

THE CALF

by

Ahmed Al-Hasan

Symbols used throughout this translation include:

Ⓟ Peace be upon him/her/them

Ⓟ Peace be upon him (Muhammad) and his family (Ali[Ⓟ] and the purified progeny of Muhammad[Ⓟ]).

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Dedication

To those who uphold the words “There is no deity except God”...

To those who carried their shrouds¹ and walked toward God ...

To the Prophets, Messengers, and Imams®

O honorable masters,

This poor man offers you peace and this insignificant commodity,

And with a heart full of monotheism of God and submission to you, says:

We and our family have been afflicted, so be charitable toward us, for God rewards the charitable ones.

Ahmed Al-Hasan
December, 2000

¹ A cloth used for burying the dead. Here, it is referring to those who do not care about dying, being persecuted, or killed, especially as a consequence of speaking up—Trans.

Introduction

In the name of God, the Abundantly Merciful, the Intensely Merciful

Praise be to God. May God's prayers be upon Muhammad and his family, the infallible ones. And may the prayers of God be upon the Blessed End, the Light of God, and His Proof (*Hujjah*)² on His earth; may my soul be ransomed for him.

The Almighty said: {[13] On the [same] Day the hypocrite men and hypocrite women will say to those who believed, "Wait for us that we may acquire some of your light," and it will be said, "Go back behind you and seek light." A wall will be placed between them with a door; its interior side will contain mercy, but on its outside is torment. [14] The hypocrites will call to the believers, "Were we not with you?" They will say, "Yes, but you afflicted yourselves and awaited [misfortune for us] and doubted, and wishful thinking deluded you until the command of God came. And the Deceiver deceived you concerning God. [15] So today, no ransom will be taken from you or from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the fire. It is most worthy of you, and wretched is the destination.}"³

In the stories of previous prophets and the nations that sometimes followed them but at other times followed the Samiris, occasionally supporting the prophets but often failing them and supporting tyrants instead, there is a moral for those who consider and a reminder for those who reflect.

To comprehend what became of the Prince of Believers and his infallible sons⁴ requires

² The *Hujjah* is translated as "Proof", as he is the Proof of God upon the creation—Trans.

³ Quran Chapter "The Iron" 57:13-15.

⁴ The definition of an infallible is one who does not mislead or deceive, and who is incapable of error when defining doctrines related to faith or morals—Trans.

researching these stories. Examining those stories that take place from the time leading up to and following the death of the Prophet helps. The events include the displacement of his successor⁵, the seizing of his authority, and the tragedies these events brought to this Islamic community after the Prophet's death⁶.

Even today, the Islamic community continues to experience suffering as a result of these afflictions.

The Prince of Believers and his infallible sons suffered at the hands of the tyrants who seized the helm of governance with oppressive force. They also suffered from the leaders of misguidance—the Samiris—who were always trying to distort the jurisprudence of the Muslims and degrade them.

Therefore, I, the one who is poor [before God], whose work is meager and missteps many, decided to present this research so that it may serve as a shield for some believers to avoid falling into the abyss.⁶ An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and the only remedy for siding with the Sufyani or the clerics of evil who will fight the Mahdi⁶ is drinking scalding water and being chained in hellfire. This book may motivate some believers to prepare the proper foundation to establish the state of justice on the earth, based on the belief that “there is no deity but God,” the state of truth and justice of the Mahdi⁶ at a time when worldwide injustice prevails. The American tyrant is stifling the weak nations day after day and leading the people of the earth toward the abyss. As for the tyrants who control the Islamic communities, if they are not slaves to these tyrants, the likes of whom humankind has never seen before on the earth, then they join him in worshipping Satan. The Muslim nations, which are the weakest in the world, suffer from two issues:

First: the hammers of the tyrant America,⁷ as well as the tyrants dominating the Muslim nations.

Second: the tyrants that typically exist inside an Islamic framework; the dysfunctional clerics who claim to represent Islam. These clerics have marginalized Islamic communities and obtained many followers, to whom they teach passivity, submission, and surrendering to tyrants, all of which leads to repression, hunger, and humiliation.

⁵ This symbol[®] stands for “peace be upon him” and refers to the prophets and messengers. When the same symbol is underlined, it refers to Prophet Muhammad^ﷺ, and stands for “peace be upon him and his family.”

⁶ The abyss: deviating from the true religion of God—Trans.

⁷ Meaning the oppression that the US exerts over Islamic countries—Trans.

Inside and outside the Islamic communities, the war is continuous. A disbelieving enemy is incessantly striking from the outside, and a hypocrite is plaguing from the inside. From the outside, we have the Pharaoh or Pilate, and from the inside, we have the Samiri, or the dysfunctional clerics of the Children of Israel.

From one side, a tyrant is waging a relentless war on the religion of Islam. A television channel presents verses from the Holy Quran; a few minutes later, the channel displays songs, images of semi-naked women, and TV series aimed at dismantling the Islamic societal structure. You could say that all that is left to do is to shave the beard and elongate the mustache, as the Magi did in ancient times.⁸ This is Islam, according to them! They kill the believers who say, “There is no deity except God,” imprison their women, and demolish their homes! The greatest catastrophe is that some of the oppressors claim to be Arabs and carry out their injustices, such as attacking and raping women and filling their prisons with women and children, in the name of Arabism.

The truth is that the Arab man is honorable. If he fights, he fights men, not women. So, to what type of Arabism do those gypsies—the remnants of the Mongols and Tartars—lay claim? They have darkened the face of mankind and committed crimes and scandals of which even Pharaoh and Nimrod (may God curse them), who lived at the time of Moses and Abraham, would be ashamed.

From the other side, the Samiri (dysfunctional cleric)⁹ attempts to distort Islam’s jurisprudence, neglecting the obligation to command good and forbid evil. He does not strive in the way of God through words or actions, even when he can. He pretends to forget that the Messenger of God^ﷺ said, “**You are to command good and forbid evil, or the worst of you will be empowered against the rest of you. The best of you will then pray, and your prayers will not be answered.**”¹⁰

Is anyone more evil than the tyrants who are oppressing the Islamic communities today? The results of such oppression exist, so precursors to it must have existed, and they continue to exist today. The reason for the tyrannical authority over Islamic societies today is that these societies followed the dysfunctional clerics’ footsteps by abandoning their responsibility to command good and forbid evil. They have abandoned this obligation because the dysfunctional clerics abandoned it: “If the cleric is corrupt, the world is

⁸ The Magi are members of the Zoroastrian priesthood of the ancient Persians—Trans.

⁹ A scholar who is insincere and doesn’t put his knowledge into practice, nor does he practice what he preaches—Trans.

¹⁰ *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient Book] vol 5, 56.

corrupt.” Subservience, submission, and giving in to the tyrant and the love of this world, love of life, and an unnatural fear of death are deeply rooted in the souls of many Muslims today. These Muslims are beginning to think that a humiliating life is better than an honorable death. So, just like that, humans degrade themselves and subvert the standards of Islam with these dissident thoughts. It is Satan's (may God curse him) ultimate desire for the weak Islamic communities to remain immobile between the hammer and the anvil; for example, between the Pharaoh and the Samiri. These weaker communities are stuck between a tyrant, corrupting, killing, and looting, and a dysfunctional cleric who avoids commanding good and forbidding evil. Behind the curtain, the fingers of the American tyrant move the strings left and right, leaving no remnant of Islam but its name.

The obligation of today's clerics is to reform the Islamic communities. They must bear the weight of the message they have undertaken. Do you, students of religious studies and clerics of Islam, both Shia and Sunni, believe that you are only expected to obtain rational, conveyed knowledge without applying it or commanding good and forbidding evil, even though part of your obligation is to reform the Muslim communities, warn their people, and be prepared to sacrifice everything to strive in the way of God?

If that is what you believe, then I am telling you the truth: You are wrong.

It is not difficult to acquire rational knowledge that is conveyed to you. However, giving your food to a captive, a stranded traveler, and a destitute person, like Imam Ali did, is a difficult task. Living your life for the sake of making others happy and getting rid of unfairness and injustice is difficult. Giving to others in God's way, as Imam Hussain[®] did, is truly difficult.

Peace be upon you, O father of Abdullah. May my parents be of service to you. You have given up everything, including the infant and women who were with you.¹¹ You left no excuse for the apathetic ones.

If you do not go further than acquiring knowledge and performing your own worship, you are giving the tyrants everything they desire: to turn you into servants, not clerics. The term “servant” cannot be dissociated from the cleric who does not carry out his duty to command good and forbid evil. The infallible ones[®] have said that the cleric is better than seventy servants because he is occupied with the salvation of the people, whereas the servant is occupied with his own salvation.

¹¹ Imam Hussain[®] risked everything in the event of Karbala: his own life, family, his infant, and the women—Trans.

Imam Al-Sadiq[®] said, “Narrating our words that strengthen hearts is better than a thousand worshippers.”¹²

The Almighty said: {A company from every group should go forth to obtain understanding of the religion. Then they can warn their people when they return to them, so they might be cautious}¹³ to warn their people, not to fall asleep or warn one or two individuals. O people, if your concern is saving yourselves, do not say that you are religious students or clerics, and do not wear the clothes they wear to deceive people. Do not be a wolf in sheep’s clothing as many are today. This is not the place for requesting the temporal world or fulfilling desires, but rather for bearing the weight of the message of the prophets and infallible ones[®], so be cautious. Otherwise, you will lose this world and the hereafter.

Jesus[®] said, “The clerics of evil are like a rock that falls on the mouth of a river. The rock does not drink, nor does it allow water to reach the plants.”¹⁴

In 1971, when Sayyed Al-Khomeini (may God have mercy on him) was in the Holy City of Najaf, and his students were waiting for him to give a lesson about self-discipline, he began by saying, “I feel an obligation on some occasions to remind the gentlemen here about the disasters that befell the Muslims . . .” He then said, “Now you want me to talk about ethics? We will never be ethical unless we think about these circumstances. If we had been ethical, we would have considered them.”

So I say to the dysfunctional clerics: Compare your actions to the conduct of the prophets and messengers. Praise be to God, there are enough of their[®] stories in the Quran before us today that will confirm the drastic difference between your life and theirs. So, either follow the path of the prophets and messengers, or step aside so that you do not become obstacles on the path to reaching God, similar to what the Prince of Believers[®] said, “I say to you what Jesus[®] said to the arrogant and dysfunctional Jewish clerics: [13] ‘But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.’”¹⁵

Wake up before your soul reaps what it has sown and perishes; wake up before the day

¹² *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient Book], vol 1, 33.

¹³ The full verse is: {it is not for the believers to go forth all at once. For every group of people, a company from among them should go forth to obtain understanding of the religion, and then they can warn their people when they come back to them that they might be cautious} Quran Chapter “The Repentance” 9:122—Trans.

¹⁴ *Faydh al-Qadeer* [The Overflow of the Spring], vol 4, 206.

¹⁵ Matthew 23:13.

comes when you say, “How great is our regret over what we neglected regarding God.”

The roots of Islam and the Muslims are being annihilated today, and you want me to talk about self-discipline?

Wake up before the sword of Fatima’s son leaves its sheath, for then you [clerics] will regret your actions that placed you in the opposition’s trenches. Wake up and admit your obscene wrongdoings, as shame is better than entering hellfire.

At the same time, I praise the ascetic clerics who work and strive, whose exterior reflects what is within them, who work day and night to spread justice within the Islamic community through the words, “There is no deity but God”—though they are very few—as Imam Al-Sadiq[®] has stated.¹⁶

God will bless these clerics’ work and make it a source of abundant good, God willing. So do not become weak or tired. God willing, you are the higher ones. Blessed are those known in the heavens but unknown on the earth, despite their abundant work and few possessions. I ask God to make me a servant of those blessed ones and resurrect me

¹⁶ Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Khaliq and Abu Basir narrated that Abu Abdullah[®] said,

“O Abu Muhammad, there is a secret with us from the secrets of God, and knowledge from the knowledge of God that no one can bear. Not even an angel near to God, a prophet, messenger, or a believer whose heart God has been tested for faith can bear it. By God! God has not assigned anyone to bear this knowledge except us, nor has He assigned anyone to worship Him with this knowledge except us. There is a secret from the secrets of God and knowledge from the knowledge of God with us. God had commanded us to preach it, so we preached what God, the Most Majestic, the Most Gracious, commanded us to preach. However, we had not found a place or people who would bear this message until God created certain groups. They were created from the clay and the light from which God had created Muhammad and his descendants. He made them with the grace of His Mercy from which He had made Muhammad and his descendants. We then preached what God had commanded us to preach, and they accepted and acknowledged it. (Through us, the knowledge reached them, and they accepted and acknowledged it). Our words had reached them and their hearts inclined towards us, recognizing us and our words. Had they not been created from this [clay], they would not have been like this. No, by God, they would not have borne it.” Then he said, “God created certain groups of people for hell and the fire. He then commanded us to preach to these people as we had preached to the earlier ones. But to these later ones, the message seemed repugnant, and their hearts felt hatred. They rejected it from us, did not acknowledge it, and considered it to be lies. They said, ‘They are magicians and liars.’ God then placed a seal on their hearts and made them forgetful. Then, God made their tongues speak some of the truth. They speak it, though their hearts are in denial, as a defense of His guardians and those who obey Him. If this were not the case, no one would have worshipped God on the earth. He commanded us to withhold, hide, and conceal these secrets [the hadiths] from them. You must also keep these secrets from those God commanded to avoid, and conceal from those whom God commanded concealment and secrecy.” The narrator said that the Imam[®] then raised his hands and wept and said, “O Lord, this is a very small group. Make our lives like their lives and our death like their death. Do not allow any of Your enemies to dominate them because that will agonize us. If that were to happen, no one would worship You on the earth. May God send blessings upon Muhammad and his family, and may You bless them abundantly” *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient Book], vol 1, 406.

with their group—despite my great ignorance and little knowledge and work—by His favor, mercy, and generosity.

I only wanted to reform whatever I could,¹⁷ begging the Living One who does not die that I am not of those who fear criticism when it comes to God. My support is from God alone. I rely upon Him and turn to Him. He is my supporter and He supports the righteous. I take refuge in God from humiliation in this world and in the hereafter.

I fortify by the Owner of Sovereignty and the Kingdom; I hold fast to the Owner of Ability and Might; I seek help from the Owner of Greatness and Divinity, from all that I fear and am wary of, and by Muhammad, Ali, Fatima, Al-Hassan, Al-Hussein, Ali, Muhammad, Jafar, Musa, Ali, Muhammad, Ali, Al-Hassan and Muhammad®. Praise be to God alone.

In the name of God, the Abundantly Merciful, the Intensely Merciful {[10] [Mention] when your Lord called Moses, [saying], "Go to the wrongdoing people— [11] The people of Pharaoh. Will they not fear God?" [12] [Moses] said, "My Lord, I fear that they will deny me, [13] and that my breast will tighten, and my tongue will not be fluent, so send for Aaron. [14] They have upon me a [claim due to] sin, so I fear that they will kill me." [15] [God] said, "No. Go both of you with Our signs; We are with you, listening.}"¹⁸

The Promise of Iblis

The Almighty says:

{[71] [So mention] when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I am going to create a human being from wet clay. [72] So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration." [73] So the angels prostrated themselves entirely. [74] Except for Iblis; he was arrogant and was among the disbelievers. [75] [God] said, "O Iblis, what prevented you from prostrating yourself to that which I created with My

¹⁷ To reform neglecting to command good and forbid evil—Trans.

¹⁸ Quran Chapter "The Poets" 26:10-15.

hands? Were you arrogant [then], or were you [already] among the haughty?" [76] He said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from wet clay." [77] [God] said, "Then get out of Paradise, for indeed, you are expelled. [78] Indeed, upon you is My curse until the Day of Reckoning." [79] He said, "My Lord, then reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected." [80] [God] said, "So indeed, you are of those reprieved [81] Until the Appointed Day. [82] [Iblis] said, "By your might, I will surely mislead them all [83] Except for Your chosen servants among them." [84] [God] said, "The truth [is My oath], and the truth I say [85] [That] I will surely fill hell with you and those of them that follow you all together."}¹⁹

God Almighty created Adam[®] and commanded the angels to prostrate themselves to him. This prostration was a practical acknowledgment of Adam's merit over the angels[®]. These sacred beings prostrated themselves in the way that is customary for their circumstances and world. The prostration was not to the body of Adam[®], but to his spirit and inner truth. The prostration was actually directed through Adam and toward the truth of Muhammad, the complete human and the closest veil.²⁰ Through Muhammad[®], the angels' prostration turned toward the Ever Living One Who does not die. God Almighty did not command them to prostrate themselves until after He had projected the ideal image of God onto the body of Adam[®], blowing His Spirit into him. It is narrated that the Prophet[®] said, "God created Adam in His image." In other words, Adam[®], the human being, or let us say the created being, is capable of acquiring the divinely perfect attributes to the highest degree possible. Although Adam[®] did not reach the distance of two bows' brace heights or nearer,²¹ this distance was reached by one from his lineage: Muhammad[®], the chosen and purified one. Iblis (may God curse him) recognized a part of this truth but rebelled, did not prostrate himself with the angels, and remained on the earth. He looked at the material from which Adam's body was created and compared it to the energy, or fire, from which he himself was created, deciding that fire is nobler than matter. He was heedless regarding the truth of Adam[®] and his nearness to God. Thus, Iblis fell into the abyss, despite his vast knowledge and lengthy worship, because he was not a sincere worshipper of God. Instead, he was a sincere worshipper of himself; throughout all of his time spent worshipping, he sought only exaltedness and rank.

The test of prostrating himself to Adam[®] was a huge catastrophe for Iblis that shook him

¹⁹ Quran Chapter "Sad" 38: 71-85.

²⁰ Muhammad[®] was the only one for whom all veils toward God were lifted, thereby becoming a veil of the Divine self—Trans.

²¹ The distance of the brace height of two bows in that it is the closest distance that anyone has gotten to God—Trans.

to his core, and he envied Adam[®]. If you were to imagine it, you would have found him saying at the time, “I spend all this time in worship, and God creates a worshipper who is better than me as soon as he is created and the moment he speaks? He gets to be elevated and raised so that the angels are lower than him?” This veil²² prevented him from seeing the truth about Adam and drove him to look for an excuse to convince himself to not prostrate himself and to argue with his Lord.

The response of God Almighty was nothing but expulsion and damnation because Iblis was of those who reject the signs out of injustice and arrogance, while the inner self is convinced of the truth.²³ The Almighty said: {We assign that home of the hereafter to those who do not desire exaltedness or corruption upon the earth. And the best outcome is for the pious.}²⁴

So Iblis (may God curse him) was not an ignorant one who needed to be taught, nor was he a disobedient one who needed to be scolded and disciplined. Instead, he was an arrogant, knowledgeable cleric whose oppressive, conceited nature would not be dissuaded. Adam was the reason for Iblis's expulsion from the mercy of God, as Iblis's soul inclined toward despising this new creation. Also, Iblis's dismissal is what motivated him to make enemies out of Adam and his lineage. He requested a reprieve and postponement of accountability until the day of resurrection in order to misguide them [Adam and his progeny] from the straight path. However, God Almighty gave him time only until the Appointed Day, and this cursed one promised to misguide the children of Adam from the straight path of God:

{[16] [Iblis] said, "Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your straight path. [17] Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You]."}²⁵

The Appointed Day is the day of the rise of the Mahdi[®]. Is-haq Ibn Ammar narrated that he asked Imam [Al-Sadiq][®] about God's reprieve for Iblis until the Appointed Day that He mentioned in His book. He[®] said, “The Appointed Day is the day of the rise of the Riser.²⁶ When God dispatches him, he will be in the Kufa mosque. Iblis will come, kneel before him, and say, ‘Woe to me on this day.’ The Riser will strike his neck. That Day of the

²² Of darkness—Trans.

²³ {And they rejected out of injustice and haughtiness, while their inner souls were convinced of it} Quran Chapter “The Ants” 27:14.

²⁴ Quran Chapter “The Stories” 28:83.

²⁵ Quran Chapter “The Heights” 7:16-17.

²⁶ The Mahdi is the Islamic eschatological figure who will spread justice all over the earth after it has been filled with injustice and tyranny—Trans.

Appointed Time is the end of him.”²⁷

The Gospel mentions that in the Minor Resurrection, which is the time of the rise of Imam Al-Mahd[®], Satan will be chained. The Book of the Revelation of John states:

[1] Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. [2] And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, [3] and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.²⁸

Sayyed Ibn Tawoos (may God have mercy upon him) states:

Regarding the question of Iblis and God’s response to him, I found the following mentioned in the book of Prophet Enoch[®]: He [Iblis] said, “My Lord, reprieve me until the Day of Resurrection.” God said, “No. However, you are of those reprieved until the Day of the Appointed Time. On that day you will die and perish, and I will purify the earth from disbelief, associating anything with Me, and sin. I chose servants of mine for that time whose hearts I tested for faith and filled with understanding, sincerity, certitude, piety, humility, honesty, tolerance, patience, dignity, holiness, asceticism toward this world, and desire for what I have. I will make them of those who call to the sun and the moon.²⁹ I will make them vicegerents on the earth and firmly establish their religion to my level of satisfaction. They will worship Me and not associate others with Me. They will establish prayer and give charity at certain, specific times. They will command good and forbid evil. At that time, I will place the Trust³⁰ on the earth, and no one will cause harm or fear anything. The vermin and cattle will be among the people and will not hurt each other. I will remove the sting of every vermin and the poison of whatever bites. I will send down blessings from the heavens and the earth, and the earth will bloom with the best of plants and bring out all its fruits and scents. I will place compassion and mercy among them so they comfort each other and share their provision, and the poor will become rich. They will not be arrogant toward one another. The old will be merciful toward the young, and the young will respect the old. They will practice in truth and rule by it, and because of it, they will be just.

²⁷ *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 52, 376.

²⁸ Revelation 20:1-3.

²⁹ The Sun and Moon are figurative for two of God’s vicegerents—Trans.

³⁰ Imam al-Mahd[®]—Trans.

These are my supporters. I selected for them a chosen, faithful, trustworthy prophet. I made him a prophet and messenger, and made them his righteous ones and supporters. I selected them as a community for my chosen Prophet, my faithful and trustworthy one. Everyone knows that the Appointed Time will surely come, even though the exact hour of its occurrence is hidden in the knowledge of My unseen. On that day, I will eradicate you [Iblis] and all your horses, your men, and your soldiers. Go! You are among those who are reprieved until the Day of the Appointed Time.”³¹

This is the story of Iblis, the scholar, the worshipper who fell into the abyss, whose arrogance led him into hellfire. This story contains a lesson for those who learn and a reminder for those who remember, but where are the ones who will happen upon this lesson and not only learn, but also remember?

The Prince of Believers[®] said,

You should learn a lesson from what God did with Iblis. He nullified his great deeds and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, even though Iblis had worshipped God for six thousand years—it is not known whether this time measurement is by the rules of this world or the next. After what happened to Iblis, can anyone feel safe from God while committing a similar disobedience? No one at all will be safe. God, the Glorified One, will not let a human being enter Paradise who has perpetrated the same act for which God turned away an angel. His command is the same for all the inhabitants of the sky and earth. God has no tolerance for, nor does He give license to, any individual from His creation to engage in an undesirable thing that He considers unlawful for all of the worlds.

Therefore, beware, lest Iblis infect you with his disease, lead you astray through his call, or harm you with his horsemen and footmen. By my life, he has put the arrow in the bow, stretched it tensely, and aimed it at you from nearby. Iblis said: {“Lord! Because You let me stray, certainly I will adorn unto them the path of error, and certainly I will cause them all to go astray.”}³² Seek God’s protection from the danger of arrogance, just as you seek His

³¹ *Bihar al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 52, 385; *Ilzam al-Nasibi* [Overcoming the Nasibi (enemy of the family of Muhammad)], vol 2, 259; *Mujam Hadith Imam Al-Mahdi*[®] [Encyclopedia of Hadiths on Imam Al-Mahdi], vol 5, 199.

³² Quran Chapter “Ta Ha” 15:39.

protection from calamities.

Certainly, if God were to allow anyone to indulge in pride, He would have allowed it for His selected prophets and vicegerents . . . but they were oppressed people. God tried them with hunger, afflicted them with difficulty, tested them with fear, and upset them with troubles . . . When Moses, son of Imran, and his brother Aaron[®] went to Pharaoh wearing (coarse) shirts of wool and holding canes in their hands, they guaranteed him longevity for his country and continuance of his prestige if only he would submit. But Pharaoh said: ‘Do you not wonder at these two men who guarantee that my prestige and dominance will continue, although you see their poverty and lowliness? If that is the case, then, why do they not have gold bangles on their wrists?’ He said this while feeling proud of his gold and collected possessions and belittling wool and those wearing it . . .

Fear God regarding the immediate consequence of rebellion, the eventual consequence of weighty oppressiveness to accrue in the next world, and the evil result of vanity. Vanity is the great trap of Iblis and his great plot that grips the hearts of men, just like fatal poison does. It never misses its target, not anyone, whether it be the learned ones with knowledge or the destitute in rags . . . God, the Glorified One, cursed the past generations only because they had forsaken enjoining others to do good deeds and refrain from doing bad deeds. In fact, God cursed the foolish ones for committing sins and the lenient for giving up on prohibiting others from committing evil deeds . . . Beware! You have breached the restrictions of Islam, transgressed its boundaries and destroyed its commands . . . Certainly, I belong to the group of people who do not fear anyone’s reproach in matters concerning God. The countenance of this group is that of the truthful and their speech is that of the virtuous. They are wakeful during the nights (in devotion to God) and beacons (of guidance) in the day. They hold fast to the rope of the Holy Quran and revive the traditions of God and His Messenger. They do not boast or indulge in self-conceit, misappropriate, or create mischief. Their hearts are in Paradise while their bodies are busy in deeds.³³

³³ *Nahjul Balagha* [The Peak of Eloquence], section “The Sermon of Disparagement”; Muhammad Abduh, vol 2, 183; *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 14, 466.

The Straight Path

The Almighty says: {[52] Thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command. You did not know what the Book or faith is, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. Indeed, you guide to a straight path, [53] the path of God, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and on the earth. Unquestionably, to God do [all] matters evolve.}³⁴

The straight path is the truth, or the path on which God Almighty wants His worshippers to walk. It is the path that takes one to the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of existence, the Exalted. In other words, the straight path is the correct beliefs and legal rulings that come from Him, the Almighty, reaching His worshippers through His prophets, messengers, and their successors[®]. Therefore, the rational person must search for the truth, in order to protect himself from chastisement and seek the Lord's refuge by walking on His straight path. Satisfaction with this materialistic life and becoming immersed in it are worse than death. It is similar to nothingness; rather, it is hell. The Almighty said: {They urge you to hasten the punishment. Indeed, hell will encompass the disbelievers.}³⁵

Knowing the truth and following it is the true life because, at the path's end, one reaches the world of the intellect and returns to the Ever-Living Who does not die, and this position is greater than attaining the gardens of Paradise. The Almighty says: {God has promised the believing men and women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, gardens of perpetuity and pleasantness; and satisfaction from God that is greater. That³⁶ is the great attainment.}³⁷

The Almighty says: {And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for their eyes as a reward for what they used to do.}³⁸ A rational person does not miss his chance to walk on this path. If he reaches the world of the intellect, then it is due to the

³⁴ Quran Chapter "The Consultation" 42:52-53.

³⁵ Quran, Chapter "The Spider" 29:54.

³⁶ "That" being satisfaction from God—Trans.

³⁷ Quran, Chapter "The Repentance" 9:72.

³⁸ Quran, Chapter "The Prostration" 32:17.

mercy of God. If he does not, he oscillates between paradises³⁹ due to the favor of God and the blessing of answering the call of the Ever Living that does not die: “Come.”⁴⁰

The Almighty says: {It is He who created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot; then He brings you out as a child; then [He develops you] that you reach your [time of] maturity, then [further] that you become elders. And among you is he who is taken in death before [that], so that you reach a specified term; perhaps you will use reason.}⁴¹ In other words, God created you with the hope that you would reach the world of intellect, just as the Prophets and Imams[®] did. However, what that requires is to achieve the highest rank in this world, which is the rank of being in contact with the world of Divinity, or the rank of “two bows’ brace heights or nearer.”⁴² The owner of this praised station is the one for whom this existence was created: Muhammad[®] and Ali[®], who is the self [of Muhammad[®]].⁴³ Although I chose to be brief and to the point, it is fine to clarify a bit more so that perhaps God will bestow upon me the supplications of whoever reads these words.

You must know, O beloved believing men and women, that the first creation is the intellect. It is the first spiritual world,⁴⁴ and it is a comprehensive world. The beings that exist therein merge with one another, with full compatibility between them. This world’s inhabitants have ranks, and the highest rank is touching the world of Divinity, a rank specific to Muhammad[®] and Ali[®].

So Muhammad[®] {[8] . . . approached and came down, [9] And was a distance [of] two bows’ [brace heights] or nearer.}⁴⁵ and Ali[®] is the “self” of [Muhammad]. The Almighty says {and ourselves and yourselves.}⁴⁶ Ali[®] is touched by the Self of God, as he [Ali] has

³⁹ It is mentioned in the Quran that there is more than one paradise, for example: {But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two paradises} Chapter “The Abundantly Merciful” 55:46.

⁴⁰ Imam Al-Baqir[®] pointed out this phrase: *come*. It was narrated from Alh al-Bayt[®]. Sheikh Al-Kalini narrated that Abu Jafar[®] said: “When God created the intellect, He made it speak, then said to it: ‘Come,’ and it came. Then He said to it: ‘Go back,’ and it went back. Then God said: ‘By My Dignity and Magnificence, I did not create a creature more beloved to me than you, and I did not make you complete except in whom I love. However, you are the one I order, the one I forbid, the one I punish, and the one I reward’” *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient Book], vol 1, 10. The fortunate one is he who accepts the call of God the Exalted, and who accepts the commands when He is ordered to follow them.

⁴¹ Quran, Chapter “The Forgiver” 40:67.

⁴² A figurative expression of how close one is to the world of divinity—Trans..

⁴³ Imam Ali[®] was considered the self of the Prophet Muhammad due to the revelation of the *Mubahala* verse. When the Almighty said: “Ourselves,” He meant the self of the Prophet, who is Ali[®]. A *mubahala* is a form of resolving religious disputes. When the argumentation from both sides fails to resolve a religious issue, the parties jointly pray to God to cast His curse on whichever of the two parties is false—Trans.

⁴⁴ The seventh heaven—Trans.

⁴⁵ Quran Chapter “The Star” 53:8-9.

⁴⁶ Quran Chapter “Family of Imran” 3:61.

narrated,⁴⁷ and below the two of them [Muhammad and Ali] are ranks. So, they[®] encompass and know everyone below them, and whoever is below them learns from them to the extent that his rank allows. No one knows Muhammad[®] and Ali[®] completely except the One who created them, and they are the only ones who completely know God, the Exalted, as much as is humanly possible.

The owner of the praised rank[®]⁴⁸ said, “O Ali, nobody has known God except you and me, and nobody has known me except God and you, and nobody has known you except God and me.”⁴⁹

As for the second world, it is the world of the Kingdom of Heaven.⁵⁰ It is an ideal world of images, the World of Souls. It is similar to what a person sees while asleep because he or she is unaware of material existence and turns toward existence in the Kingdom of the Heavens. You could say it is one’s ideal or spiritual existence.

The third world is the physical world, a world similar to nothingness. If not for its capacity to exist, it would have no chance of existing. It is the lowest level of descent. If an ideal image [from the second world] spills over to the material, the body forms, which is the first rank of ascension or return. The bodies are then divided according to their existential ranks into inanimate objects, plants, animals, and humans. The human being either ascends and returns to his Initiator, the Exalted, and resides in the world of intellect and draws close to the Ever-Living One that does not die, or he degrades himself and turns away from his Lord, seeing only the material, which can barely be perceived, as knowledge cannot be acquired from the physical world unless the ideal image⁵¹ spills over into it. Therefore, he becomes like the herded “livestock,” meaning like animals, and actually goes even more astray because he was created to acknowledge the truth but turned away. He was created to become intellectual but insisted on ignorance; created to live but insisted on death.

Imam Abu Abdullah[®] said: “God Almighty created the intellect. It is the first creation out of the spirits, those near the right of the throne, created from His light. He said [to the intellect], ‘Turn away.’ It turned away. Then He said to it, ‘Come back,’ so, it came back.

⁴⁷ Ibn Shahr Ashoob, *Manaqib Ibn Shahr Ashoob* [The Merits of the Family of Abu Talib], vol 3, 31; Al-Tabarani, *Al-Mujam Al-Awsat* [The Standard Dictionary], vol 9, 142; *Kanz Al-Ummal*, [Treasures of the Workers], vol 11, 621; and *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 39, 313.

⁴⁸ Muhammad is the owner of the praised rank—Trans.

⁴⁹ *Mukhtasar Basair Al-Darajat* [Abridged Insights of High Ranks], 125. *Mawsua Al-Imam Ali fi Al-Kitab wa Al-Sunnah* [The Encyclopedia of Imam Ali in the Book and Sunnah [Traditions], vol 8, 185; *Mashariq Al-Anwar Al-Yaqeen* [The Brilliant Lights of Certitude], 172.

⁵⁰ The first heaven to the sixth heaven—Trans.

⁵¹ From the second world—Trans.

