

Indian Secular Society

THE BOOK OF FAITH

From the *Da'ā'im al-Islām* (Pillars of Islam) of
al-Qāḍī al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad al-Tamīmī

Translated from the Arabic

by

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INTRODUCTION

The *Da'ā'im al-Islām* (The Pillars of Islam) of Cadi al-Nu'mān b. Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad b. Ḥayyūn al-Tamīmī al-Maghribī is the masterpiece of the author. It is divided into two volumes; the first dealing with belief, faith, and rituals; and the second, with legal matters. The *Pillars* is considered to be one of the four fundamental works of the Western (Musta'lian) Ismā'īlīs,¹ the others being the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*,² *Rāḥat al-'Aql* of Ḥamid al-dīn al-Kirmānī³ and *Majālis al-Mu'ayyadīyya* of al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-dīn Abū Naṣr Hibat Allāh b. Mūsā al-Shīrāzī⁴. It is mentioned by authorities too numerous to mention, and is supposed to have been composed at the behest of the Caliph/Imām al-Mu'izz li-dīn Allāh.

The life of the author in its bare outline is well known⁵. He served four Fatimid Caliphs, Maḥdī, Qā'im, Maṣṣūr and Mu'izz, and died in Cairo, 363 A.H./974 A.D.

The first volume of the *Pillars* contains seven chapters, which are each devoted to the "Seven Pillars" of Islam. According to Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (DM, I, 6), the seven pillars are—

- (i) *al-Walāya/Wilāya* (devotion to the Imām/the authority and the Plenipotency of the Imām);⁶
- (ii) *al-Tahāra* (ritual purity), including *al-Janā'iz* (funerals);
- (iii) *al-Ṣalā* (prayer);
- (iv) *al-Zakā* (poor tax);
- (v) *al-Ṣawm* (fasting);
- (vi) *al-Hajj* (pilgrimage);
- (vii) *al-Jihād* (holy war).

The first chapter translated herein is the largest and the most important in the book. It comprises 98 pages, divided into 195

¹Asaf A. A. Fyzee, *Compendium of Fatimid Law* (Simla, 1969), and references in the introduction; M. Goriawala, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Fyzee Collection of Ismaili Manuscripts*, (Bombay, 1965), No. 28.

²Goriawala, Nos. 3-9.

³*ibid.*, Nos. 53-54.

⁴*ibid.*, Nos. 66-72.

⁵Asaf A. A. Fyzee, *JRAS*, 1934, 1-32: *Com. Fat. Law*, op. cit.

⁶On *walāya/wilāya*, see Fyzee, *Shiite Creed* (Bombay, 1942; reprinted by University Microfilms, XEROX, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1971), 96, footnote 6.

paragraphs, roughly a fourth of the first volume. It deals with *īmān* (faith), *islām* (belief), *walāya/wilāya* (devotion to the Imām/ the authority and Plenipotency of the Imām). The word is vocalized in two different ways and construed accordingly, as the context demands, but quite often both connotations seem to be possible.

As the completion of the translation of vol.I will take some time, the first chapter, which is independent and deals with faith, belief and the Imāmate, its establishment and perennial subsistence, is being published separately in the first instance. It is an early statement of the faith of Western Ismā'īlīs in its *ẓāhir* form and is of importance for religious and theological studies relating to the time of Imām Mu'izz, fourth Fatimid Caliph/and 14th Imām of the Ismā'īlīs in the fourth/tenth centuries.

The references in this translation to the text of the *Da'ā'im* are to the paragraphs, not the pages (Vol.I, third printing, Cairo, 1389/1969; Vol.II, second printing, Cairo, 1387/1967).

The *Pillars* has been translated into Urdu by Yūnus Shakīb Mubārakpūrī (Vol. I, 2nd ed., Surat, 1969; Vol. II, 1st ed., Surat, 1968). The translation is on the whole painstaking, reliable and useful; but in certain cases, it is but natural that I should have the temerity to differ from him.

Three works for understanding the text of the *Pillars* have appeared recently. They are (1) *al-Urjūzat al-Mukhtāra* by Cadi al-Nu'mān, ed. Ismā'il K. Poonawala, Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. Published and distributed by the Trading Office, P.O. Box 2668, Beirut, Lebanon, 1970, (2) *Ta'wīl al-Da'ā'im* by the same author, ed. Muḥammad Hasan al-A'ẓamī, Dar El Maaref, Cairo, 1969, and (3) *Kitāb Ikhtilāf Uṣūli'l-Madhāhib* by the same author, edited by S. T. Lokhandwalla. Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. This was published in December 1972, and came to me too late for use in this book. It is one of the most important works of Nu'mān and I hope to refer to it when the translation of Vol. I is completed.

The *Urjūza* is most useful as it deals with and confirms in metrical form most of the topics dealt with in the *Book of Faith*. It is admirably edited, with a critical introduction by the editor. The editing of the *Ta'wīl*, however, leaves much to be desired. The edition is based upon manuscripts which are not described; no variants are given. The introductions to the two volumes contain much matter which, although interesting, is not germane to the issue. There are

no indexes. The printing is excellent, as it comes from one of the leading houses in the Arab world; but how such a text could be published without indexes and proper *apparatus criticus*, seems strange. The *Ta'wil* deals with the esoteric teaching of the author comprised in the *Pillars*, and is not of much utility for our purposes. My translation is concerned only with the *zāhir* of the religious principles. It aims at a proper rendering of the text according to its plain and literal meaning. Its esoteric connotation must be left to those who specialize in the sciences known as *ta'wil* and *ḥaqā'iq*, a unique feature of the religion of the Musta'lian Ismā'ilīs, containing fanciful explanations, elements of Pythagorean and neo-Platonic philosophy and other myths, legends and philosophical speculations.

Many problems, such as the details of the author's life and character, the chronology and the authenticity of his works, whether he was an Ismā'ilī from the very beginning, or whether he was a Mālikī, or an Ithnā 'Asharī for some time, and what was his exact relationship with each of the four Imāms he served, are problems upon which unfortunately I can throw little light. My friend Dr. Ismail K. Poonawala is specializing on Nu'mān and his work; and it seems better to wait for his scholarly contributions on the subject. Possibly, by the time the whole work has been translated, we may be in a better position to write a fuller introduction, to prepare a glossary of selected words and phrases, and generally add to the meagre information we possess at present.

The Book of Faith consists of verses of the Koran, traditions of the Prophet, reports of the sayings and actions of the Imāms, mainly from Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, and discussions by the author Nu'mān. A break-up of the text gives the following result:

(a) Verses of the Koran.....	243
(b) Traditions of the Prophet.....	32
(c) Sayings of 'Alī the Prince of the Faithful.....	23
(d) Reports from Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir.....	29
	Total.....
	84
(e) Reports from Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.....	88
	Grand Total.....
	172
(f) Discussions by the author.....	41

It is thus clear that the *Book of Faith* purports to be in the main the teaching of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the fifth Imām of the Ismā'īlīs and the sixth of the Ithnā 'Asharīs.

Additionally there are a few sayings and anecdotes of the following personages:

Three Fatimid Imāms are mentioned: Mahdī, once (Para. 88); Qā'im, once (89), and Manṣūr, once (loc. cit.). It is very significant that Imām Mu'izz, who inspired the composition of the *Pillars*, and at whose behest the book was written, is not mentioned even once in this chapter on faith.

The three Sunnite jurists, deemed as Imāms in *fiqh*, are mentioned as follows:

Imām Abū Ḥanīfa, five times (179, 180, 183, 186, 187);

Imām Mālik, once (179);

Imām Shāfi'ī, once (loc. cit.).

The actions and sayings of three Sunnite Caliphs are also discussed: 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, three times; Abū Bakr, once; and 'Uthmān, once.

The other individuals discussed are:

'Abbas b. al-Muṭṭalib; Ibn Abī Laylā; Abū Lahab; Abū Baṣīr; Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī; 'Amr b. Udhayna; Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; and Rabī'a b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān. Each is mentioned once, except Ibn Abī Laylā who appears twice.

The first volume of the *Pillars* comprises 407 pages of Arabic text, divided into seven chapters and 1578 paragraphs. The *Book of Faith*, the largest and most important chapter, 98 pages, divided into 195 paragraphs, comprises roughly a quarter of Vol. I of the *Da'ā'im*.

An important observation relates to the principles of *isnād* in the science of *ḥadīth*. The contents of the *Pillars* shows that it is a work midway between the style of *fiqh* books and *ḥadīth* literature. The reports will be judged by the science of *ḥadīth* criticism and the remarks of Nu'mān and others, by the canons of legal works. Imām Ja'far appears more often than all the earlier authorities put together—The Prophet, 'Alī and Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir. He died in 148/765,⁷ and lived two centuries earlier than Cadi Nu'mān who died in 363/974. There is no connecting link between them.

Each of the *riwāyāt* (reports) in the book begins with *ruwīnā 'an* (*takḥfīf* for *ruwīnā*) which signifies: "It is *authentically* reported

⁷*Ency. of Islām*, I, 993.

to us from...that..."; or simply "From...", abbreviated from the above phrase. This raises the question why the author consistently refuses to state the complete *isnād*, according to the usual rules and practice. There is no satisfactory explanation for the author's practice. In the present state of our knowledge, speaking critically, it is safe to assume, with the majority of Bohora *shaykhs*, that the book, having been written under the orders of Imām Mu'izz and having been revised chapter by chapter by the Imām himself, derives its authority from the "living Imām," and therefore no *isnād* was necessary. The *Da'ā'im* was written by one of the Chief Missioners of Imām Mu'izz who had the secret rank of Chief Justice, although the public and official designation was probably not conferred upon him.⁸ Thus, what authority can be higher and what reason, more cogent? Nevertheless the *Pillars* must, in the twentieth century, be treated by critical scholars, as the undoubted work of Nu'mān, the greatest jurist of the Fatimids, and a legal corpus of the highest authority and sanction.

In fact, Nu'mān is the one and only jurist of the Fatimid school; their legal literature is meagre in comparison with that of other schools of Islamic law, and Nu'mān is the head of a negligible band of legists—a *maestro* in his own right.

There is also no complete and satisfactory evidence of the chronology of Nu'mān's legal works, or how they are related to one another. That the *Da'ā'im* is an abbreviation of a voluminous work, the *Īdāh*, now lost, is tolerably clear; but the question of his other works, almost equally authoritative, remains unsolved. When the edition of *Ikhtilāf Uṣūli'l-Madhāhib*, in preparation by Dr. S. T. Lokhandwala,⁹ is completed and published, and when we have further contributions by Dr. Ismā'il K. Poonawala, more light is likely to be thrown on this vexed but very important question.

As the book is short, a summary of its argument is all that seems sufficient at present.

The Book of Faith is divided into eleven sections. The author begins by saying that as correct traditions have disappeared and forged ones circulated, he was compelled to write a brief treatise comprising all the necessary topics. The "seven pillars" of *īmān* (which I have rendered as "faith") are so designated by Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir. The most important of these is *walāya*, the

⁸Fyzee, in *JRAS*, 1932, 13f.

⁹*Com. Fat. Law.* xxxii, but, see above p. iv.

devotion due to the Imām and its twin expression, *wilāya*, his great authority, both spiritual and temporal.

In establishing the doctrine of Imāmate, Nu'mān shows his acumen, ingenuity and learning. The author speaks as an able lawyer from his brief. It is an extraordinary thesis, if the plain and unvarnished words of the Koran are to be taken at their face value. The four schools of Sunnite jurisprudence taught that there are five main institutes of orthodox Islam; to these the Fatimids added *walāya/wilāya* (devotion/authority) and *ṭahāra*, ritual purity, because the Koran uses the expression "thorough cleansing" in a certain context. In Musta'lian Ismā'ilism, the process of cleansing by God is applied especially to the five members of the Prophet's family—the Prophet, 'Alī (his cousin), Fāṭima (his daughter and 'Alī's wife), Ḥasan and Ḥusayn (his grandsons by 'Alī and Fāṭima). Above all is their authority (*wilāya*), and consequentially, the devotion (*walāya*) due to them, involving love, submission and obedience. This is done by taking the Ghadīr Khumm incident and interpreting it to mean the establishment of an Islamic "church", which has similarities with the Catholic concept of the Papacy. The first Imām, 'Alī, was nominated and proclaimed by the Prophet himself; 'Alī appointed his eldest son Ḥasan; Ḥasan appointed his brother Ḥusayn; Ḥusayn appointed his son 'Alī (Zayn al-'Abidīn), and accordingly the succession goes on till the Day of Judgement. And he who does not possess knowledge of the "living Imām", dies a pagan—"dies the death of the Days of Jāhiliyya".¹⁰

Much can be said about this doctrine, its origin and parallels; but this is a brief treatment of the subject and I would content myself with referring to the earlier work of Bernard Lewis, Hodgson, and Dr. Zāhid 'Alī.¹¹

These two—*ṭahāra* and *walāya*, when added to prayer, poor tax, fasting, pilgrimage and holy war, make up the "seven pillars" of Islām. Seven is a charismatic figure in the esoteric sciences of the Ismā'ilīs, and the number therefore has an additional value.

¹⁰DM, I, 48 f. On the necessity of recognizing the Imām see W. Ivanow, *Ismā'īlīya*, I & II, *Mem. of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1922, Vol. VIII, pp. 1-76.

¹¹B. Lewis, *The Assassins* (London, 1967), Chap. ii; M.G.S. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins* (The Hague, 1955), 7 ff.; Zāhid 'Alī, *History: Ta'rikh Fāṭimīyyīn-e Miṣr*, Hyderabad, Deccan, India, 1367/1948, and *Religion: Hamāre Ismā'ilī Madhhab ki Ḥaqīqat aur uskā Nizām*, Hyderabad, Deccan, India, 1375/1954. Both in Urdu; the most authoritative discussion extant on the history and religious beliefs of the Western Ismā'ilism.

Another difference between the generality of believers and Ismā'ilīs, is the distinction between *islām* and *īmān*. The Koran uses the two words *aslammā* and *āmannā*; and their meaning cannot be the same. *Islām* is the outer crust; *īmān* the inner kernel. Imām Bāqir described this graphically by drawing two concentric circles on the palm of his hand, one within the other; and likened *islām* to the outer and *īmān* to the inner circle; hence, I use the terms "belief" for *islām* and "faith" for *īmān*. *īmān* has three elements: profession by tongue, belief with conviction, and above all, action in conformity with principles. This dictum attributed to Imām Ja'far is substantially the same as that propounded by the Sunnite Imām Abū Ḥanīfa. Thus the doctrine goes back at least to two centuries earlier, the period between Abū Ḥanīfa (died 150 A.H.) and Nu'mān (died 363 A.H.), or to use oriental rhetoric—between the times of "the two Nu'māns," who have accidentally the same *kunya*, Abū Ḥanīfa.

Nu'mān goes on to show that not one of the terms of the definition can be eliminated with impunity. Apart from the frailty of mere words, especially in a school of thought where precautionary dissimulation was declared by Imām al-Ṣādiq as an essential article of faith¹², action is fundamental. Neither the belief in the Imāmate nor the necessity of action (*'amal*) could be dispensed with in the early stages of the foundation of the Fatimid state. Hence neither faith without action, nor action without faith, is sufficient.

Now action is not merely "good works" in general, a term well known to readers of the Koran or modern theology. Each limb of the human body has its particular rights and obligations, and will be answerable to God. Furthermore, faith is not a static and unchangeable concept. It is a living organism; it may increase or decrease; it has its grades and stations. This is similar to the doctrine of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*,¹³ that enigmatic work which richly deserves a critical edition, translation and commentary by one who, apart from being an Arabist, is a master of the Greek and Latin languages, Greek for ancient philosophy and Latin for medieval thought.

Another peculiarity of the devotion due to the Imāms is the variety of forms of salutations and blessings to which the Prophet

¹²DM, I, 86 (faith); DM, II, 464-465 (actions in which *taqiyya* is not permissible; B. Lewis, *The Assassins*, 25; *Com. Fat. Law*, p. 142.

¹³*Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'*, ed. Khayr al-Din al-Zarkalī, IV (Cairo, 1347/1928), 126; Goriawala, *op. cit.*, Nos. 3-9.

and the Imāms, as his Plenipotentiaries (*awliyā'*) and Vicegerents (*awṣiyā'*), are entitled.

Now comes the fundamental doctrine, the establishment of the Imāmate and its everlasting transmission and existence. The Prophet appointed 'Alī as his *walī* (which I have rendered, plenipotentiary, although an exact translation seems impossible) and his *waṣī* (vicegerent). The first term emphasizes the authority he wields; the second, the directions which he receives from his master, the Prophet. The incident of Ghadīr Khumm is well known and the report in the *Pillars* conforms with the usual traditions on the subject (para. 28; there are numerous references, both open and veiled, about this incident, throughout the *Book of Faith*). As 'Alī was appointed by a prophet, he has naturally a higher rank as *walī* and *waṣī* than the other Imāms. After 'Alī comes his eldest son Ḥasan; and then Ḥusayn, the brother of Ḥasan. After Ḥusayn there is a filial succession of Imāms till Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the fifth Imām of the Western Ismā'īlis and the sixth, according to the Ithnā 'Ashariyya. This follows from the doctrine that 'Alī has a higher rank than the Imāms after him.

In the development of the later doctrine there are further complications: son does not always follow son, sometimes a trustee-Imām (*mustawda'*) holds the Imāmate in trust for the *mustaqarr* (fixed or established). With these later refinements we are not concerned here, for, this is the earliest phase of the dogma which has been described by Nu'mān. The same doctrine is laid down specifically in the *waṣīyya* of 'Alī in the second volume, para. 1297, and a translation was offered in *The Ismaili Law of Wills*.¹⁴

The question of the transference of the Imāmate from this analysis is as follows—first cousin—eldest son—brother—son—son—son; this raises the problem of succession in an acute form, and is answered by Nu'mān as follows:

“When 'Alī died Ḥasan was entitled to the Imāmate in preference to Ḥusayn by the argument of priority in time; and this follows from the Koranic verse, *The foremost in the race are the foremost* (56, 10); thus Ḥasan was anterior to Ḥusayn and therefore his right was greater. And when Ḥasan died, he had no right to allocate the Imāmate to his progeny, because his brother was his coeval in purification. [This has already been discussed by the author earlier] The Imāmate came to Ḥusayn by priority, in preference to the descendants of Ḥasan... Now, when Ḥusayn died, he had

¹⁴*Ismaili Law of Wills* (Bombay, 1933), para. 9 (text and translation).

no right to return the Imāmate to the sons of Ḥasan, in preference to his own, by the force of the word of God the Glorious and Mighty . . . and those who are akin are nearer one to another in the Book of God (8, 75). As Ḥusayn's sons were nearer akin to him than the sons of his brother, Ḥasan, they had a greater claim to the Imāmate. Thus this verse excludes the sons of Ḥasan and awards the Imāmate to the sons of Ḥusayn. Now this office—the Imāmate—will continue among the descendants of Ḥusayn till the Day of Resurrection¹⁵.”

It will be conceded that this is an ingenious argument in defence of the first six Imāms, reconciling Koranic command with tribal custom. But the later history of the Imāmate creates many difficulties which are outside the scope of this book. It may, in passing, be observed that Nu'mān has already dismissed the claims of Fāṭima, although, she is the daughter of the Prophet and the mother of the Imāms, for, she has no claims to the high office on account of her sex.

The station of the Imām, as the infallible preserver and “proof” of the faith, is far above the common people. The Imāms are not deities, but only creatures of God. The beliefs of the extremists, attributing divine powers to them, or receiving revelations, is unsound. It is Satan who misguides such erring persons and leads them to perdition.

Section (vii) deals with the moral injunctions given by the Imāms. These contain wisdom from many sources, Semitic as well as tribal. Obedience to the Imāms is an essential part of *walāya*. Love for the Prophet's kinsfolk is the cornerstone of faith. The Imām's secrets ought to be closely guarded, lest he come to harm from enemies. Precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*) is a fundamental article of faith; it is the dictum of Imām Ja'far who says: *taqiyya* is my faith and the faith of my fathers¹⁶.” A special kind of loving-kindness is due to the Imāms (*mawadda*) and is to be reserved exclusively for the members of the House of the Prophet. The prayers and good works of the faithful are acceptable to God only if accompanied by love and devotion to the Imām. Acts of piety and good works, without such love, are not accepted by God. Salvation is confined exclusively to those who believe in, and act according to, the principles of *walāya*.

¹⁵DM, I, 65 (end). The establishment of the Imāmate is to be found in the *Waṣīyya* of 'Alī, DM, II, 1297 and is translated in the *Ismaili Law of Wills*, op. cit.

¹⁶DM, I, 96, 239, 475; II, 464.

The acquisition of true knowledge is very necessary for the faithful. 'Alī declared it to be obligatory on every Muslim to acquire knowledge. It is incumbent on the Faithful to listen attentively to words of knowledge, to commit them to memory, to act according to its principles and to publish it. It is a matter of common experience that true learning may be conveyed by a person to another who is superior to him in the knowledge of religion or law. Although most of these reports use the generic term, 'ilm, knowledge, the real import is that the term 'ilm is applied mainly, if not exclusively, to sacred as distinguished from secular learning.

A man of learning should not bend his knee before the temporal authority; else he is unreliable as a spiritual guide. He should be humble, not arrogant, and ready to confess his error or lack of knowledge. The Imāms are repositories of knowledge given to them by divine favour. Deriving knowledge only from the Imāms, or, failing them, from their accredited representatives, is a religious duty. Acquiring knowledge from them leads to salvation; but obtaining it from others is dangerous and leads to perdition.

The doctrine of *qiyās* (deductive reasoning) is unsound. Islam is the perfect form of religion as laid down by God. Only that which comes from Almighty God, or His Prophet, or the Imāms, is worthy of acceptance. The Imāms possess knowledge in perfection. Following unsound opinions, based upon human reasoning, as distinguished from divine revelations, leads to the Fire.

The true meaning of the Koranic verse: *This day have I perfected your religion for you, and completed My favour on you...*(5, 3) is that all matters whatsoever, past, present and future, were laid down by God for man through the Koran and the Prophet Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and no scope for human reasoning remains in matters of law and religion. If the true believer has doubts regarding any question, he should ask the living Imām of his time, who possesses knowledge of all things, perfectly and exhaustively. It is also possible, in the alternative, to gather such learning from the duly appointed agents of the Imām, but from no one else.

This in brief is the teaching of the *Book of Faith*, shorn of all unnecessary details. A fuller discussion has not been attempted by me, as the material for it is not available in Bombay. But it is my hope that when the translation of the two volumes is completed, fuller information on several topics not touched by me may be possible. Meanwhile, a serviceable translation, with the minimum

of annotation, may serve the needs of both the scholar and the general reader. It may well exemplify the words of the Prophet:

“ Many a man of learning, is not a jurist; and many a jurist (may convey) knowledge to one who is more learned than him ” (DM, I, 151), *ka mithli' l-ḥimār yaḥmilu asfārā* (Kor. 62, 5).

THE PILLARS OF ISLAM

PROLOGUE

1. All praise to God, with Whose praise (this book) is undertaken; and the blessings of God upon Muḥammad, His Messenger and creature, and on all the Pure Imāms of the Prophet's House.

At the present time religious claims and legal opinions have increased in number. Schools of law and religious predilections have come to differ. Traditions have been forged, and the community has been divided into sects and sub-sects. And a majority of (the correct) traditions have disappeared, and innovations have grown and flourished. All the misguided sects have elected leaders from among the ignorant. The people, thus, have considered licit what is illicit, and unlawful what is lawful, according to the views of such misguided leaders. This has been done by following and obeying commands (of leaders) without proof from the Koran or usage (*sunna*), and by accepting a consensus derived neither from the Imāms nor from the (true) community. Thus we remembered the words of the Prophet; "You will surely follow the practices of the earlier communities like a flock of sheep."¹ The community has become as God has informed us in His Book about former races: *They have taken as their lords beside God their rabbis and their monks* (Kor. 9, 31), save those whom God has protected by the obedience due to Himself and His Messenger and His Friends, which was obligatory on them.

2. And it is correctly related to us² from Imām Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq that he read this verse and said that they (the misguided-

¹Literally, "They shall follow the paths of former people even as a horse-shoe follows upon a horse-shoe, or an arrow-feather an arrow-feather, to the extent that if they (the former generations) entered the hole of a lizard, they (the present generation) too would surely do the like. And in another tradition: they shall walk the paths already existing cubit by cubit, and the length of a fore-arm by another (or "with might and main", Wehr), so that if the previous generations entered the hole of an insect (or a bee), they too would do so."

A graphic description of *taqlid* according to the Arabic idiom. This is shortened and an English idiom used.

²Reading *ruwīnā* for *ruwūnā*, see Introduction to DM, I, 12 (Eng.), 23 (do.), and 19-20 (Arabic). For a similar usage, see Ḥasan b. Zayn al-dīn b. 'Alī b. Aḥmad al-Āmilī, *Ma'alim al-Uṣūl*, p. 16, l. 8.

ed ones) neither fasted for themselves nor prayed for the Imāms. On the other hand, their leaders permitted them as lawful things that were unlawful, and so the people considered them to be lawful; and similarly when their leaders forbade things that were lawful, the people considered them to be forbidden.

3. And from the Prophet. He said: When innovations appear in my community, let the learned man make manifest his knowledge; but if he does not do so, the curse of God be upon him.

4. So, when we found the matter as stated above, and God gives us guidance, we intended by God's grace to compose a book, brief but exhaustive of all that is necessary, easy to remember and easy of access, and such as to render reference to lengthy and correct reports superfluous. The reports are taken from traditions reported on the authority of the Imāms of the House of the Prophet, avoiding those about which the traditionists have differed, concerning *The Pillars of Islām, and the mention of lawful and unlawful things and decisions, and binding rules of law.*

5. And from Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Islām is based upon seven Pillars:

- (1) *walāya* (Devotion to the Imām) or, *wilāya*, (Power, authority) and this is the most excellent; and through it and the Imām, the true knowledge of the faith can be obtained;³
- (2) *ṭahāra* (Ritual purity);
- (3) *ṣalā* (Prayer);
- (4) *zakā* (Poor Tax);
- (5) *ṣawm* (Fasting);
- (6) *ḥajj* (Pilgrimage); and
- (7) *jihād* (Holy war).

THE BOOK OF DEVOTION (*WALĀYA*)

These, then, are the *Pillars of Islam*. We shall deal with them after *imān* (faith), without which no human acts are acceptable to God, nor can man be righteous before God unless he is a believer in the

³On *walāya/wilāya*, see Fyzec, *Shiite Creed* (Bombay, 1942), page 96, footnote 6; DM,I, page 14, footnote 1.

true faith. And we shall correlate *īmān* with an account of that which is lawful and unlawful; and decisions and rules; for, obedience to them is an act of piety. We shall also deal with the obligatory rules of purchases and sales, drinking and eating, divorce, marriage, inheritance and evidence, and the other topics of law which are well authenticated and obligatory. We ask God for His help and grace, by which alone is righteousness obtained. He is sufficient for us and the best of agents.

(I) OF FAITH (ĪMĀN)

6. It is correctly related to us from Imām al-Ṣādiq that faith (*īmān*) consists in professing by tongue, believing with conviction and acting according to its principles. This, and nothing but this, is valid. It is not correct to assert with Murjites that faith consists in belief without action; nor is it correct to say with a group of the commonalty⁴ that faith consists only in "word and deed" (that is, without faith).

And how can the doctrine of the Murjites be correct, that belief without action constitutes faith? They and the community are unanimous in holding that he who forsakes the obligatory acts as laid down by God (in the Koran) for his creatures, and disbelieves in it, (faith) is an unbeliever. And if he persists in such disbelief, it is lawful to put him to death. (And this is so) though he believes in God and proclaims his belief in His unity and in His Prophet by word of mouth, save and except that he asserts that "this obligatory act is not one which the Prophet commanded." (For instance) God says: *And woe unto the idolaters, who do not give the poor-tax* (41, 6-7). So, God removed them from the faith by their denial of the poor-tax. For the same reason, the community agreed to declare the blood of the tribe of Banū Ḥanīfa⁵ and the enslavement of their children to be lawful. They were designated as renegades because they denied that the poor-tax was obligatory.

7. And from Imām al-Ṣādiq who said: My father (Muḥammad al-Bāqir) may God be well pleased with him, said one day to Jābir b. 'Abd al-lāh al-Anṣārī⁶: O Jābir, has God made the poor-tax obligatory upon the idolator? He said: No, He has made it obligatory only on the Muslims. I (The Imām) said: I shall tell you; have you not considered the word of God: *and woe be to the idolaters, who do not give the poor-tax?* (41, 6-7) Jābir said: By God, it is as though I had never read the verse, although it really occurs in the Book of God!

⁴*amma*, as distinguished from *khāṣṣa*, the select community, the truly faithful (*mu'minīn*), see the Shiite lexicon *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*, s. v. *amma*.

⁵*Enc. of Islam*, II, 260.

⁶Tūṣī, *Rijāl*, 9; Kashī, *Rijāl* (Bombay, 1317), 27; Hilli, *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl* (Tehran, 1311), 18; *Urjūza* (Ed. Poonawala), 853, 856.

