

Essence of the Holy Qur'an: The Eternal Light

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Mirza Mahdi Pooya

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The purpose of this book is to demonstrate, through Qur'anic analysis, that the sublime attribute of Allah (SwT) is the act of creation. Using various verses, it is illustrated that the best of Allah's creation are His prophets, whom He endowed with His eternal light. This light is transmitted through the messengers, from Adam to Muhammad, and eventually to the guardians of the final message, the Ahlul Bayt. The author aims to show that through this transference, the initial cause behind creation manifests as the most perfect effect, thus completing the cycle of life.

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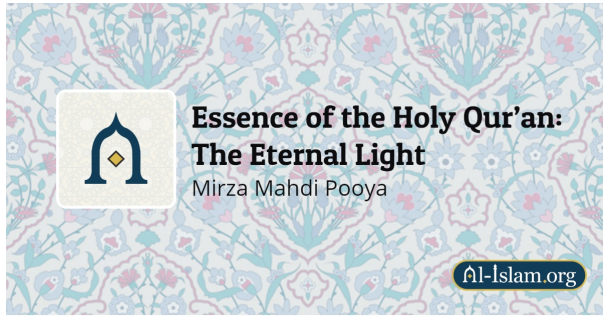
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Foreword

In the Name of Allah the All Merciful, the All Compassionate

Thanks to the untiring and unmitigated efforts of Mr. Syed Muhammad Murtadha, my late father Agha Mirza Mahdi Pooya's essence of his life and works, *Essence of the Holy Qur'an*, is seeing the light of day. He penned his last sentence on a Friday, he confided to the late Allama Rasheed Turabi, his closest disciple, now he was ready to leave this mortal world, and on the following Tuesday, July 17, 1973, he passed away into eternity.

Since that day Syed Muhammad Murtadha made it his mission to get this work published and has given more to pleasing my late father's soul than I have and actually deserves to do the forward and introduction himself. His humility has encouraged him to bestow this honour on myself and my brother Mirza Ali Pooya. Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) be praised for finally making it possible for us to see this happy day.

Agha Mirza Mahdi Pooya's journey through life was charted and coursed by a burning zeal to acquire knowledge and be blessed with piety, and hence was acquiring the surname Pooya, the seeker of truth and knowledge. These two values he cherished and bequeathed to all those who came in contact with him. To these he added justice and completed the triangle. This was to be the greatest gift he received from his unassailable faith in *Tawheed* (Unity), in Allah and His Last Prophet, peace be upon him, and his pristine progeny which make up the 14 purified paragons of piety, knowledge, and justice.

Agha Pooya's firm belief was Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala's* most sublime attribute is creation and the most sublime of his creation is Prophet Muhammad, whose sublimity lies in the Qur'an, whose sublimity lies in faith (*Iman*), whose sublimity lies in piety (*Taqwa*), whose sublimity lies in *Jihad*, whose sublimity lies in *Shahadat* (martyrdom), whose sublimity is Hussain. Hussain's *mi'raj* (sublimity) lies in his unquestioned and unimpeachable *ittabe'e Muhammad* (obedience to the Holy Prophet, peace be upon

him).

Throughout the book, the reader will find this thread running in which Muhammad and Al-e Muhammad are the first cause of creation and the pinnacle of perfect effect, completing the cycle of life. *“Allah humma akyani hayata Muhammad wa Al-e Muhammad wa ametni mamaata Muhammad wa Al-e Muhammad”* was the prayer which bore him through life and when under stress, he would lean on what he considered the talisman *virid* par excellence and effect: *Ya Fatimato bint-e Muhammad adrakni.*

May Allah grant his soul eternal peace and shower the same on all those who stood by him throughout his life and made this work possible, especially my mother. May Allah grant abiding peace and tranquility (*sakeenah*) to all those who follow the path of Muhammad wa Al-e Muhammad.

Agha Murtadha Pooya

Introduction

There are pages, sentences, sayings, phrases, words, and letters, all true, which radiate the light of the Qur’an. *The Essence of the Holy Qur’an*, by Ayatullah Pooya, is one of them! The Qur’anic simile of “light” furnishes a source to secure peace and felicity in this world and the hereafter and stimulates the heart and mind to achieve it.

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is, as it were, a shining star. (This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire, touches it. Light upon Light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He will. And Allah speaks of humankind in allegories, for Allah is Knower of all things. (This lamp is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and His name shall be remembered therein. Therein do offer praise to Him at morn and evening.” (24:35 – 36)

This “eternal Light” has been transmitted through His messengers from Adam to the Last Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his household,

“so there may not remain any argument for people against Allah.” (4:65)

The inseparable chain of Light passed from the Holy Prophet to Ali, the first Imam (the divine leader), and his 11 descendants as Imams, and their mother Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, of whom he declared, *“al-Fatimatu-bidh’tu mini”* (Fatima is a piece of my flesh and blood, i.e., personality). They are all infallibles (*Ma’soom*) as conferred by the Qur’an (33:33), and a permanent proof of *Tawheed Nabuwat*, and the continuity of *Imamate* until the Day of Resurrection.

It exists as the inner reality of the Prophet (*Haqiqat-e Muhammadia*), and all the signs of Allah exist in it. The Qur'an warns the believers, ***“even if they desire, they could not extinguish the Light.”*** Allah ***“will perfect it.”*** (41:8). This is the overall view of Islam.

The portrait of the late Agha Pooya (may Allah bless him) appears among ***“those (who possessing minds) remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining on their sides and think (seriously) on the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying, ‘Oh our Lord, You have not created all this in vain! Glory be to You. Save us then from the (hell) fire.’”*** (3:191). It is an inimitable description of a person who remember Allah with all sincerity and humbleness.

Agha Pooya was born in Yazd (Iran) in the year 1317 A.H. (1899 A.D.) and his chapter of ephemeral life closed in Karachi on Jamadi al-Thani 17, 1393 (July 17, 1973).

This venerable religious scholar during his studies of Islamic sciences under the patronage of his father, the saintly scholar Agha Mirza Muhammad Hassan of Yazd, and the special guidance of the eminent religious authority Agha Mirza Muhammad Hussain al-Naini, was able to develop his talents and comprehend the Qur'anic verses.

The political upheavals, with intervals, in Iran and Iraq, led the author to migrate to India in 1925. He settled down in Madras and Bangalore, and had the opportunity to study modern thought directly in English and evaluated the conflicting intellectual trends of the east and the west.

His illuminating metaphysical notes of exoteric and esoteric nature on the verses of the Qur'an, a guide to the seeker of truth, have been incorporated by Mir Ahmad Ali in His English translation of the Holy Book.

His scholarly exposition of the universal Islam left indelible marks on people of every caste and creed, from Christian missionaries to Hindus, Zoroastrians, Muslims of all schools, on theists and atheists alike.

As editor I have made a sincere effort to bring out the book which is consistent with the intention of its esteemed author. Mr. Hussain Taylor, who reviewed this volume, earns respect for his linguistic observations and sound approach to Islamic ideology.

The profound interest taken by Agha Murtadha Pooya and Agha Ali Pooya, sons of the late Agha Pooya, manifests a mark of nobility which they have inherited from their parents.

Thanks are due to all those friends who participated in the publication of the work.

Syed Muhammad Murtadha

Appendices to Chapter 1

Appendices From: **Genuineness of the Holy Qur'an (Printed July 1974)**

Appendix 1: An Answer

After the publication of the author's first treatise on the genuineness of the Holy Qur'an as a part of the introduction to the translation of the Qur'an by Mir Ahmad Ali, he received letters and articles against the genuineness of the arrangement of the Qur'an (on hand). He, therefore, considers it imperative to refer to the arguments advanced against the arrangement of the Qur'an and to add a few lines to what we have already said. The main arguments forwarded in the aforesaid articles and letters with our replies are as follows:

1. The Qur'an was not collected and arranged during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. We have proved beyond doubt, the allegation is entirely unfounded and it was made and publicized for political reasons.
2. Imam Ali's collection produced after the Holy Prophet and its arrangement was date wise. It has been proven this allegation is also not correct. The text and its revealed commentary were put into writing by Imam Ali as it had been dictated to him by the Holy Prophet then and there; so the text and its arrangement was the same as the one which is in our hand. The difference between him and his opponents was on the question of interpretation as declared by him and his followers in public repeatedly. The Qur'an which Ali brought to the mosque during the reign of the first caliph also contained commentary which was not acceptable to the ruling party. So Ali took back his collection and afterwards nobody had the chance to see it except the successive Imams of his House. As has already been pointed out, there is no single reliable tradition from the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* to show the arrangement of his collection was different. All that is said in this connection is mere conjecture.
3. Some of the traditions assert the deviations made by the followers of the previous Prophets including tampering with their scriptures were repeated by Muslims. We have explained that traditions of this nature do not mean the repetition of those deviations in the same form. It is true that such misdeeds have been repeated in Islam in spirit but in different forms. For example, the followers of Moses worshipped the golden calf during the absence of Moses. Such a misdeed apparently did not take place in Islam. But a student of Islamic history will realize the same rebellious spirit manifested itself after the demise of the Holy Prophet when the question of obedience to *Hujat* (supreme authority) arose. Mischievous hands had tampered with the text of pre-Qur'anic scriptures, but in the case of the Qur'an the text could not be tampered with due to its wide popularity. So effort was made to tamper with its interpretation.
4. The other argument forwarded by the protagonists of this view is that in the present Qur'an the Madni

and Makki *surahs* (chapters) are not arranged chronologically. The same is the case with some verses, i.e. some verses of Makki *surahs* are in Madni *surahs* and vice versa, and some abrogating passages have preceded the abrogated passages. There is no argument whatsoever to justify the arrangement of the Qur'an should be date wise according to the date of its gradual revelation. On the contrary, it has been proven that the gradual revelation means nothing but piecemeal recitation and quotations from the book which had already been revealed in its entirety to the heart of the Holy Prophet on the esteemed night in the month of Ramadan.

Importance is attached to the date of Makki or Madni *surahs* or passages only by those who have failed to take into consideration the revelation of the Qur'an as a whole mentioned before, and its arrangement in the stages of gradual revelation. Secondly, there is no such abrogated passage. Moreover, there is no argument to prove the recitation should be in accordance with the order of abrogated and abrogating passages. For recitational purposes and memorizing the Holy Qur'an by everyone, the rhythmical and other factors are taken into consideration.

5. The main argument advanced by the advocates of this view is the supposed non-appropriateness of the present position of certain passages of the Qur'an. This made them to evolve the idea of disarrangement of the Holy Book by mischievous hands. A few examples of such passages (according to them) are given below to warn the students of the Qur'an not to try to cover their inadequacy by discrediting the words of God which He has promised to protect forever.

(a) 2:142, regarding the change of the *Qibla*. According to them, this verse should have been placed after 2:144 because of the objection of the simple-minded people in which the reason for the change of the *Qibla* should have come after the passage which declares the new direction to which one should turn in prayers as the *Qibla*. This argument proves nothing but lack of proper study of the Qur'an by the critics. The old direction towards which the Muslims used to turn in their prayers as the *Qibla* was abolished in verse 115 of the same chapter which announces, "*God is the east and west, therefore, to any direction you turn, that direction will be God's.*"

This was enough to give room to the simple-minded people to ask as to what made the Muslims give that particular direction towards which they used to turn in their prayers. This question had nothing to do with the fixation of the new direction which comes after verse 142. Therefore, the arrangement of the passages beginning with verse 106 about the abrogation of one sign of God by another sign up to verse 150 with which the question of abrogation of the old *Qibla* reaches its completion is entirely logical and systematic. Every passage has been placed appropriately in its present position. If a person fails to understand, he should blame his own short-comings and not the arrangement of the Qur'an.

(b) In the same chapter 2:234 deals with the requisite period of *iddah*, (i.e. four months and then days). It means a woman, after the death of her husband, should not remarry before the expiry of the said period (four months and ten days). It is said this verse abrogates 5:240 which is a directive either to the husband before his death or to the heirs to fix for a year some monetary allowance for a widow and

allow her to continue residing in the same house of her husband for the same period, if she likes to do so. A proper study of the two verses proves beyond doubt there is no conflict between the two passages to establish abrogation of one by the other. Verse 234 is a directive to the widow to observe *iddah* for four months and ten days after the demise of her husband.

Verse 240 is a recommendation addressed to the husband, before death, or to the heirs to finance the widow and allow her to continue to stay in the same residential house of the deceased husband, for a year if she likes. One passage enjoins on her not to marry a person for a particular period and the other passage recommends other relevant people about her stay at the place with the provision of her maintenance during the period of stay. There is no conflict between the two passages at all. On the contrary, verse 240 indicates the heirs can ask the widow to vacate the place after a year. This supports the Shia school of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) in which the widow does not inherit the land of the residential house of her husband, and this restricts the directive given in 4:12 which shows she should have no share in the residential land left by the husband.

She may be entitled to its value but not to the land itself, otherwise the heirs would have no right to ask her to vacate the house after one year because she has a share in the property. Therefore, instead of holding the passages in question as contradictory to each other, 2:240 should be considered to be still in force restricting the above-mentioned passage of chapter 4 concerning the share of a widow in the property of her husband in the sense she is not entitled to the residential land.

(c) In chapter five concerning the celebrated passage of verse three, '*al-yauma akmaltu lakum deenkum*' (This day have I perfected your religion for you), it is said it is not in its proper place. It should have come after verse 67 '*Ya ayaharrasool baliq*' (Oh Our Apostle (Muhammad) deliver you what has been sent down unto you from your Lord). The critics thought the completion of religion depends on the delivery of the last message. He thought the religion is completed when its last vital issue is delivered to humankind and ignored the fact the delivery of this message to humankind is a stage which comes after its being completed fully by God. A religion is completed when its vital and final issue is decided by God, not when the message about the vital issue is delivered to humankind. The completion of religion depends on Divine decision and decree which should precede its delivery or announcement.

This is supported by the reports from the Imams (*Ahl al-Bayt*) which show the passage dealing with the "completion of the message" was revealed when the Holy Prophet was still in Mina or 'Arafat and the passage, ordering the Holy Prophet to announce the "completion" was revealed after the Holy Prophet left Mecca for Medina (ref *Tafsi-Safi*). It should be borne in mind the phrase *al-yaum* (today) or the "day" used twice in verse three and once in verse five of the same chapter does not refer to a particular day of 24 hours of our calendar. It also does not refer either to the day when one passage was revealed at Mina or the day when the other was revealed at *Ghadir*, on 18th Dhil Hijah, because the contents of these two verses had been revealed on various occasions long before the day of the last pilgrimage of the Holy Prophet.

Therefore the phrase *al-yaum* should be interpreted to mean one of *ayamullah* (God's day which means various periods or stages of development of evolution in the realm of creation, divine administration and legislation. Accordingly in the hierarchy of the arc of ascent, the stage at which the divine decision concerning the vital and final issue of Islam was revealed to the last Prophet, i.e. the Prophet of Islam, should be called the "day," *al-yaum*, because the divine decision concerning this issue means the finality of all previous issues. Without decision of the final issue, no issue can be considered as settled. So *al-yaum* refers to the last stage in the arc of ascent where the question of *wilayat* (divine leadership) is settled.

Another objection of the critics regarding the passages in verse three is it has come between the passages of the verse which deals with the various kinds of prohibited foods such as carrion, blood, pork, etc. At the end of this verse after the passage of "completion" the Qur'an allows one, in unavoidable circumstances, to use the prohibited food to the minimum extent possible. According to the critics, the passage of completion is irrelevant between the passages before and after, in the verse. The critics ignore the super-rhetorical hint which makes the passage of completion quite relevant to the passages mentioned before and after it. It shows nobody can disregard the vital issue of religion, i.e. the question of Imamate and follow the lead given by others except in unavoidable circumstances, in the same manner that one is not allowed to eat the prohibited food except in unavoidable circumstances. In short the Qur'an has placed obedience to undeserving leaders in the same line as that of prohibited food.

(d) 33:33 known as *Ayat-i-Tat'hir* has been placed between the passages which contain warnings to the wives of the Holy Prophet. This made some commentators to include the wives also in the term of *Ahl al-Bayt* used in the passage. Thus the critics thought this particular passage has been mischievously shifted from another place. But both the commentators and the critics ignore the divine purpose of placing this parenthetical sentence between the passages of warning to the Prophet's wives. All the pronouns used in the passages pertaining to the wives are in plural of feminine gender, but the pronouns in this parenthetical sentence are plural, masculine gender. Moreover, the structure of the sentence with the particular particle, *Inama* denoting exclusiveness and use of the objective phrase *Ankum* governed by the preposition '*Ana* before the phrase *al-rijis*, which is also in the objective case governed by the verb *Yuzhiba*, denote inclusion of the *Ahl al-Bayt* exclusively as the object of divine intention for purification.

Thus the structure of the sentence shows, beyond doubt, (i) some males are included which justifies the use of the masculine gender, (ii) the object of divine will is a particular person exclusive of all other people, so this will and intention cannot be considered legislative which is general including all, it must be creative ones, (iii) of the wives of the Holy Prophet some were subject to reproach, and some though they were good yet there were people better than them among the female believers (vide 46:5), but there can be none better than the members included in *Ayat-i-Tat'hir* mentioned above. Having all these considerations in view, the inclusion of wives in this passage becomes impossible. Therefore, the

justification of bringing this parenthetical sentence between the passages concerning wives was further warning to them to have the idea of being included in the passage.

Thus the appropriateness of the position of the passage here is very clear. This is supported by the report indicating the place and manner in which the Holy Prophet announced the inclusion of particular people. According to what Muslim (Book of Traditions) has recorded in his *Sahih* when the passage was revealed the Holy Prophet was in the room of 'Ayesha. The Holy Prophet asked for a sheet and ordered Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussain to join him inside the sheet and said, "Oh my Lord, these are my *Ahl al-Bayt*." According to 'Ayesha the Holy Prophet excluded her and did not allow her to join them, though the occasion took place in her room. According to some other reports the event took place in the house of Umm Salamah, and when Umm Salamah asked the Holy Prophet if she could get under the sheet, he said, "Although you are a good lady, yet these are the only members, my *Ahl al-Bayt*."

However, whether he was in the house of 'Ayesha or Umm Salamah or the incident was repeated at both places, the inclusion of Ali, Fatimah, Hassan and Husain under the sheet in question and the exclusion of the wives is in accordance with the exclusive nature of the parenthetical sentence between these passages. The passage is like a gem studded in a ring. The ring cannot be included in the gem, and the gem is not like the ring. In support of this, there is a report from the fifth Imam Muhammad al-Baqir in which the position of this passage among the passages concerning the wives has many indications (vide Safi).

(e) It is said the celebrated passage in 42:23 known as *Ayat-i-Mawadat al-Qurba* is not in its proper place. The chapter was revealed in Mecca most probably even before the birth of Fatima though the Sunni and Shia traditions assert the term *Qurba* (nearness) here has been applied to the same people to whom *Ayat-i-Tat'hir* (33:33) and *Ayat-i-Mubahala* (3:61) have been applied, i.e. Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussain, who were the closest to the Holy Prophet in respect of spirit and blood relationship, and many a time the Holy prophet declared they were identified with him and he was identified with them. The antagonist of the *Ahl al-Bayt* rejected the traditions on the plea that it is a fabrication of the pro-*Ahl al-Bayt* group. But both the critics and antagonists are lacking a proper appreciation of the significance and application of the passage in question in the light of the other passages and verses of the Qur'an.

Granted the revelation of the whole *surah* including this passage at Mecca was before the birth of Fatima, Hassan, and Hussain, yet nobody can deny the *surah* and the passage were revealed after 26:214 ("and warn the nearest of kin"). This was revealed in connection with the invitation of the kin by the Holy Prophet to help him in his divine mission. On this occasion none of the relatives or kin responded and accepted his offer but Ali. It proves him and none else, then, was the nearest person to the Holy Prophet in respect of both the spirit and blood relationship. So even if it is granted that all the members of the House of the Holy Prophet were not born and present at the time of revelation of 42:23, there is no doubt, Ali was there. It would be enough for the appropriateness of revelation and application, if one of the members like Ali was present.

The application of the verse to other members of the same status who would be born later on would be quite natural, as a corollary. The traditions whether narrated by Sunni or Shi'ah traditionists show nothing more than quoting of this verse by the Holy Prophet in the case of Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussain repeatedly to confirm the significance of the verse and the extent of its applicability to the people of a particular status, i.e. those who enjoy nearness to the Holy Prophet in spirit and relationship, who are near to or rather identical with him in purity of spirit, birth and conduct. It includes not only the above-mentioned four people but the successive Imams of the "House" too. It excludes those whose nearness to the Holy Prophet was due to mere blood relationship but who were lacking in high degree of faith and purity of conduct. Next to those purified people it also includes those who have the honour of complete attachment in spirit, faith, and conduct to those above-mentioned "purified personalities" like Salman.

However, deliberate effort has been made to make this verse vague And its application doubtful by the anti-*Ahl al-Bayt* group to deny the appropriateness of its position in the Makki chapter.

It is not out of place to refer to various interpretations of this verse by the antagonists.

(i) The verse does not mean the Holy Prophet should ask any reward towards the delivery of the divine message to humankind. They say the exceptional phrase "*except the love for the sake of nearness*" may mean no expectation of any reward made to preach to you (addressing his Qurayshite relatives) except my love of you for the sake of your relationship to me.

(ii) It may mean "I do not ask for any reward from you save you should love each other for the sake of the relationship.

These two interpretations have one point in common: the Holy Prophet does not ask any reward. In the former it shows the motive of preaching is the love of his relatives, and the latter the motive is to make us love each other for the sake of the relationship. Both interpretations limit his motive of preaching in which he is either concerned with his relatives and no one else or only admonishes people to love each other for the sake of relationship, ignoring all other important teachings of Islam. Moreover, both interpretations are against 34:47: *Say, "Oh Prophet! The reward which I have asked you is in your interest."* The verse asserts the Holy Prophet was ordered to ask for some reward, but the reward in question, is consequently in the interest of those from whom he is order to ask for it. It is obvious the Holy Prophet's mission was not confined to things which would be benefitting the Quraysh, his relatives, because he was *Rahmatan lil-'Alameen* (universal grace). Nor was the mission confined to making relatives love each other.

The purpose of his mission and the extent of his teachings were to enable a person to attain the highest stage of nearness to the Absolute, and to be away from the deeds which drag one to hell.

(iii) The third interpretation of the verse by the antagonists is the Holy Prophet was ordered by God to ask his opponent relatives (the Quraysh) to love him because of his being related to them and not to

give him trouble. This interpretation means the Holy Prophet was ordered to ask the unbelievers for reciprocal love. This is quite against the specific declaration 58:22 in which no reciprocal love should exist between the believers and non-believers, particularly those who oppose God and His Apostle even if they are close relatives.

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ ۗ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِنْهُ ۗ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۗ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝ 22

“You shall find not a people who believe in God and the hereafter befriending those who oppose God and His Apostle, be they even their own fathers, or their sons, or their own brothers, or their kinsmen. They are those God has inscribed faith in their hearts and has strengthened them with a spirit from Himself, and He will admit them into gardens beneath which flow rivers, they shall abide therein, with God well-pleased with them, and they will be well-pleased with God. They are the party of God. Be it known, verily the party of God alone shall be the successful ones.” (58:22)

That being so how could it be possible for the Holy Prophet to request his antagonists to love him for the sake of relationship? According to 19:96, the reciprocal love is bestowed by God } on those who believe and practice righteousness and not between the believers and non-believers.

{إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا ۝ 96}

“Verily those who believe and work good deeds, the Beneficent (God) will appoint love for them.” (19:96)

(iv) The fourth interpretation refers to what is adhered to by all the pro-*Ahl al-Bayt* commentators whether of the Sunni or Shi‘ah school and supported by several traditionists. The verse means the Holy Prophet was ordered by God not to ask any reward except *Mawadat* (Love) for certain people for the sake of their nearness to him. This nearness cannot be mere blood relationship or nearness in spirit regardless of blood relationship, because certain people who were related to him were declared as the members of his House free from inward and outward uncleanness and purified to the utmost extent of “purification.” Thus these people enjoy both nearness in spirit and blood relationship. This interpretation is further defined and clarified in 34:47 which says the reward asked for was in the interest of those from whom the reward was asked for in 25:57. The Qur’an asserts the reward in question was asked not from every person but only from those who intended to adopt a way towards their Lord.

{قُلْ مَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ ۗ إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ۝ 47}

“Say you, ‘Whatever recompense I have asked for you, it is only for yourselves. My recompense is (to be expected) from God (alone) and He is witness over all things.’” (34:47)

{قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا} 57

“Say you (Our Apostle Muhammad), ‘I ask you not aught of any recompense (for my ministry) save he who will take the way unto his Lord.’” (25:57)

This means those who intend to approach God in spirit should love those who enjoy nearness to the Holy Prophet in spirit and blood relationship. The true love for those people is the sole means for approaching God. If all the passages given above are taken into consideration there will not be the slightest doubt in which the word *Qurba* in the exceptional sentence *Ilal Muwadat fe-Qurba* (i.e. *Save love for the sake of nearness*) is the only means to help one to approach God is not applicable to anyone but the members of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the purified Imams of the House, the Queen of Paradise Fatima, and next to them to those who are attached to them in soul and spirit. There is thus no room for the other three interpretations.

6. The challenging verse of the Qur’an wherein those who doubt about the Qur’an being the word of God are required to bring the like to it.

In 11:3–4, 10:37–38, the Qur’an challenges the sceptics and disbelievers to produce the like of one of its chapters. This is the minimum they are asked to produce because the smallest chapter of the Qur’an, chapter 108, *al-Kauthar*, contains only three very short verses. In 11:13, the sceptics and disbelievers were asked to bring ten chapters like it. In 17:88, and *jinn*s and *ins* (jinn and human beings) were challenged to join together to produce something resembling the Qur’an. In 2:23–24, the challenge is they should produce something like the Qur’an. According to the critics the passages differ from each other. In some chapters like two and ten, the challenge is made for one whole *surah*. In chapter 11 the challenge is made of ten *surahs*. In chapters 17 and 52 the challenge is about the Qur’an as a whole.

So they criticize that according to the present arrangement in the beginning the challenge was made in respect of one *surah* and when the sceptics and disbelievers tried to answer that challenge the number was increased to ten, and when they showed readiness to answer that also, then the challenge extended to the whole book, and this shows the “Author” was not firm in His challenge. The argument against the Qur’an was evolved by the opponents of Islam and the early writers of the pseudo-religions of modern times. It will be surprising if any Shia or Sunni theologian falls into the trap of this fallacy. There is not the slightest doubt in which chapter two of the Qur’an is the latest chapter among the chapters containing the above-mentioned challenging verse and therein the challenge is for one *surah* and nothing more.

This shows the “Author” (God) has always been sure of His stand and no one would ever succeed in

producing the like of even the smallest chapter of the Qur'an. This verse leaves no room for the above fallacious argument against the firm stand of the "Author." The above argument has shown that due to the lack of proper study of the Qur'an the advocates of the theory of disarrangement could not understand the appropriateness of the position of the verses. They found it easier to discredit the arrangement than to admit their own ignorance. This is the reason why the advocates of this view differ from each other in giving reference to the verse. There is not a single tradition from the Holy Prophet or the Imams to show any of the aforesaid verses or chapters are not in their proper position. This attack on the arrangement of the verses is nothing but a conjecture based on whims and fancies.

Such innovations have gained popularity among some schools of traditionists particularly in India. It seems to have become a matter of personal prestige. However respectable may be the group but genuineness of the Qur'an with its authoritative status is more important as an article of the faith than any other consideration. Imam Ali told Talha, "The Qur'an in its entirety given for recitation in the hands of the people is the same Qur'an which has an irrefutable proof of the *Ahl al-Bayt's* authoritative status, the necessity of their being obeyed by the people and their rights to be observed by all."

On the Day of Resurrection the Holy Prophet will complain to God in which this "Qur'an" was forsaken by his followers:

And shall say (out) the Apostle (that day), "Oh my Lord! Verily my people have held this Qur'an as a vain forsaken thing." (25:30).

This complaint cannot be true unless the Qur'an in its entirety from all aspects is within the reach of those who have forsaken it, otherwise the tone of complaint would have been different and the Holy Prophet would have said the people have tampered with the Qur'an. It would mean what was left among them was not the Qur'an. The proper study of this verse is the best proof against *tahrif* in any shape and form.

The Qur'an terms itself as Light. The Holy Prophet and all the infallible Imams of his house have also termed it as "light of guidance" which, if adhered to, will illuminate the darkest (unknown) regions and aspects of creation in its relation to humankind, provided, as the Holy Prophet has said, "One keeps it before him always as a torch light." The very fact of its inimitability is enough to answer and refute all that is said against its genuineness and authoritative status.

Those who claim the arrangement of the letters, words, phrases, sentences, passages or chapters of the Qur'an in hand is not the same as was left by the Holy Prophet among the people with *itrat*, mean the arrangement was non-revealed; so the Qur'an requires of them imperatively to produce the Qur'an in any other arrangement provided its super-rhetorical standard and recitative and rhythmical beauty is not affected. It is true many non-Muslims and some credulous traditionists and theologians have tried to produce the Qur'an in a chronological form, but they failed miserably to keep that invincible beauty and super-rhetorical standard. However, it is a matter of regret in which those who claim to be not only true

Muslims but qualified students of Islamic theology should say the Qur'an as revealed to the Holy Prophet and left by him among the people as an ever-lasting miracle, did not remain intact for 16 to 17 years, but that the Qur'an in its non-revealed arrangement produced by Zayd ibn Thabit and a few Umayyad youths of no academic significance has remained intact until today.

Appendix 2: Last Sermon of Caliph 'Umar

There is a lengthy tradition in Bukhari, volume four, on the chapter about the stoning of the pregnant adulteress. Bukhari narrates from ibn 'Abbas. It contains important matter which throws light on the events taking place immediately after the demise of the Holy Prophet, of which one is the view of 'Umar (the second Caliph) about the omission of some verses from the Holy Qur'an. It shows he was the first one who announced the incompleteness of the Qur'an on hand. The translation of the text is given here to enlighten the readers.

Text from Bukhari

According to ibn 'Abbas, he used to teach the Qur'an to some dignitaries among the *Muhajirin*. One of them was 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-'Auf. Once ibn 'Abbas went to 'Abd al-Rahman's residence at Mina where he was not available and had gone to another part of Mina to meet 'Umar ibn al-Khattab who was on his pilgrimage to Mecca. He waited for 'Abd al-Rahman. On his return 'Abd al-Rahman said to ibn 'Abbas he wished ibn 'Abbas was present at 'Umar's residence when a certain person came to the Commander of the Faithful ('Umar) and informed him of the wish of someone who had said, "When 'Umar dies he would give his vote of allegiance (*ba'yat*) to a certain person, and it would be similar to Abu Bakr coming to power by an unconstitutional method (*falta*) which was regularized later on."

On hearing this statement 'Umar got angry and said, "This evening I will publicly warn those people who intend to usurp the rights of people." And further 'Abd al-Rahman advised 'Umar not to do it there because in Hajj season people gather from all corners of the country and they would try to be near 'Umar. They might hear something from him ('Umar) and without understanding may narrate it improperly. It would be better to keep quiet. 'Abd al-Rahman had suggested if he would go back to Medina, sensible and noble people would hear him and react properly. 'Umar replied to 'Abd al-Rahman that on the first occasion after his arrival in Medina he would follow his advice.

Ibn 'Abbas says on the first Friday after their arrival (in Medina) he hurried to the mosque at noon and found Sa'eed ibn Zayd sitting close to the pulpit. He sat near him. Meanwhile, 'Umar entered the mosque. Ibn 'Abbas told Sa'eed that 'Umar would deliver a sermon the like of which was not uttered before, but Sa'eed did not believe. 'Umar sat on the pulpit quiet until the *adhan* (call for prayer) was over. Then he stood up and after praising God said, "I am going to say something, it is destined to me that I should say. It may be my last sermon before I die. Whoever hears and understands should convey my statement wherever he goes. Whoever does not properly grasp my utterance, I do not allow him to

tell lies about me. God sent Muhammad, His true Prophet and revealed the book to him. One part of it was the verse concerning the stoning of one who commits adultery. We read the verse, understood and digested it. The Prophet did stone me and us too after him.

“I am afraid that after some length of time some people may say they do not find the verse in question in the Book of God and will go astray by giving up the revealed ordinance of God. The stoning of an adulterer is a part of the Book of God whether the act is committed by a man or a woman, even if she is pregnant, when proved by a witness or confession. Besides that, we used to read in the Qur’an, ‘Do not turn away from your parents. It is ingratitude to turn away from your parents.’”

(The structure of both the sentences uttered by Caliph ‘Umar differs from the divine style of the Qur’an. It seems to be a piece of imagination of the speaker.)

Then he uttered, “The Prophet has said he should not be worshipped in the same manner as it was done in the case of Jesus, son of Mary. Concerning me you all can say I am a servant of God and the Prophet (*‘Abd Allah wa Rasool*). I have been informed some of you have said this before ‘Umar dies he would do *ba‘yat* on the hands of someone. One should not be misled by the *ba‘yat-e Abu Bakr* (i.e. vote of allegiance to Abu Bakr). It was unconstitutional (*falta*) and later on it was regularized. Yes, it was so. But God saved us from its evil consequences. Of you none is like Abu Bakr to whom people may submit. Whosoever receives *ba‘yat* without consulting the Muslimeen should not be followed nor the person who did *ba‘yat* with such a person, lest there be rift and fight among the Muslims.

(Caliph ‘Umar accepts the *ba‘yat* of Abu Bakr was unconstitutional which might have resulted in evil consequences. In the face of this confession by him, to defend the unconstitutional act’s continuous repercussion on the Muslims was not sound.)

Then he stated the events after the demise of the Holy Prophet. “The *Ansars* gathered in Saqifah. Ali and Zubayr and those who were with them remained aloof. The *Muhajirs* approached Abu Bakr. I told Abu Bakr we should go to Saqifah. On the way we met two people from the *Ansars*. We informed them of our intention. They said we should not go there and settle our affairs with approaching the *Ansars*. I insisted to proceed to Saqifah. We found a person there wrapped in a mantle (*chador*). I asked him who was he. He said he was S‘ad ibn ‘Ubaydah, suffering from fever. When we sat at Saqifah, the speaker from the *Ansars*, after praising God, reminded us of the services of the *Ansars* for Islam and addressed the *Muhajirs* they were driven out from their home and were sheltered by the *Ansars*.

“Now the *Muhajirs* wanted to deprive the *Ansars* of their rights. When he finished his speech, I wanted to talk, which I had prepared in my mind but Abu Bakr did not allow me to talk. I had to submit to him as I did not want to annoy him. Abu Bakr spoke extempore better than what I had prepared in my mind. He accepted the services of the *Ansars* for which they deserved the post but said the post suites none but the tribe of Quraysh on account of their ancestral superiority and sacredness of their native place (Mecca). Then Abu Bakr proposed one of the two people of Quraysh who were with him (i.e. ‘Umar and

Abu 'Ubayda). At that time I felt myself far below the rank of being the head of the people among whom Abu Bakr was one.

Meanwhile a speaker from the *Ansars* proposed he would settle the dispute thus, 'You have your own head and we will have our own head.' When the dispute intensified and voices grew louder, then I feared the situation may become worse, therefore I forced Abu Bakr to stretch out his hand. I did *ba'yat* and with me other *Muhajirs* also did *ba'yat*. Some of the *Ansars* followed them. Then we manhandled Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah who refused to do *ba'yat*. Somebody said, 'You people killed Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah.' I said, 'God may kill him!'" Further 'Umar said, "We thought there was nothing better than doing *ba'yat* with Abu Bakr because we were afraid of leaving them (i.e. the opposite party) without *ba'yat*. If we had left the opposite party without *ba'yat* they may have done *ba'yat* with someone among them after us.

Then we too would have had to do *ba'yat* with the person whom they had chosen, and if opposed there would have a rift and quarrel. Therefore, whosoever takes *ba'yat* with a person without approval and consultation with the Muslimeen his *ba'yat* should not be followed by others. Nor the person with whom he has made *ba'yat* should be accepted as Caliph lest there will be a rift and quarrel."

The gist of the sermon of Caliph 'Umar in this connection shows the first *ba'yat* that took place after the Holy Prophet, was not based on any certified virtue. It was purely based on tribal bureaucracy to whom they were accustomed before Islam. The rift, of which he was afraid, continued throughout the history of Islam and no stable form of government came to power without the use of force which was against Qur'anic guidance.

Appendix 3: Fisl al-Khitab

After discussing in detail the views of the celebrated theologians and jurists on the genuineness of the Holy Qur'an and its authoritative status, one feels it is inevitable to remove the fallacious notions created by certain authors and a few solitary weak traditions relating to *tahrif* (i.e. the distortion of the letters, words, verses or arrangement of the Qur'an). In the last two centuries of the Hijrah some traditionists had tried to question the status of the Qur'an within the very narrow field of the sporadic traditions which are dearer to them than reason and the Qur'an.

In the beginning of the present century, the late Haji Mirza Hussain Nuri (d. 1320/1908), who belongs to this group, has written many valuable books which earned a name for him, but unfortunately his book *Fasl al-Khitab*, a bundle of contradictions, represents the views against the unanimous verdict of Shi'ah scholars of all centuries regarding the genuineness of the Qur'an and subjected him to the severe criticism of his contemporaries whose superiority in learning is unquestionable.

The study of the book will show it refutes its own contentions. While he insists in which the Qur'an was not put into book form as it is now, he asserts at the same time that Ali used to write every verse of the Qur'an with its revealed commentary and its inner significance by the order of the Holy Prophet. Here

the question arises whether Ali's writing of the Qur'an was based on a particular order or system or was it something haphazard? Secondly, it is obvious the Holy Prophet's reference to the Book of God, the text of which he was leaving among the people with the *Ahl al-Bayt*, was in complete accord with the text which he had already dictated to Ali. Therefore, there is no room left for the author of *Fasal al-Khitab* to assert the Qur'an was not put into writing during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet.

The story in which Ali had kept himself engaged in collecting the Qur'an after the demise of the Holy Prophet is nothing but a mere fabrication of the ruling party just to give reason for Ali's delay in participating in the *ba'iyat*. They wanted to prove Ali thought the collection of Qur'an was more important than the issue of *ba'iyat*, otherwise he was not opposed to Abu Bakr being the caliph. The baseless propaganda gave a chance to the unscrupulous traditions of the later period to accept the fact the Qur'an was not collected and arranged during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet.

Another point which the author of *Fasl al-Khitab* takes for granted is the arrangement of the so-called collection of Ali was chronological. Without repeating the details which have already been discussed, it is an accepted fact that no Shi'ah traditionist has ascribed the chronological arrangement to any Imam (*Ma'sum*). The first person who attributed this type of arrangement to Ali is ibn Sireen whose fidelity to the *Ahl al-Bayt* are two traditions in the connection narrated by Kafi from the fifth Imam through Jaber-e Jaufi. Jaber says, "I heard the fifth Imam Abu Ja'far used to say that excluding Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Holy Imams after Ali nobody except a liar could claim he collected the Qur'an as a whole as it was revealed, compiled and preserved as God has sent it down."

Next to the tradition Kafi narrates through the same traditionist Jaber from the same Imam in which he (the Imam) said that except the successors of the Holy Prophet (i.e. the Imams) nobody could claim he was in possession of the Qur'an as a whole with the outer letters (exoteric form) and inner significance (esoteric form). The second tradition from Kafi explains what the Imam meant by the word "Qur'an as a whole" as it was narrated in the first tradition. The Imam meant that nobody except Ali and his successive Imams were in possession of the Holy Qur'an with both its exoteric and esoteric aspects which were revealed to the Holy Prophet and dictated to Ali then and there. This tradition is a general explanation for all the traditions which have been narrated from the *Ahl al-Bayt* giving various versions of particular verses. These particular verses are not found in the text in hand, they refer to the inner significance of the verse.

It is surprising the author of *Fasl al-Khitab*, in order to prove the Qur'an in hand is not the whole one which was revealed, quotes the first tradition ignoring the second which explains the former. It is very difficult to say the second tradition escaped his notice.

Nuri has criticized Mullah Faid-e Kashani for not narrating the tradition which states the Qur'an contains 17,000 verses. He has boldly accused the Mullah of dishonesty. The question of the number of verses has already been discussed at length to disprove this statement. Moreover, he himself cannot escape similar charges. Anyhow, all his contemporaries and scholars of later periods wished the late Nuri would

not have written in this book which has damaged his reputation.

We would like to point out here that Mullah Faid-e Kushani is far above any allegation and he is a link in narrating the tradition between the author of *Fasl al-Khitab* and the Imams. When the above author discredits Mullah Faid-e Kashani, he loses the important link.

Appendix 4: A Luminary

The “Introduction to the Qur’an” is the outcome of deep research by the great scholar, the late Haji Mirza Mahdi Pooya (no honorifics can elevate a name now so eminent). The intellectual zeal and intuitive insight of this most profound and constructive thinker have elucidated logically the genuineness of the Qur’an, the meaning of revelation, the existence of God and the inevitability of faith in divine occultation (i.e. the birth, presence, disappearance and re-appearance of the 12th Imam – the last Imam from the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the progeny of the Holy Prophet) – all these articles of faith being based on the Qur’an.

He completed this work in spite of continuous ill-health. The work had been reviewed thoroughly by the eminent judge, the late justice Shahabuddin, former chief justice of the supreme court of Pakistan. Justice Shahabuddin was among the close friends of Aqa Pooya who imbibed the scholarly exposition of the Qur’an by the Aqa.

This great scholar left this world in July 17, 1973, (16 Jamadi up-Thani 1393 Hijrah) (may the Almighty further elevate his station). He was born in 1317 Hijrah in a very learned family of Yazd, Iran. His father Hujjatul-Islam Aqa Mirza Muhammad Ja’far of Yazd were celebrated scholars of their time, the former being a brilliant student of the Shia divine Syed Kazim Tabataba’i Yazdi, who in turn was the student of the latter.

Aqa Pooya received his education in Yazd (Iran) and Najaf (Iraq). By the age of seven he was learned in “Euclid” and other intricate mathematical problems of Pythagoras. He was the most intelligent student of *Mujahid* Aqa Naini. The sublimity of calibre of this young scholar was recognized by his *mujtahid* who was deeply interested in his career.

However, Aqa Pooya did not stay in Iraq and Iran. Being very sensitive he was affected by the unhappy conditions prevailing in Iraq and Iran that he migrated to Madras in India. His *mujtahid* Aqa Naini was very unhappy over the migration of such a brilliant scholar and were it possible he would have ordained a religious decree to stop his migration. He set himself to the task of learning the English language there and kept steadily to it until he attained a sound knowledge of the language.

Scholars and people in Pakistan found common indebtedness to Aqa Pooya for his choosing to settle in Karachi and enlightening those around him by his conversations and fortnightly religious discourses – *Dars-e Qur’an* – where one could discuss one’s doubts and be satisfied by Aqa Pooya’s learned self.

Association with him has given birth to learned scholars and famous orators. Many have been blessed

by his piety, tolerance and benevolence. He was one of those scholars who never raised an eyebrow at the unbeliever pestering him with his problems which were at times childish, at times serious. He was all ears and always successful in putting the questioner at ease and at showing him where the flaw lay in his reasoning. Problems of everyday life to the most scholastic ones were solved by him through recitation of relevant verses from the Qur'an with explanations.

In the eyes of the living divines of Najaf and Iran, he is an accepted authority on the interpretation and exposition of the Qur'anic verses from esoteric and exoteric points of view.

His explanatory notes in the *Translation of the Qur'an* by Mir Ahmad Ali and his book *Fundamentals of Islam* are among the monumental works of this epoch. His outstanding works will always serve as guidelines not only to the scholars but all those interested in knowing and grasping the meaning of Islam, universal truth, regardless of their creed, nationality, and sect.

His personality attracted Hindus, Christians, Parsees and Christian missionaries from abroad, who were left spell-bound and overwhelmed with admiration at his sound reasoning and clear exposition of Islam through the Qur'an, as presented by the Holy Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Though the great luminary has physically disappeared from the scene, he retains a position in the horizon and generations to come will be enlightened with the rays of his learning.

I am duty bound, according to the wish of the late Aqa Pooya to offer thanks to Mr. Habib Esmail, Benevolent Trust, whose constant services in the achievement of religion ideal need no introduction, and Mr. Mushtaq Ali K. Laddhani who carried out his work devotedly.

I feel it is my supreme fortune to have had close association with this benefactor, the late Aqa who taught me Islam and dispelled all doubts relating to religion which was the product of the particular western philosophic thought and envious tendencies of the time. Not only my humble self but my late loving daughter Najiba (Mrs. Syed Fida-e Shabir), M.A., lecturer of English literature S.M.B. Fatima Jinnah Girls' College who passed from this world at a young age, had also learned and grasped the instructions of the late Aqa which unfolded the outer and inner aspects of the Qur'an and teachings of the Holy Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*. She had been co-operating with her humble and assiduous labour during the Aqa's views through his writings on various occasions (may Allah bless her soul).

At the end I request all the readers to observe their religious obligation and pray for the late Aqa Pooya's elevation of station in the permanent abode for his great services to the cause of Islam.

Syed Muhammad Murtaza

Chapter 2: The Existence of God

Angles of Approach

The question of the existence of God has been the concern of man ever since his coming into being or at least since his becoming conscious of his own self. Of the several philosophical and religious methods of dealing with this most important subject, the metaphysical is the most logical and systematic, but that method is meant only for those who are well-acquainted with the physical, mathematical and metaphysical sciences. Many of the religious methods are undoubtedly convincing to the majority of people of average understanding, but there are some who are neither satisfied with most of the religious methods of approach nor are they properly educated in philosophy or fully acquainted with the physical and metaphysical sciences.

The religious arguments are generally based on inferences from the observation of those phenomena which are natural and purposeful signs within and without the human self and which bear testimony to the existence of a mighty, conscious, creative mind responsible for planning and bringing into evidence and existence all which is seen or observed. But according to the dissatisfied group the testimony of such phenomena and signs is based on analogical arguments, the conclusion of which need not be necessarily and universally true.

The metaphysical method of approach begins with concepts and propositions which are self-evident. The most universal of them are the terms “existence” and “objects.” In other words, the use of the universal predicate “is” or “exists” and the use of “particular things” or “objects” are common and familiar to everybody more than the use of any other terms. When man observes himself and the things surrounding him, he forms the following propositions: I exist, He exists, You exist, the Earth exists, air, land, trees, animals, man, sky, stars, white, blue, red, yellow, light, dark, left, right, cold, heat, electricity, gas, quantity, qualities, position, concrete things, abstract ideas, imagination, subjective and objective phenomena, etc. all have great varieties and even some are in contrast with each other but to all those, one and the same predicate “existence” is applicable.

The predicative term is so universal it can be applied to everything, to every conceivable idea other than the term itself. Everything can be made a subject in the affirmative or negative form; it does exist or does not exist. Such a universal term or idea is and must be known as *apriori* to every human mind. It need not be defined or described by any other term or idea.

As a general logical rule no proposition is found unless the idea taken as the “subject” and the idea taken as the “predicate” are different from one aspect and “one and the same” from another aspect. So in every proposition the human mind finds two aspects: (a) the aspect of differentiating the subject from the predicate and (b) the aspect of identifying the subject from the two items are entirely different from

each other no “predication” between the two is possible. Similarly, if the two ideas are identical with each other from all aspects and all respects, no “predication” between them would have any meaning.

A proposition is called analytical if the difference between the subject and predicate is a mere abstract process of human thought, otherwise within or outside the human mind they are actually identical in the sense that one idea is the content of the other or the necessary property of it. For example, in the proposition “dimension is divisible” there are two different ideas meaning, but one is implied in the other inside and outside the human mind. They are so inter-related to each other one cannot be considered separate from the other.

In the proposition “the body is white” the predicative term whiteness may be identified with the body outside the human mind but whiteness is not implied in the idea of body (which means a three-dimensional being). The whiteness is neither the content of dimensional being nor an essential property. A dimensional being may be white, red, blue, or even colourless. So the predicate “white,” though identical with the body is not inherently and inseparably inter-related with the body. It is an idea added in the idea of body. This kind of proposition is called a synthetic proposition wherein the identity of the predicate with the subject is due to some cause.

In all analytical propositions either both the subject and the predicate are abstract which have no corresponding fact outside the mind or one has the corresponding fact outside the mind and the other is abstract, obtained through mental process. For example, the logical terms “genus” and “species” are two “universal” ideas. Genus is an idea which is true of individual beings of various kinds outside the mind. Species is an idea which is true of individuals of one kind. Both ideas are universal in the same sense that both can be said about any individuals of various kinds or of one kind respectively.

So we form this proposition: “Genus is universal; species is universal. But all exist outside the mind are individuals resembling each other in certain aspects” These kinds of abstract propositions are termed logical abstractions: they are ideas which the human mind derives from some common aspects of individual beings existing outside it, or they are forms given by the mind to the idea considered as the object or thing outside human thought.

There is another kind of analytical proposition where one of the two ideas has a corresponding fact outside the mind and the other is an idea abstracted from the former by mental process or the abstracted ideas are forms given by human thought. Such analytical propositions are termed metaphysical abstractions like the proposition “fire is the cause of burning” in which all which exists outside the mind is “fire and the burning,” but the idea of “cause” has no corresponding fact outside the mind. This idea of causation is something derived by human thought from the phenomenon of fire and burning. These ideas are metaphysical abstractions.

Actually, metaphysics discusses the most universal terms in which man thinks and talks. Without studying the metaphysical problems no thorough study of any science terrestrial, celestial, ethereal,

spiritual or theological, is complete. To be well-versed in metaphysics one should know logic, mathematics or at least the outline of all other physical and human sciences.

Universal predicative term “Existence”

Of all the concepts and propositions, metaphysics begins as the most comprehensive subject with the universal predicative term “existence” which can be used in respect of the multitude of objects or things. The first question is as follows: are both the universal predicate “existence” and the particular multitude of objects which form the subjects of the said predicate abstracts of the human mind having no corresponding fact or facts outside it? In other words, are both the predicate and the subjects unreal? Or do both have corresponding facts outside the mind to which one can point. For example, is the proposition “tree exists” like the proposition “the body is red” in the sense that tree is a real fact and its existence is also a quality added to it outside the mind, or is one of the two ideas, the multitude of subjects or the universal predicate, a real fact outside the mind and the other is the idea abstracted from the former.

To put it another way, the question is whether the universal predicate “existence” and the multitude of things are both unreal, or are both real added to each other, or is one real and the other unreal abstracted from the real one. All metaphysicians have refuted the first and the second probabilities as self-contradictory propositions. The only thing which remains is the view that one is real and the other is abstracted, and the controversy among the metaphysicians is which of the two are real and the other abstracted from it. Whether the universal predicate is the absolute real and the multiple subjects are abstracted from it or are its various aspects and manifestations, or are the multiple subjects real and the idea of “existence” is derived from this multiplicity of things in the question.

Unless and until this question is fully grasped and metaphysical solution of the problem of the existence of God can be considered as logically tenable and intelligible. To deal with problem of the existence of God, metaphysically, ignoring this fundamental problem of metaphysics, is like trying to prove or disprove any geometrical figure discarding the self evident definitions and propositions laid down at the starting point of Euclid such as “straight line means the shortest line between two points,” “the whole is greater than its parts” or “anything equal to A must be equal to B which is equal to A.” To prove the existence of God ignoring the question of reality or unreality of existence and its implications, and jumping to the question of eternity and contingency would result in nothing but confusion in the mind of the writer as well as of the reader.

But there is a via media between the complicated metaphysical method based on sound syllogisms and the religious method based apparently on analogy. The basis of the metaphysical method based on sound syllogism is the unity and identity of the predicate of the conclusion with its subject through the identity of the middle term with the subject and the predicate of the conclusion, e.g. all A are B and all B are C, therefore, A are C. B is the middle term and the factor which makes A identical with C. But the

religious method which approach appeals to men of average understanding is apparently based on analogical grounds: i.e. resemblance, e.g. A resembles B in having D in common and A has C also, like A.

This proposed via media, as it will be seen, combines in itself the appealing simplicity of the religious method of inference from the signs and phenomena, which one finds within himself or in the things surrounding him and the inferences evolved from the metaphysical ground of self-evident propositions and concepts. Thus it has side by side, both the analogical as well as metaphysical bases. This method gives two grounds for the edifice of its inferences; one is analogical meant for the average man and the other is metaphysical to convince the intellectuals.

Qur'anic Approach

In this via media there are few self-evident concepts and propositions on the basis of which all religious inferences and arguments in this connection can be converted from the analogical outlook to real, sound and conclusive syllogism or metaphysical value. The basic self-evident concepts and propositions for conversion of the religious arguments into metaphysical proofs are given in the Qur'an in a very simple and short but super-rhetorical expression comprehensible by men of all standards:

{أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ} 35

{أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۗ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ} 36

Or were they created by nothing? Or are they themselves the creators? Or created they the heavens and the earth? Nay! They have no certainty. (52:35 – 36)

The language of these verses is so clear and simple their philosophical significance and implications may escape the notice of many thinkers who recite them. So the following lines are meant to draw the attention of the reader to some of the important parts of speech in the full verses.

(1) As the usual Qur'anic method is to appeal to common sense, both verses have been presented in the interrogative form. The answer to the questions in the two verses is left to common sense. The last sentence in the second verse, "*Nay! They have no certainty*" is not an answer to the questions concerned. It is a warning to those who indulge in conjecture rather than the judgments based on reason which is necessarily and universally true and certain.

(2) The term *Khalq* and its derivative and conjugations used in the Qur'an means "to measure" or "to create." The term in both senses applies to things which owe their existence not to themselves but depend for their existence in some way or other on something else. If it is used in the sense of creation,

it means a thing had no existence before and now it has. If it is used in the sense of measuring, it implies limitation. And limitation implies necessarily being composed of parts, be the part organic, mechanic, physical, chemical, atomic, geometrical, logical (genus and differentia), or at least metaphysical which means limitation in degree of existence.

To understand the limitation in degree of existence the following examples may be helpful. Two or more white objects differ from each other not in other aspect but in the degree of whiteness; two electric bulbs differ from each other in nothing but in the degree of candle power (i.e. illumination). In both examples the difference in degree means both have the whiteness and light in common but the whiteness of one differs from that of the other in being less or more. But bulbs have light in common but the one which has less candle power than the other has less light. They differ from each other in the same aspect which they have in common.

So the composition in any aforesaid sense of the term means at least dependence on its parts; hence it owes its existence as to its parts and is not self-existent. The *Khalq* in any of the two senses means a non-self-existent thing, an object of human thought which comes into existence by assuming existence not analytically but synthetically.

(3) This is true of all measured and measurable, defined and definable things, like man, animal, plant, inanimate beings or physical and chemical parts, atoms, parts of atoms (be it protons or anything smaller than which occupies space and is divisible is dimensional). All are at least geometrically divisible and anything divisible is composite, composed of parts, dependent and hence a non-self-existent being.

(4) The same is the case with any supposed non-dimensional being of limited and definable nature, composed of logical (genus and differentia) or metaphysical parts (limited degree of existence); such beings also are non-self-existing things and hence created.

(5) The questions put forward in the above two verses are as to how or by what means non-self-existing things become the subject of existence or are created whether from nothing or nothingness or by making themselves the subject of "existence," or in other words do they create themselves, or do they (i.e. non-self-existing things like men) make the heavens and the earth (which are also non-self-existing things) the subject of existence? Or again is a non-self-existing thing a creator or another non-self-existing thing?

Law of Causation

It is obvious the answer to all these questions is a clear negative, because the creation of things from nothing or nothingness means the becoming of non-being a creator of another of itself, or a non-self-existing thing becomes the creator of another non-self-existent thing. It means and implies the creation of things from nothing or nothingness. In other words, it means becoming or making a thing by adding a nought to another nought, or making a being by adding a non-being to another non-being which is self-

evidently impossible. The impossibility of such a proposition cannot be removed by postulating in a vicious circle, regress or infinite chain or non-self-existing things have existence from each other, as all these postulations ultimately mean the coming of non-being into being by nothing or nothingness which is evidently impossible. This is the basis of causation.

It means when two ideas or objects of human thought are not identical in all aspects and all respects, no one thought is the analytical content or necessary property of the other, the identification and unity of the two must have some justifying medium. This is called in logic *the Law of Sufficient Reasoning*. The self-evident law (Law of Causation) is one of the categorical *apriori* forms the human thought given to the object of human thought. There must be some medium to justify the affirmation. The medium is termed *cause*, the finding of which is the basis of all human investigations or enquiries whether physical, metaphysical, mathematical, ethical, social, economical, and political. In other words, this the basis of all questions, in answer to which man is striving ever since his coming into being or at least since his becoming conscious of himself.

On the basis of the truth of this law the whole edifice of human progress towards knowledge and fact-finding was raised, and it will continue to expand itself in all directions. If this law is not self-evidently true the door of all inquiries and investigations would be closed.

But the case is not so. Whether one is an atheist or a theist, materialist or spiritual, or agnostic, any man of sense, no matter to which class he belongs, is alive to this self-evident proposition in which a non-self-existing thing can only become the subject of existence by becoming in some way or other, through a middle term or directly, identified with the self-existing thing. This implies the necessity of a self-existing being responsible for the existence of non-self-existing things. Hence the postulation of the necessity of a self-existing being is common to every man of sense. It is a real irrefutable fact of common sense. All the lovers of truth and knowledge and in fact everyone with common sense is in search of that self-existing being. Some may see “it” in terms of matter and material things and some may see “it” in terms of immaterial beings. However, none denies the existence of an uncaused cause. The difference of views lies in the description of the uncaused cause but the fact is what the Qur’an has said: ***“Mimma Yasifun,” “He is above all descriptions.” (6: 100)***

Uncaused Cause, Infinite Absolute One

The postulation of an *Uncaused Cause*, responsible for the affirmation of a predicate for a subject, which is not the clear analytical content or the necessary and the inherent property of the other, is an irrefutable necessary and universal truth. This is true of all synthetic propositions, be the predicate “existence” or some other predicate. Let alone a philosopher, none save a sophist or quibble disputes the necessity of the above universal postulation. But it is said about a famous contemporary thinker who decided there was no God because he could not answer the question – “Who made God?” This form of argument may be expected from a child when his parents begin to teach him that man and all

observable things surrounding him are created by God. The child's mind begins to work psychologically through an analogical process and his judgment would be in the same manner as he was created, God must also have been created, and His Creator must have had a creator.

Similar to this way of thinking is the anthropomorphic way of describing God as the creator of the universe. It is obvious such a God or Lord of the universe presented as (a) sitting on His Throne with His Son on the right and the Holy Ghost on His left or (b) with other deities as His issues or, as sitting all alone as a king on the throne and the angels as His servants, or (c) in any form or description which implies His being of composite nature, should be the subject of the question "Who has created Him?" Thus, it is not only for a philosopher but it is for any man of sense to deny such a composite God and question who has created Him. Most probably the great philosopher's denial is directed against such description or presentation of the Godhead and not against the proposition in which God is Absolute and Self-existing.

But the Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes, "He" the Absolute is One in the true sense of Oneness from all aspects and in all respects in His essence and attributes. He is Infinite, indefinable in any physical, metaphysical or mathematical term of finitude. "God has not adopted any issue. Nor are there with Him other gods, otherwise each god would have taken away what he had created and there would have been no unity and continuity in the system of creation, and there would have been conflict among the gods." "If there would be gods with Him as they say, then they would have sought a way to the holder of the throne." The postulation of another like Him means finitude of both and the possibility of a human being encompassing two finite beings. Therefore, He is 'Samad' (All in All) and "Transcendent" and "Indivisible" in the sense of being of non composite nature, "Omniscient" and "Omnipresent" having no second, match nor partners, the like of whom is not possible. Such descriptions, particularly the last one, cut the roots of all analogical presentation and description of the "Absolute."

{وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ} 49

"And of everything have We created in pairs, in which you may reflect." (51:49)

The Absolute One is single and cannot be in pairs. One in His essence and attributes, full in the true sense of fullness, in the sense nothing is devoid of Him and He is devoid of nothing. He is with everything but nothing is co-extensive in existence with Him, nothing can match Him nor bear any resemblance to Him.

If the term personal God means such a Unique Unit, Creative Might of Infinite and Absolute Reality that by His agency everything has or may come into being, then it is true He is the real person to whose personality (reality) all other limited beings owe the extent of the personality they have. If Personal God means any quantitative (be it the biggest or smallest) or qualitative or logical or metaphysical limitation, then God is Impersonal, but gives personality to all limited entities.

To postulate an atom or the smallest part of it, the photon, as the indivisible self-existing unit and component of the universe is a self-contradictory proposition. Anything spatial, however small it may be, is dimensional, hence geometrically divisible, containing parts on which it depends. It may not be practically divisible by us now, as it was the case with the atom until a few years ago, but practical indivisibility does not exempt the smallest particle from the possibility of further division, nor from mathematical divisibility. The proof of is this: if the supposed infinite small particle is entirely non-dimensional then the side which meets another particle like it no dimension can be formed.

If it has the same dimension then the side which meets another particle is different from the side which does not meet the other particle, so it is divided into two different sides. Therefore, the theory of non-dimensional infinitely small particles as self-existing units by the combination of which bigger bodies are formed is untenable. Moreover, such infinitely small and indivisible units cannot escape the logical composition. They are composed of particular material and formal parts (matter and form) and of the specific parts (genus and differentia) and of the metaphysical particular degree of existence. So the composition and dependency as their necessary property is there, and the problem remains unsolved.

The same or worse is the case with all sorts of anthropomorphic presentations of God: (a) as a very huge well-bodied person made of pure light or (b) a being who is supposed to have created man after His image, to represent Him as His miniature. These descriptions given by some theologians of different schools or any other description which undermines the Absolute Oneness of God in His essence and attributes are anti-reason and anti-Qur'anic as interpreted by the *Ahl al-Bayt*. According to the Qur'an, and the sayings of the Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*, all the Qur'anic descriptions of God go back to the negation of limitation and composition about Him and the affirmation of His absolute Oneness in the sense detailed before. It means:

{قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ 1}

{اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ 2}

{مُ يَلِدُ وَلَمْ يُوَلَدْ 3}

{وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ 4}

Say, "He is Allah the One! Allah is the Eternal. Besought of all! He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him. (112:1 – 4)

Any Qur'anic word, phrase, sentence or passage concerning God which may appear to mean anything

not in agreement with the aforesaid Oneness of God should be interpreted in light of the clear and unequivocal wording of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Holy Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt* (vide the Qur'an, *Nahj al-Balagha*, *I'tiqadat* by Sheikh Saduq and *Wafi* by Musin Faid on the Unity of God). It takes man higher and higher towards the realization of the fact that in spite of His being closer to everyone than one is to himself, He is far away from being encompassed by any sense and being describable by any means. Imam Ali says about the efforts to describe God, "Whatever is known to us and grasped by human thought is made and created." The sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq says, "Whatever you distinguish and define with your power of understanding in the most subtle sense of distinction and definition, it is created like you and is the product of your thought. Perhaps the ant would also feel God to have the two feelers which are the means of its getting information from its surroundings."

Here the question arises: how is it that in spite of all the aforesaid arguments, the Absolute Self-existing is indefinable and indescribable, we find all the theists describing Him with such attributes as are found in man? He is described in terms of life, knowledge, will, might, etc. the only difference between Him and man as given in the description being a question of degree and extent. He is unlimited and infinite in His said attributes while the same attributes in others are on a limited scale and degree. Anyway, the resemblance is there. The final answer to this question given by the thinkers of high standard is actually we do not know what He is in His essence as well as in His attributes.

Atheist

If the ultimate answer to this question is: We do not know and cannot know the nature of the Absolute as He or It is in Himself or Itself and whatever we say about Him just shows our limitations and not His nature, why should we blame the atheist or agnostic in presenting Him in terms of space, time, nature, matter, etc. or in expressing their ignorance in scepticism? The theist and all similar schools of thought are unanimous in confessing their ignorance about the nature of the Reality in Himself. The views of all these schools have only subjective value, so far as His Nature is concerned. Then let everyone have the chance of expressing his limitations. Why should we insist on a particular view and reject others? The answer is we should not forget that throughout our arguments we have proved beyond doubt the postulation of the Self-existing Absolute One is a self-evident reality.

Having this positive fact in view, all the discussions about His positive or negative attributes started with the question as to which attribute or which description is the necessary property of His Absolute Oneness to be asserted and maintained and which attribute or description is contradictory of His Oneness to be negated and rejected? All positive attributes and descriptions should be reduced into an assertion of His Absolute Oneness and all negative attributes should be reduced into a negation of His Composite Nature. For example, everything which occupies space is dimensional whether big or small. Every dimensional being is composed of geometrical parts in the sense each part occupies a space other than the space occupied by its immediate adjoining part.

