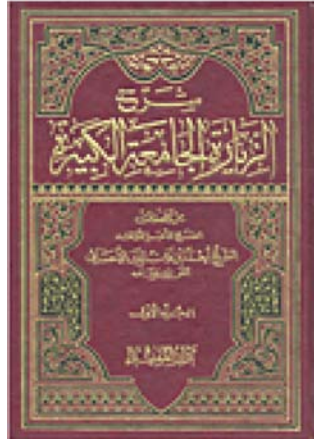


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Abdul-Haleem al-Ghizzi

**EXPLAINING THE MEANINGS OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE ZIYĀRA**

شرح الزيارة الجامعة الكبيرة



Translated from the Arabic by

Yasin T. al-Jibouri



In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

FIRST EPISODE

First Introduction to Explaining the Meanings of the Comprehensive Ziyāra

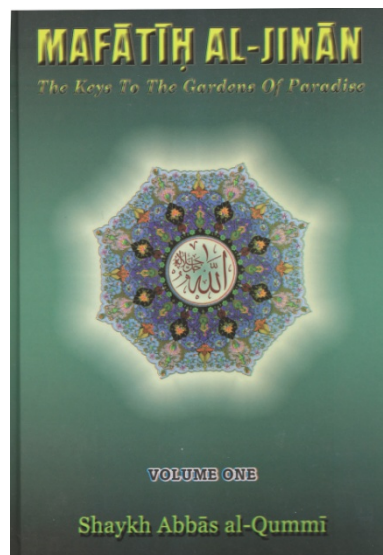
Peace with you all, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. [This is] the first episode of the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra program. This first episode of our program is to explain the meanings of this sacred ziyāra which has reached us as narrated, as a citation, from our tenth Imam, Abul-Hassan al-Hadi, Allāh's peace and blessings with him. There are several objectives to which I would like to point out as a first introduction for starting the explanation of the implications of this sacred ziyāra. There are several points to which I would like to point out:

FIRST POINT:

In it, I discuss the motive behind this program and the reason why we talk about the implications of this Great Comprehensive Ziyāra. I do not wish to elegantly introduce my statements or over-state them, but it is the truth: This program is a *carpe diem* (seizing the opportunity), stealing from this wasted time. Years, months, days and nights pass by as our time is wasted between trivialities of the

self (*nafs*) and the occupations of the daily life which do not greatly benefit man's ultimate end in this life, between inattention and the occupations and distractions in which one is lost, thus he wastes his lifetime. This program is for seizing some time and, as I have said a short while ago, stealing from this wasted time. I do not anticipate anything (for myself) from it; it is a portion of time during which a discussion goes on about Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ so that these hearts may be purified, and so that these tongues may be cleansed. I am talking about myself before anyone else, about an hour which I seize to talk about the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, so I may purify my heart and tongue. This is so because they are the greatest purification agent. They are the greatest method for purification in this life, and they are the greatest method of purification in the life to come. I am seizing a portion of time which we decorate with remembering Muhammed and the Progeny of Muhammed, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. I find nothing more beautiful than this sacred text from the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra; so, this is how this program about the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra came about. This is the first point to which I liked to point out.

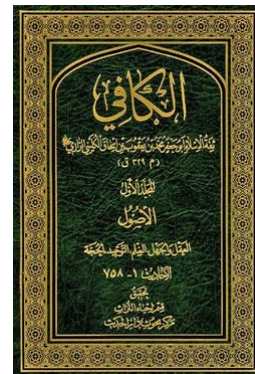
There are other points which I will tackle within the folds of this episode before starting to read the text. I would like to recite the narrative which cites our Imam al-Hadi عليه السلام. I point out to the sources of this sacred ziyāra, the ziyāra which we will be reciting from *Mafatih al-Jinan* of our mentor, scholar of traditions al-Qummi, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him. From where does he quote it? Rather, I recite it from *Mafatih al-Jinan* because this book is available at most homes of lovers of Ahlul-Bayt, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. This ziyāra reached us as narrated by the most important of our sources of hadith. Before I point out to the sources



of the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra specifically, I would like to point out to the following issue:

Ahlul-Bayt, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all, narrated hadith for us, taught us, informed us and disclosed for us many facts. Their greatly dignified companions narrated their sacred hadith. The companions of the Imams compiled from the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt four hundred books which are known by our scholars and *Faqīhs* (jurists) as well as narrators of hadith as the Four Hundred Sources. There are four hundred books in which the Imams' companions quote the hadith of the Imams, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. These books used to be written, compiled and edited under the Imams' supervision. For example, we have narratives such as this: Our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام ordered his companions to collect for him all what they had written. They, therefore, brought their books, and he oversaw and edited them, removing what was doubtful, or removing ahadith which some people, such as the fellows of al-Mugheerah ibn Sa'eed and others, tried to insert, those who wanted to place ahadith of extremism and atheism in the books of the companions of our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام, and also those of our Imam al-Ridha عليه السلام. He ordered them to collect these books for him, and he re-edited them and looked into them. The same took place during the time of our Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام. Thus did our Imams عليهم السلام monitor those books which came to be identified as the Four Hundred Sources.

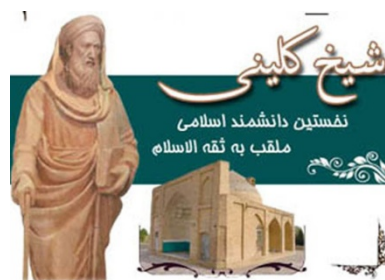
Therefore, there is a beautiful narrative in the revered *Al-Kafi*. Here is Volume One of this revered book, *Al-Kafi*. In a chapter about knowledge, and in a chapter about narrating books and hadith and the merits of writing and upholding books, the 15th hadith reads: “Muhammed ibn al-Hassan ibn Abu Khalid is quoted as having said, ‘I said to Abu Ja`far II, peace with him—meaning our Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام who is called Abu Ja`far II, meaning the Imams' Jawad, since Abu Ja`far I is al-Baqir عليه السلام of the Purified `Itra عليه السلام, (namely) Muhammed ibn al-Hassan,



who said the following to our Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام: — ‘May I be sacrificed for your sake! Our mentors have quoted narratives from Abu Ja`far—meaning Abu Ja`far I, the Baqir عليه السلام of the `Itra عليه السلام— and Abu Abdullah عليه السلام, when the *taqiyya* was very strong—stronger than it is in our time—, so they did not divulge their books, and the latter were not narrated as being theirs. So, when they passed away, the books reached us—and they were not reported as being theirs, i.e. nobody directly quoted them, quoting the compilers of those books—. Our mentors have quoted Abu Ja`far and abu Abdullah عليه السلام, when the *taqiyya* was very strong, so they kept their books confidential. Those books were not reported as being theirs. So, when they died, the books reached us. What did our Imam al-Jawad say? He said, ‘Disclose their contents, for they contain the truth.’” This statement of the Imam عليه السلام, “Disclose their contents,” is, first of all, a clear evidence that these books, these four hundred sources, in their entirety quote the Imams عليه السلام.

If there is something wrong with them, the Imams عليه السلام removed it. And if something wrong happens because of the insinuation of some interest seekers or because the same narrators are confused, a trusted narrator may become confused while transmitting it, and he may sometime mix some ahadith. For this reason, the Imams عليه السلام, as I said a short while ago, themselves oversaw the editing of these books. The statement by Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام: “Disclose their contents, for they contain the truth” is an evidence for permitting narrating from these books for all followers of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. This is a license to narrate hadith. Where was the license issued?

It was issued by the Infallible Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام: “Disclose their contents, for they contain the truth”. It is evidence that the four hundred sources are truthful, authentic and real. It indicates a license for the hadith issued by Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام. These four hundred sources



have kept changing hands among our fellows, the hands of the companions of the Imams عليه السلام, the hands of the narrators of hadith,

till they reached the time of the Minor Occultation. During the time of the Minor Occultation, our revered scholars started compiling them in hadith compilations, and the first compilation of hadith is *Al-Kafi* by our mentor al-Kulayni who excerpted many ahadith from the four hundred sources. He may have cited more than three hundred of the four hundred sources in *Al-Kafi* book. He quoted most of their ahadith. For your information, mentor al-Kulayni died

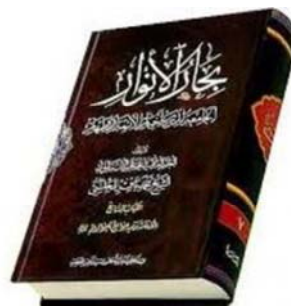


before the fourth deputy [of Imam al-Mahdi عج], namely Ali ibn Muhammed al-Samari, may Allāh be pleased with him. It is known that mentor al-Kulayni died in 328 A.H./940 A.D., whereas the fourth Deputy, Ali ibn Muhammed al-Samari, may Allāh be pleased with him, died in 329 A.H./941 A.D. Then came our mentor, al-Saduq, who also compiled his famous respectable books the highest in rank among the

scholars being *Faqīh Man la Yahdhuruhu al-Faqīh* and the rest of his books which are no less in degree, distinction, level of knowledge and authenticity than the *Faqīh* book. Mentor al-Saduq (left image) had the upper hand in preserving the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ and in safeguarding the Four Hundred Sources which he incorporated into his books: in *Uyoon Akhbār al-Ridha*, Sheikh al-Saduq's *Tawhīd*, *Kamal ad-Din wa Tamam al-Ni`ma*, *Ilal al-Shara`i*, *Ma`ani al-Akhbār* and other important books which mentor al-Saduq compiled from the Four Hundred Sources. After him, our mentor al-Tusi, mentor of the sect, came, so there came two books: *Al-Istibsar* and *Al-Tahtheeb*, and these are the Four Sources.

Why were they called the Four Sources: *Al-Kafi* by al-Kulayni, *Al-Faqīh* by al-Saduq, both *Al-Tahtheeb* and *Al-Istibsar* by the sect's mentor, al-Tusi? These books were called the Four Sources because they were basically excerpted from the Four Hundred Sources. These books were called the Four Sources, and what Sheikh al-Saduq the father had compiled was added to them as well as what was written by Sheikh al-Mufid and other such prominent scholars from among the most revered scholars of the sect. Thus did these Four Sources come to exist. They were called the Four Sources because they were excerpted from the Four Hundred Sources.

What point am I trying to make? Where was the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra narrated? It was narrated in the book titled *Faqīh Man la Yahdhuruhu al-Faqīh*, one of the Four Sources excerpted from the Four Hundred Sources where the Imams' ahadith were compiled. These books were edited under the Imams' supervision. We have been ordered by Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام, as stated a short while ago, and as exists in the narrative of the revered *Al-Kafi* book thus:



“Disclose their contents, for they contain the truth.” The Great Comprehensive Ziyāra, which exists in *Mafatih al-Jinan*, was narrated by our mentor, al-Saduq, in his book titled *Al-Faqīh*. This is Volume Two of the book written by Sheikh al-Saduq. He narrated it on page 609 under this title: “Comprehensive Ziyāra Incorporating all Imams, peace with them.” Mentor al-Qummi, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him, excerpts the Comprehensive Ziyāra from the book titled *Al-Faqīh* by our mentor, al-Saduq, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him. It was also narrated by our mentor, al-Saduq, in another important book of his: *Uyoon Akhbār al-Ridha*. This is Volume One of the book titled *Uyoon Akhbār al-Ridha*. Also, it was narrated by our mentor, al-Saduq, on page 305 under the heading “Another Comprehensive Ziyāra by Ali ibn Mousa, peace with him.” This means that this ziyāra used to performed for Imam al-Ridha and for all Imams, peace with them all. He narrated it according to his own *isnad*¹ and in all its details which were stated in *Mafatih al-Jinan*, a second source written by Sheikh al-Saduq. He narrated it in *Al-Faqīh*, which is one of the Four Sources citing the Four Hundred Sources. He narrated it in *Uyoon Akhbār al-Ridha*, and all his narratives are excerpted from the Four Hundred Sources.

It was narrated by our mentor, al-Tusi, in *Tahtheeb al-Ahkām*, one of the Four Sources which are excerpted from the Four Hundred

¹ *Isnad* is the chain of authorities attesting to the historical authenticity of a particular hadith.

Sources about which Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام said, “Disclose their contents, for they contain the truth.” It is also narrated in Volume Six of *Tahtheeb al-Ahkām* by the sect’s mentor, al-Tusi, on p. 107 under this heading: “A Ziyāra Incorporating all Holy Sites,” meaning mausoleums of the Imams, peace with those they house. He mentioned this sacred ziyāra as narrated by our mentor, al-Saduq, in its entirety and perfectly. After that, it was narrated by narrators and scholars of hadith and by those who compiled ziyārats and *du`as* and who mentioned this Great Comprehensive Ziyāra in the modern collections of hadith and in books relevant to mausoleums. For example, it is mentioned in Volume 99 of *Bihār al-Anwār*, the well known edition which contains 110 Volumes. It exists in Volume 99 of *Bihār al-Anwār* by Sheikh al-Majlisi, may Allāh be pleased with him, in a chapter about comprehensive ziyāras. In this chapter, he states a group of comprehensive ziyāras of our Imams, Allāh’s peace and blessing with them all, on p. 127, the fourth hadith. There, he mentions the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra which we are discussing. I brought *Bihār al-Anwār* as an example for recent compilations of hadith, since I have already pointed out to the original hadith compilations, such as *Al-Faqīh*, *Tahtheeb al-Ahkām* and what is narrated by Sheikh al-Saduq in *Uyoon Akhbār al-Ridha*. I am here not counting the sources of narratives and of hadith which have transmitted the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra. Suffices me to say that Sheikh al-Saduq narrated it, mentioning this narrative in his book, *Al-Faqīh*.

No wonder we find among Sunni scholars those who quote this Comprehensive Ziyāra in all its details. This is Volume Two of *Fara'id al-Simtayn* book by the narrator of hadith Ibrahim al-Juwaini al-Khurasani who died in 722 A.H./1322 A.D. It was in Khurasan where he died. Add to it the well known story of how Mogul Sultan Mahmud Ghazan (1271 – 1304 A.D.) became a Muslim due to al-Khurasani’s own effort. Mogul Sultan Ghazan became Muslim due to the influence of this great Sunni narrator of traditions, namely Ibrahim al-Juwayni al-Khurasani who died [at the age of 78, hence his year of birth should be around 644 A.H./1246 A.D.] in 722 A.H./1322 A.D. He died in Khurasan. The story of how Mogul Sultan Ghazan embraced Islam at the hands of this great Sunni narrator of hadith, Ibrahim al-Juwayni, is well known. This is

the book titled *Fara'id al-Simtayn*. Volume Two of this edition is published by Dar al-Habib for Printing, Publishing, Distributing and Translating. It is edited by `allama Sheikh Muhammed Baqir al-Mahmoudi. Page 179 carries this heading: “The Great Comprehensive Ziyāra Intended for Performing the Ziyāra of Each Imam of Ahlul-Bayt, Peace with Them.” The author quotes this ziyāra through the venue of al-Hakim, that is, al-Hakim al-Niashaburi, as it seems. He says “al-Hakim,” meaning al-Hakim al-Naishaburi. He points out to his source which is the same mentioned in the *Faqīh* book by our mentor, al-Saduq, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him. This ziyāra exists in its entirety, in all its pronouncements, in *Fara'id al-Simtayn*, which is one of the Sunnis' books.

I here do not want to talk about authenticating the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra. Rather, the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra authenticates me. I am not the one to authenticate it. The Great Comprehensive Ziyāra is one of the clearly known texts in which our Imam al-Hadi عليه السلام placed the most sublime of meanings, the most perfect of meanings, and the most exemplary meanings, and this will become obvious for us as we explain and clarify it.

I have said that I stopped my discussion of the revered *Al-Kafi* book. On Thursday, it was usual for me to have a program in the courtyard of revered *Al-Kafi*, and the episodes of this program that had already passed by revolved round ahadith relevant to the Hujja (حج), round narratives stated in *Kitab al-Hujja* in the revered *Al-Kafi* book. But I stopped the discussion of explaining these narratives and said that in upcoming days, I would tackle another chapter, by the will of Allāh Almighty, one of the chapters of the revered *Al-Kafi*. I stopped it because I wanted to start explaining the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra. All contents in revered *Al-Kafi* exist in the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra; therefore, we do not need to look for an *isnad* or logic about authenticating this Ziyāra. The contexts of this sacred ziyāra exist in *Al-Kafi*, and you will see from explaining this ziyāra that its contexts exist in the revered *Al-Kafi* and in major books of hadith which quote our Infallible Imams, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all.

There is a matter to which I would like to point out before moving to another point regarding our Imam al-Hadi عليه السلام from whom this Ziyāra has reached us. Two important ziyāras are rendered to our Imam, al-Hadi عليه السلام; they are: the ziyāra at hand, the Great Comprehensive one, for this is how it is identified, and there is a second ziyāra: the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra through which all Imams are addressed; they can all be addressed in a single ziyāra, and we can perform the ziyāra individually to each of them. We can perform the ziyāra of our Imams, all of them, through this ziyāra. We address them all. And we can perform through this ziyāra our Imams one by one. But the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra is primarily for addressing the Master of Wasis عليه السلام and, secondly, it is for addressing his infallible sons. In this ziyāra, therefore, the master of wasis is addressed: "... and to your brother." There is a second address: "... and to your grandfather." We will reach, in the process of our discussion, these expressions if we adopt a gradual process in [explaining] the text of this sacred ziyāra. Essentially, the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra is for Ali عليه السلام, and after Ali it is for his infallible sons and, in our time and age, it is for the Imam of our Time, al-Hujja son of al-Hassan, Allāh's peace and blessings with him. This first ziyāra is one from Ali to Ali: from Ali al-Hadi عليه السلام to Ali al-Murteza عليه السلام and to the offspring of Ali al-Murteza عليه السلام.

The second ziyāra, which reached us as narrated from al-Hadi of the `Itra, is a ziyāra for Ali specifically, and it is one of the most important Alawī ziyāras. This ziyāra exists in *Mafatih al-Jinan*, and it is the ziyāra of the Commander of the Faithful on the Ghadir Day. This is the most important ziyāra of the master of wasis. This ziyāra embraces in many details of its aspects with the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra, for our Imam al-Hadi conveyed to us the ziyāra of the master of wasis¹ on the Ghadir Day, and he conveyed to us the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra. I, therefore, would like to attract the attention of my brothers and sisters, the believing men and women, to this issue: The ziyāra of the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام on the Ghadir Day, which is mentioned in *Mafatih al-Jinan*, the lengthy and elaborated one, talks about the historically doctrinal

¹ A *wasi* is a successor of a prophet. – Tr.

aspect. As for the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra we are talking about, it talks about the cognitive doctrinal aspect. Both are inseparable from each other. This is so because if we want to apply the cognitive doctrinal aspect, we will need history; therefore, both of these ziyāras complement each other, and they both are narrated from al-Hadi عليه السلام of the Purified `Itra عليه السلام. I said that the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra is primarily for the master of wasis and, after that, for the Imams after him, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all, for there is talk about the doctrinal cognitive aspect. Here, in the ziyra of the Ghadir Day, there is talk about the doctrinal historic aspect. I hope a day will come when we tackle this ziyāra, too, by explaining and detailing it, for it is one of the most important Alawi ziyāras in honor of the master of wasis, Allāh’s peace and blessings with him and with them all. This is the matter which I liked to point out and explain for my brothers and sisters, those who love Ahlul-Bayt, and to my sons and daughters who love Ahlul-Bayt, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all.

I start reciting the first lines of the narrative of the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra as it is in *Maḡatih al-Jinan* and which this reference cites from the sources to which I pointed out a short while ago.

Mousa ibn Abdullah al-Nukh`i says the following to Imam al-Hadi عليه السلام, “Teach me, O son of the Messenger of Allāh, a perfectly eloquent statement to pronounce when I visit [the Shrine of] one of you [Imams of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام].” The inquirer is al-Nukh`i who requests our Imam al-Hadi عليه السلام, thus: “Teach me, O son of the Messenger of Allāh, a perfectly eloquent statement to pronounce when I visit one of you [Imams of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام].” The absolute priority is for the master of wasis. The master of wasis has the priority, then to the Imams after him, Allāh’s peace and blessings with them all. In this time and age, it is specifically for our Imam of the Time (عج). Narratives say, “Every Imam has a covenant round the necks of his followers (Shī’as).” Every Imam has a covenant to which his followers are obligated. Our Imam has a covenant round our necks. We are his followers, his slaves, and we are the slaves of

his slaves; and may Allāh Almighty be pleased with Sheikh al-Hurr al-`Amili who said,

وانى له عبدٌ و عبدٌ لعبيده و حاشاه أن ينسى غداً عبده الخُرُّ

*A slave am I of his and the slave of his slave,
Far away it is from him to forget in the morrow his free slave.*

For every Imam there is a covenant round the neck of his followers, thus does the sacred narrative say. Included in perfecting the fulfillment of the covenant is to perform the ziyāra to him. For every Imam there is a covenant round the necks of his followers (Shī`as), and a hint of perfecting the fulfillment of the covenant is to perform his ziyāra. The Great Comprehensive Ziyāra is first and foremost for the Ali of Sublimity عليه السلام and, secondly for his infallible sons عليهم السلام, and especially, specifically and particularly at this time and age, it is for the Imam of our Time, al-Hujja son of al-Hassan, Allāh's peace and blessing with him and with his Purified forefathers. Basically, we have entered through this door. Which door is it?

“O Allāh! Let me know who Your Hujja is...” We, in this program, have come and opened this door, and we have knocked at this door: “O Allāh! Let me know who Your Hujja is, for if You do not let me know who Your Hujja is, I will stray from my creed! O Allāh! Do not let me die the *jahiliyya* death ...” Why? It is so because one who does not know the Imam of his time dies the death of *jahiliyya*. “O Allāh! Let me know who Your Hujja is, for if You do not let me know who Your Hujja is, I will stray from my creed! O Allāh! Do not let me die the *jahiliyya* death, and do not let my heart swerve, having already guided me...” Guidance lies at the thresholds of the mercy, the generosity and the blessing of the Imam of our Time, Allāh's peace and blessings with him. Guidance, Islam, conviction and the truth are there: in that pure courtyard, in the courtyard of the son of Narjis, the pure one, in the courtyard of the Hujja son of al-Hassan, peace and blessings of Allāh with him. “O son of the Messenger of Allāh, do teach me...” And if I do not learn from you, O son of the Messenger of Allāh, from whom shall I learn? “Teach me, O son of the Messenger of Allāh, an eloquent statement which I pronounce when I perform the ziyara to one of you [members of

Ahlul-Bayt [عليه السلام].” So, we are before a perfectly eloquent statement because the Imam [عليه السلام] answered him directly. The inquirer pleads, “Teach me, O son of the Messenger of Allāh, a perfectly eloquent statement to pronounce when I perform the ziyāra of one of you.” He answered him directly, without hesitation, without discussion, directly. He said, “When you are at the door, stop...”, and so does the ziyāra continue. This means that this statement is the perfectly eloquent one which we articulate when we perform the ziyāra of one of them.

Why do we visit them [their shrines]? It is part of the fulfillment of the covenant of Imamate (leadership) and Wilāyate (mastership), and we shall come to talk about this ziyāra and its implications: What is this ziyāra for? What is its objective? I [will] talk about the implications of the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra. The statement, then, is perfectly eloquent. As regarding this statement being perfectly eloquent, this means that the perfecting of the principles of the faith, in which we must believe, and the knowledge of which we must attain..., all this exists in this text; otherwise, how can it be a perfect statement?! The statement is the speech that has an indication, a meaning. When one articulates several different pronouncements that do not convey any meaning, these pronouncements are not said to be a statement. A statement means a group of words, a group of sentences, a group of expressions, a group of segments of a saying and a speech which conveys a clear and obvious meaning so it may be described as a statement; i.e. there is a meaning derived from the statement. Contrariwise, if we bring a group of pronouncements, of scattered words, these scattered words are not said to be a statement. That is, if I now articulate scattered words that are not tied to a meaning common to them, these pronouncements are not said to form a statement. The statement is a saying that has a meaning, the saying that provides us with a useful meaning, for the word “statement” itself indicates a useful meaning. When it is described as being perfect, i.e. being a perfect statement, it means the meaning that exists in this statement is perfect.

When we perform the ziyāra of the [Shrines of the] Imams, and when we address them, surely we shall address them in a ziyāra in a

way that suits their sacred status. When this statement is perfect, this means the perfection of the principles of the faith, the perfection of the principles of the knowledge in which we must believe and realize, and which we must attain. We must contemplate on it, and the orbits of our thinking revolve round all that exists in the text; otherwise, how can it be a perfect statement?! The perfect statement is the one that contains these meanings. As logicians say, the perfect statement can be described. The logicians say that it is inclusive and obstructive. The perfect statement I can describe, according to what the logicians and philosophers say, i.e. that it is inclusive and obstructive, is that it includes all positions, descriptions and conditions of the Imams. It is obstructive because it covers them, Allāh's peace and blessings with them, but it does not cover others in addition to them in as far as these descriptions are concerned. This statement is inclusively theirs, obstructing others from being included among them to share these descriptions. It is a perfect statement, one that is collective, inclusive and familiar with their descriptions, conditions and lofty stations.

Moreover, it is an eloquent statement, one that has eloquence and perfection, a perfectly eloquent one. An eloquent statement is one that contains the most precise meanings. In other words, the eloquent statement is the one in which there are neither additions needed nor shortcomings [to be removed]. In other words, each of these statements leads to the same meaning intended for it without additions or shortcomings. Such is the eloquent statement; so, what would you say if this eloquence comes from [Imam] Ali ibn Muhammed al-Hadi عليه السلام?

Who is eloquent? Eloquence in the Arabs' speech: When one's statement is eloquent, it is calculated in its pronouncements and meanings; this is what is eloquent. Eloquent is one who does not articulate a statement except after having prepared and readied his pronouncements and meanings: His pronouncements are calculated and so are his meanings. He does not release statements haphazardly without contriving, without thinking, without calculating. Eloquent is one who articulates based on calculation and on a written book. Such is the eloquent person from among the public: I and you, if we are eloquent. So, what if eloquence comes from Ali and the son of

Ali?! This is a perfectly eloquent statement from Ali عليه السلام son of Ali عليه السلام, from Ali al-Hadi عليه السلام son of Ali al-Murteza عليه السلام, Allāh's peace and blessings with them both and with their good and pure progeny. This is the eloquent statement in which there are no additions [needed], nor is there any shortcoming in it. There are no additions or shortcomings because it is an eloquent statement. The eloquent statement is the one the pronouncements and the words of which are calculated and also indicative, and its gist, meaning and connotation are all calculated and studied, and the speech in it is arranged based on a system. Not so is a statement which is released without a system, without a venue, without a basis. From here comes this sacred ziyāra: perfect. It is perfect in its literary structure, and it is perfect in its cognitive structure. The Great Comprehensive Ziyāra has two distinctive characteristics. Both these distinctive characteristics will become clear in the coming episodes: How this Comprehensive Ziyāra is literary perfect, intellectually perfect. There is literary precision in this Ziyāra, in its expression, a literary precision in the full sense of the word. There is cognitive perfection and doctrinal perfection in the full sense of the word. The picture shall be made clear for us by the will of Allāh in the episodes of this program.

I shall not continue to read the expressions of this sacred ziyāra, but I stop here in order to point out to an important issue which must be observed: The important issue to which I would like to point out is: The implications present in the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra depend on both corners of the creed, and on the bases of cognition: Tawhīd (belief in the Unity of the Almighty) and Wilāya (mastership). When I say “wilāya,” I mean it in its more general sense: It covers belief in the Prophet ﷺ and in the Imam عليه السلام. The Great Comprehensive Ziyāra, which is based on both of these principles, stands on the basis of Tawhīd and on that of Wilāya. As I said a short while ago, the “wilāya” here refers in its more general sense to the Prophetic Mission and to the Mission of the Imam and to their branches: the mastership of the believers and the dissociation from their foes. Mastership is accepting the Prophet ﷺ, his Progeny عليه السلام and their followers as the masters, and it means dissociation from their enemies, all of them. When I refer to dissociation from the believers’

enemies, I do not mean personal enmity. Rather, I mean enmity for the sake of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ because a believer may face during his lifetime enemies of the Prophet ﷺ and enemies of Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ in general. Because the Prophet ﷺ is Infallible, and because the Imam ﷺ is Infallible, there are no enmities there taken in this light as personal enmities. Enmity towards the Prophet ﷺ and the Infallible Imam ﷺ is enmity towards Allāh directly: “Whoever reviles Ali reviles me, and whoever reviles me reviles Allāh.” Enmity towards the Prophet ﷺ or towards the Infallible Imam ﷺ is enmity towards Allāh directly: When Fatima, Allāh’s peace and blessings with her, is pleased, Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, is pleased, and when she is displeased, Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, is displeased. If she is pleased, Allāh is pleased, and if she is angry, Allāh, Praised and Exalted is He, becomes angry.

Enmity or love towards the Infallible one is directed towards Allāh. As regarding their friends, these friends face in life two different norms of enmity: There may be personal enmity due to personal/family matters, which is not covered by this research here; rather, what is discussed in this matter is enmity towards the followers of the Prophet ﷺ and of the Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ because they are followers of the Prophet ﷺ, because they follow Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ. Enmity comes from this side: If enmity comes from this area, we dissociate ourselves from their enemies. Here, enmity, wilāya and dissociation enter [our discussion] in their dogmatic dimension. Anyhow, as I said shortly before, the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra is based on both of these principles: Tawhīd and Wilāya. Through the explanation of this ziyāra, the context of Tawhīd will become clear to us, and so will the context of Wilāya in its more general sense. Here, I would like to point out to this issue..., to what issue? To our having to find a basis and a criterion for our discussion as we explain the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra. This criterion includes two points; it includes two branches, two roots, call them whatever you will.

The first root is this: Every statement, every talk, every idea that undermines Tawhīd is false. This is so because the basis of existence

is Tawhīd, and because the basis of the faith is Tawhīd, and because the basis of the creed is Tawhīd. Any talk that undermines this belief belittles this faith and is false, no matter where it comes from, who issues it, etc. This is so because the first principle in our faith is Tawhīd. Beliefs other than Tawhīd fall under Tawhīd. Any faith, any knowledge, falls under Tawhīd. This is the first basis which must be a bulwark, a fortress that protects and shields, according to hadith. Here, we would like to quote two Radhawi ahadith:

“The statement ‘There is no god save Allāh’ is My fortress; therefore, whoever enters My fortress is secure from my torment.”

Here is another Radhawi hadith:

“The Wilāya of Ali ibn Abu Talib is My fortress; therefore, whoever enters My fortress is secure against My torment.”

[Let us first discuss] the statement “There is no god save Allāh is My fortress; therefore, whoever enters My fortress is secure from My torment.”

“The Wilāya of Ali ibn Abu Talib is My fortress; therefore, whoever enters My fortress is secure from My torment.”

First: Tawhīd; Second: the Wilāya of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, the Wilāya of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and His Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام.

Knowing the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام is knowing the Wilāya. Knowing the Wilāya has no limits. The stations of Ahlul-Bayt have no borders. But they fall short of Tawhīd: “Distance us from being gods worshipped, then say whatever you please in our praise.” Thus did the master of wasis say. Thus did our Imams say: “Distance us from [being] gods worshipped, distance us from this status, then say whatever you please in our praise, for the door is wide open for you.” The door is wide open for us because no matter how deeply we delve, we shall never reach one-tenth of their distinction; therefore, the door is wide open for us. This is so

because no matter how we go far in our thinking, we shall never reach any of the truth of their levels and lofty stations.

From here shall the restriction be. It will be the basis. It will be the criterion. It will be the bulwark. It will be the fortress inside of which we move: They are these two bases: The first principle is Tawhīd, which is the first belief and the last. Beliefs other than Tawhīd fall under Tawhīd: knowing the Ahlul-Bayt of Infallibility عليهم السلام, knowing the Prophet ﷺ and the Progeny of the Prophet عليهم السلام, knowing Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليهم السلام...., so long as they fall below Tawhīd, the door is wide open for them. “Distance us from being gods worshipped and say in our praise whatever you please.” But this does not mean we must say just as we please, speaking on our own, from our own personal accounts, just making statements, making innovations without a basis. Our first and last recourse is the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام, to the four hundred sources. Where do we find Ahlul-Bayt’s hadith? We find it in the four hundred sources. This comprehensive ziyāra has come to us from there. It came to us from that fragrant source, from that purified rivulet, from the Ghadir of the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام, from the Ghadir of Ali عليه السلام and the progeny of Ali عليهم السلام. We draw from that Ghadir, return to that Ghadir, drink of that Ghadir, purify ourselves with that Ghadir; the ablution of our faith, of our religion, is from that Ghadir. Where do we bring the water of our true ablution, the ablution of the Wilāya, the real ablution of Wilāya?

We bring it from that which is described as the greatest purification. The greatest purification is Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليهم السلام. They are the greatest purification. They are the greatest water. They are the greatest mystery. They are the Greatest Name. They are the greatest truth. They are the greatest word. They are the greatest attribute. Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليهم السلام are the greatest path, the most straight path, Allāh’s peace and blessings with them all. It is to this fountain that we go, to this Ghadir, and from this Ghadir do we return. Here we drink, of this Ghadir, in order to quench this acute thirst, this acutely burning thirst. And here it is that we purify ourselves. Here we bestow the ablution of the truth. How do we bestow the ablution of the truth?

From where? From the Ghadir of Ali عليه السلام and the Progeny of Ali عليه السلام. Here do we perfume ourselves: from this Ghadir. Was not the perfume of the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم water? Thus do narrations say: His perfume was water. This distantly points out to the implications to which I point out. I do not want to enter into such implications and hints. Our perfume comes from this Ghadir, the Ghadir of Ali عليه السلام and the Progeny of Ali عليه السلام. The water we drink comes from this Ghadir. Our religion comes from this Ghadir. The Great Comprehensive Ziyāra is the holy grail filled for us by [Imam] Ali ibn Muhammed al-Hadi عليه السلام: He did so from that Ghadir, from that pure garden, from those refined springs, from this Great Comprehensive Ziyāra, a cup from which we drink rations for love for Ali and the Progeny of Ali, the Salsabil of the wilāyat of Ali and of the Progeny of Ali. This Great Comprehensive Ziyāra comes from the depth of the hadith of Muhammed صلى الله عليه وسلم and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام round which we keep circumambulating. From it is our beginning, and at it is our end, for the beginning and the end hinge on knowing the Imam of our Time. The Great Comprehensive Ziyāra is only a decorated portrait embellished with colors, perfumed by branches of knowledge and realities with which the lips of the son of al-Zahrā over-brimmed, the lips of al-Hadi, Allāh’s peace and blessings with him. His lips over-brimmed with these words and so did the lips of Ali al-Hadi, peace and blessings of Allāh with him. My speech, as I said, will be within this fortress: the fortress of “There is no god save Allāh” and within the fortress of the Wilāya of Ali ibn Abu Talib, for they are the security which, if one enters it, he will achieve salvation: the statement of “There is no god save Allāh is My fortress.” Allāh Almighty has said:

“The statement ‘There is no god save Allāh’ is My fortress; therefore, whoever enters My fortress is secure from My torment. The Wilāya of Ali ibn Abu Talib is My fortress; therefore, whoever enters My fortress is secure from My torment.”

Our talk will be judged on this basis. Our talk will be judged according to the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, for we derive from them, and we refer to them in everything, and such is the true salvation. I said at the beginning of this episode that this program, I swear by al-

Hussain, is not intended for any gain. Rather, it is an hour which I seize from this lifetime which has been wasted in trivialities, in worthless engagements, an hour which I steal from this bitter time, from this time which has weighed us down with its weights and burdens. This hour I seize, I steal, so I may live in the atmosphere of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, so I may first be purified, then I advance it as a present to my brethren who love Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ, to those who enjoy this talk, this very talk. There are many who do not like this talk, and I do not address them. I address those who enjoy this talk, who like it, who love to hear the hadith of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. As for the folks who do not like this talk and whose hearts do not incline to it, nor do their souls lean to it, nor do their souls become pleased by such talk, we have nothing to do with them. This is a modest gift with which I extend my hand to my brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, who love Ahlul-Bayt, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all. This is the talk of a pleasant conversation. I excerpt it from Ali ibn Muhammed al-Hadi عليه السلام, and I shift in its courtyards from *Al-Kafi* to its sister books of hadith, deriving from them statements, words and ahadith that fill this existence with their fragrance: Ja'far ibn Muhammed was one day generous to produce them, and they were bestowed on us by Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha during some time, and al-Hassan al-Askari introduced them to us. These are words that have perfumed our life. I say: our life, the life of those who have loved Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ; I do not mean others. They are words that have perfumed our life, lit the darkness in the paths of this world on which ignorance and inattention press, and the path falls under the pressure of what is trivial and frivolous from everywhere. These words are the ones that I advance as a gift, since our Imams, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, have already said,

“If one is unable to perform the ziyāra to us (to our Shrines), let him visit the righteous from among those who accept us as their masters; thus, the rewards of performing the ziyāra to us will be recorded for him.”

This ziyāra is for you, O lovers of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. Our Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام says, “One who is unable to stay in contact with us should do so to the righteous from among our followers, the rewards of staying in touch with us will then be recorded for him.” We are unable to visit the Imam of our time, nor are we able to reach him. This is the ziyāra of those who love him, a link to those who love him, and this hadith I reap from the fruits of the mellow gardens and orchards of Muhammed صلى الله عليه وسلم and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام. I, therefore, stand here shortly to explain a fact brought through narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام and it exists in their Qur’ān. We do not get out of the scope of both of these pillars. If we get out of the Qur’ān, we will enter into the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, and if we get out of the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, we enter their Qur’ān, our safe haven. If you seek security for your religion, if you wish to be secure in your Hereafter, there are two doors for that: On one door, the Qur’ān of the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام is written down. On the other, the hadith of Muhammed’s Progeny عليه السلام is written down. If we exit this door, we enter into the other, and if we exit the other, we enter the first. From here is the beginning and also the end, for the beginning and the end meet at one point: at the Book [of Allāh] and the `Itra عليه السلام. As I said a short while ago, our hadith is fenced with the fence of Tawhīd first and with that of Wilāya second.

In our program, “Qur’ānuna” (our Qur’ān), and in the sacred Surat al-Baqara, we came across this 26th verse. I talked about explaining an aspect of its context. Today, too, I point out to another aspect. There are other aspects which I shall tackle some other time by the will of Allāh Almighty. Verse 26 of Surat al-Baqara says, “Allāh does not disdain to use any analogy, the lowest, (such as) a mosquito, as well as the highest” (Qur’ān, 2:26) up to the end of the verse. I would like here to read a text narrated from our Imam, al-Hassan al-Askari, peace and blessings of Allāh with him, regarding this verse. I would like to recite the text to you. The text is lengthy, and I excerpt from it what I need: “... so it was said to al-Baqir, peace with him, ‘Some people pretend to be your followers. It was said to al-Baqir, peace with him, that some of those who pretend to follow you claim that the mosquito is Ali, peace with him..’” Of course, there are narratives, and I do not wish to delve into all their details. I said a

short while ago in the “Qur’ānuna” program that I explained an aspect of the verse’s meaning, and today I would like to point out to another. There are other aspects which we will later explain by the will of Allāh Almighty. We excerpt what we need in relevance to our program. “It was said to al-Baqir, peace with him, ‘Some of those who claim to accept you as their *wali* (master) claim that the mosquito is Ali, peace with him.’” This is a reference to the mosquito mentioned in this verse: “Allāh does not disdain to use any analogy, the lowest, (such as) a mosquito, as well as the highest” (Qur’ān, 2:26). It is claimed that the mosquito is Ali, peace with him, and that what is higher than it, than the mosquito, what is larger in size, the fly, is Muhammed, the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny. Read the statement again so the meaning may become clear:

So it was said [once] to [Imam] al-Baqir, peace with him, “Some of those who claim that they accept you as their master claim that the mosquito is Ali, peace with him, and that what is above (higher) than it is the fly, namely Muhammed the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny. [Imam] al-Baqir, peace with him, therefore, said, ‘These folks heard something which they did not put where it belongs,’” meaning there is talk stated in this direction, but those folks did not place the statement as it is. Now before us is our Imam, al-Baqir, peace with him, explaining this context: “[Imam] al-Baqir عليه السلام, therefore, said, ‘These folks heard something which they did not place where it belongs. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was sitting once with Ali عليه السلام when he heard someone saying, ‘The will of Allāh be done and so will the will of Muhammed.’ He also heard another man saying, ‘The will of Allāh (be done) and that of Ali.’” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, therefore, said, ‘Do not pair both Muhammed and Ali with Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, but say: ‘The will of Allāh (be done) then the will of Muhammed; Whatever Allāh wills, then whatever Ali does.’ The will of Allāh subdues all wills; it is unequalled; nothing comes close to its magnitude, nothing comes close to it.’ (The quoted statement is still made by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ) ‘Muhammed is only the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. In Allāh and in His Might, he [Muhammed] is like a fly that traverses these broad

paths'. Ali عليه السلام in Allāh and in His Might is like a mosquito in the mass of these paths, although the favor of Allāh Almighty on Muhammed and Ali is not equaled by His favor on all His creation.' (Say about us whatever you please) although the favor of Allāh Almighty on Muhammed and Ali does not equal that of His favor over all His creation from the beginning of time up to its end.' This is what the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said about the fly and the mosquito in this place." Such was the statement of our Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام.

Thus does our Prophet ﷺ say, "Muhammed is only the Messenger of Allāh ﷻ; in Allāh and in His Might, he is [like] no more than a fly that soars along these broad paths, and Ali عليه السلام in Allāh and in His Might is only [like] a mosquito soaring in the mass of these paths, although the favor of Allāh Almighty on Muhammed and Ali is not equaled by His favor over all His creation combined from the beginning of time up to its end." I think that the meaning is now clear and so is the evidence. This is the place where speech starts and where it ends, too.

The other limit is explained by the Holy Qur'an. The following verse 35 is excerpted from the blessed Surat al-Noor:

35. Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth. The parable (likeness) of His *Noor* (celestial) light is a lantern and a lamp is within it: The lamp is enclosed in glass: The glass is like a luminous planet lit from a blessed tree, an olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, one whose oil is almost luminous, though fire scarcely touches it: Light upon light! Allāh guides whomsoever He wills to His light: Allāh sets forth parables for men, and Allāh knows all things.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ: مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا
 مِصْبَاحٌ، الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ، الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا
 كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ
 وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ، يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ
 عَلَى نُورٍ: يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ، وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ
 الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ، وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

This (above) is Verse 35 of the sacred Surat al-Noor (Chapter of *Noor*, the Celestial Light). This verse can be said to be the highest

station of the Household of Infallibility عليه السلام, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all, stated by the Qur’ān.

There is a limit to which our Prophet ﷺ pointed out: The reality of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام, if measured against that of Allāh, is nil; everything is nil if measured against Allāh, the most Praised, the most Exalted One: “O mankind! It is you who need Allāh: Allāh is the One Who is free of all want, worthy of all praise” (Qur’ān, 35:15). The more perfect a creature becomes, his want, his need, for Allāh increases. Why? This is so because his need increases: Since the favor of Allāh on His Messenger ﷺ and the Progeny of His Messenger عليه السلام is the most perfect, they will all need Allāh the most. Such is the meaning of adoration, of servitude. Why is servitude, in its truly perfect sense, applied only to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ? If it is applied to someone else, it will only be through the venue of licensing, of leniency. True servitude is that of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام. Why so? It is due to Allāh having overwhelmed them with His blessings, and they reached the highest levels beyond which there is no other level for any being. They are the first reality; they are the first *Noor*, they are the first Word; they are the first Name; they are the first reason; they are the pioneers; say whatever you please of such statements and choose whatever you want of such terms...

Our expressions are diverse, O our master the Messenger of Allāh!
O our Master the commander of the Faithful! O our Lady, Zahrā! O
our Master whom Allāh has kept on earth [as a Hint of His mercy,
i.e. the Hujja]...! Our statements are many, while your beauty is one
[and the same], while your beauty, masters, is one:

عباراتنا شتى و حُسنك واحدٌ و كُلُّ الِى ذاكِ الجمالِ يُشيرُ

عباراتنا شتى و حُسنكم واحدٌ و كُلُّ الِى ذاكِ الجمالِ يُشيرُ

Our statements are many, while your beauty (master) is one;

And all point to that beauty...

Our statements are many, while your beauty (masters) is one;

And all point to that beauty...

The more perfect a being becomes, the more his need will increase, and the Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام are the most perfect of all, so their need is the most acute, their want is the most urgent because they are the most outgiving, since Allāh has bestowed on them more than He bestowed on all other beings. Thus, they need Allāh the most. This verse talks about the most precise meanings and the most deep regarding the status of Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام. First, I will explain the linguistic meanings of this sacred verse. First of all, this verse came within the process of Qur'ānic parables, and all our Imams عليه السلام ordered us to contemplate on the Qur'ān's parables because they help us reach the facts. This is one of the Qur'ānic parables where I wish to linger longer at his verse. I shall explain an aspect of its meaning in this episode and talk about other aspects on other occasions by the will of Allāh Almighty:

35. Allāh is the *Noor* (celestial) light of the heavens and the earth.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

The talk here is not about light as related to the senses (such as vision, etc.). The talk is about a real light. There is a difference between the senses' light and the light of the truth, of the reality: The sensed light is the one that helps us see things. When darkness comes and there is no light, we will be unable to see the things around us. But if daylight comes, we can see the things around us through this sensed light which philosophers define as self-revealing as well as revealing others. We do not have a definition for light or for the sense-related light other than this. Perhaps there is a physical definition as a group of photons coming from nuclear fission in the sun of hydrogen and helium, or something else. But the talk about the philosophical definition, i.e. the philosophical definition of light and of *noor* is the one that reveals itself and reveals others. As much as it reveals of its own self, it reveals others as well; such as the sense-related light.

As regarding the real *noor*, it is the *noor* of existence. I can bring the meaning of the real *noor* in an example: You all know the story of the Queen of Yemen, Balqeas, and you all have read in the Qur'ān

the story of Sulayman's *majlis* (meeting place). When he wanted to get her royal Arsh before his hands, and the story is well known, Asif ibn Barqia said to him, "I shall bring it to you within the twinkling of your eye," and he brought the Arsh. I do not want to delve into this story but only take of it a snap, a gleam. There are some scholars of exegesis who have talked about how the Arsh moved from Yemen to Palestine. They say that Asif ibn Barqia had a *wilāya* (mastership) over deluge. He cut off the deluge in Yemen, shifting it to Palestine, thus it became present in Palestine. It is as though he cut off the deluge as you, for example, have a pipe for the water flow in a particular place, so when this water was cut off, the deluge was cut off, too. When the deluge was cut off, this deluge was the real *noor*. Do I, personally, know how my existence became a reality?! Or how can my existence and everything around me become a reality? How can your existence become a reality? There is a deluge that descends at all time, and it cannot be measured according to time. Deluge times cannot be measured by time units: The deluge incidents, which are referred to as transfigurations, are not measured by time units. They are more precise than what is beyond time. I do not wish to delve into these details, but my existence materializes through the fall of the deluge, just like this light when, for e.g., we are in a dark room: We are in a dark room and I hold a lamp. Whenever I direct the hand-held lamp to a certain direction, I see it. Here is a group of books and I am holding a small lamp. I want to recognize this book, so I direct the lamp's light to it, whereupon I read "Usool al-Kafi". When I direct the light to another book, focusing on it, I read "Bihār al-Anwār". So, it is as if this light is the one that found the book. The deluge is the one that brought us into existence. There is a deluge. So long as this deluge continues, we continue to exist. When the deluge is no more, we will be no more. From here, there are those who took this idea from here, that is, Asif ibn Barqia had a *wilāya* over the deluge, so he cut the deluge off in Yemen and caused it to exist [elsewhere].

Of course in the thinking of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, this talk is not sound, for Asif brought the Arsh itself, whereas I brought this explanation for the sake of the example of "اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ" *Allāh is the Noor of the heavens and the earth* (Qur'ān, 24:35), that is, the real *noor*, not the sense-detected one, the real *noor* which brought us into

existence. The sense-related *noor* reveals things. The real *noor* brings things into existence; this is the difference between both types of *noor*. Also, the real *noor* is self-revealing while also revealing others, but the revelation here is bringing into being; it is not showing things, as is the case with the sense-related (or sense-detected) *noor*. The sense-detected *noor* reveals itself as well as others, but such revealing is only in showing. Through the medium of the sense-related *noor*, things are seen. The real *noor*'s revelation is bringing into existence: "Allāh is the *Noor* of the heavens and the earth": Through what does this existence materialize? It materializes through the real *noor* that is issued by Allāh, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, not through the sense-related *noor*. Sense-related light (itself) is realized through the real *noor*. Sense-related *noor* reveals itself and others because it exists through the real *noor*. So, essentially and not through a comparison between the real and the sense-related *noor*, I brought the example of the sense-related *noor* so the picture may become clear and in order to explain the meaning of the real *noor* because the sense-related *noor* materializes because of the real *noor*.

"Allāh is the *Noor* of the heavens and the earth": These things have come to be, the sense-related *noor* came to be, this ability to show and to reveal came to be via the sense-related *noor*, because of what? It is because of the real *noor*, the *noor* issued by Allāh, the most Praised, the most Exalted One. "Allāh is the *Noor* of the heavens and the earth": This statement needs a great deal of explaining, but I satisfy myself with this much because I am not in the process of explaining this verse, I only want to benefit from it regarding the topic at hand: the Great Comprehensive Ziyāra. "Allāh is the *Noor* of the heavens and the earth; the parable (similitude) of His *noor*..." The Qur'ān here brings us an example for Allāh's *noor*, for this bright *noor* that lights the heavens and the earth. "The parable of His light is like a lantern..." The lantern is said to be an opening other than a window, i.e. an opening in a wall. Only this opening in the wall is like a shelf on which the lamp is placed. This opening does not overlook what is outside so as light enters through it, or it may be like a window. The lantern is a place opened in the wall like a shelf, a special shelf for the lamp, we can say something like that. And the lantern can also be like a frame that encloses the

lantern, as is the case in our time when we have lamp and around this lamp there is a frame. This frame safeguards the lamp. And there may be mirrors within this frame in order to increase the lamp's light or for decoration or to beautify it. As a result, the lantern is the place or container that holds the lamp such as an opening in a wall.

It may be a place on a table. It may be a frame or something put on the lamp; such is the lantern. The lantern is something that surrounds the lamp. The lantern is itself the *noor*, the glowing light. In the past, how did people make lamps? They made them of a wick dipped in olive oil or in some other type of oil. "The lantern is enclosed in glass." For what purpose is the glass placed? It is for holding the lamp, for protecting the lamp's light and for intensifying its glow because of the transparency of this glass. "The parable of His light is a lantern and a lamp is within it: The lamp is enclosed in glass: The glass is like a luminous planet." The meaning of the luminous or bright planet is obvious. "... [It] is like a luminous planet". Of course, according to the Arabs' language, a planet is seen as a large star in the heavens. But in scientific astronomical terms, there are stars and there are planets. The stars are self-illuminating, as is the case with the sun. The planets do not emit light by themselves; rather, they reflect others' lights, as is the moon, the earth, and other planets. The earth is not said to be a star because it is a planet, because it reflects the sun's light. As for the sun, it is not said to be a planet according to the astronomical terms. In the Arabs' language, a planet describes a large visible star. "The glass is like a luminous star." A luminous star looks like *durr* [plural of *durra*], pearls, clearly luminous and shiny precious stones: "The glass is like a luminous star," i.e., looking like a shiny, luminous and clearly large planet in the sky during the night, such are said to be *durry* [*durr*-like] planets, looking like pearls. "The glass is like a luminous star lit from a blessed tree." The Blessed Tree... It is one the produce of which is plentiful. This is first. And it is absolutely perfect. Such is called a blessed tree, a tree that is faultless. It means if we, for example, have a tree; if it is sick and its fruit are wormy; is such a tree called a blessed one?!

Or, for e.g., its fruit taste bad, not good, or the normal fruits are large, whereas this tree's fruit are small; it is not called a blessed tree. The blessed tree is the one that is faultless, there is no shortcoming in it: The tree's trunk, stock, branches, leaves... are all absolutely beautiful. The tree's fruit; the blessed tree is the one that has no defects, there is nothing faulty with its roots. Its roots absorb salts, minerals and water in the best way. Its branches and leaves are green. Its leaves are perfect. Such is the blessed tree: It is flawless, nothing is missing in it, neither in its stock, nor in its roots, nor in its branches, nor in its leaves, nor in its fruit. "[It is] lit from a blessed tree, an olive tree"; so the blessed tree is an olive tree because this is the type of oil used for lighting. How did people use to light their lamps? They used to do so with oil. "[It is] a blessed tree, an olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west." What does it mean not to be of the east nor of the west?

The tree is described as an olive tree. The longer the sun shines on an olive tree, the more perfect its produce will be, and the oil extracted from its fruit will be more clear and glowing. "[It is] neither of the east nor of the west," that is, the sun does not abandon it in the morning or in the afternoon. It means it is located in the middle, it is neither in the east of the place, nor is it in the west. It is not in the east of the place so as when the sun inclines to its sunset, it distances itself from it. Nor is it in the west of the place so as when the sun shines, it is distant from it. Rather, it is in the middle, in the center; therefore, from the moment of its rise and up to the end of the day, the sun shines on this tree. This leads to perfecting its fruit to the beauty of its leaves. After that, it leads to the oil extracted from its fruit being extremely clear, very pure, quite glowing. This is one of the meanings of the blessed tree. It is blessed because it is neither eastern nor western; its nutrients reach it fully, completely. It is flawless, its fruit are perfect. It is neither of the east nor of the west. "Its oil almost emits light" due to the intensity of its clarity and purity before it is burnt with the fire, so much so as if we need no fire to light this oil. "Its oil almost emits light": "Almost" is a verb used for making a comparison, an approach. It "almost" is, as if it was close to being so. "Its oil almost emits light": It does not emit light, but due to its clarity, to the intensity of purity, it almost releases light without the need for fire. This does not mean it gave

out light without fire; it does need fire in order to give out light, but due to the intensity of its clarity, to the intensity of its purity, of its perfection, it is as though it needs no fire. “As though” is used as an approach verb. “The glass is like a luminous star lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is almost luminous, though fire scarcely touches it.” But once fire touches it, it turns into “Light upon light!” That is, light comes from the fire and light comes from the oil, all due to the clarity of this oil.

“Allāh guides to His light whomsoever He pleases.” Through this *noor*, celestial light, Allāh guides towards Him whomsoever He pleases. “Allāh sets forth parables for people, and Allāh knows all things.” So, we have here a very beautiful literary picture; it is very eloquent, very expressive when it comes to a beautifully embellished and an ornamented solid expression, a picture the beauty of which I cannot describe with my faulty expressions and limited words, with these narrow pronouncements. But I try and try to reach the closest meaning I can within the limits of my faulty ability. “Allāh is the *Noor* of the heavens and the earth.” It is the *noor*, the light, of the truth in this cosmos, the *noor* of creating, of bringing into existence. Without this *noor*, neither I nor you would have come to exist. Neither I nor you would have come into being. Allāh, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, provides a parable, a similitude, for this *noor*: “The parable (similitude) of His *Noor*...” He provides us with a picture of a lantern; what does this lantern have?

“The parable of His light is like a lantern.” There is a lantern. The lantern is enclosed in glass. “The glass is like a luminous planet” that glows. Where is this glow coming from? The glow comes from the oil. Where does this oil come from? It comes from a blessed tree, a perfect tree in which there is no defect. We have a tree. The parable starts from here. We have a blessed tree. This is the start because where does the light from the oil and the oil [itself] come from? It comes from a tree. So, the picture here is: We have a tree. This tree is described by the verse as follow: It is a blessed tree, its roots suffer no shortcoming, all the nutrients are in the earth for this tree that extends into the depth of the earth, capturing all minerals, all salts, all components which the tree needs for its growth and fruit from which oil is extracted. It is an olive tree. It is a blessed olive

tree located in a place where the sun shines on it at the start of sunshine and till it sets. Thus, its fruit come fully ripe. From it a clear oil is extracted. This oil is the one that causes this light in this lantern. And there is a glass that beautifies the lamp. And there is a lantern that encloses the lamp's light. And there is light upon light. Where does this light come from?

It comes from the fire that lights the lamp, from the light of the oil which, due to the intensity of its clarity and purity, almost emits light without fire touching it. "Its oil almost emits light." Its oil lights, lights, lights "although no fire touches it." It lights without fire touches it; what kind of oil is this?! It is the oil of Fatima عليها السلام ... Narratives have explained this tree as Fatima عليها السلام. This blessed tree is Fatima عليها السلام, and "Fatima" is one of her blessed names. Fatima عليها السلام has many names. One of Fatima's blessed names is al-Zahrā', the contended one, the pleased, the purified one, the maiden Fatima, Fatima the glowing one. Some people think that she is called "al-Zahra" as in "flower" in the colloquial. No, not all. One of her names is Fatima al-Zahrā', Fatima al-Zahra, the flower of existence, and Fatima al-Zuhra, the Venus in the heavens. So, one of Fatima's names is al-Zahrā', another is al-Zāhira, and one is al-Zahra, while another is al-Zuhra. Her names are many. If Allāh so wills, one day we will talk about her names. Among her blessed names is this blessed tree, this is Fatima عليها السلام; this pure tree the roots of which extend; where do its roots extend to? Its roots extend to the earth of existence, in the reality of existence. This blessed tree is Fatima عليها السلام, those pure branches are her pure Progeny, and those are her pure fruits.

Do we not have in narratives that this tree is Fatima عليها السلام and that in its stalk and roots, in its depth, "I and Ali are from one [and the same] tree, whereas all other people are from various trees"? This blessed tree is Fatima, Allāh's peace and blessings with her. Do narratives not say that the fruits are her offspring, that the leaves are her Shī'as, these leaves that wrap this tree are her Shī'as. Its leaves are her Shī'as, its fruits are her offspring. And the tree is Fatima عليها السلام, and its origin is: Muhammed صلى الله عليه وسلم and Ali عليه السلام. Thus do the narratives explain to us the implications. There are other images drawn, other

portraits, for this tree. By the will of Allāh, we shall talk about this purified tree. This blessed tree is Fatima, Allāh’s peace and blessings with her, and this *noor* is the *noor* of *wilāya* (the light of mastership). We have said that there is Tawhīd and there is Wilāya. This oil is the oil of Wilāya. It is as though the verse wants to say: "Due to its perfection and distinction, this oil almost, without being touched by fire, has the ability to emit light." “Almost” is a figure of speech. It almost, without being touched by the mighty fire, though it is not as such, only a Qur’ānic expression, an expression of the Creator, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, in His Holy Book. He wants to explain the distinction enjoyed by Muhammed and the Progeny of Muhammed. This oil almost emits light although no fire touches it, as if it innately carries a self-power, as if it is autogenous. But where does this self-power come from? It is bestowed by Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, because they are the “Face of Allāh” which never ceases to be, which never perishes. The limits of the knowledge of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام fall between both of these meanings, between this meaning to which I pointed out a short while ago in the narrative of Imam al-Baqir, and between this meaning to which this blessed verse points out. I wish to talk [more] and not stop [here], but what can we do to time? What can I do to time? I wish to talk and talk and talk and not end the talk until life itself comes to an end, but what can we do to life’s concerns, and what can we do to the nature of life? This is our life. As I said a short while ago, it is an opportunity, a piece of time which I seize from this lifetime which we have squandered right and left.

My masters, the Progeny of Muhammed: From you do I start and to you do I return. You are my haven, my hope, my anticipation in this life and in the Hereafter. I say to my loved ones, the followers of Muhammed عليه السلام and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام: If there is any beauty in this talk, it, I swear by Ali, comes from their beauty. And if there is any ugliness, any shortcoming, any ill expression, it comes from me. Anything that is good and beautiful comes from them, while anything bad, any shortcoming, comes from me. Let me say the final word in this episode: I would like to quote the words articulated by [poet] al-Kumait after the pronouncement of which he

died, his life's torch went out, they are the last words al-Kumait ibn Zaid al-Assadi, his last words, what were they? He said,

O Allāh! O Progeny of Muhammed! O Progeny of Muhammed! O Progeny of Muhammed!

I plead to all of you to pray for me; may you all remain safeguarded by Allāh's security.

SECOND EPISODE

SECOND INTRODUCTION TO EXPLAINING THE MEANINGS OF THE GREAT COMPREHENSIVE ZIYARA

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته *Peace with you all, the mercy of Allah and His blessings.* This is the second episode of our “Great Comprehensive Ziyāra” program. In the previous episode, something was said by way of a First Introduction before starting the explanation of the meanings and implications of the text of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara which is narrated from our Imam, al-Hadi عليه السلام. These days, we are living the anniversary of his birth as well as the days of his martyrdom according to a host of narratives and reports. We are doing it in a brief way. I would like to point out to the most important point the discussion of which has already been made in the previous episode. The important point about which I talked, and which we must take into consideration throughout the episodes of this program, while explaining the meanings and implications of the Great Comprehensive Ziyra, is that our discussion must be restricted and must be surrounded by a fence. In it, I have talked about two important principles:

The First Principle: *Tawhid*

The Second Principle: *Wilaya* (mastership) in its more general sense: the *wilaya* of the Prophet ﷺ followed by that of the Imams, peace and blessings of Allah with them all. Our beliefs, generally speaking, are categorized under the *Tawhid* belief. Every belief, every thought and every statement that clashes with our *Tawhid*-related belief has no value and is categorically rejected. I pointed out to two important matters hastefully, so I am tackling them in this episode:

The first matter: The narrative from our Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام, which also cites our Purified Imam al-Askari عليه السلام is: It was said to Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام: “Some of those who claim to accept you as their *wali*

(master) claim that the mosquito is Ali, peace with him.” What is meant by (mentioning) the mosquito refers to the sacred verse to which I have pointed out, i.e. Verse 26 of Surat al-Baqara (Chapter of the Cow): **إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا**: “Allāh does not disdain to use any analogy, the lowest, (such as) a mosquito, as well as the highest” (Qur’ān, 2:26). The talk is about this sacred verse. It was said [once] to [Imam] al-Baqir عليه السلام, “Some of those who claim that they accept you as their master claim that the mosquito is Ali, peace with him, and that what is above (higher) than it is the fly, namely Muhammed the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny.” [Imam] al-Baqir, peace with him, therefore, said, ‘These folks have heard something which they have not put where it belongs. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was sitting once with Ali عليه السلام when he heard someone saying, ‘The will of Allāh be done, and so will the will of Muhammed.’ He also heard another man saying, ‘The will of Allāh (be done) and is that of Ali.’ The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, therefore, said, ‘Do not pair both Muhammed and Ali with Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great. Rather, you should say: ‘The will of Allāh (be done) then the will of Muhammed; Whatever Allāh wills (will be done), then whatever Ali wills.’ The will of Allāh subdues all wills; it is unequalled; nothing comes close to its magnitude, nothing comes close to it.’ (The quoted statement is still made by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ) ‘Muhammed is only the Messenger of Allāh. In Allāh and in His Might, he [Muhammed] is like a fly that traverses these broad paths’. Ali in Allāh and in His Might is like a mosquito in the mass of these paths, although the favor of Allāh Almighty on Muhammed and Ali is not equaled by His favor on all His creation.’ (Say about us whatever you please) although the favor of Allāh Almighty on Muhammed and Ali does not equal that of His favor over all His creation from the beginning of time up to its end.’ This is what the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said about the fly and the mosquito in this regard.” This narrative needs no explanation. Yet I have cited it again. I mentioned it in the previous episode, and here I am reciting it for you in the second episode in order to underscore this meaning and to stress the following fact: Every existence, when compared with the existence of Allah, Praised and Exalted is He, is only a shadow: The original existence is the first divine existence, the first

the beginning of which has no beginning, and He is the last the last of Whom has no end; He is the First in the perfect sense of the truth, and He is the last in the perfect sense of the truth. He is the Apparent in the most perfect truth. And He is the Hidden in the most perfect sense of the truth. He is broad, He surrounds everything in the most perfect norm of the truth. He is the Hidden in the most perfect of the truth; He is the Last in the most perfect of the truth; He is the Apparent in the most perfect of the truth; He is the Hidden in the most perfect of the truth, and He is Broad, He surrounds everything in the most perfect of the truth, too. The narrative here is clear, obvious and open in explaining where Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام stand if measured with Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One; to this meaning have I pointed out.

I also pointed out to Verse 35 of the sacred Surat al-Noor which is known as the Noor verse:

35. Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth. The parable (likeness) of His *Noor* (celestial light) is a lantern and a lamp is within it: The lamp is enclosed in glass: The glass is like a luminous planet lit from a blessed tree, an olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, one whose oil is almost luminous, though fire scarcely touches it: Light upon light! Allāh guides whomsoever He wills to His light: Allāh sets forth parables for men, and Allāh knows all things.

35. اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ: مَثَلُ نُورِهِ
 كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ، الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجْجَةٍ،
 الزُّجْجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ:
 زَيْتُونَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ، يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ
 تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ؛ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ؛ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ،
 وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ، وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 عَلِيمٌ

I explained aspects of the meaning of this verse. I do not like to repeat what I stated in the previous episode, but I would like to point out only to two points:

First Point: This verse is the greatest that has pointed out to the greatest stations of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, to the greatest stations of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم and his Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. This verse talks about the first

realities: the Muhammedi reality, the Alawi reality, and the first *Noors* (celestial lights), the first spirits, the first facts, the facts of Muhammed and the Progeny of Muhammed, Allah's peace and blessings with them all. I can say that this verse is the greatest in the Book of Allah that has talked about the greatest stations of the Prophet ﷺ and his Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. The essence of this verse is the Zahrā' reality, this blessed tree is Fatima عليها السلام in truth; she is this blessed tree, the olive tree, which is neither of the east nor of the west. It is above the upper worlds, and it is above the lower worlds. These facts are higher than all these worlds: The eastern worlds are the higher worlds in which *noor* shines, while the western worlds are the lower worlds in which nature's darkness reigns: In them did they reign, but the divine lights did not shine. They are said to be western because the noors did not shine in them; rather, something else shone in them; what is it? The darkness of nature "shone" in them. When I say that the darkness of nature shone in them, this is a metaphorical meaning. The western worlds are the worlds of nature: Our earth world and similar other worlds in the lower heavens or less are all called the lower worlds. They are called the dark worlds. They are called the dust worlds. They are called the natural worlds..., call them whatever you please. These realities are neither of the east nor of the west because what is in the eastern worlds and in the western worlds is derived from the *noors* of this tree. The first which Allah created was this tree, this olive tree, which He made neither of the east nor of the west. Rather, from its *noor* did the eastern worlds shine and also the western worlds. I said a short while ago that the eastern worlds are the upper worlds, the ones called the Exalted Assembly. As regarding the western worlds, they are the lower worlds, the worlds of nature, of darkness, of material darkness. This reality is the blessed tree. It is the reality which is sanctified. Above what is it sanctified? It is sanctified above the eastern worlds and western worlds; from here does the reality of this tree and the status enjoyed by this tree becomes clear.

The talk about the Great Comprehensive Ziyara is between this matter which our Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام explained in the narrative which I recited for you a second time a short while ago, and between this great sublime context to which the *Noor* Verse has pointed out,

i.e. Verse 35 of the blessed Surat al-Noor (Chapter 24 of the Holy Qur'an). This is the first issue, and this is the first matter to which I liked to point out and to emphasize for the sake of reminding, so that these meanings may always be present when we start explaining the implications of this sacred ziyara.

This episode is like a second introduction before we start explaining the meanings of this sacred ziyara.

The Second Matter to which I would like to point out is: I said within the folds of my talk, when I mentioned the greatness of this sacred ziyara, i.e. the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, that I do not wish here to authenticate the Great Comprehensive Ziyara; rather, it is the one that authenticates me. Here, some brothers ask about the gist of this meaning: What do I mean by saying that I do not want to authenticate the Great comprehensive Ziyara but rather it is the one that authenticates me?! I mean by so saying that the Great Comprehensive Ziyara is:

FIRST: It has been cited in the most authentic sources, and I have pointed out to its sources and to the books that quote this sacred ziyara. I do not wish to repeat what I said. The discussion was made in the previous episode. This ziyara exists in the most authentic sources, and in the most important sources of hadith. This is First.

SECOND: Ziyara's text is one of the strongest that is quoted from the Household of Infallibility in its literary structure, linguistic structure or cognitive structure. This means that we are facing a text that is being complemented literally and linguistically, and it is complemented cognitively. As regarding this text being literally and linguistically complemented, it is due to the oratory structure, to the eloquency structure, and to the meaning structure in which the statements and expressions of this ziyara are organized and arranged. As regarding the cognitive structure of this ziyara, this will become clear when I am able to explain its implications and meanings, and the truth will then become manifest, that is, this ziyara contains a cognitive doctrinal structure which we rarely find in other texts. Perhaps we have few texts, if the texts have reports, ahadith or ziyara texts. We have few ziyara texts similar to this inimitable

comprehensive text: “Teach me, O son of the Messenger of Allah, a completely eloquent statement...” There is a fully eloquent statement here, as we stated while explaining this statement.

From a Third Aspect: The strength of the source, the authenticity of the source, the strength of the context, the strength of the text..., there is a third matter which is: all meanings that are contained in this sacred ziyara. These meanings came in its regard, in explaining its implications and meanings, and they are quite few narratives. This means that if we want to take every statement, every clause, of this ziyara and place it somewhere, then if we let this clause be the title and, on its basis, we go to the concordances of hadith in which the ahadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام have been compiled..., we will find scores, actually hundreds, of texts that match and branch out of these concise labels that are mentioned in the Great Comprehensive Ziyara. This means that I can say that the labels and terms which this Great Comprehensive Ziyara contains are like a table of contents for the subject titles words the Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام have stated, not in a limited group of narratives, not in a hundred or two hundred narratives..., there are huge numbers of texts, there are thousands of texts. The discussion is not about scores or hundreds, it is about thousands of texts excerpted from statements made by the Imams عليه السلام in our hadith books which have incorporated statements and ahadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. Of course, you must not be surprised at all when I say that this is so even in books of those who disagree with Ahlul-Bayt: There are many texts that are in harmony with the gist of this comprehensive ziyara and are indicative of its meanings and contexts.

I pointed out in the previous episode to one source of those who disagree with Ahlul-Bayt, which is the book titled *Fara'id al-Simtayn*. I pointed out to this source not due to my interest in the contents of books that disagree with Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, for we do not rely on the hadith that does not come through the venue of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, we take our hadith from the venue of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام and from those who follow them, those who hold them as their masters, but because there are many folks who now watch this program and do not follow Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. nor do they have a Shi'ite reference

where they can find this text. I have attracted attention to this issue and said that this text is narrated in a Sunni book, namely *Fara'id al-Simtayn* by the narrator of hadith al-Juwaini al-Shafi'i. From this onset, I said that I do not want to authenticate the Comprehensive Ziyara. Rather, the Comprehensive Ziyara is the one that authenticates me. This ziyara exists in the most important source, so much so that among the Sunnis there are those who have narrated it, and if this ziyara is distinguished for the strength of its context from the language and literature standpoint on the one hand, and, on the other, from the standpoint of its cognitive value. Moreover, thousands of ahadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام come consistently, harmoniously and in agreement with the contexts of this sacred ziyara; so, how can this ziyara not authenticate me?!

This ziyara, then, is the one that authenticates me because when I do not believe in its contexts, such libeling will not be in the ziyara but in my own self and in others, if the latter do not believe the contexts of this ziyara. Faith in the contexts of this ziyara praises anyone who believes in it; thus, it itself will be the cause for authentication, while it does not need authentication. As regarding those who wish to look in a biographical source, which is a very weak evidence compared to these evidences, this has no value whatsoever because matters are not proven from one side. How do we prove our texts? Texts with us are proven through the evidences, through the proofs, through the statements and through the testimonies that surround the texts. These evidences and testimonials, which surround the text, may be in tracking the series of narrators, it may be in the source, it may be in the fame of this hadith [or that]. They may be in the strength of the text. They may be in the agreement between this context and other texts. And it may or may not be; there are many evidences through which we can find out the extent of the authenticity of this text.

Despite all of this, despite all the matters to which I have pointed out, I here am not in the process of authenticating them. Had I been in the process of authenticating them, I would have needed, in so doing, hours and hours because I will be forced to compare this text with other texts and sources, and this needs a long time. But if we wish to cast a historic look at the generations of our scholars that have passed by, all our scholars had accepted this ziyara, believing

in it. This sacred ziyara has received many explanations. Scholars accepted it, believed in it and acted upon its basis by performing the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام through it. I do not wish to go on more than that but to tackle another matter related to the second introduction.

A short while ago, I said that the previous episode was a first introduction that precedes the talk about explaining the contexts of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, and this episode is like a second introduction.

My talk will be about this second introduction, having presented the explanations to which I pointed out a short while ago so that my talk will first deal with the meaning of this ziyara before I enter into its text. What is this Ziyara for? Why do we visit the shrines of the Imams عليه السلام? Why do we perform the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام? There are many aspects to which I will point out, but I will focus on one of these points in particular. There are several dimensions in performing the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام:

The First Dimension: One of the dimensions of performing the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام is ideological. I mean by the ideological dimension that when we perform the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام, we renew the pledge to them, and this is one of our duties. There are pledges and covenants: the pledges and covenants of the Imamate which we had given our Imams عليه السلام. These pledges and covenants were made in the very start of creation. In the start of creation were they taken, in the start of existence. There have been pledges and covenants which were taken in the world of the atom. There have been pledges and covenants taken in the loins world. And there have been pledges and covenants undertaken against us after the evidences were established, after we had come out to the world, after we became adolescent. There is the pledge of the Imamate and the covenant of the Wilayate round our necks. In order to fulfill this covenant and pledge, we visit the shrines of the Imams عليه السلام. This ziyara gives this meaning: renewing the pledge to the Imams عليه السلام. This is an ideological dimension. I said that the ziyara has many dimensions. The first dimension is ideological. The ideological dimension contains this meaning: the renewing of the covenant, the

meaning of emphasizing the covenant. When we perform the ziyara of the shrines of the Imams عليه السلام, whether we perform it closely or distantly, our Imams عليه السلام hear us, whether we visit their shrines from a near distance or from a far one. When we address the Imam عليه السلام: “I testify that you hear my speech and respond to my greeting,” this type of dealing, and this sort of connection, does not obstruct us from the Imam عليه السلام. Land terrains do not form a barrier in its face. The Imam عليه السلام hears our speech wherever we may be. “I testify that you hear my speech, witness my position and respond to my greeting, O son of the Messenger of Allah!” The ideological dimension carries this first meaning, the meaning of renewing the pledge, emphasizing the covenant.

There is another dimension: It is our link with the Imam عليه السلام. We must stay in touch with the Imam. Why? It is because the Imam’s link is that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; the lineage with which we must stay in contact is that of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with whom we all must remain in touch. Narratives say, “Kinship ties are hung on the Arsh; whoever maintains his ties with his kinfolk, Allah maintains His ties with him, and whoever severs them, Allah severs His tie with him.” Which ties of kinship are these? Are they kinship ties with our families?! They are the ties of kinship with Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام. “Kinship ties are hung on the Arsh; whoever maintains his ties with his kinfolks, Allah maintains His ties with him, and whoever severs them, Allah severs His tie with him.” These meanings which you read are in the ziyaras of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, especially in the ziyara of the Truthful Lady, the Pure one. When we address her, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that she is, we say: “One who maintains his ties with you does so with the Messenger of Allah, and one who severs his ties with you does so with the Messenger of Allah.” Whoever maintains his link with her actually maintains his link with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and one who severs such ties, he severs them from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. This meaning applies to her and to her offspring up to the Imam of our time, peace and blessings of Allah with him.

You find in the doctrinal dimension of performing the ziyara of our Imams عليه السلام: first, a renewal of the pledge of *wilaya* (mastership) and, second, the emphasis on the Imamate covenant with Ali عليه السلام and the Progeny of Ali عليه السلام. There is also in it a link with Ali عليه السلام and the Progeny of Ali عليه السلام, a link with the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله and with the Progeny of the Messenger of Allah عليه السلام. The tie of kinship that is hung over the Arsh is that of Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله and of the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام. One who maintains ties with Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله does so with Allah because whoever obeys Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله obeys Allah. One who loves Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله loves Allah, and one who disobeys Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله disobeys Allah. Whoever hates Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله hates Allah. This is a link with Allah. When we visit the shrines of our Imams عليه السلام, it is as though we visit Allah, the most Praised and the most Exalted One. Whoever visits the shrine of al-Hussain عليه السلام is a visitor of Allah. Narratives explain this meaning. It is like the one who goes to perform the pilgrimage or the *'umra*: One who goes for the pilgrimage or the *'umra* is as though he goes to visit Allah, the most Praised and the most Exalted One. Whoever visits the shrines of our Imams عليه السلام is as though he visits Allah. It is a link with Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One. This is the first doctrinal dimension in performing the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام. By implication, the doctrinal dimension, in its first meaning, is renewing the pledge and emphasizing the covenant.

In its second meaning of maintaining ties with kinsfolk, we have many narratives that talk about maintaining ties with kinsfolk. In what sense? In the social sense, maintaining ties means keeping in touch with one's relatives. Of course, this is one of the sure and important meanings which narratives underscore. We find in sacred narratives a great deal of emphasis on maintaining ties with kinsfolk. It is one of the important meanings provided by narratives. We have sacred narratives that greatly emphasize maintaining ties with one's lineage, the social lineage, the human lineage. But the ties of kinship in the original meaning, in the essential meaning, and in the first meaning, is the Divine link: the link with the lineage of Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله, the progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام. One who severs his ties with Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام will never enter

Paradise. These narratives say that such an individual will never smell the fragrance of Paradise. Which lineage? It is the lineage of Muhammed ﷺ and the progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. As for one who severs his ties with the human lineage, the one who severs his social ties, he may enter Paradise if his relatives become pleased with him on the Judgment Day. But the one who severs his ties with the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ can never enter Paradise because the narratives are quite clear in stating that nobody who hates Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ will enter Paradise.

Narratives are quite clear. When our Imam al-Sadiq (عليه السلام) talks about the gates of Paradise, he says, “Paradise has eight gates: one for the prophets and *siddeeqs* (those who are the foremost in believing and attesting to the prophets’ mission), one for the martyrs and the righteous, five gates for our Shi’as and the eighth gate for one who says, ‘There is no god save Allah’ while having no atom of hatred towards us, we Ahlul-Bayt, in his heart.” So, there is something that prevents one from entering Paradise: It is hatred towards Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. The eighth gate is for one who testifies that “There is no god save Allah” without having in his heart one atom of hatred towards Ahlul-Bayt (عليه السلام).” So, what prevents people from entering Paradise on the Judgment Day is their hatred towards Ahlul-Bayt (عليه السلام). From this onset, I said a short while ago that one who severs his ties from Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ is one who shies away from the Progeny, and it does not mean here one who severs his ties with their blood kinship. The talk is about ties with Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, since not everyone has a blood kinship with Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, although this matter covers the Prophet’s blood relatives, it is one of the matters which the narratives have stressed. I do not wish to talk about this issue, this is the talk about Muhammed’s kinship tie which is linked to the Arsh, the talk about the Book (Qur’an) and the `Itra (Progeny), when we want to maintain the ties with Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, the talk about maintaining ties with Muhammed’s kinsfolk, the talk about maintaining ties with the Book and the `Itra... Anyhow, I do not want to dedicate a lot of

time for this issue, but I said that the ziyara has a group of dimensions one of which is the doctrinal dimension, and I have already talked about it.

Also among them is the worship dimension. Ziyara is a form of worship, a means of seeking nearness to Allah. Ziyara is a form of worship that results in great rewards. We are not here to talk about the great rewards, the generous rewards, resulting from ziyaras, for this is a wide door in which I do not wish to enter in this episode.

The worship dimension: Ziyara is a form of worship, and worship is a matter that results in reward and recompense. Ziyara is a form of worship, one of the deeds that result in great rewards, in generous rewards not earned in many other forms of worship. Perhaps I should point out to one single text which exists in *Kamil al-Ziyarat*. This text talks about performing the ziyara of al-Hussain عليه السلام on the Day of Arafa. What does this text say? What do narratives reported by Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام say? Do they not say that Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, looks at those who perform the ziyara of al-Hussain عليه السلام on the Day of Arafa before looking at those who approach the standing place in Arafa, before looking at the pilgrims of His House (the Ka'ba)? This talk is about our Infallible Imams عليهم السلام. Allah looks at those who perform the ziyara of al-Hussain on the Day of Arafa before looking at those who stand at Arafa. I said that I do not want to enter through this door of ahadith that tell us about the greatness of the rewards, of the great recompenses, which result from this ziyara as a form of worship; this is first.

The second matter is also listed under the category of the ziyara's worship dimension. The second matter, which falls under the worship dimension, is that this ziyara is a station for contemplation, for deriving a moral lesson, for meditation. Deriving a moral lesson is for the sake of the norms of worship. Basically, narratives say that worship does not mean a great deal of prayers and fasting; rather, worship is a great deal of contemplation on matters relevant to Allah. Is there a station, a real field, better than the field of this ziyara for contemplation and for deriving moral lessons?! This is the important matter in the ziyara's worship aspect. The worship aspect

includes both of these matters: The first is that the ziyara itself is a form of worship that results in rewards and recompenses, and it also is a station of man's life for contemplation and for deriving moral lessons, a station for renewing repentance, a station for some self-accountability. When one finds himself facing Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, this is an opportunity for reciting the Qur'an. Perhaps at home he cannot find an opportunity for reciting the Qur'an. In this opportunity, he recites supplication. This is an opportunity for performing optional prayers. This is an opportunity for reciting texts of ziyaras, for contemplating on the meanings and contexts. This is an opportunity for his eyes noticing a book at a library in the walls of the sacred places. This is an opportunity for listening to admonition or meeting someone who becomes a cause for opening large and wide gates towards getting closer to Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him. The Ziyara has a broad worship dimension: On the one hand, it is a form of worship, and, on the other, it is a station for contemplation, for learning moral lessons, for admonition.

There is also a third dimension: the political dimension. There is a political dimension. What is meant by the political dimension is its doctrinal limit. It does not mean politics that include cunning, deception, struggle over positions, hoarding wealth, subduing and overcoming people. This is not what we mean by the political dimension. Rather, what is meant by the political dimension is support for what is right, countering falsehood, supporting justice, confronting injustice. The political dimension is that this ziyara represents a political stance. This matter is clear across history. Performing the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام reflects the political stance of the followers of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, individuals or the public, for the Shi'i society. This ziyara has a political dimension. It is the jihadi dimension. It is articulating the truth. It is doing what is right. Sometimes, one supports the truth with a statement, and sometimes he supports what is right with his action without saying anything. Going to perform the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام is a practical support for the Imams عليه السلام. Supporting the Imams عليه السلام means supporting righteousness, it means supporting the Divine Vicegerency. It is support for the divine policy which Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, wills to be implemented on the face of earth. It is the

political stance of the believers in particular, the believing individuals, and also the general public from among the followers of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, i.e. the Shi'ite umma, nation. Also, another political stance enters into the political one: It is keeping the memory of the Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام alive. This, too, we can consider to be among the branches of the political matter, for it is linked to belief in jihad on the path of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, keeping Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام in the public's memory. Doing this may be undertaken by an individual on his own, but when these ziyaras are undertaken by the masses, this massive dimension is given to the concept of keeping the matter alive. In other words, it is giving it depth and dimension. The million-man ziyaras of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, for example, these events are kept in the public's memory in a broad way, and this emphasizes the meaning of the political and jihadi dimension in performing the ziyara of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام.

There is a fourth dimension: It is the social dimension: the faithful meeting each other, getting to know each other, becoming acquainted with each other's problems. This results in benefits for the believers, benefits for the followers of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, be it on the level of tourism, on the level of the media, on the level of commerce and economy, on various levels connected to people's social life. There is an apparent social dimension in performing the ziyaras of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام: There is the doctrinal dimension, the worship dimension, the political dimension and the social dimension. All these dimensions are incorporated into this sacred ziyara. Ziyara has still a deeper meaning than all the above. These meanings, to which I have pointed out, may be in the doctrinal dimension, in the worship dimension, or in the political one, or they may be in the social dimension. There may also be other dimensions to which we can point out. All these meanings are in one scope, under one roof, while there is a deeper meaning than all of these, one which is deeper than all these meanings:

Performing the ziyara of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام is an image, an example, for a reality that is deeper than all these meanings. This deeper reality, this deeper example, this obvious transfiguration is returning to the homeland. The sacred narratives have told us that love for

one's homeland is a sign of belief (*iman*). It is a sign of sound belief when you love your homeland. I do not wish to talk about the apparent temporal meaning; this meaning is also sound, but in the words of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, there is what falls within the scope of this statement, and there is what falls in the scope of pointing out, and there is what falls in the scope of rarities..., and there is what falls in the scope of realities. The speech of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام has a meaning within the scope of statements. This is what I pointed out a short while ago: what has been explained by the dimensions to which reference has been made a short while ago: the doctrinal, the worship-related, the political, the social..., these meanings fall within the scope of this statement. There is another scope beyond that of this statement; this is it: the scope of pointing out (hinting). Loving the homeland is a sign of *iman*. There is pointing and there is hinting to this reality. The true homeland is the reality from which all existing things have come out. The reality from which the existents came to be is the Muhammedi reality, thus were we informed by our Prophet ﷺ and Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, that is, Allah first created the *noor*, the celestial light, of our Prophet ﷺ, and from this *noor* did He derive all lights and all beings. So, all beings are rendered to the first *noor*, to the Muhammedi *noor*, and this *noor* is the homeland. The homeland is the place where realities reside, where facts are born. Do they not say in language and tradition, even in legislated rulings, that the homeland is the place where one is born, i.e. the birthplace, where one is born, lives and grows up? Such is the homeland. It is so in language and tradition, even in the Shari`a. The homeland, in the true sense of the word, is the place where existence is born. Our reality does not lie in our bodies, nor does it lie in our souls. Our reality lies in our existence. Mankind is body and soul. But can this body materialize without the truth of its existence? Can this soul be realized without existence?

Man's reality lies in his existence. The soul came to be because an overflow of existence manifested itself to it. The body came to be because the overflow of existence manifested itself to it. The overflow of existence, moreover, comes from the first *noor*. The real homeland is the reality from which we were born and from which we came to be, the reality from which our existence was born. Such

is the reality of the Muhammedi *noor*, the first created thing, the first to be, say whatever you will..., the first mind, the first Arsh..., say whatever expressions and words you please. All of them point out to this meaning, to the meaning of the first word which Allah spoke, and after this word, all other words came to be. “O Lord! I plead to you in the most perfect of Your Words, and all Your Words are perfect; O Allah! I plead to You in all Your Words.” The most perfect Word, the original *Noor*, is Muhammed ﷺ in the Highest Horizon, not in the earthly horizon. Muhammed son of Abdullah ﷺ in the earthly horizon is the transfiguration of that reality. When we talk about the *noor* of our Prophet ﷺ, we talk about the source of beings. Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, placed in that *noor* the ability to bring about beings. We are not talking about Muhammed son of Abdullah ﷺ who was born in such a year for a mother named so-and-so and a father named so-and-so. Muhammed ﷺ who was in Medina and who was buried in Medina is the greatest transfiguration of that Muhammedi reality. When existing beings shone, they shone from that first reality the greatest name of which manifested itself in the earthly world, and he is Muhammed ﷺ, and many, many narratives testify to it, and we shall explain them, if Allah Almighty so wills, in upcoming episodes.

Ziyara is a return to whom? It is a return to the homeland which was obstructed from us by dusks of the nature world. We are here in this nature world. Do you not remember this hadith: “The (temporal) world is the believer’s prison”? This hadith has many implications and connotations. Among its hints is that this life is the believer’s prison, the prison that stands in the way between us and returning to our homeland, to our original homeland, to the original womb. As I explained a short while ago, it is the kinship of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ: يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا ۖ فَمُلَافِيهِ “O man! Truly you are always toiling towards the Lord, painfully toiling, and you shall meet Him” (Qur’an, 84:6). When will this meeting take place? The meeting will be through returning to the first reality, to the Muhammedi reality. Allah, Praise and Exaltation are due to Him, created the first *noor*, and from that *noor*, the *noors* of existence shone, the beings shone, and we came from that *noor*. This is the reality of the creation as told by the words of

the Greatest Prophet ﷺ and those of Ahlul-Bayt (عليه السلام), and our ziyara is only an example and an image: an image for returning to the homeland, so we may get out of desolation. We are in the desolation world. A short while ago I talked about the olive tree which is neither of the east nor of the west. These are the western worlds, the desolation worlds that keep us away from the original world, the original homeland. Loving the homeland is a sign of *iman*, conviction. Loving the homeland stems from *iman*: love to return to that origin of *iman*. Rather, it is the *iman* in all the sense of the word. When we perform the ziyara of our Imams (عليه السلام), for example, one of the etiquettes of the ziyara is seeking permission. In the same *Mafatih al-Jinan*, in a chapter about ziyaras, before we start the ziyara of the Prophet ﷺ, there are etiquettes for the ziyara which include seeking permission (to enter the mausoleum). Narrator of traditions, al-Qummi, has discussed seeking permission quite deeply. I do not wish to linger there for too long, but I would like to point out to some contexts which suit what I have stated. What does it say about seeking permission when we stand at the gates of sacred precincts of our Prophet ﷺ and Imams (عليه السلام)? How do we seek permission?