Imām al-Šādiq said: The verse was revealed in respect of those who associated others in the devotion due to the Prince of the Faithful ('Alī b. Abī Tālib), and gave the poor-tax to him who stood up against him. But the full details regarding this question are too extensive.

8. The assertion of a certain group that faith consists in profession and action without intent (*niyya*) is impossible; for, they are unanimous in thinking that if a man were to abstain from food and drink for the whole day till night; yet, if he had not conscientiously resolved to fast, he is not considered to be fasting. And similarly, even if a man were to stand (*qāma*) and bend (*raka'a*) and prostrate himself (*sajada*), and yet there is no intent to pray, he has not prayed; and even if a man were to halt at 'Arafa, and his purpose is not to perform the *hajj*, he has not performed the pilgrimage; and if, without the intention to pay the poor-tax, a man gives away the whole of his wealth in charity, he has not fulfilled the obligation to pay it; and this rule applies to all the obligatory acts. Thus, what the Imām said is proved—namely, that faith (*īmān*) consists of profession (*qawl*), and action (*'amal*), and intent (*niyya*); this rule and no other is sound.

9. And from the Prophet. Verily, actions can be judged only by intentions. A man obtains a reward only for that which he intends. Thus he, who abandons his home for the sake of God and His Prophet, will be rewarded for his emigration. But he, who emigrates to marry a woman, or for worldly considerations, will be adjudged accordingly.

10. Faith (*īmān*) consists in testifying that there is no deity other than God; He is alone, without associate and Muḥammad is his creature (*'abd*) and his Messenger; the Garden and the Fire and the Resurrection are verities; *The Hour (of Judgement) will surely come: there is no doubt concerning it* (22, 7); in believing faithfully in the Prophets (*anbiyā'*) and Messengers (*rusul*) of God; in knowing the Imām of the time and accepting him faithfully, obeying his commands without question; and acting in accordance with what God has rendered obligatory and avoiding what has been prohibited; and obeying the Imām and accepting what comes from him.

11. And from Imām al-Šādiq: someone asked him about the act which is most excellent in the eyes of God. And the Imām said: That without which no act is acceptable to God. The man said:

and what is it? The Imām said: Faith in God is of all acts the most exalted; in worth, the most noble; in recompense, the most profitable.

The questioner said: I asked the Imām: Tell me about faith, is it profession *with* action, or profession *without* action? He said: Faith consists entirely in action, and profession is part of action. Action is made obligatory by God, and is clear from His Book; its light is manifest, and its proof well-founded. The Book bears witness to it, and invites (man) to it. And the questioner said: (Please) make this clear, may I be thy ransom (O Imām), so that I can understand it (faith). The Imām said: Verily, faith possesses circumstances and stages, grades and stations. In faith, there can be total perfection; or else, it may be imperfect, and the imperfection may be manifest; or it may be preponderant (*rājiḥ*), its preponderance being clear. The questioner said: Can faith achieve perfection, and does it decrease or increase? The Imām said: Yes. And I said: And how so? And he said:

God, the Blessed and Exalted, has made faith compulsory on each organ of man, and has divided and clarified it in such a manner that to each one of them a duty is allocated which is not allocated to another. For instance, there is the heart which reasons, and deduces, and understands, and it is the commander (*amīr*) of the body, and no organ acts or moves without the heart's volition and command. And among the limbs are the eyes which endow the body with sight, and ears by which we hear, and arms with which we seize, and feet by which we walk, and the private parts whereof the frontal organs possess sexuality, and the tongue by which we speak, and the head wherein is the face. For each of these organs an obligatory duty of faith has been laid down by God in His Book which is not laid down for any of the others. Thus the heart has duties by which the hearing is not bound; the ear has duties by which the tongue is not bound; and the tongue has duties not laid down for the two eyes; and what is laid down for the eyes is not for the hands; and the hands are bound by duties which are not for the feet; and the feet are bound by duties which are distinct from those of the pudenda and the duties of the private parts are other than those that are ordained for the countenance.

12. Now, what is obligatory on the conscience, in respect of faith, is affirmation and knowledge and allegiance and willing submission that God, the Blessed and Exalted, is one (*wāḥid*). There is no

deity other than God, who is without any associate, Unique (in substance), One (in number), everlasting, who has neither an equal nor a son. That Muḥammad is His creature ('*abd*) and His Messenger (*rasūl*), the blessings of God on him and on his progeny. And acceptance of what comes from God, from the Prophet (*nabī*) or the Book. This is what is obligatory on the conscience concerning affirmation and knowledge.

God, the Mighty and Glorious, says: *whoso disbelieveth in Allah after his belief save him who is forced thereto and whose heart is still content with the faith—but whoso findeth ease in disbelief* (16, 106). And says He, the Mighty and Glorious: *Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest!* (13, 28). And He says: *...such as say with their mouths: "We believe", but in true hearts believe not...* (5, 41). And says He, the Mighty and Glorious, *If ye do good openly or keep it secret...* (4, 149). And says He, the Mighty and Glorious: *...and whether ye make known what is in your minds, or hide it, God will bring you to account for it* (2, 284). This is the affirmation and knowledge which God has ordained for the heart (conscience) of man. This is the action which is the kernel of Faith (*īmān*). And obligatory on the tongue is speech and clarification; and the true meaning of *qalb* (conscience, heart) is what is resolved and affirmed by the heart. And so, He says, Blessed and Exalted is He: *Say (O Muslim): We believe in God and that which is revealed unto us (through Muḥammad) and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets received from their Lord, we make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered* (2, 136; cp. 3, 84).

And He said: *...and speak kindly to mankind...* (2, 83).

And He said: *Speak words straight to the point* (33, 70).

And He said: *And say (this is) the truth from your Lord* (18, 29); and the like of these (verses) in which God, the Mighty and Glorious, has spoken of *īmān*. This, then, is what God has ordained for the tongue, and that is its function.

13. And it is ordained for the sense of hearing that it should listen to what God has commanded and that it should abstain from listening to what God has declared to be unlawful; and should not deem lawful the things which have been prohibited and should hearken to that which angers God. He (God) says concerning this: *He hath already revealed unto you in the Scripture that, when ye hear the revelations of God rejected and derided, (ye) sit not with them (who disbelieve and*

mock) until they engage in some other conversation. Lo! in that case (if ye stayed) ye would be like unto them (4, 140). Then, at another place, He excluded (certain persons): And if the devil cause thee to forget, sit not, after the remembrance with the congregation of wrong-doers (6, 68). And He said: Therefor give good tidings (O Muḥammad) to my creatures. Who hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom God guideth, and such are men of understanding (39, 17-18). Thereafter He said: Successful indeed are the believers. Who are humble in their prayers, and who shun vain conversation, and who are payers of the poor-due (23, 1-4). And He said: And when they hear idle talk they withdraw from it (28, 55). And He says: ...when they pass by senseless play, pass by with dignity (25, 72). This, then, is what God has ordained for the ear regarding abstention from unlawful things, and this is its (proper) function.

14. And God has forbidden the eye to look at things which He has declared to be unlawful, and to avert itself from what is illicit. This is its proper function, and it is part of faith. And says He, the Blessed and Exalted: *Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be chaste (24, 30). This signifies that a man should not look at the private parts of others; nor should he expose himself indecently. Then said Imām al-Ṣādiq: All the verses of the Koran speaking of protection of the pudenda are parts of (the general regulations of) zinā (illicit intercourse), except this verse. For, verily, this deals (only) with sight. And then God coordinated all His commands to the conscience, the tongue, the ear and the eye in one verse, and said: (O man), follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo! the hearing and the sight and the heart, each of them will be questioned (17, 36). And says He, The Mighty and Glorious: Ye did not hide yourselves lest your ears and your eyes and your skins should testify against you (41, 22). And the meaning of skins is the private parts and thighs. These are the obligatory rules laid down by God for the eyes which are required to avert their gaze from what is forbidden by God, and this is their proper function, and it is part of faith.*

15. And God has ordained for the hands that they should not seize what God has forbidden, and should take (only) what He has permitted. And God has made charity, love of kindred, and defensive war in the way of God (*jihād*) and ritual purity in prayer, compulsory. God says: *O ye who believe, when ye rise up for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbow, and lightly rub your heads and your feet up to the ankles. And if ye are unclean, purify yourselves (5, 6.)*

The Fatimid sectarians read *arjulikum*). And the Almighty says in another verse: *O ye who believe, when ye meet those who disbelieve in battle, turn not your backs to them* (8, 15). And He said: *Now when ye meet in battle those who disbelieve, then it is smiting of the necks until, when ye have routed them, then make fast the bonds; and afterward either grace or ransom...*(47, 4). This also is what God has laid down for the hands, for smiting is a treatment prescribed for them. And this is part of faith.

16. Walking in the obedience of God and not in paths forbidden, and going in directions whereby He is well pleased, is the duty ordained by God for the feet. God says in this connexion: *And walk not on the earth exultant. Lo! Thou canst not rend the earth, nor canst thou stretch to the height of the hills* (17, 37). And He says: *Be modest in thy bearing and subdue thy voice. Lo! The harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass* (31, 19). And He said: *O ye who believe! When the call is heard for the prayer of the day of congregation, hasten unto remembrance of God and leave your trading* (62, 9). And He said:... *And go round the ancient House (Ka'ba)* (22, 29). And concerning what the hands and feet will testify (on the Day of Judgement) regarding themselves, how they and other organs have fulfilled the commands and interdictions of God, God says: *This day we seal up their mouths, and their hands speak to us, and the feet bear witness as to what they used to earn* (36, 65). This, too, is what God has ordained for the two hands and the two feet; and that is their proper function in regard to faith.

17. And God has commanded the face to prostrate itself by night and in the morning at the hours of prayer, and God says: *O ye who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves, and worship your Lord, and do good, that haply ye may prosper* (22, 77). And this is a duty common to the face, hands and feet. And He said in another place: *And the places of worship are dedicated only for God, so do not pray to any one along with God* (72, 18). This is what God has ordained for the limbs respecting ablutions and prayers.

And God has named prayer "faith" in His Book and this (for the following reason). Verily, when God changed the face of His Prophet in prayer from Jerusalem towards the Ka'ba, and ordered him to pray towards it, the Muslims said to the Prophet: Tell us! How will the prayers we used to say in the direction of the Sacred House (Jerusalem) be considered (by God) and what will be our

position? And so God, the Mighty and Glorious, revealed the following: *But it was not God's purpose that your faith should be in vain, for God is full of pity, merciful toward mankind* (2, 143). And He called prayer by the name of faith.

When a man meets God having protected all his limbs (from illicit actions) and all his limbs having fulfilled the direct commands of God, he meets his Lord in the perfection of faith and is one of the people of Paradise. But he who has deceived God in the slightest thing, and disobeyed Him, comes to God as one imperfect in faith.

The questioner said: O son of the Messenger of God (that is Imām al-Şādiq), I have understood the perfection and the imperfection of faith; but how can faith increase? Can you adduce any proof for it? The Imām said: God the Glorious and Mighty has revealed an account of this in His Book, and said: *And whenever a sūra is revealed there are some of them who say: Which one of you hath thus increased in faith? As for those who believe, it hath increased them in faith and they rejoice (therefor). But as for those in whose hearts is disease, it only addeth wickedness to their wickedness, and they die while they are disbelievers* (9, 124-25). And He says: *We narrate unto thee their story with truth. Lo! They were young men who believed in their Lord, and we increased them in guidance* (18, 13).

18. Now, if faith were a single (unalterable) entity, and there is no decrease or increase in it, there would be no excellence in one person over another (in respect of faith). God's bounties would be distributed equally, and the people would all be equal and gradations of excellence would be void. But, in reality, it is by the completion of faith that the faithful enter Paradise; by the impulsion towards it and increase of faith the faithful excel one another in the eyes of God, and by defections in it, the sinners enter Hell.

The questioner said: I asked: Are there grades and degrees in faith which create priorities among the faithful in the eyes of God? The Imām said: Yes. I said: Explain it to me how this is, so that I may understand it. And he said: Verily, God the Glorious and Mighty gives precedence amongst the Muslims in the same manner as horses are ranked on the day of racing, and then He receives them according to their precedence in His eyes. He then gives to each person his proper rank without decreasing it, according to his deserts. The follower does not precede the leader, nor does the beneficiary come before the benefactor. According to this principle, the first among men takes precedence of the next after him. It

follows (from our reasoning) that 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, the blessings of God upon him, was the most excellent of the faithful, because he it was who first believed in God among them. If excellence were not determined by priority in the acceptance of the faith, verily, the last to become a Muslim would possess equality with the earliest.

Yes, indeed; and many of the later ones would have precedence over several of the earlier ones; for, we find that among the later faithful ones there are many who perform their religious duties more abundantly than the earlier ones. They surpass the earlier ones in prayer, in fasting, in the performance of the pilgrimage, in waging holy war, in charity. If priority were not determined by time, we would find many of the later ones outstripping the earlier in the performance of religious duties. But God, glorious be His praise, has denied to the later the rank of the earlier ones in respect of faith. God has, verily, not given precedence to him who has come later, just as He has not given a lesser station to one whom He has placed ahead.

19. The questioner said: Tell me, O Imām how has God assigned priority in faith among the faithful? The Imām said: God the Mighty and Glorious, says:

Race one another for forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whereof the breadth is as the breadth of the heavens and the earth (which) is in store for those who believe in God and His Messengers (57, 21). And He says: And the foremost in the race are the foremost. They are those who will be brought nigh (56, 10-11). And He says:

And the foremost are the earliest among the emigrants (muhājirūn) and the Helpers (anṣār), and those who followed them in goodness—God is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him (9, 100).

And He said: *And (it is) for the poor fugitives who have been driven out from their homes and their belongings, who seek bounty from God, and help God and His Messenger. They are the loyal (ones) (59, 8).*

And He said: *Those who entered the city and the faith before them love those who flee unto them for refuge, and find in their breasts no need for that which hath been given them, but prefer the fugitives above themselves though poverty become their lot. And whoso is saved from his own avarice—such are they who are successful. And those who come (into the faith) after them say: O Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in the faith, and place not in our hearts any rancour toward those who believe. O Lord! Thou art full of Pity, Merciful (59, 9-10).*

Thus God began with the first Emigrants (*muhājirūn*), ranking them according to the order of priority. He gave the second rank to the Helpers (*anṣār*) and the third to the Followers (*tābi'ūn*) in (His) kindness. God classified each community according to their ranks and stations with Him, and mentioned the faithful in the order of their ranking in respect of (His) forgiveness, and mentioned His friends (*awliyā'*), ranking some of them above others, and the Mighty and Glorious says:

Of these messengers, there are some whom we have caused to excel others, and of whom there are some unto whom God spake, while some of them He exalted (above others) in degree; and we gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs (of God's sovereignty) and we supported him with the holy spirit (the Angel Gabriel) (2, 253).

And He said: *And We preferred some of the Prophets above others (17, 55); and He said: There are degrees (of grace and reprobation) with God (3, 163), and He said: He giveth His bounty unto every bountiful one (11, 3).*

And He said: *Those who believe, and have left their homes and striven with their wealth and their lives in the way of God are of much greater worth in God's sight. These are those who are triumphant (9, 20). And He said: God hath conferred on those who strive with their wealth and lives a rank above the sedentary. Degrees of rank from Him, and forgiveness and mercy (4, 95-96). And He said: Those who spent and fought before the victory are not upon a level (with the rest of you). Such are greater in rank than those who spent and fought afterwards. Unto each hath God promised good (57, 10). And He said: God will exalt those who believe among you, and those who have knowledge to high ranks (58, 11).*

20. These are the ranks of faith; its stations, and its aspects; and the degrees of believers; and their priorities in excellence. Priority cannot be attained without faith (*īmān*). And one who is lacking in faith or has lost it altogether does not profit (merely) by his precedence or priority (in time). God the Mighty and Glorious says: *And whoso denieth the faith, his work is vain (5, 5).*

Imām al-Ṣādiq, said concerning the word of God: *And whoso denieth the faith, his work is vain...* (loc. cit.), his disbelief (*kufr*) consists in his abandoning the works ordained for him. And this likewise confirms what we have said before, that faith consists in word, act and belief. There can never be word, act and belief without faith and affirmation, for then alone is faith completed. And he who asserts and acts and believes the contrary of the faith and the truth, cannot be a


believer. His works will not benefit him, howsoever much he abases himself. God says: *And we shall turn unto the work they did and make it scattered motes* (25, 23). And the Mighty and Glorious says: *On that day many faces will be downcast, toiling, weary, scorched by burning fire...* (88, 2-4).

And numerous are the arguments therefor.

(II) OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ISLĀM (BELIEF) AND ĪMĀN (FAITH)

21. God the Glorious and Mighty says: *The wandering Arabs say: We believe (āmannā). Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): ye believe not, but rather say "We submit" (aslamnā) for the faith hath not yet entered into your hearts (49, 14). And He says: They make it a favour unto thee (Muḥammad) that they surrendered (unto Him). Say: Deem not your surrender a favour unto me; nay, but Allah doth confer a favour on you, inasmuch as He hath led you to the faith, if ye are earnest (49, 17). And He says: Then we brought forth such believers as were there. But We found there but one house of those who surrendered (to God, muslims) (51, 35-36).* The obvious meaning of the Book of God clearly establishes that faith (īmān) is one thing; and resignation (islām) is another. They are not one and the same as some of the commonalty assert.

22. And from Imām al-Ṣādiq: *īmān (faith) is included in islām, but islām does not necessarily imply īmān. Resignation is the outward crust (of belief), whereas faith is the inmost and purest (kernel) in the heart. Imām al-Ṣādiq was asked about Faith and Resignation; and he said: Faith (īmān) is what is in the hearts; while (islām) regulates marriage, and inheritance, and by it bloodshed is prevented. Īmān (Faith) necessarily implies islām (Resignation); while islām does not necessarily imply īmān.*

Imām al-Bāqir is reported to have repeated this very tradition (and explained it as follows). He opened his hand, and drew a small circle on his palm, and said: This circle represents the faith (īmān). Then he drew a larger circle around it, thus ⁷ and said: This is the circle of Resignation (islām). He represented islām as the outer circle; and īmān as the inner circle, because it consists principally of the heart's knowledge, as has been explained earlier. For this reason, īmān is part of islām, but islām is not part of īmān, necessarily. It is possible for a man to be a muslim (believer), without being a mu'min (faithful); but no one can be a mu'min (faithful) without being a muslim. This confirms what we said in an earlier chapter that Faith is not complete without the vinculum of niyya (intent).

⁷The two concentric circles here depicted are to be found in all the manuscripts of the *Da'ā'im* that I have seen.

23. It is reported from the Prince of the Faithful 'Alī, the blessings of God upon him, that he was asked: What is faith (*īmān*)? And what is resignation (*islām*)? And he replied: *islām* is affirmation (*iqrār*); while *īmān* is affirmation, plus knowledge (*ma'rifa*). When God gives knowledge to a man regarding himself, his Prophet, and his Imām; and then the man professes his faith in it, he is a *mu'min*. He was asked: Does knowledge come from God, and affirmation from the creature? 'Alī said: Knowledge is a proof; it is a grace; and it is a bounty, from God; while acceptance is a kindness, which God grants to whomsoever He wills. Knowledge is the creation of God within the heart, and acceptance is the act of the heart, which is a gift of the Lord, and a protection and mercy. He to whom God has not given knowledge, will not be guided by any proof. He should pause and avoid (saying and acting about) matters of which he has no knowledge. God will not punish him for his ignorance; He will, on the other hand, requite him for his obedience and punish him for his sins. Nothing happens in these matters except by the destiny (*qaḍā'*) and decree (*qadar*)⁸ of God; by His knowledge and His Book; and without any constraint. For, if there were constraint, then the creature would be deemed to be excusable, although not worthy of approbation. He who is ignorant should turn to us (*imāms*) for understanding what is difficult for him. God the Mighty and Glorious says: *Ask the people of the Reminder (ahl al-dhikr) if ye know not (21, 7).*

24. And from 'Alī, that it was said to him: O Prince of the Faithful, what is the least (action) by which a creature may be considered as faithful (*mu'min*); or a disbeliever (*kāfir*); or misguided (*ḡāll*)?

He said: The least that will make a man faithful is that God may grant him true knowledge of His own self, in order that he may accept obedience (to God), and that God may give him knowledge of His Prophet in order that he may obey him implicitly; and that God may instruct him about His Proof on His earth (*imām*) and His Witness to mankind, so that he may believe in his leadership (*imāma*) and accept him by obedience. It was said: (What happens) if he in his ignorance believes otherwise? 'Alī said: Yes, but when commanded, the creature should obey; and when prohibited, he should desist.

'Alī continued: the least thing that will make him an associater

⁸*qaḍā'* and *qadar* are explained in *Shiite Creed*, 37 f., ft. 5.

(*mushrik*, commonly translated “polytheist”) is when he believes in what has been forbidden by God, and asserts (perversely) that God has so ordered, and then displays enmity towards God in respect of religion, and asserts that he worships what he has been commanded to worship, that is, someone other than God the Mighty and Glorious. And the least that will make a creature misguided is when he does not know the Proof of God on His earth, and His Witness to mankind (*imām*), and thus, is unable to believe in the **Imām**.

(III) OF THE PLENIPOTENCY (WILĀYA) OF THE PRINCE OF THE FAITHFUL 'ALĪ B. ABĪ ṬĀLIB, ON WHOM BE THE BLESSINGS OF GOD, AND ON HIS PROGENY, THE PURE IMĀMS

25. Almighty God says: *Your friend (walī) can only be God, and His Messenger and those who have faith, who establish worship and pay the poor-due, and bow down in prayer* (5, 55).

And from Imām al-Bāqir that one day a man said to him: O son of the Messenger of God, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī⁹ has related to us that the Prophet said: Verily, God sent me with a message (to mankind) but I felt greatly perturbed, and feared that the people would declare me to be false. So God warned me that if I did not convey the message, He would punish me. Imām al-Bāqir said: Did the Prophet relate anything to you about the office of Messenger? Ḥasan said: No. The Imām said: By God, Most certainly the Prophet knew what it was, but he concealed it deliberately!

The man said to the Imām: O son of the Prophet, tell me what it is, may God sacrifice me for thee! And the Imām said: Verily, God commanded the faithful in His Book to pray, but they did not know what prayer was and how to pray. So God ordered His Prophet to explain how prayers are to be said, and the Prophet explained in detail the regulations of prayer. The Koran declared all prayers to be mandatory, but the mention is brief and the Prophet expounded the rules exhaustively, according to his own practice (*sunna*). And the Prophet was the best informed of what was compulsory for the people in regard to prayer.

And God ordered the poor-due, and the people did not know what it was, and so it was the Prophet who explained it in detail. He was the most knowledgeable as to what was to be paid from the gold, and the silver, and the camels, and the cattle, and the sheep and from agricultural produce. He did not omit a single one of the rules which God had ordained regarding the poor-due (to be paid or rendered), but explained it to the people and made it clear to them.

And He ordained fasting, but the people did not know what it was and how they should fast. So the Prophet explained it to them fully, and what they had to believe concerning it, and the manner of fasting.

⁹*Ency. of Islam*, II, 273; See § 123, below.

And God commanded (the community) to undertake the Pilgrimage, and accordingly He commanded His Prophet to explain how it was to be performed and he explained it to them by his own practice (*sunna*).

And, similarly, God ordered (the community) to accept the Plenipotency at 'Alī and He said: *Your friend (walī) can only be God, and His Messenger and those who have faith, who establish worship and pay the poor-due, and bow down in prayer* (loc. cit.=5, 55). Thus did the Lord ordain the devotion due to the possessors of authority (*amr*). And the people did not know what *walāya* was; so God ordered His Prophet, on whom be peace, to explain to them what constituted *walāya* (Devotion) in the same manner as in the case of prayer, poor-due, fasting, and pilgrimage.

26. When this command (to declare 'Alī the Plenipotentiary) came to the Prophet from God, the Prophet was greatly disturbed about his own capacity (*dhar'an*) and was afraid that the community would become renegades and declare him to be false. That was why he was pained, and he turned to His Lord; who revealed the following verse to him:

O Messenger! Make known that which hath been revealed unto thee from thy Lord, for if thou do it not, thou wilt not have conveyed His Message. God will protect thee from mankind (5, 67). So the Prophet declared the will of God, and proclaimed the Plenipotency (*wilāya*) of the Prince of the Faithful, 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, may God bless and salute him, on the Day of the Ghadīr Khumm¹⁰. And a congregational prayer was announced, at which the Prophet commanded that those who were present should convey the tidings to those who were absent. Now, (at that time) the obligatory rules had already been revealed, one after another. An obligatory command would be revealed, and then, later, another would be sent down, and the command relating to *wilāya* was the last to be revealed. Thus God revealed the following verse of the Koran: *This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion, al-Islām* (5, 3).

Imām al-Bāqir said, (in effect) God says: I shall *not* reveal unto you any more mandatory commands after this, for I have perfected (for you) all the obligatory commands.

27. And from the Prophet: He said, I adjure those who have faith in God and in me and have declared me to be truthful, to treat

¹⁰*Ency. of Islam*, II (rev. ed.), 993.

'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as Plenipotentiary. For, truly, devotion to him, is devotion to me, a command which my Lord has given me, and a compact which He has made with me, and has ordered me to convey it to you from Himself.

And it is similarly reported from 'Alī that he said: When God revealed the following verse (to the Prophet): *And warn thy clan of near kindred* (26, 214), the Prophet collected the kindred of Banī Muṭṭalib, and they were forty and more and he served them with a shoulder of mutton and a cup of milk. Now there were a group of ten, who could each have eaten a shoulder and taken a skinful of milk! And yet on that day they ate and drank their fill, and among them was Abū Lahab. The Prophet then addressed them: O Banī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, obey me and you will be the kings of the world and its governors. God had, surely, never sent a Prophet without appointing his Vicegerent (*waṣī*) and his Minister (*wazīr*) and his Heir (*wārith*) and his Brother and his Plenipotentiary (*walī*). Now, which of you will be my Vicegerent (*waṣī*), Heir, Plenipotentiary (*walī*), Brother and Minister? And they remained silent. He then invited each one of them, individually, to accept the responsibility, but all of them refused it. Only one remained, and it was I ('Alī); and I was the youngest of them all. Then he offered it to me, and I said: I, O Prophet of God (accept the honour and responsibility). And the Prophet said: Thou, verily, O 'Alī (art hereby appointed Plenipotentiary).

And when they departed, said Abū Lahab (deridingly): Is not that which you have seen a clear proof of the magic of your friend? He offered you a shoulder of mutton and a cup of milk, and you ate and drank to satiety! So, they began to jest and said to Abū Ṭālib: Today your son has been given precedence over you!

Many of the commonalty (*'amma*) have related from their predecessors the real significance of the Word of God: *Your friend (walī) can only be God, and His Messenger and those who have faith, who establish worship and pay the poor-due, and bow down in prayer* (5, 55), why this was revealed with reference to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. This is so because once a beggar came and stood by 'Alī while he was bending in prayer, and 'Alī (understanding his need) threw his own ring at him (while continuing to pray). This verse was intended for him, and the Imāms descended from him, the blessings of God upon him and all of them.

28. And the incident of Ghadīr Khumm, and the Prophet's stand

on that occasion regarding the nomination of 'Alī as his Plenipotentiary is common knowledge and notorious, to be denied neither by friend nor foe, may God bless him and his progeny.

And when the Prophet returned from the Pilgrimage of Farewell, and came to Gadīr Khumm, he ordered that the ground be cleared and tall trees (*dawhāt*) be cut, and announced a congregational prayer. Then the people foregathered, and the Prophet took 'Alī by the arm and made him stand next to him, and said: O people, know that what Aaron was to Moses, 'Alī is to me, save and except that, surely, there shall be no prophet after me, and he is (my) Plenipotentiary (*walī*) to you after me. Therefore, he to whom I am Master (*mawlā*), 'Alī is his Master. Then he lifted the arms of 'Alī, until the whiteness of his arm-pits was visible (to the people assembled) and said to them: O God, be affectionate to him who is devoted to 'Alī, show enmity to him who is his enemy, give victory to him who helps 'Alī, and forsake him who forsakes 'Alī. May the truth encompass 'Alī to the end of his life. Now, which compact (*bay'a*) can be more binding than this compact and nomination to plenipotency (*wilāya*)?

29. And from 'Alī that some people questioned him about the greatest of all his attainments. 'Alī said: The greatest of my attainments is one which was not due to any action on my part. They said: And what is that, O Prince of the Faithful? And He said: Verily the Prophet when he reached Medina, ordered the construction of a mosque. Every one of his companions opened a door which gave access to the mosque. Then came Gabriel, on whom be peace, and he instructed the Prophet to order them to close their doors but leave mine open. The Prophet sent Mu'ādh b. Jabal who visited Abū Bakr and asked him to close his door; and he said: To hear is to obey, and closed his door. Then the Prophet sent Mu'ādh to 'Umar to do the same. 'Umar however, went to the Prophet and pleaded: O Messenger of God, allow me to leave at least a small aperture so that I may see you with my own eyes; but the Prophet refused, and 'Umar closed the door. Likewise the Prophet sent Mu'ādh to Ṭalḥa, Zubayr, 'Uthmān, 'Abd ar-Raḥmān, Sa'd, Ḥamza and 'Abbās, and asked them to close their doors. And they heard and obeyed. Ḥamza and 'Abbās remonstrated: The Prophet has ordered us to keep our doors sealed, but 'Alī's door has been excepted. The Prophet heard this and said: What you have said concerning the closing of the

doors has reached me. By God, I have not done this, but it is the act of God. Verily God had revealed to Moses to take for himself a pure house and no one to be adjacent to it, except himself, and Aaron and his two sons¹¹. That is, no one could enter the pure house in a state of impurity except the persons named. And God has revealed to me that I should take this house in a state of purity. No one except myself, 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn can lead marital life therein. I swear by God that I did not order the closure of your doors; it was not I, who opened the Gate of 'Alī, but God who ordered me to do it.

30. The people said: Please explain this more fully, O Prince of the Faithful. And 'Alī said: Once upon a time there came to the Prophet two Christian scholars and they spoke to him concerning Jesus. And God revealed the following verse to the Prophet: *Lo! the likeness of Jesus with God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him of dust...*(3, 59), to the end of the verse. Then the Prophet came, and took me, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn and Fāṭima by the hand, and went out for the Imprecation (*mubāhala*)¹². He raised his hands upwards and turned the palms towards the sky, leaving space between the fingers, and invited the two scholars to join in the Imprecation. When the two scholars saw him (the Prophet), one of them told his companion: By God, if he is a Prophet, we shall be destroyed; and if he is not a Prophet, his people will be sufficient (to destroy him for us); and so, the two scholars desisted, and went on their way.

31. The people said: Give us more information, O Prince of the Faithful. And 'Alī said: Verily, the Prophet sent Abū Bakr to the people assembled for Pilgrimage to read to them the chapter of the Koran entitled *Barā'a* (*Sūra* 9, also *Tawba*). Then Gabriel descended to the earth and said: O Muḥammad, no one can deliver the message (to the people) on your behalf except 'Alī. So the Prophet sent for me, and ordered me to ride his she-camel *al-'aḏbā'*,¹³ to overtake Abū Bakr, obtain the chapter on the *Barā'a* from him, and read it to the people at Mecca. Accordingly, I read the chapter to the people of Mecca, and Abū Bakr said: Is this due to any displeasure? I said: Not at all, it is only this, that the Prophet has

¹¹W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford, 1953), 16.

¹²See *ba-ha-la*, *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*; also *Ency. of Islam, Sup.* 150.

¹³The Prophet's own mount, *Qāmūs* and *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*.

received a revelation that none except a man from his family shall deliver a message from him. Now when we reached Mecca, and it was the Day of Sacrifice after the *zuhr* prayer, the Greater Pilgrimage (*al-Hajj al-Akbar*)¹⁴, I stood up and spoke to the people assembled:

“Lo! I am the messenger of the Messenger of God sent to you,” and I read to them: *Freedom from obligation (is proclaimed) from God and His Messenger toward those of the idolaters with whom ye made a treaty. Travel freely in the land four months (9, 1-2), that is 20 days of Dhū'l-ḥijja, Muḥarram, Ṣafar, the whole of Rabī', I, and 10 days of Rabī', II. And I said: No naked man or woman shall walk round the (Sacred) House, nor a polytheist, whether male or female. And, mind well, anyone who has a compact with the Prophet and the Members of his House, the period for him is these four months. And 'Alī said: The word al-udhun, the ear (Kor. 9, 61) is my name in the Book of God. No one has knowledge of this except me.*

32. And the people said: Give us more (of your attainments), O Commander of the Faithful. 'Alī said: I, 'Abbās and 'Uthmān b. Shayba were in the Sacred Shrine (at Mecca); and they boasted about their pre-eminence above me, and 'Uthmān said: The Prophet entrusted me with the service of the Ka'ba (*sadāna*); that is he gave me the keys of the Ka'ba. And 'Abbās b. al-Muḥṭṭalib said: The Prophet gave me the right to offer water to the people from the spring of Zamzam. And the two of them said: And he gave you nothing, O 'Alī! Then God revealed (the following verses): *Count ye the slaking of the pilgrim's thirst and tendance of the Inviolable Mosque (equal to the worth of) him who believeth in God and the Last Day, and striveth in the way of God? They are not equal in the sight of God. God guideth not the wrong-doing folk.*

Those who believe, and have left their homes, and striven with their wealth and their lives in God's way are of much greater worth in God's sight. These are they who are triumphant.

Their Lord giveth them good tidings of mercy from Him, and acceptance, and Gardens where enduring pleasure will be theirs.

There they will abide for ever. Lo! with God there is immense reward (9, 19-22).

33. And they said: Give us more of it, O Prince of the Faithful. 'Alī said: Verily, when the Prophet returned from the Pilgrimage of

¹⁴When the Feast of Sacrifice falls on a Friday.

Farewell towards Medina, he alighted at Ghadīr Khumm, and the trees were cut down (to enlarge the space) and the people assembled. Then the Prophet took hold of my hand and lifted it high as if to the skies, and said: Am I not (O people), the first among you? They said: Yes (O Prophet). And the Prophet said: He for whom I am Master, for him 'Alī is Master (*mawlā*). O God, be friendly to him who is friendly to 'Alī, and be inimical to him who is the enemy of 'Alī.

34. And from Imām al-Ṣādiq, that he said concerning the Koranic verse: *Is he (to be counted equal with them) who relieth on a clear proof from his Lord, and a witness from Him reciteth it, ...* (11, 17), that by the words "who relieth on a clear proof from his Lord" is meant the Prophet, and by "a witness who follows him in the Faith", is meant 'Alī who succeeds the Prophet as Leader (Imām), after him, and as Proof (*ḥujja*) to the later followers of the Prophet's community.

35. And from the Prophet who said: 'Alī is part of me, and I am part of him, and he is the Plenipotentiary (*walī*) of every faithful man or woman after me. This also is a widely prevalent report, and it follows from the word of God: *Is he who relieth on a clear proof from his Lord...* (loc. cit) meaning thereby the Messenger of God. And as to the words: "*There follows a witness from him*", The Prophet said: 'Alī is part of me, and I am part of him. Therefore it stands to reason that the witness who follows the Prophet, is a witness to his community and a proof to them after his lifetime, and a leader (Imām) to whom obedience is obligatory, and his Vicegerent (*waṣī*) after him, like the Vicegerent of Moses in his community.

And the words of the Prophet to 'Alī "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses" can only mean that 'Alī was his *Khalīfa* in his community, even as Moses said to Aaron: *I have made my Khalīfa in my community* (7, 142).

And the reports and proofs are (so numerous) that they are beyond the scope of this book. If we were to exhaust all that can be included on this score, it would require a separate tome by itself, while we have made it a condition that we shall discuss the traditions briefly to satisfy the possessors of intelligence. And God is the One who directs towards the correct belief.

(IV) OF THE PLENIPOTENCY (WILĀYA)¹⁵ OF THE IMĀMS OF THE HOUSE
OF THE PROPHET, MAY GOD BLESS HIM AND ALL OF THEM

36. God says: *O ye who believe! Obey God, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority* (4, 59). And it is correctly reported from Imām al-Bāqir that someone asked him about the above verse. The Imām said: The real answer is to be found in the verse where God says: *Hast thou not seen unto whom a portion of the scripture hath been given, how they believe in idols and false deities, and how they say of those (idolaters) who disbelieve: "These are more rightly guided than those who believe?"* (4, 51). He explained that these people speak of the false leaders and of those who invite (others) to Hell-fire. These, according to them, are guided better than the progeny of the Prophet. (God says:) *Those are they whom God has cursed, and he whom God hath cursed, thou (O Muḥammad) wilt find for him no helper. Or, have they even a share in the Sovereignty?*—That means the Imāmate and the Caliphate, said the Imām—*Then in that case, they would not give mankind even the speck of a date-stone* (4, 51-52). We are the people (said the Imām) whom God implies in this case.

And the word (in the Koran) *naqir* means the spot which you see in the centre of the date-stone (4, 53). *Or, are they jealous of mankind because of that which God of His bounty hath bestowed upon them* (4, 54)? We are the people who are the target of jealousy for what God has bestowed on us of the Imāmate, as distinguished from all mankind. *For We bestowed upon the house of Abraham the Scripture and wisdom, and We bestowed on them a mighty kingdom* (4, 54). That is, We were appointed messengers, and prophets, and *imāms* among them, till His Word (the Koran)...*plenteous Shade* (4, 57). Then God said: *Lo! God commandeth you that ye restore deposits to their owners, and if ye judge between mankind, that ye judge equitably. Lo! Comely is this which God admonisheth you. Lo! God is ever Hearer, Seer* (4, 58).

37. Then he (Imām al-Bāqir) addressed this to us and meant that the first of us should hand over the books, the knowledge and the weapons to the one who follows¹⁶. And when "you adjudge

¹⁵Can be read both *wilāya* and *walāya*.

¹⁶DM, I, 65 (end); *Waṣīyya of 'Alī in Ismaili Law of Wills* (Bombay, 1933), para. 9, pp. 67-8; DM, II, para. 1297 (*alif*), 2nd printing, p. 348. See also W. Madelung, "Das Imamāt in die frühen ismailitischen Lehre", *Islam*, 37 (1961), 43-135.

between the people, that you (*Imāms*) should judge equitably”, that is, whenever any matters arise before you for your decision, then decide equitably.

Then God said to the people: *O ye who believe!* (That is) all the Muslims till the Day of Judgement, *Obey God, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority* (4, 59). Imām al-Bāqir said: God refers to us in this place. And the questioner asked: (What about the word of God), *Your friend can only be God; and His Messenger and those who believe, who establish worship, and pay the poor-due, and bow down in prayer?* (5, 55). The Imām said: It is we who are indicated here. The questioner said: *O ye who believe, fear God and be with the truthful* (9, 119). Imām al-Bāqir said: We are the truthful ones; and we are indicated by this verse. The questioner asked concerning the word of God: *And say (unto them): Act! God, and His Messenger and the believers will behold your actions* (9, 105). The Imām said: By this command, God refers to us. The questioner said: *Thus we have appointed you a middle nation, that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the Messenger may be a witness against you* (2, 143). The Imām said: We are the “middle nation”. We are the witnesses God has sent to the people, and His proofs in His earth. The querist said: (And what is the reference) in His Word concerning the family of Abraham—and *we bestowed on them a mighty kingdom* (4, 54)? The Imām said: By the “the mighty kingdom” is meant that God creates among the people Imāms (leaders); he who obeys them, obeys God; and he who disobeys them, disobeys God. This is the true meaning of “the mighty kingdom”. So, how can you accept that which is laid down for the family of Abraham, and yet deny it in regard to the descendants of Muḥammad?

The questioner said: (And what do you say about this?): *O ye who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves, and worship your Lord, and do good, that haply ye may prosper. And strive for God with the endeavour which is His right...till the end of the sūra* (22, 77-78). The Imām said: God refers to us (the Imāms) by this. We are “the chosen ones”, chosen for the community of our father Abraham; and God has named us “Muslims” from the earlier times, in the (former) Books and in this Koran, in order that the Prophet (Muḥammad) may be a witness sent to you. Therefore, the Prophet is a witness sent to us (Imāms) for the message he conveyed to us from God, and we are the witnesses sent to the people. Thus, he who speaks the truth on the Day of Judgement, him we shall declare to be truthful and whoever speaks falsehood, him we shall declare

to be false. The questioner said: (And how would you explain): *But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge...?* (29, 49). The Imām replied: We it is who are referred to in this verse; we are the people who have been given knowledge.

The questioner said: And what about His word—*Say: God, and whosoever hath true knowledge, is sufficient as a witness between me and you?* (13, 43). The Imām said: God meant us; and ‘Alī is the first, the most excellent and the best among us, after the Prophet. And the following verses, asked the questioner: *And lo! it is in truth a reminder, for thee and for thy folk; and ye will be questioned* (43, 44). The Imām said: He refers to us; we are the People of the Reminder (*dhikr*), and we will be those who will be answerable¹⁷. And the questioner said:—What about—*Thou art a warner only, and for every folk (there shall be) a guide* (13, 7)? The Imām replied: The “Warner” is the Messenger of God; and in every age there is an Imām from amongst us to guide the community towards the message sent by God to His Messenger.

38. Thus the First of the Guides after the Prophet is ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the blessings of God upon him, and then the Vicegerents (*awṣiyā’*) after him, one following the other, on them all be salutations and peace, the most excellent.

The questioner asked about: *And none knoweth its true meaning except God, and those who are possessed of sound knowledge* (3, 7). The Imām (al-Bāqir) said: The Messenger of God is the most excellent among the possessors of sound knowledge. God had instructed him regarding all that He revealed to him of the Koran and its true meaning (*ta’wīl*), and nothing had been revealed to him, the true meaning whereof he did not know. Then, the Vicegerents who came after him were the possessors of knowledge who know its true meaning in its totality. And then the questioner asked concerning: *Then we gave the Scripture as inheritance unto those whom we elected of our bondmen. But of them are some who wrong themselves and of them are some who are lukewarm, and of them are some who outstrip (others) through good deeds, by God’s leave. That is the great favour* (35, 32). The Imām said: We are the persons referred to here. The first among us is the Imām. The “lukewarm” (*muqtaṣid*) are those who know the right of the Imām. And the wrongdoers are those who, knowing the Imāms, are the doubters, who have avoided us.

¹⁷*Ismaili Law of Wills*, 74-5; DM, II, para. 1297, p. 353.

39. The commonalty assert that in this verse God by the words "Then We gave the Scripture as inheritance unto those whom we elected of our bondmen", refers to all the Muslims in general. If what they assert be true, then all Muslims would be "the chosen ones" and all of them would be in Heaven, as God says: Gardens of Eden which they enter (13, 23; 16, 31; 35, 33). And they said the same with regard to the true explanation of the verse concerning *ūlū'l-amr* (4, 59) in two ways. Some of them said that the words refer to the officers commanding a regiment (*sariyya*). The others affirmed that the words meant the learned ones, capable of giving *fatwās*. Both of these opinions will be found to be unsound on examination.

As for the opinion of those who assert that the *ūlū'l-amr* are the army officers, the doctrine establishes the superiority of these officers over the Imāms, who do not belong to the armed forces, and thus (God) lays down that the Imāms should obey the army officers! And according to persons holding such an opinion, it is obligatory that all the faithful ones should obey the army officers, because the word of God the Mighty and Glorious—"O ye who believe" comprises all the faithful ones. It is impossible to exclude any *mu'min* from this rule, except by clear proof from the Book or an explanation from the Messenger, who was commanded to expound (God's word). Now the commonalty will not discover any such rule, for, except the members of the army, the Muslims in general are not obliged to obey the army officers.

And as for the others who say that it is the learned ones that are meant, they refer to the '*ulamā*' among the commonalty, and all of them differ from one another, and obedience to some of them may involve disobedience to others. If a believer follows one, he disobeys the other. Now God does not order obedience to authorities who differ among themselves. The follower does not know whom to follow. This, then, is a doctrine the unsoundness whereof is absolutely patent. The doctrine is so clearly unsound as to exclude (the need for) a refutation of him who propounds it.

The term *ūlū'l-amr* is most appropriate for the Imāms, for authority is wholly and completely vested in them; they are the Plenipotentiaries (*wulāt*) of God. This is clear to him who thinks carefully. God does not place obedience to Himself and His Prophet on the same level as that which is due to those to whom obedience is not due in all matters. And in such matters, God enforces His own and His Messenger's ordinances in His earth. All

creatures are commanded to hear and to obey their (Imāms') commands. Therefore the doctrine of the commonalty that they should obey the rules laid down by the army officers or by the learned ones, is refuted by the doctrine stated by us. For, the army officers are themselves ordained to obey the Imāms, and they, the Imāms have, by their own commands, appointed the officers to exercise authority (in their own proper sphere). The officers' appointment is itself the reason for their obedience to the commands of those who are higher than they in authority. And as for the opinion of those who say: (Verily), they (*ūlū'l-amr*) are the learned ones, the Imāms are in reality the highest among the learned people. The status of the Imāms is higher than that of the '*ulamā*' in true knowledge, and they are superior to them in learning.

40. And from Imām al-Şādiq, that Ḥasan b. Şāliḥ b. Ḥayy, and his brother 'Alī, asked him concerning the meaning of *ūlū'l-amr* in the Koranic verse: "*O ye who believe! obey God, and the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority* (4, 59), and who they were? And the Imām said: The '*ulamā*'. When the brothers departed, 'Alī said to his brother: We have come to nothing, as we did not ask him who these '*ulamā*' were? So, they returned and asked him, and the Imām replied: They are the Imāms of the House of the Prophet.

And from Imām al-Bāqir that as respects the word of God: *Whereas if they had referred it to the Messenger or such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to think out the matter would have known it* (4, 83), he said that they are the Imāms of the House of the Prophet. God has endowed them with true knowledge by which they elucidate it. Thereafter God prescribed obedience to the Imāms and said: *O ye who believe! Obey God, and the Messenger, and those of your who are in authority* (4, 59).

41. And from Imām al-Şādiq that he heard a man, who was circumambulating in the Ka'ba, saying: O God, make me one of *those who when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, fall not deaf and blind thereat* (25, 73). O God, include me among—*those who say: Our Lord! Vouchsafe us comfort of our wives and our offspring, and make us patterns (imāman) for all those who ward off evil* (25, 74).

And said the Imām: You have asked your Lord for a thing exceeding all bounds! You have demanded from Him to appoint you the Leader (*imām*) of the pious to whom obedience is obligatory. Some of his companions said: May we be thy ransom (O Imām), to

whom does the first verse refer? The Imām said: It was revealed for you. And they asked: And the second? The Imām said: For us.

42. And from Imām al-Şādiq that, concerning the word of God, the Mighty and Glorious: *O ye believers! Obey God, and the Messenger, and those in authority among you* (4, 59), he affirmed: The verses referred to the Imām from amongst us (the family of the Prophet) and obedience to them was obligatory.

43. And it is also reported from him, on whom be peace, that he was questioned about the saying of the Prophet: He who dies without knowing, the living Imām (of his time), dies the death of an unbeliever. They said: Do you mean the Imām from the family of Muḥammad or of some one else? The Imām said: (The reference here is to) him who disowns the right of the Imāmate altogether, whether he is a member of the Prophet's family or not. (It is he who dies the death of an unbeliever).

44. Imām al-Şādiq was asked about the Word of God the Mighty and Glorious: *Lo! therein verily are portents for those who read the signs* (15, 75). He said: They are the Imāms who perceive by the Light of God; hence, fear the intuitive perception of the Imāms concerning your affairs.

45. And from the Prophet that he said to 'Alī: O 'Alī, you and the Vicegerents descended from you constitute the elevated places (*a'rāf*) of God between Heaven and Hell. No one shall enter them unless he recognizes (all of) you and you recognize him; and no one shall enter the fire unless he denies you and you deny him. This is the real explanation, manifest and correct, excluding every other. Its meaning is not as the commonalty interpret it, namely that the people who enter the elevated places (*a'rāf*) are those who, by their unworthy actions, fail to enter Paradise. Nor are (their actions so evil) as to consign them to the fire, thus, they are midway between Heaven and Hell. God has created only two abodes in the Hereafter—the abode of Reward and the abode of Retribution, the Garden and the Fire. And these two are stations; the residents of Heaven enter it according to their rank based on righteous actions; and the inhabitants of Hell enter it, duly graded according to their evil deeds. Now he who does not deserve the retribution of God

(Hell), enters His Mercy. How therefore can the residents of the Elevated Place be in the same position as the commonalty say?

That is, they are standing between Heaven and Hell, being prevented from entering Paradise and being deprived of the Mercy of God. God has described the greatness of their position in His Book. They are those who will be recognized by the people at large by their marks (*simā*'), they will stop the people of Hell one by one on account of their sins and upbraid them and tell them: *What did your multitude and that in which ye took your pride avail you? Are then they of whom ye swore that God would not show them mercy?* (7, 48-49). (The commonalty) interpret this to signify a group of the residents of Heaven, and they announce to the people residing in Paradise saying: Peace be on you, enter Paradise. And no fear shall come upon you, nor shall you grieve. And the people will cry out to them seeking their help and desiring their intercession, as God the Mighty and Glorious has stated about them in His Book, and pointed out the greatness of their status and worth, and that they were the witnesses and proofs of God to the people. Now the people of the Elevated Place (*a'rāf*) are honoured personages, of exalted station in the eyes of God.

The word *'urf* signifies the higher part of a thing, as you say *'urf ad-dayk* (the comb of a cock), or *al-faras* (the mane of a horse), and the plural is *a'rāf*, that is, "heights" or "battlements". And some Arab philologists have said that in the Arabic language the word *a'rāf* signifies every "exalted (or high) thing". And it is said of heaps of sand that they are *a'rāf*; and, similarly, some of the commentators of the Koran among the commonalty say, concerning the Word of God: *And the dwellers on the Heights call unto (men)...* (7, 48), that they were on sand-hills between Heaven and Hell. And others hold that they were on a high battlement between the Garden and the Fire, and they say that it was so named by reason of its height. Thus the people thirsted for the truth, and were perplexed by the views of those who had knowledge but were unbelievers, and were ignorant and defective (in understanding). May God save us from perplexity, misdirection, denial of truth, and ignorance.

In the same way, there is unsoundness in most of the interpretations of the Book of God, among the commonalty, and this is only because it is based on their own opinions and predilections. May God keep us safe from the doctrine of (interpreting) the Book of God by our individual opinion, and following predilection in

matters where it contradicts the truth as laid down by God. And, withal, it is possible to have persons who have been denied Paradise, as the commonalty assert. This is with reference to unsoundness in interpreting (Holy Writ) and does not require any formal rebuttal. And accordingly the major part of their interpretation is corrupt, as it is founded on their own opinions. May God protect us from the doctrine of (interpretation by) opinion in regard to the Book, and things ordained by God as lawful and as unlawful.

46. And it is correctly reported to us from the Prophet who said: I have been commanded to obey God, my Lord; and the Imāms of my House have been commanded to obey God and to obey me. And all other persons, except the Imāms, are commanded to obey God, and me (Prophet), and the Imāms of my House; he who follows them will be saved; and he who forsakes them will perish. And no one but a *māriq* (heretic)¹⁸ forsakes them.

47. And from Imām al-Ṣādiq, He was asked: who are they that are referred to in the Koranic verse: ...*whereas if they had referred it to the Messenger and those in authority among them* (4, 83), he said: We are the possessors of authority, and God has ordered that (all) matters should be referred to us.

And from the same Imām it is authentically reported that a man came to him and said: May I be sacrificed for thee! Some people amongst us are of opinion that Jewish scholars are indicated in the following Koranic verse: *Ask the followers of the Reminder if ye know not!* (16, 43). And the Imām smiled and said: Surely, by God, in that case the Jewish scholars must be inviting them to their own religion! On the contrary, I swear by God, it is we who are the *ahl al-dhikr* (The People of the Reminder), to whom all questions must be referred by the command of God.

48. And from Imām al-Ṣādiq that in regard to the saying of the Prophet: He who dies without knowing the Imām of his time, dies the death of an unbeliever, he (immediately corrected the report, and) said: a *living* Imām (*imāman ḥayyan*). And the people said: We did not hear the word *ḥayyan* (living). And the Imām said: I swear by God that he has said so (that is, the Prophet himself said accordingly).

¹⁸Generally "heretic", a term usually applied to the Khārijites, *Faṭanī*, *Majma' Biḥār al-Anwār*, III (Lucknow, 1319), 293; *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*, s. v. *m-r-q*.

49. And with reference to the verse of the Koran, *On the day when we shall summon all men with their imām* (17, 71), Imām al-Ṣādiq said: (That means) the one whom they hold as leader (Imām) in the world, that is, 'Alī. 'Alī, on whom be peace, will be summoned for the period in which he lived; and then Ḥasan; and then Ḥusayn and then he enumerated all the Imāms, and said: One who dies without knowing the (living) Imām of his time, dies the death of an unbeliever.

50. And from Imām al-Bāqir that a man said to him: O son of the Messenger of God, the Quraysh are greatly agitated that (they have to recognize) you as their master. The Imām said: The people may be divided into three kinds, (i) we invited a group of persons towards God and they accepted us; and so, the grace of God, and the Prophet's and our grace is on them; (ii) and there is a group whom we fought; and (iii) there is a group whom God and his Messenger favoured in the year of victory, Badr, and so the grace of God and the Prophet is on them because of us. So let the person who speaks adhere to any one of the groups that he wishes.

51. And it is correctly reported from Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī,¹⁹ may God have mercy on him, that once at the Pilgrimage, a year after the Prophet's death, he saw the people gathering for the circumambulation, and he stood at the gate of the Ka'ba and caught the round ring of the gate and called out to the people three times, and the people gathered together and stopped and listened. He said: He who knows me, knows me; and he who does not, (let him know that) I am Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī. I am relating to you what fell from the lips of the Prophet. When he was about to die, I heard him saying: I leave behind me two substantial things among you—the Book of God and my family, the People of my House. Verily they shall never be separated till the twain return to the Pond (*kawthar*) in this manner—and the Prophet put together the two index fingers of his two hands thus, equalizing them in all respects—and not like this—and he showed the middle finger of the right hand, and the first finger of the same hand because, said the Prophet, the one is longer than the other. Now beware! their like is the like of Noah's ark. He who boarded it was saved; and he who forsook it was drowned.

¹⁹Traditionist, *Ency. of Islam*, I, 82. Repeatedly referred to in *al-Urjūzat al-Mukhtāra*, ed. Poonawala (Montreal, 1970), see index. This work is briefly referred to as *Ujūza*.

52. And from 'Alī that he was questioned about the identity of the People of the Reminder (*ahl al-dhikr*)²⁰, and he said: We are the People of the Reminder. The same question was asked to Imām al-Bāqir, and he replied in an identical manner.

And the chronicles concerning this matter (are so numerous) that they are beyond the scope of this book. Whatever has been related by us is sufficient for the possessors of understanding and right guidance.

²⁰*Ismaili Law of Wills*, 42, 75.

(V) OF THE OBLIGATION TO SEND SALUTATIONS TO MUHAMMAD AND HIS PROGENY, AND THEY ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE HOUSEHOLD, AND THE TRANSFER OF THE IMĀMATE AMONG THEM, AND THE CLARIFICATION THAT THEY ARE THE UMMA OF MUHAMMAD

53. The Mighty and Glorious God has said: *Lo! God and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation* (33, 56).

And it is related to us correctly from the Prophet that when this verse was revealed, some of his companions asked him about it and said: O Messenger of God, we know how to greet you; but how are we to bless you? And the Prophet said: You should say—"O God, bless the Prophet and his progeny, even as you had blest Abraham and his Progeny. Verily! You (O God) are worthy of praise, full of majesty". In this way the Prophet clarified to them how to send blessings, made obligatory by God, on himself and that the blessings are for him and for his progeny. He did this in the same manner as he taught and explained to them all the other obligatory acts, which were revealed to him in the Koran briefly, such as Prayer, Poor-Tax, Fasting, Pilgrimage, Plenipotency (*wilāya*) and Holy War. All of these were revealed in the Koran with a brief mention, such as the account of blessings on the Prophet, but it was the Prophet who explained them fully.

54. The commonalty have related this tradition even as we have done. As it was not possible for them to repudiate it by subterfuge, they asserted that "all the Muslims belong to the family (*āl*) of Muḥammad". (This was done) in order to exclude the Prophet's family from the pre-eminence which God had especially bestowed on them, and about which the Book speaks eloquently, and the Prophet upheld it by expounding it. And God established it by proofs of their leadership and the necessity to obey them when he equated the Imāms in this respect with the Messenger of God. And this is a great sin on the part of the commonalty, the mischief whereof is clear to those who possess right thinking and fair minds. Their falsehood is so patent as to preclude the necessity of refutation by reasoning.

55. And from Imām al-Şādiq that a man questioned him as follows:

O son of the Prophet, give me information about the Family (*āl*) of Muḥammad, who precisely are they? The man said: The commonalty assert verily that all the Muslims (taken together) are the children of Muḥammad! The Imām smiled and said: They have lied, and they have told the truth! The questioner said: O son of the Prophet! what is it that you mean when you say: They have lied, and they have spoken the truth? The Imām said: they lied, in a certain sense; and they spoke the truth, in another sense. They lied in the sense that they hold that all Muslims who believe in the unity of God and in the Prophet are the children of God, although they possess shortcomings in faith and commit excesses as well. And they have the truth because some of them belong to the progeny of the Prophet, although they are not related to them by blood. That is because they fulfil the conditions laid down in the Koran; and *not* because they are of the family of the Prophet, whom God has removed from impurity and cleansed with a thorough cleaning (33, 33). Thus he who upholds the regulations of the Koran and is a follower of the progeny of Muḥammad belongs (in a certain sense) to the house of the Prophet by reason of the acceptance of their authority, although he is far removed from direct kinship with the Prophet's family.

