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Nahj al-Balaghah for Children

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A small selection from the great collection of speeches, sermons, letters, and sayings of Imam Ali (a). Short passages with pictures.



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Nahj al-Balaghah
for Children

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Introduction

Welcome to the Nahj al-Balaghah, the world of Imam Ali, may peace be upon him.

Here is a small selection from the great collection of speeches, sermons, letters, and sayings of the Imam, next only to the Qur'an in its beauty.

This work, which is one of the masterpieces of Arabic prose is difficult to translate, especially for a children's book. Yet we have tried to select the simplest of its passages which can be useful for children. These small passages, together with the illustrations, are a small window into the great world of Imam Ali, peace be on him, who was the most perfect of human beings after the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household.

The creation



He made **the creation**

without any example and without the

advice of a counsel

or the assistance of a helper.

(Sermon 155)

The earth

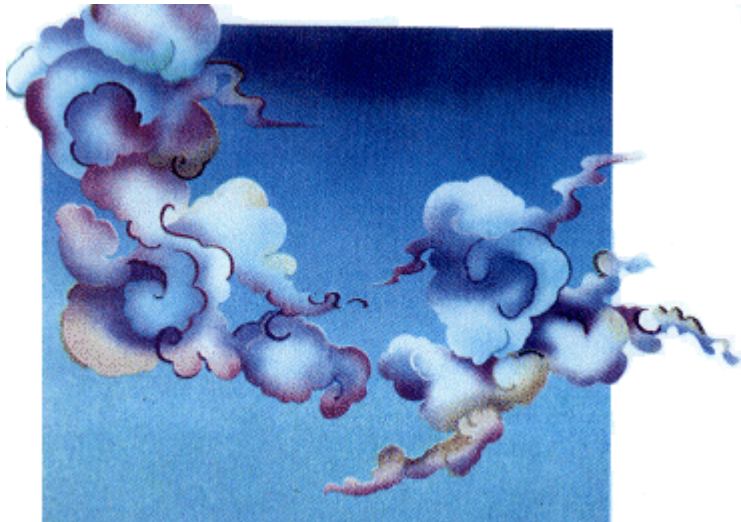


He created **the earth** and

suspended it,
retained it without support,
made it stand without legs,
and raised it without pillars.

(Sermon 185)

The winds



He brought out the creation
by His power
and made **the winds** blow
With His compassion.

(Sermon 1)

The moon



Then He decorated the heavens
with the stars and the light of the
meteors and set the shining sun and the
bright **moon** in an orbit that rolls around.
(Sermon 1)

The night



Praise be to Allah
when **the night** falls

and darkens,
and praise be to Allah
when the stars shine and set.
(Sermon 48)

The sun



Look at

the sun and the moon,
the plants and the trees,
the water and the stones,
at the alteration of day and night,
the gush of the oceans,
the great number of the mountains
and the height of their peaks,
at the difference of languages
and the variety of tongues.

(Sermon 185)

The Ant



Look at **the ant**

with its small body

and delicate form.

See how it crawls on the earth

and leaps at its livelihood.

It carries the grain to its hole

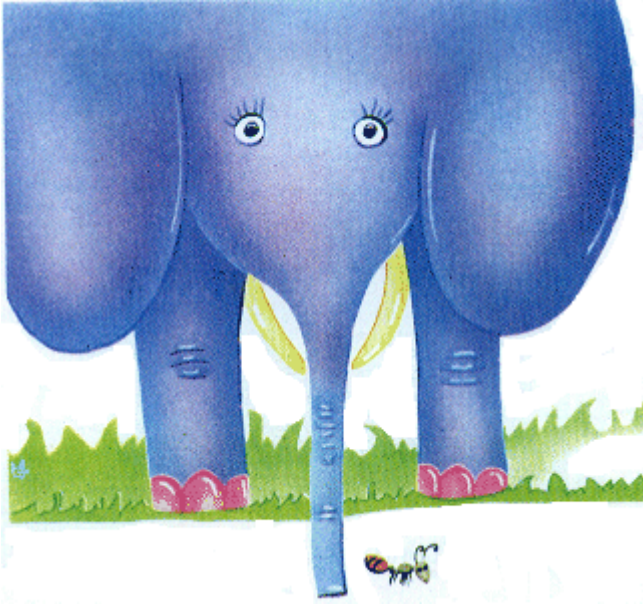
and stores it in its storage.