“O Allah! You have purified this spot, honored this abode, and cleansed landmarks where You permitted the proofs of Tawhid and the spirits of the Glorious Arsh to be manifested.” They are the Proofs of Tawhid, and they are the spirits of the Glorified Arsh in their earthly presence. As for their sublime presence, the Arsh was created of their *noor*, and we will come across quite few ahadith. Some of these ahadith exist in books of those who differ from us (Sunnis), not only in our books. There are quite few ahadith in books of those whose [religious] views differ from ours. Facts testify to this: the Arsh and everything less than it were all created of their *noor*. They occupy a status that is above the above. The Arsh and the Kursi, as well as the veils, are only from the glitter of that first Divine reality, the Muhammedi reality: “O Allah! You have purified this spot, honored this abode, and cleansed landmarks where You permitted the proofs of Tawhid and the spirits of the Glorious Arsh to be manifested, those whom You chose for safeguarding order.” They are not only for safeguarding the worldly order, for regulating

the ordinary political life, but the order of all beings. "... those whom You chose for safeguarding order, selecting them as chiefs of all people and sent them to establish equity from the start of existence up to the Judgment Day. Then You bestowed on them the blessing of being deputies of Your prophets in order to safeguard Your laws and rulings, thus You completed, through their successorship, the message of the warners, and You obligated this, by appointing them as the masters, in the very nature of accountable people." This message needs a lengthy halt, but I find no time to explain this context now. I only wish to point out to it, and my brothers and sisters have to discern this context. My sons and daughters who love Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام have to seek light from this statement: "... You obligated this, by appointing them as the masters, in the very nature of accountable people." This is the cosmic Imamate, the existent Imamate. As for the Shari'a-imposed Imamate, it branches out of that supreme Imamate. This existent Imamate, which was placed in the nature of accountable people—"You obligated this, by appointing them as the masters, in the very nature of accountable people"—until you seek permission of the Imams عليه السلام [to enter their Shrines]. This seeking permission is lengthy, and I find no room at present to recite it in full. Then you say,

"Praised belongs to Allah Who has bestowed on us men of authority who assume His seat, had he been present in this place," until you say and supplicate thus to Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One: "Grant us (O Lord) the ability to reach their ever-populated abodes up to the Judgment Day." Let us recite this supplication from the depths of our hearts. Let us supplicate thus as we plead to the Imam of our Time (عج) to purge our hearts, with a look from him, the moment we recite this supplication: "Enable us to reach their ever-populated abodes up to the Day of Judgment, and make our souls yearn to the places where their feet treaded and our hearts desire to look at their meeting places and courtyards, as if we address them in the presence of their own selves." Then you supplicate thus: "Lord! Grant us permission to enter these courtyards the ziyara to which You by the people of the earth and the heavens have regarded as a form of worship. Let our tears flow in awe, and

subjugate our senses to the humility of worship and the obligation of obedience so we may recognize the attributes that are rightly theirs,” up to the end of this sacred supplication. Such are our Imams عليه السلام. Lord! By the status reserved with You for al-Hussain عليه السلام, let our souls yearn to the places they treaded, write us down among those who perform the ziyara to them, record us in the record of those who perform the ziyara to al-Hussain, be it from a nearby place or from afar, by the status al-Hussain عليه السلام which he enjoys with You.

These are portions of seeking permission as transmitted to us by Sheikh al-Qummi. You can refer to it and contemplate on its expressions and statements, in its beautiful words which contain references to this context about which I have talked. This context is: Ziyara means yearning to a homeland, to a return to the homeland, the real homeland: Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام, to the true faith of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام, to the true mother of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام, to the blood brother, the gentle friend, the truthful friend..., all are Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام; thus have the narratives told us. The articulating Qur’an is Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام. The truth in all its meanings is Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام. This is why this meaning is manifested when we perform the ziyara of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. It is the return to the homeland. The more the eagerness for the homeland, the deeper the meaning of this ziyara and so are the benefits which those who perform the ziyara earn, be it in the horizon of rewards and recompenses or in that of moral, spiritual and sovereign benefits earned by those who perform the ziyara according to their various intentions, levels of knowledge, power of reasoning, degree of yearning for the homeland; how much is this yearning for the real homeland?

The benefit will then take place and so will the reward and the recompense. This is so because when we go to our homeland, when one returns home after his absence, what will he find?

He will find the family and the loved ones, respect, longing, tears of reunion..., all this makes him feel a certain mood. In this mood, his soul soars. All this is in the material homeland, in the ordinary homeland of human life. As for the real homeland, this is what the Great Comprehensive Ziyara states for us. What does the Great Comprehensive Ziyara say as it talks to us about some aspects which we will define when we return to our real homeland? "... And He made our blessing you...": When we perform the ziyara to them, the label of the ziyara is blessing them and greeting them. "... And He made our blessing you and accepting you as the masters as goodness for our creation," a reference to a creating process, to a genesis change: "... goodness for our creation," for our being created, "... and a purification for our souls, a cleansing for us, and the atonement for our sins," i.e. an atonement for the sins we commit, which is the final level. The highest level is goodness for our creation, for the essence of our existence. "... goodness for our creation, a purification for our souls, a cleansing for us and an atonement for our sins," this is what we shall find when we return to the homeland, to the real homeland, to Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. Perhaps other meanings for this ziyara will become clear to us within the folds of our explanation of the text of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara which we will recite.

I am still in the second introduction, but I am going to start reciting the text because there is an introduction for the text. An inquirer asked the Imam عليه السلام, "Teach me, O son of the Messenger of Allah, a perfectly eloquent statement to say when I perform the ziyara of any of you (members of the Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام)." The Imam عليه السلام said to him, "When you reach the gate," i.e. the gate to the sacred mausoleum, "... stop and pronounce both testimonies (*shahadas*)."
 We will explain both testimonies. "... Stop and pronounce both testimonies;" I am not going here to explain both testimonies because these two testimonies, actually three, will be mentioned in the context of this ziyara. "... so pronounce both testimonies," that is, say, "I testify that there is no god save Allah, the One and Only (God); there is no partner with Him [in His authority], and I testify that Muhammed ﷺ is His servant and messenger," while you have maintained your *ghusul* (ceremonial bath). "So, if you enter and see

the grave, stop and say, ‘*Allahu Akbar!*’ thirty times. Then walk a little bit while maintaining your calm and reverence and make your steps short,” that is, do not make them wide but short. “So, if you enter and see the grave, stop and say ‘*Allahu Akbar!*’ thirty times, then walk a little bit while maintaining your calm and reverence and let your steps be short. Then stop and glorify Allah, the most Exalted One (say ‘*Allahu Akbar!*’) thirty times. Then get close to the grave and repeat ‘*Allahu Akbar!*’ forty times, bringing the total count to one hundred *takbirs*. Then say, ‘Peace with you, O members of the Household of the Prophet...,’ up to the end of the Ziyara.

This discussion will be within my discussion in the second introduction. I am still talking about the second introduction because when I mention the Great Comprehensive Ziyara or talk about the text of the Comprehensive Ziyara, I mean starting from the Imam’s statement: “Peace with you all, O members of the Household of the Prophet...,” up to the end of the text. As regarding these introductions or meanings, which we can articulate when we make a reference to purification, ablution or *ghusul*, these meanings can take a good deal of time. I now find no time to talk about them. I want to speak briefly about them. I want to sum up what I want to speak briefly so we may soon start the original text of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, yet this issue needs an explanation: You stand to repeat “*Allahu Akbar!*” thirty times. Then you step forward and repeat “*Allahu Akbar!*” thirty more times. Then you get close to the grave and repeat “*Allahu Akbar!*” forty more times, totalling one hundred *takbirs*. Here, I halt to explain the meaning of “*Allahu Akbar!*” and the wisdom behind this statement or such pronouncement or ritual... You repeat “*Allahu Akbar!*” thirty times then thirty more times then forty as you step forward the distance from the gate to the sacred graves of the Infallible Imams عليه السلام. First of all, what is meant by pronouncing such *takbir*? When you say, “*Allahu Akbar!*,” what is the objective of our pronouncement of *Allahu Akbar!*? I do not wish to prolong this talk, and I do not want to enter into the linguistic details and the statements made by those who explain such pronouncements.

I go straight to *Al-Kafi* book. This is Volume One of the venerable *Al-Kafi* book. A narrative is reported from our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. A man said, “*Allahu Akbar!*” in his presence. That man was sitting at the meeting place of Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام, and the incident is narrated by Sheikh al-Kulayni through his *isnad* to Ibn Mahboob. Anyway, a man was sitting in the company of Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام, and this man said, “*Allahu Akbar!*” It is a simple matter. The Imam عليه السلام, whereupon, asked him, “What is Allah greater than?” The man said, “He is greater than everything.” The man said, “*Allahu Akbar!*” (Allah is Greater), and the Imam عليه السلام asked him, “Allah is greater than what?,” so the man told him that He is greater than everything. What did the Imam عليه السلام say to him? Abu Abdullah [Imam Ja`far al-Sadiq عليه السلام] said to him, “You have limited Him!” That is, you have set a limit for Allah. A second narrative tells us that the Imam عليه السلام said to the man, “Is there anything beyond Allah?” That is, is there something so you may say that Allah is greater than every thing?! Was there Allah and nothing was with Him? So, what should we say, then? The man asked, “Then how should I say it?” The Imam عليه السلام said, “Allah is greater than being described.”

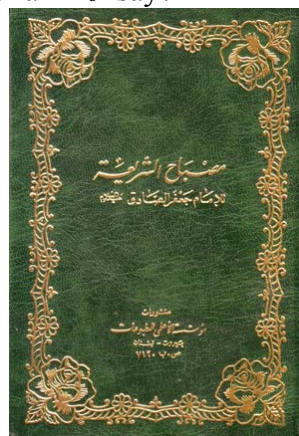
I do not think that I and the viewers find an explanation for the meaning of “*Allahu Akbar!*” more beautiful than this. Was there a thing with Allah so we may say that Allah is greater than every [other] thing/being?! How do we measure things with Allah?! Things have no reality [of their own]; reality belongs to Allah, and everything other than Allah is false. The truth and the reality belong to Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One. Everything is His reflection; every thing is one of His Signs; every thing is one of His Names. Every thing is one of His words, every thing is His servant, and every thing is rendered to Him: “We belong to Allah, and to Him do we return.” We belong to Allah. He owns us. Allah, Praise and Exaltation are His, is not measured by His creation. This precise statement is made by our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام: “Allah is greater than being described.” When we repeat “*Allahu Akbar!*” thirty times, then we repeat it thirty more times followed by forty, we get closer to the sacred grave, and it is there that you recite this ziyara: “Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet!” So, what is meant by “*Allahu Akbar!*” is that Allah is greater than being described. When I say that

Allah is greater than being described, it means I have shut my mind off, locked my heart, closed my conscience and suspended each and every faculty of thinking, of knowing, of trying to realize Him. The ultimate level of knowledge is our inability to know Him; therefore, what do the sacred texts say? You must not contemplate on Him! What should we contemplate on, then? We must contemplate on His Attributes, actions, etc. Contemplation must not be done about Allah: the more you think, the more puzzled you will become, such have our Imams عليه السلام said, “The more contemplating you do, the more puzzled you will be.” These faulty minds cannot absorb Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him. Yes, these minds find evidence to reaching Him. Yes, these minds seek to be honored by His *noor*. Yes, these minds seek the honor of His perfection. But whether they can absorb him, this is not possible at all: The more you contemplate [on Allah], the more puzzled you will be. Allah is greater than being described, not Allah being greater than everything. When was it that there was something with Allah so we may say that Allah is greater than it? Rather, Allah is greater than being described. This is the overall meaning when we say, “*Allau Akbar!*”, for when we offer *takbir* of our Creator, as we enter [sacred Shrines], we bring to memory this meaning: Allah is greater than being described; He is greater than the minds’ ability to absorb. Before Him, the minds stand incapacitated and the hearts faulty. All abilities and all realizations stand at Him incapacitated. All the abilities to learn, to acquire knowledge, to imagine, to envision..., stand incapacitated. It is impossible for these minds to advance one single step in this direction. Let this text always be present before us: Allah is greater than being described. Our minds are smaller, our spirits are smaller, than realizing the real description of Allah. Allah is greater than being described. This is the meaning of *takbir*. Why do we pronounce the *takbir* as we enter [the Shrines]? For what purpose do we pronounce the *takbir* as we enter?

We pronounce the *takbir* as we enter in order, first of all, to remove the barriers and, second, when the barriers are removed before us, this will bring us closer to Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. There are many barriers before us, and this *takbir* contains a reference to a deep meaning. This deep meaning came in narratives of the Household of

Infallibility عليه السلام. This is the book titled *Wasa'il al-Shi'a* in my hand. This narrative is reported by Hisham ibn al-Hakam from Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام. This is Volume Four of *Wasa'il al-Shi'a*. What does the narrative that cites our Imam Musa ibn Ja'far عليه السلام say?

It says that when the Prophet ﷺ was taken during the night [*isrā*] to the heavens, he passed by seven barriers where he articulated the *takbir* at each of them; therefore, Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, enabled him to reach the ultimate degree of esteem. These are the seven *takbirs* which the Prophet ﷺ pronounced at each barrier. The narrative goes on to mention the ultimate esteem, something the meaning of which we do not



know. The “ultimate [degree of] esteem” is known only by Allah, His Messenger ﷺ and Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام because it is a status specifically set for Muhammed ﷺ and Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام.

There is another narrative reported from our Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام which is also reported by Hisham ibn al-Hakam. Hisham asked the Imam عليه السلام, “For what reason has the *takbir* at the time of initiation [of the prayers] been preferably seven times?” By “initiation”, it is meant *takbirat al-ihram* [which is pronounced for starting a prayer ritual] which is pronounced once. But if one wishes to articulate multiple *takbirs*, it is recommended that he must articulate them seven times then start the prayer. This means that these are the *takbirs* of the *ihram*. What is meant by the *takbirs* of initiation are the seven *ihram takbirs*, and they are recommended. The obligatory is one. Hisham goes on to ask Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام, “For what reason is the *takbir* [repeated] seven times in the initiation better? The Imam عليه السلام says, “O Hisham! Allah created seven heavens, and so are the earth levels and the barriers.” These barriers are after the heavens; these barriers are after the Arsh. “O Hisham! Allah created seven heavens, and so are the earth levels and the barriers. So, when the Prophet ﷺ was taken for the night journey, when he ﷺ was taken during the night, he was with regard to his Lord the distance of

two bow lengths or nearer, one barrier was raised up for him, it was removed, lifted, for him. One of its barriers was lifted, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ pronounced the *takbir* and kept reciting the words articulated in the initiation—meaning the highly commendable supplication at the time when the prayer starts—so when the second barrier was lifted for him, he again pronounced the *takbir* and kept doing that until the number of *takbir* times was seven; this is why the *takbir* at the time when starting the prayer is repeated seven times. Hence, it is commendable to pronounce it when the prayer is started. When the second barrier was lifted, he ﷺ pronounced the *takbir* and kept doing so until they were seven *takbirs*. This is why the *takbir* is pronounced seven times at the start of the prayer.” It is highly commendable in the prayers that the one performing it repeats the *takbir* seven times. What is the secret behind that?

As our Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام says, there are, of course, other implications and meanings, but we cannot [now] tackle all implications except what time allows. The narrative here talks about the reason behind legislating the seven *takbirs* at the time when the prayer is started, i.e. the recommended *takbirs* at the time of the *ihram*, when the *ihram takbir* is pronounced for the prayer, when we start the prayer with “*takbirat al-ihram*,” the *ihram takbir*. This was an example, an image, of what was in the barriers world when he ﷺ was taken for his night journey, when he ascended the heavens and reached the stations of the barriers: He used to pronounce the *takbir*, whereupon a barrier would be lifted, until he repeated it seven times, thus causing all the barriers to be lifted. This enabled him ﷺ to reach the station of ultimate esteem, the place which no being other than him ﷺ reached, the place which no existent in the world of possibilities can reach other than him ﷺ. Thus, these *takbirs* were an image for that reality, or for that Divine scene. The *takbirs* came to lift the barriers. The *takbirs* are not only these seven recommended ones. Rather, if we want to count the *takbir* times in the daily prayers, they will reach ninety-five, and there is a full chapter in *Wasa'il al-Shi'a* and in other books about them. These chapters discuss the recommended act of pronouncing the *takbir* ninety-five times in the five prayer services starting from the

takbirat al-ihram and ending with the *tasleem* up to the end of the well known obligatory prayer.

Anyhow, we stand and repeat the *takbir* thirty times, then we repeat it thirty more, then we repeat it forty times. These *takbirs* are for removing or lifting the barriers. Which barriers are they? We now have counted one hundred *takbir* times. Why this number? Numbers carry symbols; otherwise, they would not have been stated and thus drawn. When we repeat the *takbir* thirty times, this *takbir*, carries the meaning to which I have pointed out, that is, Allah is greater than being described, and that the *takbir* carries the symbolism of lifting barriers. I do not wish to start a discussion mentioned by scholars of biography, conduct, self discipline and ethics that the levels for the human self, *nafs*, the psyche, are one hundred, and there is a barrier before each level. This meaning may be sound, but I do not wish to delve deeper into these pursuits. Scholars of biography and conduct say that the human self, the psyche, has one hundred levels, and before each level there is a barrier: If you wish to rise and reach the level of human perfection, you have to ascend one hundred levels. They have stated these levels and steps and talked about how to reach them. I do not wish to delve into these pursuits. Before each level there is a barrier. It may be said that referring to these meanings or implications is possible, but these words are only about possibilities, presumptions. And I do not wish here to point out to other implications or meanings which talk about the origin of the human creation, how mankind was created, that is, that he passed through phases, etc. If the number of these phases is calculated as narrated in citations, it would have reached what is referred to in the text of the ziyara: thirty, another thirty then forty [*takbirs*].

But this comes from the sacred narratives. I do not say that we have texts that talk about these mysteries in particular; rather, [they are deducted] through the borne meanings which we may derive from statements made by Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. The discussion here is about the Tawhid of actions, of Attributes, and of the Self. It means when we articulate the *takbir* thirty times, upon reaching the sacred mausoleum, and we stand at the gate..., after that we start this *thikr*, these first thirty *takbirs*..., this portion of the ritual of the ziyara wants to point out to the Tawhid of actions. The second portion

points to the Tawhid of Attributes. As for the actions, they are the transfigurations of the Attributes. Then we reach the forty [*takbirs*], which is the most perfect figure. There is talk about *al-tawhid al-thati*, the Unity of the Divine Self (the belief that His Essence is One, i.e. He is Unique with no match, peer or partner). There is the Unity of Actions, *al-tawhid al-af'ali* (which refers to the belief that all actions, including human actions, and all phenomena, have their source in His Will). And there is talk about *al-tawhid al-sifati*, the Tawhid of (His Divine) Attributes (a reference to the belief that the Divine Positive Attributes of Allah are not separate from His Essence). After the Self Tawhid, *al-tawhid al-thati*, there will be talk in the ziyara of the Imams عليه السلام, which is the Tawhid of Worship, of adoration. We cannot unify Allah, Praise and Exltation belong to Him, except by unifying Him through these levels: those of His actions, Attributes and Essence. After that comes *al-tawhid al-'ibadi*, the tawhid of worship, of adoration. I do not wish to enter into the details of these contexts because we will talk about Tawhid and about these contexts when we discuss the Unity of His actions, the context of the Unity of His attributes, the Unity of His Essence, and the unity of worship, of adoration. This is so because in this ziyara, we will tackle the meanings of Tawhid, and we will discuss the meanings of *wilayat*, mastership [of the Imams عليه السلام]. When we get to Tawhid, the discussion will be in detail, by the will of Allah Almighty, in this regard according to the statements of the Household of Infallibility عليه السلام.

This completes the second introduction to the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, and the conclusion of the discussion, by the will of Allah Almighty, will take place through the Might and Power of Allah Almighty in the next episode. I solicit your supplication, all of you, and I wish you good and carefree times through the medium of the *wilaya* of Ali عليه السلام and the progeny of Ali عليه السلام, especially since we are spending the days of the month of Rajab, the moth of Ali عليه السلام. Remain in Allah's security.

THIRD EPISODE

THE MEANING OF “ASSALAMO ALAIKOM!”

Peace with you all¹, the mercy of Allah and His blessings. May Allah bring happiness to your days, times and nights during this sacred month, the month of Ali عليه السلام. This is the third episode of our program “The Great Comprehensive Ziyara”.

In both previous episodes, we talked in two introductions about initiating and starting the explanation of the meanings of the Comprehensive Ziyara. The last thing I talked about, when the discussion reached a statement of our Imam, al-Hadi عليه السلام, in the introduction to this Ziyara, in which he عليه السلام said, “... Stop and say ‘*Allahu Akbar!*’ thirty times. Then walk a little bit while maintaining your calm and reverence and make your steps short, then stop and say ‘*Allahu Akbar!*’ thirty more times. Then get close to the grave and repeat saying ‘*Allahu Akbar!*’ forty more times, bringing the number of *takbirs* to a total of one hundred.”

I talked about the meaning of “*Allahu Akbar!*”, that is, sacred narratives have stated that during his ascension to heavens, when the greatest Prophet ﷺ reached the barriers, he used to articulate the *takbir* at every barrier, whereupon that barrier would be removed, lifted, until he reached the station which no other being had ever reached. I talked about this meaning and that the *takbir* is a cause and a way to remove barriers. I pointed out that these *takbirs*: thirty, another thirty then forty, contain a hint and a symbol for the meanings of Tawhid: the Tawhid of Actions, of Attributes, then of the Essence [of the Divine One]. After the forty [*takbirs*], the ziyara

¹ Most texts translate “Assalamo Alaikom” as “peace be upon you.” As a simultaneous interpreter, I used to do the same when some Americans corrected me. The latter said that the proper translation should be “peace with you,” not on or upon you. This is why throughout my books and essays, I have always used “peace with you” instead of “peace upon you”.
– Tr.

comes: The meanings of the Tawhid of worship manifests itself on it. Belief in Tawhid does not materialize except through these levels. I said that in upcoming episodes, when we discuss the meanings of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, I will tackle these pursuits while discussing Tawhid. I repeated this statement, and I now repeat it, that this explanation and these implications depend on two bases:

The First Basis: Tawhid

The Second Basis: Wilaya in its more general meaning: the *wilaya*, mastership, of the Prophet ﷺ and of the Imams عليه السلام, the *wilaya* of the Infallible Ones عليهم السلام.

This is almost the latest of what I stated in the previous episode. Then the narrative says, that is, after you repeat the *takbir* a hundred times, the *takbir al-ihram*, you should say, according to the Imam عليه السلام, “Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message...,” up to the end of the sacred ziyara.

In this episode, I deal with the meaning of “*Assalamo Alaikom!*,” peace with you. This statement is repeated in all ziyaras of the Household of Infallibility عليهم السلام. I, therefore, stop to explain an aspect from the meaning of our statement, as we address our Prophet ﷺ and Imams عليهم السلام saying, “*Assalamo Alaikom!*,” whether we do that from a near distance, before them, in their sacred mausoleums, or from a distant one; what does our statement “*Assalamo Alaikom!*” mean?

The speech of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام carries the characteristics of the Qur’an. The speech of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام carries gusts of the Qur’an. Our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام says, “The Qur’an descended on four things: on the [self-explanatory] statement, a sign, finesse and fact. The statement is for the general public; the sign is for the elite, the finesse is for the *walis*, while the fact is for the Prophets.” This meaning applies to the verses of the Holy Qur’an just as it applies to the speech of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. We recite the following in the Comprehensive Ziyara as we address the Imams عليهم السلام, “Your speech is *noor* (celestial light),” and the Qur’an is described as being *noor*, while *noor* is one, its source is one, its fountainhead is one;

therefore, the speech of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام also falls within the scope of this statement. It contains what falls within the scope of a sign, and it contains what falls within the scope of finesse. Some of it falls within the scope of facts. We stop at the limit of this statement. The Imam عليه السلام has said, “As for the statement, it is for the general public.” We sense something carrying the meaning of a sign through the statements of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. As for finesse and factual statements, these, as far as we are concerned, are far fetched. This is something which we cannot hunt with our nets, nor can our minds direct themselves to its field or courtyard. Finesse statements are for the elite. Facts are for the Prophets. For these, there is another talk, other statements, symbols and things with which we cannot be fully knowledgeable. We turn within the orbit of the statement and may sense something of the meanings of the sign. The Imam عليه السلام said, “The statement is for the general public; the sign is for the elite.”

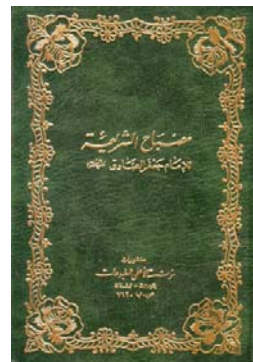
We turn within the orbit of the statement, for we belong to the general public that faces the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. When I say so, I include the speaker and listener alike. We may sense something of the sign through the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. As for the finesse statements and the facts, they are far fetched, things which we cannot reach; therefore, I stop, while explaining the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, at this limit, at the limit of the statement and at sensing, groping, for a sign. In this episode, as I said a short while ago, I will try to explain aspects of the meaning of “*Assalamo Alaikom!*”

When we say, “*Assalamo Alaikom!*”, according to the Arabs’ language, the “salam” means salvation. When we contrast “salam” with war, it means redemption from the evils of war, from the damages of war and from the perils of war. And when we contrast “salam” with sickness, it is peace and safety versus illness. Salam, then, means here redemption of handicaps, pains, ailments and everything the consequence of which is the suffering of one who is afflicted by disease. This applies to everything. When the heart is described as being “saleem” [a derivation of the word “salam”], such heart is redeemed of doubts, suspicions and any other defects, any darkness, any barrier separating it from Allah. So, *salam*, peace, is

redemption. Salam is purity. When we say that a thing is “salim” [another derivation of the word “salam”], it means it is pure, having no defect. Peace, then, is redemption. Peace, then, is purity. Peace, then, is perfection; therefore, one of His Names, the most Praised and Exalted One, is “al-Salam,” the peace. I here would like to stop to explain the meaning of His Name, the most Praised and Exalted One. The meaning of this sacred Name may become clear during my statements throughout this episode, but if we win an opportunity to explain the meanings of Allah’s Most Beautiful Names [or Attributes], I wish we will have such an opportunity to explain the meanings of these Names as much as we can during the nights of the blessed month of Ramadan if I am granted the ability to do it. Salam, then, is redemption. Salam is perfection. Salam is the absence of defects. Salam is purity. Such it is in the language of the Arabs; such is the linguistic meaning of “salam”. But what about the meaning intended when we greet each other with “salam”? When I salute someone with this “salam” and say, “Assalamo Alaikom!,” it means granting peace to the person I am addressing, that he will get nothing from me but peace. A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand people are safe. From what aspect are they safe? Their blood is safe, their lives are safe, their wealth is safe, their belongings are safe, their matters are safe, their honor is safe... A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand people are safe. It is as if I say to you, “Assalamo Alaikom!,” or when you say the same to me, it is a statement, an explanation, a message, a pledge or a covenant between two persons that each of them is safe from the other. Salam means security. It means, “I grant you security; no harm shall reach you from me.” This is the overall meaning of the statement “Assalamo Alaikom!” which we pronounce so often.

There is a narrative cited in *Musbah al-Shari`a*. This narrative cites our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام talking about the meaning of “salam”. What does this sacred narrative say?

“Al-Salam is one of the Names of Allah Almighty which He placed as a trust for His creation to use its meaning in their deals, trusts, additions, the truthfulness of their companion-



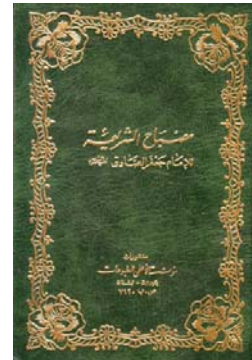
ship and the soundness of their comradery. If you wish to put the Salam where it belongs and to carry out its meaning, you must fear Allah, and let your religion, heart and mind be safe; do not pollute them with the darkness of transgressions. Let your Guardians [angels] be safe. Do not harm them; do not cause them to be bored by you; do not let them be alienated from you on account of your ill treatment of them. Do the same to your friend then to your enemy. If one's close person is not safe from one's mischief, that who is the furthest from him that is more apt to be safe? If one does not place the Salam where it belongs, there will be neither Salam nor the granting of salvation, and he will be lying in his Salam even if he disseminates it among people." The talk here is about the meaning of the Salam, the greeting, which is so often repeated by people; therefore, the Imam عليه السلام says, "...and he will be lying in his Salam even if he disseminates it among people." This is one of the narratives and recognized ahadith which have reached us from the Prophet ﷺ and which commend for us the venues that open the paths to Paradise; what are they?

The Prophet ﷺ says, "The best person among you is the one who feeds others, who disseminates the greeting [of *Assalamo Alaikom!*] and prays while people are asleep." Disseminating the Salam is one of the venues, one of the means, that open the path to Paradise, one of the causes and means that result in mercy descending on man. Disseminating the Salam greeting is one of the norms of conduct which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Imams عليهم السلام have recommended. Disseminating such a greeting means spreading the message of peace. It means promoting peace. It means greeting the young and the old. This is the label of humbleness. This is the label of good manners. How do we find the evidence for one's good manners? The label of one's good manners and of humbleness in one's practical behavior is disseminating this greeting. It is a pleasant countenance. Absolutely, the disseminating of this Salam is not done when one is frowning, when one's face is gloomy. Disseminating the peace greeting is accompanied by a pleasant countenance. It is accompanied by a relaxed face. Disseminating this greeting is the label of good manners, of humbleness. The Imam عليه السلام, in this narrative, explains to us the meaning of Salam. I shall

pass by the narrative in a hurry; otherwise, it really needs a lengthy halt. Thus did the Imam عليه السلام say, “Al-Salam is one of the Names [Attributes] which Allah Almighty entrusted to His creation.”

Al-Salam is one of the Names [Attributes] of Allah Almighty. What is the transfiguration of this Name? It is mercy. Mercy comes from peace. The [other] transfigurations (manifestations) of this Name are: love; love comes from peace. The transfigurations of this Name are: high virtuous manners. “Al-Salam is one of the Names [Attributes] which Allah Almighty entrusted to His creation.” This means that the transfigurations of this Sacred Name are: the power of this Name was entrusted among the creation of Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him. All the characteristics we have, all the energies, all abilities, all capabilities in humans and in non-humans, in all these beings..., are transfigurations, images; where do these images initiate from? Where does this outpouring come from? It comes from the Names of Allah, Praise and exaltation belong to Him. Allah’s Names are the ones that let life flow within us. Allah’s Names are the ones that manifest on us all meanings of energy, all meanings of vitality, all meanings of perfection, and everything a being has actually comes from the Names of the most Praised and Exalted One. “Al-Salam is one of the Names [attributes] of Allah Almighty which He entrusted to His creation.” For what purpose did He entrust it to them? The purpose is their application of its meaning, so that this meaning may manifest itself on mankind. Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, did not create an ill-mannered human, nor did he create a well-mannered human. Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, deposited in man the ability to be good-mannered and to be ill-mannered. There is the power in man; this power is the ability of one to be good-mannered. Such an individual is one who is in harmony with his nature on which the meaning of Salam manifests itself, which is one of the His Names, Praise and Exaltation are His. When one is ill-mannered, he drifts in the opposite direction because of the meaning of peace, the peace that manifests itself in his nature. Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, deposited in the human nature this very meaning; therefore, the Imam عليه السلام says, “Al-Salam is one of the Names [Attributes] of Allah Almighty which He entrusted to His creation.”

“Entrusted” means incorporated into His creation’s nature; for what purpose? He has done so in order that they may implement its meaning, so that these meanings may manifest themselves in their daily life, so they may use its meaning; where may they use it? They may do so in their transactions, trusts, additions, the truthfulness of their comradery among them and the soundness of their companionship. These are the matters which man needs in his daily life. What does he need? He needs these matters: deals, trusts, additions [to what things he already has], i.e. anything related to and connected with daily living affairs, and “the truthfulness of their companionship,” that is, the friendships and inter-relations, be they through kinship or non-kinship, and “the soundness of their comradery.” It means peace needs people to fulfill these meanings. When one’s manners are good, when one’s companionship is good, when he is amicable upon meeting others, surely his deals, trusts, additions, friendships, relationships and comradery will all be beautiful. Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, incorporated these meanings into man’s nature. Man is the one who can get these meanings to the practical reality in his daily life. “Al-Salam is one of the Names of Allah Almighty which He entrusted to His beings so they may apply its meaning.” What does it mean to use its meaning? It means they apply in in their deals, trusts, additions and the soundness of their comradery among themselves and that of their companionship. In other words, man becomes, through these meanings, fault-free: His deals will be sound, his trusts will be fulfilled and complete, his additions have no shortcomings, all his friendships will be filled with loyalty and truthfulness, and his comradery will be beautiful; this is the meaning of Salam.



When peace comes and resides into man’s heart, these meanings will be manifested. When one is peaceful with his tongue, he wants to underscore this meaning, emphasize this meaning, to those whom he greets. He will then say, “My deals with you will be sound, my trusts safeguarded, the friendship sound and the comradery beautiful, for you will not get any harm, and you will not suffer anything wrong from me. This is so because a Muslim is one from whose

tongue and hand (actions) others are safe. You will be safe from my tongue and hand (actions).” Then the narrative continues: “If you want to place peace where it belongs,” that is, if you want to let peace just as Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, wants it, if you want to put it in its real place... “...if you want to put peace where it belongs and carries out its meaning...,” what should you do? “You should fear Allah.” So, the meaning of peace is fear of Allah, i.e. piety. The explanation above is summed up with this word. The Salam is fear of Allah. So, when I salute you, what is required by this Salam? I say, “*Assalamo Alaikom!*” It means, “O one whom I am greeting, I shall deal with you according to the principle of fear of Allah, and this will let your possessions and life be safe from me. Your affairs will be safe because I will then deal with you based on fear of Allah.” But does this matter actually happen in reality?! I am here not talking about the practical aspect, I am in the process of explaining a narrative and highlighting words which reached us as statements made by our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام: “If you wish to place Salam where it belongs and carry out its meaning—the meaning of Salam—you should fear Allah.” So, the meaning of Salam is fearing Allah. It is fearing Him as one deals with His servants—so they may be safe from his mischief—the first thing that is safe, what is it? If peace is piety, what is the first thing that is safe in as far as you are concerned? “Let your religion, heart and mind be safe,” let your creed, heart and way of thinking be safe from your own mischief.

The Imam عليه السلام mentioned these three meanings. He said, “Let your religion be safe;” the safety of one’s religion is the soundness of its roots and branches; otherwise, how can your religion be safe? The safety of creed has been explained for us by the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم who said, “I have left among you the Book of Allah (Qur'an) and my `Itra, my Ahlul-Bayt.” Anyone who looks for the soundness of his religion, it is found only through this way: “I am leaving among you the two Weighty Things: the Book of Allah and my `Itra, my Ahlul-Bayt.” “I am leaving among you the Two Weighty Things.” “I am leaving among you that which, if you uphold, you will never stray after me.” “You will never stray;” what does “never” here mean? It means emphatic denial. It means: “You will never, ever,

ever, stray.” The safety of religion is upholding the Book (Qur’an) and the `Itra. “And let your religion be safe from you,” then, “and so should your heart and mind.” Where is man? The reality of man is in his heart and mind. The reality of a human is not in the clothes he wears or body or food and drink for which he toils day and night. Where is man’s reality? It is in his heart and mind. So, if peace is fear of Allah—“And if you want to place the peace (Salam) where it belongs and to carry out its meaning, you should fear Allah, and let your religion, heart and mind be safe from you; do not pollute them with the darkness of sins.” So, the first peace and the first desired safety is that of the religion, of the heart and of the mind, and this is a lengthy topic. The safety of the heart and the mind: This has been taught by Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام and they can explain this statement. Salam is fear of Allah, piety, and the first thing which must be safe is: your religion, heart and mind. The Imam عليه السلام says, “Do not pollute them.” He means: Do not pollute your heart or mind, and also do not pollute your religion. “Do not pollute them” means: do not pollute these three things; do not pollute your religion with what?

It is polluted by deviation from the Book (Qur’an) and from the `Itra (Prophet’s Progeny). If you deviate from the Qur’an and `Itra, you will have polluted your religion, and you will no longer have any religion left. “And let your religion, heart and mind be safe from you, and do not pollute them with the darkness of sins, and let your Guardians [angels] be safe, too.” The “Guardians” are the guardian angels in charge of protecting you, the angels of recording good and bad deeds, these are the angels that keep a record of what you do. “And let your Guardians be safe.” How can there be safety and peace with the Guardians? “Do not harm them.” It means do not hurt them psychologically. “Do not harm them, and do not let them feel bored with you,” let them not feel bored by you. And “Do not let them feel alienated from you, do not harm, do not bore and do not alienate them,” with what? This is done with sins or inattention. They are hurt, they are bored, and they are alienated from you because of what? It is because of your bad intentions, the times of inattention, the wasting of time, the committing of transgressions. “Do not harm them, do not bore them, and do not alienate them from

you by your ill treatment of them.” Anything bad you do is an act of such ill treatment.

Of course our narratives relate that when the Imams عليه السلام are asked how the angels of good and bad deed know about one’s intentions, they say, “If one entertains a good thought, a sweet perfume emanates from him which the angels smell. The angels smell the good deeds. And if he entertains bad thoughts, a foul smell emanates from him, an ugly one which the angels of bad deeds recognize, so they record these bad intentions in their records if a practical effect results from them. Thus do they recognize the good and the bad intentions. It means if they detect the foul odor, they will put him under surveillance in order to see if he carries out this intention or not. If he avoids it, it will be written down for him as a good deed, if he turns away from that bad intention. If he does it, it will be written down as a sin against him; otherwise, the angels do not record intentions. Yes, these good intentions come as a sign of the mercy of Allah: When they are there, they are written down as good deeds. But the bad intentions are not recorded: If he shies away from them, it will be recorded as a good deed for him in his record of good deeds. But when he commits this bad intention, it is then that the bad deed is recorded. Even this bad deed, according to some of our narratives, remains with the angel for several hours, for many hours, waiting in anticipation that the individual would repent so he, the angel, would not write down this bad deed. If many hours pass while this individual does not repent this ugly action which he committed, it will then be written down in the record of his bad deeds. This is a sign of mercy of the most Praised and Exalted One. Such is His outgiving, favor and generosity. “Let your Guardians be safe from you; do not harm them, do not bore them and do not alienate them from you on account of your ill treatment of them.” Who is next to be safe from you? “Then [do likewise to] your friend then your enemy.” Even your enemy: You must not initiate any harm against him. If your enemy initiates his hostility, avoid his harm, but do not start to harm your enemy. Such is the behavior of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. Even on the day of Ashura: On that day which caused Allah’s Arsh to shake, al-Hussain عليه السلام did not start fighting those folks. He said, “I hate to start fighting them.” Even at that moment. Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام

are the symbol of peace, of love, of affection; therefore, through what would loyalty to them be? Loyalty to them is done through affection. So, what is the reward of their conveying the Message? It is affection. Affection means our saluting Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. This killing, violence and terrorism are the characteristics of the enemies of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام, the distinction of those who assaulted the house of Fatima عليها السلام, and this has been going on till our time.

Peace is the label of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. Peace is the faith of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. “Then your friend, then your enemy.” The Imam عليه السلام goes on to say, “One from whom the closest individual is not safe, the one who is the furthestmost is more apt to it.” He means that you must try to get peace to reach one who is close to you. If this is not possible, you must at least get it to reach the furthestmost individual. “One who does not place peace in such places, he has neither peace nor safety.” He means that if peace does not carry these meanings, the Imam says, “If one does not put peace in such places, he has neither peace nor safety, and he will be lying in his greeting even if he disseminates it among people.” So, this is the real meaning of the Salam greeting which we exchange. These are the words of our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. Although the narrative needs more explaining than this, I cannot prolong my halt at it or keep on discussing it, for there are many matters with which I have to deal. Now, what have we understood from this narrative? This narrative lets us understand the meaning of Salam. This narrative, as you have noticed, talks about the peace that is established among us. The Imam عليه السلام thus speaks: “One who does not place the Salam in these places...,” that is, the places indicated above..., etc. The Imam عليه السلام talked about the deals, trusts, additions, friendship and companionship. The Imam عليه السلام talked about peace; what does peace mean? “So fear Allah.” He said, “If you want to place peace where it belongs and carry out its meaning, you must fear Allah.” Then he عليه السلام said, “If you want to put peace where it belongs and carry out its meaning, you must fear Allah.” Then he said, “Let your religion, heart and mind be safe.” He عليه السلام also said, “Do not pollute them with the darkness of sins.” And he said, “Let your Guardians be safe; do not harm them, do not bore them, and do not alienate them from you with your ill treatment of them, then your friend is safe then your enemy.”

All these meanings exist in this word, in the word which you and I exchange. Allah knows best how much of these meanings we give this word. In other words, is there a presence for these meanings in our life?! Allah knows best. The practical reality says that there is no presence for all these meanings in the Salam which we try to disseminate among the public. Anyhow, we hope our Salam would be thus, and we plead to the Imam of our Time (عج) to let our Salam which we exchange be just that, although the practical reality says that the Salam among people, among us, and by "us" I mean those who love Ahlul-Bayt (عليه السلام), is only a matter of courtesy. What about the peace among us, I and you? I am talking about myself before talking about others. Does the peace which I mention include these meanings? The practical reality says that the Salam which we send out, or try to disseminate among the public, or try to respond to it among ourselves, does not include these meanings. Thus does the practical reality say. What does our Imam (عليه السلام) say? "If one does not place the Salam where it belongs, there will be neither Salam nor the granting of salvation." Such is not called Salam. It is clatter. "And he will be lying in his Salam even if he disseminates it among the public." I do not wish here to tackle an ethical issue, nor do I want to be a preacher in explaining this narrative. The reason that prompted me to quote this narrative, and to spend some time halting at it, is to clarify the meaning of the Salam among us; is it thus deep? If the peace among us is thus deep, what would you say about the Salam with which Ahlul-Bayt (عليه السلام) are greeted?! How deep is it?!

This is the reason that prompted me to quote this narrative. I explained this narrative and halted at it desiring to reach this point: If the Salam among us, between myself and yourself, I am a servant of Allah and so are you, we all are servants of Ahlul-Bayt (عليه السلام)..., if the Salam between you and me is as deep as that and in this meaning, when this meaning is not there, the Imam (عليه السلام) says, "There will be neither peace nor salvation and he would be lying in his Salam even if he disseminates it among the public." The talk is about the public, the general public. So, how deep is the meaning of Salam when I recite the following in this Ziyara: "Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم)"? Even if I want to remain at the level of the

statement, not going beyond this level, if I want to stop at the level of the statement, this means that the meanings mentioned in this narrative have to take another depth with the Imams عليه السلام. So, when I greet you and you greet me, all deals, trusts, additions, friendships and comradeships... must be safe. I have to deal with you based on fear of Allah. My religion, heart and mind must be safe. The Guardians must be safe from me. My friend and enemy must be safe from me. So, how should addressing Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام be?!

These hearts have to be safe with Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. These minds have to be safe with Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. So, life has to be safe with Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. One person from among his companions asked Imam al-Ridha عليه السلام, “O son of the Messenger of Allah! What is my status with you?” The Imam عليه السلام said, “Look at your heart: How much of a status I enjoy with you? I have for you the same.” Look at your heart. Look at these implications... This implication may sum up the meaning to which I want to point out: what the Salam among us means: When I am loyal to you, upon greeting you, Brother, while being loyal to you, you will likewise reciprocate with the same extent of loyalty. When I am not loyal to you, you will not be loyal to me. When we salute the Imams عليه السلام, the same meaning is implied which narratives state. When one says, “Labbayk!”, be it when one performs the pilgrimage or the `umra, do not narratives tell us that Allah says to many of those who thus articulate, “There is no positive response for you with Me, nor do I grant you happiness”? “*Labbayka Allahomma, Labbayk!*” (O Lord! Here I am!) The answer comes, “There is no positive response for you with Me, nor do I grant you happiness”. “What status do I have with you, O son of the Messenger of Allah?” He عليه السلام said, “Look at your heart: How much of a status do I enjoy with you? I have for you the same.”

When we salute the Imams عليه السلام with “Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet,” their response will come according to your status with them. “I testify that you hear my speech and respond to my greeting.” How much [veneration] do we have in our hearts for the Imams عليه السلام? The response will come according to the level of such a status which we have for them. If these hearts are not loyal to the Imams عليه السلام, the answer will be commensurate with the greeting.

What sort of greeting is it? If you are greeted, what result comes from it? If the greeting is articulated, the response to it will be equal or better. Definitely, Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام respond with what is better, with what is better than the best. But when the greeting is good, how would Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام respond to it? A bondmaid once greeted Imam al-Sajjad عليه السلام with a fragrant bouquet, that is, she one day gave him a rose, according to some narratives; that day was an Eid. She picked one rose and gave it to him. How did the Imam respond to this greeting? He set her free seeking the pleasure of Allah. He greeted her with what is much better than her greeting. Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام respond to our greetings with what is better, with what is better than the best. But our greeting must be good. When we say, “Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet ﷺ,” does this salutation contain these meanings?! This means that our dealing with Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام must be good, our love for Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام must be quite truthful. What is our dealing with Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام? Our dealing with Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام is based on knowledge. What is our knowledge? Is our knowledge of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام as the Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام want it, based on the speech of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, or does it rely on ahadith transmitted by this man and that in the books of those who differ in their views from us? Or is it based on a statement decorated by this man and that who stuffed his brains with the speech of newspapers and magazines? Where do we get the knowledge of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام from?

When we salute Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام with, “Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet!,” this peace must meet the conditions stated above, and all this must be according to the level of the statement because this narrative before us is on the level of the statement: It explains the meaning of the word “Salam”, conditioning the Salam between myself and yourself, Brother, between myself and yourself, sister, that this greeting between us is based on what? It is based on the truthfulness of the deal, on good manners, on loyalty, and on piety. Each of these meanings, which are distant in our practical life, remains to be distant in its full meanings. They do not exist in our life except as sketches and phantoms. This is the truth, so much so that even when we talk so much about religion, about divine knowledge, we do not have these

meanings except as phantoms, pale shadows and dim images. The facts do not exist, and this is the serious calamity in which we live. This is the truth. This is the truth which we live day and night. No, wonder, then, when our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام says, “Times pass by the heart of a believer like worn out dry leather, empty of *iman*, empty of disbelief.” The narrative talks about a believer of the high levels. Hours pass by his heart; so, what would you say about our hearts as years and years pass by, not hours, as these hearts remain empty of *iman*, empty of disbelief, with the exception of the clatter of the tongue, of pale shadows and dim actions which we put under the label of piety, righteousness and other true labels of which we own only dim images in our life? Anyhow, I do not wish to elaborate my discussion of this subject, but the talk about the Comprehensive Ziyara, when we greet the Imams عليهم السلام with “*Assalamo Alaikom!*”, this greeting has to be truthful: truthful in knowledge, truthful in loyalty, truthful in saluting. We must make our life, our minds, our hearts, our life-spans, our wealth..., everything: our time, our health... in the service of Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله and the Progeny of Muhammed عليهم السلام. “*Assalamo Alaikom!*” must bear the knowledge which they require, the knowledge that is based on what they عليهم السلام said, not on what those who differ from Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام have said, not what is stated in newspapers, magazines and different books which have nothing to do with the Household of Infallibility and have no relationship with the Book (Qur’an) and the Progeny عليهم السلام or the speech which is based on false criteria originating from the human taste, foolish commendations and standards, and the like of this is a lot. It is pronounced from the pulpits, it is said on satellite television channels. It is stated in books and everywhere. Where is the knowledge of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام?

The knowledge of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام exists in the Qur’an and `Itra. The knowledge of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام reaches us from Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. Knowledge must be verified so the peace greeting may at least have a measure of honesty. When I say, “*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet!” I have at least some knowledge issued by Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام, not by individuals who claim that they are on the line of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام while they fill their buckets from everywhere other than Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. They fill their buckets from everywhere, but

when talk comes about Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, doubts and suspicions are raised. the speech of Ahlul-bayt عليه السلام is clear, frank and obvious, and the text of the Comprehensive Ziyara is one of such clear texts; therefore, I have selected this sacred text. When we say, “*Assalamo Alaikom!*,” we have to realize the first condition: knowledge, at least knowledge with limits, at least this knowledge is the minimum. But from where does this knowledge come?! It comes from the Qur’an and `Itra عليه السلام: “... So long as you adhere to them, you shall never stray after me [after my demise] at all.” From here, the meaning of “*Assalamo Alaikom!*” becomes clear as we address our Imams عليه السلام, whether it is in the Great Comprehensive Ziyara or in any other ziyara, in the sacred Ashura Ziyara, or in any other ziyara, or it may be in a salutation which we compose. We salute the Imams عليه السلام from a distance or closely, or when it is a salutation which we recite at the end of the prayer as we salute the greatest Prophet ﷺ with “*Assalamo Alaikom, O Prophet! Assalamo Alaina* (peace with us) and with Allah’s righteous servants. *Assalamo Alaikom; Assalamo Alaikom...*” This Salam is directed at the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Purified Progeny عليه السلام. Prayer, from the beginning to end, is a transfiguration of the Names of Allah which are apparent in the realities of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. By the will of Allah, we will find time to explain the meanings of prayer which we perform according to statements made by the Household of Infallibility عليه السلام.

“*Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of Infallibility!*” Such a salutation has to stem from knowledge, at least from a minimum extent of knowledge, and this knowledge comes from the same pur fountainhead: the Qur’an and the `Itra عليه السلام. This meaning, this horizon, this is the horizon of the statement: Up to now, we have not exited this horizon. There are other meanings, but time has no mercy. Time is limited, while the pursuits are many, and the Great Comprehensive Ziyara is also lengthy. I try to explain what I can explain, for nobody is sure of his end, nobody ensures any matter relevant to his life-span. I wish to explain these meanings to my brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, those who love Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, perhaps I earn some benefit and perhaps they, too, may gain some benefit. Perhaps we will live some of our time, pick some of time to remember the hadith of the Household of Infallibility عليه السلام.

“*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet!” This salutation must stem from knowledge. This knowledge means loyalty, the fulfillment of pledges made to them ﷺ. This and other talk is plentiful, and it falls within the scope of the statement. I cannot tackle this narrative and apply to it the testimonies of dealing with the Imams ﷺ, be it in deals, trusts, additions, friendships, comraderies, fear of Allah... and all other meanings. Each of these meanings has a meaning that is compared with it in our dealing with Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ. If we want to explain all these meanings, we will consume a great deal of time. But I used this method: I took this narrative and explained the meaning of *Salam* among the servants of Allah, among Allah’s creation, between myself and yourself, and it became clear how deep the meaning is, although I did not explain the narrative in its full sense, not even from this aspect. Yet it became clear to us how deep the meaning is. Thereupon, I followed this standard. Based on this, I made this reference; so, how deep the meaning of peace can be with Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ?

I said that all this falls within the horizon of the statement. If I depart a little bit from the horizon of the statement to that of the sign, and the sign is just a sign, the sign does not need an explanation. Despite all of this, we do not take from the sign except its ends. We are at a level. When I talk, I talk from my own self, for I and my peers are at a level where we do not take of the sign other than its ends and through the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ. As regarding deep signs, this is something for me and for my peers which is far fetched: I will never be able to reach it. I shall hold on to the loose ends of the sign’s horizon. These are loose strings at the tip of the covers’ ends, at the ends of carpets, the strings that are at the end of a prayer rug or at the end of the covering sheet with which one covers himself. They are called *sharashir*. I hold on to the *sharashir* of the sign’s horizon, I point, for example, to what is contained in the sacred *Al-Kafi*. I said, during both previous episodes, that the implications of the Comprehensive Ziyara exist in the sacred *Al-Kafi* book.

The narrative is the 39th in a chapter on the birth and demise of the Prophet ﷺ. The narrative is reported by our mentor, Abu Ja`far al-Kulayni through his own *isnad* from Dawood ibn Katheer al-Riqqi

who said, “I asked Abu Abdullah, peace with him, ‘What is the meaning of A Salutation on the Messenger of Allah?’ that is, when we salute the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, when we salute Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام “O you who believe! Send blessings unto him and salute him with a perfect salutation” (Qur'an, 33:56). Of course a salutation has two connotations: The first is peace. And the second is surrendering to his command. The talk here is about the Salam. Dawood ibn Katheer al-Riqqi asks Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام about the meaning of saluting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, or about the meaning of Peace with the Messenger of Allah, if it is by way of an address between two persons which may be alright in some cases. But if the Salam on the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is in the form of an address between two persons, it may sometimes be alright. But if the salutation of the Messenger of Allah is a label, this salutation will itself be the subject [rather than the predicate]. Dawood ibn Katheer al-Riqqi asks the Imam عليه السلام about the meaning of saluting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the Comprehensive Ziyara: “Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet!” What does this salutation mean? Our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام explains for us. He said, “When Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, created His Prophet, his wasi, daughter and both his sons—meaning al-Hassan and al-Hussain, for they are sons of the Messenger of Allah in all reality—when Allah, the most Blessed and the most Exalted One, created His Prophet, his wasi, his daughter, both his sons and all Imams—up to the Imam of our Time, peace with him—and He created their Shi`as, He undertook the covenant from them that they should be patient, they should persevere, and they should maintain their grounds—He took on them the covenant, each according to his ability. Is the covenant that is taken from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the same as that taken from me and you?

There is a covenant taken from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام, and there is a covenant taken from the Shi`as. Definitely, the covenant taken from the Seal of Prophets, the Master of Beings عليه السلام, is accountable. We do not know what the context of this covenant is. Anyhow, the narrative has a hint, a sign, and I said that signs are hard to explain. A short while ago, I said that I only

hold on to the *sharashir* of the horizon of signs through these narratives. “When Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, created His Prophet, his *wasi*, daughter and both sons and all Imams عليهم السلام, creating their Shi`as, He undertook the covenant from them that they should be patient, persevere, maintain their grounds and fear Allah, and He promised them...” A short while ago we talked about the meaning of *Salam*, that it contains fear of Allah. This context supports this one. “... to fear Allah, and He promised them to deliver the Blessed Land and the Secure Sanctuary to them, to, relieve them of their enemy, and the earth will be altered by Allah, through peace, securing everything in it, there is no harm in it at all: There is no contention in it for any of their enemies. They shall have in it whatever they please. The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم undertook the covenant thus from all Imams عليهم السلام and their Shi`as—meaning another covenant from the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم—saluting him, that is, saluting the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم—is a reminding of the same covenant and a renewal of it by Allah, perhaps He, the most Great, the most Mighty, will speed up the peace for you with everything it includes—a clear and obvious sign to the meaning of *Salam*.

Here is the sacred book, *Al-Kafi*, the jewel of hadith books. And here is the statement of our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام, the jewel of speech and of hadith. Dawood ibn Katheer al-Riqqi asks the Imam عليه السلام about the meaning of saluting the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, and we, too, wish to know the meaning of *Salam* in the Comprehensive Ziyara: “*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet!” What is this “Salam” which we articulate? What does the narrative say? It says: Two covenants were taken from us: The first covenant was taken by Allah; thus the narrative says: “When Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, created His Prophet, his *wasi*, daughter and both sons and all Imams, creating their Shi`as, He undertook the covenant from them that they should be patient, they should persevere, and they should maintain their grounds, and he promised them...” This is the covenant of Allah. What did He promise them? “... to hand them over the Blessed Land.” When will that be? It will happen after they persevere, hold their ground and fear Allah. The Imam عليه السلام

points out here to a verse from Surat Āli Imran, the last verse of this blessed Sura (Qur’anic Chapter) number 200:

200. O you who believe!
 Persevere in patience and
 constancy: Vie in such
 perseverance; strengthen
 each other and fear Allāh so
 you may prosper.

٢٠٠ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا
 وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

What did the covenant obligate them?

“They must persevere, maintain their grounds and fear Allah.” These meanings need to be explained. I do not wish to stop to explain them but to clarify the rest of the narrative: “He promised them to deliver the Blessed Land and the Secure Sanctuary to them, to let the ever-Inhabited House descend for them, and to show them the raised Ceiling.” When will this take place? It will take place during the days of the righteous government the start of which will be during the days of the Imam of our Time, al-Hujja (عج), following his sacred reappearance. These meanings will be realized when there is a Return, the return of the Prophet ﷺ and the Imams عليه السلام, because the program of the Hujja Imam, Allah’s peace and blessing with him, is to open the gates between the world of martyrdom and those of the world of the unseen, so that man on earth will establish a link with the world of the unseen. How will these gates be opened? There is a formative connection. There will be many cosmic changes. The cosmos will change, and things will happen. Change will take place. This earth will turn into another earth, a blessed earth, an earth having characteristics that differ from those of the earth on which we now live. This earth will be replaced by another earth the nature of which will be different, one the characteristics of which change; therefore, the animals’ nature will be different: There will be no drought, no shortage of water, no environmental pollution. The earth will change [into a] blessed earth where there will be no earthquakes, nor will there be volcanoes. The earth will bring about its dearest ones: He promised them “to deliver the Blessed Land and the Secure Sanctuary to them, to let the ever-Inhabited House

descend for them, and to show them the raised Ceiling.” The “Secure Sanctuary,” the Extended Secure Sanctuary... This Secure Sanctuary is the extended one. Where does it extend from? It extends from Mecca to Medina up to Ali عليه السلام, i.e. to Najaf, to Kerbala, to Toos..., such is the Extended Sanctuary. “He promised them to deliver the Blessed Land and the Secure Sanctuary to them, to let the ever-Inhabited House descend for them.” And He will let the ever-Inhabited House descend for them, such is the change in earth that will take place, and such is the connection between the worlds of the unknown and those of martyrdom.

The Ever-Inhabited House is in the fourth heavens, but the veils, barriers and cosmic system will change. There will be communication between this world and those worlds: “He will let the ever-Inhabited House descend for them and show them the raised Ceiling.” The Raised Ceiling, the high worlds that were raised above us, i.e. they were lifted high above, there are veils and barriers that separate us from them. They were raised above us due to the higher nature of those worlds and to the lower nature in which we live in this world. When the Imam reappears, when the State of Righteousness starts and the cosmic changes begin, this world will rise. This lower world will rise. Many barriers that separate this natural world from the divine world will be removed. The Reappearance issue is not political. It is an issue of governance, an issue of social reform. This is part of the issue. The issue is greater than that. Allah, Praise and exaltation belong to Him, brings about the meaning of succession: succession on earth. The vicegerent of Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, will be on earth. This vicegerent must be in touch with all sides, be they in the natural material world or in the upper one. Should this vicegerent carry some of the characteristics of the one whom he succeeded? “He promised them to deliver the Blessed Land and the Secure Sanctuary to them, to relieve them of their enemy,” up to the end of the narrative. When will this be, then, as the narrative say? “The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله undertook from all the Imams عليهم السلام a covenant in this regard.” So, there are two covenants:

A covenant from Allah, and a covenant from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Imam عليه السلام says, “Peace with him, with the Messenger of Allah, and peace with the Imams, is a reminding of the same covenant and a renewal of it with Allah.” This salutation, saluting the Imams عليهم السلام, is for renewing that covenant, a reminding of that covenant: “Perhaps He, the most Great, the most Exalted One, will speed it up and escalate the peace for you all with everything it contains.” So, the *Salam* is this: The symbolism of *Salam* is this. The meaning of *Salam*, then, is renewing a covenant with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The renewing of the covenant with the Messenger of Allah, in its actual and practical meaning, is renewing the covenant with the Imam of our Time (عج). If we want to renew the covenant with Allah and with His Messenger ﷺ, who do we renew the covenant with? We renew the covenant with the Imam of our time, peace and blessings of the Almighty with him. “O Allah! Make me acquainted with Yourself, for if You do not make me acquainted with Yourself, I will not get to know Your Messenger, Your Prophet! Make me acquainted with Your Messenger, for if You do not make me acquainted with Your Messenger, I would not know Your Hujja! And if You do not make me acquainted with Your Hujja, I would stray from my creed.” There is knowledge of the Hujja; to what gate does such knowledge lead us? It leads us to the gate of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, to the gate of Allah, for this *Salam—Assalamo Alaikom*, O Members of the Prophet’s Household!—is a renewal of that covenant, of the Divine Covenant, and of the covenant of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; which covenant is it? It is the covenant of Imamate and Wilayate. When does their practical meaning materialize? It will do so at the time of the reappearance of the Imam of our Time and when our Prophet ﷺ and Imams عليهم السلام return. It is then that the meaning of Caliphate, Wilayate and Imamate will materialize. In which phase are we now? “Persevere and hold your ground;” we are in the phase of waiting. We and those who preceded us and even during the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, even during the time of the Master of Wasis عليه السلام and in the time of our past Imams عليهم السلام, all are included in this waiting.

The narrative said that the covenant was taken from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and from the Imams ؑ as well as from their Shi'as: "Be patient, persevere, maintain your grounds," according to the narratives. He said, "Uphold the grounds of the One in Charge; wait for the Hujja Imam, Allah's peace and blessings with him." So, "Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet!" is a renewal of the Divine covenant and of the Muhammedi covenant; in what? In being patient, in preserving, in maintaining the grounds, in waiting, in emphasizing the covenants and in getting to know how to hold on to the Firmest Handle of the Imam of our Time, waiting for that day when the world of martyrdom will in it open up onto the world of the unseen, waiting for that day when the Blessed Land will be there, the secure Haram from Mecca to Medina and from Medina to Najaf to Kerbala to Toos to every area that has fragrance from Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammd ؑ. The Secure Haram is that of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ؑ, up to that covenant in which the ever-Inhabited House descends and the Raised Ceiling is unveiled. This *Salam* is a reminder of these covenants. When you greet our Imams ؑ saying, "Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet!" this is a renewal of the covenants with them ؑ. This is something like a sign. The context is very deep, and I find no time to explain it in all its details, but only a little bit of a sign, and the free man is sufficed by a sign. As for one whose paths are darkened, by Allah, a thousand thousands¹ of statements do not do him any good. This is just a signal from afar. I said that I cannot hold on to the ends of the *sharashir* of the horizon of the sign world. The Commander of the Faithful ؑ said, "O Kumayl! Hearts are containers." I have no container, I cannot help holding on to the *sharashir* of the sign world through narratives of Ahlul-Bayt, peace and blessings of Allah with them all.

Another sign, another glimpse of the sign horizon in a narrative in *'Ilal al-Shara'i* *علل الشرائع* by our mentor, al-Saduq رحمته الله, in Volume Two, Chapter One, in a section about reasons behind performing the ablution, the call to prayer, the prayer, etc. It is a lengthy one, and it

¹ In Arabic, the word "million" does not exist; therefore, Arabs instead say "a thousand thousands". – Tr.

is narrated from our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام who quotes for us the Messenger of Allah ﷺ narrating about his ascensions. The narrative is very deep. I only wish to point out to the portions of it which we need. Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, addresses His Prophet. “He [Allah] said to me..., etc.” Our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام tells us about his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, saying, “So He said to me, ‘O Muhammed! Say *Salam*.’ I said, ‘*Assalamo Alaikom*.’” This is the *Salam* which is at the end of the prayer and which is the same in the ziyaras. It is also the same in all other areas. “So He said to me, ‘O Muhammed! Say *Salam*.’ I said, ‘*Assalamo Alaikom wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh* [Peace with you, the mercy of Allah and His blessings], so Allah said...” What did He say? “He [Allah] said, ‘O Muhammed! I am the *Salam*; as for the greeting, the mercy and the blessings, they are you and your offspring.’ Then my Lord, the most Exalted One, the most Great, commanded me not to turn to my left.” “I am the *Salam*.” Such is Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to him. The greeting, the mercy and the blessings are “you and your offspring, O Muhammed.” The discussion of the offspring, the Infallible Ones, the talk about the Household of Infallibility: “O Muhammed! I am the *Salam*; the greeting, the mercy and the blessings are you and your offspring.’ Then my Lord, the most Exalted One, the most Great, commanded me not to turn to my left.” Here, there is a clear sign not to turn left because the left carries a symbolism. What worlds does the left symbolize?

It symbolizes the under worlds. The left carries a sign to the worlds of the barriers, “... that I should not turn left.” To what side should be the turning? The turning should be to the right side; therefore, when we recite Surat al-Waqi`a (Chapter 56 of the Holy Qur`an) we need to stop at it for a long time, but time is not sufficient for us to halt for a while at this Sura. This Sura talks in its beginning about three groups:

7. And you shall be sorted out into three groups.
8. Then (there will be) the companions of the right Hand; What will the

وَكُنتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً ❁

فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ، مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ؟ ❁

companions of the right Hand be?

9. And the companions of the left Hand; What will the companions of the left Hand be?

وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ، مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ؟ ❁

10. And those foremost (in faith) will be foremost (in the Hereafter).

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ ❁

Qur'an, 56:7-10

Then comes the talk about these groups: The companions of the left hand are again mentioned in Verse 41:

41. The companions of the left Hand, what will the companions of the left Hand be?

وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ، مَا أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ؟ ❁

42. (They will be) in the midst of a fierce blast of fire and in boiling water,

فِي سُمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ ❁

Up to the end of the verses. At the end of Surat al-Waqi`a also comes a discussion of the fortunate ones who are close to their Lord, those who were the foremost in believing in the Prophet's Message:

88. Thus, then, if he is of those nearest to Allāh,

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ❁

89. (There is) rest and satisfaction (for him) and a Garden of delights.

فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّةٌ نَعِيمٍ ❁

90. And if he is of the companions of the right Hand,

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ❁

91. (For him there is the salutation,) "Peace be unto you" from the companions of the right Hand.

فَسَلَامٌ لَّكَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ❁

Qur'an, 56:88-91

The “right hand” is Ali عليه السلام and the companions of the right hand are the companions of Ali, the Shi`as of Ali عليه السلام. “Then my Lord, the most Exalted One, the most Great, commanded me not to turn left,” the turning should be to the right side. To what side? To Ali’s side. Here, there are very precise signs, but there is no time to explain them. By the will of Allah, within the folds of the next episodes, I will point out to some of them. But I can point out to this very interesting point: Narratives tell us that Allah, the most Praised and the most Exalted One, was spoken to by Ali عليه السلام on the carpet of noor in the voice of Ali عليه السلام. When the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ascended to the sublime stations, the high stations, he found Ali عليه السلام, he found an image of Ali عليه السلام, and the angels were circumambulating and performing the ziyara to this image, and the angels were the ones that asked Allah to make an image for them in the likeness of Ali due to their eagerness for him. Thus do the narratives say. In all of this there are symbols. The issue must not be considered within its apparent frame. In all of this there are symbols and signs which we will explain at the right time by the Will of Allah Almighty.

“O Muhammed! I am the *Salam*; [whereas] the salutation, the mercy and the blessings are you and your offspring.” This statement is a quotation from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and from the Infallible Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, for they are the salutation, the mercy and the blessings; therefore, the Holy Qur’an has pointed out to this symbolism in a clear way. Verse 18 of Surat al-Ma’ida (Chapter 5 of the Holy Qur’an), and Verse 25 of Surat Yunus state the following: **وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ** *Allāh calls (them) to the abode of peace: He guides whomsoever He pleases to a straight way* (Qur’an, 10:25). The “abode of peace” is Paradise. The *Salam* in the narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام is meant to be the *wilaya* of Ali عليه السلام. **وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ** *Allāh calls (them) to the abode of peace: He guides whomsoever He pleases to a straight way*: “Al-Salam” is the name of the Paradise of the Creator, all Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, to which reference is made in Verse 25 of Surat Yunus: **وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ** *Allāh calls (them) to the abode of peace: He guides whomsoever He pleases to a*

straight way, and the speech is the one that exists in this narrative: “O Muhammed! I am the *Salam*, [whereas] the salutation, the mercy and the blessings are you and your offspring.” This is a sign, and this is another context from the meanings of the *Salam*.

There is another sign in the Book of Allah, the Almighty, in Surat al-Qadr:

4. In it do the angels and the Spirit descend, by Allāh's permission, on every errand:

تَنْزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

5. Peace, it is, until the break of the dawn!

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَمِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

Peace (*Salam*) it is until the break of the dawn: If we compose the sentence grammatically, i.e. that of “Peace it is until the break of the dawn”, it starts with the the Speaker's pronoun, while *Salam* is a predicate indicative of Laylatul-Qadr. The Chapter is Surat al-Qadr:

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. We have indeed revealed this (Qur'an) in the Night of Power (Destiny):

١. إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾

2. And what will explain to you what the night of power (destiny) is?

٢. وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾

3. The night of power (destiny) is better than a thousand months.

٣. لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾

4. In it the angels and the Spirit descend, by Allāh's permission, on every errand:

٤. تَنْزِلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

5. Peace, it is, until the

٥. سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَمِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

break of the dawn!

Qur'an, 97:1-5

It is a pronoun denoting Laylatul-Qadr as the predicate. The message here is that Laylatul-Qadr is Salam, peace. Of course, there are very precise signs in the narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليه that discuss this meaning. For example, what do the first verses of Surat al-Dukhan (Chapter of the Smoke No. 44) say?

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. بِحَمْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Ḥā Mīm.

١. حم

2. By the Book that makes things clear,

٢. وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

3. We sent it down during a blessed night, for We (always) wish to warn (against evil).

٣. إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ

A narrative in sacred *Al-Kafi* and in other books quotes our Imam, the gate to the fulfillment of needs, namely Musa ibn Ja'far عليه as saying, “Ḥā Mīm means Muhammed; the ‘Book that makes things clear’ is Ali; the ‘blessed night’ is Fatima.” So, “Ḥā Mīm” is Muhammed عليه; “We sent it down during a blessed night”; the blessed night is Fatima عليها, which is the same context reported in many narratives that cite the Household of Infallibility عليهم in explaining the meaning of Laylatul-Qadr, in the meaning of

1. We have indeed revealed this (Qur'an) in the Night of Power (or Destiny):

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

2. And what will explain to you what the night of power (destiny) is?

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ

3. The night of power (destiny) is better than a thousand months.

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ

In many narratives, Laylatul-Qadr, which is mentioned in Surat al-Qadr, is Fatima عليها السلام, and it is the same blessed night referred to in Surat al-Dukhan:

3. We sent it down during a blessed night, for We (always) wish to warn (against evil).
4. In that (night) every matter of wisdom is made distinct.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ مُبَارَكَةٍ؛ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

Such is stated in the narratives and ahadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام, for e.g. in the reference *Ta'weel al-Ayat al-Zahira fil `Itra al-Tahira*, which is one of the most important sources of *Tafsir al-Burhan*. This is Volume Two of this book. It cites the narrative from mentor al-Tusi رحمته الله. The narrative is from Abdullah ibn Ajlan al-Sakuni who said, “I heard Abu Ja’far عليه السلام saying, ‘The house of Ali and Fatima عليهما السلام is the chamber of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the ceiling of their house...” The talk here is not about a house in the (material) sense of the word, that is, one built of bricks and mortar, etc. The talk is about a house in the unknown meaning, in the further deeper sense. I said that we are talking in the scope of signing, not in the scope of the statement. “The house of Ali and Fatima عليهما السلام is the chamber of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the ceiling of their house is the Arsh of the Lord of the Worlds, and at the bottom of their homes there is a scraped opening—an opening—to the Arsh—the ascension of the *wahi* (inspiration)—and the angels descend on them with *wahi* morning and evening, every hour and every twinkling of the eye. The angels’ groups do not stop: a group descends as another ascends. Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, scraped the heavens for Ibrahim عليه السلام until he saw the Arsh. Allah increased the strength of his vision. Allah made the vision of Muhammed, Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain عليهم السلام, so strong, they were able to witness the Arsh and find no ceiling for their home other than the Arsh. The ceiling of their homes, therefore, is the Arsh of the most

Merciful One, with the ascensions of the angels, with the spirits, one group after another, uninterruptedly. There is no house of the Imams from among us except that it has an ascension for the angels. This is due to this verse of Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great: تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *In it, the angels and the Spirit descend by the permission of their Lord on every errand.*” Someone asked him, “What does ‘on every errand’ mean?” The Imam said, “In every errand.” He asked, “Are you talking about this revelation?” He answered in the affirmative. The talk here is not about the descending of the *wahi*; it is about a meaning deeper than that. The talk of the *wahi* in books of logic and modern exegesis, the talk about the revelation of the Qur’an in its pronouncements, the descending of the Qur’an to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ..., this is one of the meanings of the communication between the Prophet ﷺ and Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One. The issue is much deeper than that and goes much further. The narrative talks about the descending in another horizon, in deeper horizons. What does the Imam عليه السلام say?

“They find no ceilings for their homes except the Arsh, for their homes are ceiled by the Arsh of the most Merciful One.” The talk here is not about mud houses. The talk is about the realities of the Imams عليهم السلام. The talk is about the heart of the Prophet ﷺ, about the heart of Ali عليه السلام, about the reality of Muhammed ﷺ, about the reality of Ali عليه السلام... The talk is about an aspect of homes and stations of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed and they are in the earthly world. They are in the earthly world remaining in contact with the higher worlds. Therefore, “They find no ceilings other than the Arsh, for their homes are ceiled by the Arsh of the most Merciful One and the ascensions of the angels and the Spirit,” and the Spirit is a greater being than the angels.

The narrative is in the sacred *Al-Kafi*, and this is Volume One of the sacred *Al-Kafi*, which talks about our Imam al-Sadiq in a chapter about the births of the Imams, the first narrative. The narrative is lengthy of which I quote what is needed. It is narrated by Abu Busayr from our Imam al-Saidq عليه السلام. “I said, ‘May I be sacrificed for your sake, is the Spirit not Gabriel?!’” That is, the Spirit to which

Surat al-Qadr refers, because before this talk, the Imam said, “Ziyara of the Spirit is due during Laylatul-Qadr.” He is talking about the status of the Infallible Imam, and that the Infallible Imam is visited by the Spirit on Laylatul-Qadr. “Ziyara of the Spirit is due during Laylatul-Qadr.” Abu Busayr says, ‘May I be sacrificed for your sake, is the Spirit not Gabriel?!’ The Imam said, ‘The Spirit is greater than Gabriel. Gabriel is an angel, while the Spirit is a creation greater than the angels.’ The spirit is another being, the Spirit is something else. Do you not notice how Allah, the most Blessed and Exalted One, say, **تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ** *The angels and the Spirit descend?* Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, Israel and the cherubim angels, the angels near to Allah and all types of angels fall under this label. “The angels descend.” As regarding the Spirit, our Imam al-Sadiq says, “The Spirit is greater than Gabriel. Gabriel is an angel, whereas the Spirit is a being greater than the angels.” Who is this spirit?!

This spirit is the one mentioned in Surat al-Qadr: **تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ** *In it, the angels and the Spirit descend by the permission of their Lord on every errand,*” as the Imam said when he [Abu Busayr] asked him, “On every errand?!” The Imam said, “With every errand.” Here is verse 85 of Surat al-Isrā’:

85. They ask you concerning the Spirit. Say: “The Spirit (comes) by the command of my Lord: Only a little knowledge is communicated to you, (O man!)”

وَسَأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

Qur’an, 17:85

The Spirit mentioned in Surat al-Qadr is this same Spirit to which the narratives refer. **تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ** *In it, the angels and the Spirit descend by the permission of their Lord on every errand,* every command of Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him. Let us stop and ponder on what the Spirit says in Surat al-Qadr: **لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ** *Laylatul-Qadr (the Night of Power (or*

Destiny)) is better than a thousand months. According to the narratives, the Night of Power (or Destiny) mentioned in this Sura is Fatima عليها السلام. I have this narrative now in my hand. *Laylatul-Qadr is better than a thousand months*; it means Fatima عليها السلام. Many narratives about the Imams عليهم السلام say so. Laylatul-Qadr, which is mentioned in Surat al-Qadr, is Fatima عليها السلام. I have pointed out to the narrative from Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام in explaining the first verses of Surat al-Dukhan: The Blessed Night which is mentioned in these verses:

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. بِمِ اسمِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

1. Ḥā Mīm.

ح م

2. By the Book that makes things clear,

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

3. We sent it down during a blessed night, for We (always) wish to warn (against evil).

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ مُبَارَكَةٍ، إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ

Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام says that Ḥā Mīm refers to Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله; the Book that makes things clear is Ali عليه السلام, the Blessed Night is Fatima عليها السلام, and Laylatul-Qadr is Fatima عليها السلام. Then this Chapter starts talking about characteristics and events that take place during Laylatul-Qadr. In Laylatul-Qadr there is a time symbolism in the earthly world. As for the sublime world, it is the Fatima عليها السلام reality which the cosmic time formed in the earthly world. She is Laylatul-Qadr during which the Qur'an was revealed in its entirety to the heart of Muhammed: *تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا* *In it, the angels and the Spirit descend.* This Spirit is greater than the angels, it is another being. This Spirit is one of the transfigurations of the Fatimi reality.

This night is Laylatul-Qadr, and Laylatul-Qadr is Fatima according to the narratives of Ahlul-Bayt. During this night, the angels descend, all the angels, and with the angels the Spirit descends: the true Spirit of Fatima عليها السلام, the Fatimi reality: It points out to the essence that incorporates the reality of Prophethood and of

Wilayate. She, therefore, is the Hujja (proof, evidence) over the Imams عليهم السلام. “We are the Hujjas over the creation, and Fatima, our mother, is the Hujja over us, the Hujja of Allah over us” because she is the reality that incorporates Prophethood and Wilayate, because she is the reality that incorporates the Muhammedi meaning and the Alawi meaning, the Prophetic meaning and the Alawi meaning. Between Muhammed and Ali there has been the Fatima عليها السلام reality. This is the Spirit that manifests itself during Laytul-Qadr. What is the description of this night? *سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ* *Peace, it is, until the break of the dawn!* It is peace. This night is peace. This is another image similar to the covenant, to the dialogue between Allah and His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم when He said, “O Muhammed! I am the *Salam*, while the greeting, the mercy and the blessings are you and your offspring,” as you have already come to know when we cited one hadith in *Ilal al-Sharayi`* a short while ago, the hadith which mentor al-Saduq narrates from our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام from the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, as has been stated, in one hadith in *Al-Kafi* about the meaning of saluting the Messenger of Allah, about renewing the covenant, the Divine covenant and the Muhammedi covenant, that Allah, the most Praised, the most Ealted One, grants them after that; when will that be? It will happen when the Imam or our Time (عج) takes charge, and in the Return He shall grant them the Blessed Land, the Secure Haram, the ever-Inhabited House, the Raised Ceiling..., and their discussion has already been stated above. Also, when he ascended, He said to him, “Greet!,” whereupon he greeted. It was then that He said, “I am the *Salam*, [whereas] the greeting, the mercy and the blessings are you, O Muhammed, you and your offspring, O Muhammed!” This is another picture. A third is the one in my hands: the image of Laylatul-Qadr; this is the *Salam*, the Peace, during which the angels and the Spirit descend on the Infallible Imam عليه السلام. This is Allah’s greeting of the Infallible Imam عليه السلام: the angels and the Spirit descend in it.

When we greet the Imams with “*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet!,” this *Salam* is a recognition of their status. We here recognize the Imams’ status and station. This has some sort of a sign. Of course, the pursuits need more details, broader details and

more explanations. There are other pursuits which I wished to point out, but the program's time has ended, and I took an additional time for the program's schedule. The program was supposed to last less, but I liked to explain this meaning, the meaning of "*Assalamo Alaikom!*," so I may deal with a new meaning and context in the upcoming episode by the will of Allah Almighty.

My conclusion is that when we say, "*Assalamo Alaikom!*," it is the renewing of a pledge, of a covenant, and a recognition of the faith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. These are the stauses of Ahlul-Bayit عليه السلام. Laylatul-Qadr is their night, and its reality is their mother, Fatima, Allah's peace and blessings with her, and the Spirit, which is a greater being than the angels, is one of the transfigurations of the Fatimi reality which manifests itself in this Night, in Laylatul-Qadr. Such is the truth about the *Salam*, the *Salam* of Allah, the *Salam* of the higher beings to the Infallible Imam on earth. This descending is the meaning of *Salam*. When we salute the Imams عليه السلام, we review this faith and bring it to memory, remembering these meanings and pledging to the Imams to believe in them, and this is the Introduction to my statement. The statement is yet to be concluded, and the talk about the *Salam* needs an explanation or a review of statement more than that, but what can we do to the sword of time whose sword is the cutting edge? If another opportunity becomes available to me, I may add other explanations to the meaning of the *Salam*.

I conclude my statement and talk by saying the following:

Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet, the mercy of Allah and His blessings,

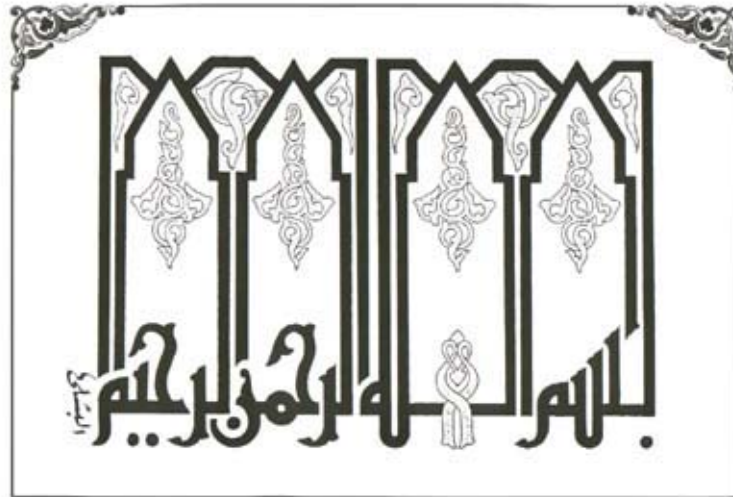
And Peace with you, O Shi`as (followers) of the Household of the Prophet, the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

I solicit your Du`a (supplication), all of you, and may you all remain in Allah's security.



Shrine of Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (as), Mashhad, Iran

FOURTH EPISODE
THE MEANING OF
“HOUSEHOLD OF THE PROPHET”



Peace with you all, the mercy of Allah and His blessings. This is the fourth episode of our program “The Great Comprehensive Ziyara”. As we agreed to do in the previous episodes, we recite the Great Comprehensive Ziyara in *Mafatih al-Jinan* because this book is available with the believing men and women who love Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام.

In the previous episode, we started reading the first statement of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara when a visitor of a shrine says, “*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet!” In the previous episode, we talked about the meaning of *Salam*, and I tackled a group of sacred ahadith and narratives reported from the Infallible Ones عليه السلام, and we still deal with the statements of this sacred ziyara. “*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet!” In this episode, I deal with this phrase “Household of the Prophet”. I explained the meaning of *Salam* in the previous episode, and I tackle in this episode the meaning of “Household of the Prophet”. The first I deal

with is the content of sacred narratives to which I will keep returning, explaining and clarifying without going to the branches and aspects from here and there.

The narrative is reported by our mentor, al-Saduq, from Abu Busayr who said, “I said to Abu Abdullah, ‘Who are the Progeny of Muhammed?’ He said, ‘They are his offspring; the Progeny of Muhammed are his offspring—and his offspring are restricted in Fatima; so, his offspring are the descendants of Fatima, and the Prophet’s words are clearly obvious: ‘Every Prophet’s progeny descend from his loin, and my Progeny descends from the loin of Ali and Fatima.’” I said to Abu Abdullah,” Abu Busayr goes on, “Who are Muhammed’s Progeny?’ He said, ‘They are his offspring.’ I said, ‘Who are the members of his Household?’ He said, ‘They are the Imams, the *wasis*.’ I said, ‘Who are his Progeny?’ He said, ‘They are the fellows of the mantle.’” The narrative is clear, open and obvious in explaining the meanings of these terms. We have a label for the Progeny of Muhammed, and we have a label for the members of his Household, and we have a label for the Purified `Itra. Who are the Family of Muhammed? He said, “They are his offspring,” i.e. the descendants of Fatima عليها السلام. “I said [Abu Busayr goes on], “Who are the members of his Household?” He said, “They are the Imams, the *wasis*.” “Who are his `Itra?,” I said. The `Itra is the family tree, the root of the tree. According to the Arabs’ language, the word *عتره* ‘`itra’ means the root of the tree. “I said [Abu Busayr goes on], ‘Who are his `Itra?’ He said, ‘They are the fellows of the mantle.’” You know who the fellows of the mantle are, those who were with the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وآله under the mantle: Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain, peace and blessings of Allah with them all. “So I asked [Abu Busayr resumed his dialogue with Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام], ‘Who is his nation?’ He said, ‘They are the believers who testified to the truth of what he brought from Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, those who hold on to the Two Weighty Things and who were commanded to hold on to them: the Book of Allah and his `Itra, his Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام from whom Allah removed all abomination and purified them with a perfect purification. They are the two authorities over the Imams, peace with them.’” Peace with the Purified `Itra. Peace and blessings of Allah with him. The narrative

is very beautiful. I am reading this narrative from Volume 25 of *Bihar al-Anwar* of our mentor, al-Majlisi, who quotes it from the book titled *Ma`ani al-Akhbar* of our mentor, al-Saduq عليه السلام. It is very clear, frank and beautiful. At the same time, it does not need a great deal of explaining. I repeat reading it due to its importance and so that the meaning in it may settle in the minds of those who are listening to me: “I [Abu Busayr] asked Abu Abdullah عليه السلام, ‘Who are the Family of Muhammed?’ He عليه السلام said, ‘They are his offspring.’ I said, ‘Are they from among his Household?’ He عليه السلام said, ‘they are the Imams, the *wasis*.’ I asked him, ‘Are they from among his `Itra?’ He عليه السلام said, ‘They are the fellows of the mantle.’ I said, ‘Who is his nation?’ He عليه السلام said, ‘They are the believers who testified to the truth of what he had brought from Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, those who hold on to the Two Weighty Things and who were commanded to hold on to them: the Book of Allah and his `Itra, his Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام from whom Allah removed all abomination and purified them with a perfect purification. They are the two authorities over the Imams, peace with them all.’” So, the two authorities are: the Qur’an and the `Itra. What is related to the great Comprehensive Ziyara before us, we address the Imams with: “Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet!” As regarding Abu Busayr’s question, “Who are his Household?,” He عليه السلام said, “the are the Imams, the *wasis*.” The talk here is about the wasi Imams; the address here is directed towards the wasi Imams.

Another beautiful and clear narrative, one the indication of which is quite obvious, one which is very clear, is a narrative from Ghiyath son of Ibrahim from Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام who quotes his forefathers عليه السلام. He said, “The Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام was asked about the meaning of this statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: ‘I am leaving among you behind me the Two Weighty things: the Book of Allah and my `Itra.’ Who are the `Itra?’” This is a question which was directed to the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام: Who are the `Itra to whom the Messenger of Allah ﷺ referred in the hadith in which he said, “I am leaving among you behind me the Two Weighty things: the Book of Allah and my `Itra.” Who are the `Itra? What did the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام answer? He said, “I am, al-Hassan, al-Hussain and the nine Imams from among the

descendants of al-Hussain the ninth of whom is their Mahdi, al-Qaim; they do not part with the Book of Allah, nor does it part with them, until they rejoin the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at his Pool.” It is an open and clear narrative in explaining the meaning of the `Itra, and I do not need to refer to the statements made by the scholars of logic, nor do I need to go to the meaning of the “ahl” or “āl” in the language. The narratives are frank and clear. The Comprehensive Ziyara is the speech of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, and these narratives are theirs, and these words are their words: they are quite clear, frank and obvious. The narrative is a cutting edge. When the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام was asked about the `Itra to whom reference was made in the hadith of the Two Weighty Things in a clear and obvious way, what did he عليه السلام say? He said, “I am, al-Hassan, al-Hussain and the nine Imams from among the descendants of al-Hussain the ninth of whom is their Mahdi, al-Qaim; they do not part with the book of Allah, nor does it part with them, until they rejoin the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at his Pool.”