The querist said: Inform me (O Imām), may I be sacrificed for thee, what these conditions are, conditions by which he who defends and upholds them, becomes, in this sense, part of the Prophet's progeny? And the Imām said: Following the regulations of the Koran and rendering obedience to the Family of Muḥammad, the blessings of God be on them. Now he who befriends them and gives them precedence among all, even as God has done, he indeed is of the Family of the Prophet in this sense. And that is how God has ruled: *He among you who taketh them for friends is one of them* (5, 51). And God said, repeating the words of Abraham: *But whoso followeth me, he verily is of me. And whoso disobeyeth me—still Thou art Forgiving, Merciful* (14, 36). And He said, concerning the Jews: (*The same are*) those who, say: *Lo! God hath charged us that we believe not in any messenger until he bring us an offering which fire shall devour* (3, 183). And God said to His Prophet: *Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): Messengers came unto you before me with clear proofs, and with that (very proof) which ye described: why then did ye slay them? (answer that) if ye are truthful* (loc. cit.). And God said in another place: *Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): Why then slew ye the prophets of God aforetime, if ye are (indeed) believers?* (2, 91). And this was revealed only with

regard to the Jews who had made a treaty with the Messenger of God. Now they did not kill the Prophets with their own hands, nor were they living in those times; but their ancestors murdered them and they (the contemporaries of Muḥammad) approved of their action, and were well inclined to them on this account, so God increased (their responsibility) for this their action, and considered the contemporaries of Muḥammad as belonging to the same group as their predecessors.

56. The questioner said: May God sacrifice me for thee (O Imām)! Give me a proof from the Book of God to establish the dictum that the "progeny" of Muḥammad are specifically the Members of his House, as distinguished from others. The Imām said: Very well. God, and He is the most truthful of speakers, said: *Lo! God preferred Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imrān above all his creatures* (3, 33). And then he clarified who the people were that were thus chosen, and said: *They were descendants one of another; and God is Hearer, Knower* (3, 34). And it is impossible to be of the progeny of a people except through direct descent and God said: *Give thanks, O family of David!* (34, 13); and He said: *And a believing man of Pharaoh's family, who hid his faith, said: Would ye kill a man because he said: My Lord is God* (40, 28) and he was, indeed, the paternal uncle's son of Pharaoh. And God had in fact made this believer one of the blood relation of Pharaoh, and still he was an opponent of Pharaoh in allegiance and faith.

And if all those who believed in Muḥammad were of the family of Muḥammad, even those whom God described as being opposed to Pharaoh in his faith, would have been born outside his family. Thus, in this there is a reason for saying that the family of a person are the persons who belong to his House. And he who follows the family of Muḥammad is within the circle and comes within the meaning of the saying of Abraham: *But whoso followeth me, he verily is of me. And whoso disobeyeth me—still thou art Forgiving, Merciful* (14, 36). And God the Mighty and Glorious said: *Cause Pharaoh's folk to enter the most awful doom* (40, 46). That is to say, the members of his House, in particular, and their followers, in general. And he who entered the Fire, without belonging to the house of Pharaoh, verily enters it by his friendliness towards the house of Pharaoh, and he is to be considered even as one of them, by his obedience to them: For the family of Pharaoh were their leaders and he who befriends them is their follower. And God said: *Peace be unto the family* (āl)

of *Yāsīn* (37, 130).²¹ Now, *Yāsīn* is Muḥammad and *āl yāsīn* are the people of his House. For God says: *Give thanks, O family of David! Few of My bondmen are thankful* (34, 13). The Mighty and Glorious says:...and, a remnant of that which the house of Moses and the house of Aaron left behind, the angels bearing it (2,248); for, it is possible to belong to the family of Moses, or of Aaron, or of David, or of Muḥammad (*āl Yāsīn*), without the bond of blood kinship, provided there is obedience. Thus the Members of the houses of the prophets are the Leaders (*a'imma*); he who befriends them and follows them, is also to be counted among them on this interpretation, and on the grounds specified by God, glory be to Him.

57. Then Imām al-Ṣādiq said to the questioner: Know that none among the earlier communities in times gone by, nor among people that are no more, nor have we heard tell of any folk, that any of them were greater in wrong-doing than this community. For, verily, they assert that there is nothing to distinguish them from the Members of the House of their Prophet, and that the *Ahl Bayt* are not more excellent than the commonalty. Now he who makes such an assertion is surely a greater impostor in the eyes of God, and is guilty of a grave slander and a manifest crime. By this affirmation he is quit of Muḥammad or the family of Muḥammad until he repents, and returns to the true faith by acknowledging the excellence of those on whom it has been bestowed by the Glorious and Mighty God among the Members of the House of prophecy, the abode of mercy, the mine of knowledge, the people of the Reminder, the coevals of angels. Now he who asserts that even by these attributes there is no excellence in them is entirely repudiated by the *Ahl Bayt* in this world and the hereafter.

58. Then said the Imām (al-Ṣādiq): There is another point concerning the doctrine of consensus. The man said: and what is that? The Imām continued: Are not matters upon which there is unanimity among the Muslims nearer the truth and more eagerly to be accepted than those on which there is a divergence of opinion? And the man agreed and the Imām said: Tell me about those Muslims who falsely claim to be the descendants of the Prophet. Do they not admit that the members of the House of the Prophet are partners in (the heritage) claimed by them and that they together comprise the Family (*āl*) of Muḥammad? The man said:

²¹Reading *āl Yāsīn* for *il-Yāsīn*. A Fatimid variant of the *textus receptus*.

Yes. The Imām said: Do you not see that the claimants to the status of the family of Muḥammad themselves admit that the close relatives of the Prophet are, indeed, the members of his House. But the family of the Prophet deny this right to the generality of the people.

Now this is obviously a false claim to be rejected unless it is proved by one of two alternatives. First, either that by consensus or the general admission of the people, they are designated as the Members of the House of the Prophet. This would be a confirmation of their own claims, just as the Members of the Family of the Prophet claim to be and are witnesses for themselves. Or, in the alternative, there may be clear proof by others who testify against them and demonstrate that there is no substance in their claim and that they are clearly in the wrong.

Do you not see that from this it follows that the right of the Members of the House of the Prophet is proved to the hilt, and what the claimants assert is false, since the difference between the common people and the right of the family of Muḥammad cannot be reconciled for these two reasons? And thus the claim of the claimants is false for the reasons we have mentioned: (first) by proof, and (secondly) because of the consensus which we have clearly explained.

59. The questioner then said: Inform me, may God sacrifice me for thee (O Imām), about the *umma* (community) of Muḥammad. Are they the Members of His House? The Imām said: Yes! The man said: But, is it not that the Muslims in general and those who believe in Muḥammad, confirming his claims, comprise his *umma*?

The Imām said: This proposition is exactly like the first, concerning the *āl* (family) of Muḥammad. Not all the Muslims, who do not belong to the House of the Prophet of the tribe of Banū Hāshim, can be declared to be the *umma* of the Prophet. And the people at large, inhabitants of the four corners of the globe, whether they are Arabs or non-Arabs, men as well as genii, those who believe in God and His Prophet, and declare him to be the true prophet and obey him by their allegiance (*tawallā*) for which (the Prophet) was sent, they are of the *umma* (community) of Muḥammad, by their adherence to this community. Similarly he is to be counted among the Muslim who declares the unity of God and who believes in the Prophet. He indeed is of the community (*umma*) to whom Muḥammad was sent. And he who denies the excellence of this

community is among those who—*believe in some and disbelieve in others, and seek to choose a way in between* (4, 150). And they are the people who, when they are asked: Do you believe in God and His Messenger?—Say: Yes. And when they are told: Do you then admit the excellence of the family (*āl*) of Muḥammad in whom you believe, and whom you declare to be truthful?—They say: No, because they have no pre-eminence among us!

The man asked: And what is the proof that the *umma* of Muḥammad are the Members of the House of Muḥammad as distinguished from others? The Imām said: The word of God, and He is the most veracious of those that speak: *And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House, (Abraham prayed): Our Lord! Accept from us (this duty). Lo! Thou, only Thou art the Hearer, the Knower.*

Our Lord! and make us submissive unto Thee and of our Seed, a nation submissive unto Thee, and show us our ways of worship, and relent toward us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Relenting, the Merciful (2, 127-28). God then heard the call of Abraham and Ishmael, peace be on them both, to make their seed a community of believers, and to send them a Messenger from among them (see 2, 129), that is, from this community (*umma*), a messenger to recite to them His signs, and purify them, and teach them the scripture and the wisdom. Abraham thus coupled his first mission to his community, wherein he asked for favours for his progeny, with another whereby he prayed for their purification from associating others with God and from the worship of idols. By this means he desired to put their affairs right, so that they might not follow any group except the community. And Abraham said: *...and preserve me and my sons from serving idols* (14, 35). That is, those to whom I carried your (God's) mission. And You (God) have promised me that You will make them Leaders (*a'imma*) and a believing community; and that You will send them a Messenger from amongst them, and You will preserve them from the worship of idols. *My Lord! Lo! They have led many of mankind astray. But whoso followeth me, he is verily of me. And whoso disobeyeth me—still Thou art Forgiving, Merciful* (14, 36). Now this is an argument to show that there can be no Leaders, or a believing community, to whom was sent Muḥammad, other than the progeny of Abraham and Ishmael, peace be on them both, who have their dwelling in the Ka'ba and who never worshipped anyone except God, on account of God's word: *and preserve me and my sons from serving idols* (14, 35). And the proof regarding their dwelling places and countries is the saying of Abraham: *O Lord!*

Lo! I have settled some of my posterity in an uncultivable valley near unto Thy Holy House, our Lord! that they may establish proper worship; so incline the hearts of some men that they yearn toward them, and provide Thou them with fruits in order that they may be thankful (14, 37). But Abraham did not say that they should worship idols.

60. This Koranic verse, therefore, proves that the leaders (*a'imma*) and the believing community to whom Abraham preached belong to his own progeny. They never worshipped any being save God. Then Abraham said: *Incline the hearts of some of these (community) toward them (his family) (14, 37)* and thus the prayer of Abraham is expressly directed towards the Leaders (*a'imma*) and the progeny who spring from his loins. Abraham invited them to his "group" (*shī'a*), as he invited the generality of them. Therefore the "Inheritors" (*aṣḥāb*) of the Call of Abraham and Ishmael, on whom be peace, are surely, the Messenger of God, and 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and the Imāms, the blessings of God on them. Now he who bears allegiance to the sons of Abraham and Ishmael is among the People of their joint Mission, because, every one of the progeny of Ishmael worshipped idols except the Messenger of God, 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. And the mission of Abraham was restricted to them.

61. (Imām al-Ṣādiq said:) And the tradition recorded from the Prophet says: I (Muḥammad) am the Mission (*da'wa*) of my father, Abraham, and he who adheres to this community, described by God in His Book as bearing true allegiance, belongs to the Community (*umma*). And he who opposes the community, by not accepting its preeminence, belongs to the people to whom Muḥammad was sent, but they did not accept (him). And God says in another part of the Book about the community for whom the Mission of Abraham and Ishmael was ordained: *And there may spring from you a nation who invite to goodness, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency. Such are they who are successful (3, 104).* This verse declares that sinful Muslims are unbelievers. For, those who do not invite (people) towards righteousness, or command what is approved, and prohibit what is disapproved, are not members of the community (*umma*) described by God. It is they who allege that all the Muslims belong to the community of Muḥammad. And you see that God in this verse defines the community of Muḥammad as being distinguished for inviting people to righteous-

ness, commanding what is approved and prohibiting what is disapproved. Now he who does not possess the qualities laid down by God for the community (*umma*), how can he be counted as one of them? Such a man (in reality) is the exact contrary of what God has ordained for the community, and He has distinguished the community by the possession of certain qualities.

62. And God says in another place, referring to the community: *Thus we have appointed a middle nation* (ummataṅ wasaṭan, meaning a “just nation”) *that ye bear witness against mankind, and that the Messenger may be a witness against you* (2, 143). And do you think that God implies by this verse all of those among the believers in the unity of God who turn to the Qibla (in prayer)? (In that case) do you believe that one whose evidence is not acceptable in this world even for a sack of dates, can be a witness whom God recognizes to testify against all mankind on the Day of Judgement? And also that God accepts the testimony of such individuals against people who lived in former ages?

Certainly not (continued the Imām)! God never lays down any such conditions for His people. For, God has in another place said, referring to the community that had accepted the call of Abraham: *Ye are the best community that hath been raised for mankind* (3, 110).

Now if God means that the whole body of Muslims are “the best of communities that had been raised among men”, mankind as a whole would not know for certain which, among the Muslims, were the ones indicated. Certainly not! God never intended to mean the riff-raff among mankind. On the other hand, He designated clearly the “community” to which Muḥammad was sent (and which accepted his message).

63. The questioner said: But this would imply, surely, that there was no one with Him except ‘Alī! Imām al-Ṣādiq said: Verily with ‘Alī are Fāṭima and Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. It was said of them that God has removed them from uncleanness and cleansed them with a thorough cleansing (33, 33). And “the People of the Mantle”, it is they that the Book declares to be cleansed. (At that time) it was solely the Messenger of God who was designated “the *umma*” since God declares: *Lo! Abraham was a nation obedient to God, by nature upright* (16, 120). Thus was Abraham alone an *umma*, and God associated Ishmael and Isaac with him in his old age, and endowed their seed with prophecy and the Book. And similarly

the *umma* consisted solely of Muḥammad, and God associated 'Alī and Fāṭima with him; and added Ḥasan and Ḥusayn to him, just as He associated Ishmael and Isaac with Abraham. God bestowed the Imāmate which is in succession to the Prophethood to Muḥammad's progeny, namely, to the seed of Ḥusayn, the son of 'Alī even as God had done earlier by restricting the Prophethood to the seed of Isaac, and sealed it within the seed of Ishmael. Similarly, the Imāmate was with Ḥasan, son of 'Alī, on account of his priority in time; and God says in this context: *And the foremost in the race are the foremost. They are those who shall be brought nigh* (56, 10-11).

Thus Ḥasan is antecedent to Ḥusayn; but thereafter God transferred the Imāmate to the descendants of Ḥusayn, just as He had transferred the Prophethood from the progeny of Isaac to the descendants of Ishmael. The people testified to their exclusive rights by consensus, and the Imāmate continues (for ever) among them. And no unanimity was ever so universal as in the case of the Members of the House of the Prophet.

64. And if the questioner asked for the reason why God transferred the Imāmate from the seed of Ḥasan to the progeny of Ḥusayn, we (Imāms) would say: The Book transferred it. And if he asked: How? Verily, the Imāmate can only subsist by antecedence and purification from destructive sins which lead to the Fire, and by demonstrable knowledge. To him the reply is: The Imāmate (continues to exist) by the concurrence of all that is necessary for the community (*umma*) to know in respect of what is permissible and what is forbidden; and (complete) knowledge of the Book, both in its general and in its particular aspects and of its exoteric and esoteric meanings; of its explicit commands and its metaphorical teaching; of the repealing and repealed verses; of the subtilities of its connotation and the rarities of its interpretation.

The questioner said: And what is the proof for the proposition that the Imām must necessarily be learned in the things that you have mentioned? Imām al-Ṣādiq said: The word of God, the Mighty and Glorious, wherein He defines the attributes essential for those who are empowered to be rulers and by which they are deemed to be qualified: *Lo! We did reveal the Torah, wherein is guidance and a light, by which the Prophets who surrendered (unto God) judged the Jews, and the rabbis and the priests...*(5, 44). Now the *rabbāniyyūn* are the Imāms, next in authority to the prophets, who educate the people

by their knowledge; and the priests (*aḥbār*) are below them in rank and are their missionaries (*du'āt*). And then God explains: *by such of God's scripture as they were bidden to preserve and thereunto were they witnesses* (loc. cit.). And God did not say: "and whereof they were ignorant". Then He said: *Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed* (39, 9); and He said: *But it is clear revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge* (29, 49); and He said: *But none shall grasp their meaning save the possessors of knowledge* (29, 43); and He said: *Only the erudite among His bondmen fear God* (35, 28). And He said: *Is He who leadeth to the truth more deserving that He should be followed, or he who findeth not the way unless he himself be guided. What aileth you? How judge ye?* (10, 35).

This, then is the proof that the Imāms must of necessity be possessed of knowledge. The people, assuredly, have need of them; whereas they, the Imāms, have no need of anyone (for obtaining knowledge) of what is lawful and what is forbidden (by God).

65. The questioner asked: Inform me of the transfer of the Imāmate from the progeny of Ḥasan to that of Ḥusayn. How did this happen, and what is the proof? Imām al-Šādiq said: (The answer is) the word of God, the Blessed and Exalted: *God's wish is but to remove uncleanness far from you, O Members of the Household, and cleanse you with a thorough cleansing* (33, 33). This verse was revealed in respect of five persons, who were attested as being free from the sin of association (*shirk*), the adoration of idols and the worship of every being other than God. The origin of this is the call of Abraham, when he said: *And preserve me and my sons from serving idols* (14, 35).

The five concerning whom the Verse of Purification (33, 33) was revealed were the Messenger of God, 'Alī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. It is to them that the call of Abraham points. Thus their leader in this respect is the Prophet; the lady associated with them in purification was Fāṭima, the blessings of God be on her; but she had no right in the Imāmate; for, she is the Mother of the Imāms, the Blessings of God on them. And when the Prophet of God died by His command, 'Alī was the foremost among men entitled to the Imāmate after the Prophet by reason of the word of God: *And the foremost in the race are the foremost. These are they that shall be brought nigh* (53, 10-11), and by the saying of the Prophet

concerning Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, that they were the leaders of the youth of Paradise, and their father ('Alī) was superior to them; and also, because the Prophet said that Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were the Imāms of Truth, whether in power or otherwise, and their father was superior to them both. So 'Alī, on whom be peace, had a prior right to the Imāmate than Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, as he was antecedent to them.

When 'Alī died Ḥasan was entitled to the Imāmate in preference to Ḥusayn by the argument of priority in time; and this follows from the Koranic verse: *The foremost in the race are the foremost* (56, 10); thus Ḥasan was anterior to Ḥusayn and therefore his right was greater. And when Ḥasan died, he had no right to allocate the Imāmate to his progeny, because his brother was his coeval in purification. The Imāmate came to Ḥusayn by priority, in preference to the descendants of Ḥasan, and thus the office went to Ḥusayn. Now when Ḥusayn died, he was not entitled to return the Imāmate to the sons of his brother Ḥasan, in preference to his own, by the force of the Word of God the Mighty and Glorious...*and those who are akin are nearer one to another in the Book of God* (8, 75). As Ḥusayn's sons were nearer akin to him than the sons of his brother, Ḥasan, they had a greater claim to the Imāmate. Thus this verse excludes the sons of Ḥasan and awards (the Imāmate) to the sons of Ḥusayn. Now this (office)—the Imāmate—shall continue among the descendants of Ḥusayn until the Day of Resurrection.

And all praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds!

(VI) OF THE PROCLAMATION (TAWQIF) OF THE IMAMS OF THE
PROGENY OF MUḤAMMAD, MAY GOD BLESS HIM AND ALL OF THEM

66. This is a chapter the proofs and arguments whereof, and the refutation of its opponents (are so numerous) that were we to deal with them exhaustively, they would exceed the bounds of this book, and would require a work devoted exclusively to the Imāmate. The Imām al-Manṣūr bi'l-lāh had indeed composed a separate volume on it, the blessings of God be upon him, and His mercy and His bounties and His satisfaction. May God illumine his face therefor. It was an exhaustive work, explaining fully its meanings, and doing justice to its proof. But as we have made it a condition in the commencement of this work that we shall be brief in dealing with each subject, there is no option to us except to deal with it summarily.

67. The proponents of the Imāmate have differed amongst themselves in adducing its proofs. The commonalty affirm that the people are empowered to elect an Imām for themselves, and to invest him with authority over them in the same manner, according to them, as the Companions of the Prophet exercised their own choice in electing their leader to succeed him.

They differed, however, as regards the qualifications required and the real cause of his pre-eminence. They denied that the Prophet himself had declared any one as the foremost among them, and nominated him above all of them to establish the Imāmate after him. A group amongst them said: The Prophet had indicated him, without expressly naming him, and they said: He was Abū Bakr. The Prophet placed him first in prayer, and prayer is the equal of the poor-due; thus he who is placed above others in prayer, is entitled to receive the poor-due by precedence. This is the view of the majority of the commonalty (*'amma*). And therefore they held that: He who wields power is entitled to obedience, even if he were an Ethiopian. They were further of the opinion that rebellion against him was not lawful, even when he acted sinfully.

68. And the Murjites affirmed: It is for the people to appoint a man among themselves who, in their opinion, is possessed of excellence and knowledge. And they should exert themselves

greatly in finding out (the rightful Imām) and it is the duty of the Imām to rule over them by the Book and the *Sunna*. When the Imām did not find evidence in the Koran or the *Sunna* he should strive hard to formulate his own opinion. They said: Obedience to the ruler is obligatory on the people, so long as he obeys God. But if the ruler disobeys God, the people are not obliged to obey him. The appointment of the Imām, his dismissal and his transfer depend upon his obedience to the Koran and *Sunna*.

And the Mu'tazila said: The Prophet neither nominated nor indicated any one expressly, but he commanded the people to elect a man to rule over them, and they chose Abū Bakr.

And the Khārijites said: We do not know, nor has any report reached us that the Prophet commanded anything about this matter. He did not command explicitly or implicitly; nor did he say one way or another. But there is no doubt that there should be a Leader (Imām) who would administer the punishments (laid down by God) for crimes and enforce the regulations of law (*ahkām*); and so we shall appoint a leader above us.

69. Now, by God's guidance and help, we say to those who hold that the Prophet appointed no one—and they represent all the persons noted above—your doctrine is disproved not only by us un-animously, but even by some among yourselves, and also by the whole of the Muslim community. For every one is agreed that one who denies a fact is not a witness to the fact. Verily, a witness is one who testifies to a positive fact as true. Now you merely deny that the Prophet appointed anyone as his successor over his people, or that he nominated an Imām over the community after him. Thus you do not testify to anything positive. You merely traverse²² something you disapprove. Now he who gives evidence of an affirmative statement is more worthy of acceptance, and is to be treated as a reliable witness.

You and the majority of the community rely on one of two kinds of persons. One of them says: "I heard so-and-so saying this" or, "I saw him doing this". And the other says: "I did not hear him saying this", or "I did not see him doing that". Verily the eye-witness, or one who has heard the statement himself, is a trustworthy witness, and he who merely says "I have not seen" or "I have not heard" is not a reliable witness. His denial does not refute the positive testimony of one who has himself heard or seen something.

²²The word is used in the legal sense.

We have already related that the Prophet appointed 'Alī b. Abī Tālib as his Plenipotentiary (*walī*) on the day of Ghadr Khumm. You too have reported the incident in the same manner as we have done. And verily this is the most binding compact and the most obligatory command for the Imāmate, in addition to a great deal else that we have stated. And a summary of all that happened is sufficient as a clarification.

If the Imāmate were an institution such as you have affirmed, and depended on the choice of the people, the Prophet would surely have asked the people to assemble and choose for themselves. How could people with a variety of opinions and predilections agree on the choice of one single individual, particularly when some of them were envious of others? And if this were as you say, the Imāmate could not be established except by unanimity among the people about one person. But the people can never agree in this fashion. Not all the inhabitants of Medina accepted the Caliphate of Abū Bakr. The Anṣār said what they did, and a group of the foremost of the Companions of the Prophet refused to acknowledge him, and what happened is well known. This is apart altogether from those that were absent, being in the provinces and the other parts of the country.

And if you say: The authority and the power is in the hands of some to the exclusion of others, then, inform us who was entitled to the leadership in preference to others, and on what authority from the Book, the Practice of the Prophet, or the Consensus. And they will never find the answer. If the Imām derives his authority from the people, then, the Imām is under their command. He cannot own anything unless they make him owner. These, then, are their Imāms, according to the plain meaning of this doctrine—and the Imām is thus one among other officials. In the hands of the people is the power to dismiss him, so say the Murjites, and the unsoundness of this doctrine is so patent as to preclude the need for a formal refutation.

70. And the saying of those who hold that they do what the Messenger of God did not command and did not do, is an admission that this is an innovation (*bid'a*). They say that the Imāmate is part of the religion of God; and God has said that He had perfected His religion. We have explained previously that this verse was revealed when the Prophet established the Plenipotency (*wilāya*) of 'Alī. How then can they agree that God had perfected His

religion without elucidating the question of the Imāmate which, according to their own admission, is part of religion? Or, is it that God indeed had said this and yet did not perfect His faith until the people completed it? Or, is it that the Prophet was helpless and unable to clarify what God had rendered obligatory and it was they who clarified it? Now this is the foulest of their allegations, and the worst of what they attribute to God the Mighty and Glorious and to His Messenger.

71. And to those who assert that since the Prophet pointed to Abū Bakr (as his successor), they appointed him at the head of affairs by implication, (we say): If you accept that the Imāmate (as an institution) is part of the religion of God, how then can you permit a change in any part of the religion of God, or any alteration in it?

And as for those that deny this, to them it may be said that if the obligatory ordinance of the Imāmate can be laid down by implication, and it was the Prophet who by implication appointed Abū Bakr, then how did Abū Bakr appoint 'Umar, and 'Umar, 'Uthmān? And as for those that assert that Abū Bakr appointed 'Umar expressly (by *naṣṣ*), and that 'Umar relegated this duty to six persons acting in concert, and placed Ṣuhayb to lead the prayer, this then clearly contradicts the action of the Prophet in a matter pertaining to religion. God had surely commanded them to obey the Prophet and prohibited opposition to him by His dictum: *And whatsoever the Messenger giveth you, take it. And whatsoever he forbiddeth, abstain from it* (59, 7). The action of 'Umar contradicted the action of Abū Bakr, and both of them had contravened the religion of God by their own admission and altered His decision, and went against God's Messenger. Ṣuhayb according to their view had a greater right to the Imāmate than 'Uthmān, because 'Umar placed Ṣuhayb above 'Uthmān in prayer. And they affirm that Abū Bakr was entitled to leadership as the Prophet had asked him to lead the prayer.

But this is not correct; for we say, on the contrary, to those that hold this to be an implication, that it would be better if you did not rely on this argument! For, you affirm that prayer is permissible behind any person, whether he is righteous or sinful, and you report traditions in support of this view to those that are opposed to you. You agree that the Prophet appointed 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ to lead the expedition known as the Battle of Dhāt al-Sālasil while Abū Bakr and 'Umar were with him. 'Amr

b. al-‘Āṣ used to lead both Abū Bakr and others in prayer, while both of them were under his military headship. You also admit that the Prophet never appointed anyone above ‘Alī, nor did he ever command ‘Alī to follow any one in prayer. This prayer to which you refer, where the Prophet ordered Abū Bakr to lead, was performed in the absence of ‘Alī. Now ‘Alī, according to your allegation, was at the time with the Prophet himself, and prayed with him; thus ‘Alī, according to your own argument, is to be preferred in excellence to those whom you have placed above him in precedence.

You also agree that the Prophet placed Usāma b. Zayd above Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. When the Prophet died, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were under Usāma’s banner; he was their Commander (*amīr*) and also Leader (*imām*) in prayer. The last of the Prophet’s instructions (before he died) was: Dispatch (*naḥadhū*) the armies to Usāma, may God curse him who lingers behind. This was when Usāma advanced victoriously from Medina, but Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were with those that tarried. Thus both Usāma and ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (according to you) were more entitled to leadership than Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, for they were placed above Abū Bakr ‘Umar in prayer.

You accept that when (the matter of the Caliphate) was placed by ‘Umar in the hands of six persons in joint consultation, ‘Umar appointed Ṣuhayb to lead the prayer. In spite of this Ṣuhayb, according to your own views, was not entitled to the Imāmaté. And this despite the fact that the prayer, which you adduce as proof, did not affect the question of the transfer of the Imāmaté, or the conflict of reports on the point. All these reports and their differences emanate from ‘Ā’isha, daughter of Abū Bakr. Now you yourself assert that when a man relates contradictory reports, it is as though nothing authentic comes from him. And you rejected the evidence of ‘Alī concerning Fāṭima, may the blessings of God be on both of them. Then how do you accept the testimony of ‘Ā’isha in favour of her father, even if it were proved to be authentically attributed to her? How, when you accept her word, is it not established that the Prophet ordered Abū Bakr to lead the prayer? When the Prophet came to know of this, he went out and prayed with the people, placing Abū Bakr behind himself!

72. And as for the doctrine of the Murjites that it is for them to appoint the Imām, and that when he acted unrighteously, it is they

who had the right to dismiss him; their view is, indeed, like that of the people we have mentioned, so that they themselves were the Imāms! If they had the power to appoint, they surely had the power to reject. This is the opinion of those who do not care to weigh their opinions, and we have demonstrated earlier the unsoundness of this view.

The opinion of the Mu'tazila is that the Prophet himself asked the people to choose their own Leader. Now this contravenes the Prophet's practice. We have reported the action of the Prophet in favour of 'Alī, to whom be the most excellent of salutations, at Ghadir Khumm, and we have also discussed the results of holding that people have the right to elect. Neither God nor His Prophet ever ordered a thing which is inconclusive or impossible. God never made obedience obligatory to a Leader who was himself to be elected by those who are commanded to obey him. God never gave people the right to dismiss or criticize (*muntaqida*) the Imām. If the people were empowered to appoint the Imām, they would likewise be entitled to appoint a prophet; for, God has likened the obedience due to the Imāms to the obedience due to prophets, and has made the Imāms rulers over their subjects, after the prophets, just as the prophets ruled over the people in former times.