It collects during the summer for the winter,

and during strength for the period of its weakness.

(Sermon 185)

The Feet



Glorified is Allah

who has given **feet**

to the ant and the gnat,

and created those bigger than them,

the fishes and the elephants.

(Sermon 165)

The Locust



If you wish,

I will tell you about the locust.

Allah gave it two red eyes,
with pupils like two moons,
made its small ears,
opened for it a suitable mouth,
and gave it a keen sense.

He gave it two front teeth to cut with
and two sickle - like feet
to grip with.

(Sermon 185)

The Birds



The birds are subject to His
commands.

He knows the number of their feathers

and the count of their breaths.

He has made their feet stand on water

and on land.

He knows all their species.

There is the crow,

and the eagle,

the pigeon,

and the ostrich.

(Sermon 185)

The Peacock



The most amazing among them

is **the peacock** in its creation,

which Allah has created

in the finest harmony

and arranged its hues

in the best composition,
with wings well tacked together
and a long trailing tail.

(Sermon 165)

The Bat



An example of His delicate product,
a marvel of His creation,
and a sample of His profound wisdom,
is what we see in **the bat**,
which shrinks from the daylight,
although daylight moves everything else
to action,
and is active in the night,
although the night stops the activity
of every other living being.

(Sermon 155)

The Fishes



God is aware of the cries
of the beasts in the forests,
of the sins of the people in private,
of the movements of **the fishes**
in deep oceans,
and the uproar of the waters
by strong winds.

(Sermon 198)

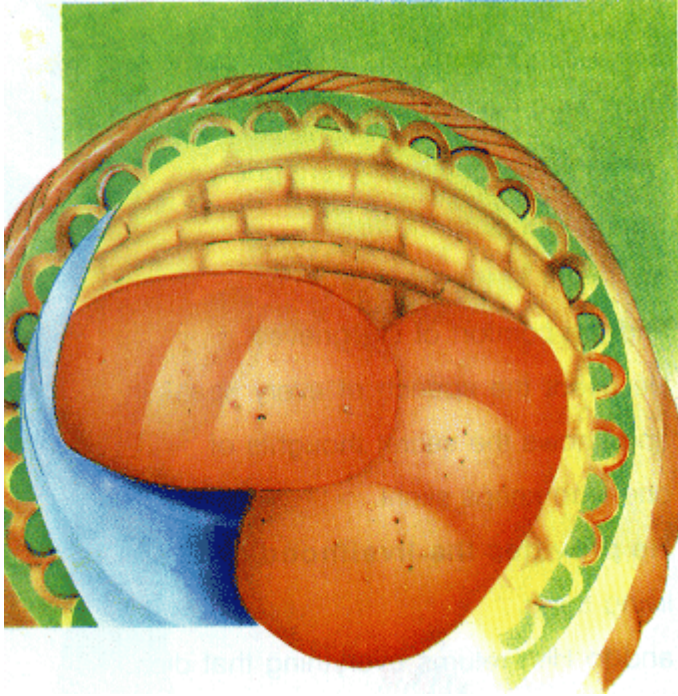
Livelihood



Every thing submits to Him,
and everything exists by Him.
He is the recourse of every poor,
the honour of the lowly,
the might of the weak,
and the comfort of the grieved.
He hears the speech of every speaker,
and knows the secret thoughts of
one who keeps silent.
He provides the **livelihood** of every living thing,
and to Him returns everything that dies.

