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NUTRITION FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ISLAM

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at briefly specifying an analytical approach for the understanding of diet and nutrition in Islam and its effects on the promotion of health within the society. The Qur'an and other Islamic literature on *Hadiths* (Traditions), *Figh* (Jurisprudence) and traditional medicine are studied.

The specifications of the Islamic food, the significance of the use of a diet compatible with the nature of the human body, manners of fostering hygienic principles, and ways and means of improving nutrition in the society are duly elaborated.

The study further verifies that Islam has an independent approach towards nutrition, which is based on social and economic justice. It also shows that people should have equal opportunities to acquire a sufficient and legitimate amount of food for subsistence.

The study also concludes that the world oppressors are the ones who have brought about poverty and starvation to a large number of humans in the world. One of the most important responsibilities of Muslims and the Islamic States is to eradicate such an oppression.

INTRODUCTION

Islam as a living religion has taken all man's vital matters, including nutrition and food, into consideration. This paper aims at briefly specifying an analytical approach for the understanding of diet and nutrition in Islam and its effects on the promotion of health within a society. The subject is examined in Islamic original texts and the principles and specifications of nutrition are elaborated.

NUTRITION IN THE ISLAMIC TEXTS

The Qur'an

There are many verses in different chapters of the Qur'an that encourage the believers to exploit the Divine Blessing and the pure and lawful sustenance. The verses recommend the enjoyment of the blessing that God has granted mankind.[1] The Qur'an observes spirituality in nutrition and summons Muslims to reason about it.[2] The commentators of the Qur'an, who have worked on verses concerning religious precepts, have categorised verses relating to comestibles and beverages to four groups as follow:[3]

1. The verses that indicate permissibility principle[4] (*Asl Ibaheh*);
2. The verses that forbid some comestibles;[5]
3. The verses concerning alcoholic beverages and prohibiting vinosity;[6] and
4. The verses that stipulate the permissibility of some food items in particular.[7]

Hadiths (Traditions)

A main part of the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his successors (PBUT) are appropriated to this important issue. These teachings, which are recorded in full account in the authentic books of *Hadiths* (religious traditions), provide the materials for the jurists to deduce and declare their *Fatawa* (religious

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verdicts) concerning the comestibles and beverages on the one hand and for the Muslim scholars and researchers to work out and elaborate the principles of nutrition in Islam[8] on the other. In addition, nutrition is a matter that is expressed in the supplication texts ideally.[9] The interesting point in the cited texts is that when the issue had a very significant specification that was not in the scope of man's reasoning and experiences or would require a long time to be discovered, and the mystery of the problem remained to be resolved, it has been expressed plainly.

Figh (Jurisprudence)

The distinguished jurists (*Mujtahids/Fuqaha*) have written down some chapters in their treatises on this matter. They have looked at comestibles, beverages and relevant matters from the angle of jurisprudence in detail,[10] and presented the religious verdicts for applications in the practical treatises (*Risala*).[11]

Most of them believe that permissibility principle is applied to comestibles and beverages in general. Therefore, based on reasoning, whatever is not declared as unlawful or abominable in the Qur'an or the Traditions is considered as permissible for eating or drinking.[12]

Islamic Medical Texts

Some of the companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his infallible successors (The Imams) have compiled their traditions on medicine and hygiene. They are adorned under titles such as *Tebb-al-Nabi*, *Tebb-al-A'immah*, *Tebb-al-Sadeq*, *Tebb-al-Reza* or similar names. In addition, the works of distinguished Muslim physicians during the golden ages of the Islamic civilisation are studied. We will refer to these works as "Islamic or traditional medicine books".

Islamic medicine views mankind as a whole entity in which his soul and body are united. In relation to the cosmic environment, he preserves his loyalty with the Islamic unity soul. The man's health will be fulfilled through harmony and equilibrium.[13]

Traditional medicine does not interpret the human body as a collection of parts that have merely mechanical relationships to each other, but believes in an independent managerial system ruling the whole body that interprets its essence. This is the reason why it talks about a single truth by the name of «temperament», which plays an essential function in maintaining the health of human beings.[14] The refraining food habits of the Islamic lands have been found based on this fact and thus in a common food the different properties and natures should be balanced.[15] Islamic medicine is essentially based on the natural resources and does not make much alteration for converting them into medicine.[16] Traditional medicine is based on food therapy and advises people "as long as you can cure with food, don't treat yourself with drugs and don't take medicine".[17]

