

1444 AH  
2022 AD

HIS EMINENCE GRAND AYATOLLAH  
**SAYYID ALI AL-SISTANI (DZ)**  
**MESSAGE TO ORATORS**  
– MUHARRAM 1441 AH



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## **General Guidelines from the Supreme Religious Authority for Lecturers and Preachers during Muharram - Latest guidelines received in 1441 A.H.**

In the Name of Allah (swt), the Compassionate the Merciful And may peace and benediction of Allah (swt) be upon of Muhammad (s) and his pure progeny.

All praise is for Allah (swt), the Lord of the worlds, and may His blessings be upon our master, Muhammad (s), the last of the divine Prophets (s), and upon the purified members of his progeny.

Salutations upon all the other favoured servants amongst His created individuals, and His representative to his servants, the Imam (a) of this current time (may Allah (swt) hasten his reappearance).

Peace be upon al-Husayn ibn Ali (a), the master of all martyrs of this nation, the ideal example of sacrifice, redemption, nobility, courage, honour and all the lofty Godly and human moral values. [And may peace be upon] his progeny, his companions, and his household.

The holy month of Muharram is approaching with the remembrance of the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (a), along with the noble members of his family and his honourable companions. It is a remembrance of the most tragic event that reflects the oppression of the family members of the Prophet (s) in this nation, despite the fact that they were a purified progeny, and were made equal to the Qur'an. The Prophet (s) has strongly advised Muslims to respect their rights; however, they have been deprived of the status that has been ascribed to them by God, the Almighty. They were prevented from leading the Muslim ummah. They have even been persecuted and mercilessly killed due to their stance against injustice, falsehood, and evil, and because of their call towards justice, truth, and virtue.



This anniversary reflects the profound sacrifice of Ahl al-Bayt (a) in the way of Allah (swt), to promote His word, and to strengthen the principles of reason, wisdom, justice, and virtue. These principles are indeed the purpose behind the delegation of all divine Prophets (a), as the Qur'an states:

*We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences [miracles and logical proofs] and sent down with them the Scripture [with written laws, i.e. the Torah, Bible, and Qur'an] and the balance [i.e. the criterion to judge right from wrong, justice from injustice] so that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice [and not violate the rights of others].*  
(Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Hadid, verse 25).

The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (a) have strongly recommended us to commemorate this event by organising meetings to mourn and remember the calamities and tragedies that befell them so that the believers learn lessons and weep. So, as a duty, the believers should organise and participate in these religious gatherings, and feel the sorrow that has befallen Ahl al-Bayt (a) on their days of sorrow. They should adhere to the recommendations of the sacred texts in loving the Ahl al-Bayt (a),<sup>[7]</sup> as therein is advancement of their faith and worldly life. And each one of them ought to consider them like his family, and to consider what has happened like it happened to his own family, and to feel it with mercy, love, sadness, and humility. Essentially, Almighty Allah (swt), His divine Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a) are dearer to the believer than himself and his own family members.

Speakers and orators should emphasise the mention of the sacrifices and calamities, especially during these days of the month of Muharram, in order for it to be the crucial hallmark and public aspect of the commemorations, as indeed these are the fundamental purposes and the starting points behind them. Through reciting those dirges, the hearts of the believers become softer, and the blessings of Almighty Allah (swt) descend on the believers, thereby strengthening their faith, consolidating their belief, and stimulating them to do good and righteous deeds.

The commemoration of the tragedy of al-Taff [Karbala] has become a beacon for the remembrance of Almighty Allah (swt), and remembering His saints. These gatherings are the direct cause for reviving the positive role of religion and preserving the Islamic teachings and values in the hearts of the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (a) and of other Muslims.

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[7] Qur'an, 42:23.



As such, these are perfect opportunities for the people of knowledge – may Almighty Allah (swt) guide them for further success – to fulfil their responsibilities in preaching, inviting people towards Almighty Allah (swt), and reminding them of the sacred position [of the Ahl al-Bayt (a)] in religion and as role-models and guides.

Indeed, it is a worthy institution that must be preserved and maintained, whilst fulfilling the wisdom behind it and making good use of it in achieving the higher goals of religion, and reminding people about the lofty status of the Ahl al-Bayt (a).

Some of the wise teachings that should be observed and followed by the scholars, preachers, and all other reciters – such as poets and eulogists – in this noble task, are as follows:

**First Wisdom:** To emphasise the Holy Qur'an with the utmost emphasis throughout their speeches, as it is the special message of Almighty Allah (swt) to all His creation. It is the greater legacy [left by the Holy Prophet (s)] for this Muslim nation and the measure of truth and falsehood. Almighty Allah (swt) has revealed it as His guidance,[8] light,[9] and insight-giving proofs to all human beings. It is a blessed and wise reminder. And, indeed, the lifestyles of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) and their sacrifices were actually an application of its teachings and implementation of its instructions. As such it must remain the fundamental pillar and the most crucial cornerstone of the speeches, while all else is to be mentioned under its umbrella and in the shadow of its divine authority.

**Second Wisdom:** The preachers and orators should try their best to include in their speeches – whenever possible as circumstances allow – arguments that prove the true fundamentals of faith. The ideas should support the faith with strong intuitive evidences and logical arguments that are presented in an easy style and comprehensible to the public level of understanding, as stated in the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet (s)'s Sunnah, and the narrations of the infallible Imams. The reason behind this approach is consolidating the faith of people, replying to questions in the mind, and answering doubts. All of these logical arguments ought to be mentioned in a way that dispels any doubt and removes ignorant emulation and indoctrination. For example, the preacher or orator may refer to the signs of the existence of God, through the amazing nature of the universe and the wonders of creation which man witnesses around him through natural observation or is proven through scientific evidence and modern tools. One may emphasise the evidence that proves the validity of the Prophetic claims, as well as the arguments for the truthful message of Islam, as contained in the Holy Qur'an and supported by the records of historical accounts and its clear established principles.

[8] From deviation.

[9] From darkness.

Let the preachers and orators mention as importantly as possible the afterlife and its crucial importance; that every person will be given a record book of his/her work in this life; that scales of justice will be set up on the Day of Resurrection;<sup>[10]</sup> and that each person with good and positive qualities will be rewarded, whilst those who offended and violated others' rights will be punished for what they have done.

One should use examples that have been mentioned in the Qur'anic text, and the narrations from the Prophet and his progeny (a) in this regard.

In the speeches of the Commander of the Faithful (a) in the book Nahj al-Balaghah, one may find the perfect examples of what right speech should include. He (a) would normally begin by mentioning Almighty Allah (swt) and His signs in the world of creation; he would then remind people of His enormous right upon them, through creating them and His care and love for them. He would then describe the message of the Prophet (s) with its proofs and teachings. He would describe the life Hereafter in an eloquent way, with details, so that those listening could imagine the sight of it as if it were before their very eyes! He would emphasise the status and excellence of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) amongst this Muslim nation, and he would describe examples of wisdom and virtuous values that would increase the knowledge level and contribute to the social education and righteous, strong nurturance, and being able to distinguish between good and evil. Of course, presentation of all the above has stages appropriate to the situation and audience.

In the supplications of al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyyah there are many excellent and ideal supplications and prayers which the speakers can quote at the end of their speeches, or quote a paragraph of one of them and conclude his speech with those prayers, so that the audience becomes familiar with the eloquent supplications of the Imams of Guidance (a).

**Third Wisdom:** To pay special attention to the lofty divine and human values and noble teachings as manifested in the call of the Prophet (s) and his progeny (a),<sup>[11]</sup> and in their practices and lives. One has to clarify their status as examples and role models.  
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[10] To measure their beliefs, actions, and traits (21:47).

[11] Based on the Prophet's hadiths, and Ahl al-Bayt's (a) narrations.

[12] For the Muslim nation.

Indeed the Prophet and Ahl al-Bayt (a) are the elevated and distinguished figures of guidance. They are the highest exemplars for this nation, as they embody the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and its Godly, intuitive values in terms of their attachment to Almighty Allah (swt), worshipping Him, being blessed with a perfect reasoning and rectitude, and being granted complete wisdom, as well as manifesting the divine teachings and moral values such as justice, honesty, benevolence, chastity, and good character.

This is because they (a) have dedicated their noble souls to this purpose and sacrificed their lives for it. Therefore, one has to present those principles, teachings, and values in the light of the Holy Qur'an, accompanied by whatever merits have manifested in their words and the historical records of their morals, their virtues, including being martyred for the sake of Islam, trying to apply that to the current conditions and the contemporary era.

Indeed, this shall fulfil the requirement in portraying their personality and the goals for which they sacrificed their lives, and this would incorporate the divine duty in calling toward the truth and Allah (swt), the Exalted.

Almighty God has made the purified chosen ones – in each and every nation – the leaders and role models for all its members. They are the divine proofs over those who lag behind. The Qur'an states about Jesus son of Mary (a):

*And We made him an exemplar for the Children of Israel.  
(Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Zukhruf, verse 59).*

As such, the Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a) are the divine proofs for this nation and its role models. The Almighty states in the Qur'an:

*There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah [to be pardoned and rewarded] and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allah [with tongue, body, and heart] often [day and night]!  
(Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Ahzab, verse 21).*

It is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (a), in one of his statements to some of his governors after describing his asceticism. He states:

*Certainly you cannot do so,[13] but at least support me in piety, exertion, and chaste uprightness. (Nahj al-Balaghah, letter 45).*

[13] I.e. you cannot survive on just two pieces of clothing and two pieces of bread.

Generally speaking, the orators and preachers must focus on the elements of reasoning, wisdom, and morality in the words and lives of Ahl al-Bayt (a), trying to uncover them and to clarify them, calling the audience to learn and understand them, and to follow them in accordance with the requirements of the present time.

Let the poets and reciters include in their poems the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (a), as well as reminders about the values of purifying the heart, wisdom, and virtue in order to help develop the mind, encourage maturity, stimulate the conscience, revive the inborn God-given nature (fitrah) and deeper reflection. This should take place following the guidelines of the Qur'an, and the Sunnah of the Prophet (s) and the narrations from his Ahl al-Bayt (a). That is because it is the most appropriate context in which one should present the biography of the infallible Imams (a), their sacrifices, and what has befallen them. Eloquent poetry has great beauty and huge impact on individuals, and has a great power to inflame and arouse religious feelings. As such, those emotional elements should be optimally used for preaching the truth and enabling noble causes.

**Fourth Wisdom:** To state their (a) special advice to their followers and Shias. The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (a) in addition to their general guidelines and recommendations to the Muslims, wherein they have emphasised the importance of realising the status of Ahl al-Bayt (a) for the Muslim nation, as they are indeed the divinely chosen ones amongst them, also have special advice for their pure Shia followers and loyalists. These pieces of advice should be taken into consideration and presented to the public, so that the grassroots would emulate their standards of behaviour until they become well-established customs among them.

These advices urge in particular the Shias to practice and commit themselves to the religious teachings, maintain harmony between themselves, and strive to imbue themselves with the moral traits and behaviour [of the Ahl al-Bayt (a)], even with regard to those who are of different religions and denominations, as well as with those who share the same. Imam Abu Abdillah al-Sadiq (a) states:

*You ought to have God-wariness, intense piety, utmost striving [to obey], honesty, trustworthiness, good manners, and maintaining good relationship with your neighbours. You ought to be inviting [people] to all that is good without your tongues! You ought to be subjects for one to be proud of, and not be a matter of shame for us.*  
(Al-Kafi, volume 2, p. 77).

In another hadith we read that Imam Abu Ja'far, al-Baqir (a) had been speaking to Jabir al-Ju'fi, and had asked him:

*Tell me, O Jabir, is it enough for the Shias to claim that they love the Ahl al-Bayt (a) without acting according to our guidelines? I swear by Allah (swt) that no one is considered to be a Shia unless s/he obeys Allah (swt) and fears Him! O, Jabir, what the Shias are known for, is: humbleness, fearing Allah (swt), trustworthiness, extensive remembrance of Almighty Allah (swt), fasting, prayers, being polite with parents, taking care of poor neighbours, miserable individuals, those who are indebted, and the orphans! [They are known by] truthfulness in their words and the recitation of the Qur'an, and abstinence from impolite words, and they are fully reliable in their claims for keeping things safe!*

In another narration he said:

*O Jabir, don't go astray! Do you think it's enough for a Shia to say: 'I love Imam Ali (a) and I'd choose his side', but then not act accordingly? If he were to say that he loves the Messenger of God, then the Prophet of God (s) is higher than Imam Ali (a), and then he does not follow his lifestyle, or follow his Sunnah, then his love would not benefit him in the slightest! So fear Allah (swt) and act for what is with Allah (swt)! There are no close ties between Allah (swt) and any one of His servants.[14] Indeed the dearest and most honourable servant to Almighty Allah (swt) is the most pious and the most active in His obedience. O, Jabir no one can be close to Allah (swt) except through obedience! O Jabir, we have no immunity from fire for anyone,[15] and nobody can have proof against God; so whosoever is obedient to Allah (swt) is our sincere follower, and whoever has been a [persistent and unrepentant] sinner is our enemy! To be our sincere follower can never be possible except through hard work to obey and avoid sins.*

*(Al-Kafi, volume 2, p. 74)*

According to the hadith from Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab, he states that he asked [Imam al-Sadiq (a)]:

*'How should we deal with our people and behave with people whose faith is not identical to ours?' Imam said: 'Take a closer look at the Imams whom you follow [and follow in their footsteps], and do what they do! I swear by God, we [the Imams (a)] visit their patients, attend their funerals, testify for and against them. We would give them back their entrusted items.'*

*(Al-Kafi, volume 2, p. 636)*

[14] Be it Ali or his Shi'ah!

[15] I.e. no sinner can be spared from the hell-fire.



In another narration one reads:

*What an easy approach that if you were to follow it, people would be pleased with you: control your [disrespecting] words! (Al-Kafi, volume 8, p. 341).*

**Fifth Wisdom:** The speakers and preachers, whilst explaining the importance of the true beliefs and the principles of the Shia doctrine regarding the elevated status of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) should remain precautionous and careful, not to weaken the importance of obedience, nor to underestimate the destructive effects of sins for the audience. The reason is obvious, namely that the believers' success can only be achieved while having equal proportion of fear and hope, so that s/he must keep the balance between them – inwardly and outwardly – with regards to the affairs of others. There is no immunity in religion from hell-fire for anyone who commits any sins, unless these are occasional minor sins. The minor sins may – sporadically – occur from anyone, but he must realise and revert penitently to Allah (swt). Indeed, a smart preacher should not cause his audience to develop a false sense of security so they do not care about Allah (swt)'s punishment on disobedience, nor allow them to lose hope in the Lord's mercy and forgiveness or in intercession through His chosen servants by His permission if they sincerely revert to Him. One has to advise people to emphatically remember and recall the Qur'anic statement:

*And supplicate Us in hope [of Our merciful reward] and fear [of Our severe, unbearable punishment]. (Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Anbiya, verse 90)*

And He says:

*And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives, And that his effort is going to be seen [as will be shown on Judgement Day] – then he will be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense [if it is good it will be rewarded manifold].  
(Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Najm, verses 39-41)*

And He, the Honourable and Mighty, has said:

*Paradise is not [obtained] by your wishful thinking nor by that of the People of the Scripture [whose empty claims of salvation were not backed by action and avoidance of sins]. Whoever does a wrong will be recompensed for it, and he will not find besides Allah a protector or a helper [to help escape punishment]. (Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Nisa, verse 123).*

We have mentioned some similar references [16] from the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (a), which emphasise this.

**Sixth Wisdom:** Preachers and orators must avoid anything that may divide the community or cause schism amongst the believers. Rather, they should be concerned for maintaining unity, brotherhood, and harmony.

One aspect of this is to avoid focusing on the distinctions between themselves. A perfect example is focusing on their differences in taqlid and the different details of certain rulings, or even disagreement between them with regards to some detailed points within theology. No type of disagreement can disqualify some from the right path of following the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt (a), even if those different opinions were due to different levels of faith, insight, commitment, and maturity. They should refrain from any form of division, even if it were due to shortcomings or errors from some of them. One has to be extremely careful when defaming or revealing others' mistakes, because this may lead to more publicity. This may lead to a worse condition, such as the mistaken persistent behaviour on the same wrong way, as well as for those who would be influenced by them. This may lead to weakening the truth that one intends to preserve and protect. In addition, this is an act of prohibited disclosure, as it is not permissible to defame the believers due to a mistake committed as it may imply you are not appreciating his positive and good qualities. Sometimes, under certain circumstances, the wiser reaction, rather than focusing on someone's mistakes or sins, is in ignoring them and turning a blind eye, rather than fuelling [the situation] by speaking about it and discussing it. At times, silence on a matter is better than speaking about it.

In addition, one has to be extremely careful not to consider some people as disbelievers or outsiders of faith solely due to having some misinterpretation, doubt, or a [different] view about religion, as long as they have explicitly declared recognising the two fundamental pillars of faith, i.e. monotheism and prophethood. It is equally bad to classify some Shia Muslims as being non-Shias after they have espoused the doctrine of the divinely chosen status of the Ahl al-Bayt (a) amongst the Muslim nation, just like some prophets (a) and their progeny were selected and blessed with divine leadership (Imamah), wisdom, and knowledge. Anyone who does so [i.e. disqualifies other Shias as non-Shias], has gone against their practice. He has created schism and division amongst their followers and devotees, and has committed a great sin.

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[16] In the Fourth Wisdom.



In fact, one should avoid anything that instigates division between Muslims, and also keep away from anything that causes hatred and distrust amongst them. This is indeed against their teachings and practice as they (a) were keen to treat others kindly and would not expose the differences in a manner that would weaken the Islamic faith in general, or distort the truth. To the extent that it has been recommended that one should pray together with them, never harm them, and attend their commemorations and funerals. All of these are emphasised and clear in history if one studies their acts and statements. Therefore, they (a) enjoyed respect by others, and were praised by them; in fact, others would come to learn [general knowledge] from them as well as jurisprudence.

These advices do not imply compromise on principles of true faith or abandoning enmity and dissociation from those who oppressed them, or to overlook it and not mention it, because there are different ways of explaining the same points, each depending on the situation. A wise speaker, cognisant of the different methods of presenting, must choose the relevant way for it, [17] as was practiced by them (a). Therefore, it has been narrated from them (a), while promoting the scholars amongst their companions, to be smart enough to grasp what they intended to indicate, such as the following saying:

*We do not consider the man of our followers a jurist unless he would grasp what we intended to say when we use allusive words.*

Or:

*... until he accurately perceives the indirect points that we make.*

The speaker must avoid putting the public to judge theoretical and specialised matters within theology, where people have not been obliged by God to do so, or when they have been [justifiably] allowed to follow the experts in such matters. This would lead to the trivialisation of the issues, or lead pretenders of knowledge to misuse the atmosphere in order to misguide others, and ignore any academic research criteria, diminish the value of true academic research, and of genuine specialisation of the experts. All of those mentioned points shall have abhorrently significant negative repercussions among the believers, especially in the medium and long term.

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[17] Taking into consideration his special audience and their ability to grasp the points.



**Seventh Wisdom:** One has to be extremely precautionary not to speak without profound knowledge or insight because, whatever the content, this is forbidden according to the religious teachings. The Almighty (swt) has said:

*And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart – about all those [one] will be questioned. [18] (Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Isra, verse 36).*

Having a good intention or holy aim does not justify it and likewise, it shall not protect him from its dangers and negative repercussions.[19]

This will only become possible through increasing one's knowledge in the field of his/her speech and also in the scope of knowledge and practice thereof, and through extensive attention to the different opinions [amongst the scholars],[20] but also being aware of what is certain and what is uncertain and doubtful. As such one has to be precautionary in all matters.

Among some of those requirements is that one must have sophisticated knowledge about the history and its events, their circumstances, and conditions of the relevant historical facts. In addition, one must have appropriate assessment of historical sources and their different grades of reliability.

In general, the speaker must be knowledgeable, up to a sufficient level, in the relevant fields. He should be equipped with the necessary tools, having enough experience in the subject of his research and speeches, and be well-guided by the relevant information, thus remaining precautionary in what he does not know or what he has not yet learned about.

And one has to be careful not to fabricate any information, which is called bid'ah. This means to add something to religion that is not originally from it, and nor is it based on authenticated arguments. Indeed, fabricating things within religion is one of the most harmful aspects of misguidance, as it leads to further sects within religious teachings and divides groups into multiple beliefs, and initiates schisms into different and cross-party divisions and parties, exactly as one sees in many current religions and sects. It has been narrated from the Prophet (s) that he gave an extremely severe warning against heresy. Indeed, he said that the most evil of things are those which are fabricated, as each fabrication/heresy is a misguidance, and every misguidance will end up in the hell-fire.

[18] It may be asked: 'How did you claim on just hearing from any unverified source? Or claim as if you have seen it when you were absent? Or accept/reject in heart without proper evidence?'

[19] For example, how he had misled others.

[20] Within comparative jurisprudence.

One of the statements without knowledge and insight is an exaggeration in something, and to exceed its logical boundaries. A good example of that is considering a theoretical matter that requires extra effort and research (ijtihad) as extremely clear and obvious. Or to pretend the points that top religious researchers have different opinions about to be unanimously agreed upon by them – either explicitly or implicitly – or almost considering it agreed upon. Another example happens when one elevates some possible issues as probable or some more probable cases to be certain. Or to declare certain recommended religious practices to be obligatory – without any special circumstances that make it be so, or to consider certain obligatory tenets that are not amongst the fundamental principles to be fundamental pillars of faith, or the other way around. All these examples are rejected in religious teachings. Anyone who assumes the position of teaching and preaching to the people and is somehow linked to the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (a), and is generally considered a moral preacher and teacher, is strictly required to avoid such instances. Any speech without piety and any statement without God-wariness is void and fruitless. It is better and safer for what he intends if one remains steadfast on the right path of God-wariness.

Also, avoidance of unknowingly saying things depends on being precautionary whilst narrating an account or a hadith. One has to verify things and be sure about them before confidently narrating them, so one has to be extremely sure about the details and think twice before declaring them to the public. As such, one should not say a word in public without having completely contemplated it. It would be like throwing a pebble without properly targeting a precise goal. One has to recall that there would be no room for him to apologise in public. It is certainly better not to deliver a speech in public something that he ought not to speak, even indirectly, for which he has to later apologise, or need to thereafter offer a clarification.

Preachers and orators must be on guard not to include any false ideas or refutable arguments in their speeches. This matter may weaken the truth or cause it to be murky, and may distort the correct method of argument. There is enough correct information and perfect approaches to prove the truth, without the need to rely on falsehood.

**Eighth Wisdom:** Preachers and orators must think – aside from the genuine contents of their speeches – about the nurturing effects on the audience in particular and on the society at large. The smart way of conveying a message is similar to the experience one may notice while talking to one's family members and children. The reason for this is that despite the fact that something is valid and correct in itself, sometimes the words or act should be avoided because of the inappropriate negative effects it causes in the listener or observer. Preachers, as those who call toward Allah (swt), have a core duty of reminding and spiritually nurturing.

So preachers and orators must formulate the right and correct messages in an appropriate way. Because, a single message can be delivered in different forms, some of which can be appropriate, beneficial and influential, while others that are not so, and in fact may be considered harmful and repulsive.

Therefore, the speaker and preacher must be aware that his speeches have implications, corollaries, and suggestions. Being wise and smart necessitates that one should take these points into consideration. Sometimes one may utter a statement but the audience understands it differently, or insinuate what is not intended, or that he indicates a message or motive that he did not notice, or affects something that he did not anticipate, or some people take some sentences out of context and then misquote those words in order to defame him, thereby defaming and distorting the truth. Nowadays, these are highly likely especially due to the widespread use of recording and filming tools.[21] Hence, a smart and wise speaker must pay special attention to any words that are spoken even if confined within a specific place and time, as this can be easily spread. So, he should speak what is appropriate for wide circulation though every situation has a befitting message and every place has a suitable oration. A perfect speaker and poet is not really perfect unless he pays attention to the delicate details of his speech and poetry and can express with as much control as possible on its formulation in the most appropriate way, avoiding any potential form of misquoting and misunderstanding.

What can be really useful for this is the speaker's wide knowledge of the historical incidents and current experiences, because they are full of cases of criticism, vilification, exploitation, condemnation, and propagation, and they all represent rich experiences worthy of careful attention to being alert and vigilant about the areas of hazards [22] and of potential division/trouble.

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[21] Therefore, one has to be careful with statements that can be misquoted in recorded and screened lectures, as the speaker may have meant something else.

[22] For example, misquoting.



Let the speakers, poets, and reciters be extremely careful about stating the truth that could allude to exaggeration of the status of the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (a). The technical exaggeration and religious glorifying (ghuluww) is divided into two types:

- 1) To ascribe divine attributes to other than Almighty Allah (swt), and
- 2) To ascribe traits and descriptions that are not proven by any reliable arguments for them. The doctrine of Ahl al-Bayt (a) is pure from any one of these two forms of exaggeration, rather it is far from accepting them. Their doctrine is to acknowledge the elevated status that Almighty Allah (swt) has ascribed the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (a) without additional or excessive belief. One has to exercise great precaution in cases of ambiguity and extra guardedness against any unreliable arguments about their status. A pious individual should never exaggerate about those whom he loves, nor degrade or be unfair towards those whom he despises. It is not right to base those beliefs on merely blind, irrational love, and it is incorrect to believe in what is said by those who have exaggerated, as giving in to false claims may lead to additions in the matters of religion without rational arguments, and may also lead to the occurrence of [prohibited] innovation! It may also lead to excesses by the ignorant, elevating misguided people to the top leadership, and the withdrawal of the pious who act [only] by confirmed proof, and of God-wary individuals who are precautionous under ambiguous circumstances. All of these points may cause extreme damages to the right faith, and may retrogress into a regression from the opposite side due to reduction by others, [23] and addition to the faith without reliable arguments is equal to the unacceptable deduction in it as proven by reliable arguments. Anyone who has added something today without a valid argument may well be added upon tomorrow, and may even be accused of negligence and shortcomings! As such, it is better and safer to remain steadfast on the right path of valid proofs and standards.

The speaker, whilst criticising something or someone should try to address it smartly without condemning and insulting any people in a generalised way. And if such a purpose is achieved with mild criticism and rebuke, it would suffice from harsh criticism and humiliating someone. One also has to appreciate the good qualities and decent practices of others, so that it would be an encouragement toward it, and an acknowledgement of goodness in its doers.

[23] A reduction of what is rightly the Ahl al-Bayt's (a) status.

**Ninth Wisdom:** Preachers and orators should be extremely concerned that their deeds match their words, and their outward be identical with their inward. They must be ahead of others in living by those values. Indeed this practice shall make them closer to honesty, and further from showing off. That will lead to sincerity and create greater impact on the community members and their audience. How can one eagerly and with honesty describe the moral virtues and qualities of the Prophet (s) and his noble Ahl al-Bayt (a) recommending them for others, including their worshipping of God (glory be to Him), their abstinence from worldly desires, solely seeking justice, honesty, chastity, loyalty, and benevolence to parents amongst other noble attributes, while he is far away from them in his heart, nor reflecting them through his own works?! The Qur'an states:

*Do you order righteousness to the people and forget yourselves?  
(Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Baqarah, verse 44).*

And He said:

*O you who have believed, why do you say [and promise to do] what you [then] do not do?  
(Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Saff, verse 2)*

Anyone who is accustomed to say and preach what he does not do shall grow hypocrisy in the heart and intensify the malady of double standards and showing off. Furthermore, this may lead his rewards to be annulled and disgrace him both in this world and in the Hereafter. It can also lead to an evil end here, from which we seek refuge in Allah (swt).

**Tenth Wisdom:** It is incumbent upon the preachers and orators to possess the necessary competencies and appropriate qualities that are required for this honourable task. We know that each job requires certain relevant qualities and formalities, whether these are things to be followed in the public sphere or matters to be adhered to in private behaviour. Preaching and communicating the religious teachings and the Husayni messages requires some appropriate qualifications as it entails speaking about the truth and about the Imams (a) of Guidance and what is intended as guidance and reminders.



It is especially important to remember the need to remain full of dignity and to avoid bargaining whilst asking for money. One must avoid causing distrust and shaking the pure image of the religious leaders through acts that indicate greed, and to remain abstinent from being corrupted with any worldly desires in performing this duty.

And the preachers and orators, as well as the managers of commemoration councils and processions, must refrain from any form of mutual contradictions, hatred, division and schism, especially whilst Muslims are living in the diaspora. These points blemish sincerity, abolish rewards, and cause misgivings among believers, and lead to the breakdown of projects that depend on cooperation and solidarity, and he who can make his work and his support more like the secret charity without asking for a presidency or fame or prestige, then he should do so because it is good for him and more blessed, and God, glory be to Him, has said:

*If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good [because you obey God's order and encourage others to spend]; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is even better for you [as it is not showing off and is more dignifying for the needy], and He will atone from you some of your misdeeds [i.e. He will thereby pardon some major sins]. And Allah, with what you do, is [fully] acquainted [so even if you give secretly He will record and reward it amply].*  
(Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Baqarah, verse 271)

*And whoever believes in Allah and remains God-wary, He shall provide for him, from which he is not expecting, nor waiting for. (Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Talaq, verse 2-3)*

In addition, the preachers and orators must refrain from modes or methods that negatively affect the sanctity of these meetings that ought to be reviving the divinity of Allah (swt), and [commemoration of] his Messenger (s) and his saints (a). Indeed the nature of the topics requires the speaker to follow the most appropriate presentation method whilst preaching. Any violation from the speaker would negate his very intended goals and contradict the identity of the message, which is supposed to be for the right cause; in fact, it could be considered a desecration and an abuse of the original cause.

**Eleventh Wisdom:** The speaker should possess self-criticism! He should think twice about his [acts and] words before preaching to others. One should avoid praising himself, as if he is immune from any mistake or sin. One should be aware that Almighty Allah (swt) is vigilant over him, he should feel His presence as well as His absolute control over him while he engages in inviting people to the truth, and [beyond that] during all his circumstances, as he will be asked about them during the Day of Resurrection. He should benefit from others' criticism, and remain fair to them about himself and respond to the reminder of the truth. [24]

The speaker and orator should realise that the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (a) are witnessing whatever the scholars in the religion, the preachers, and the orators have done and worked for. Subsequently, the scholars are witnesses over the ordinary people in the society of what they have done and said, as the Qur'an has stated:

*In this [Qur'anic revelation you were named Muslims and] that the Messenger may be a witness over you [that he delivered God's message and observes how you respond] and that you may be witnesses over the people [so deliver the message to mankind and observe how they respond].*

*(Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Hajj, verse 78)*

As such, whoever fails in the matter of inviting towards and preaching the truth, regarding their sayings or deeds, the proof will be complete against him and he will bear the burden of failure. [25] Whoever has carried out his responsibility with utmost efforts, but unfortunately people did not respond with a positive reaction, will be in peace of mind from blame or punishment, while they [the people] will have proof completed against them. [26] This approach is very important for those who have contemplated and grasped it the way it deserves to be contemplated and grasped.

**Twelfth Wisdom:** Beyond all of what we have mentioned, the speakers must seek God-wariness, piety, and total devotion to Almighty Allah (swt) in speech, delivery, and behaviour. One has to put Almighty Allah (swt) in front of his eyes, keeping in mind and reminding himself about Him that He is vigilant over him. He must seek His approval and acceptance, as all his efforts should be for the sake of His Lord's mercy. Anyone who is God-wary and extremely loyal to the Lord, will be awakened by Him when in situations of slumber and alerted in case of mistakes, and will be continuously led to the right path. Almighty Allah (swt) shall bless his life here and in the Hereafter.

[24] (about himself)

[25] God will punish him.

[26] And they will be punished.



This does not mean that this crucial element is limited to the intention only, or that one should not pay attention to the quality of work. One should master it and pay special attention to its effects and prepare for it in order to get it perfectly accomplished. Indeed the true loyalty and absolute devotion [to God] would lead the believer towards increased reflection and help him understand the dictates of prudence and he will not speak without contemplation. It should assist him in realising the consequences, so that he would not act as if he were detached from reality. He should be learning from his and others' experiences, as it has been narrated that the believer is always intelligent and smart. A believer is supported with the divine light [27] and that he must never allow repetition of the same mistakes again and again. A wise believer thinks before speaking, while the fool's mind is always behind his tongue. A believer does the good deeds, albeit he is afraid that he might be committing a mistake:

*And they who give what they give [charity and all acts of piety] whilst their hearts are fearful because they will be returning to their Lord [who knows all their inner secrets and this makes them apprehensive as to whether they have performed their duty to be worthy of acceptance]. It is those who hasten to good deeds [as they are motivated by a sense of duty and fear of failure], and they outstrip [others] therein [by having positive competition to be better than others in all virtues]. (Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Mu'minun, verses 60-61)*

*He gives wisdom [the knowledge of the secrets of the universe and the Qur'an] to whom He wills [if the recipient qualifies by his purity and piety], and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good [as the highest good is to manifest God's wisdom]. And none will remember [this great secret] except those of deep understanding [who have not clouded it with lowly desires]. (Holy Qur'an, Surat al-Baqarah, verse 269)*

O Allah (swt), bless Muhammad (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a), shower Your mercy over Muhammad (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a), and honour Muhammad (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a), as you have blessed and showered your mercy over Ibrahim and his family members, as You are the praised, the thanksgiving.

[27] (he sees by Divine illumination what is dark and hidden for others)

O Allah (swt), bless the ones who call to You and inform others about Your religion!

O Allah, bless those who revive the memory of Your Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a).

O Allah (swt), bless them to perform this job optimally, and record them with the servants who are loyal to You and who seek Your satisfaction!

O Allah (swt), help them to have every virtue and stay away from all dissonance, and thank them with rewards for their struggle for truth in this world and the Hereafter!

O Allah (swt), write similar rewards for those who have sought to do so by establishing and organising these councils and commemorations, and help them in attending them!

Our Lord, accept all our worship from us: You are the most generous, and all thanks to Almighty Allah (swt), the Lord of the worlds.