So each part though joined with the other, is absent from the other. So the whole which is the total of the parts is absent from itself. Therefore, the whole is unconscious of itself, because consciousness (knowing) means the presence of the thing perceived to the conscious being (the knower – the perceiver). In other words, knowing means the presence of the known to the knower. It implies one's being conscious of oneself. Self-conscious is the necessary condition of one's being conscious of other things which is absent in dimensional beings. Dimension and unconsciousness are inter-related, and one is the necessary property of the other.

But it is not the case with the beings which are non-dimensional, yet limited and composed of logical parts (genus and differentia) or composed of metaphysical parts (having a lesser or bigger degree of existence) like mind, soul, spirit or intellectual entities. They are composed of parts to which they are limited and as such they are dependent and non-self-existing beings. But the parts of which they are composed are not spatially different. They are merged into each other. So they are absent from each other and such is the whole. It is not about absent from itself. Hence, it is conscious of itself and thus conscious of whatever is in touch with and is present to it. So non-dimension and consciousness are correlative.

But non-dimensional beings of limited nature have limited consciousness and have no Absolute Oneness of the Self-existing Being. There is no limitation of any kind in the Absolute One, and hence there is no limitation of His consciousness.

Absolute One, Self-consciousness and Unlimited Attributes

Therefore, the Absolute One is necessarily self-conscious and conscious of whatever is His manifestation, and the reference to the Absolute One should be with the personal pronoun meant for conscious beings – He, You, and I.

The Qur'an says:

وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ وَمَا تَتْلُو مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ
عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ {61}

And you (Muhammad) are not (engaged) in any affair, nor do you recite any part of the (Holy) Qur'an and nor any deed you (humankind) be doing, but We are witness over you when you are engrossed therein. And do not lie concealed from your Lord (even) the weight of an atom in the Earth or in the heaven, or anything lesser than that nor greater, but it is (recorded) in a clear book. (10:61)

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظِلْمَاتٍ

{الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ} 59

And with Him are the keys (of the treasures) of the unseen – know it not anyone but He, and He (alone) knows what is in the land and the sea, and (there) falls not (even) a leaf (of a tree) but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness (in the deepest parts) of the Earth, nor anything wet or dry but (it is) in a clear book. (6:59)

{هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ} 3

{هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۗ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا ۗ وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ} 4

He is the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He is the Knower of all things. He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, then firmly established (Himself) over the “Arsh” (the seat of supreme authority). He knows whatever enters the earth and whatever goes forth from it, and whatever descends from the heavens and whatever goes up into it, and He is with you wherever you are, and God is the Seer of whatever you do. (57:3 – 4)

{وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا} 2

And follow you what is revealed unto you from your Lord. Verily God is aware of what you do, well-aware. (33:2)

{أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ} 14

What! Knows not He that created? And He is the Subtle, the All-aware. (67:14)

These and many other verses of the Qur’an assert the fact which Absolute Oneness and Absolute Consciousness are the two analytical aspects of Reality. Non-absoluteness of one affects the absoluteness of the other. Thus self-consciousness, perpetuity, fullness, all-pervasiveness, omniscience, omnipresence, all-encompassing, are various expressions of one and the same absolute reality, according to the Qur’an.

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ ۗ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

Say, “Call upon Allah or call upon Rahman (the Beneficent) whichever you call upon, for Him

(alone) is all the best names. (17:110)

He is Living in the sense of a self-conscious being. Being conscious of Himself and all His existence He loves Himself. So He is the Knower, Knowing and the Known. He is the Lover, Loving and Beloved. He is evident to Himself by Himself for by the agency of which other things come into existence. He is the Witness, Witnessing and the Witnessed. All these are various terms pointing towards the Absolute One. So He loves to express Himself and His excellence. The love of self-expression means Will. He is the All-sufficient to bring into being what He wills:

{إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ} 82

His command, when intends He anything, is only He says unto it “Be” than (and there) it is.

(36:82)

This is His Might. He is the All-mighty, so everything is according to His plan and will. He is self-sustaining, sustainer of all limited beings. He is *al-Qayum* – the Being which is existing by Himself and others exist by Him. He loves His manifestation and expressions and is inclined towards them, out of Grace, expecting no return from them, nor to obtain anything from them. He is the All-gracious, the Compassionate. He brings everything up to what it deserves according to His pre-plan and He puts everything in its proper place resulting in harmony, unity and continuity in the system of manifestation. This is justice and He is all All-just. One can easily judge all these attributes and excellences and numerous multitudes of other “names” are nothing but various expressions of asserting His Absolute Oneness or negating all sorts of limitations and compositions in respect of Him.

Ali (as) says, “The perfect recognition of His Oneness means the negation of all attributes from Him because every attribute gives evidence of its being other than the essence and the essence gives evidence fits being other than the attribute.” These are the terms in which man can express the extent of his own realization of Him, knowing what really transcends all expressions and is beyond and above all manifestations and expressions. A man’s highest approach towards God could be, “Oh One who is beyond my imagination, my talk and tales: let dust be thrown on my forehead and on my parables about You. But man cannot refrain from effort to have a fine description of You. Every now and then man says, “My soul may be spread under Your feet.” The Holy Prophet says, “Oh my Lord we have not recognized You as You ought to be recognized and we have not obeyed as you ought to be obeyed. Oh Lord, I cannot Praise You. You are as You have praised Yourself.”

Again we repeat all anthropomorphic usages in the Qur’an are figurative expressions of the aforesaid facts. The terms throne (*‘arsh*), chair (*kursi*), face (*wajh*), ear (*sama’*), eye (*basr*), hand (*yad*), meeting (*liqa’*) seating (*ruyyat*), being carried (*wal*) or carrying (*hamad*), coming (*maji*), etc. are all figurative expressions which should not be taken literally. We have given the figurative significance of all these usages in their proper place according to the interpretation of the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

The Relation of Conscious Creative Will and Might to the Created

Man Ibda'

The relation of the Absolute One, the Unique Unit of Infinite Reality cannot be other than the relation of the Infinite Conscious Creative Will and Might to the Created Many. It is by the agency of that creative Will and Might which all finite beings or spiritual, intellectual, psychical and physical nature or seen and unseen objects have into being.

Non-self-existing things can be brought into existence only in the following probable ways: (a) division of the origin into parts, (b) composition of the original parts into the shape of the whole, (c) transformation by assumption of the origin into a new form, (d) reproduction and growth or decay. [1](#)

The relation of the source to the product or the cause to the effect is presented below.

(a) The relation of matter and form, i.e. the material and formal causes, the structural causes to the result or product through the combination of the former two causes, which are components of the result.

(b) The relation of the builder, engineer or architect or the producing agent (not the creative) to the building, plan or drawing in which the latter requires the former only coming into being but not in its subsistence. Once the latter comes into being it does not need the former, who is not the component of the latter, nor the creative agent.

(c) The relation of the object (purpose) of the building which becomes the motive for the agent to undertake the action (the ultimate or final cause). This has also nothing to do with the subsistence of the building.

(d) The relation of the source of light, the illuminating object to its rays and reflections or any thermodynamic forces to its effect: here the relation of the source to the effect may seem to be of a creative nature because the source is not the component of the effect and the effects depend on the source both in respect of its coming into being and in its subsistence. But the process of the said effect from the source is not due to the medium of consciousness and will of the source. Radiation is the necessary property of the illuminating object and reflection is the necessary property of the ground which receives the radiation.

(e) The relation of the human ego cognitive self, the one to which one refers to as "I," to the ideas which are formed by the attention of the ego, within the region of the mind. Here the relation of the source is purely creative. The effect owes its coming into being to the sole agency of the attention of the conscious source.

Of all these probable ways mentioned to the above (a), (b), (c) and (d), none can be taken as a probable or possible way of a non-self-existing thing being brought into "being" by the Absolute One. In all of

these probabilities the Absolute One loses His Oneness and Absoluteness. All of the four probable relations of the Absolute One to His finite effects and manifestations imply limitation of the cause in some way or other. Excepting the last one (e), all are inconsistent with the absoluteness of the self-existing One. In the case of the relation mentioned in (a) it plays the role of structural cause. The Absolute becomes the formal or the material component of the whole which requires for its coming into being or for its subsistence of producing a holding agent.

In the case of the relation mentioned in (b) the Absolute's role is to bring the components together and give shapes to the matter. It has no creative or holding power on the material for the formal components of the structure. Moreover, it is inconsistent with the Law of Identity; i.e. a non-self-existing being becomes self subsistent (self-existent after coming into being). The limitation of the causal role of the purpose mentioned in (c) is clear. It causes only a conscious agent to produce the effect. The relation mentioned in (d) is inconsistent with the infinite conscious nature of the Absolute One and His will and might. The rays and the recipient ground yet the source or ground being dimensional is not conscious of its production and effect.

Therefore, the only probable relation free from all objections is mentioned in (e) wherein an effect (idea) is brought into being in the region of the mind by the ego through conscious attention without the slightest change, division, combination, transformation, reproduction, growth and decay, or any other form of change in the essence of inherent attributes of the ego. The activity does not affect His Oneness, nevertheless, the effect (idea) so produced by the ego depends in his existence on the attention and will of the ego, and it remains non-self-existent in itself before, after, and with its present existence. This causal relation can only be true of the Absolute One in His relation to the created many. This is called creation in the true sense of the Qur'anic term *ibda'*. (This is what the verse reveals: "**Be, then it is.**" *Kunfayakuni. 33:82*)

It means the universe as a whole with parts with their formal and material components in its substance and attributes is nothing but the outcome of the will and command of the absolute creative, conscious might Who is Infinite Reality, God (Allah). He has innumerable beautiful names. The Qur'an says among His signs is one which the heavens and the earth are standing, subsisting by His command. He has brought and brings every sign into existence out of love of Himself – love of expression. From this angle, whatever existed, exists or will exist in any form is the "created word" of God and whatever "ought to have been, ought to be now or in the future" is the "legislative word of God." The Qur'anic presentation of God supports the metaphysical proposition, "the finite things are created and nothing created can be created by nothing or nothingness. Therefore, the finite things are not created by nothing or nothingness: thus they are all created by something."

That something must be infinite, self-existing by nature, otherwise the chain of finites will continue, all non-beings and nothings, the whole will become non-being and nothing, which is impossible. Therefore, basically the Qur'an asserts the circular system of creation begins with the highest finite, and continues

downward to the lowest one, the primal matter, the end of the arc of descent, and again the process continues upward from the primal matter up to the highest intellectual being in an arc of ascent, corresponding to the intellectual beings of the arc of descent. Meanwhile both arcs are in ever proportionate and well-balanced expansion.

The use of the term self-love and love of expression may raise suspicion of an attempt to resort to analogical argument. To remove this suspicion we have given further explanation about the implications of the creative method of causation which can be ascribed to the Absolute One in His relation to the finite beings.

The best example of this “creative method” known to everyone is the relation of the human cognitive self, as a creative cause to the various ideas which come into being within the region of the mind. An idea comes into being in the region of the mind by mere attention to the cognitive self. This attention does not underlie any change – transformation or division, decay or growth in the essence or essential attributes of the cognitive self. Nor does the idea so caused by the attention to come into being become independent of the attention in its subsistence. Unlike the relation of a building to its builder, the idea in its coming into being and in its subsistence is entirely dependent on the attention.

This argument is not based on analogy. It is purely based on logical syllogism of proving one of the several alternative hypotheses by proving the impossibility of the others: “A” is either “B,” “C” or “D” but it cannot be “B” or “C,” therefore, “A” is necessarily “D.”

Self-love, Self-expression

Attention, intention, will, wish, desire, decision, decree, care and command are terms with slightly different shades of meaning denoting, connoting or implying the creative and active attitude of a conscious or cognitive being (or self) towards the objects other than self. All these terms imply *apriori* self-consciousness which is the attitude of the conscious being to itself, wherein the “known, knowing and the knower” are one and identical. So there are two different attitudes of the cognitive self; its attitude toward the objects other than itself, and its attitude towards itself. There must be a connective medium between the two attitudes of the cognitive self. The appropriate connective medium in between is self-love, the inseparable property of self-consciousness. And self-love implies, as its inseparable property, the love of self-expression.

This is the base of all the above-mentioned terms of creative and active attitudes. This connective medium between the two attitudes of conscious beings, in the case of the human cognitive self and possibility in the case of other finite cognitive selves may be associated perceptibly or other finite cognitive selves may be associated perceptibly or imperceptibly with some emotion and affection. Such a connective medium associated with any process of affecting the true of the Absolute One uncaused cause. Therefore, such emotional or affectionate love is to be negated from the absolute cause. But there should be some connective medium in between the two attitudes there also.

To the best human ability, that known medium may be termed as self-love and love of expression, but not associated with anything, as emotion and affection, affecting His Absoluteness, which is love-knowledge or intellectual love. In other words, the Absolute One being conscious of Himself means His absolute beauty. This knowledge makes Him to express all He is conscious of. Thus, by negation of the anthropomorphical aspect of love from the love attributed to Him, the analogical outlook of the argument is changed into another logical syllogism of affirming for Him the excellent aspect of an essential attribute, while negating from Him the defective aspect of the same attribute.

This is the height of human efforts in translating man's realization of the essence and the essential attributes of the Absolute Reality into conceptual terms. But the fact should never be forgotten in which to experience and realize a thing does not always mean to be able to express and describe the thing in exact conceptual terms. The best example is the human ego "I" which is the closest thing realized and experienced by everyone, but none can claim to be able to express and describe it in exact conceptual terms.

The eighth Imam Ali al-Rida pointed out though man in the state of realization of the Absolute Reality finds Him nearer to him than he is to himself, yet he is sure the most excellent terminologies are not adequate to be used about Him. Thus the Imam said, "All the divine names made known to us are created just to suit our intellectual limitations, otherwise He is so far above our understanding. His essence and attributes cannot be understood and adequately described by us." In reply to a question about the unity and justice of God, Ali says, "The height of recognition of His Absolute Oneness is one should not try to imagine Him, and the height of recognition of His actions."

He is the One though realized by very finite being, yet is far beyond their conceptual faculty to encompass and describe Him. This is the actual meaning of the name "Allah," the One who is known to all, in some way or other, whom all adore and to whom all resort for help with the utmost awe and reverence when the hope in all other means is lost, and in describing whom the understanding faculty of the finite beings is perplexed. This is the most comprehensive name of the Absolute One as it is known to every finite being. Though it is an abridged form of an abstract noun, *Elah*, with the definite article *Al* (The), it is inapplicable to any other being. It is treated as the sole proper name for the Absolute Self-existing One.

Meditate His Bounties

Even this name "Allah," notwithstanding its comprehensiveness and inapplicability to any other being, simply denotes the relation in which He stands to all finite beings. It is the greatest name of the Absolute which can be known to His creatures, otherwise His essence and essential attributes are far beyond the creature's power of comprehension. This is the reason the Prophet admonishes man not to mediate about the essence of the Absolute (Allah) but to mediate more and more on His bounties. Meditation on His bounties enables one to realize Him, but meditation on His essence perplexes one.

Nevertheless, in some stages of realization, even perplexity is unavoidable. The Holy Prophet prays, “Increase, oh Lord, my perplexity in You!” All these statements may look paradoxical but on the threshold of Infinity all paradoxes are the outcome of our limitations. Ali says, “By bringing opposite and paradoxical things into being one should realize He has no opposite and nothing is a paradox to Him. In Him all paradoxes vanish and by Him every being is reconciled and harmonized with the other.”

1. (a) In other words, the division of the origin into parts like the breaking of larger body into smaller bodies or pieces. – A huge nebula in its rotational movement of utmost velocity is broken into small pieces which are revolving around the parent nebula as its satellites. So the satellites were non-existent but came into existence by the process of separation from the parent nebula.

(b) Composition of the original parts into the shape of the whole. – Like the process of bodies of infinites (atoms) coming together in a particular way to form the parent nebula.

(c) Transformation by assumption of the origin of a new form. – Like transformation of a silkworm in the cocoon into a form of a butterfly or the change of a body into a solid, liquid or gaseous state.

(d) Reproduction, growth and decay. – Which is the process observable in living beings, i.e. plants, animals and humankind. These three processes (reproduction, growth, and decay) are always associated with the above process mentioned in (a), (b) and (c). These are termed (a) Tajzia (division), (b) Tarkib (composition), (c) Tahawwul (transformation), (d) Talid (introduction), (e) Numuw (growth), and (f) Dhubul (decay), respectively. These kinds of relations of the source of its product or cause to this effect are true of the structural causes, i.e. material or formal causes of a thing. By the term material or formal cause, we mean the cause which becomes the component, out of which the effect is made or the shape by which the effect becomes what it is.

(e) The relation of an agent to his work. – Like the relation of the builder, engineer, architect or the producer to the building, plan or drawings. In the process the agent is not part of the effect. He is not the originator of the material or formal components of the effect. He is only the producer, bringing the already existing material parts together in a particular shape. This effect is subsistence is not dependent on the producing agent.

(f) The relation of the object (purpose) to the building, the concept of which becomes the motive for the agent to undertake the production. – The relations of these two causes (e) and (f) to the effect are agential nature in the sense in which they are neither the components of the effect nor the originator of the effect. They do not bring the material or the formal part of the effect into existence. But one acts in bringing the material and formal parts together, and the other (purpose) makes the agent to act.

It is obvious the causal relation of the above-mentioned causes to their effects is not the relation of a complete determinative cause which does not require a further cause. Moreover, of these incomplete causes there is none to remain unaffected and unchanged in producing the effect. And none is consistent and inconformity with the absolute Oneness of the uncaused cause.

(g) The relation of a cognitive and volitive self to the idea produced by it (the self) within the region of the mind, with no other means but his own attention and will. – The ideas so originated in that region are totally dependent in their coming into being and their subsistence in their material and formal part on the will and intention of the self. The self is neither the formal nor the material components of the ideas, so it may in its effectiveness be affected by division, composition or transformation. Not is its activity like the incomplete producing agent or the motive of his action mentioned in (e) and (f).

The effectiveness of the cognitive self in bringing the ideas into existence within the region of the mind is not associated with any change in the essence or essential attributes of the self. The activity does not affect His Oneness. So this last causal relation can only be true of the Absolute One in His relation to the created many. This is called creation in its true

sense and the Qur'an terms it as *Ibda'* and this is what the term, "Be, then it is" (*Kunfayakun*) means (36:82).

It means the universe as a whole and part in its formal and material components, in its substance and attribute, is nothing but the outcome of the command, intention and will of the Absolute Conscious Creative Might. The Qur'an says that among His signs is the heavens and the earth are standing, subsisting by His Command and will.

It is from this angle what whatever was, is or will be – whatever existed, exists or will exist in any shape and form – is termed as the created word of God, i.e. the outcome of His creative will. And whatever ought to have been, ought to be now or in the future is the legislative word of God, the outcome of His legislative will.

Chapter 3: Revelation

Unique in Oneness

According to the Qur'an, He (Allah), the Absolute Reality and Truth, the Absolute Conscious One of Infinite Nature and Perfection, is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden, the All-in-All, the Self-existing, Self-sustaining, Unique in Oneness, not as the basis for all realities, but as the Creative Might by Whose agency every finite being exists, subsists and is sustained. What is true of every finite being is true of their total, which is termed as the universe (*'alam*) or is sub-divided as worlds (*'alamin*). Thus He is the Great (*al-'azim*). Nothing is devoid of Him and He is not devoid of anything. This means Absolute Fullness (*al-Samad*), All-pervading, All-embracing (*Bekul-e Shiyin Maheet*),¹ All-witnessing (*ala-Akul-e Shiyin Shahid*),² nearer to everything than the thing itself. At the same time, He is High, Sublime, Transcendent (*al-'Ala*) in that every finite being falls short of being co-extensive with Him in His essence or attributes and also incapable of reaching Him, because they all are finite while He is Infinite.

So, as the Immanent, He is everything and being in essence and attributes. But as the Transcendent he is with nothing and no being is with Him in essence or attributes. Everything is His manifestation. Therefore, He is identical and with everything, but nothing is identical with Him, nothing can be His incarnation even the universe as a whole. The Qur'an says, "**Surely those who said verily God is Christ or God and Christ are the same became disbelievers**" (17:72 – 73),³ i.e. these are those who co-extended Christ with God and identified him with God. Again the Qur'an says, "**Verily those who said, God is the third of the three became disbelievers**" (5:73). But in 58:7, the Qur'an says,

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ ۗ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۗ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ 73

There is no secret conference of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, more

of less than that or more but He is with them wheresoever they may be (but not counted with them). (58:7)

Hence, nothing can be associated with Him in any sense of the term (association or partnership); His is no partner. There is none comparable to Him (Ch. 57).⁴ There is nothing like Him.⁵ Therefore, in spite of His nearness (as Ali says, “I saw nothing but I behold God before, after, with and in the thing.”). He keeps all finites far from being identical or co-existing with Him. Hence, the most appropriate term of reference to Him by any being is He (*Hoo*), the personal pronoun in the third person, singular of masculine gender, and not I the *atman* of the *Upanishads*. One cannot deny the seeker of truth in his process of realization the possibility of his reaching a certain stage, wherein to him all limitations and boundaries of dualistic view of God and non-God, Creator and created, Worshipped and worshipper would banish, but his absolute monistic view, as opposed to the monotheistic view is purely subjective, a momentary state of mind.

Monism and polytheism are two extremes, out of religious bounds, which may meet in certain minds, but like the atheistic materialism, neither tallies with religious thought. Religious thoughts are based on the Absolute Reality of the Infinite One and the objective, yet relative, reality of many. Many in the sense that next to the Absolute Reality, the Absolute One, there are the relative realities of objective value, differing from each other in the degree of reality, oneness and finiteness.

{انظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۖ وَلَآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا} 21

See how we prefer one above another, and verily the hereafter will be greater in degrees and greater in preferment. (17:21).⁶

The Arc of Descent and Ascent

The higher in degree of reality, the closer it is to the Absolute Real. The realities of lesser degree are the manifestations of the higher ones. Thus, the hierarchy of the realities begins with the highest possible being, which is the immediate manifestation (emanation) of the Absolute and ends with the four dimensional primal matter, lowest and the least of all in the degrees of reality, with which the descending process terminates, and the ascending process of relative realities begins. Thus primal matter itself is the lowest revealed form of relative reality and becomes the ground for the evolutionary process, which forms another hierarchy of relative realities. It begins with matter in its simplest form and ends with man, the most complicated intellectual being of the highest order.

These two arcs of descent and ascent, the devolutionary and evolutionary hierarchies of relative realities, form the complete circle of Absolute Reality. These two arcs perfectly coincide with each other, so far as the stages and degrees are concerned. Every stage or degree in the arc of descent must have its corresponding stage and degree in the arch of ascent, so there could be no gap in either arc.

{الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَافُوتٍ ۚ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ} 3

{ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ} 4

Who created the seven heavens layer above layer? You see not in the creation of the Beneficent (God) any defect or incongruity. Then look you again. See you any gap? Then repeat your gaze again and again. Your gaze shall return unto you, dulled, being wearied. (67:3 – 4)

This is what the laws of radiation and reflection require. The two arcs are governed by the laws of radiation and reflection, or the laws of action and reaction. The arc of descent, the downward hierarchy, is radiation in the process of deflection and refraction, conditioned only with the nature, extent and duration of its immediate source from which it proceeds. It is unaffected by the conditions of the ground to which it reaches, while the arc of ascent is the reflection of the radiation, conditioned with the nature, number, extent and duration of the grounds which receive the radiation. The radiation may be one and of a long duration, but the reflection, with matter or material beings as its ground, may differ greatly from the radiation, in number and duration.

For instance, the soul or self to which one refers as I: **“By the soul as it is perfected,”**⁷ is the reflection of what is termed as spirit (*ruh*), the outcome of God’s creative will and command.⁸ Spirit is the radiation from God and is one, and has the relative degree of eternity due to its being unconditioned with the ever-becoming nature of the matter on which it works. But the soul is the reflection and result of the active spirit, conditioned by the changing and becoming nature of the material ground. Thus, with the grounds of different natures and qualities the reflection are bound to vary in number, nature, and duration while the active spirit remains the same.

{وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ} 50

And Our command is not but one word “Be” and it becomes, like the twinkling of an eye. (54:50)

{أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَابِيًا ۚ وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَاءَ حُلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِّثْلَهُ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ۚ فَأَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَاءً ۚ وَأَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ} 17

He sends down water from the heavens, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam (mounting to the surface). (Even so) and from that (the ore) what they melt in the fire for the sake of (making) ornaments or (the necessary) implements, arises a scum like it. Thus, compares God the truth and the falsehood, then as for the scum, it

passes away as a worthless thing, and as for which profits the people, then it remains in the earth. Thus does God set forth parables. (13:17)

However, the process of creation, manifestation, and development (including both the processes of devolution and evolution) is circular in the sense the process ultimately ends at the point from which it proceeds. Hence, to the theist the process begins with the highest and ends with highest.

{قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۚ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ 29}

Say you, “My Lord has enjoined justice and set you upright your faces at (each time and place) of prostration, and call upon Him being sincere exclusively unto Him in religion, even as He brought you forth (in the beginning) so unto Him shall also return.”(7:29)

{يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ ۚ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ ۚ وَعَدَا عَلَيْنَا ۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ 104}

On that day We roll up the heavens, as is rolled up the written scroll, as We caused the first creation, so will We get it returned. It is a promise binding Us, verily We were doing it. (21:104)

{قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِيُ الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ 49}

Say you, “The truth has come and falsehood neither brings forth anything nor does it reproduce.” (34:49)

But to the atheist, it begins with the lowest reality and it ends the same way.

{وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۚ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ 24}

And say they, “Naught it is save our life in this world, we die and live and destroys us not but time.” For them there is no knowledge of that: they do but (merely) guess. (45:24)

Absolute and Relative Reality

The conclusion is that (a) the Absolute Reality, the Infinite One, reveals or manifests Himself creatively, (which means producing an effect without being associated with any change in the cause) in the relative reality of the finite objects. These objects differ from each other in the degree of reality according to the stage they occupy in the hierarchy of relative realities. And (b) these finite objects owe their degrees of reality to their being His manifestation, subservient to His will.

{وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۚ سُبْحَانَهُ ۚ بَلْ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ كُلُّ لَّهُ قَانِتُونَ } 116

And they say God has taken unto Him a son. Glory be to Him. Nay! This is all which is in the heavens and the earth, Him (alone) everything obeys (suppliantly). (2:116)

{أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَتَفَيَّأُ ظِلَالُهُ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَالشَّمَائِلِ سُجَّدًا لِلَّهِ وَهُمْ دَاخِرُونَ } 48

Or see they not towards what God has created in which everything turns its shadow to the right and to the left, prostrating in obeisance unto God, while they lie abased. (16:48)

{أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ وَالدَّوَابُّ
{وَكَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۚ وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُهِنِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُكْرِمٍ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ } 18

See you not God (is He), unto Him prostrates whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth and the sun and the moon and the stars and the mountains and the trees and animals, and many of the people. (22:18)

{وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
27}}

And He it is Who originates the creation, then causes it to return again, and to Him is it most easy. His are the most exalted similtudes in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Almighty, the All-wise. (30:27)

{ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ } 11

Then He applied Himself unto the heaven, which was yet smoke, so said He unto it and unto the earth, “Come you two, willing or reluctant?” Said the two, “We do come willingly.” (41:11)

The finite objects of both the arcs of ascent and descent in and of themselves are nothing and having nothing. They are devoid of reality and all analytical attributes and excellences of the Absolute Reality, and whatever degree of reality or excellence they have is from Him.

{يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ } 15

Oh you people! You are the needy unto God, and God (alone) is he Who is the Self-sufficient, the

Most Praised One. (35: 15)

Therefore, in relation to the Absolute Reality, the finite objects have nothing of the excellence in themselves to be termed as inherent. Everything is from Him and is the revelation and manifestation of His will.

{وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ} 21

And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down but a known measure. (15:21)

This is the fact when we speak of the finite in relation to the Infinite. But if we speak of the Infinite as manifested in the finite, then the use of the prefix “in,” signifying the process from within to without, from into to out, inner to outer, is justified, and in this case the use of the term “I” also is justified because now it is God, the Infinite Who is referring to Himself. Here and elsewhere in the Qur’an, the use of “I” or “We” as the term of reference is justified, because it is God the Infinite Who is speaking of Himself through His creature or manifestation.

{يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ} 9

Oh Moses! Verily it is. I am God, the Almighty, the All-wise. (27:9)

{فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْأَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَنْ يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ} 30

When came he unto it (he) was called (by a voice) from the right side of the valley, in the blessed spot, from the tree, saying, “Oh Moses! Verily I am God, the Lord of the worlds. (28:30)

{وَتَادَيْنَاهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ الْأَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنَاهُ نَجِيًّا} 52

And We called unto him from the right side of Mount Sinai, and made him draw nigh (unto Us) for a communion. (19:52)

This is with regard to viewing the Infinite One and the finite many in relation to each other. The finites owe the degree and extent of their reality to the Infinite One Who has manifested Himself in them. Thus, as the manifestation of the Infinite Real One, the finites display all the attributes of reality, all which is identical with the reality (*wajib al-wojud*).⁹ Hence, cognition and volition, self-consciousness, self-love and will are necessarily displayed in the finites in accordance with the degree of the reality they display. Even primal matter, of dimensional and ever-becoming nature, the least and lowest in the degree of

reality, which for all practical purposes is considered to be void of consciousness and will, is, according to the Qur'an, not totally void and bereft of these excellences.

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ ۚ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا {44}

Celebrate His glory the seven heavens and the earth, and (all) those in them, and there is not anything but it glorifies Him, but you understand not their glorification. Verily, He is the Forbearing, the Oft-forgiving. (17:44)

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ {11}

Then He applied Himself unto the heaven, which was yet only a smoke, so said He unto it and unto the earth, "Come you two willing or reluctantly?" Said the two, "We do come willingly." (41:11)

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ۚ وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ
الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ {12}

And he made them seven heavens in two days (periods), and revealed in every heaven His will, and adorned We the lower heavens with lights (of the brilliant stars), and made it guarded (with angels). This is the decree of the Almighty, the All-knowing. (41:12)

{سَبِّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ {1}

They all praise the Lord of the universe: praise whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth the Glory of God, and He is the Ever-prevalent, the All-wise. (59:1)

{سَبِّحَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ {1}

Hallows God whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and He is the Ever-Prevalent, the All-wise. (61:1)

{يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ {1}

Hallows the Glory of God whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. His (exclusively) is the kingdom and unto Him (only) is due (all) praise, and He (alone) is over all things, All-powerful. (64:1)

{وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عَابِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ} 3

Your Lord has revealed unto her. (109:5)

The heavens, earth, matter and material beings of celestial or terrestrial realms, in accordance with their degree of reality, are all associated with some degree of cognition and volition. They are dominated and administered by a spiritual force which is termed by some scientists as the “fifth dimension,” responsible for such phenomena as are inexplicable in terms of four dimensional space-time. In short, life in its highest sense, i.e., consciousness which is identical with the Real One of Infinite Creative Might, is bound to assert itself in some way or other and to some degree in every manifestation of Him, even in matter and material beings. [10](#)

Finite in Relation to Finites and in Relation to its Various Aspects

Besides the two aforesaid angles of the finites in relation to the Infinite and the finites in relation to the finites, there are two other points of views: (1) that of the finites in relation each other and (2) that of every finite in relation to its own various aspects. According to the first viewpoint, the terms (prefixes) “in and out,” “inner and outer,” may find their application. The finites of higher grades in the arc of descent may be considered as “Ins” or inner aspects of lower ones, which in turn may be viewed as the “Outs,” or outer aspects or revelation of higher ones. But the arc of ascent the finites of lower grades from the “Ins,” i.e. inner layers, the latent potentiality and possibility of the higher ones. They (the higher layers), in turn may be considered as the developments of the lower ones.

The difference between the Ins and Outs of the two arcs is the process in the former is from Absolute Reality, actuality and creativeness to the utmost possibility, potentiality and recipience, while in the latter the process is reversed, i.e. from possibilities, potentiality and recipiency to reality, actuality and creativeness. Hence, the appropriate term for it is development, the process of becoming, what one was not, or having what one did not have, as opposed to revelation which is the process of displaying what is already inherent in certain faculties and power. But, as the law of sufficient reasoning requires, development in this sense cannot take place without the direct or indirect assistance of some creative agencies of the former arc (the arc of descent).

The developments in the world of matter, celestial or terrestrial, are affected either through the psychical and intellectual forces, faculties or entities of the arc of descent, termed as angels, or through the

agency of the material beings or psychical or intellectual attainment (such as man, animal and plant) and even the rotating nucleus of the atomic or solar system which are in correspondence with those of the other arc. Thus, in all material developments the developed forms have two aspects, the potential and actual; the former is rooted in matter and comes from within, while the latter is not in matter, it is revealed to matter by the agency which is actual in some way or other.

The material used in the structure of a machine has the potentiality for the form and the form is the developed state of that potentiality, but, the form is given to the material by the intellectual agency of man. Actualization or realization of potentialities is always accomplished by some actual agency. The materials of the embryo have the potentiality of becoming the child, capable of assuming the form of a baby.

{هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ 6}

He it is Who fashioned you in the wombs (of your mothers) as he likes. There is no God but He, the Almighty, the All-wise. (3:6)

Revelation Qur'anic terms, Atom, Soul, Ego, Appetite, Self-consciousness

Before dealing with the last viewpoint concerning finite of the arc of ascent in relation to its own various aspects, the term revelation used hitherto should be further clarified. Revelation literally means removal of the veil, to show what is hidden. The Arabic equivalents of the term in this sense are ***ibad', izhar, i'lam, tamsil*** and ***tajali***, (i.e. disclosure or communication of the divine will and message through unusual and super-natural means), are specific shades of the meaning of the term. The most suitable Arabic equivalent of revelation is the term *Wahy* and its derivatives as used in the Qur'an. But revelation does not convey the exact meaning of the term *nazala* or *nuzulu* and their derivatives used in the Qur'an. The term in all its shades of meaning keeps the sense of "coming down to evidence." It applies to concerns to concrete objects and concrete ups and downs as well as the abstract objects and abstract ups and downs.

{وَلَيْنُ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ ۗ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۗ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ 63}

And if you ask them, "Who sends down from heaven the water, and gives life with it unto the earth after its death?" Certainly will they say, "God!" Say, "All praise is His." Nay! most of them understand not. (29:63)

{وَأِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ} 21

And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down but in a known measure. (15:21)

{وَأِنَّهُ لَتَنْزِيلُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ} 192

{نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ} 193

{عَلَى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ} 194

And verily it has come down from the Lord of the Worlds. Came down with it the Spirit trusted, upon thee (oh Our Prophet Muhammad), in which you may be the warner. (26:192 – 194)

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ} 25

Indeed sent We our Apostles with clear proofs, and sent We down with them the Books and the scale which people may establish themselves in justice, and sent We down iron wherein is latent (in its use) mighty power and also benefits for humankind and God may prove who helps Him and His Apostles in secret. Verily God is All-strong, the Ever-prevalent. (57:25)

Descent and Ascent

It has also been used for physical and concrete objects coming into existence and evidence (*zahur*) as if the descended from the height of Godhead or of the angelical realm to the ground of the material world. In other words, the term descent (*nuzul*) used in the Qur'an implies coming down from above, while the term revelation used in the English language as its equivalent implies hidden and apparent. The opposite of descent (*nuzul*) is ascent and development (*sa'ud, 'uruj' iritqa*). Having these terminological differences in perspective we go back in the viewpoint in question, i.e. every finite of the arc of ascent in relation to its various aspects. The four dimensional matter, the starting point in the arc of ascent in the inert ground, the carrier of unlimited possibilities, potentialities and receptivities. Through the agency of the immaterial force, in immediate touch with it, the matter is divided into the smallest quantitative particles or atoms or specific individualities (the *dharrah* of the Qur'an).

Each individual entity or unit as such, is composed of the rotating central part which has been proven,

recently, to be composed of three components known as proton, positron, and neutron, and the revolving satellitic parts. The central part is the ground for receiving radiation, energy or force with one hand and reflecting it to the extent of its immediate potentiality with the other. This reflection, or the energy conditioned by the immediate recipiency of the ground, is the soul, working in the mechanism of the atomic unit. This is the dynamic force which produces, first, rotation in the central part and subsequently, revolution in the satellites. Of the material and physical forces none produces such effect without some mechanical device which is absent here; it is matter in its simplest and inorganic form.

Hence, the force is immaterial with which every atom is distinguished from the other and to which it owes its individuality. Thus we can term the atom as the primal cell, the smallest living component in the structure of bigger bodies, notwithstanding the fact, in which bodies composed of them which are lacking the faculty of nourishment, growth and reproduction, are considered inanimate and lifeless because the question of life and death, living and non-living, is like the question of degree or kind, purely relative. So to term them inanimate is justified in comparison to plants, etc. and to term them living cells from the other consideration is also justified. What is true of the atom is true of the big bodies of terrestrial, celestial, earthly and heavenly realms.

From their primitive stages, to their fully developed forms, from their nebular conditions up to the fully grown solar system, all these bodies owe their rotational, spiral, revolutionary and other movements essential in the process of their formation, to the specific immaterial energy which has individualized the body as a unit. This is the specific immaterial reflection (psyche, soul or self) of the immaterial radiation from the arc of descent.

The principle applied to the formation of the atom – the smallest unit of the simplest form of matter, applies also to the formation of the molecule, the smallest unit of the composite bodies. When two or more atoms of different kinds join together and form a common centre, termed as nucleus, a molecule of the composite bodies, such as water, air and other solid, liquid and gaseous substance is formed. The nucleus of the molecule so formed, as the higher centre, governs the centre, of every component atom which is its subordinate. The new centre owes its development and actualization to some immaterial agency. It becomes the central ground for new radiations and new reflections.

Thus the new soul, new self or new psychic force individualizes the various material substances, which form the new stage of material development. We term the new stage, figurative, as the new layer or stratum. This layer or stratum in turn becomes the ground for the development of the protoplasm, which is the original and substantial ground for new forms of life, found commonly in the kingdoms of plants, animals and human beings. The process is generally the same. Molecules of various substances – oxygen, hydrogen, carbon and nitrogen – join together in particular proportions and form a common central ground, the nucleus of vegetable life. This ground receives and reflects the immaterial energy which produces movements of various directions – nourishment, growth, self-repair and reproduction – within the simplest organ, termed as the primitive cell, or protoplasm. This stage is the third stratum in

the course of development and is the ground for further developments through the same process. By the combination of the living cells of different kinds in various forms and ratios under a common centre of a more complicated nature and of a higher capacity of specific kinds, new individual souls and new lives of various species come into being and start their progress.

These selves, souls or ego-centres are surrounded by their (1) internal layers or strata, (2) external environments of physical nature, terrestrial and celestial, and (3) immaterial agencies of the arc of descent. They (the ego-centres are always in the stage of give and take, act and react, govern and be governed and receive and reflect. They influence and govern their inner layers and strata or the subordinate centres within them and in return they are also influenced and governed by them. They influence and are influenced. Their relation with the immaterial agencies of the lower grades is also the same as of the material environment, i.e. reciprocal. But their relation with the agencies of higher grades is of a beggar to a giver, the more the begging and want, the more the giving and enrichment.

The vegetable soul at its zenith of the faculty of nourishment, growth and reproduction is the base for the development of animal faculties, such as appetite, lust, sensory, and voluntary movement. The height of vegetable life is the ground of animal life. These animal faculties imply *apriori* the higher degree of self-consciousness, self-love, self-preservation and self-expansion which are absent in the vegetable kingdom. These are the subjective aspects of the animal self or soul. In the order mentioned here one is the basis and background of the objective aspect of all animal faculties of cognition, volition, emotion and instinct. Self-consciousness is the root and background of the development of all the subjective and objective aspects and the organs and instruments of animal faculties.

It is true of all animals. The difference between one animal and another in this respect may be the difference of degree, number and extent of the faculties. From the simplest cell, insect, reptile, to the most complicated mammalia of the land, the high animals of the sea and air, all have these in common and vary from each other only in degree and kind. The sensual faculty which begins with the sense organ of touch (with all its varieties) to the sense of sight and hearing is based on self-consciousness.

Sense: Basis of Imagination and Memory on which Intellectual Faculty is Based – A Gift

The senses in turn form the basis for development of the faculties of imagination and memory, which are the zenith of the animal mind. The animal kingdom may be divided and classified according to the degree, number and kind of senses and power of imagination and memory. However, the animal mind has two ways out to the material world surrounding it. One is the external senses which connect the mind to the surrounding material world directly and the other is the internal strata or the subordinate self-centres are pre- and post-vegetable stages which connect the mind to the surrounding world of matter indirectly. They are the unconscious and the subconscious strata of the animal soul. They are subjacent to the animal conscious self. They are the seat of vegetable and animal instincts, which form

the basis of appetite, lust, emotion and volition.

Thus, though the instincts are working within the animal soul, and influence its course of activities, they are material connected with the outside world. Besides the instincts which are common to all animals, the memory in the higher animals becomes the second indirect link which connects the mind with the world perceived through external senses. It stores and preserves all the images and impressions received through external senses and all the emotional processes caused by these impressions or by the working of internal instincts. The imagination with all its creative power would be totally nil if it were detached from memory.

Imagination and memory are the zenith of the animal mind and the ground of human reasoning, which means the power of discovery and invention or in a better term used in the Qur'an, the power of expression, *al-bayan* – the power with which man is distinguished from all other animals:

{عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ} 4

He taught him expressions. (55:4)

It is the power through which the ego-centre of man brings forth creatively whatever impression it has received or formed from the surrounding regions. It is this power of expression which reproduces the impressions intelligibly received either directly as they were received (which is discovery), or in a new form not received before (which is invention).

The Qur'anic term, power of expression, is very close to the Greek term Logos or power of speech used in Logic for reasoning and "rational-soul" (*nafs-e natiqa*), the speaking soul. But the word "expression" in its literal sense is more comprehensive than speech, though figuratively each can be used in the place of the other as equivalent and co-extensive. "Expression" includes both discovery and invention brought to evidence and conveyed to others through speech, writing, signs, building and action, while speech in its literal sense is only one way of expression.

However, the function of the intellectual faculty of reasoning is to proceed from the known to the unknown by the process of generalization and particularization, by extracting general ideas from the particular objects of senses and by applying the general ideas to the particular objects of sense. The basis for this function is the self-evident concepts and propositions. These form the basic and categorical mode of the conscious self in the intellectual stage. These are the *apriori* subjective conditions of the intellectual conscious self. There are the actual human modes of intellect into which the animal conscious self-develops. This mode of mind like all other specific modes and forms owes its actuality to the two corresponding factors already pointed out, namely to passive receptivity of the ground (which here is the animal's conscious self in its zenith of imagination and memory and the creative agency of the arc of descent (which here must be the higher immaterial being or intellectual

faculty).

These subjective conditions are undoubtedly acquired and are not inherent in the animal's conscious self. But their acquisition of the sensory objects depends on the prior presence of these subjective conditions. It cannot also be through the substrata of the animal self (the unconscious, subconscious and the animal and the vegetable instincts). They are far from having such cognitive faculties and must be considered as the reflection of the descending radiations of the arc of descent, or reflections caused by some super-conscious faculties. In other words, they are the gift from Him through super-natural means.

{إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا} 2}

Verily We created man from a small insignificant life drop of inter-mingled life germ (of both sexes), in order We put him to trial, so We endowed him with hearing, seeing. (76:2)

{وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ} 78}

And God has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers – you knew not anything, and He gave you hearing and sight and heart, in which you may give thanks. (16:78)

However, this gifted primitive intellectual state is the actual mode of the human mind or the human conscious self in comparison to the animal states of mind and the animal conscious self. But with regard to the higher stage of intellectual development, this stage is rightly termed by Avicenna, as “Potential Intellect,” (*aql-e hyulani*).

The second stage, according to him, is the stage of the “Actual Intellect” (*aql-e bil fai’i*) when the subjective conditions come into the focus of consciousness. The next or third is the stage of the “Holding Intellect” (*aql-e bil malikah*) when these conditions begin to reflect on the object of the senses. The fourth stage is termed “researching intellect” (*aql-e bil mustafad*), the stage of gaining data and information and forming ideas. The fifth is the stage of the “Creative Intellect” (*aql-e fa’al*). When the conscious self has reached the highest intellectual faculty of creativeness it attains the zenith of the human mind, where all the psychical processes surrounding the conscious self are focused and radiated.

In the process of reasoning down from general to particular (the deductive process) and vice versa, reasoning up from particular to general (the inductive process), the creative intellect forms two arcs of descent and ascent within the region of the mind, similar to the two arcs of creation, but in a very diminished and miniature form. As in the case of creation, here also the two arcs of descent and ascent form a complete circle of ideas, differing in the degree of universality and comprehensiveness.

Revolving Process of Creation and Reasoning – Belief in Bada‘a a-Naskh

But the most important point to be noted here is that, in spite of the fact that both the process of divine creation (of which man is a link) and the process of human reasoning within the region of the human mind are circular and revolving, it does not necessarily mean repetition and recurrence of events, the theory adhered to by many schools of thought to the extent it has become proverbial – “history repeats itself.” The circular movement or process would certainly mean repetition and recurrence, if the orbit of movement would remain the same. But neither in the case of creation nor in reasoning does the orbit of the process necessarily remain the same. In the case of creation, the unlimited conscious might of the Absolute, in the course of its creative descent of refracting nature terminates in the primal matter or the four dimensional ground of unlimited receptivity.

The unlimited might acting on the ground of unlimited receptivity – four dimensional ground (space–time) or ever–becoming ground, the ground of constant change, results necessarily, as its reaction and reflection, in the appearance (or coming into existence) of new finite beings of links in the chain and order of creation. By adding new links the orbit expands necessarily. By expansion of the orbit, more potentialities and receptivities come to the central ground for development. So, along with unlimited length of the fourth dimension, the orbit of creation expands. Hence, in no round will the circle remain exactly as before, so there is no repetition of the events.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنِحَةٍ مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعٍ ۖ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا
{يَشَاءُ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ} 1

(All) praise is God’s, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Maker of the angels, messengers flying on wings, two, and three, and four: he adds to his creation whatever he wills. Verily God over all things has power. (35: 1)

{وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ} 47

And the heaven, We did raise it up with (Our) Might, and We make the vast extent (thereof). (51:47)

In the case of the intellectual process, the expansion of the orbit is clearer because the conscious self of every individual is a link in the expanding process of creation. He is connected with the two arcs of creation: the active immaterial agencies of the arc of descent and the recipient of the arc of ascent. Hence, along with the expansion in such surroundings the expansion of the human intellect in its circular process of reasoning is inevitable. The revolution and evolution in the objective and subjective worlds of

creation and reasoning, or in the world without human self-consciousness and the world within it, are necessary and go together. So the known, the knowing and the knower with regard to man are in constant cyclical evolution. Hence the Qur'an instructs: **Say (oh Prophet), "Oh my Lord, increase my knowledge,"**¹¹ and the Prophet says, "In loss is he whose two days remain the same (unchanged)."¹²

This theory of evolutionary course in the revolving process of creation and reasoning plays a very important part in solving many metaphysical, theological, ethical, social and political problems. It is one of the most important premises in the arguments against (a) absolute pre-determinism, (b) the quantitative fixity of the total of matter and energy, the eternity and indestructibility of their total, though one is reducible into the other, and (c) the theory of transmigration, reincarnation, or the earthly rebirth of the finite soul which has departed from its previous earthly form or body. The theory of evolutionary course is the basic point in favour of the theory of *bada'a* adhered to and advocated by the Shi'ah school of thought, which means the possibility of change in the given system of creation, development or legislation, hitherto unknown to man or even to the higher agencies of the arc of descent.

Bada'a or *naskh* means the possibility of sudden or gradual change in the system of creation not known to man. The knowledge of the change remained with God unrevealed to the mind of man in the arc of ascent or even to the intellectual agencies of the arc of descent because the specific potentiality for development was too far from the central ground to justify revealing it to the intellectual agencies of the two arcs. As the Qur'an says, **"They (the intellectual agencies) do not comprehend aught of His knowledge save to the extent He wills."** (2:255)

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۗ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

He knows what is before them and what is behind them, while they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge save which He wills. (2:255)

So *bada'a* and *naskh* means the appearance of new objects of the creative or legislative will of God in the code of creation in legislation which were not known before, nor expected by the angels. It does not contradict what was revealed before; rather it means revelation of what was not revealed before. Otherwise, whatever the angels of either arc have shown to be the object of the creative will of God, is bound to happen, "God is far from belying His own Messengers and Prophets" (Ref. *Kafi, Bab al-Bada'a*). So there is no such thing as contradiction of information given by the divine agencies. Similarly, it is imperative in which man should do whatever they (the divine agencies) have shown to be the object of the legislative will of God. So there is no abrogation of divine orders.

The case of Prophet Ibrahim's sacrificing his son was in complete accord with what appeared to Ibrahim in a dream, i.e. he saw in a dream he was slaughtering his son, and it was in accord with the interpretation which appeared to the son, Isma'il. Ibrahim saw in a dream what he was doing and the son understood it was an order which was obeyed completely. The act of slaughtering which Ibrahim had to

do, was done, and the patience and readiness which the son had to show, was shown. ¹³ They both did what they were order to do. Being slaughtered was in God's hand and was withheld from Him. There is no question of abrogation of any order or contradiction of any information. Therefore, any tradition that an infallible representative of God had been informed by Him and he (the representative) in turn informed the people of the happening of a certain event, which did not happen as it had been foretold, is false. The story of Adam given in the Qur'an (2:30) says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۗ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝ 30

(Recollect oh Our Apostle Muhammad) when your Lord said unto the angels, “Verily I (intend to) appoint a vicegerent on the Earth.” They said, “Will though (oh our Lord) appoint therein one who will cause mischief and shed blood, while we celebrate by Your praise and hallow You alone?” Said (the Lord to the angels), “Verily, I know what you know not.” (2:30)

This is the best example of a revelation and disclosure to the high intellectual agencies of the arc of descent (angels) about a specific object of the creative will of God which was new in that it was yet to appear on the scene of creation. Ali said about *bada'a* (appearance of sudden change in the system of creation), “God has in His knowledge innumerable changes to be effected, in the system of creation, which may come into evidence all of a sudden. Were not the system of creation subject to change I would have informed you of all that was going to happen until Resurrection Day.”

In the case of Adam, God revealed to Adam, first, all the names of certain entities and he in turn was ordered to inform the angels of those names. This is what we call the appearance of “new schemes of creation” or “legislation” in the Book of Providence to be revealed to the angels of either or both the arcs. It is obvious that *bada'a* in this sense has no application to God at all. He is All-knowing, Almighty. Nothing in the heavens and the earth is absent from Him. His knowledge of even the minutest of the objects of creation or legislation remains unchanged, before, during and after the time of creation and legislation. He is the Creator of time and space. He is not affected by space and time, either in His essence or in His attributes.

Nature of Divine Knowledge and Planning

In other words, the terms prior and posterior (*taqaddum ta'khur*) and before and after (*qabl, ba'd*) are relative. They may be used in relation to time, order, rank, position and even possession. It is obvious that all things are known to Him at once. His knowledge embraces everything and He cannot be supposed at any given time to know something and be ignorant of others. All are known to Him at once, and simultaneously in relation to time and forever. So there is no question of His prior or posterior knowledge of any object so far as time is concerned. The question is whether the terms prior and

posterior can be used about His knowledge in relation to the *order* of the known objects.

For the sake of analysis only His knowledge of the objects other than Himself may be differentiated from His knowledge of His essence. His knowledge of His own essence may be said to be prior to His knowledge of His own attributes. It is true the real attributes, such as knowledge and love, are actually identical with His essence and with each other. But from an analytical point of view these ideas differ from the essence, and from each other, too. So, in this respect, His attributes would have the essence and the essence would have been composed of those ideas. The same would be the case of those ideas in relation to each other; every idea would be composed of the other. Thus, though everything is known to Him at the same time He is known to Himself, yet the knowledge of Himself, speaking analytically, is prior to the knowledge of His attributes.

It is through His attributes in which the finite objects are known to Him. In this manner, among the finite objects, His knowledge of those ideas and objects which are more universal and comprehensive may be classified as prior to His knowledge of those ideas and objects which are less in universality and comprehensiveness – the ideas which tend more towards particularity. In short, simultaneous knowledge of two things does not necessarily mean they are co-ordinate in being known. The knowledge of one may be sub-ordinate to the knowledge of the other. The knowledge of the real cause means simultaneous knowledge of the effect, but in order of sequence of the knowledge of the other. The knowledge of the real cause means simultaneous knowledge of the effect, but in order of sequence the knowledge of the latter may be taken as sub-ordinate and posterior to the knowledge of the former.

The knowledge of the cause implies the knowledge of the effect, the explicit knowledge of the cause means the implicit knowledge of the effect, but explicit knowledge of the latter is next in the order of sequence of the explicit knowledge of the former. Thus, the knowledge of the attributes is implicit to His knowledge of His own essence, but explicitly they are not there. The explicitly knowledge of the attributes is posterior in order to the explicit knowledge of the essence. Similarly, the explicit knowledge of the attributes implies the knowledge of the finite object of the highest order in universality and comprehensiveness, but its explicit condition is next in rank and order and is sub-ordinate to the explicit knowledge of the attributes. So, the knowledge of the finite object of the highest order implies the knowledge of the object next to it, in causal order and rank.

The explicit knowledge of the higher means implicit knowledge of the lower, but the explicit knowledge of the lower cannot be aligned in everything, every being, essence, attribute is known and present to Him explicitly, at one and the same time but each in its own stage and not in the prior stage. Any Qur'anic passage or apostolic statement which seems to indicate there was or will be with Him or there was or will be a time when something was not or will not be known to Him, should be interpreted as to mean a certain stage and state and not any point of time.

Instead of the pronoun for time, “when,” it should be taken to mean the pronoun for stage and state, “where.” Once a sage was asked about the meaning of the celebrated saying of the Holy Prophet, “God

was, when nothing else was with Him,” and he said, “Even now He is as He was, there is nothing with Him.” It means in the state of His absoluteness nothing else (finite) was, is or will be with Him. This should be the exact interpretation of the first verse of Chapter 76:

{هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا } 1}

Surely did come over man to pass an occasion of time when he was nothing mentioned of? (76:1)

Al-dahr is duration (time), as an undivided length of time or “eternity to eternity.” In the last sense time is almost synonymous with *abad* (always), *sarmad* (continue), constant, permanent and perpetual. In other words, time has two aspects – non-constant and changing, and constant and perpetual. Time as a whole is perpetual and in part is non-constant and changing. The total, the constant and perpetual aspect of time is *dahr* and its changing and non-constant aspect is *hin* (occurrence). The relation of events to the changing aspect of time, past, present or future is *hin*: (a) the relation of one changing phenomenon to another changing phenomenon is time. The relation of the changing parts of time to its undivided whole is *dahr*. The relation of changing phenomenon to the perpetual one is *dahr*. (b) The perpetual aspect of time to the self-subsistent one is *sarmad* (c), i.e. the relation of perpetual to perpetual is *sarmad* (*diam*).

Having this meaning of *dahr* in view, some important implications of this seemingly simple passage of the Holy Book may be pointed out. It asserts (1) that *dahr*, the constant and perpetual change, though it has perpetuity as its constituent; it has also change, *hin*, as another constituent. And such an idea which is composed of change cannot be held as the self-subsistent origin of the events, the atheistic doctrine of time (*dahriat*) to which the Qur’an refers:

{وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۚ إِن هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ } 24}

And say they, “Naught it is save our lie in this world; we die and live and destroys us not but time.” For them there is no knowledge of that. They do but (merely) guess. (45:24)

Because of the idea of change as its essential component, there can be no “self” to be termed as subsistent.

Therefore, this perpetual aspect, this continuity and everlastingness of time cannot be by time itself. It must be by something else, unchangeable, by something subsisting by itself. Actual time is nothing but a moment which like the geometrical point has no length at all, to be divided into past, present and future. The length is abstracted (and drawn) from the coming of moment after moment or say from the act of becoming, and an act as such requires something as the subject of becoming, and an agent to produce this becoming of the subject. The subject of becoming must be a thing identical with becomingness,

something the nature of which is becomingness. Take for instance speech, the utterance of any word, phrase or sentence.

Though all its parts, the letters, are present in the mind simultaneously yet in assuming the form of sound in pronunciation, the parts are bound to appear in succession, one letter after the other, because the sound is a particular form of movement, its parts cannot in the nature of things come into being but in a successive way. This successive continuity is not effected by itself, nor by the previous part which has been uttered before the next comes into being. It is the effect of the continuous attention of the speaker to achieve his aim of conveying his ideas to the listeners. The attention embraces all the parts of speech at once, the gradual nature of the sound which the effectiveness of the attention is restricted from simultaneity to successional order. In this way the continuity of successive events depends on the constancy of the power or force behind the gradual happenings. Perpetual phenomenon owes its perpetuity to the perpetual cause behind it which is ultimately the self-subsistent (*sarmad*), and the changing and becoming phenomenon owes its becomingness to something of which becomingness is caused and cannot be the first cause uncaused.

On the other hand, the passage implies refutation of the doctrine which holds the inner self of man, the *atmun* as the perpetual background of all phenomenal changes. So the *atmun* is held to be the self-subsisting and the “Absolute Reality” behind all finite multiplicities which, according to their theory, are nothing but delusion. This doctrine has been presented in various terms, the Eternal word, the heavenly man, the third person in the trinity. This is the eternal man who appears in the form of finite material being of inanimate and animate entities, such as stone, plant, animal and men.

He deteriorates himself into the sensual and material bondage. Fettered with the consequences of his action, he is transferred or transformed from one body to another, better or worse than the previous one, until he is ultimately released and goes back to heaven or reappears on the terrestrial scene as *aowtar* or reincarnate of the Absolute one.

The doctrine of eternal man or of the eternity of the human soul is rooted in the pagan cults of the Hindus and the Greeks, most probably of Chaldean origin. However, the Qur’an refers to both the earthly and heavenly phases of man, and asserts that not only has his earthly phase undergone the evolutionary process of development from the simplest material form to the highest intellectual state of free choice,

{إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا 2}

Verily We created man from a (small insignificant) life drop of inter-mingled life germ (of both sexes), in order We put him to trial, so We endowed him with hearing, seeing.” (76:2)

But even with regards to his heavenly phase, an occasional part (*hin*) of time (*dahr*) has passed when

man was nothing to be mentioned. In a certain stage of eternity the explicit notion of man is absent, though implicitly it is there. In the stage of God's explicit knowledge of His attributes, the perfect men are implicitly known, but not mentioned. This passage asserts that in certain stages of eternity, even the (explicit) notion of man is absent. As stated by the Imams (of the *Ahl al-Bayt*) the real man (the most perfect man) is in eternity (in the knowledge of God) but implicitly and unnoticed in certain stages already pointed out. So, a being as such cannot be termed as eternal. Eternity in its true sense is not applicable but to the Absolute One – the Divine Essence – which according to the Imams has no name, no sign, no predicate to be said about Him, save that “He Is” and “Is is He.”

This fact is referred to by Ali, “Whatever is known directly is made (is created),” and the sixth Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq says, “Whatever you defined and distinguished in its most exact sense, it is created like yourself and it returns to you. It mirrors your mind only and not the Reality.” There can be no Eternal but the One who is absolute and indefinable. Anything or being defined is not the Absolute, but is the manifestation of the Absolute, and therefore, dependent on the absolute, and is not self-existent or self-subsistent. So it is in some sense or other that can be said here, as though the first manifestation of the Absolute is finite and definable, and so in relation to *sarmad* (eternity) is an event, yet as it embraces implicitly all the subsequent chains of events (the finites of lesser degree), it can be termed as eternal relative (in relation to the finites and events which it implies).

Thus, the first manifestation, or the perfect man, is an event from one aspect and is eternal from another aspect. The implicit existence of real and perfect man in the high grades of relative eternity refers to the traditions and the apostolic statements which indicate the perfect men of highest order had a shadow-like existence in the peaks of the hierarchy of the arc of descent prior in order to all other possible beings of high order.

However, it should be borne in mind that all such apostolic statements, referring to the pre-physical existence of man, implicitly or explicitly, as a shadow, as a light illuminated from the light, or as luminous letters of symbolical significance should be understood to mean the various aspects of the spirit, radiated from God; the spirit of God infused into man, and not the souls of individuals which are the reflections of the radiated spirit, conditioned with the recipient nature of the grounds. The individual soul of man to which everyone refers as “I” (first person singular) is an event which comes into being, in the first stage, as a material power, fettered with all the conditions of space, time and the laws of evolution. It is through the constant activity of the radiated and radiant spirit which this material power (the soul in its early stage of development) begins to raise itself from the material fetters to the level of immaterial sphere of freedom – that is the level of the immediate radiating spirit of which the soul is a reflection.

The main reason for emphasis on *bada'a* is to assert the destiny of creatures is not determined by God (Providence) in disregard of the creature's recipiency, merits and efforts. The destiny of man, pleasure or pain, paradise or hell as a consequent, is predictable by anyone who knows the antecedent causes. But the knowledge of the antecedent is not the cause of the consequent. God, the Omniscient, knows of

every antecedent and every consequent before they come into being. But His knowledge of the antecedents and the consequents is not the cause of their coming into being. His knowledge of the preceding and the following events justifies only His prediction, and does not hold Him responsible.

To some this argument may appear fallacious, in the sense it is true the knowledge of the cause is not the cause of the effect. It is the cause of the causes. We are concerned with the knowledge which is the cause of, and responsible, for, the effect. We are dealing with the knowledge of the first cause—uncaused which is the first and the ultimate cause of every finite being, big or small, material or immaterial, and of their essence and attributes and their total. The brief answer to this question is there are two kinds of knowledge. One is the knowledge on which the known depends and the other is the knowledge which depends on the known. Take the example of an architect who intends to plan a building. By his intention associated with his creative knowledge of architecture he creates a space (a ground) in his mind and then he begins to specify every portion of the imagined space (or ground) for a particular department of the intended building.

The imagined space (or ground) may be round triangular, square, pentagon or polygon, etc. Each of these shapes and figures has its own inherent and peculiar property which cannot be otherwise. A circular ground cannot have angles. No power can create a circle with angles. A triangular figure cannot be without three angles, nor can it have four or two angles. A creator can create within or without his mind any triangle, but he cannot give an angle more or take away one or more angles from it. Three angles are the analytical property of a triangle and therefore are uncaused. The same is true of other shapes. They have their analytical properties uncaused. Every ground of peculiar shape is suitable for a specific form of building for which no other shape is suitable.

Besides these, every ground has its centre, circumference, and the parts in between. Every part is suitable for a particular department for which the other parts are not. The parts were not arranged in the whole by the architect after the whole was imagined. The architect imagined the whole (the space). That imagination of the whole implies all the parts as its inherent and intrinsic property. Then the specific suitability of each part is also the inherent and analytical property thereof. It is not a synthetic attribute, an additional ability to require a cause of its own. Thus the architect with his creative knowledge of architecture imagined the whole space (or ground) directly and the parts and their specific suitability indirectly. So the parts and their suitability are uncaused in the sense in which they require no separate cause. Enough is the cause of the whole to be their cause.

This knowledge of architecture is the first phase of the architect's knowledge without which the ground for designing could not be imagined. This is the knowledge on which the known depends. The second phase of his knowledge is the detailed planning and specifications of every part for a particular department, which depends on the specific suitability of each part, which is the inherent and analytical property of the part, and hence uncaused. Therefore, it is true to say there are two divine determinations – one is pre-detailed planning (*qabl at-taqdir*) and the other is post-detailed planning (*qada ba'd at-*

taqdir). The creative knowledge associated with the intention, *mashiat ula* (determination) to create, is the cause on which the whole, parts and their specific suitabilities depend. But the knowledge of the course of development and the ultimate destiny of every part and particle of the universe and of the whole cannot but be in accordance with the specific nature and suitability of each, and so depends on it (i.e. on the specific nature and suitability).

The divine knowledge of the post-planning which is associated with the final determination has obviously taken *a priori* into account the specific nature, quality, function and action of every part of the whole, which are based on the inherent nature and suitability. So, it is true the divine planning (*taqdir*) which is followed by final determination (*qadha-i hatm*) or irrevocable Providence, as it is stated by the *Ahl al-Bayt*, is based on the factors for which the creature is responsible and not the creator. Hence, it is true in this sense which it is we who make our destiny. It is our nature, our qualities, our function and our action which make paradise and hell.

Prayer and Supplications (Du'a)

Thus our prayers and efforts are accountable to changing (conditioning) the pre-detailed determination. This is what the Qur'anic passage reveals concerning God's promise to respond to the supplication of the supplicant in 2: 186:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۚ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۚ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ
186}}

And when My servants ask thee about Me, then (say unto them), “Verily I am nigh, I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he beseeches unto Me, so let them hearken unto Me and believe in me, so they may be led a right.” (2: 186)

The last verse of 25 asserts that for the supplication of the creatures, God would not have cared for them:

{قُلْ مَا يَعْزُبُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ ۚ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا 77}

Say you (oh Our Apostle Muhammad) unto the disbelievers, “My Lord would (also) care not for you had it not been your prayer (unto Him), but you indeed have belied (the truth) and soon you shall be (in) the grip (of the inevitable). (25: 77)

In 40:60, God says,

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

Pray unto Me, I will answer you. (40:60)

In 10:96, He asserts that the punishment decreed by God against the people of Jonah (Yunus) was averted due to their repentance. They returned to Him and became believers.

The Qur'an also asserts in 35:10, that the length of life, decreed (in the Book of Providence) may be granted to one in full, and a part of the length of the life of another may be cut by God. There are many statements of the Holy Prophet and the Imams which explain the length of life of an individual is subject to increase or reduction due to some charitable or mischievous deeds of the person concerned. This is what the celebrated saying of the Holy Prophet reported by Ali and recorded by all Muslim traditionists mean, "Do act (work). Everyone is provided with the facilities required for achieving (attaining) what he is created for." All these prove without doubt that nature, behaviour do play an important part in finalizing the divine decree, concerning the course and destiny of individuals and nations, "And God, surely does not change the condition of a nation unless they change their own behaviour. God does not change (take away) the bounty He bestowed on a nation unless they change their own behaviour."

{ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝ 53}

This is because God changes not any favour (which) He bestows upon a people until they (themselves) change their own selves, and God is All-seeing, All-hearing. (8:53)

{لَهُ مُعَقَّبَاتٌ مِّنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَإِذَا لهُ مُرَادٌ لِّلَّهِ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءٌ فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۗ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَالٍ ۝ 11}

Verily God changes not the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves, and when wills God unto any people a punishment, there is no repelling of it for them, there is none besides Him a protector. (13:11)

Human Responsibility, Earning Kash, Divine Measuring

The Qur'an and the apostolic statements assert also the fact that the divine decree (*taqdir*) or determination is of two stages: provisional (*ajal wa qadha-i mu'laq*) and final (*aqal wa qadha-i hatm*). It is in the final stage in which the reaction or reflection of the creatures of the arc of ascent is taken into account and accordingly a certain amount of responsibility is put on them (the creatures). Particularly, man as the topmost in the hierarchy, with some degree of free choice, is distinguished with responsibility:

{إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَن يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ

Verily We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid thereof, and man undertook it, verily he was (proved) unjust, ignorant.

(33:72)

It is the consequence of this responsibility in which the moral imperative of “what ought to be” takes the place of the natural fact of “what is.” The “defacto” (natural fact) of animal life is replaced by the ideal of rational being (man), and then the moral, legal, social and political principles and laws become of some meaning and value. Thus, *bada‘a* in relation to divine knowledge means the appearance of pre-requisite conditions for final determination in the second phase of divine knowledge which depends on the known and not in the first phase of His knowledge, on which the known depends. The doctrine of *bada‘a* based on recognition of the two phases of divine knowledge – the knowledge on which the known depends and the knowledge which depends on the known – along with the theory, already established, of the evolutionary course of the revolving process of creation, is an answer to the fatalistic doctrine of Hindu cults, based on the pre-destination theory of karma and dharma and of Muslims’ faith of the ‘Asharite school based on the absolute arbitrary predestination.

It is also an answer to the theory of the absolute free will, the other extreme view held by the Mu‘atazelites (rationalist school of Sunni theology). The unlimited creative conscious might of the Creator causes the ever-becoming matter (or, space-time of four dimensional beings) to come into existence. Of the three space dimensions, every dimension and every part of each carries a specific and peculiar potentiality and recipiency, which is the analytical and inherent property of that dimension and of that part of it, different from that of the other dimensions or their parts. These varieties of potentialities of each dimension are to be multiplied by the fourth dimension of time which is unlimited. Then the result will be the unlimited potentiality and recipiency to appear in succession, as ground after ground for new planning and new designing. The Qur’an says, every individual and every nation, every group has a term (period) and every term has a record (or a book) or a divine “blue print” of its own and the “Mother Book” on which the ground and planning depend is with Him!

{وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ ۚ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً ۚ وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ} 34

And for every people (group or nation) is (an appointed) term, so when comes their (appointed) term, they shall not remain behind an hour (even for the least while) nor can they go before.

(7:34)

{وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهَا ۚ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ} 11

And never does god respite a soul, when has come unto it its fixed time, and God is All-aware of whatever you do. (63:11)

{وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ} 11

And indeed We did send Apostles before you and gave We unto them wives and offspring, and it is not for an Apostle to bring or (show) a sign (miracle) but by God's permission: for every term there is a book prescribed. (13:38)

{يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُنَبِّتُ ۗ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ} 39

(Of it) effaces out God whatever He pleases and confirms He (similarly). And with Him is the Mother of the Book (basic source). (13:39)

Every term has a book. This book of term or the terms recorded therein are subject to obliteration or preservation, according to His will (as He wills), which is in accordance with His plan. And the plan is based on the nature, the analytical and inherent condition of the ground. "He created everything," (the ground of everything: it is what religion terms as nature (*tina* or *tinat*), after which man is moulded), "then He measured it as a measuring ought to be." "He gives everything the mould, mood, or shape which is requires," "He plans and then guides." This is what the Qur'anic term *kasb* (earning) means. The Qur'an has repeatedly asserted that "everyone's and every nation's destiny is indebted to what it has earned.

{تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۗ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ ۗ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ} 134

This is a group (nation) which has passed away, for them is the reward which they (have earned) and you shall have which you (have) earned and you shall not be questioned for what they had been doing. (2:134)

{تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۗ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ ۗ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ} 141

Those are a group (nation) which has passed away, for them (shall be) which they (have) earned and for you (shall be) what you earn and you will not be questioned about what they had been doing. (2:141)

{أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمْ الْبُنُونَ} 39

{أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَغْرَمٍ مُثْقَلُونَ} 40

{أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُمُونَ} 41

And there is not for man (aught) save what he strives for. And his striving shall soon be seen, then shall he be recompensed to the fullest measure. (52:39 – 41)

{الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۗ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ} 17

This day shall every soul be recompensed for what it has earned. No injustice (shall be done on the Day). Verily God is quick in reckoning. (40:17)

Thus, the seeming conflict between passages which hold man's earning responsible for his destiny and the passages which emphasize it is He who guides whom He wills and it is He who misguides whom He wills, is removed. It is through His creative will and the first phase of His knowledge which the ground, the essence, nature and its inherent conditions come into evidence and distinction in His knowledge and then they come into being (existence). So, had not there been His will and knowledge, nothing could be distinguished or could come into existence. But the peculiar and specific destiny and the course of action and movement leading to it (to the destiny) are due to the second phase of His knowledge, which depends on the inherent conditions of the ground or the natural quest and demand of the ground (*tina*). In this sense, it is true whatever takes place through the agency of human will or without it, is by His creative will.

{أَيْنَمَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكْكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُشِيدَةٍ ۗ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ ۗ قُلْ كُلُّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۗ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا} 78

Wherever you be, death will overtake you, even if you be in towers (strong and lofty). If good befalls them they say, "This is from you." Say (oh Our Apostle Muhammad), "All is from God." But what has happened to these people which they will-nigh understand not anything spoken (to them). (4:78)

{مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَفْسِكَ ۗ وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا} 79

Whatever good befalls you (oh man) it is from God and whatever evil befalls you it is from yourself. We have sent you (oh Our Apostle Muhammad) unto humankind as (Our Apostle) and

God is sufficient a witness (thereof). (4:79)

The result is that, though whatever a creature has or befalls him is undoubtedly from Him and is His gifts, **“We sustain all: these and those and your Lord’s gift is not restricted”** (17:20). Yet for receiving a specific mode of divine gifts the creature’s specific nature and mould of mind is responsible (17:84). It is the individual’s nature which earns a specific course of life and consequently pain or pleasure.

In short, the unlimited creative might from one side and the unlimited successive potentiality of the ground from the other, form the basic principle of ever-increasing supply-and-demand which is working in the mechanism of creation. Nevertheless, all this is within the purview of His all-embracing knowledge, which is according to the *Ahl al-Bayt’s* interpretation, is identical with what is termed in the Qur’an as the ‘*arsh* (throne of God) or seat, over and above which the All-gracious has equal hold over everything or *kursi*, the other aspect of divine knowledge.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۚ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۚ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ
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And when My servants ask you about Me, then (say unto them), Verily I am nigh, I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he beseeches unto Me, so let them hearken unto Me and believe in Me so they may be led a right. (2:186)

The working of this principle in the mechanism of creation within the purview of His all-embracing knowledge is amazingly just. He knows what every female bears and what the wombs reject and what they (the wombs) increase.

{اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا تَغِيضُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزَادُ ۚ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ ۝ 8}

God knows what every female bears, and which the wombs fall short (of completion) and in which they (increase). And of everything (there is) with Him a measure. (13:8)

{وَإِن مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ۝ 21}

The ratio is in exact measurement: And there is not a thing but with us are its treasures, and We do not send it down but in a known measure. (15:21)

Female and womb used in this passage should be taken in their widest sense to include the female of females and the womb of wombs, the primal matter, and the mother of all mothers, the bearer and carrier of all potentialities, the receptacle of all forms and stages. The reward of good deeds and the

righteousness from your Lord is a gift (for no return) yet it is according to the reckoning. The observation of proportionate ratio here and keeping the balance between the components of a compound, the parts of a whole and the constituents of a society of beings, are some of the various aspects of divine justice with which He describes Himself when He, as the first witness, gives evidence of His Absolute Unity.

{شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ} 18

God (Himself) witnesses there is no but He and (so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge, standing firm for justice: (there is) no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise. (3:18)

To this justice, the Holy prophet refers, “It is by justice (balance) in which the heavens and the earth are standing.

The Journey of Movement – Eternity to Eternity

The conclusion is the process of creation is going on from eternity to eternity without any discontinuity. The things which were not with the Absolute in His essence appear by the creative might of the Creator in two stages. In the first stage they appear in the second phase of His knowledge or the stage of planning, and then they appear through the same agency in the realm of actual existence in complete accord with the pre-planning. The act of creation is going on perpetually. No moment, no duration, no time and point of time, and *hin*, can be imagined when the creative conscious might was, is or will be idle.

{يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ} 29

Beseech Him all those in the heavens and the earth. Every day he is in a (new) splendid manifestation. (45:29)

Every day He is in work. But of the matter and material beings (including whatever is in the matter like material energies and material forms, or has developed from the matter, though it became independent afterwards, such as individual selves), there is nothing of which it can be said in which it existed throughout the length of time (*dahr*). Matter and whatever depends on matter in its existence are in constant change and movement. There is nothing stable and stationary, though, on account of the variety of direction and speed some beings may appear to us or to some other beings as stable and stationary, as the Qur'an says:

{وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ ۚ صُنْعَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَتَقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ إِنَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ} 88

And you will see the mountains which think you firm, solid, pass away the passing of the clouds. It is the work of God Who has made everything firm. Verily he is All-aware of what (all) you do.
(27:88)

The material universe which is so prodigiously large which it appears endless and infinite, with all that it includes, is moving and changing in essence and attributes. Nothing material remains the same from one moment to the next. The seeming continuity and unity is due to the continuity and unity of the immediate creative cause, the last link in the chain of causes which ultimately go back to the first cause—uncaused. “Everything is vanishing save His aspects.”

{وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ ۚ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ 88}

And call not with God any other god. There is no god but He. All things are perishable but He. He is the Authority, and unto Him shall you be returned. (28:88)

Whatever is here on the earth is perishing while the glorious and honoured aspect of your Lord remains.

{كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ 26}

{وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهَ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ 27}

Everyone on it shall perish but will remain forever the Face (aspects) of your Lord, the Glorious and Gracious. (55:26 – 27)

{مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ ۚ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَاقٍ ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ 96}

What(ever) is with you passes away and what is with God is everlasting and certainly We will give those who exercise patience, their return, with the best of what they were doing. (16:96)

{وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ 21}

There is not a thing but the treasure and the source of it is with Us and We do not send it down but in fixed measure. (15:21)

In the course of the various movements, the potentialities which are carried by matter are transformed into actualities – what was potential becomes actual. The seed was the potential tree. It had in itself the potentiality of becoming a full-grown tree. But when the seed, the potential tree, becomes the actual tree

that particular potentiality is gone out of existence. It is replaced by an actual tree. The actual tree may carry with it potentialities for many more trees like itself. But the tree itself cannot go back to its potential stage to become actual again unless the portion of time during which the previous process took place is brought back, which is evidently impossible. No part of a successive chain can be shifted from its ordinal position.

A specific potentiality, once it becomes actual, either remains actual forever or has to go out of existence forever. Therefore, continuity and survival of any species through propagation of successive issues means the coming into being of new potentialities for new actualities, and not the return of the old potentialities and old actualities. Thus, in the material realm what appears to be repetition of the same stuff is actually the appearance of a similar one and not the same.

Hold of the Absolute One: Immaterial Entities Control Material Realm

The same is true with immaterial entities such as the spirit, soul, psyche and intellect, the conscious beings whose existence is not dependent on matter. If such entities became dependent on matter, after they were independent of it, it would mean the loss of their identity. If the immaterial is transformed into material it means that immaterial entity goes out of existence and something new, of a different identity, comes into existence, one actual has gone and a new potential has come. Therefore, both conceptions (a) the idea of pre-physical existence of the individual souls (the ego to which one refers is "I") of man and animal, as immaterial and independent conscious entities, and (b) the idea that they become material (dependent on matter) when they join the bodies, should be totally discarded because it means that what body loses its identity when it joins the body, and what remains with the body is a new identity totally different from which was before.

It makes no difference, whether the soul as such is considered to exist independently and immaterially, right from the beginning or after her departure from the body. Once the soul is considered as independent, let it be for a moment, its becoming dependent again means its total loss. So both ideas, i.e. union or reunion of the immaterial entity with the matter (body) are self-contradictory, hence untenable. Any conscious entity which is considered to exist before or after the body, independent of the body shall remain independent. Immaterial entities, whether existing before or after the matter and material realm, may govern and influence bodies but cannot be fettered and governed by the bodies. Accordingly the souls of individuals (man and animal) are either (a) material (dependent on matter, as the materialists hold) throughout their development, and as such perish with the disintegration of the bodies to which they are united, or (b) they (the souls) ought to be considered as material in the early stages of their development, becoming gradually immaterial in the advanced stages, before departure, to some extent, and after departure completely immaterial.

If the individual souls are proved to be immaterial, at any stage during their union with the bodies, there

is no alternative but to accept they are the new actualities, developed out of specific potentialities, which were carried by matter. This means development of immaterial entities from matter. Just as in the course of material movement a certain quantity of matter transforms itself into physical energy, such as heat, light, electricity, etc. so also in the course of organic activities and movements of animals, a certain quantity of matter transforms itself into physical force or energy. The difference between the two processes is in the case of material energy. They can be again transformed into matter. While in the case of psychical energy, which has become fetters of matter cannot be bound by it again.

The soul's becoming free from the fetters of matter means that some specific quantity of matter through the organic activity of an individual is transformed into psychic energy of specific consciousness, distinguishable from the consciousness of other beings (other egos and selves). The specific psychic energy as the ground, specific consciousness, as the form, constitutes the ego or specific psychic entity (individual soul). That specific ego, or soul (*nafs*), in turn becomes a new ground under the direct hold and control of the agencies of the arc of descent, and therefore is capable of receiving radiation from the arc and reflecting it, (according to its acquire status) without the medium of the matter or any material organ. Having come under the direct hold of the agencies of the arc of descent, the ego for its subsistence depends entirely on the conditions of the immaterial agencies of the arc controlling it and not on the matter or the material ground from which it developed.

The following points should be noted as the sequel to the above argument. (a) Through the organic activities of self-conscious beings, animals and men, and some specific quantities of matter lose their material properties and assume the form of psychic entities, i.e. become immaterial individual souls and selves. (b) They receive the means of their subsistence from the Absolute through immaterial agencies, and no more through the material medium. (c) The change in matter and its conditions does not affect survival of the souls freed from their matter. (d) The quantities of matter developed into immaterial souls and psychic energies are to be taken as detached and deducted from the total quantity of matter and energy which are reducible into each other, because the psychic energy which develops from matter cannot be reduced into matter or material energy again. Therefore, the quantity so developed should be considered as real loss to matter. The matter is destroyed through the development of the souls, hence, matter is destructible.

Balance in the Mechanism of the Material Realm

To balance the total quantities of matter and material energy, so the mechanism of the material universe may continue to function, a new quantity of matter, at least equal to the quantity lost, should be created (in the true sense of creation, *ibada'*), in the sense of "Be, then it is," (*Kun fayakun*), which means to produce effect by the sheer force of will and intention not associated with the slightest change in the essence or essential attributes of the cause. The reduction of matter into energy or vice versa, joining of some substance from each or their rejoining, transformation or transference into each other, or changing their reality are not creation in its true sense. This process is necessarily shaping or reshaping what has

already existed. On the basis of this argument the individual souls are considered to be material at the time when they come into being and they become immaterial through their gradual development through the organic mechanism.

As has been pointed out the newly created quantity should be at least equal to what was lost. This is the minimum amount required to keep the said mechanism functioning, but in fact the newly created quantity is much greater than the quantity lost, because, along with the loss of quantity of matter, the number of the souls (the psychic entities, the re-radiating intellects) of various natures and groups, is increased.

Grouping of Departed Souls

The Qur'an presents the varieties of the departed souls under three groups – the Foremost, the Rightists and the Leftists (not in the political sense):

{فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ} 8

{وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ} 9

{وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ} 10

Then (will be) the people of the Right hand. Oh, what (a happy state shall) the people of the Right hand (be in)! And the people of the Left hand. Ah, what (a wretched state shall) the people of the Left hand (be in). And the Foremost ones (in faith and virtue) shall be the Foremost ones (in receiving their reward). (56:8 – 10)

This refers briefly to the countless sub-divisions of each indicating the degrees and graduations of life in the hereafter are much greater than those of life in this terrestrial region.

{انظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۚ وَلَآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا} 21

Behold (you) how We caused some of them to excel the others, and surely the hereafter is much greater in respect of degrees and greater still in respect of excellence. (17:21)

So, reminding men of the example of development of various shapes and moulds of life in the first material stage (region) which is known to everyone, the Qur'an asserts the same divine authorities will change our moulds and make us appear in the stage or region which is not yet known to us.

{عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَتُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ} 61

To our changing your forms and raising you in that you know not. (56:61)

The individuals, who are now in this life classed under the category of human beings, shall be regrouped in the life hereafter according to the character which they have formed in their life here. Some are grouped in the various communities of angelical order, some in the satanic communities, and some in the communities of neutral spirits. This is with regard to the souls, developed and departed from this terrestrial region known to us as Earth, which in comparison to the material universe is very minute. It would therefore be absurd to confine development of life and its varieties to what is found in the small portion of this globe – seven miles up in the air and seven miles to the bottom of the sea. According to the Qur'an and the apostolic statements of the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the observable heavens and the heavenly bodies are also populated with lives and conscious beings of their own. They may differ from the living beings here, according to the variant conditions of the regions.

Continuity in Creation: Rational Approach to the Qur'an and Apostolic Statements

However, in every moment of a certain number of psychic entities and re-radiating intellects of various natures, characters, and groups are developed and dispatched from this terrestrial region of ours or from other regions of the material universe. They do not lose their identity or revert from the acquired status of actuality to the potential status whence they advanced, nor do they remain idle and inert. By having the re-radiating power of specific nature every entity and every group of entities becomes a new specific might, a new conscious dynamic force of specific mould, or cognition and volition. They meet, communicate with, and react to each other on the one hand, and produce new possibilities, new potentialities and new capacities in the matter and the material realms on the other. They influence its movement, extend its spatial dimensions along with its time dimension. They change the course of its movements and its velocity by accelerating or slowing down its momentum. All these take place not haphazardly. These changes are in a well-balanced, proportionate and harmonious ratio as per divine pre-planning.

Thus, He is always creating new heavens and new earths and “making the angels communicators, possessing wings, two, three and four. He increases creation as much as he wills.”

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنِحَةٍ مَثْنَىٰ وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ ۗ يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ {1}

(All) praise is God's, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Maker of the angels, messengers flying on wings, two, and three and four. He adds to His creation whatever He wills.

Verily God, over all things has power. (35:1)

It is His authoritative will and might which built heaven and is expanding it now. It is His will and might which spread the earth as the ground (to receive) and He is still preparing it (to receive more).

{وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ} 47

{وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ} 48

And the heaven, We did raise it up with (Our) might, and We it is Who make the vast extent (thereof). And the earth, We did spread it out (like a carpet), how excellent (are We) the Spreaders (thereof). (51:47 – 48)

So through the rise in the number of the re-radiating intellects and immaterial agencies the material world is also expanding and accordingly nothing of the material universe, from its smallest to the largest solar systems, constellations, and galaxies is static or fixed.

{وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ} 38

And the sun travels unto a resting place fixed for it. That is the decree of the Almighty, the All-knowing. (36:38)

{لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ ۚ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ} 40

It is not (expedient) for the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day, and each (of these luminaries) rotate on in (its peculiar) sphere. (36:40)

Everything grows from the simplest primal stage to the full-fledged solar system.

{أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا ۚ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ ۚ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ} 30}}

Or see not those who disbelieve in which the heavens and the earth were one piece, and We cleave them asunder, and made We of water everything alive. Will they not then believe? (21:30)

It brings forth all potentialities, of the souls and conscious entities, and then it deteriorates and ultimately disintegrates into the same stage whence it developed: this process is common in all things.

{ وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ } 3

{ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ } 4

And when the earth shall be stretched out (flattened). And shall cast forth whatever is in it and becomes empty. (84:3 – 4)

{ إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا } 1

{ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا } 2

When the earth shall quake with her (terrible) quaking. And the earth brings forth her burdens. (99:1 – 2)

God only knows how many earths and heavens have so arisen and deteriorated before our earth and heaven came into being, how many of them are growing up along with ours and how many of them will come into being and resume the same or different course of development after the disintegration of our solar system and advent of our resurrection. Ali says, in these heavenly luminous bodies, stars, there are distant cities connected with columns of light and they are populated with conscious beings, which worship the Creator and do not know anything about our Adam, his creation and his issues. In another statement he points out that before Adam, the first father of the present human race, there was an Adam and similarly before him there was another Adam and so it goes on to God knows how many worlds and Adams. There is no limit to the creative might. Barring a few self-evident concepts and propositions which are *apriori* categorical mode of thinking, as a gift of the Creator, nothing besides Him is eternal and unchangeable.

In this process of creation, the relation of the material bodies of the souls is like the relation of the womb to the embryo. The extent of the surrounding material world, wherein the souls begin to grow as compared with that of the next world to which the souls proceed is the same as the extent of the embryo compared with the world of matter into which the child enters. The material world which, according to the Qur'an, is the starred sphere, and the lowest of spheres of existence.

{ إِنَّا زَيْنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ الْكَوَاكِبِ } 6

Verily We have adorned the heaven nearest the world (earth) with an adornment, the stars. (37:6)

It may also be presented as a process house for manufacturing souls of different natures and grades, for

the immaterial spheres beyond it. According to the Holy Prophet, the material sphere in comparison to the immediate immaterial sphere beyond it is like a small ring thrown in a huge desert. And that sphere has the same relation in comparison to its immediate sphere beyond it, and so on to the Throne and Seat (*Arsh* and *Kursi*) which are figurative terms for immaterial spheres encompassing the material, and the intermediary immaterial spheres to the first manifestation of the Absolute. This process house is always subject to partial or total change and expansion, according to the well-planned will of the Creator. Any portion worn out and ceasing productivity will be pounded into powder, thrown away and replaced by a new one. In this way, after disintegration and annihilation of bodies, the resurrection (standing before God) of individuals, groups or the whole of certain systems of the world of matter takes place.

{لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ} 5

{يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ} 6

For a Mighty day, on the day when humankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds. (83:5 – 6)

{مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى} 55

From it (the earth) We created you and into it will We return you, and out of it will We bring you forth a second time. (22:55)

The above is a brief preliminary attempt towards a rational presentation of certain Qur’anic and apostolic statements which may guide the seeker of truth to have, at least, a faint idea of (1) the creaturely and occasional character of all beings other than the Absolute, (2) the life hereafter, as the development of potential matter into actual form of psychic entity, i.e. development from a “becoming condition” to full active status, from the transitory life in this world to the real and stable life (of the hereafter) in the next world (the eternal home),

{وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَلَعِبٌ ۗ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ ۗ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ} 64

And nothing is this life of the world but a vain sport and play, and verily the abode of the hereafter is certainly the life: if they but know. (29:64)

(3) to believe in the partial and the total disintegration and resurrection of the solar systems,

{إِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ 1}

{وَإِذَا النُّجُومُ انْكَدَرَتْ 2}

{وَإِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ 3}

{وَإِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ 4}

{وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ 5}

And when the sun is folded, and when the stars darken, and when the mountains are removed (as scattered dust), and when the “Ishaar” (she-camel) shall be abandoned, and when the wild beasts are herded together. (81:1 – 5)

(f) and the physical resurrection an appearance of souls in bodily form similar to the material bodies,

{فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا 17}

Then she took a veil (to cover herself) from them, and then sent We unto her Our Spirit, then he (the Spirit) appeared unto her a man sound (in form). (19:17) [14](#)

(5) the physical ascent of the Holy Prophet,

{سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا ٥ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ 1}

Glory be to Him Who carried His servant (Apostle Muhammad) by night from the Holy Mosque (of the Ka'ba) to the Farthest Mosque, which we have blessed its environment in which We may show unto Him of Our signs. Verily, he is the All-hearing, the All-seeing. (17:1)

(6) the appearance of angels, jinns and other higher and lower souls and spirits in physical form here, or their influence on the souls, which are still connected with the material body.

The above presentation explains the Qur'anic truth without getting entangled in the absurdities of transmigration or material resurrection or return of souls to the world of matter in a material body, as

fancied by credulous people who cannot think of anything but in terms of matter, which is condemned by the Qur'an as unstable or transitory.

This discourse may appear to have been prolonged by including several side issues. Unless all the points dealt with under the topic "Evolutionary Course" are kept in view, an intelligible idea about the revelation cannot be formed. So let us go back to the highest point of intellectual development of the human mind – the creative intellect.

Creative Intellect: Arc of Descent and Arc of Ascent and Innumerable Spheres

In the previous discourse, it has been outlined in which the cosmos contains spheres of beings, one encompassing the other with no gap between. If the cosmos is viewed from the arc of descent, it begins with the first manifestation and ends with the material sphere. The higher encompasses the lower and the lower manifests the higher. But if it is viewed from the arc of ascent it begins with the lowest and last manifestation (primal matter) or the material sphere, and ends with the creative (active) intellectual sphere. The lower forms the recipient base or potential ground and the higher comes to the scene of existence as a developed and actual form of the lower. The last sphere of the latter arc corresponds to the first sphere of the former arc. The first sphere of the second arc, the primal matter, is the last sphere of the first sphere of the first arc. This is the lowest common base of both the arcs. It is so huge and extensive the greatest mathematician fails to give a proper and exact account of the extent, except by giving as an example the distance between Earth and the nearest galaxy in terms of the light years which represent the speed of light.

It is so huge that, in spite of its geometrically proved finiteness in common presentation of it, one has to treat it as infinite. This huge sphere in comparison to the immediate immaterial sphere beyond it was presented by the Holy Prophet as a ring in the desert. The individual entities developing from this material sphere are under the influence of the cosmic spheres beyond the material sphere. Just as our Earth and its various developments are influenced by the rays and radiation of near and distant stars of the material sphere, so also, the individual members of any cosmic sphere are influenced by other members of the same sphere or the whole, and also by other spheres above or below, and their members. The radiation of the farthest star in the farthest galaxy has its effect on the largest and smallest parts of the Earth despite the waves taking millions of light years to go from one end to the other. In a similar way the radiations of the Earth reach the remotest regions and leave their impression (effect) there.

{الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَافُوتٍ ۚ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ ۝ 3}

{ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ} 4

{وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ ۗ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ} 5

Who created the seven heavens layer above layer? You see not in the creation of the Beneficent (God) any defect or incongruity. Then look you again. See you any gap? Then repeat your gaze again and again, your gaze shall return unto you dulled, being wearied. Indeed have We adorned the lower heaven with lamps (the stars), and We have made them (as) missiles to repulse away the satans, and We have prepared for them the chastisement of the flaming fire. (67:3 – 5)

Super-conscious Source Revelation – Angelic-Satanic Mixed

Thus, there is an effective exchange of action and reaction and proper communication between every part and particle of each sphere with those of other spheres. But the exchange and its effect may not and need not be left by centres of consciousness, i.e. those of man or animal. All that an average man perceives are certain waves, carried by air or ether, which under certain conditions touch his sensory organs. It is erroneous to confine existence to those objects only, which are perceptible to the centre of human consciousness by sense organs (external senses). It has been proved, for example, that of the sound waves, only those of a certain frequency are perceptible by our organ of hearing and no sound waves below or above the frequency are perceptible to us.

The same is the case with the sight waves. Our sensory organs are limited, conditioned and very narrow. It is wrong to narrow the sphere of existence to the limitations and conditions of our senses. There is abundant proof of the fact that the centre of human consciousness, the cognitive self, sometimes receives information and suggestions and develops inclinations, the sources of which cannot be traced back to any of the direct or indirect sensory channels. As already discussed, these channels connect an individual's mind with certain specific objects, situated in a particular region of the material sphere and nothing more.

Therefore, for any such information, suggestion or inclination felt by the cognitive self, none of the unconscious, subconscious or conscious strata of the individual self (from elemental and primitive physical stages up to the vegetable and animal instincts and tendencies from the five external senses up to imagination, feelings, memory and the state of reasoning) can be held responsible. Therefore, we have to refer it to some source beyond the conscious state of the human mind – some super-conscious, some super-natural, some unusual source or means – a source and means which is not common and natural with everyone or is common with everyone but is not acquired through empirical means. The information, suggestion or inclination felt by the ego centre through the super-conscious or super-natural means is termed by the Qur'an as *revelation*.

The regular or irregular action of any visible entity which cannot be explained in terms of empirical means, or any other natural cause is considered by the Qur'an as the result of revelation from some invisible and super-natural source from the unseen world ('*alam-e ghayb*) as opposed to the seen world ('*alam-e shahada*). It (the revelation) is from God or some angelical sphere if it is right and advantageous and it is from the satanic and evil spirit spheres if it is wrong and mischievous.

The Qur'an has used the term *revelation* in its widest sense. The Qur'an considers the movements and functions of the Earth and heavens as under the order revealed to them (as they are inspired by Him). It says, about Earth,

{بَانَ رَبُّكَ أُوحَىٰ لَهَا 5}

That your Lord has revealed unto her. (99:5)

About the heavens it says,

He revealed to every heaven its affairs (its concerns).

God says further,

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ۚ وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ
{الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ 12}

And He made them seven heavens in two days (periods) and revealed in every heaven His will, and adorned We the lower heavens with lights (of the brilliant stars), and made it guarded (with angels). That is the decree of the All-mighty, the All-knowing. (41:12)

The instinctive life of the honeybee is presented by the Qur'an as the result of divine revelation.

{وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ 68}

And revealed your Lord unto the bee saying, "Make you hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they (men) build." (16:68)

Every human soul is inspired by Him with the awareness of vice and virtue (right and wrong).

{وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا 7}

{فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا 8}

By the soul as it is perfected. And inspired unto it (against) its vices and (about) its piety! (91:7 – 8)

The evils of men and jinns, who are opponents of the Prophets reveal to each other vain talk deceitfully.

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ ۖ وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ
{إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ 121}

And eat you not of which God's name (Allah) was not mentioned, while verily it was transgression, and verily satans inspire unto their friends in which they should contend with you and if you obey them, verily you be polytheists. (6:121)

The satans¹⁵ reveal to their friends (followers) so they may argue against you.

{وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ 120}

And leave you open and secret sins. Verily those who earn sin, soon will they be recompensed with what they earned. (6:120)

It was revealed to Musa's mother to put the newborn in a box and float it in the river.

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۖ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي ۚ إِنَّا رَادُّوهُ إِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوهُ
{مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ 7}

And revealed We unto the mother of Musa, saying, "Give him suck and if you fear for him, launch him on the river, and fear you not, nor grieve you, for We will return him unto you and make him one of the Apostle." (28:7)

Apart from Prophetic revelations many instances of other revelations and inspirations to individuals, mostly in the state of dreams and abnormal conditions and sometimes in the normal state of awakening are found in the stories of every community of the human race. We term them as super-natural information communicated to the person concerned through unusual (ultra) cosmic rays. Some instances of revelation are very clear and need no interpretations. In some cases the information assumes a figurative form in accordance with the psychological condition of the receiver (the mind that receives it). Such revelation requires interpretation, the correctness of which depends on the skills of the interpreter. Some revelations are partly true and partly false, which may be due to (1) the defect in the source of

despatch, or (2) the confusion of two different waves despatched from different sources, but received simultaneously, or (3) a defect in the receiver. Sometimes the suggestions received from the cosmic and super-natural sources are mingled with suggestions received from within, i.e. from the unconscious or subconscious strata of mind, which is the usual source of everybody's dreams.

Every community has its own record of stories of people who have by some spiritual exercise developed a sort of communication with the unseen within the starred sphere or somehow closely connected with as shall be discussed later. There are also records of people who by peculiar nature and mould or mind have this faculty without any exercise of spiritual practice. There have been men and women who have had the tendency of dreaming future events in real or figurative form without pursuing any special course of spiritual attainments. According to occultism, there are prescribed courses of practice to develop such faculties within the human mind and to establish contact and communication with the super-natural and invisible cosmic agencies. These sources do not require adherence to any prescribed code of ethics or religion.

On the contrary, in some of the occult courses some sort of impurity, immorality or anti-religious practice is necessary for success. This is the reason, why among religious, ethical and scholarly points of view, thought they are very famous in their mysterious practices. The idea here is not to certify the validity of occultism, and the genuineness or truth of the records of theurgists and the claimants of mystical power. It is only to assert the possibility of such practices, and the truth of a few instances given here and there. Otherwise, generally the cases and stories about the performance of occultists and theurgists are mostly false, concocted to the raise childish tricks. However, though few in number, there are genuine cases of the past and present which prove beyond doubt the possibility of such mysterious practices.

In any case, all occult and strange performances, such as fortune-telling, foretelling, palm reading, horoscope, astrology, clairvoyance, mind reading, telepathy, sorcery, witchcraft, establishment of communication with or having influence over *jinn*s celestial spirits or departed souls, mesmerism and hypnotism (accepting the psychological validity and utility of them), spells, incantations, numeral and symbolic letters, etc. are as old as human history. Though mostly false, there is also some truth in them. But they are condemned by the Qur'an and apostolic statements as unreliable as and more harmful than useful.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَانَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ {101}

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُو الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ ۖ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ ۖ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۖ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ ۖ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۖ وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمُوا لَمَنْ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَقٍ ۖ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۖ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

And when there came unto them an Apostle from God confirming what was (already) with them, some of those to whom the scripture was given cast the Book of God behind their backs as if they knew (it) not. They followed what the devils recited (falsely) against Solomon's kingdom; not that Solomon disbelieved but (it was) the devils which disbelieved. Sorcery did they teach to men and was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut. Neither of these taught anyone without saying, "We are only a trial so disbelieve not (in the guidance of God)." They learned from them which sows discord between man and wife, but they could harm no one (thereby) but by God's permission. And they learned what harmed them and profited them not, and indeed they knew he who bought that (art) had not shared in the happiness of the hereafter. And vile was the price for which they did sell their selves, had they only known (it). (2:101 – 102)

It was a mixture of falsehood and truth. Their sources are mostly satanic and super-natural agencies of the lowest sphere (the stellar sphere). The powers of these agencies are limited and defective. These satanic forces have no approach to the higher spheres of angelical order.

So neither the dispatching source in this sphere, or the mind and heart of the person who receives the dispatch is saved from error. The mind, the conscious centre, whether of the dispatcher or of the receiver, influenced by the requirements of life in this sphere, is not free from the impurities of narrow mindedness I (narrowness of the *sadr* [heart] the Qur'anic figurative term for the seat of love and knowledge, the ego centre).

The impurity of inclination towards material, sensual and sexual objects, makes the recipient narrow and sullen, incapable of receiving the light of truth in its entirety. This narrowness of the ego centre of the dispatcher or receiver, or both, is the cause of mental confusion, the cause of revolt against what is right and true. It is to the mind and heart and of such people, who are attached to this profane world, that according to the Qur'an, Satan has an approach. Such people can be tempted by the satanic influence, but not those whose minds are beyond the reach of the satanic agencies:

{فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ} 98

{إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ} 99

{إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ} 100

And when you recite the Qur'an seek you refuge with God from Satan the accursed. Verily there

is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord. Verily his authority is only over those who befriend him and those who associate with him. (16:98 – 100)

The Infallibility of the Last Prophet (the Prophet of Islam) and Other Prophets (Part One)

Therefore, unless the soul (the mind and heart) is free from the influence of this lowest sphere, and is released from the narrow bents of animal instincts and sexual desire and unless the mind is raised to the zenith of creative intellect, it cannot become the ground for receiving the entire light, i.e. the exact and undisturbed information and suggestion dispatched from the undisturbed information and suggestion dispatched from the angelical sphere of higher order. The angelical spheres range from the first immaterial sphere to the highest sphere of direct and immediate communion with the Absolute (the stage of the nearest point): the Prophet, as the Qur'an indicates reached the "nearest point."

{فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ} 9

Thus was (he) the measure between two bows (facing each other) of higher still. (53:9)

These spheres differ from each other in comprehensiveness and in the nature of their dispatches, but there is no possibility of error in whatever the dispatch. "They do not disobey God of what He has ordered them and they do whatever they are ordered." They do not go ahead of Him in saying (or doing) and they do according to His order.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ} 6

Oh you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from the fire whose full shall be men and stones, over which shall be angels stern and strong, they disobey not God in what He commands them, and act (only) as they are bidden." (66:6)

There is no confusion whatsoever in the higher spheres. They are free from all profanities of the material world.

{فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ} 13

{مَرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ} 14

{بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ} 15

{كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ} 16

(It is written) in the Books greatly honoured, exalted high, purified, in the hands of the deputy angels, noble virtuous. (80:13 – 16)

So also must be the receiving station, the human mind which is the recipient. It must be free from the impediments of temporal life and the bondage of the material world. So long as the zenith of the human mind, the intellect, is drawn toward its base, the material and sensual ground, man is liable to commit mistakes in both theory and practice, whatever may be the source of information and suggestion.

{وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَأَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ} 175

{وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۚ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ۚ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ} 176

Relate unto them the news of him whom We gave Our signs, but he withdrew (himself) from them, so Satan followed him, so he was one of those who went astray. And Had We willed, We would certainly have exalted him thereby, but he inclined towards the earth and followed his vain inclinations, so his similitude is like the parable of a dog, if you attack him he lolls out his tongue, or leave him alone he lolls out his tongue. Such is the similitude of people who belie Our signs, so relate (unto them) the stories, which they may reflect. How evil is the similitude of the people who believe Our signs and unto their own selves they are unjust. (7:175 – 176)

Being in possession of signs man should have been raised. But he detached himself from the sign bestowed on him by God and he was drawn downward toward the Earth. But if the whole edifice of the human mind from the base upward is drawn toward the zenith, i.e. the active intellect, and is totally controlled by it, then the zenith can become a pure refined recipient ground. It becomes capable of receiving light from the above as exactly as it is dispatched. It will be also capable of judging precisely the truth and the value of what is received from below. In short, the pure contents of the worlds of purity cannot be reached but by the pure and purified.

{فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ} 75

{وَإِنَّهُ لَفَسَّمٌ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ} 76

{إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ} 77

{فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ} 78

{لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ} 79

But nay! I swear by the setting of the stars, and verily it is a great oath if you only knew it. Verily it is a Qur'an honourable, in a Book hidden. Touch it not save the purified ones, sent down by the Lord of the worlds. (56:75 – 79)

{وَالضُّحَىٰ} 1

{وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ} 2

{مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ} 3

Those who disbelieved from among the people of the Book and the polytheists could not have separated themselves (from the falsehood) until came unto them the Clear Evidence. (In the) Apostle from God reciting (unto them) the Purified Scripture, wherein are the decrees (correct and) strong. (93:1 – 3)

In essence, no one touches it but those who are purified. To establish direct and infallible contact with the heavenly kingdom and the spheres beyond the material one, the mind should be completely refined and free from the fetters of this material world.

This is what the Qur'an means by the terms *muttahaarun*, purified ones, *suhafan muttahira*, purified books, *mustafaun*, chosen and refined, and *mukhlisin*, servants of God freed from sinning.

{إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ} 46

Verily We freed them (from sinning) with a distinction of remembrance of the (eternal) abode. (38:46)

{وَأَنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْأَخْيَارِ} 47

Verily they are with Us, of the chosen ones, the good ones. (38:47)

{لِي يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ} 81

Save Your servants from among them the freed ones. (38:83)

“We have freed, released them from all concerns but the remembrance of the abode (the heavenly or eternal kingdom).”

It does not mean they are not in this material world in this lowest sphere. They are in it but they are not attached to it. Ali says, “They (the true servants of God) have accompanied this lowest world of matter with their bodies, the souls of which are attached to the spheres of higher order. Had not the fixed term been ordained by God for them (to remain here), their souls would not have remained in their bodies.” [16](#)

In other words, the purity of mind as opposed to its impurity (*Rijs*). It means complete control of the active intellect over the whole structure of mind including its material base on the one hand, and the absolute submission of the active intellect as recipient ground to the spheres of higher order on the other. This is the state of divine revelation.

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ ۖ إِن أَنْتَبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۖ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي
{الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ ۖ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ} 50

Say (oh Our Apostle Muhammad), “I do not say unto you that with me are the treasures of God, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say unto you I am an angel. I follow not but what is revealed unto me.” Say, “Are the blind and the seeing alike. Do you not then reflect? (6:50)

The Holy Prophet’s answer to all the questions raised by anyone: the believers, unbelievers, sceptics, heretics, hypocrites, friends and foes were a divine revelation to unveil the truth.

Thus, the body is controlled and governed by the mind and its faculties. The mind in turn is controlled and governed by the active intellect, which in turn is fully controlled and governed by the divine will dispatched to it, direct, or through the angels. Such an accomplished person, though he shares, with other men all aspects of humanity (*a human being like you*), yet he is distinguished from the rest of humankind, but not only being the recipient of the revelation but by being controlled also by the revelation. [17](#) (“I follow nothing but what is revealed to me.”)

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ
{بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا} 110

(And) say you, “I am only a man like you, it is revealed unto me in which your God is but One God, therefore whosoever desires to meet his Lord, let him do good deeds, and associate not any one in the worship of His Lord.” (18:110)

He should be so fully controlled by the divine will dispatched to him, that his life becomes the embodiment of divine will. His will is the will of God.

{ مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ ۖ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا } 80

Whoso obeys the Apostle, he indeed obeys God, and whosoever turns away: We have not sent you upon them to watch. (4:80)

{ فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ ۖ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ ۖ وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ }
{ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ } 17

So you slew them not but God slew them, and you threw not (the dust) but God threw it, in which He might test the believers by a gracious trial from Him. Verily God is All-hearing, All-knowing. (8:17)

So, to secure the infallibility of the message, the purity and infallibility of both the sources of dispatch, and the receiving mind, is necessary. With regard to the purity of the dispatching side, from God down to the last angelical sphere at its base, there can be no doubt. The question is about the purity of the receiving side – the receiver which is the active intellect, the zenith of the mind. The zenith cannot be pure unless the whole of the mind and its faculties from the base are pure. The purity of mind and its faculties mean harmonious functioning of all the physical and physical parts of mental mechanism towards actualization of the potential intellect and the development of the active intellect. There should be no drawback, from any side of the mechanism. There should be nothing wrong anywhere, even for a moment, in the progressive movement towards attaining the state of active intellect.

Every part of the mechanism should be perfect. Otherwise any drawback anywhere at any stage of the process would mean a fall in the degree of attainment and in the active aspect of the intellect; a fall in the height of the zenith. In other words, the ego should always be alive to its incessant needs and should always look upwards submissively and ask for help.

[Seed of Adam and Eve \(Part Two\)](#)

To secure the purity and infallibility of the mental mechanism in this sense, the purity and infallibility of the material base is necessary. A good seed, properly looked after, brings forth good fruit. The material base of an individual mind is a zenith which has its own base and history of its development. God knows

through how many specific stages, or terrestrial wombs, or millions of years it passes until it reaches the stage of the specific protoplasm of the first pair of human species – the day of Adam and Eve. That specific seed, or protoplasm, original clay, dough or paste of humanity, is a specific quantity of matter, and it had obviously the potentiality for the form which it has assumed, the form of original seed or clay of humanity. It was a selected and refined quantity suitable for that form.

{وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ {12}

And indeed We created man from an extract of clay. (23: 12)

It is also obvious in which this particular quantity, in its development did not face any hindrance, otherwise it would not have reached the stage in question. As a general rule, development of any given quantity of matter into any specific form or shape necessarily means the quantity had the potentiality for that particular form and shape, and it had throughout the course all the favourable conditions required for its proper development. And along the way it met with no obstruction, drawback, fall or short-coming. The very fact of the quantity having the specific form implies the presence of all the conditions required. This means (1) divine selection (parallel to what the materialist terms natural selection) of every quantity of matter for a specific course of development, and (2) special care of divine agencies (parallel to the mechanical agencies of Darwinism) to provide the requisite conditions for the completion of the course and guard against any unfavourable mishap damaging the potentiality or causing hindrance in the course of development. This is what the divine attribute of *Rububi'at* (Cherishing) implies.

The beginning verses of Chapters 37, 51, 77, and 79 refer to the agencies that take care of the development of the material world and their different functions.

{وَالصَّافَّاتِ صَفًّا {1}

By those who range themselves in ranks. (37:1)

{وَالذَّارِيَّاتِ ذُرْوًا {1}

By the scatters that scatter. (51:1)

{وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا {1}

By those sent forth with goodness one after another. (77:1)

{وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا} 1}

By those who drag forth violently. (79: 1)

As already pointed out, in the religious terminology, the potentiality carried by every specific quantity of matter for a certain course of development is its inherent demand or prayer for that development. That particular quantity is divinely selected to demand that particular course and form. To provide the requisite conditions and to guard against preventive events is the favourable response of the divine grace and blessing. The humble requisites and the reciprocal generous divine grant forms a scale, a balance, in the progressive development.

However, the particular quantity of matter which had the potential to become man was provided with all favourable conditions, guarded and protected against all mishaps until it reached the state of original clay. It was kept pure (purified) under special will, attention and grace of God throughout the course of its development. And even in the darkest period of its development from the primal matter, the details of which God alone knows, it was kept pure and resplendent against all possible impurities.

It (the particular clay) was a part of the whole (the whole of primal matter) hidden in the darkness of primal matter which is devoid of knowledge and justice and the excellences which these two terms imply. The Qur'an refers to this characteristic:

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا {72}

Verily We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid thereof, and man undertook it, verily he was (proved) unjust, ignorant.

(33:72)

But its incessant prayer, demand for coming out of the dark or its particular potentiality for development (only known to God) with which it was distinguished from the other parts, attracted the special attention, care or grace of God.

Story of Prophet Jonah, Israelites' Misinterpretation (Part Three)

It is not out of place to quote the celebrated story and prayer of Yunus (Jonah) mentioned in the Qur'an:

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ {87}

{فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ } 88

And remember the man of the whale (Jonah), as he went away (from his people) angrily (due to godly motives). So he was sure We would never bring restraint against him. Then he called in the darkness, “There is no Elah (Resort to God to resort to for help) but You. Praise and glory be Yours. Indeed I was of (the community of) unjust.” Therefore We responded in his favour and relieved him from grief. And in this manner We relieve the believers.” (21:87 – 88).

In chapter 68, the Qur’an says asserts,

{فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوتِ إِذْ نَادَىٰ وَهُوَ مَكْظُومٌ } 48

{لَوْلَا أَن تَدَارَكُهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ } 49

{فَاجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ } 50

Wait patiently for the order of your Lord and do not be like the man of the whale as he called (Us) while he was grieved. Had not a bounty from his Lord reached him, he would certainly have been cast forth on the naked shore disgracefully. Then (as the consequence of divine blessing due to his prayer), his Lord selected him and then made him the member of the community of the righteous ones. (68:48 – 50)

Misguided by the Israelite story connected with Jonah, many commentators and translators misinterpreted the above Qur’anic passage by presenting Yunus (Jonah) as a great sinner. Finding his community heedless to his preaching, he lost his temper. His only follower, the Sober Sage, advised him to be more patient and temperate and to continue his preaching for some time more, but he did not listen to him. He prayed to God to destroy the adamant people. Responding to his prayer, God promised to send down His wrath on the sinners and destroy them. Yunus informed the sage of what was going to happen and asked him to leave the scene of the coming destruction. But the sage declined to run away for his life, leaving the whole community prey to divine wrath. In his wisdom he preferred to remain with the people and meet the coming situation as wisely as possible.

The promised hour approached. The Prophet Yunus was watching and waiting from a great distance. The sage continued warning the people of the approaching calamity, advising them to repent before the opportunity was lost. As the signs of the catastrophe came very close, the people realized the gravity of the situation. Stricken with terror, they rushed penitently to the sage for advice. The sage told them there was no other way to avert the catastrophe decreed by God, but a sincere mass repentance. As

conducted by the sage, the mass repentance was performed with utmost sincerity by the entire population, including the male and female, old and young, even the babies and the cattle. God responded to their sincere repentance and prayer with favour. He withheld the decree at the last moment and averted the catastrophe from them, to which the Qur'an refers in chapter 10:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ
 {إِلَى حِينٍ} 98

And why then was there not a town which believed, so its faith should have profited it but the people of Jonah? When they believed We removed from them the torment of it). nominy in the life of the world and provided them (with comfort to enjoy it) for a fixed while. (10:98)

Then coming to know about the withdrawal of the divine decree and the people had been saved by repentance, Jonah felt hurt, got angry and went away, fancying God can never have a hold on him. As a result of his selfish anger and misconception of the divine might, he was punished by God. Having lost in the balloting, [18](#) he was thrown to the whale and devoured. In the belly of the whale he came to his senses and realized the faults for which he was punished. Then he repented and asked God for release.

Like many of its kind, this story of Israelite origin got much publicity among certain Muslim traditionists who deny the idea (doctrine) of absolute infallibility of the vicegerents of God. But a story like this, if believed, does not only prove the fallibility of the Prophets of Allah but brings them down to a level lower than that of an ordinary person. The story while making the non-commissioned sage a hero, credited with sobriety, prudence, wisdom, sympathy for this people and firm faith in the mercy of God, presents the commissioned Prophet of God as lacking in all these qualities. It depicts him as short-tempered and selfish. Getting angry with his people for not listening to him, he tries to bring the wrath of God on them. Disappointed for the non-fulfilment of his expectation he gets angry with God and goes away thinking God would have no hold on him!

Reading the story as such, one really feels surprised why Jonah, a man of character, of the sage, the embodiment of virtues, should have been commissioned by God to carry His message to the people? What makes one more surprised or rather suspicious is the traditionists, who recognized Jonah as depicted by the Jews and the Christians, have narrated also a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect he (the Prophet) should not be considered superior in character to Jonah. If we add similar tales and stories allegedly ascribed to the Holy Prophet and the Prophets before him, the conclusion would be (1) the status of prophet will be little more than of a postman who is only commissioned to deliver letters. He is useful so long as he lives and is of no use when he dies – “Whosoever used to worship Muhammad should know he (Muhammad) has certainly died,” said the first caliph, Abu Bakr, in his first sermon.

(2) He need not be of any character or qualification. He is subject to the influence of all temporal and profane tendencies. (3) Among their followers there may be people, superior to the Prophet's sagacity

and virtues. All their orders need not be obeyed, nor should every step of them be followed. These are the points cherished by every ambitious person who wants to use religion as a means to gain power, be he Jew, Christian, Muslim or a member of any other creed and faith. The main objection raised against the policy and behaviour of the ruling party is their deviation from the letter and spirit of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the sacred and divinely prescribed code of conduct (the Qur'an, the word of God, as manifested in the life of the Holy Prophet).

{لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا} 21

Indeed (there) is for you in the Apostle of God (Muhammad) and excellent pattern (of conduct) for him who hopes in God and the latter day and remembers God much. (33:21)

But once the Prophet is recognized as one not superior to Jonah of the above story, there is no room for the said objection. He himself made errors. How can anybody say the prophet was right and those who assumed the reins after him and adopted a different policy and rules were wrong? An anti-*Ahl al-Bayt* scholar may say, "The Prophet wanted and nominated Ali to succeed him. But the Qurayshites (as 'Umar said) did not like what he liked. So they pursued the course they thought was more expedient. Who are we to judge that he was right and they wrong?"

But keeping in mind what has already been explained in light of the Qur'an and sound reasoning, one has to come to the conclusion that without purity and infallibility of the receiving ground, no revelation can be taken as completely right and divine if no margin can be fixed for the divine and the profane states of the receiving mind, and as such the representative status of the Prophets and vicegerents of God would be shaken to the ground.

Therefore, this or other tales and stories which have evolved round the personalities of those who are considered to be commissioned by God to deliver His message to humankind to lead and guide men to the ultimate goal for which they have been created, should be treated as baseless. Stories and traditions may be concocted or distorted by interested parties to support a religio-political cause. The stories which assert the fall, sin or drawback of Adam and Eve and of their worthy children who had to represent God on Earth are against the unequivocal wording of the Qur'an and sound reasoning, and ought to be rejected as false or interpreted in the light and evidence of the two authorities (the Qur'an and reason).

Even the Qur'anic passages which may not appear to be in conformity with the requisite infallibility of the vicegerent of God should be interpreted in the light of the unequivocal passages of the Qur'an and evidence of reason. This story of Jonah may be taken as an example. The Qur'an mentions that he went away angry, but it does not give the cause of anger, whether it was righteous and praise-worthy, or selfish, bad and worthy or condemnation. The Qur'an gives examples of many Prophets and godly people who felt disgusted with the ungodly behaviour of their people and left them in righteous indignation but after undergoing some ordeals they were selected and sent back to guide the people. It

is obvious that to interpret the sentence in question (21:86 – 89) in the light of the Qur'an and examples of godly men is more reasonable than reading it in the light of the tale introduced by Jewish converts and the courtiers of the early caliphs, such as Kaab ul Ahbar, Wahab bin Munabbah, etc.

However, the sentence, in the aforesaid verse, is followed by three more sentences wherein the conjunctive particle "*Fa*" (consequently), denoting one event to be the consequent of the other, has been used, which implies the relation between the events denoted by the sentence is not accidental for which the conjunctive particle "*Wa*" (and) is appropriate, but it is causal; it is the relation of an antecedent to its consequent. Now let us consider the two versions and their implications.

Jonah in the Light of the Qur'an

"He went away angrily (due to righteous cause). Therefore (as the result of his godly feelings and attempt) he felt certain (and not fancy and conjecture) that We will never (withhold our blessing restraint against him) but bring restraint against him. Therefore, (as the result of his certainty), he called us (like other Prophets even in the darkest hour of trial) in the dark (similar to the case of Ibrahim when he was thrown into the fire), "There is no resort but You. Praise and glory by You. Indeed I was of the (community of the) unjust (and not that I am of them now)," as if he is thanking the Almighty for not leaving him to continue the society of the unjust and for having helped him to detach himself from them, no matter what the trials and temporal sufferings may be. As a result of this virtuous process and successful trial he was relieved, selected and sent back to the people who also, after his departure, felt sorry for their wrongs.

This may be due to the efforts of the sage who was deliberately left behind to warn them of the seriousness of the Prophet's anger and departure. The result of it was they repented and petitioned God for mercy at the last moment. Had not he been of those who are habituated to pray and praise God he would have been thrown (out of the belly of the whale) on the barren land as a reprobate and would not have been chosen and selected again to lead his people. The term *laula*, used in 37:43 and in 68:49, meaning **had not, were nor or if not**, the conditional particle used to affirm presence of one event sequel to the absence of the other or vice versa, has been used in the Qur'an on many occasions concerning the Prophets. It asserts that, had not their prayer received special blessing and grace of God they would have suffered a fall or would have committed a sin. So due to the presence of the desirable condition the undesirable state was absent.

Thus, Jonah being a habitual supplicant detached from the society (company) of the unjust, moving towards Him with utmost certainty and seeking His blessings in all circumstances had no fall or drawback throughout his life. His life like that of all other vicegerents of God is the norm and ideal to be followed by those who want to evolve a godly spiritual life.

A Commentary on the Bible

He went away angrily (because he was hurt by God's responding to the prayer of the evil-doers). Therefore, he fancied, that ***We (God) will never have a hold or power on him*** (71:87), which means sheer denial of God's might caused by extreme anger). Therefore, he called. This call cannot be considered as the result of his conjecture unnecessary missing links between the antecedent and the consequent to prove that Jonah was a sinner first and then he repented and was relieved and selected for the second time. Accepting his repentance when he was in utter distress there is nothing commendable in the life of Jonah to be adopted as the norm and ideal for spiritual progress. It would have been more advantageous if the Qur'an, instead of Jonah, had made some reference to the virtuous role played by the supposed sage. How can one allow a Prophet of God to conjecture even for a moment in which God has no power or hold on him?

The sentence, "And imagined he never would We straighten him" should be read in light of 65:7 and 89:16.

لِيُنْفِقُ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّنْ سَعَتِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ فَلْيُنْفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ ۚ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا ۚ سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ
{بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا} 7

Let him with abundance spend of his abundance and he on whom is straightened his subsistence, let him spend of what God has given him, (for) God lays not on any soul a burden save to the extent to which He has given it. God will soon bring about ease after difficulty. (65:7)

{وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ} 16

But when tries him, and then straightens unto him his sustenance, then he says, "My Lord has disgraced me." (89:16)

The verses explain the creaturely defect of humankind and God's infinite mercy. It is evident in the prayers of the Holy Prophet and the *Ahl al-Bayt* which does not mean they have committed any wrong. This inner meaning is absent in the Jewish version of Jonah which suits many religious heads, hence it is more popular.

The Jewish version cannot be taken as true even in regard to a man of worldly wisdom, how can it be accepted in the case of the vicegerent of God? So the correct reading elucidates the meaning of privation, detachment from social surroundings temporarily, consciousness of creaturely shortcomings, repentance, prayer, urge of progress towards perfect submission to God and God's infinite mercy.

A reduction of matter to any extent from a commendable quantity is due to a non-recipient condition; otherwise, the gift of God is universal and unrestricted. This non-recipient condition is termed in the Qur'an as injustice done by one to one's self. ***"We (God) have not done them injustice, but they did it to themselves."*** (11: 101)

Any individual or group which in comparison to its surroundings is improvable and has the recipient condition may be presented as dissatisfied with the condition of its society seeking detachment from them for betterment. This is what the following Qur'anic expression means.

{وَأَعْفِرُ لَأَبِي إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ} 86

And forgive my father; verily he was of those who have gone astray. (26:86)

{وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَعْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ} 87

And (remember) Jonah (Zunnun or Yunus) when he went in anger, and imagined he never would We straighten him. Then he cried out from the darkness, "There is no god but You (oh my Lord), Glory be to You. Verily I was of the unjust ones!" (21:87)

"I was of those straying ones," means that in certain stages the person referred to by the pronoun was counted among the members of the society which was devoid (or deprived) of justice and knowledge. It is the natural tendency for development present in a particular section of matter and absent in its surrounding sections which is translated into dissatisfaction in the conscious stages of development disliking the surroundings and abandoning them. These conditions, i.e. dissatisfaction and dislike for and desertion from the surroundings, are virtues and righteousness if the aim is to approach God, the Absolute perfection. And they are evil and vice if the aim is something ungodly.

The certainty which He is the sole resort and in no circumstance does He withhold His blessings from His creatures, is the impulse of this progressive move and the motive behind prayer and supplication. Temporal sufferings and material losses in this journey are inevitable as a test and trial.

This trial is followed by divine relief, blessings, and selection for leadership.

{وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ بَلْ أحيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ} 154

{وَلْتَبْلُوْنَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالتَّمَرَاتِ ۚ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ} 155

{الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ} 156

{أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ} 157

And say not of those who are slain in the path of God in which they are dead. Nay (they are) living, but you perceive not. We will surely test you with something of fear, and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits, and give glad tidings to the patient ones. Who when misfortune befalls them, say, “Verily we are God’s and verily unto Him shall we return.” Those are they on who are the blessings from their Lord and (His) mercy, and they are the ones which are (rightly) guided. (2: 154 – 157)

So long as the movement is towards the right direction it is towards God, without any break or diversion. There can be no fall, drawback or sin. The terms sin (*dhanb*), straying (*dal*), injustice (*zulm*), ignorance (*jahalat*), etc. which show some defect and ungodly condition, may be used to mean appearance of these defects in the conscious stages when human will and reason are functioning and they may also be used to mean these are natural and creaturely defects which accompany every finite being, and if they are not covered, redressed and redeemed by His grace and blessing, they will display themselves in human conduct.

Similarly, the terms repentance (*tauba*) and petitioning after some diversion has taken place, or petitioning for mercy after some defect has displayed itself in the conscious stage of human will and reason. It may also mean being constantly alive to the creaturely defects. Some people are in continuous prayer and a supplicating attitude so these defects may continue to be covered by His blessings and no room is left for their display at all. There are instances and occasions on which the Qur’an has used the conditional participle, “if not” (*laola*) to show it is due to the special blessing of God or due to the sincere prayer of the man which the inherent sin, defect and fault have not displayed themselves.

Thus, “*repentance*” does not always mean the sin has been committed. It may be preventive instead of being retrievable. Accordingly, the sin and other defects mentioned in the Qur’an and other apostolic statements do not necessarily mean the actual appearance of those defects in the life of man. Reference may be to their potential state wherein they are covered by special blessings of God. Thus the incessant confession of accomplished men of their sins, shortcomings and faults and their incessant repentance and prayer for mercy are the two main factors responsible for their infallibility and sinlessness. Imperfect, sinner and guilty are those who consider themselves either entirely sinless or occasional sinners, and not those who are always alive to their creaturely defects, and pray to God to cover them with His blessings and grace. [19](#)

Vicegerency of Adam

Having all these points and the basic conditions for development and progress in view let us revert to the “first human pair,” Adam and Eve. Detached and distinguished from the rest of the material beings, they had infallibly and progressively reached the stage of original clay. It was the finest, purest and the most resplendent quantity of matter which departed from the rest to undergo a special course of trials and developments and to fulfil the necessary conditions for the top rank in the hierarchy of material developments. This clay, the divinely selected and chosen portion of matter, carried in itself all the potentialities for development and propagation of the human race and for all the material and spiritual achievements and attainments which man may be credited with.

The potential Adam and his potential family were craving and praying for such a lofty status of responsibility (*amanat*) in the realm of creation as was not prayed for by anyone else. On the contrary the heavens, Earth, and mountains declined to accept it when it was offered to them. So, the brave and bold clay received the utmost care and attention from the Creator. The whole administrative agencies of the arc of descent, all the angelical and celestial forces in charge of development were co-ordinated and directed towards this new development. From the stage of clay up to the stage of the most complicated but well-balanced and harmonious organism (the stage of *tasviya*²⁰ (adjustment of parts in a whole), man had to pass many stages of development. This is the stage wherein man receives radiation direct from the Absolute, and God blows into him His own spirit (*Roohul-Qudus*).

{لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي ۖ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا} 29

So when I complete him and breathe into him My spirit, fall you down unto him prostrating (in obeisance). (15:29)

To reach that high stage he (man) had to undergo many bright and dark turnings, ups and downs, unavoidable in this journey. Of the divine days (*ay'yamullah* – periods of development)²¹ how many days he took to cover the distance we do not know. Whatever has been said in this respect by men is a mere guess and conjecture, and if there was any revelation in this connection, it was equivocal and not clear and exact. But one thing is certain that man passed all those stages and curves infallibly under the utmost care of divine administration and attention, otherwise he would not have reached the status which he secured and is still holding: the status of vicegerency of God.

{وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ} 30

(Recollect oh Our Apostle Muhammad) when your Lord said unto the angels, “Verily I (intend to)

appoint a vicegerent on the Earth.” They said, “Will You (oh our Lord) appoint therein one who will cause mischief and shed blood, while we celebrate by Your praise and hallow You alone?” Said (the Lord of the angels), Verily I know what you know not.” (2:30)

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ
ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا {72}

Verily We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid thereof, and man undertook it. Verily, he was (proved) unjust, ignorant.” (33:72)

God revealed to the administrative agencies of the arc descent, the angels, in which he was going to create a man out of earthen clay and when He would bring him into a well-balanced stage and blow into him His own spirit, they (the angels) should prostrate before him (the man). The same man who has been passing progressively one stage after another under the care and attention of the agencies turned out to be capable of reaching the loftiest stage of receiving direct radiation, light and blessing, leaving all the previous mediums behind. This quantity of matter, in spite of its negligible size carried so great and an important potentiality that not only the entire angelical machinery was engaged for its development but it came under the direct care of God at last. He came under the direct care of God’s two most comprehensive names, *al-Zahir* (the Apparent) and *al-Batin* (the Hidden). In other words man was directly attended by both aspects of the creative might of God. This is what the Qur’an terms as the two hands of God, the physical and the spiritual aspects.

{قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِإَيْدِي ۗ أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ ۖ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ {75}

Said (God), “Oh Iblis, what prevented you in which you should prostrate in obeisance unto him whom I created with My two hands? Are you proud or are you of the exalted ones?” (38:75)

However honoured with the gift of divine spirit man who was originally administered by the angels, from time immemorial, turned in the last stage to be the real administrator in the sense that he became the ultimate object for creation for which the whole divine organization had been set at work. The angels turned out to be subservient to him. He was the aim and they were the means. When the angels wondered why so much care and attention was being bestowed by the Creator on this negligible clay, they (the angels) were told by Him that He was not only going to create a man out of the clay, but He was going to establish a vicegerency on Earth to represent Him and His kingdom and His sovereignty. This revelation caused the angels great surprise and they raised their objection. They were familiar with the administration of the day of other species very close to that of the human species.

It is said that before the development of human clay or the advent of our Adam and eve, the Earth was

populated by semi-men, a species which bore very close affinity to man. But they were lacking in the holy spirit which was infused into man and which was a distinction conferred on him. The species of semi-man had almost been extinguished before the appearance of man on the scene of creation. Those semi-men might have been the degenerated descendents of another Adam who preceded our Father or might have been of another species lower than man but closer to him in physical and mental structure than any of the living species of today. Anyway they were lacking in the distinctive aspect of manhood about which the Qur'an says,

{لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ} 4

{ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ} 5

{إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ} 6

Indeed We created man in the best structure. Then we reverted him to the lowest of the low, save those who believe and do good deeds, for them shall be recompense incessant. (95:4 – 6)

The words “the best structure” and the “lowest of the low” in the verse refers to man’s best and lowest aspects. Whether the shortcoming or defect in men was due to degeneration or the original lack of specific potentiality makes no difference. Their process of thinking was controlled by vegeto-animal and senso-sexual and beastly tendencies as in the case with the organized barbarism of today, known as modern or material civilization. They were busy in mischievous, destructive activities and bloodshed as depicted in 2:30. The angels, like some scientists of the modern age, could not observe the specific aspect which distinguishes the human clay (protoplasma) from the other species. So they judged man to be of the same mould and behaviour as the semi-men, on the basis of some apparent affinities they found between the two. God rejected the partial and analogical argument of the angels and said, “**Verily I know what you do not know.**” (Reference 2:30 quoted above).

Adam having the distinctive potentiality and aptitude, was gifted with the holy spirit, which implies all the divine names on the one hand and the names of all created objects, which are the manifestation of the divine names on the other.

{وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ} 31

{قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ} 32

قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئِهِمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ 34

And He taught Adam the names, all of them, and then set them unto the angels and said, “Declare you unto Me the names of these if you be truthful.” They said, “Glory be to You (oh Lord). We have no knowledge save what you have taught us. Verily You (alone) are the All-knowing, the All-wise.” Said He, “Oh Adam, inform you unto them their names.” and when he and informed them unto them their names, said (the Lord) “Said I not unto you verily I know the secrets of the heavens and the Earth and know which you declare and which you conceal?” And when said We unto the angels, “Prostrate you before Adam,” they all prostrated save Iblis, he refrained and was puffed with pride and was turned into one of the disbelievers.” (2:31 – 34).

And the succeeding verses 35 – 39 depict how the pair was driven out of earthly paradise and settled on Earth. The supremacy of Adam in the universe is due to the knowledge of the names of the entities who possess unimaginable radiance of truth.

It is in the light of the holy spirit in which Adam learned every name of the Creator and the creatures, but the names of those accomplished and most perfect entities whose clay, seeds and potentialities were carried by him came into light first, and then through the compact names of those perfect and most comprehensive entities, the other names became evident. They were the names of those “perfect and exalted entities” (*‘aleen*), the seeds of which Adam was carrying. Owing to the lack of affinity it was not possible for angels to learn the names of those entities except through the medium of Adam who represented them as the carrier of their potentiality and represented God having His spirit with him.

Here the first man, the top entity in the arc of ascent received knowledge directly from God, of the things which the angels did not know. It was the knowledge of the names of certain conscious entities of high order (*‘aleen*). Those entities were other than angels and jinns. They were the entities whose names could be made known to Adam by God directly and to the angels and other things of lower order through the medium of Adam. They were those who could at one and the same time represent God in all the spheres of creation, and creatures of all spheres before God. They are the entities who due to the highest degree of their recipiency, submissiveness and devotion to the Absolute, have attained the nearest possible stage of direct communion with Him on one side, and due to their utmost paternal affection of love of His creatures come closer and nearer to every being, than the being itself or himself – a stage of *‘aula-bil-mominin*, “a greater claim on the selves of the believers,” which refers to the Prophet:

النَّبِيِّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ ﴿٤١﴾ وَأُولُو الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ

{المؤمنين والمهاجرين إلا أن تفعلوا إلى أوليائكم معروفًا ۞ كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا } 6

The Prophet (Muhammad) has a greater claim on the believers than they have on their own selves, and his wives are (as) their mothers, and blood-relations have the better claim in respect of one to the other, according to the Book of God, than the (other) believers and the emigrants, save you do some good unto your friends. This in the Book (of God) is prescribed. (33:6)

And the Prophet declared that Ali and the succeeding 11 Imams (and Fatima his daughter) are topmost among the *Illiyin* in having this great claim on *Ummah*, and their records are well preserved in the Book (vide Tradition on *Ghadir*).

{كَلَّا إِنَّ كِتَابَ الْأَبْرَارِ لَفِي عَلِيِّنَ } 18

{وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا عَلِيُّنَ } 19

{كِتَابٌ مَرْقُومٌ } 20

{يَشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ } 21

Nay! The record of the righteous shall be in the Illiyin. And what shall make you know what Illiyin is? (It is) a book written. See it those who are the near ones unto God.” (33: 18 – 21)

They are such selfless entities and their egos are so limitless they have become the reciprocal medium between the Infinite one and the finite beings close to both at one and the same time. They are those who on devotional occasions when completely absorbed in the realization of His greatness, can hear the call of the destitute and go to their rescue without being diverted from the height of their devotional absorption. They are those who give alms when they are in the state of bowing before Him in prayer.[22](#)

{وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا ۞ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ } 58

Verily, verily, your guardian is (none else but) God and His Apostle (Muhammad) and those who believe, those who establish prayer and pay the poor rate, while they be (even) bowing down (in prayer). (5:58)

In short they represent the Creator and the creatures to each other at one and the same time. It is this permanent representative status of Adam and his deserving issues which became the subject of dispute.

The “great news” about which they are in dispute:

{عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ} 1

{عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيْمِ} 2

{الَّذِي هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُوْنَ} 3

Of what ask they one another? Of the great news in which they therein differ. (78: 1 – 3)

The dispute about the news was so widespread that even the chiefs of the highest angelical order were involved in it. “Say it is the news, the great from which you turn away. I had no knowledge of the chiefs of the highest (order) when they were disputing.”

{قُلْ هُوَ نَبَأٌ عَظِيْمٌ} 67

{أَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُوْنَ} 68

{مَا كَانَ لِيْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَاِئِكَةِ اِلَّا اَنْزَلْتَنِيْ مِنْ سَمٰوٰتٍ مُّكْنٰنٍ} 69

{اِنْ يُّوحٰى اِلَيَّ اِلَّا اَنْزَلْتَنِيْ مِنْ سَمٰوٰتٍ مُّكْنٰنٍ} 70

{اِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَاِئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ طِيْنٍ} 71

{فَاِذَا سُوِّتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِيْ فَفَعَلُوْا لَهُ سٰجِدِيْنَ} 72

{فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَاِئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اَجْمَعُوْنَ} 73

{اِلَّا اِبْلِيسَ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ} 74

Say you, “It is a message of (great) importance, (and) you are turning away from it. I had no knowledge of the exalted chiefs when they disputed! It is revealed unto me save I am an open warner. Remember when your Lord said unto the angels, “Verily I am about to create man from clay. And When I have completed and have breathed into Him of My spirit, then fall you prostrating in obeisance unto him.” And did fall prostrating in obeisance the angels all together, save Iblis, he was proud and was of the disbelievers. (38:67 – 74)

Even the chiefs of the highest order, the arch angels, on receiving information about the new appointment, questioned its propriety. They doubted his competency in comparison to themselves and dissented. They submitted to and carried out the divine order only when Adam informed them of the precious names which he had learnt from God directly, and which the angels were unaware of until then.

Satanic Activity and Divine Warning

But Satan, the hot and the fiery tempered, who had become the co-opted member of the angelical community on account of the extreme devotion and ascetic attitude he had already displayed, was far from appreciating the distinctive spiritual aspect of the newly earthen make. So he and all the satanic forces at his disposal refused to recognize the representative status of man and this is the case even now. He considered himself and his party, who were able to influence and misguide the purely animal instincts, to be much superior to this new earthly creature (man) also. They are able to influence and dominate, if not Adam and all of his issues, at least the great majority of them who tend more towards their material needs than their heavenly progress.

Thus Satan and his forces failed in the test and were at last exposed for what they really were. They declined to submit, rebelled and were driven out of the angelical order and community down to the earth, the terrestrial field of their activities. Satan and the satanic forces, ever since their banishment from the heavenly field, have remained materialists. They are anti-man and their values are anti-heavenly and anti-spiritual. So, as demanded by Satan, God gave him and his party and his forces freedom of action to approach Adam and his issues.

Taking the terrestrial realm as the testing stage of man to develop his spiritual or material aptitude and inclination, it was necessary the satanic forces should have a free chance of activities in their field on the one hand and man should be warned to be careful not be tempted by the satanic call on the other. So both the satanic activities and the divine warning should continue to go together in order to pave the way for man to prove he is really a man or a common animal in the form of man. The Qur’an declares:

{وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمَلِّي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّأَنفُسِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّمَا نُمَلِّي لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِثْمًا ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ} 178

It is not for God to leave the believers in the state in which you are, until He has distinguished the wicked from the good and it is not for God to acquaint you with the unseen. But God chooses

from the Apostles whomsoever He pleases. So you believe then in God and His Apostles, and if you believe and guard yourselves (against evil) then for you is a great reward. (3: 178)

These are clearly repeated warnings:

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ ؕ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ
{بِهَا} ؕ أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ ؕ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ {179}

Indeed we have created for hell many of the jinn and the men. They have hearts (but) they understand not with them, and they have eyes (but) they see not with them, they have ears (but) they hear not with them, they are like cattle, nay, more astray. These are they, the heedless ones. (7:179)

Satan blames the human beings for following him.

وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعَدَ الْحَقُّ وَوَعَدْتُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُمْ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ
دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي ؕ فَلَا تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ؕ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ ؕ إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا
{أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ} ؕ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ {22}

And shall say Satan after the affair is decided, “Verily God promised you the promise of truth and I gave you the promise but failed to keep them to you, and I had no authority over you except I called you and you responded unto me, so blame not but (rather) blame yourselves. I cannot be your aide (now) nor can you be my aide. Verily I disbelieved in your associating with me God from before. Verily the unjust ones, for them shall be a painful chastisement. (14:22)

Sincere action is a test:

{أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ} 2}

What! Do people imagine they will be left off on (their) saying, “We believe!” And they will not be tried. (29:2)

Allah, the All-mighty, the All-wise knows the hypocrites:

{وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ فَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ} 3}

And indeed We did try those before them, so God certainly knows those who are true, and certainly knows He the liars. (29:3)

The Tree of Total Submission – Paradise Lost

The majority of the children of Adam, according to the degree of their material and temporal inclinations, have been and will be the victims of satanic influence. But Adam, the first vicegerent, was carefully brought up by God from the stage of primal matter to the stage of becoming the divinely declared object of angelical veneration and prostration and his deserving and chosen children, who would establish the hierarchy of the vicegerency, the base of which was Adam, were certainly saved from any possible influence of Satan and satanic forces. The devils may have approached Adam and his chosen issues in the same manner as they approach others, but they were far from being able to influence the chosen ones.

{إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلِصِينَ} 40

{قَالَ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ} 41

{إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ} 42

Save Your (devoted) servants, of them the freed ones. Said He, “This is right way unto Me. Verily (as regards), My (devoted) servants, there is not for you over any authority except the one who follows you, of the deviators.” (15:40 – 42)

Adam was created to be the vicegerent of God on Earth; he was created as the base for the establishment of the hierarchy of the divine vicegerency. He carried in him the seeds, the potentialities of so many perfect men who have achieved wonders in innumerable fields of material and spiritual importance. Each of the deserving descendants has represented God in some aspect, which could not be done by any being other than man. Above all, he carried the seeds, or the light and the resplendent clay of those entities by the knowledge of whose names Adam surpassed the angels and was envied and opposed by Satan. So, such an object of divine care cannot suffer any fall, drawback or shortcoming. He cannot be accused of any sin or fault. He was infallible and must remain infallible until his death, until the precious deposit and the divine responsibility are transferred to one who succeeds him, and so the process should continue until it reaches its final stage of perfection.

{يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَرِيحَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ} 32

{هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ} 33

Intend they in which they put out the light of God with (the blow of) their mouths, and disdains God save that He perfects His light, though the infidels may detest it. He it is Who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may prevail it over all other religions, though the polytheists may detest it. (9:31 – 32)

The above emphatic declaration is repeatedly made in various verses with full freshness and unfathomable depth.

It should continue without break until the total appearance of the most perfect man through whom the legislative will of God in its entirety is not only declared, as it was done by the last Prophet in the shape of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, but is also executed thoroughly throughout the human world, as it will be done by the 12th Imam (al-Mahdi) when he reappears.

Adam was not the end. Adam with all his potential was the beginning of a new system of creation. He and his worthy offspring represented God on Earth. He had to populate the Earth with his issues. He had to bring forth what he was carrying. The potential had to become actual. The toil and hardships were ahead of him. It was not the time for him to rest and enjoy the animal comforts, to eat and drink, and protect himself against the heat of the sun under the shadow of the trees. If these animal comforts were the divine objectives, the other animals were quite enough to serve the purpose. There was no need of adding a new creation to what was already there. The paradise of Adam was not in the shape of eating and drinking.

{ذَرَّهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا وَيُلْهِمُ الْأَمَلُ ۚ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ} 3

Leave them (oh Our Apostle Muhammad) in which they may eat and enjoy themselves and beguiles them the hope, for soon will they know. (15:3)

{إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ} 12

Verily God will admit those who believe and do good to the gardens underneath which flow rivers, and those who disbelieve enjoy themselves and eat as the beasts eat, and the fire shall be their abode. (47:12)

Man's paradise is submission to God and to follow His message and remember Him in pleasure and pain.

{وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْواتًا ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ} 169

{فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ} 170

{يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ} 171

Rejoicing in what God of His grace has granted them, rejoicing for those who have not yet joined them from behind them, which no fear shall come on them nor shall they grieve. They rejoice in the grace from God and (His) bounty and in fact, God suffers not to be lost the reward of the believers. (As for) those who did respond to the call of God and the Apostle (Muhammad) even after wounds inflicted on them, such of those who do good (to others) and guard (themselves) against evil, shall have a great reward. (3: 169 – 171)

So his and his wife's lodging in the lower paradise of animal comforts to which other animals and Satan also had an approach, was a temporary arrangement for test and trial. The divine order addressed to Adam to live with his wife in paradise enjoying all sorts of food *except this tree* was in accordance with their animal requirement. The prohibitory order *not to go near this tree* meant nothing more than showing him that the consequence of going near *this tree* would be the loss of the lower paradise and the animal comforts. Whatever *this tree* might have been, something physical or spiritual, actual or symbolical, it was very close to Adam and his wife, but they were ordered not to go near it. *This tree* was very attractive; one could not help desiring to taste its fruit. It would make the person who would enjoy it realize his nakedness and defects.

According to some apostolic statements it was the clean and refined tree of his chosen offspring. There is another apostolic statement mentioned in the commentary, *al-Burham* in which the *tree* was an all-round *tree* termed by Satan as the *tree* of perpetuation (*shajarat ul-khuld*). It was the *tree* rooted in Adam and Eve, the *tree* of sexual urge which embraces all other *trees* mentioned by the commentators. It was the *pure tree* of total submission to God, for which the jinns and men were created.

This tree of total submission is rooted in entities whose names Adam was taught and whose seeds he was carrying.

{أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ} 24

See you not how sets forth God a parable? Of a good word (being) like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) in the heavens. (14:24)

In short, from all internal and external evidence available, it is clear the prohibition was not due to the profaneness of the *tree*, the prohibition was due to the utmost sanctity of the *tree* in the sense that once it was approached one had to be always on guard not to do anything to pollute it. It must be the *pure tree* (*shajrah Tayyibah*), the root of which is well established and its branches have gone to the sky. This is a

reference to the Qur'anic parable, which is applicable to any well established system of creation or divine legislation which has the growing faculty. It has been specially applied to the *tree* like a chain of perfect men, the chain being rooted in the first perfect creature in the arc of descent. The reflection of it is the last and most perfect creature in the arc of ascent. This is the *tree* the root of which is Muhammad (in its true adjectival sense, "praised one"). So, he is the first one arc and the last in the other, and both are ultimately identified with each other. This is called *Shajrah Tayyibah*, the "tree" (15:23 – 26). If the place of its growth is properly guarded against pollution this *tree* may become the place of manifestation of the divine spirit (*Roohul Qudus*).

The order to live there (in paradise) and not to go near the attractive and eye opening *tree*, which was very close to him, was intended to rouse the ambition in man. Under this prohibitory order, let us see what part Satan had to play in this test. Satan's case was exactly like the team of pretenders of all times and of all types who, by appearing in the garb of faith, piety and knowledge, are classed by the ignorant under the category of people of spiritual accomplishment. Such people may even be raised to the companionship of the Prophets, but by facing some trial, their pretension is exposed and they are debarred just as Satan was debarred. Concealing his fiery and rebellious nature in the garb of extreme devotion and piety, Satan had raised himself to the community of the angels, but failing to stand the test of prostrating before Adam, he exposed himself and was driven out of the angelical order. He had to pursue his rebellious and destructive activities in the material field and influence those who are inclined towards him and his activities.

Before proceeding further it should be borne in mind that the statements of Satan mention in the Qur'an concerning himself, his forces and party, the stand he took against the divine order of prostration, the concession he asked for and his decision after it was granted, his approach to Adam and Eve as a well wisher, his comments on the prohibition, his open announcement that, with the exception of a few purified and chosen ones, he would influence and deceive all the children of Adam, and his blaming ultimately those who followed him and similar statements, are a presentation of the facts which have been playing a very great role in the history of creation, especially in the development of the human mind. Nothing should be considered untrue just because Satan has said it. All he has said is true and should be taken into account.

The only thing is his attitude towards Adam and Eve was hostile and whatever he told them, though true, was not with good intention. He wanted to deceive them but it turned out in favour of their cause. His example was like the example of the hypocrites who would come to the Holy Prophet and would give evidence and say, "***We are witnessing in which you are the Prophet (Apostle) of Allah.***" God retorts saying,

"God certainly knows you are His Apostle, but God gives evidence and is witnessing the hypocrites are surely liars" (63: 1).

Similarly, Satan's whispering to Adam and Eve in which the *forbidden tree* was the *tree of perpetuation*

(*shajarat ul-Khuld*), and it was a kingdom which would never decline and be extinguished (*mulk la yabla*) was entirely true.

{فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلَى} 120

But Satan whispered unto him saying, “Oh Adam, shall I guide you unto the tree of eternity and unto a kingdom which decays not?” (20:120)

He was correct in giving the reason for the divine announcement of prohibition. It was true that approach to the *tree* would have resulted in their becoming angels or attaining perpetuity.

{فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْآتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَن تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ} 20

Then whispered Satan evil suggestions unto the two (Adam and Eve) in which he might display unto them what has been kept hidden from them of their shame, and said he, “Forbade not you two your Lord from this tree lest you two may become the immortals?” (7:20)

His only mistake was he thought the purpose of the order was to deprive the pair of the pleasant fruit of the tree while the real purpose of prohibition was to make the pair desire the higher. The great lie in which he uttered was he was their well wisher.

{وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ} 21

And he swore unto them both, “Verily I am unto you a sincere adviser.” (7:21)

He was their enemy, but a very short-sighted one. He wanted to see the immediate suffering of the pair caused by the loss of material comfort. He was satisfied with this, and with the idea in which the great majority of their issues would in the future fall in his trap. His short-sightedness could not appreciate the fact that Adam and his chosen issues, who would remain aloof, unaffected by his mischievous activities, though very few in number, would surpass all creatures in excellence and quality. He was far from realizing the ultimate object of creation was the development of excellent qualities and not the multiplication of quantities.

However, Satan had to approach Adam to achieve his aim. The Qur'an describes the satanic method of seducing Adam:

Certainly he (Satan) and his party watch you from the side from where you (Adam) do not see them. Certainly We made Satan's patrons of those who do not believe. (7:27)

Satan approached Adam through some medium, most probably, through the sexual sense which had just begun to grow. It is said his approach was to influence Eve to persuade Adam to taste *this tree*, defying God's prohibition. But really Satan made a fool of himself. He did not know the order was meant only to stir up the pair's latent desire, the basic impulse of social growth. It was the process wherein Eve had a very important role to play. She represents sex and sexual desire and she is responsible for bringing Adam out of the cell of his individual ego to exchange love and compassion with her who is the other part of Adam.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
 {يَتَفَكَّرُونَ} 21

And of His signs is He created for you from yourselves, mates in which you may dwell (inclined) unto them and caused between you love and compassion. Verily in this are signs for a people who reflect. (30:21)

It is she who is presented in the first verse of Chapter Four:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا
 {اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا} 1

Oh men, take shelter in your Lord Who has created you from a single self and created from it, its pair, and spread from these two, men manifold and women, and fear God, in Whose name you importune one another, and (be mindful) of kinship. Verily God is vigilant over you. (4:1)

As she was made of the same clay of which Adam was made it was from them, both Adam and Eve, in which the multitude of men women were spread out (propagated). Her womb is termed in the Qur'an as *rahm*, the seat of mercy and kindness, derived from the divine name, *ar-Rahman* (the All-merciful).

{هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ} 6

He it is Who fashioned you in the wombs (of your mothers) as He likes. There is no god but He, the All-mighty, the All-wise. (3:6)

It is by virtue of her womb which blood relationship and affection is reciprocally established. The Qur'an terms this relationship after the womb (*rahm*) to emphasize the important part which the womb plays in the establishment of physical and mental relationship, and affinity between the members of human society. In this verse the wombs (*arham*), i.e. blood relatives, are presented aligned with God towards whom men hold each other responsible and whose displeasure should be avoided. It is she who makes

man lose the negligible and immediate comforts of irresponsible life and suffer the toil and hardship of fulfilling obligations towards others for the sake of greater and far-reaching pleasure to come. It is said that man owes Eve a lot. It was through her we come out of the animal or lower paradise of ignorance, nakedness, laziness and selfish and material comforts, and it shall be through her chosen daughters like Fatima, the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet, in which man shall enter the heavenly paradise of knowledge, perfection, peace, and unimaginable social comforts.

{إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ} 45

{ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ آمِنِينَ} 46

{وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ} 47

{لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ} 48

{نَبِيِّ عِبَادِي أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ} 49

Verily the pious ones shall be in the midst of gardens and fountains. (The angels saying unto them), "Enter you therein in peace, secure." And We will root out whatever rancour be in their hearts, (they shall be) as brothers, on dignified couches, face to face. Shall not touch therein any weariness, nor shall they ever be cast out of it. Announce you (oh Our Prophet Muhammad) unto My servants, verily I am the most Oft-forgiving, the Most Merciful. (15:45 – 49)

It is the growth of the social impulse which makes man alive, not only to his selfish needs but to the needs of others who surround him. This is the sense which widens the limitation of one's ego, and develops the tendency of sacrifice, i.e. the tendency to give up a limited and immediate gain for a wider and far-reaching interest. However, Satan intended to deceive Eve and through her Adam, by advising them to approach the *forbidden tree*, as would drive them both out of the state and condition in which he thought they were happy. He did not know of the divine purpose and the device and instrument to achieve it. Blinded by jealousy and enmity, he could not see what progress and attainments were awaiting Adam outside the lower paradise of animal and selfish comfort.

If he could have become aware of the lofty stages of intellectual and spiritual gains ahead of the parents of so many accomplished men, scholars, philosophers, scientists, inventors, discoverers, legislators and others who contributed towards the actualization of human potentialities, and above all the line of the

chosen vicegerents of God, he would never have thought of trying to dislodge the pair. On the contrary, he would have done his best to see they remained there forever. It is the case with all the hypocrites who think they are deceiving God, while, really God is deceiving them.

{يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ} 9

They (intend to) deceive God and those who believe, while they deceive not but themselves, but they perceive (it) not. (2:9)

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
142}}

Verily the hypocrites strive to deceive God while He is deceiving them, and when they stand up for prayer, they stand up sluggishly (without earnestness). They do it only to be seen by men and they remember not God save a little. (4:142)

As the sixth Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq says, “God prohibited but willed Adam to do it, as God ordered Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, but He willed not the slaughter.” These are called testing orders. He orders just to bring forth the reaction of man to it, otherwise the object of the order is not willed by Him. So it was God who actually provided all the means which would take Adam and Eve towards *the tree*, just to open their eyes and to make them see their creaturely nakedness and defects, to bring their inherent wants to the centre of their consciousness in order to translate their hitherto natural prayer and demand into conscious and verbal prayer and supplication. In other words, God saw the time was quite appropriate to convert the hitherto natural and non-obligatory life of the world be, his first vicegerent, into the conventional life of obligations and responsibilities.

The time was ripe to make man, who was until then dependent on the products of nature and unaware of his creaturely weakness and defects, to depend on his toil and labour to realize his physical and spiritual needs and then to try and pray to God for protection and help to cover his nakedness not with leaves of trees but with the clothes which God would reveal to him through his industries (but utilizing the physical and mental faculties). Besides, better than the clothes and anything else is the pure garb of piety and godliness to cover their creaturely defects.

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُؤَارِي سَوْآتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا ۖ وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
{يَذْكُرُونَ} 26

Oh children of Adam! Indeed we have sent down unto you raiment to cover your shame and (for) adornment and the raiment for piety, that is the best. This is one of the signs of god which you

may be mindful. (7:26)

Satan thought he had precipitated the fall of the pair by deceiving them:

فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ ﴿٦﴾ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ
أَنْهَيْكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْتُ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

Then he instigated them both by deceit so when they tasted (of) the tree their shameful things got displayed unto them and they both began covering themselves with the leaves of the garden, and called out unto them their Lord (saying), “Did I not forbid you two that tree and (did I not) say unto you both that Satan is of you both a declared enemy?” (7:22)

God ordered both Adam and eve to get down to Earth.

{وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٥﴾ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾}

But Satan made them slip and drove them out of what they were in, and (whereupon) said We, “Get you down, the one of you an enemy unto the other and there shall be an abode for you on the Earth and provision for a (fixed) time. (2:36)

Satan thought he had prevailed upon them to disobey their Lord: he thought they had gone astray.

{فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ ﴿٥﴾ وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ ﴿١٢١﴾}

Then they both are of it, so their nakedness appeared unto them and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden: And Adam acted not (to the advice of) his Lord (deceived by Satan) and went astray. (20:121)

That was the case apparently, but actually there was no real order and command. The prohibitory order and warning about the hostile attitude of Satan was issued by God before the development of the faculty of decision in Adam. So, it was natural that Adam did not take notice of it.

{وَلَقَدْ عٰهَدْنَا اِلٰى اٰدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا ﴿١١٥﴾}

And indeed We covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot, but We did not find in him any intention (to disobey Us). (20:115)

Adam was in paradise which is out of the bound of man’s responsibility, which begins with the

appearance of intellectual consciousness and ends with the actualization of all intellectual potential. The end of the lower paradise is the beginning of responsibility and the beginning of the upper and higher paradise is the end of man's responsibility. By approaching *this tree* he reached intellectual consciousness, a stage of mental development when man distinguishes right and wrong, since he was no more in paradise. He was out of it and was on Earth, wherein he committed no sin and disobeyed an order. It was on Earth in which he was chosen by God. He turned to Adam and guided him.

{ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَىٰ} 122

Then His Lord chose him and turned unto him (accepting his repentance) and guided him.

(20:122)

Before guidance there could be no disobedience. As the eighth Imam Ali al-Rida says, "Adam was not created for Paradise. He was created for Earth wherein he committed no sin. He enters the responsible stage after approaching this tree and with that stage the loss of animal comforts began." The Qur'an gives glad tidings to those who stand the trial successfully.

{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ} 153

{وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ بَلْ أحيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ} 154

{وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالتَّمَرَاتِ ۚ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ} 155

{الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ} 156

{أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۚ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ} 157

Oh you who believe, seek help with patience and prayer. Verily God is with the patient ones. And say not of those who are slain in the path of God in which they are dead. Nay, (they are) living, but you perceive not. We will surely test you with something of fear, and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits, and give glad tidings to the patient ones. Who, when misfortune befalls them, say, "Verily we are God's and verily unto Him shall we return." Those are they on who are the blessings from their Lord and (His) mercy, and they are the ones which are (rightly) guided. (2:153 – 157)

Ever since the start of his trial on Earth, he never, even for a moment, turned his face from the divine direction, neither did he divert from the right path, nor did he forget his creaturely defects and lack of knowledge and justice. He was always up and looking far ahead seeing the signs and names of those chosen ones to whom he was the father. These names were the words which he had received from his Lord.

{فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ} 37

And received Adam from his Lord (certain) words (of prayer) and God turned unto him (mercifully) (for) verily, He is the Oft-turning (unto mercy), the Most-merciful. (2:37)

Through these words he used to approach God for blessing, grace, and covering of his certainty defects and faults.

In short, the paradise lost was not an exalted place or state of comfort, suitable for man as his permanent abode. On the contrary, the Qur'an asserts it was Earth wherein man had to settle (rest) and enjoy for some time (until Resurrection).

{قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۗ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ} 24

{قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ} 25

He said, "Get you down, some of you (being) the enemies of the others, and for you there is on Earth an abode and a provision (of sustenance) for a (fixed) time. (And) said He, "Therein you shall live and therein shall you die, and from it you shall be brought out. (7:24 – 25)

It was on Earth wherein man would live, die and from it be taken out. The paradise to come as described in the Qur'an in several chapters is the ever-lasting abode (*darulqarar*). It contains all which the souls desire for and the eyes are pleased with. It contains every pleasant thing from the sensual objects up to the greatest and highest spiritual enjoyment, the pleasure of God (*ridwan min Allah*) and His presence (*'inda rabbihim*).

{وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ} 133

And hasten unto (the means to obtain) forgiveness from your Lord and paradise vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious ones. (3:133)

{أَفَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ ۗ وَيَسَّ الْمَصِيرُ} 162

Is then he who abides by the pleasure of God, like him who has brought on himself the wrath from God, and whose abode shall be Hell? What an evil destination (it is). (3:162)

{وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ ۗ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ} 72

God has promised to the believer men and the believer women gardens underneath which flow rivers, to abide in them and the excellent mansions in the gardens of “Adn.” But the goodwill of God is the greatest: That is the grand achievement. (9:72)

The permanent abode of man is the paradise of perfection, the paradise of one’s realization of his perfections. For those who would follow the divine guidance there is no spiritual loss. They will gain the higher paradise. Of course, for those who fail to follow the divine guidance there is no spiritual loss. They will gain the higher paradise. Of course, for those who fail to follow the guidance, it is a great loss. They are deprived of both the animal comforts, the paradise lost and higher paradise to come.

{وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى} 124

And whoever turns away from my monition, verily his shall be a life straightened, and We shall raise him up on the Day of Judgment, blind. (20:124)

{وَلَقَدْ دَرَأْنَا لِحَٰثِمٍ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ ۗ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ} 179

Indeed we have created for hell many of the jinn and the men, they have hearts (but) they understand not with them, and they have eyes (but) they see not with them, and they have ears (but) they hear not with them. They are like cattle, nay, more astray. These are they, the heedless ones. (7:179)

Adam Settled on Earth

The few terms such as “but came not nigh this tree,” (*la taqraba*); “let him not drive you both out of the garden,” (*fala yakara-jannakuma*); “but he forgot” (*fala tansa*), etc. used in the Qur’an dealing with the story of Adam and Eve and Satan may, in the first instance, seem to assert the fall and sin of the pair, but on taking all the Qur’anic and apostolic evidences into consideration there is not the slightest doubt there terms do not mean what some schools of thought may believe. All these terms have been used

against Adam when dealing with the stage when he had not entered the life of responsibility. They mean nothing more than what a father would tell his child, “Be satisfied with the comforts which I have provided you with and do not go after attaining a higher position. If you do this you will lose the physical comfort and have to suffer hardship.”

This is said because the father wants to prepare the child for the loss of the present comfort in order to gain a better state of mind. Thus being driven out of paradise was not really a loss and fall for Adam and Eve, except in the eyes of Satan and his party. Actually it was a sort of transfer from a natural life and condition to a rational status. It was a shift from the irresponsible state to a responsible one. The term *habut* used in this connection does not necessarily mean descent from a height. It may mean to settle down. When the children of Israel expressed their dissatisfaction with the nomadic and wandering life they were ordered to settle down in a city so they may get what they asked for.

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا ۚ قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ ۚ اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ ۖ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ وَالْمَسْكَانَةُ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۚ {ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ} 61

And (remember you) when you said, “Oh Moses never can we (always) endure one kind of food, so pray you unto your Lord for us to produce for us of what the earth grows, its herbs, and cucumbers, its garlic, lentils, and onions!” Said he, “Seek you to exchange which is inferior for which is superior? Go you down to (settle into) some town and there you shall have what you ask for!” And humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them and they drew unto themselves the wrath of God. This because they used to reject the signs of God and slay His Apostles unjustly, this because they disobeyed and were wont to transgress. (2:61)

Therefore, Adam’s settling down (*habut*) was not a fall or the original sin as presented by the Jewish, Christian and some Muslim schools of thought. It was really a progressive move, a rise from the animal state of life to the human state. The advent of the pair on Earth was the beginning of human civilization. Accordingly, human civilization begins with “appointment” of the vicegerent of God on Earth. First comes the Imam (leader), the centre, and then the other parts of a society come into being. According to this view the first pair from whom the human race has developed were sinless and free from all sorts of falls, faults, or drawbacks. From this state of primal matter up to the last stage of their development they passed through the wombs and loins of nature or the natural stages – well protected by God, and from the conscious stage until the end they remained obedient and submissive to His will.

The same is the case with all the chosen issues of Adam and Eve. They have passed from the “exalted loins” (*aslab-ish-shamikhat*) to the “purified wombs” (*arham-il-mubhira*).²³ God waved their resplendent clay and light from being polluted by the vices of the days of ignorance.²⁴ The pagan days could not cover and stain that refined clay and light. Even Satan realized he had no chance of diverting

Adam and all of his issues from the right path. Some of them, though few in number, would always follow the prescribed path. So Satan challenged God that he would certainly sever most of Adam's issues from him (Adam) or from the right path.

{قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنِ أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لِأَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا} 62

{قَالَ أَذْهَبُ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاؤُكُمْ جَزَاءً مَوْفُورًا} 63

{وَاسْتَفْزِرْ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَتْ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمُ بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَعِدَّتِهِمْ ۚ وَمَا يَعِدُّهُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا} 64

{إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا} 65

He (Iblis) said, "See You, (this) is (the creature) whom You have honoured above me? If you respite me until the Day of Judgment, I will sever his posterity under my sway from its origin save a few." Said He God, "Begone! But whosoever of them follows you, then verily hell is your recompense, a recompense in full! And tear you away whomsoever of them you can with your voice and collect (against) them you cavalry and infantry, and partake with them in (their) riches and (their) children, and make promises unto them." And Satan promises them only to deceive. "Verily (as for) My (own) servants, you shall not have over them any authority and suffices you Lord (as their) Guardian." (17:62 – 65)

Despising the satanic domination over the majority of Adam's issues, God's answer to the challenge was, "He (Satan) may do whatever he likes with the offspring of Adam who would follow him, but he shall never have any influence over the real servants of God." God is the saviour who saves those worthy persons from satanic influence. And by saving them, most of Adam's issues have been saved in the end. The Qur'an asserts Adam and the "few" of his issues, which include Noah, the family of Ibrahim including the family of Muhammad, and the family of Imran are "chosen" (*mastafaun*) and beyond Satan's influence. They form the chain of divine vicegerency on Earth.

They are in communion with the higher spheres, and the infallible receivers or form the recipient ground for the divine will dispatched to the material plane. They represent and reflect His will in its entirety to humankind. Consequently, those who follow them and try to adhere to their cause and leadership will be saved. As the result of the safety of Adam and the "selected few" of his issues, the truth and righteousness shall ultimately prevail in the world and falsehood, wickedness and all other Satanic forces will be defeated, over-powered and thrown into hell.

{قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِيُ الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ} 49

Say you, “The truth has come and falsehood neither brings forth anything nor does it reproduce.

(34:49)

The end is good because the beginning was good. This means the doctrine of intercession, i.e. *Shifa't*.

Christian and Jewish Conception of Infallibility

The doctrine of Adam's *original sin* and *fall* and the other obnoxious stories of the Prophet's sins form the fundamental basis of Christian theology. Some of the Muslim traditionists and theologians who are accustomed to following the footsteps of the Jews and Christians in adopting many of their doctrines such as the uncreatedness²⁵ of the Qur'an (the word of God), etc. insisted on the fall of Adam and sins of other Prophets and did not like to make even the Prophet of Islam an exception.

To accuse Adam and the celebrated Prophets and vicegerents of God who succeeded Adam and one another, of sin and being influenced by satanic forces means either (a) denial of the authoritative and divine representative status of these persons, or (b) recognition of the same status for all those claimants of communion with the higher spheres, whose fallibility is evidently proved. In either of these cases the establishment of an authentic and authoritative communication between man and God becomes impossible. The apostolic statements based on communication with the angels or God, and the philosophic assertions based on pure reasoning or conjectural and hypothetical propositions, all becoming of the same value, subject to error, falsehood and thus unreliable and unauthentic.

Such a state of affairs would undermine the foundation of all religions as all the Prophets say need not be from “Above” and even all which is revealed to them from “Above” need not be entirely true. Hence, the revelation would then become conditional with the state of the receiving mind which is subject to satanic influence. The result, accordingly, would be neither all the revelations are exactly true, nor all the truths are exactly revealed.

We have already pointed out the actual motive and background for evolving the view of the “fallibility” of the vicegerents of God. The point to be noted here is the Christian theologians, while accepting the Jewish reports of the sins and wrong deeds of the Prophets, try to present Jesus, upon whom be peace, as sinless, free from all human faults and drawbacks. Hence, he (Jesus) is considered by them as the true representative or manifestation of God, the incarnated Word, the Son, the Third Person in the Trinity or God Himself. Considered sinless and free from all faults, he is presented as the only saviour and redeemer for humankind. He, the person of such standard of perfection, can only represent God and be an intercessor and a medium between God and man. They agree it is only the infallible person who can hold such a status.

But the question is: how do they reconcile (a) the fall and original sin of Adam, (b) the sins and

obnoxious life of Jesus' ancestral chain (the life of David with the wife of Oria, mother of Solomon and Nathan), and (c) the life of Jesus himself as given in the Bible as a "wine-bibber," of "loose conduct," and "harsh to his mother, relatives and non-Israelites," besides his being from the "seed and the fruit of the loins of David." Therefore, he is like all other men, the descendants of the same sinful fathers and fallible people. Even if the contradictory genealogy of Jesus, through Joseph, the husband of Mary, given by Matthew and Luke is dismissed as totally incorrect and what the Qur'an asserts, namely that Jesus was born of the "Virgin" and she never met a man before nor after the birth of Jesus is accepted, there remains the fact that the mother (Mary) was the descendant of those sinful fathers.

The Bible insists Jesus of Nazareth was the descendant of David, whose advent, as foretold by the scriptures, was expected by the Jews. So he cannot be the real "son of God" in body and spirit to remain aloof from the fall and faults of Adam and the chain of his issues who link up Mary with Adam. He must be from the seed of David. Otherwise, the whole prophecy of the scriptures falls apart. All they can claim from Jesus is he was an adopted "son of God" and the real son of Adam. One inherits the character of the natural father more than of the adoptive father. If it is possible for them to claim total transformation of body and soul into "Divine Nature" for one issue of the sinful man, it can be claimed for others, too.

In short, it is not possible for Christians to have it both ways, to consider Adam and David and the forefathers of Jesus as sinners and still hold Jesus perfectly infallible. If once we believe in the fall and fallibility of Adam none of his descendants can be accepted as infallible. To believe all the Prophets from Adam up to Jesus made sins and make Jesus of the seed of David an exception is unreasonable.

The Christians wanted to monopolize the Divine representative status of Jesus of Nazareth, so they held all men as sinners save Jesus. The Jews and some of the Muslim theologians wanted to profane the status so they may be able to claim it for fallible people of their own choice. They held prophethood so cheap a gift even the ill-tempered people, who passed most of their life in practicing the worst forms of pagan cults, could be entitled to it. Even insane men can establish direct communion with the higher sphere and become saints, if not Prophets, according to them. They applied such terms as *Muhaddas* (inspired), *Vali* (in close contact with God), *Qiddis* (saint), and consecrated one, too many people of no spiritual accomplishment.

These are the things wanted by the people, and a group of the People of the Book, but the truth never allows the wishes of people:

{وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ۚ تُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ} 21

And should the Truth follow their vain inclinations certainly will perish the heavens and the earth and all those who are therein. (23:71)

The Qur'an declares Adam as God's chosen vicegerent on Earth, due to his superiority in certain knowledge and to his being in the best of "mould and form." He was brought up as infallible by God and lived on Earth a pure and virtuous life. He followed His will and order incessantly with no drawback at all until his departure from earth, then he was succeeded by this chosen son, Shees, who live a godly life as his father had done.

The Continuity of Infallibility (Part Four)

The chain of the chosen ones, keeping their purity unstained and carrying further potentialities to the next, succeeded each other. Some appeared with the brilliance while others remained in obscurity, but the chain was continuous. It continued, as it ought to, in a particular line of Adam's offspring. The chain had Noah as its outshining link after Shees. But the interval between the two does not mean any break or gap. It means only the links in between remained in obscurity, so far as our knowledge is concerned.

{وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۗ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا} 164

And apostles We have (already) mentioned unto thee before and Apostles We mentioned not unto you and God spoke unto Moses, directly discoursing. (4:164)

Between Noah and Ibrahim, only God knows how many vicegerents of limited jurisdiction were branched off and went out preaching the truth to every nook and cranny of Earth, as the human race began to spread out.

{وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ ۗ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ ۗ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِبِينَ} 36

And indeed raised We in every nation an Apostle (of Ours) (preaching), "Worship your God (only), and shun you (the worship of every kind of) idol," so of them were some whom God guided, and of them were others on whom error was confirmed. Therefore, travel you on Earth, then see what has been the end of the beliers. (16:36)

But the main stem continued progressing until it outshone with the advent of Ibrahim, the holy and venerated father of the two chosen and blessed branches, propagated from his chosen sons, Isma'il (Ishmael) and Ishaq (Isaac). The latter branch (of Ishaq) began to outshine immediately after Ibrahim with Ishaq and after him with the successive Prophets and vicegerents of his descendants, some very prominent in outlook while others obscure and less known to the people until it ended with the most outshining Prophet Jesus, son of Maryam, the carrier of the Divine Spirit (*ruh Allah*). He was succeeded by his chosen disciple Sham'un (Simon Peter), after whom the chain of the true successors of Jesus is not very clear to us. But the Christians gave prominence to Paul, even in preference to Simon Peter.

They recognize Paul as the supreme father and founder of the Church next to Jesus. Next to Paul comes the chain of the Church fathers who recognize Paul as the true inspired adopted disciple of Jesus.

Jesus nominated and declared Peter as his successor, terming him as the rock on which he (Jesus) would build his church. Paul was then one of the staunch Jews who opposed the Christian movement during the lifetime of Jesus as well as afterwards. His sudden conversion with great enthusiasm for the new religion and the extraordinary dexterity he displayed in enhancing the new cause eclipsed Peter, the true successor of Jesus. Paul's broad esoterical interpretation of the Old Testament and the fragmentary *teachings* of Jesus attracted Roman gentiles and non-Jews. He differed from Peter and tried to depart from the rigid boundaries of racial Judaism, so he became popular. His heretical interpretations were gradually recognized as orthodox and the original Jewish orthodox presentation of Jesus' *teachings became heresy and heterodoxy*. In short the true and genuine teachings of Jesus and his true successors remained almost in obscurity while Paulian thoughts and movement began to introduce themselves as the true teachings of Jesus.

Paulianism or Paulian Christianity in comparison to what was held by the early Hebrew Proselytes as genuine is a departure from the original teachings for the sake of convenience. It was a particular course of thought and interpretation adopted by Paul and his school. So it was natural that in the course of time and circumstances it would adopt various directions of development which would be decided by one or a number of people who would exercise authority. Christianity today with all its sects, sectarian views, and various churches owes its development to the decisions and resolutions taken from time to time by men in power, the religious authorities for the time being in the shape of individuals on councils, and ecclesiastical bodies.

Apart from the Qur'an, all that is known about the life and teachings of Jesus is of Pauline origin rooted in the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, Revelations, or the Visions of John. There are discrepancies in these works and there were different editions of two Gospels' authors are in doubt and the sources of their information are not historical. Two of them, Mark and Luke, were not eye-witnesses. They wrote what they heard and were inclined to believe. Regarding the other two, Matthew and John, the authors of the first and last Gospels, it is, as shall be seen presently, doubtful whether they were the real disciples of Jesus.

However, though very few in number and historically very obscure, a group of Christians continued to adhere to the original teachings of Jesus. Their version of the life and teachings of Jesus was very different from the four canonical Gospels, each of which differs from the other in several particulars. Of those collections some were written by the immediate disciples of Jesus who were eyewitnesses, such as Barnabas and Matthew. It was doubtful if the present Gospel of Matthew is his real work or was partially or totally written by someone else. The four Gospels in hand and the Acts, Epistles and Visions were canonized and declared authentic by the ecclesiastical councils of the Pauline schools long after

they were written. It was the view and decision of the councils of a particular school of Christianity in which the Four Gospels were canonized made authoritative, and the rest declared as apocryphal (doubtful).

Thus the authenticity of the four or the doubtfulness of the rest is not based on any historical scrutiny. Whether the original work of Matthew was in Hebrew or in Greek is also a matter of doubt. Some hold the view the apocryphal Gospel of Ebeonites, the early Jewish proselytes (Jewish Christians) was the original work of Matthew. Some say Matthew wrote originally in Greek. Others think it was Luke, the physician of Antioch, the author of the third Gospel and Acts who rendered Mathew's Hebrew work into the Greek language. As already stated, Mark and Luke were not eyewitnesses and they wrote what they had heard from others; so the last in order and latest in the date of composition is quite doubtful.

Christian Prediction of the Holy Prophet of Islam

There is, however, no doubt in which a group of Christian monks and hermits of the early days remained detached from the Pauline school and which formed the main group of Christianity. They had their own Gospel and life story of Jesus and his teachings and considered themselves the true followers of Jesus. They were firm believers in the unity of God and the prophethood of Jesus. They abhorred the Trinity and divinity of Jesus and did not believe in his crucifixion and physical resurrection, which are the fundamental articles of the Pauline faith. They usually had their monasteries and hermitages in Arabia and its surroundings. They, like many Jewish priests and rabbis of those regions, expected the coming of a prophet of Isma'ilite descent. That the advent of such a prophet was generally expected is clear from the celebrated story of Bahyra²⁶ the Christian monk of Busra (in Syria) who met the Holy Prophet, when as a boy of eight years he accompanied his uncle, Abu Talib, to Syria and other similar anecdotes which refer to the expectation of the advent of Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace.

Upon seeing the Prophet these monks realized in him all the prophecies they knew and they intimated their knowledge to his uncle. There were people who believed firmly in which the time for the advent of the promised Prophet was approaching. Hearing these prophecies from the pious and well-informed monks, people like Selman, set out towards Arabia in search of the Prophet leaving his home and comfort in Iran.

The eager expectants were looking towards Mount Furan, and were making themselves acquainted with the House of Hashim. As the Qur'an asserts and history describes, these were learned Jews, Christians and even Magians and people of other creeds, who, according to their scriptures, were expecting the advent of Muhammad, upon whom be peace.

Leaving the Israelite branch, let us go back to the other branch of Ibrahim's descent, which comes forth through Isma'il, the oldest son of Ibrahim by the Holy Hajar. As per divine order, Isma'il, the newborn baby and his mother, Hajar, were taken by Ibrahim to the barren hillside and valley of Faran, the Bacca of the Qur'an, the barren valley surrounding the sacred House of God, with the sole purpose of

establishing a universal centre for humankind to pray and express total submission to God.

رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْنِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي
إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ {37}

Oh our Lord, verily I have used a part of my offspring in a valley uncultivable, nigh unto Your Holy House, our Lord, in which they may establish prayer, so make You the hearts of some of the people year unto them, and provide them with fruits in which they may be grateful. (14:37)

The House of God was ordered by Him to be purified by the father, Ibrahim and his son Isma'il for all devotees, and for all sorts of devotion, for those who go round the House in obedience, for those who stand in prayer and for those who bow down and prostrate in obeisance.

This holy place belongs to all alike, the inhabitants as well as those who come from abroad. The father and the son were ordered by God to call people to come for pilgrimage from places far remote and by all means of transportation:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءً الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ
فِيهِ بِالْحَادِ بِظُلْمٍ نُدَقَهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ {25}

Verily those who disbelieve and obstruct (people) from the way of God and from the Sacred House (Masjidul-Haram) which We have made alike for the dweller therein as well as the stranger, and whoever does intend to wrong therein unjustly, We shall make him taste a grievous chastisement. (22:25)

{وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ {26}

{وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَى كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ {27}

And (remember oh Our Apostle Muhammad) when We fixed for Ibrahim the place for the House, (saying), “Associate you not with Me aught, and cleanse My House for those who make the circuits and stand in prayer, and bow and prostrate themselves (unto me). And Proclaim you unto the people of the Pilgrimage (Hajj)! They will come unto you on foot and on lean camel, coming from every remote (high) way.” (22:26 – 27)

God consoled Ibrahim and assured him He has blessed Isma'il as He blessed his brother Ishaq, that He would raise a Prophet from among the descendants of Isma'il and would put His word into the mouth of

the Prophet to come, who would rule the people with an iron rod and vigour. Through him and for his sake Isma'il's issue would prosper and flourish throughout the world and Isma'il would be blessed with 12 princes who would be of his descent. This version is in complete accord with the Old and New Testament, and it is almost confirmed by the Qur'an.

Islam

According to the Qur'an, Islam, i.e. submission of the human will to the Will of God, is the religion approved by God for humankind and is in accord with his nature and the mould in which man was created.

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا ۚ فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
 {النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ} 30

Then set you your face uprightly for the (right) religion, in natural devotion to the truth (following) the nature caused by God in which He has made the people. No change can there be (by anyone else) in the creation of God. (30:30)

The perpetuity of Islam has been established by all Prophets and divine guides, known or unknown, in all ages.

{وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نَفَرِقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ} 84

{وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ} 85

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَاهَدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ
 86}}

Say (oh Our Apostle Muhammad) (unto the people), "We believe in God, and in what has been sent down to us, and what has been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes, and in what was given to Moses, and Jews and the Prophets from their Lord, we make no difference between any of them, and we unto Him are Muslims." And whosoever seeks any religion other than Islam (total resignation unto God) never shall it accepted from him, and in the next world he shall be among the losers. How shall God guide a people who disbelieved after their (once) believing and after they had borne witness in which the Apostle (Muhammad) was true, and clear evidence had come unto them, and God guides not people (who are) unjust. (3:84

Opposite to Islam in this sense is a deviation of man's will from the legislative will of God and submission to influence of any ungodly force. This is what the Qur'an terms as *baghi* (revolt or rebellion). Islam is the established religion with which Adam was sent to Earth.

{قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا ﴿٤٠﴾ فَأَمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

Said We (then), "Get down you therefrom all together and when there comes from Me unto you a guidance, and whoso follows My guidance, no fear shall come on them, nor shall they grieve.

(2:38)

And as the vicegerency of Adam continued, Islam, the approved religion of God, also continued. Sabeanism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and even the term Muhammadanism, all limited terms used mostly by men for their convenience, or if they are ever used in some revelation they are meant to show a particular or specific aspect of the universal religion, connected with a particular time or place. Otherwise, these terms are very limited in their baptismal significance with which the religion of God should not be coloured. Islam is *Sibghatallah* (God's colour), or the baptismal water, the best with which every being is originally baptized, purified, coloured, or moulded. According to a Prophetic *hadith*, "Every child is born according to the original design after which man was made (i.e. Islam or submission to His Will). It is the parental education which remoulded or reshapes the child as a Jew, Christian or Magian."

The limited baptisms are artificial and manmade colours. The divine recognition of these religions within their limited jurisdiction of time and place was due to the fact they were preached by the Prophets of the times and places who represented the will of God locally. They could be termed as Islam of that jurisdiction. But Islam, with which Ibrahim was commissioned to preach and recommended his children (issues) to adhere to, was in its comprehensive mould. It was Islam in its universal form not stressing on any exclusive aspect, ritual or spiritual. The one-sidedness of Moses' teachings stressing on the ritual aspects of religion and the one-sidedness of Jesus' teachings, stressing on the moral and spiritual and religious maladies which were prevailing in their respective periods of time at particular places.

According to the Qur'an, Ibrahim, after receiving the status of *Imamate* (leadership or vicegerency), prayed to God in which his *Imamate* be continued in some of his issues. Responding to his prayer, God disqualified the unjust and the wrongdoers for the status of *Imamate* (5:124). After building the House of God at Bacca (Mecca) with the help of Isma'il, Ibrahim again prayed to God to keep himself, Isma'il, and of their issues a group (the term used is *Ummat* which is applicable even to one person), in complete submission to His Will, to show himself, Isma'il and those of his issues who submit to God the rites which they should observe and the right path they should follow and to always bestow on them all His attention and special care.

Ibrahim's further prayer was, "Oh our Lord, send out of them (in the *Ummat-e Muslima*, (i.e. the

submissive group of the issues of Isma‘il) a Prophet (a messenger from among them, the same *Ummat-eMuslimah*) to recite for them the signs of God and to teach them the Book and wisdom.”

Ibrahim made this *tawalla* (submissive attitude towards the Creator) and *tabarrah* (rejection of all other deities or all other ungodly forces) a permanent motto for his offspring. If verses 2:124 – 140, 8:35 – 41, 22:77 – 78 and all the verses in chapters 23, 26, 28 are read together, one will have no doubt that according to the Qur’an (a) from Isma‘il to our Prophet the chain of *Ummat-e Muslimah* continued without interruption, (b) each link in the *Ummat-e Muslimah* was inspired by God to adhere to the right path and rituals. The Qur’an mentions the prayer of Ibrahim as follows, “Oh our Lord, show us the rites which we have to perform.” The pronoun “us” refers to Ibrahim, Isma‘il and their “Muslim” progeny, which means all were inspired. To this fact, *arana* (show us), Ali refers in detail in his sermon,²⁷ and (c) the Prophet was sent in the *Ummat-e Muslimah* and he was one from among them.

Purity of Lineage of Prophet Muhammad and the Declaration of

Abu Talib

In other words, the Qur’an asserts the lineage between Isma‘il and Muhammad (peace be upon him and his household) consisting of the selected Muslims in the true sense of the term and not in the sense of mere utterance of the confessional formula. This also confirms the celebrated statement of the Holy Prophet in which God has brought him down from the loins of Adam in such a lineage that every link of it was a chosen and selected one. To consider anyone in this lineage to be a non-Muslim is to depart from what the Qur’an asserts. So granting the historical account of the lives of the ancestors of the Holy Prophet between Isma‘il and Hashim is obscure, nevertheless on the authority of the Qur’an we have to maintain the purity of the chain from which the Holy Prophet has descended.

This Qur’anic assertion is supported by the logical argument already advanced in which it is necessary that the main argument already advanced, it is necessary the main stem from Adam to Isma‘il and from Isma‘il to the Holy Prophet should be true Muslims, otherwise the continuity of the divine vicegerency would have been disturbed. What was the faith and creed of the margins and branches, it is not necessary to determine here. We would have stopped here with Abdullah and Amina, the parents of Muhammad, if the vicegerency had stopped with Muhammad and had not continued after him. But the Qur’an says Muhammad is not *abtar* (unproductive, chapter 108), without selected offspring to inherit the Book, the wisdom and the great kingdom given by God to *Al-e Ibrahim*.

{أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَىٰ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا } 54

Or do they envy the people for what God has given them of His grace, but indeed We have given to Ibrahim’s children the Book and the wisdom and We gave them a great kingdom. (4:54)

{وَالَّذِي أُوحِيَنا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ﴿٣١﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣١﴾}

﴿٣١﴾ ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبادِنَا ﴿٣٢﴾ فَمِنْهُمْ ظالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ بإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ﴿٣٢﴾ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٢﴾}

Certainly We have given the inheritance of the Book (Qur'an) after Muhammad to the same servants of Ours whom We have already selected, of whom some are unjust to themselves and some are fairly good, and of them some are, by the will of God the foremost and topmost in all that is good. (35:31 – 32)

This means the chain of the *Ummat-e Muslimah* or selected people of Isma'il's descent was still to continue after the Holy Prophet. The Prophet's issues, to inherit the Book, were through none but Fatima, daughter of the Prophet, and Ali. It is through Muhammad and Ali, of the House of Ibrahim, in which the *Imamate* of Ibrahim in its final form should continue. So the parental purity required for Muhammad is equally required for Ali. Muhammad is from Abdulla and Aminah. Ali is from Abu Talib and Fatima bint Asad (daughter of Asad). Abdullah and Abu Talib are two brothers from the same father Abdul Muttalib and the same mother. That was (if the report is true) the significance of Abu Talib's last declaration in the presence of Abu Jahl and other opponents of Islam in which he was adhering to the religion of his father and grandfathers (the ancestral chain). He meant to declare that, not only himself but the whole chain between him and Ibrahim had been adherents of the same faith to which the Qur'an refers.

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ﴿٧٨﴾ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٨٠﴾ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ﴿٨١﴾ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٧٨﴾}

And fight (endeavour) you in (the way of) God as it behoves you to fight (endeavour) for Him. He has chosen you and has laid not upon you any hardship in religion, the faith of your father Ibrahim. He (God Himself) named you Muslims before and in this, and the Apostle may be a witness over you and you be witness over the people, so establish your prayer and pay you the poor-rate and hold you fast by God. He is your Master – how excellent the Master and how excellent the Helper! (22:78)

This declaration of Abu Talib should be read in the light of the amazing devotion which he as a chivalrous successor of Abdul Muttalib should to his young orphan nephew. He devoted himself with all that was at his disposal – men, children and property – for the protection of Muhammad against his opponents, to certifying to the truth and righteousness of his mission and to the promotion of his cause. In his action, attitude and eloquent speeches, in prose or poetry, Abu Talib expresses his devotional love

for Ahmad (the Holy Prophet) to the extent he would sacrifice himself and all the members of his family young and old, in order to defend Ahmad and his cause. One may wonder in which the undisputed vehement zeal of Abu Talib to protect Muhammad and his mission on the one hand, and considering his (i.e. Abu Talib's) own attitude and reaction towards the new movement on the other, one would wonder whether it was Abu Talib's love for Muhammad which made him protect his mission and cause or was it his love for the mission itself and the unchallengeable truth of the cause, which inspired him to protect Muhammad?

A deep study of Abu Talib's actions, attitude and utterances and the Prophet's reverence for his devoted uncle, however, proves beyond doubt that to Abu Talib, Muhammad and his cause, Islam, are "one inseparable unit." They together were the fullest and final embodiment of all which was brought, preached and practiced by the chosen chain of the vicegerents of God from Adam to Ibrahim and from Ibrahim to Jesus in one line and from Ibrahim to Muhammad in the other line. Abu Talib said expressly he and his predecessors were far from believing in or doing or supporting what was wrong.

He declared he sided with Muhammad because he never told a lie, but was true and right in whatever he said or did and if it was otherwise he (Abu Talib) and the members of the family who were with him, were far from paying attention to what was false and wrong. He presents Muhammad as the shining and auspicious face, whose grace brings down rain from the sky. He presents him also as the protector of the orphans and the shelter for widows. He considers him as the criterion of truth which never mistakes and as the measuring authority of justice whose measurement never fails.

He considers Muhammad as the one who had been commissioned by the Lord of all creatures to preach religion in its thoroughness unmingled with falsehood. The declaration of Abu Talib in the presence of Abu Jahl and other Qurayshites to the effect he was the adherent of the religion of his ancestors has been quoted frequently by the anti-*Ahl al-Bayt* party as proof of his remaining a non-Muslim throughout his life. The party fails to read this statement in the light of other statements of Abu Talib mentioned above. They ignore these statements and overlook his service to the cause of Islam. The antagonists are determined to consider Abu Talib and the other members of his house only from the point of view of the Umayyad rulers. This party fails to read while in power did its best from the early days of Islam to depict the first and foremost supporter of Islam and his house in a manner that pleased their masters.

Otherwise, in view of all the historical evidence in hand if they were not prejudiced and were really impartial they would have realized Abu Talib's firm stand for his nephew was due to no other motive than the deep-rooted admiration for truth, justice and godliness. Abu Talib believed Muhammad was the complete expression and thorough manifestation of all the godly virtues with which Ibrahim, Isma'il and the chain of their descendants had been endowed. His declaration meant to show that not only himself, but the whole of the ancestral chain were the forerunners of Muhammad, and Muhammad was the total fulfilment of their expectations and complete manifestation of the truth and righteousness, which they all were standing for. The only argument advanced by the pro-Umayyad party in support of their view

against Abu Talib is that despite all his devotion and support to the prophet and admiration for his stand, he did not publicly utter the confessional formula of the faith while Abu Sufyan and his kin uttered the confessional formula.

But Abu Sufyan and his kin continued their oppression and hostility to the Prophet and his cause, though outwardly they accepted Islam. Also, they were declared Muslims by the pro-Umayyads simply because of a verbal confession. So, according to the pro-Umayyad party the verbal confession, though lacking sincerity, takes Abu Sufyan to heaven, and the sincere devotion and services of Abu Talib, the first protector of Islam and its founder, seemingly lacking confession, takes to the verge of hell (which is intended for unbelievers and hypocrites). In other words, Abu Talib, like Hazkeel,²⁸ the *Mo'min-e al-e Fira'un* (believers in God and Prophet Moses), concealed his faith in Islam to be able to protect and defend the Holy Prophet against the ill designs of Abu Sufyan and his associates (the Pharaohs of Quraysh) deserve hell, but Abu Sufyan, who lie the hypocrites mentioned in the Qur'an 63:1 – 4:

{ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُولُهُ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَكَاذِبُونَ } 1

{ اتَّخَذُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ } 2

{ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا فَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ } 3

{ وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ أَجْسَامُهُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ يَقُولُوا تَسْمَعُ لِقَوْلِهِمْ ۗ كَأَنَّهُمْ خُشُبٌ مُسَنَّدَةٌ ۗ يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صِخْرَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ ۗ قَاتِلْهُمْ اللَّهُ ۗ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ } 4

When came unto you the hypocrites, they said, “We bear witness that verily you are the Apostle of God,” and verily God knows you (oh Muhammad) are certainly His Apostle, and verily God bears witness in which the hypocrites are certainly the liars. They make their oaths a shield, thus they obstruct (others) from the way of God. Verily evil is what they are wont to do. This is because they believe, then (again) disbelieve they, so a seal has been set upon their hearts, so they understand not. When you see them, marvel you their bodies, and if they speak, you listen unto their speech, (they are) as if they were blocks of wood propped up in garments, deem they every cry is against them. They are the enemy (of yours), so beware you of them! May God annihilate them, whence do they deviate. (63:1 – 4)

confessed faith verbally after complete defeat only to save his neck against the sword of Islam, deserves heaven! To such prejudiced minds no amount of argument, be it based on reason, the Qur'an, *Sunnah* or historical facts will be of any avail. They have been educated and brought up to think in this manner. It

paid them support and pleased the party in power against the persecuted ones. This perverse judgment is not confined to the cause of Abu Talib and Abu Sufyan but extends to Ali and the *Ahl al-Bayt* also. They ignore all the facts of history, the assertion of the Qur'an and declarations of the prophet, which prove beyond doubt that Ali, the son of Abu Talib, is next to the Prophet and Ali and identity of their ideology and their mould of mind about which the Prophet, in conformity with the Qur'an declared on several occasions that "Ali is from me and I am from Ali," of "Ali is of me and I am of him" (*aliun minni* and *ana min ho*).

