

LIFE AND LECTURES
of the
GRAND MISSIONARY
AL-MUAYYAD-FID-DIN
AL-SHIRAZI

by

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حياة الموقد في الدين الشيرازي

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Preface

The present work constitutes a second publication in the series of the Research Department of the Ismailia Association, Pakistan. It is a collection of a few selected lectures of the Grand Missionary Al-Moyyud Fid Din Ashirazi along with a short sketch of his life that we have summarized from his autobiography, which is kept together with other manuscripts in the library of the Ismailia Association, Pakistan, Karachi.

We hope that these philosophical lectures and the adventurous life of this Grand Missionary who devoted every thing that he could call his own to Ismaili faith, will prove interesting and instructive for the Ismaili reader.

It is a matter of sorrow to note that a Missionary of Al-Moyyud's eminence who had played a great part in the intellectual development of the Islamic thought in the fourth and fifth century of Hijra, should have been ignored by most of the great historians of his period and of the succeeding generations. Had he himself not written his own life, we would have not come to have a thorough knowledge of this great intellectual personality and a Missionary of such a high achievement.

The book, therefore, sees the light for the first time.

— JAWAD MUSCATI

Introduction

Ismailism has been distinguished from all other sects of Islam by being a permanent Missionary sect. This sect has developed and spread all over the world through the efforts of a band of Missionaries, who preached and propagated the truth of this sect peacefully and won innumerable converts in all places of the world.

“To assign a special post for the Chief Missionary was a peculiarity of the Fatimide reign”, says Al-Maqrizi, a great historian. He is absolutely right. The Umayyads, the Abbasides and other religio-political parties had, like the Fatimides, their own respective Missionaries and propagandists to enlist supporters and sympathiers. But all of them after having achieved their political object, abrogated the Missionary system which they took as a means to an end.

But the Fatimides on the other hand looked upon the Missionary system as a sacred institution and a pious duty which they prosecuted faithfully and actively. They sought power in order that they might be able to realize this ideal safely and smoothly. Their reign, therefore, was marked with great Missionary activities and intellectual agitation.

Circumstances changed and the wheel of fortune turned against the temporal power of the Fatimides, who were deprived of their possessions and government;

but the Missionary activities remained unaffected by this adverse change. On the contrary, with lapse of time it acquired more strength and greater force. Thus from its very inception—ever since the death of the Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq—up today, Ismailism has been a Missionary sect and the spread of this faith over so vast a portion of the globe is due mostly to the unremitting labours of the Ismailia Missionaries.

Attempts were made by several writers and chronologists to draw a picture of the spiritual, intellectual, literary and political life in Egypt during the Fatimides' reign. But their success was not much. Because the sources which most of the writers and historians approach for information do not possess genuine and accurate reports about the Fatimides. The biggest work that the people rely upon for getting information about Ismailis are those of Al-Maqrizi, An-Nwairi, Al-Qalqashandi and others from the ancient authors, who were either opponents of the Fatimides and therefore misrepresented the facts or credulous people who took everything for granted.

But the original and valuable works that had been composed in the Fatimide period were mostly destroyed by the fanatic people who wrested power from the Fatimides in the year 567 and whatever little that survived the malicious act, remained in the possession of Bohra community, an Ismaili sub-sect, who keep these manuscripts very carefully and give them sacramental character.

These manuscripts contain most genuine information about the Fatimides from every respect, particularly about the Missionary institution.

The Ismailis have constituted their Missionary system on the principles of Quranic teaching. In the Holy Quran the Prophets have been called by God as 'Da'ees' and their function as 'Da'waat'. The word Da'ee and Da'waat mean a Missionary and Missionary work respectively. God says in the Holy Quran: **"O Prophet We have sent you as a witness, a giver of good tidings, a warner and as a Da'ee to the religion of God"**. On another occasion He says, **"Invite to the way of God"**. Such verses are many in the Quran which indicate that all the Prophets were but Da'ees.

In short, Missionary work has been one of the fundamental principles of Ismailia sect, and it is hitherto prosecuted regularly and systematically in Ismailia community. By going through the following pages that have been devoted to the biography of the Grand Missionary, the reader will be able to have larger views of the Missionaries and their function.

— JAWAD MUSCATI

A SHORT SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF SYEDNA AL-MUAYYAD-FID-DIN AL-SHIRAZI, HEAD MISSIONARY OF THE ISMAILI SECT.

HIS TITLE: In history this chief "daa-ee" is known as Al-Muayyad-fid-din. Throughout the missionary works of the Ismailis he is mentioned as Syedna Al-Muayyad Fid-din. We cannot trace the date when and who first gave him the title of Al-Muayyad Fid-din. But, however, Abu Khalijar,¹ one of the kings of the Al-Bawahi dynasty who died in the year 440 A.H. (1048 A.D.) in his correspondence with the 'daa-ee' addresses him as "Our Sheikh, our support and our guide Al-Muayyad-fid-din".² Abul-ala-Ma'arree a well known poet and philosopher, also, in correspondance with the 'daa-ee' addresses him as 'Al-Muayyad-fid-din'. In one of his letters to the 'daa-ee' he says: "The first thing with which I open my letter is the praise of our revered Chief Al-Muayyad-fid-din³." This letter was written to him in the course of a correspondance which had passed between him and Al-Muarree, in the year 449 A.H. (1057 A.D.) over the heated debate between the two. His student, Nasir Khusroo, a well known philosopher and traveller of this period also addresses him as 'Al-Muay-

1. He is the ninth king of the Buwehi dynasty who ruled Faras from 416 A.H. to 440 A.H. (1024-1048 A.D.) from the descendants of Ruknud-dowlah.
2. As-Siratul-Muayyadiyah p. 114.
3. Mujamul-udaba: Volume III ps. 118 and 144. (Farid Rufai Press).

yad-fid-din'. In one of his poems he says: "O Nasir, God has opened a new world of wisdom for you through the teaching of Khwaja Al-Muayyad.¹ Ibnul-Maisar in his historical works refers to him in the following terms: "In the year 448 A.H. (1056 A.D.) the Vizier Al-Yazuree equipped Al-Muayyad-fid-din with money and material and sent him to help Abul-Harisul-Basasir² against the Turkooman." Ibn-Manjab also speaks of him in his "Miratul-Zaman³ "the mirror of the time" as Al-Muayyad-fid-din'."

HIS NAME: His full name was Hibtullah bin Musa bin Daud-as-Salmani⁴. He is believed to have descended from Salman Farsi. His position before the Imam of the time was as high as that of Salman before the Prophet and the Wasi. In one of his poems he says: "Had I lived in the days of the Prophet, my position before him would have been, in no way less important than that of Salman. He would have said to me in unequivocal terms, 'you are a member of my family⁵'".

His father and his great-grand-father were all well accomplished missionaries. They were all devoted Ismailis and had served its cause to the best of their abilities. Muayyad has written several poems on his devotion to the Imam of his time. In one of his poems he says, "I wish I should get a chance to offer my life as a sacrifice for you, O my lord. My forefathers and myself have been living in comforts under

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1. Diwan Nasir Khusroo p. 313, verse 24th. (Tehran edition of 1307 A.H.).
 2. History of Egypt, p. 58 by Ibn Manjab.
 3. History of Egypt, page 69 by Ibn Manjab.
 4. Uyoonul-Ma'rif, page 458, by Ali Bin-Saleh.
 5. 38th Poem of Diwanul-Muayyad.

your patronage and we have never swerved an inch from our devotion to you¹". In some of his letters addressed to the Vizier of Abu Kalijar, Al-Muayyad says, "My father lived in this very province in which I am living now. He followed the very same creed which I am following now. He commanded the influence with the vazier of his time. He was held in high esteem by him. He never stood in need of knocking at the doors of others. He suffered no humiliation at the hands of the door-keepers. He never visited the minister at the residence which you are occupying now. On the contrary, Abu-Ghalib al-Wastee with all the pomp and pride and power of the Prime Minister was often seen visiting my father at his house to pay his respects to him²."

This letter reveals to us that his father was a top-ranking missionary. He commanded a great respect at Shiraz. Even the high dignatories of State visited him at his house to pay their respects to him.

HIS BIRTH PLACE: It is difficult to determine the exact date of his birth. Roughly speaking he was born somewhere towards the middle or the end of the year 390 A.H.³ (999 A.D.) in the city of Shiraz. We know next to nothing of his educational career. Very likely he was educated by his father, a learned divine of the Ismaili Faith. After he completed his education his missionary instinct seems to have prompted him to enter into controversies with the anti-Ismaili theologians. His poems show that not only he was not tolerated by non-Ismailis out was systematically persecuted by them in

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1. Poem 4th: Verse 59th, 60th, Diwanul-Muayyad.
 2. As-Siratul-Muayyadiyah, Page 20.
 3. Siratul-Muayyadiyah.

the worst possible manner. Al-Muayyad was a man of great conviction. He put up with their tormentations with patience and came out of the ordeal with success.

In 499 A.H. (1105 A.D.) his wheel of fortune began to change. He received rapid promotions in the job of the 'daa-ee' which he seems to have inherited from his father. His services were recognised and he was appointed the head Missionary at Shiraz and the 'hujjat' for the whole of Persia.

His chequered career is full of adventures and full of excitements. His career as a head missionary of the Ismailis is an important chapter not only in the history of Egypt but in the whole history of Islam during the fifth century of the Hijri era.

In his autobiography he tells us that in 429 A.H. (1037 A.D.) he intended to lead the prayer of Idul Fiter. According to his calculations the Id was due one day before the expected date of the non-Ismailis. They started a rumour that Al-Muayyad wanted to celebrate the Id one day earlier in order to proclaim Caliph Al-Mustansirbillah to the spiritual leadership of the Muslims. This rumour spread like wild fire in the city and the Ismailis being under the impression that the life of Al-Muayyad was in danger rushed to him to find out the true state of affairs. When the Id-day arrived his followers poured in from all possible directions and he led the prayers and after it he delivered his usual sermon to the congregation and nothing untoward happened. But, however, on the third day the vizier Adil sent for him and advised him to leave the country. He pointed out to him that the King Abu

Kalijar was in rage. The non-Ismaili Ulama had prejudiced him to such an extent that there was very likelihood of his issuing a sentence of death against him. Al-Muayyad said that he had no secular advantage in his staying at Shiraz. His stay there was for no other consideration than the interest he took in his religion and in the spiritual advancement of his followers. However, he promised the vizier that he would think over the matter and would try to follow his advice¹. He went home and brooded the whole night over his lot. He did not know where to go and how to leave the country when all the roads were blocked by his enemies who were lying in wait for him. Next morning he saw the vizier and told him that he would rather stick to Shiraz to be killed or forced out of it in fetters than leave it and be killed on the way by some vagabond. He left it to the vizier either to decide one of these two alternative courses for him or to allow him to stay in Shiraz for some time till he was able to arrange for the expenses of the journey and his departure from the city un-noticed by his opponents. The vizier consented to the last suggestion and permitted him to stay on provided he did not extend his stay for over a week.

Al-Muayyad agreed to this and said to the vizier, "If you permit me I shall like to reveal you something which I do not think proper to conceal from you." The vizier said, "Go on with it". Al-Muayyad said, "You know very well the respect that I command with the Delamis. They are so intimately connected with me and they have so much confidence in me that if one

1. As-Siratul-Muayyadiyah, Pages 7-9.

of them quarrels with his wife at night he inform me in the morning of the nature of his quarrel and seek my advice in the matter. When they come to know of my forced flight from Shiraz they are sure to create troubles and take to violence. In that case I hope I shall not be held responsible for what their trouble may entail." The vizier asked him to close his doors against his visitors during this week. Al-Muayyad promised to do so and accordingly he did not allow anybody to see him. But all the same the Ismailis came to know of everything of what had happened to their leader. They discussed the matter among themselves and gathered together in a place known as "Suqul-davab" in Shiraz. They gave vent to their wrath against the king and threatened to rise in revolt in defence of their faith and their great leader. The king was frightened by the news and he ordered the vizier to lose no time in setting the matter right. The vizier at once sent for the Qazi and the Police Officer and threatened them that if any harm occurred to the Ismailis he would order both the officers to be killed outright and properties to be confiscated. After issuing this threat to these officers he sent for the leaders of the Ismailis to enquire into their grievances which had prompted them to rise in revolt. They said that their principle grievance was due to the order of the vizier for the deportation of their Sheikh. The vizier categorically denied their charge and said that the Sheikh was too respectable a person to be deported or maltreated. With assurances for the safe stay of their Sheikh in Shiraz he persuaded them to disperse. Side by side with this he permitted Al-Muayyad to open his doors to his followers and receive them as usual.

Al-Muayyad resumed the activities as usual but fearing lest the anti-Ismaili propaganda should assume a violent form he took a precautionary measure of shifting his important books and records to some unknown place and left his fate in the hands of Providence. Being frightened by the news that the non-Ismailis had plotted to murder him, he made arrangements for his flight to Ahwaz where he intended to stay for some time till the return of normal conditions in Shiraz. In the meantime Al-Muayyad came to know that the king, Abu Kalijar had decided to visit Ahwaz. He thought it safe to join the convoy of the king on his journey to Ahwaz. The king came to know of his intentions and gave Muayyad the surprise of his life by ordering him not to join his convoy. Al-Muayyad was naturally enraged and he protested to the vizier against this unexpected order of the king. The vizier very politely informed the Sheikh that the king did not like to see Al-Muayyad or even hear his name. Unfortunately, Al-Muayyad had already announced to his followers his intended departure with the convoy of the king. The result was that a very large number of his admirers being under impression that their Sheikh was with the convoy, had left Shiraz for joining the convoy out of respect for their Head. Thus, Al-Muayyad was left alone in the midst of his enemies. He was in a fix. However, he got a welcome news that a caravan was ready to leave for Basa, a small village at a distance of four days journey from Shiraz. A fairly large number of Ismailis lived in this village. This attracted Al-Muayyad who availed himself of this opportunity. He rushed to the caravan and on his arrival at Basa he received a warm welcome from his followers. With the help and advice of Al-Muayyad

they built a mosque for the Ismailis who had no mosque there before. He led the congregational prayers in this mosque and delivered his daily sermons to the Ismailis. The non-Ismaili residents of Basa were surprised to notice the tremendous sway which Al-Muayyad held over the Delamites who were reputed to be the most uncontrollable class of people. They looked upon Al-Muayyad as a magician. For, in their opinion his conquest of this uncontrollable element was in no way less mysterious than the conquest of 'jins' by Solomen.

AL-MUAYYAD and ABU KALIJAR: Al-Muayyad happened to return to Shiraz just at the time when Abu Kalijar had arrived there from Ahwaz. But he was not in the proper frame of his mind. His fears had not subsided as yet. One day Al-Muayyad went outside the city of Shiraz in advance to receive a Delami friend of his who was expected to be in the caravan which was bound for Shiraz. When he reached the caravan, he happened to meet a courtier of the king. He took the opportunity to inform him of the maltreatment he had received at the hands of the king. He gave the details of his grievances and requested him to bring them to the notice of the king and solicit him to consider his case and treat him with justice and fairness. Just when he was talking to the courtier a servant of the king told the courtier that he was wanted by the king. Before he saw the king the servant had run to the king and informed him that he had seen the courtier engaged in a friendly conversation with Al-Muayyad. When the courtier appeared before the king he asked him to tell what Al-Muayyad had told him. The courtier said without any reservation

what Al-Muayyad had asked him to communicate to the king. On hearing this the king despatched the courtier with the instruction to be delivered to Al-Muayyad in private. The courtier saw him in a lonely place and delivered to him the message that Al-Muayyad was an agitator intending to create trouble for the king and that he wanted to recite the Khutba in the name of his Imam Al-Mustansar-billah, on the occasion of Idd prayer and that if he should desist from his activities the king would shower his favours on him.

Al-Muayyad listened to the message and exhorted the messenger to carry to the king the following reply: "Sir, the Faith I am preaching and practicing is not a new one. I am not the founder of this faith. The office I have been holding is a centuries-old institution. Numerous Kings and Sultans in the past knew it and witnessed its progress. Had it been a cause of mischief the children of Bu-waih¹ would not have tolerated it. On the contrary, several kings of this dynasty followed and died in this faith. But my enemies have misrepresented the matter to you. You have been misled by the slanderers who poison your ears against me. If you want to know the truth,

1. They are the descendants of Abu Shuja Bu-waihi who had three sons viz. 1. Emadud-dowla Ali. (2) Ruknud-dowla Al-Hasan and (3) Moizzud-dowla Ahmed. They established their rule in different places. Emadud-dowla and his descendants ruled Faras from 321 A.H. to 447 A.H. and Abu Kalijar was a king of this dynasty. Ruknud-dowla and his descendants ruled Ispahan from 321 A. H. to 443 A. H. Moizzud-dowla ruled Kirman. He was the first king of the Bu-Waihi dynasty who brought Baghdad, the seat of Abaside Caliph, under his sway. He had one son namely, Izzud-dowla Bakhtiyar. They ruled for forty six years from 321 to 367 A. H. All Bu-wahis were Shias and many of them were Ismailis. Abu Shuja Bu-waih originally was the descendant of Iranian monarchs. For details see "Ibn Athir" V. 9.

I appeal to you to investigate the matter. Go through the history of this faith. Look at the attitude of your fore-fathers to this faith. Most of them, may God shower, His blessings on them, were good Ismailis. With regard to the allegation that I intend to read the Khutba in the name of the Imam, Al-Mustansar-billah, there is no such thing in my mind. I am waiting for the day when the truth will dawn on you and you yourself will order that the Khutba should be read in the name of the Imam."

He prevailed upon the courtier to influence the king in his favour and persuaded him to give Al-Muayyad a chance to present his case before him. The courtier promised to do his best to help Al-Muayyad. After this Al-Muayyad wrote a very well-worded letter to the king who was much pleased with the choice of his words and his fine logic. He at once issued orders to the vizier that Al-Muayyad should not be disturbed in his missionary work and that he should be allowed to carry on his activities as usual, without letting the public know that the king had given him the necessary permission.

Thus, by force of his logic and the wonderful power of expression he was able to win the sympathy of the king and secure his stay at Shiraz. His movements were free. He could preach as he liked. But he was not satisfied with this much success. His ambition was not only to win the sympathy of the king and secure his safe stay but to convert him into a regular Ismaili. The king had heard a lot about Al-Muayyad but he had never seen him before.

One day Al-Muayyad came to know that the king

was going out for hunting. He went ahead of the king and stood on the way to meet him. When he saw the king approaching, he got down from his horse and greeted him in a very attractive manner. The king was glad to learn that he was the person who was much talked about. The king treated him with respect and ordered that the horse should be offered to him to ride on. On his return from his shooting excursion he found Al-Muayyad waiting, for him on the way. The king said to Al-Muayyad, "You are welcome to see me at the palace whenever you like." Al-Muayyad was much pleased and paid repeated visits to the king who grew very fond of him. His visits had a very satisfactory effect on the king. He was so much charmed by Al-Muayyad's learned talk that he asked him to challenge the opponents of his faith, in the form of a debate. "This," he said, "will give him an opportunity to go through their arguments." Al-Muayyad complied with the king's order and refuted the arguments of his opponents with effective success and proved the truth of his faith by reason and revelation. When the king went through the controversies, he was convinced and said to Al-Muayyad, "I entrust my soul and my faith to you. I accept your belief. I approve of all that you preach and practice." By these words he embraced the Ismaili Faith and recognised the Fatmide mission tacitly.

After this the king and Al-Muayyad agreed to meet every Thursday evening to study Ismaili fundamentals. On these occasions the king put his difficulties before Al-Muayyad who solved them to his satisfaction. The king was much pleased with the way in which his difficulties were solved. He apologised to Al-Muayyad

for the wrong that he had done to him and recanted his old opinion. He said that he was glad to see that after all he was led by Al-Muayyad to the right path.