A third narrative is reported from our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. All these narratives were compiled by mentor al-Saduq in *Ma`ani al-Akhbar* from Muhammed ibn Sulayman al-Daylami from his father, i.e. Sulayman al-Daylami, who said, “I said to Abu Abdullah عليه السلام, ‘May I be sacrificed for your sake! Who are the Āl (Family Members)?’ He said, ‘They are the descendants of Muhammed ﷺ.’ I asked him again, ‘Then who are the Household Members?’ He عليه السلام said, ‘They are the Imams عليه السلام.’ I again said, ‘In the verse saying *أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ* (Cast the people of Pharaoh into the severest penalty) (Qur’an, 40:46) who are meant by the word آل?” That is, what is meant by the word آل (people of) in this verse? The inquirer is asking the Imam عليه السلام. First, he asked the Imam عليه السلام who the آل are, whereupon he عليه السلام said that they are his offspring. Who the ahl (family members) are? He عليه السلام said that they are the Imams عليه السلام. Then he asked him about this verse: *أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ* (Cast the people of Pharaoh into the severest penalty), who the آل فِرْعَوْنَ, the people of Pharaoh, who are mentioned in this verse, are, the Imam عليه السلام says, “By Allah! He meant only his [Pharaoh’s] daughter, the

daughter of Pharaoh. *أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ* (*Cast the people of Pharaoh into the severest penalty*). So, the آل, people, ذُرِّيَّة offspring, أهل family and the عِتْرَة `itra, Progeny, are the Infallible ones, peace and blessings of Allah with them all. It is just as the Master of Wasis [Imam Ali عليه السلام] had said, “The `Itra عِتْرَة are: I am, al-Hassan, al-Hussain and the nine descendants of al-Hussain the ninth of whom is their Mahdi and Qaim.” These are the ones addressed in this sacred ziyara and in any other ziyara. When we say *السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة* “Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet!,” we mean these individuals; we mean Ali, al-Hassan, al-Hussain and the nine infallible ones from among the descendants of al-Hussain the ninth of whom is their Mahdi and Qaim, the Imam of our Time (عج).

Therefore, if we want to continue reciting the Comprehensive Ziyara, we will reach somewhere. When we reach this statement *و بِكُمْ يُنْفَسُ الْهَمُّ وَ يَكْشَفُ الضَّرُّ، وَ عِنْدَكُمْ مَا نَزَلَتْ بِهِ رُسُلُهُ، وَ هَبَطَتْ بِهِ مَلَائِكَةُ*, “Through you does worry disappear and harm dissipates; it is at your abodes that His messengers (angels) descend and angels come down...,” when we reach this point, if the address in the ziyara is directed at the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام, we say, *وَ إِلَى أَخِيكَ بُعِثَ* و إلى أخيك يا أمير المؤمنين، و إلى *و إلى أخيك يا أمير المؤمنين، و إلى* “It is to your Brother [the Prophet ﷺ] that the Trusted Spirit was sent,” when the Master of Wasis عليه السلام is being addressed. If the Imams عليهم السلام are addressed, we say, *وَ إِلَى أَخِيكَ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، وَ إِلَى* *و إلى أخيك يا أمير المؤمنين، و إلى* “It is to your Brother [Prophet ﷺ], O Commander of the Faithful, and to your grandfather, O my pure masters, that the Trusted Spirit [Gabriel] was sent,” since the ziyara is for the Master of Wasis عليه السلام and his Infallible sons عليهم السلام.

This is the overall meaning. *السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة* “Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet.” So, the meaning of His Household, then, is quite clear: Definitely they are al-Zahrā عليها السلام, who is included in the عِتْرَة `itra, and she is included in the آل *āl*, and she is also included in his أهل البيت *Ahlul-Bayt*. Actually, al-Zahrā عليها السلام has the authority over the Imams from among the descendants of the Master of Wasis عليه السلام. Did our purified Imam al-Askari عليه السلام not say, “We [Infallible Imams عليهم السلام] are Allah’s Hujaj (proofs, evidences, witnesses) over the creation, over the servants [of the Almighty], whereas Fatima, our mother, is Allah’s Hujja over us”?

But the talk here is about this sacred text. In it, we address the Master of Wasis عليه and the Infallible Imams from among his offspring عليه. We say, “*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet!” Fatima عليها is included in this label. She is the Lady of the Household of the Prophet. But, according to the address, we sometimes direct our address to the Master of Wasis عليه, and some other times we direct it at the Infallible Imams عليه from among his offspring. We may also direct the address at all members of the Household of the Prophet عليه, for Fatima عليها is the Lady of the Household of the Prophet عليه: “O Household of the Prophet!” These are the *آل* *āl*, *أهل* the *ahl*, and the *عترة* *’itra*; with which side are they affiliated? “*يا أهل بيت النبوة*” “O Household of the Prophet!” So, the meaning is not quite clear unless we explain the meaning of Prophethood. What does "Prophethood" mean?

I do not wish to go into linguistic details, nor do I wish to refer to the statements of logicians or to the sayings of exegetes in searching for a meaning for Prophethood. Rather, I tackle this meaning from narratives that cite the Prophet عليه and Imams عليه so the picture may become clear without entering into details. I do wish to discuss the difference between *nabi* (Prophet) and *rasool* (Messenger). I do not wish to discuss, for e.g. that some prophets receive their prophecy in visions, some receive their prophecies through angels, hearing the voice without seeing the angel... and such meanings. These meanings apply to most prophets other than our Prophet عليه. The Prophethood of our Prophet عليه stands above [other] prophets; therefore, I do not enter into these details which logicians and exegetes handle. I go directly to the narratives of the Infallible Ones عليه in order to explain the meaning of Prophethood, that of our Prophet عليه. In language, Prophethood means supremacy: “naba” means rose high, and “nabwa” is the high place according to the Arabs’ language. Also, the meaning of “nabwa” is knowledge. The “nabwa” is height or elevated place. Also, “naba” means knowledge. The “nabwa” is a high place, and no place can be high without knowledge because height comes through knowledge. In the reality of knowledge, what does Prophethood mean? According to narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليه, Prophethood has a broader meaning, one broader than the issue of conveying a message or notifying

about legislative rulings. For our Prophet ﷺ, there is a great status of Prophethood. The greatest status of Prophethood is that of absolute Divine caliphate. Allah, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, was and there was nothing with Him, then He spoke a word. He, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, made that word the basis of existence. The narratives in this subject are lengthy, and we will mention some of them as much as we can. This word is the label of the absolute Divine caliphate because Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, vested this word on existence. In its reality, this word is the Muhammedi reality, the first Muhammedi *noor*, thus do narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام say.

So, the absolute Divine caliphate lies in the Muhammedi reality and it occupies the highest level. The loftiest transfiguration of this caliphate is that of Prophethood, the absolute Prophethood, not the one restricted to the earthly world. The Prophethood in the earthly world is within this level: *وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ* *We sent you only as a mercy for all the worlds* (Qur'an, 21:107), as mercy for all, for all the worlds. This mercy is absolute because it stems from the absolute Divine caliphate. There is the Divine caliphate or, say, the absolute Divine caliphate. The highest level of this *wilaya* is the seal of Prophethood. It is the one that opens and seals. I am talking about Prophethood here in the absolute sense, not in the earthly sense. As I said, Prophethood (*nubuwwa* نُبُوَّة) is, in the earthly meaning, proportionate with the earthly world. As for the Muhammedi reality, it is the reality that enjoys the status of the absolute caliphate, the status of the absolute authority, the status of the absolute Prophethood, and this meaning is broader than being discussed within the frameworks of the science of logic and within frameworks that the Prophet is inspired through visions or that an angel talks to him without seeing the angel and the like of such meanings. The talk here is about something which is very broad and deep; therefore, I shall deal with some ahadith or narratives that tackle this meaning.

Here is one narrative: This narrative was reported by our mentor, al-Kulayni, in his book *Al-Kafi*. This is Volume 15 of *Bihar al-Anwar*. Mentor al-Majlisi cites this narrative from the sacred *Al-Kafi*. This is

the narrative: “Muhammed ibn Sinan has said, ‘I was with Abu Ja`far II—meaning the Jawad of the Imams عليه السلام—I was in the company of abu Ja`far II, peace with him, when I mentioned the differences among the Shi`as—that is, I said that there is a dispute among the Shi`as in some pursuits, in some matters. Definitely, one of the most important causes of this dispute is the factor of *taqiyya* and the inability of the Shi`as to remain in touch with their Imams عليهم السلام because of their fear of oppressors—I was in the company of Abu Ja`fār II, peace with him, when I mentioned the dispute among the Shi`as, whereupon he عليه السلام said, ‘O Muhammed!—addressing Muhammed ibn Sinan—O Muhammed! Allah, the most Praised and the most Exalted One, remains unique in His Tawhid—i.e. He was and there was nothing with Him—then He created Muhammed, Ali and Fatima—of course these narratives may give the impression that they may differ among themselves [in their wording]. In some narratives, they mention the name of only the Prophet ﷺ, whereas some narratives mention these three names. Each of these narratives looks at an aspect or an angle or a "whereas" situation. As the men of wisdom say, had it not been for "whereas," wisdom would have been voided—then He created Muhammed, Ali and Fatima. So, they remained for a thousand eons—and the figures and time divisions in these narratives have nothing to do with the worldly timing. This talk was prior to the creation of beings, before constellations, stars, suns and the earth were created..., before everything; so, there was no time then like our time in which we now live—that Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, was solely Unique. Then He created Muhammed, Ali and Fatima, and they remained for a thousand eons, then He created all things and let them witness their creation, requiring them to obey Him on their account and vesting on them [on the three individuals named above] the authority over them—such is Prophethood. This is the Prophethood in the absolute sense. This is the absolute Divine caliphate. This is the overall authority for the Prophet and his Progeny. The talk is not about an Imam robbed of his authority, position or government over the people by worthless such-and-such individuals. The caliphate of the Prophet ﷺ and his Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام is a Divine one. It is broader than all meanings about which scholars of logic talk such as: “O Muhammed! Allah, the most Blessed, the most Exalted One,

remained Unique in His Unity, then He created Muhammed, Ali and Fatima who remained for a thousand eons, then He created all things—“He created all things” means: He thereafter created time and the constellations. So, “a thousand eons” stated above has nothing to do with worldly timings—then He created Muhammed, Ali and Fatima who stayed for a thousand eons, then He created all things, whereupon He required them to testify to His creating them—meaning they oversaw their creation—and He established obedience for them from all things—and He assigned their affairs to them all—This narrative is in sacred *Al-Kafi*—so they permit and ban as they please. This permitting and prohibiting is not within the Shari’a circle. The legislative aspect is part of this permitting and prohibiting. This permitting and prohibiting fall within the formative aspect, and the legislative aspect after that branches out from the formative aspect. This narrative talks about the formative dimension in existence: He let them witness their creation. He required these beings, all these things, to obey them [obey the Infallible Ones عليه السلام]. There is no prohibiting and forbidding in as far as inanimate objects are concerned; the talk here is about forming: He let them witness their creation, requiring the latter to obey the witnesses and vesting on them [on the three individuals named above] the authority over these beings, i.e. formative matters—and He vested their matters on them, so they permit whatever they please and prohibit at will. They will not do what they please unless Allah, the most Blessed, the most Exalted One, pleases. Their will is the will of Allah. Then He said, “O Muhammed!” (The person addressed is Muhammed ibn Sinan) “Anyone who goes ahead of this creed,” this doctrine, this doctrinal faith, “abandons the faith just as swiftly as an arrow leaves a bow.”

This is a metaphor. How does one get out of this faith? It means his heart and mind do not accept this faith. He is one who swiftly abandons the [Islamic] faith. “O Muhammed! If one goes ahead of it, he abandons it, and if one lags behind it, he will be annihilated—that is, he becomes nil—and if one holds on to it, he will catch up [with the vanwagon of the saved ones]—Take this [piece of advice], as a clear, frank and open one.” The Imam عليه السلام thus sums up this creed in the most beautiful way in this narrative. This narrative is

very beautiful and deep in its meaning. It is brief. This narrative is brief and is reported in the sacred *Al-Kafi* from our Imam al-Jawad عليه السلام. I repeat reading these narratives so their meanings may settle in our minds: “O Muhammed! Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, remained Unique in His Tawhid, then He created Muhammed, Ali and Fatima who stayed for a thousand eons, then He created all things, whereupon He let them witness their creation, requiring the latter to obey them [i.e. to obey these three individuals]—the formative obedience—and vested the matters on them, so they permit whatever they please—in the formative sense prior to legislation—and prohibit as they please—in the formative sense prior to legislation—and they will not do anything except as Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, wills.” Then He عليه السلام said, “O Muhammed! If one goes ahead of this faith, he swiftly abandons it, and one who lags behind it will be annihilated, while one who holds on to it catches up [with the vanwagon of the saved ones]. Take this [piece of advice], O Muhammed!” Such is the status of the absolute Prophethood, the absolute *wilaya*, the overall *wilaya*. Talking about this *wilaya*, the overall *wilaya*, that is, the highest level of *wilaya*, is talking about the level of Prophethood. So, when we address the Infallible Ones عليهم السلام saying, “Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet!,” we mean to say, “Assalamo Alaikom, O people of the *wilaya*!” The Household of the Prophet are the Household of the *wilaya*, mastership. The Household of Prophethood is the center of the *wilaya*, the Household of the entire caliphate. The highest level of the overall caliphate is that of Prophethood which opens and seals. The first in charge of it is Muhammed عليه السلام in his first existence, in his sublime existence from the *noor* of which all *noors* were derived.

A second narrative tackles this subject from another aspect in a way that takes note of another “whereas”; other than that, the context is the same. The context, in the end, is one and the same. This amount of details is only for observing the human understanding, as our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام says, “Knowledge used to be one point which ignorant ones multiplied.” Knowledge in its basis is one reality, but man’s ignorance prompts him to coin juridical concepts, and this research falls outside our present discussion. But in philosophy, this

subject is clear and well known, i.e. the subject of the juridical concepts which man makes through the mental ability inherent in him, juridical concepts for the sake of facilitating education and so that it would be easy for him to think, to realize the meanings that surround him; otherwise, the rational concepts have no reality in the external world. Rather, they fall within the level and in the horizon of being juridical; therefore, they are called juridical concepts. I do not wish to delve into this story.

I now point out to another narrative. I recite for you another text from the Prophet ﷺ and his Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. It handles another aspect. But all the talk is about the whole *wilaya* and the highest level in it: that of overall Prophethood. The second narrative is transmitted by our mentor, al-Majlisi, from *Kanz al-Fawa'id* by the revered narrator of traditions, al-Karajki رحمته. This narrative is about the Prophet ﷺ. What does the Seal of Prophets ﷺ say? “Allah created me, created Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain before creating Adam, peace with him.” This narrative mentions these five names. I said a short while ago that this is not a difference in the narratives; rather, each narrative looks at a particular aspect. In other words, each narrative shows one side of the reality: “Allah created me, created Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain before creating Adam, peace with him.” When did that happen? “[It happened] when there was no heavens built, nor earth outstretched, nor were there darkness, light, sun, moon, Paradise or Hellfire,” i.e. before all creation. This is the same previous context. He created them then created all things after that: “Allah created me, created Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain before creating Adam, peace with him, when there was no heavens built, nor earth outstretched, nor were there darkness, light, sun, moon, Paradise or Hellfire.” This status, this horizon, is the horizon of the overall *wilaya*, and the highest level in the overall *wilaya* is the overall Prophethood. This horizon is outside that of the earth, outside that of the heavens, outside that of the natural world, outside that of the lower and upper worlds. This is the Olive Tree which is neither eastern nor western. This is the Olive Tree which is the origin of everything, the one from whose oil existence came to be: **يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ** one whose oil is almost luminous; it was from this tree that the candle of existence was lit.

This horizon is the one which is neither eastern nor western: there is neither sky nor earth nor darkness nor light nor sun nor moon. Here, when the earth is mentioned, when the sun and the moon are mentioned, since these things are sensed by man as he lives on earth, man's nature is tied to the senses. He feels comfortable with what he senses; therefore, these things are mentioned; otherwise, when the narrative says that there would be no heavens built, the matter ends at the earth, the sun, the moon and all other things that are under the frame of the heavens; they are in the atmosphere of the heavens. When I say the "atmosphere of the heavens," I do not mean the space; rather, I mean to say that these planets fall under the circle of the heavens, the broader circle, not in the cosmic sense but in the existentialist sense: "They came to be when there was nothing there. Al-Abbas (Prophet's uncle) said, 'How was the start of your creation, O Messenger of Allah?!' (How was the beginning?) He ﷺ said, 'O Uncle! When Allah wanted to create us, He spoke a word—this is the word to which I referred at the beginning—He spoke a word from which He created *noor*.'" This was the first word, the first reality, and it has scopes: One of the scopes of this word is the first *noor*; otherwise, the first word, which is the Muhammedi reality in its first transfiguration, and this word has its scopes. "O Uncle! When Allah wanted to create us, He spoke a word from which He created *noor*. Then He spoke another word from which He created a Spirit. Then he mixed the *noor* with the Spirit, thus creating me, Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain. Thus, we kept praising Him when there was no [other] praise, when there was nobody else sanctifying Him." Of course, the talk here is not about the *noor* which is similar to things around us nor the Spirit that is similar to things around us. This is the Supreme Spirit one of whose transfigurations is the Spirit that descends during Laylatul-Qadr.

The Spirit that descends during Laylatul-Qadr is the one to whom reference is made in the Holy Qur'an thus:

85. They ask you concerning
the Spirit (of inspiration)
Say: "The Spirit (comes) by

وَسَأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ؛ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي، وَمَا
أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ❁

the command of my Lord:
Only little knowledge is
communicated to you, (O
mankind!)”

Qur'an, 17:85

The Spirit who comes by the command of my Lord and who descends during Laylatul-Qadr is one of the transfigurations that are distant from the first Spirit, the great Spirit to whom this narrative refers: “Then He spoke another word from which He created its Spirit.” Neither is the *noor* mentioned here the one which we know, nor is the Spirit that we know in language or in these sciences about which we talk and discuss. This talk comes out of the scope in which we are. These are symbols and signs known only by Allah and by them. It is to these stations, to these statuses, that he refers: “O Ali! Nobody knows you except Allah and I! O Ali! Nobody knows me except Allah and you! O Ali! Nobody knows Allah except I and you.” It is to these statuses and stations that the Seal of Prophets ﷺ has pointed out. We roam around from afar in the hope we can inhale a fragrance from a distance. For example, if there is a royal mansion where a big celebration goes on and which not all people can enter, when aromas blow from a distance, people sniff them. They sniff food smell. They sniff the aroma of elation and of weddings from afar. We smell perfume. This also is not done save through enabling from the Imam of our Time, Allah’s peace and blessings with him. Reaching such meanings needs care from the Imam of Time, of every time, the Imam of all Shi`as in every age. Through the success he grants, they reach these norms of knowledge; otherwise, these meanings, these branches of knowledge, need enabling. They need hearts that accept them and pleased countenances filled with the aroma of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام.

Our Imam, al-Baqir عليه السلام, in a narrative in the sacred *Al-Kafi*, addresses Abu Khalid al-Kabuli thus: “By Allah, O Abu Khalid! The Imam’s *noor* in the hearts of the faithful is more intense than this sun that shines in the midst of daytime.” It shines more than sunrays.

These hearts are the ones that can somehow get close in order to smell a fragrance from afar. These are mysteries within mysteries. They ﷺ have said, “Our matter is a continuous mystery, a mystery veiled with secrecy, a mystery that benefits only a mystery.” They themselves have said so. No wonder, then, when we see in some of their sacred statements that reach us that, “Our matter, our hadith, is difficult, hard; nobody can withstand it except a sent prophet.” I said that the hadith which the logicians mention about the statuses of the Prophets has nothing to do with this meaning of Prophethood. The hadith here points out to this reality: “Our matter, our hadith, is difficult, hard; nobody can withstand it, not even a sent prophet, not even a close angel.” “Who bears it, O son of the Messenger of Allah?,” he asked the Imam ﷺ. He (Imam ﷺ) said, “It is borne by whoever we choose.” This is the success to which I pointed out. This is the pursuit that we, by the will of Allah Almighty, will explain in the upcoming days as we explain the statements of this sacred Ziyara.

I continue to read the narrative: “Then He spoke another word from which He created a soul. Then He mixed the *noor* with the soul, so He created me, Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain, so we used to glorify Him when there was none else to glorify Him.” There was no glorification because none existed that would glorify. They were created before existence, before glorification, and they taught the beings how to glorify Him; thus narratives say. “So we used to glorify Him when there was no glorification at all and to sanctify Him where there was no sanctification.” What is meant by this glorifying? What is meant by this sanctifying? It is something which neither I nor anyone else knows. One who imagines that he knows these meanings is one hundred percent ignorant because these meanings cannot be grasped by minds. The resources we have, the faculties of realization, are limited. We roam in the hope of sniffing a fragrance from afar. “So we used to glorify Him when there was no glorification at all and sanctify Him when there was no sanctification. When Allah Almighty wanted to start His creation, He split my *noor* from which He created the Arsh. The Arsh, then, is from my *noor*, and my *noor* is from Allah’s *noor*. My *noor* is better than the Arsh.” The Arsh is the broadest created entity in the world

of creation, broader in the world of creation after the first Word; therefore, it is derived from the highest level of absolutely whole Divine caliphate. The Arsh was derived from the *noor* of Muhammed ﷺ. “So, when Allah Almighty wanted to start His creation, He split my *noor* from which He created the Arsh. The Arsh, then, is from my *noor*; my *noor* is from Allah’s *noor*, and my *noor* is better than the Arsh. Then He split the *noor* of my brother, Ali, from which He created the angels. So, the angels are [created] from Ali’s *noor*, and Ali’s *noor* is from Allah’s *noor*, and Ali is better than the angels. Then He split the *noor* of my daughter (Fatima). Then He split the *noor* of my daughter, creating from it the heavens and the earth. The heavens and the earth, then, are from the *noor* of my daughter Fatima, and the *noor* of my daughter Fatima is from Allah’s *noor*, and my daughter Fatima is better than the heavens and the earth. Then He split the *noor* of my son, al-Hassan, from which He created the sun and the moon. The sun and the moon, then, are from the *noor* of my son, al-Hassan, and his *noor* is from Allah’s *noor*, and al-Hassan is better than the sun and the moon. Then He split the *noor* of my son al-Hussain, creating from it Paradise and the huris with large lovely eyes. So, Paradise and the huris with huris are from the *noor* of my son al-Hussain; the *noor* of my son al-Hussain is from Allah’s *noor*, and my son al-Hussain is better than Paradise and the huris with large lovely eyes.” Of course, the narrative here is not apt for details; rather, this narrative is summing up, talking about samples of those whose *noor* was split which form existence in all its details as is explained in many narratives and ahadith citing the Prophet ﷺ and the Imams ؑ: Everything is derived from their *noors*, everything.

The narrative here talks about samples of those whose *noors* were split and what was derived from their holy *noors* ؑ while they were in that status, too, nobody blessing them. These supplications which we state are articulated only because such are our manners. They form a part of our etiquette in this earthly world in their regard ؑ. They were, in that status, above even these meanings, the meanings of these restrictions, and this is a very deep pursuit. I do not want to talk about it now, perhaps I will tackle it in future episodes of this program. The pursuits are many, and the subjects are

very deep, and I cannot tackle them all, but I would like to point out to some of them, perhaps the picture will be complete. So, what is meant by Prophethood in this sense, when we salute our Imams عليهم السلام with “*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Members of the Prophet’s Family!,” this is their home, this is their Prophethood to which they belong, the Prophethood of their grandfather ﷺ. This is their *wilaya*. This is their Divine caliphate. From here it becomes clear for us, though in an overall way, the meanings contained in the Great Comprehensive Ziyara. The inquirer asked the Imam عليه السلام to teach him a completely wise statement. The completely oratory statement does not undertake one aspect; it has to deal with all aspects though in an overall way. I am here to explain the meanings in an overall way. If I wish to simplify the statement in all these details, we will halt at Prophethood without being able to continue the statements of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, and the episodes will continue explaining the statements of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara as the episodes continue to explain the meaning of Prophethood. This is due to the abundance of the texts that quote the Prophet ﷺ and the Imams عليهم السلام explaining these levels and these realities.

I only would like to point out to another narrative. This narrative cites the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام. It talks about another aspect, another transfiguration of Prophethood. We here want to understand the gist of our statement: “*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet!” Prophethood is the highest height, and the highest height is in the status and horizon which used to be before this creation, before this existence. The narrative cites our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام quoting his purified forefathers who quote the Master of Wasis عليه السلام. What does the Master of Wasis عليه السلام say?

Allah, the most Praised and Exalted One, created the *noor* of Muhammed ﷺ before creating the heavens, the earth, the Arsh, the Kursi, the Tablet, the pen, Paradise and hell, and before creating Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, David and Solomon, peace with them all, and everyone else included in this sacred of the most Great, the most Exalted One:

84. We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob: We guided all (three): And before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny: David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron; thus do We reward those who do good deeds.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا، وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا
مِن قَبْلُ، وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ
وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ، وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. And Zakariya and John and Jesus and Elias: All are in the ranks of the righteous.

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِّن
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot: And We favored all (of them) above the nations,

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُوسُفَ وَلُوطًا، وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. (Them) and their fathers and progeny and brothers did We guid to a straight path.

وَمِمَّن آتَيْنَاهُمْ ذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانَهُمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ، وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ
إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾

Qur'an, 6:84-87

“We guided them” in 6:87 refers to the Almighty having guided all His Prophets. “... And before the creation of all prophets by one hundred and twenty-four thousand years.” These figures have nothing to do with worldly timing. These statuses are in the world of actuality and passivity of the levels of existence. These statuses talk about the transfigurations, to levels of transfiguration, and we will talk about transfiguration in this creation, in the first creation, so the picture may become clear, and so the talk may be sequential. Let us establish two levels for the creation: the first are the first holy *noors*, and the second covers all existents whose *noors* were derived from the first divine *noors*.

When I use this terminology, I mean by the first creation those who were created before [material] creation, whereas I mean by the second creation the existence which was derived from their sacred *noors*, Allah’s peace and blessings with them all. I now go back to

the narrative. The Imam عليه السلام here explained other aspects. I have said that each narrative of the branches of knowledge deals with an aspect. There is no contradiction among these narratives; therefore, there are labels mentioned by way of generalization in a narrative, while in another narrative, it is stated in detail. For example, this narrative has some details. “Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, created the *noor* of Muhammed ﷺ before creating the heavens, the earth, the Arsh, the Kursi, the Tablet, the pen, Paradise and hell and before creating Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus, David and Solomon, peace with them all, and everyone else included in this sacred of the most Great, the most Exalted One:

84. We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob: We guided all (three): And before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny: David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron; thus do We reward those who do good deeds.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ؛ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا، وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا
مِن قَبْلُ، وَمَنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ
وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ، وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. And Zakariya and John and Jesus and Elias: All are in the ranks of the righteous.

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِّن
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot: And We favored all (of them) above the nations,

وَأِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا، وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. (Them) and their fathers and progeny and brothers did We guide to a straight path.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ، وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ
إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾

Qur'an, 6:84-87

... Before creating the prophets, all of them, by one hundred and twenty-four thousand years., the most Praised and Exalted One

created with him [with Muhammed ﷺ, i.e. with his supreme *noor*] twelve barriers.” We have talked about these barriers while explaining the meaning of “*Allahu Akbar!*” “And the most Praised and Exalted One created with him twelve barriers of: ability, greatness, grace, mercy, happiness, dignity, status, guidance, Prophethood, loftiness, awe and intercession. Then He confined the *noor* of Muhammed ﷺ in the barrier of ability for twelve thousand years as he kept saying, *سبحان ربي الأعلى* ‘Praise belongs to my Lord, the most High—the ‘saying’ here is not the articulated one, and the indications are not the linguistic ones with which we are familiar. All these are realities greater than we can imagine. “Then He confined the *noor* of Muhammed ﷺ in the barrier of ability for twelve thousand years as he kept saying, *سبحان ربي الأعلى* ‘Praise belongs to my Lord, the most High,’ and in the barrier of greatness for eleven thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان عالم السر* ‘Praise to the One Who knows what is concealed!’ and in the barrier of grace for eleven thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان من هو قائم لا يلهو* ‘Praise to the One Who stands without being distracted!’ and in the barrier of mercy for nine thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان الرفيع الأعلى* ‘Praise to the most High’ and in the barrier of happiness for eight thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان من هو دائم لا يسهو* ‘Praise to the One Who is Everlasting without being inattentive’ and in the barrier of dignity for seven thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان من هو غني لا يفتقر* ‘Praise to the One Who is Needless and Who suffers no want’ and in the barrier of status for six thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان العليم الكريم* ‘Praise to the all-Knowing, to the Great One,’ and in the barrier of guidance for five thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان ذي العرش العظيم* ‘Praise belongs to the One Who has the Great Arsh,’ and in the barrier of Prophethood for four thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان رب العزة عما يصفون* ‘Praise belongs to the Lord of Dignity above what they ascribe,’ and in the barrier of loftiness for three thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان ذي الملك و الملكوت* ‘Praise to the One Who owns the domain and the dominion,’ and in the barrier of awe for two thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان الله و بحمده* ‘Praise belongs to Allah and Lauded is He,’ and in the barrier of intercession for a thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان ربي العظيم و بحمده* ‘Praise belongs to my Lord, the Great, and Lauded is He!’” These are the barriers through which he ﷺ

passed. These barriers are the Divine transfigurations. They are the transfigurations of the One and Only Lord in His Holy self. These are the transfigurations of His Unity in this Holy Essence. These are the transfigurations of the Names in this first *noor* reality.

These many thousands of years, these stations of transfigurations, these and these meanings we cannot realize; rather, we circumambulate from a far. They make us realize that there are great realities, greater than great realities, and greater than greater realities which we cannot imagine but realize through a group of articulations and words. "...and in the barrier of intercession for a thousand years as he kept saying *سبحان ربي العظيم و بحمده* 'Praise belongs to my Lord, the Great, and Lauded is He!' Then He showed his name on the Tablet, hence the Tablet was lit for four thousand years. Then He showed it on the Arsh, so it was on the leg of the Arsh fixed for seven thousand years until Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, placed it in Adam's loins." The narrative here talks, in one of its aspects, about the descending transfigurations for the Muhammedi reality. Here, the narrative is yet to mention all the descending transfigurations. These are only examples and samples of what has already passed by in previous narratives.

These Gnostic narratives talk about an aspect of the reality, about something that brings to us the meanings closer a little bit, and it may even distance it sometimes due to the density of our minds. These dense minds cannot realize the transparent meanings, the *noor*-related meanings in those worlds. There is density in these minds. These minds are imprisoned in this earthly world, this world which is surrounded by barriers and dark twilights. These minds are jailed in this world, so how can they realize these realities? But the Master of Wasis *عليه السلام* says, "What cannot all be realized must not all be abandoned."

"Then He showed his name on the Tablet, hence the Tablet was lit for four thousand years. Then He showed it on the Arsh, so it was on the leg of the Arsh fixed for seven thousand years until Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, placed it in Adam's loins, then He moved it from the loins of Adam *عليه السلام* to those of Noah *عليه السلام*, then

from loins to loins until Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, got it out of the loins of Abdullah son of Abdul-Muttalib, granting him six tokens of esteem.” There are six tokens of esteem which He bestowed on the Prophet ﷺ: “He clothed him with the shirt of content,” this tradition does not talk about material, tangible, things; it is about the Prophetic reality as manifested in the earthly world. The start of the talk is about Prophethood in its essence, in the supreme status, then this Prophethood descended in transfigurations until it manifested itself on the earthly Prophethood, “So He bestowed on him six tokens of esteem: He clothed him with the shirt of content, outfitted him with the robe of awe, crowned him with the crown of guidance, outfitted him with the slacks of knowledge and let his belt be love whereby he ties his slacks. He let his sandal be fear, handing him the cane of status. Then He said to him, ‘O Muhammed! Go to people and tell them to say that There is no god save Allah and Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah.’” He bestowed on him six tokens of esteem; what does this mean?

I can explain the statements linguistically, and I can imagine and envision meanings for these statements. Some people derived from them, from the narratives, their own conclusions, but they are not the realities. These realities have been mentioned in an overall purpose so we may sense from them the great mysteries that are in the circle of Prophethood, in all its levels, the Prophethood that is in the high circle prior to creation, and the Prophethood within the earthly circle. “He clothed him with the shirt of content, outfitted him with the robe of awe, crowned him with the crown of guidance, outfitted him with the slacks of knowledge and let his belt be love whereby he ties his slacks. He let his sandal be fear, handing him the cane of status. Then He said to him, ‘O Muhammed! Go to people and tell them to say that There is no god save Allah and Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah.’” The essence of that shirt was comprised of six things. The shirt: He clothed him with the shirt of content. This shirt of content which covers the slacks is the widest and greatest. And the origin of that shirt was comprised of six things: Its height is of ruby. The height means the cloth from which the shirt is made; i.e. when one wears a shirt, this part is the front and the back of it. Its height is of ruby and sleeves of pearls, while its additional sleeves, which are added to broaden the shirt, is made of yellow crystal and

armpit areas of aquamarine and lining of red corals and openings of red corals and pocket of the noor of the Lord, Great is His Greatments.” This hadith is not about a robe or a shirt; it is about the Prophet’s own self. These descriptions are provided only by way of euphemism about the Prophet ﷺ himself, about the reality of the Prophet ﷺ in all its details. I, by the will of Allah, will deal with this narrative some other time in order to explain it because if I now start explaining it, I will need a long period of time. If it pleases Allah Almighty, I will explain it.

Yet overall, this narrative wants to explain to us that the Prophetic reality in the earthly world is a mystery which cannot be realized and its dimensions are divine, godly; therefore, the opening of this shirt, the one from which one’s head comes out, means the shining reality. Where does the Prophet’s reality come from? And its opening is of the *noor* of the Lord. What comes out of the Prophet’s reality shines from the Lord’s *noor*. “Its opening is of the *noor* of the Lord, Great is His Greatness.” Then the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام goes on to say, “So, Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, accepted the repentance of Adam عليه السلام through that shirt—through the shirt when he pleaded with the reality which Adam came to know—and returned Solomon’s ring to him—through the shirt, i.e. through that belief; the shirt here is not one made of cloth—and He reunited Yousuf (Joseph) عليه السلام with Jacob عليه السلام—through that shirt—and saved Yunus (Jonah) عليه السلام from the belly of the whale through it, too, and so were all other prophets, peace with them all. He saved them from calamities through it—through the shirt: the supreme Muhammedi reality—and that shirt was none but the shirt of Muhammed ﷺ. Muhammed’s shirt here means the Prophetic *wilaya*. It is meant to be the status Muhammed ﷺ [enjoys with his Lord]. The narrative is deep in its context. The narrative is filled with signs and symbols. I have said that the hadith of Ahlul-Bayat عليه السلام is like the Holy Qur’an. The speech of Ahlul-Bayat عليه السلام also stands on four horizons: statement, sign, minute details and realities, as our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام said as he spoke about the Qur’an. He عليه السلام said that the statement is for the commoners, the sign for the elite, the minute details for the *walis* and the realities for the prophets. Our talk, all of it, falls within the world of the statement. We did not get

out to the world of the sign because the sign, for us, is also far-fetched. We can hold on to the *sharashir* of the sign world, and I have already explained the meaning of the *sharashir*, the strings at the end of the prayer rug, at the end of the carpet... Are there no strings there? These strings are called *sharashir*. We hold on to the ends of the sign world when we realize meanings that are for us deep; otherwise, the sign world for us is also far-fetched. We are the sons of the statement world, and all our talk is in the statement world. Yes, there are signs in these narratives, but we do not realize their realities. If we wish to hold on to some of them, we hold on to their extremities, to the ends of their *sharashir*.

Such is the Prophethood about which the Comprehensive Ziyara talks according to what we understand in the statement horizon of the narratives, keeping in mind that if I keep reading for you the narratives that explain the meaning of Prophethood, we will need many episodes. This statement is not an exaggeration. By Allah, we need many, many, many episodes to tackle this issue. I, therefore, will contend myself with this much and, if Allah so wills, I will do so within the folds of the upcoming episodes, in explaining the contexts and the meanings of the other phrases of the Ziyara. I will explain, to the best of my ability and as time permits, some of these meanings, but what is the summary which we reach after having recited these narratives for you?

These narratives, as a whole, talk about an aspect of the meaning of the absolute Divine total Prophetic caliphate prior to this creation, although this third narrative also talks about some characteristics and particularities of earthly Prophethood. We do not realize the meaning of this earthly Prophethood, either. This earthly Prophethood has transfigurations in the world of its ascent from its earthly world, and in the world of its ascent, it has transfigurations with which we cannot be fully familiar. Perhaps one of the best texts which I would like to cite to talk about the transfigurations of the earthly Prophethood, and which falls within the sphere of total Prophethood, is that the total Prophethood is broader. The earthly Prophethood stems from the transfigurations of the total absolute Prophethood prior to creation, from near and at the same time distant images which we have and which are stated in the Holy Qur'an in

the sacred Surat al-Najm. It sketches for us a portrait about our Prophet ﷺ ascending in the world of ascent:

The Stars [Al-Najm]

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. بِمِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ رَّحِيمٍ

1. By the star when it goes down,
 ١. وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ﴿١﴾
2. Your companion is neither astray nor misled,
 ٢. مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ﴿٢﴾
3. Nor does he say (anything) of (his own) desire.
 ٣. وَمَا يَبْطِئُ عَنِ النَّوَىٰ ﴿٣﴾
4. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him:
 ٤. إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٤﴾
5. He was taught by One mighty in power,
 ٥. عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾
6. Endowed with wisdom, for he appeared (in a stately form)
 ٦. ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾
7. While he was in the highest part of the horizon:
 ٧. وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٧﴾
8. Then he approached and came closer,
 ٨. ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ ﴿٨﴾
9. And he was at a distance of only two bow-lengths or (even) nearer;
 ٩. فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾
10. So did (Allāh) convey the inspiration to His servant! (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey.
 ١٠. فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾
11. The (Prophet's mind and) heart in no way falsified what he saw.
 ١١. مَا كَذَّبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ﴿١١﴾
12. Then will you dispute with him concerning what he saw?
 ١٢. أَفَتَسَارُوهَ عَلَيْهِ مَا بَرَىٰ؟ ﴿١٢﴾

13. For indeed he saw him at a second descent, . ١٣ وَقَدَرَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى ﴿١٣﴾
14. Near the lote-tree beyond which none may pass: . ١٤ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى ﴿١٤﴾
15. Near it is the Garden of abode. . ١٥ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى ﴿١٥﴾
16. Behold! The lote-tree was shrouded (in unspeakable mystery!) . ١٦ إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى ﴿١٦﴾
17. (His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong! . ١٧ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾
18. For truly he saw the greatest of his Lord's Signs! . ١٨ لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى ﴿١٨﴾

Qur'an, 53:1-18

Can anyone explain these verses for us?!

These verses cannot be explained in any language. I can explain them in a language; I can explain them through the rules of oratory; I can explain them in more than one way..., but these verses talk about meanings, statuses and levels outside these horizons. They are outside the horizons of language, outside the horizons of oratory. This is another issue: **ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى** Endowed with wisdom, for he appeared (in a stately form). Perhaps some people do not know the meaning of **مِرَّةٍ** which is natural wisdom; **ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى** Endowed with wisdom, for he appeared (in a stately form). The **مِرَّةٍ** is the balanced nature. This verse explains that this nature is leveled, perfected.

6. Endowed with wisdom, for he appeared (in a stately form) ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَى ﴿١٦﴾
7. While he was in the highest part of the horizon: وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى ﴿١٧﴾

It means he has a leveled nature, an integrated one. **وَهُوَ بِالْأَفْقِ الْأَعْلَى**
While he was in the highest part of the horizon. The highest horizon
 is the one that is out of the eastern and western worlds:

7. While he was in the
 highest part of the horizon:

وَهُوَ بِالْأَفْقِ الْأَعْلَى

8. Then he approached and
 came closer,

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَكَّرَ

He approached and came closer: “Approached” has meanings. Here,
 I do not wish to talk about the exegesis of these verses. At some
 other time I will deal with an aspect of their meanings which I can
 explain. **فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى** And he was at a distance of only two
 bow-lengths or (even) nearer, up to:

13. For indeed he saw him at
 a second descent,

وَلَقَدْ رَأَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى

Where did that second descent take place?

14. Near the lote-tree beyond
 which none may pass:

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى

15. Near it is the Garden of
 abode.

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى

The lote-tree beyond which nobody passes, the Garden of Abode:
 These are not the Gardens which people will enter following the
 Reckoning on the Judgment Day. This is another Garden. This is a
 label that carries another meaning. The Garden of Abode, the abode,
 the homeland, and we have already said that love for the homeland
 is a sign of *iman*, conviction. Talk has already passed by in
 explaining the meaning of this hadith, and it is one of the meanings
 of this Ziyara. But the talk here is about the Garden of the abode, the
 abode for Muhammed ﷺ:

15. Near it is the Garden of
 abode.

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى

16. Behold! The lote-tree was shrouded (in unspeakable mystery!)

إِذْ يُعْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَعْشَى

17. (His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong!

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى

The lote-tree was shrouded...; what shrouds this lote-tree?

These are meanings which we cannot imagine. What is this lote-tree near the Garden of Abode? Why is this expression used here, i.e. the lote-tree beyond which none passes? The سِدْرَةَ *sidra* is derived from the meaning of سَدْرٌ *sadr* which has more than one meaning. According to the Arabs' language, the سَدْرٌ *sadr* means disappearance in the sense of shrouding: It is said that a woman made سَدْرٌ *sadr* of her hair which means she covered her body with her hair. It is said that a man made سَدْرٌ *sadr* of himself with his robe which means he covered himself with it. From here, the covering worn on the head is called سِدَارَةٌ *sidara*, head cap. So, سَدْرٌ *sadr* means covering; therefore, the hood that has no sides is called سِدَارَةٌ *sidara* which, according to the Arabs' language, means head covering. A man makes *sadr* of his body: It means he covers it with his robe. *Sadr*, then, means covering. *Sadr* also means in Arabic the puzzlement of vision. It is said that سَدْرٌ بَصْرُهُ *sadr* which means his vision is puzzled, confused; so, in what level are we?

We are in the level of mystery and puzzlement; but regarding the vision, the verse says مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى (His) sight (vision) never swerved, nor did it go wrong! This describes the vision, the eye sight, of Muhammed ﷺ. The talk here is about meanings and realities, and it is about descriptions which cannot be imagined. عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى Near the lote-tree beyond which none passes, at the status where realities are hidden; but why are realities hidden? It is due to the *noors* manifesting themselves, and when the *noors* manifest themselves, they obliterate all realities. This dazzling *noor*, when it manifests itself even in the sensual *noor*, when the *noor* is very intense..., one cannot see [anything] because the *noor* will then stand between man and his vision. Just when one looks at the sun's disk, he cannot keep gazing at it, he cannot fill his eyes with sun

rays. When the sense-related light is very intense, vision ends. At the lote-tree, everything disappears; therefore, some narratives quote the Prophet ﷺ as saying, “I saw no being there, as if all beings passed away at the lote-tree.” But at this lote-tree, at this dazzling light, where vision becomes confused, was Muhammed’s vision confused?! The verse says *مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى* (His) sight (vision) never swerved, nor did it go wrong! His vision did not swerve. Muhammed’s vision did not swerve. For the sake of Allah, O Muhammed ﷺ, is there a status similar to that of yours and of your Ahlul-Bayt?! *مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى* (His) sight (vision) never swerved, nor did it go wrong! Such is his status. *إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى* Behold! The lote-tree was shrouded (in unspeakable mystery!) Here, when the noor manifested itself, what can I say with the utmost effort, with the sweetest words I can articulate, in the strongest way?! What can my expressions be, and who am I?

Words and expressions stop when *noor* shines; therefore, some narratives say that between Allah and His creation, there are seventy thousand barriers of *noor* and seventy thousand barriers of darkness. Had these barriers been lifted, existents would come to an end, their presence will terminate; the glory of His Countenance burns these existents. This burning is not material because these existents will fuse into their love [for the Creator] and their existence will come to an end. Their existence is confirmed through these barriers. They will fuse themselves into their love [for the Almighty]. They will be annihilated. This is why there have been barriers between Allah and His creation. My statement is faulty because I really do not know how to coin it. Talk is faulty. Statements are faulty. *عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى* *عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى* Near the lote-tree beyond which none may pass: Near it is the Garden of abode. There is a Garden of abode at the lote-tree. But what have I so far come to know about the lote-tree so I may now get to know about the Garden of abode?!

Tell me, by your Lord, what have we all come to know about the lote tree beyond which none passes so we may get to know the Garden of Abode?! The Garden of abode is a status, a level, at the lote-tree to which one resorts. Whoever resorts to it, it embraces him. This means that this Prophetic reality that rises from the earthly

world, this ascending transfiguration for this Prophetic reality, where is it embraced? It is embraced at the Garden of Abode. Loving the homeland is a sign of *iman*, conviction. **إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَأْدُكَ** *Truly the One Who ordained the Qur'an for you will bring you back to the place of return* (Qur'an, 28:85). Of course, according to books of exegesis, the “place of return” in this verse refers to one of Mecca’s names, but the issue is much deeper and far-fetched. The return is this Garden of Abode. He shall bring you back to your place of return. This response is not referring to death. This response during all the times of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is at the Garden of Abode. These meanings are not restricted to a particular time, to a particular ascension. The Prophet ﷺ is in the state of ascension at every moment, at all times. The Prophet’s ascension is not measured by time. This ascension has already been discussed, and it has been subjected to time’s moments; otherwise, we have narratives that say that there have been one hundred and twenty ascensions conducted by the Prophet ﷺ: According to narratives, every eve preceding Friday, he ﷺ is taken for an ascension. Some narratives say that he ﷺ goes through an ascension every single day, and these ascensions are subjected to time calculations. As far as he ﷺ is concerned, when was it that he was not taken for an ascension, and when did he ever get distant from the Garden of Abode so he would need to return to it through an ascension?! He is from it and is back to it:

16. Behold! The lote-tree was shrouded (in unspeakable mystery!)

إِذْ يَعْشَى السَّدْرَةَ مَا يَعْشَى

17. (His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong!

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى

There, when all *noors* (celestial lights) are crushed under the Greatest *noor*, Muhammed’s vision is the exception: It neither swerves nor goes wrong. **لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى** *For truly he saw the greatest of his Lord's Signs!* According to narratives, this verse points out to the Fatimi reality: **لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى** *For truly he saw the greatest of his Lord's Signs!* I do not wish to talk about these details but only to point out to them for the sake of deriving some benefit. I hope another opportunity will become available to me to

tackle and explain these verses, but I will refer to the narratives. I will go to the narratives in order to complete the talk where I had left off so the image of Prophethood may manifest itself for us in its level in this earthly world.

We have a narrative in the exegesis book by Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi. The narrative cites our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام talking about the Prophet ﷺ being the nearest of all creation to Allah Almighty. The Prophet ﷺ is the nearest to Allah Almighty than all other creation. “And he was at the place where Gabriel, during his ascension to the heavens, said to him, ‘O Muhammed, advance, for you have set your foot at a place where neither an angel close to Allah nor a sent prophet had ever set foot.’” A short while ago, I said that our matter is difficult, challenging, and it cannot be tackled by a sent prophet or an angel close to the Lord. “Advance, O Muhammed, for you have set foot where neither an angel close to Allah nor a sent prophet ever reached.” The Imam عليه السلام comments saying that had the Prophet’s soul not been from that place, from the Garden of Abode to which he resorted—loving the homeland is a sign of iman, conviction: he simply returned home—and had his soul and self not been from that place..., he could not have reached it. Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great, described that place as قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى “a distance of only two bow-lengths or (even) nearer;” rather, much nearer than that. We must also not forget that when the narratives tell us something, they do so within the scope of civility, politeness. By Allah, Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام did not speak to people, as the latter themselves say, except according to their mental capacity, not according to the mentality of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام themselves. Who among us can comprehend statements as did Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib عليه السلام?! Who among us can understand speech as [Imam] Ja`far ibn Muhammed عليه السلام [al-Sadiq, for e.g.] could?!

Never! We can only realize some of what is said, such as: I am so-and-so son of so-and-so; I am the one who stands before al-Hussain عليه السلام to say to him, “Master! O father of Abdullah! I am your servant and the son of your servant and bondmaid, one who admits his servitude [to Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام]..., etc.” Our Imams عليه السلام talk to us within this scope, the scope in which I address al-Hussain عليه السلام:

“...your servant and the son of your servant and bondmaid, one who admits his servitude.” The speech with us falls within this scope; otherwise, what is the difference between dust and the Lord of lords, as men of wisdom say? What is the difference between dust and the Lord of lords? The issue is broader and deeper than all of this. I excuse anyone who rejects these meanings. He rejects them for two reasons: 1) due to the lowliness of nature and taste, and 2) due to his limited knowledge; otherwise, these meanings flow with nature, the nature of conscience. There is ignorance and there is a shortage of good taste. When I talk about a shortage of good taste, little appreciation of the Divine, I do not mean a limited taste in food, drinks and clothes, although this taste branches out of that. Rather, I talk about the taste of the Divine, the taste of what is doctrinal. Those who reject these meanings are sick. They suffer a shortage of knowledge and of taste that falls short of appreciating the statements of the Infallible Ones عليه السلام such as the following:

Here is one narrative in *Tafsir al-Burhan*.



Here is Volume 7 of *Tafsir al-Burhan*.

A narrative cites our Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام explaining this verse: *إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى* *The lote-tree was shrouded (in unspeakable mystery!)*. The narrative goes on to say that Gabriel, peace with him, says, “This is *سِدْرَةَ الْمُنْتَهَى*, the lote-tree beyond which none passes. Prophets before you [O Muhammed!] used to reach as far as here.” Yet the Prophet ﷺ and his Muhammedi ascension need neither Gabriel nor anyone else; Gabriel is a servant: “We have with Allah instances in which neither an angel near to Allah nor a sent prophet can fathom.” There are instances that involve them [Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام]; these instances are their own real ascension. As regarding this ascension which is seen through worldly eyes and which took place through the gate of this world, this ascension which took place through the *buraq*..., their [Imams'] real ascension needs no medium, needs no method, and this meaning is very deep and we

will explain it, by the will of Allah, at the right time. Yet all these are transfigurations. For each level of the reality there is a transfiguration. This ascension, which is seen through the eyes of worldly timing and is seen as having a method, a means, through the *buraq*..., it, too, is a transfiguration of the Prophetic ascension, the transfiguration of the Muhammedi ascension. Gabriel said, “This is the lote-tree beyond which none passes. Prophets before you [O Muhammed!] used to reach as far as here, but you go beyond it.” Other prophets cannot go any further than this lote-tree. How do you compare other prophets with Muhammed ﷺ?! “This is the lote-tree beyond which none passes. Prophets before you [O Muhammed!] used to reach as far as here, but you go beyond it,” which he did; he went beyond it; al-Zahrā’s father ﷺ went beyond it...

This narrative has details. I would like to point only to what is needed here. The Prophet ﷺ goes on to say, “I was overwhelmed with elation and anticipation, and I thought that all beings had died, and I saw nothing else besides myself from among those whom He created.” I do not think that there is an indication of his status ﷺ greater than this. “... and I thought that all beings had died”: Death here means only void. Death means the separation of the soul from the body. He ﷺ did not see a thing; everything became nil: “...I thought that all beings had died and I saw nothing else besides myself from among those whom He created.” Death here is not the one in which the souls depart from the body, for the body remains and so does the soul, and the Prophet ﷺ is capable of seeing it. The talk here is about a void: “... I thought that all beings had died and I saw nothing else besides myself from among those whom He created, so He left me [in that status] for as long as He willed.” Then he adds saying, “Thereafter, my Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, addressed me saying, ‘O Muhammed!..’” When did He address him? He ﷺ said, “I used to look at something like a needle hole.” This is a simile. A needle has a hole through which a string is inserted. “I used to see a *noor* between myself and my Lord which no visions could withstand.” But Muhammed’s vision is described in this verse:

17. (His) sight never swerved,
nor did it go wrong!

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾

“I used to see through the likeness of a needle hole a *noor* between myself and my Lord which no vision could withstand, whereupon my Lord addressed me, the most Blessed and Exalted One that He is, saying, ‘O Muhammed!’ I said, **لبيك ربي و سيدي و الهى، لبيك!** Here I am at Your service, O my Creator, Master and God!’ He said, ‘Have you come to know your status [which you occupy] with Me?’” How high did his esteem rise? How high when he saw only himself in His company?! “... I saw nothing else besides myself from among those whom He created, so He left me [in that status] for as long as He willed.” “Have you come to know [by now] your status with Me, your position and station?” The Prophet ﷺ answered, “Yes, Lord!” He said, “O Muhammed! Have you come to know your status with me and that of your offspring?” The Prophet ﷺ answered, “Yes, Lord!” His status and the status of his offspring, his position and that of his *wasis*, peace and blessings of Allah with them all.

Here is another narrative from Hamran ibn A`yan: Hamran says that he asked Abu Ja`far, our Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام, about these verses:

8. Then he approached and came closer,
9. And he was at a distance of only two bow-lengths or (even) nearer;

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَكَّرَ

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ

The Imam عليه السلام said, “Allah brought Muhammed closer to Him, so much so that only a window of pearls was between them in which there was a bed of glittering gold, whereupon he was shown an image. It was said to him, ‘O Muhammed! Do you recognize this image?’ He said, ‘Yes, this is the image of Ali ibn Abu Talib.’” We cannot imagine these realities and meanings through our senses so as we can imagine limits for them. Rather, we imagine them in their general meaning, in their overall sense. “Allah brought Muhammed closer to Him, so much so that only a window of pearls was between them in which there was a bed of glittering gold, whereupon he was shown an image. It was said to him, ‘O Muhammed! Do you recognize this image?’” Where did he ﷺ see that image? He saw it

when he got closer. “Do you recognize this image?,” he was asked. “Yes,” he said, “this is the image of Ali ibn Abu Talib.’ Allah Almighty inspired him to let Ali عليه السلام marry Fatima عليها السلام and to appoint him as his *wasi*.”

This narrative has very deep signs and indications. By the will of Allah, I will within the folds of the upcoming episodes deal with such meanings in a gradual way, one by one, explaining them one by one so the picture may become clear.

There is a narrative reported by our mentor, al-Tusi. Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani quotes it from mentor al-Tusi from the Prophet ﷺ thus: “When I was taken for the ascension to the heavens, I came nearer to my Lord, the most Exalted One, the most Great, so much so that I was the distance of two bow-throws or nearer, whereupon He said, ‘O Muhammed! Whom do you love the most from among all people?’ I said, ‘Lord! I love Ali.’” In that situation, where the *noors* shone and all realities obliterated, did he ﷺ not say that he saw none other than himself as Allah addressed him, asking him whom he loved the most? “He said, ‘Ali.’ He [the Almighty] said, ‘Turn, O Muhammed,’ whereupon I turned to my left where Ali ibn Abu Talib stood.” From here did the expression *أنفسنا* *anfusuna*, our own selves, occur in the Mubahala verse:

61. Now, if anyone disputes this matter with you, after the (full) knowledge that has come to you, say: “Come! Let us gather together our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves then earnestly pray and invoke Allāh's curse on the liars!”

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ، فَقُلْ:
تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ، وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ،
وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ، ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى
الْكَاذِبِينَ ❁

Qur'an, 3:61

So, *أنفُسَنَا* our own selves means: Muhammed and Ali; Muhammed is Ali, and Ali is Muhammed. This is one thing out of hundreds of other texts that discuss the characteristics of the status of Prophethood, the characteristics of the status of entire *wilaya*, mastership, their *wilaya* [that of Ahlul-Bayt *عليه*], while Prophethood is a higher status than that of entire *wilaya*. I have picked these narratives from here and there. Some of these narratives talk about entire Prophethood prior to creation with the first Word, and there are narratives that talk about the earthly Prophethood which manifested itself in Muhammed son of Abdullah *ﷺ* who is the most perfect scope of the Greatest Name [Attribute of the Almighty] on the face of earth. There are narratives that talk about the appearances of ascending to this reality in the very high worlds: *إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَيَّ مَعَادٍ* Truly the One Who ordained the *Qur`ān* for you will bring you back to the place of return (Qur`an, 28:85). It is the talk about the Garden of Abode, the Abode of Prophethood.

After this explanation, I can say that one thing has become clear to us, something of the meaning of Prophethood, when we address our Prophet *ﷺ* and Imams *عليه* saying, “*السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة*” *Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet!*” I would like to conclude my talk by saluting the Household of the Prophet *ﷺ* by saying,

*Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet! O Family of the Prophet! Help me! Help one who loves to know something about you though from afar. Help me! Help me so I may get to know something about you. Help me so I may get close to you, O Household of the Prophet! I am in need and am in your courtyard, O masters, O family of Muhammed! I am your servant and the son of your servant and bondmaid, one who admits his servitude, who avoids what differs from your line, Allah’s peace and blessings with you all. I say to my brothers, sisters, sons and daughters who watch this program, and you, too, “Assalamo Alaikom, O Shi`as of the Household of the Prophet! Assalamo Alaikom as you try to know the Household of the Prophet *ﷺ*.*

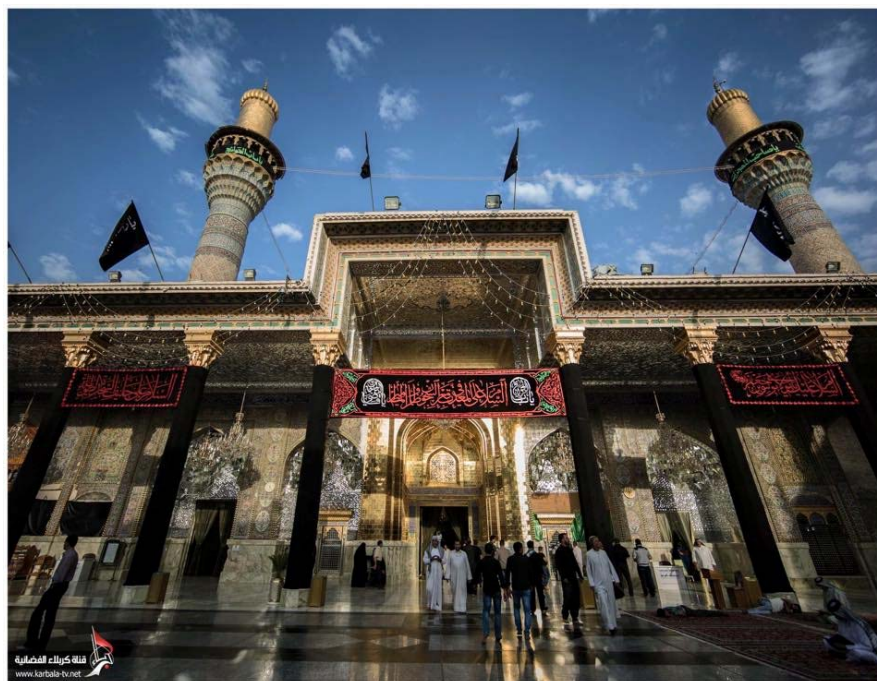
I solicit your supplication, all of you, and I look forward to meet with you again on loving and knowing the Household of the Prophet ﷺ in the next episode of our program, “The Great Comprehensive Ziyara”, and may you all remain in the security of Allah.



Huge crowds in the area between the Shrine of Imam al-Hussain عليه السلام and Imam al-Abbas عليه السلام

FIFTH EPISODE

MEANING AND STATUS OF THE MESSAGE



Facade of the Grand Kazimain Shrine, al-Kadhimiyya, Iraq

Salam to the one tortured in the depths of prisons at the hands of the worst oppressors, the one whose leg was bruised by the rings of shackles, the one whose coffin was addressed with the humiliation of slighting, the one who shall return to his grandfather, the Chosen One ﷺ, to his father, the Pleased One عليه السلام, and to his mother, the Head of all Women, complaining about a confiscated inheritance, a robbed loyalty, an avenged blood and poison drunk... Peace with you, O master, *mawla* and Imam, the Gate of Pleas, the one who has stations and ascensions, the mercy of Allah and His blessings.

O followers of Musa son of Ja`far [Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام], those who love the Gate of Pelas, *Assalamo Alaikom*, all of you, the mercy of Allah and His blessings. May Allah increase our rewards and yours. This is the fifth episode of our program “The Great

Comprehensive Ziyara.” In the previous episode, we talked about the meaning of the Household of Prophethood. We recite the Ziyara from the book titled *Mafatih al-Jinan* by our mentor and narrator of traditions, al-Qummi, may Allah be pleased with him: **السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة** Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet! This greeting we direct at all of them in general and at our Imam, the Gate of Pleas, in particular, for this day is named after his sacred name: **السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة و موضع الرسالة و رحمة الله و بركاته** *Peace with you all, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the mercy of Allah and His blessings.* Today, I stand for a short while to explain the second label of the Comprehensive Ziyara:

السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة و موضع الرسالة
Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet and the place of the Message.

Also, as indicated in the previous episode, I do not wish to bother you with regard to what logicians have said, the branches and the roots they have set up; rather, our first and last resort are their own [Ahlul-Bayt’s] statements. We start from the Holy Qur’an and go back to it and to the `Itra. This does not mean that we reject what our scholars of logic say; rather, what our scholars of logic talk tackles the surface. This does not mean at all that it is wrong or unsound, but the Ziyara at hand, the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, needs some depth in understanding its meanings and implications: **السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة و موضع الرسالة** *Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet and the place of the Message.* We have already explained the meaning of Prophethood, and I shall start now explaining the meaning of the Message. I provide a brief linguistic introduction after which I quote what explains it from the Qur’an and `Itra. The word **الرسول** *al-rasool*, and the word **الرسالة** *al-risala*: Each of these two words has a separate meaning, but sometimes they unite into one meaning. The *risala*, message, is carried by the *rasool*, messenger. According to the Arabs’ language, the word *rasool* also conveys the meaning of *risala*. It carries the meaning of the female gender and also in that of the male gender which indicates that this word is inclusive. According to the Arabs’ language, when a man, for e.g., sends a woman to someone, a male or a female, he says, “She is my *rasool* to you; so-and-so is my messenger” to him. So,

the word “rasool” is used in the female or the male gender sense. I say, “Fulan [male] (so-and-so) is my *rasool* to you,” and I may say, “Fulana [female] is my *rasool* to you.” The word “rasool” is used in the female or male gender case. I say, “Fulan is my rasool to you,” and I may say, “The such-and-such matter is my *rasool* to you,” i.e., my message to you. This message may inform [the recipient] about something; it may be a promise of goodness, it may be an evil threat; it may be a label for love; it may be a salutation and a greeting; it may be a request; it may be an explanation for some issue, and it may be something else. The *risala*, message, has no limitation in language. The message is something carried: It may be material, and it may be immaterial. The *rasool*, messenger, is the bearer of the *risala*, message. But in the language of the Arabs, the word *rasool* may be used to mean *risala*. In this, there is a beautiful sign to the message united with the messenger, that the messenger is united with the message. Where has this word originated from?

In the root of its structure, it has come from *istirsal* [providing details], and from *irsal* [sending]. *Istirsal* is also contact. When something is *mustarsal*, it means it is continuous, successive. It is said that the camels or steed came one after the other, i.e. in hordes after hordes in a continuous succession. We say that the troops came *mustarsala*, continuous, each part of it is tied to the other. What is “rasool” applied for? He is so called because the reports reach him in a succession, one after the other, from the person who sends them, so he gets the reports to reach their destination in a succession, to the one to whom he sends them. There is a continuation between the sender, the messenger and the one to whom the reports are sent. The *risala*, message or letter, is something which the messenger carries. The word “rasool” may also mean message. The messenger fuses himself in the message. The messenger, *rasool*, then, is the bearer of a message. It is said that he is *rasool* because the messages (or letters), reports, facts..., etc. reach him from their sender in a succession, and he is the one who gets them to reach others in a succession. The message is a fact borne by the messenger. It may be material, or it may be immaterial, or it may be both material and immaterial at the same time, or it may even be something else. This is the overall meaning of the words “rasool” and “risala” according

to the Arabs' language, and this applies in one way or in many ways to the meaning at hand.

There is an important matter to which I would like to point out. The important matter is that we take the facts from language according to our comprehension of such meanings, from the meanings of the Comprehensive Ziyara and the like. Do we get the meanings from the language, so the language becomes our source? This is a problem in which many people fall: They make language a source of knowledge. Language is not a source of knowledge. Language is a means, a medium, to attain knowledge. There is a difference between using language as a source from which we derive knowledge and making language a means towards that end. One may say that language is a means, but when we deal with the reality, for example, when we go to the books of exegesis of those who differ from Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام or other books of exegesis, we find out that they make language a source for knowledge rather than a means, even if they say that language is a means, but in the practical reality, we find the language as a source for attaining knowledge. This matter has also affected many Shi'as from among our scholars, writers and thinkers. They make language a source for knowledge and thought. Our source of knowledge and of thought is the Qur'an and the 'Itra, and language assists us in so doing as one of the means. If we, therefore, want to refer to the narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام that explained the Qur'an or hadith, when the hadith explains itself by itself, this exegesis, this explanation, which the narratives mention sometimes, is outside the limits of language. There are restrictions in the narratives that are relevant to this pursuit, and I do not want to elaborate too much on this issue because this issue is basic, essential. Do we make language a source of attaining knowledge so as we deal with the Qur'anic text and with the statement made by an Infallible One, with the text of the Infallible One as a whole, as such? The text of the Infallible One is divided into two types:

One is the Qur'anic text, and the other is the text of the 'Itra. The Qur'an is an infallible text, and the text of the 'Itra is also infallible, for we are dealing with the infallible text, with the Qur'anic text or

with that of the `Itra when we deal with the text of the Infallible One. Is language going to be our source in reaching the bits of information, the sciences and the facts?! This contradicts the method of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. True, we believe in the argument of the recognizable appearance and the recognizable dialogues. We also believe in the language issue: *وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ* *We did not send a Messenger except (to teach) in the language of his own people* (Qur'an, 14:4). We believe in the linguistic issue, in the Prophet's tongue which is based on the principles of clarity, the rules of oratory and the literary methodologies which the Arabs use in their speech. These matters are clear and are taken for granted, but they are not the judge in all circumstances. When this text faces us, so the Infallible Imam عليه السلام says, "I speak the word that can accept seventy meanings, and I can choose from all of them [meanings] an outcome." This is called *ma'areedh* معاريض –and you cannot be jurists unless you know the *ma'areedh* of our speech. This is an important issue that will accompany us all along the line. We seek help from language. We rely on language but on the basis it is a means, not on the basis of its being a source, so language would restrict us to the limits of the scopes of its pronouncements. What restrict us are: the Qur'an and the `Itra. You may say that the Qur'an is Arabic and so is the `Itra. This is true, but in the Qur'an, there are rules for comprehension, and the `Itra have rules for comprehension. We seek help from language, but the judge and the final decision is the clarity of the Qur'an and of the `Itra. But if we make the language a source for achieving knowledge, this is a great confusion in which those who differ from us have fallen because they do not have the `Itra to whom they may refer. This is so because they, as is the case with their senior man, said that the Book of Allah suffice them, so they are satisfied with the Book of Allah. When they face the Qur'an, how can they understand it?! They, therefore, have had to use language as a source for knowledge, a source for comprehension only, limiting comprehension and knowledge within the borders of language. From here, superficiality in understanding the Qur'an became the case, and so did superficiality in their comprehension of many ahadith which they themselves narrate.

As for us, we have undertaken the route which was sketched by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the route of the Qur'an and of the `Itra. The route of the Qur'an and of the `Itra is the gate to knowledge which is stored in the Qur'an and in the `Itra, while language is a helping agent, a means, a mechanism that helps us comprehend. Sometimes language stands incapacitated. Actually, quite often, it does so when we delve into the circle of Divine Gnostic branches of knowledge. Language stands many times incapacitated as if it is chained and tied, and as if shackles have surrounded it from every direction, so the pronouncements cannot release themselves so they may wade into the deep sea of meanings. These pronouncements remain chained. From here, we have to direct our attention to the lantern that lights the realities, the lantern that lights the facts, i.e. the lantern of the Purified `Itra.

When our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام says that the [text of the] Qur'an is based on four things: [a self-explanatory] statement, sign, finesse and fact, where does language stand in the world of finesse and fact?! Language would be defeated in such a world. Actually, even in the sign world, language stands incapacitated. Language moves within the cycle of the statement world, and I said a short while ago that I do not wish to elaborate on this pursuit because it is basic, because this pursuit is essential and a basis in comprehension and in dealing with the Infallibles' texts. I mean by "Infallibles' texts" those of the Qur'an and of the `Itra عليه السلام; therefore, when I explained a short while ago the meaning of *risala*, message, and of *rasool*, messenger, I said that this applies to the speech at hand, to the position of the message in fathoming the aspects of meanings; otherwise, the rest of meanings and their realities we take from the Qur'an and `Itra: *السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة و موضع الرسالة Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet and the place of the Message*. The message may be in the Prophethood but in some aspect. The message is a facet of total Prophethood. We talked in the previous episode about the earthly Prophethood and about the total Prophethood. The total Prophethood is the total *wilaya*, the total caliphate the highest level of which is Prophethood. I pointed out and stated some texts and narratives in the broad shade of which we have lived so we may inhale some of the fragrance of Prophethood,

the aroma of the meaning of Prophethood. The message is one facet of Prophethood. Total Prophethood is one of its facets, and one of its transfigurations is the message. When I say, “I sent you a message,” one may think that this message is a sum of money, an outfit, roses or flowers or... But the first meaning for “message” that comes to one’s mind is something written; therefore, the Qur’an takes this meaning, takes this fact, to talk about it. The Qur’an informs us about the message in its overall meaning, the total message which is one of the transfigurations of total Prophethood. Prophethood and the message are two transfigurations of the supreme *wilaya*, the total *wilaya*, while Prophethood is the supreme level as the message is one of the facets of total Prophethood.

To this end does the Qur’an talk in the first verse of Surat al-Qalam (Chapter 68) following the *basmala*: ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ *Nūn*. *By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down*. This is the message. This is the message in its overall sense. “*Nūn*” according to the Arabs’ language means the inkpot. In other words, it is the source of ink for the pen. The pen takes its ink from the inkpot and writing starts. When I write a book, where were these written words? In the beginning, they were in my mind, in my intellect, then they took a form, so the form came to exist through the inkpot and the pen. All the words which are written in the book, where was their ink? It was in the pen, and the pen’s ink was in the inkpot. So, ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ *Nūn*. *By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down* is one facet of the message. In other words, it is one of the meanings of the total *wilaya*. He spoke one Word then created a *noor* then a soul, then He mixed the *noor* and the soul together from which He created all beings, as we have already explained when we discussed the meanings of total Prophethood. The whole matter is that the issue is one of transfigurations. When the talk is about a *noor* and a soul, this is a transfiguration method. And when the talk is about *Nūn* and the pen, this is another transfiguration. What is meant by transfiguration? I have said that I do not wish to explain these meanings in one installment. Rather, during the episodes of this program, I shall little by little explain them as suits the situation. What is meant by transfigurations?! Transfigurations are appearances; they are visible appearances, but

how do we envision them?! There is a deep meaning. How shall I bring the deep meaning closer to your comprehension?!

I can bring the meaning closer now when we snap a photograph with a camera. Let us suppose we have a garden before us. This garden is full of roses and flowers, so we snap a photograph of this garden. The photographic camera snaps one still and silent image, and that is the end of it. It only takes one single isolated picture. But when we have a video camera and the transmission is just as is the case with this program, the transmission is direct: there is continuation, and my image every second is the same as you see each and every image of it. If we, for e.g., transmit directly from this garden, I mean we set up cameras directed at the garden and there is a direct transmission, what reaches viewers' television sets would be a continuously connected image. In other words, if we want to divide this image into seconds, there would be sixty images for the same status: an existing garden, roses are roses. Such is the transfiguration. Transfiguration means existence does not have one fixed status. Existence, at every instance, is a new transfiguration. If we wish to look at things the same way, there will be no single repeated image for us; therefore, what do men of wisdom and the Gnostics say? They say that there is no repetition in transfiguration. Existence now, in this status, is not the same a second later. When I say a second, I do it only to bring the meaning closer; otherwise, the issue is much deeper than that because existence is not measured by seconds, nor is it measured by instances. The seconds and instances are projectors. But I can bring the example closer to comprehension; how do I do that? A minute is divided. This division is old; it has been there since time immemorial. The minute is divided into sixty seconds, and the second is divided into sixty each. Perhaps some people did not hear this before. This division exists for a long period of time. A second is divided a third time into sixty. We say that an hour equals sixty minutes, the minute equals sixty seconds, the second equal third sixty fractions, the fraction equals a fourth more sixty parts, and the fourth equals a fifth sixty more... and so on, up to the ninth time which equals a tenth sixty parts, the smallest part of the second according to the old divisions. They used to divide time thus and this method has remained up to recently. The minutes and seconds are thus divided. Why is the second called so?

Since the hour was divided into sixty minutes, the minute is the first, i.e. the first division for the hour. Why was it called second? The hour was divided into sixty minutes, which means that the minute is the first [unit]. You can say “minute” and you can say the first [unit], but the minute expression became more widespread. The minute, or the first [unit], is divided into sixty seconds, then to a third, a fourth, up to a tenth division of each. The tenth represents one of sixty portions of the ninth; the ninth represents one of sixty portions of the eighth..., and so on up to returning to the minute than to the hour. Even if we want to divide existence, that is, dividing the image of existence, through this division, this cannot be right. Can you imagine how the tenth division would be?! The second we divide into sixty parts, then we repeat it a third, a fourth..., up to a tenth time. Actually, even if we want to apply laser division to existence, there is now the division of time which is called femtosecond; what is the femtosecond?

A femtosecond means dividing the second into a thousand trillion parts. This is the smallest part reached by man up to now. The second is swiftly divided via the power of laser beams into femtoseconds each of which equals a thousand trillion parts of the second. This means that if we want to write a femtosecond, we say it equals 1^{-15} of a second. If we want to write it through mathematical symbols, i.e. if we want to say how many femtoseconds there are in a second, we say it equals 1^{-15} of a second. This means we have the figure 1 before which there are 15 zeros. Fifteen zeros means one thousand trillions because the billion has nine zeros. After the billion comes the trillion. The trillion has 12 zeros. Now we have the figure of 15 zeros. Even if we divide the second into femtoseconds, which is done only for our benefit, I say that this is how a second is divided into one thousand trillion parts each of which is called a femtosecond. This is the division which the Egyptian scientist Ahmed Zewail (1946 -) [picture above] reached on the basis of which he won a Nobel prize [in 1999 in chemistry for his work on femtochemistry, becoming the



Ahmed Zewail

first Egyptian scientist to win a Nobel Prize in a scientific field] because he was able to create a technique for photographing the existing transformations in the atoms inside the particles in this distance of a second in this portion of the second. Anyhow, this is the most precise division contemporary technology has reached. Even if we divide time accordingly, i.e. if we divide the second into femtoseconds, that is, each femtosecond equals one thousand trillion parts..., even if we want to imagine this, such an imagination falls short. Existence has instances, and these instances are not measured by time because time is only a projector of some existents. Where does time come from? It comes from the movement of the epicycles, which is incidental; the movement of epicycles is incidental. Time comes from the movement of the epicycles, and the movement of the epicycles is incidental. The epicycles, the planets, the stars that exist..., all decorate the lower world. In other words, they are below the first heavenly world according to the Qur'anic expressions which tell us that the lower heavens is decorated with these planets. This means they are below the first heavenly world. They, thus, lag behind in their existentialist levels, so what would you say about the broader meaning of existence, the more general reality, the reality that carries the most broad and the greatest in existence? This is the one that has no repetition in its transfigurations: Every instance of existence, this existence is overwhelmed with a new outpouring, and this is the meaning of the Most Outgiving, the One Whose outpouring has no end, nor is there a repetition in it. Such is the greatness of outpouring. What does the greatness of the Divine outpouring (outgiving) mean?

Divine outpouring and generosity means His outgiving is continuous, there is no repetition in it. Had there been repetition, it would undermine the greatness of such outpouring, outgiving. The greatness of this outpouring is that there is no repetition in its transfigurations. Existence, in all its instances, is a new transfiguration. This material stillness of things is also one aspect of transfiguration: the first transfiguration, if we want to thus call it; otherwise, it would not be right to give it such a name because the first transfiguration is one that has neither a beginning nor an end, and it is the transfiguration of the Divine Self for the Divine Self. This is the transfiguration to the courtyard of which no mind can

reach. This is the transfiguration that puzzles minds; what minds?! I am talking about the first minds to which traditions have referred when Allah first created reason. I am talking about those minds. I am not talking about the mind which I and my likes carry in this lower world. I am talking about the first minds, the perfect minds. The transfiguration that has neither a beginning nor an end is the Self manifesting itself to the Self. It is knowing Allah through His own Self, getting to know Allah through Himself. Allah is manifested to Allah. This is talk about expressions, while the reality is strange and foreign to our minds.

There is a very beautiful Persian line of poetry the gist of which is:

أجمع شباكك أيها الصائد فانك لن تصيد العنقاء

*Gather your nets, O hunter, for
You shall never hunt the Phoenix.*

The Phoenix is a non-existent mythical bird. So, gather your nets, O hunter, O you who wishes to hunt the Phoenix! Gather your nets for you shall never hunt the Phoenix. And you, people, you poor humans *يا أيها الناس، أنتم الفقراء إلى الله* *O mankind! It is you who need Allāh!* (Qur'an, 35:15), gather the nets of your minds! The more you think, thus have our Imams عليهم السلام told us, the more confused you become. I do not want to go too far in explaining the meanings of Tawhid, for when the discussion reaches Tawhid in the expressions relevant to it in the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, I shall provide some details about the meanings of Tawhid. But this is the first transfiguration; so, let us gather the nets of our minds for the Phoenix does not exist. Let us gather minds' nets, for these minds will hunt nothing. This knowledge, as far as we are concerned, does not exist: knowing the transfiguration that has no beginning when Allah manifests Himself to Himself. This transfiguration, the faulty expressions, my mind and pronouncements are all faulty; so, what should I do?! The meanings are very deep, but I get lost in this world. I get lost in these contexts. And I am not alone: anyone who wants to sail in these meanings will get lost, for what is the difference between the dust and the Lord of lords?! Even these expressions are faulty, but what can we do? We have to speak; we

have to talk; we have to coin meanings, and these meanings are also faulty. We coin faulty meanings from our faulty minds in faulty forms...! After this first transfiguration for the beginning of which there is no beginning, so that the meanings may become clear, I say the first transfiguration; otherwise, the first transfiguration is the one that comes to be after the Word is pronounced. This is the first transfiguration, the transfiguration of the self for the self; such is called the first transfiguration, for there is no beginning for its beginning, nor is there an end for its end. Even when we say, “the beginning,” i.e. before everything, these expressions are also faulty, for the talk here is about *ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ* *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down.* One who reviews the narratives may conclude that the pen is one of the transfigurations that took place after the Arsh. This exists in the narratives. Here there is an issue to which I must point out. This is the issue: First, when we deal with the narratives, we have to keep in mind that there are narratives reported by way of *taqiyya*, and there are narratives reported in a compromising way. There are narratives that have been stated by way of a sign or a symbol, and there are narratives that have been reported by way of viewpoints. Had it not been for viewpoints, there would have been no wisdom. Viewpoints abound in material things; so, what would you say about the immaterial things and the supreme realities? The supreme realities and the upcoming facts are two spheres of the Most Beautiful Attributes [of Allah], and these have no end. Both spheres of the Most Beautiful Attributes are endless, for the viewpoints are endless. Therefore, one who reviews the narratives will find out, for example, that this label, the pen, is used in more than one meaning. This does not indicate any contradiction among the narratives, nor is it confusion or a mistake made by those who transmitted [past knowledge]. Rather, the expression is one, and it has been used in more than one sense, in more than one context. This itself moves to the books of Gnostics; therefore, in the latter books, when their writers write something, we find one term used in more than one aspect and in more than one meaning. This is done because of the texts that discuss Divine norms of knowledge. I do not wish to state more than that, I only pointed out to this issue and, if Allah so pleases, in the next episodes I will halt at this issue and I may explain it in more clarity. I have pointed out to it so some people may not be confused when they review the

narratives, or when they have preserved some of these narratives, so they may imagine that there is a contradiction among these narratives.

When we deal with these narratives, as I have said, we have to take into consideration that in some narratives we must consider the language of *taqiyya*, and in some narratives it is the compromising method, whereas in some narratives it is the reference to a sign or a symbol, and in some other narratives it is the language of viewpoints. Anyhow, I return to the verse which is the label of the meaning of the message: *ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ* *Nūn*. *By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down*. What or who is *Nūn*? And what or who the pen is? The narrative is quite clear, and it tells us about *Nūn* and about the pen. The book I am holding is *Tafsir al-Burhan* by the narrator of hadith Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani, may Allah Almighty be pleased with him. The narrative is reported from Muhammed ibn al-Fudhayl from Abul-Hassan Musa عليه السلام, and we are living these days the memory of his martyrdom, Allah's peace and blessings with him: Muhammed ibn al-Fudhayl asked our Imam عليه السلام, the Gate of Pleas, about this verse: *ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ* *Nūn*. *By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down*. What did he say? Our Imam, al-Kadhim عليه السلام said, "Nūn is a name of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, whereas the pen is a name for the Commander of the Faithful, peace with him." *ن Nūn* is the label of the Muhammedi reality, and the pen is the label of the Alawi reality. He created a *noor*, and He created a soul, then he mixed the *noor* with the soul, then the Words followed. The Words were the most perfect, the most complete, and the Words were in various transfigurations and levels which the pen outpoured, deriving its ink from *ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ* *Nūn*. *By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down*. The pen is never separated from *ن Nūn*. The ink of the pen is from this *ن Nūn*, and *ن Nūn* is the label of the Muhammedi reality. Even in writing and pointing at it, there is something amazing. Even in writing: The *ن Nūn* is written and in the midst of which there is the dot about which Ali عليه السلام said, "... And I am the dot," the dot that is under the "bā ب," beta, from which the Qur'an started. The Qur'an is the image of the world of Genesis. The Qur'an is the world of Genesis, and it is the image of the world

of Genesis. The dot under the “bā ب,” beta, is the one found in the midst of the ن *Nūn*, and this dot is the one called *sayyala*, flowing, from which the alphabets were formed: Every alphabet is a group of connected dots each of which was originally a flowing one. When we write the *aleef*, alpha, we start with a flowing dot, so this flowing dot manifests itself in the form of a group of dots; it gets out and moves to the “bā ب,” beta, so we write the “bā” with a flowing dot; where does the dot stay?

This dot remains present in the pen. The flowing dot is not in the words. The words are the places accommodating the flowing dot, and these are symbols pointing out to ن وَالْقَلَمُ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down.* The dot underneath the “bā” is the one that moved. The Qur’an started with بِسْمِ اللَّهِ *In (or with) the Name of Allah.* From here was the beginning. From the beginning of the Fatiha up to the end of Surat al-Nas, how were the words written?! They were written via the flowing dot: It moved, so the alphabets were in the form of a group of connected dots; therefore, in a text by the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, he says, أَنَا النُّقْطَةُ، أَنَا الْخَطُّ؛ أَنَا الْخَطُّ، أَنَا النُّقْطَةُ “I am the dot; I am the line; I am the line; I am the dot.” The line is a field for the dot, and the line is a group of dots. Letters/alphabets are comprised of lines. Letters (alphabets) and figures are lines formed in various ways. Even when we write the “seen س”, it originally is a straight line that curves and zigzags then is written as a “seen س”. The “bā ب”, beta, is a straight line both sides of which are curved. The talk here is done by way of symbolism. The talk is not about letters/alphabets as such; rather, these letters contain indications. I said a short while ago that there is a total agreement between the Genesis world and the existence world, the recording world; therefore, the Qur’an explains everything; why? It is so because the Qur’an is in its treasures, not the pronounced treasures but the reality treasures. The real treasure is the one that is deposited in the heart of the Infallible One. For this reason, there can be no separation between the Qur’an and the Infallible One. If the Qur’an is separated from the Infallible One, it becomes something else because the Spirit of the Qur’an is in the Infallible One, Allah’s peace and blessings with him. At any rate, who records the message here? It is recorded by ن وَالْقَلَمُ *Nūn* and the pen. Assalamo Alaikom, يا أهل بيت النبوة و موضع الرسالة.

Household of the Prophet and the Place of the Message. There is in the sacred *Al-Kafi* book what helps us understand the meaning of this message in its most sublime sense. This is done in a narrative from our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. Here is Volume One of the sacred *Al-Kafi* book. This narrative quotes our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام as saying, “Allah was there when there were none else, so he created time and place, and He created the *noor* of *noors* from which the other *noors* received their celestial light and in which He let flow of His own *noor* from which all *noors* received their light and it is the *noor* from which He created Muhammed صلى الله عليه وسلم and Ali عليه السلام. They remained the first two *noors* when there was nothing else before them. They kept flowing, pure and purified, in the pure loins, until they parted in the purest of the pure ones: Abdullah [Prophet’s father] and Abu Talib [Imam Ali’s father], peace with them both.” The narrative talks here about this message but in another way, in another transfiguration: ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْتُرُونَ *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down.* What did the pen write down after having taken its ink from *Nūn*? It wrote down all the words. All the words were written down by the pen with a continuous ink which it took from *Nūn*. There is no separation between *Nūn* and the pen. What was written down by the pen was recorded by *Nūn*; it was written down by *Nūn*: ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْتُرُونَ *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down.*” The verse does not say “*Nūn*, by the pen and by what the pen records.” Notice the precision in expression: ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْتُرُونَ *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down.* *Nūn* is not separated from the pen, and the pen is not separated from *Nūn*. They are simultaneous, on the same level, recording. ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْتُرُونَ *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down.* *Nūn* and the pen record simultaneously. He created *noor*. He created a soul. He mixed them both, then He derived the [other] *noors* from that *noor*.

This narrative in *Al-Kafi* says that Allah was there when there was no time there. “Was” here is a term for a label. Allah was when there was nothing else. “Was” here talks about manifesting: the first transfiguration. I mean by the first transfiguration, which I will always use, the transfiguration of the first word because, as I said a short while ago, this may exist in some books. When they say “the

first transfiguration”, they use it to describe the transfiguration of the Self for the Self, for this transfiguration, in reality, is not said to be the first because there was no first before it, nor is there a start for its beginning, or is there an end after its end, nor is there an end for its end. The first transfiguration, then, is that of the word: the transfiguration of the first word, the transfiguration of the first *noor*: “Allah was when there was nothing else.” Here, this was the label for the first manifestation, the transfiguration of the first Word. He was and there was nothing else with Him until the first transfiguration. Even the first manifestation was not there: it was nil; for every thing without Allah is void in void, misguidance in misguidance, until after it is created. The real existence belongs to Him, Praise and Exaltation are His. There is none in the house save its Master. All existents are tied to Him. When measured by the existence of Allah, it is a shadow existence. No matter how high the levels of existents may be, even if it may be the first Word, “Allah was there when there was nothing else, so He created time and place.” Time and place is not the subject-matter of our talk here. Time is calculated by hours, minutes..., etc. Nor is it calculated by place. The talk here is about this place in which we move about, from it and to it. These are levels for existents that are quite late. Rather, this is a label, a label for transfiguration: He created time and place, just as he said that He created the *noor* and the soul. These are terms, labels, and I said that the narratives talk. Every narrative or a group of narratives talks about a transfiguration, and there is no end to the outpouring of transfigurations. The outpouring is continuous, and there is no repetition in it. “So, He created time and place, and He created the *noor* of *noors* (the light of lights),” this transfiguration which resulted from time and place. “Allah was when there was nothing else, so He created time and place.” Here, there is a transfiguration, which is the light of lights. The light of lights is a transfiguration of time and place. “And He created the *noor* of *noors* from which the [other] *noors* derived their *noor*,” that is, the light of existents: **اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ** Allah is the *noor* of the heavens and earth (Qur’an, 24:35). The heavens and earth denote the existents. The heavens and earth are also used to provide more than a meaning. The Kursi is broader than the heavens and the earth. The Arsh is broader than the Kursi. We shall tackle this pursuit later. “Allah was when there was nothing else, so He created time and

place, and He created the *noor* of *noors* from which [all other] *noors* derived their *noor*,” the *noor* that lit all things. “And He let flow in it of His *noor*, from which all *noors* derived their *noor*, the one from which He created Muhammed and Ali.” The talk is about creating Muhammed ﷺ and Ali عليه السلام. The talk is about the earthly world, the earthly image of Muhammed ﷺ and Ali عليه السلام; otherwise, the time and place are the Muhammedi and Alawi realities [respectively], and the *noor* of *noors* from which all *noors* were created is only a transfiguration of the Muhammedi reality. “Allah was there when there was nothing else, so He created time and place, and He created the *noor* of *noors*,” that is, the transfiguration of the time and place from which the *noors* derived their *noor*. “And He let flow in it of His *noor*, from which all *noors* derived their *noor*, the one from which He created Muhammed ﷺ and Ali عليه السلام; so, they remained the first two *noors* when there was nothing before them.” This talk contains signs to their first lights in the time and place, and it contains signs to both their *noors* which manifest themselves on all levels of existence.

In every level of existence, there is a transfiguration for Muhammed ﷺ and Ali عليه السلام, and we will quote narratives that explain this meaning. There are transfigurations for Muhammed ﷺ and Ali عليه السلام in each level of existence. We have already cited the narratives that talk about Prophethood and the likeness of Ali in the sublime worlds, and each likeness in the sublime worlds has a rank that is proportionate with those worlds. “So, they remained two early *noors* when there was nothing before them, and they kept flowing, pure and purified, in the pure loins until they parted in the purest loins of Abdullah and Abu Talib, peace with them,” in the purest of pure loins. Notice the reference to Abdullah and Abu Talib being the purest, the purest of the pure; what is meant by this purity? Is it not the same purity mentioned in *آية التطهير* Ayat al-Tatheer?! Is not the expression the same as in: *إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا* *Allāh only wishes to remove all abomination from you, you members of the family and to make you pure and spotless* (Qur’an, 33:33)? *آية التطهير* Ayat al-Tatheer talks about three levels of purification: Emphasis is laid on *يُطَهِّرْكُمْ* “He purifies you,” while the verb “purifies” is an absolute one when it is derived from the same

verb. It provides emphasis for the verb's meaning; thus do scholars of grammar say. When the absolute adjective is derived from the verb, it comes in the form of an infinitive, and the infinitive assumes the function of the verb; i.e. it assumes the position of the verb; therefore, the infinitive, according to the Arabs, accepts a subject and a predicate just as it accepts a verb. If it is observed as an absolute effect and is from the same verb's wording, it emphasizes the meaning of the verb. In other words, it underscores the verb again, such as: "He purifies you, and purifies you and purifies you," three levels of purification. Hence, they were the purest of all pure people. These meanings manifest themselves in this tradition: "... until they parted in [the loins of] the two purest [loins] of Abdullah and Abu Talib, peace with them both." This statement is made by the `Itra, and the hadith exists in the sacred *Al-Kafi* book, and the talk about the two purest ones refers to Abdullah, father of the Messenger of Allah, and abu Talib, father of Ali, the peace and blessings of Allah with them all.

You notice that the narratives talk about the first dimension of the message which manifests itself in the meaning of the overall *wilaya* prior to creation and talk about the second dimension, i.e. the message in the earthly world, the same talk which we reviewed in the narratives relevant to Prophethood. The narratives here talk about the meaning of the message in this deep sense, the sense that was written by *ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ* *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down.* So, what did the pen write down, and what did *Nūn* record? They both write down together. They wrote down these *noors* that transfigured themselves in all existence, and one of the greatest spheres of these *noors* were those of Muhammed ﷺ and Ali عليه السلام in the earthly world. As for the sublime worlds, each of them has the spheres in which he manifested himself. The talk ends at the first Word which is the most perfect reality: It is the Muhammedi and Alawi realities, the most perfect. It is to these contexts, and it is to these meanings, that many texts point out which reached us from the Infallible Ones, Allah's peace and blessings with them all. This is so because everything in this existence comes from both spheres of the *noors* of the first reality: *ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ* *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down.* So, what did they write down? The narratives talk about

Nūn and the pen, the first Word, there are many transfigurations some of which have been mentioned in the overall way because we cannot imagine them, and some of them were mentioned in labels which contain some descriptions, some details. These details cannot be realized by us, by our limited intellects; rather, the texts of the Infallible Ones bring the meanings closer to us. This is so because we find in the narratives the world of veiling, the world of barriers. These barrier worlds and these past worlds preceded the world of the Arsh, while the world of the Arsh precedes and is ahead of the Kursi world. As for the Kursi world, all the seven heavens, all these worlds, are within the folds of the Kursi world; therefore, when we recite the sacred Ayat al-Kursi..., what do we read in Surat al-Baqara? We read: وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ *His Kursi (Might)*¹ *overwhelms the heavens and the earth* (Qur'an, 2:255). The Kursi incorporates the heavens and the earth, but the Kursi world is nothing compared to the Arsh world. In the previous episode, we indicated that the Arsh is a transfiguration of the *noor* of Muhammed ﷺ, one of the transfigurations. The narrative said that He split Muhammed's *noor* from which He created the Arsh, "... therefore, my *noor* is better than the Arsh, and I am better than the Arsh, and my *noor* is better than the Arsh" because the Arsh is from his *noor*, Muhammed's *noor*, which came from the *noor* of Allah, the most Praised, the most Exalted One.

The narratives tell us so. This is *Bihar al-Anwar* of our mentor al-Majlisi, may Allah Almighty be pleased with him. The narrative is transmitted by mentor al-Majlisi from *Al-Ihtijaj* book which cites our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. The narrative is reported by Hisham ibn al-

¹ The "Kursi" is translated in some English translations of the Holy Qur'an as "Seat" and is further explained as "Might". S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali translated it as "Arsh", perhaps envisioning the Almighty, metaphorically, of course, as a King sitting on His Arsh... Dr. T.B. Irving translated it as "Seat". I am glad he did not translate it as "chair"... Abdullah Yusuf Ali translated it as "Arsh". Muhammed Habib Shakir translated it as "Knowledge"... In my own translation of the Holy Qur'an, I have preferred to keep the same Arabic word, Kursi, so the inquisitive reader may conduct his own research in its regard, and I have done the same with the word "Arsh". – Tr.

Hakam. Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام was asked whether the Kursi is greater than the Arsh or vice versa. This question was put forth to our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام: “Which is greater: the Kursi or the Arsh?” He عليه السلام said, “Everything which Allah created is incorporated into the Kursi with the exception of His Arsh.” He meant that everything is less than the Kursi world; the Arsh is greater. There is the barrier world which comes ahead of that of the Arsh. “Everything which Allah created is incorporated into the Kursi.” This statement points out to the heavens, as great as they are, are only one thing within the Kursi world. “Everything which Allah created is incorporated into the Kursi”: *وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ* *His Kursi overwhelms the heavens and the earth.* “Everything which Allah created is incorporated into the Kursi with the exception of His Arsh, for it is greater than being embraced by the Kursi.” The Arsh is greater than being surrounded by the Kursi.

We have a narrative which contains a more clear indication. It is also narrated by our mentor al-Saduq in his book titled *Al-Khisal* and in *Al-Ma`ani*, that is, *Ma`ani al-Akhbar*. It is transmitted by al-Ayyashi رحمته and is recorded in *Tafsir al-Ayyashi*. The narrative quotes the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and is reported by Abu Dharr al-Ghifari رضي الله عنه who says that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said to him, “O Abu Dharr! The seven heavens compared to the Kursi are like a ring thrown in a vast plain desert.” It is like a ring which we wear on our fingers, something circular, thrown on a desert as far as eyes can see. The seven heavens compared to the Kursi are like a ring thrown in a desert. “O Abu Dharr! The seven heavens compared to the Kursi are like a ring thrown in a vast plain desert.” Keep in mind that we find in the narratives a description that the lower heavens, the first, compared to the second is like a ring thrown in a vast desert, and the second, third, and so on..., up to the seventh, is the same. “The seven heavens compared to the Kursi are like a ring thrown in a vast plain desert, and the Arsh compared to the Kursi is the desert compared to that ring.” Also, the Kursi world is like a ring thrown in a desert compared to the Arsh world. What is beyond the Arsh world, i.e. the barriers, form a transfiguration of the Muhammedi reality. All of this comes from the transfiguration of *ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ* *Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (humans) write down*, and the pen and the

message carry this same meaning. The Divine message means the greatest message, the message of existence. As regarding the message of the religion and legislation, it is mankind's message on earth, and it is one sphere of that greatest message. The first heavens compared to the second is like a ring thrown in a vast desert, and so on up to the seventh. The seven heavens compared to the Kursi are like a ring in a vast desert, whereas the Kursi compared to the Arsh is like a ring thrown in a vast desert, and after the Arsh come the barrier worlds.

There is a narrative reported by our mentor al-Saduq from our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام from `Asim ibn Hameed from Abu Abdullah عليه السلام saying, “The sun is one of seventy portions of the Kursi's *noor*—and “seventy” here must not be understood as a defined figure—. The sun is one of seventy portions—and we cannot fill our eyes with sun rays; you cannot fill your eyes with the sun—. “The sun is one of seventy portions of the Kursi's *noor*, and the Kursi is one of seventy portions of the *noor* of the Arsh, while the Arsh is one of seventy portions of the *noor* of the barrier, and the barrier is one of seventy portions of the veil's *noor*.” The narratives here talk about these meanings not through the language of mathematics, of mathematical calculations, with figures and numbers. Rather, each narrative looks at an aspect. These narratives are ruled by the language of signs and of symbols, ruled by the language of “whereas” standpoints about which the men of wisdom say that had it not been for standpoints, wisdom would have been nullified. “The sun is one of seventy portions of the Kursi's *noor*, and the Kursi is one of seventy portions of the *noor* of the Arsh, while the Arsh is one of seventy portions of the *noor* of the barrier, and the barrier is one of seventy portions of the veil's *noor*,” and all these are transfigurations of the Muhammedi reality.

A narrative is reported about our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام, and it is narrated by mentor al-Saduq in his book *Al-Tawhid* through Abdullah ibn Sinan, one of the most prominent *faqih*s (jurists) among the companions of Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام: “Abu Abdullah عليه السلام has explained this verse of Allah, the most Exalted One, the most Great: *وسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ* His *Kursi* overwhelms the heavens

and the earth thus: “The heavens, the earth and what is in-between them are in the Kursi, while the Arsh is the knowledge the value of which nobody knows.” He means it is outside rational limits. The knowledge has something which surpasses rational limits. The Arsh is the broader knowledge, the one the value of which nobody can assess. The narrative is transmitted by mentor al-Majlisi from mentor al-Saduq as narrated by the latter in his book *Al-Faqih*, which is one of our important sources, and in *Al-'Ilal* and in *Al-Majalis*. The narrative is from Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. The Imam عليه السلام was asked this question: “Why was the Ka`ba called so?” He عليه السلام answered, “It is called so because it is square (cubic).” He was asked, “Why was it made square?” He said, “It is aligned with the Ever-Inhabited House, which is square.” He was asked, “Why is the Ever-Inhabited House square?” He said, “It is aligned with the Arsh which is square.” He was asked, “Why is the Arsh square?” He said, “It is square because the words on which Islam was based are four: 1) *Subhan Allah* سبحان الله, 2) *al-Hamdu Lillah* الحمد لله, 3) *La ilaha Illa Allah* لا اله الا الله and 4) *Allahu Akbar* الله أكبر. This talk is about the communication between the earthly message and the message in the first world. From here, when I talked about Prophethood, I talked about the whole Prophethood in the world that preceded creation, and about the earthly Prophethood. Here, too, we talk about the message prior to creation: the message of *Nūn* and the pen and what they record, one of the transfigurations of which is the earthly message, and the talk here points out to this meaning. He عليه السلام was asked, “Why is the Arsh square?” He meant that the Ka`ba is one of the transfigurations of the Arsh, which is square. The “square” here is not a tangible thing such as the one that exists in the late natural world. The Arsh is much greater and loftier than being subjected to these limited chains in the late natural world. “Why was the Arsh square?,” he عليه السلام was asked. He عليه السلام said, “This is so because the words (statements) on which Islam is based are four—these are the corners of the Arsh—which are: 1) *Subhan Allah* سبحان الله, 2) *al-Hamdu Lillah* الحمد لله, 3) *La ilaha Illa Allah* لا اله الا الله and 4) *Allahu Akbar* الله أكبر. This is the correlation between the meaning of the message, in its overall meaning, and the meaning of the message in the earthly world: *Assalamo Alaikom*, *O Household of the Prophet and the place where the*

Message [of Islam] descends! These are transfigurations and spheres from the meaning of the message. Since the first message was transfigured for all existents, so they all were lit by it, as we have come to know from the narrative in *Al-Kafi* a short while ago, so is the case with the earthly message which is for all worlds. The earthly message is for all existents, it is not for one world rather than another.

When we read verse 107 of Surat al-Anbiyā of the Holy Qur'an..., what do we read? We read: **وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ** *We sent you only as a mercy for all worlds.* I here do not wish to discuss what is stated by those who explain the word “worlds” as people, saying that what is meant by “world” is the world of the Arabs or Persians, or in such meaning. The word is clear. It is the same word which exists in the beginning of Surat al-Fatiha: **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ** Praise belongs to Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds. His being the Lord here is for all worlds, not for one world rather than another. This is the message, the message for all worlds. It transfigures in all the world of existence, in all the worlds of pre-existence, in the message of *Nūn and the pen and what they record*, and in Muhammed on earth, in Muhammed son of Abdullah ﷺ: *We sent you only as a mercy for all worlds*; what is the general context of this message?

The general context is explained to us by the sacred Surat al-Fath (Chapter 48) in its eighth and ninth verses: **إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا** *We have truly sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner* (Qur'an, 48:8). The verse we have already recited before it was Verse 107 of Surat al-Anbiyā: **وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ** *We sent you only as a mercy for all worlds.* Verses 8 and 9 of Surat al-Fath read: **إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا** We have truly sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; for what was he sent as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner?! **لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ** *So that you (O men) may believe in Allāh and His Messenger, assist and honor Him and celebrate His praises in the morn and in the eve.* This is one of the contexts of the message, actually its essence, is **تَسْبِيح** glorifying (Him): **لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا** *So that*

you (O men) may believe in Allāh and His Messenger, assist and honor Him and celebrate His praises in the morn and in the eve. Glorifying is the final level. All levels lead us to it. You must believe in Allah and in His Messenger, assist and honor Him and celebrate His praises. We thus reach the context of the message which is glorifying. The reality of the message is glorifying Him. The overall message came from *Nūn* and the pen for all beings, as all beings were glorifying the Almighty. Glorifying Him is holding Him above any shortcoming. Even in the issue of the appointment of a representative of the Almighty on earth, when we go to Surat al-Baqara, Verse 30, we read:

30. Behold! Your Lord said to the angels, "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said, "Will You place on it one who will cause mischief and shed blood as we celebrate Your praise and glorify Your holy (name)?" He said, "I know what you do not know."

٣٠ . وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ؟ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

(Qur'an, 2:30)

They regarded the *tasbeeh* (glorifying the Almighty) as the basis of Vicegerency. They said, "Do you want to appoint a vicegerent who will shed blood while we are more worthy of it since we are the ones who glorify and sanctify You?" Thus, they made the *tasbeeh* the foundation for Vicegerency because it is the essence of Vicegerency, the essence of the faith: They said, "Will You place on it one who will cause mischief and shed blood as we celebrate Your praise and glorify Your holy (name)?" I have brought this quotation in order to prove that "worlds" in verse 107, وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ *We sent you only as a mercy for all worlds*, refers to all worlds, not only to the world of the Arabs, Persians, Turks..., etc. Rather, it implies all worlds because the gist of the message is the *tasbeeh* as the sacred verse of Surat al-Fath clarified for us. The basis of the viceregency here in the verse referring to the angels, i.e.

قَالُوا: أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ؟ They said, "Will You place on it one who will cause mischief and shed blood as we celebrate Your praise and glorify Your holy (name)?" , is the *tasbeeh*.

For this reason, when we recite, for e.g., in surat al-Saffat (Chapter 37) verses 139 and thereafter, we notice the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 139. Jonah was also among those sent (by Us as prophet). | وَلْيُونُسَ لَمَّا أُرْسِلَ |
| 140. When he ran away (like a slave from captivity) to the (fully) laden ship, | إِذْ أَقْبَلَ إِلَى الْفُلِّ الْمَشْحُونِ |
| 141. He (agreed to) cast lots, so he was condemned: | فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ |
| 142. Then the big fish (whale) swallowed him and he had done acts worthy of blame. | فَالْتَمَتَهُ الْحَوْتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ |
| 143. Had it not been that he (repented and) glorified Allāh, | فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ |
| 144. He would certainly have remained inside the belly of the fish till the Day of Resurrection. | لَلَبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ |

(Qur'an, 37:139-144)

This means that all prophets throughout their lives, actually their way of life, was the *tasbeeh*: Had it not been that he (repented and) glorified Allāh..., etc. Yunus (Jonah) and all prophets glorified the Almighty in all their conditions and circumstances, not only because he was inside the belly of the whale: Had it not been that he (repented and) glorified Allāh, He would certainly have remained inside the belly of the fish till the Day of Resurrection. The *tasbeeh* is the general label for the prophets and

the righteous, and it is the same for all existents; therefore, we read the following in Verse 44 of Surat al-Isrā:

44. The seven heavens and the earth and all beings therein declare His glory: Not a thing exists that does not celebrate His praise, but you do not understand how they declare His glory! Truly He is oft-Forbearing, Most Forgiving!

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُوا تَسْبِيحَهُمْ: إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿٤٤﴾

(Qur'an, 17:44)

The *شَيْءٍ*, thing, as philosophers tell us, is something that is there, and the thingness is commensurate with existence. When we say “something,” we mean it exists: Not a thing exists that does not celebrate His praise, but you do not understand how they declare His glory! Truly He is oft-Forbearing, Most Forgiving! ... And The seven heavens and the earth and all beings therein, declare His glory: Not a thing exists that does not celebrate His praise, but you do not understand how they declare His glory!

The context of the Muhammedi message is the *tasbeeh*, for it is a message for everything, since everything glorifies the Almighty. Narratives tell us that they taught the angels the *tasbeeh* and taught everything the *tasbeeh*; all existents learned *tasbeeh*. In the narratives from Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام: Not a thing exists that does not celebrate His praise, but you do not understand how they declare His glory! Truly He is oft-Forbearing, Most Forgiving! And these are other verses that refer to *tasbeeh*: *سَبِّحْ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ* Whatever in the heavens and on earth, let it declare Allāh's Praise and Glory, for He is the One Exalted in might, the Wise (Qur'an, 57:1); *يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ*

Whatever in the heavens and on earth declares the praises and glory of Allāh, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the One Exalted in might, the Wise (Qur'an, 62:1). The same is repeated in the Holy Qur'an in Verse 41 of Surat al-noor: **أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مِنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَافَاتٍ كُلِّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ؟ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ**
Do you not see that it is Allāh Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth celebrate and (so do) the birds with wings outstretched? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allāh knows well all that they do (Qur'an, 24:41). Notice "...and the birds with wings outstretched." We have some narratives that tell us that the *tasbeeh* is also done according to levels. Some narratives say that the above is a level of *tasbeeh*. Existence glorifies Him. We glorify Him when we worship Him. The beings glorify Allah; existence glorifies Him; otherwise, without this praise, no existents remain present. There is the *tasbeeh* as a method of worship. All beings praise Him. Some narratives say that when an arrow hits a bird, the hunter hunts it when the latter stops glorifying the almighty. Definitely this is not the same glorification of existence because if the glorification of existence stops, the bird will cease existing. Its existence hinges on glorifying the Almighty. The arrow of the hunter hits the bird, or when the bird falls suddenly to the ground, it is because it stopped glorifying its Creator: Do you not see that it is Allāh Whose praises all beings celebrate? Examples like these are many.

Here are examples and specimens, and I do not wish to go too much into details regarding the narratives reported by Ahlul-Bayt **عليهم السلام**. There is no room here enough for all details: **أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مِنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَافَاتٍ كُلِّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ؟ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ**
Do you not see that it is Allāh Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth celebrate and (so do) the birds with wings outstretched? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allāh knows well all that they do. The Qur'anic verses are obvious, open and clear in providing this meaning. This *tasbeeh* accompanies us and accompanies creation. Even those who are in hell glorify Him through the glorification of existence; otherwise, how could they continue to exist? No existent can remain existing without glorification. But they do not glorify Him as a

method of worship. Verse 10 of Surat Yunus and the one before it, the ninth, say:

9. Those who believe and work righteousness, their Lord will guide them because of their faith: Rivers will flow beneath them in gardens of bliss.

لَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ؛
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ❀

10. (This will be) their plea therein, "Glory to You, O Allāh!" and "Peace" will be their greeting therein! And they end their plea with, "Praise belongs to Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds!"

دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا: سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ، وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا: سَلَامٌ،
وَأَخْرَجُوا دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنْ: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ❀

(Qur'an, 10:9-10)

Notice how they are in Paradise but still incessantly praise the Almighty; this is the gist of the Muhammedi message; therefore, وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ We sent you only as a mercy for all worlds (Qur'an, 21:107).

The context of the Muhammedi message is glorifying the Almighty, i.e. *tasbeeh*, for it is a message for everything. This is so because everything glorifies Him. Narratives say that they (Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام) taught the angels how to glory Him, taught everything how to do so: all existents learned how to glorify Him. Narratives from Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام say so: وَإِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِن لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ؛ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا Not a thing exists that does not celebrate His praise, but you do not understand how they declare His glory! Truly He is oft-Forbearing, Most Forgiving! (Qur'an, 17:44). Qur'anic verses that refer to the tasbeeh include: سَبِّحْ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ Whatever in the heavens and on earth, let it declare Allāh's Praise and Glory, for He is the One Exalted in might, the Wise (Qur'an, 57:1);

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ Whatever in the heavens and on earth declares the praises and glory of Allāh, the Sovereign, the Holy One, the One Exalted in might, the Wise (Qur'an, 62:1), and they are repeated in the Holy Qur'an such as verse 41 of Surat al-Nur: السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَافَاتٍ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ؟ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ Do you not see that it is Allāh Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth celebrate and (so do) the birds with wings outstretched? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allāh knows well all that they do (Qur'an, 24:41); everything celebrates His glory: السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَافَاتٍ and (so do) the birds with wings outstretched. Glorification is done according to degrees. Some narratives we have say that there is the glorifying of the existence, of adoration, etc. All beings glorify Allah the glorification of existence; otherwise, without this glorification, they would cease to exist. There is the glorification of adoration. All beings glorify Him. We have narratives that say that when an arrow hits a bird, the hunter actually hits the bird when the latter is being inattentive, i.e. when he stopped glorifying Him. Definitely this is not the glorification of existence because if the bird ceases its existence glorification, it would stop existing: Its existence stands through the existence glorification. But this is the glorification of adoration. When the arrow hits the bird, when inattention distracts it from glorifying its Lord, so it stops glorifying Him, the hunter's arrow hits the bird. Or when a bird suddenly falls to the ground, this happens also because it stopped glorifying Him: أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَافَاتٍ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ؟ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ Do you not see that it is Allāh Whose praises all beings in the heavens and on earth celebrate and (so do) the birds with wings outstretched? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allāh knows well all that they do (Qur'an, 24:41).

These are examples and samples. I do not wish to go into too many details regarding what narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام have in this regard, there is simply not enough room for all details. أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرِ صَافَاتٍ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ؟ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ Do you not see that it is Allāh Whose praises all

beings in the heavens and on earth celebrate and (so do) the birds with wings outstretched? Each one knows its own (mode of) prayer and praise. And Allāh knows well all that they do (Qur'an, 24:41). The Qur'anic verses are clear, frank and obvious in this sense. This glorification accompanies us, it accompanies all creation, even those in hell glorify Him through the existence glorification; otherwise, how could they remain existing? No existent remains existing without glorification, but those in hell do not glorify Him through the adoration glorification. The ninth and tenth verses of Surat Yunus (Jonah) say the following:

9. Those who believe and work righteousness, their Lord will guide them because of their faith: Rivers will flow beneath them in gardens of bliss.

لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ لِأَيَّمَانِهِمْ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

10. (This will be) their cry therein, "Glory to You, O Allāh!" and "Peace" will be their greeting therein! And they end their cry with, "Praise belongs to Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds!"

دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَأٰخِرُ
دَعْوَاهُمْ أَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Qur'an, 10:9-10

The tenth verse shows you how even the residents of Paradise glorify Him thus: سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ! وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا: سَلَامٌ! وَأٰخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَن: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ (This will be) their cry therein, "Glory to You, O Allāh!" and "Peace" will be their greeting therein! And they end their cry with, "Praise belongs to Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds!" So, they are in their Gardens of Bliss (Paradise), yet they incessantly glorify their Lord. This is the gist of the Muhammedi message; therefore, وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (Qur'an, 21:107). This sending is to all worlds that glorify their Lord: وَإِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِن لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ؛ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا (Qur'an, 17:44). This sending everything an absolute message. This context clearly manifests itself in the seventh verse of Surat Ghafir: الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ

الْعَرْشِ "Those who bear the Arsh (of Allāh)" occupy a higher station than that of the Arsh which they bear on their own realities. They are the ones through whom the Arsh remain firm. In this meaning, verses talk from time to time:

7. Those who bear the Arsh (of Allāh) and those near to Him glorify and praise their Lord. They believe in Him and implore His forgiveness for those who believe: "Lord! Your reach is over all things, in mercy and in knowledge. Then forgive those who turn in repentance and follow Your path and preserve them from the penalty of the blazing Fire!

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا؛ رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا، فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ، وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٧﴾

(Qur'an, 40:7)

This means that the high stations that support the Arsh are higher than that of the Arsh. Those who bear the Arsh are the ones who provides firmness to the Arsh. These glorify their Lord, and their glorifying is the secret behind their existence, and it is the secret behind the existence of the Arsh, too. Here is verse 75 of Surat al-Zumar (Chapter 39):

75. And you will see the angels surrounding the (divine) Arsh on all sides, glorifying and praising their Lord. The decision between them (at Judgment) will be in (perfect) justice. And the cry (on all sides) will be, "Praise belongs to Allāh, Lord of the worlds!"

75. وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

The angels, too, in the angel world and in all worlds glorify their Lord. This is the context of the Muhammedi message: it is for all worlds. This is the absolute message. It is the message of **ن و القلم و** *Nūn! By the pen and by what they record!* in its deepest meaning of the absolute Divine *wilaya* and *khilafa* the most clear fields of which are: total Prophethood and the total message, and it

manifests itself in every world, but it manifests itself in the earthly world through the Muhammedi message the label of which is Islam and to which we have pointed out a short while ago in a narrative by Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. This narrative says that the Arsh is square because the corners of the Arsh are four which are the corners of Islam: 1) *Subhan Allah* سبحان الله, 2) *al-Hamdu Lillah* الحمد لله, 3) *La ilaha Illa Allah* لا اله الا الله and 4) *Allahu Akbar* الله أكبر. Its first corner is the *tasbeeh*: سبحان الله Glory belongs to Allah! The first corner of Islam is to glorify the Almighty, as the said narrative points out. This meaning manifests itself in the integrated Muhammedi message the image of which will fully appear at the hands of the Imam of our Time (عج). The Islamic message is yet to manifest itself in its perfect image: هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ He, it is, Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth so He would proclaim it to be superior to all religions, even though the pagans may detest (it) (Qur'an, 9:33). The superiority of this religion, Islam, is yet to appear, it is yet to manifest itself. A time has to come when this religion manifests itself and this message manifests itself in this world so this world, this natural world, would regain its harmony with the world of the unseen and man would continue, through the potentials granted to him, intellectual and ideological, through vision, heart and wisdom which man will in that time gain so mankind may establish a link with the world of the unseen. The world of martyrdom will be in contact with the world of the unseen. The earthly message will be in contact with the whole message, in all layers of this existence. These meanings are mere signals; we cannot delve into the depths of the truth of these meanings. The Imams عليهم السلام, therefore, talked to us and told us about the levels of this message, about the realities of this message. Here is Jabir quoting our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. Jabir al-Ju'fi talks to us from our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام. The book in my hand is *Basa'ir al-Darajat* of our mentor Abu Ja'far al-Saffar, one of the companions of our pure Imam al-Hassan al-Askari عليه السلام. It is one of the most respectful books of beliefs and branches of knowledge that talk about the statuses and stations of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. *Basa'ir al-Darajat* is a book that fits its name. The narrative is from Jabir who quotes Abu Abdullah (Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام). What did our Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام say? "Our matter is a mystery within a mystery." To this did I point

out: The issue's depths cannot be fathomed. "Our matter is a mystery within a mystery." This is first. And it is "Our matter is a continuous mystery," meaning it is quite deep. This is second. "And it is a mystery that benefits only a mystery." This is third. And it is "a mystery on top of a mystery." This is fourth. And it is "a mystery masked by a mystery." By Allah I ask you, "How much of their mysteries do we realize?" "Our matter is a mystery within a mystery, a continuous mystery, a mystery that benefits only a mystery, and it is a mystery to a mystery and, moreover) a mystery masked by a mystery."

The second narrative is quoted by Marazim. The latter said that Abu Abdullah عليه السلام had said, "Our matter is the truth, the truth of the truth, and it is the apparent and the hidden of what is hidden, the mystery and the mystery of the mystery." This copy in my hand misses some text according to the ahadith I memorize. In fact, I am here in an exceptional circumstance: the references are not available to me in their entirety; rather, I have only some references. But what I recall from memory is this: "And it is the mystery, the mystery of mystery, and the continuous mystery," and not the veiled one without a mystery. This is what I recall with regard to the narration citing Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام: "Our matter is the truth, the truth of the truth, and it is the apparent and the hidden of what is hidden, and it is the mystery, the mystery of the mystery, the continuous mystery and the mystery that is masked by a mystery." You notice that each narrative points out to a number of aspects and viewpoints that differ from those of the second narrative. The reason, as I said, is due to these narratives look at various viewpoints. But, as a whole, what do both narratives want to tell us in their context or meaning which reaches us? It is this: Their matter is a mystery; the minds are capable of reaching it. but it is, as I said, within the limits of the world of expressions which I and my likes understand as well as those whom Allah, Glory and Exaltation are His, has enabled, opening their visions, so they sensed something which is further than the expression world. I and my likes dive and delve into the expression world and stop at this limit. All we understand from these narratives falls within the expression world, i.e. "Our matter is a mystery in mystery, a continuous mystery, a mystery that benefits only a mystery,

a mystery atop a mystery and a mystery masked by a mystery. Our matter is the truth, the truth of the truth, the apparent and the hidden of what is hidden; it is the mystery, the mystery of the mystery, a continuous mystery and a mystery masked by a mystery." These are summed up labels for a group of true contexts of the message of Muhammed ﷺ.

They (Prophet's Progeny عليه السلام) are the place of the message, the place of mystics: ﴿ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ﴾ Nūn. By the pen and by the (record) which (mankind) write (Qur'an, 68:1). If we wish to live the atmosphere of this verse, by what does Allah, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, swear? He swears by Nūn and by the pen. Why is there a "kasra /" under the "meem م" in "وَالْقَلَمِ"? This is so because this word is coupled with the "waw و" to denote swearing. Allah here is swearing by Nūn, the pen and what they (both) record. What do both Nūn and the pen record? They record something by which Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, swears. These narratives talk about these mysteries which Nūn and the pen record, be it in the sublime worlds, whether the facts and Muhammedi branches of knowledge manifest themselves in Muhammed's Qur'an or in his heart. The Qur'an is Muhammed's recording Book, while Muhammed's heart is the formative one, Muhammed's formative Qur'an. The Qur'an is an image of Muhammed's heart, and Muhammed's heart is the truth of the Qur'an. Muhammed's heart is the Qur'an itself, it is the comprehensive reality, it is the place of the message: "Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet!" Where is the true place of the message?

The true place, locale, seat, of the message is Muhammed's heart, and Muhammed's heart is Ali's heart; it is Fatima's heart; it is Hassan's heart; it is Hussain's heart; it is the heart of the Imam of our Time (عج); it is the heart of the Gate of Pleas, the heart of Musa son of Ja'far, Allah's peace and blessing with him. So, they (Infallible Imams عليه السلام) are the place of the message, the place of Allah's mysteries. Whatever manifests itself of them is a mystery in a mystery, a mystery atop a mystery. What manifests of them is this meaning. These meanings manifest themselves from their realities. This mystery, which lies within a mystery, the continuous mystery,

the mystery that benefits only a mystery, the mystery atop a mystery, and the mystery that is masked by a mystery..., these are fields that show some of the realities of their message, for they are the place of the message. They are the truth of the message. It is about these contexts that our Imams عليه السلام talk to us saying the following:

This narrative is reported by Abu Rabee` al-Shami who quotes Abu Ja`far, peace with him. He says, "I was sitting with him (Abu Rabee` sitting with Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام) when I saw that Abu Ja`far stood up and raised his head as he said, 'O Abu al-Rabee`! There is a tradition that is being chewed by the Shi`as' tongues without realizing its meaning." Even the expression "chewed" is a beautiful signal. He عليه السلام means it is being discussed even by those who adhere to the rules of grammar and phonetics such as myself and people like me who try to put on the attire of good speech and try to safeguard the rules of phonetics as much as they can, trying to talk in a beautiful and attractive way..., even these (are implied by the Imam's statement). We chew words. Even people like us whom some people imagine they have a measure of knowledge, thus does our Imam speak about us: "O Abu al-Rabee`! There is a tradition that is being chewed by the Shi`as' tongues without realizing its meaning," its reality. "I said, 'What tradition is it, may Allah regard me as a sacrifice for your sake?'" He said, 'It is a statement made by Ali ibn Abu Talib, Allah's peace and blessings with him, (and it is): 'Our matter is difficult, challenging; nobody bears it except an angel close to Allah, or a sent messenger, or a believing servant of Allah whose heart Allah has tested for conviction'" through this condition. Have our hearts been tested for conviction? "... or a believing servant of Allah." If Allah so wills, some other time will come when we talk about the meaning of a believing servant whose heart was tested for conviction. "... or a believing servant whose heart Allah tested for conviction. O Abu al-Rabee`! Do you not see that one can be an angel but this angel is not close to Allah? This is not borne except by someone who is close to Allah." The angels cannot bear their (Imams') affairs. "O Abu al-Rabee`! Do you not see that one can be an angel but this angel is not close to Allah?" This is so because the angels who are close to Allah are higher in status than the rest of angels, and there are those who are also higher in status than the

angels who are close to Allah. "O Abu al-Rabee'! Do you not see that one can be an angel but not is close to Allah? It is not borne except by one who is close to Allah. One may be a prophet but not a messenger. It is not borne save by a messenger." He means that the prophets who are not messengers cannot bear their matter. "One may be a believer but he is not tested; it is not borne save by a believer whose heart Allah tested for conviction." This hadith is chewed by Shi`as, as Imam Abu Ja`far al-Baqir عليه السلام says, without knowing what it means. We have quite often repeated such words.

Another narrative which we chew without knowing its meaning, but what can we do? What is not entirely realized must not be entirely abandoned. We decorate our tongues with their hadith. We perfume our mouths, we perfume our majalis, we decorate the screen of our television, with their hadith. This narrative is also reported by Jabir al-Ju`fi, bearer of the mysteries of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. He cites Imam Abu Ja`far عليه السلام as saying that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed is difficult, challenging." This is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ. "The hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed is difficult, challenging; it cannot be trusted except to an angel close to Allah, a sessenger-prophet or a servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for iman, conviction. So, when you come across hadith by the Progeny of Muhammed towards which your hearts lean, and if you come to know it, accept it." This is a great bliss. It is a great blessing; so, you must praise Allah on its account and plead for His emrcy towards your mothers. Our Prophet ﷺ says, "The hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed is difficult, challenging; it cannot be trusted except to an angel close to Allah, a sessenger-prophet or a servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for iman, conviction. So, when you come across hadith by the Progeny of Muhammed towards which your hearts lean, and if you come to know it—meaning if you believe in it—, accept it. But if your hearts feel averse towards it, and if you cannot identify it, render it to Allah, to the Messenger and to the scholar from among the Progeny of Muhammed." The "scholar" refers to the Infallible Imam. "... and to the scholar from among the Progeny of Muhammed. In other words, we have to refer to their hadith. In our time and age, where is the scholar from among the Progeny of Muhammed? He is the Imam

of our time. We cannot reach him; so, to whom should we refer? We refer to their hadith, and to the scholar from among the Progeny of Muhammed, i.e. to the rules and laws which they explained for us regarding accepting or rejecting hadith. "Perishes, O Shi`as of Ahlul-Bayt, is one who quotes for you some of it (meaning of the hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ) which he cannot bear, so he says, 'By Allah! This was not so! This was not so! This was not so!' The one who perishes is such an individual. "Perishes is one who quotes for you some of it (meaning of the hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ) which he cannot bear, so he says by way of comment, 'By Allah! This was not so! This was not so! This was not so!' This is his reaction to their hadith. Rather, if you get to know (understand) it, accept it, and if you do not know its contexts, render it to Allah, to the Messenger and to the scholar from among the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ.

Here is a narrative from Omer ibn Shimr from Imam Abu Ja`far عليه السلام, and I think that the name of Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju`fi fell from it because Omer ibn Shimr narrates from Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju`fi. He quotes Omer ibn Shimir quoting Imam Abu Ja`far عليه السلام who said, "Our hadith is difficult, challenging, *ajrad*." The word "*ajrad*" means a straight, not bent, mountain, one which is difficult to climb, a smooth one which cannot be climbed. It is a straight mountain, not bent, it has no foot, a straight one which has no place in it for one to put his foot or hands so he may be able to climb it. smooth rocks are difficult to climb. "Our hadith is difficult, challenging, *ajrad*, one that challenges intellect, a rough one." He means that such hadith challenges one no matter how brilliant he may be to tackle it. "Our hadith is difficult, challenging, *ajrad*, one that challenges intellect, a rough one., sacred, holy. So, if you hear some of it to which your hearts lean, bear it and glorify Allah." "Bear it" means believe in it. This is different from believing while still doubting. "Bear it" means believe in it. "... bear it and glorify Allah for it. but if you cannot bear it, and if you cannot withstand it, render it to the knowledgeable Imam from among the Progeny of Muhammed, peace and blessings of Allah with him and with them, for the perishing wretch is the one who says, 'By Allah, this was not so!'" Then he said, "O Jabir, denial (of these ahadith) is disbelief in Allah, the Great." A perishing

wretch is the one who says, "By Allah, this was not so!" Then the Imam ﷺ said, "Denying it is disbelieving in Allah the Great." "Our hadith is difficult, challenging." The simile in the original Arabic text is with the horse that is difficult to mount. A horse that is difficult to mount. There are steeds that cannot be domesticated; man cannot ride their backs.

It is also used to describe a very high rope where there are no windows to climb it, a mountain difficult to climb. "Our hadith is difficult, challenging; it is difficult, challenging, *ajrad*, challenges intellect, rough, sacred and holy." These, too, are difficult to reach, having a high status. The dignity of one whose status is lofty cannot be touched. So is the case with a holy person. So, beware of the man of dignity when he charges. When does a dignified man charge? He charges when he is insulted. All these are expressions used as similes to draw an image in order to bring its meaning closer to our intellects. "Our hadith is difficult, challenging; it is difficult, challenging, *ajrad*, challenges intellect, rough, sacred and holy. So, if you hear some of it to which your hearts incline, bear it and glorify Allah for it. but if you cannot bear it, if you cannot tolerate it, render it to the knowledgeable Imam from among the Progeny of Muhammed, for a perishing wretch is the one who says, 'By Allah, this was not so.'" Then he said, "O Jabir," this is evidence that Jabir's name was dropped from the *isnad*, the Imam ﷺ is addressing Jabir. As I said at the beginning of my statement, Omer ibn Shimr was quoting Jabir al-Ju'fi. "Then he said, "O Jabir! Denial is disbelieving in Allah, the Great." These are ahadith of Ahlul-Bayt which also show us the levels of those who have the beliefs and the branches of knowledge.

For example, here is a narrative the like of which has already been cited. This narrative is reported by Abu al-Jarud from Imam Abu Ja'far (Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام). Abu al-Jarud says that he heard the Imam ﷺ saying that the hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed is difficult, challenging, heavy, masked, *ajrad* and challenges the most brilliant individual. These are the descriptions of their hadith, of their mysteries. "The hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed is difficult, challenging, heavy, masked, *ajrad* and challenges the most

brilliant individual. It is not borne except by an angel close to Allah or a messenger prophet or a servant of Allah whose heart was tested for conviction by Allah, or a formidable city." By the "formidable city", it is meant the hearts that shine with realities and are fortified by conviction and concealment. A formidable city, a fortified heart, a heart that is fortified, one which people do not know what goes on inside it while it knows what goes on to the public. It knows what the people's hearts conceal while they do not know what is in his heart. "Or a messenger prophet or a servant of Allah whose heart was tested by Allah for conviction, or a formidable city. When our Qa'im rises, he will speak, and the Qur'an will testify to his truth." He means the realities of the Qur'an and of the `Itra will become clear; they will be clear, for the Qur'an will testify to the truthfulness of the Imam, and the Imam will testify to the Qur'an. "So, when our Qa'im rises, he will speak, and the Qur'an will testify to his truthfulness." This is one of the levels of branches of knowledges and one of the levels of the mysteries, the levels of the message. Definitely it is not meant by this level, for e.g. the legislative rulings. This is not among its mysteries. Nor is it meant the Qur'an in its pronounced appearance which exists among us and about which books of exegesis have been written. It is not meant the texts of supplications and ziyaras which we read and on which we contemplate. Nor is it meant the ahadith recited in books and read on the pulpits. Rather, what is meant is beyond the Qur'an, beyond the ahadith: They are these realities about which such narratives talk. "The hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed is difficult, challenging, heavy, masked, *ajrad*, challenges the most brilliant individual. It is not borne save by an angel close to Allah or a messenger prophet or a servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for conviction, or a formidable city." This is one level of the people of conviction. "So, when our Qa'im rises," this formidable city which is mentioned with the statement after it as if it contains a hint that this formidable city, those hearts that glitter like chandleirs, the hearts of the companions of the Imam عليه السلام, these are the fortified cities, those are the hearts which, as narratives have indicated, glitter like chandliers, the hearts of the companions of the Imam, "... or a formidable city. So, when our Qa'im rises, he will speak and the Qur'an will testify to his truth." This is a level of knowledge "... which is not borne except by an angel close to Allah or a messenger prophet," for there are among

the angels those who are not close to their Lord, and there are among the prophets those who are not messengers, "... or a servant whose heart Allah tested for conviction." There are among the believers those whose hearts Allah had tested for conviction—or a formidable city—for some hearts of the believers do not rise to the degree of being a formidable city.

There is another level of knowledge. Abu al-Salt is quoted as having said that Abu Abdullah, peace with him, said, "Our hadith is difficult, challenging, sacred, holy, challenging the most brilliant, rugged, not borne by an angel close to Allah nor a messenger prophet." The previous narrative says: "It is not borne except by an angel near to Allah or a messenger prophet." This narrative has another tongue: "It is not borne by an angel near to Allah..." "Our hadith is difficult, challenging," says al-Sadiq of the `Itra عليه السلام, "sacred, holy, challenges the most brilliant individual, clever, rugged, not borne by an angel ner to Allah nor a messenger prophet nor a tested believer.' I said, 'May I be sacrificed for your sake, who, then bears it?' He said, 'It is borne by whomsoever we wish, O Abu al-Salt." This is another characteristic. If that level is not relevant to the outer appearance of the Qur'an, the articulated structure of the Qu'an, nor to the rulings, nor to the texts of supplications and ziyaras, but to what is beyond them, what is this level related to? It relates to what is beyond that level: "It is not borne by an angel close to Allah." This narrative requires us to wait for a good while. The believers need to stand, to contemplate on this narrative. They need to discern from two aspects: from the aspect of the greatness of our Imams and from the aspect of our own shortcoming and limitation. How much shortcoming and limitation do we have? How great are our Imams? Also, how great is the injustice towards our Imams, peace and blessings of Allah with them all?

This means this description fits all our Imams, fits our Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام who underwent woes and calamities. "Our hadith is difficult, challenging, sacred, holy." I repeat these narratives so they may rest firmly in the minds of the listeners. These narratives may not have been heard by many people, and they may not have the opportunity to hear. Perhaps many people from among the followrs

of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام died without having heard these ahadith because there was none to disseminate these traditions among the public. Very, very few people are those who disseminate these ahadith. These ahadith remain in the books. "Our hadith is difficult, challenging..." This is a big sigh that one dies as a follower of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام without having heard such ahadith or come to know these meanings. This will be a sigh. After that, this sigh manifests itself to man when he dies and many realities will be unveiled for him. He will then sigh. We have in the narratives that on the Judgment Day, when means of ascension are set up, a man from among the followers of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام is told to recite and to ascend: "Whenever you recite something of the Qur'an, you ascend." One who does not memorize anything of the Qur'an, and definitely it is not meant here to memorize only the pronouncement; definitely memorizing the pronouncement is important, but what is meant is that when the narratives talk about those who bear the Qur'an, those who know the sciences of the Qur'an, who know the meanings of the Qur'an..., and these are the meanings of the Qur'an, where do we get the meanings of the Qur'an from? Where do we get the meanings of the Qur'an from? Do we get them, for example, from al-Zamakhshari's *Kashaf*? Or do we get them from *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir* of al-Razi?

Branches of knowledge of the Qur'an we get from the People of the Qur'an, those to whom the Qur'an was revealed, and at their own homes, and the Qur'an settled in their hearts. We get these meanings from the hearts of Muhammed and the Progeny of Muhammed, these meanings which they recorded for us in these sacred ahadith. Recite and ascend as much as you have of the knowledge of the Qur'an, for you will ascend to the heights and degrees in the Hereafter according to your level of knowledge of the Qur'an. But if one does not carry in his heart any knowledge of the sciences of the Qur'an, he will prey to the sighs. Truly, it is a great sigh that one should live and die without being familiar with such contexts of the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt, Allah's peace and blessings with them all. Al-Sadiq of the `Itra عليه السلام says, "Our hadith is difficult, challenging, sacred, holy, challenging the most brilliant individual, rugged and is borne neither by an angel near to Allah, nor by a messenger prophet,

nor by a tested believer." I said, "Who, then, bears to carry it, may I be sacrificed for your sake?!" He said, "It is borne by whomsoever we will, O father of al-Samit, it is to them that we extend our hands." This narrative is clear, and it orders us to refer to them. Seek your pursuit from them. Ask them. Plead to them. They are the source of knowledge. They are the source of information. They are the source of the religion. They are the source of the truth. They are the Qur'an. They are the Qur'an in all its reality and in all its manifestations. "I said, 'Who, then, bears to carry it, may I be sacrificed for your sake?!' He said, "It is borne by whomsoever we will." If they do not wish, Allah's peace and blessings with them, no human can rise to this level save through their will.

There is a more amazing level and more wonderful. If this level is amazing, there is a level which is more amazing, much more amazing. Definitely there are people who wonder about this statement: "Our matter is difficult, challenging. It is not borne save by an angel close to Allah, for there are angels who are not so close." He means that the angels cannot bear it, only a messenger prophet, for there are prophets who are not messengers..., save a believer whose heart Allah tested for conviction, for there are among the believers those whose hearts were not tested by Allah. One may find this amazing. But this is more so: "It cannot be borne by an angel close to Allah or a messenger prophet or a believing servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for conviction." So, who can bear it? "It is borne by whomsoever we will." So, who are you, O Progeny of Muhammed? The third narrative is also from Abu al-Samit. He said, "I heard Abu Abdullah عليه السلام saying, 'Our hadith cannot be borne by an angel close to Allah or a messenger prophet or a believing servant of Allah.' I said, 'Who, then, bears it?' He said, 'We bear it.'" This is most amazing. This is something that challenges the minds as the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام said in a talk about the reality to Kumayl: "O Kumayl! Put out the light, the morning has come." He meant to say, "Put out the light of your mind, of your senses. Here, we put out all lights. Here we put out all lanterns. Here, all senses are incapacitated, and so are the visions, which are the highest levels of realization. Visions are the highest levels of realization because they explore the unseen. Here all visions come to an end. Here is

puzzlement multiplied. Up until when do I remain puzzled about you, O master? Here, the puzzlement is multiplied. Do we not address the Hujja Imam, peace with him, saying in Du`a al-Nudba: "Up to when do I remain puzzled about you, O master, and up to when and how do I describe you and what silent address is this?" Is it not the clear testimony to this statement which the narrative cites? Who bears it? If your matter cannot be borne by the angels close to Allah, nor by the messenger prophets nor by the believers, who then bears it, O son of the Messenger of Allah? He said, "We bear it." These are the contexts of the message, and this is the meaning: Assalamo Alaikom, O places of the Message! One of the scopes of the place of this message is not borne except by them, Allah's peace and blessings with them all.

This narrative is from Mas`adah ibn Sadaqah. Mas`adah ibn Sadaqah quotes [Imam] Ja`far عليه السلام quoting his father quoting Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام as saying, when the subject of *taqiyya* came up one day, "The topic of *taqiyya* was once mentioned in the presence of [Imam] Ali ibn al-Hussain [al-Sajjad, Zainul-`Abidin عليه السلام], so he, al-Sajjad عليه السلام, said, "By Allah! Had Abu Tharr known what was in the heart of Salman, he would have killed him." Of course, those explain hadith said that "he would have killed him" means that Salman's knowledge killed Abu Tharr. Another possibility is that Abu Tharr would kill Salman because he saw him misguided, unable to bear his knowledge. We salute Salman when we perform the ziyara of his shrine: "Assalamo Alaik, O one who occupies the tenth rank." Abu Tharr, according to narratives, is the one who occupies the eighth rank; therefore, the Imam عليه السلام brings this example because abu Tharr, according to narratives, is the one who has the eighth rank, while Salman occupies the tenth. "By Allah! Had Abu Tharr come to know what the heart of Salman contained, it would have killed him." Some narratives say this is due to his disbelief; others say such knowledge would have killed him, while still other narratives say he would have prayed for the mercy of the one who killed him. The final outcome is that he could not bear what Salman's heart contained. "By Allah, had Abu Tharr come to know what Salman's heart contained, it would have killed him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ created brotherhood between both of them; so, what would you

say about the rest of people?" The Imam عليه السلام here wants to point out that when one knows something, so he does not see in himself to be better than others, than those who do not know it [he occupies a high rank]. If Salman occupied that rank of knowledge, had that information and conviction which, had Abu Tharr come to know it, it would have killed him; yet, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ established brotherhood between both of them; so, what would you say about the rest of people, myself, yourself and others when one of us knows something simple, this does not mean that the others have no value. "By Allah, had Abu Tharr what Salman's heart contained, it would have killed him. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ established brotherhood between both of them; so, what would you say about the rest of people? The knowledge of the scholar—here "scholar" refers to the Infallible Imam عليه السلام—the knowledge of the scholar is difficult, challenging, not borne except by a messenger prophet or an angel close to Allah or a believing servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for conviction." Then the Imam عليه السلام explained his statement saying, "Salman was a scholar because he is one of us, Ahlul-Bayt; therefore, his lineage belongs to us, or it affiliated him with us." Salman is one of the Ahlul-bayt; so, what kind of knowledge was his?

His knowledge belonged to the degree mentioned above: "... whomsoever we will," whomsoever we [Ahlul-Bayt] will. Such is the degree of Salman's knowledge. "We bear it." This degree is higher than Salman and others. "... whosoever we will" includes Salman, bearer of the matter which cannot be borne even by a messenger prophet or an angel close to Allah... Salman, then, is the one to whom this meaning applies. Another narrative is reported by al-Mufadhhal ibn Omer who also enjoyed the same rank Salman occupied. Al-Mufadhhal was contemporary of Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام and of Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام. During the time of Imam al-Ridha عليه السلام, he was to them [to Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام] was Salman used to be. Al-Mufadhhal was the companion of four Infallible Imams: He was a companion of Imams al-Baqir, al-Sadiq and al-Kadhim and was one of the close companions of Imam al-Kadhim, peace and blessings of Allah with them all. He was one of the trusted deputies of Imam al-Kadhim عليه السلام. When the report of his death reached Imam al-Ridha

عليه السلام, he said, "Now he is restful from the worries and griefs of life in this world." This is so because al-Mufadhhal was harmed a great deal because he was one of those who were bearing the mysteries of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام and one of the bearers of the special norms of knowledge. Even the companions of the Imams عليه السلام used to harm him. Imam al-Ridha عليه السلام points out to this issue: "Now he is restful from the worries and griefs of life in this world." The most important and the best of narratives of virtues and norms of knowledge are reported from al-Mufadhhal; therefore, some people label them as "weak". Imagine! They regard the narratives of al-Mufadhhal as weak! This is the great disaster! This is the calamity with which we have been afflicted all along the line! We always find narrators of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام who narrate narratives of knowledge, of virtues, of mysterious stations, being regarded as "weak", while the narrators who report for us the rules of cleanness and of *najasa* are held as being reliable! This is a big question: The narrators who transmit to us the important norms of knowledge are regarded as being weak, although I and others, those who know these matters, do not care about such weakening labels. The real issue lies behind the thicket. We are not here tackling these matters. Anyhow, when the report of the demise of al-Mufadhhal reached Imam al-Ridha عليه السلام, he said, "May Allah have mercy on him. Now he is restful from the worries and griefs of life in this world. He was like a second father." Thus did our Imam al-Ridha عليه السلام speak about him. Anyhow, al-Mufadhhal narrates about Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام saying,

Abu Ja'far عليه السلام has said, "Our hadith is difficult, challenging; it challenges the most brilliant individual; it is *ajrad*, no angel close to Allah bears it nor a messenger prophet nor a servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for conviction. As for what is difficult of it, it is the one which is yet to be tackled. As for the challenging one, it is the one from which people run away." The Imam عليه السلام explains these meanings saying, "Our hadith is difficult, challenging; it challenges the most brilliant individual; it is *ajrad*, no angel close to Allah bears it nor a messenger prophet nor a servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for conviction. As for what is difficult of it, it is the one which is yet to be tackled." It is not tackled by the angels who are close to Allah nor by the messenger prophets nor by the servants of Allah

whose hearts Allah has tested. He goes on to say, "As for the challenging one, it is the one from which people run away." There is a reference to this in Salman's hadith or in the knowledge of Abu Tharr: Had abu Tharr come to know what Salman's heart contained, it would have killed him. "As for the challenging one, it is the one from which people run away." Here, Abu Tharr runs away from Salman. "As for the challenging one, it is the one from which people run away when it is narrated. As for the one that is challenged by it, it is the brilliance of the believers," i.e. the intelligence of the believers which stands at it baffled. The brilliance of the believers refers to their insight, to their vision, which goes beyond ordinary cleverness. It is vision that senses the unseen. "As for the ajrad, it is the one to which nothing holds—i.e. nothing can reach it—from before it or from behind it, and this is the testimony to this verse: ﴿نَزَلَ

﴿أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ﴾ Allāh has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful message (Qur'an, 39:23). So, the best message is our hadith: It is not perfectly borne by anyone from among the creation." Nobody can bear the matter of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام perfectly—unless he limits it—because if he looks at matters through his own potentials, he will find this matter, he will realize it, through the limits of his power of realization, the limits of his senses, of his heart, of his mind, of his insight, of all abilities of realization. "The best message is our hadith: It is not perfectly borne by anyone from among the creation unless he limits it." Then the Imam عليه السلام says, "This is so because when one limits something, it means he is greater than it." When you limit something, it means it is greater than yourself. All praise belongs to Allah for granting success to realize these meanings. "Denial is disbelief." This is the statement made by Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام of the `Itra عليه السلام, and it is a very deep hadith.

Actually, I see that a good deal of time has elapsed and I cannot halt at every narrative to explain. Each narrative needs an episode, but where would we get time while time is like a sword? Yet I go back to this narrative. It needs discerning. It needs contemplating. The Imam عليه السلام says, "Our hadith is difficult, challenging, it challenges the brilliance of the most intelligence; it is *ajrad*, it cannot be borne by an angel close to Allah nor by a messenger prophet nor by a

servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for conviction. As for the difficult one, it is yet to be tackled." Neither the angels close to the Almighty nor the messenger prophets have tackled it. "As for the challenging one, it is the one from which people run away." People run away from it when they come across it as did Abu Tharr: "By Allah, had Abu Tharr come to know what is in the heart of Salman, it would have killed him; he would have pleaded for Allah's mercy for his killer; it would have rendered him an apostate." "As for the brilliant one, it is a reference to the believers' intelligence. As for the *ajrad*, it is the one which is not attached to anything before or after it, and it is the testimony to this verse: ﴿نَزَلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ﴾ Allāh has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful message (Qur'an, 39:23). The best hadith is our hadith which is not borne by anyone in its perfect form unless he limits it." Why does he limit it? It is due to the limitation of the intellect, the heart, the conscience and the senses; therefore, he has to limit it. The Imam عليه السلام says, "... because one who limits a think is greater than it." The hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام is greater than we are. Then he says, "We praise Allah for granting us such a success. Denial is disbelief." Denying it (Ahlul-Bayt's hadith) is disbelief, apostasy, and Praise is due to Allah for any success.

A second hadith is also transmitted by the author *Al-Basa'ir* (Basa'ir al-Darajat بصائر الدرجات), may Allah Almighty be pleased with him. This hadith carries the same meaning as the one before. The meaning of "Our hadith is difficult, challenging" is the meaning of this hadith: "Our hadith is difficult, challenging, not borne by an angel near to Allah nor by a messenger prophet, for it is just as you have narrated, that is, Allah, the most Blessed, the most Exalted One, cannot be described, nor can His messenger: He, too, cannot be described, and the believer cannot be described." By the "believer" here it is meant the Infallible Imam because this label applies specifically to Ali only. Such we are told by the narratives. Allah, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, bestowed this name on Ali which is relevant to the believer. It is a label for the reality of Ali and for anyone who enjoys the same degree of Ali from among his Infallible Sons either. As regarding applying it to us, it is only used metaphorically, by way of license: The believer, Ali, and the heart of

the believer are like the Arsh of the most Merciful One. Such was the heart of Ali, Allah's peace and blessings with him. The Arsh of the most Merciful One is one of the manifestations of Muhammed ﷺ and of Ali عليه السلام, as has been stated. But these manifestations appear in each world according to it, and in each horizon according to its limits. "The meaning of this hadith is what you have already narrated, i.e. the hadith of the Progeny of Muhammed is difficult, challenging, not borne by an angel near to Allah nor by a messenger prophet. It is what you have narrated, i.e. Allah, the most Blessed, the most Exalted One, cannot be described, nor can His Messenger: He, too, cannot be described. Nor can the believer: He cannot be described; so, one who bears their hadith limits them." That is to say, one who imagines that he knows the realities of the hadith, setting up limits for it, and our ignorance is much: An individual comes to you not knowing the difference between grains and sands, yet he wants to identify for us the stations of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. There are individuals who lived and died and whose food was mostly newspapers, magazines and political books, not knowing anything about Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام, yet they come to explain to us the stations and levels of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. This is what the Imam عليه السلام says. Such ahadith are available with us: Allah cannot be described, nor can His Messenger, nor can the believer, i.e. the Infallible Imam. "So, whoever bears their hadith," that is, who imagines that he comprehends their hadith, "he limits them." The Imams عليهم السلام have told us the following: "We talk to you according to the ability of your comprehension." These ahadith agree with the limitation of our comprehension. If one bears their hadith, he limits them, he places limits for them. "And one who limits them describes them, and one who describes them in their perfection contains them and is more knowledgeable than them," that is, if he absorbs their knowledge, he becomes more knowledgeable than them, whereas the One Who encompasses them is only Allah; therefore, the only ones who know Allah are they, and only Allah knows them. "O Ali! None knows you save Allah and I." It is the same speech. "One who bears their hadith," one who imagines that he knows the meanings of their hadith, "is one who limits them." For this reason, we always say that any statement made by myself and by my likes is only within the limits of our faulty comprehension, within the limits of the

expression world. If we get out a little bit with help from the narrative, we will be holding only to the *sharashir* (loose ends of sheets) of the sign world, to the *sharashir* world. The *sharashir*, as I said, are these loose strings that drape from the ends of sheets, from the ends of some clothes, from the ends of carpets and rugs; these are the *sharashir*. We sometimes hold on to the *sharashir* world, not to the sign world. "So, if anyone bears their hadith, he limits them, and one who limits them describes them, and one who describes them in their perfection encompasses them and is more knowledgeable than them. He stops the hadith which is beyond him, contending himself with it because he says it is difficult. It is difficult for everyone who says that it is difficult. What is difficult is not tackled and is not borne because if one bears it and carries it, it is not difficult." Minds cannot reach it. the issue is limited. I see that time has passed greatly while the reality remains: I have many other texts which I would like to read to you, and I have been talking about them, but our program's time has passed by a great deal. I contend myself with this much and, if Allah so wills, when there is another opportunity, I will talk about the rest of the meaning of the message.

Yet until now, many overall meanings of the message have now become clear to us in the world of the first creation and the meanings of the earthly message through these ahadith which say that their message, in its real dimension, cannot be borne by a messenger prophet or an angel near to Allah or a servant of Allah whose heart Allah tested for conviction. So, who can bear it, O son of the Messenger of Allah? He said, "We bear it." They bear its matter, not others. These are our Imams, and here is Imam Musa ibn Ja'far, the Gate of Pleas, the one who occupies the stations and the ascensions, Allah's peace and blessings with him.

I solicit your supplication, and our meeting, by the will of Allah Almighty, will be renewed in the program of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara as we maintain our loyalty to Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, as I and you endeavor to get to know Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. This is the month of Rajab, and this day is the day of the Gate of Pleas. O

Lord! We plead to You by the glory of Musa son of Ja`far and by the oppression to which Musa ibn Ja`far was exposed: O Lord! I plead to You by the one whose griefs were lengthy, who became accustomed to trials and tribulations, to worries, the one who has the supplications, the numerous pleas, the one who was tormented in the depth of prisons, in the darkness of dungeons, the one whose coffin was addressed with derision. I plead to You by the Generous Imam to enable us to achieve success in getting to know Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, to let us die on the knowledge of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, to enlighten our hearts in our lifetime and in our death and in our graves and at the Straight Path, at the Scales, through knowledge of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, to let knowledge of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ be before us in the life of this world and in the Hereafter, to let knowing Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ be our ultimate objective and concern in the life of this world through Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. I solicit your supplication, all of you, and may you all remain enjoying the security of Allah.



Evening view of the Shrine of Imam al-Ridha ﷺ

الحلقة السادسة

معنى "وَمُخْتَلَفَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ"

SIXTH EPISODE

MEANING OF
"ANGELS' VISITING PLACE"¹



Assalamo Alaikom, all of you, peace and blessings of Allah with you all. May Allah bring happiness to your days and fill them with love and loyalty to Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. Here we are living their merry days. Tomorrow will be the feast of the birth of the Master of Martyrs ﷺ, may Allah Almighty grant us

¹ Actually, the best translation for the heading is "the place the angels frequently visit." This is too lengthy; so, the alternative is what I have indicated above. –Tr.

and your own selves the blessing of visiting his shrine closely and from a far, his service and intercession in the life of this world and in the Hereafter by the status of Muhammed ﷺ and his Pure `Itra ﷺ. This is the sixth episode of our program, the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, and I am still reading it from the *Mafatih al-Jinan* مفاتيح الجنان book of our mentor traditionist al-Qummi, may Allah Almighty be pleased with him.

"*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet and the Place of the Message." We have already discussed these sacred statements of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, and today the discussion has reached this statement: "... and the angels' visiting place. *Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message and **مُخْتَلَفُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ** the ones who are frequently visited by the angels." What does "the ones who are frequently visited by the angels" mean? The word **مُخْتَلَفٌ** in Arabic means the place which is quite often visited, coming and going. From here has the hadith about the greatest Prophet ﷺ come: The **اختلاف أمتي رحمة** hadith has reached us. It is not as those who differ from us explain it, nor is it as some Shi`as do, imitating and following those who differ from us! How can it be reasonable to regard the differences among the [Islamic] nation as a sign of mercy?! Have we been ordered to be so different, or have we been prohibited from differing [among ourselves]?! If someone says that we have been ordered with regard to these differences, how can the Creator, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, prohibit us from differing with each other as the Prophet ﷺ prohibits us (too)? If we have been ordered against it, how can it be [regarded as a sign of the Almighty's] mercy?! This is pure lying and fabricating against the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and against his Progeny ﷺ. Rather, he ﷺ said that the **اختلاف** "ikhtilaf" of my nation is mercy, that is, the nation frequently referring to him and to his Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ, their continuous referring to them, so they may get to know the facts of the creed from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, such frequenting of the nation is mercy. In other words, they refer to him coming and going. The **مُخْتَلَفٌ** is the place which is visited quite often. When I say **اختلفت اليه**, I mean I always go to him. When I say **اختلفت معه**, this conveys the meaning of differing, of discord. The **مُخْتَلَفٌ** is the place which is often frequented, coming and going. This

ziyara addresses them as the place where the angels quite often go. It means the angels constantly going to and coming from them, circumambulating their sacred courtyard, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. "*Assalamo Alaikom*, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones who are quite often frequented by the angels." As regarding the discussion about the angels, this is quite lengthy, and there may be among the viewers those who have no accurate idea about the angels. Most likely, people have an ambiguous notion [about the angels], and the reason is their being distant from the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. We, therefore, shift to the gardens of the statements of the Household of Infallibility so we may appreciate some of their hadith or get to know about the angels and their frequent visits of the household of infallibility, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all.

Angels are the most numerous creation of Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him. The angels are many types, and their levels are quite numerous. The angels have great abilities and potentials, and they vary with regard to their levels. The angels sleep, for every created being sleeps. Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, is the only One Who is never overcome by slumber or sleep. The angels do not marry, nor do they multiply like humans and animals. The angels do not eat, nor do they drink, for their food is magnifying and glorifying the Almighty. They seek breezes from the Arsh; this is their food and the mystery behind their living. They occupy levels. We will shift to narratives of the Household of Infallibility عليه السلام in order to appreciate some meanings and knowledge about the angels and their frequent visits of the Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. In supplications of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, there is hadith about the angels, sometimes in general terms and some other times in detail. For example, the story of the supplication of the Mother of David, which is narrated from our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام, is well known. I do not want to discuss the supplication of the Mother of David as much as I would like to handle lines of this supplication that are recited during the month of Rajab, and they are detailed. Here I am reciting it from *Mafatih al-Jinan* of our mentor, al-Qummi, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him. This supplication contains the following: "O Allāh! Bless Gabriel, the one whom You

trust with your *wahi* (inspiration), the one who is strong enough to carry out Your command." Our discussion here is about the types of angels and some of their affairs. "O Allāh! Bless Gabriel, the one whom You trust with Your *wahi*, the one who is strong enough to carry out Your command, the one who is obeyed in Your heavens and the areas of Your Signs, the one who can bear Your words, who supports Your prophets, who destroys Your enemies. O Allāh! Bless Michael, the angel of Your mercy, the one whom You created as a sign of Your affection, the one who keeps seeking forgiveness and assistance for those who obey You. O Allāh! Bless Israfil, the bearer of Your Arsh, the fellow of the trumpet who awaits Your command, the one who is apprehensive, who is sacred due to fearing You. O Allāh! Bless the pure bearers of the Arsh and the fellow of the trumpet who awaits Your command, who is apprehensive due to fearing you. O Allāh! Bless the pure bearers of the Arsh and the (angel) messengers, the kind, the good ones, bless Your revered scribe angels, the angels in charge of the Gardens of Bliss, the custodians of the Fires, the angel of death and his aides. O One Who has all Greatness and Reverence!" The supplication, up to here, has discussed the angels' types and levels of pointing out and discuss, some of their functions and capabilities.

When Gabriel was mentioned, the supplication stated: "O Allāh! Bless Gabriel, the one whom You trust regarding your *wahi*, the one who is strong enough to carry out Your command." Each of these statements and descriptions needs an explanation, but there is no time for that; therefore, I content myself by only citing the texts and explaining what needs to be explained. When the discussion reaches Michael, the ziyara says, "O Allāh! Bless Michael, the angel of Your mercy, the one whom You created as a sign of Your affection, the one who keeps seeking forgiveness and assistance for those who obey You." This means that the moral support that reaches those who obey Allāh shines from Michael's side. "O Allāh! Bless Michael, the angel of Your mercy, the one whom You created as a sign of Your affection, the one who keeps seeking forgiveness and assistance for those who obey You. O Allāh! Bless Israfil, bearer of Your Arsh," that is, he is among those who bear the Arsh, and the one in charge of the trumpet. The trumpet, صور, according to the Arabs' language, is basically the horn of the large bull in which it is

blown, and it is also called **بوق**, *booq*, the ancient shape of which was made from horns of large bulls. The discussion here is by way of similes and metaphors. "... and the fellow of the trumpet who awaits Your command, who is apprehensive out of fear of You. O Allāh! Bless the pure bearers of the Arsh." These bearers are of another type of angels. "... and the revered scribing angels," this is another type. Some of these revered scribing angels are on earth in the company of humans, the angels who write the good and the bad deeds. And some of them are in the heavens writing the affairs of the heavens. "... (O Allāh!) bless the angels in charge of the Gardens of Bliss, the custodians of the Fires, the angel of death and his assistants." There are hosts of angels who assist the angel of death in snatching the souls away. The discussion about the types of angels does not stop here. This is the supplication of the mother of David which discusses some types of angels.

There is another type of angels mentioned in the supplication reported about the sacred area. It is the supplication which traditionist al-Qummi narrates from mentor al-Tusi. Mentor al-Tusi narrated this supplication in *Musbah al-Mutahajjid مصباح المتهدد*, which is one of the original supplication books. It was narrated from the second deputy [of Imām al-Hujja **عج**] from the great mentor, Abu Ja'far, Muhammed ibn Othman (ibn Sa`eed) al-Amri, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him. The following exists in this supplication: "O Maintainer [of everything], Sustainer, the One Who knows everything, do bless Muhammed and his Progeny and Your servants who are the elite and who are veiled from our eyes, bless Your angels who are near to You and the angels who are [to us, humans] obscure who surround [Your Arsh]." These are one of the highest ranks of angels when compared with the angels who are close to Allāh in as far as the angel world is concerned. As for us, the angels who are close to Allāh are also obscure, but this is one of the highest levels of angels in the sublime worlds, they are obscure to even the angel world. "... Your angels who are near to You and the angels who are [to us, humans] obscure and who surround [Your Arsh]." I have already said that I cannot explain all words in detail because this requires a long time. I only want to explain the overall general outlines stated in narratives of Ahlul-Bayt **عليه السلام**, perhaps I can

get the viewers to reach some of what Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام have said in these meanings and contexts. " السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة و موضع الرسالة " و *مُخْتَلَفُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ* Peace with you all, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the message and the ones whom the angels frequently visit." In the sacred *Sahifa Sajjadiyya* *الصحيفة السجادية* , the *Sahifa* of our Imām al-Sajjad عليه السلام, there is a supplication at its beginning. It is the supplication for blessing the bearers of the Arsh and every angel who is close to Allāh, one of the beautiful supplications which mention many types and levels of angels, including those who occupy a status higher than the [rest of] angels. What did our Imām al-Sajjad عليه السلام say? The fifth day of this holy month, the month of Sha`ban, will be his birth anniversary, Allāh's peace and blessings with him. Our Imām al-Sajjad says the following:

اللهم و حَمَلَةٌ عرشك الذين لا يفترون "O Allāh! [Also bless] the bearers of Your Arsh who never cease glorifying You, nor do they feel tired or bored due to sanctifying You, nor do they wear out on account of adoring you, nor do they prefer shortcoming over laboring hard following Your Command, nor do they lax in their love for You." اللهم و حَمَلَةٌ عرشك الذين لا يفترون من تسبيحك و لا يسأمون من تقديسك و لا يستحسرون من عبادتك و لا يؤثرن التقصير على الجد في أمرك و لا يغفلون عن الوله اليك All these meanings contradict those who "catch their breath" because of being tired, bored or who feel worn out. Such qualities do not apply to those who bear the Arsh. They are never inattentive due to their deep love for the Almighty, feeling puzzled by His Greatness. They are in a state of amazement and passion for Him. Are the angels capable of knowing Allāh? It is for this reason that they have so much longing for the Almighty, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him: *و لا يغفلون عن الوله اليك، و اسرافيل صاحب الصور الشاخص الذي ينتظر منك الاذن و حلول الأمر فينبه بالنفخة صرعى رهائن القبور، و ميكايل ذو الجاه عندك و المكان الرفيع من طاعتك، و جبرئيل الأمين على وحيك المطاع في أهل سماواتك المكين لديك المقرب عندك، و الروح الذي هو على ملائكة الحُجُب* *They never cease being puzzled by Your Greatness. And [do bless, O Allāh] Israfil of the trumpet, the one who is ever alert, waiting for Your permission, for Your command, so he would blow [in order to wake up] those who are the hostages of the graves. And [do bless, O Allāh] Michael, the one who enjoys favor with You and the lofty status of obedience to You. And [do bless, O Allāh] Gabriel, the one*

whom You entrust to convey your wahi, inspiration, the one who is obeyed by the people of Your heavens, the one whom You have empowered, who is near to You and the Spirit over the angels of the veils. This shows that the status of Gabriel, Michael and Israfil is less than that of the Arsh.

We have already said that the Arsh is the world that surrounds the Kursi, and the Kursi is the world that surrounds the heavens and what is below the heavens, such as the earthly and other worlds. As for the veils, they are above the Arsh world. There are special angels for the veils, and they occupy a status higher than the [other] angels, yet it is above that of the veil angels. There is also the Spirit: **وَالرُّوحِ الَّذِي هُوَ عَلَىٰ مَلَائِكَةِ الْخُبُوبِ، وَرُوحِ الَّذِي هُوَ مِنْ أَمْرِكَ** And [bless] the Spirit who is in charge of the veil angels, and the Spirit that carries out Your command. This Spirit occupies a status higher than that of the veil angels. This is the Spirit that descends during Laylatul-Qadr:

85. They ask you concerning the Spirit. Say: "The Spirit (comes) by the command of my Lord: Only little knowledge is communicated to you, (O mankind!)"

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ؛ قُلِ: الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي، وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

Qur'ān, 17:85

This is the Spirit that comes by the command of the Almighty; this is the greatest being in the sublime worlds, one of the manifestations of the levels of the first holy realities: "... and the Spirit that comes by Your command. Reference has already been made to it, that is, it is understood from the narratives that this Spirit stems from the true Fatimi realities. "And [do bless, O Allāh] Gabriel whom You trust with Your wahi, inspiration, the one who is obeyed among the people of Your heavens, the one whom You empowered, who is close to You, and [bless] the Spirit who is in charge of the angels of veils" who is a being greater than the angels, and [bless] "the Spirit that comes by Your command," and this is even greater than before it. "O Allāh! Bless them and bless the angels who are lower in rank than them from among the residents

of Your heavens and those entrusted with Your messages," i.e. those who are dispatched to the prophets, "and those whom no weariness overshadows nor fatigue" due to their continuous hard work of obedience, "nor any exhaustion." Should such fatigue happen, the cosmos would suffer a great deal of malfunction because the cosmos, in all its atoms, is regulated by the angels. Thus have the narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام explained to us. *و الذين لا تدخلهم سامة من دؤوب و لا اعياء من لغوب و لا فتور و لا تشغلهم عن تسبيحك الشهوات و لا يقطعهم عن تعظيمك سهو الغفلات، الخُشَعُ الأَبصار فلا يرومون النظر اليك، النواكس الأذقان، الخُشَعُ الأَبصار* [And bless, O Lord] *those who are never overcome with boredom because of continuous adoration, neither exhaustion nor hiatus, nor are they distracted by any desires from glorifying You. Inattention never stops them from glorifying You. Their vision is all reverence, so they do not even try to look at You. Their heads are down, their visions are devout.* These angels do not see themselves as having a status or a degree so as they would raise their visions upwards. *الخُشَعُ الأَبصار فلا يرومون النظر اليك، النواكس الأذقان، الخُشَعُ الأَبصار، النواكس الأذقان الذين قد طالت رغبتهم فيما لديك، المستهترون بذكر آلائك و المتواضعون دون عظمتك و جلال كبريانك و الذين يقولون اذا نظروا الى جهنم تزفر على أهل معصيتك: سبحانك ما عبدناك حق عبادتك، فصلّ عليهم و على الروحانيين من ملائكتك* *Their vision is all reverence, so they do not even try to look at You. Their heads are down, their visions are devout. Their vision is all reverence, their faces are downward, those whose desire has been prolonged for what is with You, those who are fond of mentioning Your Signs, who are humble towards Your Greatness, Magnanimity and the greatness of Your Pride, those who, when they look at hell exhaling at those who disobeyed You, say, "Glory to You! We did not worship You as You deserve."* These angels, whose characteristics are like that, address the Creator, Glorified and Exalted is He, thus: *Glory to You! We did not worship You as You deserve! So, bless them and bless the spiritualist ones from among Your angels, those who enjoy a status close to You, those who are in charge of bearing the unseen.* Those who enjoy a status close to the Almighty form one class of angels. *فصلّ عليهم و على الروحانيين من ملائكتك و أهل الزلفى عندك و حَمال الغيب الى رسلك و المؤمنين على وحيك و قبائل ملائكة الذين اختصصتهم لنفسك و أغنيتهم عن الطعام و الشراب* *So, bless them and bless the spiritualist ones from among Your angels and those who enjoy a status near to You and those who bear the [knowledge of the] unseen to Your messengers, and those who are entrusted over*

Your wahi and the tribes of angels whom You chose for Your own service, rendering them independent of the need of food and drink with what? بتقديسك With glorifying You و أسكنتهم بطون أطباق سماواتك و housed them in the depths of Your heavens, and [also bless] those who are in charge of their areas, the areas of existence, the directions and the areas الذين على أرجائها اذا نزل الأمر and those throughout them when the command descends that Your promise is to be fulfilled. When will the command descend regarding the fulfillment of His promise?

The first timing will take place when the Imām of our Time (عج) reappears. The second will be on the Judgment Day. و خزان المطر. [Also bless, O Lord] *the treasurers of rain, the angels whose function is to treasure rain water. و خزان المطر وزواجر السحاب و الذي بصوت زجره يُسمع زجر الرعود، و اذا سبحت بع حفيضة السحاب التمعت صواعق البروق و مُشيعي الثلج و البَرَد و الهابطين مع قَطَر المطر اذا نزل [Also bless, O Lord] those (angels) who treasure the rain, who drive the clouds whose voice, when commanding, is heard as thunder, and when moving clouds glorify, there would be lightning. Also bless (O Allāh) those who drive the snow and the frost which fall with rain drops.* Narratives say that with each rain drop that falls down, an angel in charge of it falls in order to get it to the place where it must be. This is just an example. و الهابطين مع قَطَر المطر اذا نزل، و القوام على خزانين و الرياح، و الموكلين بالجبال فلا تزول، و الذين عرَفَتْهُم مثاقيل المياه و كيل ما تحويه لواعج الأمطار و عوالجها، و رُسلك الى أهل الأرض بمكروه ما ينزل من البلاء و محبوب الرخاء و السفرة البررة و الحفظة الكرام الكاتبين و ملك الموت و أعوانه و منكر و نكير و رومان فتان القبور و الطائفين بالبيت المعمور و مالك و الخزنة و رضوان و سدنة الجنان الذين لا يعصون الله ما أمرهم و يفعلون ما يؤمرون، و الذين يقولون: سلام عليكم بما صبرتم، فنعم عقبى الدار، و الزبانية الذين اذا قيل لهم خذوه فغَلَوْه ثم الجحيم صَلَّوه ابتدروه سراعاً و لم يُنظَرُوهُ و من أوهمنا ذكروه و لم نعلم مكانه منك و بأي أمرٍ و كَلَّتُهُ و سَكَّانِ الهواء و الأرض و الماء و من منهم على الخلق فصلٌ عليهم يوم تأتي كُلُّ نفسٍ معها سائقٌ و شهيدٌ، و صلِّ عليهم صلاةً تزيدهم كرامةً على *And bless (O Lord) those (angels) who descend with the rain drops when they fall down, those in charge of the wind, those in charge of the mountains so they would not move, those whom You have taught the weight of waters and the measure of what the rain contains and how to deal with it. Bless, O Lord, Your angel messengers to the residents of the earth whom You send with some affliction which they hate and some prosperity which they*

love; bless the good and the obedient angels, the honored scribing custodians, the angel of death and his aides, Munkir and Nakeer, and Ruman who creates sedition in the graves. Bless, O Lord, those (angels) who circumambulate the ever-Inhabited House, Malik and the treasurers, Ridhwan and the caretakers of Paradise and those who never disobey Allāh whenever He orders them, carrying out whatever they are commanded, and bless those who say, "Peace with you on account of having persevered, so how good the abode for your reward is!" And bless those (caretaker angels of hell) who, when it is said, "Take him, chain him, and in hell throw him," rush swiftly without giving him a respite. Bless, O Allāh, those whom we have not mentioned and with whose status with You we are unfamiliar, nor do we know the mission for which You commissioned him. Bless those (angels) who reside in the air, the earth and the water, and some of them are in charge of the creation; bless them on the Day when *وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ* "every soul will come forth: An (angel) will be with each to drive and an (angel) to bear witness" (Qur'ān, 50:21), and bless them with a blessing which increases their prestige and a purification which further purifies them, up to the end of this sacred supplication.

This supplication mentions for us types, tribes, groups and levels as well as sorts of angels. In the sacred text of Nahjul-Balagha, the Master of Wasī عليه السلام discusses the creation of the angels saying,

ثُمَّ فَتَقَّ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَوَاتِ الْعُلَا فَمَلَأَهُنَّ أَطْوَاراً مِنْ مَلَائِكَتِهِ، مِنْهُنَّ سَجُودٌ لَا يَرْكَعُونَ وَرُكُوعٌ لَا يَنْتَصِبُونَ وَصَافُونَ لَا يَتْرَافُونَ وَمُسَبِّحُونَ لَا يَسْأَمُونَ، لَا يَغْشَاهُمْ نَوْمٌ الْعُيُونَ وَلَا سَهُوٌ الْعُقُولِ وَلَا فِتْرَةٌ الْأَبْدَانِ وَلَا غَفْلَةٌ النِّسْيَانِ، وَمِنْهُنَّ أَمْنَاءٌ عَلَى وَحْيِهِ وَالسَّنَّةُ إِلَى رَسُولِهِ وَمُخْتَلِفُونَ بِقَضَائِهِ وَأَمْرِهِ، وَمِنْهُنَّ الْحَقِظَةُ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالسَّنْدَنَةُ لِأَبْوَابِ جَنَاتِهِ، وَمِنْهُنَّ الثَّابِتَةُ فِي الْأَرْضِينَ السُّفْلَى أَقْدَامُهُنَّ وَالْمَارِقَةُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ الْعُلْيَا أَعْنَاقُهُنَّ وَالْخَارِجَةُ مِنَ الْأَفْطَارِ أَرْكَانُهُنَّ وَالْمُنَاسِبَةُ لِقَوَائِمِ الْعَرْشِ أَكْتَافُهُنَّ، نَاكِسَةٌ دُونَهُ أَبْصَارُهُنَّ، مُتَلَفَعُونَ تَحْتَهُ بِأَجْنَحَتِهِنَّ، مَضْرُوبَةٌ بَيْنَهُنَّ وَبَيْنَ مَنْ دُونَهُنَّ حُجُبُ الْعِزَّةِ وَأَسْتَارُ الْقُدْرَةِ، لَا يَتَوَهَّمُونَ رَبَّهُنَّ بِالتَّصْوِيرِ وَلَا يُجْرُونَ عَلَيْهِ صِفَاتِ الْمَصْنُوعِينَ وَلَا يَحْدُونَهُ بِالْأَمَاكِنِ وَلَا يُشِيرُونَ إِلَيْهِ بِالنَّظَائِرِ.

... "Then He cleft the high skies and filled it with all kinds of His angels. Some of them are in prostration, so they do not rise. Others are in kneeling positions, so they do not stand. Some of them are ranked in an array, so they do not leave their stations. Others are

extolling Allāh without ever getting tired. The sleep of the eye, the slip of wit, the languor of the body or the effect of forgetfulness does not affect them. Among them are those who work as trusted bearers of His message, thus serving as articulating tongues of His prophets. And there are those who carry His orders and commands. Among them are protectors of His creatures and guardians of the gates of Paradise. Among them are those whose steps are fixed on earth but their necks protrude into the skies. Their limbs are out on all sides, their shoulders are in accord with the columns of the Divine Arsh, their eyes are cast down before the Arsh, they spread their wings under it and render between themselves and all others curtains of honor and screens of power. They do not think of their Creator through images (i.e. imagining Him); they do not impute created attributes to Him; they do not confine Him within abodes and do not point at Him through illustrations" (*Nahjul-Balagha*, Sermon One).

The Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام tells us about the conditions of the angels, i.e. how they are, like humans, bow down and prostrate, glorying the Almighty without feeling sleepy or inattentive. The angels have a sort of sleep which suits them, but it is not similar to human sleep; rather, they have their own type of sleep just as they have their own typical "food" (sustenance): Their food is glorification. They have a type of sleep. They have no bodies like ours, nor do they have eyes like our eyes. Some of His angels remain prostrating, so they do not bow down, whereas others bow down without prostrating. The discussion here is about angels who remain in the status of prostration whereas others remain in that of bowing down, and the status of prostration is higher than that of bowing down and closer to pleasing the Almighty, as close as a servant of Allāh can be to his Lord when he is humble, submissive and feeling lowly. The most apparent signs of submission and humbleness as well as lowliness towards Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, is when His servant is in the status of prostration on the dust. Those who are in the status of bowing down are higher in rank than those who stand in rows. Where do they go, ascending and descending, and whom do they visit? They go to the men in authority on earth: *تَنْزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا* "In it do the angels and the Spirit descend" (Qur'ān, 97:4). This descending does not take

place on Laylatul-Qadr only. This descending always continues, for they always go to those in charge: وَمُخْتَلِفُونَ بِقَضَائِهِ وَأَمْرِهِ. To whom do they go? They go to those in charge; and who are these people in charge or in authority? وَمِنْهُمْ الْحَفِظَةُ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالسَّدَنَةُ لِأَبْوَابِ جَنَاتِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ الثَّابِتَةُ فِي الْأَرْضِ السُّفْلَى أَقْدَامُهُمْ، وَالْمَارِقَةُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ الْعُلْيَا أَعْنَاقُهُمْ، وَالخَارِجَةُ مِنَ الْأَفْطَارِ أَرْكَائِهِمْ، وَالْمُنَاسِبَةُ لِقَوَائِمِ الْعَرْشِ أَكْتَافُهُمْ. *And there are those who carry out His orders and commands. Among them are protectors of His creatures and guardians of the gates of Paradise. Among them are those whose steps are fixed on earth but necks protrude into the skies. Their limbs are out on all sides, their shoulders are in accord with the columns of the Divine Arsh.* What shoulders are these that carry the Arsh in which the Kursi world is like a ring on a plain and in which the heavens and earth fall within the Kursi world like a ring on a plain, like a ring thrown in a wide plain? وَالخَارِجَةُ مِنَ الْأَفْطَارِ أَرْكَائِهِمْ وَالْمُنَاسِبَةُ لِقَوَائِمِ الْعَرْشِ أَكْتَافُهُمْ نَاصِيَةٌ دُونَهُ أَبْصَارُهُمْ مُتَلَفَعُونَ تَحْتَهُ بِأَجْنِحَتِهِمْ مَضْرُوبَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَنْ دُونَهُمْ حُجُبُ الْعِزَّةِ وَأَسْتَارُ الْقُدْرَةِ لَا يَتَوَهَّمُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالتَّصْوِيرِ وَلَا يُجْرُونَ عَلَيْهِ صِفَاتِ المَصْنُوعِينَ وَلَا يَحْدُونَهُ بِالنَّظَائِرِ. *Their limbs are out on all sides, their shoulders are in accord with the columns of the Divine Throne, their eyes are cast down before it, they have spread their wings down under it and have rendered between themselves and all others curtains of honor and screens of power. They do not think of their Creator through images (i.e. imagining Him); they do not impute created attributes to Him; they do not confine Him within abodes and do not point at Him through illustrations.* The Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام is here discuss about the types of angels and about lofty stations. There are veils of dignity set up between the bearers of the Arsh and the rest of angels. Also, there are veil angels and the Spirit which is above the veil angels as we have indicated. And there is the Spirit who is from the command of Allāh, the Glorified, the most Exalted One, a world about the facts of which we know only this little which the Infallible Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام have brought us.

There is a very beautiful description in Sermon 82 of sacred Nahjul-Balagha.¹ What does the Master of Wasis عليه السلام say? He says, **إِنْ كُنْتُ**

¹ Numbers of the sermons of Nahjul-Balagha vary from one edition to another. I have translated this great book into English in three volumes together with the Arabic text for comparison sake. This sermon is

صَادِقًا، أَيُّهَا الْمُتَكَلِّفُ لَوْصَفَ رَبِّكَ، فَصِفْ جِبْرِيْلَ وَمِيكَائِيْلَ وَجُنُودَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ فِي
 "O you who exerts himself in describing Allāh! If you are serious, then (first try to) describe Gabriel, Michael or the host of angels who are close (to Allāh) in the receptacles of sublimity. Their heads are bent downwards and wits are perplexed as to how to assign limits (of definition) to the Highest Creator". The Imām ﷺ here is challenging us thus: If you can describe the Almighty, describe for us at least these chambers in which they communicate with the sublime holy worlds. Thus are they described by the Master of Wasī ﷺ, a very precise description: مُرْجِحَيْنِ, like being in a hammock swinging right and left. This is their condition due to their puzzlement, amazement in the chambers of holiness. These angels are in the sublime stations. This is Gabriel, the one who is obeyed in the heavens worlds and in the sublime worlds. Thus is he described by the Master of Wasī ﷺ: فَصِفْ جِبْرِيْلَ وَمِيكَائِيْلَ وَجُنُودَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ فِي : ﷺ. If you are serious, then (first try to) describe Gabriel, Michael or the host of angels who are close (to Allāh) in the receptacles of sublimity. Their heads are bent downwards and wits are perplexed. They are as if in hammocks swinging right and left on account of the weight of the knowledge and of their love for Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him. These are words which I repeat without understanding the realities of their meanings. But thus has the Master of Wasī ﷺ said about them.

When I say that I do not comprehend their meanings, I do not mean linguistically; the linguistic meanings are clear. Nor do I mean the meanings which can be explained by other narratives. We will review narratives which explain these meanings. Rather, I mean the true meanings of these words, the precise meanings of these words. What does it mean that these angels who are near to Allāh are

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مُرَجِحِينَ swinging, their minds are puzzled?! Also, the Master of Wasis ﷺ talks to us about the greatest angel. There is an angel who is the greatest, and he is neither Gabriel nor Michael nor Israfil. He is none of these angels about whom we discussed. What is the function of this greatest angel? He was a servant of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. What does the Master of Wasis ﷺ say in his 192nd sermon [in Nahjul-Balagha], the one known as the القاصعة qasi`a where he talks about the Messenger of Allāh? [He says the following:]

ولقد قرن الله به صلى الله عليه وآله من لدن أن كان فطيماً أعظم ملك من ملائكته يسئلك
 به طريق المكارم ومحاسن أخلاق العالم ليلاً ونهاره *From the time of his
 weaning, Allāh had assigned a mighty angel to the Prophet ﷺ to
 take him along the path of high moral character and good behavior
 throughout the day and the night.*

This was in the world of this life. Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ are the visiting place of the angels in this world. In the Hereafter, in the sublime worlds, in the world of the Arsh and what is under it, in the worlds of what is above the Arsh world..., the angels frequently visit Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ, for the Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ have a presence in each of these worlds that suits that particular world. Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ in each of these worlds are the visiting place of the angels. When we say that the Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ are the visiting place of the angels not only in the earth world but in each level of this existence, they are as such.

A mighty angel was assigned by the Almighty to the Prophet ﷺ to serve him. Gabriel, too, was serving him, and so were all angels. Actually, the narratives indicate that the angels serve us and our Shi`as. This meaning is clear in the statements of the Infallible Ones ﷺ. This great angel is thus described by the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ: "a mighty angel". The greatest angel was a servant of the Greatest Prophet ﷺ since he was a weaned baby.

I said at the beginning of my statement that the types of the angels are quite numerous, and the sacred narratives which we have at hand do not mention all types of angels. Rather, they mention some types, tribes, groups, specializations and functions of the angels.

Discussing them has been general, not detailed. There is a narrative that discusses the angels, explaining for us aspects of the angels' characteristics. I am going to read for you a group of ahadith, a group of narratives which I have picked from ahadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام which bring the picture of the angel world closer to our comprehension. Here is a narrative that quotes the Sadiq of the `Itra عليه السلام. What does our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام say? I read few lines of it. The narrative is lengthy. Here is what we need of it: **خلق الله الملائكة مختلفة، وقد رأى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله جبرئيل وله ستمائة جناح** Allāh created different angels. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saw Gabriel having six hundred wings. He saw him in his own image, not in the one which he assumes when he descends to the earth, for the earth is not large enough for Gabriel; Gabriel is greater than the earth. Gabriel used to descend to the Prophet ﷺ in the image of Duhayyah al-Kalbi who was a handsome young man, a good man from among the people of Medina who used to work in trade and often he used to stay away for some time. Gabriel used to descend in Duhayyah's image, and he may have descended in other images. Whenever he descended, he was seen by many Muslims who thought that he was Duhayyah al-Kalbi. The Prophet ﷺ saw Gabriel having six hundred wings. Read this Qur'ānic verse: **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنَحَةٍ: مَثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ** "Praise belongs to Allāh Who created the heavens and the earth (out of nothing), Who made the angels messengers with wings, two, or three, or four (pairs) (Qur'ān, 35:1). This verse does not limit the types of angels to this number, that is, that they have two or three or four (pairs) of wings. Rather, it wanted to point out that the number of angels' wings varies according to their levels. The higher in degree an angel is, the more the wings. The increase in the number of wings points out to the increase in the level which the angels reach and to which they ascend. From here, the Imām عليه السلام tells us about Gabriel saying: **وقد رأى رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وآله، جبرئيل وله ستمائة جناح، على ساقه الدر مثل القطر على البقل** "The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny, saw Gabriel having six hundred wings on his pearl-like leg (looking like) dew drops on beans." Beans are vegetables. When a farmer comes in the morning to pick them, what does he find? He finds dew drops on their leaves. The Imām عليه السلام is here describing Gabriel. The word **الدر** does not refer to

ordinary pearls; these are heavenly pearls from the angel world. Pearls remind one of clarity and purity and also of encompassing. "... on his pearl-like leg (looking like) dew drops on beans, having filled the space between the heavens and the earth." This is how the Prophet ﷺ saw him. The Prophet ﷺ seeing the heavens and the earth varies from the way I and you see the heavens and the earth, for Muhammed's vision is so intense and broad, it is like no other vision. The Imām ﷺ says, "He saw Gabriel having six hundred wings on his pearl-like leg (looking like) dew drops on beans, having filled the space between the heavens and the earth," until the Imām ﷺ says, "ان الملائكة لا يأكلون و لا يشربون و لا ينكحون" "Angels do not eat or drink or have sexual intercourse." There is no marriage or reproduction for the angels; rather انما يعيشون بنسيم العرش "They live on the breeze of the Arsh." This is one angel class. They inhale the breeze of the Arsh. What is this breeze of the Arsh?

It is something the meaning of which I do not realize. All the statements here try to bring the picture close to our comprehension, setting similes for us. ان الملائكة لا يأكلون و لا يشربون و لا ملائكة ينكحون، "The angels do not eat or drink or have sexual intercourse but live on the breeze of the Arsh, and there are angels who remain prostrating up to the Day of Judgment." Our Imām al-Sadiq ﷺ says, قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله: ما من شيء خلقه الله أكثر من الملائكة، و انه ليهبط في كل يوم و في كل ليلة سبعون ألف ملك فيأتون البيت الحرام (يعني في مكة) ثم يأتون أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام (النجف) فيسلمون عليه، ثم يأتون الحسين في كربلاء فيقيمون عنده (أكثر اقامتهم عند الحسين)، فإذا كان السحر وُضع لهم معراج الى السماء ثم لا يعودون أبدا "The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny, has said, 'Nothing which Allāh created is more numerous than the angels. Every day and night, seventy thousand angels descend. They go to the Haram House (meaning in Mecca), then they go to the (Shrine of the) Commander of the Faithful (in Najaf) to greet him. Then they go to (the Shrine of) al-Hussain in Kerbala where they stay (most of their stay is at al-Hussain's Shrine). When it is pre-dawn, an ascension method is placed for them to ascend to the heavens; after this, they never return at all.' These angels perform the *hajj*, pilgrimage, and stay at (the Shrine of)

al-Hussain عليه السلام, then they never return at all. This happens every day and night. This shows you some of the places which the angels visit: They visit the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم (in Medina), then they go to Najaf then to al-Hussain عليه السلام where they stay. When it is pre-dawn time, a method for their ascension to the heavens is set up for them after which they never return. Hordes and hordes come, and these hordes never stop. The angels go to Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام in countless appearances and levels, I have only picked from the narratives what shows us some of the meanings which bring the picture of the angel world closer to our comprehension.

Another narrative is transmitted by our mentor al-Saduq عليه السلام. This narrative is reported by Abu Makhnaf Lut ibn Yahya, one of the narrators on whose hadith we rely, rejecting the numerous lies attributed to them. They are not what is said about them and about other reliable Shi'a narrators. Lut ibn Yahya says *عن أبي مخنف لوط بن يحيى عن أبي منصور عن زيد بن وهب قال: سئل أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام عن قدرة الله جلّت عظمته، فقام خطيباً فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ثم قال: إن الله تبارك وتعالى ملائكة لو أن ملكاً منهم هبط إلى الأرض ما وسعته لعظم خلقه وكثرة أجنحته، ومنهم من لو كلفت الجن والإنس أن يصفوه ما يصفوه لبعد مفاصله وحسن تركيب صورته؛ وكيف يوصف من ملائكته من سبعمئة عام ما بين منكبيه وشحمة أذنه؟ ومنهم من يسد الأفق بجناح من أجنحته دون عظم يديه، ومنهم من في السماوات إلى حوزته، ومنهم من قدمه على غير قرار في جو الهواء الأسفل والأرضون إلى ركبتيه، ومنهم من لو ألقى في نقرة ابهامه جميع المياه لوسعها، ومنهم من لو ألقى السفن في دموع عينيه لجزت في نهر الداهرين، فتبارك الله أحسن الخالقين* "Abu Makhnaf, Lut ibn Yahya, quotes Abu Mansur quoting Zaid ibn Wahab as saying that the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام was asked once about the Might of Allāh, great is His Greatness, so he عليه السلام stood up to deliver a sermon. He praised and lauded Allāh then said, 'Allāh, to Whom all Glorification and Exaltation belong, has angels if one of whom landed on earth, it would not be big enough to accommodate him due to his great size and the abundance of his wings. There are some whom the jinns and mankind cannot describe due to the distance between his parts and the perfection of his form. How can one describe angels the distance between whose elbows and ear lobes is [the march of] seven hundred years? And there are those who would obstruct the horizon with only one of their wings, let alone the greatness of hands. Some of them are in the heavens up to their

middle, and there are those whose foot is unstable in the atmosphere of the lower air and on the land up to the knees. There are those if you pour in the pit of their thumbs all waters [of the earth], the pit would hold them. There are others if you place ships in his eye tears, they would sail for ages; so, Glorified is Allāh, the best of creators."

From the above you can form an idea about the multitudes and sizes of Allāh's angels whom mankind and humans, from the beginning of creation up to the end, cannot describe. Of course the jinns are many times more numerous than humans; such do the narratives tell us. Reference above is also to the beauty of these angels some of whom extend up to the loftiest places in the heavens, as reference to the *حُجْزَة* *hujza* is made above, and we may discuss the Divine *hujza* in the future. The above narrative has told us about an aspect of the angels' affairs and description.

Here is another narrative. This one is narrated by Jameel ibn Durraj. قال: سألت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام: هل في السماء بحار؟ قال: نعم؛ أخبرني أبي عن أبيه عن جدّه عليهم السلام (امامنا الصادق يقول: أخبرني أبي الباقر عن أبيه السجاد عن جدّه عليهم السلام يعني عن سيد الأوصياء) قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: ان في السماوات لبحاراً—في العوالم العلوية—لبحاراً عمق أحدها مسيرة خمسمئة عام—بحار تتناسب مع العوالم العلوية—فيها ملائكة قيام منذ خلقهم الله عزّ وجلّ و الماء الى ركبهم—يعني هذه البحار عمقها مسيرة خمسمئة عام هذا الماء كله بهذا العمق الهائل يصل الى ركب هؤلاء الملائكة—ان في السماوات السبع لبحاراً عمق أحدها مسيرة خمسمئة عام فيها ملائكة قيام منذ خلقهم الله عزّ وجلّ و الماء الى ركبهم، و ليس منهم ملك الا و له ألف و أربعمئة جناح، في كل جناح أربعة وجود، في كل وجه أربعة ألسن، He said, "I asked Abu Abdullah, peace with him, 'Are there seas in the heavens?' He said, 'Yes; I was told by my father who quoted his father citing his grandfather, peace with them all (our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام says, 'My father, al-Baqir, quotes his father al-Sajjad quoting their father, peace with them all, the latter being the Master of Wasis عليه السلام) as saying, 'The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny, said that there are seas in the heavens (in the upper worlds) in which there are angels who have been standing since Allāh, the most High, the most Great, created them and the water reaches their knees (meaning these seas are as deep as the distance of five hundred years; this water, in such a huge

depth, reaches the knees of these angels) and each of them has one thousand and four hundred wings in each of which there are four faces; in each face there are four tongues; they do not have wings or mouths that do not glorify Allāh Almighty with a glorification similarly to that of the other." He means each tongue has a way of glorifying the Almighty which is its function. The discussion here is not about a human image. The discussion here is about these angels that are among the manifestations of the early holy presence. The discussion here is about these wings, faces and tongues, about the potentials, energies and capabilities which Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, has deposited in these angels.

Another narrative, which is reported by the author of *Basa'ir al-Darajat* بصائر الدرجات from our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام, says that the cherubim الكروبيون, a higher type of angels close to the Almighty, "are people who are among our Shi'as." The cherub المَلَكُ الكروبي is a non-Arab word which we have inherited from Syriac¹. Imām al-Sadiq says the following about them: ان الكروبيين قوم من شيعتنا من الخلق الأول جعلهم الله خلف العرش، لو قُسمَ نور واحد منهم على أهل الأرض لكفاهم. ان موسى عليه السلام لما سأل ربه ما سأل أمر واحداً من الكروبيين فتجلى للجبل فجعله دكاً. *So, these cherubim are folks from among our followers and they belong to the first creation. Allāh let them be behind the Arsh. Had the noor of one of them been divided to the people of the earth, it would have sufficed them. When Moses, peace with him, asked his Lord what he asked, He ordered one of the cherubim who manifested himself to the mountain, crushing it into rubble.* They are among the first level of angels who were derived from the *noors* of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, as we indicated in previous episodes which quote the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم, that is, the narrative which discussed the Arsh having been derived from the *noor* of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم and that the angels were derived from the *noor* of Ali, Allāh's peace and

¹ Actually, this word comes from the Hebrew cherub (singular), cherubim (plural), that is, כְּרוּב, pl. כְּרוּבִים. In English, these words correspond to *kəruv*, pl. *kəruvīm*. According to the Wikipedia, The cherub concept is represented in ancient Middle Eastern art by a lion or a bull with eagles' wings and a human face, and it is regarded in traditional Christian angelology as an angel of the second highest order of the ninefold celestial hierarchy. – Tr.

blessings with him. It does not discuss for us the confusion between what I stated in the previous episodes and the "first creation" term applied to the first holy realities from which Allāh derived all beings, whereas the second creation constitutes all beings which Allāh derived from the first creation. As regarding the discussion of the first creation, it means the first levels of angels who manifested themselves from the *noor* of the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام in its lofty holy levels. As for the cherubim, these angels occupy a station higher than those who are near to Allāh. They surround the Arsh and carry it. If the *noor* of one of them is divided to the people of the earth, it suffices them, that is, it will not need the light of the sun or any other light. Our Imām عليه السلام says that when Moses عليه السلام asked his Lord to let him see Him, He ordered one of the cherubim who manifested himself to the mountain (Mount Sinai), crushing it. Some narratives say that the *noor* that shone on the mountain where Moses stood measured as much as the opening of a ring: as much as the circle of the ring. This means what is anticipated of the ring is this much. This *noor* shone from that cherub angel who was among the Shi`as of Muhammed عليه السلام and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام; this was stated by our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام: *ان الكروبيين قوم من شيعتنا من الخلق الأول جعلهم الله خلف العرش، لو قسم نور واحد منهم على أهل الأرض لكفاهم. ان موسى عليه السلام لما سأل ربه ما سأل أمر واحداً من الكروبيين فتجلى للجبل فجعله دكاً.* *The cherubim are people from our own Shi`as from the first creation. Allāh made them behind the Arsh. Had the noor of one of them been divided to the people of the earth, it would have sufficed them. When Moses, peace with him, asked his Lord what he asked, He ordered one of the cherubim who manifested himself to the mountain, crushing it.* The narratives say that the mountain where Moses was standing turned into particles, the particles that we see moving in the sun rays that enter through the windows. The narratives say that these rays are from the remnant of the particles of the mountain which was crushed by the *noor* of one cherub who is one of the Shi`as of Ali عليه السلام and of the Progeny of Ali عليه السلام. Perhaps some people find these matters too difficult to understand and do not, therefore, accept these meanings, or they may make fun of them and regard them merely whims and things of the imagination. We are not concerned about what they say. The real speech is that of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. The stations are theirs, the statuses belong to them.

If one of us knows the value of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, lucky is he if he can listen to, read and memorize the largest number of these ahadith. Lucky is anyone among us who is granted success to become familiar with such ahadith. It is, indeed, a great fortune. This is the speech of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. By Allāh, I feel very sorry for many of those who love Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام and who are sincere to them and yet who do not hear such words. From here can the great difference be known between the first and the second creation. The prophets, *wasis* and angels are all from the level of the second creation. ان موسى عليه السلام لما سأل ربّه ما سأل When Moses, peace with him, asked his Lord what he asked, that is, when he wanted to look at Him, when he asked and requested to look at Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, the *noor* of that cherub from among the Shi`as of Ali عليه السلام and of the Progeny of Ali عليه السلام, the mountain was crushed.

Another narrative is narrated by our mentor al-Saduq in his book, *Al-Ikmal*. عن داود بن فرقد قال: قال لي بعض أصحابنا: أخبرني عن الملائكة، أينامون؟ *Dawud ibn Farqad said, "One of our fellows asked me, 'Tell me about the angels, do they sleep?' I said, 'I do not know.' He said, 'Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, says [in the Holy Qur'ān], They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they ever flag or rest (Qur'ān, 21:20). In other words, they are not overtaken by drowsiness, exhaustion or boredom. Then he said, ألا أطرفك عن أبي عبد الله بشيء؟ فقلت: بلى، فقال: سئلت عن ذلك فقال: ما من حي إلا وهو ينام خلا الله وحده عز وجل، و الملائكة ينامون، فقلت: يقول الله عز وجل: "يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ" Shall I tell you something interesting from Abu Abdullah [Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام]?" I said, "Yes." He said, "He was asked about that, and he said, 'Every being sleeps except only Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, and the angels do sleep." I said, "Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, says, 'They glorify [Him] during the night and the day, and they do not lax' (Qur'ān, 21:20). He said, 'Their own breath glorifies." That is, the breath they draw which suits their nature and the glorifying that suits them. The narratives are numerous from the Household of Infallibility, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all.*

Here is a narrative transmitted by Abu Tharr al-Ghifari رضي الله عنه from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Abu Tharr says, "The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny, has said, 'I see what you do not see.'" A short while ago, I said that the vision of Muhammed ﷺ is not like our vision, be it in intensity or in strength or in continuation or in brightness or in range. "I see what you do not see and hear what you do not hear." So, what does the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say? He says, *أطت السماء وحق لها أن تأت، ما فيها موضع أربع أصابع إلا وملك واضع جبهته لله ساجداً* "The heavens has complained, and it has the right to complain: There is no distance of four fingers without an angel in it placing his forehead down, prostrating." What is the *أطيت* *ateet*? It is, according to the Arabs' language, the [crackling] sound of camel loaders (litters, carriers, saddles) when one [over-weight] sits on them. Say, there is a sofa or a place on which people sit, a wooden sofa, it is normal when three persons sit on it, but when five, six or seven persons sit on it, a sound will come out of it indicating that it is about to break. This sound is produced due to the heavy weight on the wood and it is called *أطيت* *ateet*, such as *ateet al-aqtab*, the sound that comes out when too much load is placed on a wooden loader carried by a camel. In the narrative reported by Abu Tharr al-Ghifari رضي الله عنه, this sahabi says that the heavens almost produced the *ateet* sound on account of the multitude of angels. It "almost" did, which means it did not, "almost" being used for comparison. The Prophet ﷺ simply wants to say that the angels are so numerous, and that the heavens are crowded with them. These huge numbers of angels, which we do not know how many, come and go, up and down, to whom? They go to those whom the angels quite often visit. Who are they? They are Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام, for from whom was the beginning of these angels derived? They were derived from Ali's *noor*; thus have we been told by the Prophet ﷺ: The angels were derived from the *noor* of Ali عليه السلام and they were in levels, and the knowledge of these levels has not reached us except very little from the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام who told us what suits the ability of our comprehension.

There is a narrative reported by mentor al-Majlisi in *Bihar al-Anwar*. Here is Volume twenty-six. The narrative is lengthy, and I excerpt

from it what is needed. The narrative cites our Imām al-Ridha عليه السلام quoting his pure forefathers quoting the Master of Wasis عليه السلام who, in turn, quotes the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. The statement is made by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ of which I excerpt what is needed; otherwise, it is quite lengthy and contains many details: يا علي! لولا نحن ما خلق الله آدم ولا حواء ولا الجنة ولا النار ولا السماء ولا الأرض، فكيف لا نكون أفضل من الملائكة وقد سبقناهم الى معرفة ربنا وتسيبحة وتهليلة وتقديسه؟ لأن أول ما خلق الله عز وجل أرواحنا فأنطقنا بتوحيده و تحميده، ثم خلق الملائكة، فلما شاهدوا أرواحنا نوراً واحداً استعظموا أمرنا، فسبحنا لتعلم الملائكة أنا خلق مخلوقون و أنه سبحانه و تعالى—مُنَزَّرَةٌ عن صفاتنا، فسبخت الملائكة بتسيبنا ونزّهته عن صفاتنا، فلما شاهدوا عظم شأننا هللنا لتعلم الملائكة أن لا اله الا الله و أنا عبيد و لسنا بالهة—لأن الملائكة ظنوا أنهم آلهة—يجب أن نعبد معه أو دونه، فقالوا: لا اله الا الله؛ فلما شاهدوا كبر محلنا كبرنا لتعلم الملائكة أن الله أكبر من أن ينال عظم المحل الا به، فلما شاهدوا ما جعله لنا من العز و القوة قلنا: لا حول و لا قوة الا بالله لتعلم الملائكة أن لا حول لنا و لا قوة الا بالله؛ فلما شاهدوا ما أنعم الله به علينا و أوجبه لنا من فرض الطاعة قلنا: الحمد لله لتعلم الملائكة ما يحق لله تعالى ذكره علينا من الحمد على نعمه، فقالت الملائكة: الحمد لله؛ فبنا اهدوا الى معرفة توحيد الله و تسيبحة و تهليله و تحميده و تمجيده، ثم ان الله تبارك و تعالى خلق آدم فأودعنا صلبه، فكيف لا نكون أفضل من *O Ali! Had it not been for us, Allāh would not have created Adam or Eve or Paradise or Hell or the heavens or the earth; so, how can we not be better than the angels since we were ahead of them in knowing our God, praising, unifying and glorifying Him? This is so because the first that Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, created were our souls, so He let us pronounce His Unity and praise Him. Then He created the angels. When they saw our souls as a single noor, they regarded our matter great; therefore, we glorified Him so the angels would come to know that we are created beings and that He—Glory and Exaltation belong to Him—is above our characteristics; therefore, the angels praised Him as we did and held Him above our characteristics. When they saw how great our matter is, we unified Him so the angels would come to know that there is no god save Allāh and we are servants and not gods—because the angels thought they [our souls] were gods—and that we must worship with Him or with less, so they said, "There is no god save Allāh." When they saw how great our status was, we magnified Him so the angels would come to know that Allāh is greater than any status being achieved except through Him. When they saw the prestige and power which He allotted for*

us, we said, "There is neither power nor might save in Allāh," so the angels would come to know that we have neither power nor might save through Allāh. When they saw the blessings which Allāh bestowed on us, obligating others to obey us, we said, "Praise belongs to Allāh," so the angels would come to know the praise we have to mention for His blessings, so the angels said, "Praise belongs to Allāh." It was, therefore, through us that they were guided to knowing that Allāh is One, that He is Praised, Unified, Glorified and Magnified. Then Allāh, the most Blessed and Exalted One, created Adam, so He deposited us in his loins; therefore, how can we not be better than the angels since they all prostrated to Adam? This text shows you the transfigurations for Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ in the world of praising, unifying and magnifying Him.

When the narrative says, "They deemed our matter great," this is one level, and here the level of praising is manifested for Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ. When the narrative says, "They saw how great our affair is," this is another manifestation, "so we unified Him". When the narrative says, "When they saw how great our status is," this is the manifestation of another level, "we magnified Him." When they saw our prestige and power, we said, "There is neither power nor might save in Allāh," this is another level, and so on: the unifying, praising, glorifying, up to one transfiguration: "When Allāh, the most Blessed and Exalted One, created Adam, He deposited us in his loins and ordered the angels to prostrate to him in order to grant us greatness and honor." The prostration was to magnify those *noors* which shone in Adam. "And He ordered the angels to prostrate to him in order to magnify and honor us, and their prostration was to Allāh, the most Exalted One and the most Great, adoration, while for Adam it was honoring and obedience due to our being in his loins. So, how can we not be better than the angels since they prostrated to Adam all of them?" The narrative is lengthy and it has many details, but I will satisfy myself with the amount I excerpted from this sacred narrative which discusses the level of the angels frequently going to visit Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ. They went to them, so they learned how to praise, hold the almighty above His creation, glorify, praise and magnify Him, which the narrative contains. Why do angels go frequently to Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ? They go to Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ as a way

of expressing their obedient submission, and they go to them in obedience of their commands. The angels are the ones who are responsible for organizing this cosmos, who oversee its organization about which the angels descend for every affair during Laylatl-Qadr. There is supervision, control, a Divine power manifesting itself in Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام and the angels who serve them in that. The narratives are numerous in this regard, and our discussion may get lengthier and lengthier, but I, despite that, snap some of these narratives for you:

One narrative is mentioned by mentor al-Saduq in *'Ilal al-Sharayi'* علل الشرائع. This is volume One of *'Ilal al-Sharayi'*, and the narrative is from Muhammed ibn Abu Omayr رحمته الله, one of the most highly respected companions of our Imāms al-Sadiq عليه السلام and al-Kadhim عليه السلام. عن محمد بن أبي عمير عن عمر بن جميع عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: كان جبريل إذا أتى النبي صلى الله عليه وآله قعد بين يديه قعدة العبد، و كان لا يدخل حتى يستأذنه Muhammed ibn Abu Omayr is quoted by Omar ibn Jamee` who quotes Abu Abdullah, peace with him, as saying, "Whenever Gabriel went to the Prophet, Allāh's peace and blessings with him and with his Progeny, he would sit before him as a slave would, and he never entered without his permission." We have shortly before come across a narrative in Nahjul-Balagha, in a hadith in Nahjul-Balagha, that ان الله سبحانه و تعالى جعل أعظم ملك من ملائكته خادماً لسيد المرسلين "Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, let His greatest angel serve the Master of Messengers." The narrative here discusses the way which Gabriel used to deal with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله: كان جبريل إذا أتى النبي صلى الله عليه وآله قعد بين يديه قعدة العبد "Whenever Gabriel went to the Prophet, peace and blessings of the Almighty with him and with his Progeny, he would sit before him as a slave would." As we said shortly ago, the angels go quite often to Ahlul-Bayt as their form of obedience and submission. They obey them because they learned how to praise, unify and glorify the Almighty from them. They learned how to worship from Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, so they go to Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام frequently in every level of this existence in order to benefit from them and, at the same time, to express their submission to them just as they prostrated to Adam. Prostrating to Adam was due to the *noors* which were in Adam. There is adoration and there is submission. This adoration and submission is a reality. Adoration

and submission are due to Allāh, Praised and Exalted is He. The worship and adoration specifically belong to Allāh, Praised and Exalted is He, but there is a manifestation for this worship and submission as Allāh, Praised and exalted is He, ordered the angels to prostrate to Adam. Prostrating to Adam was one manifestation of worshipping Allāh, and this worship is also worship for Allāh. They prostrated to Adam in obedience to Allāh, and obedience is adoration. The angels prostrated to Adam in submission and due to their commitment to abide by Allāh's commands as well as surrender and adherence to Allāh's commands; this is how to worship Allāh. But this submission has manifestations. What are these manifestations? One manifestation is to prostrate to Adam. Submitting to Adam, prostrating to Adam, was a manifestation of worshipping the Almighty, one of obedience and surrender to His command; therefore, we have in the narratives that the Prophet ﷺ during the ascension to heavens used sometimes to tell Gabriel to advance, but Gabriel would say, "I am not supposed to go ahead of you; we, angels, do not go ahead of humans since we prostrated to Adam." There is a very deep hint here. "I do not go ahead of you because we, angels, do not go ahead of humans since we prostrated to Adam." This frequent visiting carries the meaning of surrender, of service, and these in reality are norms of worship of Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him.

One narrative is mentioned by mentor al-Kulayni رحمته الله in the sacred *Al-Kafi*, and this is its Volume One. Chapter One of it says that the angels enter their [Ahlul-Bayt's] homes, tread on their rugs and bring them reports. This is the fourth narrative: عن علي بن أبي حمزة عن أبي الحسن—يعني عن امامنا الكاظم صلوات الله و سلامه عليه—قال: ما من ملك يهبطه الله في أمرٍ ما يهبطه الا بدأ بالامام فعرض ذلك عليه، و ان مُخْتَلَف الملائكة من عند الله. تبارك و تعالی الى صاحب هذا الأمر. Ali ibn Abu Hamzah quotes Abul-Hassan—meaning our Imām al-Kadhīm, peace and blessings of Allāh with him—as saying, "There is no angel whom Allāh sends down on an errand without starting with the Imām عليه السلام to whom he submits it. Angels are sent from Allāh, the most Blessed, the most Exalted One, are (now) frequently visiting Sahibul-Amr, the One in Command," meaning the Infallible Imām عليه السلام, the Imām of our Time, the Hujja son of al-Hassan, Allāh's peace and blessings with

him. This is a very important narrative from Imām al-Kadhīm عليه السلام. What does he say? He says that every angel whom Allāh sends down on an errand starts with the Imām to whom he presents it, and the angels keep coming from Allāh, the most Blessed and exalted One, to the man in charge of this matter. In some other texts, the narrative is clear: "ما من مَلَكٍ يخطو قدماً عن قدمِ الأمامِ المعصومِ" "No angel makes one step without the order of the Infallible Imām." In every step, in every movement, in every matter, there must be a referral to the one in charge of this matter. A short while ago, we answered the question of "Who is the greatest angel?"

He is the Spirit dispatched by my Lord on every errand. We have already noticed in the supplication of the *Sahifa Sajjadiyya* as we read the *Salawat* of Imām al-Sajjad عليه السلام after mentioning the names of Israfil, Michael and Gabriel, how he mentioned the Spirit who is in charge of the veil angels. He said, "... and the Spirit that acts according to Your command." This is the same Spirit mentioned in the sacred Surat al-Qadr: "تنزّل الملائكة والروح فيها بإذن ربهم من كل أمرٍ" "In it do the angels and the Spirit descend, by Allāh's permission, on every errand" (Qur'ān, 97:4). To whom do they descend? They descend to the Infallible Imām, Allāh's peace and blessings with him. This Spirit, who acts according to the permission of the Almighty, is the one who has the absolute organizational authority over even the veil world. This is the one that descends on the Infallible Imām. As regarding how the descent takes place, we are not concerned about it because we cannot envision or imagine it. This matter is beyond the limits of our comprehension. The narratives talk to us through hints from a distance via euphemism or similes that bring the meanings closer to our comprehension. Narratives tell us, in a hint method, from a distance, through euphemism, through similes that may bring the meanings closer to us. If we go with them from another aspect, the meanings would be further from us. The examples get things closer to us while distancing others. The statements of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام are many in conveying these meanings and contexts.

I think we now have an overall picture of the types of angels and their levels, something about their missions and the relationship

between the angels and the Prophet ﷺ and his Progeny ﷺ though briefly; therefore, when we read in the ziyara the following: *Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the message, the ones who are frequently visited by the angels*, what is sought is actually deeper than these meanings to which I pointed out. There are other things which I will discuss and which explain the relationship between the angels and the Household of Infallibility ﷺ. There are meanings which the narratives have mentioned and which discuss the relationship of the angels in the upper world and the relationship of the angels in our earthly world. For example, there is a detailed narrative mentioned by mentor al-Saduq in the beginning of Volume Two of *Ilal al-Saharyi*. The narrative, in fact, needs to be explained, but I really find no time to explain it. I am going to cite the narrative only and point out only to the ambiguous meanings in it: *عن الصباح المزني أو المزني و سدير الصيرفي و محمد بن النعمان الأحول—و هذا الذي يسمى بمؤمن الطاق—عن الصباح المزني و سدير الصيرفي و محمد بن النعمان الأحول و عمر بن أذينة—هؤلاء كلهم يروون عن امامنا الصادق عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام—أنهم حضروه فقال: يا عمر بن أذينة، ان الله العزيز الجبار عرج بنبيه، صلى الله عليه و آله، الى سماته سبعاً؛ أما أولهن فبارك عليه و الثانية علمه فيها فرضه، فأنزل الله العزيز الجبار عليه محملاً من نور فيه أربعون ذراعاً من أنواع النور كانت محدقة حول عرشه تبارك و تعالى تُغشي أبصار الناظرين. أما واحد منها فأصفر، فمن أجل ذلك اصفرت الصفرة، و واحدٌ منها أحمر فمن أجل ذلك احمرت الحمرة، و واحد منها أبيض فمن أجل ذلك ابيضَّ البياض، و الباقي على عدد سائر ما خُلِق من الأنوار و الألوان. It is reported from al-Sabah al-Mazni or al-Mazani, Sadeer al-Sairafi (the money exchanger) and Muhammed ibn al-Nu`man al-Ahwal—who is called the Believer of the Arc—from al-Sabah al-Mazni. Sadeer al-Sairafi, Muhammed ibn al-Nu`man al-Ahwal and Omar ibn Uthaynah—all these men report hadith from our Imām al-Sadiq from Abu Abdullah ﷺ who met him, so he said, “O Omar ibn Uthaynah! Allāh, the most Sublime, the most Mighty, raised His Prophet ﷺ to His heavens seven times. In the first time, He blessed him. In the second time, He taught him his obligations, whereupon Allāh, the most Sublime, the most Mighty, sent down for him a loader carrying *noor* the length of which was forty years containing types of *noor* which used to fix their looks round the Arsh of the most Blessed and Exalted One. They could blind visions. One of them was yellow, so*

there was yellowness, and one was red, so there was redness, and one was white, so there was whiteness. The rest were according to the rest of *noors* and colors. In that loader, there were rings and chains of silver on which he ﷺ sat."

A number of narrators, as indicated above, narrate from our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام as he discussed to Ibn Uthaynah about the claim by those who oppose our views with regard to the issue of the legislating of the *athan*, the call to prayer. We do not wish to stop at this point but deal with what the Imām عليه السلام said. What did he say?

He عليه السلام said that the Almighty let His Prophet ﷺ ascend to His heavens seven times. Of course, when such a narrative comes and discusses the ascension having taken place seven times, this is one type of ascension; otherwise, we have narratives that say that there were as many as one hundred and twenty incidents of ascension, and we have narratives that say that he ascended each evening preceding Friday. These meanings are with us. These are levels of ascension. He blessed him in the first ascension; in the second He taught him his religious obligations, and the Imām عليه السلام did not mention the rest of the ascensions. Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, let a loader descend for His Prophet ﷺ containing forty types of *noor*, celestial light, which were fixed at Allāh's Arsh. He let them descend to the earth in this loader in which the Seal of Prophets ﷺ was carried. One of them carried the color yellow, another carried the color red, another carried the color white, and the rest carried the rest of *noors* and colors which the Almighty created. In that loader, there were rings and chains of silver on which he ﷺ sat. The redness symbolizes the natural worlds. The whiteness symbolizes the sublime worlds. The yellowness symbolizes the supreme worlds which fall between the very high worlds and the low ones because the characteristic of the white color is that it differentiates vision, the worlds of puzzlement. We have already come across in the narratives that at the lote-tree beyond which none passes vision is puzzled. Why was it called *سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى* the lote-tree beyond which none may pass?

It was called so because vision there is puzzled, amazed, so it suffers dispersion. The supreme worlds are the highest of the high worlds beyond the Arsh, beyond the veil worlds, and they are the white worlds in which the mind suffers dispersion and the *noors* of both vision and mind disperse. This is euphemism and symbolism. As for the worlds that are those of nature, they are the worlds of heat which the red color symbolizes. It is the color of puzzlement, of energy, of heat, of thermal energy. This signals this world, the world of nature. The most distinctive in the world of nature is the animal life. We have a narrative from our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام in which al-Mufadhhal asks him about the fires, the types of fires. Our Imām عليه السلام says, النيران أربعة: نارٌ تأكل و تشرب، و نارٌ تأكل و لا تشرب، و نارٌ تشرب و لا تأكل، و نارٌ التي تشرب و لا تأكل و لا تشرب “Fires are of four types: a fire that eats and drinks, one that eats but does not drink, one that drinks but does not eat and a fire that neither eats nor drinks.” I point out here to the diversity of the discussion, of the speech, so there will be no boredom due to focusing on one subject or issue. The Imām عليه السلام explains after that saying that النار التي تأكل و لا تشرب هي نيران المواقد التي تأكل الحطب، و النار التي تشرب و لا تأكل هي نار القداحة و الحباب “The fire that eats but does not drink is that of fireplaces which consumes firewood; the fire that drinks but does not eat is that of trees, and the fire that neither eats nor drinks is the fire of the lighter and of fireflies (lighting bugs).” The lighter is the one made of stones, the one used to make a fire; this fire neither eats nor drinks. The fire of the حباب refers to a type of flies (bugs) that fly in the air at night, emitting phosphoric sparks during their flights. These are called by the Arabs *habahib*, after a man named Habahib who was very miser, so miser that during the night, when he wanted to light a fire, he would make a very small light so guests would not be able to see it so they would go to his house in the hope he would host them. This name was applied to the small fires, such as the one made by these flying insects that emit phosphoric lights during the night as if they are fire sparks which the Arabs call the mother of *habahib* or the father of *habahib*. It is also applied to the spark from horses’ hooves that hit stones; this, too, is called *habahib*. Anyhow, I do not wish to get out of this subject. The narrative here points out to the fire, the energy, instilled in mankind. I said that the red color is the color of heat, of the fire, because the

fire in its original conditions is red. Yes, if it is purified, its color would turn blue. Perhaps blackness may mix the color of the fire when it gets away from its purity and clarity due to the pollution in it which changes its color to black. It becomes red if its clarity increases, and when such clarity intensifies, the color turns blue. If the clarity intensifies even more, it turns green. If its clarity increases, its color disappears. In some narratives, therefore, which discuss some areas of hell, it is said that these areas are colorless. Hell is of different layers and levels. Some levels of the fire of hell are colorless. Such fire can also be in this world. Worldly fire, when it is extremely pure, becomes colorless. You may ask me: How so?

I say to you: We can see the air ionized if, for e.g., we perform an experiment or an air ionization process. The air is ionized in the laboratory. Air ionization is like the white fire that has no color. Perhaps I will bring an example that brings the meaning closer. For example, when we look at high voltage lines, which usually are outside the cities, during hot days, you see something like the mirage around these exposed wires, the high voltage wires. This happens there because of the high voltage of the electrical energy: an air ionization process. You, therefore, notice a sort of a ball, a metal ball placed between these wires in order to disperse this ionization, a dispersal of the ions. Anyhow, this is not our subject. My objective is that the fire can reach the degree of losing its color as some narratives describe some levels of hell. But the original color of fire in the natural world is red in its various shades. The fire may also be colored at one of its degrees yellow in the beginning, it becomes red then blue then green. It may become yellow after being green, and after the yellow, it is likely to turn to a color as if it is colorless like water, for e.g. Anyhow, the red color points to the color of the natural world. As for the yellow color, it signifies the worlds that are between the red color, i.e. it is as if the yellow color came as a mixture of redness and whiteness, as if the yellow color came as a mixture, which means it is the Barzakh world (the Purgatory). Of course there are other indications of these colors, and I here do not want to stop at all these details in this narrative, but I said that I will try to explain some ambiguous meanings. “Then he ascended to the lower heavens”: It means he exited the earthly world. The Prophet ﷺ ascended in this celestial ladder to the lower heavens, whereupon

the angels were startled, fleeing to the edges of the heavens. The angels were startled when the celestial ladder reached the lower heavens. Why?

They did so because they saw a *noor* that made them become startled. What is meant here is that they ran, as we noticed from describing the angels that swing right and left due to puzzlement as the Commander of the Faithful described them.

فنفرت الملائكة الى أطراف السماء ثم خرَّت سَجْدًا فقالت: سُبُوْحُ قُدُّوس، ربنا و رب الملائكة و الروح؛ ما أشبه هذا النور بنور ربنا! جبرئيل قال: الله أكبر، الله أكبر! فاجتمعت الملائكة ثم جاءت فسَلَّمَت على النبي صلى الله عليه و آله أفواجاً، ثم قالت: يا محمد، كيف أخوك؟ قال: بخير؛ قالت: فإن أدركته فأقرأه منا السلام—أشهد أن علياً ولي الله—فقال النبي صلى الله عليه و آله: أتعرفونه؟ فقالوا: كيف لا نعرفه و قد أخذ الله عز و جل ميثاقك و ميثاقه و ميثاق شيعته الى يوم القيامة علينا، و انا لنتصفح وجوه شيعته في كل يوم خمسا—يعنون في كل وقت صلاة—، و انا لنصلي عليك و عليه؟ ثم زاده أربعين نوعاً من أنواع النور، لا يشبه شيء منه ذلك النور الأول، و زاده في محمله حلقاً و سلاسل، ثم عرج به الى السماء الثانية، فلما قَرَّب من باب السماء تنافرت الملائكة— لشدة النور—الى أطراف السماء و خرَّت سَجْدًا—ما استطاعوا ما تحملوا هذا النور الساطع فتنافروا مبتعدين عنه و خرُّوا سَجْدًا—و قالت: سُبُوْحُ قُدُّوس، ربِّ الملائكة و الروح! ما أشبه هذا النور بنور ربنا!—هؤلاء ملائكة السماء الأولى—فقال جبرئيل عليه السلام: أشهد أن لا اله الا الله، أشهد أن لا اله الا الله؛ فاجتمعت الملائكة و فُتحت أبواب السماء و قالت: يا جبرئيل، من هذا الذي معك؟ فقال: هذا مُحَمَّدٌ؛ قالوا: و قد بُعث؟ قال: نعم؛ قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله: فخرجوا الى شبه المعانيق—المعانيق الخيول الجميلة التي تكون أعناقها طويلة—فسلموا عليَّ و قالوا: اقرأ أخاك السلام— ذكرُ علي عند أشهد أن لا اله الا الله، عند التكبير ذُكِرَ عليٌّ و عند الشهادة الأولى: أشهد أن لا اله الا الله، ذُكِرَ علي؛ و قالت الملائكة: مرحباً بالأول و مرحباً بالآخر و مرحباً بالحاضر و مرحباً بالناشر، محمد خاتم النبيين و علي خير الوصيين. فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و آله: سَلِّمُوا عليَّ و سألتوني عن علي أخي، فقال: هو في الأرض خليفتي؛ أو تعرفونه؟ قالوا: نعم، و كيف لا نعرفه و قد نحج البيت المعمور في كل سنة مرة—البيت المعمور هو بيت الله في السماء الرابعة، و ما الكعبة المسجد الحرام الا صورة للبيت المعمور في العالم الأرضي، كما قلت مراراً و تكراراً بأنه هناك وجود لهذه الكائنات، لهذه الموجودات، في كل طبقة من طبقات هذا العالم—و عليه رق أبيض فيه اسم محمد—رق يعني كتاب—فيه اسم محمد و علي و الحسن و الحسين و الأئمة و شيعتهم الى يوم القيامة، و انا لنبارك على رؤوسهم بأيدينا؛ ثم زادني ربي تعالى أربعين نوعاً من أنواع النور لا تشبه شيئا من تلك الأنوار الأول، و زادني حلقاً و سلاسل— تجليات النور و الجمال في نبينا صلى الله عليه و آله—ثم عرج بي الى السماء الرابعة فلم تقل الملائكة شيئا، و سمعت دويماً كأنه في الصدور، و اجتمعت الملائكة ففتحت أبواب السماء و خرجت اليَّ معانيق، فقال جبرئيل عليه السلام: حيَّ على الصلاة، حيَّ على

الصلاة، حيَّ علي الفلاح، حيَّ علي الفلاح! فقالت الملائكة: صوتين مقرنين: بمحمد تقوم الصلاة وبعليَّ الفلاح—و ذكر علي هنا أيضاً.

الفلاح علي و الصلاة علي؛ أنا صلاة المؤمنين؛ هكذا قال سيد الأوصياء—فقالت الملائكة: صوتين مقرنين: بمحمد تقوم الصلاة—مقرنين معاً، ذكُر محمد مع ذكر علي يُقرن دائماً: إذا قلتم: لا اله الا الله، محمد رسول الله، فقولوا: علي وليُّ الله—فقال جبرائيل: قد قامت الصلاة، قد قامت الصلاة؛ فقالت الملائكة: هي لشيعته.

The angels were startled, so they went to the edges of the heavens, then they prostrated and said, "Praised and Glorified is He; our Lord, the Lord of the angels and of the Spirit; how this noor looks so similar to that of our Lord! Gabriel said, "Allāho Akbar, Allāho Akbar!," whereupon the angels assembled then greeted the Prophet ﷺ in hordes then said, "O Muhammed, how is your brother?" He said, "Very well." They said, "When you see him, convey our Salam to him" —I testify that Ali is a wali of Allāh—The Prophet ﷺ asked them, "Do you know him?" They said, "How can we not know him since Allāh, the most Sublime, the most Great, took a covenant [from us] regarding you and him and also regarding his followers up to the Judgment Day, and we look at the faces of his followers every day five times—they mean every prayer time—And we bless you and bless him? Then Allāh increased him forty types of noor none of which is similar to the first noor and increased in his loader rings and chains, then He ascended him to the second heavens. When he came close to the heavens' gate, the angels were startled—due to the intensity of the noor—and went to the edges of the heavens, prostrating—being unable to bear that shiny noor, so they were startled and ran away from it then prostrated—and the angels said, "Praised and Glorified is the Lord of the angels and of the Spirit! How similar this noor to the noor of our Lord!—these are angels of the first heavens—whereupon Gabriel, peace with him, said, "I testify that there is no god save Allāh; I testify that there is no god save Allāh," whereupon the angels assembled and the gates of the heavens were opened. The angels said, "O Gabriel! Who is this person in your company?" He said, "This is Muhammed." They said, "Has he been sent [as a Messenger Prophet]?" "Yes," said he. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "They came out to me looking like the ma'aneeq—the ma'aneeq are beautiful steed whose necks

are long—, so they greeted me and said, ‘Convey our Salam to your brother—mentioning the name of Ali when one testifies that there is no god save Allāh, when saying, ‘Allāhu Akbar!’ and when making the first testimony of: I testify that there is no god save Allāh. Ali’s name is mentioned. The angels said, ‘Welcome the first, the last, the gatherer, the one who will resurrect, Muhammed the Seal of Prophets and Ali, the best of wasis.’” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, thereupon, said, “They greeted me and inquired about Ali, my brother, and I said, ‘He is on earth as my successor. Do you know him?’” They said, “Yes, how can we not know him since we may perform the pilgrimage to the ever-Populated House once a year—the ever-Populated House is Allāh’s [symbolic] House in the fourth heavens; the Ka`ba and the Haram Mosque are only images of the ever-Populated House in the earth world, as I said repeatedly that there is a presence for these beings, for these existents, in every layer of this world—and there is a white writing containing Muhammed’s name and the names of Ali, al-Hassan, al-Hussain, the Imāms and their followers (Shi`as) up to the Judgment Day. We bless them, rubbing on their heads with our hands.’ Then my Almighty Lord granted me an increase of forty types of noor none of which is similar to the first noors, and He increased the rings and the chains—these are transfigurations of noor and beauty in our Prophet ﷺ—then I was taken up to the fourth heavens where the angels did not say anything. I heard a noise as if it was coming from the chests, and the angels assembled, so the heavens’ gates were opened and the angels came out to me looking like the ma`aneeq. Gabriel, peace with him, thereupon said, ‘Hayya `la al-salat!’ (Come to perform the prayers), Hayya `ala al-salat! Hayya `ala al-falah (Come to what brings you salvation), Hayya `ala al-falah!’ The angels then said, ‘Two conjoint voices [calls]: Through Muhammed can the prayer be performed, and through Ali can salvation be achieved’”—and Ali is mentioned here, too.

Salvation (falah) is Ali, and the salat (prayer) is Ali: “I am the prayer of the faithful,” thus did the master of wasis ﷺ say—so the angels said, “Two conjoint voices [calls]: Through Muhammed ﷺ can the prayer be performed—these calls are connected to each other: the name of Muhammed is always mentioned with that of Ali.

If you say, "There is no god save Allāh, Muhammed is the Messenger of Allāh," you should also say, "Ali is the wali of Allāh"—so Gabriel said, "It is prayer time, it is prayer time," so the angels said, "It [the call to prayer] is for his followers (Shi`as)."

The text above shows you how the angels prostrated when the *noor* of Muhammed dazzled them, so they glorified the Almighty and said that that *noor* looked so much similar to that of the Almighty. Such was Muhammed's *noor* borne in that celestial loader which manifested itself to the angels. This is the same discussion which we indicated a short while ago in the narrative that discussed their [Infallible Imāms عليه السلام] being the ones who taught the angels how to glorify and unify the Almighty. They taught them how to glorify and how to unify Him, so the angels prostrated because they thought that that *noor* was so great. This is one of the levels, the level of celestial ascension in the case of the ascension of the Prophet ﷺ. Then the angels prostrated just as they had done to Adam; they prostrated to the *noor*; they prostrated again, and this time they did so to this *noor*, glorified and unified their Lord and the Lord of the Spirit. It was then that Gabriel, peace with him, said "Allāhu Akbar!" twice, whereupon the angels remained silent and the gates of the heavens were opened. Such was the prayer legislated. Notice this narrative carefully. Notice how the name of Ali عليه السلام is mentioned in the *athan*, the call to prayer. Notice this narrative, although it is an issue outside our research, yet for the sake of benefit, pay attention to this narrative. Notice how the name of Ali عليه السلام is mentioned in the narrative that tells us how the *athan* was legislated. Gabriel magnified Allāh, so the angels remained silent and the gates of the heavens were opened and the angels assembled after they were startled. Why were they startled?

They were startled on account of the intensity of their puzzlement due to the greatness of this manifesting *noor*. The angels assembled, went and greeted the Prophet ﷺ to whom they frequently go in the life of this world and in the Hereafter, on earth and in the heavens, in the lower worlds and in the upper ones.

السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة، و موضع الرسالة، و مُخْتَلَف الملائكة—ثم جاءت Peace فسَلِّمْت على النبي صلى الله عليه و آله أفواجاً، ثم قالت: يا محمد، كيف أخوك؟ *with you, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message and the ones whom the angels frequently visit—then they went and greeted the Prophet ﷺ in hordes and said, “O Muhammed! How is your brother?”* We now reach the place about legislating the *takbeer*: Gabriel pronounced the *takbeer*, and here the *takbeer* was legislated in the *athan*. They asked him about Ali, for Ali is present in each chapter of the *athan* and of existence. The angels asked the Prophet ﷺ about his brother, requesting him to convey their Salam to him upon seeing him. I testify that Ali is the *wali* of Allāh. The Prophet ﷺ asked them if they knew Ali, so they said, “How can we not know him since Allāh, the most Sublime, the most Great, took a covenant [from us] regarding you and him and also regarding his followers up to the Judgment Day, and we look at the faces of his followers every day five times—they mean every prayer time—And we bless you and bless him?” Then Allāh increased him forty types of *noor*, that is, increasing the loader of the Prophet so he would ascend to the second heavens. This points out to an increase in the beauty because when the rings and chains are in the loader, they increase its beauty and goodness. Then he was taken to the second heavens. When he was close to the heavens’ gate, the angels felt startled due to the intensity of the *noor*, ran to the edges of the second heavens and prostrated. They could not withstand this shiny *noor*, so they ran away from it and prostrated. They glorified the Almighty, the Lord of the angels and of the Spirit, expressing their amazement at the similarity of that *noor* to that of their Lord. These are angels of the second heavens whose level is higher than the angels of the first heavens. They pronounced the *shahada* then assembled, whereupon the gates of the heavens were opened. The angels asked Gabriel about the individual, the human, who was with him, and when he told them that he was Muhammed ﷺ, they asked him if he was already sent as the Messenger Prophet of Allāh. He answered in the affirmative. The Prophet ﷺ described the beauty of those angels, making a comparison between them and the beautiful steed with long necks. They greeted the Prophet ﷺ and asked him to convey their Salam to his brother, Ali, whereupon he asked them if they knew him. They said, *نعم، و كيف لا نعرفه و قد أخذ الله ميثاقك و ميثاقه و*

“Yes; how can we not know him since Allāh took against us your covenant, his and that of his followers up to the Judgment Day?” Notice the extent of knowledge and the depth of the speech of the angels in the lower heavens. Those who were in the lower heavens asked him about his brother, inquiring about reports in his regard.

All these are evidences and signs, and these are approximate issues. In other words, what took place was not (exactly) in such an image and norm. These are approximate meanings that tell us what went on there, in the second heavens, where they did not directly ask the Prophet ﷺ, “How was your brother?” but asked him directly to convey their Salam to him. And the covenant also includes his followers (Shi`as) which was added to that of the Prophet ﷺ and of that of the Master of Wasis عليه السلام. They said, “How can we not know him since Allāh, the most sublime, the most Great, took a covenant [from us] regarding you and him and also regarding his followers up to the Judgment Day, and we look at the faces of his followers every day five times—they mean every prayer time—And we bless you and bless him?” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, thereupon, said, “Then Allāh increased me forty types of *noor* none of which is similar to the first *noor* and increased in the loader rings and chains,” then He ascended him to the second heavens. When he came close to the heavens’ gates, the angels were startled—due to the intensity of the *noor*—and went to the edges of the heavens, prostrating—being unable to bear that shiny *noor*, so they were startled and ran away from it then prostrated—and the angels said, “Praised and Glorified is the Lord of the angels and of the Spirit! What is this *noor* which looks so similarly to the *noor* of our Lord?!—whereupon Gabriel, peace with him, said, “I testify that Muhammed is the Messenger of Allāh; I testify that Muhammed is the Messenger of Allāh,” whereupon the angels assembled and the gates of the heavens were opened. The angels said, ‘Welcome the first, the last, the gatherer, the one who will resurrect, Muhammed the Seal of Prophets and Ali, the best of wasis.’” The name of Ali عليه السلام here is quite clearly following the pronouncement of the second *shahada*: ‘Welcome the first, the last, the gatherer, the one who will resurrect, Muhammed the Seal of Prophets and Ali, the best of wasis.’ The Messenger of

Allāh ﷻ said, “They greeted me and asked me about Ali, my brother, and I told them that he is on earth as my successor; do you know him?” They said, “Yes, how can we not know him since we may perform the pilgrimage to the ever-Populated House once a year—the ever-Populated House is Allāh’s [symbolic] House in the fourth heavens; the Ka`ba and the Haram Mosque are only images of the ever-Populated House in the earth world, as I said repeatedly that there is a presence for these beings, for these existents, in every layer of this world—and we may perform the pilgrimage to the ever-Populated House once a year, and there is a white writing containing Muhammed’s name and the names of Ali, al-Hassan, al-Hussain, the Imāms and their followers (Shi`as) up to the Judgment Day. We bless them, rubbing on their heads with our hands.’ Then my Almighty Lord granted me an increase of forty types of *noor* none of which is similar to the first, and He increased the rings and the chains—these are transfigurations of *noor* and beauty in our Prophet ﷺ—then I was taken up to the fourth heavens where the angels did not say anything. I heard a noise as if it was coming from the chests, and the angels assembled, so the heavens’ gates were opened and the angels came out to me looking like the *ma`aneeq*. Gabriel, peace with him, thereupon said, ‘Hayya `la al-salat!’ (Come to perform the prayers), ‘Hayya `ala al-salat! Hayya `ala al-falah!’ (Come to what brings you salvation), ‘Hayya `ala al-falah!’ The angels then said, ‘Two conjoint voices [calls]: Through Muhammed can the prayer be performed, and through Ali can salvation be achieved’”—and Ali is mentioned here, too.

Salvation (*falah*) is Ali, and the *salat* (prayer) is Ali: “I am the prayer of the faithful,” thus did the master of *wasis* say—so the angels said, “Two conjoint voices [calls]: Through Muhammed can the prayer be performed—these calls are connected to each other: the name of Muhammed is always mentioned with that of Ali. If you say, “There is no god save Allāh, Muhammed is the Messenger of Allāh,” you should also say, “Ali is the *wali* of Allāh—so Gabriel said, “It is prayer time, it is prayer time;” therefore, the angels said, “It [the call to prayer] is for his followers (Shi`as).” You notice how the narrative does not point out to “Hayya `ala khairil-`amal”. This points out to “I testify that Ali is the *wali* of Allāh” exists in

legislating the *athan*, just as the Imām عليه السلام did not pronounce “Hayya `ala khairil-`amal” due to acting upon the *taqiyya*, he did not pronounce “I testify that Ali is the *wali* of Allāh”. The hint is clear in this narrative which is one of the greatest of the Imāms عليه السلام. “Hayya `alas-salat! Hayya `alal falah” where “Hayya `ala khairil-`amal” is not mentioned while it is an obligatory part. Here, the Imām عليه السلام wants to point out to the third [part of] the *shahada* also being part of the *athan*. This is clear for anyone who wants to discern such a narrative which is one of scores of narratives. I do not wish to go on for too long discussing this matter. Gabriel said, “It is prayer time, it is prayer time,” so the angels said, “It [the call to prayer] is for his followers (Shi`as) which they have established till the Judgment Day.” Then the angels assembled and said to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, “Where did you leave your brother? How is he?” Ali’s name is mentioned everywhere. He صلى الله عليه وسلم asked them, “Do you know him?” They said, “Yes. We know him and we know his Shi`as, and he is *noor* round the `Arsh of Allāh, and there is a tablet of *noor* in the ever-Populated House in which the names of Muhammed and of Ali are mentioned.” It is a tablet in which there is a writing of *noor* containing the names of Muhammed, Ali, al-Hassan, al-Hussain, the Imāms and their Shi`as; no other man’s name is added to it nor removed from it. “It is our covenant which was taken from us, and it is read to us every Friday.” I, thereupon, prostrated to thank Allāh.” He (Allāh) addressed His Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying, “Raise your head.” “I,” the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم went on, “raised my head and saw the heavens’ tendons pierced and veils lifted. Then He (Allāh) said to me, ‘Look down. What do you see?’ I looked at your House and Haram—meaning the Haram Mosque—and saw it similar to that House—meaning the ever-Populated House facing it; if I dropped anything from my hand, it would fall only on it—narratives say that the Ka`ba is situated facing the ever-Populated House in the fourth heavens—if I drop something from my hand, it will fall only on it. He (Allāh) said to me, يا محمد هذا الحرم وأنت الحرم—أنت الوجود المقدس، الحرم، لكل مثل مثال ‘O Muhammed! This is the Haram and you are the Harām (Haraam),’ i.e. you are the holy existence, the holy Haram—for every likeness there is an example.” I, by the will of Allāh, will explain the meaning of this statement later.

“This is the Haram and you are the Harām (Haraam)” is a very deep statement, and this is the highest status for the Prophet ﷺ in his ascension; i.e. he is the Harām (Haraam), the self the status of which no other self can reach. The Haram is the place which nobody can reach. Fatima عليها السلام is the reality of Muhammed; she is the one from knowing whom the minds are weaned, while Muhammed ﷺ is the self from knowing whom the minds are deprived, [both are] one *noor*. A short while ago, the angels saw them as one noor, a reference to the status of simplicity in those worlds, the simplicity which suits that world. It does mean the plurality of precedents or of what is simple. No, not in this sense. Rather, it is according to what is pointed out by signs and symbols of statements of the Infallible Household, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all.

فقال لي: يا محمد هذا الحرم و أنت الحرام، لكل مثل مثال، ثم قال لي ربي تعالى: يا محمد مد يدك فيتلقاك ماءً يسيل من ساق العرش الأيمن—أي ماء هذا؟—فنزل الماء فتلقيته باليمين، فمن أجل ذلك صار أول الوضوء اليمنى، ثم قال: يا محمد خذ ذلك الماء فاغسل به وجهك فانك تريد أن تنظر الى عظمتي—هذه جملة من أسرار الوضوء—فانك تريد أن تنظر الى عظمتي و أنت طاهر، ثم اغسل ذراعيك اليمين و اليسار فانك تريد أن تتلقى بيدك كلامي، و امسح بفضل ما في يديك من الماء رأسك و رجليك الى كعبك، و قال: اني أريد أن امسح رأسك و أبارك عليك، فأما المسح على رجليك فاني أريد أن أوطئك موطناً لم يطأه أحد من قبلك و لا يطأه أحدٌ غيرك—فهذه علة الوضوء و الأذان؛ إذاً كل ما عندنا هو لمحمد: صلاتنا لمحمد، وضوئنا لمحمد، هذه رموز لأشياء كانت لمحمد صلى الله عليه و آله—ثم قال: يا محمد استقبل الحجر الأسود—.

"He (the Almighty) said to me, "O Muhammed! This is the Haram and you are the Harām (Haraam). For every likeness there is an example." Then my Almighty Lord said to me, "O Muhammed! Stretch your hand so you may get water flowing from the `Arsh's right leg—what water is this?—whereupon water flowed down, and I received it with my right hand. For this sake, the first ablution water is received by the right hand." Then He said, "O Muhammed! Take this water and wash your face with it, for you wish to look at My Greatness while you are pure, then wash your right and left arms, for you wish to receive My Speech with your right hand. With the remaining water in your hand, rub your head and feet up to your ankles." He also said, "I wish to rub your head and bless you, hence

the rubbing of your feet, for I wish to let you tread a place which nobody before you ever treaded nor anyone ever will—this is the mystery behind the ablution and *athan*; so, everything we have is for Muhammed ﷺ: Our prayer is for Muhammed ﷺ, our ablution is for Muhammed ﷺ... These are symbols for things which were for Muhammed ﷺ—then He said, "O Muhammed! Face the Black Stone."

The narrative is lengthy, and we have been discussing for a good while. The narrative remains lengthy and needs explanation and clarification. There are other pursuits which have to be explained if the rest of the narrative is read. By the will of Allāh, on some other occasion, I will complete the reading of the narrative, but from the general view of the narrative, the relationship between the angels (on the one hand) and Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ (on the other) becomes quite clear to us.

The concepts stated about the Prophet ﷺ are themselves fixed for his pure Progeny, all these concepts and realities about which we have discussed. The narrative is lengthy. This, in fact, is one of the most beautiful narratives, and it needs to be explained. A large portion of it remains, but a large portion of the time has lapsed, and there is more the discussion of which I should complete so we may reach a summary. This narrative, which I have stated, and which quotes the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, discusses an aspect of the angels' relationship with the Prophet ﷺ and his Progeny ﷺ. Whenever they saw him, they prostrated and said, "How similar this noor is to that of our Lord!" These are the angels in all their levels, and these are the angels who sit before him in the earthly world, so what would you say about the higher worlds when the reality of Muhammed ﷺ manifests itself there?!

In the earthly world, they (angels) sit before him as slaves do; therefore, there is a meaning for this. This meaning is the one to which the narrative in *Ilal al-Sharayi* **علل الشرائع** refers. It discusses the link to the angels, indicating how the angels quite often visit Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ in the world of his ascension. There is a heavenly ascension, and there is an earthly

one. Muhammed ﷺ is the one who has the statuses and the ascensions for which there is neither a limit nor an end. This narrative is in *Tafsir al-Burhan* تفسير البرهان and I read it to you during past episodes. I am going to repeat it because it is relevant to this research. This narrative is transmitted by Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani. This is Vol.8 of *Tafsir al-Burhan* which quotes mentor al-Tusi citing his *isnad* reporters quoting Abdullah ibn Ajlan al-Sukuni as saying, سمعت أبا جعفر يقول: بيت علي وفاطمة حجرة رسول الله وسقف بيتهم، عرش رب العالمين، وفي قعر بيوتهم فرجة مكشوفة إلى العرش، معراج الوحي والملائكة - الملائكة تعرج إليهم، النبي عرج إليهم وهم يعرجون إليه وهو في عالمه والملائكة - معراج الوحي والملائكة تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً "I heard Abu Ja'far عليه السلام as saying, "The house of Ali and Fatima ؑ is the chamber of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and the ceiling of their house is the Arsh of the Lord of the Worlds. At the bottom of their homes, there is a scraped opening to the Arsh—the ascension of the *wahi*—and the angels—the angels descend to them; the Prophet ascended to them and they descend to him in his earthly world—they descend to them with *wahi* morning and evening." The discussion here is not about mud houses; it is about the heart of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, about the heart of Ali and of Fatima ؑ, the realities of Muhammed, Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussain ؑ. The angels descend to them. The Prophet ascended to them and they descend to him in his earthly world. معراج الوحي والملائكة تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً The descending of the *wahi* (inspiration), and the angels descend to them with the *wahi* morning and evening. This is not a reference to the *wahi* of Prophethood. The *wahi* of Prophethood is one level. Did the *wahi* descend to the Imāms ؑ? Yes, but it is not the *wahi* of Prophethood. By the will of Allāh, we will read in the next episode about "the landing place of *wahi*" السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ، وَمَوْضِعَ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطَ الْوَحْيِ "Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones who are frequently visited by the angels, the landing place of the *wahi*." They are the landing place of the *wahi*, but the *wahi* has levels. When we reach this part in the next episode, we will explain the meaning of *wahi* here. تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً وكل ساعة وطرفة عين They (angels) descend to them with *wahi* morning and evening, every hour and every eye blink. In other words, the descending is to them; it means they are the supreme *qibla*, so the angels, all angels,

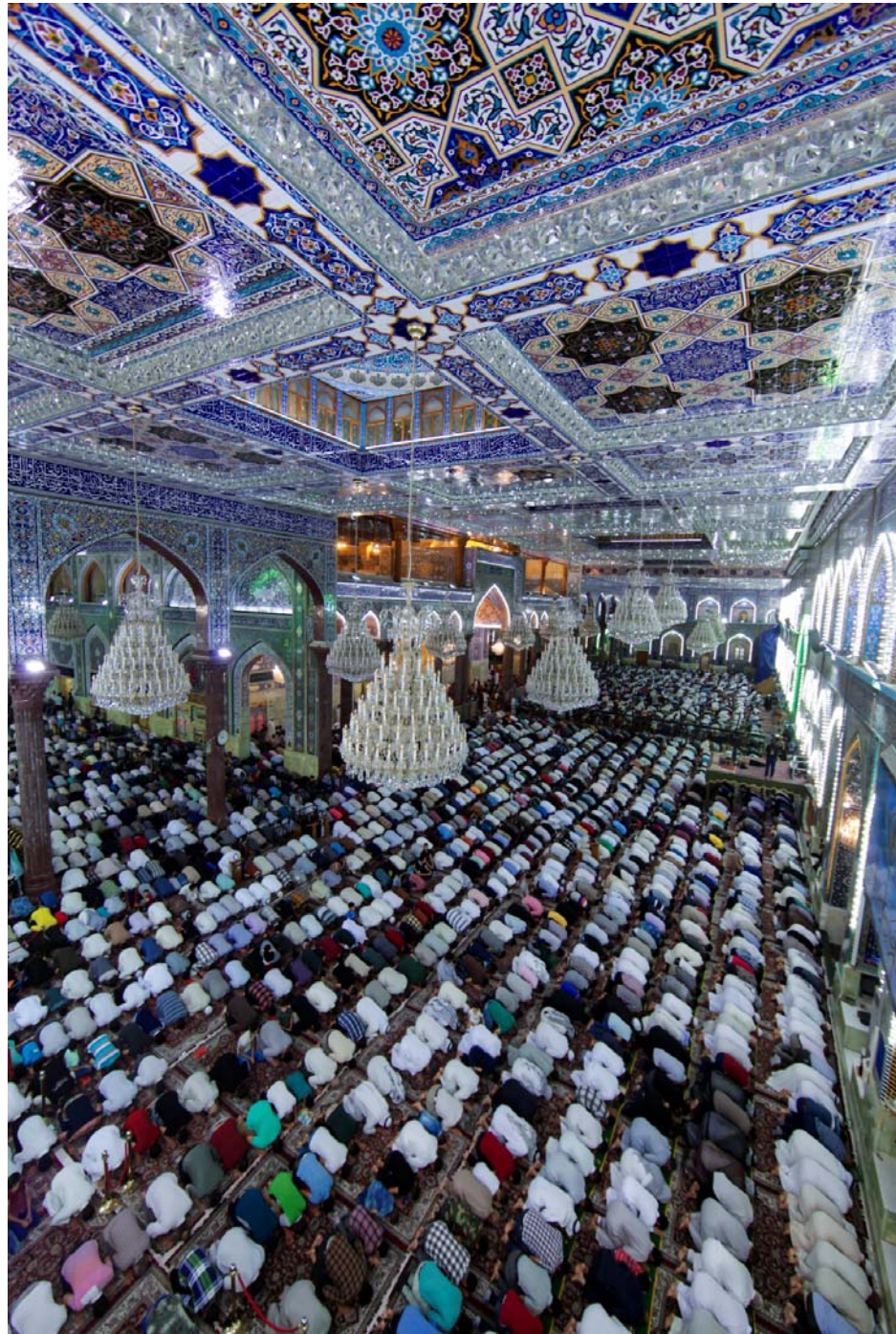
descend to them every time an eye blinks. The narrative is very deep, and this is the meaning of the angels frequently visiting them. When we say **وَمُخْتَلَفَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ**, "the ones frequently visited by the angels," this is the meaning of it. **وفي قعر بيوتهم فرجة مكشوفة إلى العرش** "At the bottom of their homes, there is a scraped opening to the Arsh: the descending of the *wahi* and of the angels," but what descending is it?

It is a descent to Muhammed ﷺ. They descend to Ali. **تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً وكل ساعة وطرفة عين، والملائكة لا ينقطع فوجهم، فوج ينزل وفوج يصعد** They descend to them in the morn and in the eve, every hour and every eye blink. The angels' crowds never stop (their trip), one group descends as another ascends. They are the ones to whom the angels often descend. **وإن الله تبارك وتعالى كشف لإبراهيم** and Allāh, the most Praised, the most Sublime, revealed to Abraham—this is an example to bring the idea closer to our comprehension; otherwise, Muhammed ﷺ occupies a status with which Abraham ﷺ is not to be compared. Abraham ﷺ is father of the prophets, but his status cannot be compared with that of Muhammed ﷺ. **وإن الله تبارك وتعالى كشف لإبراهيم عليه السلام عن السماوات حتى أبصر العرش** Allāh, the most Praised, the most Exalted One, unveiled the heavens to Abraham, peace with him, until he saw the Arsh, and Allāh increased the power of his vision. And Allāh increased the power of Muhammed's vision. We have already said that Muhammed's vision is not similar to ours. **وإن الله زاد في قوة ناظر مُحَمَّدٍ وعليّ وفاطمة** والحسن والحسين، وكانوا يبصرون العرش ولا يجدون لبيوتهم سُقْفاً غير العرش، فبيوتهم مسقفة بعرش الرحمن ومعارج الملائكة والروح - الروح الذي هو من أمر ربي - فوج بعد فوج، لا انقطاع لهم، وما من بيت من بيوت الأنمة منا إلا وفيه معراج **Allāh increased the power of vision of Muhammed ﷺ, Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain** ﷺ, and they witnessed the Arsh and found no ceiling for their homes other than the Arsh, for their homes are roofed with the Arsh of the most Merciful One and with the ascension (routes) of the angels and the Spirit—that is, the Spirit that descends with the command of my Lord—one group after another without interruption. There is no home of the Imāms ﷺ without an angels' ascension. This is due to this verse of the Almighty: **تَنْزَلُ**

الملائكة وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ * سَلَامٌ
 "In it the angels and the Spirit descend by Allāh's permission on every errand: Peace..." (Qur'ān, 97:4-5). I said, "On every errand?" He said, "In every errand." I said, "This revelation?" He said, "Yes." Such is the frequenting by the angels of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ.

This narrative needs to be explained and clarified, but I contend myself with what I have stated, for we have exhausted a great deal of time. I wish time would continue, but I fear lest the listeners should feel tired, for I have discussed for a good while in this episode or in the past episodes, yet I try to present to you whatever I can of the hadith of Ahlul-Bayat, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, perhaps I can get some of their hadith to you. Thus it becomes clear what this statement in this sacred ziyara means: *السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ* *Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message and the ones whom the angels frequently visit.* These days are relevant to Ahlul-Bayat ﷺ. From this distant place, I direct my Salam to the Master of Martyrs, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, saying the following:

Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message and the ones whom the angels frequently visit. Salam to al-Hussain, the one who enjoys a high status with the Almighty, and with al-Hussain's grandfather ﷺ, father ﷺ, mother ﷺ, brother ﷺ and the Nine Infallible ones ﷺ from among his progeny ﷺ, and Salam to his offspring, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. Salam to al-Hussain and to the bearer of the standard of al-Hussain, Abul-Fadhl al-Abbas son of the Commander of the Faithful, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings with him. Salam to al-Hussain's companions. Salam to al-Hussain's dependents. Salam to the huri sister of al-Hussain. Salam to those who perform ziyara to al-Hussain's Shrine. Salam to Allāh's angels whose vision is fixed on al-Hussain's Holy Shrine and to the family of al-Hussain as long as I live, as long as there is night and day, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. I solicit your supplication, all of you, and may Allāh keep you safe.



Prayer Time at Imām Husain's Shrine



Shrine of Imam Ali عليه السلام at night

الحلقة السابعة

معنى وَمَهْبِطَ الْوَحْيِ

SEVENTH EPISODE

THE MEANING OF "THE LANDING PLACE OF *WAHI*"



This is a new episode of our program "The Great Comprehensive Ziyara". *Assalamo Alaikom*, all of you, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. May Allāh bring happiness to your times; may He accept your good deeds and favorably respond to your true supplications especially during these sacred days of the holy month of Sha`ban.

Our discussion continues to explain the implications of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara which I am reading from *Mafatih al-Jinan* مفاتيح الجنان by our mentor, the narrator of hadith, al-Qummi, may

Allāh almighty be pleased with him. In our previous episodes, we came across this statement by the Imām عليه السلام: **السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرِّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ** *Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones frequently visited by the angels.* The new topic this episode discusses is **وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ** "and the landing place of the *wahi* (inspiration or revelation)."

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرِّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ *Assalamo Alaikom, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones frequently visited by the angels and the landing place of the wahi (inspiration or revelation).* The word **مَهْبِطِ** *mahbit* refers to the name of a place according to the Arabs' language which bears many meanings. The *wahi* **وَحْيِ**, according to the Arabs' language, means sending or pointing out (making a sign or sending a signal). When I beckon with my hand, eye or any other part of my body, I do so in order to get someone to understand something which I mean. This is *wahi*; it is for this reason that a poet said:

فَأَوْحَتْ إِلَيْنَا وَالْأَنَامِلَ رُسُلَهَا

So she made a sign the messengers of which were her fingers.

She made *wahi* to us means she made a sign, she gave a signal, to us: She made a sign to us with the tips of her fingers, desiring to let us understand something. Likewise, another poet discusses the eye sign saying the following:

وتعطلت لغة الكلام فخاطبت عينا في لغة الهوى عينك

The language of speech became idle, so my eyes addressed, in the language of love, your eyes.

The **خطاب** *khitab*, "address", here is akin to *wahi* **وحي**. *Wahi* is done through a signal. *Wahi* also is writing. *Wahi* also is a pronouncement. And *wahi* is sending a messenger. *Wahi* has many meanings in the Arabs' language. What we would like to conclude is that *wahi* is the label of anything intended for communication, for sending and receiving messages (or signals) between two parties: one sends and the other receives what reaches him, what arrives at

his end or what someone (or something) brings him. *Wahi* is a general label in the Arabs' language for all testimonies, means and situations in which something meaningful is transmitted, in which a fact is expressed, be it a truly factual or not, for every manner, every method and every norm through which we can express something. It may be done through a signal, in writing, or in language, or it may be via the stealthy language through whispering. Or it may be via the declared language. Or it may be through this or that means, for every method, means or way of expression can get us to attain our purpose; such is one of the meanings of *wahi* and a degree of it; this is its linguistic meaning.

Through the ziyara do we address the Imāms, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. "Teach me, O son of the Messenger of Allāh, a completely articulate statement which I articulate if I visit a member of your Household." This is the articulate statement with which we address the Imāms, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, for they are the ones where the *wahi* descends, i.e. they are the place. Here, the expression "place" is used metaphorically. They are the (receiving) party, the place, the existent level that becomes a landing place for the *wahi*. The *wahi* descends at their homes. The *wahi* descends on their realities, in their realities, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all. The ziyara is like the way I addressed them, i.e. their being the Household of the Prophet ﷺ. The Imāms عليهم السلام are members of the Household of the Prophet ﷺ, and we have already discussed the meaning of Prophethood. They follow that complete prophetic reality, for they are the place of the message. Where would the message be? It is in their realities. And they are the ones whom the angels quite often visit. For what purpose do the angels visit them? They visit them either as a norm of worship and submission to Allāh, for no angel advances one foot without the command of the Infallible Imām عليه السلام. Or it may be for the purpose of adoration, seeking benefit or a blessing. We have already discussed the narratives that discuss these contexts in the previous episode. Just as they are the ones who are frequently visited by the angels, they likewise are the place where the *wahi* descends. The *wahi* descends in their realities, according to their realities.

Before I enter into details, there is a problem to which I pointed out in the past which is: Some of those who oppose Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام (in their way of thinking) rely on language and on linguistic meanings as a source of knowledge, and they may reject my statement here. But when we, in fact, examine what they wrote and in what they believed, they make language a source of knowledge rather than a means, and this (way of thinking) has influenced some of our own scholars, too, so they made language a source of education and knowledge. This is one issue. The other issue is, for e.g., when a concept of *wahi* and a certain outlook for the *wahi* is disseminated, this outlook, which is based also on some ahadith narrated by those who oppose our beliefs, thus falling under the influence of those who oppose our way of thinking, and this outlook becomes a law which nobody can transcend. This happens despite the presence of scores, actually hundreds, of narratives that clearly and openly point out to the meanings of *wahi*, to the degrees of *wahi*, to the levels of *wahi*, contrarily to what is generally known. This pursuit is spacious. I am going to deal with the verses. I cite the narratives that discuss this subject. First, I shall start from the Holy Qur'an, then I will focus on the *noor*-like statements of the Infallible Ones عليه السلام.

Let us conduct a quick tour of the verses of the Holy Qur'an, discerning the meaning of *wahi* and researching it. For example, verses 10 and 11 of Surat Fussilat (Chapter 41 of the Holy Qur'an) say the following:

11. "He Moreover comprehended the sky in His design, and it had been (like) a smoke: He said to it and to the earth, 'Come together, willingly or unwillingly.' They said, 'We come (together) in willing obedience.'
12. "So He completed them as seven firmaments in two Days and assigned

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ ﴿١١﴾

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ

duty and command to each heavens.” And We adorned the lower heavens with lights and (provided it) with protection. Such is the decree of the One Exalted in might, full of knowledge.

أَمْرَهَا وَرَزَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحٍ وَحِفْظًا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ
الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ❁

(Qur'ān, 41:11-12)

The discussion here is about the creation of the heavens, including the lower heavens which the Creator, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, decorated with planets and stars: “So He completed them as seven firmaments in two Days and *أَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا* assigned duty and command to each heavens. And We adorned the lower heavens with lights and (provided it) with protection. Such is the decree of the One Exalted in might, full of knowledge” (Qur'ān, 41:12). Here, *أَوْحَى* implies what is called *وحي* *للجمادات* an inspiration (or command) to inanimate objects because among the seven heavens there is the lower one, and among the affairs of the lower heavens there are these planets and stars that are the most solid of inanimate objects. This *wahi* is for all the heavens, including the lower havens. This is *wahi* to the inanimate objects: *فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا*: “So He completed them as seven firmaments in two Days and assigned duty and command to each heavens.”

There is another testimony/example to the inanimate objects stated in Surat al-Zalzala (Chapter 99 of the Holy Qur'ān) thus:

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. When the earth is shaken to her (utmost) convulsion, ١. إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُلْزِلَاتِهَا ❁
2. And the earth throws up her burdens (from within), ٢. وَأَخْرَجَتْ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ❁

3. And man cries (distressed), "What is the matter with her?" ❁ . ٣ وَقَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ: مَا لَهَا؟
4. On that Day she will declare her tidings: ❁ . ٤ يَوْمَئِذٍ تُحَدِّثُ أَخْبَارَهَا
5. Because your Lord will have given her inspiration. ❁ . ٥ بِأَنَّ رَبَّكَ أَوْحَى لَهَا

(Qur'an, 99:1-5)

The above verses contain a *wahi* to the earth which is similar to the one mentioned in Surat Fussilat above. The most Praised and Exalted One also made *wahi*, inspiration, to the heavens, including the lower heavens decorated with planets and stars, including the earth. There will be *wahi* to the earth; when will it be? It will take place to signal the signs of the Judgment Day. When will the earth be shaken, i.e. have the greatest earthquake ever? On that Day she will declare her tidings:

68. And your Lord taught the bees to build their cells in hills, on trees, and in (men's) habitations; ❁ أَنْ اتَّخَذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ

So, let the exegetes say whatever they want, that is, this *wahi* is instinctive, something cosmic. So is the *wahi* to the heavens, the *wahi* to the earth, and the *wahi* to the inanimate objects, animals and insects, including the bees: وَأَوْحَى رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ "And your Lord made *wahi* to the bees," to their bee insect.

There is (a type of) *wahi* which may be from the humans themselves, from the prophets, as stated in Surat Maryam (Chapter 19 of the Holy Qur'an) in the story of Zacharias (Zakariyya), peace with him:

10. (Zacharias) said, "O قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آتَيْكَ لَآتٍ كَلِمَةً

Lord! Grant me a Sign."
 "Your Sign," was the answer,
 "shall be that you will speak
 to no man for three nights,
 although you are not mute."

النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ❁

11. So Zakariya came out to
 his people from his chamber:
 He told them by signs to
 celebrate God's praises in the
 morning and in the evening.

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ
 سَبِّحُوا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ❁

(Qur'ān, 19:10-11)

Even if we say that this *wahi* وحى is signaling, as it seems from the outer meaning of the verses, since he was ordered not to speak to people for three full nights, فَأَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمْ أَنْ: "So Zakariya came out to his people from his chamber: He told them by signs to celebrate God's praises in the morning and in the evening," this, too, is a level of *wahi*, it is the level of human *wahi* but one coming from the prophets.

There is another type of *wahi* in verse 112 of Surat al-An'am (Chapter 6 of the Holy Qur'an) as follows: وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا: شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنَّ، يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا، وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ، فَذَرُهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ "Likewise, We made for every messenger an enemy: evil ones from among men and jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception. Had your Lord so planned, they would not have done it; so, leave them and their inventions alone," i.e. a *wahi* between the evil ones, Satans, from among the men and the jinns. The satanic jinns may inspire humans, this verse makes this quite clear. It points out to *wahi* taking place between both parties: evil human ones, Satans, can inspire Satans from among the jinns, and, likewise, Satanic jinns can inspire human Satans: وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا: شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنَّ، يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا "Likewise, We made for every messenger an enemy: evil ones from among men and jinns, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of

deception." This, too, is a level of *wahi*, but it falls in the category of false *wahi*. What benefit do we get from this? We get to understand that *wahi* has many levels. Due to the wide spectrum of levels of *wahi*, there is in the *wahi* what is false, as this verse clearly points out. We notice the same in verse 121 of the same Sura: وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ، وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ "Do not eat (meats) on which God's Name was not pronounced: That would be impiety. But the evil ones constantly urge their friends to contend with you; if you were to obey them, you truly would be pagans." Here, the "evil ones," the Satans, are apparently from among the jinns, although we can bring together this verse and the one before it, thus the discussion would cover the Satans from among the jinns and humans, for the Satans from among the humans inspire the Satans from among the jinns, and the jinn Satans inspire human Satans, and so on. But both verses, numbered 112 and 111 of Surat al-An`am, discuss a level, they are about levels, of the *wahi*, yet it is inspiration advocating falsehood, one of a Satanic nature; therefore, the levels of *wahi* are numerous, they are manifold, and the *wahi* has two aspects: one advocating goodness and another advocating evil.

The Holy Qur`ān continues to discuss the *wahi*. Let us go to verse 51 of the sacred Sura titled Shura (Chapter 42 of the Holy Qur`ān): وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا "It is not fitting for a human that Allāh should speak to him except through inspiration." This means there is inspiration from Allāh to humans: وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا "It is not fitting for a human..." This verse does not discuss a prophet, it discusses humans in general, covering prophets and non-prophets, although some exegetes interpret it as referring to the prophets, but the verse is quite clearly discuss humans in general: وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا "It is not fitting for a human that Allāh should speak to him except through inspiration." So what is the method of communication between Allāh and humans? وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا "It is not fitting for a human that Allāh should speak to him except through inspiration or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger" from behind a veil. Allāh, the most Praised and the most Exalted One, created speech in the tree, in the air, in the fire when He spoke to Moses,

because Allāh does not have a faculty. He does not have a faculty for speech: When He wants to say something, He creates speech in any of His creations: "وما كان لبشر أن يكلمه الله إلا وحياً" "It is not fitting for a human that Allāh should speak to him except by inspiration." This is a norm of Divine speech through *wahi* أو من وراء حجاب أو يرسل "... or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger," that is, an angel messenger, أو يرسل رسولا فيوحى بإذنه ما يشاء، إنه عليّ حكيم "... or by sending a messenger to reveal, with God's permission, what Allāh wills, for He is the Most High, the Most Wise." So, this messenger may be either one of the angels sent to the prophets or to the wasis, or what is meant by رسول *rasool* a human messenger; this verse makes room for a broad and wide discussion, but on the whole, it discusses *wahi* between Allāh and human beings.

We discussed the Divine *wahi* to inanimate objects, such as *wahi* to the heavens, to the earth, to the animals, to the bees..., and we also discussed human inspiration: Zakariyya inspiring his folks, the Satanic insinuation among the evil ones from among the jinns and humans. The verse here discusses *wahi* to humans in general. What is the law of *wahi* to humans, be they prophets or non-prophets? Even if this verse is specifically for the prophets only, the discussion here is about the general law for *wahi*, for communication between Allāh and humans: "وما كان لبشر" "It is not fitting for a human..." where the indefinite article here denotes generality:

51. It is not fitting for a human that Allāh should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger to reveal, with God's permission, what Allāh wills, for He is Most High, Most Wise.

وَمَا كَانَ لَبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا أَوْ مِنْ
وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولًا فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا
يَشَاءُ، إِنَّهُ عَلِيُّ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾

(Qur'ān, 42:51)

There is *wahi* to which verse 37 and the following verse of Surat Taha (Chapter 20 of the Holy Qur'an) refers which testifies to *wahi* to humans when it makes a reference to the Almighty addressing Moses ﷺ:

37. "And we truly conferred a favor on you another time (before).

وَقَدْ مَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَى * ❁

38. "Behold! We sent, by inspira-tion, the message to your mother:

إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَى * ❁

39. "Place (the child) in the chest, and toss (the chest) into the river: The river will cast him up on the bank and he will be taken up by one who is an enemy to Me and an enemy to him': But I cast (the garment of) love over you from Me, and (this) in order that you may be reared under Mine eye.

أَنْ أَقْدِفِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ فَأَقْدِفِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ، فَلْيُلْقِهِ
الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ، يَأْخُذُهُ عَدُوُّ لِي وَعَدُوُّ لَهُ،
وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِنِّي وَكُتِبَ عَلَيَّ عَيْنِي * ❁

... up to the end of these sacred verses. إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَى "Behold! We sent, by inspiration, a message to your mother...;" this is verse 38 of Surat Taha discuss human *wahi*. We have already come across verse 51 which states: وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْيًا "It is not fitting for a human that Allāh should speak to him except by inspiration." The discussion here is about humans in general, and it testifies to *wahi* covering humans in general. إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَى "Behold! We sent, by inspiration, a message to your mother..."

The same meaning is repeated in verse 7 of Surat al-Qasas (Chapter 28 of the Holy Qur'an): "We sent this inspiration to Moses' mother: 'Nurse (your child).'" This means there is a repeated *wahi*: The first *wahi* was: إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَى: أَنْ

أَقْدِفِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ "Behold! We sent, by inspiration, a message to your mother: `Place (the child) in the chest;" (Qur'ān, 20:38-39). This placing of the child in the chest (or wooden frame so it may float on water) was the beginning of the story which is followed by placing him in the chest and taking him out of the water to Pharaoh's mansion. After that comes the story of beast-feeding baby Moses عليه السلام. Another *wahi* came to his mother: وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ، فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ "We sent this inspiration to Moses' mother: 'Nurse (your child), but when you have fears for him, cast him into the river'" (Qur'ān, 28:7). The discussion here in this verse is about the mother of Moses nursing him, but before she cast him into the river: "Behold! إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰ: أَنْ أَقْدِفِيهِ فِي التَّابُوتِ We sent, by inspiration, a message to your mother: `Place (the child) in the chest'" (Qur'ān, 20:38-39), whereas here is another discussion: وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ، فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ "We sent this inspiration to Moses' mother: "Nurse (your child), but when you have fears for him, cast him into the river'" (Qur'ān, 28:7); the discussion here involves human *wahi*, the Divine inspiration to Moses' mother. Of course, according to sacred narratives, the meaning of *wahi* was repeated to the mother of Moses and to other loyal servants of the Almighty from among people in general, since the mother of Moses was not a prophetess.

The same discussion we find repeated in Surat Aali `Imran (Chapter 3 of the Holy Qur'ān) in the story of Mary (Maryam), peace with her, in verses 42 and 43: وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَابْتَخَرَكِ وَابْتَخَرَكِ عَلَىٰ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ "Behold! The angels said, 'O Mary! Allāh has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of all nations.'" The discussion here is about the angels' *wahi*, the Divine *wahi*, through the angels' venue, to Maryam:

42. Behold! The angels said, "O Mary! Allāh has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of all nations.

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ
وَابْتَخَرَكِ عَلَىٰ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ❁

43. "O Mary! Worship your

يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ

Lord devoutly: Prostrate and bow down (in prayer) with those who bow down.”

الرَّاكِعِينَ

(Qur'ān, 3:42-43)

This, too, is *wahi* from Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, to humans whom He created. We have already cited verse 51 of Surat al-Shura which discusses *wahi* for humans in general, and we have testified to this by citing verses from Surat Taha and Surat al-Qasas: Allāh inspired the mother of Moses ﷺ what He inspired. Here in verses 42 and 43 of Surat Aali `Imran [the family of Amram] there is a discussion of *wahi* to Mary; the angels address and inspire her.

We read verse 110 of Surat al-Ma'ida (Chapter 5 of the Holy Qur'ān): **وَإِذْ أُوحِيَتْ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي؛ قَالُوا: آمَنَّا، وَاشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ** “And behold! I inspired the disciples to have faith in Me and in My Messenger: They said, ‘We have faith, and we bear witness that we bow to Allāh as Muslims.’” This is another type of *wahi* to humans who are not prophets.

There is another type of *wahi* in verse 12 of Surat al-Anfal (Chapter 8 of the Holy Qur'ān), in reference to the Badr Battle and to the angels descending: **إِذْ يُوحِي رَبُّكَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ أَنِّي مَعَكُمْ فَثَبَّتُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا؛ سَأَلْتِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ، فَأَضْرِبُوا فَوْقَ الْأَعْنَاقِ، وَأَضْرِبُوا مِنْهُمْ كُلَّ بَنَانٍ** “Remember (how) your Lord inspired the angels (this message): ‘I am with you: Grant firmness to the believers: I will instil terror into the unbelievers’ hearts: Smite above their necks and smite their finger-tips off them.’” This is another level of *wahi*: the Divine *wahi* to the angels.

There are many testimonies and labels: In verse 163 and the following verses of Surat al-Nisaa (Chapter 4 of the Holy Qur'ān), there is a discussion of *wahi* to the prophets: **إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ** “We have sent you inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the messengers after him.” To Him, the Prophet ﷺ is

the compiler, and the Qur'ān is the book which he compiled; his Message is the comprehensive one. All levels of *wahi* which were for the prophets were also for our Prophet ﷺ: **إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ** "We have sent you inspiration as We sent it to Noah and the messengers after him." Noah and the prophets after him vary in their levels of *wahi*. All these levels Allāh sent them as *wahi* to the Prophet ﷺ; why? This is because he ﷺ is the comprehensive reality; otherwise, the Muhammedi *wahi* is different from the *wahi* which was for the prophets. This is so because the *wahi* suits everyone according to the spirituality and *noor* of the prophet ﷺ. Each prophet has a level of spirituality and of *noor*, and the *wahi* descending to him suits his *noor* and spirituality. But the Prophet ﷺ is the one who has the overwhelming Prophethood, the one who has the dominating reality.

When we read, for e.g., verse 48 of Surat al-Ma'ida (Chapter 5 of the Holy Qur'ān), which states: **وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنْ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ** "We have revealed the Book (Qur'ān) to you in truth, confirming the Scripture (revealed before it), safely (and ably) guarding it," we realize that the Book (Qur'ān) is one of the affairs relevant to the Prophethood of our Prophet ﷺ. Our Prophet's Message is broad, and we have already discussed it, and its relevant matters are endless, numerous, countless. Among the affairs of our Prophet's Prophethood is the Book (Qur'ān) which was revealed to him. This Book is described thus by the Almighty: **وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ** "We have revealed the Book (Qur'ān) to you in truth, confirming the Scripture (revealed before it), safely (and ably) dominating (and guarding) it," we focus on **مُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ**, that is, fully dominating or controlling it, that is, dominating all (sacred) Books. What does dominance mean? Dominance means encompassing, and it means mastership, *Wilaya*, too. One who dominates is one who encompasses, who is fully knowledgeable of a thing, the one who has the ability to deal with it. Among the testimonies of the Book's dominance is that it abrogates past books. This is relevant to the recording scope; other than that, the Prophet's Message also abrogates, in its earthly scope, all previous messages. The discussion needs details, and I do not want to enter it now. Perhaps if we

explain this verse, particularly the reference to dominance, we will discuss this subject in more details. But we, in this quick tour in the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, discuss the meaning of *wahi* and its levels.

Here is verse 160 of Surat al-Nisaa (Chapter 4 of the Holy Qur'ān):

"We have sent you inspiration as We sent it to Noah and the messengers after him." Noah had a level of *wahi* and so did each of the prophets after him: وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَىٰ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ "We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon." These (prophets) vary in their levels. They vary in their knowledge, vary in their *noor*; therefore, the *wahi* varies according to the variance of their levels: وَأَتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زُبُورًا، وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَا لَهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ وَهَٰؤُلَاءِ مِمَّنْ نَاوِيحُنَا لَكَ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَكَ آيَاتِنَا وَلِيُنذِرَ لِقَوْمِهِمْ إِذَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْكِتَابُ وَلَا يُتَمَتَّعُوا فِي الْآيَاتِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْفَٰسِقِينَ "... and to David We gave the Psalms, We have already told you the story of some Messengers; of others We have not." These, too, the *wahi* that descended to them and its level enters in the levels of the Muhammedi *wahi*:

164. We have already told you the story of some Messengers; of others We have not, and Allāh spoke directly to Moses.

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَا لَهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾

165. Messengers who gave good news as well as warnings, (so) that mankind, after (the coming) of the Messengers, should have no plea against Allāh, for Allāh is Exalted in power, Wise.

رُسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾

(Qur'ān, 4:164-165)

All these levels of *wahi* which the Qur'ān mentions and those it does not, all the levels of the prophets' *wahi*, enter into the levels of the

prophetic *wahi* in one aspect or another with the exception of the Muhammedi *wahi* which differs from all these levels. The entire verse discusses the prophetic *wahi*, about Allāh inspiring the prophets, the levels of which are quite numerous, and we may point out to these levels within the folds of our citing the narratives and sacred ahadith which I will read to you.

We, for e.g., read verse 7 of Surat al-Shura (Chapter 42): **وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ** "Thus have We sent an Arabic Qur'ān by inspiration to you, so that you may warn the Mother of Cities": This is another level of prophetic *wahi*, it is the *wahi* of the Qur'ān. *Wahi* was never restricted to only the Qur'ān. This is one of the levels of *wahi*: **وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا** "Thus have We sent an Arabic Qur'ān by inspiration to you;" it is the level of the Qur'ānic *wahi*, the Qur'ān which dominates all Books. This is the level of dominating *wahi*. There is another level which we find in verse 39 of the sacred Surat al-Israa (Chapter 17 of the Holy Qur'ān): **ذَٰلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ، وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَتُنْقَلَىٰ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَلُومًا مَّدْحُورًا** "These are among the (precepts of) wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you. Do not take another object of worship with Allāh lest you should be thrown into Hell, blameworthy and rejected." This is one level of *wahi*. The verse we have cited from Surat al-Shura discusses the Qur'ānic *wahi*. This is the *wahi* of wisdom, although interpreters of the Qur'ān have also interpreted the word **حِكْمَةٍ** *hikma*, wisdom, as referring to the Qur'ān, but if we discern this label, wisdom, throughout the Holy Qur'ān, we will conclude that wisdom is something else: **ذَٰلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ** "These are among the (precepts of) wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you" (Qur'ān, 17:39). This is another level of the prophetic *wahi*. Allāh inspired him as he inspired the prophets, as we have come across in verse 63 of Surat al-Nisaa. Just a short while ago, we saw in verse 163 how the Almighty inspired our Prophet ﷺ as He had inspired other prophets. The Qur'ānic *wahi* is referred to in Surat al-Shura. In Surat al-Israa, it is the *wahi* of wisdom: **ذَٰلِكَ مِمَّا أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ** "These are among the (precepts of) wisdom." In Surat al-Shura, we read: **وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ** "Thus have We sent an Arabic Qur'ān by inspiration to you so that you may warn the Mother

of Cities." Also in Surat al-Shura, in its last verse, verse 52, that is, the one before the last, we read: "وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا" "And thus have We, by Our command, sent *rūh* (inspiration) to you;" this is another level of *wahi* which is different from the Qur'ānic level; "وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا؛ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ، وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَّهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَّشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا، وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ" "And thus have We, by Our command, sent *rūh* (inspiration) to you: You did not know (before) what Revelation was, and what faith was, but We have made the (Qur'ān) a light, with which We guide those of Our servants as We will, and indeed you guide (men) to the straight path" (Qur'ān, 42:52). This is another standpoint, because if we track in the Holy Qur'ān, the *rūh* الروح and الروح من أمر ربي, the *rūh* is by the Command of my Lord, many other meanings will manifest themselves.

There is another level of Muhammedi *wahi* mentioned in Surat al-Najm (Chapter 53 of the Holy Qur'ān). We have already discussed an aspect of the meanings of these verses when we were discussing the meaning of Prophethood:

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. By the star when it goes down, ١٩. وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ❁
2. Your companion is neither astray nor misled, ٢٠. مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ❁
3. Nor does he say (anything) of (his own) desire. ٢١. وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ❁
4. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him: ٢٢. إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ❁
5. He was taught by One mighty in power, ٢٣. عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ❁
6. Endowed with wisdom, for he appeared (in stately ٢٤. ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ❁

form)

7. While he was in the highest part of the horizon:

٢٥. وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى ❁

8. Then he approached and came closer,

٢٦. ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى ❁

9. And was at a distance of only two bow-lengths or (even) nearer;

٢٧. فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى ❁

10. So did (Allāh) convey the inspiration to His servant! (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey.

٢٨. فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ❁

(Qur'ān, 53:1-10)

This is *wahi* of another level:

1. By the star when it goes down,

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ❁

2. Your companion is neither astray nor misled,

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ❁

3. Nor does he say (anything) of (his own) desire.

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ❁

4. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him:

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ❁

This *wahi* is in the earthly world, i.e. in the earth world. We discussed Prophethood in the earthly world: **مَا ضَلَّ * مَا ضَلَّ * وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ** "By the star when it goes down, Your companion is neither astray nor misled": This is an address directed at those on earth; *** وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ * وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ** "Nor does he say (anything) of (his own) desire, it is no less than inspiration sent down to him." This address is: "O you on earth! You hear speech **إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ * عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ * ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ** "This speech is no less than (Divine) inspiration sent down to him."

"It is no less than inspiration sent down to him: He was taught by One mighty in power, Endowed with wisdom, for he appeared (in stately form)." Now we go to the upper realm: **وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى * ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى * فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى * فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى** "While he was in the highest part of the horizon: Then he approached and came closer": This is *wahi* in the high horizon: **وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى * ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى * فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى * فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى** "While he was in the highest part of the horizon: Then he approached and came closer and was at a distance of only two bow-lengths or (even) nearer; so did (Allāh) convey the inspiration to His servant! (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey": This is another Muhammedi *wahi*. **فَأَوْحَى إِلَى عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَى * مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَى * أَفَتُحَارُونَهُ عَلَى مَا يُبَرِّى؟ * وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى * عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى** So did (Allāh) convey the inspiration to His servant, (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey. The (Prophet's mind and) heart in no way falsified what he saw. Then will you dispute with him concerning what he saw? For indeed he saw him at a second descent near the lote-tree beyond which none may pass." The *سِدْرَةَ sidra* is the place where there is puzzlement and amazement. But, as narratives have said, Muhammed ﷺ was not puzzled there, nor was his vision:

13. For indeed he saw him at a second descent,

وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَى ❁

14. Near the lote-tree beyond which none may pass:

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَى ❁

15. Near it is the Garden of abode.

عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَى ❁

16. Behold! The lote-tree was shrouded (in unspeakable mystery!)

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى ❁

17. (His) sight never swerved, nor did it go wrong!

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى ❁

18. For truly he saw the greatest of his Lord's Signs!

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى ❁

This is the Muhammedi *wahi* for which we have no explanation. This is Surt al-Najm which discusses two levels of *wahi*, and it discussed other levels. Verses of the Holy Qur'ān have stated that all levels of the prophets' *wahi* existed in the circle of the prophetic *wahi* because prophets' levels varied.

For example, let us read some narratives or ahadith. This is the sacred *Al-Kafi* book, and this is Volume One. For e.g., a narrative says, قال: سألتُ أبا جعفرٍ عليه السلام عن قول الله عزَّ وجلَّ: الرسول وما النبي؟ قال: النبي الذي يرى في منامه ويسمع الصوت ولا يُعَين المَلَك - هذه درجة ليس كل الأنبياء هكذا، هذه درجة من درجات الأنبياء - قال: النبي الذي يرى في منامه ويسمع الصوت ولا يُعَين المَلَك، والرسول الذي يسمع الصوت ويرى في المنام ويُعَين المَلَك - وهذه أيضاً مرتبة من مراتب الرسل - قلتُ: الإمام ما منزلته؟ قال: يسمع الصوت ولا يرى ولا يُعَين المَلَك - هذه أيضاً مرتبة من المراتب، لا يعني أن مراتب أئمتنا هكذا، ستأتي. He said, "I asked Abu Ja`far [Imām al-Baqir عليه السلام] about this statement of Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, "وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا" (Qur'ān, 19:51). What is the meaning of 'a messenger prophet'? He said, 'He is the prophet who sees in his vision, hears the voice but does not see the angel, whereas the messenger is the one who hears the voice, sees in the vision and sees the angel—this, too, is one of the levels of the messengers—I said, 'What is the status of the Imām?' He said, 'He hears the voice, he cannot see, nor can he see the angel—this is a level, and this does not mean that the levels of our Imāms عليه السلام are like that. We will discuss narratives that explain this statement."

I do not go too far, I only wish to point out to what is stated in the sacred Nahjul-Balagha. Here is the *qasi`a* sermon, one of the most famous sermons of the Master of Wasis عليه السلام. What does the Master of Wasis عليه السلام say? He says the following about the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: "He used to take to seclusion every year in the Hira (cave), so I could see him whereas nobody else could." He ﷺ used to go to the place known as the Hira Cave. You may ask why would the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ go to Hira?! Prophets before him ﷺ used to worship there. This place is sacred; in it, past prophets and *wasis* used to worship, those who are mentioned in narratives, from among those who worshipped

at Hira Cave were: Abdul-Muttalib, the Prophet's grandfather, and also Abu Talib. Narratives say that Abdul-Muttalib and Abu Talib were among the *wasis* of Abraham, and all Abraham's *wasis* were prophets, according to the narratives. So, this place enjoys a special sanctity. Anyhow, ولقد كان يُجاورُ في كلِّ سنةٍ بحراءِ فأراهُ - الأمير يراه - ولا يراهُ, غيري ولم يجمع بيتٌ واحدٌ يومئذٍ في الإسلام غير رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وخديجة وأنا ثالثهما، أرى نور الوحي والرسالة وأشتمُّ ريح النبوة - أي أنه كان يرى ويشم - ولقد سمعت رنة الشيطان حين نزل الوحي عليه صلى الله عليه وآله، فقلت: يا رسول الله ما هذه الرنة؟ فقال: هذا الشيطان قد أيس من عبادته، إنك يا علي - الكلام مع رسول الله "He used to go to Hira every year, so I would see him—the Commander of the Faithful would see him—whereas none other than myself could, and no single house gathered us together in Islam other than the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny, Khadija and I am the third: I would see the *noor* of the *wahi* and of the Message and inhale the fragrance of Prophethood—he used to see and smell—and I heard Satan's moan when the *wahi* descended to him, Allāh's peace and blessings with him and with his Progeny, so I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! What is this moan?' He said, 'This is [the moan of] Satan; he now has lost hope of being worshipped. Beware, O Ali—the address is directed at Ali—you hear what I hear and see what I see save you are not a prophet.'" Here is Ali hearing and seeing the *wahi*, hearing what the Prophet, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, heard and seeing what he ﷺ saw. This is the statement of Ali in the *qasi'a* sermon; it is clear, obvious and unambiguous.

So, these ahadith where many of our scholars halt, vesting the prophets' characteristics and those of the messengers as well as of our Imāms ﷺ at this extent, and this is unfair to the statuses of our Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ. The statuses of Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ are higher, greater and more magnanimous, and we will discuss that later. ما الرسول وما النبي؟ قال: النبي الذي يرى في منامه ويسمع الصوت ولا يعاين الملك - يعني أن الأنبياء منهم من لا يرى الملائكة - والرسول الذي يسمع الصوت ويرى في المنام ويعاين الملك، قلت: الإمام ما منزلته؟ قال: يسمع الصوت ولا يرى ولا يعاين الملك Who is the messenger and who is the prophet? He said, "The prophet is the one who sees in his vision, hears the voice but does not see the angel—this means some prophets could not see the angels—while the

messenger is the one who hears the voice, sees in his vision and sees the angel." "I said, 'What is the status of the Imām?' He said, 'He hears the voice, sees but does not see the angel.'" The rest of narratives are like that. For example, here is another narrative: عن الأحول قال: سألتُ أبا جعفرٍ عن الرسول والنبي والمُحدِّث - المَحَدَّث هو إما المراد الإمام المعصوم وإما الأولياء الذين بلغوا هذه الرتبة، وظاهراً المراد هنا هو الإمام المعصوم - قال الرسول: الذي يأتيه جبرئيلُ قبلاً فيراه ويكلمه فهذا الرسول، وأما النبي فهو الذي يرى في منامه نحو رؤيا إبراهيم عليه السلام ونحو ما كان رأى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله من أسباب النبوة قبل الوحي حين أتاه جبرئيل عليه السلام من عند الله بالرسالة - إلى أن يقول - وأما المُحدِّث فهو الذي يُحدِّث فيسمع ولا يعاين ولا يرى في منامه The following is narrated in *Al-Ahwal*: "I asked Abu Ja'far عليه السلام about the messenger, prophet and *muhaddath* —the latter being the one who is visited by Gabriel, so he sees him and speaks to him; such is the messenger. As for the prophet, he is the one who sees in his vision the like of the vision of Abraham عليه السلام and the like of what the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to see of the marks of Prophethood before the *wahi* when Gabriel, peace with him, brought him the Message—and he continues his statement until he says, 'As for the *muhaddath*, he is the one who narrates hadith, so he hears but neither sees [the angel of *wahi*] nor does he see visions." These are existing levels of Allāh's prophets, His *walis* and messengers' wasis. But these levels do not mean that Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام stopped at this level, at this status. We a short while ago discussed statements by the Master of Wasis عليه السلام in sacred Nahjul-Balagha saying that this is what the Prophet ﷺ said to him: "You hear what I hear and see what I see." He himself has said, *أرى نور* "I see the *noor* of the *wahi* and message and smell the fragrance of Prophethood." So, he sees and smells. When angels descend, they have a distinctive smell, fragrance, which varies according to their levels. He smells the *wahi's* fragrance which is different from that of the angels: *أرى نور الوحي* "I see the *noor* of the *wahi* and the message and smell the fragrance of Prophethood;" "You hear what I hear and see what I see, except you are not a prophet." Our Imāms, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all, had these distinctive statuses. They had these degrees of *wahi*; otherwise, how could we address them in the ziyara saying,

"Peace with you, O the landing place of wahi" أَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا مَهْبِطَ الْوَحْيِ
wahi"?

The same narrative which I am quoting exists in *Basa'ir al-Darajat* and also in Volume One of sacred *Al-Kafi*, but I recite it from *Basa'ir al-Darajat* because I want to read another narrative from the same book. الرواية عن حمران عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام، قال: إن جبرئيل أتى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله برمانتين - وهذه رموز - فأكل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله إحداهما وكسر الأخرى بنصفين فأكل نصفها وأطعم رسول الله علياً نصفها، ثم قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: يا أخي هل تدري ما هاتين الرمانتين؟ قال: لا، قال: أما الأولى التي أكلها لوحده فالنبوة، ليس لك فيها شيء، وأما الأخرى فالعلم، أنت شريكى فيه. The narrative is transmitted by Hamran from Imām Abu Ja'far, peace with him. The Imām عليه السلام said that Gabriel brought the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ two pomegranates—these are symbols—so the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ ate one of them, split the other into two halves, ate one half and fed Ali عليه السلام with the other. Then the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "Brother! Do you know what these two pomegranates are?" Ali عليه السلام answered in the negative, whereupon the Prophet ﷺ said, "As for the first, which I ate all by myself, it is Prophethood; you have no share in it. As for the other, it is knowledge; you are my partner in it"—for everything [every type of knowledge] with the Messenger of Allāh is also with Ali عليه السلام—whereupon Imām Ali عليه السلام said, "Allāh keeps you on the path of righteousness, how can I be your partner in it?!" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Allāh does not teach لا يُعَلِّمُ اللَّهُ مَحْمَدًا عِلْمًا إِلَّا وَأَمْرُهُ أَنْ يُعَلِّمَ عَلِيًّا" Allāh does not teach Muhammed some knowledge without ordering him to teach (it to) Ali." "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate." It is to this same statement that this narrative points out: أنا مدينة الحكمة وعلي بابها "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate." The second narrative which I would like to read to you is: عن جابر الجعفي عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قوله تبارك وتعالى: {اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، مَثَلُ نُورِهِ...} فهو مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ... فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ { وهو العلم... المصباحُ في زُجَاجَةٍ } فزعم أن الزجاجة ما هي؟ الزجاجة أمير المؤمنين وعلم نبي الله عنده - الرواية هكذا تبين المعنى: {اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، مَثَلُ نُورِهِ...} هو مُحَمَّدٌ Jabir al-Ju'fi quotes Imām Abu Ja'far عليه السلام explaining this verse of the most Praised and Exalted One: "Allāh is the *noor* (celestial light) of the heavens and the earth. The parable (similitude) of His *noor*...", this parable of His *noor* is Muhammed ﷺ. {فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ} "In it there is a lantern,"

which is knowledge, "the lantern is in glass;" what is this glass? The [reflecting] glass is the Commander of the Faithful with whom is the knowledge of the Prophet ﷺ. Thus does the narrative explain the meaning: "Allāh is the *noor* of the heavens and earth; the parable (or similitude) of His *noor*," a reference to Prophet Muhammed ﷺ. This *noor* is enclosed in a lantern, which is knowledge. The lantern is enclosed in glass. The glass is the one that holds the lantern. The glass is Ali. This is one aspect of this sacred verse. We, therefore, are not surprised at all. This is Volume 35 of *Bihar al-Anwar*. The narrative in it is transmitted by al-Hassan ibn Mahboob from our Imām al-Sadiq ﷺ who discusses the birth of his grandfather, the Master of Wasī ﷺ. What does he say? - الكعبة - أنفتح البيت من ظهره - أنفتح البيت من ظهره ودخلت فاطمة فيه - فاطمة بنت أسد - ثم عادت الفتحة وألتصقت وبقيت فيه ثلاثة أيام فأكلت من ثمار الجنة فلما خرجت قال علي عليه السلام - لَمَّا خرجت بعلي هكذا قال، ماذا قال؟ مخاطباً أباه أبا طالب - السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا وَرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ وبركاته، ثم تنحنح وقال: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ - فقرأ الآيات من The House (Ka`ba) opened from the back, so Fatima [daughter of Assad, mother of Imām Ali ﷺ] entered, then the opening closed-in and merged [into the wall]. She stayed there for three days eating of the fruits of Paradise. When she came out, she was carrying Ali ﷺ who addressed his father saying, 'Peace with you, father, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings.' Then he hawked and said, '*In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful*. The believers must (eventually, imminently) win through,' reciting verses from Surat al-Mu'minoon (Chapter 23 of the Holy Qur'ān). When did this take place?

The story is about the birth of the Master of Wasī ﷺ. This took place ten years before the inception of the Prophetic Mission. We do not care about those who wish to make fun of this account; this is the account of Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ. The issue is not just one or two or three narratives. There are seas of narratives, Qur'ānic texts and hadith texts each strengthening the credibility of the other. The issue does not stop at one narrative or line. ثم تنحنح وقال: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ - فقرأ سورة المؤمنون - فقال رسول الله - رسول الله موجود، هذه قرأها في وجه رسول الله، فماذا قال؟ - قد أفلحوا بك؛ أنت والله أميرهم، تميرهم من علمك فيميتارون، وأنت والله دليلهم، وبك والله يهتدون، ووضع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله لسانه في فيه فانفجرت اثنتا عشرة عينا Then he hawked and said, "*In the Name of*

Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. The believers must (eventually, imminently) win through,' reciting verses from Surat al-Mu'minoon (Chapter 23 of the Holy Qur'ān)." The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, thereupon, said, "The Messenger of Allāh is present." He recited this verse facing the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ; why? What did he ﷺ say in answer? He said, "They win through you, by Allāh, their Commander [of the Faithful]; you command them through your knowledge, so they win supremacy, and you, by Allāh, are their guide and through you, by Allāh, are they guided." The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ put his tongue in Ali's mouth; thereupon, twelve spring gushed out. These are symbols; these twelve springs are the twelve Imāms عليه السلام: Ali and those after him عليه السلام. These are symbols. I cannot stop at each word to explain; this way time will go by without completing my statement though briefly. This is so because each narrative needs an explanation or clarification; therefore, these narratives, including the one we have a short while ago come across, the narrative of the two pomegranates in which he ﷺ split the second pomegranate, the one that symbolizes knowledge, giving Ali عليه السلام half of it, making him his partner. Knowledge is the lantern. The *noor* is the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. The lantern is knowledge. Ali عليه السلام is the glass that surrounds the lantern which surrounds the *noor*. *يا علي، - كما جاء في نهج البلاغة - إنك تسمع ما أسمع وترى ما أرى، ولكنك لست بنبي* "O Ali," as we read in Nahjul-Balagha, "you hear what I hear and see what I see, except you are not a prophet." He عليه السلام used to say that he saw the *noor* of Prophethood and Message, the *noor* of *wahi* and of the Message, and smell the fragrance of Prophethood. What was for Ali عليه السلام is for the Imām of our Time (عج). What was for their first [Imām] is for their last, and what is for their last is for their first. These narratives, therefore, which exist in *Al-Kafi* or other sources and which are always atop the books of logic and beliefs, say that these are the levels of the prophets, imāms and messengers in order to distance these levels from our Imāms; otherwise, these are statements of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, and these are ahadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, and here is Ali عليه السلام articulates verses of the Holy Qur'ān when he was still an infant, and this is strange because the Qur'ān was in the heart of Muhammed ﷺ since he came to be, and what was inside Muhammed's heart was also inside the heart of Ali عليه السلام.

When we read, for e.g., verse 114 of Surat Taha (Chapter 20 of the Holy Qur'ān): "وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ" "Do not be in haste with the Qur'ān before its Revelation to you is completed," we wonder: What is meant by that? Such a statement we find also existing in verse 16 of Surat al-Qiyama (Chapter 75 of the Holy Qur'ān): { لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ * إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ } "Do not move your tongue concerning it (Qur'ān) to hasten with it. It is for Us to collect it and promulgate it." What is the meaning of these verses? Do they say what is claimed by those who differ from us [Sunnis] and those from among our scholars who follow them, that is, it is strange when Sayyid al-Tabatabai in *Al-Mizan* says the same. This is Volume 20 of *Tafsir al-Mizan* where Sayyid Tabatabai says the following while discussing this verse: { لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ } "Do not be in haste with it (Qur'ān) before its Revelation to you is completed" هذا الكلام يتضمن أدباً إلهياً "This statement implies Divine etiquette." What is this etiquette? أن الله كَلَّفَ "Allāh required the Prophet to follow such an etiquette whenever he received texts of the Holy Qur'ān inspired to him," up to his explanation of what is meant by that saying, فالكلام في هذه الآيات يجري مجرى قول المتكلم منا أثناء حديثه لمخاطبه إذا بادر إلى تتميم بعض كلام المتكلم باللفظة واللفظتين قبل أن يلفظ بها المتكلم وذلك يشغله عن التجرد للإنصات فيقطع المتكلم حديثه ويعترض ويقول لا تعجل بكلامي "The speech in these verses flows as one of us talks when he is addressed by someone else who starts talking to him with one or two words before the speaker pronounces them, thus distracting him from just listening, interrupting the speaker's statement. The speaker objects and says, 'Do not be hasty about what I say and listen so you may understand what I say.'" Tabatabai brings this example of someone speaking and someone else listening. The listener does not let the speaker complete his statement but goes ahead of him with one or two words. The speaker, therefore, says to him, "Listen to what I say!"

Was the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ really like that?! أدبني ربي فأحسن تأديبي "My Lord cultured me, doing so very well," said the Prophet ﷺ. { وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ } "You (O Muhammed!) (stand) on an exalted standard of moral character" (Qur'ān, 68:4). What does this verse

mean? Does anybody know the meaning of this verse? What is meant by "an exalted standard of moral character"? What moral character Allāh describes as being "on an exalted standard" of morality, of ethics, of behavior? What is meant by this? Do we say that it means that he was outgiving, generous, well mannered, amicable? These meanings can decorate anyone. But this great standard of morality we cannot attain. Such discussion, this discussion often reflects the way of thinking of one who is definitely influenced by those who oppose our views; otherwise, if we stop at this verse: **وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ** "Do not be in haste with the Qur'ān before its Revelation to you is completed" (Qur'ān, 20:114). This proves that the Qur'ān was present in his heart, wholly encompassed by his heart. Rather, this verse wants to point out the following: "People! You must know that the Qur'ān is present in Muhammed's heart;" therefore, the verse says **وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ** "Do not be in haste with the Qur'ān before its Revelation to you is completed". What is meant by this haste, the Prophet's haste? It is the haste of longing, of eagerness. The verse here does not want to prohibit the Prophet ﷺ from anything which was not sound or right. Rather, it wants to address us: The Qur'ān was revealed according to the method of "You do I mean, O neighbor, listen!" This method has more than one level. Sometimes, the address is directed to someone whereas we are the ones who are intended by it. Some other times, the speech is directed at someone while our attention is solicited towards it especially regarding the affairs and conditions of that person: **وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ** "Do not be in haste with the Qur'ān before its Revelation to you is completed." The verse wants to let us realize that the Qur'ān, as a whole, existed in his heart, Allāh's peace and blessings with him and with his Progeny. The same exists in Surat al-Qiyama: **لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ** "Do not move your tongue concerning the (Qur'ān) to hasten with it" (Qur'ān, 75:16). When we, therefore, want to read what is indicated in the *tafsir* book of Ali ibn Ibrahim for this verse: **وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ** "Do not be in haste with the Qur'ān before its Revelation to you is completed," keeping in mind the fact that the *tafsir* by Ali ibn Ibrahim is entirely quoted from the Imāms عليه السلام, particularly from our Imām al-Sadiq, peace with him, what does Ali ibn Ibrahim say?

كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله إذا نزل عليه القرآن بادر بقراءته قبل نزول تمام الآية والمعنى - يعني أن الآية والمعنى موجوداً في قلبه، قبل نزول تمام الآية، الآية يعني اللفظ والمعنى، يعني معنى الآية، الجانب المعنوي منها - كان رسول الله إذا نزل عليه القرآن بادر بقراءته قبل نزول تمام الآية والمعنى فأنزل الله {وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَى إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ} - أن يُفرغ من قراءته من قِبَل جبرئيل، أو إذا كان الوحي من الله سبحانه وتعالى، لأن الوحي الذي كان ينزل على النبي تارةً من طريق الملائكة وتارةً من طريق الله سبحانه وتعالى، وهذا المعنى واضح في الروايات، لا كما يتصور البعض من المخالفين أن الله لم يُكلم النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وأن التكليم حالة خاصة بموسى، هناك منهم من يقول هذا الكلام، مع أنهم حين يتحدثون عن عمر بن الخطاب ماذا يقولون عنه؟

Whenever verses of the Qur'ān were revealed to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, he would recite them before the verse and the meaning were completed. In other words, both verse and meaning existed in his heart prior to the revelation of the full verse and meaning. Allāh, therefore, revealed this verse: {وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَى إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ} "Do not be in haste with the Qur'ān before its Revelation to you is completed," that is, before Gabriel had finished reciting it, or if the *wahi* is from Allāh, the most Praised and Exalted One, because the *wahi* used to descend to the Prophet ﷺ once through the venue of the angels and some other times through the venue of Allāh, the most Praised and Exalted One. This meaning is clear in narratives. It is not as some people who differ from us imagine, i.e. that Allāh did not speak to the Prophet ﷺ and that speaking to Him was a special status relevant to only Moses عليه السلام. Some of them make such a statement although when they discuss Omar ibn al-Khattab..., what do they say about him?

This is al-Bukhari's *Sahih*. The edition in my hand is that of Dar Sadir of Beirut. Hadith No. 3469 states the following: عن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله قال - النبي يقول - إنه قد كان فيما مضى قبلكم من الأمم محدثون - يعني يحدثهم الله، تحدثهم الملائكة - وإنه إن كان في أمي هذه منهم - إذا كان في هذه الأمة - فإنه عمر بن الخطاب - وحددت به - فإنه عمر بن الخطاب - وفي باب مناقبه وفضائله، الحديث: ٣٦٨٩ - عن أبي هريرة قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: لقد كان فيما قبلكم من الأمم محدثون، فإن يك في أمي أحد فإنه عمر - الرواية التي بعدها - عن أبي هريرة قال: قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: لقد كان فيمن كان قبلكم من بني إسرائيل رجالٌ يكلمون من غير أن يكونوا أنبياء، فإن يك من أمي منهم أحدٌ فعمر - الأمة لا، لا يصح أن يكلمون، عمر يمكن أن يكلم، يكلمه الله، تكلمه الملائكة - لقد

كان فيمن كان قبلكم من بني إسرائيل - هذا صحيح البخاري ورواياته صحيحة بحسب القوم - لقد كان فيمن كان قبلكم من بني إسرائيل - هذا في باب فضائل أصحاب النبي، في كتاب فضائل أصحاب النبي وفي باب فضائل عمر، باب مناقب عمر بن الخطاب، من كتاب فضائل أصحاب النبي - لقد كان فيمن كان قبلكم من بني إسرائيل رجالاً يكلمون من غير أن يكونوا أنبياء فإن يكن من أمتي منهم أحدٌ فعمر - لكن حينما يكون الحديث عن عليّ وعن آل عليّ يكون الكلام حينئذٍ باطلاً وبدعةً، يعني إذا كان عمر بهذه المرتبة فلما لا يكون أهل البيت صلوات الله وسلامه عليهم أجمعين بهذه المرتبة؟! هل نال هذه المرتبة بفضل جدته باطلي؟ وأولاد رسول الله لم ينالوا هذه المرتبة بفضل أمهم فاطمة صلوات الله عليها؟!!

Abu Hurayra quotes the Prophet ﷺ as saying, "There were in nations before you those to whom the angels spoke, and if there are such persons in my own nation—that is, if there are men in this nation like them—it must be Omar ibn al-Khattab—the narrative specifically names him—it must be Omar ibn al-Khattab." In hadith 3689, which deals with Omar's merits and distinctions, we read about Abu Hurayra quoting the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ as saying, "There were in nations before you محدثون (those to whom the angels speak); so, if there is any such person in my nation, it is Omar." And the narrative after it also quotes Abu Hurayra citing the Prophet ﷺ as saying, "There were before you in the Israelites men to whom the angels spoke without being prophets; so, if there is any such person in my nation, it must be Omar." So, the Imāms إمامة cannot be محدثون *muhaddathoon*, men to whom the angels speak, but they can speak to Omar to whom Allāh speaks, to whom the angels speak... This is Bukhari's *Sahih* book the narratives of which are authentic, according to these folks. But when there is a discussion of Ali and the Progeny of Ali, the discussion will then be باطلاً وبدعةً false and an innovation. In other words, if Omar enjoyed such a status, why did not Ahlul-Bayt, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, enjoy it as well?! Did Omar win this status by virtue of his grandmother Batahli باطلي, but the children of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ could not win it by virtue of their mother Fatima, Allāh's blessings with her?!

Batahli باطلي is the second name of Sahak صهاك, grandmother of Omar ibn al-Khattab. Sahak صهاك is a well known woman, i.e. she is ill-reputed and is known in history. I wonder: Did Omar win the status indicated above [speaking to the Almighty's angels] by virtue

of his grandmother Batahli, whereas Muhammed's offspring did not win it by virtue of their mother, Fatima...?! Allāh and the angels speak to Omar, this is what the narrative indicates in the absolute sense. As for Ali عليه السلام and his offspring عليه السلام..., they did not! What is amazing is that such a discussion exists in our books, too. We always find overlooking and bypassing of these deep meanings in narratives of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام while explaining the positions of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. What do these meanings of addressing the Imāms, peace and blessings of the Almighty with them all, saying, **السلام عليكم يا مهبط الوحي**, "Peace with you, the landing place of the *wahi*? Are these not the meanings to which some narratives have pointed out? **وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ** { "Do not be in haste with the Qur'ān before its Revelation to you is completed" (Qur'ān, 20:114) means that Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله had the entire Qur'ān with him, and this is proven by the narrative which I recited for you from Volume 35 of *Bihar al-Anwar* which discusses the birth of the Master of Wasis عليه السلام who recited: **{قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ}** "The believers must (eventually, imminently) win through" (Qur'ān, 23:1) فقال له صلى الله عليه وآله: **قد أفلح المؤمنون بك وبولايتك يا علي**. Whereupon the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله said to him, "The believers win through you and through accepting your authority, O Ali."

If I want to look for similar testimonies in *hadith* books and in the narratives reported from the Household of Infallibility, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, we will need a great deal of time. In our narratives, our Imāms عليه السلام set the condition that the narrator must be a *faqih* (jurist); this is a condition which our Imāms عليه السلام require of the narrator. This is *Rijal al-Kashi*, and this is a narrative from our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام, the second narrative in the book. The first narrative reads: **أعرفوا منازل شيعتنا بقدر ما يحسنون من رواياتهم عننا، فإننا لا نعد الفقيه منهم فقيهاً حتى يكون محدثاً، فقيل له أو يكون المؤمن محدثاً؟ قال: يكون مفهماً والمفهم محدث - وهذا أيضاً درجة من درجات الوحي - قال: يكون مفهماً - يعني لا هو الذي يبحث عن الفهم، هناك فارق بين من يطلب الفهم ويبحث عن الفهم، وهناك فارق بين الذي يكون مفهماً - إننا لا نعد الفقيه منهم فقيهاً حتى يكون محدثاً، أو يكون المؤمن والمفهم محدث - قال: نعم، يكون مفهماً والمفهم محدث.** "Get to know the positions of our Shi'as (followers) from the extent of how good they quote us, for we do not regard a *faqih*, jurst, among them as such unless he is *muhaddath*." He was asked, "Can a believer be *muhaddath*?"

He ﷺ said, "He becomes مُفْهَم *mufham*, inspired with comprehension, and such an individual is مُحَدَّث *muhaddath*." This, too, is a degree of *wahi*. He ﷺ said: يَكُونُ مُفْهَمًا that is, he is not the one who looks for comprehension—there is a difference between one who seeks understanding and one who is inspired understanding, comprehension.

This sacred verse as well as verse 16 of Surat al-Qiyama which we have already discussed above: { لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ } "Do not move your tongue concerning the (Qur'ān) to hasten with it" (Qur'ān, 75:16), and here is verse 114 that says وَلَا فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ، وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُقْضَى إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ، وَقُلْ: رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا "Allāh is high above all, the King, the Truth! Do not be in haste with the Qur'ān before its Revelation to you is completed but say, "O Lord! Advance me in knowledge" (Qur'ān, 20:114) point out to this reality, to the reality that the entire Qur'ān, in all its pronouncements and meanings, is in the heart of Muhammed ﷺ, and Muhammed's *wahi* is beyond our ability to encompass, and reference to this has already been cited in Surat al-Najm (Chapter 53 of the Holy Qur'ān). There are levels of *wahi* in the earthly world, and there are levels in the high horizon. The ahadith or narratives that discuss levels or testimonies of *wahi*. I would like to bring about some samples from them; let us take these samples:

Regarding the verse saying لَا تُحْرِكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ "Do not move your tongue concerning it (Qur'ān)," [Abdullah ibn Omar] al-Baydhawi says the following: أَيُّ بِالْقُرْآنِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَتِمَّ وَحْيُهُ {لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ} لِتَأْخُذَهُ عَلَى عَجَلَةٍ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ يَنْفَلِتَ مِنْكَ "He [the Almighty] refers to the Qur'ān before its *wahi* is completed 'so you may take it in haste for fear it will get lost from you.'" Does the Qur'ān become loose with Muhammed ﷺ?! This is what al-Baydhawi says in his *tafsir* titled أنوار التنزيل و أسرار التأويل *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Asrar al-Ta'weel*. Another example is in *Mujma` al-Bayan* مجمع البيان في تفسير القرآن by al-Tibrisi which states: - قال: لا تعجل بتلاوته قبل أن يفرغ جبرئيل من إبلاغه - وذكر معاني أخرى أنه - "He said, 'Do not make haste in reciting it (Qur'ān) before Gabriel finishes notifying you of it.'" He mentions other meanings such as: "Do not recite it to your companions, nor should you dictate it before its meanings are made

clear for you," as if he was not familiar with its meanings and was waiting until the meanings were made clear for him. This is what al-Tibrisi, may Allāh have mercy on his soul, says, one of our exegetes, in his *Mujma` al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur`ān*. It is no secret that Al-Azhar endorsed it, regarding it as one of the *tafsir* books relied on by Al-Azhar. Had this *tafsir* relied in a true and broad way on the hadith of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, Al-Azhar would not have endorsed it. But they in Al-Azhar know that this *tafsir* is full of views of those who differ from us. But what is odd is that our pulpits and speakers quote only this *tafsir* although *tafsir* books of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام are available and so are their narratives; otherwise, Al-Azhar would not have endorsed this book out of love for the Shi`as or for Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام!

It is not only due to the book being thus full of such ideas; there is an issue behind it and details in this pursuit which I may tackle some other time. Read these lines of what mentor al-Saduq wrote in his belief book known as *Aqa'id al-Shaikh al-Saduq*:

قال - الاعتقاد في نزول الوحي من عند الله عز وجل بالأمر والنهي: اعتقادنا في ذلك إن بين عيني إسرائيل لوحاً - طبعاً هذه المعاني يأخذها من الروايات - فإذا أراد الله عز وجل أن يتكلم بالوحي ضرب اللوح جبين إسرائيل - ضرب اللوح يعني أشرق، شخ فيه - فينظر فيه فيقرأ ما فيه - إسرائيل ينظر فيه - فيلقيه إلى ميكانيل - يعني القرآن يأتي من اللوح - إن بين عيني إسرائيل لوحاً فإذا أراد الله عز وجل أن يتكلم بالوحي ضرب اللوح جبين إسرائيل - يعني جاء الكلام إلى اللوح وإسرائيل يقرأ في لوحه - فينظر فيه فيقرأ ما فيه فيلقيه إلى ميكانيل ويلقيه ميكانيل إلى جبرئيل ويلقيه جبرئيل إلى الأنبياء، وأما الغشبية التي كانت تأخذ النبي حين ينقل ويعرق فإن ذلك كان يكون منه عند مخاطبة الله عز وجل إياه، فأما جبرئيل فإنه كان لا يدخل على النبي صلى الله عليه وآله حتى يستأذنه إكراماً له وكان يقعد بين يديه قعدة العبد - جبرئيل كان يأمر الأنبياء السابقين، أما حينما يأتي إلى مُحَمَّدٍ صلى الله عليه وآله فهو يقعد بين يديه قعدة العبد، جبرئيل إنما سجد والملائكة كلهم سجدوا لآدم لأي شيء؟

He has said, "Belief in the descending of the *wahi* from Allāh, the most Exalted, the most Great, which carries commands and prohibitions: Our belief in this matter is that there is a tablet between the eyes of Israfīl—of course he derives these meanings from the narratives—so if Allāh, the most Exalted, the most Great, wanted to speak through the *wahi*, the tablet would hit Israfīl's forehead—he

means the Qur'ān comes from the tablet—between the eyes of Israfil is a tablet; so, if Allāh, the most Exalted, the most Great, wants to speak in the *wahi*, the tablet would hit Israfil's forehead—meaning the speech goes to the tablet and Israfil reads his tablet—so he would read what is in it. He would then submit it to Michael, and Michael would submit it to Gabriel, and Gabriel would submit it to the prophets. As regarding the swoon which used to overtake the Prophet ﷺ when he felt heavy and would sweat, this happened when Allāh, the most Exalted, the most Great, addressed him. As for Gabriel, he used not to enter the house of the Prophet ﷺ without first seeking his permission out of respect for him, and he used to sit before him as a slave would—Gabriel used to order the past prophets, but whenever he went to Muhammed ﷺ, he would sit before him as slaves would. Why did Gabriel and all angels prostrate to Adam?

They did so because of the *noor* from Muhammed ﷺ which shone in Adam; so, why should Gabriel not sit before Muhammed ﷺ as a slave would?! Does it make sense to say that Gabriel would be a teacher of the Prophet ﷺ?!

الرواية هنا عن عبيد بن زرارة عن أبيه قال: قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام: جعلت فداك الغشبية التي كانت تصيب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله إذا نزل عليه الوحي؟ قال: فقال ذلك إذا لم يكن بينه وبين الله أحد - يعني لم يكن الرسول هو جبرئيل - ذاك إذا تجلى الله له قال: ثم قال: تلك النبوة يا زرارة وأقبل يتخشع - تلك النبوة، هذه مرتبة النبوة، ليس النبوة في نزول جبرئيل، الإمام هنا يشير إلى هذه الحقيقة التي تحدثنا عنها سابقاً حين الحديث: السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة. النبوة هي هذه وليس الحديث عن جبرئيل، النبوة حين يتجلى الله له - فقال ذلك إذا لم يكن بينه وبين الله أحد، ذاك إذا تجلى الله له، ثم قال: تلك النبوة يا زرارة، وأقبل يتخشع - النبوة هي هذه، ليس النبوة بنزول جبرئيل، هذا لعامة الأنبياء، لمحمد صلى الله عليه وآله النبوة هي هذه والوحي هو هذا، الوحي الذي أشارت إليه آيات سورة النجم كما مر علينا قبل قليل.

The narrative here is from Ubayd ibn Zurarah from his father. He said, "I asked Abu Abdullah عليه السلام: 'May I be your sacrifice! What about the swoon which used to affect the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ whenever the *wahi* descended to him?' He عليه السلام said, 'This would take place when nobody was between him and Allāh—meaning Gabriel was not the messenger in that case—this happened if Allāh

manifested Himself to him.' Then he said, 'Such is Prophethood, O Zurarah,' and he seemed overwhelmed by humility"—such was Prophethood; such is the level of Prophethood. Prophethood is not in the descending of Gabriel. The Imām عليه السلام here points out to this fact about which we discussed before when we discussed: **السلام عليكم يا أهل بيت النبوة** "Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet!" Prophethood is this and not the speech of Gabriel. Prophethood is when Allāh manifested Himself to him. He said, "This took place when nobody was between him and Allāh, when Allāh manifested Himself to him." Then he added saying, "Such is Prophethood, O Zurarah," and he seemed overwhelmed by humility. Such is Prophethood. Prophethood is not through Gabriel descending; this applies to the prophets in general. To Muhammed ﷺ, Prophethood was such as this, and such is the *wahi*, the *wahi* to which verses of Surat al-Najm point out as we shortly before discussed.

This narrative is in the *tafsir* book of Ali ibn Ibrahim:

عن جابر عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: قال جبرئيل لرسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله في وصف إسرأفيل: هذا حاجب الرب - إسرأفيل - وأقرب خلق الله منه واللوح بين عينيه من ياقوتة حمراء - الكلام الذي أشار إليه الشيخ الصدوق قبل قليل - فإذا تكلم الرب تبارك وتعالى بالوحي - والله سبحانه وتعالى لا يتكلم باللفظ كما يقول أمير المؤمنين فإنه يقول ولا يلفظ - فإذا تكلم الرب تبارك وتعالى بالوحي ضرب اللوح جبينه فنظر فيه ثم ألقى إلينا - يعني إلى جبرئيل وإلى ملائكة الوحي، ملائكة العلم النازل على الأنبياء - ثم ألقى إلينا نسعى به في السماوات والأرض، إنه لأدنى خلق الرحمن منه وبينه وبينه تسعون حجاباً من نور يقطع دونها الأبصار ما يعد ولا يوصف، وإني لأقرب الخلق منه - في حال تلقي الوحي - وبينني وبينه مسيرة ألف عام، في قوله تعالى: {بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ* فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ} - الرواية ينقلها علي بن إبراهيم - اللوح المحفوظ له طرفان: طرفٌ على العرش وطرفٌ على جبهة إسرأفيل؛ فإذا تكلم الرب جل ذكره بالوحي، ضرب اللوح جبين إسرأفيل، فنظر في اللوح، فيوحي بما في اللوح إلى جبرئيل عليه السلام.

Jabir quotes Abu Ja`far عليه السلام as saying that Gabriel said this to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in his description of Israfīl: "This is the Lord's commissionaire and the nearest of Allāh's creation to Him, and there is a tablet between his eyes is of a red ruby." The discussion to which mentor al-Saduq pointed out a short while ago: "If the Lord, the most Blessed and the most Exalted One, spoke with *wahi*—and Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, does not

speak through pronouncements as the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام says: He says something without pronouncing it—when the Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, speaks the *wahi*, the tablet hits his (Israfil's) forehead, so he would look into it, then he would submit to us—that is, Israfil submitting to Gabriel and the angels of *wahi*, the angels of the knowledge that descends to the prophets—then he would submit to us that which we would rush to convey in the heavens and earth. He is the closest being to the Merciful One, and between him (Israfil) and Him (the Almighty) is the distance of a thousand years as we read in this verse: **﴿بَيْنَ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ فِي نُوحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ﴾** "Nay! This is a glorious Qur'ān, in a preserved tablet (inscribed)" (Qur'ān, 85:21-22). This narrative is transmitted by Ali ibn Ibrahim: The preserved tablet has two ends: One end is on the Arsh and one on Israfil's forehead. So, if the Lord, Great is His Mention, speaks *wahi*, the tablet would hit Israfil's forehead, whereupon he would look into the tablet and inspire what the tablet contains to Gabriel, peace with him.

These are samples of the narratives which discuss the *wahi* and the angels of *wahi*. They show us images of how the *wahi* descends to the Prophets. I said that all levels of *wahi* which were for the prophets are all gathered for Muhammed ﷺ, but the Muhammedi *wahi*, the Prophetic *wahi* relevant specifically to Muhammed ﷺ varies completely. The greatest Sura in the Holy Qur'ān that has discussed the reality of the *wahi* is the *Tawhid* Sura (also called Surat al-Ikhlās):

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Say: "He is Allāh, the One and Only; 1. قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ
2. "Allāh the Eternal, the Absolute; 2. اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
3. "He does not beget, nor is He begotten; 3. لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
4. "And there is none like unto Him." 4. وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

(Qur'ān, 112:1-4)

The minds cannot absorb the knowledge embedded in this Sura which is one of those that conclude the text of the Qur'ān. This Sura may give the impression to one who looks at it to think that he knows its meaning. This Sura is very deep in its implication and meaning, quite distant from our minds. An interesting incident I point out not because it is funny but because it tells you something. They say that in an Iraqi city there was a mosque imām who used to lead the congregational prayer service then leaves without sharing with people any hadith. One day, the worshippers at the mosque said to him, "Our Shaikh, you come and pray but you do not talk to us. Teach us something; today is Friday; let us know something from you." He asked them, "What do you want?" "We want," they said, for example, Surat al-Tawhid; we do not know its meaning. We recite it in the prayer always without knowing its meaning. Explain to us what it means." He ascended the pulpit only to surrender to the insistence of the worshippers and started explaining Surat al-Tawhid thus:

"In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful.' You know what it is. 'Say: 'He is Allāh, the One and Only; Allāh the Eternal, the Absolute; He does not beget, nor is He begotten;“ this is quite clear; "And there is none like unto Him," nobody is like Him."

I say that the axiom of "He, after much effort, explained water to mean water" does not apply to him. He actually did not even explain water, after some effort, to mean water. This incident may be amusing, but this is the truth: the man does not have much. But even those who have much, who have plenty of the knowledge of language, the science of oratory regarding views of exegetes, this Surat is locked, is secured; it is very difficult to reach, very difficult to enter. The narrative in the sacred *Al-Kafi*, therefore, in Volume One, says the following:

عن إمامنا زين العباد صلوات الله وسلامه عليه، يقول: عن عاصم بن حميد قال: قال: سئل علي بن الحسين عليهما السلام عن التوحيد فقال: إن الله عز وجل علم أنه يكون في آخر الزمان أقوامٌ متعمقون - في آخر الزمان - فأنزل الله تعالى: {قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ}

والآيات من سورة الحديد إلى قوله: { وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ } - يعني الآيات الأولى من سورة الحديد - فمن رام وراء ذلك فقد هلك - الإشارة الدقيقة هنا - إن الله سبحانه وتعالى علم أنه يكون في آخر الزمان أقوامٌ متعمقون فأنزل الله تعالى: { قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ } - أنزلت هذه السورة للمتعمقين في آخر الزمان كي تكون حجة وبرهاناً ودليلاً على عظمة هذا القرآن وعلى عظمة هذا الوحي وعلى أسرارهِ وألغازهِ التي لا يصل إليها إلا مُحَمَّدٌ وآلُ مُحَمَّدٍ.

Our Imām, Zainul-`Abidin, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, is quoted by Aasim ibn Hameed who narrates saying that Ali ibn al-Hussain, peace with them both, was asked once about the *Tawhid*, so he said, "Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, knows that there will be at the end of time folks who are conversant, erudite; therefore, He revealed [the Sura that starts with]: 'Say: He is Allāh, the One and Only (God)' and the verses from Surat al-Hadid (Chapter 57 of the Holy Qur`ān:

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Whatever there is in the heavens and on earth declares God's Praise and Glory, for He is the One Exalted in might, Wise.

١ . سَبِّحْ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ❀

2. The dominion of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him; it is He Who gives life and death, and He has power over all things.

٢ . لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي
وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ❀

3. He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent, and He has full knowledge of all things.

٣ . هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ
وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ❀

4. It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days: moreover, He is firmly established on the Arsh. He knows what enters the earth

٤ . هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَعْلَمُ
مَا يَلْجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا
يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا وَهُوَ
مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ ❀

and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from the heavens and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wherever you may be. And Allāh sees well all that you do.

5. The dominion of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him, and all affairs are referred to Allāh.

6. He merges the night into the day, and He merges the day into the night, and He has full knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts.

٥ . لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ❁

٦ . يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَهُوَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ❁

(Qur'ān, 57:1-6)

"Therefore (the Imām ﷺ went on), if one seeks what is beyond that, he perishes,"—the reference here is precise--"Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, knows that there will be at the end of time folks who are conversant, erudite; therefore, He revealed [the Sura that starts with]: 'قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ' Say: He is Allāh, the One and Only (God)'. That is to say, this Sura was revealed for those during the last times on earth who are conversant, erudite, so it may be an argument, a proof, an evidence testifying to the greatness of this Qur'ān and to this *wahi* as well as to its mysteries and puzzles which nobody reaches except Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ.

I would only like to point out to this Sura, particularly to its first verse 'قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ' Say: "He is Allāh, the One and Only (God), that the reference here is to the greatest level of the Muhammedi *wahi*, to the greatest status. This greatest *wahi* level is the one that was before creation, when Allāh was and nothing else was with Him, then He spoke a word; this word was *noor* and spirit, then He

mixed the *noor* with the spirit, and from that *noor* the *noors* of all existents were derived. This address refers to that reality. This address is not a pronounced one, as we discussed while explaining the Almighty's statement of {كُنْ فَيَكُونُ} "Be! And it is" (Qur'ān, 36:82). He says, but He does not articulate, as the Master of Wasis ﷺ says: "It is not a sounded call, nor is it an audible voice." It is neither a sounded call nor a heard voice; rather, if He wanted something, it came to be. This is قُلْ *Qul* (Say) and كُنْ *Kun* (Be!) having the same context. In our past episodes, we came across such a meaning.

These are lines from one hadith by Tariq ibn Shihab which he narrates about the Commander of the Faithful ﷺ. This is Volume 25 of *Bihar al-Anwar* where the Master of Wasis ﷺ says the following as he talks about Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, ie. the Imāms, Ali and Ali's offspring ﷺ:

فهم سر الله المخزون وأوليائه المقربون وأمره بين الكاف والنون، لا بل هم الكاف والنون - هذا تجلي أول، وهذا تجلي ثاني، أمره بين الكاف والنون مرتبة من مراتب التجليات، لا بل هم الكاف والنون: هذا تجلٍ آخر - إلى الله يدعون وعنه يقولون وبأمره يعملون، علم الأنبياء في علمهم وسر الأوصياء في سرهم وعز الأولياء في عزهم، كالقطرة في البحر والذرة في القفر والسموات والأرض عند الإمام، كيدته من راحته - السماوات والأرض وهذا هو حقيقة الوحي - والسموات والأرض عند الإمام كيدته من راحته، يعرف ظاهرها من باطنها، ويعلم برها من فاجرها ورطبها ويابسها، لأن الله علم نبيه علم ما كان وما يكون وورث ذلك السر المصون الأوصياء المنتجبون - يا علي إنك تسمع ما أسمع وترى ما أرى - وورث ذلك السر المصون الأوصياء المنتجبون ومن أنكر ذلك فهو شقي ملعون، يلعنه الله ويلعنه اللاعنون، وكيف يفرض الله على عباده طاعة من يحجب عنه ملكوت السماوات والأرض - هل هذا شيء منطقي؟ - وكيف يفرض الله على عباده طاعة من يحجب عنه ملكوت السماوات والأرض؟، وإن الكلمة من آل مُحَمَّد تنصرف إلى سبعين وجهاً، وكل ما في الذكر الحكيم والكتاب الكريم والكلام القديم من آية تذكر فيها العين والوجه واليد والجنب فالمراد منها الولي لأنه جنب الله ووجه الله، يعني حق الله وعلم الله وعين الله ويد الله، فهم الجنب العلي والوجه الرضي والمنهل الروي والصراط السوي والوسيلة إلى الله والوصلة إلى عفوهِ ورضاه - هؤلاء هم آل مُحَمَّد - سر الواحد والأحد فلا يقاس بهم من الخلق أحد، فهم خاصة الله وخالصته وسر الديان وكلمته وباب الإيمان وكعبته وحجة الله ومحجته وأعلام الهدى ورايته وفضل الله ورحمته وعين اليقين وحقيقته وصراط الحق وعصمته ومبدأ الوجود وغايته وقدرة الرب ومشيته وأم الكتاب وخاتمته وفصل الخطاب ودلالته وخزنة الوحي وحفظته وآية الذكر وتراجمته ومعدن التنزيل ونهايته، فهم الكواكب العلوية والأنوار العلوية - فهم

الكواكب العلوية والأنوار العلوية، أو قد تكون: فهم الكواكب العلوية - فهم الكواكب العلوية والأنوار العلوية المشرقة من شمس العصمة الفاطمية في سماء العظمة المحمّديه والأغصان النبوية النابتة في دوحة الأحمدية والأسرار الإلهية المودعة في الهياكل البشرية والذرية الزكية والعترة الهاشمية الهادية المهدية، أولئك هم خير البرية - مُحَمَّدٌ وآل مُحَمَّدٍ صلوات الله وسلامه عليهم أجمعين.

"They are Allāh's treasured mystery, friends who are close to Him, command between the ك and ن; Nay! They are the ك and the ن—this is a first manifestation and a second one: His Command between the "Kaaf" and "Noon" is a level of manifestation; rather, they are the "Kaaf" and the "Noon": this is another manifestation—towards Allāh do they invite, about Him do they talk, by His command do they act. The prophets' knowledge is incorporated into their knowledge, and the mystery of the wasis is (embedded) in their mystery. The dignity of the friends of Allāh lies in their dignity. They are like the drop in the sea, the atom in the plain. The heavens and the earth with the Imām are like his hand to his palm—the heavens and the earth: this is the reality of the *wahi*—the heavens and the earth are with the Imām like his palm to his hand: He knows its outer and its inner, and he distinguishes the pious from the sinner, what is moist and what is dry, because Allāh taught His Prophet the knowledge of what it was and what will be, and the elite *wasis* inherited that safeguarded mystery—*O Ali! You hear what I hear and see what I see*—and that mystery was inherited by the elite *wasis*. Anyone who denies it is a cursed wretch; Allāh curses him and so do those who curse. How can Allāh impose on His servants the obedience of one from whom the domains of the heavens and the earth are obstructed?—is this logical?—and how can Allāh require His servants to obey one from whom the domains of the heavens and the earth are obstructed? The word from the Progeny of Muhammed has seventy meanings. Every word in the Holy Qur'ān, every verse in which there is a reference to the eye, the face, the hand, the side... is intended to refer to the *wali* because he is Allāh's side and face; that is, he is Allāh's reality, Allāh's knowledge, Allāh's eye, Allāh's hand, the lofty side, the pleased countenance, the spring that quenches the thirst, the straight path, the means to Allāh, the link to attaining His forgiveness and pleasure—these are the Progeny of Muhammed—they are the mystery of the One and Only (God), so none among the creation can be compared to them, for they are

Allāh's elite, the chosen ones, the secret of the One Who legislates the creed, His word, the gate of *iman*, conviction, its Ka`ba, the proof of Allāh and the destination to Him, the flagposts of guidance and the standards, Allāh's favor and mercy, the sure certainty, His reality, the path of righteousness and of His protection, the start of existence and its goal, the Might of the Lord and His will, the Mother Book, its conclusion, the settling argument, the evidence that leads to Him, the treasurers of the *wahi* and its guardians, the verses of the Qur`ān and its interpreters, the substance of revelation and its conclusion; for they are the Alawi planets and the lofty *noors*—they are the Alawi or the sublime planets—they are the Alawi planets and the sublime *noors* that shine from the sun of Fatimi Infallibility in the sky of Muhammedi greatness and the prophetic branches that grow in the Ahmedi garden, the Divine mysteries embedded in human bodies, the pure progeny, the Hashemite descendants, the guiding ones, the ones who are rightly guided..., such are the ones who are the best of creation—Muhammed and the Progeny of Muhammed, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all."

I go back to Surat al-Tawhid which was revealed for the conversant and erudite ones near the end of time: {قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ} "Say: 'He, Allāh, is the One and Only (God).'" This is similar to the word كُن which is the first level, when Allāh, the most Praised and Exalted One, manifested in the first *noor*; what is this manifestation? It is this manifestation of: {قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ} "Say: 'He, Allāh, is the One and Only (God).'" Allāh, the most Praised and Exalted One, manifested Himself in it, and it was Muhammed, it was the Muhammedi reality, the mirror in which **الأسماء الحسنی** Allāh's Most Beautiful Names were manifested: "Say: 'He, Allāh, is the One and Only (God).'" O Muhammedi reality! Say! Speak! What is this speech, articulation? It is the articulation of the transfiguration, not the pronouncement of words. From here was this Sura revealed to the conversant, the erudite. This is a sign from afar. I am not one of the conversant ones, nor do I realize the implications of this Sura. Yes, if I want to discuss it linguistically or say what the scholars of exegesis and philosophers have said, I can explain these meanings, but these are not the conversant ones. The conversant ones are people who have their own characteristics and other conditions about which the narratives and sacred supplications have discussed, describing their

honorable merits. These descriptions do not fit me or my likes. But there is a clear sign through the narratives: "Say: 'He, Allāh, is the One and Only (God).'" The discussion here is about the first *noor*. The first *noor* was when Allāh manifested Himself in that *noor*: "And the Arsh is from my *noor*, and my *noor* is better than the Arsh;" why so? It is because "The Arsh is from my *noor*, and my *noor* is from Allāh's *noor*; Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, manifested Himself in the first reality, in the first *noor*. A short while ago, we came across the narrative about {اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، مِثْلُ نُورِهِ...} "Allāh is the *noor* of the heavens and the earth; the likeness (similitude) of His *noor*..." He said, "The likeness of His *noor*; His *noor* is Muhammed ﷺ, His first *noor* from which the (other) *noors* shone and from which existence became a reality. It is the *noor* of the Muhammedi reality. Allāh, Praised and Exalted is He, manifested Himself in this reality: "Say: 'He, Allāh, is the One and Only (God).'" O Muhammedi reality! Manifest itself! By what means does it manifest itself?

It does so through أسماء الله الحسنى Allāh's Most Beautiful Names; He manifested Himself this way; therefore, there is one hadith that says إن الله خلق آدم على صورته "Allāh created Adam in His image." "Adam" refers to the first Adam, and the first Adam is the Muhammedi reality—إن الله خلق آدم على صورته "Allāh created Adam in His image." What is meant is that Allāh manifested Himself in him; how did Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, manifest himself in him? The *noors* of His Most Beautiful Names did the manifesting. The existents came to be from the *noors* of these Names. His *noors* manifested themselves in the Muhammedi reality, and the Muhammedi reality is like a mirror: This mirror reflected the *noors* of the Most Beautiful Names. There was existence, and there were levels of existence according to their affiliations and rendering to the Most Beautiful Names which shone from the mirror of the Muhammedi reality. This is the *wahi* in its lofty level, and this is the *wahi* in its first degree. The *wahi* that was in the earthly world is an appearance and a level of the *wahi* that suits this world, for the guidance of people. It manifested itself in the Book, in rulings, verses, knowledge, thought and other things: all is called *wahi*, for such is the *wahi* in the earthly world. Even the *wahi* in the earthly world, in its mystery station, is different from this written *wahi*. We

have already come across this narrative, and I think I read it twice because it suits the meanings which have passed by and suits this meanings before us now. The narrative which is transmitted by our mentor, al-Tusi, from Imām al-Baqir عليه السلام says: **عن عبد الله بن عجلان السكوني قال: سمعت أبا جعفر عليه السلام يقول: بيتُ عليٍّ وفاطمة حجرة رسول الله وسقف بيتهم عرشُ ربِّ العالمين، وفي قعر بيوتهم فرجة مكشوفة إلى العرش: معراج الملائكة تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً و كل ساعة و طرفة عين** Abdullah ibn Ajlan al-Sukooni has said, "I heard Abu Ja`far عليه السلام saying, 'The house of Ali and Fatima عليهما السلام is the chamber of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, and the ceiling of their house is the Arsh of the Lord of the Worlds. At the bottom of their homes there is a scraped opening to the Arsh—the ascension of the *wahi* (inspiration)—the descent of the *wahi* and the angels are these [Imāms]; they are the landing place of the *wahi*. Peace with you, O landing place of the *wahi*. This *wahi* is the one to which this narrative points out. **وفي قعر بيوتهم فرجة مكشوفة إلى العرش: معراج الوحي، والملائكة تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً و كل ساعة و طرفة عين** At the bottom of their homes there is a scraped opening to the Arsh—and the angels descend to them with *wahi* morning and evening, every hour and every eye's blink. Of course, for each situation there is a *wahi* of its own. The Muhammedi *wahi* is specifically relevant to Muhammed ﷺ, but there is the Alawi *wahi* and the Fatimi *wahi*; therefore, those who are surprised about what some narratives have brought, this is a low level of *wahi*. Gabriel, peace with him, used to go to entertain Fatima following the martyrdom of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and his departure from this (earthly) world. Whatever knowledge Gabriel brought was written in a book which was called thereafter **مُصْحَفُ فَاطِمَةَ** *Fatima's Mushaf*. This is one level of *wahi* and is not the highest level of Fatimi *wahi*.

There is *wahi* to the bees, to the mother of Moses عليه السلام, to Mary daughter of Imran (Amram), and there is *wahi* to the disciples... all is acceptable. But when the *wahi* is to Ali...?! The *wahi* is to Omar... The angels speak to Omar although he is not a prophet..., this is acceptable..., but when the *wahi* is to Ali and Fatima عليهما السلام, it is not acceptable. Definitely there is *wahi* specifically to the Prophet ﷺ which is the Prophetic *wahi*. For each there is a level of *wahi*. What was particularly for the Prophet ﷺ cannot be for someone else, as we came across in the two pomegranates narratives: Gabriel

brought the Prophet ﷺ two pomegranates. He ate the first and said that it was specifically for him, splitting the second and saying, يا "O Ali! You hear what I hear and see what I see," as we have come across in the sacred *Nahjul-Balagha* a short while ago. وفي قعر بيوتهم - بيوت عليّ وآل عليّ - فرجة مكشوفة إلى العرش: معراج الوحي، والملائكة تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً And at the bottom of their homes—the homes of Ali and his Progeny—there is a scraped opening leading to the Arsh: the ascension of *wahi*, and the angels descend to them with *wahi* morning and evening. These are the landing places of the *wahi*; thus do we greet them: **السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ** يا أهل بيوت النبوة، وموضع الرسالة، ومختلف الملائكة، ومهبط الوحي "Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, those whom the angels frequently visit and the landing place of *wahi*." These are described as the landing place of *wahi*. It is just like that, not what is said by some folks who explain it by saying that they are the landing place of *wahi* because their grandfather was the Prophet ﷺ and the *wahi* descended to the Prophet ﷺ, so they were addressed as the landing place of the *wahi*. What shall we do with all these numerous texts in narratives which discuss these degrees of *wahi* which descend to them? وفي قعر بيوتهم - بيوت عليّ وآل عليّ - فرجة مكشوفة إلى العرش معراج الوحي والملائكة تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً وكل ساعة وطرفة عين "At the bottom of their homes—the homes of Ali and his Progeny—there is a scraped opening leading to the Arsh: the ascension of the *wahi*, and the angels descend to them with *wahi* morning and evening, every hour, every eye's blink." The narrative wants to point out that the *wahi* never stops reaching them. Actually, their own soul is the *wahi*. Their soul is the *wahi* between them and Allāh. Their life is this link: إن لنا مع الله حالات لا يسعنا فيها لا ملك مقرب ولا نبي مرسل "We have with Allāh instances during which neither an angel close to Allāh nor a sent messenger can encompass us." The narrative here is to bring the meaning closer to our comprehension. They are as such in all their conditions. We have already come across the discussion that their matter, their hadith, can be borne neither by the angels close to Allāh nor by the messenger prophets; so, what about their own conditions? These narratives come to send a signal, not to provide details, a signal that provides brevity through the sign language: تنزل عليهم بالوحي صباحاً ومساءً وكل ساعة وطرفة عين، والملائكة لا ينقطع فوجهم: فوج ينزل وفوج يصعد "They bring them down

wahi morning and evening, every hour and every eye's blink, and the angels' groups never stop descending and ascending—the angels descend to them in order to benefit from them—**وإن الله تبارك وتعالى كشف لإبراهيم عليه السلام عن السماوات حتى أبصر العرش، وزاد الله في قوة ناظره، وإن الله زاد في قوة ناظر مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلِيٍّ وفاطمة** He, uncovered the heavens to Abraham, peace with him, until he saw the Arsh, and Allāh increased the power of his vision, and Allāh increased the power of vision of Muhammed, Ali and Fatima **عليه السلام**. "Allāh, Blessed and Exalted is He, uncovered the heavens to Abraham, peace with him, until he saw the Arsh, and Allāh increased the power of his vision, and Allāh increased the power of vision of Muhammed, Ali and Fatima **عليه السلام**." Bringing the example of Abraham is to bring the meaning closer; otherwise, the distance in the status of Abraham and that of their homes cannot be counted or enumerated. **وإن الله زاد في قوة ناظر مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلِيٍّ** "And Allāh increased the power of vision of Muhammed and Ali..." The narratives say that at the last moments of Abraham's lifespan, the angel of death went to him to take his soul away. What did he ask the angel of death?

Abraham asked the angel of death to grant him a respite so he could offer a thanksgiving prostration just as Ali's Shi`as do. This is what our narratives say. At the last moment of his life, the angel took Abraham's life as he was imitating Ali's Shi`as: **{وَأَنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ}** "Surely among his followers (Shi`as) is Abraham" (Qur'ān, 37:83). The narratives say that among Ali's Shi`as was Abraham. In the explanation of this verse, this narrative came saying that at the last moment of his life, Abraham prostrated, imitating Ali's Shi`as: **{وَأَنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ}**. This is the highest level which Abraham reached. But it was the level in which he was; he was the father of Tawhid. It is not that we are the ones who claim to love them and to address them by only the tongue and something that touches the hearts, such as emotion or love, without knowledge or without conviction. What we have falls within the limits of children's knowledge. I say children's knowledge and I mean the child whose mother nurses him while not knowing he does not know the meaning of motherhood, nor does he know the status of the mother. But gradually he learns to pronounce the word "Mama" which signifies her being the one who nurses him with milk. So, whenever he heard this word, he knew that the being that feeds him and is keen about his well-being, granting him affection, is called "mother". We, our knowledge, is like that. Our knowledge stops at this limit. All what I say here and what is said by others falls along the degree of children's knowledge.

The knowledge of conviction, of facts, specifically belongs to the prophets, just as Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام of the `Itra has said: العبارة للعوام "the statement is for the general public." We swim in the sea of the statement: والإشارة للخواص، واللطائف للأولياء، والحقائق للأنبياء "The sign is for the elite, the interesting things are for the *walis*, whereas the realities are for the prophets." Where do we stand with regard to the realities and to the interesting things, and where do we stand with regard to the sign? We swim in the sea of adoration and dive into it, for such is the children's knowledge to which I have pointed out, such as this child's knowledge through this word describing the being that feeds him and provides him with sustenance.

وإن الله زاد في قوة ناظر مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلِيٍّ وفاطمة والحسن والحسين صلوات الله عليهم، وكانوا يبصرون العرش ولا يجدون لبيوتهم سقفاً غير العرش، فبيوتهم مسقفةً بعرش الرحمن ومعارج الملائكة والروح - الروح الذي هو أعظم من الملائكة - فوجٌ بعد فوج لا انقطاع لهم، وما من بيت من بيوت الأنمة منا إلا وفيه معراج الملائكة، لقول الله عز وجل: {تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ * سَلَامٌ...} قال: قلت من كل أمر، قال: بكل أمر، فقلت: هذا التنزيل؟، قال: نعم - فالوحي نازلٌ عليهم صباح مساء وفي كل ساعة وفي كل طرفة عين، فروحهم هي الوحي، اتصالهم بالله هو هذا الوحي، وتلكم هي أعلى مراتب الوحي.

Allāh increased the power of vision of Muhammed, Ali, Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, and they used to look at the Arsh and find no ceiling for their homes save the Arsh. Their homes, therefore, were roofed with the Arsh of the most Merciful One and with the ascensions of the angels and the Spirit—the Spirit who is the greatest angel—one group after another, incessantly; there is no house of the Imāms from among us save it has an ascension to the angels due to this verse of the most Exalted, the most Great One; "In it, the angels and the spirit descend by Allāh's permission on every errand: Peace... (Qur'ān, 97:4-5). I asked, "On every errand?" He said, "Yes, by every errand." I asked, "Is it this revelation?" He said, "Yes." The *wahi*, therefore, descends on them morning and evening, every hour and every eye's blink, for their soul is the *wahi*, their link with Allāh is this *wahi*; such is the highest level of *wahi*.

If the signal in the supplication of the evening preceding the anniversary of the Inception of the Prophetic Message, we read the following: اللهم إني أسألك بالتجلي الأعظم في هذه الليلة من الشهر المعظم "O Allāh! We plead to You through the greatest manifestation in this night of the revered month." The greatest manifestation is the meaning to which we have already pointed out. This greatest manifestation is the first, but it manifested itself during the night preceding the Inception of the Prophetic Mission. It manifested itself according to what suited the earthly world, within the limits of the earthly worlds, within the limits of the Greatest Prophet ﷺ in the earthly world; otherwise the greatest manifestation is the first, i.e. when Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, manifested Himself to the Muhammedi reality, so the *noors* of His Most Beautiful Names shone, the *noors* of His Most Beautiful Names shone in that reality from which it was reflected on existence, whereupon the existents came to exist through the *noors* of the Muhammedi reality which is the mirror for that reality. But there is a greater manifestation of this reality which suits the earthly world in Muhammed, the Greatest, peace and blessings of the Almighty with him and with his Progeny. It is to this sign that the supplication narrated from our Imām al-Hujja, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, refers:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَعَانِي جَمِيعِ مَا يَدْعُوكَ بِهِ وَوَلَاةِ أَمْرِكَ الْمَأْمُونُونَ عَلَى سِرِّكَ الْمُسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِأَمْرِكَ الْوَاصِفُونَ لِقُدْرَتِكَ الْمَعْلُونُونَ لِعَظَمَتِكَ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَا نَطَقْتَ فِيهِمْ مِنْ مَشِيئَتِكَ فَجَعَلْتَهُمْ مَعَادِنَ لِكَلِمَاتِكَ وَأَرْكَانًا لِتَوْحِيدِكَ وَأَيَاتِكَ وَمَقَامَاتِكَ الَّتِي لَا تَعْطِيلُ لَهَا فِي كُلِّ مَكَانٍ، يَعْرِفُكَ بِهَا مَنْ عَرَفَكَ، لَا فَرْقَ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَخَلْقُكَ. لَا فَرْقَ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهَا - إِنْ لَنَا مَعَ اللَّهِ حَالَاتٌ لَا يَسْعَا فِيهَا لِأَنْبِي مُرْسَلٌ وَلَا مَلَكٌ مُقَرَّبٌ - لَا فَرْقَ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَخَلْقُكَ {قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ}.

"O Allāh! I plead to you in the names of all the pleas of those in charge of Your affairs whom You entrusted to safeguard your mystery, who disseminate the glad tidings by Your command, who describe Your Might, who declare Your Greatness! I plead to You by Your will which You articulated in them, rendering them the substance of Your words, the corners of Your Unity, your Signs and stations for which there is no idling anywhere! Through them are You recognized by those who know You. There is no difference between You and them [the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh] except

they are Your servants and creatures—there is no difference between You and them—we have with Allāh conditions in which neither a messenger prophet nor an angel close to Allāh can encompass—there is no difference between You and them except they are Your servants and creatures: "Say: He is Allāh, the One and Only (God)". O Muhammedi reality! Speak! How does it speak?

It speaks through transfiguration. It does not speak through pronunciation because Allāh is manifested in it. When we say about the Infallible Imām ﷺ that he is the face of Allāh, the hand of Allāh, the eye of Allāh, the side of Allāh..., this is one aspect, one direction of the transfiguration which suits the earthly world, with this limited world. As regarding the Muhammedi reality, which is above these limited worlds, transfiguration in them will be according to them, to their expanse, and we will come across some narratives in the other labels of the Comprehensive Ziyara that discuss such contexts and others. This pursuit needs more explanation and clarification, but time is flying, and a good deal of time has already lapsed, I mean I have gone beyond the usual time limit for the program. There is still the rest of the reality. There are other narratives, other verses, too. This Surat al-Tawhid needs a long stop according to what we know, not according to its reality which was revealed for the conversant, the erudite folks near the end of time.

The summary we reach is this: **السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبُوَّةِ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرِّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ** *Assalamo Alaikom*, peace with you, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones who are frequently visited by the angels and the landing place of the *wahi*. They are the landing place of the *wahi* but not in these naïve senses in which the levels of Prophethood are limited and so are the levels of Imāmate and the statuses of Ahlul-Bayt, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. The statuses of Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ are limitless stations, and the statuses of Prophethood are limitless stations, too. Perhaps the narrative of the two pomegranates is the best that points to the symbolism of the Prophethood's pomegranate being specifically relevant to Muhammed ﷺ, whereas in the pomegranate of knowledge, there are partners with Muhammed ﷺ. In the Muhammedi reality, the first *noor* was; who was he? It was

Muhammed, Allāh's peace and blessings with him and his Progeny, then it mixed with the soul; from the mixture, all other *noors* were derived from his *noor*, Allāh's peace and blessings with him and with his Progeny. He has the precedence, the priority, the perfection, the completion, and they branch out from him, for they are the Household of the Prophet's family, the place of the Message, the ones whom the angels often visit, and they are the landing place of the *wahi*--يا عليّ إنك تسمع ما أسمع وترى ما أرى "O Ali! You hear what I hear and see what I see!" I think this statement suffices to explain what is meant. It is true in every level of existence, in every layer of existence of the earthly world and also in the high horizon. We have already come across narratives indicating that Ali عليه السلام was in the sublime horizon, and Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله saw Ali عليه السلام in the high horizon. We have come across the narratives, for Ali عليه السلام hears where Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله does and sees what Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله saw. This applies to all of them, from their first up to their last, up to the Imām of our Time, Allāh's peace and blessings with him: Al-Hujja son of al-Hassan sees what Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله sees, hears what Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله hears and smells what Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله smells.

Just as Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله was the landing place of the *wahi*, they, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, did likewise, and the Imām of our Time was the landing place of the *wahi* and he remains so. The Imām of our Time عليه السلام is the one who is often visited by the angels, and he is also the one where the *wahi* descends, Allāh's peace and blessings with him. But what belongs to Muhammed صلى الله عليه وآله is Muhammed's, and what belongs to Ali عليه السلام is Ali's. When we tackle the deep Gnostic pursuits, we have to commit ourselves to a very important *noor*-based principle and a golden principle called the principle of safeguarding statuses and the principle of the plurality of standpoints. When we discuss every aspect of a particular standpoint while safeguarding the statuses, each status has its own particularity and [relevant] matters; otherwise, if we do not take into consideration the plurality of standpoints and the safeguarding of statuses, we will fall into a mix-up and shuffle, and the discussion will then be unmanageable, meaningless. The borders will then break and the joints will be disjointed. But we will always keep discuss within two frameworks: *Tawhid* and *Wilaya*. In our

discussion of both of these frameworks, i.e. that of *Tawhid* and of *Wilaya*, what applies to *Tawhid* applies to *Wilaya*, and what applies to *Wilaya* applies to *Tawhid*. It is just as we discussed the supplication: لا فرق بينك وبينها There is no difference between yourself and them. This is from one standpoint while safeguarding the statuses as the supplication says إلا أنهم عبادك وخلقك except that they are Your servants and creation.

There is a plurality of standpoints. The aspect that is looked at and through which a look is cast at the concept, at the meaning, and there also is the safeguarding of the statuses, for each level has its status, just as is said in the speech that for every situation there is a statement. Is there not for every situation, i.e. in the situation of elation, there is a station juxtaposed by a stance in grief, and for each level there is a statement? In the world of realities, every situation has its own matters and particularities. For every situation there is a description relevant to it, and it cannot seep into the other situations. If it seeps into other situations, the latter will be mixed up, causing a mix-up and a shuffle, and this causes us to fall into falsehood, into stupidity, into all sorts of evil. We always keep adhering to these two principles: a plurality of standpoints and the safeguarding of statuses. For each status there is its own relevant affair. *Tawhid* is a status; *Wilaya* (mastership) is a status. *Wilaya* is of two facets: Prophethood and Imāmate.

We have two main positions: *Tawhid* and *Wilaya*.

Wilaya branches out into two positions: Prophethood and Imāmate.

Each of these positions has its own particularities. When we discuss the convergence of these positions, it is of some sort of standpoint, while safeguarding the particularities of each in particular, for its own self, without the first situation's characteristics seeping into the second. They, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, are the ones whom we address thus: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبُوَّةِ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمَخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ. "Peace with you all, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones whom the angels frequently visit and the landing place of *wahi*."

Peace with you all, their followers (Shi`as), those who love them, who visit their Shrines, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. I solicit your supplication, all of you, and may Allāh keep you secure.



Shrine of Imam al-Abbas 

الحلقة الثامنة

معنى "وَمَعْدِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ"

EIGHTH EPISODE

THE MEANING OF وَمَعْدِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ "THE SUBSTANCE OF MERCY"



Peace with you all, you who love Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. May Allāh bring happiness to your days, and may He recur these days to you and your honorable families with felicity, blessing, goodness and happiness. This is the eighth episode of our program "the Comprehensive Great Ziyara", a discussion of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, the discussion of love, of cleanness and purity, the discussion of the truth, of salvation in this life and in the Hereafter. Come let us board this ark, the ark of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. Our program continues to reach you, and by the will of Allāh, it will continue to do so during the blessed month of Ramadhan at the threshold of which we stand, this month which is awaited by the faithful from one year to another, the month of Ramadhan, of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. We, by the will of Allāh, will stay

in touch with you, I and my brothers, across the Satellite Mawadda Channel. With regard to the "Comprehensive Great Ziyara," it will reach you every other evening. We will divide the nights of the month of Ramadhan: In one evening, it will be our Qur'ān program, and in the next evening, the program will be the "Great Comprehensive Ziyara". We remain shaded during the nights and the days of the month of Ramadhan in the shades of the Holy Qur'ān and `Itra: One day will be for the Qur'ān and one for the `Itra. One day you will watch our Qur'ān program and one you will be watching the "Great Comprehensive Ziyara" program. There are other programs which will be announced later by the will of Allāh at the right time. As far as the program of the "Great Comprehensive Ziyara" is concerned, it will be aired every other night so we may be able to discuss the largest possible number of meanings and contexts which this sacred ziyara contains.

Regarding our episode for today, we reached the following statement which we read in *Mafatih al-Jinan* of our mentor narrator of hadith, al-Qummi رحمته الله, in this sacred ziyara: **السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبُوَّةِ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ - آخر حديث كان عند هذا العنوان -** "Peace with you all, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones whom the angels frequently visit and the landing place of the *wahi*—the last hadith reached this label—the landing place of the *wahi* and the substance of mercy." Our discussion today deals with this label: "the substance of mercy".