In the Qur'an a chapter has been entitled food napery (*Ma'edah*). It is worth noting that the day of descending the same food was declared as the joyful day of feast.[18] In another chapter called "The Man" (*Insan*) the great models of humanity (Imam Ali, his wife Fatima and his beloved sons Hasan and Husayn) have been praised with regard to his generosity and giving food.[19] Food donor (*Mot'em*) is one of the names of God Almighty in the Holy Qur'an[20] and this name has also appeared in the Traditions. On the other hand, the beneficient God has attributed foods to Himself. Out of many instances are: Your Divine sustenance, what the praise of God on it, of Divine daily bread, whatever that God provides you.

The Almighty God introduces His House (*Ka'bah* in Mecca) with two protecting factors: man and society, which means physical health and society are dependent and regards the food as a fundamental and independent parameter in existence.[21] Since Islam enumerates human virtue and dominance over many creatures, it regards good nutrition as a known factor and a divine grace.[22]

In the Qur'an, oath to the food is brought among the oaths that God takes to His Greatness. Again, Qur'an introduces the meals and food in the row of pure stages of spirituality.[23] Furthermore, the Creator's oath to His creature such as food indicates that God has a special and adorable respect to the laws of life such as food and nutrition. The Qur'an speaks of those who unjustly declare the man's divine sustenance and livelihood unlawful like the one who has killed his child ignorantly and in fact sustained a loss.[24] God judges with justice among the servants on the day of judgement (Hereafter) and will also inquire about the blessings, food and nutrition.[25] This is another indication of the significance of nutrition in Islam. Food poverty is propounded in the Qur'an and the divine pious prophet had begged God to remove it for the sake of doing beneficience.[26]

Among the Islamic narratives, providing food to the hungry is reminded well and it is also seen often in the supplications.[27] In connection with the food issues, jurists (*Fuqaha*) state a verdict that: "It is obligatory for every Muslim to give daily bread and water to another Muslim who is about to die of hunger or thirst and save him/her from death".[28] The Qur'an talks about the miracles in relation to food in some cases and speaks of the Prophet Moses, food and the Prophet Jesus, divine food (Mann and Salwa).[29]

The organic connections between food regimen and the season, geographical regions, occupation and age

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are precisely observed in Islam. In the Islamic diet, certain recommendations are given in relation to each of these factors.[30] This regimen is based on the following principles.

Using the Natural Gifts

The holy Qur'an recommends that the believers use the gifts of nature such as healthy and clean foods. Those who deprive themselves and others of such foods without any reason and basis are bitterly blamed.[31] Furthermore, in the Traditions there are also much recommendations for using the natural gifts that God has granted to mankind and even encourages them to exploit the underground mines. According to these recommendations, food should be concordant and compatible with human nature[32] and nourish the body on what it is used to.[33] Breast feeding is considered as one of the natural foods for the child and is highly recommended.[34] In this respect, the special physical and affectional emotions of the mother during lactation is observed diligently.[35] From the explicit instructions in the jurisprudence, the significance of breast feeding can be discovered in the conditions of breast feeding which are propounded with much accuracy and care.[36] This matter has been interpreted so important that the foster relationship was enumerated.[37,38]

Observation of Hygienic Principles

Health preservation and its restoration in the case of sickness is the epigraph of the hygienic teachings of Islam. Muslims of the early Islamic era observed the prophets' teachings on sanitation, abstinence and the like. They embraced and applied these teachings enthusiastically which was the feature of the early Muslim generations. The successive generations within the period of several centuries had followed these teachings and much of the Muslims'hygienic abstinence habits originated from them.[39]

The main point of these teachings lies in their priority on preventive over curative measures which necessitates human health preservation. In this regard, a chapter is opened in the jurisprudence on the matter of fines (*diah*),[40] in which the price of all parts of the body are determined with the explanation of accurate details. This indicates the deep attention of Islam to the life preservation and refraining from perdition in personal and social dimension which reflects the Islamic comprehensiveness feature. Essentially, Islam deals with the problems with a removal approach not rebuff, in encountering matters. This approach behaves in an active manner which tries to prevent the occurrence of difficulties and displays the necessary foresight but does not sit for disaster to happen and reopen it.[41] It is on the basis of such manner that the Imams (*ahl albayt*) and the commentators of the divine verses have set the nutrition matter on the basis of considering the hygienic principles and recommended the believers to observe them as follows:

Pure Eating

The holy Qur'an recommends that mankind eat pure and lawful foods that have been referred to before. Furthermore, the Qur'an requires people to evaluate the foods and become sure about its profit, worth, purity and lawfulness.[42] In the context of the holy Qur'an, "pure" means organic cleanliness and "lawful" is religious cleanliness.[43] Therefore, both spiritual and material dimensions of nutrition with regard to purity is taken into account in the religion. In addition, God enumerates using the malice and impurities unjustly[44] and eating or drinking the defamed things have also been declared unlawful in the Islamic jurisprudence.[45] The jurisprudence stipulates that eating the meat of an animal that eats excrements is not lawful even if it is slaughtered according to the religious instructions unless the animal has been kept away from eating excrement for a certain period of time determined by the jurists and ate clean food before being slaughtered.[46] In this respect, the turn-over physical mechanism of the animal system is the issue that has precisely been observed by the religion.

Variety

The human body's mysterious machine requires innumerable food factors for preserving a healthy and qualified lengthy life. The food necessities of mankind cannot be found in a single food and is not accumulated in one place. Therefore, it is necessary to have different kinds of food that are materialised in plains, mountains and seas. This is the reason why the Creator of the world has granted us the natural gifts to obtain our sustenance that is pure and lawful.[47] Religious traditions teach the believers to enjoy all kinds of food whether vegetarian or nonvegetarian in order to meet the necessities of life and achieve an equilibrium and healthy state.[48]

Freshness

In Islam eating some foodstuffs in the normal conditions is abominable (*Makrouh*) which means not to use these materials as far as possible. These precepts play an important and effective role in the prevention of difficulties and entanglements of today's life. Among these instructions there is detestability of eating preserved foods such as canned foods despite their being free from food poisoning and microbial infections.[49] Reciprocally the use of fresh food is recommended. This emphasizes the importance of freshness and liveliness of food cells and even in Traditions the first fruits are recommended that pos-

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sess all the vital force of the plant and for this reason are richer than the subsequent crops.[50]

Prohibition of Unlawful (*Haram*) food

The glorious Qur'an has forbidden the eating of some foods in certain cases.[51] The study of these verses clarifies the philosophy of their unlawfulness that is based on two principles of devoutness and contemplation.

The principle of devoutness is set in order that the people do not forget the Eternal Being and do not leave politeness and attention to His authority and obey His commands and prohibitions. This principle is set for the reason that people's goodness and stability are in them. If the Almighty God left humans to some matters without devoutness, in the long run their hearts would be inclined to harshness and cruelty.[52]

The unlawfulness of some foods is intellectually based on the principle of contemplation. Right reasoning does not accept any harm for humans. The unlawful food stuffs have been generally distinguished harmful for physical and mental health and especially in this matter their late effects are considered which occur by lapse of time and slowly. This is the reason why it has been concealed from the sharp-sighted view of human intellect and sciences.[53] Incidentally on philosophy of religious precepts the valuable subjects are seen in the books of Traditions that indicate this point clearly.[54] In the context of the ethical system of Islam, the worst food is the unlawful one. The jurisprudence declares eating whatever is harmful for man to be unlawful.[56]

Gluttony and Prodigality

Prodigality means overindulgence and exceeding the limit. The Qur'an has cited this matter in 23 verses and reproached it there.[57] As the Qur'an says to the hypocrites that it is not correct to ignore the world delectations, beauties and Godly blessings, so it warns those who are luxurious that this action is also contrary to the law of reason and God's command and God is weary of these kinds of individuals.[58] The Qur'an has taken up a moderate manner that neither suppresses the aesthetic tendencies nor the prodigals, the luxurious and the gluttons.

