Ta'wil al-Da'a'im - Volume Two

By al-Nu'man ibn Muhammad, Chief Judge of the Fatimid Caliph, Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, founder of Cairo and al-Azhar University.

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Method of Editing Kitab Ta'wil al-Da'a'im - Volume Two

This edition is based on manuscripts from the private libraries of the Fatimid Sayfiyya institution in Surat, the Zahidiyya Library in Hyderabad, and the library of Mulla Yunus Shakib, director of the Fatimid literary administration in Surat, India.

The copy submitted to Dar al-Ma'arif was collated with the unique copy preserved in the A'zamiyya Library in Karachi, Pakistan, which is considered the most reliable of the three copies mentioned above.

Researcher's Introduction

The Fatimids in the Judgment of History

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How often we have seen some of those who undertake to record historical events allow their pens to run in obedience to their own desires, or to the desires of others, with opinions and contradictions that they fabricate in their own minds as imagination and then present to the world as proof. In this way opinions and ideas become confused and the sun is hidden from sight. I do not, in these few words, attempt to evaluate the Fatimid state in its entirety. Rather, I wish to place a limit upon the claims whose suffocating illusions have encircled an age that concerns the Islamic world, and the Egyptians and the Arabs in particular.

I believe that political factors played a great part in casting pitch darkness over the brilliant light of truth and in releasing deadly serpents into the hills of the flourishing garden. The historian of this sort is one of three men. One is a man who covets the gains of the state: you see him beautifying its faults, concealing its defects, and inventing for it polished praise and ornamented commendation until he builds for it a dwelling in Paradise and claims the constellation Gemini itself as its station. Another is compelled by the authority of the government to scheme against its opponents and disparage its enemies, so he sharpens from his pen a poisoned arrow and shoots it with errors and delusions until he places them, in his book, inside the cage of accusation. A third is ignorant of the facts and therefore resorts to falsehoods; lacking clear exposition, he invents errors.

From men of these kinds repeated mistakes have arisen in every age. Seekers of fairness and pursuers of truth have been deceived by transmitting from them and being influenced by them, imagining their word to be decisive and their judgment just. Thus myths and absurdities arise about individuals and communities, growing with generations and swelling in size. Even fair-minded people may then err in judging the stages through which peoples have passed, the changes of nations, and their proper place in history, when they judge social life by isolated events and take those incidents as a point of departure from which they impose conclusions and premises.

Many persons belonging to Islamic sects had, in their private lives, excesses and peculiarities, and held particular views in matters of belief. Historians were not content merely to report these views about those individuals, but attributed them to the beliefs of their followers or to the doctrine of their sect. In this way the matter became obscured.

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You hear, for example, that among the Shi'a there are hundreds of sects and doctrines. If you try to enumerate all these numerous paths and many doctrines, the search for their origins and branches soon defeats you, just as we encounter many such examples in the works of the author of al-Milal wa'l-Nihal, the author of al-Farq bayn al-Firaq, and the historian al-Maqrizi.

Returning to the Core of the Subject, We Say:

The Qarmatians and their doctrine are well known. They associated themselves with the Hashimite da'wa and claimed an old connection with its missionaries. Yet before long they kindled the fire of war, and the first fuel for that fire was the Fatimids themselves. Likewise the Druze began their doctrine during the rule of Imam al-Hakim and made of him an exalted figure.

Perhaps many of the founders of such sects created them because they knew the nobility of the Household of the Prophet and that affiliation with them would raise a person to the summit of honor and dignity. They therefore set about founding such doctrines. Others, however, organized these groups because they knew that direct affiliation with the Household would expose them to the sword of vengeance wielded by the enemies of the Shi'a. Nor should we forget that love of prominence and domination drove certain wicked

men, at different periods, to intermittent rebellions, as anyone who follows the history of the Qarmatians can see.

The Fatimids had enemies who could not permit this civilization to flourish or to live without being stained with blood. If we take the reader back to the causes and circumstances, there is nothing surprising in this. From the first day of their state, the Umayyads waged relentless war against the 'Alids: killing one group, imprisoning another, and blocking the avenues of wealth to a third. They let the tongues of preachers loose in abusive and unjust cursing from the pulpits, and encouraged poets, Muslim and Christian alike, to glorify the house of Umayya and attack the family of 'Ali in ways for which this brief account has no room. The 'Abbasids in the East and the surviving Umayyads in al-Andalus were no less oppressive and no easier upon them.

Thus the Fatimid Imams and their missionaries remained hunted everywhere, their roads watched and their paths cut off. There was no route to safety except concealment and secrecy. The first three centuries passed over them while they were exposed to the swords of their enemies, until their state was finally established.

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When their state arose and prospered after the period in which their Imamate had been concealed, their enemies began brandishing the swords of slander against them in order to alienate Muslims from them. They gathered crowds, prepared formal accusations, sought written testimonies and witnesses, and spread spies and observers. They encouraged writers to blacken the Fatimids' reputation, whether through questions of belief or through accusations concerning their 'Alid descent. Yet true history never lacked fair-minded people who defended its truth and saved later generations from the errors of earlier ones. As we shall show, we find even an opponent of the Fatimids whose opposition did not prevent him from stating what he believed to be right and decisive.

Today, after all of us have been freed from the chains of Umayyad, 'Abbasid, and Fatimid politics, we should not accept the statements of historians as unquestionable propositions beyond discussion and research. Nor should respect for the ancients cause us to sanctify them and cast the cloak of infallibility over books which may have undergone a thousand alterations and changes before reaching our hands. We live in an age in which we have even freed ourselves from many of the restraints of nature and have learned to direct and harness its powers on land, sea, and in the air. When speaking of the Fatimids, therefore, we ought to give a concise account of them, their lineage, and their literature according to what our consciences believe and what our investigation dictates to us as true, without concern for the anger of the Fatimids' opponents in their graves and without being swayed by what certain historical writers have transmitted. Thereafter we leave judgment to the readers, and the final judgment belongs to God.

The Ismailis in Yemen

The Ismailis live in small, scattered groups in Yemen, though their principal center is in the district of Najran, which in the time of the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, was an important center of Christianity. Since 1934 that district has belonged to the Saudi kingdom of the Hijaz. To the north lies the valley of Hubuna, the center of the absolute da'i, who today is commonly called the da'i of the Yam tribes, because the Yam tribes have become the principal bearers of the Ismaili banner in Yemen. The Yam also include other Ismaili groups, especially those living in the mountains of Haraz.

Footnote 1: See R. Strothmann, "A Chronological List of the Imams and Da'is of the Muslim Ismailis," J.B.B.R.A.S., and Kleinere Ismailitische Schriften.

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The Haraz mountains lie on the road between Hudayda and San'a after crossing the lowland region. The road passes through mountain passes until it reaches al-Hajila, about 2,655 meters above sea level, and from there to the rugged region. In the north-eastern direction are Ismaili areas such as 'Athara and other high settlements, some more than two thousand meters above sea level.

Some of these Ismaili tribes of Haraz are subject to the Yam tribes of Najran, while others live alongside Zaydi sayyids. It is noticeable that the distribution of Ismaili tribes in strategically important places in

Yemen, intermingled with the Zaydis who form the majority, enabled them to play a significant role whenever foreign powers dominated Yemen. In every period, the north-western region of San'a and the place known as Dhu Marmar served repeatedly as a center of the absolute da'i, especially in the eighth and ninth centuries AH. In the place known as Yasrim are also important Ismaili settlements. It therefore appears clearly that the Ismailis of Yemen are remnants of a once extensive presence, administered by leaders whose learning and religious formation were of a high standard.

The number of Ismailis in Yemen is approximately one hundred thousand, while in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia there are about seventy thousand, all belonging to the Musta'li Ismaili community (the Bohras), in its Da'udi and Sulaymani branches.

Yemen contributed to the first political establishment of Ismailism and continued along the Fatimid path independently. It remained so even after the fall of the Fatimid state, to such a degree that this country became the first field for the spread of the da'wa outside its original center and a land which produced missionaries whose writings are among the most valuable and sound works in the general Ismaili library. To this day Yemen preserves Ismaili communities with their distinctive flexibility, their Arab-Islamic traditions, and their deep philosophical heritage.

'Abd Allah ibn al-Husayn ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Shi'i al-Kufi and his brother Abu'l-'Abbas, who brought Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi bi'llah to Raqqada and worked to spread the doctrine in North Africa, are regarded as among those who first introduced Ismaili teaching into Yemen.

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After them came 'Ali ibn al-Fadl and Abu'l-Qasim ibn Zadan ibn Hawshab, known as Ja'far ibn Mansur al-Yaman. Both played an important role in Yemen and established extensive authority there: 'Ali in the southern regions and Ja'far in the fortress of al-Maswar in the north-west of San'a. Later, however, 'Ali ibn al-Fadl broke away from Fatimid authority and declared himself independent. He died by poisoning in 303 AH, and his son attempted to continue in his path but was executed together with his followers in the fortress of Mudhaykhira. Ja'far ibn Mansur, by contrast, remained sincere and loyal to the Fatimids to the end of his life.

Thereafter events followed one another in Yemen. The Sulayhids ruled, and after the extinction of the Fatimid state the Ismailis remained as strong communities with a formidable moral position down to the present day.

'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sulayhi, founder of the Sulayhid house, came from the mountains of Haraz. He had embraced Ismailism through Amir 'Abd Allah al-Zawahi, and after the latter's death he was appointed his successor and became the founder of political Ismaili power in Yemen. In 455 AH he conquered San'a, the capital of Yemen, and imposed his authority over all the emirates and tribes of the country.

From 467 to 532 AH Yemen was ruled by the noble lady, wife and widow of the founder Ahmad al-Mukarram. She resembled Queen Bilqis of Saba' or Sayyida Sitt al-Mulk, who saved the Fatimid kingdom after the disappearance of the Fatimid Imam al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah through her sound judgment and rare intelligence. Harmony remained between the Yemeni and Fatimid courts until the death of Imam al-Mustansir bi'llah. Thereafter the whole country followed al-Musta'li and his son al-Amir bi-Ahkam Allah, down to their last Imam, al-'Adid.

Whatever the details, the Yemeni Ismailis were in reality a support of the Fatimids. They remained united in strong, respected communities and generally stood apart from ordinary political operations. Their organization and authority became established especially among the Yam tribe.

It is also worth noting that Da'i al-Du'at al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din Hibat Allah al-Shirazi was the spiritual father of this Yemeni organization and of its outstanding missionaries. Yemen was in fact the only eastern land which remained continuously within the attention and concern of the Fatimids.

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More than one historian has stated that the Fatimids, who in the second century AH aspired to establish themselves at Salamiyya in Syria and elsewhere, also considered founding their Fatimid state in Yemen.

After repeated attempts, however, they turned toward the Maghrib and established their state there, but only after they had spread the teachings of their da'wa in Yemen and removed the principal obstacles in its way. The seeds they planted did not fail to grow, flourish, and develop until they rose to the level of the great eastern states. Under the Fatimid Imam al-Mustansir bi'llah they reached their height, became firmly established at the summit, and acquired great importance.

'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Walid al-Anf al-'Abshami al-Qurashi

He was the father of al-Husayn, author of the Epistle of Origin and Return. He lived in the region of Haraz and was the da'i of Yemen, bearing the title al-Anf. He died in the sixth century AH. It has been suggested that he was the author of Nusus al-Fusus, known as Tuhfat al-Talib wa-Umniyyat al-Bahith al-Raghib.

He was an accomplished scholar and an inspired poet. He assumed the ceremonies and responsibilities of the da'wa in Yemen and the territories attached to it after the da'i al-Hamidi and his son, and he held an exalted rank and extensive authority. His grandfather, Ibn Abi Salama, had been the envoy of 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sulayhi to the noble Mustansiri court. He was called al-Anf because of his precedence over his peers, like the nose's position in advance of the face.

During his time the da'wa improved and its affairs became orderly, the condition of its followers grew better, and certain kings and leaders in Hamdan and elsewhere gathered in support of him and his mission. The da'i 'Ali ibn Hanzala Abu Salim al-Wada'i al-Hamdani was among those who supported him. He died in Sha'ban in the sixth century AH at an age approaching ninety. He died with his senses sound, still writing books, worshipping, studying, and teaching. He defended the sanctuary of the da'wa energetically and struggled for it with both pen and tongue. Together with earlier missionaries such as Ibrahim ibn al-Husayn al-Hamidi, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Tahir, and the da'i Hatim ibn Ibrahim al-Hamidi, he took a substantial part in laying the foundations of the scholarly movement within the region of the da'wa.

Footnote: The text cites an edition/manuscript associated with Tehran, Iran.

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His Most Famous Works

1. Damighat al-Batil wa-Hatf al-Munadil.
2. Tasmiyat al-Albab, containing questions and answers.
3. Al-Idah wa'l-Tabyin fi Kayfiyyat Tasalsul Wiladat al-Jism wa'l-Din.
4. Jalal al-'Uqul.
5. Mukhtasar al-Usul.
6. Mulhimat al-Adhhan wa-Munabbihat al-Wasnan.
7. An epistle concerning the Greatest Name.
8. Lubab al-Fawa'id wa-Safw al-'Aqa'id fi 'Ilm al-Mabda' wa'l-Ma'ad.
9. Majalis al-Nasih wa'l-Bayan.
10. Al-Diwan.
11. Lubb al-Ma'arif.
12. Taj al-'Aqa'id wa-Ma'din al-Fawa'id.
13. Al-Idah wa'l-Tafsir fi Ma'na Yawm al-Nadhir.
14. Taj al-Haqa'iq.
15. Tuhfat al-Murshid wa-Ghussat al-Addad.
16. Jala' al-'Uqul wa-Zubdat al-Mahsul.
17. Al-Risala al-Mufida.
18. Majalis al-Fasih wa'l-Bayan.
19. Risalat Lubb al-Ma'arif.
20. Kitab al-Dhakhira.
21. Mulhaqat al-Adhhan.
22. Nizam al-Wujud fi Tartib al-Hudud.

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The Fatimid Intellectual School: Those Obscured in History - Abu Ya'qub Ishaq al-Sijistani (al-Sijzi)

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Abu Ya'qub Ishaq al-Sijistani, or al-Sijzi, stands among the foremost scholars who struggled, endured hardship, and dedicated themselves to establishing a universal philosophical system founded upon doctrinal thought, solid scientific principles, and firm supports that would not be shaken by whatever crises might arise. He was, in fact, one of those who sacrificed everything they possessed for the sake of spreading and generalizing this teaching throughout the regions. In the end he was accused of unbelief by the conservative public and was finally killed for his belief.

If we wish to give an account of the life of this great philosopher, we must say that he played an important role in the field of philosophy and rendered some of the greatest intellectual services in the scholarly sphere. We may go farther and say that he established the intellectual school of the Ismaili da'wa in the third century AH. His intellectual influence appeared clearly in his student Ahmad Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani, Hujjat al-'Iraqayn, who followed his path and called to his teachings from the source of his learning. If we know that al-Kirmani studied philosophy under al-Sijistani, we can place al-Sijistani in the first rank among Muslim philosophers and among the famous philosopher-scholars of the world.

He lived during the period when the esoteric Ismaili da'wa emerged openly, that is, during the rise and flourishing of the Fatimid state as an Islamic polity possessing a civilizational, scholarly, doctrinal, social, and political identity. Although he lived in lands whose inhabitants followed a doctrine different from his own, he was compelled to make taqiyya a covering for himself and to exercise the greatest caution in his movements and missionary activity. For this reason his life is somewhat obscure. We should not be blamed if we are unable to reconstruct his entire biography or discover everything connected with him. Little has reached us about this great da'i beyond what historians record concerning some of the missionaries of the ruler of the age.

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His efforts and his connection with Nasr ibn Ahmad al-Samani, ruler of the lands beyond the river, form part of what is known of his activity in the Ismaili da'wa. We likewise know very little about Abu Hatim al-Razi, the linguist and author of one of the most important works on the Arabic language, Kitab al-Zina. Concerning Hujjat al-'Iraqayn, Ahmad Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani, more of his writings and surviving works have reached us. Had al-Mu'ayyad fi'l-Din Hibat Allah al-Shirazi, friend and disputant of Abu'l-'Ala' al-Ma'arri, not written his autobiography with his own hand, we would scarcely know anything about him. The same can be said of the obscurity surrounding the lives of leading figures of the Ismaili da'wa and their shaykhs among the hujjas and da'is of the various islands in Syria, Iran, Yemen, and elsewhere. Their lives are deeply obscure, and the books in which their biographies were written have been lost, leaving scarcely a trace.

Al-Sijistani was associated with Sijistan, a province in southern Khurasan. He was said to be from a Persian family - some even linked it with the Persian hero Rustam - while others held that he was of Arab origin and that his grandfather came from Kufa and settled in Sijistan. A number of researchers who studied his philosophy claimed that he died around the late fourth century AH, but this view does not accord with the chronology. It is known that al-Sijistani was a teacher of al-Kirmani, who was active in the early fifth century AH; from whom, then, would al-Kirmani have taken the philosophical sciences of the da'wa if al-Sijistani had died too early? There is also an explicit statement by al-Sijistani himself in Kitab al-Iftikhar that he composed it in a later year. The Iftikhar is mentioned in al-Kirmani's Kitab al-Riyad. This indicates that al-Sijistani was a da'i during the caliphate of Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah al-Fatimi and thus a contemporary of the great da'i Ja'far ibn Mansur al-Yaman, the jurist and scholar al-Qadi al-Nu'man

ibn Muhammad ibn Hayyun al-Maghribi al-Tamimi, judge of the Fatimid state, and other major authors and scholars of the da'wa in that brilliant scholarly age.

Nothing better demonstrates al-Sijistani's scholarly standing than the books and writings he left behind. Most were composed in Arabic and a smaller portion in Persian. They are mentioned by Isma'il ibn 'Abd al-Rasul in his catalogue of books, by al-Biruni in his writings, and by al-Baghdadi in al-Farq bayn al-Firaq.

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Al-Sijistani left a prolific scholarly legacy of more than thirty works of philosophy. Among the best known are Ithbat al-Nubuwwat, Kashf al-Mahjub, and Tuhfat al-Mustajibin, as well as Kitab al-Yanabi'. He divided the latter into forty "springs," and it became one of the works rarely surpassed in arrangement and organization. It appears to have been intended for a select class of missionaries and holders of the higher ranks in the da'wa - those who had advanced far in their philosophical studies. His reason for dividing the book into forty springs was his desire to make each spring correspond to one of the forty hudud who formed the higher council of the da'wa.

Among his other works, some of which were mentioned by the celebrated traveler and poet Nasir-i Khusraw in Zad al-Musafirin, are: Asas al-Da'wa; Ta'wil al-Shara'i'; Susan al-Ni'am or Susan al-Baqa'; al-Risala al-Bahira; Kitab al-Iftikhar; al-Mawazin, divided into nineteen balances; al-Najat; al-Nusra, written in defense of Abu Hatim al-Razi's Kitab al-Islah, to which al-Kirmani later responded with Kitab al-Riyad; Kitab al-Maqalid fi Ma'na al-Asrar; works of admonition and ethics; al-Gharib fi Ma'na al-Iksir; Mu'nis al-Qulub; Ta'lif al-Arwah; al-Amn min al-Hayra; and Khaza'in al-Adilla wa'l-Burhan.

Footnotes: The text notes modern editions of several of these works, including editions by Henry Corbin and 'Arif Tamir.

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In these few lines we may summarize some of al-Sijistani's philosophical views as he expressed them in his writings. He held that the Originator of all originated things is exalted and transcendent, while the existent and originated beings are themselves created. If the world were not created, there would have to be something before it that brought it into being; and if the world were eternal, the relation of created action to eternity and the relation of existence to non-existence would become impossible and would require some prior cause that produced it.

The Creator, in al-Sijistani's account, is beyond the grasp of attributes. He cannot be reached by the senses, does not fall under sight, and is not perceived by the eyes. He is not described by genus, nor encompassed by conjecture. Knowledge does not behold Him, the senses do not describe Him, analogy does not comprehend Him, and He is not likened to human beings. He is exalted above an opposing contrary, an equal rival, or the likeness of anything. He is above resemblance to limited beings. Imagination is bewildered in attempting to describe Him; understanding falls short of defining His dominion; and thought is unable to comprehend His greatness. He has no likeness, no peer, and no opposite. He is indicated by His creation, His signs by His names, and through His prophets. Reason has no path by which it can seize His essence through comparison, for to liken the Originator to what He originated is impossible.

He is the cause of every existent because He is the Originator of originated things, the Inventor of inventions, the cause of the coming-to-be of beings, the Lord of all things, their Creator, their Perfecter, and the One who brings them to their best condition. He is too exalted to be bounded by thought or encompassed by estimation. Names were devised for His created beings and attributes belong to existent things; language cannot furnish a term that properly names Him, because all linguistic expressions are themselves among His inventions. The names that He brought into being are names for what He created.

He is before eternity and the source of priority, for the First Limit proceeded from Him and the first existent overflowed from Him. He is the cause of causes and the Originator of creatures. In His unity He stands beyond multiplicity. Just as the number one is made the basis of numbers, the Intellect is made the basis of existents and the Natiq the basis of the world of religion. In addition to all this, He is not attained through any attribute; He is not a body and is not in a body; no intellect comprehends His essence and no

sense perceives Him. He is not a form or matter, and no language possesses a sufficient expression for Him. Yet He is existent, because it is impossible that He should be non-existent, while at the same time He is not an existent of the same kind as the existents that proceed from Him.

Proof of Him is derived from the existence of other beings: there is no effect without a cause, and no existent without that by which its existence is established. Created beings depend upon one another in their existence, while that upon which the entire chain ultimately depends cannot itself be merely another contingent member of the chain.

