

ESSENCE OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

The Eternal Light

Ayatullah Agha Haji Mirza Mahdi Pooya

Edited by: Syed Muhammad Murtaza & Husain P Taylor

IN THE NAME
OF ALLAH
THE ALL MERCIFUL
THE ALL COMPASSIONATE



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ERRATA

PAGE	LINE	INCORRECT	CORRECT
24	5	by by	by
27	3	only to only	only to
34	15	XLIV XLV XLVI	LIV LV LVI
35	5	LXXII	LXXIII
39	34	insure	ensure
68	21	them	him
88	1	→Insert Period (.) after Ahl al-Bayt	
88	2	→Delete: "including the wives of Holy Prophet."	
113	10	XXXI	XLI
124	13	→substitute correct original verses, ch.V: vs 90-91 (translation is correct)	
259	3	→Add v.75 ch.LVI. original	
262	17	physical	psychical
306	29	mubahira	arham-il-mutahira
351	6	pleanant	pleasant
361	22	al-saqifa	at Saqifa
364	25	→Include after persons "by Fatimah."	
364	29	after	from
372	30	who	who('hoo')
380	13	akramun	ahrmun
383	32	exhanging	exchanging
413	6	Musa	prophet Musa
417	35	centres	centers
418	5	centres	centers
419	7	centres	centers
432	9	intended	invented
438	13	few	law
440	13	Ummatum	Ummatun-muslematun
461	31	Unfortunately	Fortunately
NOTES		correct serial number	

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Foreword

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

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

Agha Mirza Mahdi Pooya's journey through life was charted and coursed by a burning zeal to acquire knowledge and be blessed with piety, and hence his acquiring the surname Pooya, the seeker of truth and knowledge. These two values he cherished and bequeathed to all those who came in contact with him. To these he added justice and completed the triangle. This

was to be the greatest gift he received from his unassailable faith in *Tawheed* (Unity), in Allah and His Last Prophet, peace be upon him, and his pristine progeny that make up the 14 purified paragons of piety, knowledge and justice.

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

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

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

Agha Murtaza Pooya

Introduction

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

'*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is, as it were, a shining star. (This lamp is) kindled from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon Light; Allah guideth unto His Light whom He will. And Allah speaketh of mankind in allegories, for Allah is Knower of all things.*
'*(This lamp is found) in houses which Allah hath allowed to be exalted and that His name shall be remembered therein. Therein do offer praise to Him at morn and evening.*' (Ch. XXIV: vs 35-36)

This 'eternal Light' has been transmitted through His messengers from Adam to the Last Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his household, '*so that there may not remain any argument for people against Allah.*' (Ch. IV: v 65)

The inseparable chain of Light passed from the Holy Prophet to 'Ali, the first Imam (the divine leader), and his eleven descendants as Imams, and their mother Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet, of whom he declared, '*Al Fatimatu-bidh'tu mini*' (Fatimah is a piece of my flesh and blood, i.e., personality). They are all infallibles (*Ma'soom*) as conferred by the Qur'an (Ch. XXXIII: v 33), and a permanent proof of *Tawheed, Nabuwat*, and the continuity of *Imamat* till the Day of Resurrection.

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

The portrait of the late Agha Pooya (may Allah bless him) appears among '*those (who possessing minds) remember Allah standing and sitting and reclining on their sides and think (seriously) on the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying: "O our Lord! Thou has not created all this in vain! Glory be to Thee! Save us then from the (hell) fire*".' (Ch. III: v 191) It is an inimitable description of persons who remember Allah with all sincerity and humbleness.

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

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

The political upheavals, with intervals, in Iran and Iraq, led the author to migrate to India in 1925. He settled down in Madras and Banglore, and had the opportunity to study modern

thought directly in English and evaluated the conflicting intellectual trends of the east and the west.

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

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

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

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

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

Syed Muhammad Murtaza

CHAPTER ONE

Genuineness of the Holy Qur'an in its Text and Arrangement

'*Verily, those who disbelieve in the Reminder when it cometh unto them, and verily it (Qur'an) is a Book Unassailable.*

Shall come not nigh it falsehood from before it nor from behind it: a revelation from the All Wise, the Most Praised One.' (Ch. XLI: v 41-42)[1]

An overwhelming majority of scholars of all schools of thought in Islam agree that the Holy Qur'an, as it is now in our hands, was rendered in writing under the command and the personal supervision of the Holy Prophet himself, and that no addition, omission or alteration, whatsoever, ever took place in it. But a few traditionists of Sunni as well as Shi'ah schools of thought who were invariably influenced more by the letter of all sorts of traditions than by reason and historical facts, have held a different view to the effect that some omissions and alterations took place after the Holy Prophet during the time of the Caliph 'Uthman. The advocates of this view have never succeeded in establishing this theory by any reliable evidence and argument. In order to demonstrate the fallacy of this theory it is necessary:

(A) to point out the ORIGINS of this theory,

(B) to assess the internal and external EVIDENCE of historical value on this subject,

(C) to evaluate the TRADITIONS put forward in support of the theory; and thus,

(D) to establish what the Muslims are required to believe about the Holy Qur'an from the religious point of view — 'DIVINE TRUST'.

Before dealing with the above in detail the following essentials must be noted.

1. Definition of the Qur'an

By Qur'an we mean the rhythmic and recitative verses, phrases, sentences, and chapters uttered by the Prophet of Islam, not as his own wording, but as the *verbatim* Book of God revealed to him. This book he proclaimed as his '*Everlasting Miracle*', bearing testimony of his Prophethood, with which he challenged not only the Arab individuals of his time who doubted the divine origin of the Qur'an but also non-Arabs who may in the future doubt its origin. He even challenged all '*Ins* and *Jinns*' (human beings and jinns) together to join hands and create even a single chapter like it, until the Day of Resurrection.

'*If ye be in doubt about what We have sent down unto Our Servant (Muhammad), produce ye then a surah* [chapter] *like unto it, and call ye your witness other than God, if ye be truthful.*

But if ye do (it) not, and never shall ye do (it), then guard ye (yourselves) against the (Hell) fire whose fuel shall be the people and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.' (Ch. II: vs 23-24)

(*Say thou), "Even if men and jinns get united (with the object) that they bring the like of this Qur'an, they would bring not the like of it, even though some of them to the others be helpers*".' (Ch. XVII: v 88)[2]

The other sayings of the Prophet are also revelations from God but they are not included in the above definition, as they are not

part of the Qur'an in respect of which he challenged the world. These are known as *Ahadith Qudsi* (the sacred traditions), which are so numerous, that if collected together they would be at least the size of the Qur'an if not more. This definition also excludes the words, phrases or sentences revealed to the Holy Prophet as explanatory notes, in between certain verses, but not for recitation. The revealed notes of this type are so peculiar that if they were taken as part of the text of the Qur'an, the rhythmic and recitative tone of the verse would be disturbed. Thus, granting the truth of certain reports pointing out some words or phrases not found in the Qur'an as 'revealed,' in between some verses, they do not mean that the words or phrases in question were part of the text for recitation. In other words, it is true that the Qur'an as a whole or part is revealed but it is not true that whatever was revealed is the Qur'an or part of it. For example, there are certain reports narrated by some Sunni and Shi'ah narrators that in Chapter IV (*An-Nisa*) v 24 wherein temporary marriage is dealt with there was a phrase '*Illa Ajlin*' — 'for fixed period' after the sentence '*fa mastamta'tum bihi min hunna*' —'as such of ye had '*Muta'ah*'[3] with them.' It was said that the phrase was found in the collections of 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd. The said phrase was undoubtedly revealed, not as a part of the recitative Qur'an but as an explanatory note; this is the reason it was not found in any other collection except that of 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd. All the Muslim commentators agree that the passage deals with the legislation relating to temporary marriage. According to 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd the reason for recording and reciting this explanatory phrase was that Caliph 'Umar had issued an ordinance prohibiting the temporary marriage (*muta'ah*) and as a protest he (Ibn Mas'ûd) used to mention this phrase so that nobody could deny the legislation regarding temporary marriage. Any report that suggests addition, omission or alteration of some words or phrases which is inconsistent with the rhythmic and recitative tone of the text should be either rejected or interpreted as meaning something out of the text. For example, Bukhari reports that one of the companions of the

Prophet, Abu Darda, used to consider the phrase '*Wa ma khalaqa*' — 'and what has He created' — in Chapter XCII: v 3, as an addition not found in the original version, but the rhythmical consistency of the present version with the phrase is the best proof against the report of Abu Darda. Moreover it is the consensus of Muslim scholars that nothing has been added to the text. The definition above needs to be kept in mind throughout the discussion about the Holy Qur'an.

2. No religious document is as genuine as the Holy Qur'an

'A comparative study of the Qur'an with the Old and New Testaments brings to light the fact that the Qur'an in many places has directly or indirectly refuted many statements recorded in the Jewish and Christian scriptures held by their adherents as authentic.'[4]

None of the historical records and reports which the Muslims claim to be the most authentic: the *Sihah-al-Sitta* (Six Correct Collections) of the Sunnis or the *Kutb-al-'Arba'h* (Four Books) of the Shi'ahs, can claim to be within the reach of every Muslim from his earliest age as is the Holy Qur'an. And no tradition was considered so important as to make every Muslim child learn, recite and memorize it, word by word with the utmost grammatical correctness and phonetic perfection as in the case of the Holy Qur'an. The utmost importance attached to the Holy Qur'an by every Muslim was not developed as an afterthought. The Holy Qur'an itself, from the time of its revelation, encouraged the people in various ways to learn, read, recite and memorize it, and ponder over every word and mindfully listen when being recited:

'*And when the Qur'an is recited then ye listen to it and be attentive, that mercy be done unto you.*'[5] (Ch. VII: v 204)

According to Islamic rules one should be physically clean, i.e. perform prescribed ablution (*wudu*), and avoid things which

cause distraction before recitation.

'And when recitest thou the Qur'an, seek thou refuge with God from Satan the accursed.'[6] (Ch. XVI: v 98)

3. The importance of the Qur'an declared by its divine author and upheld by believers: The Holy Prophet was commanded by God not to be in haste in the recitation or the arrangement of the Holy Qur'an but to follow the divine order in both respects

'[O Our Apostle Muhammad!], Move not by thy tongue with it (the Qur'an) in haste!
Verily on Us is the collection of it and the recital of it!
So when We have recited it, then follow through the recital!
Again it is on Us the explaining of it!'[7] (Ch. LXXV: vs 16-19)

'High above all is God, the King, the (Self-Existent) Truth; And hasten not [O Our Apostle Muhammad!] *with the Qur'an ere it's completed unto thee its revelation, and say thou: "O my Lord! Increase me in knowledge".'* [8] (Ch. XX: v 114)

This indicates that the arrangement of verses and *surahs* need not be according to the dates of revelation. It is evident the importance attached to the holy text by its divine author, is naturally shared by the Muslims, who rightly believe that God is the author of the Holy Qur'an.

Thus the Muslims pay full devotion to the Holy Book and carry out the orders required of them. The Muslims in the lifetime of the Prophet were brought up to learn the Qur'an as '*Ibadat*' (devotion), to recite it as 'devotion', to write it down as 'devotion', to teach their children and other people and make them learn it by heart and understand it as 'devotion'. They became so familiar with it that they used the verses of the Holy Qur'an in their daily conversation. History records that Fidhah, the noble Abysinian housemaid of Fatimah Al-Zahra, the 'Lady of Paradise', the daughter of the Holy Prophet, was in the habit of using the verses and words of the Qur'an in her conversation.[9]

4. The Qur'an was arranged and written in complete book form during the life of the Holy Prophet

The Holy Qur'an declares that the teaching of the Book and the act of writing are among the main objects of the advent of the Holy Prophet and it considers the pen as the means of educating man even when God is the teacher.

'*(He who taught (to write) with the Pen,*
(He) taught man what he knew not!'[10] (Ch. XCVI: vs 4-5)

'*Noon (N) by the Pen and by what they write.*'[11] (Ch. LXVII: v 1)

The Holy Qur'an commands people to write down their business, their agreements, and other transactions, and keep witnesses to avoid doubts and disputes later on. So it is not credible that the author of the Qur'an, God, who ordered mankind to write down their business transactions minutely did not want His 'Book' recorded in precise written form. It is after all the 'Book' containing the fundamental principles of truth and justice, the final and the universal Divine Message, not for any section of humanity or for any limited time but for the human race as a whole, for all time in all parts of the earth. It is unthinkable too that God left the Qur'an in fragmentary form when He blames the Jews for fragmenting the Book of Moses when they were exhibiting a part and suppressing the other:

'*They esteem not God with the estimation due to Him when they say: "Nothing did God send down unto man!" Say [O Our Apostle Muhammad!]: "Who (then) did send down the Book which Moses brought? A light and a guidance to mankind, ye make [transcribe] it into papers (whereof) ye publish (a part) and conceal ye much (of it)! And ye were taught what ye knew not, neither you nor your fathers; Say thou: 'God!'" Then leave them sporting in their vain discourses.*'[12] (Ch. VI: v 92)

Emphatically 'Ali says, 'Nay! during the gradual revelation of the Qur'an there was no chapter, verse, sentence, phrase, word, letter revealed which the Prophet did not recite to me and made

me recite, and then dictate to me. I wrote it in its proper place as ordered. He dictated to me not only the text but also the necessary explanatory notes about the date, circumstances and the implications of every verse and chapter. Besides this, the Prophet taught me a thousand key notes to the inner meaning of the Qur'an, each key note leading to another thousand key notes and further inner meanings and so on.' It is a verdict against the claim of any school of thought that the text in question was collected and arranged by anyone after the demise of the Prophet. Umm Salma (wife of the Holy Prophet) has narrated that the Prophet said, "Ali is always with the Truth (*Haqq*) and the Qur'an and the Truth is always with him. Until the Day of Judgement they will not be separated from each other.'[13]

The term *Mushaf*, or 'collection', used then did not mean the text only. It meant text with commentary or explanatory notes. That collection also had been made by the recognized teachers, months before the demise of the Holy Prophet. It will be discussed later that the recognized teachers refused to hand over their collection to the then ruling parties. However, the ruling parties decided to dispense with those collections and prepare their own. It is recorded in books of traditions and history that the young Zayd ibn Thabit was selected for the task by them. No record of historical value shows that 'Ali or other recognized teachers of the Qur'an took part in this official collection, on the contrary each of them engaged himself independently in producing copies of his collections according to his insight and ability. Of 'Ali's transcendental ability we need say no more than what he said about his own *Mushaf* (collection). It was based entirely on the revealed explanation dictated to him by the Holy Prophet. The following statement of 'Ali relates not only to the commentary of the Qur'an, but also covers every minute aspect of his life from birth to death: 'The Prophet did not follow any but divine guidance and I did not follow any but the Prophet's guidance.'[14] The Prophet said, 'I and 'Ali are from the one and same Divine Light.'[15]

Neither the so-called collection of 'Ali, prepared after the demise of the Holy Prophet, nor his former collection made during the life of the Holy Prophet was seen by any person other than the chosen members of the family of the Prophet, i.e., the Holy *Ahl al-Bayt*. The official collection prepared by by Zayd ibn Thabit under the order of the first Caliph also remained unpublished during the reigns of the first two Caliphs and the early part of the third Caliph's rule. But before the beginning of this period the text of the Qur'an along with the *Ahl al-Bayt* was widely known among the Muslims. All that could have been done was to tamper with the interpretation of the existing text. To the question of Talha, 'Is all this in our hands Qur'an (revealed from God)?' 'Ali's answer was, 'All that is in our hands (within the reach of the people) is Qur'an (revealed from God), and in this (which is available to all) is the proof of our right over the people and their duty to obey us.'[16] However, the futile dispute remains about omissions and alterations in the arrangement and in some lettering, but not about any additions at all.

5. This issue should not be confused with the question of varieties of recitation which do not mean addition or alteration

The alteration or the alternatives given by some commentators regarding some lettering, pronounciation and some words of the Holy Book which do not affect any substantial change either in the meaning or in the significance of the phrases or the sentences will be dealt with under the variety of recitations of the same words; such as *Malike* and *Maalike*.

6. CRITERION

All religious records other than the Holy Qur'an, Islamic or non-Islamic are suspected of containing passages, paragraphs and even chapters which have been added to the original work. Having in view the irrefutable authenticity of the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet and his companions and the scholars of

subsequent generations are unanimous that the Holy Qur'an is to be taken as the standard and the criterion for the verification of all the other religious records, be these Islamic or non-Islamic. Any narration attributing an utterance, action or endorsement to the Holy Prophet or the Holy Imams of his House is unacceptable if inconsistent with the Holy Qur'an. This criterion for accepting or rejecting a narration or tradition has been declared by the Holy Prophet, 'Ali, Hasan and Husain and the succeeding nine Imams of the Holy House.[17] It means that the Qur'an as the criterion for the verification of other religious statements, records and narrations, existed within the reach of the public throughout the period.

7. There is no dispute or doubt that the Qur'an in our hand is the same version which received the official assent of the third Caliph 'Uthman

All that has been or may be said about the omission, addition or substantial alteration alleged to have taken place in the Qur'an in the arrangement of the words, phrases, verses and chapters or the arrangement of the chapters together relates to the period between the demise of the Prophet and the official assent given to the existing popular version by the third Caliph, 'Uthman. The confusing circumstances created by the ruling party on this occasion of official assent needs to be reviewed. Besides the Qur'an there were authoritative scribes of the Qur'an who could be referred to in any issue pertaining to the Qur'an. Apart from 'Ali, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib and their adherents, there were a few scholars selected by the Prophet like 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd and Mas'ab ibn 'Umayr from the earliest Muslims in Mecca, and 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b amongst the earlier adherents of Islam (*Ansars*), Ma'adh ibn Jabal, Salim Maulla, Hudhayfa, and others who were entrusted with the duty of recording there and then the Qur'an as it was revealed to the Prophet and recited by him. The scribes, after recording, used to obtain the approval of the Prophet on the spot and many times afterwards. The Muslims learned the Qur'an directly or indirectly from these scribes of the

Holy Book in the lifetime of the Prophet and later on. Ja'far ibn Abi Talib was the head of the early Muslims who migrated to Abyssinia, and Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr was sent to Madina to teach the Qur'an before the migration of the Prophet to that city.

Apart from these scribes many companions of the Prophet (*Sahaba*) were interested in learning the Holy Qur'an and its commentary. Among the prominent scholars of the Qur'an, 'Abdallah ibn 'Abbas was eminent, though he was a young companion of the Prophet. He was also one of the disciples of 'Ali. Even the party in power and their dignitaries had to learn the Qur'an from 'Abdallah ibn 'Abbas (vide *Sahih* of Bukhari, Chapter: 'Stoning the Pregnant Adultress', *Rajm Hubla*). The dignitaries of the Quraysh, during the later period of the second Caliph were learning the Qur'an from 'Abdallah ibn 'Abbas. One of them was 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Auf whose political importance was evident from the fact that the second Caliph gave him the right of casting a vote in the deliberations of the committee appointed to nominate the third Caliph. Most of these recognized scholars of the Qur'an lived throughout the period between the demise of the Holy Prophet and the official assent given by Caliph 'Uthman to the existing version. These people taught the Qur'an throughout the length and breadth of the fast expanding Muslim Empire.

People of various races, creeds and different shades of opinion who had embraced Islam learned the Qur'an by heart from those early Muslims and put it down in writing for their own use. The popularity of the Qur'an among the Muslims is evident from the report that in the battle of Yamama [12/633 C][18], which took place only about six months after the demise of the Holy Prophet, seven hundred *Huffaz* (those who learned the Qur'an by heart) were killed in a single day's fight. If there was any letter, word, phrase, sentence, verse or chapter and if its original position was different from those of the version in hand it would have been known to a very large number of people in every generation. Any such report about the wording of the

Qur'an lacking the strength of evidence of the reporters in large numbers cannot be true just as the eclipse of the sun at midday in a clear sky cannot take place and be known only to only a few out of thousands of inhabitants of a particular region. This argument aimed at the negation of a certain event on the basis of the absence of correlative factors of the event will frequently be referred to in the course of our discussion about the Qur'an in hand as the strongest evidence of its genuineness. There are solitary reports about certain words of *Surah al-Fatihatul-Kitab* being different from the words in the version in hand, e.g. instead of *Walad-daleen*, some reports say it was *Ghairad-daleen*. Reports stating that this small chapter, the recitation of which twice in each of the five daily prayers is compulsory, was different in wording from the present version, cannot be relied upon at all.

The statement of the Holy Prophet, 'Gabriel had placed before me the Qur'an for review once a year and in the last year of ministry he [Gabriel] did so twice which indicated that the time of my departure was close at hand', asserts that both the Divine Author and the Holy Prohet were so very careful about the Qur'an that no alteration of any kind whatsoever could have been made in it by any one, and that the Qur'an received its complete arrangement and order not later than about two months before the demise of the Holy Prophet. It is with reference to this revealed Book which existed in the complete form within the reach of the people, that the Prophet addressing his followers declared:

إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمُ الثَّقَلَيْنِ كِتَابَ اللهِ وَعِتْرَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي أَبَدًا فَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ (حديث)

'I leave amidst you two great things, the Book of God (the Holy Qur'an), and my Ahl al-Bayt (members of my household). Should ye be attached to these two never shall ye

be misled after me; for verily these two will never be separated from each other, until they meet me at the cistern of Kauser (on the Day of Judgement).'[19] *Hadith-e-Thaqalayn: Tradition of the Two Precious Things)*

It was with reference to the complete Book of God in the hands of the Muslims that 'Umar said, '*Hasbuna Kitaballah*' (i.e. 'Sufficient is for us the Book of God'), on the last day of the Holy Prophet's life when he had asked for pen and ink to write his will in which he wanted to reiterate 'Ali as being the *Hujjat* (the Supreme Authority) after him but was refused (vide 'Hadith of Pen and Paper).[20] It is a categorical announcement referred above about the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Any doubt in the genuineness of the Qur'an and the supreme authoritative status of both the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt* undermine the very foundation of Islam. Such doubts imply that the Holy Prophet who claimed to be the last in the order of the Messengers of God has left these two vital issues to be finalized and decided by the wishes of the new converts whose susceptibility to reversion to the old pagan cult and practices has been referred to by the Qur'an as a warning to the Prophet.

٣٠- وَقَالَ الرَّسُوْلُ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ
قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوْا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ مَهْجُوْرًا ○

'*And shall say (out) the Apostle (that day), "My Lord verily my people have held this Qur'an as a vain forsaken thing*!"' (Ch. XXV: v 30)

In other words, to doubt the genuineness of the Qur'an is to allege that the Holy Prophet, who had come to finalize the divine mission so that after him there would be no arguments or excuses for men against God,

١٦٥- رُسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِيْنَ وَمُنْذِرِيْنَ لِئَلَّا
يَكُوْنَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللّٰهِ حُجَّةٌ ۢ
بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيْزًا حَكِيْمًا ○

[God says: '*We sent apostles as givers of glad tidings and warners*

that there may not remain any argument for people against God, after (the coming of) these apostles. And God is Mighty, Wise.' (Ch. IV: v 165)]

had neglected the final settlement of important issues, and thus laid the foundation of all the later controveries in Islam.

For the sake of argument, let us say that the Holy Prophet in his declaration,

'*I am leaving among you two precious things, the Book of God and my Ahl al-Bayt,*'

referred to what the people had learnt by heart and from the fragments of the leaves, wood, bones and papers on which the Qur'an used to be written at the time of its revelation. Such an interpretation of the above words of the Holy Prophet which he uttered when declaring the final and supreme authority after him, is as meaningless as the interpretation that the word *Maula* used by the Holy Prophet, at the declaration of *Ghadir-e-Khum*, meant 'friend'. There was no need for such a declaration if the intention of the Holy Prophet was to refer to 'Ali as a mere friend at *Ghadir*. Similarly, it is not possible that he referred to a pile of scattered fragments as the 'Book of God' without saying anything definite about the would-be shape of those fragments as a complete book and about those who were to undertake the task. If by the 'Book of God' he meant the fragments in question, and not a proper book then he would have said (according to the Shi'ah point of view) that he had left them with 'Ali to give the final shape as ordered by God. And he would have said that people should receive the Qur'an from 'Ali only. Or, according to the Sunni point of view, he could have left the Qur'an in a fragmentary condition and said that it was the duty of the man in power after him to undertake the task of putting together a 'Book.' There is no such statement of the Prophet. Again, to doubt the existence of the Qu'ran in a definite book form and the existence of a clear declaration about a living authority (*Ahl al-Bayt*) as its interpreter and infallible exponent, is to doubt the prophethood of the founder of Islam

and his perfect wisdom!

8. The Qur'an claims several stages of its existence

(1) A pre-revealed existence with God in the *Lawhe Mahfuz* (Ch. LXXXV: v 22) (protected tablet) and in the *Kitab-e-Maknun* Ch. LVI: vs 77-79) (hidden book).

٧٧۔ إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ ۝
٧٨ فِي كِتَٰبٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ۝
٧٩۔ لَّا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ۝

'*Verily it is an honoured Qur'an, In a Book hidden, Toucheth it not save the purified ones.*' (Ch. LVI: vs 77-79)

(2) A revealed form taught to the Holy Prophet when he was created and given the power of expression.

١۔ الرَّحْمَٰنُ ۝
٢۔ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ۝
٣۔ خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ ۝
٤۔ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۝

'*(God), the Beneficient, Taught He the Qur'an. He created man, He taught him Expression.*' (Ch: LV: vs 1-3)

And (3) an arranged form revealed to the heart of the Holy Prophet in its totality on the esteemed night in the month of Ramadhan. (Ch. XLIV: vs 1-6 and Ch. XCVII: *Al-Qadr*)[21] These three stages refer to God's teaching the Holy Prophet and acquainting him with the Qur'an. (4) Fourth is the stage of the gradual revelation of the Qur'an; in this stage the revelation of the Qur'an part by part was meant for recitation to the people (Ch. XVII: v 106):

١٠٦۔ وَقُرْآنًا فَرَقْنَٰهُ لِتَقْرَأَهُ عَلَى النَّاسِ
عَلَىٰ مُكْثٍ
وَنَزَّلْنَٰهُ تَنزِيلًا ۝

'*And it is the Qur'an which We have apportioned it so that thou mayest recite it unto the people with deliberation (by degrees), and We have sent it down, gradually in portions.*' (Ch: XVII: v 106)

It was in this stage of recitation that the first five verses of Ch. XLVI (*'Alaq* or *Iqra*) were revealed. The first chapter of the Qur'an named *al-Fatihatul-Kitab* (the Opening Chapter of the Holy Book, the Qur'an) was revealed for recitation later. In this stage of revelation the circumstances would require quotation and recitation of some chapters or verses (from chapters) not in accordance with the order of the previous arrangement. A portion of one chapter would be recited earlier and the other portion would remain to be recited later on. In this interval few other chapters were revealed for recitation. (5) Fifth is the stage of post-gradual revelation wherein the Qur'an was taught to be placed within the reach of *Jinns* and *Ins* (*Jinns* and human beings) as an everlasting guidance and challenging miracle. Post-gradual revelation begins in the last year of the Holy Prophet's ministry. The Holy Prophet said that Gabriel used to place the Qur'an before him every year but this year he placed it twice before him as it was the Holy Prophet's last year in this material world. It was approximately three months before the Holy Prophet's repeated declaration:

'*I am leaving among you two precious things, the Book of God and my Ahl al-Bayt.*'

It is obvious, then, that the arrangement of the post-gradual revelation should be in accordance with the order of the Qur'an or pre-gradual revelation because circumstances may require an earlier recitation of a portion which might be next in the order of the pre-revealed arrangement.

This fact is supported by the Qur'an:

١٧-إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ۖ

'*Verily, on Us is the collection of it and the recital of it!*' (Ch. LXXV: v 17)

Also there are the traditions indicating that the Holy Prophet

used to order the scribes to place the revealed verses of different rhythmical pitch in the relevant chapters; and the Qur'an was revised by Gabriel twice in the last year of the Prophet's ministry. Therefore, the place and the date of revelation have no bearing on the order of arrangement of the Qur'an in post-gradual revelation. What we find written in the beginning of every chapter about the date and place of revelation (whether revealed in Mecca or Madina) are not part of the Qur'an. People had marked these out for their own reference. Thus, it is not correct to consider the present placing of the Madani Chapters before the Makki and vice versa as a sign of disorder and lack of proper arrangement.

9. Unique Method — Tasrifi

There is no issue of any theological nature which the Qur'an has not dealt with. It surpasses all scriptural records of pre or post-Islamic ages in the abundant variety of its content. Its method of presentation is unique in itself. It never deals with any topic in the common systematic way used by authors of theology or even by apostolic writers. On the contrary it expressly says that it has adopted a special manifold method of its own which may be termed as *Tasrifi*, that is, display of varieties, or changing the topics and shifting from one subject to another or reverting to the previous one and repeating purposely one and the same subject in unique and peculiar rhythmic and recitative forms to facilitate understanding, learning and memorizing:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هٰذَا
الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَاَبٰٓى اَكْثَرُ
النَّاسِ اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ۝

'*And certainly We have used various arguments for men in the Qur'an, every kind of description, but most men consent not to aught but denying.*' (Ch. XVII: v 89)

اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْاٰيٰتِ
ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْدِفُوْنَ ۝

'*...See thou, how we display (explaining) the signs yet they turn*

aside.' (Ch. VI: v 46)

'*Behold! how repeatedly do We display the signs, that they may understand*.' (Ch. VI: v 65 last portion)

وَكَذٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْاٰيٰتِ
وَلِيَقُوْلُوْا دَرَسْتَ
وَلِنُبَيِّنَهٗ
لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ○

'*And thus do We display the signs and that they may say (unto Thee, Muhammad): "Thou hast been taught: and that We make it clear to people who know*".' (Ch. VI: v 106)

The display of varieties linked together with rhythm of peculiar pitch is to reveal the signs of the Unity of God. From the above verses it is evident that the Holy Qur'an was already alive to the fact that this splendid method will make some opponents accuse its author of introducing the subject abruptly. The Qur'an emphatically asserts that it is a matchless form of expression of unique beauty to stir up the depth of human intellect, to reflect on the unity in variety and harmony in diversity. An attentive reciter or an intelligent audience of the Holy Qur'an while passing through these varieties of rhythmical pitch experiences that which the Holy Qur'an itself declares:

اَللّٰهُ نَزَّلَ
اَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيْثِ كِتٰبًا
مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِيَ ۖ
تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُوْدُ الَّذِيْنَ
يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ۚ
ثُمَّ تَلِيْنُ جُلُوْدُهُمْ وَقُلُوْبُهُمْ
اِلٰى ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُدَى اللّٰهِ
يَهْدِيْ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ
وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ
فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ○

'God hath the best announcement, a book consistent in its various parts, at the recitation of which do shudder the skins of those who fear their Lord, then their skins and their hearts become pliant to the remembrance of God, this is God's guidance. He guideth with it whomsoever He willeth; and (as for) him whom God alloweth to err, there shall be no guide for him.' (Ch. XXXIX: v 23)

٢٧ وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ
مِن كُلِّ مَثَلٍ

'And certainly We have set forth for men in this Qur'an similitudes of every sort that they may mind.' (Ch. XXXIX: v 27)

Even those who doubted the genuineness of the arrangement of the present version did not complain that the whole arrangement of the verses in all the chapters had been affected. There are chapters which were undoubtedly revealed in complete form such as Chapters XLIV (*Al-Qamar*), XLV (*Al-Rahman*), XLVI (*Al-Waqiah*) and the chapters immediately preceding and succeeding them and Chapter XXXIX (*Al-Zumar*). The sixth chapter (*Al-An'am*), which is a lengthy chapter, according to the *Ahl al-Bayt*, was also revealed at one time in its complete form. One finds the same variation of subject manifested in those chapters also. This variety of expression in a rhythmical way is found not only in the chapters but even in the verses of the Holy Book. These facts are understood by an intelligent and a sincere student of the Holy Qur'an as he goes on reciting it over and over.

Therefore to consider (a) the absence of chronological arrangement of some of the verses and chapters or, (b) the variance of topics in the verses, as proving that disagreements over the Qur'an took place after the Holy Prophet is not correct.

On the other hand there is irrefutable internal evidence based on the verses of *surahs* (chapters) to establish our contention discussed above. For example Chapter XCVI (*Al-'Alaq* or *Iqra*) contains eleven verses of which the first five are in chronological order but the last six were revealed long afterwards when many

portions of other chapters were also revealed for recitation. The last six were revealed when the Holy Prophet started offering and leading prayers openly, and met with the opposition from the infidels in the third year of his mission. Similarly, the last lengthy verse 20 of *Surah Al-Muzzammil* (Ch. LXXII) according to its content, supported by authentic reports, must have been revealed eleven years after the first nineteen short verses. The revelation of the last portion belonged to the early revelations next to *Iqra* (Ch. XCVI) and *Al-Muddathir* (Ch. LXXIV). Were not the position of the verses in complete accord with the Holy Prophet's declarations, it would have been pointed out by the *Ahl al-Bayt* and their followers, and also by other companions of the Holy Prophet who were held as authorities on the Qur'an. The Imams of the Holy House have pointed out that *Surah Ad-Duha* (Ch. XCIII) and *Al-Inshirah* (Ch. XCIV) though separated by *Bismillah* should be considered as one and recited together if they are recited in the first two *Rakaahs* of the daily compulsory prayers. The same is true of *Al-Fil* (Ch. CV) and *Al-Quraysh* (Ch. CVI). They should be recited together in the prayer. This directive of the *Ahl al-Bayt* about these chapters confirms that they were keen to see that the prayers from the Qur'an be recited in the proper order. If the last six verses of *Iqra* and the last forty-six verses of *Al-Muddathir* were not in their proper places the *Ahl al-Bayt* would have pointed it out and directed people to place them properly. Absence of any direction from the *Ahl al-Bayt* regarding the verses in question is sufficient proof that their present arrangement is in order, though the time of their revelations was long after the revelation of the other portions of their respective chapters. This is the best internal evidence negating the notion that the chronological arrangement of verses and chapters should be according to their date of revelation. Besides these, all the authentic reports to the effect that the Holy Prophet used to direct the scribes to insert revealed verses into different chapters, proves that the *original arrangement* of the verses and the chapters need not be in accordance with the date of revelation. Besides these apparent (exoteric) ties which justify the groupings, there are hidden

(esoteric) ties which explain the sequence of the verses and the chapters which are only known to God and those whom He has purified from the profanity of the material world, those in perpetual touch with the Qur'an in its original stage of Hidden Book: the Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*. The recitational consideration plays a part in the arrangement of verses in the chapters and has some affinity to the size and subject matter of the chapters. The date and place of the fragmentary revelation have nothing to do with the position of the verses in the chapters, nor in the grouping of the chapters together. The knowledge of the date and place of the fragmentary revelation may be of some use in the elementary stages of commentary, but otherwise the Qur'an transcends the boundaries of time and space.

A. ORIGINS of doubt — the background

There is no doubt that the irresistible fascinating force and the challenging power of the Holy Qur'an were the significant, if not the sole means of conversion ever since the beginning of the Holy Prophet's mission. Inevitably, the effect of the recitation of the Qur'an made the opponents spare no effort to prevent the Holy Prophet and his disciples from reciting the Holy Book before the public, particularly the youth. There is abundant historical evidence of this fact. Besides this preventive measure, the opponents also tried to overcome the irresistible force and the wonderful effect of the Holy Qur'an by disturbing its recitation through making noises and mischievous interjections.

...وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَٰذَا
الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُوْنَ ○

'*And those who disbelieve say: "Hearken ye not this Qur'an, make noise in it, happily ye may overcome".*' (Ch. XLI: v 26)

One of the instances of the effort is the story of *Tilkal Ghuraniqual ola inna Shafa atahunna Laturja*, (These are the exalted females whose intercessions is sought).

تلك الغرانيق الاولى وإنّ شفاعتهن لترجى

It narrates that when the Holy Prophet, while reciting *Surah Al-Najm* (Ch. LIII), reached the 20th verse, one of the infidels in the audience uttered mischievously the above words, which were his own, to make them appear as if they were a continuation of the verse recited by the Holy Prophet and thus to disturb the sequence of the succeeding verses. The result was that the infidels immediately fell into prostration in token of their approval and satisfaction. This pre-arranged plan among the infidels to disturb the recitation of the Qur'an by the Holy Prophet was condemned by the Qur'an as an unsuccessful satanic attempt that used to be made against all the preceding Prophets when they delivered God's message to the people:

٥٢- وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ
وَّلَا نَبِيٍّ اِلَّآ اِذَا تَمَنّٰٓى
اَلْقَى الشَّيْطٰنُ فِيْٓ اُمْنِيَّتِهٖ ۚ
فَيَنْسَخُ اللّٰهُ مَا يُلْقِى الشَّيْطٰنُ
ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللّٰهُ اٰيٰتِهٖ ۗ
وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۙ

٥٣- لِّيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِى
الشَّيْطٰنُ فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ
مَّرَضٌ وَّالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۗ
وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَفِيْ شِقَاقٍۭ بَعِيْدٍ ○

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ
فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

'And We sent not before thee (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) any Apostle or Prophet, but when he recited (the message) Satan did cast his recitation (to create error); But annulleth God that which Satan casteth, then God doth establish His signs; And verily God is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

'So that He may make that which casteth Satan a trial unto those in whose hearts is a disease and those whose hearts are hard; and verily, the unjust are in a schism far (away from the truth).

'And that may know those who have been given the knowledge that it (Qur'an) is the truth from the Lord, so they may believe in it and may humble unto it their hearts; and verily, God guideth those who believe, unto the right path.' (Ch. XXII: vs 52-54)

It is surprising that the superficial critics in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, and some commentators of the Qur'an, due to lack of insight and by accepting the rumours spread by infidels and hypocrites, attribute the satanic utterances of infidels to the Holy Prophet while the verses preceding and following v 20 of Ch. LII [*Al-Njam*] are the unshakable internal evidence that the allegation against the Prophet is blasphemous.

This hostile attitude towards the Holy Qur'an continues, though without success. The hypocrites during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and afterwards did not hesitate to divert the attention of the Muslims from the Qur'an or weaken its influence on the minds of the people by all possible means. The mischief-mongers received support from the politically ambitious Quraysh to regain, after the Holy Prophet, supremacy over the Arabs which they had enjoyed before Islam. As the Qur'an did not favour their ambition, they did not mind if it lost its constitutional authority.

The antagonistic tendency appeared clearly when one observed

the *reaction* to the *apostolic stand* taken by the Prophet, confirmed by the Qur'an and his sayings, about the genuineness and infallibility of the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Apostolic Stand

The revealed form of religion started with the advent of Adam and passed through a continuous chain of divine vicegerency and the intermittent appearance of Prophets, reached its perfection and assumed its final form of Islam in the manner revealed to the last Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (peace be on him and his household) as the universal religion approved by Allah for mankind throughout the world and ages. The revelational period for the preaching of Islam in its final form to mankind comprised 23 years of the Holy Prophet's ministry. During this period the revelational aspect of the religion of Allah (Islam) was completed in the forms of:

(a) the recitative miraculous Word and Book of God, the Qur'an, and
(b) the sayings, deeds and endorsement of the Holy Prophet.

Both the Qur'an and the life of the Holy Prophet, as the Qur'an asserts, ought to be taken as the inseparable and equally revealed parts of the constitution of Islam. But for explaining and expounding the implications of these two constitutional sources and their application to the various aspects of human life and to make the new converts, with all their divergent outlooks to grasp Islam, the said period of 23 years was not sufficiently long. The new period of consolidation began after the demise of the Holy Prophet. It took nearly 250 years to systemize the Islamic constitution with details which form the basis of the development of Islamic thought embracing all aspects of human life. It resulted in the various schools of thought in theology, ethics, philosophy, history, mathematics and the physical sciences. During this long period there was to be a supreme authority, *Imamat*, of the chosen persons of the *Ahl al-Bayt* (in other words Ale-Ibrahim) to insure the continuity

of divine guidance along with the Qur'an. According to the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet the goal was to protect the purity of the universal message of Islam by disallowing any profane element to creep into it.

١٢٤-وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰٓ إِبْرٰهِمَ رَبُّهُۥ
بِكَلِمٰتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ
قَالَ إِنِّى جَاعِلُكَ
لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ
قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ
قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ○

'*And remember when his Lord tried Ibrahim with certain words then He fulfilled them; He said, "Verily I am making thee an Imam for mankind." (Ibrahim) said, "And of my offspring?" He said: 'My covenant reacheth not the unjust*".' (Ch. II: v 124)

This divinely chosen form of *Imamat* (leadership) was not designed after any monarchical pattern. It was purely apostolic in nature. That was the reason why their number was divinely fixed and foretold by the Holy Prophet and many other Prophets who preceded him as 'Twelve', neither more nor less. This divine lead which began with 'Ali, the first Holy Imam, continued for almost 250 years till the requisite constitutional consolidation was completed, and the Twelfth Imam (the promised Mahdi, whose name is the same as that of the Holy Prophet) though alive, disappeared from the sight of man, and in the light of the Qur'an, a new era of *ijtihad* (rationalization of revelation) followed to give complete opportunity to the believers to acquaint themselves with the revealed and divinely detailed constitution and use their reason, with knowledge and utmost piety and righteousness, to bring forth the implications of the constitution and apply their findings to the ever-changing, increasing and expanding aspects of human life. This was to give full freedom to every believer, irrespective of colour, social and geographical distinction, to develop his faculties on the basis of the Islamic constitution towards the achievement of the Islamic ideals and values. During this period, every believer, as declared

by the Imams, who qualifies himself in the prescribed knowledge and piety, is entitled to act as the supreme authority of his time, under certain conditions mentioned in detail under the topic '*Ijtihad* and *Taqlid*' (Vide Chapter 'Occulation'). This era of *ijtihad* will continue till the time when individualism, nationalism and all other isms, tendencies and interests give way to the sense of the human race, the globe, and the whole solar system as small parts of the greater whole. Then time will be ripe for the reappearance of the last link in the chain of the divinely chosen guides, the 'Twelfth Imam', not as an exponent of the constitution and teacher of Islam, but as the final Islamic executor, establishing universal justice on earth.

The vital issue of the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt* as two inseparable parts of the constitution has been fully established above. Thus doubting the genuineness of the one leads to the denial of the divine authority of the other. Ibne Hajar Mecci (author of *Al-Sawaiq*) confirms it as the main reason why the Holy Prophet has dealt with the above mentioned two issues jointly in his 'Declaration' and '*Sermon at Ghadir-e-Khum*' and on various subsequent occasions. Actually 'Umar's pronouncement *Hasbuna Kitaballah* ['Sufficient is for us the Book of God'] was a denial of the Holy Prophet's repeated declaration of the joint authority of the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Such is the brief outline of the *apostolic stand*, as confirmed by the explicit wordings of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Holy Prophet.

Reaction

But the Qur'an, the sayings of the Holy Prophet and the facts of history show the reaction of the majority of the new converts surrounding the Holy Prophet, particularly of the non-Hashemite branches of the Qurayshite tribe, was not favourable. The pagan tendency for bureaucratic rule, rule of the elders and the chieftains, was still in the hearts of the Quraysh whose claim to supremacy and authority over the Arabs had just recently been crushed by Islam, and by the Qur'anic declaration:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ
عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ

'*The most pious of you is the noblest in the sight of Allah*'. (Ch XLIX: v 13)

They were far from yielding to the absolute authority of the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt*. To them it was but a nepotic urge on the part of the Holy Prophet to contribute to the supremacy of the House of Hashim. *The Annals of Tabari*[22] has recorded a report of a conversation between 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbas during the reign of the former, wherein the unfavourable attitude of the Quraysh towards the status of the *Ahl al-Bayt* as divinely chosen people is fully exposed. Caliph 'Umar said: 'The Quraysh, dislike the Prophethood and the vicegerency to be combined in the "House of Hashim" as this would increase their (Hashemite's) vanity. So they (the Quraysh) chose for themselves, and their choice was the best.' Ibn 'Abbas replied, regarding the dislike of the Quraysh: 'They disliked all that was revealed from God, so God put them in loss, but regarding the remark against the "House of Hashim" and of their vanity being increased, it means accusing the people whom God has purified (Ch. XXXIII: v 33);[23] and regarding the choice of the Quraysh if they would have chosen the one whom God had chosen, it would have been better for them'. This anecdote throws ample light on the reaction of the Quraysh toward the divine choice and the inner motive which was working behind the confusing events that developed around the issue of the authority after the Holy Prophet, and on the causes of the civil wars and other internal events of political value, from Ghadir to Karbala, and from Karbala to the disappearance of the 'Twelfth Imam' of the House, and the subsequent sectarian disputes, quarrels and bloodshed. Instead of absolute submission to the dictates of the divinely established authority and a theocratic form of rule representing God and the Holy Prophet, the new converts aspired to having a share in authority and command.

وَطَائِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ
يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ

يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِن شَيْءٍ ۗ
قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ
كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ ۗ

'*While the other group cared for their own selves — thinking quite unjustly about God; thoughts of ignorance; Say they "Is there anything for us in the authority?" Say (O Our Apostle Muhammad) "Verily the authority resteth wholly with God*".' (Ch. III: v 154)

They were waiting for an opportunity, and viewed the divine authority of the Qur'an and *Ahl al-Bayt* as an obstacle to having a ruler of their own choice. Hence they attempted to remove that obstacle as much as possible by such means as (1) ignoring, minimizing and counteracting the authoritative importance attached to the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt*;[24] (2) creating confusion and doubt regarding the genuineness of the Qur'an in hand; (3) creating doubts and confusion about the authenticity of the Holy Prophet's sayings and declarations about 'Ali and the rest of the *Ahl al-Bayt*; (4) interpreting the Qur'an and authentic sayings of the Prophet in a way which loses their significance; and (5) counteracting such sayings of the Holy Prophet as mentioned above by fabricating reports which directly or indirectly negate the divine appointment of 'Ali as the supreme authority inseparable from the Qur'an.

Notwithstanding the innumerable authentic reports of the Prophet's announcement about 'Ali's infallible status, Bukhari repeatedly narrates a damaging report that once 'Abbas (the uncle of 'Ali) told 'Ali: 'Let us ask the Prophet whether we have any share or right in the matter of authority or not.' To which 'Ali said, 'If we would ask him and he would say no, then nobody would give us the chance of coming to power afterwards.' The whole idea behind this concoction is to counteract reports of 'Ali's nomination for *khilafah* by the Holy Prophet. Similarly, to minimize the importance of 'Ali's *Sahifa* — a book dictated by the Holy Prophet and written by 'Ali, Bukhari reports that once 'Ali was asked whether it was something other than the Qur'an, to which 'Ali replied that it

was about the fine for bruises. The actual reply was that, 'It contained everything even the fine for bruises'. A similar confusing report is narrated that after the Holy Prophet, 'Ali did not wear a mantle and did not come out of his house till he had collected the Qur'an as he was ordered to do by the Holy Prophet. This narration is a misrepresentation of the facts. It is true that there were fragments of woods, bones, leaves, paper, hides, etc. on which a rough copy of the Qur'an was written and they were in the custody of the Holy Prophet, who on the eve of his demise asked 'Ali to take care of them so that they might not fall into the hands of the people who would misuse them. It may also be true that 'Ali brought to the mosque once during the reign of Caliph Abu Bakr or Caliph 'Umar a complete copy of the Qur'an with full commentary as dictated by the Prophet and written by him ('Ali), informing the people that it was what he had been ordered by the Holy Prophet to prepare, but the ruling party declined to accept it for obvious reasons, as it was not their achievement. There is sufficient proof that 'Ali's collection with commentary was prepared by him and reviewed by the Holy Prophet long before his demise. The idea behind the misrepresentation is twofold. One is to provide an excuse for 'Ali's non-participation in the Qurayshite choice of a ruler by stating that he was busy with the collection of the Qur'an and, therefore, he had no time for other activities. The other is to justify the attempt made by others to collect the Qur'an, ignoring the collection left among them by the Holy Prophet which is similar to their (the ruling party's) attempt to have a ruler of their own choice. The main reaction which appeared in the temporal success of the anti-Hashemite plan of the Qurayshites was to blame 'Ali for his selfish and disruptive attitude if he would assert his divinely assigned supreme authority, and to counteract against the attempt of the *Ansars* to prevent them from occupying the would-be vacated place of the Hashemites in the front row of the Islamic government. Thus, it resulted in a quick change of loyalty of the people to the new political order. To consolidate their gains, the promoters of this

political change felt justified to leave aside the apostolic declaration and encourage the people 'in whose hearts there was perversity' to come forward. These were the same people who had only recently expressed their awe at the efforts of the Holy Prophet to make them worship only One God.

ءَأَجَعَلَ ٱلْءَالِهَةَ إِلَٰهًا وَٰحِدًا ۖ
إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ عُجَابٌ ۝

'*What! Maketh the gods to be but One God? Verily this is a thing indeed strange.*' (Ch. XXXVIII: v 5)

Thus the party in power began to evolve a new idea to the effect that any one who has embraced Islam or had seen the Prophet or heard something from him and transmitted it became a *Sahabi* (companion of the Holy Prophet), irrespective of his or her maturity, sensibility and honesty. Not only the reports about the Prophet's sayings were accepted, even their personal views carried constitutional weight in some cases. The honest intellectuals of the community were pushed back, and those who were mentally and morally backward and the hypocrites found an opportunity to occupy prominent places. This was the most painful change after the demise of the Prophet which shocked the daughter of the Prophet, Fatimah, 'the Lady of Paradise', who brought it to the notice of *Ummat-e Muslima* (all Muslims) in her famous sermon in the Masjid an-Nabawi[25] which pointed to the most serious damage caused to the fundamentals of Islam by the regime.

The newly formed chain of unreliable reporters between the Prophet and the new generation got pre-eminence. The Qur'an depicts the multitude of converts who had the honor of being in the presence of the Prophet as possessing intellectual and moral standards. They included a large number of hypocrites other than Abdallah ibn-e Ubay who died in the lifetime of the Prophet. Many were unknown but aspired to power after the Prophet. (Ch. XLVII: vs 16, 20-23, 29-32)[26] Each one of these companions had a large number of followers of various categories who formed the second link of reporters and narrators

for the generation next to them. The number and varieties multiplied till the celebrated and voluminous books of traditions were compiled in the third and fourth centuries. But this did not stop the traditionists of the next generation from collecting and recording the reports which their predecessors missed or discarded for some reason or another. As a result of the multiplicity of the various chains of transmitters and narrators, a huge number of contradictory, absurd and misleading statements and reports about the teachings of the Holy Prophet and the developments of the events, during his time and after him, formed a historical data for Islamic thought and literature which needs close scrutiny. A very few instances out of many false or distorted reports against the *apostolic* statements will help to understand the *reactionary* attitude.

Zayd ibn Arqum, a pro-Qurayshite narrator paid respect to the *Ahl al-Bayt* as mere relatives of the Prophet and common companions. He declined to declare the truth of the event of '*Ghadir-e-Khum*' when 'Ali asked him to testify as a witness of the event. He pretended that he forgot it. On some occasions, however, he recounted the sermon of the Prophet on *Ghadir*, omitting the main portion of the sermon 'Whomsoever I am *Maula* (Master), 'Ali shall be his *Maula*.' And on another occasion, he narrated in a distorted manner the declaration of the Prophet:

'*I am leaving among you two precious things — the Book of God and my Ahl al-Bayt.*'

Then and there he attempted to tamper with the application of the term *Ahl al-Bayt* so that it might lose its significance. In answer to a question about the application of the said term, he excluded the wives of the Holy Prophet from it but extended it so widely as to include all the Hashemites' descendants, Abbasids, Ja'farids, 'Alawids, and 'Aqulids (Vide *Muslim*, chapter on *Ahl al-Bayt*). The Prophet categorically announced what was revealed to him that none but 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Husain, and the nine successive Imams from the progeny of

Husain are the *Ahl al-Bayt*. the names of the nine Imams were also mentioned by the Holy Prophet. Such distortions provided a satisfactory pretext to avoid 'Ali in all matters relating to administration, judiciary decisions and all that concerns the *Ummah* (Muslim community). They were reluctant to agree with 'Ali's method of justice based on the Qur'anic injunctions save on critical occasions, when there was no alternative but to abide by his final advice to save the dignity of Islam. But 'Ali and his successors were rarely referred to in the books of traditions like *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. If here and there 'Ali and his descendants are quoted as reporters of certain traditions in those books, the purpose is partly to avoid being accused of total neglect of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and mostly to foist on them such reports which would indicate the negation of, or counteract the numerous genuine reports which testify to the apostolic status of 'Ali and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (vide *Bukhari* and *Kafi*). On the contrary Bukhari has credited persons like Shau'bi[27], the tutor of the children of the Umayyad royal house to discredit the genuineness of most of the numerous reports or statements ascribed to 'Ali. People like Abu Huraira and Anas ibn Malik, despite all drawbacks recorded about them in the biographies of the companions, were credited with a large number of reports about the Holy Prophet and his teachings just because it was claimed that they had the honor of serving at the door of the Holy Prophet for a few years. Among the ladies, 'Ayesha, the Prophet's wife, is given extraordinary prominence, as a reporter. She has been credited with a large, if not the largest number of reports about the life and the teachings of the Holy Prophet. Some are absurd and some are even damaging to her reputation and the dignity of the Holy Prophet.[28] She had not attained the status of perfection which 'Asiya, wife of Fir'on (Pharaoh, the enemy of Prophet Musa, i.e. Moses), Maryam, the daughter of 'Imran (mother of Prophet 'Isa, i.e. Jesus Christ), Khadijah, wife of the Prophet, and Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet (and wife of 'Ali) had. (vide *Isti'ab* by Ibne Abdul Barr).

Despite all these shortcomings Bukhari and his supporters feel

comfortable to quote her as authority for facts on the Prophet's life and misrepresenations of 'Ali. Bukhari credits her with statements denying that 'Ali was the executor of the Holy Prophet's testaments on the basis that she was attending to the Holy Prophet till the last moment before his demise and that he made no will, or testament to any one. It is refuted by other reliable traditionists which say: (a) 'Ali insists that he alone and nobody else was attending on the Holy Prophet at the moment, and the Holy Prophet's soul departed from his body when his head was resting on his ('Ali's) chest.[29] (b) Hundreds of companions of the Holy Prophet in the presence of hundreds of others, at the battles of Jamal and Siffin, pronounced 'Ali as *Wasiy-yo-Rasulillah* (the executor of the testaments of the Prophet of Allah). (c) This title had been bestowed on 'Ali by the Holy Prophet even before 'Ayesha was born. It is a part of his declaration about 'Ali's status at Abu Talib's house in the presence of the elders of the Hashemites where 'Ayesha's father was not present, because he was not included in the term '*Ashiratal-al-Aqrabin*' (the 'closest kins'.[30] However regarding this lady — the mother of the faithful — none can say anything other than what 'Ammar ibn Yasir had remarked while he was addressing the people of Kufa, on the eve of the battle of Jamal, waged by lady 'Ayesha against 'Ali, 'She is a testing point (being given a motherly status) by God, to see whether ye follow her own self or obey God.' (d) During the second or third year of Hijrah the Holy Prophet ordered all those who had their houses around the mosque with doors opening to the mosque to close the doors and open them in another direction, except in the case of 'Ali's house which was as before allowed to open towards the mosque. This resulted in a severe protest from the other relatives of the Holy Prophet, such as Hamza and 'Abbas, whose houses were there with houses opening towards the mosque. The Holy Prophet was asked whether the order of closing all doors and keeping that of 'Ali's house open was his or God's? The Holy Prophet replied that all was by divine order. He said, 'God has closed yours and has kept 'Ali's open.' Overlooking this

tradition entirely, Bukhari tries on the other hand to make people believe that the door of Abu Bakr or a ventilator from his house was kept open towards the mosque, without mentioning the time and the circumstances connected with this event. In fact, Abu Bakr had no house there at all. He was living at Sunh, at a considerable distance from the mosque. This fact put the commentators of *Bukhari* into difficulty in their wishful interpretation of Bukhari's report.

(e) Another example — It is a noted fact that after the revelation of the first 25 verses of *At-Taubah* or *Al-Bara'ah* (Ch. IX) the Holy Prophet called Abu Bakr who was to conduct the pilgrims to Mecca, and entrusted him with the verses to preach there and acquaint the pagans with what the verses meant.[31] Hardly had Abu Bakr set out for the journey, when the Holy Prophet recalled him and ordered him to hand over the verses to 'Ali, and in reply to the questions about the reason for this new order, the Holy Prophet said that it was God's order that none should preach those verses but the Holy Prophet himself or 'Ali who was identified with him as they were in fact reflections of each other. So 'Ali was commissioned with the special order of Allah to preach the verses at the Hajj season. Bukhari accepts this fact, and briefly mentions that 'Ali was ordered to preach the verses in question. However he emphasizes that Abu Huraira also preached the verses at Mina, without mentioning by whose order and authority Abu Huraira did so. The fact that the narrator of this story, 'Abd al-Rahman belonged to the pro-Umayyad party explains why Abu Huraira has been brought into the picture. A thorough appraisal of these few examples brings out the biased trends, accentuated by the political turn of events and their consequences.

Such attempts by unconstitutional governments to bring a drastic change in the established version of religious and constitutional codes are not unusual in the political history of nations.

The best evidence of this fact is that during the early stage of the

sudden turn when the *Ansar* or the *Ahl al-Bayt* protested the new policy of misquoting the Qur'an, the ruling party in reply either misquoted some sayings of the Holy Prophet or made some other excuses, but did not quote the Qur'an in support of their deeds and contentions. Of course there is one instance of 'Umar's quoting the Qur'an (Ch. IX: v 100) in support of his contention that the Quraysh were superior to the *Ansar* in religious status omitting *wa* (and) after the word *Ansar* — a reading which would make the *Ansars* the followers of the *Muhajirs*. But if it is read correctly with the conjunction 'and' both the *Muhajirs* and the *Ansars* would have equal status and 'those who followed them' would mean another class of people who would follow the preceding classes of *Muhajirin* and *Ansars*.

....وَالسّٰبِقُوْنَ الْاَوَّلُوْنَ
مِنَ الْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ وَالْاَنْصَارِ
وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُمْ بِاِحْسَانٍ

'*The foremost of the first of the Immigrants (Muhajirin) and the Helpers (Ansars) and those who followed them in good.*' (Ch. IX: v 100)

'Ubayy remonstrated against his misreadings, supported by all the students of the Qur'an, and 'Umar should have withdrawn his wrong quotations. However, as a staunch pro-Qurayshite, he remained adamant. Islam, as depicted and prescribed by the Qur'an, stands definitely for a peculiar form of theocracy represented by men who have passed beyond the boundaries of limited tendencies and interests, capable of representing the universal will and grace of *Rabil-'Aalamin*, the Lord Cherisher of all the universes, Allah, in knowledge and practice, not comparable to any form of democratic, bureaucratic, artistocratic, monarchic, despotic, dictatorial or even the theocratic form of the patriarchic and papal systems of government. Islam and the Qur'an stand for the rule of the fittest in moral and intellectual strength, verifiable through divine selection. This is the essence of the 'apostolic stand' and the 'reaction' against it.

With the above background in view the motive for raising

doubts in the Qur'an appears more evident. If the reports of *Sihah Six*, authentic books of tradition among Sunnis are to be relied upon, then the causes of the doubt about the Qur'an in hand mainly are: (a) the unnecessary and unauthorized attempt of the ruling party to make a collection of the Qur'an of their own, apart from what was already prepared under the supervision of the Holy Prophet, and approved and left by him among them, (b) the manner in which they pursued their attempt, (c) the rumours spread about the alleged utterances of some responsible members of the party, affirming the incompleteness of their collection after the first attempt was over.

Even if we discard and ignore all the external and internal evidence bearing testimony to the existence of the Qur'an in a complete book-form approved by the Holy Prophet and be so impudent as to remark that the Holy Prophet was not precise and serious in the usage of the term *kitab* (book), and even if he meant by the *kitab* only written fragments scattered among the people and no complete form of the Qur'an was with anybody either in writing or in memory, and even if the ruling party felt something imperative was left undone by the Holy Prophet, even then they were not justified in calling Zayd ibn Thabit, an inexperienced young man of no intellectual status to undertake such a heavy responsibility as that of collecting the Qur'an. The only reasonable course open to the authorities in pursuance of their attempt in question was to entrust the work to well-known scribes, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ûd, 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Ma'dh ibn Jabal, Salim Maulla, Hudhaifah and others, who were known to have learnt the whole of the Qur'an by heart and had the honor of reciting the entire Qur'an before the Holy Prophet several times and getting their recitations approved by him. The incomparable divine personality of 'Ali was also there to be consulted without any condition.

The incompetency of Zayd was once pointed out by 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b in dispute between the two. 'Do you teach me Qur'an?' said 'Ubayy to Zayd. 'I used to read the Qur'an with the Holy

Prophet, while you were still a child playing in the street.' A similar remark once passed by 'Ubayy to 'Umar in the course of a dispute. 'I used to read the Qur'an with the Holy Prophet while you were busy in transactions in the market.' Neither Zayd nor 'Umar could refute 'Ubayy's remarks. Unfortunately none of the three, Abu Bakr, 'Umar or Zayd who joined hands in this matter was a recognized student of the Qur'an. Moreover, from a conversation of 'Umar, during his reign, with Zayd who declined to comply with a certain order of the Caliph, it appears that both were lacking in proper regard for the revelation. Once 'Umar warned Zayd, when the latter refused to follow him: 'Look! It is my command to which you have to yield. It is not the revelation with which you might play about.' Such tendencies and lack of regard for the Book of God among some of the companions of the Holy Prophet was not uncommon then. In a certain case of pronouncing divorce thrice in one session, which was brought to the notice of the Holy Prophet, he remarked angrily, 'Is it the Book of God that is being played with, while I am still alive among them (the companions)?' Zayd and his colleagues, being no authorities themselves, nor inclined to refer to those who were considered to be authorities, had approached common men who possessed some scattered portions of the Qur'an either in writing or in memory. They invited people to bring their portions of the Qur'an on the condition that their claim be supported by some witness.

The method adopted for the official collection of the Qur'an shows either (a) there was no one among the companions of the Holy Prophet who had the entire Qur'an in writing and in memory with him, or (b) those who had the entire Qur'an with them did not care at all for the official attempt and scheme, or (c) the schemers debarred them from taking part in the comtemplated scheme lest their participation made the project unsuccessful. Even the method of accepting witnesses or rejecting in support of including or excluding a particular verse was not reliable. There were certain cases of verses being claimed by some people to be part of the Qur'an for which no witness to

support could be produced, so Zayd treated these cases in a seemingly partial way. He accepted the claim of one Abu Khudhaymah with no witness and rejected 'Umar's claim for lack of witness. So it is quite obvious that this type of attempt gave room to all sorts of talks about the Qur'an being tampered with by the collectors. Unfortunately, the members of the party were also not discounting the rumours.

However, it was a political move which produced nothing useful for Muslims at all except an opportunity for some friends to credit the authorities for preparing the collection of the Qur'an, and the mischievous enemies to argue against the genuineness of the Qur'an in hand. Their attempts, it is said, produced a collection of a Qur'an of their own, but it was never published. It remained as a bundle in the custody of 'Ayesha and Hafsa during the reigns of their respective fathers. It is also said that some portion of it was devoured by a goat, a story which indicates the lack of regard on the part of persons in power who presented themselves as the guardians of the Book of God.

The reigns of the first, second and a considerable part of the third Caliph's period had also passed and the bundle produced by the State remained unnoticed. During this period of nearly sixteen to seventeen years, the Qur'an was being written, taught, learnt, memorized, recited, discussed and applied to the daily life of the Muslims throughout the fast expanding Muslim empire.

No Muslim complained against the lack of approach to the collection of Zayd, nor did anyone ask the State to publish that collection. The authorized teachers of the Qur'an were performing their duties of imparting knowledge of the Qur'an directly and through their disciples in every part of the Muslim world, independently of the collection in the possession of the State. A considerable part of the reign of the third Caliph had also passed when at last a variation in the recitation of the Qur'an was noticed among the Muslim soldiers who were fighting with the infidels on the remote borders of the empire.

The leniency in variety of recitation noticed by Hudhayfa, one of the confidants and prominent disciples of the Holy Prophet, worried him lest this practice may lead to addition, omission and alteration in the Qur'an. He had a complete list of the hypocrites. He advised Caliph 'Uthman to take necessary action to unify the Muslims under the current recitation of the Qur'an, as that of the Holy Prophet, and stop them from reciting in a manner of their own choice as that might lead to further controversies. 'Uthman again entrusted the job to Zayd who did nothing except what Hudhayfa had suggested, and declared it as the official version to which 'Uthman gave his assent. Several copies of that official version were made and despatched to different parts of the empire so that the people might revise their recitation accordingly. No complaint of any omission, addition or alteration (i.e. *tahrif*) was made by anyone. Neither the Caliph, his party, nor the opposite party which was framing charges of deviation from the right path against the third Caliph ever complained against this adopted version of the Qur'an. The third Caliph was blamed for ordering the other versions differing from the official version in recitation to be destroyed on the ground that it was an act of desecration of the Word of God to recite them, but none charged him with tampering with the verses of the Qur'an.

Inspite of the utmost care taken by the ruling party for the publication of the official version and the obliteration of the other versions, they did not succeed. All the then current recitations have come down to us in the terms of the 'seven or ten recitations'. The Umayyad rulers could not stop the publication of the other recitations, nor publication or narration of the verses or the chapters left out of the Qur'an if there were any. Neither could they stop the recording of objections to the omissions, additions or disagreements.

B. EVIDENCE

The reign of caliph 'Uthman was marked by the growth of strong opposition parties and critics of the authorities led by the

prominent companions of the Holy Prophet, such as (1) Talhah, Zubayr, and 'Ayesha. (2) 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Auf, 'Amr ibn al-'Aas, Abu Musa al-'Ashari and other disgruntled members of the same ruling party. (3) 'Ali, Hasan, Husain, 'Abdallah ibn 'Abbas and other Hashemites and their adherents, 'Ammar, 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd, Abu Dharr Ghifari, etc. and (4) the people of the important provinces such as Kufa, Egypt and Syria and their leaders who were watching with a critical eye the small movements of the center. Any tampering with the Qur'an could never have escaped the notice of all these critics and opponents. No consideration would have stopped any one of them from raising objections publicly against the desecration of the wording of the Book of God. No power could have suppressed the report of such objection had it been raised publicly by the critics.

Neither the first three Caliphs nor the Umayyads nor the Abbasid Caliphs could suppress the Holy Prophet's declaration about 'Ali's status as the 'master of the faithful' (*Amir al-Muminin*) and being the supreme authority in Islam next to him. All statements of the Holy Prophet in this connection have been passed from generation to generation down to us. How could anyone suppress the reports of even a word of the Qur'an having been tampered with if this were the case? One cannot accept the solitary and contradictory traditions and reports about a particular verse, phrase or sentence being tampered with in the absence of evidence. The rejection of such reports contained in the books of traditions of Sunni and Shi'ah schools, their solitary nature and weakness of the chain of reporters and the contraditory tone of their content are the best proof.

A man like Abu Dharr Ghifari, about whom the Holy Prophet said, 'The heaven has never spread its shadow on any one as truthful a speaker as Abu Dharr' and whom no personal temptation or persecution could stop him from criticizing the Caliph and the host of Umayyad youths surrounding him, for

their misdeeds, contempt for the tenets of Islam, misuse of the public treasury and ill-treatment of the people, would have certainly noticed and announced an unpardonable act of the party had there been any specified alteration in the wording of the Qur'an.

The same is the case with 'Ammar ibn Yasir, the bold and outspoken opponent of the party in power, about whom the Holy Prophet had foretold that he would be killed by the rebellious group whom he ('Ammar) would call to heaven and they (the rebels) would call him ('Ammar) to hell. The Holy Prophet ordered people 'to keep always to the side where 'Ammar is, as he was always on the side of the right and truth.' This was a hint that 'Ammar would never leave the side of 'Ali. During the battle of Siffin, he was once asked about the justification of 'Uthman being killed. He answered, 'He ('Uthman) wanted to change our religion, so he was killed.' Such an outspoken man on the same occasion in the presence of the chiefs of both armies (of 'Ali and Mu'awiyah) pointed to the banner under which Mu'awiyah was standing and said, 'We were with the Prophet, under the banner where 'Ali is now standing and fought against that banner (of Mu'awiyah) on the issue of the revelation of the Qur'an and today with 'Ali we are fighting under the same banner of the Holy Prophet against the same banner of the Quraysh on the issue of the interpretations of the Qur'an.'

Is it possible that 'Ammar, who was aware of the Quraysh's tampering with the significance of the Qur'anic verses for which he found justification to fight them, kill them and be killed by them, would have no knowledge of the Quraysh's tampering with the wording and letters of the Qur'an if there were any? According to him the dispute on the issue of the Qur'an, being the revealed word of God (*verbatim*), was over in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet and the pagans willingly or unwillingly submitted to it. The disputed issue after the Holy Prophet was only the interpretation of the Qur'an and not the wording of it. The very fact of history that the battle of Siffin ended with 'Ali's

acceptance of arbitration based on the Qur'an then at hand and not on any other version of it, proves that the letters, wordings and arrangement of the Qur'an were for both parties the same and that the dispute was always confined to the interpretation. In support of this fact there is a report narrated by 'Allamah Majlisi in *Bihar al-Anwar*, (*Oceans of Light*), Volume X about a conversation which took place at Madina between Ibn 'Abbas and Mu'awiyah, after the martyrdom of 'Ali. When Mu'awiyah asked Ibn 'Abbas to stop praising 'Ali and the *Ahl al-Bayt*, Ibn 'Abbas replied, 'Do you stop us from reading the Qur'an?' Mu'awiyah said, 'No, but do not interpret it.' Then Ibn 'Abbas said, 'You want us to read the Qur'an, but not understand it?' He said, 'I mean, not to give your own interpretation to it?' 'O,' said Ibn 'Abbas, 'you mean that I should give up the interpretation of those people in whose house the Qur'an was revealed and leave the interpretation to the children of Abu Sufyan?' 'No,' said Mu'awiyah, 'I mean, do not interpret the portion concerning 'Ali at all, and do whatever you like with the other portions, or if you insist on interpreting that portion too, then do it privately among yourselves and do not give publicity to it.' All that the authorities in power could try to stop or alter was only the publicity of the true and correct interpretations of the Qur'an. But as for tampering with the wording of it, they knew it was something beyond their power. Failure in that direction had already proved the truth of the assurance given by God that He Himself would guard the Qur'an as the last revealed reminder for people and the everlasting miracle against the ill-designs and mischievous attempts of the enemies to nullify its effective force. The only course open to them was to tamper with its interpretation and the significance of its verses. Accordingly, one should be sure that the word *tahrif*, change or tampering with, and other synonymous words used by the *Ahl al-Bayt* and their early adherents with which they charged their opponents, were meant only as wrong interpretation.

Along with this evidence, the presence of several varieties of recitations, and the absence of the requisite number of reporters

to give unanimous evidence affirming and confirming specific wordings or order of the wordings of the Qur'an being tampered with, and the absence of any other version of the Qur'an different in wording and order from the received version, yet comparable in style with it, are the conclusive proof of the genuineness of the version in hand.

But the said attempt after the Holy Prophet, however, along with the utterances and statements alleged to have been made by members of the ruling party before the existing version was approved by 'Uthman, did give a chance to the opponents of the Qur'an whether in the garb of Muslims or otherwise, who could not disturb its miraculous force of eloquence by throwing some triviality in it, to spread rumors alleging that it was incomplete or misarranged compared to the received version. These rumors gained currency along with the development of the later religious and political controversies inspite of the efforts of the Imams of the House of the Holy Prophet and the faithful thinkers and the sincere rational scholars of academic accomplishment, to discredit them. The rumors got somehow into certain books of traditions of the Sunni school, and subsequently some of the Shi'ah books of traditions also were not exempt from the taint of such sceptic rumors. The result was that some of the credible narrators of both schools, who lacked the ability to apply critical scrutiny to confirm the authenticity and examine the external and internal evidence for and against the text or the wording of traditions, accepted the rumors despite established genuineness of the Holy Qur'an.

C. TRADITIONS

1. *Sunni Sources*

Another reason for raising these doubts was the traditions which assert that the collection of the Qur'an by 'Ali was in a particular form different from that of the version recognized officially. A similar opinion is held about the copies of 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd and 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b. There are different opinions

about the collection of 'Ali. It is not established whether he refused to place his collection at the disposal of the ruling party and the public, or the ruling party refrained from accepting it when it was offered, and whether this happened in the reign of the first or the second Caliph. 'Allama Majlisi narrates that it took place during the reign of the second Caliph, while the others maintain that it was during the time of the first Caliph. In any case, the collection remained with him and his successors, i.e., in the possession of the Imams. No one has claimed to have seen that collection thoroughly. One or two narrations claim that the sixth Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq showed some of his disciples the collection of 'Ali and they found in one small *surah* the names of seventy *munafiqin* (hypocrites). This contradicts what 'Ali had declared about his collection that none would see it before the reappearance of the Last Imam (Twelfth Imam of the House of the Holy Prophet). The tradition itself says that the sixth Imam gave the collection to the narrator concerned and told him not to look into it. The narrator disobeyed the Imam and had a glimpse at the *surah*. This version seems implausible, because the Imam would not have handed over the collection to a person who was likely to disobey him. It is said that 'Ali's collection of the Qur'an contained all that was revealed with its exoteric and esoteric interpretations. Apart from the question of their authenticity a thorough examination of these traditions proves without doubt that the collection in question was a sort of detailed commentary on the Qur'an which contained the revelations and their interpretations besides the miraculous text which was placed within the reach of mankind as a challenge. The same is the case with the collections of 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd and 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b and others. Both, being the acknowledged and the earliest authorized students of the Qur'an, must have had their own special collection with interpretations and notes of their own for guidance. Therefore, they might also have had a different arrangement of the verses and the chapters for the purpose of their commentaries as the later commentators have done (chronological and subject-wise, etc.). These collect-

ions do not deny the current accepted version placed within the reach of the common man for recitation and as an open challenge to men and *jinns*. The explanatory nature of the collections of the eminent companions of the Holy Prophet is evident from traditions which assert that 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd used to recite with the verse of *Muta'ah* (temporary marriage) the phrase *ila ajalin* (until a term) after *famastamta'atum bihi minhunna* (when you do *muta'ah* [temporary marriage] with them — Ch. IV: v 24). It is obvious that this phrase was used by him as an explanatory note of guidance and by way of protest when *muta'ah* was prohibited by the second Caliph. The narration which says that Ibn 'Abbas used to recite *fi 'Aliyin* (about 'Ali) after *manzila ilaik* (that which has already been sent unto thee) in Ch. V: v 67 should be taken as a note explaining the occasion. It meant to point out the implied significance of the verse in question when the people were ignoring it. Similarly in the verse *innallah astafa Aadama wa Nûhan* (Ch. III: vs 33-34), according to some traditions, Ibn 'Abbas had added *Al-e Muhammad* (the descendants of Muhammad) after *Al-e 'Imran* or had replaced *Al-e 'Imran* by *Al-e Muhammad*. If this tradition is true, 'Abdallah ibn 'Abbas might have said that *Al-e Muhammad* are meant in the verse. He did not mean the phrase to be part of the text, because if it is taken as part of the text with the phrase *dhurriyatan b'aduhu min b'ad* (offspring, one from the other), then 'Ali will be out of *Al-e Muhammad*; and if it is said without *dhurriyatan b'aduha*, people other than the House of the Prophet would be included in the *Al* in the same way as all the followers of Pharaoh are included in *Al-e Fir'aun*.

In short, the different collections of the Qur'an prepared by different companions of the Holy Prophet, which were neither published nor had gained any currency among the Muslims, cannot have any value other than that of a tradition serving as a commentary on the text. This is the reason why none of the acknowledged and authorized students of the Holy Book raised any voice of dissent against the accepted version, though all of them were alive and had their other grievances of religious

importance against the ruling party.

Let us now examine a few references given by the traditionists which have somehow found their way into the books of tradition of both the Sunni and Shi'ah schools.

Regarding the first attempt of the ruling party for having a collection of their own, Bukhari narrates from Zayd ibn Thabit as follows:

After the battle of Yamama the first Caliph sent for Zayd ibn Thabit. He told him in the presence of 'Umar, who had said that many reciters of the Qur'an had been killed in the battle of Yamama and feared that others might be killed in other battles with the result that a great portion of the Qur'an might be lost with them. 'Umar had further insisted to the first Caliph: 'You should order the collection of the Qur'an'. The first Caliph told 'Umar, 'How could I do what the Holy Prophet did not;' to which 'Umar replied, 'By God, this good has to be done,' and continued demanding it till God opened Zayd's heart to it. Zayd says that the first Caliph told him, 'You are an intelligent young man whom we do not suspect and you used to write the revelations for the Holy Prophet. You search for the Qur'an and collect it.' He answered, 'I swear on my God, if they had ordered me to carry out the task of shifting a mountain from its place, I would not have felt it so heavy a task as what they asked me to undertake (i.e. the collection of the Qur'an).' He said to 'Umar, 'How dare you do a thing which the Holy Prophet did not?' 'Umar replied, 'By God I swear! It is good to do.' 'Thereafter the first Caliph continued asking me to undertake the task till God opened my heart for that to which He had opened the heart of the first Caliph and 'Umar. Therefore I began to search for the Qur'an, collecting it from the pieces of wood, bones and from the memory of the people till I found the last verse of *Surah al-Taubah* with Abu Khudhaymah Ansari, and with no one else.' This collection remained with the first Caliph till he passed away, then with 'Umar and with his daughter Hafsa.

Bukhari tells us that Hudhayfa ibn Yaman, after his return from the expedition to Armenia and Azarbaijan, expressed his anxiety about the variation in the recitation of the Qur'an among the members of the expedition. He asked the third Caliph to take the necessary steps to unite the Muslims in this regard before it leads to a controversy about the Book of God similar to those among the Jews and the Christians about their Holy Scriptures. Even today there exists various versions of the Old and New Testaments termed as the Apocrypha against the Bible termed as authentic. The third Caliph requested 'Umar's daughter Hafsa to hand over the bundle of the collection of the Qur'an left with her so that its copies might be made, and ordered Zayd, 'Abdallah ibn Zubayr, Sa'id ibn al-'As, and 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Harith ibn Hisham to prepare copies of the same. He told the three Qurayshites that wherever they and Zayd differed in the recitation and pronounciation of the Qur'an, they should write it in accordance with the dialect of the Quraysh as it was revealed in their dialect. They did as they were bidden and prepared copies of the collection and returned the original to Hafsa and sent the copies to all corners of the empire; and then he ordered the Qur'an in any other book-form or in the form of any collection to be burnt and destroyed. In continuation of these statements Bukhari narrates from the son of Zayd that he had heard his father saying, 'When we were copying the collection, we missed a verse from *Surah al-Ahzab* (Ch. XXXIII) which I used to hear the Holy Prophet recite and then we searched for it and found it with Khudhaymah ibn Thabit Ansari and then we put it in the same *surah* in the collection.' These two traditions of Bukhari regarding the collection of the Qur'an in the reign of the first Caliph and the copying of it during the reign of the third Caliph contain a slight contradiction regarding the missing verse of the Qur'an which could not be found with anybody except one Abu Khudhaymah ibn Thabit Ansari.

Now, besides these two, there are twenty other traditions regarding this official collection of the Qur'an, each contradicting

the other in one way or the other. Eleven are mentioned in the *Muntakhab-e kanz al-'ammal* and the rest have been taken from *Ittqan* (by Suyuti). The following is a brief account of them.

In one tradition Ibn Abi Shaiba narrates from 'Ali that he considered Abu Bakr as the greatest person for the collection of the Qur'an. He is the first person who collected the Qur'an which is between the pads.

Another narration also says that Abu Bakr collected the Qur'an on paper and asked Zayd ibn Thabit to review it. When Zayd declined to do so Abu Bakr sought the help of 'Umar to persuade him. Zayd did so and that the reviewed copy remained with Abu Bakr, then with 'Umar and then with Hafsa.

The third tradition from Hisham ibn Orwa asserts that after the battle of Yamama wherein some of the companions of the Holy Prophet who had collected the Qur'an were killed, Abu Bakr ordered 'Umar and Zayd ibn Thabit to sit at the gate of the mosque and collect the Qur'an from the people.

Another tradition from Muhammad ibn Seerin tells us that 'Umar was killed and the Qur'an was not collected till then.

The fifth tradition says that once 'Umar asked for some verses of the Holy Qur'an and he was told that these were with a person who was killed in the battle of Yamama. 'Umar became worried and ordered the Qur'an to be collected and he was the first person to collect the Qur'an in a book form.

The sixth tradition tells us that 'Umar decided to collect the Qur'an and ordered that 'whosoever has received from the Holy Prophet any portion of the Holy Qur'an, should bring it to us.' The people had the Qur'an on bits of wood, stones, skin, leaves of trees and bones and he would not accept anything from any one unless it was certified by two witnesses and he ('Umar) was killed while the collection was not yet over. 'Uthman succeeding him continued the task, and repeated the order of 'Umar demanding certification of two witnesses. Then Abu Khudh-aymah ibn Thabit came with the last two verses of *Surah al-*

Bara'ah (Ch. IX) saying, 'I have received it from the Holy Prophet and you have not got it in your Qur'an!' 'Uthman then said, 'Yes! I also give evidence that these verses are from God, but tell me where we should place them?' Abu Khudhaymah said, 'Place these two verses at the end of the last revealed portion of the Qur'an' and those were accordingly placed at the end of *Surah al-Bara'ah* concluding the *surah*.

The seventh tradition asserts that it was 'Umar who accepted these last verses of *Surah al-Bara'ah* from a man of the *Ansars* without any witnesses which was against his own formula.

Another tradition relates that after the battle of Yamama in which four to seven hundred reciters of the Qur'an were killed, Zayd ibn Thabit approached 'Umar and said, 'The Qur'an is the only unifying factor of our religion; if it is lost, our religion is also lost. I have decided to collect it in a book form.' 'Umar replied, 'Wait till I ask Abu Bakr' and both went to Abu Bakr and informed him of their talk. Abu Bakr replied, 'Do not hurry until I consult the Muslims' and then he began lecturing to the people informing them of their decision. All approved it. Then they collected the Qur'an and Abu Bakr ordered a crier to announce, 'whosoever has a part or the whole of the Qur'an should produce it.'

The ninth tradition narrates that Khudhaymah ibn Thabit said that he brought the last verses of *Surah al-Bara'ah* to 'Umar and Zayd ibn Thabit. Then Zayd asked Khudhaymah as to who would give evidence in his support, to which he replied that he did not know any one. Then 'Umar said, 'I was there to witness it.'

The tenth tradition narrates that when 'Umar collected the Qur'an, he asked, 'Whose is the best pronunciation?' The people answered, 'Sa'id ibn al-A'as.' Then 'Umar asked, 'Who is the best calligrapher?' They replied, 'Zayd ibn Thabit.' Then he ordered, 'Let Sa'id dictate and Zayd write.' They made four copies and distributed them in Kufa, Basra, Damascus, and the Hijaz.

The eleventh tradition reports that when 'Umar wanted to have the Qur'an written he made a few of his companions undertake the task and said, 'Whenever you differ in the wording write it down in the dialect of Hudhail for the Qur'an was revealed to a man of Hudhail.'

The twelfth tradition reports the narration of Abu Qullaba that during the reign of 'Uthman, the teachers of the Qur'an started teaching their pupils different recitations and the boys used to meet and differ with each other. When this was brought to the notice of the teachers they condemned each other's recitation, and when this news reached 'Uthman he reprimanded them saying: 'You differ in the recitation, and recite it in different ways in my presence. What about those people who are far away from me in distant cities. Their differences in recitation would be greater.' He then asked the companions of the Holy Prophet to write a standard Qur'an for the people. Abu Qullaba narrated that Anas ibn Malik had said that he was among those who used to dictate the Qur'an and they used to mention the name of the person who had received a particular verse from the Holy Prophet, and if the person was not present, they used to write the preceding and the succeeding verses leaving blank the space for the verse under dispute until the person concerned was available. 'Uthman thus completed the collection and wrote to the people in the big cities that he had obliterated everything else with him, and they should also act accordingly.

The thirteenth tradition relates that 'Uthman addressed the people in one of his lectures: 'Only thirteen years have passed between you and your Prophet and you doubt the Qur'an, saying the recitation of 'Ubayy or the recitation of Ibn Mas'ûd, or one's own will not stand right.' Then he urged them all by an oath to the effect that whosoever had any portion of the Qur'an should bring it. People brought pieces of paper, bits of wood and skin, etc. containing Qur'anic verses. Then 'Uthman went inside (his house) and called them one after another and made each one swear that he had heard it from the Holy Prophet, and that the Holy Prophet had dictated it to him. After finishing this

task he asked as to who was the best in pronunciation, the people said, 'Sa'id ibn al-'As'. Then he ordered Sa'id to dictate and Zayd ibn Thabit to write. Several copies were made and distributed among the people. And the narrator Mus'ab ibn Sa'ab says that he heard some of the companions of the Holy Prophet approving this act of 'Uthman.

The fourteenth tradition relates that the persons who were ordered by 'Uthman to make the collection and dictate were from the tribe of Hudhail and the scribes were from the tribe of Thaqif.

The fifteenth tradition relates that after the collection was completed, it was brought to 'Uthman who looked into it and said, 'You have done well, and done the best. Yet I see some mistakes which an Arab will correct.'

The sixteenth tradition relates that when the collection was shown to 'Uthman he found some mistake therein and said, 'Had those who dictated been from the Hudhail and the scribes from the Thaqif these mistakes would not have occurred.'

The seventeenth tradition reports that when 'Uthman wanted to make copies of the Qur'an he sent for 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b who dictated to Zayd ibn Thabit who wrote it down, and Sa'id ibn al-'As was there to correct the pronounciation. Thus the Qur'an of 'Uthman was the recitation of 'Ubayy and Zayd.

The eighteenth tradition supports the seventeenth mentioned above adding that a person named Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Harith was asked to assist Sa'id ibn al-'As in correcting the pronunciation.

The nineteenth tradition narrates from Zayd ibn Thabit that while they were making the copies of the Qur'an he found the pages containing v 23 from Ch. XXXIII (*Surah al-Ahzab*) were missing. Later on he found them with Khudhaymah ibn Thabit only, whose evidence had been accepted by the Holy Prophet as equal to the evidence of two persons.

The twentieth tradition narrates that the first person who

collected the Qur'an was Abu Bakr, and Zayd ibn Thabit was the scribe; that people used to come to Zayd with passages and he used to accept a passage only when it was supported by at least two pious men, except in the case of the last passage of *Surah al-Bara'ah* which was found with Abu Khudhaymah ibn Thabit. In this case he did not ask for any witness and assumed that the Prophet valued Abu Khudhaymah's evidence as a single person who was equal to two witnesses. And when 'Umar brought the passage concerning the stoning of an adultress, Zayd did not accept it from him for he was alone in asserting, without any witnesses.

The above are the main reports about the efforts of the collection of the Qur'an during the reign of the first three Caliphs. None of these has the standard authenticity required to establish them as genuine. Further, they are subject to criticism from various aspects.

Let us first examine the two traditions on the authority of Bukhari:

1. Even if we suppose that the Qur'an was not collected and arranged in a book form during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, what right could any one have to make a collection according to one's own taste or fancy? Is it not a sort of innovation? What does *Sharh-e Sadr* (the opening of the heart) mean? Does it mean some kind of inspiration or revelation which the Christians claim for the authors of the Gospels? Can this *Sharh-e Sadr* be taken as an authorized legal source like *Kitab* and *Sunnah* (the Book and the Tradition) of Islamic jurisprudence and the means of inference of *Halal* (the allowed) and *Haram* (the prohibited)? Or was it an exclusive privilege given only to those three: Abu Bakr, 'Umar and Zayd ibn Thabit? What about the other companions of the Holy Prophet who had also made a collection of their own, a fact which has been unanimously acknowledged by Muslims?

2. Why did 'Uthman destroy the other collections without having the sanction of the Holy Prophet for his action? Zayd's

collection as well as the other collections according to the above statement were based on their innovation (*ijtihad*). Why should one *ijtihad* be preferred over another?

3. Why was Zayd's inspired collection not published immediately and placed within the reach of the people so as not to allow time for the other versions of the Qur'an to gain popularity through the Muslim empire, which were commonly available for twenty years?

4. What do the following words, spoken by Abu Bakr to Zayd, imply? 'You are a young and intelligent man whom we do not suspect and you used to write the revelations for the Holy Prophet.'

What were the qualifications of Zayd which made the selector prefer him over other scribes who had the honor of writing the revelations since the earliest days and long before Zayd grew up? On the contrary, the experience of ripe age was actually the requirement. What does the clause 'we do not suspect [you]' imply? Did they suspect 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and his innumerable divine credentials?

One may say that inspite of the great qualifications of 'Ali they had the right to suspect them and his cooperation with them. Bukhari and Muslim report through Malik ibn Aws ibn al-Hadthan that the ruling party believed that 'Ali did not have a good opinion about them. Even if this is assumed to be true, there were other scribes, such as 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd, 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Ma'adh ibn Jabal and Salim Maula ibn Hudhayfa whose competence according to Bukhari was certified by the Holy Prophet who had ordered the people to learn the Qur'an from them. And this is narrated by 'Abdallah ibn 'Umar. Though Salim was killed in the Battle of Yamama, the other three were alive and available till the official version issued by 'Uthman, but no reference was ever made to any of them. Why was the assistance of certain Umayyad youths such as Sa'id ibn al-'As and Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Harith ibn al-Hisham sought, during the reign of 'Uthman, while persons like 'Abdallah ibn

Mas'ûd and 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b were ignored? Was it the lack of knowledge of the Qur'an, or, was it the lack of truthfulness and reliability or the lack of political loyalty to the ruling party? In view of the certification by the Holy Prophet the first two possibilities should be entirely discarded. Now remains the third possibility which is a historic fact that they were not loyal to the ruling party while Zayd ibn Thabit was. Ibn Abdul Barr(the author of *Isti'ab*) has noted that Zayd remained pro-Umayyad. For this act of loyalty on his part, he was rewarded with wealth and comfort, while 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd was persecuted and 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b suffered disfavour. If these were the reasons for ignoring these personalities then the attempt to collect the Qur'an itself becomes subject to suspicion.

6. Moreover, these two traditions of Bukhari contain contradictory statements regarding the missing verse of the Qur'an which was not found with any one except the one whose name in one tradition is given as Abu Khudhaymah ibn Ansari and in the other tradition as Khudhaymah ibn Thabit Ansari. Regarding the passage itself in the first tradition, it is said that it was the last verse of *Surah al-Bara'ah* (Ch. IX) and in the second tradition it is given as Ch. XXXIII: v 23.

Of the remaining twenty traditions given above, the first and second mention that Abu Bakr was the first person who collected the Qur'an, and according to the second Zayd ibn Thabit was asked only to review Abu Bakr's collection, contradicting the previous tradition which says that it was Zayd who collected it by the order of Abu Bakr.

The third states that 'Umar and Zayd jointly were given the task of the collection; and here it is also stated that some companions of the Holy Prophet who had already collected the Qur'an were killed in the battle of Yamama. Historians avoided the issue as to what happened to these collections and why they were not secured by the ruling party which was seriously interested in the collection of the Qur'an. It contradicts four previous traditions, as it asserts that others had already collected the Qur'an.

The fourth contradicts all the other traditions that the Qur'an had not been collected by the time 'Umar died.

The fifth gives an entirely different story that 'Umar was the first person who ordered the Qur'an to be collected in a book form; and the reason was that he asked about some passages of the Qur'an and was told that those were possessed by a person who was killed in the battle of Yamama. It implies that the collection of the Qur'an took place during the reign of 'Umar long after the battle of Yamama.

The sixth one gives us quite a different picture saying that it was 'Umar who decided to collect the Qur'an by the same process from bones, leaves, bits of wood and paper, etc. with the help of witnesses, but the work was not completed when he died, and 'Uthman pursued the same course, and, he was the one who supported the statement of Khudhaymah ibn Thabit and not 'Umar. But the seventh tradition says that it happened in the reign of 'Umar, and that he accepted the verses from a person who had brought them without asking for any witnesses.

The eighth tradition gives credit to Zayd ibn Thabit for taking the initiative to collect the Qur'an during the reign of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr did not approve of Zayd's proposal which was supported by 'Umar, till he consulted the Muslims and obtained their approval and only then did he order the collection.

The ninth tradition makes 'Uthman and Zayd ibn Thabit the joint-champions for the collection of the Qur'an. 'Umar accepted this collection and offered himself as a witness to it without any evidence, when it was brought to his notice by Khudhaymah ibn Thabit.

The tenth tradition asserts that 'Umar initiated the collection and employed Sa'id ibn al-'As as the person to dictate and Zayd ibn Thabit as the calligrapher, and that they produced four copies which were despatched to the big cities mentioned in the tradition. This contradicts the first two traditions of Bukhari which date the initiative in the reign of Abu Bakr and the

despatch of the prepared copies to the big cities during the reign of 'Uthman and also contradicts the traditions which give credit to 'Umar for the initiative and to 'Uthman for the completion.

The eleventh tradition confers on 'Umar the honor of collecting the standard Qur'an.

The twelfth tradition gives the credit for the first collection and completion and preparation of the copies of the Qur'an to 'Uthman, and introduces Anas ibn Malik as one of the persons who dictated the Qur'an while it was being copied. Further, it asserts that 'Uthman informed the people of the big cities about what he had done with the Qur'an and ordered them to follow his footsteps without sending any copy to them. It clearly indicates that 'Uthman was sure of the people already having the copies of the Qur'an with them. It shows that of the various recitations the most current were those of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ûd's and 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b's.

The thirteenth tradition asserts that Sa'id ibn 'As was the person who dictated and Zayd ibn Thabit was the calligrapher who produced the copies which were distributed to the people. The fourteenth tradition asserts that the task of dictation and of writing the Qur'an was given by 'Uthman to persons of the Hudhail and Thaqif tribes respectively and not to Sa'id ibn 'As, an Umayyad, and Zayd ibn Thabit, an *Ansari*; while the sixteenth tradition says that if the person dictating and the calligrapher had been of the Hudhail and the Thaqif respectively the mistakes found by 'Uthman in the prepared copies would not have occurred. It clearly indicates that the Hudhails and the Thaqifs were never employed to copy the Qur'an.

The fifteenth and the sixteenth traditions state that the prepared copies were not free of mistakes and they were left to the dialect of the Arabs and no corrections were made.

In the seventeenth tradition, 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b is mentioned as the person who dictated to Zayd ibn Thabit as a calligrapher. This contradicts the statement in the thirteenth tradition which presents Sa'id ibn al-'As as the person who dictated and also

contradicts all the traditions which present Zayd ibn Thabit as the person solely responsible for the collection.

The nineteenth and twentieth traditions contradict each other about the missing passage which was found with Khudhaymah ibn Thabit. The former reports that it was v 23 of Ch. XXXIII while the latter states that it was the verse of *Surah al-Bara'ah.*

All these contradictory statements, if they are not the product of later periods, show that in order to counteract the statement of the Holy Prophet,

'I am leaving among you two precious things: the Book of God and the Ahl al-Bayt,'

signifying the excellence of 'Ali and the succeeding Imams as the unquestioned authority on the Qur'an over 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd, 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Ma'dh ibn Jabal and Salim Maula Hudhayfa as the teachers of the Qur'an, an attempt was made by the ruling party to produce a collection of the Qur'an to dispense with these authorities so that they may themselves take the credit. But they differed even among themselves as to who should get the most credit. Parties within parties, in opposition to each other had obviously been formed. Each party was trying its best to claim the credit for itself. The only thing which can be said is, that whoever be the hero in this venture, he was neither competent nor authorized for the task. Thus though they had collected something of the scattered fragments from here and there, yet they dared not publish it for more than sixteen years during which period the Qur'an collected at the time of the Holy Prophet's life had gained tremendous publicity in a perfect book-form throughout the length and breadth of the vast Muslim empire. As 'Uthman and the ruling party of his time felt their failure in their attempt to gain credit through their instituted venture, they procured a copy of the current version and gave it official assent and called it the official version.

The method adopted made some companions to question the official version by spreading rumours to start a disruptive

propaganda. In support of this fact statements attributed to some prominent members of the ruling party about the omissions in the present version may be referred to.

Firstly, the majority of the Sunni schools of thought agree that there are certain passages, the wording of which is abrogated but their contents or the instructions contained therein remain valid. The example given of such abrogation is the passage dealing with the stoning of the adultress — the wording of which is given in three different forms as Bukhari and Muslim narrate on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas and 'Umar.

Muslim further narrates what 'Ayesha said about two revealed passages of the Qur'an that dealt with the question of how many times a foster mother had to suckle the child to be considered the mother in order to include her under the category of prohibited women for matrimonial relations. 'Ayesha says that in the first passage it said ten but that it was abrogated by another passage which reduced the number to five, and that these two passages were read as part of the Qur'an till the demise of the Prophet. This is given as an instance of the abrogation of the passages in both respects, namely, the wording as well as the instruction implied in it. A careful examination of these two instances proves that the abrogation is a euphemistic term for a deliberate omission, because none but the Holy Prophet had the right of abrogating anything from the Qur'an, either any wording or any significance of the contents. It is obvious from the two statements that the abrogation was not done by the Holy Prophet, as the first statement says that 'Umar while collecting the Qur'an brought the passage dealing with the stoning of the adultress which was not accepted, not for the reason of its having been abrogated but for want of the required witnesses to support the statement of 'Umar. In the second instance 'Ayesha expressly says that the passages dealing with the foster mother were part of the Qur'an till the demise of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, if these statements are true, it means nothing but the intentional omission of certain passages of the

Qur'an by some unauthorized person. Suyuti, in his book, *Ittqan*, in continuation of the narration of Bukhari and Muslim regarding this matter relates another passage from 'Umar, which is said to be missing in the official version of the Qur'an. But a careful examination of the said 'missing passages' which 'Umar and 'Ayesha presented, when compared with the style of the Qur'an proves that they could never have been a part of the Qur'an. These are nothing but imaginary statements.

Some of the companions used to accuse each other of particular mistakes on account of their fancies in their narrations; for instance about the question of mourning for a bereaved person, 'Ayesha accused 'Umar of misunderstanding the statement of the Holy Prophet. It is not possible that a part of the Qur'an was not known to the companions of the Holy Prophet except 'Ayesha and 'Umar, both of whom were accused of forgetfulness and lack of knowledge in respect of the Qur'an by the traditionists.

Ittqan, on the authority of Tibrani, narrates that 'Umar said that the Qur'an contained one million seventy-seven thousand letters whereas the Qur'an available would not reach even one-third of this account. It means that the Qur'an left by the Prophet was so well-arranged that even the number of its letters was known to 'Umar. How could this statement be reconciled with his claim that during his reign two-thirds was missing? How could a person, who had no proper knowledge of the available one-third portion of the Qur'an, know that two-thirds was lost. This is further supported by the fact that 'Umar was not even properly acquainted with the available one-third portion of the Qur'an, which had been memorized by other Muslims. Moreover, when his evidence even for one verse, which he so well remembered, was not accepted by his own party, while Khudhaymah's statement was accepted without any testimony, how can his solitary statement about two-thirds of the Qur'an being missing be accepted especially when he did not mention a single verse?

The early history of Islam indicates that the *Ansar* considered

themselves to have equal status with the *Muhajirin* (immigrants). This tendency is obvious from the very statement of the *Ansar* in Saqifah when the Quraysh insisted that the head of State should be someone from the Quraysh. The *Ansar* had negated it and proposed *Mina amir wa minkum amir* ('We will have two heads; one from us and one from you'). The Quraysh, claiming to be superior to the *Ansar* in the eyes of Arabs, proposed that while the head of State shall be from the Quraysh, the *Ansar* could act as his assistants — *Nahanul umara wa antamul-wozara.*

The tendencies of both the parties are clear. The *Ansar* considered themselves equal to the *Muhajirin* and the *Muhajirin* used to consider themselves superior to the *Ansar.* However, the *Muhajirin* won the case by force in Saqifa and got the reins in their hands but the *Ansar* were not satisfied and every now and then the matter was disputed. On one occasion to prove the superiority of the *Muhajirin* over the *Ansar*, 'Umar quoted Ch. IX v 100 of the Qur'an where the first and foremost *Muhajir* and *Ansar* are mentioned. The passage runs as follows: '*The first and foremost immigrants and the helpers and those who follow them.*' 'Umar in his recitation of this passage omitted *Wa* meaning *And*, the conjunctive particle between the words *Ansar* and the relative pronoun *Al-lazina* meaning the *Ansar* (helpers) who follow the immigrants (*Muhajirin*). 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b objected to 'Umar's recitation and said the correct recitation was that the conjunction *Wa* between the words *Ansar* and *Al-lazina* should be inserted which would mean the first and the foremost of the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar* and those who followed the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar.* This version gives the *Ansar* and the *Muhajirin* equal status and makes those who followed the *Muhajirin* and the *Ansar* as subordinates. 'Umar first insisted that his recitation was correct but with the evidence of other students of the Qur'an he had to submit to 'Ubayy's recitation.

Suyuti in *Ittqan* narrates that 'Abdallah ibn 'Umar had said that one should not say that he has received the whole Qur'an as he does not know about the whole, and that one should only say that he has received of the Qur'an only that much as has come

into evidence. Again *Ittqan* points out that 'Ayesha claimed that *Surah al-Ahzab* (Ch. XXXIII) read during the time of the Holy Prophet contained 200 verses while that in 'Uthman's collection contained much less. To the same effect *Mun-takhabe Kanz al-Ummal* narrates that 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b said *Surah al-Ahzab* which now contains seventy-three verses was originally equal in size to *Surah al-Baqarah* or even longer.

'Ayesha's evidence for the missing 127 verses of *Surah al-Ahzab* without quoting a single verse of it, should be discounted as she did not remember even the first words of v 33 of the same *surah* which concerns herself and the other wives of the Holy Prophet. The statement attributed to 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b is also to be disregarded because the omission of such a large portion of one particular *surah* without its being remembered by him who was an acknowledged authority on the Qur'an or by any one else is unbelievable. Such a claim could never have been forwarded from a personality like 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b.

Another tradition of *Ittqan* asserts that 'Ayesha had a collection of her own, and she narrated from her father that in *Surah al-Azhab* after *Taslima* in v 56 mentioning *Salawat* there was a conjunctive clause — *Wa llazina yasiluna sufuful awwal* — and that was before 'Uthman made changes in the collection. First of all the internal evidence against this statement is the style of the alleged missing clauses which is against the unanimous verdict of the Muslims as a whole because either Muslims in their *Salawat* on the Holy Prophet stop with the Holy Prophet or join his family or add the companions in general, or the wives and the issues of the Holy Prophet. But there is no trace of any evidence in support of this addition. Secondly no one else has narrated that 'Ayesha's *Mushaf* (collection) was ever destroyed by anyone. Therefore, the question arises as to what happened to that *Mushaf*?

Another tradition of Muslim says that Abu Musa al-'Ashari called on the reciters of the Qur'an in Basra, and addressed them: 'You are the chosen ones of the people of Basra and the

reciters of the Qur'an. You continue reciting the Qur'an regularly and do not stop it for any period of time lest your hearts get hardened in the manner of the hearts of the previous people.' He further said that he used to read a *surah* in the Qu'ran which resembled in length and rigidity *Surah al-Bara'ah* (Ch. IX) but he had forgotten it except one verse of it. There was also another *surah* which resembled the *Musabbihat* but that too he had forgotten except one verse of it.

The style of both the narrations is inferior to that of the Qur'an, and the wording of the first passage itself makes it quite obvious that it belongs to the category of the *Ahadith Qudsi*.

As regards the second passage it might be taken as a parenthetical sentence in the form of commentary added to the text of v 2 of Ch. LXI (*As-Saff*) before the third verse *Kabura maqtan indallahe* (of the same chapter), which Abu Musa having heard, might have taken it to be a different *surah*, because he is known to have been credulous, weak in memory and lacking in literary taste. He himself confessed to have forgotten both the *surahs* and none else had any knowledge of the matter. This statement stands discredited. Besides the statement, if it be true, might have been made after tensions developed between 'Uthman and him which led to his removal from the governorship. Thus, it is obvious that he wanted to blackmail 'Uthman accusing him of omission.

Suyuti in his *Ittqan* points out that 'Umar once told 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Auf, 'Don't you find this passage among what was revealed to us: *In Jahado kama jahadtum awwala marratin*? Surely we do not find it now!' Abd al-Rahman replied: 'It was one of the passages of the Qur'an which was omitted'. Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Auf, though one of the important political workers of the ruling party, was not an authority on the Qur'an. Ibn 'Abbas, though much younger, used to teach the Qur'an to him and some other persons among the *Muhajirin*, to the last days of 'Umar's reign. Secondly, this is a conditional clause, a part of a large one. The consequent sentence is not mentioned

and neither 'Umar nor Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Auf had mentioned that it was part of a certain verse and *surah*. Thirdly, no one could prevent 'Umar from reinserting this and the other omitted passages in appropriate places in the Qur'an, if he thought that was the case, as he was a powerful leader of the ruling party. No insertion on his behalf shows that those and many other passages which were fancied by persons like 'Umar and Abd al-Rahman as part of the Qur'an were rejected by the Muslims for lack of internal and external evidence in support of those statements.

Similar to the above statements is that of Musslemah ibn Mukhallad Ansari, a prominent companion of the Holy Prophet. Once he asked the people, among whom was also Sa'ad ibn Malik Ansari, 'Will you tell me about the two passages of the Qur'an which were not written in this collection?' No one replied except his son who recited the passages (vide *Ittqan* by Suyuti).

Undoubtedly a proper examination of this passage will prove that the reciter had mixed up certain passages of different *surahs* of the Qur'an with each other while inserting in it his own fancies and prose which differ from the inimitable and miraculous style of the Qur'an, and in fact it exposes his lack of knowledge and inability to produce a version similar to the Qur'an. It may be added to this category of traditions what is said about two *surahs* found in the collection of Ibn 'Abbas and 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b, the proper examination of which bears testimony to the fact that their style is quite different from that of the Qur'an and they may be classed under the category of the supplications (*Ad'iya*) worded by the Holy Prophet or some members of his family. In the opinion of some scholars these two passages are inferior in language and style to the supplications of the Imams of the house of the Holy Prophet whose authentic collections are available.

What is given here is only the internal and external evidence, thus establishing that the Qur'an is inimitable. From these

reports we infer that either for blackmailing each other or for discrediting the accepted version of the Qur'an, which stood between them and their political aspirations, some of the members of the ruling party were inclined to spread disruptive rumours. On the other hand, those of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and the people close to them and other companions, who were against the ideology of the ruling party, were firm in pursuance of the command of the Holy Prophet. Their opinion about the genuineness of the accepted version as the criterion fixed by the Holy Prophet for the verification of genuine and false traditions, both the pre-Qur'anic as well as the post-Qur'anic, was strong. The *Ahl al-Bayt* have recorded that once the Holy Prophet stood up and declared: 'Certainly the liars about me have increased abundantly. Beware! For every truth there is a proof and for every right there is the Light. Thus whatsoever agrees with the Book of God hold it fast and whatsoever is opposed to the Book of God leave it.'

'Ammar ibn Yasir, the most upright *Sahabi* and one of the zealous adherents of the cause of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, once, during the Battle of Siffin, in the presence of the representatives of both the parties, pointing to the banner under which Mu'awiyah was standing, and to the banner of 'Ali under which he stood, said, 'Behold under this banner of ours we fought against the banner of Mu'awiyah in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet on the question of the revelation of the Qur'an, and now we are fighting against the same banner on the question of the interpretation of the Qur'an.' The dispute was confined only to the interpretation of the Qur'an and there was no question of any distortion of its wordings. No tradition dealing either with the theory or the practice of Islam would be acceptable to the Imams of the house of the Holy Prophet or the members of their school of thought, if it did not agree with the Book of God. As 'Allama Majlisi has put it: 'Of the innumerable miracles of the Holy Prophet, the first and the foremost is the Holy Qur'an which is the most genuine and authentic one narrated and recorded ever since its revelation by innumerable persons,

generation after generation, down to us and will last as such till the Day of Resurrection.' (*Haq al-Yaqin*)

Before the conclusion of this review, it is desirable to refer to some traditions of the Sunni school about the nature of 'Ali's collection of the Qur'an, the date of the collection, its authenticity and 'Ali's vast knowledge of the inner and outer aspects of the Qur'an as a whole.

Suyuti in his *Tarikh al-Khulafa* states that 'Ali is one of the godly scholars, the celebrated warrior, the famous ascetic and the matchless orator, and one of those who collected the Qu'ran and presented it to the Holy Prophet for his review. In *Ittqan*, Suyuti on the authority of Abu Na'yim, relates the statement of 'Ali himself: 'No verse of the Qur'an was revealed of which I know not.'

And the same Abu Na'yim further narrates from 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd that the Qur'an was revealed on seven folds or seven sides (*Ahruf*) or aspects, each of which has an inner and an outer significance and 'Ali ibn Abi Talib has got with him all the inner and outer aspects with the significance of each aspect.

The author of *Wasilatun-Najaat*, Mullah Muhammad Mubin Luckhnavi, (Farangimahali) on the authority of Ibn Sirin asserts that 'Ali arranged the Qur'an according to the dates of the revelation, with nothing antedated. Again Suyuti in his *Ittqan* says that 'Ali was one of those who arranged the Qur'an according to the dates of revelation.

And Abu Shukur, the author of *Tamhid*, says that the companions of the Holy Prophet were not unanimous in accepting 'Ali's collection.

Again Suyuti says that 'Ali's collection began with *Surah 'Iqra* followed by *Al-Muddathir* and *Al-Muzzammil*, *Tabbat (Al-Lahab)*, *Al-Takwir*, etc. 'Abdallah ibn Mas'ûd's collection began with *Al-Baqarah* followed by *Al-Nisa* and *Al-e 'Imran* and with much difference thereafter and the same was the case with the collection of 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b.

If we accept the authenticity of the above narrations and other similar ones, it will assert nothing more than what has already been said expressly, that 'Ali was the foremost, next only to the Holy Prophet in possessing thorough knowledge of the inner and outer significance of every word, sentence, passage, part of chapter of the Qur'an in its revealed and pre-revealed form to which the Qur'an itself bears testimony; and if it is properly and impartially read one will grasp that vs 77-79 of Ch. LVI (*Al-Waqi'ah*) form the major premises with Ch. XXXIII (*Al-Ahzab*) v 33 as the minor premises and Ch. III (*Al-e 'Imran*) v 61 as the conclusion defining the personnel of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. It is the unanimous verdict of the Muslim world as to the names of the persons to whom the above verses are applicable: they are 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain. These verses are supported by many other verses of the Qur'an that declare of the descendants of Al-e Ibrahim, those who divinely inherit the *Kitab* (Book), *Hikmat* (Wisdom), *Mulk-e Azîm* (the Great Kingdom) and the *Imamat* (Divine leadership) which cover all aspects of human life, are divinely the foremost in complete obedience and service to the Absolute, and purified from all ungodly inclinations. The foremost of the Ismaelite branch is the Holy Prophet himself and next to him are the members of his household (the *Ahl al-Bayt*) headed by 'Ali as the Imam and succeeded by the eleven Imams. The inclusion of Lady Fatimah in the *Ahl al-Bayt* on account of her personal purity is also by virtue of her elevated position of being the daughter of the Holy Prophet, the wife of the first Imam, and the mother of the eleven Imams — thus establishing the link between *Risalat* (Prophethood) and *Imamat* (the Divine Guidance), a status which can never be secured by merely being a wife of a Prophet and playing no part in the establishment of the divinely chosen line of Abraham's descendants. Besides this clear evidence of the Qur'an there are the most authentic declarations of the Holy Prophet about 'Ali which have been mentioned at various places in this treatise. Regarding 'Ali's special collection and the collection of others, it has already been said that their particular arrangements must

be for the purpose of commentary or for their personal information.

The point to be noted here is that the statement of Suyuti to the effect that 'Ali collected the Qur'an and presented it to the Holy Prophet for a review contradicts all the statements which assert that 'Ali collected the Qur'an after the demise of the Holy Prophet. Furthermore, we would like to remind the reader that the collection of the Qur'an in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet was made not only by 'Ali, whose authority is unquestionable, but also by the other authorized companions of the Holy Prophet, among whom, besides men, there were also women. It is interesting to note that in some traditions Zayd ibn Thabit, the hero of the official venture of the ruling party in the collection of the Qur'an, is counted among those who had collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. This contradicts all the stories of his collecting the fragments of the Qur'an from pieces of paper, bits of wood, bones, leaves and skin, etc. by the order of the first, second or third Caliphs jointly or independently.

Tabarani and Ibn 'Asakir narrate from Shu'abi that he said that the Qur'an was collected during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet by the following six persons from the *Ansar*:

1. Ubayy ibn Ka'b
2. Zayd ibn Thabit
3. Abu Darda
4. Ma'adh ibn Jabal
5. Sa'ad ibn 'Ubayy
6. Abu Zayd

There was a seventh one, Mujjama ibn Jariah who also collected the Qur'an, with the exception of two or three *surahs*.

Bukhari tells us that Anas ibn Malik said that four persons, all from the *Ansar*, collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet:

1. 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b
2. Zayd ibn Thabit
3. Ma'adh ibn Jabal
4. Abu Zayd

Nasa'i asserts that 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar said: 'I collected the

Qur'an and used to complete its recitation (as a whole) every night. This news reached the Holy Prophet and he called and told me not to complete hastily the recitation of the whole Qur'an in one night (i.e. not to recite it mechanically) but to recite it (intelligently) as to ponder over its contents to understand and complete the recitation in one month.'

Ibn Sa'ad asserts in *Taba'qat* on the authority of Fadhl ibn Dakeen from Walid ibn 'Abdullah ibn Jamil who reports from his grandmother, Umme Waraqa, that the Holy Prophet used to visit her and call her *Shahidah*, meaning witness, and she was one of those who had collected the Qur'an.

There is a narration from Ibn 'Abbas, related by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i, Ibn Habban, Hakim, Bahiqi, and Zia Maqdasi that Ibn 'Abbas asked 'Uthman about the reason why *Bismillah* was not written in the beginning of *Surah al-Bara'ah* (Ch. IX, *al-Taubah*) and why they had joined this *surah* with the other and put the two *surahs* in the seven big *surahs*? 'Uthman replied: 'Sometimes when the *surahs* were revealed the Holy Prophet used to call the scribes and tell them to place the particular verses in certain places of the *surahs*. The verse subsequently revealed was placed as pointed out by the Holy Prophet. *Surah al-Anfal* (Ch. VIII) was revealed in Madina early after the Hijrah and *Surah al-Bara'ah* was the last of the Madinite *surahs* but the contents were almost similar to each other and the Holy Prophet did not say whether the *surah* was a separate one or the continuation of the previous *surah*. Therefore, I joined these two together without using *Bismillah* and put it in the lengthy *surahs*.' This statement of 'Uthman, if true, is an attempt to gain some credit for himself for the arrangement of some portion of the Qur'an namely *Al-Bara'ah* and *Al-Anfal* but it asserts the fact that the Qur'an was put in writing under the supervision and the instructions of the Holy Prophet, and that the arrangement of the *ayahs* (verses) in the *surahs* and the arrangement of the *surahs*, one after another were done accordingly except for *Al-Anfal* and *Al-Bara'ah*. But there are authentic traditions by both the

schools (the Sunni as well as the Shi'ah), that the revelation of *Al-Bara'ah* had begun in the ninth year of the Hijrah with the first twenty verses, and 'Ali was instructed by the Holy Prophet to recite them at Mecca during the Hajj season, and that *Bismillah* was not revealed in the beginning of it. Thus there is no question of 'Uthman's joining these two *surahs* or arranging them together as one. *Surah Al-Bara'ah* was revealed without *Bismillah*, and on account of the similarity of the contents was put after *Al-Anfal* under the instructions of the Holy Prophet not as a part of *Al-Anfal* but as a separate *surah*. Probably 'Uthman had no knowledge of this. It is not possible to imagine the actual position of *Surah al-Bara'ah*, the earlier portion of which was revealed in the beginning of the month of Dhil Q'ada, 9th Hijri. Its position in order of arrangement among the other *surahs* was not clarified by the Holy Prophet for more than a year, before his departure from this world, during which period, he himself used to direct the scribes about the arrangement of the *surahs* and even about the arrangement of the verses in them. Moreover, during these last years the Qur'an was revised by Gabriel twice. How was it possible that the portion of *Al-Anfal* and *Al-Bara'ah* as one or two *surahs* and the question of *Bismillah* were not made clear by the message of God? In any case, the statement contradicts his original claim of collecting the fragments of the Qur'an from the people and copying them with the support of witnesses. On the other hand, it supports all the statements and the evidence which show that the Qur'an was collected during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet.

According to the unanimous statements of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, *Bismillah* is a part of the Qur'an, revealed to the Holy Prophet in the beginning of every *surah* except *Surah al-Bara'ah* which was revealed without *Bismillah*. Therefore the last portion of the statement ascribed to 'Uthman cannot be his. It may be a fabrication of a later period of those schools of thought who did not consider *Bismillah* as a part of the Qur'an except the *Bismillah* used in the middle of *Surah al-Namal* (Ch. XXVII).

2. Shi'ah sources

From numerous Shi'ah traditions, only a few important ones are being considered. Most of the others are transmitted from persons like Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Sayya'ri (368 A.H.) and 'Ali ibn Ahmad Kufi (352 A.H.). The former was accused of heresy and the latter of lies and heresy. However, the scrutiny of the text of the narrations is our main concern in respect to the subject of the traditions.

There are twenty traditions where the word *tahrif* (i.e. alteration) has been used, out of which we refer to only eight examples.

1. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi (d. 381 A.H.) relates from Abu Dharr Ghifari that the Holy Prophet commenting on the verse *Yuma tabyadu wujuhun*, ('on the day when some faces will be bright...') (Ch. CXI: v 106) said, 'On the Resurrection Day my people will come to me under five different standards and I will ask the group under each standard about what they had done with the two precious legacies which I left among you?' [The two precious legacies refer to the Qu'ran and the *Ahl al-Bayt — Hadith-e Thaqlayan*].

The people under the first standard will reply: 'Of the two precious things which you left behind, the greater one we have distorted and thrown on our backs (i.e. ignored it), and the smaller one we opposed (or hated).' The group under the second standard will reply: 'Of the two precious ones the greater one (the Qur'an) we distored, and tore it into pieces and went against it; and the smaller one we opposed and waged war against it.'

2. Ibn Taus (664 A.H.) and Sayid Ne'matullah al-Jazairi (1112 A.H.), the two prominent Shi'ah traditionists, narrate a lengthy tradition that the Holy Prophet said to Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman that the people will profane the sanctity (of Islam) to the effect that they will deviate from the path of God and distort His Book and alter the Holy Prophet's *Sunnah* (traditions).

3. Sa'd ibn 'Abdallah al-Qummi, narrates that the fifth Imam,

Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir said that the Holy Prophet had called the people at Mina and said: 'O People! I am leaving among you two precious things to which if ye adhere, never shall ye go astray, namely the Book of God and my *Ahl al-Bayt*, and besides these two, here is the Ka'ba (the Sanctuary), the Holy House.' The Imam said, 'The Book they have distorted, the *'Itrat* (the *Ahl al-Bayt*) have been killed and the Ka'ba they have destroyed, and all God's deposits with them, they threw away, and they have detached themselves from them.'

4. Shaykh Saduq asserts in his *Khisaal*, through Jabir ibn 'Abdallah Ansari that the Holy Prophet said on the Day of Resurrection three entities would complain: i) the Qur'an, ii) the mosque and iii) the *'Itrat*. The Qur'an would say, 'O my Lord! They distorted me and tore me into pieces.' The mosque would say, 'O my Lord! They kept me and spoiled me.' The *'Itrat* would say, 'O our Lord! They killed us, drove us out of our homes and made us wander hither and thither.'

5. The tradition narrated by Kulayni and Saduq from 'Ali ibn Suwayd is that he wrote to the seventh Imam Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim while he was in prison and got the following reply: 'They were trusted with the Book of God and they distorted and altered it.'

6. Ibn Shahr Ashub (588 A.H.) narrates that the third Imam, Husain ibn 'Ali on the Day of 'Ashurah, while addressing the enemy's army said: 'Ye are of the same rebellious party, and the remains of the infidel allies (against the Holy Prophet), and the remains of those who threw away the Book (the Holy Qur'an), and were inspired by Satan, and a gang of criminals, and those who distorted the Book.'

7. In *Kamil al-Ziyarah* by Ibn Qulawayh (d. 369 A.H./979-980 A.D.) it is related that the sixth Imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq has prescribed for the pilgrims who enter the shrine of Imam Husain to say: 'O God! Cursed be those who belied Thy Prophets, destroyed Thy House (the Ka'ba), and distorted Thy Book.'

8. It is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq: 'The masters of the

Arabic language distorted the Word of God from its proper place.'

The rest of the twenty traditionists have also used the words *tahrif* and *tagyir* in the same tone.

If these and similar traditions are read in the light of what the fifth Imam Muhammad al-Baqir had said, 'Of their throwing away the Book of God was that they established its letters and altered and distorted its scope and significance,' it becomes clear that no change in the lettering of the Qur'an ever took place by omission, addition or alteration but that the change took place in the significance, and the application of the contents of the Holy Qur'an. There is no doubt that the words *tagyir* and *tabdil*, used in these traditions mean nothing but the misuse and misinterpretation of the contents of the Qur'an. This is fully vouched by the history of the development of Islamic thought. The Holy Prophet was expecting this behaviour from some of his followers when he declared, 'Three pronouncements of divorce in one session do not make it effective.' And he warned: 'Do they play with the Book of God when I am still present among them?' There are many more examples of misinterpretation and misuse of the contents of the Book of God in every generation.

The last tradition quoted here supports the fact that many who think themselves to be masters of the Arabic language try to misinterpret the Holy Book by destroying its real significance. We find many commentators striving to distort the wordings of the Qur'an to deny the miracles of the Prophets of God. The best example being attempts of the anti-*Ahl al-Bayt* commentators to distort the significance of the verses which undoubtedly were revealed exclusively regarding the spiritual excellence of the *Ahl al-Bayt* since the earliest days of Islam.

One of the clear examples of such attempts is the distorted interpretation of v 33 of Ch. XXXIII (*Ta'thir*) which leaves no room for anybody else other than the *Abna'ana* (i.e. Hasan and Husain), *Nisa'ana* (i.e. Fatimah) and the *Anfusana* (i.e. 'Ali) of

the verse of *Mubahala* (Ch. III: v 60) among the *Ahl al-Bayt*, including the wives of the Holy Prophet. If the verses preceding v 33 of Ch. XXXIII and its following verses of *Surah al-Tahrim* (Ch. LXVI) dealing with the wives of the Holy Prophet are taken into consideration it becomes clear that v 33 of Ch. XXXIII is applicable only to those who are in the highest stage of accomplishment and attainment.

They also distorted the significance of the terms in *Mubahala* (Ch. III: v 60), specially *Anfusana* by making it refer not to the self of the Holy Prophet but to the Muslims in general, overlooking the undeniable fact that the Holy Prophet, in relevance with his authentic statement "Ali is of me and I am of 'Ali,' had responded to the challenge of the Christians by choosing 'Ali as *Anfusana*. Further, in keeping with his other statements about the *Ahl al-Bayt*, he had chosen Fatimah as *Nisa'ana* and Hasan and Husain (the sons of 'Ali and Fatimah) as *Abna'ana*. They held that if the fact of *Mubahala* is admitted, other followers, wives and the remaining relatives of the Holy Prophet will be naturally excluded from Islam, whereas according to the Shi'ah belief the divine selected few were the best of the Muslims and their selection did not in any way exclude others from the fold of Islam or lessen their respective position in view of their proximity to the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

The conversation between Ibn 'Abbas and Mu'awiyah, reported by Allama Majlisi in Vol X of *Bihar al-Anwar*, when the latter warned the former not to narrate anything from the Prophet or quote or interpret the Qur'an in support of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, throws sufficient light on the fact that all that the ruling class was attempting to do and wanted others to do was to misinterpret the Qur'an and distort the significance of the verses which are in favour of the right cause. Otherwise the wide publicity of the text of the Holy Book made it impossible for them to affect any distortion in the wordings or arrangement of the verses.

To have an idea of the distortion of the interpretation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an, one has to study Ch. III: v 32; Ch. V:

v 55; Ch. IV: v 54; Ch. XXXIII: v 33; Ch. XXXV: v 31-32; Ch. XLII: v 23; and all the passages dealing with the distinction given to Al-e Ibrahim, and the verses which clearly show that the Prophets of God inherit and leave behind them their legacies to their issues.

These are only a few of the innumerable instances of the distortion of the scope and significance of the verses of the Holy Qur'an against which Imam Husain spoke at Karbala and his successors, the Imams of the house of the Holy Prophet, had reiterated the protest, in private as well as in public.

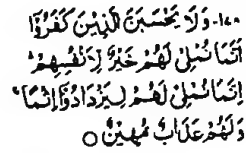
When Imam Husain, his relatives, and the companions had sacrificed their lives on the battlefield of Karbala for the establishment of truth (on Muharram 10, 61 A.H./681 A.D.), his son, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin, with his aunt Zaynab (sister of Imam Husain), and other members of the household of the Prophet and the families of the martyrs of Karbala were taken to Damascus as captives before the court of Yazid (son of Mu'awiyah), a noted tyrant in the world. He addressed Zaynab, overwhelmed with self pride, with the words of the Qur'an (Ch. III: v 26):

٢٦- قُلِ اللّٰهُمَّ مٰلِكَ الْمُلْكِ
تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَآءُ
وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَآءُ
وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَآءُ
وَتُذِلُّ مَنْ تَشَآءُ
بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ
إِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ○

'*Say (O Apostle Muhammad!): "O God! Master of the kingdom. Thou givest the kingdom unto whomsoever Thou likest and takest away the kingdom from whomsoever Thou likest! Thou exaltest whomsoever Thou likest and abasest whomsoever Thou likest*".'

Instantaneously the granddaughter of the Holy Prophet, Zaynab, gave a moving sermon which depicted the brutality of Yazid against the family of the Prophet. She recited v 178 from the

same Ch. III.



'*Let not those who disbelieve think that Our giving them respite is good for their selves. We only give respite to them that they may increase in sins, and for them is a disgraceful chastisement.*'

The evident distortion of the Qur'an by Yazid was brought to the notice of the audience, who shed tears over the sermon. This precedent of distortion was followed by the Umayyads and their successors and all aggressors.

The second collection of the traditions shows that in some verses of the Holy Qur'an the name of 'Ali in particular and the names of the other members of the *Ahl al-Bayt* in general, which had been originally mentioned, were omitted or altered later on. Such traditions are divided into three classes.

1. The tradition from Kafi. In v 23 of Ch. II (*Al-Baqarah*) after the phrase *Ala 'Abdina* was the phrase *fi 'Aliyyin* and omitted afterwards.

2. There is a tradition from both the Sunni and the Shi'ah schools that in Ch. V: v 67 (*Al-Ma'idah*) after the phrase *ilaika* there was the phrase *fi 'Aliyyin* which was omitted later on.

3. The author of *Fasl al-Khitab*, on the authority of Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Sayya'ri (who was accused of heresy) says that *'Aliyya* in Ch. XV: v 41 (*Al-Hijr*) is *Inna haza sirato alaiya.*

One may find traditions of a similar nature indicating the omission or the alteration of the name, 'Ali, in some other passages narrated in books like *Tafsir* by Ibn Furat, or the commentary unwarrantedly ascribed to the eleventh Imam Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Askari, for which Sahl ibn Ahmad Deebaji is accused.

The first, though from Kafi, the authentic book of the Shi'ah

traditions, is to be totally rejected because of the context. It is unanimously agreed by all Muslims that v 23 of Ch. II is an ever current challenge to those who doubt the divine nature of the Book in part or as a whole. If such a restricting phrase as *fi 'Aliyyin* is accepted then the verse and the challenge as a whole will become meaningless.

It should be noted that the authenticity of Kafi does not mean that doubt in the genuineness of a problem should be left unsolved. Kafi has some conflicting traditions, including some facts against history, particularly in the Rauza-Kafi. Moreover, these kinds of traditions are contradicted by the authentic traditions of Kafi itself, on the authority of Abu Basir who says, 'I asked the sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq about v 59 of Ch. IV (*Al-Nisa*) which deals with *Ulil Amr* and he said that it was revealed about 'Ali, Hasan and Husain.' Then he asked the Imam that the people say, 'If it is so, then why were 'Ali and the people of his house not mentioned by name in the Qur'an?' The Imam replied, 'Tell them, the daily prayer, *Salat*, is mentioned in the Qur'an in several places but the numbers of the *rak'tan* in each prayer have not been given. It was for the Holy Prophet to explain the details.' The same is the case with the details about Hajj, *zakat, saum* (i.e. fasting), etc. which were left to the Holy Prophet to explain. Likewise, it was the duty of the Holy Prophet to explain as to who are the persons worthy of being called *Ulil Amr*, obedience to whom is as compulsory as obedience to the Holy Prophet, next to obedience to God. The Holy Prophet explained it whenever the occasion demanded, and the last of such occasions was the declaration of *Ghadir-e-Khum* [Ref. note 23 F and G], which left no room for any doubt to be clarified, but those who were determined to doubt and create doubts among others did not leave any stone unturned. They could not succeed in hiding any occasion of the least importance, let alone the event of *Ghadir*, concerned with the declaration of 'Ali and his particular descendants as his successors. This tradition contradicts all other traditions which tend to say that 'Ali's name or that of Hasan, Husain or Fatimah, were revealed

as the text of the Qur'an and dropped by someone later. Therefore, such traditions are to be interpreted as these names have been mentioned as a commentary to the text, as in the case of Ch. V: v 67 referred to above. In the cases of those traditions which would not bear such interpretations, they should be totally rejected as being against the Qur'an and the authentic traditions.

Accepting the third tradition as true, it does not convey any peculiar distinction or qualification for 'Ali which he did not already possess. Particularly, if the context is taken into consideration it proves that 'Ali was one of those who did not follow Satan, which is no great distinction for him, because an ordinary righteous person also possesses that distinction. Secondly, Sayya'ri, from whom the author of *Fasl al-Khitab* reports, did not say that *'Aliyyin* used there was a proper noun in possessive case, as there is another recitation of this verse where *'Aliyyin* is used as an adjective which qualifies *Sirat* in Ch. XV: v 41. It is more probable that Sayya'ri with his ultra-views aimed to say that 'Ali, though used here as an adjective, yet from an esoterical point of view meant 'Ali. Not only here but wherever the word 'Ali occurred in the Qur'an, though as an adjective, according to the ultra-Shi'ahs, it means 'Ali. According to some traditionists the Holy Prophet named him 'Ali under Divine command. Therefore, they say, whatever is termed by God as 'Ali, as an adjective, must be associated with 'Ali in some sense.

There are traditions which show that *Al-e Muhammad* originally mentioned in some passages of the Holy Qur'an were omitted or altered later on. For instance the tradition narrated by Ayashi that in Ch. III: vs 32-33 after *Al-e Ibrahim* there was *Al-e Muhammad* instead of *Al-e 'Imran* and the former was omitted and the latter was inserted. Such a tradition, if true, means not only omission but also addition of non-Qur'anic matter in the Qur'an; but this is against the unanimous verdict of all schools, particulary the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ah school. Besides, its being

reported by one solitary reporter cannot be acceptable in the case of the Qur'an, as already pointed out. The insertion of the term *Al-e Muhammad* here in place of *Al-e 'Imran* would exclude 'Ali from *Al-e Muhammad* on account of the subsequent phrase *Zurriatan Ba'duha min B'ad* as 'Ali is not a descendant of Muhammad, and this is against both the fact and the faith, as *Al-e Muhammad* are headed by 'Ali. If the subsequent phrase is totally discarded then the term *Al-e Muhammad* will include not only the members of the family, but all the followers as in the case of *Al-e Fir'aun* (Ch. III: vs 32-33), whereas in the case of the present version of the Qur'an both Muhammad and 'Ali, along with their issues are included in the term *Al-e Ibrahim* (i.e. descendants of Abraham).

There is another tradition to the effect that in Ch. XXVI: v 227 after *Zulimu* the term *Al-e Muhammad* was mentioned, which if true, would restrict the condemnation of injustice only to the case of *Al-e Muhammad*, excluding the cases of the others, which is against the spirit of the Qur'an, the universal justice of God being that whosoever is unjust to any one in any degree, is punishable. It is also against the saying of 'Ali, 'It is easier for 'Ali to bear all sorts of tortures than to meet God after committing injustice to any one of His creatures.' Most probably the expression *Al-e Muhammad* has been used as a commentary to emphasize the seriousness of injustice caused to the holy people.

Another example is the tradition from Ibn 'Abbas which deals with v 130 of Ch. XXXVII showing that instead of *Ilyasin* there was *Al-e Yasin*. It is totally against the context which is dealing with the Prophet from vs 123 to 132. If the tradition is authentic, most probably Ibn 'Abbas mentioned *Al-e Yasin* not as the word title of the Holy Prophet, but on the ground of the association of ideas. He might have mentioned *Al-e Yasin* also to be the subject of 'peace from God,' similar to *Ilyasin*, and there are many biblical evidences which show the reappearance of Elijah as identified with 'Ali.

There are also many solitary traditions dealing with the word *Ummat* (community) mentioned in the various passages of the Qur'an assigning to the expression the duties and qualities suitable for leading personalities. The traditions say that in those verses (i.e. Ch. II: v 143; Ch. II: v 128 and Ch. III: v 103) instead of the word *Ummat* the word *A'immah* (plural of Imam) had been used at first. But counter to these traditions there are other traditions which assert that the word *Ummat* itself was rightly used by God to denote *A'immah* (note Ch. III: v 31).

There is another tradition dealing with the word *Imaman wa Rahmatan* mentioned in v 17 of Ch. XI. It says that in the original arrangement *Imaman wa Rahmatan* was after *Shahidan minhu* before qualifying *Shahid* and not *Kitabu Musa*. We have dealt with this matter and proved that *Imaman wa Rahmatan* in its present arrangement qualifies both *Kitabu Musa* and *Shahid*. The imagined arrangement is absurd and against the Qur'an and the commentaries of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, as *Kitabu Musa* is qualified in *Imaman wa Rahmatan* (Ch. XLVI: v 12).

Another example of a tradition of this nature is that which deals with Ch. XXV: v 74 saying that in the place of the present *Waj'alna lil Muttaqîna Imama*, it was originally *Waja'l lana min Muttaqîn Imama*. The reading of this verse will show the absurdity of this view and the soundness of the present verse. The supposed version would reduce the position of the persons referred to by the personal pronoun *Na* meaning 'Us' to a state of praying to have a leader from among the pious ones, in which case the infallible Imam would be excluded from *Na*, i.e. Us. Further, such a prayer could be the prayer of only an ordinary man, while in the present version the pronoun would mean only the *infallible personalities* who are fit to be the leaders of the pious and not to be led by any one from among the pious ones. In either case, the restriction in the meaning of the personal pronoun is unavoidable. In the supposed version the position of the Imam is reduced to an ordinary pious person, *Muttaqi*, while according to the present version the Imam prays for the post of the *Imam al-Muttaqîn* which Ibrahim prayed for his *Zurriah*.

These are examples of the traditions which assert omission or alteration of the wording of the Qur'an which according to the imagination of their reporters were in favour of the *Ahl al-Bayt* but were omitted. But a thorough study of these will prove without doubt that this was either the work of a foolish friend or a crafty enemy who wanted to damage the sacredness of the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and along with it the unique status of the Holy Qur'an which is the criterion for the verification of the Truth of pre and post-Islamic literature of a theological nature.

There are traditions which give a different wording in some passages of the Qur'an as a different recitation which are not acceptable in any way. For example, 'Ali ibn Ibrahim narrates through his chain from Huraith from the sixth Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq, that the Imam read the last portion of *Surah al-Fatihah* as follows: *Sirata mun an'amta alaihim, ghairil maghdube alaihim wa gahiriz dalin*, meaning instead of *Allazeena* after *Sirat* he used the relative pronoun *Mun* and *Ghair* instead of *la* before *dalin*. It is obvious that the supposed recitation does not differ from the present recitation in substance, but the absurdity of the narration is so obvious that one is surprised that a person like 'Ali ibn Ibrahim should have narrated it. The *Fatihatul-Kitab* is a chapter repeatedly recited by the Muslims in the daily prayers and all other prayers and there is no prayer without the recital of the *Surah*, and as such it is impossible that the correct version escaped the memory of all the Muslims from the time of the Holy Prophet up to the third Caliph, or that deliberately the correct recitation was replaced by the distorted recitation without a word of protest from any quarter. If this tradition is to be accepted no report of the past, whatever the degree of its authenticity and the number of its narrators and written reports, could be relied upon.

There is another group of traditions quoted by some writers in support of *tahrif* which indicates that the Qur'an contains different sections, dealing with the *Ahl al-Bayt* and their enemies, the exemplary events of the past and the laws and precepts of Islam. It is obvious that these kinds of traditions have nothing

to do with *tahrif* (i.e. omission, alteration or addition). It refers to the applicability of the subject matter and not to its arrangement. As such it does not convey more than what is mentioned in the celebrated *Ziarat* (*Jami'ah*): 'Wherever, or whenever, anything good is mentioned it applies to you as its origin, its development, its source and as its final phase.'

A few traditions narrated by 'Ayashi in his commentary confirm what has already been said *viz* that the names of the *Ahl al-Bayt* have not been mentioned in the Qur'an and that the passages of the Qur'an should not be restricted to persons or occasions in connection with which they might have been revealed. He narrates through his chain from the fifth Imam who said: 'The Qur'an was revealed in three groups, one third about us and our devotees, one third about our enemies and the enemies of those before us (the Prophets and the righteous ones) and one third about law, precepts and exemplary narrations, and that if the passage revealed about some persons is restricted to them, then that passage would lose its applicability along with the death of the said persons; but the applicability of the Qur'an continues to be valid so long as the heavens and the earth exist. There are passages in the Qur'an which apply to all good or bad.' Another saying from the same Imam reported by 'Ayashi is: 'Whenever in the Qur'an any of the followers of Islam is mentioned as virtuous, it refers to us and whenever some are mentioned as wicked, even in the past, it is our enemies that are meant.' And another tradition narrated by 'Ayashi from the sixth Imam says: 'If the Qur'an is read as it was revealed, one would find us named therein.' This means that if one reads the Qur'an studiously without prejudice, he would realize the exclusive status given to them by the Qur'an. For example in Ch. III: v 60, nobody's name is mentioned but there is no doubt that no one is meant by the verse but Hasan, Husain, Fatimah and 'Ali. It is natural that only these can be termed as the people of the House and members of the family. Therefore, whatever God has said in the Qur'an about the *Ahl al-Bayt* and the chosen members of *Al-e Ibrahim* applies to these people exclusively. Instead of

mentioning their names, the Qur'an referred to them according to reliable traditions narrated above. God has introduced them in a rhetorical manner which is much more effective than mentioning their names.

There are some other traditions which evidently assert that a large portion of the Qur'an has been omitted and some non-Qur'anic matter has been inserted in the present version. The outstanding example of such traditions is the lengthy statement of 'Ali narrated by Shaykh Ahmed bin Abi Talib al-Tabrisi, the author of the book *Kitab al-Ihtija*. 'Ali is reported to have said in the course of his conversation with a Jew, that between the first portion of v 3 and v 137 of Ch. IV about one third of the Qur'an had been omitted and that v 188 of Ch VII was not a genuine part of the Qur'an. The absurdity of this tradition is self-evident. It seems that 'Ali was talking of some remote ancient book. If one third of the Qur'an was deleted in his presence he and all the Muslims would not have remained silent. Not even a single verse of the one third of the Qur'an said to have been omitted has been indicated. In the case of Fadak, 'Ali and his followers did not hestitate in the least to raise objection and even for a minor deviation from the Islamic law, people like Abu Dharr, 'Ammar, Miqdad, etc. protested against the ruling party at the risk of their lives. That being so, if one third of the Qur'an had been omitted, it is unthinkable that no one objected. It is unacceptable that such a deliberate omission in the Qur'an was effected and 'Ali did not speak but to a Jew. On the strength of this spurious tradition the genuineness and authenticity of the Qur'an cannot be doubted. On the other hand, the book containing this tradition itself cannot be regarded as reliable.

There is another tradition from Kulayni in the chapter dealing with the Qur'an to the effect that the sixth Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq said that the Qur'an which Gabriel brought to the Holy Prophet contained seven thousand verses. This is according to Wafi taken from Kafi but in some editions of Kafi itself, the number mentioned is seventeen thousand, instead of seven thousand. There is no doubt that the narration

of Wafi from Kafi is much more reliable than the ordinary editions of Kafi itself. However, the difference between the narration is there, hence it is not unreasonable to take either of these statements as wishful conjecture, because it deals with the number of the passages of the Qur'an and the numbering depends upon punctuation, about which the reciters of the Qur'an may differ. According to the current punctuation the number of verses is 6,666 but according to the punctuation ascribed to the Holy Prophet by *Majma'ul Bayan* it is 6,263. The different schools of the reciters — Kufi, Hijazi, Macci, Madani and Shami — differ in this regard from each other. It is also said that the numbering by the Kufi school is based on the authority of 'Ali.

However, it should be noted that the differences in numbering was not based on the variation in numbering of the letters and the words of the Qur'an as confirmed by a tradition from *Kafi* saying that 'No change in the letters of the Qur'an in addition or omission ever took place' and that the Muslims established the letters of the Qur'an and distorted its significance and its application. Here it is is not out of place to recommend to the reader a reference to a tradition quoted by the author of *Majma'ul Bayan* in Ch. LXXVI (*Al-Dahr*) while dealing with the question of the date and the occasion of *Shan-e Nuzul* (Significance of Revelation), where the full account of the number of the chapters, verses, letters, the date and place of their revelation is given. It is said that there are chapters the beginning portions of which were revealed at Mecca and the other portions were revealed at Madina and were put in their proper places by the order of the Holy Prophet.

To a particular group belongs the solitary tradition stating that the Qur'an originally had forty *Juz* (i.e. parts of which we have now only thirty and the remaining ten parts are with the Last Imam who would bring them when he reappears). The absurdity of this version has already been pointed out when dealing with the tradition of the *Ihtijaj*. No word, phrase, sentence, verse or chapter, small or large, can be considered as a part of the

Qur'an if it is reported by a solitary reporter, because in our definition of the Qur'an we have said that the revealed statement was placed within the reach of mankind as an everlasting miracle, and as such it cannot be known only to one chain of the reporters. To this category belongs the spurious *surah* known as *Surah-e-Vilayat* which the author of *Dabistan ul-Madhahib* has narrated from some unknown source, and it may be the same *surah* to which Ibn Shahr Aashub refers as the omitted chapter of the Qur'an. The chapter contains as many words (or lines) as *Musabbahat*. The style of the chapter betrays its fabrication. It cannot be classed even with the style of the *Ahl al-Bayt* in their sermons and prayers. It is an attempt to imitate the rhythm of the Qur'an but is most unlike the Qur'an in grammatical structure and rhetorical consideration, the like of which can be composed by any imitator who is acquainted with the Arabic language. There are other compositions of this type said to be the omitted chapters of the Qur'an, the style of which betrays them. Of these are two *surahs* named *Qul* and *Hafd*. The style shows that they are some sort of prayers composed by someone much inferior in style to that of the Holy Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*, let alone the style of the Qur'an.

There is another tradition of this kind narrated by Kafi from Abu Nasr Bazanti (d. 221 A.H./836 A.D.) who said that the eighth Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Rida gave him a Qur'an and told him not to look into it, but he opened it and read Ch. 98 known as the *Bayanah* and found therein the names of seventy persons of the Quraysh along with the names of their fathers. Then the Imam sent for the Qur'an and took it back. This is not believable. In the first place it is unthinkable that the Imam would give the Qur'an and yet ask that it should not be looked into. Secondly, the person who disobeys the order of the Imam not to look into it is hardly reliable. Thirdly, if we grant the genuineness of the narration, the version that he found therein the names of so many people with the names of their fathers is the best proof that what he saw was not the text of the Qur'an but some commentary. Of the contemporaries of the Holy

Prophet or his ancestors, and his followers, and the members of his family, nobody's name had come in the Qur'an except the name of Zayd among the friends and Abu Lahab among the enemies and the name of the Holy Prophet himself, and if anyone else's name had come, the report of it would not have reached through a solitary tradition. Apart from our remarks about this tradition, it can be taken as evidence that the celebrated *Mushaf* attributed to the first Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib was not confined to the text of the Qur'an revealed as a challenging miracle, but it contained also the commentaries which the Holy Prophet dictated to him or the explanatory notes which he himself added to it.

These are the main traditions quoted in favour of *tahrîf*, in the sense of addition or omission. There remains the question of *tahrif* with regard to the arrangement of words in the phrases and the sentences in the verse and the verses in the chapters and the arrangement of the chapters in the collection. As pointed out already the Qur'an explicitly asserts that the arrangement, the recitation and the explanation, all are the responsibility of God and this must be discharged before declaring the perfection of the religion and the Holy Prophet's declaration:

'I am leaving among you two things, the Book of God and the Ahl al-Bayt.'

Both issues have been thoroughly discussed and established and now no fallacy remains.

The Imams gave instructions to the Muslims to be very cautious in the recitation of the *surahs*. Besides, the traditions allow the recitation of any chapter in the compulsory prayers with the exception of four *surahs* which contain *sajdah-e wajib* (compulsory *sajdah*). The Imams have ordered that Ch. 93 and Ch. 94, though separated by *Bismillah*, should be recited together because the latter supplements the former. An identical statement is also made about the recitation of Ch. 105 and Ch. 106. The spiritual effect and the divine reward assigned to the recitation of chapters and verses are mentioned by the Imams. It

should be noted that according to the *Ahl al-Bayt* it is necessary that one complete *surah* of the Qur'an, neither more nor less, is to be recited after Ch. I, in the first and second *Rak'at* of prayers. Therefore, if there was any misarrangement in any chapter of the Holy Book which affects its completeness, it would have been pointed out.

It is the unanimous verdict of the Shi'ah theologians and jurists that any recitation different from the present arrangement, or with any addition or omission in any compulsory prayer, renders the prayer void. Even in the optional prayers or in ordinary recitations, any arrangement different from the present one is a sin.

There are some solitary reports about the recitation of some Qur'anic words by the *Ahl al-Bayt* other than the present, [such as *Mou'ooda*, v 8 of Ch. LXXXII], but according to the authentic tradition of Kafi and the unanimous verdict of the Shi'ah theologians, any recitation other than the seven or ten current ones, is forbidden. All these show that mischievous hands were working since the demise of the Holy Prophet down to the beginning of the fourth century to create doubts about the genuineness and infallibility of the Qur'an in hand.

Even the reports that the Holy Prophet, on the eve of his demise, told 'Ali to take care of the fragments of the different materials on which the Qur'an was written and were in the custody of the Holy Prophet, does not mean that the Qur'an had not been, by then, collected. In fact, the Holy Prophet did not like them to fall in the hands of the public as they might be misused. Hence he ordered 'Ali to take care of them, and no one has ever claimed to have seen them. The fragments from which Zayd ibn Thabit attempted to produce his collection were those on which people had made copies for themselves other than those of the Holy Prophet's. However, the Shi'ah traditions clearly assert that the Holy Prophet had dictated to 'Ali the details of Islamic precepts, theoretical and practical, even such details as the fine for a bruise, and all the events which had

already happened and all that would occur till the Day of Resurrection. 'Ali noted them all in the form of a scroll termed as *Jami'ah* and in the form of another collection on the parchment of hide known as *Ja'fr*.

The authoritative status of the Qur'an in all ages declared by the Holy Prophet and the Imams of his house implies that any report suggesting the least doubt about the genuineness of its present version with its present arrangement is to be totally rejected. This is the view adhered to by their disciples during their presence and followed by the standard theologians, jurists and scholars of the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ah school of all ages. No one, who professes Islam, and belonging to whatever school, can doubt the fact that the Qur'an, besides containing the last message of God, has been revealed as an ever-current, challenging miracle and as the guardian of all the preceding scriptures and the standard of the verification of all the post-Islamic literature. As such it should remain genuine and intact within the reach of mankind, protected against any addition, omission, alteration or distortion. Otherwise it would effect its status as a miracle and a guardian which has been expressly stated in the Qur'an — Ch. XV: v 9; Ch. XLI: v 42. It is incorrect to say that these verses refer to the true copy of the Qur'an which was with the Imams, because the Qur'an as a standard and as a miracle was revealed and must have been within the reach of all and not hidden and treasured by any one single person. Genuine copies of all the ancient scriptures were also with the Imams and their possessing a copy of the Qur'an was only natural. The lives of the Holy Prophet and the Imams, their teachings, mirror completely the Holy Book as it is now. (Vide *Al-Kafi*, Chapter on the Qur'an as the standard on any controversial issue)

'I was given the lengthiest *surahs* in place of the Torah (*Taurat*) and I was given hundred versed chapters in place of the Gospels (*Injil*) and I was given the lengthy one next to the first in place of the Psalms (*Zabur*), and I was made to exceed them with the separate small ones — they are sixty-eight *surahs* and the Qur'an is the guardian over all the scriptures.'

It is transmitted from the seventh Imam Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim: 'Whosoever derives his religion from the Book of God and the teachings of the Holy Prophet, the mountain may move from its place but he will not be shaken in his faith. But he who takes his religion from another man, will refute it. The person who does not understand our status from the Qur'an is not safe from mischief,' which means the present Qur'an is the standard for the identification of the *Imamat*. From the sixth Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq: 'Surely God has revealed in the Qur'an the norm of everything. Surely God did not leave out anything which people would be in need of, but He revealed it in the Book, so that nobody could say, "I wish it would have been there in the Qur'an." There is no matter under dispute between two persons but that there is a ruling for it in the Qur'an; only the people's mind cannot grasp it, which clearly shows that the Qur'an is short of nothing but that the short-coming is from our side.'

From the fifth Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir: 'Whenever I inform you about something you should ask if it is in the Qur'an.'

There are many traditions of a similar nature narrated by *Kafi* here and elsewhere, asserting that everything is in the present Qur'an in hand, but the ordinary people may not be able to grasp it. We would like here to summarize the gist of all these traditions in the words of 'Ali: *Innallaha tajalla fi kitaabihi le'ibadeh* (God manifested Himself in His Book for mankind).

The sixth Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq narrates from the Holy Prophet: 'For every truth there is a way of verification and for every right thing there is light to be thrown on it. Therefore, whatever is in conformity with the Qur'an take it, and whatever is contrary to it leave it.' When asked about the conflicting reports narrated from the Holy Prophet or from the Imams of the house of the Holy Prophet, he said: 'The one which is supported by evidence from the Qur'an or from the sayings of the Holy Prophet take it, otherwise return it to the person who brought it.' Everything should be evaluated by

comparing it with the Book of God and the teachings of the Holy Prophet, and any tradition which does not agree with the Book of God is spurious and must be rejected.

The following sermon delivered by the Holy Prophet is reported from the sixth Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq through the chain of his ancestors: 'O ye people! Ye are in an abode of truce, and ye are on a journey and the move with you is fast and indeed ye see the night and day, the sun and the moon, both wearing out everything new and bringing near everything which was far and bringing everything promised. Equip yourselves with provision for the remote journey.'

Miqdad ibn al-Aswad stood up and asked: 'O Apostle of God! What is the abode of the truce?' 'The abode (halt) is to take provisions and leave,' replied the Holy Prophet and then continued the sermon.

'Whenever the ordeals become so confusing and dark for you, like a part of the dark night, ye adhere to the Qur'an. Verily it is the intercessor whose intercession is accepted and the pleader whose pleading is approved. He who keeps it in view (as his guide or norm) it guideth him to Paradise, and he who puts it behind, it will drag him to hell fire. It is the guide which guideth to the best path. It is the Book wherein are the details and explanations and the extract and it is the decree. It has an outer aspect and an inner one. The outer side is law and order while the inner side is knowledge and enlightenment. The outer is fascinating beauty, the inner is deep. It has bottoms and the bottoms have bottoms and so on. Its wonders are innumerable and incomprehensible — its marvels are never worn out.

'Therein are the torches of guidance and the minarets of wisdom, and guidance towards knowledge for the one who understands the description.

'Thus it is for the seeker to continue his search so that his sight should reach the fact described by God and thus be rescued from perdition and entanglements. Verily the meditation on it is

a life directing an awakened heart just as the torch illuminates one who walks in darkness. Thefore, it is on ye to devote to it duly without the least hesitation.'

The above statements of the Holy Prophet and the Imams are but a few examples out of the many transmitted by the following authentic Shi'ah scholars who are the supreme authority after the occultation of the last (twelfth) Imam.

Kulayni (Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, d. 329 A.H./941 A.D.) in the introduction of his celebrated work *al-Kafi* states: 'Passed away the Holy Prophet, leaving behind among his people (*Ummat*), the Book of God and the executor of his will, 'Ali *Amir al-Muminin* (the Commander of the Faithful), *Imam al-Muttaqîn*, (the Leader and Guide of the Pious Ones) (peace of God be upon him) as the two inseparable associates, each as witness to the truth of the other.'

Pointing out the sources of true knowledge of God's religion, Kulayni quotes the two traditions which have been reproduced above. In answering the question about the conflicting traditions narrated by different reports and the method for their verification he says: 'Behold O my brethren! May God guide you that none among the scholars can distinguish the true and false ones of the conflicting traditions except in the way shown by the Holy Imams who said, "Refer them to the Book of God and then the one which agrees with the Book of God, take it, and the one which disagrees with the Book of God, reject it'." (Ref. Introduction of *al-Kafi*)

This quotation from Kulayni proves without doubt, that to him the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt* were two inseparable and infallible authorities left by the Holy Prophet among the people for their guidance and that the Qur'an was the criterion for the scrutiny of the traditions. As such it is unfair to allege that Kulayni had doubts about the genuineness of the Qur'an simply because he had mentioned in his book some solitary reports which to some may appear as indicating *tahrîf*, not withstanding the fact that the reports in question are capable of different

interpretations as already pointed out. It needs to be remembered that in attributing a doctrine to a person or a community, comparison and scrutiny of their various statements are essential.

Next to Kulayni is Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babuyah al-Qummi known as Saduq (d. 381 A.H./991-992 A.D.), author of *Mun la Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, who has specifically dealt with the subject in his famous book *I'tiqadat* (The Beliefs). But here Saduq's views are quoted through the authority of Mullah Muhsin al-Faid (10th century A.H.), in his work *Al-Wafi*, to prove unanimity between the two great authorities separated by about six centuries. The Mullah reports of Saduq, 'Said our Shaykh (may he be blessed) in his *I'tiqadat* as follows: 'Our belief is that the Qur'an which God, the Most High, revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him and on his household) is what is between these two pads, the collection which is in the hands of the people. The Qur'an was never more than this. The number of its chapters according to the people are one hundred and fourteen and according to us Chapter 93 and Chapter 94 are one and Chapters 105 and 106 are also one. Whoever ascribes to us that we say that it was more than this, he is a liar.'

The above statement clearly shows that it is not only the personal view of Saduq but is the unanimous verdict of all the Shi'ah authorities preceding him, and it does not refer only to the quantity but also indicates the genuineness in arrangement. Had there been any discrepancy other than in the number of the *surahs* or the quantity of matter regarding the arrangement, Saduq would have pointed it out in the same manner as he did about the two sets of the four chapters referred to above.

Saduq gives proof in support of the Shi'ah view about the Qur'an, and Mullah al-Faid confirming Saduq's views says that, 'Whatever tradition has come about *tahrîf* or distortion it must be taken to mean distortion only in the interpretation, application and the significance of the verses of the Qur'an and not in its wording.' (*Al-Wafi*, closing chapter on the Qur'an)

The view that the tradition indicating that the distortion of the

Qur'an by profane hands after the Holy Prophet means distortion in the interpretation of the Qur'an but not in the recitative miraculous text, is confirmed by another famous theologian and jurist of his time, Muhammad ibn Numan, known as Shaykh al-Mufîd (338-431 A.H./950-1022 A.D.). Mufîd, who succeeded Saduq as the reocgnized authority, asserts in his commentary on Saduq's *I'tiqadat*, that all the traditions and reports about distortion of the Qur'an received from the *Ahl al-Bayt* refer to what was recorded in the collection of 'Ali. 'Ali's collection contained besides the text, commentaries and interpretation and some inner meanings of the text. The omission or change of arrangement or even addition might have taken place in the explanatory passages of the collection and not in the text. For example, along with the revelation of the two passages of Ch. V: vs 3 and 67 regarding the declaration of 'Ali's *Imamat* at *Ghadir-e-Khum* several lengthy explanatory passages were revealed, as are recorded in *Tafsir al-Safi*, but they were not part of the text of the two passages in question.

Mufîd's leading disciple was the great scholar and head of the Shi'ah divines, 'Ali ibn al-Husain al-Musawi, popularly known as As-Sharif Murtada (or Sayyid Murtada), descendant of the seventh Imam Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim (d. 436 A.H./1044 A.D.). He was also given the title of *Alam al-Huda*, the Banner of Guidance. He maintained Mufîd's view.

The names of other celebrated scholars who have supported this view are given below in chronological order:

1. Shaykh al-Tabrisi, the author of the well-known commentary *Majma 'al-Bayan* (d.548 A.H.), supported the above contention and it was adhered to by the most celebrated Shi'ah divines, generation after generation, till the establishment of the Shi'ah Safavid dynasty in Iran (907-1135 A.H./1502/1722 A.D.).

2. Muhaqiq Karaki-Ali ibn Husayn ibn 'Abd al-'Ali (d. 940 A.H./1534 A.D.), author of a separate book on this subject

3. Syed Hashim al-Baharani (d.1107 A.H./1696 A.D.), author of *Tafsir al-Burhan* (Exegesis)

4. Shaykh Muhammad Husayn (d. 1261 A.H./1845 A.D.), author of *Al-Usul Fil Fusul* (Principles of Jurisprudence)

5. Shaykh Ja'far ibn Ja'far al-Najafi al-Kashif al-Ghita (d.1228 A.H./1830 A.D.), author of *Kashif al-Ghita*

6. Haji Muhammad Ibrahim Kalbasi (d.1262 A.H./1846 A.D.)

7. Muhaqiq Baghdadi, author of a commentary on *Wafia*

8. Shaykh Muhammad Balagi (d. 1352 AH), a celebrated scholar on semitic scripture, author of *Aala-ir-Rahman Fi Tafsiril-Qur'an*

9. Ayatullah Husayn ibn Ali Tabataba'i al-Burujirdi (d. 1380 AH/1961 AD), author of *'Urwah al-Uthqah*

10. Ayatullah Sayyid Mahmud Shahrudi. His letter dated 1383 A.H. is printed in Ahmad 'Ali's translation of the Qur'an, where he mentions that nothing has been added in the Qur'an nor is there anything non-Qur'anic in the version of the Qur'an in hand.

11. Ayatullah Syed Muhsin al-Hakim (d.1390 A.H./1971 A.D.), author of *Nahj al-Faqaha* and *Mustamsak al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa*

12. Ayatullah Syed Abul Qasim al-Khû'i, author of *Al-Bayan*, which has helped in the preparation of this topic.

13. Ayatullah Sayyid Hadi al-Husayni Milani from Mashhad

14. Allama Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (d.1402-1981), author of *Al-Mizan* (Exegesis)

In short, the overwhelming majority of Shi'ah divines of the Usuli School, whose main object is the rationalization of revelation, have always been the firm advocates of the supreme authority of the Holy Book and of its genuineness. It is only a few Akhbari traditionist scholars, and perhaps a few Usuli scholars, who have not paid proper attention to the question. They have been misled by the contradictory traditions mentioned and refuted above.

3. The various recitations of the Holy Qur'an

There are seven different recitations ascribed to the seven celebrated reciters of the Holy Book who lived between the last part of the first century and the third century Hijrah. These seven reciters are very famous; the next three are not so famous.

None of the reciters have seen or heard the Holy Prophet nor do any of them claim to have received his particular recitation directly from the authorized companions of the Holy Prophet. It seems that some of their recitations are based on their own personal discretion of the linguistic consideration; and for some of their recitations they claim that they received them from the reciters who had received them in turn from their predecessors (companions or disciples of the companions). Anyway one does not find the various recitations being properly traced back to the Holy Prophet. They are mere conjectures based on some non-authentic reports that all these recitations were allowed by the Holy Prophet.

However it is generally believed that all these seven or ten recitations have been allowed by the Imams (*Ahl al-Bayt*).

Besides these seven or ten recitations there are solitary reports about some different recitations ascribed to the Imams (*Ahl al-Bayt*) or some authorized companions of the Holy Prophet. These are termed as *Qir'at-e Shazzha* (sporadic and unpopular recitations). None of the Shi'ah theologians has allowed such recitations in compulsory or optional prayer or in general recitations.

The variety of recitations in question should not be confused with the question of *tahrif*, alteration by addition, omission or arrangement of letters, words, phrases, sentences, passages and *surahs* which may affect the exact meaning and significance of the wording in question. Variety of recitation means various pronunciations of letters, words, phrases, change of vowels and punctuations, etc. which do not affect the meaning and significance of the wording at all. For example to recite *Malik* or

Maalik there will be no change in the significance of these two pronunciations both of which are true of God and carry the same significance so far as He is concerned, though they may have slightly different shades of meaning if they are used about someone else.

From the grammatical point of view, also, both pronunciations referred to above are correct and permissible. The celebrated genuine reports of the Imams assert that the Qur'an is the word of the Absolute One, revealed in one recitative form and no more and that the differences in recitations have been brought about by the reciters. It is possible that some of the companions of the Holy Prophet had the words in question in a different way which is grammatically correct also, and the Holy Prophet endorsed the pronunciation for the sake of convenience. This might have happened in some cases but after the demise of the Holy Prophet the companions might have thought it a privilege for them to recite differently if according to them no change would be affected in the meaning and significance of the word. And so did the disciples. Each began to advocate the appropriateness of his choice of recitations, which gradually widened the gap between the various recitations. It caused the companions like Hudhayfa ibn Yamani and the other loyal followers of the Holy Prophet apprehension that this tendency might lead to further controversies even in the text of the Qur'an. Thus, in order to stop this tendency from gaining strength it was deemed advisable to give official recognition to the original recitation which used to be followed by the Holy Prophet and to disallow the recitations chosen by the companions after his demise. However, the ruling party could not succeed in suppressing the other recitations but it stopped further development of various recitations. Due to the absence of substantial differences in those official and non-official recitations the *Ahl al-Bayt* allowed people to choose any of the current recitations and stopped them from reciting unpopular and sporadic recitations ascribed to the Prophet, the *Ahl al-Bayt* or other companions.

However, it seems that the recitations from the Imams (*Ahl al-Bayt*) were almost the same as that of 'Ubayy ibn Ka'b. This recitation and the Kufi recitation of the Qur'an with punctuations were almost the same as that taught by persons who had learnt from 'Ali. The recitation of 'Asim, Hamza ibn Habib, Hamran ibn al-A'yun, Abu 'Umar ibn 'Alai ibn 'Ammar and many others were close to each other. It is said that their recitations differ from the official recitation adopted by Caliph 'Uthman at ten places though they carry no significance. However, it is wrong to ascribe the official recitation to Zayd ibn Thabit as has been narrated by Sunni writers. The Holy Prophet would not accept any companion's recitation particularly of a person like Zayd ibn Thabit, who was not at all the recognized student of the Qur'an. On the contrary, Caliph 'Uthman and Zayd ibn Thabit may be given credit that they had tried to adopt the Holy Prophet's recitation in their official collection. One should be careful to avoid unpopular recitations ascribed to the *Ahl al-Bayt* and other authorities which may affect the meaning.

Muhammad Ahmed Sayyari is a contemporary of or senior to Kulayni. He is quoted here and there by some prominent jurists as an authority but he is not reliable. His book *Kitab al-Qirâ* contains unpopular recitations, which undermine some fundamental articles of Shi'ah faith; e.g. in Ch. XIV: v 41, instead of the popular recitation *Wal-e Waledia* (my parent), he gives the unpopular recitation *Wal Wale-Dia* (my two sons) with the excuse that Ibrahim's father was not a Muslim to be prayed for, though it is the firm faith of Shi'ahs that Ibrahim's father as well as other Prophets' parents were Muslims and that the non-believer Azar was not the father of Ibrahim. The other example is that Sayyari asserts 'Ali also confirmed Caliph 'Umar's claim that the passage concerning the stoning of adultresses was part of the Qur'an. This statement is so absurd that it naturally discredits its author. If Caliph 'Umar believed that this was part of the Qur'an and 'Ali confirmed it, which power on the earth could have prevented these two from inserting the passage in the

Qur'an and what made Caliph 'Uthman not to take their view into consideration.

4. Punctuation Symbols

The system of punctuation, symbols and other marks were introduced by Abul Aswad Ad-Dulli and completed by the order of Hajaj ibn Yusuf about the close of the first century Hijrah to guard the recitation of the Qur'an against mis-pronunciation by non-Arabs. Dulli was a celebrated grammarian, and one of the devoted disciples of Imam 'Ali.

5. Exegisis (Tafsîr) of Imam Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Askari (the Eleventh Imam)

The *Tafsîr* as it is in our hands now contains statements which like Sayyari's book should be discredited. There is no doubt that the eleventh Imam dictated a brief commentary of the Qur'an to some of his disciples who had approached him when he was in Sammarah under house arrest. The dictation undoubtedly was of great value but it was tampered with before its publication. The person accused of this profane act is Ahmed ibn Sahl Deebaji.

The DIVINE TRUST

Now it is evident from both the internal and external evidence that to credit the first, second and third Caliphs or their deputies with the collection of the Qur'an is unreasonable. The deep study of the verses of the Qur'an and the traditions, and the undeniable declaration of the Holy Prophet,

'I leave two precious things among you, the Book of God and my Ahl al-Bayt. Should you cleave to these two, never shall you be misled after me. For verily these two will never be separated from each other until they meet me at the cistern of Kauthar (on the Day of Judgement),'

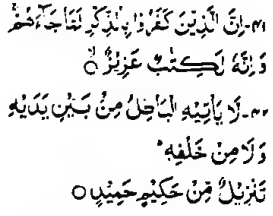
prove that any doubt about the genuineness and infallibility of any one of them (i.e. the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt*) shake the fundamentals of Islam. They are divinely identified with each

other. It is a sacred trust, a revelation which guides humanity to the straight path.

The next chapters will deal elaborately with aspects of the unity of God and revelation.

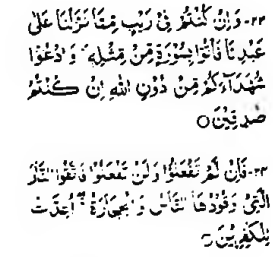
Notes

1:



Ch. XXXXI: vs 41-42

2.



Ch. II: vs 23-24

وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
ظَهِيرًا ۝

Ch. XVII: v 88

٣٧- وَمَا كَانَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ
اَنْ يُّفْتَرٰى مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَتَفْصِيْلَ الْكِتٰبِ
لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝

٣٨- اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ
قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهٖ
وَادْعُوْا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ۝

٣٩- بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيْطُوْا بِعِلْمِهٖ
وَلَمَّا يَاْتِهِمْ تَاْوِيْلُهٗ
كَذٰلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝

'And this Qur'an is not such as to be forged by (any one) besides God, but it is a confirmation of (the scriptures) that went before it and (the clearest) explanation of the Book. There is no doubt in it, (it is) from the Lord of the worlds.
'Or do they say: "He (Muhammad) hath forged it?" Say thou! "Bring ye then a chapter like unto it and call on (to your aid) whomsoever ye can, besides God, if ye be truthful."
'Nay, they belied that which they comprehended not with the knowledge of it and the explanation of it came not unto them; even thus did belie those before them, see then what was the end of the unjust ones.' (Ch. X: vs 37-39)

١٣- اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ
مِّثْلِهٖ مُفْتَرَيٰتٍ وَّادْعُوْا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ۝

١٤- فَاِلَّمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَكُمْ
فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ بِعِلْمِ اللّٰهِ
وَاَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ
فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ۝

'Or do they say, "He (Our Apostle) hath forged it." Say thou! "Bring ye then ten surahs like unto it forged, and call ye (to your aid) whomsoever ye can besides God, if ye be truthful."
'Then if they answer ye not, then know ye that this (Qur'an) is revealed (only) by God's knowledge, and that there is no God but He! Will ye then submit (and be Muslims now)?' Ch. XI: vs 13-14

قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ
عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ
هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ
وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ
ظَهِيرًا ۝

Say thou, "Even if men and the jinn get united (with the object) that they bring the like of this Qur'an, they would not bring the like of it, even though some of them to the others be helpers".' (Ch. XVII: v 88)

And various other verses

3: *Muta'ah* — 'Muslims practised *Muta'ah* or temporary marriage along with permanent marriage from the time of the Prophet until his death.' It continued in the rule of Abu Bakr (the first Caliph) and part of the rule of 'Umar (the second Caliph). In the Qur'an God says, '*And those who guard their private parts, except from their wives or those whom their right hands possess, then verily they are not blameable, and whosoever seeketh beyond that, these are they who are the transgressors.*' (Ch. XXIII: vs 5-7). This injunction was repeated in Ch. LXII: vs 29-31. 'These verses were revealed in Mecca. Before the Hijrah Zubayr (a *Sahabi*) married Asma, daughter of Abu Bakr, in a temporary marriage; from the union were born 'Abdallah ibn Zubayr and 'Urwah ibn Zubayr, the companions (*Sahaba*) of the Prophet. The legitimacy of *Muta'ah* continued after Hijrah. This verse revealed at Madina, '*As such of them ye had Mut'ah (temporary marriage) with them, give them their dowries as fixed reward*' proves that *Muta'ah* was not abrogated. According to all sources 'Umar made the following statement in the second part in his rule: 'There are two *Muta'ahs* which existed in the time of the Prophet of God and Abu Bakr which I have banned and I will punish those who will disobey my orders. These two *Muta'ahs* are concerning the pilgrimage and *Muta'ah* concerning woman.' The Shi'ahs and Malaki Sunnis do not accept his view. He has no authority to abrogate the Qur'anic legislation which was applied during the lifetime of the Prophet. It is reported from Amir al-Momineen 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, 'If 'Umar had not declared *Muta'ah* as unlawful, only some unfortunate fellow would have committed adultery.' The Qur'an as a universal message takes all human beings into consideration. It is a fact that permanent marriage does not satisfy the instinctive sexual urge of certain men, and adultery and fornication according to Islam are sins, destroying the order and purity of human life. Despite all efforts there exists throughout the world the hidden and public places where adultery and fornication take place. The horrible excessive percentage of illegitimate births proves the fact. To root out this evil temporary marriage with fixed rules according to Islamic *fiqh* (jurisprudence) is unavoidable. These conditions include the necessity for the woman to be single, to become married temporarily to only one man at one time for a fixed period. After the expiry of the fixed period divorce takes place. After divorce she must keep *'Iddah*, a period during which she can not remarry. [For further details refer to *Fiqh*, excerpt from *Shi'ite Islam* by 'Allama Tabataba'i, translated in English by Seyyed Hussein Nasr.]

4: For example, the Qur'an refutes (1) the Old Testament which depicts Harun

(Aaron), the brother of Musa (Moses), as an idol-maker and idol-worshipper and (2) Sulayman (Solomon) as an idol-maker, idolater and a man practising witchcraft. The Qur'an purifies Maryam (Mary) as the virgin mother of 'Isa (Jesus) contradicting the statement of the New Testament (see St. Luke's and St. Matthew's geneology). The Qur'an does not attach any importance to what the New Testament emphasizes *viz* that 'Isa (Jesus) was a descendant of Dawud (David) through the ancestral geneology of Yusuf (Joseph the Carpenter) whom the New Testament introduces as the husband of Maryam (Mary). The Qur'an purifies from all ungodly thoughts and actions 'Isa and all other prophets from Adam to the last one and their true successors chosen by God. The Qur'an expressly negates what the four Gospels affirm concerning the crucifixion, resurrection and physical sufferings of 'Isa at the hands of the Jews. It denies the doctrine of sonship believed by the Jews and Christians, the incarnation theory of Christians and Hindus, the Hindu theory of transmigration and union of Atma and Brahma, etc.

5:

٢٠٤- وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ
وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ○

Ch. VII: v 204

6:

٩٨- فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ
مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ○

Ch. XVI: v 98

7:

١٦- لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ۝

١٧- إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ ۝
١٨- فَإِذَا قَرَأْنَاهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ ۝
١٩- ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ ۝

Ch. LXXV: vs 16-19

8:

١١٤- فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۗ
وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ
أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ ۖ وَقُلْ
رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ○

Ch. XX: v 114

9: Abul Qasim Qashiri relates the dialogue between Fida and Abdullah Mubarak: 'I saw a woman passing through the desert who had fallen behind the caravan, and asked her, "Who are you and where are you from?" She said, "Say *Salam*!

٦٧-لِكُلِّ نَبَإٍ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ
وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ○

" *Soon shall ye know it.*" (Ch. VI, *Al-An'am*: v 67) I learned that she expected me to greet her and say *Assalamu Alaikum* first, before any question. I did as she reminded, and inquired why she was here in this desert. She answered,

٣٧-وَمَنْ يَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ
فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ مُّضِلٍّ
اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِعَزِيْزٍ ذِى انْتِقَامٍ ○

"*Whomsoever God guideth, then none shall beguile.*" (Ch. XXXIX, *Az-Zummur*: v 37) I gathered that she was left behind and thus restless, so I asked again, "Are you a human being or a *jinn*?" She returned,

٣١-يٰبَنِىْٓ اٰدَمَ خُذُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ
كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَّكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا
اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ○

"*O children of Adam! Be ye adorned at every time of prostration.*" (Ch. VII, *Al-A'raf*: v 31) I discovered that she was a human being, so I continued my enquiry, "Where are you coming from?" She said,

اُولٰٓئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ○

"*Who are called to from a place far off.*" (Ch. XLI, *Ha Mim*: v 44) I found out that she was coming from a place far off and inquired her destination. She immediately responded,

وَلِلّٰهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ

"*And for God is incumbent upon mankind the Pilgrimage of the House.*" (Ch. III, *Al-e Imran*: v 97) I realized that she was going for Hajj (Pilgrimage to the Ka'ba), and asked her how many days she had been travelling? She told me,

٥٤-اِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ
فِىْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ
ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ

"*Indeed created We (God) the heavens and the earth and what is between them two in six days.*" (Ch. VII, *Al-A'raf*: v 54 and Ch. L, *Qaf*: v 38) I concluded it was six days. I requested her to have food and water if she was so inclined. She politely indicated,

٨-وَمَا جَعَلْنٰهُمْ جَسَدًا لَّا يَاْكُلُوْنَ

الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوا خٰلِدِيْنَ ○

"We (God) made them not such bodies that do not eat food, and they will not abide (in this world) for ever." (Ch. XXI, *Al-Anbiya*: v 8) She accepted my refreshment. Then to catch the caravan, I suggested her to make haste but she reminded me again,

٢٨٦-لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

"God tasks not any soul beyond (individual) ability." (Ch. II, *Al-Baqarah*: v 286) I told her that if she could not do so let her ride on the back of my camel behind me. She recited another Qur'anic verse,

٢٢-لَوْ كَانَ فِيْهِمَا اٰلِهَةٌ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ
لَفَسَدَتَا

"If there were therein gods besides Allah, then verily both (the heavens and the earth) would have been disordered." (Ch. XXI, *Al-Anbiya*: v 22) It was a reminder of piety that when a man was not a husband of a woman, it was unlawful to ride together on the same animal.' [It is an Islamic law concerning the relatives of persons of prohibited degree — *Namahiram.*] Qashiri says that he got down and requested her to ride the camel. 'She occupied the seat and recited,

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِىْ سَخَّرَ لَنَا هٰذَا
وَمَا كُنَّا لَهٗ مُقْرِنِيْنَ ○

"Hallowed is He who subjected this (animal) unto us." (Ch. XLIII, *Az-Zukhruf*: v 13) She thanked Allah who brought the animal under her control. When we reached the caravan, I asked her, "Do you know any one among them?" She recounted,

٢٦ يٰدَاوٗدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِى الْاَرْضِ

"O Dawud (David), We have appointed thee a vicegerent in the earth" (Ch. XXXVIII, As-Sad: v 26);

١٤٤-وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ اِلَّا رَسُوْلٌ

"And Muhammad is not but an Apostle" (Ch. III, Al-Imran: v 144);

١٢-يٰيَحْيٰى خُذِ الْكِتٰبَ بِقُوَّةٍ

"O Yahya (John the Baptist)! Hold thou the Book fast!" (Ch. XIX, Maryam: v 12);

٩-يٰمُوْسٰٓى اِنَّهٗٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ○

"O Musa (Moses)! Verily it is, I am God the All-Mighty." (Ch. XXVII, *Al-Naml*: v 9) I understood that Dawud, Muhammad, Yahya and Musa were the names of her sons. When the boys appeared, I asked her who they were. She said in her habitual manner,

٤٦-اَلْمَالُ وَالْبَنُوْنَ زِيْنَةُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا

"Wealth and children are the adornment of this world." (Ch. XVIII, *Al-Kahf*: v

46) I recognized them as her sons. The woman looked at her sons with a feeling of contentment and uttered,

٢٦- قَالَتْ إِحْدٰىهُمَا يٰٓأَبَتِ اسْتَأْجِرْهُ
إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَأْجَرْتَ
الْقَوِيُّ الْأَمِينُ ○

"O my father! Employ him verily the best of those who canst employ is the strongman and trusted ones." (Ch. XXVIII, *Al-Qasas*: v 26) In these words of the Qur'an, she informed her sons indicating towards me that

٢٦١- مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنبَتَتْ سَبْعَ
سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٍ
مِّائَةُ حَبَّةٍ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ يُضَاعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ ۗ
وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ○

"This man offered me a gift (i.e. help), so verily God giveth manifold increase to whomsoever He willeth." (Ch. II, *Al-Baqarah*: v 261) The sons grasped their mother's indication, and so they paid me twice as much as I ought to have been paid. To satisfy my curiosity I asked the sons, "Who is this honourable lady that speaks nothing but the Qur'an?" They responded that she was their mother Fidhah, the housemaid of Fatimah al-Zahra (peace upon her and her progeny), the daughter of the Holy Prophet and wife of Amir al-Momineen 'Ali. She was raised under the shade of supreme knowledge and piety of the daughter of the Prophet. Since twenty years she spoke nothing but the Qur'an in her daily conversation. The school of Fatimah is a cradle of divine knowledge and great character".' (Refer *Nasikh al-Tarikh*, Vol. 4, p.345; *Misbah al-Harmyan*, p.64; *Charda Masumin* by 'Imadzada.)

10:

٤-الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝
٥-عَلَّمَ الْإِنسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ۝

Ch. XCVI: vs 4-5

11:

١-نٓ وَالْقَلَمِ
وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ۝

Ch. LXVIII: v 1

12:

٩٣-وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ
افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ
وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ
وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ مَآ أَنزَلَ اللّٰهُ

وَلَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذِ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ
فِيْ غَمَرٰتِ الْمَوْتِ
وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ بَاسِطُوْٓا اَيْدِيْهِمْ ۚ
اَخْرِجُوْٓا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۭ
اَلْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُوْنِ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ تَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ○

Ch. VI: v 92

13: This *hadith* of *Haq* has been narrated through fifteen channels in Sunni sources and eleven in Shi'ah sources. Umm Salama, Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Bakr, 'Ayesha, Abu Sa'id Khudri, Abu Ayub Ansari, and 'Ali are among the narrators. (*Ghayat al-Maram*, pp.539-540). The Prophet has also said, 'God bless 'Ali, for truth is always with him.' (*Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah* by Ibn Kathir, Vol. vii, p.36.)

14: Refer to renowned books of traditions.

15: *Hadith-e-Nur* narrated by Ibn 'Abbas has been transmitted through nineteen channels in Sunni sources and fourteen in Shi'ah sources. From Shaykh Ibrahim ibn Muhammad in his work *Faraid el-Simtain Fadail-el-Murtada wal Sibtain.*'

16: Refer to renowned books of traditions.

17: First Imam: Amir al-Mumineen 'Ali ibn Abu Talib (a.s.)*
Second Imam: Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (a.s.), son of 'Ali (a.s.)
Third Imam: Imam Husayn Sayyid al-Shuhada (a.s.), son of 'Ali (a.s.), The Lord among Martyrs
Fourth Imam: Imam 'Ali ibn Husayn, Zayn al-'Abidin and Al-Sajjad (a.s.), son of Husayn (a.s.)
Fifth Imam: Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Baqir (a.s.) [The word *Baqir* means he who dissects knowledge: a title given to him by the Prophet]; son of the fourth Imam
Six Imam: Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq (Truthful) (a.s.), son of the fifth Imam
Seventh Imam: Imam Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim (One who suppresses anger) (a.s.), son of the sixth Imam
Eighth Imam: Imam 'Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (the Content) (a.s.), son of the seventh Imam
Ninth Imam: Imam Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Taqi (a.s.), sometimes called *Jawad* (Pious and Generous), son of the eighth Imam
Tenth Imam: Imam 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Naqi (the Pure) (a.s.), son of the ninth Imam
Eleventh Imam: Imam Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Askari (One who has command on

*(a.s.) means peace be upon him

knowledge and wisdom) (a.s.), son of the tenth Imam
Twelfth Imam: The Promised Mahdi (a.s.), who is usually mentioned by his title of *Imam-e-'Asr* (the Imam of the Period) and *Sahib al-Zaman* (the Lord of the Age), son of the eleventh Imam

The above mentioned titles of the Imams and those titles which represent the divine attributes are common with all the Imams who are the successors of the Prophet as divine guides. Jabir has narrated that the Prophet has said, 'God placed the children of all Prophets in their "backbones" but He placed my children in the "backbone" of 'Ali.' (*Yanabi' al-Mawaddah* by Shaykh Qanduzi, who quotes the tradition from Salman Farsi) and in other standard books this celebrated tradition is recounted that 'the Imams after 'Ali will be Hasan and Husain, and the nine Imams after Husain will be from his progeny. All are Bani Hashim.'
18: Battle of Yamama.
19: *Hadith Thaqalayn* — This *hadith* has been transmitted through more than one hundred channels by over thirty-five companions of the Holy Prophet. *'Abaqat of Musavi*, Volume on *Hadith Thaqalayn*; various sources such as *Ghayat al-Maram*, p.211.

20: *Hadith Qirtas* — While the Prophet was suffering from the illness which led to his death, he organized an army under the command of 'Usama ibn Zayd and insisted that everyone should participate in the war and go out of Medina. A number of people disobeyed the Prophet including Abu Bakr and 'Umar and this disturbed the Prophet greatly. (*Sharh ibn Abi'l-Hadid*, Cairo, Vol. I, p.53) At the time of his death the Prophet said, 'Prepare ink and paper so that I will have a letter written for you which will be a cause of guidance for you and prevent you from being misled.' 'Umar who prevented the action said, 'His illness has run out of hand and he is delirious; sufficient is the Book of God for us.' (*Tarikh Tabari*, Raudat al-Safa of Mir Khawind; *Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim*) 'Umar was not correct. The Prophet is infallible (*Masum*), and he was fully conscious. History records a similar occasion during the illness of the first Caliph Abu Bakr which led to his death. In his last testament the first Caliph chose 'Umar as his successor when he completely fainted. 'Uthman wrote the testament, but 'Umar said nothing nor did he consider the Caliph delirious or remember the Book of God. 'Umar knew that the Prophet was never delirious or unconscious on any occasion. The Qur'an declared the Prophet's consciousness free from all deficiencies and impurities, material and spiritual.

21:

٢-وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۙ
٣-اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ
اِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِيْنَ ۝
٤-فِيْهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ اَمْرٍ حَكِيْمٍ ۙ
٥-اَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ۭ
اِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِيْنَ ۝

١- رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ ۚ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝

'By the Manifesting Book (Qur'an).
Verily We sent it down on a Blessed Night.
Verily We have ever been warning —
Therein are made distinct all wise affairs.
(Becoming) a command from unto Us:
Verily, We are the senders (of mercy and peace).
A mercy from thy Lord: Verily, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. Ch. XLIV: vs 1-6

١- إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ۝
٢- وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ۝
٣- لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ۝
٤- تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ
فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِم مِّن كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ۝
٥- سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ۝

'Verily, We sent it (the Qur'an) down in the Night of Qadr!
What can make thee know what the Night of Qadr is?
The Night of Qadr is better than a thousand months!
The Angels and the Spirit descend therein by the permission of their Lord, with (decrees) of all affairs.
Peace is (the whole night) till the breaking of the dawn!' (Ch. XCVII: vs 1-5)

22: *The Annals of Tabari*

23: **The Significance and Application of *Ayat-i-Tat'heer***

٣٣- وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ
تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ
وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ
إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ
أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ۝

'Verily, God intendeth but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanness, O ye the People of the House, and purify you with thorough purification.' Ch. XXXIII: v 33

The purity of the ego-center of an individual depends on the purity of the lineage from which the individual is developed. The lineage in question

includes both the human geneological chain as well as the pre-human stages of the development from primal matter upwards leading towards the human being. Every individual of every species will reach the final stage of perfection in accordance with the extent of the purity of lineage from which it has developed. If we suppose the human species to be the most developed, complicated conscious being, it will necessarily imply utmost purity and refineness in human lineage in comparison to other living species. The same principle applies to every individual man. The purer the lineage the wider will be its ego-center, which will have a higher notion of the Absolute One. Therefore, in the human race there must be one lineage more pure than the other lineages, so that there should be of that lineage a continuous chain of individuals with the purest ego-centers, in order to have the highest possible notion of the Absolute, Unlimited One.

The Negative and Positive Aspects
Required in the Conception of Purity

Whatever narrows down the ego-center towards material and temporal objects is a hinderance which affects submissiveness. The Qur'an terms it as *rijs* and whatever action or notion causes widening of the ego-center to have a better manifestation of the Absolute One is termed by the Qu'ran as *taharat*.

١٢٥۔ فَمَنْ يُّرِدِ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّهْدِيَهٗ
يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهٗ لِلْاِسْلَامِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّرِدْ اَنْ
يُّضِلَّهٗ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهٗ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا
كَاَنَّمَا يَصَّعَّدُ فِي السَّمَآءِ ۚ
كَذٰلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللّٰهُ الرِّجْسَ
عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ○

'Whomsoever God intends to guide, He expands his breast for Islam (to submit his self to His will)
And whomsoever He intends to leave straying, He makes (his) breast strained and narrow as if they had to climb upto the skies: Thus God puts dirt (riis) on those who disbelieve.' (Ch. VI: v 125)

Those who lack belief are terms as *rijs* due to the perversion and narrowness in their ego-centers as opposed to those whose ego-center has been widened to receive guidance from God for their submissiveness.

٩٥۔ سَيَحْلِفُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ لَكُمْ اِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ
اِلَيْهِمْ لِتُعْرِضُوْا عَنْهُمْ ۖ فَاَعْرِضُوْا عَنْهُمْ ۖ
اِنَّهُمْ رِجْسٌ وَّمَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ
جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ○

'They will swear unto you by God, when ye return unto them, That ye may turn aside from them;
Verily, they are (filthy) and their abode is hell; a recompense for what they did earn.' (Ch. IX: v 95)

The hypocrites have been termed as *rijs** for their shaky faith and hypocritical attitude.

١٢٥- وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَتْهُمْ
رِجْسًا إِلَىٰ رِجْسِهِمْ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ○

'But as to those in whose hearts is a disease (loathsome filth) addeth unto them (further) filth (to their inherent filth) and they shall die while they are infidels. (Ch. IX: v 125)

The unhealthy mind of the hypocrites is termed as inherent *rijs* which converts the external guidance given by the Prophets into further impurity.

٩٠- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا
طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۚ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ○

٩١- وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۚ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ○

'O ye who believe: (a fact and nothing else) that intoxicants and games of chance (dedication of stones) (i.e. idols) and (divination by) arrows, are only loathsome filth wrought by Satan, So be ye away from it so that ye may be successful. Satan only desireth to cause enmity and hatred in your midst through intoxicants and gambling, And keep you away from remembering God and from prayer; will ye then abstain (from them)? (Ch. V: vs 90-91)

(Intoxicating liquor, gambling, idols and ballot of lotteries are termed as *rijs* wrought by Satan in order to create enmity and vengeance among the people and to divert their mind from the remembrance of God and prayer. A thorough study of the above quoted verses proves the fact that whichever

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*This term *rijs* has been also applied to those who are lacking sound reasoning.

١٠٠- وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ إِلَّا
بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ○

'And (although) it is not for any soul to believe except by God's permission; while casteth He uncleanliness (of infidelity) on those who use not (their) sense'. (Ch. X: v 100)

mental process or physical action diverts the ego-centre of man towards temporal and sensual desires is *rijs*.* On the other hand whatever widens the ego-center of man towards submission to the Absolute One and His Will is termed as purity, such as prayer, spiritual cleanliness which is called *Tauba*, the physical cleanliness of body and dress which is essential for the prayer. It is obvious that there are degrees of such impurity and purity.

The highest degree of purity means to be kept constantly aloof from all the causes of impurity. This is termed as the state of infallibility in knowledge, character and action. Such a state of absolute infallibility should be possible and have application to a particular group of humanity. The Divine Order makes one avoid the cause of impurity and adhere to the conditions of purity and may be addressed to all in general but in actuality the application of the order will be confined to those who are really carrying out the order; e.g. the order for prayer and ablution applies to mankind but the real application is confined to those who carry out the order. In this sense all divine orders and precepts given to man through the Prophets are general, but there are certain instances where God confines expressively His order to certain individuals or groups of people excluding the rest of mankind from it. In these instances whether the divine will is legislative or creative makes no difference. In the instance of Ch. V: v 56 and Ch. XXXIII: v 33, *Ayat-i-Tat'heer* the order may be interpreted as the manifestation of the legislative or creative will of God but the application is exclusive. It should necessarily be true of those who are included in the order, otherwise the order will be meaningless.

The divine will mentioned in Ch. XXXIII: v 33

٣٣- وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ
تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ
وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ
إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ
أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

'And stay in your abodes and display not your finery like the display of the ignorance of yore, and establish ye prayer and give away the poor-rate, and obey God and His Apostle.
Verily, God intendeth but to keep off from you (every kind of) filth, O ye the People of the House, and purify you (with) a thorough purification.'

after the exclusive particle of *Inama* has no application but to the *Ahl al-Bayt*, whether the will is of creative or legislative nature makes no difference.

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*It is noteworthy that the learned translators of the Qur'an did not select one word. The words used for *rijs* are abomination, uncleanliness, impurity, loathsome filth and dirt, which they deemed appropriate according to the context. Moreover it should be realized that *rijs* in its usages signifies one and the same sense as the author has explained in his works.

These entities, the *Ahl al-Bayt*, are purified and honored by God directly in the same stage wherein the divine Book has been purified and honored. The following Qur'anic verses prove the equal standard of both the Book and the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

٧٥. فَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَٰقِعِ ٱلنُّجُومِ ۝

٧٦. وَإِنَّهُۥ لَقَسَمٌ لَّوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ ۝

٧٧. إِنَّهُۥ لَقُرْءَانٌ كَرِيمٌ ۝

٧٨ فِى كِتَٰبٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ۝

٧٩. لَّا يَمَسُّهُۥٓ إِلَّا ٱلْمُطَهَّرُونَ ۝

٨٠. تَنزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ۝

'But nay I swear by the setting of the stars.
And verily it is a great oath if ye only knew it.
Verily it is Qur'an honourable.
In a Book hidden.
Toucheth it not save the purified ones.
Sent down by the Lord of the worlds.' (Ch. LVI: vs 75-80)

١٣. فِى صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ ۝

١٤. مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ ۝

١٥. بِأَيْدِى سَفَرَةٍ ۝

١٦. كِرَامٍۭ بَرَرَةٍ ۝

'(It is written) in the Books greatly honored.
Exalted high, purified,
In the hands of the Deputy Angels, noble, virtuous.' (Ch. LXXX: vs 14-16)

١. لَمْ يَكُنِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ
وَٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنفَكِّينَ
حَتَّىٰ تَأْتِيَهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَةُ ۝

٢. رَسُولٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ
يَتْلُوا۟ صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً ۝

٣. فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ ۝

'Those who disbelieved from among the people of the Book and the polytheists could not have separated themselves (from the falsehood) until came unto them the clear evidence,
(In the) Apostle from God reciting (unto them) the purified scripture,
Wherein are the decrees (correct and) strong.' (Ch. XCVIII: vs 1-3)

In Ch. LVI: v 79 God declares the *Ahl al-Bayt* as the persons purified by Him to be constantly in touch with the Qur'an in its original, hidden, well-protected, exalted and purified form. This fact has been explained and supported by the celebrated statements of the Holy Prophet, narrated by a large number of his companions to this effect that he was leaving two inseparable entities among his followers, i.e., the Book of God and his *Itrat* (*Ahl al-Bayt*) and that whoever adheres to these two shall be saved from going astray. But to reduce the importance of and counter the above declaration made by the Holy Prophet another statement has also been narrated from the Holy Prophet on the authority of Abu Haraira whose reliability has remained always questionable. His narration is that the Holy Prophet said: 'I have left among you two things: if you adhere to them both, you shall not go astray after me; i.e., the Book of God and my *Sunnah*.' The text itself does not stand a sound critical scrutiny. There is no doubt that the *Sunnah* in the sense of the Holy Prophet's sayings, actions and endorsement has the same authoritative status as the Qur'an, but the question is that the Qur'an was in a written form and distinctly recorded to be referred to while the Holy Prophet's *Sunnah* was not then recorded in a distinct form to be adhered to when disputes would arise. On the contrary the disputants used to take advantage of the unrecorded *Sunnah* against each other. Therefore, to declare such a controversial source to have the same authoritative status as the Qur'an would not only be meaningless but would mean encouraging controversies. The term *Itrat* or *Ahl al-Bayt* was well defined and known to everybody as the embodiment of the teachings of the Holy Prophet. In short, to follow the *Sunnah* as it is in our hands will lead to controversies and errors but to follow the *Itrat* along with the Qur'an would mean following the *Kitab* and *Sunnah* in its true sense which would save the adherents from going astray and committing errors. Therefore, we shall leave the tradition of Abu Huraira to himself and his followers.

Regarding the disputes about the personalities to whom the term *Ahl al-Bayt* or *Itrat* has been applied, there is hardly any need of discussion. The application of the term in question to the nearest members of the House of the Prophet through whom the holy House was established and continued to last forever is undoubtedly unquestionable. They are the persons to whom reference has been made in Ch. III: v 61 as *Abnana* (our son), *Nisana* (our) women) and *Anfusana* (our souls).

٦١- فَمَنْ حَآجَّكَ فِيهِ
مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا
نَدْعُ أَبْنَآءَنَا وَأَبْنَآءَكُمْ
وَنِسَآءَنَا وَنِسَآءَكُمْ وَأَنفُسَنَا وَأَنفُسَكُمْ
ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَل
لَّعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَٰذِبِينَ ○

'*And unto him who disputeth with Thee, therein after the knowledge hath come unto thee, Say (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) (unto them), "Come ye, let us summon our sons, and (ye summon) your sons, and (we summon) our women and (ye) your women, and (we summon) our selves and (ye) your selves, and then let us invoke and lay the curse of God on the liars"*.'

The traditions and historical reports are unanimous that they are none but Hasan, Husain, Fatimah and 'Ali. It is true that through Fatimah and 'Ali the House of the Prophet was established and their progeny continued to propagate until now. They are the certified members of the House of the Prophet and the certified members of *Al-e Ibrahim* from the Ismaelite branch. The efforts of some Muslim antagonists and writers to include the wives of the Holy Prophet or his other relatives in the terms *Itrat* and *Ahl al-Bayt* are uncalled for against the verdict of the Qur'an and sayings of the Holy Prophet.

The *Ahl al-Bayt* mentioned in Ch. XXXIII: v 33, includes none but 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain and the other nine Imams of the descendants of Imam Husain who possess the same excellence of infallibility. The wives of the Holy Prophet who remained childless cannot be included in it, as the wives of the Prophet, though they are respectable and are of high standard yet better females than these wives are possible.

ه-عَسٰى رَبُّهٗۤ اِنۡ طَلَّقَكُنَّ
اَنۡ يُّبۡدِلَهٗۤ اَزۡوَاجًا خَيۡرًا مِّنۡكُنَّ
مُسۡلِمٰتٍ مُّؤۡمِنٰتٍ
قٰنِتٰتٍ تٰٓئِبٰتٍ
عٰبِدٰتٍ سٰٓئِحٰتٍ
ثَيِّبٰتٍ وَّاَبۡكَارًا ○

'Haply his Lord, if he divorceth you, will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive, faithful, obedient, repentant, observers of fast, widows and virgins.' (Ch. LXVI: v 5)

They cannot have the same position as the *Ahl al-Bayt*, otherwise the word *Inama* in Ch. XXXIII: v 33 would be meaningless. As such the term *Khair-e Ummat* in Ch. III: v 110

١١٠-كُنۡتُمۡ خَيۡرَ اُمَّةٍ اُخۡرِجَتۡ لِلنَّاسِ
تَاۡمُرُوۡنَ بِالۡمَعۡرُوۡفِ وَتَنۡهَوۡنَ عَنِ الۡمُنۡكَرِ
وَتُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِاللّٰهِ
وَلَوۡ اٰمَنَ اَهۡلُ الۡكِتٰبِ لَكَانَ خَيۡرًا لَّهُمۡ
مِنۡهُمُ الۡمُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ
وَاَكۡثَرُهُمُ الۡفٰسِقُوۡنَ ○

'Ye are the best group that hath been brought forth for mankind: ye enjoin goodness and ye forbid evil, and ye believe in God; And if the people of the Book had (also) believed (similarly) it had surely been better for them; of them (only some) are believers and most of them are perverse.'

is only applicable to the *Ahl al-Bayt* and no one can lay claim to it or the leadership incumbent on the *Khair-e Ummat* in Ch. III: v 104.

٣٠٤... وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ
وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ○

'And that there should be among you a group who call (mankind) unto virtue and enjoin what is good and forbid wrong; and these are they who should be successful.'

The other relatives of the Holy Prophet, even of the Hashimite House on whom *sadaqa* (charity) is forbidden, do not come under the definition of *Ayat-i-Tat'hir* and *Ayat-e Mubahala*. Of the descendants of 'Ali and Fatimah, also, all do not come under the term in its strict sense. It applies only to the eleven Imams of the House who have been certified to possess the requisite qualification and absolute purification.

Even the inclusion of fallible persons of the House of the Holy Prophet and Hashimite House in *Ayat-e Muvadatul Qurba, Ch. XLII: v 23*

٤٢- ذٰلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللّٰهُ عِبَادَهُ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ۗ
قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا
إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ۗ
وَمَنْ يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً
نَزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا ۚ
إِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ ○

'This is what God gives, as good tidings to those servants of Him who believe and do right deeds: Say (O Prophet), "I do not ask you any reward for it (the mission) save the love for the sake of nearness (to me or to God).

is questionable because the love on account of nearness to the Holy Prophet merely in blood or faith cannot be the reward of *Risalat* unless there is nearness in blood as well as spiritual attainment. They should be originated from the same light from which the Holy Prophet has been originated. As tradition asserts the number of such infallible personalities after the Holy Prophet who succeeded as vicegerents of the Holy Prophet is limited to twelve. (*refer to note 17*).

a. This note will be incomplete if a few of the many significant traditions are not recorded here about the attributes of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, and 'Ali among them as the *Abi al-A'imah* (father of Imams) accepted by all Muslims and other individuals who are not prepared to turn away from the truth.

b. *Hadith-i-Safinah*: Ibn 'Abbas says, 'The Prophet said, "My household (*Ahl al-Bayt*) is like the ship of Noah; whoever embarks upon it will be saved, whoever turns from it will be drowned".' (Al-Sawaiq al-Muhriqah of Ibn Hajar, Cairo, 1312, pp 150 and 184; *Tarikh al-Khulafa* of Suyuti and other

sources.) Eleven chains of transmissions of this hadith from Sunni sources and seven from Shi'ah sources.

[*Hadith-i-Thaqalayn; Hadith-i-Noor* and *Hadith-i-Haq* have been mentioned above.]

c. The Prophet said, 'I am the city of knowledge, 'Ali is the door.' [*refer to authentic books of tradition and history*]

d. Ibn Mardwayh has said that the Prophet said, 'Whoever wishes his life and death to be like mine that he enter Paradise should after me love 'Ali and follow my household, for they are my descendants and have been created from my clay. My knowledge and wisdom have been bestowed upon them. Therefore, woe unto those who deny their virtues. My intercession (on the Day of Judgement) will never include them. (*Muntakhab Kanz al-'Ummal: Musnad*, Imam Ahmad Hanbal, Vol. V, p. 67)

(e) '*Verily your guardian (wali) can be only Allah; and His messenger (Muhammad) and those who believe, who establish prayer, and pay the poor-due while bowing down in prayer*' (Ch. V: v 55). Almost all commentators agree that this verse referred to 'Ali. Abu Dharr Ghifari has said, 'One day we prayed the noontime prayer with the Prophet. A poor person asked people for help, but no one gave him anything. He raised his hands to the sky saying, "O Allah! Be witness that in the mosque of the Prophet none gave me anything." 'Ali was in the position of genuflection (*ruku'*) in the prayer. He pointed with his finger to the person, who took his ring and left. The Prophet who was observing the scene raised his head towards heaven and said, 'O Allah! My brother, Musa (Moses) said to Thee, "Expand my breast and make easy my task and make my tongue eloquent so that they comprehend my words, and make my brother Harun my help and my vizier.' O Allah! I am also Thy Prophet; expand my breast and make easy my task and make 'Ali my vizier and helper." The words of the Prophet had not yet finished when the verse [cited above] was revealed." (24 hadiths from Sunni sources, 19 Shi'ah sources, Baharani: Tabari's *Dhakhair al-'Uqba*, p. 16; *Ghayat al-Maram*, p. 103; Tabatabai's *Shi'ite Islam*, p. 177; Suyuti's *Durr al-Manthur*.)

The chain of divine guardians continues after 'Ali in the eleven Imams of the House of the Prophet. All the prominent Muslim exegetes and scholars have reported that when v 7 of Ch. XIII (*Al-Ra'd*): '*And say thou who disbelieve: "Why hath not a sign been sent down unto him (Muhammad) from his Lord?" Verily thou art a warner and guide unto every people*' was revealed to the Holy Prophet, he placed his hand on his breast and said, 'I am the warner,' and with his other hand on the shoulder of 'Ali said, 'O 'Ali, thou art the guide, and after thee thy issues shall be those who are guided aright.' (*Tafsir-e Khabir*, Fakhruddin Razi; *al-Durr al-Manthur*, Suyuti; *Musnad Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal*, Ibn Mardwayh, Tabarani, Hafiz Abu Na'yim, Ibn 'Asakir and Ibn Hatim, etc.)

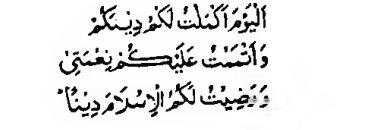
(f) The Holy Prophet along with the caravan of thousands of pilgrims returning from Mecca after the farewell pilgrimage (*Hajjat-al-Wida'*) reached *Ghadir-e-Khum*, where it was revealed, '*O! Our Apostle* [*Muhammad*]*! Deliver*

what hath been sent down unto thee from Thy Lord: and if you dost it not, then (it will be as if thou hast not delivered His message (at all). Surely God will protect thee from (the mischief) of mankind; Verily God guideth not an infidel people' (Ch. V: v 67). It indicates that God commanded a mission of great importance to the Prophet which if not accomplished would endanger the basis of Islam and prophecy. The same revelation was received earlier by the Prophet without specifying until the appropriate occasion to announce it without opposition. This latest revelation which is of a categorical nature made the Prophet secure. He stopped the caravan, called back those who had gone ahead, cleansed the place, and a pulpit of *kajawas* (saddles used on the back of camels) was made. The Prophet gave a long sermon from the pulpit, praised and glorified God and asked if he had conveyed to them the commands of God enumerating them all one by one. The assembly answered in one voice, 'O Apostle of God! We acknowledge.' Then he gave the news of his death and said,

'*I leave behind me two precious things which if you cleave to them you will never go astray — that is the Book of God and my offspring from my family (Ahl al-Bayt).*'

Then he called out at the top of his voice, 'Am I not superior (Master) to the believers more than their selves?' 'By God! Yes!', they answered. Then he took 'Ali's arm and lifted him so high that the white spot in the armpit of the Prophet could be seen, and said, 'For whom I am his Master (*Maula*) and the authority whom he obeys, 'Ali will be his Master (*Maula*) and authority. O God be friendly with the friends of 'Ali and the enemy of the enemies of 'Ali.' Just on the moment it was revealed again, '*This day are despaired those who disbelieve against your (reverting from your) religion, so ye fear them not, fear Me; This day I have perfected for you your religion, and completed My favour towards you, and chosen for you Al-Islam to be the religion*' (Ch. V: v 3). Then the Prophet uttered serenely, '*Allahu Akbar* (God is Great) that religion has been perfected and God's bounty has been completed. His satisfaction attained and the *Walayat* of 'Ali achieved.' 'Umar ibn al-Khattab congratulated 'Ali, 'May this position be pleasing to you, for you are now my Master and the Master of all believers.' The enemies of Islam who did everything to destroy Islam and were planning to continue their activities after the demise of the Prophet lost all their hopes when 'Ali was presented as the guide and leader of the people to protect the universal message of God as the successor of the Prophet. This hadith has been recorded in books of Sunnis and Shi'ahs which has been narrated by more than one hundred companions. (*Ghayat al-Maram*, p. 79; '*Abaqat* of Musavi, India (vol on Ghadir); Al-Ghadir of Amini, Najaf; 1372 recounted by Allama Tabataba'i).

(g) *Al-Yaum* - 'This day'



'This day have I perfected for you your religion, and have completed My favour on you, and chosen for you Islam (to be) the religion.' (Ch. V: v 4)

From the context it is obvious that the 'day' referred to here is not the ordinary day of twenty-four hours known to us. It is the 'day' wherein God has approved Islam as a *'din'* for us and according to other passages of the Qur'an the only *'din'* approved by God from eternity to eternity is Islam, to which every heavenly and terrestrial being has willingly or unwillingly submitted. No religion other than Islam is acceptable to Allah. And emphatically enough the person 'Muhammad' was commissioned with this universal grace. And 'Ali was made identical in degree of perfection so he was ordained as Muhammad's vicegerent. The result is that the day referred to here is the day or rather the stage wherein the creation begins with Muhammad and 'Ali. The perfection of *din*, and bounty of God and approval of Islam for all worlds coincide with the creation of the two identical entities, *Muhammad* and 'Ali. Thus, the day obviously transcends all our concepts of time and space and refers to the highest stage of ascension (*Mi'raj*) as pointed out by the sixth Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, a stage which is identical with the starting point of descension. And the *Day of Ghadir* has been honored as one of the manifestations of 'this day.' Whenever the Holy Prophet announced his prophethood he declared 'Ali's vicegerency, as both are identical with each other at every stage.

Moreover one should know that the phrase, *'Al-yaum'* (this day) used before the sentence, *'This day have I perfected your religion'* in v 3 and in the latter verse, *'This day have been made lawful for you'* is a sequence to the 'Sublime Day'.

There are various manifestations of the perfection of *din* (religion) as such. It is not out of place when the perfection of *din* is declared with all its aspects, that Satan and all his followers (infidels) give up hope. All the clean things (*tayyabat*) have been declared lawful for the believers and the unclean things unlawful.

There is another point which needs our attention: that v 4 of Ch. V begins with the declaration of the unlawful foods but after the middle of this verse, *'This day are despaired those who disbelieve'* and *'This day have I perfected for you your religion'* the clause *'But whosoever is helplessly forced by hunger not inclined to sin'* implies that unlawful food should be avoided except in the case of complete absence of lawful food (*tayyabat*). The structure of the verse draws the attention of the reader that he is permitted to obey the unlawful authority to the minimum extent as the case of unlawful food where and when circumstances compel him. To eat a dead animal and obey the order of an unlawful authority are permissible when lawful is not available. This passage refers to the prefection of *din* by God.

Verse 67 of the same chapter: *'(O Our Apostle Muhammad) Deliver thou what hath been sent down unto thee from thy Lord: and if thou dost it not, then (it will be as if) thou hast not delivered His message (at all); and surely will God protect thee from (the mischief) of men: Verily, God guideth not an infidel people'* should normally be placed next to the above verse (*'This day have I perfected for you your religion*) because perfection (*takmeel*) by God precedes the conveying of

the message (*tabligh*) by the Holy Prophet. (Pooya, *Fundamentals of Islam*).

(h) *Mubahala*: a spiritual contest between Christians and the Holy Prophet.

In the 10th Hijra the Holy Prophet sent messages to the tribes and regions to accept Islam. The Christians of Najran, a town in Yaman, got the invitation. A deputation of sixty Christians with Abu Haresa, the renowned scholar and one of the chief monks, Abdul Mashih, the chief monk priest, and Aqab, a distinguished aristocrat visited the Holy Prophet and had a long discussion about the personality of Jesus and asked him, 'What do yo say, have you seen any man born without a father?' The reply was revealed to the Holy Prophet that Adam was born without father and mother: '*The likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam; He created him of dust, then He said unto him: "Be" and he is. This is the truth from your Lord (O Muhammad) so be not thou of those who doubt. And who disputes with thee therein, after the knowledge which hath come unto thee, say (unto him): "Come! We will summon our sons and your sons, our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, and then pray humbly to (our Lord) and (solemnly) invoke the curse of Allah upon those who lie*".' (Ch. III: vs 59-61)

When the Christians did not listen to reason, the *Mubahala* as commanded by God in the verse mentioned above was arranged to pray to God and to invoke His anger on the liars. The next day, Dhil Hija 24, 10th Hijrah, the Holy Prophet sent Salman Farsi to erect a shelter in an open place. A large number of companions assembled in the mosque to make themselves available for this fateful event. The Holy Prophet with his grandchild Husain in his lap and his elder grandson Hasan holding his finger, his daughter Fatimah (al-Zahra) close behind him, and her husband 'Ali following her, appeared on the spot. The Christians, on the opposite side, who were waiting with their selected children, women and men observed the halo of divine light radiating from the faces of the Holy Prophet and his group. Their chief monk exclaimed, 'By God! I see the faces who if they prayed to God to move the mountains from their places, the mountains would immediately move!' The Holy Prophet raising his hands towards heaven said, 'O God! These are the people of my House! (*Allahumma Haulai Ahl al-Bayti*).' It was revealed to the Holy Prophet, '*Verily, verily God intendeth but to keep off from you (every kind of) uncleanliness, O ye the people of the House, and purify you with a thorough purification*' (Ch. XXXIII: v 33) [ref note 23].

The chief monk turned to his crowd who were inspired with awe, and said, 'O believers in Jesus of Nazareth! I will tell you the truth that should you fail to enter into some agreement with Muhammad and if these godly souls, whom Muhammad has brought with him, curse you, you will be wiped out of existence to the last day of the life of the earth.' The Christians listened to his advise and gave up the idea of the *Mubahala*, and beseeched the Holy Prophet that they would pay the *jizia* (protection tax) which entitled them to religious freedom and protected their personal rights and property and forbade them to do any act detrimental to Islam, the religion of peace. It was an occasion of tremendous sanctity. The relevant verses of the Qur'an mentioned above reveal the following points:

1. The usual turn of events in the process of creation is not confined to Adam and Jesus. There are innumerable examples wherein the natural process known to man fails to explain entirely. Man is bound to find the explanation of events in the 'Hands of God', as the Qur'an terms it, 'the imperative Word of God'. If Jesus, born without the agency of a male could be considered the 'Son of God,' Adam born without the agency of either partner would deserve more to be accepted so. The similitude of Jesus and Adam explains the evolutionary process of creation. The creation of the first living cell with unliving elements wherein there is no alternative left to accept the possibility of living being coming into existence without one or both of the sexual agencies is a command of God (*Amr-i-Rabbi*). Whatever once becomes possible in the order of creation shall remain possible for ever. It is the command of Almighty God, 'Be and it is' (*Kun Fayakun*).

2. It proves without doubt as to who are the members of the House of the Holy Prophet — *Ahl al-Bayt*.

3. It establishes the spiritual purity and infallibility of the *Ahl al-Bayt* as the occasion demands the best of God's creation to be heard in the prayer to establish the truth.

4. The infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* are witness to the purity and universality of Islam and God is witness over them.

5. Invoking the curse of Allah on the enemies of Islam established by Muhammad and his house is commended by the Qur'an. (1-5 Pooya; ref. Baizavi, Zamkshari, Kashaf; Kamil ibn Asir, Kafi, Suyuti and all Muslim commentators and traditionists): Mir Ahmad Ali.

24: Example of Ignoring: Verses in connection of inheritance and preference given to the nearest of kin — omission of the phrase '*Dhawilqurba*' when quoting the verse on the issue of Fadak.

Example of minimization: Preference given to imagined advantages and expediencies against the clear directives of the Qur'an. Refer to the verse concerning *tayamum* and verse dealing with *tamatu* in pilgrimage. *Bukhari*, the book of traditions, is itself an example on this subject.

Example of counteracting: The oft-quoted hadith, 'We the group of Prophets do neither receive inheritance nor give inheritance' is against the clear Qur'anic statement:

١٦- وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمٰنُ دَاوٗدَ
وَقَالَ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ
وَاُوْتِيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۭ
اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِيْنُ ○

'*Sulayman the Prophet received inheritance from his father Dawud (David) another Prophet*' (Ch. XXVII: v 16).

25: Vide Chapter 3: Sermon of Holy Fatimah, daughter of the Holy Prophet.

26:

١٦- وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ
حَتّٰى إِذَا خَرَجُوْا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ
قَالُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ أُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ
مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا
أُولٰئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ طَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ
وَاتَّبَعُوْا أَهْوَآءَهُمْ ○

'*And of them are those who seek to listen to thee until when they go forth from thee say they unto those who have been given the knowledge: "What was it that he said just now?" These are they on whose hearts hath God set a seal, and follow they their vain desires*' (Ch. XLVII: v 16).

٢٠- وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ
فَإِذَآ أُنْزِلَتْ سُوْرَةٌ مُّحْكَمَةٌ
وَّذُكِرَ فِيْهَا الْقِتَالُ
رَأَيْتَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ
يَّنْظُرُوْنَ إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ
الْمَغْشِيِّ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ
فَأَوْلٰى لَهُمْ ○

'*And say those who believe: "Why hath not been sent a chapter (for us)?" But when is sent down a decisive chapter, and mentioned therein is war, seest thou those in whose hearts is a disease look unto thee with a look of one on whom has fallen the shadow of death; woe unto them! Far better will certainty be for them*' (Ch. XLVII: v 20).

٢١- طَاعَةٌ وَّقَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوْفٌ
فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ
فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللّٰهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ○

'*Obedience and a fair word; but when the affair is determined, then if they be true to God, it would certainly be better of them*' (Ch. XLVII: v 21).

٢٢- فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ
أَنْ تُفْسِدُوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَتُقَطِّعُوْا أَرْحَامَكُمْ ○

'*Then be like ye are, if ye hold authority, that ye make mischief in the earth and sever the ties of kinship!*' (Ch. XLVII: v 22).

٢٣- أُولٰئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ
فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعْمٰى أَبْصَارَهُمْ ○

'Those are they whom hath cursed God, and so hath He made them deaf and blinded their eyes' (Ch. XLVII: v 23).

٢٩- أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ
أَن لَّن يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَانَهُمْ ○

'Or deem those in whose hearts is a disease that never will God bring forth their spite?' (Ch. XLVII: v 29).

٣١- وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ
الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ ۙ
وَنَبْلُوَ أَخْبَارَكُمْ ○

٣٢- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَشَاقُّوا الرَّسُولَ مِن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ
الْهُدَىٰ لَن يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ۚ
وَسَيُحْبِطُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ○

'And certainly will We try you until We have known those who strive (fight) among you and the patient ones, and make your affairs known.

'Verily those who disbelieve and hinder (others) from the path of God, and oppose the Apostle after the guidance has been made manifest unto them, can never harm God in any way; and He will make null their deeds.' (Ch. XLVII: vs 31-32).

27: One should have the following example in view. Bukhari records the statement of Sha'ubi who discredited most of the reports narrated from 'Ali, and Muslim in his *Sahih* says that Ja'far Ja'ufi was in possession of a large number of the Holy Prophet's sayings narrated by the fifth Imam Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Husain al-Baqir but Ja'far was discredited just because he believed in Rajat (minor resurrection). These two examples throw sufficient light on the fact, that people were in possession of a very large number of sayings of the Holy Prophet narrated by the members of his House and their devoted followers but the party in power and priestly satellites were adamant not to give publicity to the reports received through the House of the Prophet. Here it is worth noting that Ibn 'Abbas, though one of the devoted disciples of 'Ali, and the advocate of the cause of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, is frequently quoted by contemporary compilers of traditions. The motive behind the prominence attached to Ibn 'Abbas is nothing but to please the 'Abbaside rulers of the time.

28: The author does not agree with some of the most spurious reports mentioned by Bukhari about 'Ayesha because 'Ali said about her after the Battle of Jamal that she should be respected to the same degree and regarded as before. But the question is how does Bukhari record such damaging reports about her?

29: See, for instance, *Al-Kafi, Bihar al-Anwar, Tabqat ibn Sa'd, Khasais-e Nisa'i.*

30: It was revealed to the Prophet to warn his nearest kin to accept the religion

of Allah. The Prophet invited them for lunch at Abu Talib's house and after the meal announced, 'I know of no one who has brought to his people better things than I have brought to you. God has commanded me to invite you to draw toward Him. Who is there who will assist me in this matter and be my brother and inheritor (*wasi*) and vicegerent (*khalifah*) among you?' All remained silent. 'Ali, the youngest of all, stood and exclaimed, 'I shall be your deputy (vazier) and aide.' The Prophet put his arms around him and declared, 'He is my brother, inheritor and vicegerent. You must obey him.' Then the guests began to depart laughing and remarking, 'Abu Talib! Muhammad has ordered you to obey your son.' 'Ali did not fail to fulfill his promise on any occasion of war and peace during the 23 years of the ministry of the Prophet nor after his demise. This is the first declaration of 'Ali's vicegerency by the Prophet in public in the third year of the Prophet's ministry when 'Ali was only fourteen years old. (*Tarik-Abil-Fida*, vol 6, p. 116, and various sources, *Shi'ite Islam* by Allama Tabataba'i.)

31: *Sahih Tirmidhi, Khasais-e Nisa'i, Tafsir Dur-e Mansur* and *Tafsir Nishapuri.*

Appendices From:

GENUINENESS OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

(Printed July 1974)

Appendix I

An Answer

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

1. The Qur'an was not collected and arranged during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. We have proved, beyond doubt, that the allegation is entirely unfounded and that it was made and publicized for political reasons.

2. Imam 'Ali's collection produced after the Holy Prophet and its arrangement was datewise. It has been proven that this allegation is also not correct. The text and its revealed commentary were put into writing by Imam 'Ali as it had been dictated to him by the Holy Prophet then and there; so the text and its arrangement was the same as the one which is in our hand. The difference between him and his opponents was on the question of interpretation as declared by him and his followers in public repeatedly. The Qur'an which 'Ali brought to the mosque during the reign of the first caliph also contained commentary which was not acceptable to the ruling party. So 'Ali took back his collection and afterwards nobody had the chance to see it except the successive Imams of his House. As has already been pointed out, there is no single reliable tradition from the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* to show that the arrangement of his collection was different. All that is said in this connection is mere conjecture.

3. Some of the traditions assert that the deviations made by the followers of the previous prophets including tampering with their scriptures were repeated by Muslims. We have explained that traditions of this nature do not mean the repetition of those deviations in the same form. It is true that such misdeeds have been repeated in Islam in spirit but in different forms. For example, the followers of Moses

worshipped the golden calf during the absence of Moses. Such a misdeed apparently did not take place in Islam. But a student of Islamic history will realize that the same rebellious spirit mainfested itself after the demise of the Holy Prophet when the question of obedience to *Hujat* (supreme authority) arose. Mischievous hands had tampered with the text of pre-Qur'anic scriptures; but in the case of the Qur'an the text could not be tampered with due to its wide popularity and publicity ever since the beginning of its gradual revelation. So effort was made to tamper with its interpretation.

4. The other argument forwarded by the protagonists of this view is that in the present Qur'an the Madni and Macci *surahs* (chapters) are not arranged chronologically. The same is the case with some verses, i.e., some verses of Macci *surahs* are in Madni *surahs* and vice versa; and that some abrogating passages have preceded the abrogated passages. We have already refuted the necessity of chronological arrangement. There is no argument whatsoever to justify that the arrangement of the Qur'an should be datewise according to the date of its gradual revelation. On the contrary it has been proven that the gradual revelation means nothing but piecemeal recitation and quotations from the book which had already been revealed in its entirety to the heart of the Holy Prophet on the esteemed night in the month of Ramadan. Importance is attached to the date of Macci or Madni *surahs* or passages only by those who have failed to take into consideration the revelation of the Qur'an as a whole mentioned before, and its arrangement in the stages of gradual revelation. Secondly there is no such abrogated passages in the present version of the Qur'an which have come after the abrogating passage. Moreover there is no argument to prove that the recitation should be in accordance with the order of abrogated and abrogating passages. For recitational purposes and memorizing the Holy Qur'an by every one, the rythmical and other factors are taken into consideration.

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

(a) Ch. II: v 142, regarding the change of the *Qibla*. According to them this verse should have been placed after v 144 (Ch. II) because of the

objection of the simple-minded people that the reason for the change of the *Qibla* should have come after the passage which declares the new direction to which one should turn in prayers as the *Qibla*. This argument proves nothing but lack of proper study of the Qur'an by the critics. The old direction towards which the Muslims used to turn in their prayers as the *Qibla* was abolished in v 115 of the same chapter which announces, '*God's is the east and west, therefore, to any direction ye turn, that direction will be God's*'. This was enough to give room to the simple-minded people to ask as to what made the Muslims give up that particular direction towards which they used to turn in their prayers. This question had nothing to do with the fixation of the new direction which comes after v 142. Therefore the arrangement of the passages beginning with v 106 about the abrogation of one sign of God by another sign up to v 150 with which the question of abrogation of the old *Qibla* reaches its completion is entirely logical and systematic. Every passage has been placed appropriately in its present position. If a person fails to understand he should blame his own short-comings and not the arrangement of the Qur'an.

(b) In the same chapter (II), v 234 deals with the requisite period of *iddah*, i.e. four months and 10 days). It means that a woman, after the death of her husband, should not remarry before the expiry of the said period (four months and 10 days). It is said that this verse abrogates v 240 which is a directive either to the husband before his death or to the heirs to fix for a year some monetary allowance for a widow and allow her to continue residing in the same house of her husband for the same period, if she likes to do so. A proper study of the two verses proves beyond doubt that there is no conflict between the two passages to establish abrogation of one by the other. Verse 234 is a directive to the widow to observe *iddah* for four months and 10 days after the demise of her husband. Verse 240 is a recommendation addressed to the husband, before death, or to the heirs to finance the widow and allow her to continue to stay in the same residential house of the deceased husband, for a year if she likes. One passage enjoins on her not to marry a person for a particular period and the other passage recommends other relevant persons about her stay at the place with the provision of her maintenance during the period of stay. There is no conflict between the two passages at all. On the contrary, v 240 indicates that the heirs can ask the widow to vacate the place after a year. This supports the Shi'ah school of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) that the widow does not inherit the land of the residential house of her husband; and this restricts the directive given in Ch. IV: v 12 which shows that she should have no share in the residential land left by the

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

(c) In Ch. V concerning the celebrated passage of v 3, '*Al-yauma akmaltu lakum deenkum*' (This day have I perfected your religion for you), it is said that it is not in its proper place. It should have come after v 67, '*Ya ayaharrasool baliq*' (O Our Apostle (Muhammad) deliver thou what hath been sent down unto you from thy Lord). The critic thought that the completion of religion depends on the delivery of the last message. He thought the religion is completed when its last vital issue is delivered to mankind and ignored the fact that the delivery of this message to mankind is a stage which comes after its being completed fully by God. A religion is completed when its vital and final issue is decided by God, not when the message about the vital issue is delivered to mankind. The completion of religion depends on Divine decision and decree which should precede its delivery or announcement. This is supported by the reports from the Imams (*Ahl al-Bayt*) which show that the passage dealing with the 'completion of the message' was revealed when the Holy Prophet was still in Mina or 'Arafat and the passage, ordering the Holy Prophet to announce the 'completion' was revealed after the Holy Prophet left Mecca for Madina (ref *Tafsir-e Safi*). It should be borne in mind that the phrase *al-yaum* (today) or the 'day' used twice in v 3 and once in v 5 of the same chapter does not refer to a particular day of twenty-four hours of our calendar. It also does not refer either to the day when one passage was revealed at Mina or the day when the other was revealed at *Ghadir*, on 18th Dhil Hijah, because the contents of these two verses had been revealed on various occasions long before the day of the last pilgrimage of the Holy Prophet to Mecca (i.e. *Hajjat al-Wida'*).

Therefore the phrase *al-yaum* should be interpreted to mean one of *ayamullah* (God's days) which means various periods or stages of development of evolution in the realm of creation, divine administration and legislation. Accordingly in the hierarchy of the arc of ascent, the stage at which the divine decision concerning the vital and final issue of Islam was revealed to the last prophet, i.e. the Prophet of Islam, should be called the 'day', *al-yaum*, because the divine decision

concerning this issue means the finality of all previous issues. Without decision of this final issue, no issue can be considered as settled. So *al-yaum* refers to the last stage in the arc of ascent where the question of *vilayat* (divine leadership) is settled.

Another objection of the critics regarding the passages in v 3 is that it has come between the passages of the verse which deals with the various kinds of prohibited foods such as carrion, blood, pork, etc. At the end of this verse after the passage of 'completion' the Qur'an allows one, in unavoidable circumstances, to use the prohibited food to the minimum extent possible. According to the critics the passage of completion is irrelevant between the passages before and after, in this verse. The critics ignore the super-rhetorical hint which makes the passage of completion quite relevant to the passages mentioned before and after it. It shows that nobody can disregard the vital issue of religion, i.e. the question of Imamat and follow the lead given by others expect in unavoidable circumstances, in the same manner that one is not allowed to eat the prohibited food except in unavoidable circumstances. In short the Qur'an has placed obedience to undeserving leaders in the same line as that of prohibited food.

(d) Verse 33 in Ch. XXXIII known as *Ayat-i-Tat'hir* has been placed between the passages which contain warnings to the wives of the Holy Prophet. This made some commentators to include the wives also in the term of *Ahl al-Bayt* used in the passage. Thus the critics thought that this particular passage has been mischievously shifted from another place. But both the commentators and the critics ignore the divine purpose of placing this parenthetical sentence between the passages of warning to the Prophet's wives. All the pronouns used in the passages pertaining to the wives are in plural of feminine gender, but the pronouns in this parenthetical sentence are plural, masculine gender. Moreover, the structure of the sentence with the particular particle, *Inama* denoting exclusiveness and use of the objective phrase *Ankum* governed by the preposition *'Aan* before the phrase *Al-rijis*, which is also in the objective case governed by the verb *Yuzhiba*, denote inclusion of the *Ahl al-Bayt* exlusively as the object of divine intention for purification. Thus the structure of the sentence shows, beyond doubt, (i) that some males are also included which justifies the use of the masculine gender; (ii) that the object of divine will is a particular person exclusive of all other persons; so that will and intention cannot be considered legislative which is general including all, it must be a creative one; (iii) of the wives of the Holy Prophet some were subject to reproach, and some though they were good yet

there were persons better than them among the female believers (vide Ch. LXVI: v 5), but there can be none better than the members included in *Ayat-i-Tat'hir* mentioned above. Having all these considerations in view, the inclusion of wives in this passage becomes impossible. Therefore, the justification of bringing this parenthetical sentence between the passages concerning wives was a further warning to them not to have the idea of being included in the passage. Thus the appropriateness of the position of the passage here is very clear. This is supported by the report indicating the place and manner in which the Holy Prophet announced the inclusion of particular persons. According to what Muslim (Book of Traditions) has recorded in his *Sahih* when the passage was revealed the Holy Prophet was in the room of 'Ayesha. The Holy Prophet asked for a sheet and ordered 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain to join him inside the sheet and said, 'O my Lord, these are my *Ahl al-Bayt*.' According to 'Ayesha the Holy Prophet excluded her and did not allow her to join them, though the occasion took place in her room. According to some other reports the event took place in the house of Umm Salamah, and when Umm Salamah asked the Holy Prophet if she could get under the sheet, he said, 'Although thou art a good lady, yet these are the only members, my *Ahl al-Bayt*.' However, whether he was in the hosue of 'Ayesha or Umm Salamah or the incident was repeated at both places, the inclusion of 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain under the sheet in question and the exclusion of the wives is in accordance with the exclusive nature of this parenthetical sentence between these passages. The passage is like a gem studded in a ring. The ring cannot be included in the gem, and the gem is not like the ring. In support of this, there is a report from the fifth Imam Muhammad al-Baqir that the position of this passage among the passages concerning the wives has many indications (vide Safi).

(e) It is said that the celebrated passage in v 23, Ch. XLII known as *Ayat-i-Mawadat al-Qurba* is not in its proper place. The chapter was revealed in Mecca most probably even before the birth of Fatimah though the Sunni and Shi'ah traditions assert that the term *Qurba* (nearness) here has been applied to the same persons to whom *Ayat-i-Tat'hir* (Ch. XXXIII: v 33) and *Ayat-i-Mubahala* (Ch. III: v 61) have been applied; i.e. 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain, who were the closest to the Holy Prophet in respect of spirit and blood relationship, and many a time the Holy Prophet declared that they were identified with him and he was identified with them. The antagonist of the *Ahl al-Bayt* rejected the traditions on the plea that it is a fabrication of the pro-*Ahl al-Bayt* group. But both the critics and antagonists are lacking

a proper appreciation of the significance and application of the passage in question in the light of the other passages and verses of the Qur'an. Granted that the revelation of the whole *surah* including this passage at Mecca was before the birth of Fatimah, Hasan and Husain, yet nobody can deny that the *surah* and the passage were revealed after v 214 in Ch. XXVI (*'and warn the nearest of thy kin'*). This was revealed in connection with the invitation of the kin by the Holy Prophet to help him in his divine mission. On this occasion none of the relatives or kin responded and accepted his offer but 'Ali. It proves that he and none else, then, was the nearest person to the Holy Prophet in respect of both the spirit and blood relationship. So even if it is granted that all the members of the House of the Holy Prophet were not born and present at the time of revelation of v 23 in Ch. XLII, there is no doubt that 'Ali was there. It would be enough for the appropriateness of revelation and application, if one of the members like 'Ali was present. The application of the verse to other members of the same status who would be born later on would be quite natural, as a corollary. The traditions whether narrated by Sunni or Shi'ah traditionists show nothing more than quoting of this verse by the Holy Prophet in the case of 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain repeatedly to confirm the significance of the verse and the extent of its applicability to the persons of a particular status; i.e. those who enjoy nearness to the Holy Prophet in spirit and relationship, who are near to or rather identical with him in purity of spirit, birth and conduct. It includes not only the above-mentioned four persons but the successive Imams of the 'House' too. It excludes those whose nearness to the Holy Prophet was due to mere blood relationship but who were lacking in high degree of faith and purity of conduct. Next to those purified persons it also includes those who have the honor of complete attachment in spirit, faith and conduct to those above-mentioned 'purified personalities' like Salman.

However, deliberate effort has been made to make this verse vague and its application doubtful by the anti-*Ahl al-Bayt* group ever since its revelation until now. This attempt made some credulous traditionist of the pro-*Ahl al-Bayt* group to deny the appropriateness of its position in the Macci chapter.

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

(i) That the verse does not mean that the Holy Prophet should ask any reward towards the delivery of the divine message to mankind.

They say that the exceptional phrase '*except the love for the sake of nearness*' may mean that no expectation of any reward made to preach to you (addressing his Qurayshite relatives) except my love of you for the sake of your relationship to me.

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

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

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

(iii) That the third interpretation of the verse by the antagonists is that the Holy Prophet was ordered by God to ask his opponent relatives (the Quraysh) to love him because of his being related to them and not to give him trouble. This interpretation means that the Holy Prophet was ordered to ask the unbelievers for reciprocal love. This is quite against the specific declaration in Ch. LVIII: v 22 that no reciprocal love should exist between the believers and non-believers, particularly those who oppose God and His Apostle even if they are close relatives.

٢٢-لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ
يُوَآدُّوْنَ مَنْ حَآدَّ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ
وَلَوْ كَانُوْٓا اٰبَآءَهُمْ اَوْ اَبْنَآءَهُمْ
اَوْ اِخْوَانَهُمْ اَوْ عَشِيْرَتَهُمْ
اُولٰٓئِكَ كَتَبَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الْاِيْمَانَ

وَأَيَّدَهُمْ بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ ۖ
وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۚ
أُولَٰئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ ۚ
أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۝

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

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

٩٦- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وُدًّا ۝

'Verily those who believe and work good deeds, the Beneficient (God) will appoint love for them.' (Ch. XIXL v 96)

(iv) The fourth interpretation refers to what is adhered to by all the pro-*Ahl al-Bayt* commentators whether of the Sunni or Shi'ah school and supported by several traditionists. The verse means that the Holy Prophet was ordered by God not to ask any reward except *Mawadat* (Love) for certain persons for the sake of their nearness to him. This nearness cannot be mere blood relationship or nearness in spirit regardless of blood relationship, because certain persons who were related to him were declared as the members of his House free from inward and outward uncleanliness and purified to the utmost extent of 'purification.' Thus these people enjoy both nearness in spirit and blood relationship. This interpretation is further defined and clarifed in Ch. XXXIV: v 47 which says that the reward asked for was in the interest of those from whom the reward was asked for. In Ch. XXV: v 57 the Qur'an asserts that the reward in question was asked not from

every person but only from those who intended to adopt a way towards their Lord (God):

٤٧- قُلْ مَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ
إِنْ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ
وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ○

'*Say thou: "Whatever recompense I have asked for you, it is only for yourselves; my recompense is (to be expected) from God (alone), and He is witness over all things*".' (Ch. XXXIV: v 47)

٥٧- قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلَّا
مَنْ شَاءَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ○

'*Say thou (Our Apostle Muhammad!): "I ask ye not aught of any recompense (for my ministry) save that he who will take the way unto his Lord!" (Ch. XXV: v 57)*

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

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

In Ch. XI: vs 3-4 and Ch. X: vs 37-38, the Qur'an challenges the sceptics and disbelievers to produce the like of one of its chapters. This is the minimum they are asked to produce because the smallest chapter of the Qur'an, Ch. CVIII, *Al-Kauthar*, contains only three very short verses. In Ch. XI: v 13, the sceptics and disbelievers were asked to bring ten chapters like it. In Ch. XVII: v 88, and *jinns* and *ins* (i.e. jinns and human beings) were challenged to join together to produce something resembling the Qur'an. In Ch. LII: vs 33-34, the challenge is that they should produce something like the Qur'an. According to the critics the passages differ from each other. In some chapters like II and

X, the challenge is made for one whole *surah*. In Ch. XI the challenge is made for ten *surahs*. In Ch. XVII and LII the challenge is about the Qur'an as a whole. So they criticize that according to the present arrangement in the beginning the challenge was made in respect of one *surah* and when the sceptics and disbelievers tried to answer that challenge the number was increased to ten; and when they showed readiness to answer that also, then the challenge extended to the whole book, and this shows that the 'Author' was not firm in His challenge. This argument against the Qur'an was evolved by the opponents of Islam and the early writers of the pseudo-religions of modern times. It will be surprising if any Shi'ah or Sunni theologian falls into the trap of this fallacy. There is not the slightest doubt that Ch. II of the Qur'an is the latest chapter among the chapters containing the above-mentioned challenging verse and therein the challenge is for one *surah* and nothing more. This shows that the 'Author' (God) has always been sure of His stand and that no one would ever succeed in producing the like of even the smallest chapter of the Qur'an. This verse leaves no room for the above fallacious argument against the firm stand of the 'Author.' The above argument shows that due to the lack of proper study of the Qur'an the advocates of the theory of misarrangement could not understand the appropriateness of the position of the verses. They found it easier to discredit the arrangement than to admit their own ignorance. This is the reason why the advocates of this view differ from each other in giving reference to the verse. There is not a single tradition from the Holy Prophet or the Imams to show that any of the aforesaid verses or chapters are not in their proper position. The attack on the arrangement of the verses is nothing but a conjecture based on whims and fancies.

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

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

'*And shall say (out) the Apostle (that day): "O my Lord! Verily my people have held this Qur'an as a vain forsaken thing*".' (Ch. XXV: v 30)

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

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

Those who claim that the arrangement of the letters, words, phrases, sentences, passages or chapters of the Qur'an inhand is not the same as was left by the Holy Prophet among the people with *itrat*, mean that the arrangement is non-revealed; so the Qur'an requires of them imperatively to produce the Qur'an in any other arrangement provided its super-rhetorical standard and recitative and rhythmical beauty is not affected. It is true that many non-Muslims and some credulous traditionists and theologians have tried to produce the Qur'an in a chronological form, but they failed miserably to keep that invincible beauty and super-rhetorical standard. However it is a matter of regret that those who claim to be not only true Muslims but qualified students of Islamic theology should say that the Qur'an as revealed to the Holy Prophet and left by him among the people as an ever-lasting miracle, did not remain intact for 16 to 17 years, but that the Qur'an in its non-revealed arrangement produced by Zayd ibn Thabit and a few Umayyad youths of no academic significance has remained intact until today.

Appendix 2

Last Sermon of Caliph 'Umar

There is a lengthy tradition in Bukhari, Vol. 4, in the chapter about the stoning of the pregnant adultress. Bukhari narrates it from Ibn 'Abbas. It contains important matter which throws light on the events taking place immediately after the demise of the Holy Prophet, of which one is the view of 'Umar (the second Caliph) about the omission of some verses from the Holy Qur'an. It shows that he was the first one who announced the incompleteness of the Qur'an in hand. The translation of the text is given here to enlighten the readers.

Text from Bukhari

According to Ibn 'Abbas, he used to teach the Qur'an to some dignatories among the *Muhajirin*. One of them was 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn al-'Auf. Once Ibn 'Abbas went to 'Abd al-Rahman's residence at Mina where he was not available and had gone to another part of Mina to meet 'Umar ibn al-Khattab who was on his last pilgimage to Mecca. He waited for 'Abd al-Rahman. On his return 'Abd al-Rahman said to Ibn 'Abbas that he wished that Ibn 'Abbas was present at 'Umar's residence when a certain person came to the Commander of the Faithful ('Umar) and informed him of the wish of someone who had said: 'When 'Umar dies he would give his vote of allegiance (*ba'yat*) to a certain person, and it would be similar to Abu Bakr coming to power by an unconstitutional method (*falta*) which was regularized later on.' On hearing this statement 'Umar got angry and said: 'This evening I will publicly warn those people who intend to ursurp the rights of the people.' And further 'Abd al-Rahman advised 'Umar not to do it there because in Hajj season poeple gather from all corners of the country and they would try to be near 'Umar. They might hear something from him ('Umar) and without understanding may narrate it improperly. It would be better to keep quiet. 'Abd al-Rahman had suggested that if he would go back to Madina, sensible and noble people would hear him and react properly. 'Umar replied to 'Abd al-Rahman that on the first occasion after his arrival in Madina he would follow his advise.

Ibn 'Abbas says that on the first Friday after their arrival (in Madina) he hurried to the mosque at noon and found Sa'eed ibn Zayd sitting close to the pulpit. He sat near him. Meanwhile, 'Umar entered the mosque. Ibn 'Abbas told Sa'eed that 'Umar would deliver a sermon the like of which was not uttered before, but Sa'eed did not believe. 'Umar sat on the pulpit quiet till the *adhan* (call for prayer) was over. Then he stood up and after praising God said, 'I am going to say something, it is destined to me that I should say. It may be my last sermon before I die. Whoever hears and understands should convey my statement wherever he goes. Whoever does not properly grasp my utterance, I do not allow him to tell lies about me. God sent Muhammad, His true Prophet and revealed the book to him. One part of it was the verse concerning the stoning of one who commits adultery. We read the verse, understood and digested it. The Prophet did stone and we too after him. I am afraid that after some length of time some people may say that they do not find the verse in question in the Book of God and will go astray by giving up the revealed ordinance of God. The stoning of an adulterer is a part of the Book of God whether the act is committed by a man or a woman, even if she is pregnant, when proved by a witness or confession. Besides that, we used to read in the Qur'an, 'Do not turn away from your parents. It is ingratitude to turn away from your parents.'

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

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

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

Then he stated the events after the demise of the Holy Prophet. 'The *Ansars* gathered in Saqifah. Ali and Zubayr and those who were with them remained aloof. The *Muhajirs* approached Abu Bakr. I told Abu Bakr that we should go to Saqifah. On the way we met two persons from the *Ansars*. We informed them of our intention. They said that we should not go there and settle our affairs without approaching the *Ansars*. I insisted to proceed to Saqifah. We found a person there wrapped in a mantle (*chadar*). I asked him who was he. He said that he was S'ad ibn 'Ubaydah, suffering from fever. When we sat at Saqifah, the speaker from the *Ansars*, after praising God, reminded us of the services of the *Ansars* for Islam and addressed the *Muhajirs* that they were driven out from their home and were sheltered by the *Ansars*. Now the *Muhajirs* wanted to deprive the *Ansars* of their rights. When he finished his speech, I wanted to talk, which I had prepared in my mind but Abu Bakr did not allow me to talk. I had to submit to him as I did not want to annoy him. Abu Bakr spoke extempore better than what I had prepared in my mind. He accepted the services of the *Ansars* for which they deserved the post but said that the post suits none but the tribe of Quraysh on account of their ancestral superiority and sacredness of their native place (Mecca). Then Abu Bakr proposed one of the two persons of Quraysh who were with him (i.e. 'Umar and Abu 'Ubaydah). At that time I felt myself far below the rank of being the head of the people among whom Abu Bakr was one. Meanwhile a speaker from the *Ansars* proposed that he would settle the dispute thus: "You have your own head and we will have our own head." When the dispute intensified and voices grew louder, then I feared the situation may become worse, therefore I forced Abu Bakr to stretch out his hand. I did *ba'yat* and with me other *Muhajirs* also did *ba'yat*. Some of the *Ansars* followed them. Then we manhandled Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah who refused to do *ba'yat*. Somebody said, "You people killed Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah." I said, "God may kill him!"' Further 'Umar said, 'We thought that there was nothing better than doing *ba'yat* with Abu Bakr because we were afraid of leaving them (i.e. the opposite party) without *ba'yat*. If we had left the opposite party without *ba'yat* they may have done *ba'yat* with someone among them after us. Then we too would have had to do *ba'yat* with the person whom they had chosen, and if opposed there would have been a rift and quarrel. Therefore, whosoever takes *ba'yat* with a person without approval and consultation with the Muslimeen his *ba'yat* should not be followed by others. Nor the person with whom he has made *ba'yat* should be accepted as Caliph lest there will be a rift and quarrel.'

The gist of the sermon of Caliph 'Umar in this connection shows that

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

Appendix 3

Fasl al-Khitab

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

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

The study of the book will show that it refutes its own contentions. While he insists that the Qur'an was not put into book form as it is now, he asserts at the same time that 'Ali used to write every verse of the Qur'an with its revealed commentary and its inner significance by the order of the Holy Prophet. Here the question arises whether 'Ali's writing of the Qur'an was based on a particular order or system or was it something haphazard? Secondly, it is obvious that the the Holy Prophet's reference to the Book of God, the text of which he was leaving among the people with the *Ahl al-Bayt*, was in complete accord with the text which he had already dictated to 'Ali. Therefore there is no room left for the author of *Fasal al-Khitab* to assert that the Qur'an was not put into writing during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. The story that 'Ali had kept himself engaged in collecting the Qur'an after the demise of the Holy Prophet is nothing but a mere fabrication of the ruling party just to give reason for 'Ali's delay in participating in the *ba'yat*. They wanted to prove that 'Ali thought that the collection of

the Qur'an was more important than the issue of *ba'yat*, otherwise he was not opposed to Abu Bakr being the caliph. This baseless propaganda gave a chance to the unscrupulous traditionist of the later period to accept the fact that the Qur'an was not collected and arranged during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet.

Another point which the author of *Fasl al-Khitab* takes for granted is that the arrangement of the so-called collection of 'Ali was chronological. Without repeating the details which have already been discussed, it is an accepted fact that no Shi'ah traditionist has ascribed the chronological arrangement to any Imam (*Masum*). The first person who attributed this type of arrangement to 'Ali is Ibn Sireen whose fidelity to the *Ahl al-Bayt* is questionable. All that we have received from the *Ahl al-Bayt* are two traditions in this connection narrated by Kafi from the fifth Imam through Jaber-e Jaufi. Jaber says, 'I heard that the fifth Imam Abu Ja'far used to say that excluding 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Holy Imams after 'Ali nobody except a liar could claim that he had collected the Qur'an as a whole as it was revealed, compiled and preserved as God has sent it down.' Next to this tradition Kafi narrates through the same traditionist Jaber from the same Imam that he (the Imam) said that except the successors of the Holy Prophet (i.e. the Imams) nobody could claim that he was in possession of the Qur'an as a whole with its outer letters (exoteric form) and inner significance (esoteric form). The second tradition from Kafi explains what the Imam meant by the word 'Qur'an as a whole' as it was narrated in the first tradition. The Imam meant that nobody except 'Ali and his successive Imams were in possession of the Holy Qur'an with both its exoteric and esoteric aspects which were revealed to the Holy Prophet and dictated to 'Ali then and there. This tradition is a general explanation for all the traditions which have been narrated from the *Ahl al-Bayt* giving various versions of particular verses. These particular verses are not found in the text in hand, they refer to the inner significance of the verses.

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

Nuri has criticized Mullah Faid-e Kashani for not narrating the tradition which states that the Qu'ran contains seventeen thousand verses and confined himself to narrating the tradition of seven thousand verses. He has boldly accused the Mullah of dishonesty. The

question of the number of verses has already been discussed at length to disprove this statement. Moreover he himself cannot escape similar charges. Anyhow all his contemporaries and scholars of later periods wished that the late Nuri would not have written this book which has damaged his reputation.

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

Appendix 4

A Luminary

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

He completed this work inspite of continuous ill-health. The work had been reviewed thoroughly by the eminent judge, the late justice Shahabuddin, former chief justice of the supreme court of Pakistan. Justice Shahabuddin was among the close firends of Aqa Pooya who imbided the scholarly exposition of the Qu'ran by the Aqa.

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

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

However, Aqa Pooya did not stay in Iraq and Iran. Being very sensitive he was so affected by the unhappy conditions prevailing in Iraq and Iran that he migrated to Madras in India. His *mujtahid* Aqa Naini was very unhappy over the migration of such a brilliant scholar

and were it possible he would have ordained a religious decree to stop his migration. He set himself to the task of learning the English language there and kept steadily to it till he attained a sound knowledge of the language.

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

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

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

Aqa Pooya never neglected his duties towards Islamic institutions all over Pakistan, many of which owe their existence to him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Syed Muhammad Murtaza

CHAPTER TWO

The Existence of God

Angles of approach

The question of the existence of God has been the concern of man ever since his coming into being or at least since his becoming conscious of his own self. Of the several philosophical and religious methods of dealing with this most important subject, the metaphysical is the most logical and systematic, but that method is meant only for those who are well-acquainted with the physical, mathematical and metaphysical sciences. Many of the religious methods are undoubtedly convincing to the majority of people of average understanding, but there are some who are neither satisfied with most of the religious methods of approach nor are they properly educated in philosophy or fully acquainted with the physical and metaphysical sciences. The religious arguments are generally based on inferences from the observation of those phenomena which are natural and purposeful signs within and without the human self and which bear testimony to the existence of a mighty, conscious, creative mind responsible for planning and bringing into evidence and existence all that is seen or observed. But

according to the dissatisfied group the testimony of such phenomena and signs is based on analogical arguments, the conclusion of which need not be necessarily and universally true.

The metaphysical method of approach begins with concepts and propositions which are self-evident. The most universal of them are the terms 'existence' and 'objects'. In other words, the use of the universal predicate 'is' or 'exists' and the use of 'particular things' or 'objects' are common and familiar to everybody more than the use of any other term. When man observes himself and the things surrounding him, he forms the following propositions: I exist, He exists, You exist, the earth exists. Air, land, trees, animals, man, sky, stars, white, blue, red, yellow, light, dark, left, right, cold, heat, electricity, gas, quantities, qualities, position, concrete things, abstract ideas, imagination, subjective and objective phenomena, etc., all have great varieties and even some are in contrast with each other but to all those, one and the same predicate 'existence' is applicable. This predicative term is so universal that it can be applied to everything, to every conceivable idea other than the term itself. Everything can be made a subject in the affirmative or negative form; it does exist or does not exist. Such a universal term or idea is and must be known *apriori* to every human mind. It need not be defined or described by any other term or idea.

As a general logical rule no proposition is formed unless the idea taken as the 'subject' and the idea taken as the 'predicate' are different from one aspect and 'one and the same' from another aspect. So in every proposition the human mind finds two aspects: (a) the aspect of differentiating the subject from the predicate and (b) the aspect of identifying them both. Thus if two items are entirely different from each other no 'predication' between the two is possible. Similarly, if the two ideas are identical with each other from all aspects and all respects, no 'predication' between them would have any meaning.

A proposition is called analytical if the difference between the

subject and predicate is a mere abstract process of human thought, otherwise within or outside the human mind they are actually identical in the sense that one idea is the content of the other or the necessary property of it. For example, in the proposition 'dimension is divisible' there are two different ideas in the human mind distinguished from each other in their meaning, but one is implied in the other inside and outside the human mind. They are so interrelated to each other that one cannot be considered separate from the other.

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

In all analytical propositions either both the subject and the predicate are abstract which have no corresponding fact outside the mind or one has the corresponding fact outside the mind and the other is abstract, obtained through mental process. For example, the logical terms 'genus' and 'species' are two 'universal' ideas. Genus is an idea which is true of individual beings of various kinds outside the mind. Species is an idea which is true of individuals of one kind. Both ideas are universal in the sense that both can be said about many individuals of various kinds or of one kind respectively. So we form this proposition: 'Genus is universal; species is universal. But all that exist outside the mind are individuals resembling each other in certain aspects.' These kinds of abstract propositions are termed logical abstractions: they are ideas which the human mind derives from some common aspects of individual beings existing

outside it; or they are forms given by the mind to the idea considered as the object or thing outside human thought.

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

Actually metaphysics discusses the most universal terms in which man thinks and talks. Without studying the metaphysical problems no thorough study of any science, terrestrial, cellestrial, etherial, spiritual or theological, is complete. To be well-versed in metaphysics one should know logic, mathematics or at least the outline of all other physical and human sciences.

Universal predicative term 'Existence'

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

universal predicate, a real fact outside the mind and the other is the idea abstracted from the former. To put it another way, the question is whether the universal predicate 'existence' and the multitude of things are both unreal, or are both real added to each other, or is one real and the other unreal abstracted from the real one. All metaphysicians have refuted the first and the second probabilities as self-contradictory propositions. The only thing which remains is the view that one is real and the other is abstracted, and the controversy among the metaphysicians is which of the two is real and the other abstracted from it. Whether the universal predicate is the absolute real and the multiple subjects are abstracted from it or are its various aspects and manifestations, or are the multiple subjects real and the idea of 'existence' is derived from this multiplicity of things in the question. Unless and until this question is fully grasped, and dealt with from all its various angles and aspects, no metaphysical solution of the problem of the existence of God can be considered as logically tenable and intelligible. To deal with the problem of the existence of God metaphysically, ignoring this fundamental problem of metaphysics, is like trying to prove or disprove any geometrical figure discarding the self evident definitions and propositions laid down at the starting point of Euclid such as a 'straight line means the shortest line between two points,' 'the whole is greater than its parts' or 'any thing equal to A must be equal to B which is equal to A.' To prove the existence of God ignoring the question of reality or unreality of existence and its implications, and jumping to the question of eternity and contingency would result in nothing but confusion in the mind of the writer as well as of the reader.

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

term and the factor which makes A identical with C. But the religious method which appeals to men of average understanding is apparently based on analogical grounds; i.e. resemblance; e.g. A resembles B in having D in common and A has C also, therefore B which resembles A in having D must have C also like A. This proposed via media, as it will be seen, combines in itself the appealing simplicity of the religious method of inference from the signs and phenomena, which one finds within himself or in the things surrounding him and the inferences evolved from the metaphysical ground of self evident propositions and concepts. Thus it has side by side, both the analogical as well as the metaphysical bases. This method gives two grounds for the edifice of its inferences; one is analogical meant for the average man and the other is metaphysical to convince the intellectuals.

Qur'anic Approach

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

٣٥-أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ
أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ ۝

٣٦-أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۚ
بَلْ لَّا يُوقِنُونَ ۝

'*Or were they created by nothing? Or are they themselves the creators?*

Or created they the heavens and the earth? Nay! They have no certainty.' (Ch. LII: vs 35-36)

The language of these verses is so clear and simple that their philosophical significance and implications may escape the

notice of many thinkers who recite them. So the following lines are meant to draw the attention of the reader to some of the important parts of speech in the verses.

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

(2) The term *Khalq* and its derivative and conjugations used in the Qur'an means 'to measure' or 'to create.' The term in both senses applies to things which owe their existence not to themselves but depend for their existence in some way or other on something else. If it is used in the sense of creation, it means that a thing had no existence before and now it has. If it is used in the sense of measuring, it implies limitation. And limitation implies necessarily being composed of parts, be the part organic, mechanic, physical, chemical, atomic, geometrical, logical (genus and differentia), or at least metaphysical which means limitation in degree of existence. To understand the limitation in degree of existence the following examples may be helpful. Two or more white objects differ from each other not in any other aspect but in the degree of whiteness; two electric bulbs differ from each other in nothing but in the degree of candle power (i.e. illumination). In both examples the difference in degree means that both have the whiteness and light in common but the whiteness of one differs from that of the other in being less or more. Both bulbs have light in common but the one which has less candle power than the other has less light. They differ from each other in the same aspect which they have in common.

So the composition in any aforesaid sense of the term means at least dependence on its parts; hence it owes its existence to its parts and is not self-existent. Therefore *Khalq* in any of the two

senses means a non-self-existent thing, an object of human thought which comes into existence by assuming existence not analytically but synthetically.

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

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

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

Law of Causation

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

of such a proposition can not be removed by postulating in a vicious circle, regress or infinite chain of non-self-existing things having existence from each other; as all these postulations ultimately mean the coming of non-being into being by nothing or nothingness which is evidently impossible. This is the basis of causation. It means that when two ideas or objects of human thought are not identical in all aspects and all respects, nor one is the analytical content or necessary property of the other, the identification and unity of the two must have some justifying medium. This is called in logic *the Law of Sufficient Reasoning*. This self-evident law (Law of Causation) is one of the categorical *apriori* forms of human thought given to the object of human thought. There must be some medium to justify the affirmation. This medium is termed *cause*, the finding of which is the basis of all human investigations or enquiries whether physical, metaphysical, mathematical, ethical, social, economical, political; in other words, this is the basis of all questions, in answer to which man is striving ever since his coming into being or at least since his becoming conscious of himself.

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

But the case is not so. Whether one is an atheist or a theist, materialist or spiritualist, or agnostic, any man of sense, no matter to which class he belongs, is alive to this self-evident proposition that a non-self-existing thing can only become the subject of existence by becoming in some way or other, through a middle term or directly, identified with the self-existing thing. This implies the necessity of a self-existing being responsible for the existence of non-self-existing things. Hence the postulation of the necessity of a self-existing being is common to every man of sense. It is a real irrefutable fact of common sense. All the lovers of truth and knowledge and in fact every one with

common sense is in search of that self-existing being. Some may see 'it' in terms of matter and material things and some may see 'it' in terms of immaterial beings. However none denies the existence of an uncaused cause. The difference of views lies in the description of the uncaused cause but the fact is what the Qur'an has said: '*Mimma Yasifun*,' 'He is above all descriptions.' (Ch. VI: v 100)

Uncaused Cause
Infinite Absolute One

The postulation of an *Uncaused Cause*, responsible for the affirmation of a predicate for a subject, which is not the clear analytical content or the necessary and the inherent property of the other, is an irrefutable necessary and universal truth. This is true of all synthetic propositions, be the predicate 'existence' or some other predicate. Let alone a philosopher, none save a sophist or quibbler disputes the necessity of the above universal postulation. But it is said about a famous contemporary thinker who decided that there was no God because he could not answer the question — 'Who made God?' This form of argument may be expected from a child when his parents begin to teach him that man and all observable things surrounding him are created by God. The child's mind begins to work psychologically through an analogical process and his judgement would be that in the same manner as he was created, God must also have been created, and His Creator must have had a creator. Similiar to this way of thinking is the anthropomorphic way of describing God as the creator of the universe. It is obvious that such a God or Lord of the universe presented as (a) sitting on His Throne with His Son on the right and the Holy Ghost on His left or (b) with other deities as His issues or, as sitting All Alone as a king on the throne and the angels as His servants, or (c) in any form or description which implies His being of composite nature, should be the subject of the question 'Who has created Him?' Thus, it is not only for a philosopher but it is for any man of sense to deny such a composite God and

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

٤٩. وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ○

'*And of everything have We created in pairs, that ye may reflect.*' (Ch. LI: v 49)

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

If the term personal God means such a Unique Unit, Creative Might of Infinite and Absolute Reality that by His agency everything has or may come into being, then it is true that He is the real person to Whose personality (reality) all other limited

beings owe the extent of the personality they have. If Personal God means any quantitative (be it the biggest or smallest) or qualitative or logical or metaphysical limitation, then God is Impersonal, but gives personality to all limited entities.

To postulate an atom or the smallest part of it, the photon, as the indivisible self-existing unit and component of the universe, is a self-contradictory proposition. Anything spatial, however small it may be, is dimensional, hence geometrically divisible, containing parts on which it depends. It may not be practically divisible by us now, as it was the case with the atom until a few years ago, but practical indivisibility does not exempt the smallest particle from the possibility of further division, nor from mathematical divisibility. The proof is this: if the supposed infinite small particle is entirely non-dimensional, then by adding it to another non-dimensional particle like it no dimension can be formed. If it has some dimension then the side which meets another particle is different from the side which does not meet the other particle, so it is divided into two different sides. Therefore the theory of non-dimensional infinitely small particles as self-existing units by the combination of which bigger bodies are formed is untenable. Moreover such infinitely small and indivisible units cannot escape the logical composition. They are composed of particular material and formal parts (matter and form) and of the specific parts (genus and differentia) and of the metaphysical particular degree of existence. So the composition and dependency as their necessary property is there, and the problem remains unsolved.

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

to the Qur'an, and the sayings of the Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*, all the Qur'anic descriptions of God go back to the negation of limitation and composition about Him and the affirmation of His Absolute Oneness in the sense detailed before. It means:

١-قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ۝
٢-اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝
٣-لَمْ يَلِدْ ۙ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ ۝
٤-وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ۝

'*Say: He is Allah the One!*
Allah the Eternal. Besought of all!
He begeteth not, nor was He begotten.
And there is none comparable unto Him.' (Ch. CXII)

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

Here the question arises: how is it that inspite of all the aforesaid

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

Atheist

If the ultimate answer to this question is: We do not know and cannot know the nature of the Absolute as He or It is in Himself or Itself and whatever we say about Him just shows our limitations and not His nature, why should we blame the atheist or agnostic in presenting Him in terms of space, time, nature, matter, etc. or in expressing their ignorance or scepticism? The theist and all similar schools of thought are unanimous in confessing their ignorance about the nature of the Reality in Himself. The views of all these schools have only subjective value, so far as His Nature is concerned. Then let every one have the chance of expressing his limitations. Why should we insist on a particular view and reject others? The answer is that we should not forget that throughout our arguments we have proved beyond doubt that the postulation of the Self-Existing Absolute One is a self-evident Reality. Having this positive fact in view all the discussions about His positive or negative attributes started with the question as to which attribute or which description is the necessary property of His Absolute Oneness to be asserted and maintained and which attribute or description is contradictory of His Oneness to be negated and rejected? All positive attributes and descriptions should be reduced into an assertion of His Absolute Oneness and all negative attributes should be reduced into a negation of His

composite Nature. For example, every thing that occupies space is dimensional whether big or small. Every dimensional being is composed of geometrical parts in the sense that each part occupies a space other than the space occupied by its immediate adjoining part. So each part though joined with the other, is absent from the other. So the whole which is the total of the parts is absent from itself. Therefore, the whole is unconscious of itself, because consciousness (knowing) means the presence of the thing perceived to the conscious being (the knower — the perceiver). In other words, knowing means the presence of the known to the knower. It implies One's being conscious of oneself. Self-consciousness is the necessary condition of one's being conscious of other things which is absent in dimensional beings. Dimension and unconsciousness are interrelated, and one is the necessary property of the other.

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

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

Absolute One Self-Consciousness and Unlimited Attributes

Therefore, the Absolute One is necessarily self-conscious and

conscious of whatever is His manifestation; and the reference to the Absolute One should be with the personal pronoun meant for conscious beings — He, Thou and I.

The Qur'an says:

٦١-وَمَا تَكُونُ فِي شَأْنٍ
وَمَا تَتْلُوا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْآنٍ
وَلَا تَعْمَلُونَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ
شُهُودًا إِذْ تُفِيضُونَ فِيهِ
وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَبِّكَ مِنْ مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ
وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَٰلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ
إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ○

'And thou (Muhammad) are not (engaged) in any affair, nor dost thou recite any part of the (Holy) Qur'an and nor any deed ye (mankind) be doing, but We are witness over you when ye are engrossed therein; And doth not lie concealed from thy Lord (even) the weight of an atom in the earth nor in the heaven, nor anything lesser than that nor greater, but it is (recorded) in a clear book.' (Ch. X: v 61)

٥٩-وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ
لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ
وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا
وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ
وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ
إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ○

'And with Him are the keys (of the treasures) of the unseen — knoweth it not any one but He; and He (alone) knoweth what is in the land and the sea; and (there) falleth not (even) a leaf (of a tree) but He knoweth it, nor a grain in the darkness (in the deepest parts) of the earth, nor anything wet or dry but (it is) in a clear book.' (Ch. VI: v 59)

٣-هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ
وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ

وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ۝

٤۔ هُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ
سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ؕ
يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْاَرْضِ
وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا
وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيْهَا ؕ
وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ۝

'He is the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden: and He is the Knower of all things.
'He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, then firmly established (Himself) over the "Arsh" (the seat of supreme authority); knoweth He whatever entereth the earth, and whatever goeth forth from it, and whatever descendeth from the heaven, and whatever goeth up into it; and He is with you wherever ye be; and God is the Seer of whatever ye do.' (Ch. LVII: vs 3-4)

٢۔ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰى اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا ۝

'And follow thou what is revealed unto thee from thy Lord; Verily God is aware of what ye do, well-aware.' (Ch. XXXIII: v 2)

١٤۔ اَلَا يَعْلَمُ
مَنْ خَلَقَ ؕ
وَهُوَ اللَّطِيْفُ الْخَبِيْرُ ۝

'What! Knoweth not He that created? And He is the Subtle, the All-Aware.' (Ch. LXVII: v 14)

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

١١٠۔ قُلِ ادْعُوا اللّٰهَ اَوِ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمٰنَ ؕ
اَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُوْا
فَلَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ

'Say: Call upon Allah or call upon Rahman (the Beneficient); whichever ye call upon, for Him (alone) are all the best names.' (Ch. XVII: v 110)

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

٨٢۔ اِنَّمَآ اَمْرُهٗٓ اِذَآ اَرَادَ
شَيْـًٔا اَنْ يَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ۝

'His command, when intendeth He anything, is only that He sayeth unto it "Be" then (and there) it is.' (Ch XXXVI: v 82)

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

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

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

The Relation of Conscious Creative Will and Might to the Created Many Ibda'

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

Non-self-existing things can be brought into existence only in

the following probable ways: (a) division of the origin into parts, (b) composition of the original parts into the shape of the whole, (c) transformation by assumption of the origin into a new form, (d) reproduction and growth or decay.[1]

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

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

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

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

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

(e) The relation of the human ego cognitive-self, the one to which one refers to as 'I', to the ideas which are formed by the attention of the ego, within the region of the mind; here the relation of the source is purely creative. The effect owes its

coming into being to the sole agency of the attention of the conscious source.

Of all these probable ways mentioned in the above (a), (b), (c) and (d), none can be taken as a probable or possible way of a non-self-existing thing being brought into 'being' by the Absolute One. In all of these probabilities the Absolute One loses His Oneness and Absoluteness. All of the four probable relations of the Absolute One to His finite effects and manifestations imply limitation of the cause in some way or other. Excepting the last one (e), all are inconsistent with absoluteness of the self-existing One. In the case of the relation mentioned in (a) it plays the role of structural cause. The Absolute becomes the formal or the material component of the whole which requires for its coming into being or for its subsistence a producing or holding agent. In the case of the relation mentioned in (b) the Absolute's role is to bring the components together and give shapes to the matter. It has no creative or holding power on the material or the formal components of the structure. Moreover it is inconsistent with the Law of Identity; i.e. a non-self-existing being becomes self-subsistent (self-existent after coming into being). The limitation of the causal role of the purpose mentioned in (c) is clear. It causes only a conscious agent to produce the effect. The relation mentioned in (d) is inconsistent with the infinite conscious nature of the Absolute One and His will and might. The rays and reflection are entirely dependent on the source of light and the recipient ground yet the source or ground being dimensional is not conscious of its production and effect.

Therefore the only probable relation free from all objections is mentioned in (e) wherein an effect (idea) is brought into being in the region of the mind by the ego through conscious attention without the slightest change, division, combination, transformation, reproduction, growth and decay, or any other form of change in the essence of inherent attributes of the ego. The activity does not affect His Oneness, nevertheless, the effect (idea) so produced by the ego depends in his existence on the

attention and will of the ego, and it remains non-self-existent in itself before, after, and with its present existence; this causal relation can only be true of the Absolute One in His relation to the created many. This is called creation in the true sense of the Qur'anic term *Ibda'*. (This is what the verse reveals: '*Be, then it* is.' *Kunfayakun*. (Ch. XXXVI: v 82) It means that the universe as a whole with parts with their formal and material components in its substance and attributes is nothing but the outcome of the will and command of the absolute creative, conscious might Who is Infinite Reality, God (Allah). He has innumerable beautiful names. The Qur'an says among His signs is one that the heavens and the earth are standing, subsisting by His command. He has brought and brings every sign into existence out of love of Himself — love of expression. From this angle, whatever existed, exists or will exist in any form is the 'created word' of God and whatever 'ought to have been, ought to be now or in the future' is the 'legislative word of God.' The Qur'anic presentation of God supports the metaphysical proposition, 'the finite things are created and nothing created can be created by nothing or nothingness. Therefore, the finite things are not created by nothing or nothingness: thus they are all created by something.'

That something must be infinite, self-existing by nature, otherwise the chain of finites will continue, all non-beings and nothings, the whole will become non-being and nothing, which is impossible. Therefore, basically the Qur'an asserts that the circular system of creation begins with the highest finite, and continues downward to the lowest one, the primal matter, the end of the arc of descent, and again the process continues upward from the primal matter up to the highest intellectual being in an arc of ascent, corresponding to the intellectual beings of the arc of descent. Meanwhile both arcs are in ever proportionate and well-balanced expansion.

The use of the term self-love and love of expression may raise suspicion of an attempt to resort to analogical argument. To remove this suspicion we have given further explanation about

the implications of the creative method of causation that can be ascribed to the Absolute One in His relation to the finite beings.

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

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

Self-Love
Self Expression

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

the love of self expression. This is the base of all the above-mentioned terms of creative and active attitudes. This connective medium between the two attitudes of conscious beings, in the case of the human cognitive self and possibility in the case of other finite cognitive selves may be associated perceptibly or imperceptibly with some emotion and affection. This implies the cognitive self being affected by emotion and affection. Such a connective medium associated with any process of affecting the essence or the essential attributes of the cognitive self cannot be true of the Absolute One uncaused cause. Therefore, such emotional or affectionate love is to be negated from the absolute cause. But there should be some connective medium in between the two attitudes there also.

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

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

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

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

Meditate His Bounties

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

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

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

(f) *The relation of the object (purpose) to the building, the concept of which becomes the motive for the agent to undertake the production.* — The relations of these two causes (e) and (f) to the effect are of agential nature in the sense that they are not the components of the effect nor the originator of the effect. They do not bring the material or the formal part of the effect into existence. But one acts in bringing the material and formal parts together, and the other (purpose) makes the agent to act.

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

(g) *The relation of a cognitive and volitive self to the idea produced by it (the self) within the region of the mind, with no other means but his own attention and will.* — The ideas so originated in that region are totally dependent in their coming into being and their subsistence in their material and formal part on the will and intention of the self. The self is neither the formal nor the material components of the ideas, so that it may in its effectiveness be affected by division, composition or transformation. Nor is its activity like that of the incomplete producing agent or the motive of his action mentioned in (e) and (f).

The effectiveness of the cognitive self in bringing the ideas into existence within the region of the mind is not associated with any change in the essence or essential attributes of the self. The activity does not affect His Oneness. So this last causal relation can only be true of the Absolute One in His relation to the created many. This is called creation in its true sense and the Qur'an terms it as *Ibda'* and this is what the term, '*Be, then it is*' (*Kunfayakun*) means. (Ch. XXXVI: v 82)

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

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

CHAPTER THREE

Revelation

Unique in Oneness

According to the Qur'an, He (Allah), the Absolute Reality and Truth, the Absolute Conscious One of Infinite Nature and Perfection, is the First and the Last, the Apparent and the Hidden, the All-in-All, the Self-Existing, Self-Sustaining, Unique in Oneness, not as the basis for all realities, but as the Creative Might by Whose agency every finite being exists, subsists and is sustained. What is true of every finite being is true of their total, which is termed as the universe (*'alam*) or is subdivided as worlds (*'alamin*). Thus He is the Great (*Al-'Azim*). Nothing is devoid of Him and He is not devoid of anything. This means Absolute Fullness (*Al-Samad*), All-Pervading, All-Embracing *(Bekul-e Shiyin Muheet)*,[1] All-Witnessing (*Ala-Akul-e Shiyin* Shahid),[2] nearer to everything than the thing itself. At the same time, He is High, Sublime, Transcendent (*Al-'Ala*) in that every finite being falls short of being co-extensive with Him in His essence or attributes and also incapable of reaching Him, because they all are finite while He is Infinite. The distance between the finite and the infinite is always infinite. So, as the Immanent, He is every thing and being in essence and attributes. But as the Transcendent He is with nothing and no being is with

Him in essence or attributes. Every thing is His manifestation. Therefore, He is identical with every thing, but nothing is identical with Him; nothing can be His incarnation even the universe as a whole. The Qur'an says: '*Surely those who said, verily God is Christ or God and Christ are the same became disbelievers*' (Ch. V: vs 17, 72-73);[3] i.e. these are those who co-extended Christ with God and identified him with God. Again the Qur'an says, '*Verily those who said, God is the third of the three became disbelievers*' (Ch. V: v 73). But in Ch. LVIII: v 7, the Qur'an says,

مَا يَكُونُ مِن نَّجْوَىٰ ثَلَٰثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ
رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا
هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ
وَلَا أَدْنَىٰ مِن ذَٰلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرَ
إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا

'*There is no secret conference of three but He is their fourth, nor of five but He is their sixth, nor of less than that or more but He is with them wheresoever they may be (but not counted with them).*'

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

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

انظر كيف فضلنا بعضهم على بعض
وللآخرة أكبر درجات
وأكبر تفضيلا ○

'*See how We prefer one above another, and verily the Hereafter will be greater in degrees and greater in preferment.*'(Ch. XVII: v 21)[6]

The Arc of Descent and Ascent

The higher in degree of reality, the closer it is to the Absolute Real. The realities of lesser degree are the manifestations of the higher ones. Thus the hierarchy of the realities begins with the highest possible being, which is the immediate manifestation (emanation) of the Absolute and ends with the four dimensional primal matter, the lowest and the least of all in the degree of reality, with which the descending process terminates, and the ascending process of relative realities begins. Thus primal matter itself is the lowest revealed form of relative reality and becomes the ground for the evolutionary process, which forms another hierarchy of relative realities. It begins with matter in its simplest form and ends with man, the most complicated intellectual being of the highest order. These two arcs of descent and ascent, the devolutionary and evolutionary hierarchies of relative realities, form the complete circle of the Absolute Reality. These two arcs perfectly coincide with each other, so far as the stages and degrees are concerned. Every stage or degree in the arc of descent must have its corresponding stage and degree in the arc of ascent, so that there could be no gap in either arc.

٣- الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ؕ
مَا تَرٰى فِيْ خَلْقِ الرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْ تَفٰوُتٍ ؕ
فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۙ
هَلْ تَرٰى مِنْ فُطُوْرٍ ○
٤- ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ
يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا
وَّهُوَ حَسِيْرٌ ○

'*Who created the seven heavens layer above layer; thou seest not in the creation of the Beneficient (God) any defect or incongruity. Then look thou again: Seest thou any gap? 'Then repeat thou (thy) gaze again and again. Thy gaze shall return unto thee, dulled, being wearied.*' (Ch. LXVII: vs 3-4)

This is what the laws of radiation and reflection require. The two arcs are governed by the laws of radiation and reflection, or the laws of action and reaction. The arc of descent, the downward hierarchy, is radiation in the process of deflection and refraction, conditioned only with the nature, extent and duration of its immediate source from which it proceeds. It is unaffected by the conditions of the ground to which it reaches; while the arc of ascent is the reflection of the radiation, conditioned with the nature, number, extent and duration of the grounds which receive the radiation. The radiation may be one and of a long duration, but the reflection, with matter or material beings as its ground, may differ greatly from the radiation, in number and duration. For instance, the soul or self to which one refers as I: '*By the soul as it is perfected*',[7] is the reflection of what is termed as spirit (*Ruh*), the outcome of God's creative will and command.[8] Spirit is the radiation from God and is one, and has the relative degree of eternity due to its being unconditioned with the ever-becoming nature of the matter on which it works. But the soul is the reflection and result of the active spirit, conditioned by the changing and becoming nature of the material ground. Thus with the grounds of different natures and qualities the reflections are bound to

vary in number, nature and duration while the active spirit remains the same.

٥٠- وَمَآ أَمْرُنَآ إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ
كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ○

'And Our command is not but one word 'Be' and it becomes, like the twinkling of an eye.' (Ch. LIV: v 50)

١٧- أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً
فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌۢ بِقَدَرِهَا
فَٱحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَّابِيًا ۚ
وَمِمَّا يُوقِدُونَ عَلَيْهِ فِى النَّارِ ٱبْتِغَآءَ
حِلْيَةٍ أَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِّثْلُهُۥ ۚ
كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْحَقَّ وَٱلْبَٰطِلَ ۚ
فَأَمَّا ٱلزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَآءً ۖ
وَأَمَّا مَا يَنفَعُ ٱلنَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ
كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْأَمْثَالَ ○

'He sendeth down water from the heavens, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent beareth along the swelling foam (mounting to the surface): (Even so) and from that (the ore) what they melt in the fire for the sake of (making) ornaments or (the necessary) implements, arises a scum like it; Thus compareth God the truth and the falsehood; then as for the scum, it passeth away as a worthless thing; and as for that which profiteth the people, then it remaineth in the earth; Thus doth God set forth parables.'(Ch. XIII: v 17)

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

٢٩- قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّى بِٱلْقِسْطِ ۖ
وَأَقِيمُوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ
عِندَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ

وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۚ
كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ ۝

'*Say thou: "My Lord hath enjoined justice and set ye upright your faces at (each time and place) of prostration, and call upon Him, being sincere exclusively unto Him in religion; even as He brought you forth (in the beginning) so unto Him shall ye also return".*' (Ch. VII: v 29)

١٠٤-يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ ۚ
كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ ۚ
وَعْدًا عَلَيْنَا ۚ
إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ۝

'*On that day will We roll up the heaven, as is rolled up the written scroll; as We caused the first creation, so will We get it returned. It is a promise binding Us, verily We were doing it.*' (Ch. XXI: v 104)

٤٩-قُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ
وَمَا يُبْدِئُ الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيدُ ۝

'*Say thou: "The truth hath come and falsehood neither bringeth forth anything nor doth it reproduce".*' (Ch. XXXIV: v 49)

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

٢٤-وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا
نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ۚ
وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۚ
إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ۝

'*And say they: "Naught it is save our life in this world; we die and live and destroyeth us not but time." For them there is no knowledge of that; they do but (merely) guess.*'(Ch. XLV: v 24)

Absolute and Relative Reality

The conclusion is that (a) the Absolute Reality, the Infinite One, reveals or manifests Himself creatively, (which means producing an effect without being associated with any change in the cause)

in the relative reality of the finite objects. These objects differ from each other in the degree of reality according to the stage they occupy in the hierarchy of relative realities. And (b) these finite objects owe their degrees of reality to their being His manifestation, subservient to His will.

١١٦- وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا
سُبْحٰنَهٗ بَلْ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
كُلٌّ لَّهٗ قٰنِتُوْنَ ○

'*And they say God hath taken unto Him a son. Glory be to Him. Nay! His is all that is in the heavens and the earth; Him (alone) everything obeyeth (supplicantly).*' (Ch. II: v 116)

٤٨- اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلٰى مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
يَّتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلٰلُهٗ
عَنِ الْيَمِيْنِ وَالشَّمَآئِلِ سُجَّدًا لِّلّٰهِ
وَهُمْ دٰخِرُوْنَ ○

'*Or see they not towards what God hath created that everything turneth its shadow to the right and to the left, prostrating in obeisance unto God, while they lie abased.*' (Ch. XVI: v 48)

١٨- اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهٗ
مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ
وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُوْمُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ
وَالدَّوَآبُّ وَكَثِيْرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ

'*Seest thou not that God (is He), unto Him prostrateth whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth and the sun and the moon and the stars and the mountains and the trees and animals, and many of the people.*' (Ch. XXII: v 18)

٢٧- وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ
ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ
وَهُوَ اَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى
فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ○

'*And He it is Who originateth the creation, then causeth it to*

return again, and to Him it is most easy; His are the most exalted similitudes in the heavens and the earth; and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.'(Ch. XXX: v 27)

١١- ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى إِلَى السَّمَآءِ
وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ
فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ
ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا
قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِينَ ○

'Then He applied Himself unto the heaven, which was yet smoke, so said He unto it and unto the earth: "Come ye two, willing or reluctant?" Said the two: "We do come willingly".'(Ch. XLI: v 11)

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

١٥- يَآيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنتُمُ الْفُقَرَآءُ
إِلَى اللّٰهِ
وَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ○

'*O ye people! Ye are the needy unto God; and God (alone) is He Who is the Self-Sufficient, the Most Praised One.*' (Ch. XXXV: v 15)

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

٢١- وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِندَنَا خَزَآئِنُهُ
وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهُ
إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ○

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

This is the fact when we speak of the finite in relation to the

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

٩۔ يٰمُوسٰٓى اِنَّهٗٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝

'*O Moses! Verily it is. I am God, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.*' (Ch. XXVII: v 9)

٣٠۔ فَلَمَّآ اَتٰىهَا نُوْدِىَ
مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْاَيْمَنِ
فِى الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبٰرَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ
اَنْ يّٰمُوْسٰٓى اِنِّىْٓ اَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝

'*When came he unto it (he) was called (by a voice) from the right side of the valley, in the blessed spot, from the tree, saying: "O Moses! Verily I am God, the Lord of the worlds.*' (Ch. XXVIII: v 30)

٥٢۔ وَنَادَيْنٰهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ الْاَيْمَنِ
وَقَرَّبْنٰهُ نَجِيًّا ۝

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

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

of consciousness and will, is, according to the Qur'an, not totally void and bereft of these excellences.

٤٤۔ تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْاَرْضُ
وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ ؕ
وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَیْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ
وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ ؕ
اِنَّهٗ كَانَ حَلِيْمًا غَفُوْرًا ۝

'Celebrate His glory the seven heavens and the earth, and (all) those in them; and there is not any thing but it glorifieth Him, but ye understand not their glorification; Verily, He is the Forbearing, the Oft-Forgiving.' (Ch. XVII: v 44)

۱۱۔ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰۤى اِلَى السَّمَآءِ
وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ
فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ
ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا اَوْ كَرْهًا ؕ
قَالَتَاۤ اَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِيْنَ ۝

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

۱۲۔ فَقَضٰىهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوَاتٍ
فِيْ يَوْمَيْنِ وَاَوْحٰى فِيْ كُلِّ سَمَآءٍ اَمْرَهَا ؕ
وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيْحَ ۖ
وَحِفْظًا ؕ
ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيْرُ
الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ ۝

'And He made them seven heavens in two days (periods), and revealed in every heaven His will; and adorned We the lower heavens with lights (of the brillant stars), and made it guarded (with angels); That is the decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.' (Ch. XLI: v 12)

۱۔ سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ
مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ

وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ○

'They all praise the Lord of the universe: praiseth whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth the Glory of God; and He is the Ever-Prevalent, the All-Wise.' (Ch. LIX: v 1)

١- سَبَّحَ لِلّٰهِ
مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ○

'Halloweth God whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; and He is the Ever-Prevalent, the All-Wise.' (Ch. LXI: v 1)

١- يُسَبِّحُ لِلّٰهِ
مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ
الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوْسِ
الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ○

'Halloweth the Glory of God whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, the King, the Most Holy, the Ever-Prevalent, the All-Wise.' (Ch. LXII: v 1)

١- يُسَبِّحُ لِلّٰهِ
مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ
لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ۚ
وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ○

'Halloweth the Glory of God whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; His (exclusively) is the kingdom and unto Him (only) is due (all) praise, and He (alone) is over all things, All-Powerful.' (Ch. LXIV: v 1)

٥- بِاَنَّ رَبَّكَ اَوْحٰى لَهَا ۝

'That thy Lord hath revealed unto her.'(Ch. XCIX: v 5)

The heavens, earth, matter and material beings of celestial or terrestrial realms, in accordance with their degree of reality, are all associated with some degree of cognition and volition. They are dominated and administered by a spiritual force which is termed by some scientists as the 'fifth dimension,' responsible for such phenomena as are inexplicable in terms of four

dimensional space-time. In short, life in its highest sense, i.e. consciousness which is identical with the Real One of Infinite Creative Might, is bound to assert itself in some way or other and to some degree in every manifestation of Him: even in matter and material beings.[10]

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

Besides the two aforesaid angles of the finites in relation to the Infinite and the finites in relation to the finites, there are two other points of view: (1) that of the finites in relation to each other and (2) that of every finite in relation to its own various aspects. According to the first viewpoint, the terms (prefixes) 'in and out,' 'inner and outer,' may find their application. The finites of higher grades in the arc of descent may be considered as the 'Ins' or inner aspects of lower ones, which in turn may be viewed as the 'Outs,' or outer aspects or revelation of higher ones. But in the arc of ascent the finites of lower grades form the 'Ins,' i.e. inner layers, the latent potentiality and possibility of the higher ones. They (the higher layers), in turn may be considered as the developments of the lower ones. The difference between the Ins and Outs of the two arcs is that the process in the former is from Absolute Reality, actuality and creativeness to the utmost possibility, potentiality and recipience, while in the latter the process is reversed, i.e. from possibilities, potentiality and recipiency to reality, actuality and creativeness. Hence the appropriate term for it is development, the process of becoming, what one was not, or having what one did not have, as opposed to revelation which is the process of displaying what is already inherent in certain faculties and power. But, as the law of sufficient reasoning requires, development in this sense cannot take place without the direct or indirect assistance of some creative agencies of the former arc (the arc of descent). The developments in the world of matter, celestial or terrestrial, are affected either through the psychical and intellectual forces, faculties or entities of the arc of descent, termed as angels, or through the agency of the material beings or psychical or

intellectual attainment (such as man, animal and plant) and even the rotating nucleus of the atomic or solar system which are in correspondence with those of the other arc. Thus in all material developments the developed forms have two aspects, the potential and actual; the former is rooted in matter and comes from within, while the latter is not in matter; it is revealed to matter by the agency which is actual in some way or other. The material used in the structure of a machine has the potentiality for the form and the form is the developed state of that potentiality, but, the form is given to the material by the intellectual agency of man. Actualization or realization of potentialities is always accomplished by some actual agency. The materials of the embryo have the potentiality of becoming the child, capable of assuming the form of a baby.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ
يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا
هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ○

'*He it is Who fashioneth you in the wombs (of your mothers) as He liketh. There is no God but He, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.*' (Ch. III: v 6)

Revelation Quranic term Atom, Soul, Ego, Appetite, Self-Consciousness

Before dealing with the last viewpoint concerning every finite of the arc of ascent in relation to its own various aspects, the term revelation used hitherto should be further clarified. Revelation, literally means removal of the veil, to show what is hidden. The Arabic equivalents of the term in this sense are *Ibda'*, *izhar*, *i'lan, tamsil* and *tajali*, (i.e., disclosure or communication of the divine will and message through unusual and supernatural means), are specific shades of the meaning of the term. The most suitable Arabic equivalent of revelation is the term *Wahy* and its derivatives as used in the Qur'an. But revelation does not convey the exact meaning of the term *nazala* or *nuzul* and their derivatives used in the Qur'an. The term in all its shades of

meaning keeps the sense of 'coming down to evidence.' It applies to concrete objects and concrete ups and downs as well as the abstract objects and abstract ups and downs.

٦٣- وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ نَّزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ
مَآءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا
لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ
بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ۝

'*And if thou ask them, "Who sendeth down from heaven the water, and giveth life with it unto the earth after its death?" Certainly will they say: "God!" Say, "All praise is His." Nay! most of them understand not.*' (Ch. XXIX: v 63)

٢١- وَإِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَآئِنُهٗ
وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهٗٓ
إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ۝

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

١٩٢- وَإِنَّهٗ لَتَنْزِيْلُ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝
١٩٣- نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوْحُ الْأَمِيْنُ ۝
١٩٤- عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِيْنَ ۝

'*And verily it hath come down from the Lord of the Worlds. Came down with it the Spirit trusted, upon thee (O Our Prophet Muhammad), that thou mayest be the warner.*' (Ch. XXVI: vs 192-194)

٢٥- لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ
لِيَقُوْمَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيْدَ فِيْهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيْدٌ
وَّمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ
وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّنْصُرُهٗ
وَرُسُلَهٗ بِالْغَيْبِ
إِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ ۝

'*Indeed sent We our Apostles with clear proofs, and sent We down*

with them the Books and the scale that people may establish themselves in justice; and sent We down iron wherein is latent (in its use) mighty power and also benefits for mankind and that God may prove who helpeth Him and His Apostles in secret: verily God is All-Strong, the Ever-Prevalent.' (Ch. LVII: v 25)

Descent and Ascent

It has also been used for physical and concrete objects coming into existence and evidence (*zahur*) as if they descended from the height of Godhead or of the angelical realm to the ground of the material world. In other words, the term descent (*nuzul*) used in the Qur'an implies coming down from above, while the term revelation used in the English language as its equivalent implies hidden and apparent. The opposite of descent (*nuzul*) is ascent and development (*sa'ud*, *'uruj*, *irtiqa*). Having these terminological differences in perspective we go back to the viewpoint in question, i.e. every finite of the arc of ascent in relation to its various aspects. The four dimensional matter, the starting point in the arc of ascent is the inert ground, the carrier of unlimited possibilities, potentialities and receptivities. Through the agency of the immaterial force, in immediate touch with it, the matter is divided into the smallest quantitative particles or atoms or specific individualities, (the *dharrah* of the Qur'an). Each individual entity or unit, as such, is composed of the rotating central part which has been proven, recently, to be composed of three components known as proton, positron and neutron, and the revolving satellitic parts. The central part is the ground for receiving radiation, energy or force with one hand and reflecting it to the extent of its immediate potentiality with the other. This reflection, or the energy conditioned by the immediate recipiency of the ground, is the soul, working in the mechanism of the atomic unit. This is the dynamic force which produces, first, rotation in the central part and subsequently, revolution in the satellites. Of the material and physical forces none produces such effect without some mechanical device which is absent

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

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

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

figurative, as the new layer or stratum. This layer or stratum in turn becomes the ground for the development of protoplasm, which is the original and substantial ground for new forms of life, found commonly in the kingdoms of plants, animals and human beings. The process is generally the same. Molecules of various substances — oxygen, hydrogen, carbon and nitrogen — join together in particular proportions and form a common central ground, the nucleus of vegetable life. This ground receives and reflects the immaterial energy which produces movements of various directions — nourishment, growth, self-repair and reproduction — within the simplest organ, termed as the primitive cell, or protoplasm. This stage is the third stratum in the course of development and is the ground for further developments through the same process. By the combination of the living cells of different kinds in various forms and ratios under a common center of a more complicated nature and of a higher capacity of specific kinds, new individual souls and new lives of various species come into being and start their progress. These selves, souls or ego-centres are surrounded by their (a) internal layers or strata, (2) external environments of physical nature, terrestrial and celestial, and (3) immaterial agencies of the arc of descent. They (the ego-centers) are always in the stage of give and take, act and react, govern and be governed and receive and reflect. They influence and govern their inner layers and strata or the subordinate centers within them and in return they are also influenced and governed by them. The same is their relation with the physical environment. They influence and are influenced. Their relation with the immaterial agencies of the lower grades is also the same as that of the material environment, i.e. reciprocal. But their relation with the agencies of higher grades is that of a beggar to a giver, the more the begging and want, the more the giving and enrichment.

The vegetable soul at its zenith of the faculty of nourishment, growth and reproduction is the base for the development of animal faculties, such as appetite, lust, sensory and voluntary movement. The height of vegetable life is the ground of animal life. These animal faculties imply *apriori* the higher degree of

self-consciousness, self-love, self-preservation and self-expansion which are absent in the vegetable kingdom. These are the subjective aspects of the animal self or soul. In the order mentioned here one is the basis and background of the objective aspect of all animal faculties of cognition, volition, emotion and instinct. Self-consciousness is the root and background of the development of all the subjective and objective aspects and the organs and instruments of animal faculties. It is true of all animals. The difference between one animal and another in this respect may be a difference of degree, number and extent of the faculties. From the simplest cell, insect, reptile, to the most complicated mammalia of the land, the high animals of the sea and air, all have these in common and vary from each other only in degree and kind. The sensual faculty which begins with the sense organ of touch (with all its varieties) to the sense of sight and hearing is based on self-consciousness.

Senses: Basis of Imagination and Memory on which Intellectual Faculty is Based — A Gift

The senses in turn form the basis for development of the faculties of imagination and memory, which are the zenith of the animal mind. The animal kingdom may be divided and classified according to the degree, number and kind of senses and power of imagination and memory. However the animal mind has two ways out to the material world surrounding it. One is the external senses which connect the mind to the surrounding material world directly and the other is the internal strata or the subordinate self-centers of pre and post-vegetable stages which connect the mind to the surrounding world of matter indirectly. They are the unconscious and the subconscious strata of the animal soul. They are subjacents to the animal conscious self. They are the seat of vegetable and animal instincts, which form the basis of appetite, lust, emotion and volition. Thus, though the instincts are working within the animal soul, and influence its course of activities, they are

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

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

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۝

'*He taught him expression.*' (Ch. LV: v 4)

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

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

However, the function of the intellectual faculty of reasoning is to proceed from the known to the unknown by the process of

generalization and particularization, by extracting general ideas from the particular objects of senses and by applying the general ideas to the particular objects of sense. The basis for this function is the self-evident concepts and propositions. These form the basic and categorical mode of the conscious self in the intellectual stage. These are the *apriori* subjective conditions of the intellectual conscious self. They are the actual human modes of intellect into which the animal conscious self develops. This mode of mind like all other specific modes and forms owes its actuality to the two corresponding factors already pointed out namely the passive receptivity of the ground (which here is the animal's conscious self in its zenith of imagination and memory) and the creative agency of the arc of descent (which here must be the higher immaterial being or intellectual faculty). These subjective conditions are undoubtedly acquired and are not inherent in the animal's conscious self. But their acquisition cannot be through the external senses, because the intelligibility of the sensory objects depends on the prior presence of these subjective conditions. It cannot also be through the substrata of the animal self (the unconscious, subconscious and the animal and the vegetable instincts). They are far from having such cognitive faculties and must be considered as the reflection of the descending radiations of the arc of descent; or reflections caused by some super-conscious faculties. In other words, they are the gift from Him through supernatural means.

٢. إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ
نَّبْتَلِيهِ
فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ○

'*Verily We created man from a (small insignificant) life drop of intermingled life germ (of both sexes); in order that We put him to trial, so We endowed him with hearing, seeing.*' (Ch. LXXVI: v 2)

٧٨. وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُم مِّن بُطُونِ
أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا
وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ○

'And God hath brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers — ye knew not anything, and He gave you hearing and sight and heart, that ye may give thanks.'(Ch. XVI: v 78)

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

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

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

Revolving Process of Creation and Reasoning — Belief in *Bada'a-Naskh*

But the most important point to be noted here is that, inspite of the fact that both the process of divine creation (of which man is

a link) and the process of human reasoning within the region of the human mind are circular and revolving, it does not necessarily mean repetition and recurrence of events, the theory adhered to by many schools of thought to the extent that it has become proverbial — 'history repeats itself.' The circular movement or process would certainly mean repetition and recurrence, if the orbit of movement would remain the same. But neither in the case of creation nor in that of reasoning does the orbit of the process necessarily remain the same. In the case of creation, the unlimited conscious might of the Absolute, in the course of its creative descent of refracting nature terminates in the primal matter or the four dimensional ground of unlimited receptively. The unlimited might acting on the ground of unlimited receptivity — four dimensional ground (space-time) or ever-becoming ground, the ground of constant change, results necessarily, as its reaction and reflection, in the appearance (or coming into existence) of new finite beings of different degrees of perfection. These new beings are the new links in the chain and order of creation. By adding new links the orbit expands necessarily. By expansion of the orbit more potentialities and receptivities come to the central ground for development. So, along with the unlimited length of the fourth dimension, the orbit of creation expands. Hence in no round will the individual links of the circle remain exactly as before; so there is no repetition of the events.

١- اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
جَاعِلِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا اُولِيْٓ اَجْنِحَةٍ
مَّثْنٰى وَثُلٰثَ وَرُبٰعَ ؕ
يَزِيْدُ فِى الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝

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

Verily God over all things hath power.' (Ch. XXXV: v 1)

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ
وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ۝

'*And the heaven, We did raise it up with (Our) Might, and We make the vast extent (thereof).*' (Ch. LI: v 47)

In the case of the intellectual process, the expansion of the orbit is clearer because the conscious self of every individual is a link in the expanding process of creation. He is connected with the two arcs of creation: the active immaterial agencies of the arc of descent and the recipient of the arc of ascent. Hence, along with the expansion in such surroundings the expansion of the human intellect in its circular process of reasoning is inevitable. The revolution and evolution in the objective and subjective worlds of creation and reasoning, or in the world without human self-consciousness and the world within it, are necessary and go together. So the known, the knowing and the knower with regard to man are in constant cyclical evolution. Hence the Qur'an instructs: '*Say (O Prophet), "O my Lord! increase my knowledge*,'[11] and the Prophet says: 'In loss is he whose two days remain the same (unchanged).' (*Bihar al-Anwar II,* by Majlisi)

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

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

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

'*He knoweth what is before them and what is behind them, while they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge save that which He willeth.*' (Ch. II: v 255)

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

which appeared to the son, Isma'il. Ibrahim saw in a dream what he was doing and the son understood that it was an order which was obeyed completely. The act of slaughtering which Ibrahim had to do, was done, and the patience and readiness which the son had to show, was shown.[12] They both did what they were ordered to do. Being slaughtered was in God's hand and was withheld from Him. There is no question of abrogation of any order or contradiction of any information. Therefore, any tradition that an infallible representative of God had been informed by Him and he (the representative) in turn informed the people of the happening of a certain event, which did not happen as it had been foretold, is false. The story of Adam given in the Qur'an (Ch. II: v 30) says:

٣٠- وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ
فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوٓا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا
مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ ۖ وَ
نَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ
إِنِّيٓ أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ○

'(Recollect O Our Apostle Muhammad) when said thy Lord unto the angels: "Verily I (intend to) appoint a vicegerent in the earth." They said, "Wilt though (O our Lord!) appoint therein one who will cause mischief and shed blood, while we celebrate by Thy praise and hallow Thee alone?" Said (the Lord to the angels), "Verily, I know what ye know not".' (Ch. II: v 30)

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

Resurrection Day.'

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

Nature of Divine Knowledge and Planning

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

For the sake of analysis only His knowledge of the objects other than Himself may be differentiated from His knowledge of His essence. His knowledge of His own essence may be said to be prior to His knowledge of His own attributes. It is true that the real attributes, such as knowledge and love, are actually identical

with His essence and with each other. But from an analytical point of view these ideas differ from the essence, and from each other too. So, in this respect, His attributes are not in line with His essence. Otherwise the attributes would have the essence and the essence would have been composed of those ideas. The same would be the case of those ideas in relation to each other; every idea would be composed of the other. Thus, though every thing is known to Him at the same time that He is known to Himself, yet the knowledge of Himself, speaking analytically, is prior to the knowledge of His attributes. It is through His knowledge of His essence, that His attributes may be said to be known to Him and in turn His knowledge of His attributes may, for the sake of analysis, be said to be prior to His knowledge of the finite objects, which are the revealed aspects of the attributes. It is through His knowledge of His attributes that the finite objects are known to Him. In this manner, among the finite objects, His knowledge of those ideas and objects which are more universal and comprehensive may be classified as prior to His knowledge of those ideas and objects which are less in universality and comprehensiveness — the ideas which tend more towards particularity. In short, simultaneous knowledge of two things does not necessarily mean that they are coordinate in being known. The knowledge of one may be subordinate to the knowledge of the other. The knowledge of the real cause means simultaneous knowledge of the effect, but in order of sequence the knowledge of the latter may be taken as subordinate and posterior to the knowledge of the former. The knowledge of the cause implies the knowledge of the effect; the explicit knowledge of the cause means the implicit knowledge of the effect, but explicit knowledge of the latter is next in the order of sequence to the explicit knowledge of the former. Thus, the knowledge of the attributes are implicit in His knowledge of His own essence, but explicitly they are not there. The explicit knowledge of the attributes is posterior in order to the explicit knowledge of the essence. Similarily, the explicit knowledge of the attributes implies the knowledge of the finite object of the

highest order in universality and comprehensiveness; but its explicit condition is next in rank and order and is subordinate to the explicit knowledge of the attributes. So, the knowledge of the finite object of the highest order implies the knowledge of the object next to it, in causal order and rank. The explicit knowledge of the higher means implicit knowledge of the lower, but the explicit knowledge of the lower cannot be aligned in order with the explicit knowledge of the higher. Nevertheless, everything, every being, essence, attribute is known and present to Him explicitly, at one and the same time but each in its own stage and not in the prior stage. Any Qur'anic passage or apostolic statement which seems to indicate that there was or will be a time when God was or will be and nothing else was or will be with Him, or that there was or will be a time when some thing was not or will not be known to Him, should be interpreted as to mean a certain stage and state and not any point of time.

Instead of the pronoun for time, 'when,' it should be taken to mean the pronoun for stage and state, 'where.' Once a sage was asked about the meaning of the celebrated saying of the Holy Prophet, 'God was, when nothing else was with Him,' and he said, 'Even now He is as He was, there is nothing with Him.' It means in the state of His absoluteness nothing else (finite) was, is or will be with Him. This should be the exact interpretation of the first verse of Chapter 76:

١- هَلْ أَتَىٰ عَلَى الْإِنسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ
لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا ○

'*Surely did come over man to pass an occasion of time when he was nothing mentioned of*?' (Ch. LXXVI: v 1)

Al-dahr is duration (time), as an undivided length of time or 'eternity to eternity'. In the last sense time is almost synonomous with *abad* (always), *sarmad* (continue), constant, permanent and perpetual. In other words, time has two aspects — non-constant and changing, and constant and perpetual. Time as a whole is perpetual and in part is non-constant and changing. The total,

the constant and perpetual aspect of time is *dahr* and its changing and non-constant aspect is *hin* (occurrence). The relation of events to the changing aspect of time, past, present or future is *hin*;(a) the relation of one changing phenomenon to another changing phenomenon is time. The relation of the changing parts of time to its undivided whole is *dahr*. The relation of changing phenomenon to the perpetual one is *dahr*. (b) The perpetual aspect of time to the self-subsistent one is *sarmad* (c), i.e. the relation of perpetual to perpetual is *sarmad* (*diam*).

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

٢٤-وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا
نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ
وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ○

'*And say they: "Naught it is save our life in this world; we die and live and destroyeth us not but time." For them there is no knowledge of that; They do but (merely) guess.*' (Ch. XLV: v 24)

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

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

act as such requires something as the subject of becoming, and an agent to produce this becoming of the subject. The subject of becoming must be a thing identical with becomingness; something the nature of which is becomingness. Take for instance speech, the utterance of any word, phrase or sentence. Though all its parts, the letters, are present in the mind simultaneously yet in assuming the form of sound in pronunciation, the parts are bound to appear in succession, one letter after the other, because the sound is a particular form of movement, its parts cannot in the nature of things come into being but in a successive way. This successive continuity is not effected by itself, nor by the previous part which has been uttered before the next comes into being. It is the effect of the continuous attention of the speaker to achieve his aim of conveying his ideas to the listeners. The attention embraces all the parts of speech at once, so they are present simultaneously in the mind, but it is due to the gradual nature of the sound that the effectiveness of the attention is restricted from simultaniety to successional order. In this way the continuity of successive events depends on the constancy of the power or force behind the gradual happenings. Perpetual phenomenon owes its perpetuity to the perpetual cause behind it which is ultimately the self-subsistent (*sarmad*), and the changing and becoming phenomenon owes its becomingness to something of which becomingness is its nature. Therefore, *dahr*, the perpetual becoming, is itself caused and cannot be the first cause uncaused.

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

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

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

٢. إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ
نَّبْتَلِيهِ
فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ○

'*Verily We created man from a (small insignificant) life drop of intermingled life germ (of both sexes); in order that We put him to trial, so We endowed him with hearing, seeing.*' (Ch. LXXVI: v 2)

but even with regards to his heavenly phase, an occasional part (*hin*) of time (*dahr*) has passed when man was nothing to be mentioned. In a certain stage of eternity the explicit notion of man is absent, though implicitly it is there. In the stage of God's explicit knowledge of His attributes, the perfect men are implicitly known, but not mentioned. This passage asserts that in certain stages of eternity, even the (explicit) notion of man is absent. As stated by the Imams (of the *Ahl al-Bayt*) the real man (the most perfect man) is in eternity (in the knowledge of God) but implicitly and unnoticed in certain stages already pointed out. So, a being as such cannot be termed as eternal. Eternity in its true sense is not applicable but to the Absolute One — the Divine Essence — which according to the Imams has no name, no sign, no predicate to be said about Him, save that 'He Is' and 'Is is He.' This fact is referred to by 'Ali: 'Whatever is known directly is made (is created),' and the sixth Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq

says, 'Whatever you defined and distinguished in its most exact sense, it is created like yourself and it returns to you; it mirrors your mind only and not the Reality.' There can be no Eternal but the One who is absolute and undefinable. Any thing or being defined is not the Absolute, but is the manifestation of the Absolute, and, therefore, dependent on the Absolute, and is not self-existent or self-subsistent. So it is in some sense or other created. Any thing created can be termed an event (*hadith*). All that can be said here, is that though the first manifestation of the Absolute is finite and definable, and so in relation to *sarmad* (eternity) is an event, yet as it embraces implicitly all the subsequent chains of events (the finites of lesser degree), it can be termed as eternal relatively (in relation to the finites and events which it implies). Thus, the first manifestation, or the perfect man, is an event from one aspect and is eternal from another aspect. The implicit existence of real and perfect man in the high grades of relative eternity refers to the traditions and the apostolic statements which indicate that the perfect men of highest order had a shadow-like existence in the peaks of the hierarchy of the arc of descent prior in order to all other possible beings of high order.

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

of freedom — that is to the level of the immediate radiating spirit of which the soul is a reflection.

The main reason for emphasis on *bada'a* is to assert that the destiny of creatures is not determined by God (Providence) in disregard of the creature's recipiency, merits and efforts. The destiny of man, pleasure or pain, paradise or hell as a consequent, is predictable by any one who knows the antecedent causes. But the knowledge of the antecedent is not the cause of the consequent. It is the cause of the knowledge of the consequent. God, the Omniscient, knows of every antecedent and every consequent before they come into being. But His knowledge of the antecedents and the consequents is not the cause of their coming into being. His knowledge of the preceeding and the following events justifies only His prediction, and does not hold Him responsible. To some this argument may appear fallacious, in the sense that it is true that the knowledge of the cause is not the cause of the effect. It is the cause of the causes. We are concerned with the knowledge which is the cause of, and responsible for, the effect. We are dealing with the knowledge of the first cause-uncaused which is the first and the ultimate cause of every finite being, big or small, material or immaterial, and of their essence and attributes and their total. The brief answer to this question is that there are two kinds of knowledge. One is the knowledge on which the known depends and the other is the knowledge which depends on the known. Take the example of an architect who intends to plan a building. By his intention associated with his creative knowledge of architecture he creates a space (a ground) in his mind and then he begins to specify every portion of the imagined space (or ground) for a particular department of the intended building. The imagined space (or ground) may be round, triangular, square, pentagon or polygon, etc. Each of these shapes and figures has its own inherent and peculiar property which cannot be otherwise. A circular ground cannot have angles. No power can create a circle with angles. A triangular figure cannot be without three angles, nor can it have four or two angles. A

creator can create within or without his mind any triangle, but he cannot give an angle more or take away one or more angles from it. Three angles are the analytical property of a triangle and therefore are uncaused. The same is true of other shapes. They have their analytical properties uncaused. Every ground of peculiar shape is suitable for a specific form of building for which no other shape is suitable. Besides these, every ground has its center, circumference, and the parts in-between. Every part is suitable for a particular department for which the other parts are not. The parts were not arranged in the whole by the architect after the whole was imagined. The architect imagined the whole (the space). That imagination of the whole implies all the parts as its inherent and intrinsic property. Then the specific suitability of each part is also the inherent and analytical property thereof. It is not a synthetic attribute, an additional ability to require a cause of its own. Thus the architect with his creative knowledge of architecture imagined the whole space (or ground) directly and the parts and their specific suitability indirectly. So the parts and their suitability are uncaused in the sense that they require no separate cause. Enough is the cause of the whole to be their cause. This knowledge of architecture is the first phase of the architect's knowledge without which the ground for designing could not be imagined. This is the knowledge on which the known depends. The second phase of his knowledge is the detailed planning and specifications of every part for a particular department, which depends on the specific suitability of each part, which is the inherent and analytical property of the part, and hence uncaused. Therefore, it is true to say that there are two divine determinations — one is pre-detailed planning (*qabl at-taqdir*) and the other is post-detailed planning (*qada ba'd at-taqdir*). The creative knowledge, associated with the intention, *mashiat ûla* (determination) to create, is the cause on which the whole, parts and their specific suitabilities depend. But the knowledge of the course of development and the ultimate destiny of every part and particle of the universe and of the whole cannot but be in accordance with the specific nature and suitability of each, and so depends on it (i.e.

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

Prayer and Supplications (*Du'a)*

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

١٨٦- وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي
عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ
أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ
إِذَا دَعَانِ
فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ○

'*And when My servants ask thee about Me, then (say unto them), Verily I am nigh; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he beseecheth unto Me, so let them hearken unto Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright.*'

(The last verse of Ch. XXV:

٧٧- قُلْ مَا يَعْبَؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّي
لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ
فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا ○

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

asserts that but for the supplication of the creatures, God would not have cared for them.

In Ch. XL: V 60, God says:

٦٠- وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِيٓ
أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ

'Pray unto me, I will answer you.'

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

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

٥٣- ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا
نِّعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا

مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝

'That is because God changeth not any favour (which) He bestoweth upon a people until they (themselves) change their own selves, and that God is All-Seeing, All-Hearing.' (Ch. VIII: v 53)

لَهُ مُعَقِّبَاتٌ مِّن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ
خَلْفِهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ
حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ
وَإِذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوءًا
فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهُ ۚ
وَمَا لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَالٍ ۝

'...Verily God changeth not the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves; And when willeth God unto any people a punishment, there is no repelling of it for them, there is none besides Him a protector.' (Ch. XIII: v 11)

Human Responsibility
Earning *Kasb*
Divine Measuring

The Qur'an and the apostolic statements assert also the fact that the divine decree (*taqdir*) or determination is of two stages: provisional (*ajal wa qadha-i mu'laq*) and final (*ajal wa qadha-i hatm*). It is in the final stage that the reaction or reflection of the creatures of the arc of ascent is taken into account and accordingly a certain amount of responsibility is put on them (the creatures). Particularly, man as the topmost in the hierarchy, with some degree of free choice, is distinguished with responsibility (Ch. XXXIII: v 72):

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ
فَأَبَيْنَ أَن يَحْمِلْنَهَا
وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنسَانُ ۖ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ۝

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

It is the consequence of this responsibility that the moral imperative of 'what ought to be' takes the place of the natural fact of 'what is.' The 'defacto' (natural fact) of animal life is replaced by the ideal of rational being (man); then the moral, legal, social and political principles and laws become of some meaning and value. Thus *bada'a* in relation to divine knowledge means the appearance of pre-requisite conditions for final determination in the second phase of divine knowledge which depends on the known and not in the first phase on His knowledge, on which the known depends. The doctrine of *bada'a*, based on recognition of the two phases of divine knowledge — the knowledge on which the known depends and the knowledge which depends on the known — along with the theory, already established, of the evolutionary course of the revolving process of creation, is an answer to the fatalistic doctrine of Hindu cults, based on the predestination theory of karma and dharma and of Muslims' faith of the 'Asharite school based on the absolute arbitrary predestination. It is also an answer to the theory of the absolute free will, the other extreme view held by the Mu'atazelites (rationalist school of Sunni theology). The unlimited creative conscious might of the Creator causes the ever-becoming matter (or, space-time of four dimensional beings) to come into existence. Of the three space dimensions, every dimension and every part of each carries a specific and peculiar potentiality and recipiency, which is the analytical and inherent property of that dimension and of that part of it, different from that of the other dimensions or their parts. These varieties of potentialities of each dimension are to be multiplied by the fourth dimension of time which is unlimited. Then the result will be the unlimited potentiality and recipiency to appear in succession, as ground after ground for new planning and new designing. The Qur'an says, every individual, and every nation, every group has a term (period) and every

term has a record (or a book) or a divine 'blue print' of its own and the 'Mother Book' on which the ground and planning depend is with Him!

٣٤- وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهُمْ
لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً
وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ○

'*And for every people (group or nation) is (an appointed) term, so when cometh their (appointed) term, they shall not remain behind an hour (even for the least while) nor can they go before.*' (Ch. VII: v 34)

١١- وَلَنْ يُؤَخِّرَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا
إِذَا جَاءَ أَجَلُهَا
وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ○

'*And never doth God respite a soul, when hath come unto it its fixed time; and God is All-Aware of whatever ye do.*' (Ch. LXIII: v 11)

٣٨- وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَ
جَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَذُرِّيَّةً
وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ
إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ
لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ○

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

٣٩- يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثْبِتُ
وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ ○

'*(Of it) effaceth out God whatever He pleaseth and confirmeth He (similarly). And with Him is the Mother of the Book (basic source).*' (Ch. XIII: v 39)

Every term has a book. This book of term or the terms recorded therein are subject to obliteration or preservation, according to His will (as He wills), which is in accordance with His plan. And the plan is based on the nature, the analytical and inherent

conditions of the ground. '*He created every thing*,' (the ground of every thing: it is what religion terms as nature [*tina* or *tinat*), after which man is moulded), '*then He measured it as measuring ought to be*.' '*He gives everything the mould, mood, or shape which it requires*.' '*He plans and then guides*.' This is what the Qur'anic term *kasb* (earning) means. The Qur'an has repeatedly asserted that 'every one's and every nation's destiny is indebted to what it has earned.'

١٣٤- تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۖ لَهَا مَا
كَسَبَتْ وَ لَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ ۖ وَلَا تُسْئَلُونَ
عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

'*This is a group (nation) that hath passed away; for them is the reward which they (have earned) and ye shall have that which ye (have) earned and ye shall not be questioned for what they had been doing*.' (Ch. II: v 134)

١٤١- تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۖ
لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَ لَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ ۖ
وَ لَا تُسْئَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ○

'*Those are a group (nation) that hath passed away; for them (shall be) that which they (have) earned and for you (shall be) what ye earn and ye will not be questioned about what they had been doing*.'(Ch. II: v 141)

٣٩- وَ أَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعٰى ○

٤٠- وَ أَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرٰى ○

٤١- ثُمَّ يُجْزٰىهُ الْجَزَآءَ الْأَوْفٰى ○

'*And that there is not for man (aught) save what he striveth for, And that his striving shall soon be seen; then shall he be recompensed to the fullest measure*.' (Ch. LII: vs 39-41)

١٧- اَلْيَوْمَ تُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۖ
لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ ۖ
إِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ○

'*This day shall every soul be recompensed for what it hath earned. No injustice (shall be done on the Day): Verily God is quick in reckoning*.' (Ch. XL: v 17)

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

٧٨. أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يُدْرِكْكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ
فِي بُرُوجٍ مُشَيَّدَةٍ ۗ وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ حَسَنَةٌ
يَقُولُوا هَٰذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۖ
وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ
يَقُولُوا هَٰذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ ۚ
قُلْ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۖ
فَمَالِ هَٰؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ
لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ۝

'Wherever ye be, death will overtake you, even if ye be in towers (strong and) lofty; If good befalleth them they say, "This is from God". But if evil befalleth them say they, "This is from thee;" Say (O Our Apostle Muhammad!), "All is from God;" But what hath happened to these people that well-nigh they undertand not anything spoken (to them).' (Ch. IV: v 78)

But on the other hand it is also true that the specific inherent recipiency and potentiality of every ground has its restrictive (effect) function.

٧٩- مَآ اَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللّٰهِ
وَمَآ اَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِنْ نَّفْسِكَ
وَاَرْسَلْنٰكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُوْلًا
وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا ○

'*Whatever good befalleth thee (O man!) it is from God and whatever evil befalleth thee, it is from thyself; We have sent thee (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) unto mankind as (Our Apostle); and God is sufficient a witness (thereof).*' (Ch. IV: v 79)

The result is that, though whatever a creature has or befalls him is undoubtedly from Him and is His gift, '*We sustain all: these and those, and thy Lord's gift is not restricted*' (Ch. XVII: v 20); yet for receiving a specific mode of divine gift the creature's specific nature and mould of mind is responsible (Ch. XVII: v 84). It is the individual's nature that earns a specific course of life and consequently pain or pleasure.

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

١٨٦- وَاِذَا سَاَلَكَ عِبَادِيْ
عَنِّيْ فَاِنِّيْ قَرِيْبٌ
اُجِيْبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ
اِذَا دَعَانِ
فَلْيَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لِيْ
وَلْيُؤْمِنُوْا بِيْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُوْنَ ○

'*And when My servants ask thee about Me, then (say unto them), Verily I am nigh; I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he beseecheth unto Me, so let them hearken unto Me and believe in*

Me, so that they may be led aright.' (Ch. II: v 186)

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

٨. اَللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ اُنْثٰى
وَمَا تَغِيْضُ الْاَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ ؕ
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهٗ بِمِقْدَارٍ ۝

'*God knoweth what every female beareth, and that which the wombs fall short (of completion) and that in which they (increase); And of every thing (there is) with Him a measure.*' (Ch. XIII: v 8)

٢١. وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَآئِنُهٗ
وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهٗٓ
اِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ۝

'*The ratio is in exact measurement: And there is not a thing but with Us are its treasures, and We do not send it down but in a known measure.*' (Ch. XV: v 21)

Female and womb used in this passage should be taken in their widest sense to include the female of females and the womb of wombs, the primal matter; the mother of all mothers, the bearer and carrier of all potentialities, the receptacle of all forms and stages. The reward of good deeds and righteousness from thy Lord is a gift (for no return) yet it is according to the reckoning. The observation of proportionate ratio here and keeping the balance between the components of a compound, the parts of a whole and the constituents of a society of beings, are some of the various aspects of divine justice with which He describes Himself when He, as the first witness, gives evidence of His Absolute Unity.

١٨. شَهِدَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۙ
وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَاُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَآئِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ ؕ
لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝

'*God (Himself) witnesseth that there is no god but He, and (so do)*

the angels and those possessed of knowledge, standing firm for justice; (there is) no god but He, the Mighty the Wise.' (Ch. III: v 17)

To this justice, the Holy Prophet refers: 'It is by justice (balance) that the heavens and the earth are standing.'

The Journey of Movement Eternity to Eternity

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

٢٩-يَسْئَلُهٗ مَنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ
كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِىْ شَاْنٍ ۝

'*Beseech Him all those in the heavens and the earth; Every day He is in a (new) splendorous manifestation.*' (Ch. LV: v 29)

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

٨٨-وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً

وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ ۚ
صُنْعَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ
اِنَّهٗ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ۝

'*And thou wilt see the mountains which thinkest thou firm, solid, pass away the passing of the clouds. It is the work of God Who hath made everything firm; Verily He is All-Aware of what (all) ye do.*' (Ch. XXVII: v 88)

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

٨٨- وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۘ
لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ
كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ اِلَّا وَجْهَهٗ ۭ
لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ۝

'*And call not with God any other god; There is no god but He: All things are perishable but He: His is the Authority; and unto Him shall ye be returned.*' (Ch. XXVIII: v 88)

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

٢٦- كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ۝
٢٧- وَّيَبْقٰى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ
ذُو الْجَلٰلِ وَالْاِكْرَامِ ۝

'*Every one on it shall perish, but will remain for ever the Face (aspects) of thy Lord, the Glorious and Gracious.*' (Ch. LV: vs 26-27)

٩٦- مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ ۭ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ بَاقٍ ۭ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْٓا
اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝

'*What(ever) is with you passeth away and what is with God is everlasting; and certainly We will give those who exercise patience, their return, with the best of what they were doing.*' (Ch. XVI: v 96)

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

In the course of the various movements, the potentialities which are carried by matter are transformed into actualities — what was potential becomes actual. The seed was the potential tree. It had in itself the potentiality of becoming a full-grown tree. But when the seed, the potential tree, becomes the actual tree that particular potentiality is gone out of existence. It is replaced by an actual tree. The actual tree may carry with it potentialities for many more trees like itself. But the tree itself cannot go back to its potential stage to become actual again unless the portion of time during which the previous process took place is brought back, which is evidently impossible. No part of a successive chain can be shifted from its ordinal position.

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

Hold of the Absolute One: Immaterial Entities Control Material Realm

The same is true with immaterial entities such as the spirit, soul, psyche and intellect, the conscious beings whose existence is not dependent on matter. If such entities became dependent on matter, after they were independent of it, it would mean the loss

of their identity. If the immaterial is transformed into material it means that immaterial entity goes out of existence, and something new, of a different identity, comes into existence, one actual has gone and a new potential has come. Therefore, both conceptions (a) the idea of pre-physical existence of the individual souls (the ego to which one refers as 'I') of man and animal, as immaterial and independent conscious entities, and (b) the idea that they become material (dependent on matter) when they join the bodies, should be totally discarded because it means that what exists before the body loses its identity when it joins the body, and what remains with the body is a new identity totally different from that which was before. It makes no difference, whether the soul as such is considered to exist independently and immaterially, right from the beginning or after her departure from the body. Once the soul is considered as independent, let it be for a moment, its becoming dependent again means its total loss. So both ideas, i.e. union or reunion of the immaterial entity with the matter (body) are self-contradictory, hence untenable. Any conscious entity that is considered to exist before or after the body, independent of the body shall remain independent. Immaterial entities, whether existing before or after the matter and material realm, may govern and influence bodies but cannot be fettered and governed by the bodies. Accordingly the souls of individuals (man and animal) are either (a) material (dependent on matter, as the materialists hold) throughout their development, and as such perish with the disintegration of the bodies to which they are united, or (b) they (the souls) ought to be considered as material in the early stages of their development, becoming gradually immaterial in the advanced stages, before departure, to some extent, and after departure completely immaterial. If the individual souls are proved to be immaterial, at any stage during their union with the bodies, there is no alternative but to accept that they are the new actualities, developed out of specific potentialities which were carried by matter. This means development of immaterial entities from matter. Just as in the course of material movement

a certain quantity of matter transforms itself into physical energy, such as heat, light, electricity, etc., so also in the course of organic activities and movements of animals, a certain quantity of matter transforms itself into psychical force or energy. The difference between the two processes is that in the case of material energy, they can be again transformed into matter. While in the case of psychical energy, which has become independent of matter, the soul, the psyche, once free from the fetters of matter cannot be bound by it again. The soul's becoming free from the fetters of matter means that some specific quantity of matter through the organic activity of an individual is transformed into psychic energy of specific consciousness, distinguishable from the consciousness of other beings (other egos and selves). The specific psychic energy as the ground, and specific consciousness, as the form, constitute the ego or specific psychic entity (individual soul). That specific ego, or soul (*nafs*), in turn becomes a new ground under the direct hold and control of the agencies of the arc of descent; and therefore is capable of receiving radiation from the arc and reflecting it, (according to its acquired status) without the medium of the matter or any material organ. Having come under the direct hold of the agencies of the arc of descent, the ego for its subsistence depends entirely on the conditions of the immaterial agencies of the arc controlling it and not on the matter or the material ground from which it developed. The following points should be noted as the sequel to the above argument. (a) Through the organic activities of self-conscious beings, animals and men, and some specific quantities of matter lose their material properties and assume the form of psychic entities, i.e. become immaterial individual souls and selves. (b) They receive the means of their subsistence from the Absolute through immaterial agencies, and no more through the material medium. (c) The change in matter and its conditions does not affect survival of the souls freed from matter. (d) The quantities of matter developed into immaterial souls and psychic energies are to be taken as detached and deducted from the total quantity of matter and energy which are reducible into each

other, because the psychic energy which develops from matter cannot be reduced into matter or material energy again. Therefore, the quantity so developed should be considered as real loss to matter. The matter is destroyed through the development of the souls; hence, matter is destructible.

Balance in the Mechanism of the Material Realm

To balance the total quantities of matter and material energy, so that the mechanism of the material universe may continue to function, a new quantity of matter, at least equal to the quantity lost, should be created (in the true sense of creation, *Ibda'*), in the sense of 'Be, then it is,' (*Kun fayakun*), which means to produce effect by the sheer force of will and intention not associated with the slightest change in the essence or essential attributes of the cause. The reduction of matter into energy or vice versa, joining of some substance from each or their rejoining, transformation or transference into each other, or changing their reality are not creation in its true sense. This process is necessarily shaping or reshaping what has already existed. On the basis of this argument the individual souls are considered to be material at the time when they come into being and they become immaterial through their gradual development through the organic mechanism.

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

Grouping of Departed Souls

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

٨-فَأَصْحٰبُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ۙ
مَآ أَصْحٰبُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ۝
٩-وَأَصْحٰبُ الْمَشْـَٔمَةِ ۙ
مَآ أَصْحٰبُ الْمَشْـَٔمَةِ ۝
١٠-وَالسّٰبِقُونَ السّٰبِقُونَ ۝

'Then (will be) the people of the Right hand; O! What (a happy state shall) the people of the Right hand (be in)! And the people of the Left hand; Ah! What (a wretched state shall) the people of the Left hand (be in). And the Foremost ones (in faith and virtue) shall be the Foremost ones (in receiving their reward).' Ch. LVI: vs 8-10)

refers briefly to the countless subdivisions of each indicating that the degrees and graduations of life in the hereafter are much greater than those of life in this terrestrial region.

٢١-اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ
وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجٰتٍ
وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا ۝

'Behold (thou) how We caused some of them to excel the others; and surely the hereafter is much greater in respect of degrees and greater still in respect of excellence.' (Ch. XVII: v 21)

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

٦١-عَلٰٓى أَنْ نُّبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ
وَنُنْشِئَكُمْ فِى مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝

'To Our changing your forms and raising you in that ye know not.' (Ch. LVI: v 61)

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

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

However, in every moment a certain number of psychic entities and re-radiating intellects of various natures, characters and groups are developed and dispatched from this terrestrial region of ours or from other regions of the material universe. They do not lose their identity or revert from the acquired status of actuality to the potential status whence they advanced, nor do they remain idle and inert. By having the re-radiating power of specific nature every entity and every group of entities becomes a new specific might, a new conscious dynamic force of specific mould, of cognition and volition. They meet, communicate with, and react on each other on the one hand, and produce new possibilities, new potentialities and new capacities in the matter and the material realms on the other. They influence matter in

its movement, extend its spatial dimensions along with its time dimension. They change the course of its movements, and its velocity by accelerating or slowing down its momentum. All these take place not hapazardly. These changes are in a well-balanced, proportionate and harmonious ratio as per divine pre-planning.

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

١- اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
جَاعِلِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا اُولِيْٓ اَجْنِحَةٍ
مَّثْنٰى وَثُلٰثَ وَرُبٰعَ ؕ
يَزِيْدُ فِى الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝

'(All) praise is God's, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Maker of the angels, messengers flying on wings, two, and three and four: He addeth to His creation whatever He willeth; Verily God, over all things hath power.' (Ch. XXXV: v 1)

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

٤٧- وَالسَّمَآءَ بَنَيْنٰهَا بِاَيْىدٍ
وَّاِنَّا لَمُوْسِعُوْنَ ۝
٤٨- وَالْاَرْضَ فَرَشْنٰهَا
فَنِعْمَ الْمٰهِدُوْنَ ۝

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

So through the rise in the number of the re-radiating intellects and immaterial agencies the material world is also expanding and accordingly nothing of the material universe, from its

smallest particle to the largest solar systems, constellations, and galaxies is static or fixed.

٣٨- وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي
لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَّهَا
ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ
الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ۝

'And the sun travelleth unto a resting-place fixeth for it: That is the decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.'(Ch. XXXVI: v 38)

٤٠- لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنبَغِي لَهَا أَن تُدْرِكَ
الْقَمَرَ وَلَا الَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ
وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ۝

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

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

٣٠- أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنٰهُمَا
وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ
أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

'Or see not those who disbelieve that the heavens and the earth were one piece, and that We cleave them asunder; and made We of water everything alive;Will they not then believe?' (Ch. XXI: v 30)

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

٣- وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ۝
٤- وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا
وَتَخَلَّتْ ۝

'And when the earth shall be stretched out (flattened), And shall cast forth whatever is in it and becometh empty.' (Ch. LXXXIV: vs 3-4)

١-إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ۝

٢-وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ۝

'*When the earth shall quake with her (terrible) quaking, And the earth bringeth forth her burdens.*' (Ch. XCIX: vs 1-2)

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

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

٢-إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا

بِزِينَةِ الْكَوَاكِبِ ۝

'*Verily We have adorned the heaven nearest to this world (earth) with an adornment, the stars.*' (Ch. XXXVII: v 6)

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

٥- لِيَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝
٦- يَوْمَ يَقُومُ النَّاسُ
لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ۝

'*For a Mighty Day; on the day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of the worlds.*' (Ch. LXXXIII: vs 5-6)

٥٥- مِنْهَا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ وَفِيهَا
نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرٰى ۝

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

The above is a brief preliminary attempt towards a rational presentation of certain Qur'anic and apostolic statements which may guide the seeker of truth to have, at least, a faint idea of (1) the creaturely and occasional character of all beings other than

the Absolute, (2) the life hereafter, as the development of potential matter into actual form of psychic entity, i.e., development from a 'becoming condition' to full active status, from the transitory life in this world to the real and stable life (of the hereafter) in the next world (the eternal home),

٦٤- وَمَا هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَّ
لَعِبٌ ۭ وَاِنَّ الدَّارَ الْاٰخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ
لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ○

'*And nothing is this life of the world but a vain sport and play; and verily the abode of the hereafter is certainly the life: if they but know.*' (Ch. XXIX: v 64)

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

١- اِذَا الشَّمْسُ كُوِّرَتْ ۙ
٢- وَاِذَا النُّجُوْمُ انْكَدَرَتْ ۙ
٣- وَاِذَا الْجِبَالُ سُيِّرَتْ ۙ
٤- وَاِذَا الْعِشَارُ عُطِّلَتْ ۙ
٥- وَاِذَا الْوُحُوْشُ حُشِرَتْ ۙ

'*And when the sun is folded;*
And when the stars darken,
And when the mountains are removed (as scattered dust),
And when the 'Ishaar' (she-camel) shall be abandoned,
And when the wild beasts are herded together.' (Ch. LXXXI: vs 1-5)

(4) and the physical resurrection and appearance of souls in bodily form similar to the material bodies;

١٧- فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ حِجَابًا ۡ
فَاَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهَا رُوْحَنَا
فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ○

'*Then she took a veil (to cover herself) from them; then sent We unto her Our Spirit, then he (the Spirit) appeared unto her a man sound (in form).*'(Ch. XIX: v 17)[13]

(5) the physical ascent of the Holy Prophet,

١- سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْٓ اَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهٖ
لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
اِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْاَقْصَا
الَّذِيْ بٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهٗ لِنُرِيَهٗ
مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا
اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ ○

'*Glory be to Him Who carried His servant (Apostle Muhammad) by night from the Holy Mosque (of the Ka'ba) to the Farthest Mosque, which We have blessed its environment that We may show unto Him of Our signs; Verily, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.*' (Ch. XVII: v 1)

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

The above presentation explains the Qur'anic truth without getting entangled in the absurdities of transmigration or material resurrection or return of souls to the world of matter in a material body, as fancied by credulous persons who cannot think of anything but in terms of matter, which is condemned by the Qur'an as unstable or transitory.

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

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

In the previous discourse, it has been outlined that the cosmos contains spheres of beings, one encompassing the other with no

gap between. If the cosmos is viewed from the arc of descent, it begins with the first manifestation and ends with the material sphere. The higher encompasses the lower and the lower manifests the higher. But if it is viewed from the arc of ascent it begins with the lowest and the last manifestation (primal matter) or the material sphere, and ends with the creative (active) intellectual sphere. The lower forms the recipient base or potential ground and the higher comes to the scene of existence as a developed and actual form of the lower. The last sphere of the latter arc corresponds to the first sphere of the former arc. The first sphere of the second arc, the primal matter, is the last sphere of the first arc. This is the lowest common base of both the arcs. It is so huge and extensive that the greatest mathematician fails to give a proper and exact account of the extent, except by giving as an example the distance between the earth and the nearest galaxy in terms of light years which represent the speed of light. It is so huge that, inspite of its geometrically proved finiteness in common presentation of it, one has to treat it as infinite. This huge sphere in comparison to the immediate immaterial sphere beyond it was presented by the Holy Prophet as a ring in the desert. The individual entities developing from this material sphere are under the influence of the cosmic spheres beyond the material sphere. Just as our earth and its various developments are influenced by the rays and radiation of near and distant stars of the material sphere, so also, the individual members of any cosmic sphere are influenced by other members of the same sphere or the whole, and also by other spheres above or below, and their members. The radiation of the farthest star in the farthest galaxy has its effect on the largest and smallest parts of the earth despite the waves taking millions of light years to go from one end to the other. In a similar way the radiations of the earth reach the remotest regions and leave their impression (effect) there.

٣- الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمٰوٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ؕ
مَا تَرٰى فِيْ خَلْقِ الرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْ تَفٰوُتٍ ؕ
فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۙ

مَا تَرٰى فِيْ خَلْقِ الرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْ تَفٰوُتٍ ۭ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ ۙ هَلْ تَرٰى مِنْ فُطُوْرٍ ۝
ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ اِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَّهُوَ حَسِيْرٌ ۝
وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاۗءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيْحَ وَجَعَلْنٰهَا رُجُوْمًا لِّلشَّيٰطِيْنِ وَاَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيْرِ ۝

'*Who created the seven heavens layer above layer; thou seest not in the creation of the Beneficient (God) any defect or incongruity. Then look thou again: Seest thou any gap?*

Then repeat thou (thy) gaze again and again, thy gaze shall return unto thee dulled, being wearied.

Indeed have We adorned the lower heaven with lamps (the stars), and We have made them (as) missiles to repulse away the satans, and We have prepared for them the chastisement of the flaming fire.' (Ch. LXVII: vs 3-5)

Super-Conscious Source Revelation - Angelic-Satanic Mixed

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

perceptible to us. The same is the case with the sight waves. Our sensory organs are limited, conditioned and very narrow. It is wrong to narrow the sphere of existence to the limitations and conditions of our senses. There is abundant proof of the fact that the center of human consciousness, the cognitive self, sometimes receives information and suggestions and develops inclinations, the sources of which cannot be traced back to any of the direct or indirect sensory channels. As already discussed, these channels connect an individual's mind with certain specific objects, situated in a particular region of the material sphere and nothing more. Therefore, for any such information, suggestion or inclination felt by the cognitive self, none of the unconscious, subconscious or conscious strata of the individual self (from elemental and primitive physical stages up to vegetable and animal instincts and tendencies from the five external senses up to imagination, feelings, memory and the state of reasoning) can be held responsible. Therefore, we have to refer it to some source beyond the conscious state of the human mind — some super-conscious, some super-natural, some unusual source or means — a source and means which is not common and natural with everyone or is common with everyone but is not acquired through empirical means. The information, suggestion or inclination felt by the ego center through this super-conscious or super-natural means is termed by the Qur'an as *revelation*. The regular or irregular action of any visible entity which cannot be explained in terms of empirical means, or any other natural cause is considered by the Qur'an as the result of revelation from some invisible and super-natural source from the unseen world (*'alam-e ghayb*) as opposed to the seen world (*'alam-e shahada*). It (the *revelation*) is from God or some angelical sphere if it is right and advantageous and it is from the satanic and evil spirit spheres if it is wrong and mischievous.

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

٥- بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَىٰ لَهَا ۝

'*That thy Lord hath revealed unto her.*' (Ch. XCIX: v 5)

and about the heavens it says,

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

God says further:

١٢- فَقَضٰىهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوَاتٍ
فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحٰى فِي كُلِّ سَمَآءٍ أَمْرَهَا ۚ
وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ ۖ
وَحِفْظًا ۚ
ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ
الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ۝

'*And He made them seven heavens in two days (periods), and revealed in every heaven His will; and adorned We the lower heavens with lights (of the brilliant stars), and made it guarded (with angels); That is the decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.*' (Ch. XLI: v 12)

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

٦٨- وَأَوْحٰى رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي
مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ ۝

'*And revealed thy Lord unto the bee saying: "Make thou hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they (men) build).*' Ch. XVI: v 68)

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

٧- وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوّٰىهَا ۝
٨- فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا
وَتَقْوٰىهَا ۝

'*By the soul as it is perfected!*
And inspired unto it (against) its vices and (about) its piety!' (Ch. XCI: vs 7-8)

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

١٢١- وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا
مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ ۗ وَإِنَّ الشَّيٰطِينَ
لَيُوحُونَ إِلٰى أَوْلِيٰٓئِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ ۚ
وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ۝

'*And eat ye not of that on which God's name (Allah) was not mentioned, while verily it was transgression; and verily satans inspire unto their friends that they should contend with you, and if ye obey them, verily, ye be polytheists.*' (Ch. VI: v 121)

The satans[14] reveal to their friends (followers) so that they may argue against you.

١٢٠- وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ ۚ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ
سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ ۝

'*And leave ye, open and secret sins; verily those who earn sin, soon will they be recompensed with what they earned.*' (Ch. VI: v 120)

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

٧- وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلٰٓى أُمِّ مُوسٰٓى
أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۖ فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ
فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي ۖ
إِنَّا رَآدُّوهُ إِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝

'*And revealed We unto the mother of Musa, saying, "Give him suck, and if thou fearest for him, launch him on the river; and fear thou not, nor grieve thou; for We will return him unto thee, and make him one of the Apostles.*' (Ch. XXVIII: v 7)

Apart from Prophetic revelations many instances of other revelations and inspirations to individuals, mostly in the state of dreams and abnormal conditions and sometimes in the normal state of awakening are found in the stories of every community of the human race. We term them as supernatural information

communicated to the person concerned through unusual (ultra) cosmic rays. Some instances of revelation are very clear and need no interpretation. In some cases the information assumes a figurative form in accordance with the psychological condition of the receiver (the mind that receives it). Such revelation requires interpretation, the correctness of which depends on the skills of the interpreter. Some revelations are partly true and partly false, which may be due to (1) the defect in the source of despatch, or (2) the confusion of two different waves despatched from different sources, but received simultaneously, or (3) a defect in the receiver. Sometimes the suggestions received from the cosmic and supernatural sources are mingled with suggestions received from within, i.e., from the unconscious or subconscious strata of mind, which is the usual source of everybody's dreams.

Every community has its own record of stories of people who have by some spiritual exercise developed a sort of communication with the unseen within the starred sphere or somehow closely connected with it as shall be discussed later. There are also records of people who by peculiar nature and mould or mind have this faculty without any exercise of spiritual practice. There have been men and women who have had the tendency of dreaming future events in real or figurative form without pursuing any special course of spiritual attainments. According to occultism, there are prescribed courses of practice to develop such faculties within the human mind and to establish contact and communication with the supernatural and invisible cosmic agencies. These sources do not require adherence to any prescribed code of ethics or religion. On the contrary, in some of the occult courses some sort of impurity, immorality or anti-religious practices is necessary for success. This is the reason, why among occultists, there are persons who are utter failures from a religious, ethical and scholarly point of view, though they are very famous in their mysterious practices. The idea here is not to certify the validity of occultism, and the genuineness or truth of the records of theurgists and the claimants of mystical

power. It is only to assert the possibility of such practices, and the truth of a few instances given here and there. Otherwise, generally the cases and stories about the performance of occultists and theurgists are mostly false, concocted to raise curiosity or deceive credulous people. Or, they are jugglery and childish tricks. However, though few in number, there are genuine cases of the past and present which prove beyond doubt the possibility of such mysterious practices. In any case, all occult and strange performances, such as fortune-telling, foretelling, palmreading, horoscope, astrology, clairavoyence, mind-reading, telepathy, sorcery, witchcraft, establishment of communication with or having influence over *jinns*, celestial spirits or departed souls, mesmerism and hypnotism (accepting the psychological validity and utility of them), spells, incantantions, numeral and symbolic letters, etc. are as old as human history. Though mostly false, there is also some truth in them. But they are condemned by the Qur'an and apostolic statements as unreliable and more harmful than useful.

١٠١- وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ
مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ
نَبَذَ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ أُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ كِتٰبَ
اللّٰهِ وَرَآءَ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝
١٠٢- وَاتَّبَعُوْا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيٰطِيْنُ عَلٰى
مُلْكِ سُلَيْمٰنَ ۚ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمٰنُ وَلٰكِنَّ
الشَّيٰطِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُعَلِّمُوْنَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ ۗ
وَمَآ أُنْزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوْتَ
وَمَارُوْتَ ۚ
وَمَا يُعَلِّمٰنِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ
حَتّٰى يَقُوْلَآ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۗ
فَيَتَعَلَّمُوْنَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُوْنَ بِهٖ بَيْنَ
الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهٖ ۚ
وَمَا هُمْ بِضَآرِّيْنَ بِهٖ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۗ
وَيَتَعَلَّمُوْنَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۗ
وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوْا لَمَنِ اشْتَرٰىهُ مَا لَهٗ فِيْ

الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ۚ
وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهٖٓ اَنْفُسَهُمْ ۭ
لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

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

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

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

The impurity of inclination towards material, sensual and sexual objects, makes the recipient narrow and sullen, incapable of receiving the light of truth in its entirety. This narrowness of the ego center of the dispatcher or receiver, or both, is the cause of

mental confusion; the cause of revolt against what is right and true. It is to the mind and heart of such people who are attached to this profane world, that according to the Qur'an, Satan has an approach. Such people can be tempted by the satanic influence, but not those whose minds are beyond the reach of the satanic agencies:

٩٨-فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ
مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ○

٩٩-إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ○

١٠٠-إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ ○

'And when recitest thou the Qur'an seek thou refuge with God from Satan the accursed.
Verily, there is no authority for him over those who believe and rely on their Lord.
Verily, his authority is only over those who befriend him and those who associate others with him.' (Ch. XVI: vs 98-100)

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

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

٩- فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ۝

'Thus was (he) the measure between two bows (facing each other) or higher still.' (Ch. LIII: v 9).

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

٦- يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا
أَنفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا
وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ
عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ
لَّا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ
وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ۝

'O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your families from the fire whose fuel shall be men and stones; over which shall be angels stern and strong, they disobey not God in what He commandeth them, and act (only) as they are bidden.' (Ch. LXVI: v 6)

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

١٣- فِي صُحُفٍ مُّكَرَّمَةٍ ۝
١٤- مَّرْفُوعَةٍ مُّطَهَّرَةٍ ۝
١٥- بِأَيْدِي سَفَرَةٍ ۝
١٦- كِرَامٍ بَرَرَةٍ ۝

'(It is written) in the Books greatly honored,
Exalted high, purified,
In the hands of the deputy angels,
Noble, virtuous.' (Ch. LXXX: vs 13-16)

So also must be the receiving station, the human mind which is the recipient. It must be free from the impediments of temporal life and the bondage of the material world. So long as the zenith

of the human mind, the intellect, is drawn toward its base, the material and sensual ground, man is liable to commit mistakes in both theory and practice, whatever may be the source of information and suggestion.

١٧٥- وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ
آيَاتِنَا فَانسَلَخَ مِنْهَا
فَأَتْبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ○

١٧٦- وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا
وَلَٰكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ
وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ ۚ
فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ ۚ
إِن تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ
أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَث ذَّٰلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۚ
فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ○

'Relate unto them the news of him whom We gave Our signs, but he withdrew (himself) from them, so Satan followed him; so he was one of those who went astray.
And had We willed, We would certainly have exalted him thereby, but he inclined towards the earth and followed his vain inclinations, so his similitude is like the parable of a dog, if thou attacketh him he lolleth out his tongue, or leaveth him alone he lolleth out his tongue; such is the similitude of the people who belie Our signs, so relate (unto them) the stories, that they may reflect.
How evil is the similitude of the people who believe Our signs and unto their own selves they are unjust.' (Ch. VII: vs 175-176)

Being in possession of signs man should have been raised. But he detached himself from the sign bestowed on him by God and he was drawn downward toward the earth. But if the whole edifice of the human mind from the base upward is drawn toward the zenith, i.e., the active intellect, and is totally controlled by it, then the zenith can become a pure refined recipient ground. It becomes capable of receiving light from the above as exactly as it is dispatched. It will be also capable of judging precisely the truth and the value of what is received

from below. In short, the pure contents of the worlds of purity cannot be reached but by the pure and purified minds.

٧٦. وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَّوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ ۝
٧٧. إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ ۝
٧٨. فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ۝
٧٩. لَّا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ۝

'But nay! I swear by the setting of the stars;
And verily it is a great oath if ye only knew it:
Verily it is a Qur'an honorable,
In a Book hidden; toucheth it not save the purified ones;
Sent down by the Lord of the worlds.' (Ch. LVI: vs 75-79)

١. لَمْ يَكُنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ مُنفَكِّينَ
حَتَّىٰ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَةُ ۝
٢. رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً ۝
٣. فِيهَا كُتُبٌ قَيِّمَةٌ ۝

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

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

This is what the Qur'an means by the terms *muttahrun*, purified ones, *suhafan muttahira*, purified books, *mustafaun*, chosen and

refined, and *mukhlisin*, servants of God freed from sinning.

٤٦-إِنَّآ أَخْلَصْنٰهُم بِخَالِصَةٍ
ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ ۝

'*Verily We freed them (from sinning) with a distinction of remembrance of the (eternal) abode.* (Ch. XXXVIII: v 46)

٤٧-وَإِنَّهُمْ عِندَنَا لَمِنَ
الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْأَخْيَارِ ۝

'*Verily, they are with Us, of the chosen ones, the good ones.*' (Ch. XXXVIII: v 47)

٨٣-إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ۝

'*Save Thy servants from among them the freed ones.*' (Ch. XXXVIII: v 83)

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

It does not mean that they are not in this material world in this lowest sphere. They are in it but they are not attached to it. 'Ali says, 'they (the true servants of God) have accompanied this lowest world of matter with their bodies, the souls of which are attached to the spheres of higher order. Had not the fixed term been ordained by God for them (to remain here), their souls would not have remained in their bodies.'[15]

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

٥٠-قُل لَّآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِندِي خَزَآئِنُ
اللَّهِ وَلَآ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ
وَلَآ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ ۖ
إِنْ أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۚ

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ۚ
أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ۝

'Say: (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) I do not say unto you (that) with me are the treasures of God, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say unto you that I am an angel; I follow not but what is revealed unto me." Say, "Are the blind and the seeing alike. Do ye not then reflects?" (Ch. VI: v 50)

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

Thus, the body is controlled and governed by the mind and its faculties. The mind in turn is controlled and governed by the active intellect, which in turn is fully controlled and governed by the divine will dispatched to it, direct, or through the angels. Such an accomplished person, though he shares, with other men all aspects of humanity (*a human being like you*), yet he is distinguished from the rest of mankind, by not only being the recipient of the revelation but by being controlled also by the revelation.[16] ('I follow nothing but what is revealed to me.')

١١٠- قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ
يُوْحٰٓى إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلٰهُكُمْ إِلٰهٌ
وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ رَبِّهٖ
فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا
وَّلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهٖٓ أَحَدًا ۝

'(And) say thou: "I am only a man like you, it is revealed unto me that your God is but One God, therefore whosoever desireth to meet his Lord, let him do good deeds, and associate not any one in the worship of His Lord.' (Ch. XVIII: v 110)

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

٨٠- مَنْ يُّطِعِ الرَّسُوْلَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللّٰهَ ۚ

وَمَنْ تَوَلّٰى
فَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا ۝

'*Whoso obeyeth the Apostle, he indeed obeyeth God; and whoever turneth away: We have not sent thee upon them to watch.*' (Ch. IV: v 80)

١٧- فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوْهُمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَتَلَهُمْ ۪
وَمَا رَمَيْتَ اِذْ رَمَيْتَ
وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَمٰى ۚ
وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مِنْهُ بَلَآءً حَسَنًا ۭ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ۝

'*So ye slew them not but God slew them, and thou threw not (the dust) but God threw it, that He might test the believers by a gracious trial from Him; Verily, God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.*' (Ch. VIII: v 17)

So, to secure the infallibility of the message the purity and infallibility of both the sources of dispatch, and the receiving mind, is necessary. With regard to the purity of the dispatching side, from God down to the last angelical sphere at its base, there can be no doubt. The question is about the purity of the receiving side — the receiver which is the active intellect, the zenith of the mind. The zenith cannot be pure unless the whole of the mind and its faculties from the base are pure. The purity of mind and its faculties mean harmonious functioning of all the physical and physical parts of mental mechanism towards actualization of the potential intellect and the development of the active intellect. There should be no drawback, from any side of the mechanism. There should be nothing wrong anywhere, even for a moment, in the progressive movement towards attaining the state of active intellect. Every part of the mechanism should be perfect. Otherwise any drawback anywhere at any stage of the process would mean a fall in the degree of attainment and in the active aspect of the intellect; a fall in the height of the zenith. In other words the ego should always be alive to its incessant needs and should always look upwards submissively and ask for help.

Seed of Adam and Eve
(Part 2)

To secure the purity and infallibility of the mental mechanism in this sense, the purity and infallibility of the material base is necessary. A good seed, properly looked after, brings forth good fruit. The material base of an individual mind is a zenith which has its own base and history of its development. So the chain of zenith and base goes back to the base of bases, the primal matter with the long history of its development. God knows through how many specific stages, or terrestrial wombs, or millions of years it passes till it reaches the stage of the specific protoplasm of the first pair of human species — the clay of Adam and Eve. That specific seed, or protoplasm, original clay, dough or paste of humanity, is a specific quantity of matter, and it had obviously the potentiality for the form which it has assumed, the form of original seed or clay of humanity. It was a selected and refined quantity suitable for that form.

١٢- وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ
مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ۝

'*And indeed We created man from an extract of clay.*' (Ch. XXIII: v 12)

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

the requisite conditions for the completion of the course and guard against any unfavourable mishap damaging the potentiality or causing hinderance in the course of development. This is what the divine attribute of *Rububi'at* (Cherishing) implies.

The beginning verses of Chapters XXXVII., LI, LXXVII and LXXIX refer to the agencies who take care of the development of the material world and their different functions.

١-وَالصّٰٓفّٰتِ صَفًّا ۝

'*By those who range themselves in ranks.*' (Ch. XXXVII; v 1)

١-وَالذّٰرِيٰتِ ذَرْوًا ۝

'*By the scatterers that scatter.*' (Ch. LI: v 1)

١-وَالْمُرْسَلٰتِ عُرْفًا ۝

'*By those sent forth with goodness one after another.*' (Ch LXXVII: v 1)

١-وَالنّٰزِعٰتِ
غَرْقًا ۝

'*Those who drag forth violently.*' (Ch. LXXIX: v 1)

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

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

possible impurities.

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

٧٢- إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ
فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا
وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ
كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ۝

'*Verily We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid thereof; and man undertook it, verily he was (proved) unjust, ignorant.*' (Ch. XXXIII: v 72)

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

Story of Prophet Jonah
Israelites' Misinterpretation
(Part III)

It is not out of place to quote the celebrated story and prayer of Yunus (Jonah) mentioned in the Qur'an (Ch. XXI: vs 87-88).

'*And remember the man of the whale (Jonah), as he went away (from his people) angrily (due to godly motives). So he was sure that We would never bring restraint against him. Then he called in the darkness, "There is no Elah (Resort or God to resort to for help) but Thou. Praise and glory be Thine. Indeed I was of (the community of) the unjust;" therefore We responded in his favour and relieved him from grief. And in this manner We relieve the*

believers.' In Ch. LXVIII: vs 48-50, the Qur'an asserts, '*Wait patiently for the order of thy Lord and do not be like the man of the whale as he called (Us) while he was grieved. Had not a bounty from his Lord reached him, he would certainly have been cast forth on the naked shore disgracefully. Then (as the consequence of divine blessing due to his prayer), his Lord selected him and then made him the member of the community of the righteous ones.*'

Misguided by the Israelite story connected with Jonah, many commentators and translators misinterpreted the above Qur'anic passage by presenting Yunus (Jonah) as a great sinner. Finding his community heedless to his preaching, he lost his temper. His only follower, the Sober Sage, advised him to be more patient and temperate and to continue his preaching for some time more, but he did not listen to him. He prayed to God to destroy the adamant people. Responding to his prayer, God promised to send down His wrath on the sinners and destroy them. Yunus informed the sage of what was going to happen and asked him to leave the scene of the coming destruction. But the sage declined to run away for his life, leaving the whole community prey to divine wrath. In his wisdom he preferred to remain with the people and meet the coming situation as wisely as possible. The promised hour approached. The Prophet Yunus was watching and waiting from a great distance. The sage continued warning the people of the approaching calamity, advising them to repent before the opportunity was lost. As the signs of the catastrophe came very close, the people realized the gravity of the situation. Stricken with terror, they rushed penitently to the sage for advice. The sage told them that there was no other way to avert the catastrophe decreed by God, but a sincere mass repentance. As conducted by the sage, the mass repentance was performed with utmost sincerity by the entire population, including the male and female, old and young, even the babies and the cattle. God responded to their sincere repentance and prayer with favour. He withheld the decree at the last moment and averted the catastrophe from them, to which the Qur'an refers in Ch. X: v 98.

٩٨-فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ
اٰمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَآ اِيْمَانُهَآ اِلَّا قَوْمَ
يُوْنُسَ ؕ
لَمَّآ اٰمَنُوْا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ
فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ○

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

Then coming to know about the withdrawal of the divine decree and that the people had been saved by repentance, Jonah felt hurt, got angry and went away, fancying that God can never have a hold on him. As a result of his selfish anger and misconception of the divine might, he was punished by God. Having lost in the balloting,[17] he was thrown to the whale and devoured. In the belly of the whale he came to his senses and realized the faults for which he was punished. Then he repented and asked God for release.

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

Reading the story as such, one really feels surprised why Jonah,

a man of no character, not the sage, the embodiment of virtues, should have been comissioned by God to carry His message to the people? What makes one more surprised or rather suspicious is that the traditionists, who recognized Jonah as depicted by the Jews and Christians, have narrated also a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect that he (the Prophet) should not be considered superior in character to Jonah. If we add similar tales and stories allegedly ascribed to the Holy Prophet and the Prophets before him, the conclusion would be that (1) the status of prophethood will be little more than that of a postman who is only commissioned to deliver letters. He is useful so long as he lives and is of no use when he dies — 'Whosoever used to worship Muhammad should know that he (Muhammad) has certainly died,' said the first caliph, Abu Bakr, in his first sermon. (2) He need not be of any character or qualification. He is subject to the influence of all temporal and profane tendencies. (3) Among their followers there may be persons, superior to the Prophets in sagacity and virtues. All their orders need not be obeyed, nor every step of them should be followed. These are the points cherished by every ambitious person who wants to use religion as a means to gain power, be he Jew, Christian, Muslim or a member of any other creed and faith. The main objection raised against the policy and behaviour of the ruling party is their deviation from the letter and spirit of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the sacred and divinely prescribed code of conduct (the Qur'an, the word of God, as manifested in the life of the Holy Prophet.).

٢١- لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ
لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ
وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ۝

'*Indeed (there) is for you in the Apostle of God (Muhammad) and excellent pattern (of conduct) for him who hopeth in God and the latter day and remembereth God much.*' (Ch. XXXIII: v 21)

But once the Prophet is recognized as one not superior to Jonah

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

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

Therefore, this or other tales and stories which have evolved round the personalities of those who are considered to be commissioned by God to deliver His message to mankind or to lead and guide men to the ultimate goal for which they have been created, should be treated as baseless. Stories and traditions may be concocted or distorted by interested parties to support a religio-political cause. The stories which assert the fall, sin or drawback of Adam and Eve and of their worthy children who had to represent God on earth are against the unequivocal wording of the Qur'an and sound reasoning, and ought to be rejected as false or interpreted in the light and evidence of the two authorities (the Qur'an and reason). Even the Qur'anic passages which may not appear to be in conformity with the requisite infallibility of the vicegerent of God should be interpreted in the light of the unequivocal passages of the Qur'an and the evidence of reason. This story of Jonah may be taken as an example. The Qur'an mentions that he went away angry, but it does not give the cause of anger, whether it was

righteous and praise-worthy, or selfish, bad and worthy of condemnation. The Qur'an gives examples of many Prophets and godly people who felt disgusted with the ungodly behaviour of their people and left them in righteous indignation but after undergoing some ordeals they were selected and sent back to guide the people. It is obvious that to interpret the sentence in question [Ch. XXI: vs 86-89] in the light of the Qur'an and examples of godly men is more reasonable than reading it in the light of the tale introduced by Jewish converts and the courtiers of the early caliphs, such as Kaabul Ah-Bar, Wahab bin Munabbah, etc. However, the sentence, in the aforesaid verse, is followed by three more sentences wherein the conjunctive particle '*Fa*' (consequently), denoting one event to be the consequent of the other, has been used, which implies that the relation between the events denoted by the sentence is not accidental for which the conjunctive particle '*Wa*' (and) is appropriate, but it is causal; it is the relation of an antecedent to its consequent. Now let us consider the two versions and their implications.

Jonah in the Light of the Qur'an	**A commentary on the Bible**
'*He went away angrily* (due to righteous cause). *Therefore* (as the result of his godly feelings and attempt) *he felt certain* (and not to fancy and conjecture) *that We will never (withhold Our blessings from him) but bring restraint against him. Therefore (as the result of his certainty), he called Us* (like other Prophets, even in the darkest hour of trial) *in the dark*, (similar to the case of	He went away angrily (because he was hurt by God's responding to the prayer of the evil-doers). Therefore, he fancied, that '*We (God) will never have a hold or power on him*' (Ch. LXXI: v 87) which means sheer denial of God's might caused by extreme anger). Therefore, he called. This call cannot be considered as the result of his conjecture unnecessary missing links

Ibrahim when he was thrown into the fire), '*There is no resort but Thou. Praise and glory be thine. Indeed I was of the (community of the) unjust* (and not that I am of them now),' as if he is thanking the Almighty for not leaving him to continue the society of the unjust and for having helped him to detach himself from them; no matter what the trials and temporal sufferings may be. As a result of this virtuous process and successful trial he was relieved, selected and sent back to the people who also, after his departure, felt sorry for their wrongs. This may be due to the efforts of the sage who was deliberately left behind to warn them of the seriousness of the Prophet's anger and departure. The result of it was that they repented and petitioned God for mercy at the last moment. Had not he been of those who are habituated to pray and praise God he would have been thrown (out of the belly of the whale) on the barren land as a reprobate and would not have been chosen and selected again to lead his between the antecedent and the consequent to prove that Jonah was a sinner first and then he repented and was relieved and selected for the second time. Accepting his repentence when he was in utter distress there is nothing commendable in the life of Jonah to be adopted as the norm and ideal for spiritual progress. It would have been more advantageous if the Qur'an, instead of Jonah, had made some reference to the virtuous role played by the supposed sage. How can one allow a Prophet of God to conjecture even for a moment that God has no power or hold on him?

The sentence, 'And imagined he that never would We straighten him' should be read in light of Ch. LXV: v 7 and Ch. LXXXIX: v 16.

لِيُنفِقْ ذُو سَعَةٍ مِّن سَعَتِهِ ۖ
وَمَن قُدِرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقُهُ
فَلْيُنفِقْ مِمَّا آتَاهُ اللَّهُ ۚ
لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا ۚ
سَيَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ عُسْرٍ يُسْرًا ۝

'*Let him with abundance spend of his abundance and he on whom is straightened his subsistence, let him spend of what God hath given him;*

people. The term *laula*, used in Ch. XXXVII: v 43 and in LXVIII: v 49, meaning *had not, were not* or *if not*, the conditional particle used to affirm presence of one event sequal to the absence of the other or vice versa, has been used in the Qur'an on many occasions concerning the Prophets. It asserts that, had not their prayer received the special blessing and grace of God they would have suffered a fall or would have committed a sin. So due to the presence of the desirable condition the undesirable state was absent.

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

(for) God layeth not on any soul a burden save to the extent to which He hath given it; God will soon bring about ease after difficulty.' (Ch. LXV: v 7)

١٦-وَأَمَّآ إِذَا مَا ٱبْتَلَىٰهُ
فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُۥ
فَيَقُولُ رَبِّىٓ أَهَٰنَنِ ۝

'*But when trieth him, and then straighteneth unto him his sustenance, then saith he: "My Lord hath disgraced me!*"' (Ch. LXXXIX: v 16)

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

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

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

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

٨٦-وَاغْفِرْ لِأَبِي إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ۝

'*And forgive my father, verily, he was of those who have gone astray.*' (Ch. XXVI: v 86)

٨٧-وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَّهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا
فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَّنْ نَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ
فَنَادَىٰ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ
أَنْ لَّا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ ۖ
إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

'*And (remember) Jonah (Zunnun or Yunus) when went he in anger, and imagined he that never would We straighten him; Then he cried out from the darkness: "There is no god but Thou (O my Lord!), Glory be to Thee. Verily, I was of the unjust ones*!' (Ch. XXI: v 87)

'*I was of those straying ones*,' means that in certain stages the person referred to by the pronoun was counted among the members of the society which was devoid (or deprived) of justice and knowledge. It is the natural tendency for development

present in a particular section of matter and absent in its surrounding sections that is translated into dissatisfaction in the conscious stages of development disliking the surroundings and abandoning them. These conditions, i.e., dissatisfaction and dislike or and desertion from the surroundings, are virtues and righteousness if the aim is to approach God, the Absolute perfection. And they are evil and vice if the aim is something ungodly. The certainty that He is the sole resort and that in no circumstance does He withhold His blessings from His creatures, is the impluse of this progressive move and the motive behind prayer and supplication. Temporal sufferings and material losses in this journey are inevitable as a test and trial.

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

١٥٤- وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
أَمْوَاتٌ ۚ
بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ ○

١٥٥- وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ
مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ
وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ○

١٥٦- الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ
قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ○

١٥٧- أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ
وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ○

'And say not of those who are slain in the path of God that they are dead; Nay (they are) living, but ye perceive not.
We will surely test you with something of fear, and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits; and give glad tidings to the patient ones,
Who when misfortune befalleth them, say, "Verily we are God's

and verily unto Him shall we return."
Those are they on whom are the blessings from their Lord and (His) mercy; and they are the ones that are (rightly) guided.' (Ch. II: vs 154-157)

So long as the movement is towards the right direction it is towards God, without any break or diversion; there can be no fall, drawback or sin. The terms sin (*dhenb*), straying (*dal*), injustice (*zulm*), ignorance (*jihalat*), etc. which show some defect and ungodly condition, may be used to mean appearance of these defects in the conscious stages when human will and reason are functioning and they may also be used to mean that these are natural and creaturely defects which accompany every finite being; and if they are not covered, redressed and redeemed by His grace and blessing, they will display themselves in human conduct. Similarly the terms repentence (*tauba*) and petitioning for mercy (*istighfar*) may be used to mean returning to Him after some diversion has taken place, or petitioning for mercy after some defect has displayed itself in the conscious stage of human will and reason. It may also mean being constantly alive to the creaturely defects. Some people are in continuous prayer and a supplicating attitude so that these defects may continue to be covered by His blessings and no room is left for their display at all. There are instances and occasions on which the Qur'an has used the conditional participle, 'if not' (*laola*) to show that it is due to the special blessing of God or due to the sincere prayer of the man that the inherent sin, defect and fault have not displayed themselves. Thus, '*repentence*' does not always mean that the sin has been committed. It may be preventive instead of being retrievable. Accordingly, the sin and other defects mentioned in the Qur'an and other apostolic statements do not necessarily mean the actual appearance of those defects in the life of man. Reference may be to their potential state wherein they are covered by special blessings of God. Thus the incessant confession of accomplished men of their sins, shortcomings and faults and their incessant repentence and prayer for mercy are the two main factors responsible for their infallibility and

sinlessness. Imperfect, sinner and guilty are those who consider themselves either entirely sinless or occasional sinners, and not those who are always alive to their creaturely defects, and pray to God to cover them with His blessings and grace.[18]

Vicegerency of Adam

Having all these points and the basic conditions for development and progress in view let us revert to the 'first human pair,' Adam and Eve. Detached and distinguished from the rest of the material beings, they had infallibly and progressively reached the stage of original clay. It was the finest, purest and the most resplendent quantity of matter which departed from the rest to undergo a special course of trials and developments and to fulfil the necessary conditions for the top rank in the hierarchy of material developments. This clay, the divinely selected and chosen portion of matter, carried in itself all the potentialities for development and propagation of the human race and for all the material and spiritual achievements and attainments which man may be credited with. The potential Adam and his potential family were craving and praying for such a lofty status of responsibility (*amanat*) in the realm of creation as was not prayed for by any one else. On the contrary the heavens, earth and mountains declined to accept it when it was offered to them. So, the brave and bold clay received the utmost care and attention from the creator. The whole administrative agencies of the arc of descent, all the angelical and celestial forces in charge of development were coordinated and directed towards this new development. From the stage of clay up to the stage of the most complicated but well-balanced and harmonious organism (the stage of *tasviya*[19] (adjustment of parts in a whole), man had to pass many stages of development. This is the stage wherein man receives radiations direct from the Absolute, and God blows into him His own spirit (*Roohul-Qudus*).

٢٩-فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ
وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي

فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ○

'So when I complete him and breathe into him My spirit, fall ye down unto him prostrating (in obeisance).' (Ch. XV: v 29)

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

٣٠- وَاِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ
فِي الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً ۭ قَالُوْٓا اَتَجْعَلُ فِيْهَا
مَنْ يُّفْسِدُ فِيْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاۗءَ ۚ وَ
نَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۭ قَالَ
اِنِّيْٓ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ○

'(Recollect O Our Apostle Muhammad) when said thy Lord unto the angels: "Verily, I (intend to) appoint a vicegerent in the earth." They said, "Wilt Thou (O our Lord!) appoint therein one who will cause mischief and shed blood, while we celebrate by Thy praise and hallow Thee alone?" Said (the Lord to the angels), "Verily, I know what ye know not".' (Ch. II: v 30)

٧٢- اِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْاَمَانَةَ عَلَي السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ
فَاَبَيْنَ اَنْ يَّحْمِلْنَهَا
وَاَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْاِنْسَانُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ
كَانَ ظَلُوْمًا جَهُوْلًا ۝

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

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

قَالَ يٰٓاِبْلِيْسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ
اَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ ؕ
اَسْتَكْبَرْتَ
اَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِيْنَ ○

'*Said (God): "O Iblis! what prevented thee that thou shouldest not prostrate in obeisance unto him whom I created with My two hands? Art thou proud or art thou of the exalted ones?*' (Ch. XXXVIII: v 75)

However honored with the gift of divine spirit man who was originally administered by the angels, from time immemorial, turned in the last stage to be the real adminstrator in the sense that he became the ultimate object for creation for which the whole divine organization had been set at work. The angels turned out to be subservient to him. He was the aim and they were the means. When the angels wondered why so much care and attention was being bestowed by the Creator on this negligible clay, they (the angels) were told by Him that He was not only going to create a man out of that clay, but that He was

going to establish a vicegerency on earth to represent Him and His kingdom and His sovereignty. This revelation caused the angels great surprise and they raised their objection. They were familiar with the administration of the clay of other species very close to that of the human species. It is said that before the development of human clay or the advent of our Adam and Eve, the earth was populated by semi-men; a species which bore very close affinity to man. But they were lacking in the holy spirit which was infused into man and which was a distinction conferred on him. The species of semi-man had almost been extinguished before the appearance of man on the scene of creation. Those semi-men might have been the degenerated descendents of another Adam who preceded our Father or might have been of another species lower than man but closer to him in physical and mental structure than any of the living species of today. Any way they were lacking in the distinctive aspect of manhood about which the Qur'an says.

٤۔لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِيْٓ اَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيْمٍ ۝
٥۔ثُمَّ رَدَدْنٰهُ اَسْفَلَ سٰفِلِيْنَ ۝
٦۔اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
فَلَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ۝

'*Indeed We created man in the best structure.*
Then We reverted him to the lowest of the low,
Save those who believe and do good deeds, for them shall be a recompense incessant.' (XCV: vs 4-6)

The words 'the best structure' and the 'lowest of the low' in the verse refers to man's best and lowest aspects. Whether the shortcoming or defect in men was due to degeneration or the original lack of specific potentiality makes no difference. Their process of thinking was controlled by vegeto-animal and senso-sexual and beastly tendencies as is the case with the organized barbarism of today, known as modern or material civilization. They were busy in mischievous, destructive activities and bloodshed as depicted by the angels in Ch. II: v 30. The angels, like some

scientists of the modern age, could not observe the specific aspect which distinguishes the human clay (protoplasma) from that of the other species. So they judged man to be of the same mould and behaviour as the semi-man, on the basis of some apparent affinities they found between the two. God rejected the partial and analogical argument of the angels and said, '*Verily, I know what ye do not know*' (ref Ch. II: v 30 quoted above).

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

٣١- وَعَلَّمَ اٰدَمَ الْاَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ
عَلَى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ فَقَالَ اَنْۢبِـُٔوْنِيْ بِاَسْمَآءِ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ○

٣٢- قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَآ اِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ؕ
اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ○

٣٣- قَالَ يٰٓاٰدَمُ اَنْۢبِئْهُمْ بِاَسْمَآئِهِمْ ۚ فَلَمَّآ
اَنْۢبَاَهُمْ بِاَسْمَآئِهِمْ ۙ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ اِنِّيْٓ
اَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۙ وَاَعْلَمُ مَا
تُبْدُوْنَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُوْنَ ○

٣٤- وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ
فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ اَبٰى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ۟ وَكَانَ
مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ○

'*And He taught Adam the names, all of them, and then set them unto the angels and said, "Declare ye unto Me the names of these if ye be truthful."*
They said: "Glory be to Thee (O Lord!). We have no knowledge save what Thou hast taught us; Verily, Thou (alone) art the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
Said He: "O Adam! Inform thou unto them their names," and when he had informed unto them their names, said (the Lord): "Said I not unto you that verily I know the secrets of the heavens and the earth and know that which ye declare and that which ye

conceal?"
And when said We unto the angels: "Prostrate ye before Adam!" they all prostrated save Iblis, he refrained and was puffed with pride and was turned into one of the disbelievers.' (Ch. II: vs 31-34)

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

It is in the light of the holy spirit that Adam learned every name of the Creator and the creatures; but the names of those accomplished and most perfect entities whose clay, seeds and potentialities were carried by him came into light first, and then through the compact names of those perfect and most comprehensive entities the other names became evident. They were the names of those 'perfect and exalted entities' (*'aleen*), the seeds of which Adam was carrying. Owing to the lack of affinity it was not possible for angels to learn the names of those entities except through the medium of Adam who represented them as the carrier of their potentiality and represented God having His spirit within him. Here the first man, the top entity in the arc of ascent received knowledge directly from God, of the things which the angels did not know. It was the knowledge of the names of certain conscious entities of high order (*'aleen*). Those entities were other than angels and jinns. They were the entities whose names could be made known to Adam by God directly and to the angels and other beings of lower order through the medium of Adam. They were those who could at one and the same time represent God in all spheres of creation, and creatures of all spheres before God. They are the entities who due to the highest degree of their recipiency, submissiveness and devotion to the Absolute, have attained the nearest possible stage of direct communion with Him on one side, and due to their utmost paternal affection and love of His creatures have come closer and nearer to every being, than the being itself or himself — a stage of *'aula-bil-mominin, 'a greater claim on the*

selves of the believers,' which refers to the Prophet:

٦- اَلنَّبِيُّ اَوْلٰى بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَاَزْوَاجُهٗٓ اُمَّهٰتُهُمْ
وَاُولُوا الْاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ
اَوْلٰى بِبَعْضٍ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ
مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ
اِلَّآ اَنْ تَفْعَلُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَوْلِيٰٓئِكُمْ مَّعْرُوْفًا
كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مَسْطُوْرًا ○

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

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

١٨- كَلَّآ اِنَّ كِتٰبَ الْاَبْرَارِ
لَفِيْ عِلِّيِّيْنَ ○
١٩- وَمَآ اَدْرٰىكَ مَا عِلِّيُّوْنَ ○
٢٠- كِتٰبٌ مَّرْقُوْمٌ ○
٢١- يَّشْهَدُهُ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ ○

'*Nay! The record of the righteous shall be in the Illiyin.*
And what will make thee know what the Illiyin is?
(It is) a book written,
See it those who are the near ones unto God.' (Ch. LXXXIII: v 18-21)

They are such selfless entities and their egos are so limitless that they have become the reciprocal medium between the Infinite one and the finite beings close to both at one and the same time.

They are those who on devotional occasions when completely absorbed in the realization of His greatness, can hear the call of the destitute and go to their rescue without being diverted from the height of their devotional absorption. They are those who give alms when they are in the state of bowing before Him in prayer.[21]

٥٨-إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ وَالَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوا
الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ
وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ رٰكِعُوْنَ ○

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

In short they represent the Creator and the creatures to each other at one and the same time. It is this permanent representative status of Adam and his deserving issues that became the subject of dispute. The 'great news' about which they are in dispute:

١-عَمَّ يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ۝
٢-عَنِ النَّبَاِ الْعَظِيْمِ ۝
٣-الَّذِيْ هُمْ فِيْهِ مُخْتَلِفُوْنَ ۝

'*Of what ask they one another?*
Of the great news,
That which they therein differ.' (Ch. LXXVIII: vs 1-3)

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

٦٧-قُلْ هُوَ نَبَؤٌا عَظِيْمٌ ۝
٦٨-اَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ○
٦٩-مَا كَانَ لِيَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَاِ الْاَعْلٰٓى
اِذْ يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ○

٦٥۔ إِنْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِلَّا أَنَّمَا أَنَا
نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ○
٦٦۔ إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي
خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ ○
٦٧۔ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ
فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي
فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ○
٦٨۔ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ○
٦٩۔ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ
مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ○

'*Say thou: "It is a message of (great) importance,*
(And) ye are turning away from it.
I had no knowledge of the exalted chiefs when they disputed!
It is revealed unto me save that I am an open warner.
Remember when thy Lord said unto the angels: "Verily I am about to create man from clay,
And when I have completed and have breathed into Him of My spirit, then fall ye prostrating in obeisance unto him."
And did fall prostrating in obeisance the angels all together,
Save Iblis; he was proud, and was of the disbelievers.' (Ch. XXXVIII: vs 67-74)

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

Satanic Activity and Divine Warning

But Satan, the hot and the fiery-tempered, who had become the co-opted member of the angelical community on account of the extreme devotion and ascetic attitude he had already displayed,

was far from appreciating the distinctive spiritual aspect of the newly earthen make. So he and all the satanic forces at his disposal refused to recognize the representative status of man and this is the case even now. He considered himself and his party, who were able to influence and misguide the purely animal instincts, to be much superior to this new earthly creature (man) also. They are able to influence and dominate, if not Adam and and all of his issues, at least the great majority of them who tend more towards their material needs than their heavenly progress. Thus Satan and his forces failed in the test and were at last exposed for what they really were. They declined to submit, rebelled and were driven out of the angelical order and community down to the earth, the terrestrial field of their activities. Satan and the satanic forces, ever since their banishment from the heavenly field, have remained materialists. They, by their disposition, judge every thing, every being and every action from the angle of materialism. They are anti-man and their values are anti-heavenly and anti-spiritual. So, as demanded by Satan, God gave him and his party and his forces freedom of action to approach Adam and his issues.

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

١٧٩- مَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ
عَلٰى مَآ اَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
حَتّٰى يَمِيْزَ الْخَبِيْثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ؕ
وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ
لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ
يَجْتَبِيْ مِنْ رُّسُلِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۪
فَاٰمِنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرُسُلِهٖ ۚ

وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا
وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ○

'It is not for God to leave the believers in the state in which ye are, until He hath distinguished the wicked from the good and it is not for God to acquaint you with the unseen; But God chooseth from the Apostles whomsoever He pleaseth. So ye believe then in God and His Apostles: and if ye believe and guard yourselves (against evil) then for you is a great reward.' (Ch. III: v 178)

These are clearly repeated warnings:

١٧٩- وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا
مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ ۖ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا
يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا ۖ وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ
لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا ۖ وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ
بِهَا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ
بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ○

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

Satan blames the human beings for following him.

٢٢- وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ
وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ ۖ
وَمَا كَانَ لِيَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ
إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي ۖ
فَلَا تَلُومُونِي وَلُومُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۖ
مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ ۖ
إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ
إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ○

'And shall say Satan after the affair is decided: "Verily, God promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you the promise but failed to keep them to you; and I had no authority over you except

I called you and you responded unto me; so blame me not but (rather) blame yourselves; I cannot be your aide (now), nor can you be my aide. Verily, I disbelieved in your associating me with God from before; Verily, the unjust ones, for them shall be a painful chastisement".' (Ch. XIV: v 22)

Sincere action is a test:

٢-أَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوٓا
أَنْ يَقُولُوٓا اٰمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ○

'*What! Do people imagine that they will be left off on (their) saying:"We believe!" and they will not be tried*?' (Ch. XXIX: v 2)

Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise knows the hypocrites:

٣-وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ
اللّٰهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكٰذِبِينَ ○

'*And indeed We did try those before them, so God certainly knoweth those who are true, and certainly knoweth He the liars*. (Ch. XXIX: v 3)

The Tree of Total Submission — Paradise Lost

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

٤٠-إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ○

٤١-قَالَ هٰذَا
صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ○

٤٢-إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ
إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَاوِينَ ○

'*Save Thy (devoted) servants, of them the freed ones.*
Said He: "This is a right way unto Me,
Verily (as regards), My (devoted) servants, there is not for thee over them any authority except the one who followeth thee, of the deviators".' (Ch. XV: vs 40-42)

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

٣٢-يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللهِ
بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ
وَيَأْبَى اللهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ○

٣٣-هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ
وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ

لِيُظْهِرَهٗ عَلَى الدِّيْنِ كُلِّهٖ ۙ
وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝

'Intend they that they put out the light of God with (the blow of) their mouths, and disdaineth God save that He perfecteth His light, though the infidels may detest it.
He it is Who sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may prevail it over all other religions, though the polytheists may detest it.' (Ch. IX: vs 32-33)

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

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

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

٣-ذَرْهُمْ يَاْكُلُوْا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوْا
وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْاَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝

'Leave them (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) that they may eat and enjoy themselves and (that) beguileth them the hope, for soon will they know.' (Ch. XV: v 3)

١٢- إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ
وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ ۝

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

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

١٧٠- فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ
بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ
أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝

١٧١- يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝

١٧٢- الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ
لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَوْا
أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝

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

So his and his wife's lodging in the lower paradise of animal comforts to which other animals and Satan also had an

approach was a temporary arrangement for test and trial. The divine order addressed to Adam to live with his wife in paradise enjoying all sorts of food *except this tree* was in accordance with their animal requirement. The prohibitory order *not to go near this tree* meant nothing more than showing him that the consequence of going near *this tree* would be the loss of the lower paradise and the animal comforts. Whatever *this tree* might have been, something physical or spiritual, actual or symbolical, it was very close to Adam and his wife, but they were ordered not to go near it. *This tree* was very attractive, one could not help desiring to taste its fruit. It would make the person who would enjoy it realize his nakedness and defects. According to some apostolic statements it was the clean and refined tree of his chosen offspring. There is another apostolic statement mentioned in the commentary, *Al-Burhan* that the *tree* was an all-round *tree* of wheat, fig, raisin and other things. Actually it was the *tree* termed by Satan as the *tree* of perpetuation (*shajarat ul-khuld*). It was the *tree* rooted in Adam and Eve, the *tree* of sexual urge which embraces all other *trees* mentioned by the commentators; it was the *pure tree* of total submission to God, for which the jinns and men were created.

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

٢٤- أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا
كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ
أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ۝

'*Seest thou not how setteth forth God a parable? Of a good word (being) like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) in the heavens.*' (Ch. XIV: v 24)

In short, from all internal and external evidence available, it is clear that the prohibition was not due to the profaneness of the *tree*, the prohibition was due to the utmost sanctity of the *tree* in the sense that once it was approached one had to be always on guard not to do anything to pollute it. It must be the *pure tree*

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

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

Before proceeding further it should be borne in mind that the statements of Satan mentioned in the Qur'an concerning himself, his forces and party, the stand he took against the divine order

of prostration, the concession he asked for and his decision after it was granted, his approach to Adam and Eve as a well-wisher, his comments on the prohibition, his open announcement that, with the exception of a few purified and chosen ones, he would influence and deceive all the children of Adam, and his blaming ultimately those who followed him and similar statements are a presentation of the facts which have been playing a very great role in the history of creation especially in the development of the human mind. Nothing should be considered untrue just because Satan has said it. All that he has said is true and should be taken into account. The only thing is that his attitude towards Adam and Eve was hostile and whatever he told them, though true, was not with good intention. He wanted to deceive them but it turned out in favour of their cause. His example was like the example of the hypocrites who would come to the Holy Prophet and would give evidence and say, '*We are witnessing that thou are the Prophet (Apostle) of Allah.*' God retorts saying, '*God certainly knows that thou art His Apostle, but God gives evidence and is witnessing that the hypocrites are surely liars*' (Ch. LXIII: v 1). Similarly, Satan's whispering to Adam and Eve that the *forbidden tree* was the *tree of perpetuation* (*shajarat ul-khuld*), and it was a kingdom which would never decline and be extinguished (*mulkin la yabla*) was entirely true.

١٢٠۔ فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطٰنُ قَالَ يٰٓاٰدَمُ
هَلْ اَدُلُّكَ عَلٰى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ
وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلٰى ○

'*But Satan whispered unto him saying: "O Adam! shall I guide thee unto the tree of eternity and unto a kingdom which decayeth not*?"' (Ch. XX: v 120)

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

٢٠۔ فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطٰنُ لِيُبْدِيَ
لَهُمَا مَا وٗرِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْاٰتِهِمَا

وَقَالَ مَا نَهٰىكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هٰذِهِ
الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا
مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ۝

'*Then whispered Satan evil suggestions unto the two (Adam and Eve) that he might display unto them what hath been kept hidden from them of their shame, and said he: "Forbade not ye two your Lord from this tree lest ye two may become the immortals*".' (Ch. VII: v 20)

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

٢١- وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ
النَّاصِحِينَ ۝

'*And he swore unto them both: "Verily I am unto you a sincere adviser*".' (Ch. VII: v 21)

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

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

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

Satan approached Adam through some medium, most probably,

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

٢١- وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ خَلَقَ
لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا
لِّتَسْكُنُوْٓا اِلَيْهَا
وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَّرَحْمَةً ۭ
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ○

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

It is she who is presented in the first verse of Ch. IV:

١- يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمُ
الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ
وَّخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا
رِجَالًا كَثِيْرًا وَّنِسَاۗءً ۚ
وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ تَسَاۗءَلُوْنَ بِهٖ
وَالْاَرْحَامَ ۭ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيْبًا ○

'*O men! take shelter in your Lord Who hath created you from a single self and created from it, its pair, and spread from these two, men manifold and women, and fear God, in Whose name ye importune one another, and (be mindful) of kinship; Verily, God is vigilant over you.*' (Ch. IV: v 1)

As she was made of the same clay of which Adam was made it was from them, both Adam and Eve, that the multitude of men

and women were spread out (propagated). Her womb is termed in the Qur'an as *rahm*, the seat of mercy and kindness, derived from the divine name, *Ar-Rahman* (the All-Merciful).

٦- هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ
يَشَاءُ ۚ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا
هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ○

'*He it is Who fashioned you in the wombs (of your mothers) as He liketh; There is no god but He, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.*' (Ch. III: v 6)

It is by virtue of her womb that blood relationship and affection is reciprocally established. The Qur'an terms this relationship after the womb (*rahm*) to emphasize the important part that the womb plays in the establishment of physical and mental relationship, and affinity between the members of the human society. In this verse the wombs (*arham*), i.e., blood relatives, are presented aligned with God towards whom men hold each other responsible and whose displeasure should be avoided. It is she who makes man lose the negligible and immediate comforts of irresponsible life and suffer the toil and hardship of fulfilling obligations towards others for the sake of greater and far-reaching pleasure to come. It is said that man owes Eve a lot. It was through her that we come out of the animal or lower paradise of ignorance, nakedness, laziness and selfish and material comforts, and it shall be through her chosen daughters like Fatimah, the beloved daughter of the Holy Prophet, that man shall enter the heavenly paradise of knowledge, perfection, peace and unimaginable social comforts.

٤٥- إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ
وَعُيُونٍ ○

٤٦- ادْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ آمِنِينَ ○

٤٧- وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم
مِّنْ غِلٍّ
إِخْوَانًا عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُّتَقَابِلِينَ ○

أَنِّيٓ أَنَا ٱلْغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ۝

٤٨-لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ
وَمَا هُم مِّنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ ۝

٤٩-نَبِّئْ عِبَادِيٓ

'Verily the pious ones shall be in the midst of gardens and fountains;
(The angels saying unto them): "Enter ye therein in peace, secure."
And We will root out whatever rancour be in their hearts, (they shall be) as brothers, on dignified couches, face to face.
Shall not touch them therein any weariness, nor shall they ever be cast out of it.
Announce thou (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) unto My servants that Verily, I am the most Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.' (Ch. XV: vs 45-49)

It is the growth of the social impulse that makes man alive, not only to his selfish needs but to the needs of others who surround him. This is the sense that widens the limitation of one's ego, and develops the tendency of sacrifice, i.e., the tendency to give up a limited and immediate gain for a wider and far-reaching interest. However, Satan intended to deceive Eve and through her Adam, by advising them to approach the *forbidden tree*, as that would drive them both out of the state and condition in which he thought they were happy. He did not know of the divine purpose and the device and instrument to achieve it. Blinded by jealousy and enmity, he could not see what progress and attainments were awaiting Adam outside the lower paradise of animal and selfish comfort. If he could have become aware of the lofty stages of intellectual and spiritual gains ahead of the parents of so many accomplished men, scholars, philosophers, scientists, inventors, discoverers, legislators and others who contributed towards the actualization of human potentialities, and above all the line of the chosen vicegerents of God he would never have thought of trying to dislodge the pair. On the contrary he would have done his best to see that they remained

there forever. It is the case with all the hypocrites who think that they are deceiving God, while, really God is deceiving them.

٩- يُخٰدِعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۚ وَمَا
يَخْدَعُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۝

'*They (intend to) deceive God and those who believe, while they deceive not but themselves, but they perceive (it) not.*' (Ch. II: v 9)

١٤٢- اِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ يُخٰدِعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ
وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ ۚ
وَاِذَا قَامُوْٓا اِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ قَامُوْا كُسَالٰى ۙ
يُرَآءُوْنَ النَّاسَ
وَلَا يَذْكُرُوْنَ اللّٰهَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝

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

As the sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq says, 'God prohibited but willed Adam to do it, as God ordered Ibrahim to sacrifice his son, but He willed not the slaughter.' These are called testing orders. He orders just to bring forth the reaction of man to it, otherwise the object of the order is not willed by Him. So it was God who actually provided all the means which would take Adam and Eve towards *this tree*, just to open their eyes and to make them see their creaturely nakedness and defects, to bring their inherent wants into the center of their consciousness in order to translate their hitherto natural prayer and demand into conscious and verbal prayer and supplication. In other words, God saw that the time was quite appropriate to convert the hitherto natural and non-obligatory life of the would-be, His first vicegerent, into the conventional life of obligations and responsibilities. The time was ripe to make man, who was until then dependent on the products of nature and unaware of his creaturely weakness and defects, to depend on his toil and labour to realize his physical and spiritual needs and then to try and pray to God for protection and help to cover his nakedness

not with leaves of trees but with the clothes which God would reveal to him through his industries (by utilizing the physical and mental faculties). Besides better than the clothes and anything else is the pure garb of piety and godliness to cover their creaturely defects.

٢٦. يٰبَنِيٓ اٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا
يُّوَارِيْ سَوْاٰتِكُمْ وَرِيْشًا ۭ
وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوٰى ۙ
ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ۭ
ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ○

'*O children of Adam! Indeed We have sent down unto you raiment to cover your shame and (for) adornment and the raiment for piety, that is the best; this is one of the signs of God that ye may be mindful.*' (Ch. VII: v 26)

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

٢٢. فَدَلّٰىهُمَا بِغُرُوْرٍ ۚ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ
بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْاٰتُهُمَا
وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفٰنِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَّرَقِ
الْجَنَّةِ ۭ
وَنَادٰىهُمَا رَبُّهُمَآ
اَلَمْ اَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكُمَا الشَّجَرَةِ وَاَقُلْ
لَّكُمَآ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ○

'*Then he instigated them both by deceit so when they tasted (of) the tree their shameful things got displayed unto them and they both began covering themselves with the leaves of the garden; and called out unto them their Lord (saying): "Did I not forbid ye two that tree and (did I not) say unto you both that Satan is of ye both a declared enemy?*"' (Ch. VII: v 22)

God ordered both Adam and Eve to get down to earth.

٣٦. فَاَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطٰنُ عَنْهَا فَاَخْرَجَهُمَا
مِمَّا كَانَا فِيْهِ ۠

وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۚ
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ
حِينٍ ۝

'But Satan made them slip and drove them out of what they were in; and (whereupon) said We, "Get ye down! the one of you as an enemy unto the other and there shall be an abode for you in the earth and provision for a (fixed) time.' (Ch. II: v 36)

Satan thought that he had prevailed upon them to disobey their Lord: he thought that they had gone astray.

١٢١- فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا
فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا
وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِن وَرَقِ
الْجَنَّةِ
وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ ۝

'Then they both ate of it, so their nakedness appeared unto them and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the garden; And Adam acted not (to the advices of) his Lord (deceived by Satan) and went astray.' (Ch. XX: v 121)

That was the case apparently, but actually there was no real order and command. The prohibitory order and warning about the hostile attitude of Satan was issued by God before the development of the faculty of decision in Adam. So, it was natural that Adam did not take notice of it.

١١٥- وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِن قَبْلُ
فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا ۝

'And indeed We covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; but We did not find in him any intention (to disobey Us).' (Ch. XX: v 115).

Adam was in paradise which is out of the bound of man's responsibility which begins with the appearance of intellectual consciousness and ends with the actualization of all intellectual potential. The end of the lower paradise is the beginning of

responsibility and the beginning of the upper and higher paradise is the end of man's responsibility. By approaching *this tree* he reached intellectual consciousness, a stage of mental development when man distinguishes right and wrong, since he was no more in paradise. He was out of it and was on earth, wherein he committed no sin and disobeyed no order. It was on the earth that he was chosen by God. He turned to Adam and guided him.

١٢٢. ثُمَّ اجْتَبٰهُ رَبُّهٗ فَتَابَ
عَلَيْهِ وَهَدٰى ○

'Then His Lord chose him and turned unto him (accepting his repentance) and guided him.' (Ch. XX: v 122)

Before guidance there could be no disobedience. As the eighth Imam Ali al-Rida says, 'Adam was not created for that paradise. He was created for the earth wherein he committed no sin. He enters the responsible stage after approaching this tree and with that stage the loss of animal comforts began.' The Qur'an gives glad tidings to those who stand the trial successfully.

١٥٣. يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اسْتَعِيْنُوْا
بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ○

١٥٤. وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا لِمَنْ يُّقْتَلُ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
اَمْوَاتٌ ؕ
بَلْ اَحْيَآءٌ وَّلٰكِنْ لَّا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ○

١٥٥. وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ
مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوْعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْوَالِ
وَالْاَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرٰتِ ؕ
وَبَشِّرِ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ○

١٥٦. الَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَصَابَتْهُمْ مُّصِيْبَةٌ ۙ
قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَاِنَّآ اِلَيْهِ رٰجِعُوْنَ ○

١٥٧. اُولٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوٰتٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ

وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ۝

'O ye who believe! seek help with patience and prayer; Verily, God is with the patient ones.
And say not of those who are slain in the path of God that they are dead; Nay, (they are) living, but ye perceive not.
We will surely test you with something of fear, and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits; and give glad tidings to the patient ones,
Who when misfortune befalleth them, say, "Verily, we are God's and verily unto Him shall we return."
Those are they on whom are the blessings from their Lord and (His) mercy; and they are the ones that are (rightly) guided.' (Ch. II: vs 153-157)

Ever since the start of his trial on earth, he never, even for a moment, turned his face from the divine direction, neither did he divert from the right path, nor did he forget his creaturely defects and lack of knowledge and justice. He was always up and looking far ahead seeing the signs and names of those chosen ones to whom he was the father. These names were the words which he had received from his Lord.

٣٧- فَتَلَقَّىٰ آدَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ
عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

'And received Adam from his Lord (certain) words (of prayer) and God turned unto him (mercifully) (for) verily, He is the Oft-Turning (unto mercy), the Most-Merciful.' (Ch. II: v 37)

Through these words he used to approach God for blessing, grace and covering of his creaturely defects and faults.

In short, the paradise lost was not an exalted place or state of comfort, suitable for man as his permanent abode. On the contrary, the Qur'an asserts that it was the earth wherein man had to settle (rest) and enjoy for some time (till resurrection).

٣٦- قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۖ
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ

وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ۝

٢٥- قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ
وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ ۝

'*He said, "Get ye down, some of you (being) the enemies of the others; and for you there is in the earth an abode and a provision (of sustenance) for a (fixed) time."*
(And) said He: "Therein ye shall live, and therein shall ye die, and from it ye shall be brought out".' (Ch. VII: vs 24-25)

It was on earth wherein man would live, die and from it be taken out. The paradise to come as described in the Qur'an in several chapters is the ever-lasting abode (*darulqarar*). It contains all that the souls desire for and the eyes are pleased with. It contains every pleasant thing from the sensual objects up to the greatest and highest spiritual enjoyment, the pleasure of God (*ridwan min Allah*) and His presence (*'inda rabbihim*).

١٣٣- وَسَارِعُوٓا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَجَنَّةٍ
عَرْضُهَا السَّمَٰوَٰتُ وَالْأَرْضُ
أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝

'*And hasten unto (the means to obtain) forgiveness from your Lord and paradise vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious ones.*' (Ch. III: vs 133)

١٦٢- أَفَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَٰنَ اللَّهِ
كَمَنۢ بَآءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَأْوَىٰهُ جَهَنَّمُ
وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ۝

'*Is then he who abideth by the pleasure of God, like him who hath brought on himself the wrath from God, and whose abode shall be Hell? What an evil destination (it is).*' (Ch. III: v 162)

٧٢- وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ جَنَّٰتٍ
تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَمَسَٰكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّٰتِ عَدْنٍ
وَرِضْوَٰنٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ
ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝

'God hath promised to the believer men and the believer women gardens underneath which flow rivers, to abide in them and the excellent mansions in the gardens of 'Adn.' But the goodwill of God is the greatest: That is the grand achievement.' (Ch. IX: v 72)

The permanent abode of man is the paradise of perfection, the paradise of one's realization of his perfections. For those who would follow the divine guidance there is no spiritual loss. They will gain the higher paradise. Of course, for those who fail to follow the guidance, it is a great loss. They are deprived of both the animal comforts, the paradise lost and higher paradise to come.

١٢٤- وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي
فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَىٰ ○

'And whoever turneth away from my monition, verily his shall be a life straightened, and We shall raise him up on the Day of Judgement, blind.' (Ch. XX: v 124)

١٧٩- وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا
مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ ۖ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا
يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا ۖ وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ
لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا ۖ وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ
بِهَا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ
بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ○

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

Adam Settled in the Earth

The few terms such as *'but come not nigh this tree,'* (*la taqraba*); *'let him not drive you both out of the garden,'* (*fala yakra-*

jannakuma; '*but he forgot*,' (*fala tansa*), etc.,used in the Qur'an dealing with the story of Adam and Eve and Satan may, in the first instance, seem to assert the fall and sin of the pair, but on taking all the Qur'anic and apostolic evidences into consideration there is not the slightest doubt that these terms do not mean what some schools of thought may believe. All these terms have been used against Adam when dealing with the stage when he had not entered the life of responsibility. They mean nothing more than what a father would tell his child, 'Be satisfied with the comforts which I have provided you with and do not go after attaining a higher position. If you do this you will lose the physical comfort and have to suffer hardship.' This is said because the father wants to prepare the child for the loss of the present comfort in order to gain a better state of mind. Thus being driven out of paradise was not really a loss and fall for Adam and Eve, except in the eyes of Satan and his party. Actually it was a sort of transfer from a natural life and condition to a rational status. It was a shift from the irresponsible state to a responsible one. The term *habut* used in this connection does not necessarily mean descent from a height. It may mean to settle down. When the children of Israel expressed their dissatisfaction with the nomadic and wandering life they were ordered to settle down in a city so that they may get what they asked for.

٦١- وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يٰمُوسٰى لَنْ نَّصْبِرَ عَلٰى
طَعَامٍ وَّاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا
مِمَّا تُنْۢبِتُ الْاَرْضُ مِنْۢ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّآئِهَا
وَفُوْمِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا ۭ قَالَ اَتَسْتَبْدِلُوْنَ
الَّذِيْ هُوَ اَدْنٰى بِالَّذِيْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ۭ
اِهْبِطُوْا مِصْرًا فَاِنَّ لَكُمْ مَّا سَاَلْتُمْ ۭ
وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ ۤ
وَبَآءُوْ بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ
ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ
وَيَقْتُلُوْنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۭ
ذٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَّكَانُوْا يَعْتَدُوْنَ ۝

'And (remember ye) when ye said, "O Moses! never can we (always) endure one kind of food, so pray thou unto thy Lord for us to produce for us of what the earth groweth, its herbs, and cucumbers, its garlic, lentils, and onions!" Said he, "Seek ye to exchange that which is inferior for that which is superior? Go ye down to (settle into) some town and there ye shall have what ye ask for!", And humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them and they drew unto themselves the wrath of God; This because they used to reject the signs of God and slay His Apostles unjustly; this because they disobeyed and were wont to transgress.' (Ch. II: v 61)

Therefore Adam's settling down (*habut*) was not a fall or the original sin as presented by the Jewish, Christian and some Muslim schools of thought. It was really a progressive move, a rise from the animal state of life to the human state. The advent of the pair on earth was the beginning of human civilization. Accordingly human civilization begins with the 'appointment' of the vicegerent of God on earth. First comes the Imam (leader), the center, and then the other parts of a society come into being. According to this view the first pair from whom the human race has developed were sinless and free from all sorts of falls, faults, or drawbacks. From the state of primal matter up to the last stage of their development they passed through the wombs and loins of nature or the natural stages — well protected by God, and from the conscious stage till the end they remained obedient and submissive to His will. The same is the case with all the chosen issues of Adam and Eve. They have passed from the 'exalted loins' (*aslab-ish-shamikhat*) to the 'purified wombs' (*arham-il-mubahira*).[22] God saved their resplendent clay and light from being polluted by the vices of the days of ignorance.[23] The pagan days could not cover and stain that refined clay and light. Even Satan realized that he had no chance of diverting Adam and all of his issues from the right path. Some of them, though few in number, would always follow the prescribed path. So Satan challenged God that he would certainly sever most of Adam's issues from him (Adam)

or from the right path.

٦٢. قَالَ أَرَءَيْتَكَ هَٰذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ
عَلَيَّ لَئِنْ أَخَّرْتَنِ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ
الْقِيَٰمَةِ لَأَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهُۥٓ
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ○

٦٣. قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ
فَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ جَزَآءً
مَّوْفُورًا.

٦٤ وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُم
بِصَوْتِكَ وَأَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِم
بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ
فِي الْأَمْوَٰلِ وَالْأَوْلَٰدِ وَعِدْهُمْ
وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطَٰنُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ○

٦٥. إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
سُلْطَٰنٌ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا

'He (Iblis) said, "Seest Thou, (this) is (the creature) whom Thou hath honored above me? If Thou respiteth me until the Day of Judgement, I will sever his posterity under my sway from its origin save a few."
Said He (God): "Begone! But whosoever of them followeth thee, then verily hell is your recompense, a recompense in full!"
And tear thou away whomsoever of them thou canst with thy voice, and collect (against) them thy cavalry and infantry, and partake with them in (their) riches and (their) children, and make promises unto them;" and Satan promiseth them only to deceive. "Verily (as for) My (own) servants, thou shalt not have over them any authority, and sufficeth thy Lord (as their) Guardian".' (Ch. XVII: vs 62-65)

Despising the satanic domination over the majority of Adam's issues, God's answer to the challenge was: "He (Satan) may do whatever he likes with the offspring of Adam who would follow him, but he shall never have any influence over the real servants of God." God is the saviour who saves those worthy persons

from satanic influence. And by saving them, most of Adam's issues have been saved in the end. The Qur'an asserts that Adam and the 'few' of his issues, which include Noah, the family of Ibrahim including the family of Muhammad, and the family of Imran are 'chosen' (*mustafaun*) and beyond Satan's influence. They form the chain of divine vicegerency on earth. They are in communion with the higher spheres, and the infallible receivers or form the recipient ground for the divine will dispatched to the material plane. They represent and reflect His will in its entirety to mankind. Consequently, those who follow them and try to adhere to their cause and leadership will be saved. As the result of the safety of Adam and the 'selected few' of his issues, the truth and righteousness shall ultimately prevail in the world and falsehood, wickedness and all other Satanic forces will be defeated, over-powered and thrown into hell.

٤٩۔ قُلْ جَآءَ الْحَقُّ
وَمَا يُبْدِئُ الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيْدُ ○

'*Say thou: "The truth hath come, and falsehood neither bringeth forth anything nor doth it reproduce.*' (Ch. XXXIV: v 49)

This end is good because the beginning was good. This means the doctrine of intercession, i.e. *Shifa't*.

Christian and Jewish Conception of Infallibility

The doctrine of Adam's *original sin* and *fall* and the other obnoxious stories of the Prophet's sins form the fundamental basis of Christian theology. Some of the Muslim traditionists and theologians who are accustomed to following the footsteps of the Jews and Christians in adopting many of their doctrines, such as the uncreatedness[24] of the Qur'an (the word of God), etc. insisted on the fall of Adam and sins of other Prophets and did not like to make even the Prophet of Islam an exception.

To accuse Adam and the celebrated Prophets and vicegerents of God who succeeded Adam and one another, of sin and being influenced by satanic forces means either (a) denial of the

authoritative and divine representative status of these persons, or (b) recognition of the same status for all those claimants of communion with the higher spheres, whose fallability is evidently proved. In either of these cases the establishment of an authentic and authoritative communication between man and God becomes impossible. The apostolic statements based on communication with the angels or God, and the philosophic assertions based on pure reasoning or conjectural and hypothetical propositions, all becoming of the same value, subject to error, falsehood and thus unreliable and unauthentic. Such a state of affairs would undermine the foundation of all religions as all that the Prophets say need not be from 'Above' and even all that is revealed to them from 'Above' need not be entirely true. Hence, the revelation would then become conditional with the state of the receiving mind which is subject to satanic influence. The result, accordingly, would be that neither all the revelations are exactly true, nor all the truths are exactly revealed.

We have already pointed out the actual motive and background for evolving the view of the 'fallibility' of the vicegerents of God. The point to be noted here is that the Christian theologians, while accepting the Jewish reports of the sins and wrong deeds of the Prophets, try to present Jesus, upon whom be peace, as sinless, free from all human faults and drawbacks. Hence he (Jesus) is considered by them as the true representative or manifestation of God, the incarnated Word, the Son, the Third Person in the Trinity or God Himself. Considered sinless and free from all faults he is presented as the only saviour and redeemer of mankind. He, the person of such standard of perfection, can only represent God and be an intercessor and a medium between God and man. So they accept in principle the fact that fallible man cannot have the real representative status between God and man. They agree that it is only the infallible person who can hold such a status. But the question is: how do they reconcile (a) the fall and original sin of Adam, (b) the sins and obnoxious life of Jesus's ancestoral chain (the life of David

with the wife of Oria, mother of Solomon and Nathan), and (c) the life of Jesus himself as given in the Bible with his infallibility? He is presented in the Bible as a 'wine-bibber,' of 'loose conduct,' and 'harsh to his mother, relatives and non-Israelites,' besides his being from the 'seed and the fruit of the loins of David.' Therefore, he is like all other men, the descendants of the same sinful fathers and fallible persons. Even if the contradictory genealogy of Jesus, through Joseph, the husband of Mary, given by Matthew and Luke is dismissed as totally incorrect and what the Qur'an asserts, namely that Jesus was born of the 'Virgin' and that she never met a man before nor after the birth of Jesus is accepted, there remains the fact that the mother (Mary) was the descendant of those sinful fathers. The Bible insists that Jesus of Nazareth was the descendant of David, whose advent, as foretold by the scriptures, was expected by the Jews. So he cannot be the real 'son of God' in body and spirit to remain aloof from the fall and faults of Adam and the chain of his issues who link up Mary with Adam. He must be from the seed of David. Otherwise the whole prophecy of the scriptures falls apart. All that they can claim for Jesus is that he was an adopted 'son of God' and the real son of Adam. One inherits the character of the natural father more than that of the adoptive father. If it is possible for them to claim total transformation of body and soul into 'Divine Nature' for one issue of the sinful man, it can be claimed for others too. In short, it is not possible for Christians to have it both ways, to consider Adam and David and the forefathers of Jesus as sinners and still hold Jesus perfectly infallible. If once we believe in the fall and fallibility of Adam none of his descendants can be accepted as infallible. To believe that all the Prophets from Adam up to Jesus made sins and make Jesus of the seed of David an exception is unreasonable.

The Christians wanted to monopolize the Divine representative status of Jesus of Nazareth, so they held all men as sinners save Jesus. The Jews and some of the Muslim theologians wanted to profane the status so that they may be able to claim it for fallible

persons of their own choice. They held prophethood so cheap a gift that even the ill-tempered persons, who passed most of their life in practising the worst forms of pagan cults, could be entitled to it. Even insane men can establish direct communion with the higher sphere and become saints, if not Prophets, according to them. They applied such terms as *Muhaddas* (inspired), *Vali* (in close contact with God), *Qiddis* (saint), and consecrated one, to many people of no spiritual accomplishment.

These are the things wanted by the people, and a group of the People of the Book, but the truth never follows the wishes of people:

١٠٠-وَلَوِ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ
لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ
فِيهِنَّ

'*And should the Truth follow their vain inclinations certainly will perish the heavens and the earth and all those who are therein.*' (Ch. XXIII: v 71)

The Qur'an declares Adam as God's chosen vicegerent on the earth, due to his superiority in certain knowledge and to his being in the best of 'mould and form.' He was brought up as infallible by God and lived on the earth a pure and virtuous life. He followed His will and order incessantly with no drawback at all till his departure from the earth; then he was succeeded by his chosen son, Shees, who lived a godly life as his father had done.

The Continuity of Infallibility (Part 4)

The chain of the chosen ones, keeping their purity unstained and carrying futher potentialities to the next, succeeded each other. Some appeared with brilliance while others remained in obscurity, but the chain was continuous. It continued, as it ought to, in a particular line of Adam's offspring. The chain had Noah as its outshining link after Shees. But the interval between

the two does not mean any break or gap. It means only that the links in-between remained in obscurity, so far as our knowledge is concerned.

١٦٤-وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنٰهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَّمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ ۚ
وَكَلَّمَ اللّٰهُ مُوْسٰى تَكْلِيْمًا ۝

'*And apostles We have (already) mentioned unto thee before and Apostles We mentioned not unto thee; and God spake unto Moses, directly discoursing.*' (Ch. IV: v 164)

Between Noah and Ibrahim, only God knows how many vicegerents of limited jurisdiction were branched off and went out preaching the truth to every nook and corner of the earth, as the human race began to spread out.

٣٦-وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ رَّسُوْلًا
اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوْتَ ۚ
فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللّٰهُ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلٰلَةُ ۚ
فَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ
فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ۝

'*And indeed raised We in every nation an Apostle (of Ours) (preaching) that "Worship ye God (only), and shun ye (the worship of every kind of) idol," so of them were some whom God guided, and of them were others on whom error was confirmed; Therefore travel ye in the earth, then see what hath been the end of the beliers.*' (Ch. XVI: v 36)

But the main stem continued progressing till it outshone with the advent of Ibrahim, the holy and venerated father of the two chosen and blessed branches, propagated from his two chosen sons, Isma'il (Ishmael) and Ishaq (Issac). The latter branch (of Ishaq) began to outshine immediately after Ibrahim with Ishaq and after him with the successive Prophets and vicegerents of his descendants, some very prominent in outlook while others obscure and less known to the people till it ended with the most

outshining Prophet Jesus, son of Maryam, the carrier of the Divine Spirit (*ruh Allah*). He was succeeded by his chosen disciple Sham'un (Simon Peter), after whom the chain of the true successors of Jesus is not very clear to us. But the Christians give prominence to Paul, even in preference to Simon Peter. They recognize Paul as the supreme father and founder of the Church next to Jesus. Next to Paul comes the chain of the Church fathers who recognize Paul as the true inspired adopted disciple of Jesus. Jesus nominated and declared Peter as his successor, terming him as the rock on which he (Jesus) would build his church. Paul was then one of the staunch Jews who opposed the Christian movement during the lifetime of Jesus as well as afterwards. His sudden conversion with great enthusiasm for the new religion and the extraordinary dexterity he displayed in enhancing the new cause eclipsed Peter, the true successor of Jesus. Paul's broad esoterical interpretation of the Old Testament and the fragmentary *teachings* of Jesus attracted Roman gentiles and non-Jews. He differed from Peter and tried to depart from the rigid boundaries of racial Judaism, so he became popular. His heretical interpretations were gradually recognized as orthodox and the original Jewish orthodoxical presentation of Jesus's *teachings became heresy and heterodoxy*. In short the true and genuine teachings of Jesus and his true successors remained almost in obscurity while Paulian thoughts and movement began to introduce themselves as the true teachings of Jesus. Paulianism or Paulian Christianity in comparison to what was held by the early Hebrew Proselytes as genuine, is a departure from the original teachings for the sake of convenience. It was a particular course of thought and interpretation adopted by Paul and his school. So it was natural that in the course of time and circumstances it would adopt various directions of development which would be decided by one or a number of persons who would exercise authority. Christianity today with all its sects, sectarian views, and various churches owes its development to the decisions and resolutions taken from time to time by men in power, the religious

authorities for the time being in the shape of individuals or councils, and ecclesiastical bodies. Apart from the Qur'an all that is known about the life and teachings of Jesus is of Pauline origin rooted in the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, Revelations or the Visions of John. There are discrepancies in these works and there were different editions at different times by different churches. Further, the identity of two of the Gospels' authors is in doubt and the sources of their information are not historical. Two of them, Mark and Luke, were not eye-witnesses. They wrote what they heard and were inclined to believe. Regarding the other two, Matthew and John, the authors of the first and last Gospels, it is, as shall be seen presently, doubtful whether they were the real disciples of Jesus.

However, though very few in number and historically very obscure, a group of Christians continued to adhere to the original teachings of Jesus. Their version of the life and teachings of Jesus was very different from the four canonical Gospels, each of which differs from the other in several particulars. Of those collections some were written by the immediate disciples of Jesus who were eye-witnesses, such as Barnabas and Matthew. It is doubtful if the present Gospel of Matthew is his real work or was partially or totally written by someone else. The four Gospels in hand and the Acts, Epistles and Visions were canonized and declared authentic by the ecclesiastical councils of the Pauline schools long after they were written. It was the view and decision of the councils of a particular school of Christianity that the Four Gospels were canonized (made authoritative) and the rest declared as apocryphal (doubtful). Thus the authenticity of the four or the doubtfulness of the rest is not based on any historical scrutiny. Whether the original work of Matthew was in Hebrew or in Greek is also a matter of doubt. Some hold the view that the apocryphal Gospel of Ebeonites, the early Jewish proselytes (Jewish Christians) was the original work of Matthew. Some say that Matthew wrote originally in Greek. Others think that it was

Luke, the physician of Antioch, the author of the third Gospel and Acts who rendered Matthew's Hebrew work into the Greek language. As already stated Mark and Luke were not eyewitnesses and they wrote what they had heard from others. The last in order and latest in the date of composition is the fourth Gospel, but whether the author was John the immediate disciple of Jesus is a matter of doubt.

Christian Prediction of the Holy Prophet of Islam

There is, however, no doubt that a group of Christian monks and hermits of the early days remained detached from the Pauline school which formed the main group of Christianity. They had their own Gospel and life-story of Jesus and his teachings and considered themselves the true followers of Jesus. They were firm believers in the unity of God and the prophethood of Jesus. They abhored the Trinity and divinity of Jesus and did not believe in his crucifixion and physical resurrection which are the fundamental articles of the Pauline faith. They usually had their monastaries and hermitages in Arabia and its surroundings. They, like many Jewish priests and rabbis of those regions, expected the coming of a Prophet of Isma'ilite descent. That the advent of such a Prophet was generally expected is clear from the celebrated story of Bahyra[25] the Christian monk of Busra (in Syria) who met the Holy Prophet, when as a boy of eight years he accompanied his uncle Abu Talib to Syria, and other similar anecdotes which refer to the expectation of the advent of Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace. Upon seeing the Prophet these monks realized in him all the prophecies they knew and they intimated their knowledge to his uncle. There were people who believed firmly that the time for the advent of the promised Prophet was approaching. Hearing these prophecies from the pious and well-informed monks, people like Salman, set out towards Arabia in search of the Prophet leaving his home and comfort in Iran.

The eager expectants were looking towards Mount Faran, and were making themselves acquainted with the House of Hashim. As the Qur'an asserts and history describes, these were learned Jews, Christians and even magians and people of other creeds, who, according to their scriptures, were expecting the advent of Muhammad, upon whom be peace.

Leaving the Israelite branch, let us go back to the other branch of Ibrahim's descent, which comes forth through Isma'il, the oldest son of Ibrahim by the Holy Hajar. As per divine order, Isma'il, the newborn baby and his mother Hajar, were taken by Ibrahim to the barren hillside and valley of Faran, the Bacca of the Qur'an, the barren valley surrounding the sacred House of God, with the sole purpose of establishing a universal center for mankind to pray and express total submission to God.

٣٧- رَبَّنَآ إِنِّيٓ أَسۡكَنتُ مِن ذُرِّيَّتِي
بِوَادٍ غَيۡرِ ذِي زَرۡعٍ عِندَ بَيۡتِكَ ٱلۡمُحَرَّمِ
رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ
فَٱجۡعَلۡ أَفۡـِٔدَةٗ مِّنَ ٱلنَّاسِ تَهۡوِيٓ
إِلَيۡهِمۡ
وَٱرۡزُقۡهُم مِّنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَشۡكُرُونَ ٣٧

'*O Our Lord! Verily I have housed a part of my offspring in a valley uncultivable, nigh unto thy Holy House, Our Lord! that they may establish prayer; so make Thou the hearts of some of the people yearn unto them, and provide them with fruits, that they may be grateful.*' (Ch. XIV: v 37)

The House of God was ordered by Him to be purified by the father, Ibrahim and his son Isma'il for all devotees, and for all sorts of devotion, for those who go round the House in obedience, for those who stand in prayer and for those who bow down and prostrate in obeisance.

This holy place belongs to all alike, the inhabitants as well as those who come from abroad. The father and the son were ordered by God to call people to come for pilgrimage from places far remote and by all means of transportation:

٢٥- إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ
سَوَاءً ۚ الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ ۚ
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِإِلْحَادٍ بِظُلْمٍ
نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۝

'Verily those who disbelieve and obstruct (people) from the way of God and from the Sacred House (Masjidul-Haram) which We have made alike for the dweller therein as well as the stranger, and whoever doth intend to wrong therein unjustly, We shall make him taste a grievous chastisement.' (Ch. XXII: v 25)

٢٦- وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ
أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا
وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ
وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ۝

٢٧- وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ
يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ
يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ۝

'And (remember O Our Apostle Muhammad!) when We fixed for Ibrahim the place for the House, (saying): "Associate thou not with Me aught, and cleanse My House for those who make the circuits and stand in prayer, and bow and prostrate themselves (unto Me).
"And proclaim thou unto the people the Pilgrimage (Hajj)! They will come unto thee on foot and on lean camel, coming from every remote (high) way".' (Ch. XXII: vs 26-27)

God consoled Ibrahim and assured him that He has blessed Isma'il as He blessed his brother Ishaq, that He would raise a Prophet from among the descendants of Isma'il and would put His word into the mouth of the Prophet to come, who would rule the people with an iron rod and vigour. Through him and for his sake Isma'il's issue would prosper and flourish throughout the world and Isma'il would be blessed with twelve princes who would be of his descent. This version is in complete accord

with the Old and New Testament, and it is almost confirmed by the Qur'an.

Islam

According to the Qur'an, Islam, i.e. submission of the human will to the Will of God, is the religion approved by God for mankind and is in accord with his nature and the mould in which man was created.

٣٠- فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا ۚ
فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ
لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ
اللَّهِ ۚ

'Then set thou thy face uprightly for the (right) religion, in natural devotion to the truth (following) the nature caused by God in which He hath made the people; No change can there be (by any one else) in the creation of God.' (Ch. XXX: v 30)

The perpetuity of Islam has been established by all Prophets and divine guides, known or unknown, in all ages.

٨٤- قُلْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ
وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ
وَالنَّبِيُّونَ
مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ
بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ○

٨٥- وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ
غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا
فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ ۚ
وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ○

٨٦- كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا

كَفَرُوْا بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِهِمْ
وَشَهِدُوْٓا
اَنَّ الرَّسُوْلَ حَقٌّ
وَجَآءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ ۭ
وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝

'Say (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) (unto the people): "We believe in God, and in what hath been sent down to us, and what hath been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael, and Issac and Jacob, and the Tribes, and in what was given to Moses, and Jews and the Prophets from their Lord, we make no difference between any of them,and we unto Him are Muslims."
And whosoever seeketh any religion other than Islam (total resignation unto God) never shall it be accepted from him, and in the next world he shall be among the losers.
How shall God guide a people who disbelieved after their (once) believing and after they had borne witness that the Apostle (Muhammad) was true, and clear evidence had come unto them; and God guideth not people (who are) unjust.' (Ch. III: vs 84-86)

Opposite to Islam in this sense is a deviation of man's will from the legislative will of God and submission to influence of any ungodly force. This is what the Qur'an terms as *baghi* (revolt or rebellion). Islam is the established religion with which Adam was sent to the earth.

٣٨۔ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوْا مِنْهَا جَمِيْعًا ۚ
فَاِمَّا يَاْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِّنِّيْ هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ
هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُوْنَ ۝

'Said We (then): "Get down ye therefrom all together and when there cometh from Me unto you a guidance, and whoso followeth My guidance, no fear shall come on them, nor shall they grieve.' (Ch. II: v 38)

And as the vicegerency of Adam continued, Islam, the approved religion of God, also continued. Sabeanism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and even the term Mohammadanism all

are limited terms used mostly by men for their convenience; or if they are ever used in some revelation they are meant to show a particular or specific aspect of the universal religion, connected with a particular time or place. Otherwise, these terms are very limited in their baptismal significance with which the religion of God should not be colored. Islam is *Sibghatallah* (God's color), or the baptismal water, the best with which every being is originally baptised, purified, colored, or moulded. According to a Prophetic *hadith*, 'Every child is born according to the original design after which man was made (i.e., Islam or submission to His Will). It is the parental education which remould or reshape the child as a Jew, Christian or magian.'

The limited baptisms are artificial and man-made colors. The divine recognition of these religions within their limited jurisdiction of time and place was due to the fact that they were preached by the Prophets of the times and places who represented the will of God locally. They could be termed as Islam of that jurisdiction. But Islam with which Ibrahim was commissioned to preach and recommended his children (issues) to adhere to, was in its comprehensive mould. It was Islam in its universal form not stressing on any exclusive aspect, ritual or spiritual. The one-sidedness of Moses' teachings stressing on the ritual aspects of religion and the one-sidedness of Jesus' teachings, stressing on the moral and spiritual aspects are like prescriptions required for treating the spiritual and religious maladies which were prevailing in their respective periods of time at particular places.

According to the Qur'an, Ibrahim, after receiving the status of *Imamat* (leadership or vicegerency), prayed to God that his *Imamat* be continued in some of his issues. Responding to his prayer, God disqualified the unjust and the wrongdoers for the status of *Imamat* (Ch. V: v 124). After building the House of God at Bacca (Mecca) with the help of Isma'il, Ibrahim again prayed to God to keep himself, Isma'il and of their issues a group (the term used is *Ummat* which is applicable even to one

person), in complete submission to His Will, to show himself, Isma'il and those of his issues who submit to God the rites which they should observe and the right path they should follow and to always bestow on them all His attention and special care. Ibrahim's further prayer was: 'O our Lord! send out of them (in the *Ummat-e Muslimah*, i.e. the submissive group of the issues of Isma'il) a Prophet (a messenger from among them, the same *Ummat-e Muslimah*) to recite for them the signs of god and to teach them the Book and wisdom.' Ibrahim made this *tawalla* (submissive attitude towards the Creator) and *tabarrah* (rejection of all other deities or all other ungodly forces) a permanent motto for his offspring. If vs 124-140 in Ch. II, 35-41 in Ch. XIII, 77-78 in Ch. XXII and all the vs in Chs. XXIII, XXVI, XXVIII are read together, one will have no doubt that according to the Qur'an (a) from Isma'il to our Prophet the chain of *Ummat-e Muslimah* continued without interruption, (b) that each link in the *Ummat-e Muslimah* was inspired by God to adhere to the right path and rituals; the Qur'an mentions the prayer of Ibrahim as follows: 'O Our Lord, show us the rites which we have to perform;' the pronoun 'us' refers to Ibrahim, Isma'il and their '*Muslim*' progeny, which means all were inspired; to this fact, *arana* (show us), 'Ali refers in detail in his sermon[26]; and (c) That the Prophet was sent in the *Ummat-e Muslimah* and he was one from among them.

Purity of Lineage of Prophet Muhammad and the Declaration of Abu Talib

In other words, the Qur'an asserts that the lineage between Isma'il and Muhammad (peace be upon him and his household), consisted of the selected Muslims in the true sense of the term and not in the sense of mere utterance of the confessional formula. This also confirms the celebrated statement of the Holy Prophet that God has brought him down from the loins of Adam in such a lineage that every link of it was a chosen and selected one. To consider any one in this lineage to be a non-

Muslim is to depart from what the Qur'an asserts. So granting that the historical account of the lives of the ancestors of the Holy Prophet between Isma'il and Hashim is obscure, nevertheless on the authority of the Qur'an we have to maintain the purity of the chain from which the Holy Prophet has descended. This Qur'anic assertion is supported by the logical argument already advanced that it is necessary that the main stem from Adam to Isma'il and from Isma'il to the Holy Prophet should be true Muslims otherwise the continuity of the divine vicegerency would have been disturbed. What was the faith and creed of the margins and branches, it is not necessary to determine here. We would have stopped here with 'Abdallah and Aminah, the parents of Muhammad, if the vicegerency had stopped with Muhammad and had not continued after him. But the Qur'an says Muhammad is not *abtar* (unproductive, Ch. CVIII), without selected offspring to inherit the Book, the wisdom and the great kingdom given by God to *Al-e Ibrahim*.

٥٤-أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ
عَلٰى مَآ اٰتٰىهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۚ
فَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَآ اٰلَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ الْكِتٰبَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مُّلْكًا عَظِيْمًا ۝

'*Or do they envy the people for what God hath given them of His grace; but indeed We have given to Ibrahim's children the Book and the wisdom and We gave them a great kingdom.*' (Ch. IV: v 54)

٣٢-ثُمَّ اَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتٰبَ الَّذِيْنَ
اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ
فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ ۚ
وَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ۚ
وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرٰتِ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ
ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ ۝

'*Certainly We have given in inheritance the Book (Qur'an) after Muhammad to the same servants of Ours whom We have already selected, of whom some are unjust to themselves and some are fairly good, and of them some are, by the will and grace of God the*

foremost and topmost in all that is good.' (Ch. XXXV: vs 31-32)

This means that the chain of the *Ummat-e Muslimah* or selected persons of Isma'il's descent was still to continue after the Holy Prophet. The Prophet's issues, to inherit the Book, were through none but Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet, and 'Ali. It is through Muhammad and 'Ali, of the House of Ibrahim, that the *Imamat* of Ibrahim in its final form should continue. So the parental purity required for Muhammad is equally required for 'Ali. Muhammad is from Abdullah and Aminah. 'Ali is from Abu Talib and Fatimah bint-e Asad (daughter of Asad). Abdullah and Abu Talib are two brothers from the same father Abdul Muttalib and the same mother. That was (if the report is true) the significance of Abu Talib's last declaration in the presence of Abu Jahl and other opponents of Islam that he was adhering to the religion of his father and grandfathers (the ancestoral chain). He meant to declare that, not only himself but the whole chain between him and Ibrahim had been adherents of the same faith to which the Qur'an refers.

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ
هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي
الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ
مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ
فِي هَٰذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ
وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ
فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

'*And fight (endeavour) ye in (the way of) God as it behoveth you to fight (endeavour) for Him; He hath chosen you and hath laid not upon you any hardship in religion; the faith of your father Ibrahim; He (God Himself) named you Muslims before and in this, and the Apostle may be a witness over you and ye be witness over the people; so establish ye prayer and pay ye the poor-rate and hold ye fast by God; He is your Master — How excellent the Master and*

how excellent the Helper!' (Ch. XXII: v 78)

This declaration of Abu Talib should be read in the light of the amazing devotion which he as a chivalrous successor of Abdul Muttalib showed to his young and orphan nephew. He devoted himself with all that was at his disposal — men, children and property — for the protection of Muhammad against his opponents, to certifying to the truth and righteousness of his mission and to the promotion of his cause. In his action, attitude and eloquent speeches, in prose or poetry, Abu Talib expresses his devotional love for Ahmad (the Holy Prophet) to the extent that he would sacrifice himself and all the members of his family, young and old, in order to defend Ahmad and his cause. One may wonder that the undisputed vehement zeal of Abu Talib to protect Muhammad was due to his chivalrous sense of duty alone to render all possible help to an orphan who was under his protection. But reading Abu Talib's eulogies and description of Muhammad and his mission on the one hand, and considering his (i.e. Abu Talib's) own attitude and reaction towards the new movement on the other, one would wonder whether it was Abu Talib's love for Muhammad that made him protect his mission and cause or was it his love for the mission itself and the unchallengeable truth of the cause, that inspired him to protect Muhammad? A deep study of Abu Talib's actions, attitude and utterances and the Prophet's reverence for his devoted uncle, however, proves beyond doubt that to Abu Talib, Muhammad and his cause, Islam, are 'one inseparable unit.' They together were the fullest and final embodiment of all that was brought, preached and practised by the chosen chain of the vicegerents of God from Adam to Ibrahim and from Ibrahim to Jesus in one line and from Ibrahim to Muhammad in the other line. Abu Talib said expressly that he and his predecessors were far from believing in or doing or supporting what was wrong.

He declared that he sided with Muhammad because he never told a lie; but was true and right in whatever he said or did and

that if it was otherwise he (Abu Talib) and the members of the family who were with him, were far from paying attention to what was false and wrong. He presents Muhammad as the shining and auspicious face, whose grace brings down rain from the sky. He presents him also as the protector of the orphans and the shelter for widows. He considers him as the criterion of truth which never mistakes and as the measuring authority of justice whose measurement never fails.

He considered Muhammad as the one who had been commissioned by the Lord of all creatures to preach religion in its thoroughness unmingled with falsehood. The declaration of Abu Talib in the presence of Abu Jahl and other Qurayshites to the effect that he was the adherent of the religion of his ancestors has been quoted frequently by the anti-*Ahl al-Bayt* party as proof of his remaining a non-Muslim throughout his life. The party fails to read this statement in the light of other statements of Abu Talib mentioned above. They ignore these statements and overlook his service to the cause of Islam. The antagonists are determined to consider Abu Talib and the other members of his house only from the point of view of the Umayyad rulers. This party while in power did its best from the early days of Islam to depict the first and foremost supporter of Islam and his house in a manner that pleased their masters. Otherwise, in view of all the historical evidence in hand if they were not prejudiced and were really impartial they would have realized that Abu Talib's firm stand for his nephew was due to no other motive than the deep-rooted admiration for truth, justice and godliness. Abu Talib believed that Muhammad was the complete expression and thorough manifestation of all the godly virtues with which Ibrahim, Isma'il and the chain of their descendants had been endowed. His declaration meant to show that not only himself, but the whole of the ancestoral chain were the forerunners of Muhammad and that Muhammad was the total fulfilment of their expectations and complete manifestation of the truth and righteousness, which they all were standing for. The only argument advanced by the pro-Umayyad party in

support of their view against Abu Talib is that despite all his devotion and support to the Prophet and admiration for his stand, he did not publicly utter the confessional formula of the faith while Abu Sufyan and his kin uttered the confessional formula. But Abu Sufyan and his kin continued their oppression and hostility to the Prophet and his cause, though outwardly they accepted Islam. Also, they were declared Muslims by the pro-Umayyad simply because of a verbal confession. So according to the pro-Umayyad party the verbal confession though lacking sincerity takes Abu Sufyan to heaven, and the sincere devotion and services of Abu Talib, the first protector of Islam and its founder, seemingly lacking confession, takes him to the verge of hell (which is intended for unbelievers and hypocrites). In other words, Abu Talib who, like Hazkheel,[27] the *Mo'min-e al-e Fira'un* (believer in God and the Prophet Moses), concealed his faith in Islam to be able to protect and defend the Holy Prophet against the ill designs of Abu Sufyan and his associates (the Pharaohs of Quraysh) deserve hell, but Abu Sufyan, who like the hypocrites mentioned in the Qur'an, Ch. LXIII: vs 1-4

١-إِذَا جَآءَكَ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ
قَالُوْا نَشْهَدُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ
وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ لَرَسُوْلُهٗ
وَاللّٰهُ يَشْهَدُ
إِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ۝

٢-إِتَّخَذُوْٓا اَيْمَانَهُمْ جُنَّةً
فَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ
إِنَّهُمْ سَآءَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝

٣-ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ اٰمَنُوْا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوْا
فَطُبِعَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ
فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ ۝

٤-وَإِذَا رَاَيْتَهُمْ تُعْجِبُكَ اَجْسَامُهُمْ
وَإِنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا تَسْمَعْ لِقَوْلِهِمْ
كَاَنَّهُمْ خُشُبٌ مُّسَنَّدَةٌ

يَحْسَبُونَ كُلَّ صَيْحَةٍ عَلَيْهِمْ
هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ
قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ
أَنَّىٰ يُؤْفَكُونَ ۝

'When came unto thee the hypocrites, said they: "We bear witness that verily thou art the Apostle of God;" and verily God knoweth that thou (O Muhammad!) art certainly His Apostle; and verily God beareth witness that the hypocrites are certainly the liars.
They make their oaths a shield, thus they obstruct (others) from the way of God; verily evil is what they are wont to do.
That is because they believe, then (again) disbelieve they, so a seal hath been set upon their hearts, so they understand not.
When thou seest them, marvel thee their bodies; and if they speak, thou listeneth unto their speech;(they are) as if they were blocks of wood propped up in garments, deem they that every cry is against them. They are the enemy (of yours), so beware thou of them! May God annihilate them, whence do they deviate!' (Ch. LXIII: vs 1-4)

confessed faith verbally after complete defeat only to save his neck against the sword of Islam, deserves heaven! To such prejudiced minds no amount of argument, be it based on reason, the Qur'an, *Sunnah* or historical facts will be of any avail. They have been educated and brought up to think in this manner. It paid them to support and please the party in power against the persecuted ones. This perverse judgement is not confined to the cause of Abu Talib and Abu Sufyan but extends to 'Ali and the *Ahl al-Bayt* also. They ignore all the facts of history, the assertion of the Qur'an and declarations of the Prophet, which prove beyond doubt that 'Ali, the son of Abu Talib, is next to the Prophet in all virtues and excellence which Islam stands for. They put aside all the spiritual and blood ties between the Prophet and 'Ali and the identity of their ideology and their mould of mind about which the Prophet, in conformity with the Qur'an declared on several occasions that "Ali is from me and I am from 'Ali;' of "Ali is of mine and I am of him' (*aliun minni* and *ana min ho*). The shining truth in the splendid

character of 'Ali, identical with the Holy Prophet in blood and achievements based on the Qu'ran and revelational reason urged Bukhari, the distinguished Sunni traditionist to devote one chapter on the genuineness of the statement. Overlooking all the incomparable virtues with which none but 'Ali is credited, they argue that after all 'Ali was one of the numerous companions of the Prophet. To them all the companions are virtuous and guiding stars, and Mu'awiyah, the son of Abu Sufyan, despite all his drawbacks and vices (before and after coming into the fold of Islam) being one of the companions of the Prophet, was virtuous and a guiding star. They say that he, like 'Ali and other companions, was a *Mujtahid* (an authority in religious affairs and problems). As such he had the right to apply his mind to the problems facing him and to differ from 'Ali and others. They ignore his vices and subversive activities against Islam and the House of the Prophet as mistakes committed by an authority and expert in the application of the general rule to particular cases. Some of the pro-Umayyads try to justify even his most horrible crimes as an appropriate step taken by him because he considered it necessary in the interest of the kingdom. Thus, they raised Mu'awiyah to the status of a companion of the Prophet, as defined by them, i.e. a virtuous and guiding star, and brought 'Ali down from the status of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and from his spiritual union with the Prophet to the level of mere companionship and aligned him with the son of Abu Sufyan and people of his type. The adherents of this school of thought deliberately ignore the declaration of the Prophet that he is the city of knowledge and 'Ali is the door of that city.

They overlook what the Qur'an says about some of the companions of the Prophet: '*Of them (the companions) who listen to you (Prophet Muhammad), some are of the type that when they go away from your presence, they ask those who are gifted with knowledge, "what did he (the Prophet) say a few minutes before*".' They are the persons whose hearts have been sealed by God and they are following their own desires (inclinations). And those who have availed of the guidance, He (God) increased

their guidance and He gave them the power to guard themselves against evil.

١٦- وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ
قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا
أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ
وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ○
١٠- وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا
زَادَهُمْ هُدًى
وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ ○

'*And of them are those who seek to listen to thee until when they go forth from thee say they unto those who have been given the knowledge: "What was it that he said just now?" These are they on whose hearts hath God set a seal, and follow they their vain desires.*

And those who avail of the guidance, He addeth to His guidance unto them, and granteth them their guard (against evils).' (Ch. XLVII: vs 16-17)

In spite of these verses, they evolved the view that all those who confessed Islam verbally and saw the Prophet and heard something from him were all the *Sahabah* (companions), and that all the companions were virtuous, guiding stars and *Mujtahids* having the right to apply their mind to religious affairs and decide according to their discretion. According to them the companions will have double reward from God if their opinions are correct and if their opinion turns out to be wrong, they will have a single reward. On this basis, which is against reason, the Qur'an and the statements of the Holy Prophet, they hold the view that all the controversies that took place after the Prophet's demise till the tragedy of Karbala, between the companions or even between the disciples of the companions (*tabi'in*) were based on *ijtihad* (the opinion of an expert), who whether right or wrong, was not to be blamed. They justify the dislocation of 'Ali and other members of the House of the

Prophet from the holy status which the Qur'an and *Sunnah* have accorded for them. They viewed the ill treatment of the *Ahl al-Bayt* by the parties in power as the natural consequence of *ijtihad*. Some of them even consider the assassin of 'Ali (who was not a companion of the Prophet) as a *mujtahid* whom God will reward. But it is surprising that they do not give the same concession to the murderers of 'Uthman, though many companions were involved in that murder. Some of them go further and hold the embodiment of cruelty and vices, Yazid, the son of Mu'awiyah, a rightful ruler and consider him and his lieutenants and army who took part in the tragedy of Karbala as *mujtahids*. They even hesitate to say which of the conflicting *mujtahids* were right and which side was wrong, and the tone of their apologetic arguments in favour of the opponents of the *Ahl al-Bayt* betray that they are inclined to hold the *Ahl al-Bayt* and their partisans more blameworthy than their opponents. In order to justify the misdeeds of the ruling parties as *Khata-e Ijtihadi* (permissible error in judgement by an expert) they try to prove that even the Prophet as well as previous Prophets were subject to error and that they committed sins and mistakes. The result is that all the chiefs of Quraysh who have done wrong to Islam and the *Ahl al-Bayt*, all those who displeased the Prophet in his lifetime and opposed and hurt 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan and Husain, after the Prophet's demise, are considered authorities on religion and worthy of reward from God.

However, this is not the place for discussing all the controversial matters which resulted in the development of numerous sects in Islam and caused bloodshed and horrible heart-rending crimes committed by one sect against the other throughout the history of Islam. We have referred to the above controversy only to show that the political background of Abu Talib being considered as an unbeliever by certain schools of thought in Islam forms, according to those schools, the main criterion for acceptance or rejection of the reports of the Holy Prophet's sayings and statements (*ahadith*). They cherish and celebrate any report which pleased in some way or the other the rulers of the

early period of Islam and was directly or indirectly against the followers of the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Ibn-e Kathir, the commentator and historian of the same school, tried to prove that Husain was superior to Yazid merely because he (Husain) could be counted among the companions of the Prophet as defined by his school. This he considered a great favour done to the *Ahl al-Bayt*. But his attempt was not to defend the status of Husain against Yazid, it was to save Mu'awiyah's stand against 'Ali. Their view about Abu Talib should be examined in the light of the stand they have taken against the members of the *Ahl al-Bayt* throughout the history of Islam. The Holy Prophet said that he was leaving two inseparable precious things, the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt*, which if adhered to, would save his followers from going astray. It means that the nature of every problem and the character of every Muslim should be judged in accordance with the degree of its nearness or his conformity with these two fundamental criteria for right and wrong, truth and falsehood. The Muslim majority, however, perverted the position. They began to judge the Qur'an and the *Ahl al-Bayt* by the verdict of the people of no religious status who are subject to error, and were even openly mischievous. For example, instead of relying on Ja'far ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq, the sixth Imam of the House, for determining the reliability or otherwise of the chain of reliable reporters of the statements of the Holy Prophet, some of the traditionists of the pro-Umayyad school try to doubt him on the authority of persons like Yahya ibn Moin and Ibn Habban whose knowledge, competency and piety cannot be relied upon.

Rahmatin lil-'alimîn
(Mercy to all the worlds)

Let us, however, go back to trace the chain of the issues of Isma'il (*Ummat-e Muslimah*) whom God promised to bless and for whom Ibrahim prayed to God to keep them away from the evils of paganism and make them submissive to His will. After

Isma'il the branch began to propagate and prosper, but the lineage carrying the most resplendent clay of the most perfect vicegerent of God was progressing in obscurity until the birth of Hashim whence the lineage began to outshine gradually. Hashim and his son Abdul Muttalib began to display the character, heritage, rituals and etiquette of Ibrahim. They began to outshine as the firm adherents and followers of the venerable and Holy Father of the House. Their lives clearly showed that they observed all the commandments of Ibrahim and protected his faith of which they were the custodians. But they were just the forerunners. The light to shine and illuminate the world was still to come. Hashim, whom his grandson Abu Talib eulogised for his generosity, clemency and sympathetic affection for the oppressed, needy and poor people, began to indicate that the light he was carrying was not for the illumination of a particular region, tribe or race only and that it was not inclined only towards the west as does Judaism or towards the east as does Christianity. It was 'neither of the east nor of the west.' It was to illuminate the whole universe and he (Hashim) represented the Absolute One to whom belongs all that could be termed east and west. The light which Hashim was carrying was the All-Gracious Light (*Ramatin lil-'alimîn*), the blessed light intended for all the worlds. It was the light prophesied as the 'Comforter,' the 'Spirit of Truth,' the 'Advocate' — the light of the person who would receive the word of God direct and would not utter aught but what he hears from Him (God). It was the light of the one who would tell mankind everything, and complete and finalize the divine message which Jesus and his predecessors had not completed. According to Jesus it was the Paraclete or Parclet (Muhammad or Ahmad — more commendable) who would come after him (Jesus) and would deliver the final and the last message of God to mankind. (Vide 4th Gospel)

Hashim shone in all that was noble and excellent, but his chosen son Abdul Muttalib with a glorious forehead and resplendent features outshone his father. He displayed the spirit of sacrifice which is the nearest and dearest to God. He was ready to

sacrifice his dearest son, 'Abdallah, in fulfilment of his sacred oath in the same manner in which Ibrahim and Isma'il stood the test.[28] The spirit of sacrifice displayed itself then as it had done before (in the case of Isma'il), but once again the execution was postponed by God for a greater *sacrifice to come* (*zibeh-e 'azeem*) The great sacrifice to come had to be offered by the same House but in a different shape and at another time, i.e., when the House of 'Abdallah and Abu Talib, the two brothers, had become one against all that was ungodly and wrong.

Abdul Muttalib's stand against the elephant expedition of the Christian Abyssinian ruler Abraha of Yemen who marched to Mecca to destroy the Holy Shrine of the Ka'ba (537 A.C.) is the best proof of his firm faith in the sanctity of the Holy Place as the House of God. It shows his extreme confidence that the Lord of the House would defend His House against the offenders. The reverend Hashimite patriarch, Abdul Muttalib, meeting Abraha, the head of the expedition, asked for the release of his camels which had been seized by the invading army. Abraha expressed his surprise that the custodian of the Holy Shrine, instead of asking him not to pollute and destroy the sanctuary, was asking only for the release of his camels. Abdul Muttalib in a very calm but firm voice retorted that he was the lord of the camels, while the House had its own Lord to defend it. This challenge of Abdul Muttalib was followed by the total annihilation of the Christian expedition in the manner mentioned in the Qur'an in Chapter LV, *al-Fil* or the Elephant. That miraculous event was the best proof of the sanctity of the House. It showed the truth and righteousness of the cause to which the people of the house, headed by the son of Hashim, the then patriarch of Al-e Ibrahim, were adhering. This was the first peaceful challenge of *Ummat-e Muslimah* against the Christians of Yemen mentioned in the Qur'an. The second challenge took place after nearly sixty years at Madina by the grandchildren of Abdul Muttalib in the shape of the *Mubahala*.[29]

The stand was the same as that of their grandfather; the stand of

the firm believers in the unity of God — the Lord of the House built by Ibrahim — against the believers in the Trinity and divinity of Jesus. On both occasions, the Christians were defeated not by means of the sword, but by the force of truth. In the case of the elephant expedition, they had to submit to the sanctity of the House, and in the case of the *Mubahala*, invoking the wrath of God on the party whose claim was false, the Christian delegates declined to respond to the challenge and agreed to pay tribute as a token of their submission to the supremacy of Islam.

Abdul Muttalib openly announced that he was an adherent to the religion of Ibrahim, rejecting the pagan cults of idolatry, lottery, marriage with the wives of one's father (stepmothers), etc. He revived many rights recommended by Ibrahim, which had been neglected by most of his descendants. All the reforms adopted by Abdul Muttalib and the rules laid down by him were later confirmed by Islam. The announcement by Abdul Muttalib that he was an adherent to the religion of his father and forefathers should be read along with the Qur'an which asserts that the Holy Prophet is commissioned to preach the religion of the grand ancestors of the house of Prophet Ibrahim. The Qur'an confirms also that Ibrahim had already named some of his descendants as *Muslimin* with the status of being witness over the people, and their being witnesses over the Holy Prophet.[30]

However, the Hashimite patriarch is said to have combined in him the dignity of the kings and the glowing features of the Prophets. Like his grand ancestor, Ibrahim, he is called *Umatun Wahidah*,[31] a single soul, who attained the distinction of possessing all the virtues found in different pious persons. And he was well aware of the light (the resplendent clay) which he was carrying. It was not very late in his life that, to his utmost joy, he found the light began to glow on the foreheads of his two beloved sons, 'Abdallah and Abu Talib. The former was saved by God, like his ancestor Isma'il, from being sacrified, just to carry the light of prophethood in its finality and perfect phase.

He lived a life clean but very short. He married Aminah, the daughter of his grand uncle Wahb, the brother of Hashim. She conceived. The light was transferred from 'Abdallah to Aminah. A few months before or after the birth of the Holy Prophet, 'Abdallah in the prime of life, between the age of 25 and 30, passed away. He left his widow and orphan to be looked after by Abdul Muttalib, who for his extreme pain and grief at the loss of a son like 'Abdallah was compensated by the joy of holding in his arms the most perfect manifestation of divine grace, which was the expectation of the House of Ibrahim for a long time. It was destined that the grandfather and not the father should solemnize with the utmost care all the rites in respect of the newborn, recommended by Ibrahim.

٦-اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيْمًا فَاٰوٰى ۝

'*Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter*?' (Ch. XCIII: v 6)

Abdul Muttalib performed all the rites ceremoniously and named the baby, Muhammad, peace be upon him. This name had not been used before. He said he was expecting the baby to be the real embodiment of the name which means the 'Praised One.' It means the one who is made perfect, devoid of al' defects. God is absolutely perfect by Himself. His immediat manifestation is also perfect in relation to the subsequent manifestation but not by himself. He is made perfect. He owes his perfection to the Absolute. Thus, the best and the most comprehensive term for the first created being in the arc of descent is Muhammad. No being in the hierarchy of the corresponding arc of ascent can appropriately be named Muhammad, that name was for the one who was to be the final, the last on the zenith of the hierarchy. It is the last in the arc of ascent which corresponds or reflects the first in the arc of descent. Of the manifestations of the Absolute, the first and the last in degree of perfection was to be termed Muhammad. The first and the last in these two arcs are actually the inner and outer aspects of each other. Both are Muhammads in the real

sense of the term. For this interpretation of the word the celebrated apostolic statement of the *Ahl al-Bayt* may be referred, '*Awaluna Muhammad, Aowsatuna Muhammad, Akheruna Muhammad, wa Kuluna Muhammad*;' i.e., the first, middle, and last of us are Muhammad. This *hadith* (tradition) explains and asserts that the twelve Imams of the House of the Prophet are successors of the Prophet who have all the attributes of the Prophet except prophethood. The constant will of God made them far away from all dirt and defects and bestowed on them the purity and excellence to the maximum possible extent (Ch. XXXIII: v 33).

Looking at the apparent aspects of the early life of the Holy Prophet we find that he was under the care of his grandfather and his widowed mother for some time. Then he was entrusted for a few years to the care of his foster mother, Haleemah, of the tribe of Bani Sa'ad. The mother could not tolerate to be away very long from the only precious gem left behind by her husband. Muhammad was brought back from the desert to join his mother in the city of Mecca. But she did not survive the shock of the loss of her husband to enjoy the glorious future of her son. She passed away when the Holy Prophet was six years old, and thereafter he had the motherly care and affection of Fatimah, the daughter of Asad, the wife of Abu Talib and the fatherly attention of his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, which also did not last very long. The Prophet was eight years old when Abdul Muttalib's time of departure came. He handed over to Abu Talib, his worthy successor, the charge of the ancestral heritage along with the duty of taking care of the divine trust, the topmost gem of humanity. He put the hand of Muhammad into the hand of Abu Talib who carried out the duty of a guardian. This was 'the apparent aspect of his early life.' But the Qur'an, Abu Talib and his son 'Ali give us a glowing picture of the whole situation. Their presentation of the life of the Prophet should be taken as the real and spiritual aspect of his life. Of the numerous enlightening descriptions of the Holy Prophet by 'Ali we quote here only the gist of one, given in one of his lectures

recorded in *Nahj al-Balagha*.

'Ali says that ever since the birth of the Prophet, God made the greatest angel to accompany the Prophet, day and night, leading him to the path of virtue and excellent conduct. Abu Talib did not consider the Prophet to be under his care and obligation or of any other's of the Hashimite house. On the contrary, he considered it a great honor and blessing for every member of the house of Hashim to be in the presence of the Prophet. He describes the brave warriors of the house of Hashim who were ready to lay down their lives for the holy one, as resorting to the Prophet for shelter. Instead of considering the Prophet to be under his protection, he considered himself and all the other members of the house to be under the Prophet's protection. He did not look at his nephew as a helpless orphan under his care. He saw him as having a shining and auspicious face by virtue of which rain descends from the clouds. Instead of considering him as an orphan he presented him as the caretaker of the orphans and the protector of the widows. To Abu Talib, Muhammad was the beauty and glory in the world for those who were able to appreciate him and was full of wrath against the enemy of the truth. He was the ornament of all assemblies. He was forebearing, prudent, and farsighted. He devoted himself entirely to the service of Allah.

Abu Talib was well aware of the prophetic status of his nephew as recorded in the earliest scriptures. His verses in euology of the Prophet, 'Don't you know that we have found, recorded in the early scriptures, that Muhammad is indeed a Prophet like Moses?' are not mere flattery. They are the expression of a brave and sincere man of nobility who meant every word that he uttered. They are the outburst of the ardent love and admiration for the truth and righteousness which he saw in his nephew ever since his childhood.

Abu Talib considered Muhammad as the one commissioned by the Lord of all creatures (and not just the Lord of the Quraysh or Arabs) to preach to all the universal religion approved by

Him in its pure and original form. He did not regard the stand taken by Muhammad as only against the degenerated Qurayshites who claimed to be the descendants of Ibrahim, but contemplated it as something against the whole world which had been fouled by ungodly cults, customs and beliefs. The stand was against racialism, nationalism, parochialism and the Jewish and Christian bigotries which resulted in hatred and intolerance: he was the glory of the whole world of truth and the wrath of God on any one who opposed it. In short, the amount of respect that the Prophet was commanding among the members of his own family in general and of his nearest kin such as Abu Talib, Abdul Muttalib, and 'Ali in particular, before and after his birth and his departure from this world, was so great that it is beyond one's ability to describe it. The intimate and chosen members of the family are the most competent persons to bear testimony to the character of the man who claims to be in communion with the heavenly spheres.

In the case of the Holy Prophet and his household, even their enemies had to acknowledge their virtuous character. It is a revelational and historical truth, let alone the confessions of Abu Jahl, Abu Sufyan, Mu'awiyah and others. Shimr who cut the holy head of Husain, the grandson of the Prophet, and presented it to Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah, demanded with great pride, 'O king! fill up my sack with gold and silver as I have killed the virtuous saint. I have killed the one whose father and mother were the best among the whole of mankind.'

This is evidence of the heavenly aspect of the life of the Holy Prophet narrated by those of the nearest kin. Their evidence is cofined to the extent of their approach to the revelational and scriptural sources. The Qur'an is the supreme authority which gives evidence on the godly, spiritual or inner aspect of the life of the last messenger of God sent for all that may be termed as the *'Alimîn* (worlds). This is what the Qur'an itself repeatedly and emphatically asserts. *'Those who disbelieve and say, "Thou art not sent (commissioned by God)." Say (thou), "Sufficient is God and*

the One who has with Him the thorough knowledge of the Book, as the witness between me and you'" (Ch. XIII: v 43).

In essence, the Qur'an testifies that the Holy Prophet is the first being in the order of creation (in the arc of descent), the foremost in receiving the divine grace. There was no other purpose for the process of descent and ascent of the Holy Prophet, the first created one, but to send him as the universal grace to all the world (Ch. XXI: v 107). The achievement of this purpose resulted in the long process of creation of the heavens and earth, or say the '*unfolding of what was compact in His (God's) knowledge, and refolding of them again in the manner that the written scrolls are unfolded and refolded*' (Ch. XXI: v 104). God is presented in the Qur'an as the Lord Cherisher of all the worlds. To Pharaoh's question, 'Who is the Lord Cherisher of all the worlds?' Moses answered, 'The Lord Cherisher of the heavens, the earth and all that is in between.' To the worlds of which God is the Lord Cherisher, the Holy Prophet is sent as His 'universal grace.' This is the 'great character' with which the Holy Qur'an credits the Holy Prophet. The universal grace is the principle attribute of God for all of His creative an legislative activities. God has made the same universal grace the principle life of the Holy Prophet. He and the ot righteous servants of God shall ultimately inherit the earth (C. XXI: v 105). Thus the beginning of the life of the Holy Prophet was prior to the world to which he was sent, because no world can come into being prior to the universal grace of God. Similarly, the end of the Prophet's life is connected with the universal grace which never ends.[33] The All-Gracious taught the Qur'an in the manner that He created the man and taught him 'expression.' It is obvious that the man who receives such unique instructions cannot but be the manifestation of the universal grace to all the worlds (Ch. CV, The Beneficient, *Ar-Rahman*). The teacher of Muhammad is *Ar-Rahman* (Allah). The lesson is the Qur'an. The time and method of teaching were such that the moment He created the Holy Prophet He taught him expression (*bayan*). The result of His teaching was that he took such a

unique stand as to be over and above the highest horizon (Ch. LIII: vs 5-7). The term *Sharh-e Sadr* used in the Qur'an concerning the Prophet means the broadening of the breast as opposed to constricting it. The Qur'an has used this as a figurative expression of broad-mindedness and extensive capacity for receiving the light of divine guidance in its entirety, as opposed to the narrow mindedness and absence of capacity to receive the radiant light of truth. The Qur'an has termed the narrowness of the breast, in this sense, as the dirt fallen on those who are lacking in faith and reasoning (Ch. VI: v 125).

Therefore, the term *Sharh-e Sadr* used in the Qur'an for the Holy Prophet means the constant process of widening of his mind and heart and ever expanding the submissive capacity to receive the divine light. Wherever this term is used for him it should not be taken to mean a surgical-like operation by the angels on the physical breast or heart of the Holy Prophet and their washing and dressing the wound, caused by their operation. These are the reports given by the narrators of an anthropomorphic tendency who were incapable of grasping the real meaning of the apostolic statement of the Holy Prophet and the *Ahl al-Bayt*. They understood nothing beyond the material and physical form, and so naturally distorted what they heard by converting it into their own words which are totally against the Qur'anic significance of the term.

The Qur'an asserts that he and the members of his House are kept away from all dirt and impurities and are purified to the highest extent. As such they are in touch with the Qur'an in the 'Hidden Book,' in its original form which is with God, i.e. divine knowledge. It gives evidence that the Prophet never went astray nor deviated from the right path. God never foresook the Prophet nor was He ever displeased with him. He assured him of his incessant progress towards such an end which was better for him than the beginning, which implied that every step of his was better than the previous one; he was in non-stop motion towards the sublime stage of the Well-Praised One (Ch. XCIII).

He (the Prophet) followed nothing throughout his life but what was revealed to him by God. God assured him that He would give him so many gifts and blessings that he (the Prophet) might be satisfied and pleased. The Qur'an reminded the Prophet of the special care and attention of God toward him which was so incessant that He did not even for a moment leave the Prophet to himself or any one else. The moment He found him in any physical or spiritual need, He helped him immediately with no lapse of time. He sheltered him the moment He found him an orphan. He enriched him the moment He found him poor. He guided him the moment He found him not knowing his way. In short, God never allowed the common creaturely defects and short-comings, inherent in all finite beings to display themselves in the life of the Holy Prophet.

The Conception of the Fallibility of the Prophet is an Evil Innovation

There are a few passages in the Qur'an which are quoted against the view of the total infallibility of the Prophet such as v 43 ir Ch. IX, the first verse in Ch. LXVI, and the first eight verses o Ch. LXXX.[34] It is said that on these three occasions the Prophet was reproached and censured for what he had done, which means that the actions undertaken by him on those occasions had no divine approval. But this statement is not correct. On the first two occasions, though God addressed the Prophet, the tone of each of the verses relating to the respective occasions shows that the censure was directed against those toward whom the Holy Prophet showed leniency. Such leniency is an aspect of that universal grace with which he was commissioned, so he was already allowed by God, as the sentence, 'God forgives thee (O Our Apostle)' signifies, to permit those unstable in faith to remain behind, but that permission was expressed in the usual rhetorical manner of addressing the one who is innocent, meaning to censure and warn the real culprit. So God addressed the Prophet on both occasions and the Prophet did what God had already allowed him to do. He did nothing but what God

wanted him to do. Therefore God warned the wrongdoers involved in both cases not to take undue advantage of the grace and leniency with which God had sent the Prophet. In the first eight verses of Ch. LXXX, the personal pronouns, which some commentators have wrongly taken as referring to the Holy Prophet refer actually to some other person who belonged to the aristocratic class of the companions of the Prophet. He had brought a few people of his class to the Prophet, and he was anxious to see the Prophet more attentive to the people of his class than the people of the class of the poor such as the blind companion, Ibn Maktoom, who came to see the Prophet on that occasion. The whole blame is against the attitude of the Quraysh aristocrat who frowned and turned his face from the blind companion. Otherwise the Prophet, who was 'with the Qur'an and the Qur'an was with him' from the beginning to the end of his life, was far from deviating from its teachings, even for a moment. The Qur'an repeatedly states the stand taken by the previous prophets against the arrogant aristocrats who used to despise those believers of their time who were poor. Among the followers of the Prophet there were some arrogant aristocrats of the Quraysh who used to consider themselves superior to the poor followers of the Prophet like persons known as *Ashab al-Sufa*,[35] those homeless persons who used to sleep on the platform of the mosque (such as Salman, Abu Dharr, 'Ammar, Miqdad, etc.). So in order to warn those arrogant people the Qur'an repeatedly addressed the Holy Prophet not to despise the poor believers and turn towards the rich people. But actually the admonition was directed against those who used to despise the poor followers. Even if it is granted that the Prophet was addressed, he was certainly not meant to be the person warned, for as the sixth Imam of the House of the Prophet, Ja'far as-Sadiq, says, 'All the reproving addresses of this kind in the Qur'an which apparently refer to the Prophet are actually directed at others. "It is like the proverb in Arabic — Thee do I address, but hear ye O neighbour".'

There are three more verses in the Qur'an which have been

quoted to prove that the Prophet had committed some sin for which in two of the verses (55 of Ch. XL and 19 of Ch. XLVII)[36] he is ordered to pray to God for forgiveness; and in one place, in the first and second verses of Ch. XLVIII God forgives all the sins committed by the Prophet in the past or those that might be committed by him in the future. This total forgiveness is presented as due to the victory which God achieved for the Prophet. In the first two verses it is clear that the *dhanab* (sin) referred to is the creaturely shortcoming, in devotion and submission, to which all the highly conscious finite beings are always alive. They always feel that however great may be their obedience, and deep and wide may be the degree of their realization, yet they are unworthy of His greatness and His transcedent sublimity.

It is the awareness of their creaturely shortcoming which keeps them in a state of supplication and incessant prayer for mercy and forgiveness. This humble petitioning attitude is the basic condition of their infallible devotion and submission. It does not imply the committing of any sin or disobeying any of the divine commands. This is a precautionary measure which every righteous man has to take against the possible display of the inherent defects. When we recite in prayer 'O God, guide us to the right path,' it does not mean that we are out of it now. It means 'O God, keep us on the right path so long as we are on the move towards thee.' It is a precautionary measure against possible deviation.

Regarding the first two verses of Ch. XLVIII, the Qur'an asserts that God 'caused victory' for the Prophet to cover past and future sins. Another purpose was to complete His bounties on the Prophet. The third purpose was to guide him to the right path and the fourth was to render to the Prophet unique help. It is obvious that there should be some relevancy between the victory and all the four purposes mentioned in the verses, particularly the first purpose: the forgiveness of the past and future sins of the Prophet. Unless the sin in question is not rooted in defeat

and frustration, the victory cannot be the cause of its removal. The Qur'an does not mention anything done by the Prophet against the will of God, except the three cases already referred to. Suppose that on all three occasions he acted against the will of God, and suppose that God also, like human despots, forgives the sinners and sets the prisoner free on some happy occasion like victory over an enemy, yet no despot will give a general license to a sinner to commit sin even after the victory or the happy occasion is over, for that would mean allowing a person to live licentiously throughout his life. Satan, after thousands of years of devotion was condemned for ever on account of one sin. Would God, for an ordinary victory over a few pagans of Mecca pardon the Prophet's sins of the past and license him to sin in the future? On the same pattern of thinking a report is made popular, that the Prophet said, 'Perhaps God has looked at the people of Badr (those Muslims who took part in the first battle against the pagans of Mecca) and said unto them: "Do whatever you like; I have, verily, forgiven you".' These sort of concoctions were allowed to creep into the minds of Muslims to protect certain companions of the Prophet, who despite their participation in the celebrated battle misbehaved afterwards and committed crimes which were deterimental to the very cause of Islam.

The above is the wishful interpretation of some people; but the Qur'an here and elsewhere confirms the reasonable view of the *Ahl al-Bayt* that the Holy Prophet in particular, and all the Prophets in general, are far from being influenced by Satan and satanic forces and are also far from deviating from the right path to which God has guided them. It is not possible that God gave the Prophet in particular and other prophets or any other rational being in general, a license to commit any wrong which they liked for the sake of some good deed already done by them. It is against the Qur'anic facts and assertion: '*Whosoever does a bit of good shall see it and whosoever does a bit of evil shall see it.*' (Ch. XCIX: vs 7-8)

Moreover, if God intended to forgive any sin that might be

committed by the Prophet, then there was no sense in mentioning the third purpose of the victory in the verse '*and to guide thee to the right path*,' because once license is given to him to commit sin the third purpose becomes redundant for there is then no need of guidance to the right path. He is forgiven, whatever path, right or wrong, he may adopt. Therefore, there should be no doubt that the term 'sin' used here or elsewhere in the Qur'an concerning the prophets does not signify what it generally is taken to mean. The Prophet never did anything which could displease God. As for what the Qur'an asserts, viz that God will not be pleased to see the breast (the mind and heart) of His devoted servants and messengers get constricted on account of people's doing wrong and disobeying God, it does not mean that God is displeased with the Prophet. It is a very commendable manifestation of fatherly affection and grace that the misbehaviour of the children should pain the father and cause his breast to become constricted. Thus the one sent by God with the fatherly status of universal grace for all the worlds, if he sees the slightest misbehaviour in any one in any corner of the world to which he is sent, he would feel distressed and pained and as the head of the worlds under him he would also feel ashamed and guilty before the Almighty for the misdeeds of those to whom he is like a father. God points out on the one side the amount of the fatherly grace and anxiety of the Prophet for the people, and on the other the effect of the misdeeds of the people on the Prophet.

٩٧- وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ
بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ۝

'*We already know how cramped your breast feels because of what they say.*' (Ch. XV: v 97)

١٢٧- وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ
إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا تَكُ فِي ضَيْقٍ مِمَّا يَمْكُرُونَ ۝

'*And be thou patient (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) and thy patience is not but by (the help of) God.*' (Ch. XVI: v 127)

'*And grieve not for them and be not distressed of what they devise.*' (Ch. XXVII: v 70)

God does not like His vicegerent to suffer such mental anguish. Therefore, to remove the cause of such suffering He blesses His Prophet with the spiritual victory of having a clear view of the whole universe and every part and particle so that he may realize that in the total view of the whole, nothing is wrong or evil, and nothing is out of His control and domination.

٨٤- قُلْ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَمَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَمَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلٰٓى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ
وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَالْاَسْبَاطِ
وَمَآ اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى وَعِيْسٰى
وَالنَّبِيُّوْنَ
مِنْ رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ
بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ
وَنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ○

'*Say: (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) (unto the people), "We believe in God, and in what hath been sent down to us, and what hath been sent down to Abraham and Ishmael, and Issac, and Jacob, and the Tribes, and in what was given to Moses, and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord, we make no difference between any of them, and we unto Him are Muslims.*' (Ch. III: v 84)

It is this view of the whole that removes the cause of distress. The mental anguish commendable from one aspect, yet is unpleasant from another and as such is termed as *dhanab* (sin), and is removed from its root. The relative and partial view of the universe is the root. In this view the good and bad, things pleasing God and displeasing Him are discriminated. On this ground, the Imams (of the *Ahl al-Bayt*) have interpreted the sin here as the sin of the *Ummah*; the group to whom the Prophet was sent. According to this interpretation the manifest victory is not confined to the temporal conquest of Mecca or even the whole of Arabia or the entire globe. These conquests are, comparatively speaking, of less importance, though the conquest of Mecca was the occasion on which gradual revelation of the

Qur'an was recited by the Prophet.[37]

However, here in this Ch. XLVIII, the term *fatha* (victory), has been qualified as manifest (*mubin*) in the beginning verse, and as near victory (*fathan qariba*) in v 27, and also in Ch. LXI: v 13. But in Ch. CX the term victory has been used without qualification. According to some commentaries the near victory refers to the establishment of the godly kingdom on earth during the reign of the last Imam al-Mahdi.

٦- إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا ۝
٧- وَنَرَىٰهُ قَرِيبًا ۝

'*Verily, they regard it to be far distant,*
And We see it (very) near.' (Ch. LXX: vs 6-7)

The manifest victory refers to the realization of divine domination of the universe in the stage of viewing it as a whole. These victories refer to the spiritual states of the Prophet's realization, be it associated with temporal victories or not. This realization covers people's sins, misdeeds and ungodly actions Thus, the victory would cover the unpleasant scenes whic would make the Prophet feel ashamed before God, who ha given him the responsible status of vicegerency. This view relieves the Prophet of the heaviest burden of responsibility as outlined in v 6 of Ch. VII.

٦- فَلَنَسْـَٔلَنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ
وَلَنَسْـَٔلَنَّ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝

'*Verily We shall question those to whom (the messengers) have been sent; and verily We shall question (too) those (messengers) who have been sent.*'

It is obvious that of all the Prophets the one who is the last and final is the supreme and as such his responsibility before God is greater than that of the others. Nothing can relieve the Holy Prophet from feeling the heaviness of the burden of his responsibility, but the realization of divine victory and His hold' over all that comes under his (the Prophet's) responsibility; the

assurance given to him by God that 'the end is better for him than the beginning' and that his Lord Cherisher would give him very much to please and satisfy him:

٤- وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ۝
٥- وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ
فَتَرْضَىٰ ۝

'*And verily, the end is better for thee than the beginning (of life)! And soon will give thee thy Lord that thou shalt be well pleased*!' (Ch. XCIII: vs 4-5)

and the appointment of one to assist him in shouldering the burden. To this effect, 'Ali as the nearest person to the Prophet in blood, spirit and character was declared by the Prophet as his brother, assistant, executor of his will and his successor after him to be listened to and obeyed by all. This declaration was made by the Prophet along with the announcement of his mission in the third year of his ministry (vide *Tarikh-e Tabari* and *al-Kamil* of Ibn al-Athir). This kind of strengthening of the hands of the Prophet by giving him an assistant of the same spirit and blood, qualification and excellence is exemplified in the Qur'an by the story of Harun being appointed by God as the assistant, supporter and successor of Musa. To this effect the Prophet of Islam declared that 'Ali was to him what Harun was to Moses.

In dealing with the Qur'anic evidence of the infallibility of the Prophet two opposite terms, *Sharh-e Sadr* and *Ziq-e Sadr*, have been explained. The former means broadmindedness and as such it is a very commendable virtue and no Prophet or vicegerent of God can be lacking in it while the latter means narrowmindedness, which has been presented as a condemnable vice with which no prophet can be tainted. Here in answer to those who have quoted the first verse of Ch. XLVIII as evidence to the Prophet's sin, we have pointed out that the sin referred to here is the distress felt by the Prophet owing to the ungodly behaviour of the people. So, it was actually the sins of others that caused him distress. We have said that this constriction of

the chest is a commendable virtue from one aspect, though God does not will to let his vicegerent continue to suffer even this distress.

These two statements about the mental distress commending it as a virtue on the one hand and condemning it as a vice on the other seem to be contradictory and confusing. But this seeming contradiction is over if the reader keeps in mind that there are two different constrictions of one's mind due to two opposite causes. One is the distress caused by the feeling of personal loss and sufferings resulting from the narrowness of the ego-center which makes one indifferent to the welfare of any one else other than one's self. The other kind of mental distress is caused by the feeling of loss suffered by others. Such feeling is due to the broadness of one's ego-center which feels in union with others and considers their loss and suffering or their gain and happiness as one's own. The Prophet felt happy when he saw people really prosperous and happy and he felt worried and distressed when he saw people in real loss and distress. 'Ali, the Prophet's successor in the status of the final vicegerency of God, says, 'It is painful for 'Ali as the head of the State to fill his stomach and sleep, feeling satisfied, when even one of his subjects in the remotest part of his kingdom is starving.'[41] The extent of the kingdom of the final vicegerents of God is not bounded by any geographical boundaries. They are the very *Al-e Ibrahim* (family of Ibrahim) who have been given the Book, the wisdom and the great kingdom (Ch. IV: v 54).[42] The temporal rule over a small or large region of the earth may be great in the eyes of the average man but to the Almighty Creator and Sovereign of the whole universe, His are the kingdoms of the heavens and the earth.

١٧ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ
قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ
مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ
وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا

وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ
وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝

'Certainly infidels are they who say: "Verily, God, He is the Messiah, son of Mary;" Say (O Our Apostle Muhammad!): "Who could hold anything against God, if He intendeth to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother and (all) that is in the earth together?" For unto God belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth and what is between them; He created what He willeth; Verily, God over all things hath power.' (Ch. V: v 19)

So the great kingdom given in charge of the Holy Prophet and his twelve successive vicegerents of God from the *Al-e Ibrahim* must be the one which is great in dimension and duration in the sight of God and not in the eyes of those whose ambition does not rise beyond earthly pleasure and gain.

۱۸. مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ
عَجَّلْنَا لَهٗ فِيْهَا مَا نَشَآءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيْدُ
ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهٗ جَهَنَّمَ
يَصْلٰهَا مَذْمُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ۝

'Whosoever intendeth this (fast hastening) immediate (life) We hasten unto him in it what We please for whomsoever We intend, then assign We unto him the hell; he shall enter it despised, driven away.' (Ch. XVII: v 18)

Therefore, one can imagine how great would be the concern of the person responsible who is in communion with God and with every part and member of the universe. That concern cannot be remedied but with the assurance from God of the ultimate manifest victory of good over evil, truth over falsehood, right over wrong, justice over injustice, love over hatred, and grace over wrath. It is narrated that on the eve of the departure of the Prophet from this world, when all the chief angelical entities, particularly Israel, the arch angel of death, were attending the Prophet and waiting for his permission to perform their final duty, the Prophet began murmuring, 'What about my followers?'

He was waiting for the arch angel Gabriel to bring him the final assurance from God about the destiny of his followers, for whom he was concerned, and it was only when Gabriel repeated the recitation of God's assurance given to the Holy Prophet during the early days of his mission, that the Holy Prophet said, 'Now death is pleanant to me.'[38]

In connection with the question of the infallibility of all the Prophets in general and the Holy Prophet in particular, the reader may find many points dealt with here as repetitive or overlapping with the points dealt within our treatise on the complete representative status of Prophets, particularly the last Prophet. We also quoted from the Qur'an in the light of sound reasoning to the effect that every action, talk and endorsement of the Prophet including his domestic, private and individual movements and rest, even eating, drinking, sleeping, and relations with wives and children, in fact, all aspects of his life were controlled by revelation. However, there is no contradiction between the points dealt herewith and in the said treatise. The repetition and overlapping could have been avoided, but there is justification in not doing so, owing to the importance of the matter and the fact that repitition may produce a deeper effect on the mind of the reader.

Before concluding the above discourse on the evidence which elucidates the heavenly aspect of the Prophet's life, which dominates the material life, a brief account of the different points of view about the life and teachings of the Holy Prophet is given here to comprehend his 'tremendous character' (*Khulq-e azim*).

Views about the Holy Prophet

(1) Atheistic materialism: It is obvious that from this angle of vision all the religious and moral values based on the reality of the spiritual and heavenly aspects of existence in general and of men in particular become meaningless. Nevertheless, many

prominent figures of this school have acknowledged the greatness of the Holy Prophet as a reformer and have held his teachings as a great revolutionary contribution toward the advancement of human civilization.

(2) Theistic materialism or theistic rationalism acknowledges the existence of a universal conscious and intellectual mind behind the phenomena of creation, who has designed and set the machinery of the universe in motion. But they do not believe in the universal mind being concerned with the destiny of individual life and the souls of men, nor do they believe in His having legislative hold or authority on the human will. According to this view, human life, whether limited to the temporal span or continued in the hereafter, is either of little significance to the universal mind to bother about, or as some members of this school hold, man has been left by Him to his intellectual faculties and will power to decide his own destiny. God has given man enough reasoning and free choice to look after his own interests. So there is no such thing as a legislative will of God to be communicated to man through special messengers and revelations. Persons who hold these views are called deists. To this school belongs Gibbon, the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and many prominent advocates of democracy, as opposed to theocracy, i.e., the rule of divine will. Most of them have paid glowing tribues to the Prophet of Islam as an extraordinary genius of his epoch who revolutionized the history of human thought and culture.

(3) Non-Islamic theology: The adherents of this view admit the legislative authority of God, the Creator of the universe over His entire creatures in general and over men in particular. God communicates His legislative will to men through some chosen men. They are persons who are gifted by birth or by effort with some special faculty of being in communion with the spiritual and heavenly sphere of angels or with God directly. The faculty, thus obtained, is something beyond the intellectual faculty and reasoning with which an average person is endowed to a greater

or lesser degree. If the faculty in question is obtained by birth with no effort from the person, it is termed as prophethood and the heavenly communication received through this channel is called scripture, the heavenly book (*kitab-e asmani*).If the faculty is obtained by effort it is termed mysticism and the communication obtained through this channel is mystic-vision (*kashf*) and intuitive-sight (*shuhud*). All the known non-Islamic religions of the world come under the above categories. Zoroasterism, Judaism and Christianity come under scriptural religions. Hinduism, Buddhism and their various branches may come under the mystic religions.

However, many prominent ecclesiastical scholars of these views, particularly the Jewish and Christian missionaries, have adopted a very bigoted and hostile stand against the Prophet. They did not spare any means or opportunity to attack Islam and misrepresent the Prophet, the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam. In their anti-Islamic attempts, they have adopted methods of direct and indirect attack. The first method which was adopted by the Christian missionaries proved in the course of experience to be very unsuccessful, the result being more agains the missionaries. It made the Muslims adopt a counter attac They (the Muslims) turned to the Bible, the Old and Ne Testaments, and found many more weak points in them tha what their opponents could claim to find in the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam. So the missionaries gave up the direct method and resorted to the second method, i.e., indirect attack: the method of posing as impartial scholars of research. With the professorial style of approach, but relying on wrong or incomplete data, they tried to undermine the fundamentals of Islam and misrepresent the history of the development of Islamic thought, culture and civilization. This method was adopted with the same bigoted ecclesiastical background in the professorial garb as that of the priestly robe.

But in both the professorial (indirect method of undermining Islam) and in the priestly (direct) method of attack, one will find

tributes paid by famous writers of these schools to the Holy Prophet and their acknowledgement of his contribution towards human progress in all branches of civilization. Willingly or unwillingly, they have to admit the facts of history in order not to appear prejudiced. But the entire attempt of these orientialists like that of the missionaries is aimed at presenting the Prophet's movement and teachings as a sort of temporal reform in the garb of religion. Some of them go to the extent of holding the Prophet as the greatest reformer that ever appeared in the history of mankind, and as a man of highly intellectual accomplishment but not as a prophet, not as man in communication or communion with God and angelical spheres, nor as one commissioned by God to convey His will to mankind. This professorial school, i.e., the oriental research scholars, are a greater danger to Islam than all the anti-Islamic movements. They pose as impartial and unprejudiced seekers of historical truth and win the confidence of the westernized Muslim youths and inject poisonous ideas into their minds. They cut the fundamental root of Islam — the prophethood and vicegerency of the Prophet and the binding force of his teachings on humanity. Then they leave the mind which has lost faith in the heavenly authority of the Holy Prophet to drift along the conflicting currents of old traditional tendencies of Islamic culture and the modern material civilization of the west. Such is the wavering mind of our modern writers on Islam. They want to pose as Muslims on the one hand, and as very broadminded free thinkers on the other. In their approach they imitate the western professorial method of presenting wrong or incomplete data in a very attractive rhetorical style and logical form. In writing on Islam, they try their best to present the Prophet more as a temporal than a divinely accomplished figure.

This group of writers on Islam resemble a group of the early converts who were not firm in their faith. They are like them in a wavering state of mind. To the westerners and the admirers of modern civilization they pretend to be with them, and to the staunch believers they pretend to be true Muslims — the same as

the people about whom the Qur'an says:

١٤- وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا ۖ وَإِذَا
خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيَاطِينِهِمْ ۙ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ ۙ إِنَّمَا
نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ ○

'And when they meet with those who believe, they say, "We believe," but when they go apart to their devils, they say, "Surely we are with you, verily, we did but mock.' (Ch. II: v 14)

Some of them used to listen to the Prophet, but when they would go from his presence they would ask mockingly those who were gifted with knowledge, 'What did the Prophet say just now?' (Ch. XLVII: v 16)

Some of them would express doubt when the Prophet would inform them of some incident that had taken place, apparently hidden from the Prophet, as to who could have informed the Prophet? They would question him, 'Who has informed thee about this?' The Prophet had to tell them, 'The Omniscient, All-Knowing has informed me.' (Ch. LXVI: v 3)

Many times when the Prophet would give some new directives which would appear strange to them, they would consider them as something temporal and as the outcome of the Prophet's own wisdom. The Prophet had to reaffirm on those occasions that he would not utter a word but what was revealed to him and that he would not follow anything but what was revealed to him.

(4) An Islamic school of thought holding dualistic views about the personality of the Prophet sees the Prophet as the last one, after whom no prophet would come. They believe that the communication between him and God, sometimes through the angelic agency, particularly Gabriel, and at others directly, was established when he reached the age of forty and that he received revelation both in the form of the Qur'an and other than the Qur'an. But they hold that he was also subject to human frailty like others and that he acted according to the dictates of his own discretion and desires. He was a Prophet, and recipient of divine revelation but he was a man of opinion

and discretion also. As a Prophet he did not err or commit any mistake but as a man he was subject to error and mistake like others. He was a man like others (*bashrun mislakum*) and he received revelation as an additional qualification. Prophethood was an addition to his human qualities without their becoming identical with his prophethood in that his mind was not totally controlled by revelation. So his movement and expressions, they say, were partly due to his prophethood and partly to his manly qualities. This dualistic view about the Prophet can be traced back to the early days of Islam. From the behaviour and utterances of some of the companions of the Prophet, it seems that this theory was evolved on political grounds by some of the companions, during the closing days of the Prophet's life (*Al-Milal wal-Nihal*). Among the early followers of the Holy Prophet there were some who were accustomed to the rule of a sort of aristo-bureaucracy of tribal chiefs. It was very difficult for them to comply whole-heartedly with the requirements of Islam, i.e., the absolute theocracy — absolute submission to the will of God as presented and dictated by the Prophet. At the same time, convinced by commonsense and the force of the Qur'anic arguments, they had to admit that no finite being can secure real salvation without submitting his will to the will of God — the Infinite. They also had to admit that the divine will was conveyed to them through chosen men, as special messengers of God, of whom Muhammad was one and also the last. With these convictions and admissions, how could they make room for their deep-rooted tendency of allowing the aristocratic class of elders to have their say and sway in the affairs concerning various aspects of human life? They had to find a way to satisfy the desire which was working in them. The course they adopted was to evolve the dualistic view. Thus the elders could have their say in those affairs about which the Qur'an is silent or its verdict is not clear. Though they agree that the sayings of the Prophet are mostly the outcome of revelation, yet they say that some of his sayings as well as some of his actions were the outcome of his human capacity and hence not binding and may be even

objectionable and subject to reproach.

In spite of all the Qur'anic evidence as already mentioned that Muhammad was nothing but a Prophet and that he did not follow anything but revelation, they recorded reports to the contrary. Some of those reports bear not only testimony to the dualistic personality of the Prophet, they depict him as a person even below the ordinary moral standard. These reports are claimed to be reliable on the authority of the companions of the Prophet who are considered to be first-hand reporters. From them, through the chain of transmitters, generation after generation, the reports have come down to the authors of the Sunni books of traditions — *Masanid*, and six cannoical collections '*Al-Siha Sitta*: biography and history concerning the life and teachings of the Prophet which were included without scrutiny. In addition, reports on events during the Prophet's life and of the first four Caliphs which throw light on his life are the main sources of which every writer on the life of the Prophet depends. Those who hold the dualistic view, depend on the said six collections of *ahadith*. The topmost in authenticity, according to them, is the collection of *Bukhari* and next comes *Muslim*. *Bukhari* and *Muslim* contain damaging reports, from which the non-Muslim critics, the missionaries and orientalists, and a group of Muslim writers as the former's camp followers, draw their data for the criticism of the life of the Prophet. They claim that whatever they have written is based on sources which are held by the majority of Muslims to be authentic. The critics pay no attention to the fact that the authenticity attached to these collections by the majority of Muslims, like the authenticity attached to the canonical Bible, is based on traditional blind faith prompted by political expediency. The texts of some of the reports, when compared with each other, suffer from considerable discrepency, contradiction, absurdities and omissions, additions and alterations. The defects are greater if the contents of each collection are compared with those of other collections. So it is obvious that these reports and collections cannot be regarded as authentic. The chain of the narrators are not

reliable, as they depend on the views of a few persons whose reliability is not free from doubt.

So far as the first hand reporters (the eyewitness companions of the Prophet) are concerned, the Sunni school of thought holds them all to be pious and authentic, even a boy, not below the age of six, who confessed Islam, born of Muslim parents or by conversion and saw the Prophet and heard something from him, is termed a companion, and has the right of deciding the religious affairs according to his own discretion. They may differ in degree of piety and authoritative status. This blind faith in the companions of the Prophet contrasts with the verdict of the Qur'an about a great number of groups of the companions who were surrounding the Prophet. The verdict of the Qur'an against the piety and authoritative status claimed for every companion of the Prophet and against the view that they are above the criticism of non-companions is supported by the sayings of the Prophet, and is confirmed by facts of history. During the time of the Prophet, a great number of so-called companions used to tell lies about the Prophet and make false reports of his sayings and teachings. When the Prophet found the practice increasing he had to declare in one of his sermons, 'Verily the hypocrites about me have been increasing in number. Let it be known to all, that whosoever tells lies about me, his seat (in the life hereafter) shall be filled with fire.[39]

'Any report about my sayings and deeds, not in conformity with the Qur'an should be treated as false and be rejected.'

(4.a.)*Misdeeds of a class of companions foretold by the Prophet:* There are many reports that the Prophet foretold about the misbehaviour of his companions after him. He warned them not to go back to the pagan state of killing and beheading each other. The story of Malik ibn Nuwayrah[40] is the first instance of this kind and it is followed by many other examples. Mu'awiyah beheaded the pious Hijr ibn 'Adi and his seven noble companions. By the order of Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, his army made the Holy Ka'ba the target of their arrows and catapults against

their party who were seeking protection there as the 'House of Peace.' Madina was sacked and people were massacred by the so-called *sahaba* during the Umayyad period with the free use of sword and poison. The tragedy of Karbala is an unparalleled example of their atrocities. The Prophet said, 'Some of my companions will be dragged on the day of resurrection to hell and then I will acclaim my companions. My acclamations will be answered there: "O Muhammad, thou knoweth not what (wrong) they did commit after thee".' He foretold that 'Ammar the son of Yasir would be killed by a group of rebels whom 'Ammar would call towards paradise and they would invite him towards hell. He also predicted that after him 'Ali would have to wage war against the breakers of the covenant and those who would rise against the rightful authority, and the group of people who would digress from Islam in the manner in which an arrow shoots off from the bow.

The statement refers to the three battles that 'Ali fought after the Prophet. They are known as Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan. In these battles 'Ali and a group of the companions of the Prophet who were with him had to fight against their opponents who were also led by many so-called prominent companions of the Prophet. Even in the last of the three battles, the party against 'Ali was led by a companion of the Prophet known as Zussadyah. Bukhari narrates an interesting story about the devotional outlook of this man which made Abu Bakr and 'Umar in turn to refrain from executing the order of the Prophet to kill him. In short, there is much Qur'anic evidence and the Prophet's assertions to the effect that among his companions there were a great number of people whose character and conduct was below the minimum standard of morality required by Islam or even by the general code of ethics. Besides these, the history of the early days of Islam give a very unpleasant account of the lives of the companions after, or even a few days before, the demise of the Prophet.

Each of these companions had disciples attached exclusively to

them. They used to receive the reports from their masters to hand them over in turn to their followers and disciples. The disciples of the disciples used to record these. Thus, between the companions, the first-hand reporters and the compilers of the so-called authentic collections there is a chain of narrators, containing two, three, four or more links. For the verification of the compilation and qualification of the persons who form the links in the chain of narrators the science of the biography of the narrators (*'Ilm al-Rijal*) was originated. Many voluminous works of this science have been produced. Therein, one will find many controversial assertions and negations about the reliability of every link in the chain. Some are held by some biographers as extremely reliable and qualified while other biographers hold them as unreliable and unqualified. In commending or condemning the link narrators one will find their personal prejudice an important factor. For instance, the author of some of the most important collections of *ahadith* has preferred those chains of narrators who were anti-*Ahl al-Bayt*, or were less attached to them, to the link of narrators who were more inclined towards the House of the Prophet and 'Ali. As a result of political bias the reports were concocted or modified by omission, addition or alteration to suit the ruling parties of the time, and to present the Prophet as a personality, a messenger with revelation, but fallible.

It is clear that they were not greatly in favour of the teachings and orders of the Prophet, the same binding authoritative status as they claimed for the Qur'an.

(4.b.) *The following instances will throw more light on their disobedience of the Prophet*: (1) pronouncing 'Sufficient is the Book of God for us' against the order of the Prophet and creating a tumultous atmosphere there and then to the extent that the Prophet asked them to get away from his presence and warned them for the last time not to quarrel and misbehave in his presence; (2) avoiding to serve under the command of Usamah ibn Zayd and their delay in marching with him to the

front till the Prophet passed away; (3) leading the congregational prayer sometime during the Prophet's illness in his last days, without his permission, to the extent that the Prophet ordered 'Ali and Fadl ibn 'Abbas to take him to the mosque to prevent what was going on without his permission; (4) leaving the funeral of the Prophet and rushing to Saqifah to settle the question of the *khilafat* on the line which they themselves termed *faltah* (at random, unconstitutional, or without the consent of even the elders); (5) the utterance of the first Caliph in his first sermon delivered in the mosque, 'Whosoever was worshipping Muhammad, let him behold, that Muhammad has died, and whosoever was worshipping God should know, that God is alive' (vide *Bukhari* and *Muslim*): this was an uncalled for insinuation that the companions of the Prophet were worshipping him and not God. It seems to have been intended to confirm the statement of 'Umar, 'Sufficient is the Book of God for us,' referred to already; it was also aimed at those who had full faith in the complete representative and authoritative status of the Prophet and used to maintain that every order, teaching, directive, every word and action was under revelation and that they were as binding on Muslims as the wordings of the Qur'an; (6) unpleasant treatment of Sa'ad ibn 'Ubaydah al-Saqifah; (7) raiding the house of Fatimah, threatening to burn it and its inmates (even her innocent children, Hasan and Husain) are the glaring examples against the teachings of the Prophet. They ignored the sanctity attached to the house of the Prophet and Fatimah that no one should enter the house without their permission; they even ignored the repeated declarations of the Prophet that Fatimah was a part of him and that whosoever annoyed or displeased her, would annoy and displease him (the Holy Prophet). The rulers declared Fadak as *sadaqah* (charity) land. The Al-e Muhammad (Fatimah, 'Ali, Hasan and Husain, the persons to whom the term *abnanana* — our sons, *nisa'ana* — our women and *anfus'ana* — our selves in Ch. III: v 61 were applied by the Prophet) shall have nothing to inherit from the Prophet and that they shall, like all the other poor, live on this

property of charity, though the Prophet, as a privilege, had forbidden those persons in particular and all the descendants of Hashim and his brother Muttalib in general to live on charity. Recognizing three times pronouncement of any word denoting divorce in one session to be as legal and effective as three times divorce intervened by two times reunion. Prohibition of *mut'ah* (temporary marriage)) and *mut'ah* of Hajj; i.e. allowing an interval between the performance of 'Umrah and the performance of Hajj for the pilgrims to enjoy freedom for cohabitation with their wives. Abolition of the equal status of Muslims of all ranks (irrespective of their race, color and seniority in accepting Islam) in having a share in the public treasury are the examples of deviations from the Islamic code. They introduced class distinction such as Quraysh and non-Quraysh, Immigrant and Helper, Arab and non-Arab. Instances of these kinds of alterations are so many in every branch of ritual, social, economical and political codes of Islam that it is difficult to give a complete list of them here. There are books written by experts on this topic such as *The Deviation of the ruling party from the orders and directives of the Prophet.*

The ruling party could not reconcile themselves to the fact that the Prophet and the Qur'an are inseparable and that the infallibility of one means the infallibility of the other. So they on the one hand tried to create doubts in the genuineness of the written book of God which was and still is within the reach of the people, and on the other prevent the other part of the constitution of Islam (the Sunnah) from being collected in written form. They thus tried to curtail the constitutional curb as much as possible. The announcement, 'Sufficient is for us the Book of God,' and the other instances cited above indicate clearly that they wanted to have the right of using their own discretion even in respect of the clear orders and directives of the Prophet, *ijtihad-e-Muqabil-e Nass* (as Sharestani the author of *Milal wal-Nihal* terms it). Besides this they also wanted the supplementary and explanatory part of the divine constitution, the Sunnah to remain unwritten, as it was easier for them to

accept or reject a verbal report of the Prophet's statement and to modify its wordings to suit the administrative expediency of the time.

(4.c.) *Apart from the above instances, there is abundant evidence that the Prophet told repeatedly that 'Ali was his 'brother' (akhi al-Rasulullah)* [equal status in faith and origin], but this appellation was denied to 'Ali by them.

After that is the question of the land of Fadak. Since the establishment of Islam in Madina, the Jews, after their unlawful occupation of the Arabs' land on the outskirts of Madina, were making secret alliances with the enemies of the Prophet to execute their aggressive plans against the rising force of Islam. They built a very strong fort at Khaybar. The Prophet marched against them. The glorious conquest was brought by 'Ali when others including Abu Bakr and 'Umar felt nervous and failed as standard bearers of the army of Islam. After the fall of Khaybar (7th Hijra, about 680 A.D.), the Prophet sent 'Ali to invite the Jews of Fadak, an important place, to Islam. The Jews offered half of the land of Fadak to the Prophet without fighting. He agreed and the land came under his possession. On this occasion it was revealed to the Prophet that in the land possessed by him 'without any effort on the part of the believers mounted or on foot' (i.e., without any military action), 'the believers have no right,' as *bayt ul-mal* (public treasury). It was his personal property (*khalesa* of the Messenger, the Prophet). Only the spoils from Khaybar were treated as *bayt ul-mal*. It was further revealed that the Prophet should give his and Allah's share in it (i.e., property gained without militray action), to his nearest kindred:

'And whatever hath God bestowed upon His Apostle from them, ye pressed not against it any horse or camel, but God granteth authority unto His apostles against whomsoever He willeth; and God over all things is All Powerful. Whatever hath God bestowed on His Apostle from the people of the towns, belongeth unto God, and for the Apostle, and for his (Prophet's) kindred, and the

orphans and the needy and the wayfarers, so that it may not circulate among the rich ones of you; and whatever give you the Apostle, ye accept it, and from whatever preventeth he, ye be away (from it); and fear ye (the wrath of) God; verily God is severe in retribution' (Ch. LIX: vs 6-7).

According to the divine order above, the Prophet gave the Fadak land to his daughter Fatimah, the nearest relative, by written document. It was in her possession in the lifetime of the Prophet.

After the demise of the Prophet it was immediately seized by Caliph Abu Bakr and 'Umar and remained in the possession of the caliphs until the Caliph 'Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, an exception to the Umayyad's tyrannical rule, who came to power in 99 Hijrah (717 A.D.) at the time of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq. He turned down the decision of Abu Bakr and his followers, and returned Fadak to the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Again, it was confiscated by his successors. During the Abbassid period, when Mamun, son of Harun al-Rashid, held the reins of the caliphate (198 Hijrah, 813 A.D.) he returned Fadak to Imam 'Ali ar-Riza (Rida) (of the house of the Prophet). After Mamun it was again taken away by his successors, and remained under the unlawful possession of the ruler of the time. The income from Fadak was estimated at 3,600 tomans (gold coin) that is about 7,200 pound sterling in those days. The whole income was distributed among the needy, the orphans, widows and handicapped persons. History narrates that Fatimah used to live on the bare minimum, and often observed fasting. Even her noble maid, Fiza, followed her glorious example and aided the destitutes. After the demise of the Prophet it was immediately seized by Abu Bakr after the personal possession of Fatimah and in support of his decision against the Qur'an, misquoted the statement of the Prophet: 'We group of Prophets do not leave any property to be inherited by their heirs; whatever we leave is charity' (*nahno ma'shiral anbiyayai la nooris, ma terknaho sadaqatun*). *Sadaqatun* is the objective case in the subordinate clause and 'what we leave as

charity' is also the objective clause of the principle clause, 'we do not give inheritance.' Abu Bakr, supported by his group, changed the word *sadaqatan* to *sadaqatun* as the predicate to the word *ma* (i.e, that or what), the relative pronoun as subject; as such he made the complete sentence a coordinate clause to the first sentence, 'we leave is charity.' The change in the original is an example of the kind of language which is far below the standard language and it can not be attributed to the Prophet. The tradition transmitted in *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* is full of discrepancies. Thus, the claim of Abu Bakr and 'Umar was not reliable from any aspect. To please the Quraysh and their supporters they took the personal decision against the Qur'an and apostolic statement and action. Abu Bakr asked Fatimah to substantiate her claim with evidence though it was not needed according to Islamic law. She placed the written document of her father (the Prophet) before him which was torn by 'Umar. Abu Bakr wept over it and he had no remedy but to follow his dominant partner. Apart from others, 'Ali, Hasan and Husain, who were the witnesses of the truth for Islam on various occasions, and at the times of crisis such as the 'Day of Mubahala' against the Christians of Najran, as perfect entities confirmed by the Qur'an, were rejected as witnesses to the claim of Fatimah. There was not a single lawful claimant of Fadak except Fatimah. The judges, Abu Bakr and 'Umar stood themselves against the Qur'an. Even in human law, there is no code based on equity and justice which allows the opposite party to assume the powers of a judge. Greatly affected with grief and pain over this open violation of Qur'anic injunctions and the preachings of her father, the lady Fatimah gave a long heart-rendering sermon in the huge gathering of Masjid-e Nabavi which so shocked the people that they wept over the injustice.

According to the Qur'an, as she quoted in her argument, the Prophets owned property which they bequeathed to their close relatives, as Sulayman inherited from Dawud (Ch. XXXVII: v 16) and Zachariah prayed to God to bless him with a son to

inherit from him the material property, and to inherit from the family of Yaqub (Jacob) the spiritual property, the book and wisdom (Ch. XIX: vs 5-6). She quoted the verses of Ch. IV concerning the law of inheritance. She also quoted Ch. XXXIII: v 6 to the effect that the Prophet is nearer to all the believers than their own selves, i.e., his hold on them is greater than their hold on themselves, and his wives are the mothers of the believers (in the sense that the believers cannot marry them and in no other sense) and the blood relatives are nearer to each other (in inheritance) and preferable to other believers from among the Immigrants and the Helpers. In this passage, the Prophet has been declared to have the privilege of having complete hold on the believers, being closer to them than they are to themselves; his wives have been given the privilege of motherhood as far as marriage is concerned, and his blood relatives, like the blood relatives of others, have been given the privilege of being closer to him than other believers. She also quoted the passage, in Ch. LIX: v 7, wherein God declares the close relatives of the Prophet as owning a share in Fai (the land property abandoned by the infidels without use of arms) along with God and the Prophet. But all those quotations and arguments were in vain; they went unnoticed by the party in power. She felt hurt, annoyed and angry against the ruling party and this feeling continued till she passed away. From the report of Malik ibn Ows ibn Hadthan, it is clear that Fatimah regarded the ruling party as unjust and an aggressor.

Any way from these few instances out of the many it appears clearly that the ruling party thought it expedient to deny, as far as possible, the privileges given by God to the Prophet and the people of the House — the *Ahl al-Bayt*. They wanted to bring the *Ahl al-Bayt* down to the level of the ordinary companions. They felt that the other Qurayshite families would not tolerate too many distinctions being conferred on the Hashemite family in general, and on the 'People of the House' in particular. As 'Umar disclosed, the events of Saqifah and their later consequences were due to the aversion of the Quraysh to the house

of Hashim retaining the prophethood as well as the *khilafat*, the supreme leadership (Vide *The Annals of Tabari*, the conversation of 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbas). Therefore, to avoid displeasing the Quraysh the first caliph made the above declaration about Muhammad's death and also declared that the Al-e Muhammad should live on charity like others. The only privilege he and his colleagues approved for the Al-e Muhammad was that they should be deprived of the right of inheriting what was owned by the Prophet. The tendency was not to make the public acquainted with the spiritual distinctions conferred on the house of the Prophet, which is still continued in the writings and speeches of the scholars of this school. It has been noticed that if any student of Islamic history and literature from among them is attracted towards the passages of the Qur'an and innumerable sayings of the Prophet in praise of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, which are scattered in their own collections of *ahadith* and history, and if he begins to talk or write about them, he is looked upon with suspicion. In short, on account of the reasons given above, one should be very cautious in selecting one's data from the literature of such schools for writing about the life of the Prophet.

(5) The Shi'ah traditionists, known as Akbari. They are firm believers in the complete infallibility of the Prophet and the other thirteen members of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. They consider themselves as the true adherents of the sayings and teachings of the fourteen infallible holy ones. They may be termed as verbalists, following as far as possible the literal sense of what is narrated by any one of the infallible persons. They pay little or no attention to what the Qur'an or reason asserts, if the assertion is not in accord with what they understand to be the meaning of the narrated statements of the Imams. They are inclined more to collect in large numbers the narrated reports and statements of the Imams than to scrutinize the quality and nature of the text of the statement or the charcter and qualifications of the persons who form the links in the chain of narrators. The four famous Shi'ah collections of the reports and

statements of the *Ahl al-Bayt* are the most authentic on which the Shi'ahs can rely,[41] and of the four, *Kafi*, is the oldest, most authentic and the most comprehensive. But some of the traditionists go to the extreme extent of holding the contents of these collections, especially *Kafi* to be wholly true and genuine statements of the Imams. Besides these four books, there are many other voluminous collections of later periods such as *Wasa'ih al-Shi'ah* (by Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili, 2nd century Hijrah), *Bihar al-Anwar* of Allama Majlisi (1110 A.H./1698-9 A.D.) and *Awalim* of Mulla 'Abdullah Afandi, the disciple of Majlisi.These collections of narrated reports cover various religious topics of great importance.[42] They are also held reliable, though to a lesser degree. There is no doubt that these collections and many other collections of lesser size, dealing with the particular topics, written by prominent Shi'ah scholars who have specialized in the science of traditions, are of great importance and they ought to be considered as highly valuable contributions to the development of Shi'ah thought covering all branches of theology, jurisprudence, history, philosophy, cosmology, etc. There is also no doubt that their authors have taken the utmost care in collecting the narratives from sources they considered to be reliable. These collections are really oceans of light. They contain abundant enlightening statements from the *Ahl al-Bayt* which lead the human mind towards the aims and objects for the achievement of which the Qur'an has been revealed. They direct human thought towards the sacred task of *Rationalization of Revelation* (*Ta'qul*), a well founded and systematic effort to have both a sound analytical and proper synthetic view of the 'outcome' of the creative as well as the legislative will of God. Nevertheless, they are the collections prepared by fallible men, and are not pure and free from doubtful narratives. A thorough study of all these collections will make one sure of the fact that they contain also many contradictory and absurd narrated reports. They contain many narrated statements which are supposed to have been made by the Imams, but those statements are contrary to the fundamental

articles of the Shi'ah faith. Even the most authentic collection of Shi'ah traditions, such as *Kafī*, is not totally free from such defects, though comparatively it is more reliable than the others. Therefore, it is far from being fair to consider any man-made collections of scriptural reports, be they pre-Islamic or Islamic, as above the bounds of critical scrutiny. All religious narrated reports are subject to criticism from both aspects, the character of the chain of narrators, and the nature of the narrated text. It is for this critical study of the narrated scriptural reports that the sciences of biography of the religious narrators (*'Ilm al-Rijal*) and the principles to be observed in the comparative study of religious narratives (*'Ilm al-daraya*) were evolved and developed. *The only exception* from this general rule is the Qur'an.

But unfortunately a section of our prominent traditionists seem to have been so absorbed in accumulating religious reports and narratives that they had little or no time left for a critical scrutiny of their accumulated materials. It seems that due to their extreme attachment to the narrated reports they were inclined to give even a solitary report the authoritative status which they declined to give to the Qur'an itself. It is on the strength and authority of such narratives that they spread doubts about the genuineness of the Qur'an in hand. The aforesaid collections contain such reports that in outlining the life of the Holy Prophet or other members of his house we are always confronted with inconsistent and contradictory statements which make a proper life-sketch of our religious leaders (Imams) very difficult. There are religious reports in our collections of traditions from which both extremist schools, the ultra-Shi'ahs (*Gulat*), and the anti-*Ahl al-Bayt* or pro-Umayyad (*Nawasib*) draw inferences in support of their respective views.

(6) The Muslim philosophers and scholastics of the medieval ages. The Arabs were deeply absorbed in some of the pre-Islamic schools of thought of Greek, Indian and Persian origin. They had been in contact with the neighbouring nations to the north, south, east and west. Besides the contact by trade

through land and sea, there had been Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, and most probably Indian and Greek settlements in Arabia. Similarly, there were Arab settlements in those neighbouring lands. So the neighbouring thought and cultures had already influenced the Arabs. By the advent of Islam and its expansion, through conquest and propagation, the contacts began to increase in both frequency and intensity, in the very first century of Islam. But since the beginning of the second century foreign thought and culture began to assert themselves and increasingly began to influence Islamic thought, such as (a) the Asha'arites and their anthropomorphic views of Jewish origin about the deity, (b) the Mu'tazilites and their extreme views of negating all divine attributes, (c) the peripatetic views about the primal matter, and (d) the pythagorian view of presenting the system of creation in mathematical and arithmetical forms. The symbolic, alphabetical, astrological, alchemistic, and other theurgical sciences and cults current in those countries since the ancient civilization of the Chaldeans, Babylonians, Egyptians and even of India and China, exerted their own influence in different degrees over Islamic literature. The vestiges and traces of all these cults and cultures can be found in scholastic literature of Muslims of the medieval ages. The *Treatise of Ikhwan al-Sufa*, the work of *Alchemy* attributed to Jaber ibn Hayyan-e Sufi, who is supposed to have learnt from the sixth Imam of the House, Ja'far as-Sadiq, and the work of a person named Ja'far, ascribed to the same Imam, are examples of foreign schools of thought introduced into Islamic literature or mixed up with it. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, neo-Platonism and Manicheism had undeniable influence upon Islamic literature. Platonic and Aristotelian schools dominated the whole range of Islamic thought. The Qur'an and Sunnah were interpreted in light of these schools of thought. The Muslim thinkers grouped themselves into two schools, of *Ishraqi-Platonic* and *Mashsha'in-Aristotelian* (Peripatetic). These were in addition to the two theological schools of the Mu'tazilites and Asha'arites. These schools and the main and the various

mixtures of them were termed as Islamic philosophy and its various branches. Al-Farabi and Avicina are the leaders of the Mashsha'in. Shaykh al-Israq, al-Ghazzali and other theomystic chiefs are basically Platonic. Mu'tazilites are more inclined towards the Mashsha'i school and the Asha'arites are inclined towards Ishraq. All these schools have more or less depended on some spurious and apocryphal narrations which suit their views. Therefore, one should be very careful to avoid the influence of all non-Islamic sources. A sound comparative study of all these schools should be made without being influenced but by the unequivocal assertions of the Qur'an as the supreme authority and next to it by the authentic and unequivocal teachings of the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* as the true embodiment of the life of the Holy Prophet. These two — the Qur'an and *itrat* — are the heritage left by the Prophet for the guidance of mankind and one mirrors the other and in no circumstances are they separate from each other.

One should also have in mind that in the course of the study of religious doctrines one may have to face questions and problems concerning human beliefs, character or actions which are not dealt with explicitly in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (the teachings of the infallibles). This should not make one stagnant in religious or theological thoughts. The Qur'an is the last purified word of God, perfect and complete, in guiding man toward both the truth which concerns all the facts which man has to believe, and the justice which concerns all the virtuous characters and deeds which man has to develop and practise. The purified word of God is like the purified tree. The root of the purified words is firm and well-established and of ever-growing and ever-fruit-giving and far-reaching nature. Thus if any problem of theological or practical type faces us which is not dealt with in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* explicitly we have to be sure that it is undoubtedly dealt with in the teachings of Islam implicitly. According to the Qur'an, the growing, fruit-giving and dynamic force running in the trunk of this purified tree or purified word of God is the sound reasoning and the unequivocal verses of the

Qu'ran (*muhkamat*) which are termed as *Ummul-Kitab* and the authentic and unequivocal apostolic statements of the infallibles. These three sources are so inter-related that one mirrors the other and they explain each other. One has to find for the problems which one faces the requisite fruit in this purified tree in the light of the self-evident reasoning and unequivocal verses of the Qur'an and authentic and unequivocal statements of the infallible ones. *Ijtihad* or *tafaqqaho fid-din* means nothing but an all-out effort to find out the implications of these three inter-related sources.

Before concluding the treatise on the definition of the revelation, it is necessary to outline the categorical principles and fundamental background in the light of which the Shi'ah school of thought interprets the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. To the Shi'ahs these principles and backgrounds are the known facts and factors proved by the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* and reason. The Shi'ah mind works to find a proper solution for the problems which concern every aspect of human life. It is with those principles that we interpret the Qur'an or interpret the apostolic narrations or other statements which are connected with Islamic ideologies as presented by the *Ahl al-Bayt*. For the Shi'ahs, history and faith go together. If the historical statement is in agreement with the faith established by the verses of the Qur'an, the *Sunnah* and sound reasoning, it is true. But if the historical statements and inferences disagree with the established faith, they should be rejected.

Summary

The main categorical principles discussed in the previous chapters are summarized below:

(1) The Existence of God: The Absolute Who is One in His essence and attributes in the true sense of Oneness, unlimited and undefinable. Any description contrary to His Oneness should be negated, and any description that is the necessary property of or implied in the idea of His Oneness should be

asserted and maintained.

(2) Any anthropomorphic description of the Godhead: Any statement associating anything or any being as co-existing or co-existensive with Him in essence or attribute, is to be rejected or reinterpreted.

(3) He is the One infinite reality: There is no second, no match, no equal, nor partner for Him. Anything other than Him is finite, created and sustained by Him.

(4) The Infinite creates the finite being but He is not incarnated in one or the whole of the finite beings.

(5) No finite being, however, perfect, can be considered as the incarnation of the Infinite One. All the finite beings whether intellectual, physical, whether matter or form, or material or spiritual, good nature or bad, all are sustained by His creative conscious might and preplanned grace and justice. He alone is the Omniscient, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, All-Pervading, All-Compassionate, All-Witnessing, Self-Existent, Self-Living, Self-Subsistent, All-Sustainer, Unique in Oneness and Fullness, All-in-All, Transcendant, Perpetual, All-Mighty, All-Gracious, All-Just, All-Wise.

(6) The terms universal justice and universal grace are two different aspects of one and the same principle attribute of God responsible for the manifestation of His creative, administrative and legislative will. The whole universe and every part and particle of it are manifestations of His creative, administrative or legislative will.

(7) It is part of His legislative will and authority over the entire universe that He has appointed Adam and a particular chosen lineage of His issue as His vicegerents in the form of Prophets, to deliver the divine message and His legislative will to mankind or in the form of Imams (leaders) to lead every man towards the ultimate destiny required by his inherent capacity. So the establishment of the vicegerency and sending of new messengers, and sending along with them the

revealed books and scales and sufficient proofs of their truth, are the requirements of His universal grace, justice and wisdom.

(8) His Absolute Oneness and the attributes that it implies prove that His will is purposeful. His actions are for the best and aimed at the ultimate purpose.

(9) The observable part of His acts are the transitory and incomplete stages. It should be neccessarily followed by other progressive stages beyond our observation. The last stage is the ultimate purpose of creation as a whole. This is termed as *Qyamat-e Kubra* or the total resurrection.

(10) This ultimate end must be one with the principle attribute responsible for the act of creation and other manifestations of His will. The aim is not to gain anything for Himself but to bless the creatures. The purpose of creation is the necessary expression of His grace, justice and wisdom which are to be manifested in the final stage termed the 'Day of Total Resurrection.' Thus, the Absolute Oneness of God implies the fundamental articles of faith: justice, prophethood, vicegerency (Imamat) and resurrection. They are inter-related. Each implies numerous issues of belief, conduct and action, one related to the other.

Of the issues of a theoretical nature connected with the belief in the Absolute Oneness of God, the following are very important:

(a) He cannot be seen, sensed or perceived by any external senses in any stage of the life of any finite being here or in the hereafter. Nor can He be conceived or encompassed by imagination or reasoning. He is realizable and is and will be realized in some way or other by every creature. The term *liqa* (meeting Him) mentioned in the Qur'an and the apostolic statements is misinterpreted to mean that He is visible. It means realization and certainty, as 'Ali explains in his own saying, 'I do not worship God whom I do not see but behold, that the eyes did not see Him through the process of sight. The hearts have seen Him through the realization and certainties of faith.'

(b) Of the divine attributes some are totally identical with His Oneness. Some are identical from one aspect and non-identical from another aspect, and some are purely relative attributes ascribed to Him in view of His actions.

(c) The revealed books of God or words of God are His works, they are created by Him. Some Muslim theologians believe that the Qur'an is an uncreated work of God, coexistent with Him or the 'Christ' as the Christians believe to be the 'word of God with God' uncreated by Him. The belief that the Qur'an or any other word or book of God was not created is one of the absurdities of foreign origin that has crept into the credulous mind of some of the Muslim theologians of the second century A.H. This should not make one to go to the other extreme of considering the Qur'an as the word and work of the Prophet. This view has been ascribed by some orientalists to a particular group among the Mu'tazilite school. The allegation is doubtful, but if it is true, is not Islam. The Qur'an as revealed to the heart of the Prophet and uttered by him is *verbatim* the word, book and work of God. It was created by God and is not uncreated or coexistent with God as the extreme traditionists or Asha'arites hold.

(d) God is the Almighty in that He does whatever He wills. But His will is based on His grace, justice and wisdom. The manifestation of His will or the order of creation begins not in the sense of time, but in the sense of rank, grade and order, with the highest possible and most comprehensive finite being. He begins with the finite beings which are comparatively nearest to Him, not in space and time but in reality and perfection. That being is the first, in the order of creation; the first creation (*awala khalaqin*) mentioned in Ch. XXI: v 104 of the Qur'an, which is termed in the authentic apostolic statements as *al-'aql*, the intellect, the light, and the spirit of Muhammad, upon whom be peace, the creative and active will. All these terms refer to the same created reality which stands first in the order of comparative perfection. The best term for it in Arabic is Muhammad, 'the Praised One,' in its real and true adjectival

sense and not as a mere ordinary proper noun.

The creation begins with this highest finite perfect being and ends with the lowest in the order of comparative realities. This is the 'primal matter' — *madah*, 'mother,' or *'ma'a* of the Qur'an and other scriptures (*suhaf*). It is a thing which is measurable in space and time. This primal matter is devoid of positive qualities and attributes of reality, but it is endowed with potentiality and receptability for positive qualities and attributes of the first finite reality. It is devoid of excellent actualities, but it has the capacity for them. Therefore, it became the ground for the manifestation of divine will in the horizon of space and time. The horizon measured by space and time is bound to the inherent requirements of gradual development. This primal matter is the end of the arc of descent (*qaus-e nuzuli*) and the beginning of the arc of ascent (*qaus-e 'uruji*). The beings of the spheres in the arc of descent are conscious entities unconditioned with the fetters of space and time.

Each of the spheres has a function, assigned by God, to perform. According to the scriptural terminology recognized by the Qur'an, they are termed as *malak*. The plural of it is *mala'ikah* and *mala'ik*. That sphere and realm is termed *malakut*, meaning the state of authority and hold over subordinate things. God is termed *Ma'alek* and *Malik*, the One Who has a hold over all and is not held by anything else. The matter and material beings are termed *mulk* or *milk*, the one which is held and has no holding power over the spheres lower than theirs. These entities of the Qur'an are translated into the English language as 'angels.' Whether they convey the exact meaning of the Qur'anic term or not cannot be affirmed, but they should be read in the sense signified in the Qur'an. These entities differ in the extent of their function and jurisdiction. The exact nature of these entities is not known to us. Their functions and descriptions of status have been mentioned in the Qur'an and the apostolic statements. To call them intellect (*'aql*), psyche (*nafs*), spirit (*ruh*) or luminary beings (*nur*) is not blasphemy so long as the term does

not contradict what religious statements assert about them.

However, these entities are created by God as sub-agencies functioning in the administrative course of creation and legislation. There can be no objection to ascribe certain actions to these angelical sub-agencies (*mala'ikah*). But every minute thing and event must be ascribed to God as He is the absolute creative, administrative and legislative authority. There are angelical, spiritual and even natural forces and agencies functioning by His will and command in the system of creation in both the arcs of descent and ascent. The same is true with every being and the function assigned to it or him. The act can be ascribed to the thing or being and it can be ascribed also to God, the Absolute, All-Pervading Authority. It is not wrong to say that the arch-angel Israpheel has the power of giving form and shape to things or a certain wild herb as a curative power of healing certain diseases. Such assertions do not mean associating those agencies with God. They are created by Him, in order to perform certain duties assigned to them. All are subservient to His will. Neither is it wrong to ascribe every thing to His will and authority. It does not mean denial of the effectiveness of the subordinate willpower of the sub-agencies. He is the supreme authority and every finite will in creation is subordinate to His will. It is not un-Islamic to believe that certain finite entities in either the arc of ascent or descent are empowered by God to perform certain functions and to seek the assistance of that entity within its jurisdiction. On the contrary, to recognize for every finite being the status and function assigned to him or it by God, is what Islam requires from us.

All the angelical entities are prior in existence to the matter and material beings which are administered by them. Each of these angelical entities in the grade assigned to it is the manifestation and the active spirit of the creative command of God. They are in the line of creative, administrative or legislative action proceeding from the divine will. But the material beings — the beings which are developed from matter, are undoubtedly fettered with the conditions of matter, space and time. Their

existence is posterior to matter and bound to the requirements of space and time, position, succession and graduation. They are reflections and reactions of the action of the active and administrative entities of the arc of descent. If this distinction between the beings and events of the two arcs is taken into consideration many issues in the Qur'an and apostolic statements will be properly understood.

One action may have several reactions of different nature and value. One creative, administrative or legislative act from God, directly through the angelical order, may produce several results in the arc of ascent, of which some may be in utter contrast with the other. One of the most important issues, based on the above distinction between the peculiarities of the two arcs, is a question of spirit (*ruh*) and soul (*nafs*), the two terms used frequently in the Qur'an and the apostolic statements. The term spirit (*ruh*) is used in the Qur'an mostly in the sense of the things proceeding from the creative, administrative or legislative will of God. The soul, self (*nafs*) or the thing to which every conscious being refers as 'I' is used in the Qur'an in the sense of the effect or reflection produced by the divine will's agency in a particular portion of material ground after reaching a certain stage of development. It is the created reaction of the creative action of God. The creative action may be ascribed to the subordinate angelical or natural agencies, but actually it is to be ascribed to the creative will and might of God, the Absolute One. This creative will and act of God is one in its origin. It is the manifestation of His universal grace but it produces various effects in various grades of the arc of descent. They in turn produce various effects or reflections on the material grounds of various potentialities. This creative will and act are prior in order and rank to the creatures of the arc of descent and are prior in time also to the products of the arc of ascent. The subordinate angelical agencies functioning by His command are also prior in time and order to the souls produced. The action, unconditioned with the peculiarity of the ground is one, but the reaction conditioned with different grounds will be different in nature.

The same is the case with His legislative will and command. It may cause one to rise to heaven and the other to be dragged to hell. It may guide one and misguide the other. Had there been no order to do this and not to do that, there would have been no ground for obedience and disobedience. The misguidance of one and the guidance of the other may be ascribed to the same order of God which is the manifestation of His universal grace. But the guidance is His and the misguidance is due to the shortcoming of the one who failed to react submissively.

It is not un-Islamic to believe in the oneness of the creative, administrative or legislative act of God for the best, as the manifestation of His universal grace and universal will and at the same time to believe in the multiplicity of the result of that one action due to the variety and multiplicity of the recipient grounds. This view solves many problems discussed in the Qur'an and the apostolic statements:

(i) To believe in the prior existence of human spirits to their bodies, and the highest priority in existence of the spirits of the Prophet and the infallible members of his house to all other created beings and to their own *tinat* (original clay), and to believe in the posterity of the human souls in creation to their *tinat* and their bodies. What is said to be prior in creation to the body is the spirit proceeding from the divine will and what is said to be posterior in creation to the body is the soul (*nafs*), the ego or the reflection conditioned with the recipient state of the ground to which it reaches.

(ii) Justification of ascribing behaviour to the creation of the creative uncaused-cause and justification of holding the created beings responsible for their defects; this being due to the lack of recipient capacity which is inherent and uncaused. The grace of God which manifests in His guiding will is reflected in recipient grounds. They are the selected servants of God unfettered with the possible defects of the ground. They receive His gift in full. There are other receivers also whose inherent nature rejects the divine gift and reacts reversely.

(iii) Creation means bringing into existence the essence, *mahiet*, *tinat* or any idea or object which is not self-existing. It means to bring a non-being into being, whether in the mind or outside the mind.

The use of the term 'uncaused' about God, the real cause of all causes, and about the essences, or about things other than 'existence' should not mislead one into a dualistic view of creation. Dualism recognizes two eternal and independent uncaused-causes, one bringing good things into existence, and the other bringing bad things into existence. It holds two creative causes of utter contrast working in the system of creation producing opposite effects of good and evil. They (causes) are termed as *yazdan* and *akramun* respectively. The theory of considering spirit and matter as co-existing realities, one acting upon the other, is another form of dualism. But the Islamic unitarian view recognizes only one self-existing absolute uncaused-cause, the creator of every finite thing. Nothing can be held as second, equal, match or rival, uncreated and co-existing with Him. Once an idea or thing is brought into existence, or it becomes a subject of existence, all the analytical ideas contained in the thing (which becomes the subject of existence) or the ideas which are the necessary property of the said thing, will automatically come into existence. They are termed as uncaused in that the creator does not create the analytical contents or its necessary properties as an independent act. Once a given dimension comes into existence in the mind of an architect or in the region outside his mind, the idea of divisibility, which is the inherent property of dimension will automatically follow. It does not require an independent cause; divisibility is uncaused, it needs not independent creative cause. But it owes its existence to the creator of the given dimension, indirectly. It is incapable of receiving existence from the creator directly. This is one of the basic metaphysical propositions on which many theological problems dealt with in the Qur'an and apostolic statements depend. Unless this proposition is properly grasped one should refrain from discussing or even thinking about the questions of

predestination, determinism and free will.

(iv) The individual souls or egos — The psychic forces which produce (i) rotational movement in the central part of the atom or of the solar system, (ii) nourishment and self-reproduction in vegetation, (iii) free movement and sense in an animal and (iv) power of self-expression, invention and discovery, have no existence prior to their individual bodies. They are the developed forms of their bodies. The bodies as individual grounds, recipient of radiation from the corresponding spirit, reflect what they have received. This reflection is the individual soul of the body. Thus all the individual souls are developed along with the development of the individual bodies. No soul as an individual entity can have previous existence independent of its present body and then lose its independence and become dependent on the present body. It is impossible. It implies bringing into existence the same entity which has gone out of existence. Therefore the transmigration of a soul from one body to another, the existence of a soul independent of all bodies even for a time and its becoming thereafter dependent on a particular body, the postulation of a conscious stage in any form for the soul of a human prior to the present state and after are impossible because they imply reproducing what has gone out of existence. It is also anti-Qur'anic. In Ch. LVI: vs 60-62 the Qur'an says, '*We are not incapable of changing your moulds and produce (create) you in what (a state or stage where) you know not at all. And you have certainly known the first state or stage of your coming into being, then why do you not remember it*?' Here the Qur'an asserts that there are states of existence ahead of the individuals which are unknown to them as yet. It also asserts that there is a first state of man's existence which is known to mankind and they have to remember it. It is a fact that there is no state known to man other than the present state of existence. Therefore, there is no other state of existence to be termed as the first other than the present. The theory of the individual souls of the children of Adam having been brought out of Adam's loins into consciousness prior to the present state and of their having

been made witness over their selves (*misaq-e 'alam-e dhar*) is absolutely non-Islamic, and against what the Qur'an clearly asserts (vide Ch. LVI: v 61 and Ch. VII: v 172 and the author's notes on it). There are several narrations from Shi'ah and Sunni sources in this connection and the theory is advocated by a great number of Muslim theologians of both schools. In the first instance, it seems very difficult to reject all the narrations and the common beliefs of the people, but a deeper study of all the narrations and their comparison with what the Qur'an asserts will make one sure that the theory from both the Qur'anic and rational points of view is untenable.[44]

The narrations indicating priority of the spirits of the individuals to their bodies in creation can be reconciled with the Qur'anic and apostolic assertions that the conscious selves are created along with the body and have undergone development along with the bodies. The selves are material, totally dependent on their bodies in the beginning but in the course of their development they became gradually independent of them. When the cognitive self departs from the body it remains independent of the body from which it developed. It may assume a similar, better or worse body and form in the hereafter, but in the non-terrestrial region, corresponding to the character formed in his life. *Tanasukh*, or change of form, is of two kinds: (1) departed soul assuming, through the process of rebirth, a new material body corresponding to the character it formed in his previous material body or return of the departed soul to another material body through the process of rebirth or (2) immediate assumption of the departed soul of a form finer and more sensitive than the material form, from which it departed; the immaterial form is in complete correspondence to the character formed when it had a material body. Of these two kinds, the first is denounced by Muslims as against the principles of the life hereafter identified by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. The second is asserted by reason and confirmed by the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. The distinctive aspect of the life hereafter as asserted in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* is that the cognitive self will be alive to

what was done in the previous life, and that the pleasures and sufferings are the result of what was done before. These two should not be confused with each other. All the Qur'anic passages and apostolic statements which indicate that the departed soul will assume new forms in the hereafter refer to the second kind of transformation. But some Muslim theologians, misled by non-Muslim advocates of material rebirth of the soul, tried to interpret such passages to support their views. However, it should be borne in mind that in essence the Shi'ah thought is against the concept of the material rebirth of the soul, which is propounded by Hinduism and the ancient Platonic, neo-Platonic and the Aryan mythologists to which some saints of the Sufi order and ultra-Shi'ites of Qaramatian tendencies are also inclined. Any being other than the Absolute One is finite and therefore created. The finite beings, whether in the arc of descent or ascent differ from each other in degree of reality; the higher in the degree of reality is closer to the Absolute.

In the hierarchy of the arc of ascent 'man' (Adam) and his chosen issues as vicegerents of God are foremost in degree of reality and nearness to the Absolute. The Holy Prophet is presented in the Qur'an as the universal grace of God superior to all his predecessors in submissiveness. And the Qur'an, as confirmed by the Prophet, has presented these holy members of his house as spiritually identical with him. Therefore, any effort to bring them down to the state of other followers of the Prophet is anti *Ahl al-Bayt*. The question of the infallibility of the vicegerents of God, has already been dealt with in detail. Here the idea is to point out that some theologians who could not interpret the Qur'anic passages which apparently do not agree with the conception of the absolute infallibility of the vicegerents have adopted an apologetic term, *Tark-e Awla*, meaning 'exhanging better for the good.' They apply this term to the passages of the Qur'an which appear to accuse the Prophets of committing mistakes; e.g. Adam approaching the tree which caused him to quit paradise. According to these theologians it was not a fault amounting to sin, it was a

permissible deed though it was better not to do it. Thus Adam's approach to the tree was a diversion from better to good. This story of apologetic terms and arguments which subject the vicegerents of God to commit such diversions from superior to inferior deeds, undermine their normative status and is unacceptable. The reader should refrain from applying this term to the vicegerents of God and seek a more appropriate interpretation for the Qur'anic passage in question.

Prayer and repentance which are uttered by the vicegerents of God do not imply any sin or diversion from a better to a lesser deed. On the contrary, those vehement supplicative expressions indicate their sense of creaturely defects which would not be covered but by His blessings. In the beginning of the last four lines of the celebrated *Du'a-e Kumayl*, 'Ali addresses God as follows: 'O One Who is quickly pleased! Forgive one who possesses nothing but prayer (needy supplications); and it is Thou whatever ye willeth.' Here 'Ali expresses the fact that the finite being in itself and by nature possesses nothing towards the One Who is able to do whatever He wills. 'Ali exposes his creaturely needs before the creative All-Gracious One. Prayer means nothing but to be alive to one's creaturely nothingness and His unlimited grace. It is this constant prayer that makes the vicegerents of God infallible and it does not attribute to them any sin or improper deed. Another important point to be noted is that in several chapters of the Qur'an dealing with the settlement of Adam on earth after the loss of paradise of animal comforts, God asserts that Adam and those of his issues who follow His guidance are secure from any fear or grief: '*Those who follow My guidance shall not suffer fear or grief. They shall not go astray and suffer spiritual hardship*' (Ch. XX: v 123). These assurances placed the infallible issues of Adam and even the true followers of them above the influence of the evil forces working in the material realm.

Restricting the effectiveness of evil forces and practices to His will the Qur'an condemns those who adopt such practices as

their profession and those who are apprehensive of the effect of such unusual practices. The Qur'an asserts that sorcery and the devices of this kind are a mixture of devilish devices and misinterpretations of some scriptural instructions; and this is done by people of the Book such as Jews, Christians, and even Muslims who have thrown the unequivocal words of God behind their back. All these occultic prescriptions and practices are innovations of those who, in the garb of religious profession, try to take advantage of people's ignorance. The traditions which indicate that the Jews cast a spell on the Holy Prophet and he was affected to the extent that he was under the impression that he was doing or saying something when he was not actually doing or saying so, are fabrications of those who ignore the Qur'an. Even the traditions about the Holy Prophet that he used to be an epileptic and abnormal conditions during revelation are contrary to the Qur'an and reason.