Prodigality is not merely discarding food. Overindulgence and wasting the useful materials with wrong methods of cooking are also other means of prodigality. For this reason prodigality and dissipation are unlawful in Islam and the extension of life will be permissible if it does not end in spoiling a right or prodigality and dissipation or the lapse of duty.[59]

Many traditions are narrated from the Imams that reproach prodigality in food and gluttony. These sayings call it the calamity of health and speak of the evil effects derived from it.[60] According to these traditions gluttony causes illness, cruelty and as a result it provides the privation of divine blessing and praised hypoalimentation in any case and position.[61,62] It is interesting that this matter has found a special place in the Islamic law and it has been discussed extensively.[63] Eating while full, gluttony[64] and drinking much water[65] have been declared abominable and if it ends in harm it will be unlawful.[66]

Geophagy

Sometimes man maybe in need of something but choose a wrong way of access to it, such as geophagy. The side effects, such as enlargement of the abdomen, turning pale, atrophy of the genital glands and other symptoms are reported.[67] Islamic traditions severely condemn geophagy because of its harms which predispose the body for all kinds of mental and physical illnesses.[68]

Among the Islamic prominent jurists the unlawfulness of geophagy has been declared and it is an interesting and significant point that can not be ignored. Some of the jurists have known the unlawful philosophy of geophagy in its harm on the body. The contemporary jurists have also forbidden geophagy.[69]

IMPROVEMENT OF NUTRITION CONDITIONS IN THE SOCIETY

In Islam nutrition has an independent manner that provides a law based on social justice in human life. Social justice is a basic aim of the prophets' mission[70] that should be carried out within the limit of its economical justice; much efforts for reaching the other dimensions of social justice is useless[71] unless the latter is fulfilled.

The improvement of social nourishment conditions in a society is regarded as one of the essential branches of social justice. On the basis of this viewpoint, the improvement of nutrition conditions in a society is based on some principles that will be discussed briefly.

Cultural Promotion

Islam views culture as the foundation of all matters including nutrition. Food habits, consumption patterns, the customs of parties, etc. all are influenced by the culture of a society. The relationships between the primitive culture of Arabs in the ignorant ages (before the advent of Islam) and their nutritional regimen and habits is elaborated by Imam Ali (*P.B.U.H.*) who had closely witnessed and comprehensively compared with the pro-Islamic era in the first Islamic state established by the holy prophet Muhammad (*P.B.U.H.*).[72] Nourishment in the primitive culture was an aim that justified each means to obtain it but in the Islamic culture it is a means that should be legal and lawful and

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the limit of chastity and sufficiency should be followed.[73] This culture has proceeded to improve consumption patterns disproving the luxury, prodigality and changing the food habits on the basis of hygienic principles. Furthermore, it does not permit one to neglect the society's people in any case and blame variegated foods while there are needy people in the society.[74]

The promotion of the public awareness level on all fields with correct use of the printed matter, mass media and other pamphlets and the principle of free instruction is a principle that has been considered in the constitutional law of Iran in order to achieve the Islamic culture's goals.[75] The necessity of education and the evolutional permanent changes (cultural promotion) are much emphasized in the teachings of Islam.[76]

Self Sufficiency

Self sufficiency is a prevailing subject that includes all cultural, social, economical, political fields, etc. The holy Qur'an does not accept any dominance from unbelievers over the believers.[77] The jurists have elaborated the negation of the foreigners' dominance as a rule based on the teachings of the Qur'an. According to this rule the preservation of independence in all fields and attaining self sufficiency is necessary for an Islamic society, that is obligatory for every Muslim to fulfil his/her duties in this regard.[78] Even if the political relations of the Islamic governments with foreign countries cause Muslims' dependence, these kinds of relations will be unlawful and the contracts that have concluded on this basis are null and void.[79] Of course, this matter does not contradict the correct and proper use of their experiences, civilization, sciences and techniques because the Muslims are obliged to listen to each kind of speech and follow the best one as this is taught in the Qur'an (XXIX/18-19).