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Al-Sijistani then moves to the ordered succession of existents. He says that the Originator first brought forth none other than the Intellect and placed within its substance the forms of all originated things. The Intellect is also called the Pen, because through the pen the inscriptions of knowledge are made manifest from the beginning onward. It is called the Throne, because the throne is the seat of the one who sits upon it and through it his exalted rank becomes known in comparison with those beneath him. It is called the First, because priority belongs to it among created existents.

The Intellect contains, in potential or in form, all that comes to exist after it and is the first of the hudud to receive the effects of wisdom because of its nearness to and union with the command. Its act precedes the acts of all the ranks beneath it; this precedence is a distinction possessed by no other existent, and through it the Intellect becomes complete and perfect.

The Intellect is also called Decree (qada'), because through the Intellect the soul comes to comprehend intelligible things and to attain desired objects; and it may be said that the Intellect is God's decree among His creation. It is also called hyle or prime matter, because through the Intellect the forms that are poured forth receive their subsistence. It is called the Sun because by the Intellect truths are seen.

Then comes the Soul, which is the second created principle and the second link in the first chain. It was called Soul because it continually breathes, as it were, toward gaining benefit, so that through the successive breaths of its own substance the ordered chain is sustained. It is called the Tablet because what flows from the Intellect - its lights and inscriptions - is written upon the Soul, and from the Soul the current that proceeds from it reaches others according to the Soul's purity and subtlety. It is called the Kingdom because the Soul is the kingdom of the Intellect and its instrument; through the Soul the excellence of the Intellect becomes manifest just as the excellence of a king becomes visible through his kingdom. It is called the Follower because it comes after the Intellect in receiving the effects of the Word and follows it in action. It is called Measure (qadar), because whatever benefit from the Intellect is united with the Soul is surrounded by determination and limitation. It is called Form because the Soul took form from the substance of the Intellect; whenever it strives to reach the Intellect and occupy its station, its own light becomes eclipsed, just as the moon derives its light from the sun yet loses its light when it joins the sun in the same station. Together the Intellect and the Soul are called the Two Roots.

These are some of al-Sijistani's philosophical opinions on divine matters. We have presented them only briefly, but perhaps they clearly demonstrate the breadth of his learning, his deep grounding in the sciences, and his ability to set out difficult propositions in attractive order and fine arrangement. Scholars and thinkers ought to devote themselves to the study of these neglected works and to bring these philosophical treasures out from the cave of concealment after they have passed through centuries hidden in the darkness of time.

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Ahmad Hamid al-Din al-Kirmani

He lived in a flourishing scholarly age and was a distinguished da'i who inscribed upon the pages of knowledge some of the strongest investigations and finest lines. He left later generations a number of works of which the least that can be said is that they constitute a great treasure and heritage.

The missionaries of Yemen and Ismaili scholars commonly place before his name such expressions as "our master" and "our lord" as an expression of honor and reverence for his status and rank. Philosophers of the Islamic world consider him one of the greatest men produced by the Ismaili intellectual school during the Fatimid state.

His book Rahat al-'Aql is one of those rare and valuable works for which scarcely any parallel can be found among the books of earlier or contemporary philosophers in strength, solidity, and depth. For that very reason its circulation was limited and its readership small, being largely confined to a special class of eminent scholars and deeply learned philosophers.

The Ismaili da'i and great historian Idris 'Imad al-Din mentions him in 'Uyun al-Akhbar and says that he was a foundation of the da'wa: through him its standard rose and became firmly established, and by him difficult questions became clear and knotty problems were opened.

The Syrian Ismaili da'i Nur al-Din Ahmad described him in his book Fusul wa-Akhbar, saying in substance: "Had the Ismaili da'wa produced none but al-Kirmani, that alone would have sufficed it as glory and pride."

His influence and importance became especially great during the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. His well-known title was Hujjat al-'Iraqayn, meaning that he bore responsibility for the cultural and doctrinal affairs of the da'wa in Persia and Iraq. In Cairo his central position was that of a hujja, and he belonged to those charged with administering the intellectual and missionary affairs of the Imam's da'wa throughout the world.

Footnote: Rahat al-'Aql was printed in Cairo in an edition prepared by Dr. Mustafa Ghalib and Dr. Kamil Husayn.

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Al-Kirmani was later employed as head of Dar al-Hikma in Cairo, the cultural institution which, according to the author, may be described as the first university established in the world.

He came to Cairo in 404 AH at the request of the trustworthy al-Sadiq Amin al-Dawla, a leading officer of the Fatimid da'wa in the time of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, when religious controversy had become intense, new claims were spreading, and innovations had grown in popularity, including claims that tended toward divinizing al-Hakim. Al-Kirmani therefore delivered lessons and lectures in Dar al-Hikma and opposed the new movements that conflicted with the fundamental principles of the Fatimids.

He wrote many studies, the best known of which included al-Risala al-Wa'iza, a refutation of al-Hasan al-Farghani, who had proclaimed the divinity of al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, and the epistle al-Bisharat wa'l-Masabih. In these works he sought to establish the Imamate as an indispensable cosmic reality, supporting his argument with rational demonstrations and forceful proofs. His writings were filled with Hebrew and Syriac expressions drawn from the books of the speaking prophets of the heavenly religions.

He also employed Neoplatonic ideas with a skill in which, according to the researcher, none before him had surpassed him. His works as a whole were intended as a broad call to strengthen and elevate the philosophical-intellectual system and to remove from it the effects of doubt, hesitation, dispute, and argument.

In this brief study, then, al-Kirmani is not presented merely as one of the Ismaili missionaries who played an important role in the propagation of the da'wa in the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim, nor merely as a philosopher who rendered great intellectual services to the Fatimid mission. He is presented as one of the philosophers of the wider world, a man who entered the field of universal philosophy and expended all his effort in establishing a philosophical school grounded in new rational foundations for his age.

He also developed ideas concerning the unity and order of existence, expanding upon theories discussed by al-Farabi, the Second Teacher, and by Ibn Sina, the Chief Shaykh. At the same time he gave broad explanation to the general method prescribed for Ismaili missionaries. Those before him and those contemporary with him had generally been compelled to proceed according to established rules whose bounds could not be crossed. Reading and analyzing al-Kirmani's works, however, shows that he adopted

the theory that apparent conflict exists among beings while those same beings nevertheless continue to exist together within a single order.

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Existents remain present despite their apparent mutual contradiction and opposition, and the existence of one thing is not nullified merely by the presence of its opposite; rather all of them remain embraced within existence. The author compares this to the theory of the Second Teacher regarding continuous origination and to Ibn Sina's discussion of contingent and necessary existence, in which the effect's being necessary through another does not contradict its being contingent in itself.

The author further compares al-Kirmani's position on this question with later European philosophical discussions, especially Descartes's distinction between the act by which God preserves the world and the act by which it was brought into being, in what is known as the theory of continuous creation. The point is not that the details are identical, but that al-Kirmani participated in philosophical debates which can be compared with later attempts to explain the continuing dependence of the world upon its cause.

Al-Kirmani shared in the heritage of Muslim philosophers and was influenced by Greek philosophy, yet he was distinguished, in the researcher's view, by originality, innovation, and a capacity to present inherited philosophy in a distinct Fatimid-Ismaili form. In certain matters he may even be compared with later European thinkers. His works and ideas therefore should not be treated merely as the internal opinions of the Ismaili school, but as contributions to Islamic philosophy in general at a high intellectual level, examining the essence of things and rational questions in a deliberate and carefully ordered way.

He inclined toward Neoplatonic systems and exerted great effort in applying some of their elements through his own philosophical method. He argued for prophecy and the Imamate both philosophically and religiously. In this respect the author compares him, in a different field, with al-Ghazali's use of philosophical systems in support of Sufism. Al-Kirmani upheld strict adherence to the outward law as a path toward disciplined intellectual worship, while ta'wil and esoteric discourse remained restricted to the appropriate hudud and authorized persons who had reached a high level in philosophy and the sciences.

Footnotes: The researcher cites Ibn Sina's al-Isharat and Descartes's Discourse on Method and Principles of Philosophy in connection with these comparisons.

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These features can be seen clearly in works such as al-Risala al-Wadi'a and Rahat al-'Aql. Al-Kirmani also had a major role in the development of the intellectual system itself: he expanded doctrinal discussion, introduced new elements, broadened certain subjects, and laid down fundamental principles of interpretation. In particular, he worked to prevent contradiction and confusion concerning the Imamate, a subject around which opinions and theories had previously remained unsettled. Rahat al-'Aql defined its rules, principles, ranks, center, and internal order. In the researcher's estimation, the book occupies within Ismaili philosophy a position comparable to that of Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din in the thought of al-Ghazali, in that it defined foundations and principles for the religious-intellectual system.

Al-Kirmani was especially prominent in the doctrine of the da'wa concerning existence, the absolute negation of corporeality and creaturely attributes from God, the doctrine of tawhid, and the two principles of ibda' and inbi'ath. He also discussed the relation between Imamate and prophecy. He treated all of this with a rigorously logical method.

Nor did he stop there. For the first time, according to the researcher, he combined the first two principles - the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul - with the ten Neoplatonic intellects as developed by the Second Teacher. He then correlated the world of origination, meaning the world of intellects or spiritual souls, with the celestial world, meaning the spheres; the corporeal world, meaning what lies beneath the sphere of the moon; and the world of religion, meaning knowledge of the ranks of the hudud of religion. He also drew geographical, astronomical, terrestrial, and bodily diagrams which displayed great artistry and demonstrated skill in exposition and a high rank in philosophy.

When we return to Rahat al-'Aql and examine its contents, we find him using formulations intended to deny creaturely attributes of God and affirming that God, exalted is He, cannot be attained through any attribute; that He is not a body, nor in a body; that no intellect comprehends Him and no sense perceives Him; that He is not form or matter, has no opposite or likeness, and that no language can fully express Him. In this respect he displays wide knowledge, especially of the rational sciences. The researcher sees points of agreement here with the Mu'tazila and the theologians, as well as comparisons with Ibn Rushd and, regarding causal reasoning from the existence of the world to God, with Descartes, though the details and method of exposition differ.

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Alongside these investigations, al-Kirmani's solutions and ideas incorporate elements from philosophers before and around his own time, including Plato, Aristotle, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina.

The researcher notes that al-Baqillani, al-Baghdadi, and al-Ghazali accused the Ismailis, because of their negation of attributes, of being "Mu'attila" - those who strip God of attributes in a way that amounts to denial. Al-Kirmani rejected this accusation. He argued that true ta'til would mean directing absolute negation at the divine identity itself - for example saying, in effect, "there is no He" or "there is no God." This, he says, is not the Ismaili position. Their negation is directed at limiting attributes, not at the divine identity.

Whatever one's final judgment, al-Kirmani directed substantial criticism in Kitab al-Riyad toward two philosophers: Abu Hatim al-Razi in his Kitab al-Islah and Abu Ya'qub al-Sijistani in Kitab al-Nusra, because of differences between them in philosophical questions discussed in Kitab al-Mahsul and related works. He also wrote al-Aqwal al-Dhahabiyya to address what he believed Abu Hatim al-Razi had left unresolved in his debate with the philosopher Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi, especially matters relating to prophecy. The title alludes to the latter's famous al-Aqwal al-Dhahabiyya fi'l-Tibb.

In Rahat al-'Aql, al-Kirmani gathered the views of philosophers, literary figures, historians, and scholars. Instead of dividing his book into ordinary chapters, sections, and parts, he likened it to a city surrounded by seven walls. Whoever wishes to enter must pass through the seven walls, and on each wall he must face seven branching paths, except in the case of the final wall. The book thus has an elaborate symbolic structure. We will not attempt here to explain fully what al-Kirmani intended by these walls and paths, lest the discussion become too long. It is enough to acknowledge his breadth in philosophy, the strength of his thought, and his deep understanding of the nature of things.

Al-Kirmani left many works, some of which were published. Among them are: al-Risala al-Durriyya; al-Risala al-Lazima; al-Risala al-Hawiya; al-Risala al-Wa'iza; al-Risala al-Kafiya; works connected with questions of the hidaya and the Ismaili hierarchy; and other epistles named in the source.

Footnote: One of the cited editions was prepared by Dr. Muhammad Kamil Husayn.

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Among al-Kirmani's other works are al-Aqwal al-Dhahabiyya; Fasl al-Khitab wa-Ibanat al-Haqq al-Mutajalli 'an al-Irtiyab; al-Riyad; Risalat al-Ma'ad; Risalat al-Fihrist; al-Maqadir wa'l-Haqa'iq; Risalat al-Tawhid fi'l-Ma'ad; Taj al-'Uqul; Mizan al-'Aql; works of obligation and proof; al-Kayl al-Nafsi; Kitab al-Maqayis; the Baghdad and Basra sessions; an epistle on special properties; Rahat al-'Aql; and works on the seven cycles of concealment.

Finally, al-Kirmani is one of those philosophers who have remained comparatively neglected in the history of philosophy. In reality, the study of his works and intellectual production is important because it gives a clear picture of the effect of philosophers on the history of thought for those concerned with Eastern studies and Islamic philosophy.

Fatimid Comments

The pages of history testify to the Muslims' concern, rulers and subjects alike, with libraries established in different periods, and also to what befell many of those libraries afterward.

History bears witness that Muslim concern with libraries endured for many centuries. Three libraries in particular became famous in Islam: first, the library of the Umayyads in al-Andalus; second, the library of the 'Abbasids in Baghdad; and third, the library of the Fatimids in Egypt. These libraries had few parallels. Their fame spread across the Islamic lands and their organization was carefully regulated. The caliphs themselves were eager to encourage culture, establishing centers and libraries so that the light of learning would spread and the traces of ignorance would be erased from people's hearts.

There is no doubt that the Fatimid age was among the most celebrated Islamic periods for the dissemination of Islamic and Arabic culture, other sciences, and the establishment of educational institutions throughout the territories of the Fatimid state. They founded many great centers with important collections of books. Those books were not limited to the Fatimid doctrine but covered a wide variety of disciplines: philosophy, astronomy, geometry, logic, mathematics, the natural sciences, and theology.

Footnote: The source refers to an edition by 'Arif Tamir.

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All these sciences were represented in Fatimid libraries. Other libraries were certainly important too, but the Fatimid library in Egypt compared favorably even with the great library of al-Andalus.

Culture reached a high level in the age of al-Mu'izz al-Fatimi, especially in fields related to the Islamic da'wa such as philosophy and Qur'anic interpretation. Eminent scholars, poets, and men of letters appeared in his reign, and al-Mu'izz himself had a substantial share in this scholarly awakening.

The Islamic sciences flourished in the fourth century AH. The Buyids and Hamdanids carried their banner in the East, while the Umayyads of al-Andalus contributed to the same revival in the West. The Fatimids were no less important in this respect. Al-Mansur al-Fatimi, for example, was known for the breadth of his learning, and the burdens of the caliphate did not prevent him from study and authorship. He often encouraged his son al-Mu'izz to devote himself to learning.

The library of al-Mu'izz at al-Mansuriyya and later in Cairo was filled with books containing many kinds of general knowledge. The Fatimid library became the third of the great libraries of Islam in greatness, splendor, and abundance.

Fatimid ministers were no less eager than the caliphs to acquire books. The minister Ya'qub ibn Killis, as mentioned earlier, sought knowledge and gathered scholars in his residence. Some people in his household copied the Qur'an; others copied books of hadith, law, literature, and medicine, after which the texts were compared, vocalized, and pointed. He employed learned teachers, and his house contained books beyond counting. Likewise al-Mubashshir ibn Fatik, one of the princes of Egypt, possessed great collections.

Among the other famous libraries was the 'Abbasid Bayt al-Hikma in Baghdad, founded by Harun al-Rashid, who gathered a vast number of books. It remained until the Mongol capture of Baghdad, when the 'Abbasid state disappeared and the traces of its library were effaced.

The second great library was that of the Umayyad caliphs in al-Andalus.

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Its founder and greatest patron was al-Hakam al-Mustansir ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Nasir. He was devoted to learning and collected books from throughout the world, sending merchants to purchase them, providing them with money, and urging them to spend generously so that he might compete with the 'Abbasids in acquiring books and drawing scholars and authors to his court. The number of volumes gathered in that library was said to have reached hundreds of thousands.

Yet neither the 'Abbasid nor the Andalusian library equaled the greatness and splendor attributed to the Fatimid library. Al-Maqrizi described it as one of the wonders of the world and said that there was no comparable book-house in the Islamic lands. It was said to contain approximately 1,600,000 volumes.

It is a cause for sorrow that much of this vast collection was dispersed during the severe crisis that afflicted the country for years in the reign of al-Mustansir al-Fatimi. Nearly eighteen thousand Qur'an codices, some

written in gold and silver, were reportedly taken, and Turkish troops seized many books in lieu of unpaid stipends.

Al-Maqrizi also relates that a considerable number of precious books were stripped of their bindings by slaves and servants, who fashioned sandals and shoes from the leather and burned the pages, claiming that the books contained writings of easterners whose doctrine differed from their own. Other books were drowned or destroyed, and what remained was blown about by the wind until heaps of pages became known in Cairo as the "hills of books."

Despite these disasters, the Fatimids soon compensated for many of the losses and once again formed a very great library during the reign of al-'Adid, the last of their caliphs. The books that filled the splendid Fatimid palaces were sold after Salah al-Din took possession of the palaces, and their sale continued for several years. If this indicates anything, it indicates the immense scale of the Fatimid collections.

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Through their great concern for books and their eagerness to acquire rare volumes, the Fatimids were able to compete with the owners of libraries in other Islamic lands. Yet we deeply regret the loss of many of these valuable collections, some during the great crisis and others later.

Many other libraries were likewise destroyed and burned. Hulagu, for example, destroyed the library built by al-Sayyid al-Murtada in Baghdad, and books from Baghdad were thrown into the Tigris in such numbers that later writers described the water as darkened by their ink. Accounts speak of tens of thousands of volumes.

It is also said that books were used to fill places and to make passage possible for horses. The noted Indian historian Shibli al-Nu'mani reports traditions from Baghdad that the Tatars cast so many books into the river that its waters were blackened by the ink. Their destruction was not confined to Baghdad: they extended it to Turkistan, Transoxiana, Khurasan, the mountain regions of Persia, Iraq, and Syria, eliminating many scholarly centers and libraries.

In the age of the Crusades, libraries in Syria, Egypt, and other Islamic lands were also burned. The library of Tripoli in Syria was burned by order of Count Raymond of Saint-Gilles and was said to contain more than three hundred thousand books. Another European ecclesiastical leader is reported to have burned eighty thousand books. The great library associated with Qadi Ibn 'Ammar in Tripoli, said to contain one hundred thousand volumes, was likewise destroyed during the Crusades.

The public library in the Karkh quarter of Baghdad, established by Sabur ibn Ardashir, minister of Baha' al-Dawla, contained around ten thousand books. Yaqut al-Hamawi is quoted as saying that among all the Islamic libraries he had seen, he had seen none finer. Historians called it Dar al-'Ilm, but it too was burned on the order of a Seljuk commander when he entered Baghdad.

We grieve deeply over the destruction of these Islamic libraries. What could have driven corrupters to burn libraries of such immense value? It was not only the libraries that were burned; the hearts of historians and authors were burned with them, for those scholars had deposited their hearts, as it were, within the folds of those pages.

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Had those libraries not been burned, we would possess today an enormous Islamic intellectual wealth.

And after all this: I have set out in this introduction something of the history of the Fatimids and their intellectual school in order to supplement the introduction to the first volume. By this means, as I estimate it, the reader will possess a clearer picture of the elements of their intellectual approach and the principal outlines of their opinions.

Muhammad Hasan al-A'zami

Footnote: See the detailed study 'Abqariyyat al-Fatimiyyin (The Genius of the Fatimids).

Part Seven of the Book *Tarbiyat al-Mu'minin bi'l-Tawfiq 'ala Hudud Batin 'Ilm al-Din*, from the *Ta'wil* of the *Da'a'im*

The First Session of Part Seven

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

Praise be to God, who knows what has been and what will be, and who knows concerning what has not been, if it were to be, how it would be. As God, mighty and exalted, says: no leaf falls but He knows it, nor is there a grain in the darknesses of the earth, nor anything moist or dry, but that it is in a clear Book. May God bless Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and his true and trustworthy revelation, and the Imams from his pure progeny.

What follows the preceding discourse on the interpretation of prayer, and what was given completely concerning its limits from the *Da'a'im al-Islam*, is what comes next in sequence in that book.

On Funerals

The general principle and root from which its branches proceed is what we shall mention before explaining those branches, so that the branches may be made sound by reference to it, God willing.

The word *jana'iz* is the plural of *janaza*. Here, with the *jim* pronounced with a fatḥa, *janaza* means the dead person himself. This derives from the linguistic sense of something that weighs heavily upon a people and causes them grief, for the matter of a dead person weighs heavily upon his family and grieves them. With the *jim* pronounced with a kasra, *jinaza* means the bier upon which the deceased is carried. The Arabs also call it the *sharja'*, and the *sharja'*, meaning the bier of the dead, is used only for them.

This is the outward linguistic explanation of *janaza* and its plural *jana'iz*, with the two pronunciations. The dead person may also be called by the name of the bier on which he is carried, and the bier by the name of the dead person, just as the Arabs name one thing by another when the two accompany and suit one another. Thus they called a waterskin a *rawiya*, after the camel that carried it.

All of this is an indirect expression for the dead. The dead is the opposite of the living, and death is the opposite of life. Yet the dead may be understood in two ways, and death likewise.

The human being and every animal before creation are, with respect to that state, within the limit of death: they are dead and non-existent, not mentioned, not named, and not known. As God, the most truthful of speakers, says: "Has there come upon man a period of time when he was nothing to be mentioned?"

Footnote: Qur'an 6:59.

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God also says, "You were dead and He gave you life," and He says, "He who created death and life that He might test you as to which of you is best in deed." A thing in which there is no spirit and no growth is called lifeless and dead; whatever has a spirit and grows is an animal and is living. This is the outward sense of the living creature and the lifeless thing.

The inward meaning and interpretation of this, as has already been explained, is that death of this kind is the likeness of unbelief, error, and what resembles them. The dead person and the lifeless thing are the likeness of the unbeliever and the one in error, because the likeness of the spirit is faith. One in whom there is no spirit is dead, and one in whom there is no faith is likewise dead. God indicates this when He says of the believer, "We gave him life and appointed for him a light by which he walks among the people," and when He says of the unbelievers, "Dead, not living," and, "The living and the dead are not equal."

This is the blameworthy death, outwardly and inwardly. But the death that occurs outwardly after life is not blameworthy in its outward aspect, and therefore its inward meaning is not blameworthy either. Death after life befell the Messengers of God. God said to Muhammad, His Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him

and his family: "You will die, and they will die." Those before him passed away, and the friends of God and all His servants likewise die. None remains except Him, the One, unlike anything else, distinguished from all His creatures by everlasting subsistence.

It is related from the Messenger of God, blessings and peace be upon him and his family, that he said, "Death is the sweet basil of the believer," and he mentioned virtues of death that we shall cite, God willing, from the *Da'a'im*. These reports confirm what we have said: this death is praiseworthy rather than blameworthy.

For the living, death is the cause of transfer from the abode of this world to the abode of the Hereafter, and the Hereafter is a better dwelling and station than this world, although among those transferred are, as God says, the blessed and the wretched. The blessed person is transferred to felicity, honor, and reward; the wretched person is transferred to misery, humiliation, and punishment. Such is the way of outward death in the outward order.

Its inward meaning and interpretation is the transfer of those who are truly living - the people of faith - from one state to another and from one degree to another.

Footnotes: Qur'an 2:28; Qur'an 67:2; and other verses cited in the text concerning spiritual life and death.

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Among those transfers, some are upward and some downward, according to what a person's deeds require and what he truly deserves. Thus, inwardly, the person transferred from one condition to another is like the person outwardly transferred by death from one abode to another.

It is related that the Commander of the Faithful, blessings be upon him, heard a man say, "Praise be to God who created us for annihilation." 'Ali said to him, "Rather, you were created for abiding, but you are transferred from one abode to another." In the same way, in the inward order, people are transferred from one state to another and rise from one degree to another. God says, "You shall surely ride from stage to stage." As they are transferred outwardly in bodily creation from one state to another, so are they transferred inwardly in the other creation, the second origination.

God mentions the creation of man until he is completed, then says, "Then We produced him as another creation - so blessed is God, the best of creators. Then after that you shall surely die." We have introduced this explanation of death before turning to what is related in the *Da'a'im*, whose passages concerning the sick person, his visitation, and what is done with him outwardly are what we intend to interpret. We shall now mention these, together with their inward interpretation, God willing.

On Illnesses, Visiting the Sick, and the Approach of Death

Illness outwardly is the cause through which transfer from one abode to another occurs. Inwardly, illness is the cause and circumstance by which a believer is transferred from one state to another. Visiting the sick outwardly means attending to the sick person and investigating his condition. Inwardly, visiting means investigating the condition of one whom it is intended to transfer from one rank, state, or degree to another, in order to determine his true condition and the rank to which it is proper to transfer him. This inspection is carried out by one who is above him, just as outwardly the sick person is visited by one who is healthy and stronger than he, not by someone who is in the same condition.

The approach of death (*ihtidar*) outwardly means the coming near of death and the nearness of transfer from this world to the Hereafter. Its inward meaning is likewise the believer's drawing near to the state from which he is to be moved and to the state into which he is to be transferred.

It is related that the Messenger of God, blessings and peace be upon him and his family, visited a man of the Ansar who complained to him of fever. The Messenger of God said, "Fever is purification from a forgiving Lord." The man replied, "Rather, fever boils over the old man until it brings him to the graves."

Footnote: Qur'an 84:19.

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The Messenger of God became angry at the man's rejection of his words and said to him, "Then let it be so for you." The man died of that illness.

It is also related that the Messenger of God said: "The groaning of the sick person is written as good deeds so long as he is patient. If he gives way to panic and complaint, it is written as impatience and he receives no reward." He also said, "One day of fever is expiation for a year." And it is related from 'Ali, blessings be upon him, that he said, "The sick person is in God's prison so long as he does not complain to those who visit him; his sins are erased." He also said that any believer who dies while ill dies as a martyr, and that every believer is a martyr however he dies. He recited God's words: "Those who believe in God and His messengers - they are the truthful and the martyrs with their Lord."

The inward interpretation is that fever, and other outward illnesses like it, represent an inward trial with which the believer is tested by the person above him when that superior intends to move him from one state to another. That trial is purification for him and an expiation of his faults if he bears it patiently, does not complain to another about the difficulty of what he is being tested with, and does not become vexed by it, just as the outwardly sick person ought not to turn his groaning into objection and complaint.

As for the statement that one who dies while sick, or dies by any death, is a martyr: the martyr is a witness. Every holder of a rank among the hudud is a witness over those below his rank when their affairs are entrusted to him, and the one above him is a witness over him. In this manner testimony rises through the ranks to the Imams, then to the Messengers, while God, mighty and exalted, is witness over all.

It is further related from 'Ali, blessings be upon him, that he said: "When God tests a servant, He causes sins to fall away from him according to the measure of his illness." Inwardly, *ibtila'* means testing and examination. We have already explained that the outward illness is the likeness of the inward examination of the believer. The believer has reward in that test and his sins are expiated, outwardly and inwardly, according to what has been said.

It is also related from him that visiting the sick is after three days, and that women are not obliged to visit a sick man. The inward meaning follows what has already been explained: visiting is the examination of the believer's condition when he is being tested, and the one who examines him in that matter is one above him. Thus the statement that women do not visit men accords with the inward likeness of women as those who receive instruction from others, as explained previously.

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The same interpretation applies to investigating the believer's condition during his test: it is done by the one who gives him benefit and stands above him. As for the statement that visiting takes place after three days, it is also proper outwardly that the sick person not be visited immediately at the first moment of illness, but after some time has passed. Inwardly this means that the person undergoing examination should not be rushed by having his condition exposed at the very beginning of the trial, lest the matter become too difficult for him. He is left for a little while until he becomes accustomed to the test, and then his condition is examined and disclosed.

It is related from the Messenger of God, blessings and peace be upon him and his family, that he forbade a visitor to eat in the house of the sick person, saying that doing so causes God to diminish the visitor's reward. Outwardly, the sick person is not required to feed those who visit him, because visitation should be sought for the reward of God, not for food. The same applies inwardly: the one charged with investigating the condition of a person being tested, in order to promote him, must not consume any of that person's outward wealth or take for himself any part of his knowledge in return for performing the examination. He must not damage any part of his knowledge or property. Wealth is the likeness of knowledge in the inward interpretation, as has been explained previously.

It is also related from the Messenger of God that when a person visits a sick person in the morning, seventy thousand angels pray over him until sunset, and if he visits him at night they pray over him until dawn. Its inward interpretation is what has already been explained: visitation signifies that the instructor investigates the condition of one who receives benefit from him before moving him from one degree to another. The

interpretation of the angels, those who possess the affairs of servants from among the inhabitants of heaven and earth, has likewise been explained. Prayer is the likeness of the da'wa; the rising of the sun is the likeness of the appearance of the Imam, and its setting the likeness of his concealment or transfer.

Thus, when the one responsible for a beneficiary investigates his condition and raises him according to what justice and truth require, mention of that act continues within the ordered ranks of the da'wa until the time of the responsible guide's transfer or concealment; and if he is hidden or transferred, it continues until the appearance of the one who takes his place after him. The respondents to the da'wa are made to know the ranks and limits in which God's established practice operates among His friends.

Understand, O believers, the outward things with which you have been charged and their inward meanings, so that you may establish what you have been commanded to establish, both outwardly and inwardly.

The Second Session of Part Seven

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May God assist you in this, grant you success in it, and open for you that which brings increase of His blessings. May God bless Muhammad, His Prophet, and the righteous Imams from his progeny.

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, the First without beginning and the Last without end, exalted beyond all limits and transcending the likeness of existent things. May God bless Muhammad, the Chosen, and the pure and righteous guides from his progeny.

What follows what has already been mentioned from the *Da'a'im al-Islam* is the report from the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali, blessings be upon him, that he said: whoever visits a sick person seeking God's mercy and the fulfillment of His promise is in the autumn of Paradise for as long as he sits with the sick person. When he leaves, God appoints seventy thousand angels that day to pray for him until night if he visited by day, or until morning if he visited by night.

This is the outward reward of visiting the sick when the visit is undertaken seeking God's reward. Its inward interpretation follows what has already been stated: the illness, the sick person, and the visit signify the instructor's investigation of the beneficiary's condition when the latter reaches the end of the rank in which he stands and is to be raised to another rank. We have already explained this and interpreted the angels in the session before this one.

As for the statement that the visitor is in the *kharif* of Paradise: *kharif* is one of the seasons of the year, a period of three months following summer and preceding winter. It is said to be called *kharif* because fruits are gathered during it - taken from here and there. We have already explained that the true da'wa, through which the everlasting Garden in the Hereafter is reached, has an inward meaning, and that the varieties of wisdom within it are like the varieties of the fruits of Paradise. Accordingly, in the inward interpretation, the person who investigates the conditions of those whom he is to raise through the degrees of the da'wa is in its *kharif*, because he gathers from the benefits of its wisdom while examining those whom he supervises and moving them among its degrees according to what wisdom requires. In the same manner every instructor and beneficiary gather, know, and consume the fruits of wisdom. God describes the fruits and rivers of Paradise, and their likeness in the inward interpretation is knowledge and wisdom.

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It is related that the Messenger of God, blessings and peace be upon him and his family, entered upon a man of 'Abd al-Muttalib who was at the point of death and whose face had been turned away from the qibla. He said, "Turn him toward the qibla." When they did so, the angels turned toward him and God turned toward him with favor, and he remained so until his soul was taken.

It is related from 'Ali, blessings be upon him, that among the practices of the natural religion is to turn the sick person toward the qibla when death approaches. Outwardly this is the established practice for the dying person. Its inward interpretation is what has already been stated: the qibla outwardly is the likeness of the Imam inwardly. Whenever a believer is transferred among the states and ranks of the true da'wa, the person responsible for transferring him must teach him, in each of those states, what one who has reached

that rank must know concerning the Imam of his age; he must clarify it, confirm it for him, direct him toward the Imam, and cause him to face him.

It is related from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, blessings be upon him, that it is recommended for one present with a dying person to prompt him to testify: "There is no god but God alone, without partner, and Muhammad is His servant and messenger." It is also recommended to recite at his head the Throne Verse, two verses after it, the verse beginning "Indeed, your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six days," through the end of the verse, and three verses from the end of Surat al-Baqara. It is related from the Messenger of God that whoever's final words are the testimony that there is no god but God enters Paradise.

Thus the outward command is to prompt the dying person with the two testimonies so that his life concludes with them and he dies upon them. The inward interpretation is to establish the person being transferred among the ranks of the true da'wa firmly upon knowledge of God's unity, acknowledgment of the possessor of the revealed law, and what he brought. The recitation of the Qur'anic passages in his presence is among the things that confirm this meaning and bear witness to it from the Book of God, mighty and exalted.

It also follows from this the glad tidings given to the believer when death comes to him concerning the reward that he will meet from God. God says: "For them are glad tidings in the life of this world and in the Hereafter." This is true in the outward and inward senses. The believer is given glad tidings at his transfer from this world to the Hereafter and also when he is transferred among the ranks of faith and the true da'wa from one limit to another.

The report that the severity of death for a believer expiates his sins, while its ease is a mercy and relief for him, is likewise true outwardly. Inwardly, severity upon the person being transferred from one degree of the da'wa to another represents the strict treatment imposed by the one responsible for him when he finds deficiency or fault in his earlier conduct, so that he may be purified of it before promotion.

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When the appropriate time, circumstances, and conditions call for ease, however, he is treated with ease and allowance.

What Follows: The Command to Remember Death

Remembering death, outwardly and inwardly, is among the practices a believer should maintain. Outwardly he remembers his transfer from the abode of work to the abode of recompense and acts in hope of reward. Inwardly he likewise remembers that he will be transferred from one state to another through the degrees of the da'wa and of faith, and he works so that he may rise to the degrees of excellence and faith.

In this connection comes the saying of the Messenger of God, blessings and peace be upon him and his family: when you are summoned to a funeral, hasten to it, for it reminds you of the Hereafter. Ja'far ibn Muhammad, blessings be upon him, said that whoever is invited to both a funeral and a feast should choose the funeral, because attending funerals reminds one of death and the Hereafter, while attending feasts can distract from them.

This is something recommended outwardly because of the remembrance of death and the Hereafter contained in it. Inwardly, attending a funeral is attending the transfer of a person within the ranks of the da'wa. Whoever witnesses that transfer is reminded of the excellence of the state toward which the person is moving. The inward likeness of attending feasts is attending to the worldly affairs that pass among people; such affairs distract from remembrance of the matters of religion.

It is related from the Messenger of God: "The wisest of the believers are those who remember death most and are best prepared for it." The interpretation has already been indicated. *Kays* means intelligence or sound judgment. Those believers who remember outward and inward death most are the most intelligent because one who frequently remembers a thing that is approaching prepares himself to discharge its obligations. Therefore the believer prepares through righteous action for elevation through the degrees of

excellence when that elevation - the inward death - comes to him; and such righteous action is likewise provision for what follows outward death in everlasting life.

It is also related from the Messenger of God: "Death is the sweet basil of the believer." *Rayhan* is the name given to fragrant plants and especially to myrtle because of its fragrance and because its leaves remain upon it through the seasons, in winter and summer.

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A sprig from such a plant is called *rayhan* because it is loved and its scent gives pleasure. The Messenger of God therefore described death in the same way for the believer: he loves it and finds sweetness in it, outwardly and inwardly, because outward death brings him to rest and lasting existence in bliss, while inward death brings him elevation in rank, victory, blessing, and happiness after he has passed through its discipline.

For unbelievers, hypocrites, those astray, and persistent sinners, however, death is a calamity in both its outward and inward senses. Through outward death they pass to punishment. Inwardly they are already "dead, not living," as God describes them in the Book.

This may also occur to one who was among the people of faith but then clothed his inward state in wrongdoing. If he is tested and that which lowers him from the degree in which he stood is established against him, and if what he committed expels him from faith, he returns as one who is dead when the spirit of faith departs from him. If the fault requires only that he be lowered from his degree to one beneath it, he begins anew from that lower degree, performing the work that will later raise him. Thus outward and inward death can be a calamity for such people.

Death separates truth from falsehood and gives rise to reward or punishment. Hence the saying of the Messenger of God: "The world is the prison of the believer and the paradise of the unbeliever." For the unbeliever, death is therefore the cause of leaving his paradise for the punishment to which he passes.

Another report in the *Da'a'im* supports this. The Messenger of God spoke of the one "who finds rest" and the one "from whom rest is found." The one who finds rest is the believer: when he dies he leaves the world and its acts of worship and goes to rest and the bliss of Paradise. The one from whom rest is found is the wicked man, from whom his recording angels and others are relieved.

Outwardly this meaning is clear. Its inward meaning is that when a believer is transferred from one degree to a higher one, the work of the degree he has left becomes easy for him. At its beginning that work was difficult and burdensome, but when the worker becomes accustomed to it, it becomes easy and he is relieved of its heaviness. Ja'far ibn Muhammad, blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever performs one of the works of goodness, let him persist in it for a year." He did not mean that he should abandon it after a year, but that if he persists for a year he becomes accustomed to it, it becomes like a habit, and its burden and hardship fall away.

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Some devoted worshippers have similarly said: "I fear that I shall receive no reward for fasting," meaning that the fast had become so habitual through long practice that they no longer felt its difficulty; they would feel hunger and thirst chiefly at the time when they were accustomed to breaking the fast.

Likewise, when the believer is transferred from one degree to a higher degree, he rests from the difficulty he once found, while his insight and certainty increase. The work becomes light upon him even if he performs more of it and additional duties are added. This is the meaning of rest from work in the inward death. It does not mean that action is cast aside; rather, action increases and is not dropped except through outward death, by which one is transferred from the abode of work to the abode of recompense.

This world is an abode of work, and action remains binding upon its people so long as they remain in it. Were action to fall away here, obedience would also fall away; there would be no Imam, no duty to struggle against an enemy, and no obligation to obey a friend of God - all of which are among the most binding deeds. Such a claim would therefore entail the collapse of faith and of the duties of believers.

So work, O believers. Take provisions and store up righteous deeds for that to which you are going. Beware of abandoning action or supposing that any command has ceased without proof. Every thing has a limit and a ruling according to which it proceeds, and it must not be transgressed. It was through analogy, private opinion, and speaking according to desire that those who were destroyed were destroyed and those who went astray departed from the straight path and abandoned the following of proof.

Therefore do what you are commanded and refrain from what you are forbidden. Whatever has been made obligatory by a text from God, His Messenger, and His friends does not fall away except by an explicit text from them, either heard directly or conveyed reliably through trustworthy transmitters. Know this, act upon it, and hold firmly to it.

After this, the *Da'a'im al-Islam* transmits from the Messenger of God and from the Imams, blessings and peace be upon them, condemnation of heedlessness regarding the remembrance of death and blame of those who make light of it. We have already discussed the command to remember death and explained its outward and inward meanings. Making light of it outwardly or inwardly is the opposite of that command. A believer must not neglect the remembrance of death or treat it lightly, for if he does so he will abandon or fall short in the action by which everlasting life after outward death is attained and by which the inward death of elevation becomes possible.

Understand, O believers, the interpretation of the outward acts which God has commanded you to establish outwardly and inwardly. May God assist you in this.

The Third Session of Part Seven

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, from whom no outward thing is hidden and whom neither weakness nor strength can overcome. Blessings be upon Muhammad, upon Ali his chosen legatee, and upon the Imams from his progeny, His successors on earth and His elect.

What follows from the interpretation of the *Da'a'im al-Islam* concerns condolences and patience. Consoling people after death is recommended in the outward law and brings reward, while patience at the death of relatives is commanded. In the inward interpretation, relatives are the people joined to a believer in the ranks of the true da'wa. Those of one rank are like brothers; those who teach them are like their fathers, those taught by them like their children, and those joined to them in dependence like spouses. God says, “the creed of your father Abraham,” and the Messenger of God said to Ali, “You and I are the two fathers of the believers.”

When one of these people is raised by his deeds from the degree in which he stood to a higher degree, or lowered by his deeds to one beneath it, this is like the outward transfer from this world to the next by death. The one who remains behind should not grieve resentfully when his companion is raised above him, nor envy him; and if the other is lowered because of what his deeds have earned, he should not reject the judgment of those who placed him there. He should accept the action of God's friends and be patient with what saddens him in it, just as patience is required at the outward separation of loved ones by death.

Thus the chapter on condolences and patience concerns both outward and inward separation. The reports transmitted from the Messenger, from Ali, and from the Imams of his progeny command patience and condemn frantic grief. Their inward meaning is as just explained.

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The Messenger of God, blessings and peace be upon him and his family, when speaking of patience at the first shock of bereavement, said: “Reward is with the first shock.” Ali, blessings be upon him, said: “Whoever does not find consolation at the first overwhelming blow will find it through the passage of time, as beasts eventually become consoled.” This applies outwardly and inwardly. One should master oneself and endure at the first shock of outward death and at the transfer of one's counterpart in the inward order. Whoever restrains himself and accepts the matter is rewarded; whoever gives way to panic eventually becomes accustomed to the separation merely through the passage of time, for habituation is part of human nature.

Ali also said: “Beware of anxiety, for it cuts off hope, weakens action and begets sorrow. Know that there is a way out in two matters: where a remedy is possible, use the remedy; where no remedy is possible, be patient.” He also compared patience to the head in relation to the body. Patience is therefore a beautiful and necessary quality in every matter in which the soul pulls a person toward disobedience or away from obedience. Its inward counterpart here is patience when a companion is transferred from one degree to another, whether upward or downward.

The *Da'a'im* next relates that when Ibrahim, the son of the Messenger of God, died, the Prophet ordered Ali to wash him and lower him into the grave. When he saw the child being lowered he wept, and those around him wept until the voices of the men rose with the voices of the women. The Messenger of God strongly forbade wailing and said: “The eye sheds tears and the heart grieves, but we do not say what angers the Lord. We are afflicted by your loss, Ibrahim, and we grieve for you.” They said, “Messenger of God, when we saw you weeping, we wept.” He replied, “I did not forbid you tears. I forbade lamentation and loud wailing. These tears God places in the heart of whichever of His servants He wills. God has mercy on the merciful.”

He thus permitted tears of the eye at calamity, saying that the soul is afflicted and the eye weeps while the covenant with the deceased is still fresh, but one must not say what displeases God. Ali likewise taught that shrieking and loud lamentation in calamity are from Satan.

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The Messenger of God took a pledge from women that they would not wail over the dead. Ali warned his judge Rifa'a in Ahwaz: “Beware of lamentation over the dead wherever you have authority.” Ja'far ibn Muhammad also forbade striking the cheeks and tearing garments, and severe threats are transmitted concerning a woman who tears her collar in grief.

Tears of the eye and sadness of the heart, when they overcome a person beyond his power to repel them, are excused, because God says: “God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity.” The Messenger also said that God has pardoned his community for what they are compelled to do, and God says of the compelled person whose heart remains secure in faith that he is excused. Thus patience is to be practiced as far as one has power. What overwhelms a person after he has exerted his capacity to restrain himself brings no blame; nevertheless he should continue to cultivate patience and not surrender himself voluntarily to panic.

In the inward death, grief of the heart and tears of the eye resemble the natural sadness of a person when one who shared his rank is transferred away from him. He may grieve at being left behind if the other is raised, or grieve for the other if the other is lowered, while remaining submissive to God's ordering and not objecting to it. This carries no blame, provided he strives for patience and acceptance.

But loud wailing, shrieking and rebellious lament are inwardly like denying the propriety of a transfer made by those who govern the ranks of the da'wa: saying that the one transferred did not deserve to be raised, or should not have been lowered, or that those responsible for the transfer acted unjustly. This is the forbidden thing. No believer may hold such a thought in his heart, utter it with his tongue or incline toward it.

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An exception is transmitted concerning lamentation for the Imams when they are killed or die, and particularly the lamentation for al-Husayn ibn Ali and for Hamza. Their calamity is not like the calamity of ordinary men. Some Imams who discouraged mourning for themselves did so out of humility or because of the circumstances of their own time. In the inward interpretation, the outward killing or death of an Imam corresponds to his concealment after manifestation because of the tyranny and fear imposed by usurping rulers. To condemn in one's heart and speech those who forced the Imam into concealment, and to grieve and weep over that oppression, is good and obligatory for one capable of it.

On Washing the Dead

Washing a dead person is obligatory upon those living who are able to perform it, and the body is not washed until death has occurred. The inward interpretation follows what was explained in the

interpretation of ritual purification: water signifies knowledge. As outward water removes dirt and impurity from bodies, true knowledge removes from souls the sins, errors and false notions that have attached to them.

We have already explained that outward death signifies transfer from one abode to another, while inward death signifies transfer from one rank of the true da'wa to another. When a believer is transferred into a new rank, the one who transfers him must open to him the knowledge and wisdom appropriate to that new station, knowledge that he was not entitled to receive before. In that respect the person being transferred is like the dead, because he does not yet know what belongs to the new rank; the instructor who gives him that knowledge is like the living person who washes the dead.

Thus, just as the outward washer cleans the body of the deceased, the inward instructor cleans the soul of the recipient through knowledge and wisdom, removing from it traces of associationism, doubt and error.

The *Da'a'im* relates from Ali that the Messenger of God instructed him to wash his body after his death. Ali said that as he began the washing he heard a voice from the side of the house telling him not to remove the Prophet's shirt, and he therefore washed him while the shirt remained upon him.

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It is related that the speaker was Gabriel. The inward meaning is this. We have said that outward death represents inward transfer among the ranks of the true da'wa. The first thing by which God supported Ali, the legatee of the Messenger, after the Prophet's death was knowledge and wisdom delivered through Gabriel: the instruction not to remove the shirt and to wash the Prophet over it. This indicated that the washing of the prophets is an outward act without the same inward counterpart as the washing of ordinary believers. The prophets have reached the rank of messengership, above which there is no further rank in the hierarchy of the revealed da'wa to which their washing could correspond. For this reason the manner of washing them differs from that of other believers.

Ali further said that whenever he turned the Messenger of God while washing him, he found assistance in turning him. When the Prophet had said to him, “Turn me, Ali,” Ali had answered, “Messenger of God, your body is heavy and I cannot turn you by myself.” The Prophet said, “Gabriel is with you and will help you.”

The inward meaning is that washing signifies the instructor's bestowal of knowledge and wisdom. The Messenger himself received such knowledge from Gabriel on God's behalf. Gabriel therefore “washed” him inwardly, while this was not openly visible to the people, just as the outward washing took place over the shirt. Understand, believers, these subtleties of the inward science of religion. May God grant you understanding and success. Blessings be upon Muhammad, the trustworthy Prophet, and upon the pure Imams of his family.

The Fourth Session of Part Seven

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, from whose knowledge not the weight of an atom escapes, from whom no glance or hidden secret is concealed, and whom no matter great or small burdens. He encompasses all things without acquiring knowledge from another and numbers every thing without assistance. Blessings be upon Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy, upon Ali his legatee, and upon the chosen Imams from their progeny.

The next report is Ali's account that the Messenger told him: “Gabriel is with you and will assist you in washing me.”

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Ali asked, “Who will hand me the water?” He was told: “al-Fadl will hand it to you, but tell him to cover his eyes, for anyone who looks upon my nakedness other than you will become blind.” Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn related that al-Fadl therefore handed the water while blindfolded, and Gabriel and Ali washed the Messenger of God.

A man's nakedness extends from his navel to his knees and is not to be seen by another man except where the law allows; a woman's body is treated with even greater concealment. It was previously explained that in the inward interpretation every instructor resembles a man and every recipient resembles his spouse. The legatees stand in relation to the prophets as wives in this analogy, and the deputies, missionaries and authorized teachers stand similarly in relation to those above them.

The “nakedness” here signifies the hidden knowledge and interpretation that belongs only to the appropriate successor. The hidden knowledge of a prophet is not exposed except to his legatee. Whoever steals a hearing of what he has not been authorized to receive is struck by inward blindness, which is misguidance. He becomes confused and gains no stable understanding from what he has seized. Many have perished and gone astray for this reason, either taking what they were not given or receiving it from one who gave it before they were qualified for it.

Ali also said that when he wished to turn the Prophet face-down to wash his back, he was called to leave him as he was, so he turned him only on his sides and washed his back. The back signifies the outward aspect of religion, while the belly signifies its inward reality. The inward is nobler, being the kernel and life-giving wisdom, though the outward is itself obligatory and may not be neglected. The superiority of the inward over the outward is like that of the spirit over the body; each has its proper excellence.

This is why it is disliked for a person to sleep on his face and recommended to lie upon his back: it signifies elevating the inward over the outward. A dead person is likewise carried and prayed over lying on his back. When placed in the grave he is turned onto his right side, which signifies reliance upon the Imam of the age; the left side signifies the hujja. The teaching thus preserves both outward practice and inward hierarchy.

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The Prophet's instruction that no one except Ali look upon his nakedness means that no one except the legatee is to behold the Prophet's most hidden knowledge. One who snatches at such knowledge without permission suffers inward blindness: deviation from guidance, perplexity, and inability to understand. The same applies to every person who takes knowledge before his degree permits it, or to one who transmits it to an unqualified person. This is one of the chief causes by which people perish and go astray.

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali relates that Gabriel and Ali washed the Messenger three times: once with water mixed with cleansing leaves, once with water and camphor, and once with pure water. Similar three washings are prescribed for those able to perform them outwardly.

The inward interpretation is that every washing with water signifies purification by knowledge when a believer is transferred to a new rank. The three washings correspond to three successive limits through which the person being transferred is introduced. In the first, the instructor removes doubts and suspicions, as the first washing removes dirt from a body. In the second, he discloses matters that make the recipient's soul tranquil and joyful, like fragrant camphor in the second washing. In the third, he opens to him pure, true knowledge by which his spiritual life is perfected, corresponding to the final washing with pure water.

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Ali said that no believer washes his believing brother without despising neither him nor his condition, refraining from looking at his nakedness, concealing what he sees, accompanying his funeral, praying over him, and remaining until he is placed in his grave, except that he departs cleansed of sins. Outwardly this describes the virtue of washing a believer. Inwardly it likewise describes the instructors who transfer believers through the ranks of faith.

The instructor must not despise the person he teaches because his outward worldly condition is weak, obscure or poor. Nor should he expose concealed defects. Just as the washer of the dead covers the body's nakedness and does not stare at it, the instructor should not search after faults that God has concealed. Few people are free from defects; therefore he deals with a person according to the state that appears, leaving hidden matters covered.

Likewise, if the washer sees anything unpleasant from the body, he is not to speak of it. Inwardly, the instructor is not to reveal a secret fault, ugly act or hidden matter he learns about the recipient while instructing or transferring him. The later phrases about accompanying the funeral, praying over the deceased and remaining until burial correspond to additional ranks through which the recipient is led; they will be interpreted in their proper places.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad also said that a person in major ritual impurity and a menstruating woman are not to wash a dead person until they have purified themselves. The inward meaning follows the earlier interpretation of ritual impurity and menstruation: they symbolize religious offenses requiring repentance and purification by true knowledge. One who himself stands in need of purification may not purify another before rectifying himself.

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It is related that Ali washed Fatima, at her own instruction, and that a husband may wash his deceased wife and a wife her deceased husband when necessity requires. Inwardly, men symbolize instructors and women recipients. Normally the instructor gives and the recipient receives; yet if an instructor falls into a religious difficulty and cannot reach one above him, a person whom he formerly instructed may possess the knowledge needed to remove that particular doubt and may convey it to him. Thus the outward ruling has its inward counterpart.

It is also related that if a man dies among women, or a woman among men, with no person lawfully able to perform the washing, the body may be buried without washing. In the outward law an obligation falls away where there is no capacity to perform it. Inwardly, a person may be transferred to a degree of the da'wa and yet find no one available to give him every item of instruction appropriate to that rank. He may nevertheless be moved onward when his transfer is due; absence of one intermediate instruction does not invalidate what necessity requires. The meaning of burial will be explained below.

The martyr killed in battle is buried in his clothes where he fell and is not washed; if he is removed while still alive and later dies, he is washed. The Messenger buried Hamza and the martyrs of Uhud in this manner, removing only such outer coverings as fur and leather.

In the inward interpretation, a “witness” or martyr is an instructor who bears witness over those beneath him by what he has received from God and His friends. Every rank bears witness over the rank below it, until witness reaches the Imams, then the messengers, and finally God, who is Witness over all His servants. If such a witness has already passed beyond the inward degree represented by washing, what he previously received suffices and need not be repeated. If something remains incomplete, he is given what remains, just as the wounded martyr who is carried away alive and then dies is washed.

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The martyr is buried in the outward state he lawfully possessed. Inwardly this signifies that he enters the degree represented by burial clothed in the valid outward religion he already held. Any attachment to the outward forms of the people of error must, however, be removed first, just as fur or leather is removed from the martyr's body. A believer is not advanced while retaining a religious form borrowed from falsehood.

The report specifies removing from the martyr such items as fur, a belt, cap, trousers and turban unless blood has soaked them, and loosening knots. Each item has an inward signification. The turban, as a crown of the Arabs, symbolizes the authority and knowledge of a chief. The Messenger said to Ali, when called “master of the Arabs,” that he himself was “master of the children of Adam,” while Ali was master of the Arabs; in the interpretation the Arabs signify the articulate teachers and boundaries of religion. Thus when a person is transferred upward he must surrender claims of authority belonging to his former station and acknowledge the chief over him.

Trousers symbolize secrets that must remain covered. If what is attached to the martyr belongs lawfully to his own knowledge, it is not stripped from him; if it represents a claim he made for himself without right, it is relinquished. The cap belongs to the same class as the turban. Knots are loosened because, when one

reaches the degree represented by burial, restrictions that belonged to the preceding degree are released and permissions appropriate to the new degree are granted.

The Fifth Session of Part Seven

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, who knows things without deliberation, reflection or acquired thought. His creating them does not increase His knowledge, nor did He acquire knowledge by bringing them into being. Blessings be upon Muhammad, His Prophet and elect, and upon the rightly guided Imams from his family.

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The next report says that those who die by drowning or burning are to be washed, and all the rites of the dead are to be performed for them. Outwardly this is clear. Inwardly, one “drowned” is a person overwhelmed and bewildered by a flood of knowledge he has entered without proper measure. One “burned” is a person scorched and corrupted by falsehood. If such people are transferred for their rescue and renewed life, they are washed with the knowledge symbolized by water. Outwardly and inwardly, the obedient and the disobedient alike need purification when they pass through such a transfer.

Fire is also a means of testing and purification. Gold and silver, among the noblest substances, are put into fire when alloyed with impurity; the heat melts them, consumes what is mixed with them, and leaves them purer after the ordeal. Inwardly, a believer into whom corruption has entered may be tested by something difficult until the corrupt admixture is removed, after which he is treated with the life-giving knowledge that restores him.

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The Messenger of God said that a drowned person should be held for a day and a night before burial, and Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that one struck by lightning should not be buried before three days unless death has become certain. Outwardly this is precaution lest life remain. Inwardly, burial signifies entry into one of the fixed boundaries of the da'wa, and those represented by drowning or stunning should not be hurried into such a boundary until their condition becomes clear and what is appropriate to them is established.

The Messenger also said that whoever dies at the beginning of the day should not spend the night except in his grave, and whoever dies at the beginning of the night should not remain until morning except in his grave. Prompt burial is part of the honor of the deceased, because delay leads to bodily change. Inwardly, once a person is ready for the degree represented by burial he should be advanced without needless delay, lest a harmful condition enter upon him while he waits.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that if a person dies in major impurity, or a woman dies while menstruating, one complete washing suffices. The inward interpretation is that ritual impurity and menstruation signify religious offenses requiring purification by knowledge. If a person who has such an offense is then transferred from one rank to another, the knowledge by which he is opened to the new rank also purifies him of the earlier offense.

The dead person is prepared for washing in a manner analogous to the full washing from major impurity. The interpretation was explained under purification: the opening with knowledge given at a transfer resembles the instruction given to one who requires purification after a religious offense.

The Imam also said that the corpse is turned from side to side while being washed but is not seated upright, because sitting it up can injure the back.

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Inwardly, sitting signifies remaining idle and ceasing from action. Therefore, when an instructor treats a believer in any rank of religion, he does not permit him to sit back from obligatory action. Rather, he confirms and strengthens the outward duties upon him. The saying that sitting the corpse may break its back signifies that abandoning action destroys the outward religion, for the back symbolizes the outward aspect; whoever breaks his outward practice ruins his religion.

The instruction to turn the corpse on its two sides corresponds to reliance upon the Imam and his hujja. The right side symbolizes the Imam and the left the hujja. At every transfer the believer is confirmed in his duty toward both according to the station he has reached. Washing the back signifies inspecting and cleansing the person's outward practice, removing from it innovations, analogical reasoning, personal opinion and other corruptions introduced by those who oppose the pure Imams.

The corpse is to have a cloth placed from navel to knees; water is passed beneath it, and the washer wraps a cloth around his hand when washing the private parts. Inwardly, the "private parts" signify what belongs to a rank and should not be exposed to one not entitled to it. In another aspect, nakedness signifies a person's defect. The instructor must not uncover another's defect for others, nor stare at it. Washing beneath the covering signifies correcting the person's hidden state, cleaning away doubts and false ideas introduced by the people of falsehood until the matter is clarified and purified for him.

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Wrapping the hand in a cloth further signifies refraining from searching into concealed faults by any means of perception. Outwardly as well, one is forbidden to look at or touch another's nakedness except where necessity requires it.

Whatever falls from the deceased during washing—hair, flesh, bone or the like—is placed with him in the shroud and buried. Inwardly, whatever element of the outward religion has fallen away or become neglected by a person being transferred must be identified, restored and joined again to his outward practice before he is raised onward. His outward religion is to be made complete as he advances.

On Embalming and the Shroud

The embalming perfume placed upon the deceased signifies knowledge disclosed to one transferred into a new degree—knowledge that he did not possess before and by which his soul is delighted and made fragrant. The shroud signifies the outward religious form in which the transferred believer is clothed. Its relation to the later symbolism of the grave will be explained in its place.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that after washing, the body is dried with a cloth and camphor and embalming perfume are put upon the places of prostration: the forehead, nose and the other members used in prostration; the embalming of men and women is the same.

Drying after washing signifies the covenant to conceal the true knowledge received in a new rank and not expose it improperly. The living person likewise dries himself after purification; inwardly this is keeping what has been entrusted to him. The perfume signifies the new knowledge that brings joy to the soul. Its placement upon the members of prostration refers to the obedience due to the speaking prophet, the Imam, and the ordered succession of the seven ranks represented by the seven bodily members used in prostration.

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The seven members of prostration—the face, the two hands, the two knees and the two feet—were previously explained as symbols of the ordered sevenfold succession between speaking prophets. What is placed upon these members therefore signifies the knowledge of these divine ranks by which the believer is made glad when transferred upward. Perfume at the mouth concerns the speaking prophet; what is placed at the ears concerns the Imam and the hujja; what is placed upon the chest and beard concerns what is conveyed of the outward religion. The statement that men and women are embalmed alike means that instructor and recipient alike, when transferred, receive the knowledge proper to their new station.

Understand what has been disclosed to you of the outward and inward meanings of your religion. May God assist you in what He has made obligatory, and blessings be upon Muhammad, upon Ali and upon the Imams from their progeny.

The Sixth Session of Part Seven

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to Him who possesses the most beautiful names and highest attributes and whom no created thing resembles. Blessings be upon Muhammad, upon Ali his legatee, and upon the Imams from their progeny.

Ali saw no harm in using musk in embalming the dead. Since embalming signifies the knowledge by which the transferred believer is made glad, musk—the finest fragrance—signifies the best and most fitting discourse with which an instructor may open the new rank to the recipient. In outward practice musk is especially associated with those who have means; inwardly, excellence of the opening is according to what is appropriate and available.

Ali also said that saffron and *wars* are not to be used in embalming the dead. These are fragrant substances whose color is conspicuous. Inwardly they signify forms of outward learning whose appearance is more obvious than their inward fragrance. The teaching transmitted from the Imams says that men's perfume is that whose scent is evident while its color is hidden, and women's perfume is that whose color is evident while its scent is hidden. Accordingly, the knowledge of the instructor—symbolized by the man—is more inward and subtle than the knowledge of the recipient until the latter reaches the rank of the men of knowledge.

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Ali saw no objection to fumigating the shroud and the place in which the deceased is washed and shrouded with fragrant incense. Ja'far ibn Muhammad, however, disliked having a censer carried behind the corpse; the shroud may be perfumed, but the funeral itself is not followed by incense.

The inward meaning is that smoke rises into the air, disperses, and cannot be held or confined. Its fragrance reaches both the one for whom it is intended and others whom the giver did not intend. It therefore resembles worldly knowledge and useful arts: they benefit people in the immediate life and may spread beyond the person to whom they were first directed, but they do not accompany a soul into the Hereafter as saving religious knowledge does. An instructor may mention such knowledge for a person's temporal benefit, yet it is not the knowledge with which one is initiated when transferred from one inward degree to another. Hence the corpse itself is not followed with incense; rather, the shroud, which signifies the outward condition, and the place of washing, which signifies the worldly setting, may be perfumed with it.

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali was asked about a person who dies while in the state of consecration for pilgrimage. He said that his head is covered and he is treated like other lawful dead people except that perfume is not brought near him. Outwardly, a pilgrim in consecration has renounced ordinary clothing and certain pleasures, among them perfume, until he completes the rites and leaves consecration.

Inwardly, the consecrated pilgrim resembles the novice who has entered the covenant of the true da'wa but has not yet reached the rank of those freely admitted to higher knowledge. Perfume, as already explained, signifies a disclosure of knowledge not previously possessed, by which the soul is delighted. That disclosure is withheld from the beginner until he reaches the rank at which hearing it becomes lawful for him.

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Ali shrouded the Messenger of God in three garments. Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that three garments are an excellent shroud. Reports also specify a waist-wrapper and a turban, and that a woman is covered with a head-covering. The Messenger shrouded Hamza in a dark cloak when no more was available. The outward law therefore does not make a large number of garments an absolute condition: one garment suffices where nothing else exists, while a more complete shroud is recommended when means allow.

The inward meaning of the shroud is the outward practice of religion in which a person transferred from one rank to another remains clothed. Advancement in inward knowledge never cancels the outward obligations God established in His Book and the Messenger established in his Sunna. The believer is to be confirmed in outward obedience as he is introduced to inward knowledge.

On Carrying the Funeral

Carrying a funeral outwardly means placing the deceased upon a bier and bearing him on men's shoulders to the place of prayer and burial. Inwardly, the bier signifies the true da'wa and its ordered ranks. The person borne upon it is the believer being transferred from one rank to another. Being raised upon the

shoulders of men signifies being elevated above those who were formerly his peers when he is raised to a higher station.

The covered bier used for Fatima, blessings be upon her, is mentioned as the customary means of concealing a woman's body. Inwardly, recipients of instruction were compared to women, and their transfer may occur in greater concealment. The transfer of instructors, represented by men, is normally more apparent because those whom they had instructed perceive the change in their position and authority. Yet even a male corpse is covered above its shroud when carried, showing that some concealment pertains to every transfer.

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The Messenger of God forbade placing decorative perfume on the bier. Ali once saw a bier decorated with colored cloths, called for it, removed the decorations, and said that he had heard the Messenger say: “The first justice is in the graves, where the noble is not distinguished from the lowly.” Outwardly, funerals are therefore not places for worldly display. Inwardly, the one responsible for transfers among equal ranks must judge equally between those whose religious degree is the same, even if their worldly conditions differ.

It is also related that when a funeral passed a group who stood up for it, the Messenger motioned to them to sit. al-Husayn ibn Ali similarly passed people who intended to rise, and he continued walking. At the grave he stood speaking until the bier was set down, then he sat and the people sat. The rule is that one does not rise merely because a funeral passes unless one intends to join it; and those accompanying it remain standing only until it is set at the grave.

Inwardly, only one who has authority to manage the transferred person is to “stand” for his affair. Once the person reaches the final station represented by burial, he passes out of the governance of those who previously handled his transfer, just as a corpse placed in the grave is no longer under the practical care associated with carrying it.

The Messenger and Ali commanded speed in carrying funerals and discouraged undue slowness. Inwardly this signifies that, once a person's qualification for advancement is established, his transfer through the ranks should not be needlessly delayed.