٢٩- مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ؕ
وَالَّذِيْنَ مَعَهٗۤ اَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ
رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ
تَرٰىهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا
يَّبْتَغُوْنَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرِضْوَانًا
سِيْمَاهُمْ فِيْ وُجُوْهِهِمْ مِّنْ اَثَرِ السُّجُوْدِ ؕ
ذٰلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرٰىةِ ۚ
وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْاِنْجِيْلِ ۚ
كَزَرْعٍ
اَخْرَجَ شَطْئَهٗ فَاٰزَرَهٗ
فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوٰى
عَلٰى سُوْقِهٖ
يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ
لِيَغِيْظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ ؕ
وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
مِنْهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّاَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ۝

'Muhammad is the Apostle of God, and those who are with him are vehement against the infidels, compassionate among themselves. Thou seest them bowing down, prostrating themselves in obeisance

(unto) God seeking grace from God and (His) pleasure; Their marks are in their faces (foreheads), because of the effect of their (frequent) prostrations; That is their description in the Torah, and their description in the Evangel; as a seed that puts forth its shoot, then strengthens it, it grows stout and rises firm from its stalk, delighting the sowers — that through them He may enrage the unbelievers; God has promised those who believe and do good deeds, forgiveness and a great recompense.' (Ch. XLVIII: v 29)

Notes

1:

٥٣- سَنُرِيهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فِى
الْاٰفَاقِ وَفِىٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتّٰى
يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ؕ
اَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ
اَنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ○

٥٤- اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ فِىْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَآءِ رَبِّهِمْ ؕ
اَلَآ اِنَّهٗ
بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ مُّحِيْطٌ ○

'We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice, since He is witness over all things?
How! Are they still in doubt about the meeting with their Lord? Lo! Is not He surrounding all things?' (Ch. XLI: vs 53-54)

2:

١١٧- مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ اِلَّا مَآ اَمَرْتَنِىْ بِهٖٓ
اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ رَبِّىْ وَرَبَّكُمْ ۚ
وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيْدًا
مَّا دُمْتُ فِيْهِمْ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِىْ
كُنْتَ اَنْتَ الرَّقِيْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ
وَاَنْتَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ○

'I spake unto them only that which Thou commandeth me, (saying): "Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." I was a witness of them while I dwelt among them, and when Thou tookest me Thou wast the watcher over them. Thou art witness over all things.' (Ch. V: v 120)

3:

١٩- لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِيْنَ
قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۭ
قُلْ فَمَنْ يَّمْلِكُ
مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـــًٔا اِنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يُّهْلِكَ الْمَسِيْحَ
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَاُمَّهٗ
وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا ۭ
وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاۗءُ ۭ
وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝

'They indeed have disbelieved who say: "Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary." Say: "Who then can do aught against Allah, if He had willeth to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother and everyone on earth?" Allah's is the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. He created what He will. And Allah is able to do all things.' (Ch. V: v 19)

4:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

١- قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ ۝
٢- اَللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝
٣- لَمْ يَلِدْ ۙ وَلَمْ يُوْلَدْ ۝
٤- وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ ۝

'In the Name of Allah, the Beneficient, the Merciful
Say: "He is Allah, the One!
Allah, the eternally besought of all!
He begetteth not nor was He begotten.
And there is none comparable unto Him".' (Ch. CXII: vs 1-4)

5:

١١- فَاطِرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ
جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا
وَّمِنَ الْاَنْعَامِ اَزْوَاجًا ۚ
يَذْرَؤُكُمْ فِيْهِ ۭ
لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهٖ شَيْءٌ ۚ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ ۝

'The creator of the heavens and the earth. He hath made for you pairs of yourselves, and of the cattle also pairs, whereby He multiplieth you. Naught is as

His likeness, and He is the Hearer, the Seer.' (Ch. XLII: v 11)

6: ٢١. اُنظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ
وَلَلْآخِرَةُ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَاتٍ
وَأَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيلًا ۝

'*See how We prefer one above another, and verily the hereafter will be greater in degrees and greater in perfectment.*' (Ch. XVII : v 21)

7: ٧-وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّىٰهَا ۝

'*And a soul and Him Who perfected it.*' (Ch. XCI: v 7)

8: ٨٥. وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ
قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي
وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝

'*They will ask you about the spirit. Say: "The spirit (operates) at my Lord's command, while you have been given only a smattering of knowledge.*' (Ch. XVII : v 85)

9: See Appendix

10: Here some may argue as to how matter can be considered identical in the slightest degree with life or consciousness, ignoring the fact that consciousness is the property of immaterial and non-dimensional beings. For consciousness means the presence of the object to the subject (the known to the knower), which implies *apriori*, the presence of the subject to itself. And matter being dimensional, consisting of geometrical parts absent from the other is as a whole absent from itself and consequently absent from all other objects and, therefore, unconscious and totally void of life. So it is in utter contrast not only with the absolute reality but even with all the immaterial and non-dimensional finite beings, which fill the gap between absolute reality and matter. This is the reason why matter and mind are generally presented as two substances in extreme contrast. Their association in the living material beings such as man, animal and plant is one of the oldest metaphysical problems of importance, around which many schools of thought have been developed. In answer to this argument, it is out of place to discuss here all the views and solutions forwarded to this problem. It is enough here to note that whatever is said about the contrast between mind and matter is true when they are viewed from a dualistic angle, when each is viewed as a *substance* in itself, independent of the other, and as such the problem of their association remains unsolved as all the proposed solutions are unsatisfactory. But from the unitarian point of view, be it of the theist or the atheist, there is no problem at all. In the case of the former (the theist) nothing can be termed as *substance* in the true sense of the word other than the Absolute One. The immaterial objects of the arc of descent are radiations of the Real One in deflective and reflective grades, which terminate in four-dimensional matter or space/time. Matter is nothing but termination (terminus) of the arc of descent, held by the immediate cohesive force or power of immaterial nature. That force, to which the four-dimensional continuity named matter owes its appearance, is the psychic or the spiritual

force in association with matter, not as co-relative but as the immediate sustainer. To the atheist, mind is nothing more than a material phenomenon, the result of complicated material processes. Both views agree that one of the two is the real and the other is phenomenal. Either matter is the devolutionary phenomenon of the actual mind, psyche or spirit which loses its actuality in the downward process and regains it in the upwards (evolutionary) process, as it has already been pointed out or the mind, psyche or spirit is the phenomenal development of the primal matter's potentiality, a theory which is held by atheists but never proved.

11:

١١٤- فَتَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۚ
وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ
اَنْ يُّقْضٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهٗ ۡ وَقُلْ
رَّبِّ زِدْنِيْ عِلْمًا ○

'Then exalted by Allah, the True King! And hasten not (O Muhammad) with the Qur'an ere its revelation hath been perfected unto thee, and say: "My Lord! Increase me in knowledge.' (Ch. XX: v 114)

12:

١٠٢- فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ
قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ اِنِّيْٓ اَرٰى فِي الْمَنَامِ
اَنِّيْٓ اَذْبَحُكَ
فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرٰى ۚ
قَالَ يٰٓاَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ ۡ
سَتَجِدُنِيْٓ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ
مِنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ○

١٠٣- فَلَمَّآ اَسْلَمَا
وَتَلَّهٗ لِلْجَبِيْنِ ۚ

١٠٤- وَنَادَيْنٰهُ اَنْ يّٰٓاِبْرٰهِيْمُ ۚ

١٠٥- قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْيَا ۚ
اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ○

١٠٦- اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلٰٓؤُا الْمُبِيْنُ ○

١٠٧- وَفَدَيْنٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ عَظِيْمٍ ○

'And when (the son) reached (the age of) working with him, said he: "O my son! Verily I saw in a dream that I sacrifice thee; now what is thy view?" Said (the son): "O father! Do thou what thou art bidden; If God willeth, thou wilt find me of the steadfast ones".

And when they both had surrendered (themselves) to the will of God and he (Abraham) threw him (the son) upon his forehead.

And We called out unto him: "O Abraham! Indeed hast thou proved true the dream; Verily thus do We recompense the doers of good!"
Verily, this is an open trial.
And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.' (Ch. XXXVII: vs 102-107)

13: The Holy Spirit (*Ruh*) mentioned in the verse assumed the form of a man and appeared before Mary when she retired into complete seculsion. The Qur'an declares that she said to the Spirit, '*Verily I fly for refuge in the Beneficient (God) from thee. (Begone from me) if thou art God-fearing.*' The Spirit said that as a divine messenger he was giving a glad tiding that she would have a purified soul (i.e., Jesus Christ). She again felt nervous and said that how could it be possible when no man had touched her and she was not unchaste. The Spirit said that the Lord says, '*It is easy for Me and We will make him (Jesus) a sign (miracle) (of yours) unto the people and a mercy from Us. It is a matter decreed.*" (Ch. XIX: vs 17-21). Those who have no knowledge of and faith in the supernatural realm of beings say that the appearance of the Spirit or Angel to Mary was in a vision, because no angelical power assumes human form, and she conceived by a well-made man who appeared to her in normal course. It is a total blasphemy, and a rejection of the Qur'an.

14: In some languages the words Satan, Pharaoh, Caesar, etc. might have been treated as proper nouns but actually these words are common nouns or titles used for entities of certain status. In this sense it can be used both in the singular and plural. The Qur'an has used Satan not only as a proper noun for the entity hostile to Adam but it has used it also in the sense of any evil entity in the form of a man or something else who is hostile to humanity. In the apostolic statements also Pharaoh and Caesar have been used as common nouns for despots who rule over mankind with no justifiable merits, such as *Fara'na* has been used as the plural of *Fir'aun* (Pharaoh) and *Kaya'sara* as the plural of *Kaiser* (Caesar). Similar to these usages it is supposed that the word *Azar* used in the Qur'an, as the father of Ibrahim, was actually the title of the patriarch of the Assyrian tribe. So Azar was not the actual father of Ibrahim, he was the patriarch who was looking after Ibrahim as an orphan.

15: Sermon of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, upon whom be peace, *Nahj al-Balagha*, 184 or 191, depending on the edition.

16:

٣- وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى ۝

٤- إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحٰى ۝

٥- عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوٰى ۝

٦- ذُو مِرَّةٍ ۚ فَاسْتَوٰى ۝

٧- وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلٰى ۝

'*And, nor he speaketh of (his own) inclination:*
It (the wording) is naught but a revelation revealed (unto him),
Taught him the One intense in power,

The One endued with wisdom; (and) hence he took an overviewing position. While he was in the highest horizon.' (Ch. LIII: vs 3-7)

17: Vide Ch. XXXVII: vs 139-143; Ch. XXI: v 87; Ch. X: v 981; Ch. XLVIII: vs 48-49. It is said that Jonah entered the boat to avoid the chastisement. While sailing they were hit by a huge storm. The owner of the boat announced that there was among them a slave who had run away from his master. Jonah said it was he, but other travellers in the boat who were much impressed by the nobility of Jonah did not believe him. A ballot was, therefore, drawn several times but each time Jonah's name was drawn. Jonah immediately jumped into the ocean and was swallowed by the fish. Jonah prayed to God in the belly of the fish, *La ilaha illa anta subhanaka inni kunto minazzalameen*, i.e., 'There is no God save Thee, Thou art the pure and verily I am of the unjust ones.' He was caused to be cast out of the belly of the fish, and was restored to life on earth as an Apostle to his people; forgiven by Allah in answer to his pleas for mercy and forgiveness.

18: Renowned sources of supplication (*du'a*), prayers, litanies, invocations for different moments in one's life, and the life of the community, and for special occasions:

1. *Nahj al-Balagha* — Sermons of Imam 'Ali, upon whom be peace.
2. *Al-Sahifat al-Sajjadiyyah* (also known as *Al-Sahifat al-Kamila*) — Prayers of the fourth Imam 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, upon whom be peace.
3. *Bihar al-Anwar* (Oceans of Light) — by 'Allama Muhammad al-Baqir Majlisi (d. 1110 A.H./1698-9 A.D. or 1111 A.H./1700 A.D.). Chapter on *Du'a* and other sources mentioned in the book.
4. *Mafatih al-Jinan* (Keys to the Garden of Paradise) — by Shaykh Abbas Qummi (d. 1359 A.H./1940/41).
5. *A Shi'ite Anthology* — by 'Allama Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, translated by William C Chittick (Muhammadi Trust: Britain, 1980). English version of the prayer (supplication) of the third Imam Husain, upon whom be peace, for the Day of 'Arafah (the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah during the pilgrimage of Mecca) is included in it.

19: ٢٩-فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ
وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِي
فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ○

'*So when I complete him and breathe into him My spirit, fall ye down unto him prostrating (in obeisance).*' (Ch. XV: v 29)

The word *isteva* means the hold and domination of the Infinite over all finite beings including the highest and the lowest with His All-Embracing Knowledge. It expresses the all-encompassing view of the '*Arsh* which has no dimensions. It negates the view of anthropomorphic schools of thought who imagine that God is sitting on a throne. It is un-Islamic. Another point in the use of *isteva alal 'arsh* in the verse after pointing to the process of creation is to show that the creation of the order and its administration is His. (vide Ch. XI: v 7; Ch. XXV: v 59; Ch. L: v 38; Ch. LIII: v 4). [Extracted from Pooya's note,

Translation of the Qur'an by Mir Ahmed Ali. 1st edition, p. 578.]

20. Divine Days (*Ay'yamuullah*). See the Qur'an: Ch. VII: v 57; Ch. X: v 3; Ch. XI: v 7; Ch. XXV: v 59; Ch. L: v 38; Ch. LVII: v 4. These verses confirm that the total period of creation does not exceed six days; and it is also pointed out that one divine day is equal to one thousand days on earth and in some cases fifty thousand years. The restoration of all values on the Day of Judgement will take place in the shortest moment within a twinkling of an eye. The Creator alone knows the duration of time which is beyond any imagination on that plane. For the significance of *al-yum* in the verse relating to the day of Ghadir, see Chapter 1, note 22 (f and g).

21: See Chapter 1, notes 22 (e) for details. It refers to the prayer of 'Ali, upon whom be peace, when he gave alms in the state of *ruku* (genuflection).

22. 'Exalted loins' and 'purified wombs' mentioned in the descriptive salutation (*ziarat*) are addressed to the third Imam Husain, upon whom be peace, known as *Ziarat-e Warath*, and similar to this is mentioned in the descriptive salutation to the Holy Prophet in the salutation known as *Ziarat-e Jame'h* (vide *Mafatih al-Jinan* and other relevant books). All these salutations are an amplified form of *Ayat-i Tat'hir* and other Qur'anic descriptions of the chosen issues of Adam.

23. The 'days of ignorance' do not refer to a particular period of history. According to the Qur'an ignorance or a pagan tendency is a peculiar attitude of the human mind as opposed to Islam or submission to the will of God. So Islam and ignorance are two opposite mental attitudes which assert themselves throughout the history of civilization.

24. The origin of the theory of 'Logo,' word of God, originated from the Jewish school of thought in Alexandria, and later was evolved and maintained by the Pauline school of Christianity (vide the first few verses of the first chapter of the fourth Gospel). The Christians presented Christ as the word of God, the third person in the Trinity, therefore, 'non-created.' The traditionists of the Muslim school of thought headed by Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Mohammad ibn Ismail Bukhari, Muslim ibn Hajaj-e Nishapuri consider the Qur'an as the word of God and maintain it is one of the attributes of God co-existent with the presence of God, therefore uncreated. The createdness and non-createdness as the word of God was one of the most controversial issues between the rationalist school (Mu'tazilite), headed by Mamun the caliph and the traditionist school ('Asharites), headed by Ahmed ibn Hanbal. According to the Shi'ahs it is true that the Qur'an is the word of God revealed to the heart of the Holy Prophet and uttered by him, but the word of God as 'Ali says is His act not attribute. Moreover, the attributes also are not co-existent with the essence as the 'Asharites would maintain.

25: 'Allama Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi relates from Shaykh Saduq a detailed description. Here it is in brief. Abu Talib at the height of the hot season started for Shams (Syria) taking Muhammad who was then eight years old. As soon as the heat of the sun became oppressive, a small cloud, white as snow, came, and saluting Muhammad, cast a refreshing shade over him,

attending him where ever he went. 'As we approached Busray (Busrah),' said Abu Talib, 'the hermitage of a certain Nasaranee (Christian) recluse was seen advancing towards us with the speed of a race horse. On coming up it stopped before us with the astonished owner, Bahira (a Christian monk) by the name, who was always so absorbed in contemplation that he never showed the least attention to those who passed by his cell, and never even spoke to any person. When he found his hermitage in motion, and saw the *qafilah* (caravan) approaching, he at once perceived it was the Prophet. On coming up he said to him, "If what I have read and heard is true, thou art he, and none other." Then the monk asked Abu Talib's permission to present the refreshment he had brought to the wonderful child, who inquired, "Is it for me alone, or may my fellow travellers partake of it with me?" The recluse said it was little, but all he had; however he might do as he pleased. Accordingly he (the child) said, "*Bismillah*" and began to feed the whole party of 170 persons following his example; and after they were all satisfied the little offering of Bahira seemed to have been untouched. The monk, astonished at what he witnessed, blessed the head of the Prophet, and said, "By the truth of the Lord Christ, this is he!" but the people present did not comprehend what he meant.' (*Hiyat al-Qulub*, Vol. 2 by 'Allama al-Majlisi, translated by Rev. James L. Merrick, The Zahra Trust, San Antonio, TX, US)

26. Commenting on the Qur'anic v 37 in Ch. XXIV, 'Ali, upon whom be peace, says, 'Surely God, the Glorious and High, has made remembrance (of Him) as a means to keep the center of human cognition and volition polished and pure from the rust of vegeto-animal, sensual desires. It is through remembrance that one hears after being deaf and through it one sees after being blind, and through it one submits after being in revolt. God, Almighty and High be His bounties, has incessantly and in every moment and in the intervals between His messengers and such of His servants in whose minds He has whispered, and with whose thought He has talked (meaning who are inspired by Him), those 'chosen ones,' well-awakened with the light of the inspiration spread throughout their sense of sight, hearing, reasoning and feeling, undertook to remind people of the 'divine days' ahead of them and warn them of His stand (against the wrongdoers). Thus, the inspired ones continued to be like the guides in the wilderness. Whosoever adopts the straight path they commend the path adopted by him, they given him the good news of salvation awaiting him; and whosoever deviates from the right path to the left or right they censor him and warn him of the loss awaiting him. Thus, they are the beacons in the darkness ahead of man, and are the guides in the confusing and bewildering states and stages of human life. Surely for the remembrance of God there have been selected ones who have adopted the remembrance in preference to all other temporal occupations: so no transaction has ever occupied their mind and deviated them from the remembrance of God. They cover the length of their worldly life with remembrance of God shouting in the ears of negligent ones the divine warnings against obnoxious deeds prohibited by God. They order people to do justice and they themselves practise it. They are absorbed in the light sublime that it seems that they have passed from the temporal light to the light hereafter as if they are there seeing things beyond the terrestrial life. It seems that they are looking over the unseen states and conditions, the inhabitants, the intermediary stage between the temporal life and the resurrection and the lengthy changes therein.

(Extract from Sermon 217 of *Nahj ul-Balagha* by Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Alib, Volume II which speaks of his own personal experience, Egypt edition. No 219, Pakistan edition. Translated in Urdu by Mufti Ja'fer Hussain.)

27. The Pharaoh dreamt that a fire was coming from the Israelites' dwellings around his palace and destroying it. The scholars of ancient scriptures interpreted this to mean that a boy, born to the Israelites, would bring perdition to him. The Pharaoh ordered every male child of the Israelites to be killed. When Moses was born, his mother was inspired to put the baby in a box and float it away into the river. The box with Moses in it, floated into the channel of the river which passed into the Pharaoh's palace garden. Asi'a, the wife of the Pharaoh, picked up the box; the radiance of divine beauty of the child enchanted her and the Pharaoh, and they decided to adopt the child. (Ch. XX: vs 38-40)

The box was made by Hazkeel, son of Saboor, a carpenter and cousin of the Pharaoh. When the inspired mother approached Hazkeel to prepare the box for Moses, he made it but then went to inform the Pharaoh of the child's birth but he went dumb on the way. So he returned to his shop where he became well. He again went to inform the Pharaoh but now he became blind and dumb, and was forced to return. He was convinced that the child (Moses) was the expected Prophet. He declared his belief in God and Moses. He became well and hid his faith, but always advised people to have belief in the All-Mighty God and the person (Moses) who was preaching the right cause. (Ch. XXVIII: v 3-7 and Ch. XL: vs 28-29). He is called *Momin-e al-e Fira'un.*

28. 'Abdul Muttalib felt alone against the aggression of the mischievous Quraysh, and had vowed in the Ka'ba that God Most High would bestow on him 10 sons and he would immolate the favourite one. He was blessed with 10 sons. When they grew up he took 'Abdallah (the father of the Prophet), the dearest one, to fulfill his vow. At the crisis, 'Autekah, one of the daughters of 'Abdul Muttalib, besought her father to cast lots between her brother and a given number of camels and increase the number till the Most High should accept the substitution. 'Abdul Muttalib offered 10 camels and cast lots between them and his son, the arrow pointed at him; the number was increased till 100 camels were set apart as a substitute and the arrow pointed at the camels. Great rejoicing followed. 'Abdul Muttalib and all the Quraysh around him shouted '*Allahu Akbar.*' The 'great sacrifice' (*zebhe 'azim*) was postponed till the tragedy of Karbala, which saved Islam from destruction.

29. *Mubahala.* See Chapter 1, Note 22 (h).

30. *Shahadat:* After a careful study of the following verses and the author's notes given in the *Translation of the Qur'an* by Mir Ahmed Ali, one will have no doubt the words *Shahadat* and *Shaheda* and their derivative forms in the Qur'an have been used to mean witnessing or observing a thing or being (Ch. II: vs 124 and 143; Ch. IV: v 41; Ch. V: v 117; Ch. X: vs 91 and 105; Ch. XVI: vs 84 and 89 and Ch. XXII: v 78). It is a state of knowledge of a thing as it is in itself with utmost and unshakable certainty. It is a state of direct communion of the knower with the known or a state of presence of the known object to the knower. There are numerous shades of meaning of *Shahadat* which signify the

highest stage of realization or observation of a thing. This root and its various derivative forms have been used in the Qur'an signifying the same state of certitude and realization. It has been used about and applied to God, the angels and people gifted with knowledge of things. It has been used for the persons who were eyewitnesses of certain events and the persons who have faith in something unseen with utmost certainty and unshakable conviction. This term has been applied to God, the Omniscient Creator of everything. He is not only with everything but He is closer to everything than the thing to itself. It has been used in the same sense but in a lesser degree of state of realization attained by the high intellectual entities who are in communion with the Absolute Reality (God). The entities of such spiritual attainments, be it in the arc of descent like angels, or in the arc of ascent like the souls of the Prophets and saints, are in the state of observing the finite-many in the Absolute One and observing Him in the finite-many. And as such they are in a position to observe the actual relation in which the finite multitude are standing to each other as well as their relation to the Absolute. So such entities are the true witnesses of the Absolute Reality and the relative and finite realities in different degrees. In this sense the Qur'an has used the term *Shahadat* for the Prophets, saints and righteous persons according to the degree of their spiritual attainment. Therefore, *Shahadat* means a state of observation and realization of the Truth. This state of realization in its most comprehensive sense has been used for the soul of the last Prophet, Muhammad, upon whom be peace. Next to him are the 'holy souls,' who in soul and spirit are identical with him, and are true manifestations of his stage of accomplishment. Next to them are the holy souls of Prophets, saints and righteous persons according to their position in the hierarchy of realization and observation of the Truth. Such personalities are undoubtedly the model and norm for the others to follow. *Shahadat* is a stage of attainment whether anybody does or does not follow the person who has reached this stage. But the life of such a person deserves to be adopted as an example and be followed. Anyone who establishes a tie of love with such an accomplished personality will also attain the same stage of realization and become a *Shaheed* in a lesser degree corresponding to his spiritual limitations. This is supported by the report narrated by many traditionists including Mohiuddin Ibn Arabi in his commentary of the Qur'an where he interprets and comments on v 23 in Ch. XLII, known as *Ayah-e Modat*: 'Whosoever dies with the love of Al-e Muhammad in his heart, his death is the death of one who had attained the state of Shahadat (realization).' Thus a *Shaheed* is the one who is the witness of the Truth and possesses also the right of intercession (*shifa'at*). [Refer to footnote in Ch. XLIII: v 86 of *Translation of the Qur'an* by Mir Ahmed Ali.]

So a *Shaheed* and its derivatives have been used in the Qur'an in the sense of realization and observation of the Truth; it has not been used in the Qur'an in the limited sense of being killed for the cause of righteousness. It is true a person who gives his life and all that is dear to him for the sake of God will reach such a stage of realization. There are people who have reached this stage of realization before giving their lives and dear ones in the way of God: Husain (the grandson of the Holy Prophet) had attained the stage of realization since his birth. Many of his statements prove beyond doubt that this state of realization made him move towards Karbala and display a scene of realization without precedence and shall not be repeated. It is true of the righteous people

who are killed for the cause of Islam that after their martyrdom they have reached the stage of *Shahadat*. But for the Holy Prophet and his twelve successors, their very existence and *Shahadat* are synonyms and inseparable from each other. It is for this reason that even love for them will take one to the stage of *Shahadat*. Here it should be noted that martyrdom (being killed for the cause of Islam) applies only to those who have given their lives for the sake of Islam in obedience and submission to the order of God conveyed to them by the Holy Prophet and his rightful successors. In the battle of Uhud wherein the Muslims were defeated and ran away except for a few, a person named Khazman remained with the Prophet and fought against the infidels who were attacking the few Muslims and wanted to kill the Prophet. Afterwards a Muslim praised that leader who fought but the latter said frankly that he had not fought but for the sake of helping his clan. The Prophet, when asked about the destiny of that leader, said that Khazman would go to hell inspite of his bravery because the motive of his good deed was not Godly. This is a lesson and a distinctive mark between *jihad* (fighting for the cause of Islam as ordered by God) and the war waged against non-Muslims to conquer territory and rule over people. Imam Muhammad Baqir (the fifth Imam) says that if a person calls people to give up obedience to creatures and obey God, it is *fardh* (obligatory), and it will be termed *jihad*. But if the attempt is to give up obedience to one creature and accept the obedience to another, it is satanic war which is usually waged by people to gain power.

31. *Ummat Muslima* - The word *Ummat* or *Ummah* (nation) has been frequently used in the Qur'an in various meanings. Many commentators fail to grasp the exact shade of meaning in which the word has been used in certain passages of the Qur'an, which has resulted in some confusion. In the interpretation of the concerned passage, *Ummat* is a derivative form, the root of which is *Amama*, meaning literally, intention to or turn towards a fixed direction. But figuratively it has been used for any distinguished unit which draws attention. (1) One of its derivative verbal nouns is 'Imam.' It has been used to signify a distinguished leader towards whom attention is drawn. In this sense the plural is *A'immah*. It has also been used in the sense of distinguished 'highway.' (2) The other sense is *Amam*, meaning forward, front: a distinctive thing which is ahead in time or place and draws attention. (3) The third is *Ummat* or *Ummah*. It has been used in the following shades of meaning: (a) a distinctive point of time (Ch. XI: v 8 and Ch. XII: v 45); (b) as a collective noun denoting a distinctive group of people who are led by a distinctive leader. In this sense the plural for it is *Umum* (nations); (c) a collective noun for a distinguished group of people who have the quality to lead. In this sense the plural is *A'immah*; and (d) as a common noun used for a single person who has the quality of leadership or any other distinctive quality (Ch. XVI: v 12).

To understand the exact shade of meaning in which the word *Ummat* has been used in different passages of the Qur'an one should refer to the context or other evidence whether it has been used to mean a leading person or a distinguished leading group or a distinguished group led by a distinguished leader or leaders. Or, it has been used in the sense of a distinguished point of time or space. It is wrong to interpret *Ummah* in all the passages of the Qur'an in one and the same shade of meaning, i.e., a distinguished group who followed a distinguished leader or in the sense of a nation. For example, see the

word *Ummatan Muslimatan* used in Ch. II: v 128, and *Ummatan Wasatan* in v 143; *Wal Takun Min Kum Umatun* in Ch. III: v 104; *Kuntum Khaira Umatin* in Ch. III: v 110; *Umatun Khaiamatun* in Ch. III: vs 113-114; and *Umatun hia arba min Umatin* in Ch. XVI: v 92. The context of all these usages proves beyond doubt that the word *Ummat* used as a collective noun means a distinguished group of leading personalities and not the followers of a leader or a particular nation. In short, *Ummat* in these places has been used in the sense of *Imam* and *A'immah* and not in the sense of *Mamoom* (followers). Every follower of the Prophet of Islam has not attained the high state of realization and the observation of the truth to be a witness over the people. Every follower of the Prophet cannot be counted in the 'best group' whom God has brought out in the interest of the people to lead them towards the right path. These are qualities of righteous leaders chosen by God and cannot be applied to every man.

The word *wasat* (middle) used in the Qur'an, particularly in Ch. II: v 143, means a group of persons who are in the middle path saved from all extremities, or it means that they are on the zenith of the hierarchy of spiritual attainment, the state which has equal comprehensive relation to all that is below it. This state or stage of accomplishment has been termed as '*araf* in Ch. VII: vs 46 and 48, meaning elevated place. This is a state which those who have attained it, would recognize as all good or bad, by their very appearance and features.

32: ٦-اَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيْمًا فَاٰوٰى ۝

33. It has been discussed in relation to the 'Spirit' that the Holy Prophet's light was glorifying God before coming into this world. It refers to his prior existence. But as far as his soul is concerned it was created along with his birth, reflecting the light of his spirit. Therefore, there is no existence of the human soul, whether of the Prophets or others, before the creation of the body. The difference between the spirit which proceeds from God in the arc of descent and the soul which is the reflection of the spirit in the arc of ascent, conditioned with the state of the ground, should always be kept in mind so that this theory should not be confused with the eternity of the soul and the problem of transmigration which has no room in Islam at all.

34: ٤٣-عَفَا اللّٰهُ عَنْكَ ۚ
لِمَ اَذِنْتَ لَهُمْ حَتّٰى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِيْنَ
صَدَقُوْا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ۝

'*God forgives thee (O Our Apostle) Why didst thou give them leave (to stay behind) until it was manifest unto thee those who spake the truth, and thou hadst known the liars.*' (Ch. IX: v 43)

١-يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ لِمَ تُحَرِّمُ
مَآ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكَ ۚ
تَبْتَغِيْ مَرْضَاتَ اَزْوَاجِكَ ۚ
وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝

'*O (Our) Prophet! Why dost thou forbid (unto thyself) what God hath made lawful unto thee? Thou seekest to please thy wives; and God is Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.*' (Ch. LXVI: v 1)

١-عَبَسَ وَتَوَلّٰٓى ۝
٢-اَنْ جَآءَهُ الْاَعْمٰى ۝
٣-وَمَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّهٗ يَزَّكّٰٓى ۝
٤-اَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ
فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى ۝
٥-اَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى ۝
٦-فَاَنْتَ لَهٗ تَصَدّٰى ۝
٧-وَمَا عَلَيْكَ اَلَّا يَزَّكّٰى ۝
٨-وَاَمَّا مَنْ جَآءَكَ يَسْعٰى ۝

'*He frowned and turned away, because came unto him the blind man,*
And what maketh thee to know that he would cleanse himself
Or be warned, and profiteth him the warning?
As for him who thinketh himself independent (on account of his wealth)
Unto him dost thou attend,
It shall be no blame on thee if cleansed not himself,
But as to him who cometh unto thee striving in earnest.' (Ch. LXXX: vs 1-8)

35. When the Prophet migrated to Madina a mosque was erected with brick and mud walls and a roof of palm leaves, and also constructed was a platform with a roof, adjacent to the mosque, for the needy *sahabah* (companions) whose devotion was remarkable. The Prophet assisted with his own hands in the construction. The companions are called *As'hab al-Suffa.*

36:

٥٥-فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ
وَّاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْۢبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ
بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ
بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْاِبْكَارِ ۝

'*So be thou patient; verily the promise of God is true; and seek protection for thy (followers') shortcomings, and celebrate the praise of thy Lord in the evening and the morning.*' (Ch. XL: v 55)

١٩-فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ
وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْۢبِكَ
وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ

وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ
وَمَثْوٰىكُمْ ۝

'So know thou that there is no god but God, and seek thou protection for thy sins and for (the sins of) the believer men and believer women; and God knoweth well the place of your movements (in this world) and the place of your final rest (in the hereafter).' (Ch. XLVII: v 19)

١. إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ۝
٢. لِّيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللّٰهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنۢبِكَ وَمَا
تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ
وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ۝

'Verily We have caused victory for thee, a manifest victory,
(So) that (O Our Apostle Muhammad!) God may grant protection for thy sake (against) that which hath gone before of thy (followers') shortcomings and that which hath to come later, and thus He perfecteth His bounty unto thee, and guideth thee (firm-footed) on the way straight (unto the Lord).' (Ch. XLVIII: vs 1-2)

37. It has already been pointed out that the gradual revelation was a fragmentary quotation of what was already revealed totally to the Prophet on the Esteemed Night, in the month of Ramadan; to consider such victories as something manifest producing real tranquility of mind and heart of the Prophet is a very narrow view of the aims of the Qur'an and a limited perspective of the Prophet's mission. On this ground the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* have emphasized that the occasions said to be connected with the revelation of the Qur'an, part by part, during 23 years of the Prophet's ministry have no restrictive bearing on the parts revealed on those occasions. This gradual revelation was like quoting a proverb on a particular relevant occasion once and on some other similar occasion at another time.

38. Narratives of this kind may seem to be legends but the seen world of matter is the lowest surface of the universe which appeals to the external senses of the average man; beyond this visible surface there are unseen worlds and surfaces of existence dominating the seen surface.

39. *Safinat al-Bihar*, Vol. II, p. 474; *Kanz al-Ummal*, tradition 39168. The following verses of the Qur'an relate to the hypocrites: Ch. II: vs 8-20; Ch. III: vs 152, 156 and 167; Ch. IV: vs 67, 93, 138 and 140-145; Ch. IX: vs 43-45, 64, 67-69, 73, 95-98, 101 and 124-127; Ch. XXIV: vs 47-50 and 63; Ch. XXIX: vs 2-3; Ch. XXXIII: vs 9-20 and 60-61; Ch. XLVIII: vs 16, 20, 22-23 and 25-30; Ch. XLVIII: vs 6, 10, 18 and 29; Ch. XLIX: vs 1-6 (for the commentary of these verses see *Bukhari*, part on *Tafsir* of Ch. XLIX: vs 14-18); Ch. LVII: vs 13-15; Ch. LVIII: v 8; Ch. LXII: v 5; and Ch. LXIII: vs 1-8.

40. Malik ibn Nuwayrah. Khalid ibn Walid, the famous general, was sent to collect *zakat* at the time of Abu Bakr, from Malik ibn Nuwayrah, who was the head of his region, in turn appointed by the order of the Prophet, to receive *zakat* from the tribes there. When Malik refused to pay, Khalid killed him. On

the very night, he cohabited with Malik's beautiful wife and married her which was punishable under Islamic law, but he was not taken to task by the caliph. (*Tarikh Abi'l Fida*, Vol. 1, p.158 and *Tarikh-e Yaqubi*, Vol. 11, p.110.)

41. Of the early collections of lesser size which contain transmitted statements of the *Ahl al-Bayt* few are noted. All are highly esteemed according to the Shi'ah scholars as the sources of theological inferences. Of these collections *al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah* (or *al-Sahifa al-Kamila*), the collection of prayers and supplications of the fourth Imam, 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin (38 A.H./658 A.D. — 95 A.H./713/714 A.D.), compiled by the Imam, and transmitted through the chain mentioned in the beginning of the book, has been highly regarded because of the date of its compilation, its being genuinely preserved in the original classical style of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and the authenticity of the chain of its transmitters, and the popularity of the text among the various schools of thought. Next is the celebrated collection, *Nahj al-Balagha*, the selections from the lectures, sermons, epistles and maxims of the first Imam, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, selected by Sayyid Radi the renowned scholar (d. 436 A.H./1044 A.D.) from the earlier authentic sources of Shi'ah and Sunni literature. Before the compilation of *Nahj al-Balagha* the *Book of Sulaym* ibn Qays al-Hilali (d. 80-90 A.H./699-707 A.D.), a devoted disciple of 'Ali, was in the hands of the followers. It is said that the book was termed by the sixth Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq as the alphabet of the Shi'ah school of thought. Extracts of the book have been quoted in the authentic collections of later periods, such as *Kafi*. Sulaym's information about Islam and the events of its early days is based on what was narrated by 'Ali or the prominent companions of the Prophet who remained whole-heartedly close to 'Ali and his house, like Salman, Abu Dharr, Miqdad, 'Ammar, Hudhayfa, etc. But the question is about the genuineness of the *Book of Sulaym*. Whether the present copy is entirely the same as it was written by the author and confirmed by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq, or was it tampered with? This is a controversial issue among the critics of traditions; and some of the contents of the book support the latter view; partly it is against the facts of history, the articles of the Shi'ah faith and the assertions of the Imams. The same is the case with the commentary of the Qur'an (supposed to have been dictated by the eleventh Imam Hasan al-Askari (232 A.H./846 A.D. — 260 A.H./823 A.D.) to two of his disciples, when he was almost under house arrest at Samarrah (the cantonment town of the Abbasides in Iraq). The book contains valuable commentary on the Qur'an with interspersed statements contrary to historical facts, faith and reason which give evidence against the genuineness of the book. The same is the case with some Shi'ah works and collections of the first four centuries of Islam which were not incorporated in the famous and authentic collections of Kulayni, Saduq and Shaykh Tusi. Such collections can be relied upon if they are not in conflict with the contents of the above top-ranking collections and other criteria for verification of scriptural narratives. The following books are below that criteria: (1)*Exegesis of the Qur'an* by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim Qummi (last part of 3rd century AH), (2)*Exegesis of the Qur'an* by Muhammad ibn 'Ayyashi (beginning of 3rd century AH), (3) *Exegesis of the Qur'an* by Farat ibn Ibrahim al-Kufi (3rd century AH), (4) *Basa'ir al-Darajat* by Saffar Abu Ja'far ibn Muhammad (d. 290 AH/902-903 AD), (5) *Da'aim al-Isam* by Qadi Nu'man (d. 363 AH/974 AD), (6) *Al-Istighatha* by 'Ali Ahmed Kufi (d. 352 AH), (7) *Mahasin*, commentary by Al-Harrani (3rd century AH). However,

any narrated statement in any one of those books or event described concerning any one of the vicegerents of God should not be accepted unless it is supported by some internal or external evidence confirming its authenticity. This principle of evidence has been elucidated by Sayyid Murtaza, *'Alm al-Huda* (the outstanding banner of guidance), in the fifth century A.H. He did not accept the authoritative status and reliability of the apostolic statements narrated by solitary chains of the narrators without scrutiny, and discredited the contents of those collections which are not supported by any external or internal evidence. The solitary narrated reports contained in such collections are mixed with reports (a) tending towards deification of the vicegerents of God as His incarnates or coextensive with Him, transcending the accomplished men directly or indirectly from the status of being created to the status of a creator; (b) presenting them as falling short of the maximum standard of obedience and submission to the will of God; (c) asserting conscious existence for individual souls, prior to physical birth and death, and affirming that the individual souls of the children of Adam had been taken out by God at once before their ordinary and gradual birth and propagation from Adam, and brought to a conscious state in the form of small particles (*'Alam-e Zar*) for taking their confession and making a covenant with them; (d) there are reports, tending to esoterical interpretation, of the Qur'an and the apostolic statements discarding totally their literal and exoterical significance; and (e) indicating that the Qur'an was tampered with after the Prophet by mischievous hands. Such reports are explicitly anti-Islamic. The interested parties tried their charge of tampering with the apostolic literature most of which had neither received wide publicity, nor was it in a classical style. It is easy to play with the statement narrated by some solitary chain of narrators in a very ordinary style. Instead of narrating the statements *verbatim*, the narrator can alter it in his own words deliberately or by mistake to achieve his aim. Any such distortion in the classical style of the Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt* in their sermons, lectures, epistles, prayers and descriptive salutations (*ziarat*) addressed to the holy and chosen servants of God can be easily detected and exposed by the experts.

Remember that the above collections and others have been incorporated or quoted in the collections of later periods. Even in 'Allama Majlisi's work one can find such pieces of narrations without scrutiny, though the 'Allama is highly respected for his versatile knowledge. Unfortunately Muhaddith Nuri-Husayn ibn Muhammad Taqi (1320 A.H./1902 A.D.), the author of *Mustadrak al-Wasail* and many other useful works, wrote a damaging book, *Fasl al-Kitab fi Tahrif al-Kitab*. It is said that when his contemporary scholars refuted the book and exposed his mistake in the proper application of the principles of the critical scrutiny, he accepted it. Mere incorporation of the information on any topic from *al-Kutub al-'Arba'a* by the later authors in their works is not acceptable if it is not based on the principles of reasoning, developed and formulated on the basis of the Qur'an and traditions of the *Ahl al-Bayt*. The door of *ijtihad* is always open with accompanying principles. It is accepted that the intense research of the highly qualified scholar may lead him to reject some contents of the most authentic collections as weak and to confirm some contents of the least authentic collection as reliable in the light of *'ilm al-rijal* (science of verification of scriptural reports). Thus the refutation by one scholar of a view held by others is neither heresy nor a sign of disrespect to the

other scholar, however prominent he may be. This form of *ijtihad*, an effort to establish the creative or legislative will of God communicated to mankind through His chosen representatives, Prophets and the Imams of the house of the Prophet of Islam, which is advocated by the Shi'ah school of thought should not be confused with the *ijtihad* in the sense of effort by a fallible person to establish his own views against the former's clear declarations, directives and statements. *Qiyas* or hypothetical inferences based on reasoning is invalid in Shi'ah fiqh (doctrines of divine law), though valid in other sects of Islam.

42. Renowned Shi'ah books on doctrines of religion, popularly known as *al-Kutub al-'Arba'*: they hold the same position that the six cannonical collection's (*al-Sihah al-Sittah*) have among the Sunnis.

Al-Kutub al-'Arba'

1. *Al-Kafi* by Thiqat al-Islam Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (d. 329 A.H./940 A.D.);

2. *Al-Itiqadat, Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, al-Tawhid, Uyan Akbar, al-Rida,* and other works by Muhammad ibn Babuyah al-Qummi al-Saduq (d. 381 A.H./991 A.D.);

3. *Tahdhib al-Ahkam*; and

4. *Al-Istibsar* and other works by Shaykh al-Taifah Muhammad al-Tusi (d. 460 A.H./1068 A.D.).

There are comprehensive lists, catalogues and biographies of Shi'ah scholars of various sciences; e.g., philosophy, literature and history. Ibn un-Nadim, An-Najashi, Kashi and Shaykh Tusi are among the celebrated biographers. The noted philosophers among the Shi'ahs are Abu Nasr Farabi (d. 339 A.H.), Ar-Ra'is ibn Sina (Avicina) (428 A.H.) and Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, author of *Asfar*, popularly known as Mulla Sadr (d. 1060 A.H./1742 A.D.). Sadr's positon as the father of philosophy has been discussed in detail by 'Allama Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i (d. 1400 A.H./1981 A.D.), author of the exegesis of the Qur'an, *Al-Mizan*. The bibliography of 'Allama Tabataba'i's work has been given by Sayyid Hossein Nasr who has translated the former's *Shi'ite Islam* from Persian into English and edited it with an introduction and notes.

A list of a few prominent scholars who are referred to in this book is given here in chronological order.

1. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (d. 329 A.H./941 A.D.): *Al-Kafi*;

2. Shaykh al-Sadiq Muhammad ibn Ali Babuyah al-Qummi, known as al-Saduq (d. 381 A.H./991-992 A.D.): *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih,, Al-I'tiqadat, Al-Tawhid*, etc;

3. Shaykh al-Mufid, Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn

Nu'man (d. 413 A.H./1022 A.D.): *Tashih al-I'tiqad, Kitab al-Irshad* and other works;

4. Sayid Murtada (known as Sharif Murtaza), Abu'l Qasim Ali ibn Husayn al-Musawi, with the title of *'Alam al-Huda* (the outstanding banner of guidance) (d. 436 A.H./1044 A.D.): *Jawabab al-Masa'il al-Mawsiliyya al-Thailitha, Ibtal al-'Amal bi-Akhbar al-Ahad, al-Intisar*, and other works;

5. Al-Tusi, Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Tusi (title Shaykh al-Taifa) (d. 460 A.H./1067 A.D.): *Al-Istibar, Tahdhib al-Ahkam, Al-Ghayba, 'Udat al-Usul* and *Al-Fihrist*;

6. Muhaqqiq Hilli Najm al-Din Abu'l Qasim Ja'far ibn Hasan al-Hilli (d. 676 A.H./1277 A.D.): *Shara'i al-Islam, Ma'arig al-Usul, Al-Mu'tabar*, etc;

7. 'Allama Hilli, Jamal al-Din Hasan al-Mutahhar al-Hilli (d. 726 A.H./1325 A.D.): *Tahdhib al-Usul, Tabsirat al-Mut'allimin, Mukhtalaf al-Shi'ah, Nihayat al-Wasul 'ila 'ilm al-Usul*, etc;

8. Al-Shahid al-Awwal, Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Makki al-'Amili (d. 786 A.H./1384 A.D.): *al-Qawa'id wa'il-Fawa'id, al-Lim'a al-Dimashiyya, al-Durus al-Shr'iyya, Shayat al-Murad, al-Bayan* and *al-Alfiya*;

9. Al-Muhaqqiq al-Karaki, 'Ali ibn Husayn ibn 'Abd al-'Ali al-Karaki (d. 940 A.H./1534 A.D.): *Jami' al-Maqasid, Ta'liq al-Irshad* and *Fawa' al-Shara*;

10. Mir Damad, Muhammad Baqir ibn Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Husayni (d. 1040 A.H./1630-1631 A.D.): *Shari'i al-Najat, Al-Rawashih al-Samawiyya*, etc;

11. Mulla Sadr, Sadr al-Din Shirazi (d. 1060 A.H./1743 A.D.): *Asfar*;

12. Majlisi I, Muhammad Taqi ibn Maqsud 'Ali al-Isfahani (d. 1070 A.H./1659-1660): *Lawami'-e Sahabqarani* and *Rawdat al-Muttaqin*;

13. Muhsin al-Fayd (Kashani), Muhammad ibn Murtada al-Kashani (d. 1091 A.H./1680 A.D.): *Al-Wafi, Mafatih al-Shara'i, Mu'tasam al-Shi'ah*, etc;

14. Majlisi II, Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taqi, Majlisi I (d. 1110 A.H./1699 A.D.): *Bihar al-Anwar, Mir'at al-'Uqul, Zad al-M'ad*, etc;

15. Bihbahani, Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Akmal al-Wahid (d. 1205 A.H./1791 A.D.): *Al-Fawa'id al-'Atiqa, Sharah Mafatih al-Shara'i*, etc;

16. Mulla Mahdi ibn Abi Dhar an-Niraqi (d. 1209 A.H./1795 A.D.): *Jami' al-Sa'dat*;

17: Bahr al-'Ulum, Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi ibn Murtada al-Tabataba'i (d. 1212 A.H./1797 A.D.): 18. Ja'far ibn Kidr al-Najafi, Kashif al-Ghita (d. 1228 A.H./1813 A.D.): *Kashif al-Ghita*;

19. Shaykh Muhammad Hasan ibn Muhammad Baqi al-Najafi (d. 1226 A.H./1850 A.D.): *Jawahir al-Kalam*;

20. Mirza Abu'l Qasim Qummi (d. 1231 A.H./1816 A.D.): *Qawanin; al-Masabih;*

21. Sayyid 'Ali ibn Muhammad 'Ali al-Tabataba'i al-Kerbala'i: *Riyad al-Masa'il*;

22. Shaykh Murtada Ansari ibn Muhammad Amin al-Ansari (d. 1281 A.H./1864 A.D.): *al-Makasib, al-Rasa'il*, etc.

(The last *maraji'* (authority) is from the Ansari school of thought in religious doctrines.)

Appendix

THE IDEA OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

No one with common sense and average intelligence can ever doubt the existence of God. One may as well deny his own existence rather than denying or even doubting any effect being without any cause.

CAUSE

The thing or being by which another thing or being exists or on which the existence of another thing or being depends, is called a cause.

EFFECT

The thing or being which depends on or owes its existence to something else is called an effect or phenomenon. The existence of an effect cannot depend on a non-being or nothingness. This implies that the chain of an effect and its cause should end in a *self-existing* cause, otherwise it would mean the existence of a being or a thing by a non-being, or naught; the absurdity of which is self-evident.

Having the definition of the cause and effect in view, mankind has been questioned by the following verses of the Qur'an:

٣٥-أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ
أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ ۝

٣٦-أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۚ
بَلْ لَّا يُوقِنُونَ ۝

'*Or were they created by nothing? Or are they themselves the creators? Or created they the heavens and earth? Nay! they have no certainty.*' (Ch. LII: vs 35-36)

VARIOUS KINDS OF CAUSES

The basis of all scientific investigation is that there can be no effect without a cause. The word 'cause' is a term meaning a thing somehow responsible for the existence of a being or another thing: and this is of two kinds, the *structural* and *creative.*

The *Creative or Agential Causes* are the producing or originating factors, bringing the structure into existence but they are not part of

the structure.

The *Structural Cause* is subdivided into two kinds, *material* and *formal*. The *material cause* is the thing out of which the structure is made. The *formal cause* is the shape or form by which the structure is what it is.

The *creative cause* means the factor which produces the parts and affects their arrangement. This cause consists of two kinds: *genetic* and *objective*. The former is called the first or the active, and the latter is called the ultimate or final cause (purpose or motive).

DEEN

Deen (religion) is a term used in several meanings which are not totally irrelevant to each other; one is a figurative expression of the other. Here the term means strictly the submissive attitude of human conscience towards some sacred object. The sacred object means a superhuman controlling power whose pleasure and displeasure are responsible for the happiness and suffering of man. Hardly can any one claim to be without religion in this sense. Thus the history of religion and its development are the same as the history of the development of human consciousness. Of the various religions in their highly developed form, Islam is usually classed among the latest. But as it is presented in the Qur'an and defined in this treatise, the reader will find it the oldest or rather the only religion.

No man with commonsense, has ever denied or doubted the necessity of the *structural cause*. Every thing owes its existence to its component parts and to the form in which they are arranged together.

EFFECT

Every thing or being of composite nature is an effect, i.e., its existence is not by itself, as it depends at least on its parts and its existence is caused by them. The parts of a being or beings cannot be non-beings. The question arises whether the parts exist by themselves or are they also a composite whole depending on their parts? If they are also composed of parts then we have to trace back the process till we reach the final components which will lead to the conclusion that they are beings of non-composite nature existing by themselves on which the whole edifice of the effects and their causes stands. But, no being of a dimensional nature presentable in terms of space and time, can ever be of a non-composite nature as the simplest and smallest being which occupies space is dimensional and geometrically divisible and depends

on its parts.

Therefore, no dimensional being can be taken as a self-existing being and thus considered as the first or the beginning in the chain of beings. We have either to accept that the chain is based on non-beings, the absurdity of which is self-evident, or we are forced to step out of the realm of the material chain in search of a non-composite, non-dimensional, self-existing being and assert that the chain of cause and effect is based on this being. This means that the whole dimensional realm presentable in terms of space and time is an effect and the phenomenon of a non-dimensional, non-material being. On this ground we have to leave the dimensional realm and proceed in search of the self-existing being responsible for the phenomenon of the chain of cause and effect in the realm where the experimental logic and method has no approach to it at all.

In other words no being of dimensional nature can be taken as the first and the basic unit in the chain of the structural causes of the effect. We have either to postulate that the chain of the beings in question is based on non-beings or nothingness, the absurdity of which is self-evident. Or, we are forced by reason to search for a being of non-composite form, somewhere beyond the realm of matter and dimension; so we have to step in the sphere of immaterial and non-dimensional beings. It means that in the chain of the structural causes of the dimensional phenomena there is nothing to be termed as self-existent. Therefore, neither the structure of the dimensional universe nor its structural causes — its material and formal components — are self-existent. They owe their existence to some *creative* or producing factor of immaterial and non-dimensional nature which is not part and particle of the structure, but has a hold over the structure and its material and formal causes.

THE CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT PART

We have said that any being of composite nature depends for its existence on its part and hence it is an effect, a phenomenon and unreal. Here it is to be pointed out that the parts and components of a composite being may be of two kinds: *concrete* and *abstract*.

THE CONCRETE

The *concrete parts* are those which our mind observes side by side in the realm outside the mind such as the parts of an organic, chemical or geometrical compound.

THE ABSTRACT

The *abstract parts* are those found in a being in the course of the mental process and analysis, but outside the realm of the mind the parts are merged into each other as one entity such as the logical parts of a definition, *genus* and *differentia*: *genus*, being the aspect found in an idea which is common in other ideas too, and *differentia* being the aspect which is peculiar to one and is not found in anyone else.

In any case, composition means dependence on the parts. Hence the composite being becomes an effect and a phenomenon and thus unreal, be they concrete or abstract parts; because though the abstract parts, *genus* and *differentia*, are merged into each other as one outside the mind, in fact, they are two different things.

THE ABSOLUTE ONENESS OF THE SELF-EXISTING BEING

As we had to step out of the limitation of space and time in search of the self-existing being we have also to step further out beyond the logical limitations which consists of the abstract parts of *genus* and *differentia*.

Hence the self-existing being must be unlimited, not presentable in terms of space and time, *genus* and *differentia*. It should be beyond all dimensional and un-dimensional limitations and as such it cannot be but One, because the idea of two self-existing beings implies limitations of both, having a common aspect of being self-existent and the aspect by which they are distinguished from each other; hence composite and dependent on their parts.

The conclusion is that the self-existing being is One, the real unit which is not divisible at all, in any sense of the term, and in any respect or form or any aspect imaginable. Therefore, it is the real unique, the like of it in any sense is not possible.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SELF-EXISTING ONE

This unique part by which the finite beings in part and as a whole are existing, is not absent from 'Itself.' Hence it is conscious of 'Itself.' Consciousness means the presence of the known to the knower, the

presence of one thing to (or for) the other.

If the thing or being is present to 'Itself' then the being is conscious of 'Itself' and consequently becomes conscious of anything else which is present before it or stands by it. But if the being (or thing) is absent from 'Itself,' it cannot be self-conscious, hence unconscious of other things standing by it.

UNCONSCIOUSNESS OF DIMENSIONAL BEING OR THING

All the dimensional beings are composed of dimensional parts and every dimensional part occupies a portion of space not identified with the portion occupied by the other parts. Hence every dimensional part is absent from the other dimensional parts. The conclusion is that all dimensional parts are devoid of self-consciousness and consequently devoid of consciousness.

On the other hand, anything or being which is non-dimensional and non-material, be it composed of *abstract parts* such as a finite mind (which is composed of *genus* and *differentia*), or composed of no parts at all such as the Absolute Unit in question (which is unlimited and infinite), is not absent from 'Itself' because either it has no part at all or it consists of parts which do not occupy different portions of space. The parts are merged into each other and their separation is only mental and a conceptual process.

Regarding the undimensional being or Absolute Unit it is obvious that 'It' cannot be absent from 'Itself' on account of 'Its' Absolute Oneness, though the undimensional beings which are finite consist of parts and hence dependent, yet the parts are one and identical outside the mind and the realm of conception. Hence they are also not absent from their ownselves. Each is present to itself, hence conscious of itself and consequently conscious of whatever is present before it.

The conclusion is that whatever is undimensional is conscious and whatever is conscious is undimensional. Therefore the Absolute Unit by which all beings exist and stand is necessarily present with every being, as its holding or sustaining factor is self-conscious and conscious of all that exist by it, hence 'Living.' Therefore, the reference to the Absolute Unit responsible for the whole phenomenon called the universe should be in terms of 'He' instead of 'It.'

In light of the above statement one can realize that the personal pronoun 'He' (*Hoo*) refers to a well-known 'person' and has no real

application but to the Absolute One and no term or word can be taken as a real reference to the Absolute One but this personal pronoun 'He.' Therefore there is no real 'He' but the Absolute One, there is no real term for Him but 'He.' This idea of *Hooiyat*, 'He-ness,' in its true significance is given in *Surah Ikhlas* (also known as *Qul Hoo Wallaha*, Ch. CXII).

(Taken from Pooya, *The Fundamentals of Islam*, printed at Pakistan Herald Press, Karachi, 1972, pp.1-8.)

CHAPTER FOUR

Occultation Divine

Secrecy of the birth of the 12th Imam al-Mahdi, *al-Qaim*

The events in the life of the twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi, upon whom be peace, are like those in the life of Musa. The unjus' rulers of the year 256 A.H./868 A.D. knew the prophecy abou his birth, disappearance (*ghayba*), and overthrow of their rule. They feared his birth just as Pharaoh had feared the birth of Musa. The Imam's birth was kept secret from the ruler of the time as was done in the case of Musa; the prominent followers of Islam were aware, including in particular the forty well-known Shi'ahs.

The latter were introduced to the Mahdi of the house of his father Hasan al-'Askari, the eleventh Imam, who told his followers to keep the matter secret from the rulers. Imam Mahdi lived with his father for six years.

According to the Shi'ah and Sunni schools of thought, Jesus,

from among the past vicegerents of God, will be the first one who will reappear on the terrestrial scene to follow al-Mahdi's lead. Jesus was the last outstanding link in the chain of the divine vicegerents of the Israelite branch of Ibrahim's issue. He disappeared from the terrestrial scene in an unusual way. Al-Mahdi is the last link of the divine vicegerents of the Ishma'ilite branch of Ibrahim's issue who also went into an unusual occulation. Narjis, the mother of al-Mahdi, fell into the hands of Muslims as a captive of war and was brought to Baghdad as a slave-girl. She was the daughter of one of the patriarchal princes who ruled the eastern provinces of the Roman empire bordering the Abbasid empire. Her father's ancestry traced back to Simon; the Peter of Israelite descent who was the nominated successor of Jesus. The tenth Imam of the house, 'Ali al-Hadi an-Naqi had been well aware of her life story, her genealogy and her destiny. He sent one of his devotees from Samarrah to Baghdad to wait for the arrival of the slave-trader, who was bringing her along with the other women captives for sale. The Imam gave a brief description of Narjis to the man, with a fixed amount for the bargain with the trader and a letter to be handed to her, on behalf of the Imam. Everything went exactly as the Imam had predicted. To his surprise, the man found her well-acquainted with the Imam, her husband to be, Hasan al-'Askari. She had already seen al-'Askari in a dream as mentioned elaborately in the early records of the life story of the eleventh and twelfth Imams. She set out with the agent of the Imam for Samarrah, anxious to meet her beloved and his family.

After arrival in Samarrah she married al-'Askari of her own choice, as a free lady. The marriage was solemnized by the tenth Imam on her behalf, but it is said that in a dream she had seen the wedding solemnized by the Prophet Jesus on her behalf and the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, on al-'Askari's behalf. In her dream the ceremony took place in the presence of Jesus's mother Maryam, Peter and eleven disciples of Jesus on the bride's side, and 'Ali, Khadijah, Fatimah and the other ten Imams of the house on the bridegroom's side. The presence of

the fourteen divine luminaries taking part from each side, as she had dreamt was actually substantiated and assumed its real interpretation in the state of awakening after the arrival of Narjis at Samarrah, towards the close of the year 254 A.H.

The promised al-Mahdi was born from the union of Hasan al-'Askari and Lady Narjis, as such the last word of Allah in its complete form of Imamat appeared on the terrestrial horizon at the dawn of the 15th of Sha'ban at the end of the year 255 A.H./868 A.D. In the celebrated *Lauh-e Fatimi* (the heavenly tablet in the possession of Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad), the name of the twelfth Imam, same as that of the Holy Prophet, is mentioned in alphabetical order *Mim Ha Mim Dal* (M H M D), describing 'the grace of all worlds.' He is usually mentioned by his titles of *Sahib al-Zaman* (the Lord of the Age), *Imam-e 'Asr* (the Imam of the Period), *al-Qaim* (the Existent), *al-Muntazar* (The One Who is Awaited) and the Promised Mahdi (One who is Rightly Guided and the Guider).

Minor Occultation and Deputies

After the demise of the eleventh Imam by poison (260 A.H./872 A.D.) the government sent a posse in search of the child. They raided the house and searched all the apartments (*sardab*) there. After a thorough search they went down to the basement. To their extreme surprise, the hall appeared filled with water and like an island, a prayer-mat was spread over the water in the middle of the hall. They saw the young Imam standing on the mat, wholly absorbed in his prayers. One or two members of the party attempted to cross the water to reach the Imam, but from fear of drowning they withdrew. They all stood in awe. They went back to their superiors and informed them of what they had seen. The officers warned them not to disclose to anybody what they had seen. After that incident the government thought it wiser to give up further search and to spread the rumour that the eleventh Imam had died without leaving any offspring. Accordingly the government distributed the property left by the

eleventh Imam among his nearest kin on the presumption that he had left no child.

The disappearance of the last Imam in the cave (*sardab*) meant only that the ruling party, who were searching for him, last glimpsed him in that place. Later, they could not find any trace of him. Even his followers could not meet with him in the usual manner. Nevertheless there was regular communication between him and his followers, mostly through the four successive agents who were nominated by his father and him. But some of the most trustworthy followers had direct communication with him during the period of the nominated 'honorary agents' (*nawabin*). This period is termed as *al-Ghayba al-Sugra*, 'Minor Occultation.' During this period the Imam used to give written replies to the questions of his followers, and issue directive letters (*tawqi'at*) through his nominated deputies (i.e. *Nawab* or *Wikala* or *Sufra*). The names of the nominated deputies are: (1) 'Uthman ibn Sa'id al-'Umari (260 A.H./874 A.D. - 265 A.H./879 A.D.), and (2) his son, Muhammad (d. 305 A.H./917 A.D.), his *kunya* was Abu Ja'far, (3) Abul al-Qasim Husayn ibn Ruh ibn Abi Bakr al-Nawbakhti (d. 326 A.H./937 A.D.), and (4) Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sammari (his career 326 A.H./937 A.D. - 329 A.H./941 A.D.).

The period continued for almost seventy years. It began with the martyrdom of the eleventh Imam Hasan al-'Askari, on the 8th of Rabi' al-Awwal 260 A.H./874 A.D. The ninth of this month as the first day of the accession of al-Mahdi, the last Imam of the house to the seat of Imam is still celebrated by the Shi'ahs as one of the religious festivals. The period of 'minor occultation' ended in the year 329 A.H./940 A.D., when the last deputy, 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sammari received the following letter from the Imam: 'O 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sammari, behold that thou shall die six days after the receipt of this letter. Thou shall not nominate any one to succeed thee as my special and nominated agent. O 'Ali, behold that the time of my major disappearance has come. The time for my total and all-dominating reappearance (*zuhoor-e kulli*), as promised by God

and prophesized by the Prophets and vicegerents, is known only to God. Behold! That the following signs shall inevitably occur on the eve of *my reappearance*: (a) the onslaught of Sufyani, the embodiment of all the evil forces, who disguising himself in the garb of the well-wisher of mankind will try to spread his domain all over the globe and (b) the heavenly cry being heard all over the world, as if it is coming from a nearby place. During this major occultation and before the appearance of the said signs, if anyone claims that (a) he has a regular meeting or audience with me (in a cognisable manner) or (b) he has established a regular communication with me in any shape or form, physical or spiritual, *he must be considered a liar and his claim as false*.' This is a free translation of the text of the epoch-making letter (*tawqi*), with a few explanatory phrases taken from other apostolic reports.

Major Occultation

a) The Qur'an and Hadith

The aforesaid major occultation or disappearance of the twelfth Imam, which means severance of all contacts of any follower with the Imam is considered by the *Ithna-'Ashari Shi'ah* as one of the fundamental articles of their faith. During this period the Imam will continue until the time of his reappearance, to live in his terrestrial body in the terrestrial realm, though in an invisible manner. They also believe that serverance of contact is one-sided, in the sense that only the followers have lost contact. So far as the Imam is concerned, the Shi'ahs believe that his invisible and spiritual domination over the world as the vicegerent of God and the last link in the chain of Imamat, has not ceased. The state of his occultation is like a sun behind the clouds. While illuminating the surface of the earth, the disc of the sun cannot be seen.

The vicegerent of God in his terrestrial form is the centre of

human society in whom the light of both the creative and legislative will of God is focused. Thus, as a spiritual sun (the Imam) reradiates, reflects and diffuses all that he has received as a permanent blessing from the above, to his surroundings, the subordinate social and individual centres of humanity. The reflection even expands to the animal, vegetable and inanimate centres below human level. The real disc of this spiritual sun is the mind and not the body of the Imam and it is the case with all the Imams hidden from the bulk of their followers even during their physical presence. A very few accomplished persons might have a sort of spiritual communion with the Imam or the vicegerent of the time during his physical appearance. The contact of the rest of the followers with the Imam is only through oral or written speech, directly or through narrators.

The Imam is commissioned by God either (a) to deliver a new message to mankind as Prophets who are termed as *Ul ul-Azm* (the Prophet with decisive power) or (b) to explain the message of the Prophet whom they succeed, as it is the case of the successors of the *Ul ul-Azm*. So from Adam to the end of the minor occultation of the twelfth Imam, the presence of the vicegerents or regular contact with them meant the contact of an ordinary student with his teacher through the external senses. There was no domination of the master mind over the mind of the followers. This communion of the Imam with the soul of his followers is presented in the Qur'an in Ch. 33: v 6: '*That the Prophet has the greater claim on the believers than they have on their own selves.*' It is this communion to which 'Ali refers in *Nahj al-Balagha*, 'I used to see the light of revelation and smell the fragrance of prophethood. The Prophet told me: "O 'Ali, surely thou seest whatever I see and thou hearest whatever I hear but thou art not a Prophet. Thou art my assistant (next to the Prophet in spirit".' Next to 'Ali only a very few, such as Salman Farsi, Abu Dharr, 'Ammar Yasir and others of their rank attained communion with the Prophet. The same is the case with the followers of every one of the twelve Imams of the house. Few had spiritual intimacy with the person of the Imam.

The people approached the Imams in their capacity as preachers and as *walayat*, the all-dominating spiritual authority. It is immaterial for the Imam to be known or unknown to the people of the world, which is spiritually managed and administered by him. For instance, Musa was commissioned to preach the precepts of God to mankind so it was necessary that he should be known to the people. But the man who was given the task of executing the will of God in secrecy should not be known to the people or even to the Prophets of limited jurisdiction (vide the Qur'an, Ch. XVIII: vs 60-82: the story of Musa and Khidr). 'Ali confirms what the Qur'an asserts: 'The earth is never left by God devoid of a man of divinely authoritative status (*hujjah*) to function as an 'intermedia' between Him (God) and the rest of the creatures of the world. He may be seen and unknown (to the people) and he may be in obscurity, unseen and unknown (to the people).' In other words, the divine vicegerency of a perfect man on earth has two functions: one is to preach what God has ordered men to know; the other is to exercise the spiritual power delegated to him by God. For enabling the vicegerents to preach the heavenly books and the explanatory notes which were revealed to them, it is necessary that people should have ways of contacting them. But to exercise the spiritual authority in his jurisdiction, it is not necessary that the vicegerent be known to the people. Thus from Adam to the last Prophet, the vicegerents would appear, after some intervals, to establish contact with the people, as preacher and teacher. Then again they would retreat from the scene to occultation, leaving people to apply the revealed directives. With the last Prophet the most comprehensive message of God was revealed in the form of the Qur'an. It took almost twenty-two years and ten months to complete its communication. As the most concise code of the creative and legislative will of God, the Qur'an formed the constitution of Islam. For further details and explanation, the Prophet, whose life embodied the divine revelation, gave directives in words, deeds and endorsements. Thus the *Sunnah* was declared by the Qur'an as an indispensable part of the divine constitution. But

to enable the people to have a coherent idea of these two inseparable parts of the Islamic constitution in its final form, the 23 years' time of the Prophet's ministry was not sufficient. It took almost 300 years for the Muslims to try to codify the second part of the constitution and to put it into material that would help readers to grasp the two parts. This is the period of codification, explanation and amplification. It is the period of consolidation of the Islamic constitution, *al-Shari'ah*. The presence of the successive vicegerents and the infallible successors of the last Prophet, the twelve Imams of the house of the Prophet, were necessary during this period as guides for the people to follow a proper course of consolidation. For this purpose, the Prophet declared that he was leaving behind two precious things: the book of God and his *Ahl al-Bayt* as guides. They shall not separate from each other till the day of resurrection and whoever adheres to these two shall never go astray. All schools of thought in Islam have their origin in this consolidatory period. Therefore, the presence of the Imams during the period in question was a special grace with which God blessed the seekers of truth, who were anxious to have a true version of the revealed constitution.

b) *Ijtihad*: personal meetings with *al-Qaim*

When the consolidation was over and a detailed form of divine constitution was made available to the people, the aim of *Imamat*, in the capacity of a divine preacher, had been achieved and reached its final stage in 330 A.H. After this achievement the retreat of the Imam from the scene of apparent guidance to the state of occultation was also a divine blessing and grace, but in disguise. It was necessary that people be given the chance to apply their mind to understand the implications of the detailed constitution of Islam which was placed within their reach in the form of the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet, and mirrored in the life of the twelve Imams. It is the period to make all efforts with care, piety and sincerity, to grasp the significance of the revelation through the rational approach. This is called *ijtihad*,

i.e., rationalization of revelation.

During this period the presence of the Imam as an ordained teacher is not needed. Therefore his existence in the terrestrial realm as the focus of the legislative and creative 'rays of divine will' is an indispensable blessing and grace of God. Nevertheless, it is also true that his occultation is another blessing and grace of God. Thus, his existence is a grace, his functioning another grace, and his functioning behind the clouds of occultation is a further grace.

During this period the course open to the people is: (1) to make all efforts with utmost piety to obtain a thorough knowledge of the sciences and topics which are required to grasp every part of the constitution of Islam; i.e., the Qur'an and the directives of the Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*, and (2) to follow the opinion of qualified persons in the manner prescribed in the treatise on *ijtihad* and *taqlid*. It is open to everyone, irrespective of race or nationality, to obtain the qualifications required to become an authority on the Islamic constitution. It only requires knowledge and piety.

The requisite knowledge here means: (1) the knowledge of the relation of the creatures to their Creator, (2) the knowledge of the essence and attributes of the Creator, (3) the knowledge of the relation of the Creator with His creatures and, then (4) the knowledge of the relations of the creatures to each other as established by the creative and legislative will of the Creator. All this knowledge should be obtained from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* through a rational approach. The requisite piety here means to develop such care and attention as not to displease the Merciful Creator by neglecting the duties towards Him, His creatures and towards one's own self, as prescribed by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. These two conditions may be considered as the distinctive features of the Shi'ah faith. The pious *mujtahids*, or representatives of the Imams, are authorities to the extent of their knowledge and piety. The deeper their piety and knowledge, the higher their authority. To lead congregational prayers, a

considerable knowledge and piety are necessary. To be a recognized authority on Islamic sciences, the highest standard of knowledge and piety is essential. In the case of difference of opinion among the *mujtahids*, laymen are bound to follow the opinion of the best living *mujtahid* of the time. After acquiring the basic proficiency and knowledge for *ijtihad*, each student of theology and Islamic sciences may specialize in one or more branches of the subjects concerned. In that case the laymen have to follow the best specialist in each branch of study. For example one *mujtahid* might have specialized in the ritual branch of *fiqh* (Islamic law) for devotional services and another *mujtahid* in personal law. The laymen have to follow each in the specific branch in which the *mujtahid* is an expert.

In the case of *fatwa*, the legal opinion of the best living *mujtahid* is considered the authority. But for judicial and administrative purposes, knowledge and piety are enough. There is no need of his being the best *mujtahid*. Any pious *mujtahid* can discharge judicial functions and his judgement will be binding. He can perform all the administrative duties which Islam enjoins concerning various aspects of human life — the personal, domestic, social, economic and the political.

However, knowledge and piety are two indispensable verifiable conditions required to be a *mujtahid*. To attain them no master's permission, mystic transfer of power to the disciple, nomination or non-Qur'anic declaration of the outgoing authority about his successor is required, as is the case with mystic orders and '*hazir* Imams,' and *da'is* of the hereditary authorities in Islam. Nor will voting raise a person to authority. Of course, the opinion of other *mujtahids* about the competency of a person may be sought by the layman.

There are methods recommended by some people for having personal communion with the Imam al-Mahdi (*Sahib al-Zaman*) or receiving a blessing from him. Some are baseless, and others are uncertain. But piety and devotion to the cause of the *Ahl al-Bayt* reduces the thickness of the veil between the follower

and the Imam. Materialistic desires and tendencies are the main obstacles.

Thus any directive supposed to have been received from the Imam through such occasional contacts, shall be classed under the category of (a) visions and dreams of fallible persons, (b) the subjective findings of the systems, (c) the esoterical contact and inner experience of the gnostics, and (d) alphabetical and astrological calculations of the occultists. Of these none can be considered to have any authoritative value, unless the result is confirmed by clear verdict of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Any method to grasp the legislative or the creative will of God, other than the rational and logical approach to the contents of the Qur'an and the teachings of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, should be treated as nothing more than a hypothesis. We are in the age of rationalization of revelation, which means all our efforts to understand and explain the significance of revelation in the light of certain measurable and verifiable logical principles, rules and conditions. The period of interpretation of previous revelations by some new revelation or inspiration is over. Anyone who claims to have a super-rational authoritative method to ascertain the divine will, besides the scriptural and apostolic texts left among the people before the major occultation of the twelfth Imam, is false, and the claimant is an imposter. The greater the knowledge and piety the thinner will be the cloud and veil of occultation between the qualified person and the Imam. But the veil cannot be removed in such a way that the outer disc (body) of the luminary (Imam) can be seen and at the same time be recognized that the person is the Imam himself. Nor can any regular communion of the soul of the qualified person with the soul of the Imam be established. There are reports of learned or pious persons having physical or spiritual contact with the Imam during this period of major occulation. Some of these accounts are authentic and reliable. But of these, none shows that the person actually knew that he was in the presence of the Imam. According to the Shi'ah faith, there is nothing more required for the perfection of the human personality than to follow the

Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and his household. This is implied in the Qur'anic declaration regarding the perfection of religion (Ch. V: v 3), the details of which are given by the Holy Prophet and the Imams of the house. It would be enough here to quote the Holy Prophet's statement: 'There is nothing which brings you close to God and keeps you away from hell except what I have ordered you, and there is nothing which brings you close to hell and away from God except what I have prohibited you. Surely God has fixed limitations (for human activities); don't trespass them. Surely God has kept quiet about certain things not due to forgetfulness; don't trouble yourself with questions about them.' This is part of one of his sermons delivered during his last pilgrimage to Mecca. There is no need of any addition, omission or alteration by people. It is the duty of the qualified *mujtahids* to understand the requisite rules and apply them as the occasions arise during the major occultation.

Appearance of *al-Qaim*

The reappearance of the Imam in human society after the major occultation is not for the purpose of delivering any new message, nor any alteration in the system of human life, not already provided for or implied in the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. His reappearance is as the chosen executor of the divine law. He reappears with the sole purpose of reducing all religions of the world into one approved by God, namely Islam, and then seeing that it is extended throughout the world and practised by every human being. He reappears to spread justice, prescribed by Islam, all over the globe. 'He fills the earth with fairness and justice, after the earth would be filled with injustice and aggression' (Majlisi, II, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 42, p. 336). The apostolic reports assert that He will reappear with such divine power that all the temporal forces will be vanquished. He reappears not as a preacher of the divine will, as the pretending mahdis of modern time would claim. He reappears as the powerful executor of the divine will and command. He reappears

as the all dominating *walayat*. His 'total reappearance' is in the period wherein the spiritual mastership of perfect man over the realm of humanity will be manifested in the person of the Twelfth Imam, the last vicegerent of the last Prophet. He represents Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, in both name and the real meaning of the word. 'Muhammad,' as pointed out earlier, is the term divinely assigned to the created being who is the first and the last in degree of perfection in the arcs of descent and ascent, and who is in the highest possible stage of communion with the Absolute. So his reappearance is the manifestation of *walayat* — mastership of Muhammad — on earth.

Some apostolic reports assert that the time will come when al-Mahdi will be ordered by God to appear on the scene of humanity for the performance of the executive task assigned to him. He will then enter the sacred mosque at Mecca and keeping his back to the wall of the Ka'ba, declare his appearance to deliver mankind from the miseries of injustice and the licentious existence of the time. Hours prior to his declaration, there will be a similar declaration from Dajjal — the anti-Mahdi personality. Both declarations will be heard throughout the globe at once. The chosen devotees of al-Mahdi, who are the same in number as the faithful warriors of Badr, and others willing to respond to the sacred call will reach Mecca within a very short time. The communication throughout the world will be very quick. The people will see each other from remote places. These prophecies were made and recorded at a time when the natural forces and the means of communication at the disposal of man were confined only to donkies, mules, horses and camels on the land, sailboats on the sea, and pigeons, hawks and other trained birds in the sky. Nobody had even dreamt of the modern means which man is using for communication and contact today. The impossible of that time is becoming the simple, fact of today. Confirming the assertion of the Qur'an, 'Ali states that the stars and heavenly bodies are populated by living beings. The cities there are like our cities, but connected with each other by

columns of light, which we have just started to use for communication. There are many statements of this kind from saintly men long before the advent of scientific discoveries and inventions. Such statements show the insight of their author into the nature of the universe. Now, with atomic energy man is trying to establish communications with the moon, Mars, and other planets. This attempt is possible according to the Qur'an, provided man has the requisite authority at his disposal (Ch. LV: v 33). But until now the power and forces discovered and used by man are material ones. Nevertheless, they are producing wonders. The superhuman incorporeal powers of the spiritual and pyschic type have not yet been properly understood, measured, controlled, and used by men. Undoubtedly there are occasional displays of supernatural forces in the form of miracles of the vicegerents of God. These instances may only be taken as convincing proofs of the existence of supernatural energies dominating the material realms. But the time for regular use of these spiritual energies has not yet come. When God will allow the 'perfect man' possessing these energies to display their regular use for the welfare of humanity, the impact shall be greater than the use of atomic energy. With such supermaterial energies, not only the space distances will be removed. Communication between the living and the dead may be established. Many vicegerents and saintly men of the past who had played a part in the advancement of the noble and final aim will reappear on the scene of the divine kingdom on earth when it is established. When the time distance is removed, the godly men who sacrificed themselves for the complete manifestation of the divine kingdom through the person of the Imam, will appear and enjoy the results of the sacred role they performed. Not only the good people of the past will reappear but some of the opponents too may be brought to the scene, to reveal the wretched ends of those evil-doers (Ch. XXVII: v 83). The verse refers to a sort of 'partial resurrection' prior to the 'total resurrection' which is referred to in Ch. XVIII: v 47.

Al-Mahdi combines in him the dignity of Musa in perfection,

the grace of Jesus and the patience of Job. Thus, in the person of al-Mahdi the two chosen branches of Ibrahim's issue are reunited. By the reappearance of Jesus, to follow the lead of al-Mahdi, the kingdom given by God to the family of Ibrahim will be manifested under the banner of Islam, the sole religion approved by God. The heavenly kingdom will be established on the earth, through al-Mahdi. He represents in name, nature and attributes, the last Prophet, Muhammad, upon whom be peace. His leadership will be accepted by Jesus, and other godly men of spiritual attainments will appear on the scene, of their own choice. Also some of their opponents will be forced into the scene by the agencies functioning in that realm. The reappearance of al-Mahdi and his reign is termed as *Zahoor-Mahdi Alaihis Salaam*. The appearance of Jesus is termed as *Nozool-e 'Isa Alaihis Salaam*, the descent of Jesus. The appearance of other persons who died or their wicked opponents is termed as *Raj'at*. The process is termed as the minor resurrection (*Qayamat-e Sughra*), the rule of the perfect man over the world. It has to precede the major resurrection (*Qayamat-e Kubra*), the manifestation of the divine kingdom over man and the universe.

It has been proven that the return of a departed soul to a body in the form of an embryo in the womb of a mother and rebirth in the usual manner known to us, is impossible. Return of the dead to life, whether in an individual or collective way, means the soul assuming a new body, similar to the previous one. This process can be in two ways: (1) the development of the earthly realm into the celestial form as the Qur'an says: '*The day when the earth is replaced by a different earth and the earth will be illuminated with the light of its Lord' (and not with the light of the sun*) or (2) the descent of the soul to the earthly level by assuming an earthly body as the angels do (Ch. XIX: v 17). Both are possible and both may take shape towards the ultimate resurrection. The Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians firmly believe in individual and collective resurrection of human souls after death. So to the followers of these faiths, the reappearance of al-Mahdi, the descent of Christ and the return

of some virtuous and wicked men to life as a sort of partial resurrection, prior to the ultimate resurrection should not appear strange. As the Qur'an asserts: '*And among His signs is the creation of (1) the heavens and the earth and (2) the living beings which He has spread in the heavens and the earth: And He is able to bring them together as He wills (whenever and in whatever manner He wills and intends)*' (Ch. XLII: v 29). He may collect all or some groups of them on the terrestrial level or in the celestrial sphere. The basis of theistic religions is the faith that the material world, which appeals to our external senses, is the seen, '*Alam-e Shahadat*, and held world, '*Alam-e Mulk*. It has holding power by itself. It is controlled by the unseen worlds and spheres of agencies. They are termed as *malakut*. These unseen agencies are of grades; the lower ones are controlled by higher grades. But whether lower or higher all the unseen holding agencies, like the seen and held world, are created, held and controlled by the creative will and might of the All-Gracious, Absolute One. To such might and will of the Absolute Creator, controlling all the seen and unseen spheres of the universe, no proposition can be considered impossible.

Ponder over the Qur'an

All the following events, asserted in the Qur'an or other scriptures and apostolic reports confirmed by the Qur'an are undeniable:

(1) The creation of a living being, man, other animals, or plants, through a process unknown to us. (Ch. XV: vs 25-30; Ch. XVIII: v 51; Ch. LVI: v 61; and similar verses; *Al-Sahifat al-Kamilat Al-Sajjadiyya*, The Muhammadi Trust, London, England, Supplication 63 for Monday, p. 223; *Nahj al-Balagha*; Ch: LV: vs 14-15)

(2) The transformation of an inanimate object to animal and vice versa; sudden or gradual transformation of one animal to another animal of a different species. (Ch. XXVII: vs 10, 12 and Ch. XX)

(3) The return from death to life after the lapse of a considerable time (Ch. II: v 259; Ch. XVIII); the return of a departed soul to the same body and stage of life at which it had left, but not through the process of rebirth and return from an actual stage to a potential one. (In every chapter of the Qur'an there are verses relating to the resurrection, *Qiyamat*, adding to more than five hundred verses spread over the Qur'an. Ch. II: v 260 is one example for Prophet Ibrahim.)

(4) The living of a perfect man who is freed from material fetters and controlling the material realm for one or two thousand years or more; for example in the case of Jesus and the twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi: the time factor is controlled by God. (Ch. XXVII: vs 143-144 and; Ch. VIII: vs 60-82)

(5) The descent of angelical, celestial and etherial entities to the terrestrial sphere by assuming human forms. (Ch. XIX: vs 17-21 and Ch. XI: vs 69, 78)

(6) The ascent of the highly developed terrestrial entities to the super-terrestrial spheres without suffering death; instead of separation of the body from the soul, the body assimilates for a period the conditions of the sphere to which the soul ascends. (Ch. XVIII: v 1; Ch. LIII; Ch. III: v 55)

(7) The transfer of a heavy object from its place to a remote place in the twinkling of an eye. (Ch. XXVIII: vs 40-41)

(8) The birth of a child from a virgin without any insemination. (Ch. III: vs 46-47)

(9) The curing of diseases, the blind, deaf, lepers and insane persons and bringing the dead to life without any medical means. (Ch. V: v 110)

(10) The splitting of the sea and making a dry passage for people to cross from one side to the other. (Ch. XX: vs 77-78)

(11) The descent of angels to help godly people against the disbelievers. (Ch. III: vs 124-126)

(12) The sleeping of a few believers for 309 years in a cave and

their waking after such a long period, as mentioned in the Qur'an and pre-Islamic apostolic records of the seven sleepers. (Ch. XVIII: vs 9, 22, 25-26)

All these wonders have their own category; they are possible in themselves. They may not be possible in the sense that they do not take place through the means known to man. As the Qur'an says: '*O company of jinns and men, if ye are able to penetrate the diameters of the earth and heavens, then do it, but ye penetrate not except with certain force (which has not yet come within your disposal)*' (Ch. LV: v 33).

Today, man is able to reach the moon, something which was once considered impossible. Science extends the scope of man's contact with his surroundings, but no power can make a triangle with more or less than three angles, nor a part of a whole greater than the whole itself, because the proposition is self-contradictory.

The birth, growth and the minor and major occultation of the twelfth Imam, and his reappearance are not more strange than the wonders and miracles narrated in the Qur'an, scriptures and the apostolic reports. The historical evidence of his past and present is more authentic than those of others. How he will be recognized at the time of reappearance is a basic question, as he will reappear with the same divine signs and powers with which all the vicegerents of God have appeared on the earth.

All the aforesaid is based on the monotheistic view and on a faith in the unseen, as explained before. As the Qur'an says: '*The Book wherein and about which no doubt exists, is guidance for the pious ones, who believe in the unseen*' (Ch. II: v 1), which includes the occultation of the Imam also. The absolute materialistic existentialism of today has no place for miracles like the occultation of the twelfth Imam.

Pseudo-religious movements

Ideologies which concentrate on subjective values of religious

and ethical thoughts tend towards materialism in the garb of religion or moralism. During the period of the partial occultation of the twelfth Imam movements were started under the name of a false Mahdi with political aims and economic benefits. The pretenders' main attempt was to interrupt the miraculous assertions of previous scriptures as common facts of the terrestrial world. To them the word 'al-Mahdi' was more appealing and convincing than the actual belief in the resurrection and the life hereafter. Some were impudent enough to announce the abrogation of Islam and its replacement by a new message and new commandments. Some of them call themselves the subordinates of Prophets. They claim to give a different interpretation to some Qur'anic passages in which they show little or no originality They move towards adapting any thought, belief and practice which is an outcome of empirical knowledge and materialistic values: they do so even at the violation of the sacred aspect of human life. The best evidence of what they stand for are the religious texts which these pretenders prepared which are full of absurd thoughts. The immediate successors of the founders of the pseudo-religious movements considered it wiser to get those texts withdrawn from the market and religious circles of the world.

The source of these movements can be traced in the old gnostic movements appearing in the Islamic garb of the ultra-Shi'ahs, and some Sufi sects of the Sunnis. These gnostic and mystic ideas infiltrated the Shaikhi and Kashfi movements which flourished among the Shi'ah traditionists of the 18th and 19th centuries A.D., and then manifested themselves among the Shi'ahs in the garb of the Mahdi and among the Sunnis in the form of the Messiah. Here also the pretenders were actually the camp-followers of the pretenders calling themselves Mahdis. The founders of the new movements try to hide the absurdity of their religious ideas by having a very good organization for propaganda and a plan for solving the economic requirements of their adherents. It attracts those people who are anxious to be in some religious group and at the same time keep pace with the

modern materalistic progress. Unable to satisfy the religious urge of the people through a rational approach to the Qur'an and the scriptural and apostolic records, the founders of these movements have given mystic shades of meaning to unequivocal religious terms. They could not offer a clear solution of the religious problems about the creation of the universe, man's place in it, and the revealed purpose of creation. Neither have the rights and obligations of individuals been defined. They have intended theosophical phrases and terminologies which confuse human thought.

Their ritual and doctrinal contributions can be estimated from a few examples. In some of these groups a calendar for ritual purposes has been introduced. It is based on a year of 361 days. It is divided into 19 months. Each month contains 19 days. It differs from both the lunar and the solar calendars used by mankind from time immemorial. Of the two, one is based on the astronomical calculation of the 28 revolutionary phases of the moon around the earth; the other is based on the seasonal revolution of the earth around the sun. Both the old calendars, based on regular phenomenal changes, are natural and useful for calculation of time. In view of their geographical and astronomical backgrounds and utility, both have been recognized since the beginning of human civilization. Both are recognized by Islam to the extent of its expediency for ritual and economical purposes (vide Ch. II: vs 189, 197; Ch. IX: v 36; Ch. X: v 6; Ch. XVI: v 12; Ch. XVII: v 12).[1] But the year comprised of 361 days, 19 months each of 19 days seems to have no scientific basis except its oddity. It is said that it is based on some numerical and symbolical considerations which may have some significance, but no bearing on the solution to religious problems.

(b) It is a common belief among the Christians and Muslims that Jesus was lifted by God to heaven. But whether the ascent was made through the instrument of death and departure of the soul from the body or the ascent happened with the living body, is a matter of dispute among Muslim theologians. Some hold

the first view that he was made to die and then taken up. The origin of this view goes back to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th centuries A.H. Shaykh Saduq in his treatise on *Beliefs* (*al-'Iteqadat*) seems to hold this opinion. But other theologians insist that he was taken up alive in the same manner as the Holy Prophet was and brought back again. Then the difference between the ascents of the two Prophets would be a matter of: (a) the duration of the ascents and (b) the stage to which each had ascended. The duration of Jesus's ascent will be much longer than that of the Prophet. But the stage to which the latter ascended was the farthest and highest possible. We have already pointed out the possibility of both kinds of ascents during life and after death. Both Christians and Muslims are unanimous about the descent of Jesus before the total resurrection occurs. Jesus will descend to the terrestrial realm once again to lead men, as the Christians say, or to be led, by al-Mahdi towards the establishment of the godly kingdom throughout the world, as the Muslims believe.

According to the first view about his ascent, his descent will be his *Raj'at*, return to life, and according to the other view of his ascent, his descent will mean his descending alive after a very long stay in the region of his ascent. To those who believe in the resurrection and return of all the dead to life, it will not be difficult to accept the idea of the return of one person to life before the total resurrection. In the same way, to those who believe in the physical ascent of the Holy Prophet to the heavenly regions and his descending back to earth, it should not be surprising if the same is said about Jesus. His ascent has been to a lower stage of the heavens, but for a longer period, while that of the Prophet has been to the highest terminus, *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, but for a shorter period.

This in mind, one may ask the pseudo-religious societies and so-called reformers why they attach so much importance to this issue? Whether he died and went to the heavenly region assigned to him or he ascended alive, does not make any essential

difference, nor does it necessarily mean that he has vacated the terrestrial regions for another man to come long after him. Sometimes the man claims to represent Muhammad, sometimes Krishna, and sometimes Buddha. God can send back to this terrestrial region, everyone of these spiritual leaders in person, if necessary. There is no need to send the imitators. Supposing that their return in person is not expedient, then God would send a new messenger with a new title, new mission and with convincing signs. Even the imitators' claim to being the expected messiah or Mahdi, has no bearing on the question of whether the heavenly life of Jesus or the invisible life of the son of al-'Askari, followed their earthly death or not. Because the pretender can say that the holy individuals formerly born on earth, have been raised alive or through the instrument of death, and they may come back to earth before the resurrection day. The pretenders may claim that they are for the time being the Messiah or the Mahdi of the earth; and the belief of the Shaikhis, Kashfis and some of the Sufi leaders of the Sunni and Shi'ah schools and some sections of the ultra-Shi'ahs imply this claim. They claim a mysterious communion with the Imam and the previous vicegerents of God, living beyond the terrestrial sphere. While there is no demonstration of their claims, there is more twisting of the previous scriptures and apostolic statements. All are false.

All the reliable reports show that the same Jesus, son of the Virgin Mary, and the same Mahdi, son of Hasan al-'Askari, will appear on the terrestrial scene for the establishment of the divine kingdom.

One should be optimistic about human progress towards the sublime achievement. All the miseries and sorrows inflicted by temporal life upon individuals and societies are for the best. No misery would afflict a person who has faith in the manifestation of the divine kingdom through a man who has inherited the virtues of the vicegerents of God from Adam to the Last Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt*. That faithful person who has no

doubt that his firm devotion to the ideal rule will not only be rewarded in the life hereafter, but in the life here also, looks upon unpleasant events as steps towards the fulfilment of God's promises in the Qur'an. The task ahead for the faithful is to reach the truth through rationalization of revelation by means of the Islamic sciences and to preserve justice by acting in accord with the constitution of Islam. It is an attainment which has no limits. Therefore, the door is open for man to keep increasing the extent of his knowledge and piety, till the period of occultation is over.

According to this school of thought, it is wrong to consider anyone else, other than the vicegerents of God, to be perfect in knowledge and piety. So the door on *ijtihad* in theory and practice is always open to anyone willing to secure the above object to the best of his ability.

But if any person denies the truth of such prophecies or accepts them in part or interprets them in a way to suit his own end, it is better for him to put aside all the prophecies of the past whether or not they are clear in their meanings. Let him not base his claim only on religious statements prior to the time of the claimant, which are capable of different interpretations and applications. It is illogical to prove one doubtful proposition by another doubtful one. Let him come out with a clear and unambigious claim of being God or being in communion and contact with Him in a super-reasoning manner which is not open to other people of his time. There is no need for assuming the names or titles of people whose advent is expected by some communities. The Prophet of Islam claimed to have been commissioned by God to guide the people of all times and all places. He did not invite only the Jews, Christians or the followers of the other faiths on the grounds that he was the one whose advent they were expecting. He invited all, even those who did not believe in the prophets or anything revealed to them, and those who deny the existence of God and the life hereafter. By the force of his arguments and tremendous character, *Khulq-*

e 'Azim, he proved his claim and introduced God, the previous Prophets and other articles of faith to those who had no faith in any thing but *dahr* (nature). He, as a known historical figure, with a forceful and challenging testimony, the Qur'an, stood facing all shades of opinion, tendencies and schools of thought. On the basis of his established claim, he has proved to all what was unknown or doubtful to them; and his divinely-chosen successors from his house are the link of divine guidance, as has been discussed in detail.

Apostates

Ever since the occultation of the twelfth Imam all those who claimed to have authority over people on account of their being in communion with the Imam, the Prophet, the angels or God, are imposters. Shalmaghani and Mansur Hallaj, during the period of the minor occultation and other imposters in the 13th, 14th and even 15th centuries of Hijrah, tried to deny all miracles and supernatural wonders attributed to the Prophets and godly men. They interpret all the scriptural and apostolic records of miraculous deeds as something ordinary. They planned it so that nobody should ask them to produce the same miracles or some other convincing wonders in support of their claims. But this strategy failed because the negation of evidence for the claims of the previous Prophets did not result in anything positive in favour of their own claims. They sensed the failure and resorted to some theurgical imitations. The easiest course of such imitative miracles is vague prophecies and ambiguous predictions which are not based on astrological calculations or ecstatic visions. In most cases these predictions and prophecies, in spite of being capable of various interpretations due to their vagueness, remain unfulfilled or proved false.

The only attraction in these pseudo-religious movements is their organization. In some of these movements there are sensory and sensual entertainments as well. The organizational and the entertaining temptations may not be of use in one's progress

towards the religious objects, but they cement the organizations so well as to be used by political powers for their ends. These organizations can serve imperialism as a strong fifth column. Here is an example of a common misinterpretation of Ch. XXXII: v 5 of the Qur'an to prove their pseudo-religious movement as a substitute of Islam. The Qur'anic passage refers to the course (procedure) of the divine authority exercised in respect of His creative and legislative will and command (*al-'Amr*). The course begins from the highest heavenly sphere and descends to the material and terrestrial end. Then it takes an upward course from the terrestrial terminus to the heavenly sphere. It (the Qur'an) refers to the two corresponding courses of descent and ascent. The course of descent (*nuzul*), moving away from the light of perfection and things becoming dark is termed in the Qur'an as 'night' and the course of ascent (*'uruj*), progressing towards the light of the perfect and things becoming brighter is termed as 'day.' These two administrative courses of descent and ascent have been referred to in the Qur'an in several places. Here, to avoid confusion with the ordinary day of 24 hours, the passage clarifies the term day (*yaum*) or days (*ayyam*) used in the Qur'an in connection with the creative, administrative and legislative developments in the upward course. Here, like v 47 in Ch. XXII, the Qur'an asserts that the length of a day in the upward course is like a thousand years that men calculate; it may be a lunar, solar or light year. Ch. LXX: v 4 points out the length of the day for the upward movement of the angels and the spirit to be 50 thousand years. In short, the day or days in question means the evolutionary period required for completion of a certain course of development. The evolution of any system of creation, administration or legislation is judged by the degree of its manifesting divine perfection. Upward movement of any revealed system means its becoming closer to the absolute perfection. Nowhere in the Qur'an or in the apostolic usages, has the term upward move (*'uruj*) been used to mean abrogation of religion or law or deterioration of a system. But the promoters of pseudo-religious movements wanted to find some

way to abandon the Qur'an and Islamic teachings and make room for their views and activities. So, those who were arrogantly bold, interpreted: (a) the word *al-'amr* (command) to mean the religion of Islam only; (b) the word *'uruj* (ascent) to mean becoming obsolete, and (c) the day of one thousand years' length (Ch. XXII: v 47) to mean the period when the gradual decadence of the religion takes its turn till its total eradication. The question is from which level is *'Amr* (the teachings of Islam) eradicated? Is it from the field of utility, the memory of its adherents, the realm of human society, or the state of validity? Eradication from none of the above states makes sense, except the last which means abrogation. But abrogation of legislation cannot be gradual. Abrogation means repealing of a few. It does not require any length of time unless it is the abrogation of the code of law by instalments. If it is so then it must be shown from the date when the instalment plan of abrogation had started and by what date it is to be completed. At the same time a substitute for the abrogated part must be pointed out, if there is any, and through the number of agencies the process of abrogation has taken place.

But others, except Babis and the Baha'is, were not so bold as to claim the total abrogation of Islam and the Qur'an. They wanted to share their faith within the fold of Islam, so they interpreted the upward move, *'uruj*, to mean the negligence and detachment of people from the real meaning of the Qur'an. On this basis they argued that God has sent a new messiah, Mahdi, reformer, *muhaddith* or a new *Wali-Ullah* to point out what the Qur'an really means.

To support the contention the apostates have to prove, (a) how could the term *'uruj* (ascent) and its synonyms mean negligence when in the Qur'an the term *mahjur* (forsaken) has been precisely used for negligence? (b) When did the negligence of misconception of the Qur'anic teachings begin? (c) Why did God leave people to have wrong ideas of the teachings, without a guide for a period of one thousand years? (d) What made God

send a guide now and not before. (e) What is the reformer's contribution towards the interpretation of the Qur'anic teachings? (f) Or what are the neglected interpretations that the reformers of today have remedied? (g) When does this decaying day of one thousand years, which is wrongly termed as upward move, begin and when does it end? (h) Can any of these interpreters of the passage show us one instance of an exact interval of one thousand years between two Prophets, reformers or vicegerents of God? They appeared on the scene claiming to be commissioned by God to deliver some divine message, to exercise some authority, or to do something which was not done by their predecessors. From Adam until now the intervals between the real vicegerents of God or even the pretenders, either exceed the limit or fall short of it.

However, it is not necessary to pay much attention to these movements from a religious point of view. Their own literature is the best evidence of the shallowness of their religious ideas. From an organizational point of view they may play into the hands of political powers of the day and prove subversive against the Muslim States.

Mulkan Azima (Ch. IV. v.54) (The Great Divine Kingdom)

Let all anti-Islamic movements of the world do whatever they can against Islam and against the Shi'ah faith; God has promised His last Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him and his household, to make the true religion dominant over all religions of the world. This promise will be fulfilled. He has challenged the idolators and disbelievers, who plot to extinguish the light of God, to make His light reach the final stage of perfection. He has promised the righteous believers from among the followers of the Last Prophet to make them succeed on the earth (as His vicegerents) in the same manner that He made those who were before them (before the followers of the Prophet) to succeed on earth. And He shall make for them their religion, which he has

approved for them, to be all-pervading and powerful. They will be in the state of safety, so that they may worship Him and associate no one with Him in worship. He has declared that the earth is His and of His servant, only the righteous ones shall finally inherit it. He has chosen Adam, Nuh and the families of Ibrahim and 'Imran over all the worlds. The divine choice of vicegerents shall continue in a particular lineage till it reached Ibrahim. Ibrahim achieved success in the divine test, and was appointed leader (Imam) for all the people. This vicegerency was made a permanent decree in the family of Ibrahim. After Jesus, his *real successors* continued in their rank, but historically remained obscure. In Ibrahim's issue, the divine leadership in service and obedience to God as *Ummatum-Muslematun* continued, but after Isma'il it remained historically obscure till the advent of Hashim, Abdul Muttalib, 'Abdullah and Abu Talib when the light of ancestral leadership began to glow. It was with the advent of the Holy Prophet and revelation of the Qur'an that the grace of God bestowed on Al-e Ibrahim began to shine in its fullness. Next to the Holy Prophet in purity of blood and spirit was the closest of the close relatives (*al-Aqrabin*) from Al-e Ibrahim, was 'Ali, whose issue was declared by the Prophet his own through the Queen of Paradise Fatimah, peace be on her, his daughter. Thus the Book (the Qur'an), the wisdom and the great kingdom that have been bestowed on Al-e Ibrahim in their perfect and final forms were enshrined in the house of the Prophet and 'Ali.

The two divine gifts, the Book and the wisdom, have been manifested in the teachings and lives of the eleven Imams of the house. The third gift of God which has remained unmanifested in its fullness is the last phase of divine sovereignty, the great kingdom (*Mulkan 'Azima*), the executive authority over the world. The kingdom which God has described as great, could not be the land of Mecca, the Arabian peninsula, nor the whole of the Muslim empire in its supposed golden days. These may be great in the eyes of Abu Sufyan, but in the eyes of God, the kingdom of the earth is nothing but a ringlet, as the Prophet

said, thrown in a vast desert. It is true that God bestowed upon Dawud and his son Sulayman such a kingdom. He bestowed on them great spiritual powers of dominating the air, sea, land and animals and inanimate beings existing in them, besides a hold over '*jinn and human being*' (Chs. XXI, XXVII, XXXIV, XXXIX). He also bestowed on Dawud and Sulayman extensive knowledge and the capacity to dispense justice. Nevertheless, God did not describe their kingdoms as great, but asserts that the kingdom given by Him to Al-e Ibrahim is 'great.'

Thus the greatness of the kingdom of Al-e Ibrahim should be estimated with regard to the fact that the creator of the universe described it as 'great.' That divine kingdom was given to Muhammad as the Imam of Al-e Ibrahim, and was to be inherited after Muhammad by the chosen servants of God from Al-e Ibrahim, who inherited the other two gifts of God, namely the Book and wisdom. They are the *Ahl al-Bayt.*

In short, the great kingdom is bound to be manifested before the total resurrection in the person of al-Mahdi, who represents the Prophet, in name, nature and features which the real adjectival meaning of the word 'Muhammad' (the Praised One) implies.

The statement of the Prophet, 'Whoever dies without recognizing the Imam of his time shall die the death of ignorance and paganism,' clearly asserts, according to the Qur'an, that every age has an Imam and no time shall lapse without an Imam. It indicates that mere belief in God, the Prophet, the scriptures, angels and the life hereafter and performance of obligatory rites and observations of other precepts of Islam are not sufficient to make one a Muslim in the true sense of the term. It is by recognition of the Imam that the tie between human beings and God is established. No one but God chooses the qualified one to represent Him and His will as Imam. In essence, (a) during every period after the Prophet there must be an Imam from his family of Al-e Ibrahim; (b) the number of successive Imams is neither less nor more than twelve: they are those nominated by God through His last Prophet, otherwise they would not be the

divine nominee; (c) of the Muslim rulers, from the first three caliphs, excluding 'Ali (the fourth), down to the present day, and of other Muslim authorities, such as eminent jurists, theologians, Sufi saints, *sayyids* or scholars, no chain of twelve successive persons have ever claimed to have been nominated by God through the Prophet as Imams, except the twelve Imams of the house of the Prophet. So, keeping all the aforesaid Qur'anic assertions and the apostolic statements of the Prophet together, coupled with the absence of revelation as evidence in support of anyone else, one is bound to accept that the twelfth of the twelve Imams is alive in the terrestrial realm though we do not see him in a cognizable manner, and he shall remain so until the manifestation of the Great Kingdom of Al-e Ibrahim.[2]

There are many scholars of the Sunnis school who believe firmly in the spiritual *Imamat* of all the twelve Imams of the house and particularly the birth and life of the last Imam, almost in the same manner as believed by the Shi'ah Ithna 'Asharis. The only difference between the Ithna 'Asharis and this school of Sunnis is that the latter follow one of the four schools of Sunni jurisprudence — Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i or Hanbali — all associate themselves with the rulers who opposed the *Ahl al-Bayt* and presented Islam as a means to gain temporal power. There is a vast literature in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu on this topic.

Divine Covenant

Relating to faith in al-Mahdi, mere rational arguments and traditional or historical evidence may not be sufficient. It is the great message, divine vicegerency of Adam, about which the chiefs of the high order (the angels) have disputed, and Satan rebelled. It is the last testing part of the divine irrevocable 'covenant' that God shall be represented on earth by a man who is gifted with the knowledge of such perfect and comprehensive names of the mediators which represent the Creator and the creatures to each other. This representative status of the perfect man has been such a difficult test of obedience that even the

angels questioned God at first and then accepted it; Satan refused it and was condemned for ever, inspite of his long period of devotional obedience to God. Ever since the creation of Adam, the acceptance of the divine representative status of the perfect man has become the final touchstone with which every rational being's submission and obedience to God is tested. Of the issues of Adam, very few have come out successful in this final test. The present subject of discussion is the last part of that final test of one's belief in Islam, i.e., absolute submission and obedience to God.

Criticism against the Qur'an and Apostolic Statements

Most non-Shi'ahs, who have written or preached against the Shi'ahs, like most non-Muslims, who criticized Islam, are ignorant of their subject. They rely on information furnished by persons who were prejudiced and were making efforts to misrepresent Shi'ism as though it were an extinguished sect. It is self-evident that from the beginning of the message of Islam to the present day with no gap, along with the revelation of the Qur'an and the statements of the Prophet, 'Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Husayn and the nine successive Imams descended from Husayn, the Shi'ahs have the most authentic record of what they believe and what they practice. The Shi'ite literature on faith surpasses similar literature of all other schools of thought in quantity, quality, continuity and consistency. For the Oneness of God, angelical order, creation of the universe, advent of all the Prophets, from Adam to the last one, Muhammad, the chain of *Imamat* after him up to the reappearance of the last Imam, al-Mahdi, *raj'at*, and then *qiyamat-e kubra*, the Shi'ahs have a continuity of coherent thought in complete accord with the Qur'an and the apostolic records.

The *Imamat* or authoritative leadership of the perfect man, as outlined by the Shi'ahs, is the axis of the theocratic form of rule implied in the very term 'Islam.' In the monarchical hereditary

system no perfect man, foremost in obedience to God and in all that is good and excellent, is required. The monarchical system based on racial, tribal or family right of sovereignty may apply to those systems of authority, caliphate or *murshids* that confine the rights to a particular branch of descent without fixing the number and making any verifiable qualifications necessary for the person such as a certain branch of the Isma'ili sect. The Zaidi sect (followers of Zaid, the son of Imam Zayn al-'Abidin) believes that any descendant of Fatimah who is a *mujtahid* and draws the sword to fight evil, is an Imam. It is a common belief among Sunnis that any member of the clan of Quraysh who comes to power by any means, whether qualified or not, is an Imam like the Umayyads, 'Abbasids and all Muslim rulers. These views are opposite to the doctrine of *Imamat* (*Imamology*) in the Shi'ah Ithna 'Ashari (Twelvers).

It is also malicious to accuse the Shi'ah Ithna 'Asharis of drawing their ideas of *Imamat* from the ancient Iranian idea of the divine right of monarchs. To Shi'ahs, the royal throne or dynastic considerations have no value and no man is entitled to exercise authority over any body unless he possesses the requisite knowledge and piety. The divinely declared messengers of God, or their divinely nominated successors or Imams, are the real authorities, obedience to whom is obedience to God. Whether they be in power or in prison. In case the vicegerent of God is not approachable, the Shi'ahs turn to the person next in authority, the pious *mujtahid* who represents the vicegerents of God, as the recognized *mujtahid* in power, prison or in exile. In short, the Shi'ahs are distinguishable from the crown and power worshippers. The Shi'ah attitude is underlined in this couplet:

Pie dar silsilah Sajjad wa ba sar taj Yazid!
Khak-e Alam ba sar-e afsar wa day hîm wa qusûr.

The legs of the godly saint ('Ali Zayn al-'Abidin Sajjad, son of Husain) be in chains and the crown on the head of Yazid! Let the dust be thrown on the crown, throne and palaces.

For a brief outline of the Shi'ah conception of divine *Imamat*, one may study *Saheefa-e Sajjadyah (Sahifa al-Kamila)*, the outstanding, authentic classic work of the fourth Imam of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, 'Ali ibn Husain (Zayn al-'Abidin), produced in the second half of the first century A.H., and *Ziarat-e Jami'ah*, among the most exalted and inimitable works of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, produced by the 10th Imam, 'Ali ibn Muhammad (an-Naqi), in the first half of the 3rd century A.H. For details about these two works one should refer to works produced by the three prominent Shi'ah compilers of traditions, Kulayni, Saduq and Shaykh Tusi.

Ziarat-e Jami'ah is one of the comprehensive salutations addressed to the vicegerents of God. As a descriptive, solemn salutation to godly persons it is recommended in the Qur'an. It should be offered in remembrance of (a) the leading status of the addressees in their nearness to God and (b) their representation in conveying His will and order to mankind and making people grasp His attributes from every angle.

Here the reader's attention is drawn to lines from the *Ziarat* (*Mifathi al-Jinan*):[3]

My assistance is ready for you, waiting till God, the Sublime,
revives His religion through you; and brings you
back (to power) during His (chosen) days and establishes
your hold over all to make His justice prevail,
and cause you to dominate throughout the earth.
Thus, I am with you and with no one else.
I believe in you and submit out of sheer love
to the last of you as I do to the first of you.
I denounce in the presence of God, the Most Glorious
and High, your enemies, the *jibt*
(the power unauthorized by God) and *taghut*
(the rebel against God), the devils
and their party who opposed you, who denied your right,
who have discarded the love of your domain and hold,
who have usurped your heritage, who doubted or disputed

or denied you (your godliness) and those who
dissociated from you.
I denounce before God (the Most Glorious and High)
all means of approach to God, other than you;
I denounce anyone who is obeyed, other than you.
I denounce the imams, leaders who call people
to the path of hell.

The above piece indicates the political ideas and stand of the followers of the *Ahl al-Bayt* in the third century of Islam. This may be compared with the following lines from the supplication of 'Ali ibn Husain Zayn al-'Abidin recited by him on the 9th of Dhil-Hijja, the day known as 'Arafât, when he was performing the rituals of Hajj. After invoking God to bless the Prophets in general and the last Prophet in particular, he invokes God to bless the members of the house of the Prophet. The invocation gives the description of the persons concerned. It runs as follows:

O God! Send down your blessings on the unstained members
of his house (the house of Muhammad, upon whom be peace),
whom You have selected for executing Your command
and You made them treasures of Your knowledge,
guardians of Your religion and Your representatives
on the earth and authority over Your creatures.
You have by Your creative might purified them of all
uncleanliness to the utmost extent of purification.
You then have made them the means of approach to Yourself.
Their path is the path of paradise and Your pleasure.

After mentioning the various blessings of God with which the house has been and would be honored, the fourth Imam points out the status of the Imam and that at no time has the earth ever been left without an Imam. He says:

'O God! Surely, You have supported Your religion every moment with an Imam (leader), whom You have raised as Your

distinguished sign for Your servants and have made them the beacon of guidance in Your cities. You have done this after making the ties of the Imams with the people firmly linked with the ties of the Imams with You. After making the Imams as the connecting link between You and Your creatures, You have made the Imams the means and the instruments of gaining Your paradise and pleasure. You have made obedience to the Imams compulsory and have warned people not to disobey them. You have ordered the people to carry out that command and to refrain from doing what they have prohibited. You have ordered that no person should go ahead of the Imam, nor should one remain behind, detached from the Imam. Therefore, the Imam is the stronghold for those who take refuge with him; he is the fortress of the believer and he is the rope to be adhered to by the seekers of truth, and he is the light of all the worlds; therefore, O God! Inspire Your representative (the Imam) to thank You for all the bounties that You have bestowed on him and inspire us, O Lord! to thank You for blessing us by appointing him (the Imam) as our guide and leader. O Lord! Give him on Your behalf power and make him win in the easiest manner of success. O Lord! Help him with Your strongest support and back him to the utmost extent, strengthen his shoulder and watch him with Your eyes and protect him with Your protection, help him with Your angels, reinforce him with Your victorious army and establish through him Your book and the limits of duties and rights fixed by You, establish through him Your precepts and the conduct recommended by Your Prophet, Your peace be on him and his family. O Lord! Revive through the Imam the outstanding teachings of the religion which have been obliterated by the unjust despots. O Lord! Remove through him the rust of injustice which has covered Your path. Push aside through him the obstacles that have come in the way leading to You. Remove through him those perverted ones who push people backward.'

Then, after a few lines in the same prayer, Imam 'Ali ibn Husain begins to invoke God's blessings on those who are totally

devoted in words and in deeds to the Imams. He says:

O Lord! Bless those who yield to the Imams out of sheer love,
those who profess their (Imams') status, stick to their path,
follow their footprints, adhere to their rope and cling firmly
to their leadership to follow their instructions,
submit to their orders and make full efforts to obey them,
and are waiting the days of their (Imam's) rule to come.
Their (followers') eyes are focused on the divine days to come.

The consistency of the Shi'ah faith is also reflected in the salutation known as *Salawat ul-Hujaj al-Tahira*, dictated by the eleventh Imam, Hasan al-'Askari, to one of his devoted followers, Abu Muhammad 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad, known as *Abid* (pious) in the year 255 A.H. In those petitions to God, the Imam invokes God's blessings on each of the fourteen infallible members of the house (the Holy Prophet is included in it). In the petition, the reader will find the description of each of the fourteen in complete accord with the Shi'ah faith. The *Du'a Nudba* from the twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi, during the period of the minor occultation, bears the same glowing aspect of faith which is reflected in the above passages of prayer. Next, the salutation addressed to the four successive agents, *nawabin*, of the last Imam, during the minor occultation, preserve the same light. This composition is said to be dictated by the third deputy of the twelfth Imam, Shaykh Abul Qasim Husain ibn Ruh Nawbakti (vide *Thadhib* by Shaykh Tusi). The above quotations bear testimony to the fact that the Shi'ah faith from its inception to the end of the minor occultation in 330 A.H. and from the beginning of the major occultation to the present day has not lost the continuity of its traditions nor the consistency of its thought.

The above quotations bear sufficient testimony to the fact of its thought which has preserved the light of the Prophet's tradition, 'Whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his time, his death will be a paganish death.'

The Development of Shi'ah Thought After Minor Occultation

First Period — Pure rational Approach
Al-Kulayni to Shaykh Tusi
(329 A.H./941 A.D. — 460 A.H./1067 A.D.)

The period of the major occultation of the Imam begins from 329 A.H./941 A.D. The teachings of Islam as explained and adhered to by the twelve vicegerents of God assumed its final form in the work of Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Yaqub Kulayni, author of *Al-Kafi*. He died in 329 A.H./941 A.D. a year before the major occultation. The method of classification of the apostolic teachings of the *Ahl al-Bayt* throws light on the direction which the Shi'ah thought follows. It begins with the book (the term used in *Kafi* for chapter) on the importance of reason and the disadvantages of ignorance, the various kinds of knowledge, and their important recognition of sound reasoning as the sole internal evidence to be relied upon in one's effort to conceive God and realize His existence, the importance of the Prophets and revelations as the main authority for the knowledge of the godhead (*uluhiyat*, His essence, attributes, actions and commands).

The next chapter of *Al-Kafi* deals with the problems of the godhead and the vicegerents as the intermediaries between people and God. This chapter deals with the divine vicegerency of the chosen lineage of men on earth, the qualifications of the vicegerents of God, their education, when their education begins, their means of acquiring knowledge and the infallibility and scope of their knowledge. The book also discusses the birth, name, parents, date of birth and departure and days of ministry of the fourteen infallibles, the announcements by the preceding vicegerents concerning his successor and a brief account of the spiritual and heavenly accomplishments of each.

The following chapter is about faith and infidelity. This part covers the main moral virtues which are the necessary qualifi-

cation for faith in God and the vices which originate from its absence.

The *Furu-e Kafi* deals with human actions. It contains treatises on the rules of devotional and ritual performance, matters of domestic and economic nature (known as personal laws) and administrative, judicial and political affairs. This code of the Shi'ah faith was compiled and placed within the reach of the people, a few years before the end of the minor occultation in 330 A.H. Many scholars received the book from the author directly hearing him reciting his work before them. Therefore, the collection of the teachings of the Holy Prophet, known as the *Sunnah*, which is part of the Islamic constitution, was made available to the people before the close of the apostolic days of the infallible Imams. But the earliest collection of the Prophet's teachings, prepared by the scholars of the other schools of thought contain more discrepancies and distortions due to a considerable lapse of time between the infallible source, the Prophet, and the compilers of the collections. The chain of narrators are fallible persons who differ from each other in character, capability and knowledge. Moreover, the rulers of the time influenced the narrators to conceal the truth. Also, throughout the consolidatory period of Islam, attempts were made by the rulers to suppress Shi'ah narrators. *Al-Kafi*, its sources and other Shi'ah literary products of the period, ranging from the time of departure of the Prophet to the demise of Kulayni in 329 A.H. and of 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Summari (the last deputy of the twelfth Imam) in 330 A.H./942 A.D., were saved from being influenced or tampered with. The force of the saintliness of the Imams of the house that manifested in all fields of spiritual accomplishments, was so strong that it overawed some temporal rulers. They could not resist submission to the supreme authority of the Imams of the house as the sole representatives of the divine will, in spite of their being in prison, house arrest, or under strict vigilance. The consolidated teachings of Islam, as manifested in the life of the twelve Imams of the house, began to dominate temporal powers after 330 A.H./942 A.D. at some

places.

In the case of the majority school of thought in Islam the temporal powers that succeeded each other after the Prophet, dominated Islamic thought in general and the chain of narrators of the Prophet's sayings in particular. In the later days of the political history of the Shi'ah faith the force of right produced some temporal might. It was after the consolidatory and apostolic period that the Shi'ahs began to gain temporal power in particular countries during the Buwayhid dynasties in Iran and Iraq, under the independent rule of the Da'is of Tabarestan and the Fatamids of Egypt. So subsequent religious literature had been produced in these countries on the pattern of original Shi'ah works. The works of Shaykh Saduq (d. 381 A.D./991-992 A.D.), Shaykh Mufid (d. 413 A.H./1022 A.D.), Sayyid Murtada (d. 436 A.H./1044 A.D.), Syed Razi and Shaykh Tusi (Abu Ja'far ibn Hasan al-Tusi, known as Shaykh al-Taifa, d. 460 A.H./1067 A.D.) and the works of other contemporary scholars of the same school, are mainly moulded on the same pattern of *Kafi*. There may be minor differences, but they are due to the rational approach of the individuals. They do not, however, affect the substance of the doctrine.

The first period of Shi'ah rationalization of revelation, i.e., of *ijtihad* after the major occultation, ends with the migration of Shaikh al-Taifa al-Tusi from Baghdad to Najaf.

Before proceeding, this point should be borne in mind. During the apostolic period beginning with the Prophet's mission and ending with the occultation of the last Imam, as also during the first period of *ijtihad*, beginning with Kulayni and ending with Shaykh Tusi, the Shi'ahs were always in touch with various Islamic and non-Islamic schools of thought. It was necessary, according to the Qur'an and the apostolic instructions to have a careful comparative study of all thoughts concerning religion, so that they would be cautious of any thought against apostolic statements authenticated by the Imams. The rationalists (Mu'tazilites), the traditionists ('Asharites), dealing with the

pure theory, the mystic or ascetic school explaining the ethical aspect of the religion, the jurists, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali, defining the ritual precepts and other practical laws of Islam, and the gnostics and philosophers disclosing the spirit and the inner aspects of the teachings of Islam, all move to enjoy the support of the house of the Prophet for themselves. There are several theoretical and practical problems on which clean and unanimous verdicts of the *Ahl al-Bayt* go against the views held by the other schools. Nevertheless, the opposite schools try to interpret the verdict of the *Ahl al-Bayt* in their own favour. The unanimous verdict of the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* about the legality of *aul* and *taseeb*, concerning inheritance and the impossibility of God being seen, are established facts of Shi'ah doctrine. Nevertheless, the traditionists such as Bukhari and Muslim are inclined to hold the opposite view, by narrating reports that 'Ali held the same views as theirs.

The Mu'tazilites are no exception; they present their views as approved by the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Shaykh Tusi, in his work *Tahdhib*, in the chapter on *jihad*, narrates the story of the meeting of the foremost Mu'tazilite leaders with the sixth Imam (Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq) at Mina during the Hajj season. They requested him to join them in the political movement as planned by them. The discussion throws light on the political-theological trends of the time and the stand of the Imam against all the issues raised by them. It would be unfair to present the Shi'ahs as the camp followers of the Mu'tazilites or any other school of thought in Islam. It shows the ignorance or malicious tendency of those writers who allege that the main stem of the Shi'ah Ithna 'Ashari school was bent in the course of its development by doctrines alien to the teachings of the Imams of the house. Shi'ah thought in its development was so clearly distinguished that it gave no chance to any temporal power to divert its course. From the time of Kulayni to Shaykh Tusi's migration to Najaf will be considered the first period of Shi'ah *ijtihad*. It developed from purified apostolic roots without being grafted with any foreign idea or doctrine. It became one of the examples

of the purified world and the purified tree mentioned in the Qur'an, Ch. XIV: vs 24-25, *Kalima-e Tayyaba* and *Shajraah-e Tayyaba*.

Second Period — Continuity

Muhaqiq Hilli (676 A.H./1274 A.D.)
'Allama Hilli (726 A.H./1325 A.D.)
Shahid Awal (786 A.H./1385 A.D.)
Muhaqiq Karaki (940 A.H./1539 A.D.)
Safavids

During the second period from Tusi to Muhaqiq Hilli, from Muhaqiq Hilli to 'Allama Hilli, from 'Allama to Shahid Awal (the first Shi'ah divine, who was executed by the order of the Sunni *mullas*), and from him to Muhaqiq Karaki (the beginning of the establishment of the Safavid reign in Iran), the Shi'ah school continued to produce innumerable scholars of high standards in all branches of Islamic sciences. The consistency of thought remained undisturbed, and continued till the middle of the Safavid reign.

Third Period
a) Mixture of mystic, intuitive and rationalistic interpretation
b) Traditionalism - 'Akhbari

Baha al-Din al-Amili (1030 A.H./1721 A.D.)
Mir Damad-Muhammad Baqir
(1040 A.H./1630-1631 A.D.)
Mulla Sadra-Sadr al-Din Shirazi (1060 A.H./1651 A.D.)
Majlisi I, Muhammad Taqi (1070 A.H./1659-1660 A.D.)
Mulla Muhsin al-Faid Kashani (1091 A.H./1680 A.D.)
Majlisi II, Mulla Muhammad Baqir
(1110 A.H./1699 A.D.)

In this period the pure rational approach to revelation is

responsible for the development of two other tendencies in religious studies. Eminent scholars, such as Mir Damad, Shaykh Bhai, Mulla Sadr, with some reservations, and Mulla Muhsin Faid Kashani and Mulla Muhammad Taqi (Majlisi I), were inclined towards the mystic and intuitive interpretation of the Qur'an. But the traditionist tendency, depending more on the literal and verbal significance of apostolic traditions rather than rational principles for inferences from the apostolic statements, was dominant. Mulla Muhammad Baqir (Majlisi II) and his followers were more inclined towards this course of study. The first group may be termed as theosophist. Among them are traditionists ('Akhbari) and rationalists (Usuli). There was a third purely 'Akhbari group. Pure and partly-'Akhbaris did not agree with the rationalists who were known as pure Usuli in certain doctrinal issues, and differ from each other in approving or disapproving the mystical method. The controversial issues seemed in the beginning to be less important as to provoke factions in the ranks of the Shi'ah theologians, but gradually the schismatic spirit of scholasticism, under the influence of politics turned the least religious issues into important concerns of the ecclesiastical circles and caused sectarian feelings among followers of the respective scholars. However, the school of 'Allama Majlisi II appealed to the religious tendencies of the masses and it succeeded in influencing the majority of the theologians till today. Even a great number of Usuli scholars, who denounce boldly, the 'Akhbari school and its branches are not free from the influence of the vast literature in Arabic and Persian, produced by Allama Majlisi II. There is no doubt that as a compiler of traditions, with the royal libraries and numerous assistants at his disposal, he is one of the greatest contributors on the subject for the development of Shi'ah religious thought. But those matters without the rational methods, may be misleading and harmful. The same is true of literature produced by various branches of the 'Akhbari school. One may find precious gems in that literature but all are required to be properly selected and polished with the instrument of reasoning as prescribed in the

logical science for the treatment of scriptural and apostolic traditions, based on *'Ilm al-Usul* and *'Ilm al-Dinya*. From Majlisi II to Muhammad Baqir Behbahani (1205 A.H./1791 A.D.) the theological conflict between these three schools continued. Majlisi's school, however, remained dominant.

Fourth Period — Usuli
Rationalism based on the Qur'an and Ahadith

Muhammad Baqir Behbahani, al-Wahid
(1205 A.H./1791 A.D.)
Shaykh Murtada Ansari
(1281 A.H./1864 A.D.)

Behbahani, known as al-Wahid, the Great Master (Ustad al-Akbar), the champion of the Usuli school, drew his rational weapon against the 'Akhbaris and their branches and defeated them in all fields of thought. He revived the school at Karbala, the place selected by the 'Akhbaris as their stronghold. He produced numerous well-versed scholars, writers and teachers for advocating and expounding the Usuli method and refuting the opposite doctrines and principles. Within a short period, Behbahani's school succeeded in limiting the influence of other schools. Among the prominent personalities of this school are Mirza Abul Qasim Qummi known as Mirza Qummi (1231 A.H./1816 A.D.), the author of *Qawanin* (Principles of Jurisprudence); Mulla Mahdi Naraqi, the author of *Jami' al-Sa'dat* (Treatise on Ethics); Mulla Mahdi Fatuni; Sayyid Mahdi Sharistani; and Syed Mahdi Bahar ul-Ulum, who, though junior in age is greater than his seniors in spiritual attainment. Also included were Shaykh Ja'far, the author of *Kashif al-Ghita*; Sayyid 'Ali, the author of *Riaz*, Sayyid Muhammad Mujahid; Shaykh Muhammad Taqi, the commentator of *Ma'lim*; and his brother Shaykh Muhammad Husain, the author of the treatise on the *Usul* (Principles of Jurisprudence), and his prominent students. Then the chain dazzles with the name of Shaykh Muhammad Hasan, author of the book *Jawahir al-Kalam* (The

Practical Laws of Islam), containing the minutest points and arguments and views on every practical problem of jurisprudence. It is a commentary on the concise but comprehensive work of Muhaqiq Hilli, known as *Shara'i al-Islam*. The text written by Muhaqiq in the 7th century A.H., and the commentary referred to above, written at the beginning of the 13th century A.H., are still the standard books on Shi'ah jurisprudence. This period, from Behbahani to the author of *Jawahir al-Kalam*, may be considered as the golden period of the Shi'ah rationalist school. The literary products of this period are numerous and valuable. The author of *Jawahir* was succeeded by a scholar of Shi'ah jurisprudence whose works revolutionized the whole system and opened a new era for religious studies. This luminary, Shaykh Murtada Ansari, was the author of the valuable books on principles of jurisprudence, *Fara'id al-Usul* and *Makasib*, dealing with the principles of transactions and trade; *Taharat*, dealing with the principles of physical purity required by Islam, and many other small treatises on various juristic issues.

His method of exposition eclipsed all the previous systems and served as a link between extreme rationalism and extreme traditionalism. In his works the arguments are based on the Qur'an and apostolic statements. This leading scholar showed how the implications of the scriptural instructions as the principles of inference should be brought out. To him, though reason has its value, it is secondary when there are clear scriptural statements on a field of study. He tried to show how the two sources, the scriptural assertions and pure reason should be reconciled. The school of Shaykh Ansari is still the leading school of Shi'ah theology. It is flourishing wherever comparative Islamic jurisprudence is studied.

The last revelational literature, the Qur'an, with the apostolic statements, contain all that is required by men for their spiritual and temporal progress. Both rigid conservatism and extreme radicalism are un-Islamic. The ever-productive, growing tree of life, Islam, needs to be watered with pure and irrefutable reasoning.

The Qur'anic injunctions have made study of all branches of knowledge compulsory so that there shall be qualified students specialized in every field of study. Comparative study of relevant views and theories are inevitable, otherwise the study will remain incomplete.

In view of these facts, it is surprising that in certain centers of Shi'ah theology students are allowed to be content with superficial knowledge and as such discouraged from the study of the metaphysical treatises of even eminent Shi'ah theologians. A Shi'ah student of theology should not neglect any school of creation. The task of rationalization of revelations concerning the practical aspect of Islam was carried on in detail by the jurists of all ages and regions, as the exigency of time demanded it.

In the last century the term *tafaqqahu-fiddin*, the effort to understand religion, has lost its comprehensiveness and universality and narrowed to the science of jurisprudence and certain hair-splitting juristic problems.

Correct Approach

a. *Tafaqahu-fiddin*

Effort to understand religion

The principles of juristic inference of Islamic law contain two parts. One deals with: (a) the authoritative status of scriptural and apostolic records; (b) the deductive and inductive reasoning and analogical inference; (c) the consensus of opinion of jurists or Muslim intelligentsia; and (d) the principles to be resorted to in the case of ambiguity or in conflicting scriptural and apostolic statements. This part may be termed as discourse on the authoritative principles and the extent of their validity. The second part deals with the universal principles of speech common to all languages.

There is no doubt that a study of both parts is necessary to be able to deal with the scriptural and apostolic statements concern-

ing the practical teachings of Islam; but one may not be content with the above information. A thorough study of Arabic grammar, philology, etymology, syntax, rhetoric and prosody, with special reference to the Qur'an and other apostolic records, and the biography of the narrators of the apostolic statements (*'Ilm-e Rijal*) and history is inevitable. Without the knowledge of mathematics, astrology, logic, metaphysics and general principles of physical and natural sciences, and socio-economic sciences, with special references to the teachings of Islam, a scholarly approach to the problems of life cannot be developed. The knowledge of logic and metaphysics is required for sound thinking.

Metaphysics is the science of all sciences. It deals with universal concepts and propositions which form the background of human thinking. Without the proper knowledge of metaphysics, the study of the principles of juristic inferences, which cover problems based on the rationalization of revelation, remains incomplete.

Great scholars like Mir Muhammad Baqir Damad, Shaykh Bhai, Sadr ul-Muta'allihin (known as Sadr) and their followers, Faiz of Kashan and Fayyaz of Lahijan (two sons-in-law of Sadr) and their supporters concentrated on the religio-metaphysical science and did their best in filling the gap between the revealed statement and pure reason. Though appreciated by a large number of jurists, it was opposed to those Usuli jurists who were not well-versed in the sciences.

(b) Anti-Rationalism and New Cults
Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa and other similar leaders — theosophic and mystics

In the middle of the 13th century A.H., the champion of the 'Akhbari school of theology, Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa, appeared on the scene. He was not a student of logic and metaphysics, but had good knowledge of scriptural and apostolic records with

particular aptitude in theological thinking. His main attempt was to disprove the religio-metaphysical views of the Sadr school, on the one hand, and please a section of the anti-Sadr jurists, on the other.

His commentaries of *Asfar* of Mulla Sadr and the commentary on *Ziarat-e Jami'a* betray the defects of the 'Akhbari scholars of his time. Ahsa refutes the validity of rational approach to understand the significance of revelation and to secure an authoritative status as the vicegerent of the Imam. According to him, without inner communication with the soul of the Imam, one will not be entitled to claim authority as a representative of the Imam, the Prophet or God. On this ground he wanted to put an end to the dominating leadership of the Usuli jurists and start a new era of his own school. His attempt met with severe opposition, from the Usuli school, and he could not advance his ideology in any academic field. It opened a new way for the development of sectarian views, mostly in the rank of the 'Akhbari school, to which some credulous Usulis also were inclined. Ahsa and his illogical views became the basis of all new sects of Shaykhi, Kashafi, Sufi within the fold of Islam, and Babi, Azali, Baha'i, outside the fold.

The background of the ideologies advocated by Ahsa and the off-shoots of his school are actually the same as the ideologies of the ultra-Shi'ahs of the second and third century Hijrah.

But the origin of the schools of the Zahabis of Shiraz, Ni'matullahi of Kerman and Safi 'Ali Shahi of Tehran can be traced back to the Sufi orders of Safavid and pre-Safavid times. The Safavids themselves, before gaining temporal power, were in the garb of spiritual leaders and saints of a Sufi order. During their reign, they also have encouraged and supported the Sufi order of Dervishes, the religio-mystic Qalandars, and wandering hermits. Ever since then, the Shi'ah rulers patronised the Shi'ah dervishes.

They have much in common with theosophic mysticism and they seem to have the same theomystic tendencies of the Sunni

Sufis with liberal touches of Shi'ah ideology. Safi 'Ali Shah of Tehran has written a commentary of the Qur'an in Persian poetry in the style of Rumi. His commentary is theosophical and theopathetic in nature, presented in a fairly forceful style. His mystic presentation of the tragedy of Karbala seems quite forceful and fascinating. Another exegesis by Hajj Mulla Sultan 'Ali Shah of Gunabad, the founder of the Sunabadi school of Shi'ah Sufis, on the Qur'an, in Arabic, known as *Tafsir-e Bayan al-Sa'dah*, is in the main a theomystic, philosophical interpretation of the Qur'an, almost on the lines of the Sadr school as presented by Haji Mulla Hadi Subzwari, author of the standard text on logic and philosophy, known as *Manzumah* and *Shraha Manumah*. Sultan 'Ali is one of the disciples of Subzwari. The writer could not find in his work any originality of thought or presentation. As an offshoot of Subzwari school he created a new Sufi order of his own to which Subzwari could have no claim. The common element between him and the post-Ahsai 'Akhbari' schools is that both deny the sufficiency of knowledge or rational and scholastic method of approach for the interpretation of revelation and respresenting the infallible Imam. The Sufis, the Shaykhs, and Kashfis of Shi'ah school, all are inclined towards the Sufism of the Sunnis and gnosticism and esoterism of the Isma'ilites.

These tendencies paved the way for the rise of Baha'ism and Qadianism on the one hand, and the development of absolutism in political trends on the other. The possessors of political power welcome the use of the flattering title 'The Shadow of God' for themselves in the political field and claim to have the right to introduce drastic changes in Islamic laws concerning the daily practical life of Muslims. The Sufi saint, the Shaykhi head, the Kashfi chief, the Qadyani Masih, the Sabbahi Hazir Imam and the Bohras 'living Da'iya' all claim to be in communion with some infallible agency of higher sphere of beings, a source from which they receive the requisite guidance directly. As such they are beyond formal rules of religious and moral obligations and formalities. The head of the group is to be obeyed, whatever his

knowledge or character.

The Baha'is have gone to the extreme; they not only hold the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* as out-dated, they even treat their new-born scriptures of the present century as obsolete. Their last spiritual head, Showqie Afendy of Akka died in London without leaving any will or successor. So at present the Baha'is are receiving inspiration directly from Tel Aviv, the modern Tur Sinai of all pseudo-religions. Hence their commandments and precepts are subject to daily changes inspired by the modern *Tur*. The only difference between Rabwah of Pakistan and Akka of Israel is that the former tries to retain the garb of Islam while the latter has thrown it away. Otherwise the Rabwa ideology, in general, is copied from those of Akka. It is noteworthy that their literary and academic contributions are insignificant, hence remain unpublished, or withdrawn soon after their publication.

There are undoubtedly many political and temporal factors for the flourishing of these new heretical schools of thought during the last two centuries. But it is not proposed to deal here in detail. The factor which concerned us is that the temporal support of the Iranian monarchs of the later centuries of the Shi'ah faith, developed an unexpected intolerance in some leading jurists of the time. Depending on the use of force, they were not prepared to listen to any argument not in conformity with their views.

The fatherly affection and godly tendencies of the Shi'ah divines which would convince their opponents by logic was replaced by the use of bigotry. The people reacted against it by welcoming any movement which would free them from the yoke of bigoted Mullas.

Broad Vision

Unfortunately, the undesirable consequences of the use of such wrong means were soon realized by the divines at the helm of ecclesiastical administration. They now do not allow the use of such dogmatic authoritative weapons against criticism. In asserting their spiritual authoritative status, they are now resorting

more and more to the godly force of knowledge and piety which no temporal force can suppress. The Shi'ahs have never depended and shall never depend in their progressive moves on any power other than the inner strength of sound knowledge, excellent character and selflessness. This is the teaching of the Qur'an and the written, oral and practical teaching of the Holy Prophet and the infallible Imams of the house. The Shi'ah religious authorities in charge of religious administration do not bother or worry themselves about the temporal and political circumstances of the time, whether favourable or unfavourable. They concentrate on producing the best students of theology, who sacrifice their limited interest for the welfare of mankind. It is expected that they will prove worthy of being termed true slaves of *Rahmat ul-lil 'Alameen* (the Divine Grace). The temporal world with all its might and power is bound to bow before these forces, sooner or later. As history records, 'Ali started his sublime movement with five or, at the most, seven supporters. At the time of the tragedy of Karbala, the number increased to not more than one hundred and twenty persons, who laid down their lives in support of the right cause. Now they are counted in very large numbers with a glorious heritage of knowledge and righteousness to their credit. Let the Shi'ahs continue progressing on these lines disregarding any geographical boundaries and political barriers till the time of the expected saviour, the twelfth Imam, to establish the divine kingdom given to Al-e Ibrahim, throughout the world. He will use spiritual force in the face of which all physical and temporal forces, even of atomic energy, will become ineffective. Before the ultimate ideal is achieved the Shi'ah religious authorities should enlighten their followers with a correct and proper presentation of the Shi'ah faith.

'*And We intend to show favour to those who were considered weak in the earth and to make them Imams (guides in faith) and the inheritors.*

And to establish them in the earth, and to show Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts that which they feared from them.' (Ch. XXVIII: vs 5-6)

Notes

1: In both systems the number of months cannot be more or less than twelve. The seasonal revolution of the earth round the sun completes its circuit in 364 or 365 days. During this seasonal revolution, the moon's phases change twelve times, of which six times the moon shows its crescent phase after 29 days and after 30 days in the others. This change of 29 or 30 days usually takes place every alternate month. But it is possible that in certain regions the crescent phase can be sighted for two successive months after 29 or 30 days. Six months of 30 days aggregated to 180 days while six months of 29 days to 174 days, totalling 354 days altogether. The circuit of the lunar year is 10 days shorter than that of the solar year. The lunar year which begins with the sighting of the crescent phase of the moon in any of its twelve months, in a given year, will naturally coincide with a particular day (first, second, third, and so on) of certain days of the solar month. The following year the lunar year will complete its circuit 10 days before the particular day of the solar month with which the first day of the given month of the year started. The result of this is that, during a given period of thirty years, every day of every month of the lunar year will coincide with every day of every month of the solar year. Thus, for the performance of periodical rites, such as fasting and pilgrimage, Islam preferred the lunar year and calendar, so that the devotees should have the opportunity to perform the rites periodically every day of each of the four seasons of the solar year.

But for daily rites, such as the daily prayers, Islam takes into account the rotational movements of the earth towards the sun, which are responsible for the 24-hour alternation of day, night and dawn. For daily prayers, the Qur'an considers sunrise, sunset, mid-noon, and dawn as important. These segments of the day hold good for everyone, whether they are inhabitants of the equatorial regions, tropical, temperate, northern or southern zones where, in the 24-hour rotational movement of the earth, the sun appears to rise above and set below the horizon. There are also the remote northern and southern regions, far above eighty degrees from the equator where during six months of their respective summer, the sun never sets but only changes position during the 24-hour cycle. During winter, the sun is not seen at all in that region. Its position can only be located through the change in the position of its rays. For such regions the meridian longitude is taken into account. In those regions the timings of the mid-noon prayer and the night prayer can be observed. For the other prayers the requirements would be that they should be performed after the mid-noon prayer after regular intervals. For those who may be on the exact poles, where all the longitudes end, there is no observable time at all but the daily prayers must be performed within 24 hours. They should begin with the mid-noon prayer and end with the morning prayer. The person inside the holy Ka'ba has the option to say his prayers facing any direction. The persons on the exact poles have the option to say their daily prayers within 24 hours at any time facing any direction.

2: One question remains, namely, why should the number of the vicegerents of God after the last Prophet be confined to twelve. All that we must know is that, whatever action is taken by God in any of the three fields of activity, has its reasons which makes such action necessary and its contrary impossible. But what is the particular justification for any particular action no one can claim to know, except to the extent of what He 'has willed the people to know.' However, the number of divine actions, whose reasons have become known to us, through reasoning or revelation, are small in comparison to those which are still unknown to us. The system of the universe as a whole and the fixed measures, numbers, positions, conditions, the quantitative and qualitative peculiarities, found in every part and particle of the universe and the fixed and proportionate speed of the biggest and the smallest parts of the whole, all are puzzling. The particular justifying reasons for the fixities are not known to us, though the fixities are indisputable. The seasonal rotations of the earth round the sun are fixed in terms of the number of days and speed, as are the moon's round the earth. According to the Qur'an every thing has been created in a fixed measure. The life of every solar system is fixed. The life of every part of it is fixed. The life of the earth and earthly beings is fixed. The number of the prophets, vicegerents of God, and their genealogical line from Adam to the day of resurrection are pre-ordained. All these predeterminations are based on particular reasons and wisdom known only to God. The same is true about the fixation of the number (twelve) of the Imams of the house and that the last Imam should live in a particular manner for a long period, the end of which is only known to Him.

3: 'My' refers to the devotee who is saluting the Imam. The pronouns in the first and second person used in the above translation refer respectively to the devotee and the Imams.

CHAPTER FIVE

Evidence relating to the birth of the twelfth Imam, Sunni scholars and apostates

Evidences

More than forty people had the honor of seeing the last Imam, during the lifetime of his father, the eleventh Imam, Hasan al-'Askari.

(1) Hakimah, daughter of the ninth Imam, Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Taqi, and the aunt of the eleventh Imam, had attended Narjis's delivery. Her evidence about the birth and growth of the last Imam, al-Mahdi, is on record. She was one of those who brought up the newborn secretly. Her nephew, Imam al-'Askari, informed her about the future of his son, planned by God.

(2) Maryah and Nasim, two housemaids of Imam al-'Askari, are among the witnesses who said that when al-Mahdi was born he prostrated on the ground, and with his index finger he pointed toward the heavens and said: 'All praise is God's, the

Lord Cherisher of all the worlds. And blessings be on Muhammad and his family, who are purified.'

(3) Abu Basir, a servant of Imam al-'Askari, said that once he found the newborn in the cradle and went forward and saluted the baby. The baby asked him whether he knew who he (the Imam) was. Abu Basir replied in the affirmative and said that he was the son of his Imam. When the baby asked Abu Basir to get some sandals, he was puzzled about how a baby in the cradle could speak so well. The newborn asked Abu Basir to question him about his spiritual status. He did and the baby replied: 'I am the last successor and the last of the executors of the divine will, as is the case with all the vicegerents of God. It is through me that my family and the followers are delivered from calamity and trouble.'

(4) Abu Nasim Muhammad ibn Ahmad Ansari states that once he together with a group of Mufawada, had gone to Samarra for an audience with the eleventh Imam Hasan al-'Askari for enlightenment on religious matters. There he saw a boy of four. The Imam asked them to refer their inquiries to the boy which they did and he answered their questions satisfactorily. The Imam said: 'He is al-Mahdi, the established executor of the will of God.'

(5) 'Ali ibn Bilal, Ahmad ibn Hilal, Muhammad ibn Mu'awiyah, Hakeem and Ayub ibn Nuh went together to see the eleventh Imam al-'Askari. There were forty people present. All were led by 'Uthman ibn Sa'id al-'Umari to the presence of the Imam where they saw a baby, with a face shining like the sun, sitting beside Imam al-'Askari. In answer to the questions of the people, 'Umari replied that the boy was their Imam and the successor of Imam al-'Askari, and he would be the supreme authority after him.

(6) Sa'ad ibn Abdallah al-Qumi, who was carrying many letters for Imam al-'Askari, went to Samarrah with a group of people and had his audience with him. They saw the boy with the shining face, on the right side of Imam al-'Askari. In reply to the

question from the audience, he informed them that the boy was al-Mahdi of Al-e Muhammad, the established executor of the will of God throughout the world.

(7) Abi Sahl Isma'il Nowbakti states: 'I went to Abi Muhammad, Hasan ibn 'Ali (al-'Askari), when he was on his death bed. He ordered his wife, Saqil (another name of Narjis) to bring him the syrup of mustaki (a syrup made with gum). She brought it. The Imam's hand was shaking so the cup struck his fore-teeth and fell from his hand spilling the syrup. At that time the Imam told me: "Go inside the house. You will find a boy busy in his prayers. Tell him to come to me." 'I entered,' Isma'il says, 'the residential quarters and found the boy engaged in prayers. I told him: "Your father is calling you." His mother took the boy to his father. When the boy saw his father's teeth broken, he wept. Then the Imam asked the boy to help him drink the syrup. The boy brought another cup to his lips. The Imam drank a few drops and then breathed his last. The boy was the son of Imam Hasan al-'Askari, al-Mahdi, the supreme authority, representing God on earth.'

(8) Ahmad ibn Ishaq Qumi says that once he went to the eleventh Imam, with the intention of asking him about his successor. The Imam spoke before his question, and mentioned the name of his young son as his successor-designate, the greatness of his status and the importance of the part which he would play in the order of the divine vicegerency.

(9) Yaqub ibn M'anfush states that once he went to meet the eleventh Imam. He saw a child with a glowing face like the full moon sitting beside the Imam. He appeared to be a boy of eight or ten years old (though his actual age was less) with a broad forehead, bright features, white shining cheeks and a peculiar Hashimite black mole on the right side of his face. The Imam, pointing towards the child, told Yaqub that the child would be the next master of the faithful, the Imam and the supreme authority of the time after him.

(10) Abu Nasir says that he entered the house of the eleventh

Imam (at Samarrah) and met the last, the twelfth Imam, the master of the time. He said, 'I am the last in the chain of successors and the executors of the will of the Last Prophet, Muhammad.'

(11) Abu 'Abdallah Saturi says: 'I was walking towards the garden of Bani Hashim (at Samarrah), where I saw a child playing. I inquired about him and was told that he was M H M D (abbreviation of Muhammad), the son of Hasan al-'Askari.

(12) 'Abdallah, son of Ja'far Himyari, narrates from Ahmad ibn Ishaq that he once saw a child and asked al-'Umari about him. Ahmad replied that the child was the master of the time, al-Mahdi, the successor of the eleventh Imam.

(13) 'Ali ibn Ibrahim Mayhyar, who was the servant of the eleventh and the twelfth Imams, said that he was with the twelfth Imam till the moment he descended into the basement apartment and then, as narrated before, he was pursued by the search party of the government. It was after this occasion that the Imam went into the first occultation.

Besides the persons mentioned above, there were many others who had the honor of meeting him before and during the minor occultation. Their names are given in the following books: (a) *Kimal al-Din* — Shaykh Saduq; (b) *Bihar al-Anwar* — Allama Majlisi; (c) *Najm al-Thaqib* — Muhadith Nuri; (d) *Al-Zaman al-Wasib* — Allama Hayeri; and (e) *Nur al-Anwar* — Haji 'Ali Asghar Burujardi.

Muhadith Nuri has given the names of the persons who had the opportunity of meeting the Imam.

(1) Ibn Tawus Raziuddin 'Ali ibn Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Tawus. He died in 664 A.H. This venerable divine of his time was the head of the Shi'ah community in the 7th century. He is admired by Allama Hilli, an eminent scholar, who had met him. The Allama says that Raziuddin (Ibn Tawus) is credited with many spiritual wonders. He is the author of many valuable books. It is evident from his works that he was in contact with the Imam.

(2) Al-Muqaddis Ardabayli — Mulla Ahmad ibn Muhammad of Ardabayl (d. 993 A.H./1585 A.D.). He was the celebrated Shi'ah divine of his time and the leading *mujtahid* from Najaf. Shah Abbas Safavi, the king of Iran, was proud of having an epistle addressed to him by Ardabayli. The epistle begins with the following sentence: 'Abbas-e Safavi ra'ilm meedarad,' i.e., 'Abbas, the Safavi is informed.' The text of the letter is given by Professor Brown in the *Literary History of Persia*. Ardabayli is credited with many spiritual wonders and having had the honor of direct contact with the soul of the first Imam, 'Ali, who sometimes used to order Ardabayli to contact the last Imam in the mosque of Kufa, three and a half miles away from the shrine of 'Ali. The anecdotes of Ardabayli are given in detail in *Qisas al-'Ulama* by Tunkabuni Muhammad ibn Sulayman (d. 1302 A.H./1889-1890).

(3) Syed Muhammad Mahdi, son of Syed Murtaza Tabataba'i of Najaf, known as *bahar al-'ulum*, the ocean of knowledge, was revered by all the contemporary Shi'ah divines, including his teachers and seniors; and Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita, the eniment jurist of his time, considered it a matter of honor to clean with his turban the sandals of this divine. He was born in 1155 A.H. at Karbala and died in 1212 A.H./1797 at Najaf. Shaykh Muhammad Hasan, the noted jurist, author of *Jawahir al-Kalam*, describes *bahar al-'ulum* as the master of wonders and miracles. There are numerous authentic evidences to his credit of having direct contact with the last Imam (vide *Qisas al-'Ulama* by Tunkabuni and *Najm al-Thaqib* by Nuri).

There is a story of *Jazirat al-Khizra*, the Green Island, the present abode of the twelfth Imam, which is not traceable at present by the usual means. However, the legendary nature of some of the stories evolved round the lives of godly men, do not justify the rejection of authentic accounts relating to their lives. It does not mean that all the recorded miracles and wonders are imaginary or fabricated.

Sunni scholars

The names of 50 distinguished Sunni scholars, who have faith in and confirmed al-Mahdi's birth, growth, occultation and reappearance, are given below:

1. Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad ibn Yusuf Ganji, Shafi'i, is the author of *Akhbar-e Sahib al-Zaman* and *Kifayat al-Talib*, in praise of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. The author died in 658 A.H.

2. Shaykh Nuruddin 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Sabbagh, Malaki, resident of Mecca who has written *Fusul al-Muhimma* about the twelve Imams of the house of the Prophet.

3. Muhiuddin Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-'Arabi (known as Ibn 'Arabi), Hanbali, in his celebrated book *Futuhat* (Ch. 366) gives a detailed account of the birth of al-Mahdi, son of al-'Askari and of his reappearance before the resurrection day.

4. Abu Muhammad 'Abdallah ibn Ahmad ibn Ahmad ibn Khashab, who is known as Ibn Khashab, has given a detailed account of the twelfth Imam in his biographical work on the twelve Imams of the house of the Prophet.

5. Shaykh 'Abdallah Shi'rani (d. 905 A.H.), the celebrated Sufi, in his work *Yaqaqeet*, Ch. 66 deals with the birth and occultation of the twelfth Imam.

6. Shaykh Hasan 'Iraqi who accepts the twelfth Imam, praises Shi'rani as a pious and learned ascetic, and narrates the story of Shi'rani's meeting with the twelfth Imam.

7. Syed 'Ali, known as Khawas, the teacher of Shi'rani, also a believer in the twelfth Imam, confirms what Shaykh Hasan asserts about the meeting of Shi'rani with the twelfth Imam.

8. Nuruddin Abdul Rahman ibn Ahmad (known as Mulla Jami), in his book *Shawahid al-Nabuwah* (The evidence of the prophethood of Muhammad) gives an account of the birth of the twelfth Imam and his statement is in complete accord with what the Shi'ahs record.

9. Ibn Hajar Macci, Shafi'i (d. 974 A.H.), in his well-known book *Al-Sawaiq* has mentioned the twelfth Imam as a boy of five at the time of the demise of his father al-'Askari and says God had gifted him with divine wisdom.

10. Muhammad ibn Mahmud (known as Khawja Parsa) in his book *Fasl al-Khitab* gives the account of the birth and occultation and reappearance of the twelfth Imam.

11. Shaykh Abdul Haq Dehlawi, in his book *Jazb-e Qulub* narrates the statements of Hakimah, daughter of the ninth Imam who was asked by the eleventh Imam, al-'Askari, to stay with Narjis, mother of the last Imam during the night at the end of which she gave birth to her son. Hakimah stated that she was there when the baby was born clean, circumcised and with glowing features. She took him to his father. He put his hand on the back of the baby and put his tongue in his mouth and performed all the customary rites of reciting *adhan* in the right ear and *iqama* in the left ear. Then he handed over the baby to her to carry him to his mother. Hakimah stated that afterwards she went to her nephew Imam al-'Askari and saw the baby dressed in yellow clothes. She found a fascinating halo round the child and it made her seek some information about the newborn. The Imam said, 'O my aunt, behold, this newborn is the one whose birth we were awaiting and whose advent was prophesied by all the vicegerents of God.' Then she said, 'I prostrated on the ground, thanking God for the good news.' She used to call on her nephew from time to time. Once she did not see the baby and asked Imam al-'Askari about him. The Imam replied, 'We have entrusted the baby to the one whom the mother of Musa (Moses) had entrusted her son.'

12. Sayyid Jamaluddin Hussaini Muhaddith is the author of the celebrated book *Rawdat ul-Ahbab*. According to *Dayar-e Bakri*, Mulla 'Ali Qari, Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlawi and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, *Rawdat ul-Ahbab* is one of the reliable sources of reference. The author mentions the twelfth Imam in the most reverential terms. He says, 'The auspicious birth of the

pearl of the vicegerency and the precious form of the mine of guidance took place on the 15th of Sha'ban in the year 255 Hijrah at Samarrah.' He described the Imam by the following titles: *Mahdi al-Muntazir* (the expected Mahdi), *Al-Khalaf ul-Saleh* (the righteous successor) and *Sahib al-Zaman* (the Lord of the time), and narrates that al-Mahdi was five years old when his father al-'Askari departed from this world, but the giver of all bounties, Allah, has bestowed on this bud of the flowerbed of guidance the wisdom as He had bestowed on Yahya (John the Baptist) when he was a baby. So the son of al-'Askari has attained the status of the Imam in his childhood (in Rabi ul-Awwal 261 A.H. in the reign of Mu'tamad Abbasi). It was in the underground apartment of his residence at Samarrah that people saw him for the last time. Then the author narrates eloquently the account of the pleasure that the righteous devotees of the *Ahl al-Bayt* would have at the time of the appearance of the last vicegerent of God who would defeat all the wrongdoers and the unjust, and would make truth and justice prevail throughout the world.

13. Abdul Rahman Sufi in his work *Mir'at ul-Asrar* (the Mirror of Mysteries) states: 'This is in remembrance of the sun of faith and might, the leader of all nations and religions, the purified successor of Ahmad, the Prophet, the rightful Imam, Abul Qasim, M H M D (the abbreviations of Muhammad), al-Mahdi, the son of Hasan al-'Askari. He is from the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and he is the twelfth. His mother's name is Narjis. His birth took place at dawn of Friday, the 15th of Sha'ban, 255 A.H. at Samarrah. The twelfth Imam's name and *kunyat* (M H M D) are the same as those of the holy Prophet. His holy appellations are Mahdi and Hujjat (the expected one). He was five years old at the time of the death of his father. He occupied the seat of *Imamat* in the manner as the Almighty God bestowed upon Yahya, son of Zakariya, when he raised Jesus to the lofty state when he was a baby. Thus, the last one in the chain of *Imamat* was made an Imam by God in his childhood. His attainments and supernatural deeds are so numerous that it

is not possible to relate them in this short sketch.'

14. 'Ali Akbar, son of Asadullah Maududi, a scholar of the later period. In his book *Makashafath* (Visions), which is a commentary on *Nafahat al-Uns* by Abdul Rahman Jami asserts the existence of the expected al-Mahdi as being the pole of guidance after his father Imam Hasan al-'Askari, who was also the pole of guidance and *Imamat*.'

15. Ahmad ibn Hashim al-Baladhuri is one of the great scholars and traditionists who also asserts the *Imamat* and occultation of the twelfth Imam.

16. Malikul ul-'Ulama Dulatabadi is a well-known scholar who in his work *Hidayat al-Sa'ada* has confirmed the *Imamat* and the occultation of al-Mahdi.

17. Nasr ibn 'Ali Jahzami Nasri is one of the reliable reporters of traditions whom Khatib of Baghdad has praised in his historical work; and Yusuf Ganji Shafi'i, in his book *Manaqib* has introduced Nasr as one of the masters of Bukhari and Muslim. Nasr asserts the existence of *Qaim-e al-e Muhammad*, the one among the Imams of the house of the Prophet whose duty is to establish Islam throughout the world.

18. Mulla 'Ali Qari, one of the great traditionists, in his famous work *Mirqat* mentions the celebrated statement of the holy Prophet that after him there would be twelve successors as *khalifs* (caliphs). Mulla 'Ali says that according to the Shi'ahs, the twelve *khalifs* mentioned here are the successive Imams of the house of the Prophet. Whether they are in power or not makes no difference; they are the rightful Imams. Later, he mentions their names, beginning with 'Ali and ending with al-Mahdi. He says that it is in accordance with what is stated in detail by Khawja Muhammad Parsa in his work *Fasl al-Khitab* and followed by Nuruddin Abdul Rahman Jami in his work *Shawahid al-Nabuwath* Mulla 'Ali says that both Parsa and Jami have mentioned the virtues, attainments and supernatural deeds of the Imams.

19. Kazi Jawad Sibti was a Christian but later became a Muslim. He wrote *Barahin-e Sibtia* (Proofs forwarded by Sibti). It is written in refutation of Christian writers. He narrates the prophecy from Ashaya (Joshua), concerning the coming of a godly man from the chosen branch of the chosen lineage of Adam who would be the seat of the divine spirit. In other words, he will be filled with the spirit of wisdom, sympathy, justice and knowledge and will be God-fearing. God would bestow on him a sound and glowing reason and make him firm in godliness. His judgement would be based not only on apparent evidence but unimaginable insight. The writer has refuted the interpretation of the said passage by the Jews and Christians, and states that it is a clear prophecy about the coming of al-Mahdi, about whom the Muslims are unanimous that his judgement shall not be based on mere hearing an external evidence, but he will have divine insight about everything and judge people according to what they really are in their hearts. He further says that his method of judgement is peculiar to him and has not been adopted by any Prophet or vicegerent of God. The Muslims are unanimous that the Mahdi of this description shall be the descendant of Fatimah, daughter of the Holy Prophet and his name, nature and features will be the same as those of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. But some Sunnis say that the name of his father will be 'Abdallah and his mother's name will be Aminah, and the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ahs firmly believe that he is the son of Hasan al-'Askari, in Samarrah, during the reign of Mu'tamid-e 'Abbasi. He disappeared for some time, and will reappear and judge the world by means of his deep insight. This view of the Shi'ah seems to be the real interpretation of the prophecy.

20. Shams al-Din Abul Muzaffar Yusuf known as Sibt Ibn Jawzi, author of *Tadhkirat al-Khawass* (d. 654 A.H.), writes about the Twelfth Imam as follows: 'He (al-Mahdi) is Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Musa al-Riza,' and, tracing him to 'Ali, he further says, 'His paternal appellation is Abu 'Abdallah and Abul Qasim: he (the Twelfth Imam) is the last successor (of the Prophet).' According to the writer he is the last Imam of the house; he is the

'authoritative proof' of God (*al-Hujjat*), the master of the time (*Sahib al-Zaman*), and the expected one (*Muntazar*). Then the writer refers to the statement of Abul Aziz ibn Mahmud ibn Bazaz, who narrated from 'Abdallah, son of 'Umar, that the Holy Prophet had said that during the last days of the world, a person will rise from among his descendants whose proper name and parental appellation (*kunyat*) would be the same as his and that he would fill the world with justice which was as yet full of injustice.

21. Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Hasan al-Bayhaqi, the famous Shafi'i jurist (d. 458 A.H./1066 A.D.), has confirmed the birth of the son of al-'Askari and his being the expected Mahdi.

22. Shaykh Sadruddin, known as Hamavi (from Hama, a town in Syria), has written a book about the last Imam of the house of the Prophet. Shaykh Aziz ibn Muhammad known as al-Nasafi quotes from the book of Sadruddin Hamavi, 'In the religions before the advent of our Holy Prophet Muhammad there was no name or appellation of *wali* or saint. The term then used was *nabi* or prophet. All godly persons who were in close communion with God and who were the carriers of divine laws were called *anbia* or prophets.

In every religion the holy one was the law-giver and his successors who inherited his status and protected and preached his teachings were called Prophets. From Adam to Nuh, from Nuh to Ibrahim, from Ibrahim to Musa and from Musa to 'Isa (Jesus), all the successors in different religions were termed Prophets; but with the advent of the new religion and the new teachings brought by Muhammad, the last Prophet, God selected twelve persons from the house of Muhammad and made them the heirs of Muhammad and all that God had gifted him with the book, wisdom and the great kingdom. God let the twelve be in close communion with Him and He distinguished them with the privilege of having the status of *wilayat*. The famous saying of the Prophet, 'The learned ones are the heirs of the Prophet' refers only to these twelve persons. The other

saying of the Holy Prophet, 'The learned ones from among my followers are the same as the Prophets from among the children of Israel,' also refers to these twelve. But the last *wali*, who is the last successor of the Prophet and is the twelfth *wali* in the chain of *awlia*, is Mahdi, *Sahib al-Zaman*; his appellation and title, should not be used for any one else.' Nasafa continues to quote Shaykh Hamavi to the effect, the saints (*awlia*) in this world are not more than the aforesaid twelve, and the three hundred and sixty persons, who are termed as *Rijal al-Ghaib* (the invisible persons), those incognito are not called *awlia* (saints). They are termed *abdals* (alterable saints).

23. Husain ibn Moinuddin Maybudi, in his commentary on the collection of poems ascribed to Imam 'Ali, says: 'I hope that by the grace of the giver of all bounties, our eyes will receive the light from the dust of the threshold of the twelfth Imam and the whole structure of our personalities will be illuminated by the rays of the most universal and comprehensive sun of truth and reality. It is not difficult for God to respond to this prayer favourably.'

24. Shaykh Ahmad Jami, as quoted by Qanduzi, author of *Yanabi al-Mawaddah*, and Qazi Nurullah, author of *Majalis al-Mu'minin*, has composed the following lines:

My heart is fine and bright with love of Hydar.
Next to Hydar, Hasan is our guide and leader.
Like a dog, I am lying down on
the threshold of Abul Hasan.
The dust beneath the shoes of Husain
is the eyeliner (*surmah*) for my eyes.
'Abidin, the ornament of all devotees
is like a crown on my head.
Baqir is the light of both my eyes.
The religion of Ja'far is true and the path of Musa is right.
O, loyal ones: listen to me praising the king of kings (Raza)
who is buried in Khurasan.
A particle from the dust of his tomb is the cure of all pains.

Leader of men of faith is Taqi, O dear Muslims.
If you love Naqi in preference to all other people,
you have done the thing which is proper and right.
'Askari is the light of the eyes of both Adam and the world.
Where can be found, in the world,
such a chief in command like Mahdi?

The poets have composed poems to get silver and gold, but Ahmad Jami had done so, because he is the devoted slave of the king of the saints ('Ali).

25. Fariduddin 'Attar of Nishapur, the celebrated Sufi saint about whom Rumi has said, 'Attar has made tour of all the seven cities of love, and we are still stranded at the bend of the street and have not yet covered it.' Qanduzi quotes the following lines from 'Attar's work: *Manifestation of Divine Attributes*':

Of the messengers of God, Mustafa is the last in the world.
Of the saints (*awliya*) in close communion with God,
Murtada is manifestly the top.
All the issues of Hydar are saints.
All are made of the same light, God has declared that.

After giving the names of the Imams of the house, Attar continues:

There are hundreds and thousands of godly men
of saintly status on earth, who admire Mahdi
and pray for his advent.
O my God! bring out Mahdi for me
from the veil of occultation so that
the universal justice may become evident.
Mahdi, the guide, is the crown
on the head of all the pious ones.
Of the twelve saints of the House, he is the most shining one.
O the One with whom the chain of saints (*awliya*)
of the time ends and is sealed, Thou art hidden from all.
O the soul of souls. O the One who is both evident and hidden

behold that Thy slave, Attar is praising Thee.

26. Jalaluddin Muhammad of Balkh, known as Maulavi Rumi, migrated from Tabriz to Qunya in Asia Minor, settled and died there in the year 672 A.H. His *Mathnawi* is the unrivalled masterpiece of the loftiest presentation of Islamic thought in mystic garb. He is also the author of the lyrical work *Divan-e Shams Tabriz.* This work is the outburst of his extreme love and veneration for his mystic master, Shamsuddin Tabrizi.

Here is one of Rumi's lyrics:

O 'Ali! O head and chief of the real men;
all of them salute thee.
O 'Ali, O foremost of men, all of them salute thee.
Tell the killer of the infidels, the religion and the religious one,
tell Hydar, the doubtless warrior,
all drunk with love, salute thee.
Tell the casket of the two precious gems,
Tell the zodiac house of the two shining stars
(Fatimah, the daughter of the Holy Prophet),
Tell Shabbar and Shabbir;
tell each of them, all drunk with love, salute thee.
Tell 'Abid, the ornament of religion,
Tell Baqir, the light of religion,
Tell Ja'far, the truthful,
tell each of them, all drunk with love, salute thee.
Tell Musa, the forebearer,
Tell the learned one, buried in Tus,
Tell the straight one (who is holding the affairs firm),
tell each of them, all drunk with love, salute thee.
Tell Hadi, the chief in charge of religion,
Tell 'Askari, the guided one,
Tell Mahdi, the guided saint,
tell each of them, all drunk with love, salute thee.
Tell the vernal breeze,
Tell the lucky one,

Tell Shams of Tabriz, all drunk with love, salute thee.

27. Shaykh Salahuddin Safdi (d. 764 A.H.) was the master of the mystic significance of the alphabets, and author of *Sharh-e Dai'yrah* (The Explanation of the Circle). As quoted by Qanduzi in *Yanabi*, Safdi said: 'The promised Mahdi is indeed the same twelfth of the twelve Imams, the first of whom is our master, 'Ali, and the last of whom is Mahdi.'

28. Shaykh 'Amir ibn Basri has composed an eulogy called *Qasidah Tayya*. The composition contains theosophical lore, maxims, mystical points and matters of etiquette. It is divided into twelve pieces, each termed as a piece of light; the ninth piece is about the recognition of the master of the time, and the time of his reappearance. Of the pieces three lines are quoted here:

O, Imam Mahdi! How long will you be hidden?
Oblige us, O our father with thy return!
We feel sad the waiting time is prolonged.
For the sake of thy Lord, bless us with thy audience,
O the pole of existence! Hasten, O our beloved!
Return, so that we may enjoy thy sight.
Surely, it is a great pleasure
for a lover to meet his beloved after a long absence.

35. Husain ibn Hamdan al-Husaini in his work *Al-Hidaya* mentions the twelfth Imam, the master of the time, as the son of the eleventh Imam, Hasan al-'Askari.

36. The well-known biographer, Ibn Khallakan in his work *Wafyat al-A'yan* has given a brief account of the birth of the Imam.

37. Ibn al-Azraq, as quoted by Ibn Khallakan, asserts the existence of the twelfth Imam.

38. Ibn al-Wardi, the historian, in his work asserts the birth of the son of al-'Askari in 255 A.H.

39. Syed Mumin Shablanji in his work *Nur al-Absar* gives the genealogy of Imam M H M D (abbreviation of Muhammad) as the twelfth Imam, and his various titles and appellations.

40. Abul Fawz Muhammad Amin al-Suwaidi of Baghdad, the genealogist, in his work on the tribes of Arabs, *Sya'ak al-Dhab*, after mentioning the names of the twelve Imams of the house, confirms the existence of Mahdi, and that he (Mahdi) was five years old when his father al-'Askari passed away.

41. Muafaq ibn Ahmad, known as *Khatib Khawarzum*, refers to other works in this connection and confirms it.

42. Syed 'Ali Hamdani in his famous work *Mawadat al-Qurba* asserts the existence of the twelfth Imam.

43. Shaykh Muhammad Sabban Mesri in his work confirms the existence of the twelfth Imam of the house of the Prophet.

44. Abdul Falah Abdul Hyi Hanbali in his work *Shuzarat al-Sahab* asserts the birth of the Mahdi.

45. Al-Sayyid Nusaimi has mentioned the twelfth Imam on the authority of Al-Qanduzi.

46. Shaykh Abd al-Rahman 'Ali ibn Ahmad Bastami, as quoted by Qanduzi, confirms the existence of the Mahdi, a descendant of Husain and gives his brief description in eulogistic terms.

47. Shaykh Abdul Karim Yamani's poem in praise of the Mahdi has been quoted by Qanduzi.

48. Shaykh Sulayman ibn Ibrahim, known as *Khawajah Kalan* (the senior-most), is from Qanduz in Balkh and a famous Sufi (d. 1294 A.H./1877 A.D.). He is the author of the famous book *Yanabi al-Mawaddah*, which is the outcome of his extensive research. He has established from important Sunni sources that love for the *Ahl al-Bayt* is the only right path, an Islamic way of life. He believes in the twelve Imams from the house of the Prophet.

49. Qazi Fazlullah Rozbahan has written books against the

Shi'ahs, particularly against Allama Hilli, the famous Shi'ah divine during the 9th century A.H., but believes in the existence of the twelfth Imam as a blessing.

50. Rashiduddin of Delhi in his work *Al-Imam al-Ithna 'Ashar* (The Twelfth Imam) confirms the existence of the Imam, as the title indicates.

There are many other prominent scholars of the Sunni school who are firm believers in the twelve Imams in general, and the last one in particular. They believe in the same manner as the Shi'ahs believe.

In 1343 A.H., when the author of these lines himself had the honor of pilgrimage to the holy shrine of Mecca (the Ka'ba) and the holy mosque of Madina (Masjid al-Nabavi), the names of the twelve Imams of the house, along with the names of the first four caliphs, the four Imams of the Sunni school of *fiqh*, and some other Sunni religious leaders, were found inscribed round the walls of the holy mosque. Once a Sunni scholar, who is a friend of the author, told me about his impression when during his pilgrimage he found the names of the twelve Imams there. He said that when he saw the inscription in the Holy Prophet's mosque, he thought that it was quite natural to expect the names of the Sunni religious leaders inscribed there, because the holy shrine had always been administered by Sunni rulers. With the exception of a few years of the Fatimid rule in the Hijaz during the 4th century A.H., no Shi'ah ruler had any domain over there or had the opportunity to insert the name of the twelve Imams. He reasoned that the presence of the names of the holy Imams was entirely due to their spiritual attributes. This is the force of knowledge and spirituality which kept their names alive in the hearts of the true Muslims in spite of a well-organized opposition.

Apostates

Besides the four recognized genuine deputies of the twelfth

Imam, a few apostates also posed as the nominated agents of the Imam during the minor occultation. But their apostatic and inconsistent views and practices on the one hand, and the epistles from the Imam repudiating them on the other, exposed them. The result was that the heretical movement died in its infancy and could not form a separate sect. But their tactics set a pattern for the latter day claimants and imposters.

1. Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Numayri

Muhammad ibn Nusayr al-Numayri tried to rival Muhammad ibn 'Uthman al-'Umari, the second deputy, and claimed to be the nominated agent of the last Imam. But al-'Umari being the recognized deputy of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth Imams was too strong an opponent for a person like al-Numayri, who was already condemned by the tenth Imam for his heretical views and activities. Al-Numayri had claimed the tenth Imam to be God and himself to be a prophet sent by him. He believed in transmigration and incarnation and was accused of allowing marriages which were prohibited by Islam, and other obnoxious practices. He was a disciple of Muhammad ibn Musa al-Shari'i, and 'Ali ibn Haska ibn Baba, one of his main associates, who was also condemned and cursed by the tenth Imam, 'Ali al-Naqi. He may be considered as one of the ring-leaders of the ultra-Shi'ahs of his time (in the 3rd and 4th centuries A.H.). The origin of this particular sect can be traced back to the first half of the first century Hijrah. It was named Nusayri after Muhammad ibn Nusayr. The prevailing political conditions of the time provided an opportunity for such apostates to revive their un-Islamic creed. The ruling authority went all out to suppress the Shi'ah faith. Imam 'Ali al-Naqi and his son, the eleventh Imam, Hasan al-'Askari, were under house arrest at Samarrah. Their devotees had few opportunities of having an audience with the Imams freely. The movements of both the Imams and their followers were strictly watched by the government, so these imposters could easily approach the credulous Shi'ahs and poison their minds with false claims. When the Imams or their recognized deputies denounced their

claims, the claimants interpreted the denunciation as a sort of *taqiyah* (dissimulation). Nevertheless, the Shi'ah faith in its true form was so well-established at that time that no one but the ignorant or self-interested persons would care for such apostasies. Muhammad ibn Nusayr realized the failure of his attempt and tried to have an interview with Muhammad al-'Umari, the second deputy, but he was refused. Nusayr lived until 300 A.H., unnoticed by the Shi'ahs.

2. Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj

Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj of Baiza (a district of Fars) became a celebrated theosophist of the Sufi order. He lived in the second half of the third century A.H. and was sentenced to death at the end of 309 A.H. All his contemporary jurists of the Sunni and Shi'ah schools of thought condemned him as a cheat pretending to follow the path of the Sufis. He claimed his scholarship in every science but he was ignorant of them all. He knew some occult art of alchemy. He was ambitious, bold and active against the rulers, and used to embark upon great schemes to overthrow the government. To his followers he claimed to be God or His incarnation. He pretended himself before the rulers as a Shi'ah, and for the public he posed as a Sufi. He used bombastic terms of the Sufis which implied his being the incarnation of God. He was questioned by the authorities and the jurists several times. He also claimed to be the agent of the Imam but this was repudiated and he was impeached by the twelfth Imam through an epistle received by Muhammad al-'Umari. He was condemned by the unanimous verdict of the jurists and, therefore, hanged. For almost two hundred years, the man continued to be mentioned by all biographers as an impious impostor till the celebrated Sufi saint, Shaykh Abu Hasan Kharaqani consecrated him among the Sufi saints of the first order. Ever since, he has become the hero of many Sufi legendary wonders. His slogan *An al-Haq* (I am the Truth) is presented by the Sufis as an example of the mystic experience of the union of the finite with the infinite. He became the exemplary hero of the mystic poetry of later periods.

'It is allowed and tolerated, if a tree says, "I am the Truth," why is it not allowed and tolerated if a fortunate man says, "I am the Truth?"' It is a translation of the Persian couplet in his appreciation. A legend narrates that when Hallaj was hanged, a few drops of his blood fell on the ground and they formed the letterings on the ground: 'I am the Truth.'

To prove the saintliness of a person, according to the Sufis, there is no need for any evidence of his accomplishments, knowledge or piety. Such accomplishments are rather considered as hinderances to saintly attainments. For proof of a person's saintliness, the dream or vision of a recognized saint of Sufi order is reliable. The time distance between the consecrated one and the consecrator is ignored. Let the Sufis have al-Hallaj elevated to whatever station they like, but he has no representative status on behalf of the twelfth or any previous Imams of the house.

3. Al-Shalmaghani

Muhammad ibn 'Ali, known as Ibn Abi al-Azaqir, belonged to Shalmaghan, a village in the district of Waset. At the beginning of his career he seemed to be a true adherent of the Shi'ah faith but he was ambitious. He expected Muhammad, the second deputy, to nominate him as the agent to the Imam after him. But contrary to his expectations and those of many others, he nominated Abul Qasim Husain ibn Ruh Nowbakti as his successor, and the third deputy of the Imam. So jealousy for Nowbakti forced Shalmaghani to the wrong path. He was denounced and cursed in the epistle of the twelfth Imam received by Abul Qasim Husain ibn Ruh. For his apostasy, he was sentenced by the jurists to death in 322 A.H.

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