Providing the food necessities is one of the effective factors in physical growth and has a direct influence on production system and economical improvement in work output. Self sufficiency in the context of nourishment is one of the factors that bring about means of strengthening the people's independence. Lack of self sufficiency in the production of strategic crops such as agricultural and animal products are of important factors that ventures the real independence of countries and opens the way for the foreign powers' influence to reach covetings.[81]

Nutrition difficulties are naturally dependent on the production, distribution and consumption possibilities. The increase in the population has been known as a main factor in elevating the nutrition necessities. Studies of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) show that in the past five years about 70% of the increase in food necessities was caused by the increase in the population and some 30% of it caused by the increase in income.[82] Regarding the over-population in Iran the necessities of self sufficiency in nutrition is evident more than before. The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has propounded the necessity of self sufficiency decently. In order to achieve the aims of the Islamic Republic, removing each kind of deprivation on food and health and providing self sufficiency in every field are declared as the government's duty.[83] Moreover, providing the basic needs such as food health and emphasis on the increase in the agricultural and animal products so that the country may attain the stage of self sufficiency and be set free from dependence are figured as the standards of the Islamic Republic's economy and is emphasized seriously.

The other point that draws the attention in attaining self sufficiency is that the constitution obligates the government to extend the means of higher education as far as self sufficiency gratuitously, in order to provide the necessary manpower.[84]

Hoarding

Accumulation of public provisions and storing them to increase their price and sell them more expensively is unlawful and forbidden in the Islamic jurisprudence. The well-qualified jurist who can decide on the legal matters and supervise the affairs of Muslims in the area of the application of the Shari'a (*hakim al-shari'*) should offer them to the market and have them sold at a fair price in spite of the owner's will and desire.[85] The important point is that this socio-economic command is set up for the prohibition of disorder in public welfare. Then, since the reason for hoarding prohibition is the people's necessities, because of the generality of the mentioned cause of prohibition, it necessarily includes all materials, foods, clothes, houses and medicine.[87] This cause has been specified in the loftiest charter of the Islamic political system explicitly (Imam Ali's command to Malek Ashtar).[88] Also in other parts of this excellent charter, the hoarding prohibition, supervision of the Islamic government on pricing affairs so that to provide the buyers and sellers' profits, discretionary punishment (*ta'zir*) in the *hakim al-shar'is* decision and the necessity of observing the proportion of the punishment to the crime are also discussed.[89]

Eradicating Poverty

The eradication of poverty and privation by continuous combat against the factors that create them is on the epigraph of the Islamic teachings. In the Traditions, poverty and blasphemy have been declared in direct connection,[90] and recalled great death.[91] In these works the poor's hunger has a direct relation with the rich's fruition. No poor remains hungry unless it is because of the additional profit that the rich gain and

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never accumulate any blessing unless there is the masses' violated rights besides it.[92]

From this point of view, poverty is an antonym value. When God promises the paradise, He introduces it as a place free from hunger[93] and since recalls utopia, i.e. Mecca with priority and virtue and enumerates it as a place far from hunger and insecurity[94] and when it involves a place in trouble, it wears the clothes of starvation, fear and agitation.[95] Human virtues are severely theatened by poverty and hunger.[96]

Islam combats against every kind of oppression especially poverty and starvation, not merely with presenting moral and educational instructions or sermons but puts it on the top agenda of the Islamic states' programs. Imam Ali (*P.B.U.H.*) speaks of the value of a political leadership and the community administration in the intolerance of oppressors' oppressions and privation of the oppressed and construe the permanent struggle against oppression and starvation as the divine undertaking of the scholars and the intellectuals.[97] In performing this principle, Imam Ali had launched a revolutionary action in the most difficult political atmosphere and prevented the concentration of unlawful riches by returning the funds to the peoples' interests.[98]

Well management of the communities' economic affairs has also been considered as the nation's statuary right upon the Islamic states.[99] The Islamic Republic of Iran's constitutional law has also emphasised this principle and much noted the gratuitous education supplying the economical and material needs and the eradication of poverty.[100] Another basic point that is propounded as the duty and responsibility of the heads of the governments and the directors of an Islamic society is to support the oppressed and investigate the poor conditions.[101]

In the present world, which is still a world of oppression and despotism, the international development bank reports that in 1980 nearly one billion people (more than 25% of the world population) lived with pecuniary poverty.[102] In 1982, about 40 million alone died of hunger in the world.[103] Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) reports that most of the people of underdeveloped countries suffer from malnutrition. Most of these countries export their desirable foodstuffs and protein to provide the gluttonies of the rich and developed countries. Consequently, the rich countries' people, in addition to spending a very great share of the world crop for their nutrition and animals, waste an unbalanced quantity of the world foodstuffs. The food conditions in underdeveloped countries has not been improved since the Second World War and food shortages among the masses, the increase in population growth and slow increase of products in underdeveloped countries warn the world of a hunger crisis.[104]