Ali was asked whether carrying the bier is individually obligatory on every person present. He said it is not; it is a communal duty. If some perform it, the rest are discharged, though others may volunteer to assist. Inwardly, every person qualified for a necessary function of the da'wa must be prepared to perform it, but once those appointed to it have fulfilled the obligation, it does not remain individually binding on all others unless the lawful authority summons them to assist.

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Thus every capable person must answer when the guardian of the affair calls him to a duty for which he is fit, though the duty falls from the rest when enough have performed it. Understand, believers, the outward and inward interpretation of your religion. May God aid you, open its wisdom to you, and bless Muhammad and the Imams of his household.

The Seventh Session of Part Seven

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, worthy of praise and exaltation, Lord of bounty and blessing, who has no limit at which He terminates, no boundary that contains Him, and no bodily form by which He may be imagined. Created attributes are denied of Him, while His existence is established to intellects without modality. Blessings be upon Muhammad, His Messenger, the best of creation, and upon the guiding Imams from his progeny.

The *Da'a'im* reports that Ja'far ibn Muhammad permitted a funeral to be carried on a mount when no men could be found to carry it, though the Sunna is for men to bear it upon their shoulders. Outwardly the ruling is as stated. Inwardly, those who carry the bier are the persons entrusted with administering the true da'wa. Four men ordinarily carry a bier, and correspondingly an important transfer in the da'wa passes

through four hands: the da'i responsible for the person examines his actions and reports to the one who appointed him; that superior reports to the bab, the bab to the hujja, and the hujja to the Imam. In matters of lower rank, fewer intermediaries may be involved, and in circumstances of concealment or lack of available officers the matter may proceed through fewer still, even one. The mount therefore signifies a lower or substitute boundary used in necessity.

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Ali said that whoever wishes to assist in carrying a bier should begin at the left side of the bier, taking it with his right hand, and then move around its four sides. This is the outward Sunna. Inwardly, the bier signifies the da'wa: its right sides correspond to the higher boundaries and its left sides to the gates leading to them. Whoever enters the da'wa should come to its houses through their doors, as God says, “Enter houses through their doors.” Circling the four sides signifies acknowledgment of all the ranks of those who stand over the da'wa.

The Messenger said: “Follow the funeral; do not let it follow you.” A man asked him how he was that morning, and he replied in a way that praised one who had walked behind a funeral. Ali said that the excellence of walking behind the bier over walking in front of it is like the excellence of the obligatory prayer over the voluntary prayer. Reports from the Imams likewise favor walking behind it.

The *janaza*, in Arabic usage, may refer to the deceased, while the bier carries him. Inwardly, the bier is the da'wa and the person being carried is the believer transferred according to its rule. Therefore one follows the da'wa and the authority it bears rather than preceding it by opinion or desire. Ali's walking barefoot behind a funeral also bears an inward sign: footwear can signify the former outward affiliation of a person who has entered the true summons. Moses was commanded, “Remove your sandals; you are in the sacred valley of Tuwa,” and likewise the one who enters the true da'wa casts off the outward form of the people of error he previously followed.

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The Messenger once saw a woman following a funeral and ordered that she be turned back, waiting until she had disappeared. Women were therefore discouraged from following funerals outwardly. Inwardly, women symbolize recipients of instruction, while the actual management of a transfer among the ranks belongs to instructors. Those not entrusted with the transfer do not attend its confidential procedures; rather, the persons who raise the believer to the new degree are those empowered to do so.

A report says that the Messenger asked women following a funeral whether they would pray over the deceased, carry the bier, lower the body into the grave, or cover it with earth. When they answered no to each question, he told them to return without reward. Inwardly, attendance belongs to those who actually perform the responsibilities of advancing the believer.

On Prayer over the Dead

Prayer over the dead is itself one of the inward boundaries into which a person being transferred enters. Prayer, as previously explained, signifies the true da'wa. Funeral prayer contains no bowing or prostration. It is supplication. God said to His Prophet: “Pray for them; surely your prayer is tranquility for them.” Thus the transferred person is brought into a station in which something is bestowed that gives him rest and security.

Bowing and prostration were interpreted as obedience to the Imam and the hujja. By the time a believer reaches the inward degree corresponding to funeral prayer, these matters have already been established for him. Therefore the prayer contains instead glorification of God, testimony of His unity, blessings upon His Messenger and his family, supplication for the deceased, and prayers for the believers. These signify what is suitable to the new rank rather than a repetition of duties already established.

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There is another aspect. Funeral prayer can signify the outward summons to the revealed law without the inward ranks of Imam and hujja. In that aspect, the “dead” is like one who has fallen into unbelief and must first be called back to the two testimonies and the outward obligations. Since bowing and prostration

symbolize obedience to Imam and hujja, their absence corresponds to a stage in which the person is only being restored to the outward foundation. This is the general interpretation of funeral prayer.

The *Da'a'im* then relates the death of the Messenger of God. After Ali had washed and shrouded him, al-Abbas came and said that the people had gathered to pray over the Prophet, intended to bury him in al-Baqi', and wished one of them to lead the prayer. Ali went out and told them that the Messenger had been their Imam while alive and remained their Imam after death, and that no prophet is taken except that he is buried where he dies. The people accepted his judgment. Ali stood at the door while people entered in groups of ten, prayed over the Messenger and departed, with no human imam leading them.

Ali acted according to the Prophet's own instruction and covenant. The Messenger's transfer was unlike that of ordinary people. Inwardly, he passed to the highest celestial kingdom; Gabriel had participated in his washing, and Ali, who assumed his station in relation to the community after him, also attended him. The Prophet was not carried on a bier from place to place because the hierarchic stages represented by ordinary carrying belong to those beneath the rank of prophethood. For the same reason he was buried where he died.

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Those who prayed over him individually were drawing near to God through the Messenger, as God speaks of “the prayers of the Messenger” as a means of nearness. Ali therefore said that the Messenger was their Imam alive and dead. In the station to which the Prophet had passed, his attendants were the highest angels and the chosen prophets, not an earthly imam standing before him in prayer.

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali said there is no harm in praying over the dead at sunset, sunrise or any other time because funeral prayer is supplication and seeking forgiveness. Outwardly, therefore, it is not restricted like some optional prayers. Inwardly, a believer may be transferred among the ranks of the da'wa both in the time of the Imam's manifestation—symbolized by sunrise—and during his concealment—symbolized by sunset—through those appointed to maintain the summons.

Ali, when invited to pray over a deceased person, said in effect: “We shall do so, but what truly benefits him is his own deed.” Prayer and the supplication of believers may increase his good, but the principal benefit is the righteous action he himself sent forward. The same is true inwardly: the person advanced in the da'wa benefits because his prior righteous conduct demonstrated his worthiness to the one transferring him.

Ali also said that if forty believers pray over a believer and strive sincerely in supplication for him, their prayer is answered. Inwardly, the number forty points to a completed conjunction of ranks, just as God appointed thirty nights for Moses and completed them with ten, making forty. This number therefore signifies fullness of the testimony and support accompanying a worthy transfer.

If the lawful ruler attends a funeral, he has greater right to lead the prayer than the deceased's relative. Likewise, if the Imam of the age is not present but one whom he has appointed over Muslim affairs is present, that appointed authority has priority. If several officials appointed by the Imam are present, the highest in rank takes precedence; only when none is present does the nearest qualified relative lead.

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Among those entitled to lead the funeral prayer, one appointed by the Imam, or by an appointee of the Imam over Muslim affairs, has precedence. The person ordinarily appointed to lead communal prayer likewise has precedence when present. Only in the absence of such authorities does the nearest guardian of the deceased take priority.

The inward meaning is that the person who has managed a believer's instruction, upbringing and transfer is most entitled to conduct his advancement to the degree signified by funeral prayer. If someone of a higher rank is present, the higher one takes precedence. A lower officer does not advance before a superior in his presence.

The Eighth Session of Part Seven

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, who is not a describable accident, whom veils do not conceal, places do not contain, directions do not encompass, and eyes do not perceive. Blessings be upon Muhammad, the sent Prophet, upon Ali his chosen legatee, and upon the pure Imams from their progeny.

Ali was asked whether a man whose wife had died should lead her funeral prayer. He answered that her male agnatic relatives have greater right than the husband, unless a lawful ruler is present. In the inward interpretation, the woman signifies the recipient and the man her instructor. Agnatic kin are related through the father, and fatherhood inwardly signifies the da'i and the superiors above him up to the speaking prophet. God says, “the creed of your father Abraham,” and the Messenger said to Ali, “You and I are the fathers of the believers.” Therefore, if one higher than the immediate instructor is present at a believer's transfer, the higher rank has greater right to conduct it.

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Ali said that if a newborn child gives a cry, funeral prayer is performed for it. The cry establishes that the child lived after birth. Inwardly, the child signifies a novice in the true summons who has not yet been authorized to speak concerning inward interpretation. When he is raised to a rank at which speech becomes permitted, his “raising the voice” corresponds to the infant's cry. If he subsequently qualifies for the station represented by funeral prayer, he is transferred to it.

The Messenger prayed over a woman who had died as a result of unlawful sexual intercourse, and the Imams taught that funeral prayer is performed over both righteous and sinful Muslims. Outwardly, one who dies professing Islam is not denied the funeral rites merely because of sin.

Inwardly, fornication can signify disclosing esoteric knowledge to someone not authorized to receive it. The person who improperly opens such knowledge resembles the adulterous man, and one who willingly receives it without right resembles the adulterous woman. If the offender had lawful access to the knowledge but disclosed it without authorization, he sinned in its transmission. Yet if he repents and thereafter reaches the qualifications of a higher degree, his earlier fault does not permanently bar advancement.

The inward “child of fornication” is one produced by an unauthorized transmission and then himself transmitting what he received. If such a person later reforms, advances through legitimate ranks, and becomes entitled to the degree represented by funeral prayer, he too is not barred merely by the origin of his earlier error. As outward death ends the former worldly state, inward transfer can close a prior state once repentance and qualification are established.

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When the bodies of men and women are gathered together, the Imam may perform one funeral prayer over all of them, arranging the men nearest him and the women nearer the qibla. Inwardly, if both instructors and recipients are transferred at the same time, each is moved to the rank he deserves, while those represented by men—persons of instruction—stand nearer to the one conducting the transfer than those represented by women.

The Messenger, when praying over a man, stood opposite his chest; over a woman he stood opposite her head. One outward reason is greater concealment of a woman's body. Inwardly, it teaches the one conducting a transfer to keep away from searching into a person's concealed defects. The private parts have repeatedly signified hidden faults and secrets. The lawful guide treats what is manifest and does not pry into what God has concealed.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad was asked about a person present at a funeral without ablution and unable to find water. He said that if he fears missing the prayer he should perform dry ablution and pray. Funeral prayer, once missed, is not restored in the same manner as ordinary obligatory prayer.

The inward interpretation follows the earlier interpretation of purification. One “without ablution” is a person who has committed a religious fault requiring correction by true knowledge. If he cannot reach the

teacher from whom that correction would normally be received, he takes what he can from a sound believer whose outward state provides the necessary indication, just as a traveler without water uses clean earth. Before assuming a role in another's advancement, however, he should rectify his own deficiency as far as possible.

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If the person lacks access to the proper instructor because of travel, concealment or another obstacle, he may in necessity rely upon the sound outward example of trustworthy believers, as explained earlier in the Book of Purification. Whoever stands to perform a religious function must first repair in himself whatever would invalidate that function; if the superior who normally performs that repair cannot be reached, he seeks the nearest lawful substitute.

Ali used to raise his hands with every takbir in funeral prayer. Since the worshipper remains standing through all of its takbirs, he raises the hands with each one. The inward interpretation of raising the hands was explained in the Book of Prayer: prayer signifies work in the true da'wa, and raising the hands at the takbir signifies recognition of the Imam and the hujja. Thus at every stage through which a believer is raised he is made to know what that degree requires concerning the Imam of his age and his hujja.

The funeral prayer has five takbirs. Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that they correspond to the five daily prayers, one takbir for each prayer. Outwardly this is the required number. Inwardly, the five prayers correspond to the five summonses of the great law-bearing messengers: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, blessings be upon them all. God says: “He has prescribed for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah, and what We revealed to you, and what We enjoined upon Abraham, Moses and Jesus: establish the religion and do not be divided in it.” He also says: “Be patient as those of firm resolve among the messengers were patient.”

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Accordingly, when a believer is transferred from one boundary of the true summons to another, he is instructed in whatever the new rank requires him to understand concerning the great messengers, their revealed laws, and the inward meanings of those laws. This is the interpretation of the five takbirs.

If a person joins a funeral prayer after some takbirs have already been pronounced, Ali said that he should treat the first takbir he catches as the beginning of his own prayer, follow the Imam thereafter, and after the others finish complete what remains before giving the final salutation. This resembles one who joins an obligatory congregational prayer late and completes what he missed.

Inwardly, if a person enters a new degree after some of its instruction has already been delivered to those accompanying his transfer, he must inwardly affirm the matters he missed and receive them when possible. He does not dismiss the omitted instruction as unnecessary merely because he was absent. He preserves it in belief, builds upon what he has heard, and completes what is due.

The Imams also taught that the wording of funeral prayer is not rigidly fixed. After the first takbir one praises and glorifies God and proclaims His unity according to one's ability; after the second one invokes blessings upon the Prophet and his family; after the third one prays for the deceased; after the fourth one prays for the community of Muslims; after the fifth one again invokes blessings upon the Prophet and his family. If one combines these themes in each takbir, that is also good.

Its inward meaning is that the believer at this rank is established in proper knowledge of God's unity, of the Messenger and the Imams, and of the faithful servants who uphold their summons. Understand, believers, what is disclosed to you of the outward and inward science of religion. May God aid you in action and belief, and bless Muhammad and the righteous Imams from his progeny.

The Ninth Session of Part Seven

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, exalted above all created things, bestowing abundant favor, bounty and provision. Blessings be upon Muhammad, the best of His creation, and upon the Imams from his progeny.

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali taught that when the condition of a deceased person is not known, one should pray: “O God, You created him and You know him better. Take charge of what he has earned, place him with whom he loved, and reward him according to what You know of him.” Such a prayer is appropriate where the true inward state of the deceased is unknown and one knows only that he outwardly professed Islam.

Inwardly, the person responsible for a transfer judges by the outward religious state he can ascertain. He raises the believer only to the degree warranted by the evident signs of his condition; he is not required to penetrate the hidden realities known only to God and those to whom God has granted such knowledge.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad prescribed for the funeral prayer over a weak or unlearned believer the Qur'anic supplication: “Our Lord, You encompass all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who repent and follow Your way...” through the words “that is the mighty triumph.” Outwardly this concerns the ordinary Muslim who has little knowledge and follows accepted religious practice without deep understanding.

Inwardly, such a person is like a novice whose understanding of the true summons remains limited. He nevertheless adheres to allegiance, acknowledges God's friends, joins their followers and imitates them in obedience. When people of this kind are raised from one degree to another, they are opened only to what they can bear. They are not burdened with knowledge beyond their capacity and are treated according to what they can understand.

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The Imams said that if the deceased was a *nasibi*—one who consciously set himself in hostility toward the friends of God—the one praying over him does not supplicate for him as for a faithful Muslim; rather he may pray against him in words appropriate to his hostility. Such a person outwardly still claims the external form of Islam but knowingly opposes God's friends.

Inwardly, the corresponding person is one who entered among the responders to the true da'wa and then became a hypocrite by hostility toward its rightful leaders. We explained at the beginning of the discussion of funerals that “death” inwardly can mean either a praiseworthy or a blameworthy transfer. It may be movement upward into goodness or downward into evil.

Death likewise has more than one inward aspect. There is a death before life, corresponding to unbelief before faith, and a death after life, corresponding in one aspect to hypocrisy after faith. Some ordinary theologians refused to call hypocrisy unbelief, but the Qur'an itself says of the hypocrites: “That is because they believed, then disbelieved, so their hearts were sealed and they do not understand.” They professed with their tongues what was not in their hearts, and God explicitly described their state after faith as disbelief.

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So too, inwardly, if a person falls short of the duties of his degree or commits an offense requiring that he be lowered, he is lowered according to what his act deserves. This is a kind of death because it transfers him from one state to another.

For a child, Ja'far ibn Muhammad used to say in the funeral prayer: “O God, make him a forerunner and a stored reward for us.” Inwardly, the child corresponds to a novice who has entered the covenant but has not yet reached the rank permitting him to speak of higher wisdom. As he is led through successive degrees of instruction, every earlier stage is a forerunner to the next, and those responsible for his sound development receive reward for what is completed through them.

Ali said that when one finishes funeral prayer one departs with the salutation. The inward meaning of the prayer salutation was explained before: turning and saluting signifies acknowledgment of God's friends and of the ranks joined to the right and left. At every new degree the person transferred is therefore confirmed, from beginning to end, in recognition of those whom he must acknowledge and in the actions required by that recognition.

On Burial and the Grave

We have said that death is of two kinds, praiseworthy and blameworthy, and that inward transfer can likewise be upward or downward. Burial and the grave therefore also have praiseworthy and blameworthy meanings according to the transfer that has taken place.

Outwardly, burial is in the earth. God speaks of the earth as receiving the living and the dead, and of the crow that scratched the earth to show the son of Adam how to conceal his brother's body. Burial is an honor and covering granted to humankind when the body changes from its former state. The Messenger permitted visiting graves and taught respect for them, as will be explained.

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The earth, in the inward interpretation, signifies the hujja. The Messenger said of the earth that it is kind and dutiful toward people, and he said to Ali: "You and I are the fathers of the believers." Thus praiseworthy burial signifies the believer's rise through the degrees of faith until he reaches connection with the hujja of his age and the rank of the *naqibs*, the highest degree of ordinary believers.

The naqibs are the hujja's proofs and representatives. The Qur'an mentions the twelve chiefs appointed among the Children of Israel. When the command of the possessor of the age is strong and conditions permit, he may appoint twelve naqibs distributed through the great regions of the earth; where circumstances are weaker, their number or visibility may be less. The author names the great "islands" or regions known to the da'wa—among them Arabia, Byzantium, Sicily, Nubia, Khazar, Sind, India, Abyssinia, China, Daylam and the Berber lands—and notes that others are associated with them.

Moses, the fourth among the seven speaking prophets, possessed exceptional strength in his cycle, just as the middle of a sevenfold sequence has a distinctive position. The Mahdi likewise stood as the fourth in his sequence and through him God strengthened and made manifest the cause of His friends. Moses had twelve chiefs who called to his religion through the regions of the earth, and remnants of his law continued widely among the Jews, although punishment later overtook those who rejected the truth.

The Tenth Session of Part Seven

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The Qur'an's warning, "Rivalry in increase distracts you until you visit the graves," has an inward sense as well. One who was raised by faith and then turned back to unbelief or hypocrisy returns to the "graves" of error and misguidance. In this blameworthy aspect the graves signify the states of unbelief from which faith had previously brought him forth.

The verses that follow—"You will surely know; then again you will surely know... then you will surely be asked that day about the blessing"—are a threat to those who waste the divine favor of guidance. Ja'far ibn Muhammad rejected the claim that the "blessing" about which people will be questioned is merely cold water. God is more generous than to grant ordinary lawful things and then reproach His servants simply for enjoying them. "We," he said of the rightful guides, "are the blessing of God about which they will be questioned," meaning the divine guidance and loyalty people neglected.

Thus the same inward symbolism of death, grave and burial may be praised for the believer and condemned for the unbeliever. A saying transmitted from the righteous states that the world is the prison of the believer, the grave his house and Paradise his abode; while the world is the unbeliever's paradise, the grave his prison and Hell his abode.

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The *lahd* is a niche cut into the side of the grave toward the qibla, while the *darih* is a trench cut in its middle. Both are lawful outwardly. Inwardly, both indicate the orientation of the transferred believer toward the Imam of his age, symbolized by the qibla, according to his circumstances and nearness or distance from him. The *lahd* lies close to the wall of the qibla, while the central trench lies farther away; both nevertheless orient the deceased toward it.

If the grave niche must be lined or spread, that outward support signifies whatever support the believer requires when entering this high inward station.

Ali said that a woman should be lowered into her grave only by one who was permitted to see and deal with her during her life; the person nearest to her attends the rear of her body, while those nearest to a man attend his front. Inwardly, the woman is the recipient and the man the instructor. A believer should be transferred only by the one who knew and supervised his deeds or by the lawful superior responsible for that transfer. The “private part” again signifies knowledge and faults that must not be exposed to outsiders.

Ali disliked a father personally descending to place his own child in the grave because tenderness and grief might overcome him. Inwardly, the father signifies the da'i; if a superior of the da'i is present at the transfer of one of his spiritual children, the superior takes charge, and the lower does not advance before the higher.

The Messenger said that the “door” of the grave is at the feet of the deceased and that those who descend into or rise from it should do so from that direction. The feet, by which one walks and acts, signify the Imam and hujja through whose authority advancement in the ranks of the true summons takes place.

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The Messenger instructed those lowering a body to place it first at the edge of the grave toward the qibla, receive it in their hands, and lower it saying, “Upon the creed of God and the creed of His Messenger.” This is contrary to the practice of sliding the body head-first into the grave. The Sunna is to face and receive it properly.

Inwardly, the one responsible for delivering a believer to the hujja of the age prepares him by proper confirmation and opening in knowledge, establishing him on the creed of God and His Messenger before handing him onward.

The Messenger ordered a cloth to be spread over the grave of Uthman ibn Maz'un while he was being buried. Inwardly this signifies preserving the secret of one transferred to the highest degrees until he reaches the station intended for him.

The Messenger also ordered that the body be placed on its right side facing the qibla, neither face-down nor flat on the back. The person nearest should make sure of the orientation and pray that God establish the deceased's proof and raise his spirit to divine pleasure. Inwardly, facing the qibla means orienting the transferred believer toward the Imam of his age, while lying on the right side signifies reliance upon that Imam.

When present at burial, the Messenger used to cast three handfuls of earth into the grave. Ali, when doing so, would say words of faith in God, confirmation of His Messenger, and certainty in what God and His Messenger had promised. A report assigns reward for every particle of earth cast in this way.

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The three handfuls inwardly signify three persons through whom the believer ordinarily rose before reaching the station of the hujja: the bab or gate who first opened the way for his da'i, the da'i who called him, and the authorized officer through whom the da'i's work was established. Each shares in the merit of the believer's eventual advancement according to the role he performed, just as those who help bury the deceased share in the outward merit.

Ali learned that a man who died in a village several miles from Kufa had been carried to Kufa for burial. He reprimanded those responsible and said: “Bury bodies where they fall; do not act like the Jews who carry their dead to Jerusalem.” On the day of Uhud the Ansar began carrying their slain back to their

homes, but the Messenger ordered them to bury the bodies where they had fallen. Thus it is disliked to transport a body far from the place of death without cause.

Inwardly, the person who has qualified for the high degree represented by burial should ordinarily be advanced where the hujja of the Imam or his lawful representative is present. He is not to be transferred artificially elsewhere merely by human preference. If the possessor of authority personally selects a person and draws him close, however, that transfer is by the very authority that validates it.

Ali made the Prophet's grave level and squared rather than mound-shaped, and the Sunna is to make graves in this fashion. The grave itself is a four-sided pit. Inwardly, the true da'wa is also upheld through four chief relations: Imam, hujja, da'i and authorized officer. The authorized officer points to the da'i, the da'i to the hujja, and the hujja to the Imam; when one rank is raised, another is established beneath it. The squared grave therefore reflects the ordered structure of the summons.

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When Uthman ibn Maz'un was buried, the Messenger placed a stone at the head of his grave and said he would recognize by it the grave of his relative. Marking graves by a stone, building or another sign is therefore outwardly permissible. Inwardly, the mark signifies the distinction by which the rank and excellence of one raised to a high degree become known.

Ali disliked a grave being dug deeper than about three cubits, and disliked adding to it earth other than what had been removed from it. Inwardly, one who reaches the degree signified by the grave is not to be burdened with knowledge beyond what his station requires concerning the Imam, hujja and da'i. Nothing is to be added beyond the proper measure.

The Messenger sprinkled water on the grave of Uthman ibn Maz'un after leveling it. Inwardly, once the hujja receives and incorporates the believer among those joined to him, he bestows upon him knowledge and wisdom. Water again signifies knowledge.

The Messenger permitted visiting graves and said that doing so reminds people of the Hereafter. Fatima used to visit the graves of the martyrs. Outwardly, grave visitation is therefore permitted. Inwardly, a praiseworthy transfer into a higher rank deserves continued connection, visitation and regard. A person lowered into states of corruption and disgrace is not visited in that same way. This is another aspect of the verse, “Rivalry distracts you until you visit the graves,” whose blameworthy inward meaning was explained above.

Ali, when passing graves, used to say three times: “Peace be upon you, people of the abode; surely we shall join you.” This is a recommended outward greeting. Inwardly, it signifies submitting to and acknowledging the authority and state of those transferred upward to lofty ranks.

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The Messenger forbade stepping over graves and laughing beside them. Outwardly this is reverence for the dead. Inwardly, a believer must not treat those raised to high degrees with frivolity, nor bypass their authority to reach others beneath or beside them. He does not overstep the order established through them.

The Messenger also forbade making a mosque directly at a grave. Its outward ruling was discussed in the Book of Prayer. Inwardly, those who have already reached the highest ranks are not to have a new independent “summons” erected over them as though another station remained beyond the degree they have completed.

When news came of Ja'far's death, the Messenger told his family to prepare food and carry it to the bereaved household, saying that something had come upon them that occupied them from preparing food for themselves. Outwardly, relatives and close friends should therefore assist the household of the deceased. Inwardly, when a guide transfers a person upward, he should attend to those companions left behind, consoling and strengthening them through explanation, knowledge and wisdom until their grief or confusion subsides.

Understand, believers, the inward meaning of these acts by which you are commanded to live. May God aid you in bearing them, grant you knowledge and insight, and bless Muhammad and the Imams from his progeny.

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Thus ends Part Seven of the Book of the Training of the Believers. Praise be to God for His blessings, outward and inward.

Part Eight of the Book of the Training of the Believers: Instruction in the Boundaries of the Inward Science of Religion

The First Session of Part Eight

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, the One, the Eternal, without modality, who originated what He originated and created what He created without effort or deliberation. May God send His most perfect blessings upon the best of creation, Muhammad His Prophet, and upon the Imams from his progeny.

Brothers, you have heard portions of interpretation and wisdom concerning the outward obligations and rulings established in the *Da'a'im al-Islam*: allegiance, purification and prayer, together with their lawful and unlawful matters. You are bound to perform their outward forms exactly as they have been transmitted to you. The next subject in the *Da'a'im* is zakat, so hear its interpretation.

Know that everything gathered in the *Da'a'im* concerning obligations, judgments, lawful and unlawful things is the outward religion of God, and God has commanded that it be established and acted upon. Therefore perform what you are commanded and abstain from what you are forbidden. What you hear of their inward meaning is knowledge, wisdom, bounty and mercy that God has made clear upon the tongues of His friends so that you may understand the purpose of the worship with which He has bound you.

No outward or inward deed benefits a person without allegiance to God's friends, remaining with them, hearing them and obeying them. God says, “Obey God, obey the Messenger, and those vested with authority among you.” He instructed Muhammad to say, “I ask of you no reward for it except love for the near kin; and whoever acquires a good deed, We increase him in good through it.” Acceptance of good deeds and increase in their reward are therefore joined to recognition, love and obedience of the divinely appointed friends. Whoever obeys them obeys God; whoever disobeys them disobeys Him.

The Messenger said: “There is no share in Islam for one who abandons prayer.” Its outward form is known, and its inward form is entry into the true da'wa. Whoever abandons either outward or inward prayer, or one of the two, lacks his proper share in Islam, because God does not accept from His servants what He has prescribed in only one aspect while the other is rejected.

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Faith itself shows this union of outward and inward. The testimony of faith is not accepted from one who says it with the tongue but denies it in the heart; nor is the inward conviction treated as fulfillment of the prescribed confession if a person refuses to utter it when required. A polytheist does not enter the outward community of Islam until he pronounces the testimony, and a hypocrite is not a Muslim in God's inward judgment merely because his tongue utters what his heart rejects. God says of the hypocrites: “They say: We bear witness that you are truly the Messenger of God... and God bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.”

God says that He has lavished upon people His blessings “outward and inward,” and He commands: “Leave outward sin and inward sin.” Just as abandoning what He forbids must be both outward and inward, so performing what He commands must also have both dimensions. For this purpose He deposited wisdom with His friends so that those who respond to them may worship with knowledge rather than ignorance.

Prayer is not valid without purification. Outwardly, one who rejects the Messenger from whom the obligation of prayer came has no accepted prayer. Inwardly, one who does not know and follow the Imam of his age likewise does not fulfill the inward prayer. Outward prayer without outward purification by water is invalid; inward entry into the true da'wa without purification by true knowledge from unbelief, associationism, doubt and sin is likewise incomplete.

The Messenger also said: “There is no prayer without zakat.” God says, “Woe to the polytheists, those who do not give zakat,” and repeatedly joins prayer to zakat. The Messenger said: “There is no prayer for one who has no zakat,” just as he said there is no prayer without purification and no share in Islam for the one who abandons prayer.

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The *Da'a'im* teaches that Islam rests upon seven pillars, beginning with allegiance to God, the Messenger and those vested with authority, without which the rest are not accepted; then purification, prayer, zakat, fasting, pilgrimage and jihad. The interpretation of allegiance, purification and prayer has already been given. We now begin, with God's help, the interpretation of zakat.

The Book of Zakat

Outwardly, zakat is obligatory upon the wealthy in their property, and it must be delivered to the Imams whom God has charged with receiving it, or to those whom they appoint, so that it may be distributed in the ways God designated. God said to His Prophet: “Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them to grow.” Muslims did not hold that this duty ended with the Prophet's death; rather, its administration continued through the Imams after him. Therefore one upon whom zakat is due must deliver it to the Imam of his age or to the person he has lawfully appointed to receive it.

In Arabic, *zakat* means purification. When a man “purifies” his property by taking out the obligatory share, what remains becomes clean and lawful for him; before that, the due portion is mixed with his holdings and the whole has not yet been purified. Hence God's warning concerning those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend them “in the way of God”: the expenditure intended includes the obligatory zakat. The Messenger said: “What has had its zakat taken from it is not a hoard.” A hoard is what remains hidden and withheld; payment makes the prescribed amount known and manifest.

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Zakat in Arabic also denotes soundness or righteousness: a righteous person is one purified of corruption. It further denotes increase and growth: one says that a thing *zaka*, grew and increased. Its inward interpretations therefore follow all these senses. In one context zakat signifies purification, in another rectification, and in another increase and growth, according to the subject of the discourse.

God says, “Prosperous is the one who purifies it, and failed is the one who corrupts it.” He says of charity: “Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them to grow.” The two verbs can be understood as purification and rectification, or purification and increase; Arabic also permits emphatic repetition of near meanings.

When God says, “Establish prayer and give zakat,” the inward prayer is establishment of the true da'wa, while zakat is that by which one is purified, rectified and increased through proper giving. In another aspect, the person who purifies others may himself be called a *zaki*, just as Arabic names a person by the act attached to him.

Accordingly, in some inward interpretations prayer signifies the speaking prophets and the Imams who establish the summons, while zakat signifies the foundations and legatees who purify people, rectify their states and raise them through degrees of merit according to their deeds. In this sense, “there is no prayer without zakat” means that the true summons cannot stand without recognition of the foundations who are the legatees of the prophets and the hujjas who are the legatees and representatives of the Imams.

This is the general interpretation of zakat. The *Da'a'im* next turns to exhortations encouraging its payment. Inwardly, giving zakat means connecting oneself to God's friends and to those they have appointed, through righteous action by which one obtains purification and reaches the rank of those accounted sound and just in their sight.

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God says: “Prosperous is the one who purifies himself, remembers the name of his Lord, and prays.” Prosperity means deliverance from what is feared. Inwardly, the verse speaks of one whom God's friends

purify and raise to the rank of the righteous, authorizing him to call to God and to them. His "remembering the name of his Lord" is his recognition and proclamation of the rightly guided lord of his age through whom people know their Lord.

God also says: "Prosperous indeed are the believers, those who are humble in their prayer, who turn away from vain speech, and who perform zakat." Inwardly, the successful are those who enter the true da'wa in humility and fear of God, obey Him and His friends, turn away from vain or false discourse, speak only what is true, and perform the deeds by which they are purified of sin and made sound before God's friends.

The Messenger said that when God intends good for a servant, He sends him an angel from the treasurers of Paradise who touches his breast so that his soul becomes generous in giving zakat. Outward angels are the intermediaries between God and His prophets. The Arabic root of *malak* is connected with message, and inwardly the angels signify God's friends and the lawful intermediaries through whom His command reaches His servants. Paradise inwardly is the true da'wa that leads to Paradise in the Hereafter, and its treasurers are those who administer it. Thus, when God wills good for a person, He directs someone who opens his heart to the hujja of his age, so that he accepts him, acts in ways that purify him, and willingly gives what is due.

Compete therefore, believers, in what brings you near to the possessor of your command, to the satisfaction of your Lord and to purification of your souls. May God open this to you and grant you success in acting upon it.

The Second Session of Part Eight

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, exalted beyond the sight of eyes and the conjectures of hearts, beyond likeness, comparison and category. Blessings be upon Muhammad, master of humankind, and upon the Imams from his progeny.

Ali said: "The worshipper has three signs: prayer, fasting and zakat." Inwardly, the worshipper is the believer who submits to God and His friends, acknowledges their allegiance and lives under their command. Prayer signifies his participation in the true summons; fasting signifies guarding what he has been commanded to conceal; zakat signifies purification from defect, sin and stain and, in one of its meanings, increase in his state and rank through connection to the hujja of his age.

Ali, in his testament, enjoined his children, household and all believers to fear God, and said: "God, God concerning zakat, for it extinguishes the anger of your Lord." Outwardly, this is an injunction to those upon whom zakat is due to pay it to those entitled to receive it, and an instruction to those who administer it to place it in the uses God commanded. Inwardly, believers must perform the deeds by which they are purified before God's friends, and the Imams of Ali's progeny purify those who deserve purification by the true knowledge that cleanses the enduring souls for the Hereafter.

The Messenger said of zakat: "Each of you gives only a part of what God has given him, so let him give it willingly. Whoever pays the zakat of his wealth has its evil removed from him." Outwardly, payment purifies the remainder because the due share is not truly the payer's private property. Until it is removed, the lawful and the due are mixed, like permissible food contaminated by something unlawful.

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Inwardly, wealth signifies knowledge, as explained before. The Messenger said: "Everything has a zakat, and the zakat of knowledge is to spread it; the zakat of bodies is fasting." Therefore one appointed to convey knowledge must not withhold from a qualified recipient the measure he is authorized to give. Proper transmission is the purification of knowledge, just as removing the due share purifies property.

The recipient, however, must not spread what he has not been authorized to disclose. His "zakat" at that stage may be preservation and concealment. The statement that fasting is the zakat of bodies likewise points to restraint and disciplined concealment. As knowledge is retained faithfully, acted upon and preserved, the instructor increases the recipient in it; thus zakat also means growth.

Those appointed to teach must spread to each rank the amount of knowledge suitable to it. If the students preserve, understand and act on what they receive, those above them increase them further. This chain continues upward to the highest Giver. God says: “If you are grateful, I shall surely increase you; but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is severe.” A generous human benefactor increases a recipient when he sees his gift used well; how much more fitting is increase from the possessors of clear insight and pure intellect when those below them faithfully preserve what they have been given.

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The Messenger's saying that one gives only a part of what God gave him means outwardly that zakat is only a small portion of one's total wealth. One should not resent giving it, for it was never independent of God's command. Whoever hates giving what God has prescribed hates the divine pleasure attached to that command. God condemns those who “followed what angered God and hated His pleasure, so He made their deeds worthless.”

Inwardly, the instructor gives to recipients from the knowledge of God's friends willingly, cheerfully and with openness, not harshly, boastfully or arrogantly, because what he gives is not his own independent possession; God caused it to reach others through his hands. Ja'far ibn Muhammad advised teachers to humble themselves before those whom they teach and not become tyrannical scholars whose false pride destroys their work.

The instructor also does not give away all that he has to every recipient. Just as a person is not required to dispose of all his property and make himself needy, an instructor gives only the portion appropriate to the recipient's degree. God has established different ranks: “We raised some of them above others in degrees,” and “See how We have favored some of them over others.” The teacher gives a part of what he himself received from the superior above him; this ordered difference belongs to God's wisdom in both outward and inward life.

The Messenger said: “No wealth perishes on land or sea except because zakat was withheld. Fortify your wealth by zakat; treat your sick with charity; repel affliction by supplication.” Outwardly, when a person pays zakat sincerely to its rightful recipient, seeking God's pleasure rather than reputation or display, the remainder is purified and protected by God's permission.

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Sincerity is essential. Ja'far ibn Muhammad related a report in which a man suffering stomach pain was instructed, according to a Prophetic remedy, to drink honey with a prescribed addition. Another man complained that he had tried the same treatment without benefit. The Imam became angry and said that God benefits people of faith and certainty through such instruction, while the person who treats the Messenger's word merely as an experiment without confidence should not expect the same result. The lesson is that charitable and righteous deeds without sincere intention and trust do not yield their proper benefit, outwardly or inwardly.

Inwardly, the person who possesses knowledge but neither acts by it nor gives the authorized share of it to those entitled to receive it destroys that knowledge's benefit. Its “destruction” means that it no longer profits its possessor, just as a ruined object ceases to be useful.

The Messenger said: “No servant becomes noble with God except that his trial increases; no man pays the zakat of his wealth and has his wealth thereby diminished; no theft occurs except that its amount is deducted from the thief's provision.” Outwardly, zakat does not truly diminish a person's rightful wealth because the portion paid was due to another. Inwardly, when an instructor gives to a student the knowledge he is authorized to give, nothing is taken away from the instructor's own knowledge. Transmission increases rather than impoverishes him.

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The Messenger's statement that “the zakat of knowledge is to give it” confirms this interpretation: one who acts upon knowledge and conveys its due share purifies that knowledge. His saying that a servant's honor

with God is accompanied by increased trial likewise means that every elevation is preceded by testing. Before a person is raised to a noble station, his actual state must be examined and proved.

The saying that no thief steals anything except that it is counted from his provision is also true outwardly, because God has measured provisions. Inwardly, theft is taking knowledge from instructors by trickery, overhearing or other means without their intending to give it and before the recipient has reached the degree that entitles him to it. Had he waited until qualification, what was truly allotted to him would have reached him lawfully. By stealing it early, he gains no legitimate increase and exposes himself to error.

The reports concerning Ali's charity by night and in secret, and the saying that "secret charity extinguishes the Lord's anger," concern voluntary charity beyond obligatory zakat. Inwardly, voluntary charity is the instructor's giving of counsel, admonition and useful guidance beyond the strictly prescribed knowledge belonging to the recipient's rank. It also signifies voluntary good works beyond what is obligatory. May God grant you understanding, success, rectitude and nearness to His mercy.

The Third Session of Part Eight

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, unique in oneness and manifest in power, whose essence is beyond definition and whose attributes are not those of created beings. Blessings be upon Muhammad, Seal of Prophethood, and upon the Imams from his progeny, masters of creation.

On the Severe Warning against Withholding Zakat from Those Entitled to It

The command to give zakat and the virtues attached to it have been explained outwardly and inwardly. Withholding it is the opposite and therefore brings blame and harm.

The Messenger said that the Hour will not arise until prayer is treated as a favor that people claim to have conferred and zakat is treated as a burdensome fine. In inward interpretation the Hour is the final Resurrection by which worldly order ends. Before that time people's affairs become corrupted: some boast that they have "granted" their obedience and participation in the summons, instead of recognizing that God has favored them by guiding them to faith. God says: "They count it as a favor to you that they have submitted. Say: Do not count your submission as a favor to me; rather God has favored you by guiding you to faith, if you are truthful."

Likewise instructors may come to regard the knowledge they are obliged to give to recipients as an onerous debt or loss. Such corruption has been seen in human conduct, and its spread is among the signs preceding the Hour, whose exact time God alone knows.

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Ali said that God imposed upon the property of the rich an amount sufficient for the poor; if the poor go hungry, are left naked or suffer hardship, it is because the rich have withheld what is due, and God will call them to account and punish them. Ja'far ibn Muhammad likewise said that God allocated for the poor in the wealth of the rich enough to suffice them; had He known it insufficient, He would have increased the obligation. Their deprivation therefore comes from those who withhold their rights, not from deficiency in the divine apportionment.

Inwardly, God has assigned to recipients a due share of knowledge from the instructors appointed over them. He has given those instructors the knowledge needed to benefit those beneath them and has determined the measure that brings about their soundness. If instructors fail to give the proper measure, those below them suffer because of that negligence. If, however, recipients themselves turn away from instruction, pursue desires and worldly distractions, neglect action, and refuse the means of learning, the blame is upon them, not upon instructors who have fulfilled their duty. The same distinction exists outwardly when a poor person refuses lawful assistance and chooses forbidden means of gain.

Zakat must not be placed anywhere other than its proper destination. Outwardly, one must deliver it to the Imam of the age or his appointed collector, as was done in the Prophet's time. Inwardly, every person's purification belongs with the Imam of his age and those whom he has appointed and made manifest as the agents of purification. God said to Muhammad: "Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify

them and cause them to grow," and said of the Messenger that he "recites His signs to them and purifies them."

The Messenger and the people of his house are forbidden to consume ordinary charity because it is described as the washing-away of people's sins. God purified them from taking it for themselves while making them trustees over its collection and distribution. God says: "Your guardian is only God, His Messenger, and those who believe—those who establish prayer and give zakat while bowing." Their establishing prayer signifies establishment of the true da'wa, their giving zakat is their delivery of purification to those entitled to it, and their bowing signifies obedience to God and His Messenger.

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The Messenger said that among the first to enter Paradise are a martyr, a slave who worshipped his Lord well and sincerely served his master, and a poor but chaste man with dependants; while among the first to enter the Fire are an unjust ruler, a wealthy man who withheld God's right from his wealth, and an immoral poor man.

Inwardly, the martyr is the Imam of the age, witness over the people of his time. God says: "How will it be when We bring from every community a witness and bring you as a witness over these?" and: "The prophets and witnesses will be brought and judgment will be made between them in truth." The prophets bear witness over their communities, and after them the Imams are witnesses over the people of their ages. The truthful followers enter behind their rightful leaders just as, on a journey, the highest-ranking person proceeds and the rest follow.

The "owned slave" inwardly is the authorized servant whose affair has been entrusted to the Imam. He worships God through recognizing and obeying the Imam whom God has appointed, and he sincerely serves the one placed over him. The "chaste man with dependants" is an instructor who guards himself from God's prohibitions, obeys the authority of his age and tends the people of his summons, who are inwardly his household and dependants.

The first of the condemned, the ruler who does not act justly, includes every person given authority in religion or worldly affairs who abandons the truth. The wealthy person who withholds the right due from his wealth inwardly is the learned person who withholds knowledge from those entitled to it. The Messenger said that whoever conceals knowledge will come on the Day of Resurrection bridled with a bridle of fire. God curses those who conceal the clear proofs and guidance after they have been made known in the Book.