Al-Muayyad used to open his discourses with recitation from the Holy Quran and then they discussed points from the book, "Daemul Islam" of Qazi prayer for the Fatmide Caliph, Al-Mustansar-billah Nu'maan. He concluded his talk with the praise and and then with the prayer for the king, Abu Kalijar. Al-Muayyad regularly kept up his discourses with the king who became a great admirer of him. When Al-Muayyad found the king had assimilated his teachings to a great extent, he started his campaign against drinking and licentiousness. He wanted to eradicate this bad habit from the king. But his lectures to the king on these subjects excited the wrath of the king's associates who began to intrigue against Al-Muayyad with a view to retain their hold on the king. They were shocked to find that the king was so much impressed by this Ismaili missionary that he gave up drinking and all evil habits and began to live a pious life. They could no longer have the king in their midst at their indulgences in drinking and other vices. They grew very jealous of Al-Muayyad and were bent upon denouncing him to the king. They ran down the Ismaili doctrines, and painted them in the worst possible colours before the king. They made virulent attacks against Al-Muayyad and his faith. They left no stone unturned in dislodging him from his elevated position. They used all possible tricks and treacheries and told all sorts of lies against him. The king was tired of this and he spoke of all these things to Al-Muayyad in the presence of his courtiers. Al-Muayyad

was forced to defend his right cause and the king was convinced that his associates were Al-Muayyad's open enemies and that they wanted to continue his indulgence in drinking and his living a vicious life.

With all this the courtiers did not spare Al-Muayyad and made the worst possible attacks on his religion. Al-Muayyad getting tired of all this addressed the king as follows: "Neither your pleasure nor your displeasure has left me secure in my place. When you were displeased with me without trying to know me and with no positive proofs against me you were after my blood. In those days I spent sleepless nights. I was terribly afraid of your power and your impulsiveness. When God eased the situation for me by rousing you from sleep and you came in my contact I did for you by showing the right path what your father had not done to you. With all this I am not secure. Your associates have still persistantly been harming me by playing all sorts of tricks to poison you against me."

An address of this type made by Al-Muayyad to the king gave the courtiers an additional weapon against the Ismaili missionary. They pointed out to the king that the tone of his talk was an open insult to him. None else could have had the audacity to address the king in this manner. "No king", they said, "in the past was ever addressed in this fashion." Thus they went on poisoning the king's ears until he got excited and stopped his weekly meetings with Al-Muayyad.

Al-Muayyad apologised to him and wrote to him a poem of a great literary value in which he vitu-

perated the courtiers in a masterly style. This took place in 433 A.H., 1041 A.D., the year in which the vizier Adil who was an Ismaili at heart and who used to hide his faith from the public, died and Abu-Mansur-Hibtullahe-bin Ahmed known as "Muhazzabuddolah" was appointed in his place.¹

This new vizier hated Al-Muayyad and his faith. He was afraid lest Al-Muayyad by coming in contact with the king should be appointed to the post of the minister for which he knew, Al-Muayyad had been the most qualified a person. The vizier always looked at things from material point of view, and thought everybody like himself was hankering after material gains and therefore Al-Muayyad became his eye-sore. The vizier's hostility with Al-Muayyad strengthened the hands of the courtiers who, one and all, moved heaven and earth to entrap Al-Muayyad and bring him to disgrace.

Al-Muayyad left Shiraz and stayed in an old mosque which was in a dilapidated condition. It was a favourite hanut of the 'Sufees'. He rebuilt this mosque and wrote on its arch the names of the Prophet and the Imams one after another upto Al-Mustansar-billah, the Imam of his time, in golden letters. He asked all the Daylamite Ismailis to offer their Jumma prayers in the mosque where 'Khutba' was being recited in the name of Al-Mustansar-billah. Al-Muayyad asked twenty of his Daylamite admirers to give the prayer cry from the top of the mosque with 'Haye-alkhairil-amal'. This created a sensation and a sort of confusion in the city. All the Ismailis rushed to their

1. Ibnul-Athir, page 344.

own mosque to say their prayer. This state of affairs continued every Friday and the inquisitive people began to say all sorts of things. "Who did this? How he did it? Why he did it?" were the common topics of the day.

Al-Muayyad refers to this in one of his 'Qasidas' in which he says, "Ask the land of Ahwaz about my doings there. Every brick of its walls will tell you what I did there."

Thus, the city of Ahwaz was in great excitement. Ibnul-Mushtaree Abul Hasan Abdul Wahab bin Mansur-al-Shafae. happened to be the Qazi in charge of Khuzistan and Farsi.¹ He wrote to the Abaside Caliph Al-Qaem at Baghdad bemoaning the loss of his power at Ahwaz. He advised the Khalifa to ask Abu Kalijar to arrest Al-Muayyad. He further suggested that he should give a threat to Abu Kalijar that if he did not hand over Al-Muayyad to the messenger of the Khalifa he would be severely dealt with.

Al-Muayyad came to know of all that was being plotted against him. Just at the time when this matter was being talked about by the people, Ibnul-Maslama² the messenger of the Abaside Caliph arrived at Basra to see Abu Kalijar. The people began to gossip about the cause of his arrival. Ibnul-Maslama fearing lest the followers of Al-Muayyad should harm him, played a trick to disguise his identity. He influenced one of the local chiefs to write to Al-Muayyad to the effect that Ibnul-Maslama was misrepresented to him by the

1. Ibnul-Athir, Volume 9, page 360.

2. History of Saljuqs p. 9. Annujumuzzahera, Volume 5, page 6, "Miratuzzaman", V. 12 p. 54 "Al-Fakhri" p. 396.

idle-talkers. The chief accordingly tried to impress on Al-Muayyad that he had not come to Basra to arrest him but to look after the personal estate of the Caliph. But, Al-Muayyad would not be easily misled. He saw through the trick of Ibnul-Maslama and understood the whole plot. He knew very well that the wicked courtiers, of Abu Kalijar were seriously planning to make full use of this golden opportunity to bring him to trouble. Hence, Al-Muayyad thought it wise to go back to Shiraz. The king knew that the cat was out of the bag, therefore, he took particular care not to excite the Daylamite Ismailis, just at the time when Ibnul-Maslama, the messenger of the Caliph, was on his way to Shiraz.

To afford the king an opportunity of arresting Al-Muayyad without rousing the wrath of the Daylamite Ismailis, one of his courtiers suggested to him that he should organize a debate between Al-Muayyad and Sharif Alavi. He further suggested that some mischievous people should be kept ready to interrupt Al-Muayyad during the course of his debate to make him lose the thread of his thought. He thus would lose his temper and violate the laws of debates. "This", he said, "will run against Al-Muayyad and justify his opponent, to disgrace him, while the Daylamite Ismailis being influenced by the piety and lineage of Sharif Alavi, will not interfere."

The king approved of this suggestion and invited Al-Muayyad to enter into a debate with the Alavi. It happened to be the beginning of the month of Ramadan. Al-Muayyad accepted the invitation and as a preliminary to the debate he said to the Alavi, "I have been trying to defend Alaweas and strengthen their

hold on people, which you, inspite of your being an Alawee have been playing into the hands of the enemies of the Alawees and are prepared to debate with one who is the supporter and defender of their doctrines." The king stopped them from reprimanding one another and expressed a desire that they should carry on the debate on whether the first of the month of Ramzan was to be decided by the visibility of the moon as according to the general opinion of the Sunni divines or by the astronomical calculations of the Fatmides. They carried on a heated debate on this point.¹ Each one of them did his best to prove his point of view. They made a full display of science and learning in trying to defeat each other. In the meantime the courtiers applied themselves to their premeditated plan and tried their best to interrupt Al-Muayyad and to excite him. They used all possible measures to put him out. But, Al-Muayyad upset their scheme by remaining calm, cool and collected. He vindicated his point by the force of logic and his marvellous power of argumentation. He proved more than a match for his opponent Alawee whom he let stand at bay. The king and all those that were present there, including the enemies of Al-Muayyad began to laugh at Alawee. The courtiers failed in their conspiracy. But, with all this, their anger against Al-Muayyad would not subside. On the contrary they became his bitter enemies and they started their anti-Muayyad machinations with re-doubled vigour. They tried to impress upon the king that Al-Muayyad had excited all his Daylamite Ismailis against courtiers

1. This and other debates which this grand missionary had with the divine of several sects shall be published later on.

of the king. They complained that they were being abused by them at open meetings. The king, Abu Kalijar, was in a fix. He did not know what to do. He was very anxious to please Abaside Caliph by handing over Al-Muayyad to his messenger, but at the same time his conscience began to prick him. He feared God and he could not make up his mind to arrest Al-Muayyad who had committed no crime. He knew very well that he was a pious missionary who was doing his best to lead the people to the path of righteousness. He had very nearly decided in his mind to protect Al-Muayyad but worldly considerations preponderated over his religious feelings and blinded him. Ultimately he decided to please the Abaside Caliph by carrying out his instructions in his dealings with Al-Muayyad. His decision leaked out and created a great sensation in Shiraz. Every one began to talk of Al-Muayyad. His enemies rejoiced at the news and wrote letters to their friends in cities and villages congratulating them on the fact that the king had changed his views about Al-Muayyad and had done him to death.

Al-Muayyad himself heard one man saying to another that not only Muayyad was done to death but even the horse he rode was cut to pieces. The man who heard this jumped with joy and said to the one who gave him the news, "Give me your hand that I may kiss it." The man said, "Bring your chest near my chest and let us rub them against each other so that the hearts enclosed within them may blossom over the news that the dark clouds have disappeared from the firmament of Islam and the Muslims."

The king Abu Kalijar was in the habit of attending the Juma prayers at the Jam-e-mosque every Friday

in the month of Ramzan. The courtiers got the opportunity of striking at Al-Muayyad the last arrows in their quivers. They gathered a large number of people from the city who bore grudge against Al-Muayyad. They asked them to stand in rows from the gate of the house of the king upto the gate of the mosque and raise their voices one and all thanking the king, on his way to the mosque, for purging Islam of the plague of Al-Muayyad.

Al-Muayyad says, "On Friday I heard from my house the shouts of people. I cannot compare the tumult to any thing else than what one can imagine on the blowing of the Trumpet on the Day of Resurrection. I knew for certain that the swords were ready to cut me to pieces and the fire was ready to burn down my house. I entrusted my affairs to God and sat in my house contented with what might befall me as a result of my love for the Ahl-bet, may the greetings of God be on them. I may forget all other tormentations that I have suffered but I can never forget my painful experience on this occasion.

After the prayer the king wrote a letter to Al-Muayyad asking him to leave Shiraz for his safety's sake and go wherever he liked. Two days after he sent to Al-Muayyad the very letter which he had received from the Abaside Caliph. It was full of threats and attacks on the geneology of the Fatmides. "Their propaganda" it said, "was always carried on in the past with secrecy. None has so far had the courage to carry on his pro-Fatmide activities as openly as Al-Muayyad does. Hand over Al-Muayyad to my messenger. If you cannot do it I shall seek the help of Tughrel Beg, the Turkoman chief in the matter." Al

Muayyad gave a serious thought to the advice of the king to leave the city. But, in the meantime, one of the courtiers advised the king to force Al-Muayyad to stay in his house. "If you allow him to go out", he said, "the Daylamites will get excited and will create trouble." The king acting on his advice asked Al-Muayyad to stay at home and wait for his further orders.

After a few days Ibnul-Maslama, the messenger of the Caliph arrived at Shiraz and delivered the Caliph's presents to Abu Kalijar. Side by side with this he sent a note to Al-Muayyad saying, "If you abandon your faith and renounce the opinion you hold the Abaside Caliph will be pleased with you and you will be allowed to maintain your high position in the court of Abu Kalijar." In reply to this Al-Muayyad wrote, "In whatever I do I am prompted by nothing else than the love for my faith. It is my firm belief that God's pleasure lies in the faith I follow. With regard to my position with the king or the prospect of my receiving the reward from him I am not in the least attracted by it. I am not the seeker of the worldly wealth. I wish you worldly prosperity. As far as I am concerned, if you cut me to pieces or burn me alive I shall not abandon my faith."

Fearing, lest he should fall into the hands of Ibnul-Maslama he left Shiraz. Although he was out of the clutches of Ibnul-Maslama, he was not secure of the intrigues of his opponents and the sudden rise of the ignorant people against him particularly when they were given to understand that the king had become the enemy of Al-Muayyad. For nearly seven months Al-Muayyad lived in an atmosphere of fear

and terror. He could neither eat his food with ease nor sleep an undisturbed sleep. His position became very critical.

Abu Kalijar decided to go for a change to Ahwaz along with his army. Al-Muayyad saw that in the absence of the king and his army his stay in Shiraz would not be safe. Fearing lest his opponents should do him harm in the absence of the king he tried to accompany the king but could not get the chance. He left the city un-noticed and gave his own people to understand that he was travelling with the king's party in disguise and told others that he was going to stay in Skiraz and was sending his travelling kit along with his servant to Ahwaz.

He left the country in disguise and took with him two slaves who were not much known to the people. He went by some unusual route and at every stage he hired a new riding animal. When he found the route impassable by the animal, he had to walk. He suffered all sorts of hardships and he had to put up with the severest cold in the valleys. Very often he came across people who used to abuse Al-Muayyad and attribute all sorts of evils to him. Little did they know that the same Al-Muayyad whom they were abusing was in their midst. He remained silent. He knew well that if he uttered anything in his defence they would pounce upon him and would make short work of him.

Under these difficulties he managed to reach Janabah. It happened to be a rainy day. He entered a mosque and took shelter there. Here some one who happened to be one of his disciples recognised him and

offered to place his personal services, his property and everything that he could call his own at his disposal. Al-Muayyad thanked him for his offer and asked him not to reveal his identity. A few minutes later an Alawee came and said to him, "You appear to be Al-Muayyad. I have seen you at Ahwaz when you were building a mosque there." Al-Muayyad said, "I am not the person whom you are referring to. I know nothing of this mosque. I passed Ahwaz on my way but I did not stay there." The Alawee said, "People have been saying that you are Al-Muayyad." Al-Muayyad replied, "I have heard the name of this gentleman. He is reported to have great influence over the Dalamites, but I have never seen him. Some people do resemble one another and sometimes one man is mistaken for another." The Alawee said, "Some people have advised the governor of Janabah to arrest you." He had almost made up his mind to stop you from moving further. It was I who advised the governor not to touch you." The Alawee was followed by a third person who said to Al-Muayyad, "People have been saying all sorts of things about you. Some say that you are the Zaheeruddin of Basra. You have absconded from the jail and are going in disguise to Basra. Others say that you are Al-Muayyad." Al-Muayyad said, "I am none of the two. I am an Alawee traveller." He then asked him to hire a donkey for him for he wanted to resume his journey forthwith. After a short while the man brought a donkey-man without the animal. The donkey-man promised to bring the donkey next morning. Since the donkey-man did not return at the appointed time Al-Muayyad thought that the governor must have prevented him from providing him the donkey. While he was thus

hinking the donkey-man appeared with the donkey and Al-Muayyad hurried up and left the city immediately.

He took full one month to reach Ahwaz. Since he had to avoid the familiar route, his journey was tedious and troublesome. He reached Ahwaz long before the king, Abu Kalijar, who had broken his journey on the way to rest at some recreating spots. He had spent nearly a month in the village of Saboor. On his way to Ahwaz the king learnt that Al-Muayyad had left Shiraz in disguise along with his retinue. Fearing the consequence of this, the king spread his C.I.D. officers in the tents of Dalamites to find out Al-Muayyad and ordered them to identify every veiled person and carry out the search very minutely.

When Al-Muayyad reached Ahwaz he discarded the disguise and met his admirers and acquaintances. The king came to know that Al-Muayyad had arrived at Ahwaz where a large number of people had gathered around him. He was very much enraged at his impudence and his courtiers who were the bitterest enemies of Al-Muayyad got once again an opportunity to fall upon their enemy. They began, therefore, to fan the king's flames of anger against Al-Muayyad by pointing out to him that he had thought lightly of his orders and had defied him by leaving Shiraz for Ahwaz and that he took unnecessary pride in his Dalamite followers and had purposely preceded the king at Ahwaz in order to instigate them to rise in revolt against the king. When the king heard this his prejudice increased and he made a vow to take full revenge from Al-Muayyad. Al-Muayyad had some friends in the retinue of the king who informed him

of the king's prejudice and his resolve to harm him and advised him to leave Ahwaz at once and go to Hillah of Mansur bin-el-Husain, one of the allies of Abu Kalijar. They thought that if for sometime he kept away from the sight of the king his anger would subside.

Al-Muayyad accordingly left for 'Hillah-ul-Mansur bin Husain¹ who treated him with much respect and asked him about his welfare. Al-Muayyad narrated the whole account of Abu Kalijar's dealings with him.

Mansur promised him that he would do his best to influence the king in his favour. Had it not been for the death of Abu Tahir-al-Buwehi,² the king of Baghdad, which made the situation more complicated, Mansur would have succeeded in his efforts. Abu Kalijar aspired to replace his cousin Abu-Tahir in becoming the king of Baghdad. He knew very well that he could not achieve his object unless the Abaside Caliph was pleased with him. The Caliph being deadly against Al-Muayyad the chance of compromise between the latter and Abu Kalijar became remote.

Consequently, Al-Muayyad stayed at the Hillah for a period of seven months. He got disgusted with the place and made up his mind to go back to Ahwaz caring little for the consequences. He revealed this to the chief of Hillah and the matter circulated amongst the people. Abu Kalijar having come to know that wrote a letter to Al-Mansur saying: "You know Al-Muayyad well. Ever since Al-Muayyad has left Ahwaz the Daylamites are harassing us under false protests. They are excited over the fate of Al-Muayyad, their Sheikh.

1. Ibnul-Athir V. 4, p. 260. 2. Ibnul-Athir V. 4 pp. 320 and 352.

Our desire to get Baghdad added to our charge cannot be fulfilled without the goodwill of the Abaside Caliph. If he comes to know that this man is staying with us under our protection, he will naturally be prejudiced against us and we shall lose the chance. It has come to our notice that he is going back to Ahwaz. If he reaches there he will create for us a hell of trouble!

Al-Muayyad came to know of this letter but he paid no heed to it and resolved once for all to leave for Ahwaz in disguise or otherwise. In the meantime he came to know that the Imam Al-Mustansir-billah had sent robes of honour and other gifts to Karwah bin Muqallid¹ the chief of Moosal and Koofa and Ambar. He thought it wise to go to Moosal and meet Karwah. He revealed his intention to Mansur-binil-Husain who approved of his plan and provided him with his requirements for the journey.

Al-Muayyad left for Moosal where he expected much help from the chief for his missionary activities. But the Amir was a whimsical fellow. He was not a man of determination. In his inclination to the Abaside or the Fatmides he was always guided by monetary consideration. If he was bribed by the Abaside, he propped up their cause. If he received gifts from the Fatmides he supported them and allowed the Khutba to be recited in their name. When Al-Muayyad found in the chief a faithless and weak-minded person he left him to himself beating about the bush and proceeded to Egypt, the seat of his spiritual leader, to quench his thirst by having a look at the face of his Imam and thereby getting his soul illumined.

1. An-nu-'juomuz-zahira Vol. 5, p. 49 311.

AL-MUAYYAD IN EGYPT

Al-Muayyad left for Egypt full of hope and full of fear. He was hopeful because he had services to his credit. At the same time he was afraid of the intrigues of the ministers and the courtiers who usually would not allow any man of learning to see the Imam directly unless he complied to their dictates and acknowledged their superiority.

He reached Egypt and experienced all that he had been afraid of. He was not allowed to see the Imam. He saw the minister Fallahee, who, however, accorded him a warm welcome and arranged for him a house to stay in. Al-Muayyad has given the description of this house in the following words: "They put me up in some sort of a house with some sort of furniture suited for middle-class people." Al-Muayyad came to know from those around him that Abu-Saed al-Tastaree was all in all in the state. He therefore went to see him the next day. Tastaree was very pleased to meet Al-Muayyad and gave him valuable gifts and robes of honour. Later on he paid a visit to Qasim bin Abdul Azib¹ bin Mohammad bin No'maan who was the Qazi and the 'daa-ee' of the place. He does not seem to have welcomed his visits. For the 'daa-ee' knew well that Al-Muayyad was far more competent in the profession of 'Dawat' than the 'daa-ee' himself. Hence, it was in his interest to keep Al-Muayyad away from Egypt.

Al-Muayyad frequented his visits to Abu Sa'ed al-Tastaree who made all sorts of promises to him but would fulfil none. He advised him to keep up his dig-

1. See our book 'Kitabul-Himma'.

nity, and not to see other Egyptian officers. Tastaree's intention was to keep him with himself and take the fullest advantage of his learning. The officials no sooner came to know of this then they grew jealous of Al-Muayyad and started to prejudice Tastaree's mind against him. They said, "How is it that you have taken a liking for this man and have begun to hold him in high esteem. You will never be safe in his company. If you allow him to enter in he will drive you away. If you allow him to go ahead he will leave you behind, for his tongue is sharper than yours. His knowledge is deeper than yours. His experience is richer than yours. As a missionary there is no match for him. He is unique in every respect. His stay with you is a signal for danger." Tastaree was much influenced by this talk and he changed his attitude to Al-Muayyad. Instead of favouring him he began to oppose him.

This broke the heart of Al-Muayyad and filled him with disappointment. He knew he could not stay any longer in Egypt under these circumstances. He decided to leave it and informed Tastaree about his intention. Tastaree doubting the veracity of his statement said, "This is the best plan. I shall write letters to the various chiefs on the way to give you every possible help."

When Tastaree was convinced that Al-Muayyad was resolute he thought over the matter again and changed his mind. He stopped him from leaving Egypt. Al-Muayyad was exasperated and could not control his feelings of hatred against Tastaree. He bluntly wrote to him, "I have not come to Egypt for getting money or position. The promptings of my Faith have brought

me here. I have come here to visit the Imam and not the Wazirs and his officials. But, unfortunately, these people stop me from having a look at my Imam and now I am going back disappointed." Tastaree got wild with this note and frightened him with threats. But Al-Muayyad cared little for his threats and for some-time he stayed in Egypt, in open hostility with him. The sudden death of Tastaree in the year 439 A.H. (1047 A.D.) gave Al-Muayyad a breathing time. He then renewed his endeavours for presenting himself before the holy presence of the Imam. He, therefore, approached the Minister, Fallahee, and sought his help for visiting the Imam which was the height of his ambition and the sole purpose of his trip to Egypt. Fallahee helped him in this and Al-Muayyad was able to pay his respects to the Imam on the last day of Shaban 449 A.H. (1057 A.D.).

Al-Muayyad has given the following description of his visit to the Imam: "I was taken near the place wherefrom I saw the bright light of the Prophet-hood. My eyes were dazzled by this Light. I shed the tears of joy and felt as if I was looking at the face of the Prophet of God and of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali. I prostrated myself before the one who is the fittest person for the people to bow to him. I wanted to say something but I was awe-struck. I could not move my tongue. I was dumb-founded. When I lifted my head up and gathered my wits some one from amongst those who were present there signalled me to stand up. The Commander of the Faithful, may God perpetuate his kingdom, snubbed the man by saying, "He is not bowing to you. He has not come to visit you." This gave me courage and I stayed there longer. I tried to

speaking but my tongue refused to move. People asked me to say what I had to say. I stood mum. The Imam said, "Leave him. Let his fear and awe subside." After this I stood up, took the holy hand of the Imam, placed it on my eyes and on my chest and kissed it and left the place filled with joy."

After visiting the Imam, Al-Muayyad saw the minister, Al-Fallahee and related to him his experience of his visit to the Imam. He requested him to give him more such opportunities to enjoy the sight of the bright Light of Prophet-hood. The minister was much impressed by his sincerity and appointed him as an officer (*usher*) at the door of the mother of the Imam in order that he should get ample opportunities to come in close contact with the Imam. Al-Muayyad was much pleased with this appointment. He thought that all worries had come to an end. But unfortunately Yazuri¹ who was all in all, fearing lest Al-Muayyad's contact with the Imam should diminish his importance removed Al-Muayyad from the job.

A few months later Fallahee was killed and Abu Barkaat-ul-Jarjarai² was appointed in his place. Jarjarai did not get on well with Yazuri. Every day their relations grew from bad to worse. His relations with Al-Muayyad were equally strained. With the death of Al-Fallahee who was the connecting link between the two, their relationship was changed into enmity.

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1. He is Aboo Mohammad Al-Hasan Alyazuri bin Abdur-Rehman. He was appointed as a minister on 7th Moharram of the year 442 A. H. (1050 A. D.) He was arrested on the first of Moharram 450 A. H. (1058 A. D.) on the charge of conspiracy with Tughral Beg As-Saljuqi against the Fatmides. ('Ibne Manjab').
 2. ('Ibne Manjab') p. 37-38.

Jarjarai was not on good terms with Abu Ali, the son of Abu Tahir al-Buwaihi (see Note on page 9). On the death of his father, Abu Ali finding himself insecure in Baghdad arrived in Egypt along with his family and friends. He requested Al-Muayyad to influence the Vazier to protect him. Al-Muayyad managed to get an order from the mother of the Caliph on the minister to the effect that he should give necessary protection to Abu Ali and his party. This incident and a few more cases of his interference of this type added to the wrath of the Vazier against Al-Muayyad. The following words of Al-Muayyad are typical expression of his bitter experience in life: "I am surprised at my fate. When I open my eyes I see none but my enemies before me. If I turn my face in any direction I find nothing but evil awaiting me." To avoid his clash with Jarjarai, Al-Muayyad decided to leave Egypt. In the meantime Abul Qasim bin Abdul Aziz bin No'maan was removed from the post of the chief 'Daa-ee'¹ Al-Muayyad has naturally aspired for this job for which he was the best fitted person. But Jarjarai instead of offering the post to him offered it to his opponent Yazuri with a view to detract him from his constant visits to the mother of the Caliph.²

But Yazuri was more than a match for Jarjarai. He accepted this job, and treated it as additional to his original post of private secretary to the mother of the Imam. Al-Muayyad was disappointed and he grew wild over the treacherous conduct of the minister and other dignatories of the State. When he was making preparations for his departure from Egypt, Yazuri

1. "Al-Kindi".

2. "Al-Kindi" p. 613.

brought him round and forced him to continue his stay in Egypt.

Al-Muayyad, being under the impression that Yazuri was instructed by the Imam or his mother, yielded to his persuasions and changed his mind. Yazuri became more friendly with him and requested him to help him by writing for him the sermons which he was expected to deliver to the public as the chief 'daa-ee'. Al-Muayyad says: "I was requested by him to make full display of my talents by writing for him the sermons with the best stuff couched in the choicest possible words. This, Yazuri said, will be the test of my sincerity to him. Accordingly I wrote the sermons and he made name for himself by delivering them at the meetings."

For a period of a little more than a year Al-Muayyad wrote the sermons and Yazuri delivered them at the meetings giving the public to understand that they were written by him. His attachment to Yazuri gave him no time for visiting the minister. Jarjarai did not like his indifference to him and began to find out ways and means by which he could turn his friendship with Yazuri into enmity. Al-Muayyad refers to him by saying, "The Vazier tried his best to set one of us against another but he did not succeed". Fortunately for him in the year 442 A.H. (1050 A.D.) Jarjarai was put into prison house¹ under some charge and Yazuri was appointed the minister. This time, the people were sure that none but Al-Muayyad would be appointed the Chief Daa-ee. To the great surprise of the public and the bitter disappointment of Al-Muayyad, Qasim bin Abdul Aziz bin No'maan was called back to the job. Al-Muayyad protested to the Vazier who explained to

1. 'Ibnul-Athir' Vol. 9, page 391.

him in an apologetical tone that some old women of the family of No'maan had influenced the mother of the Caliph in the matter. He appeased his anger by holding out hopes to him and making a solemn promise to do something for him. Al-Muayyad was contented and was anxiously waiting for the fulfilment of his promise. But he did nothing for him. All his promises and hopes he had held out to him evaporated. Al-Muayyad lost his temper and poured his wrath on the letter he wrote to the Vazier. He attacked his sense of justice; he complained of the violation of his pledges and treated his usual excuse as the tricks of the weak-minded people to justify their stupid action. The Vazier was annoyed with the tone of this letter. Instead of promises he gave him all sorts of threats, and Al-Muayyad took no notice of his threats. For nearly seven months he did not care to see the Vazier. In the month of Zil-Q'ad of 444 A.H. (1052 A.D.) the Vazier succeeded in putting down the revolt of the Bani Qurah¹. All important people went to the minister to congratulate him on his success. Al-Muayyad was reluctant to go, but being convinced by his friends that the Vazier's success was the success of the Fatmide Faith, he changed his mind and went to the Vazier to congratulate him.

A few months later Al-Muayyad was appointed the head of the epistolery department on an increased pay. This improved his financial condition to a considerable extent. With all this he was not satisfied with the behaviour of the Vazier towards him. In the meantime Al-Qasim bin Abdul Aziz bin No'maan got an attack of paralysis and his son was appointed in this place. This gave Al-Muayyad a shock of his life. This time also

1. 'Ibn-Athir' Vol. 9, page 396.

his claims were ignored. In the heat of excitement he gave vent to his anger against the Vazier by running him down in his correspondence with him and slandering him in public. The Vazier sent him a message saying, "I have raised your pay from 300 to 1000 dinars and yet you are ungrateful to me." Al-Muayyad wrote in reply, "If you knew what your words amount to, you would not have written them. By these words you defamed the Lord in the worst possible manner. There are people from the East and the West who, compared to me, are nobodies and are yet rolling in wealth in the state. I do admit that you have given me the job when I was jobless. But if you were to recollect what you have done to me by detaching me from the post of 'Dawat', you will realise the harm you have done to me is much greater than the favour you are reminding me of."

HIS DEALING WITH BASASIRI¹

Willingly or unwillingly Al-Muayyad continued to work in his new job like others. In the meantime it was brought to his notice that Tughral Beg had made a truce with Byzantine and had conquered the city of Ray.² Moreover, he learnt that Byzantine had entered into an agreement with the Saljuqs to conquer the Fatimide

1. He originally was a slave (from Turk stock) of Baha-ud-dowla-al-Buwaih, who presented him to an Abasides Caliph. Later on he became one of the commanders of the Abaside army. Being an Ismaili Shia he deserted the court of Abaside the Caliph Al-Qaim-bi-amrillah when the latter sought the help of Saljuqs in order to get rid of Bu-waihides. So Al-Basasiri entered into correspondence with the Fatmide Caliph in Egypt and sought his help against the Abasides. (Itiazul-Hunafa p. 62 Note IVth.)

2. Ibnul-Athir Vol. 9 page 227.

territories in Syria and other places. This was the time for Al-Muayyad to use his brains. He made the best display of his talents to save Fatmide countries from falling into the hands of their enemies. He corresponded in Persian with Al-Kindree,¹ the Minister of Tughral Beg, persuading him to abandon his aggressive scheme. Similarly he corresponded with every other important person who he thought was in league with the Saljuqs. He did his best by this sort of correspondence to win their sympathy and support for the Fatmides. His intention was to kill two birds with one stone by this correspondence. On one hand he thought he would bring them round to the Fatmide side, on the other hand he expected that this correspondence with these people would create suspicion in the minds of the Abaside Caliph against them and would ultimately end in the loss of his confidence in Tughral Beg and his party. Tughral Beg occupied Iraq and the Khutba was read in his name in Baghdad in the year 447 A.H.² (1055 A.D.). Having learned that the Saljuqs were nearing Baghdad Al-Basasiree fled away from there.³

Al-Muayyad in consultation with the important officers of the State decided to correspond with Al-Basasiree on the point and informed him and his friends that the Fatmides were ready to help him against the Saljuqs, with men, money and the war material. After despatching these letters to the persons concerned, Al-Muayyad left for Hijaz for pilgrimage. On his return from the pilgrimage he came to know that his messenger had died on the way and his

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1. Abnul-Athir Vol. 9 p. 196.
 2. Ibnul-Athir Vol. 9 p. 18.
 3. Italazul-Hunafa, p. 62 Note 4.

letters were not delivered to Basasiree. He wrote other letters which reached Al-Basasiree, who agreed to work for the Fatmides cause with the greatest pleasure. The Fatmides decided to send the money and the war materials which they had promised to Al-Basasiree.

The Vazier Yazuri thought this was the golden opportunity to get rid of Al-Muayyad. Very cleverly he asked Al-Muayyad to inform him as to which person be suitable to carry the money and material to Basasiree. Al-Muayyad saw through his trick and outwitted him by evading all his enquiries. The Vazier was forced to tell him in clear terms that the Imam himself had desired that Al-Muayyad should lead the party. The Vazier thought that when Al-Muayyad knew that he was being sent by the Imam he would never disobey his orders. But Al-Muayyad did not believe the Vazier and knew for certain that the Imam had never issued these instructions. When the Vazier noticed that the trick did not succeed with Al-Muayyad he changed his tactics and took to persuasion. He appealed to him in the name of the State, in the name of the Muslims and in the name of the Imam to go at the head of the party. He said, "We beg of you to help us on this occasion. The State, the Muslims and Islam itself are in need of you. It is upto you to help us at the time of need." Al-Muayyad laughed at the tone of his talk and said, "Thank God. I never knew that I was an important person of this magnitude. I never knew that I would one day be addressed in such endearing terms by the Minister of the State."

After Al-Muayyad yielded to the entreaties of the Vazier and said, "I accept the job on condition that I

should not be blamed in case I did not succeed in my mission". The Vazier said, "Rest assured that if such a thing happens no one will blame you." He was advised to put on the uniform of the minister. He said, "I would rather prefer the humble garment of a religious divine." He led the party and the people were surprised to hear that a "mullah" of the type of Al-Muayyad was put in charge of a political affair which was fraught with danger, a scheme to overthrow the Abasides. They were wondering how a man who knew nothing of war tactics was leading the party with no army and yet with confidence in his ability and the money and the robes of honour he was carrying for important chiefs to win over their sympathy and support.

Al-Muayyad was instructed to recruit 3000 men from amongst the 'Kalbis'¹ and go with them to Rehba. He was strictly warned not to meddle with Ibne Saleh² of Halab. Al-Muayyad thought over these instructions and took a different view of the situation. Contrary to the instructions he had received from the Vazier he thought it proper to meet Ibne-Saleh and

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1. They belong to the Arabian tribe of Kalb. Most of them were Ismailis. They ruled Cicily as Viceroys of Fatmide Caliphs from 336 to 431 A.H. (Ibnul-Athir V. 8 p. 169.)
 2. From Ibnul Athir we learn that Halab originally was under the Fatmides. But after the death of Anushtakin, the viceroy of Imam Mustansir-billah, Moizzuddowlah Saleh took possession of it in the year 433 A.H. (1041 A.D.). In the year 440 A. H. (1048 A.D.) Egyptian Army made an attempt to repossess it from Saleh but failed. However, in the year 441 A.H. (1049 A.D.) they made another and successful attempt and regained it. But his son Simal bin Saleh afterwards again deprived the Fatmides of it and it remained in his possession till the time when Al-Muayyad without any war recovered it from him. (Miratuzzaman V. 16, p. 44.)

not to tap the 'Kalbis.' When he arrived at Damascus, before seeing Ibne-Saleh personally and delivering him the gifts of the Fatmide Caliph, he wrote to him a letter explaining to him the purpose of his visit. He informed Vazier Yazuri by letter that he had given up the idea of meeting the 'Kalabis' and that he had decided to approach Ibne-Saleh for help. Yazuri sent him a threatening letter asking him not to disobey his orders. He did not care for his threat and prolonged his stay at Damascus. Yazuri wrote another letter in an equally threatening tone ordering him to hurry up and not to visit Aleppo to negotiate with Ibne-Saleh. Al-Muayyad paid no heed to this threat. He was eagerly waiting for the return of Ibne-Saleh to Alepoo from his fight with Maneeu-bin Sabeeb-al-Namiree a Riqqa. On his return from the fight Ibne-Saleh in reply to the letter of Al-Muayyad promised to meet him at Rustaan.

Al-Muayyad sent his men with gifts in advance and he himself stayed behind intending to travel all alone unattended by any of his servants. This removed the suspicion of Ibne-Saleh who imposed full confidence in Al-Muayyad and gave him a pledge for serving the cause of Fatmides. Al-Muayyad and Ibne Saleh left Maaratun-No'maan where they met the principal officers of the Baghdad army of Basasiree. Since it had taken Al-Muayyad very long to carry the gifts of the Fatmide Caliph to Basasiree, his men, anxious to know what had happened, had left Rahba to meet Al-Muayyad on the way. When they met him they were convinced of his sincerity and they all left for Alepoo. Here, Al-Muayyad, took from them all the oaths of allegiance to the Caliph Al-Mustansar

and delivered to Ibne Saleh the robes of honour and the gifts. They left Aleppo for Rahba to meet Basasiree. On the way he received a letter from Nasruddowlah Ahmed bin Marwan,¹ the chief of Mayafarqueen and Dayar-e-Bakr saying, "I have left the side of Tughral Beg whom I have found to be oppressive and mischievous. I shall be pleased to help you." Al-Muayyad welcomed his sympathy and support and asked him to recite the Khutba in the name of the Fatmide Caliph, Al-Mustansar-billah and at the same time contact the Caliph in Egypt. Al-Muayyad wrote a series of letters to almost all the neighbouring chiefs persuading them to help the Fatmide Caliph and never to yield to Tughral Beg.

DEPARTURE TO REHBA TO MEET BASASIREE

Al-Muayyad left for Rehba to meet Basasiree who along with his army had left about two stages from his place to meet him in advance. Al-Muayyad gives a vivid description of his meeting Basasiree in the following words: "We met Abul Haris Basasiree, along with his army at two stages from Rehba. When they arranged their armies in the rows and we arranged ours, the right wing of the army reached the mountains and the left wing reached the Euphrates. Our bugles created a terrific noise in the atmosphere. Our different colours of the flags looked like a rainbow. We entered Rehba and proceeded to the bank of Euphrates, where we pitched our tents. Our army was a combination of all

1. Third ruler from the dynasty of Marwan who ruled Diyar Bakr from 373 to 489 A.H. The total rulers of this dynasty were 5. For detail see "Ibnul-Athir" page 26, V, 9.

sorts of people. There were amongst them highway robbers, dacoits and bandits from all over the adjoining territories. There were Turks, Kurds and Iranis of various types and greedy soldiers."

Al-Muayyad took an oath of allegiance from all their chiefs and gave them the rare Fatmide gifts, the like of which had never been seen before. He gave money to every party. Some were satisfied with their share and others began to grumble. Most of them showed signs of dissatisfaction and asked for greater favours. Al-Muayyad tried to satisfy them in the best possible manner. When his soothing expressions did not succeed with them he got wild and said that he would be glad if they revoke their oath of allegiance to the Imam and have nothing to do with him. The people came to their senses and they renewed their pledges with apology. After some days he gave the gifts to Basasiree and read to the people his pledge to the Fatmide Caliph.

In the meanwhile Al-Muayyad came to know that Dabis¹ bin Mazeedul-Asadi and Quraishi bin Badran al Aqilee² had made an offer of allegiance to Tughral Beg on condition that he should protect their countries from the looting of the armies. But Tughral Beg would not guarantee them unless every one of them kept with him one of his sons as hostage. This irritated Dabis and Aqili who dissociated themselves from Tughral Beg. Al-Muayyad availed himself of this opportunity and wrote a letter to Ibne Mazeed

1. A second ruler from the dynasty of Mazeed who ruled Hilla from 403 to 545 A.H. The total rulers of this house were 8. For details see 'Ibnul Athir' V. 9.

2. The ruler of Moosal. See for detail 'Ibnul Athir' V. 9.

advising him to join him. Ibne Mazeed rushed to Al-Muayyad on certain stipulations every one of which he had to accept. After this Mazeed wanted to test the ability of Al-Muayyad as a religious divine. He instigated the learned divines who had accompanied him to enter into religious discussion with Al-Muayyad. When they found him more than a match for them, they began to put him such silly questions as to what he would do after the completion of the conquest of Baghdad. All this revealed to Al-Muayyad that their allegiance was not based on conviction and that their loyalty was not for the cause of the Fatmide Caliph but for monetary considerations.

When Al-Muayyad wanted to take the oath of allegiance from Ibne Mazeed and his people they refused to do so unless the terms of the allegiance were read out to them. They spent full one day in making the alterations to their choice. Al-Muayyad tolerated this with patience when they exceeded with limits he could not put up with their impertinence any longer, he made up his mind to have nothing to do with Ibne Mazeed. But this important personage amongst the Arabs, the greatest chief of the day, insisted on renewing his allegiance to the Fatmide Caliph. Consequently Al-Muayyad dictated to him the terms of his allegiance and addressed him as "The head of the kings of Arabia, the Sword of the Khilafat and the choice of the Commander of the Faithful." Ibne Mazeed accepted the terms, but he demanded certain concessions one of which was the separation of his army from the troops of Ibne Saleh. Al-Muayyad was too diplomatic to grant him these concessions.

He did his best to bring about reconciliation between Ibne Mazeed and Ibne Saleh but his efforts ended in nothing. The reconciliation looked like the reconciliation between two wild beasts. They were entirely different from each other. Racially and from the religious point of view the gulf between them was unbridgable. With all this, Al-Muayyad spared no pains to bring the two together. But in the long run he had to give up the matter as a thankless task. He describes his experience with them in the following words: "I used to spend my day and night like the one who is cut off from the caravan and left alone in the desert with nothing in his hands. All the same I used to keep up appearances. I bore my miseries and never allowed any one to know as to what was in my mind."

Thus, the rivalry amongst the various groups in the army of Basasiree gave the greatest headache to Al-Muayyad. The arrival of the troops of some of the Chiefs of Kalbi from Damascus made the matter worse. Al-Muayyad welcomes their arrival but as soon as they reached the place they started grumbling. The Arab troops of the Kalbis and Aqilee had never mixed with the non-Arabs like Turks and Kurds. They refused to move unless the Arab army was completely separated from the non-Arabs. Al-Muayyad did not know what to do with this inflammatory material. He refers to this by saying, "It gave me a severe headache which alone was enough to kill me if I had had no additional trouble."

Somehow or the other, partly by his persuasive tongue and partly by money, Al-Muayyad was able to

bring them round.¹ On the tenth of Ramdan 448 A.H. (1056 A.D.) they marched with the rest of the army and Al-Muayyad kept a vigilant watch on their movements. He wrote letters to the surrounding chiefs for help and influenced his opponents to follow the Ismaili Faith. At a place known as Sanjar² his army gained a complete victory over the army of Tughral Beg.

Al-Muayyad informed Egypt of his victory. Obnul-Jawzi says, "Al-Muayyad sent 2,200 heads to Egypt on this occasion³". As a result of this victory he was able to enter Musal in the month of Shaban, where Ibne Mazeed influenced him to forgive Quraish bin Badran and bring him to his side by conferring on him some robes of honour. His victory and letters he wrote to the chiefs created a great impression on the minds of Iraquees. For instance, Mohammad bin-ul Ahzan Khafazee wrote to Al-Muayyad that he had established the Fatmide faith at Kufa. Ibne-Qaid bin Rehman, the Amir of Basit wrote to him that he had ordered his people to recite the Khutba in the name of the Imam Al-Mustansir⁴ and that he had minted the coins with the name of the Fatmide Caliph on them.

This was a great triumph for Al-Muayyad. The defeat of Tughral Beg was dramatic. His letters worked wonders with the Arab Chiefs. They were bent upon crushing the Turkomans and putting an end to the Caliphate of the Abbasides. The missionary activities in favour of the Fatmide Caliph

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1. Miratuzzaman Vol. 16, p. 17.
 2. Al-eshara-ela-man-nalal-wazara, p. 44.
 3. Miratuzzaman.
 4. Miratuzzaman.

were in full swing in Iraq. But his success was not long-lived. Immediately after this, trouble arose in his army, which was composed of conflicting elements. Aqeel deserted his army. A large number of his soldiers followed him. When Tughral Beg came to know of this split in the army of Al-Muayyad he rushed after them. This frightened the people of the surrounding places and particularly the people of Rehba. But he put on a cheerful look and did not let the people know what was in his mind. He describes his state of mind on this occasion in the following words: "I was practically dead. I was expecting trouble from all sides. I had made a resolve not to allow myself to fall into the hands of my enemies. I was ready to die. I was ready to run away to the desert and starvation. I would rather allow myself to be cut to pieces than to be taken alive as a prisoner." He segregated himself in a place from where he wrote to Basasiree and other chiefs encouraging them and filling them with hopes. Unfortunately his letters produced no effect. Al-Muayyad was forced to leave for Aleppo where in 442 A.H. (1067 A.D.) he received a letter from Basasiree desiring to meet him at Dair-e-Hafir, a village between Aleppo and Balis. They met here and Basasiree assured Al-Muayyad of his loyalty and both of them chalked out a plan for their future operations.

After this Al-Muayyad returned to Aleppo. Here he learnt that Ibne Saleh had sent a message to the Imam in Egypt requesting him to send one of his chiefs to take charge of Aleppo. In response to his message an army had arrived from Egypt to take charge of the city. Unfortunately, there were in

Aleppo people known as 'Ahdas'¹ who had greater control over the city than Ibne Saleh its legitimate chief. They exercised a greater influence over the people than the chief himself. There was an old standing hostility between them and the 'Maghrabite' soldiers who had arrived from Egypt. They rose in revolt and Ibn Saleh concealed himself for safety in his fort. He advised Al-Muayyad to run away from Aleppo and send the Egyptian army back to Egypt. Al-Muayyad was not a man to run away from danger. He did not like the idea of sending back the army empty handed. He took courage and invited the rebels to hear him. They gathered round him and he charmed them one and all by his address which was couched in the choicest possible words and which was full of sense. They stood dumbfounded and assured him of their loyalty to him. Relying on their assurances he ordered the Egyptian army to enter Aleppo and occupy it.²

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1. After having conquered Egypt, Ghazi, Jauhar sent Ja'far bin Falah-al-Maghrabi at the head of Maghrabite army to take possession of Syria which was then under the Abaside rule. Ja'far bin Falah captured its Ameer, Hasan bin Abdullah Taghaj together with his military staff and sent them to Ghazi Jauhar in Egypt. This was much resented by Abul Qaim-al-Hashmi, an Abaside sympathiser and a grandee of Damascus. He, therefore, excited the Ahdas and led an armed revolt against Ja'far bin Falah in favour of Abasides. So a tough battle was fought between the 'Ahdas' and Maghrabites army which eventually put down the revolt and controlled the situation with an iron hand. Hence the Ahdas entertained bitter feelings and harboured enmity towards the Maghrabites which they displayed now. For more details see 'Ibnul Athir' Vol. 8, p. 212.
 2. Miratuzzaman.

After a few days Ibrahim Yanal¹ pretended to his people that he was negotiating with Basasiree in the interest of Tughral Beg, sent a message to him with a confidential note asking him to see Al-Muayyad and told him that if he was prepared to provide him with the necessary funds, he would be ready to revolt against Tughral Beg to establish the Fatmide supremacy in his countries. Al-Basasiree sent the messenger with the note direct to Aleppo. Al-Muayyad naturally welcomed this offer and supplied him with the funds with the utmost willingness. He prolonged his stay at Alepoo and began to watch with care the movements of Ibrahim bin Yanal. After this incident whenever he made his mind to leave for Egypt, Basasiree was anxious to accompany him with his army. Al-Muayyad, knowing the rebellious nature of Basasiree's army did not like that by going to Egypt they should create some fresh trouble for the Imam. He did not know what to do in the matter. In the meantime a news came to him that Ibne Yanal had deserted Tughral Beg and was camping with his army at Musal. Al-Muayyad availed himself of this opportunity and ordered Basasiree to go back to Rehba to join Ibne Yanal and he himself left for Egypt.

When he reached the city of Soor he found that some of the Turkish chiefs of Baghdad had deserted Basasiree and were on their way to Egypt. Fearing lest these rebels should prove a source of trouble to

1. Ibrahim Yanal was the brother of Tughral Beg. Misunderstanding arose between them over the possession of the city of Hamadan and some fortresses which belonged to Ibrahim who refused to deliver them to his brother Tughral Beg when he demanded from him the possession of the same. See for detail 'Ibnul Athir' V. 9.

the Imam, he handled them very tactfully and succeeded in persuading them to go back and join the army of Basasiree. They left for Rehba and he continued his journey to Egypt. On his way to Egypt when he reached the place called Bawaqeer he learnt that the minister, Abu Faraj Abdullah bin Mohammad al-Babli who had succeeded Yazuree was dismissed in the month of Rabi-ul-awwal of 450 A.H. (1058 A.D.) and Al-Maghrabi was appointed in his place. This Maghrabi¹ sent him a message to the effect that he should not proceed to Egypt but go back to Aleppo and stay there and wait for his further instructions. Al-Muayyad was in a fix. He could not decide at once whether he should defy the minister's orders and continue his journey to Egypt or he should go back to Alepoo. He gave a serious thought to the matter and ultimately decided to go to Egypt. He received another order similar to the first one insisting on his going back to Aleppo. Al-Muayyad was not affected by this letter. He went on till he received a third letter from the minister of a similar type. This frightened him the most but still Al-Muayyad did not change his mind. He was surprised to find that the official class in Egypt instead of appreciating his great services and welcoming him to Egypt were preventing him from entering the capital city of the Fatmides. In order to avoid the chance of his receiving some more messages

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1. He is Abdul Faraj Mohammad Al-Maghrabi-al-Babli. He assumed the office of minister after Al-Yazuri. Being one of those who ran away from Al-Basasiree, Al-Maghrabi tried to prejudice the Imam Al-Mustansir-billah against Al-Basasiree and thus caused a great deal of delay in the process of the correspondence which took place between the Imam and Al-Basasiree in connection of his war against the Abasides. For detail see 'Maqrizi.'

of this type he changed the usual route and travelled by some unfamiliar tracts in disguise. After all he reached Cairo.

He saw the minister, Maghrabi, who did not give him the treatment he expected. The one who had turned his nights into days for working for the State, the one who had done all that he could possibly do in carrying on the propaganda for the Fatmides, the one who had dedicated his life to the service of his religion, the one who was a learned divine of a very high order, a great philosopher a great commander of the army and an astute statesman should be treated by the minister as an ordinary man! This, very nearly, broke his heart. He was compelled to complain to the Imam in the following verses:

"I swear by God, if you were to place on my head the crown of Kisra, the Eastern monarch; if you were to make me the master of the world by putting in my charge the affairs of all those that are dead and alive and lay a condition that I should not see you for a moment, O my lord, I shall prefer to glance at you to the pomp and dignity of this world. For my being away from your sight will make my head grey in a moment."

These verses of his happened to reach the Imam just at the time when the post of the 'daa-ee-ud-duat' was lying vacant. The Imam knew well that none but Al-Muayyad was suitable for this high post. Without consulting the Vazier, the Imam appointed him to the post and replied his verses by the following verses:

"O you 'hujjat', who are well known in world, O you, who have ascended to the peak of knowledge to which none can climb, we did not allow you interview for your safety's sake. The closing of our doors against you was prompted by nothing but fatherly affection for his son."

After all, Al-Muayyad was elevated to the position of 'Daa-ee-ud-duat'¹ which was the highest ambition of his life. He got what he wanted. He was the best fitted man for the job. In 450 A.H. (1058 A.D.) the very year of his appointment, news came to Egypt that the Fatmide rule was established at Baghdad and Khutba was being recited in the mosques in the name of the Imam. Al-Muayyad jumped with joy and nothing could give him greater pleasure in life than the news that Al-Basasiree and Ibrahim bin Yanal had succeeded in overthrowing the Abasides and establishing the Fatmide supremacy at Baghdad. This was the crowning success of his efforts. His influence naturally increased with the people and with the Imam. The Vazier, instead of bossing over him began to fear him. After twenty years discharge of his duty as the daa-e-ud-duat' he died in 470 A.H. (1077 A.D.) His funeral prayers were led by the Imam himself and he was buried in the University of Cairo. He has left behind him a glorious history. His great deeds and his great works have made him immortal in history. To be brief, he was the greatest man of his age. He was one of the most versatile geniuses of his time. His knowledge of Ismailism in particular and Islam in general was unsurpassable. He was an all round man. Not only he was a great divine, a splendid preacher and a great

1. 'Ibne Maisar': History of Egypt page 10.

savant but he was also a politician and a statesman of a superior type. The books that he has left behind are undoubtedly the most authoritative literature on Ismailism. The learned divines of his age who have left for us the treasures of their masterly works on Ismailism were one and all his pupils. Even the great genius of the type of Nasir Khusroo and Hasan bin Sabbah were his pupils. Nasir Khusroo speaks of Al-Muayyad in the following terms: "O Khusroo, through Khwaja Muayyad God has opened the doors of wisdom to you. When he stood on the pulpit to deliver his sermon to the people, intellect was ashamed of its insignificance. He turned my dark nights into bright days by his illuminating arguments. I picked up a particle from his vast wealth of knowledge and I found the revolving heaven under my feet. He showed me in myself both the worlds visible and invisible. I saw the guardian of paradise who said to me, 'Lo, I am the pupil of Al-Muayyad.'"

As an Ismaili missionary he was unrivalled in field. He was the 'daa-e-ud-duat', the greatest Missionary of the Ismailis. He was always surrounded by the 'daa-ees' who used to learn from him the mysteries of the mission and the subtleties of the Ismaili Faith. His book, 'Majalisul-Muayyadiya' is a treasure-house of the secrets of the Ismaili Faith. He was considered to be a supreme master in the mission. Not only he was recognised as such in Egypt, Iraq and Persia but even in Yaman. He never visited Yaman, yet he was very well-known there through his pupils who had created a great sensation by their learned sermons. There was none there who did not know the name of Al-Muayyad. His authoritative books on Ismailism were the only source of guidance to the 'daa-ee' there. They

had a firm belief that his version on Ismailism was the best and the most authenticated one. In short, he was considered to be the master of the 'hujjats'.

The author of 'Kanzul-Walad' says, "Our lord, Al-Muayyad is nearest of 'hudood' to us. He never tells us anything which is not accurate. He brushes aside things which are of a doubtful nature. His is the most correct version. He has made crystal clear to us what was said by his predecessors in an allegorical manner. We have four proofs for his 'hujjatship': his knowledge, his conviction, his wisdom and the announcement of the Imams. The Imam addresses him as follows: "O you the 'hujjat' well-known in the world and who have ascended to the heights of knowledge which are unclimbable by others". This is the conclusive proof of his being a 'hujjat' of unfathomable knowledge.

Among the pupils who immortalised his name in Yaman by carrying his works there was Lamak bin Maalik who was the Qazi-ul-Quzzat in the days of Sulehee; he deserves a special mention. Al-Hāsan bin Nooh in his book 'Kitabul-Azhar' gives the following account of Lamak bin Maalik: "When Sulehee gained complete supremacy over the countries of Yamen and Mecca and the Khutba was recited in the name of Al-Mustansir, the Fatmide Caliph, he sent to the Imam a deputation headed by Lamak bin Maalik, the Qazi-ul-Quzzat, for permission to extend his influence towards Iraq. The Imam, for reasons known to him, detained the deputation and did not allow them to move until Sulehee was killed. Lamak stayed all the while with Al-Muayyad and made the full use

of this opportunity by learning from him, the mysteries of the mission. For a period of five years he followed Al-Muayyad like his shadow, and wrote down all that he heard from his master. When Lamak returned to Yaman he was very reluctant to impart to others the knowledge he had acquired from Al-Muayyad. He taught something to the 'daa-e-ul-Mukarram' the son of Sulehee and to Malakatul-Hurrah, a female 'daa-ee' and Ahmed bin Qasim and other 'daa-ees' at Yaman. But he reserved the full knowledge for his own son Yahya bin Lamak. He taught him everything that he had learnt from Al-Muayyad and prepared him for missionary work of high order. All the Ismaili 'daa-ees' of this period and the later periods speak of Al-Muayyad as 'Syedna Al-Muayyad', as a mark of respect. His books upto this day continue to be counted as the fountain-heads of Ismailism and are read by the greatest 'daa-ees' of the 'Tyebbiyah' branch in India and in Yaman. These books are considered to be as holy scriptures by the Bohras who read them before and after prayers as a 'Wird', an oft-repeated religious formula.

The author of 'Uyoonul-Maarif' says, "Al-Muayyad has a large number of books to his credit on Pilgrimage and Traditions. He was the author of many books in Arabic and Persian. 'Al-Majalisul-Muayyadiyah' is the most famous of his works. It is a collection of sermons which he had delivered at religious meetings. It is a comprehensive treatise on the Fatmide Faith. There is nothing of the Fatmide Faith which Al-Muayyad has not treated in the course of these sermons. Hatim bin Ibrahim-ul-Hamidee, a 'daa-ee' of Yaman, placed these sermons together, arranged them subject-

wise and published them with the name 'Jameatul-Haqaiq, encyclopaedia of Ismailism.

We must bear in mind that almost all the books on missionary works particularly the books written by the missionaries themselves are known as 'Al-Majalis', But from the point of view of the stuff there is a world of difference between the other 'majalis' and 'Majalisul-Muayyadiyah'. This is the most comprehensive work on the mysteries of the Fatmide mission and the philosophy of the Fatmide Faith. In fact, it is an encyclopaedia of the Fatmide Faith.

Al-Muayyad was a prolific writer. His best known works are:—

(1) 'Majalasal-Muayyadiyah', (2) 'Eiwan-ul-Muayyad', a collection of poems in praise of the Imams and the doctrines of Faith, (3) 'Seeratul-Muayyed', which is his autobiography, (4) 'Sharahul-Maad', a treatise on the Day of Resurrection, (5) "Al-Eazah watabeer fi Fazle Yoomal Ghadir," a treatise on the elucidation of the affair pertaining to the day of 'ghadir', (6) "Al-Ibtedal-Inteha", the beginning and the end, (7) "Taweelul-Arwah," a treatise on the souls, (8) "Mahajul-Ibadah," the method of devotion, (9) "Al-Maselet-wal-Jawab," the questions and answers.

In short, Al-Muayyad was a man of great learning, he was a great 'daa-ee', a great Philosopher, a pious 'Momin' and a devout Ismaili. He spent his whole life in devotion to his Faith and the service of the Fatmide cause.

LECTURE FIRST :

Potential and Actual "Jannat"

May God make you profit by your living a pious life and your submitting to the will of the Imam of the time. You must bear in mind luckily for you, you are living in the dominion of the descendants of the Prophet whose sovereign power for sometime was usurped by the tyrants. After all God has restored it to its legitimate claimants. By this, He has proved the rightfulness of the cause of the Imams and the utter falsehood of the pretences of their opponents.

The Holy Quran says, "They intend to put off the light of God by blowing it by their mouths. But God has decided to keep His light burning for ever." This refers to the Imams Their enemies did their best to put out the Light of God. Thank God for the favour He has done to you by keeping the divine light burning for ever for your good. Keep aloof from those who turned their backs to this light and have shown utter ingratitude to him. They have done no harm to God but to themselves. They have scratched their bodies by their own nails. They have treated with scorn the holy mosques of God and the arches of the mosques. To put it in plain language they have wronged the Imams, the descendants of the Prophet. The

Holy Quran says, "O Momins, go to the mosque properly dressed". The mosque here stands for the Imam. The enemies of the Imams enjoy peace and prosperity under them and yet they revolt against them. This is the work of traitors. God is with the Imams. No treachery can succeed with them. He always helps their cause and makes their mission prosper.

Last time I explained to you the meaning of the Verses upto the Verse: "Jannat has been kept ready for the pious and it is not far away from them". There are two forms of 'Jannat' the potential 'Jannat' and the actual 'Jannat'. The potential 'Jannat' is embodied in 'Dawatul-Haq' *i.e.* the teachings of the Imam of the time. The 'dawat' is the substance of the Quranic teachings and the extract of everything that pertains to religion. When a 'Momin' is initiated into the mystery of this faith, he is being prepared, stage by stage, by the knowledge acquired through the Imams and his living a straight life: for the second 'jannat' the actual 'jannat'. He cannot enter this 'jannat' unless he gets over his animal nature by this process.

Just as an embryo in a womb cannot experience life in this world unless it develops into a full-formed babe, similarly man in this material world which is a sort of a second womb for him, has to develop, through knowledge and practice, the qualities of the inmates of Paradise before he can experience the life in the 'jannat'. The life there is as much different from the life of this world as our life from the life in the womb.

