Excerpts: The Imamat on moral courage and character

"Manly bravery’ is a general term embracing all other qualities."
Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Bravery is a resplendent honour, and cowardice a visible degradation."
Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"When things become clear, you realise that lying goes with cowardice, and truthfulness with courage, and ease with despair, and weariness with covetousness, and deprivation with greed, and humiliation with debt."
Hazrat Ali
The Sayings and Wisdom of Imam Ali, ed. S. F. Haeri, Muhummadi Trust of Great Britain & Northern Ireland, 1992

"The believer who is most perfect in iman is the one who has the best character."
Imam Muhammad al-Baqir
Early Shia Thought, IIS, pp 87

"The measure of a man depends on the scope of his resolution, and his sincerity depends on the degree of his chivalric virtues. His courage depends on the degree of honour he has, and his integrity is based on the degree of his sense of shame."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp ??
"Three classes of men are cut off from the benediction of heaven: the oppressors, those who aid and abet oppressors and those who tolerate oppression."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"When you meet a man oppressed, help him against the oppressor."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"By much silence, there comes to be awe. By justice, communications increase. By generosity, worth grows. By humility, blessings come about. By taking burdens upon oneself, one attains leadership. By just behaviour, enemies are overcome. By forbearance in face of a fool, helpers against him increase."

Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 42

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"Shun even the baseness that would bring you to your heart's desire."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Guard your self-respect from all baseness, though to do so exposes you to danger; you will never find an equivalence for wounded honour."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"It is a great virtue never to make in secret a plan that you would blush to disclose."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Be on your guard against committing an act, the knowledge of which would throw discredit on the doer, and degrade him."
Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"It wiser to abstain than to repent. | Not to commit faults counts for more than to do good."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Not to be in need of an excuse is more powerful than to be candid with an excuse."

Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 52

"Do no act of which the embarrassed author must make denial. | Worldwide glory can be undone by an hour's degradation."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Beware of treating anything as permissible without due knowledge."

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq
Usul al Kafi, Book 2, Chapter 11, Tradition 2

"By the way you conduct your daily lives, by the compassion you show to your fellow men and women, and above all by your faith in God, you will ultimately be judged."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1958 Takht Nashini (Enthronement) Ceremony (Mumbai, India)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1068/

"Beware of disobeying God when alone, for the witness is the Judge."

Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 98

"Do not hope for anything but God, and do not fear anything but your
“sin."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 70

“A man’s reflection is the mirror that shows him his good and bad deeds.”
Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

“The most serious misdeed is that which the perpetrator thinks insignificant.”
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 55

“Remember that enjoyments pass while consequences remain.”
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 64

“Asked about faith, Hazrat Ali said, ‘Faith is experience by the heart. avowal by the tongue. and action by the limbs.’”
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 85

“Allah dislikes a person who is idle.”
The Prophet (pbuh)
Africa Ismaili, December 1977

“A little bit at which you persevere is better than a lot at which you are bored.”
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 48

“The worth of an individual is what one does well.”
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 12
"Do not be one of those who hope for the Hereafter without work ..."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 25

"One who prays but does no work is as one who shoots without a bowstring."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 100

"The most gracious deed is the one you have to force yourself to do."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 44

"Doing good is easy to start with, and difficult to finish. It is as if it begins as a desire without any idea, and ends up as an idea without any desire. It is because of this that it has been said: 'Keeping up a good deed going is more difficult than getting it started.' ... The action is what is kept going, the one who keeps it going is the one who makes it progress."
Hazrat Ali

"Perfection in learning the real values of religion lies in seeking knowledge and acting according to it."
Hazrat Ali
Usul al Kafi, Book 2, Chapter 1, Tradition 4

"To give yourself up to nonchalance is to lay up regrets."
Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Everyone who is being overtaken by death asks for more time, while everyone who still has time makes excuses for procrastination."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 49
"An Ayat in the Qur'an says: 'Verily, God does not change man's condition unless they change that which is in themselves.' We must show greater faith in the ability of the individual to be creative."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1987 Keynote Address at the International Development Conference (Washington, D.C., USA)
http:/www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/3381/

"It is written in the Bible: 'Do not seek knowledge of what you do not know until you have acted on what you have already learnt, because knowledge which is not put into practice only enhances the disbelief of the knower and his remoteness from God.'"

Imam Zayn al-Abidin
Usul al Kafi, Book 2, Chapter 13, Tradition 4

"One who encourages anyone to attain righteousness will be rewarded as if he himself had acted on it."

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq
Usul al Kafi, Book 2, Chapter 4, Tradition 3

"One of the finest of a liberal man’s gestures is not to take advantage of what he knows of others."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Among the noblest deeds of the generous man is his ignoring of what he knows."

Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 41

"Hasten not punish a man for a fault committed but leave room for pardon between the two acts."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali
"Keep commitments in all their integrity."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 29

"If there should be a reconciliation come between your enemy and yourself, and you pledge your word thereto, honour your obligation, obedient to the vice of your conscience."
Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Do not make your knowledge into ignorance and your certainty into doubt. When you know, act; and when you are certain, proceed."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 47

"Better be dumb than lie. | Whoever gets a reputation for lying, sees men's confidence in him dwindle. | Avoid a liar."
Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Everything must be according to reason and reason itself must be polite."
Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Do not think of anyone's statement as evil if you can find it capable of bearing good."
Hazrat Ali
Living and Dying with Grace, Counsels of Hadrat Ali, Thomas Cleary, pp 57

"[My grandfather] believed, as I do, that the correct interpretation of our office, and of the faith which guides it, is that man must not shy away from the material endeavour in the name of his faith. On the contrary, he must be enterprising, contributing of his best to his family and the society in which he lives, so long as the content of his endeavour is within the terms of our social and moral conscience and so long as the objectives of the enterprise are equally acceptable. In simple terms, the question is less
one of whether a man is successful in business or in his profession than of the way in which he is achieving success and the purposes for which his achievements are utilised.”

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1983 Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce Luncheon address (New Dehli, India)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/2707/

"Return not evil for good; for that is to obstruct benevolence."

Hazrat Ali
Maxims of Ali

"Do not enter the fold of harsh tempered scholars; otherwise your good deeds will be washed away by your evil acts."

Imam Jafar al-Sadiq
Usul al Kafi, Book 2, Chapter 5, Tradition 1

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