The shining truth in the splendid character of Ali, identical with the Holy Prophet in blood and achievements based on the Qur'an and revelational reason urged Bukhari, the distinguished Sunni traditionist to devote one chapter on the genuineness of the statement. Overlooking all the incomparable virtues with which none but Ali is credited, they argue that after all Ali was one of the numerous companions of the prophet. To them all the companions are virtuous and guiding stars, and Mo'awiya, the son of Abu Sufyan, despite all his drawbacks and vices (before and after coming into the fold of Islam) being one of the companions of the Prophet, was virtuous and a guiding star. They say he, like Ali and other companions, was a *Mujtahid* (an authority in religious affairs and problems).

As such he had the right to apply his mind to the problems facing him and to differ from Ali and others. They ignore his vices and subversive activities against Islam and the House of the prophet as mistakes committed by an authority and expert in the application of the general rule to particular cases. Some of the pro-Umayyads try to justify even his most horrible crimes as an appropriate step taken by him because he considered it necessary in the interest of the kingdom. Thus, they raised Mo'awiyah to the status of a companion of the Prophet, as defined by them, i.e. a virtuous and guiding star, and brought Ali down from the status of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and from his spiritual union with the Prophet to the level of mere companionship and aligned him with the son of Abu Sufyan and people of his type. The adherents of this school of thought deliberately ignore the declaration of the prophet in which he is the city of knowledge and Ali the door of that city.

They overlook what the Qur'an says about some of the companions of the Prophet, "*Of them (the companions) who listen to you (Prophet Muhammad), some are of the type that when they go away from your presence, they ask those who are gifted with knowledge, 'what did he (the Prophet) say a few minutes before.'*" They are the people whose hearts have been sealed by God and they are following their own desires (inclinations). And those who have availed of the guidance, He (God) increased guidance and he gave them the power to guard themselves against evil.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ أَنفَاءً ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ۚ ﴿١٦﴾

﴿وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًىٰ وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ﴾ 17

And of them are those who seek to listen to you until when they go forth from you say unto those who have gained the knowledge, "What was it he said just now?" These are they on whose hearts has God set a seal, and follow them their vain desires. And those who avail of the guidance, He adds to His guidance unto them, and grants them their guard (against evil). (47:16 – 17)

In spite of these verses, they evolved the view that all those who confessed Islam verbally and saw the Prophet and heard something from him were all the *Sahabah* (companions), and all the companions were virtuous, guiding stars and *Mujtahids* having the right to apply their mind to religious affairs and decide according to their discretion. According to them the companions will have double reward from God if their opinions are correct and if their opinion turns out to be wrong, they will have a single reward. On this basis, which is against reason, the Qur'an and the statements of the Holy Prophet, they hold the view all the controversies which took place after the Prophet's demise until the tragedy of Karbala, between the companions or even between the disciples of the companions (*tabi'in*) were based on *ijtihad* (the opinion of an expert), who whether right or wrong, was not to be blamed.

They justify the dislocation of Ali and other members of the House of the Prophet from the holy status which the Qur'an and *Sunnah* have accorded for them. They viewed the ill-treatment of the *Ahl al-Bayt* by the parties in power as the natural consequence of *ijtihad*. Some of them even consider the assassin of Ali (who was not a companion of Prophet) as a *mujtahid* whom God will reward. But it is surprising they do not give the same concession to the murderers of 'Uthman, though many companions were involved in that murder. Some of them go further and hold the embodiment of cruelty and vices, Yazid, the son Mo'awiyah, a rightful ruler and consider him and his lieutenants and army who took part in the tragedy of Karbala as *mujtahids*. They even hesitate to say which of the conflicting *mujtahids* were right and which side was wrong, and the tone of their apologetic arguments in favour of the opponents of the *Ahl al-Bayt* betray that they are inclined to hold the *Ahl al-Bayt* and their partisans more blameworthy than their opponents.

In order to justify the misdeeds of the ruling parties as *Kata-e Ijtihadi* (permissible error in judgment by an expert) they try to prove even the Prophet as well as previous Prophets were subject to error and they committed sins and mistakes. The result is all the chiefs of the Quraysh who have done wrong to Islam and the *Ahl al-Bayt*, all those who displeased the Prophet in his lifetime and opposed and hurt Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussain, after the Prophet's demise, are considered authorities on religion and worthy of reward from God.

However, this is not the place for discussing all the controversial matters which resulted in the development of numerous sects in Islam and caused bloodshed and horrible heart rending crimes committed by one sect against the other throughout the history of Islam. We have referred to the above controversy only to show the political background of Abu Talib being considered as an unbeliever by certain schools of thought in Islam forms, according to those schools, the main criterion for acceptance or rejection of the reports of the Holy Prophet's sayings and statements (*ahadith*). They cherish and

celebrate any report which pleased in some way or the other the rulers of the early period of Islam and was directly or indirectly against the followers of the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Ibn-e Kathir, the commentator and historian of the same school, tried to prove Hussain was superior to Yazid merely because he (Hussain) could be counted among the companions of the Prophet as defined by his school. This he considered a great favour done to the *Ahl al-Bayt*. But his attempt was not to defend the status of Hussain against Yazid, it was to save Mo'awiyah's stand against Ali. Their view about Abu Talib should be examined in the light of the stand they have taken against members of the *Ahl al-Bayt* throughout the history of Islam. The Holy Prophet said he was leaving two inseparable precious things, the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt*, which if adhered to, would save his followers from going astray. It means the nature of every problem and the character of every Muslim should be judged in accordance with the degree of its nearness or his conformity with these two fundamental criteria for right and wrong, truth and falsehood. The Muslim majority, however, perverted the position. They began to judge the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt* by the verdict of the people of no religious status who are subject to error, and were even openly mischievous. For example, instead of telling on Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq, the sixth Imam of the House, for determining the reliability or otherwise of the chain of reliable reporters of the statements of the Holy Prophet, some of the traditionists of the pro-Umayyad school try to doubt him on the authority of people like Yahya ibn Moin and ibn Habban whose knowledge, competency and piety cannot be relied upon.

Rahamatin lil-'alimin (Mercy to all the worlds)

Let us, however, go back to trace the chain of the issues of Isma'il (*Ummat-e Muslimah*) whom God promised to bless and for whom Ibrahim prayed to God to keep them away from the evils of paganism and make them submissive to His will. After Isma'il the branch began to propagate and prosper, but the lineage carrying the most perfect vicegerent of God was progressing in obscurity until the birth of Hashim whence the lineage began to outshine gradually. Hashim and his son Abdul Muttalib began to display the character, heritage, rituals and etiquette of Ibrahim. They began to outshine as the firm adherents and followers of the venerable and Holy Father of the House. Their lives clearly showed they observed all the commandments of Ibrahim and protected his faith of which they were custodians.

But they were just the forerunners. The light to shine and illuminate the world was still to come. Hashim, whom his grandson Abu Talib eulogized for his generosity, clemency and sympathetic affection for the oppressed, needy and poor people, began to indicate the light he was carrying was not for the illumination of a partial region, tribe, or race only and it was not inclined only towards the west as does Judaism or towards the east as does Christianity. It was "neither of the east nor of the west." It was to illuminate the whole universe and he (Hashim) represented the Absolute One to whom belongs all which could be termed east and west. The light which Hashim was carrying was the All-Gracious Light (*Rahamatin lil-'alimin*), the blessed light intended for all the worlds.

It was the light prophesized as the “Comforter,” the “Spirit of Truth,” the “Advocate” – the light of the person who would receive the word of God direct and would not utter aught but what he hears from Him (God). It was the light of the one who would tell humankind everything, and complete and finalize the divine message which Jesus and his predecessors had not completed. According to Jesus it was the Paraclete or Parclit (Muhammad or Ahmad – more commendable) who would come after him (Jesus) and would deliver the final and the last message of God to humankind (vide fourth Gospel).

Hashim shone in all that was noble and excellent, but his chosen son Abdul Muttalib with a glorious forehead and resplendent features outshone his father. He displayed the spirit of sacrifice which is the nearest and dearest to God. He was ready to sacrifice his dearest son, ‘Abdallah, in fulfilment of his sacred oath in the same manner in which Ibrahim and Isma‘il stood the test.²⁹ The spirit of the sacrifice displayed itself then as it had done before (in the case of Isma‘il), but once again the execution was postponed by God for a greater *sacrifice to come (zibeh-e ‘azeem)*. The great sacrifice to come had to be offered by the same House but in a different shape and at another time, i.e. when the House of ‘Abdallah and Abu Talib, the two brothers, had become one against all that was ungodly and wrong.

Abdul Mutallib’s stand against the elephant expedition of the Christian Abyssinian ruler Abraha of Yemen who marched to Mecca to destroy the Holy Shrine of the Ka‘ba (537 A.C.) is the best proof of his firm faith in the sanctity of the Holy Prophet as the House of God. It shows his extreme confidence in which the Lord of the House would defend His House against the offenders. The reverend Hashimite patriarch, Abdul Muttalib meeting Abraha, the head of the expedition, asked for the release of his camels which had been seized by the invading army. Abraha expressed his surprise that the custodian of the Holy Shrine, instead of asking him not to pollute and destroy the sanctuary, was asking only for the release of his camels. Abdul Muttalib in a very calm but firm voice retorted he was told of the camels, while the House had its own Lord to defend it.

This challenge of Abdul Muttalib was followed by the total annihilation of the Christian expedition in the manner mentioned in the Qur’an in Chapter 55, *al-Fil* or the Elephant. That miraculous event was the best proof of the sanctity of the House. It showed the truth and righteousness of the cause to which the people of the house, headed by the son of Hashim, the then patriarch of Al-e Ibrahim, were adhering. This was the first peaceful challenge of *Ummat-e Muslimah* against the Christians of Yemen mentioned in the Qur’an. The second challenge took place after nearly 60 years at Medina by the grandchildren of Abdul Muttalib in the shape of the *Mubahala*.³⁰

The stand was the same as their grandfather, the stand of the first believers in the unity of God – the Lord of the House built by Ibrahim – against the believers in the Trinity and divinity of Jesus. On both occasions, the Christians were defeated not by means of the sword, but by the force of truth. In the case of the elephant expedition, they had to submit to the sanctity of the House, and in the case of the *Mubahala*, involving the wrath of God on the party whose claim was false, the Christian delegates declined to respond to the challenge and agreed to pay tribute as a token of their submission to the

supremacy of Islam.

Abdul Muttalib openly announced he was an adherent to the religion of Ibrahim, rejecting the pagan cults of idolatry, lottery, marriage with wives of one's father (stepmothers), etc. He revived many rights recommended by Ibrahim, which had been neglected by most of his descendents. All the reforms adopted by Abdul Muttalib and the rules laid down by him were later confirmed by Islam. The announcement by Abdul Muttalib in which he was an adherent to the religion of his father and forefathers should be read along with the Qur'an which asserts the Holy Prophet is commissioned to preach the religion of the grand ancestors of the house of Prophet Ibrahim. The Qur'an confirms also Ibrahim had already named some of his descendants as *Muslimin* with the status of being witness over the people, and their being witnesses over the Holy Prophet.³¹

However, the Hasmimite patriarch is said to have combined in him the dignity of the kings and the glowing features of the Prophets. Like his grand ancestor, Ibrahim, he is called *Umatun Wahidah*,³² a single soul, who attained the distinction of possessing all the virtues found in different pious people. And he was well aware of the light (the resplendent clay) which he was carrying. It was not very late in his life that, to his utmost joy, he found the light began to glow on the foreheads of his two beloved sons, 'Abdallah and Abu Talib. The former was saved by God, like the ancestor Isma'il, from being sacrificed, just to carry the light of prophethood in its finality and perfect phase.

He lived a life clean but very short. He married Aminah, the daughter of his grand uncle Wahb, the brother of Hashim. She conceived. The light was transferred from 'Abdallah to Aminah. A few months before or after the birth of the Holy Prophet, 'Abdallah in the prime of life, between the age of 25 and 30, passed away. He left his widow and orphan to be looked after by Abdul Muttalib, who for extreme pain and grief at the loss of a son like 'Abdallah was compensated by the joy of holding in his arms the most perfect manifestation of divine grace, which was the expectation of the House of Ibrahim for a long time. It was destined that the grandfather and not the father should solemnize with the utmost care all the rites in respect of the newborn, recommended by Ibrahim.

{أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ} 6

Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter? (93:6)

Abdul Muttalib performed all the rites ceremoniously and named the baby Muhammad, peace be upon him. This name had not been used before. He said he was expecting the baby to be the real embodiment of the name which means the "Praised One." It means the one who is made perfect, devoid of all defects. God is absolutely perfect by Himself. His immediate manifestation is also perfect in relation to the subsequent manifestation, but not by himself. He is made perfect. He owes his perfection to the Absolute. Thus, the best and the most comprehensive term for the first created being in the arc of descent is Muhammad. No being in the hierarchy of the corresponding arc of ascent can appropriately

be named Muhammad, that name was for the one who was to be the final, the last month amenity of the hierarchy. It is the last in the arc of ascent which corresponds or reflects the first in the arc of descent.

Of the manifestations of the Absolute, the first and the last in degree of perfection was to be termed Muhammad. The first and the last in these two arcs are actually the inner and outer aspects of each other. Both are Muhammad's in the real sense of the term. For this interpretation of the word the celebrated apostolic statement of the *Ahl al-Bayt* may be referred, "*Awaluna Muhammad, Aowsatuna Muhammad, Akheruna Muhammad, wa Kuluna Muhammad,*" i.e. the first, middle, and last of us are Muhammad. This *hadith* (tradition) explains and asserts the 12 Imams of the House of the Prophet are successors of the Prophet who have all the attributes of the Prophet except prophethood. The constant will of God made them far away from all dirt and defects and bestowed on them the purity and excellence to the maximum possible extent (33:33).

Looking at the apparent aspects of the early life of the Holy Prophet we find he was under the care of his grandfather and his widowed mother for some time. Then he was entrusted for a few years to the care of his foster mother, Haleemah, of the tribe of Bani Sa'ad. The mother could not tolerate to be away very long from the only precious gem left behind by her husband. Muhammad was brought back from the desert to join his mother in the city of Mecca. But she did not survive the shock of the loss of her husband to enjoy the glorious future of her son. She passed away when the Holy Prophet was six years old, and thereafter he had the motherly care and affection of Fatima, the daughter of Asad, the wife of Abu Talib, which also did not last very long.

The Prophet was eight years old when Abdul Muttalib's time of departure came. He handed over to Abu Talib, his worthy successor, the charge of the ancestral heritage along with the duty of taking care of the divine trust, the topmost gem of humanity. He put the hand of Muhammad into the hand of Abu Talib, who carried out the duty of a guardian. This was "the apparent aspect of his early life." But the Qur'an, Abu Talib and his son Ali give the glowing picture of the whole situation. Their presentation of the life of the Prophet should be taken as the real and spiritual aspect of his life. Of the numerous enlightening descriptions of the Holy Prophet by Ali, we quote here only the gist of one, given in one of his lectures recorded in *Nahj al-Balahga*.

Ali says that ever since the birth of the Prophet, God made the greatest angel to accompany the Prophet, day and night, leading him to the path of virtue and excellent conduct. Abu Talib did not consider the Prophet to be under his care and obligation or of any other's of the Hasmimite house. On the contrary, he considered it a great honour and blessing for every member of the house of Hashim to be in the presence of the Prophet. He describes the brave warriors of the house of Hashim who were ready to lay down their lives for the holy one, as resorting to the Prophet for shelter. Instead of considering the Prophet to be under his protection, he considered himself and all the other members of the house to be under the Prophet's protection. He did not look at his nephew as a helpless orphan under his care. He saw him as having a shining and auspicious face by virtue of which rain descends

from the clouds. Instead of considering him as an orphan he presented him as the caretaker of the orphans and the protector of widows. To Abu Talib, Muhammad was the beauty and glory in the world for those who were able to appreciate him and was full of wrath against the enemy of the truth. He was the ornament of all assemblies. He was forbearing, prudent, and farsighted. He devoted himself entirely to the service of Allah.

Abu Talib was well aware of the prophetic status of his nephew as recorded in the earliest scriptures. His verses in eulogy of the Prophet, “Do you not know we have found, recorded in the early scriptures, in which Muhammad is indeed a prophet like Moses?” are not mere flattery. They are the expression of a brave and sincere man of nobility who meant every word he uttered. They are the outburst of the ardent love and admiration for the truth and righteousness which he saw in his nephew ever since his childhood.

Abu Talib considered Muhammad as the one commissioned by the Lord of all creatures (and not just the Lord of the Quraysh or Arabs) to preach to all the universal religion approved by Him in its pure and original form. He did not regard the stand taken by Muhammad as only against the degenerated Qurayshites who claimed to be the descendants of Ibrahim, but contemplated it as something against the whole world which had been fouled by ungodly cults, customs, and beliefs. The stand was against racialism, nationalism, parochialism and the Jewish and Christian bigotries which resulted in hatred and intolerance: he was the glory of the whole world of truth and the wrath of God on anyone who opposed it. In short, the amount of respect the prophet was commanding among the members of his own family in general and of his nearest kin such as Abu Talib, Abdul Muttalib, and Ali in particular, before and after his birth and his departure from the world, was so great it is beyond one’s ability to describe. The intimate and chosen members of the family are the most competent people to bear testimony to the character of the man who claims to be in communion with the heavenly spheres.

In the case of the Holy Prophet and his household, even their enemies had to acknowledge their virtuous character. It is a revelation to all and historical truth, let alone the confessions of Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan, Mo‘awiya, and others. Shimr who cut the holy head of Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet, and presented it to Yazid, son of Mo‘awiyah, demanded with great pride, “Oh king, fill up the sack with gold and silver, I have killed the virtuous saint. I have killed the one whose father and mother were the best among the whole of humankind.”

This is evidence of the heavenly aspect of the life of the Holy Prophet narrated by those of the nearest kin. The Qur’an is the supreme authority which gives evidence on the godly, spiritual or inner aspect of the life of the last messenger of God sent for all which may be termed as the *‘Alameen* (worlds). This is what the Qur’an itself repeatedly and emphatically asserts.

{وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا ۚ قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ } 43

“Those who disbelieve and say, ‘You are not sent (commissioned by God).’ Say (you) ‘Sufficient is God and the one who has with Him the thorough knowledge of the Book, as the witness between me and you.’” (13:43)

In essence, the Qur’an testifies the Holy Prophet is the first being in the order of creation (in the arc of descent), the foremost in receiving the divine grace. There was no other purpose for the process of descent and ascent of the Holy Prophet, the first created one, but to send him as the universal grace to the entire world (21:107). The achievement of this purpose resulted in the long process of creation of the heavens and earth or say the “unfolding of what was compact in His (God’s) knowledge, and refolding of them again in the manner which the written scrolls are unfolded and refolded” (Ref. 21:104).

God is presented in the Qur’an as the Lord cherisher of all the worlds. To Pharaoh’s question, “Who is the Lord Cherisher of all the worlds?” Moses answered, “The Lord Cherisher of the heavens the Earth and all that is in between.” To the worlds of which God is the Lord Cherisher, the Holy Prophet is sent as His “universal grace.” This is the “great character” with which the Holy Qur’an credits the Holy Prophet.

The universal grace is the principle attribute of God for all of His creative and legislative activities. God has made the same universal grace as the principle life of the Holy Prophet. He and the other righteous servants of God shall ultimately inherit Earth (21:105). Thus the beginning of the life of the Holy Prophet was prior to the world to which he was sent, because no world can come into being prior to the universal grace of God. Similarly, the end of the Prophet’s life is connected with the universal grace which never ends.³³ The All-Gracious taught the Qur’an in the manner in which He created the man and taught him “expression.” It is obvious the man who receives such unique instructions cannot but be the manifestation of the universal grace to all the worlds (Chapter 105, the Beneficent, *ar-Rahman*). The teacher of Muhammad is *ar-Rahman* (Allah). The lesson is the Qur’an.

The time and method of teaching were such the moment He created the Holy Prophet He taught him expression (*bayan*). The result of His teaching was he took such a unique state as to be over and above the highest horizon (53:5 – 7). The term *Shah-e Sadr* used in the Qur’an concerning the Prophet means the broadening of the breast as opposed to constricting it. The Qur’an has used this as a figurative expression of broad-mindedness and extensive, as opposed to the narrow mindedness and absence of capacity to receive the radiant light of truth. The Qur’an has termed the narrowness of the breast, in the sense, as the dirt fallen on those who are lacking in faith and reasoning (6:125).

Therefore, the term *Sharh-e Sadr* used in the Qur’an for the Holy Prophet means the constant process of widening of his mind and heart and ever expanding the submissive capacity to receive the divine light. Wherever the term is used for him it should not be taken to mean a surgical-like operation by the angels on the physical breast or heart of the Holy Prophet and their washing and dressing the wound, caused by their operation. These are the reports given by the narrators of an anthropomorphic tendency who were incapable of grasping the real meaning of the apostolic statement of the Holy Prophet and the *Ah/ al-Bayt*. They understood nothing beyond the material and physical form, and so naturally distorted what

they heard by converting it into their own words which are totally against the Qur'anic significance.

The Qur'an asserts he and the members of his House are kept away from all dirt and impurities and are purified to the highest extent. As such they are in touch with the Qur'an in the "Hidden Book," in its original form which is with God, i.e. divine knowledge. It gives evidence in which the Prophet never went astray nor deviated from the right path. God never forsook the Prophet nor was He ever displeased with him. He assured him of his incessant progress towards such an end which was better for him than the beginning, which implied every step of his was better than the previous one. He was in non-stop motion towards the sublime stage of the Well-praised One (Chapter 93).

He (the Prophet) followed nothing more throughout his life but what was revealed to him by God. God assured him He would give so many gifts and blessings in which he (the Prophet) might be satisfied and pleased. The Qur'an reminded the Prophet of the special care and attention of God towards him which was so incessant that He did not even for a moment leave the Prophet to himself or anyone else. The moment He found him in any physical or spiritual need, He helped him immediately with no lapse of time. He sheltered him the moment He found him an orphan. He enriched him the moment He found him poor. He guided him the moment He found him not knowing his way. In short, God never allowed the common creaturely defects and short-comings, inherent in all finite beings to display themselves in the life of the Holy Prophet.

The Conception of the Fallibility of the Prophet is an Evil

Innovation

These are a few passages in the Qur'an which are quoted against the view of the total infallibility of the Prophet such as 9:43, the first verse in Chapter 66, and the first eight verses of Chapter 80.³⁴ It is said that on these three occasions the Prophet was reproached and censured for what he had done, which means the actions undertaken by him on those occasions had no divine approval. But this statement is not correct. On the first two occasions, though God addressed the prophet, the tone of each of the verses relating to the respective occasions shows the censure was directed against those toward whom the Holy Prophet showed leniency. Such leniency is an aspect of that universal grace with which he was commissioned, so he was already allowed by God, as the sentence, "God forgives you (oh Our Apostle)" signifies, to permit those unstable in faith to remain behind, but their permission was expressed in the usual rhetorical manner of addressing the one who is innocent, meaning to censure and warn the real culprit.

So God addressed the prophet on both occasions and the Prophet did what God had already allowed him to do. He did nothing but what God wanted him to do. Therefore, God warned the wrongdoers involved in both cases not to take undue advantage of the grace and leniency with which God had sent the Prophet. In the first eight verses of Chapter 80, the personal pronouns, which some commentators have wrongly taken as referring to the Holy Prophet refer actually to some other person who belonged to

the aristocratic class of the companions of the Prophet. He had brought a few people of his class to the Prophet, and he was anxious to see the prophet more attentive to the people of his class than the people of the class of the poor such as the blind companion, ibn Maktoom, who came to see the Prophet on that occasion.

The whole blame is against the attitude of the Quraysh aristocrat who frowned and turned his face from the blind companion. Otherwise the prophet, who was “with the Qur’an and the Qur’an was with him” from the beginning to the end of his life, was far from deviating from its teachings, even for a moment. The Qur’an repeatedly states the stand taken by the previous prophets against the arrogant aristocrats who used to despise those believers of their time who were poor. Among the followers of the Prophet there were some arrogant aristocrats of the Quraysh who used to consider themselves superior to the poor followers of the Prophet like persons known as *Ashab al-Sufa*,³⁵ those homeless people who used to sleep on the platform of the mosque (such as Salman, Abu Dharr, ‘Ammar, Miqdad, etc.).

So in order to warn those arrogant people, the Qur’an repeatedly addressed the Holy Prophet not to despise the poor believers and turn towards the rich people. But actually the admonition was directed against those who used to despise the poor followers. Even if it is granted the Prophet was addressed, he was certainly not meant to be the person warned, for as the sixth Imam of the House of the prophet, Ja’far as-Sadiq, says, “All the reproving addresses of this kind in the Qur’an which apparently refer to the Prophet are actually directed at others. ‘It is like the proverb in Arabic – You do I address, but hear you oh neighbour.’”

There are three more verses in the Qur’an which have been quoted to prove the Prophet had committed some sin for which in two of these verses (40:55 and 47: 19)³⁶ he is ordered to pray to God for forgiveness, and in one place, in the first and second verses of chapter 48, God forgives all the sins committed by the prophet in the past or those which might be committed by him in the future. This total forgiveness is presented as due to the victory which God achieved for the Prophet. In the first two verses it is clear the *dhanab* (sin) referred to is the creaturely shortcoming, in the devotion and submission, to which all the highly conscious finite beings are always alive. They always feel, however great may be their obedience, and deep and wide may be the degree of their realization, yet they are unworthy of His greatness and His transcendent sublimity.

It is the awareness of their creaturely shortcomings which keeps them in a state of supplication and incessant prayer for mercy and forgiveness. This humble petitioning attitude is the basic condition of their infallible devotion and submission. It does not imply the committing of any sin or disobeying any of the divine commands. This is a precautionary measure whichever righteous man has to take against the possible display of the inherent defects. When we recite in prayer, “Oh God, guide us to the right path,” it does not mean we are out of it now. It means, “Oh God, keep us on the right path so long as we are on the move towards You.” It is a precautionary measure against possible deviation.

Regarding the first two verses of Chapter 48, the Qur’an asserts God “caused victory” for the Prophet to

cover past and future sins. Another purpose was to complete His bounties on the Prophet. The third purpose was to guide him to the right path and the fourth was to render to the Prophet unique help. It is obvious there should be some relevancy between the victory and all four purposes mentioned in the verses, particularly the first purpose: the forgiveness of the past and future sins of the Prophet. Unless the sin in question is not rooted in defeat and frustration, the victory cannot be the cause of its removal. The Qur'an does not mention anything done by the Prophet against the will of God, except the three cases already referred to.

Suppose that on all three occasions he acted against the will of God, and suppose God also, like human despots, forgives the sinners and sets the prisoner free on some happy occasion like victory over any enemy, yet no despot will give a general licence to a sinner to commit sin even after the victory or the happy occasion is over, for that would mean allowing a person to live licentiously throughout his life. Satan, after thousands of years of devotion was condemned forever on account of one sin. Would God, for an ordinary victory over a few pagans of Mecca pardon the Prophet's sins of the past and license him to sin in the future?

On the same pattern of thinking a report is made popular in which the Prophet said, "Perhaps God has looked at the people of Badr (those Muslims who took part in the first battle against the pagans of Mecca) and said unto them, 'Do whatever you like, I have, verily, forgiven you.'" These sort of concoctions were allowed to creep into the minds of Muslims to protect certain companions of the Prophet, who despite their participation in the celebrated battle misbehaved afterwards and committed crimes which were detrimental to the very cause of Islam.

The above is the wishful interpretation of some people, but the Qur'an here and elsewhere confirms the reasonable view of the *Ahl al-Bayt* in which the Holy Prophet in particular, and all the Prophets in general, are far from being influenced by Satan and satanic forces and are also far from deviating from the right path to which God has guided them. It is not possible that God gave the Prophet in particular and other prophets or any other rational being a general license to commit any wrong which they liked for the sake of some good already done by them. It is against the Qur'anic facts and assertion,

{فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ} 7

{وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ} 8

"Whosoever does a bit of good shall see it and whosoever does a bit of evil shall see it." (99:7 – 8)

Moreover, if God intended to forgive any sin which might be committed by the Prophet, then there was no sense in mentioning the third purpose of the victory in the verse *"and to guide you to the right path,"* because once license is given to him to commit sin the third purpose becomes redundant for there is

then no need of guidance to the right path. He is forgiven, whatever path, right or wrong, he may adopt. Therefore, there should be no doubt the term “sin” used here or elsewhere in the Qur’an concerning the prophet does not signify what it generally is taken to mean. The Prophet never did anything which could displease God. As for what the Qur’an asserts, viz. God will not be pleased to see the breast (the mind and heart) of His devoted servants and messengers get constricted on account of people’s doing wrong and disobeying God, it does not mean God is displeased with the Prophet.

It is a very commendable manifestation of fatherly affection and grace in which the misbehaviour of the children should pain the father and cause the fatherly status of universal grace for all the worlds, if he sees the slightest misbehaviour in any one in any corner of the world to which he is sent, he would feel distressed and pained and as the head of the worlds under him he would also feel ashamed and guilty before the Almighty for the misdeeds of those to whom he is like a father. God points out on the one side the amount of the fatherly grace and anxiety of the Prophet for the people, and on the other the effect of the misdeeds of the people on the Prophet.

{وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ} 97

We already know how cramped your breast feels because of what they say. (15:97)

{وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ ۖ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ} 127

And be you patient (oh Our Apostle Muhammad) and your patience is not but by (the help of) God. (16:127)

And grieve not for them and be not distressed of what they devise. (27:70)

God does not like His vicegerent to suffer such mental anguish. Therefore, to remove the cause of such suffering He blesses His Prophet with the spiritual victory of having a clear view of the whole universe and every part and particle so he may realize that in the total view of the whole, nothing is wrong or evil, and nothing is out of His control and domination.

{قُلْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ
وَالنَّبِيِّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُنْفِرُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ} 84

Say (oh Our Apostle Muhammad) (unto the people), “We believe in God and in what has been sent down to us, and what has been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob and the Tribes, and in what was given to Moses, and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord, we make no difference between any of them, and we unto Him are Muslims.” (3:84)

It is this view of the whole which removes the cause of distress. The mental anguish commendable from one aspect, yet is unpleasant from another and as such is termed as *dhanb* (sin), and is removed from its root. The relative and partial view of the universe is the root. In this view the good and bad, things pleasing God and displeasing Him are discriminated. On this ground, the Imams (of the *Ahl al-Bayt*) have interpreted the sin here as the sin of the *Ummah*; the group to whom the Prophet was sent. According to this interpretation the manifest victory is not confined to the temporal conquest of Mecca or even the whole of Arabia or the entire globe. These conquests are, comparatively speaking, of less importance, though the conquest of Mecca was the occasion on which gradual revelation of the Qur'an was recited by the Prophet.³⁷

However, here in chapter 48, the term *fatha* (victory), has been qualified as manifest (*mubin*) in the beginning verse, and as near victory (*fathan qariba*) in verse 27, and also in 61:13. But in chapter 110 the term victory has been used without qualification. According to some commentaries the near victory refers to the establishment of the godly kingdom on Earth during the reign of the last Imam al-Mahdi.

{إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا} 6

{وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا} 7

Verily they regard it to be far distant, and We see it (very) near. (70:6 – 7)

The manifest victory refers to the realization of divine domination of the universe in the stage of viewing it as a whole. These victories refer to the spiritual states of the prophet's realization, be it associated with temporal victories or not. This realization covers people's sins, misdeeds, and ungodly actions. Thus, the victory would cover the unpleasant scenes which would make the Prophet feel ashamed before God, who has given him the responsible status of vicegerency. This view relieves the Prophet of the heaviest burden of responsibility as outlined in 7:6.

{فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ} 6

Verily We shall question those to whom (the messengers) have been sent, and verily We shall question (too) those (messengers) who have been sent. (7:6)

It is obvious that of all the Prophets the one who is the last and final is the supreme and as such his responsibility before God is greater than the others. Nothing can relieve the Holy Prophet from feeling the heaviness of the burden of his responsibility, but the realization of divine victory and His hold over all which comes under his (the Prophet's) responsibility, the assurance given to him by God in which "the end is better for him than the beginning" and his Lord Cherisher would give him very much to please and

satisfy him:

{إِنَّ سَعِيكُمْ لَشَتَّى} 4

{فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُعْطِيَ وَاتَّقَى} 5

And verily the end is better for you than the beginning (of life). And soon will give you your Lord in which you shall be well pleased. (93:4 – 5)

and the appointment of one to assist him in shouldering the burden. To this effect, Ali as the nearest person to the Prophet in blood, spirit and character was declared by the Prophet as his brother, assistant, executor of his will and his successor after him to be listened to and obeyed by all. This declaration was made by the Prophet along with the announcement of his mission in the third year of his ministry (vide *Tarikh-e Tabari* and *al-Kamil* of ibn al-Athir). This kind of strengthening of the hands of the Prophet by giving him an assistant of the same spirit and blood, qualification and excellence is exemplified in the Qur'an by the story of Harun being appointed by God as the assistant, supporter and successor of Musa. To this effect the Prophet of Islam declared Ali was to him what Harun was to Moses.

In dealing with the Qur'anic evidence of the infallibility of the Prophet two opposite terms, *Sharh-e Sadr* and *Ziq-e Sadr*, have been explained. The former means broadmindedness and as such it is a very commendable virtue and no Prophet or vicegerent of God can be lacking in it while the latter means narrow-mindedness, which has been presented as a condemnable vice with which no prophet can be tainted. Here in answer to those who have quoted the first verse of chapter 48 as evidence to the Prophet's sin, we have pointed out the sin referred to here is the distress felt by the Prophet owing to the ungodly behaviour of the people. So, it was actually the sins of others which caused him distress. We have said this constriction of the chest is a commendable virtue from one aspect, though God does not will to let his vicegerent continue to suffer even this distress.

These two statements about the mental distress commending it as a virtue on the one hand and condemning it as a vice on the other seem to be contradictory and confusing. But this seeming contradiction is over if the reader keeps in mind there are two different constrictions of one's mind due to two opposite causes. One is the distress caused by the feeling of personal loss and sufferings resulting from the narrowness of the ego-centre which makes one indifferent to the welfare of anyone else other than one's self. The other kind of mental distress is caused by the feeling of loss suffered by others. Such feeling is due to the broadness of one's ego-centre which feels in union with others and considers their loss and suffering or their gain and happiness as one's own.

The Prophet felt happy when he saw people really prosperous and happy and he felt worried and

distressed when he saw people in real loss and distress. Ali, the Prophet's successor in the status of the final vicegerency of God says, "It is painful for Ali as the head of the State to fill his stomach and sleep, feeling satisfied, when even one of his subjects in the remotest part of his kingdom is starving." The temporal rule over a small or large region of Earth may be great in the eyes of the average man but to the Almighty Creator and Sovereign of the whole universe, His are the kingdoms of the heavens and the Earth.

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فِتْرَةٍ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ ﴿١٩﴾ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ
 {بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾}

Certainly infidels are they who say, "Verily God, He is the Messiah, son of Mary." Say (oh Our Apostle Muhammad), "Who could hold anything against God if He intends to destroy the messiah, son of Mary, and his mother and (all) which is on the Earth together?" For unto God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the Earth and what is between them. He created what he wills. Verily God over all things has power. (5:19)

So the great kingdom given in charge of the Holy Prophet and has 12 successive vicegerents of God from the *Al-e Ibrahim* must be the one which is great in dimension and duration in the sight of God and not in the eyes of those whose ambition does not rise beyond earthly pleasure and gain.

{مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهُ فِيهَا مَا نَشَاءُ لِمَنْ نُرِيدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهُ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَاهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا ﴿١٨﴾}

Whosoever intends this (fast hastening) immediate (life) We hasten unto him in it what We please for whomsoever We intend, then assign We unto him the hell. He shall enter it despised, driven away. (17:18)

Therefore, one can imagine how great would be the concern of the person responsible who is in communion with God and with every part and member of the universe. That concern cannot be remedied but with the assurance from God of the ultimate manifest victory of good over evil, truth over falsehood, right over wrong, justice over injustice, love over hatred, and grace over wrath. It is narrated that on the eve of the departure of the Prophet from this world, when all the chief angelical entities, particularly Israel, the arch-angel of death, were attending the Prophet and waiting for his permission to perform their final duty, the Prophet began murmuring, "What about my followers?" He was waiting for the arch-angel Gabriel to bring him the final assurance from god about the destiny of his followers, for whom he was concerned and it was only Gabriel repeated the recitation of God's assurance given to the Holy Prophet during the early days of his mission in which the Holy Prophet said, "Now death is pleasant to me."³⁸

In connection with the question of the infallibility of all the Prophets in general and the Holy Prophet in

particular, the reader may find many points dealt with here as repetitive or overlapping with the points dealt within our treatise on the complete representative status of Prophets, particularly the last Prophet. We also quoted from the Qur'an in the light of sound reasoning to the effect that every action, talk and endorsement of the prophet including the domestic, private and individual movements and rest, even eating, drinking, sleeping, and relations with wives and children, in fact, all aspects of his life were controlled by revelation. However, there is no contradiction between the points dealt herewith and in the said treatise. The repetition and overlapping could have been avoided, but there is justification in not doing some owing to the importance of the matter and the fact that repetition may produce a deeper effect on the mind of the reader.

Before concluding the above discourse on the evidence which elucidates the heavenly aspect of the Prophet's life, which dominates the material life, a brief account of the different points of view about the life and reaching of the Holy Prophet is given here to comprehend his "tremendous character" (*Khulq-e azim*).

Views about the Holy Prophet

(1) Atheistic materialism

It is obvious that from this angle of vision all the religious and moral values based on the reality of the spiritual and heavenly aspects of existence in general and of men in particular become meaningless. Nevertheless, many prominent figures of this school have acknowledged the greatness of the Holy Prophet as a reformer and have held his teachings as a great revolutionary contribution toward the advancement of human civilization.

(2) Theistic materialism or theistic rationalism

Theistic materialism or theistic rationalism acknowledges the existence of a universal conscious and intellectual mind behind the phenomena of creation, which has designed and set the machinery of the universe in motion. But they do not believe in the universal mind being concerned with the destiny of individual life and the souls of men, nor do they believe in His having legislative hold or authority on human will. According to this view, human life, whether limited to the temporal span or continued in the hereafter, is either of little significance to the universal mind to bother about, or as some members of this school hold, man has been left by Him to his intellectual faculties and will power to decide his own destiny.

God has given man enough reasoning and free choice to look after his own interests. So there is no such thing as a legislative will of God to be communicated to man through special messengers and revelations. People who hold these views are called deists. To this school belongs Gibbon, the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman empire* and many prominent advocates of democracy, as opposed to theocracy, i.e. the rule of divine will. Most of them have paid glowing tributes to the Prophet of Islam as

an extra-ordinary genius of his epoch who revolutionized the history of human thought and culture.

(3) Non-Islamic theology

The adherents of this view admit the legislative authority of God, the Creator of the universe over His entire creatures in general and over men in particular, God communicates His legislative will to men through some chosen men. They are people who are gifted by birth or by effort with some special faculty of being in communion with the spiritual and heavenly sphere of angels or with God directly. The faculty, thus obtained, is something beyond the intellectual faculty and reasoning with which an average person is endowed to a greater or lesser degree. If the faculty in question is obtained by birth with no effort from the person, it is termed as prophethood and the heavenly communication received through this channel is called scripture, the heavenly book (*kitab-e asana*). If the faculty is obtained by effort it is termed mysticism and the communication obtained through his channel is mystic-vision (*kashf*) and intuitive-sight (*shuhud*). The entire known non-Islamic religions of the world come under the above categories. Zoroasterism, Judaism and Christianity come under scriptural religions. Hinduism, Buddhism and their various branches may come under the mystic religions.

However, many prominent ecclesiastical scholars of these views, particularly the Jewish and Christian missionaries, have adopted a very bigoted and hostile stand against the Prophet. They did not spare any means or opportunity to attack Islam and misrepresent the Prophet, the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam. In their anti-Islamic attempts, they have adopted methods of direct and indirect attack. The first method which was adopted by the Christian missionaries proved in the course of experience to be very unsuccessful, the result being more against the missionaries. It made the Muslim adopt a counter attack. They (the Muslims) turned to the Bible, the Old and new testaments, and found many more weak points in them than what their opponents could claim to find in the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam. So the missionaries gave up the direct method and resorted to the second method, i.e. indirect attack: the method of posing as impartial scholars of research.

With the professorial style of approach, but relying on wrong or incomplete data, they tried to undermine the fundamentals of Islamic thought, culture and civilization. This method was adopted with the same bigoted ecclesiastical background in the professorial garb as that of the Priestly robe.

But in both the professorial (indirect method of undermining Islam) and in the priestly (direct) method of attack, one will find tributes paid by famous writers of these schools to the Holy Prophet and their acknowledgement of his contribution towards human progress in all branches of civilization. Willingly or unwillingly, they have to admit the facts of history in order not to appear prejudiced. But the entire attempt of these orientalist like that of the missionaries is aimed at presenting the prophet's movement and teachings as a sort of temporal reform in the garb of religion. Some of them go to the extent of holding the Prophet as the greatest reformer that ever appeared in the history of humankind and as a man of highly intellectual accomplishment but not as a prophet, not as a man in communication or

communion with God and angelical spheres, nor as one commissioned by god to convey His will to humankind.

The professorial school, i.e. the oriental research scholars, are a greater danger to Islam than all the anti-Islamic movements. They pose as impartial and unprejudiced seekers of historical truth and win the confidence of the westernized Muslim youths and inject poisonous ideas into their minds. They cut their fundamental root of Islam – the prophethood and vicegerency of the Prophet and the binding force of his teachings on humanity. Then they leave the mind which has lost faith in the heavenly authority of the Holy Prophet to drift along the conflicting currents of old traditional tendencies of Islamic culture and the modern material civilization of the west. Such is the wavering mind of our modern writers on Islam. They want to pose as Muslims on the one hand, and as very broadminded free thinkers on the other. In their approach they imitate the western professorial method of presenting wrong or incomplete data in a very attractive rhetorical style and logical form. In writing on Islam, they try their best to present the Prophet more as a temporal than a divinely accomplished figure.

This group of writers on Islam resemble a group of the early converts who were not firm in their faith. They are like them in a wavering state of mind. To the westerners and the admirers of modern civilization they pretend to be with them, and to the staunch believers they pretend to be true Muslims – the same as the people about whom the Qur'an says:

{وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ} 14

And when they meet with those who believe they say, “We believe,” but when they go apart to their devils, they say, “Surely we are with you, verily we did but mock.” (2:14)

Some of them used to listen to the Prophet, but when they would leave his presence they would ask mockingly those who were gifted with knowledge, “What did the Prophet say just now?” (47:16) Some of them would express doubt when the Prophet would inform them of some incident which had taken place, apparently hidden from the Prophet, as to who could have informed the Prophet? They would question him, “Who has informed you about this?” The Prophet had to tell them, “The Omniscient, All-knowing has informed me.” (66:3)

Many times when the Prophet would give some new directives which would appear strange to them; they would consider them as something temporal and as the outcome of the Prophet's own wisdom. The Prophet had to reaffirm on those occasions he would not utter a word but what was revealed to him and he would not follow anything but what was revealed.

(4) An Islamic school of thought holding dualistic views

An Islamic school of thought holding dualistic views about the personality of the prophet sees the Prophet as the last one, after whom no prophet would come. They believe the communication between

him and God, sometimes through the angelic agency, particularly Gabriel, and at others directly, was established when he reached the age of forty and he received revelation both in the form of the Qur'an and other than the Qur'an. But they hold he was also subject to human frailty like others and he acted according to the dictates of his own discretion and desires. He was a Prophet, and recipient of divine revelation but he was a man of opinion and discretion also.

As a Prophet he did not err or commit any mistake but as a man he was subject to error and mistakes like others. He was a man like others (*bashrun mislakum*) and he received revelation as an additional qualification. Prophethood was an addition to his human qualities without their becoming identical with his prophethood in that his mind was not totally controlled by revelation. So his movement and expressions, they say, were partly due to his prophethood and partly to his manly qualities. This dualistic view about the Prophet can be traced back to the early days of Islam. From the behaviour and utterances of some of the companions of the Prophet, it seems this theory was evolved on political grounds by some of the companions, during the closing days of the Prophet's life (*al-Milal wal-Nihal*).

Among the early followers of the Holy Prophet there were some who were accustomed to the rule of a sort of aristo-bureaucracy of tribal chiefs. It was very difficult for them to comply whole-heartedly with the requirements of Islam, i.e. the absolute theocracy – absolute submission to the will of God as presented and dictated by the Prophet. At the same time, convinced by common sense and the force of the Qur'anic arguments, they had to admit that no finite being can secure real salvation without submitting his will to the will of God – the Infinite. They also had to admit that the divine will was conveyed to them through chosen men, as special messengers of God, of whom Muhammad was one and also the last.

With these convictions and admissions, how could they make room for their deep-rooted tendency of allowing the aristocratic class of elders to have their say and sway in the affairs concerning various aspects of human life? They had to find a way to satisfy the desire which was working in them. The course they adopted was to evolve the dualistic view. Thus the elders could have their say in those affairs about which the Qur'an is silent or its verdict is not clear. Though they agree the sayings of the Prophet are mostly the outcome of revelation, yet they say some of his sayings as well as some of his actions were the outcome of his human capacity and hence not binding and may be even objectionable and subject to reproach.

In spite of all the Qur'anic evidence as already mentioned in which Muhammad was nothing but a Prophet and he did not follow anything but revelation, they recorded reports to the contrary. Some of these reports bear not only testimony to the dualistic personality of the Prophet; they depict him as a person even below the ordinary moral standard. These reports are claimed to be reliable on the authority of the companions of the Prophet who are considered to be firsthand reporters. From them, through the chain of transmitters, generation after generation, the reports have come down to the authors of the Sunni books of traditions – *Masanid*, and six canonical collections *al-Sihah Sitta*: biography and history

concerning the life and teachings of the Prophet which were included without scrutiny.

In addition, reports on events during the Prophet's life and of the first four Caliphs which throw light on his life are the main sources of which every writer on the life of the Prophet depends. Those who hold the dualistic view, depend on the said six collections of *ahadith*. The topmost in authenticity, according to them, is the collection of *Bukhari* and next comes *Muslim*. *Bukhari* and *Muslim* contain damaging reports, from which the non-Muslim critics, the missionaries and orientalist, and a group of Muslim writers as the former's camp followers, draw their data for the criticism of the life of the Prophet. They claim that whatever they have written is based on sources which are held by the majority of Muslims to be authentic. The critics pay no attention to the fact that the authenticity attached to these collections by the majority of the Muslims, like the authenticity attached to the canonical Bible, is based on traditional blind faith prompted by political expediency.

The texts of some of the reports, when compared with each other, suffer from considerable discrepancy, contradiction, absurdities and omissions, additions and alterations. The defects are greater if the contents of each collection are compared with those of other collections. So it is obvious these reports and collections cannot be regarded as authentic. The chain of the narrators is not reliable, as they depend on the views of a few people whose reliability is not free from doubt.

So far as the first hand reporters, the eyewitness companions of the Prophet are concerned, the Sunni school of thought holds them all to be pious and authentic, even a boy, not below the age of six, who confessed Islam, born of Muslim parents or by conversion and saw the Prophet and heard something from him, is termed a companion, and has the right of deciding the religious affairs according to his own discretion. They may differ in degree of piety and authoritative status. This blind faith in the companions of the Prophet contrasts with the verdict of the Qur'an about a great number of groups of the companions who were surrounding the Prophet.

The verdict of the Qur'an against the piety and authoritative status claimed for every companion of the Prophet and against the view which they are above the criticism of non-companions is supported by the sayings of the Prophet, and is confirmed by facts of history. During the time of the Prophet, a great number of so-called companions used to tell lies about the Prophet and make false reports of his sayings and teachings. When the Prophet found the practice increasing he had to declare in one of his sermons, "Verily the hypocrites about me have been increasing in number. Let it be known to all, whosoever tells lies about me, his seat (in the life hereafter) shall be filled with fire."³⁹

"Any report about my sayings and deeds, not in conformity with the Qur'an should be treated as false and be rejected."

(4.a) *Misdeeds of a class of companions foretold by the Prophet:* There are many reports which the Prophet foretold about the misbehaviour of his companions after him. He warned them not to go back to the pagan state of killing and beheading each other. The Story of Malik ibn Nuwayrah⁴⁰ is the first

instance of the kind and it is followed by many other examples. Mo'awiyah beheaded the pious Hijr ibn 'Adi and his seven noble companions. By the order of Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, his army made the Holy Ka'ba the target of their arrows and catapults against their party who were seeking protection there as the "House of Peace." Madina was sacked and people were massacred by the so-called *sahaba* during the Umayyad period with the free use of sword and poison.

The tragedy of Karbala is an unparalleled example of their atrocities. The Prophet said, "Some of my companions will be dragged on the Day of Resurrection to hell and then I will acclaim my companions. My acclamations will be answered there, "Oh Muhammad, you know not what wrong they did commit after you." He foretold that 'Ammar the son of Yasir would be killed by a group of rebels whom 'Ammar would call towards paradise and they would invite him towards hell. He also predicted that after him Ali would have to wage war against the breakers of the covenant and those who would rise against the rightful authority and the group of people who would digress from Islam in the manner in which an arrow shoots off from the bow.

The statement refers to the three battles in which Ali fought after the Prophet. They are known as Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan. In these battles Ali and a group of the companions of the Prophet who were with him had to fight against their opponents who were also led by many so-called prominent companions of the Prophet. Even in the last of the three battles, the party against Ali was led by a companion of the Prophet known as Zussadyah. Bukhari narrates an interesting story about the devotional outlook of this man which made Abu Bakr and 'Umar in turn to refrain from executing the order of the prophet to kill him. In short, there is much Qur'anic evidence and the Prophet's assertions to the effect that among his companions there were a great number of people whose character and conduct was below the minimum standard of morality required by Islam or even by the general code of ethics. Besides these, the history of the early days of Islam give a very unpleasant account of the lives of the companions after, or even a few days before, the demise of the Prophet.

Each of these companions had disciples attached exclusively to them. They used to receive the reports from their masters to hand them over in turn to their followers and disciples. The disciples of the disciples used to record these. Thus, between the companions, the first-hand reporters and the compilers of the so-called authentic collections there is a chain of narrators, containing two, three, four or more links. For the verification of the compilation and qualification of the people who form the links in the chain of narrators the science of the biography of the narrators (*Ilm al-Rijal*) was originated. Many voluminous works of this science have been produced. Therein, one will find many controversial assertions and negations about the reliability of every link in the chain.

Some are held by some biographers as extremely reliable and qualified while other biographers hold them as unreliable and unqualified. In commending or condemning the link narrators, one will find their personal prejudice an important factor. For instance, the author of some of the most important collections of *ahadith* has preferred those chains of narrators who were anti-*Ahl al-Bayt*, or were less

attached to them, to the link of narrators who were more inclined towards the House of the Prophet and Ali. As a result of political bias the reports were concocted or modified by omission, addition or alteration to suit the ruling parties of the time, and to present the Prophet as a personality, a messenger with revelation, but fallible.

It is clear they were not greatly in favour of the teachings and orders of the Prophet, the same binding authoritative status as they claimed for the Qur'an.

(4.b) *The following instances will throw more light on their disobedience of the Prophet:* (1) pronouncing "Sufficient is the Book of God for us" against the order of the Prophet and creating a tumultuous atmosphere there and then to the extent in which the Prophet asked them to get away from his presence and warned them for the last time not to quarrel and misbehave in his presence. (2) Avoiding serving under the command of Usamah ibn Zayd and their delay in marching with him to the front until the Prophet passed away. (3) Leading the congregational prayer sometime during the Prophet's illness in his last days, without his permission, to the extent the Prophet ordered Ali and Fadl ibn Abbas to take him to the mosque to prevent what was going on without his permission.

(4) Leaving the funeral of the Prophet and rushing to Saqifah to settle the question of the *Khilafat* on the line which they themselves termed *faltah* (at random, unconstitutional, or without the consent of even the elders). (5) The utterance of the first Caliph in his first sermon delivered in the mosque, "Whosoever was worshipping Muhammad, let him behold, Muhammad has died, and whosoever was worshipping God should know God is alive" (vide *Bukhari* and *Muslim*): this was an uncalled for insinuation in which the companions of the Prophet were worshipping him and not God. It seems to have been intended to confirm the statement of 'Umar, "Sufficient is the Book of God for us," referred to already. It was also aimed at those who had full faith in the complete representative and authoritative status of the prophet and used to maintain every order, teaching, directive, every word and action was under revelation and they were binding on Muslims as the wordings of the Qur'an.

(6) Unpleasant treatment of Sa'ad ibn 'Ubaydah at Saqifah. (7) Raiding the house of Fatima, threatening to burn it and its inmates (even her innocent children, Hassan and Hussain) are the glaring examples against the teachings of the Prophet. They ignored the sanctity attached to the house of the Prophet and Fatima in which no one should enter the house without their permission. Then even ignored the repeated declarations of the Prophet in which Fatima was a part of him and whosoever annoyed or displeased her, would annoy and displease him (the Holy Prophet). The rulers declared Fadak as *sadaqah* (charity) land. The Al-e Muhammad (Fatima, Ali, Hassan and Hussain, the people to whom the term *abna'ana* – our sons, *nisa'ana* – our women and *anfus'ana* – ourselves in 3:61 were applied by the Prophet) shall have nothing to inherit from the Prophet and they shall, like all the other poor, live on this property of charity, though the prophet, as a privilege, had forbidden these people in particular and all the descendants of Hashim and his brother Muttalib in general to live on charity.

Recognizing three times pronouncement of any word denoting divorce in one session to be as legal and

effective as three times divorce intervened by two times reunion. Prohibition of *mut'ah* (temporary marriage) and *mut'ah* of Hajj, i.e. allowing an interval between the performance of 'Umrah and the performance of Hajj for the pilgrims to enjoy freedom of cohabitation with their wives. Abolition of the equal status of Muslims of all ranks (irrespective of their race, colour, and seniority in accepting Islam) in having a share in the public treasury are the examples of deviations from the Islamic code.

They introduced class distinction such as Quraysh and non-Quraysh, Immigrant and Help, Arab and non-Arab. Instances of these kinds or alterations are so many in every branch of ritual, social, economical and political codes of Islam that it is difficult to give a complete list of them here. There are books written by experts on this topic such as *The Deviation of the ruling party from the orders and directives of the Prophet*.

The ruling party could not reconcile themselves to the fact the Prophet and the Qur'an are inseparable and the infallibility of one means the infallibility of the other. So they on the one hand tried to create doubts in the genuineness of the written book of God which was and still is within the reach of the people, and on the other prevent the other part of the constitution of Islam (the Sunnah from being collected in written form). They thus tried to curtail the constitutional curb as much as possible. The announcement, "Sufficient is for us the Book of God," and the other instances cited above indicate clearly they wanted to have the right using their own discretion even in respect of the clear orders and directives of the Prophet, *ijtihad al-Muaqabil-e Nass* (as Sharestani, the author of *Milal wal-Nihal* terms it).

Besides this they also wanted the supplementary and explanatory part of the divine constitution, the Sunnah, to remain unwritten, as it was easier for them to accept or reject a verbal report of the Prophet's statement and to modify its wordings to suit the administrative expediency of the time.

(4.c) *Apart from the above instances, there is abundant evidence in which the Prophet told repeatedly that Ali was his "brother" (akhi al-Rasulullah) [equal status in faith and origin], but this appellation was denied to Ali by them.*

After that is the question of the land of Fadak. Since the establishment of Islam in Madina, the Jews, after their unlawful occupation of the Arabs' land on the outskirts of Madina, were making secret alliances with the enemies of the Prophet to execute their aggressive plans against the rising force of Islam. They built a very strong fort at Khaybar. The Prophet marched against them. The glorious conquest was brought by Ali when others including Abu Bakr and 'Umar felt nervous and failed as standard bearers of the army of Islam. After the fall of Khaybar (seventh Hijra, about 680 A.D.), the Prophet sent Ali to invite the Jews of Fadak, an important place, to Islam. The Jews offered half of the land of Fadak to the Prophet without fighting. He agreed and the land came under his possession.

On this occasion it was revealed to the Prophet that in the land possessed by him "without any effort on the part of the believers mounted or on foot" (i.e. without any military action), "the believers have no

right,” as *Bayt ul-mal* (public treasury). It was his personal property (*khalesa* of the Messenger, the Prophet). Only the spoils from Khaybar were treated as *bayt al-mal*. It was further revealed that the Prophet should give his and Allah’s share in it (i.e. property gained without military action), to his nearest kindred:

وَمَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رَسُولَهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۖ وَاللَّهُ
 {عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ} 6

مَا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَىٰ فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ
 {دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ} ۖ وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ} 7

And whatever has God bestowed upon His Apostle from them, you pressed not against it any horse or camel, but God grants authority unto His apostles against whomsoever He wills, and God over all things is All Powerful. Whatever has God bestowed on His Apostle from the people of the towns, belongs unto God, and for the Apostle, and for His (Prophet’s) kindred, and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarers, so it may not circulate among the rich ones of you, and whatever give you the Apostle, you accept it, and from whatever prevents he, you be away (from it), and fear you (the wrath of) God. Verily God is severe in retribution. (59:6 – 7)

According to the divine order above, the Prophet gave Fadak land to his daughter Fatima, the nearest relative, by written document. It was in her possession in the lifetime of the Prophet.

After the demise of the Prophet it was immediately seized by Caliph Abu Bakr and ‘Umar and remained in the possession of the caliphs until Caliph ‘Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, an exception to the Umayyad’s tyrannical rule, who came to power in 99 Hijra (717 A.D.) at the time of Imam Ja‘far as-Sadiq. He turned down the decision of Abu Bakr and his followers, and returned Fadak to the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Again, it was confiscated by his successors. During the Abbasid period, when Mamun, son of Harun al-Rashid, held the reins of the caliphate (198 Hijrah, 813 A.D.) he returned Fadak to Imam Ali ar-Rida (of the house of the Prophet). After Mamun it was again taken away by his successors, and remained under the unlawful possession of the ruler of the time.

The income from Fadak was estimated at 3,600 toman (gold coins) which is about 7,200 pound sterling in those days. The whole income was distributed among the needy, the orphans, widows and handicapped people. History narrates Fatima used to live on the bare minimum, and often observed fasting. Even her noble maid, Fiza, followed her glorious example and aided the destitute. After the demise of the Prophet it was immediately seized by Abu Bakr after the personal possession of Fatima and in support of his decision against the Qur’an, misquoted the statement of the Prophet: “We group of Prophets do not leave any property to be inherited by their heirs; whatever we leave is charity” (*nahno ma’shiral anbiyayai la nooris, ma terkna ho sadaqatun*).

Sadaqatun is the objective case in the sub-ordinate clause and “what we leave as charity” is also the objective clause of the principle clause, “we do not give inheritance.” Abu Bakr, supported by his group, changed the word *sadaqatan* to *sadaqatun* as the predicate to the word *ma* (i.e. that or what, the relative pronoun as subject. As such he made the complete sentence a co-ordinate clause to the first sentence, “we leave is charity.” The change in the original is an example of the kind of language which is far below the standard language and it cannot be attributed to the Prophet. The tradition transmitted in *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* is full of discrepancies. Thus, the claim of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar was not reliable from any aspect. To please the Quraysh and their supporters they took the personal decision against the Qur’an and apostolic statement and action. Abu Bakr asked Fatima to substantiate her claim with evidence though it was not needed according to Islamic law. She placed the written document of her father (the Prophet) before him which was torn by ‘Umar. Abu Bakr wept over it and he had no remedy but to follow his dominant partner.

Apart from others, Ali, Hassan and Hussain, who were the witnesses of the truth for Islam on various occasions, and at the times of crisis such as the “Dat of Mubahala” against the Christians of Najran, as perfect entities of Fatima. There was not a single lawful claimant of Fadak except Fatima. The judges, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar stood themselves against the Qur’an. Even in human law, there is no code based on equity and justice which allows the opposite party to assume the powers of a judge. Greatly affected with grief and pain over this open violation of Qur’anic injunctions and the preachings of her father, Lady Fatima gave a long heart-rendering sermon in the huge gathering of Masjid-e Nabavi which so shocked the people they wept over the injustice.

According to the Qur’an, as she quoted in her argument, the Prophets owned property which they bequeathed to their close relatives, as Sulayman inherited from Dawud (37:16) and Zachariah prayed to God to bless him with a son to inherit from him the material property, and to inherit from the family of Ya‘qub (Jacob) the spiritual property, the book and wisdom (29:5 – 6). She quoted the verses of chapter four concerning the law of inheritance. She also quoted 33:6 to the effect in which the Prophet is nearer to all the believers than their own selves, i.e. his hold on them is greater than their hold on themselves, and his wives are the mothers of the believers (in the sense that the believers canny marry them and in no other sense) and the blood relatives are nearer to each other (in inheritance) and preferable to other believers from among the Immigrants and the Helpers.

In this passage, the Prophet has been declared to have the privilege of having complete hold on the believers, being closer to them than they are to themselves. His wives have been given the privilege of motherhood as far as marriage is concerned, and his blood relatives, like the blood relatives of others, have been given the privilege of being closer to him than other believers. She also quoted the passage in 49:7, wherein God declares the close relatives of the Prophet as owning a share in Fai (the land property abandoned by the infidels without use of arms) along with God and the Prophet. But all those quotations and arguments were in vain. They went unnoticed by the party in power. She felt hurt, annoyed and angry against the ruling party and this feeling continued until she passed away. From the

report of Malik ibn Ows had then, it is clear Fatima regarded the ruling party as unjust and an aggressor.

Anyway, from these instances out of the many it appears clearly the ruling party thought it expedient to deny, as far as possible, the privileges given by God to the Prophet and the people of the House – the *Ahl al-Bayt*. They wanted to bring the *Ahl al-Bayt* down to the level of the ordinary companions. They felt the other Qurayshites families would not tolerate too many distinctions being conferred on the Hashemite family in general, and on the “People of the House” in particular. As ‘Umar disclosed, the events of Saqifah and their later consequences were due to the aversion of the Quraysh to the house of Hashim retaining the prophethood as well as the *Khilafat*, the supreme leadership (vide *The Annals of Tabari*, the conversation of ‘Umar and ibn Abbas).

Therefore, to avoid displeasing the Quraysh the first caliph made the above declaration about Muhammad’s death and also declared the Al-e Muhammad should live on charity like others. The only privilege he and his colleagues approved for the Al-e Muhammad was they should be deprived of the right of inheriting what was owned by the Prophet. The tendency was not to make the public acquainted with the spiritual distinctions conferred on the house of the Prophet, which is still continued in the writings and speeches of the scholars of this school. It has been notice that if any student of Islamic history and literature from among them is attracted towards the passages of the Qur’an and innumerable sayings of the Prophet in praise of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, which are scattered in their own collections of *ahadith* and his story, and if he begins to talk or write about them, he is looked upon with suspicion. In short, on account the reasons given above, one should be very cautious in selecting one’s date from the literature of such schools for writing about the life of the Prophet.

(5) The Shi’ah traditionists, known as Akhbari

They are firm believers in the complete infallibility of the Prophet and the other thirteen members of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. They consider themselves as the true adherents of the sayings and teachings of the 14 infallible holy ones. They may be termed as verbalists, following as far as possible the literal sense of what is narrated by any one of the infallible people. They pay little or no attention to what the Qur’an or reason asserts, if the assertion is not in accord with what they understand to be the meaning of the narrated statements of the Imams. They are inclined more to collect in large numbers the narrated reports and statements of the Imams than to scrutinize the quality and nature of the text of the statement or the character and qualifications of the people who form the links in the chain of narrators.

The four famous Shi’ah collections of the reports and statements of the *Ahl al-Bayt* are the most authentic on which the Shi’ahs can rely,⁴¹ and of the four, *Kafi*, is the oldest, most authentic and the most comprehensive. But some of the traditionists go to the extreme extent of holding the contents of these collections, especially *Kafi* to be wholly true and genuine statements of the Imams. Besides these four books, there are many other voluminous collections of later periods such as *Wasa’il al-Shi’ah* (by Muhammad ibn Hassan al-Hurr al-‘Amili, second century Hijrah), *Bihar al-Anwar* of Allama Majlisi (1110 A.H./1698 – 9 A.D.) and *Awalim* of Mulla ‘Abdullah Afandi, the disciple of Majlisi. These collections of

narrated reports cover various religious topics of great importance.⁴² They are also held reliable, though to a lesser degree.

There is no doubt these collections and many other collections of lesser size, dealing with the particular topics, written by prominent Shi'ah scholars who have specialized in the science of traditions, are of great importance and they ought to be considered as highly valuable contributions to the development of Shi'ah thought covering all branches of theology, jurisprudence, history, philosophy, cosmology, etc. There is also no doubt their authors have taken the utmost care in collecting the narratives from sources they considered to be reliable. These collections are really oceans of light. They contain abundant enlightening statements from the *Ahl al-Bayt* which lead the human mind towards the aims and objects for the achievement of which the Qur'an has been revealed.

They direct human thought towards the sacred task of *Rationalization of Revelation (Ta'qul)*, a well founded and systematic effort to have both a sound analytical and proper synthetic view of the "outcome" of the creative as well as the legislative will of God. Nevertheless, they are the collections prepared by fallible men, and are not pure and free from doubtful narratives. A thorough study of all these collections will make one sure of the fact they contain also many contradictory and absurd narrated reports. They contain many narrated statements which are supposed to have been made by the Imams, but those statements are contrary to the fundamental articles of the Shi'ah faith. Even the most authentic collection of Shi'ah traditions, such as *Kafi*, is not totally free from such defects, though comparatively it is more reliable than the others.

Therefore, it is far from being fair to consider any man-made collections of scriptural reports, be they pre-Islamic or Islamic, as above the bounds of critical scrutiny. All religious narrated reports are subject to criticism from both aspects, the character of the chain of narrators, and the nature of the narrated text. It is for this critical study of the narrated scriptural reports which the sciences of biography of the religious narrators (*'ilm al-Rijal*) and the principles to be observed in the comparative study of religious narratives (*'ilm al-daraya*) were evolved and developed. *The only exception* from this general rule is the Qur'an.

But unfortunately, a section of our prominent traditionists seem to have been so absorbed in accumulating religious reports and narratives they had little or no time left for a critical scrutiny of their accumulated materials. It seems that due to their extreme attachment to the narrated reports they were inclined to give even a solitary report the authoritative status which they declined to give to the Qur'an itself. It is on the strength and authority of such narratives they spread doubts about the genuineness of the Qur'an in hand. The aforesaid collections contain such reports that in outlining the life of the Holy Prophet or other members of his house we are always confronted with inconsistent and contradictory statements which make a proper life-sketch of our religious leaders (Imams) very difficult. There are religious reports in our collections of traditions from which both extremist schools, the ultra-Shi'ahs (*Ghulat*), and the anti-*Ahl al-Bayt* or pro-Umayyad (*Nawasib*) draw inferences in support of their

respective views.

(6) The Muslim philosophers and scholastics of the medieval ages

The Arabs were deeply absorbed in some of the pre-Islamic schools of thought of Greek, Indian and Persian origin. They had been in contact with the neighbouring nations to the north, south, east, and west. Besides the contact by trade through land and sea, there had been Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, and most probably Indian and Greek settlements in Arabia. Similarly, there were Arab settlements in those neighbouring lands. So the neighbouring thought and cultures had already influenced the Arabs. By the advent of Islam and its expansion, through conquest and propagation, the contacts began to increase in both frequency and intensity, in the very first century of Islam.

But since the beginning of the second century, foreign thought and culture began to assert themselves and increasingly began to influence Islamic thought, such as (a) the Ash'arites and their anthropomorphic views of Jewish origin about the deity, (b) the Mu'tazilites and their extreme views of negating all divine attributes, (c) the peripatetic views about the primal matter, and (d) the Pythagorean view of presenting the system of creation in mathematical and arithmetical forms. The symbolic, alphabetical, astrological, alchemistic, and other theurgical sciences and cults current in those countries since the ancient civilization of the Chaldeans, Babylonians, and Egyptians and even of India and China exerted their own influence in different degrees over Islamic literature.

The vestiges and traces of all these cults and cultures can be found in scholastic literature of Muslims of the medieval ages. The *Treatise of Ikhwan al-Sufi*, the work of *Alchem* attributed to Jaber ibn Hayyan-e Sufi, who is supposed to have learnt from the sixth Imam of the House, Ja'far as-Sadiq, and the work of a person named Ja'far, ascribed to the same Imam, are examples of foreign schools of thought introduced into Islamic literature or mixed up with it. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, neo-Platonism and Manichaeism had undeniable influence upon Islamic literature. Platonic and Aristotelian schools dominated the whole range of Islamic thought. The Qur'an and Sunnah were interpreted in light of these schools of thought. The Muslim thinkers grouped themselves into two schools, of *Ishraq-Platonic* and *Mashsha'in-Aristotelian* (Peripatetic).

These were in addition to the two theological schools of the Mu'tazilites and Asha'arites. These schools and the main and the various mixtures of them were termed as Islamic philosophy and its various branches. Al-Farabi and Avicenna are the leaders of the Mashsha'in. Sheikh al-Israq, al-Ghazzali and other theomystic chiefs are basically Platonic. Mu'tazilites are more inclined towards Ishraq. All these schools have more or less depended on some spurious and apocryphal narrations which suit their views. Therefore, one should be very careful to avoid the influence of all non-Islamic sources. A sound comparative study of these schools should be made without being influenced but by the unequivocal assertions of the Qur'an as the supreme authority and next to it by the authentic and unequivocal teachings of the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* as the true embodiment of the life of the Holy Prophet. These two – the Qur'an and *itrat* – are the heritage left by the Prophet for the guidance of humankind and one

mirrors the other and in no circumstances are they separate from each other.

One should also have in mind that in the course of the study of religious doctrines one may have to face questions and problems concerning human beliefs, character or actions which are not dealt with explicitly in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (the teachings of the infallibles). This should not make one stagnant in religious or theological thoughts. The Qur'an is the last purified word of God, perfect and complete, in guiding man toward both the truth which concerns all the facts which man has to believe, and the justice which concerns all the virtuous characters and deeds which man has to develop and practice. The purified word of God is like the purified tree. The root of the purified words is firm and well-established and of ever-growing and ever-fruit-giving and far-reaching nature. Thus if any problem of a theological or practical type faces us which is not dealt within the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* explicitly we have to be sure it is undoubtedly dealt with in the teachings of Islam implicitly.

According to the Qur'an, the growing, fruit-giving and dynamic force running in the trunk of this purified tree or purified word of God is the sound reasoning and the unequivocal verses of the Qur'an (*muhkamat*) which are termed as *Ummul Kitab* and the authentic and unequivocal apostolic statements of the infallibles. These three sources are so inter-related that one mirrors the other and they explain each other. One has to find for the problems which one faces the requisite fruit in the purified tree in the light of the self-evident reasoning and unequivocal verses of the Qur'an and authentic and unequivocal statements of the infallible ones. *Ijtihad* or *tafaqqaho fid-din* means nothing but an all out effort to find out the implications of these three inter-related sources.

Before concluding the treatise on the definition of the revelation, it is necessary to outline the categorical principles and fundamental background in the light of which the Shi'ah school of thought interprets the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. To the Shi'ahs these principles and backgrounds are the known facts and factors proved by the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* and reason. The Shi'ah mind works to find a proper solution for the problems which concern every aspect of human life. It is with those principles which we interpret the Qur'an or interpret the apostolic narrations or other statements which are connected with Islamic ideologies as presented by the *Ahl al-Bayt*. For the Shi'ahs, history and faith go together. If the historical statement is in agreement with the faith established by the verses of the Qur'an the *Sunnah* and sound reasoning, it is true. But if the historical statements and inferences disagree with the established faith, they should be rejected.

Summary

The main categorical principles discussed in the previous chapters are summarized below:

(1) The Existence of God: The Absolute Who is One in His essence and attributes in the true sense of Oneness, unlimited and indefinable. Any description contrary to his Oneness should be negated, and any description which is the necessary property of or implied in the idea of His Oneness should be asserted and maintained.

(2) Any anthropomorphic description of the Godhead: Any statement associating anything or any being as co-existing or co-existent with Him in essence or attribute, is to be rejected or re-interpreted.

(3) He is the One infinite reality: There is no second, no match, no equal, no partner for Him. Anything other than Him is finite, created and sustained by Him.

(4) The Infinite creates the finite being but He is not incarnated in one or the whole of the finite beings.

(5) No finite being, however perfect, can be considered as the incarnation of the Infinite One. All the finite beings, whether intellectual, physical, whether matter or form, or material or spiritual, good nature or bad, all are sustained by His creative conscious might and pre-planned grace and justice. Pervading, All-compassionate, All-witnessing, Self-existent, Self-living, Self-subsistent, All-sustainer, Unique in Oneness and Fullness, All-in-all, Transcendent, Perpetual, All-mighty, All-gracious, All-just, All-wise.

(6) The terms universal justice and universal grace are two different aspects of one and the same principle attribute of God responsible for the manifestation of His creative, administrative and legislative will. The whole universe and every part and particle of it are manifestations of His creative, administrative or legislative will.

(7) It is part of His legislative will and authority over the entire universe which He has appointed Adam and a particular chosen lineage of His issue as His vicegerents in the form of Prophets, to deliver the divine message and His legislative will to humankind or in the form of Imams (leaders) to lead every man towards the ultimate destiny required by his inherent capacity. So the establishment of the vicegerency and sending of new messengers, and sending along with them the revealed books and scales and sufficient proofs of the truth, are the requirements of His universal grace, justice and wisdom.

(8) His Absolute Oneness and the attributes which it implies prove His will is purposeful. His actions are for the best and aimed at the ultimate purpose.

(9) The observable part of His acts are the transitory and incomplete stages. It should be necessarily followed by other progressive stages beyond our observation. The last stage is the ultimate purpose of creation as a whole. This is termed as *Qiyamat-e Kubra* or the total resurrection.

(10) This ultimate end must be one with the principle attribute responsible for the act of creation and other manifestations of His will. The aim is not to gain anything for Himself but to bless the creatures. The purpose of creation is the necessary expression of His grace, justice and wisdom which are to be manifested in the final stage termed the "Day of Total Resurrection." Thus, the Absolute Oneness of God implies the fundamental articles of faith: justice, prophethood, vicegerency (Imamate)

and resurrection. They are inter-related. Each implies numerous issues of belief, conduct and action, one related to the other.

On the issues of a theoretical nature connected with the belief in the Absolute Oneness of God, the following are very important:

(a) He cannot be seen, sensed or perceived by any external senses in any stage of the life of any finite being here or in the hereafter. Nor can he be conceived or encompassed by imagination or reasoning. He is realizable and is and will be realized in some way or other by every creature. The term *liqa* (meeting Him) mentioned in the Qur'an and the apostolic statements is misinterpreted to mean He is visible. It means realization and certainty, as Ali explains in his own saying, "I do not worship God whom I do not see but behold, that the eyes do not see Him through the process of sight. The hearts have seen Him through the realization and certainties of faith."

(b) Of the divine attributes some are totally identical with His Oneness. Some are identical from one aspect and non-identical from another aspect, and some are purely relative attributes ascribed to Him in views of His actions.

(c) The revealed books of God are words of God and are His works, they are created by Him. Some Muslim theologians believe the Qur'an is an uncreated work of God, co-existent with Him or the "Christ" as the Christians believe to be the "word of God with God" uncreated by Him. The belief that the Qur'an or any other word or book of God was not created is one of the absurdities of foreign origin which has crept into the credulous mind of some of the Muslim theologians of the second century A.H. This should not make one go to the other extreme of considering the Qur'an as the word and work of the Prophet. This view has been ascribed by some orientalist to a particular group among the Mu'tazilite school. The allegation is doubtful, but if it is true, is not Islam. The Qur'an as revealed to the heart of the Prophet and uttered by him is *verbatim* the word, book and work of God. It was created as the extreme traditionalists or Asha'rites hold.

(d) God is the Almighty in that he does whatever He wills. But His will is based on His grace, justice and wisdom. The manifestation of His will or the order of creation begins not in the sense of time, but in the sense of rank, grade and order with the highest possible and most comprehensive finite being. He begins with the finite beings which are comparatively nearest to Him, in space and time but in reality and perfection. That being is the first, in the order of creation, the first creation (*awala khalaqin*) mentioned in 21:104 of the Qur'an which is termed in the authentic apostolic statements of *al-'aql*, the intellect, the light, and the spirit of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, the creative and active will.

All these terms refer to the same created reality which stands first in the order of comparative perfection. The best term for it in Arabic is Muhammad, "The Praised One," in its real and true adjectival existence is posterior to matter and bound to the requirements of space and time, position, succession and graduation. They are reflections and reactions of the action of the active and administrative entities of

the arc of descent. If this distinction between the beings and events of the two arcs is taken into consideration, many issues in the Qur'an and apostolic statements will be properly understood.

One action may have several reactions of different nature and value. One creative, administrative, or legislative act from God, directly through the angelical order, may produce several results in the arc of ascent, of which some may be in utter contrast with the other. One of the most important issues, based on the above distinction between the peculiarities of the two arcs, is a question of spirit (*ruh*) and soul (*nafs*), the two terms used frequently in the Qur'an and the apostolic statements. The term spirit (*ruh*) is used in the Qur'an mostly in the sense of the things proceeding from the creative, administrative or legislative will of God. The soul, self (*nafs*) or the thing to which every conscious being refers to "I" is used in the Qur'an in the sense of the effect or reflection produced by the divine will's agency in a particular portion of material ground after reaching a certain stage of development.

The creative action may be ascribed to the sub-ordinate angelical or natural agencies, but actually it is to be ascribed to the creative will and might of God, the Absolute One. This creative will and act of God is one in its origin. It is the manifestation of His universal grace but it produces various effects in various grades of the arc of descent. They in turn produce various effects or reflections on the material grounds of various potentialities. This creature will and act is prior in order and rank to the creatures of the arc of descent and are prior in time also to the products of the arc of ascent. The sub-ordinate angelical agencies functioning by His command are also prior in time and order to the souls produced. The action, unconditioned with the peculiarity of the ground is one, but the reaction conditioned with different grounds will be different in nature.

The same is the case with His legislative will and command. It may cause one to rise to heaven and the other to be dragged to hell. It may guide one and misguide the other. Had there been no order to do this and to do that, there would have been no ground for obedience and disobedience. The misguidance of one and the guidance of the other may be ascribed to the same order of God which is the manifestation of His universal grace. But the guidance is His and the misguidance is due to the short-coming of the one who failed to react submissively.

It is not un-Islamic to believe in the oneness of the creative, administrative or legislative act of God for the best, as the manifestation of His universal grace and universal will and at the same time to believe in the multiplicity of the result of that one action due to the variety and multiplicity of the recipient grounds. This view solves many problems discussed in the Qur'an and the apostolic statements:

(i) To believe in the prior existence of human spirits to their bodies, and the highest priority in existence of the spirits of the Prophet and the infallible members of his house to all other created beings and to their own *tinat* (original clay), and to believe in the posterity of the human souls in creation to their *tinat* and their bodies. What is said to be prior in creation to the body is the spirit proceeding from the divine will and what is said to be posterior in creation to the body is the soul (*nafs*), the ego or the reflection conditioned with the recipient state of the ground to which it reaches.

(ii) Justification of ascribing behaviour to the creation of the creative uncaused–cause and justification of holding the created beings responsible for their defects; this being due to the lack of recipient capacity which is inherent and uncaused. The grace of God which manifests in His guiding will is reflected in recipient grounds. They are the selected servants of God unfettered with the possible defects of the ground. They receive His gift in full. There are other receivers also whose inherent nature rejects the divine gift and reacts reversely.

(iii) Creation means bringing into existence the essence, *mahier*, *tinat* or any idea or object which is not self–existing. It means to bring a non–being into being, whether in the mind or outside the mind.

The use of the term “uncaused” about God, the real cause of all causes, and about the essences, or about things other than “existence” should not mislead one into a dualistic view of creation. Dualism recognizes two eternal and independent uncaused–causes, of bringing good things into existence, and the other bringing bad things into existence. It holds two creative causes of utter contrast working in the system of creation producing opposite effects of good and evil. They (causes) are termed as *yazdan* and *akramun* respectively. The theory of considering spirit and matter as co–existing realities, one acting upon the other, is another form of dualism. But the Islamic Unitarian view recognizes only one self–existing absolute uncaused–cause, the creator of every finite thing. Nothing can be held as second, equal, match or rival, uncreated and co–existing with Him.

Once an idea or thing is brought into existence, of it becomes a subject of existence, all the analytical ideas contained becomes a subject of existence, all the analytical ideas contained becomes a subject of existence, all the analytical ideas contained in the thing (which becomes the subject of existence) or the ideas which are the necessary property of the said thing, will automatically come into existence. They are termed as uncaused in which the creator does not create the analytical contents or its necessary properties as an independent act. Once a given dimension comes into existence in the mind of an architect or in the region outside his mind, the idea of divisibility, which is the inherent property of dimension, will automatically follow. It does not require an independent cause; divisibility is uncaused, it needs not independent creative cause. But it owes its existence to the creator of the given dimension, indirectly. It is incapable of receiving existence from the creator directly.

This is one of the basic metaphysical propositions on which many theological problems dealt within the Qur’an and apostolic statements depend. Unless this proposition is properly grasped one should refrain from discussing or even thinking about the question of pre–destination, determinism and free will.

(iv) The individual souls or egos – the psychic forces which produce (i) rotational movement in the central part of the atom or of the solar system, (ii) nourishment and self–reproduction in vegetation, (iii) from movement and sense in an animal and (iv) power of self–expression, invention and discovery, have no existence prior to their individual bodies. They are the developed forms of their bodies. The bodies as individual grounds, recipient of radiation from the corresponding spirit, reflect what they have received. This reflection is the individual soul of the body. Thus all the individual souls are developed along with

the development of the individual bodies. No soul as an individual entity can have previous existence independent of its present body and then lose its independence and become dependent on the present body. It is impossible.

It implies bringing into existence the same entity which has gone out of existence. Therefore, the transmigration of a soul from one body to another, the existence of a soul independent of all bodies even for a time and its becoming thereafter dependent on a particular body, the postulation of a conscious stage in any form for the soul of a human a priori to the present state and after are impossible because they imply reproducing what has gone out of existence. It is also anti-Qur'anic. In 56:60 – 62 the Qur'an says, "We are not incapable of changing your moulds and produce (create) you in what (a state or stage where) you know not at all. And you have certainly known the first state or stage of your coming into being, then why do you not remember it?"

Here the Qur'an asserts there are states of existence ahead of the individuals which are unknown to them as yet. It also asserts there is a first state of man's existence which is known to humankind and they have to remember it. It is a fact that no state is known to man other than the present state of existence.

Therefore, there is no other state of existence to be termed as the first other than the present. The theory of the individual souls of the children of Adam having been brought out of Adam's loins into consciousness prior to the present state and of their having been made witness over their selves (*misaq-e 'alam-e dhar*) is absolutely non-Islamic and against what the Qur'an clearly asserts (vide 56:61 and 7:172 and the author's notes on it). There are several narrations from Shi'ah and Sunni sources in this connection and the theory is advocated by a great number of Muslim theologians of both schools. In the first instance, it seems very difficult to reject all the narrations and the common beliefs of the people, but a deeper study of all the narrations and their comparison with what the Qur'an asserts will make one sure the theory from both the Qur'anic and rational points of view is untenable.

The narrations indicating priority of the spirits of the individuals to their bodies in creation can be reconciled with the Qur'anic and apostolic assertions which the conscious selves are created along with the body and have undergone development along with the bodies. The selves are material, totally dependent on their bodies in the beginning but in the course of their development they became gradually independent of them. When the cognitive self departs from the body it remains independent of the body from which it developed. It may assume a similar, better or worse body and form in the hereafter, but in the non-terrestrial region, corresponding to the character formed in his life. *Tanasukh*, or change of form, is of two kinds:

(1) departed soul assuming, through the process of rebirth, a new material body corresponding to the character it formed in his previous material body or return of the departed soul to another material body through the process of rebirth or

(2) immediate assumption of the departed soul from a form finer and more sensitive than the material form, from which it departed; the immaterial form is in complete correspondence to the character formed when it had a material body.

Of these two kinds, the first is denounced by Muslims as against the principles of the life hereafter identified by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. The second is asserted by reason and confirmed by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. The distinctive aspect of the life hereafter as asserted in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* is the cognitive self will be alive to what was done in the previous life and the pleasures and sufferings are the result of what was done before. These two should not be confused with each other. All the Qur'anic passages and apostolic statements which indicate the departed soul will assume new forms in the hereafter refer to the second kind of transformation. But some Muslim theologians, misled by non-Muslim advocates of material rebirth of the soul, tried to interpret such passages to support their views.

However, it should be borne in mind which in essence the Shi'ah thought is against the concept of the material rebirth of the soul, which is propounded by Hinduism and ancient Platonic, neo-Platonic and the Aryan mythologists to which some saints of the Sufi order and ultra-Shi'ites of Qaramatian tendencies are also inclined. Any being other than the Absolute One infinite is therefore created. The finite beings, whether in the arc of descent or ascent differ from each other in degree of reality, the higher in the degree of reality is closer to the Absolute.

In the hierarchy of the arc of ascent "man" (Adam) and his chosen issues as vicegerents of God are foremost in degree of reality and nearness to the Absolute. The Holy Prophet is presented in the Qur'an as the universal grace of God superior to all his predecessors in submissiveness. And the Qur'an, as confirmed by the Prophet, has presented these holy members of his house as spiritually identical with him. Therefore, any effort to bring them down to the state of other followers of the Prophet is anti-*Ahl al-Bayt*. The question of the infallibility of the vicegerents of God has already been dealt with in detail.

Here the idea is to point out that some theologians who could not interpret the Qur'anic passages which apparently do not agree with the conception of the absolute infallibility of the vicegerents have adopted an apologetic term, *Tark-e Awla*, meaning "exchanging better for the good." They apply this term to the passages of the Qur'an which appear to accuse the Prophets of committing mistakes, e.g. Adam approaching the tree which caused him to quit paradise. According to these theologians it was not a fault amounting to sin; it was a permissible deed though it was better not to do it.

Thus Adam's approach to the tree was a diversion from better to good. This story of apologetic terms and arguments which subject the vicegerents of God to commit such diversions from superior to inferior deeds, undermining their normative status is unacceptable. The reader should refrain from applying this term to the vicegerents of God and seek a more appropriate interpretation for the Qur'anic passage in question.

Prayer and repentance which are uttered by the vicegerents of God do not imply any sin or diversion

form a better to a lesser deed. On the contrary, those vehement duplicative expressions indicate their sense of creaturely defects which would not be covered by His blessings. In the beginning of the last four lines of the celebrated *Du'a-e Kumayl*, Ali addresses God as follows: “Oh One Who is quickly pleased! Forgive one who possesses nothing but prayer (needy supplications), and it is You whatever you will.” Here Ali exposes his creaturely needs before the creative All-gracious One. Prayer means nothing but to be alive to one’s creaturely nothingness and His unlimited grace. It is this constant prayer which makes the vicegerents of God infallible and it does not attribute to them any sin or improper deed.

Another important point to be noted is that in several chapters of the Qur’an dealing with the settlement of Adam on Earth after the loss of paradise of animal comforts, God asserts Adam and those of his issues who follow His guidance are secure from any fear or grief:

{فَأَمَّا يَا تَبِيتُكُمْ مِّنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى} {123}

“Those who follow My guidance shall not suffer fear or grief. They shall not go astray and suffer spiritual hardship” (20: 123).

These assurances placed the infallible issues of Adam and even the true followers of them above the influence of the evil forces working in the material realm. Restricting the effectiveness of evil forces and practices to His will, the Qur’an condemns those who adopt such practices as their profession and those who are apprehensive of the effect of such unusual practices.

The Qur’an asserts that sorcery and the devices of this kind are a mixture of devilish devices and misinterpretations of some scriptural instructions, and this is done by people of the Book such as Jews, Christians, and even Muslims who have thrown the unequivocal words of God behind their backs. All these occultic prescriptions and practices are innovations of those who, in the garb of religious profession, try to take advantage of people’s ignorance. The traditions which indicate the Jews cast a spell on the Holy Prophet and he was affected by the extent which he was under the impression he was doing or saying something when he was not actually doing or saying so, are fabrications of those who ignore the Qur’an. Even the traditions about the Holy Prophet which he used to be epileptic and abnormal conditions during revelation are contrary to the Qur’an and reason.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا ۖ سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ ۖ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطَأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ ۚ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ {مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا} {29}

Muhammad is the Apostle of God, and those who are with him are vehement against the infidels, compassionate among themselves. You see them bowing down, prostrating themselves in

obesance (unto) God seeking grace from God and (His) pleasure. Their marks are on their faces (foreheads), because of the effect of their (frequent) prostrations. This is their description in the Torah, and their description in the Evangel, as a seed which puts forth its shoot, then strengthens it, it grows stout and rises firm from its stalk, delighting the sowers – through them he may enrage the unbelievers. God has promised those who believe and do good deeds, forgiveness and a great recompense. (48:29)

1. {سُنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ {53} }
 {أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنَ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ {54} }

We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until now it will be manifest unto them in which it is the Truth. Do not your Lord suffice, since He is witness over all things? How! Are they still in doubt about the meeting with their Lord? Lo! Is not He surrounding all things? (41:53 – 54)

2.

{لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ {120} }

I spoke unto them only which You commanded me, (saying), “Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.” I was a witness of them while I dwelt among them, and when You look at me You was the watcher over them. You are witness over all things. (5:120)

3.

{يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَىٰ فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرَّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِن بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ ۗ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ {19} }

They indeed have disbelieved who say “Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary.” Say, “Who then can do aught against Allah, if He had willed to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother and everyone on Earth?” Allah is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. He created what He will. And Allah is able to do all things.

4.

{قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ {1} }
 {اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ {2} }
 {لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ {3} }
 {وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ {4} }

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Say, “He is All, the One! Allah, the eternally besought of all! He begets not nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him. (112:1 – 4)

5. {فَاعْطَرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجًا ۗ يَذُرُّكُمْ فِيهِ ۗ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ {11} }

The creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you pairs of yourselves, and of the cattle also pairs, whereby He multiplies you. Naught is as likeness, and He is the Hearer, the Seer. (42:11)

6. {انظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَلَآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا {21} }

See how We prefer one above another and verily the hereafter will be greater in degrees and greater in perfection. (17:21)

7. {وَتَنَفَسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا {7} }

And a soul and Him who perfected it. (91:7)

8. 85} وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ ۖ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

They will ask you about the spirit. Say, “The spirit (operates) at my Lord’s command, while you have been given only a smattering of knowledge.” (17:85)

9. See Appendix

10. Here some may argue as to how matter can be considered identical in the slightest degree with or consciousness, ignoring the fact that consciousness is the property of immaterial and non-dimensional beings. For consciousness means the presence of the object to the subject (the known to the knower), which implies apriori, the presence of the subject to itself. And matter being dimensional, consisting of geometrical parts absent from the other is as a whole absent from itself and consequently absent from all other objects, and therefore, unconscious and totally void of life. So it is in utter contrast not only with the absolute reality but even with all the immaterial and non-dimensional finite beings, which fill the gap between absolute reality and matter. This is the reason why matter and mind are generally presented as two substances in extreme contrast. Their association in the living material beings such as man, animal, and plant is one of the oldest metaphysical problems of importance, around which many schools of thought have been developed.

In answer to the argument, it is out of place to discuss here all the views and solutions forwarded to this problem. It is enough here to note that whatever is said about the contrast between mind and matter is true when they are views from a dualistic angle, when each is viewed as a substance in itself, independent of the other, and as such the problem of their association remains unsolved as all the proposed solutions are unsatisfactory. But from the Unitarian point of view, be it of the theist or the atheist, there is no problem at all. In the case of the former (the theist) nothing can be termed as substance in the true sense of the word other than the Absolute One. The immaterial objects of the arc or descent are radiations of the Real One in deflective and reflective grades, which terminate in four-dimensional matter or space/time. Matter is nothing but termination (terminus) of the arc of descent, held by the immediate cohesive force or power of immaterial nature. That force, to which the four-dimensional continuity named matter owes its appearance, is the psychic or the spiritual force in association with matter, not as a co-relative but as the immediate sustainer.

To the atheist, mind is nothing more than a material phenomenon, the result of complicated material processes. Both views agree one of the two is the real and the other is phenomenal. Either matter is the devolutionary phenomenon of the actual mind, psyche or spirit which loses its actuality in the downward process and regains it in the upwards (evolutionary) process, as it has already been pointed out or the mind, psyche or spirit is the phenomenal development of the primal matters potentiality, a theory which is held by atheists but never proved.

11. 114} فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۚ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ ۗ وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

Then exalted by Allah, the True King! And hasten not (oh Muhammad) with the Qur’an ere its revelation has been perfected unto you can say “My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.” (20:114)

12. Bihar al-Anwar II, by Majlisi

13. {102} سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ

{103} فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ

{104} وَنَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ

{105} قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّؤْيَا ۗ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

{106} إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ

{107} وَقَدَيْنَاهُ بِذَبْحٍ عَظِيمٍ

And when (the son) reached (the age of) working with him, said he, “Oh my son! Verily I saw in a dream in which I sacrifice you. Now what is your view?” said (the son), “Oh father, Do what you are bidden. If God wills, you will find me of the steadfast ones.” And when they both had surrendered (themselves) to the will of God and he (Abraham) threw him (the son) upon his forehead. And We called out unto him, “Oh Abraham! Indeed you have proved true the dream. Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good!” Verily, this is an open trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice. (37:102 –

[14.](#) The Holy Spirit (Ruh) mentioned in the verse assumed the form of a man and appeared before Mary when she retired into complete seclusion. The Qur'an declares she said to the Spirit, "Verily I fly for refuge in the Beneficent (God) from thee. (Be gone from me) if you are God-fearing." The Spirit said that as a divine messenger he was giving a glad tiding which she would have a purified soul (i.e. Jesus). She again felt nervous and said that how could it be possible when no man had touched her and she was not unchaste. The Spirit said the Lord says, "It is easy for me and We will make him (Jesus) a sign (miracle) (of yours) unto the people and a mercy from Us. It is a matter decreed." (19:17 – 21). Those who have no knowledge of and faith in the super-natural power assumes human form, and she conceived by a well-made man who appeared to her in normal course. It is a total blasphemy, and a rejection of the Qur'an.

[15.](#) In some languages the words Satan, Pharaoh, Caesar, etc. might have been treated as proper nouns but actually these words are common nouns or titles used for entities of certain status. In this sense it can be used both in the singular and plural. The Qur'an has used Satan not only as a proper noun for the entity hostile to Adam but it has used it also in the sense of any evil entity in the form of a man or something else who is hostile to humanity. In the apostolic statements also Pharaoh and Caesar have been used as common nouns for despots who rule over humankind with no justifiable merits, such as Fara'na has been used as the plural of Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and Kaya'sara as the plural of Kaiser (Caesar). Similar to these usages it is supposed the word Azar used in the Qur'an, as the father of Ibrahim, was actually the title of the patriarch of the Assyrian tribe. So Azar was not the actual father of Ibrahim, he was the patriarch who was look after Ibrahim as an orphan.

[16.](#) Sermon of Ali ibn Abi Talib, upon whom be peace, Nahj al-Balagha, 184 or 191, depending on the edition.

[17.](#) وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ {3}

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ {4}

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ {5}

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ {6}

وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ {7}

And nor he speaks of (his own) inclination. It (the wording) is not aught but a revelation revealed (unto him). Taught him the One intense in power. The One endued with wisdom, (and) hence he took an overview position, while he was in the highest horizon. (53: 3 – 7)

[18.](#) Vide chapter 37:139 – 143, chapter 21:87, chapter 10:98, chapter 48:48 – 49. It is said Jonah entered the boat to avoid the chastisement. While sailing they were hit by a huge storm. The owner of the boat announced there was among them a slave who had run away from his master. Jonah said it was he, but other travellers in the boat who were much impressed by the nobility of Jonah did not believe him. A ballot was, therefore, drawn several times but each time Jonah's name was drawn. Jonah immediately jumped into the ocean and was swallowed by the fish. Jonah prayed to God in the belly of the fish, La ilaha illa anta subhanaka inni kunto minazzalameen, i.e. "There is no God save You, You are the pure and verily I am of the unjust ones." He was caused to be cast out of the belly of the fish, and was restored to life on Earth as an Apostle to his people, forgiven by Allah in answer to his pleas of mercy and forgiveness.

[19.](#) Renowned sources of supplication (du'a), prayers, litanies, invocations for different moments in one's life, and the life of the community, and for special occasions:

1. Nahj al-Balagha – Sermons of Imam Ali, upon whom be peace.
2. al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah (also known as al-Sahifat al-Kamila) – Prayers of the fourth Imam Ali Zain al-'Abideen, upon whom be peace.
3. Bihar al-Anwar (Oceans of Light) – by 'Allama Muhammad al-Baqir Majlisi (d. 1110 A.H. 1698 A.D. or 1111 A.H./1700 A.D.) Chapter on Du'a and other sources mentioned in the book.
4. Mafatih al-Jinan (Keys to the Garden of Paradise) – by Sheikh Abbas Qummi (d. 1359 A.H./1940/41).
5. A Shi'ite Anthology – by 'Allama Sayyid Muhammad Hussain Tabataba'i, translated by William C. Chittick (Muhammadi Trust: Britain, 1980), English version of the prayer (supplication) of the third Imam Hussain, upon whom be peace, for the Day of 'Arafah (the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah during the pilgrimage of Mecca) is included in it.

20. 29. {فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ}

So when I complete him and breathe into him My spirit, fall you down unto him prostrating (in obeisance). (15:29)

The word *isteva* means the hold and domination of the Infinite over all finite beings including the highest and the lowest with His All-embracing Knowledge. It expresses the all-encompassing view of the 'Arsh which has no dimensions. It negates the view of anthropomorphic schools of thought who imagine that God is sitting on a throne. It is un-Islamic. Another point in the use of *isteva* alal 'arsh in the verse after pointing to the process of creation is to show the creation of the order and its administration is His (vide 11:7, 25:59, 50:38, 53:4). (Extracted from Pooya's note, Translation of the Qur'an by Mir Ahmad Ali, first edition, p. 578.)

21. Divine Days (Ayyamullah). See the Qur'an: 7:57, 10:3, 11:7 25:59, 50:38, 57:4. These verses confirm the total period of creation does not exceed six days, and it is also pointed out in which one divine day is equal to 1000 days on Earth and in some cases 50,000. The restoration of all values on the Day of Judgment can take the place in the shortest moment within a twinkling of an eye. The Creator alone knows the duration of time which is beyond any imagination on that plane. For the significance of *al-yaum* in the verse relating to the day of Ghadir, see Chapter One, note 22 (f and g).

22. See Chapter One, notes 22 (e) for details. It refers to the prayer of Ali, upon whom be peace, when he gave alms in the state of *ruku* (genuflection).

23. "Exalted loins" and "purified wombs" mentioned in the descriptive salutation (*ziarat*) are addressed to the third Imam Hussain, upon whom be peace, known as *Ziarat-e Warith*, and similar to this is mentioned in the descriptive salutation to the Holy Prophet in the salutation known as *Zirat-e Jam'h* (vide *Mafatih al-Jinan* and other relevant books). All these salutations are in amplified form of *Ayat- Tat'hir* and other Qur'anic descriptions of the chosen issues of Adam.

24. The "days of ignorance" do not refer to a particular period of history. According to the Qur'an, ignorance or a pagan tendency is a peculiar attitude of the human mind as opposed to Islam or submission to the will of God. So Islam and ignorance are two opposite mental attitudes which assert themselves throughout the history of civilization.

25. The origin of the theory of "Logos," word of God, originated from the Jewish school of thought in Alexandria, and later was evolved and maintained by the Pauline school of Christianity (vide the first few verses of the first chapter of the fourth Gospel). The Christians presented Christ as the word of God, the third person in the Trinity, therefore, "non-created." The traditionists of the Muslim school of thought headed by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Muhammad ibn Ismail Bukhari, Muslim ibn Hajaj-e Nishapuri consider Qur'an as the word of God and maintain it is one of the attributes of God co-existent with the presence of God, therefore uncreated. The createdness and non-createdness as the word of God was one of the most controversial issues between the rationalist school (*Mut'tazilite*), headed by Mamun the caliph and the traditionist school ('Asharites), headed by Ahmad ibn Hanbal. According to the Shias it is true the Qur'an is the word of God revealed to the heart of the Holy Prophet and uttered by him, but the word of God as Ali says in His act not attribute. Moreover, the attributes also are not co-existent with the essence as the 'Asharites would maintain.

26. 'Allama Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi relates from Sheikh Saduq a detailed description. Here it is in brief. Abu Talib, at the height of the hot season started for Shams (Syria) taking Muhammad who was then eight years old. As soon as the heat of the sun became oppressive, a small cloud, white as snow, came, and saluting Muhammad, cast a refreshing change over him, attending him wherever he went. "As we approached Busray (Busrah)," said Abu Talib, "the hermitage of a certain Nasarane (Christian) recluse was seen advancing towards us with speed of a race horse. On going up it stopped before us with the astonished owner, Bahira (a Christian monk) by the name, who was always so absorbed in contemplation that he never allowed the least to those who passed by his cell, and never even spoke to any person. When he found his hermitage in motion, and now the *qafilah* (caravan) approaching, he at once perceived it as the Prophet. On coming up he said to him, "If what I have read and heard is true, you are he, and none other." Then the monk asked Abu Talib's permission to present the refreshment he had brought to the wonderful child, who inquired, "Is it for me alone, or may my fellow travellers partake of it with me?" The recluse said it was little, but all he had. However he might do as he pleased. Accordingly he (the child) said, "Bismillah" and began to feed the whole party of 170 people following his example. After they were all satisfied the little offering of Bahira seemed to have been untouched. The monk, astonished at what he witnessed, blessed the head of the Prophet, and said, "By the truth of the Lord Christ, this is he!" But the people present

did not comprehend what he meant. (Hiyat al-Qulub, vol. two by 'Allama al-Majlisi, translated by Rev. James L. Merrick, The Zahra Trust, San Antonio, TX US.)

[27.](#) Commenting on the Qur'anic 34:37, Ali upon whom be peace, says, "Surely God, the Glorious and High, has made remembrance (of Him) as a means to keep the centre of human cognition and volition polished and pure from the rust of vegeto-animal, sensual desires. It is through remembrance in which one hears after being deaf and through it one sees after being blind, and through it one submits after being in revolt. God Almighty and High be His bounties, has incessantly and in every moment and in the intervals between His messengers and such of His servants in whose minds He has whispered, and with whose thought He has talked (meaning who are inspired by Him), those 'chosen ones,' well-awakened with the light of the inspiration spread throughout their sense of sight, hearing, reasoning and feeling, undertook to remind people of the 'divine days' ahead of them and warn them of His stand (against the wrongdoers).

Thus, the inspired ones continued to be like the guides in the wilderness. Whosoever adopts the straight path they commend the path adopted by him, they gave him the good news of salvation awaiting him, and whosoever deviates from the right path to the left or right they censor him and warn him of the loss awaiting him. Thus, they are beacons in the darkness ahead of man, and are the guides in the confusing and bewildering states and stages of human life. Surely for the remembrance of God there have been selected ones who have adopted the remembrance in preference to all other temporal occupations. So no transaction has ever occupied their mind and deviated them from the remembrance of God. They cover the length of their worldly life with remembrance of God shouting in the ears of negligent ones the divine warnings against obnoxious deeds prohibited by God.

They order people to do justice and they themselves practice it. They are absorbed in the light sublime in which it seems they have passed from the temporal light to the light hereafter as if they are there seeing things beyond the terrestrial life. It seems they are looking over the unseen states and conditions, the inhabitants, the intermediary stage between the temporal life and the resurrection and the lengthy changes therein.

(Extract from Sermon 217 Nahj ul-Balagha by Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, Volume Two which speaks of his own personal experience, Egypt edition, no. 19, Pakistan edition. Translated in Urdu by Mufu Ja'far Hussain.)

[28.](#) The Pharaoh dreamt that a fire was coming from the Israelites' dwellings around his palace and destroying it. The scholars of ancient scriptures interpreted this to mean a boy, born to the Israelites, would bring perdition to him. The Pharaoh ordered every male child of the Israelites to be killed. When Moses was born, his mother was inspired to put the baby in a box and float it away into the river. The box with Moses in it, floated into the channel of the river which passed into the Pharaoh's palace garden. Assia, the wife of the Pharaoh, picked up the box. The radiance of divine beauty of the child enchanted her and the Pharaoh, and they decided to adopt the child. (20:38 – 40)

The box was made by Haskeel, son of Saboor, a carpenter and cousin of the Pharaoh. When the inspired mother approached Hazkeel to prepare the box for Moses, he made it but then went to inform the Pharaoh of the child's birth but he went dumb on the way. So he returned to his shop where he became well. He again went to inform the Pharaoh but now he became blind and dumb and was forced to return. He was convinced the child (Moses) was the expected Prophet. He declared his belief in God and Moses. He became well and hid his faith, but always advised people to have belief in the Almighty God and the person (Moses) who was preaching the right cause. (38:3 – 7 and 40:28 – 29.) He is called Momin-e al-Fira'un.

[29.](#) Abdul Muttalib felt alone against the aggression of the mischievous Quraysh, and had vowed in the Ka'ba that God Most High would bestow on him ten sons and he would immolate the favourite one. He was blessed with ten sons. When they grew up he took Abdallah (the father of the Prophet), the dearest one, to fulfill his vow. At the crises, 'Autekah, one of the daughters of 'Abdul Muttalib, besought her father to cast lots between her brother and a given number of camels and increase the number until the Most High should accept the substitution. 'Abdul Muttalib offered ten camels and cast lots between them and his son, the arrow pointed at him. The number was increased until 100 camels were set apart as a substitute and the arrow pointed at the camels. Great rejoicing followed. 'Abdul Muttalib and all the Quraysh around him

shouted "Allahu Akbar." The "great sacrifice" (zebhe 'asim) was postponed until the tragedy of Karbala, which saved Islam from destruction.

[30.](#) Mubahala. See Chapter One, Note 22 (h).

[31.](#) Shahadat: After a careful study of the following verses and the author's notes given in the Translation of the Qur'an by Mir Ahmad Ali, one will have no doubt the words Shahadat and Shaheda and their derivative forms in the Qur'an have been used to mean witnessing or observing a thing or being (chs. s:124 and 143, 4:41, 5:117, 10:91 and 195, 16:84 and 89, and 22:78). It is a state of knowledge of a thing as it is in itself and utmost and unshakable certainty. It is a state of direct communion of the knower and the known or a state of presence of the known object to the knower. There are numerous shades of meaning of Shahadat which signify the highest stage of realization or observation of a thing. This root and its various derivative forms have been used in the Qur'an signifying the same state of certitude and realization. It has been used about and applied to God, the angels and people gifted with knowledge of things.

It has been used for the people who were eyewitnesses of certain events and the people who have faith in something unseen with utmost certainty and unshakable conviction. This term has been applied to God, the Omniscient Creator of everything. He is not only with everything but He is closer to everything than the thing to itself. It has been used in the same sense but in a lesser degree of state of realization attained by the high intellectual entities who are in communion with the Absolute Reality (God). The entities of such spiritual attainments, be it in the arc of descent like angels, or in the arc of ascent like the souls of the Prophets and saints, are in the state of observing the finite-many in the Absolute One and observing Him in the finite-many. And as such they are in a position to observe the actual relation in whom the finite multitude are standing to each other as well as their relation to the Absolute. So such entities are the true witnesses of the Absolute reality and the relative and finite realities in different degrees.

In this sense the Qur'an has used the term Shahadat for the Prophets, saints and righteous people according to the degree of their spiritual attainment. Therefore, Shahadat means a state of observation and realization of the Truth. This state of realization in its most comprehensive sense has been used for the soul of the last Prophet, Muhammad, upon whom be peace. Next to him are the "holy souls," who in soul and spirit are identical with him, and are true manifestations of his stage of accomplishment. Next to them are the holy souls of Prophets, saints and righteous people according to their position in the hierarchy of realization and observation of the Truth. Such personalities are undoubtedly the model and norm of the others to follow. Shahadat is a stage of attainment whether anybody does or does not follow the person who has reached this stage.

But the life of such a person deserves to be adopted as an example and be followed. Anyone who establishes a tie of love with such an accomplished personality will also attain the same stage of realization and become a Shaheed in a lesser degree corresponding to his spiritual limitations. This is supported by the commentary of the Qur'an where he interprets and comments 42:23, known as Ayah-e Modat, "Whosoever dies with the love of the Al-e Muhammad in his heart, his death is the death of one who had attained the state of Shahadat (realization)." Thus a Shaheed is the one who is the witness of the truth and possesses also the right of intercession (shifa'at). (Refer to footnote in Ch. 43:86 of Translation of the Qur'an by Mir Ahmad Ali.)

So a Shaheed and its derivatives have been used in the Qur'an in the sense of realization and observation of the Truth; it has not been used in the Qur'an in the limited sense of being killed for the cause of righteousness. It is true a person who gives his life and all that is dear to him for the sake of God will reach a stage of realization. There are people who have reached this stage of realization before giving their lives and dear ones in the way of God: Hussain (the grandson of the Holy Prophet) had attained the stage of realization since his birth. Many of his statements prove beyond doubt that this state of realization made him move towards Karbala and display a scene of realization without precedence and shall not be repeated. It is true of the righteous people who are killed for the cause of Islam in which after their martyrdom they have reached the stage of Shahadat. But for the Holy Prophet and his 12 successors, their very existence and Shahadat are synonyms and inseparable from each other.

It is for this reason that even love for them will take one to the stage of Shahadat. Here it should be noted that martyrdom

(being killed for the cause of Islam) applies only to those who have given their lives for the sake of Islam in obedience and submission to the order of God conveyed to them by the Holy Prophet and his rightful successors. In the battle of Uhud wherein the Muslims were defeated and ran away except for a few, a person named Khazman remained with the Prophet and fought against the infidels who were attacking the few Muslims and wanted to kill the Prophet. Afterwards a Muslim praised the leader who fought but the latter said frankly he had not fought but for the sake of helping his clan. The Prophet, when asked about the destiny of that leader, said Khazaman would go to hell in spite of his bravery because the motive of his good deed was not Godly. This is a lesson and a distinctive mark between jihad (fighting for the cause of Islam as ordered by God) and the war waged against non-Muslims to conquer territory and rule over people. Imam Muhammad Baqir (the fifth Imam) says is fardh (obligatory), and it will be termed jihad. But if the attempt is to give up obedience to one creature and accept the obedience to another, it is the satanic war which is usually waged by people to gain power.

[32.](#) Ummat Muslima – The word Ummat or Ummah (nation) has been frequently used in the Qur'an in various meanings. Many commentators fail to grasp the exact meaning in which the word has been used in certain passages of the Qur'an, which has resulted in some confusion. In the interpretation of the concerned passage, Ummat is a derivative form, the root of which is Amama, meaning literally, intention to or turn towards a fixed direction. But figuratively it has been used for any distinguished unit which draws attention. (1) One of its derivative verbal nouns as "Imam." It has been used to signify a distinguished leader towards whom attention is drawn. In this sense the plural is A'immah. It has also been used in the sense of distinguished "highway." (2) The other sense is Amam, meaning forward, front: a distinctive thing which is ahead in time or place and draws attention.

(3) The third is Ummat or Ummah. It has been used in the following shades of meaning: (a) a distinctive point of time (9:8 and 12:45), (b) as a collective noun denoting a distinctive group of people who are led by a distinctive leader. In this sense the plural for it is Umum (nations), (c) a collective noun for a distinguished group of people who have the quality to lead. In this sense the plural is A'immah, and (d) as a common noun used for a single person who has the quality of leadership or any other distinctive quality (16:12).

To understand the exact shade of meaning in which the word Ummat has been used in different passages of the Qur'an one should refer to the context or other evidence whether it has been used to mean a leading person or a distinguished leading group or a distinguished group led by a distinguished leader or leaders. Or, it has been used in the sense of a distinguished point of time or space. It is wrong to interpret Ummah in all the passages of the Qur'an in one and the same shade of meaning, i.e. a distinguished group who followed a distinguished leader or in the sense of a nation. For example, see the word ummatan Muslimatan used in 2:128, and Ummatan Wasatan in 2:143, Wal takun Min Kum Umatun in 3:104, Kuntum Khaira Umatin in 3:110, Umatun Khalamatun in 3:113 – 114, and Umatun hia arba min Umatin in 16:92. The context of all these usages proves beyond doubt the word Ummat used as a collective noun means a distinguished group of leading personalities and not the followers of a leader or a particular nation. In short, Ummat in these places has been used in the sense of Imam and A'immah and not in the sense of Mamoom (followers). Every follower of the Prophet of Islam has not attained the high state of realization and the observation of the truth to be a witness over the people. Every follower of the Prophet cannot be counted in the "best group" whom God has brought out in the interest of the people to lead them towards the right path. These are qualities of righteous leaders chosen by God and cannot be applied to every man.

The word wasat (middle) used in the Qur'an, particularly in 2:143, means a group of people who are in the middle path saved from all extremities, or it means they are on the zenith of the hierarchy of spiritual attainment, the state which has equal comprehensive relation to all which is below it. This state or stage of accomplishment has been termed as 'araf in 7:46 and 48, meaning elevated place. This is a state which those who have attained it, would recognize as all good or bad, by their very appearance and features.

[33.](#) It has been discussed in relation to the "Spirit" which the Holy Prophet's light was glorifying God before coming into this world. It refers to his prior existence. But as far as his soul is concerned it was created along with his birth, reflecting the light of his spirit. Therefore, there is no existence of the human soul, whether of the Prophets or others, before the creation

of the body. The difference between the spirit which proceeds from God in the arc of descent and the soul which is the reflection of the spirit in the arc of ascent, conditioned with the state of the ground, should always be kept in mind so this theory should not be confused with the eternity of the soul and the problem of transmigration which has no room in Islam at all.

{إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَارْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ} 45. 34.

God forgives you (oh Our Apostle). Why did you give them leave (to stay behind) until it was manifest unto you who spoke the truth and you had known the liars? (9:43)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَطَلِّقُوهُنَّ لِعَدَّتِهِنَّ وَأَحْصُوا الْعِدَّةَ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ ۖ لَا تَخْرِجُوهُنَّ مِنْ بُيُوتِهِنَّ وَلَا يَخْرُجْنَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُبِينَةٍ ۚ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يُحْدِثُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَمْرًا ۝ 1

Oh (Our) Prophet! Why did you forbid (unto yourself) what God has made lawful unto you? You seek to please your wives, and God is Oft-forgiving, the Most Merciful. (66: 1)

{عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى} 1
 {أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى} 2
 {وَمَا يَذُرُّكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكَّى} 3
 {أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى} 4
 {أَمَّا مَنْ اسْتَعْزَى} 5
 {فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدَّى} 6
 {وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكَّى} 7
 {وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعَى} 8

He frowned and turned away, because came unto him the blind man, and what makes you to know he would cleanse himself or be warned, and profit him the warning? As for him who thinks himself independent (on account of his wealth) unto him do you attend. It shall be no blame on you if cleaned not himself. But as to him who comes unto you striving in earnest. (80: 1 – 8)

35. When the Prophet migrated to Medina a mosque was erected with brick and mud walls and a roof of palm leaves, and also constructed was a platform with a roof, adjacent to the mosque, for the needs of the sahabah (companions) whose devotion was remarkable. The Prophet assisted with his hands in the construction. The companions are called As'hab al-Suffa.

{فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ} 55. 36.

So be you patient. Verily the promise of God is true, and seek protection for your (followers') shortcomings and celebrate praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning. (40:55)

{فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَقَالِكُمْ وَمَوَاقِعُكُمْ} 19

So know you there is no god but God and seek the protection for your sins and for (the sins of) the believer men and believer women, and God knows well the place of your movement (in this world) and the place of your final rest (in the hereafter). (47: 19)

{إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا} 1
 {لِيُغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا} 2

Verily We have caused victory for you, a manifest victory. (So)(oh Our Apostle Muhammad) God may grant protection for your sake (against) which has gone before of your (followers') shortcomings and which has to come later, and thus He perfects His bounty unto you and guides you (firm-footed) on the way straight (unto your Lord) (48: 1 – 2)

37. It has already been pointed out that the gradual revelation was a fragmentary quotation of what was already revealed totally to the Prophet on the esteemed Night, in the month of Ramadan. To consider such victories as something manifest

producing real tranquility of mind and heart of the perspective of the Prophet's mission. On this ground the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt have emphasized the occasions said to be connected with the revelation of the Qur'an, part by part, during the 23 years of the Prophet's ministry have no restrictive bearing on the parts revealed on those occasions. This gradual revelation was like quoting a proverb on a particular relevant occasion once and on some other similar occasion at another time.

[38.](#) Narratives of this kind may seem to be legends but the seen world of matter is the lowest surface of the universe which appeals to the external senses of the average man. Beyond this visible surface there are unseen worlds and surfaces of existence dominating the seen surface.

[39.](#) Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 474, Kanz al-Ummal, tradition 39168. The following verses of the Qur'an relate to the hypocrites: 2:8 – 20, 3:152, 156 and 167, 4:67, 93, 138 and 140, 9:43 – 45, 64, 67 – 69, 73, 95 – 98, 101 and 124 – 127, 14 47 – 50 and 63, 20:2 – 3, 33:9 – 20 and 60 – 61, 48:16, 20, 20 – 23, and 25 – 30, 48:6, 10, 18 and 29, 49:1 – 6 (for the commentary of these verses see Bukhari, part on Tafsir on 39:14 – 18), 57:13 – 15, 58:8, and 63:1 – 8.

[40.](#) Malik ibn Nuwayrah. Khalid ibn Walid, the famous general, was sent to collect zakat at the time of Abu Bakr, from Malik ibn Nuwayrah, who was the head of his region, in turn appointed by the order of the Prophet, to receive zakat from the tribes there. When Malik refused to pay, Khalid killed him. On the very night, he co-habitated with Malik's wife and married her, which was punishable under Islamic law, but he was not taken to task by the caliph. (Tarikh Abi'l Fida, vol. one, p. 158 and Tarikh-e Yaqubi, vol. 11, p. 110.)

[41.](#) Of the early collections of lesser size which contain transmitted statements of the Ahl al-Bayt few are noted. All are highly esteemed according to the Shi'ah scholars as the sources of theological inferences. Of these collections al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah (or al-Sahifa al-Kamila), the collection of prayers and supplications of the fourth Imam Ali bin al-Hussain Zayn al-'Abideen (38A.H. 658 A.D. – 95 A.H./714 A.D.), compiled by the Imam, and transmitted through the chain mentioned in the beginning of the book, has been highly regarded because of the date of its compilation, its being genuinely preserved in the original classical style of the Ahl al-Bayt and the authenticity of the chain of its transmitters, and the popularity of the text among the various schools of thought. Next is the celebrated collection, Nahj al-Balagha, the selections from the lectures, sermons, epistles and maxims of the first Imam, Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected by Sayyid Radi the renowned scholar (d. 436 A.H./1044 A.D.) from the earlier authentic sources of Shi'ah and Sunni literature.

Before the compilation of Nahj al-Balagha the Book of Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilali (d. 80 – 90 A.H./699 – 707 A.D.), a devoted disciple of Ali, was in the hands of the followers. It is said the book was termed by the sixth Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq as the alphabet of the Shi'ah school of thought. Extracts of the book have been quoted in the authentic collections of later periods such as Kafi. Sulaym's information about Islam and the events of its early days is based on what was narrated by Ali or the prominent companions of the Prophet who remained whole-heartedly close to Ali and his house, like Salman, Abu Dharr, Miqdad, 'Ammar, Hudhayfa, etc. But the question is about the genuineness of the Book of Sulaym. Whether the present copy is entirely the same as it was written by the author and confirmed by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, or was it tampered with? This is controversial issue among the critics of traditions, and some of the contents of the book support the latter view, partly it is against the facts of history, the articles of the Shi'ah faith and the assertions of the Imams.

The same is the case with the commentary of the Qur'an (supposed to have been dictated by the 11th Imam al-Askari (232 A.H./846 A.D.) – 260 A.H./823 A.D.) to two of his disciples, when he was almost under house arrest at Samarra the cantonment town of the Abbasides in Iraq). The book contains valuable commentary on the Qur'an with interspersed statements contrary to historical facts, faith and reason which give evidence against the genuineness of the book. The same is the case with some Shi'ah works and collections of the first four centuries of Islam which were not incorporated in the famous and authentic collections of Kulayni, Saduq and Sheikh Tusi. Such collections can be relied upon if they are not in conflict with the contents of the above top-ranking collections and other criteria for verification of scriptural narratives.

The following books are that criteria: (1) Exegesis of the Qur'an by Ali ibn Ibrahim Qummi (last part of the third century A.H.), (2) Exegesis of the Qur'an by Muhammad ibn 'Ayyashi (beginning of the third century A.H.), (3) Exegesis of the Qur'an by Farat ibn Ibrahim al-Kufi (third century A.H.), (4) Basa'ir al-Darajat by Saffar Abu Ja'far ibn Muhammad (d. 20–A.H./902 – 903 A.D.), (5) Da'aim al-Islam by Qadi Nu'man (d. 363 A.H./974 A.D.), (6) al-Istighatha by Ali Ahmad Kufi (d. 352 A.H.), (7) Mahasin, commentary by al-Harrani (third century A.H.). However, any narrated statement in any one of

those books or event described concerning anyone of the vicegerents of God should not be accepted unless it is supported by some internal or external evidence confirming its authenticity. This principle of evidence has been elucidated by Sayyid Murtaza, 'Alam al-Huda (the outstanding banner of guidance), in the fifth century A.H.

He did not accept the authoritative status and reliability of the apostolic statements narrated by solitary chains of the narrators without scrutiny by the external or internal evidence. The solitary narrated reports contained in such collections are mixed with reports (a) tending towards deification of the vicegerents of God as His incarnates or co-extensive with Him, transcending the accomplished men directly or indirectly from the status of being created to the status of a creator, (b) presenting them as falling short of the maximum standard of obedience and submission to the will of God, (c) asserting conscious existence for individual souls, prior to physical birth and death, and affirming the individual souls of the children of Adam had been taken out by God at once before their ordinary and gradual birth and propagation from Adam, and brought to a conscious state in the form of small particles ('Alam-e Zar) for taking their confession and making a covenant with them, (d) there are reports, tending to esoterical interpretation, of the Qur'an and the apostolic statements discarding totally their literal and esoterical significance, and (e) indicating the Qur'an was tampered with after the prophet by mischievous hands.

Such reports are explicitly anti-Islamic. The interested parties tried their charge of tampering with the apostolic literature most of which had neither received wide publicity, nor was it in a classical style. It is easy to play with the statement narrated by some solitary chain of narrators in a very ordinary style. Instead of narrating the statements verbatim, the narrator can alter it in his own words deliberately or by mistake to achieve his aim. Any such distortion in the classical style of the Prophet and his Ahl al-Bayt in their sermons, lectures, epistles, prayers and descriptive salutations (ziarat) addressed to the holy and chosen servants of God can be easily detected and exposed by the experts.

Remember the above collections and others have been incorporated or quoted in the collections of later periods. Even in Allama Majilis's work one can find such pieces of narrations without scrutiny, though the Allama is highly respected for his versatile knowledge. Unfortunately Muhaddith Nuri-Hussain ibn Muhammad Taqi (1320 A.H./1902 A.D.), the author of Mustadrak al-Wasail and many other useful works, wrote a damaging book, Fasl al-Kitab fi Tahrif al-Kitab. It is said that when his contemporary scholars refuted the book and exposed his mistake in the proper application of the principles of the critical scrutiny, he accepted it. Mere incorporation of the information on any topic from al-Kutub al-'Arba'a by the later authors in their works is not acceptable if it is not based on the principles of reasoning, developed and formulated on the basis of the Qur'an and traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt.

The door of ijtiḥad is always open with accompanying principles. It is accepted that the intense research of the highly qualified scholar may lead him to reject some contents of the least authentic collection as reliable in the light of 'ilm al-rijal (science of verification of scriptural reports). Thus the refutation by one scholar of a view held by others is neither heresy nor a sign of disrespect to the other scholar, however prominent he may be. This form of ijtiḥad, an effort to establish the creative or legislative will of God communicated to humankind through His chosen representatives. Prophets and the Imams of the house of the Prophet of Islam, which is advocated by the Shi'ah school of thought should not be confused with the ijtiḥad in the sense of effort by a fallible person to establish his own views against the former's clear declarations, directives and statements. Qiyas or hypothetical inferences based on reasoning is invalid in Shi'ah fiqh (doctrines of divine law) though valid in other sects of Islam.

[42](#). Renowned Shia books on doctrines of religion, popularly known as al-Kutub al-'Arba': they hold the same position in which the six canonical collections (al-Sihah al-Sittah) have among the Sunnis.

al-Kutub al-'Arba'

1. al-Kafi by Thiqat al-Islam Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (d. 329 A.H./940 A.D.)

2. Al-Itiqadat, Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, al-Tawhid, Uyan Akbar, al-Rida, and other works by Muhammad ibn Babuyah al-Qummi al-Saduq (d. 381 A.H./991 A.D.).

3. Tahdhib al-Akham and

4. al-Istibar and other works by Sheikh al-Taifah Muhammad al-Tusi (d. 460 A.H./1068 A.D.)

There are comprehensive lists, catalogues and biographies of Shi'ah scholars of various sciences, e.g. philosophy, literature and history. Ibn un-Nadim, an-Najashi, kasha, and Sheikh Tusi are among the celebrated biographers. The noted philosophers among the Shia'ahs are Abu Nasr Farabi (d. 339 A.H.), ar-Ra'is ibn Sina (Avicenna) (428 A.H.) and Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, author of Asfar, popularly known as Mulla Sadr (d. 1060 A.H./1742 A.D.). Sadr's position as the father of philosophy has been discussed in detail by 'Allama Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Tabataba'i (d. 1400 A.H./1981 A.D.), author of the exegesis of the Qur'an al-Mizan. The bibliography of 'Allama Tabataba'i's work has been given as Sayyid Hussein Nasr who has translated the former's Shi'ite Islam from Persian into English and edited it with an introduction and notes.

A list of a few prominent scholars who are referred to in this book is given here in chronological order.

1. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (d. 329 A.H./941 A.D.): al-Kafi.
2. Sheikh al-Sadiq Muhammad ibn Ali Babawayh al-Qummi, known as al-Saduq (d. 381 A.H./991 – 992 A.D.): Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, al-I'tiqat, at-Tawhid, etc.
3. Sheikh al-Mufid, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Nu'man (d. 413 A.H./1022 A.D.): Tashih al-I'tiqad, Kitab al-Irshad and other works.
4. Sayid Murtadha (known as Sharif Murtaza), Abu'l Qasim Ali ibn Hussein al-Musawi, with the title of 'Alam al-Huda (the outstanding banner of guidance) (d. 436 A.H./1044 A.D.): Jawabab al-Masa'il al-Mawsiliyya al-Thalitha, Ibtal al-'Amal bi-Akhbar al-Ahad, al-Intisar, and other works.
5. Al-Tusi, Sheikh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Hassan al-Tusi (title Sheikh al-Taifa) (d. 460 A.H./1067 A.D.): al-Istibar, Tahdhib al-Akham, al-Ghayba, 'Udat al-Usul and al-Fihrist.
6. Muhaqqiq Hilli Najm al-Din Abu'l Qasim Ja'far ibn Hassan al-Hilli (d. 676 A.H./1277 A.D.): Shara'i al-Islam, Ma'arij al-Usul, al-Mu'tabar, etc.
7. 'Allama Hilli, Jamal al-Din Hassan al-Mutahhar al-Hilli (d. 726 A.H./1325 A.D.): Tahdhib al-Usul, Tabsirat al-Mut'allimin, Mukhtaf al-Shi'ah, Nihayat al-Wasul 'ila 'ilm al-Usul, etc.
8. al-Shahid al-Awwal, Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Makki al-'Amili (d. 786 A.H./1384 A.D.): al-Qawa'id wa'il-Fawa'id, al-Lim'a al-Dimashiyya, al-Durus al-Shr'iyya, Shayat al-Murad, al-Bayan and al-Alfiya.
9. al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki, 'Ali ibn Hussain ibn 'Abad al-'Ali al-Karaki (d. 940 A.H./1534 A.D.): Jami' al-Maqasid, Taiq al-Irshad and Fawa' al-Shara.
10. Mir Damad, Muhammad Baqir ibn Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Hussain (d. 1040 A.H./1630 – 1631 A.D.): Jami' al-Najat, al-Rawashih al-Samawiyya, etc.
11. Mulla Sadr, Sadr al-Din Shrazi (d. 1060 A.H./1743 A.D.): Asfar.
12. Majlisi 1, Muhammad Taqi ibn Maqsud Ali al-Isfahani (d. 1070 A.H./1659 – 1660 A.D.): Lawami'-e Sahabqarani and Rawdat al-Muttaqin.
13. Muhsin al-Fayd (Kashani), Muhammad ibn Murtadha al-Kashani (d. 1091 A.H./1680 A.D.): al-Wafi, Mafatih al-Shara'i, Mu'tasam al-Shi'ah, etc.
14. Majlisi H. Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taqi, Majlisi 1 (d. 1110 A.H./1699 A.D.): Bihar al-Anwar, Mir'at al-'Uqul, Zad al-M'ad, etc.