We can learn from the Qur'an that God has created food and sustenance for all the world's creatures.[105] Thus the presence of starvation in the world and its threats are because of unjust distribution of world wealth and plundering of rights and the large amount of wealth of the captive nations. Despotism and poverty have a direct relation to each other as we read in Islamic revolution charter:

"Undoubtedly the world conquerors fear of our nations martyrdom and the other generous values much as they fear of the Islamic economy tendency and spirit that supports the indigents. Certainly the more our country moves to fight poverty and defend the deprived, the more the world conquerer's enmity toward us and the greater the tendency of world nations to Islam."[106]

Islam encounters the problem of poverty fundamentally and in confronting hunger, advises the believers to eradicate despotism and summons the Muslims to crusade for God, the oppressed, the poor children, women and men to save them from the evil of despotic rules.[107]

CONCLUSIONS

It can be seen from the present study that Islam has its own independent approach towards nutrition based on social and economical justice. Human beings have equal rights in using sufficient pure and lawful foods. The world oppressors and unjust distribution of public wealth have brought about hunger and poverty for many people in the world and are threatening the world with hunger. The basic responsibility of the Muslims is to eradicate such oppression and prepare the grounds for the just Islamic government in the world.

Explaining the views of Islam on this subject is necessary. It is suggested that an encyclopedia of the Islamic medicine and nutrition be compiled. This must merely be extracted from the holy Qur'an, authentic Traditions and Islamic original sources. Such an important task requires the collaborative research of the Muslim scholars and nutritionists.

GLOSSARY

ahl al-bayt «the People of the House». In Shi'i writings it includes the Prophet, Imam Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and nine other Imams from among the descendants of al-Husayn.

ayatollah literally, sign of God. A title used for senior Shi'ite clergyman mostly in Iran and Iraq.

fatwa (pl. fatawa) legal, judicial decision deduced by a

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mujtahid (faqih, jurist) after researching the sources of jurisprudence- the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the ijma'- exerting one's mental faculties to the utmost.

fuqaha' (pl. faqih) = rijal, ruwat «jurisconsult», «jurist».

figh «knowledge of religious law» in Islam. In the earlier period the term also included the speculative side of the faith in addition to jurisprudence, and was used in the sense of comprehending religious sciences through independent exercise of one's well-informed judgment.

hadith «tradition». Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and his ahl-al bayt. No tradition being accepted unless it could be traced back through named righteous persons to someone (also righteous) who had been present when it occurred originally. This chain of authorities is called the isnad of the hadith or sunna.

hakim al-shar' in Imamite jurisprudence, a title referring to the well-qualified Imamite jurist who can decide on legal matters and supervise the affairs of Muslims in the area of the application of the Shari'a.

haram prohibited, sinful. Thus whatever the Canon totally forbids, i.e. mortal sin; and forms the lowest of the five categories into which the Shari'a classifies actions, viz: (1) Wajib= obligatory (also fard= duty) (2) Mustahab= desirable (also mandub= meritorious or najl= supererogatory), (3) Mubah= indifferent (also murakhkhas= immaterial), (4) Makruh= reprehensible, (5) Haram= forbidden.

ijtihad independent reasoning. «a lawyer's exerting the faculties (of the mind) to the utmost for the purpose of forming an opinion in a case of law (respecting a doubtful and different point)». It is an independent estimation of the jurist in a legal or theological question based on interpretation and application of the authoritative sources of Islamic law: the Qur'an, the Sunna, and ijma'.

marja' al-taqlid (MT) the most learned juridical authority in the Imamite community. His rulings on the Shari'a are followed by those who acknowledge him as such, and commit themselves to base their religious practice in accordance with his fatwas (taqlid).

mujtahid (= faqih) a «jurist» who applies ijtihad (q.v.) to deduce laws.

rida'a suckling, fosterage.

risala in the Imamite context, a book of reference issued by marja' al-taqlid for the religious guidance of his muqallidun (followers). It consists of his legal rulings in all the sections of applied figh.

seyyed (S.) literally, lord, master; technically, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

shaikh (Sh.) religious leader (also sheikh and shayk).

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