(Sermon 109)

David



David

The receiver of the Psalms

and the reciter of the dwellers of paradise, used to make

baskets of palm leaves

with his own hands,

and he would say to his companions,

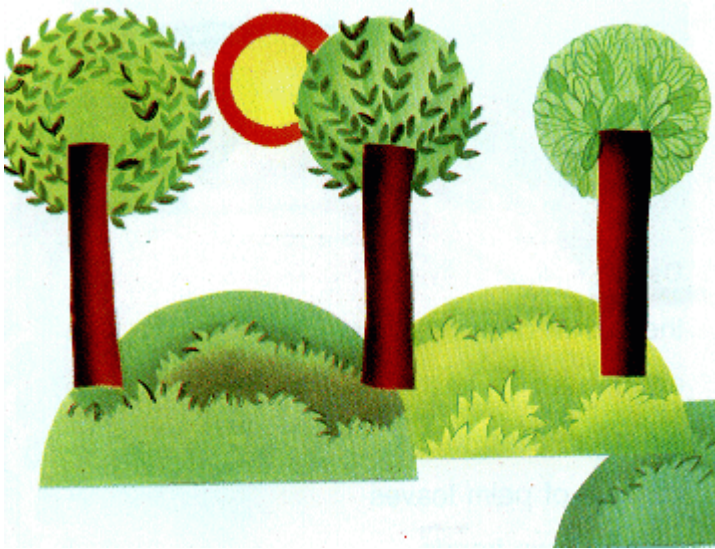
“Which of you will help me sell them?”

He ate bread made of barley

bought with that money.

(Sermon 160)

Herbs



Moses said:

“O my Lord, surely I have need of
whatever good you may send
down upon me.”

And by God,

he asked Him only for bread to eat,

because he used to eat **herbs**

of the earth

and the greenness of the herbs

could be seen

under the skin of his belly

due to his leanness!

(Sermon 160)

Winter



I will tell you about Jesus,

son of Mary.

he had a stone for his pillow,

wore coarse dress,

and ate rough food.

His lamp at night was the moon,

and the earth's vast expanse east and

west, his roof during **winter**.

His dessert and relish were

what grows on the earth for cattle.

His feet were his means of transport

and his two hands his servant.

(Sermon 160)

Good Tidings



Then Allah sent Muhammad, may God

Bless him and his Household,

as a witness,

a bearer of **good tidings**,

and a warner.

the best of the creation as a child,

and the most chaste amongst them

as a grown up,

the purest of the pure in conduct,

and the most generous of those

who are approached for their

generosity.

(Sermon 105)

The People of Arabia



Allah sent Muhammad, may Allah bless
him and his Household, as a warner for
all the worlds,

and as the trustee of His revelation,

while you, **the people of Arabia,**

followed the worst of creeds

and were the most ill placed.

You lived amongst harsh rocks

and venomous serpents.

You drank muddy water

and ate coarse food.

You shed each others blood

And broke the ties of kinship.

Idols stood amongst your midst

And sins held you in their bondage.

(Sermon 26)

Idols



Allah sent Muhammad (S.A.W.)
with truth
so that He may take out His people
from the worship of **idols**
towards His worship
and from obeying Satan
towards obeying Him.
(Sermon 145)

The Holy Prophet



Follow your **Prophet**, the best of the
good and purest of pure, may
God bless him and his Household.
He is the example for one to follow,
and comfort for one
who seeks happiness.

The most beloved of servants to God
is one who follows His Prophet
and walks in his footsteps.

He, may God bless him and his
Household,
would sit on the ground
when eating food,
and he would sit like a slave.

He would mend his shoes with his own
hands
and patched his clothes himself.

(Sermon 160)

The Revelation



When **the Revelation** descended on the

Prophet, may God bless him and his

Household, I heard a wailing cry.

I said: "O messenger of Allah,
what is this wailing?"

He replied,

"This is Satan, who has lost
all hope of being worshipped.

O Ali, you see what I see,
and you hear what I hear,
only that you are not a prophet.

But you are a minister
and on the path of virtue."

(Sermon 192)

The Stars



Behold!

The example of the Household of
Muhammad (S.A.W.)

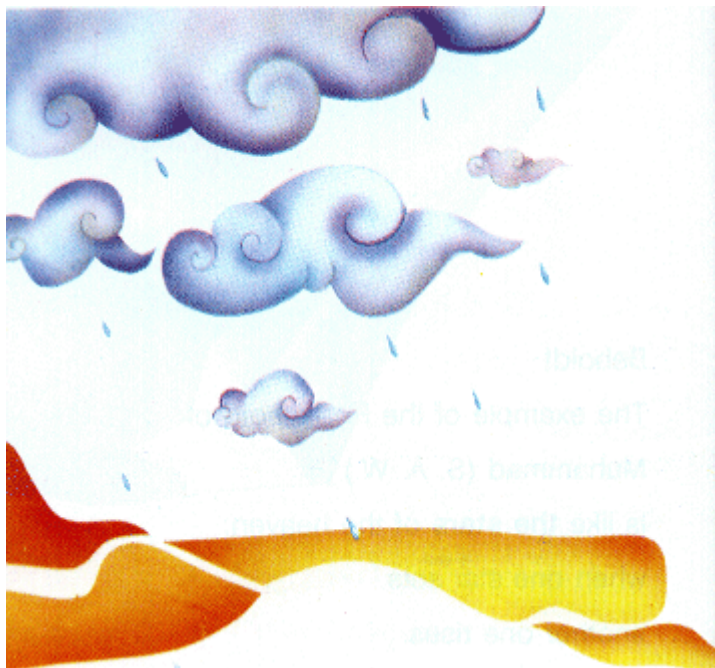
is like **the stars** of the heaven:

when one star sets

another one rises.

(Sermon 100)

The Rain



The riser has risen,
the sparkler has sparkled,
the appearer has appeared.
Allah has replaced
one people with another.
We awaited these changes
as the famine stricken await **the rain.**

Certainly the Imams are
the vicegerents of Allah
over his creatures,
and they make people know Allah.
No one will enter Paradise,
except he knows them
and they know him.....

(Sermon 150)

The Qur'an



Certainly **the Qur'an**
is wonderful in its outward form,
and its inner meanings
are profound.
(Sermon 18)

Leader



To them (the Household of the Prophet)
pertain the noblest of human virtues
described in the Qur'an,
and they are the treasures of the
Beneficent Allah.

When they speak, they speak the truth,
but when they keep quiet,
no one can out strip them.

The **leader** should speak truthfully to his people,
and put all his intelligence to work.

He should be one of those who work for
the next world,

because he has come from there
and would return to it.

(Sermon 154)

The Tree of Prophethood



We are **the tree of Prophethood**,

the place of descent

of Divine revelation,

the place of frequenting

of the angels,

and the mainsprings of knowledge.

Those who help us and love us

await (God's) mercy,

and those who regard us

with enmity and hatred

await to be subdued

(by the Almighty's power

and punishment).

(Sermon 109)

A Lamp in the Darkness

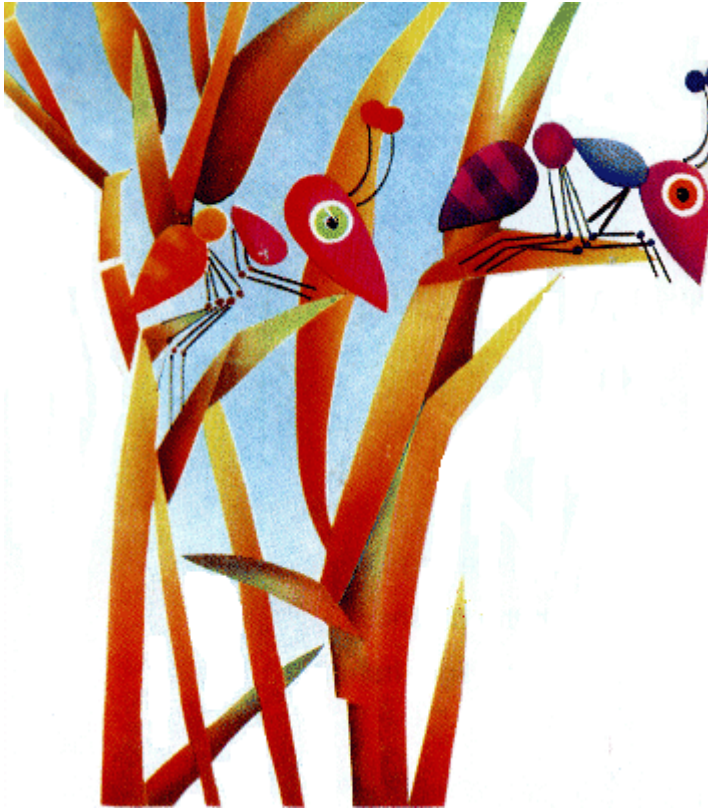


Amongst you, I am
like **a lamp in the darkness.**

Everyone making his way
through the darkness
have to get light from it.