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Therefore every person appointed to explanation must explain to those entrusted to him the knowledge suitable to their degree and may not conceal it when their deliverance depends upon it. God commanded the Messenger: "O Messenger, convey what has been sent down to you from your Lord; if you do not, you have not conveyed His message," and: "We sent down to you the Reminder so that you may make clear to people what was sent down to them." This is God's practice with His prophets, the Imams of His religion and those whom they appoint. Whoever neglects the command of God's friends disobeys God and deserves punishment.

The "immoral poor man" signifies one who possesses neither useful knowledge nor righteous action.

The Messenger said that God has certain places called "the avengers" upon which He pours the property of one who withholds God's right, causing it to be wasted there. He also said that every night a caller says: "O God, give replacement to every spender and destruction to every withholder." Outwardly, the property of one who refuses zakat may be consumed in losses and places from which he gains no benefit.

Inwardly, if a person withholds the knowledge he was commanded to convey, God's proofs—likened elsewhere to regions and grounds of the earth—may be given authority to remove from his hand the religious office and trust that had been placed with him. The Qur'an forbids killing children for fear of poverty and forbids killing a soul without right, while granting authority to the guardian of one killed unjustly.

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Inwardly, “killing children for fear of poverty” is the da'i's deliberately keeping his spiritual children—those who responded to his summons—ignorant because he fears that, if he educates them, they will become learned and challenge his personal superiority. Such a guide withholds the knowledge by which they would grow. The possessor of the age has authority to punish this offense by removing the offender's hand from the summons and cutting off from him the supply of knowledge. This is the inward analogue of lawful retaliation. The first “killing” is abandoning people to ignorance; the corrective “killing” is removal of the corrupt instructor from office.

God says: “Do not kill yourselves; God is merciful to you.” Turning away from knowledge and wisdom is inwardly a form of killing oneself. Understand, believers, both the outward ordinances of your religion and their inward meanings. Establish what you have been commanded outwardly and inwardly.

The Fourth Session of Part Eight

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to the Inward One who is not hidden and the Manifest One who cannot be encompassed, who counts every instant and every breath. Blessings be upon Muhammad, His sent Prophet, upon Ali his trustworthy chosen legatee, and upon the Imams from their progeny.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said: “God imposed nothing upon this community harder for most of them than zakat; through it the majority perish.” This applies outwardly and inwardly because stinginess with outward property and reluctance to part with it dominate human nature. God says that if He demanded all people's wealth, they would become miserly and their hidden resentments would appear. What He actually commands is the measured expenditure in His path. People perish by withholding what is due.

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Inwardly, instructors perish when they withhold the knowledge they were ordered to give, and recipients perish when they withhold the righteous deeds by which purification and growth become due to them. The reports describe deliberate withholding of zakat as a form of associationism, because one who knowingly refuses what God has commanded sets his own will against God's command. Faith requires full submission to God and His friends: “By your Lord, they do not believe until they make you judge concerning what disputes arise between them, then find in themselves no discomfort at what you decide and submit completely.”

On the Zakat of Gold, Silver and Precious Substances

Gold is the nobler monetary substance and silver is below it in value; through them ordinary buying and selling are carried on. Inwardly, gold signifies the knowledge of the speaking prophet in his age and of the Imam in his time. Silver signifies the knowledge of the foundation or legatee of the prophet and, in an Imam's cycle, the hujja who is the Imam's proof and heir to his office. Precious stones signify the knowledge of the lofty spiritual angels who convey God's command from one level to another until it reaches human messengers. God says: “God chooses messengers from the angels and from humankind.”

This is the general interpretation of gold, silver and jewels.

The transmitted outward rule is that twenty dinars of gold, after a full year in one's possession, owe half a dinar in zakat, and two hundred dirhams of silver owe five dirhams after a full year.

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The outward ruling is as stated. Inwardly, wealth signifies knowledge and the hierarchy of metals corresponds to ordered kinds of knowledge. Gold, the most noble and fluid of the metals mentioned, signifies the knowledge of the speaking messenger; silver signifies the knowledge of the foundations and hujjas; copper signifies the knowledge of da'is; iron the knowledge of higher authorized officials; tin and lead lower authorized forms of transmission. People use these materials in different ways, just as believers benefit in different measures from the knowledge of the ranks above them.

No zakat is due in these other metals as such unless they are held as merchandise, whereas gold and silver have a fixed zakat. Inwardly, the fixed measure in gold and silver concerns the transmission of the highest knowledge from one divinely established rank to the next.

The number twenty is represented by two complete tens in finger reckoning. The hand, as explained earlier, can symbolize the Imam. The digits used in forming the numbers likewise symbolize ranks: the thumb signifies the speaking prophet, the index the foundation or legatee, the middle finger the Imam, the ring finger the hujja, and the little finger the da'i. Thus the numerical measures themselves allude to the ordered transmission of knowledge.

The half-dinar due from twenty is one-fortieth. Inwardly, a speaking messenger gives his foundation or legatee a measured portion of his knowledge during his lifetime; when death approaches, the entirety of the prophetic inheritance passes to the legatee, who stands in his place for the community. Scripture speaks of Solomon inheriting David and of Zechariah praying for an heir who would inherit from him and from the family of Jacob.

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The legatees inherit both the lawful worldly possessions of prophets and, more importantly, their inward wealth of knowledge. In a corresponding way God established measured shares in the property of the rich for the poor and other recipients named in His Book, and the Imams receive and distribute those shares.

The five dirhams due from two hundred are likewise one-fortieth. Since silver signifies the knowledge of the legatee and hujja, the measure indicates the ordered transfer from foundation to Imam, from Imam to hujja, and onward through the da'i. The chain of knowledge passes from rank to rank, and through it God's friends purify those who respond to their summons.

If a person has less than the minimum twenty dinars, no gold zakat is due. Inwardly, the Messenger does not establish and invest the foundation with the full share of secret knowledge until the total structure of the law and its two dimensions have been completed. When that completeness is reached, the foundation receives his proper inheritance. Likewise the Imam gives his heir and hujja what belongs to him when the conditions of the succession are complete.

Precious stones, being fixed substances rather than circulating monetary metals, symbolize the knowledge of the lofty angels. They do not independently distribute their knowledge to human recipients; they convey only what God commands them to convey to prophets. Similarly, the lower substances here symbolize officers who transmit the knowledge of those above them rather than originate a new independent store.

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Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that a person owing zakat in gold may give its equivalent value in silver, and a person owing it in silver may give the equivalent value in gold. Outwardly this is valid payment by value.

Inwardly, the foundation's share from the Prophet and the hujja's share from the Imam is chiefly knowledge of inward interpretation, for the foundations are the people of interpretation while the speaking prophets establish the outward revelation and law. Yet the foundations and hujjas also require outward knowledge by which they themselves act and by which they direct those whom they initiate. Therefore the giver may convey from either aspect—interpretation or revelation—according to the need and equivalence of the recipient's rank.

The requirement that a full year pass before zakat becomes due has an inward meaning. The speaking prophet does not appoint the foundation to his complete public function until the structure of the revealed law has been completed. When only the establishment of the foundation remains, he appoints him and makes the community know his authority and his role in the inward summons.

This occurred with the Messenger of God. After the laws and outward obligations of Islam had been established and explained, he was commanded to designate Ali and declare his authority. Because the Prophet feared that some who had been newly brought into Islam might turn back, he prepared the community gradually: among the signs was his closing the doors opening into the mosque while leaving Ali's door, together with other indications. Then God revealed: “O Messenger, convey what has been sent

down to you from your Lord; if you do not, you have not conveyed His message." The meaning was that without establishing the foundation of allegiance the revealed order was not complete.

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Thus the Messenger publicly established Ali as the foundation and successor when the law had reached completion. The full "year" symbolizes completion of the whole ordered cycle required before that zakat becomes due.

The analogy of gold and silver also shows that inward interpretation and outward revelation are not competing truths. The Prophet gives the legatee knowledge of revelation as well as interpretation, and the legatee transmits to those below him what is needed for lawful action. The true hierarchy preserves both. The payment of equivalent value in gold or silver therefore signifies that the required share may be expressed in the form most suited to the recipient while preserving the value and truth of the knowledge conveyed.

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When the Messenger declared Ali's authority at Ghadir Khumm, God revealed: "Today I have perfected your religion for you and completed My blessing upon you." In the same way, an Imam does not fully install his heir and hujja for the people of his age until the structure of religion has been established and the command has become strong. The passing of the "year" therefore signifies completion and strength. At that point the zakat of knowledge becomes due and is transferred to the foundation or hujja who is to receive it. Understand, believers, both revelation and interpretation, and establish them outwardly and inwardly.

The Fifth Session of Part Eight

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to Him who originated creation without model, counselor, deliberation or thought, and who measured all that He created with the best measure. Blessings be upon Muhammad, the Prophet who seals the succession of messengers, upon Ali his legatee, and upon the pure Imams from their progeny.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that one-fifth is due from amber and pearls brought from the sea, and likewise from buried treasure and ancient mineral deposits. If a discovered treasure belongs to recent property and its owner can be established, it belongs to its owner. He was also asked about mines of gold, silver, iron, lead, copper and other minerals, and said that one-fifth is due from them. The Imam receives this share.

Inwardly, pearls and amber come from the hidden depths of the sea. Pearls are ornaments and amber is fragrance. They signify hidden treasures of outward revelation whose inward wisdom must be extracted by interpretation. Mineral deposits likewise signify knowledge concealed in the apparent forms of revelation, as gold and silver are concealed in earth and obtained only by searching, excavation, smelting and purification.

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People who see only the soil do not know the precious metal within it; specialists seek it out, melt it and separate it. So too, the inward wisdom contained in earlier revealed laws may remain hidden from the communities that outwardly possess those laws, while God's friends extract their true meanings through the knowledge He has taught them.

The fifth taken from spoils and discoveries likewise signifies a share of knowledge. God says that a fifth belongs to God, the Messenger, the near kin, the orphans, the needy and the traveler. Ja'far ibn Muhammad explained that God's mention at the beginning indicates divine ownership of all things, while the five human categories receive appointed portions.

In inward interpretation, the wealth of the fifth is the concealed knowledge and wisdom whose extraction God has entrusted to His friends and their appointees. "For God is a fifth" signifies that the knowledge is ultimately God's own; He grants it to those He names and commands them to distribute it through the ranks of His cause.

The Messenger is one category. The near kin are the Messenger's legatees and, after them, those vested with authority. The orphans signify the Imams, each unique in his own age, without a peer—like the rare pearl called “the orphan pearl.” They are also “orphans” in the sense that the fathers who preceded them in both outward lineage and spiritual office have passed away before they themselves stand as Imam.

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The needy signify, in one aspect, the heirs and hujjas who during the life of the Imam are dependent upon what he grants them, possessing only what he entrusts to them and remaining humble before him. The travelers signify the classes of da'is dispersed through the roads, regions and “islands” of the earth, calling people to God's friends just as outward travelers move from region to region. These five categories receive their apportioned shares of knowledge and wisdom according to God's order.

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali said that if buried dinars, dirhams, gold or other treasure falls below the fixed monetary threshold, the rule follows the appropriate valuation. Inwardly, kinds of knowledge differ in nobility and measure, just as forms of wealth differ in value, but every category has a due share for those qualified to receive from it.

The Messenger exempted personal houses, servants, clothing, household goods and riding animals from zakat so long as they were not intended for trade. Outwardly, property kept for personal use is not zakatable merely because it has value; merchandise held for trade is assessed and zakat becomes due upon it.

Inwardly, an instructor does not owe to those beneath him every item of knowledge belonging to his own station. What is peculiar to his degree and personal office is like the house, servant, garment or mount held for personal use. What he has been given specifically to circulate among responders is like commercial merchandise and carries the obligation of distribution.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that merchandise bought for trade is zakatable if, after a year, it can be sold for its purchase price or more; if its value has fallen below the capital and no other qualifying wealth makes up the threshold, zakat is postponed until sale or recovery.

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Inwardly, when an instructor receives knowledge specifically so that he may give it to those below him, he should give from it where he has a real field of da'wa and persons likely to benefit. If circumstances do not yet permit useful transmission, the obligation is related to actual capacity and the presence of qualified recipients. When his summons becomes broad and appropriate recipients appear, he joins what he has received to what he already possesses and gives to those entitled to it.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that the property of an orphan or mentally incapacitated person is not ordinarily subject to zakat unless it is actively employed in trade, in which case the obligation attaches to the person managing it.

Inwardly, the orphan signifies the Imam because he is unique in his age and has no peer or “father” above him in the living hierarchy. The knowledge God has made uniquely his is not something he must distribute indiscriminately; it belongs to the office that only his successor will inherit. But when a portion of his knowledge is put into circulation through officers who teach those below them, those officers must purify and distribute it according to the due measure.

The mentally incapacitated person, lacking reason, signifies one who has strayed from the Imam of his age, because the Imam has elsewhere been compared to the intellect by which God gives, rewards and punishes. A Prophetic report says that when God created the Intellect He commanded it to advance and retreat, then declared that He had created nothing more honored and that through it He gives reward and punishment. One without the inward “intellect”—that is, without the rightful Imam—cannot lawfully employ inherited religious knowledge as a source of instruction unless he returns to a lawful authority through whom that knowledge can be purified and properly used.

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Ja'far ibn Muhammad said concerning a debt owed to a person: if the debt is readily collectible whenever he asks, without dispute or resistance, it is treated like wealth in his hand and its zakat is due; if the debtor resists and payment can be obtained only through litigation, the responsibility is upon the person actually holding the money until it becomes accessible.

Inwardly, if an instructor depends upon a superior for knowledge and can receive his allotted share whenever he asks, that share is effectively available to him, and he must provide those beneath him according to the due measure even before every part has physically reached him. If, however, the superior withholds and the knowledge is not actually accessible, the lower instructor is responsible only for what he truly possesses after retaining what his own rank requires.

The knowledge of those who teach must remain greater than that of the recipients whom they instruct. They do not empty everything they possess into those beneath them until the two become equal, for the distinction of degrees is itself part of the ordered da'wa.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that there is no zakat in the property of a *mukatab*, a slave who has contracted with his master to purchase his freedom, until the contract is completed. Outwardly he remains in servitude while the obligation is incomplete and owns property only in the qualified manner set by that contract.

Inwardly, the bound servant signifies one who has entered the covenant but remains under restriction, not yet authorized to speak openly in the wisdom disclosed to him. When he completes what has been imposed upon him, he passes from the state of restriction to the state of release and may be permitted to transmit. Until then he may not initiate others or distribute the esoteric knowledge he possesses as if he were an authorized teacher.

The Sixth Session of Part Eight

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, Appointer of times, Measurer of provisions, Grower of plants, Creator of the living and Raiser of the dead. Blessings be upon Muhammad, His Messenger to all humankind, and upon the radiant Imams from his progeny.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that zakat remains guaranteed upon the person from whom it is due until he places it in its proper destination. Outwardly, if zakat becomes due and the owner separates its amount but it is then lost before it reaches the Imam or his appointed collector, or if the rest of the wealth is lost while the due amount remains unpaid, the obligation is still a debt upon him whenever he regains the means to pay.

Inwardly, an instructor who owes a qualified recipient a particular portion of knowledge remains responsible until he actually conveys it. If he withholds it while able to give it and the recipient dies or circumstances change, he has failed in a duty for which he is accountable. Giving that knowledge to someone not authorized to receive it does not discharge the obligation, just as paying zakat to someone other than the Imam or his authorized agent is an unlawful diversion rather than valid payment.

The principle is like an ordinary debt: payment to a stranger does not free the debtor; it must reach the creditor, his authorized agent, or the lawful successor who stands in his place. So too, religious knowledge due to a particular rank must pass through the authority that owns the right to receive it.

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If one qualified recipient is lost before receiving what was due, the instructor does not thereby gain permission to retain the knowledge forever; he gives it to the next person lawfully entitled. Inward “agency” applies where a recipient cannot reach the instructor directly and an authorized intermediary is appointed to convey what is due.

On the Zakat of Livestock

In Arabic, livestock refers broadly to walking animals, but the fixed zakat concerns camels, cattle and sheep or goats. Inwardly, camels signify the speaking prophets in their cycles and the Imams in their ages. Cattle signify the foundations who are the legatees of prophets and, later, the hujjas who are the heirs and successors designated by the Imams. Sheep and goats signify the da'is, the great believers, and in some contexts the wider body of the faithful.

These ranks may all be called “walking creatures” because they travel and strive through the earth to establish God's cause and bring people to soundness. They are also “cattle” or blessings because God has bestowed through them benefit, grace and guidance upon His servants. They are truly alive in this world and the next through the life of faith, and through them God brings others to life.

Of these three outward species, the camel is greatest in size and bearing, so it represents the greatest of the corresponding inward ranks, the speaking prophets. Camels bear heavy loads to distant lands. Likewise the prophets bear the burdens of the heavenly kingdom and the divine obligations placed upon humankind. God said to Muhammad: “We shall cast upon you a weighty word.” The prophets bear both the duties themselves and the knowledge and wisdom of their outward and inward meanings.

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Outward zakat purifies the flesh and fat of these animals so that what remains is wholesome to consume. Inwardly, the corresponding purification makes the benefits people receive from prophets, foundations and da'is sound and lawful.

Camels are slaughtered in a distinctive manner while standing. Inwardly, the prophets are “purified while alive” by life-giving knowledge and heavenly wisdom after their certainty has been perfected. Cattle and sheep are slaughtered at the throat; slaughter signifies a covenant that separates a person from a former head or chief and binds him to the station toward which he is moving. Skinning signifies stripping away the outward covering of error. The removal of corrupt blood signifies removal of doubt and impurity until what remains can nourish the faithful with true outward and inward religion.

Several natural features of camels are treated as signs. A camel urinates backward, while the reproductive fluid by which offspring are generated proceeds forward. Earlier, urine was interpreted as doubt, while generative fluid signifies the knowledge by which inward progeny—believers—are produced. The prophets bring an outward revealed law that, because it contains symbols and concise expressions, may present questions or ambiguities to people who do not yet know its interpretation. At the same time they transmit true inward knowledge forward to their foundations and hujjas, who explain the revelation and remove the doubt contained in its symbols.

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Another sign is that young camels face the sun while grazing, whereas older mature camels may turn away from it. Inwardly, at the beginning of their missions the prophets themselves administer both outward law and inward teaching; when their order becomes established and the foundations and hujjas are appointed, they delegate much of the inward interpretation to them and devote themselves more visibly to establishing the revealed law.

When the Messenger established Ali as his foundation, he declared: “For whomever I am the *mawla*, Ali is his *mawla*.” That is, those whom the Messenger had been authorized to open through explanation were thereafter joined to Ali in that function according to the order of succession.

Camels store fat upon their backs. Since the back has repeatedly signified the outward aspect, this means that speaking prophets store wisdom within the outward forms of their revealed laws; interpretation and explanation extract the hidden wisdom concealed within those forms.

God says of livestock that some are for carrying burdens and some are for spreading or furnishing. Camels carry burdens, while cattle plow the earth and cause crops to grow. Thus cattle inwardly represent the foundations who cultivate the earth of the da'wa through interpretation so that believers grow from it.

The Qur'anic story of the cow in Moses' time is also treated as a symbol of succession and proof. The Israelites were required to identify and establish the designated authority according to the divine description rather than invent a leader by their own choice. The narrative is connected with the establishment of Joshua after Moses and the continuing line of authority, a subject the author says will be explained more fully in its proper place.

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God says: “Surely in the cattle there is a lesson for you; We give you to drink from what is in their bellies, from between digested matter and blood, pure milk, pleasant to those who drink.” The pure milk that emerges from between impurities symbolizes the inward knowledge held by God's friends, purified and made clear for those who receive it.

The urine and dung of edible livestock are treated differently from the impurities of forbidden animals. Inwardly, this indicates that the corresponding ranks are free of the associationism and fundamental doubt represented by those impurities. Their hides, once lawfully purified, may be worn and used in prayer. The hide signifies the outward aspect, so the outward practice of these ranks is itself pure and lawful to imitate within the true da'wa.

God says that He made houses from animal skins and provides from wool, fur and hair furnishings and goods for a time. Inwardly, houses signify God's friends and the ranks that shelter believers. God says: “Enter houses through their doors,” and the Messenger said: “I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.” The wool, fur and hair signify outward teaching and practices that benefit believers for the duration of this worldly order, while the “dwelling” itself includes the inward knowledge in which their hearts find rest.

Camels have no horns like cattle. Inwardly, speaking prophets do not contend with their opponents by the same mode of argumentative disputation represented by the butting of horned cattle; their authority is supported by the sword and decisive command, while cattle's butting signifies argument, proof and refutation by those entrusted with explanation.

Understand these signs, believers. May God grant you understanding, benefit, guidance and success in what brings you near to Him.

The Seventh Session of Part Eight

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, Creator of creation, Originator of creatures, Bestower of blessings and gifts, the Single, the One, the Glorious. Blessings be upon Muhammad, His chosen Prophet, and upon the Imams from his progeny.

On the Zakat of Camels

We have already explained that camels inwardly signify the speaking prophets and presented indications supporting this. Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that there is no zakat on fewer than five grazing camels. At five, one sheep is due; at ten, two sheep; at fifteen, three; and at twenty, four sheep. Thus up to twenty camels the due is paid in sheep rather than from camels themselves.

Inwardly, the speaking prophet does not attain the fullness of his station all at once. God advances him degree after degree and strengthens him with knowledge and wisdom. Scripture describes Abraham's ascent in knowledge when God showed him the kingdom of the heavens and earth so that he might become one of those with certainty. Jacob likewise told Joseph that God would choose him, teach him the interpretation of events, and complete His blessing upon him as He had upon Abraham and Isaac. God told Muhammad that He would complete His blessing upon him, guide him on a straight path, grant him mighty help, and later give him until he was satisfied.