Then God Almighty said, ‘I have created you exceptionally and honored you above all My creations.’ Then He created ignorance from a briny dark ocean. He said to it, ‘Turn away,’ so it turned away. Then He said to it, ‘Come back,’ and it did not come back. He said to it ‘You have chosen arrogance, so my curse is upon you. . .’⁵²

As for the intellect, Muhammad^ﷺ comprises the complete intellect and, by extension, so does his successor Ali[ؑ], because Ali[ؑ] is the self of Muhammad^ﷺ, as shown in the verse {and ourselves and yourselves.}⁵³ As for the ignorance, the complete ignorance is “the second,” which is the origin of the arrogance that misguided Iblis and threw him into the abyss.⁵⁴ Iblis (may God curse him) said: {My Lord, by what you have misguided me},⁵⁵ meaning by the one who misguided me or by the undefined one that caused my misguidance. In the verse, the one that misguided him was the described but unknown person, labeled as such because he is dark with no identity. The word “what” (*ma*, in Arabic), which is used to describe non-intellectual beings, is used here because he does not have intellect.

In this way, there is someone from among the children of Adam who ascended, due to his worship and moral perfections, until he reached the distance of two bows’ brace heights or nearer. He is the teacher of the spiritual ones and the close angels, and he is the complete human: Muhammad^ﷺ. Adam also taught the angels what they did not know. The Prince of Believers said: “The human being was created with a perceiving soul. If he purifies it with knowledge and work, it becomes similar to jewels in their initial form, and if he moderates its temperament and disengages it from contradictions, then he will join the seven mighty ones [the heavens].”⁵⁶

On the other hand, there is someone from among the children of Adam who casts himself

⁵² *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient Book], vol 1, 21. Al-Sadooq, *Al Khisal* [The Traits], 589. *Tuhaf al-Uqul* [Antiques of the Minds], 401; *Bihar al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 75, 316.

⁵³ The full verse is as follows: {Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you—say, “Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together] and invoke the curse of God upon the liars [among us]}” Quran Chapter “Family of Imran” 3:61.

The “self” of the Messenger^ﷺ is Ali Ibn Abi Talib[ؑ], and the sons are Al-Hassan and Al-Hussain[ؑ]. Also included is Fatima[ؑ]. You can find the reason this verse was sent down in *Majma Al-Bayan Fi Tafsir Al-Quran* [Bridging Enclaves of Knowledge in the Interpretation of Quran], vol 2, 309, and other works.

⁵⁴ The characteristics of intellect have to be fulfilled or complete first in order to be perfect. Likewise is the case with ignorance. These characteristics are metaphorically described as soldiers: soldiers of intellect, and soldiers of ignorance. Being complete, or perfect in intellect means a person has fulfilled all of the required characteristics—Trans.

⁵⁵ Quran Chapter “The Rocky Tract” 15:39.

⁵⁶ *Manaqib Aali Abu Talib* [The Virtues of the Family of Abu Talib], vol 1, 327. *Uyoon Al-Hukm wa Al-Mawaidh* [The Eyes of Rules and Preaching], 304. *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Light], vol 40, 165. *Mizan Al-Hikma* [The Scale of Wisdom], vol 1, 223.

into the abyss. He swims in a bitter sea where there are layers of darkness, one over the other. When one submerges his hand in it, he can barely see it, until he eventually becomes complete darkness with no light, ignorance without intellect, turmoil without peace, fear without reassurance, and tranquility never descends upon him. He does not wish for the mercy of God and is in despair of the Spirit of God. On the other hand, Iblis (may God curse him) wishes for the mercy of God if the Resurrection happens as mentioned in the narration. God Almighty said:

{When Iblis made their deeds pleasing to them, he said, “No one can overcome you today from among the people, and indeed, I am your protector.” But when the two armies sighted each other, he turned on his heels and said, “Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I see what you do not see; indeed I fear God. And God is severe in penalty.”}⁵⁷

Some of the children of Adam, with their malicious, arrogant souls, inspire the Satans of *jinn* with decorative speech. So, the Satans of *jinn* take and learn from the Satans of mankind. The Almighty said: {Satans from mankind and *jinn*, inspiring to one another’s decorative speech in delusion. But if your Lord had willed, they would not have done it, so leave them and that which they invent.}⁵⁸

Al-Haruri⁵⁹ said:

“I was a lad from the soldiers of Iblis,
and I rose until Iblis became one of my soldiers,
so if he were to die before me
I would master ways to corrupt that he would not master after me.”⁶⁰

A person may ask the question: “Do the disbelievers not have what is considered intellect, since they use their intellect to invent airplanes and advanced communication devices?” The answer can be found in this narration: Imam Abu Abdullah[®] was asked about what Muawiya had. He[®] said, “Muawiya has the evil, Satanic attributes of devilry and conniving. These attributes are similar to the intellect, but they are not the intellect.”⁶¹

⁵⁷ Quran Chapter “The Spoils of War” 8:48.

⁵⁸ Quran Chapter “The Cattle” 6:112.

⁵⁹ A man from the sect of the Kharijites—Trans.

⁶⁰ *Bi-har Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 12, 330.

⁶¹ *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient Book], vol 1, 11.

Each person has a share in the Kingdom of Heaven, which is his soul, an ideal image and a shadow of the intellect. This shadow⁶² is the capacity to be conscious, or the perceptive being planted in the paradises. Voiceless animals share it with us, but the human has a reflected image that is clearer. Since the reflection of the intellect upon the human's soul is more brilliant and clearer, humans have a greater share of this shadow. Whoever has studied the animal world knows that some animals have the ability to invent tools, as biologists have stated. An example is the beaver that builds dams to raise the water level. So the human is not favored over the animal unless he searches further into this shadow to see the truth and intellect within. To be favored, the human also must walk toward this shadow—and, in turn, toward perfection—by practicing worship, gratitude, and kind morals. Otherwise, if the shadow is sufficient for him, then he is like livestock (i.e., like animals). If he degrades himself with reprehensible morals, then he goes even more astray.⁶³

Praise be to God Alone, and we were only given a little of the knowledge [from God]. My Lord, include me and the believing men and women in Your mercy. You are my supporter in this world and the hereafter, and You are the best supporter and the best Protector.

The Creeds and Rulings

The Creeds and Rulings include the following:

The Correct Creed

Faith is to believe in the following: monotheism and the existence of a Creator, His prophets, messengers, and their successors[®], justice, predestination, destiny, the change of fate,⁶⁴ heaven and hell, the infallibility of the vicegerents of God[®] on His earth, the angels, the unseen, and everything that the prophets, messengers, and successors mentioned. All we have to do is follow their footsteps.

⁶² The perceptive soul is the shadow or representation planted in the paradises because the image of God was placed within Adam. This was accomplished through the blowing of the spirit into Adam at the gate of the first heaven. A shadow is like a model, simply a representation of the real thing—Trans.

⁶³ He[®] is referring to God's saying: {Or do you think that most of them hear or reason? They are like livestock. Rather, they are [even] more astray in [their] way} Quran Chapter "The Criterion" 25:44.

⁶⁴ "The Change of Fate" (*Al-Bidaa*) means that some things can change. For example, let's say it was written for a person to die tomorrow but he performed a good deed, such as giving charity. The date of his death could change, being delayed by God Almighty due to this act—Trans.

The Almighty said:

{Say, "If you love God, then follow me, God will love you and He will forgive you for your sins. And God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.}"⁶⁵

Zurara narrates the following religious account:

Abu Abdullah[®] was asked how the lineage of Adam[®] began, as some say that God Almighty inspired Adam[®] to wed his daughters to his sons, and that the lineage of humankind comes from marriage between brothers and sisters.

He[®] said: "God Almighty is far above that. Whoever says this is actually saying that God Almighty made His finest creation, His beloved ones, prophets, messengers, believing men and women, and Muslim men and women come from a forbidden act, and that He did not have the ability to create them from something permissible, yet He took their pledge on what is permissible and pure. I swear by God, I learned that an animal copulated with his sister because he did not recognize her. When her identity was revealed and it became known to him that she was his sister, he shredded his own genitals with his teeth and dropped dead. Another beast unknowingly copulated with his mother and did the exact same thing. So how would a human, with all of his humanity, virtue, and knowledge, do that? What happened is that one generation of these people you see went astray from the knowledge of the progenies of their prophets and sought knowledge where they were not supposed to until they reached a high level of perversity and ignorance. You now see how things were in the past, since the beginning of creation, and the things that have always been."

Then he[®] said, "Woe to them! How could they stray so far from that upon which the clerics of al-Hijaaz and Iraq agree: that God Almighty commanded with the Pen, two thousand years before the creation of Adam, to write everything on the preserved board that will take place until the day of resurrection? It is written in all the scriptures of God: from that which is forbidden is for brothers to marry their sisters. Among these scriptures, we have the four well-known scriptures of this world: the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms and the Quran. God sent all of them down from the preserved board to His messengers, may the prayers of God be upon them all. He sent the Torah to Moses[®], the Psalms to David[®], the Gospel to Jesus[®], and the Quran to

⁶⁵ Quran Chapter "The Family of Imran" 3:31.

Muhammad[®] and the prophets[®]. None of these books permit that. I honestly say: The only purpose of whoever says that or anything similar is to strengthen the arguments of the Magi.⁶⁶ However, no one will accomplish that, may God fight them.”⁶⁷

Praise be to God who exposed and humiliated them for their ignorance and stubbornness toward the honest ones from the family of Muhammad[®], as they have made the prophets[®] out to be children of adultery, God forbid. God has darkened the face of those who opposed the truthful ones from the family of Muhammad[®] and claimed to know the traditions of the Messenger and the explicit and allegorical verses of the Book.⁶⁸ They appointed themselves Imams who call to hell in matters of religion as the Umayyads and Abbasids did, and those who followed them, in temporal world matters. This includes their followers today. There is still no excuse for their followers except stubbornness and arrogance or saying, “It is a goat, even if it flies!”⁶⁹

The required pillars of faith in which to believe, in which the Prophet[®] believed, are the pillars included at the end of the [Quranic] chapter "The Cow." These pillars are as follows: believing in God, the angels, the divine books and the messengers, whether they were prophets, successors, or any messenger of God Almighty, even if he were sent only for worldly leadership, like Saul[®] was.

Thus, every Muslim must believe in God, the One, the Alone, the Singular, the Absolute One, and in the prophecy of Muhammad[®], the angels, the divine books, the previous prophets, their successors, and the jurisprudence they brought. Every Muslim must respect the jurisprudence, even if it was previously abrogated because it was at one time the jurisprudence of God on this earth. He must believe in the twelve successors of Prophet Muhammad[®] and accept everything that truly came from them[®]. The Muslim must also believe that the twelfth successor from the successors of Muhammad[®]—Imam Muhammad Ibn Al-Hasan Al-Mahdi—is alive today, and will rise with the sword like his grandfather[®] did. The Muslim must support him, be loyal, and prioritize his affairs above his own and his possessions and children. He must also work to spread the word of Imam al-Mahdi[®], prepare for his[®] state, and make known his mission and the injustice he received. Furthermore, he must fight the Imam's enemies, such as the leaders of oppression who dominate this nation, as well as their disbelieving supporters and soldiers who left the allegiance to God for the allegiance to Iblis (the cursed one). The believer

⁶⁶ The Magi are members of the Zoroastrian priesthood of the ancient Persians—Trans.

