



**A Treasury of Virtues: Sayings, Sermons, and
Teachings of Ali, with the One Hundred Proverbs,
attributed to al-Jahiz (Library of Arabic
Literature)**

al-Qadi al-Qudai

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A Treasury of Virtues is a collection of sayings, sermons, and teachings attributed to ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 40H/661AD), cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, first Shi’a Imam and fourth Sunni Caliph. ‘Ali was an acknowledged master of Arabic eloquence and a renowned sage of Islamic wisdom. Through proverbs and aphorisms, sermons and speeches, prayers and supplications, epistles and contracts, testimonials and homilies, verse and dialogues, it provides instruction on how to be a decent human being. And it combines these ethical teachings with religious exhortations and preparation for eternal life in the hereafter. Moreover, the lessons of the text are clothed in the cadenced parallelisms of a consummate oral culture, and the vivid metaphors of the Arabian desert. Appealing to the addressee’s higher nature, they also beguile his aesthetic sensibilities, integrating art and edification in an exquisite package of verbal ingenuity.

Of the many compilations of ‘Ali’s words, *A Treasury of Virtues* arguably possesses the broadest compass of genres, and the largest variety of themes. The shorter One Hundred Proverbs is also a compilation of ‘Ali’s words. Attributed to al-Jahiz (“the father of Arabic prose”), it has a celebrity status in its own category and its pithy one-liners are quotable quotes of the finest order. This volume presents the first English translation of both these important texts, with a new critical edition based on several original manuscripts.

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