15. Bihbahani, Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Akmal al-Wahid (d. 1205 A.H./1792 A.D.): al-Fawa'id al-'Atiqa, Sharah Mafatih al-Shara', etc.

16. Mulla Mahdi ibn Abi Dhar an-Narqi (d. 1209 A.H./1795 A.D.): Jami' al-Sa'dat.

17. Bahr al-'Ulum, Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi ibn Murtadha al-Tabataba'i (d. 1212 A.H./1797 A.D.), 198, Ja'far ibn Kidr al-Najafi, Kashif al-Ghita (d. 1228 A.H./1813 A.D.): Kashif al-Gita.

18. Sheikh Muhammad Hassan ibn Muhammad Baqi al-Najafi (d. 1226 A.H./1850 A.D.): Jawahir al-Kalam.

19. Mirza Abu'l Qasim Qummi (d. 1231 A.H./1816 A.D.): Qawanin, al-Musabih.

20. Sayyid Ali ibn Muhammad Ali al-Tabataba'i al-Karbala'i: Riyad al-Masa'il.

21. Sheikh Murtadha Ansari ibn Muhammad Amin al-Ansari (d. 1291 A.H./1864 A.D.): al-Makasib, al-Rasa'il, etc.

The last maraja' (authority) is from the Ansari school of thought in religious doctrines.

Appendix to Chapter 3: The Idea of Cause and Effect

No one with common sense and average intelligence can ever doubt the existence of God. One may as well deny his own existence rather than denying or even doubting any effect being without any cause.

Cause

The thing or being by which another thing or being exists or on which the existence of another thing or being depends, is called a cause.

Effect

The thing or being which depends on or owes its existence to something else is called an effect or phenomenon. The existence of an effect cannot depend on a non-being or nothingness. This implies the chain of an effect and its cause should end in a *self-existing* cause, otherwise it would mean the existence of a being or a thing by a non-being, or naught; the absurdity of which is self-evident.

{أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ} 35

{أَمْ خُلِقُوا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۚ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ} 36

Or were they created by nothing? Or are they themselves the creators? Or created they the heavens and Earth? Nay! They have no certainty. (52:35 – 36)

Various Kinds of Causes

The basis of all scientific investigation is there can be no effect without a cause. The word “cause” is a term meaning a thing somehow responsible for the existence of a being or another thing, and this is of two kinds, the *structural* and *creative*.

The *Creative or Agential Causes* are the producing or originating factors, bringing the structure into existence but they are not part of structure.

The *Structural Cause* is sub-divided into two kinds, *material* and *formal*. The *material cause* is the thing out of which the structure is made. The *formal cause* is the shape or form by which the structure is what it is.

The *creative cause* means the factor which produces the parts and affects their arrangement. This cause consists of two kinds: *genetic* and *objective*. The former is called the first or the active, and the latter called the ultimate or final cause (purpose or motive).

Deen

Deen (religion) is a term used in several meanings which are not totally irrelevant to each other; one is a figurative expression of the other. Here the term means strictly the submissive attitude of human conscience towards some sacred object. The sacred object means a super-human controlling power whose pleasure and displeasure are responsible for the happiness and suffering of man. Hardly anyone can claim to be without religion in this sense. Thus the history of religion and its development are the same as the history of the development of human consciousness. Of the various religions in their highly developed form, Islam is usually classed among the latest. But as it is presented in the Qur'an and defined in this treatise, the reader will find it the oldest or rather the only religion.

No man with commonsense, has ever denied or doubted the necessity of the *structural cause*. Everything owes its existence to its component parts and to the form in which they are arranged together.

Effect

Every thing or being of composite nature is an effect, i.e. its existence is not but itself, as it depends at least on its parts and its existence is caused by them. The parts of a being or beings cannot be non-beings. The question arises whether the parts exist by themselves or are they also a composite whole depending on their parts? If they are also composed of parts then we have to trace back the process

until we reach the final components which will lead to the conclusion in which they are beings of composite nature existing by themselves on which the whole edifice of the effects and their causes stands. But no being of a dimensional nature presentable in terms of space and time, can ever be of a non-composite nature as the simplest and smallest being which occupies space is dimensional and geometrically divisible and depends on its parts.

Therefore, no dimensional being can be taken as a self-existing being and thus considered as the first or the beginning in the chain of beings. We have either to accept the claim is based on non-beings, the absurdity of which is self-evident, or we are forced to step out of the dimensional, self-existing being and assert the chain of cause and effect is based on this being. This means the whole dimensional realm presentable in terms of space and time is in effect and the phenomenon of a non-dimensional, non-material being. On this ground we have to leave the dimensional realm and proceed in search of the self-existing being responsible for the phenomenon of the chain of cause and effect in the realm where the experimental logic and method has no approach to it at all.

In other words, no being of dimensional nature can be taken as the first and the basic unit in the chain of the structural causes of the effect. We have either to postulate the chain of the beings in question is based on non-beings or nothingness, the absurdity of which is self-evident. Or, we are forced by reason to search for a being of non-composite form, somewhere beyond the realm of matter and dimension, so we have to step in the sphere of immaterial and non-dimensional beings. It means that in the chain of the structural causes of the dimensional phenomena there is nothing to be termed as self-evident. Therefore, neither the structure of the dimensional universe nor its structural causes – its material and formal components – are self-existent. They owe their existence to some *creative* or producing factor of immaterial and non-dimensional nature which is not part and particle of the structure, but has a hold over the structure and its material and formal causes.

The Concrete and Abstract Part

We have said any being of composite nature depends for its existence on its part and hence it is an effect, a phenomenon and unreal. Here it is to be point out the parts and components of a composite being may be of two kinds: *concrete* and *abstract*.

The Concrete

The *concrete parts* are those which our mind observes side by side in the realm outside the mind such as the parts of an organic, chemical or geometrical compound.

The Abstract

The *abstract parts* are those found in a being in the course of the mental process and analysis, but

outside the realm of the mind the parts are merged into each other as one entity such as the logical parts of a definition, *genus* and *differentia*: *genus*, being the aspect found in an idea which is common in other ideas too, and *differentia* being the aspect which is peculiar to one and is not found in anyone else.

In any case, composition means dependence on the parts. Hence the composite being becomes an effect and phenomenon and thus unreal, be they concrete or abstract parts, because though the abstract parts, *genus* and *differentia*, are merged into each other as one outside the mind, in fact, they are two different things.

The Absolute Oneness of the Self-existing Being

As we had to step out of the limitation of space and time in search of the self-existing being we have also to step further out beyond the logical limitations which consists of the abstract parts of *genus* and *differentia*.

Hence the self-existing being must be unlimited, not presentable in terms of space and time, *genus* and *differentia*. It should be beyond all dimensional and un-dimensional limitations and as such it cannot be but One, because the idea of two self-existing beings implies limitations of both, having a common aspect of being self-existent and the aspect by which they are distinguished from each other, hence composite and dependent on their parts.

The conclusion is the self-existing being is One, the real unit which is not divisible at all, in any sense of the term, and in any respect or form or any aspect imaginable. Therefore, it is the real unique; the like of it in any sense is not possible.

Self-consciousness of the Self-existing One

The unique part by which the finite beings in part and as a whole are existing, is not absent from "Itself." Hence it is conscious of "Itself." Consciousness means the presence of the known to the knower, the presence of one thing to (or for) the other.

If the thing or being is present to "Itself" then the being is conscious of "Itself" and consequently becomes conscious of anything else which is present before it or stands by it. But if the being (or thing) is absent from "Itself," it cannot be self-conscious, hence unconscious of other things standing by it.

Unconsciousness of Dimensional Being or Thing

All the dimensional beings are composed of dimensional parts and every dimensional part occupies a portion of space not identified with the portion occupied by the other parts. Hence, every dimensional part is absent from the other dimensional parts. The conclusion is that all dimensional parts are devoid of self-consciousness and consequently devoid of consciousness.

On the other hand, any thing or being which is non-dimensional and non-material, be it composed of *abstract parts* such as a finite mind (which is composed of *genus* and *differentia*), or composed of no parts at all such as the Absolute Unit in question (which is unlimited and infinite), is not absent from “Itself” because either it has no part at all or it consists of parts which do not occupy different portions of space. The parts are merged into each other and their separation is only mental and conceptual process.

Regarding the undimensional being or Absolute Unit it is obvious that “It” cannot be absent from “Itself” on account of “Its” Absolute Oneness though the undimensional beings which are finite consist of parts and hence dependent, yet the parts are one and identical outside the mind and the realm of conception. Hence they are also not absent from their own selves. Each is present to itself, hence conscious of itself and consequently conscious of whatever is present before it.

The conclusion is whatever is undimensional is conscious and whatever is conscious is undimensional. Therefore, the Absolute Unit by which all beings exist and stand is necessarily present with every being, as its holding or sustaining factor is self-conscious and conscious of all which exist by it, hence “Living.” Therefore, the reference to the Absolute Unit responsible for the whole phenomenon called the universe should be in terms of “He” instead of “It.”

In light of the above statement one can realize the personal pronoun “He (*Hoo*) refers to a well-known “person” and has no real application but to the Absolute One and no term or word can be taken as a real reference to the Absolute One but the personal pronoun “He.” Therefore, there is no real “He” but the Absolute One, there is no real term for Him but “He.” This idea of *Hooiyat*, “He-ness,” in its true significance is given in *Surah Ikhlas* (also known as *Qul Hoo Wallahu*, chapter 112).

(Taken from Pooya, *The Fundamentals of Islam*, printed at Pakistan Herald Press, Karachi, 1972, pp. 1 – 8.)

Chapter 4: Occultation Divine

Secrecy of the birth of the 12th Imam al-Mahdi, al-Qaim

The events of the life of the 12th Imam, al-Mahdi, upon who be peace, are like those in the life of Musa. The unjust rulers of the year 256 A.H/868 A.D. knew the prophecy about his birth, disappearance (*ghayba*), and overthrow of their rule. They feared his birth just as Pharaoh had feared the birth of Musa. The Imam’s birth was kept secret from the ruler of the time as was done in the case of Musa; the prominent followers of Islam were aware, including in particular the 40 well-known Shi’ahs.

The latter were introduced to the Mahdi of the house of his father Hassan al-‘Askari, the 11th Imam, who told his followers to keep the matter secret from the rulers. Imam Mahdi lived with his father for six years.

According to the Shi‘ah and Sunni schools of thought, Jesus, from among the past vicegerents of God, will be the first one who will reappear on the terrestrial scene to follow al-Mahdi’s lead. Jesus was the last outstanding link in the chain of the divine vicegerents of the Israelites branch of Ibrahim’s issue. He disappeared from the terrestrial scene in an unusual way. Al-Mahdi is the last link of the divine vicegerents of the Ishmaelite branch of Ibrahim’s issue who also went into an unusual occultation. Narjis, the mother of al-Mahdi, fell into the hands of Muslims as a captive of war and was brought to Bagdad as a slave girl. She was the daughter of one of the patriarchal princes who ruled the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire bordering the Abbasid Empire. Her father’s ancestry traced back to Simon; the Peter of Israelite descent who was the nominated successor of Jesus.

The tenth Imam of the house, Ali al-Hadi an-Naqi had been well aware of her life story, her genealogy and her destiny. He sent one of his devotees from Samarra to Bagdad to wait for the arrival of the slave trader, who was bringing her along with the other women captives for sale. The Imam gave a brief description of Narjis to the man, with a fixed amount for the bargain with the trader and a letter to be handed to her, on behalf of the Imam. Everything went exactly as the Imam had predicted. To his surprise, the man found her well-acquainted with the Imam, her husband to be, Hassan al-‘Askari. She had already seen al-‘Askari in a dream as mentioned elaborately in the early records of the life story of the 11th and 12th Imams. She set out with the agent of the Imam for Samarra, anxious to meet her beloved and his family.

After arrival in Samarra she married al-‘Askari of her choice, as a free lady. The marriage was solemnized by the tenth Imam on her behalf, but it is said that in a dream she had seen the wedding solemnized by Prophet Jesus on her behalf and Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, on al-‘Askari’s behalf. In her dream the ceremony took place in the presence of Jesus’ mother Maryam, Peter and 11 disciples of Jesus on the bride’s side, and Ali, Khadijah, Fatima and the other ten Imams of the house of the bridegroom’s side. The presence of 14 divine luminaries taking part from each side, as she had dreamt was actually substantiated and assumed its real interpretation in the state of awakening after the arrival of Narjis at Samarra, towards the close of the year 254 A.H.

The promised al-Mahdi was born from the union of Hassan al-‘Askari and Lady Narjis, as such the last word of Allah in its complete form of Imamate appeared on the terrestrial horizon at the dawn of the 15th of Sha‘ban at the end of the year 255 A.H./868 A.D. In the celebrated *Lauh-e Fatimi* (the heavenly tablet in the possession of Fatima, daughter of Prophet Muhammad), the name of the 12th Imam, same as that of the Holy Prophet, is mentioned in alphabetical order *Mim Ha Mim Dal* (M H M D), describing “the grace of all worlds.” He is usually mentioned by his titles of *Sahib al-Zaman* (the Lord of the Age), *Imam-e Asr* (The Imam of the Period), *al-Qaim* (the Existent), *al-Muntazar* (the One Who is Awaited), and the Promised Mahdi (One who Rightly Guided and the Guider).

Minor Occultation and Deputies

After the demise of the 11th Imam by poison (260 A.H./872 A.D.) the government sent a posse in search of the child. They raided the house and searched all the apartments (*sardab*) there. After a thorough search they went down to the basement. To their extreme surprise, the hall appeared filled with water and like an island; a prayer mat was spread over the water in the middle of the hall. They saw the young Imam standing on the mat, wholly absorbed in his prayers. One or two members of the party attempted to cross the water to reach the Imam, but from fear of drowning they withdrew. They all stood in awe. They went back to their superiors and informed them of what they had seen. The officers warned them not to disclose to anybody what they had seen. After the incident the government thought it wiser to give up further search and to spread the rumour in which the 11th Imam had died without leaving any offspring. Accordingly the government distributed the property left by the 11th Imam among the nearest kin on the presumption he had left no child.

The disappearance of the last Imam in the cave (*sardab*) meant only the ruling party, who were searching for him, last glimpsed him in that place. Later, they could not find any trace of him. Even his followers could not meet with him in the usual manner. Nevertheless, there was regular communication between him and his followers, mostly through the four successive agents who were nominated by his father and him. But some of the most trustworthy followers had directed communication with him during the period of the nominated “honorary agents” (*nawabin*). This period is termed as *al-Ghayba al-Sughra*, “Minor Occultation.” During this period the Imam used to give written replies to the questions of his followers, and issue directive letters (*tawqi'at*) through his nominated deputies (i.e. *Nawab* or *Wikala* or *Sufrat*). The names of the nominated deputies are (1) ‘Uthman ibn Sa‘id al-‘Umari (260 A.D./974 A.D. – 265 A.H./879 A.D.), and (2) his son, Muhammad (d. 305 A.H./917A.D.), his *kunya* was Abu Ja‘far, (3) Abul al-Qasim Hussain ibn Ruh ibn Abi Bakr al-Nawbakhti (d.326 A.H./937 A.D.), and (4) Abu al-Hassan ‘Ali bin Muhammad al-Sammari (his career 326 A.H./937A.D. – 329 A.H./941A.D.).

The period continued for almost 70 years. It began with the martyrdom of the 11th Imam Hassan al-‘Askari, on the 9th of Rabi‘ al-Awwal 260 A.H./874 A.D. The ninth of this month as the first day of accession of al-Mahdi, the last Imam of the house to the seat of Imam, is still celebrated by the Shi‘ahs as one of the religious festivals. The period of “minor occultation” ended in the year 329 A.H./940 A.D., when the last deputy, ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sammari received the following letter from the Imam, “Oh Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sammari, behold you shall die six days after the receipt of this letter. You shall not nominate anyone to succeed you as my special and nominated agent. Oh Ali, behold the time of my major disappearance has come. The time for my total and all-dominating reappearance (*zuhoor-e kulli*), as promised by God and prophesized by the Prophets and vicegerents, is known only to God. Behold! The following signs shall inevitably occur on the eve of *my reappearance*: (a) the onslaught of Sufyani, the embodiment of the evil forces, who disguising himself in the garb of the well-wisher of humankind will try to spread his domain all over the globe and (b) the heavenly cry being heard all over the world, as if it is coming from a nearby place.

“During this major occultation and before the appearance of the said signs, if anyone claims that (a) he has a regular meeting or audience with me (in a cognisable manner) or (b) he has established a regular communication with me in any shape or form, physical or spiritual, *he must be considered a liar and his claim as false.*” This is a free translation of the text of the epoch-making letter (*tyawqi*), with a few explanatory phrases taken from other apostolic reports.

Major Occultation

a) The Qur’an and Hadith

The aforesaid major occultation or disappearance of the 12th Imam, which means severance of all contacts of any follower with the Imam is considered by the *Ithna-‘Ashari Shi‘ah* as one of the fundamental articles of their faith. During this period the Imam will continue until the time of his reappearance, to live in his terrestrial body in the terrestrial realm, though in an invisible manner. They also believe that severance of contact is one sided, in the sense that only the followers have lost contact. So far as the Imam is concerned, the Shi‘ahs believe his invisible and spiritual domination over the world as the vicegerent of God and the last link in the chain of imamate, has not ceased. The state of his occultation is like a sun behind the clouds. While illuminating the surface of the Earth, the disc of the sun cannot be seen.

The vicegerent of God in his terrestrial form is the centre of human society in whom the light of both the creative and legislative will of God is focused. Thus, as a spiritual sun (the Imam) re-radiates, reflects and diffuses all that he has received as a permanent blessing from the above, to his surroundings, the sub-ordinate social and individual centres of humanity. The reflection even expands to the animal, vegetable and inanimate centres below human level. The real disc of this spiritual sun is the mind and not the body of the Imam and it is the case with all the Imams hidden from the bulk of their followers even during their physical presence. A very few accomplished persons might have a sort of spiritual communion with the Imam or the vicegerent of the time during his physical appearance. The contact of the rest of the followers with the Imam is only through oral or written speech, directly or through narrators.

The Imam is commissioned by God either (a) to deliver a new message to humankind as Prophets who are termed as *Ul ul-Azm* (the Prophet with decisive power) or (b) to explain the message of the Prophet whom they succeed, as it is the case of the successors of the *Ul ul-Azm*. So from Adam to the end of the minor occultation of the 12th Imam, the presence of the vicegerents or regular contact with them meant the contact of an ordinary student with his teacher through the external senses. There was no domination of the master mind over the mind of the followers. This communion of the Imam with the soul of his followers is presented in the Qur’an in 33:6: “*That the Prophet has the greater claim on the believers than they have on their own selves.*” It is this communion which Ali refers in *Nahj al-Balagha*, “I used to see the light of revelation and smell the fragrance of prophethood. The Prophet told me, ‘Oh

Ali, surely you see whatever I see and you hear whatever I hear but you are not a prophet. You are my assistant (next to the Prophet in spirit).” Next to Ali only a very few, such as Salman Farsi, Abu Dharr, ‘Ammar Yasir and others of their rank attained communion with the Prophet. The same is the case with the followers of every one of the 12 Imams of the house. Few had spiritual intimacy with the person of the Imam.

The people approached the Imams in their capacity as preachers and as *walayat*, the all-dominating spiritual authority. It is immaterial for the Imam to be known or unknown to the people of the world, which is spiritually managed and administered by him. For instance, Musa was commissioned to preach the precepts of God to humankind so it was necessary he should be known to the people. But the man who was given the task of executing the will of God in secrecy should not be known to the people or even to the Prophets of limited jurisdiction (vide the Qur’an 17:60 – 82: the story of Musa and Khidr). Ali confirms what the Qur’an asserts, “The earth is never left by God devoid of a man of divinely authoritative status (*hujjah*) to function as an “intermedia” between him (God) and the rest of the creatures of the world. He may be seen and unknown (to the people) and he may be in obscurity, unseen and unknown (to the people).” In other words, the divine vicegerency of a perfect man on Earth has two functions: one is to preach what God has ordered men to know; the other is to exercise the spiritual power delegated to him by God.

For enabling the vicegerents to preach the heavenly books and the explanatory notes which were revealed to them, it is necessary people should have ways of contacting them. But to exercise the spiritual authority in his jurisdiction, it is not necessary the vicegerent be known to the people. Thus from Adam to the last Prophet, the vicegerents would appear, after some intervals, to establish contact with the people, as preacher and teacher. Then again they would retreat from the scene to occultation, leaving people to apply the revealed directives. With the last Prophet the most comprehensive message of God was revealed in the form of the Qur’an. It took almost 22 years and ten months to complete its communication. As the most concise code of the creative and legislative will of God, the Qur’an formed the constitution of Islam. For further details and explanation, the Prophet, whose life embodied the divine revelation, gave directives in words, deeds and endorsements. Thus the *Sunnah* was declared by the Qur’an as an indispensable part of the divine constitution.

But to enable the people to have a coherent idea of these two inseparable parts of the Islamic constitution in its final form, the 23 years’ time of the Prophet’s ministry was not sufficient. It took almost 300 years for the Muslims to try to codify the second part of the constitution and to put it into material which would help readers to grasp the two parts. This is the period of codification, explanation and amplification. It is the period of consolidation of the Islamic constitution, *al-Shari’ah*. The presence of the successive vicegerents and the infallible successors of the last Prophet, the 12 Imams of the house of the Prophet, were necessary during this period as guides for the people to follow a proper course of consolidation. For this purpose, the Prophet declared he was leaving behind two precious things: the book of God and his *Ahl al-Bayt* as guides.

They shall not separate from each other until the Day of Resurrection and whoever adheres to these two shall never go astray. All schools of thought in Islam have their origin in this consolidatory period. Therefore, the presence of the Imams during the period in question was a special grace with which God blessed the seekers of truth, who were anxious to have a true version of the revealed constitution.

b) Ijtihad: personal meetings with al-Qaim

When the consolidation was over and a detailed form of divine constitution was made available to the people, the aim of *Imamate*, in the capacity of a divine preacher, had been achieved and reached its final stage in 330 A.H. After this achievement the retreat of the Imam from the scene of apparent guidance to the state of occultation was also a divine blessing and grace, but in disguise. It was necessary people be given the chance to apply their mind to understand the implications of the detailed constitution of Islam which was placed within their reach in the form of the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet, and mirrored in the life of the 12 Imams. It is the period to make all efforts with care, piety and sincerity, to grasp the significance of the revelation through the rational approach. This is called *ijtihad*, i.e. rationalization of revelation.

During this period the presence of the Imam as an ordained teacher is not needed. Therefore, his existence in the terrestrial realm as the focus of the legislative and creative "rays of divine will" is an indispensable blessing and grace of God. Nevertheless, it is also true his occultation is another blessing and grace of God. Thus, his existence is a grace, his functioning another grace, and his functioning behind the clouds of occultation is a further grace.

During this period the course open to the people is: (1) to make all efforts with utmost piety to obtain a thorough knowledge of the sciences and topics which are required to grasp every part of the constitution of Islam, i.e. the Qur'an and the directives of the Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*, and (2) to follow the opinion of qualified persons in the manner prescribed in the treatise on *ijtihad* and *taqlid*. It is open to everyone, irrespective of race or nationality, to obtain the qualifications required to become an authority on the Islamic constitution. It only requires knowledge and piety.

The requisite knowledge here means: (1) the knowledge of the relation of the creatures to their Creator, (2) the knowledge of the essence and attributes of the Creator, (3) the knowledge of the relation of the Creator with His creatures and, then (4) the knowledge of the relations of the creatures to each other as established by the creative and legislative will of the Creator. All this knowledge should be obtained from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* through a rational approach. The requisite piety here means to develop such care and attention as not to displease the merciful Creator by neglecting the duties towards Him, His creatures and towards one's own self, as prescribed by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. These two conditions may be considered as the distinctive features of the Shi'ah faith. The pious *mujtahids*, or representatives of the imams, are authorities to the extent of their knowledge and piety. The deeper their piety and knowledge, the higher their authority.

To lead congregational prayers, a considerable knowledge and piety are necessary. To be a recognized authority on Islamic sciences, the highest standard of knowledge and piety is essential. In the case of difference of opinion among the *mujtahid*, laymen are bound to follow the opinion of the best living *mujtahid* of the time. After acquiring the basic proficiency and knowledge for *ijtihad*, each student of theology and Islamic sciences may specialize in one or more branches of the subjects concerned. In that case the laymen have to follow the best specialist in each branch of study. For example, one *mujtahid* might have specialized in the ritual branch of *fiqh* (Islamic law) for devotional services and another *mujtahid* in personal law. The laymen have to follow each in the specific branch in which the *mujtahid* is an expert.

In the case of *fatwa*, the legal opinion of the best living *mujtahid* is considered the authority. But for judicial and administrative purposes, knowledge and piety are enough. There is no need of his being the best *mujtahid*. Any pious *mujtahid* can discharge judicial functions and his judgment will be binding. He can perform all the administrative duties which Islam enjoins concerning various aspects of human life – the personal, domestic, social, economic and the political.

However, knowledge and piety are two indispensable verifiable conditions required to be a *mujtahid*. To attain them no master's permission, mystic transfer of power to the disciple, nomination or non-Qur'anic declaration of the outgoing authority on his successor is required, as is the case with mystic orders and "hazir Imams," and *da'is* of the hereditary authorities in Islam. Nor will voting raise a person to authority. Of course, the opinion of other *mujtahids* about the competency of a person may be sought by the layman.

There are methods recommended by some people for having personal communion with the Imam al-Mahdi (*Sahib al-Zaman*) or receiving a blessing from him. Some are baseless, and others are uncertain. But piety and devotion to the cause of the *Ahl al-Bayt* reduces the thickness of the veil between the follower and the Imam. Materialistic desires and tendencies are the main obstacles.

Thus any directive supposed to have been received from the Imam through such occasional contacts, shall be classed under the category of (a) visions and dreams of fallible people, (b) the subjective findings of the systems, (c) the esoteric contact and inner experience of the gnostics, and (d) alphabetical and astrological calculations of the occultists. Of these none can be considered to have any authoritative value, unless the result is confirmed by clear verdict of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Any method to grasp the legislative or the creative will of God, other than the rational and logical approach to the contents of the Qur'an and the teachings of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, should be treated as nothing more than a hypothesis. We are in the age of rationalization of revelation, which means all our efforts to understand and explain the significance of revelation in the light of certain measurable and verifiable logical principles, rules and conditions.

The period of interpretation of previous revelations by some new revelation or inspiration is over. Anyone who claims to have a super-rational authoritative method to ascertain the divine will, besides the

scriptural and apostolic texts left among the people before the major occultation of the 12th Imam, is false, and the claimant is an imposter. The greater knowledge and piety, the thinner will be the cloud and veil of occultation between the qualified person and the Imam. But the veil cannot be removed in such a way that the outer disc (body) of the luminary (Imam) can be seen and at the same time be recognized in which the person is the Imam himself. Nor can any regular communion of the soul of the qualified person with the soul of the Imam be established. There are reports of learned or pious people having physical or spiritual contact with the Imam during this period of major occultation. Some of these accounts are authentic and reliable. But of these, none shows the person actually knew he was in the presence of the Imam.

According to the Shi'ah faith, there is nothing more required for the perfection of the human personality than to follow the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and his household. This is implied in the Qur'anic declaration regarding the perfection of religion (5:3), the details of which are given by the Holy Prophet and the Imams of the house. It would be enough here to quote the Holy Prophet's statement, "There is nothing which brings you close to God and keeps you away from hell except what I have ordered you, and there is nothing which brings you close to hell and away from God except what I have prohibited you. Surely God has fixed limitations (for human activities), do not trespass them." This is part of one of his sermons delivered during his last pilgrimage to Mecca. There is no need of any addition, omission or alteration by people. It is the duty of the qualified *mujtahids* to understand the requisite rules and apply them as the occasions arise during the major occultation.

Appearance of al-Qaim

The reappearance of the Imam in human society after the major occultation is not for the purpose of delivering any new message, nor any alteration in the system of human life, not already provided for or implied in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. His reappearance is as the chosen executor of the divine law. He reappears with the sole purpose of reducing all religions of the world into one approved by God, namely Islam, and then seeing it is extended throughout the world and practiced by every human being. He reappears to spread justice, prescribed by Islam, all over the globe. "He fills the Earth with fairness and justice, after the Earth would be filled with injustice and aggression" (Majlisi, II, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 42, p. 336). The apostolic reports assert He will reappear with such divine power in which all temporal forces will be vanquished. He reappears not as a preacher of the divine will, as the pretending Mahdis of modern time would claim.

He reappears as the powerful executor of the divine will and command. He reappears as the all dominating *walayat*. His "total reappearance" is in the period wherein the spiritual mastership of perfect man over the realm of humanity will be manifested in the person of the 12th Imam, the last vicegerent of the last Prophet. He represents Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, in both name and the real meaning of the word. "Muhammad," as pointed out earlier, is the term divinely assigned to the created being who is the first and the last in degree of perfection in the arcs of descent and ascent, and who is in

the highest possible stage of communion with the Absolute. So his reappearance is the manifestation of *walayat* – mastership of Muhammad – on Earth.

Some apostolic reports assert the time will come when al-Mahdi will be ordered by God to appear on the scene of humanity for the performance of the executive task assigned to him. He will then enter the sacred mosque at Mecca and keeping his back to the wall of the Ka'ba, declare his appearance to deliver humankind from the miseries of injustice and the licentious existence of the time. Hours prior to the declaration, there will be a similar declaration from Dajjal – the anti-Muslim personality. Both declarations will be heard throughout the globe at once. The chosen devotees of al-Mahdi, who are the same in number as the faithful warriors of Badr, and others willing to respond to the sacred call will reach Mecca within a very short time. The communication throughout the world will be very quick. The people will see each other from remote places.

These prophecies were made and recorded at a time when the natural forces and the means of communication at the disposal of man were confined only to donkeys, mules, horses and camels on the land, sailboats on the sea, and pigeons, hawks and other trained birds in the sky. Nobody had even dreamt of the modern means which man is using for communication and contact today. The impossible of that time is becoming the simple fact of today. Confirming the assertion of the Qur'an, Ali states the stars and heavenly bodies are populated by living beings. The cities there are like our cities, but connected with each other by columns of light, which we have just started to use for communication. There are many statements of this kind from saintly men long before the advent of scientific discoveries and inventions. Such statements show the insight of their author into the nature of the universe.

Now, with atomic energy man is trying to establish communications with the moon, Mars, and other planets. This attempt is possible according to the Qur'an, provided man has the requisite authority at his disposal (55:33). But until now the power and forces discovered and used by man are material ones. Nevertheless, they are producing wonders. The superhuman incorporeal powers of the spiritual and psychic type have not yet been properly understood, measured, controlled, and used by men. Undoubtedly there are occasional displays of supernatural forces in the form of miracles of the vicegerents of God. These instances may only be taken as convincing proofs of the existence of supernatural energies dominating the material realms. But the time for regular use of these spiritual energies has not yet come. When God will allow the "perfect man" possessing these energies to display their regular use for the welfare of humanity, the impact shall be greater than the use of atomic energy. With such super-material energies, only the space distances will be removed.

Communication between the living and the dead may be established. Many vicegerents and saintly men of the past who had played a part in the advancement of the noble and final aim will reappear on the scene of the divine kingdom on Earth when it is established. When the time distance is removed, the godly men who sacrificed themselves for the complete manifestation of the divine kingdom through the person of the Imam will appear and enjoy the results of the sacred role they performed. Not only the

good people of the past will reappear but some of the opponents, too, may be brought to the scene, to reveal the wretched ends of those evil doers (28:83). The verse refers to a sort of “partial resurrection” prior to the “total resurrection” which is referred to 18:47.

Al-Mahdi combines in him the dignity of Musa in perfection, the grace of Jesus and the patience of Job. Thus, in the person of al-Mahdi the two chosen branches of Ibrahim’s issue are reunited. By the reappearance of Jesus, to follow the lead of al-Mahdi, the kingdom given by God to the family of Ibrahim will be manifested under the banner of Islam, the sole religion approved by God. The heavenly kingdom will be established on the Earth, the last Prophet, Muhammad, upon whom be peace. His leadership will be accepted by Jesus, and other godly men of spiritual attainments will appear on the scene, of their own choice. Also, some of their opponents will be forced into the scene by the agencies functioning in that realm.

The reappearance of al-Mahdi and his reign is termed as *Zahoor Mahdi Alaihis Salaam*, the descent of Al-Mahdi; the appearance of *’Isa Alaihis Sallam*, the descent of Jesus. The appearance of other people who died or their wicked opponents is termed as *Raj’at*. The process is termed as the minor resurrection (*Qayamat-e Sughra*), the rule of the perfect man over the world. It has to precede the major resurrection (*Qayamat-e Kubra*), the manifestation of the divine kingdom over man and the universe.

It has been proven the return of a departed soul to a body in the form of an embryo in the womb of a mother and rebirth in the usual manner known to us, is impossible. Return of the dead to life, whether in an individual or collective way, means the soul assuming a new body, similar to the previous one. This process can be in two ways: (1) the development of the earthly realm into the celestial form as the Qur’an says: “The day when the Earth is replaced by a different Earth and the Earth will be illuminated with the light of its Lord (and not with the light of the sun)” or (2) the descent of the soul to the earthly level by assuming an earthly body as the angels do (19:17). Both are possible and both may take shape towards the ultimate resurrection. The Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians firmly believe in individual and collective resurrection of human souls after death. So, to the followers of these faiths, the reappearance of al-Mahdi, the descent of Christ and the return of some virtuous and wicked men to life is a sort of partial resurrection, prior to the ultimate resurrection should not appear strange.

As the Qur’an asserts: **“And among His signs is the creation of (1) the heavens and the earth and (2) the living beings which He spread in the heavens and the earth. And He is able to bring them together as he wills (whenever and in whatever manner He wills and intends)”** (42:29). He may collect all or some groups of them on the terrestrial level or in the celestial sphere. The basis of theistic religions is the faith which the material world, which appeals to our external senses, is the seen, *“Alam-e Shahadat*, and held world, *“Alam-e Mulk*. It has holding power by itself. It is controlled by the unseen worlds and spheres of agencies. They are termed as *malakut*. These unseen agencies are of grades; the lower ones are controlled by higher grades. But whether lower or higher, all the unseen holding agencies, like the seen and held world, are created, held and controlled by the creative will and might of

the All-gracious, Absolute One. To such might and will of the Absolute Creator, controlling all the seen and unseen spheres of the universe, no proposition can be considered impossible.

Ponder of the Qur'an

All the following events, asserted in the Qur'an or other scriptures and apostolic reports confirmed by the Qur'an are undeniable:

(1) The creation of a living being, man, other animals, or plants, through a process unknown to us. (15:25 – 30, 18:51, 56:61, and similar verses. *Al-Sahifat al-Kamilat al-Sajjadiyya*, The Muhammadi trust, London, England, Supplication 63 for Monday, p. 223; *Nahj al-Balagha*, 55:14 – 15).

(2) The transformation of an inanimate object to animal and vice versa, sudden or gradual transformation of one animal to another animal of a different species. (27:10, 12, and chapter 20.)

(3) The return from death to life after the lapse of a considerable time (2:259, chapter 18), the return of a departed soul to the same body and stage of life at which it had left, but not through the process of rebirth and return from the actual stage to a potential one. (In every chapter of the Qur'an there are verses relating to the resurrection, *Qiyamat*, adding to more than 500 verses spread over the Qur'an. 2:260 is one example for Prophet Ibrahim.)

(4) The living of a perfect man who is freed from material fetters and controlling the material realm for one or 2000 years or more. For example, in the case of Jesus and the 12th Imam, al-Mahdi: the time factor is controlled by God. (27:143 – 144 and 8:60 – 82).

(5) The descent of angelical, celestial and ethereal entities to the terrestrial sphere by assuming human forms. (12:17 – 21 and 11:69, 78.)

(6) The ascent of the highly developed terrestrial entities to the super-terrestrial spheres without suffering death. Instead of separation of the body from the soul, the body assimilates for a period of conditions of the sphere to which the soul ascends. (18:1, ch. 53, 3:55.)

(7) The transfer of a heavy object from its place to a remote place in the twinkling of an eye. (28:40 – 41.)

(8) The birth of a child from a virgin without an insemination. (3:46 – 47.)

(9) The curing of diseases, the blind, deaf, lepers and insane people and bringing the dead to life without any medical means. (5:110)

(10) The splitting of the sea and making a dry passage for people to cross from one side to the other. (22:77 – 78)

(11) The descent of angels to help godly people against the disbelievers. (3: 124 – 126)

(12) The sleeping of a few believers for 309 years in a cave and their waking after such a long period, as mentioned in the Qur'an and pre-Islamic apostolic records of the seven sleepers. (18:9, 22, 25 – 26)

All these wonders have their own category, they are possible in themselves. They may not be possible in the sense they do not take place through the means known to man. As the Qur'an says, "***Oh company jinns and man, if you are able to penetrate the diameters of the Earth and Heaven, then do it, but you penetrate not except with certain force (which has not yet come within your disposal)***" (55:33).

Today, man is able to reach the moon, something which was once considered impossible. Science extends the scope of man's contact with his surroundings, but no power can make a triangle with more or less than three angles, not a part of a whole greater than the whole itself, because the proposition is self-contradictory.

The birth, growth and the minor and major occultation of the 12th Imam, and his reappearance are not stranger than the wonders and miracles narrated in the Qur'an, scriptures and the apostolic reports. The historical evidence of his past and present is more authentic than those of others. How he will be recognized at the time of reappearance is a basic question, as he will reappear with the same divine signs and powers with which all the vicegerents of God have appeared on Earth.

All the aforesaid is based on the monotheistic view and on a faith in the unseen, as explained before. As the Qur'an says, "***The Book wherein and about which no doubt exists, is guidance for the pious ones, who believe in the unseen***" (2:1), which includes the occultation of the Imam also. The absolute materialistic existentialism of today has no place for miracles like the occultation of the 12th Imam.

Pseudo-religious movements

Ideologies which concentrate on subjective values of religious and ethical thoughts tend towards materialism in the garb of religion or moralism. During the period of the partial occultation of the 12th Imam, movements were started under the name of a false Mahdi with political aims and economic benefits. The pretenders' main attempt was to interrupt the miraculous assertions of previous scriptures as common facts of the terrestrial world. To them the word "al-Mahdi" was more appealing and convincing than the actual belief in the resurrection and the life hereafter. Some were impudent enough to announce the abrogation of Islam and its replacement by a new message and new commandments. Some of them call themselves the subordinates of prophets. They claim to give a different interpretation to some Qur'anic passages in which they show little or no originality.

They move towards adapting any thought, belief and practice which is an outcome of empirical knowledge and materialistic values: they do so even at the violation of the sacred aspect of human life.

The best evidence of what they stand for is the religious texts which these pretenders prepared which are full of absurd thoughts. The immediate successors of the founders of the pseudo-religious movements considered it wiser to get those texts withdrawn from the market and religious circles of the world.

The source of these movements can be traced in the old gnostic movements appearing in the Islamic garb of the ultra-Shi'ahs, and some Sufi sects of the Sunnis. These gnostic and mystic ideas infiltrated the Shiekhi and Kashfi movements which flourished among the Shi'ah traditionists of the 18th and 19th centuries A.D., and then manifested themselves among the Shi'ahs in the garb of the Mahdi and among the Sunnis in the form of the Messiah. Here also the pretenders were actually the camp followers of the pretenders calling themselves Mahdis. The founders of the new movements try to hide the absurdity of their religious ideas by having a very good organization for propaganda and a plan for solving the economic requirements of their adherents. It attracts these people who are anxious to be in some religious group and at the same time keep pace with the modern materialist progress.

Unable to satisfy the religious urge of the people through a rational approach to the Qur'an and the scriptural and apostolic records, the founders of these movements have given mystic shades of meaning to unequivocal religious terms. They could not offer a clear solution of the religious problems about the creation of the universe, man's place in it, and the revealed purpose of creation. Neither have the rights and obligations of individuals been defined. They have intended theosophical phrases and terminologies which confuse human thought.

The ritual and doctrinal contributions can be estimated from a few examples. In some of these groups, a calendar for ritual purposes has been introduced. It is based on a year of 361 days. It is divided into 19 months. Each month contains 19 days. It differs from both the lunar and the solar calendars used by humankind from time immemorial. Of the two, one is based on the astronomical calculation of the 28 revolutionary phases of the moon around the earth; the other is based on the seasonal revolution of the Earth around the sun. Both the old calendars, based on regular phenomenal changes, are natural and useful for calculation of time.

In the view of their geographical and astronomical backgrounds and utility, both have been recognized since the beginning of human civilization. Both are recognized by Islam to the extent of its expedience for ritual and economical purposes (vide 2: 189, 197; 9:36; 10:6; 16: 12; 17: 12).¹ But the year comprised of 361 days, 19 months each of 19 days seems to have no scientific basis except its oddity. It is said it is based on some numerical and symbolical considerations which may have some significance, but no bearing on the solution to religious problems.

(b) It is a common belief among the Christians and Muslims that Jesus was lifted by God to heaven. But whether the ascent was made through the instrument of death and departure of the soul from the body or the ascent happened with the living body, is a matter of dispute among Muslim theologians. Some hold the first view in which he was made to die and then take up. The origin of this view goes back to the

first, second, third, and fourth centuries A.H. Sheikh Saduq in his treatise on *Beliefs (al-'Iteqadat)* seems to hold this opinion. But other theologians insist he was taken up alive in the same manner as the Holy Prophet was and brought back again. Then the difference between the ascents of the two Prophets would be a matter of: (a) the duration of the ascents and (b) the stage to which each had ascended.

The duration of Jesus' ascent will be much longer than the Prophet. But the stage to which the latter ascended was the farthest and highest possible. We have already pointed out the possibility of both kinds of ascents during the life and after death. Both Christians and Muslims are unanimous about the descent of Jesus before the total resurrection occurs. Jesus will descend to the terrestrial realm once again to lead men, as the Christians say, or to be led, by al-Mahdi towards the establishment of the godly kingdom throughout the world, as the Muslims believe.

According to the first view about his ascent, his descent will be his *Raj'at*, return to life, and according to the other view of his ascent, his descent will mean his descending alive after a very long stay in the region of his ascent. To those who believe in the resurrection and return of the entire dead to life, it will not be difficult to accept the idea of the return of one person to life before the total resurrection. In the same way, to those who believe in the physical ascent of the Holy Prophet to the heavenly regions and his descending back to Earth, it should not be surprising if the same is said about Jesus. His ascent has been to a lower stage of the heavens, but for a longer period, while that of the Prophet has been to the highest terminus, *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, but for a shorter period.

This in mind, one may ask the pseudo-religious societies and so-called reformers why they attach so much importance to this issue. Whether he died and went to the heavenly region assigned to him or he ascended alive, does not make any essential difference, nor does it necessarily mean he has vacated the terrestrial regions for another man to come long after him. Sometimes the man claims to represent Muhammad, sometimes Krishna, and sometimes Buddha. God can send back to this terrestrial region, every one of these spiritual leaders in person, if necessary. There is no need to send the imitators. Supposing their return in person is not expedient, then God would send a new messenger with a new title, new mission and with convincing signs.

Even the imitators' claim to being the expected messiah or Mahdi, has no bearing on the question of whether the heavenly life of Jesus or the invisible life of the son of al-'Askari, followed their earthly death or not. Because the pretender can say the holy individuals formerly born on Earth, have been raised alive or through the instrument of death, and they may come back to Earth before the resurrection day. The pretenders may claim they are for the time being the Messiah or the Mahdi of Earth, and the belief of the Sheikhis, Kashfis and some of the Sufi leaders of the Sunni and Shi'ah schools and some sections of the ultra-Shi'ahs imply this claim. They claim a mysterious communion with the Imam and the previous vicegerents of God living beyond the terrestrial sphere. While there is no demonstration of their claims, there is more twisting of the previous scriptures and apostolic statements. All are false.

All the reliable reports show the same Jesus, son of the Virgin Mary, and the same Mahdi, son of

Hassan al-‘Askari, will appear on the terrestrial scene for the establishment of the divine kingdom.

One should be optimistic about human progress towards the sublime achievement. All the miseries and sorrows inflicted by temporal life upon individuals and societies are for the best. No misery would afflict a person who has faith in the manifestation of the divine kingdom through a man who has inherited the virtues of the vicegerents of God from Adam to the Last Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*. That faithful person who has no doubt that his firm devotion to the ideal rule will not only be rewarded in the life hereafter, but in the life here also, looks upon unpleasant events as steps towards the fulfilment of God’s promises in the Qur’an. The task ahead for the faithful is to reach the truth through rationalization of revelation by means of the Islamic sciences and to preserve justice by acting in accord with the constitution of Islam. It is an attainment which has no limits. Therefore, the door is open for man to keep increasing the extent of his knowledge and piety, until the period of occultation.

According to this school of thought, it is wrong to consider anyone else, other than the vicegerents of God, to be perfect in knowledge and piety. So the door on *ijtihad* in theory and practice is always open to anyone willing to secure the above object to the best of his ability.

But if any person denies the truth of such prophecies or accepts them in part or interprets them in a way to suit his own end, it is better for him to put aside all the prophecies of the past whether or not they are clear in their meanings. Let him not base his claim only on religious statements prior to the time of the claimant, which are capable of different interpretations and applications. It is illogical to prove one doubtful proposition by another doubtful one. Let him come out with a clear and unambiguous claim of being God or being in communion and contact with him in a super-reasoning manner which is not open to other people of his time. There is no need for assuming the names or titles of people whose advent is expected by some communities.

The Prophet of Islam claimed to have been commissioned by God to guide the people of all times and all places. He did not invite only the Jews, Christians or the followers of the other faiths on the grounds he was the one whose advent they were expecting. He invited all, even those who did not believe in the prophets or anything revealed to them, and those who deny the existence and the life hereafter. By the force of his arguments and tremendous character, *Khulq-e ‘Azim*, he proved his claim and introduced God, the previous Prophets and other articles of faith to those who had no faith in anything but *dahr* (nature). He, as a known historical figure, with a forceful and challenging testimony, the Qur’an stood facing all shades of opinion, tendencies and schools of thought. On the basis of his established claim, he has proved to all what was unknown or doubtful to them, and his divinely chosen successors from his house are the link of divine guidance, as has been discussed in detail.

[Apostates](#)

Ever since the occultation of the 12th Imam all those who claimed to have authority over people on account of their being in communion with the Imam, the Prophet, the angels or God, are imposters.

Shalmaghani and Mansur Hallaj, during the period of the minor occultation and other imposters of the 13th and 14th and even 15th centuries of Hijrah, tried to deny all miracles and supernatural wonders attributed to the Prophets and godly men. They interpret all the scriptural and apostolic records of miraculous deeds as something ordinary. They planned it so that nobody should ask them to produce the same miracles or some other convincing wonders in support of their claims. But this strategy failed because the negation of evidence for the claims of the previous Prophets did not result in anything positive in favour of their own claims. They sensed the failure and resorted to some theurgical imitations. The easiest course of such imitative miracles is vague prophecies and ambiguous predictions which are not based on astrological calculations or ecstatic visions. In most cases these predictions and prophecies, in spite of being capable of various interpretations due to their vagueness, remain unfulfilled or proved false.

The only attraction in these pseudo-religious movements is their organization. In some of these movements there are sensory and sensual entertainments as well. The organizational and the entertaining temptations may not be of use in one's progress towards the religious objects, but they cement the organizations so well as to be used by political powers for their ends. These organizations can serve imperialism as a strong fifth column. Here is an example of a common misinterpretation of 32:5 of the Qur'an to prove their pseudo-religious movement as a substitute of Islam. The Qur'anic passage refers to the course (procedure) of the divine authority exercised in respect of His creative and legislative will and command (*al-Amr*). The course begins from the highest heavenly sphere and descends to the material and terrestrial end.

Then it takes an upward course from the terrestrial terminus to the heavenly sphere. It (the Qur'an) refers to the two corresponding courses of descent and ascent. The course of descent (*nuzul*), moving away from the light of perfection and things becoming dark is termed in the Qur'an as "night" and the course of ascent (*'uruj*), progressing towards the light of the perfect and things becoming brighter is termed as "day." These two administrative courses of descent and ascent have been referred to in the Qur'an in several places. Here, to avoid confusion with the ordinary day of 24 hours, the passage clarifies the term day (*yaum*) to days (*ayyam*) used in the Qur'an in connection with the creative, administrative and legislative developments in the upward course. Here, like 22:47, the Qur'an asserts the length of a day in the upward course is like a thousand years in which men calculate; it may a lunar, solar or light years. 70:4 points out the length of the day for the upward movement of the angels and the spirit to be 50 thousand years.

In short, the day or days in question means the evolutionary period required for completion of a certain course of development. The evolution of any system of creation, administration or legislation is judged by the degree of its manifesting divine perfection. Upward movement of any revealed system means it is becoming closer to the absolute perfection. Nowhere in the Qur'an or in the apostolic usages, has the term upward move (*'uruj*) been used to mean abrogation of religion or law or deterioration of a system. But the promoters of pseudo-religious movements wanted to find some way to abandon the Qur'an and

Islamic teachings and make room for their views and activities.

So, those who were arrogantly bold, interpreted: (a) the word *al-‘amr* (command) to mean the religion of Islam only, (b) the word *‘uruji* (ascent) to mean becoming obsolete, and (c) the day of 1000 years’ length (22:47) to mean the period when the gradual decadence of the religion takes its turn until its total eradication. The question is from which level is *‘Amr* (the teachings of Islam) eradicated? Is it from the field of utility, the memory of its adherents, the realm of human society, or the state of validity? Eradication from none of the above states makes sense, except the last which means abrogation. But abrogation of legislation cannot be gradual. Abrogation means repealing of a law. It does not require any length of time unless it is the abrogation of the code of law by instalments. If it is so then it must be shown from the date when the instalment plan of abrogation had started and by what date it is to be completed. At the same time, a substitute for the abrogated part must be pointed out, if there is any, and through the number of agencies the process of abrogation has taken place.

But others, except Babis and the Baha’is, were not so bold as to claim the total abrogation of Islam and the Qur’an. They wanted to share their faith within the fold of Islam, so they interpreted the upward move, *‘uruji*, to mean the negligence and detachment of people from the real meaning of the Qur’an. On this basis they argued that God has sent a new messiah, Mahdi, reformer, *muhaddith* or a new *Wali-Ullah* to point out what the Qur’an means.

To support the contention the apostates have to prove, (a) how could the term *‘uruji* (ascent) and its synonyms mean negligence when in the Qur’an the term *mahjur* (forsaken) has been precisely used for negligence? (b) When did the negligence or misconception of the Qur’anic teachings begin? (c) Why did God leave people to have wrong ideas of the teachings, without a guide for a period of 1000 years? (d) What made God send a guide now and not before? (e) What is the reformer’s contribution towards the interpretation of the Qur’anic teachings? (f) Or what are the neglected interpretations which the reformers of today have remedied? (g) When does this decaying day of 1000 years, which is wrongly termed as upward move, begin and when does it end? (h) Can any of these interpreters of the passage show us one instance of an exact interval of 1000 years between two Prophets, reformers or vicegerents of God?

They appeared on the scene claiming to be commissioned by God to deliver some divine message, to exercise some authority, or to do something which was not done between the real vicegerents of God or even the pretenders, either exceed the limit or fall short of it.

However, it is not necessary to pay much attention to those movements from a religious point of view. Their own literature is the best evidence of the shallowness of their religious ideas. From an organizational point of view they may play into the hands of political powers of the day and prove subversive against the Muslim States.

The Great Divine Kingdom –Mulkan Azima (5:54)

Let all anti-Islamic movements of the world do whatever they can against Islam and against the Shi'ah faith. God has promised His last Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him and his household, to make the true religion dominant over all religions of the world. This promise will be fulfilled. He has challenged the idolaters and disbelievers, who plot to extinguish the light of God, to make His light reach the final stage of perfection. He has promised the righteous believers from among the followers of the last Prophet to make them succeed on Earth (as His vicegerents) in the same manner which He made those who were before them (before the followers of the Prophet) to succeed on Earth. And He shall make for them their religion, which he has approved for them, to be all-pervading and powerful.

They will be in the state of safety, so they may worship Him and associate no one with Him in worship. He has declared the Earth is His and His servant, only the righteous ones shall finally inherit it. He has chosen Adam, Nuh and the families of Ibrahim and 'Imran over all the worlds. The divine choice of vicegerents shall continue in a particular lineage until it reached Ibrahim. Ibrahim achieved success in the divine test, and was appointed leader (Imam) for all the people. This vicegerency was made a permanent decree in the family of Ibrahim. After Jesus, his *real successors* continued in their rank, but historically remained obscure. In Ibrahim's issue, the divine leadership in service and obedience to God as *Ummatum-Muslematun* continued, but after Isma'il it remained historically obscure until the advent of Hashim, Abdul Muttalib, 'Abdullah and Abu Talib when the light of ancestral leadership began to glow.

It was with the advent of the Holy Prophet and revelation of the Qur'an in which the grace of God bestowed on Al-e Ibrahim began to shine in its fullness. Next to the Holy Prophet in purity of blood and spirit was the closest of the close relatives (*al-Aqrabin*) from Al-e Ibrahim, was 'Ali, whose issued was declared by the Prophet his own through the Queen of Paradise, Fatima, peace be on her, his daughter. Thus the Book (the Qur'an), the wisdom and the great kingdom which have been bestowed on Al-e Ibrahim in their perfect and final forms were enshrined in the house of the Prophet and 'Ali.

The two divine gifts, the Book and the wisdom, have been manifested in the teachings and lives of the 11 Imams of the house. The third gift of God which has remained unmanifested in its fullness is the last phase of divine sovereignty, the great kingdom (*Mulkan 'Azima*), and the executive authority over the world. The kingdom which God has described as great, could not be the land of Mecca, the Arabian Peninsula, nor the whole of the Muslim empire in its supposed golden days. These may be great in the eyes of Abu Sufyan, but in the eyes of God, the kingdom of Earth is nothing but a ringlet, as the Prophet said, thrown in a vast desert. It is true God bestowed upon Dawud and his son Sulayman such a kingdom. He bestowed on them great spiritual powers of dominating the air, sea, land and animals and inanimate beings existing in them besides a hold over "*jinn and human being*" (chs. 21, 27, 34, 39). He also bestowed on Dawud and Sulayman extensive knowledge and the capacity to dispense justice. Nevertheless, God did not describe their kingdom as great, but assets the kingdom given by Him to Al-e Ibrahim is "great."

Thus the greatness of the kingdom of Al'e Ibrahim should be estimated with regard to the fact the creator of the universe described it as "great." The divine kingdom was given to Muhammad as the Imam of Al-e Ibrahim, and was to be inherited after Muhammad by the chosen servants of God from Al-e Ibrahim, who inherited the other two gifts of God, namely the Book and wisdom. They are the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

In short, the great kingdom is bound to be manifested before the total resurrection in the person of al-Mahdi, who represents the Prophet, in name, nature and features which the real adjectival meaning of the word "Muhammad" (the Praised One) implies.

The statement of the prophet, "Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time shall die the death of ignorance and paganism," clearly asserts, according to the Qur'an, that every age has an Imam and no time shall lapse without an Imam. It indicates that mere belief in God, the Prophet, the scriptures, angels and the life hereafter and performance of obligatory rites and observation of other precepts of Islam are not sufficient to make one a Muslim in the true sense of the term. It is by recognition of the Imam in which the tie between human beings and God is established. No one but God chooses the qualified one to represent Him and His will as Imam. In essence, (a) during every period after the Prophet there must be an Imam from his family of Al-e Ibrahim, (b) the number of successive Imams is neither less nor more than 12: they are those nominated by God through His last Prophet, otherwise they would not be the divine nominee, (c) of the Muslim rulers, from the first three caliphs, excluding 'Ali the fourth, down to the present day, and of other Muslim authorities, such as eminent jurists, theologians, Sufi saints, *sayyids* or scholars, no chain of 12 successive people have ever claimed to have been nominated by God through the Prophet as Imams, except the 12 Imams of the house of the Prophet.

So, keeping all the aforesaid Qur'anic assertions and the apostolic statements of the Prophet together, coupled with the absence of revelation as evidence in support of anyone else, one is bound to accept the 12th of the 12 Imams is alive in the terrestrial realm though we do not see him in a cognizable manner, and he shall remain so until the manifestation of the Great Kingdom of Al-e Ibrahim.[2](#)

There are many scholars of the Sunnis school who believe firmly in the spiritual *Imamate* of all the 12 Imams of the house and particularly the birth and life of the last Imam, almost in the same manner as believed by the Shi'ah Ithna 'Asharis. The only difference between the Ithna 'Asharis and this school of Sunnis is the latter follow one of the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence – Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i or Hanbali – all associate themselves with the rulers who opposed the *Ahl al-Bayt* and presented Islam as a means to gain temporal power. There is a vast literature in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu on this topic.

Divine Consent

Relating to faith in al-Mahdi, mere rational arguments and traditional or historical evidence may not be sufficient. It is the great message, divine vicegerency of Adam, about which the chiefs of the high order

(the angels) have disputed, and Satan rebelled. It is the last testing part of the divine irrevocable “covenant” that God shall be represented on Earth by a man who is gifted with the knowledge of such perfect and comprehensive names of the mediators which represent the Creator and the creatures to each other. This representative status of the perfect man has been such a difficult test of obedience that even the angels questioned God at first and then accepted it. Satan refused it and was condemned forever, in spite of his long period of devotional obedience to God. Ever since the creation of Adam, the acceptance of the divine representative status of the perfect man has become the final touchstone with which every rational being’s submission and obedience to God is tested. Of the issues of Adam, very few have come out successful in this final test. The present subject of discussion is the last part of that final test of one’s belief in Islam, i.e. absolute submission and obedience to God.

Criticism against the Qur’an and Apostolic Statements

Most non-Shi’ahs, who have written or preached against the Shi’as, like most non-Muslims, who criticized Islam, are ignorant of their subject. They rely on information furnished by people who are prejudiced and were making efforts to misrepresent Shi’ism as though it were an extinguished sect. It is self-evident that from the beginning of the message of Islam to the present day with no gap, along with the revelation of the Qur’an and the statements of the Prophet, ‘Ali, Fatima, Hassan, Hussain and the nine successive Imams descended from Hussain, the Shi’ahs have the most authentic record of what they believe and what they practice. The Shi’ite literature on faith surpasses similar literature of all other schools of thought in quantity, quality, continuity and consistency. For the Oneness of God, angelical order, creation of the universe, advent of all the Prophets, from Adam to the last one, Muhammad, the chain of *Imamate* after him up to the reappearance of the last Imam, al-Mahdi, *raj’at*, and then *qiyamat-e kubra*, the Shi’ahs have a continuity of coherent thought in complete accord with the Qur’an and the apostolic records.

The *Imamate* or authoritative leadership of the perfect man, as outlined by the Shi’ahs, is the axis of the theocratic form of rule implied in the very term “Islam.” In the monarchical hereditary system no perfect man, foremost in obedience to God and in all that is good and excellent, is required. The monarchical system based on racial, tribal or family right of sovereignty may apply to those systems of authority, caliphate or *murshids* which confine the rights to particular branch of descent without fixing the number and making any verifiable qualifications necessary for the person such as a certain branch of the Isma’ili sect.

The Zaidi sect (followers of Zaid, the son of Imam Zayn al-‘Abideen) believes that any descendant of Fatima who is a *mujtahid* and draws he sword to fight evil, is an Imam. It is a common belief among Sunnis that any member of the clan of Quraysh who comes to power by any means, whether qualified or not, is an Imam like the Umayyads, ‘Abbasids and all Muslim rulers. These views are opposite to the doctrine of *Imamate (Imamology)* in the Shi’ah Ithna ‘Ashari (Twelvers).

It is also malicious to accuse the Shi'ah Ithna 'Asharis of drawing their ideas of *Imamate* from the ancient Iranian idea of the divine right of monarchs. To Shi'ahs, the royal throne or dynastic considerations have no value and no man is entitled to exercise authority over anybody unless he possesses the requisite knowledge and piety. The divinely declared messengers of God, or their divinely nominated successors or Imams, are the real authorities, obedience to whom is obedience to God. Whether they be in power or in prison. In case the vicegerent of God is not approachable, the Shi'ahs turn to the person next in authority, the pious *mujtahid* in power, prison or in exile. In short, the Shi'ahs are distinguishable from the crown and power worshippers. The Shi'ah attitude is underlined in this couplet:

Pie dar silsilah Sajjad wa ba sar taj Yazid!

Khak-e Alam ba sar-e afsar wa day him wa qusur.

*The legs of the godly saint ('Ali Zayn al-'Abideen Sajjad,
son of Hussain) be in chains and the crown on the head of Yazid!*

Let the dust be thrown on the crown, throne and palaces.

For a brief outline of the Shi'ah conception of divine *Imamate*, one may study *Saheefa-e Sajjadyah* (*Sahifa al-Kamila*), the outstanding, authentic classic work of the fourth Imam of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, 'Ali ibn Hussain (Zayn al-'Abideen), produced in the second half of the first century A.H., and *Ziarat-e Jami'ah*, among the most exalted and inimitable works of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, produced by the tenth Imam, 'Ali ibn Muhammad (an-Naqi), in the first half of the third century A.H. For details about these two works one should refer to works produced by the three prominent Shi'ah compilers of traditions, Kulayni, Saduq and Sheikh Tusi.

Ziarat-e Jami'ah is one of the comprehensive salutations addressed to the vicegerents of God. As a descriptive, solemn salutation to godly persons, it is recommended in the Qur'an. It should be offered in remembrance of (a) the leading status of the addressees in their nearness to God and (b) their representation in conveying His will and order to humankind and making people grasp his attributes from every angle.

Here the reader's attention is drawn to lines from the *Ziarat (Mifathi al-Jinan)*:[3](#)

My assistance is ready for you, waiting until God, the Sublime,

Revives His religion through you, and brings you

Back (to power) during His (chosen) days and establishes

Your hold over all to make His justice prevail

And cause you to dominate throughout the earth.

Thus, I am with you and with no one else.

I believe in you and submit our sheer love

To the last of you as I do to the first of you.

I denounce in the presence of God, the Most Glorious

And High, your enemies, the *jibt*

(the power unauthorized by God) and *taghut*
(the rebel against God), the devils
And their party who opposed you, who denied your right
Who have discarded the love of your domain and hold,
Who have usurped your heritage, who doubted or disputed
Or denied you (your godliness) and those who
Dissociated from you.
I denounce before God (the Most Glorious and High)
All means of approach to God, other than you.
I denounce the imams, leaders who call people
To the path of hell.

The above piece indicates the political ideas and stand of the followers of the *Ahl al-Bayt* in the third century of Islam. This may be compared with the following lines from the supplication of ‘Ali ibn Hussain Zayn al-‘Abideen recited by him on the ninth of Dhil Hijja, the day known as ‘Arafat, when he was performing the rituals of Hajj. After invoking God to bless the Prophets in general and the last Prophet in particular, he invokes God to bless the members of the house of the Prophet. The invocation gives the description of the people concerned. It runs as follows:

Oh God! Send down your blessings on the unstained members
Of his house (the house of Muhammad, upon whom be peace),
Whom You have selected for executing Your command
And You made them treasures of Your knowledge,
Guardians of Your religion and Your representatives
On the Earth and authority of Your creatures.
You have by Your creative might purified them all
Of uncleanness to the utmost extent of purification.
You then have made them the means of approach to Yourself.
Their path is the path of paradise and Your pleasure.