⁶⁷ Al-Sadooq, *Alal Al-Sharai* [The Reasoning of Islamic Law], vol 1, 17-18, 1966. Arabic source, translated.

⁶⁸ See the book “The Allegories” by Ahmed Alhasan, 2010—Trans.

⁶⁹ A well-known Arabian proverb used often in Iraq—Trans.

must not fear the enemies' numbers or equipment.

The Almighty says: {[50] They planned a plan, and We planned a plan while they perceived not. [51] Then look at the outcome of their plan—that We destroyed them and their people, all. [52] So those are their houses, desolate because of the wrong they had done. In that is a sign for people who know.}⁷⁰

The Rulings

The rulings are the collection of laws the prophets and messengers bring from the Almighty, which the worshippers are obliged to follow. Some of them might have been abrogated and others added over time, according to the knowledge of the Wise One, Who knows what is best for the worshippers and their countries in every era. Abrogation, changes, and additions [of laws] are not valid unless dispatched by the infallible warner, who speaks from God and works by His command. Whoever seeks anything beyond that⁷¹ is very misguided. Moreover, if we take a look at the heavenly legislation or divine rulings, we will find that applying them is the only way to reform souls, bodies, countries, and the economy. Therefore, whoever legislated, changed, abrogated, or added to the jurisprudence, other than the infallible ones who speak for God, has claimed to be a god and that the creation must worship him, even if he does not say it. The Quran states that the Jews used to worship their rabbis and monks instead of God because they permitted what was forbidden and forbade what was permissible, and the people obeyed them. Concerning the saying of God Almighty, {They have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides God},⁷² Imam Abu Jafar[®] said: “As for their scholars and monks, the people obeyed them, adopted their words, followed their command, and took their teachings as religion. The people took the scholars as their lords by obeying them and abandoning and throwing behind their backs what God commanded, His books, and His messengers. They followed what the scholars and monks commanded, obeying them and disobeying God. This was mentioned in our Book so that we may learn a lesson from them.”⁷³

Thus, for any ideology in which a person believes, if he does not receive it from an infallible who conveyed it from God, then it is worship without God. If a person practices legal rulings that are not given by an infallible who conveyed them from God, then this person is worshipping the person who issued and legislated the rulings. This is because

⁷⁰ Quran Chapter “The Bee” 27:50-52.

⁷¹ Meaning whoever goes beyond what the infallibles have said, and alters what comes from them—Trans.

⁷² Quran Chapter “The Repentance” 9:31.

⁷³ *Tafsir al-Qummi* [Interpretation of Al-Qumi], vol 1, 289, and *Bihar al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 9, 212.

the legislator is claiming to be a god, whereas the infallibles themselves do nothing but transmit the legal ruling from God.

Imam Al-Sadiq[®] said in his famous message to the Shia:

O successful people upon whom God has mercy! God has perfected the good that He has given you. Know that it has never been in God's knowledge or command for anyone to follow his own desires, opinions, or standard in his religion. God has sent down the Quran and clarified everything within it, and assigned a people for the Quran and for learning it. Those who possess the knowledge of the Quran, which was given to them by God, cannot adopt their desires, opinions, or standards. God has sufficiently enriched them with knowledge specific for them, and placed it with them as a favor from Him. They are the people of remembrance of whom God has commanded this community to ask. If anyone asks them, they will guide him and give him knowledge of the Quran, which will guide him to God by His permission and to all ways of truth, since it is in God's prior knowledge to believe them and follow their footsteps. No one turns away from them, from asking them, or from the knowledge with which God has favored them and placed with them, except those who, within God's knowledge, were overcome by wretchedness during the origin of creation⁷⁴ (under the shadows). They are the ones who turn away from asking the people of remembrance, to whom God has given the knowledge of the Quran, placing it with them and commanding people to seek it from them. They are the ones who follow their desires, their opinions, and their own standards to the point that Satan enters them. This is because they have made out the people of faith in the knowledge of the Quran from God to be disbelievers, and have made out the people who deviated from the knowledge of the Quran to be believers. They forbade much of what God permitted and made permissible much of what God made forbidden.

This is the root of the fruit of their desires. The Messenger of God[®] entrusted [a Will] to them before his death. However, they said: "After the Messenger's death, we are allowed to follow the opinion on which people agree." This was after God's Messenger[®] had died after he[®] made a Will for us and commanded us to abide by it. So, this is in opposition to God and His Messenger. No one is more insolent toward God and more deviant than

⁷⁴ Referring to the world before this world, known as the world of souls (*Al-Tharr*)—Trans.

those who have adopted this and claimed it is allowed.

By God, it is God's right that His creation obeys Him and follows His commands during Muhammad's® life and after his death. Can those enemies of God claim that one of the Muslims during Muhammad's® time followed their own sayings, opinions, or criteria? If he says "Yes," then he has lied to God and gone far astray. If he says, "No; no one else was allowed to follow his own opinions, desires, and standards," then he has acknowledged the evidence against himself and is of those who claim that God is obeyed and His command followed, even after the death of the Prophet®. As God has said: {Muhammad is only a Messenger. Certainly other messengers passed away before him. So, if he died or is slain, will you turn back on your heels? Whoever turns back on his heels will never harm God in anything. And God will reward the grateful ones.}⁷⁵ This verse tells you that God is obeyed, and His command is followed during the life of Muhammad® and after the death of Muhammad®. It was not allowed for anyone who was with Muhammad® to follow his desire, opinion, or standards, in opposition to Muhammad's® order. It is also not allowed for the people after Muhammad® to follow their desires, their opinions, or their own standards.⁷⁶

If the Imams® cannot issue their own rulings despite the completeness of their intellect and having knowledge of the Book's explicit and allegorical meanings and its revelation and interpretations, but instead are to convey them from God and His Messenger®, then how can anyone else do so, considering their deficient intellect and ignorance of the Book's explicit and allegorical meanings, revelation, and interpretations

When Abu Hanifa came to visit, Imam Al-Sadiq® said to him, "O Abu Hanifa, do you know the book of God as it should be known? Do you know the abrogating and abrogated [verses]?" He said, "Yes." Al-Sadiq® said, "O Abu Hanifa, you claimed to have this knowledge. Woe to you, for God has only given this knowledge to the people of the book upon whom the book has descended. Woe to you, for it is only for particular ones from the descendants of our Prophet®. God has not bequeathed you a single letter of His book, so if you are as you say, which you are not, then tell me about [God's saying] . . . "⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Quran Chapter "Family of Imran" 3:144.

⁷⁶ *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient Book], vol 7, 6-7. *Wasail Al-Shia* [Tools of the Shia], vol 28, 38. *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 85, 213.

⁷⁷ *Ilal Al-Sharai* [The Reasoning of Islamic Law], vol 1, 90, *Wasail Al-Shia* [Tools of the Shia], vol 27, 48.

There is a Lesson in their Stories

The Almighty said: {[58] We have certainly presented every kind of example to the people in this Quran. But, if you should bring them a sign, the disbelievers will surely say, “You [believers] are but falsifiers.” [59] Thus does God seal the hearts of those who do not know. [60] So be patient. Indeed, the promise of God is true. Let not those who lack certainty [of faith] disquiet you.} ⁷⁸

Every Muslim should study the history of the children of Israel and how they behaved with Moses and Aaron[®] and then with Jesus[®]; the dispatch of Moses and Aaron[®] is like the dispatch of Muhammad and Ali[®], and what happened to Moses and Aaron[®] is not much different than what happened to them. Moreover, what the children of Israel did during the time that Moses[®] was absent, and also after the death of Aaron and Moses[®], is not much different than what the Islamic nation did after the death of Muhammad[®], after the death of Ali[®], and after the absence of the final successor, Muhammad[®]. Furthermore, the dispatch of Jesus[®] to the children of Israel is like the dispatch of Muhammad Ibn Al-Hasan Al-Askari Al-Mahd[®] to the Islamic nation. What Al-Mahdi[®] will encounter from this nation and some of its evil (dysfunctional) clerics is not much different than what Jesus[®] faced with the Jews and their dysfunctional scholars. {So relate the stories that perhaps they will give thought.} ⁷⁹

The Children of Israel were Anticipating the Birth of Moses[®]

Before Moses[®] was sent, the children of Israel were anticipating this great prophet and expected reformer. They would even rejoice in informing each other of his birth and preparing to welcome this blessed newborn who was going to save them from the rule of tyrants and pharaohs. Those tyrants and pharaohs were bitterly anticipating this blessed newborn. They had the goal of rushing to kill and eliminate him before he would grow up and put an end to tyrannical rule, exposing the pharaohs and their false claims and leading the children of Israel to salvation, carrying the words “There is no deity except God” to everyone on the earth. When the years of his promised birth approached,

⁷⁸ Quran, Chapter “The Romans” 30:58-60.

⁷⁹ Quran, Chapter “The Heights” 7:176.

Pharaoh, thinking he would be able to change the way of God, killed the newborn babies of the children of Israel in anticipation of Moses's® birth. However, God willed to disgrace him and reveal his weakness in the face of divine power and planning, and to have Moses raised in the palace of Pharaoh specifically. So, the one who raised Moses was none other than Pharaoh the tyrant, who sought day and night to eliminate this newborn.

The Almighty says: {[8] The people of Pharaoh picked him up [out of the river] so that he would become their enemy and a [cause of] grief. Indeed, Pharaoh and Haman and their soldiers were deliberate sinners. [9] The wife of Pharaoh said, "[He will be] a comfort of the eye for me and for you. Do not kill him; perhaps he may benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son." But they perceived not.}⁸⁰ While Pharaoh and his army were oppressing and humiliating the children of Israel, and killing their children and the best of their people, Moses was growing up in Pharaoh's palace. He saw the injustice and persecution that was going on against the oppressed masses outside the palace and the terrorist and propaganda being plotted inside the palace. The aim of Pharaoh and his army was to demean the masses and force them to obey Pharaoh or, at the very least, accept the current situation and abandon resistance. {Pharaoh said, "I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the way of right conduct."}⁸¹

Moses® saw the politics of Pharaoh and his party, which entailed stopping the divine religion from spreading, stopping the religious rituals of the children of Israel, and spreading corruption. As a result, the generations brought up in this corrupt environment would be impelled toward corruption and abandonment of religion and observance of the sacred, divine laws. This is the most crucial element on which a tyrant relies during his reign, as it guarantees that the masses abandon God, the True Force and Real Helper, Who can abolish the tyrant and his evil party.

Moses® Fought for God's Cause and Migrated to God, a Prophet Calling Others to God

The Almighty says:

{[14] When he attained his full strength and was [mentally] mature, We bestowed upon him judgment and knowledge. Thus do We reward the doers of good.

⁸⁰ Quran Chapter "The Stories" 28:8-9.

⁸¹ Quran Chapter "The Forgiver" 40:29.

[15] He entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found two men fighting therein: one from his faction and one from among his enemies. The one from his faction called to him for help against his enemy. Moses struck him and killed him. [Moses] said, "This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest, misleading enemy." [16] He said, "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me," and He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. [17] He said, "My Lord, for the favor You bestowed upon me, I will never be an assistant to the criminals." [18] He became fearful within the city, anticipating [exposure], when suddenly the one who had sought his help the previous day cried out to him [once again]. Moses said to him, "Indeed, you are an evident, [persistent] deviator." [19] When he [Moses] wanted to strike the one who was an enemy to both of them, he said, "O Moses, do you intend to kill me as you killed someone yesterday? You only want to be a tyrant in the land and do not want to be of the reformers." [20] Then, a man came from the farthest end of the city, running. He said, "O Moses, indeed the eminent ones are conferring over you [intending] to kill you, so leave [the city]; indeed, I am a sincere advisor to you." [21] So he left it, fearful and anticipating [apprehension]. He said, "My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people." [22] And when he directed himself toward Midian, he said, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the sound way." }⁸²

Moses[®] entered the battlefield of life, finding the injustice of the tyrant Pharaoh, who oppressed the masses of the children of Israel and the Egyptians. How could Moses[®], the purified, the Prophet and awaited savior that the children of Israel knew about, stay in Pharaoh's palace supporting him, even if he was just being silent regarding his oppression and the increasing multitude? God had willed for an incident to take place: the killing of one of Pharaoh's oppressive guards and soldiers. This incident greatly affected Moses[®] because he sought refuge with the Truth,⁸³ seeking forgiveness and repenting to Him for what he considered to be a sin—living in the palace of the tyrant Pharaoh, the father who raised him[®]. When God Almighty forgave him, Moses made a promise to God, due to His blessing of forgiveness, never to support a murderer or an oppressor, not even by placating or being silent about his oppression. Therefore, it was necessary after this incident for Moses[®] to migrate to God. He left the city frightened and watching his back, remaining absent from the children of Israel for ten years. He spent this time in the land of Midian, living a simple, quiet life with the great prophet Shuaib[®], looking after flocks of sheep, and learning a great deal so he could return to the children of Israel as a brave,

⁸² Quran Chapter "The Stories" 28:14-22.

⁸³ The Truth here in this passage refers to God Almighty. It is one of His names—Trans.

divine leader and Prophet who calls to God. This was so he could lead the believers and save them from the tyranny of Pharaoh and the marginalization and degradation they faced in Egypt. Moses[®] crossed the sea with the believers, and God drowned Pharaoh and his army. However, after they crossed, the children of Israel rebelled against the divine commands and disobeyed Moses and Aaron.

After the children of Israel rejected entering the Holy Land and fighting the oppressors to spread the words “There is no deity but God” and to worship God sincerely, God ordained for them to wander in the desert of Sinai for forty years. Moses and Aaron[®] were hurt tremendously during this time. Many people from the children of Israel opposed Moses[®] and belittled him. They also opposed Aaron, even though he was a Prophet and successor to Moses[®]. God therefore commanded that the head of each tribe from the children of Israel write his name on a dry stick. Aaron wrote his name on one of the sticks. Moses[®] deposited all of the sticks in a meeting tent. God willed that the stick with Aaron’s[®] name turn to green as a miracle to prove Aaron’s prophethood and right to succeed Moses[®]. However, they did not stop hurting and belittling Aaron[®]. When they made and worshipped the calf and Aaron[®] objected, the Children of Israel were ready to kill him, as well as the small minority who supported the truth along with him. Yet, the Jews were not satisfied with this. They distorted the Torah after the death of Moses and Aaron[®], by writing with their sinful hands that the one who created the calf and misguided the children of Israel was Aaron[®]!

Look at the injustice done toward this great Prophet Aaron[®], and compare it to the injustice done toward the successor Ali Ibn Abi Talib[®]. This is the way of God, and you will not find in the way of God any change.

The Trial of the Calf

The Almighty said:

{Their hearts absorbed [the worship of] the calf because of their disbelief. Say, "How wretched is that which your faith enjoins upon you, if you are indeed believers."}⁸⁴

The Almighty also said:

⁸⁴ Quran Chapter “The Cow” 2:93.

{[148] The people of Moses made, after [his departure], from their ornaments a calf—an image having a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them to a way? They took it [for worship], and they were wrongdoers. [149] And when regret overcame them and they saw that they had gone astray, they said, "If our Lord does not have mercy upon us and forgive us, we will surely be among the losers." [150] When Moses returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said, "How wretched is that by which you have replaced me after [my departure]. Were you impatient over the matter of your Lord?" And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by [the hair of] his head, pulling him toward him. [Aaron] said, "O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people." [151] [Moses] said, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy, for You are the most merciful of the merciful." [152] Indeed, those who took the calf [for worship] will obtain anger from their Lord and humiliation in the life of this world, and thus do We recompense the inventors [of falsehood]. [153] But to those who committed misdeeds and then repented after them and believed—indeed your Lord, thereafter, is Forgiving and Merciful.}⁸⁵

And the Almighty said:

{[87] They said, "We did not break our promise to you by our will, but we were made to carry burdens from the ornaments of the people [of Pharaoh], so we threw them [into the fire], and thus did the Samiri throw." [88] He then extracted for them [the statue of] a calf, which had a mooing sound, and they said, "This is your god and the god of Moses, but he [Samiri] forgot." [89] Did they not see that it could not return to them any speech and did not possess for them any harm or benefit? [90] But Aaron had already told them before [the return of Moses], "O my people, you are only being tested by it, and indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my order." [91] They said, "We will never cease being devoted to the calf until Moses returns to us." [92] [Moses] said, "O Aaron, what prevented you, when you saw them going astray, [93] From following me? Then have you disobeyed my order?" [94] [Aaron] said, "O son of my mother, do not seize

⁸⁵ Quran Chapter "The Heights" 7:148-153.

[me] by my beard or by my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say, 'You caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe [or await] my word.'" [95] [Moses] said, "And what is your case, O Samiri?" [96] He said, "I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful [of dust] from the tracks of the messenger⁸⁶ and threw it, and thus did my soul entice me." [97] [Moses] said, "Then go. It is [decreed] for you in [this] life to say, 'No contact.' Indeed, you have an appointment [in the Hereafter] you will not fail to keep. Look at your 'god' to which you remained devoted. We will surely burn it and blow it into the sea with a blast. [98] Your god is only [One] God, there is no deity but him. He has encompassed all things in knowledge."⁸⁷

The trial of the calf occurred during the forty years that the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness of the Sinai desert as a punishment for rebelling against the divine orders, and also as a reformation of the corruption in their souls. The Almighty made an appointment with Moses's⁸⁶ thirty nights and completed them with ten. God says: {We made an appointment with Moses's thirty nights and completed them by (the addition of) ten; so the term of his Lord was completed.}⁸⁸

God Almighty was not unaware that the time appointed was forty nights, and He did not lie to Moses⁸⁶; He is far above that. However, He promised him thirty nights and the ten nights that would complete forty depended on something else that did not occur, such as supplication, charity, or any other act [that could have been done] by Moses⁸⁶. Alternatively, the ten nights could have depended on a shortcoming of the group of the children of Israel, which led to a punishment (in the form of) Moses's extended absence. Included in God Almighty's knowledge was the fact that Moses⁸⁶ would be absent for forty nights. However, in the board of erasure and confirmation, Moses⁸⁶ was to be absent for thirty nights, but if an unspecified matter were to take place with Moses⁸⁶ or the children of Israel, God would complete it with ten more nights. God says: {God erases or confirms what He wills, and He has the Mother book.}⁸⁹

This is analogous to a supplication from any one of us in an effort to ward off afflictions or be given whatever He wills from His mercy. If matters were unchangeable, supplications would be futile and useless nonsense. But God Almighty preordains the amount, and extends both His hands. He gives abundance to whomever He wants and withholds from

⁸⁶ The angel Gabriel—Trans.

⁸⁷ Quran Chapter "Ta-Ha" 20:87-98.

⁸⁸ Quran Chapter "The Heights" 7:142.

⁸⁹ Quran Chapter "The Thunder" 13:39.

whomever He wants, and He is the Most Wise. This is the “changes in fate” and the clear truth in the Wise Remembrance⁹⁰ that the ignorant ones have denied. They said, “God finalized all matters,” and made His hands chained, imitating the saying of the Jews.⁹¹

However, some Sunni scholars prove that changes in fate exist, such as Ibn Al-Jawzi in his book, *Al-Jawab Al-Kaafi Fi Fasl Al-Dua* [The Sufficient Answer in the Chapter of the Supplication], though he didn't state it directly; he confirmed it in both the narrations from the Prophet^ﷺ and his discussion about the benefits of supplication.

During these forty days, the Samiri took advantage of the absence of Moses^ﷺ and created the calf with ornaments. He then threw in a handful of soil that he took from under the hoof of Gabriel's^ﷺ horse. A lowing sound emanated from the calf, similar to what a live calf would make. Moses^ﷺ said, “O Lord! The calf was made by the Samiri, but where did the lowing sound come from?” He said: “O Moses, it was from Me because when I saw them turning their backs on Me to the calf, I wanted to intensify their trial.”⁹²

The Samiri said to them, “This is your God and the God of Moses.” In other words, your

⁹⁰ One of the names of the Quran—Trans.

⁹¹ The Jews claim that God's hand is chained, and that God finalized the creation and cannot change anything! God Almighty has replied to this statement. He said: {The Jews say, "The hand of God is chained." Chained are their hands, and cursed are they for what they say. Rather, both His hands are extended; He spends however He wills. That which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase many of them in transgression and disbelief. And We have cast among them animosity and hatred until the Day of Resurrection. Every time they kindled the fire of war [against you], God extinguished it. They strive throughout the land [causing] corruption, and God does not like corrupters} Quran Chapter “The Table Spread” 5:64.

Most Sunni scholars have agreed with the Jews on this, saying that God Almighty has concluded things and cannot change them! The Sunnis have narrations about this. One of them is what Ahmed narrated in his book *Musnad*. Ibn Umar narrated that Umar said, "O Messenger of God! Do you think that the acts we perform are a matter that has already been predetermined or are they just something new?" He replied, "It has already been predetermined. O son of Al-Khattab. Work; everything is facilitated for everyone. Therefore, whoever is from the people of happiness, then they will work for happiness, and whoever is from the people of misery, they will work for misery" (*Musnad Ahmad*, vol 2, 52. Also in *Sahih Bukhari*, vol 6, 86; *Sahih Muslim* vol 8, p 48; *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vol 4, 554; and others).

Because of these narrations which they believe as authentic (*sahih*), they say that predestination applies to God Almighty, as it does to human actions! We also find Al-Bukhari holding God Almighty accountable for the sin of Adam^ﷺ. It is narrated that Abu Huraira said: "The Messenger of God^ﷺ said: "Adam and Moses argued with each other. Moses said to Adam. 'You are Adam whose mistake expelled you from Paradise.' Adam said to him, 'You are Moses whom God selected as His Messenger and as the one to whom He spoke directly; yet you blame me for a thing which had already been written in my fate before my creation?'" God's Apostle said, "So, Adam overpowered Moses twice" (*Sahih Bukhari*, vol 3, 31). Thus they deny changes in fate due to their ignorance of the truth.

⁹² *Tafsir Al-Qummi* [Interpretation of Al-Qumi], vol 2, 62, *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 13, 210; *Qasas Al-Anbiya* [Stories of the Prophets], Al-Jazairi, 268.

Lord has settled in this calf! Many of the children of Israel believed him after helping him create the calf!