(Sermon 187)

A Grain of Barley



By God,
were I given all the seven heavens
with all they contain
in order that
I may disobey God
by depriving an ant
from the husk of **a grain of barley**,
I would not do it.
(Sermon 224)

Two Loaves of Bread



You should know that
your Imam has settled for
two worn pieces of clothing
out of the (comforts of the) world,
and **two loaves of bread** for his meal.
(Letter 45)

Mosquito



The annihilation of the world

after bringing it into being
is no stranger than its
origination and creation.
How can it be so?
For even if all its living beings,
birds and beasts,
the animals of the stable and the
pasture,
all the genera and species of beings,
the dull and the intelligent of the world's
nations
-were all of them together try
to create a **mosquito**,
they will be incapable
of bringing it into being,
and will not know
how it has been created.
(Sermon 185)

Paradise



Today is the day of preparation
and Tomorrow is the day of the contest.
The finishing point is **Paradise**,
and those who fail to reach it will
land in hellfire.

(Sermon 28)

The Earth's Produce



Certainly, Allah makes His creatures suffer when they do evil works, by diminishing **the earth's produce**, by holding back the blessings, and by blocking the sources of benefit, so that those who wish to repent may repent...

(Sermon 143)

Water



You should know

that every action is the fruit of a tree.

A tree cannot go without **water**,
and water is of various kinds.

A tree that receives good **water**,
is healthy

and its fruit is sweet.

A tree that grows on bad **water**
is vicious, and its fruit bitter.

(Sermon 154)

With Insight



One who sees with his heart,
and acts **with insight**,
considers before doing anything
whether his action would
be to his benefit or harm.
If it is beneficial for him,
he performs it,
but if it is harmful,
he refrains from it.
(Sermon 154)

Off The Road



One who acts without knowledge
is like one who walks **off the road**.

Then his deviating from the clear path
takes him farther and farther away from
his destination.

But one who acts with knowledge
is like one who walks on the clear path.

Therefore, one should see
whether he is moving forward
towards his goal or going backwards.

(Sermon 154)

The Spring Of Hearts



Learn the Qur'an,
for it is the most splendid of all speech;
and become learned in it,
for it is **the spring of the hearts**.
Cure yourselves with its light,
for it is a remedy for sick hearts.
Recite it in the best manner,
for it is the fairest of accounts.
(Sermon 110)

Prayer



Commit yourselves to **prayer**

and be watchful over it.

Pray as much as you can

and seek nearness to God through it.

(Sermon 199)

The Sacred House



Allah has made obligatory upon you
the pilgrimage (Hajj)
to His **sacred house**,
which is the qiblah
for mankind.
(Sermon 1)

Jihad



Jihad

is one of the gateways of Paradise

which Allah has opened

for the elect among His friends.

(Sermon 27)

The Strongest



Remember that wood of the tree
which grows in the desert
has **the strongest** fibres,
while the luxuriant greenery
has the softest barks.

The bushes of the desert
make an enduring fuel,
Whose fire is slow in dying off.

(Letter 45)

Life



O God, send out for us Your rains,
Your bounty,
Your provision, and your mercy,
and give us water in a measure
that would benefit us, satiates our thirst,

and makes the land green with grass,
wherewith all that has withered may grow,
and come to **life** all that has died,
a rain which brings abundance,
produces plenty of fruits,
watering the plains,
flooding the valleys,
dressing the trees with foliage,
and bringing the prices down.

Surely You are able to do whatever

You will.

(Sermon 143)

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