After mentioning the various blessings of God with which the house has been and would be honoured, the fourth Imam points out the status of the Imam and at no time has Earth ever been left without an Imam. He says,

“Oh God! Surely, You have supported Your religion every moment with an Imam (leader), whom You have raised as Your distinguished sign for Your servants and have made them the beacon of guidance in Your cities. You have done this after making the ties of the Imams with the people firmly linked with the connecting link between You and your creatures, You have made the Imams the means and the instruments of gaining Your paradise and pleasure. You have made obedience to the Imams compulsory and have warned people not to disobey them. You have ordered the people to carry out that command

and to refrain from doing what they have prohibited. You have ordered that no person should go ahead of the Imam, nor should one remain behind, detached from the Imam.

“Therefore, the Imam is the stronghold for those who take refuge with him; he is the fortress of the believer and he is the rope to be adhered to by the seekers of truth, and he is the light of the worlds. Therefore, oh God, inspire Your representative (the Imam) to thank You for all the bounties which you have bestowed on him and inspire us, oh Lord, to thank you for blessing us by appointing him (the Imam) as our guide and leader. Oh Lord! Give him on Your behalf power and make him win in the easiest manner of success. Oh Lord! Help him with Your strongest support and back him to the utmost extent, strengthen his shoulder and watch him with Your eyes and protect him with Your protection, help him with Your angels, reinforce him with Your victorious army and establish through him Your book and the limits of duties and rights fixed by You, establish through him Your precepts and conduct recommended by Your Prophet, your peace be on him and his family.

“Oh Lord! Revive through the Imam the outstanding teachings of the religion which have been obliterated by the unjust despots. Oh Lord! Remove through him the rust of injustice which has covered Your path. Push aside through him the obstacles which have come in the way leading to you. Remove through him those perverted ones who push people backward.”

Then, after a few lines in the same prayer, Imam 'Ali ibn Hussain begins to invoke God's blessings on those who are totally devoted in words and in deeds to the Imams. He says:

Oh Lord! Bless those who yield to the Imams out of sheer love,
Those who profess their (Imams') status, stick to their path,
Follow their footprints, adhere to their rope and cling firmly
To their leadership to follow their instructions,
Submit to their orders and make full efforts to obey them,
And are waiting the days of their (Imam's) rule to come.
Their (followers') eyes are focused on the divine days to come.

The consistency of the Shi'ah faith is also reflected in the salutation known as *Salawat ul-Hujaj al-Tahira*, dictated by the 11th Imam, Hassan al-'Askari, to one of his devoted followers, Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad, known as *Abid* (pious) in the year 255 A.H. In those petitions to God, the Imam invokes God's blessings on each of the 14 infallible members of the house (the Holy Prophet is included in it). In the petition, the reader will find the description of each of the 14 in complete accord with the Shi'ah faith. The *Du'a Nudba* from the 12th Imam, al-Mahdi, during the period of the minor occultation, bears the same glowing aspect of faith which is reflected in the above passages of prayer. Next, the salutation addressed to the four successive agents, *nawabin*, of the last Imam, during the minor occultation, preserve the same light. The composition is said to be dictated by the third deputy of the 12th Imam, Sheikh Abul Qasim Hussain ibn Ruh Nawbakti (vide *Thadhib* by Sheikh Tusi). The above quotations bear testimony to the fact the Shi'ah faith from its inception to the end of the minor occultation

in 330 A.H. and from the beginning of the major occultation to the present day has not lost the continuity of its traditions nor the consistency of its thought.

The above quotations bear sufficient testimony to the fact of its thought which has preserved the light of the prophet's tradition, "Whoever dies without known the Imam of his time, his death will be a paganish death."

The Development of Shi'ah Thought After Minor Occultation

First Period – Pure Rational Approach

Al-Kulayni to Sheiky Tusi

(329 A.H./941 A.D. – 460 A.H./1067 A.D.)

The period of the major occultation of the Imam begins from 329 A.H./941 A.D. The teachings of Islam as explained and adhered to by the 12 vicegerents of God assumed its final form in the work of Sheikh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub Kulayni, author of *al-Kafi*. He died in 329 A.H./941 A.D. a year before the major occultation. The method of classification of the apostolic teachings of the *Ahl al-Bayt* throws light on the direction which the Shi'ah thought follows. It begins with the book (the term used in *Kafi* for chapter) on the importance of reason and the disadvantages of ignorance, the various kinds of knowledge, and their important recognition of sound reasoning as the sole internal evidence to be relied upon in one's effort to conceive God and realize His existence, the importance of the Prophets and revelations of the main authority for the knowledge of godhead (*uluhiyat*, His essence, attributes, actions, and commands).

The next chapter of *al-Kafi* deals with the problems of the godhead and the vicegerents as the intermediaries between people and God. This chapter deals with the divine vicegerency of the chosen lineage of men on Earth, the qualifications of the vicegerents of God, their education, when their education begins, their means of acquiring knowledge and the infallibility and scope of their knowledge. The book also discusses the birth, name, parents, date of birth and departure and days of ministry of the 14 infallibles, the announcements by the preceding vicegerents concerning his successor and a brief account of the spiritual and heavenly accomplishments of each.

The following chapter is about faith and infidelity. This part covers the main moral virtues which are the necessary qualification for faith in God and the vices which originate from its absence.

The *Furu-e Kafi* deals with human actions. It contains treatises on the rules of devotional and ritual performance, matters of domestic and economic nature (known as personal laws) and administration, judicial and political affairs. This code of the Shi'ah faith was compiled and placed within the reach of the people, a few years before the end of the minor occultation in 330 A.H. Many scholars received the book from the author directly hearing him reciting his work before them. Therefore, the collection of the

teachings of the Holy Prophet, known as the *Sunnah*, which is part of the Islamic constitution, was made available to the people before the close of the apostolic days of the Infallible Imams. But the earliest collection of the Prophet's teachings, prepared by the scholars of the other schools of thought contain more discrepancies and distortions due to a considerable lapse of time between the infallible source, the Prophet, and the compilers of the collections.

The chains of narrators are fallible people who differ from each other in character, capability and knowledge. Moreover, the rulers of the time influenced the narrators to conceal the truth. Also, throughout the consolidatory period of Islam, attempts were made by the rulers to suppress Shi'ah narrators. *Al-Kafi*, its sources and other Shi'ah literary products of the period, ranging from the time of departure of the Prophet to the demise of Kulayni in 320 A.H. and Ali ibn Muhammad al-Summari (the last deputy of the 12th Imam) in 330 A.H./942 A.D., were saved from being influenced or tampered with. The force of the saintliness of the Imams of the house which manifested in all fields of spiritual accomplishments was so strong it over-awed some temporal rulers.

They could not resist submission to the supreme authority of the Imams of the house as the sole representatives of the divine will in spite of their being in prison, house arrest, or under strict vigilance. The consolidated teachings of Islam, as manifested in the life of the 12 Imams of the house, began to dominate temporal powers after 330 A.H./942 A.D. at some places.

In the case of the majority school of thought in Islam the temporal powers which succeeded each other after the Prophet, dominated Islamic thought in general and the chain of narrators of the Prophet's sayings in particular. In the later days of the political history of the Shi'ah faith the force of right produced some temporal might. It was after the consolidatory and apostolic period which the Shi'ahs began to gain temporal power in particular countries during the Buwayhid dynasties in Iran and Iraq, under the independent rule of the Da'is of Tabarestan and the Fatamids of Egypt. So subsequent religious literature has been produced in those countries on the pattern of original Shi'ah works.

The works of Sheikh Saduq (d. 381 A.D./991 – 992 A.D.) Sheikh Mufid (d. 413 A.H./1022 A.D.), Sayyid Murtadha (d. 436 A.H./1044 A.D.), Syed Razi and Sheikh Tusi (Abu Ja'far ibn Hassan al-Tusi, known as Sheikh al-Taifa, d. 460 A.H./1067 A.D.) and the works of other contemporary scholars of the same school, are mainly moulded on the same pattern of *Kafi*. There may be minor differences, but they are due to the rational approach of the individuals. They do not, however, affect the substance of the doctrine.

The first period of Shi'ah rationalization of revelation, i.e. of *ijtihad* after the major occultation, ends with the migration of Sheikh al-Taifa al-Tusi from Baghdad to Najaf.

Before proceeding, this point should be borne in mind. During the apostolic period beginning with the Prophet's mission and ending with the occultation of the last Imam, as also during the first period of *ijtihad*, beginning with Kulayni and ending with Sheikh Tusi, the Shi'ahs were always in touch with

various Islamic and non-Islamic schools of thought. It was necessary, according to the Qur'an and the apostolic instructions to have a careful comparative study of all thoughts concerning religion, so they would be cautious of any thought against apostolic statements authenticated by the Imams. The rationalists (Mu'tazilites), the traditionists ('Asharites), dealing with the pure theory, the mystic or ascetic school explaining the ethical aspect of the religion, the jurists, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali, defining the ritual precepts and other practical laws of Islam, and the gnostics and philosophers disclosing the spirit and the inner aspects of the teachings of Islam, all move to enjoy the support of the house of the Prophet for themselves.

There are several theoretical and practical problems on which clear and unanimous verdicts of the *Ahl al-Bayt* go against the views held by the other schools. Nevertheless, the opposite schools try to interpret the verdict of the *Ahl al-Bayt* in their own favour. The unanimous verdict of the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* about the legality of *aul* and *taseeb*, concerning inheritance and the impossibility of God being seen, are established facts of Shi'ah doctrine. Nevertheless, the traditionists such as Bukhari and Muslim are inclined to hold the opposite view, by narrating reports which 'Ali held the same views as theirs.

The Mu'tazilites are no exception; they present their views as approved by the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Sheikh Tusi, in his work, *Tahdhib*, in the chapter on *jihad*, narrates the story of the meeting of the foremost Mu'tazilites leaders with the sixth Imam (Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq) at Mina during the Hajj season. They requested him to join them in the political movement as planned by them. The discussion throws light on the political-theological trends of the time and the stand of the Imam against all the issues raised by them. It would be unfair to present the Shi'ahs as the camp of followers of the Mu'tazilites or any other school of thought in Islam. It shows the ignorance or malicious tendency of those writers who allege the main stem of the Shi'ah Ithna 'Ashari school was bent on the course of its development by doctrines alien to the teachings of the Imams of the house.

Shi'ah thought in its development was so clearly distinguished that it gave no chance to any temporal power to divert its course. From the time of Kulayni to Sheikh Tusi's migration to Najaf will be considered the first period of Shi'ah *ijtihad*. It developed from purified apostolic roots without being grafted with any foreign idea or doctrine. It became one of the examples of the purified world and the purified tree mentioned in the Qur'an 14:24 – 25, *Kalima-e Tayyaba* and *Shajraah-e Tayyaba*.

Second Period – Continuity

Muhaqia Hilli (676 A.H. 1274 A.D.)

'Allama Hilli (726 A.H./1325 A.D.)

Shahid Awal (786 A.H./1385 A.D.)

Muhaqia Karaki (940 A.H./1539 A.D.)

Safavids

During the second period from Tusi to Muhaqia Hilli, from Muhaqiq Hilli to ‘Allama Hilla, from ‘Allama to Shahid Awal (the first Shi‘ah divine, who was executed by the order of the Sunni *mullas*), and from him to Muhaqia Karaki (the beginning of the establishment of the Safavid reign in Iran), the Shi‘ah school continued to produce innumerable scholars of high standards in all branches of Islamic sciences. The consistency of thought remained undisturbed and continued until the middle of the Safavid reign.

Third Period

a) Mixture of mystic, intuitive and rationalistic interpretation

b) Traditionalism – ‘Akhbari

Baha al-Din al-Amili (1030 A.H./ 1721 A.D.)

Mir Damad-Muhammad Baqir (1040 A.H./1630 – 1631 A.D.)

Mullah Sadra-Sadr al-Din Shirazi (1060 A.H./1651 A.D.)

Majlisi I, Muhammad Taqi (1070 A.H./1659 – 1660 A.D.)

Mulla Muhsin al-Faid Kashani (1091 A.H./ 1680 A.D.)

Majlisi II, Mulla Muhammad Baqir (1110 A.H./1699 A.D.)

In this period the pure rational to revelation is responsible for the development of two other tendencies in religious studies. Eminent scholars, such as Mir Damad, Sheikh Bhai, Mulla Sadr, with some reservations, and Mulla Muhsin Faid Kashani and Mulla Muhammad Taqi (Majlisi I), were inclined towards the mystic and intuitive interpretation of the Qur’an. But the traditionist tendency, depending more on the literal and verbal significance of apostolic traditions rather than rational principles for inferences from the apostolic statements, was dominant. Mulla Muhammad Baqir (Majlisi II) and his followers were more inclined towards this course of study. The first group may be termed as theosophist. Among them are traditionists (‘Akhbari) and rationalists (Usuli).

There was a third purely ‘Akhbari group. Pure and partly – ‘Akhbaris did not agree with the rationalists who were known as pure Usuli in certain doctrinal issues, and differ from each other in approving or disapproving the mystical method. The controversial issues seemed in the beginning to be less important as to provoke factions in the ranks of the Shi‘ah theologians, but gradually the schismatic spirit of scholasticism, under the influence of politics turned the least religious issues into important concerns of the ecclesiastical circles and caused sectarian feelings among followers of the respective scholars. However, the school of ‘Allama Majlisi appealed to the religious tendencies of the masses and it succeeded in influencing the majority of the theologians until today.

Even a great number of Usuli scholars, who denounce boldly, the ‘Akhbari school and its branches are not free from the influence of the vast literature of Arabic and Persian, produced by Allama Majlisi II. There is no doubt that as a compiler of traditions, with the royal libraries and numerous assistants at his disposal, he is one of the greatest contributors on the subject for the development of Shi‘ah religious thought. But those matters without the rational methods may be misleading and harmful. The same is

true of literature produced by various branches of the 'Akhbari school. One may find precious gems in that literature but all are required to be properly selected and polished with the instrument of reasoning as prescribed in the logical science for the treatment of scriptural and apostolic traditions, based on *'Ilm al-Usul* and *'Ilm al-Dinya*. From Majlisi II to Muhammad Baqir Behbahani (1205 A.H./1791 A.D.) the theological conflict between these three schools continued. Majlisi's school, however, remained dominant.

Fourth Period

Rationalism based on the Qur'an and Ahadith

Muhammad Baqir Behbahani, al-Wahid (1205 A.H./1791 A.D.)

Sheikh Murtadha Ansari (1291 A.H./1864 A.D.)

Behbahani, known as al-Wahid, the Great Master (Ustad al-Akbar), the champion of the Usuli school, drew his rational weapon against the 'Akhbaris and their branches and defeated them in all fields of thought. He revived the school of Karbala, the place selected by the 'Akhbaris as their stronghold. He produced numerous well versed scholars, writers and teachers for advocating and expounding the Usuli method and refuting the opposite doctrines and principles. Within a short period, Behbahani's school succeeded in limiting the influence of other schools. Among the prominent personalities of this school are Mirza Abul Qasim Qummi known as Mirza Qummi (1231 A.H. 1816 A.D.), the author of *Qawanin* (Principles of Jurisprudence); Mulla Mehda Naraqī, the author of *Jami' al-Sa'dat* (Treatise on Ethics); Mulla Mahdi Fatuni, Sayyid Mahdi Sharistani, and Syed Mahdi Bahar ul-Ulum, who, though junior in age is greater than his seniors in spiritual attainment.

Also included were Sheikh Ja'far, the author of *Kashif al-Ghitar*, Sayyid Ali, the author *Riaz*, Sayyid Muhammad Mujahid, brother Sheikh Muhammad Hussain, the author of the treatise on *Usul* (Principles of Jurisprudence), and his prominent students. Then the chain dazzles with the name of Sheikh Muhammad Hassan, author of the book, *Jawahir al-Kalam* (The Practical laws of Islam), containing the minutest points and arguments and view on every practical problem of jurisprudence. It is a commentary on the concise but comprehensive work of Muhaqiq Hilli, known as *Shar'i al-Islam*. the text written by Muhaqiq in the seventh century A.H. and the commentary referred to above, written at the beginning of the 13th century A.H., are still the standard books on Shi'ah jurisprudence.

This period, from Behbahani to the author of *Jawahir al-Kalam*, may be considered as the golden period of the Shi'ah rationalist school. The author of *Jawahir* was succeeded by a scholar of Shi'ah jurisprudence whose works revolutionized the whole system and opened a new era for religious studies. This luminary, Sheikh Murtadha Ansari, was the author of the valuable books on principles of jurisprudence, *Fara'id al-Usul* and *Makasib*, dealing with the principles of transactions and trade, *Taharat*, dealing with the principles of physical purity required by Islam and many other small treatises on various juristic issues.

His method of exposition eclipsed all the previous systems and served as a link between extreme rationalism and extreme traditionalism. In his works the arguments are based on the Qur'an and apostolic statements. This leading scholar showed how the implications of the scriptural instructions as the principles of inference should be brought out. To him, though reason has its value, it is secondary when there are clear scriptural statements on a field of study. He tried to show how the two sources, the scriptural assertions and pure reason should be reconciled. The school of Sheikh Ansari is still the leading school of Shi'ah theology. It is flourishing wherever comparative Islamic jurisprudence is studied.

The last revelational literature, the Qur'an, with the apostolic statements, contain all which is required by men for their spiritual and temporal progress. Both rigid conservatism and extreme radicalism are un-Islamic. The ever productive, growing tree of life, Islam needs to be watered with pure and irrefutable reasoning.

The Qur'anic injunctions have made study of all branches of knowledge compulsory so there shall be qualified students specialized in every field of study. Comparative study of relevant views and theories are inevitable, otherwise the study will remain incomplete.

In view of these facts, it is surprising in certain centres of Shi'ah theology students are allowed to be content with superficial knowledge and as such discouraged from study of the metaphysical treatises of even eminent Shi'ah theologians. A Shi'ah student of theology should not neglect any school of creation. The task of rationalization of revelations concerning the practical aspect of Islam was carried on in detail by the jurists of all ages and regions, as the exigency of time demanded it.

In the last century the term *tafaqqahu-fiddin*, the effort to understand religion, has lost its comprehensiveness and universality and narrowed to the science of jurisprudence and certain hair-splitting juristic problems.

Correct Approach

a. Tafaqqahu-fiddin

Effort to understand religion

The principles of juristic inference of Islamic law contain two parts. One deals with (a) the authoritative status of scriptural and apostolic record, (b) the deductive and inductive reasoning and analogical inference, (c) the consensus of opinion of jurists or Muslim intelligentsia, and (d) the principles to be resorted to in the case of ambiguity or in conflicting scriptural and apostolic statements. This part may be termed as discourse on the authoritative principles and the extent of their validity. The second part deals with the universal principles of speech common to all languages.

There is no doubt that a study of both parts is necessary to be able to deal with the scriptural and apostolic statements concerning the practical teachings of Islam, but one may not be content with the

above information. A thorough study of Arabic grammar, philology, etymology, syntax, rhetoric and prosody, with special reference to the Qur'an and other apostolic records, and the biography of the narrators of the apostolic statements (*'Ilm-e Rijal*) and history is inevitable. Without the knowledge of mathematics, astrology, logic, metaphysics and general principles of physical and natural sciences, and socio-economic sciences, with special references to the teachings of Islam, a scholarly approach to the problem of life cannot be developed. The knowledge of logic and metaphysics is required for sound thinking.

Metaphysics is the science of all sciences. It deals with universal concepts and propositions which form the background of human thinking. Without the proper knowledge of metaphysics, the study of the principles of juristic inferences, which cover problems based on the rationalization of revelation, remains incomplete.

Great scholars like Mir Muhammad Baqir Damad, Sheikh Bhai, Sadr ul-Muta'allihin (known as Sadr) and their followers, Faiz of Kashan and Fayyaz of Lahijan (two sons-in-law of Sadr) and their supporters concentrated on the religio-metaphysical science and their best in filling the gap between the revealed statement and pure reason. Though appreciated by a large number of jurists, it was opposed to those of Usuli jurists who were not well-versed in the sciences.

(b) Anti-rationalism and New Cults

Sheikh Ahmad Ahsai and other similar leaders – theosophic and mystics

In the middle of the 13th century A.H. the champion of the 'Akhbari school of theology, Sheikh Ahmad Ahsai, appeared on the scene. He was not a student of logic and metaphysics, but had good knowledge of scriptural and apostolic records with particular aptitude in theological thinking. His main attempt was to disprove the religio-metaphysical views of the Sadr school, on the one hand, and please a section of the anti-Sadr jurists, on the other.

His commentaries of *Asfar* of Mulla Sadr and the commentary on *Ziarat-e Jami'a* betray the defects of the 'Akhbari scholars of his time. Ahsai refutes the validity of rational approach to understand the significance of revelation and to secure an authoritative status as the vicegerent of the Imam. According to him, without inner communication with the soul of the Imam, one will be entitled to claim authority as a representative of the Imam, the prophet God. On this ground he wanted to put an end to the dominating leadership of the Usuli jurists and start a new era of his own school. His attempt met with severe opposition, from the Usuli school, and he could not advance his ideology in any academic field. It opened a new way for the development of sectarian views, mostly in the rank of the 'Akhbari school, to which some credulous Usulis also were inclined. Ahsai and his illogical views became the basis of all new sects of Shaykhi, Kashafi, Sufi within the fold of Islam, and Babi, outside the fold.

The background of the ideologies advocated by Ahsai and the off shoots of his school are actually the same as the ideologies of the ultra-Shi'ahs of the second and third century Hijrah.

But the origin of the schools of the Zahbis of Shiraz, Ni‘matullahi of Kerman and Safi ‘Ali Shahi of Tehran can be traced back to the Sufi orders of Safavid and pre-Safavid times. The Safavids themselves, before gaining temporal power, were in the garb of spiritual leaders and saints of a Sufi order. During their reign, they also have encouraged and supported the Sufi order of Dervishes, the religio-mystic Qalandars, and wandering hermits. Ever since then, the Shi‘ah rulers patronized the Shi‘ah dervishes.

They have much in common with theosophic mysticism and they seem to have the same theomystic tendencies of the Sunni Sufis with liberal touches of Shi‘ah ideology. Safi ‘Ali Shah of Tehran has written a commentary of the Qur’an in Persian poetry in the style of Rumi. His mystic presentation of the tragedy of Karbala seems quite forceful and fascinating. Another exegesis by Hajj Mulla Sultan ‘Ali Shah of Gunabad, the founder of Sunabadi school of Shi‘ah Sufis, on the Qur’an, in Arabic, known as *Tafsir-e Bayan al-Sa‘dah*, is the main a theomystic, philosophical interpretation of the Qur’an, almost on the lines of the Sadr school as presented by Hajj Mulla Hadi Subzwari, author of the standard text on logic and philosophy, known as *Manzumah* and *Shraha Manumah*.

Sultan ‘Ali is one of the disciples of Subzwari. The writer could not find in his work any originality of thought or presentation. As an offshoot of Subzwari school he created a new Sufi order of his own to which Subzwari could have no claim. The common element between him and the post-Ahsaii ‘Akhbari schools is both deny the sufficiency of knowledge or rational scholastic method of approach for the interpretation of revelation and representing the infallible Imam. The Sufis, the Sheikhs and Kashfis of Shi‘ah school, all are inclined towards the Sufism of the Sunnis and Gnosticism and esoterism of the Isma‘ilites.

These tendencies paved the way for the rise of Baha‘ism and Qadianism on the one hand, and the development of absolutism in political trends on the other. The possessors of political power welcome the use of the flattering title “The Shadow of God” for themselves in the political field and claim to have the right to introduce drastic changes in Islamic laws concerning the daily practical life of Muslims. The Sufi saint, the Shaykhi head, the Kashfi chief, the Qadyani Masih, the Sabbahi Hazir Imam and the Bohras “living Da‘iya” all claim to be in communion with some infallible agency higher sphere of beings, a source from which they receive the requisite guidance directly. As such they are beyond formal rules of religious and moral obligations and formalities. The head of the group is to be obeyed, whatever his knowledge or character.

The Baha‘is have gone to the extreme; they not only hold the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* as out-dated, they even treat their new-born scriptures of the present century as obsolete. Their last spiritual head, Showqie Afendy of Akkan died in London without leaving any will or successor. So at present the Baha‘is are receiving inspiration directly from Tel Aviv, the modern Tur Sinai of all pseudo-religions. Hence, their commandments and precepts are subject to daily changes inspired by the modern *Tur*. The only difference between Rabwah of Pakistan and Akka of Israel is the former tries to retain the garb of Islam while the latter has thrown it away. Otherwise the Tabwa ideology, in general, is copied from those

of Akka. It is noteworthy their literary and academic contributions are insignificant; hence remain unpublished, or withdrawn soon after their publication.

There are undoubtedly many political and temporal factors for the flourishing of these new heretical schools of thought during the last two centuries. But it is not proposed to deal here in detail. The factor which concerned us is the temporal support of the Iranian monarchs of the later centuries of the Shi'ah faith, developed an unexpected intolerance in some leading jurists of the time. Depending on the use of force, they were not prepared to listen to any argument not in conformity with their views.

The fatherly affection and godly tendencies of the Shi'ah divines which would convince their opponents of logic was replaced by the use of bigotry. The people reacted against it by welcoming any movement which would free them from the yoke of bigoted Mullas.

Broad Vision

Unfortunately, the undesirable consequences of the use of such wrong means were soon realized by the divines at the helm of ecclesiastical administration. They now do not allow the use of such dogmatic authoritative weapons against criticism. In asserting their spiritual authoritative status, they are now resorting more and more to the godly force of knowledge and piety which no temporal force can suppress. The Shi'ahs have never depended and shall never depend in their progressive moves on any power other than the inner strength of sound knowledge, excellent character and selflessness. This is the teaching of the Qur'an and the written, oral and practical teaching of the Holy Prophet and the infallible Imams of the house.

The Shi'ah religious authorities in charge of religious administration do not bother or worry themselves about the temporal and political circumstances of the time, whether favourable or unfavourable. They concentrate on producing the best students of theology, who sacrifice their limited interest for the welfare of humankind. It is expected they will prove worthy of being termed true slaves of *Rahmat ul-lil 'Alameen* (the Divine Grace). The temporal world with all its might and power is bound to bow before these forces, sooner or later. As history records, 'Ali stated his sublime movement with five or, at the most, seven supporters. At the time of the tragedy of Karbala, the number increased to not more than 120 people, who laid down their lives in support of the right cause.

Now they are counted in very large numbers with a glorious heritage of knowledge and righteousness to their credit. Let the Shi'ahs continue progressing in these lines disregarding any geographical boundaries and political barriers until the time of the expected saviour, the 12th Imam, to establish the divine kingdom given to Al-e Ibrahim, throughout the world. He will use spiritual force in the face of which all physical temporal forces, even of atomic energy, will become ineffective. Before the ultimate ideal is achieved the Shi'ah religious authorities should enlighten the followers with a correct and proper presentation of the Shi'ah faith.

And We intend to show favour to those who are considered weak on Earth and to make them Imams (guides in faith) and the inheritors. And to establish them on Earth and to show Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts which they feared from them. (28:5 – 6)

1. In both systems the number of months cannot be more or less than 12. The seasonal revolution of Earth round the sun completes its circuit in 364 or 365 days. During this seasonal revolution, the moon's phases change 12 times, of which six times the moon shows its crescent phase after 29 days or 30 days in the others. The change of 29 or 30 days usually takes place every alternate month. But it is possible that in certain regions the crescent phase can be sighted for two successive months after 20 or 30 days. Six months of 30 days aggregated to 180 days while six months of 29 days to 174 days, totalling 354 days altogether. The circuit of the lunar year is 10 days shorter than that of the solar year. The lunar year which begins with the sighting of the crescent phase of the moon in any of its 12 months, in a given year, will naturally coincide with a particular day (first, second, third, and so on) of certain days of the solar month. The following year the lunar year will complete its circuit 10 days before the particular day of the solar month with which the first day of the given month of the year started. The result of this is that, during a given period of 30 years, every day of every month of the lunar year will coincide with every day of every month of the solar year. Thus, for the performance of periodical rites, such as fasting and pilgrimage, Islam preferred the lunar year and calendar, so the devotees should have the opportunity to perform the rites periodically every day of each of the four seasons of the solar year.

But for daily rites, such as the daily prayers, Islam takes into account the rotational movements of the earth towards the sun, which are responsible for the 24 hour alternation of day, night and dawn. For daily prayers, the Qur'an considers sunrise, sunset, mid-noon and dawn as important. These segments of the day hold good for everyone, whether they are inhabitants of the 24 hour rotational movement of Earth, the sun appears to rise above and set below the horizon. There are also the remote northern and southern regions, far above 80 degrees from the equator where during six months of their respective summer, the sun never sets but only changes position during six months of the 24 hour cycle. During winter, the sun is not seen at all in that region. Its position can only be located through the change in the position of its rays. For timings of the mid-noon prayer and the night prayer can be observed. For the other prayers the requirements would be they should be performed after the mid-noon prayer after regular intervals. For those who may be on the exact poles, where all the longitudes end, there is no observable time at all but the daily prayers must be performed within 24 hours. They should begin with the mid-noon prayer and end with the morning prayer. The person inside the Holy Ka'ba has the option to say his prayers facing any direction. The people on the exact poles have the option to say their daily prayers within 24 hours at any time facing any direction.

2. One question remains, namely, why the number of the vicegerents of God after the last Prophet should be confined to 12. All that we must know is that, whatever action is taken by God in any of the three fields of activity, has its reasons which makes such action necessary and its contrary impossible. But what is the particular justification for any particular action no one can claim to know, except to the extent of what He "has willed the people to know." However, the number of divine actions, whose reasons have become known to us, through reasoning or revelation, are small in comparison to those which are still unknown to us.

The system of the universe as a whole and the fixed measures, numbers, positions, conditions, the quantitative and qualitative peculiarities, found in every part and particle of the universe and the fixed and proportionate speed of the biggest and the smallest parts of the whole, all are puzzling. The particular justifying reasons for the fixities are not known to us, though the fixities are indisputable.

The seasonal rotations of the earth and the sun are fixed in terms of the number of days and speed, as are the moon's around the Earth. According to the Qur'an everything has been created in a fixed measure. The life of every solar system is fixed. The life of every part of it is fixed. The life of the Earth and earthly beings is fixed.

The number of the prophets, vicegerents of God, and their genealogical line from Adam to the day of resurrection are pre-ordained. All these pre-determinations are based on particular reasons and wisdom known only to God. The same is true

about the fixation of the number (12) of the Imams of the house and the last Imam should live in a particular manner for a long period, the end of which is only known to Him.

3. “My” refers to the devotee who is saluting the Imam. The pronouns in the first and second person used in the above translation refer respectively to the devotee and the Imams.

Chapter 5: Evidence relating to the birth of the 12th Imam, Sunni scholars and apostates

Evidence

More than 40 people had the honour of seeing the last Imam, during the lifetime of his father, the 11th Imam, Hassan al-‘Askari.

(1) Hakimah, daughter of the ninth Imam, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al-Ta‘qi, and the aunt of the 11th Imam, had attended Narjis’s delivery. Her evidence about the birth and growth of the last Imam, al-Mahdi, is on record. She was one of those who brought up the newborn secretly. Her nephew, Imam al-‘Askari, informed her about the future of his son, planned by God.

(2) Maryah and Nasim, two housemaids of Imam al-‘Askari, are among the witnesses who said that when al-Mahdi was born he prostrated on the ground, and with his index finger he pointed toward the heavens and said, “All praise is God’s, the Lord Cherisher of all the worlds. And blessings be on Muhammad and his family, who are purified.”

(3) Abu Basir, a servant of Imam al-‘Askari, said that once he found the newborn in the cradle and went forward and saluted the baby. The baby asked him whether he knew who he (the Imam) was. Abu Basir replied in the affirmative and said he was the son of his Imam. When the baby asked Abu Basir to get sandals, he was puzzled about how a baby in the cradle could speak so well. The newborn asked Abu Basir to question him about his spiritual status. He did and the baby replied, “I am the last successor and the last of the executors of the divine will, as is the case with all the vicegerents of God. It is through me that my family and the followers are delivered from calamity and trouble.”

(4) Abu Nasim Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ansari states that once he, together with a group of Mufawada, had gone to Samarra for an audience with the 11th Imam, Hassan al-‘Askari for enlightenment on religious matters. There he saw a boy of four. The Imam asked them to refer their inquiries to the boy which they did and he answered their questions satisfactorily. The Imam said, “He is al-Mahdi, the established executor of the will of God.”

(5) Ali ibn Bilal, Ahmad ibn Hilal, Muhammad ibn Mo'awiyan, Hakeem and Ayub ibn Nuh went together to see the 11th Imam, al-'Askari. There were 40 people present. All were led by 'Uthman ibn Sa'id al-'Umari to the presence of the Imam where they saw the baby, with a face shining like the sun, sitting beside Imam al-'Askari. In answer to the questions of the successor of Imam al-'Askari, he would be the supreme authority after him.

(6) Sa'ad ibn Abdallah al-Qumi, who was carrying many letters for Imam al-'Askari, went to Samarrah with a group of people and had his audience with him. They saw the boy with the shining face, on the right side of Imam al-'Askari. In reply to the question from the audience, he informed them the boy was al-Mahdi of Al-e Muhammad, the established executor of the will of God throughout the world.

(7) Abu Sahl Isma'il Nowbakti states, "I went to Abi Muhammad, Hassan ibn Ali (al-'Askari), when he was on his death bed. He ordered his wife, Saqil (another name of Narjis) to bring him the syrup of mustaki (a syrup made with gum). She brought it. The Imam's hand was shaking so the cup struck his fore-teeth and fell from his hand spilling the syrup. At the time the Imam told me, "Go inside the house. You will find a boy busy in his prayers. Tell him to come to me." "I entered," Isma'il says, "the residential quarters and found the boy engaged in prayers. I told him, 'Your father is calling for you.' His mother took the boy to his father. When the boy saw his father's teeth broken, he wept. Then the Imam asked the boy to help him drink the syrup. The boy brought another cup to his lips. The Imam drank a few drops and then breathed his last. The boy was the son of Imam Hassan al-'Askari, al-Mahdi, the supreme authority, representing God on Earth.

(8) Ahmad ibn Ishaq Qumi says once he went to the 11th Imam, with the intention of asking him about his successor. The Imam spoke before his question, and mentioned the name of his young son as his successor designate, the greatness of his status and the importance of the part which he would play in order of the divine vicegerency.

(9) Ya'qub ibn M'anfush states that once he went to meet the 11th Imam. He saw a child with the glowing face like the full moon sitting beside the Imam. He appeared to be a boy of eight or ten years old (though his actual age was less) with a broad forehead, bright features, white shining cheeks and a peculiar Hashimite black mole on the right side of his face. The Imam, pointing towards the child, told Ya'qub the child would be the next master of the faithful, the Imam and the supreme authority of the time after him.

(10) Abu Nasir says he entered the house of the 11th Imam (at Samarrah) and met the last, the 12th Imam, the master of the time. He said, "I am the last in the chain of successors and the executors of the will of the Last Prophet, Muhammad."

(11) Abu 'Abdallah Satri says, "I was walking towards the garden of Bani Hashim (at Samarrah), where I saw a child playing. I inquired about him and was told he was M H M D (abbreviation of Muhammad), the son of Hassan al-'Askari.

(12) ‘Abdallah, son of Ja‘far Himyari, narrates from Ahmad ibn Ishaq that he once saw a child and asked al-‘Umari about him. Ahmad replied the child was the master of the time, al-Mahdi, and the successor of the 11th Imam.

(13) ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim Mayhyar, who was the servant of the 11th and 12th Imam, said he was with the 12th Imam until the moment he descended into the basement apartment and then, as narrated before, he was pursued by the search party of the government. It was after this occasion in which the imam went into the first occultation.

Besides the people mentioned above, there were many others who had the honour of meeting him before and during the minor occultation. Their names are given in the following books: (a) *Kimal al-Din* – Sheikh Saduq, (b) *Bihar al-Anwar* – Allama Majlisi, (c) *Najm al-Thaqib* – Muhadith Nuri, (d) *al-Zaman al-Wasib* – Allama Heyeri, and (e) *Nur al-Anwar* – Haji ‘Ali Asghar Burujardi.

Muhadith Nuri has given the names of the people who had the opportunity of meeting the Imam.

(1) Ibn Tawus Raziuddin ‘Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja‘far ibn Tawus. He died in 664 A.H. This venerable divine of this time was the head of the Shi‘ah community in the seventh century. He is admired by Allama Hilli, an eminent scholar, who had met him. The Allama says Raziuddin (ibn Tawus) is credited with many spiritual wonders. He is the author of many valuable books. It is evident from his works he was in contact with the Imam.

(2) Al-Muqaddis Ardabayli – Mulla Ahmad ibn Muhammad of Ardabayl (d. 993 A.H./1585 A.D.). He was the celebrated Shi‘ah divine of his time and the leading *mujtahid* from Najaf. Shah Abbas Safavi, the king of Iran, was proud of having an epistle addressed to him by Ardabayli. The epistle begins with the following sentence, “‘Abbas-e Safavi ra‘ilm meedared,” i.e. “‘Abbas, the Safavi is informed.” The text of the letter is given by Professor Brown in the *Literary History of Persia*. Ardabayh is credited with many spiritual wonders and having had the honour of direct contact with the soul of the first Imam, ‘Ali, who sometimes used to order Ardabayh to contact the last Imam in the mosque of Kufa, three and half miles away from the shrine of ‘Ali. The anecdotes of Ardabayli are given in detail in *Qisas al-‘Ulama* by Tunkabuni Muhammad ibn Sulayman (d. 1302 A.H./1889 – 1890).

(3) Syed Muhammad Mahdi, son of Syed Murtaza Tabataba‘i of Najaf, known as *bahar al-‘ulum*, the ocean of knowledge was revered by all the contemporary Shi‘ah divines, including his teachers and seniors, and Sheikh Ja‘far al-Ghita, the eminent jurist of his time, considered it a matter of honour to clean with his turban the sandals of this divine. He was born in 1155 A.H. at Karbala and died in 1212 A.H./1797 A.D. at Najaf. Sheikh Muhammad Hassan, the noted jurist, author of *Jawahir al-Kalam*, describes *bahar al-‘ulum* as the master of wonders and miracles. There are numerous authentic evidences to his credit of having direct contact with the last Imam (vide *Qisas al-‘Ulama* by Tunkabuni and *Najm al-Thaqib* by Nuri).

There is a story of *Jazirat al-Khizra*, the Green Island, the present abode of the 12th Imam, which is not

traceable at present by the usual means. However, the legendary nature of some of the stories evolved around the lives of godly men, do not justify the rejection of authentic accounts relating to their lives. It does not mean all the recorded miracles and wonders are imaginary or fabricated.

Sunni Scholars

The names of 50 distinguished Sunni scholars, who have faith in and confirmed al-Mahdi's birth, growth, occultation and reappearance, are given below:

1. Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Yusuf Ganji, Safi'i, is the author of *Akhbar-e Sahib al-Zaman* and *Kifayat al-Talib*, in praise of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. The author died in 658 A.H.
2. Sheikh Nuruddin 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Sabbagh, Malaki, resident of Mecca who has written *Fusul al-Muhimma* about the 12 Imams of the house of the Prophet.
3. Muhiuddin Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-'Arabi (known as ibn 'Arabi), Hanbali, in his celebrated book *Futuhāt* (ch. 366) gives a detailed account of the birth of al-Mahdi, son of al-'Askari and of his reappearance before the Resurrection Day.
4. Abu Muhammad 'Abdallah ibn Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Khashab, who is known as ibn Khashab, has given detailed account of the 12th Imam in his biographical work on the 12 Imams of the house of the Prophet.
5. Sheikh 'Abdallah Shi'rani (d. 905 A.H.), the celebrated Sufi, in his work *Yaqaqeet*, ch. 66 deals with the birth and occultation of the 12th Imam.
6. Sheikh Hassan 'Iraqi who accepts the 12th Imam, praises Shi'rani as a pious and learned ascetic, and narrates the story of Shi'rani's meeting with the 12th Imam.
7. Syed 'Ali, known as Khawas, the teacher of Shi'rani, also a believer in the 12th Imam, confirms what Sheikh Hassan asserts about the meeting of Shi'rani with the 12th Imam.
8. Nuruddin Abdul Rahman ibn Ahmad (known as Mulla Jami), in his book *Shawahid al-nabuwah* (the evidence of the prophethood of Muhammad) gives account of the birth of the 12th Imam and his statement is in complete accord with what the Shi'ahs record.
9. Ibn Hajr Macchi, Shafi'i (d. 974 A.H.), in his well-known book *al-Sawaiq* has mentioned the 12th Imam as a boy of five at the time of the demise of his father al-'Askari and says God had gifted him with divine wisdom.
10. Muhammad ibn Mahmud (known as Khawja Parsa) in his book *Fasl al-Khitab* gives the account of the birth and occultation and reappearance of the 12th Imam.

11. Sheikh Abdul Haq Dehlawi, in his book *Jazb-e Qulub* narrates the statements of Hakimah, daughter of the ninth Imam who was asked by the 11th Imam, al-'Askari, to stay with Narjis, mother of the last Imam during the night at the end of which she gave birth to her son. Hakimah stated she was there when the baby was born, clean, circumcised and with glowing features. She took him to his father. He put his hand on the back of the baby and put his tongue in his mouth and performed all the customary rites of reciting *adhan* in the right ear and *iqama* in the left ear. Then he handed over the baby to her to carry him to his mother.

Hakimah state that afterwards she went to her nephew Imam al-'Askari and saw the baby dressed in yellow clothes. She found a fascinating halo round the child and it made her seek some information about the newborn. The Imam said, "Oh my aunt, behold, this newborn is the one whose birth we were awaiting and whose advent was prophesied by the all the vicegerents of God." Then she said, "I prostrated on the ground, thanking God for the good news." She used to call on her nephew from time to time. Once she did not see the baby and asked Imam al-'Askari about him. The Imam replied, "We have entrusted the baby to the one whom the mother of Musa (Moses) had entrusted her son."

12. Sayyid Jamaluddin Hussaini Muhaddith is the author of the celebrated book *Rawdat ul-Ahbab* is one of the reliable Waliullah Dehlawi, *Rawdat ul-Ahbab* is one of the reliable sources of reference. The author mentions the 12th Imam in the most reverential terms. He says, "The auspicious birth of the seal of the vicegerency and the precious form of the mine of guidance took place on the 15th of Sha'ban in the year 255 Hijrah at Samarrah." He described the Imam by the following titles: *Mahdi al-Muntazir* (the expected Mahdi), *al-Khalaf ul-Saleh* (the righteous successor) and *Sahib al-Zaman* (the Lord of the time), and narrates al-Mahdi was five years old when his father, al-'Askari, departed from this world, but the giver of all bounties, Allah, has bestowed on his bud the flowerbed of guidance the wisdom as he had bestowed on Yahya (John the Baptist) when he was a baby.

So the son of al-'Askari has attained the status of the Imam in his childhood (Rabi ul-Awwal 261 A.H. in the reign of Mu'tamad Abbasi). It was in the underground apartment of his residence at Samarrah that people saw him for the last time. Then the author narrates eloquently the account of the pleasure which the righteous devotees of the *Ahl al-Bayt* would have at the time of the appearance of the last vicegerent of God who would defeat all the wrongdoers and the unjust, and would make truth and justice prevail throughout the world.

13. Abdul Rahman Sufi in his work *Mir'at ul-Asrar* (the Mirror of Mysteries) states, "This is in remembrance of the sun of faith and might, the leader of all nations and religions, the purified successor of Ahmad, the Prophet, the rightful Imam, Abul Qasim, M H M D (the abbreviations of Muhammad), al-Mahdi, the son of Hassan al-'Askari. He is from the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and he is the 12th. His mother's name is Narjis. His birth took place at dawn of Friday, the 15th of Sha'ban, 255 A.H., at Samarrah. The 12th Imam's name and *kunyat* (M H M D) are the same as those of the Holy Prophet. His holy appellations are Mahdi and Hujjat (the expected one). He was five years old at the time of the

death of his father. He occupied the seat of *Imamate* in the manner as the Almighty God bestowed upon Yahya, son of Zakariya, when he raised Jesus to the lofty state when he was a baby. Thus, the last one in the chain of *Imamate* was made an Imam by God in his childhood. His attainments and supernatural deeds are so numerous that it is not possible to relate them in this short sketch.”

14. Ali Akbar, son of Asadullah Maududi, a scholar of the later period. In his book *Makashafath* (Visions), which is a commentary on *Nafahat al-Uns* by Abdul Rahman Jami asserts the existence of the expected al-Mahdi as being the pole of guidance after his father Imam Hassan al-‘Askari, who was also the pole of guidance and *Imamate*.

15. Ahmad ibn Hashim al-Baladhuri is one of the great scholars and traditionists who also asserts the *Imamate* and occultation of the 12th Imam.

16. Malikul ul-‘Ulama Dulatabadi is a well-known scholar who in his work *Hidayat al-Sa‘ada* has confirmed the *Imamate* and the occultation of al-Mahdi.

17. Nasr ibn ‘Ali Jahzami Nasri is one of the reliable reporters of traditions whom Khatib of Baghdad has praised in his historical work, and Yusuf Ganji Shafi’i, in his book *Manaqib* has introduced Nasr as one of the masters of Bukhari and Muslim. Nasr asserts the existence of *Qaim-e al-Muhammad*, the one among the Imams of the house of the Prophet whose duty is to establish Islam throughout the world.

18. Mulla ‘Ali Qari, one of the great traditionists, in his famous work *Mirqat* mentions the celebrated statement of the Holy Prophet that after him there would be 12 successors as *khalifs* (caliphs). Mulla ‘Ali says according to the Shi‘ahs, the 12 *khalifs* mentioned here are the successive Imams of the house of the Prophet. Whether they are in power or not makes no difference, they are the rightful Imams. Later, he mentions their names, beginning with ‘Ali and ending with al-Mahdi. He says it is in accordance with what is stated in detail by Khawja Muhammad Parsa in his work *Fasl al-Khitab* and followed by Nuruddin Abdul Rahman Jami in his work *Shawahid al-Nabuwath* Mulla ‘Ali says both Parsa and Jami have mentioned the virtues, attainments and super-natural deeds of the Imams.

19. Kazi Jawas Sibti was a Christian but later became a Muslim. He wrote *Barahin-e Sibti* (proofs forwarded by Sibti). It is written in refutation of Christian writers. He narrates the prophecy from Ashaya (Joshua), concerning the coming of a godly man from the chosen branch of the chosen lineage of Adam who would be the seat of the divine spirit. In other words, he will be filled with the spirit of wisdom, sympathy, justice and knowledge and will be God-fearing. God would bestow on him a sound and glowing reason and make him firm in godliness. His judgment would be based not only on apparent evidence but unimaginable insight. The writer has refuted the interpretation of the said passage by the Jews and Christians, and states it is a clear prophecy about the coming of al-Mahdi, about whom the Muslims are unanimous in which his judgment shall not be based on mere hearing an external evidence, but he will have divine insight about everything and judge people according to what they really are in their hearts.

He further says his method of judgment is peculiar to him and has not been adopted by any Prophet or vicegerent of God. The Muslims are unanimous in which the Mahdi of the description shall be the descendant of Fatima, daughter of the Holy Prophet and his name, nature and features will be the same as those of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. But some Sunnis say the name of his father will be 'Abdallah and his mother's name will be Aminah, and the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ahs firmly believe that he is the son of Hassan al-'Askari, in Samarra, during the reign of Mu'tamid-e 'Abbasi. He disappeared from sometime, and will reappear and judge the world by means of his deep insight. This view of the Shi'ah seems to be the real interpretation of the prophecy.

20. Shams al-Din Abul Muzaffar Yusuf known as Sibti ibn Jawzi, author of *Tadhkirat al-Khawass* (d. 654 A.H.), writes about the 12th Imam as follows, "He (al-Mahdi) is Muhammad ibn Hassan ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn us al-Riza" and tracing him to 'Ali, he further says, "His paternal appellation is Abu 'Abdallah and Abul Qasim: he (the 12th Imam) is the last successor (of the Prophet)," According to the writer he is the last Imam of the house, he is the "authoritative proof" of God (*al-Hujjat*), the master of the time (*Sahib al-Zaman*), and the expected one (*Muntazar*). Then the writer refers to the statement of Abul Aziz ibn Mahmud ibn Bazaz, who narrated from 'Abdallah, son of 'Umar, in which the Holy Prophet had said that during the last days of the world, a person will rise from among his descendants whose proper name and parental appellation (*kunyat*) would be the same as his and he would fill the world with justice which was as yet full of injustice.

21. Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Hassan al-Bayhaqi, the famous Shafi'i jurist (d. 458 A.H./1066 A.D.), has confirmed the birth of the son of al-'Askari and his being the expected Mahdi.

22. Sheikh Sadruddin, known as Hamavi (from Hama, a town in Syria), has written a book about the last Imam of the house of the Prophet. Sheikh Aziz ibn Muhammad known as al-Nasafi quotes from the book of Sadruddin Hamvi, "In the religions before the advent of our Holy Prophet Muhammad there was no name or appellation of *wali* or saint. The term then used was *nabi* or prophet. All godly people who were in close communion with God and who were the carriers of divine laws were called *anbia* or prophets.

In every religion the holy one was the law-giver and his successors who inherited his status and protected and preached his teachings were called Prophets. From Adam to Nuh, from Nuh to Ibrahim, from Ibrahim to Musa and from Musa to 'Isa (Jesus), all the successors in different religions were termed Prophets, but with the advent of the new religion and the new teachings brought by Muhammad, the last prophet, God selected 12 people from the house of Muhammad and made them the heirs of Muhammad and all that God had gifted him with the book, wisdom and the great kingdom. God let the 12 be in close communion with Him and He distinguished them with the privilege of having the status of *wilayat*. The famous saying of the Prophet, "The learned ones are the heirs of the Prophet" refers only to these 12 people.

The other saying of the Holy Prophet, "The learned ones from among my followers are the same as the

Prophets from among the children of Israel,” also refers to these 12. But the last *wali*, who is the last successor of the Prophet and is the 12th *wali* in the chain of *awlia*, is Mahdi, *Sahib al-Zaman*, his appellation and title should not be used for anyone else.” Nasafa continues to quote Sheikh Hamavi to the effect, the saints (*awlia*) in this world are not more than the aforesaid 12, and the 360 people, who are termed *Rijal al-Ghaib* (the invisible people), those incognito are not called *awlia* (saints). They are termed *abdals* (alterable saints).

23. Hussain ibn Moinuddin Maybudi, in his commentary on the collection of poems ascribed to Imam ‘Ali says, “I hope that by the grace of the giver of all bounties, our eyes will receive the light from the dust of the threshold of the 12th Imam and the whole structure of our personalities will be illuminated by the rays of the most universal and comprehensive sun of truth and reality. It is not difficult for God to respond to this prayer favourably.”

24. Sheikh Ahmad Jami, as quoted by Qanduzi, the author of *Yanabi al-Mawaddah*, and Qaze Nurullah, author of *Majalis al-Mu’minin*, has composed the following lines:

My heart is fine and bright with love of Haydar.
Next to Haydar, Hassan is our guide and leader.
Like a dog, I am lying down on
The threshold of Abul Hassan.
The dust beneath the shoes of Hussain
Is the eyeliner (*surmah*) for my eyes.
‘Abideen, the ornament of all devotees
Is like a crown on my head.
Baqir is the light of both my eyes.
The religion of Ja‘far is true and the path of Musa is right.
Oh loyal ones, “Listen to me praising the king of kings (Raza)
Who is buried in Khurasan.”
A particle from the dust of his tomb is the cure of all pains.
Leader of men of faith is Taqi, oh dear Muslims.
If you love Naqi in preference of all other people,
You have done the thing which is proper and right.
‘Askari is the light of the eyes of both Adam and the world.
Where can be found, in the world,
Such a chief in command like Mahdi?

The poets have composed poems to get silver and gold, but Ahmad Jami had done so because he is the devoted slave of the king of the saints (‘Ali).

25. Fariduddin ‘Attar of Nishapur, the celebrated Sufi saint about whom Rumi has said, “Attar has made tour of all the seven cities of love, and we are still stranded at the bend of the street and have not yet

covered it.” Qanduzi quotes the following lines from ‘Attar’s work: *Manifestation of Divine Attributes*:

Of the messengers of God, Mustafa is the last in the world.

Of the saints (*awliya*) in close communion with God,

Murtadha is manifestly the top.

All the issues of Haydar are saints.

All are made of the same light, God has declared that.

After giving the names of the Imams of the house, Attar continues:

There are hundreds and thousands of godly men

Of saintly status on Earth, who admire Mahdi

And pray for his advent.

Oh my God! Bring out Mahdi for me

From the veil of occultation so

The universal justice may become evident.

Mahdi, the guide, is the crown

On the head of all the pious ones.

Of the 12 saints of the House, he is the most shining one.

Oh the One with whom the chain of saints (*awliya*)

Of the time ends and is sealed, You are hidden from all.

Oh the soul of souls. Oh the One who is both evident and hidden

Behold Your slave, Attar is praising You.

26. Jalaluddin Muhammad of Balkh, known as Maulkavi Rumi, migrated from Tabriz to Qunya in Asia Minor, settled and died there in the year of 672 A.H. His *Mathnawi* is the unrivalled masterpiece of the loftiest presentation of Islamic thought in mystic garb. He is also the author of the lyrical work *Divan-e Shams Tabriz*. This work is the outburst of his extreme love and veneration for his mystic master, Shamsuddin Tabrizi.

Here is one of Rumi’s lyrics:

Oh Ali! Oh head and chief of the real men,

All of them salute you.

Oh ‘Ali, oh foremost of men, all of them salute you.

Tell the killer of the infidels, the religion and the religious one,

Tell Haydar, the doubtless warrior,

All drunk with love, salute you.

Tell the casket of the two precious gems.

Tell the zodiac house of the two shining stars

(Fatima, the daughter of the Holy Prophet).

Tell Shabbar and Shabbir,
Tell each of them, all drunk with love, salute you.
Tell ‘Abid, the ornament of religion.
Tell Baqir, the light of the religion.
Tell Ja‘far, the truthful,
Tell each of them, all drunk with love, salute you.
Tell Musa, the forbearer
Tell the learned one, buried in Tus,
Tell the straight one (who is holding the affairs firm),
Tell each of them, all drunk with love, salute you.
Tell Hadi, the chief in charge of religion,
Tell ‘Askari, the guided one,
Tell Mahdi, the guided saint,
Tell each of them, all drunk with love, salute you.
Tell the vernal breeze,
Tell the lucky one,
Tell shams of Tabriz, all drunk with love, salute you.

27. Sheikh Salahuddin Safdi (d. 764 A.H.) was the master of the mystic significance of the alphabets, and author of *Sharh-e Dai’yrāh* (the Explanation of the Circle). As quoted by Qanduzi in *Yanabi*, Safdi said, “The promised Mahdi is indeed the same 12th of the 12 Imams, the first of whom is our master, ‘Ali, and the last of whom is Mahdi.”

28. Sheikh ‘Amir ibn Basri has composed a eulogy called *Qasidah Tayya*. The composition contains theosophical lore, maxims, mystical points and matters of etiquette. It is divided into 12 pieces, each termed as a piece of light, the ninth piece is about the recognition of the master of the time, and the time of his reappearance. Of the pieces three lines are quoted here:

Oh Imam Mahdi how long will you be hidden?
Oblige us, oh our father with your return!
We feel sad the waiting time is prolonged.
For the sake of your Lord, bless us with your audience.
Oh the pole of existence! Hasten, oh our beloved!
Return so we may enjoy your sight.
Surely, it is a great pleasure
For a lover to meet his beloved after a long absence.

35. Hussain ibn Hamdan al-Husaini in his work *al-Hidaya* mentions the 12th Imam, the master of the time, as the son of the 11th Imam, Hassan al-‘Askari.

36. The well-known biographer, ibn Khallakan in his work *Wafyat al-A‘yan* has given a brief account of

the birth of the Imam.

37. Ibn al-Azraq, as quoted by Ibn Khallakan, asserts the existence of the 12th Imam.

38. Ibn al-Wardi, the historian, in his work asserts the birth of the son of al-'Askari in 255 A.H.

39. Syed Mumin Shablanji in his work *Nur al-Absar* gives the genealogy of Imam M H M D (abbreviation of Muhammad) as the 12th Imam, and his various titles and appellations.

40. Abul Fawz Muhammad Amin al-Suwaidi of Baghdad, the genealogist, in his work on the tribes of Arabs, *Sya'ak al-Dhab*, after mentioning the names of the 12 Imams of the house, confirms the existence of Mahdi, and he (Mahdi) was five years old when his father al-'Askari passed away.

41. Muafaq ibn Ahmad, known as *Khatib Khawarzum*, refers to other works in this connection and confirms it.

42. Syed 'Ali Hamdani in his famous work *Mawadat al-Qurba* asserts the existence of the 12th Imam.

43. Sheikh Muhammad Sabban Mesri in his work confirms the existence of the 12th Imam of the house of the Prophet.

44. Abdul Falah Abdul Hayi Nanbali in his work *Shuzarat al-Sahab* asserts the birth of Mahdi.

45. Al-Sayyid Nusaimi has mentioned the 12th Imam on the authority of al-Qanduzi.

46. Sheikh Abd al-Rahman 'Ali ibn Ahmad Bastami, as quoted by Qanduzi, confirms the existence of Hemdi, a descendant of Hussain and gives his brief description in eulogistic terms.

47. Sheikh Abdul Karim Yamani's poem in praise of the Mahdi has been quoted by Qanduzi.

48. Sheikh Sulayman ibn Ibrahim, known as *Khawajah Kalan* (the senior most), is from Qanduz in Balkh and a famous Sufi (d. 1294 A.H./1877 A.D.). He is the author of the famous book *Yanabi al-Mawaddah*, which is the outcome of his extensive research. He has established from important Sunni sources that love for the *Ahl al-Bayt* is the only right path, an Islamic way of life. He believes in the 12 Imams from the house of the prophet.

49. Qazi Fazlullah Rozbahan has written books against the Shi'ahs, particularly against Allama Hilli, the famous Shi'ah divine during the ninth century A.H., but believes in the existence of the 12th Imam as a blessing.

50. Rashiduddin of Delhi in his work *al-Imam al-Ithnan 'Ashar* (the 12th Imam) confirms the existence of the Imam, as the title indicates.

There are many other prominent scholars of the Sunni school who are firm believers in the 12 Imams in

general and the last one in particular. They believe in the same manner as the Shi'ahs believe.

In 1343 A.H. when the author of these lines himself had the honour of pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Mecca (the Ka'ba) and the holy mosque of Medina (Masjid al-Nabawi), the names of the 12 Imams of the house, along with the names of the first four caliphs, the four Imams of the Sunni school of *fiqh*, and some other Sunni religious leaders were found inscribed round the walls of the holy mosque. Once a Sunni scholar, who is a friend of the author, told me about his impression when during his pilgrimage he found the names of the 12 Imams there.

He said when he saw the inscription in the Holy Prophet's mosque, he thought it was quite natural to express the names of the Sunni religious leaders inscribed there, because the holy shrine had always been administered by Sunni rulers. With the exception of a few years of the Fatimid rule in the Hijaz during the fourth century A.H. No Shi'ah ruler had any domain over there or had the opportunity to insert the name of the 12 Imams. He reasoned the presence of the names of the Holy Imams was entirely due to their spiritual attributes. This is the force of knowledge and spirituality which kept their names alive in the hearts of the true Muslims in spite of a well-organized opposition.

Apostates

Besides the four recognized genuine deputies of the 12th Imam, a few apostates also posed as the nominated agents of the Imam during the minor occultation. But their apostatic and inconsistent views and practices on the one hand, and the epistles from the Imam repudiating them on the other, exposed them. The result was the heretical movement died in its infancy and could not form a separate sect. But their tactics set a pattern for the latter day claimants and imposters.

1. Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Numayri

Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Numayri tried to rival Muhammad ibn 'Uthman al-'Umari, the second deputy and claimed to be the nominated agent of the last Imam. But al-'Umari being the recognized deputy of the tenth, 11th and 12th Imams was too strong an opponent for a person like al-Numayri, who was already condemned by the tenth Imam for his heretical views and activities. Al-Numayri had claimed the tenth Imam to be God and himself to be a prophet sent by him. He believed in transmigration and incarnation and was accused of allowing marriages which were prohibited by Islam, and other obnoxious practices. He was a disciple of Muhammad ibn Musa al-Shari'i and Ali ibn Haska ibn Baba, one of his main associates who was also condemned and cursed by the tenth Imam, al-Naqi. He may be considered as one of the ring leaders of the ultra-Shi'ahs of his time (in the third and fourth centuries A.H.)

The origin of this particular sect can be traced back to the first half of the first century Hijrah. It was named Nusayri after Muhammad ibn Nusayr. The prevailing political conditions of the time provided an opportunity for such apostates to revive their un-Islamic creed. The ruling authority went all out to

suppress the Shi'ah faith. Imam 'Ali al-Naqi and his son, the 11th Imam, Hassan al-'Askari, were under house arrest at Samarra. Their devotees had few opportunities of having an audience with the Imams freely. The movements of both the Imams and their followers were strictly watched by the government, so these imposters could easily approach the credulous Shi'ahs and poison their minds with false claims.

When the Imams or their recognized deputies denounced their claims, the claimants interpreted the denunciation as a sort of *taqiya* (dissimulation). Nevertheless, the Shia faith in its true term was also so well-established at that time no one but the ignorant or self-interested people would care for such apostasies. Muhammad ibn Nusayr realized the failure of his attempt and tried to have an interview with Muhammad al-'Umari, the second deputy, but he was refused. Nusayr lived until 300 A.H., unnoticed by the Shias.

2. Hussain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj

Hussain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj of Baiza (a district of Fars) became a celebrated theosophist of the Sufi order. He lived in the second half of the third century A.H. and was sentenced to death at the end of 309 A.H. All his contemporary jurists of the Sunni and Shia schools of thought condemned him as a cheat pretending to follow the path of the Sufis. He claimed his scholarship in every science but he was ignorant of them all. He knew some occult art of alchemy. He was ambitious, bold and active against the rulers and used to embark upon great schemes to overthrow the government. To his followers he claimed to be God or His incarnation. He pretended himself before the rulers as a Shia and for the public he posed as a Sufi. He used bombastic terms of the Sufis which implied his being the incarnation of God. He was questioned by the authorities and the jurists several times.

He also claimed to be the agent of the Imam but this was repudiated and he was impeached by the 12th Imam through an epistle received by Muhammad al-'Umari. He was condemned by the unanimous verdict of the jurists and, therefore, hanged. For almost 200 years, the man continued to be mentioned by all biographers as an impious imposter until the celebrated Sufi saint, Sheikh Abu Hassan Kharraqani consecrated him among the Sufi saints of the first order. Ever since, he has become the hero of many Sufi legendary wonders. His slogan *An al-Haq* (I am the Truth) is presented by the Sufis as an example of the mystic experience of the union of the finite with the infinite. He became the exemplary hero of the mystic poetry of later periods.

“It is allowed and tolerated, if a tree says, ‘I am the Truth,’ why is it not allowed and tolerated if a fortunate man says, ‘I am the Truth.’” It is a translation of the Persian couplet in his appreciation. A legend narrates that when Hallaj was hanged, a few drops of his blood fell on the ground and they formed the letterings on the ground, “I am the Truth.”

To prove the saintliness of a person, according to the Sufis, there is no need for any evidence of his accomplishments, knowledge or piety. Such accomplishments are rather considered as hindrances to

saintly attainments. For proof of a person's saintliness, the dream or vision of a recognized saint of Sufi order is reliable. The time distance between the consecrated one and the consecrator is ignored. Let the Sufis have al-Hallaj elevated to whatever station they like, but he has no representative status on behalf of the 12th Imam or any previous Imams of the house.

[3. Al-Shalmaghani](#)

Muhammad ibn 'Ali, known as ibn Abi al-Azaqir, belonged to Shalmaghan, a village in the district of Waset. At the beginning of his career he seemed to be a true adherent of the Shia faith but he was ambitious. He expected Muhammad, the second deputy, to nominate him as the agent to the Imam after him. But contrary to his expectations and those of many others, he nominated Abul Qasim Hussain ibn Ruh Nowbakti as his successor, and the third deputy of the Imam. So jealousy for Nowbakti forced Shalmaghani to the wrong path. He was denounced and cursed in the epistle of the 12th Imam received by Abul Qasim Hussain ibn Ruh. For apostasy, he was sentenced by the jurists in 322 A.H.

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