We should reflect upon this incident in the Quran and study it. Perhaps God will bestow upon us the life of the happy ones and the death of the martyrs, as the Messenger of God^ﷺ promised us, if we study the Quran.⁹³

If you choose to study this incident, O beloved ones, then let us ask ourselves, who is the Samiri? Was he not one of the scholars of the children of Israel? Was he not an ascetic monk since he said, **{“I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful [of dust]. . . }**⁹⁴

From the context of the verse, it seems that he was able to see Gabriel^ﷺ or things from the unseen, which others were not able to see. Furthermore, was the Samiri a fighter?

This meaning is found in the interpretation of the verse that states he is the Samiri: **{The one from his faction called to him for help.}**⁹⁵ However, if it were indeed true, then the Samiri is a fighter who fought the soldiers of the tyrant Pharaoh in Egypt before the dispatch of Moses^ﷺ.⁹⁶

Then who is the one that forgot? If it was Moses^ﷺ, then that means he forgot his god right then and there, which would make the words of the Samiri true. The truth is far from that because the children of Israel knew that Moses went to the mount by the command of God. Thus, the one who forgot is the Samiri, meaning that he abandoned the true faith and the true worshipped God. The words from God Almighty are true. What did his self entice him to do? The truth is that it is the basis of all trials: desires, the ego,⁹⁷ Satan, and the ornaments of the world. His evil-commanding self enticed him to think that he was better than Aaron^ﷺ. He therefore rebelled against him, disobeyed his command, and became arrogant. His inner self enticed him to think he was a scholar, worshipper, ascetic, and, perhaps, a fighter in God’s way. Some matters of the unseen were disclosed to him, which made him think he was more worthy of leading the children of Israel than

⁹³ Ismail Ibn Abu Ziyad narrated that Jafar Ibn Muhammad reported that his father^ﷺ said that the Prophet of God^ﷺ said: **“The people of the Quran are at the highest degree of the sons of Adam apart from the Prophets and Messengers, and do not oppress the people of the Quran and their rights, for they have a place with God”** Al-Sadooq, *Thawab Al-Amal* [The Rewards for Deeds], 99-100.

⁹⁴ Quran Chapter “Ta-Ha” 20:96.

⁹⁵ Quran Chapter “The Stories” 28:15.

⁹⁶ In *Tafsir Al-Qumi*, it states: **“[T]he Samiri was in front of Moses the day God drowned Pharaoh and his companions. He saw Gabriel riding an animal that had the form of a mare. Every time its hoof touched the ground, that place would move. The Samiri... , as he was one of the favored companions of Moses. . . .”** (vol 2, 61-63). This shows that the Samiri was a leader of the companions of Moses^ﷺ; nothing less than that.

⁹⁷ Referred to as the “I” in previous translations—Trans.

Aaron during Moses's[®] absence, and he envied Aaron and Moses[®]. Arrogance had completely taken hold of him; desire and ego took full control. Satan cast him into the abyss and caused his arrogance toward the great prophets[®], just as he was arrogant toward Adam[®]. Thus, Satan incited the Samiri with his call, seduced him with his temptations, and inflicted him with his own disease. The veil came down over the soul when he exchanged guidance for misguidance and was no longer able to see: {You see them looking at you while they do not see.}⁹⁸

He forgot the truth and the true worshipped One [God] that cannot be seen with eyesight or perceived with the imagination. He reverted to the most despicable kind of *shirk*: depiction. He brought out what his soul embraced: a calf with a body and a mooing sound, to be a trial that delights a people whose soul embraced it before seeing it. Their hearts absorbed the worship of the calf before it was fashioned. How much they have gone against Moses and Aaron[®], and how much they have hurt Moses[®]. God says: {When Moses said to his people, 'O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of God to you?' When they (chose) to deviate, then God caused their hearts to deviate.⁹⁹ God does not guide the defiantly disobedient people.}¹⁰⁰

Many of the children of Israel used to think they were better than Moses[®]. As for Aaron[®], he was a nobody to many of them. It says in the Torah:

[1] Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi took [himself to one side] along with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, descendants of Reuben. [2] They confronted Moses together with two hundred and fifty men from the children of Israel . . . [3] TThey assembled against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for the entire congregation are all holy, and the Lord is in their midst. So why do you raise yourselves above the Lord's assembly?" [4] He spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, "In the morning, the Lord will make known who is His, and who is holy, and He will draw [them] near to Him, and the one He chooses, He will draw near to Him."¹⁰¹

[16] The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [17] Speak to the children of Israel and take from them a staff for each father's house from all the chieftains

⁹⁸ Quran Chapter "The Heights" 7:198.

⁹⁹ It was their choice to deviate, so God gave them what they chose. There is free will when it comes to choosing misguidance—Trans.

¹⁰⁰ Quran Chapter "The Ranks" 61:5.

¹⁰¹ The Torah, Numbers 16:1-5.

according to their fathers' houses; [a total of] twelve staffs, and inscribe each man's name on his staff. [18] Inscribe Aaron's name on the staff of Levi, for there is [only] one staff for the head of their fathers' house. [19] You shall place the staffs in the Tent of Meeting before the [Ark of] the Testimony where I commune with you. [20] The staff of the man whom I will choose will blossom, and I will calm down [turning away] from Myself the complaints of the children of Israel which they are complaining against you. [21] Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and all their chieftains gave him a staff for each chieftain according to their fathers' houses, [a total of] twelve staffs, and Aaron's staff was amidst their staffs. [22] Moses placed the staffs before the Lord in the Tent of the Testimony.

[23] And on the following day Moses came to the Tent of Testimony, and behold, Aaron's staff for the house of Levi had blossomed! It gave forth blossoms, sprouted buds, and produced ripe almonds. [24] Moses took out all the staffs from before the Lord, to the children of Israel; they saw and they took, each man his staff. [25] The Lord said to Moses: Put Aaron's staff back in front of the Testimony as a keepsake [and] a sign for rebellious ones. Then their complaints against Me will end and they will not die. [26] Moses did so. He did just as the Lord had commanded him.¹⁰²

From Mount Hor,¹⁰³ [4] They journeyed from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea to circle the land of Edom, and the people became disheartened on the way. [5] The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in this desert? For there is no bread and no water, and we loathe this miserable food."¹⁰⁴

In this way, the Samiri and his bodily calf served as breathing space for these immoral people to let out what their souls embraced, namely, hatred and envy toward Moses and Aaron®, but especially Aaron®, who was easier to slander and whose prophethood and leadership were easier to challenge. This is because Moses® had considerable standing and great prestige in the hearts of many of the children of Israel since the miracles happened through his actions. Those hypocrites who followed the Samiri behaved arrogantly toward Aaron® and the group that sided with him. They tried to kill him®, but he dealt with the trial with prophetic wisdom and then waited patiently until Moses® returned. God supported him, made clear his right, and judged the corrupted ideology, replacing it

¹⁰² The Torah, Numbers 17:16-28.

¹⁰³ Mount Hor is the name given in Torah to two mountains. One mountain is at the border of Edom south of the Dead Sea. The other is near the Mediterranean Sea—Trans.

¹⁰⁴ The Torah, Numbers 21: 4-5.

with the correct ideology. The truth that God wants is: {Look at your god to whose worship you kept (so long); we will certainly scatter it a (wide) scattering in the sea [98] Your God is only God, there is no god but He; He comprehends all things in (His) knowledge.}¹⁰⁵

The Samiri Look-Alike

God says: {Recite unto them the tale of him to whom We had given Our revelations, but he was peeled off it,¹⁰⁶ so Satan overtook him, and he became one of those who were led astray. Had We willed, We could have raised him by its means, but he clung to the earth and followed his own desires. His example is like that of a dog: if you attack him he pants with his tongue out, and if you leave him he pants with his tongue out. Such is the likeness of the people who deny Our revelations. Narrate unto them the history, that perhaps they may contemplate.}¹⁰⁷

Balam bin Baora was a scholar and an ascetic who used to witness some of the unseen. A disbelieving, tyrannical king called for him to supplicate against Moses[®]. He supplicated against Moses, despite knowing that Moses was a great prophet, because he envied him. He also knew that this tyrant king disbelieved in God, His messengers, and His religion. Although he testified with his declaration “There is no deity but God,” waging war against the guardians and religion of God was proof of his disbelief. Nevertheless, Balam bin Baora and his like use ambiguous matters as an excuse for their failures, and sometimes make the explicit [rulings] out to be allegorical and the allegorical ones explicit in order to violate the sanctities of God Almighty.

The Torah states that Balam bin Baora did not supplicate against Moses, which is most likely due to distortion by the Jews, as a narration from Imam Al-Rida[®] says:

Balam bin Baora was given the Greatest Name [of God], with which he used to supplicate, and the supplications were [always] answered. He inclined toward Pharaoh (this was not the pharaoh of Egypt, may God curse him), and when Pharaoh was searching for Moses and his companions, he said to Balam bin Baora, “Supplicate to God for us to imprison Moses and his

¹⁰⁵ Quran Chapter “Ta Ha” 20:97-98.

¹⁰⁶ Meaning the greatest name of God was taken away from him when he intended to supplicate against Moses—Trans.

¹⁰⁷ Quran Chapter “The Heights” 7:176.

companions.” He got on his donkey to search for Moses, but it would not move. After he hit it, God allowed it to speak and it said, “Woe unto you for hitting me! Do you want me to come with you so you can supplicate against Moses, the Prophet of God, and his faithful followers?” He kept hitting the donkey until it died. The Greatest Name was peeled from his tongue. . . ¹⁰⁸

This was a scholar who became aware of a part of the unseen. He was in a state of certitude, but it did not benefit him at all because he supported the unjust ruler and desired superiority and ascension. He was not sincere to God since his soul embraced arrogance, love of the ego, and envy toward the chosen guardians of God.

The moment he faced this divine test,¹⁰⁹ he turned away from the signs of God and abandoned them. He showed his dark side and his character was exposed—a dog panting after this temporal life, though he pretended to be a working and worshipping scholar of God. This is how he was seduced and ruined by Satan. He became a loyal follower of Satan by following his example—Satan possessed knowledge with certainty, yet he was arrogant toward Adam[®] and rebelled against God. Similarly, despite his knowledge and certitude, this cursed person envied Moses[®] and supplicated against him instead of joining his banner and becoming his follower. Thus, knowledge was a reason for Balam bin Baora’s arrogance and envy of Moses[®]! He rendered knowledge into resentment that threw him into the abyss, even though knowledge is a mercy with which people work to reach God.

It is narrated that the Prophet[®] said: “The scholars are all destroyed except the working ones, and the working ones are all destroyed except the sincere ones, and the sincere ones are at risk [also].”¹¹⁰

Unfortunately, many consider themselves to be scholars despite not knowing how to interpret two chapters from the Holy Quran, according to what has been narrated by the family of Muhammad[®]. They only read the simple narrations from the infallible ones[®], limiting themselves mostly to some of the jurisprudential narrations. How can they consider themselves scholars? Is it because they use the logic that Aristotle established thousands of years ago? Perhaps there are atheists who know this logic better than we

¹⁰⁸ *Tafsir Al-Qumi* [Interpretation of Al-Qumi], vol 1, 248; Al-Jaza-iri, *Qasas Al-Anbiya* [Stories of the Prophets], 352.

¹⁰⁹ The divine test of either accepting or rejecting the command of the unjust ruler—Trans.

¹¹⁰ *Mizan Al-Hikma* [Scale of Wisdom], vol 1, 756; *Kashf Al-Khifaa* [Revealing the Concealed], Al-Ajlani vol 2, 312; *Jame Al-Saadaat lil-Niraaqii* [The Collector of Felicities], vol 1, 220.

do. Or, is it because of debates and arguments of logic and other discussions that have no scientific or practical benefit and are little more than scientific indulgence and a waste of time?¹¹¹

Do we not narrate from the Prophet^ﷺ to this effect: “A person is accountable for the time he wasted in his life?”¹¹² Does God Almighty not say: {When We intend to destroy a city, We command its affluent but they defiantly disobey therein; so the word comes into effect upon it, and We destroy it with (complete) destruction}?¹¹³

Let this be a warning for those who sit for hours in mosques arguing, disputing, and filling the place with words that are far from the truth and guidance that God wants.

We have gone very far away from the [straight] path, and that is why Goliath and his likes have dominated us. The Prophet of God^ﷺ said: “A time will come for my nation when the only thing remaining of the Quran is its calligraphy, and the only thing left of Islam is its name. They are called Muslims but are the people furthest from it. Their mosques are well built, yet they are ruins of guidance. The clerics of that time are the worst under the shade of the sky. From them the test emerged, and to them it will return.”¹¹⁴

The hadith indicates that even though mosques are full of people, they are not on the

¹¹¹The Shia scientific hawza has today set down a methodology in its religious studies curriculum that is based on studying Aristotle's logic, Greek philosophy, and the science of jurisprudential principles and science of narrators (*Ilm Al-Rijal*), which are taken from the Sunnis. These and other logical sciences have become the tools by which the hawza student comes to understand the divine religious laws and the practical, secondary rulings. These sciences have reached a point where they prevail over the words of Muhammad^ﷺ and his progeny^ﷺ, and their words are being interpreted according to these methodologies, set down by atheists. This has led them to fall into many violations of the words of Muhammad^ﷺ and his family^ﷺ. They have rejected and overturned many narrations as a result of their faith in this innovative approach. Also, there are many principles in these sciences that are only studied for scientific indulgence. Therefore, there is no practical outcome that follows from them, and they admit it. However, they have become accustomed to this approach and consider it a sacred, untouchable methodology. Suddenly it is their standard of knowledge! In reality, it distances students from Ahl al-Bayt^ﷺ as they spend the prime of their youth studying the science of atheists and abandoning the wealth of knowledge and spirituality mentioned by the Holy Quran, the Prophet, and his family^ﷺ. In the scientific hawza, the Quran and narrations of Muhammed and his family^ﷺ are not studied and many of the hawza members have memorized only simple Quran verses and narrations of Muhammad and his family^ﷺ. Whoever wants to discover this truth can do so by familiarizing oneself with what is taught in the scientific hawza.

¹¹² Al-Shaikh Al-Sadooq narrates in *Al-Khalaas Wal Ilal* [The Qualities and the Reasons] that the Prophet^ﷺ said regarding the interpretation of the saying of God {Stop them; indeed, they are to be questioned}: “A worshipper should not take a step until he asks about four things: the youth he fretted away; the time he wasted in his life; where he got his money and how he spends it; and his love for us, Ahl al-Bayt^ﷺ” (*Al-Khisaal* [The Traits], 253; *Ilal Al-Sharai* [The Reasoning of Islamic Law], vol 1, 218).

¹¹³ Quran Chapter “The Night Journey” 17:16.

¹¹⁴ *Al-Kafi* [The Sufficient Book], vol 8, 308; *Thawab Al-Amal* [The Rewards of the Deeds], 253; *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 2, 109.

guidance of the family of Muhammad[®]. Do we consider ourselves as workers while we do not command good and forbid evil? It has reached a point where people see evil as good and good as evil! The duty of the scholar is to reform the Islamic communities. God says: **{And warn their people.}**¹¹⁵ This is not one or two people. Sadly, many of them are saying: “People do not want religion,” but they do not notice that the people have fallen between the hammer and the anvil. The tyrant stops the authentic Islamic religion from reaching them, and you do not even make an effort to deliver the religion to them, with the excuse of *taqiyya*.¹¹⁶ Al-Sadiq[®] said to the effect: **“If you were called to support us, *taqiyya* would become more beloved to you than your fathers and mothers.”**¹¹⁷

An ignorant person is perhaps excused in many cases, but you, scholars of Islam, what is your excuse?

The Prince of Believers[®] said: **“The Messenger of God[®] was like an itinerant physician [of guidance] with his medicines.”**¹¹⁸

So, are you working by the traditions of your Prophet[®]? **People are asleep; when they die, they will pay attention.**¹¹⁹

Saul[®]

God says:

¹¹⁵ Quran Chapter “The Repentance” 9:122.

¹¹⁶ In both Sunni and Shia Islam, *taqiyya*, which literally means fear or caution, is a form of religious dissimulation, or a legal dispensation whereby a believing individual can deny his faith or commit otherwise impermissible acts while they are in fear or at risk of significant persecution—Trans.

¹¹⁷ Sheikh Al-Toosi narrates in Al-Tahdheeb that Imam Al-Sadiq[®] said: **“The earth will never be without a scholar from us who knows the truth from falsehood. . . .*Taqiyya* was made to prevent bloodshed and if it reaches the point of bloodshed, there is no *taqiyya*. By God if you are called to assist us, you will say we will not, but we will practice *taqiyya*. *Taqiyya* will be more beloved to you than your fathers and mothers. If the Riser[®] (*Qaim*) rises, he will not need to ask your permission regarding it”** *Tahdeeb Al-Ahkam* [Refining the Rules], vol 6, 173; *Wasa-il Al-Shia* [The Means of Access for the Shia], vol 16, 235; Jawahir Al-Kalam [Jewels of Speech], vol 21, 392.

¹¹⁸ The Prince of Believers said in one of his sermons describing the Messenger[®]: “The Prophet was like an itinerant physician who had set his ointments ready and heated his instruments. He uses them wherever the need arises for curing blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues. He followed with his medicines the spots of negligence and places of perplexity” (Muhammad Abduh, *Nahj Al-Balagha* [The Peak of Eloquence], vol 1, 207).

¹¹⁹ This account is narrated by the Messenger of God[®]. Please review: *Fayd Al-Ghadeer lil-Munaawi* [The Overflow of the Stream], vol 5, 72. It is also mentioned in an account by Ali, the Prince of Believers[®], in *Bihar Al-Anwar* [Seas of Lights], vol 4, 43.

{[146] Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after [the time of] Moses, when they said to a prophet of theirs, "Send a king to us, and we will fight in the way of God?" He said, "Would you perhaps refrain from fighting if fighting was prescribed for you?" They said, "Why should we not fight in the cause of God when we have been driven out from our homes and from our children?" But when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, except for a few of them. And God is Knowing of the wrongdoers. [147] And their prophet said to them, "God has sent to you Saul as a king." They said, "How can he have kingship over us while we are more worthy of kingship than he is, and he has not been given any measure of wealth?" He said, "God has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. God gives His sovereignty to whom He wills. And God is All-Encompassing [in favor] and Knowing." [148] Their prophet said to them, "Verily, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed, that is a sign for you, if you are believers." [149] When Saul went forth with the soldiers, he said, "God will be testing you with a river. So whoever drinks from it is not of me, and whoever does not taste it is indeed of me, excepting one who takes [from it] in the hollow of his hand." But they drank from it, except a [very] few of them. Then, when he had crossed it along with those who believed with him, they said, "There is no power for us today against Goliath and his soldiers." But those who were certain that they would meet God said, "How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of God? And God is with the patient." [150] And when they went forth to [face] Goliath and his soldiers, they said, "Our Lord, pour upon us patience and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people." [151] So they defeated them by permission of God, and David killed Goliath, and God gave him the kingship and prophethood and taught him from that which He willed. Were it not for God checking [some] people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but God is full of bounty to the worlds. [152] These are the verses of God, which We recite to you, in truth. Indeed, you are from among the messengers.}

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¹²⁰ Quran Chapter "The Cow" 2:146-152.

Some time after Moses[®], the disbeliever Goliath and his soldiers ruled over the children of Israel, oppressed them, and evicted them from their homes. This tyrannical rule over the children of Israel was only because of the weakness of both their faith and piety, forsaking the commanding of good and forbidding of evil, inclining toward this temporal life, abandoning *jihad*,¹²¹ and rebelling against the prophets and divine commands. Many factors led the children of Israel back to a similar state they were in before Moses[®] was dispatched, which was a state of submission and giving in to the tyrant, and its cure was wandering in the Sinai desert. Thus, God Almighty willed that Goliath and his soldiers rule over the children of Israel. Perhaps some would return to guidance and repent to God, and a state of reformation would ensue in a group from the children of Israel, which is what happened in the desert of Sinai during their forty years in the wilderness, when a generation was raised in this desert and carried the words “There is no deity except God” to the people of the earth. In fact, a righteous generation did arise this time within the children of Israel: a divine community inclined toward religious struggle, the three-hundred thirteen men that crossed the river with Saul. Crossing the river was a trial from God, a test to determine the extent of their commitment to His divine commands and obedience to their prophet and to Saul, the leader appointed by God. Similarly, a group within the children of Israel emerged who were less faithful than those elites, and they were the ones who took only a handful from the river. It is important to recognize that the trial of the river was necessary, to thoroughly test the believers and bring forward the people most sincere and closest to God among them. However, it was a big test because the soldiers of the children of Israel were extremely thirsty when they reached the river. The ones that drank from the water did not want to die thirsty as they claimed. Their lives were more important to them than obeying God. On the other hand, those who did not drink water realized that dying thirsty while obeying God would be better than staying alive and disobeying God. They were certain that God Almighty, Who forbade them to drink from the river, would give them something better and not let them die of thirst. Therefore, we find that those 313 men were victorious over Goliath and his army when they crossed the river.

As for those who drank from the river, they were defeated and felt lethargic and weak, once they disobeyed God and obeyed their desires and Satan. Their statement—{there is no power for us today against Goliath and his soldiers}—was a settled matter and made apparent the defeat their souls embraced.

The two armies met, the party of God under the leadership of Saul and the party of Satan under the leadership of Goliath. The army of Goliath was superior in both equipment and

¹²¹ *Jihad* is the spiritual struggle within one’s self against sin. Or, a struggle or fight against the enemies of Islam.

numbers. Saul had only a small number of believers with him: those who did not drink from the river and those who took just a handful of water. The hypocrites who drank from the river were also with him. Before the battle started, God's elite and divine nation took refuge with God, and asked Him to grant them patience, firmness, and victory. So God granted them His assistance: {You threw not, when you threw, but it was God who threw.}¹²²

One of those sincere believers in God killed Goliath, and the assembly was defeated and turned its back in retreat. Satan turned on his heels, and said: {Indeed, I see what you do not see.}¹²³ The righteous servant who killed Goliath was David[®]. Afterwards, God Almighty chose him and made him a great Prophet and just king in the wake of his sincerity as a believer in God and a brave fighter who feared only God {[10] We certainly gave David bounty from Us. [We said], "O mountains, repeat [Our] praises with him, and the birds [as well]." We made iron pliable for him, [11] [Commanding him], "Make full coats of mail and calculate [precisely] the links, and work [all of you] righteousness. Indeed I, am Seeing of what you do."}¹²⁴

¹²² Quran, Chapter "The Spoils of War" 8:17.

¹²³ Ibid., 8:48.

¹²⁴ Quran, Chapter "Sheba" 34:11.