I have pointed out to you that every 'hadd' in his time whether he is a Prophet, a 'wasi' or an Imam, from the point of view of his teaching is a 'jannat' who qualifies us for entry into the actual 'jannat' and experiencing a new life.¹

The verse referring to 'jannat' is followed by second verse which says "This is what you have been promised for every 'awwab' and 'hafeez'. The word 'awwab' means one who in all his activities and even non-activities in this life, looks to his Lord for guidance. This is the sum and substance of religion which is a ceaseless chain, link within a link. It has two sides, the celestial and terrestrial. On the terrestrial side of the chain the links are placed one above the other every one of whom derives his authority from his immediate predecessor right upto the Prophet. On the celestial side are the angels, the spiritual beings, on rising scale upto the "Tablet" and the "Pen" which are the upper head of the celestial chain.

The Prophet says "Between me and my God there are five mediums one above another. They are Gabriel, Mikaeel, Israfeel and the Tablet and the Pen". This is the highest point which an 'awwab' can reach for his authority.

The word 'hafeez' indicates that the different positions of the Imams are well-defined. Every one of them has a fixed position. It is they who guard the various steps in spiritual progress. God says "We have adorned the firmament of this world with

1. The truth of this can become clear by studying the following Tradition: "Ya Ali ana wa anta abawa had-e-hil umma" i.e. "O Ali I and you are the parents of this nation."

the stars. We have guarded them against every intruding devil. If these devils attempt to listen to what is going on in the celestial world they will not be allowed to hear. They will be thrown away from every direction and will be severely punished." In another passage He says, "*We have brought down the 'zikh' and we are its preservers.*"

We shall deal with these verses at the next 'Majlis'. May God help you in deriving the fullest benefit from this knowledge and acting on it. May He guide you to the right path which is the only straight path leading to salvation.

LECTURE SECOND :

The Real Names of God

O Momins, may God help you in thanking Him for the favour He has done to you by guiding you through the Imams. Cut short your connections with the wicked world which have been corroding your inner-self. Attach yourselves to the place where you will be free from worries. This is the Abode of Bliss, the keys of which are in the hands of the Imams.

Disown those who have become ungrateful to them. They are like those about whom God says, "Don't you observe those who have denied the favours of God and have become ungrateful and have thus led their people to hell-fire where they will burn for ever. It is the worst imaginable place. They maintained that God had associates. They did so to lead people astray. Tell them, (O Mohammed), enjoy ye this life of short duration. Your ultimate destination is hell."

Last time I dealt at length with the explanation and the inner meaning of a verse from the Holy Quran and now I am going to deal with the verse which follows the previous one. The verse is as follows: "with regard to him who fears the 'Rehman' in 'ghaib' and comes to God with a penitent heart....."

The commentators say that the word 'ghaib' means unseen. Here it stands for the world which is

hidden from the people living in this world. The 'Rehman' according to them is derived from 'Rehmat' and is synonymous with 'Raheem'. But 'Rehman' is applicable to none but God and 'Raheem' is applicable to God as well as man. 'Rehman' they say meant the one who transforms a wicked man into a virtuous one when He wishes to favour him. The word 'Raheem' does not imply all this. They say when it applies to man, sometimes he does show kindness and sometimes he does not. At times he is able to show it and at times he is not. There is a very subtle difference between these two epithets.

The Holy Quran says: "There are people who disdain from devotion to the 'Rehman'. There is a tradition to the effect that these people believed in God but did not believe in the 'Rehman'. If God and 'Rehman' mean one and the same thing then there is no meaning in saying that they believed in God and did not believe in the 'Rehman'. This is one of the subtleties of the Holy Quran which needs an elucidation. There is another verse in the holy Quran which says, "*When they were ordered to bow down to the one whom you order us to bow to?*"

We say that God is 'Rehman'. 'Rehman' is the most important of all the names of God. The names have got forms which can be written down and effaced and the substance which they stand for. They are the symbols of realities. The *Hudud* i.e. the Imams, are the spirit of the forms and the realities of the symbol.

The word 'Raheem' from the point of view of its

substance stands for the great *hudud* some of which are spiritual beings and others are in human form. It is through them that we can attain to the true knowledge of the Unity of God. It is through them that we can reach the Abode of Bliss. It is they about whom God says, "*And He taught Adam all the names and said to the angles, tell me what you know of their names if you think you are right.*"

It was, the names of these *hudud* (authorities) which were taught to Adam and it was through the knowledge of these names that Adam established his superiority over the angles. Tabree and other commentators like him who float on the surface and do not dive deeper say that these 'asma' stand for horses, camels, donkeys cattle and sheep. They go to the length of mentioning all sorts of things including the wooden plates and utencils under the category of 'asma'. Our 'Majalis' are above this rude and crude stuff. The 'asma' stand for nothing else than the living *natiqs* i.e. spokesmen of God—the *hudud*; and Allah and 'Rehman' also belong to this category. It is blasphemous to say that the 'asma' stand for cattle and donkeys.

God has praised the one who fears 'Rehman' in 'ghaib' i.e. the one who knows the position of the *hudud* in this world of darkness and appears before Him with a penitent heart. We must bear in mind that the heart is the centre of human activities. It governs the body. The working of the body depends upon it.

Just as the arteries of the human body depend for the supply of blood on the heart, in the same way, in spiritual matters also we depend for guid-

ance on the Imam of the time who is the heart of the 'shariat'. The Holy Quran says, "*We shall show you our signs in the world and among yourselves in order that the truth may become clear to you.*" In short, just as our physical existence depends on our hearts, our spiritual elevation depends on the Imams. The Holy Quran says, "*There will come the day when we shall call every generation to appear before us with their Imams*"!

May God make you fear God in 'ghaib' and may you approach Him with your hearts directed to Him. This will suffice for this 'Majlis'. The rest of the verse I shall explain to you at the next meeting.

LECTURE THIRD :

The Meaning of Salam

O Momins, may God help you in listening with attention to what you hear from the Imam and in carrying out his orders. I appeal to you to fear God and be devoted to the Imams. If you are firm in your devotion to the Imams no harm will occur to you. Do not get frightened at the idea that on your death you will be shifted from bright rooms in your palaces to the dark and dingy tombs. To entertain such fears is a sign of the weakness of your faith. Let not the thought that your beautiful bodies will one day be reduced to dust, worry you in the least. When the precious pearl is out of the shell, there is no importance left for the shell. If it is broken to pieces nobody minds it.

You must bear in mind that it is only the vicious people who will be made to suffer in the grave. It is they who should fear and not you.

Look at the trouble your parents have taken from the days of your childhood in the growth of your bodies and in the improvement of your physical life on earth. But for the interest they took in you, you would not have been what you are. Your souls are thousand times more important than your bodies. The Imams are your spiritual parents. Avail yourselves of a few days

of life which are at your disposal here and look after your spiritual elevation under the care of your spiritual parents. Once you miss this opportunity, you will repent for ever. You will not be given a second chance to set the things right.

O Momins, last time I explained to you the external and the inner meaning of the verse, "He who fears the 'Rehman' in 'ghaib' and approaches Him with the heart bent to Him....." Those of you who were attentive to what I said have profitted by it and have seen for themselves the way leading to salvation. Now I am going to explain to you the rest of this verse. It says, "Enter it with 'salam'. This is the day of perpetuity." The word 'salam' needs an explanation. The commentators say that it means 'safety'. They further say that 'salam' is the greeting which the inmates of the 'jannat' offer to one another. God says "They will not hear in 'jannat' useless or sinful talk. They will hear nothing but 'salam'. "According to another verse God himself is 'salam'. The verse says "He who is the 'salam' the guardian of faith and the preserver of safety." The 'jannat' itself is called 'darus-salam'. The holy Quran says "*They have for them 'darus-salam' with God.*"

When 'as-salam' is used as an epithet of God, it means that God is safe from, *i.e.*, He is above description in words and is much above even the subtlest thought which a human being can entertain of Him. All the attributes of God that can be uttered by tongue refer to the angles and the Prophet and the Imams. God is the Creator of them all. He cannot be described by the epithets which are applicable to His creatures. He is 'salam' because of His safety from

all this. In short, God is above human description.

The 'jannat' is called 'dar-us-salam' because its inmates are free from diseases and defects and from changes from one condition into another which are the peculiar characteristics of the inmates of this world. If this definition which is the correct definition of the 'jannat', the Quranic definition is accepted and it cannot but be accepted, then it logically follows that the inmates of the 'jannat' have no bodies composed of four humors and exposed to disease and decay.

This gives the lie to those who maintain that the human being will enter hell or heaven along with their bodies. May God give you the courage to follow the real faith and may He keep you away from the influence of those who twist and turned the meaning of the words of God.

LECTURE FOURTH :

No Earthly Life Beyond Death

O Momins, may God shower His mercy on you, thank Him for the guidance He has given you in following the Imams. Listen to what I am going to tell you and act on it. If you do so you will take little interest in this treacherous world and your souls will be lifted up to the higher region, the world of sanctity.

Bear in mind that just as the cat eats up its own kits, the world also devours the very people whom she brings up in luxuries. To stick to the world is like relying for drink on the water that trickles down from your fingers. The more you rely on this world the more you will suffer. The greater the rise the greater will be the fall.

Pray to God to have mercy on you. Spend your time in doing things which will be of permanent value to you. Catch hold of the 'Arwatul-wusqa', the strong handle by sticking to your faith through your devotion to the Imams. Work for your 'akherat', the next world, and your actions in this direction will be good and everlasting.

In our previous 'Lecture' you have been told that the Prophet and the Imams address the people accord-

ing to their capacities. They tell them things which they can understand with ease. When they find their audience intelligent and receptive they talk of philosophy which is the essence of religion. Imam Jafar Sadiq, may the greetings of God be on him, said to one of his followers, "Talk to the people according to the level of their understanding. Do not speak to them of things they do not understand. Do you like that they should abuse God and His Prophet?" His followers said, "How can they abuse God and His Prophet?" The Imam said, "If you persist in telling them what they do not believe in, they will curse the sayer and what you tell them is nothing but the words of God and His Prophet."

Some men are nothing more than lower animals. They are interested only in eating, drinking and multiplying like them. The Prophets came on earth as physicians of the souls. When they talked to such people, they took into account their low level of their intelligence and their habits. Hence, when they promised them the reward for good deeds, they drew out before them the picture of 'jannat' with rivers flowing in it and with 'hoories' and good looking boys strutting about on the lawns. This is the type of description of 'jannat' that we find in the holy Quran which is meant for the people who are at the lowest level of intelligence. Similarly, when they talked of punishment they talked of iron chains in hands and feet, the flames of burning fire and some such things which frightened the ignorant men of low calibre.

The Prophets were followed by the Imams who threw full light on such things which have been mentioned in the holy Quran in a compressed form.

They are like the land which receives the water from above and brings out the corn, the vegetables and the trees bearing fruits of different varieties.

All the Muslims who recite the 'kalma-e-shahadat', unanimously mention that after death we shall rise again. They all believe in the Resurrection but they differ in the nature and the form of our rise. Those who cannot think beyond the external side of life believe that we shall rise on the Dooms-day with our bodies along with our souls. But those who are **guided by the Imams** know that our souls will rise and not the bodies. If we compare the two doctrines we find that our opponents agree with us in the rising of the souls. Here they are all one with us. But we do not agree with them in the rising of the souls with the bodies. Hence 'Ijma', the unanimity, is with us.

On one hand they say that the bodies will appear in their original forms. On the other hand they maintain that they will be free from changes, diseases, decay and death. **How can an earthly body be free from those defects which are natural with it?** If we maintain that the bodies will assume their original earthly forms then they must feel hungry, they must feed themselves, they must suffer from one disease or the other and after some-time they must decay. If this is the case how can the body be perpetually in heaven or hell?

The body is made of materials which belong to earth. All its component parts are dissolvable. If they maintain that the body will be free from these defects then it ceases to be a body, and knowingly or unknowingly accept our point of view.

Some mischief-mongers in our former meetings of the missionaries, used to purposely bring in these discussions in order to strike at the very root of our 'dawat'. May God protect us from the influence of such devils who create suspicions in the minds of the faithful. The holy Quran says, "With regard to those who believe, God brings them out from the darkest regions to light and those who disbelieve are driven by their devilish friends from light to darkness."

Now we shall go on with the explanation of the rest of the verse which we dwelt at length in the last meeting. The remaining verse is as follows: ".....They will get there what they want and we have more than that with us." The verse is similar in meaning to another verse which says, "To those who do good there is 'husna' and more than that." The commentators tell us that 'husna' in this verse stands for 'jannat' and the expression 'more than that' implies 'looking at the face of God'. They do not seem to have understood the meaning of the 'face of God'. There is another verse of the holy Quran which says, "*Everything on earth will perish; only the face of your glorious Lord will remain*".

The words '*hand and the face*' which are mentioned in the Holy Quran in the phrases such as '*the hand of God*' and '*the face of God*' are believed by a large number of commentators to mean 'the usual hand and the face'. The Mo'tazalas do not hold this view and denounce these commentators as infidels. They argue that the face is a part of the human head and the human head is supported by the human body. Hence, to believe that God has a face is to degrade Him to the position of a human being. Conse-

quently, they believe that the word is used in a figurative sense. They are equally misled. They are neither here nor there. Neither they stick to the literal meaning of the word nor are they able to arrive at the inner meaning which is the substance of the symbol.

The face is the principal part of the man by means of which 'X' is distinguished from 'Y' and 'Y' is distinguished from 'Z'. The phrase 'Wajhullah' which literally means 'the face of God' stands for the great '*hadd*' through whom the knowledge of Unity of God with the knowledge of the angels is acquired in the highest degree. Every one who comes in contact with this '*hadd*' becomes '*baqi*' i.e. eternal and those who deny him become '*fani*' i.e. perishable. The holy Prophet says, "I am the face of God and I am the face of my '*ummat*'." On one occasion the holy Prophet is reported to have said, "Cursed is the world and every one who is in it excepting those who live according to the instructions of the 'Wajhullah'."

With regard to the word *hand* the Prophet says "God has two hands both of which are right." The Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin Abu Talib, greetings of God be on him, says, "I am the hand of God extended on earth."

Reverting to our explanation of the verse, "They will get in it what they want and more than that is with us", we said that this verse is similar in meaning to another verse, "Those who do good will get the '*hasanat*' and something more than that." The Commander of the Faithful Ali, once said in this connection, "May I tell you the '*hasanat*' i.e. the good deeds

the door of which is secure from the frightfulness of the Day of Judgment and 'Sayyiah' the evil deeds the perpetrator of which will be thrown headlong in Hell-fire.?" His followers said, "Yes, our lord tell us". He said '*Hasanaat*' means devotion to us and '*sayyiat*' means hostility to us.

In short, this is the '*hasanaat*' the reward of which is '*husanaa*' which is security from punishment on the day when people will be punished or rewarded for their deeds. The addition which is with God and which is interpreted as a look at the face of God is in reality meeting the Imam of the time who has inherited his authority from the Prophet and the '*wasi*'.

O Momins, may God make you prosperous and help you in joining those about whom God says, "*They will get what they want and there is something more than that with us.*"

LECTURE FIFTH

The Real Enjoyment In the World

O Momins, may God help you in making a profitable use of your ears and eyes. May He include you in the group about whom He says. *We have selected them for the selected Zikr.* Bear in mind that knowledge is a powerful light. It can bring about wonderful changes in man provided he is sufficiently receptive. It is like a spark of fire which changes the dark charcoal into glowing embers burning with brightness.

When a 'Momin' receives this slight, he shows its effect by cutting himself off from this world of vanity. God keeps him aloof from those who are mad after its wealth like hungry dogs after bones. The Prophet says, *"He who loves this world loses his love for the next. If a man receives the light of knowledge and yet continues to love this world God increases His wrath on him."*

You have been told that God has addressed the people in His Holy Book according to their level of understanding. The Prophet did the same thing. He appointed the 'wasi' to explain in detail what was revealed to him in a compressed form. The Prophet says, *"There will come amongst you those who will take as*

much pain in bringing to you the 'taweel' as I have done to bring to you the 'tanzeel', the word of God."

If external meaning of the words of the holy Quran had been sufficient for us, we would not have stood in need of further explanation by investigators of truth to whom we have been ordered by God to refer, to get our difficulties solved and to clear our doubts. The holy Quran says, *"If they refer to the Prophet and to the spiritual authorities who derive their authority from him, the investigators of truth from amongst them will know (the real state of affairs)"*.

We have learnt by experience that when raindrops fall on earth, it brings out vegetables and trees bearing fruits of different varieties. Although in reality it is the water which is responsible for the growth of the vegetables and the trees, still without coming in touch with the land, it is incapable of producing anything. The explanation by the Imams is as necessary for the elucidation of the original *'Wahi'* as the contact of the land with the water for the growth of vegetables and the trees.

What we have said in our previous 'Lecture' and what we are going to add now is intended to refute the arguments of those who want to strike at the root of our mission by insisting on the belief that on the Day of Resurrection the souls will rise engaged in their original bodies. They support in this those devils who are satisfied with the external meaning of the *'tanzeel'*. They do not accept the *'taweel'* and they try to falsify the Imams from amongst the decedents of the Prophet. They repeat what their predecessors have said from amongst the *'Ahle-Jahood'* and *'Jahl'* i.e. the deniers and

the ignorant people who used to tell the Imams, "We see no points of superiority in you over us."

In this connection we are going now to pursue another line of argument. I feel certain that it will have a more than desired effect on the intelligensia of this audience.

Human body is made up of things which all belong to this earth. Every one of its composite parts is perishable. As soon as the soul leaves the body, everyone of them begins to dissolve, and is reduced to dust.

In short, the body is a mixture of a few earthly things which have a natural tendency to go down. How can such a body go up and rise to the '*jannat*' which is in the seventh heaven? How can the body which is fed on the produce of the earth here, find food for itself in the '*jannat*'? How can an earthly go in its earthly form to the highest heaven? This is something which conveys no sense to one who is gifted with the least intelligence.

Almost all the desires connected with the human body are defensive weapons to fight against the feelings of discomfort. For instance, thirst and hunger which cause discomfort are fought by the body by means of food and drink. The pleasure derived from eating and drinking is a relief from hunger and thirst. If we have to go to the '*jannat*' with these very feelings of discomforts and the defensive weapons then what is the difference between our life here and the life in '*jannat*'?

On the other hand if they maintain that our bodies will be free from these defects in the '*jannat*' then why

should we be compared to lower animals indulging in eating, drinking and satisfying our sexual lust? Why should we not be compared with the angels who enjoy the proximity with God? The holy Quran says, "*You see the angels hovering over the 'Arsh' and praising God.*" No position can be higher than that of the angels. The holy Quran says. "*Say, I do not tell you that I possess the treasure of God or I know the un-seen or I am an angel*". Another verse says, "*Christ does not disdain from acknowledging himself to be the slave of God nor do the nearest angels.*" These verses show that the angels occupy the highest rank with God.

Had there been a special qualification in the possession of the body which has to eat and drink and clear its bowels, God would have conferred this favour on the angels who are nearer most to him and who praise Him all the time. He would have provided them with the best of food and the best of drinks.

It is said that "*God says, O son of Adam, if you follow me I shall make you like me. You will be perpetually alive and death will not affect you. You will be powerful and your power will never decrease. You will be wealthy and you will never become poor.*" Let us give a serious thought to this *Hadees-e-Qudsee*. Can a man be perpetually alive with the help of food and drink? Can a man retain his power for ever with the help of his kith and kin? Can a man remain wealthy for ever because of his possession of gold and silver? How can perishable things help man in becoming imperishable? If this is the case, how will the son of man be perpetually alive if he eats and drinks like ordinary men?

If there had been an iota of sense in the saying of those who maintain that on the Day of Resurrection we shall rise with our bodies then naturally God would have said, "O son of man. I shall feed you with the food I take. I shall give you the drink that I take. I shall clothe you with the dress that I put on." God is above these things and to expect this from God is nothing short of blasphemy.

The men of 'Tahqiq', the investigators of truth, offer for this Tradition an explanation which is entirely different from the rude and crude ways in which such traditions are handled by the ordinary theologians. The explanation is as follows. A thing is said to be similar to another thing only when there are some points of similarity between the two. There is no point of similarity between God and man. In the above Tradition devotion to God stands for devotion to the Prophet, the 'Wasi' or the Imam and the expression 'like me' refers to them. For, from the point of view of humanity, there is something common between the son of man and the Prophet or the 'Wasi' or the Imam.

Let us argue the case from another angle of view. We know that man is made of the body and the soul. His earthly body cannot rise above the surface of the earth but his soul can rise to the highest regions. We know by experience that very often man lies on earth and his soul, in spite of its being encaged in the body, travels in the higher regions and experiences things without the help of the body. This is as clear as light. It is not difficult to understand. It is only those people whose hearts are sealed and whose ears are muffled and whose eyes are blindfolded who will not and cannot understand.

Let us tackle the question from another point of view. In the holy Quran God speaks of some living men as dead and of dead people lying in the graves as living beings. This indicates that our animal life on earth devoid of spiritualism is, in reality, 'death' and the apparently physical death of those who have lived a spiritual life on earth is, in reality, 'life'. God says "*O Mominis, respond to God and the Prophet when he invites you to something which will give you life.*" This throws an additional light on the above verse and makes it clear to us that what is meant in these verses by life is not the physical life on earth but a new form of life. This is certainly a spiritual life and not the animal life which depends on eating and drinking.

Let us carry the discussion a little further and let me offer you another argument which, I am sure, will not fail to produce the desired effect even on the most muddle-headed people.

Even in the matter of eating and drinking which are the animal requirements of man, he has to depend mostly on knowledge. He must know how to cultivate the land. He must know how to grind the corn and he must know how to kneed the flour and bake the loaf before he can eat it. The better the knowledge of these things he possesses, the better is the quality of the loaf. Similarly he cannot provide himself with clothes which are also more or less animal requirements unless he knows something of spinning and weaving. This kind of knowledge can easily be acquired by man from man. There is no need of inspiration.

Just as man's physical life on earth depends on his physical knowledge of things, in the same way

his spiritual life depends on the spiritual knowledge which he can acquire only from the Prophet, the 'wasee' and the Imams who are "Arbab-ul-wahi wa taa-ed". In a life of this kind his body does not count. It is absolutely useless. In fact, it is a hindrance in his spiritual advancement.

I hope, I have made the matter clear. I have tackled the problem from all points of view. I have argued out the case so well that there is no room for doubts left now. This is enough for this 'majlis'. In the next 'majlis' I shall begin with our usual explanation of the inner meaning of the verses where we left.

May God keep you away from the path of error. May He keep you aloof from those "who say we have heard but they do not listen. They are deaf and dumb." Thank God for the favour He has done to us by appointing for us the Imams who are the source of our salvation. Happy is the man who submits his life to the Imams and secures his salvation in the *akhrat* which is thousand times more important than our life on earth.

LECTURE SIXTH :

No Animal Life Beyond Death

O Momins, may God embellish you with the beauty of truth and may He keep you away from the shadow of falsehood. Bear in mind that between us and our knowledge of the next world, there is a gulf which cannot easily be crossed. God shows us the way of knowing the invisible through the visible. The holy Quran says, "*God has created you like one soul and will make you rise like one soul.*"

Those of us who are guided by God through the Imams to the path which He has intended for us to tread on, should look back to our life in the wombs of our mothers. Let us trace the stages which we have gone through during the process of our formation into a human being. From a human seed which is the lowest form of life we progressed to the clot of blood, a higher stage than the first one. From this we progressed to the fetus, a further step in our advancement. From this stage we moved onward till we reached the stage when we became full fledged babes. After completing our journey, stage by stage, we stepped out of the womb of our mothers to this new world in a new form of life about which God says, "*We made him into a new creature.*" This is the history of our life during our antenatal period in the wombs of our mothers. To go forward is the next step. We cannot go backward.

The progress of our life from this world to the next is based on a similar process. If we have to progress and we cannot but progress because we cannot go back to our mothers' wombs, we must gradually get rid of our bodies which belong to this world and form ourselves into new creatures for the next life.

If we argue in this way which is certainly the correct line of argument, we come to the conclusion that we cannot have bodies in the next world. Those who maintain that we shall have bodies, evidently they want us to go backward and enter the wombs of our mothers again. For, our life in the next world is as much higher than our life in this world, as our life in this world is higher than our life in the wombs of our mothers. Our food and our drink of this world will look as filthy in the next world as our nourishment in the wombs of our mothers looks here.

Those who are devoid of knowledge and have not moved forward a single step from their animal nature still believe that we shall have bodies in the next world.

All the verses and Traditions which have a bearing on this subject are the subtleties in our religion which need elucidation. Those who rely on the external meaning of the words maintain that they need no further explanation. They dispense with the '*wasees*' and the Imams who are the preservers of the '*tanzeel*' and the treasure stores of the '*taweel*'.

Man is by nature made of the earthly body and the soul which belongs to the higher region. Most of men are under the influence of their animal nature. It has a complete sway on them. The soul which is a stranger

in this world has no voice with them. Our opponents, who themselves are influenced by animal nature, finding the majority of mankind more inclined to this world than to the next, set these ignorant people against the investigators of truth. They forget that these 'Arbabul-haqaiq' are the intellect of this world. It is they who develop the potential intelligence of man and make it function. Just as a flint strikes out the hidden fire from the hard stones, they dig deep into the human hearts and bring out what is the best in them. If the fire is not extracted from the stone, it remains there and does not do good either to the stone, or some one else.

May God keep us aloof from those who are appointed by the Imams as their missionaries and who work against the interest of their benefactors and mislead their ignorant audience by telling them that they will rise with their bodies on the Day of Resurrection. The Prophet says, "the cursed devil appears before the people in the garb of a learned divine."

We stop this discussion here and deal with the explanation of the Quranic verse which is as follows:—

"We have destroyed many generations in the past who were more daring than these people. They were wandering in the land. There was no chance of their escape."

Commentators tell us that these were the people who were destroyed because of their infidelity and their revolting against God. They were made an example by being punished like 'Aad', 'Samood' and others. Let us analyse the meaning of the word '*halak*' used in the above verse in which it is translated by com-

mentators as 'death'. If it means death, all the Prophets, the *wasees* and the best of mankind who came in this world were overcome by death. In that case there is no difference between the death of the chosen ones of God. Those who stick to the surface meaning of the word cannot understand the subtleties of the holy Quran. *Halak* here does not mean ordinary death but eternal destruction accompanied with the loss of the form which is necessary for entering the new world. Christ said to his apostles, "*Do not fear those who destroy the bodies but fear those who destroy the souls.*"

The misleading divines about whom I have talked to you are the dangerous people of this type who destroy the souls of the people. They light the fire of their animal nature and put out the light of intelligence. One of the Imams was asked as to what is '*saadat*', the happiness, and what is '*shaqawat*', the misfortune. He said, "Man by nature is like a blank white paper fit for writing. Happy is the one who falls in the hands of one who writes the correct things on this paper. Unhappy is the one who turns away from the right person and falls in the hands of one who writes wrong things on this paper and blackens it. The paper loses its original whiteness and gains nothing from wrong writing." Another Imam has said something in this connection which is very much similar to this. He says, "He who does not complete his prayers is like a pregnant woman who before the time of delivery miscarries. She neither retains her pregnancy nor she gets a child."

May God make you one of the '*saaeds*'. May he give you an opportunity to meet the Imams who are the moulders of the destinies of man.

LECTURE SEVENTH:

The Soul Is Ascending

O Momins, may God make you familiar with the knowledge of truth and may He preserve you from the mischievous instigation of the devil and the vicious influence of the hypocrites. God says in His holy book, *"Is the one who walks crawling on his face better guided or the one who walks straight on the right path?"* It is said that to walk crawling on the face is the peculiar characteristic of the lower animals whose face is always fixed on the ground to look for food and water. By their very nature they are meant for a low life. They live on the lowest products of earth and when they die they are reduced to nothing but dust.

There are some human beings who are lower animals in human form. Although they are straight in stature they are animals in the disguise of human beings. They are inclined to nothing more than eating and drinking. They are over-powered by their animal nature and are ignorant of the higher powers, of their souls.

You have been told at the previous Lecture that after breathing the air of this world and enjoying the food and water of this world man will never like to go back to his mother's womb and live in a filthy atmosphere. A poet says, "To eat and drink and to live

like animals, in my opinion, is a disgraceful thing. (This is what I thought) when I was in the prime of youth. How can I think otherwise when death is staring me in the face. Sweet water is meant for me and yet I am sinking in the saltish waters. You see the human soul wide awake only when it sees its well pampered body lying in the grave."

The poet looks upon eating and drinking as the peculiar characteristic of the lower animals. He did not attach himself to these things. Had he not been forced to eat and drink, he would never have had recourse to them. A philosopher says. "We eat to live but we do not live to eat." With regard to the poet's complaint that though he had plenty of sweet water, he was sinking in the saltish water, by sweet water he means the higher regions which are within the reach of the soul and by sinking in saltish water he means his connection with this filthy world. The holy Quran says, "*God has let flow two bodies of water. One of them is sweet and drinkable and the other is saltish and bitter. He has put a partition barrier between the two which does not allow the waters to mix up.*" The '*sufees*' who are men of truth and men of purity interpret these two bodies of water as the '*shariat*' and '*haqiqat*'. They say that the external side of the religious laws which are based on '*taqlid*', a mere following, stand for a body of saltish water. '*Haqiqat*' which is the unfolding of our religious laws in conformity with the dictates of our intellects and the aspirations of the soul is a river of sweet water. Though these rivers are close to each other God has kept a barrier between the two and does not allow them to overlay each other. This is one explanation. Others say that one of these rivers stands for our dark, dingy variable life on earth and the second

river stands for the holy regions, the world of angels. The barrier between the two is our earthly form. If we can rise above this earthly form then the soul will fly back to its Lord. God says in the holy Quran. *"O peaceful soul, come back to your Lord satisfied with your lot. Mix up with my devotees and enter my 'jannat'."*

The last lines of the poet in which he says that the human soul keeps awake only when it finds its pampered body in the grave, correspond to the saying of our Prophet, *"Men are asleep. When they die they will be awake."*

Let me remind you of what I have told you in my previous 'majlis' that God addresses mankind in general. His address is meant both for people of higher intellect and for the people of feeble intellect. He has appointed the 'Arbab-e-tawee' to explain in detail and make clear the points which cannot easily be understood even by the people who have reached the highest intellectual level. They lead the people from the perceptible to the imperceptible and reveal to them the truth. Those who are intelligent and attentive understand the matter and those who persist in their ignorance continue to remain ignorant and expect to rise on the Day of Resurrection with their present bodies and indulging in eating and drinking.

We repeat what we have said before that human body is inseparable from variability and its need for eating and drinking and for the evacuation for its bowles. If these people maintain that the body will be free from its natural requirements, then it ceases to be a body. If they think that there can be

a human body separated from its bowels, its veins and its nerves and its flesh and blood they will be roving in madness. They talk of things which do not appeal to reason.

This much is enough as a refutation of the arguments of those who believe in the rise in the next world along with their bodies.

There is a party from amongst the Shias who are a disgrace to the Shia sect and who are a blot on the '*Shariat*'. They maintain that men come again and again in this world. They believe that there is no such thing as a second world. This is the only place where man is rewarded or punished according to his deeds. They believe that the '*horries*' and the boy-servants and the '*jannat*' are all here. He who eats and drinks well and derive pleasure from them to the fullest extent is in '*jannat*'. He who does not get enough to eat and drink is in hell. They talk of '*naskh*', '*maskh*', '*faskh*' and '*raskh*'. By '*naskh*' they mean the shifting of the soul from one human being into another. By '*maskh*' they mean the changing of human being into a monkey, a pig or some such low animal. By '*faskh*' they mean the shifting of the human souls into the bodies of snakes, scorpions and earth worms. By '*raskh*' they mean the changing of human beings into stones and minerals.

These nonsensical beliefs of theirs cannot stand the test of reason. With regard to the shifting of the soul from one human body into another, it looks an absurdity. There is no sense in destroying one body and building another which is exactly similar to it. This does not speak of the wisdom of our Creator.

With regard to their saying that those who derive pleasure from eating and drinking are in a paradise on earth, we have made it clear to you before, that eating and drinking are defensive weapons against the feelings of discomfort caused by hunger and thirst. What we call pleasure is nothing but a relief from discomfort. To stand always in need of the use of these defensive weapons is not a reward but a punishment. To be born and reborn and to continue this kind of life is the worst punishment. God says in His holy book, "*They will not experience death in the 'jannat', excepting the one which they have experienced only once.*" Their saying that 'One will experience death after death' shows nothing but lack of intelligence.

With regard to the form of punishment which they believe is experienced in this world by '*maskh*' '*fastih*' and '*raskh*', they forget that the lower animals whose goal of life is nothing but eating and drinking are quite happy in their own way. Our children who in the stage of childhood behave like lower animals and are incapable of thinking ahead are quite happy in the world they live in. They eat, drink and play and there is nothing to worry them. It is said that once a philosopher stood gazing at a group of children who were playing in a sprightly manner. He remarked, "Ever since I have passed this stage I have never experienced pleasure again." A writer says, "Increase of intelligence means an increase of worries." Another writer says, "The beasts of burden carry the loads of worries on their hearts." Again, since the lower animals have no thinking power and do not think of life and death as we do, one life on earth is enough for enjoyment, if it is at all an enjoyment.

In short, this is a stupid belief. May God protect us from the influence of such people with the help of our spiritual heads, the Imams. I stop this discussion here. I do not think it necessary to prolong the matter.

Let us revert to the explanation of the Quranic verse, *"We have created the heavens and earth and what is between the two in six days and it caused us no trouble."* The verse needs a thorough understanding. We people whose powers are limited do need time for making things but God whose powers are unlimited needs no fixed period for the creation of heavens and earth. God Himself says in another passage in the holy Quran *"Whatever we command, we do at once like the twinkling of the eye."* This being the case with God, what need has He to take a particular period of time for the creation?

Besides, the days are known by the sun-rise and sun-set. How could six days be counted when there was no sky, no earth and no sun to rise and set. These commentators who stick to the literal meaning of the words when they get stuck up in the explanation of these things neither prove their points by arguments nor they seek the guidance of the Imams in this matter. They make a foolish assertion that the period was exactly six days.

At the next 'majlis' we shall offer you the explanation with conclusive proofs based on our religion. We stop the 'majlis' here. May God guide you and keep you away from the influence of those whose self-conceit has prompted them to reject our interpretation.

LECTURE EIGHTH

The Meaning of Six Days in Which God Created the Heavens and Earth

O Momins, may God guide you to the right path and may He make your abode in the place where you will not hear a useless or a sinful talk.

I have told you that the thick earthly body will not rise to the skies. A belief of this kind cannot stand the test of reason. It is only the spirit which will rise and which does rise even when our body lies here during our stay in this world. It has the potential power of rising and it is not outside its province to rise in reality.

In short, the soul which belongs to the higher regions by acquiring the powers of flight, will fly back to its original abode and the body which by nature belongs to the lower region will go back to its low level.

The only way in which this power to soar upward can be acquired is to learn the particular names of God through the Imams who prescribe different names of '*naqsh*' for different individuals, according to the peculiar '*naqsh*' of their souls. Through them and them alone the human soul is being prepared to reach the

stage about which God says, "*O peaceful soul come back to your Lord satisfied. Join my devotees and enter my 'jannat'.*"

As long as our heavens continue to be what they are and our earth continues to be what it is, it is not possible for a human being to assume a form of an imperishable eternal nature. It is for these reasons that God has promised that He would change the present earth and heavens into a different type of earth and heavens in order that the human beings living between the two should assume a form fit for a perpetual life. The holy Quran says, "*The day when the earth and the heavens will change into something different from what they are.*" This proves to us that on the Day of Resurrection the earth and heavens will not be the material bodies of this world. If they will not be what they are how can the creatures living between them have the defective forms and bodies of this world? This can be understood only by those who have well developed hearts or who have listened to the words of the Imam with the presence of mind.

You have heard what I have told you about the verse, "*We have created heavens and earth and whatever is between the two.*" You have followed the lines of my argument and my criticism of the belief of those who stick to the literal meaning of these verses. I have made it clear to you that the day begins with the sun-rise and ends with the sun-set and the night begins with the sun-set and ends with the sun-rise. If there is no sun and no heavens how can we talk of days and nights, and the period of the six days? The commentators have got stuck up in the matter and they have disposed of the verse by making an assertive statement

that the period consisted of six days. This is their own imagination.

There are others who say things which are still much worse. They say that the six days refer to the six days of the '*akhrat*' and that each day is equivalent to one thousand years of our world.

I have already pointed out to you that to stand in need of a particular period for making something is indication of the limitation of powers. God's power is unlimited. He says, "*Our command is one order (which is carried out) within the twinkling of an eye.*" Other verses of the holy Quran show to us that a companion of Solomon who was his pupil and who had acquired the knowledge from him brought the throne of 'Bilqees' to Solomon within the twinkling of his eye. In continuation of the story of Solomon in the holy Quran the companion of Solomon says, "*I shall bring it to you before your eye turns back from looking at a thing.*"

If this is the magnitude of power exercised by one of the creatures of God what difficulty is there for God, the best of Creators, to experience in the creation of the heavens and earth within the twinkling of an eye? Those who know this and still believe that God took six days to create heavens and earth prove against themselves that they have no idea of the God-hood of God, whom they pretend to worship and hence they cannot understand the meaning of His words "*Six Days*".

We, with all our human weakness are gifted with a thinking power which travels from the East to the West and makes a survey of what is

under the earth and what is above the skies without the least difficulty. This is a well-known affair. No one can deny it. If this is the case with us why should it be difficult for us to understand the super power of the Creator of heavens and earth? If those who stick to the literal meaning of the holy Quran were to refer the matter to the Prophet and the spiritual heads, the Imams, who are the investigators of truth, their difficulties would be solved.

The heavens and earth do not mean the heavens and earth with which we are familiar and the days do not mean the days in the sense in which we understand them. They refer to the different ranks of the 'Natiqs' who are in charge of the 'taweel' which moulds our intellects and souls into new forms.

In some of our 'majlis' I have pointed out to you that from the physical point of view heavens surround the human beings but from the point of view of spiritual development through knowledge, human beings surround these bodies.

In short, just as our souls surround the heavens, the souls of the Imams surround our souls and are the heavens of heavens on whom alone we look for nutrition for our spirits.

May God make you profit by their philosophy and may He give you the moral strength to thank them for this.

NOTE: According to other writers on Ismailism *Heaven* stands for *Haqiqat* and *Earth* stands for *Tariqat*. The *Six Days* stand for the six cycles of the *Natiqs* namely: *Adam, Noaha, Ebrahim, Moses, Christ, and Mohammad*.

LECTURE NINTH

The True Meaning of the Quran Cannot be Understood Without the Help of the Imams

O Momins, may God help you in deriving the fullest benefit from philosophy. May He guide you in thanking the Imams who are the highest authorities on this subject.

Do not pamper your bodies of flesh and blood. They are full of filth, if they are not constantly washed and kept clean they will stink like a carcass. Had it not been for the souls which are engaged in them they would have rotted in no time.

Your souls need a special care. Apply your minds to the study of the *tanzeel*. The *taweel* is its unfold, the tongue is the transmitter, the ears are the receivers and the soul is the receptacle.

This world is not the original place of this receptacle. The soul is a stranger here. Its original place is somewhere else. The destination of its journey is the world of purity where there is light upon light, God leads to the light only those whom He likes. Think of this. Think of your precious souls. Close

your ears to the earthly gossip of the meanest type and keep them open for an elevating talk. Use your intellect with which God has gifted you. It is only the fools who grope in the dark. Thank God for the favour that He has done to you by giving you every facility to seek your salvation and by providing you the Water of Life.

You have heard what I told you at the preceding Lecture about the verse. **"We created the heavens and earth and what is between the two in six days and it gave us no feeling of fatigue."** I pointed out to you that in the matter of creation the mighty God does not stand in need of time. It is only the weak people who need time in the making of things. I further pointed out to you that the meaning of this verse is entirely different from what it is usually explained to be by the commentators who stick to the letter and miss the spirit. I explained to you that the "six days", mentioned in the verse, refer to something else.

This verse is followed by **"Be patient with what they say."** This additional verse has no connection whatsoever with the preceding one. This is again one of the subtleties of the Quran which cannot easily be understood by those who stick to the literal meaning of Quran and who maintain that God actually took a certain fixed period in the making of this world. There is another verse of the Quran which clearly proves that God took no time in the creation of this world. The verse is as follows: **"Whenever we intend to create anything, we say 'let there be' and there it is."** Our opponents maintain that these two verses are contradictory to each other. The fact is that such verses which literally appear to be contradictory need an explanation from the Imams of the **Ale-Rasool** who

are the true interpreters of the Quran. They alone can solve these difficulties and they alone can dig deep into the minds and bring out the treasures for us. The Prophet says. "I am leaving behind two weighty things. The one is the Book of God and the second is my 'ahle-bait'. If you stick to them you will never lose the way. They are inseparable. They cannot part with each other until they return to me and meet me at the 'hauz-e-Kausar'." Again the Prophet says. "Learn from the learned divines of 'ahle-bait' and from those who have learnt from them. If you do so you will be secure from hell-fire".

In short, he who tries to understand the Quran through its ordinary commentators will never get through its intricacies and he who tries to interpret like those who interpret according to their own whims will also be stuck up and will not know how to get out of it. The verse, "Be patient with what they say," refers to these people who follow their own whims and do not approach the proper authorities to solve their difficulties. This verse is followed by the verse: "Praise God before sunrise and before sunset". The ordinary commentators tell us that the verse refers to the offering of morning prayer before sun-rise and the afternoon prayer before sunset. They say that emphasis is laid on the importance of these two prayers. They tell us one thing and lose sight of something else which is hidden from their notice on which God has laid much greater emphasis than on these two prayers. By the grace of God we shall tell you what it is in the next 'Majlis'. O Momins, may God make you profit by his 'zikr' and may He make the matter easy for you.

LECTURE TENTH

The Love of the Imams is a Duty Imposed by God

The 'Shia' learned divines maintain that God has enjoined on the followers of the Prophet to give him a return for the lamp-posts of guidance which he has erected for them. The holy Quran says, "*Say, I do not ask you for a return excepting the love for the relatives.*" They say that once a group of people came to the Prophet saying, "*O the Prophet of God, you came to us at the time when we had lost the way. God guided us through you. We were poor, God made us rich through you. Our wealth is at your disposal. Take form it whatever you like.*" "It was on this occasion," say the learned divines from amongst the 'Shias' "that the above verse relating to the love for the relations was revealed." The Quranic expression, '*the love for the relations*' according to them means 'the love for Ali, Fatma, Hasan, Husain and their descendents.'

Their opponents who do not approve of this explanation maintain that the above verse has been cancelled by another verse in the Quran which runs thus, "*Say, whatever I ask you regarding my return, it is for you, I depend for my reward on none but God and He is a witness to every thing.*" The 'Shia' divines refute this statement by saying that the second verse which

has been quoted by their opponents and which according to them has a nullifying effect on the first one, has been either revealed before the first verse namely. "*I ask you for no other return than the love of relations*" or after this verse. If it has been revealed before this verse it cannot cancel the verse that had been revealed after it. On the other hand if it is revealed after the verse pertaining to '*the love for the relations*', it makes the first verse all the more emphatic. For, the verse, "*Say, whatever I ask you in the way of return, is meant for you,*" means that the love for the relations of the Prophet which he has asked for, does no good to him in the least. It does good to them and secures their salvation. This is corroborated by the saying of Imam Jafar Sadiq which is as follows: "If a servant of God were to worship Him between the '*rukhn*' and the '*muqam*' in the *Ka'ba* until his physical body begins to dissolve, his devotion will not be recognised by God if he does not approach Him through us."

LECTURE ELEVENTH:

The Meaning of the Mysterious Letters

The Holy Quran says, "*Alif, laam, meem zalikal kitabo la raibfeehi.*" Some of the commentators of the Quran explain this verse by saying that '*alif*' '*laam*' '*meem*' mean an oath taken by God. *Alif* they say is taken from the word '*Allah*', '*laam*' from *Gabriel* and '*meem*' from Mohammed. Although some of these commentators do not believe in the '*taweel*' and are too proud to accept their explanation, in this particular instance, their commentary is very much near to the interpretation of the exponents of the '*taweel*'.

The largest number of such dis-connected letters used in the Quran is five. '*Kaaf*', '*haa*', '*yaa*', '*ain*', '*saad*' and '*haa meem*' '*ain*' '*seen*' '*qaaf*' are the specimens of five dis-connected letters. The least number of such letters used in the Quran is one. '*Saad*' and '*qaaf*' and '*noon*' are the specimens of single letters. All such letters known in Arabic as '*huruf-muqatta-at*' are used in the Quran for the purpose of taking an oath. As a rule, one never takes oath by any thing which is not dignified or dear to him. In this instance God has taken oath by two spiritual powers which are the first cause of the Universe and the final point in its evolution, namely the universal intellect and the universal

soul and by one physical being who holds the highest position in His world of creation and who is the first of His '*hudud*' on earth.

By taking an oath by these three mighty powers God lays emphasis on what He wishes to express by the verse. The word '*zalika*' used in the verse is a demonstrative pronoun corresponding to '*that*' in English. Since, the word '*that*' is always used for something distant and never for something close by, the expression '*zalikal-kitab*' meaning '*that book*', does not refer to the Quran which is in front of our eyes. It refers to a book other than the Quran.

The word '*kitab*' etymologically means 'a well arranged combination of words. Just as the word '*kateeba*' stands for an orderly group of soldiers, the word '*kitab*' stands for a well-arranged number of chapters and verses dealing with the commands and prohibitions and instructive events from the past history. This is what the Quran consists of.

It is related on good authority that the Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin Abu Talib was one day reading the Quran. In the course of his reading when he arrived at the following verse, "*This book of our speaks to you the truth,*" he stopped reading. He placed the Quran on his head and said, "*O book of God speak. O book of God speak. O book of God speak.*" By repeating this thrice he has made it clear to us that he is the '*speaking book*' of God and that the Quran is the '*silent book*'. Had he and the Imams from his progeny not dived deep into the Quran and taken out from it, its hidden treasures, the real meaning of the Quran would have remained as hidden as

the latent fire in the stone. The doors of truth would have been closed to us for ever.

Just as the latent fire in the stone cannot come out unless it is struck by the flint, similarly the doors of the Quran will not open unless the 'speaking-book', the Imam, opens them for us. The silent books, the Quran, is like clay and the speaking book, the Imam, is like the potter. The book is like the steel and the Imam is the moulder. The book is like the wood and the Imam is the carpenter. They are both complementary to each other.

It is in this connection that the Prophet has said, *"I am leaving amongst you two weighty things. The one is the book of God and the second is my 'ahle-bait. If you stick to them you will never be lost. He added to this by saying: "They will never part with each other until they return to me at the 'hauz-kausar'."* He meant to say that the book of God and the 'ahle-bait' are inseparable. The one cannot exist without the other.

In conclusion, the speaking book, the interpreter of the silent book, is undoubtedly selected by God as the 'wasee' of Mohammed, just as Mohammed himself is selected by Him as his Prophet. The Quranic phrase '*hudallil-muttageen*' meaning guidance for the God-fearing people which is used as an additional description of the book of God lays further emphasis on the point that the *kitabun-Natiq,*' and the Imams from his progeny, are the only source of guidance for mankind

LECTURE TWELFTH

The Vilayat of Ali

O Momins, may God help you in deriving the fullest benefit from the glories of this day. It was on this day that God conferred on us the highest of His favours. It was on this day that a great ordinance was issued by God which is the terminating point in the revelation of the religious laws. It was on this day that everything was made clear and the path was made smooth for the seekers of truth by the verse, *"I have perfected your religion. I have bestowed on you my highest favours. I have chosen for you ISLAM as a religion."*

At first the Prophet was reluctant to proclaim the ordinance to the people who he believed were prejudiced against it. A Quranic verse made the matter clear and left no room for hesitation in his mind. The verse is as follows: *"O the Prophet, deliver the message which has been revealed to you by your Lord. If you fail to do so it will mean that you have not delivered His message to the people. God will guard you against the people."*

There is no sect in Islam which believes that the Prophet failed short of delivering the message of God in such matters as the performance of prayers, the payment of 'zakat', the fasting or going on pilgrimage or

taking part in the '*jihad*'. We know well that he exerted his utmost in making the people offer the prayers which one cannot perform without undergoing some physical discomfort. He preached the people to pay the '*zakat*' and the people did pay, although one does not find it easy to part with money. The people were made to fast and we know well that in fasting one has to put up with unbearable heat and thirst. He exhorted the people to go on pilgrimage which one cannot undertake without undergoing all sorts of hardships. He ordered the people to join the '*jihad*' and they did so at the risk of their lives.

In short, he made no hesitation in the delivering of God's message in these matters. It was only the question of '*Wilayat*' which worried him the most. It was the ordinance pertaining to the '*Wilayat*' the allegiance to Ali and the Imams from amongst his descendants that he was not prepared to proclaim. Finding the people burning with hatred and jealousy he hesitated to deliver this ordinance to them and he was waiting for a favourable time when the above verses were revealed to clear his doubts.

If some one were to suggest that the Prophet was not hesitating to deliver this ordinance, this stand will make the revelation of the above verse meaningless and superfluous.

These verses which lay emphasis on the delivery of the ordinance prove to us that the faith in the '*Wilayat*' is the corner stone of our religion. If one does not believe in the '*Wilayat*' and discharges all the primary and secondary duties enjoined on us by our religion, the performance of these duties will not help

him in the least. His good deeds minus the belief in the **'wilayat'** will lead him to no other place than hell fire. Belief in the **'wilayat'** of the Prophet is a pivot. On this hinges the whole system of our religious laws. If one has no faith in the **'wilayat'**, the duties laid down in our religion will lose the force of application on him. Hence, the performance or non-performance of these duties will make no difference in his case.

It must be borne in mind that after the death of the Prophet the belief in the **wilayat** of the Imams from his progeny is as important a part of our religion as the belief in the **wilayat** of the Prophet in his life time. This is supported by the Tradition according to which the Prophet is reported to have said at **'Ghadeer Khum'**, **"Am I not more precious to you than your own-selves."** This is an echo of the Quranic verse which says, **"The Prophet is more dear to the 'Momins' than their own-selves to them."** It is said, that in response to this question of the Prophet, when the **'Momins'** said **"Yes, you are dearer to us than our own selves"**, the Prophet said, **"O God, be witness to their admission"**. After this he said. *"Ali is the master of one who acknowledges me to be his master. O God love those who love Ali. Help those who help Ali. Desert those who desert Ali. Let the truth accompany Ali wherever he goes."*

NOTE.

"Yomul-Ghadeer" is the day on which the Prophet declared Hazrat Ali to be his brother on his return from his last pilgrimage which is known in history as **'Hajjat-ul-Wida'**. This took place on the 18th of **'Zil-haj'** when the Prophet and his

LECTURE TWELFTH

followers on their return from the pilgrimage made a halt at the 'Ghadeer-Khum'.

Ahmed bin Hambal, one of the four Sunni Imams, has mentioned this incident in his well-known book "Masnadul Kabeer". He quotes Barra bin Azib one of the 'As-haab' of the Prophet saying, "We were in the company of the Prophet when he halted at the 'Ghadeer Khum' and led the congregational prayer. After finishing the prayer the Prophet took the hand of Ali and raised it up saying, "Am I not dearer to the 'Momin' than their own-souls?" They said "Yes". Again he said, "Ali is the master of the one who acknowledges me to be his master. O God, love those who love Ali and hate those who hate Ali." After hearing this, Omar Bin-Khattab went up to Ali and said, "Congratulations to you, O the son of Abu Talib, you have become the master of every male and female Momin".

LECTURE THIRTEENTH

True Faith in the Unity of God Cannot be Achieved Without the Guidance of the Imams

The holy Quran says, **“There are some people who say, ‘we believe in God and in the day of judgement’ but in reality they do not believe.”** This is the characteristic of the hypocrites who do not profess what they believe in and do not believe in what they profess. By the words **‘we have faith in God and the day of judgement’** they intend to say that all their actions will be judged by God who will reward or punish them on the Day of Judgement. God has belied them by saying that **“In reality they do not believe”**, that is to say they do not speak the truth.

The knowledge of the oneness of God is beyond the acquisition of human mind by itself. There are some people who maintain that they can acquire this knowledge by themselves without the help of the Prophet or the Book of God. They go a step further and say that if God had not sent the Prophets, in this matter they could have easily dispensed with their teachings. If they think that by means of their intellect they can know the maker by seeing the things made

and the Creator by looking at His creation, it is the height of insolence on their part. It is preposterous to imagine that a human being can acquire this knowledge without the help of the proper mediums namely the Prophets and the Imams. We know by experience that even the power of talking which is inherent in man and which is much easier for him to acquire than the knowledge of the oneness of God, does not develop in him without the help of a teacher. Although it is in his nature to talk and he has been provided by God with the necessary apparatus for it, he does not and cannot talk unless he learns to do it from some one else. If this is the case with his talking how is it possible for him to acquire the complicated knowledge of the oneness of God without the help of a Prophet or an Imam? It is an impossibility.

Those who maintain that they can know the Maker from the things made, forget that even this much knowledge which they claim to be self-acquired is based on their seeing and hearing things from one another. It is because of their hearing things from one another that they are able to say that there must be a builder when they see a house.

If a man were to grow in a desert where he sees no house and hears nothing of this kind his intellect will not help him in coming to the conclusion that there must be a builder if he sees a house for the first time. This being the case it is as clear as day light that the divine knowledge cannot be acquired without the help of the proper medium. This leads us to the conclusion that those people about whom the holy Quran says, **"They say we have faith in God and in the day of Judgement but in reality they are faithless"**,

are the people who do not believe in the mediums, *i.e.*, the 'wasee' of the Prophet and the Imams from his progeny. No correct knowledge of the oneness of God can be acquired without our referring to them. We cannot acquire a correct faith unless we seek the knowledge through them.

The Prophet has given us the outlines of the subjects which are dealt with in the Quran. For the details we have to go to the Imams who are the masters of the subject. Had the Book been enough for us to teach us everything and solve all our difficulties independently of those divine agents who are the masters of this Book of God it would not have been necessary for God to tell us "If they had referred the matter to the Prophet and to the spiritual heads from amongst them they, who are men of depths, would have explained it to them." The 'men of depths' referred to in the above verse are the Imams from the progeny of the Prophet who possess the profoundest knowledge of the Book of God and the Tradition of the Prophet.

LECTURE FOURTEENTH

The True Meaning of the Tradition:

**"I AM THE CITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND
ALI IS ITS GATE"**

Every knowledge refers to the investigation of a fixed subject matter pursued by a fixed method. This view is supported by the verses of the Quran and the Tradition of the Prophet. The holy Quran says, **"There is no righteousness in your entering the houses by their back doors; but righteousness lies in fearing God and entering the houses by their proper doors."** The words houses and doors used in the above verse are used figuratively. They do not stand for ordinary houses and doors. We know well that the doors are meant for entrance. Had the words been used in their ordinary sense, there would have been no necessity for God to admonish us to do a thing which every one of us does in the ordinary course of affairs. The houses and the doors referred to in the verses are quite different from the houses and doors that we are familiar with. This is made clear by the well-known Tradition of the Prophet which is as follows: **"I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate. Let those who want to acquire knowledge approach the city by its proper gate."**

After having proved by the verses of the Quran and the Tradition of the Prophet that knowledge always refers to the investigation of a particular subject pursued by a particular method our next step would naturally be to find out the subject matter of the knowledge of which, according to the Tradition, the Prophet is the City and Ali is the Gate. If we maintain that the subject matter is the prayer and how to perform it or the 'zakat' and how to pay it or the fast and how to observe it, then we cannot but admit that Ali's knowledge in this respect was in no way better or higher than that of those who had the opportunities of associating with the Prophet and attending his sermons. But it is not so. The knowledge mentioned in the Tradition refers to the philosophy of 'taweel' the reconciliation between traditionalism and rationalism and the knowledge of 'hududullah', the spiritual and physical ones. It is this knowledge about which the Prophet says, **'I am the city of knowledge about which the Quran says figuratively, "There is no righteousness in your entering the houses by their back doors."**

In short, Ali is the person who is well qualified in the knowledge of which the Prophet is the City and Ali the Gate; and all those who have embraced Islam know nothing of this knowledge excepting those who have approached the 'wasee' of the Prophet and entered the city of the knowledge by its proper gate. Those Muslims who do not approach this channel have only this advantage that their blood is unlawful for the Muslims to shed and their property is safe with them. The Prophet has divided the Muslims into two classes. He says, *"I have been ordered by God to fight on with the people until they say 'there is no God but God"*

and Mohammed is the Prophet of God.' When they say this their lives and properties are secure with us unless they do something which calls for punishment. They will have to settle their accounts with God." This is the advantage that they will get from their embracing Islam. With regard to the second class of people the Prophet says, *"Those who say there is no God but God, with sincerity will enter the 'jannat'."* On being asked as to what is meant by sincerity the Prophet replied, *"It means the knowledge of the 'hudud' of God and the discharging of the obligation that one owes to them."* This refers to those learned Muslims who enter the city through its gate.

LECTURE FIFTEENTH

Be In the World But Not of the World

O Momins, may God make you from amongst those whose guardian is God in this world and the world to come and with whose devotion to Him He is much pleased.

You must bear in mind that you are made of a thick earthly body and a fine heavenly spirit. Your earthly body needs earthly nutrition to sustain its earthly existence and your spirit needs spiritual food to continue its spiritual life. The earth is the store-house of the material nutrition consisting of food and water for the body and the Prophets and the Imams are the store-house of sciences which supply nutrition to the spirit which is the most precious stuff.

O Momins, take from the Imam the food for your next life. It will save your spirit from pollution and will qualify you with the attributes of the angles. You have heard what I told you on the last occasion and those of you who were attentive have profitted by it.

Now, we shall explain to you the meaning of the Quranic verse, "Those who do not witness untruth and when they come across frivolities they turn away from them as great souls." This verse is usually interpret-

ed to be a prohibition, of a false evidence. According to some of the commentators the word '**untruth**' means an indulgence in amorous music. God says, "*Keep aloof from the filth of idol worshipping and keep aloof from the words of untruth i.e., amorous talk.*" This is a correct interpretation but there is something more which has escaped the notice of the commentators. We add that in the Quranic expression, "**they do not witness untruth,**" the word '**untruth**' refers to the deceptive world. The learned divines look upon this world as the abode of untruth and the next world as the abode of truth. They call this world an abode of untruth because it is never steady. It always changes from one state into another. It is impossible for man to find in this world a thing which does not change. Its time is changeable. At one time we have the spring season and at another time we have the autumn. At one time we have summer and at another time we have winter. Its products are equally changeable. At one time we notice an embryo at another time it grows into a babe. This babe again grows into a child. From a child it changes into a young man. The young man again changes into an old man who ultimately dies and disappears from this world. It is for these reasons that the world is called the house of '**untruth**', And it is on this account that we interpret the-not-witnessing the untruth as not witnessing the world. By not witnessing this world we do not mean that the man is not present in this world. How can one who is living in this world be absent from the world of which he is the product?

What we mean to say is this. Man has a physical life as well as a spiritual one. Physically he is like lower animals. Spiritually he is above these animals

and is capable of flying into higher regions. The one who knows the value of his spiritual life, in spite of his physical presence in this world, is spiritually absent from it. He is more attached to the next world than to this world where he lives the life of a prisoner. Our Prophet says, **“The world is a prison house for the Momins.”** If we understand this, the meaning of the whole verse will be as clear to us as day light. *

It is said that some dogs were eating a dead body and were fighting over it. A pious man passed by them and was disgusted with the foul smell of the dead body. To avoid the filthy smell he began to run away from the sight. The dogs imagining that he was running towards them to snatch away the dead body from them jumped at him and attacked him from all sides. This is the way in which the people of the world run after this world and they mistake those who are detached from it to be as much attached to it as they themselves are.

The word *'laghve'* in the above verse which is usually translated as frivolity, etymologically means that which is thrown away. Here it stands for the worldly wealth and its concomitants. The wise people naturally pass by it unattracted by it and unstained by it. This makes the meaning of the verse sufficiently intelligible to us. The word *'zoor'* in the above verse which is usually translated as *'untruth'* also means the misrepresentation of the truth or the fabrication of a lie. Accordingly the one who pretends to be a Prophet or a *'wasee'* or an Imam or one gifted with divine knowledge belongs to the category of those people of whom God says, **“Who is a greater oppressor than the one who fabricates a lie against God or says that he**

receives revelations from God while no revelation has come to him or the one who says, 'I shall reveal what God has revealed'." Such people are said to be 'Shahid-e-Zoor' i.e., the misrepresenters of truth or fabricators of lies.

The above verse speaks of three types of liars: (1) Those who fabricate lies against God are the persons who pretend to be the Prophet, like '**Musailamatul-kazzab**'. (2) Those who pretend that they receive the revelation but in reality no revelation is sent to them. They are the persons who pretend to be the '**wasee**' of the Prophet. (3) Those who say that they say exactly what God says. They pretend to take up the place of the Imams. All these three types of lies are the worst form of oppression. For, oppression means the putting of a thing in a wrong place.

The Commander of the Faithful, Ali bin Abu Talib says, "There is no verse in the Quran about which I do not know, how it was revealed, when it was revealed and in what connection it was revealed. Before you lose me, consult me about what it is and what it will continue to be upto the Day of Judgement." While he was saying this he pointed out to his chest thereby meaning that it was the store-house of divine knowledge.

LECTURE SIXTEENTH

The Maintainer of Our Souls

The holy Quran says, "They are the persons who barter away guidance for error." The error and guidance mean the right course of conduct and a wrong one. Man always follows a certain course of conduct for his prosperity in this life and the life to come. If he follows the right course, he will improve his prospects here and hereafter. If he follows a wrong one he will neither prosper here nor there.

Man moves onward and onward from the beginning of his life to its end. Some of his movements are voluntary and others are involuntary. For instance, his movements from the human seed towards the clot of blood and from the clot of blood to the full fledged human babe are all involuntary. During this process he grows like plants.

When he comes out in the world in the form of a human being his life is somewhat similar to the life of lower animals. The difference lies in this that the young ones of lower animals are born better equipped than the human babes. Unlike the human babes they stand in no need of help from their parents. The human babe is born as a bundle of flesh and bones which has to be carefully looked after by its parents; while the young ones of animals are born with a clothing, teeth, claws and everything else that they need for

self-defence in life. They find their food in plants and the flesh of other animals. If they are thrown in water, with some exceptions such as monkeys they all struggle and manage to come out safe. If some one were to throw them down from some elevated place they will stick to whatever they can catch hold of and will try to escape the fall which they instinctively believe to be harmful. In short, this is the difference between the life of a human babe who has to depend on others for its growth and the life of the young ones of the lower animals who are born independent of the help of others. This is because the life in this world is the only thing and everything for them. Beyond this there is no other life for them.

Unlike the lower animals man is gifted with the mind which grows like the body. It is fed on knowledge and it is through knowledge that it takes its proper shape. Even the body he possesses depends for its growth on knowledge that he is supplied with food which agrees with him. It is through knowledge that he is provided with the clothing which protects the body against the heat and cold. The better the knowledge the tastier the food and the finer the clothing.

To improve his physique he needs a physical knowledge but to develop his mind he needs a different knowledge—a knowledge which sharpens his intellect and carries him forward to the place of security—a knowledge of which the Prophet is the 'city' and the 'wasee' is its 'gate'—a knowledge of which the Imams from his progeny are the custodians.

There are some people who imagine that they can acquire this knowledge by themselves. They find

faults with the Imams and turn away from their teachings. These people can never reach the goal. They will always be groping in the dark. It is to these people that the above verse, **“They are the people who barter away guidance for error”** is particularly applicable. The adjoining words of the Quran, **“Their bargain will not thrive”** need an explanation. The world is a trading place for us. If we carry on our transactions on the right lines we are sure to profit by them. If we use foul methods in our dealings we are bound to suffer a loss. Good deeds are a commodity. It is a highly profitable commodity. It yields the profits which accumulate and are stored for us in heaven. The one who does good deeds does advance but his advancement is not the ordinary advancement in physical comforts but an advancement in spiritual life which is beyond one’s imagination.

Every Prophet in his age and every Imam of the time does his best to lift up the people spiritually by the strength of his knowledge and makes them firm and steady in their faith by the force of his will. Every learned divine tries to help the people in flying upwards according to the power of his knowledge.

Physical power has its limitations but there is no limitation to the spiritual power. Physically if one were to lift up something which is equal to his own weight or double his weight he is said to have performed a great physical feat. Spiritually, one Prophet or one Imam can lift up the whole world.

Spiritual things should not be mixed up with physical matters. The Prophet says, **“The servant of God who believes in Him and lives a straight life will find for**

himself in heaven a palace as big as the skies or double the size of the skies." The palace in this Tradition is very often mistaken to be a material palace. Those who maintain this view touch the skin and not the kernel of the fruit. If we take the word 'palace' in its material sense, a palace which is as big as the skies or even double their size will not be a source of comfort to a tiny creature. It will frighten him out of his wits and will turn the heaven into hell for him.

These people try to explain the Traditions according to their own whims and without the help of the Imam. God says, "They know only the external side of the life in this world. They are ignorant of the life in the next world."

As long as man continues to live in this world, if he accepts the invitation to truth he will be sitting in the lap of the Imam and will be growing spiritually as steadily as the embryo does in the womb of its mother. The Prophet says, "Happy is the one who is happy in the stomach of his mother and unhappy is the one who is unhappy in the stomach of his mother."

These Traditions are used in an allegorical sense. If we do not take the help of 'taweel' in understanding them, they will convey no sense to us. The mother in the above Tradition means our spiritual head, the Imam; and the lap means the lap of this spiritual mother of ours.

When a devotee comes out of the lap of his spiritual mother he enters a new world where he sees things which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no mind has thought of. This world, compared to the world he leaves behind, will appear to him as big as the physical

world compared to his accomodation in the womb of his mother.

To enter a world of this type is certainly a profitable concern and a positive gain. But we must bear in mind that we can never enjoy this world unless we are brought up in the lap of the Imam. If any one of us withdraws himself from the lap of those who re-shape and re-form our lives and prepare us for a perpetual life, he misses the purpose of his life. He makes his life topsy turvy and loses not only the profit on the capital, the eternal salvation, but even the capital of his physical life here. The holy Quran says, "Their transaction did not thrive and they were not properly guided."

LECTURE SEVENTEENTH

Spiritual Parents

The holy Quran says, "The Prophet is dearer to the 'Momins' than their own souls and his wives are their mothers." Since, in the words of the Quran, the wives of the Prophet are the mothers of the 'Momins', it automatically follows that the Prophet is their father. The Prophet says to Ali, "O Ali, I and you are the parents of the Momins". Most of the people knowing that Ali cannot be their mother in the literal sense of the word, are carried away by their imagination and maintain that the Prophet has used these words in an allegorical sense and not in the true sense of the word.

The fact is that the Prophet passed on the divine inspiration to Ali and deposited it with him with a view to produce through the depositor and the depositee of the holy communication a religious body of men to be remoulded and made fit for entry in the abode which is the goal of our journey from this world. Had these people who explain these Traditions according to their own whims known this they would have been able to distinguish between a spiritual progeny and a physical progeny. But, they, in the words of God, "are deprived of sense."

One should bear in mind that the connecting link between the father and the son which makes the latter stick to the former is nothing but a human seed. If a son sticks to his father because of this, a spiritual son,

the connecting link between whom and whose spiritual father is a 'Kalma' which is the extract of all the divine powers, should stick to his spiritual father a thousand times more. In this case the knowledge is the seed, the tongue is the carrier of the seed and the human mind is the field for the cultivation of this seed. This makes the difference between a man and lower animal. There can be no better seed than knowledge and there can be no better field for the growth of this seed than the human mind.

LECTURE EIGHTEENTH

The Holy Tree

The holy Quran says, "*O Adam, stay you and your wife in the 'jannat' etc.*" The commentators tell us that God made Adam stay in 'jannat' and permitted him to eat its fruits excepting the forbidden tree. They say that the forbidden tree stands for wheat. We know well that wheat is never counted in the category of trees. Others say that it stands for the fruit olive. Whatever it may be, it does not look proper on the part of God that He should select one of His creatures as a '*nabi*', He should ask the angels to bow down to him, He should place the whole of '*jannat*' at his disposal and yet He should not permit him to approach one of its trees. For whom did he intend to reserve this tree? Had He any other man in view who was dearer² to Him or higher in rank than Adam? When one does not want to part with something it is either because he wants it for himself or he wants to set it apart for some one else whom he wants to favour. Evidently God did not want to keep it for some one else whom He wanted to favour. Who could be more deserving of His favours than the one who was chosen by Him as His '*nabi*' and was made the '*Qibla*' for the angels?

If this is not in conformity with the dignity of God, if it sounds like an impossibility, then it is the duty of an intelligent investigator of truth, that he should find

out by means of his intelligence, a sensible explanation which does not detract from the dignity of God and which at the same time saves Adam from the disgrace of being dubbed as an avaricious person.

In the words of the Quran, "*Stay you and your wife in the 'jannat' "*", in view of the fact that the '*jannat*' is situated in heavens, it is a lofty place and in view of the fact that it contains things which satisfy the souls and please the eyes, it is a glorious place. In the science of '*taweel*' it is a '*Masal*' for the divine power which is conferred on His '*Natiq*'. Hence, in view of the fact that the '*Natiq*' occupies the highest position with God he is as well acquainted with the nature of the souls of the human beings as the latter are with the physical nature of the lower animals. Again, in view of the fact that the souls of these '*Natiqs*' are fully absorbed in the holy regions, they are the veritable '*jannat*'.

Hence, the Quranic words, "*Stay you and your wife in the 'jannat' "*" mean "*Take delight in your share of the divine power which you have received from the higher 'hudud' and move about freely in the spiritual garden enjoying the heavenly fruit.*" The additional words of God. "*Eat from it without reservation whatever you like*" do not mean the ordinary eating of the earthly products for the preservation of the body. Eating in this sentence has got an inner meaning. It means to take the fullest advantage of your inner world which is the abode of your soul and nourish it with the spiritual food just as the body is sustained with physical food. That is to say whether one is a '*Natiq*' or an '*Isas*' or the Imam or the '*Hujjat*' he has to preserve this spiritual power by feeding his spirit on the special knowledge he possesses

just as one preserves his physique by means of the physical food.

The Quranic words, "**Eat from it without reservation**" signify that these '**Natiqs**' or the '**Isas**' or the Imams or the '**Hujjats**' are required to absorb as much of the divine light as they can.

In the above words of God, "**Do not touch this tree,**" the word 'tree' in the Quran is a symbol for the highest point in the spiritual world which was beyond the reach of Adam. This is the tree to which God has compared '**Kalama**' in the Quran. Some say it means the **Kalma-e-Shahadat**. The Quran says, "**Do you not see how God has compared 'Kalma-e-Tayebba' to a good tree.**" Some say the tree here stands for the palm-tree. How ridiculous will it look, if we accept their explanation of the tree as the palm-tree, that God should compare the divine unity to the palm-tree and raise it to this importance! It is not an ordinary tree grown on earth. It has created a confusion in the minds of the ignorant fellows. This is the tree of test to which Adam was put. The cursed Satan was right when he said, "It is a tree of perpetuity. It is a kingdom which will never be destroyed." But he was wrong when he misled Adam by making him believe that he was quite fit to live in that kingdom. He played the treacherous part in inducing Adam to eat it *i.e.* to enter that kingdom.

In the science of '**taweel**' the '**good tree**' occupies a very important place. It refers to the higher '**hudud**'. Hence, the tree which is like '**Kalma-e-Tayebba**', is a '**masal**' for the '**Natiq**' who is an innovator in this world. Certainly he is a better person to be compared to '**Kalma-e-Tayebba**', than a palm-tree. The Prophet says,

"I am a tree, Fatma is its branch, Ali is its pollen and Hasan and Husain are its fruits and those who love us, the 'ahle-bait', are its leaves who will be with us in the jannat."

The additional words of the Quran, *"Do not approach this tree otherwise you will be the transgressors"*, signify that they should not desire to carry themselves to a place which is beyond their reach. It will mean putting a thing in a wrong place and this is positively a 'zulm', a transgression. *"And Satan misled them and took them out from the place of security"*, by a wrong piece of advice. The words *"Come down"* signify that they were degraded. The words, *"For you the resting place is on earth and it is a temporary thing for sometime"* signify that Adam was deprived of the privilege of being guided by divine knowledge and thereafter he had to depend on knowledge acquired through his senses.

He Who Knows Himself Knows God

O Momins, may God confer His favours on you and may He guide you to the right path. Stick to the principle of reticence. Stick to the Imams. If you do so, you will never go astray and you will enjoy the shade of the *Taiba Tree*. Its branches are over-hanging on your heads. Its blessings are always open to you, provided you know this and give a serious thought to it. Thank God for the special favour that He has conferred on you by guiding you through the Imams and fear the day when you will be brought before God and when every one will be rewarded or punished according to his deeds in this life, the day when no injustice will be done to any one. The month of Rajab is gone and Shaban is come. It is a sacred month. Put on the clean dress of piety. May God show mercy to you. May He help you in keeping your hearts clean. Do not keep your bodies clean and neglect your souls. Let you not be deceived by the health of your bodies if your hearts are diseased. Keep aloof from the filth of idol worship and infidelism. Never tell lies. Seek guidance from those who have been pronounced by the Quran to be pure.

Last time I spoke to you on a philosophical subject and now I am going to speak to you on a similar one. It is said that once the learned divine namely Imam

Jafar Sadiq was asked by people to explain to them the meaning of the Tradition of the Prophet, "*He who knows himself knows God.*" The divine said, "You must bear in mind that man by nature belongs both to the physical and to the spiritual world. As far as his body is concerned he is like any other material body in this world. Every particle of it belongs to this world. The heat in his body belongs to the fire in this world. The flexibility of his body is due to the air in it. The humidity of his body is due to the water and the heavy mass of his body belongs to the earth. At the time of dissolution of the body every particle of it goes back to its physical source to which it belongs. This is what we can perceive by means of our senses.

He has something else which can neither be perceived nor compared to anything that we find in this physical world. His being recognised as the noblest of all the creatures of God is not due to his physical body but to something else which is called the soul.

We know that the component parts of the body such as heat, humidity, flexibility and the mass have originated from the sources such as fire, water, air and earth. We also know that on the dissolution of the body these component parts have to go back to the sources where they have come from. Moreover, we know that the only medium through which the human body can appear on earth is its parents. Besides, it cannot grow unless it is fed on the food belonging to this physical world.

Similar is the case with the soul. It cannot shape itself without the medium of its spiritual parents. It cannot develop unless it is fed on spiritual food. The

spiritual parents are the '*hudud*' of God on earth. It is they who give a proper shape to the souls and feed them on spiritual knowledge and lift them up to the spiritual world. Their relationship with the souls is just the same as the connection of the human body with the four elements of this world.

Thus, he who reflects on the connection of his body with the physical world and its entire dependence on this world comes to the natural conclusion that the body is the creature of the Universe and the Universe is its Creator. On these lines when he goes a step further and thinks of the relationship of his soul with the '*hudud*' and its entire dependence for its development on them and of its final return to the source from where it has come he will naturally know the Lord of his soul and will realise the true position of the '*hudud*' of God on earth, namely the Imams. He will further realise that just as the Universe is the master of his body the '*hudud*' are the masters of his soul. When he comes to this stage it is sure to dawn on him that God is unlike the bodies which are made of earth and that He is above being compared to anything in the physical world. It will further dawn on him that God is not only unlike his body but even unlike his soul which is like the spiritual heads of God and which belongs to the spiritual world. In other words he will realise that God is neither the body nor the soul. This is the meaning of the Tradition, "*He who knows himself knows God.*"

O Momins, may God make you men of insight and confer upon you the last of His favours, the forgiveness of your sins. Praise be to God who is hidden from the knowledge of men and who is above imagination.

Greetings be on His apostle, the best of mankind, Mohamed who dispelled the darkness by the light of Islam and who invited people to the abode of safety. Be the greetings on Ali, his '*wasee*' the Lion of God, the Solver of our Difficulties and the dispeller of o grief, Ali bin Abi-Talib, the master of philosophy a may the greetings be on the Imams from his choice progeny for ever. God is enough for us. He is the best pleader of our Cause.

Interpretation of the Quran

"The text of the Quran needs *'taweel'*." This is admitted by every commentator. The point at issue is whether the *'taweel'* can be known or can-not be known. Our opponents say that it cannot be known. They try to prove this point by quoting the Quranic verse, "None knows the *'taweel'* excepting God." They stop here and make the succeeding part of the verse, "And those who are well-grounded in knowledge" the beginning of a new sentence.

But the exponents of the *'taweel'* read the verse as a whole, "None knows the *'taweel'* of the Quran excepting God and those who are well-grounded in knowledge." They treat the phrase, "Those who are well-grounded in knowledge" as an additional clause. The succeeding part of the verse, "They say we believe in it" is treated by the exponents of *'taweel'* as an adverbial clause. Accordingly the meaning of the verse is "and those who are well-grounded in knowledge" saying 'We believe in it.'

They maintain that if those who are well grounded in knowledge do not know the *'taweel'* then it will be difficult for them to say that they believe in it. For, faith is a matter of conviction. Conviction in a thing which cannot be arrived at without the full knowledge of it. How can one say that he is convinced of something which he does not know?

They further argue the case by saying that either the Prophet knew the '*taweel*' of what he had brought with himself or did not know it. If he did know it then it would be wrong to read the verse as, "*None but God knows its taweel*" and stop here as our opponents do. For, it is necessary that the Prophet should be in the know of this '*taweel*' and we know that the Prophet was the foremost of those that were well grounded in knowledge. If he was in the know, then, it automatically follows that those who were well grounded in knowledge and who acquired this knowledge from him also knew the '*taweel*'.

On the other hand if we maintain that the Prophet did not know it, then it does not look wise on the part of God that He should have sent him with something about which if any question is put to him he should plead his ignorance. This would be making the position of God as well as that of the Prophet ridiculous.

Again, the '*taweel*' which is mentioned in the Quran is either useful for the people or useless. If it is useful then how can it remain hidden and unknown? If it is useless then there was no necessity for God to talk of something which is of no use to man. This is clear to everybody excepting to the enemies of the Imams.

Tackling the subject from the rational point of view we know that the religion which the Prophet brought for us is as full of potentialities as the heavens and earth and men themselves. The holy Quran says, "*We shall show them our signs in the heavenly bodies and in their own-selves*". In another passage God says,

"For men of conviction there are signs on earth and in your own-selves." Do you not notice them?" The Prophet says, *"God has framed His religious laws on the pattern of the laws of the Universe, so that the observance of these laws may lead men to the laws of religion and these laws may lead them to the uniformity of the work of God."*

God has created the earth, air, water and fire for the growth of various kinds of vegetables and animals. None of these vegetables or animals is at first visible in the earth, air, water or fire. They possess the potential power of bringing out the various forms of life. Similarly the instruments of sound with which we are gifted do not talk all at once but are potential talkers. They do not and cannot talk unless they are taught to talk.

In short, we find that everything that God has created in this world is meant for a certain definite purpose. It is not visible at first. It has to be drawn out by the intellectual power of man. For instance, the cultivator draws out corn from the field, the blacksmith makes instruments out of iron, the carpenter makes wooden things from wood and the goldsmith turns out ornaments from gold. Had God liked to unveil these things by themselves and not kept them latent, the land would have produced cooked bread, dates, grapes, liquors and dates stuffed with almonds. God did not like to do this and left it to the labour of workman to produce these things in order to prove their superiority over lower animals.

This is practically the case with everything that God has created. The purpose for which it has been

created is to be decided and shaped by man. It automatically follows now that the 'Shariat', a code of the laws of Islam which the Prophet brought with himself consists of the general principles. They possess the potentiality of being stretched out and made applicable to different cases, just as the earth, water fire and air have the potential capacity to produce all sorts of things which man needs. It is only the 'wasees' and the Imams descending from the Prophet who can draw out the essence from the general principles, like the human beings who draw out the various things they want from earth, water and air. The source of religion and the creation of heavens and earth is one and the same. This clarifies to us the meaning of the verse, *'There are signs for men of conviction on earth and in yourselves. Do you not notice them?'*