And as for the view of the Khārijites that they have no knowledge of what came from the Prophet, (we say) that the word of him who does not know is not a proof against the word of him who knows. It is for him who does not know to seek knowledge from him who does. And verily if they do not know in what manner the Imāmate was established, our answer is: By something which neither you nor anyone else can annul. And surely this was an appointment and a proclamation which no one can refute; nor can any enemy adduce a defect against it.

73. And we have already mentioned how the Prophet proclaimed to the people the Imāmate of 'Alī and how 'Alī was singled out by him. This was how 'Alī nominated Ḥasan; and Ḥasan, Ḥusayn; and Ḥusayn, 'Alī b. Ḥusayn; and 'Alī b. Ḥusayn, Muḥammad b. 'Alī; and Muḥammad b. 'Alī, Ja'far b. Muḥammad; and likewise, each Imām, the Imām after him. We have been informed of this by those who preceded us, and our contemporaries have witnessed this in respect of our own Imāms. This then is the most cogent of proofs and the most manifest of arguments; in this no one has a say and none can adduce a flaw.

74. Similar is the proof of what we have said regarding messengers (*rusul*) and the Imāms during the interval between two messengers. Surely this cannot happen without the nomination (*naṣṣ*), and the proclamation (*tawqīf*) to the people, emanating from the prophet (*nabī*) to the Imām, and from one Imām to another Imām. Each prophet gives good tidings of one who is to follow him, as God has mentioned in His Book: *And bringing good tidings of a messenger who cometh after me, whose name is Ahmad, the Praised one* (61, 6).

The Imāms, each in respect of the other, confirm this and inform their followers of the appearance of this prophet, even as the commonalty have agreed that Adam appointed Sheth, and gave him testamentary instructions. And Sheth appointed the Imām among his own descendants to act after him. And similarly each Imām appointed his successor and proclaimed the succeeding Imām till Noah; and Noah till Abraham; and from Abraham till Moses; and from Moses till Jesus; and from Jesus till Muḥammad, may God bless him and his progeny, and all the messengers and the veracious Imāms.

The commonalty agree that every former prophet had left instructions to his Vicegerent (*waṣī*) to uphold the authority over his community after his death, except in the case of their own Prophet, Muḥammad, for they denied that he had left such instructions about anyone. And this, despite the fact that it was the people who were in greater need than the Vicegerents because of the cessation of the revelation and the termination of prophethood. God had, indeed, ended the prophecy with Muḥammad and relegated the authority to the Imāms of the House of the Prophet, may the blessings of God be on all of them. The delegation of the authority to the Imāms continues till the Day of Resurrection. This is what we say regarding the prophecy and the Imāmate and its proclamation (*tawqīf*) and its clarification (*bayān*). This is contrary to what the commonalty assert, namely that the proof of the existence of the prophets are the verses of the Koran, without express appointment, without good tidings and without proper proclamation.

If you ponder over the Koran carefully, you will find that the verses do not support (the doctrine of) the commonalty regarding their prophets. God says to the Prophet: *The People of the Scripture ask of thee that thou shouldst cause an (actual) book to descend upon them from heaven. They asked a greater thing of Moses aforetime, for they said: Show us God plainly* (4, 153).

And God says at another place: *And they say: We will not put faith in thee till thou cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us; | or thou have a garden of date-palms and grapes, and cause rivers to gush forth therein abundantly; | or thou cause the heaven to fall upon us piecemeal, as thou hast pretended, or bring God and the angels as a warrant; | or thou have a house of gold, or thou ascend up into heaven, and even then we will put no faith in thy ascension till thou bring down for us a book that we can read. Say (O Muḥammad): My Lord be glorified! Am I aught save a mortal messenger?* (17, 90-93).

And He says at another place: *And they say: If only he would bring us a miracle from his Lord! Hath there not come unto them the proof of what is in former scriptures?* (20, 133).

And there are many such verses in the Koran. And withal God never sends a prophet without his being entitled to absolute obedience. Thus he, who dies without proclaiming the Prophet to be truthful, or declaring him to be false and before a sign comes (from God), dies the death of an unbeliever. This is the doctrine held by consensus among the commonalty. And if they say, the verses of the Koran are evidence (only) regarding the prophets, those who did not believe before the portents (*āyāt*) appeared were free from fault. Now if they asked: What is the meaning of "the coming of the messengers is by portents"? They should be told: the meaning of this verse is what God Himself has said: *We send not portents (āyāt) save to warn* (17, 59). And God sends His portents only to warn His creatures, and to help His messengers and to confirm the proofs against those that oppose them, warning them, as God says: *We send not portents save to warn* (loc. cit.).

And God had sent Noah as a prophet to his people and has informed us that he lived for 950 years²³, ever calling them to God, and during this long period there died many declaring their disbelief. Then God informed us that a great sign was the Ark (*safīna*), and this is what the commonalty affirm. This portent occurred during the last days of Noah, and yet the people were tormented on account of their disbelief in him, and God destroyed them for their wrongdoing and denial of Noah's being a prophet. But God saved Noah and those that had faith in him. Now God had destroyed many people in former times for their disbelief in Him, and they were consigned to the Fire for disbelieving in Him, and what had come from the Lord. If it were true that without a portent the right of a prophet could not be established, then (before the portent) there

²³Kor. 29, 14; Genesis 9. 28-29.

would be nothing to make them believe in the prophet. And if there was nothing to make them accept him as a prophet, then the prophet would have no right to call them (to the true religion) without such a portent. Thus without a portent, he could not claim to act as a messenger inviting them to the truth, and they would not be obliged to accept what was obligatory on them!

If we expounded this doctrine exhaustively, it would go beyond the limits of this book; but we have explained the main points briefly so that the possessors of understanding may comprehend it. And it is God Who in His mercy guides rightly.

(VII) THE STATUS OF THE IMĀMS, AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR LIVES, THEIR DISSOCIATION (TABARRU') FROM THOSE THAT PLACED OTHERS IN THEIR PLACE (AS IMĀMS), AND THEIR DECLARATION THAT THOSE THAT DEVIATED FROM THE IMĀMS WERE DEVOID OF BELIEF

75. The Righteous Imāms, the blessings of God be on them, and His mercy and His charismatic favours (*barakāt*), are only creatures of God the Glorious, and His bondmen, especially selected among others. God has ordained that persons living during the time of each Imām should obey him, and accept his commands absolutely. God has constituted the Imāms the Guides for mankind, and the Reasons (*adillā'*) for His existence. He has equated obedience to the Imāms with obedience to Him and His Prophet in the Koran. The Imāms are the Proofs of God and His representatives on earth. The Imāms are not, as asserted by the misguided distorters of truth, lesser deities, nor are they Messengers sent by God. No revelation has come to them, as was delivered to the Prophets, and knowledge of the other world (*ghayb*), unknown to His other creatures, was not vouchsafed to them. No prophet had greater knowledge of God than what was granted to him. The claims made for the Imāms by the mendacious perverters of truth are false. Exalted above all is God, and His Friends (the Imāms) are purified from the distortions and falsehoods of the misguided ones, and the (false) words of the heretics.

76. The pure Imāms were the Friends of God, the Proofs of God's existence to His creatures, the Gates of His mercy which He opened to them and the Causes of salvation, reserved especially for His friends and followers. Salvation was specifically restricted to those who obeyed the Imāms absolutely. The acceptance of the obedience due to the Imāms was not possible without devotion to them. Salvation is reserved solely for those who declared their belief in the Imāms, as distinguished from those who were inimical to them, disobeyed them and bore them ill-will.

It was Satan who was the most heinous of those who hated the Friends of God (Imāms) and their followers. This was because he desired to beguile mankind even as he had beguiled their parents (Adam and Eve). Thus, Satan led many of them astray, seduced

them, and allured them to follow their own evil inclinations. This caused them loss after abundance, and perdition after beatitude, and disobedience after obedience. Satan contrived for each individual a distinct path of allurements, including the assemblage of mean and petty spirits (to influence him). Satan seduced the ignorant and the stupid who were influenced by persons to question the rights of the Imāms, to betray and disobey them, and finally, deny them their rights, and refuse recognition to them. Some however possessed knowledge in full measure and attained a high rank in intelligence, and could not be beguiled by means employed for others mentioned earlier. For such as these, he devised other methods. Satan allured and seduced them through his beloved; or played upon his particular weakness or his special failing. So Satan embellished his pretentious interpretations, and formulated his false reasoning in an agreeable shape and urged the people to question the greatness of the Imām's position and the loftiness of his status. Satan showed them the ways and strengthened the arguments for asserting that the Imāms were minor deities, other than God Almighty, or that they were the Messengers sent by God. Thus did Satan succeed in the task that he had taken upon himself, and accomplished it boldly.

The third class of believers, Satan seduced in the manner following. He exaggerated the severity of the obligatory rituals; he legalized illegal actions, and found a way for the commission of heinous sins, by asking the believers to abandon obligatory acts of religion and by gradually sliding away from the path of Muslims. He performed his task by putting forward unsound interpretations and spurious arguments. Thus the deluded ones fell a prey to wretchedness and loss, and went outside the circle of the religious and faithful ones. We ask God to protect us from deviation, and to bear us away from this world in perfect faith; neither breaking our compact, nor straying from the path, nor indulging in unlawful innovations, nor being among those on whom the wrath of God has descended, nor those who have strayed from the righteous path (compare Kor. 1, 7).

77. From Imām Ja'far al-Şādiq. One of his companions complained of (the foul words which fell from the lips of some) people and said:

Why, O son of the Prophet, do people (speak ill of us and) cause us pain? They make demands from us, bear us ill-will and taunt us,

as if, according to them, we are not Muslims? The Imām said: And why do you not praise God and give him thanks for this? Verily, when Satan loses hope that you will not forsake your devotion to us—for he knows full well that God does not accept the good works of those that forswear us—he urges the people against you for envy of your devotion to us. So praise God for the protection that He has extended to you. And when the burden of the words of the people grows heavy, then ponder over the hardships that we have borne from them, and the hardships that were borne by the Prophets of God and His friends (the Imāms) aforetime.

The Prophet (Muḥammad) was questioned about those who suffered the greatest sufferings and tribulations in the world and he said: The Prophets, then the Vicegerents, then the Imāms and finally the faithful. The first are the first, and the most excellent, in that order of priority. God is well pleased to vouchsafe to us and to you the choicest existence in the Hereafter, and the Prophet continued: The world is a prison for the faithful, and a paradise for the unbelievers. Whatever of felicity is granted to the faithful on this earth, is alloyed with something base, so that it may not lessen the perfection of felicity in the Hereafter.

78. The account of those that went astray and were destroyed is lengthy and exceeds the bounds of this book; nevertheless, a few points may be mentioned. And among them is the account of what happened to a certain group during the time of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. Some of them bore allegiance to him, accepted his authority and believed in his Imāmate; and yet, they disobeyed him and deviated and acted wrongfully against him. And ‘Alī fought with them and defeated the *nākihīn* (breakers of allegiance), and destroyed the *māriqīn* (Khārijites, the deviators), and made war on the *qāsiḥīn* (the wrongdoers); and ‘Alī and they mutually dissociated themselves from each other.

A certain group amongst them went to extremes about their beliefs in ‘Alī. By the foul whispering of Satan, they said that it was ‘Alī who was appointed the Prophet, but it was the Angel Gabriel who went wrong (and gave the prophecy to Muḥammad). Fie on their imperfect intelligence, their erring souls and their senseless opinions! If a man were to send a certain quantity of dates to a certain person, and the bearer gave them to a wrong individual, the sender would send him another measure, or take them back from the wrong person. How do people have such mistaken

thoughts about the Lord of the Worlds? And Gabriel was the Trusted Spirit! He came with revelations during the lifetime of the Prophet, and it was he who brought the Koran as revelation. And yet they utter such patent fabrications! The reason is that it was Satan who prompted them and embellished his false and deceitful suggestions. Now these are the persons that we have referred to earlier. And others said that 'Alī was in the clouds; this was due to their foolishness and false notions, as is clear to those that possess understanding.

'Alī came across certain persons who were extremists in this matter. They were beguiled by Satan's machinations and they said: You are our God, our Creator, our Provider! From you is our beginning and to you is our return. Thereupon 'Alī's face underwent a great change; he perspired freely; he trembled like a reed with the fear of the glory of God, May His glory be great! A great anger came upon 'Alī, and he ordered those around him to dig a large pit, and said: Verily, I shall fill this pit with flesh and bone! When the people came to know that he was going to kill them, they said: Verily, if you slay us, you can give us life! 'Alī then asked them to recant; but they persisted in their heresy, and so he burnt them and said:

When I see an act outrageous,
I kindle a fire, and call upon (my slave) Qanbar.²⁴

79. This is a well known story and in the time of the Imāms who succeeded 'Alī there were many such reports of considerable length, for instance, the one of Mughīra b. Sa'īd,²⁵ may God curse him. He was one of the companions and missioners of Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, but Satan seduced him. He became an unbeliever and claimed the rank of prophet and said that he could bring the dead to life. He asserted that Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir was God, exalted above all is Almighty God, the Lord of the worlds. He said that Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir sent him as an apostle. Many of his companions followed him and they were called the Mughīriyya after his name.

The Imām came to know of this heresy, but he could not kill the heretics, for he had no authority to do so, as 'Alī had. 'Alī

²⁴Slave of 'Alī, Hilli, *Khulāṣa*, 66; Kashī, 43; Astarābādī, *Manhaj al-Moqal* (Tehran, 1302), 246.

²⁵*Urjūza*, 221, 317 (note).

had the power to do away with those who uttered such scandalous heresies. So Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir cursed Mughīra and his followers, and dissociated himself from him, his doctrine and his companions. The Imām wrote to his friends and companions to forsake the heretic and asked God for His help in dissociating himself from them, and he asked his followers to curse Mughīra and his friends. Accordingly, the Imām's followers obeyed the Imām and cursed Mughīra and his companions. Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir named them the Mughīriyya *al-rāfiḍa* (the disobedient ones), because they disobeyed him and accepted what Mughīra affirmed, may God curse him. There were disputations, controversies and rancour between Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir and the Mughīriyya and their allies; but an account of these controversies would be too lengthy.

Mughīra and his companions considered prohibited actions as lawful, and permitted them. They abrogated the rules of law, forsook them and deviated totally from the tenets of Islam. They went outside the pale of true Shiites who were the followers of the Imāms. Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir cursed them publicly and dissociated himself from them.

80. Then there was Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb²⁶ during the time of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq. Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb was among the greatest of the Imām's missionaries. What happened to Mughīra, happened to him. He denied the true faith, and claimed prophecy, and said that Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq was God, exalted above all is God and above such heresies. He held that unlawful acts were permissible. Whenever his companions found the obligatory commands to be severe, they came to Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and said: O Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb! be lenient to us. And he would allow his followers to forsake the obligatory acts. This happened so often that finally they abandoned all obligatory acts, and considered illegal acts to be permissible. Thus they committed all forbidden acts, and even gave false evidence against others. Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb said: Every prohibition is cancelled for him who has knowledge of the Imām! This reached the ears of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, but he was unable to do anything more than curse Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb and dissociate himself from him. The Imām collected his companions and informed them about this affair, and wrote to the provinces that he dissociated himself from Abū'l-

²⁶Abū'l-Khaṭṭāb, Muḥammad ibn Abī Zaynab, al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, Tr. Dodge, 462.

Khataḥ, and cursed him. That was all that he could do; and this affair pained and distressed the Imām greatly.

81. Mufaddal b. ‘Amr²⁷ said: One day I visited Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq and found him angry²⁸, sad and tearful. So I said: What is the matter with you, may I be thy ransom! And the Imām said:

Glory be to God, exalted is He above all the sinful protestations of the wrongdoers. O Mufaddal, this great liar and unbeliever (referring to Abū‘l-Khataḥ) asserts that I am God. God Almighty be glorified; there is no deity other than God; my Lord is He, and the Lord of my fathers. It is He Who has created us, and provided for us, and looked after us. We are, indeed, the Banners of righteousness, and the greatest Proof (of God). Arise and go to the companions of Abū‘l-Khataḥ and tell them that we (the Imāms) are only created beings and slaves who are provided for by God. To us, however, is given a station, not given to any one else. Now this station befits none except us. We are a ray from the light of God; and our Party (*shī‘a*) is a part of us. All those who oppose us, will be in the Fire. Tomorrow we shall be the neighbours of God in His abode. He who accepts our dictum and offers obedience, will be in Heaven; and he who obeys this unbelieving liar (Abū‘l-Khataḥ) will be in the Fire.

82. From Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq. Sadīr al-Ṣayrafi²⁹ asked him: Your party, (O Imām) may I be thy ransom, differ amongst themselves about the true position of the Imāms. Some say, the Imām hears whispers (from the other world, or from God); others say, the Imām’s heart receives messages; others are of the opinion that he possesses sight in his sleep; and yet others affirm that he decides legal questions by a reference to the books of his fathers. Now which of these opinions should I take to be true, may I be thy ransom?

The Imām said: Do not take anything of what they say for the truth, O Sadīr. We are, indeed, the Proofs of God and His Trusted Ones, placed over His creatures. The acts permitted by us are from the Book of God; and likewise are the prohibited ones.

83. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. Once upon a time ‘Īṣ b. al-Mukhtār³⁰

²⁷A powerful heretic. Najāshī, *Rijāl* (Bombay, 1317), 295; Ḥillī, *Khulaṣa*, 126; Kashī, 206. See §§93-95, below.

²⁸Reading *mughḍiban*.

²⁹Ḥillī, 42.

³⁰Ḥillī, 64; Najāshī, 214.

visited him and said: May I be thy ransom, O Imām, what is this divergence of opinion in your party? The Imām said: What is the difference, O ‘Īṣ, to which you refer? ‘Īṣ said: When I happen to sit in their circle in Kūfa, I feel a doubt creeping into my faith, after hearing their tales and their divergences. Then I return to Mufaddal and find what I desire, but remain unruffled (in spite of what I hear). The Imām said:

It is just as you say, O ‘Īṣ. Verily, the people go to great extremes in insinuating falsehoods regarding me. It seems as if God has made it obligatory on them to tell lies concerning us. None of them intends anything but this. Whenever I relate a tradition to any of them, he puts a false interpretation on my words as soon as it is pronounced. This is because they do not seek the true religion (*dīn*); while for you, that is your quest. Each one of them, O ‘Īṣ, desires to be the head (of his party). (But, remember that) no slave raises his head undeservedly, but God abases it; and no slave abases his soul, but God raises and honours him.

84. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. Some friendly missionaries (*du‘āt*) had written to the Imām about people having started a new kind of *da‘wat*, and transgressed the bounds of religion. They declared licit actions which were illicit and had forsaken the commands of religion explicitly laid down (by God). They alleged that knowledge of a certain individual (the Imām), frees a man from the responsibility of performing obligatory religious acts. The Imām after describing such persons, wrote as follows:

You write to me concerning your knowledge of the beliefs of certain persons, namely that Prayer, Poor-due, the Ramaḍān Fast, the Ḥajj, (visiting) the Sacred Mosque (Medina), the ‘*Umra*, the Sacred House (Ka‘ba), and the Holy Stations in Pilgrimage are, each one of them, individual human beings. A bath after sexual congress is a man; every act made obligatory by God is likewise a man. They assert that knowledge of such an individual (the Imām) frees a man from the compulsory obligation to perform such ritual acts; and they aver that for him who possesses knowledge of the Imām, such knowledge itself constitutes the performance of the obligation; and he indeed has prayed, paid the poor-due, fasted, performed the pilgrimage, visited the holy places, performed the ritual ablutions and the ritual bath, given respect to the holy stations (during the pilgrimage) and fasted during the holy month and visited the Prophet’s Mosque, without actually performing any of

these acts. Such a person need not exert himself in duly complying with the obligatory religious acts. The knowledge of the Imām frees the man from his own responsibility to perform the compulsory religious rites. Thus he has lawfully, but constructively, prayed, paid the poor-due, fasted, performed the pilgrimage, visited the Ka'ba, bathed ritually and performed the ablutions. He has duly paid respect to the sacred dictates of God, the holy month of Ramaḍān, and the sacred precincts of the Prophet's Mosque. They allege that he who possesses knowledge of the Imām can neglect such acts and even spurn them, and it is unnecessary to strive after their actual fulfilment. The cognizance of this man (Imām) constitutes a sufficient compliance with the obligatory commands for the time being, without their actual performance.

You have come to know that they perpetrate indecent actions forbidden by God; and they assert that wine and games of chance, adultery and usury, the eating of carrion and of blood and the flesh of swine are, indeed, individuals! They believe that God has forbidden marriage only with mothers, daughters, sisters and paternal and maternal aunts; and except the wives of the Prophet, all other women are permissible (for marriage). You know that several of their men jointly marry one woman. They bear false witness; they claim to know the outward and the inward significance of human acts; they claim that it is the esoteric connotation of acts which is their goal and which they are commanded to seek. And you have now written to me for my opinion about their beliefs and assumptions.

Now in my opinion, he who holds such beliefs to be true concerning God is a polytheist (*mushrik*), his disbelief being so manifest that no one can possibly doubt it. Have you not heard the Word of God: *Say, My Lord forbiddeth only indecencies, such of them as are apparent and such as are hidden (7, 33), and Forsake the outwardness of sin and the inwardness thereof (6, 120)?*

An act which is forbidden, is forbidden both in its outward and in its inward form. And an act which is lawful, is lawful likewise in both its forms. The outward form of an act is a cogent reason for its inward form and likewise the inward meaning points to its outward manifestation. They confirm, emphasize, strengthen and help each other. Thus that which is reprehensible in its exterior manifestation, is reprehensible also in its inner meaning. In the same manner, that which is praiseworthy in its manifest form, is praiseworthy likewise in its inner form.

85. Then said Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq:

Know that these persons have heard the truth, but failed to comprehend its true import and its true limits. They therefore expand the limits of religious rules in accordance with their own opinions and the extent of their own understanding. They do not define the bounds of such rules as they were ordered to, but alter them so as to belie the words of God and the Prophet, and to interpolate (their own opinions) in order to be free to commit sins. God has never sent down a prophet to teach knowledge exclusively, divorced from the obedience of obligatory acts. God accepts the performance of obligatory acts from his bondmen only when it is conjoined with belief in the man who teaches and invites them to the true faith.

The first among the dogmas of belief is the knowledge of the person who invites them, and this is God, there is no deity other than Him, the One, and the submission to His Majesty; (secondly,) the knowledge of the Messenger who brought the message, and the full acceptance of what he said; (thirdly,) the knowledge of the Vicegerent (*waṣī*) and (fourthly,) the knowledge of the Imāms who came after the Messenger. God has ordained that obedience to them is compulsory for His people in every age. God has also commanded belief in, and declaration of the truth of, the first and the last among the messengers and Imāms. God has indeed ordered that obligatory acts are compulsory, both in their outward and in their inward aspects; that forbidden acts should likewise be avoided in both their forms. God has declared the outward act illicit by its inward form; and the inward act, by its outward form; these commands are absolute and to be taken together, they are like root and branch. The inward form is thus forbidden in the same manner as its outward form; it is not possible to relax any of these commands. For this reason, it is not possible to legalize even an iota of forbidden acts.

And, similarly, the acts of obedience (prayer, fasting, etc.) which are ordained for the bondmen. The command applies both to its outward as well as to its inward form. It is not possible to perform an obligatory act outwardly without performing the inward act (of faith); nor can the inward act be performed without its exterior manifestation. The outward form of prayer cannot be performed without inner faith in prayer; nor can the inner prayer be performed without its exterior manifestation. The rule applies in like manner

to poor-due, and fasting, and pilgrimage, and visiting the Ka'ba, and to all the obligatory acts laid down by God for man, and the rituals, and also to the prohibitions.

86. From 'Alī b. Abī Tālib. 'Alī spoke of the Koran and said:

Its outward meaning is the obligatory act; while its inner meaning is a secret science, hidden from sight. It is a science known to us (the Imāms) and written down.

87. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. One of his companions spoke to him about certain persons who had deviated from his party, and declared some forbidden acts to be permissible. The informant was a man among those who were counted amongst his followers. The man said: The heretics hold that true religion is cognition (*mā'rifa*). Once you have knowledge of the true Imām, you could do what you wished. The Imām said: *Verily we belong to God, and to Him do we return* (2, 156). The infidels exercise their minds on what they know not. It is said: If you know the Imām, any act considered sufficient by you, constitutes obedience, for it will surely be accepted from you. And this is because no act is acceptable to God from anyone who does not possess knowledge of God.

(To take an example,) a man performs all manner of pious acts, fasts by day and prays by night; spends his goods in charity, and for the whole of his life performs all the obligatory acts, but does not possess knowledge of the Prophet who brought these commands from God. Therefore he does not believe in the Prophet truly, nor does he declare him to be a true prophet, nor does he possess knowledge of the person who was the Imām of his time, obedience to whom was due as ordered by God. It follows that such a person's acts do not bring him any profit in the sight of the Lord.

God says: *We shall turn unto the work they did and make it scattered motes* (25, 23). And the Imām said: If a man were to ruin his constitution by excess of devotion, he would gain only distance from the Lord. Our minds are full of traditions of a like nature, and if we were to describe all such instances occurring during the times of all the Imāms, we would not be able to complete this book according to our intended plan.

88. It has reached us that in the time of Imām al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh, there were many among his opponents, who were men of insight

in religion and the most venerable among the believers. They were so assiduous in piety and in holy war that no one was superior to them. Some of them were missionaries (*du'āt*) who used to call men to God and to His Plenipotentiary (*walī*). They attained a rank in true knowledge which no one else attained. But Satan seduced them, as he had done aforetime, and led them astray, perverted their minds and destroyed them so that they ended in misery, hypocrisy and wrongdoing. Since they had resiled from religion totally, this led them to their destruction. We ask God to save us from wrongdoing and misery, and seek His protection.

We have seen that some there were who protected the *da'wa*; and among them were men of devotion and insight, enjoying prestige and acting righteously. But later they began to commit major sins and allowed themselves to indulge in forbidden acts. Thus did they abrogate the mandatory acts and scoff at religion. They became like unto those whom we have mentioned among the innovators that went astray. al-Mahdī bi'l-lāh pursued them with extreme rigour, and punished them duly, according to their deserts. He took into consideration their heretical opinions and their patent disbelief. A group he put to the sword in cold blood, and crucified the others. Another group he imprisoned and fettered until they perished. He bolted and barred the gate of his Mission, and stopped the flow of his beneficence for a considerable period, until he had duly corrected the believers and distinguished them from the heretics and hypocrites.

If we were to describe the Imām's actions and the affairs of the people adequately, it would comprise a lengthy account in several volumes.

89. A similar report from al-Manṣūr bi'l-lāh has also come to our ears, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. May God illumine his face, exalt his mention and his rank, and may he accord us his intercession.

The reporter said: When God took away the Imām Mahdī in His mercy, and the Imām al-Qā'im bi-Amrī'l-lāh succeeded him, the latter once upon a time spoke about the Imāms and their affairs, and the heresies of the heretics. He sighed heavily and seemed deeply moved, and the signs of fear were writ large upon his face, and were apparent to all of us who were present. Then Imām Qā'im said; *Verily we belong to God and to Him do we return* (2, 156).

And the informant related from the Imām Manṣūr words that

have slipped from our memory; but their general import was that the Imām asked pardon from God for the errors of mankind in regard to the errors and fanciful interpretations and assertions relating to the position of the Imām. The Imām said: But yesterday it was that I was to them the Plenipotentiary of their compact with God. And it is as though, today, some of them have made me their Lord, and some of them have made me their prophet, and some affirm that I know the unknown, and yet others say that revelation has come to me! and he continued:

Proclaim the truth from us and publish it far and wide among the people. The Imām wept copiously, and we witnessed the fear of the Lord in his visage. The Imām said: Imprint this on your hearts and proclaim it widely to the people; you are in duty bound to perform this task. Verily, we are only slaves among the slaves of God Almighty, and His creatures in common with our fellow-men; but we possess a certain station with which we are favoured in that we are Leaders among men, and the Proofs of God among His creatures.

We possess a great many such reports, and were we to mention them all, they would exhaust our book. That which we have mentioned should suffice for those who understand, if God so wills.³¹

There is no power and no strength save in God.

³¹For an explanation of this expression, see *Ency. of Islam*, III (rev. ed.), 1196.

(VIII) OF THE MORAL INJUNCTIONS³² GIVEN BY THE IMĀMS (THE BLESSINGS OF GOD ON THEM) TO THEIR FRIENDS; AND HOW THE IMĀMS NOMINATED THEIR SUCCESSORS; AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THEIR SUCCESSORS

90. From 'Alī. Certain people came to 'Alī to ask him concerning their worldly problems and obtain his sympathy by saying: We belong to your party (*shī'a*). He looked at them for long and said:

I do not know you, and do not find any sign supporting your claim. The distinguishing features of our party are—that one should have faith in God and His Messenger; that he should act in obedience to the Prophet; that he should avoid what has been declared sinful by him; that he should obey us (the Imāms) in what has been commanded by the Imām, and what we have invited him to do. The members of our party keep a constant watch over the sun, the moon and the stars for offering prayers at the proper time. (Outwardly) our party are dry of lips, with sunken abdomens, and the marks of asceticism are writ large on their faces. He who obtains anything without any right, or wrongs the people, or takes what does not belong to him as of right, is not of our party.

91. From Imām al-Šādiq. A group of people belonging to his party came from Kūfa to hear and learn from him. They stayed at Medina as long as they could, and visited him repeatedly, and heard his words and took them to heart. And when the time for their departure arrived and they bade him farewell, some of them said to him: Give us some moral exhortations, O Son of the Messenger of God, and he said:

I enjoin you to fear the Lord, to obey His behests and to abstain from His prohibitions; to return the property faithfully to him who has entrusted it to you, and to deal agreeably with your companions. And (above all,) to be silent missionaries inviting the people towards us, the Imāms.

And they said: How, O son of the Messenger of God, can we call people towards you by observing silence? The Imām said: By performing acts in obedience to God; by avoiding the acts forbidden by Him; by dealing with the people in truth and justice; by return-

³²*waṣīyya*, pl. *waṣāyā*, see *Ismaili Law of Wills*, 7-8.

ing faithfully what has been entrusted to you, and by enjoining what is good and forbidding what is bad. The people should not hear of you any report except what is favourable, so that when they express an opinion concerning you, they should say: These people belong to such and such a party. May God have mercy on so and so who trained his folk so excellently and taught them greater virtue than us. Thus will the people hasten towards us.

I bear witness that my father Muḥammad (al-Bāqir) b. 'Alī, the pleasure of God and His blessings and His mercy be on him, said this: Our Friends and the members of our party were in times past the best of mankind. If there was a leader of prayer in a tribal mosque, he was one of them; if there was a muezzin in the tribal family, he was one of them. If a man was required to guard something during the absence of the owner, he was one of them. If a man was needed to be entrusted with a thing, he was selected from among them. If there was a man of learning leading people to the right faith or righteous actions, he was one of them. So you, too, become likewise. It was they who endeared us (the Imāms) to mankind; and it was they who never excited the hatred of the people against us.

92. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. News reached him that some of his party were deficient in the performance of religious acts, and he admonished them and expressed his displeasure in strong language. The Imām said to some of them:

Verily, the mercy of God will not reach him who is deficient even in one single act made obligatory by God. Likewise the intercession of the Prophet will not avail him on the Day of Judgement. So hearken to us regarding the things made obligatory on you by God, and act accordingly. And do not disobey God or the Prophet or us (the Imāms) by repudiating what we have said, for I swear to you by no other than God the Mighty and Glorious—and he pointed his finger to the skies—and, by us—and he pointed his finger towards himself—and by our party who form part of ourselves that the rest of the people shall be in the Fire! Through us, is God to be worshipped; through us, is God to be obeyed; and by not obeying rules laid down by us, disobedience is to be offered to God. Thus he who obeys us has, indeed, obeyed God; and likewise, he who disobeys us has disobeyed God.

Obedience to the Imāms has the highest priority as a bounty of God to His creatures. This is because no action whatever is accept-

able to God save through us; and no man can be saved except through us; and no man can be subjected to punishment except through us. We are accordingly the Gate of the Almighty and His Proof. We are the Trusted Ones (to guide) His creatures, and the Guardians of God's secrets, and the Repositories of His Knowledge. No one who repudiates our claims has a share in the bounties granted by God to men.

93. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām spoke to Mufaḍḍal ibn 'Amr³³ as follows:

O Mufaḍḍal, tell our party to be true missionaries calling men towards us by abstaining from things forbidden by God and by avoiding disobedience to Him; and call upon them to seek the pleasure of the Lord. If they act accordingly, the people will run towards us!

94. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. Once Mufaḍḍal b. 'Amr came to visit him. He had something in his hand which he placed before the Imām. The Imam asked him what it was, and he replied: These are offerings from your friends and followers, may I be thy ransom!

The Imām said: I shall certainly accept this, but not because of need. I accept these offerings only as a means of purifying the donors. Then he hailed a slave girl and asked her to fetch a basket which he had given her on the day previous. The slave girl brought the wicker-basket and placed it before her master. It contained a jewel the like of which had never been seen; its radiance was like a burning flame. Then the Imām turned to Mufaḍḍal and said: Is there not in this basket what is sufficient for the progeny of the Prophet? Mufaḍḍal turned to the Imām and said: By God, aye, O Imām, May God make me thy ransom! Nay, and even less than this would suffice. The Imām then covered up the pearl and returned it to the slave girl and said:

I heard my father (Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir) say: On the Day of Judgement, God will not turn His attention to one who allows a year to pass without making an offering to us (the Imāms) whether large or small, unless He shows special mercy to him. Then the Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said: This offering, O Mufaḍḍal, is an obligatory one commanded by God in His Book, to be made to us by members of our party. For God says: *Ye shall not attain unto piety until ye spend of that which ye love* (3, 92).

³³See note 27, above.

We indeed are the possessors of piety and virtue and the paths of righteousness. Then the Imām continued: He who divulges our secret has verily showed his enmity towards us. I heard my father Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir say, May the pleasure of God rest upon him: He who divulges our secret and then presents us a mountain of gold, increases naught but distance between us and himself.

95. Imām Ja'far questioned Mufaḍḍal about his partisans in Kūfa, and Mufaḍḍal said: They are only a few. These words of Mufaḍḍal came to the ears of his friends, and when he came to them, they complained of this to him and reviled him, and suspected him, and were inimical to him. This reached the ears of Imām Ja'far, so when Mufaḍḍal came to him (from Kūfa to Medina), the Imām asked him about what he had heard. Mufaḍḍal said: What is it that they hold against me, may I be thy ransom! The Imām said: Well, what they do say is in reality against themselves. I swear by God, they are not of our Party. If they really did belong to our Party, they would not have been angered by your words, nor displeased with them. God has indeed characterized our Party by virtues which they lack.

None belongs to the party of Ja'far save he who guards his tongue and acts in the way of God, and has hope in his Leader (Imām), and fears God according to His rights, until he becomes like a bow (extremely lean) by excess of prayer, and like a she-camel by excess of fear, and purblind by excess of tears of remorse, and weak like a prolific woman by excess of fasting, and deaf by excess of silence (in prayer). Now who among them has disciplined himself by night-long prayer or spent his mornings in fasting, or denied himself the pleasure of the world and its happiness? And all this for fear of God and his devotion to us, the People of the House? Were they among those who fought with our enemies, or were they among those who roused hatred towards us and whined like dogs and were as greedy as ravens?

By God, were I not afraid of alienating them further from you, I would have asked you to shut yourself up in your house and lock the door against them, and never look at their faces. But if they came to you in repentance, then you may accept their sincere contrition, for verily, God has given us life in this world for accepting true repentance from His creatures.

96. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām told some of his compa-

nions: Divulge not our secret, and do not publish it. For verily, God will increase the honour, in this world and the next, of him who hides our secret and does not divulge it; and God will render him despicable, both in this world and the next, who divulges our secret and does not screen it. God will also take away the light from his eyes.

Verily, my father (Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir) used to say: Dissimulation (*taqiyya*) is part of my faith (*dīn*) and the faith of my fathers (Imāms). He who does not dissimulate, possesses no faith. Surely God desires to be worshipped both in secret and in public; now he who publishes our affairs is like one who disowns us.

97. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. Once upon a time a group of the Imām's followers visited him and spoke of the circumstances in which they were living (and of their difficulties). They asked when, if ever, they would be able to live a life of peace. The Imām said: Do you believe that if you obtained what you hope for, it would lead to your happiness? And they replied: By God, yes. The Imām said: Are you ready to part with your family and friends, to bear arms, and to ride horses? And they said: Yes, of course. The Imām then said: We had requested you to do something lesser than this, and you were unable to do it! A man said: And what is that, may I be ransomed for thee?

Imām Ja'far said: We had asked you to remain silent! If you had acted accordingly, we would have been greatly pleased; and if you had acted against our commands, you would have pained us; but you did not act as we suggested.

98. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. Certain companions of the Imām waited on him and spoke of the matters they used to discuss with the people concerning the Imām. And he said: Speak to the people concerning what they do know, and avoid speaking to them about matters which they dislike. Do you desire that God and His Messenger should be reviled? And they said: How can God and His Messenger be abused? He replied:

When you speak of matters abhorrent to the people, they will say: May God curse such a speaker; and this, even if what he had said was the saying of God the Mighty and Glorious or His Messenger!

99. Imām al-Ṣādiq said to some of his followers:

This your palaver disgusts the ignorant ones. Increase the knowledge of one who possesses some knowledge; but avoid discussion with him who dislikes it. God the Mighty and Glorious accepted

our allegiance and the allegiance of our party, on the day he accepted the allegiance of the prophets. Thus no increase is possible in the number of those who swore allegiance to God, and no decrease either. When God decides to benefit one of His creatures, He takes him by the forelock and causes his entry into our party, whether he likes it or not.

100. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām said: Verily, God has created a community that is devoted to us (the Imāms) and a community that bears us ill-will. If some of those that were created to be devoted to us forsake the true path, God will surely cause them to return to us although they may be thoroughly humbled in the process. But those that were born to hate us, will never be imbued with love for us.

101. From Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir. He said: May God have mercy on him who instils love for us among people, and does not increase their hatred against us. I swear by God that if our people report us correctly and do not interpolate (their own words) or alter our teaching by their own opinions, the opponents will not be able to vanquish them in argument. But (great is the calamity) when one of them hears one word from us, and adds ten of his own to it, and interprets it according to his own views. May God have mercy on him who hears a hidden secret from us and buries it in his bosom. By God, God will never bring together, save in this world, those who love us and those who bear enmity to us!

102. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. A man came from Kūfa and the Imām asked him about the condition of his party. The man informed him, and the Imām said: Our authority cannot be supported merely by declaration and acceptance; our authority can best be maintained by secrecy and protection from those who are not fit to receive the message. Give them our greetings and tell them that God will have mercy on him who increases the friendship of the people towards us and towards himself, and speaks to the people about what they know, and hides what they dislike. The man who seeks to support us by saying what the people abhor is, by God, more harmful to us than an enemy who wages war against us! If they would only say exactly what I said, I would not object to their words, and they would still remain my friends.

103. Imām al-Ṣādiq, in giving moral instructions to some of his companions, said as follows:

Fear God; treat your companions with courtesy; have cordial relations with your neighbours. If you belong to our party, return faithfully the things left with you in trust by the owners. Do not abuse people by calling them swine. Speak as we speak and act as we direct you, and you will belong to our party. Do not make (false) claims for us beyond what we ourselves do. If you do so, you cease to belong to our party. My father (Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir) used to say: If a man of our party happened to be in a certain quarter of the town, it was he to whom people entrusted their belongings, and it was he to whom they gave their testamentary directions. You now are in the same position, so act likewise.

104. From Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir. The Imām appointed a man as an emissary to a group among his party, and gave him the following charge: Give our salutations to the people. Admonish them to fear God. Ask the rich among them to visit the poor; advise those in health among them to visit the sick, and the living to attend the funerals of the dead. Direct them to visit each other in their homes; for verily, the constant association of our followers gives life to our cause. May God have mercy on him who gives help and strength to our mission.

Tell them: Verily, we (the Imāms) will not be of any avail to you without good works. None shall attain to true devotion (*walāya*) towards us without piety. On the Day of Judgement none shall be so remorseful as one who after seeing the right path, turned away from it.

105. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām, in admonishing a group of his companions, said as follows:

Perform this act of yours for the Lord, and do not do it to please mankind. Surely what is offered to the Lord, is for Him; and what is done for pleasing men, never reaches God. Do not fight the people regarding their faith; for, surely, enmity makes the heart sick. Verily God told His Prophet: O Muḥammad, *Lo! Thou guidest not whom thou lovest, but God guideth who He will* (28, 56). And He said: *Wouldst thou (O Muḥammad) compel men to become believers?* (10, 99).

Leave the people alone, for people take (their religion) from others, and you obtain it from the Messenger of God and from 'Alī and from us (the Imāms). I have heard my father (Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir) say: When it is fated for a man to enter our faith, he flies more swiftly to it than a bird to its nest.

106. Then said Imām al-Şādiq: He who is pious among you and acts righteously, is one of us, the People of the Household. He was asked: Is he indeed, one of you, O son of the Prophet? And the Imām said: Of course, he is one of us. Have you not heard the Word of the Almighty: *He among you who taketh them for friends is (one) of you* (5, 51); and the saying of Abraham: *But whoso followeth me, he is verily of me* (14, 36)?

107. From Imām al-Şādiq: The Imām gave moral instructions to some of his followers: and said: Lo! I swear by God that you hold the faith of God and His angels. So help us by piety and exertion (in the way of God). Forsooth, God will not accept (the good actions of) anyone except from yourselves. Fear God; restrain your tongues; pray in your mosques; visit your sick. When people withdraw (from you), you too should sever your connexion with them. May God have mercy on him who augments our authority. He was asked: And how, O son of the Prophet, can one advance your authority? And the Imām replied: By discussing it with the people of learning, religion and intelligence. The Imām continued: I swear by God that all of you will enter Paradise. But what is most reprehensible for a man among you—who exert yourselves so greatly in good works among the people of Heaven—is that he should be guilty of acts of indecency and impurity. The Imām was asked: But how can such a man be found among them? And he said: Certainly. It means one who fails to control his gluttony, lechery, or his tongue.

108. From Imām al-Şādiq, who said: You will never find among our followers a man both of whose legs stumble. When one of his feet stumbles, he leans upon the other until it returns to the right position (This refers, metaphorically, to mistaken beliefs and doctrines, doubts and misgivings).

109. And from Muḥammad al-Bāqir. A man spoke to him about another and said that he was behaving in a shameless fashion. He was guilty of prohibited actions and made light of compulsory duties, to the extent that he forsook even the prescribed prayers. The Imām who was sitting in a reclining position, drew himself upright and said:

Glory be to God, omission of the prescribed prayers, indeed. The omission of prescribed prayer is a mortal sin in the eyes of God!

110. From 'Alī, the Prince of the Faithful: Whoever is tested by the Almighty and found fit for piety, is surely endowed with love and devotion towards us (the Imāms) in his heart; and everyone who resents God's ordinances will be found to possess rancour towards us. Therefore he who loves us should purify his heart like unto gold which is free from all dross. And he who bears hatred to us will remain in the same condition.

We are the Noble Ones: Our noble ancestors are the ancestors of the prophets; and I am the Vicegerent of Vicegerents; and I constitute the group of God and His Prophet. And the rebellious group is the party of Satan, and Satan belongs to that party. Now he who has doubts concerning us and turns away from us towards our enemies, is not of our party. He who wishes to distinguish between those who love us and those who hate us, let him examine his own conscience. If his conscience inclines him towards any person who bears enmity towards us, let him know that he himself is the enemy of God, the enemy of His angels, and His Messengers, and of Gabriel and Michael. And God is the enemy of those who disbelieve.

111. From Imām al-Ṣādiq: The Imām gave moral instructions to some of his followers and mentioned several groups which espoused the cause of different claimants, and, in particular, he specified five groups and said: You have adhered to the authority of the House of the Prophet. It is incumbent upon you to fear God; to be truthful in your speech, and to return faithfully the goods entrusted to you. For, verily, God's favour can never be attained without obedience to Him.

112. From Imām al-Bāqir. The Imām, addressing moral exhortations to his followers, said as follows:

O people belonging to our party! Listen and understand our instructions and our charges to our friends. Be truthful in word; carry out your oaths whether to friend or to foe. Love one another with all your heart. Give to the poor. Agree among yourselves in all your affairs. Do not allow fraud or deceit to enter into your transactions with anyone. Do not allow doubt to enter your minds after you have believed. Do not retreat in cowardice after you have determined upon a course of action. Not one of you should turn his back upon those that love you. Now, some of you will show excess of love to your opponents; your love should be restricted to those that

love you. Your actions should be performed for God alone; and your belief and purpose should be directed to none other than your Prophet. And: *Seek help in God and endure. Lo! the earth belongs to God. He giveth it for inheritance to whom He will. And, lo! the sequel is for those who keep their duty (unto Him) (7, 128).* The earth surely belongs to God; and His virtuous servants shall inherit it.

Then he continued: The Friends of God and His prophets belong to our party. That is, when one of them speaks, it is the truth; when he promises, he fulfils it; when he accepts a trust, he executes it faithfully; when he is commanded to perform a righteous act, he performs it; when a lawful demand is made, he pays; when a rightful authority commands, he obeys. Our party do not believe anything which they do not actually hear; never praise him who blames us; never befriend him who bears enmity to us; never associate with him who dislikes us.

If they come across a true believer, they honour him, and if they meet a headstrong person, they avoid him. Our party do not whine like dogs, are not greedy like ravens. None of us asks for favours from anyone except our brethren, even if he is starving to death. The members of our party follow our word, and forsake even their friends for our sake. They befriend strangers who love us, and draw away from their own kith and kin who hate us.

113. From Imām al-Bāqir: One of the people who were present on the occasion (see previous para.), asked: May I be thy ransom, where are such people to be found? and the Imām replied:

They will be found in all the (remote) corners of the world. They will be living an easy, quiet life; they will be filled with happiness; if seen, they will not be recognized; if they disappear, they will not be missed; if they fall ill, no one will visit them; if they desire to marry, no one will come forward to marry them; if they stumble on the way, they lie prostrate, (and none shall care for them), and *when the foolish ones address them, they answer: Peace,|and who spend the night (in prayer) before their Lord, prostrate and standing (25, 63-4).*

And the man said: O son of the Messenger of God! What about those that profess love for the Imāms but bear rancour in their hearts? The Imām said: They will undergo a strict examination for years which will lead to their destruction; their rancour will annihilate them, and their differences will kill them. And, behold! I swear by God, as for those who receive help from us through His angels, God will not slay them, except by their own hands! When you are

told something by us, it is your duty to believe; and when you behold something, to confirm it; and to remove hatred from your hearts, for it will alienate you from us. And beware of the Lord destroying you before your time; for at that time unlawful killing will be common amongst you, and He will take away your souls. And those that come after you will blame you, and you will become an example to those that understand.

The best of mankind is he who forsakes the people of the world, even his father and son; who befriends and shares the burden of his brethren, and counsels them and requites them for the sake of God, whether he be an Ethiopian or a Negro. For no true believer shall be resurrected on the Day of Judgement with a blackened face; but he shall be like unto snow, his face laved with the water of Paradise. He shall obtain everlasting beatitude, he shall have for companions the angels and he shall be in the company of prophets and apostles. No one among the servitors of God shall be more honoured than the expelled runaway slave who meets his Lord in that condition.

Our party are the warners (from the wrath of God) in this world; they are the lights, and the signs and the beacons of light for those that seek what is to be sought, and the leaders of those that obey God. They are the martyrs losing their lives in fighting those that challenge their rightful claims; they are a benison for those that come in faith; they are generous to those that befriend them; they are full of loving-kindness and mercy. They are described in the Torah, and the Gospels, and the Mighty Koran. He indeed is the truly learned man among us who guards his tongue and moulds his life in obedience to his Plenipotentiaries and shows diplomatic reticence towards his enemy. While knowing their blemishes, he discloses them circumspectly, and does not divulge what is in his mind regarding his enemies. He witnesses with his own eyes their detestable actions; he hears with his own ears their evil words; he speaks with his own tongue against those who, for certain, are the haters of the Imāms, and the friends of their enemies.

Thereupon a man said to him: May my father and my mother be sacrificed for thee (O Imām)! And what is the reward for him who has faith in you during the day, and even while sleeping peacefully at night? What is his station in life, and what his reward after death? The Imām said:

The skies are commanded to protect him; the earth, to honour him, and the Light, to vindicate him. The man asked: But what

is his reward in this world? The Imām said: If he asks, it shall be given; if he prays, it shall be accepted; if he has any desire, he shall obtain it; and if he gives succour to a wronged person, he shall be exalted.

114. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. Exhorting some of his followers, the Imām said:

Behave courteously with people at large in accordance with the best models among them. Pray with them in their mosques. Visit the sick among them. Follow their biers. If it be possible for you to lead their prayers, do so. For, indeed, when you act accordingly, the people will say: Here are the members of such and such a party. May God be merciful to so and so, for instructing his followers in the best manner.

115. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām said to some of his followers:

These are your bounden duties—practise abstemiousness, endeavour constantly, and be truthful in speech. Return faithfully that which is entrusted to you, and hold firmly to your spiritual path; for such alone shall be prosperous and happy at the moment of their death.

The Imām continued: In your life you will live happily, and when you die you will meet, by God, the best of your predecessors (in Paradise). Harken to me, by God, you surely believe in the faith of God and the faith of my fathers. And listen, by God and by my ancestors, I do not mean merely the twain Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Imām ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn (Zayn al-‘Ābidīn), but I also mean the prophets Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘il and Iṣḥāq and Ya‘qūb; for their religion was identical. So fear the Lord and give succour to us by abstemiousness. Verily, no prayer, and no poor-due, and no pilgrimage will be accepted by God and no one will be pardoned save from amongst you.

Only those who obeyed us, and did not oppose us, belonged to our party. When fear encompassed us, they feared likewise; when we were at peace, they too were at peace; these are the members of our party. Verily, Satan approached the people and they followed him; but when our party came to them, they disobeyed Satan. Satan seduced some people against us and for this reason, they suffered as they suffered.

(IX) OF THE LOVING-KINDNESS DUE TO THE IMĀMS OF THE PROGENY OF MUḤAMMAD, MAY GOD BLESS HIM AND ALL THE IMĀMS, AND THE INDUCEMENTS FOR UPHOLDING THEM

116. Says God: *Say (O Muḥammad, unto mankind): I ask of you no fee therefor, save loving-kindness for kinsfolk (42, 23).*

And from Imām al-Ṣādiq that a group of his Party visited him one day and among them was a blind man. Some of them told the Imām: O Son of the Messenger of God! This man loves you and is under your protection and care. The Imām feigning anger said: The best of love is for God and His Messenger. There is no virtue in love of any other kind; and he moved his hand twice (sideways, as the Arabs do, signifying an emphatic negative).

117. And the Imām al-Ṣādiq said: The Anṣār once upon a time came to the Prophet and said: O Messenger of God, we were the errant ones, but God gave us right guidance through you. We were needy and God made us prosperous through you. For this reason, ask anything that you desire from our belongings and it shall be yours. Then God revealed the verse: *Say: I ask of you no fee therefor, save loving-kindness for kinsfolk (loc. cit.).*

Then Imām Ja'far raised his hand to the sky and wept until his beard was wet with tears and said: Praise be to God, who has shown great favour to us!

118. From Imām al-Ṣādiq: He was asked concerning the verse of the Koran: *Say: I ask of you no fee therefor, save loving-kindness for kinsfolk (loc. cit.),* and he said: The Anṣār had verily come to visit the Prophet and said to him: O Prophet, you were sent to us when we were the misguided ones, and God guided us rightly through you; and we were poor and God made us rich through you. Here are our earthly possessions; take from them what you desire, and then God revealed the above verse.

119. From Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir: The Imām was asked concerning the same revelation. He said: This is an obligatory command of God for his servants concerning Muḥammad, and the People of his House. The community was split into four factions regarding its true significance. One of them upheld our

interpretation and said that it was revealed in respect of the People of the House of Muḥammad, the Messenger of God.

120. (From Imām al-Bāqir). And others reported from Ibn ‘Abbās³⁴ when God revealed this verse, the people asked the Prophet: Who are these that we should love? and the Prophet said: ‘Alī and Fāṭima and their Progeny.

121. (From Imām al-Bāqir). And the second faction said: this verse was revealed doubtlessly regarding the People of the House of the Messenger of God; but it was annulled by His Word: *Say, whatever reward I might have asked of you is yours. My reward is the affair of God only* (34, 47). Thus they denied the love due to the People of the House, which had been declared obligatory on them. And this, despite the fact that they had no doubt as to the excellence of the *ahl al-bayt* and their status arising out of (their relationship with) the Prophet. Thus did they repeal God’s obligatory command and decided against the clear meaning of God by their hatred and rancour towards their real protectors (the Imāms), and by a wilful interpretation of the Book of God.

(The Imām). Now the Word of God: *Say, whatever reward I might have asked of you is yours. My reward is the affair of God only* (loc. cit.), was revealed either *before* the verse: *Say, I ask of you no fee therefor, save loving-kindness for kinsfolk* (42, 23), or *after* it. If the former was revealed *before* the latter, it could not possibly repeal the latter. And if the former was revealed *after* the latter, it only confirms the truth of the latter. The verse: *Say, whatever reward I might have asked of you is yours* (34, 47), does not according to its plain meaning demand the annulment of the reward. On the other hand, the reward (*ajr*) that has to be rendered by the people is the reward (*thawāb*) the believers shall earn by showing their love to the People of the House; and not that it is merely a favour to the Prophet. This is so clear that it can only be misunderstood by one who wilfully distorts its meaning. No one can deny the conclusion except a bitter opponent; the two verses (rightly understood) are both true. Neither of them—God be praised—repeals the other; on the contrary, each of them confirms and emphasizes the other.

122. (The Imām). The third faction says that the verse (Kor. 42, 23) was revealed as respects all the Arabs; and this was because

³⁴Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Abd Allāh, *Urjūza*, see Index; *Ikhtilāf*, index.

they traduced the progeny of the Prophet. The meaning of the verse, according to them, is "Show love to me by reason of my kinship with my community." They affirmed that the Prophet was related (by blood as well as honour) to every house or family among the Arabs as a whole. Alleging that, thus, every Arab had relationship with the Prophet, they persisted in denying the special eminence of his progeny, and that in reality the Prophet asked them to love him on account of his kinship with them.

If the request to love is made to the Faithful, they love him by evincing their faith in him, and by testifying him (to be a true Prophet). This was because God had granted the favour (of true belief) to them.

(On the other hand,) if their doctrine is that the verse is addressed to unbelievers, then how can those that disbelieved in him be asked to recompense the Prophet? Their application of the verse to the generality of Arabs shows their wilful perversion (*jahl*) of the truth, their contradiction of what is clear and manifest, their interpolation in the Book of God, and distortion of His Word.

Almighty God says: . . . *while those who believe and do good works will be in flowering meadows of the Gardens, having what they wish from their Lord. This is the great preferment. | This it is which God announceth to His bondmen who believe and do good works. Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I ask of you no fee therefor, save loving-kindness among kinsfold* (42, 22-3).

This command is addressed to all the believers, Arab and non-Arab; it is for all those who believe in God and His Messenger, may God bless him and his progeny. God has made the love of the Prophet's kinsmen a binding ordinance. And this is clear to him whom God favours with a clear understanding, guides him towards righteousness and grants him sight of his destiny.

123. (The Imām.) The fourth faction says that the verse of the Koran: *Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I ask of you no fee therefor, save loving-kindness for kinsfolk* (42, 23), means only nearness to God by obedience to Him. And this is the farthest away from its true meaning and an obscure interpretation. This is not based upon any clear reasoning. This was reported by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.³⁵ The wrong interpretation of this verse is itself an indication of his lack of faith in the progeny of the Prophet. For in the expression *mawadda fi'l-qurba*, the word *mawadda* cannot possibly mean "those that are near to God". The true significance of *mawadda* in this verse can-

³⁵See §25, above.

not be the one alleged by this distorter of the Word of God. How can the words signify "those that desire to come near God by obedience to Him"? If this be the true interpretation, as falsely alleged, the mention of "loving-kindness" and "fee" is meaningless. By such false exegesis, this man is guilty of a patent perversion of the Book of God.

124. And additionally, (this perverse interpreter) reports the tradition ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās which we have mentioned earlier, that when the people asked the Prophet the meaning of: *Say (O Muhammad, unto mankind): I ask no fee therefor, save loving-kindness for kinsfolk* (42, 23) and said: Who are these "kinsfolk", O Messenger of God, to whom loving-kindness is due for your sake? The Prophet said: 'Alī and Fāṭima and their progeny.

In this fashion did the Prophet proclaim the persons to whom loving-kindness was due, and explained clearly, by God's behest, the revelation of God. He asserted that this was clear and explicit, manifest and well known. This was because no one could make such a claim unless he possessed kinship with the Prophet. And if perchance such a claim came to be made, the nearest of kin have priority over the others according to the degree of propinquity. But no one can advance such a claim except the Prophet's descendants.

125. (Imām al-Bāqir.) And this Ibn 'Abbās, who reports from the Prophet, disclaimed any right (in the matter of loving-kindness) prescribed in this verse on account of his relationship with the Prophet. This right was restricted to 'Alī and the Imāms descended from him, as we have already said. Now this distorter of God's word follows neither the word of God nor His Prophet when he expounded its meaning to the people. On the other hand, he contradicts God and His Prophet, and invents a falsification of the plain meaning of "kinship" on account of his rancour, thus destroying the correct view. By this attitude he faces the displeasure of God and His Prophet. God save us from such error, temptation and wilfulness. What he has said is the most perverted of interpretations, and we (the Imāms) never derived such a meaning.

We shall now complete our discourse concerning this question; and, if God wills, there is sufficiency in what we have said.

126. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām said to some of his followers: Harken to me, by God! Shall I tell you of a good work

which will save a man from the terror of the Day of Resurrection? And an evil act which will throw him headlong into the Fire? And they said: Yea, O Son of the Messenger of God! The Imām said: The good work is love for us; and the evil act is hatred for us.

127. From Imām al-Bāqir. A group of persons came from Khorasan, and the Imām saw that one of them had both his feet badly wounded, and asked him for the reason. The man replied: As the result of distant travel, O Son of the Messenger of God! By God, nothing impelled me to come this distance except love for you, the People of the House.

And the Imām said: To you, glad tidings! Verily, by God, you will be raised with us (on the Day of Judgement) The man asked: With you, really? and the Imām said: Yes. No servitor loves us but God gives him life with us. What is religion save love? God the Mighty and Glorious says: *Say (O Muḥammad, unto mankind): if ye love God, follow me, God will love you (3, 31).*

128. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām said: God has verily created some folk to love us and some to hate us. If one born to love us changes his opinion, God will certainly return him to our love.

129. From Imām al-Bāqir. At the instant of death, the most profitable thing for you will be love for ‘Alī.

130. From Imām al-Bāqir. Once upon a time, Ziyād al-Aswad³⁶ came to him and the Imām saw that both his feet were bleeding with wounds, and he said: What is this, O Ziyād? Ziyād said: I travelled on a young camel, but as he was too weak, I walked all the way. This was because I had not the wherewithal to buy a full-grown mount. As a matter of fact, even to buy this young camel, I had to put all my savings together. At this, the Imām was visibly moved, and we could notice the tears in his eyes. Thereupon Ziyād said: May God sacrifice me for thee! Verily, I am full of sins. So great is the load on my soul, that I often feel lost. At such a time, I remember my devotion to you (the Imāms) and recollect the love that I bear to you, the People of the House, and then springs hope that perchance I may be saved. The Imām faced Ziyād and said:

Glory be to God! What is religion but love? Almighty God says in His Book: *(God hath) endeared the faith to you and beautified it in your*

³⁶Ziyād b. al-Mundhir, *Urjūza*, index.

hearts (49, 7); and He said: *Say (O Muḥammad, unto mankind): if ye love God, follow me, God will love you* (3, 31); and He said: *(Those who...) love those that flee (for refuge)* (59, 9).

Then said Imām al-Bāqir: One day a country Arab came to the Prophet and said: O Messenger of God, I love the prayerful, but do not pray myself. The Imām said: The man really meant that he did not offer the supererogatory prayers—not that he failed to perform the obligatory ones. Then the Prophet said: You will be (resurrected) among those whom you love.

The Imām continued: What is it that you desire? Harken to me, by God! If an event occurs which terrifies you, you will be with us, and we shall not be terrified because the Prophet will be with us. You are verily among us, so rejoice and, yet again, rejoice! Verily, God will not treat you equally with others (who bear no love to us). No, I swear by God, the others shall have no grace.

131. From Imām al-Sādiq. The Imām said: When a man amongst us (the Imāms), or among you, or among any of my followers reads the Koran, he is as luminous for heavenly beings as the blazing star is for the people of the earth.

132. From Imām al-Sādiq: A man came to the Imām and spoke to him about a man who had died recently, and he said: O Son of the Messenger of God, the deceased had a very high regard for you (the People of the House) and loved you sincerely. The Imām said: Everyone who bears love to us, will be with us on the Day of Resurrection. He will be under our protection and be our companion in all our stations (in Paradise). Doubly do I swear by God, God purifies the heart of every one who loves us. And no one's heart shall be purified until he accepts our Imāmate. And when he accepts our authority, God will save him from the punishment of his sins on the Day of Judgement, and keep him safe from the Great Terror. Verily, this salvation takes place when a person's life reaches here—and he pointed to his throat (that is, at the moment of his death).

133. From Imām al-Sādiq. The Imām told his followers: You had knowledge of (and accepted) us while the people at large denied us; you bore love to us while they showed ill-will; you attached yourselves to us while the people broke with us. For this reason God will requite you with the companionship of Muḥammad and will offer you drink from His Pond (in Paradise).

134. From Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir. Abū Hurayra the Poet³⁷ was mentioned by someone to the Imām and he said: May God have mercy on him! One of those that were present said something to incite the Imām against Abū Hurayra, whereupon the Imām said: May God have mercy on him. Fie on thee! Is it impossible for God to pardon one from amongst the party of ‘Alī (despite his sinfulness)?

135. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. No one, said the Imām, who is under our authority and who bears love for us shall come to harm, although (he be so poor as) to have no covering over his head except for a tree, and have no food save its leaves. The people will hold him by the right hand and the left, and bring him to us.

Someone who was present said: May I be thy ransom (O Imām), (but) we certainly have the hope that God will not treat us on terms of equality with these people (the commonalty). And the Imām said: No, I swear by God, No. And there will be no honour for them.

136. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām addressed a group of his party and said: You are the “men of understanding” mentioned by God in His-Book when he said: *Only the men of understanding pay heed* (13, 19; 39, 9). So rejoice; for your reward will be one of two favours from the Lord (9, 52). Either you will survive to behold what you had hoped for, and God will satisfy the desires of your hearts and take away its anxieties—and this follows from the word of God: *He will heal the breasts of folk who are believers. | And He will remove the anger of their hearts* (9, 14-15). Or else, if you die before witnessing this, you die upon the faith of God which he chose for His Prophet, and for which you were sent (to this world). For, I swear by God, God will not accept any faith but yours. No one shall behold this until he is about to die. The Imām said this and wept.

137. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. The Imām was sitting among a group of his followers and said: Inform me which group is in the worst condition among the people? One of them said: May I be sacrificed for thee! I know of none who is worse off than we ourselves (the party). The Imām was reclining, but he pulled himself upright and said:

Neither two nor one of you will be in Hell! The following verse of the Koran was revealed regarding you: *And they say: What aileth*

³⁷Abū Hurayra, traditionist, *Ency. of Islam*, I, 293 (Goldziher); *Urjūza*, 2019.

us that we behold not men who were wont to count among the wicked? | Did we take them (wrongly) for a laughing-stock, or have our eyes missed them? (38, 62-3).

The Imām continued: Do you know why you are deemed unfortunate by them? They said: No, O son of the Messenger of God! The Imām said: Because they followed Satan, while you disobeyed him, and so Satan incited them (the generality of people) against you.

138. From Imām al-Bāqir. The Imām said: Verily, Paradise welcomes the presence of the progeny of the Prophet and their party, and its brightness will be the brighter for their arrival. If a servant of God worships Him with excessive devotion between the Rukn and the Maqām Ibrāhīm³⁸ in the Ka'ba, so that his ligaments are torn (by running), but his faith does not include love for us and acceptance of the authority of the People of the House, God will not accept his devotions.

139. From Imām al-Šādiq. One day the Imām spoke to his party: You showed love to us and the (other people) bore hatred to us; you gave us help and the others opposed us; you declared us to be truthful and the others forswore us; you attached yourselves to us and the others broke with us, so God has made your abode in this life the same as ours; and likewise, the abode in your next life.

Hearken to me! by God, none of you shall see real happiness until you are about to die. Are you not blissful that when you wish to pray, you do pray and your prayer is accepted; but not the prayer of the others. And similarly that when you desire to fast and do observe it, yours shall be accepted, but not theirs; and the same applies to the pilgrimage. I swear by God that neither prayer, nor poor-due, nor fasting, nor pilgrimage, nor good works in their totality, shall be accepted by God except those that are performed by persons among your party. Verily, the other people acquired their faith from the right and the left, here and there (that is, the wrong persons), but you acquired your faith whence the Prophet of God and his Plenipotentiaries obtained theirs. God's choice fell upon Muḥammad and his progeny among all His servitors, and you chose what God chose. So fear God and return things deposited with you to persons whether black or white, whether he is a Ḥarūrīte³⁹ or a Syrian, or an Umayyad.

³⁸Maqām Ibrāhīm, s. v. Ḥadjdj, *Ency. of Islam*, II, 196 and the travel books; *Urjūza*, 1149.

³⁹*Ency. of Islam*, (rev. ed.), s. v. Ḥarūrā'; *Urjūza*, 1500 (notes).

140. From the Prophet: (On the Day of Judgement,) it is the Party of 'Alī that shall triumph!

141. From Imām al-Bāqir. The Imām was speaking to a group of his party: He alone rejoices among you who is about to die. The angel of death descends upon him, saying: You have been granted what you had desired and you have escaped what you had feared. Then a gate from the man's abode in Paradise shall be opened unto him, and the angels will say: Behold your residence in Paradise! Here are the Messenger of God and 'Alī and Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and they are your boon companions!

142. From Imām al-Šādiq. The Imām (referring to the previous report) said: This is exactly what the Mighty and Glorious God says: *Those who believe and keep their duty (to God), for them are good tidings in the life of this world and the Hereafter* (10, 63-4).

It is reported to us authentically from the Prophet that he said: He who bears malice towards us, God will raise him up as a Jew on the Day of Resurrection. Said Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī: And what happens, O Messenger of God, if he pronounces the Dual Creed (There is no God but Allāh, and Muḥammad is His Messenger)? The Imām said: Yes, by such declaration he saves himself only from the retribution for the sin of man-slaughter. My Lord has verily promised me for 'Alī and his party a certain behaviour (*khaṣla*). He was asked: And what is that, O Messenger of God? The Prophet said: God will forgive those who believe and are god-fearing, and do not betray (their faith) by any sin, major or minor. For them (is prescribed) alteration of their evil acts into good works.

143. From the Prince of the Faithful, 'Alī. He said: Both the virtuous and the profligate are united in their love for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn; but for me, verily, it is written that no unbeliever shall love me and no believer, hate me!

144. From Imām al-Bāqir. The Imām was questioned about the Word of God: *Say: O my slaves who have been prodigal to their own hurt! Despair not of the mercy of God, who forgiveth all sins. Verily, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful* (39, 53). Does this refer to the commonalty or the chosen few? The Imām said: It applies to the elect, to our own party.

145. From Imām al-Bāqir. And it is also reported from him: On the Day of Resurrection our party will be raised up from their graves with all their faults; that is with the sins committed by them. They will then be mounted on winged she-camels with luminous sandal-straps, to show them the way and avoid pitfalls. The people will be full of fear, but our party will be fearless; the people will be full of sorrow, but our party will be free from grief. Thus will they be taken into the protection of the divine Throne, and they will be served with refreshments, while the others will be held to account.

146. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. Once upon a time the Imām spoke to his party and said: On the Day of Judgement we (the Imāms) will be holding on to the waistband of our Prophet and verily you (the party) will be holding on to us, the Imāms. And whither, think you, shall we be going? Some of them replied: Towards Paradise, God willing. The Imām said: Certainly, towards Paradise. If God, Exalted is he, so wills.

147. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. Abū Baṣīr⁴⁰ whose age was great, whose sight was dimmed and whose breath was short, came to visit the Imām one day. The Imām said to him: Why are you so short of breath? And he said: May I be sacrificed for thee! I am old in age; my sight has vanished; my time has come, and yet I know not what my end will be. The Imām said: Is it really you who speak thus, O Abū Muḥammad? Know you not that God honours the young among you by sending them tribulation, and the Almighty is loath to call the aged to account and accords dignity to those that are full of years?

Abū Baṣīr said: And will this indeed be our fate, O Messenger of God? and the Imām said: Yes, certainly, and even more than this. Abū Baṣīr said: O Son of the Prophet, give me more knowledge, may God make me thy ransom! The Imām said: O thou! hast thou not heard the Word of God: *(Of the believers are) men who are true to that which they covenanted with God. Some of them have paid their vow by death (in battle), and some of them are still waiting...* (33, 23).

The man said: Yes (I have heard this verse). Imām Ja'far said: I swear by God, by these God meant none other than you. You have fulfilled the covenant which you made with God and did not change your allegiance to anyone except us (the Imāms). Has this pleased you, O Abū Baṣīr? And he said: Yes, may I be sacrificed for thee! Give me more.

⁴⁰*Mishkāt* (Tr. Robson), III, 862.

The Imām said: The people abjured the good, and you abjured evil. They divided themselves into groups and factions, and you adhered firmly to the House of your Prophet. Rejoice, and rejoice again. For, by God, you will be one of those on whom the mercy of God descends. Your good works will be accepted, and your sins, forgiven. Neither the penitence nor the just actions of those who do not follow your path will be accepted. Their good works will not be accepted and their sins will not be overlooked. Have I pleased you, O Abū Muḥammad? And he said: Aye, so give me more, may I be thy ransom!

The Imām said: Verily God has appointed one of the angels to write off the sins of our Party just as leaves fall to the ground during autumn. And this is what is meant by God's saying: *Those who bear the Throne, and all who are round about it, hymn the praises of their Lord and believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for those who believe, saying: Our Lord Thou comprehendest all things in mercy and knowledge, therefore forgive those who repent and follow Thy way...*(40, 7).

Thus the forgiveness of the angels is reserved only for you, to the exclusion of all others. Have I pleased you, O Abū Muḥammad? And he said: Yes, may I be sacrificed for thee, so give me more.

The Imām said: God has mentioned you in His Book in the following manner: *Of the believers are men who are true to that which they covenanted with God. Some of them have paid their vows by death (in battle), and some are still waiting; and they have not altered in the least (33, 23).* Now the people mentioned here, are you! You have indeed performed the covenants into which you entered, and God mentions you in another place: *And they say: what aileth us that we behold not men whom we were wont to count among the wicked? | Did we take them (wrongly) for a laughing-stock, or have our eyes missed them? (38, 62-3).* Now it is you, by God, who will be rejoicing in Paradise; and people will be looking for you in Hell! Have I pleased you, O Abū Muḥammad? And he said: Yes, may I be ransomed for thee! Pray, go on.

The Imām said: God has mentioned you in another place in His Book: *A day when friend in naught avails friend, nor can they be helped. | Save him on whom God hath mercy...*(44, 41-2). I swear by God that He has not excepted any person save 'Alī and the People of his House and his party. And truly God has mentioned you in yet another place in His Book: *...they are with those unto whom God hath shown favour, of the prophets and the saints and the martyrs and the righteous ...*(4, 69). Thus the Messenger of God is, in this context, included among the prophets; and we are the Friends (the saints) and wit-

nesses (or martyrs) and you are the righteous. Have I pleased you, O Abū Muḥammad? Yes, said the man, may I be sacrificed for thee! Now, pray, increase my knowledge.

The Imām said: God has mentioned you in (another part of) His Book: *Say: O my slaves who have been prodigal to their own hurt! Despair not of the mercy of God...*(39, 53). I swear by God that by these persons God meant none save you. Have I pleased you, O Abū Muḥammad? Yes, said he, now please give me more.

The Imām said: God has mentioned you in another place: *Are those who know equal to those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed* (39, 9). Now you, by God, are the men of understanding. Have I pleased you, O Abū Muḥammad? And he said: Yes, but please go on.

148. (From Imām al-Ṣādiq.) He said: God the Glorious and Mighty said: *Lo! As for my slaves, thou hast no power over any of them...* (15, 42; 17, 65). You are one of the slaves which God mentions. Have I pleased you, O Abū Baṣīr? Yes, said he; but please increase my knowledge, may I be ransomed for thee!

The Imām said: Every verse of the Koran which increases our desire for the Garden and speaks of its benefits is applicable to us (the Imāms) and to our party. And every verse which gives warning of the Fire and speaks of its residents concerns our enemies and those who abjure us.

The Imām was at this time at Abṭāḥ⁴¹ and heard the rush of people who were proceeding on the pilgrimage. And he said: What is this tumultuous crowd of pilgrims! (literally, what increases and what decreases the pilgrims?). I swear by God, God will accept the pilgrimage of no one except thee, and thy companions (O Abū Muḥammad). Then the Imām rose and went into his apartment.

Concerning this question, much more can be said; but in what we have mentioned, there is attainment and sufficiency and good tidings from God to his friends, the truly faithful. Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.

⁴¹Yāqūt, *Buldān* (ed. Wüstenfeld), I, 92.

(X) OF THE INCENTIVES TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE AND THE MERITS TO
BE FOUND IN ITS SEEKERS

149. God the Mighty and Glorious says: *Ask the followers of the Reminder if ye know not* (16, 43; 21, 7). And He says, Glorious is His Praise: *Are those who know equal with those who know not?* (39, 9). And He says, Blessed be His Names: *But it is clear Revelations in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge* (29, 49). And He the Mighty and Glorious says: *God will exalt those who believe among you and those who have knowledge to high ranks. And God is informed of what ye do* (58, 11).

We (the author) have made it clear earlier that the reference in the Book of God is to the pure Imāms of the House of the Prophet. Thus it is they who are the possessors of knowledge; it is they who are entrusted with it by God. God has distinguished them by knowledge; the light of knowledge is their special distinction. He has appointed them its guardians and its treasurers and its protectors to uphold, preserve and love it. God has bestowed on the people at large a lesser portion of knowledge than the Imāms; and has commanded the community to ask the Imāms concerning things which they know not. God has elevated the Imāms by their guardianship of the people, and thus has He honoured the Imāms by the command to seek knowledge from them and to obey their behests, and constituted obedience to the Imāms an essential part of the people's faith.

We have discussed these questions in the previous chapter; and herein we shall mention the merit of learning from the Imāms, perfecting one's knowledge from them and from those who teach by their authority.

150. Concerning this matter, it is related from the Imāms on the ultimate authority of the Prophet, who said: Four things are incumbent on every member of my community who possesses sagacity and wisdom. The hearers asked: And what are these, O Messenger of God? And he said: To hearken to (the teaching of) knowledge; to commit it to memory; to act in consonance with it, and to publish it.

151. From the Prophet, on the authority of the Imāms: The

Prophet said: Many a man full of learning is not a jurist and many a jurist conveys it to one who is greater than he.

152. From the Prophet, on the authority of the Imāms: The Prophet was delivering a sermon in the mosque of Khayf⁴² and said: May God have mercy on one of His bondmen who listens to my discourse, retains it in his memory and brings it to him who heard it not. Accordingly, many a man of learning who, although not a jurist himself, (conveys it to one who is); and many a jurist transmits the law to one greater than he.

153. From 'Alī. He said: There are four things (in the pursuit of which) were (the riders) to urge their mounts so strenuously as to exhaust them utterly, yet, this would be of little consequence: Let not man have hope in anyone save his Lord; let him not fear anything save his sin; let not the ignorant one be ashamed of acquiring knowledge; and let not the learned one be ashamed of confessing ignorance when questioned about something whereof he has no knowledge.

154. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. He said: Seek knowledge and adorn it with gentleness and dignity. Show modesty to those whom you teach; do not be arrogant (with your pupils) lest falsehood overcome the truth you teach.

155. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. He said: Were I to come across a youth belonging to our party who did not know the law, I would instruct him to attain proficiency in it.

156. From Imām al-Ṣādiq, and from his father Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir, and ultimately from 'Alī that the Prophet said:

The People of my Household are like unto the Ark of Noah; he who boarded it was saved, and he who turned away was lost.

And he said: Acquire knowledge from a learned man belonging to the People of the House. Those who obtain knowledge from such a person save themselves from the Fire.

157. From the Prophet, on the authority of Imām al-Ṣādiq and his ancestors. He said: There is no (true) joy in life save for the learned man who expounds knowledge, or the hearer who preserves it. Two traits will not be found in a hypocrite: correct perception of religion or a face mirroring rectitude in behaviour.

⁴²Yaḳūt *Buldan*, II, 507-09.

The legists are the trustees of the messengers of God so long as they do not enter the world (and its snares). The Prophet was asked: What constitutes their entry into the world? He said: Obedience to the sovereign! And when they bend their knee to the temporal authority, beware of following them in your faith.

(al-Nu'mān.) [The Prophet, on whom be peace, means by the word "sovereign", the sovereign of the people of rebellion and iniquity]. Now as for the Imāms of justice, who are appointed by Almighty God, and those whom the Imāms have nominated among the people who act righteously under the Imām's direction and execute their commands, obedience to them, and giving them help, and acting in unison with them, is the mark of probity and distinction. I know not of a single believer who would deny or disapprove of this principle; in fact, they urge the people and invite them to accept it. This proves conclusively what we have stated earlier that by the "sovereign", the Prophet meant the sovereigns who invited men to rebellion and iniquity, obedience to whom has been forbidden by God the Mighty and Glorious.

158. From the Prophet, on the authority of the Imāms: When God desires a man's welfare, He makes him proficient in religion.

159. From the Prophet, on the authority of the Imāms: This knowledge will be possessed by the most upright among the successors (the Imāms) who will confute therewith the corruption of religion by the ignorant, and the wrong assumptions of the falsifiers (of the true faith), and the fanciful interpretations of the extremists.

160. From the Prophet. He said: When a man goes out in the pursuit of learning, God credits him with the choicest of good works, and when such a seeker after knowledge meets a learned man and converses with him about God's decrees, the angels cover them (with their wings), and a divine command rings forth on high: "I have forgiven the twain your sins"!

161. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. He said: Every faithful slave bequeaths to his own family the true knowledge and the righteous learning, and all of them enter Paradise therefor. None is denied this benison; neither the young, nor the old, nor the servant, nor the neighbour. *Per contra*, every sinful slave bequeaths to his family the baneful learning, leading them all to Hell. None of them

shall escape this fate: neither the young, nor the old, nor the servant, nor the neighbour.

162. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. He said: At the time when the following verse of the *Koran* was revealed: *O ye who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire* (66, 6), people asked the Prophet: How are we to save ourselves and our families? The Prophet said: Do good works; recount them to your kith and kin, and instruct them to obey God. Then the Imām said:

Hearken ye to the word of God to His Prophet! *And enjoin upon thy people worship and be constant therein* (20, 132); and God says: *And make mention in the scripture of Ishmael. Lo! he was a keeper of his promise, and he was a Messenger and a Prophet. | He used to enjoin upon his people worship and alms giving, and he was acceptable in the sight of His Lord* (19, 54-55).

163. On the authority of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and his ancestors. The Prophet said: The beginning of knowledge is silence; the second is hearing it with attention; the third is action in conformity with knowledge, and the fourth is the diffusion of knowledge.

164. From the Prophet, on the authority of Imām Ja'far and his ancestors. The Prophet said: When a man instructs himself in his youth, it is as if his learning is engraved upon a stone; but when a man of advanced age acquires knowledge, it is like something written on the face of water.

165. From the Prophet, on the authority of the Imāms. He said: The fear of the Hereafter departs from the heart of him who loves the world. When God grants knowledge to a man, and yet the man increases his attachment to the world, God never fails to augment His wrath on him.

166. From the Prophet, on the authority of the Imāms. He said: The best minister of faith is knowledge; the best minister of knowledge is gentleness; the best minister of gentleness is affection, and the best minister of affection is lenity.

167. From the Prophet, on the authority of the Imāms. He said: It is the children of a learned man that take the least (advantage of his learning); then, his relations; and then, his neighbours (in that order), for they say: We can obtain knowledge from him whenever we wish it (and fail to obtain it).

Now the man of learning is like a spring of water; the people

come to it and take the water (as they please). But, of a sudden, when the spring dries up, the water disappears and the people lament.

168. From 'Alī. He said: Nine things are ugly, but in nine persons, they are even uglier than in others. In kings, stinginess; in the rich, avarice; in the noble, arrogance; in judges, falsehood; in physicians, procrastination; in womenfolk, indecency; and in those that possess authority, recklessness.

169. From 'Alī. He said: Flattery is not the mark of a true believer; nor envy, unless it be in the acquisition of knowledge.

170. From 'Alī. He said: The pursuit of knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.

171. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. He said: Luqmān⁴³ said to his son: My little son! Do not acquire knowledge to overcome the learned, nor to wrangle with the foolish, nor to give airs to yourself in gatherings. Do not forsake learning by turning away from it and by being attached to ignorance. Sonny! attend gatherings by all means; if you see people mentioning God, sit among them. If you are a man of learning, your knowledge will profit you, and your knowledge will increase by their knowledge. If you are ignorant, it is they who will teach you; and it is possible that God may show mercy to them, and it may extend to you as well.

O son of mine! If you come across a group which has forsaken God, do not sit with them. For verily, if you are a learned man, your knowledge will not profit you; and if you are ignorant, your ignorance will be added to theirs. Possibly, God may punish them, and the punishment may encompass you as well.

172. From Imām al-Bāqir. Some of the companions of the Imām said to him: Verily, your master is a young man, and is not proficient in religious law! The Imām reached for his whip (in anger) and said: I am not pleased that my community has the same relation with me as this whip has (with my hand), and that I am asked (a question) about a matter concerning what is permitted and what is forbidden by God and have no answer for it.⁴⁴

⁴³*Ency. of Islām*, III, 35.

⁴⁴"The whip is powerless to do anything unless guided by my hand; but who is it that guides me?" Here the Imām indicates clearly that he is guided by the office of the Imāmate itself which vouchsafes to him perfect knowledge by divine command.

(XI) OF THOSE FROM WHOM KNOWLEDGE SHOULD BE ACQUIRED, AND
THOSE FROM WHOM IT SHOULD BE ABJURED AND WHOSE DOCTRINES
SHOULD BE REJECTED

173. Since we mentioned in the previous chapter the inducements and incentives to knowledge, it now becomes necessary for us to indicate the kind of knowledge that should be acquired and the reasons why we urged you towards it. Similarly we shall tell you of the excellence of the '*ulamā*' mentioned, and why it is necessary to obtain knowledge from them, although some of it may be a repetition. We shall also mention herein the persons whose sayings should be discarded and the reasons for rejecting them on account of their unsoundness.

We (the author) say: It is the doctrine coming from the Imāms of the House of the Prophet which (alone) should be accepted and studied and handed down, and not what is derived from reporters who, being innovators and belonging to the commonalty, have made religious doctrines a plaything, and who have been deluded by the blandishments of this world—with its easily acquired vanities. They occupied places which were not theirs by right, and they drank from sources to which they were not entitled. They filched the rights of the rightful owners; and they avoided correcting their mistakes concerning matters whereof they were ignorant, and they did not listen to or obey the Imāms as commanded by God.

On the contrary, they put forward religious doctrines according to their own (nude) opinions and relied upon the processes of deductive reasoning. The ignorant ones of the community and its lower ranks followed them in their innovations, and thus did they usurp the temporal power as their predecessors had done. While their leaders drowned the community in ignorance, the people considered this to be a mark of distinction.

174. An example of this is a story of 'Umar b. al-Khāṭṭāb. He addressed the people and said: O people! Do not be excessive in enlarging the dowries of your wives. Now if this were a desirable practice in society, or a pious act in the eyes of God, the Prophet would have done it in former times. But he never gave a dowry in excess of 12 oz. of silver to any of his wives.

Thereupon a woman from the last ranks of the multitude arose and said: O Prince of Believers! Why do you deny the rights granted to us by God? God says: (*if ye have given unto one of them a sum of money (however great), do not take anything from it* (4, 20). Whereupon 'Umar was completely silenced and failed to give her any reply. Then said 'Umar to the people: You who have listened to me were free to answer back (but did not); while this woman—and she is by no means the most learned of women—has refuted me. And yet the people deemed this to be one of 'Umar's virtues!

How is it that the people could appoint a person so ignorant to be a Successor to the Prophet?—a man who could be refuted by a woman who was not among the most learned? How could he be deemed to know better what the truth is and what, the good?

175. Similarly, on another occasion, 'Umar in addressing the people said:

The decision to take the oath of allegiance to Abū Bakr was taken all of a sudden, without forethought. May God protect us from its bane. Kill all those who repeat such an act!

By this decision he demanded not only that he himself be put to death, but all those also who swore allegiance to himself. Thus, by this edict, he made it obligatory for the people to resile from their oath of allegiance. For it was Abū Bakr who called the convention whereby 'Umar was proclaimed as his successor; it was not by the suffrage of the people. On the other hand, they came to Abū Bakr concerning the Caliphate and said: We beseech you in the name of God! Why did you appoint over us a man so rude and harsh? And Abū Bakr said: Do you wish to frighten me in the name of God? Aye, when I face God, I shall tell Him: I appointed (a Successor) who was the best among Thy people. And the people did not show any displeasure either towards Abū Bakr or 'Umar, but thought that this was one of the merits and the virtues of them both.

And similarly they relate that 'Umar once addressed the people and said: You have appointed me as your leader, although I am not the best among you. If I err, correct me! And even this was considered by the people as an admirable trait.

176. And they related that 'Umar wanted to punish a woman who bore a son within six months. Whereupon 'Alī said: The son belongs to the father (that is, he is legitimate) and the woman is innocent. And 'Umar said: How do you say this, O Abū' l-Ḥasan (*kunya* of 'Alī)? 'Alī said: From the Book of God; for the Almighty

says: ...and the bearing of him (child) and the weaning of him is thirty months (46, 15), and God also says: Mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years (2, 233); whence it follows that the smallest period of pregnancy is six months.

‘Umar thereupon ordered the release of the woman and gave possession of the son to his father, and said: But for ‘Alī, ‘Umar would surely have perished!

The commonalty did not count this decision against ‘Umar, but reported it as one of his great virtues (showing his humility).

177. (On a certain occasion) ‘Umar decided to stone a pregnant woman (for adultery), and ‘Alī told him: But what power have you over the child in her womb? ‘Umar desisted, (especially) as a group of men among whom was Mu‘ādh⁴⁵, held a similar view. And ‘Umar said as before: But for Mu‘ādh, ‘Umar would surely have perished!

If such an error had been committed by a petty official of the criminal administration, the people would have protested against it until they brought about his dismissal. How then could ‘Umar who had attended the gatherings of the Prophet and claimed the leadership of the Muslims commit such errors? And (the wonder is) that when he confessed his mistakes, they considered it a mark of his humility and excellence. Surely, even courtesy demands a suitable occasion!

If we were to describe similar incidents coming from the “Imāms” of the commonalty, it would exceed the limits set for this book.

178. (After the Caliphate of ‘Umar) the people were unanimous in acclaiming ‘Uthmān as Caliph, and among them were both the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār*. They reported the innovations of ‘Uthmān which are too lengthy to be mentioned; and yet they did not see anything wrong in them. He was to them an Imām from whom they derived their knowledge, as they did even from Mu‘āwiya, although they considered him to be the most errant among them and among those who rebelled (from the authority of the House of the Prophet).

And similarly they acquired their knowledge from Marwān b. al-Ḥakam and ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, and from those who were similar in character among the rebels. They said: “My Companions are as (luminous as) the stars; whichever of them you choose to follow, you will be guided rightly.” If, indeed, what the commonalty say

⁴⁵Schacht, *Origins*, 105 sq.; his *ḥadīth* is one of the most famous in *fiqh*, and cited very often.

be true that " my Companions (The Prophet's) are as luminous as the stars " and that everyone who saw the Prophet and was friendly with him was a companion, it follows that it is permissible to put them all to death! This, because some of them refrained from fighting (in aid of the Prophet) and differed amongst themselves, and some of them killed others. And if one man followed someone else as leader, then he is permitted to kill someone belonging to another group. Then the original follower, having second thoughts, may follow another leader, and thus it would be lawful for him to kill a member of the original group. Neither Almighty God nor His Prophet commanded people to follow a group that differed amongst themselves—a follower not knowing whom to follow—and this doctrine therefore is a manifest error. Its falsity is so patent that a formal refutation of its proponent is uncalled for.

179. In later times, the giving of juristic opinions was restricted among the commonalty to Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik and Shāfi'ī. These three are the authorities from whom the later authors derive their knowledge, compose their books and collections of decisions, and argue against the others who differed from them.

As for (Imām) Abū Ḥanīfa, Cadi Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm and Ḥasan b. Ziyāda al-Lu'lu'ī⁴⁶ reported on Imām Abū Ḥanīfa's authority. These two were the greatest of (Imām) Abū Ḥanīfa's disciples, according to the commonalty. These two said: Abū Ḥanīfa said so: We know this to be the Imām's opinion and, in our judgement, it is the soundest view. But if someone comes to us with a better opinion, we shall adopt his view.

As for (Imām) Mālik, his companion Ashhab b. 'Abd al-'Azīz⁴⁷ reported from him, and the Mālikīs consider him to be among the foremost of his companions.

Ashhab said: One day I was in the company of Mālik, and the Imām was asked about the irrevocable divorce (*al-batta*) and he said: It is the third *ṭalāq*. The disciple thereupon seized his tablet to write it down. And Mālik said: What are you doing? The disciple said: I wish to inscribe what you have just said. The Imām said: Do not do so; for it is possible that by evening I may say that it is the first *ṭalāq* (which is irrevocable)!

As for (Imām) Shāfi'ī, it is related by his companions that he forbad them to follow his opinion or the opinion of his equals among the jurisconsults.

⁴⁶I. Khall., Tr. de Slane, II, 422, (note 3).

⁴⁷*Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, I (Cairo, 1927), 359.

180. Not a single one of these legists, or those that preceded them but had put forward a certain view and then went back upon it. None of them held a view and stuck to it till his death. This is proof enough that he might have resiled from some of the views held by him during his lifetime. The commonalty therefore are in error in adhering to them and following them.

And yet if any one repudiates the opinion of another, they do not consider it a permissible variation, but aver that he who is against an earlier authority is clearly in the wrong. The commonalty in their ignorance count this conduct on the part of the legists as admirable, but in fact it is one of their shortcomings and defects. Would that they had been granted the power to criticize such views and visualize their unsoundness!

The commonalty report from (Imām) Mālik that he held the same views as the Khārijites. But when asked by people about them, he said: What indeed can we say about a people who loved us and gave us justice?

And (Imām) Shāfi'ī—who is one of their recognized authorities, whom they cite and whom they rate highly in knowledge and discrimination—held that it was not lawful to deliver juristic opinions. Since Shāfi'ī and his followers had reservations regarding the soundness of following (blindly) the views which God Himself had not permitted, they themselves (the Shāfi'īs) fell into this evil, or rather, never emerged from it. They said: We do not follow anyone, but we adopt those views of any person which are sound, and reject the views which are unsound. Therefore, if they obtained knowledge from someone by the process of *taqlīd* (following without questioning), they cannot be said to have emerged from the doctrine of *taqlīd*. Wherefore it follows that if a person was mistaken in the least thing, it was not correct for them to follow him in other doctrine as well.

And if they assert that they did not follow the authorities in any particular, thus affirming that they only followed the authorities in what was duly proved to their satisfaction, they followed their own opinions in any case. Wherefore it follows that no one else was obliged to follow them; their reliance was restricted to their own predilections. If such freedom of opinion is to be accepted as the correct doctrine, then God would surely have permitted it to His prophets as well.

(On the other hand,) Almighty God says, concerning the Prophet Muḥammad: *Nor doth he speak of his own desire. | It is naught save an inspiration that is inspired* (53, 3-4).

And God spoke thus to David: ...*and follow not desire that it beguile thee from the way of God* (38, 26); and He said: *Hast thou seen him who maketh his desire his God?* (45, 23). God and His Messenger have commanded naught save obedience, and it is not given to man to rely on his own opinion, or what he loves, and He says: *And follow the better (guidance) of that which is revealed unto you from your Lord* (39, 55). And the Prophet said: Follow, and do not innovate; for every innovator falls into error; and every error leads to the Fire. Thus did the Prophet make it clear that he who opposes obedience, leads to neology.

181. We have stated earlier that it is the Righteous Imāms whom God has ordained as deserving of obedience, and it is from them that knowledge is to be obtained. They are the persons to whom, according to God's command, obedience is due and to whom all questions are to be addressed.

It is related that a man from Khorasan performed the pilgrimage (at Mecca) and met Abū Ḥanīfa, and wrote down some of the Imām's opinions. The next year the man performed the pilgrimage again, met Abū Ḥanīfa and asked him the same questions. The Imām resiled from his opinions *in toto*. Then the Khorāsānī threw dust on his head and raised a cry. The people gathered round him and he said: O ye people! This man (the Sunnite Imām Abū Ḥanīfa) gave his legal opinion to me last year as it is written in this document. So I returned home and permitted people to marry and allowed the shedding of blood (in punishment of crimes), and took property (from men) and gave it (to others.)

Later I came to Abū Ḥanīfa this year and he had changed his opinion entirely. Whereupon Abū Ḥanīfa exclaimed: That was only my considered opinion last year; but today I think otherwise! The Khorāsānī said: Out on thee! Were I to depend on what you say today, contrary to what you said last year, you would certainly go back upon it the next year! Abū Ḥanīfa said: I cannot say. The Khorāsānī thereupon said: Nevertheless I do know that upon you is the curse of God and the angels and all the people!

This is the way of all those that give legal opinions among the commonalty. One authority gives a certain opinion and it is acted upon; his opinion is considered a rule and acted upon by others who follow him. Then the same authority goes back upon his opinion. And he constantly varies his opinions regarding

questions addressed to him until he has no proof left to absolve himself (from this sin).

The refutation of such a procedure would be too elaborate (for inclusion in this book).

182. Those who claim that they possess knowledge on the authority of the two *shaykhs* (Abū Bakr and ‘Umar), allege that the two reported traditions directly from the Prophet. They say (for instance) that he said: Accord precedence to the Quraysh, and do not claim precedence over them. Learn from, but do not teach, them. And (according to them) the Prophet also said: The Leadership is (the prerogative) of the Quraysh.

Now this is a clear admission on the part of the people that the Quraysh have precedence of them, and yet, by implication, it is a denial of its coherence with the dictum of the Prophet. This tradition declares the disbelief of those that acquire religious lore from these idols. He who follows their rule, refutes the word of God and falsifies the saying of the Prophet, since it is not the generality of the members of the tribe of Quraysh who possess pre-eminence. The people are not commanded to follow them in their vain desires, nor their nude opinions, nor by reason of their being members of the tribe of Quraysh. These persons created confusion in the minds of the people by this tradition, as did Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.

If they declared the Word of God as the truth, and reported the saying of the Prophet, they would have accepted the nomination of the Vicegerent (*waṣī*, that is ‘Alī) and the oath of allegiance taken from the people by the Prophet, and his insistence that they should follow and obey ‘Alī and acquire knowledge from him. Had they done so, they would indeed have followed the tradition in its true import; and roused the commonalty from their oblivion, and saved themselves from the Fire and its torments.

When they decided to imbibe knowledge from Mālik and his likes (the three other Sunnite Imāms), they forced themselves to follow him who was constrained to deliver legal opinions concerning the faith of God according to his own opinion and by deductive reasoning, and lead the community of the Messenger of God by the views of its lowly and mean elements. This is so because their method is identical, deductive reasoning being worthy only of rejection. They spurned the Word of God revealed by the tongue of the Prophet:

This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion, al-Islam (5, 3).

I seek refuge from the sin of disbelief after faith, and the seduction by the friends of Satan in the shape of the allurements of the world, and the deviation from the Word of the Compassionate. May God protect us by His favour, and absolve us (from our sins) by His mercy, and make us obedient to His will. May we acquire knowledge from those that possess authority among the people of the House of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Leader of the Messengers, may God bless him and them, one and all.

The refutation of this doctrine and the bane of following it is beyond the pale of our book; for we had made it a condition that it should contain but a sprinkling of all subjects.

183. And it has been reported to us authentically from Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq that when (Imām) Abū Ḥanīfa visited him, Imām al-Ṣādiq said: O Nu'mān, what is it you rely upon when there is no explicit text from the Book of God or a report from the Prophet? Abū Ḥanīfa said: I apply the doctrine of *qiyās* (Deductive Reasoning) to the sources I possess. The Imām said: Surely, the first of those that relied upon reasoning was Satan, and he fell into error! When God commanded him to prostrate himself before Adam, Satan said: *I am better than him. Thou createdst me of fire; while him Thou didst create of mud (7, 12).* Satan held that fire as an element was nobler than earth and this (reasoning) sent him to an everlasting and painful torment.

O Nu'mān (Imām Abū Ḥanīfa), which is the purer, semen or urine? Abū Ḥanīfa said: Semen. Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said: But the Mighty and Glorious has decreed ablution after (the outflow of) urine, but a ritual bath after (the extrusion of) semen. If the question were to be determined according to *qiyās*, doubtlessly a bath would have been prescribed after the exudation of urine.

(The Imām asked Abū Ḥanīfa): Which of the two is the greater crime in the eyes of God, unlawful intercourse or murder? Abū Ḥanīfa said: Murder. The Imām said: But God has decreed two witnesses for murder and four for unlawful intercourse. If the decision were on the basis of *qiyās*, four witnesses would have been necessary for murder, since it is the graver offence.

Imām Ja'far: Which of the two is nobler in degree before God, prayer or fasting? Abū Ḥanīfa: Prayer. Imām Ja'far: The Prophet has laid down that it is obligatory on a menstruating woman to fast,

but not to say her prayers. If (the decision of the Prophet) were based on *qiyās*, it would have been imperative for her to pray!

So, fear God, O Nu'mān (said the Imām), and do not apply deductive reasoning. For, verily, we and you and those that oppose us will stand before God, and He will question us about our decisions and about your decisions. We shall say: We relied on God and His Messenger. And you and your companions will say: We gave this opinion and applied deductive reasoning (to arrive at it). And God will do as He will with us and with you!

184. From Imām al-Ṣādiq: One day the Imām said to (‘Abd al-Raḥmān) Ibn Abī Laylā⁴⁸: Do you judge between persons, O ‘Abd al-Raḥmān? I-A-L said: Yes, O son of the Messenger. The Imām: Do you take property from one person and give it to another? Do you punish one person and acquit another? I-A-L: Yes. The Imām: On what authority do you perform these duties? I-A-L: On the authority of the Book of God. The Imām: Do you find all that you need in the Book of God? I-A-L: No. The Imām: When you do not discover (the appropriate rule) in the Koran, whence do you obtain the rule? I-A-L: I take it from the Messenger of God. The Imām: And do you get everything in the Koran and in (the traditions of) the Prophet? I-A-L: Whenever I am faced with a question not found in the Book of God or the Practice of the Prophet, I rely on (the rules laid down by) the Companions of the Prophet. The Imām: From which of them in particular do you derive (your knowledge)? I-A-L: From Abū Bakr and ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī and Ṭalḥa and Zubayr; and then he enumerated the Companions of the Messenger of God. The Imām: And do you find that they are unanimous on the questions you need? I-A-L: No. The Imām: And when they differ among themselves on whose opinion do you rely? I-A-L: I base my opinion on the view which in my own judgement is the soundest. The Imām: Without caring that you differ from the rest? I-A-L: No. The Imām: And do you then contradict (upon occasion) what comes to you from ‘Alī? I-A-L: (Yes,) sometimes I did go against ‘Alī’s dictum, giving preference to that of others among them.

The Imām thereupon remained silent for a time, pensively. Then he lifted up his head and said: O ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, what will you say on the Day of Resurrection when the Prophet will take you by

⁴⁸ Abū Īsā Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā, judge, and Koran-reader, al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, Tr. Dodge, 69, 502, and 1035; *Mishkāt*, Tr. Robson, II, 754. Schacht, *Origins*, discusses several of his decisions, see Index.

the hand, and place you before God and say: O Lord, this man heard a decision from me and yet contradicted it! I-A-L: But how did I go against the tradition of the Prophet, O Son of the Messenger of God? The Imām said: Has not the tradition of the Prophet come to you when he said to his companions: The best of Judges among you is 'Alī? I-A-L: Certainly. And the Imām said: Since you gave judgement contrary to the opinion of 'Alī, have you not contradicted the Messenger of God? Whereupon a pallor came over the face of Ibn Abī Laylā and it became livid as a citron, and words failed him for a reply.

185. It is reported authentically from 'Amr b. Udhayna⁴⁹, a companion of Imām al-Ṣādiq, who said: I visited 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Laylā when he was a *cadi* of Kufa. I said: I wish to ask you a question, may God guide you rightly! I was of tender years, so he said: Ask, O cousin of mine, whatever you wish.

'Amr: Give me information concerning you and your brother judges. A case is brought before you regarding property, or (legality of) sexual intercourse, or offences concerning death. You decide it by your own opinion. The same case arises before the *cadi* of Mecca, and he decides it in a different manner. Then the case goes successively before the *cadis* of Basra, of Yemen, and at Medina, and all of them decide it contrary to the previous decision (at Mecca). Later on all of you foregather at the court of your Caliph who appointed you. You inform him of the divergence in your decisions, and he approves the judgements of each one of you. Now your God is one; your Prophet is one; and your religion is one. If God has ordered you to differ amongst yourselves, then you have indeed obeyed His command; and if He has forbidden you to do so, you have disobeyed Him. Or else, you are associates of God in His decision, wherein it is for you to say and for Him to agree! Or, possibly, God has revealed an imperfect religion, and has asked your help for its completion. Or, perhaps, God has revealed a perfect religion, but it was the Prophet who was imperfect in its articulation. Or, what is it that you say?

I-A-L: From where do you come, young man?

'Amr: I am a native of Baṣra.

I-A-L: From which tribe?

'Amr: From the tribe of 'Abd al-Qays.

I-A-L: From which family?

⁴⁹*Umar (not 'Amr?) b. Udhayna, Ḥilli, 59; Kashī, 215.

‘Amr: Of the Banī Udhayna.

I-A-L: And what is your relationship with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Udhayna?

‘Amr: He is my paternal grandfather.

Thereupon Ibn Abī Laylā welcomed me warmly and drew close to me and said: Young man, you have indeed asked questions in an angry manner; and being obstinate, you have fallen into difficulties. But I shall inform you fully, if God so wills.

As for your question regarding differences in judgements, when a cause comes to us wherein a principle from the Book of God or the Practice of the Prophet applies, we cannot go beyond the rules laid down by them. Where however the matter involves a question not contained in the Book or the Practice, we deduce the rule by the exercise of our own opinion.

‘Amr: What you have done is a nullity! For the Mighty and Glorious says: *We have neglected nothing in the Book (of Our decrees) (6, 38)*, and regarding this question God says: *And We reveal the Scripture unto thee as an exposition of all things (16, 89)*.

Seest thou not! Were a man to act in accordance with the decree of God, and refrain from that which is forbidden by Him, what is it that remains for God to punish him for the faults of commission or omission; and what, to requite him for his good works?

I-A-L: And how does God reward him for what God has not commanded? and how does the Almighty punish him for what He has not forbidden?

‘Amr: How do you decide a case by rules which are not to be found in the Koran, or which are not established by the traditions of the Prophet?

I-A-L: I shall inform you, O cousin, of a story related by some of our companions. The *ḥadīth* relates back to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. He decided a case between two persons. One of the people sitting nearest to him said: Thou hast done well, O Commander of the Faithful! ‘Umar thereupon reached for his whip and said:

May thy mother be deprived of thee! I swear by God, even ‘Umar himself knows not whether he is right or wrong! This is only my opinion after earnest consideration; so do not declare us free of fault to our faces.

‘Amr: May I not (O ‘Abd al-Raḥmān) relate a story to you?

I-A-L: And what is it?

‘Amr: My father related from Abū’l-Qāsim al-‘Abdī⁵⁰ who

⁵⁰Unfortunately, not identified.

related from Abbān⁵¹, from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who said: Judges are of three kinds, two of them are lost and one is saved. Those that perish are of two sorts, the one who errs intentionally, or the earnest seeker who is mistaken. The one who is saved is the one who acts in consonance with God's command. This then is a confutation of your story, O uncle mine!

I-A-L: By God, you are perfectly right, my cousin. But do you really assert that everything is to be found in the Book of God?

Amr: (Indeed not I, but) God Himself says so! There is nothing that is lawful, and nothing that is unlawful, and nothing that is commanded, and nothing that is forbidden, but is to be found in the Book of God. He who knows it, knows it; and he who does not, does not. And surely God has informed us about this matter to the extent that is necessary for us. How can it be that He has not told us about our reliance on Him (and Him alone)?

I-A-L: And how do you make this out?

'Amr: By His Word: *Then he began to wring his hands for all that he had spent on it* (18, 42).

I-A-L: From whom then does one obtain this knowledge?

'Amr: Who, in your estimation, is this person?

I-A-L: Would that I knew him! For then I could wash his feet and obtain knowledge and receive instruction from him.

'Amr: I adjure thee by God! Know you not of a person who when he asked something of the Prophet, the Prophet bestowed it upon him; and when he remained silent about a question (for lack of knowledge), the Prophet prompted the answer?

I-A-L: O yes, that was 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.

'Amr: Do you know whether 'Alī ever asked any one concerning lawful and unlawful things after the death of the Prophet?

I-A-L: No.

'Amr: Do you know that the people needed him and obtained knowledge from him?

I-A-L: Yes.

'Amr: Wherefore that knowledge was possessed by him!

I-A-L: But that is past. What now remains from 'Alī to us?

'Amr: That you should question his progeny, for it is they who possess that knowledge.

I-A-L: And how shall I find my way to them?

'Amr: Listen! There was a group of people in a desert who had guides with them. And the people fell upon them and slew some

⁵¹For Abbān see I. Khall., Tr. de Slane, IV, 438, 440.

of them, and the others escaped, and fled for fear of the people and went into hiding. And the people had no one left to guide them. And so the people lost their way in the desert and perished. Now, what do you say about them (O 'Abd al-Rahmān)?

I-A-L: (They shall be) in the Fire!

And a pallor came over the face of Ibn Abī Laylā. He had a quince in his hand, and he hit the ground with it in front of him and broke it into pieces, and said:

Verily we belong to God, and to Him do we return (2, 156).

186. And it is related authentically from some of the Pure Imāms that they said: (The Sunnite Imām) Abū Ḥanīfa once visited Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, the most excellent of blessings and salutations be upon him, and Imām al-Ṣādiq came forward (to meet him) leaning on a staff. Thereupon Abū Ḥanīfa exclaimed: What is this staff, O Abū 'Abdi'l-lāh? Surely you have not attained the age requiring it!

The Imām said: Undoubtedly not! It is however the staff of the Messenger of God, and I desired to be blest with it. Abū Ḥanīfa said: Indeed, had I known that it was the staff of the Prophet, verily, I would have hastened to kiss it.

The Imām said: Glory be to God! Then he bared his arm and said: I swear by God, O Nu'mān, you know definitely that these are some of the hair of the Messenger of God and part of his skin, and yet you do not kiss them! Abū Ḥanīfa (immediately) stretched himself to kiss his hand; but the Imām lengthened his sleeve, drew away his hand and withdrew into his house.

187. It is related by some Shiite associates of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq that once he tarried with a circle of the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa while he was delivering a legal opinion (*fatwā*) and al-Ṣādiq said: What do you say regarding a man who pronounces three *ṭalāqs* at one sitting when the wife was not ritually pure, or was menstruating?

Abū Ḥanīfa: The *ṭalāq* is effective.

A man asked: Is it not a fact that God has ordered *ṭalāq* to be effective (only) after *'idda*, and that the limits laid down by Him should not be transgressed? And has not the Prophet made this his Practice, confirmed the rule and insisted on it?

Abū Ḥanīfa: Yes, but we say: This man has disobeyed his Lord and contravened his Prophet, and (as a punishment) his wife is divorced from him.

The man said: Suppose a man were to appoint an agent to pronounce *ṭalāq* on two of his wives. The husband asks the agent to divorce one of them according to the *sunna*, and the other according to neology (*bid'a*). The agent contravenes the instructions of the husband, and pronounces *ṭalāq* on the woman who was to be divorced according to the rule of *bid'a*, by the rule of *sunna*, and the woman to be divorced by the rule of *sunna*, by that of *bid'a*, (What is the effect?).

Abū Ḥanīfa: The divorce (of both the women) is void.

The man: But why?

Abū Ḥanīfa: Because the agent has gone against his instructions.

The questioner said: Thus it follows that where a man goes against his specific instructions, his giving *ṭalāq* is void; but where a man contravenes the command of God and His Messenger, the divorce is valid!

Thereupon Abū Ḥanīfa turned towards his companions and said: This is a question posed by a *rāfiḍī*,⁵² and he was unable to reply.

188. And if we were to expatiate fully on the reports similar to these, it would involve undue amplification. Nevertheless, Imām al-Ṣādiq and his associates used to dispute with Abū Ḥanīfa and his companions from Iraq, since they were closer to the tenets of Shiism. For one thing, they drew their learning from the companions of 'Alī when they were in Iraq. For another, the followers of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq hoped that the Ḥanafīs would possibly come back to their views.

As for Mālik and his companions, they had full knowledge of Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and his religious stand. Mālik enjoyed a certain status in the state and thus Imām Ja'far and his associates were unable to hold disputations with them. Now Mālik had resided at Medina with the Imām, and he had recited (traditions) to Mālik; but did not refute Mālik on any particular point even when he turned away from Imām Ja'far. This was very painful (to the Imām) on account of the estrangement between Mālik and him.

We seek refuge from the Almighty for (the sin of) turning away from His Plenipotentiaries.

189. It has been reported from the Messenger of God that he said: God has not taken away knowledge from the people by snatching

⁵²Watt, W. Montgomery, "The Rāfiḍites: a preliminary study," *Oriens*, 16 (1963), 110-21.

it from them. But He denies knowledge by depriving the people of the learned; for when the truly learned disappear, the people elevate the ignorant ones as their leaders. Accordingly, such ignoramuses are asked to give legal opinions and they do so without possessing knowledge; thus do they go astray and misguide the people.

190. From 'Alī. He said: Acquire knowledge before it disappears. Harken to me! I do not say this way—and he pointed his hand heavenwards—but it is possible that there is a learned man in a tribe, and he dies, and his knowledge departs with him. When this happens, the people take for their leaders the ignoramuses who give legal opinions according to their own views and forsake the traditions. Thus do they go astray, and thus do they lead others to error. When this happens, the community perishes.

191. From 'Alī, on the authority of the Prophet who said:

He who gives legal opinions without knowledge, is cursed by the angels of the heavens and the angels of the earth.

A country Arab asked Rabī'a b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān⁵³ a question. Rabī'a replied and the man asked: If I act accordingly, is the responsibility on your head? Rabī'a remained silent for a while and even when the question was repeated, he did not break his silence. Imām al-Şādiq, on hearing this incident, said: O countryman, the responsibility is on his head, whether he acknowledges it or not!

192. From Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir. The angels of the heavens and the earth, and the angels of mercy and torment, curse the man who gives legal opinions without knowledge. The responsibility for acting on such opinions lies squarely on him who gives the opinion.

193. 'Alī once addressed the people and said:

And afterwards. When I speak, the responsibility lies on me. Piety never dries up the harvest of a people; and it never desiccates the hollow of the root of a tree. He alone arrives at the truth and the good who has knowledge of his own worth. And the limit of a man's ignorance is reached when he does not know his own worth. Two sorts of men are most abhorrent to God: One is the man to

⁵³al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, Tr. Dodge, 501.

whom God has afforded the freedom to act, but deviates from the straight path. He is enamoured of innovation. Excessive in his zeal for fasting and prayer, he is the glittering temptation that seduces people by (the semblance of) his piety. He goes astray from the path of his predecessors, and he is the one who misguides those that come after him. It is he that carries away others who, by his sins, deviate from the true path.

The other is he who picks up the refuse (of true religion) from the scum of society by his own ignorance, and incites the people towards the darkness of rebellion. He is considered to be a man of learning, but he has never devoted himself to it even for a single day. He makes haste and increases in false learning—a particle whereof is better than the bulk—until his mind is full of foul water; for he has gathered without profit, and he sets himself up as a judge. He guarantees the solution of questions that trouble others. If he differs from a former judge, he is not to be trusted in his judgement. If a real difficulty arises, he decides it by his own worthless opinion, and affirms it with confidence. He is entangled in doubts like unto a spider's web, careless whether he is right or wrong. If he happens to be right, he fears that he is wrong; and if he fears that he is in the wrong, he hopes that he is in the right. He fails to realize that there may be true knowledge in what he disapproves, or that there may be a path beyond his ken. When he deduces one thing from another, he fails to see that he may be wrong. When a matter appears to him to be doubtful, he hides it from those who possess knowledge on account of his wilfulness, lest it may be said that he is ignorant. Thereafter he boldly pronounces his decision. Thus he is truly the key to darkness, the rider of doubts, reckless in his ignorance. He fails to apologize for his lack of knowledge, lest he may be forced to confess his error. He has not bitten into the kernel of knowledge by a tooth sharp enough to obtain a proper share.

He relates traditions like unto a scattering wind. His decisions bring tears to the heirs (lit., inheritances); the blood that is shed innocently cries out for help. Legal marriages are declared to be adulterous; and adulterous unions, lawful. He is not worthy, by God, to perform his duties, nor is he fit for the position he occupies.

O people! Behold the faults of the mines of iniquity. You will not be exonerated from your ignorance of him to whom obedience is due—this is your bounden duty! For verily, the knowledge revealed to Adam and all those that possessed the distinction of

being prophets, salutations to all of them, is to be found in Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and in his progeny, the Saintly Ones. (Think well) whither are you being led to wander, and what your destination is!

194. From Imām al-Ṣādiq. He said:

He who seeks knowledge to show off before the '*ulamā'*', or to dispute with the stupid ones, or to turn the eyes of the people towards himself, or vainly to obtain their leadership, let him prepare for Hell as his final abode. Verily, authority befits none save him who is worthy of it.

Had we not followed the path of brevity (in this discourse), surely we would have filled tomes (on the subject). Nevertheless in our exposition there is attainment and sufficiency for those that possess knowledge and acumen.

195. We have discussed already how the people fell into error by their wilfulness and into doubt by their misdirection. We have forbidden you to follow them or to acquire knowledge from them. We have demonstrated that their doctrines are based upon individual opinion and deductive reasoning which is not to be found in the Book or the Practice, nor in an (authentic) report from the Messenger of God, nor from an Imām descended from the Prophet, obedience to whom is a compulsory obligation. We have furnished an account of the Imāms of the progeny of the Prophet, and how God has constrained us to obey them, to acquire knowledge from them, and to offer complete submission to their behests; and we have also shown what obligations were imposed on themselves by the Imāms. Let this suffice as a proof and guidance!

All Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds; and the blessings of God on His Messenger, our Master Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and on the Imāms descended from him the Saintly, the Pure.

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