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبُوَّةِ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ، وَمَعْدِنِ الرَّحْمَةِ وَرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتِهِ "Peace with you all, Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones who are frequently visited by the angels, the substance of mercy, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. The substance of mercy, the Household of Infallibility, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all: the word **مَعْدِنِ** *ma`din* in Arabs' language means the place of settlement and stay. It means the place of stability. **مَعْدِنِ** may refer to a place, or it may be a root word, too. I do not wish to enter into the details. **عَدَنَ** *`adana* (a verb) in the Arabs' language means "He stayed for long;" therefore, the Qur'ānic expression describes the Gardens of Eternity as **جَنَاتِ عَدْنِ** *jannaat `adn*, the Gardens of Adn (or Eden). Adan (or And)

means the place where eternity is a fixed characteristic. The Gardens of Aden means the Gardens of Stay, of Eternity. *عَدَنُ فِي الْمَكَانِ* `adana *fil makan* means he stayed in it and remained there, remained in that place. Hence, the word *مَعْدَنُ* *ma`dan* is used to describe, for e.g., gold or silver, meaning the place or the enclosure or center or quarters where there is plenty of gold, etc. So, it is said that this is *مَعْدَنُ الذَّهَبِ* *ma`dan al-thahab*, the gold metal, or the silver metal, which means: This ground contains the gold metal. It means this earth has large quantities of gold, the gold is settled in this ground. We cut some of the earth rocks and from these rocks we say that these rocks contain plenty of gold, or there is plenty of iron in them. These rocks are said to be the gold metal, the iron metal, etc. The *مَعْدَنُ* *ma`dan* is the place where something is found, be it a human, an animal, an inanimate object..., anything.

The *مَعْدِنُ الرَّحْمَةِ* *ma`din al-rahma*, the metal or substance or material of mercy, means they are the place, the authority, the position, the level or the beings in whom mercy has settled in a perpetuated fixed way. What is *رَحْمَةٌ* *rahma*, mercy? For humans, it is a feeling, a human feeling, an emotion. For Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, and for the first holy minds, there is no emotion in those worlds, there is no emotion in the Divine Self, not even in the first holy rational worlds, there is no emotion there because the holy worlds, the worlds of the first minds, there was the Muhammedi reality, the world of the Greatest Name (of Allāh), the world of the holiest outpouring..., call it whatever you will, use the expressions and terms as you please: the world of the first *noor*, the world of the first water..., all these are labels for the reality which was a mirror in which Allāh manifested Himself. In the sciences of mechanics, they say that the greatest invention in the history of mankind was the wheel. This is what they say: The greatest invention was that of the wheel; why? It is due to inventing the wheel being the beginning of movement on earth, the beginning of the industrial movement, something which man made, and it moves. This industrial movement was essentially the mother and origin of all other industries, and it was the origin and the foundation for all these huge technologies which mankind reached; so, it is said that the greatest invention is the wheel. Advocates of the Gnostic branches of knowledge, those who espouse deep sciences, say that the greatest invention which

mankind reached is the mirror; why? Through the mirror, they can make the latter an example for many realities, especially for the greatest reality in this existence. The greatest reality in existence is connected to us, humans. Before it, one's image is manifested in this mirror. But this does not mean that the image is the same human; this is only an image of a human.

The Muhammedi reality is the mirror in which Allāh manifested Himself. The Muhammedi reality is not Allāh; rather, it is the mirror in which Allāh manifested Himself. When I stand before the mirror, when you stand before the mirror, there is an image in this mirror, this image looks like the reality, but it is not the reality. Such is the Muhammedi reality: the first *noor*: it is a mirror, the Muhammedi reality is a mirror, the same mirror is the same manifestation. Examples, of course, bring us close to something while distancing us from another. The sense-related examples, if we wish to bring them to explain the deep meanings, the deep meanings in the cognitive dimension distantly from the senses, the sense-related examples... bring something closer while distancing themselves from another. Philosophy, in its depth, is less than the deep divine sciences. When those who study philosophy at the beginning, the professors, when they study philosophy, they bring the meanings [to our comprehension] with [through the use of] sense-related examples. But after that, the student's mind is trained on the philosophical study, so he is not brought examples, because thinking according to material examples does disservice to the root of the idea: The examples bring one close, on the one hand, while distancing him from another. Examples are brought for those who are not specialized; otherwise, those whose minds are accustomed to philosophical thinking and to bringing abstract images to the human mind in order to follow the norms of information and to imagine the information, do not need examples. Rather, they find the examples distancing the meanings from their right center and getting the facts out of their places and levels. But we do need some examples in order to bring the meanings closer while they, at the same time, distance other meanings.

When I brought the example of the mirror, when I stand before the mirror, I have a mirror before me and an image. But when I discuss

the Muhammedi reality, the latter is the mirror and the image at the same time. When I stand before the sense-related mirror in my daily life, there is a mirror and an image, but when I look for long at my image in the mirror, I get distracted from the mirror, so much so that it can be said that the mirror disappeared into the image. It is as though an image is before me and not a mirror in which there is an image because my mind and senses are distracted from the mirror: My gaze remains fixed at the image. This happens in the sensual world. As for the first worlds that are stripped off these faulty examples and restricted meanings, the Muhammedi reality is the mirror, and it is the image that manifested itself in the mirror. From here have the men of wisdom, the Gnostics, said that the greatest human invention is the mirror because it helps man understand the greatest reality, the broad field, the mirror on which mercy shone and in which mercy manifested itself. They are the substance of mercy. They are the place and the area as well as the mirror on which the Rahman reality manifested itself. As I said a short while ago, mercy for all creation is a feeling, and this feeling is an emotion: an emotion of the human heart; through what? The emotion of the human heart is due to a shortcoming which it sees in others, so man tries to complete that shortcoming. When man sees himself as being in need of the fulfillment of a shortcoming, this is mercy. The one in need may be a son, a child, a wife, a father, a friend, a neighbor or basically a stranger. And the mercy may be towards an animal, a plant, or anything else. Mercy for humans is a feeling, and the reality of this feeling is a heart sensation stemming from the heart because man feels a shortcoming in the one to whom he wants to be merciful, so he tries thus to complete the shortcoming in that human towards whom he felt an affection, or he wanted to pour his mercy on him. With regard to Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, this meaning cannot be because He is above emotion, above feelings; why is He above feelings? This is so because feelings are an emotion, and the Divine Self is above being emotional: لا فرق بينك وبينهم عبادك "There is no difference between You and them except they are Your servants." The emotion aspect has only their being servants of Allāh. The first holy realities are the ones that directed them towards the creation, and they were only influential, effective, and their direction was towards Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, for they are excited because they are in

the position of complete servitude: لا فرق بينك وبينها إلا أنهم عبادك "There is no difference between You and them except they are Your servants." This side is that of the creation; "... إلا أنهم عبادك" save they are Your servants": This side is from the side of Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him. This is a discussion of the world of the first holy realities, of the first *noor* from which everything shone. The texts are clear: Everything shone from their *noors*, and the discussion here falls in that phase.

They are the substance of mercy. Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام are the substance of mercy in the first holy realities and in the subsequent ones: in the veil world, the Arsh world, the Kursi world, the seven heavens and the earth world..., in every layer of this existence they are the substance of mercy. This is the overall meaning of معدن الرحمة *ma`din al-rahma*. This is the meaning in which two wings are combined: the linguistic ones, the one related to language, and the cognitive wing which is based on meanings derived from the book's hadith and from the hadith of the `Itra. This is the sum-up meaning of معدن الرحمة *ma`din al-rahma*. You exist through mercy, and so does every existent; he/it exists through mercy; therefore رحمتي سبقت غضبي "My mercy has preceded My wrath." We have already indicated that the recording Book is the Holy Qur'ān which is a symbolic image of the cosmic Book, i.e. existence. The first verse of the Holy Book, the first verse with which we open our Qur'ān, which verse do we face? بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. This is the first verse in Allāh's Holy Book in the first Sura (Chapter) called al-Fatiha, i.e. from here do we open the recording Book. Through the Fatiha do we open the recording Book, and the first thing in this Fatiha is this sacred verse: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ, *In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful*. This verse contains both descriptions: الرَّحْمَنُ *al-rahman*, and الرَّحِيمُ *al-raheem*. We are discussing the substance of الرحمة *al-rahma*, mercy, which has two positions:

They are: the *rahman*-related position and the *raheem*-related one. And they are the substance of mercy, the substance of the level in which mercy settles in its entirety, in all its levels, in all its scopes. The scopes of this mercy-related verse are referred to here as mercy from the Rahman, and there is mercy from the Raheem. It is the first verse of the Holy Book (Qur'ān): بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ a statement

which we repeatedly pronounce without knowing the reality it embeds. I say that this statement is not akin to an expression of etiquette in order to magnify the Qur'ān because this is not a discussion that can be made by anyone in order to magnify anyone. Someone dies, anyone eulogizes him by saying, "I am incapable of recounting his merits and virtues." This is a statement of etiquette which is worthless because anyone, no matter who he may be, if we want to count his defects, they will be more than his merits. As long as this individual is not Infallible, his defects are more than his merits, no matter who he may be. This is the tone of the supplications. When we recite supplications of Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام, these supplications either discuss a reality, a fact, or they may be just talk and chatter. When we recite the supplications, we find out that these supplications tell us that our vices are more than our virtues.

In the supplication of Abu Hamzah al-Thumali, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him, which is narrated from our Imām al-Sajjad عليه السلام, there is one single short statement in it: **خيرك إلينا نازل وشرنا إليك صاعد، ولم يزل ولا يزال ملك كريم يأتيك عنا بعمل قبيح** "Your goodness to us is descending, while a good angel keeps bringing You reports of our ugly deeds" describes a continuous status, day and night, when we are awake and when we sleep. This is so because the ugly deed is not only the one that falls within the circle of what is prohibited or detested, it includes even the good deed which does not meet the full conditions, it will still be ugly. In other words, when one, for e.g., builds a house, if this house is not built according to the building principles, the construction will be ugly and it will have defects and will cause problems from which whoever resides in it will suffer. This applies to everything: The tailor who sews a shirt; if he does not do it right and follows the rules, the shirt will be ugly. He did not intend to do an ugly deed; he intended to do a good one, but he did not do what he did well: **ولم يزل ولا يزال ملك كريم يأتيك عنا بعمل قبيح** "a good angel keeps bringing You reports of our ugly deeds." Anyhow, the discussion here is not about these details, but I say that we are unable to comprehend this verse. This is not said by way of composition, but it is the clearly pure reality. In verse 87 of the sacred Surat al-Hijr (Chapter 15) we read: **وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ** And We have bestowed upon you the seven oft-

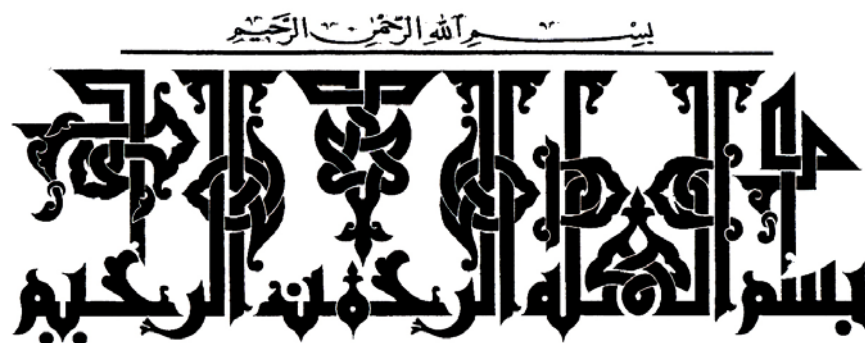
repeated (verses) and the Grand Qur'ān. The verse here mentions two things which were revealed to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: **وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي**: seven oft-repeated verses; this is on one scale, and this is mentioned first, and **وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ** and the Grand Qur'an, on the

other scale, as if there is an equality between them, but the seven oft-repeated verses come first, before the Qur'ān: **وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي** "We have bestowed upon you the seven oft-repeated verses." Reference to these oft-repeated seven verses is obvious in statements made by Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام. Here, I do not wish to explain this verse. Quite obviously, reference here is made to the seven verses that are twice



repeated in every prayer, or because they were revealed twice: al-Fatiha was revealed in Mecca and also in Medina. There are those who say that it was revealed before and after the Inception of the Prophetic Mission because the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to pray, and there is no prayer without the Book's Fatiha; this is the law: There is no prayer without the Book's Fatiha; so, how did he ﷺ pray? He had to pray with the Book's Fatiha although the position of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ is broader and deeper than that, and I have already discussed this Qur'ānic verse: **لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ** "Do not move your tongue concerning the (Qur'ān) to hasten with it" (Qur'ān, 75:16). I pointed out that the Qur'ān, in its entirety and details, is in the heart of Muhammed ﷺ. Anyhow, I go back now to the area about which I want to talk: **﴿وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي﴾** (Qur'ān, 15:87). The crown of these seven oft-repeated verses is the *basmala*; the first of these seven oft-repeated verses is the *basmala*. I now only select some ahadith and narratives that discuss aspects of the *basmala*. A narrative is reported from mentor

al-Tusi in his book titled *Al-Tahttheeb*, which is one of the well known four books of *usool* (principles of the faith): عن مُحَمَّد بن مسلم قال: سألت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام إمامنا الصادق عن السبع المثاني والقرآن العظيم - عن الآية التي مر ذكرها قبل قليل - أهي الفاتحة؟ قال: نعم، قلت: بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم "Muhammed ibn Muslim said that he asked Abu Abdullah, peace with him, our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام, about the seven oft-repeated verses and the Grand Qur'ān—about the verse cited a short while ago—whether it is the Fatiha or not. He عليه السلام answered in the affirmative, so Muhammed asked the Imām عليه السلام if the basmala is part of these seven oft-repeated verses, whereupon the Imām عليه السلام answered again in the affirmative, adding, "It is their very best."



Another narrative from Abdullah ibn Yahya al-Kahili: عن ابي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أقرب إلى اسم الله الأعظم من ناظر العين إلى بياضها Abu Abdullah, peace with him, has said, "*Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Raheem* is closer to Allāh's Greatest Name than the blackness of the eye to its whiteness." Of course, here I do not want to discuss the meaning of Allāh's Greatest Name. By the will of Allāh, we will come to it in the coming episodes and discuss the meaning of the Greatest Name. Perhaps we should first point out to this narrative, too, as much as we need of it: First, from these narratives, it has become clear to us how important the *basmala* is. For what purpose does the importance of the basmala show? It shows the greatness of its context, of what it contains, of its indications. The narrative, therefore, says that the basmala is closer to Allāh's Greatest Name than the eye's blackness to its whiteness. Is there a distance between the eye's blackness and whiteness? They

both are on one horizon, there is no distance between the blackness of the eye and its whiteness. This basmala is close to Allāh's Greatest Name than the eye's blackness to its whiteness, it is closer than that. This means it is in a way the Greatest Name. I said in *Al-Ma`arif al-Ilahiyya* **المعارف الإلهية** that we have to maintain the standpoints, the positions. The principle of maintaining the positions in *المعارف الإلهية* *Al-Ma`arif al-Ilahiyya* in the judicial pursuits is the first golden rule of judgment; otherwise, without it, there will be mix-up and confusion. From here comes the emphasis in narratives by Ahlul-Bayt about the basmala. The narratives have made its audible pronouncement as well as the pronouncement of the basmala a label for those who love Ahlul-Bayt **عليه**. The issue is not political. The issue is not social, nor is it stubbornness or contention against someone but the reality is as such. Those who differ from us wanted to hide this reality. A beautiful narrative for the benefit I would like to mention here. This narrative is from our Imām al-Sadiq **عليه** and it is narrated in al-Ayyashi's *Tafsir*. The Imām **عليه** says,

إذا أمَّ الرجلُ القومَ جاءَ شيطانٌ إلى الشيطانِ الذي هو قريبٌ إلى الإمام - لأنه مذكور في الروايات بأن الإنسان دائماً هناك من وكلاء إبليس من شياطين الجن من هو قريب منه، هذا المعنى موجود - إذا أمَّ الرجلُ القومَ جاءَ شيطانٌ إلى الشيطانِ الذي هو قريبٌ إلى الإمام فيقول: - هذا الشيطان الآتي يسأل الشيطان الذي كان موجوداً قبل أن يأتي هو - يسأله: هل ذكر الله - هو في صلاة؛ فالمراد بهل ذكر الله؟ الإمام يقول - يعني هل قرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم - لأن القوم لا يقرأون بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، مباشرة يبدؤون الحمد لله رب العالمين بعد تكبيرة الإحرام، فهذا الشيطان الآتي يسأل الشيطان الأول - هل ذكر الله؟ الإمام يقول: يعني هل قرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم؟ الإمام صلوات الله عليه يقول: فإن قال نعم هرب منه - هذا الشيطان الآتي الجديد يعني جاء بمهمة، عنده مهمة؛ سنتضح المهمة - فيسأل الشيطان السابق هل ذكر الله؟ هل قرأ بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم؟ قال: نعم، إذا قال نعم يرجع - فإنه لن يجد مجالاً لتنفيذ مهمته - وإن قال لا - لم يذكر بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم؛ الإمام يقول - ركب عنق الإمام ودلى رجليه في صدره، فلم يزل الشيطان إمام القوم حتى يفرغوا من صلاتهم.

"When a man acts as the imām (in congregational prayer services), a demon goes to the demon who is close to the imām—this is so because narratives state that there are always agents of Iblis from among the jinn Satans who are near him, this concept exists—if a man acts as the imām of some people, a Satan, demon, goes to the Satan who is near the imām and says—the incoming Satan asks the

Satan who is already present before his coming—to ask him: 'Has he mentioned [the Name of] Allāh—he is performing the prayer, so what does it mean whether he has mentioned the Name of Allāh or not? The imām will say—meaning: 'Has he read **بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم** In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful?—this is so because the [Sunni] folks do not recite the basmala, they immediately start with **الحمد لله رب العالمين** *Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of the World*, following *takbirat al-ihram*, so this Satan comes to ask the first Satan—Did he mention [the Name of] Allāh? The Imām **عليه السلام** says, "It means: 'Did he recite the basmala?' The Imām **عليه السلام** says, 'If he answers in the affirmative, that Satan will flee away from him—this newly incoming Satan comes on a mission which will become clear—and if the answer is negative—he did not pronounce the basmala, the Imām **عليه السلام** says, 'He [the incoming Satan] would ride on the imām's neck and let his legs dangle on his chest; so, Satan will remain to be the imām of the folks until they finish their prayer."

Here is a narrative from the Prophet **ﷺ**:

إذا مرّ المؤمن على الصراط - هذا في يوم القيامة - إذا مرّ المؤمن على الصراط فيقول: **بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم** - وطبعاً لا يستطيع كل أحد أن يقولها، والقضية ليست لفظية، الحديث عن عالم الآخرة، ليس الحديث حديث ألفاظ لأنه في عالم الآخرة القضية تختلف: **فَكشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ**؛ هذا البصر في المستوى الحسي، في المستوى العقلي، في المستوى القلبي والوجداني، في المستوى البصيرتي؛ في جميع المستويات بصرك اليوم حديد، القضية تتجاوز الألفاظ والطقوس - إذا مرّ المؤمن على الصراط فيقول **بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم أطفئ لهب النار** - هذه البسمة تطفئ لهب النار حتى يستطيع أن يجوز على الصراط لأن الصراط جسر ممدود في جهنم هكذا وصفت الروايات الصراط - **أطفئ لهب النار وتقول - جهنم تقول - جز يا مؤمن فإن نورك قد أطفأ لهبي**.

"If the believer treads the Sirat—which takes place on the Judgment Day—if the believer treads on the Sirat and says **بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم** *In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful*—of course not everyone will be able to say it then, and the issue is not one of a pronouncement; the discussion of the world of the Hereafter is not a discussion of pronouncements because in the world of the Hereafter the issue is different: **... "فَكشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ"** ... now We have removed the veil from you, so your sight is sharp

(on) this Day!" (Qur'ān, 50:22), this vision is on the sense level, on the mental level, on the level of the heart and the conscience, on the level of seeing things on all levels; **فَبَصَّرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ** so your sight (vision) is sharp this Day; the issue transcends pronouncements and rituals—if the believer treads on the Sirat and pronounces the basmala, the flame of the fire is put out—this basmala puts out the fire so he may be able to pass on the Sirat because the Sirat is a bridge over hell, thus have the narratives described the Sirat—it has put out my flame, and hell will say, 'Pass, O believer, for your *noor* has put out my flame.'"

These narratives and other statements by Ahlul-Bayt **عليه السلام** tell us and inform us of the greatness of the context this basmala contains. As I said, the Holy Qur'ān, the recording Book, is an image, a map of the scope of all existence. In it, there is the explanation of everything, but everything is explained in it in a symbolic way, and this symbol is not known except by the one addressed through it. The Qur'ān is not merely a Book containing sentences, statements and pronouncements to explain a group of Shari`a-related rulings and belief matters. This is one aspect of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān incorporates the mysteries of existence, and these mysteries are put in the form of symbols in this Qur'ān, and these symbols cannot be deciphered except by the Imāms **عليه السلام**. These individual letters at the beginning of Suras **الم، المص، المر** ALM, ALMS, ALMR, etc. are the same letters from which the Qur'ān is composed, but Allāh has made them in a special order this way, making them the chest, the container, of mysteries. These same letters from which the verses are composed and which contain sentences and words having meanings, this is another composition for the Qur'ānic symbols that have mysteries more than the ones in the individual letters. The individual letters are labels, they are examples that point out to the keys to the gates. These gates help us reach the chest of mysteries which neither I nor you can reach. These keys are with the Infallible Imām, Allāh's peace and blessings with him.

Perhaps I can bring an example for those who know how to use a computer. This is the keyboard. Through the symbols and keys, the computer user can explore his system. The Qur'ān is like keys,

symbols, that reveal the realities. As for this surface, the surface of the expression, it is for me and my likes from among the general public. The realities are deposited in the depth of this Qur'ān, and the Qur'ān is much deeper as the Master of Wasis عليه السلام says: **ظاهرة أنيق وباطنه عميق** "Its outside is neat, and its inside is deep." Ali عليه السلام describes it as being deep; what is this thing? What is this depth? Ali عليه السلام says, **ما رأيت شيئاً إلا ورأيت الله قبله وبعده ومعه وفيه**, "I never saw anything without seeing Allāh before it, after it, with it and in it." Ali عليه السلام, who has such a vision, says the Qur'ān is deep. Ali's normal outlook is this deep: "I never saw a thing without seeing Allāh..." He means anything that he faced in life he saw with such a vision. For him, normal vision is as such: **ما رأيت شيئاً إلا ورأيت الله قبله وبعده ومعه وفيه** "I never saw anything without seeing Allāh before it, after it, with it and in it." What a vision this is! This statement is not composition. This is Alawi speech, and the Alawi speech is sublime in meaning. This meaning we cannot imagine. I may be able to explain this statement as those who explain do, but these explanations are superficial, meaningless. I can bring many explanations for this statement, and these explanations exist in books which scholars have mentioned, but they are superficial explanations which do not suit the speaker and his speech which is as deep as his status. In his ordinary outlook, Ali عليه السلام is as such, speaking and describing the Qur'ān as being deep. What depth is it in this book?! The discussion is not about statements. The discussion is not about what are called secrets of eloquence in the Qur'ān revolving round identifying what is subject and what is predicate and about identifying the reality, the metaphor, the simile, the figures of speech and the parables. The issue is deeper, much deeper, much more deeper than all these trends; therefore, the narratives that have pointed out to some of them talk to us about deeper realities, about the transfiguration of the first *noor*: When the first *noor* manifested itself, there was existence. Allāh manifested Himself to Himself by Himself in that mirror. He manifested Himself to Himself through Himself, and He manifested Himself in the first mirror, in the first water, in the first *noor*. After that first *noor*, He manifested Himself, so the manifestations were in the veils, in the Arsh, in the Kursi, in the heavens and in all levels of this existence. What is the substance of this manifestation?

Its substance is mercy; therefore, they are the substance of mercy, the Muhammedi reality is the substance of mercy; it is from there that mercy came, originated, stemmed... We read this Qur'ānic verse that explains to us the scope of mercy in the earthly world: وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ "We sent you only as mercy for all the worlds" (Qur'ān, 17:107). This is the image of the greatest mercy, the grandest mercy, the substance of mercy, the source of mercy; where do we get gold from? We get gold from a gold mine. Where does mercy reach us from? Mercy comes to us from the substance of mercy, so the mercy of the most Merciful One manifests itself; it is the one that manifests itself; therefore, if we want to go to Surat Taha, we will read verses 5 and 6: الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى : this is the mercy of the most Merciful One. الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى * لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى "(Allāh) the Most Gracious is firmly established on the Arsh. To Him belong what is in the heavens and on earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil." We have already stated in past episodes that Allāh split the Arsh from Muhammed's *noor*; He created the Arsh from Muhammed's *noor*. He himself ﷺ had said *وإن نوري أفضل من العرش* "My *noor* is better than the Arsh" because the Arsh was created of his *noor*, and Muhammed's *noor* is from the *noor* of Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him: الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى * لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ. The Arsh surrounds the Kursi world, and the expanse of the Arsh compared to that of the Kursi has already been discussed: The Kursi is like a ring thrown in a plain, while the seven heavens are like one ring thrown in a plain compared to the Kursi.

"(Allāh) the Most Gracious is firmly established on the Arsh." The Arsh is the container of existence, of everything the human mind can reach: the levels of this existence. This Arsh came from His *noor*, from the first *noor*; it was derived from the first *noor*, and the existence of the Arsh could not have materialized without the most Gracious One establishing Himself on it. The Arsh's substance is mercy. The Kursi's substance is mercy. The substance of everything in existence is mercy. *ورحمتي سبقت غضبي* "My mercy preceded My wrath." Mercy contains a signal towards

the attributes of the Divine beauty, while wrath, anger, contains a signal to the attributes of the Divine greatness: ﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ﴾ : ﴿اسْتَوَى الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى * لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى﴾ "(Allāh) the Most Gracious is firmly established on the Arsh. To Him belong what is in the heavens and on earth, and all between them, and all beneath the soil." There is mercy that is established on the Arsh. It established itself; how does this mercy of the most Gracious One establish itself? Such is a meaning which we cannot truly imagine, but we can bring the meanings closer through narratives. Mercy being settled means being effective in every part of the existence of the Arsh and the Kursi and what is below the Kursi. As I said a short while ago, the substance of the existence of the Arsh, the substance of the Kursi's existence, is mercy; where has shiny and glittering mercy come from?

It has come from the substance of mercy because where [else] would mercy come from? It comes from the substance, the place, where it settled, was established; it is from there that mercy came. The first splendor was that of the mercy of the most Gracious One. In Surat al-Furqan (Chapter 25 of the Holy Qur'ān), perhaps the same discussion comes in verse 59: الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ، فَاسْأَلْ بِهِ خَبِيرًا "He it is Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between in six days and is firmly established on the Arsh, Allāh, the Most Gracious: Then ask about Him one acquainted (with such things)" (Qur'ān, 25:59). Where did the mercy of the most Gracious One manifest itself? It did in the establishment on the Arsh: ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ، فَاسْأَلْ بِهِ خَبِيرًا "(He) is firmly established on the Arsh, Allāh, the Most Gracious, so ask about Him one who is acquainted (with such things)." This is the mercy of the most Gracious One which spread on all existence. In verse 54 of Surat al-A`raf (Chapter 7 of the Holy Qur'ān), we read: إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا، وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ، أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ، تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ Your Guardian-Lord is Allāh, Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, and is firmly established on the Arsh: He draws the night over the Day like a veil, each seeking the other

in a rapid succession: He created the sun, the moon and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command. Indeed, it is He Who creates and Who governs. Blessed be Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds!" (Qur'ān, 7:54). This verse discusses the Arsh being firmly established on everything, and it discusses mercy being established on the Arsh. So, if we want to combine this verse with the verses cited above and with other verses in the Holy Qur'ān...: **إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ** **يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ** **اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ، يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ** Your Guardian-Lord is Allāh Who created the heavens and the earth in six days (phases) and is firmly established on the Arsh: He draws the night over the day like a veil (Qur'ān, 25:54); these are among the affairs of the creation, **﴿يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ﴾** "... each seeks the other in a rapid succession: He created the sun, the moon and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command": All this is the substance of mercy because the settlement on the Arsh is that of the most Gracious One. The verses do not say that Allāh established Himself on the Arsh; they have said that the most Gracious One established Himself on the Arsh. "Allāh" is the Name that incorporates everything [relevant to the Almighty]. As for the Rahman, it is one of His Attributes and manifestations as well as Names (Attributes). The verses have not said that Allāh established Himself on the Arsh. They have said that the Rahman established Himself on the Arsh. It is His being the most Gracious that established itself on the Arsh, and His being the most Gracious One manifested itself in the first mirror: Allāh manifested Himself in the first mirror, and the first mirror reflected this manifestation. Where did it reflect this manifestation?

It did on the Arsh, on what is below the Arsh and on all affairs below the Arsh: **يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ، يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا، وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ** **يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ، يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا، وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ** "... each seeking the other in rapid succession: He created the sun, the moon and the stars, (all) governed by laws under His command" (Qur'ān, 7:54). All these matters are examples. These are examples for existents' matters. All these matters continue in the circle of mercy; the substance of their flow is mercy, the mercy of the most Gracious One. All existence materializes through the mercy of the most Gracious One: **أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ**

والأمرُ "Indeed, it is He Who creates and Who governs." There is creation, and there is authority: تَبَارَكَ اللهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ "Blessed be Allāh, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds!" Out of what do all of this branch? Everything branches from the establishment of the most Gracious One on the Arsh. In Surat Hud (Chapter 11 of the Holy Qur'ān), we read: وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ "It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days (stages or phases), and His Arsh was over the water" (Qur'ān, 11:7). The previously cited verses that discuss the Arsh as surrounding, encompassing, every matter, and that the most Gracious One is the One Who is established on it; Allāh established Himself on the Arsh through His Grace, but where is the true firmness of this Arsh? وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ "... and His Arsh was over the water." This is one of the clear past signs. His Arsh was on the water. The discussion here is not about an Arsh built on water. These are symbols and signs. It does not mean that there used to be a sea on which a Kursi or a structure called the Arsh placed; this, rather, is a very deep issue.

The water referred to here is the first water, the first name, the first *noor*. This water because of which the Arsh reclined and became firm was His Arsh on water. Can the Arsh be without a base? How can it materialize? It means the foundation of the Arsh, the firmness of the Arsh, is because of water: وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ "... and His Arsh was over the water." This water is the one to which verse 30 of Surat al-Anbiyaa (Chapter 21 of the Holy Qur'ān) refers: وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ "We made every living thing from water" (Qur'ān, 21:30). There are ways to interpret this sacred verse, but if the discussion is as deep as that, the verse will have another facet: وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ "We made every living thing from water." What is حَيٍّ *hayy*, living, does not mean the animals; rather, it means, "We have made of water everything in existence; everything praises Him, and this is the real life. Is there anything that does not glorify Him? Glorification is the evidence of life. But what we call life in the earthly world is one image of life called the animal life. As regarding life, it is not confined to only the animal life. Even inanimate objects have a life because everything Glorifies Allāh. The glorification contains life evidence, it has an indication of

realization. It has an indication of languages. Even inanimate objects have languages of their own. Even the inanimate objects have some degree of realization that suits them as they are, and these languages and realizations are known to the Infallible Imām عليه السلام on account of his knowledge of them because the Infallible Imām, peace of Allāh and His emrcy with him, encompasses everything. In the next episode, we, by the will of Allāh, will discuss it because the label of the next episode will be *وَحُزَانُ الْعِلْمِ - وَمَعْدِنُ الرَّحْمَةِ، وَحُزَانُ الْعِلْمِ* "... and the treasurers of knowledge, the substance of mercy and the keepers of knowledge." When the discussion focuses on the treasurers of knowledge, these facts will be clear. *وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ* "... and His Arsh was on the water;" as we read the following in Surat Hud (Chapter 11 of the Holy Qur'ān): *وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ* "We made every living thing from water," as we read in Surat al-Anbiyaa (Chapter 21 of the Holy Qur'ān). Everything was made from what? It was made from the substance of mercy. Water is another label for the mercy of the Creator, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him. They are the substance of mercy. The very first verse of the Holy Qur'ān: *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ* "In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful," points in general terms to all these facts to which reference has been made before. A well known narrative is transmitted by Ibn Abbas from the Master of Wasis عليه السلام says that all the Qur'ān is in the Fatiha; all the Fatiha is in the basmala, and the basmala, all of it, is in the *baa* ب, and all what is in the *baa* ب is in the dot; then Ali, peace with him, said, "And I am the dot."

It is from this dot that the *basmala*, *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ*, was written. Is not the basmala a group of dots that formed and manifested themselves this way? This dot is the substance of writing; so, what did it write? It wrote, through pronouncement, drawing an image of the label of mercy. This dot is the symbol of that mercy that comes from the most Gracious One, al-Rahman الرحمن, for the mercy that comes from Him first, and second from al-Raheem الرحيم. The mercy coming from al-Rahman is the substance of existence. As for the mercy that comes from al-Raheem, it is the essence of Wilaya ولاية, mastership. What I mean by Wilaya is a meaning greater than emotion, greater than the issue of love, than the issue of Imāmate which is in the earthly world. Al-Wilaya is the special connection

that connects the best of existents with Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His; therefore, the mercy that comes from al-Raheem is special, specific; it is not general. The mercy that comes from al-Rahman is general. From here, some narratives state that the Rahman is merciful to both believer and unbeliever, whether the Raheem is the One Who is merciful to the believers specifically. This points to a broader meaning because the mercy that comes from al-Rahman and the one that comes from al-Raheem are broader than being restricted to [only] humans [in general] and to believers and unbelievers [in particular]. But these are only testimonials, examples, specimens. The mercy that comes from al-Rahman is the substance of existence, while the mercy that comes from al-Raheem is the substance of Wilaya. Wilaya is the relationship between Allāh, the most Glorified and Exalted One, and the best of existents. There is mercy that comes from al-Rahman, and there is mercy that comes from al-Raheem. The best of existents may be in the angel world. There is one who is the best in the angel world. There is one who is the best in the veil world. Is not the Spirit a being greater than the angels?!

There are beings that are greater than the angels. If they are described as the veil angels, this is only a metaphorical expression because the "angels" is a general [identifying] label; they are the residents of the high, the lofty, the sublime worlds; otherwise, the residents of the veils are beings that are different from the angels who reside in the heavens, in the earthly world, in the world of inanimate objects, in the world of the animals. In every world there are existents that are the best; they have the supremacy, they are near the circle of Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He. This relationship, these existents, this connection is the one that is described as the Wilaya. The Wilaya implies a meaning greater than love, than emotion. It may be the existence link for the best existents. The Judgment Day is the Day for the best beings to be distinguished from those that are opposing, contradicting the best beings which do not include only humans. The Judgment Day, narratives tell us, is a Day for all created beings, but focus will be placed on mankind because the Qur'ānic address, in its expressive structure, in the way its statements are structured, addresses mankind. From here comes the focus on mankind and the importance of mankind; otherwise, there are explanations in narratives about this matter. The angels,

too, have their own Judgment Day, and they have their own place which is relevant to them on the Judgment Day. They have their own status. Even the animals have a status of their own, even the inanimate objects have matters of their own, and I am not going to enter into the details of this subject, but it manifests itself through turning the pages of the narratives citing Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام and through discerning the verses of the Holy Qur'an.

Here is a narrative quoted from Safwan in Yahya from others who taught him hadith and who quote Imām Abu Abdullah, peace with him, who was asked about بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ the basmala, so he said,

الباءُ بهاء الله، والسينُ سناء الله، والميمُ ملك الله - هذه رواية تتحدث بلسان آخر بغير اللسان اللغوي - الباءُ بهاء الله، والسينُ سناء الله، والميمُ ملك الله، قال: قلت: الله ما معناها؟ - السائل يسأل عن بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ؛ بدأ الإمام أخذ كلمة بِسْمِ - فقال: الباءُ بهاء الله، والسينُ سناء الله، والميمُ ملك الله، قال: قلت: الله؟ قال: الألفُ آء الله على خلقه من النعيم بولايتنا - هذا كلام إمامنا الصادق في معنى لفظة الله - قال: قلت: الله؟ قال: الألفُ آء الله على خلقه.

The Imām عليه السلام said the following: "The ب is derived from بهاء الله "bahā-Allāh," the Splendor of Allāh; the س is derived from سناء الله "sanā-Allāh," the Majesty of Allāh; the م is derived from ملك الله "mulk-Allāh," the Kingdom or Domain of Allāh. I [Safwan ibn Yahya] asked the Imām about الله "Allāh", whereupon the Imām عليه السلام said, "The aleef الألف is derived from آء الله , the Signs (or Miracles) of Allāh such as the felicity the faithful earn due to following our Wilaya ولاية, mastership. This is the statement of our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام explaining the word الله, Allāh.

This is Volume One of *Tafsir al-Burhan* تفسير البرهان by our master, Hashim al-Bahrani, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him. This narrative is transmitted by Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani from the book titled *Ma`ani al-Akhar* معاني الأخبار of our mentor, al-Saduq, which is one of the well known and recognized books of hadith: قال: قلت: الله؟ قال: الألفُ آء الله على خلقه من النعيم بولايتنا، واللامُ إلزام الله خلقه ولانيتنا، قلت: فالحاء؟ قال: هو انّ لمن خالف محمداً وآل محمّد صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين؛ قلت: الرحمن؟ قال: بجميع العالم، قلت: الرحيم؟ قال: بالمؤمنين خاصة

عليه السلام was asked about the word الله Allāh, he عليه السلام said, ""The *aleef* الألف is derived from آلاء الله , the Signs (or Miracles) of Allāh such as the felicity the faithful earn due to following our *Wilaya* ولاية, mastership. The اللام *laam* is derived from Allāh obligating His creation to adhere to our *Wilaya*." When asked about الهاء , he عليه السلام said, "It is for those who oppose Muhammed and the Progeny of Muhammed, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all." When the man asked the Imām عليه السلام about الرحمن الرحيم al-Rahman, he عليه السلام said, "He is Merciful towards all His creation." When asked about الرحيم الرحيم al-Raheem, the Imām عليه السلام said, "He is Merciful towards the believers specifically." I do not want here to explain this narrative because if I delve into it, I will be leaving the original point, but I want to explain that the basmala is the label of mercy, the one the source of which is al-Rahman and the one the source of which is al-Raheem. This is the basmala about which Imām Ali عليه السلام said that it is summed up in the dot, and that he himself is the dot, this is a very deep sea in reference to that great reality; which reality?

It is the reality of the substance of mercy معدن الرحمة. The substance of mercy, as I said a short while ago, is the Muhammedi reality, the first *noor*, all these narratives, all this discussion, points out to that reality. I do not want to delve here into what the exegetes have said, that is, what is linked to the basmala. Shall I start? Shall I seek assistance? Shall I make *thikr*? They vary according to their taste and preference. There is another narrative which is also transmitted by mentor al-Saduq: عن علي بن الحسن بن فضال عن أبيه، عن الحسن بن فضال: قال: سألت الرضا علي بن موسى عليه السلام عن بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم، فقال: معنى قول القائل بسم الله أي أسمى على نفسي سمة من سمات الله عز وجل، وهي العبادة، قال: فقلت له وما السمة؟ قال: العلامة - يعني أضع على نفسي علامة من علائم الله - قال: وهي العبادة - العبادة لا بمعنى الصلاة، الحديث هنا ليس عن الصلاة، قال - إنما قال: بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم Ali ibn al-Hassan ibn Fadhal quotes his father saying that he asked Imām Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha, peace with him, about بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم , so he عليه السلام said, "The meaning of the one who says *Bismillah* بسم الله is: 'I invoke on myself one of the Attributes of Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, which is worship.'" Ali asked the Imām عليه السلام about that Attribute, whereupon the Imām عليه السلام said, "It is the mark," that is, "I put on myself one of the marks of Allāh, which is worship." It is not in the same sense as

prayers. The discussion here is not about prayer; rather, the one who pronounces it invokes this Attribute on himself. Worship is the label that discusses the essence of the existence of things, the essence of the existence of things which is: mercy. Perhaps I said once during a celebration at Husainiyya of Imām al-Mahdi, peace with him, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the Imām of our Time (عج) and pointed to this verse. This verse is numbered 81 in Surat al-Zukhruf (Chapter 43 of the Holy Qur'ān): **قُلْ: إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ، فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ** "Say: 'If (Allāh), the Most Gracious One, had a son, I would be the foremost to worship.'" The phrase **أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ**, the first or the foremost to worship, explains what is meant: I am the first to exist, the first to be. He (Allāh) described Himself as such because worship is the essence of existence; therefore, in verse 56 of Surat al-Thariyat (Chapter 51 of the Holy Qur'ān), we read: **وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِي** "I have only created jinns and men so that they may worship Me" points out that the purpose behind creation is adoration, worship, service. The verse referred to before it, **فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ**, "I would be the foremost to worship," points out that the first manifestation that appeared in existence is worship.

Worship is service, the essence of verification which, as I said a short while ago, is the substance of mercy materializing, the mercy the source of which is the Rahman and the one the source of which is al-Raheem, the latter implying the Wilaya. There is existence which spreads and manifests itself from the Muhammedi reality in the Rahmani mercy. And there is also the existence that spreads from the Raheemi mercy for the best of existents, for the best of beings, the honorable beings that are tied through the tie of Wilaya in its broad sense, the Wilaya, in its deep sense, not in the emotional one. Our Imām al-Ridha عليه السلام points out here to this issue saying: **أسمي على نفسي سمة من سمات الله عز وجل وهي العبادة ، قال: فقلت له وما السمة؟ قال: العلامة** "I invoke on myself one of the Attributes of Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, which is worship." Ali asked the Imām عليه السلام about that Attribute, so the Imām عليه السلام said, "It is the mark." In other words, "I make on myself a mark." How does one do so? "He makes on himself a mark" means he fuses himself in one of the Marks, Attributes, of Allāh, that he himself becomes a mark. He makes on himself a mark and gradually fuses himself into this mark.

There is a referene to this mark in the supplication for the month of Rajab which is quoted from the Hujja Imām, peace with him, the recitation of which is highly recommended for each day of the month of Rajab; actually, it can be recited any day because it is one of the general supplications. It contains general contexts. It is the supplication the beginning of which is: **اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَعَانِي جَمِيعِ مَا يَدْعُوكَ بِهِ وَلَا تَأْمُرُكَ - إِلَى أَنْ يَقُولَ الدَّعَاءَ - لَا فَرْقَ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهَا إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ عِبَادُكَ وَخَلْقُكَ، فَتَقْهَرُهَا وَرَتَقَهَا بِيَدِكَ، بِدَوِّهَا مِنْكَ وَعَوْدِهَا إِلَيْكَ، أَعْضَادًا وَأَشْهَادًا وَمُنَادًا وَأَذْوَادًا وَحَقْفَةً** "O Allāh! I plead to You by the meanings of the pleas submitted to You by those whom You have placed in charge..." up to this statement: "There is no difference between Yourself and them except that they are Your servants, the ones whom You created, the tying or untying of their affairs is in Your hand; their start is from You and their return is to You. They assist, they testify, they plead, they protect, they safeguard and they come and go; with them have You filled Your heavens and earth." Such are their manifestations. How has He filled the heavens and earth with them? This is their manifestation. This is the mercy in which everyone is alike; such mercy has appearances: In the Arsh world did mercy settle on the Arsh. In the Kursi world did the mercy settle on the Kursi. In every heavens has mercy settled. In every layer of this existence it has done so: "With them have You filled Your heavens and earth until it became clear that there is no god but You." That is, until it became clear that there is no god save Allāh: Allāh manifested Himself to the substance of mercy. When the substance of mercy manifested itself, what did it reflect? It reflected the meanings of the Divine. What manifested itself from the substance of mercy? The Most Beautiful Names (Attributes) **أَسْمَاءُ اللَّهِ الْحُسْنَى** did. It is to this meaning that our Imām al-Sadiq **عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ** points out saying: **نَحْنُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى** "We are Allāh's Most Beautiful Names," thus pointing out to that position, to those sublime statuses. It is from their manifestations that this supplication came: **فَبِهِمْ مَلَأْتَ سَمَاوَاتِكَ وَأَرْضَكَ حَتَّى ظَهَرَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، فَبِذَلِكَ أَسْأَلُكَ وَبِمَوَاقِعِ الْعِزِّ مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ وَبِمَقَامَاتِكَ وَعَلَامَاتِكَ** "With them have You filled Your heavens and earth until it became clear that there is no god save You, so by that do I plead to You, and by the positions of exaltation of Your mercy, by Your statuses and marks [do I plead to You]..." These are the marks to which our Imām al-Ridha **عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ** pointed out saying: **أَسْمِي عَلَى نَفْسِي**

سِمةً، ما السِمة؟ قال: العلامة "I place a sign on myself." "What is this sign?" "It is the mark." There is a mark. This mark is the mark of Wilaya. this is the mark of the Raheemi mercy for the one who says بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ "In the Name of Allāh, the most Gracious, the most Merciful," not in the pronounced sense but connects himself to that special tie, the tie of the best existents, the tie of Wilaya. One of the manifestations of this Wilaya in the earthly world is allegiance to Ahlul-Bayt, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all; therefore, مَنْ وَالَى اللَّهَ "One who accepts you as his masters accepts Allāh as His Master." The allegiance here in the earthly world is for Ahlul-Bayt عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. It is allegiance to Allāh because the Raheemi mercy is the tie of Wilaya between Allāh and the best of existents: يَا أَحْمَدَ خَلَقْتَك لِي "The ones from among Your creation whom I praise the most." Such is the tie of Wilaya between Allāh and the Muhammedi reality. ثُمَّ شَقَّ "Then He derived the *noors* of existence from the *noor* of Muhammed, Allāh's peace and blessings with him." This is the manifestation of the Divine Wilaya in all existents. The splendor is in the Rahmani sense, and such is the Wilaya of existence. And the splendor was in the Raheemi sense, and thus was the Wilaya of proximity (nearness to Ahlul-Bayt عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ); therefore, we have already come across this in the narrative: الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ " [He is] the Rahman (most Gracious) of all the world, and the Raheem (Merciful) towards the believers specifically," a reference here to the faithful in particular by way of an example, not as a testimony. The discussion here is about the honorable existents from among the faithful and others.

No wonder that even in Paradise, according to some narratives we have, there are some earthly animals which Allāh will permit into Paradise: Is there among earthly animals more نجس *najis*, unclean, than the dog?! Are there no references in narratives that the dog of the Fellows of the Cave will be in Paradise?! And there are other examples. I here do not want to discuss Paradise and the rules of Paradise stated in the narratives. Rather, I pointed out to this example in order to explain the pursuit, the purpose, the point, and I do not want to be diverted distantly from the original label about which I am discuss: فَبِذَلِكَ أَسْأَلُكَ وَبِمَوَاقِعِ الْعِزِّ مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ وَبِمَقَامَاتِكَ وَعِلَامَاتِكَ "... (It is) by that do I plead to You, and by the positions of

exaltation of Your mercy, by Your statuses and marks [do I plead to You]..." What marks are these? These are the marks of the tie, the tie of Wilaya, the Divine Wilaya one of whose scopes is the earthly world, the Wilaya of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام: Whoever accepts their Wilaya accepts the Wilaya of Allāh, and whoever is hostile to them is hostile to Allāh. They are the gates through which we reach Allāh. They are **العروة الوثقى** "... the most trustworthy lifeline" (Qur'ān, 2:256): If we hold on to it, we hold on to Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His. The meanings in the narratives, supplications and verses are linked to each other, strengthening each other, and I think that the contexts to which I have now pointed out and to which I will point out in the forthcoming episodes of this program all serve in one area: I have said that the first golden rule must be followed with regard to the Divine branches of knowledge which is: the principle of safeguarding positions, the principle of the plurality of standpoints. Perhaps if the viewers look with precision, they will find out that the same meanings which I stated with regard to the Household of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله in the place of the message, in those whom the angels frequently visit, in the landing place of the *wahi*, in the substance of mercy and in other labels that will come..., there is a convergence of these meanings from an aspect, a probability, and there is divergence from another. This is so because I have taken into consideration in these contexts both of these principles: the one that safeguards the positions and the one of the plurality of probabilities.

The substance of mercy: They are the substance of mercy in every horizon. For e.g., not for inclusiveness, this is Volume 15 of *Bihar al-Anwar*. On page 8, there is a narrative from Abu Tharr al-Ghifari citing the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وآله discuss to Abu Tharr the aspects of his heavenly ascension. He صلى الله عليه وآله reaches this statement: **قلت: يا ملائكة: ربي هل تعرفونا حق معرفتنا؟! - النبي هنا يسأل الملائكة - هل تعرفونا حق معرفتنا؟! - الملائكة لا تعرف أهل البيت حق المعرفة، مر علينا - إن أمرنا صعبٌ مستصعب لا يحتمله "O angels of my Lord! لا نبي مرسل ولا ملك مقرب، فمن يحتمله؟ قال: من شننا Do you know us fully well?!"—the Prophet is here asking the angels; the angels do not know Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام fully well, we have already stated that—Our matter is difficult, challenging, and it cannot be borne by a messenger prophet or an angel close to Allāh;" so who can bear it? He said, "Those whom we please can." If we**

now wish to read the narrative and compare what the angels stated regarding their knowledge of them, Allāh's peace and blessings with them, we find out that they really do not know them fully because if we compare the signs existing in the statements of the angels and other signs mentioned by Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, we will find a difference between the angels' knowledge and what Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام tell us about their lofty positions. Anyhow, I am not here to compare between what the angels said and what other narratives have stated; rather, I wanted to bring samples of narratives that discuss the appearances of the Rahmani mercy and of the Raheemi mercy, whether it is in the sublime worlds or in the earth world, in life or after death in the Hereafter worlds. I now read the narrative. The Prophet ﷺ asks the angels: **يا ملائكة ربي هل تعرفونا حق معرفتنا؟! فقالوا: يا نبي الله وكيف لا نعرفكم**: "O angels of my Lord! Do you fully know us?!" They said, "O Prophet of Allāh! How can we not know you...?!" They did not say that they fully knew Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام; they said, "We know you." **يا نبي الله وكيف لا نعرفكم وأنتم أول ما خلق الله، خلقكم أشباح نور من نوره، في نور من سناء عزه، ومن سناء ملكه، ومن نور وجهه الكريم، وجعل لكم مقاعد في ملكوت سلطانه، وعرشه على الماء قبل أن تكون السماء مبنية والأرض مدحيه، ثم خلق** "O Prophet of Allāh! How can we not know you since you are the first to be created by Allāh? He created you as *noor* images of His *noor*, in *noor* from the splendor of His Exaltation, from the splendor of His domain, from the *noor* of His Glorious Countenance. He set up seats for you in the domain of His authority, and His Arsh was on water before there was a heavens built or an earth extended. Then He created the heavens and the earth in six days [stages]." This narrative discusses directions, levels, images of the worlds of the first creation. I stop at this statement:

"He created you as *noor* images of His *noor*." The images are not the same as the shadows. There is the level of the shadows for Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, and there is the level of images. The image level is higher than that of the shadows. "He created you as *noor* images from His *noor*." The *noor* image is the same speech to which the *noor* mirror pointed out. What is the image? It is the like picture of the owner of the picture. What is my own image? It is the picture that is similar to my picture. This shadow is dark compared to my existence. As regarding the discussion here about *noor* images **خلقكم أشباح نور من**

نوره "He created you as *noor* images from His *noor*." I am not here in the process of explaining this narrative but only to explain this point: I read narratives. I contend myself with the greatness of meanings in them. قلت: يا ملائكة ربي هل تعرفونا حق معرفتنا؟! فقالوا: يا نبي الله وكيف لا نعرفكم - ما قالوا بأننا نعرفكم حق المعرفة، قالوا بأننا نعرفكم - فقالوا: يا نبي الله I said, 'O angels of my Lord! Do you really know us fully?!' They said, 'O Prophet of Allāh! How can we not know you since you were the first whom Allāh created? He created you as *noor* images of His own *Noor*.'" A short while ago, we came across what Surat al-Fatiha states and the narratives that discuss it while explaining the meaning of the basmala. What does this narrative say?

يا نبي الله وكيف لا نعرفكم وأنتم أول ما خلق الله، خلقكم أشباح نور من نوره، في نور من سناء عزه ومن سناء ملكه؟ - إذا تتذكرون قبل قليل الإمام الصادق وهو يتحدث عن معنى بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم؛ قال - الباء بهاء الله، والسين سناء الله، والميم ملك الله - الحديث هنا - خلقكم أشباح نور من نوره، في نور من سناء عزه ومن سناء ملكه ومن نور وجهه الكريم - هناك ترابط وهناك دلالات واضحة بين هذه الروايات، لكن المقام لا يسع لتفصيل كل شيء - وجعل لكم مقاعد في ملكوت سلطانه وعرشه على الماء - وتحدثنا عن الماء - قبل أن تكون السماء مبنية والأرض مدحية، ثم خلق السماوات والأرض في ستة أيام ثم رفع العرش إلى السماء السابعة فاستوى على عرشه وأنتم أمام عرشه - الحديث هنا عن مظاهرهم في عالم العرش، لهم تجليات، العرش من نورهم، التجلي الأعظم لهم كان قبل خلق العرش، ولكن لهم تجليات في كل عالم من العوالم - ثم رفع العرش إلى السماء السابعة فاستوى على عرشه وأنتم أمام عرشه تسبحون وتقدسون وتكبرون، ثم خلق الملائكة من بدء ما أراد من أنوار شتى، وكنا نمر بكم وأنتم تسبحون وتحمّدون وتهلّلون وتكبرون وتمجدون وتقدسون فنسبح ونقدس - طبعاً هذه المراتب لكل درجة من درجات الملائكة.

"O Prophet of Allāh! How can we not know you since you are the first creation of Allāh?! Allāh created you as *noor* images from His own *noor*, in *noor* from the splendor of His Dignity, from the splendor of His domain?" You remember a short while ago Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام discuss the meaning of the basmala, بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم, saying, "The *baa* ب is derived from الله "bahā-Allāh," the Splendor of Allāh; the *seen* س is derived from الله "sanā-Allāh," the Majesty of Allāh; the *m* is derived from الله "mulk-Allāh," the Kingdom or Domain of Allāh. The hadith here is: "He created you as *noor* images from His own *noor*, in a *noor* from the splendor of His Majesty, from the splendor of His domain, and from the *noor* of His

Glorious Countenance. There is a correlation, and there are clear indications between these narratives, but there is no way to explain everything—And He set up seats in the domain of His authority and His Arsh was on water—we discussed the water—before there was a heavens built or an earth outstretched. Then He created the heavens and earth in six days [stages] then raised the Arsh to the seventh heavens, whereupon He settled on His Arsh and you were before His Arsh—the discussion here is about their appearances in the Arsh world. They have manifestations, the Arsh was created from their noor, the greatest manifestation for them was prior to the creation of the Arsh, but they have manifestations in every world—Then He raised the Arsh to the seventh heavens, whereupon He settled on His Arsh as you were before His Arsh glorifying, sanctifying and magnifying Him. Then He created the angels from various *noors* as He pleased, and we used to pass by you as you were glorifying, praising, unifying, magnifying, lauding and sanctifying, so we would glorify and sanctify—of course these are levels for each rank of the angels.

There are glorifying angels. There are sanctifying angels. There are magnifying angels. There are unifying angels. This points to these angels having transfigurations from that source: "And we used to pass by you as you were glorifying, praising and unifying." This "passing by" is not material. The discussion here is not about the life's world and the angels passing by them as if they pass by a friend or a relative. The issue is very deep. The indications are very deep. The existence of the angels shone from the *noors* of Ali, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, and this is obvious in the narratives. We have come across some narratives that point out to this meaning. "And we used to pass by you as you were glorifying," this is transfiguration, "and praising," another transfiguration, "and unifying," a third transfiguration, "and magnifying," a fourth transfiguration, "and lauding," a fifth transfiguration, "and sanctifying," a sixth transfiguration, "so we would glorify, sanctify, laud, magnify and unify [the Almighty]," through what? "... in your glorifying, praising, etc." We unify through it, glorify through it: a very deep indication. That is, they glorify in the glorifying of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام. What does this mean? It means that the angels'

glorification is that of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام but in some way, in the way that suits the angel world. Every glorification is rendered to the first, to the substance of mercy. All this leads us to the substance of mercy—"... so we would glorify, sanctify, laud, magnify and unify according to your glorification, sanctification, lauding, magnification and unification; whatever was revealed from Allāh was revealed to you—it does not descend to others—so whatever is sent down from Allāh, it is to you—this is so because Allāh's overflow to you and from you is the source of overflow—O One Who causes the causations without a cause—these are the causes: They—O One Who causes the causations without a cause—the first which Allāh created was the will itself, that is, without a causation. Then He created the things through the will, that is, because of the will; they are the means—O One Who causes the causations without a cause—He unifies the causes but without a causation. He created freewill by itself, that is, He creates causes through the causations with the same causations; the first which Allāh created was the freewill, then what?

He created the will itself, then He created creation with that will, so they are the will of Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him—"... , so what descends from Allāh, it is to you, and what ascends to Allāh, it comes from you—and what ascends to Allāh is from you, too, because they are the substance of mercy, "substance" meaning the center; where do we get gold from? We get it from its substance. Where do we get silver from? We get it from its substance. Where do we get iron from? We get it from its substance, metal, mineral. All this applies to what is material, what is earthly. The cosmos is comprised of layers and images, while the earthly world is a very weak image which is quite distant from the Arsh world and from what is above the Arsh world—"... so, whatever Allāh sends down, it is to you, and what ascends to Allāh is from you; so, why do we not know you?—whatever ascends to Allāh is a sign to the Raheemi mercy—"... so, whatever Allāh sends down, it is to you—this is the Rahmani mercy, the Rahmani spreading of the existence—and whatever ascends to Allāh is from you—this is the Raheemi Wilaya. I said a short while ago that the Rahmani mercy is the spreading overflow, the one that spreads on all existents, while the Raheemi mercy is the Wilaya, the tie, the substance of the tie between Allāh

and the best of existents—"... so what descends from Allāh is to you"—and from you is it issued—and whatever ascends to Allāh—those that ascend to Allāh are the honorable existents, the most honored of all existents—it is from you; so, why do we not know you? Convey Ali our Salam—Ali is the axis. Wherever you go in the world of realities, you will find Ali shining—Why do we not know you? Convey Ali our Salam—up to his saying ﷺ,

ثُمَّ عُرِجَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ فَسَمِعْتُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ يَقُولُونَ لَمَّا أَنْ رَأَوْنِي: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَّقَنَا وَعَدَهُ - لَمَّا رَأَى النَّبِيُّ كَانُوا يَقُولُونَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَّقَنَا وَعَدَهُ - ثُمَّ تَلَقَوْنِي وَسَلَّمُوا عَلَيَّ وَقَالُوا لِي مِثْلَ مَقَالَةِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ - يَعْنِي نَفْسَ الْكَلَامِ السَّابِقِ الَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَيْنَا قَبْلَ قَلِيلٍ - وَقَالُوا لِي مِثْلَ مَقَالَةِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ - يَعْنِي الْكَلَامَ الَّذِي ذَكَرْتَهُ، وَطَلَبُوا مِنْهُ أَنْ يُسَلِّمَ عَلَيَّ - أَقْرَبِيءَ عَلِيًّا مِنْهُ السَّلَامُ - قُلْتُ بَأَنَّنَا فِي عَالَمِ الْحَقَائِقِ أَيْنَ مَا نَذْهَبُ نَجِدُ عَلِيًّا وَاضِحًا هُنَاكَ - فَقُلْتُ: يَا مَلَائِكَةَ رَبِّي، سَمِعْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَّقَنَا وَعَدَهُ، فَمَا الَّذِي صَدَّقَكُمْ؟ قَالُوا: يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى لَمَّا أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَشْبَاحَ نُورٍ مِنْ سَنَاءِ نُورِهِ وَمِنْ سَنَاءِ عِزِّهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مَقَاعِدَ فِي مَلَكُوتِ سُلْطَانِهِ، عَرَضَ وَلَايَتَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا وَرَسَخَتْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا فَشَكُونَا مَحَبَّتَكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ - شَكُونَا مَحَبَّتَكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ يَرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَرَوْا تَجَلِّيًّا مِنْ تَجَلِّيَاتِهِ، وَإِلَّا فَهَمْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ النَّظَرَ، وَلَا تَسْتَطِيعُ الْعُقُولُ أَنْ تَقْتَرِبَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ الْفَنَاءِ الْأَقْدَسِ - فَشَكُونَا مَحَبَّتَكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ فَوَعَدَ رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُرِينَاكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ مَعَنَا - وَعَدْنَا فِي مَقْطَعٍ مِنَ الْمَقَاطِعِ أَنْ نَرَاكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ - وَقَدْ صَدَّقْنَا وَعَدَهُ لَذَلِكَ قُلْنَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَّقَنَا وَعَدَهُ

"Then I was taken up to the seventh heavens where I heard the angels saying, upon seeing me, 'Praise belongs to Allāh Who fulfilled His promise to us'—they said so when they saw the Prophet, 'Praise belongs to Allāh Who fulfilled His promise to us'—Then they welcomed me, greeted me and made the same statement as their fellows—meaning the same previous discussion which we have just come across—and they said to me the same as their fellows did"—meaning the statement which I have mentioned, and they asked him to convey their Salam to Ali—"Convey Ali our Salam"—I said that we are in the world of realities; wherever we go, we find Ali clearly there—so I said, "O angels of my Lord! I heard you saying, 'Praised is Allāh Who fulfilled His promise to us.' What did He fulfill?" They said, "O Prophet of Allāh! When Allāh, the most Blessed and Ealted One, created you as *noor* images from the splendor of His *noor* and from the splendor of His Might, making seats for you in the domain of His authority, He submitted your Wilaya to us and it settled firmly in our hearts, so we complained about loving you to Allāh—we complained about love for you to

Allāh, meaning they wanted to see a transfiguration from Him; otherwise, they can look, and the minds cannot get close to that holy courtyard—so we complained about love for you to Allāh; whereupon our Lord promised us to let us see you in the heavens with us—He promised us to see you in the heavens—and He has fulfilled His promise; therefore, we said, 'Praise belongs to Allāh Who has fulfilled His promise to us.'" They were waiting for his *noor*. They were there waiting in their worlds, and these are very deep meanings, very precise meanings. These meanings are not in harmony except if we can bridge the gap between these narratives and many other narratives so the picture may become complete. If the picture is not complete, these narratives remain like orphan portions, like parts amputated from a large picture.

Another narrative is reported by Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, and a second one is narrated by Salman al-Farisi, that is, Salman al-Muhammedi, who quotes the Prophet ﷺ as saying,

يا سلمان، فهل علمت من نقبائي ومن الإثنى عشر الذين اختارهم الله للإمامة بعدي؟ فقلت: الله ورسوله أعلم، قال: يا سلمان، خلقتني الله من صفوة نوره ودعاني فاطعت، وخلق من نوري علياً فدعاه فاطعاه، وخلق من نوري ونور عليٍّ فاطمة فدعاها فاطعته - هي النورية الجامعة بين النورية النبوية والولوية - وخلق مني ومن عليٍّ وفاطمة الحسن والحسين فدعاهما فاطعاه، فسمانا بالخمسة الأسماء من أسمائه: الله المحمود وأنا مُحَمَّد، والله العليُّ وهذا عليٌّ، والله الفاطر وهذه فاطمة - الفاطر يعني الخالق - والله الفاطر وهذه فاطمة، والله ذو الإحسان وهذا الحسن، والله المحسن وهذا الحسين، ثم خلق منا من صلب الحسين تسعة أئمة فدعاهم فاطعوه - متى؟ - قبل أن يخلق الله سماءً مبنية وأرضاً مدحيةً أو هواءً أو ماءً - هذا الماء الماء الأرضي - أو ماءً أو ملكاً أو بشراً وكُنَّا بعلمه نوراً نسبحةً - وإلا كما قلت قبل قليل الماء في أصله: وجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ؛ الماء في أصله الحقيقة المُحمَّدية، الحديث هنا عن الماء الأرضي - وكُنَّا بعلمه نوراً نسبحةً ونسمع ونطيع.

"O Salman! Have you come to know who our naqeebs (chiefs) and the Twelve Ones chosen by Allāh for Imāmate after me [after my demise] are?" Salman said, "Allāh and His Messenger know best." He ﷺ said, "O Salman! Allāh created me of the choicest of His *noor* and called upon me and I obeyed. He created of my *noor* Ali, and He called upon him and he obeyed. He created of my *noor* and of that of Ali Fatima, al-Hassan and al-Hussain, and He called on them, and

they obeyed Him. He, therefore, called all five of us after five of His Names (Attributes): Allāh is the Mahmood (Praised One), and I am Muhammed. Allāh is the `Aliyya (the most High), and this is Ali. Allāh is the Fatir (Creator), and this is Fatima. Allāh is the One with the *Ihsan* (benevolence), and this is al-Hassan. And Allāh is the Muhsin (the One Who grants good things), and this is al-Hussain. Then He created of us from the loins of al-Hussain nine Imāms upon whom He called, and they obeyed him—when did all of this take place?—that was before Allāh created a built heavens or an outstretched earth or air or water—this water here is the earthly water—or a domain or a human, and we were through His knowledge *noor* glorifying Him—otherwise, as I said a short while ago, the water in its original form is the Muhammedi reality: **وَجَعَلْنَا** "We created of water every living thing," and we were with His knowledge glorifying Him, hearing and obeying Him."

The angels were saying that they were "present in the knowledge of Allāh." Allāh's knowledge is not compared to that of humans. When I say that I exist in your knowledge, this is a statement about an image, a mental image, a concept. As regarding the knowledge of Allāh, it is the most sublime stage in existence, the most lofty level of existence; it is the existence of existents in Allāh's knowledge. This is the highest status. We do not know the value of this level, only Allāh knows it. this is the most sublime level of existence, the existence of beings in Allāh's knowledge. After that, there will be manifestation in the first mirror, in the first water; otherwise, the loftiest status is the Muhammedi reality in Allāh's knowledge. The Muhammedi reality in Allāh's knowledge is the loftiest status, but this is one of the affairs of the most Glorified and Exalted One of which we are ignorant: **كلما ازددتم تفكراً كلما ازددتم تحيراً - وكنا بعلمه نوراً** "The more you think [about the Almighty], the more puzzled you become," "... And we were in His knowledge *noor* Glorifying Him, hearing and obeying..." This hearing, obeying and glorifying are not measured by what goes on in the earthly world.

Another narrative is transmitted by mentor al-Majlisi from the narrator of traditions, al-Karajki, may Allāh have mercy on his soul, in his book *Kanzul-Fawa'id* كنز الفوائد:

عن أبي حمزة الثمالي عن أبي جعفر الباقر عليه السلام، قال: قال أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: إن الله تبارك وتعالى أخذَ واحدَ تفرد في وحدانيته ثم تكلم بكلمة فصارت نوراً ثم خلق من ذلك النور مُحَمَّدًا صلى الله عليه وآله وخلقني وذريتي، ثم تكلم بكلمة فصارت روحاً فأسكنه الله في ذلك النور وأسكنه في أبداننا؛ فنحن روح الله وكلماته، وبنا احتجب عن خلقه؛ فما زلنا في ظلة خضراء حيث لا شمس ولا قمر ولا ليل ولا نهار ولا عين تطرف - يعني تتحرك - نعبده ونقدسُه ونسبحُه قبل أن يخلق الخلق

Abu Hamzah al-Thumali quotes Imām Abu Ja`far al-Baqir عليه السلام citing the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام as saying, "Allāh, Praised and Exalted is He, is one and only (God); nothing was with Him, then He spoke a word which became *noor* from which He created Muhammed, Allāh's peace and blessing with him and with his Progeny, then he created me and my offspring. Then He spoke one word which became a soul and which Allāh permitted to reside in that *noor* and [thereafter] He let him reside in our bodies. We, therefore, are the Spirit of Allāh and His words. In us did He set a barrier from His creation; so, we have been in a green shade where there was neither a sun nor a moon, nor was there night or day, nor an eye to blink. We were worshipping Him, sanctifying and glorifying Him before He created creation."

These are examples and samples of statements by the Infallible Ones, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all, which tell us aspects of the scopes of the substance of mercy, when the substance of mercy manifested itself, so these manifestations came to be, and so were these levels and images. These narratives have discussed areas, standpoints, positions and images of the scopes of mercy in the sublime worlds.

In the sacred *Al-Kafi* الكافي, there is one Radhawi hadith describing the Infallible Imām, peace with him. This is Volume One of the sacred *Al-Kafi* book. I excerpt these lines from it. Our Imām, al-Ridha, peace with him, says الإمام كالشمس الطالعة المجللة بنورها للعالم "The Imām is like the rising sun that crowns the world with its

light." He is the source of mercy. This hadith is about our Imāms عليهم السلام in the earthly world, about the scopes of the substance of mercy in the earthly world. The narratives we have a short while ago come across discussed the scope of mercy in the upper worlds. The discussion in these worlds is about the scope of the substance of mercy in the earthly world in the persons of the Imāms, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. "The Imām is like the rising sun that crowns the world with its light." These expressions are not meant to be a courtesy, such as when we want to discuss a great scholar, so we say that he is, for e.g., an ocean of knowledge. Or we may discuss a generous person, so we say that he is generous, outgiving, covering people with his generosity like the sun covering the world or people, which is an unrealistic discussion if we want to calculate it with precision. As for these words, they talk about facts existing in the outside reality, even if man does not sense it. What can man sense of his nature and of the reality of his own self? What do we now know about our bodies' compositions? What do we know about what goes on in this stomach which we stuff day and night with food? What do we know? Do we have an idea about what goes on in this stomach so we may wish to encompass what goes on in the world? "The Imām is like the rising sun that crowns the world with its light." This means that the Imām's outpouring reaches people, animals, jinns, residents of the seas, the dust, the water..., there is nothing of us without you being its cause and the path to it. الإمام كالشمس الطالعة المجللة بنورها للعالم وهي في الأفق بحيث لا تنالها الأيدي والأبصار "The Imām is like the rising sun that crowns the world with its light. It is in the horizon, hands and visions cannot reach it." So, how will we become familiar with the outpouring of this Imām, the Imām who is like the illuminating moon? These are among the manifestations and scopes of the substance of mercy in the earthly world in the persons of the Imāms عليهم السلام. The Imām عليه السلام is like the illuminating moon: This is one of the appearances of His mercy. The expressions here are not expressions of courtesy. Had we had time to discuss the details of these expressions, each expression has its own connotation. الإمام البدر المنير والسراج الزاهر والنور الساطع. The Imām عليه السلام is like the illuminating moon, the shiny lantern and the bright light." These are scopes, levels and appearances of the substance of mercy manifesting themselves in the persons of the Imāms عليهم السلام. الإمام البدر.

"The Imām is like the illuminating moon, the shiny lantern, the bright light, the star that guides in the darkness of the night." "وأجواز البلدان والقفار" "... and in the passages of lands and plains" "ولُجج البحار" "and on the waves of the seas." As I said a short while ago, his overflow reaches all directions. الإمام الماء العذب على الظمأ والداد على الهدى والمنجى من الردى - إلى أن يقول عليه السلام - الإمام السحاب الماطر - هذه مظاهر الرحمة - والغيث الهائل والشمس المضيئة والسماء الظليلة والأرض البسيطة والعين الغزيرة والغدير والروضة؛ "The Imām الأنيس الرفيق والوالد الشفيق والأخ الشقيق والأم البرة بالولد الصغيرة The Imām ﷺ is [like] the fresh water for the thirsty, the one who provides guidance and who saves from perdition," up to his statement, "The Imām is like the clouds laden with rainfall—these are appearances of mercy—and the downpouring rain, the sun that gives light, the sky that gives shade and the spread land, the brimful spring, the swamp and the garden. The Imām is the kind entertaining companion, the affectionate father, the brother, the mother who is kind to her little child." All these are manifestations of mercy. These are manifestations of mercy in the aspect of the overflow, in the ethical aspect and in the actions of the Imām ﷺ.

The Imām ﷺ is the wide gate for the overflow and also for the special overflow, just as there is a wide Rahmani mercy the scopes of which are [implied in this statement]: الإمام كالشمس الطالعة المجللة بنورها للعالم، الإمام البدر المنير والسراج الزاهر والنور الساطع والنجم الهادي، الإمام "The Imām is like the rising sun that crowns the world with its light; the Imām is the illuminating moon, the shiny lantern, the bright light, the star that guides in the darkness of the night. The Imām is [like] the fresh water for the thirsty, the one who guides and who saves from perdition." To what do these meanings point? They point out to the Rahmani mercy manifested in the person of the Imāms in the earthly world. Also: الإمام السحاب الماطر والغيث الهائل والشمس المضيئة والسماء الظليلة والأرض البسيطة والعين الغزيرة والغدير والروضة "The Imām is [like] the clouds laden with rainfall—these are appearances of mercy—the downpouring rain, the sun that gives light, the sky that gives shade and the spread land, the brimful spring, the swamp and the garden—there are meanings that point out to the Raheemi mercy, to the tie of the Wilaya—الإمام الأنيس الرفيق والوالد الشفيق والأخ الشقيق والأم البرة بالولد

"The Imām is the kind entertaining companion, the affectionate father, the brother, the mother who is kind to her little child, the security of the servants during the momentous calamity." These expressions, actually every label, need an explanation or details, but as a whole, they are the scopes of the Rahmani and the Raheemi types of mercy which is manifested in the earthly world in the persons of the Imāms عليه السلام, and they are portraits and appearances of the scopes of mercy to which reference has already been made in the previous narratives and in the sublime worlds. All this comes from the substance of mercy, from the first *noor*, in the Hereafter world, on the Judgment Day. Also, there are narratives from which I selected as samples discuss the appearances of this mercy, about the scope of this mercy. This is Volume 8 of *Bihar al-Anwar*. This narrative is transmitted by mentor al-Majlisi from *Uyoon Akhar al-Ridha* عيون أخبار الرضا by our mentor, al-Saduq, may Allāh have mercy on his soul, from Dawud ibn Sulayman: عن الرضا عن أبيه عن أمير المؤمنين عليهم السلام قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: إذا كان يوم القيامة ولينا حساب شيعتنا - هم أولياء لحساب كل عليه السلام Al-Ridha الخلائق سيأتينا في الزيارة الجامعة - إباب الخلق إليكم وحسابهم عليكم عليه السلام quotes his forefathers citing the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام as saying that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, "When it is the Judgment Day, we will be granted charge of the accounts of our Shi'as (followers)—they are in charge of holding all beings accountable as we will see in the Comprehensive Ziyara—The return of the creation is to you and the responsibility of holding them accountable is vested on you." This is one of the texts of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara: "The return of the creation is to you, their final end, their ultimate return, is to you, and (the responsibility of) holding them accountable is vested on you." But here, the Imām عليه السلام is talking about an image of the Judgment Day with regard to the Raheemi mercy: إذا كان يوم القيامة ولينا حساب شيعتنا؛ فمن كانت مظلمة - يعني: معاصيه، يعني ذنوبه - فمن كانت مظلمة فيما بينه وبين الله عز وجل - إذا كان عنده ذنوب فيما بينه وبين الله - حكمنا فيها فأجابنا- حكمنا فيها يعني أجزنا له الأمر، يعني رفعنا عنه الحساب، حكمنا فيها، الله هو الذي حكمنا وأعطانا الاختيار - حكمنا فيها فأجابنا - في بعض الروايات - ذهبنا إلى الله وطلبنا منه أن يعفو عنكم - نفس المعنى - ومن كانت مظلمة بينه وفيما بين الناس استوهبناها "When it is the Judgment Day, we will be granted charge of our Shi'as (followers); so, anyone whose sins were between him and Allāh, the most Sublime, the most

Great," that is, if he has sins between him and Allāh [such as falling short of performing his religious duties], we will rule in their regards, and He will respond favorably to us—that is, "we rule in their regard" means: we grant him a reprieve, we lift the sentence against him, we rule in it, Allāh is the One Who vested on us the authority to rule, giving us the freedom of choice—we will rule in it, so he will respond favorably—some narratives have this wording: "... we will refer to Allāh and ask Him to forgive you—the same meaning—and if one has wronged some people, we will seek their remission." How do the Imāms عليه السلام get others to forgive those on whose behalf they intercede? If the injustice is committed against people who are among the residents of Paradise, the latter would be granted higher levels in Paradise, and if the injustice is against people who are residents of the Fire, the latter's torment will be lessened. It will be said to those in the Fire: "We will lessen your torment if you drop this injustice from this man who is one of our followers." إذا كان يوم القيامة ولينا حساب شيعتنا؛ فمن كانت مظلّمة فيما بينه وبين الله عزّ وجلّ حكمنا فيها فأجابنا، ومن كانت مظلّمة فيما بينه وبين الناس استوهبناها "When it is the Judgment Day, we will be granted charge of our Shi'as (followers); so, anyone whose sins were between him and Allāh, the most Sublime, the most Great, we will rule in their regard, and He will respond favorably to us. If one's injustice is against people, we will seek the latter's remission, so it will be granted to us [to wipe out]. And if one's injustice is between himself and our own selves, we are more worthy of forgiving and overlooking." In other words, "We will forgive your sins and overlook them," and this falls in the scope of the Raheemi mercy in the persons of the Imāms عليه السلام on the Judgment Day; otherwise, there is the scope of the Rahmani mercy and there is one for the Raheemi mercy, too, in the persons of the Imāms عليه السلام on the Day of Judgment, but we cannot discuss everything while being under strict time limitations.

The narrative with which I conclude my discussion is very beautiful. It is cited in the *tafsir* book of Furat ibn Ibrahim ابراهيم بن ابراهيم, which is one of the beautiful exegesis books which have transmitted anecdotes in addition to the most beautiful narratives citing Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام explaining the Qur'ān. The narrative is quite lengthy from

which I excerpt some lines. This narrative is transmitted by Ibn Abbas from the Master of Wasī from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ talking to Fatima ؑ about scenes and situations of the Judgment Day. This is what the Prophet ﷺ says: بعد ثم يقول جبرئيل - أنا فقط أخذ سطوراً، الرواية طويلة وجميلة جداً، لكن المقام لا يسع لقراءتها بتمامها - ثم يقول جبرئيل: يا فاطمة سلي حاجتك، فتقولين: يا ربّ شيعتي، فيقول الله: قد غفرت لهم، فتقولين: يا ربّ شيعتي، فيقول الله: انطلقني، فمن اعتصم بك فهو معك في الجنة، فعند ذلك - هذه العبارة جميلة جداً في الروايات - فعند ذلك توذ الخلاق أنهم كانوا فاطميين "Then Gabriel," after a lengthy statement, I here cite few lines, the narrative is very lengthy and beautiful, but I cannot read it in its entirety—then Gabriel says [to Fatima ؑ], 'O Fatima! Ask what you want,' whereupon you will say, 'Lord! I plead on behalf of my Shi`as (followers).' Allāh will say, 'I have forgiven them.' You will then say, 'Lord! I plead on behalf of the Shi`as of my offspring,' whereupon Allāh will say, 'I have forgiven them.' You will then say, 'Lord! I plead on behalf of the followers of my Shi`as!,' whereupon Allāh will say, 'Set out, whoever seeks refuge with you will be lodged with you in Paradise.'" Set out; whoever seeks refuge with you is with you in Paradise,' at that time—this statement is very beautiful in the narratives—at that time, all creations wish they had been Fatimis." This is what I want to say: Whoever seeks refuge with Fatima ؑ in the life of this world will then seek refuge with her. What was the first that she asked? She said, "Lord! I plead on behalf of my Shi`as," then "the Shi`as of my offspring," then the followers of her Shi`as, whereupon Allāh will say, "Set out, whoever seeks refuge with you, whoever clings to you..., etc." Who will cling to Fatima ؑ? The Fatimis are the ones who used to follow Fatima ؑ in the life of this world; such are the ones who can seek refuge with her—فعند ذلك توذ الخلاق أنهم كانوا فاطميين, it is then that all creations wish they had been Fatimis. How we wish to be Fatimis in the life of this world and in the Hereafter!

فعند ذلك توذ الخلاق أنهم كانوا فاطميين، فتسيرين ومعك شيعتك وشيعة ولدك وشيعة أمير المؤمنين - ماذا تقول الرواية؟ فاطمة تسير والشيعة تسير معها - أمانة روعاتهم - وهذه أجلي معاني الرحمة الرحيمية - أمانة روعاتهم مستورة عوراتهم - لأنه في يوم القيامة العوارت مكشوفة - قد ذهبت عنهم الشدائد وسهلت لهم الموارد، يخاف الناس وهم

لا يخافون، ويظماً الناس وهم لا يظمنون - من هم هؤلاء؟ هؤلاء الفاطميون، هؤلاء الذين يعتصمون بفاطمة في الدنيا.

It is then that the creations wish they had been Fatimis. "You will walk accompanied by your Shi`as, by the Shi`as of your offspring and the Shi`as of the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام." What does the narrative say [further]? Fatima عليها السلام will walk and the Shi`as will walk with her without having fear, and this is the highest degree of the meanings of the Raheemi mercy, their private parts covered, because on the Judgment Day the private parts are exposed, leaving hardships behind, finding all the resources facilitated for them, people are afraid but they are not, people feel thirsty, but they will never feel thirsty. Who are these folks? They are the Fatimis. They are the ones who seek refuge with Fatima عليها السلام in this life.

Can anyone blame us when we always mention the name of Fatima عليها السلام after all of this? When we always mention Fatima عليها السلام, when we decorate our meeting places by mentioning Fatima عليها السلام, when we raise Fatima's name as our slogan, when we make our life revolve round serving [the cause of] Fatima عليها السلام...., can anyone still blame us after all of this?! We only seek our salvation in so doing. We only look for our best interest in so doing. Can anyone blame the merchant when he is keen about his trade?! Our trade is with Fatima. Our capital is with Fatima. Our life is with Fatima. Our faith is with Fatima, Allāh's peace and blessings with her.

*Had it not been for loving you,
O daughter of the Messenger of Allāh,
My breath would have stopped...
Had it not been for loving you,
My bells would have stopped ringing,
The energy of my breath, O Zahrā,
Is derived from loving you...
Had it not been for loving you,
My breath would have stopped...
Had it not been for loving you,
My bells would have stopped ringing...
O Zahrā! O Zahrā! O Zahrā!*

It is then that all beings wish they had been Fatimis. "So you will walk accompanied by your Shi`as, by the Shi`as of your offspring and the Shi`as of the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام." What does the narrative say [further]? Fatima عليها السلام will walk and the Shi`as will walk with her without having fear, and this is the highest degree of the meanings of the Raheemi mercy, their private parts covered..., so congratulations to the followers of Fatima عليها السلام—leaving hardships behind, finding all the resources facilitated for them, people are afraid but they are not, people feel thirsty, but they will never feel thirsty. فإذا بلغت باب الجنة تلقتك اثنا عشر ألف حوراء لم يتلقين أحداً. ولا يتلقين أحداً كان بعدك قبلك - هذا للاستقبال - ولا يتلقين أحداً كان بعدك قبلك. "So when you reach the gate of Paradise, twelve thousand *huris* will welcome you, and they never welcomed anyone else before you, nor will they ever welcome anyone else after you. According to narratives, Fatima عليها السلام is the first to enter Paradise. The Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم will let her in. She will enter even before the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and before the Master of Wasis عليه السلام; they will be the ones who will let her enter first. Fatima عليها السلام, as I said a short while ago, is the reality that combines Prophethood and Wilaya, and there is a great mystery in that. I go back to read this text: "You will walk accompanied by your Shi`as, by the Shi`as of your offspring and the Shi`as of the Commander of the Faithful عليه السلام." What does the narrative say [further]? Fatima عليها السلام will walk and the Shi`as will walk with her without having fear, and this is the highest degree of the meanings of the Raheemi mercy, their private parts covered, because on the Judgment Day the private parts will be exposed, leaving hardships behind, finding all the resources facilitated for them, people are afraid but they are not, people feel thirsty, but they will never feel thirsty." All this will be done through the distinction Fatima عليها السلام enjoys. Fatima عليها السلام is the image of mercy.

Is not Fatima عليها السلام the mother?! Fatima عليها السلام is the "mother of her father صلى الله عليه وسلم," the mother of the Imāms عليهم السلام, the Mother Book, the mother of the faithful. Do we not have narratives that the children of the faithful who die while still being suckling babies, what do the narratives say about them? The children of the believers from among her Shi`as, the Fatimi children..., who are her Shi`as? Her Shi`as are

the Fatimis..., the Fatimis' children who die while still suckling infants, according to the narratives, will be carried away by the angels; where will the angels take them? They will carry them to Paradise..., where in Paradise? They will be carried to Fatima's Garden; she will be the one who will oversee them. There is a tree in her Garden. These babies will nurse from it. It is the one that will nurse them. Narratives have signs and symbols.

I plead to Him, the most Praised and Exalted One, while we are in the month of Fatima's father ﷺ, by the status of Fatima ؑ and her father ﷺ, husband and offspring ؑ and the mystery deposited in her, to grant us all success, to enable me and to enable you to serve Fatima ؑ in our worldly life, to let us live serving her cause and die serving it, and that we will be gathered under her banner, to live as Fatimis and to die as Fatimis. I plead to Him, the most Exalted One, to let the last that I pronounce in my life, and I would love this to be for myself and for all my believing brethren, to pronounce a call for help, seeking refuge and saying: "O Zahrā!" All of this falls within the scope of the meaning of mercy. Time is over. This day added something while the discussion is not over yet, the issue remains lengthy, for my condition is like that of the one who reads the "One Thousand and One Nights": At the end of each night, the narrator says, "The morning broke, so Shehrezade stopped the permitted talk." No matter what we say, what we articulate, the speech is not much, and there are scores and scores of texts which I can quote in explaining these meanings, but what can we do with the sword of time? I contend myself with this much. By the will of Allāh, within the folds of the upcoming episodes, many meanings will become clear to us regarding the merits of the Members of the House of Infallibility, Allāh's peace and blessing with them all.

يا أهل بيِّتِ النَّبُوَّةِ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ، وَمَعْدِنِ الرَّحْمَةِ.
 Peace with you, O members of the House of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones who are frequently visited by the angels, the place where *wahi* lands and the substance of mercy.

Peace with you all, O followers of the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. I solicit your supplication, all of you, and may you remain enjoying Allāh's security.

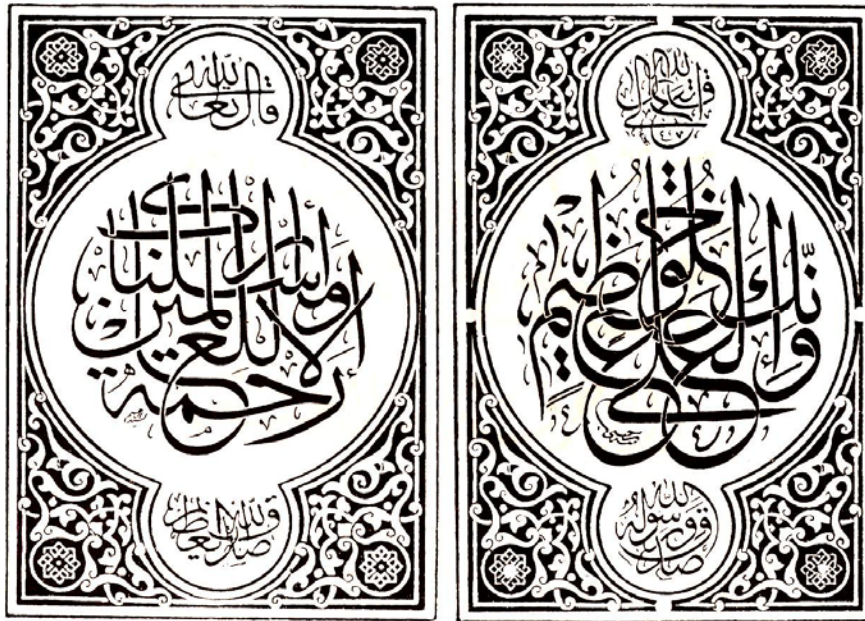


الحلقة التاسعة

معنى "وَحُزَّانِ الْعِلْمِ"

NINTH EPISODE

THE MEANING OF "TREASURERS OF
KNOWLEDGE"



Peace with you all, the mercy of Allāh and His blessings. May Allāh make all your days happy, and may He accept your acts of obedience during these sacred times. This is the ninth episode of our program "الزيارة الجامعة الكبيرة" "the Great Comprehensive Ziyara". This may be the last episode before the blessed month of Ramadhan. If next Thursday is part of the month of Sha`ban, this will be the last

episode before the month of Ramadhan the next Thursday. But if next Thursday is part of the blessed month of Ramadhan, we will start, as I told you before, on the first day of the month of Ramadhan our program "Our Qur'ān" قرآننا. On the day that follows it, we will start our program "the Great Comprehensive Ziyara" الزيارة الجامعة الكبيرة. Every other day throughout this sacred month, we will be living among the atmospheres of the Book (Qur'ān) and `Itra.

This day we have reached the statement of the Imām, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, "وَحُزَّانُ الْعِلْمِ" "... and the treasurers of knowledge".

This is *Mafatih al-Jinan* مفاتيح الجنان of our mentor, the Qummi narrator of hadith, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him. The Ziyara states: "السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبُوَّةِ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَحُزَّانِ الْعِلْمِ وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ، وَمَعْدِنِ الرَّحْمَةِ، وَخُزَّانِ الْعِلْمِ" "Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones who are frequently visited by the angels, the landing place of the *wahi*, the substance of mercy and the treasurers of knowledge." Today, in this episode of our program, I stop at his statement, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, "وَحُزَّانُ الْعِلْمِ" "... and the treasurers of knowledge". This label and this portion of the Great Comprehensive Ziyara may be the most important of the portions and labels of the Comprehensive Ziyara because the orbit of all descriptions, the cycle of all statuses, the cycle of all positions and levels is knowledge. وَحُزَّانِ الْعِلْمِ The word "khuzzan" is a plural of the singular "khazin", one who takes care of the *khuzana* safe or treasure box. Of course this a discussion of what is relevant to our life in this world. With regard to the linguistic meanings, *khuzzan* حُزَّانٌ is the plural of *khazin* خَازِنٌ, and the latter is one who takes care of the *khuzana* خُزَّانَةٌ, safe or treasure box, the place or area where the secrets [or valuable items] are safeguarded, where precious things are kept. It keeps everything of value. The meaning of *al-`ilm* الْعِلْمِ is clear: It is the opposite of *al-jahl* الْجَهْلِ, ignorance. Quite often, things become clear when compared with their antitheses. A man of knowledge is one who has the status or condition that qualifies him to be described as bearing, owning or having earned what is called knowledge which is the antithesis of ignorance. According to the linguistic meanings of the word composition of *khuzzan al-`ilm* حُزَّانِ الْعِلْمِ, treasurers or safe keepers

of knowledge, it means that there are safes or treasure boxes where knowledge is safeguarded, and **خُزَّانَ الْعِلْمِ** *khuzzan al-`ilm* are the ones who take care of such safeguarding, safe keeping. This is the linguistic meaning if we want to dismantle this term or phrase, i.e. take it apart, linguistically; otherwise, it will become clear to us later on, through the sacred verses and statements made by the Infallible Ones **عليه السلام**, that the latter are the treasurers of the Divine knowledge, and there is really nothing called **خزانة** *khuzana* without their overseeing it. But I have explained this meaning in order to dismantle this word linguistically, for **خُزَّانَ** *khuzzan*, is the plural of **خازن** *khazin*, one who oversees the *khuzana*. Here in the ziyara, however, what is meant is that they are the treasurers of Allāh's knowledge, for the discussion here is about the Divine worlds, the holy worlds, the sublime worlds, for they are the treasurers of the knowledge of Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, in the higher worlds and in the lower ones; thus, therefore, do we salute our Imāms **عليه السلام**:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبُوَّةِ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ، وَمَعْدِنِ الرَّحْمَةِ، وَخُزَّانِ الْعِلْمِ "Peace with you, O Household of the Prophet, the place of the Message, the ones who are frequently visited by the angels, the landing place of the *wahi*, the substance of mercy and the treasurers of [Divine] knowledge." What is meant by **الْعِلْمِ** the *`ilm*? In defining it, it may be said to be the impression caused by images that provide us with knowledge, information, or it may be the impression caused by images of existing external facts found outside, in the reality [world]. What is meant by "reality" may be more general than "the outside" because what exists in the outside is meant to be what has a body, a material presence, a tangible existence, or something close to this. But when I discuss what is in reality, in the reality world, in the world of reality, it includes the outside existence, and it includes the mental existence. There are many mental existents that stand in the mental presence only. Anyhow, this is the meaning of knowledge, generally speaking. As regarding how we can imagine the reality of knowledge, definitely the discussion here is about the reality of knowledge, in as far as we are concerned, what is relevant to me and to the viewers. The discussion here is not about the reality of knowledge which is

attributed [to this person or that] about which we discuss specifically in this portion of the ziyara, i.e. خُزَّانُ الْعِلْمِ the treasurers of knowledge, but we will discover, through our knowledge of forming the reality of our knowledge, we will discover, we will sense something of the meaning of their knowledge, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. There is a label in the books of philosophy which is known by philosophy specialists, students of philosophy, called المقولات العلية، المقولات العشر *al-maqoolat*, the ten *maqoolat*, the higher or the ten categories or predicaments. I do not wish to exhaust the viewers with the philosophical terms and theories, but I am going to simplify the discussion as much as I can in order to explain the meaning of knowledge. The major, ten or nine, philosophical categories or predicaments, according to various viewpoints, are sometimes referred to as the supreme genres, genera or genuses. These categories or predicaments are norms of classification. Now, in every science, there is a sort of classification; otherwise, how can we study any science unless there is categorizing and classifying of the information studied by that science? In every science, in every laboratory science, in human sciences, humanities, in the rational sciences, in any of these sciences, there is categorizing and classifying on the basis of which the matters relevant to the science or issues studied by that science are categorized under specific labels. For example, when students study diseases, do they not divide them into types and areas? There are physical diseases that inflict the body, and there are psychological diseases. There are mental diseases. The gate of mental diseases is quite wide. The gate of the psychological diseases is quite wide. The gate of the physical diseases is quite wide, and so on. In each of these categories, there are types and classifications, and so is the case with every type of science.

In philosophy, there are classifications for things which philosophy studies. In general, theological philosophy deals with the study of existence. It studies the existents. There is a classification for the existents through several observations. Among these observations or types of classification there is one for the study of existence. It studies the existents, the nature of what exists, what is connected to them, what leads to classifying them and diversifying them. There is a categorizing under labels called categories or predicaments. I do

not wish to delve too much into this matter. One of these categories is termed **كيف** *kaif*, [a tool for inquiring about the] quality or characteristic of a thing. The *kaif* term is essentially derived from the question tool **كيف؟**, how? About what do we use it?! When we say, "How is the such-and-such matter?," the question is about the status of that matter and its nature from which it is prepared and from which it prepares. When we discuss how a thing is, what is inquired about by asking, "How is it?," it falls under this label of *kaif*. There are many types of things about which we can ask with *kaif*: Some of them are felt by one of our five senses. These, too, are divided according to the senses, the five senses. So, let us now discuss the sense of tasting, for e.g. When we discuss sugar, how do we describe sugar? When we discuss how sugar is, its status, nature, etc., we describe sugar as being sweet. This is the first thing that comes to our minds when we remember sugar, whether this remembering is articulated or thought of. By merely remembering sugar, sweetness immediately pops up in our heads. This sweetness has an image in man's mind, there is a mental image for it. sugar is something sweet. This image is preserved in man's memory of knowledge. But how did this image reach the human mind?

Man has a certain ability. I personally use the term "extractive ability" for it. there is an ability with man which I call the extractive ability which was given by Allāh, the most Praised and Exalted One, to man, to animals and even to plants. But the talk about man and his extractive ability is at its highest degrees when compared to animals and plants. The extractive ability is strength and power with man through which he can extract meanings, images of the things around him on which he bears an impact or which impact him, whether man is impacting them or being impacted by them. When I bring a piece of sugar to my mouth and put it inside it, this piece starts melting in the first process of digestion. In the cavity of the mouth does this piece of sugar start melting, so I sense its taste. It is because of the ability of the bristle nerves and the neurological ability in man's mouth, lips and tongue, the latter being the mechanism which Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, created so man can taste foods and drinks. How did this sugar transfer to me the taste of its sweetness?

I have means for touching and tasting sweetness, but how did sugar transfer this taste to me?! They say in philosophy that this sugar, what we sense through tasting, did something: It transferred some of its characteristics to me. Sugar by nature is sweet, so when it found itself in the cavity of my mouth and started melting, sugar transferred its nature, something similar to its nature; otherwise, sugar did not move to my sense of taste. What moved to the sense of tasting is something of the nature of sugar. I took sugar, so it melted in my mouth, hence I sensed its sweetness. The secret in that is sugar transferring to my sense of tasting something of its nature, that is, what I shortly ago called the extractive ability. The fact is that it is not sugar that transferred it to me; rather, philosophy has said in some of its aspects as such. If I want to describe the matter with precision, mankind has the extractive ability through which he can extract things' characteristics by way of this ability. So, if this sugar is sweet and if it is found in the mouth cavity near the tasting antennas which humans have, the tasting ability which mankind has, there is inside it an extractive ability for extracting an image similar to the originality of sugar. After that, these signals, which the tasting antennas take, are transferred through the nerves in signal waves to the human mind where they are stored. This process, this status, this image, is called in philosophy the "sensed how," i.e. sugar did something that is similar to the nature of sugar. It is the same with fire: When it is made somewhere, it will provide heat; it will heat what is around it. How did it heat what is around it? It transferred some of its characteristics to the atmosphere touching it. the fire transferred some of its "how". The same applies to the heard "how", to sound or voice. And there is the seen, the observed, the witnessed "how": How do we see things? In the past, they used to say that the eye is the one that sees things, but modern science has proven that the eye cannot see things without light. Light is the one that transfers images of things to the eye. This is a seen "how". I do not wish to discuss this issue too much. Rather, I wanted to bring the meaning closer. Where does science stand vis-à-vis all of this? They say that this is a psychological *kaif* كيف, how: If sugar gives us a sensed *kaif*, science is a psychological *kaif*. The psychological *kaif* means the one that is outside the senses. Of course there is a science with us through the senses; this is another matter, and I do not wish to delve into it. I do not wish to delve into all these particularities and details.

Science, or knowledge, is a psychological *kaif*. This means that man has the ability to extract an image of the things that surround us. Based on this extracted image of the things that surround us, where is it? By nature, it is a psychological *kaif*. Just as sugar transferred to us, through the sensed *kaif*, the nature of its sweetness, the things that surround us have transferred to us their images, through what method?

They have done so through the psychological *kaif*. In other words, the things that surround us transferred these images to ourselves, to the psychological world, to the spiritual world, to the rational world of mankind. Such is the psychological *kaif*. It is said that knowledge/science falls under the psychological *kaif* category because knowledge is a present reality in our life. When philosophy comes to study this reality, under what category will it classify it? It is classified under the category of the *kaif* and, to be precise, under the *kaif* category which is of the psychological type. So, knowledge/science is a psychological *kaif*. Here, the talk about the discussion among the ancient philosophers of the time of the Greeks, this a discussion that actually took place, that is, these images that exist in man's mind. Are these images of the pieces of information by themselves or are they imagination plus a shadow of the information? They said that had these images been the information itself and in their own status, the resulting and external effects would have impacted these images in the mind of man. When we imagine ice, do we feel its chillness? We do not sense its chillness. In other words, had ice been present, we would have felt its chillness, but we do not have real ice in our minds; rather, we have in our minds an image, an extracted image bearing the reality. From here, therefore, confusion resulted in the sophistic thinking. There were those who said that what exists in man's mind does not represent external realities. Why did they say that what exists in man's mind does not result in the impacts that exist in the external reality? When we imagine fire, we do not sense its heat, nor are we burnt by it. Rather, we have a shadow image of it. From here, they said that what exists in the human mind does not represent a true reality; therefore, they said that mankind does not have a path towards knowledge through the reality; why? This is so because the reality does not enter man's mind; rather, what enter into man's mind are

mere images and concepts. I do not wish to delve into this issue. A short while ago, I pointed out to the extractive ability. This ability, which exists in man, extracts the real images of things. Allāh, the most Praised and Exalted One, deposited this ability in man and settled it in all sides and aspects of the human realization. If this realization is through the sensual level, and since the senses are many, you must not be confused about the senses being only the five senses. I bring an example: When time or place change to man, and when man feels the change of time and place, if man looks with precision, he will find out that he has a faculty through which he senses the change of time and place which is other than the well known senses/faculties. When we lift something heavy and another which is light, we will realize the difference in their weight. Through what sense/faculty did we realize the heaviness of a thing or its lightness?

We do not do so through the five senses, nor through the sense of realization that time and place have changed. There is another sense which we have and through which we distinguish between a heavy thing and a light one. There are scores and scores and scores of senses that exist in man: There is the mental realization in its levels, there is the sentimental realization in its levels, and there is the sensual realization in its many levels, and there is the visionary realization, the one that is rendered to vision, to seeing things, and there is the common realization; there is the common realization which is the human one: There is a realization which man has and in which all these realizations are incorporated. Definitely there is the innate realization, and there are other meanings for realization and for its levels; there is the inspirational realization, and the intuition may be the first level and degree of intuition, although in its high degrees, inspiration is not like intuition. Another reality, another issue: There are many levels for human realization. These many levels of human realization are the ones that give man the ability due to the extractive ability in him to know the facts in their reality, whether these facts exist through an external existence in the outside world, or whether they exist through the mental existence in the mental world. These existents that are found in the external reality, be they material or immaterial, or be they some other created levels,

man's knowledge is as such, in this form, in this status; it is a *kaif* sense.

As regarding the knowledge of Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, this is something else to which this discussion does not apply. The knowledge of Allāh, to Whom all Praise and Exaltation belong, cannot be said to be an extractive knowledge. My knowledge and that of the viewer is extractive: Through the extractive ability do we extract the facts that exist in the external reality, in the reality in general, every fact, be it external or mental, accordingly. The methods of extraction that are inherent in mankind vary from reason to conscience, from the senses and vision and other powers of human realization. The knowledge of the Infallible One, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, also is not at this level. Narratives and ahadith tell us about the characteristics of the knowledge of the Infallible One. Definitely I do not deny the existence of the mental ability, the sentimental power, the sensual ability and the ability of vision, whatever abilities people have are [also] available with the Infallible One in his human presence. These abilities are present because they are from the perfection of the human creation as a human in the earthly world, even though the Infallible One does not need these abilities. But they are like the other parts of the body. The knowledge of the Infallible One is at a higher level than these abilities and levels. The Infallible One, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, may deal with these matters according to his life in the human society and to the law and principle with which the Infallible One deals with people: He lives among them based on politeness, and this is another subject into which I do not wish to delve because politeness is broader than being within the limits of pronouncement or those of speech or within the limits of explaining the scientific pursuits. Politeness is a broader subject than this issue which I may tackle some other time in another research and explain that the Infallible One, peace with him, lives with people according to the principle of politeness and the rule of politeness.

It has become clear to us from this Introduction that the reality of the knowledge which we have from the philosophical standpoint is a psychological *kaif*, such as the effect of sugar on our tongues, lips, in

the cavity of the mouth, so it affects us in something that is like the nature and characteristic of sugar. By the same token, this applies to the things that surround us: When we look at them, they bear an impact on us according to the psychological *kaif*, so these images and means are transferred to us across the extractive ability present in man and is inherent in all his faculties. Despite all of that, there is another classification for my knowledge and that of the viewer: There is what is called the resultant knowledge, and there is what is called the presential knowledge. I do not wish to go too far in discussing the details of this issue. I say in a quick way that what is called the resultant knowledge, in as far as man is concerned, for me and for my likes, is this: An image of what is known is impressed, such as much information, such as the information I am discuss to you now. This information definitely I cannot mention without images of it existing in my mind. There are images for information, for the knowledge which, in this case, is in the form of images for information in man's mind called the resultant knowledge. There is another type of knowledge which is the presential one. The presential knowledge means there is a presence by itself for what is known, for the information, in as far as man is concerned. How does this meaning materialize? I know of my intention; this is presential knowledge. What is known here is by itself and not an image of it. Now, for e.g., when I discuss the moon or the sun, is the sun present with me, existing inside me, inside my humanity?! The sun is not present; rather, what is present in my mind is an image of the sun. Knowledge of the sun for me is a resultant knowledge; why? This is so because what results in my mind is an image of what is known. As regarding my knowledge of my intention, my intention exists with me; my knowledge of my intention is presential, present, not absent.

The knowledge of the Infallible One ﷺ is not on this level. Things are present with him. The information is by itself present. Such is the comprehensiveness of knowledge: Things are by themselves present with him: وَقُلْ: اَعْمَلُوا، فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ "Work (righteousness). Allāh will soon observe your deeds, (as will) His Messenger and the believers" (Qur'ān, 9:105). This outlook hinges on the presential knowledge, not on the resultant knowledge,

because this outlook, because of comprehensiveness, means that the Infallible One عليه السلام is granted by Allāh, to Whom Praise and Exaltation belong, the ability to encompass, absorb, this information by itself, not through images of the information. Just as I am able to encompass my intention, am I not now encompassing my intention and this intention is present with me? The intentions of the creations, the actions of the creations, are all present with him; otherwise, what is the meaning of this outlook? **وَقُلْ: اَعْمَلُوا، فَسَيَرَى اللهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ** "Work (righteousness). Allāh will soon observe your deeds, (as will) His Messenger and the believers" (Qur'ān, 9:105). Of course this bringing of the presential knowledge for man greatly reveals the reality of the knowledge of the Infallible One عليه السلام. The knowledge of the Infallible One عليه السلام is at a higher level than this knowledge. But how can I bring the meaning closer to my comprehension and to that of those who listen to me? How do I get the meaning closer to comprehension? I need clarification means. I need mechanisms to explain the pursuit. I, therefore, have brought this Introduction which starts with the psychological *kaif*, then I entered the resultant and the presential norms of knowledge. All this is about the nature of the knowledge of the ordinary individual, that is, my knowledge and yours. As regarding the knowledge of the Infallible One, it is another story. The knowledge of the Infallible One cannot be said to be presential like the presential knowledge with me, such as my knowledge of myself. I can term the knowledge of the Infallible One as the presential knowledge that is appropriate to him. When the Master of Wasī عليه السلام says **ما رأيت شيئاً إلا ورأيت الله قبله** "I never saw a thing without seeing Allāh before it, after it, with it and in it," this is penetration, probing, of the realities of things. This is penetration. The issue is not spiritual as some would like to picture it, that is, the Imām عليه السلام lives a spiritual status, so he looks at things from the outlook that the effects lead to the one that affected them. Since when did Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام deal with the effects?! In a supplication by the Master of Martyrs عليه السلام on the occasion of the Day of Arafā, which is one of the supplications taught to us by Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, I read: **إلهي ترددي في الآثار يوجب لي بُعد** "Lord! My frequent observations of the effects necessitates for me [to conclude that] what I visit is quite remote from me." If this

meaning applies to me and to my likes, when did Ali عليه السلام ever visit the effects?!

When Ali عليه السلام says **ما رأيتُ شيئاً إلا ورأيت الله قبله وبعده ومعه وفيه** "I never saw a thing without seeing Allāh before it, after it, with it and in it," this is penetration, probing, the penetration of the realities of things. Such comprehensiveness is referred to in *Du`a al-Bahaa* **دعاء البهاء** the Bahaa Supplication, one recited at the pre-dawn time and during the nights of the month of Ramadhan which are forthcoming, and it is highly recommended. Mere recitation does not suffice **ألا لا خير في قراءة ليس فيها تدبر** "There is nothing good in a recitation that does not bring about serious contemplation." Recitation needs contemplation. **اللَّهُمَّ إني أسألك من علمك بأنفذه** "Lord! I plead to You to grant me the most impactful (penetrative, probing, insightful) of Your knowledge," that is, knowledge that brings about impacts, effects, outcomes. Such knowledge is penetrative. They say **السهم النافذ** the impactful (penetrative) arrow, the one that penetrates the target; it hits the target then penetrates (pierces) it. **اللَّهُمَّ إني أسألك من علمك بأنفذه** "Lord! I plead to You to grant me the most impactful (penetrative) of Your knowledge." The talk here is not about knowledge of the Divine Self. There are no levels in the Divine Self **اللَّهُمَّ إني أسألك من علمك بأنفذه** "Lord! I plead to You to grant me the most impactful (penetrative) of Your knowledge" means there is an impactful (penetrative) knowledge and there is knowledge that is more impactful (penetrative) than it. Is there more impactful (penetrative) than this knowledge, that is, than Ali's knowledge? "I never saw a thing without seeing Allāh before it, after it, with it and in it." Perhaps I can bring the meaning closer to your comprehension: When there is before me pieces of ice, before me, before you or before people, when there are pieces of ice before us, we know that this ice is chilled water, but this water, because of a low temperature, the distances that separate its particles have shrunk, bringing the particles of the water closer to each other. When these particles came close to each other, the particles' movement towards each other weakened. The particles' movement became slow. The distances between the particles shrunk because of a low temperature. The distances between the particles shrunk, causing a slow movement of the particles, so these particles consolidated among themselves,

turning the water into ice. Ice is water, and we know that water is comprised of hydrogen and oxygen, and its formula is known to you: H₂O. In every water particle, there are two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. The oxygen atom is large, while both hydrogen atoms are small. So, there is one large oxygen atom and two small hydrogen atoms. When scientific outlook penetrates this ice, where does it reach? Ice is originally water. Water is originally hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen and oxygen are what? They are gases. Things are gases, materials are gases. Because of the distance between their atoms, particles, and because of the fast movement: the faster the movement of the particles and atoms, the more distant they will be from each other, turning things into gases. Hydrogen and oxygen are comprised of atoms, and these atoms have a nucleus, and the nucleus has a nucleolus (a smaller nucleus), and there are things that turn in the atom's orbit. These small particles are electrons, protons and neutrons as well as many other types [of particles]. Now, tiny bodies have been discovered. Now, in modern sciences, many types of corpuscles (tiny bodies or matters) have been discovered. There are those who say that it is likely in these atoms, billions of corpuscles will be discovered in the future. Now they say that there are more than 250 types of these discovered corpuscles for which no names have yet been chosen; rather, they bear numbers. What is the reality of these corpuscles?

They comprise a type of energy, a sort of electromagnetic energy. What is the reality of the electromagnetic energy?

Nobody [yet] knows what is beyond that, but if we refer to the narratives, they say that the origin of things is *noor*, celestial light, but not one that can be identified through our [physical human] senses/faculties. This *noor* was formed, and it appeared in shapes and levels. At the bottom of these levels, material existents in the natural world appeared. These are transfigurations that resulted from there. I mean to say that one who looks at this piece of ice through the limited scientific outlook, he may reach those dimensions. Man's knowledge is limited. It is of the resultant type, i.e. an image results for what is known in man's mind of the psychological *kaiif* type. The knowledge of the Infallible One ﷺ is different. The Infallible One

ﷺ has the comprehensiveness of what is known itself. This comprehensiveness is not one of ownership but one of penetration. He does not only encompass it, so he may own it, like an owner owning a piece of property in the life of this world: "Lord! I plead to You to grant me the most impactful (penetrative) of Your knowledge". When we say that the Qur'an explains everything, all these facts which the Qur'an has brought us, discuss Allāh, the heavens, the higher beings, the other natural worlds, mankind and everything [else]. When the Infallible One ﷺ knows about these facts, he does not know them as I do, that is, through mental images; otherwise, what is the difference, then, between myself and himself?! Why did he become the Hujja over me? Why was the Infallible Imām ﷺ granted the formative *Wilaya*, mastership? Had his knowledge been similar to mine, i.e. mere mental images, his outlook would not penetrate things: **اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ عِلْمِكَ بِأَنْفَذِهِ**: "Lord! I plead to You to grant me the most impactful (penetrative) of Your knowledge." I brought this example of the piece of ice, this is a sort of scientific impactful/penetrative yet a limited one. When I look at ice as water, and water is analyzed into this and that, up to the end of the example I brought, when the Infallible One ﷺ encompasses things, he realizes them, thus has the Master of Wasis ﷺ said by way of a sign: **مَا رَأَيْتُ شَيْئاً إِلَّا وَرَأَيْتُ اللَّهَ قَبْلَهُ وَبَعْدَهُ وَمَعَهُ وَفِيهِ**: "I never saw a thing without seeing Allāh before it, after it, with it and in it," his vision is impactful/penetrative. His vision is piercing. This is penetration. This is piercing. This is the most impactful/penetrative type of knowledge: He does not see a thing without seeing the source of its reality, and this outlook we cannot imagine because we do not have it. Rather, all this discussion is of examples and statements that bring the meanings closer [to our comprehension], perhaps we can sense something from the knowledge of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed **عليه**, from the knowledge of Ali **عليه** and the Progeny of Ali **عليه**. The subject is lengthy. The topic is wide. I cannot absorb the subject in a hurry, in an hour, two or three; this subject is one of the most broad subjects, but I will try to continue the talk following this Introduction in which I have explained an aspect of the meaning of knowledge.

I go to the Holy Book of Allāh (Qur'ān) in order to live among its sacred verses. In Surat al-Baqara (Chapter 2 of the Holy Qur'ān), verse 255, which is the verse relevant to the Kursi that surrounds the heavens and the earth, what does this verse say?

It says **وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ** "... Nor shall they grasp (encompass) anything of His knowledge..." (Qur'ān, 2:255). From here do we set out in the search, from this verse. Knowledge [to which reference is made in this verse] is that of Allāh, and there is no creature that can encompass a thing of His knowledge [without His facilitating it] and not the knowledge of Allāh **إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ** "... except as He wills" [or through the means or persons whom He permits], that is, save if He, the most Praised and Exalted One, wills. The principle starts from here. When we want to discuss the knowledge of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, the talk starts and ends here. **وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ** "... Nor shall they grasp anything of His knowledge...": This statement implies Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ as well as others. If something enters into it by neither Muhammed ﷺ nor the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, it is from others; **وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ** "His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth," but He made an exception when He said **إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ** "... except as He permits" [or: save through the means/persons He wills]. Then this verse explains an aspect of His knowledge: **وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ** "His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth," and in the Kursi, the seven heavens will be like a drop compared to the sea, or like a ring in an expansive broad plain. The talk here is about this verse: **وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ** "... Nor shall they grasp anything of His knowledge except as He wills." So, our discussion will branch out based on this principle. This is the canon and the golden rule from which the talk will start and end: **وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ** "... Nor shall they grasp anything of His knowledge except as He wills." Knowledge belongs to Him, and He is the One Who determines to whom He grants it, for He, and only He, is the One Who can do that. This verse needs discerning; it needs contemplation, and I find no time sufficient to halt at it. But I think that those who have the interest from among the viewers who

follow me [in this program] in these researches, in these subjects, will think deeply about this verse: **وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ** "... Nor shall they grasp anything of His knowledge except as He wills." Our start is from here and so is our end: Knowledge is only His knowledge; He is the One Who decides to grant it or to obstruct it, and the exception is quite clear. This is the first verse where I halt.

The second sacred verse is the 21st of Surat al-Hijr (Chapter 15 of the Holy Qur'an): **... وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ، وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ** "And there is not a thing but its (inexhaustible sources and) treasures are with Us, but We only send them down in due and ascertainable measure." Now, we read in the ziyara: **... وَخَزَائِنُ الْعِلْمِ** "and the treasurers of knowledge." I have said that the reality says that they [Imāms **عليه السلام**] are Allāh-appointed treasurers. **وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ، وَمَا نُنزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ**, that is, not a thing, anything, except that its **خَزَائِنُ** treasures are with us, and We send it down according to a measure which is known to Us. This verse discusses treasures and sending them down which means things appearing. We have appearances in the higher worlds, and these appearances were sent down until this physical image appeared in the earthly world. Do the narratives not tell us about the presence of our images in the Arsh world and in other worlds? These images gradually descended, took shapes that suited all worlds of Allāh, the most Praised and Exalted One, until they appeared in the earthly world. They descended according to a known or calculated measure: "And there is not a thing but its (inexhaustible sources and) treasures are with Us; but We only send them down in due and ascertainable measure."

This narrative is reported by mentor al-Majlisi. This is Volume 13 of *Bihar al-Anwar*. On p. 330, we see it transmitted by mentor al-Saduq, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him, as follows: **عن ابن محبوب عن مقاتل بن سليمان قال: قال أبو عبد الله عليه السلام: لَمَّا صعد موسى عليه السلام إلى الطور فناجى ربه عزَّ وجلَّ - ماذا ناجى ربه؟ إمامنا الصادق يحدثنا - لَمَّا صعد موسى عليه السلام إلى الطور فناجى ربه عزَّ وجلَّ قال: يا ربي أرني خزانك، قال: يا موسى إنما خزانتي إذا أردت شيئاً أن أقول له كُن فيكون** "Ibn Mahbub quotes Muqatil ibn Sulayman quoting Imām Abu Abdullah, peace with him,

as saying that when Moses, peace with him, ascended to the Mountain [Mount Sinai], he made *munajat* مناجاة to his Lord, the most Exalted One, the most Great. What did he say to his Lord? Our Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام says that when Moses, peace with him, ascended to the Mountain and addressed his Lord, the most Exalted One and the most Great, saying, "Lord! Let me see Your treasures." The Almighty said, "O Moses! My treasures are: If I want anything, I only say to it 'Be!", and it is." Such are the Almighty's treasures, and we have in previous episodes discussed a statement by the Master of Wasis عليه السلام transmitted also by mentor al-Majlisi in Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 5, in a discussion by Tariq ibn Shihab, a clear and frank statement about Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام saying فهم سرُّ الله المخزون وأوليائه المقربون وأمره بين الكاف والنون لا بل هم الكاف والنون "The are Allāh's treasured mystery, close friends and command between the *Kaaf* الكاف and the *Noon* النون; rather, they are the *Kaaf* and the *Noon*." Such is the treasure from which everything descends in a known measure. I, therefore, said at the onset of my discussion that what is meant by the علم `ilm in *khuzzan al-ilm*, treasurers of knowledge in the Great Comprehensive Ziyara, the knowledge of the Almighty, is that they themselves are as such. In their first position prior to creation were the greatest treasure, and in their earthly world they are the treasurers of the knowledge of Allāh to whom Praise and Exaltation belong. So, it is not unusual to find the Qur'ān discuss them in Surat Aali `Imran in the seventh verse as follows: هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخْرُ مِتَشَابِهَاتٌ؛ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ مَتَشَابِهَاتٍ "It is He Who has sent down the Book to you; there are basic (fundamental) verses (of established meanings) in it; they are the foundation of the Book; others are allegorical. But those with perversity in their hearts follow its allegorical parts, seeking discord and searching for their own hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except Allāh and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge," thus creating a group of people that is "firmly grounded in knowledge". Allāh Almighty has made the people of this group the treasurers of His Knowledge, hence the *ta'weel*, searching for deep meanings; what is this *ta'weel*? The *ta'weel* is not as some people understand. It is giving a text meanings

that are distant from what is articulated. *Ta'weel* is rendering meanings to their origins: "ما رأيت شيئاً إلا ورأيت الله قبله وبعده ومعه وفيه" I never saw a thing without seeing Allāh before it, after it, with it and in it." So, is there anyone other than Ali عليه السلام and the Progeny of Ali عليه السلام who know it? *Ta'weel* is rendering the meaning to its origin, source, such is **النظر النافذ**, the impactful, piercing or penetrative outlook. **اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ عِلْمِكَ بِأَنْفُذِهِ وَكُلِّ عِلْمِكَ نَافِذٌ؛ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ كُلِّهِ** "O Allāh! I plead to You to grant me of Your knowledge the most impactful, and all Your knowledge is impactful; O Allāh! I plead to You by all Your knowledge." *Ta'weel* is the most impactful/penetrative type of knowledge; therefore, it is restricted to Allāh and them: "... no one knows its hidden meanings except Allāh and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge," and the statement is quite clear.

If we go to the sacred Surat al-Ra`d (Chapter 13 of the Holy Qur`ān), we will read the following verse 43: **وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا: لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا؛ قُلْ: كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ** "The unbelievers say, 'You are not a Messenger.' Say: 'Allāh suffices as a witness between me and you and those who have the knowledge of the Book' (Qur`ān)." This verse is clear and needs no explanation. Only I would like to attract your attention to this point: This verse has equated the witness, testimony, of Allāh with that of *the one* who has with him the knowledge of the Book. When two witnesses are brought, their knowledge of the same case must be alike. The word **شَهِيدٌ** or **شاهد**, witness, means someone who is present and who witnessed the case. This is the presential type of knowledge. The case is present with the one who has with him the knowledge of the Book. There is no need to discuss Allāh's knowledge, for the knowledge of Allāh permits no discussion; it is clear and we know its reality. But the talk from the one who has with him the knowledge of the book, that is, the talk of the treasurers of knowledge, he is their master, this person who has with him the knowledge of the Book. His witness, testimony, is regarded as similar to that of Allāh. The witnesses must be present; so, how did that witness become present? How did he attend, so he said, **ما رأيت شيئاً إلا ورأيت الله قبله وبعده ومعه وفيه** "I never saw a thing without seeing Allāh before it, after it, with it and in it"? This is the testimony of

this witness. This is the most impactful sort of knowledge. This is the knowledge of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. This is the knowledge of Ali ﷺ, and suffices me just to say "Ali".

There is a narrative in *Tafsir al-Burhan* of our master Hashim al-Bahrani, may Allāh be pleased with him. There are many narratives that explain the meaning of this verse: وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا: لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا؛ قُلْ: "كُفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ" "The unbelievers say, 'You are not a Messenger.' Say: 'Allāh suffices for a witness between me and you and those who have the knowledge of the Book (Qur'ān)'" (Qur'ān, 13:43). A narrative is transmitted by Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani from the *tafsir* (exegesis) book of Ali ibn Ibrahim who quotes Omar ibn Uthaynah. I excerpt from it this narrative, since the narratives are many and time does not permit quoting them all:

عن عمر بن أدينة عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام قال: الذي عنده علم الكتاب هو أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام، وسئل عن الذي عنده علم من الكتاب أعلم أم الذي عنده علم الكتاب؟ فقال: ما كان علم الذي عنده علم من الكتاب - يعني آصف - عند الذي عنده علم الكتاب - يعني علياً - إلا بقدر ما تأخذ البعوضة بجناحها من ماء البحر - وقال الذي عنده علم من الكتاب، ذلك آصف، أنا أتيتك به، يسألونهُ ما هو وجه المقايضة؟ الإمام يقول - ما كان علم الذي عنده علم من الكتاب عند الذي عنده علم الكتاب إلا بقدر ما تأخذ البعوضة بجناحها من ماء البحر.

"Omar ibn Uthaynah quotes Imām Abu Abdullah ﷺ as saying, "The one who has with him the knowledge of the Book is the Commander of the Faithful, peace with him." He ﷺ was asked, "Is the one who has [some] knowledge of the Book more knowledgeable or is it the one who has the knowledge *of* the Book?" He answered, "The knowledge of the one who had [some] knowledge of the Book—meaning Aasif [ibn Barkhya, a nephew of Prophet Solomon ﷺ]—compared to that who has the knowledge of the Book—meaning Ali ﷺ—is like as much as a mosquito taking away of the sea's water with its wing." The Imām ﷺ was asked about Aasif to whom the Holy Qur'ān refers in "... وقال الذي عنده علم..." (Qur'ān, 27:40). The Imām's statement also points out to the presence of what is already known [by the Imām ﷺ], for the

mosquito takes something of the sea water. It is an image of what is known. As for him عليه السلام, he has the sea, he knows [things] by himself. The narrative is very deep. Moreover, it points out to the difference in measurements on the scientific level, but it has a very precise reference: the mosquito takes a drop, for e.g., of the sea.

When someone asks, "What is the sea?" He never saw it, nor is he near it so you would take him to see it. you bring him a cup of water and say to him, "The sea has a lot of this liquid." This mosquito took a drop. As for the sea, it is present with the owner of the sea, Ali عليه السلام ما كان علم الذي عنده علم من الكتاب عند الذي عنده علم الكتاب إلا بقدر ما تأخذ: عليه السلام البعوضة بجناحها من ماء البحر "The knowledge of the one who has [some] knowledge of the Book compared to that of the one who has *the* Book's knowledge is as much as what the mosquito takes of the sea water," up to the end of this sacred narrative. Time does not really suffice to quote many texts and narratives, but I will try to bring my discussion together, perhaps I will succeed in giving the viewers who love Ahlul-Bayt عليهم السلام the meaning though this image is distant. I beg your pardon, and the men of honor always accept one's excuse. I seek to apologize to the Imām of my Time (عج), and to you, for my shortcoming, for falling short of explaining this to you.

Verse 89 of the sacred Surat al-Nahl (Chapter 16 of the Holy Qur'ān) reads: وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ "We revealed to you the Book explaining all things, a guide, a mercy and glad tidings to Muslims;" is this explaining done in the form of images of information? Or is it done through the realities of information? There is the encompassing of information. What is known is that a thing that exists in reality used to be in the outside reality, in the external existence, or in the mental presence, in the lower worlds or in the upper ones: وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ "We revealed to you the Book explaining all things," that is, everything in existence. This Book explains. If we discern the expressions of this Book (Qur'ān), are there in the words of this Book an explanation for everything? These words are keys that get us to reach realities that are broader and greater. I have repeatedly stated that the men of wisdom say that this recording Book is an image of the formative Book: وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ "We revealed to you the Book

explaining all things," and you can find the same meaning in the sacred Surat Ya-Sin (Chapter 36 of the Holy Qur'an) when we read verse 12 of it: **إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوا وَآثَارَهُمْ، وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ** "Truly We grant life to the dead, and We record what they sent before and what they leave behind, and We have taken account of all things in a clear Imām." Those who oppose our views interpret "clear Imām" as meaning the Qur'an. There are other views. Even if this means that the "clear Imām" is the Qur'an, it means that everything is mentioned in the Qur'an, and the previous statement flows with this one. But according to our narratives, the "clear Imām" is Ali, Allāh's peace and blessings with him. We have many narratives, numerous ones, from the Prophet ﷺ and Imāms عليه السلام that what is meant by the "clear Imām" here is Ali, Allāh's peace and blessings with him. **... وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ** "and We have taken account of all things in a clear Imām."

There is a verse in Surat al-An'am (Chapter 6 of the Holy Qur'an) that explains this meaning to us. It is verse 59 of this Sura; what does it say? It says **وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ** "The keys of the unseen, the treasures that none but He knows, are with Him." These keys are for the treasures, and the treasures are the keys; these are the treasures of Allāh: Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام are the treasurers of Allāh, and they are His treasures and keys: "The keys of the unseen, the treasures that none but He knows, are all with Him." Then this verse explains testimonies, examples, in order to bring the meaning closer (to our comprehension): **وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبُرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ، وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنَ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا** "He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge." This is not all the unseen. The entire world and everything in it does not equal with Allāh the wing of a mosquito. This is just an example. The verse says **وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ** "The keys of the unseen are with Him." What is the value of the world compared to the keys to the unseen? But the "world" here is brought as an example, for mankind does not see except what is before his eyes, as they say. The Prophet ﷺ says **صاحب الحاجة أعمى، لا يرى إلا حاجته** "One in need is blind: He sees only what he needs." When someone has something with you that belongs to him, he will be persistent, he will be greatly persistent because he does not see anything but his need and he wants it taken care of. As

for the world, in as far as we are concerned, it is our first and last need, for one in need is blind; we are blind in this life; why? We are so because we see only it, and the Qur'ān speaks to us according to our need: **وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ، وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ** "The keys of the unseen, the treasures that none but He knows, are all with Him. He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge: There is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (recorded) in a clear record."

The "Imām" according to the Arabs' language means **الجامع** the gatherer; therefore, they say **أَمَّ الْجَمَاعَةَ** which means "He became the imām of the congregation," that is, he gathered them. The book, too, is also **الجامع** the gatherer. In army terminology, they use the term **كتيبة** *kateeba*, battalion, because it is comprised of a group of men. They say that writing is termed **كتابة** *kitaba*, because it is a collection of letters and words. A narrative transmitted by mentor al-Majlisi in Vol. 4 of *Bihar al-Anwar* is quoted from the *tafsir*, exegesis, book of our mentor, al-Ayyashi, may Allāh have mercy on him, states: **عن الحسين بن خالد قال: سألت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام عن قول الله: وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ - الحديث عن هذه الآية أخذ موطن الشاهد - قال: قلت: في كتابٍ مبينٍ ما معناها؟ قال: في إمامٍ مبينٍ** Al-Hussain ibn Khalid has said that he asked (Imām) Abu Abdullah [al-Sadiq] **عليه السلام** about this verse of the Almighty: Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge: There is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (recorded) in a clear record." The talk about this verse is introduced as a testimony—he asked the Imām, "What is the meaning of **مبين** in a clear record?" He said, **قال: في إمامٍ مبينٍ** "[It means the same as" In a clear Imām." **وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُبِينٍ** "... and We have taken account of all things in a clear Imām". It also exists in **وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ، وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ، وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ** "The keys of the unseen, the treasures that none but He knows, are with Him. He knows whatever there is on the earth and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge: There

is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (recorded) in a clear record." The reference here is made to **مفاتيح الغيب** the keys to the unseen.

In verses 26 and 27 of Surat al-Jinn (Chapter 72 of the Holy Qur'an), we read: **عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا** "He (alone) knows the unseen, and He makes no one acquainted with His mysteries—the talk here is about **غَيْبِ ghayb**, unseen, specifically relevant to Allāh. The previous verse **وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ** "The keys of the unseen, the treasures that none but He knows," then we read **... وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُبِينٍ** "... and We have taken account of all things in a clear Imām," but the verse here discusses a special knowledge of the unseen:

26. "He (alone) knows the unseen, and He makes no one acquainted with His mysteries,

عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ❀

27. "Except a Messenger whom He has chosen, and then He makes a band of guards march before him and behind him,

إِلَّا مَنْ أَرْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ، فَإِنَّهُ يَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ❀

(Qur'an, 72:26-27)

There is an exception: the Prophet ﷺ and his Progeny **آلِهِ**: Allāh, Praise and Exaltation belong to Him, acquaints them with His knowledge of the unseen. To what reality do these verses point: **فِي إِمَامٍ مُبِينٍ** "... and We have taken account of all things in a clear Imām"? It discusses everything; there are no exceptions. Read this verse of Surat al-Ra'd: **وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ** "... and those who have the knowledge of the Book" (Qur'an, 13:43). The Book explains everything without any exception. The talk here is about **فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا** "He (alone) knows the unseen, and He makes no one acquainted with His mysteries (things unknown to others)"

(Qur'ān, 72:26), which is the special *ghayb* غَيْب, what is unknown to others [but there is an exception here: إِيَّا مَنْ أَرْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ] "Except a Messenger whom He has chosen." These Qur'ānic verses are clear and frank; what do they discuss?

They tell us that their [Imāms'] knowledge is Allāh's knowledge, and there is no exception here. When we discern verse 43 of Surat al-Ra`d: وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ "... and those who have the knowledge of the Book (Qur'ān);" علم الكتاب `ilm al-kitab, the knowledge of the Book, here means the entire Book. When we deeply examine this verse: عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا "He (alone) knows the unseen, and He makes no one acquainted with His mysteries," we notice that the word غَيْبِهِ ghaybihi, His *ghayb*, i.e. His knowledge which is unknown to others, we find it referring to His own special *ghayb* with which nobody is familiar except He إِيَّا مَنْ أَرْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ "Except a Messenger whom He has chosen." All the rest of verses point out to this fact. "... and We have taken account of all things in a clear Imām" (Qur'ān, 36:12). This is not unusual, nor is it a *bid`a* statement, an innovation in speech, as we turn pages of the verses of the Holy Book. For example, in verse 43 of Surat al-Nahl (Chapter 16 of the Holy Qur'ān), we read: فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ "If you do not realize this, ask those who (have the knowledge of) the message (of the Holy Qur'ān)" (Qur'ān, 16:43). Who are these أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ *ahl al-thikr*, People of the Remembrance, of the Qur'ān? Al-Thikr الذِّكْر is the Qur'ān; it does not refer to the Christians and Jews as those who differ from us in their views claim. Our Imām عليه السلام says, إِذَا سَأَلْتَهُمْ إِذَا لَأَضْلُوكُمْ وَلَاخْبِرُوكُمْ بِأَنْ الصَّوَابُ أَنْ تَتَّبِعُوا دِينَهُمْ فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ "If you ask them [i.e. if you ask the Christians or Jews], they will mislead you and tell you that it would be right only if you follow their religion;" therefore

43. And the Messengers whom We sent before you were also only men to whom We granted inspiration: If you do not know, ask the

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رَجَالًا نُوحِي
إِلَيْهِمْ، فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ ❁

people of Thikr.

44. (We sent them) with clear Signs and books of dark prophecies, and We have revealed the message to you (also) so that you may explain clearly to people what is sent to them so that they may grant thought.

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ
لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

(Qur'ān, 16:43-44)

The verse saying "فَسَأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ" "If you do not know, ask the people of Thikr" implies knowledge in the absolute sense. In other words, the People of the Thikr, of the Qur'ān, have the absolute knowledge: "... لِنُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ" in order to explain clearly to people what is sent to them." The question here is about أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ the People of the Thikr, of the Qur'ān; so, can it be possible that Allāh commands His servants to refer to these Ahl al-Thikr people if the latter do not know, if their knowledge is limited? Their knowledge, then, has to be open, absolute, broad.

One may say that these verses discuss Shari`a-related sciences. The Qur'ān is deeper and broader than being restricted to the circle of Shari`a-related branches of knowledge, and this is indicated by the Qur'ān itself: "... تَبَيَّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ" "explaining everything" (Qur'ān, 16:89). Statements of the Prophet ﷺ and Imāms عليهم السلام describe it for us with the greatest descriptions. The talk here is not about the particularities of the Qur'ān. Above are verses 43 and 44 of Surat al-Nahl, and here is verse 7 of Surat al-Anbiyā (Chapter 21) of the Holy Qur'ān which indicates the same: "فَسَأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ" "If you do not realize this, ask the people of the Thikr" (Qur'ān, 21:7); it says the same similarly to 16:43 (above): "If you do not know, ask the people of Thikr." The same is stated in verses 43 and 44 of Surat al-Zukhruf (Chapter 43 of the Holy Qur'ān):

43. So hold fast to the Revelation sent down to

فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ، إِنَّكَ عَلَى
صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾

you: Truly you are on the straight path.

44. The (Qur'ān) is indeed the message, for you and for your people, and you shall (all) soon be brought to account.

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ، وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

(Qur'ān, 43:43-44)

Narratives say that what is meant by the Thikr is Ali عليه السلام who is the articulating Qur'ān, and what is meant by the previous verses is the silent Book, the Qur'ān; therefore, if anyone discerns both verses, he will find this meaning quite clear: **فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ، إِنَّكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ** "So hold fast to the Revelation sent down to you: Truly you are on the straight path." Whenever the Sirat is mentioned, Ali, Allāh's peace and blessings with him, is mentioned (implied): **وَأِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ، وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ** "The (Qur'ān) is indeed the message, for you and for your people, and you shall (all) soon be brought to account;" **فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ** "If you do not realize this, ask the people of the Thikr". Perhaps I will go back again to these sacred verses in order to discuss some of their meanings and implications, and the truth is broader, the truth is greater, the truth is the clearest in the Holy Book (Qur'ān) when we read verse 108 of Surat al-A`raf (Chapter 7 of the Holy Qur'ān): **وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى، فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا، وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ، سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ** "The most Beautiful Names belong to Allāh, so call on Him by them, but shun such men as use profanity in His names, for what they do, they will soon be requited." Read the narrative in the sacred *Al-Kafi*. This is Volume One of it:

عن معاوية بن عمار عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام في قول الله عز وجل: **وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا** - ماذا قال إمامنا الصادق؟ هذه نفس الآية: **وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا**، وهي الآية الثمانون بعد المئة من سورة الأعراف، في الكافي الشريف إمامنا الصادق يقول - نحن والله الأسماء الحسنى التي لا يقبل الله من العباد عملاً إلا بمعرفة فتنا - والرواية في غاية الصحة لو أراد أحد أن يبحث في السند، وإن كنا لسنا بحاجة للدخول في مثل هذه المطالب.

"Mu`awiyah ibn Ammar quotes Abu Abdullah, peace with him, commenting on this verse of the most Exalted and Great One: **وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا** 'The most Beautiful Names belong to Allāh, so call on Him by them' What did our Imām al-Sadiq **عليه السلام** say? This is the same verse No. 180 of Surat al-A`raf. In the sacred *Al-Kafi*, our Imām al-Sadiq **عليه السلام** says, 'We, by Allāh, are the Most Beautiful Names **الأسماء الحسنی** without recognizing whom Allāh does not accept any good deed from His servants.' If anyone decides to verify the *isnad* of this narrative, he will find it quite sound, and we do not need to enter such pursuits." **الأسماء الحسنی** the Most Beautiful Names are the ones whose *noors* shone in this existence. The Most Beautiful Names are the ones from which and from whose overflow every existent came to be. They [Imāms **عليهم السلام**] are the Most Beautiful Names. In the earthly world, they are the transfigurations of the Most Beautiful Names, and in the first worlds, they are the realities of the Most Beautiful Names, for when Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, manifested Himself to them in all His Most Beautiful Names, and when He did so, He manifested Himself in the Name of al-`Aleem **العليم**, the most Knowing, and He manifested Himself in the full *noor* of al-`Aleem in their first realities..., He, thus, gave them all His knowledge. There are verses that make a reference to this. They are the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His: He manifested Himself in them in His Most Beautiful Names. One of His Names is **العليم** al-`Aleem. When al-`Aleem manifests itself in them, all the Divine knowledge manifests itself in them. All the verses stated above point out to these meanings, and they all point out to these facts. The talk in this topic, as I said a short while ago, is very lengthy and broad, for this topic is one of the most broad. I will try to point out to examples or samples of narratives that have discussed the knowledge of Ahlul-Bayt, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. For example, there is a chapter in the sacred *Al-Kafi*, and this is Volume One of it, having the heading of the Imāms, peace with them all, being **ولاية أمر** **ولادة أمر** **الله** caretakers of the Commandments of Allāh and the treasurers of His knowledge. I have explained these narratives in our previous program **في فناء الكافي الشريف** "in the courtyard of the sacred *Al-Kafi*." In one episode of that program, we reached this chapter, the one about the Imāms, peace with them all, being in charge of carrying

out the Commandments of Allāh and are the treasurers of His knowledge. I excerpt here one or two narratives just for the sake of seeking their blessing:

عن عبد الرحمن بن كثير قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام يقول: نحن ولاية أمر الله Abdul-Rahman ibn Katheer says that he heard Abu Abdullah, peace with him, as saying, "We are in charge of carrying out the Commandments of Allāh, the treasurers of Allāh's knowledge and the holders of custodians of Allāh's *wahi*." Another narrative from Ali ibn Ja`far quotes Abul-Hassan, Imām Mousa [al-Kadhimi], peace with him, Ali ibn Ja`far is the brother of Imām al-Kadhimi, peace with him **عن أبي الحسن موسى عن إمامنا الكاظم قال: قال أبو عبد الله عليه السلام: إن الله عز وجل خلقنا فأحسن صورتنا فأحسن صورنا وجعلنا خزائنه في سمائه وأرضه، ولنا نطق الشجرة، وعبادتنا عبد الله عز وجل، ولولانا ما عبد الله** Abul-Hassan Mousa quotes our Imām al-Kadhimi **عليه السلام** as saying that Abu Abdullah, peace with him, has said, "Allāh, the most Exalted One, the most Great, created us and formed us, doing so excellently, making us the treasurers in His heavens and earth; it is to us that the tree spoke, and it is through our worship that Allāh, the most Exalted One and the most Great, was worshipped; without us, Allāh would not have been worshipped."

لنا نطق الشجرة "To us did the tree speak" refers to the tree of existence, the blessed olive tree which is neither of the east nor of the west, and from it the oil of this existence flowed, and from it, the *noor* that exists in every existent shone. Narratives abound containing these contexts and that they are the treasurers of Allāh, the treasures of Allāh, but you may wonder why the expression **خزائنه** *khuzzan* always exists in the narratives, or in most of them.

I have said that they are the treasures because the word **خُزَّان** *khuzzan* in [the Arab] people's language and in their understanding means those who have authority over the treasures. The *khuzzan* are the ones who have the **ولاية** mastership or authority over the treasures. They give or not give. Here, this statement wants to explain the meaning of their **ولاية**, mastership, the meaning of their ability and the meaning of what Allāh has commissioned them to do; otherwise, in those worlds, there is no distinction between treasurers and treasures. They are the treasurers of Allāh's knowledge and they are

the treasures of Allāh's knowledge. They are the treasurers of His overflow on His heavens and earth. This narrative which I read to you before – "وجعلنا خُزَّانَهُ فِي سَمَانِهِ وَأَرْضِهِ" – "... and He made us His treasurers in His heavens and earth..." shows that their authority here does not mean over knowledge but over the overflow, outpouring, outgiving [of the Almighty]. When one is in charge of the overflow, he has authority over the knowledge in its essence, for everything in existence is rendered to knowledge: its origin is traced to knowledge, the reality of existence is knowledge **وجعلنا خُزَّانَهُ فِي سَمَانِهِ وَأَرْضِهِ**. These treasures are overflow treasures, whereas in the first narrative we read: **نحن ولاة أمره - ولاة أمر الله وخزنة علم الله** – "We are in charge of carrying out His Command and the treasurers of Allāh's knowledge." The second narrative discusses their being the treasures of the overflow of Allāh, Glory and Exaltation are His.

One may review in ahadith the like of these narratives, of those recorded in *Al-Kafi* in a chapter entitled **ما أُعطي الأئمة من اسم الله الأعظم** "The portion of Allāh's Greatest Name given to the Imāms." The narratives say that Allāh's Greatest Name is comprised of 73 letters, and the Prophet ﷺ and Imāms **عليه السلام** have been granted of it 72 letters. These narratives have discussed an aspect and remained silent about another. The other has been discussed by many other narratives, but I here choose this one:

عن الإمام الصادق عليه السلام يقول: إن عيسى بن مريم أُعطيَ حرفين كان يعمل بهما، وأُعطي موسى أربعة أحرف، وأُعطي إبراهيم ثمانية أحرف، وأُعطي نوح خمسة عشر حرفاً، وأُعطي آدم خمسة وعشرين حرفاً وإن الله تعالى جمع ذلك كله لمحمد صلى الله عليه وآله، وإن اسم الله الأعظم ثلاثة وسبعون حرفاً، أُعطيَ محمدٌ صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم اثنين وسبعين حرفاً وحُجِبَ عنه حرفٌ واحد - حُجِبَ عنه حرفٌ واحد في أي مقام؟ في مقام النبوة، حينما نأخذ الكلام بالقياس إلى الأنبياء.

"Imām al-Sadiq, peace with him, has said that Jesus son of Mary **عليه السلام** was given two letters with which he used to work, and the Almighty gave Moses four letters, Abraham eight, Noah fifteen, and Adam twenty-five, and that Allāh Almighty combined all of this for Muhammed **ﷺ**, that Allāh's Greatest Name is comprised of 73 letters of which Muhammed **ﷺ** was given 72 letters and one letter was kept from him." In what position was one letter kept away from

him? It is in the position of Prophethood when we make an analogy to the prophets.

The talk here is about the letters comprising the Greatest Name [of Allāh] does not mean that these letters are equal [to each other]. In the previous narrative, which precedes this one in which the Imām عليه السلام discusses Aasif ibn Barqia [or Barkhia برخيا in some sources] and how he used to have one letter, the Imām says,

ونحن عندنا من الاسم الأعظم اثنان وسبعون حرفاً وحرفاً واحداً عند الله تعالى استأثر به في علم الغيب عنده - مرت علينا قبل قليل أنه لا يُظهر على غيبه أحداً إلا من ارتضى من رسول هذا هو الغيب المقصود هنا - ونحن عندنا من الاسم الأعظم اثنان وسبعون حرفاً وحرفاً واحداً عند الله تعالى استأثر به في علم الغيب عنده، ولا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله العلي العظيم.

"We have with us from the Greatest Name seventy-two letters, and one is with Allāh Almighty which He has kept with Him in the world of the unseen—a short while ago we came to know that He does not acquaint anyone with His knowledge of the unseen except a Messenger with whom He is pleased; this is the *ghayb* الغيب implied here—and we have with us of the Greatest Name seventy-two letters, while one letter remains with Allāh which He has kept with Him in the world of the unseen, and there is neither power nor might save in Allāh, the most Sublime, the Great."

The talk here deals with the Greatest Name. This does not mean that these letters are equal. In the previous narrative which precedes this one, the Imām talks about Aasif ibn Barqia and how he used to have only one single letter. The Imām عليه السلام says, "We have of the Greatest Name seventy-two letters, and one letter is with Allāh Almighty Who has kept it with Him in the world of the unseen—we have a short while ago indicated that He does not acquaint anyone with His unseen world save a messenger with whom He is pleased; this is what is meant by the unseen here—and we have of the Greatest Name seventy-two letters while one letter remains with Allāh Almighty Who kept it in the world of the unseen with him, and there is neither power nor might save with Allāh, the sublime, the Great—for there is one letter which the Almighty has definitely kept with

Him. Definitely the power of this letter which Allāh Almighty kept with Him is greater than that of the [other] seventy-two letters. For this reason, I have said that each of these letters is not equal to any of the rest in its level. Each prophet took some of these letters, and the letters which any prophet took does not mean that they are equal in status, depth, expanse and position vis-à-vis the rest. There may be one letter which is broader than all of these letters, and this letter is the one which Allāh has kept in the unseen world—"We have of the Greatest Name seventy-two letters, and one letter is with Allāh Almighty Who has kept it with Him in the world of the unseen—keeping it with Him means preferring it for Himself, making it His own *ghayb* غيب. This is what we read a short while ago in verses 26 and 27 of the sacred Surat al-Jinn: ﴿عَالَمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا﴾ "He (alone) knows the unseen, and He makes no one acquainted with His mysteries (Qur'ān, 72:26). What does the narrative say? وحرف واحد عند الله تعالى استأثر به في علم الغيب... and one letter is with Allāh Almighty which He kept for Himself in the unseen world." "Kept it for himself" means He made it specifically His. The verse here says: ﴿عَالَمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا* إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ﴾ "He (alone) knows the unseen, and He makes no one acquainted with His mysteries except a Messenger whom He has chosen (Qur'ān, 72:26-27). This set aside knowledge of the unseen is the one which Allāh allotted for Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. These narratives talk about the seventy-two letters by making an analogy of the prophets ﷺ, as regarding the broader letter and the Greatest Letter, it is the one which the Almighty has kept for Himself. This letter is the one which He entrusted to Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ. We will come across narratives and ahadith that point out to these meanings. Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him was and there was nothing with Him, then He manifested Himself in the first *noor*. When He manifested Himself in the first *noor*, He did so with all His Most Beautiful Names, for He is the most generous of those adorned with generosity. Is it rational to say that man, the weak being, offers to manifest himself [for noble purposes], while doing so is the ultimate end of making a manifestation; so, is it rational for this man to manifest himself? Where did he have the ability to manifest himself? The elite among

the men of knowledge say that the loftiest type of manifestation is the Divine one, that He manifested Himself. What does it mean? The expressions are metaphoric. "He manifested Himself" means He did so with His Names in the first reality. One who gives himself out carries out what is the extreme degree of giving. From where has mankind brought this ability to offer everything? There are among people those who have the ability and the love to give everything they have along the path of those whom they love. Where did he bring this ability from if it was not innate? Everything he has comes from one's originality. Is it possible that one who has something innately, in his existence, in his characteristics, in his demeanor, in his statuses, if these things were not given to us by Allāh, the most Glorified and the most Exalted One?! All we have comes from Allāh and is rendered to Allāh. One giving himself away [for others]: Where did this merit come from? It came to us from Allāh, the most Praised and Exalted One. What does it mean when we say that Allāh gives Himself out? Definitely it does not convey the naïve and simple meaning, the material meaning; rather, He manifests Himself as the most generous of all, in all His Most Beautiful Names, in the first reality. So, if He manifests Himself in all His Most Beautiful Names, in the first reality, He manifests all His knowledge in the first reality but as suits that reality—there is no difference between you and them—as is stated in the supplication for the month of Rajab—save they are Your servants and creatures—as Imām al-Sadiq عليه السلام of the `Itra had said, "We are the Most Beautiful Names." They [Imāms عليهم السلام] are Allāh's Most Beautiful Names. How were they so this term applied to them, that is, their being the Most Beautiful Names? It is because Allāh was gracious to them by manifesting Himself [to them] in their first realities; He manifested Himself to them, and He manifested Himself through them, and He manifested Himself in them through His Most Beautiful Names, in all His Most Beautiful Names. "We are the Most Beautiful Names." There is no exception here: All the Most Beautiful Names manifested themselves in the first realities to them, Allāh's peace and blessings with them. The narratives are quite numerous, perhaps I should point out to some of them. For example, this is a narrative that sums up for us the hadith which also exists in the sacred *Al-Kafi*. This is Volume One in which we read: عن عمر بن أذينة عن أبي عبد الله

"Omar ibn Uthaynah quotes Abu Abdullah, peace with him, as saying, 'Allāh created the volition (self-will) by itself.'" He means that its reality is full, complete. How did He create it by itself? He created it by itself complete because all the Most Beautiful Names were manifested in it. **ثم خلق الأشياء بالمشيئة**. "Then He created things through volition." After that, He created the things through this volition, this will. The volition is not meant here as referring to the Divine attribute; it is intended here to mean a label for the first manifesting *noor*. Allāh created volition, will, by itself, complete, integral; how was it integral? It did not need a cause: **يا مُسَبِّبَ الْأَسْبَابِ مِنْ غَيْرِ سَبَبٍ** "O One Who causes things without [being in need of] a causation." This statement points out to this reality: It was complete, it did not need any causation: **{يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ}** "Its oil is almost luminous" **{يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ}** whose oil is almost luminous, though fire scarce touches it," i.e. without being in need of a causation. It is the manifestation of the Divine Might. It is the manifestation of the Most Beautiful Names in all their appearances: **{يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ}** "Its oil is almost luminous." **يا مُسَبِّبَ الْأَسْبَابِ مِنْ غَيْرِ سَبَبٍ** "O One Who causes things without [being in need of] a causation." Allāh created volition, the will, by itself—because the Most Beautiful Names manifested themselves in it— **ثم خلق الأشياء بالمشيئة** "Then He created things through volition." All things are appearances for all the Most Beautiful Names. These things that surround us show the Divine Might. The appearances of the Divine Might are the appearances of all the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh, for where [else] did they appear and from where did they come? They came from the volition, the will, for the volition is the gathering place for all the Most Beautiful Names, and the Name **العليم** al-`Aleem (the all-Knowing) is their master and the first of them. The Name **العليم** al-`Aleem is manifested in this volition: **خلق الله المشيئة بنفسها ثم خلق الأشياء بالمشيئة {وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ}**... and those who have the knowledge of the Book" (Qur`ān, 13:43): "Those who have the knowledge of the Book" means those who have all knowledge. The Book is the whole, the real knowledge, the most perfect manifestation, and this is clear in Muhammed ﷺ and Ali عليه السلام and their Pure Progeny **آل بيته**. The texts [that prove this point] are numerous, and there are many narratives which I wanted to read to you, but it seems that the time has mostly

been consumed; therefore, I will try to summarize the remaining pursuits as much as I can.

This volition, which is mentioned in the supplication recited during the eve of the Inception of Prophethood, that is, the eve preceding the 27th of the month, and during daytime of that day, states: **فَأَسْأَلُكَ بِهِ** **وَبِاسْمِكَ الْأَعْظَمِ الْأَعْظَمِ الْأَعْظَمِ الْأَجَلِ الْأَكْرَمِ** "I plead to You in it and in Your Greatest, Greatest, Greatest Name, the most Venerated, the most Revered." You can see so much emphasis is placed on sanctifying this Name which is "the Greatest, Greatest, Greatest." This is so because this Name incorporates all Names; otherwise, why so much magnifying? There is nothing above it or greater than it which Allāh, the most Glorified and the most Honored, created; only Allāh is greater. **وَبِاسْمِكَ الْأَعْظَمِ الْأَعْظَمِ الْأَجَلِ الْأَكْرَمِ الَّذِي خَلَقْتَهُ فَاسْتَقَرَّ فِي ظِلِّكَ فَلَا** **يَخْرُجُ مِنْكَ إِلَى غَيْرِكَ** "... and in Your Greatest, Greatest, Greatest Name, the most Venerated, the most Revered which You created, so it settled in Your shade; it does not get out of You to anyone else." The sentence "It does not get out of You to anyone else" is a very precise sign, i.e. this Name is the true treasure of Allāh. All mysteries are embedded in this Name. This is why it is settling in His shade without leaving Him to anyone else. This Name is created and is described as being "the Greatest, Greatest, Greatest," as incorporating all perfections, and the first perfection is knowledge. When it is described as being "the Greatest, Greatest, Greatest," it means that Allāh's knowledge, all of it, manifested itself in it; this is why it settled in His shade: "... so it settled in Your shade; it does not get out of You to anyone else." The same statement exists in the supplication recited on the anniversary of the inception of the Prophetic Mission. The likes of these contexts in the supplications are numerous. I brought here an example for the meaning to which I pointed out a short while ago, that is, Allāh, the most Glorified and Exalted One, created volition by itself. This volition is the Greatest, Greatest, Greatest Name [of the Almighty] which settled in His shade, so it does not get out of it to anyone else. All the Names shone in it and, thereafter, every virtue and every goodness in this existence shone, too.

I take examples of narratives from the Imāms, peace and blessings of Allāh with them all, which reveal aspects of the meanings with

which we are dealing. This is a narrative reported by mentor al-Saduq in *Ma`ani al-Akhbar*: **عن علي بن يقطين عن موسى بن جعفر عليه السلام قال: والله أوتينا ما أوتي سليمان** "Ali ibn al-Yaqtin quotes Imām Musa ibn Ja`far, peace with him, as saying, 'By Allāh! We have been granted all what Solomon (prophet Sulayman عليه السلام) had been.'" This statement is a comparison with what the Almighty had granted Solomon عليه السلام, and it is with regard to the earthly world. Why is Solomon used as an example here? It is done on account of the amazing things done by Solomon and his *wasi*: **والله أوتينا ما أوتي سليمان** "By Allāh, we have been granted what was granted to Solomon." People are usually tied to the sense-related matters. Solomon was granted only a little compared to what was granted to Muhammed صلى الله عليه وسلم and the Progeny of Muhammed عليه السلام: **والله أوتينا ما أوتي سليمان وما لم يوتي سليمان وما لم يوتي أحد من العالمين** "By Allāh! We have been granted what Solomon had been granted and what Solomon was not granted nor was anyone from among the worlds." That is, the Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام were granted what was granted to other prophets and what neither Solomon nor anyone else was granted. Narratives have already been cited about their positions and degrees which neither a messenger prophet nor an angel close to Allāh could bear. So, "Who can bear them, O son of the Messenger of Allāh?" He said, "Those whom we will; they alone bear them." This is one narrative.

Here is another narrative. This is Volume 26 of *Bihar al-Anwar* of mentor al-Majlisi, may Allāh have mercy on his soul: **عن عمر بن يزيد قال: قلت لأبي الحسن الرضا عليه السلام: إنني سألت أباك عن مسألة أريد أن أسألك عنها، قال: وعن أي شيء تسأل؟ قال: قلت له عندك علم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وكتبه وعلم الأوصياء وكتبهم؟ قال: فقال: نعم وأكثر من ذلك، سل عما بدا لك** Omar ibn Yazid has said that he spoke to Abul-Hassan, Imām al-Ridha, peace with him, saying, 'I asked your father about a matter. I wish to ask you about it, too.' The Imām عليه السلام inquired, 'What do you wish to ask about?' Omar said, 'Do you have with you the knowledge of the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny, the knowledge of the *wasīs* and their books?' The Imām عليه السلام answered in the affirmative, adding, 'I have more than that; ask whatever you want.'" When the Imām عليه السلام said "...more than that," he did not mean that he knew more than the Messenger of Allāh, but the inquirer restricted the knowledge of the Messenger of Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم

قلت: له عندك علم رسول الله وكتبه وعلم الأوصياء "I asked him, 'Do you have the knowledge of the Messenger of Allāh, his books and the knowledge of the *wasis*?' This means the inquirer made a comparison between the knowledge of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ with that of the *wasis*. In other words, he asked about this level of knowledge. A short while ago we indicated that in ahadith relevant to the seventy-two letters, the narratives made a comparison: Aasif [ibn Barqia or Barkhia] had one letter, Jesus عليه السلام had two, Moses had four, Abraham had eight, Noah had fifteen, Adam had twenty-five and Muhammed ﷺ had seventy-two letters. This comparison goes in the direction of the prophets. As regarding the preserved letter, this is something else. The inquirer presents a question on this level: عندك علم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: "Do you have with you the knowledge of the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny, the knowledge of the *wasis* and their books?" The Imām عليه السلام answered in the affirmative, adding, "I have more than that." The phrase "more than that" refers to the preserved letter which is with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and with them [with the Imāms عليه السلام]. "نعم وأكثر من ذلك" "Yes and more than that," that is, more than you imagine; so سل عما بدا لك "ask whatever you want." The narratives are numerous in this context, including, for e.g., this one:

عن ابن أبي عمير عن ابن أذنيه عن أبي عبد الله السلام يقول: - هذه الرواية مرت علينا قبل قليل - ما كان علم الذي عنده علم من الكتاب عند الذي عنده علم الكتاب إلا بقدر ما تأخذ البعوضة بجناحها من ماء البحر Ibn Abu Omayr quotes Ibn Uthaynah quoting Imām Abu Abdullah عليه السلام as saying—we have come across this narrative a short while ago—"The comparison between the knowledge with the individual who had some knowledge of the Book with that of the one who knows the entire Book is like what the mosquito carries in its wing of the sea water." This narrative supports the same meaning to which reference was made a short while ago. There is another group of narratives or ahadith cited in *Basa'ir al-Darajat* of which I mention the following sample narratives:

عن عمر بن يزيد قال أبو جعفر عليه السلام في قوله: {وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ} Omay ibn Yazid is quoted as having said that Abu Ja`far, peace with him, explained the meaning of this verse: 'The (Qur`ān) is indeed the message, for you and for your people, and you shall (all) soon be brought to account' (Qur`ān, 43:44). قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: وأهل بيته أهل الذكر، وهم المسئولون. He said, 'The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah with him and with his Progeny, has said, 'The أهل الذكر Ahl al-Thikr are his Ahlul-Bayt أهله، and they are the ones who will be questioned.'"

عن عمر بن يزيد قال أبو جعفر عليه السلام في قوله: {وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ} قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: وأهل بيته أهل الذكر، وهم المسئولون. Omar ibn Yazid is quoted as having said that [Imām] Abu Ja`far, peace with him, commented on this verse: "The (Qur`ān) is indeed the message, for you and for your people, and you shall (all) soon be brought to account" (Qur`ān, 43:44) saying, "The Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of Allāh with him and with his Progeny, said that he and his Ahlul-Bayt are the أهل الذكر the People of the Thikr (Qur`ān) and who will be questioned."

There is another narrative reported also from Imām al-Baqir, peace with him, commenting on this verse of the Almighty: {وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ} "The (Qur`ān) is indeed the message, for you and for your people, and you shall (all) soon be brought to account" (Qur`ān, 43:44). The Imām عليه السلام said, "He [the Almighty] meant us by it; we are أهل الذكر the people of the Thkir, and we are the ones who will be questioned."

There are other such narratives; for e.g. this one: عن مُحَمَّد بن مسلم عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: قلت له: إن من عندنا يزعمون أن قول الله تعالى: {فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ} أنهم اليهود والنصارى، قال: إذا يدعونهم إلى دينهم "Muhammed ibn Muslim quotes Imām Ja`far, peace with him, commenting on a statement which he made in which he said, 'There are people among us who claim that this verse of Allāh Almighty: If you do not realize this, ask the people of the Thikr (Qur`ān, 21:7) {فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ} implied the Christians and Jews." The Imām عليه السلام commented saying, "In this case, they [the

Christians and Jews] invite them [invite such claimants] to accept their religion." Then the Imām ﷺ pointed with his hand to his chest and said, "We are أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ the people of the Thikr, and we are the ones who will be questioned."

Here is another narrative: عن عبد الحميد بن ابي الديلم عن ابي عبد الله عليه السلام في قول الله تعالى: {فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ} قال: كتاب الله الذكر وأهله آلُ مُحَمَّدٍ الَّذِينَ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِسُؤَالِهِمْ وَلَمْ يُؤْمَرُوا - النَّاسُ يَعْنِي - بِسُؤَالِ الْجَهَالِ "Abdul-Hameed ibn Abu al-Daylam quotes Imām Abu Abdullah, peace with him, commenting on this verse of Allāh Almighty: {فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ} 'If you do not realize this, ask the people of the Thikr' (Qur'ān, 21:7). The Imām ﷺ says, 'The Book of Allāh is the الذِّكْر Thikr, and its people are the progeny of Muhammed whom Allāh commanded to be asked, while they—meaning people—were not commanded to ask the ignorant ones.' By الْجَهَالِ, the ignorant folks, it is meant those who do not know the realities of matters. Allāh has called the Qur'ān as ذِكْرٌ saying, {وَأَنْزَلْنَا}... and We have revealed the message to you (also) so that you may explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and so that they may grant thought" (Qur'ān, 16:44).

A third narrative quotes Zurarah as saying that he said this to Imām Ja'far [al-Sadiq ﷺ]: {فَاسْأَلُوا} قال: فأتتم المسنولون؟! قال: نعم قلت لأبي جعفر عليه السلام قول الله تبارك وتعالى: {فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ} من المعنى بذلك؟ قال: قلت: فأتتم المسنولون؟! قال: نعم قلت فأتتم المسنولون؟! قال: نعم، قلت: "Are you [Imāms] implied in this verse: 'If you do not realize this, ask the people of the Thikr' (Qur'ān, 21:7)?," and the Imām ﷺ answered in the affirmative. "قلت فأتتم المسنولون؟! قال: نعم، قلت: ونحن السائلون؟! - يعني الشيعة - قال: نعم، قلت: فقلت: فعلينا أن نسألكم؟! قال: نعم، قلت: وعليكم أن تجيبونا؟ قال: لا، ذاك إلينا إن شئنا فعلنا وإن شئنا لم نفعل، ثم قال: هذا Zurarah went on to ask the Imām ﷺ, "Are you, then, the ones who will be questioned?!" The Imām ﷺ again answered in the affirmative, whereupon he asked him, "So do we have to ask you?!" The Imām ﷺ said, "Yes." Zurarah asked again, "Do you have to answer us?" The Imām ﷺ answered saying, "No, this is up to us; if we wish, we do so, and if we do not, we will not do it." Then the Imām ﷺ quoted this verse of the Holy Qur'ān:

هذا عَطَاؤُنَا ، فامْتَنُ أو امسك بغير حساب "Such are Our bounties: Whether you bestow them (on others) or withhold them, no account will be asked" (Qur'ān, 38:39). This narrative contains a reference to the absolute Wilaya (mastership) *الولاية المطلقة* to Ahlul-Bayt in everything relevant to them: in the Shari`a-related ones, in the religious, in knowledge, in the formative matter..., such is one of their affairs.

There is a chapter in *Basa'ir al-Darajat* *بصائر الدرجات* under the label *الأنمة خُزَانُ الله في السماء والأرض على علمه* "Imāms: the Treasurers of Allāh in the Heavens and on Earth over His knowledge." When they are treasurers of His knowledge, peace and blessings of Allāh with them, they become treasurers of everything—*الرواية عن سورة بن كليب* قال: قال لي أبو جعفر عليه السلام: والله إنا لخُزَانُ الله في سماءه وأرضه لا على ذهبٍ قال: "A narrative from Su'rah ibn Kulayb: He said that Imām [al-Baqir عليه السلام] Abu Ja`far [al-Sadiq عليه السلام] said to him, 'By Alah, we are the treasurers of Allāh in His heavens and earth, not over gold or silver, but over His knowledge.'" Gold and silver are worldly things; as for them, they are Allāh's treasurers over His knowledge. To them belongs the absolute mastership: Since they are the treasurers of His knowledge, mastership belongs to them, for mastership is a branch of knowledge.

Here is another narrative: *عن جابر الجعفي قال: قال أبو جعفر عليه السلام: والله إنا لخُزَانُ الله في السماء وخُزَانُهُ في الأرض* "Jabir al-Ju`fi has quoted Abu Ja`far, peace with him, as saying, 'By Allāh, we are Allāh's treasurers in His heavens and on earth.'" The talk here is about their being His treasurers in and over the overflow. The previous narrative talks about their being the treasurers of His knowledge, and here they are described as the treasurers of His overflow, outpouring, outgiving.

Here is another narrative: *عن سدير عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: سمعته يقول: نحن خُزَانُ الله في الدنيا والآخرة وشيعتنا خُزَانُنَا* "Sudayr quotes Abu Ja`far, peace with him, as saying, 'We are Allāh's treasurers in the life of this world and in the Hereafter, and our Shi`as (followers) are our treasurers,'" that is to say, the Shi`as are the place of our knowledge. We have already come across this statement: *إن أمرنا*

صعبٌ مستصعب لا يحتمله لا نبيٌّ مرسل ولا ملكٌ مقرب، فمن يحتمله؟ قال: من شئنا "Our matter is difficult, challenging, and it cannot be borne by a messenger prophet or an angel close to Allāh;" so who can bear it? He said, "Those whom we please." There is a group whom they choose to be in this status, becoming their treasurers: قال: سمعته يقول: نحن خُزَّانُ الله في الدنيا والآخرة وشيعتنا خُزَّاننا، ولولانا ما عرَّفَ الله He said, "I heard him saying, 'We are the treasurers of Allāh in this life and in the Hereafter, and our Shi`as are our treasurers; without us, Allāh would not have been recognized."

Here is another narrative: عن أبي حمزة الشمالي عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام في "Abu Hamzah al-Thumali quotes Imām Abu Ja`far, peace with him, commenting on this verse of Allāh, the most Glorified, the most Exalted One, which is verse 53 of Surat al-Shura (Chapter 42 of the Holy Qur`ān), which is the last verse of this Sura and is preceded by this verse: {وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ} "... indeed you guide (men) to the straight path." I said a short while ago that whenever the straight path is mentioned, Ali, peace with him, is implied: {وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ * صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ} "... indeed you guide (men) to the straight path, the path of Allāh to Whom whatever is in the heavens and on earth belongs: See (how) all affairs tend [are referred] to Allāh!" (Qur`ān, 42:52-53). The Imām عليه السلام is talking about this verse of Allāh, the most Glorified, the most Exalted One, {صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ} "... the path of Allāh to Whom whatever there is in the heavens and on earth belongs". الإمام يقول: يعني علياً؛ انه جعل علياً خازنه على ما في السماوات وما في الأرض من شيءٍ وانتمنة عليه The Imām عليه السلام says, "He means Ali: He has made Ali His treasurer over what is in the heavens and on earth." {أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ} "See (how) all affairs tend [are referred] to Allāh" (Qur`ān, 43:53). These are mere samples of quite few narratives reported about the Imāms عليه السلام explaining the facts.

This narrative is from Dharees: عن ابي جعفر عليه السلام قال: إن لله علمين: إن الله علمين: علماً مبذولاً - وهو العلم الذي أعطاه للأنبياء وللملائكة وللرسل - إن الله علمين: علماً مبذولاً وعلماً مكفوفاً؛ فأما المبذول فإنه ليس من شيءٍ تعلمه الملائكة والرسل إلا نحن نعلمه - هذا المبذول وهو الذي بُذِلَ للأنبياء وللرسل وللملائكة - إن الله علمين: علماً مبذولاً وعلماً مكفوفاً؛ فأما المبذول فإنه ليس من شيءٍ تعلمه الملائكة والرسل إلا نحن

Abu Ja`far, peace with him, has said, "There are with Allāh two types of knowledge: knowledge which is granted—that is, the one which He bestowed on the prophets, angels and messengers—and knowledge which is kept aside. As regarding the granted one, nothing that the angels and the messengers know except that we know it. As regarding the one that is kept aside (prevented from reaching others), it is the one with Allāh in the Mother Book." Where is this Mother Book? It is located in the heart of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: **وَإِنَّهُ** ﴿: ﴿ "And indeed it is in the Mother Book, in Our presence, high (in dignity), full of wisdom" (Qur`ān, 43:4). This narrative is frank, clear and very beautiful. The narrative from Imām al-Sadiq, peace with him, says **إن الله علمين: علم تعلمه ملائكته** "There are two types of knowledge with Allāh: one which His angels and messengers know, and knowledge with which only He is familiar." This first type is the one referred to in the previous narrative: **و علم لا يعلم غيره** "... and knowledge which is known only by Him," that is, only Allāh has this knowledge. **فما كان مما يعلمه ملائكته ورسله فنحن نعلمه، وما خرج من العلم الذي لا يعلم غيره فإلينا** "So, if it is knowledge which His angels and messengers know, we know it, and whatever knowledge comes out which none knows save He, it comes out to us." It manifested itself to them in all His Most Beautiful Names, so it is to them that it went.

There is a beautiful statement made by Imām Khomeini, may Allāh Almighty be pleased with him, which he made in the last thing he wrote in his books during his lifetime, which is his will, his famous will. In the Introduction to the will, Sayyid al-Khomeini wrote this statement:

الحمد لله وسبحانك اللهم، صلي على مُحَمَّدٍ وآله، مظاهر جمالك وجلالك وخزائن - العبارة دقيقة جداً كما قلت قبل قليل هم الخزائن، وهذا المعنى هو الذي يتجلى من الآيات ومن الروايات - اللهم صلي على مُحَمَّدٍ وآله، مظاهر جمالك وجلالك وخزائن أسرار كتابك الذي تجلى فيه الأحادية بجميع أسمائك حتى المستأثر منها الذي لا يعلمه غيرك "Praise belongs to Allāh; Glorified, O Allāh, are You; I plead to You to bless Muhammed and his Progeny, the appearances of Your beauty and greatness and the treasures—this statement is quite precise as I said before, that they are the treasures, and this meaning

is the one that manifests itself from the verses and narratives—O Allāh! I plead to You to bless Muhammed and his Progeny, the appearances of Your beauty and greatness and the treasures of the mysteries of Your Book in which the Unity manifests itself in all Your [Most Beautiful] Names, even the one which is kept away and which none knows but You." Even the one which He kept away is manifested in this Book, and they are the treasures of this Book." This statement is clear, open and frank, and it totally agrees with the contexts of these sacred texts and to the reality about which I have talked, that is, they are in their first holy realities the mirror of the overflow of the Creator, Glorified and Exalted is He, and they are the mirror of His most Beautiful Names.

This is another narrative in the same sequence: عن سماعة بن سعد الخثعمي أنه كان مع المفضل عند أبي عبد الله عليه السلام فقال له المفضل: جُعِلَتْ فِدَاكَ يَفْرُضُ اللَّهُ طَاعَةَ عَبْدٍ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ ثُمَّ يَحْجُبُ عَنْهُ خَيْرَ السَّمَاءِ؟ قَالَ: لَا، اللَّهُ أَكْرَمُ وَأَرَأْفُ بِالْعِبَادِ مِنْ أَنْ يَفْرُضَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَاعَةَ عَبْدٍ يَحْجُبُ عَنْهُ خَيْرَ السَّمَاءِ صَبَاحاً وَمَسَاءً "Samma`ah ibn Sa`d al-Khath`ami is quoted as having said that he once accompanied al-Mufadhhal to the meeting place of Abu Abdullah, peace with him. Al-Mufadhhal said to the Imām عليه السلام, 'May I be your sacrifice! Does Allāh impose obedience to one of His servants then obstructs from him the news of the heavens?' The Imām عليه السلام said, 'No, Allāh is Greater and too kind to His servants to impose on them the obedience of one of His servants from whom He obstructs the reports of the heavens morning and evening.' This is the talk which we discussed a short while ago, that is, they are commanded to ask, and they are commanded to ask أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ the people of the Thikr, Qur`ān; therefore, these people of the Thikr must have the knowledge of everything.

Here is another narrative: عن الإمام الصادق عليه السلام يقول: واللّٰه إنّني لأعلم ما في السماوات وما في الأرض وما في الجنة وما في النار وما كان وما يكون "Imām al-Sadiq, peace with him, is quoted as having said, 'By Allāh, I know what is in the heavens, what is in the earth, what is in Paradise, what is in Hell, what was and what shall be.'" The talk here is about an inclusive knowledge, not about images of information. The talk here is about encompassing, about an encompassing vision: واللّٰه إنّني لأعلم ما في السماوات وما في الأرض وما في الجنة وما في النار وما كان وما يكون إلى أن تقوم

الساعة، ثم قال: أعلمه من كتابٍ أنظر إليه هكذا ثم بسط كفيه ثم قال: إن الله يقول: { وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ } "By Allāh, I know what is in the heavens, what is in the earth, what is in Paradise, what is in Hell, what was and what will be up to the Hour." Then he said, "I know it from a book in which I look," then he opened his palms and said, "Allāh says { وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ } "We revealed to you the Book explaining all things" (Qur'ān, 16:89). Definitely the talk is not about the Qur'ānic pronouncements as much as they are pronouncements; rather, the talk is about the realities that stand behind these pronouncements. This is so because these Qur'ānic pronouncements are keys: { وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يُعَلِّمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ } "The keys of the unseen, the treasures that none but He knows, are with Him" (Qur'ān, 6:59). Where did He deposit the keys of the unseen? He deposited these keys in the treasure box of mysteries, and it is Muhammed and the Progeny of Muhammed, Allāh's peace and blessings with them all. Let me bring the matter closer to you with an example: Man has the ability to use imagination. Allāh, Glory and Exaltation belong to Him, has granted us the ability to imagine, this ability which we can utilize in a broader way than exists in other realization abilities. Allāh, Glorified and Exalted is He, granted us this area, and He also granted us a formative mastership. But He granted us this formative mastership according to the area of imagination, according to our wisdom, because Allāh, the most Glorified and the most Exalted One, did not grant us knowledge from which the formative mastership branches. The formative mastership has to be ruled by wisdom. Since our wisdom is limited, He granted us a formative mastership in which we cause no harm to ourselves or to anyone else. We can establish states in the imagination world and to cause their downfall. We can create amazingly odd things. We can create these things in the imagination world then do away with them. This is an area for creativity and innovation which is also towards a degree of formative mastership. We in the imagination world can absorb what we imagine. We can create in our imagination an image of a being which we compose of parts which we create in the imagination world, and we will have full knowledge of all the details of this being which we made of our own abilities. Also, we have a complete mastership to change its shape, to create it in another form, to do away with it then to recreate

it, to keep it at a distance, to bring it closer..., all this goes on in the imagination world; why?

It is because we have the wisdom in which we can deal with things. As regarding the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ, they have the absolute wisdom. We have this imagination. The imagination of the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ is the reality, the fact. Just as we form the particularities of images from imagination, and in the imagination, our knowledge is existentialist, it exists inside us, so is the knowledge of Muhammed ﷺ and the Progeny of Muhammed ﷺ of the realities of things similarly to our knowledge of this imagination. Their encompassing is similar to our own encompassing of this imagination. Their mastership and ability over the reality is like our mastership and ability on this imagination. The issue is much deeper than that, but what can I do towards my inability due to the inability of words while the pursuits are broad and deep? The narratives are quite numerous. In fact, this pursuit needs more than one episode, but I tried to bring together the ends of speeches and to pass by a group of verses of the Holy Qur'ān in order to handle different samples of statements by Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ and to point out to the statement of one from among the nation's scholars, one of the scholars of the followers of Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ. I tried to take a sample from some supplications. I tried to put together a collection of Qur'ānic texts, of supplications, of statements of scholars and of narratives of various levels and to explain some philosophical meanings. I tried to bring some examples in order to bring this reality closer [to your understanding], yet despite all of this, my talk falls short and is incomplete, and my statement remains quite distant from the goal, from the target. But this is what I have been able to explain according to the time allotted, to the situation, to what I could explain within the limits of this "بِضَاعَةٍ مُزْجَاةٍ" "scanty capital", within the limits of this little stalling merchandise which is mine: If there is anything in it that is good, sound and precise, it is from them [Ahlul-Bayt ﷺ], and if there is shortcoming, badness and fault, it comes from me. I conclude my talk by saluting them thus:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ النَّبِيِّ، وَمَوْضِعِ الرَّسَالَةِ، وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَهْبِطِ الْوَحْيِ،
وَمَعْدِنِ الرَّحْمَةِ، وَخَزَائِنِ الْعِلْمِ.

Prophet, the place of the message, the ones who are quite often visited by the angels, the landing place of the *wahi*, the substance of mercy and the treasurers of knowledge.

I apologize to you, Master, Sahibul-Amr (the one in charge), for my shortcoming, for my faults, for the weakness of the faith, and for a shortage of knowledge in knowing you. I say: Peace with you, O Shi`as (followers) of the treasurers of knowledge, O Shi`as of Ahlul-Bayt عليه السلام, O Shi`as of the mysteries of Allāh, O Shi`as of Ali and of the Progeny of Ali عليه السلام! I solicit your supplication, all of you, and may you remain in Allāh's security.