God likewise strengthens the Imams, successors of the prophets, step by step, and through them strengthens the intermediaries appointed between them and the servants. Every rank receives from divine bounty what equips it for the function assigned to it.

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Since wealth signifies knowledge, every rank that receives knowledge has an inward zakat: a due portion by which the one beneath is purified and advanced. The higher heavenly boundaries are not the subject here; the discussion concerns the chain of ranks among God's human friends.

When God taught Muhammad the knowledge of the five speaking prophets before him—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus—and commanded him to establish a revealed law in continuity with their divine pattern, this resembled possession of five camels. The due one sheep signifies establishment of one da'i. When he was then taught the principles by which those earlier prophets established their foundations or legatees, this was another increase, requiring another da'i. Further knowledge concerning the twelve naqibs represented another stage, and knowledge concerning the da'is another. Thus the four sheep due from twenty camels symbolize four principal da'is whom the speaking prophet himself first establishes.

This accords with the Qur'anic symbolism addressed to Abraham: “Take four of the birds and incline them to yourself.” The author says its detailed interpretation was given previously. The four also correspond to the four sacred months among the twelve months.

When the camel count reaches twenty-five, the due changes from sheep to a yearling she-camel known as a *bint makhad*, one that has completed its first year and whose mother has become pregnant again. Inwardly, this marks a new kind of rank rather than merely another one of the first four da'is.

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After establishing the first four da'is, the speaking prophet commands each to call additional persons until there are twelve, corresponding to the twelve months of the year, four of which are sacred. These twelve become the naqibs. God says: “Surely the number of months with God is twelve months in the Book of God from the day He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are sacred. That is the upright religion.”

The best of the four first da'is is like Muharram, the first of the sacred months. From the twelve, the speaking prophet selects the naqibs who administer the regions of the earth. A naqib in Arabic is a person who investigates, bears witness concerning his people, and whose report is accepted. Each is assigned a region, while the chief of them serves as the gate to the speaking prophet.

Ali was the first and greatest person called by the Messenger and became his gate. The Prophet said: “I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate.” Whoever sought access came through that gate, fulfilling the Qur'anic command to “enter houses through their doors.” In this stage Ali was like the *bint makhad*, prepared to bear a light burden and to rise toward the next degree.

The Messenger himself, bearing divine knowledge until its appointed delivery, is compared to a pregnant she-camel carrying her load. Scripture describes conception as a light burden that later becomes heavy; in the same way revelation first rests upon the prophet and grows in weight until its appointed transmission to the one entitled to inherit it. The first substantial share delivered to the future successor corresponds to the yearling camel due at twenty-five.

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Among the four great supporters after Ali, Ja'far ibn Abi Talib was especially eminent. The Messenger assigned the Arabian region to Ali and made him his gate, while Ja'far was sent with the emigrants to Abyssinia after the Muslims were persecuted. Ja'far called the Negus to Islam and the Negus accepted.

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Later, when Ja'far returned at the time of the conquest of Khaybar, the Prophet rejoiced greatly and said he did not know which made him happier, the victory at Khaybar or Ja'far's arrival.

The other two of the four were Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib and Ubayda ibn al-Harith ibn Abd al-Muttalib. At Badr, because they were among the Prophet's foremost supporters, he sent Ali, Hamza and Ubayda to meet the champions who came out from the opposing side. The Qur'an refers to the two parties disputing concerning their Lord.

The author connects these men with the verse: “Among the believers are men who were true to what they pledged to God; some fulfilled their vow, and some are waiting, and they did not alter in the least.” Ali is reported to have said that the verse was revealed concerning himself, Ja'far, Hamza and Ubayda: those companions fulfilled their pledge through death, while Ali remained waiting and did not change.

This completes the inward interpretation of camel zakat through twenty-five, according to the capacity of this degree of explanation. Give thanks for the knowledge God has granted through His friend, for He says: “If you are grateful, I shall surely increase you; but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is severe.”

The Eighth Session of Part Eight

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, whom eyes do not perceive, places do not contain, and the directions of the horizons do not encompass. Blessings be upon Muhammad the Prophet and upon the righteous Imams of his family.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that when camels reach thirty-six, one more being added after the preceding threshold, the due is a *bint labun*, a she-camel that has completed two years and entered its third year. Inwardly, this signifies the next elevation of the person previously represented by the *bint makhad*, especially Ali in the earliest stages of his ascent under the Messenger.

The Messenger, after establishing Ali as his gate and chief naqib, continued to give him knowledge in proportion to the rank God prepared for him. The prophet had been taught how the five earlier speaking prophets established da'is, subordinate ranks and naqibs. As new knowledge was added, he was obligated to “purify” it by transmitting the proper portion to the one destined to stand after him.

A *bint labun* has passed the age of first nursing and is stronger than the earlier yearling. Its inward analogue is the rank of minister or helper of the speaking prophet.

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The Messenger established Ali as his minister in the gathering of the clan of Abd al-Muttalib, before the Hijra, when he was commanded: “Warn your nearest kindred.” He instructed Ali to prepare a small amount of food and milk and invite the clan. Though the quantity was slight, all ate and drank to satisfaction by the Prophet's blessing.

The Messenger then told the clan that God had never sent a prophet without appointing for him from his household a minister who would support him. He asked which of them would assist him in his mission. They turned away. He offered the matter man by man until Ali, the youngest among them, accepted. The Messenger said to him in substance: “You are my minister and my successor after me,” and told the clan to hear and obey him. They departed mocking Abu Talib for being told to obey his son.

Thus Ali reached the rank of ministry and support, like the *bint labun* whose age permits greater strength and burden-bearing.

When camels reach forty-six, the outward due is a *hiqqa*, a she-camel that has completed three years and entered the fourth and is fit for mating and load-bearing. Inwardly this corresponds to the brotherhood of the speaking prophet: the person joined to him as a brother and partner in the matter. Moses prayed: “Appoint for me a minister from my family, Aaron my brother; strengthen my back through him and make him share in my affair.”

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After the Hijra, the Messenger paired his Companions as brothers two by two. Ali alone remained. He asked why he had been left without a brother. The Prophet replied that he had kept Ali for himself: “You are my minister; you are to me as the head to the body and as the spirit to the body; you are to me as Aaron was to Moses, except that there is no prophet after me.” Thus Ali became not only the Prophet's gate and minister but also his brother, and he received the portion of knowledge appropriate to that degree. This is the inward counterpart of the *hiqqa* due at forty-six camels.

When camels reach sixty-one, the due is a *jadha'a*, a she-camel that has completed four years and entered the fifth. This is the oldest age normally taken in camel zakat. Inwardly, it corresponds to the foundational or legateal rank itself: the Messenger's declaration at Ghadir, “Whoever has me as his *mawla*, Ali is his *mawla*,” publicly established Ali in the authority of succession.

Beyond the principal ages used for zakat, camels have many further age names, but these other ages are not independently taken as the obligatory animal. The inward meaning is that the degrees signified by the prescribed zakat animals concern persons being prepared for the designated offices beneath or after the speaking prophet. Once the successor fully reaches the station of Imam or speaking authority, he has passed beyond the preparatory degrees represented by the animals taken as zakat.

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Thus the zakat of camels inwardly is the speaking prophet's giving from the knowledge he received to those whom he must purify, train and qualify for their appointed stations. Once those persons reach the completed station, they resemble the speaking prophets and Imams in their own office rather than the preparatory animals taken as dues.

On the Zakat of Cattle

Cattle, as explained before, signify the foundations of the speaking prophets and the hujjas of the Imams. The root of the Arabic word is associated with splitting open or probing, and these ranks “split open” knowledge and extract its hidden meanings from what is above them. Ali once used a similar expression about probing into knowledge, and Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn was called al-Baqir because he opened and displayed hidden knowledge after it had long been concealed for protection from enemies.

The outward rule transmitted from Ja'far ibn Muhammad is that no cattle zakat is due below thirty grazing cattle. At thirty, a yearling calf, male or female, is due. Nothing further is due until forty, when a two-year-old animal is due. Thereafter the count proceeds by combinations of thirties and forties: one yearling for each thirty and one mature animal for each forty.

Inwardly, the foundation with the speaking prophet and the hujja with the Imam rise degree after degree. The threshold of thirty corresponds to the stage of the subordinate ranks and to Moses' thirty appointed nights. At each threshold, the superior gives the knowledge needed to establish and strengthen the one beneath him.

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At thirty cattle, the due yearling calf signifies the person whose two “horns” or capacities have become established and who can now receive a measured share and give to those beneath him. When he reaches the foundational rank he establishes beneath himself a hujja who can later stand in his place when the degree of foundation is completed. This is the symbolism of forty. God says of Moses: “The appointed time of his Lord was completed as forty nights,” and He says of human maturity: “until, when he reaches full strength and reaches forty years...”

Thus the mature cow taken from forty corresponds to the higher completed rank, while the yearling from thirty corresponds to the subordinate hujja. The alternating combinations of thirties and forties in larger herds symbolize repetition of these two principal relations: the foundation establishes hujjas, and the hujjas establish lower supporting ranks. The system does not depart from these ordered types.

Camels, cattle and sheep differ in heaviness and digestibility. The speech of the speaking prophets is the weightiest and most difficult for ordinary people to penetrate, as camel meat is heavier. The discourse of the hujjas is gentler, nearer and more explicit, like cattle meat; the discourse of the da'is is easier still and closer to ordinary understanding, like sheep. The same analogy applies to their milk and to young and mature animals: the smaller rank is below the larger in degree and capacity.

Understand, believers, the symbols, inward meanings and analogies of religion. May God help you preserve what He has entrusted to you and act upon what He has made obligatory.

The Ninth Session of Part Eight

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God with the praise of one who knows the reality of praise and directs it sincerely to the One who deserves it. Blessings be upon Muhammad, the best of His creation, upon Ali his legatee and successor, and upon the guiding Imams from their progeny.

On the Zakat of Sheep and Goats

We have explained that sheep and goats in inward interpretation signify the da'is and can also signify the wider community of believers, since the da'is themselves are among the best of the believers.

The Imams taught that no zakat is due below forty sheep. When forty grazing sheep have been possessed for a year, one sheep is due. No additional amount is due until the herd reaches one hundred and twenty-one, at which point two are due; above two hundred, three are due; once the herd becomes large, one sheep is due for every hundred. As with camels and cattle, the fixed zakat applies to grazing animals, not to work animals or animals maintained by feed in the household.

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Working camels are those used to carry burdens, and working cattle till the earth. Their inward counterparts—the speaking prophets and hujjas actively bearing the burdens of religion and cultivating believers through wisdom—are not themselves the ordinary recipients from whom such a “zakat” is extracted. Likewise, sheep kept and fed within households signify da'is maintained directly by the superiors above them, nourished by the knowledge and wisdom they receive. The animals upon which the due is counted are the free-grazing ones, symbolizing recipients who take in knowledge and wisdom and are themselves purified through the ordered giving.

The numbers also carry an inward indication. The speaking prophet and his foundation, once their affair is complete, may survey forty men and select one for a special function in the da'wa. At one hundred and twenty, two are selected; at three hundred, three; and when the community is numerous, one suitable person is appointed from each hundred. The same principle is used by subordinate officers within the populations entrusted to them.

When a qualifying herd exists, small and large animals are counted in determining the number, though the animal taken as zakat must meet the prescribed age. Inwardly, the community may include believers of differing levels of maturity, all of whom count as part of the body from which officers are selected, but the person actually appointed must possess the maturity and qualities required for the office.

The young of camels, cattle and sheep do not independently generate a zakat threshold where no qualifying adult herd exists. Inwardly, persons who have not reached the rank corresponding to the mature type are not appointed merely because of their number. They must first reach the degree that makes them suitable.

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The Messenger forbade collectors to combine separate herds or split a single herd artificially in order to change the zakat due. Each owner's actual holding is assessed as it stands. Inwardly, a single da'wa is not to be broken into artificial groups merely to multiply appointments, nor may two distinct summonses be merged by one officer so that he can claim enough people to justify an appointment for which his own community is insufficient. Appointments belong to the lawful authority over each real community and according to its actual number and needs.

If partners mix their animals and use one shepherd and one breeding male, each is still assessed according to his own share unless they are true partners in the capital itself, in which case the total obligation is divided proportionately. Inwardly, two da'is may have their followers taught together by one educator, yet each da'i's community remains his own for purposes of the offices he is entitled to establish. If, however, a superior has appointed two da'is jointly over one region or tribe and their work forms a genuine partnership, the number of qualified followers may be counted together and the merit of those raised from them is shared between the two according to each one's contribution.

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Ali and Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that the zakat collector is not to take a decrepit animal, an animal with a serious defect, a breeding male, the best milk-producing animal on which the household depends, young calves or lambs, nor the very best or worst of the herd. The due is taken from the sound middle quality.

Inwardly, the decrepit animal signifies a weak believer who lacks capacity; an animal with a defect signifies a person with a disabling fault; the breeding male signifies one already performing a vital teaching function; the milk animal upon which the household depends signifies a believer authorized to nourish those below him with knowledge and wisdom; a castrated or otherwise unsuitable breeding animal signifies one who, though perhaps upright personally, lacks the capacity for leadership. Such people are not selected merely to fill the number.

Young lambs, calves and camel-colts represent people who have not yet reached the degrees corresponding to the mature offices. They may be worthy and may later grow into those stations, but until then they are not appointed as if already qualified. The person selected should be a sound, balanced member of the community—not someone of manifest deficiency, nor someone whose existing higher function would be harmed by removing him from it.

Ali said that if collector and owner dispute over which sheep is to be taken, the flock is divided into three groups: the owner chooses one third to retain, then the collector chooses the due animal from the remaining two thirds. Inwardly, if the da'i and the superior who is selecting from his community differ over candidates, the da'i may preserve a portion needed for his immediate work, while the superior selects from the remainder the person required for the greater need of the da'wa.

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The Messenger exempted elephants, horses, mules, donkeys and slaves from livestock zakat, and Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that fixed livestock zakat applies only to grazing camels, cattle and sheep. Inwardly, elephants can signify very high hujjas, mules the naqibs, and donkeys the da'is or carriers of particular burdens. God says of horses, mules and donkeys that He created them “for you to ride and as adornment.” Their “riding” signifies bearing the burdens of religious service and conveying people, while their adornment signifies the beauty and benefit found in them. Their role differs from the three species used here for the fixed symbolism of zakat.

Reports also speak of a doubled assessment upon certain Arab Christians. In inward interpretation, Christians can signify groups who exaggerated concerning Ali and departed from balance. A doubled treatment signifies the stronger correction required when such people respond from an erroneous doctrine that must first be removed and then replaced with the due belief. Arabs in the inward symbolism can signify those who possess articulate explanation.

Understand this, believers. May God grant you understanding, teach you and benefit you by what you hear.

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, who orders affairs without deliberation or thought, possessor of bounty and deserving of praise and thanks. Blessings be upon Muhammad, His Prophet sent with the message, and special blessings upon the guiding Imams of his family.

On Delivering Zakat and Charities

The *Da'a'im al-Islam* establishes from the Qur'an, the Sunna and the reports of the Imams that the person entitled to receive zakat and charitable dues and distribute them to their lawful destinations is the Imam in every age, or a person whom the Imam appoints for that purpose. One upon whom zakat is due may not validly discharge it by giving it elsewhere.

Inwardly, the establishment of the human “causes” or officers through whom God's friends preserve religion and reform His servants—which has repeatedly been compared with zakat—likewise belongs only to the Imam of the age or to an authority he has appointed. No person may appoint himself independently to such an office. The lengthy outward proofs gathered in the *Da'a'im* all return inwardly to this principle.

On the Zakat of Grain, Fruit and What the Earth Produces

God says: “O you who believe, spend from the good things you have earned and from what We have brought forth for you from the earth.” He also says of palm trees and crops of varying kinds: “Eat of their fruit when they bear fruit, and give its due on the day of its harvest.” Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that this “due” is the obligatory zakat.

The Messenger said that what is watered by rain and flowing rivers owes one tenth, while what is watered by drawing water from wells with buckets or similar effort owes half of one tenth.

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The inward meaning begins with the symbols already established: heaven signifies the speaking prophet, earth signifies the hujja, and water signifies knowledge. All earthly water ultimately originates from heaven: some descends directly as rain, while some is stored within the earth. God says: “We sent down water from heaven in due measure and lodged it in the earth... and by it We produced gardens of palms and vines.”

Direct rainwater therefore signifies knowledge proceeding openly from the speaking prophet. Water stored in the earth signifies knowledge passed from the prophet into the hujja and retained within him. The plants growing from that water signify believers produced through the wisdom of God's friends.

Different crops and fruits signify different classes. Grapes, dates and fruits from which sweetness, drink or pressed juice is extracted signify naqibs, da'is and other officers from whom knowledge and wisdom are “pressed out” for others. Their sweetness signifies the delight of the proper combination of revelation and interpretation, outward and inward. Grains, trees without such fruit, herbs and grasses signify lower authorized ranks and ordinary responders. Just as vegetation nourishes animal bodies outwardly, knowledge and wisdom nourish human souls inwardly.

The full tenth due from what heaven waters and the half-tenth due from what is irrigated from wells also fit the hierarchy. Knowledge given directly by the speaking prophet has a broader outward and inward scope. The hujja, who receives and stores knowledge from that prophet, administers principally the inward dimension. His transmitted share is therefore described as half in relation to the prophet's more comprehensive giving. The author compares this with inheritance, where the male receives the share of two females, and with the differing numbers of species taken from camels and cattle in the earlier zakat rules.

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The Messenger also said that honey owes a tenth. Honey inwardly is a kind of knowledge whose possessor must give an appropriate share to those beneath him. The Qur'an describes rivers of water, milk, wine delightful to drinkers, and purified honey in Paradise. These are symbols of forms of knowledge within the da'wa. Their source is ultimately the water of divine knowledge, but each is transformed into a different beneficial form. The detailed explanation of these rivers belongs elsewhere.

No zakat is due on crops until they reach five *wasqs*. Inwardly, this means that one of the five principal teaching ranks—the messengers, foundations, Imams, hujjas and da'is—does not begin the full act of instructing those below until his own capacity has reached the completeness required for giving. A *wasq* is sixty *sa's*; the author draws numerical correspondences from five and sixty to the completed lower thresholds previously explained, making the number a sign of maturity in the teaching ranks.

On Zakat al-Fitr

Fasting has already been interpreted as concealment. A person who has entered the covenant of God's friends and been opened to explanation must keep what he has heard secret and not disclose it until he is authorized; while he remains in that state, he resembles the fasting person.

Ja'far ibn Muhammad interpreted the verse, “Prosperous is the one who purifies himself, remembers the name of his Lord, and prays,” as referring outwardly to one who gives zakat al-fitr and then performs the festival prayer. Zakat al-fitr is to be given before breaking the fast. The Messenger said that a man must pay it for everyone in his household whom he supports—young or old, free or enslaved, male or female—one *sa'* of food for each person. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali was asked whether a poor person who receives zakat al-fitr may himself give from what he has received, and he answered yes.

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Thus outwardly zakat al-fitr concerns young and old, male and female, free and dependent, rich and poor according to the rules of support. Inwardly, it applies to all who have entered the true da'wa: instructors and recipients, those represented by males and females, people expansive or limited in knowledge, those of high and low rank, the rich and the poor, the great and the small. Each must obtain his own “release of the neck” by rendering what his station requires to the person responsible for him.

Zakat al-fitr is also called the “zakat of heads” because it is paid for each individual head. Inwardly, every person must turn to his “head” or chief—the instructor who gives him explanation—acknowledge that chief's authority and the authority of the ranks above him, and know that his purification is obtained through the knowledge he receives from that lawful source.

The fasting person should not break the fast on the day of the festival until zakat al-fitr has been paid. Inwardly, no person may begin openly disclosing explanation to others until he has first fulfilled his own obligations and received authorization from the chief who governs his instruction. The festival prayer, like prayer generally, signifies the da'wa. Therefore zakat al-fitr comes before the prayer: release and authorization must precede active calling and teaching.

The word *fitr* relates to beginning or origination. Inwardly it signifies the novice's beginning in open explanation after purification and permission. The rules concerning dependants mean that the person responsible for others must fulfill the obligations connected with them to the extent of his means, outwardly and inwardly. God says: “Let the person of ample means spend according to his means; and whoever's provision is restricted, let him spend from what God has given him. God does not burden a soul beyond what He has given it. God will bring ease after hardship.”

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Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that a person pays zakat al-fitr even for a Jewish or Christian servant and for anyone enclosed within his household and dependent upon him. A wife may be responsible for it when she independently supports herself and those dependent upon her. The rule follows actual support and responsibility.

The inward analogy is not that such people literally fast and break their fast. Rather, it concerns the responsibility of the person who governs and supports others. Children and people exempt from fasting outwardly can nevertheless be included in the household obligation, just as inwardly immature persons are included under the responsibility of those who educate and maintain them until they reach their own rank of obligation.

The friends of God also transmit that a righteous deed may be performed on behalf of a deceased person and its reward reaches him. Zakat al-fitr may likewise be reckoned for one whose birth is imminent. Inwardly, a person from whom the covenant has been taken but who has not yet heard the detailed explanation resembles a fetus in the womb; once he hears and receives the explanation, he resembles a child born and nursing.

Understand, believers. May God teach you, grant you understanding, bless you and bless for you what He has opened. Blessings be upon Muhammad the Prophet and upon the pure Imams from his progeny.

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Thus ends Part Eight of the Book of the Training of the Believers. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds.