

## Core Curriculum

### 5 The Qur'an and Hadith

#### 5.10 **Imam Ali (as) and Nahj al-Balagha.**

##### INTRODUCTION

Bismillāhir Rahmānir Rahīm, As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh. Peace be upon you brothers and sisters.

Welcome back to the Muslim Converts Channel! Perhaps one the greatest distinguishing features of the school of Ahl al-Bayt (as) are the hadiths of Imam Ali (as). Imam Ali’s (as) hadiths are known to be pithy and full of wisdom. They are often short but more inspiring than any book out there with the exception of the Holy Qur’an. The most famous book containing Imam Ali’s (as) wisdom is called Nahj al-Balāgha.

In this lesson, we will have a brief overview of this book, and quote a number of inspiring passages from it. Hopefully this will inspire our audience to purchase the book if they don’t have it, and use it as a continuous source of guidance and salvation in their lives.

##### BODY OF TEXT

Nahj al-Balagha is not just a contribution to Islam, but a contribution to religion. Within the school of Ahl al-Bayt (as), Nahj al-Balagha is the most famous book after the Holy Qur’an. Nahj al-Balagha is a collection of sermons, letters and short maxims from Imam Ali (as). The sermons and sayings in Nahj al-Balagha were mostly delivered during Imam Ali’s Caliphate. The text itself was compiled by the famous Muslim scholar al-Sharīf al-Rādī who died in the year 1015 AD.

The language of the book is quite complex. Even the most advanced scholars of Arabic have difficulties reading the work as the language is high. In Egypt for example where some of the greatest faculties of the Arabic language exist today, Nahj al-Balagha, as a work of Arabic literature that is usually studied at the doctoral level.

Despite the intentions behind the book, one cannot compile the sayings and sermons of Imam Ali (as) and be left unguided. Everything Imam Ali (as) ever said was in essence a form of guidance and a light from the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah. Reading Nahj Al-Balagha is an important book in helping our salvation in the Hereafter.

The following are just some passages from Nahj al-Balagha.

Part of Sermon 28:

Surely this world has turned its back and announced its departure while the next world has appeared forward and proclaimed its approach. Today is the day of preparation while tomorrow is the day of race. The place to proceed to is Paradise while the place of doom is Hell. Is there no one to offer repentance over his faults before his death? Or is there no one to perform virtuous acts before the day of trial?

Beware, you have been ordered insistently to march and been guided how to provide for the journey. Surely the most frightening thing which I am afraid of about you is to follow desires and to widen the hopes. Provide for yourself from this world what would save you tomorrow (on the Day of Judgement).

The following are some short sayings or maxims from the book:

He who adopts greed as a habit devalues himself; he who discloses his hardship agrees to humiliation; and he who allows his tongue to overpower his soul debases the soul.

Miserliness is shame; cowardice is a defect; poverty disables an

intelligent man from arguing his case; and a destitute person is a stranger in his home town.

Knowledge is a venerable estate; good manners are new dresses; and thinking is clear mirror.

Meet people in such a manner that if you die they should weep for you and if you live they should long for you.

The most helpless of all men is he who cannot find a few brothers during his life, but still more helpless. is he who finds such a brother but loses him.

Whenever a person conceals a thing in his heart it manifests itself through unintentional words from his tongue and (in) the expressions of his face.

Imam Ali (as) gave the following advice to his son Imam al-Hasan (as)

O my son, learn four things and (a further) four things from me. Nothing will harm you if you practise them. That the richest of riches is intelligence; the biggest destitution is foolishness; the wildest wildness is vanity and the best achievement is goodness of the moral character.

O my son, you should avoid making friends with a fool because he may intend to benefit you but may harm you; you should avoid making friends with a miser because he will run away from you when you need him most; you should avoid making friends with a sinful person because he will sell you for nought; and you should avoid making friends with a liar because he is like a mirage, making you feel far things near and near things far.

More sayings of Imam Ali (as) from Nahj al-Balagha

The sin that displeases you is better in the view of Allah than the virtue which makes you proud.

Victory is by determination; determination is by the turning over of thoughts; and thoughts are formed by guarding secrets.

There is no wealth like wisdom, no destitution like ignorance, no inheritance like refinement and no support like consultation.

If you are met with a greeting, give better greetings in return. If a hand of help is extended to you, do a better favour in return, although the credit would remain with the one who was first.

Whoever places himself as a leader of the people should commence with educating his own self before educating others; and his teaching should be by his own conduct before teaching by the tongue. The person who teaches and instructs his own self is more entitled to esteem than he who teaches and instructs others.

Until Next Time, Thank you for watching. As-salāmu ‘Alaykum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh