

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

The Book of Assemblies and Journeys

To the most noble caller, our master, Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him

Praise be to God who has honored us with the guardianship of His chosen ones and favored us with the leadership of the Imams from the family of His Prophet, and guided us by their light and enlightened us with their paths, and bestowed upon us through them blessings beyond measure, blessings which He loves and approves, and which bring about an increase in His blessings upon us. And may God's blessings be upon

▪ Muhammad, His Prophet, and upon the pure Imams from his family

Now then, after we have presented what we have presented of virtues, wisdom, knowledge, and learning from the forefathers of our Imams, through the transmission of this knowledge from among our righteous brothers and the best of our ancestors, and since they possessed the merit of the one who conveys it to us and the reward of the truthful transmitter, the desire for that reward prompted us to convey what we heard, what was passed down to us, what we narrated, and what we presented from those we witnessed and experienced among them, may God's peace and blessings be upon them, to others among our contemporaries who were absent from that time, so that they may convey it from us to those who come after us, just as what we

▪ presented was conveyed to us by those we experienced from those who came before us

We have narrated from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, as transmitted to us by our Imams, that he said: "May God have mercy on the one who hears my words, understands them, and conveys them to those who have not heard them. For perhaps the one who carries knowledge will convey it to one who is more knowledgeable than him, and perhaps the one who carries knowledge is not himself a scholar." And he also said: "This knowledge will be carried by the just among every generation, who will refute the distortions of the ignorant, the interpretations of the extremists, and the

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▪ fabrications of the deceivers

On the authority of Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, that he said: May God have mercy on whoever revives our cause. It was said: O son of the Messenger of God, what is reviving your cause? He said:

▪ Mentioning it, spreading it, and conveying it to those who have not heard of it before

And it was narrated from him, peace be upon him, that he said to some of his followers: Speak about us and gather in your assemblies to mention us, for there is no group of our followers who gather to mention our virtues and discuss what they have learned from our knowledge except that they roam in the gardens of Paradise, and the angels shade them and seek forgiveness for them, and God Almighty turns His merciful face

▪ towards them

For this reason, and for many other reasons we have mentioned and summarized, we desired what we

▪ presented and preferred what we intended

I have compiled books about al-Mahdi, al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, and al-Mansur bi-Allah (may God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon them), and about them and their virtues, too numerous to mention. I have also written a biography of al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God's peace be upon him) from the time God Almighty entrusted the Imamate to him until today. I am continuing this work until my life ends, God willing, and it will be passed on to my descendants and their descendants after me, by God's grace, through the long life of His

▪ chosen one and the perpetuation of His glory and authority. There is no power nor strength except with God

Then I saw aspects of wisdom, knowledge, literature, and understanding burst forth from his logic, surged from his words, and pointed to his symbols and allusions. These aspects did not follow the path of the biographies he compiled, nor did they fall into the categories he established, despite the wisdom, knowledge, miracles, proofs, evidence, and signs contained within those biographies. Therefore, I saw fit to dedicate these aspects to books similar to and worthy of them, and to dedicate the biographies to their respective books, along with those similar to them and sharing their meaning. And I will mention in this book what I heard from al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, of wisdom, benefit, knowledge, and understanding, whether through discussion in a gathering, a position, or a conversation, and what reached me of it through a message, a signature, or correspondence, confirming the meaning without the exact wording, without addition or omission, after offering my excuse for failing to convey the true meaning of his words, as he is the essence that humans cannot create,

but rather God who originated his creation. Indeed, he is better than essence, as Sufyan al-Thawri mentioned that he entered upon Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, and he told him a hadith with words the like of which Sufyan's ears had never heard. Upon hearing it, he could not help but say, "This, by God..." The jewel, so Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, said to him, "O Sufyan, rather it is better than the jewel. Is the jewel

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■ anything but a stone?" He said, "So I said, 'God knows best where He will place His message

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, is the son of Ja'far, peace be upon him, and his descendant and progeny, and the offspring of the Messenger of God, and his children, and they are as God Almighty said, descendants of one another, whose story cannot be recounted, and creation is incapable of

■ producing anything like what they are

It has been narrated that one of the companions of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, was asked, "Tell us a hadith exactly as you heard it from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, without adding or subtracting anything from it." He replied,

"You have burdened me with an excessive task. It suffices me to convey the meaning to you, striving to

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■ accurately convey the wording and not intentionally altering anything of it, God willing

Mention of words that took place in a situation .1

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad said: The first words I heard from the Commander of the Faithful, al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him), were spoken on the day I arrived from Tripoli. Al-Mansur Billah had appointed me as judge there and then sent me his order to come. So I arrived, and when I reached al-

Mansuriyya, I encountered al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him) as he was going out for one of his outings in a grand procession. I dismounted and hastened to greet him, having prepared my words. But as soon as I drew near to him, and his presence filled my eyes and my heart was filled with awe of him, and I saw the majesty of the Imamate in his face, I swear by God that I did not know what to say, and I could only resort to kissing the ground. Then he gestured to me with his hand, so I kissed it, speechless with awe and reverence. He began to speak to me, saying, "You have come with the best of arrivals. May God bless you and reward you well. We have heard of you. Proceed rightly to the gate of the Commander of the Faithful," and he urged his

■ mount on

When I stood before Al-Mansur, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he said to me, among other things, "O Nu'man, if God rewards the righteous with good, then may God reward you on our behalf with

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■ the best of rewards

Nothing pleased me more than what I heard that day from Al-Mansur and Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may

God's peace and blessings be upon them. I considered that statement and pondered it as the words of God's saints should be considered and pondered. I saw that the statement of Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, the Exalted and Glorified, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, "And may God reward you well for yourself," was a clear, manifest, evident, and well-known statement, needing no interpretation and requiring no proof. It is confirmed by the words of God, the Exalted and Glorified: "If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if

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■ you do evil, it is against yourselves

And the saying of Al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, "If God rewards the righteous with good, then may God reward you on our behalf with the best of rewards," is similar in meaning, since the righteous, when they do good deeds, do not do good to God, exalted is He above that, but rather they do good to

■ themselves, as God Almighty said

His statement, "May God reward you on our behalf," requires interpretation and is not independent of

■ evidence, and it is open to several interpretations

One interpretation is that his saying "May God reward you on our behalf" means "on our behalf" or "from us," or something similar, because prepositions in Arabic can sometimes replace one another. God Almighty said, relating Pharaoh's words, "And I will crucify you on the trunks of palm trees," meaning on the trunks of palm trees. The meaning of the supplication in this context is that God will reward them through them, or by them, or from them, in this world, in the Hereafter, or in both. This is what I hope for, confident that the

■ supplication will be accepted. There is no power except with God

▪ His statement about us may be metaphorical, meaning about our guardianship, love, and advice to us
Or it could mean: May you be rewarded for what you have done in the matter we entrusted to you, and

▪ for which you did well, or something similar

The discussion on this matter is extensive, and the evidence for it is abundant. We have omitted mentioning it for brevity, not so that anyone might think or imagine that he has a favor, grace, or blessing upon

▪ God's saints for which he should be rewarded

We have narrated on the authority of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, as related to us by narrators from our Imams, that a man from the Ansar said, "Your father did me a favor. Do you have any need of me?" He said to the Messenger of God, "Ask God to grant me Paradise." He said, "Yes, help me in this by performing many prostrations." He mentioned his father's past jihad and said to several people, "May God reward you well on behalf of His Prophet." We have shortened their mention to lighten the burden on a people who strove and gave sincere advice. This is without doubt, dispute, disagreement, or contention. It is a favor they did for themselves, not for the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family. Some of them, out of ignorance, boasted of some of this, so God, the Exalted and Glorified, revealed: "They consider it a favor to you that they have embraced Islam. Say, 'Do not consider your Islam a favor to me. Rather, God has conferred favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you should be truthful.'" No one has a favor to bestow upon God, may His name be glorified, nor upon any of His saints, in any deed, word, or anything else, even if he were to be torn limb from limb. For if he does that, he is preparing for himself and seeking his own benefit, especially one who is employed for a wage that will come to him and works for a reward that he is given. His path is like that of a hired worker; if he is sincere in his work, then... He fulfilled his duty, and if he betrayed or cheated in it, he deserved punishment and incurred sin. And whoever works today

▪ for our Imams, peace be upon them, should act accordingly

I told some of the judges I entrusted with certain duties that the most important thing you should consider and act upon is fulfilling your pledges and carrying out your responsibilities, and obeying the instructions given to you by the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) regarding what is due to God and to him from you in this matter. At the very least, you should consider what will ensure the continuation of your blessings and emulate those you see among the common people, such as goldsmiths, jewelers, and tailors, who have become like them among the craftsmen. You may see one of them entrusted with work worth a great deal of money, yet he performs it for a paltry wage, without witnesses or verification. He may be poor or otherwise, and neither trustworthy nor knowledgeable in science or religion. He fulfills his trust, delivers what was entrusted to him to the one who employed him, and takes a small fee for it. He is only motivated to do so because if he withholds what was given to him and denies it, people will avoid him and not employ him. He sees

▪ that taking the wage little by little is more beneficial and advantageous for him

And you will receive from the bounty of God's chosen ones, as long as you persevere in preserving what He has entrusted to you. May your good reputation endure, and may you hope for further increase and the reward you seek from your Lord. Whoever hears from God's chosen ones what I have mentioned should interpret it as I have interpreted it, and not take it to the same conclusion as those whom the Book condemns, and to whom God has clarified the error of their assumptions and beliefs. And God guides those who hold fast to the rope of His chosen ones to obedience to Him and to them, and to acting in accordance with what pleases

▪ Him and them, in word, deed, intention, and conformity to what is right, God willing

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When al-Mansur Billah summoned me, I accompanied him one day as he went out to a garden called Kaniyya and stood there. I stood before him, and he spoke at length on many subjects. Then he looked at some of his men and said, "What about the hadith you told me about so-and-so?" He mentioned a hadith containing a blatant lie. Then he looked at me and said, "This man is known for his blatant lies, and the one who rises to the command of God, peace be upon him, has learned of his actions and is amazed at what he is able to do and how

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▪ he is obeyed

he said to me, "This man, known for lying, testified before so-and-so—meaning some judges— regarding the confession of a mule. So that judge sent for this man—meaning the one who lied about him— to investigate his situation and inform him of what he was testifying about. So he sent for him. He is considered

trustworthy by us regarding a mule.” Al-Mu’izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, smiled and then said, “So the ? judge accepted his testimony.” Have you ever seen anything more astonishing than this

When I heard this from him, peace be upon him, I remembered the saying of those who said, regarding the stories of God Almighty in His Book about the nations to whom He sent His messengers, and who disobeyed the messengers, so God destroyed them with punishment, that although this is an account of their fate and destruction and how their situation unfolded, it is also a warning from God Almighty to those who do likewise, and a caution against that punishment befalling them. So I understood that the implication of his, peace be upon him, in what he said was that one should not seek out such a man for proofs, even if he held a position of closeness and service, for there are those more deserving of revealing proofs. And I did not consider his statement as mere hearsay or idle talk without meaning or benefit, since it is more appropriate to refrain from

▪ such talk

Likewise, whoever hears a saying from the saints of God, peace be upon them, should ponder it deeply and not turn away from it, passing it by lightly. For every word of theirs contains wisdom, and beneath every phrase lies a benefit for whoever God guides to this knowledge, and whom God makes manifest, and whom He grants success in understanding it, and whom He facilitates its benefit for. And God guides whom He wills by

▪ His grace

Hadiths on the journey 3

He said, and I was with Al-Mu’izz li-Din Allah, may God’s prayers be upon him, one day, and he

▪ mentioned a man, so I said that he was with us during the days of the turmoil in Mahdia

"? He said, "And how was that

I said, when the accursed Antichrist drew near to us, he migrated to us from the desert with himself, his family, his children, and whatever wealth he could muster, leaving behind much that was plundered. But God compensated him for that, for he had brought us food, and when food became scarce, he sold some of it for a great price after having withheld his own and his family's sustenance. So God replaced what he had lost many

▪ times over

He, peace be upon him, said to me, “O Nu’mān, by God, what God has prepared for him of reward in His noble abode is greater than that. By God, no believer who remained with us on that day, who recognized our right and preferred to be with us in hardship and adversity rather than with our enemy in ease and prosperity, will be with us tomorrow in Paradise, entering our abode and taking shelter in our shade. By God, even if he had sins as numerous as the grains of sand, God would forgive him and admit him to Paradise through our

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▪ intercession and his being with us

He (peace be upon him) was not satisfied with telling me this until he swore by God repeatedly to confirm it to me. So I examined what he (peace be upon him) said and confirmed, and I found that the Book of God supported it, the hadith of the Messenger (peace be upon him) strengthened it, and the statement of Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) reinforced it. As for the Book of God, it is His (God's) statement, may He be glorified and exalted, "And whoever among you takes them as allies is one of them," and his statement, relating the words of his friend Abraham (peace be upon him), "Whoever follows me is of me," and the statement of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), "Salman is one of us, the People of the House." Salman was of Persian lineage, but he was devoted to the family of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family), so he was attributed to them and included among them. The Messenger (peace be upon him) said to some of those he addressed, "You are with whomever you love." And Ja’far ibn Muhammad (peace be

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▪ upon him) said to some of his followers, "You are one of us, the People of the House

Whoever takes God's allies as his own and inclines towards them, and is with them in this world, especially in times of hardship, distress, adversity, and trial, will be with them in Paradise by God's mercy and justice. God Almighty, may His name be glorified, has said, "And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire." If He admits to the Fire whoever inclines toward His enemies, then it is from His justice that He admits to Paradise whoever turns away from them and inclines toward His allies. As we have narrated from Ja’far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, that he said, "Whoever safeguards the wealth of an

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▪ orphan and invests it for him, God will admit him to Paradise

Some of those who heard this from him said to him, "O son of the Messenger of God, where did you
 " get this from? Did you hear something from the Messenger of God
 Is it not from God's justice that when He promised Hellfire for those who devour the wealth of orphans,
 ? He would admit Paradise to those who protect and cultivate it
 All of this supports and confirms what Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said. And
 the words of God's saints, if pondered by one who is granted understanding, will be confirmed by the words of
 . God, may His name be glorified, and the words of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him

answers to a question in the context of keeping up with the times 4

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: When al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, appointed me as judge in al-Mansuriyya, and I resided there, whenever I stood to greet him, I would kiss the ground before him out of reverence and respect for his position. He repeatedly told me, "Do not do this, Nu'man," but I continued to do it. I believed his prohibition was not based on mere disapproval, as al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, did it at that time, as did those below him in rank and all other people, except for those ignorant of his rights among the rabble who lacked understanding. I disliked being included among them and being associated with them in this practice. Then one day, peace be upon him, he went out for one of his usual outings, and al-Mu'izz went with him for his usual outings. I kissed the ground before al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, and he said to me in a harsh and reprehensible manner, "I have forbidden you from this repeatedly, yet I do not see you desisting from it." This caused me great distress and sorrow, and I did not know how to proceed. So I went to al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, who was at the head of the procession, behind him, and told him what had happened to me. He saw the effect of my distress. Then Ali smiled at me and said, "Do not let what you heard from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, sadden you, nor let it deter you from what you were doing. Continue doing it even if he forbade you a thousand times. By God, he deserves more

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 . than that in terms of rights and veneration

His words, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, removed from me what I had been experiencing. I pondered what he mentioned and commanded regarding the disregard for the Imam's commands, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and what he commanded regarding the avoidance of his prohibitions. I found that much of God Almighty's command and prohibition in His Book is not obligatory but rather serves various purposes of discipline, guidance, testing, and examination. If I were to mention them all, I would exceed the scope of this book. Anyone who has studied any aspect of Quranic knowledge will understand

. this

It was mentioned that Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As apologized to al-Husayn ibn Ali, peace be upon him, when he disapproved of his rebellion against Ali, peace be upon him, at Siffin. He said to him, "O son of the Messenger of God, by God, nothing prompted me to do that except that my father, Amr, had a grudge against me and complained about me to the Messenger of God, peace be upon him. The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said to me, 'O Abdullah, obey your father.' When he went out with Muawiyah, he called me, and I remembered the words of the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, so I answered him and obeyed him as he

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 . had commanded me

Then Al-Husayn, peace be upon him, said to him, "O servant of God, have you not heard the words of God Almighty, who, after commanding kindness to parents, says, 'If they strive to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them'? And the words of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, 'There is no obedience to a creature in disobedience to the Creator'? And his words,

" ?" peace and blessings be upon him, 'Obedience is only in what is right

Abdullah's face changed, and he said, "By God, O son of the Messenger of God, it is as if I have never

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 . heard this before, but I have heard it

And I saw it that way, and I understood the meaning of what al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said: that since obedience is only due in what is right, then forbidding what is right is not a binding prohibition. And I saw that al-Mansur's order to me, along with al-Mu'izz's explanation to refrain from kissing the ground, was a test and trial, just as God Almighty commanded Abraham, peace be upon him and his family, to sacrifice his son Ishmael to test his patience and his resolve. And indeed, I returned to that as al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, had commanded me. And he did not disapprove of it after that during his lifetime, peace, mercy,

and blessings be upon him. And his saying, "All of this is for me, with His pleasure upon me," increases with every moment and is confirmed by praising God as He deserves. We ask God for the ability to be grateful and

▪ for the completion of the matter

Having mentioned the act of kissing the ground before the saints of God, it is necessary to mention the aversion of the ignorant to this practice, their condemnation of those who perform it, and their belief that it constitutes disbelief in God and prostration to someone lesser than Him. Exalted is God, and far removed are His saints from what the unjust and ignorant say. It is a trial and tribulation for the ignorant to exert themselves in presenting arguments to people who do not understand. Even if they consider it prostration, have they not heard the words of God Almighty, recounting in His Book the story of Jacob and his sons, who were prophets, prostrating to Joseph, peace be upon him, when they entered upon him while he was a prophet? This was in response to the interpretation of his dream, in which he saw the sun, moon, and stars prostrating to him. Do these prophets, in their view, become disbelievers because of this prostration? We do not say that we prostrate to anyone other than God—exalted is He above such a thing! Rather, we kiss the ground as a sign of reverence for the saints of God. Prostration has a different true meaning. If these ignorant people were asked about a man who kisses the ground during his prayer while prostrating, without placing his forehead upon it as those who prostrate do, would that be considered disbelief? They did not say that prostration was a prostration, so how can someone who does that without intending to prostrate be considered to have prostrated? Even if a man truly prostrated without intending to prostrate, he would not be considered to have prostrated, just as if he abstained

▪ from food from day until night without intending to fast, he would not be considered to have fasted

Yet they kiss the hands of the Imams, peace be upon them, and they narrate from some of their predecessors that kissing the hand is a prostration, or at least, according to their own reasoning, a rak'ah, because the one performing it lowers his head as he does in bowing. Thus, according to their own reasoning, they are bowing to them instead of God, exalted is He above such a thing. He has declared His saints far above being pleased with this or permitting it for any of their companions. What they narrated from the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, with some of his companions who came to him from Abyssinia, and he saw them prostrating to their kings, so he prostrated to him, and he forbade him from doing so, saying, "If I were to command anyone to prostrate to anyone, I would have commanded the woman to prostrate to her husband." That, if their narration is authentic, is prostration instead of God, because the one who does it is merely imitating the Abyssinians, who were Magians and the message had not reached them at that time. So the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, forbade following their example. Their narration does not mention kissing the ground, but rather it forbids prostration. And we have already mentioned that kissing the ground is not prostration, and this is a matter of consensus; we know of no disagreement on that it does not suffice in place of... Prostration is called "if it is done without intention," and we do not say that the prostration of Jacob, his son, and his family to Joseph was a prostration other than to God—God is far above that, and He has purified His saints from it. Rather, it was a prostration of obedience and veneration to him, and submission to his command because of the favor God had bestowed upon him. This is one of the greatest things that the ignorant criticize, and they are more deserving of criticism and more worthy of ignorance. We have already

▪ explained their ignorance, if only they would be guided

words that led to watching 5

The Commander of the Faithful, al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, went out on one of his usual inspection tours. He arrived at Tanbas, and al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, went with him. I was among those who went with them. They came to a valley where rainwater flowed, irrigating many lands for various dwellings. There was a great dam there. When he reached it and stood before it, two men, administrators of the estates, approached him. One of them claimed that the other had blocked the dam, preventing the estates under his administration from receiving the rainwater. The other claimed that it was his right and something he was obligated to do. Each of them presented numerous arguments, their voices rose, and their conversation became heated. Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, heard all of this but did not intervene. Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, stood on his horse to one side, while people at a distance, some mounted on their animals and others standing, watched. Most of them heard the two men's arguments, and I was among those who heard them. I saw no reason to intervene between them, and whenever I thought to myself that one of them had a valid argument, the other

▪ would present a counter-argument

Then one of those in the procession who was near me said to me, "Didn't you hear what was said

"? between these two

I said yes

"? He said, "What do you see in it

I said, "By God, I have not ascertained the truth of this matter to the point of certainty. Their affair is unclear to me, and what you see of the Commander of the Faithful's (peace be upon him) hesitation to decide between them is sufficient. But I say that if they had stood before the Commander, meaning al-Mu'izz li-Din

" .Allah (may God's peace and blessings be upon him), he would have decided between them

"? He said, "And where did you get that from

I said, knowing him, "By God, no matter has ever been difficult for me since I saw him, and no matter has ever been unclear to me regarding the truth, so I brought it to him, except that he answered me before completing it, or when he completed it, with an answer that never occurred to me after considering it and thinking about it for many days and many nights, and with something that I have no doubt is the truth, and there is no other way to it." I mentioned to him aspects of this, and we will mention them and others of a similar

.nature in this book of mine, God willing

I was telling him about it, and he was amazed at what God was preparing for him and guiding him to in terms of the right course of action. We saw the two men turn away from al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, and stand before him. He was closer to us than al-Mansur, peace be upon him. No sooner had they stood before him than they turned away from us, and we did not hear a word from them. Then one of them came and stood between me and the man I was speaking to, and I saw his face beaming. I said to him, "What happened between

"? you two

He said, "Our conversation ended, and the prince settled the matter between us with a single word after

" .I heard what was before our master, peace be upon him

So I said, "How is that?" and I looked at the man to whom I had said what I had said and said to him,

"? "Didn't I tell you

"? The man asked him, "And how was that

He said that when our stay had been long and our conversation had increased before our master, he told

.us to go to our master so that he might look into what was between us

So we went to him, and when we stood before him and wanted to speak, he said, "Be quiet, I will suffice you and myself." Then he looked at my companion and said, "Isn't this valley, with its flowing water and

"? the lands it irrigates, ours

He said yes

He said, "You two only disputed over this irrigation so that each of you could use it to secure what

" .would flow to us through him

He said yes

He said, "Tell me, if you were in charge of both places, would you water one place and leave the other

.without water?" He remained silent

" .He said, "Speak if you prefer to speak the truth

" .He said, "My lord, I would not have done that

He said, "You are right. What you would not do for yourself, do not obligate others to do. Go and remove the dam and irrigate what you have, and this is what he has, according to what he gives you and what he

.gives." So he ruled in my favor as I had requested, and I left

The man I had spoken to looked at me and said, "It is as if, by God, the secret of this matter has been

" .revealed to you

I said that this is only because of what I have experienced and learned from what I have presented to

▪ you, mentioning some of it

Then I considered this wondrous case which God Almighty inspired him with and concealed from the

Imam. I recalled the words of God Almighty: "And [remember] David and Solomon, when they judged concerning the field, when the sheep of the people had strayed into it, and We were witnesses to their judgment. So We made Solomon understand it, and to each [of them] We gave sound judgment and knowledge." (Quran 2:24) And what the narrators related to us from our Imams, peace be upon them, that two men disputed before the Prophet David, peace be upon him, concerning sheep belonging to one of them that had strayed into the other's crop and damaged it. David, peace be upon him, gave a ruling on the matter and then referred them to Solomon, peace be upon him, to judge between them. Solomon said: If the owner of the sheep intentionally sent them into the crop, then he is liable for what they damaged. But if he did not intend it and they strayed without his will or intention, then he is not liable. And the damage caused by animals is not subject to compensation. "Animals" refers to livestock, and "not subject to compensation" means that what the animals cause of their

▪ own accord is not subject to compensation

He said, "This only happens during the day, and it is the responsibility of those who own walls to protect them during the day. If something escapes at night, its owner is liable for any damage it causes, whether intentionally or unintentionally, because it is the responsibility of livestock owners to guard their animals at night and prevent them from leaving their homes, while it is not the responsibility of those who own walls to protect their walls at night." Solomon understood this ruling during his father's lifetime but concealed it from him to show him his virtue and please him with the wisdom he had imparted. Similarly, Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, understood this ruling during Al-Mansur's lifetime to please him, to demonstrate his virtue

▪ and the wisdom he had been inspired with, and to bring him joy

As the narrators also related to us from our Imams, peace be upon them, that a Bedouin came to the mosque of the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, during the days of Umar, and said to him, "I am a man in a state of ihram. I passed by some ostrich eggs, so I picked them, roasted them, and ate them." He said, "I have no knowledge of this, but sit for a while until someone who has knowledge of this comes." So he sat until the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, came. Umar said to the Bedouin, "Ask this man." Al-Hasan was a young boy with Ali at that time. So the Bedouin came to Ali, peace be upon him, and said, "I am a man in a state of ihram. I passed by some ostrich eggs, so I picked them, roasted them, and ate

"
▪ them

▪ Ali then asked him, "Ask this one," and gestured towards al-Hasan (peace be upon him)

The Bedouin said, "Woe is me! What is wrong with me? But, O companions of Muhammad, are you

"
▪ incapable of answering? Every time I ask one of you, he refers me to another

Abdullah ibn Muhammad said to him, "Ask him, O Bedouin, for he is from the family of the

"
▪ Prophet

The Bedouin asked him, and Al-Hasan (peace be upon him) said to him, "O Bedouin, what is your

"?
? camel

He said yes

He said, "Take a number of camels with eggs and mate them with a male camel. Whatever offspring

"
▪ they conceive and separate from them, make it a sacrificial offering

The Bedouin said, "You have relieved me, may God relieve you." He stood up, and Umar met him and asked, "What did he say to you?" So he told him. Umar said, "Go back to him and tell him, 'Didn't you know

"'?
? that camels slip

"'?
? Al-Hasan said, "Tell the one who told you this, 'Didn't you know that eggs are torn

His father then approached him and kissed him between the eyes, saying, "Offspring, one from another.

"
▪ And God is Hearing and Knowing

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said, "The One who made this boy understand this matter is the same One who made Solomon, son of David, peace be upon them both, understand that matter. And the One who made this boy speak with wisdom is the same One who made John, son of Zechariah, speak with wisdom. By God, if this matter were to be put back in its proper place, they would eat it green and lush, on their right and on their left."

Umar said, "O Ibn Mas'ud, you are inciting the people against us." Al-Hasan, peace be upon him, said to him,

"
". "You were giving him a fatwa, not guiding him to us

This case, too, was from Al-Hasan in the presence of Ali (peace be upon him), an inspiration from God

• to him so that he might be pleased with it during his lifetime, as we mentioned in the case of Al-Mu'izz

The Bedouin said that he roasted and ate eggs, even though there were no chicks in them. Al-Hasan (peace be upon him) instructed him to send a male camel to mate with as many camels as there were eggs. Whatever offspring resulted from this mating, he should offer as a sacrifice. If it did not result in pregnancy, or if only some of it did, he was only obligated to offer the offspring as a sacrifice, because eggs can also spoil, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned. If there were chicks in the eggs, but the fetuses had not yet developed, he should have mated the camels with the male until their pregnancy became evident. Whatever offspring resulted from this mating would then be offered as a sacrifice. If the fetuses had already developed, he should have mated the camels with the male until they became pregnant and their embryos began to move in their wombs. Whatever offspring resulted from this mating should be offered as a sacrifice, and whatever died in

• their wombs did not require a replacement, because chicks can also die in the eggs

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said to the man, "What you would not do for yourself, do not obligate others to do." This is from the saying of his forefathers: "Love for others what you love for yourself, and it is sufficient for your own good manners to do for yourself what you dislike in others." It is also from the saying of some of them to one another when he asked about temporary marriage (mut'ah): "Would you be content to

"?
" marry a close relative in a temporary marriage

"
". He said, "No, by God

He said, "That is enough for you. Do not accept for others anything other than what you accept for

"
". yourself

The words of God's saints are like a building, each part strengthening the other and each part bearing witness to the other, for they see with God's light, they draw from it, they speak with His wisdom, and they learn

"
". from their forefathers. They are God's proofs on earth, as God Almighty said, "Offspring, one from another

Part Two

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

• May God bless our Prophet Muhammad and his family

Hadiths on keeping pace 6

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad said: When al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, appointed me as judge over al-Mansuriyya, he ordered me to sit and judge between the people in the portico of his palace. He said to me, "If it were possible for me to seat you before me in a chamber inside my palace, that would be more pleasing to me. But if that is not possible, then sit in the portico of my palace, for it is the most

"
". fitting place where rights are established and judgments are carried out

So I sat where he ordered me to sit, and this caused distress to most of the opponents, especially the women, the weak, and those who were hesitant to enter through the gate of the palace of the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him). I realized this, and it was also brought to my attention, but I hesitated to oppose the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) in what he saw and ordered. Then one day, al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him) went out for one of his outings, and I went with him. He said to me, "O Nu'man, what is the situation regarding your sitting in the Saqifa?" I hesitated to say anything contrary to what the

• Commander of the Faithful had said, so I mentioned his words and remained silent

He said, "What about the woman and the weak, those who are exposed to prying eyes and jostled by our men and slaves? And what about you if a punishment or disciplinary measure is due from someone? Where would you be able to carry it out? By God, it is not a suitable place for that. It is more appropriate, more beautiful, and better for you to be in a visible place where the weak can reach you and have their needs met, and

where women can approach you discreetly, and where you can carry out the necessary punishments and

■ disciplinary measures

■ So I said, "The opinion is what the prince saw, may God grant him success and guide him
This was something I saw God Almighty had made him understand correctly and guided him to with

■ decisive words, and it was something I mentioned in the chapter before this one

Then, when he left, a decree came out to me from Al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers be upon him, along with money he ordered to build a spacious place where I could sit, so that I could reach the people and enable them to do what they wanted in their affairs, as is appropriate for me. So I knew that this was due to an order that Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him, had given him, since he had said what he

■ had said to him before and done what he did with knowledge and wisdom

And likewise, what God showed Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, regarding that opinion, contained compassion and mercy for the people. There is no contradiction or disagreement in this, but rather it is all knowledge, wisdom, and harmony. For what Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, saw in that was the exaltation and support of truth and the manifestation of its majesty in hearts and in the eyes of the eye. And what Al-

Mu'izz, peace be upon him, saw was more compassionate towards the people and more inclusive of both aspects. Thus, they are as God Almighty said concerning David and Solomon: "And to each We gave wisdom and knowledge." This was among what we mentioned regarding bringing joy to the friends of God by showing them in their successors and guardians during their lifetime what would gladden their eyes, by entrusting them with knowledge beyond what they had been entrusted with and teaching them more wisdom than they had been taught. This is not a deficiency for them, but rather an elevation, a favor, an honor, and a blessing from Him upon them, since the honor of the newborn is the honor of the parent, and the parent's joy is that his child be

■ more honorable than he is

I heard al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mention something similar in a gathering where the Imams, peace be upon them, were being discussed. He said, "And God has favored Muhammad, His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, by their Imamate." Then he clarified this so that no one who heard it would misinterpret it, saying, "I only say this to show favor to Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, since God Almighty bestowed this honor and virtue upon him by placing it in his progeny and perpetuating it in his descendants. They attained this through God Almighty's favor upon him, not because his favor originated with them. Rather, he is their master and the master of all the worlds, and through him they were honored, and by his favor they earned what they earned. This is from God's grace and His beautiful favor upon him." This indicates what I mentioned and supports what I presented regarding God's honoring of the Imams by showing them the favor of the chosen ones from their progeny during their lifetimes, so that they may

■ have confidence in His favor upon them after their deaths

And from this perspective, and related to this meaning, is what one of our brothers told me about al-Mansur Billah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, who said: "I wanted to appoint a governor to one of the border regions, so I pondered the choice of someone I deemed suitable for the job. However, no matter how much I considered it, my choice always fell upon one of our companions. Since my choice always fell upon him, I knew that this was from God's grace. So I wanted to test what God Almighty had in store for the one I hoped would be appointed to my position and whom I had favored with my command. I wrote the name of the man who came to mind on a piece of paper, sealed it, and placed it before me. I called for him—meaning al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him—and he greeted me. Then he stood up, and I said, 'My son, I want to send a governor to such and such a city,' and I mentioned the city. 'Who do you think is

""? suitable for this

He kissed the ground and said, "My master, what opinion do I have that differs from yours? May God

■ grant you success

So I said, "Speak up about that," but he refused to speak and began to apologize and ask for

■ forgiveness

So I said to him, "You must say something about that, for I have mentioned a man whose name is on

■ this piece of paper, so you take it and write down who you see fit

He said, "When he found no other way, he took a pen and paper, wrote, and handed me the paper. On it was the name of the man I had chosen. I thanked God for His favor upon me in this matter and threw him the paper, which I had sealed and which contained that name, and said to him, 'Unwrap it and see what is in it.' He

did so, and when he saw that it matched my opinion, he praised God Almighty, rejoiced, and his face beamed

”
• with happiness

This is what I mentioned and repeated in this chapter and the one before it, regarding bringing joy to His chosen ones by showing them who they have appointed in their place and to whom they have entrusted their

• affairs. Then Al-Mu’izz, peace be upon him, informed me of this news after that

Hadiths on keeping pace 7

He said, “I accompanied Al-Mu’izz li-Din Allah (may God’s prayers be upon him) one day during the lifetime of Al-Mansur (may God’s prayers be upon him), and he mentioned the days of the sedition and some of those who followed the accursed Mukhallad during it, and allied themselves with him and were drawn to him.

He said, ‘By God, those are the party of Satan, the fuel of Hell, and the kindling of the fires. Whoever among them has left us, allied himself with our enemy, and aided against us, and died in that state without repenting or

”
• • • turning back from it

I said, "My master, whoever has regretted that, repented of it, turned back to you, and made amends for

”
• • • what he has done in your presence

He said, “O Nu’mān, we are the gates of God and the means to Him. Whoever draws near to Him through us is accepted, whoever seeks intercession through us is attained, whoever we intercede for, we intercede for him, and whoever we ask forgiveness for, his sin is forgiven. But, by God, those who sin are not equal to those who do not sin. That is why there are different degrees in the Hereafter. And God punishes

”
• whomever He wills of His creation in this world for their sins, and that is the lightest of His punishments

I said, "My master, by God, I have seen more than one tribulation in those days. The tribulation was from one who had a history with you in jihad, companionship, or allegiance. He rarely escaped some calamity in this world or punishment, either by being killed at the hands of your allies or at the hands of those who

”
• supported him, or by some calamity befalling him in himself, his family, or his wealth

He said, “O Nu’mān, wretched indeed is he who dies persisting in what he has become. As for those who die having redeemed themselves through our command, they are of varying degrees. If one of them turns to us in the same way he turned away from us, he has washed away his sins and purified himself. If he increases his turning to us compared to his turning away from us, he increases his reward and recompense. If he decreases

from that, his share decreases. As for what they suffered in this worldly life, it is among the lightest punishments. And by God, purification is inevitable. Have you seen gold when it is mixed with impurities? Does it not have to be refined by fire until what is mixed with it is burned away and it becomes pure? Such is

”
• the case with the believers

I have never heard speech before that is as sublime in value and more beneficial. I pondered it and found it all derived from the Book of God, may His name be glorified, and from the words of the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him. As for his decree of Hell for whoever dies following the accursed Dajjal,

Mukhallad ibn Kaydad, turning away from the allegiance to God's allies to the allegiance to His enemies, abandoning the party of God and inclining towards the party of Satan, this is from the words of God, the Almighty: "And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire." I do not know of a

• group more unjust or a sect more wicked than the group of Mukhallad and his party

This also includes the words of God Almighty: “You will not find a people who believe in God and the Last Day loving those who oppose God and His Messenger,” and His words: “O you who have believed, do not take as allies a people upon whom is the wrath of God,” and His words: “And whoever among you takes them

”
• as allies – then indeed, he is [one] of them

As for His statement concerning those who repent and turn back to Him, God Almighty says, and He is the One who accepts repentance from His servants, and He says, “Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of God. Indeed, God forgives all sins. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’ And turn to your Lord in repentance.” (Quran 39:53) He is the Forgiver of sins and

• the Acceptor of repentance

As for his statement regarding the degrees of the Hereafter, it is from the words of God, the Most High, the Most High: "See how We have preferred some of them over others, and the Hereafter is greater in degrees and greater in distinction." And His words, the Most High, the Most High: "Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Mecca] and fought. Those are greater in rank than those who spent afterwards and fought. But to each [of them] God has promised the best." So He, the Most High, informed us that if they are in

"
• Paradise, then they are therein in degrees. And He said, "They are of varying degrees with God
Narrators have related to us from our Imams, peace be upon them, on the authority of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, that he said: A group of people from the highest ranks will pass by those below them and say, "Our Lord, by what means did Your servants attain this honor?" It will be said to them, "They used to pray at night while you slept, they used to fast during the day while you ate and drank, they used to spend in the way of God while you were stingy, they used to strive in His cause while you were stingy." He also said that the people of Paradise will look upon the people of the highest ranks as the

• people of Earth look upon the stars in the sky

As for his statement regarding punishment in this world through calamities, it is based on the words of God, may His name be glorified: "And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much." It is also based on the words of the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, which were narrated to us by our Imams on his authority, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family. He was asked about the words of God, the Almighty and Majestic: "Whoever does evil will be recompensed for it." He was told, "O Messenger of God, if we are recompensed in the Hereafter for every evil we did in this world, then we are doomed." He replied, "You are indeed recompensed in this world. Are you not afflicted? Are you not in pain? Are you not grieving? Are you not afflicted with hardship, distress, and suffering?" They said, "Yes, O Messenger of God." He said, "It is from

"
• that

And the saying of God Almighty, "Whoever does evil will be recompensed for it," also testifies to the saying of Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, "There must be, by God, a trial," and his analogy of the believer who

• earns sins to gold into which adulteration has entered

The words of God's saints on all such matters are derived from the Book of God, may He be glorified and exalted, and from the words of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever hears their words and finds no way out of them should know that he has only fallen short in understanding and lacks

• divine guidance. We ask God to guide His saints with knowledge, wisdom, and sainthood

Answer to a question regarding keeping pace .8

He said: When Al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, appointed me as judge over Al-Mansuriyya, some people objected to some of the matters I was considering. So I submitted this to him, may God's blessings be upon him, in a letter, and he wrote to me at the bottom: "O Nu'man, you have not established yourself as we have established you, nor have you been as precise as we hoped. Rather, we see that

"

• the teacher of the Book of God is more revered than you

When I read his signature, I was filled with dread, and the world seemed to darken before my eyes. I felt I had been excessive in my severity, overstepping boundaries in my fear and harshness. This coincided with al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, going out on one of his usual outings. I greeted him, walked alongside him, and complained to him about what I had experienced from al-Mansur, peace be upon him, admitting that I had indeed been excessive and overstepped my bounds. He saw the distress this had caused me and said, "O Nu'man, do not let your heart be troubled or your mind be saddened. Do not overstep your bounds or transgress in your affairs. By God, I hear much from him in the same vein as what you have said, and I do nothing but what I have done. We have no other example to follow but his, and we should emulate him in all matters. By God, he has adhered to a path of gentleness that is essential in the management of worldly affairs, indeed, in the administration of worldly matters, for things are corrupted by it. But God has set things right for him because of what He has seen of his intention and knows of his noble character. He only says what he says to admonish and warn, so that negligence does not prevail, and so that all those in service may emulate his gentleness. May God protect him." What He entrusted to him and what He protected in what He entrusted to him and what He gave him

• So I praised and thanked God, and the sorrow I had been experiencing vanished

Then al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, rode on after that, and I greeted him, though I was very afraid of what he had done to me. He drew me near and praised me as he deserved, and said, "O

Nu'man, use severity where it is needed and gentleness where it is needed. By God, I see a sparrow being slaughtered and my heart softens for it, while you see me wading through blood where it is necessary and

”
▪just

I considered the words of Al-Mansur Billah and Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon them, and found them to be one and the same, with no discrepancy. Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, when he commanded harshness and severity, did not command entering into falsehood or transgressing against it. Nor did Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, when he commanded gentleness, command abandoning the truth or compromising it. I found their words, peace be upon them both, to be derived from the Book of God, may He be glorified and exalted, and the words of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him. God Almighty said to His Prophet, "O Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be harsh upon them. Their refuge is Hell, and wretched is the destination." And He said, "There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful." So He described him as gentle in his place and commanded him to be harsh in his place. And He described the believers among his companions, saying, "They are firm against the disbelievers, merciful

”
▪among themselves

Narrators have related to us from our Imams, on the authority of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, that he said: "Whoever meets a disbeliever should meet him with a frowning face." And he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "Jesus, son of Mary, met John, son of Zechariah, peace be upon them both. Jesus smiled at him, and John frowned and said: 'You are laughing, O Spirit of God, as if you

”
▪have become safe from God's punishment

”
▪Jesus said, "And you, O Prophet of God, frown as if you have despaired of God's mercy

”
▪God revealed to them, "I love you both and I will make you happy with your companion
The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said: When a believer meets his brother, he should greet him, shake his hand, and meet him with a cheerful face. But when he meets a disbeliever or a

▪sinner, he should meet him with a frowning face

Ali (peace be upon him) said: The believer is firm without being arrogant, and gentle without being

▪weak

Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon them, said: God has vessels on earth, and the ones He

▪loves most are those that are thin, clear, and solid

He was asked, "What is that vessel, O son of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him

”? peace

He said, "The hearts of the believers are divided among the believers, firm in their faith, and free from

”
▪sin

All of this confirms what I mentioned about Al-Mansur and Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon them, that severity has its place and leniency has its place. Whoever hears or is informed of one of these two approaches from the saints of God should not apply it to both, but rather apply each approach to its appropriate context and interpret it accordingly. Success comes only from God, and He is sufficient for us, and He is the

▪best of guardians

Words on Discipline 9

He said: A group of people complained to Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, about some of the workers. So he summoned the worker and ordered me to bring him along with them and look into their grievance. They accused him of things he had taken from them, and he admitted to some of them, stating that this was something permitted to him by the Commander of the Faithful, Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him. So I wrote down their claim and what he admitted to and claimed was permitted to him, and I submitted that to

▪the Commander of the Faithful, Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him) sent for me and summoned me to him. When I stood before him, he said to me, "The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) only sends to you those who complain about the officials so that you may hear what the people say about them and their complaints, and give them justice in what is due to them in their claims, and be firm with them where firmness is required. The Commander of the Faithful has learned of what you related concerning so-and-so's confession regarding what he admitted to taking what he should not have taken, and that he claimed that it was permissible for him. So he saw

"

▪ that it was incumbent upon you not to accept that from him and to be firm with him in this matter

I said, "My master, when he said what he said and made his claim, I saw that I should not rush him

"

▪ until I knew what our master, peace be upon him, would do regarding his matter and what he claimed

He said, "There was talk about this that we carried on your behalf and for which we apologized. So be wary of such talk in the future. Depart in peace and contentment, for you will receive nothing from the

"

▪ Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, except what you desire

So I thanked him and left. I reflected on the matter and realized that I had erred due to oversight. It became clear to me that the error in my previous statement was due to my mentioning what the narrators related to us from our Imams, on the authority of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), who said: "You will narrate, and those who come after me will narrate, things that I did not say. So whoever hears a hadith from me should compare it to the Book of God. If it agrees with it, then accept it and know that I said it. If it contradicts it, then reject it and know that I did not say it. How could I contradict the Book of God when God has guided me through it?" And the saying of Ja'far ibn Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Whatever comes to you from us that is correct and true, we said it, so narrate it from us. And whatever comes to you that is false and attributed to us, reject it and know that it is a lie and a fabrication against us." Thus, I realized that it was my duty to refute the man's statement and his attribution of it to the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him), something that he would not have commanded, even though I did not believe him. However, it was necessary for those

▪ who had been wronged to see my refutation of him so that they would not be under any suspicion

This is not the first thing we have learned from the saints of God, nor is it the only guidance we have received from them. Every piece of knowledge we have acquired, every insight we have gained, and every piece of guidance we have gleaned, we have taken from them, and from their abundant knowledge we have drawn.

They are our guides to the truth, and they are the Imams of creation, may God's blessings be upon them, the Imams whom He has chosen, favored, and approved of with the most perfect, purest, most virtuous, and most

▪ exalted blessings He has ever bestowed

symbols in keeping up 10

He said: I served the Mahdi, peace be upon him, for nine years, months, and days from the end of his life, and the Imam al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah after him, peace be upon him, during his lifetime, conveying news from the Divine Presence to them every day throughout that period, except for the fewest days. They, peace be upon them, bestowed upon me countless blessings and favors, which I can never fully enumerate, nor can I ever adequately express my gratitude. The least of these blessings was their overlooking my mistakes and forgiving what came to them on my behalf. I know that even if I strive, take precautions, and be wary, I cannot escape such things. Yet, throughout this entire period, I never received from either of them a denial that I was aware of, nor any criticism of anything I was unaware of. I hope that this is connected to God's forgiveness and mercy. Whenever I mention this, I am reminded of the hadith of Anas ibn Malik, which is considered authoritative, in which he said: "I served the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, for nine years, and he never once said to me about anything I did, 'You have erred,' nor 'What you did was bad.'" I reflect on this and on the satisfaction I experienced from al-Mansur bi-Allah and al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon them, and their overlooking and forgiving. Then I remember Anas's statement and say: They, peace be upon them, are as

▪ God Almighty described them. Offspring, one from another; and God is Hearing and Knowing

If Anas meant by this the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) forgiveness, pardon, and mercy, as I mentioned regarding the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (peace be upon him), in my own mind, then he was correct and did well. But if he meant that Ali was spared from error throughout this period, then how wrong he thought! Even if he had nothing else to say except that he had brought Ali (peace be upon him) to the door of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) three times, after hearing him say something to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) when a roasted bird was

brought to him and he was supplicating, saying in his supplication, "O God, bring me the one You love most among Your creation to eat this bird with me," then Ali (peace be upon him) came, as Anas mentioned, and knocked on the door. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) came out to him, and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said to him, "I am asleep." Then he came a second time, and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said to him, "I have a need." Then he came a third time, and the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) wanted to turn him away in the same way, so he pushed his chest and entered, saying, "O son of Malik, God has afflicted you with a white spot that even a turban cannot conceal." Anas said, "It was because of Ali's supplication that I was afflicted with leprosy." When he entered, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said to him, "What delayed you from coming to me, O Ali?" So he told him. Anas said, "The face of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) changed, and he said to me, 'O Forget what prompted you to do that. I said, "O Messenger of God, it is love for my people, and I heard your call, so I wanted the man who comes to eat with you to be a man from the Ansar." He said, and he remained silent about me. There is much more to say

▪ on this matter, and I did not intend to elaborate on it

I served al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, for some of the days of al-Mahdi Billah, peace be upon him, and throughout the days of al-Qa'im. He bestowed upon me countless blessings and favors. My service to him consisted of collecting and copying books for him. When al-Qa'im, peace be upon him, passed away, he appointed me as a judge before his own mission became manifest. I was the first of his judges whom he appointed. He elevated my reputation, raised my status, and bestowed upon me blessings so numerous that if I were to describe them, I would exhaust my efforts. Before him, I had received no greater blessing than his, in addition to the obligation God Almighty placed upon me to recognize his right and love him. During his time, no one was dearer to me than him, nor of greater stature, nor held a more significant place in my heart.

▪ Whenever I had a wish, my greatest wish was to die during his time and in accordance with his will

When the Prophet, peace be upon him, fell ill with the illness from which he passed away, I was overcome with intense panic and great fear. During his lifetime, al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, was my intermediary with him and my reliance in all my affairs with him. I would meet with him while al-Mansur was ill, and I would ask him about him, and he would mention his improved condition, which reassured me. Then one day, he asked permission for me to enter with a group of friends, and I was brought in to see him. I saw him severely ill and weak, and I had barely left his presence when my heart nearly melted. I would then meet with al-Mu'izz, who was bald, and ask him about his condition, and he would say that he was well. But I saw on his face, peace be upon him, the effects of grief that had altered it and transformed it from its former radiance and freshness. I saw this increase in him every day, and my grief intensified until I saw in al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, a grief that surpassed even my grief over what I had expected regarding al-

▪ Mansur, peace be upon him and his family

Then he went out on the day he was arrested, though I had no knowledge of it. I met him as I usually did, and I saw that his outward appearance was better than I had seen him before, so I was pleased by that. Then I asked him a hopeful question about al-Mansur, may God sanctify his soul. He said to me, "O Nu'man, if this sun, moon, stars, sky, earth, and mountains are transient, vanishing, and perishable, then what do you think of what is less than them of this human being? Every soul will taste death, as God, may His glory be exalted, said: 'Everything will perish except His Face.'" Then I knew that al-Mansur had been arrested, and I was so overcome by that I almost fell to the ground. Then I regained my composure and saw the people around me, so I calmed down and said something similar to what al-Mu'izz, may God's blessings be upon him, had said, though I did not understand it. I forgot what I had been going through and left him, with tears choking me and gushing from my eyes, until I reached a secluded place. There I let out my tears and raised my voice and wept for a long time until it subsided. I remained in that state for several days. Whenever my heart was full and my patience ran

▪ out, I would go out to that place and pour out what I had

The matter of al-Mansur, peace be upon him, became widely known, and I saw al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God prolong his life and multiply his blessings, each day finding solace, increasing his patience, and improving his outward appearance. I knew his position with him, his standing in his eyes, and his place in his heart, and I feared for him should anything happen to him. But I saw such consolation, patience, fortitude, and beauty in his demeanor that I became certain it was due to the transfer of the Imamate to him. I saw its influence and its signs in him, and yet I could not contain my anxiety and fear. However, what eased my mind was the patience of al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, his beautiful consolation, and what God, may His glory be exalted, had bestowed upon him of composure and sufficiency, and the subtle care and protection He had

▪ granted him

And I think he saw in my outward state the intensity of my grief and my lack of patience, so one day he wrote to me in his own hand, may God exalt him, "O Nu'man, may He grant you comfort and adorn your patience. Your master has passed on, and your master remains. You will find with us what you found with him, and we were the means of your connection with him, and that connection with us will not cease, God willing. So be of good cheer and be content, and let your opinion of us be good, and let your soul find peace in what you

"
▪ love with us

While I was fearing grief for him, he began to console me, may God's blessings be upon him, for God's support and guidance for him, and for the good fortune He bestowed upon him and the good habits He

▪ instilled in him

Talk that took place in the council .11

He said, "I heard him, peace be upon him, say to a group of his close friends who were present in his gathering, urging them to seek his favor and ask for his goodness: 'When God, the Exalted and Glorified, withholds rain from His servants, rain which sustains their livelihoods and bodies, they gather and leave their homes, seeking rain from Him, calling upon Him, and beseeching Him. If this is something they should do for the sake of the life of these mortal bodies and the few remaining days they hope for, how can they not do the same for the sake of the salvation of their souls from the eternal torment of the Hereafter and their eternal bliss in everlasting Paradise? Should not their desire for this be even stronger and their seeking more fervent? Do you not know that rain from the sky has a time when it is hoped for and when God benefits through it? When its time passes, its benefit is gone, and it is no longer appropriate to ask for it. Likewise, by God, this great blessing, this vast mercy, has a time when it will come and a time when it will descend. If its time has passed and its appointed hour has arrived, then beware of heedlessness, and employ supplication and yearning, and hasten before...' "Hurry and do good deeds before death, for these are but a few days, and the time when salvation and

▪ mercy are hoped for is fleeting

Then he said, "Who among those before us has found what you have found with us? We answer those who ask and initiate with those who do not ask, from among those whom we see as accepting. And none are

"
▪ disappointed with us except those who turn away from God and from us

etiquettes in keeping up with 12

He said, and I heard him say, as I was going along with him, and he mentioned the secret and what should be kept hidden and concealed, so he said: Al-Mansur Billah sometimes confided a secret to me, and when I thought it was best to keep it hidden and conceal it, I might forget it, and then he would ask me about it

▪ afterward, and I wouldn't know it

sermons were delivered in the council 13

He said, and I heard him say, after mentioning a deformed, blind, and crippled man whom he had seen in one of the roads, and this man was well-known, Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, said: Whoever sees this man and others like him with disabilities and afflictions should praise God for the health

▪ He has granted him and reflect upon the greatness of His blessings upon him

This is similar to the saying of his grandfather, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace: "Whoever looks at someone afflicted with a calamity and says, 'Praise be to God who has spared me from what He has afflicted you with and has favored me over many of His creation,' then it

"
▪ is incumbent upon God not to afflict him with that calamity

words on extremism mentioned in a gathering 14

He said, and I heard him say, I heard the one who stands by the command of God, peace be upon him, say concerning a group of preachers who had been informed that they had exaggerated about him and his forefathers, the truthful Imams, may God's prayers be upon them all, and that they claimed to know the unseen. So he cursed them and said, "These are the ones who turn people away from us and lie about us. By God, they did not intend by what they described us to be anything but to discredit us and to distance people from us, because if they described us to them with what is not in us, and people did not see that and did not find it with

"
• us, they would not see that we are Imams

Then Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: The unseen knowledge that the Imams possess is that which is hidden from people, knowledge that God entrusted to them and whose secret He made them to guard. As for the unseen knowledge that God, may His glory be exalted, said: "Say, 'None in the heavens and earth knows the unseen except God,'" then none knows it except Him, as the

• Almighty and Majestic said

This statement by al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah is similar to the statement of his grandfather, Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, when he heard that Abu al-Khattab had said about him what he said of exaggeration. Al-Mufaddal said: I entered upon him one day and found him withdrawn and weeping, so I said to

? him: What is the matter with you, may I be your ransom

Ay Mufaddal said, "This lying infidel claims that I know the unseen. Glory be to God! There is no god but He, my Lord and the Lord of my forefathers, who created us and who bestowed upon us and granted us authority. We are the beacons of guidance and the supreme proof. Go out to these people—meaning the companions of Abu al-Khattab—and tell them, 'We are created beings and servants under God's care, but we have a station with God Almighty that no one else has attained, and it is only fitting for us. We are a light from

"
• the light of God, and our followers are from us, while the rest of creation is in Hellfire

benefits of keeping up 15

He said, and I accompanied him one day, and he said to us, while we were a group in the procession around him, "Say something, speak about what you do not know, and you will find with us the answer to what

"
• you want, for your leaving us without any benefit from us is a loss for you and a deficiency in you

So I said, "May God protect us from turning away from His saint without benefit. By God, I do not know of a time when I saw him and left without some benefit, either from what I heard from him or from what I saw in him." And some of the wise men have said, "Every silent thing speaks." So if this is the case with

? inanimate objects when considered, then what about the saints of God, the Almighty and Majestic

"
• He said, "It is as you said, but only pure minds can perceive it

words mentioned in the context of following 16

He said, and I went along with him one day, and the conversation turned to people saying that there are two luminaries, the sun and the moon, and that they attributed them to the more noble of the two, which is the moon, and they said that this is because it is seen both night and day, and because eyes fall upon it more often than upon the sun, and because the Arabs used to spend their evenings in their gatherings and saw it more often

• than they did during the day, and it was more famous to them than the sun

I said, and some narrators have taken Al-Farazdaq's verse

• We have taken to the horizons of the sky, and to you we have its two moons and the rising stars

He deviated from this doctrine and leaned towards esoteric interpretations, claiming that by the two moons he meant Abraham and Muhammad, peace be upon them and their families, and by the rising stars he meant the

• Caliphs, because he was closer to the Quraysh than those who boasted against him

He said, "This speaker was wrong, even though he was considered strange by people in his statement,

”
▪ and it came to them with a subtle meaning

Then a great deal of esoteric knowledge flowed from al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) regarding this matter, and he opened the discussion to what this speaker had inclined towards. Then he said: If he meant the esoteric, then this is it, and he has erred. And if he meant the exoteric, then it is

▪ contrary to what he said, as evidenced by eyewitness testimony

Then he, peace be upon him, said: "And it is through such things that those who deviated from guidance, those who claimed to possess our knowledge and professed our doctrine, those who stripped away the esoteric meaning and spoke of it while rejecting and denying the exoteric meaning, have strayed. The only thing deserving of such an act is to have one's soul removed from one's body to see whether that soul can exist without a body, or whether a body can exist without a soul. It is from this that some perished and others went astray, because they isolated the esoteric meaning, adhered to it, rejected the exoteric meaning, abandoned its application, and permitted what is forbidden when they saw no exoteric meaning. How can this be established among the wretched? Can there be an esoteric meaning without an exoteric meaning? If there is no exoteric meaning, then why does there be an esoteric meaning? Likewise, if there is no esoteric meaning, then there is no exoteric meaning. Each of them is valid and exists by virtue of the other. If one were not established, the name of the other would not indicate it. One cannot be called esoteric except that which has an exoteric meaning, nor can one be called exoteric except that which has an esoteric meaning. Otherwise, such a statement would be impossible. Whoever is ignorant of such a thing is not among those who understand, for this is neither obscure

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▪ nor difficult

words on going along with it 17

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say, after mentioning allegiance and love, "By God, this will not be lost for whoever believes in it. I saw so-and-so in a dream," and he mentioned a man who was outwardly extreme in his beliefs, but he was connected to the Qa'im, peace be upon him, and had received a blessing from him. He said, "I saw him in a dream after he died, and I asked him, 'What became of you?' He replied, 'By God, I benefited from my love for the Qa'im, peace be upon him.'" One of those present asked him, "Do you think that will save him while he remains as he was?" He replied, "No, by God, but as he said, it will

”
▪ benefit him to some extent

He said, "I saw so-and-so"—meaning one of the saints—"who had been confused, then his condition improved, and his efforts and struggles improved. Al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, singled him out. Then he died after him." Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, said, "I saw him the night after he died. He passed by me, so I called him, and he looked at me as if he were in distress and hardship. He said, 'When I called him, leave me alone. Don't you see what I am going through?' I woke up, and I was saddened by what I had seen. Then, on the second night, I saw him in my dream in the best of conditions, and he came towards me laughing. I said, 'What is your condition, and what has become of you?' He said, 'I am well, praise be to God. God has not created anyone like your father among creation. By God, he kept at me until

”
▪ he forcibly delivered me from severe distress and a great matter

I said that the vision of the Commander of the Faithful is a great proof, and few see anything in their

▪ dreams except confusion and jumbled thoughts

Then he, peace be upon him, smiled and said, "Have you seen the schoolboys when they leave the teacher's presence, and the difference in their behavior? One of them walks with dignity, going about his business and taking care of what he needs in his school, such as his writing tablet, inkwell, and Quran. Another

”
▪ one rushes off to play, idleness, and idleness

I said yes

▪ He said that based on their previous circumstances and their concern for their current situation

I said yes

He said, "Likewise, souls, when they die during sleep, only wander and roam according to the

”
▪ measures of their natures and what they were like in their waking state

Part Three

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

words on trustworthiness mentioned in a council 18

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad said: I heard Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, describe one of the preachers who had died, praising his health, trustworthiness, and integrity. He said: "He used to buy musk for us, among the things we instructed him to send. He would pour it onto his garment to weigh it and place it in a container. Its fragrance would cling to his garment, and he would then take out money from his own funds to pay for that fragrance, adding it to the money he had in his possession, as a

”
▪ precaution against any treachery

Then he prayed for mercy upon him and praised him greatly. Then he said, "Some of those who were among his followers told me that he would sometimes pour water on his hands, and when he had finished, he would take the vessel and pour it on the hands of that man, who would refuse and consider it a great honor. So he would say to him, 'By God, I will do it if you only intended by pouring water on my hands to gain a reward and merit, for I am more in need of that. But if it was for a right that I saw I had over you, then the right belongs

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▪ to the friend of God, so whatever you wish to do, it is up to him to do

Commandments in the Council 19

He said, and I heard him one day in a gathering attended by a group of Kutama men, preaching and advising them. Among the things he said to them, he said: I want three things from you and I hate three things from you: I want truthfulness from you and I hate lying from you; I want chastity from you and I hate treachery

▪ from you; I want humility from you and I hate arrogance from you, and this is the thing I fear most for you

words on justice that took place in the council 20

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, say one day in a gathering: "If I wanted to please people, I could achieve their satisfaction with the easiest things for them, but if

”
▪ they knew that would be plunging into Hellfire

"? So he was asked, "What is it, O Commander of the Faithful

He said, "We permit them to indulge their desires, and I seek refuge in God from that. We permit them to openly drink alcohol, commit adultery, engage in sodomy, and display entertainment and music, as the rulers of the earth do today for themselves and permit it for those they conquer. We used to hear nothing from them but praise and gratitude. But God Almighty has entrusted us with their affairs and obligated us to guide them, rescue those who repent to us, and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong among them. We want to save

”
▪ them from Hellfire, but they are angry with us. We love to admit them to Paradise, but they hate that from us

Some of those present at the council mentioned to him the matter of the Umayyad rulers in Andalusia, that they and their subjects drank wine and bought it openly in their markets, openly indulged in sodomy, and committed adultery publicly. They also mentioned that in their women's prisons, anyone who desired adultery would come to the jailer and choose from among the women whomever he wished. Each woman had a known custom, and whichever he chose, he would remove her custom and violate her in many blatant and obvious

▪ ways

He, peace be upon him, said: This is what we have already mentioned. We know that reforming the outward appearance of the general public and winning their hearts is easier and more direct than reforming and winning them over through religion and compelling them to adhere to the truth. The truth is bitter, except for a few. What people have disliked about us, both in the past and present, is nothing other than this. Had Ali, peace be upon him, not compelled all people to adhere to it, and had he not refused to overlook any aspect of it, or to

grant leniency or compromise regarding it, no one would have turned to Mu'awiya, nor would anyone have inclined towards him. Leniency in falsehood, compromise regarding the truth, injustice, selfishness for worldly gain, abandoning the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil, and neglecting the establishment of God's rights and limits, which He commanded to be established, were the reasons for the Umayyads' initial dominance. They have clung to these principles to this day. Our adherence to the truth is what has diminished our standing among the general public. By God, we will not abandon it until God makes His command manifest. For He, may His praise be exalted, has said: "Rather, We hurl the truth against falsehood, and it obliterates it, and behold, it

• vanishes." And I hope that its time is near and its appointed hour has arrived, God willing

Commandments in the Council 21

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say one day, when Al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, was on his deathbed, he began to advise me on what to do after him, and this man was standing there. He gestured to one of his servants who was standing before him. Then he looked at him, and tears welled in his eyes, and he said, "By God, you will witness from this master of yours, and from the beauty of his deeds and conduct, the good that God will bring about through him, the good He will do for him, the support He will provide for him, the empowerment He will grant him, and the opportunities He will provide for

" • him, the like of which you have never seen or heard before

"? The man said to him, "My lord, what is left of that that you haven't done

Many said, and God is very much so. He is in potential but has not yet manifested himself in action.

• God will reveal it to him and make it happen through him

He who is symbolized by wisdom is mentioned in the council 22

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) one day saying, "By God, I have never found pleasure in anything as much as I find pleasure in knowledge and wisdom. If I could find someone to whom I could confide

" • it, I would have reached the ultimate goal and desire

His statement, in my view, contains a metaphor, and what he reveals through his wisdom is his proof.

God will bring closer what I hope for from that for him and for us, God willing. He is the one to whom he reveals all the wisdom he possesses, according to God's established practice with those who have passed and those who remain of His saints. As for revealing it in a way that is possible and according to the capacity of the

• listener, he, may God bless him and his family, reveals it at all times

He may have wanted to find someone more capable than us of bearing what he carries, and we ask God to make us among those who can bear what he carries, to care for it as He should care for it, and to support His

• allies in it with His power

Words of wisdom mentioned in a council 23

And I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say, regarding what he found within himself of such matters: "By God, I find such pleasure, comfort, and desire in contemplating wisdom that if the people of this world found it, they would abandon it for it. Were it not for what God Almighty has obligated me to do in worldly matters for its people, to maintain its outward appearance and their interests therein, I would have rejected it in order to enjoy wisdom and contemplate it, even though what I have been entrusted with in worldly matters and contemplating them is profound wisdom for those who see and proof for those who ponder

" • and consider

Hadiths on the virtues of Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be 24 upon him

He said, "I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, one day speaking about the love of al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah for him, his special favor towards him, and what he preferred for him and sought for him, which we knew and were told about. He said, 'He said to me one day, "Were it not for your young age, I would have entrusted this matter to you, but you are truly Abu Tamim, as you are known." He said, "He often said that to me and repeated it, 'You are truly Abu Tamim,' and I did not know at that time what he meant by

"
• that

He said, "On the day he passed away, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, I was ill and had stayed behind due to some matter that had befallen me. He inquired about me, but they were reluctant to inform him of my illness. He fainted, then regained consciousness and asked about me again. He said, 'Bring him to me.' Then he fainted again several times. When he regained consciousness, he asked about me, and they brought me to him. He was prevented from speaking. When he saw me, he embraced me, then fainted again. I was removed from him, and when he regained consciousness, he sent me back. Then he passed away, may God's

"
• prayers and peace be upon him and his family

Then Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I witnessed two events that, were mountains to bear what I

• witnessed, they could not endure: this and the death of Al-Mansur, peace be upon him

This is what the Imam did at the time of his death with al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him), just as the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) did with al-Hasan and al-Husayn (peace be upon them) when he passed away. It was narrated that he (peace be upon him) called for them and embraced them, then he fainted. Ali (peace be upon him) moved them away, then he awoke and said, "Where are my two sons?" Ali (peace be upon him) said to him, "I removed them from you, O Messenger of God, because of what I saw in you, and here they are." He (peace be upon him) brought them closer and said, "Let them enjoy me and I enjoy

• them." They remained thus until he (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) passed away

Hadiths on the virtues of the Imams (peace be upon them) 25

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, said to me, among the things he advised me: If a matter occurs to you, then take hold of it. If you find no way to repel it from yourself, then take hold of it and act upon it, even if the opinion and plan appear to you to be contrary to it. And know that if that is the case, then it is something from God Almighty that He has placed in

• your heart

He said, "I cannot count the number of times something like that came my way, and I saw that the correct view and opinion were contrary to it, so I abandoned it and acted upon what came to my heart, and in

"
• that I found success and a good outcome

26

He said, and I heard him, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, one day when a group of the elders and leaders of the Kutama tribe were present in his assembly, and he was advising them. Among what he said to them was, "I have placed your elders in the position of brothers and your younger ones in the position of children. You are living in the best of times, so recognize the value of the blessings bestowed upon you and compare yourselves today to those who came before you yesterday, a people whose good deeds you now share, due to their precedence, their struggle, and their advancement. God Almighty established this matter through their swords and their hands, and they were on the best path until Satan tempted them with corruption, which they misinterpreted, and they harbored a false assumption. Thus, they were not excused for their stumble, nor were their mistakes forgiven, and destruction befell them in the worst of circumstances. This was what time, truth, justice, and possibility necessitated. I hope for purification from what they have defiled, and that God Almighty will not let their past deeds go to waste. You are with us today in the best of times, with the best of leaders, who is kind to you, compassionate towards you, and benevolent towards you. He overlooks your

stumbles, forgives your mistakes, is kind to those among you who do good, and overlooks the sins of those

”

■ among you who do wrong

They thanked him and kissed the ground before him, saying, "O Commander of the Faithful, we are your servants, and may God reward you for all the good you have done for us. Even if we thanked you for the

”

■ rest of our lives, we could not repay even the least of your kindness and favor towards us
He, peace be upon him, said: If you know this, then you have shown gratitude for the blessing and you

■ expect more of it, God willing

27

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say: Al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, said to me when he was on his deathbed: "The will at the time of death is tearful and sad, but I give you a

”

■ comprehensive piece of advice: Do deeds that will please you and be followed

Hadiths on establishing the truth about the Mahdi, peace be upon him 28

He said, and I mentioned to him, peace be upon him, one day something that reached us concerning the Mahdi, may God's blessings be upon him, that Rafi' had presented him with advice in which he claimed that if the common people were required to adhere to their doctrines and the rulings applied to them regarding their refusal to allow inheritance to relatives, and if they returned much of it, according to many of them, to the public treasury, then this would be a saving of money in a way that they would neither deny nor refuse. The Mahdi, may God's blessings be upon him, rejected this statement and became furious with him, and ordered that he be summoned, saying, "I do not think that he intended by this statement anything but to criticize us and to make us rule contrary to what God Almighty has revealed. God, may His name be glorified, has only appointed us to

”

■ establish His religion for His servants, not to increase our worldly possessions through unlawful means
Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) said, "The Mahdi spoke the truth, may God illuminate his face and raise his rank. By God, we do not rule over God's servants except according to what God has revealed, whether they like it or not, whether they are pleased or displeased. We do not allow them to disobey God's rulings, for God has commanded us to do so. They have only resented us for this. If we had left them to their own devices and choices, as the usurpers did—those whose only aim was to gain worldly power and who paid no attention to establishing the religion, leaving the nation divided over it—they would have loved us and submitted to us as they submitted to those others. But God Almighty has forbidden this for us, by what He has obligated us to do: to establish His religion, to guide His servants according to His path, and to

”

■ prevent them from ruling and acting contrary to it

signatures on concealing the sins of the believer 29

He said, and he, may God's blessings be upon him, asked me about a matter brought to his attention concerning some rulers, something he found objectionable. So I wrote to him about it, saying that it was being said about him, spreading widely, and people were talking about it without any basis in fact. God knows best. He then wrote to me, "We have concealed this." And your master, Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, said,

”

■ "No one lives among people except those who are ignorant of them

Hadiths in a gathering on the benefits of intention 30

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say one day in a gathering, and some of those who were in the service of Al-Mansur, may God's prayers be upon him, and Al-Mahdi and Al-Qa'im before him, peace be

upon them, were mentioned, and he had authority, and it was said about him in the presence of Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, so he turned away from him with some turning away, and he fell into great distress because of that and was very afraid for him. Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him, said, "He met me one day and complained to me about what had happened to him, so I said to him, 'If you tell me the truth about

""

■ yourself, I will find for you relief and a way out

"?

He said, "My lord, how could I not believe you

I asked, "Did these symptoms change anything in your intention, or alter any aspect of what you harbored and concealed for our Master, peace be upon him, in terms of love, devotion, and other obligations

"?

towards him, and what you believed in when he was pleased with you and kind to you

"

■ He said, "No, by God, I have no such situation

I said God

God said

"

■ I said, "Be at ease and rest assured, for by God, nothing you dislike has befallen you because of him As I told him, he saw no harm until he died during the lifetime of Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, and he continued in his service in the same manner as before. Then his son preserved him and appointed him in his

■ place, and that was only because, as mentioned, he was sincere

Then al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned some of his son's lapses, and that he had spoken ill of some of the saints, but he overlooked it, may God's blessings be upon him, out of respect for his father. Most of what he did in this regard was to express surprise and say, "So-and-so is such-and-such," because of something he had said to him in the form of insults. We know their situation as we know it, and only those who are themselves flawed accuse the innocent of fault. So I recited to him the well-known verse on this

■ matter

And the most audacious person I have seen who speaks ill of men behind their backs is the one with the

■ flaws themselves

"

■ He, peace be upon him, said: "The one who said it spoke the truth

Hadiths on going along with the poor judgment of the ignorant 31

I heard him say, in a conversation with someone else, that we have a tradition from our grandfather Ali, peace be upon him, that he said: "God never brings good near to a people without them becoming indifferent to it." He also said: "And whoever people know and see, they belittle his knowledge. What they most admire is what comes to them from someone they do not know." He said: "Therefore, it is said that one of the wise men, at the beginning of his journey, left his country in search of wisdom. He traveled through the lands and searched diligently until he found no one with more knowledge than he possessed. So he returned to his country. The people of that country knew of his search and were aware of the wisdom and knowledge he had acquired. They came to him seeking benefit and asking him for wisdom, but he closed his door to them and refused to give them anything. When he was asked about this, he said: 'I have never met a wise man or a scholar in any country from whom I sought knowledge or wisdom without finding the people of that country belittling him and demeaning him, and preferring me over him, even though I know his superiority over me. So I will not spread knowledge or wisdom in my country, exposing it to the scorn of the ignorant and the disdain of those who lack

""

■ discernment

He went out to a place unknown, and revealed this, so people learned from him and benefited from him

■ during his life and after his death

And in this hadith, it is narrated that the least knowledgeable people in a scholar are his family, then his neighbors, then those closest to him, and so on. The scholar in a tribe is like a spring of water in a village; its inhabitants do not store any of that water because they believe they can take from it whenever they wish. But while they are in this state, the spring dries up, and then they regret it. Likewise, when a scholar dies, those who

■ knew him regret not having learned from him

Then he said: Scholars, in their pursuit of knowledge and their increase in it, are like the rich who seek

■ to increase their little wealth, even if they already possess much of it

32

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say in a conversation that took place in the presence of Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, about the mention of death and the fear of God's saints and prophets of it, despite their knowledge of the honor they have with God and that they will move to a better state than they were

■ in

"? So I said, "Or could that be from them

He told me, "Yes, they are more afraid of death than all other people, because they consider it a great

" ■ matter and are terrified of it

"? I said, "How so

He said, "Because of the greatness of God's majesty and His place in their hearts, they fear Him and are in awe of meeting Him." This is similar to what is narrated about Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, that when he began performing ablution for prayer, his complexion would change and his limbs would tremble.

" ■ When asked about this, he would say, "I want to stand before a mighty King

Hadiths in a gathering condemning oppression 33

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, one day mentioning some of those who were connected to the Qa'im, peace be upon him, and he cursed them, saying, "A man informed the Qa'im, peace be upon him, about a man and testified against him with something that warranted execution, even though he thought well of him. So he ordered the man to be killed, and he was killed. Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, knew of his innocence of what that man had attributed to him, so he hastened to the Qa'im, peace be upon him, and told him about it. So he sent a messenger quickly to save him, but he found that the messenger had already been killed.

So he was saddened by that and ordered me to go out to that man who had testified against him with his message and said, 'Tell him that a trustworthy person has informed me that the man about whom you said what

" ■ ■ you said is innocent of it

He said, "So I told him that, and he told me, 'Tell him that this person should not be trusted by you after

" ■ ■ this, for he has spoken untruthfully

So I informed the Imam, peace be upon him, of his words, and his color changed because of that, and he considered it a great matter and was displeased with it, and he said, "This is greater than what he brought

" ■ first. Go out to him and tell him how you cut him off with the words you said

Then he brought a story that contradicted his testimony and proved the words of Al-Mansur, peace be upon him. I conveyed it to him, and Al-Qa'im, peace be upon him, became very angry and said harsh words

■ about him

The murdered man had a reason for his killing other than the testimony given by that man. The Imam (peace be upon him) wanted to reveal this reason to him and was greatly astonished by the man's certainty in his pronouncements without knowledge. He was also astonished by the man's audacity towards the friend of God, his rejection of him when he told the man who had informed him of his trustworthiness, "You cannot trust him after this," and his boldness in making such pronouncements about someone he did not know. This man subsequently died a most wretched death after his hypocrisy was exposed and his condition deteriorated. His son later revealed his true nature and was killed in the most terrible way. God hastened His vengeance, for God Almighty would not let anyone who dared to transgress against His friends in such a manner go unpunished in

■ this world. And the punishment of the Hereafter is far more severe and lasting, as God Almighty has said

signatures in the audacity of the ignorant 34

And it happened to me, peace be upon him, beginning with him, O Nu'man, how forbearing God Almighty is towards His creation, and how great is His respite, may His name be glorified. So-and-so told me yesterday such-and-such, and asked me such-and-such. This man, whom he named, is famous for criticizing something ugly, and the one who asked him something wanted to use it as a means to that end, but ignorance and excessive lust drove him to dare to speak to the friend of God, peace be upon him, in this way, and God was forbearing towards him. I do not see that this happened to me except as a way of relieving him, since his heart was constricted by it and he could not do anything in the matter except overlook it. So I was greatly amazed at his forbearance, peace be upon him, towards one who confronted him in this way, one who had no worth or importance. Then, not much time passed until that man went blind, and I knew that God Almighty would not leave him with such audacity until He afflicted him with something similar. So I looked at him, and al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, came out, and he was brought to him, being led. He, peace be upon him, said to me, "If one whose heart God has blinded were blind in this way, it would be a hastening of punishment, and the punishment

"
▪ of the Hereafter is more shameful and severe

Hadiths on patience in times of calamity 35

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say, in keeping with what happened when Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, was dying and God's command drew near to him, he fainted. I saw a sight in him that I could not help but weep. He awoke while I was weeping and said, "Ah, what is wrong

"? with you? Did I not forbid you from weeping

"? I said, "How can one be patient when one sees you in this state, my master
He said to me, "You have not repaid me as I deserve. I am pleased with what you will receive after me in this world, and you are saddened and grieved by what I will receive in the bliss of the Hereafter. Do not return to this, and do not greet what God has granted you of your kingdom with sadness and weeping. Rather,
"▪ rejoice in what God has given you in this world and what He has granted me in the Hereafter
So he (peace be upon him) did as he had instructed, neither striking his cheek nor tearing his garment. And thus did al-Mansur (peace be upon him) instruct, just as it has been reported that his grandfather, Ja'far ibn Muhammad (peace be upon him), instructed it in the same way: that no one should wail over him, nor weep for him, nor strike his cheek, nor tear his garment, nor wear black for him. This was out of humility to God on their part, even though permission had been granted for wailing and weeping over the Imams and those honored by

▪ them due to the enormity of their loss and the magnitude of their tragedy

It was narrated that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, heard the women of the Ansar weeping for the martyrs of Uhud. He said, "But Hamza is among them, and no one weeps for him." This reached the women of the Ansar, so they all came to Hamza's house and began to lament and weep for him. He asked, "What is this?" They were told what they had heard about him and that this was why they had done what they did. He praised them, and to this day it has become a custom in Medina that

▪ no woman laments her dead until she has lamented Hamza, peace be upon him, first
Mourning was observed for Al-Hussein, peace be upon him, for a year each day, and for three years on the day he was martyred. This was done by the women of Banu Abd al-Muttalib in the presence of Ali ibn Al-Hussein, peace be upon him. The remaining Companions and Followers would come to the women's mourning

▪ gathering, listen to them, and weep

He mourned and wept for the Mahdi, peace be upon him, for a period of time during the days of the

▪ Qa'im, peace be upon him, while many of the Imams did not weep or mourn for him

The prohibition against wailing came from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, and from the Imams from his progeny, peace be upon them. The general statement indicates that the prohibition applied to all people, but it was permitted for them, their leaders, and those who held similar positions, including

Hamza, may God be pleased with him. It is not an obligatory duty, as some of them refrained from it, and some
. even bequeathed it to others

symbols of wisdom and what is required of it 36

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, one day use a subtle symbol of wisdom in a gathering where a group of his close friends were present. I understood what he was alluding to, but I saw no sign of understanding from those present. I wished they had understood, so I mentioned this to him privately in another gathering. He said, "If we were to reveal everything to you and explain it to all of you, the distinction between you would cease, and both the deserving and the undeserving would receive the favor. But we want the favor to

" . reach those who deserve it, and for the words to pass by the ears of those who do not deserve it
Then he mentioned some preachers, saying, "They destroyed nations with this kind of thing, because they burdened them beyond their capacity and gave them more than they deserved, and they did not exercise such caution. If they had treated people according to their ranks, classes, and merits, they would have been safe,"
" . and people would have been safe from their evil deeds

Hadiths on the virtues of Al-Mansur, may God's prayers be upon him 37

He said, "One day, while I was in his presence, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, I was turning over some books. He glanced at one of them and stared intently at it. Then he wept, having noticed something in the book's margins. He then said, 'I looked at this book, which is in the handwriting of al-Mansur, peace be upon him, and I saw that it was short and lacked the quality of his well-known script. I did not know why this was until I saw this verse in its margins, a verse which he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him,

" . quoted. It is the saying of Labid
We have perished, but the rising stars will not perish; the mountains and factories will remain after
1 . us

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: This is the eulogy with which he announced his own death, peace be upon him. His handwriting was altered, and I think that was during his illness. Then he said: And to
. this, by God, is the final destination

Hadiths on matters that the ignorant deny 38

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say, "By God, the only reason people resent us is that we affirmed God Almighty's oneness as He truly deserves and denied to Him, glory be to Him, what is not befitting
" . of Him

Hadiths on Misguidance and Lying about God's Saints 39

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, mention some preachers and curse them, saying, "They permit forbidden things." He also said to some of those who had heard him say that abandoning sins is a sign of having a bad opinion of God Almighty, that He does not forgive sins. Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, "So, will these wicked people continue to slander us and turn people away from us while they say such vile

.The beginning of Labid's elegy for his brother Arbad: The Diwan, p. 88, published in 1966¹

things and attribute themselves to us? We disavow ourselves before God Almighty from these people and draw
" closer to Him by cursing them and disassociating ourselves from them

sayings containing rebuke and encouragement to do good 40

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say to some people who asked him to grant them God's mercy through him and persisted in that request, so he, peace be upon him, said to them something in which he made clear their shortcomings in what they had asked for, so they said, "Our Master will be gracious to us with

" forgiveness and will embrace us with mercy

He said, "If a thief stole some of your money and you discovered it, but you overlooked it and forgave him, would it be right for you to bring him to me and nominate him for a trust so that I might entrust him with

"? it

They said no

He said, "Likewise, if I know something in someone that I dislike, it is not fitting for me to pardon him.

We must bring him before God Almighty until we see that he deserves it. So improve your conditions, purify yourselves through your deeds, cleanse yourselves from impurity, and free yourselves from confusion, so that

" you may deserve what you ask for, God willing

Hadiths on Intercession 41

He said, "I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, one day advising a group of his close friends in one of his gatherings, admonishing them for falling short in what would earn them the honor of the faith. Then, peace be upon him, he said to them after that, 'We only wish for you to attain the stations of honor through your pure deeds and pleasing actions. As for your salvation from destruction, if you believe in our authority, then we are there for you in that, God willing.' I heard al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, say, 'If I do not put my hand here'—and he gestured to his armpit—to save those who have wronged themselves

"? from among those who have pledged allegiance to me, then by what right do I deserve the favor

This is similar to what Ja'far al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, said to some of his followers: "Help us in what we want for you of good through righteous deeds. By God, you are all in Paradise, but how disgraceful it is for a man among you to be there with people who entered it through their righteous deeds, while he is among them with his veil lifted and his faults exposed because of his past sins, known for them, even if he is

" forgiven

Hadiths on the scarcity of trustworthy narrators 42

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say one day, "If I found ten people who were like what I

" love, I would achieve with them what I want

So I said, "Did the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, not know that this was not completed for the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, nor for his successor Ali, peace and

"? blessings be upon him, nor for his two grandfathers

He said, "That is so, but I hoped to attain what they did not attain and find what they did not find, because God Almighty, by His grace, has enabled me and gathered for me from this world and the hereafter

" what He did not gather for those of my predecessors

" I said, "May God grant our master his hope and request, God willing

" He said, "What God wills

symbols in its likeness 43

He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: An orphan is one who has no guardian. But if he

- has a guardian, then he takes the place of the father, and he is not called an orphan in that case

This contains a symbol understood by those granted understanding. As for the apparent meaning of God Almighty's words, "And test the orphans until they reach marriageable age," it applies to those who have a

- guardian and to those who have no guardian, such as those whose father died and left them as children

symbols also in the council 44

And I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: I heard Al-Mansur, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: I was present at the table of Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, and with me were some of his children and the children of his children, the children of his children, the Qaim, my father, and a group of boys, and a maidservant was standing with water at the table, and she said to one of them: Do you

? want water

He said no

Al-Mahdi became extremely angry at this and said, "Were it not for the sanctity of food, I would have severely punished you all." He said to the slave girl, "What possessed you to offer him water when he did not ask for it?" And to the boy, he said, "What harm is there in drinking something, even if you have no need? Water is more honorable and dignified than being offered to someone who did not ask for it, or being offered to

- someone who would refuse it

So Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, said, but I did not know the meaning of that at the time

- because of my youth and young age

This also contains a symbol of God's saints, and its apparent meaning is self-evident and strongly

- significant

Words on the Virtue of the Believer 45

He said, and I heard Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, mention the virtue of the mosque and what is due of veneration for it. This was after a conversation about a man who told him that in the past he had entered the mosque riding his mount. He condemned his action and considered what he had done to be grave, and he mentioned what is due of veneration for the mosque and its virtue. Then he said,

- "The believer is better than him and in a more honorable state

This is similar to what his grandfather, Muhammad, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, said when he looked at the Kaaba, the Sacred House, and said, "By God, you are great in the sight of God, and I know who is greater than you in His sight." It was said, "And who is that, O Messenger of God?" He said, "The believer, because God Almighty has forbidden his wealth and his honor, and

- that evil should be thought of him

brief commandments 46

He said, and some of the saints asked him, may God bless him and his family, "O our master, teach us

- an act by which we may attain success with God and with you

He, peace be upon him, said: By God, there is nothing hidden in that. Let each of you see what he loves and deems good for himself and his children, and let him do it for us. By doing so, he will be successful with

▪ God Almighty and with us

Hadiths on the virtues of the Imams, peace be upon them, that took place 47 in a gathering

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, say: "Whoever

"

▪ among you is fortunate, he is fortunate because of us

▪ This is a brief statement that requires much more explanation

This indicates that happiness from God Almighty to His servants is bestowed through His chosen ones,

▪ and it is through them that those who are happy are blessed

From this, it follows that happiness is only for those who know them and follow their leadership;

▪ without them, no one would be truly happy

One of them is that whoever is happy is only happy because of what they have attained, and this

▪ applies in many ways

Hadiths in a gathering containing etiquette and advice 48

He said, "One day I attended his gathering, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and there was a group of prominent saints present. He mentioned to one of them a slanderous accusation made against him to al-Mansur, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, by one of his men who frequented his place and attended his gatherings. This accusation nearly caused him harm. He recounted the words of the one who slandered him and what was attributed to him. The man swore by God and by the oath he had sworn by that it was not as the slanderer had said, and he described the story and the words as they were, and how the slanderer had distorted the truth. One of the saints present said, 'He deserves this and more. This is the reward for one who abandons the

"

▪ palace of his master and frequents the gatherings of people, seeking them out and visiting their doors

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: Yes, this is his punishment, and worse. By God, we never made you dependent on anyone but us, nor did we place any power over you other than our own, nor did we force you to take a guardian other than us. We intended nothing by this but to honor and dignify you, and to prevent such a thing from befalling you. Yet you refused except to debase and betray yourselves. Whoever turns away from what we have approved for him and chooses the opposite for himself, let him not blame anyone else for any misfortune that befalls him because of that. God has spared you from what those before you expected from others, whether near or far. By God, no one harms anyone in our sight except himself, no one is brought low except by his sins, and no one is raised high except by his deeds. Seek our pleasure and do not worry about who is displeased, for by God, nothing pleases us except what pleases God with you. You will not see anyone who can benefit or harm you except us. Let no one among you hope for anything other than our favor through his

▪ good intentions and deeds, and let him fear nothing except what he has brought upon himself

This saying is similar to the saying of his grandfather Ali, peace be upon him: "Four things, even if one were to travel far and wide to attain them, it would be little: that no one should fear anything but his sins, that no one should hope for anything but his Lord, that the ignorant should not be ashamed to learn, and that the learned

"

▪ person, when asked about something he does not know, should not say, 'I do not know

Part Four

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

A conversation that took place in a gathering regarding a vision seen by .49
.Al-Mansur, may God's prayers be upon him

Judge Nu'man, may God be pleased with him, said: I was sitting before Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, when he mentioned the matter of the sedition and the great tribulation that occurred during it, and what befell the people in that time, and how God, the Exalted and Glorified, relieved them of it through Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, before that, through a vision he had seen. I left nothing out. He said: I saw someone coming to me with a large sheet of paper in his hand. He spread it out before me and said to me, "Look at this." So I looked, and there were many circles on it. I said, "I have seen these circles, so what are they?" He said, "This is your kingdom." So I began to look at it, and as I was looking, I saw a blackness covering some of it. That blackness began to spread over it, covering it one thing after another until it covered all of it except for one, which was closest to me. I was terrified by that and said, "If this is her kingdom and it is covered by this blackness, then that is not a good thing." That man said to me, "Place your finger on the parts of it covered by this blackness, one by one." So I did, and every time I placed my finger on one part, the blackness disappeared, and it returned to its previous state, until I had covered all of it, and the blackness had disappeared from all of it. Then I awoke. Thus it was that Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, never set foot on any land in pursuit of the accursed Mukhallad and his companions without driving them out, and they never returned to it after that. Then God enabled him to overcome the wicked one and cleansed the land of his filth.

Hadiths in a gathering mentioning Dhu al-Fiqar, the sword of the 50
.Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace

He said, "One day I sat before him with a group of his close associates, and he mentioned Dhu al-Fiqar, the sword of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). Then he ordered it to be brought out to us. I looked at it, and it was all iron, a single, upright piece. Its body was about three spans long, as I estimated, and its width was less than three fingers wide. Its width near the hilt was slightly less than the width of its point. Its tip was made of iron, like the iron of a spear, suitable for striking and stabbing. It had two blades, and in its middle was

" . a shaft and a hidden shaft

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: The Abbasids had seized him from us, but God returned him to us. When Ja'far, who called himself al-Muqtadir, was killed and his palace was looted, some of our followers were among those who witnessed this. They saw a woman from Ja'far's family who had been unveiled and was saying, "Is there no free man who will cover me until I reach such and such a place?" That man took pity on her, covered her, and said to her, "Walk before me, and I will take you." She said, "By God, I have nothing to give you in return, but enter this room, for there is a chest in it," and she hid it in its place. Inside was Dhu'l-Fiqar, the sword of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace. So he took it and went

. with her to where she had asked him, and God returned him to us through His praise and favor

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I heard al-Mansur, peace be upon him and sanctify his soul, say—and he had it on his shoulder when he went out to fight the accursed Mukhallad, and it never left him—"Whenever I faced a difficult situation in any battle, I would draw upon it, and the enemy would flee before me." Then a group of those who were present at the gathering, who had been with al-Mansur, peace be upon him, said: "By God, I saw him on the day of al-Khusus, and it was a very difficult day. The enemy had seized the mountain passes that surrounded us and encircled us from every side, and he, may God bless him and his family, was among us, leading us, with this sword in his hand, which he had drawn. Whenever he raised his hand with it and charged at one side of the enemy, they would flee before him as if a thunderbolt had struck

" . them from the sky, and he would not reach them until he had cleared the way

Hadiths in a gathering about cursing the Umayyads 51

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: This messenger who came from the Banu Umayyah asked me about the peace mentioned in some of what was said about the accursed Abd al-Rahman, that he said, meaning us, how could he be allowed to curse us when we are Muslims? Our fathers

were cursed by the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, as he said, so

? what is our sin and what necessitated cursing us

Then al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Have you ever heard anyone more ignorant than this wretched man? It is as if he has never heard the words of God Almighty: 'The curse of God be upon the wrongdoers,' and he is one of them. Nor His words: 'And whoever among you allies with them is one of them,' and he does not deny this, for he is one of the two who were banished by the Messenger of God, and he is one of his own eyes. Nor the words of God Almighty: 'And the accursed tree' in the Qur'an. Nor the words of his imams in religion, from whom he narrates and whose words he follows, that the tree here is the Banu Umayya. A tree is not called a tree except with its parts and branches, and the root alone is not called a tree. And the words of Ali ibn Abi Talib reinforce this statement, and he only said it on the authority of the Messenger of God, may God's peace and blessings be upon him and his family, who said: 'There is no people who do not have among them a noble or saved one, except the Banu Umayya, for there will be no noble or saved one among

||
• them

52

He said, and one day, peace be upon him, he sat down, and a group of us saints sat before him. He spoke to us and imparted to us benefits of knowledge and wisdom, for which we thanked him and kissed the

• ground before him when we heard it from him

He said, "I would like you to review with me what you hear and mention, and to ask about anything you doubt or find unclear, so that I may clarify it for you. Do not accept it without question or receive it unquestioningly, while you perceive that someone might introduce an objection or that something about it might stir in your hearts. If you review it, we will clarify it and provide you with further explanation as needed. Whoever experiences such a situation should mention what it presents to them and not remain stagnant in doubt. We only grant our followers an increase in God's favor from us, and we desire to remove doubts from them and clear away suspicions from their hearts. Whoever has this firmly established in their heart and mind should praise God for it. Then, if they wish to inquire about the proof against those who disagree with them, so that they may subdue their opponent, silence their adversary, and repel their enemy, let them do so. They will find with us what they seek." God Almighty said, "Rather, We hurl the truth against falsehood, and it obliterates it, and behold, it vanishes. And woe to you for what you describe!" By God, there is nothing but woe for those who

• oppose us in their opposition to us

Then he said: When al-Mansur, peace be upon him, would impart to me some knowledge and wisdom,

he would say to me, "Say what you think is relevant to this matter." Sometimes I would say, "Nothing is relevant to me." He would then say, "Ask about what is unclear to you." I would have no difficulty with it, so I would say, "Nothing is unclear to me." He would then say, "Say what you think our enemies and opponents would say, for knowledge and wisdom do not take root in hearts except through argumentation and debate." Sometimes I would speak about this, and from it would spring forth oceans of knowledge and wisdom that I had not hoped for, and I would gain benefits I had not expected, and things would become clear to me that I had not

• thought possible. So do this, and you will acquire wisdom and your benefits will increase

53

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, enumerating the blessings of God

Almighty upon him and expressing his inadequacy in thanking Him for them. Among the things he said was, "By God, if a person were to worship God for the entire world, constantly bowing and prostrating without ceasing, remembering Him and fasting without breaking his fast, in order to fulfill the obligation of thanking

Him for a single sip of water that God Almighty gave him, he would not be able to repay that, nor even a fraction of what He has bestowed upon him. How can he repay that by offering his life, which is thanked for, when He created it and perfected it? Or by offering a blessing that He bestowed and granted? Or by obedience and worship to which He guided, favored, supported, strengthened, and facilitated? How can one thank the One who created and perfected, who gave sight and guided, who bestowed blessings and granted, who was disobeyed and yet forgave? He has bestowed countless favors, the end of which cannot be reached, so how can

one fully comprehend them? O God, I acknowledge my inability before You and confess my shortcomings in
”
•attaining even a fraction of Your gratitude

Hadith 54

He said, and he, may God’s blessings and peace be upon him, commanded me to compile the history of the state in one book, and the virtues of the Banu Hashim and the vices of the Banu Abd Shams in another. So I did, and I compiled from each of these two fields a large, comprehensive book, which is divided into many parts, according to what he, peace be upon him, arranged for me and informed me of. I presented it to him, and he approved of it, accepted it, and found its meaning excellent. He, peace be upon him, said, “As for the history of the state and those who rose up in it and strove to establish it from among the preachers and believers, I would like their history to be immortalized in this way for those who remain, and their mention to be preserved through the accounts of those who come after, and for the prayers of those who hear them to be included in it, and for their descendants to know of this from what God Almighty has prepared for them of honor in the abode of eternity. This is something that is incumbent upon us to preserve and uphold for them if they do not come to
”
•us, so that we may convey it to them

As for the virtues and merits of our forefathers and the baseness and vices of our enemies, these are things that children, descendants, and guardians should know, and by which opponents and enemies should be rebuked, spread among mankind, and endure through the ages. Even though the virtues of the virtuous and the baseness of the base are well-known and not hidden, they have cast many doubts and resorted to various forms of deception. In doing so, they are as God Almighty said: "They want to extinguish the light of God with their
”
•mouths, but God will perfect His light, even if the disbelievers dislike it

•A conversation took place in a council about wanting good for people .55

He said, and I heard him, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, say, “By God, we love for all people what they do not love for themselves. By God, we desire nothing for them but their happiness and the pleasure of their Lord with them, for desire inclines them to the opposite. We call them to God even if they turn away from the path, and we correct them even if they prefer to deviate. If they obeyed us, they would eat from above them and from beneath their feet, and they would attain the pleasure of their Lord. By God, no one turns away from us except out of disdain for us to guide him, as if they did not hear the words of God Almighty to Muhammad, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him and his family, ‘You are only a warner, and for every people there is a guide.’ So, by God, we are their guides in every era. We are a guide for whoever is in his era. By God, we are the beacons of truth, and we are the guides of creation. So whoever wills, let him believe, and whoever wills, let him disbelieve. The people only wanted to be their own leaders and not have an intermediary between them and their Lord. God is the most truthful of speakers. So what is wrong with them that they turn away from the reminder as if they were startled donkeys fleeing from a lion? Rather, every one of them wants to
”
•be given scrolls spread open

Hadiths 56

He said, and I heard him, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, praising some of his servants and approving of their service, trustworthiness, advice, and conduct, as they deserved. Then he said, “By God, no son surpasses him in my eyes until he reaches the level of preference, and there is no one better in our eyes than
”
•this one, and no one more than him

Hadith 57

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, mention the days of the strife and what its people resented. He said, "The greatest resentment they had against us, by God, was that we did what we preferred with our authority and hoped would be accepted from us and adhered to our command, but he transgressed and did not accept, just as Khalid ibn al-Walid did not accept from the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family. So he disavowed himself before God from him, and no blame befell him for what

"
• he did

I heard al-Qa'im, may God bless him and grant him peace, say to his men from Kutama during the time of the strife: "By God, I know of no sin of mine that would warrant these people rising up against me, nor the war they have waged against me. By God, they have no grievance against me except what they have grievous against some of you who have transgressed my commands and committed what I have forbidden, matters over which I have more authority than they do. They wanted me to convert both the good and the bad among you to Islam and to grant them authority over you. If they had found that in me—and God forbid that they should—they would have been the most obedient of people to me. Most of what they have grieved against you is in God's favor with you, even if there is some evil in it. God will not take away your good because of your evil. Rather, you are closer to His forgiveness and His granting you victory over your enemy. This strife is nothing but a trial

"
• and a test for you

Hadiths 58

He said, and I heard him, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, say: "We do our utmost to be kind to our allies and forgive our enemies unless they wage war against us. We acquire the noble and the lowly, and we value the strong and the weak. For perhaps the enemy will become our ally, the weak will become strong in our support, the lowly will become noble, and the traitor will become chaste. If we were to hasten their punishment, we would not be able to reach them when needed. Each person has a place in every situation where they are most needed. A ship at sea may need the smallest thing, but it will not have it, and it will be destroyed because of its lack of equipment. A swift horse may lack even the smallest riding gear, and it will be unriden. A wall cannot be built except with large and small stones. Every person, whether small or large, has a place of honor or lowliness in our eyes. If they are sincere in their intentions, we will support them and elevate them to a higher position if we deem them worthy. We will raise them to the highest ranks of their peers, and we will bestow upon them favors they never imagined. People only lower themselves in our eyes. If they were to

"
• improve themselves, we would raise them all

•A discussion held in a council condemning fraud and falsehood .59

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: "I sometimes see someone trying to deceive me with trickery in what he brings to my attention and says to me, and I cannot answer him, so

I remain silent, astonished by his poor judgment. He thinks that what he has brought and the reason for his deception are permissible for him to do to me. I am amazed at his own misfortune and his poor choice of what he deems acceptable and what he intends. If people among us preferred truthfulness and sought the truth, they would achieve what they desire and would not debase themselves before us with tricks and deceptions, thus

"
• placing themselves in a position of loss

Hadiths 60

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: "I sometimes say something that some who hear it from me think I meant to be joking or something other than what I intended by that statement. Rather, I address many of those I address to inquire of them, to elicit what they have, and to test their circumstances. And there is nothing in our saying, praise be to God, that is jesting, idle talk, falsehood, or frivolity, but rather it is all wisdom and truth for whoever ponders it and whom God guides to understand and

"
• accept it

A discussion that took place in a council regarding the Imams' (peace be .61 upon them) work on the righteousness of the Imams

He said, and I heard him, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, say to the people: "They are preoccupied with their worldly affairs and the pleasures they derive from them, while our preoccupation is with guiding their needs, improving their conditions, attending to their needs, protecting their homes, defending their families, preserving their lives, safeguarding their women and property, and restraining those who would transgress against them. We dedicate our days and nights to this, while they remain oblivious, preoccupied with their own affairs. Whenever we require something of them, they raise their heads as sheep raise their heads when the shepherd calls them from their pasture. Some speak of things that do not concern them, and some deny what they do not understand. We seek God's help in fulfilling the responsibilities He has entrusted to us regarding their affairs and the obligations He has imposed upon us in attending to their needs. We beseech Him to reform them and guide them to what is in their best interest and their salvation in this world and the

"
hereafter

.A discussion took place in a council regarding the benefit of preaching .62

He said: One day I sat before Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him. It was a Friday, and he was preparing to go out and lead the people in prayer. The time was approaching, and he was told that the mosque and its surroundings were overflowing with people, and they were celebrating in a great way. He said: How wonderful that would have been if it had been with sincere intention, pure hearts, acceptance of the sermons, and acting upon what they were commanded. But most of them only come to see us and hear what we say, then they pay no attention to it and do not benefit from it. By God, were it not for the establishment of the obligatory duty and the revival of the forgotten Sunnahs, I would not have gone out to them

nor preached to them

I said, and in their view of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and their listening, there is merit and reward for them, and the Commander of the Faithful is the reason for it, so the reward of that is combined for him with the reward of establishing God's obligation and reviving the Sunnah of his grandfather,

the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him

He, peace be upon him, said that would be true if they believed that seeing and hearing belonged to God, but they do not believe that. Rather, they look for amusement and listen absentmindedly, and they return

empty-handed as they came

A conversation that took place in a gathering concerning the lives of the .63 Imams, peace be upon them

And I heard him, peace be upon him, say in this gathering, after mentioning the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, and how he dealt with people, striving for the truth, abandoning flattery in it, and rejecting secrecy between himself and them or appeasing any of them: "That was one of the things that strengthened the causes of the accursed Mu'awiya and drew more people to him than to Ali, peace be upon him. He had no leniency with anyone regarding the truth, nor any dispensation in upholding it, in word, deed, intention, or opposition. He would not back down from anyone in that, nor would he appease or conceal from them. If someone stumbled, he would not forgive their stumble; if someone slipped, he would not tolerate their slip. He would rebuke whoever criticized him and speak the truth openly to whoever opposed any part of it. He would not flatter or appease them in it, nor would he leave them even the weight of a grain or more if it was necessary to pursue what Uthman permitted in an unlawful manner, and what the two Sheikhs before him overlooked. He would take that from the hands of whoever held it. Many of those who feared him for that reason, and many of those who did not reach him, and many of those who rebuked him and made him hear what he disliked, joined Mu'awiya." As for what he brought and committed and what the tribal chiefs and clan leaders failed to do, how many of them were considered noble in their own eyes, and he was brought low by what he heard, to the point that Al-Hasan and Al-Hussein, peace be upon them, sometimes pleaded with those who heard him and deprived and alienated them with kind words and gifts, and sometimes they mentioned to him the

position of that among the people and asked him to be gentle with them, so he frowned at them and said, "Were it not for the position that you are with the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, I would have said something harsh to you about this." So he, peace be upon him, was so severe and strict in the cause of God that he was bitter to anyone who sought anything other than that from him, he was created with that, he was

▪made with that, he had no way out of it, no way to avoid it, and he could not find any other way to bear it
He said, and Fatima, peace be upon her, was like that. That is why there were disagreements between them in some situations, and because each of them saw himself as superior to the other, he would not refer to the

▪other

This prompted her to rebel against Abu Bakr when he denied her Fadak, and she made her voice heard, unable to bear it patiently until she vented her anger, relieved her distress, and spoke the truth against those who

▪oppressed her and usurped her right

He said: The Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, possessed patience in the face of adversity, forbearance in the face of what befell him, a capacity for winning hearts, overlooking sins, and enduring hardship, in accordance with what God Almighty described when He said: "And indeed, you are of a great moral character," and as He said: "So by mercy from God, you were gentle to them;

"
▪and if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them
Such firmness and gentleness in the cause of God were also present in His chosen prophets and messengers. Moses, peace be upon him, was strong, firm, and stern in the cause of God, while Jesus, peace be upon him, was compassionate and merciful in the cause of God. Both were guided by God, and each had its time and place, in which wisdom prevailed. Similarly, the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon

▪him and his family, acted in his time, and Ali, peace be upon him, acted in his era

He said that Khadija, peace be upon her, was as patient, gentle, forbearing, and calm as the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace. God Almighty had provided His Prophet with a source of relief and solace, to which he could return when the disbelief or harm inflicted upon him by the polytheists distressed him. He would come to her and find comfort and ease in her presence, which would

▪console him

Then, in this gathering, peace be upon him, he mentioned Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn al-Baqir, saying something similar: "He bestowed upon the people of his time such blessings from God as had never been seen before, when that time was favorable to him and the era was supportive. Then, after him, Abu Abdullah Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, imposed great restrictions and limitations, commensurate

"
▪with what was available in his time and what was happening in his era and period

So I said, without a doubt, that caused the Shiites after him to fall into great discord, and they differed

▪greatly regarding the successor to the ruler after him

He, peace be upon him, said regarding that: "The happiness of the righteous and the misery of the

"

▪wrongdoers

I said, "My master, if he had clarified the matter as his father did, and removed the doubt from his followers, and appointed the rightful successor after him, and explicitly designated him, would that not have

"?
? dispelled the doubt and put an end to the disagreement

He said, "Far be it from me! The time for that has not yet come. I did that for those I trusted. As for declaring it openly and publicly, that was not possible for me at that time, nor was it feasible for me in my era, due to the fear for my safety in revealing it and the need for dissimulation from my enemy. This was the beginning of the Abbasid dynasty, and they knew how they had seized and usurped it from him. Someone asked him to reveal it at a time when he could not do so. He replied, 'Tell me, if you were to ask me today about the successor from among my descendants, knowing without a doubt that it is one of them, and that it only occurs within the lineage and not between two brothers after al-Hasan and al-Husayn, peace be upon them, and if God Almighty had not yet revealed to me the location of his chosen one from among them, and I were to appoint him based on the signs of goodness He shows me in him, what would I do? If you were to ask me about one of them and I pointed to him, I do not know; perhaps God's choice will be someone else. And if I denied it, I do not know; perhaps God Almighty's choice will fall upon him. So what is required of you is to remain silent and submit until God Almighty chooses for you and bestows blessings and goodness upon whomever He

"

▪chooses

Likewise, had the people remained silent that day concerning Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, they would not have fallen into doubt. I heard al-Mansur, peace be upon him, say to me, "By God, I did not favor you with what I favored you with, but rather God favored you, singled you out, bestowed upon you, and chose you. By God, if I possessed a dirham or more of this world through any other means, I would not deem it permissible to favor any of my children with it over another. As for what God has granted me of honor and chosen me with of the Imamate, it is merely a possession with me and a loan in my hand until the appointed time is fulfilled. Then it is yours by God's decree, command, and bestowal, not by my command, decree, or favoring you with it. Rather, that is God's bounty, which He bestows upon whomever He wills, and God is the

"

• possessor of immense bounty

I said, "The Commander of the Faithful has opened for us what was closed and clarified what was

"

• unclear. May God extend his life and grant us a generous share of His bounty

He said, "By God, we do not withhold what we have from you, nor do we begrudge you God's favor,

"

• but we rarely find someone who will accept from us or someone who will ask us for anything

So I said, "The question is knowledge, O Commander of the Faithful, and how can one know what

"?

• should be asked about

He said, "I wish they would ask about what is not permissible, so we could answer them with what is permissible. By God, I am not stingy with what I have towards those who deserve it, nor am I a tyrant that would make a questioner afraid to ask. By God, I see in my servants a worth that they should see in me, and I humble myself before them to the point of saying that I have caused them to be bold with me. For it has been said, 'The boldest of people towards lions are those who are constantly near them.' The more distant they are

"

• from people, the more awe they inspire in their hearts

I said that is said by someone who lacks discernment and opinion, and how many of its leaders has it

• defeated and torn to pieces! In truth, the most fearful and awe-inspiring people should be those closest to it

He said, "By God, I served the one who rises to the command of God, peace be upon him, and he favored me with a closeness and special treatment he did not bestow upon anyone else. And because of that, I felt a profound awe and reverence for him, a feeling almost unparalleled in anyone else's heart. By God, I remember something I never thought I'd mentioned before: one day, I was walking behind him when I was young, and I gazed upon him, my eyes filled with his presence, and my heart was filled with awe of him. I remained in that state, glancing at him and then at the sky, saying to myself, 'This man is on this earth, and there is no ruler or authority over him except God in His heaven.' Each time I reflected on this, his majesty in my eyes and the awe in my heart increased. I remained in that state until he turned to me, took me in his arms, and embraced me. He said, 'My son, may God not place in your heart what is in the heart of your master,' meaning the anxieties he was experiencing. I was astonished by this, and how he came to me after all the thoughts that

"

• had crossed my mind about him

• As for Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, you know how much I revered, honored, and held him in awe

So I said, "That is what God has favored the Commander of the Faithful with and singled him out for,

"

• may God increase him and grant him the fulfillment of his hopes

Then the time for prayer arrived, so he got up and went to the mosque, ascended the pulpit, and delivered a long and eloquent sermon in which he presented points the likes of which we had never heard

• before, an argument for the Imamate, and an explanation of the injustice of the oppressive usurpers

.A statement in another council on a similar matter .64

He said, and I attended his gathering after that, and this sermon was mentioned, and those who heard it expressed their approval and admiration for it. So, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, he said, "The noble souls are more impressed and delighted by what God causes to flow from our tongues and hands, and they are more pleased with it than those of our forefathers who have attained God's favor. We are more fortunate in this regard than in the people's approval and admiration for it. I heard al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say to me as he lay dying, 'By God, may God grant you goodness and bestow upon you such blessings, joy, happiness, success, high status, guidance, and happiness after my death as

no one before you has ever had. My only fear for you is your distress at the shock of my passing and your lack of patience when it suddenly befalls you. That is what I fear will befall you: grief and hardship after my

””
• death

So I said, "And indeed, what he hoped for and promised will come to pass, and what he feared of despair, we had anticipated and feared for the Commander of the Faithful, given our knowledge of the great esteem al-Mansur, peace be upon him, held in his heart and his exalted position therein. Thus, it was from the support and protection of God Almighty that he was guided to offer the best of condolences and the most

”
• beautiful patience with which he consoled his followers

He, peace be upon him, said: As for his majesty, it was in my heart and his awe in my eyes. By God, I held him in such high esteem that it was as if he were not a human being to me, but rather an angel from the angels of heaven. And I knew that he was indeed like that; he saw the Qa'im, peace be upon him, in his eyes and found him in his heart. I never saw him fill his eyes with him, nor did I see the Qa'im, peace be upon him, do

• that. And I never saw either of them speak to the other except with his head bowed

Part Five

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

A speech that took place in a gathering regarding the virtues of Al- .65 •Mansur Billah, peace be upon him

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad (may God be pleased with him) said: I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him) say: I entered upon al-Mansur Billah (peace be upon him) during his final illness. His condition had worsened, and before him was an inkwell. He had taken a sheet of paper to write on, and when he reached for the pen, his hand could not steady it, so it fell onto his garment, staining it with ink. When he saw

? me, he said: Do you know what this is

"? I said, "What is it, my lord

He said, "By God, something has become clear to me now, something I have learned about God's knowledge, the reality of His Oneness, and the unseen realms of His dominion, the likes of which I never thought I could know. And because of my current state, I cannot utter it. So I called for an inkwell to write it down and share it with you, but I could not grasp the pen. Instead, I took the ink from his garment with the tips

””

• of his fingers and said, 'This is my excuse to you

Then he said, "This is good news from God in such a situation, and what He reveals to His saints at the

”

• time of their passing to Him

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I do not know how I was so shocked by this, nor what came over me, but I steeled myself and said: May God preserve the Commander of the Faithful, extend his life, and

• prolong his appointed time

”
• He said, "Alas, by God, the appointed time is near and the hour has arrived

? So, what was the matter with Baushk that he was taken, may God's prayers be upon him

Speech in a gathering on the virtues of Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be .66 •upon him

He said, and I heard him in this gathering say, "Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, gave me a book in the handwriting of Al-Mahdi, containing the letters of the alphabet in a script that the Imam before him used

to correspond with the missionaries. Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, said, 'Transcribe it in your own handwriting,' and he had already explained its meaning to me. Then he said to me, 'When Al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, peace be upon him, resolved to go to the Maghreb, he gathered his sons, and I was among them. He said, "You see me and what I am going out for because of this illness that has befallen me, and what our master, meaning Al-Mahdi, has left behind because of this illness. I do not know what will happen by the decree of God. This is a pen that the Imams inherit, with which they write their secrets, and its explanation and commentary are under it. It will be with you. Whatever I write to you with, you know, and whatever you wish to conceal, you

"
 . write to me with

Al-Mansur said, "One of the brothers said to me privately, 'We know these letters (A, B, T, Th), but how do we write with them?' I winked at him and said, 'Be quiet, woe to you! If you know these letters, what

"? else is there for you?' Then the one in charge looked at me and said, 'What did he tell you I said something to him, O our master, and we discussed the matter. The speaker then mentioned to him what he had mentioned to me, and the face of the Imam, peace be upon him, changed. He said, "To God we belong and to Him we shall return for the calamity that has befallen you," and he rebuked us and expelled us from his presence. I could not offer an excuse to him, nor could I attribute that ignorance to the one who said it. So I went out and stood behind the door, and I heard him say to some of the family, "Take this book, and if any of these people ask you for it, give it to them." I was pleased by that. When he went out, I asked her

. for the book, and she gave it to me, and it has been with me to this day

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "So I took it and copied it as he commanded. Then he gave me a manuscript with a pen that resembled the letters of that script. When I examined it, it did not reveal any correct speech. He told me, 'Look at this and extract it.' So I took it from him and spent days pondering it, but nothing became clear to me. I was so distressed by this that it prevented me from sleeping, eating, and drinking. One night, when I fell asleep, I would look at it while it was on my chest. Then I saw my father, Al-Mansur Billah, in

"? a dream, standing before me. He said to me, 'Does the matter of this pen greatly concern you

"
 . So I said, "Yes, by God, my master

He took the book from my hand, read a line from it, and said, "This is its translation." I memorized what he read and immediately became aware of it, so I wrote it down. Then I lowered it, and what I had experienced of being confined when I extracted it came out, until I saw it. I refrained from mentioning it to him for several days until he asked me about it. If nothing had been revealed to you in it, bring it so I can reveal it to

. you

"
 . I said, "You have opened it for me

When he said something, I recognized him and brought him the book. I read it to him, and he embraced me, unbuttoned my clothes, kissed the back of my neck, and wept. He said, "I had hoped to live longer for you, to benefit you and give you more, but there is no repelling God's decree and what He has already decreed." It was as if he had struck me with an arrow in my heart, and I did not understand the meaning of that until the

. calamity befell him soon after

Commandments of Patience and Fortitude 67

He said, and I heard him say in this gathering, that among the things Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, advised me upon his death was, "Leave off constantly visiting my grave and frequenting it, for that causes sorrow and does not lead to any wise course of action. Only ignorant men do that. If you have no other option, then stop after a while to pray for mercy, then leave quickly. He who knows the fate of souls does not concern

"
 . himself with the place of bodies

words on astrology mentioned in a council 68

He said, and I heard him say in this gathering, that Al-Mansur Billah (may God bless him and grant him peace) mentioned astrology, and he was skilled in it. He said, "Skilled." He said to me, "By God, I did not seek it and learn it for any of the matters that people see in the affairs of the people. I stood in the battles that I commanded during the times of strife until its end, and I never took a position in them by choosing knowledge from the science of astrology. Often, a matter would occur to me and appeal to me, and the pronouncements of the stars would contradict it and prevent it. So I did not pay attention to those pronouncements nor did I heed them, and I did what occurred to me and appealed to me, and in that was success and victory, and the opposite of what the pronouncements of the stars would necessitate. By God, we did not seek this knowledge except for what it indicates of the Oneness of God, may His name be glorified, and the effect of His wisdom on His

"

• actions. So beware of occupying yourself with anything other than this, and do not pay attention to it

Words on the virtues of Al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers be upon him 69

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say in this gathering: I was with Al-Mansur (peace be upon him) on one of his journeys, and he had stopped at a house where he stayed in a palace of his in that house, and a garden surrounded it with running water. One day I went out walking around that house, and when I returned, I went to him as usual and found him under some of those trees on a hot summer day, bareheaded, having shaved his head, and sweat was dripping from him, and he was composing a book, writing a copy of it.

"? So I said, "My master, in such heat, why don't you rise to your seat

He said, "Leave me be, for your words have interrupted something I had been trying to say. It is for this reason that I sat and endured this heat, because I had prepared to say something that I feared would be

"

• interrupted if I rose from my place

I sat until he had relieved himself and went inside. He stayed for a long time without coming out, so I worried that he might have suffered some discomfort from the heat. I sent word to him asking about it, and he said, "I am fine, praise be to God." Then he continued sitting and gave me permission to enter. I found him in what I perceived to be a state of well-being and health. I said, "My master, how long will you stay in this house,

"? in such a pleasant place, enjoying the sights and views of these waters and trees

He said, "I swear to God, I saw some of this great creature on my back, and I feared that it might be

"

• one of the lions of these thickets, and I seek refuge in God

"

• So I said, "No, God would not do that

"

• He said, "Yes, no, God willing, he will not do it, but I know what happened to me

Then he mounted his horse at dawn, intending to go elsewhere. He called me over, and I rode alongside him, riding a horse. He said, "Move it so I can see it." So I moved it, and he moved his horse, turning it around so fast that he feared it might fall. He threw himself off, and the horse leaped onto his back, but he was unharmed. I rushed to him and dismounted from my horse. I found him mounted again, unharmed. He said,

• "This is what I told you," and he praised and thanked God

words spoken in a council regarding the command to ask and search for 70 knowledge

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say in this gathering: "When al-Mansur, may God sanctify his soul, would impart to me some knowledge and wisdom, he would sometimes say to me, 'Revisit it with me, ask me about it and its meanings, debate with me, argue with me, and show me that you have fallen short in understanding it, even if you have understood it. Do not show me respect and reverence for it. Do not be afraid to review it with me in such a way. For in doing so, the benefits will be magnified and

" "

• increased in your eyes

• So I did that, and from the seas of knowledge and wisdom flowed to me what I had not expected

Chapters on the Majesty of Al-Mansur, may God sanctify his soul 71

He said, and I heard him say in this gathering, that Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, often ordered me to write a book or compose a poem, and he would tell me that if that was not possible, then I should write

• something or include it in my work

By God, I was not prepared for any of that, out of reverence for him in my heart, to confront him with

• it and dare to speak against him

Words spoken in a gathering concerning God's favor upon His saints .72

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say in this gathering to a man from among the leading grammarians, who was sitting before him, acknowledging his knowledge of grammar among the people of his time: "Write a book on such and such a subject, for a branch of his craft." He mentioned it to him, and that grammarian did not understand its meaning until after a long time and after he had repeated the statement and explanation many times. Then he understood his intention and the enormity of writing that which he wanted him to write. He said, "This is a method that no grammarian or one of the earlier linguists has ever done before, and I do not know how to begin it or how to proceed with it." It was as if he sought my help in making excuses, so I

• said

So-and-so told me that he wrote a book about Tha'lab the grammarian on shortened and lengthened words, which he had authored. We saw that he only included the same material as his predecessors, although he had improved the composition and added a little. I asked him about it, and he said, "Yes, that's how people write. Nothing was revealed to us from heaven. We take from people's speech, improve the phrasing, compose,

"

• and add little by little

"

• The grammarian said, "Yes, that is how people have known us, and that is how we are Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "This is the talk of the incapable. Yes, act according to what we have commanded, for it contains the Oneness of God, the Almighty, and the manifestation of His wisdom. He has supported us with knowledge of Him, and He will support you from His heavens in what we have

"

• commanded you, God willing, until you achieve our goal, contrary to what Tha'lab said

The man said, "I hope that it will be done, God willing," and he left, overwhelmed by the matter he had been commanded to do and realizing he could not accomplish it. He mentioned this to me, and I said to him, "If your intention is good and your purpose is sincere, you will be guided and granted success. I do not know, nor can I count, what the Prophet, peace be upon him, and al-Mansur, peace be upon him, before him, may God sanctify his soul, commanded me to do likewise. I do not know the meaning of this matter, let alone elaborate on

"

• it. Then I will seek God's help, and He will open for me what was closed and clarify for me what was unclear I know that a decree was issued to me from al-Mansur, peace be upon him, saying, "O Nu'man, extract from the Book of God what the common people have rejected and denied." I said to myself, "What in the Book of God could anyone who professes Islam possibly deny and reject?" This seemed overwhelming to me, and I realized at the time that I could not find a single letter of it. I did not feel it was appropriate to review it. Then I sought help from God, the Exalted and Glorified, and I knew that the saint of God would not have said this unless it existed. So I opened the Qur'an to read it, and the first thing I came across was "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." I remembered some people who said that it was not part of the Qur'an, so I confirmed that. The matter became clear to me until I compiled a section of it containing twenty pages. I presented it to al-Mansur, may God's blessings be upon him, and he approved of it and was impressed. Then he said, "Continue." So I reached Surat al-Ma'idah, from the beginning of Surat al-Fatihah and Surat al-Baqarah. I had compiled more than six hundred pages of it. Whenever I met al-Mansur, peace be upon him, he would take what I presented to him and say, "No one has ever done anything like it before." Then he passed away, may

• God's blessings, mercy, and peace be upon him, and I did not complete it

A conversation that took place in a council regarding the characteristics .73 .of those who lagged behind

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say: "The most esteemed thing in the hearts of the ignorant is the saying of someone they do not know or whose time they did not live in. But if they hear the saying of someone they know, even if it is wisdom, they reject it entirely." He mentioned a man who claimed to be knowledgeable and close to the Imams, peace be upon them. He said: "Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, saw that when he spoke to him about himself, he did not see any sign of acceptance on his face. But when he narrated to him about his forefathers, he accepted it and saw a sign of desire for it. So one day, while I was in his presence, he told him a hadith that contained wisdom and knowledge beyond description, but no sign of acceptance appeared on his face. He said to me, 'Give me that book in which we have preserved what we have related from our forefathers,' meaning a book that contained some of that. When I gave it to him, he drew me near and said to me, 'You heard what we told this man just now, and it did not affect him. Now I am opening this book. You stand in your place and look at what is in the book and listen to what I am saying.' He said this to me in secret. Then he opened the book and made it seem as if he were reading from it to him, while he was only speaking from memory and about himself. He was almost overjoyed by what he heard. Then Al-Mansur,

"

•peace be upon him, folded the book and said, 'I have seen and heard

I said yes

"

•He said, "His evil is between you and him in that matter

Then he got up and met with the man afterwards, and I said to him, "How did you hear what was in that

"? book

He said, "By God, my master, I have heard something the like of which I have never heard before. If you see fit, ask him to bestow upon his servant some of it, so that he may copy it." So I began to discourage him from it, and he kept mentioning the extent of what he had heard, and he said, "By God, it is speech that needs no

•other explanation." And he kept extolling it and mentioning the virtue of what he had heard

So I said, "O man, if someone like you says this, and you know that no Imam comes except that God gives him the virtue, knowledge, and wisdom of the Imam who came before him, and adds to it six-sevenths of that, and you see that this one who came to you is from an Imam who came before, and after him came a group of Imams, peace be upon them, and you are with an Imam who came to you after them, following in their footsteps, and you envy with such envy what came to you from those who came before, and you turn away from those in whose time you are, then what might be the case with others whom you want to guide, call, and make

•known?" And I mentioned this to al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him

That was the reason for his dismissal, and he realized his ignorance of what he was claiming and

•attributing to himself

He said, and from this meaning, that al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, ordered me to compile something that had benefited me, shaped it for me, and clarified its features and meanings for me. After I had elaborated on some of it, I presented it to him, and he approved of it and praised it. He said, "Part of its perfection is to conceal the name of its author, for nothing is magnified in the hearts of the common people except what comes to them from someone they did not meet or from someone they were ignorant of, so they did not know him. This is due to their poor discernment and their ignorance. Our intention is only to guide and correct them, so wherever we

"

•are able to do so, we have used it among them

Hadiths mentioned in a gathering concerning the lives of the Imams, 74 .peace be upon them

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say one day, "By God, we do not receive from this world more than many other people receive in it. Most of them eat and drink more than we do. We wear clothes and they wear clothes, we ride and they ride, we marry and they marry. Yet, despite all this, we toil for their well-being and to ward off harm from them, while they are complacent. Few among them recognize this for us and thank us; rather, most of them are ignorant of it and deny it. If this were something we could do for them, we

would have abandoned it, but it is something that God Almighty has made obligatory upon us and has bound us

"
" .to

I mentioned to him a saying I had heard from al-Mansur, peace be upon him and may his station be elevated. I had entered upon him after the Qa'im, peace be upon him, had entrusted him with this responsibility, to congratulate him on the honor God Almighty had bestowed upon him. He said, "O Nu'man, what could possibly be the value of this insignificant world? By God, a merchant whose merchandise is a thousand dinars will gain from this world what we might not. By God, were it not for upholding the rights of God Almighty, which we establish, and enjoining good and forbidding evil, hoping for its reward—and this is among what God Almighty has obligated us to do, and for which we have set ourselves and charged ourselves—I would have been quicker to prefer obscurity and turn away from this world, and thus I would have found life more pleasant

"
" .and enjoyable

Hadiths mentioned in a gathering to argue against those who disagree 75

He said, "I heard Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him, in a gathering where a group of saints had assembled with him, and he mentioned the matter of the East, what had gathered of its saints, and

"
" .what he hoped for from the nearness of God's promise to him and His victory over him

So, what would any of our Berber allies say at that time if someone argued with them? They would say, "Did not the Prophet David, peace be upon him, banish you from the land of the East and expel you from it by the command of God Almighty and His revelation to him?" The one questioned about this must answer, "Yes."

If it is said to him, "Who gave you permission to return to a place from which a prophet sent by a divinely

"?
"? revealed command expelled you

Some of them said, "Our joining you, may God's blessings be upon you, is our greatest proof, and you

"
" .are the inheritor of God's earth, and we are your followers and allies

He said, "It is as you mentioned, but your opponent among us is not convinced by this statement and

"
" .does not see it as evidence against him

"
" .He said, "Whoever among us is not convinced by this statement, our swords will be upon his head

He, peace be upon him, said: "The sword may prevail for both the righteous and the wrongdoer, but the victory of the argument of truth belongs only to its people. We want you to be victorious with your hands and tongues, and thus you will be, God willing. If we were to guide some animals, they would be guided, so how

"?
"? about those who have taken our place and become our leaders

"
" .They said, "The Commander of the Faithful will advise us and show us what to say

He smiled, then paused for a moment and said, "Did not God place Adam in His Paradise and bestow upon him His abundant blessings? But when Satan tempted him, and he disobeyed, God cast him and Satan out of it. Then Adam received the words of his Lord, and He restored him to it, along with those of his righteous descendants. He cursed Iblis and forbade it to him and to those of Adam's descendants who followed him and inclined towards him." He continued, "It was disobedience that caused the expulsion of the Berbers, not lineage.

Whoever among their descendants was righteous, and heeded the words, entered into the rule of the obedient and deserved to return to his place and abode. But whoever persisted in his error and disobedience remained an outcast, banished, and dwelling in misery and disgrace. This is the judgment of God, the Almighty, for the first

"
" .and the last, and His way with His servants until the Day of Judgment

Then he looked at me and said, "What made Adam receive the words of his Lord, and was granted the ability to repent and return to Him, and was given the means to his happiness, while this was forbidden to Iblis,

"?
"? so he did not attain it at all, and was cursed in this world and in the Hereafter with Hell and a terrible fate

• I said this because of his insistence on his sin and Adam's regret for it through his repentance

"?
"? He said, "Isn't that by the grace of God to Adam and His guidance to him

I said yes

He said, "Why was there no such thing for Iblis from the bounties of God Almighty's grace, mercy, and favor, even though the argument for disobedience was established against them both? Why did God Almighty

"? single out Adam with grace and guidance from them

" .I said, "God and His chosen one know best

He said, because they are not equal in sin and transgression. Adam was deceived in it; Satan made it appealing to him and misled him, while Satan chose it and entered into it with full knowledge. So they are not equal. Likewise, the leaders of misguidance are greater in sin and burden than their ignorant followers. This is what God Almighty related about them when the truth became clear to them: their saying, "Our Lord, we obeyed our masters and our leaders, and they led us astray from the right path. Our Lord, give them double the

" .punishment and curse them with a great curse

He said, and from this comes the hadith: "The Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, cursed the leaders and chiefs of the polytheists of Quraysh on the day of Uhud, and most of them on that day were Banu Umayya." And from this comes the hadith: "The people who will suffer the

" .greatest punishment on the Day of Resurrection are those who set up falsehood and people follow them in it And from this comes the hadith: "Whoever establishes a good practice and it is followed and followed after him will have his reward and the reward of those who follow it, without diminishing their rewards in any way. And whoever establishes a bad practice and it is followed and followed after him will bear his burden and the burden of those who follow it, without diminishing their burdens in any way." And from this comes the saying of God Almighty: "And they will surely bear their own burdens and other burdens along with their

" .own

All of this supports the statement of Al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) that the one who commands a sin and is followed in it is more guilty than the one who follows him, especially if he is deceived and made to appear righteous, as he (peace be upon him) mentioned regarding Adam (peace be upon him). God Almighty informed us of His favor upon him, saying: "And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred. Then his Lord chose him and accepted his repentance and guided him. And He said to Iblis, 'Get out of it, disgraced and banished. Whoever of them follows you, I will surely fill Hell with you all.' And He said, 'Get out of it, for indeed, you are accursed. And indeed, upon you is the curse until the Day of Recompense.'" Thus, He deprived him of His favor

.and made him despair of His mercy because of his audacity and the enormity of his sin

.Words spoken in a gathering about concealing the faults of a believer .76

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, commanding, among the things he made obligatory, that nothing should be concealed from him, for concealing it would be a betrayal. Then he said, "As for what is between one of you and his brother, concealing his fault is more appropriate for him.

" .Indeed, it is the right of a believer from his brothers to conceal his fault and to advise him about it

This is like the saying of his grandfather Ali, peace be upon him: "If I found a believer committing a shameful act, I would cover him with my garment." And from this comes the hadith: "Forgive the slips of those

" .of noble character

And from this comes the hadith narrated on the authority of al-Sadiq Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, who traced it back to the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, that he said: "There is no believing servant except that God has seventy veils over him. When he commits a sin, one of those veils is torn away. If he repents and seeks forgiveness from God, that veil is restored to him along with seventy more. If he persists in sins without repenting or seeking forgiveness, a veil is torn away with each sin until he is left with no veil. Then God, Blessed and Exalted is He, commands the angels to cover him with their wings. If he repents and seeks forgiveness from God, those veils are restored to him along with seventy more. If he persists in sins, the angels complain to God about him, saying, 'Our Lord, this servant of Yours disgusts us with the sins he commits.' So God, the Mighty and Majestic, commands them to lift their wings from him. If he commits a sin at the bottom of the sea or beneath the earth's depths, God, the Mighty and Majestic, will expose it to him." Then the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace,

" .said: "Ask God not to tear away your veils

If this is how God Almighty treats His believing servants—concealing their faults, overlooking their shortcomings, and giving them respite as long as they do not indulge in sin—then His close friends are more
•deserving of obeying His commands and what He has commanded them to do for His believing servants

A conversation that took place in a council regarding the proof .77

He said, and he mentioned, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, in some of the conversation that

"? took place, the proof, so he said to me, "What is the proof in your view

I said it is the meaning of the statement

He said, "The Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, said that some eloquence is like

"
•magic, but he did not say that in Al-Burhan

"? So I said, "What is the proof, my master

He said, "Investigate thoroughly what you have and what has been said that has reached you, then you

"
•will hear the answer to it, God willing

So I asked him to tell me what he had to say about that, and I said: It is true and established, and this is
a statement that has come in the Book of God, the Almighty, in more than one place, and such a statement
cannot be accepted except with the confirmation of the statement from one whose word must be accepted with

•certainty

"
•He said, "You must consider that in whatever way you have it

So I turned away when I found nothing of what he had commanded, may God's prayers and peace be
upon him. I looked at what the linguists said about it, and I found that their apparent statements differed on the
matter, but they all referred to one meaning. I saw some of them say that proof is the explanation and

•clarification of the argument

"
•The other said, "The proof is the argument

"
•The other said, "The proof is clear

The other said the statement

The other said the verse

Then I followed it from the Book of God, the Exalted and Majestic, and I found it in Al-Baqarah: "And
they say, 'None will enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.' That is their wishful thinking. Say,
'Produce your proof, if you should be truthful.'" And in An-Nisa: "O mankind, there has come to you a proof
from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light." And in Surat Yusuf: "And she desired him, and he
would have desired her, had he not seen the proof of his Lord." And in Al-Anbiya: "Or have they taken besides
Him gods? Say, 'Produce your proof. This is the reminder of those with me and the reminder of those before
me.'" And in Surat Yusuf: "He has certainly succeeded. And whoever invokes with God another deity for which
he has no proof..." And in Surat An-Naml: "Is there a god besides God? Say, 'Produce your proof, if you
should be truthful.'" And in Al-Qasas: "Insert your hand into your pocket; it will come out white without
disease. And draw your hand to your side to protect yourself from fear. Those are two proofs from your Lord."
And in it: "And We will extract from every nation a witness and say, 'Produce your proof.' And they will know

"
•that the truth belongs to God, and what they used to invent will vanish from them

Then I looked at what the commentators said about each of these verses, and I did not find that they
said anything about it except what the people of Arabic said about it, that it is an argument, a clarification of the
path, an explanation of it, a clear proof, and a sign of that, as I mentioned, its meaning is one. Then I interpreted
it in terms of what the language allows of metaphor, and I mentioned what is permissible in that and how it was
said about it in speech. Then I mentioned what became clear to me about it from the inner meaning, and I

•compiled that and brought it to him, may God bless him and his family, after I had explained it in detail

I hesitated to bring it out to him and held him until he mentioned that he had followed some of those
concerned with the words of the philosophers, and that he had mentioned what they said in philosophical
language. He mentioned and explained it until he confessed to them and admitted his error, and he mentioned

the gist of his statement on the matter. His argument was similar to what I mentioned earlier, that it was an argument, but they spoke about it in the same way they speak about the descent of things and their connection,

▪ and how that is and how it is connected according to their claim

Then some of those present at the gathering brought out a booklet on the same subject, which he had asked a man from among the preachers about. It contained some of the philosophers' sayings, but he did not

▪ repeat them exactly as they said them

Another man came with a letter of proof, and al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, looked at it, then threw it down and said, "By God, the only calamity is that someone like this should be added to our ranks and attributed to being one of our preachers. There is no mention of proof in this letter, nor any meaning to it, except that it

▪ was given that title." Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, also noticed many errors in it

Then he looked at the notebook the other had sent, and the one who had mentioned that he had engaged with him in that matter and answered him with philosophical discourse was present, and he was the most knowledgeable of those present in that regard. He said to him, "This discourse that you brought us, this one also brought." So he read some of it to him and explained its flaws. He said to me, "Bring what you have to say about it as well." I apologized and mentioned that what prompted me to compile it was the command of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, otherwise, what I preferred was to hear what the Commander of the Faithful had to say and to give it precedence over his own. I handed him a notebook in which I had compiled that, and he read it and smiled and said, "I have answered what you have argued and illustrated with something

"

▪ close to the meaning, but it is not the same. You have only grasped a superficial aspect of it

So I said, "This is what is in the people's containers. The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, has stopped at it, and nothing remains except what we await from his bounty, which is found with him." I stood up and said, "The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, is generous, for hearts are attached to

▪ what he has." There was a group in the gathering, and everyone who was sitting stood up

He said, "Sit down," and smiled. Then he said, "This requires a foundation to be laid out before him, and a basis upon which to build the discourse. That would take too long to mention, but hasn't it been

"?

? established that righteousness is a momentous matter and a grave affair

I said yes

He said, "Why did we not find it among the names of God, may His name be glorified, nor among His

"?

? attributes? Have we not already learned that it is the greatest thing, beyond all else

I said yes

It was narrated on the authority of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, that he said: When God created the intellect, He said to it, "Come forward," and it came forward.

Then He said to it, "Go back," and it went back. Then He said, "By My might and majesty, I have not created anything more honorable to Me than you. Through you I take, through you I give, through you I reward, through

"

▪ you I recompense, and through you I punish

▪ I said this is a well-known and well-known saying

He said, "Is there anything besides God that is better than the one whom God Almighty has testified to with this testimony and whom He has elevated to this position of favor above all of His creation, as He

"?

? Almighty has said

I said no

He said, "Whatever sound and perfect reason establishes, which bears witness to, testifies to, confirms, and deems necessary, that is the clear proof of its soundness and necessity. Similarly, the signs of the prophets were proofs established by sound minds, affirmed, and testified to, while deficient minds rejected them after God's proof had been established and His argument had been made against them. This is what He, the Exalted,

"

▪ said: 'And they denied them, while their souls were certain of them, out of injustice and arrogance

As for their statement when they saw the punishment, "If only we had listened or reasoned, we would not be among the companions of the blazing Fire," this was due to the deficiency of their intellects. We did not mention such intellects, nor did we allude to them. Since the intellect is a creation of God, it must have a counterpart like itself, as He, the Exalted, said: "And of everything We created pairs, that you may remember."

The inner aspect of the intellect is like its counterpart, and whatever it testifies to, is established with it, and

" confirms, that is proof from it to itself, as He, the Majestic, said: "These are two proofs from your Lord

Then the one who was in the council before him kissed the ground and said, "That is what the philosophers were saying about such a thing. By God, the people circled around him and erred, and they circled around him and were ignorant of him." So he said, " If a truthful man among you told you that he heard a

"? madman speak the words of a madman, would you doubt his statement

We said no

He said, "If a wise, virtuous, and learned man told you this, wouldn't you doubt his veracity until you tested the man who reported it? Even if you found him to be as you knew him to be in terms of intellect, understanding, and knowledge, you would still remain doubtful of what was reported to you because of the truthfulness of the informant and his character, which would refute and negate such a report. For reason does not

" definitively judge a truthful person to be lying, nor a wise person to be insane or confused

We said yes

He said, "If you find him deranged and confused, will you doubt the report of the man who reported

"? him as confused

We said no

Al-Ais said that this was only because of what reason testified to, which became proof of the

truthfulness of the informant

We said yes

He said, "And from this comes the saying of the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family: 'Whatever comes to you from me, compare it to the Book of God. Whatever agrees with the Book of God, I said it, and whatever does not agree with it, I did not say it.' Then he emphasized this, saying, 'How could I contradict the Book of God when I have been guided by it?' And the narrations transmitted from the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, are not found explicitly in the Qur'an, but rather they agree with what is in it through reasoning and the testimony of

" reason

Then he, may God bless him and his family, said: "This is something I know of no one among the forefathers or anyone else who has spoken about. I will elaborate on it and explain its meanings until I make it a

" physical form for those who look at it and a spiritual representation for those who contemplate it

His words were sufficient for those who pondered them, a guide for those who perceived them, and a symbol of the esoteric knowledge they contained. He alluded to knowledge of things that I have not seen most of those present understand; rather, I have seen many of them fall short of understanding the apparent meaning

of what he spoke and do not grasp the true nature of his knowledge

This is what he brought, peace be upon him, which, in the eyes of those with discernment and intellect, established his superiority, clarified his speech, testified to his trustworthiness, and demonstrated the connection of God Almighty to him and His support for him with wisdom, in the eyes of those who considered this in him, distinguished him from his affairs, and pondered his situation. For we know that he was young, recently arrived, well-known in his place, and had famous companions and brothers who sought refuge with him, sat with him, and departed before him, accompanying him from his childhood until we witnessed in him what we witnessed.

We did not know of any learned teacher for him in his childhood from whom we could say he benefited, nor after that any companion or friend who was equally skilled from whom we could say he benefited. He did not travel or seek knowledge, nor do I see him gaining anything from studying books that equals even a fraction of

what we see and find in him of the arts of knowledge and wisdom

We may see someone who has grown old and senile in pursuit of knowledge, who has traveled, written, met scholars, learned from wise men, and spent a long time studying, engaging in debates and discussions, yet no one can rival him in any field of knowledge, nor come close to him, nor be compared to him in any way,

even if he is a master of a particular art or a scholar who has spent his entire life seeking it

We found that he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, had studied every art and excelled in every science, and if he spoke about any of them, he surpassed all other speakers, and he was unique in the

world

As for the knowledge of the esoteric and its aspects, it is a sea whose depths cannot be fathomed nor its

▪ end reached

As for the discourse on monotheism, the establishment of the religion, and the refutation of those who

▪ commit heresies and atheists, it is his oneness, his knowledge, his beacon, and his foundation

As for jurisprudence, what is permissible and forbidden, and matters of legal rulings and judgments,

▪ that is his domain, field, craft, and domain

As for medicine, engineering, astronomy, and philosophy, the experts in each of these fields are in his

hands, and all are dependent upon him. Every day he invents new crafts for them and creates ingenious innovations in their intricate meanings, leaving their minds bewildered should they attempt to fully explore their meanings and describe the knowledge and wisdom that God Almighty has bestowed upon them, thus severing

▪ the foundation of this book

This is one of the proofs of his grandfather Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, for God Almighty perfected in him what He perfected of knowledge, wisdom, and virtue, even though he was unlettered, neither reading nor writing, and resided in Mecca, never leaving it to seek knowledge. There was no scholar there who could have learned what was revealed, so it could not be said that he acquired it from him, nor did anyone accompany him who possessed knowledge, so it could be said that he acquired it from him.

And in this is the statement of God Almighty, the most truthful of speakers: "And you did not recite before it any scripture, nor did you inscribe one with your right hand. Otherwise, the falsifiers would have had cause to doubt. Rather, it is clear verses in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge." This is sufficient as a witness, proof, and evidence, seen by the eyes, heard by the ears, and to which minds submit with obedience for

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▪ those who have a heart, as God Almighty said: "Or he who listens while he is a witness

Part Six

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

words containing rebuke and reproach for neglecting the pursuit of 78 knowledge

Judge al-Nu'man, may God be pleased with him, said: I sat before Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, one day, and he spoke of people's apathy towards good, their turning away from it, their reluctance to seek knowledge and wisdom, their contentment with ignorance, their preoccupation with worldly matters, and their intense focus on them. He said, "By God, we have provided for many of our chosen servants and servants in their worldly affairs. We have given them what we eat, clothed them with what we wear, and shared with them what we possess. They eat, wear, and possess things without toil, hardship, or expense, while we toil and exert ourselves and bear the burden for them. Thus, they live more comfortably than us, with less toil and concern. Yet, despite this, we are not spared the slander of their tongues, who attribute to us their evil deeds in their preoccupation with worldly matters. They claim that we have extended our hands to them, yet they seize what they take for themselves, and people take what they deem to be their evil deeds, which are beyond doubt or concealment." They said, "This is our master's duty and right, and he has a right to it." We take it, and thus we are commanded, and God forbid that we should command them to do anything other than what is right. Our covenants are published in their hands, bearing witness against them. It is not enough for them to commit what is forbidden for themselves, but they attribute it to us and falsely claim that we command it. God Almighty has protected us from this. Even when we wish to admonish them, clarify the truth for them, guide them to the limits of their religion, and explain to them the traditions of their Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and what God Almighty has obligated them to do, and when we wish to implement some of the wisdom we have instilled in them, hoping for the betterment of their affairs, the improvement of their circumstances, the elevation of their status, and their inclusion among the people of knowledge, wisdom, and virtue, we see no inclination towards it, no desire for it, no questioning or requesting it from them. Perhaps I even intend to sharpen their resolve with admonition and question them about what they cannot afford to be ignorant of and

what they are not permitted to neglect, which God Almighty has obligated them to do and required them to ask and seek. Yet, I see only staring eyes, gaping mouths, and bodies devoid of knowledge and wisdom. I might even retract my statement to them, blaming myself for it. When will such people find the patience to benefit

? from something, or the inclination to offer them anything of value

When I heard this from him, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, I was filled with sorrow for fear of deprivation and the cessation of the flow of grace and favor. We seek refuge in God from that and beseech Him for the continuation of His blessings, the perpetuation of His grace and mercy, and the attainment of the degree of favor hoped for from Him. So I wanted to make this easier and offer some justification for it, so I said: If the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, saw those of his close friends and servants as he described them, then the least of what they possess, praise be to God, of his grace, benefits, wisdom, and what they have taken from him and adhered to is better than everything that others possess who oppose their doctrine

▪ of allegiance and love

He said, "We know that a little truth is better than much falsehood, and that the more falsehood there is, the more harmful it is to those who possess it. But we wanted our followers to be scholars in this world, whose virtue is known to all its inhabitants. Otherwise, God forbid, if an enemy of ours were to appear among them and ask them about the same matters we ask them about—about their religion and beliefs, and what necessitates our guardianship and leadership in their eyes—and perhaps he were one of those known and mentioned among our followers, he would find nothing to answer. Wouldn't that be—God forbid—a deficiency

"? in us, and a way to attack our school of thought, attribute ignorance to us, and belittle what we possess

I said that what the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) said is true and correct, and what he intended for his followers is honor and virtue. However, the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him)

knew that people of knowledge are few among the people. When people enumerated those among the Companions of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) who were described as knowledgeable, they mentioned Ali (peace be upon him), to whom no one can be compared or counted in his rank. Then, among those they said were mentioned after him as knowledgeable, according to what they described and detailed, were Salman al-Farsi, Jabir ibn Abdullah, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, and Umar ibn al-Khattab. These are the ones they described as knowledgeable in jurisprudence and nothing else. They testified that the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said, "Ali is the most knowledgeable of you in legal rulings." They mentioned among them those who were mentioned after him as knowledgeable in legal cases, and they mentioned Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Abu Bakr, and Umar. They mentioned knowledge of the Qur'an and said that Ali (peace be upon him) was the most knowledgeable of them in it. They mentioned after him Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Zayd, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Jabir ibn Abdullah, and Uthman ibn Affan. So, these are the Companions of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), and only ten of them were mentioned as knowledgeable, and not all of them

perfected its branches. Rather, it was Ali (peace be upon him) who perfected it, according to what they mentioned. He alone, with all his virtues and merits, did not fulfill what the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, desired from his followers and servants in any of the companions of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him. Then, among them, during the rule of the successor to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, there were those whom the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, knew, yet only a few remained true to him. For allegiance is the foundation of religion, its pillar, the pinnacle of the matter, and its axis. And most of the followers and servants of the Commander of the Faithful, praise be to God, have the greatest share and the most abundant portion in this. And, praise be to God, in his pure days and his glorious state, they are in the best state they were in before, and before that. And God will grant His chosen one

▪ among them his hope and guide them to what pleases Him, God willing

So he remained silent, and I do not know how this statement came from him. Rather, I defended myself and them with it out of fear of what I mentioned earlier, that what he said might cause the cessation of his favor and the source of his blessings, and what is hoped for from him. May God protect us from that and grant us what

▪ we hope for from him and increase what he has already bestowed upon us

A discussion in a council about the backwardness of most people .79 regarding knowledge of benefits

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say, after mentioning the Mahdi, the Qa'im, and the Mansur, peace be upon them, mentioning some of their virtues, knowledge, and the wisdom with which God

Almighty had endowed them. Then he said, "We have seen that most of the believers who accompanied them, met them, served them, spoke with them, heard their words, and lived during their time, do not relate any of that about them, nor do they transmit any of it from them. Most of what they relate about them is what their natures incline them to and what their souls are accustomed to from the outward aspects of their commands, prohibitions, and actions in worldly matters, and what they were tasked with in establishing people according to the apparent path of the religion, including those they ordered to be beaten, disciplined, imprisoned, or killed, and those they appointed or dismissed, rewarded or punished. This is most of what they memorized and retained from them, as if they had never heard from them a single benefit of wisdom, nor seen it manifest in any of their actions, nor seen it appear in any of their affairs, so that they could speak of it about them or transmit it from

”
• them

words spoken in a gathering concerning the rights of the Imams, peace be 80 upon them

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say, I heard al-Mansur, may God’s prayers, mercy, and blessings be upon him, say, I saw the Mahdi, peace be upon him, standing with a prominent preacher. He mentioned him after he had risen from his seat and spoken to him, then turned away from him. That sheikh then went to the spot on the ground where the Mahdi, peace be upon him, had been standing, took some of its soil in his hand, kissed it, and then wrapped it in a handkerchief that was in his sleeve. I do not know how the Mahdi, peace be upon him, turned to him after he had gone far away and saw him and what he had done, so he said,

”
• “May God reward you well for that, O so-and-so

Neither I nor that sheikh thought he saw what he did, because he only did it after he had turned his

• back and left him

words spoken in a gathering condemning arrogance 81

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say, and he mentioned some of the preachers and that some of the Imams, peace be upon them, appointed him. He said, so he became pleased with himself and was made arrogant by the kindness shown to him, and he became haughty and hardly showed any compassion, and he acted as if the favor of God's guardian over him was a favor he deserved by himself. And God's guardian

• knew this about him, so he put him down and removed him from what he was worthy of

He said, "Among the things he heard from him, and what indicated the absurdity of his opinion and his self-delusion, was that if he praised a man and described him as religious and faithful, he would say, 'He is one of those who frequent my home and visit me often.' But if he criticized a man and described him as ignorant and deviating from religion and faith, he would say, 'He is one of those who do not visit me, nor do I see him.' It was as if he believed that religion and faith were found in visiting him, and that abandoning them was found in

”
• turning away from him

He said, and when he went out with a saint, he would withdraw to a corner and draw people to be with him, walking with them in a procession, believing that this was done by him and his followers to strengthen their faith and religion. He said, and some of those who advised him did so, but he frowned at them and rebuked them. This, and other things due to his poor judgment, were the cause of his humility, since he had sought to

• elevate himself. But God Almighty only elevates those who humble themselves before Him and His saints

Then he, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, said that when God Almighty revealed the Torah, the mountains stretched out their necks for it, each mountain wanting it to be revealed to them, but they humbled

• themselves and descended to Mount Sinai, and God Almighty revealed it to them

This supports the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family:

“Whoever humbles himself before God, God will raise him up.” And his saying: “There is no human being except that there is wisdom in his head in the hand of an angel. If he humbles himself before God, God raises him up with it and says, ‘Rise up, God has raised you up.’ And if he is arrogant, God strikes him with it and says, ‘Lower yourself, God has lowered you down.’” And the saying of Ja’far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon

him: "Whoever seeks knowledge to argue with fools or to boast to scholars in order to become a leader among people, let him prepare his seat in Hellfire, for leadership is only suitable for those who are worthy of it. Leadership is only suitable for the friends of God. Whoever disputes it with them and competes with them for it, God will humble and humiliate him." And from this is the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings
 " .be upon him and his family: "Pride is the cloak of God, so whoever disputes it with Him, He will break him

talks in a council about bad politics 82

He said, and I mentioned to him one day, may God bless him and his family, the case of a man who was among the close associates of one of the common people's rulers and had gained control over all his affairs. He was an advisor to him and diligent in serving him. That ruler was weak and foolish, so that man would do most of his work. Most of that ruler's men turned against him for advising him and envied his position with him.

. They continued to plot against him until they killed him

He said, "It is from such a person that such people are brought to power. If one of them is given a position of authority and elevated by his ruler, he becomes conceited and believes he has a superiority in terms of his advice and service over the ruler who elevated him. If that ruler holds an opinion that he disagrees with, he opposes it. If the ruler does something that he disapproves of, he criticizes him. If the ruler gives a gift or bestows a favor, he disapproves and reproaches him for it. He continues in this manner until he falls from the ruler's favor and his position becomes burdensome, leading to his downfall. If every person knew his own worth, he would not perish because of such actions. It has been said, 'No one who knows his own worth ever

" .perishes

Hadiths in a council on the meaning of judgment in the language 83

He said, and the topic of judgment and the differing meanings of it and what people say about it was mentioned in his presence, peace be upon him. He said, "It is not as they say, but the essence of judgment is

" .clarification, and everything mentioned about it is referred back to it

Then I looked at what the linguists said about it, and I found that Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad mentioned its interpretation in his book Al-Ayn. He said: "Qada yaqdi" means "he judged," "he rules," "he judges," "he judges," "he judged a judgment," and he says, "He judged him a covenant," meaning a bequest. And with this, we interpret "We judged the Children of Israel." And he says, "Death judged him," meaning it came upon him. And he said in another place, "Al-Hatim is the judge," and "al-Hatm" is the obligation of judgment. So this is

. what Al-Khalil said about it

Abdullah ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah said: The origin of "qada" (decree) is "hatam" (determination), as in His saying, "He withholds those for whom He has decreed death," meaning He has made it inevitable for them. This is impossible according to His saying, because God Almighty has made death inevitable for every soul. Rather, He said in this context, "God takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die during their sleep. He withholds those for whom He has decreed death and releases the others until a specified

. term." If "qada" here meant "determination," then it would apply to all of them

This speaker then said, "Then the imperative becomes in meanings like His saying, 'And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him,' meaning a command, because when He commanded, He made the

" .command imperative

And as He said, "And We decreed to the Children of Israel in the Scripture," meaning We informed them, because when He informed them that they would cause corruption in the land, He made it certain that the

. news would come to pass

. His statement, "So He completed them as seven heavens in two days," means He made them

" His saying, "So decree what you are going to decree, do what you are going to do

Similarly, gather together your plan and your partners, and let not your plan be obscure to you. Then

▪ carry it out, meaning do what you are going to do and do not delay

And he recited to Abu Dhu'ayb

▪ And upon them are two scrolls, which David decreed, or the seven-day scrolls were made by Tubba

▪ David, peace be upon him, made them and followed them

He said, and another said, regarding Omar

▪ I accomplished some things, then left, with secrets still hidden, yet to be revealed

I have done deeds, because whoever does a deed and finishes it has completed and finalized it. Hence, the ruler is called a judge because he decides matters for people and makes them final. It is also said, "Your judgment is complete," meaning your matter is finished. And it is said, "Death has come," meaning it has come

▪ to an end. These branches all return to one origin

We have already explained the flaw in the principle mentioned by this speaker, and his claim that these branches revert to it is impossible because he asserted that the origin of divine decree is inevitability, then he made it into a command, creation, action, judgment, completion of something, and death. None of this resembles inevitability, nor does it revert to it. Similarly, al-Khalil ibn Ahmad said regarding "decree" that it

■

▪ means "judgment

And he brought forth what does not deviate from the revelation if it is revealed in accordance with all

▪ that is contained in the Qur'an

So, what he, peace be upon him, said is the explanation, encompasses all of that, both what they mentioned and what they did not mention. Thus, his statement, "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him," means that He has made this clear in His command to His servants in His Book and through the words of His Messenger. And his statement, "And We decreed to the Children of Israel in the Scripture, 'You

▪ will surely cause corruption on the earth twice,'" means that We have made this clear to them in the Book His statement, "Then He completed them as seven heavens in two days," means that He made them

▪ manifest by creating them for all to see, after they had not been anything at all

His statement, "So decree whatever you are going to decree," is a narration of what the magicians said to Pharaoh after they believed in Moses, and after Pharaoh said to them, "You believed in him before I gave you permission," and his statement, "I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides and crucify you on the trunks of palm trees, and you will surely know which of us is more severe in punishment and more enduring," they said, "We will never prefer you over what has come to us of clear proofs and over He who created us. So decree whatever you are going to decree. You can only decree [this] worldly life," meaning, explain what you claimed about being more severe in punishment and more enduring. You can only explain

▪ what your punishment was in this worldly life by what you do in terms of punishment in it

His saying, "So gather together your plan and your partners, then decide for me," means: "Make clear

■

▪ to me at that time what you are doing and what you want

As for the verse of Abu Dhu'ayb, his saying

▪ And on it are two chains of transmission, which David or Tubba' made

This is similar to what God Almighty said: "And He made them seven heavens," meaning He fashioned

▪ them with craftsmanship, so they became two shields

As for the other saying, "I settled matters ..." etc., it means "I settled matters," and it can be from a different perspective, such as "I settled the debt," "I settled the obligation," "I made up for the prayer," "I made

▪ up for the fast," "I settled the right," and similar expressions that are not from this perspective

▪ As for his statement, "The judge ruled," it means he distinguished truth from falsehood

Their saying, "Your decree has been fulfilled," means that it is clear from your own hand, and there is no further discussion about it, regardless of the source of that statement. It is a statement about that thing if they use it in reference to death, and if someone is said to have died, then it is said, "His decree has been fulfilled." This is clearer in terms of death, indicating that he has died. If they use it in reference to someone who has been judged or whose case has been settled, then it applies to that as well, meaning that the truth has been

distinguished from falsehood. As for their saying, "He decreed death," it only means that he has fulfilled what was incumbent upon him in terms of the consequences of death. From this comes the saying of God, the Exalted, "And some of them have fulfilled their vow, and some of them are waiting." The vow is a pledge. If it is taken as a statement, it becomes clear that when he died, his matter was clarified. This is what this speaker mentioned, and what he did not mention from the saying of God, the Exalted, "And the matter was decided, and it came to rest on Mount Judi," meaning that the matter that Noah, peace be upon him, promised them was

▪ clarified for them

His statement, "So when We decreed death for him, nothing showed them his death except a creature of the earth eating his staff," means that it was clear to them. If it were inevitable, then death would be inevitable for both the living and the dead. Similarly, He decrees the truth, and He is the best of judges, meaning He makes

▪ it clear

As for His saying, "O two companions of the prison, one of you will serve his master wine, while the other will be crucified, and the birds will eat from his head. The matter about which you inquired has been

▪ decreed," meaning, the matter about which you asked has been made clear to you

His saying, "O my sons, do not enter from one gate, but enter from separate gates," up to his saying, "Except for a need in the soul of Jacob which he fulfilled," meaning he explained it to his sons by saying that to

▪ them

▪ His statement, "He would have fulfilled their term," means He would have made it clear to them
And His saying, "Say, 'If I had that which you are impatient for, the matter would have been decided between me and you,'" means between

And there are many similar examples; if you direct them, they will all be directed towards the explanation, as Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, thus freeing them from corrupt interpretations, and there is

▪ no evidence for compulsion in them

As for fulfilling a need, paying off a debt, performing a prayer, fasting, fulfilling a right, fulfilling an obligation, and satisfying a desire, as in God Almighty's words, "When Moses fulfilled the term" and "When Zayd had fulfilled his desire with her," this is different from what was mentioned previously, which is performing something and exiting it, as it is said, "So-and-so performed the Hajj," "So-and-so performed the Umrāh," "So-and-so performed the visit," "So-and-so performed the rituals," and there are many similar examples. This also serves the purpose of explanation because it is exiting from something, and whoever exits

▪ from something or departs from it has departed from it

This entire statement is the statement of Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him. I know of no one who preceded Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, in this, nor in what is fundamental to the judiciary, which is the explanation. Nor have I seen branches that follow from a root like it, without deviating from it to anything else. May God perpetuate his support, guidance, and provision with the light of His guidance, and may He continue to send

▪ blessings upon him, his forefathers, and his descendants

Speech in a council of the defeated Umayyad messenger who came to .84 him from Andalusia

He said, and it reached the Commander of the Faithful, al-Mu'izz (may God be pleased with him), that a ship belonging to the Banu Umayya came from the East. When it was between Sicily and Africa, it passed an island and encountered a boat there with some people who had come from Sicily and were heading to Africa. On it was a letter from the governor of Sicily to the Commander of the Faithful. The Andalusians feared that they would be warned, so they seized a man from their boat and stole some of their belongings, including the map containing the letter from the governor of Sicily. They left the boat and its passengers on the island without

▪ anyone to take them away until a ship passed by, so they boarded it and brought back the news

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was angered by this and ordered warships to be dispatched. He loaded them with men from both land and sea, placing Hasan ibn Ali, the governor of Sicily, in command. He ordered him to pursue the ship wherever it had been taken, and if it reached Andalusia, not to leave until he had burned it. The ship did not reach Almeria before it had already anchored at Almeria, the port

of Andalusia, the gathering place for its ships and the fleets of the Umayyad forces who had seized control of it. There was also a shipyard and its equipment. News reached him that the fleet had reached him and that his ships had already sailed with the news. So he prepared his army and stocked his ships with supplies, weapons, and men. Hasan ibn Ali arrived with his small fleet, which had only been sent out to pursue a single ship. God granted victory to his servant, and his fleet seized the Umayyad fleets, setting them ablaze and leaving them all in ashes. The land troops on board disembarked and captured Almeria. The Umayyad forces fled, and they burned all the ships, treasuries, supplies, and equipment, seizing all their treasures. Those who could fled. They fled from their families and did not harm those who remained who had surrendered. They killed those who opposed them first and burned the ship whose occupants had done what they did. The Commander of the Faithful had not ordered them to do otherwise, so they departed safe and victorious, with no harm coming to any

▪ of them

The cunning Umayyad was seized, and the country was thrown into turmoil. He was terrified, so he assembled his ships and gathered all his men, including those known for their hostility towards his country. The following year, he sent a fleet after writing to the Byzantine emperor seeking his aid, sending him gifts and messengers. The emperor responded to his request, and the Byzantine fleets arrived from Constantinople, along

▪ with the ships of the Umayyads in Andalusia

So the Commander of the Faithful, Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him), gathered his supporters and informed them of this, and that the Romans had asked him to make a truce for a long period on

"? the condition that they would leave him alone, and he said to them, "What do you think about this

They said, "The Commander of the Faithful is above reproach, and what we see is a truce with the

" ▪ Romans, so what does that matter to us? We should turn our faces towards these people as a whole

He said, "I seek refuge in God! I would not begin except with those whom God Almighty began with."

He, Blessed be His Name, said, "O Prophet, strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites." And He said, "O you who have believed, fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you, for they are nearer to us." And it is sufficient for us to seek God's help against these wicked Umayyads, for they have sought the help of the polytheists, their brothers in religion, against us, and they have joined their ranks and been in their party. And

▪ that is sufficient for them as a disgrace and shame in this world and the Hereafter

He, peace be upon him, went out to Mahdia and dispatched his fleets, including land troops, towards

▪ the Romans. He stayed in Mahdia and ordered that troops be stationed at every port on the Andalusian route. The Roman fleet advanced and met the fleet of the Commander of the Faithful near Sicily. The fleet of the Banu Umayya advanced to meet the polytheists, and God granted victory to His chosen one over the Romans. He defeated them at sea, and his men killed a great number of them. They fled before his fleet to the Straits of Rayy to defend their land, and he exhausted them there. They met him at sea again, and he defeated them. Then the land army landed on their territory and inflicted heavy losses upon them, burning their cities and

▪ destroying their churches, and achieving the ultimate goal of inflicting harm upon them

The Umayyad fleet arrived at some of the few deserted ports of the Maghreb and landed there, intending to make a mark before returning to their homeland to settle their descendants. The inhabitants of that region came out to meet them and killed many, but they were defeated. More died at sea than they were killed, and the inhabitants captured their weapons. They sent back the heads of those they had killed and the spoils of

▪ war. News of the Romans reached them, and they returned defeated and humiliated

The Byzantine emperor sent to the Commander of the Faithful vast sums of money and magnificent gifts, and expressed his desire to cease hostilities against the remaining Byzantines in Calabria, offering to pay them a sum of money he pledged to pay on their behalf. He also offered to release prisoners from the East each year for a short period, during which he requested a truce. The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, saw this as beneficial for the religion and for the Muslims, after God Almighty had empowered him, given him

▪ the ability to act, and healed his heart and the hearts of the believers

When this news reached the defeated Umayyad, he feared the consequences and sent a messenger who wrote letters, in the name of one of his men, to some of the Commander of the Faithful's men, seeking peace, reconciliation, and an end to the war. He mentioned the potential bloodshed among Muslims and their preoccupation with internal conflicts, diverting their attention from fighting the polytheists. The messenger delivered the letter and, through his words, conveyed on behalf of the traitor what the letter itself did not,

requesting peace, harmony, and an end to the war and strife. He then verbally conveyed this to the Commander

▪of the Faithful

As for his fears of war, strife, and bloodshed, nothing he feared from us has appeared, nor are we among those who can guarantee him safety from them. However, some of his own people have transgressed against us, so we triumphed with God's help, and God granted us victory and enabled us to achieve more than we hoped for. He then became restless and agitated, and he allied himself with the polytheists against us. He now sees that our preoccupation with him and his preoccupation with us leads to abandoning the struggle against them, and that this is a weakness and a setback for Islam. Why didn't he see this when he sent his wealth, gifts, and messenger to them and sought their help against us? How did he see God Almighty deal with them and their combined forces? Did He not turn away both armies defeated, disappointed, and lost? And we, after all

? this, have not seen any movement from us towards him. So what is this anxiety and this haste As for his call for peace, restraint, truce, and reconciliation, while claiming to be the Commander of the Faithful, a title he bestows upon us, unlike his forefathers, and the Imam of the nation, we declare that we are the rightful heirs to this title, unlike him and all others. We believe that God has obligated us to fight those who usurp this title from us, given the deep-rooted enmity and hatred between our ancestors and his, both past and present, in Islam and in pre-Islamic times. They held this belief in us during Islam and have demanded retribution from us since ancient times, including the Prophet's curse upon them (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), the killing of those among them who were killed for their polytheism and disbelief in God, and their demand for vengeance for their blood. We, in turn, demand retribution from them for those they killed among us during their rule and their days of dominance. How then can we accept the peace he mentioned after this momentous and dangerous event? God Almighty says: "You will not find a people who believe in God and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose God and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those are the ones in whose hearts He has inscribed faith." I am not one to compromise. In the religion of God, nor by showing affection to the enemies of God, nor by being

▪deceitful in any of God's affairs

Return my answer to him, for I have no other recourse but to him, and I have no say in the matter. All matters belong to God; upon Him I rely, and to Him I turn. If God moves me towards him and casts into my heart the intention to wage war against him and attack him, then I have no doubt that God, the Exalted and Glorified, intends to cut off his roots, eradicate his influence, cleanse the earth of his filth, and bring his days and his reign to an end. But if He does not cast that intention into my heart and turn my face towards someone else, then it is because of a matter He has already decreed, a respite He will use against him, and a period He has already ordained for him. God, the Exalted and Glorified, said: "And let not those who disbelieve think that what We grant them is better for themselves. We only grant them respite so that they may increase in sin." So let him await one of two outcomes and expect one of two possibilities: either destruction that will hasten his annihilation, or respite from God that will increase his sins. We await from God, the Exalted and Glorified, one of the two best outcomes, and we hope from Him for us the better of the two: either victory from God that He hastens for us against him, so that it heals our hearts and the hearts of those who believe in Him, or victory from God that He hastens for us against him, so that it heals our hearts and the hearts of those who believe in Him, or that He grants him respite as he is. His sins, vices, and shameful acts bring joy to those who see their enemy committing them. It used to be said, "It is enough for you to hope for your enemy to see him committing sins

▪against God," because sins hasten destruction or soon lead to the torment of Hellfire

The messenger dismissed the messenger and ordered the recipient of the letter to reply to it with a

▪promise. The recipient did so, and the messenger departed with the reply and the letter

Despair took hold of the unfortunate man, and fear seized him. The messenger responded with gentle words and wrote a reply to the one to whom he had first written, through one of his men, softening the tone and pleading for leniency. He made promises after, it is said, gathering his ministers and scribes to compose the reply, and he presented his claim as proof. He sent it with the messenger and followed it with another messenger bearing a letter to the original recipient, informing him that the letter was fabricated and that its author had no

▪knowledge of it, nor did he share its opinion, in order to calm the situation

The messenger addressed the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) with the same simple letter he had sent, and delivered the letter to the one to whom it was sent. The second messenger arrived with the other letter and delivered it to the one to whom it was sent, as we will mention. Al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) then proceeded to argue for us on every point, pointing out its flaws and corruption. The messenger was dismissed without any response from him, except that he said to him, "It has been said that truth speaks for you,

not threats." Al-Mansur (peace be upon him) wrote to the Byzantine emperor: "When the sword speaks, the pen
" .falls silent

The messenger who received the letter was ordered not to reply with a single word, and he departed disappointed. He then ordered the armies to be prepared for the Maghreb to pursue and kill all those who had sided with the Umayyads and to sweep them from the land. Once God had cleansed the land of them, He would,

▪ God willing, send them against them at sea to utterly destroy them, by the power and might of God
And in that was God's support and victory what was hoped for in its completion and the fulfillment of the hope in it by His grace and favor, as He opened in that for His chosen one and made it a means for him and

▪ moved him towards it as is His beautiful custom with him, peace be upon him

Part Seven

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Words on refusing to answer the losing, treacherous Umayyad .85

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said, when the saints present heard the flaws in the traitor's letter, they wished to refute it and respond to his faults. Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, "What benefit is there in responding to him? Do you think that if we show him the truth, he will turn away from his falsehood? Or is he doubtful of his own wickedness, so we should clarify it for him in the hope of his reform? By God, the only appropriate response to this letter from someone who understands the truth is to simply file it down and return it to its writer, for therein lies the answer and the proof against him from his own words. This wicked man only wanted to waste time with this correspondence and writing between us and him, and the fact that his messenger returned to him without a reply is more painful, shameful, and miserable for him. If a reply had come to him from us, he would have found relief and refuted such nonsense and absurdity from

" .his words

Speech in a council addressed to the Umayyad Messenger .86

He said, and among what the Messenger mentioned was that he sought mercy from the Commander of the Faithful for the Muslims, and he said, "The Commander of the Faithful knows that whenever war breaks out, both sides will perish, and they are Muslims. So if the Commander of the Faithful sees fit to spare their blood

" .and refrain from what might lead to their destruction, then he should do so

The Commander of the Faithful said, "The Muslims are the nation of my grandfather, not the nation of the grandfather of your messenger. I am more compassionate, kind, and merciful towards them. If any of them joins your companion, then he has joined the ranks of the rebellious, and it is incumbent upon me and all Muslims to fight them as God Almighty has commanded in His Book." He recited, "Until they return to the command of God. Whoever among them is killed for rebellion, then he is killed by God's decree. And whoever is killed by those who are just with me, then he is martyred in the cause of God and acted according to His command. Your companion claims that he will seek revenge from his place to the ends of the earth, but he is

" .only on an island on one side of it

If the Muslims you and he consider to be only the people of the Iberian Peninsula, then your companion was correct in his statement. But if the Muslims have spread throughout most of the earth, as is indeed the case, then you should have said to him what you said to us, since he threatened them with death. You should have pleaded for mercy for them, for he had gathered his forces, as you know, and deployed his ships, conspired against us with the polytheists, and landed his men in various anchorages to kill a group of Muslims who had no connection to him, nor had they harmed or transgressed against him, except that they were among those within our kingdom who submitted to our authority. God granted them victory over him and turned him

back in his wrath. Why then did you not condemn him for this and denounce his actions? You know that we were angered by the passage of his ships through our sea and our kingdom because of the evils and abominations they brought to him, until they wreaked havoc and laid hands on our subjects and seized our letters from our messengers. We acted in response as was our duty, pursued those who had corrupted and wreaked havoc in our land, and fought those who stood against them when we reached them, until God, by His grace, granted us victory, as We have always refrained from attacking those who did not fight us, thus neither violating sanctity nor breaking covenants. This is the way of our grandfather, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, and our father Ali, peace be upon him, and the Imams from his descendants. Then you saw how, when he once came to us as an ally of the polytheists, we turned the punishment away from his companions and directed it towards the polytheists, even though they deserved evil for their aggression against us and their advance towards us. However, we chose what should be chosen and turned away from them. So

▪ God hastened His vengeance at the hands of our allies

Who do you consider more compassionate towards Muslims and more merciful to the people of faith, us or your companion? Or how did you see that God, by His grace, empowered us over both sides and enabled us to prevail over both factions? The polytheists asked us for a truce at that time, and a group of our allies also asked us to turn to your companions, but we refused, lest the polytheists think we made peace with them out of fear of you and them. Then, after we had defeated their fleets, killed their protectors, and conquered their lands, inflicting heavy losses upon them, and our allies' hands were filled with their spoils, we saw that it was better for the Muslims to make peace with them for a period of rest. We made peace with them on the condition that their king would pay us tribute, a tribute he would not pay to anyone else in the east or west of the earth, and release the captives from the east who were in his hands. We stipulated several conditions, too numerous to mention, which we imposed upon him—conditions that would be too lengthy to mention here, conditions imposed by the

▪ mighty upon the weak

Who is more merciful to the Muslims, we or those who ally themselves with the polytheists against them, in defiance of what God revealed in the clear Book, when He says—and He is the most truthful of speakers—"O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies" (Quran 60:1). Have you not seen the fleets of your companion, while our fleets set out to fight his polytheist allies, landing in the ports of the Maghreb? They do not pass a port without landing there, and those on board wage war against its inhabitants. So God turned the tide against them, causing defeat and the killing of their men. Are those who inflicted this defeat upon them, in your view and that of your companion, Muslims or polytheists? If they are Muslims, and they did not go out to him nor confront him, how is it permissible for him to fight them and aid the polytheists against them? Then he claims, boasting, when they returned defeated, that he only sent them to reach Mahdia. This was their agreement with the tyrant of Constantinople. Thus, each of them advanced upon us with his fleet, and the polytheists entered our sea and crossed Sicily to reach us. They would never have dared to do this in our time except because of what he tempted them with. Your companion, so God defeated both armies and gave us power over both sides. Your companion was only boasting about what God had prepared for us. If God had prepared it for him, no, God would not do that, by His grace upon us. Our hope was to capture one of his ships to burn it, so God gave us power over him and all his fleets, so we burned them, and over his land and

▪ his kingdom, so we trampled them

As for his hope of reaching the Mahdi, God turned him back from it defeated and afflicted, bringing him complete disgrace and utter humiliation from God, cutting off his hope. If he were among the discerning and intelligent, or if he knew what he was saying, he would not have said such a thing, nor boasted of it, for it is a disgrace, shame, and scorn upon him. God Almighty did this to him only as He did to his accursed forefathers when they returned to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, from Mecca to Medina, all of them, having sought the help of those near them. God Almighty turned them back, as He said, in their rage, having gained no good. And God sufficed the believers in the fight. And God is ever Powerful and Exalted in Might. And He brought down those who supported them from among the People of the Book from their strongholds and cast terror into their hearts. Some of them you killed, and some you took captive. So this was exactly like that, a match for a match, and a feather for a feather. Indeed, this, praise be to God, is a thorn in your side because of what God Almighty killed of them, and the polytheists because of those He also killed, captured, and defeated from their fleets and armies. And that is God's ancient custom with His allies, and He is the Guardian of what they accustom Him to until He fulfills it. God willing, He promised them

Then he informs us that he curses us from his pulpits, just as his wicked predecessors cursed the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (peace be upon him), and he denies us cursing him. If we curse him, we curse him according to the Book of God, for he is among those of whom God, the most truthful of speakers, said, "The curse of God is upon the wrongdoers." And his ancestors are among those cursed by the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), for he follows them. And God, the Exalted and Glorified,

says, "And whoever among you takes them as allies - then indeed, he is one of them." So if he curses or insults us, it is by following the example of his predecessors who insulted the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) and cursed his successor (peace be upon him). And God has not increased him, nor will He increase us, by that except in elevation and honor, while it has only increased them in misery and will

▪ only increase their lowliness before God and His servants, and their hatred

Then he, peace be upon him, said: The meaning of cursing is expulsion and banishment. So who is more deserving of being banished from God, from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, and his family, who are closer to him and more deserving of being banished from him, or from those who oppose them, are hostile to them, and deny them? If the wretched one were to reflect on this, he would know that God's

▪ curse will return to him and will not go beyond him or his ancestors

The Messenger said, "O Commander of the Faithful, I only said what I was told to say, and the

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▪ statement is what the Commander of the Faithful said, and the proof is his

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said to him: If you have said what was said to you, then I have heard your reply, which was not intended to be conveyed or sent to the one who sent you with it. So leave if you wish and go wherever you want. If we had known that this was something you were told to say to us, we would not have listened to you nor would we have answered you about it. Rather, we answered you in

▪ response to your statement, not to the one who sent you

A discussion in a council on the chapters of the Umayyad book .87

He said, and in the letter that the messenger brought from Andalusia, whose story I have already mentioned, he presented to the Commander of the Faithful—meaning their appointed representative—the letter that had arrived. He saw in it praise from so-and-so—meaning the Commander of the Faithful—of himself, his boasting, and his pride, which is unbecoming of people of his intellect. It is not the way of people of intellect to

▪ praise themselves

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: Listen to the ignorance of this fool. This is a letter that came from one of our men to another man before him, in response to a letter he had written to him. He attributed to us what was in it, claiming we said it without any knowledge of it. If we praise ourselves, or others praise us, and if we boast, or others boast for us, or we boast, then by the grace of God, we are worthy of pride, praise, virtue, and glory because of our kinship to the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, and the position God has granted us and honored us with through the Imamate, and the virtue, glory, and honor He has bestowed upon us. If we mention this and speak, it is by the command of God, the Exalted and Glorified, when He, Blessed and Exalted, said to His Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him: "And as for the favor of your Lord, speak of it."

These are God's blessings upon us, His favor and His kindness to us, not because we boast with arrogance and pride, nor do we mention our virtues out of vanity or boastfulness. The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: "I am the master of the children of Adam, and I do not boast," and "I am the most God-fearing among you, and I do not boast." This statement that he, peace and blessings be upon him, said is the ultimate pride, but he only negated from The same arrogance, tyranny, and false claims that this critic

▪ boasted about to us

Then he read to us a chapter from the book, and it contained much boasting on his part, too lengthy to recount. Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, was astonished, and we were astonished at his self-ignorance. He said, "This is what we said: that this book contains the answer to his own words. If we had seen the answer, we would have written it down and returned it to his scribe, saying, 'This is the answer to chapter so-and-so from your book, chapter so-and-so,' until we had covered it all." Then he said, "This is what we were told: that he compiled his book and the writings of his ministers, then selected from their words what he had gathered, unaware that some of it contradicted others due to his poor discernment, his limited understanding, and his preoccupation

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▪ with his sins, which prevented him from critically examining the words and considering their meanings

In the second chapter

He said, and in one chapter of the book, the accursed Umayyad boasted of the wealth he possessed and inherited from his forefathers in the form of treasuries and treasures. Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, "This is what we mentioned to him: he takes pride in our superiority over all creation because of the birth of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, and because God has singled us out for the leadership of His servants, as stated in the Book of God, the Exalted and Glorified, regarding our virtue and right, and what He has made obligatory upon the nation in terms of love and obedience to us, and what He has made part of the spoils of war for us, along with the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family. We have described God's favor and grace upon us in this regard, and His bounty and blessings upon us. Yet he boasts to us of a kingdom of wealth he seized and acquired unlawfully, and of a power he transgressed and usurped, competing with us in heedlessness, as God, the Exalted, said, 'The rivalry for worldly gain has distracted you until you visited the graves,' until the end of the chapter. This is God's warning to this wicked man and those like him who

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▪ are distracted by the rivalry for worldly gain through the wealth they have seized

This person, in whom he takes pride, will only bring upon himself the burden of his sin and its consequences. A little of it would have been lighter and better for him, and whatever he accumulates is only an increase in God's wrath and anger. He is like a thief who boasts of his theft, or a traitor who boasts of his treachery. Let him boast and boast of it to his peers and those like him who worship this world, preferring it and abandoning the Hereafter. They prepare from it what they prepare for disobeying God and what distances them from Him, just as this wretched person prepares with entertainment, wine, and his indulgence in shameful and immoral acts. It has been narrated from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, that he said: "Whoever wants to know the source of a person's wealth should look at how he spends it, for what is unlawful is spent in such a case." He also said: "Each of you will be asked about his wealth: how he acquired it and how he spent it." This is something about which none of you doubts: that what is unlawful, if spent,

▪ remains unlawful, because the one who acquired it has no right to take it or spend it

In the third chapter

He said, and it was mentioned in one of the chapters of this book, that the Romans, according to its author, had defeated us and captured many Muslims from our fleets, and that we had agreed to release them in

▪ order to continue fighting the Muslims

Then Al-Mu'izz, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: "Are you not astonished by this treacherous liar? If this statement were merely a display of his own arrogance before his people, it would be a vile and shameful lie. How much more so, then, for him to write it to those who know its falsehood and are aware of his deceit? You know that the Romans captured Muslims from our side, except for the people of the ship that passed by them, which we recovered. We made a pact with them, as part of the truce we established between us, that they would bring us those they had captured from the East, along with whatever they had taken from them. They have asked us and pleaded with us to release some of their men, women, and children whom we had taken captive. We have not granted their request to release a single one of them, out of respect for Islam and its people, and out of contempt for disbelief and its followers. Does this traitor not feel ashamed of his lies

"? and deception

But he was not ashamed of what was more shameful for him than that, the blatant flaws and ugly sins for which he was notorious and about which news of him spread widely, such that he was even mentioned in his own mind. Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said this while lowering his head and turning his face away in shame at mentioning it. He said, "I said something to this messenger about the son of this wicked man who is attributed to his time, and I meant this meaning by it. He said to me, arguing on his behalf, 'This is only said, my master, about his father.' So it is enough for him who did not deny his guardian and messenger because of his notoriety for it. And by my life, these are the steps of one whose condition is like this, and this is his disease and the

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▪ disease of his forefathers. May God disgrace them, humiliate them, curse them, and banish them

In Chapter Four

He said, and in one chapter of this book, the accursed Umayyad boasted about the silk, brocade, and various types of clothing woven for him in Andalusia, claiming that nothing like them could be woven in the

• East, and that he had thus become self-sufficient and no longer needed anything brought to him from the East

The Commander of the Faithful, al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him), said: "We have never heard anyone claiming intelligence boast of weaving. If it were something to be proud of, we would have such exquisite works and wondrous craftsmanship that no one who sees them would doubt they have seen their like. This is what our slaves, whom God Almighty has bestowed upon us from the Roman captives captured by our swords, do—unlike those who boast of similar things from other subjects. But such things are not something that intelligent people boast of. Rather, weavers and craftsmen, when they are the majority in a land, are brought low by them, as the Egyptian said to the Yemeni: 'The people of Yemen are only weavers of cloaks, tanners of leather, and monkey trainers,' thus disparaging them. This ignorant man then made this a source of pride, and

• when compared to his own shortcomings, he boasts of something similar

In Chapter Five

He said, and he mentioned in one of the chapters of this book Ali, peace be upon him, and he prayed

• for mercy upon him, and he said, "Even if what he attained was only made possible for him through trickery Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, and what prompted him to pray for mercy upon Ali, peace be upon him, was the same necessity that prompted him to pray upon the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace. And because the community today has unanimously agreed upon his virtue, and if it were possible for him, what his predecessors did would not have been possible for him to curse, as they cursed him from the pulpits. Indeed, among the things for which some of them praised Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz was that

• he refrained from cursing him

• I wish you had not insulted Ali, nor feared Bari, nor accepted the words of a criminal

Then he, peace be upon him, said: And in this wicked man's showing mercy to Ali, peace be upon him, there is something that obligates him to curse his forefathers who cursed him and to disavow them if that was

• his belief

As for his claim that Ali, peace be upon him, attained his position through trickery, this is something we have already mentioned regarding its absurdity and confusion. Both the elite and the common people know that the one who attained his position through trickery was his accursed predecessor, the closest of whom was Marwan al-Tarroub, who conspired against Mu'awiya ibn Yazid and instigated those from the people of al-Jabiyah to install him. No virtue or merit was found in him at that time that anyone could mention or speak of, except that he said he had grown old until his arms turned gray. Yet there were among them at that time many wicked elders who were older than him. Those present in al-Jabiyah that day were greatly astonished by the one who spoke of him and accepted his leadership, given the weakness and lack of discernment of the people of al-

• Jabiyah. One of them even remarked, "This is a matter that was orchestrated in the dead of night As for Ali (peace be upon him), it is known to all, both those close to him and those close to him, that no one before him, after the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), had received such unanimous support as he did for the Prophet. As for Abu Bakr, the Ansar and others disputed his leadership, and many of the Companions died without having pledged allegiance to him. As for Umar, they gathered around him and said to Abu Bakr, "We implore you by God not to appoint over us a harsh and cruel man." He replied, "Do you frighten me with my Lord? If I meet God, I will tell Him that I appointed over them the best of your people." As for Uthman, they did not agree on his appointment, but they did agree on his

• assassination

As for Ali, peace be upon him, they unanimously agreed upon him, but he refused them, and they pressed him relentlessly until he yielded to them, as he found no way to refute their demands with a valid argument. Had they hesitated, as others before them had hesitated, he would have abandoned them. Those who later broke their oaths were the first to pledge allegiance to him, for they found in him no greater loyalty than they had come to expect. Mu'awiya had asked him to leave him in charge of Syria, and had he done so, what transpired would not have occurred. However, at that point, he recited the words of God Almighty: "And I would not take the misleaders as helpers." This wicked man then resorted to what might have been said about

his ancestors, and he accused us of it, just as the proverb says of a prostitute who accuses a chaste woman of
" .adultery: "She accuses her of her own affliction and slips away

In Chapter Six

He said, and he mentioned in a chapter of this book Muawiyah, and he prayed for mercy upon him, and

" .he said, "The Commander of the Faithful, Muawiyah

Then our master, al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: If Mu'awiya is considered the Commander of the Faithful, then he has testified against his ancestors and against himself regarding usurpation, because Mu'awiya established the matter in his son, so he did not include Marwan and the Marwanid clan in it. Mu'awiya and his son did not make that for themselves, nor did any of them appoint them as their guardians, nor did the Muslims agree upon them. Therefore, according to his statement, they are usurpers and usurpers. And with this same reasoning, he and his ancestors were satisfied with those among the common people who claimed to be scholars, so they made them imams from whom they took their religion. And those people issued a fatwa to them that whoever the Muslims accepted was their emir. And if they had established this principle, then those who accepted it would not have been considered as they established it, since they did not have anyone the right to

.appoint a successor or delegate to anyone what was not his

And how could this be, when they have no right to it themselves or others, because God, may His name be glorified, has linked obedience to the Imams, peace be upon them, with obedience to Him and His Messenger? He, may His name be glorified, said: "Obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you." If people were to appoint an Imam for themselves, and obedience to him were obligatory by virtue of their appointment, then it would likewise be obligatory for them to appoint a prophet and a god, as the pre-Islamic Arabs did in setting up gods besides God, exalted is He above the words of the misguided and unjust.

.This discussion is broad

In Chapter Seven

He said, and in a chapter of this book there was mention of Abu Abdullah, the one who carried out the call, and his carrying it out, and the killing of the Mahdi, peace be upon him, and that he did not fulfill his

.promise to him, and God took revenge on him at his hands

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: What could this ignorant man possibly be unaware of concerning Abu Abdullah? You already know him. His brother, Abu al-Abbas, was the cause of his death. Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, did not intend to kill him, even though he deserved to be killed in his eyes, in order to preserve what had been previously stated about him. He had indeed conspired with his brother, inclined towards him, and

.been overcome by his desires when he saw matters slipping from his control

This transgressor does not know what necessitated his killing, nor what its cause was, nor does he know the difference between killing that is an act of wrath, revenge, and oppression, and killing that is retribution, a duty, and a purification. So what led him to involve himself in something he knows nothing about? If someone denies such a thing, then let him deny the actions of God Almighty with those of His prophets whom

He chose above His servants, then punished them for what they had committed and purified them through punishment from what they had perpetrated. For God Almighty, the most truthful of speakers, has informed us about those of His prophets whom He punished, such as Adam, Jonah, Job, Solomon, David, and Jacob, for what they had committed. If he denies the punishment of the righteous when they commit evil deeds after good deeds, then let him deny what God Almighty has made a written Qur'an concerning this, which is His saying:

" . "And We will approach what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed

The Muslim community is unanimous that even if a worshipper were to worship God for his entire life, standing in prayer without ceasing and fasting without breaking his fast, and then disbelieve in Him for even a moment and die in his disbelief, God would nullify his deeds. If anyone denies this, let him read God's words—and He is the most truthful of speakers—"And it was revealed to you and to those before you that if you should associate anything with God, your deeds would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers." The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, was as God described him in

His clear Book, when He said—and He is the most truthful of speakers—"There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful." He was bald, despite the mercy God described in him, yet he would execute the murderer, stone the married adulterer, punish the unmarried, and cut off the hand of the thief. These are the limits set by God, which He mentioned in His Book. Whoever transgresses them has wronged himself. Mercy in these limits, and in neglecting to implement them, is not considered mercy. For God, the Exalted and Glorified, has mentioned His limits, which He has prescribed and commanded His servants to uphold. He is the Most

▪ Merciful to His creation and the All-Knowing of what is best for all His servants

If the one who denied the killing claims that he was not killed, then he must be killed, and he cites the hadith narrated by his imams that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said, as they claim, that it is not permissible to kill a person who believes in God and the Last Day except in three cases: adultery after marriage, apostasy after faith, or killing a soul unjustly, then he does not know whether this person who denied the killing committed any of these acts or not. The Book has explicitly stated the killing of others besides those mentioned in this hadith. God Almighty said, "The punishment of those who wage war against God and His Messenger and strive to cause corruption on earth is that they be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides, or be banished from the land." So, whoever causes corruption on earth, whether from his own wealth or the wealth of other Muslims, or intends to kill him, then it is permissible for him to kill him. God Almighty said, "If one of them transgresses against the other, then fight against the one that transgresses until it returns to the command of God." Thus, He made it obligatory to fight the transgressors and permitted killing them. Did this wicked, ignorant objector know the situation of this person whose killing he denied, and that he was innocent of all these charges? And all the consequences, or whether he knew how he

▪ was killed and in what ways his affairs unfolded, but he truly knows nothing of that

But he knows that the slave who fled with his grandfather, who entered Andalusia from the East, risking his life to bring him to his fate, had his hand cut off and was killed because he had slapped him one day when he brought him to the sultan. He had seen some of the sultan's men, trying to deceive them into thinking he was his slave, and thus he sought to save him. Therefore, this critic should focus on what he does know about his ancestor, rather than what he is ignorant of. It is possible that a tutor or guardian of the sons of kings disciplines and beats them for minor offenses, and then one of them, upon reaching the throne, fulfills his duty to his tutor and guardian who used to beat and discipline him. So how can someone who, through his actions, intended only to save the life of the one who had wronged him, and to spare him from death, thus rescuing him and bringing him to the throne, and sacrificing himself for it, be rewarded with having his hand cut off and being killed? If such an ignorant fool were to criticize his ancestor, he would be too preoccupied to criticize

▪ what he does not know about others

Then our master, Imam al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, and in a similar vein, some wise men said: He who is blind to his own faults does not know the virtues of others. He does not refrain from faults because he

▪ is ignorant of them, nor does he know the virtues in others so as to appreciate them

Then he, peace be upon him, said: I came across this statement a few days ago in a book, and I was greatly impressed by it. I believe it was in these exact words. Then he, peace be upon him, called for the book,

▪ took it out, found it, and returned it. Then he said: It is indeed a statement of wisdom

Part Eight

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

In Chapter Eight

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said, and it was in one of the chapters of

▪ this book that the accursed Umayyad boasted about, that he mentioned several of his men Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "If we knew that acquiring this knowledge would be difficult, we would have considered enduring it. If this foolish, ignorant man did not know that in the smallest of our lands and the humblest of our armies there are many times the number he mentioned and boasted about, then he is

ignorant of something that should not be unknown to someone like him. But if he did know this, then let him inform us of the number he possesses. This only serves to reveal his weakness and vulnerability, and to show us the extent of our need should we wish to fight him. I do not know the meaning of his mentioning it to us, but

"

▪ there is no understanding except for those with intellect

In Chapter Nine

He said, and in one of the chapters of this book there was a mention of Africa, and he said, "It is

"

▪ inhabited by Berbers who are not able to distinguish anything

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, smiled upon hearing this and said, "This is something that has been reported about some kings. A calamity befell the people during his reign, but he was spared it because of a precaution he had taken. When they saw that he had acted contrary to their expectations, they said, 'The king has gone mad,' and they intended to depose him. This happened to him, and he took what he had been guarding against until he experienced what they experienced. Then they said, 'He has recovered,' and he endured it until it

▪ was removed from him as it was removed from them

Similarly, this ignorant and feeble person, whose intellect fell short of that of the wise, accused them of ignorance. He failed to recognize his own imams, who, as they claim, are the scholars of his land. Rather, most of them acquired their knowledge from those who lived in Africa, and their books remain in their possession to

▪ this day. Every newcomer takes from them, even those among them who are not considered reliable

Ignorance, when described, foolishness, and vulgarity, when attributed, are only ascribed to the people of Andalusia, who most closely resemble the people of the Roman lands in temperament, morals, dress, and appearance. I have seen many who have written books about various countries and their inhabitants, and they all agree that intelligence, shrewdness, knowledge, and refinement reside in the people of Iraq, followed by those of North Africa. They mention all other countries but fail to include Andalusia. Were it not for their intellectual shallowness, coarse nature, and limited understanding, they would not have acknowledged those who fled from the Umayyads. If anyone more ignorant than them were found on earth, they would have sought them out

▪ instead

As for what he mentioned about the Berbers, were it not for those among them who were inclined towards him out of a desire to fight the polytheists and defend him, he would not have been able to settle down

▪ nor would his home have been secure

In Chapter Ten

He said, and it was mentioned in one chapter of this book, that he left the people of the various schools of thought and what they had chosen for themselves, and he did not criticize any of them, so most people were

▪ drawn to him and settled in his town for that reason

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: This is something we have already mentioned. He and those like him who usurped power only desired worldly gain. When the people surrendered it to them, they disregarded all aspects of their religion and simply handed it over to them, taking it from them. If they had been among those whom God Almighty had appointed to guide His servants according to His prescribed religion and to call them to it, they would have guided them to it and called them to what was best for them. This would have been more important to them than worldly matters, because God Almighty did not send messengers and establish imams

▪ except to manifest His religion, guide His servants to it, and call them to it

As for what he mentioned about those who migrated to his homeland, we know of no one who migrated there for knowledge he sought or for religious devotion. Those who migrated did so only because he permitted them to drink alcohol and openly commit sins, and he made that a reason for himself to do the same.

If he condemns this in others, he should condemn it in himself. Moreover, if migrating there is considered a source of pride, then we know of no village, let alone major cities and towns, from the far west to the easternmost reaches, that does not have a group of people from Andalusia who migrated there and settled there. Many of them mention that what drove them to migrate was fear of God's wrath when they saw the open sinning

in their homeland, so they fled from it. If migrating there is considered a source of pride, then let him consider those who migrated from it. This is a source of pride for the ignorant. People have always migrated from one

- land to another, by choice, desire, for a reason, or for no reason, since ancient times and in every place

And if he believes that every country he moves to has an advantage over the country he moves from, then let him, if he wishes, prefer the country to which the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family, exiled his grandfather, Al-Hakam ibn Al-As, over the sanctuary from which he exiled him, so that his statement

- may be supported and his pride complete

In Chapter Eleven

He said, and it was mentioned in one chapter of this book, that he meant the Commander of the Faithful, our master, who was not satisfied with praying for him to have a long life, but went beyond that to

- include what is prayed for in the prayers for the prophets

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: If this ignorant man knew the true meaning of prayer, or its figurative meaning, he would not have denied what he denied. But because of his ignorance, we refrained from answering him and remained silent, for it is said that silence is the best answer to a fool. So we sent his

- messenger back to him without answering him, out of contempt for him

It is as if this ignorant person has not heard the words of God, the most truthful of speakers: "And give good tidings to the patient, who, when afflicted with calamity, say, 'Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we will return.' Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided." And His saying: "Indeed, Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet. O you who have believed, send blessings upon him and greet him with a worthy greeting." And what his imams narrated: that the people asked the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, when this verse was revealed, "O Messenger of Allah, how should we pray for you?" He said, "Say: O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, and grant them peace, as You sent blessings upon

"

- Abraham and the family of Abraham among all the worlds. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious

Then Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: We are the family of Muhammad, upon whom blessings are invoked in the Book of God and on the tongue of the Messenger of God, despite the disapproval of the wicked

- and ignorant person who denies this

Then he said, "If this was the case with him, it was only known to be for prophets, as he said. So why is he called the Commander of the Faithful? This is not known to have been the case for anyone in Andalusia, nor was it known to any of his forefathers before him, nor was it used for a long period of his life. What necessitated this? Were he and his forefathers ignorant of this matter before, and then did he come to the right path

"

- afterward? Let him bear witness to this for himself and for them

Even if they were right, ignorance led them astray, and they claimed something that was not rightfully

- theirs

In Chapter Twelve

He said, and it was mentioned in the chapters of this book, that he preferred peace, reconciliation, and truce because of his desire to prevent the bloodshed of Muslims and because he disliked anything that might

- lead to something else

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: Why did he not dislike that when he sent his messengers, gifts, and money to the tyrant of the Romans, seeking his help against them, and conspired with him to wage war against them, and each of them came from one direction with his men and his support? Were they not Muslims in his presence at that time? They only became Muslims today when we turned our faces towards him and our lightning flashed towards him, mixing gentleness with severity for us, showing us fortitude and support, and

- then asking us to have mercy on the Muslims

Then he mentioned something similar to what he mentioned to the Messenger, and it has already been

- mentioned in a similar statement, because of what he mentioned to him

In Chapter Thirteen

He said, and it was mentioned in one of the chapters of this book, that he meant the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, prevented the people of his country, meaning the people of Andalusia, from

- performing the pilgrimage to the Sacred House of God and stood between them and it

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "Have you ever seen a more heinous liar than this wicked man, or a more vile speaker? When have we, the people of Andalusia, ever prevented the people of his land from performing Hajj or from traveling wherever they wished? Rather, he is the one who prevented them and others from other lands who were in his country from leaving, lest they, as he claimed, convey his news to us. He then turned that away from us. Yet these people go and return, and we do not interfere with any of them, nor do we prevent them. How could we turn away from the House of God when we are its people? Or prevent us from visiting our grandfather Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, when we are his descendants? May God curse this wicked man and have mercy on him! How vile is his wickedness and how vile

- "
- is his lie! Yet the evidence refutes it, and observation invalidates it

In Chapter Fourteen

He said, and it was mentioned in one of the chapters of this book, that all those who were included in the island of Andalusia were his allies, his men, his followers, his clients, his slaves, his soldiers, and his

- supporters

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: If we were to believe his statement and act upon his testimony and claim, we would kill those we captured and seize their wealth, let alone prevent them from performing their pilgrimage. For if they are as he described them, then they are our enemies and enemies, and it is permissible for us to do to them what we have said, since they are as he claimed and are among them by virtue of their

- allegiance to him and their being in his party

We all know that the situation with them is contrary to what he claimed, and that he lied—may God curse and disgrace him. We also know that many of those within his household and surrounded by his walls despise and loathe him, and consider his death unlikely and slow to come. If they could, they would hasten it for him, let alone the rest of his people, whom he has subjected to the worst forms of torment and whose wealth he has plundered to the point of pillaging. He only ceased some of his evil against them when we intervened against him. They pray to God for our victory over him because we have stopped him. Therefore, we do not accept his claims against them, nor do we believe him regarding them. We treat well those among them who

- treat us well, just as we have treated well those among them whom we could reach

In Chapter Fifteen

He said, and it was in one of the chapters of this aforementioned book, that he said, "And he wrote to us—meaning, he wrote to them from the court—that we sent Berber reinforcements against them in ships, but they were destroyed and their people were afflicted, so they were taken prisoner and sold for dogs." He said,

- "
- "This is a matter of grief for anyone with sense, that free Muslims should be sold

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said, and the scribe who wrote this to them did not say on our behalf that we permitted or authorized that, but rather he informed them of God's punishment for what they did. As for us, if we had captured them, we would not have ruled over them except by

- killing them, or by granting them freedom, or what is required in the case of those like them in judgment

Then he said, "What prevented them from gaining power and taking captives was nothing but the outward appearance of faith. As for their deeds, they were the deeds of polytheists. And if God Almighty has

inflicted upon them such misery and punishment that we might not have done to them had we triumphed over them, then that is more comforting to our hearts and a greater expression of God's favor and grace upon us. He made our awareness of God's favor upon us in the destruction of our enemy and those who intended harm

”

▪ against us, and our remembrance of what God has inflicted upon us, a source of shame for us

Then he mentioned in his book that when we sent our fleet to Almeria, burned its ships, and conquered its land, God did not grant us success in that, because we also sent a fleet to raid the Romans at Corsica, but we

▪ gained nothing, and the people of our fleet returned disappointed, and the polytheists attacked some of them Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: This is one of the contradictions in his book that we mentioned earlier. If he had addressed it to us, it would have been a response to him. Here, he rebukes us for mentioning God's favor upon us in defending us against those He sent against us, and for bringing down upon them wrath and misery while sparing us. Here, he boasts and rejoices that the polytheists protected themselves from us and inflicted upon the Muslims what he and the liars are experiencing. Rather, we conquered their land, killed some of them, expelled them, and our men returned safe, thanks be to God, Lord of the Worlds. Thus, he combines falsehood with joy at the salvation of the polytheists and the calamity of the Muslims. This is his belief, which

God has revealed through his tongue and made manifest in his book, despite the discrepancies. It is not permissible for many madmen like him to criticize us for what is not to be criticized, and to bring forth the same

▪ meaning that he attributed to us, or even greater than it

In Chapter Sixteen

He said, and it was in one of the chapters of this book, “Then he claimed that God Almighty would cut short our lifespan and take revenge on us. He said, ‘This is the statement of an ignorant person, and his ignorance is sufficient in that he makes pronouncements about the unseen concerning God that he does not

”

▪ know

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "If we were to say that, we would say it from the Book of God, may His name be glorified, and from the words of our grandfather, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him. For when we see this transgressor committing the prohibitions of God, the Almighty, the Majestic, the Exalted, neglecting His commands, and showing enmity towards His allies and party, we judge him according to God's judgment and fulfill His promise concerning him, for He says, 'There is no partner for Him, that they are the victorious ones, and that Our army is the triumphant ones.' So when they angered Us, We took vengeance on them, and I gave them respite, for My plan is firm, and God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And We have written in the Psalms, after the Reminder, that the earth will be inherited by My righteous servants. So we know that God does not leave the like of him until He takes vengeance on him, nor does He neglect his evil deeds, but rather He changes them and does not leave His

”

▪ land without purifying it from him and bequeathing it to His righteous servants, as He said

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: Then this is a chapter in his book after this, in which he mentions, according to his claim, our bad opinion of him. He said in it: And whoever is in such a state, his days will not last. So he comes with the same thing that he claimed to have taken from us, he will not return it as if he were not the one who took it. Then he said: This is from what we mentioned earlier regarding the inconsistency of his

▪ words, his bad direction, and his ignorance. And God is ever watchful over the wrongdoers

words spoken in a gathering praising and thanking God 88

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, one day mentioning what God Almighty had prepared for him in terms of worldly success and the abundance of worldly possessions He, blessed be His name, had bestowed upon him, including various kinds of wealth, horses, weapons, equipment, and finery. He also mentioned the remarkable works and extraordinary crafts that appeared during his reign, which even the most skilled craftsmen of the East could not replicate. He explained that this was the work of his servants, whom God Almighty had granted him from the captives of the Romans. He added that no other king in the world had ever experienced such a thing. He further mentioned what God Almighty had enabled him to do, such as quarrying stones from the mountains in a place where no king before him had ever been able to do so.

He also mentioned the buildings he constructed and the trees he planted, along with the people's obedience to

•him and the favorable conditions throughout his kingdom during his reign

He also mentioned the weakness of the Abbasids and the humiliation and degradation to which God Almighty had brought them, and how their kingdom had been seized, and that they were like orphans in the care of those who had conquered their kingdom, who provided for them and had taken all their wealth and power. So he praised God greatly and thanked Him for what He had bestowed upon him, enabled him to do, and given

•him, and for what his enemies had taken away and diminished

Then he said, "We have rejected this world and cast it aside, and we have sought the Hereafter and preferred it. So Allah, the Exalted and Glorified, brought this world to us willingly, and He has prepared for us a generous reward in the Hereafter. By Allah, our enemies have not attained what they have gained in this world except through hardship, fear, and deception. They find pleasure only in disobeying Allah and His prohibitions, knowing them to be so and having no doubt about them. The most one of them says about this is, and it is said to him, 'It is only this world, so hasten to it. What you hasten to gain is what you profit from, and what you leave of it is what you lose.' They do not remember the Day of Judgment, nor do they hope for reward. We, however, find greater pleasure than they do in obeying Allah and in what He has made lawful, without disobeying Him or committing what He has made unlawful. They have nothing in this world but disgrace, toil, and hardship, and nothing in the Hereafter but punishment, curse, and a bad end. They have lost both this world

"

•and the Hereafter. That is the manifest loss

Hadiths on God's favor upon His saint 89

He said, and I heard him, may God's blessings be upon him, mention a man who had come to him from the East. We saw him and knew him. He said, "He was one of those who had been given permission in his place to preach. He used to contact us to preach to us long ago. Some of our preachers, to whom we had delegated this task, had authorized him to do so. We would hear from him about his bad condition, his ugly pretensions, his alteration and distortion of God's religion, and his speaking falsehoods about it, which distressed and saddened us. Then God facilitated his arrival to us, so we received him and provided for him. We ordered one of our trusted confidants to negotiate with him and extract his knowledge. We found him to be exactly as he had been described and reported to us, and even worse. When we learned what he had and became aware of his beliefs, we denounced him for it, admonished him, and asked him to repent. He showed repentance, acceptance, and a return to the truth and submission. We took notice of him, and then he asked us to release him to his place. We

"

•ordered him to prepare for that and granted him permission, giving him a generous reward

A group of our guests who were with him informed us that he only intended to get rid of us and that he was determined to return to his former ways, to spread his dissent in his own place and elsewhere, and to roam the world. We had already released him, and he had left our door, intending to exploit people's wealth, leading them into ruin and sowing seeds of corruption. This was reported to us by one of our trusted advisors, who advised us that wherever he went, he would corrupt and destroy its inhabitants. His imprisonment and detention within our presence would be preferable. This became clear to us, and the appropriate course of action was to eliminate him completely, or at the very least, imprison him. We considered his intentions before we could apprehend him, his professed repentance, and whether the actions we feared had not yet occurred, thus warranting punishment, even if he had already prepared himself. We decided to prioritize justice in this matter.

If he harbored ill intentions, God will suffice him, and we would not undertake any action that might be considered questionable. Therefore, we granted him permission. Upon his departure, he left without bidding us farewell, fearing that something might hinder his stay. We dispatched him with our agent in Barqa at the time of

•his departure, instructing him to treat him well, be kind to him, honor him, and attend to his needs

When he arrived with him in the city of Tripoli, the governor sent two men on two swift camels to Barqa, as he had intended to travel there before his arrival. He asked to go with them and expressed his desire to do so. The governor informed him of the hardship involved, given the camels' speed and the required pace. The man replied that this was preferable, and the governor agreed, citing the governor's prior knowledge of his need and the likelihood that his fear of being turned back motivated his decision. He traveled with the two men, and after several days, night fell. Robbers attacked them, and the two men spurred their camels on. The camel, in turn, galloped with them, throwing the man off. He fell to the ground, breaking his neck, and died. His companions were unaware of his death and hid from the robbers in the darkness. The next day, the local people found him and his belongings. They reported his death to the governor, who secured his belongings, buried him,

and wrote to us with the news. May God spare us the trouble of such an encounter and keep us from any

▪ suspicion regarding his case

This is God's way with us regarding those who have denied our kindness and been ungrateful for our blessings. We have entrusted their affairs to Him and placed our trust in Him. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, for His countless favors and blessings, and for His abundant grace, which we cannot fully express. We

▪ praise Him as He deserves and is worthy of all praise

arguments for learning from the saints of God 90

He said, and one day some grammarians attended his gathering, so he said to him, "Tell me about you, you who claim to know grammar and language. Didn't your imams take this knowledge from the Bedouin Arabs, a people who didn't know what you use to justify it and apply it to its chapters, examples, aspects, subtle points of articulation, variations in its grammatical analysis, the meter of its poetry, its rhymes, its syllables, its various forms, and its underlying reasons? Why then did they take it from those who didn't know what they knew about it, nor did they know the reasons behind it, and yet they surrendered their knowledge to them, even

"? though they brought with it things they didn't know and things contrary to what they applied

He said, "Because they knew that they were imprinted with it, that they were its people and its source, and they only placed what they placed of these evidences, buildings, and curricula according to their principles so that they would not deviate from them. So if something came to them from them that they did not know, they

"
▪ would submit the statement to them regarding it

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "Are we not the family of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, his flesh and blood, his close confidants, those who entered his presence and absence, the repositories of his secrets, and the people closest to him? Why then did they not submit to us what they did not know about their religion, and ask us about what was unclear to them, instead of

"? deciding what they did not know based on their own opinions and desires

The man remained silent and offered no reply, for he was one of those who adopted the sayings of the

▪ common people

Perhaps his argument for this is that he says, "We only accept what has come to us from the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, through trustworthy individuals who conveyed it to us, even if they were not from his family. The authenticity of what they conveyed to us is established in our view." It is said to him, "What if some of these Arabs and others from outside the family conveyed it to you? Who is more deserving of being considered reliable and trustworthy in your view: one who is from among them, knows their language, and understands what he conveys on their behalf, or one who is from outside the family,

"? does not know what they know, and is not in the same position as one of them

Then he said, "If he is trustworthy in his transmission, I will accept it without hesitation." It was said to him, "What if he contradicts what the Arab, whose knowledge you do not doubt, brings you? Whose word do you consider more worthy of acceptance?" For he finds no alternative but to say that the Arab is more deserving of being accepted from, otherwise he would be contradicting the very principle upon which he built his argument. This would necessitate abandoning the established sayings of the Arabs and accepting the sayings of those who have recently adopted Arabic. This is something none of his companions would say. If they did, they would invalidate the very words of the Arabs that they cite in their books and refer to, even if they do not understand their meaning, as Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, mentioned in his original work, which he

▪ acknowledged and admitted

visions seen by Al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers be upon him 91

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: When Al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, went out to the region of Tunis while he was sending out the fleets

to invade the Romans, he stopped at the ruins of Carthage, which is one of the wonders of the ancients in

• construction, and he stayed there for several days

He said, "I entered upon him one morning, and he said to me, 'Let me tell you about the wonders of this building. It has captivated my heart.' I said to myself, 'I wonder who built it? Was it one person, or did a group succeed one another? And how could the one who built it have done so, with its grandeur and vastness?' I said, 'If it was built by one king, how could it have grown so large, when life itself would not reach its height? And if it was passed down from one king to another, how could their opinions have agreed upon this location? For it is

" "

• rare for people to agree on where to live in a country, especially kings

I fell asleep thinking about it, and in my dream I saw a man enter upon me. He was very dark-skinned with a yellowish tinge, had a thin beard, was of medium height, and wore a white robe. He greeted me, and I

"? returned his greeting and said, "Who are you

"

• • • One of God's servants said, "I sent to you

I said, "Welcome," and extended my hand to him. He leaned over and kissed my arm. I told him to sit down, so he sat and remained silent. I waited to hear what he would say, but he remained silent and smiled

"? slightly at me. I said, "Who are you, and why have you come

"

• He said, "I am the owner of this city

"? I said, "And how are you its owner

"

• He said, "I am the king who built it and ruled its people

? Did you say it alone, or did someone else share it with you

He said, "I built it myself until I completed it, and I lived in it and spent my life there until I died in

" • it

So I said to him, "You have been given a great kingdom and vast resources. Did you not have an

"? enemy whom you fought, so that he would distract you from this building

He moved his hand, bringing all his fingers together and drawing them close. "I have many enemies,"

"? he said. "And who is without enemies

"? I asked, "What was your religion and sect

He said monotheism

? So what did I become

"

• He said, "It's all for the best, praise be to God

• I said, God has combined for you the affairs of this world and the hereafter

He said, "What is so strange about that, since these parts of this earth have been granted what you see of the gift, so what about the noble souls and what the Creator bestows upon them if He is pleased with

"? them

I said yes, so what is your name? She gave me a name I had never heard of in any language, nor did I

• know its meaning, except that it had many letters

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, "I think he said something like ten letters in it," and he mentioned some of them. Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, wrote it. Then he moved to stand up, so I said, "Won't you sit? I've grown accustomed to your company." He said, "I only sent for you because I was busy. If you wish to ask

"

• about something, ask whatever you like

He spoke, then fell silent, thinking about what I wanted to ask him. He got up and left, and I was taken

• aback

words on the virtues of the Imams, peace be upon them 92

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, and he mentioned the matter of a city in the west, and it was said to him that a dispute and war had broken out between its inhabitants and the tribes that bordered them, and it

▪ had been destroyed several times before in a similar manner, and its inhabitants had been expelled from it
Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: We spared no effort in seeking its reconstruction, but it and other cities that defended our allies at the beginning of our rule will never prosper, and strife will continue there until

▪ it is destroyed

He mentioned others whose inhabitants had defended themselves while in a similar state, and said that this was a punishment from God Almighty. Then he mentioned the cities that surrendered and submitted, and

▪ what God bestowed upon them of security, goodness, and prosperity

Words on the virtue of guardianship 93

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, mentioning the Kutama and their loyalty, and their impression of the Imamate. He, peace be upon him, said, "By God, I think that if Hell and Paradise were shown to them and they were told, 'This is Paradise, and our enemies are in it,' and that is not the

"
▪ case, then either you will be with them in it, or this is Hell, so enter it, they would choose to enter it

Part Nine

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

words condemning envy, mentioned in a gathering 94

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad Qas said: I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, say:

Envy is the greatest of diseases, the most severe of afflictions, and the most wretched of misfortunes. The envious person is only displeased with God Almighty when he sees Him bestowing good upon one of His servants. He is displeased by this because he sees himself as deserving of it, even though he is not as he sees himself. He attributes injustice in God Almighty's actions and error in His judgment—exalted is God far above

▪ that! Then this is followed by the grief, sorrow, regret, and anxiety that befall him

I said, envy in matters of virtue such as knowledge, worship, pilgrimage, jihad, and good deeds is

▪ something they have claimed is desirable

He said, "There is a way out of this if envy in such matters is to act and compete in them, with hearts free from deceit and treachery. The envious person does not wish to lower the envied person from the level of excellence he possesses, but rather wishes to elevate him to it. This is not envy, but rather competition in good

"
▪ deeds and striving towards them

If his only intention is to bring down the one he envies and to elevate himself above him in status, then

▪ this is envy, and it is reprehensible

I said that they have said something similar regarding the words of God Almighty: "And do not wish for that by which God has made some of you exceed others," meaning that a man wishes to have the wealth of a specific man and his wife, and that this be transferred to him from the one who owns and possesses it. And they said regarding His words: "And ask God of His bounty," and the words of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family: "If one of you makes a wish, let him make it abundantly, for he is only

"
▪ asking his Lord, the Exalted and Glorified, that he wishes to have such wealth or such a wife

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: Wishing for the same wealth and wife as his brother is a form of envy. Rather, he should ask God Almighty, as He has commanded, for His bounty, without making demands of

Him or preoccupying his heart with his brother's wealth or wife. He should not pay attention to such things or think about them, for thinking about them, being preoccupied with them, and wishing for the same is a type of

▪envy

words in a way that contains symbolism 95

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say to a man while I was walking with him on a road, and I do not know what the man said to him, that he was among the companions of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, who were courageous and close to him, such as his uncle Hamza, his cousin Ja'far, his cousin Zubayr, and others. He gave many of his weapons to more than one of them on different occasions, so that they could fight with them, except for Dhu'l-Fiqar, for he did not strike with it

▪except the Messenger of God and Ali, his successor, by giving it to him, and he never gave it to anyone else He looked at me and said, "Dhu al-Fiqar, as you have seen, despite its great value and the special favor God Almighty bestowed upon His Messenger, may God bless him and his family, is the shortest of swords in

"

▪length and the least valuable in the eyes

I saw nothing but this as a parable and evidence of Ali's (peace be upon him) special status, the honor bestowed upon him, the proof with which he was singled out, and the knowledge entrusted to him. For the sword, outwardly, is the instrument of victory by hand, while knowledge, inwardly, is the instrument of victory by tongue and argument. And the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) singled

▪out Ali (peace be upon him) with this, a distinction he did not grant to anyone else

And from this is his saying, peace be upon him: The Messenger of God taught me a thousand chapters

▪of knowledge and wisdom, each chapter of which opens a thousand more chapters

And he, peace be upon him, said: When I asked the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, he would answer me, and when I remained silent about him, he would initiate the

▪conversation

His saying, "Ask me before you lose me, for you will not ask me about knowledge of what was and what will be except that I will inform you of it," was informed of by the truthful Prophet on the authority of the trustworthy spirit from the Lord of the worlds, with the special favor bestowed upon him, may God's prayers be

▪upon him, and the Imams from his progeny with the testament and the Imamate

words spoken in a gathering on the virtues of God's saints, peace be 96

▪upon them

He said, and I heard him say, "We are the noble, the righteous, the chosen, the virtuous, the descendants of Muhammad, the master of the prophets and the seal of the messengers. None denies our right except the obstinate, none rejects it except the arrogant, none is ignorant of it except the unjust, and none claims it except the oppressor. We were singled out by the birth of the Prophet and the successor, and the Imamate was inherited by us. We were given honor and favor over all the worlds. If we wished to say that we were with

Adam, we could say so, because when God Almighty created Adam, He looked and saw written on the leg of the Throne, 'There is no god but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God. I supported him with Ali and made him the heir through him.' So God Almighty mentioned us before He created Adam. Who then claims this with

"?

us, or who claims our superiority over him

Chapters on the Dream of Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him 97

He said, "One day I attended his gathering, and he spoke at length, then he said to some of the servants

"

▪in his presence, 'Fix the bathhouse

He said yes

He then sat for a long time, and I have no doubt that he had previously ordered its repair. Then he called for the horse, mounted it, and we walked before him to the chamber in his palace where the baths were located. He entered and dismounted to enter the bath, but found its door locked and not yet repaired. He asked for the key, but it was not found. He stood for a long time, showing no sign of distress or anger, nor did he say a word about it. Then he called for a chair and sat down, talking until the key was brought and the baths were repaired. He then got up and entered, and this did not move him at all, nor did it stir any hidden feelings. The one who claimed to have repaired them was standing before him. I was filled with intense anger at this, both at

•him and at whoever was in charge of repairing the baths

So I mentioned a hadith that he had related to us from one of his forefathers, and I think it was Muhammad ibn Ali (peace be upon him), that he was sitting with his companions when he heard a cry in his house. Then some of the servants came to him, leaned over him, and whispered something to him, saying, "Praise be to God, to Him belongs what He gives and to Him belongs what He takes. Forbid them from crying, and prepare his body for burial. Find the poor woman and tell her, 'There is no harm upon you, and you are free

"

•for the sake of God,' because of the terror that has overcome you

He returned to his speech, and the people hesitated to question him until they came to him and said,

"

•"We have prepared him." So he said to them, "Let us go and attack this boy

"?

They said, "Who is he, O son of the Messenger of God

•My son, so-and-so, fell from the hands of a maidservant who was carrying him and died

He also told us about one of his forefathers that a maidservant was performing ablution for him when the vessel fell from her hand, injuring him and breaking. She was afraid of him and said, "My master, God says,

"

•••'And those who restrain their anger

"

•He said, "We have kept it from you

"

•She said, and he says, "And those who pardon people

"

•He said, "We have pardoned you, O slave girl

"

•She said, and God says, "He loves those who do good

"

•He said, "You are free for the sake of God

I have not counted the times I saw Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, in his council and in his conduct when going out, objecting to things that would warrant punishment and anger. Sometimes some of his servants would object to his opinion, interrupt his speech, argue with him, or question him about matters that should not be questioned, things that would upset those present and listening. Yet I never saw him become angry or punish

•anyone for any of that

What I witnessed most of this was that one day he went outside al-Mansuriyya for one of his outings, and the people crowded around his mount, surrounding him from all sides, asking him for their needs and presenting their stories to him. He had appointed someone to attend to this, but they insisted on speaking to him directly. He listened to them and ordered that their needs be met, until the crowd became so dense that he could no longer walk. His horse bolted and spun around him. He ordered them to leave and commanded the foot soldiers before him to disperse them, but they persisted and refused to leave. The foot soldiers were unable to push them back. He then took a spear from one of them and said, "What is the punishment for any of you but to be struck with this?" Then he looked at us and smiled immediately afterward, saying, "Do you not see what we

•are in?" He spoke as if he were refuting something

And I, and those around me who were with him, were overcome with grief and intense anger at what we witnessed. But by God, his actions were nothing more than what I have mentioned, a natural expression of

•his noble nature, just as we use anger with a child when he is ignorant, to frighten and terrify him

And I followed his example in being patient with those who were ignorant and disobedient, including my servants and slaves, overlooking their mistakes and forgiving their slips. They became arrogant because of this, and much of their behavior was hidden from me. Then I compared the pain of anger and punishment I felt with the comfort of patience and the pleasure of forgiveness and overlooking offenses that I now experienced. I saw that what I had attained was better. I used to punish often, but I would regret the punishment when my

anger subsided, and I would reproach myself for it. Then, by the grace of God, through persistence in this, many

▪ things were rectified for me that could not be rectified through harshness

Likewise, I observed that the affairs of Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, were blessed by God with forbearance, patience, and composure, yet these qualities yielded favorable outcomes and beautiful results. I often pondered this, and I mentioned to him the words of a man of letters who had seen some slaves of his engaging in inappropriate behavior. He asked him, "Why don't you discipline and reform these slaves?" He replied, "I did attempt to do so, but I realized that I could not rectify their conduct without compromising my own. Therefore, I saw that improving my own conduct would benefit me more than improving theirs, so I left

▪ them to their own devices, letting some among them remain pure and others remain corrupt

symbols, male, in keeping with 98

He said, "One day I accompanied Imam al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) as he departed from al-Mansuriyya towards the nearby town of al-Muna. Some merchants who had lagged behind in the east met him and spoke at length about various goods, until they mentioned jewels, their distinction, knowledge, and value.

Al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) said to them, 'How can you truly know the value of a jewel? It is merely something that kings admire. When they admire something, they lavish gifts according to their admiration, their generosity, their magnanimity, and their nature. Many people possess much of the world's wealth, yet they make no distinction between a precious jewel, a piece of glass, or similar manufactured items and artificial beads. Merchants buy and transport these goods from place to place, investing heavily in precious items because they hope kings will purchase them. They do not know how this will happen. If they bring it to someone who appreciates and admires it, and who possesses the means, the inclination, and the ambition, they will be generous in their gifts. If something lacks these qualities, the reduction will be proportionate to the deficiency, and this applies to lesser items from those who have no such ability.'" He has with him those whom we have

▪ described and mentioned previously

The merchant said, "It is as the Commander of the Faithful said." But the Commander of the Faithful neither accepted nor responded. He looked at me and smiled. I realized then that he was using this as a metaphor, alluding to wisdom which only flourishes among its people, and whose value and extent are only known by those whom God Almighty has favored with it. Knowledge is measured by the degree of this favor, the bestowal of it, the effort and ability to attain it, and the degree of understanding it possesses. Those who lack it and are deprived of its benefits will simply pass it by. Even if they hear it, their hearts will not grasp any of it,

▪ nor will they benefit from it

What opened my mind to this meaning was that I had sat before him (peace be upon him) two days prior to that day, and he mentioned something similar about one of the Imams from his pure forefathers (peace be upon them). He said that one day he addressed one of his close friends with a hidden wisdom, the secrecy of which he had taken as a vow. In his presence were some servants who had not been given such a vow, nor had reached a level that warranted hearing such words. One of them said to him, "My master, do you see who is in your presence?" He replied, "I see him, and I wish that you, with the virtue you possess, would understand what

▪ I have said

And this is evidenced by the words of God, may He be glorified and exalted: "And among them are those who listen to you, but when they leave your presence, they say to those who were given knowledge, 'What did he say just now?' Those are the ones upon whose hearts God has sealed, and they have followed their desires. But those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and grants them their piety." So God, the Almighty, informed us that they heard as those with knowledge heard, but they did not understand what they heard, nor did they comprehend anything of it. They kept asking them about what the Messenger of God, may God bless him and his family and grant them peace, had said. Thus, they are like those who heard nothing of it. And accordingly, one who does not know the value of a jewel will not recognize it, nor desire it, nor distinguish

▪ it from many other stones

Hadiths in a gathering about the poor conditions of some preachers 99

He said, "I sat before him, peace be upon him, one day after the letter arrived informing him of the conquest of Sijilmasa and the capture of the usurper who ruled it, Muhammad ibn al-Fath, who called himself al-Shakir li-Allah, the Commander of the Faithful. He gave permission for the elders of the saints from Kutama

to enter. They greeted him, and he ordered them to sit. They sat before him, and he spoke to them at length, and they spoke with him until the topic of the sedition arose, and the accursed Mukhallad's conquest of Ifriqiya and his capture of Kairouan and the areas below Mahdia. They mentioned the failure of al-Qa'im li-Allah, peace be upon him, to personally rise up in that time, and the animosity and discord that existed among the people during that era, and the trials they faced from those who appointed themselves to the cause after al-Qa'im li-Allah, peace be upon him, had explicitly condemned and prohibited them. He interpreted that condemnation as praise and the prohibition as absolute freedom, so he left them to their own devices and the trials they inflicted upon

”

• the people

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "The one who requested the appointment of that Da'i sent me to establish his leadership with him to the Qa'im Billah, may God's blessings be upon him. At that time, I was conveying the message on his behalf and to him, after he had ordered that the matter should not be taken from him except through me, and that no one else should convey it to him likewise. At that time, I was young and in my prime. That requester, whom he mentioned, and who was one of his most distinguished servants, asked me

”

• to ask him to leave him and those with him who were close to that Da'i. So I conveyed that on his behalf He told me to tell him to leave this alone, for leaving it is better for him, and to focus on what concerns

• him, for in focusing on it lies his happiness

So I informed him of this, and he kissed the ground and rubbed his cheeks against it, and said to me, "My master, do the same before our master and ask him for me." So I had no choice but to do it on his behalf,

• and I did

So he said, "Tell him, woe to you! Leave this until something better and more beneficial comes to

• pass." So I told him, and he returned to his same question and persisted in asking me again

He told me, "Tell him this man has gone home. If he returns tomorrow, I will look into your case." He had ordered the people to leave, so they left the door. I informed him, and he said, "My lord, this is him. I have

• imprisoned him," and he showed him to me

”

• So I went back to him and told him, and he said, "And I saw him

I said yes

”

• He said, "Go to them and tell them about me

O evil nation that has changed and replaced its light with darkness

If you say that to them and they agree with it, then tell them, "Do as you please, and may you not be

”

• blessed in it

"?

When I turned away, he said, "Have you memorized the house

I said yes

”

• He said, "Repeat it to me," so I repeated it. He said, "Go and tell them that

So I did, thinking that if I told them that, they would faint. But when I said it, they kissed my hand, and that evil caller embraced his companion and said to him, "It is obligatory," implying that there was a hidden meaning beneath it. Then he went with him and called him and his companions, and what happened next is too

• long to recount

Then al-Baghdadi entered, and this had become widely known. He mentioned it, called me over, and said, "This was my messenger to them." Then he said to me, "Repeat to me what I sent you with," so I repeated

• it. Al-Baghdadi remained astonished and amazed by this

Then Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said to those present before him: "Where are you today compared to where you were yesterday? And how can you possibly express gratitude for God's blessings upon you in what He has compensated you with and supported you with? We dealt with you directly, without intermediaries

”

• between us and you, and you drank sweet, pure water after it had been salty and stagnant

They kissed the ground before him, thanked him, and recounted the trials they had faced from that caller, and the animosity that existed among people in that era. They explained that whoever came to him and was called upon had humbled himself and had his flaws exposed, while whoever turned away from him feared

• oppression and destruction because of him. They mentioned much more of this

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I am amazed at that, for the ruler did not reveal it, and I am amazed at how the matter ended as it did. By God, if what we have attained of God's grace and favor, and what God has revealed of the darkness of that oppression, and removed of the evil of that strife, and alleviated of the severity of that ordeal, had occurred over generations, centuries, and eras, it would have been astonishing. So how is it that all of that was removed by its immediate opposite and antithesis, with all forms of goodness, and the abundance and profusion of blessings, in this short period and these few days? Then he thanked God for that

▪ and praised Him as He deserves

Then he said, and after God revealed that ordeal, extinguished the flames of that sedition, and enabled the accursed Mukhallad and cut off the lineage of his supporters, and Al-Mansur, may God's blessings be upon him, settled in his position, were not our limbs being snatched away, one time by so-and-so, and another time by so-and-so, until it was feared that the sedition would return and the war would be renewed, until the matter called upon Al-Mansur, by God's grace, may God's blessings be upon him, to go out himself, despite a painful illness and severe pains, until the son of that instigator who usurped the call emerged, and the sedition almost returned with him. Then God enabled him and hastened him to his fire, and he had drawn near to the presence, he and others whom the sedition had chosen. So God scattered his unity and dispersed his gathering. And today, by the grace and favor of God, we traverse the earth from its edges and demolish its idols, and the terror with which God aided our ancestor Muhammad, may God's blessings and peace be upon him and his family, is

▪ before us and before our allies

A messenger from Andalusia told me that when the accursed Umayyad sultan sensed the approach of the armies we had sent into the west, his fear intensified and panic seized him. He dispatched his most trusted commanders with a large army to the region of Almeria. They pitched their encampment on the coast and camped there until a ship arrived carrying some of the accursed Ya'la's men, reporting his murder and the killing of his family, and the army's capture of his city and its surrounding areas in a single hour.² Another messenger arrived on a ship, reporting the escape of the ruler of Sijilmasa, though his capture was unknown. This news immediately sent panic through the army, causing them to flee in a single swarm. Not two of them remained at the encampment, and only the commander's camp remained, and they were all across the sea. Praise be to God

▪ who has instilled fear in the hearts of our enemies

Then, what did God, the Exalted, bestow upon this accursed ruler of Sijilmasa, who called himself by another name and sat in a place other than his own? When our armies marched out against him and drew near, he fled in disarray after having promised his men steadfastness and battle, and assured them of victory. Had God, the Almighty, granted us victory by force and he fled, it would have been a glorious triumph and a great favor. But God, in His grace, decreed that we would only attain the hope we had and fulfill the expectation we had. Some had said to me before that, "We fear he will flee." I replied, "No, God will enable me to capture him, for I relied on no power or strength of my own, and I hoped for victory and subjugation only from Him alone, without partner." So God fulfilled that hope and completed that expectation, and returned the defeated one from the place to which he had fled, until I had power over him without any covenant or pledge. Is this a gift whose

? value can be comprehended, or whose gratitude can be fully expressed

Then he praised and thanked God abundantly, and then said: Among the things God has placed in His favor for our allies, whom our armies have gathered around Him, because He, the Almighty, knew the goodness of their intentions and was aware of the purity of their hearts and their obedience and submission to us and their exertion of effort in accordance with what we do, is that He relieved them of the burden of fighting and granted them victory without assistance, and made their hands united in achieving victory over the defeated, and did not single out some of them for victory over others, so that the victorious would not become arrogant and the defeated would be left with nothing but despair. Rather, God, the Almighty, made them equal in this, and made the reward, the pride, and the mention of it for all of them, as a general bestowal of His favor upon them and a

▪ gift to them all. So may God bless them, increase them, and grant them His favor

I said, "Yes, my master," and may God bless them. I wish they had heard what God has given them of your favor and bestowed upon them of your acceptance of their efforts and what you have made obligatory for them by your grace. For if you wished to say that this is from what God Almighty has bestowed upon you and made it yours without any effort on their part, neither horse nor rider, nor any action on their part, you would

▪ have said that and spoken the truth and been just

He said: The favor, the work, the talent, and the victory are from God, the Generous, and from His favor, His work, and the talent He bestowed upon us through the obedience of our allies and their exertion of effort in what pleased us and led to the destruction of our enemy, and their exhaustion of their energy and their self-sacrifice in that. They are part of God's work for us through which He granted us our hopes and fulfilled our

•requests

"

•I said, "Congratulations to him, and may his eyes be blessed

He said, "Why shouldn't it be so? They are our closest confidants, dearer to us than family and relatives—meaning the Kutama. By God, even if they had done nothing more than what they did in this expedition, since we approached them with a matter and they did not disobey, it would suffice to say that this army cut off all that was between us and Sijilmasa, leaving no trace of obedience, not even a grain's weight of wealth. Most of them were thought otherwise because of their youth and the sharpness of their character. So-and-so and so-and-so—and he named men and described their former ways—have now become the wise men of their people, the elders of their tribes, their source of support and refuge. By God, they will surpass those who came before them and those who came after. May God bless them and reward them well. You, by God, are our strength and our reserve for what we need, and our treasure upon which we rely. If we are self-sufficient, you will spare us the burden of yourselves. If we need you, we will provide for you and do what we deem best for you. As for our other servants and attendants, nothing can satisfy them without us or their need for what we possess, whether

?

they travel or remain." Which cases were they

Those of the group who were present kissed the ground before him and said, "When will we ever be able to express our gratitude for this blessing from our Master, peace be upon him? By God, we have never heard of such a thing from any of our masters before him, nor have we heard that they said it. We do not know

"

•how we have earned this from him except through his grace

He said to them, "By God, if we found in you the acceptance we desire, you would see from us even

"

•more than what you desire and hope for

Some of them told us a question to ask our master

Ask him

They said, "Our Lord does not leave us to ourselves, nor does He abandon us to our own choices, but He bestows upon us His grace and guidance, giving us what He is worthy of, not what He deems us deserving.

"

•For, by God, we do not even deserve to look upon Him, let alone receive any favor from Him

He, peace be upon him, said: How can I teach what I say so that it will be understood and retained by

?

someone knowledgeable about the benefit of preserving what I am given

The man replied, "We are therefore, O Commander of the Faithful, guardians of the law, God

"

•willing

"?

He said, "Have you been taught and memorized anything from your forefathers

He said yes

"

•He said, "Then bring forth what you have memorized

He said, "I heard al-Mahdi Billah, peace be upon him, explicitly designate your grandfather, al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, peace be upon him, and I heard your grandfather, al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, peace be upon him, explicitly designate your father, al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers be upon him, and I heard al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, explicitly designate you. This is the foundation upon which the branch is

"

•established

He said, "Glory be to God! This is something claimed by the freed slaves and the accursed, based on the explicit statements of their fathers. Do you have any argument against those who support them, with which

•you can refute their argument for their allegiance, if you were to present it to them?" The man remained silent

He said to him, "Act as if you have fallen into the hands of those who have power over you. They will ask you about your claim to our Imamate. By what means did you come to know that we are Imams? What is your proof against those who deny it and claim others? Would you have remained silent like this while you were among us in the position you hold? Doesn't this only increase the obstinacy of our enemies and those who support them, making them more determined to say this? If they had any proof, it would have been with him, just as the accursed one called al-Muktafi said when he brought the accursed Qarmatian, who had risen up

against him claiming allegiance to the family of the Prophet, using it to entice people, while he was in a state of depravity and curse, a position from which God has purified the family of His Prophet and hastened His vengeance. He was captured and brought before al-Muktafi, who was in a similarly wretched state as a prisoner. He was brought before him, and someone was ordered to debate him before him. He said to him, 'What is the

""? reason for your rebellion against the Commander of the Faithful and your call to others

" .He said, "Because I saw that Ali was more deserving than Abbas

"? He said, "What

" .He said, "Because he is the heir of the Messenger of God, peace be upon him
He told him, "You lied. The uncle is more deserving than the cousin." He had no answer, so he had him

· testify to his interruption and testify that he admitted he was wrong in his claim
The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said, and the one who argued with him was closer to being silenced than if he had understood the argument and stood by it. It is for such arguments of the misguided and claims of the oppressors that I desire the swords of truth to be in your tongues and hands, and the sword of the tongue is the sharpest, for the sword of the hand is possessed by both the righteous and the wicked through force, while the sword of the tongue is possessed only by the people of truth. The former is shared, while the latter is unique, belonging only to its people, and possessed only by its rightful owners. If they oppose with it, they will triumph, and if they fight with it, they will be killed. I want each of you to have a torch to guide

· you and be guided by, like the fire of Moses, and do not gather around a single torch
Some of the people said to him what some of the common people said, and he looked at some of his companions, and some of those who debated with him cut him off with an argument: Do not debate with this

· one, for he has an argument

"? He said, "What did he mean by this

" .He said, "I don't know

· So I said, perhaps he meant what they say: every deluded person is given an argument

He said, and they say that

I said, "Yes, that's what they say, as if they hadn't heard the words of God Almighty: 'And that was Our argument which We gave to Abraham against his people.' If everyone who is taught an argument is misled, then

" .Abraham was misled according to their claim

He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: How strange is this statement of theirs! If that is

· the case, then the truth lies in what has no proof

Then he turned to the people and said, "By God, I desire to teach and guide you more than anything else, for I want you to be the most knowledgeable, the most pious, and the most forbearing of people. Do not turn your backs on one another, do not envy one another, and do not sever ties with one another. Be as God Almighty has named you: brothers, and helpers in righteousness and piety. Be righteous and pure. If any of you commits a sin or does something wrong, let him inform us and ask us to seek forgiveness for him, as He, may His glory be exalted, said: 'If only, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muhammad], and asked forgiveness of God, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found God Accepting of repentance and Merciful.' Place us between you and God, and use what we command and forbid you to do as your proof before Him. For, by God, we are the best intermediary that people place between themselves and their Lord. Take from us what we command and obey, and publicly follow what we command. Guard our secrets, follow our commands, advise us sincerely, purify your intentions, improve your hearts, and speak the truth, even if it is against yourselves." You must be pious, diligent, frugal, chaste, and submit to our command, and refer matters back to us as God, may His praise be exalted, has instructed you. For He says, "If they had referred it to the Messenger and to those in authority among them, those who are capable of deriving

" .correct rulings from it would have known it

They kissed the ground before him and said, "May our Lord be gracious to us and bestow His favor

" .upon us

He said, "May you continue in your pursuit and striving, for you are on the right path. Each one of you benefits from something, prepares it, teaches it, memorizes it, and acts upon it, and God benefits him through his

knowledge. God Almighty is the Most Powerful of the powerful and the Wisest of the wise. He did not give His creation all the blessings He bestowed upon them all at once, nor did He complete their creation in one fell swoop. Rather, He created man from dust, then from a drop of fluid, then made him a clot, then a lump of flesh, then bones, then clothed the bones, then breathed the spirit into him, then brought him forth as a child. He nourished him with milk for a time, then with gentle food, and so on, little by little, until He completed his

"
• creation. He was capable of giving it all at once, but He did so with wisdom and power
So desire the life of your souls as people desire the life of their bodies, for the life of the soul is eternal life, and the bargain for its salvation is the winning bargain. God has opened for you what He has closed to others, and He has provided you with time and opportunity that were not provided to those before you. So hasten to that which brings you happiness, and do not lag behind, lest you become a burden upon yourselves and upon those who come after you. Seek salvation with the seeking of one who knows the value of life, and beware of missing out with the fear of one who knows the calamity of death. Strive, exert yourselves, resolve, and

• prepare yourselves, so that you may be like a people who were called upon and awoke, and were awakened
And he passed by, recalling in such a sermon, eloquent words, of which I have not quoted them as I have presented them, nor all that I have mentioned except its meaning, after exerting effort to capture the exact wording. And I hope that I have captured much of it, God willing, and after I have not intentionally omitted or

• added anything, praise be to God

When I heard the overwhelming grace and wisdom that filled me, I hoped that our companions would grant me this wish. So I moved those on my right and left to do the same, and both of them said, "We will say that at the time of standing." And the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, continued his sermon until

"
• a servant stood up and said, "The time for prayer is near, O Commander of the Faithful
He said, "What is that? If the time comes, I will pray with our brothers. What else could we do but leave them for something better than what we are doing now? By God, my only pleasure is in what I am doing now. And how could I remain in this state for the rest of my life if I could find someone to learn from me, understand me, benefit from what he hears, and comprehend what I say? O God, incline the hearts of the people

• of Your religion towards what pleases You and draws them closer to You," or something to that effect
Then, peace be upon him, he called for money that had come to him from what was minted in the city of Sijilmasa in his name. He distributed it among those present and said, "Bless yourself with it, for this is among the first things minted for us in the place that God has granted us victory." There was much joy and happiness at the money, and some asked for some for those who were absent. Those who asked were given some. Then, peace be upon him, he rose, and none of those he had moved remembered anything he had taught them. Perhaps they had forgotten it. I rose, feeling heavy with the weight of much wisdom I had heard from the guardian of God and His grace. I feared that if I returned to the court, I might forget it or neglect most of it due to the uproar of the litigants, the length of the discussion, and the length of the session. So, I asked permission from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, to be absent from the court that day until he confirmed

• it

"? He said, "And who will succeed you in this

"
• So I said, "No one but I will bear tomorrow what I missed today

"
• He said, "Do as you wish

I left, thinking of the house and remembering what had transpired in the gathering. No sooner had I arrived home than those waiting in the gathering realized I wasn't going to sit down and rushed towards me. After I had finished with them and whatever else I needed to do, the muezzin called for the Maghrib prayer. I prayed Maghrib and Isha, then sat down to reflect on the gathering, writing down what I remembered bit by bit until I had memorized everything. I recorded it all in this collection, hoping that I have captured the essence of

• what was said and included a summary of its wording and meanings, God willing

At the beginning of this book, I mentioned the words of some of the Companions to someone who asked him to narrate a hadith he had heard directly from the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), without omitting anything, altering its meaning, adding to it, or subtracting from it. He replied, "You have asked me for something unreasonable. It is sufficient for me and others to narrate hadiths

"
• from the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) if we convey the meaning

And likewise, God willing, I will say, regarding what I narrate about the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, that there is no one like him, and no one else is possible. If a narrator were to relate a hadith

- and be asked to repeat it to us without addition or omission, few would be able to do so
- May God forgive us for unintentional slips and mistakes, God willing. There is no power or strength
- except with God, the Most High, the Almighty

Part Ten

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

100

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: I have mentioned before this what

I heard from al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, concerning the essence of things, those who know its value and desire it, and those who are ignorant of it and do not know it. I interpreted this from him as a symbol for wisdom and an example of it using the essence. Then, after that, I mentioned to him in a gathering where I sat before him, peace be upon him, my interpretation and example of it. He, peace be upon him, approved of it and said to me, "I will add to this for you, Nu'man, and open up more to you in this matter." I said, "My master, I am in

"

- need of this and I desire it

He, peace be upon him, said: The example of a precious jewel is like that of a noble soul. And according to the difference between jewels in preciousness and danger, so too is there a difference between souls in majesty and worth. Some are sublime, some less so, some intermediate, some close to it, some inferior,

- and some similar. The differences between jewels and souls are countless

And among the solid jewels is that which nothing affects, does not accept corruption, and is not affected by accidents. Similarly, there are noble souls that nothing affects, that corruption does not enter, and

- that no accidental thing can alter. They are as pure and sincere as a precious jewel

And the essence is less than that, which is affected by some slight influence, accepts some corruption,

- and is subject to some symptoms. The same applies to souls in this way

And among the substances are those that are soft and moist, the quantities of which are also unknowable due to their varying degrees of hardness, moisture, susceptibility to corruption, and resistance to it.

- Similarly, souls vary according to the differences in their states and natures, as I have illustrated for you

He said: Some essences are encased in stones of a different kind, which break off and are scraped away, revealing what is inside, thus forming a covering over the essence. Some essences are hidden within shells that have closed over them, and some are found in their mines, extracted from within. All of this is like

3 the soul's enclosure within the body. And just as there is a difference between the essence and what it contains

- in terms of excellence, so too is there a difference between the body and the soul in terms of honor and worth

Some precious stones possess a clear and evident purity, but they become even clearer and more lustrous with polishing and grinding, just as a noble soul is receptive to wisdom. When taught, it is instructed and accepts it. Others are barely visible in their purity, but when rubbed and polished, their purity and luster

- become apparent. This is like the soul receptive to teaching and instruction

And some things, when polished and rubbed, show some luster but lack a clarity that reveals what is embedded within them. This is like the soul that is less receptive to learning and wisdom among souls; in this

- there are differences and degrees that cannot be fully comprehended

Some stones possess neither luster, nor essence, nor clarity. Even when polished and shaped as the craftsman wishes, no clarity remains. This is like a person who neither understands nor learns nor is taught; such

.He put the thing in its pouch: he placed it there and sheathed it³

a person is like one without a soul or spirit. Similarly, a stone has no essence. This is clarified by God's words: "Indeed, in that is a reminder for whoever has a heart." He who does not remember is like one without a heart. And He says: "And you see them looking at you, yet they do not see." He who does not consider wisdom is like

- one without sight, for that which is intended to establish something, yet fails to do so, is like nothingness

He said, and like a jewel, it is with someone who has no desire to acquire it, like a merchant or a diver whose only concern is the price of the jewel he retrieves. Similarly, wisdom is with those who are not worthy of it, as our ancestor Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, said: A word of wisdom may fall upon a hypocrite, who will continue to speak of it without benefiting from it, until it reaches the ear of a believer, who will take it

- from him. But when it reaches him, the hypocrite will forget it and it will be taken from him

He said, "Likewise, the jewel will be with the one we mentioned, and he will continue to display it until someone who desires it sees it, recognizes its value, and buys it from him, so it will come into his

"

- possession and be removed from the one who had it in his hands

In this statement, I recalled a saying of al-Mansur, peace be upon him, that I had heard one day when I stood before him. He mentioned my long service to him and my devotion to him, and recounted several things that he was worthy of remembering. Then he said, "O Nu'man, a man is like a stone; whatever is rubbed against it reveals a jewel that cannot be found in anything else that has no jewel. The examples of God's saints, peace be

"

- upon them, bear witness to one another

I was captivated by what al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, and what al-Mansur, peace be upon him, mentioned, may his soul be sanctified. We witness the elevation of God's chosen ones in status, and the placement of each person in the position he deserves. Some they draw near, single out, raise, and exalt, just as

- precious jewels are placed in crowns and on heads, hung in earrings, strung in necklaces, and set in rings

And another layer below that in terms of immediate proximity and specialization, just as what is below

- that of the essence is poured into vessels and used to adorn beds, chairs, and the like

And a layer below the two layers, such as that made of stone, has a luster but no substance, like marble and the like, with which seating is made and from which columns and the like are carved. And in such matters,

- there are countless differences in the types of jewels and classes of people

The lowest class of people, like the common folk and the rabble, are like stones that have no luster or substance, like what walls are built with, beams are carried on, and bridges are made from. Beasts, dogs, and wild animals pass over them, and people tread upon them. Between these two classes there are varying degrees, and they are of different levels. What is preserved of precious stones and not used is wrapped in cotton and placed in baskets of gold and silver and raised in chests and boxes. What is not used of stones is discarded in courtyards and roads, where it is covered with dirt and trodden upon. And so is the measure of what resembles

- the two types of people in elevation and degradation

Hadiths on Deliberation and Patience in a Gathering 101

He said, "I sat before him, peace be upon him, one day, and he mentioned the people of harm, transgression, and corruption on earth. He said, 'I said to some people, what should be done with such

"? people

He said, regarding what Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, did—meaning, killing them and burning them

- with fire

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I said that the time when Al-Mansur did that was a time when it was appropriate to do so, given the widespread calamity and the immense suffering inflicted upon the people. It was not fitting to repel that misfortune except by the same means by which he, peace be upon him, repelled it.

However, now that God Almighty has removed that affliction and extinguished the flames of that strife, the proper response to this blessing is for us to forgive what we could have forgiven, namely, the wrongs committed against us and not others, for which we do not fear any negative consequences. We entrust justice in this matter to God Almighty, who has empowered us, given us authority, and granted us the power to seek victory, should we wish to do so. Thus, His victory for us will be more complete, as He has promised victory to those who are wronged. Regarding the rights of people, we will act justly according to what is required. If we know or fear that

corruption will arise from neglecting a matter, and that the situation will escalate to something greater if we do not address it, we cannot remain silent. We will apply the appropriate punishment commensurate with the severity of the offense and the gravity of the sin. As for the rights of God Almighty, we will fulfill them according to what He has prescribed and entrusted to us. If we were to carry out punishment for every sin for which we have the power to pardon, we would breed resentment and cause strife throughout history. We would sow enmity among people and establish a market of seeking revenge against themselves and their descendants for all ages. For he who might be granted justice today through the machinations of one who sought to bring him to justice for his sin may one day have the same misfortune turn against that person, who will then seek

▪ revenge against him or his descendants

This saying is derived from the words of God, the most truthful of speakers: "Take what is offered freely, enjoin what is right, and turn away from the ignorant. And if an evil suggestion comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge in God. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing." So God Almighty commanded His Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, to seek refuge in Him from the evil suggestions of

▪ Satan that incite him, and to do what is right when angry and powerful

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I heard Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, may God sanctify his soul, often seek refuge in God from that, saying, "Sometimes I am overcome with such anger that I cannot bear it." And this is the Prophet Moses, peace be upon him, whom God described as acting in anger: he threw down the tablets that God Almighty had revealed and seized his brother by the head, dragging him towards himself. And God described His Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, as gentle and merciful, saying: "So by mercy from God, you were gentle to them; and if you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them." (Quran 3:159) And He said: "And overlook [their faults]. Indeed, God loves the doers of good." (Quran 3:159)

And upon the noble character of his grandfather Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, God, the Almighty, created him. And how few are the days when I see him and what he does of forbearance in matters that warrant anger and punishment. And I remember what was narrated about the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, in similar matters, exactly like what he endured, patiently

▪ bore, and forbore about

words of thanks mentioned in the council 102

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, one day mention some of God's blessings upon him, and

▪ he praised God greatly, thanking and glorifying Him for that as He deserves

So I said, "Praise be to God who guided the Commander of the Faithful to what necessitates more of His favor, namely, gratitude for His blessings, for He, may His praise be exalted, said, 'And when your Lord

""

▪ proclaimed, "If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]"

He said, "O Nu'man, how can anyone fully express gratitude for even a fraction of God's blessings, which He has ordained to increase? Where does gratitude stand in relation to the immensity of His favor and bounties? By God, we can only return to acknowledging and confessing our shortcomings. God's blessings upon us and His kindness towards us are a renewed favor from Him and a proof against us that is ever-present."

”

▪ We ask Him for the continuation of His blessings and for an increase of them through His grace and mercy

Hadiths in a gathering of remembrance in the Umayyad dynasty 103

He said, and one day he mentioned before him, peace be upon him, what Abd al-Rahman al-Umawi, the usurper in Andalusia, openly displayed of immorality, wrongdoing, and corruption, and permitted it to the people in his land. So some of those present at the gathering said, "It is enough for him to know what he is

”

▪ doing in committing God's prohibitions and sins

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said that if he had known that this was a sin, it would have been a lesser offense. However, he followed the evil ways of his predecessors, adhering to the ways of ignorance, disbelief, and rejection of what Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, brought. By God, if they could have openly expressed this with their tongues as they did with their actions, they would have done so. But they did not see it

as acceptable or possible, so they openly displayed their vile deeds, driven by their desires. The ignorant among the people were unaware that this was a sin and a transgression for which forgiveness could be hoped for by abandoning it and repenting. They saw them and their outward appearance of adherence to Islam, while they remained as they were, and the first of them held the belief in disbelief. Was this not how Ali, peace be upon him, described them when he saw the accursed Mu'awiya in his army at Siffin? He said, "By God, these are the banners of Abu Sufyan with which we fought while we were with the Messenger of God. By God, they did not embrace Islam, but rather submitted and concealed their disbelief until they found supporters for it, and then

”

• they acted upon it

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I heard al-Mansur, peace be upon him, say: I cannot count what I heard al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, say and mutter when he was alone, not addressing anyone, not like one who is thinking something and muttering it, relating what is narrated about them: The Banu Hashim fed and we fed, they gave drink and we gave drink, they did and we did, until we were like two horses in a race, and

• they said: A prophet is from among us. By God, we will never acknowledge this

Then he, peace be upon him, said: By God, if they had adhered to anything of Islam, it would have become apparent to them, and if they had acknowledged Muhammad, may God bless him and his family and

• grant them peace, they would not have attacked his family and household as they did

So I said what the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said, but they gained worldly benefits because of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Islam through which they brought about what they gained. So the least that was required of them was to respect his and his family's

• rights

He, peace be upon him, said: Where is the original enmity, the pre-Islamic grudges, and the nature that the predecessors followed and the successors adopted—the belief in hatred and the inheritance of animosity? Can there be any inclination towards any aspect of goodness in word or deed alongside that? What do you think of yourself in relation to them, given what you believe in regarding our authority? Have you ever been inclined

?

towards them with affection or outward love, yet they did to you what they did

I said no, by God

He said, “And by God, they are ours and the ones of all our Shiites. By God, may God never bring us

”

• together with them in this world or the hereafter

I said, "Praise be to God who made us part of His party and the party of His allies, and made them the

”

• parties of Satan and his followers

”

• He said, "Yes, praise be to God for all His blessings

words on following the advice and exhortation 104

He said, and I accompanied him, peace be upon him, one day when the pilgrims had been given permission to depart. A group of messengers from the East, representing many regions, had gathered with him, peace be upon him. They delivered the funds they had sent him as offerings from the believers and fulfilled their needs. He wrote down the replies of those who had come on his behalf and ordered them to depart with the pilgrims. Their departure coincided with his riding, so they walked to him until they stood before him and kissed the ground, saying, "O friend of God, may God not make this our last meeting with you. How difficult it is for us to part from you, were it not for what we hope to achieve in obeying your command. It is for this reason that

”

• we have departed from you and left you

He, peace be upon him, said to them: “If your belief is in our guardianship, obedience to our commands, submission to us, and you demonstrate this in word and deed, then you are with us wherever you are, your souls connected to ours and your affection to ours. Whoever is contrary to this will not benefit from their proximity to us, for connection is not based on physical proximity but rather on the closeness of souls. Your souls, as long as you are as we have described, are close to ours, even if bodies are distant and homes are far apart. The correspondence of guardianship is more specific, closer, and more intimate than the correspondence of family and kinship. You will find from us what you will not find from fathers and mothers. If you do good to yourselves, we will appreciate that from your commands, acknowledge your favor upon us, and reward you accordingly. If you do wrong, we will forgive what should be forgiven you. Each of you looks after

himself and strives for his own benefit, while we look after and are concerned with the well-being of all of you. Our eyes are upon you in this matter, through piety towards God, obedience to His commands, and abstention from what He has forbidden. If you do this, God will rectify your condition, increase your rewards, and gladden your eyes and ours with your presence.” And soon you will see, by the grace and favor of God, what you love,

• God willing

They said, "May God bring that closer and make it easy, and extend our lives until we reach it and see you in the places where we would be pleased to see you, with God having destroyed your enemy and fulfilled

”

• what He promised you

He said, “By God, we have come to know God Almighty through His grace and favor, the extent of which is beyond measure, and we cannot adequately thank Him. He has bestowed upon us through His creation and kindness, the continuation and perfection of which we are certain. Perhaps evil comes suddenly, while good comes in order and order, one following the other. God Almighty’s favors to us are continuous and uninterrupted. We hope, by His grace, to close this book at the end, the station of our ancestor Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, and to leave no enemy behind us except that God Almighty grants us power over them, as He has promised—and He never breaks His promise—that He will establish us in the land, make us His successors therein, and make His religion prevail through us over all other religions.

”

• Proceed under God’s protection and care

• They said, with your approval, O Commander of the Faithful

He said, "Yes, may God be pleased with you, and may He reward your efforts and grant you abundant

”

• recompense

They kissed the ground and said, "If our Lord sees fit not to forget us in His grace, mercy, and the

”

• blessing of His prayers, then do so

”

• He said, "I will not forget that for you, God willing

Then he drew them near to him, peace be upon him, and whispered something to them, and they

• departed

105

I heard him say before that, after they entered his assembly and he spoke with them privately for a long time, then they left, “I told them, among other things, that nothing has delayed people from coming to us except the evil callers. By God, they are neither callers to us nor allies, but rather they are enemies of God and our enemies, and those who turn people away from God. If people had seen good in them and heard good words from them, and conveyed to them what we entrusted to them and delivered what we charged them with, then people would have been quicker to come to us than birds to their nests and water to its source. But they have deviated and changed, and the world has seduced them with its fleeting pleasures, and Satan has made committing sins seem appealing to them. So they have gone astray and led many astray, and they have strayed from the straight path. Their place is far from us, and their affair is difficult for us. If we seek to reform one area, they corrupt it, and we fear the corruption of another. So we turn away from them and leave them wandering blindly in their error. They are content with the fleeting leadership in this world that they have attained and the fleeting pleasures of this world that they have hastened to acquire, through the ritual washings of a people who purified themselves with them, but then betrayed them. They have made falsehood and lies against God and against us a cause for what...” They attained it through it, and perished, and many others perished with their

• perishing

”

• He said, and some of them told me, "And they are in this state, O friend of God

So I said, "Yes, indeed, and worse still. Didn't so-and-so say such-and-such, and so-and-so do such-and-such?" He then listed men and their reprehensible words and deeds. He continued, "If someone's words and actions are like this, are people not of two kinds? One kind takes from him and accepts his virtues, and perishes with his perdition and misguidance. The other kind sees through his flaws and the veils of his wickedness are lifted from them, so they reject him and distance themselves from him, and they distance themselves from us

and reject us because of him. They attribute to us what they see of his evil deeds, from which God has

"
•exonerated us and purified us. And because of that, everyone perished

Did not so-and-so, a man he named as one of the best of the believers, say to so-and-so, a man from among those he described as alterers, after he had been alone with him, "Woe to you! Did we not learn such-and-such from you, and narrate such-and-such, and you told us such-and-such, and commanded us to do such-and-such?" And he mentioned to him much of the truth, which he had seen but which he contradicted and

•rejected, and he said something else

He said yes

He said, "What has changed from what you were before, and what has transformed you from what you

"? were

"
•He said, "This world and its fleeting pleasures

"? He said to him, "How can you bear God's punishment and His fire

He said, "Yes, the fire is a clear sign, along with the fleeting pleasures of this world. We seek refuge in

"
•God from regression after progress and from misguidance after guidance

106

I heard him during this conversation, and a group of saints from the Kutama tribe stood before him, complaining of corruption in a certain area. He ordered them to be brought before him, and they began to apologize and swear oaths. He said to them, "You have spoken the truth about yourselves, but this was done by your young men, your slaves, and those among you who are worthless and who are associated with you, and you know this, yet you did not change it. You are like those who did it. You must rectify your situation and restrain

"
•your foolish ones, otherwise you and they will be equally punished

This is derived from the words of God Almighty: "Why do the rabbis and scholars not forbid them from their sinful speech and their consumption of what is unlawful? How wretched is what they have been doing!" Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "When the rabbis and scholars of the Children of Israel

"
•did not forbid their wicked ones from the sins they were committing, God Almighty punished them all The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "No people allow wrongdoing among

"
•themselves without changing it, except that God will afflict them and those who do it with His punishment

Words on the Eulogy of Al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers be upon him 107

He said, "One day I sat before Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, and a conversation took place that was said to be in some books. He called for the book in which it was said to be, and he looked at it. A bundle of books was brought and placed before him, and he began to leaf through them, one by one, until he came across a book containing annotations in the handwriting of al-Mansur, peace be upon him, which he was compiling. When he saw it, he wept and kept looking at it. Then he sighed deeply and said, 'By God, if he had nothing else but this, it would be enough of a miracle of his affair, and I have never seen anything like it

"
•before this time

Then he showed it to us and said, "This is the sermon that I composed and delivered on the day of Eid al-Fitr, after which he was killed. In it were words that I seemed to have intended to say, but then it occurred to

"
•me, so I left it

We looked at it and recognized his handwriting; he had crossed it out after writing it, and in it were written: "The nights and days of the month have passed, and the time has come for the end and passing of

"
•life

▪ Then Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: By God, he wanted to announce his death to us That moved me to tears, and I said, "What lament could be greater than his words that day, as he left the prayer area and stood in the palace courtyard, his hand on the shoulder of the Commander of the Faithful, entrusting him with his guardians and the people of his kingdom, while the people surrounded him as he wept, the testament of one certain of his approaching death? By God, his words that day almost broke hearts. It was among the most astonishing things that appeared from him that day to the people, for they saw it with their own

"
▪ eyes and heard it, though few understood it until after his passing, peace be upon him

Hadiths on a sermon mentioned in a gathering 108

He said, and I heard Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, say: The truly fortunate one is he who obeys our command. It is not incumbent upon anyone to have obeyed our commands. If there is good in it—and good, by God, is in all that we command—then it will be sufficient for him, and he will be thanked for it and benefit from it in this world and the hereafter. And if, because of that, he falls into what people consider a deficiency, then there is no blame upon him who obeyed our commands, nor any bad consequence in this world or the hereafter. But what destroys most people is conceit in themselves and their opinions. So, if we command something and he sees something contrary to it, and that conceit enters him, he abandons his opinion and turns

▪ away from it, and his desires and passions replace it

On a similar occasion, al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, wrote to Hasan ibn Ali and Faraj al-Khadim when they returned from Calabria to Sicily with the army to spend the winter there. He had ordered them to remain there, but he wrote them a stern letter, emphasizing his severity and ordering them to return to their assigned location immediately upon receiving his letter. They did so, and this led to a great victory. They reached a position before the Byzantine tyrant's army, a position that, had the tyrant reached it first, would have prevented such a victory. They routed the Byzantine army, and the Muslim forces surrounded them, inflicting

▪ heavy casualties. This was due to his wise counsel, which was divinely guided

He said, and in his letter to them, it was as if you had said, when you saw the departure, that the one present sees what the one absent does not see, and you had assumed to yourselves that you were the ones present for what came before you, and that I was the one absent from it. But it is not as you thought; rather, I am the one

▪ present for that, and you are the ones absent from it

Then Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said, and it is as Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, said: He is present for the matter, even if he is absent from it. He is the one whom God has brought forth through His grace and made a means between Himself and His creation. He is present for their affairs, even if his person is

▪ absent from them and they are present in them

109

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, one day with a group of elders from the Kutama tribe, speaking to them and admonishing them. Among what he said to them was: "It suffices you from our advice to you that we command you to follow us in all matters. Whatever you have seen us love, do, and command, you should do and command. And whatever you have seen us dislike and avoid, you should dislike and avoid. By God, we are the best example for you. By God, this is the advice of al-Mansur, peace be upon him, to me when he was dying. He said to me, 'I will gather all the advice for you in one statement. So look, whatever you saw me do, do it, and whatever you saw me leave out, leave it out. And do after my death what you saw me do in my

" " ! life. What an excellent predecessor I am for you

Part Eleven

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad Qas said: I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, one day when Eid al-Adha was approaching, and he asked about the arrival of the Kutama from the districts to witness the Eid. It was said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, they are sneaking in, and the palace is

"
 " . overflowing with them

He said, "May God bless them and increase their numbers, for I am delighted by their gathering and

"
 " . their celebration, and I love their people and find their appearances pleasing in my eyes

Then he looked at me and said, "Have you ever seen anyone like them in their splendor, the beauty of their mounts, and the magnificence of their appearance? I sometimes say to myself, when I admire something

"
 " . about them, that it is because of my great love for them

I said, "By God, they are as the Commander of the Faithful described them, both friend and foe. And it has reached us from more than one source that Mukhallad and his accursed companions were saying during the days of the strife, while they were fighting them, 'As for the riding of the Kutama and their camels, we do not

"
 " . claim it nor do we dispute it with them

He said, "By God, they are the ones who made them taste the bitterness of death, subjected them to humiliation, and forcibly expelled them with the sharpness of swords and the edge of spears until they drove them to the mountain peaks on the outskirts of the land. Then they brought them down from there by force and annihilated them by the victory of God for His chosen one, the blessing of his station, the happiness of his

"
 " . grandfather and his days, their obedience to him, and their patience with him

Some of the Slavic slaves said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we have fallen short, and we have endured as much hardship and struggle as others. Whoever disputes this should review our battles, our battles,

"
 " . our ranks, and those among us who were martyred

He, peace be upon him, said: No, it is not the same. We ruled you through them, and we did not rule

? them through you. Tell me, if you and those like you had been left in your lands, would you have come to us

He said no

He said, "These people came to us willingly, offering themselves to us eagerly. Their forefathers followed this path, and their character remained steadfast in it, generation after generation, from our predecessors to our successors. By God, no nation has ever been as loyal to a prophet, imam, or king of this world as they have been to us, and we to them, without those nations succumbing to failure, becoming corrupt, and being overtaken by the kings of this world who seized power for themselves and others, casting them aside and oppressing them. These people, however, have their ancestors with our ancestors, their fathers with our fathers, and they are with us. And so it will be with their descendants until the Day of Judgment, God

"
 " . willing

"? Then he looked at me and said, "Isn't that so

I said, it is as the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said, and they are among the

• predecessors whose virtue and forgiveness God has made obligatory upon the later followers

Then he said, "Their precedence and merit do not diminish the merit of those who came after them from among our servants and supporters, who strove, aided, and advised us. Rather, God Almighty will grant, as

He said, every possessor of merit his due. And God, may His praise be exalted, is All-Encompassing and All-Knowing, and with Him, the reward of those who do good is not lost. And He, may His praise be exalted, said, 'Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest and fought. Those are greater in rank than those who spent afterwards and fought. But to each God has promised the best.' He said, 'And God Almighty has promised you all the best, and the merit of those who preceded you is due to their precedence over you, as long

"
 " . as they remained steadfast in the good deeds they had done and did not deviate from them or change them

Hadiths on the prohibition of transgression, mentioned in a gathering 111

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say, after mentioning injustice towards people and backbiting, and the wretched state of those who do such things: "It is enough for them to be disgraced in this world, for we know of them, that one of them does not see that he can draw near to Us except by distancing others, nor does he seek Our favor except by diminishing others in Our sight. And what is incumbent upon one of them, if he desires the rank of another, to describe him with kindness and mention him favorably if such qualities are present in him, and to ask Us for the favor that has reached him, so that We may grant him from it what he deserves, for he who seeks Our favor in its proper manner, and pursues it in its proper place, and seeks it rightfully, will have attained his goal without demeaning himself in Our sight, nor diminishing himself by injustice towards others and backbiting. For Our favor is sufficient for all creation if they seek it in its proper

"
• manner and pursue it rightfully

So I said, "O our master, this is the etiquette of God and the etiquette of His saints who command justice among His servants, not the etiquette of the kings of this world in their own eyes, who saw that it was part of their policy to sow discord among their men and incite conflict among the people of their kingdom so that they might reveal to each other what might have been hidden from them about their situation, and so that

"
• they might fear each other and expose each other

He, peace be upon him, said: "This is done by one who has no desire for the well-being of God's servants and no opinion on their guidance. We, however, only desire their well-being and what benefits them in their religion and their worldly life, for God Almighty has made us a mercy to them, and we are more compassionate towards them than they are towards themselves. How can it be fitting for one whom God

Almighty has entrusted with the affairs of His servants to sow discord among them so that they become enemies, when God Almighty commands reconciliation in His words: 'So fear God and amend that which is between you' and 'The believers are but brothers, so make peace between your brothers'? Only one who has no share in them sows enmity among God's servants, while we have been entrusted by God with their affairs and

"
• obligated to strive for their well-being, and we spare no effort in this

Then he mentioned a man from the elders of Kutama, whom he considered close and favored, saying,

"We have been companions for a long time, and he never spoke ill of anyone in our presence, nor did he ever slander anyone in our company. We used to engage him in conversation and talk with those present. Whenever

"
• there was pleasant or good news, he would join in and discuss it, but if anything else came up, he would stop

• Then he prayed for mercy upon him and asked forgiveness for him

Hadiths in a gathering on the virtues of saints 112

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say: "I am overcome with joy and find happiness and delight in what reaches me, what I hear, and what I see of goodness and righteousness in our saints, to the extent that if such a thing were in my own children, they would not reach me more than it, and no one who is in this state among them would surpass me except for the child whom God has singled out with the virtue that He

"
• transmits to him from me

Hadiths from a gathering that discussed the fitna (strife/tribulation) 113

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say, "One day I said to al-Mansur (peace be upon him), after he mentioned the matter of the sedition and what he tried to do in it until God Almighty revealed it through him, I said, 'If the one who stood up for God's command (peace be upon him) had tried what you tried and done what you did, and had resolved it while the matter was united and the situation was good, and that did not lead to the corruption that occurred in the land, then he would have had more power, strength, and influence over

"
• men than you had on the day you did that

He said to me, "I seek refuge in God from you repeating such a statement. Rather, ask God's forgiveness for it. By God, the Imam (peace be upon him) could not have done anything other than what he did,

"
"nor could I have done anything other than what I did

Then al-Mu'izz said, "Al-Mansur spoke the truth, may God illuminate his face, sanctify his soul, and multiply blessings upon him. It was not for the one who would rise up, upon whom be the best of peace, to undertake a matter whose end God Almighty had decreed, when his time had come and his death was near. God tested His servants with tribulation and appointed a time for the end of the ordeal. He had no choice but to hasten what God had decreed, and he had no option but to be patient with it, submit to it, and be content with it until he met God, seeking reward and being patient. This is one of the brilliant deeds of God's saints. When God Almighty permitted the end of the ordeal and the cessation of the tribulation, al-Mansur could not refrain from undertaking the matter due to the small number of men and the weakness of the support. And whoever God Almighty supports cannot be overcome. So al-Mansur, by God's grace, undertook the matter at its appointed time, while the one who would rise up, upon whom be peace, left it because his time had come to an end and his era had passed. I heard him one day when some elders from the Kutama tribe consulted him about a course of action during that tribulation, and I was their messenger to him. He said, 'Tell them to do whatever they wish.' Then he said, 'By God, nothing prevents me from urging them to do something, even though I see the right

course, except..." It is as if he knew that the matter of that strife would never end at his hands

Words on Justice Mentioned in a Council 114

He said, "I heard Al-Mu'izz (may God bless him and grant him peace) one day asking some judges who

"
"had come to him from his work about the governor of that country, and the judge praised him highly He said, "We have commanded him and others of our officials to do this. Whoever obeys our command will be happy in this world and the hereafter. Whoever disobeys us, we disavow him before God, just as our grandfather, the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him), disavowed Khalid ibn al-Walid before

"
"God Almighty when he disobeyed his command

words on this subject 115

He said, "Some workers came from their jobs with a large sum of money, and their situation was reported to him. Permission was sought for them to enter, and they stood at the palace gate with what they had brought. A complaint had been filed against them beforehand." He said, "By God, even if they came with money, the first of which was with me and the last of which was in their jobs, and even if this was accompanied by some of the complaints that accompanied it, it would not have earned them any favor with me. Even if they had brought nothing but praise for him, that would have been enough for me. By God, we have never commanded them to claim any right for us without taking it, nor have we commanded them to wrong anyone or transgress against them. Whoever disobeys what we have commanded them, God will take vengeance on him.

By God, if the complaint of the one who complained against him were true, we would not have failed to establish God's right in this matter and to be fair to whoever was wronged by him. But we hear the complaint and find no proof of it. Then some of the people come and refute it, thanking the one who complained, praising him, commending his conduct, and extolling him. So we postpone the matter until it is clarified. If people were truthful and fair to us, and spoke of their rights and obligations, and if we found among them those we could trust, their conditions would improve and their affairs would be set right. But they act on their own initiative,

and God will reward us according to what we conceal from them." We hope for good from them, God willing

Words spoken in a gathering, mentioning the virtue of gentleness 116

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) one day mentioning some of his servants whom he had entrusted with a great task in his service. He praised them highly and said, "I never assigned him a task that he refused, nor did he become weary of it, nor was he unable to bear it. No one ever harmed him and he complained to me. He never brought to me a matter in which I knew he had wronged anyone, nor did he neglect

any of my duties. He does bring to me matters that must be addressed, matters that might cause resentment, and he handles them gently, not presenting them all at once, but rather bringing them up gradually to make the

”
▪ matter easier

He approved of this action and said that if a matter is brought before the Imam, he has no choice but to uphold the truth in it, even if some of it is unpleasant. So whoever can rectify this without us should do so, for

▪ the truth is heavy except for those upon whom God Almighty has made it light

This is like what the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said to Safwan ibn Umayya when a man came to him who had stolen his cloak. The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, ordered that his hand be cut off. Safwan said, "O Messenger of God, I did not know that the matter would reach this point, that his hand

”
▪ would be cut off because of my cloak, which I had given to him

The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, said: Why didn't you do this and not bring it to me? If a

▪ punishment is brought to the Imam, it is not permissible to leave it. He ordered that the thief's hand be cut off

As Ali (peace be upon him) said, "If I found a believer committing a shameful act, I would cover him

with my garment," and as he (peace be upon him) said, "Conceal yourselves from us in your homes, for whoever exposes himself to the truth is doomed." And in many narrations of this kind, there is support for what

▪ al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) said

Words on Justice Mentioned in a Council 117

He said, "I was in his presence, peace be upon him, one day when some people from the outlying regions came to him complaining about a governor who was in charge of them. A petition was presented to him on their behalf, and they had presented another one before that. He said, 'How strange these people are! They think we are unaware of them and others. What occupies us, when the kings of the world are preoccupied with their pleasures, is nothing other than attending to the affairs of those whom God Almighty has entrusted to our care and placed under our guardianship. You see what we are doing every day in this regard. Only those who see this world as their portion of the Hereafter truly enjoy it. Were it not for what we know we have with God

”
▪ Almighty, we would not look at this world with such regard for its affairs and its people

Then he looked at me and said, "Tell these people that it is enough for you to know that your story is over, so stop complaining." He had already sent for the dismissal of that official, and he arrived a few days later

▪ and appointed someone else in his place

Political statements mentioned in a council 118

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say, after he had sent out an army to some areas, and it

”
▪ was said to him, "There is nothing in the place that requires all this

He said, "We will look where they do not look. The Messenger of God, peace be upon him, ordered the army of Usama ibn Zayd to go out for a reason that was hidden from the people at that time, except for those who knew it and to whom it was confided. By God, if we were content with ease and comfort in this world, we would be in that state. But God has obligated us to fulfill His right in His land and to enjoin what is right and

”
▪ forbid what is wrong. We will not neglect that, even if its burden is heavy and its matter is great

I heard Al-Mansur Billah (may God bless him and grant him peace) say: The Mahdi Billah, the one who rises to the command of God (peace be upon him), ordered me to go to Egypt. He said, "O Commander of the Faithful, God has granted you authority and empowered you and given you enough of this world to be sufficient and ample. So why do you trouble yourself and worry your heart? Leave this until God brings it about

”
▪ freely

Then he clenched his left fist and said, "Yes, this is the Maghreb in my grasp," and he extended his right hand, "but this palm of mine is towards the East." If what I have commanded you is too much for you, I

▪ will go out to him myself

He said, "Rather, I will carry out what you have commanded, O Commander of the Faithful, and I will

”
▪ hasten to it

Al-Mu'izz said, "And Al-Mahdi knew that he would not reach that point, but he preferred not to waste his resolve and did not see fit to abandon what God Almighty had obligated him to do in terms of jihad in His

”
▪ cause

Then al-Mu'izz (may God's prayers and peace be upon him) dispatched that army, and there was such happiness, blessing, victory, achievement, and good fortune that people did not expect, and what al-Mu'izz (may

▪ God's prayers and peace be upon him) had hinted at became apparent

Words on the virtue of repentance mentioned in a gathering 119

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say one day, when news reached him from Hamid ibn Yasal that he wanted to submit to him, "If he has a share with God, He will grant him success in that, but I do not think He will grant him success because of what He knows of his ill intentions. As for us, we emulate the servants of God, may His name be glorified, in what He has bestowed upon us of His bounty, and we obey His command concerning them. Moreover, He, may His praise be exalted, has informed us in His Book that He accepts repentance from His servants, and He said, 'Except for those who repent before you apprehend them. Then know that God is Forgiving and Merciful.' So whoever repents to Us, We accept him; whoever seeks Our mercy, We have mercy on him; and whoever seeks Our forgiveness, We forgive him. And God does not grant success in that except to the fortunate among His servants, and I do not consider him to be among the

”
▪ fortunate

I saw him in my dream that night, as if I stood at the gate of a fortress where he was said to be. I called for him, and he came out in a wretched, miserable state until he stood behind the fortress gate, which was partially open. I seized him by the collar of his garments and shook him violently, then dragged him out. I heard the women inside the fortress screaming and wailing over him, saying, "God has taken him, our Lord!" I replied, "Yes, I have taken him against his will and yours. By God, I do not think God will grant him success in any of

”
▪ the good things that are being said about him

And it was only a matter of time before the news arrived that he had perished, thus incurring God's wrath and curse, so much so that I believe his death occurred on the very night that al-Mu'izz, peace be upon

▪ him, saw that

words condemning the Umayyads mentioned in a gathering 120

He said, and it was mentioned one day in his presence that there were people from Andalusia from the accursed Umayyad clan, and it was said to him what is said about them, that their father, al-Wasil, was first

▪ claimed and has no one to whom he is attributed

So, to whom do they attribute themselves? To dogs, monkeys, or pigs? By God, they are better than those they attribute themselves to—meaning dogs, monkeys, and pigs—and those they attribute themselves to are in a worse state than them. So leave them to their claims, for their attribution to them is enough shame and

▪ disgrace for them

words in a gathering on the virtue of the patient 121

He said, and I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) say one day in his assembly, when war was mentioned, "How many are there who are mentioned for their precedence, known for their leadership, and described for their bravery, yet when war comes, they are shrouded in darkness, unseen and unknown, hidden away. And how many are those whose appearance is obscure, whose circumstances and whereabouts are unknown. In some of those situations, their bravery and competence become

apparent, but not in every situation does one prove their mettle, nor does the brave stand firm at every

”
•moment

Some of those present said to him, “But in the land of Mahdia and among the young men of Sabir, who are among the followers of the Commander of the Faithful, few of them witnessed a scene after that without

”
•recognizing his station and seeing his influence

He, peace be upon him, said: Those are not comparable to other people. They are the very essence of the pure, the very core of the core. On that day, none stood with us and persevered except us, our sons, and those who were among us. Those who persevered, and God was with us at that time, were our sons, brothers, relatives, and kin. Whenever you see a procession of those, you will see nothing but a procession of the family of Abu

•Talib

•He says this while his face beams with joy at what he is saying

Words spoken in a council regarding the will of some of the saints who 122 had gone out to fight in jihad

He said, and I often heard him (peace be upon him) say, when the elders and leaders of Kutama were present with him, “By God, if I were to call upon one of your young men, or one of those among you who might be considered insignificant, to do something that you believe no one but you can accomplish, and that is suitable for no one but you, then I would call upon him to do it when I wanted, and he would carry it out according to my hope in him. By God, none of you has been successful or distinguished except by our choice and our

”
•admonition of him

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) intended to send the army to Sijilmasa to confront the accursed Ibn Wasul, who called himself the Commander of the Faithful, and given the distance, hardships, isolation, and dangers of the journey—which greatly alarmed the people and made them hesitant to undertake it—he ordered that the young men of Kutama who readily joined him should be called upon. Before long, more than he had anticipated came to him, eager and joyful. He generously rewarded them and bestowed upon them abundant

•gifts

When they wanted to leave, the elders were present, and I attended his council with them. He mentioned the eagerness of those among them who hastened to leave with that army, and that in the past he had been terrified of even mentioning the actions he had called them to, without actually going out to do them. He

•also mentioned their reluctance before that to do anything less than that

Then he said, “This is what I mentioned to you in other gatherings and situations: if I were to call upon

”
•whomever I might call upon among you, I would find in him what I seek

Then he gave permission to those who hastened to leave, and they entered in groups, and the palace was crowded with them. He praised them well and said to them a long, beautiful speech, of which I remember him saying to them

May God bless you and grant you the best of companionship and leadership, for you have proven true my expectations and hopes. You are a source of blessing and a wellspring of goodness. Through you, God began to manifest our cause, and through you, He will complete and rectify it by His power and might. I am aware of your promptness in responding to what you were called to and your responsiveness to what was desired of you. I hope that you will achieve what is hoped for in you, and that God Almighty will thereby elevate your ranks and raise your renown. You are my sons, my brothers, and my closest relatives. No one can compare to you in my eyes, and no human being can reach your level in my heart. This is only because of the place I hold in your

•hearts

God has not granted victory to any of His allies before us like the victory you have granted us. Your forefathers followed this path, and you continue on this path, growing up and multiplying in love for us, supporting us, and being loyal to us. You are nourished by this, and your nature is ingrained in it. So rejoice in the bounty God Almighty has bestowed upon you, for you are the party of God, His supporters, His soldiers, and His beloved ones. By God, I did not intend by this mission with which I sent you any evil to avert, nor to

•repel any harm that I fear, nor to gain any worldly advantage

As for the undesirable, everyone, near and far, knows that the ultimate wish of those around us on earth, both the conquerors who professed Islam and the polytheists, is to be safe from us and to be spared our might. And, praise be to God, none of them today or yesterday has any hope of gaining anything from what we

▪possess

As for acquiring worldly power, we are spending our wealth on this expedition in ways we cannot foresee, even if God grants us power, support, and victory. Our intentions are multifaceted, including fulfilling God's obligation to wage jihad against those who oppose our commands, call themselves by our names, and claim what God Almighty has bestowed upon us. Another reason is that God Almighty has tested His servants by requiring them to fight alongside us in His cause. We call them to this path to distinguish the true mujahideen and the steadfast, so that God Almighty may elevate their ranks, reward them abundantly, and transform their circumstances. How many of you today serve in this army as followers, only to return as leaders, or as subordinates, yet become chiefs? We elevate you in our eyes and in the eyes of your Lord based on your intentions and deeds, through which you seek intercession with us and your Creator. Were it not for the Sunnah, which God Almighty has commanded us to follow, and without which the servants cannot be reformed, I would not have appointed any of you, or anyone else, to lead you. Each one of you deserves to be a leader in my eyes, but the people cannot be reformed without a leader. I have appointed over you the one you know, placing him in my position among you and making him... My eye and ears are with you, and each of you is responsible for himself. I have ordered for you the most generous gift I have ever given, even beyond your immediate vicinity. You know that no one before me has ever given you what I have given you, and I do not consider it too much for you, but rather consider it insignificant for the least of you. What you have with God and with me in what you will receive is greater and more sublime. So proceed with God's blessings, His favor, His happiness, His victory, and His support. Be worthy of the wealth, sufficiency, and righteousness I have hoped for you. Treat each other well, and treat those you accompany from among others well. Treat those of my servants who accompany you as your brothers, and unite with them, for they are your support and strength, and my allegiance unites you with them. Do not let there be discord among you. May God grant you good companionship, and

▪may the Caliphate be upon you

They kissed the ground repeatedly before him, thanked him for his kindness, and promised themselves

▪they would fulfill his commands. Their joy at what they heard from him was evident and visible on their faces

Then he ordered that those who had served in that army from the Berber tribes of the court, who had been involved in the strife and then repented after being overpowered, be brought before him. He accepted them and pardoned them, such as the Banu Kamlan and others. They also hastened to come out, and when they were before him, they kissed the ground and stood. Some of the elders of the Kutama tribe who were present said, "O our master, these are among those of whom God Almighty said, 'Perhaps God will put affection between you

""

▪and those whom you have held as enemies

He said, "Yes, God did that for them because of the happiness they had previously enjoyed with Him.

They attained allegiance after enmity, guidance after misguidance, and victory after estrangement, hostility, and

""

▪warfare against us. Their repentance is accepted, and their sins, God willing, are forgiven

They kissed the ground before him, acknowledged his favor, and thanked him for his grace and

▪forgiveness

"?"

He asked, "How many of you hastened to join this victorious army

""

▪They said, "We are all eager to do this, O our master, so whoever you accept is the fortunate one

He said, "May God bless you and grant you success, and I will look into what is best for you, God

""

▪willing

He brought in the slaves and gave them the same instructions he had given the masters, ordering them

▪to be brothers to them and to treat them kindly. Then they bid them farewell and left

words spoken in secret in a gathering 123

He said, and I told him, peace be upon him, one day about someone who had prestige, a good reputation, and leadership among the people, that he used to sit with a tailor in one of the markets, a man of low

means who was hardly ever seen except at his place, and talk to him. He was reproached for that, and it was said

"? to him, "Couldn't you find anything else to talk about besides this

" .He said, "No, by God, he possesses a quality that I have not found in anyone else

"? So he was asked, "What is that

He said, "I am impatient with the conversation, and I prefer to speak of it without it being spread about me." So I told him, and it was as if I had thrown him into a well. By God, I never heard him repeat a single

.hadith to me

Al-Mu'izz said, "By God, he spoke the truth and made an excellent choice. Whoever is found to

" .possess such qualities is worthy of all goodness

Then he mentioned a man from among the saints who had a connection with him and with al-Mansur (may God bless him and grant him peace). He said, "Al-Mansur (may God bless him and grant him peace) would sometimes tell me about a conversation that took place between him and this man and tell me to ask him about it. So I would ask him, and he would use evasive language to try to cut me off. But when I repeated the question to him and got him to answer it, and I made him know that al-Mansur (may God bless him and grant him peace) had told me about it and ordered me to go along with him, he would say, 'My master spoke the truth, and perhaps I had forgotten what he said.' So I would mention that to al-Mansur (may God bless him and grant

" .him peace), and he would approve of it

Al-Mu'izz (may God bless him and grant him peace) prayed for mercy upon the man and praised him

.highly

Words on the dream of Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers be upon him 124

It was said that Al-Mu'izz (may God bless him and grant him peace) rode one spring day to a place described to him as having beautiful flowers and abundant vegetation, and the road leading there was similarly beautiful. When he (may God bless him and grant him peace) exited the gate of Al-Mansuriyya, people surrounded him, asking him for their needs and presenting their affairs. He continued to turn his face to each one and each group, speaking to them and answering them, until he reached the place described to him and departed in the same manner. He did not fully enjoy what he intended to see, nor did he glance at it except furtively. He was not annoyed by the people's behavior, and we around him were annoyed by it. The pedestrians in front of him were pushing people, and he ordered them to let those they were pushing go. Many of them would linger with him and repeat their needs, so those around him would tell them to leave. Some would nudge him, wanting to ease his burden and make him look at what he had come to, but he forbade them from doing so and ordered

.that those who spoke to him be allowed to attend to their needs and depart according to their own desires
This was his custom in most of his outings, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and I do not

.know of, nor have I heard of, anyone who has been described with such patience and magnanimity

Part Twelve

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

symbols in the hidden meaning, mentioned in the context of following 125

Judge Al-Nu'man bin Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: I accompanied Imam Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and he mentioned Al-Jahiz, so he criticized him and

• mentioned the evils of his fabrication

I said that I saw in some of his writings something that seemed to have been with me before I heard this from our master, peace be upon him, that it had been connected

" • He said, "God forbid, it is a more shameful and vile sect than that

"? Then he said, "What did you see in him that you imagined

So I said, regarding his statement in God Almighty's words, "And he inspected the birds and said, 'Why do I not see the hoopoe? Or is he among the absent?'" up to His statement, "Then see what they will return with." Al-Jahiz said regarding this, "Is it conceivable that Solomon, with his prophethood and his high standing with God Almighty, and what God had subjugated for him of the wind, birds, and jinn in the land of Syria, would not know the matter of the Queen of Sheba, nor her name, nor her religion, despite the short distance between them, until the hoopoe brought it to him? Even the least powerful king on earth today knows

" • such a thing about the affairs of the kings who lived on its borders

Then it was as if I saw him, and I was unaware of that. He came with an apparent argument that was similar to his own situation, and he said, "This is not denied in the power of God Almighty. Joseph stayed in Egypt for a long time, and Jacob, his father, was in Syria. No one knew his whereabouts or where he was. Yet, if someone is captured today in the far reaches of the earth and is in prisons, chains, and confinement, news of him

" • reaches his family, and he writes to them about his condition

It was as if I saw him come in the argument with the same thing he began with in the statement, and he

• left that suspended. I had previously considered that to be his statement, so I see it only as I thought of him No sooner had I finished speaking than he began, saying, "What is the matter of the hoopoe and what he mentioned about Solomon's ignorance of the Queen of Sheba's affair until the hoopoe brought it to him? This is something that would terrify a wicked person, who would elaborate and expound at such a length and with such prolixity. Did any of the prophets, messengers, or angels ever learn anything except after being ignorant of it? The One who alone knows what was and what will be is God, the Lord of the Worlds. As for those created besides Him, they do not know what was or what will be except through God Almighty informing them of it, and through them informing one another of what they witnessed, what reached them, and what they learned. Every person is ignorant of what is hidden from him until it is conveyed to him by someone who

" • witnessed it and informed him about it

It is possible that the first to convey the news of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon was the hoopoe. Such matters may be known by someone less knowledgeable than someone ignorant, just as travelers who have visited distant lands know news of what is happening there, while those who have not traveled there, even among the wise and virtuous, do not. Thus, the hoopoe learned of the matter concerning Sheba without Solomon's knowledge and informed him of it. This is not the kind of knowledge that warrants superiority, nor does it elevate one who possesses it above one who lacks it to the level of knowledge and wisdom in the eyes of

• discerning and intelligent people. Rather, it is knowledge gained through direct observation and experience Rather, the knowledge that deserves preference is the knowledge of intellects, minds, proofs, and

• explanations

Then he mentioned, from the inner meaning of this verse, in the story of the hoopoe, Sheba, and

• Solomon, a phrase that opened up vast knowledge for me

• The words in question were spoken in the council .126

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say: Al-Mansur (may God sanctify his soul and increase prayers upon him) would sometimes pose some questions of wisdom to me, and I would answer him with whatever answer came to mind. He also posed questions to me before his death (peace be upon him) that I was unable to answer and were in a state of confusion. Then, no sooner had he passed away than the answers that had eluded me came to me all at once, without deliberation or reflection. So I knew that this was as it has been

said, that God Almighty transfers what was with the past Imams to the next of them in the very last minute
 .remaining of that past Imam's life

Words on the virtues of Al-Mansur and Al-Mu'izz, may God's blessings 127 .be upon them

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say: The death of one of the missionaries of the Qa'im bi-Amr Allah in some of the eastern islands reached the caliphate towards the end of his days. Two men from his movement disputed his will, each claiming that he had been appointed as the successor. The Qa'im (peace be upon him) did not act on their claim until he passed away (may God sanctify his soul). Al-Mansur (peace be upon him) then became preoccupied with the war until God extinguished the flames of that strife and removed the affliction. He corresponded with the missionaries and needed to establish the existence of a missionary on that island. Each of the two men who claimed the deceased missionary's will had a messenger in the court who

 .brought a letter stating that he was the successor and requesting his release

"? One day he asked me, "Which of these two men do you think is more suitable for this island

" .So I said, "God and His guardian know best

" .He said, "Say that

 .So I stopped and excused myself

He said, "You must speak, and I have spoken on that matter, but I wanted to know your opinion on it;

"? does it agree with what I said or contradict it

" .I said, "The Commander of the Faithful is looking at me

" .He said, "I've looked at you

So I turned away, pondering and considering, and my choice fell upon one of them. I wrote his name

"? on a slip of paper and brought it to him, placing it before him. He said, "What is this

So I said the name of the man I had chosen, and he left it where it was and took out a slip of paper and said, "And on this is the name of the one I have chosen from among them." He opened them, and behold, his

 .choice and my choice had fallen on one man. I was pleased by that and praised God

Then I came to him afterwards and he said, "I am pleased that you agreed with me regarding the man's

" .matter

"? I said, "How could I not be pleased with my master's approval

" .He said, "I will increase your joy

 .I said that the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, is the most virtuous

Then he brought out a piece of paper containing the signature of the Imam (peace be upon him) in his

 .own handwriting, chosen by that man

" .He said, "I flipped through his books, and they passed by me unintentionally

I saw the three slips of paper written by al-Qa'im, al-Mansur, and myself, as if they were written from a single copy, facing each other. Each slip claimed to be the will of so-and-so. I examined each one's writing and saw that so-and-so was more deserving of it for such-and-such a reason. The contents of each slip were no

 .different from those of the others

Then al-Mansur Billah drew me close, embraced me, and held me to his chest. He kissed the back of my neck and pressed his cheek against it for a long time, weeping until his tears soaked my collar. I wept at his weeping, and by God, I did not know the meaning of that weeping until he passed away. Then I knew that it was

his farewell to me, and that he saw in what he saw that his death was near. When he saw it, he transferred his

▪ support to me

This statement by al-Mu'izz (may God be pleased with him) is not contrary to what he said about the transfer of what was in the past, but rather it transfers to what remains in the last minute that remains of that same past. This is only in the completion of the matter, the entitlement to the imamate, and the obligation of

▪ obedience, because that does not occur in two remaining

As for the signs, proofs, strength, and support, they exist in the arguments during the lives of the Imams, as mentioned by the Prophet (peace be upon him), and they increase gradually until perfection.

Whenever the Imam's death approaches, the reasons for his argument become stronger and his signs become more apparent. Therefore, when al-Mansur (peace be upon him) wept upon seeing that al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) had agreed with him and with al-Qa'im (peace be upon him), he knew that this was due to the strength of

▪ the signs and that his death was near

And so it is with most of the world's affairs; one thing does not move into another all at once, but rather gradually, growing bit by bit, like the growth of creation and the entry of one chapter of time into another, until one thing is completed from another, becomes self-sufficient, reveals itself in its own state, and supersedes what

▪ came before it

Among these is what was narrated on the authority of Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, that he said: Ali, peace be upon him, is the scholar of this nation, and we inherit his knowledge, and none of us will

▪ perish until he sees someone from his family who knows something like his knowledge

And like the weeping of Al-Mansur (may God's prayers be upon him) when he saw the connection of the material to Al-Mu'izz (may God's prayers be upon him), some of the wise men said: "He whose children bring him joy and whose soul brings him sorrow," meaning that with the perfection and increase of the child comes the deficiency and decline of the father. And on that note, some poets say

If men give birth to their children and become disturbed by the size of their arms

▪ And its ailments became habitual, for it is like crops whose harvest is near

If this is the case with the outward creation of bodies and the increases and decreases within them, then

? what about the inner knowledge of religions

Words on acquiescing to the independence of worldly affairs 128

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say that God Almighty gives the world to whomever He wills of His believing friends and servants and His disbelieving enemies, and He withholds it from whomever He wills of them. And He does not give the Hereafter except to His believing friends among His servants. And we have a tradition from our grandfather Muhammad, the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, that he said, "When I was taken up to heaven, I met an angel descending and an angel ascending, and Gabriel was with me.

So I asked them about what they were sent to. One of them said, 'I was sent to so-and-so, the disbelieving tyrant, who desired fish, but it was not available at the time, so I brought it out for him so that he might complete his pleasure in this world and so that he would not have a share in the Hereafter.' And the other said, 'I was sent to a worshipper among the servants, who had cooked a pot of the earth's herbs and vegetables and had fasted continuously for days to break his fast with it, so that I might give it to him so that God would not complete for him what he wanted of this world and so that he would not have a share of it, so that God Almighty

”

▪ would complete for him his share of the Hereafter

Then al-Mu'izz said, "God Almighty gave Solomon, son of David, and many of His righteous servants much of this world. He also gave it to the Pharaohs and the tyrants, and He deprived many of His prophets and righteous servants of it. He did the same with many of the disbelievers. This is from His justice, may He be glorified and exalted, among His servants, His wisdom in His creation, and His equity among His creatures. He

did not wrong the virtuous by withholding worldly things from them and diminishing their share, for He compensated them with the reward of the Hereafter, which is better for them. Rather, He was gracious in this and bestowed His favor upon them. Nor did He deprive the wrongdoer of his desires, giving him respite and showing him kindness. Both are favored and cared for in this world, and in the Hereafter they will be rewarded and compensated. He has the conclusive argument and the abundant favor over the one who does good to himself and the one who does evil to himself, the one who looks after him and the one who commits a crime

against him. God does not wrong people in the least, as He, may His praise be glorified, said, 'But it is people

”

• who wrong themselves

The hadith of the two angels is well-known and famous, but the benefit lies in Al-Mu'izz's explanation of it and the establishment of God Almighty's justice and wisdom in it. I have not counted how many times I have come across this hadith, yet it did not benefit me at all until I heard Al-Mu'izz's explanation and

• commentary on it

And in the Book of God Almighty there is that which strengthens, supports, clarifies, and confirms it.

Among what He, may His praise be exalted, said: “Whoever desires the life of this world and its adornments - We will fully recompense them for their deeds therein, and they will not be deprived of anything. Those are the ones for whom there is nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire. And what they did therein will be rendered

”

• worthless, and what they used to do will be in vain

He said, “Whoever desires the harvest of the Hereafter - We will increase for him in his harvest. And whoever desires the harvest of this world - We will give him thereof, but he will have no share in the

”

• Hereafter

And God Almighty said: “And on the Day when those who disbelieved are exposed to the Fire, [it will

”

• be said]: ‘Your good things in your worldly life have taken away from them, and you enjoyed them

And His saying: “Whoever desires the immediate life, We hasten for him from it what We will to whomever We intend. Then We have assigned for him Hell, which he will [enter to] burn, disgraced and banished. But whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it as it should be striven for, while he is a believer - then those are the ones whose striving is appreciated. To each We extend—to these and to those—from the bounty of your Lord. And the bounty of your Lord is not restricted. Look how We have preferred some of them

”

• over others. But the Hereafter is greater in degrees [of reward] and greater in distinction

All of this supports the statement of Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, that this is justice from God Almighty among His creation, and profound wisdom in His servants, and a gift and blessing from Him, as God

• Almighty said in His Book

It was narrated from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, that he said: God Almighty gives the world to those He loves and those He hates, but He only gives the Hereafter to those He

• loves

On the authority of Ali (may God be pleased with him), he said: “This world is a fleeting pleasure from which both the righteous and the wicked partake, while the Hereafter is a true promise that none but the obedient and grateful will attain. The good things of this world are those withheld from the believer, and they do

”

• not harm him as they harm the disbeliever

I cannot enumerate the solace and patience I gained from this hadith of Al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him)

regarding the fleeting pleasures of this world and the hardships, distress, and difficulties I encounter when I remember it and reflect upon it as he (peace be upon him) did. And, praise be to God, my share of the benefit in

• this was immense. We ask God for inspiration to be grateful and for benefits in all matters

Hadiths in a gathering containing symbolic interpretation 129

He said, and I heard Imam Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, the Commander of the Faithful, one day in one of his gatherings, say, “Our grandfather Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him, mentioned one day to

”

• some of his companions some of the knowledge that God Almighty had bestowed upon him

Al-Mu'izz reported this on his authority, saying, "Peace be upon him, saw in those who told him this what indicated that they could not bear what they heard from him, as if their souls denied it. So he said, 'If you deny what I said, it is not something I fabricated, but rather wisdom I inherited from my forefathers and a favor my Lord bestowed upon me, for He taught me and my forefathers before me the knowledge of His Book, in which He says, "We have not neglected anything in the Book," and He says in it, "It is an explanation of all

things." So there is nothing of all things that is not in the Book of God, the Exalted and Glorified, and we know

" " .it

Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: Did not the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, say in the Qur'an: "There is news of those before you and information of those after

?" you

I said yes

" .Fain said, "You will find in the book news of those who came after you

" .I said, "From you, may God's blessings be upon you, we find it

He said, "And from us, by God, you will find it and everything you ask for, as long as you submit to

" .our command, hold fast to our rope, and follow our leadership

This hadith, which al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, mentioned, is well-known and famous. It is narrated on the authority of al-Harith al-A'war, who said: "I entered the mosque and found the people engaged in idle

" .talk, so I went to Ali, peace be upon him, and informed him of that

" .He said, "You have done it

I said yes

He said, "I heard the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, say, 'There will be a

""? tribulation after me.' I said, 'What is the way out of it, O Messenger of God

The Book of God, the Exalted and Majestic, contains accounts of those before you, news of those after you, and the judgment of what is between you. It is decisive, not a jest. Whoever abandons it out of arrogance, God will break him. Whoever seeks guidance elsewhere, God will lead him astray. It is the firm rope of God,

His wise remembrance, and the straight path. It is that which desires cannot deviate from, tongues cannot confuse, scholars cannot be satiated by, and it does not become worn out by repetition or reiteration. Its wonders never cease. It is that which, when the jinn heard it, they said, "Indeed, we have heard a wondrous Qur'an."

Whoever speaks by it speaks the truth, whoever acts by it is rewarded, whoever judges by it is just, whoever

! calls to it is guided to the straight path, and whoever clings to it gains. Take it, you one-eyed one

I do not know how many times this hadith has passed through my mind, nor how many times I have read and written it. By God, I did not think about his saying, "And in it is news of those after you," until that al-

.Mu'izz, may God's blessings be upon him, opened it for me

This is a hadith narrated by most hadith scholars, so they should seek information about those who will come after them in the Quran. If they do not find it, then they should ask those who possess knowledge about it,

" .as God commanded them when He said, "So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know

Al-Mu'izz said, "We have knowledge of what is sought," like his grandfather Ali's saying, "Ask me before you lose me. By Him Who split the seed and created life, you will not ask me about knowledge of what was and what will be, nor about knowledge of what you do not know, except that I will inform you of it. The

truthful Prophet taught it to me on the authority of the trustworthy spirit on the authority of the Lord of the Worlds." And like his grandfather Ja'far ibn Muhammad said, "The knowledge that Adam, peace be upon him,

" .brought down has not been taken away, and it is inherited; it is among us, and we inherit it

words spoken in a gathering urging the pursuit of knowledge 130

He said, "One day I sat before Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, with a group of his close associates. He remained silent for a long time, and we remained silent as well. Then he raised his head and looked at us, saying, 'Why are you so silent? Have we cornered you? Will you not ask us about what benefits you? Ask us about matters of your religion, and do not hesitate to ask, for we have a sufficient answer and a comprehensive knowledge for everything you desire.' The Companions of the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, sometimes hesitated to ask him questions, while the Bedouins would respond to him and would not refrain from asking about anything that came up. The Companions of the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, wished that

someone from among them would come and ask questions in their presence so that they might hear the

”
• answer

”? So I said, "Am I not one of those Bedouins, O Commander of the Faithful

”
• He smiled and said, "Yes, be so if you wish

So I said, “We have heard that some of them asked the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, saying, ‘O Messenger of God, teach me a deed that will admit me to Paradise.’ So I say, teach us that, O Commander of the Faithful, something we cannot do without knowing, even if we are ignorant of asking about it, and

”
• something that pleases you and pleases God for us, so that we may attain it and its knowledge
He, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, said: Yes, purify your hearts and intentions, and do

• what God has obligated you to do to the best of your ability

? Let each of you consider what you would like for yourself; would you like it to be good and guided
Let each of you consider what he loves most in his son; he desires nothing more than for him to be

• chaste, righteous, dutiful, pious, devout, and knowledgeable

Let each of you consider what he wants from his servant. Does he want anything from him other than

? to be trustworthy, obedient, and diligent

This is my intention regarding you, and through it you will attain God's pleasure and our pleasure with

• you

I examined what he, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, said in this statement and found it to

• encompass all aspects of goodness, and I saw that few people act upon it

So I said, O our Master, even if our deeds fall short, we hope to attain Your pleasure through Your forgiveness, Your grace, Your kindness, Your favor, and Your mercy. And if we come to You and ask forgiveness of God, will You forgive us, so that we may be as God Almighty said: “If only, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked forgiveness of God, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for

”
• them, they would have found God Accepting of Repentance and Merciful

And you are the successor of the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, and our

• refuge for seeking forgiveness for our sins, shortcomings, and injustices against ourselves

He said that this is in conjunction with what we have already mentioned regarding the correction of intentions. Otherwise, God has informed you about a people who asked the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, to seek forgiveness for them without any intention, and he did not forgive them. He said,

“Those who remained behind from among the Bedouins will say to you, ‘Our wealth and our families preoccupied us, so ask forgiveness for us.’ They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts.” (Quran 4:12)
I said, the doctor may know about the patient's condition what the patient does not know about himself,

• and our Lord knows best our ailment and its cure

He said, “Yes, if the sick person accepts what the doctor orders regarding food and medicine, he will be cured, God willing. But if he disobeys, he will perish. So if you accept from us, you will be happy, saved, and attain long-lasting comfort and eternal life. But if you disobey us, you will destroy yourselves by disobeying

”
• us

Some of those present said, "Our Lord's grace and mercy are sufficient for us, and we hope for nothing

”
• more

He said, “God Almighty says, ‘My mercy encompasses all things, so grant it to those who are

”
• righteous. So whoever among you is righteous, let him hope for His mercy

And in the same way 131

He said, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) became somewhat withdrawn from the saints, and this was mentioned. So I pleaded with him, begged his mercy, and begged his compassion. He (peace be upon him) said, "By God, they are not more eager than I am for their well-being and for them to reach the end of their hopes, but I did not find in them what I desired. If I had found it in them, they would have found with me the best of this world and the hereafter. I approached them, but they did not approach me; I called them, but they did not respond. What would you have done with your son if you had handed him over to the school, and he had left

"? him and gone to play with the dogs

■ I said I exerted myself in correcting and teaching him, and I did not leave him to his own choice
He said, "Until when? And is there an end to this? Far from it! There is no end to the preaching of one

"
■ who accepts admonition

Words in a council in denial of grace 132

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, when the head of Ya'la ibn Muhammad ibn Salih and the head of his brother were brought and placed before him. He said, "This is one of those about whom God said, 'Is he against whom the word of punishment has been justified [like one who is in Hell]? Then can you rescue one who is in the Fire?' We have done to him what you know. We gave him from the authority of God, the Exalted and Glorified, which He gave us, and we made him our ruler, and we empowered him, and we strengthened him. Our opinion of him was to pardon and overlook what we heard about him of ingratitude and denial of favors, as long as he appeared obedient. But God, the Exalted and Glorified, refused for us to accept what was disliked and oppressed. So He revealed to him what he concealed and made manifest what he kept secret, and He hastened His vengeance upon him and deprived him of His

"
■ favor, as is His custom with us with those who are like him

A discussion on the virtue of obedience that took place in a gathering .133

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, one day when a group of saints, servants, and men of the kingdom entered upon him. He gave them some advice, and among what I memorized was that he said to them, "By God, the truly fortunate among you are those who obey our command and accept our advice. By God, it is only a matter of a person taking control of himself and training himself a little to obey us and act in accordance with what pleases us. How easy it is for him to attain this until he attains the good of this world and the Hereafter! God Almighty has connected the days of our dominion and the rise of our cause with the days of the Hereafter. So whoever among you does good in this will attain the happiness of this world and the happiness of the Hereafter, and the good of both will be combined for him. But whoever is overcome by the desire for the fleeting pleasures of this world, to the point that he disobeys our command and seeks in return a small portion of worldly gain, will lose this world and the Hereafter. That is the manifest loss. What you see from us is sufficient advice for you, so follow us and emulate our example. By God, even if obeying us and following our command were only obligatory upon you because of our goodness to you in worldly matters, it would still be obligatory upon you to be loyal to us and to reciprocate our goodness to you. So how much more so when God has combined for you through us the good of this world and the Hereafter! By God, the man who clings to some measure of chivalry..." And literature is for him to have a friend and companion who commands him to do something, so he does not see disobeying his command, and he entrusts him with a need, so he exerts

? his effort in it. So how about one who believes in our Imamate and knows the obligation of obeying us

Hadiths on Trustworthiness that took place in the Council 134

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, mention one of his callers in the East, and he praised him highly. He said, "When we chose him for the place where he is, some who wanted to criticize him said that he is not skilled in knowledge. So I said, 'That is what necessitated his selection, so that he and those who knew him before our favor reached him, when it did reach him, may know how it will affect

him, what he will see of our substance with him, and what light will appear in him when our command is

” ”

• connected to him. Thus, in that will be a dazzling miracle for us

”

• He said, "And so it was, thanks be to God

Then he, peace be upon him, said: What can a claimant possibly claim to know except what has been transmitted from our fathers and ancestors through intermediaries between him and them from among our saints and servants, the most reliable of them in hadith and the most truthful in speech, who expresses the meaning that is subject to interpretation, addition and subtraction when acquiring it, is that better than the one whom we

• provide with guidance, benefits and wisdom

The furthest people from true knowledge and closest to ignorance are those who pursue knowledge they haven't verified with us and claim wisdom they haven't acquired from us. How many of those who oppose us have perished only because of their self-admiration and their refusal to ask us, as God Almighty commanded them in the clear Quran when He said, "Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know." They did not do so, but followed their desires and acted upon their own opinions, thus going astray and deviating from the straight

• path

Words spoken in a gathering concerning the people of rebellion and 135 corruption

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say one day, when he mentioned the rebellious people who emerged during the days of the Qa'im, and whom al-Mansur, may God's prayers and

• peace be upon them both, killed and burned with fire after killing them

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said to a group of people before him, "What do you say about them

"?

and their situation in the era of al-Qa'im, and what al-Mansur, may God's prayers be upon him, did to them

"?

They said, "What can we say about that, since it was the action of two imams

He said, "What do people say about this? Do you think that the Qa'im (may God hasten his reappearance) accepted what they said about him, so he killed those he killed and punished those he punished?

Then al-Mansur (may God hasten his reappearance) saw that this was false and unjust, so he killed them in

”

• retaliation. On the surface, this is a denial of the Qa'im's actions and a change in his command

• They said that people's opinions on this matter vary according to the differences in their desires

He said, "By God, I did say something about that in the presence of Al-Mansur (may God bless him and grant him peace), and the matter was mentioned in his presence, along with a group of people who began to thank him for what he had done to them and describe what they had done and what had befallen those who were afflicted because of them, until nothing remained for them but to declare the injustice of Al-Qa'im (may God bless him and grant him peace), even though the content of their words necessitated that in their belief, due to

”

• what they had expressed in their speech

My heart was heavy with grief, and I spoke harshly to the people, explaining their error. Al-Mansur (may God bless him and grant him peace) was delighted by this, drew me near, embraced me, and kissed me between the eyes, saying, "You have fulfilled your duty to Al-Qa'im (may God bless him and grant him peace)

”

• for the love he showed you and the favor he bestowed upon you in terms of closeness and special favor

So I said that if the Commander of the Faithful saw fit to reveal this statement to these people and

• clarify its true meaning for them, so that they might know what he did

He paused for a long time, sighed deeply, and then said, "By God, the crime committed that day by those wicked people was only against him, and he was the one being tested, because of what they were bringing to him and reporting to him—matters he could neither ignore nor neglect, nor overlook without ascertaining the truth of the matter and determining its veracity. By God, he did not punish anyone based on the words of any of them, no matter what they reported. Nor did he punish anyone except based on the statements of people who had authority and special privileges. He used to consult with them beforehand, and then reward and compensate them afterward, after reviewing the matter with them, warning them of its sin, emphasizing it to them, and

implored them in the name of God. If what these people reported was based on mere suspicion, and what he did not approve of was not subject to a definitive ruling—which was the majority of what these people reported—he

kept it pending until he examined it. He only punished a few after exhausting all effort in investigation and clarification, and he kept what he kept until the matter came to me. Then what became clear to me became clear, what was proven true became proven true, and what I did became obligatory for me. So I carried out that action,

releasing some based on their innocence and others based on suspicion, in which I saw that concealing the matter was best.” They should pardon some of them according to what the time and circumstances required, and

until that era, that (may God’s prayers be upon him) قائم if the time were extended in the days of the

▪ action would not be repeated

Then al-Mu’izz, peace be upon him, said: The Qa’im and al-Mansur, peace be upon them both, are in this matter as one and the same, and their affair is continuous and unbroken. Just as a single Imam may be pleased with the condition of one of his men, so he employs him, appoints him, brings him close, singles him out, and draws him near, then later reveals to him what necessitates his dismissal and removal, so he removes him, distances him, and dismisses him. Perhaps he even deserves to be killed in his eyes, so he kills him. And perhaps his pleasure with him continues, and what necessitates his displeasure with him does not become clear to him during his lifetime, and this becomes clear to the Imam who comes after him, so he does the same to him.

▪ And both of them are guided by God, and are guided, and are granted success and direction

Thus, the matter of these people was resolved, not because the one who established God's command (peace be upon him) did something that al-Mansur (peace be upon him) disapproved of and then changed, but because it became clear that the one who established God's command (peace be upon him) had refrained from that matter until it became clear to him what had become clear to al-Mansur (peace be upon him), and then he carried it out, on the basis that if the one who established God's command had realized it, he would not have

repeated his action. And God Almighty said: "O you who have believed, if there comes to you a report, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful." And the punishment of the people was not due first for what they reported, nor was the punishment due for those about

▪ whom they reported, without the clarification that God Almighty commanded

Then al-Mu’izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: The duty of the servants in such matters is to submit to the saints of God and refrain from objecting to them or denying their actions, for all their actions are wise and correct, whether the servants know them or not, whether they approve of them or disapprove of them. This is because their actions are by the command of God, the Exalted, just as God, blessed be His name, gives life and causes death, makes healthy and sick, enriches and impoverishes, honors and humiliates, raises and lowers. All of this is from Him, the Almighty, with perfect wisdom, justice, and correctness. He is not questioned about what He does, while they will be questioned, as He said, and He is the

▪ most truthful of speakers

Likewise, what He does through His chosen ones is a command from God, a wisdom from His

▪ wisdom, and justice towards His servants

The actions of God's saints do not differ or vary, even if their outward appearances seem different, because each of their rulings, at a particular time and place, is only valid and appropriate for that specific time

▪ and place, and all of that is true and wise, even if people perceive it as different and varied

Part Thirteen

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

***A statement made in a gathering regarding the apparent differences in .136
the temperaments of the imams***

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mention the differences in the circumstances of the imams in what people see in terms of their competence, sufficiency, and management of the affairs of the nation. He said that God Almighty has differentiated in this regard between the circumstances of the prophets. He, the most truthful of speakers, said to His Prophet Muhammad, the master of the messengers, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, "So be patient, as were the resolute messengers." He informed him that he was one of His resolute messengers. He said, "And We had already made a covenant with Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him resolve." He mentioned the story of Jonah, peace be upon him, and how he became overwhelmed by the message he was entrusted with and left in anger. God's prophets are like that in their degree of prophethood and

▪ their station with God Almighty

Likewise, the Imams, peace be upon them, include those with resolve and determination, those with compassion and mercy, those with fortitude and patience, and those who cannot bear the severity of the matter. Each one is suited to his time and appropriate to his place, for God Almighty is the One who chose them, established them, and made each Imam a proof for the people of his time and a guardian of His command

▪ among them

Then he mentioned what God Almighty tested the Imam (peace be upon him) with, namely the corruption of the people of his time, the sedition that occurred during his days, his patience with that, his

▪ endurance of what he bore, and his strength in it, may God's blessings and mercy be upon him

words mentioned in a gathering, near and far 137

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say, "How many are close to me, whom people consider to be my closest companions, yet they are the furthest from me and the most distant, yet closer to me than my jugular vein. Whoever wants to know who is close to me and who is far should look at their circumstances and deeds. By God, none will be close to me except those whose righteous deeds draw them near, even if they are at the ends of the earth. And none will be far from me except those whose evil deeds distance them, even if they are under my bed. This person, by God, is close to me in this world, the one whom God's pleasure will unite with me in the Hereafter. And the one who is far from me is the one whom God's wrath will distance from me in the Hereafter. So whoever wishes to be deceived by someone who appears close to him, while he is

"

▪ otherwise, then he should not be pleased with him

words spoken in a gathering about the corruption of most people's conditions 138

He said, and he mentioned the corruption of most people and what they try to do, saying: If we are lenient with their mistakes and sins, they will not be ashamed and will think that they are right in their actions. And if we expose them to them and do not punish them for them, that will be an excuse for them to do it again.

▪ And God is the One from whom help is sought in what we try to do with them

.A conversation that took place in a council criticizing the Umayyads .139

He said, and I heard him say one day, "I have heard that these accursed Umayyads curse us from their pulpits in Andalusia. Their accursed forefathers did the same long ago, cursing Ali (peace be upon him) from their pulpits. But God did not increase him in status with Him and with people except by that, nor did He increase them in shame and disgrace. The wicked ones only wanted to avenge their ancestors for cursing and expelling the Messenger of God. If it weren't for their outward pretense of Islam, they would not have limited

"

▪ this to us, but would have extended it to the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) as well

Their cursing of us will amount to one of two things: either they attribute us to our lineage from the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) when they curse us, and that will be sufficient disgrace for them before God and His servants; or they attribute us to a lineage other than ours, and God will avert that from

us, as the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) said regarding what their forefathers used to do to him before God Almighty gave him power over them. They used to call him "Mudhammam" (the despised one) and revile him. He said, "Do you not see what God has averted from me of the evil of these people? They

"
▪ revile 'Mudhammam,' and I am not that

Then he said, "In the language, cursing means expulsion. They are the ones expelled by the Messenger of God, bald, and they neither deny nor reject that, neither they nor those who support them. They are the ones

"
▪ cursed by God and His Messenger

Then he said, "By God, their lineage is open to discussion and criticism, but even if they were descended from monkeys and pigs, they would be better than those to whom they are attributed: the accursed Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, son of the accursed, the outcast, son of the outcast. The Messenger of God cursed his grandfather al-Hakam and his father Marwan, the accursed, in his loins, and banished him from his sanctuary.

He and Marwan remained banished throughout the life of the Messenger of God and the lives of those who succeeded him, until Uthman reinstated them. This was one of the greatest things for which people resented him and considered it permissible to kill him. The Messenger of God also banished his maternal grandfather Mu'awiya ibn Mughira ibn Abi al-As ibn Umayya, who refused to comply. So he ordered Ali, peace be upon him, to strike off his head. These are the origins they claim and the lineages they ascribe to. This is enough shame, disgrace, and deficiency for them. No one can bring them down with anything like it, nor diminish them

"
▪ with anything less

words of advice 140

He said, and I mentioned to Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) one day what people were discussing regarding what they had heard and heard from him in his sermons, speeches, addresses, and exhortations, and what was written down from that. He said, "By the grace of God, what they narrate from us and hear from us is only what pleases God Almighty and what He accepts, God willing. We do not intend by what we say to them and what we establish among them, and we do not seek anything by it except the pleasure of God, and we desire their well-being and happiness in this world and the hereafter. If they accept what they hear from us, then they have attained that. If they turn away from it, then it is only incumbent upon us to advise them and convey the message to them. By the grace of God, they are in our time better than in other times because of what God has bestowed upon them in terms of their acceptance of them. We ask God to guide

"
▪ them to what pleases Him and pleases us with them

And in the same way 141

He said, and I heard him before that say, peace be upon him, I heard Al-Mansur Billah say, "I wish that people would learn what we say from us, understand it, and keep it to themselves, for that would benefit them

"
▪ and those who come after them

He said, mentioning a man of understanding in the sciences, literature, and history of the world, who accompanied the Mahdi and the Qa'im (may God's prayers be upon them) during their reigns and served them, being close to them and particularly intimate. Then, during the reign of al-Mansur (may God's prayers be upon him), he grew old, became frail, and weakened. So, he presented to him books he had collected and compiled on the history of the Umayyads and Abbasids, their stories, and what was narrated about them by those who

▪ opposed us and turned people away from us and our cause

I am amazed that a man who accompanied the Imams (peace be upon them) and was close to them for most of his life, yet he was not successful in compiling anything of the wisdom he heard from them or the knowledge he acquired from them, so that it might be preserved, passed on, written down, and heard from him,

▪ instead of what he collected and thought he had bestowed upon us

This is something that Al-Mu'izz mentioned in the hadith before this one, that the people in his time,

▪ thanks be to God, are better than in other times, as they are influential, desirable, and write

words of advice given in a sermon 142

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) one day mention a statement by some of the opponents, and he said, "Were it not for the fact that the statement is attributed to us, it would not be appropriate to argue with such people except with such and such." He also mentioned a statement by some of the opponents, and he said, "Because these people hardly understand the words of the people of truth, but rather what is close to their

"

• minds is what resembles it from the words of those who are in error like them

Some of the wise men of old were once faced with a similar situation with people whom they perceived as only understanding what was close to their level of comprehension. So they addressed them in a way they could understand, using language that was not entirely correct in their view. This was then attributed to them and ascribed to them until they had to apologize to those who understood and explain the matter to those who knew. What then is the solution with those who do not understand the truth, and if addressed with something else, it will ultimately backfire on the one who addresses them? These people are like cattle, as God Almighty

• said, nay, they are even more astray

Words on the Spirit that took place in the council 143

He said, and I asked him, peace be upon him, about the hadith narrated from the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, that he stood at the well on the day of Badr, into which had been thrown those who were killed from among the leaders of the polytheists that day, and he said, "O Utbah ibn Rabi'ah, O Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah, O so-and-so, O so-and-so," and he mentioned them by their names, "Have you

"

• found what your Lord promised to be true? For I have found what my Lord promised to be true

"

• So it was said to him, "O Messenger of God, a bald man speaks, a hollow corpse

He said, "You are no more able to hear than they are, and if they were given permission to answer, they

"

• would have answered

I said that a group of common people used this hadith as evidence for the survival of souls, and that after they leave the bodies, they remain, receiving reward and punishment, until God resurrects creation, at which point they return to the bodies as they were. They cited God's words: "The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening," and "On the Day the Hour is established, it will be said, 'Admit the people of Pharaoh to

• the severest punishment,'" and the narrations about the punishment of the grave and other things

Others said that the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) address to the people of the well, and his statement to those who asked him about it, "You cannot make them hear anything more than they can," was something God specifically granted him regarding these people. He made them hear his words after death, just as he made Jesus hear the words of the one whom He resurrected. As for souls, they perish when they leave the bodies, just as the bodies perish. Then God Almighty will resurrect them in the Hereafter, as He, the Exalted, said. They cited as evidence His statement, "You cannot make those in the graves hear," and other verses such as, "Everyone upon it will perish," and, "Everything will perish except His Face," and, "Every soul will taste

"

• death

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said regarding the soul: "There is profound speech that requires lengthy explanation, a foundation upon which to build, and branches that extend from it in its beginning, end, and transition. You will hear it, God willing. As for what you asked about concerning the words of the Messenger of God to the people of the well, he did not intend to address those dead, for they had already witnessed their fate.

His statement, 'Have you found what your Lord promised to be true?' was a question. How can one question someone who knows he cannot answer? Rather, he directed that speech to those who were with him at that time, those hypocrites who shared their views, to inform them of what God Almighty had done to their companions

"

• and how He had fulfilled His promise to them

words in the aftermath mentioned in the council 144

He said, and I heard him say, that among what God Almighty revealed to some of His prophets is that He will grant a righteous person from among His righteous servants seven generations of his descendants good,

▪ and He will punish the disbeliever in the same way among his descendants

This is similar to the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, that God

▪ protects the believer in his children for seventy autumns

So I said to al-Mu'izz, may God be pleased with him, regarding what was mentioned about the descendants and the punishment in the heirs, "O our master, is this statement meant to be general, referring to

"? those who followed in the footsteps of their forefathers, walked in their ways, and followed them

He, peace be upon him, said: Nothing good comes from nothing good, and nothing bad comes from nothing bad. Even if colocynth were watered with honey, it would only bear bitter fruit. And whatever shortcomings people see in the ancestors of the virtuous, they only see them as shortcomings due to their own

▪ limited understanding

I did not understand what he meant by that, in light of the words of God Almighty: "And those who

" ▪ believed and whose descendants followed them in faith - We will join with them their descendants

And his saying: Rather, they said, "We found our fathers following a certain way, and we are following

" ▪ in their footsteps

And his saying: "And Abraham's seeking forgiveness for his father was only because of a promise he

" ▪ had made to him. But when it became clear to him that his father was an enemy of God, he disowned him

" His saying, "He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living

Then a bald man began to criticize a people whose forefathers were pure, virtuous, and righteous imams, and he began to describe the poor state of the sons. Then the meaning of what he had said became clear to me, and it was from God's words to Noah concerning his son: "He is not of your family; he is one whose

▪ conduct is not righteous." And there were some in the gathering who could not bear the speech

words mentioned about the oppressors 145

He said, and I heard him mention a group of people who brought something to his attention that he disliked, so he cursed them and prayed against them, saying, "They were the cause of this curse upon them

" ▪ because of what they mentioned about themselves

This is similar to what is reported when God Almighty revealed to some of His prophets, when He was angry with the Children of Israel: "Tell the Children of Israel not to mention Me, for I have obligated Myself to mention whoever mentions Me. If I mention them, I only mention them with a curse, so do not expose them to it

" ▪ from Me

▪ We seek refuge in God from His wrath and the wrath of His saints, upon whom be the best of peace

Words condemning deception of God's saints 146

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say, regarding what was burned of the books during the days of al-Mansur (peace be upon him), and among what was burned were those containing great wealth, such as drinks that people had bought from the spoils of war, treasuries, financial documents, and other things: "By God, al-Mansur was not incited to do what he did and made it seem acceptable to others except by someone who intended to oppress and harm others. He resorted to this by destroying the wealth of God's allies. So, without a doubt, he was punished for that with what you saw and mentioned. And if I were to swear that al-Mansur (peace be upon him) did not do that, I would be telling the truth and being just. And there was no satisfaction of the

"? people in that, and can the people's satisfaction be attained

They said on that day, "What do we have to do with burning books? The money collected from us will
 " .be distributed among us, and even if it were distributed among them, it would not satisfy them
 I heard a man that day, who had about three thousand dinars worth of goods he had purchased from the
 " .treasuries, say, "By God, I owe no one a favor or thanks for that
 Then al-Mu'izz said, "So little of this went astray until it was lost. May God not reward well whoever
 " .suggested this and helped in its loss
 This is similar to what his grandfather, Muhammad, the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), said
 " .when he said: "I forbid you from gossip and wasting money

Sayings on the blessings of what comes from the saints of God 147 ***Almighty***

He said, and the messenger of Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him) came out to us—a group of saints—with a tray containing fine apples. He said, "These apples came to us from the East, from the land from which the Mahdi and the Qa'im (may God's peace and blessings be upon them) emerged, and from the estates that belonged to them there." He gave each of us a portion of them and said, "Bless yourselves with them, for we hope, God willing, that you will harvest them from the tree with us, with your own hands. God has
 " .fulfilled His promise to us and destroyed our enemy by His grace
 So we thanked him and prayed to God Almighty as best we could, and I took what he had given me of those apples. At that time, some of our friends asked me, "Should we eat them, or what should we do with
 "? them

I said this is something we have to seek healing and blessings from, as our master (peace be upon him)

.said

When evening came, I sat up in the night, some of it having passed, looking at some books. All the people in the house were asleep, and I was doing this when a pain came upon me in my left side, like the pricking of knives. It increased until I feared death, and I couldn't call anyone from my family. I said to myself, "There is nothing more beneficial for me than this apple that came to me from the saint of God, who spoke of it as he did." It was before me, and I took from it less than the weight of a dirham, as far as I can tell. By God, no sooner had it reached my stomach than that intense, painful pain subsided suddenly, as if a thorn had been pulled out. I praised God and knew that God Almighty does not disappoint those who draw near to Him, seek

.His help, and seek healing through His saints

I recalled to myself the hadith of Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali when he entered with his father, Muhammad ibn Ali (peace be upon him), upon Muhammad ibn Khalid, the governor of Medina. Muhammad ibn Khalid complained to my father of a stomach ache he had experienced. He mentioned to him the hadith of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) concerning honey and black cumin, and that he had described it in this way. A man from Medina objected, saying, "We have heard this hadith and tried what was said, but it did not benefit us." Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali (peace be upon him) replied, "God only benefits those who have certainty and belief in the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) through this and similar means. As for those who are hypocrites and do not believe in the Messenger of God (peace and blessings
 " .be upon him), and who accept what they hear from him without belief, God will not benefit them through it
 I entered upon al-Mu'izz (may God be pleased with him) the next day and told him about it and how God had relieved me of my pain. This increased my insight into my beliefs and my affairs. Al-Mu'izz (may God be pleased with him) said, "Praise be to God, for this is a blessing from Him. God has favored you with it and guided you to insight and sound belief in it. No one has ever sought intercession with God through us except that we were the best means for him with Him in whatever he sought intercession with us concerning his religious and worldly affairs, provided his intention was pure and his heart sincere. By God, if lepers, vitiligo sufferers, and the blind came to us seeking healing from God through us, having good faith and sincere intentions, and without any doubt, they would be healed. God, the Exalted and Majestic, did not place angels between Himself and His human creation. Rather, He made their means and intermediaries with Him human

beings like themselves. He said—and He is the most truthful of speakers—'And if We had made him an angel,

”
• We would have made him a man, and We would have confused them as they are confused

Then he, peace be upon him, said: Many people seek incantations for ailments that afflict them. If one of them trusts the reciter and is certain that his incantation will cure the ailment that has befallen him, he will benefit from it due to the strength of nature over the disease because of that certainty. So how much more so when the certainty is intended for the sake of God Almighty and healing is sought from Him through His

? saints

Then he said, “I have recently been suffering from a stomach ache, and I had been instructed to prepare a remedy for it. I went to great lengths in selecting the ingredients and perfecting its preparation, to the extent that I know no one has ever done before. I called for it to be prepared, and it was brought along with something similar to what the Mahdi, peace be upon him, had ordered to be made. When I saw it, I was too proud to choose what I had prepared over what the Mahdi had prepared. So I took some of what he, peace be upon him, had prepared and said, ‘O God, You have honored me with his fatherhood and made him a forerunner in the favor You have bestowed upon me and given him precedence in it. I give precedence to what he has done over what I have done, so grant me healing from this ailment.’ By God, no sooner had I taken it than my pain

”
• disappeared

words on supplication and praise mentioned in a gathering 148

He said, and I heard him say, a man asked our grandfather Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him,

”
• saying, "O son of the Messenger of God, teach me a supplication that I hope will be answered

• He, peace be upon him, said: Praise God often and supplicate to Him as you wish

"? He said, "And what is praise in supplication, O son of the Messenger of God

He said that all Muslims on earth call upon God Almighty day and night to answer those who praise

? Him, so what do you think of someone for whom all Muslims intercede with Him at all times

"? He said, "And how is that, O son of the Messenger of God

He said, "Don't they say in every rak'ah they perform, when they raise their heads from it, 'Allah hears

”
• those who praise Him'? So praise Allah, He hears your supplication

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I learned the meaning of this from our grandfather Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, and I wrote it in a chapter of a letter I wrote to one of those I appointed over some of the armies. Know that all Muslims on earth, in its east and west, near and far, from all sides, whether friend or foe, supporter or opponent, supplicate to God Almighty for you and your companions on their pulpits every Friday and Eid, and at the times that God Almighty has chosen for their supplications so that He may accept them from them. In doing so, they say: "O God, grant victory to the armies of the Muslims, their detachments, and their outposts, the people of their land and sea, in the east and west of the earth, and wherever they may be, with a mighty victory. Grant them an easy conquest and bestow upon them from Yourself a supporting authority." For you, by God, are the Muslims to whom the supplication reaches and for whom God's response is hoped for. And if someone who supplicates with this intention turns away from you to others, then God will only answer you and those like you among our allies and those who strive with us and on our behalf and on the behalf of those we have appointed from among them, wherever they may be and wherever they may

• be

Then he said, peace be upon him, “Likewise, whoever among them invokes curses upon us or upon any of our allies, that invocation and curse will return upon him and befall him and those who support him, for he will inevitably mention us when he mentions us, or those among our allies who mention him, when invoking curses upon him for injustice, wickedness, or whatever he deserves. So I say Amen to that invocation and ask God to answer it against the oppressors, the wicked, and the transgressors. Their invocation, which they see as beneficial to themselves, is accepted and raised up, praise be to God. It is accepted and raised up for us and our allies, and their invocation against us returns and falls back upon them. This is from the grace of God, the

Exalted and Glorified, upon us and His favor to us, and from what God has prepared of disgrace in this world
" .and the Hereafter for our enemies

.Words that appear wise but contain symbolic interpretation .149

He said, "One day I sat before him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and he ordered that Qays's garden be planted with a thousand trees, and that it be square. He said, 'The number of trees in each row on each side is not equal.' So we calculated it and found that it was not equal, as he, peace be upon him, had mentioned, except by increasing or decreasing the number of trees. If we made the number thirty-two times thirty-two, it increased, so it was one thousand and twenty-four, so it increased by twenty-four. And if we made it thirty-one times thirty-one, it decreased, so its number was nine hundred and sixty-one, so it decreased by

" .thirty-nine

"? He said, "Is there anything else in this

. We said we have no knowledge of that, and this is the most that is found in it

"? He said, "Why was there nothing else in it

We said this because it is a known calculation that can only be performed on its own terms, and it

. cannot be divided by multiplication without fractions except in this way

"? He, peace be upon him, said, looking at me, "What are you saying

I said, "My lord, I have nothing more to say than this. Arithmetic is a science about which there is no disagreement among its practitioners. If they say three times three, it is only nine; if they say ten times ten, it is only one hundred. And so it is in any way that it is multiplied, because it is a number built from one to nine units, from ten to one hundred tens, from one hundred to one thousand two hundred, from one thousand to one thousand thousand, and so on to infinity, with thousands upon thousands. I know of no disagreement on this

" .among those skilled in arithmetic

And if they divide a number by another number and the result is incorrect, they multiply the remainder by itself until it becomes correct, then they divide it into parts, increasing or decreasing the number according to what has been mentioned. For example, if we wanted to divide ten by the square of a straight line and a whole number, it would not be divisible until one is subtracted from ten, so three times three is nine, or six is added to

. it, so four times four is sixteen. This cannot be divided except in this way

So Sal'a said, "We know that this can only be divided in this way, but there is a reason for this, which

" .is the benefit in it

" .I said, "The Commander of the Faithful is more deserving of guidance and of bestowing benefit

He said this is one of the proofs of God's oneness, His greatness, and that He is One, not a number, because this number is subject to increase, decrease, division, and addition, since it is a conventional term, and that is incompatible with God, the Exalted, who has no equal and nothing resembles Him that can be seen by the

. eyes or imagined by the minds and thoughts

As my thoughts wandered, pondering what he had mentioned of the reckoning, my mind wandering as if plunging into the depths of the earth, he opened for me what he had opened, and it was as if my thoughts were attached to the kingdom of heaven. I said, "My Lord, this was not among what I had thought of, so my

" .imagination did not wander to it

He said, "If you are one of those who hold fast to us, then reflect upon this and consider it, for in

" .everything you reflect upon and consider there is evidence of God's oneness and Lordship

Then he said to some of those he had ordered to plant that, "Add twenty-four to the thousand so that its

" .number is equal from all four directions

"? Then he said, "How many weeks will that take if these plants are divided seven by seven

We calculated it and found it to be one hundred and forty-six weeks. After these weeks, two weeks

"
 . remain. The bald man smiled and said, "A good number and a good meaning, praise be to God

Then I understood what his guardian symbolized, and I knew that the saints of God, however they spoke and wherever they acted, were immersed in the seas of knowledge and traversing the depths of wisdom. Most people, however, are blind and heedless of this, as God Almighty said: "And how many a sign is there in the heavens and the earth which they pass by while they are turning away from it. And most of them do not

"
 . believe in God except while they associate others with Him

sayings on learning from the saints of God, peace be upon them 150

He said, and I examined him, peace be upon him, in a collection like this, which I had learned from him, heard from him, taken from his symbols, and seen from his actions. I saw that it was not appropriate for me to record it in books and preserve it for posterity except with his permission. I presented some of it to him, and he approved of it. He said, "Whoever takes such things from us with joy and acceptance, and recognizes the benefit in them, and thanks us for the blessing of it, God will benefit him with what he takes from it. And whoever turns away from it, does not receive it with acceptance, and does not recognize the benefit in it, that will be a proof from God against him, and he will be deprived of it. Likewise, whoever hears of it after today, or it is transmitted to him, by God, nothing of wisdom and knowledge is transmitted from the forefathers to one who truly ponders it except what is less than it. And what people have gathered in what they have gathered is less than it. And knowledge is less than it to one who truly ponders it, and what people have gathered in what

"
 . they have gathered is less than it

One of those present at the meeting said, "If our master, may God bless him and grant him peace, sees

"
 . fit to give us permission to do so, then we will write it down

He said, "If he completes what we deem acceptable, we will grant permission for him to use it for

"
 . someone whose situation we approve of, and may God benefit him through it, God willing

Then he, peace be upon him, said: Many people let this and similar things pass their ears without understanding them or appreciating their value. Many of them hear the benefit but do not receive it with

 . acceptance or gratitude. Whoever is in this state is truly deprived and worthy of remaining in his ignorance

Then he mentioned a man and said: I saw him, when I approached him with something that we hoped would make him understand it well, and that he would appreciate the benefit and receive it with gratitude, I might say a lot to him about that, and he would have his mouth wide open like an animal, not knowing what I was saying to him. So I would ask him about what I had said to him, but I would not find that he knew what he had heard. So the desire to complete the favor would prompt me to explain it to him. So when I explained it to him and clarified it, he would say: Yes, I knew this before this time, and it is my opinion and my saying. But by

God, he did not know it at that time or before. So, can such a person be given wisdom or be helped with a

 . benefit? No, by God, and no honor

This is like the saying of some wise men: Do not withhold wisdom from those who deserve it, for you will wrong them; do not give it to those who do not deserve it, for you will wrong it; and do not throw jewels to

 . dogs

Part Fourteen

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

words spoken in a gathering regarding this book 151

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad (may God be pleased with him) said: I had already offered an apology at the beginning of this book, stating that although I spared no effort in verifying what I transmitted from the Imam (peace be upon him) in his exact words, I confessed that I was truly incapable of doing so. The words of God's chosen ones, the Imams, are like the words of their grandfather, the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him), in their eloquence, grandeur, and clarity. Human beings are incapable of replicating them, just as they are incapable of replicating the Qur'an. For their pronouncements, in terms of proof and evidence, are like the pronouncements of God Almighty, who commanded obedience to them and linked it to obedience to Him, and commanded to learn from them as He commanded to learn from Him. I mentioned the excuses of some of the Companions regarding their inability to accurately convey the true meaning of the Messenger of God's words (peace and blessings be upon him), and his statement, "It suffices me to convey its

■ meaning to you," as I relied most heavily on that

However, I did something in this regard that I don't know anyone who transmitted the hadith before me. Whenever I related something from the Imam, I would write it down, show it to him, and present it to him after offering my explanation. Whenever he saw that I had altered the meaning, he would correct me and bring me back to the original meaning, and I would correct it. He would forgive me for what I couldn't do in accurately conveying his exact words. Thus, what I have recorded in this book is as if it were his exact words, even though it wasn't. He approved it based on meaning, and the accusation of distortion and misrepresentation was removed from me, even though the virtues of eloquence, fluency, and miraculous language were lost. But in doing so, it became among the most truthful hadiths and the most accurate transmissions, and the accusation was

■ removed from him, and he was deemed worthy of praise

One day I brought him a portion of it, and he read it until he finished. He pointed out some things to me, and I corrected them as he instructed—may God perpetuate his high standing and guide him to me. I began to apologize for my shortcomings and for omitting so much, explaining that I had only retained some of what memory allowed, and that forgetfulness, due to human nature's tendency to forget, had caused more. He said,

"Even so, Nu'man, God will reward you for your intention and will not hold you accountable for your forgetfulness. By God, no one before you has compiled anything like this from our forefathers. It is a book whose like is rarely found among books, and it contains life for those who have a heart." He said this, and there was a group in the gathering who had heard most of what I had retained and most of what I had transmitted, and had simply skimmed it. When they heard this from him, without knowing what was in the book, some of them

■ asked him to copy it, and some asked me to do so, showing great interest in it

He, peace be upon him, said, "It will be given to whomever deserves it, God willing." He looked at me and smiled, as if to say, "Most people are oblivious to the benefits and wisdom passes them by. If they wanted to gather what I have gathered and were granted the ability to do so, it would be possible for them, and that would please me and them, because I used to add much to what they brought and was absent from it due to my

"

■ preoccupation with its affairs

His saying, may God bless him and grant him peace, "May God reward you for your intention and not hold you accountable for your forgetfulness," is like the saying of his grandfather, the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, "Actions are but by intentions, and every person will have only what he intended." And his saying, "God has pardoned my nation for its mistakes, its forgetfulness, and what it is forced

■ to do," means mistakes that are not intentional

As for the wisdom passing over the ears of most people, it is from the words of God Almighty: "And among them are those who listen to you, but when they leave your presence, they say to those who were given knowledge, 'What did he say just now?'" There were those who attended the gatherings of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him), listened to his words, and then left without understanding anything of it

■ or knowing what he said

And from this is His Almighty saying: "Deaf, dumb, and blind – so they will not return." He said this to a people who see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and speak with their tongues, but they are blind, deaf,

■ and dumb to the truth

May God, in His mercy, protect us and you from that, and guide all believers to what pleases Him, and

■ enable us to act accordingly through His grace

A discussion that took place in a gathering regarding the call to Islam .152 and the callers to Islam

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, one day when some of the saints whom he had previously authorized to preach entered upon him. He asked them about certain matters, but they found nothing of what he asked them about. He said, "By God, I have no doubt that you have nothing of this, nor do those who called you. And most of what they do to people is to magnify the matter in their own eyes, to make it seem daunting, and to be harsh with those who ask them about it, rebuking them for asking about it. And most of what they say to those they speak to is, 'You have not yet reached the level of one who asks about this,' and 'This is not your level,' and similar statements with which they give the impression that they know what they are being asked

"

• about. But by God, they do not know most of it

Then he said to the one he was addressing, "How did so-and-so say to so-and-so among them?"—

• meaning, what some saints said to some preachers

He said, "Yes, he spoke one day while he was in his council, and he saw him turning away from his words, so he said to him, 'I see you turning away like someone who doesn't know what was said to him.' He replied, 'I don't know this. By God, this is the plaything of our children. If you have something else to say, then

"

• say it, and we will listen to you if we didn't know it before

"?

He said, "So what did the sheikh say to him

"

• He said, "I'm silent

Al-Mu'izz (may God be pleased with him) said nothing about this, even though the caller had been harsh with the man and had not treated him with the gentleness he should have shown. He did not act upon what the truthful Ja'far ibn Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Be humble towards those you teach knowledge to, and do not be arrogant scholars, lest your falsehood overshadow your truth." For it was not appropriate for the man to say what he said, because his words were a belittling of wisdom and a disparagement of it. Repeating wisdom does not diminish it, nor should one turn away from it. God Almighty has promised a reward for those who listen attentively to His Book and ponder its meanings. Wisdom does not always take root in hearts and benefit those who hear it. Sometimes it passes through the ears many times without the listener benefiting, then he hears it again and benefits. If the one who said this were required to fulfill what he was entrusted with and to carry out the obligations of what he heard, he would fall short and be unable to do so. He would be held accountable for what he requested of more, as he did not master it or fulfill the obligations of what he received. Even if all of that inner meaning were removed from him, and he were only required to establish what he knew and was commanded to establish regarding its outward aspects, he would fall short in much of it, be negligent, and be limited. How can one increase in trustworthiness when one has committed and confessed to treachery? But because most people are ignorant of the value of this matter, they are deprived of much of it, and because of

• their failure to fulfill their duty in this regard, they are limited to what little they have been given

Al-Mu'izz remained silent at that point, and I don't think he was thinking of anything other than this statement. Then he said, "Perhaps the one who heard what we said about the shortcomings of the early preachers might imagine that this is an attack on the virtuous Imams, peace be upon them all, for choosing them and appointing them, knowing such things about them. Far from it! By God, the jewel is not offered to the dung-bearers. By God, they only met those they met according to their merit, and they only sought those they sought with what was suitable for them. Our grandfather, Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, used to say, 'He who asks well is worthy of receiving.' By God, if they had asked well, I would have given them what they desired. We have from the treasures of God's knowledge and the benefits of His wisdom what each person can receive according to his capacity and be given according to his merit. And none is deprived except he who

"

• deprives himself

We should not give anyone from the trust God has placed in our hands more than they deserve. By God, we do not do that for our own children, and we give to those we approve of only what is rightfully theirs, not adding even a fingernail's clipping to it. God Almighty, the most truthful of speakers, said: "And there is nothing but that its depositories are with Us, and We do not send it down except according to a known measure." Indeed, the dearest thing to us is the presence of those who teach from us. Is this not why our grandfather Ali, peace be upon him, said—and he sighed deeply and struck his chest with his hand—"Indeed,

here is a vast amount of knowledge for which I have not found bearers, but rather I have found those who teach
?" but are not trustworthy, and those who are trustworthy but are not taught

And in the same way 153

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) say to some of the saints, "What are you looking at today

▪ that will benefit you? What are you reading? What are you listening to?" So they remained silent
And before that, I had heard some of them urging one another in a gathering to read the book "Da'a'im al-Islam" (Pillars of Islam), which al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) had made available to them in one of the halls of his palace. He permitted them to listen to it, read it, copy it, and learn from its jurisprudence whenever they wished. Some of them, urging others to do so, said: "Woe to you! Are you not afraid that if you fall short in this, it will be a proof from God and His representative against you, that He will test you with it, even though He has permitted it to you for a long time? He will test you with it, or with some of its chapters, and He will find that you have neither memorized anything from it nor benefited from it. Then it will be said to you: 'If you did not fulfill what We gave you of the outward aspects of your religion,

""? which God commanded you to uphold, how then should We give you its inner aspects

So I said, "My master, by God, I know today that our brothers are backing down on such matters, because they have stopped hearing him and he excused himself with an excuse for not being able to hear him. I did not leave them, not because of the gathering. If he persists in making excuses to them and stays away from

"
▪ them, they will bring this matter to your attention and ask for your esteemed opinion on it

""? He said, "O Nu'man, who says this

▪ I told him, "So-and-so said so-and-so," and I named the men who negotiated it

These people are few in number, and we wished for the well-being of all. It is as if, by God, if we gathered them together, they would belittle one another, with one saying, "So-and-so wants to be a judge," and another saying to his companion, "Come with me, woe to you, to such-and-such," because they are preoccupied

▪ and concerned with something else. Let us leave this idle talk aside

"
▪ Some of those present said, "It is as if, by God, the Commander of the Faithful witnessed the people

I said, O our master, for the sake of one who does not desire, the one who desires is deprived, and in the same exhibition, the seeker is disappointed. You, may God's blessings be upon you, know best what is good

▪ for them all

He said, "If I did not know that, then I am not your leader. By God, I do know it, and I cannot achieve my goal of reforming them all. May God reform them and guide them to what I desire for them, until I raise some of them above others in rank and give each one of them his due, placing him where he has placed himself.

Whoever strives to rise from one rank to a higher one through his deeds, I will raise him to it. Thus, they

"
▪ compete and aspire, and I will achieve for them what I hope for from them, God willing

"
▪ I said, "May God grant our master his wish and guide all his saints to what he loves

"
▪ He said, "What God wills, and there is no power nor strength except with God

A discussion took place in a council regarding the matter of the .154 judiciary and the duty thereof

He said, and he said to me, "O Nu'man, so-and-so claimed to me, on behalf of a man he named, that some of the saints find your position burdensome and say, 'So-and-so, be lenient with us,' to some of the judges." I said to him, "The one who finds Nu'man's position burdensome is the one who prevented me from assuming the role of judge among the people. Indeed, the judiciary is the scale of God's justice on His earth and His equity among His servants. Whoever deviates from its proper course and turns it away from its path has

incurred the wrath of God and the curse of His saints. The matter of judging is great and its burden is heavy. By God, the people did not resent the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (peace be upon him), except that he assumed it for them and guided them to the path of truth in it. Therefore, we entrusted him to whomever we entrusted him and we absolved ourselves of any blame. Whoever wanted Nu'man, when he came to him with a dispute involving a weak person, wanted him to make room for him in his court and to keep his opponent away from him. This is the least that could have been expected of him, and it is shameful for whoever does it, because we have entrusted him and others whom we have entrusted with judging and governance to treat the strong and the weak equally and to be just between the noble and the lowly in his words, deeds, speech, glances, and in bringing them near and distancing them." And his council, as commanded by our forefathers, peace be upon them, regarding assuming the mantle of authority, whoever seeks to oppose this will not be satisfied unless he also rules according to what he desires. In this, and in this alone, lies the ultimate disgrace for whoever does it. And it is sufficient for the opponent of one who has this done to him to see the apparent injustice of the one who did it to him, and to deter him from his argument and weaken his strength. Such a person is resented by those who resent him for following our command and obeying our covenant. And it is sufficient for whoever opposes it to be deficient in the sight of God and us, and whoever upholds it to receive reward from God and favor with

▪ us

When I heard this from him, all I could do was kiss the ground and consider what argument I might have. He had said more than I had hoped for, and I found it. Then my contemplation lengthened, my wonder increased, my insight deepened, and my understanding strengthened. I had previously believed that God would grant me knowledge of something I had not yet revealed to him, lest I boast of it before him. I knew that many people disliked me for this because of the corrupt judges' favoritism and nepotism towards those in power and those from whom benefit was expected among the common people, as well as bribery and other forms of corruption. They made the paths of justice difficult for those who followed them, and they incited resentment against those who were accustomed to such practices. But God, the Possessor of Bounty, Favors, and Kindness, granted His chosen one success and insight. He provided him with great support and guidance, and He revealed to him many secrets of hearts and hidden matters. He exposed him to the tricks of the schemers, the machinations of the deceivers, and the dangers of the schemers. The assassins will only suffer the consequences

▪ of their treachery, and evil plots will only backfire on those who plotted them

Thus, by the grace of God, the truth and its people are now in glory, exaltation, and protection, while falsehood and its party are in disgrace and humiliation. I intended to mention what the one who said that and the one who raised it to him called for, regarding my cutting off from him what others have accustomed him to in terms of profiting from it and usurping rights at his hands, and that this is a sin he does not believe will be forgiven for the one who committed it. So I knew that he, peace be upon him, knew this better than I did, and I saw that submitting this and similar matters to God and His guardian is more appropriate, because God says, "And whoever is wronged, God will surely help him." And I have mentioned in this book, on the authority of

▪ the Imam, peace be upon him, other than one hadith, condemning wrongdoing

words that occurred in a grammatical context containing a symbol 155

He said, and I heard him (peace be upon him) one day saying to some of the grammarians who were present in his gathering, those who excelled in the science of grammar: What do you say about the connected letters that words combine and join, which appear identical in writing, whether referring to a thing or something else, according to what the observer sees when he sees the form of those letters? They have one meaning until inflection is added and they are distinguished by diacritics and vowel markings, at which point their meanings differ, and each letter comes to indicate the opposite of what its counterpart in form indicates, and something else that is different in meaning. Why is this so? What is its meaning and purpose? Is there a meaning in it that

? must be extracted, and what is the wisdom behind it

The person responsible for that question did not know the answer, let alone the question itself, and was

▪ perplexed by it. So he asked him to clarify its meaning

? He said that was like "Why, why, why?" Hasn't the image of these three letters been completed

He said yes

He also said, "He killed, he killed, he killed," and likewise, "He carried, he carried, he carried," and

▪ similar things, too numerous to mention

He said yes

He said: If the lam of "lam" is raised, it has the meaning of a command, as in your saying, "Why the dishevelment, young man?" If it is opened, it becomes a jussive verb, as in your saying, "I did not do it." If it is broken, it has the meaning of a question, as in your saying, "Why did you do such and such?" Each one is the

• opposite of the other

Similarly, the word "qatala" (to kill) has different meanings depending on the pronunciation. If you pronounce the Qaf with a dammah, the Ta with a kasrah, and the Lam with a fatha, you say "qatala Zayd ya fata" (Zayd was killed, young man). If you pronounce the letters with a fatha, you say "qatala Zayd Khalid ya fata" (Zayd killed Khalid, young man). If you pronounce the Qaf with a fatha and the Ta with a sukun, you say "qatala Dhari' ya fata" (Dhari' was killed, young man). Each pronunciation has a different meaning. Likewise, the Haa' from "hamala" (to carry) has different meanings depending on the pronunciation. If you pronounce the

Haa' with a dammah and the Meem with a kasrah, you say "hamala ar-rajul" (the man carried). If you pronounce the letters with a fatha, you say "hamala ar-rajul" (the man carried). If you pronounce the Haa' with a kasrah and the Meem with a sukun, you say "hamala ad-dabba ya fata" (the animal carried, young man). The

? pronunciations also differ. Why is this

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• The man had no answer other than to say, "That's how people know him

He, peace be upon him, said: How many signs and wisdoms does God Almighty have in the realms

?

known to people that point to His Oneness, yet they did not recognize them and turned away from them This reminded me of the words of God Almighty: "And how many a sign is there in the heavens and the earth which they pass by while they are turning away from it," and the words of the poet regarding the

• greatness of God Almighty

• And in everything there is a sign that points to His oneness

visions seen by Al-Mu'izz 156

Al-Mu'izz said to me one day, "I had a dream that amazed me. I saw myself entering the Al-Azhar Mosque through the door of the enclosure, the one I use for Friday prayers. When I was in the enclosure, I remembered that I had gone out without performing ablution for prayer. So I asked for water, and a basin and ewer were brought to me. I performed ablution, and then I looked in the enclosure at two men—he mentioned them as commoners—who were inclined towards love and close to the school of thought. When I finished my ablution, one of them stood up with his garment to cover my legs, but I stopped him and said to him, 'What is keeping you sitting with this man, when you are so active and alert, while he is so still and rough?' And the two

"

• men were in the same state

The one who moves, the one in me, which is active and alert, compensates for the heedlessness and stillness in this one. I said, "I will ask you about something in which you acknowledge harshness." So I asked him a question, and he was perplexed and had no answer. He asked me to give him the correct answer, so I said to him, "Go to Nu'man, who is my guardian, and he will answer you." He said, "Yes." Then I entered through the door of the enclosure and looked around, but I did not see the people as I knew them, the mosque crowded and teeming with them. I saw only a few. I looked at them and saw our saints. Then I went to the pulpit and looked around, but I did not see myself wearing the sword. So I called for it. He said, "So you stood up and said to me, 'O my master, this is the sword with which I preach, and it is your sword. If you want it, here it is.' So I took it from you and ascended the pulpit and delivered a sermon in which I mentioned much knowledge and interpretation. Then you stood up and said to me, 'Give us more, O my master,' and our saints said the same. So I gave more, and every time I wanted to end the sermon, you asked me to give more, until I had said a great deal. Then I descended, saying to myself, 'What need do I have for Nu'man's sword?' as if I knew I saw that in a dream and said to myself, 'What is the traditional interpretation of his sword? By God, I have no need of any knowledge from him, neither apparent nor hidden.'" I said this to myself, and then a sheikh I did not know

"?

approached me and said, "Do you know the meaning of your taking Nu'man's sword

"?

I said, "What is it

• He said, "His age will be yours," so I accepted that and handed you the sword

He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, interpreted this to mean that the few who were with him in the mosque were a small fraction of the many who attended him, those who followed him and recognized his virtue, and that the two men who were in the enclosure but not included in the mosque were also close to his

▪ authority

And I interpreted his sermon, in which he gave us more knowledge, as a testament to his generosity, hoping for further knowledge from him and an increase in his knowledge for us, just as he increased it for us when we asked him for more. And that, God willing, will lead us to the ultimate goal we hope for and expect

▪ from him, by God's grace and favor

words on the understanding of knowledge, mentioned in a gathering 157

He said, and I heard him, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, say: "Those who fall behind in acquiring the knowledge they seek do so because when one of them looks into a branch of knowledge he seeks, he does not complete it. And if he completes it, whether by looking at it, reading it, or listening to it, he does not ponder it deeply and moves on to something else. He neither masters it nor memorizes it, nor does he grasp its true nature or what it entails in what follows. Likewise, he moves from one branch to another, from one book to another, from one field of knowledge to another, remaining thus in blindness and confusion. He hardly gains much benefit from what he seeks, except perhaps a superficial understanding. If, however, one of them, when looking into a field of knowledge, were to truly intend to acquire it, to be attached to it, and to memorize it, he would look at the first chapter of it thoroughly and give it sufficient attention until he masters its memorization and becomes fully aware of it and all its aspects. Then nothing of it would remain unexplored. This would open up further knowledge for him, make memorization easier, and allow him to reach the level of knowledge he desires. If he were to do this, he would not look at a new chapter until he has memorized the preceding one and applied it as I have described. People fall short in this regard and fall behind due to their haste. Similarly, if one of them were to limit himself to a single branch of knowledge..." Some people desire certain sciences, their passions incline them, and they find themselves drawn to them because of their excellence in them. However, they want to master the sciences, strive towards their goals, and love to possess them completely. God has only granted this to those He has favored with virtue and distinguished with knowledge and wisdom from among His chosen ones, who are the most in need of His creation and the most dependent on their knowledge. Whoever

▪ attempts to reach their level or attain their status will fall short, and fate will not favor him

words on good and evil mentioned in a gathering 158

He said, and one day, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he mentioned good and evil, truth

▪ and falsehood, and said, "What do these people say about that?"—meaning the common people

▪ I said that what they say was known to the Commander of the Faithful

"

▪ He said, "Say what you think is the best way to describe their statement on that matter

I said, they said regarding the words of God Almighty, "And We guided him to the two paths," and they mentioned that "Najd" in the language means a path on a high place. So they said that God Almighty meant that He guided people to the path of good and the path of evil, and made them aware of them. So whoever is guided, as God Almighty said, it is for his own soul, and whoever goes astray does so to his own detriment. And

▪ God's proof has been established against His servants by what He has shown them of that He said, "How could it be permissible for Him to guide them to evil? If He had guided them to it, and

"

▪ they had followed His guidance, they would have been obedient if they had done it

I said that the meaning of their saying "He guided them to it" is that He made it known to them so that they would avoid it. Likewise, He commanded them to call upon Him, "Guide us to the straight path," meaning

▪ the path of truth

"

▪ He said, "This is what we said: that guidance is only to the truth

I said, they say that the word "sirat" in the language means "path," and from it comes the Almighty's saying, "And this is My straight path, so follow it; and do not follow other paths, for they will separate you from

■ His path." "Sabil" also means "path," and its plural is "subul

He said, "If truth were a path and falsehood a path, they would be equal in their existence, and each would have a foundation. If falsehood were proven to have a foundation, it would rival truth. But the foundation belongs to truth alone, while falsehood is uprooted and has no foundation." This is the meaning of God Almighty's words: "God presents an example of a good word [being] like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and its branches [reaching] into the sky, yielding its fruit at all times by permission of its Lord. And God presents examples for the people that perhaps they will be reminded. And the example of a bad word is like a bad tree, uprooted from the surface of the earth, having no stability. God keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in worldly life and in the Hereafter. And God sends astray the wrongdoers. And God does what He

■ wills

Then he, peace be upon him, said: Do you not see that God Almighty said, "And this is My straight path, so follow it"? He informed us that this path which we are commanded to follow is one, just as the truth is one with a single origin. Then he said, "And do not follow other paths, for they will separate you from His path." That is, do not follow falsehood, for its branches, offshoots, and many ways have no origin to which one can return, nor anything to rely upon. The truth is like a straight path; whoever follows its way will not deviate or turn away from it. Its origin is the place from which it departed. Whoever does not avoid it will reach the place he intended. Whoever deviates from it will fall into an unknown place, following every hidden trace and foolish path, and will not reach where he headed. He will be lost in perils and pitfalls, and will wander through deserts. Wherever he takes a path to his right, his left, or in front of him, or wherever he turns that is not a path, he is without origin and will not reach where he wants. As long as he is like that, he will remain claiming to be astray because of the origin of the path. Likewise, whoever follows the path of falsehood and follows the way of misguidance—and it is only called a path, way, way, and the like metaphorically, not literally—will be considered astray. The truth is, it is not truly a path. If it were, it would resemble truth and have a basis. Rather, it is as we have described for those who follow it, like an unknown person in the land with no path. It is called a path metaphorically because the one who has strayed from the path takes it as a way for himself, not following any other path or trace of those who have found their way to the intended place before him. This is an example

■ of truth and falsehood

Then he said, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and this is a representation like that of al-Mansur Billah, may God illuminate his face and bless him, and he established it in the book of Imamate, which

■ he had elaborated upon

Words on the prohibition of speaking ill of people .159

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say: If you hear someone frequently mentioning people's faults and accusing them of a fault he often mentions, know that this fault is in him. For we have a tradition from our grandfather Ali, peace be upon him, that he heard a woman cursing another and accusing her of adultery, while the other did not say that to her. He said: What she says is more likely to be in her, and the one she accused is innocent of it. So he was asked about their situation, and they were found to be as he, peace be

■ upon him and upon the Imams from his truthful progeny, had said

Part Fifteen

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

On the manufacture of the pen invented by Imam Al-Mu'izz, may God's .161 prayers be upon him

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned the pen, describing its virtues and alluding to the inner meaning of knowledge within it. Then he said, "We want to create a pen that writes without needing an inkwell, its ink being from within. Whenever a person wishes, he can write with it, refilling it and writing whatever he desires. Whenever he wishes, he can leave it, and the ink will flow, leaving the pen dry. The writer can place it in his sleeve or wherever he wishes, and it will not be affected, nor will any ink drip from it. This will only happen when it is needed and intended for writing. Thus, it will be a wondrous instrument, the likes of which we know of no one

"
▪ who preceded us, a testament to profound wisdom for those who contemplate it and understand its meaning

"? So I said, "Is this so, O our master, peace be upon you

▪ He said, God willing

Only a few days passed before the craftsman who had been instructed to make the pen arrived, having prepared it from gold. He placed ink in it and wrote with it. The scribe wrote, adding a little more ink than needed. He then ordered that something be repaired, which was done, and the pen was brought back. It was a pen that turned in the hand and tilted in every direction, yet no ink was visible. When the scribe took it and wrote with it, he could write the finest book he wished. Then, when he lifted it from the scribe, the ink stopped

▪ flowing

I saw a wondrous creation, the likes of which I never imagined I would see. It revealed to me a beautiful example: it does not give what it possesses except when asked, and only when it is beneficial, for which it was created. It does not give to anyone who does not seek it, nor does it release its contents except to those for whom it is due, those whom it loves. It does not release anything harmful that might stain the hand of whoever holds it, or their clothes, or anything it comes into contact with. It is beneficial and not harmful, generous to those who ask, and withholding from those who do not. It is self-sufficient in its contents, needing

▪ nothing else to draw from it

This is similar to what some common people said about the pen: that it was the first thing God

▪ Almighty created, and He told it to write, so it wrote

And in what the saints of God symbolize, do, command, and speak, there is profound wisdom for those who contemplate it and are guided to it. And God guides whomever He wills of His believing servants to His

▪ straight path

words spoken in praise of the Kutama 162

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say, when men from Kutama came to him from the surrounding areas to witness the Eid, they entered and greeted him and stood before him. He asked them about their circumstances and those of them who had left them behind, and he was very thorough in his questioning. They thanked him for his concern and inquiry, and they mentioned the good conditions of their region, the tranquility of their areas, and the stability of affairs under their rule. They also thanked the

▪ officials of their towns

So he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, rejoiced at this, his face beamed, and he smiled. Then he looked at me and said, "These are our friends and our chosen ones. These are our party and our group. These are our followers and our support. These are our special ones and those we love. These are the ones who will be with us in Paradise as they were with us in this world. How delighted I am by them, how glad I am to see them, and how beautiful their appearance is in my eyes! I see them as a group, and it is as if they are all one image to me, equal in beauty, appearance, and radiance. Even when they mingle with other people, whenever I see one of them among a group of others, he is to me like a shining beacon of knowledge and a radiant lamp. I often say to myself when I see this in them that it is because of my intense love for them, and that is why I see

"

▪ them in this way

So they kissed the ground before him and said, "Our master says what he says out of his favor upon us. As for our allegiance to him and our love for him, we strive for our own sake and desire our Lord's pleasure in this. This is not something we force upon ourselves, nor do we see any hardship or burden in it. This is not something we do without our children, servants, and slaves. By God, our children, slaves, and servants swear only by the right and favor of our master, and nothing else is on their tongues or on their lips. They know no

other master but him. None of us or they have grown up except on this, and on this, God willing, they will

”
▪ die

By God, the enemy captured many women and children during the days of strife. Their testaments and letters reached us, commanding us to be patient with God's chosen one and not to surrender their position to the enemies of God. So they endured hardship and ease, captivity and imprisonment, until God Almighty revealed

▪ His chosen one to us and we rescued them by force, by God's power and might

He, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: God Almighty will not let this go to waste for you, nor will He forget it. By God, if you knew what you have with God because of this, your eyes would be gladdened and your souls would be content. God Almighty has tested His creation with various trials, and He has only tested you with the best of them, and He has only employed you in the best and most honorable of them: showing allegiance to His allies, striving in His cause, and defending the edifice of His religion. So

▪ rejoice in the fullest portion and the most sublime share from God

And in the same way 163

He said, and I heard him say to some of the saints of Kutama, “By God, I have no doubt whatsoever about the belief of your young and old, your free and your slaves, your men and your women, in our authority and the unity of your hearts in loving us. On this your young ones were raised, and on this your old ones grew

”
▪ up

One of them said, “By God, if our master, peace be upon him, had heard what our women, slaves, and children utter about his guardianship, love for him, and spreading his virtues, he would have known that they are

”
▪ as he described them

He, peace be upon him, said: Why shouldn't they be so, when God Almighty has allotted them from us the greatest share of love, compassion, and affection for them, young and old alike, a share they never received from any of our forefathers, in addition to the glory, security, abundance, power, and preeminence God has bestowed upon them in our time—a state that, had their ancestors attained it, and then we commanded them to

? enter Hell before us, they would have done so

One of them said, “By God, we say that, and we wish that our deceased fathers and brothers had lived longer so that they could have reached these days and seen these blessings and been encompassed by this grace. It would have increased their insight and magnified God's blessings upon them. However, we do not see any

”
▪ shortcoming in the loyalty and obedience of those who remain

He said, “No, praise be to God, they are not lacking in that, and they are in a better state of steadfastness than their predecessors. But perhaps they wanted to please us in something and they erred, and perhaps they clung to those below us to make that a means to us. No, by God, we have not given anyone a way

”
▪ to them in that

Then he said, “And it was like this that entered upon those of their forefathers who had passed away. I saw in the handwriting of the one who would rise by the command of God, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, a story about the words of some of the early elders who were afflicted with doubt during the days of the Mahdi, peace be upon him. The Mahdi admonished them for this, and they said to him, ‘By God, O our master, we did not act hypocritically towards you, nor did we change or alter anything. By God, we did act hypocritically, and we changed and altered things without realizing it and without intending it, but it was made ambiguous to us, and we fell into it without realizing it. If our master pardons us, it is by his grace, and if he punishes us with whatever punishment he wills, then we are deserving of it.’ The Mahdi, peace be upon him, said, ‘Rather, may God pardon you, O so-and-so,’ because of what he knew of his good intention, his pure heart,

”
▪ and the sincerity of his speech

Words containing news about the advancement of knowledge of .164 tribulation

He said that the one who was in charge of God's command, peace be upon him, had intended to move from Mahdia after the death of the Mahdi, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and wanted to establish

• another city. He sent for many places, and he wanted to build on them all

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, "It is as if he foresaw the strife that would later befall us. I examined several of the locations he had measured for construction and found that the accursed Mukhallad had encamped there with his army and settled in the places he had personally measured. I then investigated the matter further and verified the measurements. I found no location he had measured for construction within the borders of Ifriqiya that the accursed Mukhallad had not already occupied and designated as a camp. He named for us some of these locations: Marjana, the high ground overlooking the city of Sousse, Baqlut, Qasr al-Zujaj, and the location of his encampment near Mahdia. This location had been measured for the Qa'im, peace be upon him, on the condition that he would build there due to its overlooking the sea and the surrounding houses, and the healthiness of its air. Then there was the location of Mansuriyya and the island, the place from which the accursed Mukhallad was defeated. After that, he had no encampment in Ifriqiya. It is as if his encampments were before the Qa'im, by the command of God Almighty, whom he intended to build and reach before him. He disliked Mahdia and abhorred residing there, as if he foresaw the siege, hardship, and tribulation that would befall its inhabitants, and the strife that would ensue, even though it was..." The outcome, thanks be to God, was good, resulting in joy, happiness, honor, and victory. May God grant this and perpetuate it and lengthen its

• days

visions seen by Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers be upon him 165

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: When I wanted to build the palace known as the Sea Palace and excavate the sea within it, I stood in the place where I intended to do so and measured it. I was to order the commencement of that within about a month. Then I slept during the night, and it was as if I saw myself standing where I had been, with the servants some distance away from me, when I saw a man approaching me. I was astonished that he had entered the same place where he had entered me without permission. Then I was as if I had a dream about him and let him go until he drew near to me. I saw a handsome young man, of medium height, with a light beard, wearing clean clothes and a thin cloak. He greeted me and gestured for me to kiss his hand, so I withdrew it from him. He then kissed my upper arm and said, "What

"? brought you here

I smiled and said, "While we wanted to ask you what brought you here without our permission, you've

"
• started asking us about our position

"? He said, "Do you feel safe from someone like me if he intended harm to you here

"? I said, "Do you not see our slaves around you

Wayne said they

I looked around but saw no one, and I became suspicious. He said to me, "I only came to ask you what

"
• you intend to do here

"? I said, "Who are you

"? He said, "Do you want to know who I am

I said I love that

• I am Ptolemy

"? I said, "Which Ptolemy are you

The well-known Ptolemy said

I said, the owner of the account and the astrologer

He said yes

I said, the author of the Almagest

He said yes

"? I asked, "What was your religion and sect

He said monotheism

"? I said, "So what did you become

" .He said, "It's all for the best, praise be to God

"? I said, "Why did you ask me why I was standing here

" .He said, "I wanted to know that

I said, "I wanted to build a palace here and dig a sea in its center, into which water would flow, and in

" .the middle of the water there would be a palace

" .Hassan Jamil said, "But he started that on Tuesday

"? I said, "Why Tuesday

He said the following

I said, "Glory be to God! I cannot possibly measure the situation to such a length of time, let alone

" .manage what I intended to do in it

" .He said, "Start on Tuesday, in any case, with whatever work you can, for it is a good day

Then I became aware and said, "I will see what the astrologers say about choosing this day," though I had no intention of choosing it myself, nor did I pay attention to their pronouncements. I simply wanted to understand the meaning of the dream. So I looked, and I found that, for a long time, I had not seen a day more auspicious in their view than the Tuesday he had mentioned. Then I stood in the place where I had been standing in the dream, with the slaves far from me, just as I had seen them in the dream. Before me was a lion in a cage. I opened it to give it something, and it burst through the door, almost coming out to me. I looked towards the distance but did not see them, just as I had seen them in the dream. The groom quickly closed the cage on the

.lion, and God delivered me

.I realized that what I saw in the dream was a warning

words on the story of the Day of Ghadir 166

He said, and I asked him, peace be upon him, about the narration concerning the Day of Ghadir and what the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said that day to Ali, peace be upon him, and what he established regarding his guardianship by saying, "Whoever I am his master, then Ali is his master." And I said, the narration came that this was on his return, peace be upon him, from the Farewell Pilgrimage when he arrived at Ghadir Khumm, and that was on the eighteenth of Dhu al-Hijjah, and that God revealed to him when he established the guardianship of Ali, peace be upon him, and the Muslims responded to what he had established for him that day, "I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have

" .approved for you Islam as religion

" .He said, "Yes, that was the case

I said, and it has been narrated on the authority of Abu Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him, that it was said to him that some of the Jews heard the words of God Almighty, "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion," and the

" .Jew said, "If something like this had been revealed to us, we would have taken this day as a festival

Abu Ja'far said: This was revealed on a day of two festivals; it was revealed on the Day of Arafah and

.occurred on a Friday

I said, "And the Day of Arafah is the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah, so it seems, according to the hadith, that

" .it was revealed six days before the Day of Ghadir

Then he smiled, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and said, "What did you say about

"? that

I said, "What my mind has lost in that is that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said, 'I have left among you that which, if you hold fast to it after me, you will never go astray: the Book of God and my family, the people of my house.' He said, 'This was revealed on the Day of Arafah, and thus the

■ guardianship became obligatory,' and he explained it after that on the Day of Ghadir He said no, but it was on the Day of Arafah, as Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said, and he mentioned

■ the interpretation of Arafah, so the matter became clear to me and the two hadiths were authentic It was as if a veil had been lifted from my heart, so I kissed the ground before him and said, "O my

■ Master, this is what descended from heaven, not what dwells on earth

Words spoken in the spring, which took place in a council 167

He said, and he mentioned spring one day in the council of Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers be upon him, and what it contains of greenery, flowers, vegetation, and the blossoming of trees, until he mentioned the outings there and what the dissolute and idle people bring to it when its vegetation is lush, its blossoms are vibrant, its grass is green, and its trees are in bloom, from various kinds of food and vile drinks in their outings

■ there, and what they devote themselves to in their amusements there

Then Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: Glory be to God! How much more fitting it would have been for them, had they considered the immensity of His power in what He brings forth from the earth's vegetation, its blossoms, and the budding of its trees, after He restores what was once lush and green, then withers and becomes dry and brittle. Then God Almighty causes it to grow by His power, restores it after it has dried up and lost its freshness, adorns it with the wonders of flowers, and clothes it, after the dryness, with the colors of green. He revives it after death and awakens it after slumber, bringing it forth from dust and water, nourishing it with the sun's heat and the gentle air, and giving it life and death. He ordained from it benefit and sustenance, the manner of which minds are incapable of comprehending. His power created the greatness of trees from small grains and seeds, and what He arranged by His wise design of their branches and leaves, and brought forth from their blossoms and fruits, and the variation in their colors, the differences in their kinds, and their tastes, as God Almighty said: "It is watered with one water, and We make some of them superior to others in taste." He informed us that in this are signs, proofs, and clear evidences that necessitate for whoever is shown them... His worship is based on thought, contemplation, reflection, and reasoning, using the wonders of His power and the

■ miracles of His creation that demonstrate His oneness and wisdom

That is what God Almighty commanded, and other things He created, because He said, "Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought." He did not say that it contains pleasure for those who enjoy

■ themselves, or enjoyment for those who eat and drink while looking at it

Then he said, "I wonder what pleasure one derives from drinking intoxicants when looking at flowers and greenery, or rather, what pleasure there is in drinking it, even though it transforms beauty into ugliness and shame, from the fullness and redness of the face, to the distortion and distortion of vision, the crookedness of the jaw, and the drooling of saliva, to the loss of reason and forbearance, and the disappearance of knowledge and understanding, to the point that if a person did not know the cause of intoxication and saw a drunkard, he would have no doubt that he was insane. Indeed, some insane people may understand what they are saying and

■

■ comprehend, while the drunkard neither knows nor comprehends

Then he, peace be upon him, said, "He who described it did so well, saying that intoxication impairs the mind, and that little that is lost ever returns complete." He continued, "Even if intoxication were not forbidden, it would be incumbent upon the rational mind to avoid anything that diminishes it. A small amount of it impairs the mind of the one who consumes it by the amount that reached him, and the more it increases, the more it impairs the mind until it is completely lost. The one who permits a small amount and forbids what intoxicates from it, and what intoxicates from other parts of it, is not correct except in light of what has preceded

■ it." Many similar statements exist, which clarify this point, and sound reason testifies to its correctness

On the vices of the accursed Abbasids 168

He said, and one day he was browsing through the history of the Abbasids in some books when a book came across his hands containing accounts of the Abbasid usurpers and their biographies, compiled by some of their men who intended to mention their virtues and immortalize their stories and achievements. So our master al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, began to read their stories one by one, and most of what was mentioned in them was their drinking of wine, their revelry with musical instruments, their prayers with singers, entertainers, and hoarders, their composing poetry about young boys, their debauchery with the wicked, their treachery, their

▪deceit, their violence, their killing of one another, and their taking control of the affairs of the nation as states Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: These are the virtues of the people, so what about their vices? This is the statement of one who intended to praise and glorify them, so what about one who intended to criticize and

?" find fault with them

So I said, "Praise be to God who did not make us among their followers and in their time, so that we

"

▪ would not be like them, with them, and be gathered in their company

He said, "Yes, praise be to God for what He has bestowed upon you through us, and for the portion of

"

▪ our guardianship He has allotted you, and for the kindness He has shown you in being with us

A discussion took place in a council regarding the channeling of the .169 Ain Ayub River to Mansouriya

He said, and Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, intended to divert the Ain Ayub River to Al-Mansuriyya. Al-Qa'im, peace be upon him, had begun work on it with the intention of diverting it to the city of Kairouan, but then the strife came and interrupted that, and Al-Mansur was concerned about that, so he was

▪ greatly troubled by the matter

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, resolved to carry it out and began work on it on the first day of Muharram in the year 348 AH, which was a Sunday. He measured the distance between the place where al-Qa'im reached and al-Mansuriyya and found its length to be seventy-three thousand cubits. So he ordered that a canal be built with lime, taking the foot of mountains and passing over low valleys, where it would require

▪ bridges to carry the water over them

This alarmed some of those present. Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, "Such an alarm has been raised against the Qa'im, peace be upon him." It was said to him, "By God, even if you placed it in a glass channel, it would not flow." It was also said to Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, "It would require spending over one hundred thousand dinars, and then God knows whether it would even flow properly." This was the reason for abandoning it. "But by God, I will not abandon it, even if I spend many times what has been said. By God, if I knew that the glassmakers could build us a house of glass, I would order it to be built and make it flow so that whoever is alarmed by this will know that it does not alarm me, nor do I consider it too great. Rather, what was prepared for those who came before them among the kings of the earth in such works was achieved through

"

▪ determination and resolve

Then he mentioned the water of Mount Zaghuan, which flowed in the Carthage aqueduct, saying, "By

God, if we had a source of water there, I would have repaired that aqueduct and channeled the water into it. Although people consider this a great undertaking and believe that no one is capable of it, I wonder how it was permissible for those who came before but not for those who came after. Unless, of course, it is true in their corrupt minds that they were stronger and more physically imposing than people are today. It is like the claim that a woman could carry the largest rock they saw on her head with her spindle in her hand. If such an

"

▪ impossibility is what they considered acceptable, then yes

Then he said, "By God, I have gone to the region of Tunis, and my only concern is how the water will flow to Mansouriya. I have seen that it is possible, and I hope that if God helps us with this canal and connects it, I will complete it with His help, support, and guidance. The greatest challenge to such endeavors is that death may prevent their completion. Then, after the one who initiated and undertook this project, someone else will come along who is incapable and will abandon it, accusing the initiator of undertaking what he cannot accomplish and aspiring to what he is not prepared for, thus diminishing him. But the deficiency is more fitting

"

▪ for the one who says this about him and attributes it to him

So I said, "May God prolong the life of the Commander of the Faithful, extend his days, and grant him long life until he achieves his hopes and leaves behind good deeds on earth that will be added to his pleasing accounts." For I have never seen anything that he magnified and that others were unable to achieve except that God Almighty facilitated it for him and granted him victory over it. Indeed, these two pillars in the city of Sousse were among the greatest monuments of the ancients, and looking at them was a lesson. People did not see that they were able to be erected except for their proximity to the sea, and that they were in the sea. Someone brought them to them and rendered all the kings of Africa, both in the pre-Islamic era and in Islam,

- unable to move them from their place, let alone move them an arm's length or more from it

The Commander of the Faithful mentioned them, and we thought that this was impossible by any trick, and we wished that he had not addressed them lest they overwhelm him and that would be a deficiency. Then we saw that when he resolved to do so, he should gather people from the lands and bring them from far and wide. He assigned only a group of his slaves to this task and did not include anyone else with them. They brought them in the shortest time and with the least expense, by the grace and support of God Almighty for His

- chosen one

He said, "Yes, praise be to God for that and for all His blessings. I have abandoned what you mentioned about gathering crowds for them, for I saw that a small number is better and purer, because many rely on one another, their efforts are scattered, and the one in charge of the matter can hardly communicate with

"

- all of them. That, with a small number, is better and more effective

I have never seen or heard of anyone more knowledgeable than him (peace be upon him) in every field,

- taking from all that people deal with

words spoken one day in a gathering about alchemy 170

He said, and he mentioned alchemy one day, and he said, "I heard Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, mention it and said, 'Some of those who denied it have striven to invalidate it by deriving its name from concealment, because they said, 'A person conceals testimony,' meaning he hides it, and 'A man conceals his weapon,' meaning he covers himself with it and hides behind it, and 'Strife and evil overwhelm them,' meaning they engulf them. From this comes the name 'al-Kami,' which means the brave one who conceals

" "

- himself with his weapon and hides behind it

Then Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, said: It is hidden from those who are ignorant of it, and known to those who know it. This is just as what is concealed and hidden is unknown to those from whom it is concealed

- and hidden, and known to those to whom it is revealed and who become aware of it

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, mentioned this after mentioning something about esoteric knowledge,

- so I knew that he, peace be upon him, only brought it as a witness, proof, and symbol therein

A discussion concerning the workers that took place in the council .171

He said, and he mentioned to him, peace be upon him, the matter of the workers and officials, and that many of them were unjust and transgressed against the people and exceeded what the Commander of the Faithful had set for them. He said, "By God, I have not neglected their affairs, nor have I turned a blind eye to them, nor will I turn a blind eye or be negligent except regarding what pertains to my own self. As for what belongs to the servants of God, may His glory be exalted, which He has entrusted to me, I will not neglect it except what I have no power or ability to do. I do not know that God Almighty will excuse me for it, nor will He question me about it, for He, the Exalted and Majestic, does not burden a soul beyond its capacity. By God, I found no other way than to do what I did, or to neglect the right of God by which He established the affairs of His creation, the struggle against His enemy, and the rectification of the affairs of His creatures, which, if neglected, would lead to ruin and destruction. The most that I could do and was able to do was to choose for that the best person I found to carry it out and be suitable for it. If I had called upon someone whom I considered superior to him in his religion, he would not have been able to carry it out, nor would he have responded to me,

and thus the rights would have been lost. And that was the cause of what you mentioned of the

”

• unpleasantness

If I were to appoint someone for this purpose, I would choose the most suitable person I saw fit, instructing him to be just and of good character, taking what is due without excess or deficiency. I would entrust him with this responsibility and write him a document in his own hand, which would serve as evidence for and against him. When he assumes his post, he will be met by those who disliked the previous administrator and supervisor, who would prefer him and seek to be his confidant. Most administrators and those in charge leave before the time for collecting dues, and they remain praised by their constituents as long as they do not take any of the dues from them. Once they begin collecting dues, talk about them will start. Some will complain about them, while others will come to praise them, and we will be uncertain of their claims. He will then present arguments that clarify most of the matter. Sometimes, those who complain about him will exaggerate or attribute things to him that he did not do. When this becomes clear, his argument and words will be strengthened, and we will scarcely be able to distinguish truth from falsehood. Some will come to commend and praise him, while others will criticize and condemn him. His situation will hardly become clear, nor will what is said about him be refuted or proven true until the time of his departure and the reduction of his responsibilities has passed. If we were to dismiss him at the first instance of criticism, without ascertaining the truth of his case, Rights and duties would be lost, taxes would be suspended, and funds would be depleted. This would be the cause of the corruption we have already mentioned. Furthermore, we cannot find anyone we trust to rely on their word in every country and place, nor can we find anyone we approve of to assume this responsibility, as we

• have described. This situation forces us to resort to the measures we have already outlined

None knows the suffering we endure because of this except God Almighty, to whom we hope to find an excuse for us. It was with this same argument that the Berber charlatan, Mukhallad ibn Kaydad, used against us when he claimed to be our guardian. But when his authority was established, it crumbled in his hands,

• destroying crops and livestock, ruining the land, and killing the people

Some of those present at the gathering said, as the Commander of the Faithful mentioned, and the well-known account is that a man came to him and said, "I have some advice that the Sheikh should hear and the

”

• Muslims should see

"?

He said, "What is it

• He took out a bag containing many pieces of paper

"?

He asked, "What is this

He said, "These slips of paper you see, I have paid everything on them on my own behalf, including installments, rent, and other debts." He began reading them to him one by one, and the man listened attentively, alerting those around him. He then ordered that the prominent men from the various regions who were with him be brought before him, intending to publicly shame him. A large crowd gathered around him until the man had read all the slips. He then said, "Look, this is one man who has suffered such a fate. Understand what you have

”

• done and its reward

The man said to him, "And I will tell you, O Sheikh of the Muslims, something even greater than this,"

• so he and those around him listened attentively

"?

He asked, "What is it

He said, "I sent this message, which I have heard in these years, the history of which I have seen and heard recorded on these parchments, while I was in my house and home with my family and children. I had so many slaves, so many cattle, so many sheep and provisions, so much food, oil, and raisins, and many other things. Then your companions entered and plundered all of that until nothing remained for me, neither little nor much. They destroyed my house and scattered my family, children, and relatives. I found no one to live with, so

I traveled with my family after my slaves were taken. Some of them met me and seized my family and daughters, separating them. I came to your camp, wandering about, and I encountered some of them. One of

”

• them almost killed me, and I only managed to reach you with great difficulty

The wicked sheikh was caught off guard, and his companions turned against the man, plotting against him and nearly killing him. He was only saved from them by a trick, and he sent him secretly with a group of

• people until they brought him to the city of Kairouan, and all that he had mentioned to him vanished

This is but a small fraction of what others have attained. People only came to appreciate the value of their former state when calamity befell them and afflicted most of them. Most people neither know nor understand the extent of the blessings bestowed upon them by the ruler, and they consider the journey burdensome and unsatisfied except by complete abandonment of their duties until disaster strikes. Only then do

• they truly appreciate the value of their former state

I remember one day when I was in Mahdia during the time of the Mahdi, peace be upon him, and I heard some Bedouin who had sold their crops and goods. They came in to collect the price, and a large sum of money was in their possession. They began calculating it and discussing what they owed, and they were very concerned about it. I was listening to them without their knowledge, and around them were a multitude of slaves, standing and sitting, going and coming. When they finished speaking, I said to them, "Woe to you! Are you not afraid for this money you have in your possession from these people around you?" They laughed at my words and said, "We are in the sanctuary of the Commander of the Faithful and his city. Do you think we should

"? fear these people and others

"? So I said, "If you go out, are you not afraid of them and others like them beyond the city

• They said no and denied my statement

" • I said, "Not even on your way home

" • They said, "We fear no one

I said, "Not even in your homes," and they were astonished by my words, as if they saw me as a

• stranger who did not know the state of the lands

I said, "Do you not know that these and those like them are physically stronger, more cunning, braver,

"? and more numerous than you

They said yes

" • I said, "And you are richer, more prosperous, and have more blessings and family

They said yes

"? I said, "What prevents them from attacking you, stealing your money, and violating your women

• They said that fear of the Sultan prevented them from doing so

I said, "And what power does the Sultan have over them? Is it not through the men whom he provides

"? for and sustains

They said yes

I said, "And thus the enemy was repelled from you and others, and you were safe in yourselves, your

" • wealth, and your families

They said yes

I said, "Why do you find it so difficult that He takes from you a little of what is abundant and a small of

"? what is great

So they began to acknowledge the blessing and said, "May God reward you well. You have been truthful in what you told us, and you have made things easy for us and made us aware of the consequences that were hidden from us." And they began to discuss this and mention the extent of the blessing bestowed upon

• them in it

Most people are barbaric, neither holding themselves accountable nor considering their own actions.

They expect their leaders to defend them, fight their enemies, restrain those who transgress against them, and provide for them without any burden on them, without any obligation to fulfill their duties, and without any of God's prescribed duties being performed for them. It is as if what they spend on their interests is quarried from mountains or drawn from seas, or provided by angels who neither eat nor drink, nor are questioned about what they do. In this, they are like those whom God Almighty described as saying to Moses, son of Imran, "Go, you

" • and your Lord, and fight; we will remain right here

Words on what is preferable for the virtuous person to remain in this .172 .world

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: I heard Al-Mansur say: The virtuous person prefers to remain in this world so that God Almighty may reveal in him what is hidden of goodness and virtue, so that his reward may be magnified and his status in the Hereafter may be elevated.

• Otherwise, what he has with God in the Hereafter is better than what he has in this world

Part Sixteen

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

A discussion took place regarding people's desire for knowledge .173 .transmitted from the Imams

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: It was mentioned to Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, the people's desire for the knowledge transmitted from him and his pure forefathers, regarding what he, peace be upon him, established of the inner knowledge of religion for his saints, and their desire and delight in it. He said: I had a vision after the death of al-Mansur, peace be upon him, and when I revealed this matter of this call, I mentioned it at that time to those who were present with me. I saw al-

Mansur, may God's peace be upon him, asking me about what I had done and carried out, and I knew his stinginess and miserliness regarding it, so I began to mention it to him as if apologizing to him, and I said to him that I had no choice but to establish God's proof upon the one who entrusted it to me and charged me with his

• command, and something to that effect

He said, "You were right and successful. How did you see the people's enthusiasm for it and their

"? desire for it

"• I said, "What I saw of that impressed me

"• He made a gesture with his hand, indicating eight, and said, "You see that in eight of them

"? I asked, "Eight nights, eight months, or eight years

He said, "Up to eight years, and up to twelve years, and so on," but he did not mention the blessings of God, nor did he mention what he said about that. We hope that it will be good; we await it and will convey it,

• God willing. We did not ask him about it, as he concealed it for fear that it might not happen with his approval

Questions of Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers be upon him, to some Berber 174 sheikhs

He said, and I heard him asking some Berber elders about their opinion of his conduct towards them.

They said, "O Commander of the Faithful, they acknowledge your pardon and forgiveness of their crimes and

"• past transgressions, and they are grateful for your conduct towards them and your kindness to them

He said, "We did what we did to them only to convey God's proof and our proof against them.

Whoever among them is grateful for this and acknowledges it has sustained the blessing and attracted more. But

"• whoever is ungrateful for the favor and belittles the blessing has attracted wrath and deserves punishment

words spoken in a gathering on the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom 175

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: "We are pleased with those among our saints whom we see seeking knowledge and wisdom, desiring good, and remembering good things,

"
▪ just as we are pleased with that in our children

So I said, "They are the crop of the Commander of the Faithful, and I remember today saying something similar to some of them in his presence." I gestured to a man who was present at the gathering and said to some of them, as we were discussing such matters, "How happy would any of you be with your crop if

"? you saw it at the height of goodness, strength, prosperity, and perfection

"!
! They said, "Great joy

I said, "We are the seed of God's chosen one, and He is undoubtedly pleased to see us thus." And I recited to them the words of God Almighty: "Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and those with him..." up to His words: "And their example in the Gospel is like a seed which sends forth its shoot and strengthens it so that it grows firm and stands upon its stalk, delighting the sowers, so that He may enrage the disbelievers with

"
▪ them

I said, "Do you not see that God Almighty likened the believers to crops and mentioned that He is pleased with their growth when they have thickened and stood firm on their stalks? It is incumbent upon us to be

"
▪ in a manner that pleases God's friends

He, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: How could we not be pleased that you should be as we have commanded you on behalf of God Almighty, when we have been employed to reform you, guide you, call you to Him, and receive your acceptance from Him? Would it please someone employed in a task to perform it contrary to the wishes of the one who employed him, the one from whom he hopes for reward? By God, nothing pleases Him except to rectify and improve the task he is entrusted with, and to perform it in the best possible manner, pleasing the one who employed him, so that he may receive his due reward and be

▪ thanked for his performance

And if he corrupts it and it is corrupted by his own hand, or if he does not perform the task for which he was appointed, or if he does not fix it after exerting his effort in it, and then someone else comes and fixes it and the matter is set right for him and he brings it about according to what his employer hoped for, then what

? will be the state of the one who was before that and was unable to do it, since it was not fixed by his hand Likewise, God Almighty uses one of us after another, then He sees what we have done. The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "I will boast of your numbers before the nations on the Day of Resurrection." Do you think it would not please us if our followers and allies increased, and if those who accept us, emulate us, and obey our commands increased? By God, we are overjoyed by that and we are filled with sorrow for the opposite. Noah did not pray against his people until his patience was exhausted, his heart was constricted by their denial of him, and his grief intensified because of what he heard and saw from them. He despaired of them, and God Almighty informed him that none of them would believe except those who had

▪ already believed before. It was then that he prayed for their destruction and ruin

⁴Words on calling to the truth, mentioned in a gathering 176

He said, and I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, say, "The truth is heavy except for those upon whom God makes it light." This is what we desire: the well-being of the servants of God, and we call them to what pleases God. Few are those for whom this is not difficult and burdensome, for we are only calling to those who have adopted a falsehood which they consider to be guidance. We want to change their intentions from what they believed and turn their opinions away from what they adopted, after perhaps it became too much for them, and others followed them in it, and what was said about them was based on what

▪ they brought from it

In one version: A discussion took place regarding the reluctance of most people to accept the truth and their⁴
▪ inclination towards falsehood

Another has become fond of falsehood and indulges in it, and Satan has seduced and enticed him, so his desire has overcome him and his longing for it has grown. We want to turn him away from it, prevent him

- from it, take away what is in his hands, forbid it to him, and come between him and his desire and pleasure

And another who has gained from injustice, belittled sin, and indulged in consuming people's wealth unjustly and violating their sanctity without permission, we restrain his hand from that, we take away his ill-

- gotten gains, and we curb his arrogance

Another is engrossed in amusement, drinking, listening to music, frivolity, revelry, debauchery, and violating sanctity. We desire dignity and tranquility from him, and we forbid him frivolity and debauchery. We call him to fasting, prayer, piety, caution, truthfulness, trustworthiness, and chastity. The taste of all this is bitter

- compared to what he has found sweet in falsehood and indulged in it

Who among these people would not find our command burdensome? Who among them, when invited to what we desire, would readily accept it willingly, except those whom God Almighty has willed to be happy and successful? If we had left each person to their own religious beliefs and practices, endorsing their pronouncements and showing them that we approve of their doctrine and share it with them, while turning away from the people of falsehood and immorality and associating with them in it, leaving them to their own devices and those who transgress without opposing them, we would have been the most beloved of people to them, and nothing of our commands would have been burdensome to them. It is in this way that those who seize power

- believe they have governed their affairs

Then he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "And he answered us until that day and

"

- delivered us, praise be to God, the most knowledgeable of people regarding God's right over them in it

I reflected on what he, peace be upon him, said, and I found that the conduct of the Umayyads, Abbasids, their followers, and their officials, as we have witnessed and heard, largely matched what he, peace be upon him, described. For it was because of this that corruption entered the religion and weakness afflicted Islam and the Muslims. They secretly believed that it was prudent for the one who seized power to conceal his true beliefs from the people, and to allow the followers of each sect to believe he shared their views, so that they would unite under him. They appointed judges from among the followers of each sect, removing some from these groups and appointing others, to give the impression that they were satisfied with all their doctrines and acted upon them completely. Likewise, they allowed their soldiers and those they prepared for war to oppress their subjects, seize their wealth, and violate their sanctity in many instances, all to appease and win their favor. As for the people of immorality and falsehood, they mingled with them and engaged in many of their corrupt practices, without rebuking them, because it was in accordance with their own beliefs and customs. This was how they perceived the policy of those they conquered. And God knows best what is truly best for them. He

- created it and His servants follow it

God has prescribed His obligations, defined His limits, requirements, and rights. If they were truly worthy of them, they would have implemented them and entrusted those whom God has placed under their care from among His servants, as God Almighty has commanded. Rather, they merely offer opinions and set examples, as one of their predecessors said: "Leave people to their religions, and they will leave you to your

- worldly affairs." This is the policy of those who seek worldly gain by abandoning the Hereafter

As for the imams whom God has entrusted with upholding His rights, their example is that of the Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family. We follow his example and the words of Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and the guardians of God whom He has entrusted with the affairs of His servants and whom He has entrusted with upholding His limits and rights in His

- land. May God grant them His good assistance and rectify His servants and His land for them

signatures on the command to be patient with harm 177

He said: When Al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, sent me from the city of Tripoli to the Holy Presence, my arrival there coincided with the morning of a Friday. He bestowed upon me a robe of honor on the day of my arrival, appointed me as his representative, and ordered me to proceed that very day to the Great Mosque in Kairouan and to perform the Friday prayer and deliver the sermon there, as there was no

mosque in Al-Mansuriyya at that time. He ordered a group of the special gatekeepers of the Great Palace to

▪ walk before me with weapons until I had prayed and departed

Then, the next day, his signature was sent to the chancery, ordering me to be appointed judge in the cities of Mansouriya, Mahdia, Kairouan, and all the other cities and districts of Ifriqiya. This was mentioned and spread among the people, and they knew of my compliance, during my time in Tripoli, with his command regarding the appointment of me as judge there, to uphold justice for both the noble and the lowly, and to ensure

▪ fairness between the powerful and the weak

It reached me concerning a group of people accustomed to selfishness, and those who accustomed them to it for personal gain and sustenance, and concerning those who disagreed with me in doctrine and who coveted leadership, that this displeased and humiliated them, and their hearts recoiled from it. So, those accustomed to selfishness rose up against it out of pride and zeal, and those who accustomed others to it out of fear for themselves and piety, and those who opposed the doctrine out of religious conviction and partisanship. They secretly conspired against me and gathered against me due to the convergence of desires, both from the elite and the common people, the near and the far. They secretly plotted against me in a scheme to oppress me, and they aimed their arrows of deceit at me, without any fault of mine towards them, nor any crime on my part that warranted their action. They slandered me with the most vile accusations and attributed to me such deceit that God will question them about it and, God willing, reward me for it by His grace. And through this, they achieved some of what they hoped for, according to what the times demanded and what was possible, from

▪ which, thanks be to God and the grace of His chosen one, I suffered no harm or deficiency

When I attained the position al-Mansur had assigned me, and fulfilled my duty to him, and they heard the people's praise for the justice and fairness they had witnessed, they began to spread slander among them, subtly suggesting that I was attributing evil to them, plotting against them, and stirring up trouble that would lead to their downfall. They were unaware that they themselves disliked such things, attributing them to me to incite hatred against me and diminish their gratitude. They employed various forms of trickery, harm, and deceit, which they never ceased nor grew weary of, too numerous to recount. Many forms of harm were inflicted

▪ upon me, and I have confirmed and verified them

My heart was heavy with this, and after a long period of patience, I took it to Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah,

▪ may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and I included a portion of it in a note which I gave to him

He wrote on the back of it, "O Nu'man, by God, were it not for my knowledge of you, I would have attributed ignorance to you upon seeing this letter of yours, for you know what your followers have endured of harm from those who plotted against them, opposed them, rejected the command of God Almighty, and lied about His Messenger concerning them—great trials. But our souls have become accustomed to bearing hardship, and our backs have grown strong enough to bear its burdens. And you, praise be to God, have not suffered any deficiency in your faith nor any humiliation in this world. You have been distressed by what you described, and it has affected you deeply. Did you not know that you are the one who has wronged yourself in what you are so distressed by? For it has become clear to you that the lowly and rabble oppose the friends of God, reject God's rulings, and plot against and slander the followers of truth and its people. You wanted to avoid what happened to you, so you abandoned us and followed them, and you sought refuge from what we and

”

▪ our followers have suffered at their hands

If you have followed us with insight and knowledge, then be patient with what is inevitable. Your master, Ali, peace be upon him, said, "Pleasing people is an unattainable goal. Your obedience to God and their disobedience are sufficient for you. You know yourself better than they know you. If there is something between you and God that you fear, then beware of it. If there is nothing, then this is an increase in your reward. It was incumbent upon you to ask God to increase your reward from this envy, for the closer you get to us, the more envious and scheming you become. If you asked God to remove this from you when your heart was constricted, then do so now. Some wise men, when they prayed to God for themselves, would say, 'O Lord, make me envied, not pitied.' Trust in God, your Lord, and in us. By God, nothing you fear in religion or worldly matters will befall you with trust in God and the might of the state. These sharp tongues are the trade of women, the lowly, and the vile. They disappear when ignored and vanish when discarded. They increase and magnify only when the lowly know their hypocrisy. Do not listen to them or pay them any heed. By God, their way with me is no different than their way with al-Mansur, peace be upon him. I heard him say this, and he emphasized it and swore an oath. He mentioned words and said, "May God reward them for what they have done and recompense them for what they believe." Despite this, the king has a policy by which he governs, and we have limits that we

will not transgress. God will make His command prevail despite the dissenters, even if the polytheists dislike it.

• God bestows His favor upon whomever He wills, and God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing

When I read his signature, I was relieved of what had been weighing on my heart, as if I had been oblivious to what he had mentioned. I had previously narrated on the authority of al-Sadiq Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, that he said: "Affliction comes to our Shi'a and our followers faster than water

" • to its source and a bird to its nest. So whoever follows us should clothe himself in patience And he said to one of his close friends, who had complained to him about what he suffered at the hands of people, just as you complained: "Do you not praise God for that? When Satan despaired of turning our close friends away from our allegiance, through which they attain what is with God, he incited people against them

" • and urged them to harm them. That is why they suffer at their hands And he said to another who complained to him about the same thing, "No one but yourself did that to

" • you

He said, "How is that, O son of the Messenger of God? By God, I do not confront them, and I patiently

" • endure their dislike and turn away from them

• He said that this is not what will satisfy them from you, nor will it stop their evil and harm from you

" • He said, "What will satisfy them and stop their harm to me? May I be your ransom

He said, "What pleases them about you, makes them envious of you, endears you to them, draws you near to them, elevates you in their eyes, and brings you close to them is that you should ally yourself with them,

" • speak as they speak, oppose us, and disavow us

He said, "I seek refuge in God, O son of the Messenger of God. By God, even if they cut me with

" • scissors and threw me into the fire, I would not do that, and I would patiently endure their harm He said, "What you complained about from them is less serious than that, so be patient with it, for God

" • rewards the patient

" • He said, "Be patient, by God, O son of the Messenger of God, be patient

It was as if, by God, I had never heard anything like this before. I narrated it and wrote it down, and nothing reminded me of it except the words of al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, which matched and resembled it, as if it had come from the same source. And indeed it is, for they are, as God Almighty said, descendants of one another, and God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. And what I had complained to him about continued to increase in my mind and recur. So whenever my heart felt constricted by it, I remembered his words and found solace in them. I continued to train myself in this until it no longer saddened or distressed me, nor did it affect me. And even those who might have been able to convey it to me did not convey any of it to me because they saw my turning away from it and my lack of concern for it. So I attained peace, thanks to God and the favor of His chosen one, peace be upon him, for he enlightened me about it, taught me it, and guided me to it. And after that, I did not raise anything of that, neither little nor much, neither small nor large, nor will I ever raise it again. And indeed, on most days, I am repeatedly confronted with what they have abandoned and what they have grown

• weary of

signatures thanks and gratitude from Al-Mu'izz 178

He said: During the reign of Al-Mansur Billah, I relied on Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, for everything I sought from him, presented to him, and discussed with him. Whatever I wanted, I initiated and presented to him, asking for his favorable opinion. Whatever he commanded me to do, I did; whatever he disliked, I refrained from. This brought me great support and immense joy. I never acted upon his opinion without experiencing its blessings and happiness, and he never forbade me from something without its

• flaws becoming apparent to me afterward

When al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers, blessings, and mercy be upon him, passed away, I needed to consult with al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and deal with him as I had dealt with al-Mansur. However, I lacked the same access to him that I had previously enjoyed with al-Mansur. For a long

time, I hesitated and feared to take on this responsibility. When this situation became too much for me, I wrote him a letter in which I offered an excuse for what I might raise with him and address to him. It contained the

▪ following

The Commander of the Faithful knew that his servant relied on his own judgment and consideration before submitting matters to al-Mansur (may God sanctify his soul), and that his actions afterward were based on his commands and prohibitions. He knew that this was something whose outcome was positive, and that safety and well-being were maintained because of it. Now, the Commander of the Faithful has no other master than his own to rely on in such matters, regarding what he addresses and submits to him. It has been narrated, on the authority of his master Ali, the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him), in a section of his discourse on the duties of the nation and the imams, that he said: "If the scholars are in the time of a rightful imam, and his people are corrupt, then it is incumbent upon the scholars to present themselves to their imam, to inform him of their competence and righteous conduct, and to submit themselves to him so that he may guide them to the

”

▪ forms and limits he deems most effective and beneficial for what he desires

Therefore, what is required of the servant of the Commander of the Faithful is to reveal to his Master his true state of mind, his belief in his authority, and his sincerity towards him in this regard. This is the foundation upon which no deed is valid without it. He must also be truthful in what he says to him, and God will not question him about a lie, God willing, unless he does so intentionally or deliberately. He must submit to his

▪ Master and exert his utmost effort in seeking His pleasure

The Commander of the Faithful knows his servant best and what he deems worthy of him. If something occurs in his words or deeds that contradicts his master's approval, it is because he sees fit to do so in accordance with his own will and desires. His grandfather, the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), said, "God has pardoned my nation for its mistakes, its forgetfulness, and what it is forced to do." The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) revives his grandfather's tradition, follows in his footsteps, fulfills his promises to the people of his time, and adheres to his commands. If he commands his servant to present his affairs to him with a positive expectation of forgiveness and the hope of attaining pardon,

▪ he will do so in a manner befitting his station

On the back of the note, he wrote in his own hand: "May God protect you, Nu'man. I have read everything you described in this note of yours, and I have inferred from your words something that has become clear to me, something I only realized upon reading this note. What has become clear to me is your aversion to the ease and comfort you were previously in bringing to us, regardless of what might befall you. I have seen in you a withdrawal that has alarmed me, for there is no reason or cause for it. Rather, my hope in you is contrary to what I aspire to in terms of honoring and elevating your name and status. For I have only ever witnessed goodness and the qualities that every saint of ours like yourself should possess. It would have been more fitting for you to increase your praiseworthy efforts so that your state would be one that both the saint and the saint

”

▪ would envy. May God grant you success and guide you

What you described of your situation with the one upon whom God's blessings and peace be upon him, and may He join us with him, your situation was not hidden from us; rather, we were its origin and its branches. Even though the holy physical person has been hidden from our sight and transferred to the vastness of God's mercy, the spiritual matter is continuous and unbroken. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds. Your master has passed on, and your leader has succeeded him. So praise God, thank Him, and submit to His command. Write to me with whatever you wish to mention, so that you may receive from us what you can act upon, God willing.

▪ Peace be upon you

I do not know of any joy I have felt since my childhood as I did that day when I read this decree. It relieved me of the anxiety of being pursued and removed the burden of caution. In all my dealings with him, in all my communications with him, and in all my addresses to him, I relied on good intentions, sincerity, and the absence of pretense in all matters. I have continued to recognize this from him, may God's blessings be upon him, as a renewed favor, a continuous blessing, and a source of further good. I bear the gratitude for it even as I acknowledge my inability to fully express it, and I describe it most eloquently when I confess my shortcomings

▪ in fulfilling it

Part Seventeen

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

signatures like that 179

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, ordered me to answer questions that came to me from some regions after I had reviewed them with him and submitted them to him. So I wrote the answer to them and submitted it to him so that he might review it, and whatever he approved of it would be attributed to him and narrated from him, just as I had also corrected what I had narrated from his forefathers, peace be upon them, and upon him and those of them who came after him, peace be upon them. And I asked his permission, peace be upon him, for that to be narrated

▪ from him in a note in which I mentioned that and submitted it to him

He wrote on her back, "O Nu'man, deliver this reply, for you have done well in it. May God reward you and help you in what you have undertaken in seeking the pleasure of God, your Lord, and our pleasure with you, and may He grant you happiness in your religion and your worldly life, for you have given the answer as it

"

▪ should be

He mentioned something in the narration about him, and then said: We inherit from our righteous and

▪ pure forefathers their saying: God never brings goodness near to a people except that they turn away from it I have never known anything that brought me such joy as this supplication of his, peace be upon him, which he wrote to me in his own handwriting. And whenever I embarked upon something seeking the pleasure and approval of God Almighty, I found myself aided in it, and things came to me that I neither expected nor

▪ hoped for. Know then that this is due to the merit of his supplication

As for the favor of God Almighty upon me after He prayed for me, I saw it continuously and repeatedly bestowed upon me. Praise be to Him, He has no partner, and thanks be to Him for what He has

▪ bestowed and what He asked for me from Him

As for the conclusion with happiness in religion and this world, I am confident and certain of it because of the blessing of the prayer of God's chosen one for me, and because God Almighty has made me aware of him

▪ and hastened to answer his prayer in other matters

Among the supplications attributed to the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) that are answered is the supplication of the just Imam. We ask God to inspire him to offer more of these supplications, and to grant the same to all those who love good for him, including his family, children, brothers in faith, and all

▪ believers

and the same 180

He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, told me a statement made by someone who had witnessed his poor condition, a statement that was considered a favor bestowed upon me, while I denied it and rejected the one who made it. So I presented him with a letter in which I thanked him for his kindness and

▪ apologized for what the person had said to him

He wrote to me in his own hand on another piece of paper, "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. I have read the letter you sent us in which you apologize for what that vile, despicable man said. God knows, O Nu'man, that we have never looked upon you except from the perspective you hoped we would look upon you from, and from the perspective you placed yourself in in relation to our allegiance, love, and adherence to our cause. So, O Nu'man, your Lord's pleasure, the forgiveness of your followers, and their acceptance of your efforts are enough for you. And that vile, despicable man's state before God, us, and the nation is sufficient. By God, if I had known that you would give his words any thought or concern, I would not have let you see him. So, banish from your mind any thought of him, and place him in the same contempt he holds in our eyes and hearts as he does in ours. Trust in what you have in our hearts, and know that we are instruments of God, who uses us as He wills. If God were not pleased with you, He would not have granted you

"

▪ happiness with us. This is enough for you. Peace be upon you

By God, I do not know, nor do I know, how to describe this blessing, even though I have many similar instances of it. If this favor and beautiful expression were directed to some of my brothers, it would weigh heavily upon me, and I would be unable to express my gratitude. So how much more so when it is directed to the friend of God, the son of His Prophet, in whose hands God has placed the affairs of all that is hoped for in the good of religion and this world? Were it not for the fact that the chapter and section would become too long and would break away from the order of this book, becoming so lengthy that its end is unknown, I would have elaborated on the words of al-Mu'izz, may God's blessings be upon him, giving each word its due share of explanation and clarification of its honor, virtue, and eloquence, for those who might be unaware of some of it, even though the light of the sun is not hidden from sight, nor the light of the moon concealed from observers. Had I intended to do so, many books would have been written from this decree, and numerous chapters would have been compiled from its various branches. Yet I know that its depths are unfathomable, and its end is unattainable. May God guide to this knowledge whomever He chooses and loves to guide. May it benefit me, God willing, to record and perpetuate it, and may it benefit those who read and copy it after me, for God's reward is abundant and His bounty vast. He has

and similarly 181

He said, "Some judges, rulers, and students asked me to write a concise book of sayings of the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family) that would be easy to understand, simple to memorize, and inexpensive to produce. So I began a portion of it, estimating that when the book was completed, it would cost someone who wanted to copy it a dinar or less. I named it the Book of the Dinar, and I mentioned this in the introduction. I submitted what I had begun to al-Mu'izz (may God's peace be upon him), reviewed it with him, and asked him to read it to me and hear it from me so that it would be transmitted from him. I wrote a note to him along with what I

”

▪ submitted to him, mentioning this to him

Then Ali, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, wrote on its back

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. May God protect you, O Nu'man. I examined the book and perused it, and I found in it what impressed me: the soundness of the narration and the quality of the brevity. However, it contains words that are difficult for many of our saints to understand. So explain them in a way that makes them easier to comprehend, so that they may be equally aware of and grasp the knowledge of its noble and honored words. For it will be presented in a novel and accessible manner. Name it "The Book of Abridgment of Authentic Narrations from the Pure Imams," for that is more fitting than "The Book of the Dinar," because it contains knowledge of God's saints that all of creation should seek with their very lives, let alone their wealth. This title diminishes its value in the eyes of the wealthy, who believe they can attain it and something even greater by offering a small portion of their worldly possessions. They consider what they have amassed and gathered from their ill-gotten gains to be the ultimate prize, for corruption has corrupted

▪ their minds, and baseness is their prevailing trait, except for those whom God has protected, and they are few. Then he followed suit by confirming things that were valid in what I had submitted and deleting things from what I had written and included in it. He mentioned them and marked them, and I read it to him afterward. He included in it everything he had corrected and approved, and I omitted from what I had written what he had ordered to be omitted. I took it verbatim from him, and he permitted me to narrate it to those who had received it from him, on the authority of those he mentioned in it from his pure forefathers, after he had confirmed it from them. Thus, my benefit from it was immense, and his favor upon me through it was great. I had not sought anything other than to confirm what I had preferred from his forefathers and collected from the books of the narrators on their authority, and what I had heard from them before that. He opened my heart to it, may God's blessings be upon him, and provided me with from the ocean of his knowledge, so that this book became encompassing knowledge of all that is lawful and unlawful, and of legal cases and rulings. And this was confirmed for me from him in what I do of the obligatory duties imposed upon me, and I give legal opinions based on it to those who ask me, and I judge based on it in my rulings, by the praise of God and His favor and the grace of His chosen one. And I hope that if my life is extended, I will present everything I believe in in the same way. And I take it correctly from him, and God will grant me that and bestow it upon me by His power and might. It has been narrated from some of those who met Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, that he said to me, "O my master, I would like to present my religion to you." He said, "That is an obligatory duty." So he testified to the two testimonies and acknowledged the Imams one after another, naming them until he reached

▪ him

He said to him, "Know that whoever worships God Almighty in this way has worshipped Him with the religion that He accepts and from which He is not satisfied, nor is He pleased with anyone else." He approved of

this from him and confirmed his statement. Whoever God has enabled to present the fundamentals and branches of his religion to his guardian, He has perfected His favor by enabling him to receive them from his Imam and

▪ correct them with his guardian

Praise be to God for what He has opened for me in this regard, and we ask Him to grant me the

▪ attainment of what I hope for in what remains of it, accepting it and guiding me to what pleases Him in it

in the workers' transgression 182

He said, and I mentioned to Imam Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him, one day, the people's eagerness to obey him, submit to his command, and desire for what he possessed of the knowledge

▪ and wisdom with which God had favored him, and by which He had made him a guide for His servants

He said, "Praise be to God who has facilitated this for us and enabled us to do it without any help from

His creation. Rather, we have more than those we hope for in our strength and in reforming the hearts of His servants. We have no helper in this matter. If there is anything they dislike, something in which they transgress against them, we will appoint someone to help them. He said to them, 'This is the command of our Master, and to Him we take what we take from you. God has protected us from ordering anyone to transgress against His servants. Their transgression is not enough for them, so they attribute it to us. If there is any favor or kindness from us towards someone, he praises it to whoever receives it from him, and he prepares it for himself. So their sins are attributed to us, and our good deeds are added to them. But God knows our intentions towards His creation and our commands concerning His servants, so He will reward us for that, God willing, and

""

▪ recompense us for it

symbols of wisdom 183

He said, "I saw him one day sitting with a fountain of bubbling water in front of him, and he was looking at it. The fountain was high up, so he looked at it intently and said, 'Glory be to Him who, through everything He created, points to the greatness of His wisdom.' Then he looked at me and said, 'Do you see this

""? water

I said yes, my lord

""? He said, "Did you not know that it has a high origin in the place from which it comes

I said yes, my lord

? Is water not a dense specter, its nature being to sink and rise to the lowest point

I said yes. He said, "But such a thing, if it comes out confined as you see, rises and is named after the

""
▪ origin from which it came, even if it is in its nature to decline

I said yes

He said, "Lofty souls seek the heights of their origins, and they are more deserving of this than this water, whose nature is to settle. So let the people of understanding take heed of this, and not look at the things of

""

▪ this world like the beasts

On the obligation to establish the outward and inward aspects 184

He said, and one of those standing before him raised a note to him, and he read it, then looked at me and said to me, "This is a note from so-and-so. He mentioned to us on the day we rode the hadith that is narrated from our grandfather Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him, that he looked at the Kaaba, the

""

▪ Sacred House, and said that looking at it is an act of worship

So I said yes

He said that God Almighty did not make the evidence of the superior and the example of it except the superior, whether it be an animal, a plant, or an inanimate object. Therefore, God favored some places over others, and He made us know that this House is built from the stones and clay of the earth. So, the one who set up an example for it, God honored and magnified it and made it, as He, may His name be glorified, said, a place of return for people, and He made it obligatory upon them to perform the pilgrimage and circumambulate it.

• And whoever does not magnify the evidence of something and its example does not magnify it
Then he, peace be upon him, said: "And from the negligence of the outward aspects, many who knew the inner meaning perished. So may God curse whoever neglects it, rejects it, and belittles it. By God, God has not prescribed an obligation nor magnified a matter except that its like and magnification are obligatory in its outward and inward aspects. So the outward aspect of what is permissible is permissible and magnified, and the outward aspect of what is forbidden is blameworthy, and likewise its inward aspect. And every obligatory duty

"
• that indicates something or is an example of it is likewise governed by it and connected to it

visions seen by Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers be upon him 185

He said, and one day Abd al-Rahman al-Umawi, who had seized power in Andalusia, was mentioned in his presence. He said, "May God curse him! I have been thinking about him for several nights, pondering him at length until I was about to go to bed. I fulfilled my religious obligations to God and asked Him, the Almighty, to show me his condition, his fate, and his standing with Him in my dream. Then I slept, and it was as if I were in a chamber overlooking the Gate of Conquests when I saw a noble steed enter. Its flanks were full, and the wind had blown its garment. A man was urging it on until it stopped at the palace gate. It asked permission to enter, and I ordered it to be brought in. It seemed to me that it was a messenger who had brought me good news. So it

"
• was brought in. When it stood before me, it greeted me and said, 'This is the man we have brought

"? I asked, "Who is this man

"
• He said, "The one you asked God to show you
I said Abdul Rahman Al-Umawi
He said yes

"? I said, "Where is he

"
• He said, "This is behind me, and I only came to ask your permission to bring it to you

"
• I said, "Bring him to me

Then he brought me a man wrapped in a loincloth and wearing a tarboosh. I said to the man, "What is

"? this on his head? Is this his attire

He said, "This is the attire of fame," and I looked at it in my presence, feeling ashamed. The man said to me, "Can someone like this harm or benefit anyone other than the One capable of harm and benefit?" He gestured with his hand towards the sky, then said to me, "Do not reveal it to the common people and the rabble, for there is still some time left." He gathered his fingers and moved his hand to indicate that it was less. Then I

• awoke and fell prostrate before God for what He had shown me

brief commandments 186

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, when he had appointed a worker for some tasks, and he ordered that the worker be brought to him on the day he was going out to that task so that he could give him advice. Among the things he entrusted to him was that he said to him, "Know that we have hoped for good from you and thought well of you, so do not be content with anything less than what we thought

"
• of you, and proceed with guidance

And what he added to that, for he had gathered for him every commandment and admonition in these two words

Words on the insistence of the oppressors on falsehood 187

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say one day, "By God, our right is not hidden from people. If they were fair to themselves and abandoned their desires and looked with the eyes of fairness, they would not have perceived it from them. Nothing hides it from their ignorant ones except their ignorance, and no scholar stays away from it except out of greed for leadership. I negotiated with so-and-so, and he mentioned a man from among the scholars of the common people and their elders, and I spoke at length with him and kept at it until he acknowledged our right and confessed to it with a confession that I had no doubt was a true confession, not a confession of appeasement and dissimulation. He stopped and stood in my hands, so I said to him, 'What prevents you after this from returning from what you are on to what you have confessed to?'"

"
• But he had no answer

"
• So I said to him, "If you wish, I will tell you why you don't do that

"? So, relieved that I was unable to answer him, he said, "What is it, O Commander of the Faithful

You said, "You are a man who has risen to prominence among the people and is known for your knowledge among them, and thus you have gained a certain standing with them. But if you were to leave them and come to us, they would reject you, belittle you, and your prestige would fall with them. You would not be in the position of one who excelled in a field of knowledge he entered due to his recent acquisition of it, and you would fall below those who preceded you among them. You have neither attained the position you hold today

"
• with our companions, nor have you retained it with your own companions

He said, "There is no power nor strength except with God. I seek refuge in God from the Sunnah of the

"
• Banu Hashim

It became clear to me that he knew what I had said was his secret, so he humbled himself and began to hide behind his words. I turned away from him and left him. We seek refuge in God from abandonment and

• misery

This man died shortly after this statement, following a long association with the Imams, peace be upon them, and the great favor they bestowed upon him. He enjoyed little of the blessings, grace, and honor God granted him through his leadership, and the call of his guardian to God, which confirmed God's proof upon him.

• What God's guardian said to him was nothing but a confirmation of God's proof upon him

On the obligation of jihad 188

He said, and one day, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he was told by a messenger who had sent him and ordered him to do so, that he had descended upon one of his enemies with his army and besieged him. When he had tightened the siege, he offered him a large sum of money, which he accepted from him in

• order to leave him

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) became extremely angry at this and said, "If he does this, I will do such and such to him," mentioning some unpleasant thing. Then he said, "We seek refuge in God from the one in whom we placed our hope and expect good from him, lest God disappoint our expectations of him. Rather, we hope that God will grant him success in what we hoped and expected from

"
• him, and that He will not take away from any of our allies the blessing He bestowed upon them through us

Then he said, "We did not send out our guardians, exert our minds, and spend our money to seek wealth for ourselves, nor did we intend to trade with it. Rather, we intended to establish God's right on His earth, so that He, the Exalted, would be worshipped therein as He deserves to be worshipped, and that obedience to Him would be followed as He commanded His guardians. As for wealth, we have, praise be to God, enough of what He has entrusted to us and bestowed upon us through His right and due means, and we have no need for it. Our Imam will pass away, and one after another will succeed him. What benefit do we derive from accumulating more? What need do we have for it? Our only need and benefit is to establish what God, the

Almighty, has employed us for and appointed us to do: defending His religion, fighting His enemies, calling to

Him, rescuing those whom He has made a means of rescue, and saving those whom He has appointed us to save from those He desires to bring about their happiness, and destroying those whom He desires to destroy at our hands for their own misery. Therefore, we strive and persevere, it is to Him that we intend and for Him that we

"
▪ desire. We ask God for help in what pleases Him from us, and for guidance and support in this

A letter addressed by Al-Mu'izz to the messenger of the Roman tyrant .189

He said, and a messenger from the Byzantine patriarchs and nobles came to him (peace be upon him) on behalf of their tyrant, the ruler of Constantinople, with the tribute he had imposed upon himself for the land of Calabria, as he sent every year. He also brought many gifts from him, including gold and silver vessels inlaid with jewels, brocade, silk, a horse, and other precious items they possessed. He also brought a letter from his messenger in which the tyrant submitted to him, expressing his desires, asking for a cessation of hostilities, and requesting peace. He sent a large number of captives from the East, a number the Byzantine tyrant had never before sent to any king of the West, nor to any of the imams who preceded al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him). The Byzantine tyrant never paid tribute or jizya on behalf of any of his people to anyone other than him (peace be upon him). That messenger kissed the ground repeatedly before al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) and stood before him, delivering his messenger's message and handing him his letter. He then asked permission to bring in his

▪ gift, after the tribute money had reached the governor of Sicily according to the established custom
So the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) gave him permission to bring her in and helped him accept her. The most that the messenger conveyed on behalf of the Roman tyrant, and what was stated in his letter to him, was his request for a permanent truce in exchange for the tribute and taxes he had imposed on the people of Calabria, and that he send a messenger from him to be pleased with this and to do what was

▪ expected of someone like him, due to his supposed affection and inclination

Al-Mu'izz responded to his messenger by saying that religion and Islamic law forbid the request for a perpetual truce, because God Almighty only sent Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as His Messenger and appointed imams from his descendants after him to call people to His religion and to fight those who oppose it until they enter it or pay the jizya willingly while being subdued and under the rule and protection of the Imam of the Muslims. Truce is only permissible for a specific period, as the Imam of the Muslims deems best for them and for the religion. If it were perpetual, the obligatory jihad would be nullified, the call to Islam

▪ would cease, and the rulings of the Book would be violated

He informed him that it is incumbent upon someone in the place of his possession, who sent him, not to be unaware of such matters of the law of the one he addresses and corresponds with, and not to ask what the law

▪ does not require of the one who asks him

The foreigner acknowledged this to his messenger and asked for an extension of the truce period on his

▪ behalf

Al-Mu'izz replied, "The answer to this is in our letter that we sent to him before today. As long as he adheres to the conditions we stipulated and the obligations he has undertaken, we will not initiate war against him until we renounce our treaty with him or until the truce period between us expires. We will not break our

"
▪ word or act treacherously as you do

He listed several things they had done, and he apologized for them, saying that it was not his doing,

▪ that he denied it, and that he demanded that whoever did it be held accountable

Al-Mu'izz said to him, "If the matter is as you describe, that his rule is dominated and he is powerless against those who oppose him and overpower him from among his own people, then what is the benefit of

"?
▪ making peace with him if he is powerless and defeated

But would you and he agree that I should make a pact with him, as he sees fit, with those he considers to be outside my realm, such as Ibn Hamdan and others from the east? If they deviate from what I make with them, then there is no pact between us. As for those within my realm and under my authority, I know, and you know, that they are more capable of dealing with the people of their own religion, kingdom, and land should they wish to betray and deceive, like Ibn Hamdan. Has it reached him, or have you, that any of them has

?
▪ transgressed against me in what I have decreed for him, or disobeyed any of it

The foreigner began to acknowledge this and the favor bestowed upon the Wali of Allah (peace be upon him), asking and beseeching him. Al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) turned away from answering him and instead asked him about the situation between them and the people of Tusus and Ibn Hamdan in their wars and their treatment of them, in a lengthy conversation. The foreigner answered his questions on this matter. Some of those present looked at each other as if they did not understand the meaning of the question and the discussion. Then the foreigner returned to asking for a messenger to send to his king, mentioning the continuous flow of his messengers to him and his forefathers since God Almighty had entrusted the matter to them, and that no

▪ messenger had yet been sent from him or from them to him

Al-Mu'izz said, "No one sends a messenger to another except for a need or a duty owed to him. We, praise be to God, know that we have no need of your companion, nor does he owe us anything. So why should we send a messenger to him, unless it is a matter of religion that requires us to correspond and discuss with him?"

It is permissible in his religion, but we suspect it would be difficult for him. If we send a messenger to him about it, and we know he will respond, it will be easy for us to send him a messenger as he asked and you inquired. If it were for the sake of God Almighty and His religion, we would not do so, nor should we do so until we are certain he will respond. We do not believe in asking for something, even for the sake of God Almighty, and then being disappointed, for that would have dire consequences for him. We do not compel you to answer him on this matter or to give him a definitive answer, as that is neither obligatory nor appropriate for you. However, we will instruct you to mention what we wish to tell you, and you will leave and learn from him, for it is a significant matter. If you truly know he will respond, inform us, and it will be easy for us to send a messenger to him, even if it concerns the entire world." Whether it was in its entirety or included in its entirety, it would have been easy for us to send a messenger before us. However, since it was for the sake of God

▪ Almighty and seeking His reward, it was easy for us and obligatory upon us

The foreigner was greatly offended by this statement and began praising and thanking the Commander

of the Faithful until his words bordered on blasphemy and anthropomorphism, which he believed in. The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) refuted him, humbling himself before God Almighty as he should, and made him aware of this so that he would know that he did not approve of his statement, even though he thought he intended only to glorify him and considered it permissible. Then the Commander of the Faithful

▪ (peace be upon him) ordered him to return to the place where he had been lodged, and he departed

Then he turned to those present in the assembly, as if he had glimpsed their thoughts, and said, "Perhaps some of you have questioned us at length about their dealings with the people of the East. We did not intend to engage in conversation or discussion with him, but I knew that he was a messenger who had been instructed on what to say and had been briefed on how to answer. Perhaps the one who sent him knew that he would be questioned about this, so we approached him from a place where we knew he had not been approached beforehand, and his sender did not know that he would be questioned about it. Thus, we obtained from him what would form our argument against him, from this perspective and that perspective," and he listed many aspects of what we had heard transpiring between them. We did not realize that there was any proof in that until he, may God's blessings be upon him, mentioned it. Then, he revealed compelling arguments that had not been apparent

▪ to anyone present until he mentioned and explained them

They kissed the ground before him and expressed their joy at the support God had bestowed upon him and the knowledge and wisdom He had granted him. This occurred after he, peace be upon him, asked them what they had seen in his address to them and what they had imagined he intended. None of them had any knowledge of this. Then he asked them if they had any evidence in what they had heard that they considered to be proof against him or against the one who sent him. None of them knew. After that, he said what he said to

▪ them, as I have mentioned on his authority, peace be upon him

letters addressed by Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, to some of the preachers 190

He said, and a messenger from one of the preachers in the East came to the Commander of the Faithful,

al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, carrying money that the preacher had brought him from the works of the believers. Al-Mu'izz admitted him and asked him about the situation of that preacher and the believers before him. He informed him of what he had said, praising God for the stability of affairs, the orderliness of the religion, and the harmony of the believers. Then he asked him about what he had witnessed on his journey. He told him of the veneration shown to him by the rulers of the eastern lands he had passed through, their kindness and respect

towards him, because they knew of what he had brought to the Commander of the Faithful from their leader. Most of their soldiers and those in charge of their affairs were following his call, and many of them had been called by others, and they all professed allegiance to the guardianship of the Wali of God and believed in his

■ Imamate

Among the things he related about some of them, while he was in the most important place he passed through, was something the Messenger disliked about him, along with what he described as his bad condition. This was in what he mentioned, that he sent for him, brought him in, and asked him what he had brought. He told him, and he said, "If I had wanted to take that, I would have taken it, because most of it is from my

"

■ companions and men

"? So I said, "O Prince, do you say anything other than this

"?

He said, "What is it

You said that those in your hands are from them and on their behalf because of their support and

■ assistance to you

■ He said yes, it is for both of you

He said, "I said, 'And you, may God preserve you, what prevents you from doing what they did, when you have repeatedly pledged allegiance to the guardian of God and to the imams who preceded him?'" He said, "I saw him pause on that matter, and his answer was, 'Everyone you see is only seeking worldly gain, and we too are seeking it as long as the time, the state, and the days are ours. When they end, we will surrender that

■

■ against our will

■

■ He said, "I said, 'And I know that your companions are as they are

He laughed and said, "By God, there is no man among my companions who is higher in rank with me, nor of greater stature, nor of greater worldly possessions than this one." He gestured to a man who was his minister and confidant. Then he said, "He accompanied me a few days ago on one of my outings, and we discussed the matter of your companion," meaning the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him). "I said, 'I think the only thing preventing him from attacking the East is that he does not have enough men and equipment to do so.' He laughed at my statement and said to me, 'What does he need men and equipment for? Everyone you see around you and around others has his men and allies.' By God, he did not flatter me about his situation, nor did he conceal anything from me. He receives from me, among other things, a regular allowance and other benefits from my generosity towards him, amounting to more than three hundred thousand dinars

"

■ annually

"

■ So I said, "That's enough for you, O Prince

He said, "What prevents your companion from the East? What did he find contentment in the West?

"?

What could possibly exist in the West, and what did he accept for himself there

I said, "Do you not know, O Prince, that Morocco is half the world, and that God has linked it with the

"?

East, mentioning them together

He said yes

"?

I said, "Do you know of any other king in Morocco besides him

He said no

"?

I said, "How many kings are there in the East

Kathir said

I said, "Does he not have more than they possess, with their men drawing near to him with their wealth

"?

and supporting him with their lives if he so desires

He said yes

I said, "What king among the kings of the world has what he has, in addition to the virtue of leadership

"?

that God Almighty has bestowed upon him

"?

He said, "So what is so surprising about what we have said? What do you have to say about it

He said, "I have nothing to do with this except accept it from him, submit to his command, refrain from objecting to it, and know with certainty that everything he does is right and wise. We do not think we should speak before him; rather, we are messengers who carry out what he has sent us with and depart as he directs

"
• us

He thought for a long time, then called for my mount. I rode it only before him, and he treated me with great respect. However, I was saddened by what I saw of his failure to fulfill his duty to God's chosen one, and

• by his statement that he was a worldly man, and by what I witnessed of him and the poor state he was in Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah said, "Would you have liked to see him in good health under our rule and in

"? perfect condition under our authority

"
• He said, "Yes, indeed, I loved that

He said that if this had happened while he was openly supporting the enemies of God, it would have been more harmful to you and your fellow believers. The blessings would have been hoped for his continued well-being, and his safety hoped for its permanence, thus prolonging his life and the sorrow of you and your companions. However, whoever severs ties with God in this way, and has no share or portion among His allies, destruction, by God's power and might, is near. It used to be said, "It is enough to deter you from your enemy if you see him committing sins against God." Some informers had informed on your master, Ja'far ibn Muhammad (peace be upon him), to some of the usurpers of the Abbasid dynasty, attributing to him the intention to rebel against them. They summoned him for this purpose and asked him about what the informer had said. He denied it, but the informer persisted in his statement before the one who had informed on him. Ja'far ibn Muhammad

"? (peace be upon him) then said to him, "Will you swear to that

• He said yes, swear to it, and went to swear by God

He said, "No, but say, 'I have relinquished my power and strength from God to my own power and

"
• strength

• He said that, and then he died on the spot

So the one who sought it was left speechless, and the matter of Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) became grave. He said to him, "How did you know that he would be punished with such a punishment, since

"? you made him swear by what you made him swear by

He said, "I knew that he was lying in his statement, and that when God Almighty swears an oath, he swears by His name, affirming His oneness and glorifying Him in his oath. God spares him because of his affirmation of His oneness and glorification of Him, and does not hasten to punish him. So I did not call him to that, but made him swear to disavow him, so that there would be nothing between him and God that would allow him to escape punishment for his audacity towards Him. And so it was, and God Almighty hastened to

"
• take vengeance on him

Likewise, if this person I mentioned had adhered to even the smallest of our principles and shown some obedience to God, God would have granted him respite and opened doors for him. However, by abandoning and turning away from that, he should expect the imminent vengeance of God Almighty and the swift onset of

• calamity upon him

Then this messenger mentioned to him, besides this man, the princes of the lands who had passed through his territory, and the honor he had shown him. He said that he had sent for him to come to him, but he excused himself from this, knowing that he wanted him to kiss his hand or show him great respect, and that he would not do so. He apologized for his absence and hinted at what prevented him from coming. The messenger accepted his apparent excuse and did not burden him with anything he disliked. He left him staying with the one

he had intended to meet among the supporters of the Commander of the Faithful. He ordered that he be protected and that he be escorted by someone who had authorized him to leave his post, and that he be brought

• out publicly with what he had to the Commander of the Faithful

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) said to him, "This is someone who looks out for himself, and it is more fitting that blessings should continue for him as long as he remains in this state. Have you not heard what the Persian king did when the letter of our grandfather, the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace), came to him inviting him to Islam? He was disdainful and arrogant, and he tore up the letter of the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace), so God tore apart

his kingdom and took it from him, and they never recovered. But when the letter of the Messenger of God (may God bless him and grant him peace) came to the king of the Romans, he accepted it and responded to it, and what befell others did not befall him. This is what I mentioned to you about whoever clings to some aspect of the truth and listens to it; he will benefit from it. And whoever severs ties with God and His allies, God is likely

"

▪ to take vengeance on him

Praise be to God, the supporter of His mighty guardian, and the one who instills awe and fear in the

▪ hearts of His servants

Part Eighteen

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Hadiths that took place in a gathering in response to some speakers 191

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: I sat before Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and I mentioned to him the words of some of the Mu'tazilites regarding the words of God Almighty: "But those in whose hearts is deviation follow that of it which is ambiguous, seeking discord and seeking its interpretation," and the confusion of the Mu'tazilite's statement

▪ regarding that and his poor interpretation of it

He said, "Those who follow this speaker and others like him are similar to those who liken him to the saints of God, whom the Blessed and Exalted has commanded to refer what is unclear to them and to ask them about what they do not know concerning their religion. They did not do what God, the Mighty and Majestic, commanded them to do, and instead asked those whom He did not command them to ask. Thus, they betrayed their faith, became confused, went astray, and perished. If they had asked those firmly grounded in knowledge whom God commanded them to ask and informed them that they possessed the interpretation of the Book, they would have known the correct path from them. But they wanted to be their own leaders and to dominate the nation through their leadership, so they interpreted God's Book according to their own opinions and spoke about His words according to their whims. Thus, they incurred His threat of punishment for those He promised reward and His threat of punishment for those He threatened. They went astray, as God, the Most High, said, 'And they led many astray from the straight path,' as if they had not heard God's words, and He is the most truthful of speakers: 'Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know,' nor His words to His Messenger: 'And We have sent down to you the Reminder so that you may explain to the people what was sent down to them.' They neither took the explanation from the Messenger nor referred back to the people of knowledge." They did not find any verses of the Quran ambiguous to them, but rather interpreted them according to their own opinions and whims. If this were permissible for anyone, it would have been permissible for the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him). God Almighty informed them in His Book and commanded him to inform them that he denied this about himself, saying, "Say, 'I only follow what is revealed to me from my Lord.'" And God Almighty said, informing them about the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him), "By the star when it sets, your companion has not gone astray, nor has he erred. [He has gone astray] to one of mighty power." So they permitted for themselves what they did not permit for their Prophet, and what God's Book testified to contradict them, out of audacity towards their Lord and contempt for their religion. God Almighty mentioned the hypocrites in His Book and commanded His Prophet to fight them. If these people were asked who the hypocrites are, they would name them based on their claims against them, and those people would attribute the name of hypocrisy to them and assert that they are the hypocrites themselves. Their argument against them would not be to refer to the explanation of the Messenger and ask the people of knowledge, as God Almighty commanded them. Otherwise, there is no argument for some of them against others, and all of them

▪ are making claims without explanation

Then, when Al-Mu'izz said this, he mentioned the saying of his grandfather, the truthful Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, when one of his followers asked him about the differences in legal rulings that existed among the people. He, peace be upon him, said to the questioner: "Have you heard that they differed

"?

during the time of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him

He said, "No, by God, may God make me your ransom, I have not heard of them disagreeing during the

" . time of the Messenger of God

"? Ja'far, peace be upon him, asked him, "Why didn't they disagree then

He said, "Because they used to ask the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) about

" . what they did not know, and he would teach them what they did not know

He said, "You are right. And by God, if he had appointed someone after him in his place and they had asked him, they would not have disagreed. But they appointed after him someone whom neither God nor His Messenger commanded to be appointed. So they asked him about what they did not know and they referred their disputes to him. He fell short in much of that and did not know it, and he began asking people about it, and they differed in their answers to him and vied for leadership because of it. So they continued to give answers without knowing whether they were right or wrong, or what the correct path was. And the second and third continued in the same way, and they differed in the rulings of the religion. Those who came after them from the Successors and those who followed them from the later generations followed their example. So the reason for the disagreement was the people's seeking of leadership for themselves and turning people's attention to themselves. And the Messenger of God said, 'He who seeks knowledge to boast to scholars, to argue with fools, to turn people's attention to himself and say, "I am your leader," then let him take his seat in Hell. Leadership is only suitable for those who are worthy of it.' Ali, peace be upon him, said, 'If they had referred the matter to me, I would have judged between the people of the Quran by the Quran, between the people of the Torah by the Torah, and between the people of the Gospel by the Gospel. And I know what is between the two covers.' And he used to strike He pointed to his chest and said, "Here is a vast amount of knowledge that I have not yet encountered." Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, was asked about the words of God Almighty, "Ask the people of knowledge if you do not know." He replied, "We are the people of knowledge. If they had referred the question to us, not two of them would have disagreed." A similar account was narrated from his father, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him. This and similar statements, which support their knowledge,

. have come through other chains of transmission

And among the things he described concerning the hypocrites was the statement of the Companions:

"We did not recognize the hypocrites during the time of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) except by their hatred of Ali, because the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

'None but a believer loves you, and none but a hypocrite hates you.' So, were it not for the Messenger's explanation and guidance, people would not have recognized the hypocrites," as Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace

. be upon him) said

And in the same way 192

In this council, I mentioned the words of some of the common people who call themselves just, in response to some of the jurists who objected to the words of God Almighty, "Guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor." They said, "If He has already guided the believers, why did He command them to ask for guidance? If He has already bestowed guidance upon them, how do they deserve reward?" This so-called just one said, "God Almighty commanded His believing servants to ask Him for guidance as a favor and an increase that He bestows upon whomever He wills. He had already guided them, as God Almighty said, 'And those who were guided - He increased them in guidance and granted them their piety.' As for His favor upon them, if a man gave another man a gift, and with it he bought a house, furniture, food, and clothing for himself and his family, and when they acquired it, they said, 'So-and-so has bestowed upon us a great favor,' that would be permissible if the origin of the favor was from him. But if their guardian is the one

" . who did that for them, then by God, he is more deserving of it

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "How terrible this comparison is, and how ugly this analogy! God is far above being likened to His creation, or having His actions measured against the actions of His servants. If these blessings, which this person likens to the blessings of God Almighty, were truly bestowed upon him, he would know what deficiencies, losses, and unfairness might befall them at the time of their acquisition, and what afflictions and defects might befall them, and how they might become a cause for grievous sins and calamities in this world, and punishments and a severe reckoning in the Hereafter, and a destination in the blazing Fire of God. They would then become afflictions and not blessings. God's blessings upon His servants are too numerous to count, and the benefits and goodness they contain cannot be fully enumerated. If this person

who made this statement were to reflect upon it, he would know that the blessing with which God has bestowed His chosen servants, and which He has commanded all His servants to ask for guidance to His path, is the blessing of religion, which no other blessing can equal or resemble. Through it, religion and this world are perfected. It is the blessing of the Hereafter and this life, and it is God's blessing upon His creation, for the blessing is attained by following their path." By knowing them and following their example, one realizes that this speaker's ignorance of God's blessings leads him to liken them to worldly possessions and compare them to it. His ignorance of these blessings necessitates his enmity towards them, for it has been said that whoever is

▪ ignorant of something is its enemy

When Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said this, I mentioned a question posed by someone to his grandfather, Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, about the words of God Almighty: "Then you will surely be questioned that Day about the blessings." He, peace be upon him, said: "What do these people say

▪ about it?" meaning the common people

"
▪ He said, "You know best what they say, may I be your ransom

▪ He told him to say what he had to say about that

▪ They say bliss here is a cold drink on a hot day

He said, "By God, if they were to ask about this, their questioning would be lengthy. Rather, by God, we are the blessing that He has bestowed upon them, and they will ask about us regarding what they know of

"
▪ our right and what He has obligated them to obey us

I mentioned this hadith to Al-Mu'izz Sal'a, and that the common people narrate it. He said, "It is authentic, and it is as Al-Sadiq Ja'far ibn Muhammad, our grandfather, peace be upon him, said. The question they were commanded to ask is the question of reward for knowing His saints as well. That is the fullest reward

"
▪ and the highest portion

And in the same way 193

And I asked him in this gathering about the words of God Almighty: "Alif Lam Mim. This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of God." I mentioned to him the words of some of the common people who argued against the Qur'an, saying: "If the Qur'an is only guidance for those conscious of God, then what argument do others have if it is not guidance for them?" This arguer said: "The Qur'an is guidance for both the conscious of God and the unconscious of God, and God Almighty did not say that it is not guidance for the unconscious of God." He said something similar to this in the words of God Almighty: "You

▪ only warn those who follow the Reminder." And God has made him a warner to all the worlds

Then Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah said, "From here the people went astray, lost their way, and perished." He paused for a moment, lowered his head, and looked around the assembly, right and left, but saw no one who disliked speaking in his presence. He said, "Speech is built upon its foundations." Then he began to interpret "Alif Lam Mim. That is the Book about which there is no doubt," explaining its inner meaning in a way that would confound the speakers and amaze the listeners. Then he mentioned the righteous, describing their attributes and who they are. He mentioned those who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend from what they have been provided, explaining them step by step, healing hearts, removing doubt, and dispelling confusion. Then he said, "Those who do not believe are as God Almighty described them: 'There is deafness in their ears, and it is blindness upon them.' So whoever God guides to the right path, strengthens him in it, commands him, and forbids him, and he is guided by His guidance, accepts His commands, refrains from His prohibitions, and observes His limits, God Almighty increases him in guidance, as He said, and grants him piety. But whoever does not accept guidance, disobeys God in what He commands, and commits what He forbids, then there is deafness in his ears, as God Almighty said." Therefore, he is blind
Then he said, "This guidance for the righteous is from the subtleties, favors, and kindness of God, which this speaker mentioned first in the Mother of the Book, but forgot that, so he contradicted him in this

"
▪ matter

Then I recalled the words of Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, the words of his grandfather Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, when someone asked him about faith and Islam, what each of

them is. He said: Islam is affirmation, and faith is affirmation and knowledge. Whoever God makes known to

•him himself, his Prophet, and his Imam, and affirms that, then he is a believer

The questioner said to him, "Knowledge comes from the servant, and acknowledgment comes from

"

•him

He said: Knowledge from God is proof, a favor, and a blessing. Confession is also a favor from God,

bestowed upon whomever He wills of His servants. Knowledge is also God's creation in the heart, and confession is the heart's action. All of this is from God's mercy. Whoever God does not make knowledgeable has no proof against him, and he must refrain from what he does not know. God will not punish him for his ignorance, but will reward him for his obedience and punish him for his disobedience. None of this happens except by God's favor, grace, decree, predestination, knowledge, and book, without compulsion. For if they were compelled, they would be excused and not praiseworthy. Whoever is ignorant should refer to us what is unclear to him, for God, Blessed and Exalted is He, says: "So ask the people of knowledge if you do not

"

•know

The questioner asked him, "What is the minimum requirement for a person to be considered a believer, the minimum requirement for someone to be considered an unbeliever, and the minimum requirement for

"?

•someone to be considered astray

He said, "The least one can do to be a believer is to know God Himself and acknowledge His divinity, to know His Prophet and acknowledge his prophethood, and to know His proof on earth and witness over His

"

•creation and believe in his leadership

"?

The questioner said to him, "What if he is ignorant of something else

•He said yes, but if he commands, then he should obey, and if he forbids, then he should refrain

The least form of polytheism is when someone practices something that God has forbidden, claiming

•that God commanded it, and worshipping someone other than God who commanded it

The least that can make one misguided is not recognizing God's proof on earth and His witness over

•His creation, and thus not following him

And in the same way 194

He said, and I mentioned to him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, their statement regarding God Almighty's statement, "God has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil," and that the seal here is a statement about them that they do not believe, not that He has placed a barrier

•between them and faith

He said, "What is this evasion and this convoluted statement? Hasn't He already informed us that they disbelieved before this? He said, 'Those who disbelieve, it is all the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe.' Rather, their disbelief came after the warning and the call to faith, but they refused and disbelieved. So, His concealing this—that He will prevent them from believing after this—does this negate the fact that He will cause them to die, and death is a barrier between them and faith if they persist in disbelief? Therefore, they will have no argument against Him in this matter; rather, He has the conclusive

"

•argument

Then he said, "Hasn't God said, 'No, but their hearts have been covered by what they used to earn'?"

And He said, 'And over their eyes is a covering'? Both are veils, but the covering is lighter and finer, while the rust is thicker. So He placed that on the heart because sight is what one sees. And the eye may see much, but it only retains what the beholder directs his heart to. God Almighty said, 'And you see them looking at you while they see'. And He said, 'For indeed, it is not the eyes that are blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that are blind.' And He mentioned the likeness of the hearts and the likeness of the eyes from the inner self, so

"

•He clarified the meaning in that and explained it and indicated by it the apparent meaning of the statement

councils in a matter that was approved 195

He said, "There was a man known for harming people, falsely accusing them, and labeling them with faults and defects. He had gone to extremes in this, and his evil and harm had become widespread. This reached al-Mu'izz (may God be pleased with him), and it was confirmed to him time and again. All of this he overlooked and investigated until he confronted him about it and brought the matter before him. When the matter became clear to him, he found no alternative but to punish him. So he ordered that he be punished, and he received a

"
•punishment like his

Then he mentioned it again, may God bless him and grant him peace, saying: We will overlook, be patient, forgive, and turn a blind eye, and we will conceal as much as possible. We will be patient, forgive, and conceal, and we will wait and be certain of this so that nothing we do will happen that later turns out to be contrary to what was required, and we will regret it. We are capable of punishing him with death or lesser punishments. If it turns out afterward that the one we killed was innocent, we cannot bring him back to life, because that is something that only God, may His name be glorified, has the power to do. Therefore, we prefer patience in what is brought to us and certainty in what is decided for us. When what is beyond doubt becomes clear to us, and what is undeniably evident to us becomes clear, and it becomes obligatory for us to carry out the right, we carry it out on whomever it may be, after we are certain, God willing, that we will not regret it, and that nothing will come to us that would cause us to regret what we did and fear its consequences. We do not

follow anyone in this except God, our Lord and Creator, who has granted us authority, bestowed upon us, enabled us, and favored us. For He, the Almighty, gives respite to sinners and extends mercy to the oppressors. He is the Knower of what they do, what they reveal and what they conceal. He is capable of taking revenge on them, and we do not expect from Him what creatures expect in terms of injustices among themselves. He is with

He gives respite to those who disobey Him and delays those who transgress His commands until the truth is established against them and He recompenses them as He, the Almighty, wills. If this is the action of the All-Powerful God and the All-Knowing Lord, then what about the weak, lowly creature, who is even lower than the

? lowest

So I and those present kissed the ground before him and said, "Praise be to God who has bestowed upon us the favor of His chosen one, His protection, and His steadfastness in His cause, and made us among the

"
•people of his time and era, and perfected His favor upon us through him

visions seen by Al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) 196

He said, and he mentioned, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, Ahmad ibn Bakr al-Mutaghlib in one of the two cities of Fez, and what had happened to him in the past, until God Almighty enabled al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, to overcome him. He was brought as a prisoner to him, and he ordered his imprisonment. He remained imprisoned for the remainder of al-Qa'im's reign, may

God's prayers and peace be upon him. Then al-Mansur, peace be upon him, showed him mercy and released him. He returned to his tyranny and wickedness, casting off allegiance to the Imams and calling for allegiance to the wicked Umayyads. He openly cursed the Imams from his pulpit, may God curse him and disgrace him. The armies of al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, went out to the region where he was. Everyone there responded and returned to obedience except him, for he persisted and continued in his error. The supported

•armies and the soldiers of God and His guardian surrounded him

Al-Mu'izz said one day, mentioning him while in this state: "Last night I saw the enemy of God, and it was as if I brought him before me. I ordered his execution, and he began to beg for mercy. I said, 'By God, if I had found you under the curtains of the Kaaba, I would not have let you go; I would have killed you.' He kept arguing with me, as if challenging my statement, saying, 'What justifies my being killed under the curtains of the Kaaba?' I replied, 'The least that justifies your arguing with me is this.' Then I heard a voice behind me, though I did not see it, saying, 'By God, you have done well! May God guide you to the right path! By God, his arguing with you justifies his execution, may God curse him!' I turned around, and it was Al-Mansur Billah who

"
•said that

There were no more than ten days between the day on which he told us this story and the day on which

•God granted him victory over Fez, gave him power over the accursed Ibn Bakr, and took him prisoner

Words on the Mention of Wisdom 197

He said, "When Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) opened the door of his mercy to the believers and turned to them with his favor and grace, he brought out to me books on esoteric knowledge and ordered me to read them to them every Friday in a gathering in his palace, which was blessed with his long reign. The crowds grew large, the place was overflowing, and their gathering exceeded all bounds of sound. They filled the hall where he had ordered them to assemble and a section of the palace courtyard, and they reached a point where the sound could not reach the last of them. It was said to him (may God bless him and grant him peace) about this, and it was explained to him that among them, those who had been included in the call, were people who lagged behind and those who could hardly understand the words. It was said that if such people were distinguished and a gathering were held for them in which what they could bear and

"

• understand were read to them, it would be more beneficial for them

They understood this, and the matter became serious for the people of this class. They felt that he had only shortened his treatment of them because of their backwardness. This was mentioned in his presence while I was there. He called for the barber to cut his hair, and the barber entered. I stood up, and those who were with him moved aside. He called me over, and the barber stood at his head. He said to me, "Last night, I came across something concerning these people that prevented their removal from the Book of God. This is what the

"

• Almighty mentioned in Surah Hud. So look at what is there

It did not occur to me to question him about that, nor how he came to know it, whether through a

"

• reading he had or a vision he had seen. However, I said, "Look at him, my master

So I turned away and looked at Surah Hud, and I found in the story of Noah: "And We certainly sent Noah to his people, [saying], 'Indeed, I am to you a clear warner, [enjoining] that you not worship except Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a painful Day.' But the eminent ones who disbelieved among his people said, 'We see you only as a human being like ourselves, and we see that only the most lowly among us have followed you, without any sound judgment. We do not see in you any superiority over us; rather, we think you are liars.' He said, 'O my people, have you considered: if I am upon clear evidence from my Lord and He has given me mercy from Himself, but it has been obscured from you, should we then compel you to accept it while you are averse to it? And O my people, I do not ask you for any reward for it. My reward is only with Allah. And I will not drive away those who have believed. Indeed, they will meet their Lord, but I see you as a people who are ignorant. And O my people, who would protect me from Allah if I drove them away? Then will you not remember? And I do not say to you that I possess the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say that I am an angel, nor do I say to those whom your eyes despise, that Allah will not grant them any good. Allah

"

• knows best what is within themselves. Indeed, I would then be among the wrongdoers

From these verses, I learned that He, may God perpetuate His exalted command, willed and commanded the bestowal of His mercy upon all believers, granting them abundant blessings and generous favors. Yet, this mercy only settles within its proper place, is only perceived by those who are worthy, and each person receives only their due share according to their strength and the resources available to them. Just as daylight reaches the eyes, each eye receives only according to its health and strength, and that which lacks health and strength receives none of that light. Similarly, if a vessel is placed under a rainy sky, water will only collect in a hollow vessel. A flat vessel, inverted, or lying on its side will not receive any water. A vessel that is

• upright and hollow will take in water according to its capacity, its ability to hold, its size, or its size

It has also been said that one of the Imams uttered a secret statement to some of the believers in the presence of some of his servants. Some of those present thought he had not seen it, so he alerted them and pointed it out to them, saying, "I saw it, and I wish you would understand what I am saying." God Almighty informed us of something similar concerning people who heard from the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) something they did not understand or comprehend. He said, "And among them are those who listen to you, but when they leave your presence, they say to those who have been given knowledge, 'What did he say just now?'" God Almighty informed us that they witnessed and heard what the people of knowledge heard, but they did not recognize it, nor did they understand what the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) said. He informed us that the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) gathered such people with those who possessed knowledge, based on what he made them hear. We have witnessed similar things and seen many people who hear but do not understand what they heard, and nothing of it takes root in their hearts. And there are people who hear it with them, comprehend it, understand it, and benefit from it. The

friends of God know best what they do, whom they single out, whom they gather, and on what basis they gather
• and disperse. Everything with them is measured and weighed, according to a method and established practices

Words spoken in a council where the people of Sijilmasa wept 198

He said, “When the accursed Ibn Wasul persisted in his actions and committed what he committed, including seizing power in Sijilmasa, rejecting the allegiance of the Imams, and calling himself the ‘Imam, Commander of the Faithful, Grateful to God,’ while in reality he was an unbeliever in God Almighty, due to the enormity of his transgressions, al-Mu’izz li-Din Allah (may God’s prayers and peace be upon him) saw the necessity of waging war against him because of his grave crime. He could not remain silent after his transgressions and actions. So, he dispatched an army against him, and God Almighty, in His mercy, enabled him to achieve victory without any human intervention. This was because the commander of that army had sent letters to the people of Sijilmasa some time before the army arrived, urging them to arrest Ibn Wasul. He promised them safety, kindness, and forgiveness for the sins they had committed by obeying him, despite his grave crime and their surrendering to him. They refused. When the victorious army drew near, Ibn Wasul fled the city. A group of people from the city met him, captured him, and brought him to the commander. The commander reprimanded the people of Sijilmasa for letting him go, but then decided to pardon them and appointed a governor over them.” They left, then attacked the governor and killed him, installing in his place Muntasir ibn Muhammad ibn al-Mu’tazz. His father and grandfather had governed the city by appointment of

• the Commander of the Faithful, and they were among the people of the province

This corrupt and tyrannical Ibn Wasul, when he seized control of the city, imprisoned Muntasir, a young boy, and held him captive for a time. The people of the city then presented him to the governor they had appointed, accusing him of reprehensible acts that they claimed warranted his death. They stated that the mob and the common people had killed him, and in presenting him to the governor, they attributed to him their loyalty and affection. It was said that he had instigated the killing and immediately sent a messenger. The people of the city also sent a letter to the Commander of the Faithful, al-Mu’izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace), explaining their situation, offering apologies, and describing their circumstances. He dismissed their messenger, saying that he would not accept their excuses and that they had no protection with him until their leaders and Muntasir came to him, having settled their disputes. Only then would he decide their

• fate

The messenger then departed to them, and it was only the distance of his arrival and departure when the victorious one they had sent arrived, along with two hundred of their leaders. These were the men whom the Commander of the Faithful had named. They had traversed the deserts and sandy paths, fearing that no one would reach them before the gate, until they reached it. The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, admitted them. When they stood before him, kissed the ground, and stood, he looked at them with a disapproving gaze and lowered his head for a moment. Their faces turned pale, their limbs trembled, and none of them could utter a word because of the fear that had seized them. Then he raised his head and said O people of Sijilmasa, you did what you did during the days of the Mahdi (peace be upon him), and he had power over you time and again, yet he pardoned you and treated you kindly because of his presence among you and his proximity to you during his stay with you, as one whom God has placed in his position is treated with due to his noble character and good deeds, without any favor you had done him or any good deed you had previously done for him. He pardoned, treated kindly, forgave, and was generous. Yet you did not give him the respect he deserved, nor did you care to thank him. Then a caller from Satan called out among you, and you answered him. A caller summoned you to him, and you responded. A pretender arose among you, claiming authority, eager for what he had assumed. You knew his lineage and understood his cause. He seized power over your leaders, adorned himself with leadership and pretense before you, and called himself Commander of the Faithful and Imam of the Muslims. You knew with certainty, without doubt, that this was not permissible for him, nor was it lawful to submit to such a person. Yet you submitted to him, obeyed him, took him as your leader, and followed him. Thus, you separated yourselves from the community of Muslims, departed from the party of the believers, and committed a grave transgression in the religion. And what has reached us concerning your affair and his affair is something we could not ignore or neglect, due to what God, may His name be glorified, has obligated us to do: to uphold His right in His land and to wage jihad against those who have deviated from His religion, altered the Sunnah of His Messenger, and taken your place and the place of this transgressor among you. So we have sent against you an army of our allies, supporters of our state, and our servants, along with a servant whom we have appointed over them. We have sent him warnings and admonitions to you, urging you to repent and turn back to God before we attack you. He has continued to send letters to you

with his messengers, as he has traveled from place to place, reinforcing the argument against you, sometimes with promises, sometimes with threats, sometimes with gentleness, and sometimes with severity, calling you to obedience and to abandon your sin and misguidance. He has urged you to seize God's enemy among you if he persists in his error and misguidance, if you are able, or to disavow him and leave him aside if you are unable to do so. His letters have reached you, and those among you who passed by him have delivered them to you. Yet you persist in your falsehood and cling to the transgressor who has led you astray, until our armies arrived near you and spread out. Our soldiers are in your country, and those who have seen them, from the eyes of the enemy of God, have witnessed their gathering, their equipment, and their strength, and they know that you and he have

▪no power against any of their armies

When the calamity befell you and descended upon your homes, while you were with the wicked one in your state, he rose up, turning away from you and fleeing stealthily from among you. You were capable of seizing him had you wished, and he could have been yours, and you could have besieged him in his house whenever you desired, had you seized your opportunity and done so. But you remained steadfast in your obedience and allegiance to him until he was removed from your midst. And God Almighty, in His grace and favor, granted us power over him, as is His beautiful custom, without any intervention from you or anyone else.

He gave us power over you and enabled us to overcome you while you remained in your state of error and misguidance, deserving of your destruction and annihilation. So Our servant proceeded among you with what we commanded him of pardon, forgiveness, and mercy, and departed from you. Then you committed what you

? committed after him. What do you deserve to be done to you

He spoke to them with these words, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, words of anger, so their colors turned pale, their faces changed, their limbs trembled, and most of them were silenced. One of them, terrified and astonished, said, "If the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, punishes, then we are

” ▪deserving of punishment. But if he pardons, then he is deserving of pardon, grace, and mercy

Then he paused for a long time, then called for Muntasir ibn Muhammad ibn al-Mu'tazz, brought him close, and ordered him to sit. Muntasir kissed the ground repeatedly and thanked the Commander of the Faithful. Then he turned to the delegation and said, "You deserved severe punishment and torment, but because of the forgiveness, pardon, and mercy with which God has endowed us, we have pardoned your past sins, provided you remain upright and reform. We have appointed this servant of ours over you," and he gestured to Muntasir, who accepted. They all kissed the ground repeatedly and thanked God as much as they could. The panic and anxiety that had appeared on them vanished. He ordered them to be sent to a place where he had lodged them. He bestowed a robe of honor upon Muntasir and provided him with a mount. He did the same for a group of their leaders and ordered that lodging be provided for all of them. They stayed there for a while in the most comfortable and pleasant circumstances. Then, when he saw them being sent, he appointed Muntasir as governor of Sijilmasa and its administration. He bestowed upon him magnificent robes of honor, provided him with a mount of several horses with fine saddles, and gave him generous gifts. He also provided for all those who had come with him, clothed them, and gave them gifts, sending them back to their country with more than they had expected or even imagined. Their greatest hope was that They were spared from being killed, so they

▪departed, their tongues overflowing with gratitude and their hearts filled with joy

words spoken by the governor of Sijilmasa, may God's prayers and 199 peace be upon him

He said, "I heard this man, Muntasir, one day thanking the Commander of the Faithful, Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, for his kindness towards him, and mentioning what God had bestowed upon him of His compassion and favor, and the blessings and benefits he had received as a

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▪result

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) said to him, "By God, this is enough for you: the hastening of your relief, the removal of your distress, and the renewal of your joys. The wicked usurper before you expected God's wrath to befall him at our hands, which God Almighty has already decreed and hastened. Therefore, he found no pleasure in life. Every time something God Almighty ordained for us reached him, it only worsened his condition. His demise and God Almighty's empowerment of us over him were connected to this. He is as God Almighty said of his hypocritical brethren: 'They think every cry is against them. They are the enemy.' But today you are safe from all of that. Every time God renews a blessing for us and bestows upon us a virtue and honor, your joy is renewed, and you are connected to it with blessings and

happiness. If there were no punishment for our enemy and no reward for our allies other than this, it would suffice them. How much more so when God Almighty has guaranteed us the means to achieve this in this world by exalting our allies and subduing our enemies, and has prepared for our allies in the Hereafter a generous

”
•reward and for our enemies a painful punishment

Then Muntasir said, “By God, the Commander of the Faithful is right. He was the enemy of God and the one who anticipated God’s wrath that befell him and what God has decreed for His chosen one. He is in a state today that is not as it was then. And the servant of the Commander of the Faithful praises God and the favor of His chosen one, may God’s blessings be upon him, for the ease of life and peace of mind. He asks God

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•to perpetuate this for him through the long life of His chosen one

The Commander of the Faithful said, "You will never lack blessings and favors from God and acceptance from us as long as you recognize the value of the blessings you receive and are grateful for what

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•comes to you from them, God willing

signatures in favor of the people of the state 200

He said, and he wrote to Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, informing him of what is brought to him concerning the inheritance of his slaves and captives, and of those among their heirs who seek it from me, whether slaves or free men, and of the testimony of some of them for others. This is not appropriate, since he, peace be upon him, and the Imams before him did not set any limits in this matter, as far as I know. I have seen that most of them inherit from one another, and the judges allow them to inherit and permit their testimony for one another. This is not truly appropriate, because their wealth belongs to their master, and none of their relatives inherit from them except what he has bestowed upon them. Likewise, their testimony for one another is not permissible, because their wealth belongs to him, and the testimony of a slave for his master, as we have related from the Imams, peace be upon them all, is not permissible. This is what the common people say. I do not know if the judges of old asked for this and treated them according to what they saw of their

•situation, that they were like free men in their eyes

I mentioned something that happened during the time of al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, peace be upon him. A man, one of the slaves, died. He was the head of a treasury, and his heirs took their dispute to the judge of that time. They went to al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah, peace be upon him, and some of them asked me for a ruling regarding a will he had made. I told them, "He is a slave, so a will is not valid for him, and none of his relatives can inherit from him. Whatever he leaves behind is for our master, peace be upon him, to approve as he sees fit

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•and reject as he sees fit

That man then told me that he had presented this argument to the one who commanded God's command, peace be upon him, and mentioned to him what I had advised him, and he said, "He spoke the

”
•truth

When this was brought to my attention, I presented a petition to Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God's blessings be upon him), and he signed it, stating that whoever among our slaves was included in our call, their affairs would be treated like those of free, independent slaves in matters of inheritance, testimony, actions, and all other aspects of their lives. Those not included in this would be treated like slaves, who are only permitted to

•do what their masters explicitly allow them

From that, I considered something that had never crossed my mind or occurred to me before, and I saw that he, may God’s blessings be upon him, had bestowed his favor upon them by freeing them. So I took that as

•my understanding and acted upon his command, peace be upon him

Then I asked him about some of them who had been called to Islam long ago, but then became confused and their condition worsened, and they showed their flaws. So he, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, did not call them to Islam, and they fell into his hands, and he was treated like a slave and dealt with in the same way as those who had previously been called to Islam in similar cases. So I knew that this emancipation was only carried out for those who were taken from him by his command, but as for those who

•came to that state without his command, then they are treated according to what was originally their state

signatures of those who failed to pledge allegiance 201

He said, "I sought help in what I was doing concerning the affairs of al-Mansur, may God's blessings be upon him, when he appointed me judge in al-Mansuriyya. I sought help from people who had not yet reached the level of the call to Islam, and I saw in them a tendency towards it. I hoped that God would guide them if He opened the door of His mercy for His servants. But when God brought about what He had prepared for His creation by opening the door of His mercy for His servants, they remained behind. I hoped that they would examine themselves, and I hinted to them and debated with them, but I saw that they would not accept anything. So I confronted them, spoke to them, argued with them, and debated with them until I silenced them. But that only increased their persistence in error and their insistence on ignorance. So their affair was reported to me, and

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▪ I disliked their company, hated seeing them, and grew weary of their company. I wanted to replace them
So I brought this matter to al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and he said to me: "Keep them in your service. If God brings them back, then it is a blessing that God has bestowed upon them, and a reward that will come to you for the advice you gave them. Otherwise, do not let the ignorance of these stubborn donkeys prevent you from benefiting from them in some of your interests. They will then be as God Almighty said: 'Toiling and weary, entering a blazing fire.' So whenever the proof is established against them and they persist in disbelief, the word of punishment will be justified against them, and their removal from

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▪ your presence will not lessen their punishment

Then God guided most of them, but some persisted in their ways. There was no burden I had ever borne heavier than this, nor any sight I had ever beheld more hateful, until God, may God's blessings be upon

▪ him, permitted me to remove it, and God relieved me of it

signatures thanks to his kindness 202

He said, and I established, by his command, peace be upon him, governors in the districts. I removed some of them from the capital and employed others in their own places. In ancient times, nothing was given to those who were appointed as governors from among the people of the towns in their own places. Rather, this was only given to those removed from the capital. So the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, gave them this and expanded it, and he added to it by giving them robes of honor, mounts, and regalia, and he made this happen for them every year. And the people of the districts who were brought in remained in their places according to their customs and did not give them anything. Then news came to them that necessitated mentioning this to them, so I mentioned it to them, and it came to me, peace be upon him, instructing me: Do not leave any governor without giving him what is appropriate for his position. Whoever is as I have described, wealthy, self-sufficient, and desiring the reward for his work, then we are even more desirous of God's reward.

And I do not think that anyone will be given a position of authority for us without the effect of our favor becoming clear to him. So do not leave any of them without including him in it. Then do not care, if you act for our beloved, whether he is displeased or pleased with that, for we give from abundance, and they are stingy

▪ from scarcity

signatures in response to the injustice 203

He said, "Some people complained to me about one of the judges I appointed, and I had no choice but to bring the matter to his attention. He found that deceit, trickery, and treachery were prevalent among people today, and this man is of sound character and gentle disposition. Not everything that is said is true, and nothing is stranger than a consensus on the recommendation of a judge or ruler, for that is impossible without the removal of conflict in the world, since the one for whom the judgment is made is satisfied and the one against whom it is made is dissatisfied. However, one should approach him about this matter. If he is negligent in any

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▪ way, your admonition to him will awaken him, God willing

signatures in support of raising the status of science 204

He said, "I compiled a book on jurisprudence from the pure Imams of the Household of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him). I realized that it was not permissible for me to act upon it, nor was it lawful for me to issue fatwas or judgments based on it, nor to claim it as my own, until the Imam of the Time (may God's prayers and peace be upon him) approved it. So I presented it to him (may God's prayers and peace be upon him) along with a book containing narrations from the Household of the Prophet (peace be upon them) that I had come across. He examined its contents and found in the book I had compiled this one, a book pleasing to the learned yet easily understood by the ignorant. He divided it to make it more accessible and easier for the listener, for no one begins reading a single section without desiring to delve into it further, even if it is lengthy and tedious. The book I sent with it contains distorted material that people cannot transmit from us without resorting to falsehood and daring to commit wickedness. This would be the cause of our current predicament, due to the ignorance of the ignorant. God has afflicted us with the shepherding of ignorant donkeys. We have continued to gently guide them and adapt to their ways until God grants us a good end and allows us to depart from among them in the best of circumstances. Otherwise, such obscure matters would not be..." It leads them to some knowledge, and the consequences of their ignorance fall upon us. May God suffice us with His grace and aid us with His mercy. As for you, your situation with us is one for which you cannot give thanks to God, nor can you bear its burden except with His help and guidance for you in what you have undertaken of pleasing

• God, your Lord, and pleasing your Masters

signatures in commemoration of Ashura 205

He said, "I had narrated from the truthful Imams of the family of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), from what the narrators conveyed to us from them, the virtues of the Day of Ashura. Its time had come, so I thought I should mention them in the Friday sermon that follows, and mention in it the tragedy of al-Husayn (peace be upon him), and that God honored him with martyrdom on this day which He magnified, just as He honored Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, with it on another great day of the month of Ramadan. Then I thought I should not do that until I had informed al-Mu'izz (peace be upon him) of it, so I mentioned what I had

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• narrated about it and what I intended to preach

So, may God's blessings be upon him, he said to Nu'man: "I have only mentioned what has been authentically transmitted from the truthful ones. As for the Day of Ashura, you know that the ignorant have preferred it in a way other than the preference that God Almighty has bestowed upon it. They have made it a day of celebration and joy because of what the wicked Umayyads instituted for them. So describe their veneration of it from whatever perspective it may be, such as by saying: 'O servants of God, venerate this day which God has venerated, and follow in your veneration of it the tradition of your Prophet Muhammad, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, not by making it a day of celebration and joy as the enemies of God, the allies of Satan, and the enemies of the Most Merciful from among the descendants of Marwan did, because of what they did on that day in violating the sanctity of the Messenger of God and killing the allies of God. They made it a place of joy and jubilation, not a place of seeking forgiveness and good deeds. May God have mercy on the one who works for his own benefit, follows the tradition of his Prophet, desires the forgiveness of his Lord, and does not neglect on this great day to remember the tragedy of the descendants of his Prophet. And he does not leave the oppressors on that day without cursing them, except for the curse of God upon the wicked, the

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• rebellious, the allies of Satan, and the killers of the believers

Then, I will elaborate on this statement with something similar. What prevented me from completing the statement was my preoccupation with something we are composing. We ask God for His help and guidance for us and our allies, for we have taken it upon ourselves to bear what the misguided nation has unanimously

• rejected

Part Nineteen

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

signatures on the virtue of intention 206

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, ordered me to compile something that he had summarized for me, gathered, and explained its meanings to me, and wrote down its entirety for me. So I began with a portion of it, then submitted it to him, apologizing for the delay in it, because of what I wanted from his rulings, and I hoped that what I had compiled from it would be in accordance with his approval, may God's prayers and peace be upon him. So I

▪ reviewed it with him in its entirety

So, Nu'man, do not worry about how fate may have dealt with you, as long as the meaning is conveyed concisely. For the more concise you are in your speech and the more thorough your meaning, the more appropriate and better it will be. And what I feared might be delayed in its composition—by God, were it not for the grace and assistance of God Almighty, and what you believe to be true intention and pure devotion, you would not have been able to complete even a single chapter of it in many days. But intention is accompanied by

▪ divine guidance

Words spoken in a gathering of some saints, thanks to the sainthood 207

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say one day to one of the elder

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saints, after he had recovered from an illness and was still weak, "How do you find yourself
He said, "I am in the best of health, my master, for God has extended my life so that I may look upon

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▪ you

He said, "May God preserve you and all our followers until you see, God willing, what you hope for and expect from God's promise to us. And whoever among you dies before that will see what will gladden his eyes from God's mercy and attain what he hoped for. Indeed, our grandfather Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, said to his followers, 'By God, by your allegiance to us, you are all among the people of Paradise, and we guarantee that for you on behalf of God. But we love that all of you be with us in it, with your abodes near our abodes through your righteous deeds, and that you not delay yourselves from our proximity through sins, for Paradise has levels and abodes, as God Almighty said, 'And the Hereafter is greater in degrees and

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▪ greater in distinction

Then he, peace be upon him, said: Who else but us can guarantee God's favor? Who else can supplicate to God with a means like ours? Our means to God is our grandfather, Muhammad, peace be upon him, the best of creation in God's sight. Who else can supplicate through someone like him? Who else can take our place with Him? God has placed us in a position with Him that He has not shared with anyone else. They have striven to connect with him through some means or lineage, and the Prophet, peace be upon him, did this for those who sought to draw closer to God's religion. But God, the Exalted and Glorified, refused to grant this to anyone else.

He severed the connection of every person who sought a connection with him, and He left no one from his progeny but us. This is a distinction He has bestowed upon us, a virtue He has honored us with, despite those who wished to compete with us in it and share in it. Then He, the Exalted and Glorified, made us the elite of those He honored with it, the core of those He selected from it. He gave to us, entrusted to us, and favored us.

We are His chosen ones from among His creation, His trustees over His servants, their leaders, and those in authority among them. How much those who sought to overpower us tried to extinguish God's light from us!

▪ But God refuses except to perfect His light

They sought this from every direction and resorted to every trick, for the forefathers, peace be upon them, concealed themselves out of fear of their enemies and because they knew that the time was not yet right for them and that God's promise had not yet come to pass. The wicked plotted against them and schemed with cunning. Some from this household rose up when the situation became dire, not being worthy of such action, driven by greed to seize the opportunity. Meanwhile, the true leaders remained hidden and concealed, awaiting the appointed time of God's promise and acting upon the knowledge they possessed, a hidden knowledge entrusted to them. When the usurpers among the misguided leaders gained control over those who had risen up against them, and the matter of the rightful leaders was concealed from them, the accursed one, al-Ma'mun, devised a scheme and plotted a scheme. He outwardly professed Shi'ism and allegiance to the Imam, disavowing the school of thought of his forefathers. He returned Fadak to the descendants of Fatima, peace be upon her, and declared the injustice of those who had seized it from her. He proclaimed his disavowal of the Imam of the Age

from the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him, and stated that if he appeared, he would surrender what was in his possession. What greed would not incline him towards the one who held power? The Imams, possessed of the world, saw it and desired to be free from it, yet he did not reveal himself to the one to whom it belonged.

Undoubtedly, this provoked those who were not among the people of truth, to the point that they claimed it for him, accepted it, and surrendered the matter to him. Then they plotted against him and killed him, claiming it as his will, so that those who clung to him would see that he was gone and that what they clung to was cut off. This was the trick of his forefathers, the first enemies of God, as the first of them claimed that the will had passed from the son of Ali to him. But God would not do that, and He says, "And He made it a word remaining in his descendants until the Day of Judgment." So the enemies will never be in the descendants, never will they regress, nor will it pass from the progeny to the distant ones. This was the way of the friends of God until the promised time drew near and the appointed limit approached, and our grandfather, the Mahdi, peace be upon him, stood up, traveling the earth from east to west, fearing its people, confident in God's promise, until God

• empowered him and made him manifest, and made us his heirs and empowered us in the earth after him

Most of the saints who attended the gathering praised God for making them among those who attained this status and who were of his time. They mentioned what God had prepared for him, enabled him to do, granted him dominion over, and bestowed upon him through his sainthood, and the beautiful favor He had

• promised him

He, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: Yes, and praise be to God for what He has bestowed and done and favored. And even though the physical presence of the fathers is absent from this, it will not be absent from their noble souls, whether they were alive before it happened or dead after it happened. And the one who established God's command, may God sanctify his soul, used to take me when I was a child, embrace me, kiss me between the eyes, and say, "You are Abu Tamim," and praise God. And I did not know at

• that time what he meant by that

Then he said: Is he whom God has entrusted with knowledge of what will be, ignorant of His favor or uncertain of His command? If someone were to say that from this sperm a human being will emerge, whose condition would be such and such, that would be astonishing. So how can he be ignorant of what God has taught

? him of what will be, even what has not yet come to pass

Then that sheikh, one of the saints, who had addressed him first, said: Praise be to God for the blessing He has bestowed upon us of knowing you, and for making us among those who follow you and submit to your

• leadership

He, peace be upon him, said: Yes, so praise God for that. By God, God has not provided for any nation what He has provided for you, nor has He opened for anyone what He has opened for you. Your relationship with us is a proof for anyone who reflects upon it and evidence of our Imamate. This is due to the long association you have had with us, your forefathers with your forefathers, your fathers with your fathers, and you with us. And so it will be, God willing, with your descendants and our descendants. No one dies until a group of his children succeed him, fill his place, surpass him, and are blessed by our guardianship and honored by obeying us. And you, today, because of the favor we have bestowed upon you, are better than your father was yesterday with our forefathers, even though he had precedence, merit, and jihad. No nation before you had such a relationship with its Imams as you have. This is only because of the truth we stand upon. As for the kings of the world and those who accompanied and followed them, none of them, one after another, could be considered as righteous, let alone a nation like yours, followed by their descendants and offspring. By God, the world has no value to us, even if it were all gathered in our hands. We did not choose you, nor did we approve of you and your forefathers. Except for the Hereafter, this Mahdi, may God's blessings be upon him, heard this and pointed to an old man who was with him, one of those who had accompanied the Mahdi, peace be upon him, saying, after mentioning what God Almighty had gathered for him of this world: "Suppose the world were in my left

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• hand, where would it be in my right?" The man said, "I bear witness by God that I heard him say that

words spoken in a gathering praising some preachers 208

He said, and a letter came to him from some of the preachers from the East, describing his situation and that of the believers before him, their unity in allegiance and obedience, and the good things that had transpired.

It mentioned the arrival of a letter from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, concerning what

God had prepared for him in terms of the conquest of Sijilmasa and other cities of the West, and the capture of the leaders of misguidance there, such as Ibn Wasul, who claimed the Imamate and the title of Commander of the Faithful, and other corrupt and misguided individuals. He said that upon hearing this, he did his utmost and relied upon it to prostrate himself in gratitude. He mentioned in his letter what the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said about the prostration of gratitude, and he mentioned the joy of the believers at this.

He said that he copied the letter of the Commander of the Faithful and distributed it to his preachers in the regions of the Arabian Peninsula, where he had been commanded to call people to him, and the joy of those who heard it when it was read to them. He described what he had sent of the deeds of the believers to the Imam. So the Commander of the Faithful summoned some of his messengers who were present and told them what had been contained in their companion's letter, praising him and mentioning his authority and the sincerity of his

• intentions. They kissed the ground in gratitude for what they had heard from him concerning their companion

He then said to them, in prostration, his thanks to God for what He had revealed to His chosen one,

may God's prayers and peace be upon him. Is there any greater thanks than this? And are we capable of thanking God for His blessings upon us more than this, acknowledging our inadequacy and shortcomings in expressing even the essence of thanking Him for the least of His blessings upon us, for what He has given us,

? bestowed upon us, and favored us with

Then he said to them, "Can you possibly express enough gratitude to this sheikh who introduced us to you and connected your paths to ours, despite the distance between us and your homes being far from ours, until you saw us, met us, received our favor, and were treated as our own children, beyond mere prayer and

"? acknowledgment of your inability to adequately thank him for what he has done for you

They said, "It is as the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said," and they kissed the ground repeatedly in gratitude for what he had told them and for his favor upon them. They described the joy, delight, and happiness of that caller when they came to him from the presence of the Commander of the

Faithful, peace be upon him. The one who had been closest to him said, "He received me when news of my arrival from the presence reached him, after I had walked on foot on a very hot day outside the city where he was. When I met him, he leaned against the wall of a ruin, and we withdrew from the people. He said to me, 'I

■ ■

• saw the friend of God

I said yes

He embraced me and began kissing my eyes so intensely that I feared for them. I kissed his hands and feet, and he kissed my eyes in return, holding me close to his chest for an hour of the day, no more. He wept with joy at what he had heard about the saint of God and with longing for him. Then he began asking me about his condition and news, and I told him while he stood. I feared for him because of the intense heat. I said to him repeatedly, "My master, let us reach your place, sit, and talk with you." But he would not accept this from me;

• instead, he continued to question and inquire of me

The Commander of the Faithful said to him, "This is what he possesses of true allegiance and good intentions, which distinguishes him from others and elevates him above his peers. Our hearts were drawn to him. Had he not possessed a degree of happiness with God that would satisfy Him, God would not have granted him this success, nor guided him to it, nor guided us to choose him. Those who disputed his authority and sought his position with us exerted great effort to remove him from us and seize his place by granting it to them.

But when God knew what He knew of this, He guided us to appoint him and turned away those who harmed him, disappointed in their hopes. We found this, by God's grace, to be what we had hoped and expected. We witnessed the truth of his claims, as evidenced by his prioritizing what was in our hands. These proofs became

clear to him, to the point that he and others like him among our preachers in the East—some of whom mentioned him—offered apologies to us, saying, 'If the one who brought so-and-so to the presence of God's chosen one, may God's blessings be upon him, is the same one who brought him close, then most of the people of his island are the sultans and kings of the world, possessors of wealth and luxury, and most of them have entered...' His invitation is so that they may draw near and deliver to him the same obligations that reach others. As for us, our desire is only to establish the matter and to prepare the multitude of believers. Most of those who contact us are from the most oppressive and unjust of rulers, and from the general public who do not

• possess much wealth, so little is delivered to us

Then the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, said: "Whenever we ask them about this or suggest it to them, by God, were it not that we would be harming the believers connected to us, neglecting the rights God has obligated them to fulfill, and disobeying His command concerning them, we would not accept anything. For God Almighty has bestowed upon us from His bounty and given us from His abundant blessings, and gathered for us from the good of the Hereafter and this world what suffices us in this matter. But we accept

it as a purification for them and spend it in ways that will bring them reward, and in this we obey God Almighty's command concerning them. We are pleased with what comes to us from them because we know of

”
▪ their good intentions and their fulfillment of God Almighty's obligation upon them

Then he mentioned the ugly news that reached him about some preachers who had been appointed in a part of the land of Islam, where polytheism was prevalent and its power was firmly established. He said that the recentness of this situation, its emergence in the land, and the poor state of that preacher led him, through what he had heard from him, to permit them some of the forbidden things that those polytheists considered permissible. He expressed his distress, wept, and sighed, and mentioned that he had employed all means to purify that island from what he had heard from him, so that God Almighty might set its affairs right. He mentioned those among the believers, whom he trusted, who had conveyed this to him from a distant place.

They said that those among them who had denied this in the place would ask those who had come to the presence of the Imam about it, and they would inform him that there was nothing of it, and that the matter was to establish the religion of God, adhere to His obedience, perform His obligations, and avoid His prohibitions. He said that the man praised and thanked God, and said, “If our foundation is on this, then the corruption of the branch will not harm us. We hope that what has happened among us is not hidden from the guardian of God, despite the distance of his abode, and that God will guide him to what pleases Him concerning us and those who

He changed his religion with us

Then, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he was astonished by this and considered the matter grave and terrifying. He mentioned another of the preachers who were also his deputies, and that he looked at the people of his island, most of whom followed the philosophy of the philosophers, so he derived for them from their words words that, in his opinion, indicated something about the affairs of God's saints that they had not said nor had they given him permission to say, and by this he deviated from the system of religion and

▪ departed from the origin of all God's saints

He said, "Some of those who had learned this from him and firmly held this belief came to me, so I asked them about it. They began to speak about it, but they neither conveyed the philosophical arguments as its proponents had described, nor did they clarify the religion of God as they claimed. Instead, they introduced such confusion that it led one astray from the faith and called to disbelief. When I pressed them, it was to no avail, and I saw no truth in their acceptance, even though they agreed with me. But when I allowed them free rein in what they had firmly held, I saw the effect of their acceptance. I realized that this man and others like him were afflicted with an illness from which only prolonged treatment could cure them. I reflected on the many others in that region who might be in a similar situation and how they would turn away from this great affliction that had

”
▪ befallen them. This alarmed me

They said, “These people are like those upon whom the sun rises and sets, yet they neither perceive nor see it. The signs of God pass them by, and they turn away from them. God is capable of what He wills for their well-being, despite the distance of their homes from us and the severing of their connection to us. If we were to attempt to turn them away from what has become firmly established and settled among them, and what the sons have inherited from their fathers, I fear they would descend to something even greater: a complete break from our authority. They might perceive us as incapable of what our forefathers knew, since it was firmly established among them that this knowledge originated with them. They might then see us as having fallen short in our understanding of it, or as having altered it for them by deviating from their principles and changing their

”
▪ path

He said, “This man asked me about the name of some of the fathers, so I mentioned it, but he knew

”
▪ something different from what I knew

He said, "Yes, this is what we have been told: that the Imam has seven names: a physical name, a psychological name, a spiritual name, a natural name, a true name, an apparent name, and a hidden name."

▪ Then, may God's blessings be upon him, he expressed his astonishment at this statement

He said, “Another man came to us, sent by some of our representatives, with a book. He said that he had asked him to compile what he needed and that our master, may God's blessings be upon him, should see it. If what was in it was correct, I would accept it and act upon it; if he rejected it, I would reject and discard it.” So

I looked at it and found it filled with difficult and impossible things, of no benefit or need for anyone seeking guidance. I did not know what to say about it. If I rejected it in his presence, I feared for him because of what I mentioned earlier, and for those who would follow me in this matter. If I affirmed it in his presence, I would be affirming what was corrupt in his eyes, and I seek refuge in God. But I was gentle in correcting and supporting it from other than these two perspectives, and I was patient with him. Among what I saw in this book was a claim that the Imamate had passed from some of the Imams to Maymun al-Qaddah and to so-and-so and so-and-so, to

a group of people he mentioned from the lowest of the low. Then, may God's blessings be upon him, he was astonished by this statement and said, "If that is so, then the cause is severed, and we seek refuge in God from our own hands. So we would take what we took of the virtue from others, and they would be more deserving of it." And God Almighty will not make it, in times of need, with those of this household who have entrusted it to Him, except as a deposit with them, not permanently residing with them, until its rightful owner takes it from

▪ their hands

Then he mentioned some of those who had received it, and that he wanted to give it to those close to him whom God Almighty had not designated for him. So whenever he appointed someone for that purpose, he died, and God took him for Himself until his relatives passed away, and the rightful owner was forced to appoint someone else, as he found no one else. So he said, "Now, uncle, after you have done what you have done," and

▪ he recited to him the words of the poet

▪ God has given you what is beyond compare, and how much they tried to prevent and hinder it
He forbade it from you, but God refused to let it be brought to you until they encircled you with their

▪ collar

God Almighty returned it to its rightful owner, the one in whom it was entrusted, and removed it from the hands of the one who had deposited it with him, after he had exerted his utmost effort to transfer it to someone close to him. For the one who has it in his possession is not like the one who deposits it, nor is the agent like the one who is entrusted, nor is the guardian like the one for whom the trust is given. He has no right to own anything that is in his possession, nor to divert it to someone else. It is God's trust, which He has entrusted to him, and His deposit which He has entrusted to him. God, the Most High, says: "Indeed, God commands you to render trusts to their rightful owners, and when you judge between people, judge with justice." If this is the case with the closest members of the household, how can it be definitively stated that it has been transferred to those

? further removed, such as those mentioned by this person, such as Maymun al-Qaddah and others
He said, "Yes, the one who possesses the truth is indeed the blessed, fortunate, and happy one, the one

" ▪ who ignites the spark of truth and kindles the light of wisdom. So, whoever goes to this, then yes
Then he said to the people, "When God Almighty saw the good intentions of your companion, He spared him from such confusion, favored him with us, and established him on the truth of our cause. So you

" ▪ were happy because of his happiness and benefited from his good intentions and obedience
They thanked him and kissed the ground before him, then departed, filled with joy at what they had

▪ heard from him

Words in a Council in Response to Ibn Wasul 209

He said, and I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, say, when Ibn Wasul, the claimant to the Imamate and the one who called himself Commander of the Faithful, was brought to Sijilmasa, he ordered him to be placed in the palace's portico in chains. Then the month of Ramadan began, and Ibn Wasul asked to lead the Friday prayer behind the Commander of the Faithful, al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, and was informed of this. He said to the one who conveyed this on his behalf, "Say that prayer and all deeds are not accepted except with intention and belief. If you believed in our Imamate, you would not have occupied this position, and we would not have withheld Sijilmasa from you, nor would it have any value to us, nor the world and all that is in it. We would not have gone to the trouble of sending our allies in the armies towards you and tiring ourselves in arranging and establishing this for you. If you had genuinely wished to follow us in prayer, you would have attained its merit and reward, while you remained in your place, secure in your authority, because of our establishing it for you. But since you have denied our Imamate and claimed the Imamate for yourself, instead of us, to the one whom God has given us victory over and empowered against you, what good will it do you to follow us in prayer while you are a prisoner in the Our hands are on your claim to our position

If what you intended by praying with us was to gain merit, and that was your intention while acknowledging our leadership, denying what you were doing, regretting it, and turning away from it, then by

▪ God, that will benefit you whether you pray with us or not

If your intention is merely to show us your inclination towards us and to use this as a means to gain our favor, then by God, nothing from you will please us except what pleases God Almighty. Our hearts are in His hands, and He only directs them to those He is pleased with, whose deeds He approves of, and whose happiness He loves. If you desire this from us, then be sincere to God Almighty in your relationship with Him, and believe in this; you will find it with Him, may His name be glorified, in the Hereafter, and with us, through what He will

• place in our hearts for you in this life. Abandon your pretense of falsehood

The Messenger said, when this reached him, he was perplexed and did not know what to say, except that he said, "By God, this is nothing but the speech of prophecy, and he is the son of the Messenger of God,

"

• may God bless him and grant him peace, and this is from the legacy of his wisdom

And in the same way 210

He said, and some of those who meet with him, whom he has permitted to do so, told him about it, that he asks if he has anything from the words of Aristotle. And the one who asked him this is one who is interested in such books. He said, so I said to him, "What do you want from the words of Aristotle when your companions

"? deny them

He said, "He who is ignorant denies this." So this man conveyed this statement to Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him. Al-Mu'izz said to him, "Tell him, perhaps you wanted to find in Aristotle's books his letter to Alexander concerning the preservation of the kings he had conquered, so that you might take from it something with which you could plead with us to spare your life." The man said, "I conveyed this statement of the Commander of the Faithful to him, and he was astonished. After a while, he said to me, 'I do not think that those who bestowed prophethood upon them did so except for something like this. By God, nothing but what was in my heart was in my mind, and I only wanted this letter for the same reason he mentioned that I wanted it for him.' Then he mentioned the hadith that is narrated from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, 'I was sent, and in these two cities,' meaning Mecca and Ta'if, 'there are forty men, one of whom has the certainty of another.' He said, 'If such a thing exists among all people, then how much more so among the

"? descendants of the prophets

Words in a Council on the Virtue of Guardianship 211

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, one day say to a group of Hasanid descendants who came to him from Yemen and the Hijaz, after he had treated them well and given them permission to leave. They entered to bid him farewell, and they thanked him and acknowledged his favor, saying, "O our master, we are your servants, and that is enough honor and pride for us. Our forefathers and those who came before us have commanded us to obey the awaited one from this household, may God's prayers

"

• and peace be upon him, to follow him, to submit to him, and to recognize his virtue

He said, peace be upon him, "Whoever recognizes this for us, by God, will be blessed and happy, his birth will be blessed, and his religion will be sound. Whoever denies it will lose both this world and the Hereafter. By God, the closest of you to Muhammad and the one most deserving of him is he who acknowledges our virtue and recognizes our right. The furthest of you from him is he who denies this for us, is ignorant of it, claims it for himself without us, and rejects it. God Almighty says that the closest of people to Abraham are those who followed him. And this Prophet, peace be upon him, said, relating from him, peace be upon him, 'Whoever follows me is of me.' If it were not for the following of those who followed him, they would not have been of him and closer to him. And God Almighty denied Noah his son when he disobeyed him, saying, 'O Noah, he is not of your family; indeed, he is one whose conduct is not righteous.' So, by following the friends of God, obeying them, submitting to them, and recognizing their right and virtue, those who are saved from their descendants and others are saved. And by opposing them, disobeying them, and denying their virtue, those who are perish are perished, whether they are close to them or far from them. And God Almighty will not bring

"

• anyone close to them except those whose righteous deeds bring them close

A speech in a council in which Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers be upon him, addressed Ibn Wasul when he was brought as a prisoner .212

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him, brought Ibn Wasul into his presence several days after his arrival, while he was in chains. When he stood before him, he ordered him to sit, so he sat. He then waited until he saw that his fear had subsided, then he turned to him without frowning and said, "What

"? made you claim and adopt this name

"! He said, "Now, ignorance, O Commander of the Faithful

He said, or you argue for that with an argument

He said, "I seek refuge in God! I have no argument in this matter except to acknowledge my own ignorance and error." He looked at me as if he were a witness, for he had said to one of those he consulted, "I have heard that the judge has authored a work, and I would like to see some of it." When he informed me of what he had said to him, I presented him with a book arguing against him regarding his claim to leadership without a formal appointment, and what he went further in claiming the Imamate, calling himself Commander of the Faithful, and adopting the title "Grateful to God." I refuted what we had heard he had used to justify himself. This matter became very serious for him when he reached this point, and he acknowledged his own error and ignorance. The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) was aware of this, so I said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, rely on this statement of his." He (peace be upon him) said to him, "Then swear by God and call Him to witness that your statement is your belief and intention." So he swore to that and called upon God, the Exalted and Glorified, to witness that his belief and intention were as he had declared and

spoken

Then the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) would sit him down and ask him about his news and the news of the town he was in. Then, when he had finished with that, he would ask him to mention

any proof he had for his claim, so he would return to admitting his own error and ignorance

Among the things he asked him was, "What do people say about us in your presence, and what do they attribute to us regarding what we claim and say?" He remained silent. So he said to him, "Tell me what you know of that, and what has been said to you about it. We do not disdain to hear it, nor do we object to you saying it, even if it is among the most heinous things said by the wicked and unjust. Only those who are close to the person and know that what is said about him is true would be disdainful to hear it attributed to him. They would be saddened if God Almighty revealed it to them, made it public, and people knew of it, and they would be ashamed. But as for those who know what is between them and God, and that they have been falsely accused of something they did not do, and who possess discernment and intellect, then hearing this is something they love because of the reward they hope for from God Almighty and His vengeance upon those who said it about them and attributed it to them. We love to hear such things and desire them. So tell me what you have heard

" about us, and do not retract any of it

He said, "If the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) sees fit to excuse me from that, then

" let him do so, for my tongue is not inclined to say such a thing

So he said to him, "Hasn't it reached us that you have heard from us that we reject the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and claim prophethood after him, and reject his Sunnah and his Sharia and call to something else?" He remained silent. So the Commander of the Faithful said to him, "Woe to you! Say,

"'? Hasn't it reached us that this is what was said to you about us and attributed to us

He said yes

He, peace be upon him, said: May God curse whoever said this, fabricated it, claimed it, and attributed it to us, and whoever fabricated it against us, hurled it at us, and ascribed it to us. How could we say such a thing or claim it when our honor, which God has bestowed upon us, and our pride, which He has clothed us in, are through our ancestor Muhammad, peace be upon him? Through him, we have risen above the nations, and through him, we have gained pride over the Arabs and non-Arabs. How could we deny his prophethood, or reject his virtue, or claim that it belongs to us alone? By God, even if God were to send a prophet after him—and that will never happen—we would still be the most distant and averse of people to him. The Banu Abd Shams opposed us because of him and hated us for his sake when one of them said, "We fed you, and you fed us, and we did good deeds just as you did, until we were like two horses in a race, and then you said, 'A prophet

has arisen among us.'" By God, we will not accept that, nor will we acknowledge it to you

If we are the ones calling for disavowal of the Sharia of our ancestor Muhammad (peace be upon him), then who is calling for adherence to it and holding fast to it? Indeed, if we say that God Almighty has bequeathed to us his honor, glory, and pride, and established us as leaders of the nation after him, and obligated people to obey us after him as they did him, then we have spoken the truth, for God Almighty says: "Obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you." We are, by God, those in authority whom creation worships by obeying us, and the people of remembrance whom He commanded them to consult, despite those who deny and reject this for us. This is the favor of God Almighty upon us, His blessing upon us, for which we cannot bear the burden of gratitude except with His help. It is the plan that none can rival us in except a stubborn pretender, and none can deny it from us except a misguided disbeliever. There is no plan beyond it that we claim, nor a rank above it that we aspire to. It is enough for us that we have reached the point of thanking God for this blessing. So how can we abandon it and claim what God will punish those who claim it with in Hellfire, and say what those disbelievers who invalidated the prophethood of our ancestor Muhammad (peace be upon him) said? God will question us about what we say in this regard. We did not say it, and he is not to be held

▪ accountable for saying it

▪ Then he, peace be upon him, said to him: Bring forth something else that was said to you about us
He said, "What I know, O Commander of the Faithful, and what I have said is pure faith and

"
▪ certainty

He said, "Yes, we have been informed that you were told that we worship a head of ours who speaks to

"
▪ us and to whom we prostrate instead of God, and who scatters dinars from his mouth for us

▪ We heard someone say that

The Commander of the Faithful asked him, "Which head?" They replied, "Is this the head of a human

"?
being, an animal, or a snake? What is it

"
▪ He said, "I don't know what they are saying, may God curse them

He, peace be upon him, said: Yes, by God, we worship the head of all things, their God and Creator,

▪ God, the Lord of the Worlds. He is the One who gave to us, favored us, chose us, and honored us

"
▪ He said, "That is so, by God, O Commander of the Faithful

The Commander of the Faithful said: How strange are these deficient minds and corrupt illusions that accept such absurd statements, allowing them to become ingrained and firmly established in their minds, to the point that they attribute them to someone, accept them from the words of a speaker, or believe them even if they

▪ saw them with their own eyes or heard someone claim them with their own ears

Words spoken in a gathering about consuming what God has permitted .213 and abandoning hypocrisy by refraining from it

He said, mentioning the baldness of desires and the words of God Almighty: "They neglected prayer and followed their desires." He said, "God Almighty meant by this statement forbidden desires. As for one who desires what God has made lawful and permitted, there is no blame upon him if he attains it if he is able and capable of it. God Almighty has granted us and given us from this world what He has given us, and I do not know that I have deprived myself of what I desire from it. Rather, God, by His grace and favor upon me, has protected me from desiring anything He has forbidden me. By God, I do not look at what God has forbidden with an eye of hatred for it, nor does my soul, by the grace and favor of God upon me, incline towards any of it.

Indeed, sins are more desirable to the wrongdoers than what is lawful, and they are more eager for them and seek them out. So praise be to God who has bestowed upon us protection and has not made us desire what He has forbidden us. If we were to forbid what God has made lawful for us and prevent ourselves from it, even though He has permitted it and given us possession of it, then we would have rejected His decree and disobeyed Him, and rejected what He has favored us with and hated it. Forbidding what God has made lawful and hating it is like permitting what He has made unlawful and allowing it. God Almighty says in His Book: Say, "Who has forbidden the adornment of God which He has produced for His servants and the good [lawful] things of

provision?" Say, "They are for those who have believed during this worldly life [and] exclusively for them on

"
▪ the Day of Resurrection

visions seen by Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him 214

He said, and when the army was about to arrive from Morocco, Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, ordered Ibn Wasul and Ibn Bakr to make two wheels, each one on a wheel, to be pulled when summoned. This was something that no one knew had been done before, nor had anyone seen it. He then described them to the carpenters, saying: "Make a roof of planks on a crossbeam, and raise it on four tiers. Build a tower of planks on top of it, wide at the bottom and narrow at the top, ten cubits long. At its base is a sturdy wooden cage with a door at the back through which a prisoner can enter and be locked. Above it is a coffin made of the tower, with a door that opens and closes, and a small window that lets in just enough light. In the middle of the cage is a large piece of wood, like the mast of a ship, with a rod at its base. On the roof of the coffin, a figure about the size of a man's height will appear, and on top of it is a bed just large enough for someone to sit. Around it is a screen of conical mesh to prevent them from falling. There should be two men in the coffin who cannot be seen, and with them on the wood are two pegs which they turn, so that the upper bed rotates with whoever is on it, so that everyone around can see his face, but they will not know." By whom does

? he manage

We were amazed by what he did and saw how he devised and came to that conclusion, may God's

▪ prayers and peace be upon him

He, peace be upon him, said: I saw it in a dream some time before these two wicked men were captured. I kept looking at it as it is now before me, turning it over and over, saying, "What is this?" It was said,

▪ "This will be the one who calls out against your enemies." So I understood its form and acted accordingly

Words on the punishment of atheists among the friends of God 215

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, mentioned a man who had suffered a great affliction and described his condition. This man had deviated from the path of God's saints and been extreme in his religion, and he had imitated some of its teachings. Because of this, he incurred the wrath of the imams, from which we seek refuge in God. Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, said, after mentioning the man's condition: "No one among us has deviated or sought to introduce any deficiency into our affairs without God afflicting him in this world with a trial that serves as a punishment. The punishment of the Hereafter is more humiliating, more severe, and more lasting. Although those suffering punishment in the Hereafter may find some solace in seeing others being punished there for their sins, those punished in this world

▪ with such a punishment do not see their like to find solace in

Then, peace be upon him, he said that this man—meaning this man—had been afflicted by the curse of three Imams, and that the curse of an Imam is among the most severe punishments of God. It does not miss its intended target, and no one escapes its reach. By God, the saints of God only send it upon those who deserve it, after they see no way to avert it and find no other recourse. As long as they hope for the man's repentance or yearn for his return, they pardon, overlook, and forgive, due to the compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and overlooking of mistakes that God Almighty has instilled in them. Then he mentioned the transgressions and violations of this man and the doubts he introduced into the religion, particularly among the weaker believers,

▪ which would take too long to recount

He said, and it was decided in the presence of Al-Mansur Billah (may God bless him and grant him peace) that he says, "We possess from God's wisdom and knowledge that with which we can move mountains and part the seas, and we have among our saints in religion those whom the heavens and the earth will not change or cease to exist." Al-Mansur Billah (may God bless him and grant him peace) greatly appreciated this

▪ statement and summoned a group of saints and related it to them on his authority, and he cursed him

Then al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah said, "The greatest miracle of Moses, peace be upon him, was the parting of the sea, and there is much to be said about that. This wretched man has claimed even more for himself, attributing himself to us and claiming our knowledge, our school of thought, and our sayings. We disavow

ourselves before God of his claim, his sayings, and what he attributes to himself, even if he attributes it to us and to those connected to us. God Almighty has favored us, honored us, singled us out, chosen us, and selected us.

He has made obedience to us obligatory upon all His creation and made us leaders for all His servants, their means to Him, their intermediaries with Him, and the mediators between them and Him. This is sufficient favor and honor. We acknowledge in this the favor and kindness of God Almighty upon us, and we humble ourselves before Him and submit to what He has bestowed upon us, to the best of our ability. Whoever claims for us or for himself anything beyond this, upon him be the curse and wrath of God. We disavow ourselves before God Almighty of him and his falsehood. By God, whoever seeks to add to our right, which God Almighty has bestowed upon us, only intends to humiliate us. And God will humiliate, disgrace, cast down, and banish

”
• whoever intends this

Then he, peace be upon him, said: I heard the one who will rise with God's command, peace be upon him, say: Those who call to the Fire, who falsely claim affiliation with us, only intend to use what they falsely attribute to us—that we know the unseen and what the hearts conceal, and similar things they fabricated against us and attributed to us—as a means to justify their hypocrisy. So when they manifest their hypocrisy, they say to those they call to us: "These people do not possess what we described to you regarding the Imams to whom we

• called you," as some of them said, and thus they perished and caused many people to perish because of it. Then al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Those who claim to be our followers but attribute to us what we did not say are our enemies, and more harmful than those who claim to be our followers but are openly hostile to us. It is because of these people that doubt arises concerning our cause, due to their outward show of allegiance to us. Those who are openly hostile to us, however, have alienated people from us and caused annoyance to others with their enmity. Therefore, no doubt arises concerning us because of them. They are less harmful to us than those who claim to be our followers but

”
• disobey our commands and fabricate lies against us

Part Twenty

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Words spoken in a council in response to some speakers 216

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad (may God be pleased with him) said: I mentioned to Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) what those who advocate the argument of reason say. He said to me, "O Nu'man, do you think anyone would deny being rational? If you were to ask any madman about his sanity, he would tell you, 'I am the most rational of people.' Everyone claims to possess reason, and they differ in their doctrines. Whoever claims that reason is the proof of his doctrine will not lack those who disagree with him and make the same claim for themselves. However, there is something by which the statement of the one who is right is validated, the claim of the one who is wrong is refuted, and the distinction between reason

”
• and ignorance is made

"? I said, "What is it, my lord

He paused for a moment, smiling, then said, "The wise person is the one who obeys God Almighty, acts according to His commands, refrains from what He has forbidden, and learns from Him and His chosen ones. The ignorant person is the one who deviates from this, who claims knowledge that has not come from God or His Messenger. This is the difference between the wise and the ignorant, just as the difference between good and evil is permissibility and prohibition. Whatever God Almighty has commanded and permitted for His creation, and encouraged His servants to do, good lies in doing it. And whatever He has forbidden and prohibited, evil lies in committing and consuming it. Good and evil are not known by physical objects, nor is justice and injustice known by reason. Rather, it is through God Almighty's prohibitions, permissions, commands, prohibitions, and what He has deemed permissible and forbidden that this knowledge and distinction are made. If this knowledge were left to the minds and discernment of creation, they would deem much that is

”
• ugly pleasing and much that is beautiful reprehensible

Whoever claims to be able to distinguish between good and evil, justice and injustice, solely through his own intellect, without referring to the Book of God, without learning from the Sunnah of the Messenger of God, and without acquiring knowledge from the saints of God, has fabricated falsehood, clung to vanity and delusion. But whoever follows the commands of God and His Messenger and learns from His saints has grasped

▪ the firm rope of God, held fast to the most trustworthy handhold, and won the fullest share
Take this principle, for it decisively refutes the argument of anyone who engages in knowledge without

▪ consulting the saints of God and who refuses to refer what he does not know to them, as God has commanded
I said, "I will take it, by God, with gratitude from the source of knowledge and the descendants of the

▪ people of remembrance," and I kissed the ground in thanks to him

And I built upon this foundation, and many branches stemmed from it, which I used as evidence in many of the books I authored. These were conclusive and beneficial arguments, and praise be to God for what He has bestowed upon me of His bounty and the blessings of His love and mercy, may God's prayers and peace

▪ be upon him

Words on the blessing of seeking intercession through the saints of 217 God, may God's prayers be upon them

He said, "Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, rode in the manner of the common people. People met him with their needs, and a merchant from among our brothers met him, greeted him, kissed his hand, and rubbed his face against it. He reached out a note to give him, but the people stood between him and the merchant. So he turned to me, and I was with him in the procession. He said, 'A servant of mine has gone missing, and I wanted to raise a note to our master, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, so

""

▪ that he would order me to find him, but I was prevented from doing so and could not reach him

The next day he met me and said, "We continue to learn from the saints of God about the wondrous and miraculous things they do. I mentioned to you yesterday the disappearance of the servant and my distress over it. When I met our master, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, I said to myself, 'O God, I seek closeness to You and I beseech Your saint to gather what I have lost and return it to me.' The servant had been lost from me for several days. By God, no sooner had I left than a man I did not know met me and said,

""

▪ 'Something has gone missing from you

I said yes, a boy

""

▪ He said, "Give me something and I will guide you to it

I said what you wanted

He said, "Three dirhams," so I gave them to him, and he went ahead of me until we reached a small palace. Then I saw a group of Berbers, and the boy was with them. The place was deserted, as you know, in a vast, open area. If they had wanted to take me and the boy, or rob me, they could have. When the boy saw me,

▪ he ran to me, and the people fled, leaving him with me. So I took him away

He handed me a note on which he mentioned this and said, "I ask you, by the right of God's saint, to

""

▪ give it to him

I handed the note to the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him). When he read it, he smiled. I said, "My master, this man swore to me by your right to deliver it to you and informed me of what was in it." I

""

▪ said to him, "We have so many of these that we cannot count them

The Commander of the Faithful lowered his head in awe of God's favor upon him and said, "Praise be

""

▪ to God for what He has bestowed upon us and the blessings He has granted us

And in such a manner are the miracles of the saints of God, may God's 218 blessings be upon them

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: So-and-so told me—and he named a man who had been sent to him as a messenger from some of the preachers of the East with money from the deeds of the believers and goods in loads—and he was one of the trustworthy believers, a man of truth and integrity, that he passed by some tax collectors on his way to the East, who were levying fines on people for their loads, and he was in a large group. He said, "So I took out what I owed them in dirhams and held it in my hand, and they sat in a narrow place that only camels could pass through, and everyone who passed by them paid them according to what he had." He said, "And they sat in three places, one after the other, levying fines in this way, so that hardly anyone was hidden from them, and they only passed by them individually." He said, "So I passed by the first group, and by God, not one of them looked at me or approached me, as if God had blinded their eyes to me, so none of them spoke to me. Then I passed by the others who came after them, and that was

"

• their way, and not one of them approached me

Then al-Mu'izz, may God's blessings be upon him, said: I mentioned that to so-and-so—meaning a messenger who had also come with a similar message from that caller, and he was also a man of truthfulness, loyalty, and trustworthiness. He said: He swore to me by God that this was indeed his situation as he passed by,

• and no one confronted him about it, as if their eyes were blinded to him

Words spoken in a gathering that mentioned the Benefactor 219

He said, and it was mentioned to him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, one day, the weakness of the Abbasid rulers in the East, and those who follow them, call to them, and claim to obey them, and the fragility of their affairs, and what God supported him with, and strengthened his authority, and confirmed his glory, and expanded his power, and that was said. And some of those in the gathering said, "I

"

• hope that God's promise is near, and this, God willing, is the time of relief

Al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: What do you say about the trials our forefathers endured and the success and dominance these conquerors have gained? Was that something God

?

granted them, or did they overpower His will in it

"

• They said, "God and His guardian know best

He, peace be upon him, said: "Among what God Almighty revealed to David was: 'O David, some of your descendants will do after you what will warrant their punishment. I will not take away from them what I have given you, but whoever among them disobeys Me, I will discipline him with a stick.' Then he sighed deeply, may God's blessings be upon him, and said, 'This is a statement of great importance. It is narrated that when the awaited one from among us leans his back against the Kaaba, the Sacred House, and stands to address

"

• the people, then he will rise up for everything he possesses

So we kissed the ground and said, "We ask God to make us among those who attain that and are

"

• blessed to witness it in the presence of His chosen one and the son of His Prophet

Words on the wonders of God's saints, may God's blessings be upon them 220

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: One day, he looked at a garden he had planted and enclosed in the direction of Wadi al-Qassar. That place had been desolate and empty before, far from the city limits, and no one thought he needed it for anything. But when he, peace be upon him, planted it, surrounded it with a wall, and made a river flow through it, it flourished with various kinds of trees, fragrant herbs, greenery, and flowers,

• and became one of the most beautiful gardens people had ever seen

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said one day, after looking at him, "I passed by this place one day while I was with Al-Mansur, and there were pits in it from which bricks were being cut or soil was being removed." He said, "I said, 'What is the purpose of this place, my master? It is better to use it for things like cutting bricks and removing soil.'" He looked at me and smiled and said, "Prevent it in any case, and you

"

• will need it

Al-Mu'izz said, "So I did what he ordered, to refrain from objecting to him, and I see that I do not need him or anyone else for anything at all." He said, "By God, I did not think about this statement of Al-Mansur, "

" .may God's blessings be upon him, until today, as if it were something he had already known

A conversation that took place in a council regarding what the guardian .221 .of God desires for his guardians of good

Al-Mu'izz, may God's peace be upon him, once mentioned some men of the state and expressed his dismay at their inability to fulfill his hopes and expectations. He felt they fell short of his aspirations for them in terms of knowledge, trustworthiness, and competence, which he desired and hoped would elevate them to the highest ranks. He said, "I am astonished by a people to whom God Almighty has granted happiness in this world and the hereafter, yet they have turned their backs on what was destined for them. By God, I only wish for them to be the most prominent and distinguished among people. I do not wish for anyone to surpass them in virtue,

" .honor, closeness to me, or high standing, but I have not found in them all that I desire

So I said, "O my master, in whom can you find all that you desire? The blessings of God's chosen servants are found only in them, may God's peace and blessings be upon them. They are the ones whom God, the Exalted and Glorified, has made manifest with perfection, rendering creation incapable of what He has made manifest to them. Were it not for the grace of God's chosen servants, their mercy, and their forgiveness of us, we would be nothing. God, the Exalted and Glorified, says, 'Were it not for God's grace and mercy upon you, not one of you would ever be purified.' And though the Commander of the Faithful did not attain his desired outcome from those he loved to attain good through those he mentioned, their affairs today, praise be to God, in his manifest days and his pure state, are characterized by obedience, righteousness, pursuit of truth and safety, and avoidance of deficiency, unlike all the people of the earth and unlike what those who came before them were like with the past Imams, may God's peace and blessings be upon them. And every day, praise be to God, in the radiant days of the Commander of the Faithful and his pure state, is better than the one before it in all

" .respects

He, peace be upon him, said: That is so, praise be to God, but we wanted to fulfill our hopes in our

.allies

" .I said, "May God grant our master his wish as soon as he desires

" .He said, "God willing

Then he mentioned the Imam al-Qa'im, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, and said: I heard him during the time of tribulation saying to some of the saints: By God, I do not know of any sin between me and God that would cause me to be afflicted with such a trial. The only reason these people are angry with us is because of your actions in disobeying our commands. If you had obeyed our commands when we ordered you to

.do something, they would not have found anything to say or mention against us

Then Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him, said: May God reward well those who obeyed our command and did not give our enemy any grounds for criticism or accusations against us for

.disobeying our prohibitions and transgressing our orders

words on following what happened regarding the virtues of God's saints 222

He said, "I accompanied Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him, one day, and he mentioned a book that he had looked at during the night. He said, 'I was sleepless last night and felt lethargic, so I took such and such a book,' and he mentioned a book that he named. 'I looked at it and remembered something

" .that he followed up on with a lengthy discussion, and he presented in it brilliant and wondrous arguments

So I said, "My master, such a thing occurs to me in light of what the Commander of the Faithful

" .mentioned regarding speech, lethargy, sleeplessness, and boredom

He smiled at me and said, "I heard Al-Mansur Billah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, say in some of his advice to me: 'Whenever you wish to write a book, or follow up on it, or consider a matter whose rulings you wish to establish, then choose for that a time of weariness, laziness, and lethargy. For the souls of God's saints are at their strongest when their bodies are weak, their strength is waning, and their powers are exhausted. Likewise, they are at the time of their departure from this world and their passing from this life, due to their knowledge of the virtue of what they will attain. This is contrary to the nature of the souls of worldly people, for their souls are at their strongest when their bodies are healthy and they are confident in their position in this world. When their bodies weaken, their souls weaken as well, for their souls are servants of their bodies

" "

• and attached to this world

He said, "Whenever I engaged in any of this as I described, and found strength within myself, I

"

• remembered his words, may God's prayers and peace be upon him

A discussion on the tendency of opponents to cling to the slightest .223 • flaws they find in the religion

He said, and mentioned to me one day, as I was accompanying him, something he had seen in some of what I had written in argumentation against those among the general populace who opposed the school of thought of the Ahlul-Bayt (peace be upon them). He praised the statement on it (peace be upon them), then he informed me of something I had overlooked. He said, "You must include something like this in it to refute the argument of anyone who might say something against it. For the enemies of God may hear from God's proof against them what they have no doubt or question about as being the truth, and they remain silent about it. But if something comes up that introduces some doubt into their minds, they become aware of it, speak about it, and

"

• create confusion because of it

Then he said, "I heard Al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, mention something similar to this about their condition." Then he said, "Their example is like that of flies; they rarely land on the body

"

• except on a wound, a scar, skin, or where there is moisture or pus

A discussion on the topic of the conquerors' victory and the matter of .224 • Fadak

He said, and I accompanied Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, and he mentioned a man who claimed allegiance to the Imam, and that it had reached him that he had written a book refuting Abu Bakr's seizure of Fadak from Fatima, peace be upon her, and that some of those who came across that book, whose

• understanding was limited, who called themselves Imams, were impressed by it and exaggerated in praising it Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "How strange are these people! They mention the matter of Fadak and magnify the fact that the people seized it from Fatima, yet they neglect to mention what is greater and more significant than it, and what they were able to seize by means of and through which they overcame. This is what the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, designated for Ali, peace be upon him, in terms of the Imamate and the leadership of the nation after him. They prevented him from this, stood between him and it, usurped his right, and took his place. Yet they neglect to mention this, which is the foundation and the axis, and instead occupy themselves with mentioning Fadak and other matters that are too insignificant to even warrant attention. If the people had done nothing more than seize Fadak, then God's forgiveness would have been hoped for them. If they had submitted to the one to whom God had appointed it and had remained with Fadak and

"

• similar matters, no one would have paid them any attention

Then he spoke about the corruption of their origin and the foundation upon which they built their affair.

For whoever's origin is corrupt and whose foundation is weak, his branches will be corrupt and his structure weak. As for Fadak and things like Fadak, we turn away from them and leave them to whoever among them

• takes possession of them

Hadiths on the dream of Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and his patience and mercy **225**

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said one day, mentioning a man who had come to him from the west, interested in the science of astronomy. The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, treated him well, clothed him, provided him with a mount, gave him gifts, and granted him a stipend for traveling from afar to him. He did not stay long before asking permission to leave, which was granted. We were amazed by this. Then al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said one day, while I was in his presence,

"? "Shall I not tell you the reason for his departure

" .I said, "The Commander of the Faithful will do as he sees fit

He said that when this man came to us and received our favor, some of his fellow craftsmen, who were fond of speaking ill of us, envied him. So he mentioned to him a certain birth, and he said, "What do you think

"? was the birth of this man

" .He said, "I see misfortune has befallen him, and I have no doubt that his days are over

He said to him, "Likewise, the one you are staying with and whose intentions you seek are of concern to us, and this is his birthplace." The weak-minded man saw that leaving with what he had gained from us was a prize, so he asked our permission. We had already told him what had been said, so we granted him permission, and he left. As he was leaving, he handed us a note in which he presented his request. Before that, I had ordered two hundred dinars for him, which I had placed in a purse, and I was about to send it to him. Then I looked at the time he handed it over and saw that it was an auspicious time. I thought, "I believe he must have sought this auspicious time for his note." But, by God, I will not let him down. So I left it, intending to give it to him at

another time, without his request. But I forgot about it, and he left empty-handed

So I said to him, "God has given His saint such patience, forbearance, and composure that I don't think

" .He has given it to anyone else

He, peace be upon him, said: Did I not tell you some time ago about so-and-so, that he speaks ill of us, and I hinted at his words to you? I saw that angered you and stirred you up against him, and you said to me, "I wish I could get hold of him in a way that would justify extending my hand to him with something unpleasant,

" .so that I might give him what would satisfy my heart against him

" .I said, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful, that has happened, and I am upon it

He said, "Would you have done to him and taken revenge on him in the same way that God Almighty

"? took revenge on us

"? I said, "How so

"? He said, "Did you hear about it

I said no, by God

He said, "He died three days ago from a disease that afflicted him in his mouth and ate away at it inside

" .and out

I said to God's wrath

? He said yes, and to his fire and hell. Do you know what I alluded to in what we heard about him

.I said no, unless the Commander of the Faithful tells me

He said, "We have been judged, based on what the stars supposedly indicated, that our affair will end and cease at the time God cut short its duration with the affliction that befell him. Were we capable of doing more to him than this? Many of those who associate with us, harming us and speaking ill of us, might be asked, 'Are you not afraid that he will learn of such things from you?' They would reply, 'He is forbidden to us.' Then he smiled and said, 'Yes, by God, I am forbidden from injustice and transgression. God Almighty will grant me victory and take vengeance on whoever takes from me what is not rightfully his. By God, if I wished, I could strike them down and exact retribution from them. But if I did so, and people knew that I would seek retribution for myself in such a case, they would increase their oppression of one another and burden my heart with it, just

as they burdened those before me. But I have overlooked them. And God is not unaware of what the wrongdoers

”

•do. He knows best what they conceal and what they reveal

I said, "Praise be to God who bestowed upon the Commander of the Faithful this great favor and made it manifest with this clear proof, and marked him with forbearance, patience, and gentleness, and appointed him to avenge him against the people of transgression and injustice. The Commander of the Faithful and his predecessors, as the most truthful of speakers said, are descendants of one another, and God is All-Hearing, All-

”

•Knowing

Then, in a similar vein, he mentioned the prohibition against the deprived astrologer, lest he see that his knowledge of the stars and his seeking of an auspicious hour brought him success. This is what we have narrated from Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, that he had a house, half of which belonged to one of his freed slaves and the other half to a man who was interested in astrology. He, peace be upon him, invited him to divide it, but he delayed until he chose an auspicious hour for himself. After some time, he came to him asking for the division, so he sent someone with him to divide it. The man returned, criticizing astrology, and said, "O son of the Messenger of God, I loved a part of this house, and I delayed dividing it until I chose an auspicious hour for myself and was confident that I would achieve my goal. When the house was divided and

”

•the lot was cast, you got what I loved, and I got what I hated

Abu Abdullah, peace be upon him, said to him, "Were it not that we see that your choice has led you to what you love, we would have given you what you love, yes, and we would have left everything for you. But no, by God, you will not take anything except what has become yours. But I will give you something that, if you

”

•accept it, will be better for you than what you wanted

”?

He said, "What is it that makes me your ransom

He said: If you wake up in the morning, give charity, for it will remove the bad luck of your day; and if

•you go to sleep in the evening, give charity, for it will remove the bad luck of your night

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers be upon him, smiled and said, "It is as he, peace be upon

”

•him, said

•Words spoken concerning the acceptance and rejection of the truth .226

He said, and Ibn Wasul asked to pray the Friday prayer in the mosque, and the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, granted him permission, following the example of his grandfather Ali, peace be upon him, as it was reported that he used to allow those in prison who wished to attend the Friday prayer to come, and then they would be returned to prison after the prayer was finished. So Ibn Wasul attended the Friday prayer in this manner, while in chains, and sat in the circle after the prayer listening to questions. Some things were said that contradicted his statement, so I explained them to him, and I saw that he acknowledged the truth

•in them and submitted to it

The next day I went to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and he said: "Ibn Wasul was impressed yesterday by what he heard from you and said that he has benefited greatly from the company of the Imams and has gained much knowledge from them. So what did he hear from you, and what transpired

”?

between you, and what did you think of him

So I told him what had transpired, and I said, "He is a man who has read the books of the common people, but he is barbaric in nature, and it seems he thought that the truth was only what he had concluded. But I saw that when he heard the truth, he listened to it, and when its generalities were explained and clarified for him, he returned to it and submitted, and he did not delve into falsehood as many do who have adopted a doctrine and

”

•grown up with it, whom we see

Al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: This is the path of the just and those who wish to follow the truth. As for those who persist in error and prefer the love of worldly leadership, and who refuse to retract their falsehood lest their leadership be diminished and their standing among the common people be lowered—like the people he mentioned—those are among those of whom God Almighty said, "Deaf, dumb,

and blind—they do not understand." And among the worst of them was the one whom God cursed and cast into

• Hell—and what an evil destination it is!—the accursed Muzaffar, for he did not profess any religion to God
I said, "By God, O Commander of the Faithful, when I read to the people what the Commander of the

Faithful ordered to be read to them of wisdom on Fridays, I often looked at him among the people and it occurred to me that he was among them all, not believing what he had heard. I saw that in his face, his features, and his eyes, and I often said to myself, 'I fear that I am sinning by this suspicion of him,' and I held myself

"

• accountable for it

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "No, by God, you are not sinning in that, but rather you are correct in what he was doing. I have heard from him more than once things that indicate he did not believe in anything of Islam. And he said one day, when the Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him and his family, and the beginning of his prophethood were mentioned, the accursed one, may God curse him, said: 'This is one of the tricks of the Arabs.' He did not believe in Islam at

"?

all, so how can he be our Imam and what we are doing

I said, "That is what the Commander of the Faithful said, as it appears from it. As for his companion

"

• Caesar, he was inclined towards this matter, but he was his own devil

He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "It is as you said. He was inclined towards it, but he did not like to see anyone on the face of the earth except under his command and prohibition and under his

"

• control

"

• I said, "As for this, it is what is known of him

He said, "And whoever has this will, then wants the matter to be only his own? This is the greatest

"

• crime and the worst belief

I said, without a doubt, God Almighty hastened His vengeance upon them through His chosen one and inflicted upon them His severe punishment. Had they acted upon God's command and submitted to His chosen

• one, they would have been in the best of conditions in this world and the hereafter

He said, "Yes, by God, God would not have given us power over them as He did, except after they had transgressed against themselves. Alas for their evil deeds!" God Almighty said, "So when they angered Us, We

"

• took vengeance on them

I said, "We seek refuge in God from His vengeance and the might of His allies, and from the sins that

"

• necessitate it

Part Twenty-One

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Hadiths in a gathering on the subject of astrology 227

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: One day, while I was in the presence of Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, he mentioned astrology and astrologers. He said, "Whoever studies astrology to learn the number of years, calculations, and the times of night and day, and to reflect upon the immense power of God, may His name be glorified, and the evidence therein for His Oneness, without partner, has done well and is correct. But whoever engages in it to learn the unseen of God and to predict what will be has done wrong and erred. Al-Mansur Billah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, was among the most knowledgeable people about it. He said to me more than once, 'By God, I only studied it seeking knowledge of God's Oneness, the effect of His power, and the wonders of His creation. I witnessed what I witnessed of wars and other things, and I never learned anything about any of that

"

• by choice from the signs of the stars, nor did I pay any attention to them

Then al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: Some astrologers brought me a book he had written in which he described the creation of Adam, the state of the stars, the day God Almighty created him, and what they indicated regarding his fate and the fate of his descendants. He believed he had brought me some benefit and knowledge that he had previously possessed. When I examined his book, I asked him, "This is the creation of Adam that you have described, and how the stars were on the day God Almighty

"? created him, according to your claim. Was there anything before Adam

■ He said yes, there was one before him

I said, "What was before that, who was it, and what were these planets like before that, and what did

"? they indicate before the creation of Adam

" ■ He had no answer and said, "This is something I never thought I'd be asked about

I said, "This is what I undertook and brought, and I was not even asked about it. So how did I undertake it?" I was amazed at people who wander about what they do not know and engage in what they do not understand. It would suffice for them if they took from the saints of God what they give them and asked them what they should ask them about, and did not undertake what they were not obligated to do, nor were they asked

■ about it

Hadiths in a gathering mentioning Al-Mansur Billah 228

He said, and Al-Mansur Billah, peace be upon him, mentioned, "By God, he was the crown of the family of Muhammad, their baldness, their adornment, their beauty, and their uniqueness in knowledge, piety, asceticism, beauty, forbearance, integrity, courage, and boldness. And before the matter of the Imamate passed to him during the days of Al-Mahdi Billah and Al-Qa'im, peace be upon them, he was the least of people in his greed for the world, his attention to it, and his preoccupation with it. And what came to him was like what came to his uncles and brothers, and he was blessed in it despite his little involvement in earning and profit, and their diligence in that and their burden in it. And his favor and goodness upon us and his family was more extensive and greater than their goodness upon their children and families, many times over, so much so that we used to consider it too much and say to him about it, and we would say that we did not need much of what he sent us of goodness, and he would say: 'Expand and enjoy, for this is a favor from the favor of God, who has employed me for you and employed me in it to provide for you and improve your lives. And whoever God has blessed

" "

■ with abundance should be generous to those who have entrusted their affairs to him

We were the best of the community's relatives until God entrusted the matter to him. He became preoccupied with the affairs of the nation and turned away from us and himself, neglecting much of what he and we had been accustomed to. Some of the family members who were affected by this said to him, "If only we

"

■ were as we were before this matter came to you

"

■ He said, "You were my only concern then, but today I am concerned about the entire nation

Then he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "He has passed away, may God sanctify his soul and bless him, and he did not enjoy the pleasures of this world that one who possesses a hundred dinars or less enjoys. He endured wars, hardship, and toil, for which God will reward him. And we today revel in blessings, and we spend our days and nights in tranquility, security, and the smooth functioning of our affairs, for which we truly praise God. Whenever I reflect on what he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, endured, and what I am doing today, I am reminded of the wars, hardship, and toil that David endured, and what God Almighty bestowed upon Solomon, peace be upon him, after him in terms of dominion, abundance,

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■ prosperity, and the smooth functioning of our affairs

Then he praised God and paused for a long time, and fear and sadness appeared on him, and he wept, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, in awe of God Almighty's favor upon him and what God had bestowed upon him and granted him, even though he did not find much pleasure in food, drink, marriage, or

■ entertainment, and his pleasure was only in wisdom and such reminders and good admonitions

Ibn Wasul, though a prisoner of his own mind due to his foolishness and coarse nature, noticed his behavior. He inquired about his daily routine and was told that when morning came, he would leave his house and sit in his council chamber. His close confidants and servants would enter, and he would remain seated until

midday, when lunchtime arrived. Throughout this time, he would be engaged in various matters, including the affairs of the kingdom, and discussions of knowledge and wisdom. When it was time for him to rise, he would enter, eat, pray, and take a nap. Then he would rise, pray the afternoon prayer, and return to his previous state. He would continue in this manner until nightfall. Then he would enter, receive his confidants, study books and various sciences, and write books for most of the night. This was his routine, except on certain days when he would go out to observe people's affairs and for leisure. He would ride out early in the day and return to his seat

▪ at the end of the day

Ibn Wasul was greatly astonished by this and said, "If this is the case despite worldly success,

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▪ abundance, honor, youthful vigor, and power, then God has never been worshipped in such a way

chapters from a book written by Al-Mu'izz to the tyrant of the Romans 229 concerning the people of Crete

He said: The Roman tyrant had desired a truce with the Commander of the Faithful, Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (peace be upon him), and offered him money for it. His desire for a truce was for a long period or forever if he found it. The Imam saw, when it became clear to him, that this was better for Islam and the Muslims, so

▪ that they could unite and be strong enough to fight the polytheists, if he agreed to a truce for five years

Then, before the truce period expired, he contacted him and sent the Domestikos, who was his closest and most trusted man, with a large number of ships and heavy armies until they landed on the island of Crete,

▪ where they were calling for the support of the Abbasids

When they were afflicted with a situation beyond their control, and they knew that the Abbasids had no power to mobilize them nor offer them any support, they sent a ship with men from their side, accompanied by one of their leaders, to the Commander of the Faithful, al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, seeking his aid and asking him to rescue and rescue them. He, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, even though they had turned away from him, did not see fit to reject their pleas or to hand them over to the polytheists. So, when news of their plight reached him, and before their messenger arrived, he ordered preparations to be made so that the fleets

▪ could reach them as soon as possible. Then the messenger came to him and delivered what they had sent him

He decided to break his treaty with the polytheist, as God Almighty had commanded in His Book, if he persisted in fighting them. He ordered a letter to be written to him on this matter and dictated it to the scribe in

▪ the presence of those before him, in words more eloquent and persuasive than any I have ever heard

He then gave him the choice between ceasing the war against the Cretans or breaking his treaty with them, just as the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, broke his treaty with the Arab polytheists and sent Ali to recite the declaration of disavowal to them during the pilgrimage season, and because of God's word, the most

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▪ truthful of speakers: "And if you fear treachery from a people, then throw back to them your treaty

▪ Then he said to him in his book, peace be upon him

Do not think that the people of Crete, who previously turned to others, have now turned to us and sought our help. This does not obligate you, upon the completion of the peace treaty, to leave them to us and cease your objection to them. The refusal of the people of falsehood to submit to the people of truth does not negate their right, even if they prevail over them. Rather, it belongs to them by the decree of God Almighty. Crete and all other lands belong to us by virtue of what God has granted us and established us to do there. Some obey us, and some disobey us. It is not by their obedience that we should possess it, nor is it by their disobedience that we should be left alone. If it were so, the matter would be in their hands, not in the hands of God who granted us authority, nor would they be able to give it to us as they please or withhold it as they wish. No, it is in the hands of God, to whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. He is the One who chose us, granted us dominion, and bestowed upon us. If it were in the hands of creation, we would not be able to fight those who resist us, nor would we be able to reclaim what they seized by force from our hands, if God enabled

▪ us to do so and by Him He strengthened us

If you say otherwise, and you believe that what is in your possession is rightfully yours, then know that Romans overpowered you and your father before you, and then the tables turned on you both. If you believe that whoever seizes something and takes possession of it belongs to him, not to the rightful owner, then neither you nor your father had the right to rise up against Romans or to wrest what came into his possession from him. This

is the way of the righteous among us. If you acknowledge it, then you have acted justly. If you are ignorant of it, then your ignorance of it is not an argument against those who know it. And your pledge is that if you persist in waging war against those who have turned to us, you will be rejected by them. So consider your own situation and that of your people, for we will wage war against you and them with God's help and support. There is no

• power or strength except in Him

And in the same manner to the ruler of Egypt 230

He said, "These people of Crete sought help from the ruler of Egypt, who was one of his followers, united by the call of the Abbasid family. Their ships carried the bounty of their land, and their food and gifts reached the people of Egypt and its officials. He was unable to aid them and asked someone to look after the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, to write to him requesting his aid and rescue. He sent some of them who had been with him before to ask the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and to plead with him for this. Then he pretended that he would support them and threw some ships into the sea when he learned

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• of the public's disapproval of his failure to aid them

The Commander of the Faithful, Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, wrote to his correspondent in Egypt in response to his letter, informing him that he had ordered the deployment of the fleets

• and had begun preparing them

Among the things he wrote to him was: Tell your companion that God Almighty has bestowed upon us His bounty and provided us with His aid and support, so that we may, by His power and might, grant us victory and make us prevail over our enemy, restrain the hands of the infidels from their aggression against this region and its people. We have heard that you have initiated a movement for jihad and are supplying these resistance fighters with ships from your side. Indeed, you are more deserving of this, given their proximity to you, their connection with you, their provision of provisions from your land, and their shared call to action. Had we surrendered them to you and remained inactive, neither you nor they would have any justification against us. However, we have chosen to support the nation of our ancestor Muhammad (peace be upon him), and we saw no reason to shirk this duty. They have placed their hopes in us and have thrown themselves into this cause. We will not stand in your way of jihad in the path of God, nor will we prevent you from fulfilling your aspirations. Therefore, let not the news of our fleets deter you from your intended course of action. If you fear for those you send and for your ships from us, we will not hesitate to act. By God's covenant and pledge, we will only be with them for the good of all. We will treat them as our own men, join their hands with ours, and share with them what God has bestowed upon us. We will establish them in this and other matters as our own men, and your ships as our fleets, until God grants us victory, God willing. Then they will return to you in this manner, or God's decree and will may bring about what He wills. Know this and trust in it from us. For in the Muslims' unity against their enemy and the unification of their word lies the exaltation of God's religion and the

• suppression of His enemies. We have made the path easy for you, and God is a witness to what we say

If you are confident in this and see the merit in jihad, then work to send your ships to the port of Tunba in the land of Barqa, due to the proximity of this port to the island of Crete. Their meeting with our fleets at this

• port will be at the beginning of Rabi' al-Thani, by the grace, strength, support, victory, and aid of God

Do you not see that? We have already conveyed our apologies and advice to you, and we have discharged our obligations to you. By the power, might, support, victory, and aid of God, we are independent of you and others. We are resolute and insightful in deploying our fleets, our men, our equipment, and whatever

God has entrusted to us and enabled us to do, which we believe, by His power and might, will allow us to achieve our aims and persevere towards them. We seek God's help, rely on Him, and depend on His support. He

• is sufficient for us, and He is the best of guardians

Words on the insight of the Commander of the Faithful in fighting the 231 polytheists

He said, and when the messenger from Crete came to him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he ordered him to be brought in. When he stood before him, he kissed the ground repeatedly and conveyed to

him on behalf of the people what they had sent him with: their supplications, their pleas for help, their requests, their desires, and their pleas for mercy. He began to describe to him the importance of the city and its location in relation to the lands of the Romans and Egypt, and that it was a port for them, and that if God Almighty were to grant him power to repel the polytheists from it and rule it, it would be the cause of the conquest of Constantinople and the East, God willing. He enumerated the equipment and minerals it possessed, and what was being prepared for the construction of fleets, and its proximity to Constantinople and Egypt, in a lengthy

▪ discourse which he mentioned

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "By the power and might of God, we will fulfill your hopes and confirm your expectations of us, just as you hoped and expected. We ordered the preparation of the fleets as soon as we learned of your arrival. Had the people of your land hastened your dispatch, we would have hoped that our fleets would be with them at this time. We hope that God, who has enabled them to come to us, will support and strengthen them until our fleets reach them, and that God will rescue them through His grace and favor, as He has accustomed us to His support and victory. Our purpose in this is to fulfill what God Almighty has obligated us to do: to wage jihad against our enemy, to rescue those who have turned to us from the nation

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▪ of our ancestor, and to support and aid them

As for worldly possessions, God Almighty has granted us dominion over them, bestowing upon us and entrusting us with things that surpass hopes and aspirations, exceeding all expectations and limits. We are confident in His promise to us that He will make us inheritors of the earth, as He stated in His Book, and that He will grant us victory, by His power and might, over all His enemies. So be of good cheer and remain until you

▪ depart with your companions in our fleets

He ordered that two of his companions, along with some men from his own army, be sent back to the people of Crete with their response and with his intention to aid and support them as soon as possible, God

▪ willing

Hadiths in a gathering mentioning the virtues of Al-Mansur 232

He said, and Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned one day, while I was sitting before him, what al-Mansur, may God sanctify his soul and bless him and his forefathers, endured in the war against the people of sedition until God dispelled it through him, and what he, peace be upon him, went through in that of hardship and toil, and the suffering of travel, and the exposure to heat and cold, and how he went out into that all at once after ease and comfort, without any prior experience or practice in that, and what ailments befell him as a result

So I said to him, "My master, though he suffered greatly because of that, God Almighty has thereby averted a great calamity from the nation through him, and through him, the Almighty has protected His religion

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▪ from being altered and the Sunnah of His Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, from being changed

He said yes, and he was still in great distress and severe hardship until God transferred him to the

▪ abode of His honor, the place of His rest, and the resting place of His Paradise

Then he, peace be upon him, said: I entered upon him in his last days, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and his illness had worsened. I saw in him what I knew was death in his face, and I could not help but

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weep. He looked at me and said: What is wrong with you

I said, "I thought of you and of the Mahdi, may God sanctify his soul, and that since God Almighty bestowed upon him what He bestowed of His grace, even though trials confronted him, his affairs have ended in a long period of rest, tranquility, and blessings. And you, may God's blessings be upon you, since God bestowed this matter upon you, we have not been free from wars, conflicts, travels, and activities except for ailments, illnesses, diseases, and pains. So I ask God for the Commander of the Faithful to hasten his rest and grant him

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▪ lasting well-being

He said, "If I said what I said about what I knew, and what was hidden and concealed from you became

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apparent to you, do you know how long I have been enduring trials

"?

I said, "How long ago, O Commander of the Faithful

He said, "Since God took the Mahdi, peace be upon him, I have been subjected to great trials, even though I had already been tested with many trials. When God's decree concerning the Mahdi, peace be upon him, was fulfilled, the Qaim, peace be upon him, did not proceed to pray over him until he took my hand and was alone with me. He entrusted me with his covenant and confided it to me, and I swear by God that no one knew of this from him except me, after God. I remained for the thirteen years of his life, observing those who were close to him and those who were far from him, peace be upon him, striving to spread corruption in a state that was mine, whose affairs God had entrusted to me. I was like the least of the distant ones, neither commanding nor forbidding, nor interfering in anything I disapproved of, nor even hinting at it, nor anything that might be suspected of being against me in any way. My close family was harmed and oppressed, and none of them found any support or protection from me other than my distancing them from myself and keeping them away from my vicinity. They attacked me, and I listened, and my wealth was seized and consumed, and I remained aloof from all of that, swallowing the bitterest sorrows and bearing the most severe calamities with patience for what I had borne, fulfilling what I had been entrusted with, preserving what I had been entrusted with, and protecting what I had been entrusted with." I entrusted myself to God, lest the splendor of power or the glory of the kingdom should befall me. Had I remained in this state for the rest of my life, I would not have deviated from what I had done. Had I wished, I could have extended my hand and tongue and carried out my command, for God Almighty had granted me that power. But I remained in this state until God Almighty's came to pass, and the matter reached you, and you (may peace be upon him) **قائم** decree concerning the witnessed it. That is what you know, and it is insignificant compared to what I have experienced and

• encountered before him, for I should not dwell upon it or mention it

I was moved to tears by what I heard, and I prayed fervently for Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, and I said, "O my master, this is indeed the patience that God Almighty promised to reward its people with without

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• measure

We have narrated on the authority of Ali (peace be upon him) what he mentioned of the trials God put him through during the life of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) and after his death, trials with which He tests His chosen ones. Yet all of them combined did not amount to what al-Mansur (peace be upon him) mentioned in this single instance, nor did we know of his condition on that day and what befell him, the details of which he included in this hadith. We used to marvel at his obscurity, humility, and caution during the days of the Qa'im (peace and blessings be upon him), given his high standing with him, not knowing what God had decreed for him on that day, and we found that remarkable. How would it be if we knew what

? God had decreed for him

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) said: "Even though Ali (may God bless him and grant him peace) was tested with what he was tested with, he (may God bless him and grant him peace) did not hold back anything in his heart that he could bear until he had used it to strike the faces of those who opposed him, those who were stubborn with him, and those who lagged behind him, either explicitly or implicitly. And in that there is some solace for the distress and relief from the ailment. And al-Mansur (may God bless him and grant him peace) is like one who closes his eyes to the thorns of the acacia and grasps burning embers, yet he does not see himself in any of that as the closest of people to him and the most intimate of them. May God's prayers, mercy, and blessings be upon him. He is the one who patiently endures God's command and

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• seeks reward for it. So may God multiply his reward for that and grant him the best recompense

Words in a council on the prohibition of taking God's grace for granted 233

He said, and I heard Imam al-Mu'izz (may God bless him and grant him peace) say, "We may intend to employ some of our men and servants in a task, but the one we appoint will consider it beneath him, despise it, and see himself as above what we appointed him to and intended to employ him for. Thus, he will fall in our esteem until we see him as less than what we intended for him, because it is said, 'Whoever is elevated by authority and becomes arrogant because of it, it is above him and he is below it; and whoever is humble in it, it

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• is below him and he is above it

Then he, peace be upon him, said: "Do these ignorant fools not see that the deeds they disdain are ones we have undertaken? They are part of our deeds, which we neither turned away from nor rejected. We consider them as the highest and most noble of deeds, yet they disdain what we do not disdain, and they consider themselves above what we do not consider ourselves above. They have an example in us. But greater and more

sublime than that is that God, Exalted is His Name and Sublime is He, is the Creator of what they disdain, its Sustainer, and the One who oversees it with His wisdom. He has not neglected it nor abandoned it, but rather He has cared for it, preserved it, and entrusted it to us. Whatever God, Exalted is He, has entrusted to us, and which we have cared for with the bounty He has bestowed upon us, we entrust to these ignorant people. Yet they disdain it out of arrogance and pride, considering themselves superior to what God, Glorified is He, has

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▪ entrusted to us, and which we have entrusted to Him by His command

He was astonished by this, and I heard from him on this matter wisdom, warning, and admonition the

▪ likes of which I never thought I would hear

So I said, "My master, no one would ever disobey a command you give, even if it were as simple as cleaning toilets and garbage, except one who has overstepped his bounds, is ignorant of his limits, or does not

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▪ know what God Almighty has obligated him to do for you

Then I said, "This so-and-so is a man who was among the closest to the Mahdi, may God's blessings be upon him. The first thing he was employed in was buying and storing hay. Then matters progressed for him until he reached the position he held with the Mahdi, may God's blessings be upon him. And for a leader to assume a small position and then rise from it to a higher one is better for him than to assume a great position and

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▪ then fall from it

He, peace be upon him, said: "Straw is something that is needed, and so on and so forth," and he listed many other small things and lowly crafts. If we call upon someone who is too proud to do such things, does that not deprive him of what he needs? God has employed the prophets, the best of His servants, in His obedience in the same ways He has employed all of His creation. They did not disdain what He employed them in, nor did He place them above His servants in that regard. They cleanse themselves and purify themselves, and they take from these things with their hands what all believers do. God did not elevate them above this, nor did they

▪ disdain it as the ignorant disdain what we call upon them to do

And in that, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, came something that no heart could have

▪ imagined, and nothing like it had ever been heard in any previous wisdom or sermon

Words in a council to revive the honor of the fathers 234

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, addressing some of the saints who had ancestors who held leadership during the days of the Mahdi and the Qaim, peace be upon them both, but then they died out, and that leadership was taken from their ancestors, and their memory faded, and their power diminished. So he, peace be upon him, wanted to revive their memory and entrust them with the work that their ancestors had been working on, and for which they were remembered and honored. So he summoned them, drew them near, and mentioned that to them and what he hoped for from them. So they thanked him for his favor as much as they

▪ could and kissed the ground repeatedly before him

Then, peace be upon him, he said to them, "We wanted to connect the traditions of our forefathers, peace be upon them, with your ancestors among you, to revive their memory through you, to unite you, and to elevate your status. So be where we want you to be and what we deem good for you. Help us in what we desire

for you through your righteous deeds, good intentions, and pure hearts. For we are able to change your circumstances, alleviate your poverty, and enrich you, but we cannot rectify what you corrupt within yourselves if you do not heed our commands and admonitions. The truly fortunate are those who accept us, obey our commands, and follow us, and the truly wretched are those who disobey us and transgress our prohibitions. In all that we do for you, whether you like it or dislike it, recognize it or reject it, we desire nothing but your well-being and the good for you in this world and the hereafter. If we treat well those among you whom we treat well, elevate those we elevate, and bestow blessings upon those we bestow blessings upon, we desire nothing

from them except that they recognize our favor, be grateful for it, and perform righteous deeds that will perpetuate it and increase it." From us comes more of it, and it reaches God's pleasure, and He is pleased with us through it. And if we punish whomever we punish, we do so only to discipline him, so that he may return from what we have disapproved of and condemned in his actions to what pleases God Almighty and pleases us, so that he may be happy in this world and the hereafter. And if we kill whomever we kill among you, from whom death is due and whom we cannot spare, this is only to purify him and cleanse him of his sins. And what is less than that is for others whom we hope will be deterred by what they see in him from the corruption that is upon them. And all that we do among you is for the benefit of your general public, however our management of your

affairs may be and our rulings may be implemented upon you, so long as you submit to our command and are
• content with our judgment

Hadiths in a gathering on denying an act that is not part of God's 235 religion

He said, and I heard him, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, mentioning that some preachers had altered matters, rulings, and principles they had established from knowledge, claiming to have done so in some regions, based on their own opinions and deductions, and adding them to the words of the pure Imams, may God's peace and blessings be upon them. He said, "We disavow ourselves before God Almighty from these people and their likes and their actions. They are not our allies, nor do they have any honor, and they do not call to us, even if they outwardly claim to. Our allies are only those who say what we say and follow our commands, and do not attribute to us what we did not say. As for those who attribute falsehood to us and ascribe it to us, and who oppose our commands and call to those who say that which they have invented and follow the school of thought they have devised, then they are only calling to themselves those who follow them and have lied about us, and God will question them. By God, if the preachers who call to us were truthful about us and conveyed our words to the people and did not attribute falsehood to us, then no one who follows our words and knows our school of thought would have stayed away from us. But these people and their likes are the ones who turn people away from God and from us, who alter the words of God and our words, and who distort the words of God and our words. So, away with them and may they be destroyed!" And what a wretched fate awaits them! They only sought to hasten the spoils they obtained from the wealth of those they provoked and deceived among us. They have indeed attained what they sought, followed, and hastened. That is their portion, which they aimed for and desired, and it suffices them as compensation for the reward from God, which they sought, and for His

• fire, His blazing torment, and His punishment as recompense for what they did

Part Twenty-Two

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Words spoken in a gathering on humility before God Almighty and 336 fulfilling His commandments

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: The Eid al-Fitr holiday arrived, preceded by a great storm, and there was much mud and clay. This was mentioned to Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, along with the mud, clay, and water in the prayer area and on the road leading to it. They thought he would perform the Eid prayer in the mosque. He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: Whatever happens, it is necessary to fulfill God's obligation in the open, as He, may His glory be exalted, commanded and as His Messenger, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, established. He then mentioned the hadith of the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, in which he mentioned the Night of Power in Ramadan and said: "I saw myself prostrating in water and mud." Afterwards, it rained, and the mosque became flooded. The Messenger of God, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, prayed and finished the prayer, and the mud and water had left their mark on his

• forehead and nose from his prostration in it

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: This is the least that should be done for the sake of God, and even more than that. By God, if we were to crawl on our knees through this mud, and it were something that would please God and be accepted from us, we would do it. The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: "When you hear the call of my family, hasten to it, even if you have to crawl through snow and fire." If God Almighty has made this obligatory for us, His servants, and we are but a creation of His, whom He has favored and blessed with His grace, then how can we be lax in what is due to Him from us and from all

of creation, may His name be glorified, or consider the hardship that comes to us for His sake to be too great?

• God forbid that we should be too proud to worship Him or too reluctant to obey Him

He, peace be upon him, went out, and the people went out the next day, wading through water and mud. They did not return until they were covered in it and their clothes were soaked with it. It was a scene that

• pleased God, from his friend and from those who followed his path, God willing

Words on a situation in which the saint of God wept, some of whom 237 turned away from his command

He said, "This was the Eid, and God had given him power over Muhammad ibn Wasul, the one who claimed the imamate of the Muslims and called himself Commander of the Faithful, and over Ibn Bakr, the ruler of Fez, who was ungrateful for his favor and ungrateful for his kindness. They were both imprisoned at that time in the palace's portico. Their arrival was at the end of Sha'ban, and people thought they would be killed upon arrival. When they were spared, it was said that they would be killed on the day of Eid al-Fitr. When he departed and entered his palace, he brought them before him. They stood before him as he stood on his horse with the spear in his hand. They kissed the ground and stood. He said to them, 'Which would have been better for you: to be today in your current state of disobedience and enmity, or to be today among our allies and those who follow us, fulfilling your Lord's obligation with us, or to remain where you were, obeying us in the obedience that God Almighty has prescribed for you and all His creation, while you and your companions remain safe and

""? secure

Ibn Wasul did not understand what he said, and I think fear and panic overwhelmed him. He said, "But what we are in, my master, is better." The Commander of the Faithful smiled when he realized that he had not understood him. I think the poor fellow thought that he was being addressed in the same way as before, for the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said to him before, on the day he brought him before him, "By God, you are in this state you are in, even if you were in captivity and bondage, better than what you were doing in disobeying God by going as you went and calling yourself by what you called yourself, even if you dislike what you are doing today." He said, "It is as the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) said." I think he thought that

• the speech the Commander of the Faithful had given him in this situation was the same

So he turned away from him when he saw that he did not understand his words, and he turned to Ibn Bakr and said, "O Ibn Bakr, God gave us power over you while you were in your error. We showed you favor and released you from captivity and sent you back to your land, but you did not appreciate the favor. Rather, you were ungrateful for the blessings and seized control of the land without us, and you called for allegiance to others. And you say, regarding what has reached us from you, 'These Fatimids'—meaning those in your region—you appease one of them with a little wine and two citrons, which you give him as a gift. You mean that we will not be satisfied with anything less than much from you. If you had any sense, you would have known that whoever is satisfied with what you have described is like you in this situation or worse. I wish you had shown us some respect or had at least offered us a citron, perhaps to win us over with it, as you claimed you won over those you won over. But you opposed us and severed ties with us. Then our armies came to you, and you pretended to be obedient and closed the gates of your city to them. You did not go out to our servant, the commander of our army, who asked you to send your son to be with us. You gestured to a black man before you and said to my messenger to you, 'If he asked me for a hair from this man's head...' You gave him the black sheep, and he fought our soldiers and killed our allies, then you write to us that there was a murmuring between you and the commander, and you ask us to replace our allies with you. Do you think that if you had angered some of your wives and treated them in the same way you treated us, they would have been pleased with you?

? So, you wretch, you treat us in this way, and you dare to act with such audacity towards us

He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said such an angry statement to him, while holding the spear, turning it in his hand, its point being from the direction of the wicked Ibn Bakr. Many of those present thought that he would send it to him, so much so that those who were standing beside him moved aside. The disappointed one fell silent and was astonished, and the most he could say was, "My master, I am your servant,

"

• and I have erred

Then he turned to them and said, "What would you have done to the one who took your place with you, if God had given each of you power over him as He gave me power over you?" They remained silent. He looked

at Ibn Wasul and said, "Tell me, and God is witness to what is in your heart, what would you have done in that

"? situation

He said, "Who am I to be compared to a slave of the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him)?

"? How then could I compare myself to him in any of his actions

Then the horse of the Commander of the Faithful reared up and urinated. Many of those around him moved away, and Ibn Wasul, who was opposite him, moved aside slightly, as some of the horse's urine flowed

"? towards him. The Commander of the Faithful said to him, "Why are you disgusted by the horse's urine

He remained silent, so he said, "Tell me about that, and don't worry, for you will see many of our

" .slaves do the same as you did

" .He said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we have been told that it is impure

"? He said, "Why did you say it was unclean

.He said that because its meat is not eaten, and since its meat is not eaten, its urine is impure

He said, "How can its meat not be eaten? Or have you not heard that it is sold in Muslim

"? slaughterhouses in many of their cities

"? Then he looked at me and said, "What do you say about that, Nu'man

I said, I say about it as my masters said, and what we narrated from them on the authority of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, that Ali said: The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, passed by a man from the Ansar, and in front of him was a horse that was struggling. So the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said to him, "Slaughter it, and your reward will be doubled

" .by your slaughtering it and your seeking reward from God for it

"? He said, "O Messenger of God, do I have any part of it

He said, "Yes, give us a gift if you wish." So he slaughtered it and sent a thigh of it as a gift to the

.Messenger of God

He, peace be upon him, said: So the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, ate from it

.and fed us

I said, and based on this, most of the common people permit the slaughter of horses and the eating of their meat. As for the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), they permit the slaughter of those that are crippled and whose life is hopeless. This is the case with the one described as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) ordering to be slaughtered when he was plotting against himself. They do not permit the slaughter of healthy, sound horses, based on the words of God Almighty: "And [He created] horses, mules, and donkeys for you to ride and [as] adornment," and His words: "And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war." So they permitted the slaughter of those that are crippled and whose life is hopeless, and the eating of their meat, based on the hadith. They refrained from slaughtering the sound and healthy ones based on the text, because of the honor of Islam, the strength of its people, and their adornment when they are sound. If

they are crippled and hopeless, this meaning is removed, and their slaughter and the eating of their meat becomes permissible, based on the hadith and the words of God Almighty: "And whatever the Messenger has given you - take it; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from it." Many hadiths have been narrated from the

.Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) regarding this

Then he smiled, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and turned his horse's reins and entered through the private gate into his palace. Tables had been set for the people, and the steward of the food, Ibn Wasul and Ibn Bakr, were sent to a room and a table was brought to them, and they ate and were sent back to

.their places

People spoke of what the Commander of the Faithful had done to them, and some of them told me,

" . "We thought nothing but that Ibn Bakr would be killed

I said, "If he were killed now, wouldn't he have already passed away and found relief from his fate, even if he was destined for God's wrath? But our pleasure lies in looking at him, witnessing such scenes, and

subjecting him to such reproaches until God's chosen one sees him in his place—the best of desires and

”
• hopes

.Mention of a vision seen by Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers be upon him .238

He said, “I had already compiled the biography of al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, from the very beginning when God Almighty bestowed the Imamate upon him, and what God granted him and the nation during his reign, from the blessings and happiness of his Imamate, and the joys that followed, and the most abundant good deeds and gifts, in a metered rajaz verse with rhymed couplets. God Almighty increased this and it accumulated in such a way that, due to my many responsibilities, I was unable to complete and compile it. I had hoped to reach a portion of this during my lifetime, and that it would reach my descendants and their descendants after me, through the long life of God's chosen one, Mu'izz, and the perpetuation of his glory

”
• and authority, and the continuation of God's blessings upon him

I entrusted my son Ali with making something of that so that I might see it as I had hoped. He undertook that task and made doors from it that I found to be fine, and I presented them to Al-Mu'izz, may

• God's prayers be upon him, and he approved of them and appreciated their meaning

Then he turned to me, may God's blessings be upon him, looking at it, and said, “This reminded me of something in it, a dream I had last night. It was as if the accursed Muzaffar had once told me that whoever was far from the Commander of the Faithful was safer than whoever was near him, because it was said that whoever was near the sun would have his sight blinded. Last night, in a dream, I mentioned this to him, and he said to

”
• me, ‘Who did you mention it to?’ or ‘The wicked one told you this

I said yes

He said, “Undoubtedly, God afflicted him with your wrath and brought him to lasting disgrace and great affliction, since this was his belief in you and this was his state with you. He was blind to your light in his life and will face God's punishment after his death.” Then he turned to me and said, “The sun only blinds weak and feeble eyes, but sound and healthy eyes draw from its light. If light were to blind, it would blind whoever is

”
• in it

”
• I said, "My lord, the one who said this is known

• He said, "Yes, indeed, Sharif is well-known," and smiled

• I said that this is a type of speech used by the ancients

• He said yes, but the substance is the cause of his corruption, as you can see

I said, "Praise be to God who has illuminated His chosen one with the light of His wisdom and favored

”
• us with His nearness and the benefit of receiving from Him

Hadiths in a gathering on the virtue of being close to the friends of God, 239 • may God's blessings be upon them

He said, and I heard him, may God's blessings be upon him, say to one of his close servants who had come to him from Mahdia, where he had been residing. He had ordered him to stay in his presence and had singled him out for closeness because of his long-standing sainthood, his health, and his chastity: “You will not lack, by your closeness to us, any good you will gain, any joy you will be envied for, any happiness you will find in its arrival, and any blessings you will acquire and benefit from. Just as no one who draws near to our enemy and takes his place among his close servants will lack God's wrath, curse, disgrace, and loathing in this world, according to what he deserves. And what He has prepared for them in the Hereafter is more severe and wretched, and the punishment of the Hereafter is more intense and lasting. Likewise, what He has prepared for our friends and for those who are blessed by our closeness and our pleasure, as a reward in the Hereafter, is

”
• greater and more magnificent than what they imagine or what their hopes aspire to

So the man and those present who had been singled out for closeness kissed the ground before him, and
▪ they praised God for the favor He had bestowed upon them and thanked Him for it to the best of their ability

Hadiths in a gathering on the ugliness of treachery and the evil 240 consequences for those who commit it

He said, and mentioned one day a group of people who owed money for something they took to the east, concealing and hiding it, and cheating with it. So God revealed it to them and showed it to His guardian.

▪ And some of those who were in charge of something similar mentioned this

Then Sal'a said, "May God curse treachery and those who practice it! How wretched their condition is, and how little they consider their own well-being! If these people had asked us to relinquish what they acquired through treachery, we would have done so without withholding it from them or from others, even many times over. In fact, this year we have relinquished most of what they are obligated to give. We have not even bothered to ask any of them, whether we know them or not, whether they deserve it or not. What compels them to treachery, and what compels us to it, except perhaps the corrupt nature that prevails within them and the base ambition upon which their very being is built? May God curse them and disgrace them! By God, we relinquish much of what is rightfully ours and due to them and others, even if they do not ask us to relinquish it. We

"

▪ instruct those in charge of this for us to overlook their actions and refrain from scrutinizing them

That man said, "By God, the servant of the Commander of the Faithful is following his master's command among them, and you are as God Almighty said, descendants of one another. And the Mahdi, may God's blessings be upon him, used to command me to do that, saying, 'If we were to demand our full rights, the

" "

▪ generosity with which God created us would be lost

Al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: It is as he, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said. There is no limit to what people can attain in terms of their satisfaction, and most of them are not satisfied with what God has allotted them, so how can they be satisfied with us? But we will not neglect what is good as long as we can and are able, and God will reward us for that with what we hope for from His good reward, and He will reward those who deny our blessings and are ungrateful for our kindness as they

▪ deserve from Him

words of forgiveness that took place in the council 241

He said, and Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned the virtue of forgiveness, pardon, and mercy, and what God had instilled in him of these qualities. He praised God for what He had bestowed upon him and said, "We have a tradition from our forefathers, peace be upon them, that Moses, son of Imran, peace be upon him, while he was praying in a secluded place, and he had prostrated for a long time, when an enemy of God passed by him and placed his foot on the back of Moses, son of Imran, while he was

"

▪ prostrating, and trampled him severely, and then he went away quickly so that he would not pursue him

Moses, peace be upon him, raised his head, pained by the severity of his blow, and said, "What is wrong with you? May God not forgive you! He, the Almighty, is not the one who would forgive you for such a

"

▪ thing

Then God Almighty revealed to him, "O Moses, do you presume upon Me and assert that I will not forgive a sin committed by one of My servants? This would cause them to despair of My mercy and prevent them from receiving what I have decreed for My creation. O Moses, you have committed a grave sin by presuming upon Me in this matter. This servant of Mine, who has wronged himself, has committed a grave sin against you, and it is in My justice to punish him with a painful punishment. If you presume upon Me that I will not forgive him, then I will surely contradict your assumption about Me and what you have asserted regarding the severing of My mercy, and I will forgive him. I have already forgiven him because of what you have done in

"

▪ this matter

So Moses sought forgiveness from his Lord and turned to Him in repentance for what he had done, and

▪ he begged for His mercy and repented to Him

Words in a gathering on fulfilling God's rights, the extent of the effort 242

He said, and mentioned one day, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, a statement he heard from some of his opponents who hated his days, may God curse them. If he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, had willed, he could have destroyed them, but God Almighty had created him with forbearance,

▪ forgiveness, pardon, and mercy

He said, "I have heard that they say, 'He intended such and such but could not do it, and he intended such and such but could not attain it, nor was he able to do it.' May God curse them! How wretched is their condition, and how little insight and knowledge they possess regarding what God has commanded His Messengers and the Imams from among His servants to do, appointing them and employing them in this matter. It is as if they do not believe in the prophethood of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, nor are they of his faith, nor do they claim to follow his call. If they were sincere in this, they would be, but they claim to be Muslims. They know that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, intended something other than what he could do, and he turned away from it and did not achieve what he intended. He sent someone other than his mission, and he was defeated by him. He encountered someone other than his enemy, and he did not prevail against him. Rather, God has commanded His Messengers, whom He commanded to wage jihad, and the Imams, whom He appointed to uphold His religion, to exert their utmost effort and exert their full capacity in what He has obligated them to do in fighting His enemies. Therefore, He appointed them and employed them, so they exert themselves in this, leave their homelands, spend what He has entrusted to them of their wealth, and achieve what they are able to accomplish." And He enabled them, and this is what He imposed upon them. He did not impose upon them that they should overcome the enemies and leave none of them alive, but rather that is up to them and their enemy. It is up to Him, may His praise be exalted, to grant them victory over whomever He wills to grant them victory over, and to preserve from among the enemies of God those whom He wills to preserve for what He, may His glory be exalted, desires, whether to rescue them to guidance or to grant them respite so that they may increase in sin, as God Almighty said. And if God had willed, He could have annihilated those who disbelieved in Him and turned away from His allies, and brought His punishment closer to them. But He tested His servants with this, as He, the Almighty, said: "And if God had willed, He could have taken vengeance upon them, but [He permitted it] to test some of you by means of others. And those who are killed in the cause of God - never will He let their deeds go astray. He will guide them and set their affairs right and admit them to Paradise, which He has made known

"

▪ to them

He promised those who uphold His rights and strive in His cause what He had promised them of reward, and He did not require of them anything other than carrying out His command and exerting effort in what He ordered them to do. But this is not said to beasts in the persons of humankind; rather, beasts are better than them and more guided in their path. As for them, they are exposing themselves to God's wrath, which may befall them at our hands, and that is not far from the wicked. And as for us being forbearing with their ignorance and overlooking the ugliness of what they do, God is not unaware of what the wrongdoers do. And it is not for us to transgress His command or to disobey His judgment, but rather we should be patient with what we have been harmed as the resolute ones before us were patient, and as God commanded Muhammad, His Prophet, our ancestor, peace be upon him. For He said, and He is the most truthful of speakers: "So be patient, as were the resolute ones among the messengers, and do not be impatient for them. And the punishment of God for the wrongdoers is not far off." Rather, His seizure is as He said: "When He seizes the cities while they are

"

▪ committing wrong, indeed, His seizure is painful and severe

Words in a council on leaving the rights of God 243

He said, and a man who attended the council of wisdom, one of those who had joined the call of the saint of God, who had come from the East, asked me: To whom should I pay what is due from my wealth if I

? return to my country, not knowing anyone there who is in charge of the affairs of the believers

So I said that the saints of God will not leave any place on earth without a wing for them, in which there is an intermediary between them and those of His servants who are with them. So when you reach your

•place, you will know that, God willing

Then I mentioned this to al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, and he said, "Yes, what you said is true. Most people are ignorant of our matter and think that we only concern ourselves with those we have seen and who were in our presence. If that were the case, we would have neglected those who came after us. God Almighty has made it obligatory upon all His creation to acknowledge our authority, know us, follow our commands, migrate to us, and strive towards us from near and far, just as He has made it obligatory upon them, in His apparent command, to perform the pilgrimage to His Sacred House from all directions. But out of compassion for them and because of what we hope for and desire of their guidance, we have appointed on every island of theirs someone to guide them to us and show them the way to us. Some know this, and some do not. Although we rarely find someone who fulfills this duty and whomever we deem suitable, our only responsibility is to exert effort and convey the message. God guides whomever He wills of His servants, has mercy on whomever He

"
•loves of His creation, and chooses for our authority whomever He chooses from His party

words in keeping with what was mentioned about the Imam al-Qa'im, 244 ***•peace be upon him***

He said, "I accompanied Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, on some of his journeys, and he mentioned Al-Qa'im, peace be upon him, his special favor towards him, his love for him, and his closeness to him, and what Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, had been tested with by the length of time he kept his affair

"
•secret and refrained from revealing it until the time of his passing drew near

Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: I entered upon him after Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, had revealed himself and appointed him to the people, twelve years after the day he was informed of this. This was three days before his death, peace be upon him. He had some of his women with him, so he ordered them to move away from him. Then he drew me close to himself, embraced me, kissed me between the eyes, and wept. I

•wept because of his weeping, and I do not know what made him weep

Then he said to me, "My son, your master and lover will leave you after three days," and he made a

•gesture with his hand

I said, "Rather, may God preserve the Commander of the Faithful and extend his life, and may he come

"
•before us

He said, "Listen to what I tell you. The thing I fear most for you from your father is what he knows of my preference for you and your preference for my command over his, and your inclination towards me rather than him. And what I know of his inclination towards the mothers of your brothers—I fear, with the fear of one who cares for you, that he might turn away from you in this matter and give it to one of them. But God willing, God will not do that. However, whenever you see him showing preference over you or turning away from you, be patient with the patience of one whom God has placed in your position and established in your place. For you, by God, are the one worthy of it. Were it not for your young age today, I would not have mentioned it to you, and soon you will be in it. So I advise you to fear God, to bear what you have been burdened with, and to be patient with the hardship that comes your way. Your brothers are your brothers, so treat them well today and

"
•tomorrow

Then he was overcome with weakness and bewilderment, so he stopped speaking for a while. Then he sighed deeply and said, "The brothers—and what brothers they are!—their situation is dire because of the hardship he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, endured in managing their affairs." Then I became afraid and saw that the conversation had exhausted him, so I got up and went out. There was a woman behind the door who had overheard the conversation. She was one of the mothers of the children, and she congratulated

•me on what she had heard. And the third of them passed away, as he, peace be upon him, had said

In some of the wonders of Al-Mu'izz, may God's prayers be upon him 245

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah intended to leave the capital to inspect some districts and dig canals to bring them to the capital. After he had prepared for this and the time he intended to leave drew near, news came that locusts had appeared over the city and were swarming in every place they landed. This broke his resolve to leave, and he said, "If we leave and settle in a city, and then these locusts descend upon them, we fear that some

■ of them will take an ill omen from us and make a claim about it

He remained in that state for several days until the locusts arrived and spread throughout the lands, causing widespread destruction. Then they departed, and the rain had ceased, the land was barren, the crops had withered and turned to dust, and were on the verge of ruin. Whenever the locusts descended upon a place, rain would fall with them, bringing more than enough to quench thirst and revive the crops, but not beyond what was immediately before them. When they moved on from that place, the rain would cease and the land would clear until they reached the next place, which was in the same state of drought and barrenness as the previous place.

Upon their arrival, clouds would form and bring abundant rain as long as they remained there until they

■ departed

And so it continued throughout his journey and stay until he departed. Then the crops and fruits grew and ripened, the blight was averted, and they were safe. The people saw such blessings and good fortune from his journey that they were amazed, and his stature grew in their eyes. God Almighty rewarded him for what he had expected from their ill thoughts about him and their superstition about his arrival, due to what he had

■ witnessed of his good intentions towards them and his positive view of them

Words spoken in a gathering in the blessed presence of the saints of 246 ***■ God, may God's prayers be upon them***

It was said that Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, appointed a group of people one day to various positions for which he had chosen them, positions they had not held before. Those present spoke about this, thanking him for his appointment and for mentioning their names. They prayed that God would enable him to appoint the descendants of his saints in the east and west of the earth in the same way. They said, "We hope that God will guide them to what pleases His chosen ones and that He will not disappoint his expectations of

■ them and his selection of them for what He chose and selected them for

He, peace be upon him, said: We never look upon a servant with a kind gaze without that becoming evident in him, for our gaze upon him is a blessing from God Almighty. As long as he recognizes the favor of the blessing bestowed upon him, acknowledges our favor with him, seeks our pleasure, and fears our displeasure, he remains on the right path. To the extent that he believes in and strives for this, he ascends in rank, rises in knowledge, and increases in virtue and goodness. But when desire overcomes him, misery descends, greed takes hold, and avarice grows strong, they turn away from our command, become ignorant of our rights, disregard our precepts, and transgress our limits. Their sole concern becomes themselves, and they surrender to their own desires and rely on their own power and strength. Thus, their light is dimmed, their circumstances worsen, their deeds become evil, and Satan gains control over them, leading them astray and blinding their eyes. They lose both this world and the Hereafter; that is the manifest loss. We do not appoint whomever we appoint, nor do we employ whomever we employ, except with the intention of seeking good for them and desiring it for them. Few are those who aid those we love and obey our commands. If they did, they would be happy and attain more than they sought, hoped for, or desired. They will attain the best of this world and the hereafter, and achieve our satisfaction and their own satisfaction, and fulfill their hopes and our hopes for them. I ask God to grant them success in this and to help them in it, for through this goodness will be

■ perfected, blessings will abound, and joys will be encompassed

Part Twenty-Three

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Words spoken in a gathering awaiting God's promise to His saints, may 247 ***.God's prayers be upon them***

He said: Messengers from a group of preachers from various distant islands came to Imam al-Mu'izz li-

Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him. They arrived at his presence on the same day, and he admitted them. They kissed the ground before him, rubbed their cheeks against it, and praised and thanked God profusely for bringing them to him and showing them his face. They delivered the letters of the preachers who

▪ had sent them and the deeds of the believers they carried before them

He, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, asked them about the conditions of those who succeeded him among the preachers and believers, and how things were going for them. They mentioned the goodness of their circumstances, the uprightness of their affairs, and their high standing and prominence, for which they praised God and thanked Him profusely for what He had bestowed upon them. They also mentioned their success in dealing with the rulers who had seized power in the lands, and how these rulers treated them

▪ with respect and kindness, honoring and glorifying the cause of God's chosen one

Some of those present said, "What prevents the Commander of the Faithful from going to the East, and what stands in his way, is only that he has not yet resolved to do so. But if he had resolved to do so, nothing

II

▪ would have stood in his way

He, peace be upon him, said: We did not delay in this except in anticipation of the time when God promised us the appearance. Had that time arrived, we would not have failed to establish God's command, which He appointed us to carry out. This is not for worldly gain, from which we seek to accumulate wealth. Had that been our desire, we would have possessed from the generous wealth God has bestowed upon us, wealth which we do not see in the hands of those who have usurped our authority. We would have subjected ourselves and our followers to hardship and toil for the fleeting pleasures of this world. However, God has entrusted us with His religion and placed us in charge of the affairs of His servants. We must therefore dedicate ourselves to

▪ what He has appointed us to and strive in what pleases Him

The Mahdi, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, sent his beloved son, the one who will rise up, to Egypt twice, knowing full well that it would not be conquered by him. However, he wanted to emphasize God's proof to them through his call and spare no effort in achieving his goal, even though this may have sown doubt in the minds of some of the vulnerable regarding his mission. Therefore, we disliked introducing a similar

▪ situation to them by taking action at an inopportune time

Al-Mansur Billah told me that he met Al-Qa'im (peace be upon him) when he returned from his second visit to Egypt. Al-Mahdi Billah had traveled to Mahdia after his departure. He said, "When Al-Qa'im (peace be upon him) reached the gate of Mahdia, he looked at him and said, 'There is no need in Jacob's heart that he has fulfilled.' He entered, and I entered with him to see Al-Mahdi Billah (peace be upon him) at that time. He greeted him and embraced him, then said, 'There is no need in Jacob's heart that he has fulfilled.' It was as if they both spoke these words together, may God's blessings be upon them both, with one tongue and from one

II

▪ vision

Then al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) said: By God, if He had intended good for the Abbasids, He would have ended their rule at that time through him—meaning al-Mahdi (may God bless him and grant him peace)—while they were at the height of their power, their authority complete, and their glory at its peak. He would not have shown them the humiliation and degradation they see today at the hands of the worst of creation, the Daylamites, who have subjugated them, humiliated them, trampled their land, seized what was in their hands, and become their superiors. Indeed, the greatest calamity is the domination of the base and the wicked. As for those who are overcome by the people of truth and the righteous, that is less of a trial and easier for them in their affliction. God did not intend by what He did to them except to make it a lesson for those who would take heed, and to make those who remember and see the insignificance of this world and what is in it know, since such base people have taken control of it. He took vengeance through them, the worst of His creation, against those who denied His blessings, took what was not rightfully theirs, and usurped the place of God's chosen ones, which He had ordained for them on His earth, just as He destroyed Nimrod, son of Canaan, with a mosquito, as has been reported from His command. Indeed, if God Almighty had willed to make the earth shine for us from where we were, He would have made it shine, but He did not. He already knew what our ancestor Muhammad, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said about him: that the sun will rise from the west. He disturbed us from our abode and set us in the west,

then raised us from where He promised to raise us. He moves us wherever He wills on His earth until He makes

•us inherit it all, as He promised us in His Book, by His grace and favor

Words spoken in a council concerning God's creation of His saint 248

He said, "There was a preacher on another island in a distant region calling people to the Prince of the Saints of God, following preachers who had preceded him in the same place. A great multitude of people from that region, mostly Zoroastrians, had responded to him, though Islam had long been widespread among them. The Commander of the Faithful, al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace), learned that this other preacher had introduced something new among them. He had invited many Zoroastrians, who remained on their religion and had not converted, and he left them as they were, permitting what God had forbidden and doing what God had prohibited, such as marrying close relatives and consuming unlawful drinks and foods. This was a transgression against the limits set by God Almighty. He had entrusted God's trust, may His name be glorified, to those with whom it was not permissible to entrust it, all for the sake of worldly gain he sought to acquire from them and to increase what his ill-conceived opinion of them made appealing. Then he went further, and then he went further, until he permitted these forbidden things to some of his followers, both

II

•Muslims and others

The Commander of the Faithful was greatly distressed by this matter, and he disavowed it before God, cursed it, and neglected the matter. He had sent messengers to him, concealing his true intentions from them. The Imam questioned the messengers about it, and they informed him. There were good people among them, so the Imam, peace be upon him, made them aware of the enormity of what he had committed. They disavowed him and repented to God's representative for following him in his command. He called them to Islam and

•purified them

Then he asked them and those present from the region who were not among them about the best among them. They named a man for him, so he wrote to him instructing him to work on the people of that island and to inform those he trusted among the sincere believers before him of this, to use stratagems to kill the enemy of God who had apostatized from his religion and introduced innovations, to abolish his innovations, and to establish the religion of God as God and His saints had commanded. He sent those messengers with this and with a letter to him in reply to his letter and with what he, may God bless him and grant him peace, had deemed appropriate to write to him. We learned of this at the time from the close associates of his council, who were relieved of their distress by this, out of his generosity and favor. I have mentioned a part of this in what has

•preceded in this book

We were anxiously awaiting what we feared might happen in that region, with the apprehension of the compassionate. We said, "These are people who have indulged in forbidden things; what will deter them from it now that it has become widespread and a religion among them?" Our fear for the one to whom the letter was addressed outweighed our hope for the destruction of the corrupt and deviant one. However, we relied on God's trust in His chosen one, believing that, as He has always done, He would grant him what he hoped for and expected. No sooner had the messengers arrived at the place and departed than other messengers came from that direction with letters and trusts. He, may God's blessings be upon him, admitted them, and they kissed the ground before him and rubbed their cheeks in supplication. They praised and thanked God for bringing them to him, for drawing them near, and for keeping those present in his assembly away from him, as was appropriate for a place of secrecy in which he was taken with them. He asked them about the situation, and they spoke at length, which we could hear, but we did not listen intently, fearing it might be something inappropriate for us to hear. We watched his face light up at what he heard and he praised God profusely until they finished speaking

•and departed

II

•He turned to us beaming, beaming, and pleased, and said, "You have heard what the people said

We said we heard it but we didn't understand it

He said, "Yes, so listen to him." They mentioned that God Almighty had multiplied the followers of our cause and our allies before them, and that even though this wicked man had spread what he spread among them, it became widely known about him, and only those he trusted and those close to him were aware of it. They said that God Almighty had sent a king from among the kings of the region, a king with strength, power, resources, and men, who responded to the call with his followers and joined the party of the believers. Their cause was strengthened through him, and they made it known and proclaimed my name, making it famous,

writing it on banners, and preaching it from the pulpits. The kings of the region objected to this and came with vast armies against them, whose number was countless, and the number of believers did not even reach a tenth of it. When they saw this, they gathered in one place and dug a trench against them. No sooner had their enemy reached it than they, due to their overwhelming numbers, attacked it and stormed it upon them. That king who had responded ordered his companions and the group of believers to charge, and his insight was sound and his intentions pure. They said to him, "Whom shall we charge against when we have as many enemies as the grains

"? of sand before us

He said, "Do not look at the multitudes before you, but look to the heavens, for He who is above is with you, and He is your helper and supporter." So they charged with sincerity and pure intentions, and their group charged with them, and the multitudes of their enemy were routed before them, and God granted them victory. They killed countless numbers of them and seized their wealth, weapons, and livestock, filling their hands with it. God scattered their enemy's forces, and those around them submitted to their authority and obeyed their command. Many cities submitted to them, and they appointed governors over them and openly proclaimed our message there. They established for themselves a strong stronghold in a lofty, impregnable

▪ fortress, where they settled and made it their home of migration

And the accursed, deviant caller—they believed in obeying his authority and magnified his power, for he called to us. But no sooner had the messengers we sent on his behalf reached the outskirts of the island, and there remained between them and the place but a month's journey, than God Almighty decreed for the wicked one what we desired, without hardship or difficulty. His mule struck him, and death overtook him in it before he could appoint anyone to his position or appoint anyone to take his place. Thus, his position would have been filled, and God would have relieved us of his burden, and we attained, in his chastity, what we desired from him,

▪ by His grace and favor, and by what we had accustomed him to of His good custom

When the enemy of God perished, the preachers gathered to decide who should take his place until our time. They chose and agreed upon the man we selected and appointed. We wrote to him, as God Almighty willed, to unite their ranks, strengthen their word, and make their cause prevail over their enemy, so that they might establish him over them and send messengers to inform us of their plan. That man was greatly impressed by their decision and said to them, "Since you have agreed upon me, listen to me." They replied, "Yes, we will listen and obey you." He then chose four of them and said to them, "You will be in charge of everyone, and each preacher will be responsible for the people of his own faith. I will be the one to deliver the group's message to the Presence. Whatever the guardian of God commands, we will obey. Whoever he appoints for us, we will

"

▪ listen to him and obey him

He chose men to come with him to us, and he arrived. He had only been gone a few days when our messengers met him. He rejoiced and was delighted to see them and asked them about the situation. They delivered our letter to him and our letter to the group of preachers, containing our instructions regarding the traitor. He then returned to his place and sent the men who had been with him back with what he had brought to

▪ us, as well as the letter from the believers in the region who had received the letter

He, may God's blessings be upon him, took the two books and read them to us himself until the end. We heard from the man's words in his book, and we found not a single inappropriate word or corrupt meaning in it. We were blessed by the eloquence of his words and meanings, based on what we had learned from the guardian of God regarding his upbringing and his mention of his joy and delight, and what the guardian of God's affairs had led to in what he had commanded and revived of God's religion. They also mentioned what they had denied concerning what had become widespread about the traitor's alteration of the religion and his

▪ commission of God's prohibitions, and they mentioned that in their book

The man reviewed his work in inviting those who had converted to Zoroastrianism to Islam as required, and then taking appropriate action against them after their conversion. He consulted with others on many of his

▪ actions and affairs

He mentioned an idol worshipped before him, to which the Magians made pilgrimages as Muslims make pilgrimages to the Sacred House of God every year. He studied its destruction and the erasure of its traces, and many other matters that would make the book too long to detail. The saint of God drew upon his knowledge

▪ and acquired from his light what he would act upon and spread among those before him

We cannot describe the joy we felt at this, nor its place in our hearts, because of what God had accomplished through His chosen one, facilitating it for him and granting him what He had created. We were

determined to kiss the ground before him, and we praised and thanked God to the best of our ability and asked

▪ Him to fulfill His promise to His chosen one and grant us access to him

And in the same way 249

It was said that messengers arrived at the presence of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, sent by one of his preachers from some of the islands. They carried money from him, including offerings from the believers and other things he had entrusted to them. They delivered this and his letter to him, peace be upon him. He told us that he had written in it, mentioning the stability of the situation before him, the general well-being of his followers, the righteousness of their circumstances, the goodness of their intentions, and their devotion to what pleases God Almighty and their Master, peace be upon him. He described how one of the tyrants of the Abbasid dynasty had risen up in his region, claiming authority for himself and seizing control of a part of the island where he resided. He then marched to one of its cities, whose ruler was among those who had embraced the pure call and responded to it. God granted him victory over

▪ the defeated and humiliated one, so he routed his army and captured him

He wrote to that preacher, informing him of his work, and asked his permission to correspond with the Wali of Allah. Permission was granted, and his letter arrived. The Commander of the Faithful read it to us, and we heard words acknowledging the virtue of the Wali of Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, submitting to

▪ his command, recognizing his right, and adhering to his guardianship

So I said, "My Lord, it is incumbent upon God to grant victory to one whose intention and belief are

"

▪ like this

He said, "Yes, by God, God will surely grant victory to those who follow us, as He promised in His clear Book, for they are His party, and He says, 'The most truthful of speakers is God. Indeed, the party of God are the successful ones.'" He praised this man and prayed for his well-being, mentioning his father's guardianship before him and his noble intentions and sound belief in God's chosen one. He prayed for mercy and forgiveness for him, saying, "This young man was expected to attain a high position during his lifetime, and signs of goodness were evident in him even as a child in his father's presence, one of his youngest sons." He recounted a trial that had befallen his father when he was nine years old, and how his older brothers had plotted to win over the masses. He denounced their actions, saying, "The one for whom our father stood is alive and has not died. If he has suffered what he has suffered, then the one whose right we have embraced and whose paths we have connected with, in his glory and authority, will not be deprived of good from God as long as we follow him, nor of the victory we anticipate and the relief we hope for, as long as our intentions are sincere towards him. So why should we subject ourselves to this humiliation?" Those who heard him that day were astonished by his words, given his young age and recent past. He said, in particular... His family, if he was a master in his father's place, then God Almighty, by His grace, removed that affliction from his father and restored to him the authority and glory that He had bestowed upon him. He informed him of what had happened, and he was

▪ impressed by it and approved of it. Then the outcome of his affair was what you have heard

▪ We praised God for what He bestowed upon His servant and thanked Him to the best of our ability

This and the two councils before it were in one council, so I said to him, "My master, if it were permissible for us to establish a tradition, we would have taken this day as a festival because of the joys that have been bestowed upon us on it. But the most we can do in this regard is to praise and thank God to the best of

"

▪ our ability and the limit of our strength

He said, "Yes, praise be to God for what He has bestowed upon us and given us and granted to our guardians, and I ask Him to inspire us to thank Him and to perfect His blessings upon us and upon them through

"

▪ His grace and mercy

words spoken in a gathering on the virtue of adhering to obedience 250

He said: When the victorious army returned from the land of Morocco, after God Almighty had granted victory to His chosen one over Ibn Wasul, the claimant to the Imamate, and Ibn Bakr, the usurper who had

seized control of Fez, and after God Almighty had granted victory to His chosen one over it and the surrounding lands of Morocco, the commander of that army took the sons of all the prominent people of Morocco and their leaders as hostages and brought them before him. He brought with him a leader who was obeyed and feared in that region, and among them he brought a group of Hasanid descendants who had risen to power among the tribes and claimed kingship. When they arrived at the capital, the Commander of the Faithful ordered that they be given lodging, clothed, provided for, and mounts, and that they be given generous provisions. They remained in this state for a while, then he showed them favor by releasing them and sending them back to their lands. He ordered that they be given gifts, robes of honor, and mounts, and sent with them to their fathers and the elders of

▪ their families robes, gifts, and saddles laden with gold

He ordered them to be brought in as they were leaving to bid him farewell. They lined up before him, and he drew the two most handsome men close to him and ordered them to sit. Then he said to them all, “You know what kindness we have shown you, and the favor we have bestowed upon you, and how we have pardoned your past transgressions. We have released you because of the fame we have received of you and the longing you have for one another. We have chosen to help you in this way and to bestow this favor upon you. So acknowledge this and receive it with gratitude, praiseworthy effort, and good obedience, so that you may learn more of us and our favor and kindness may continue to reach you. Let those of you who are closest to us by lineage know that this connection is only for those who adhere to obedience and hold fast to it. As for those who disobey God’s allies and oppose them, their lineage is severed from them, just as God severed the lineage of Noah’s son from him when he disobeyed Him. Were it not that God has made obedience to us obligatory upon all His creation, linking it to obedience to Him and His Messenger, and making it a religion by which His servants worship, and establishing us to uphold His religion, we would not care who among you obeys or disobeys. But we only desire...” Thus, we establish what God Almighty has commanded us to establish in His religion. Had this wicked Ibn Bakr obeyed us, we would not have withheld from him even a single axe, nor anything greater. We have no other purpose in this matter, nor in the entire world, to seek from those who have conquered us. We would not have set ourselves up to fight him were it not for what God Almighty has obligated us to do and for which He has employed us. Had this wicked man and those who clung to him and obeyed him in disobedience to us surrendered to us, they would not have exposed themselves to destruction and their sanctity to violation. Although what God Almighty has instilled in us of forgiveness and mercy prevented us from violating it, they exposed it to violation and the shedding of their blood and their utter destruction, as they themselves were targeted for bloodshed and destruction. But we pardoned when we had the power to do so, and we pardoned with the forgiveness and mercy that God Almighty has instilled in us. We spared those who remained of them and those whom God Almighty enabled us to overpower from among them all. We protected their sanctity and refrained from shedding their blood. This wicked man, whom God Almighty enabled us to overpower after his hostility and war against us, after our previous pardon and kindness towards him, has no worth in our eyes. His imprisonment and continued captivity are only necessary because we intend to perpetuate his anguish at being a captive, and to make him reflect upon God’s favor upon us and upon those whom we have favored and shown kindness to, including some of you and others like you who have chosen to obey us, submit to our command, and repent to us, and who have not persisted in disobeying us. He will then know that if God Almighty had intended good for him, He would have guided him to it and destined it for him, so that he might receive from our favor and kindness what others have received. In this, God Almighty will cause him grief and perpetuate his anguish and regret, so that he may receive from the pain of His punishment—may His praise be exalted—in this world a portion of what He has prepared for him before his eternal torment and his everlasting

▪ disgrace

By God, we do not seek from your obedience to us, your submission to our command, and your repentance and the repentance of others to us, any glory to add to our own glory, nor any worldly gain to increase it. God Almighty has already granted us this, bestowed upon us His favor and grace, and given us things we cannot adequately thank Him for. Our eyes do not look to anyone else, for we are content with what God Almighty has bestowed upon us of His abundant generosity and the best of His favors. He has honored us with the honor of His rightful authority and glorified us with the glory of His noble religion. He has connected us to the paths of our ancestor, Muhammad, His Prophet, peace be upon him. He has made us leaders of His creation, accepting only those who turn to Him and being pleased only with those He is pleased with. After what we possess of His favor and blessings, there is no greater blessing that we should seek from any of His servants. Nor is there any honor and status above what He has given us that we should hope to attain through anything we might gain from any of His creation. Indeed, God Almighty has made all of His servants dependent upon us, both in this world and the next. Praise be to God for what He has bestowed upon us and given us, and for His favors. We exert ourselves and our bodies, employ our allies, and spend our wealth in what God has employed us for and commanded us to establish, upholding the tenets of His religion, defending it, establishing His laws,

and reviving what the falsifiers have extinguished of His Sunnah and rulings. We call upon those who repent to

- this and urge them towards it, and we strive against those who turn away from it and disregard it

Know this from us, and let those you are destined to know it. You will not lack favor from God and from us. You have held fast to our rope and taken us as your allies. You will not escape God and you will not escape us if you turn away from our command and listen to our enemy. God's hand is supreme over you and over them, and our hand is supreme over all who disobey us and turn away from our command. This is a promise that God Almighty has made in His Book, and an obligation that He, Blessed and Exalted is He, has made obligatory in His command to those who might turn away from us, those who would replace us, and those

- who would prefer to our call, which is the call of our grandfather Muhammad, peace be upon him

And the tyrants of the Umayyad dynasty, towards whom this vile Ibn Bakr inclined, to whom he called, and whose falsehood he heeded, and whom he replaced with us, are the enemies of our ancestor Muhammad, peace be upon him, and his enemies, his curses, his outcasts, the party of Satan and his soldiers. And we are the party of God and His party, as the victorious ones have been promised, and the party of the Messenger of God and his purified progeny. By God, their base souls cannot stand firm, nor can they resist our favor, nor can they deny it, even if they display what they display of fighting and enmity towards us. Indeed, their hearts fear us, and their skins shudder at our presence. If the skin of one of their dead were brought near the skin of one of our dead, it would shudder, as it has been said that this happens to the skin of some animals when it is brought near the skin of some predators. And the awe and fear that God has placed in the hearts of our enemies is

- undoubtedly greater than what God has placed in the hearts of animals for predators

Who would equate us with the vile Umayyads, or anyone like them, except one whose heart God has blinded and whose wretchedness and misfortune have overcome him? So recognize the favor God has bestowed upon you and granted you, fulfill its obligations, and thank Him for what He has given you and for the favor He has granted you through His pleasure. By doing so, you will perpetuate His blessings and increase His favor. I did not say what I said out of arrogance, nor did I describe God's favor upon me out of pride. Rather, I said it in acknowledgment of His favor upon me and in gratitude for His blessings. I am the least of His servants in my own eyes, humbled before His greatness, and the most submissive to Him in submission and obedience to His

- power. And tears flowed, may God's blessings be upon him, and the fear of God appeared on his face

They kissed the ground before him, acknowledged his favor, thanked him as much as they could, and mentioned what they believed and knew about those they had left behind from among their guardians, and their

- belief in obeying him and his authority. Then they bid him farewell and departed

He had brought in before them the most prominent of his followers from Kutama and others, especially his slaves, and they attended the gathering. When the people left, those who were seated rose to stand, but he ordered them to sit, so they sat down. Those who were standing also stood up. He turned to them and asked about their circumstances, mentioning their deceased ancestors and praying for God's mercy upon them. He urged them to follow the example of their ancestors in their desire for wisdom, seeking it, listening to it, and

- persevering in it

She mentioned to him their adherence to this practice, their gathering every Friday, their celebration, and the gathering of others among their followers at the mosque to attend the Friday prayer and their eagerness to attend it. Then she mentioned their stay after the Friday prayer to listen to jurisprudence and debate it before the end of the afternoon prayer. Then she mentioned their gathering, all of them, and those who might have missed the Friday prayer, at the palace, which was well-established, to listen to wisdom, and what was apparent

- of their interest in it and their desire for it

He said, "This is what we desire from them and others, for their benefit, the betterment of their circumstances, and the completion of God's blessings upon them. They, and their forefathers who came before them, along with our forefathers who passed away—may God sanctify their souls—received little of the blessings we bestow upon these people, according to the dictates of time and the wisdom of their eras, peace be upon them, and our blessed era after them. They would take what they were permitted of knowledge and wisdom, and when they had received it, they would leave them, not resenting their request for more of God's bounty. We, in turn, give to the people of our time what is necessary to give them from the outset, and we increase it as we see their desire and acceptance. We bestow blessings upon them when they refrain from asking for more from us. We wish to make them all beacons of guidance, lamps of light to illuminate, and scholars

”

- from whom all creation learns

They kissed the ground before him and thanked him for his favor and the abundant blessings he had

▪ bestowed upon them

He, peace be upon him, said: I love for you and for others in particular, and for all who adhere to our guardianship in general, that what your hearts conceal towards us be in accordance with what your tongues utter in our presence. For God Almighty only rewards servants according to their intentions. Otherwise, it is like the one who heard the accursed, wretched Caesar when one of our men asked him to convey a need to us, and he turned away from him and said, "The needs of men are only fulfilled when they are needed." Today, our master has no enemy with whom he needs men, so he should conceal this from us, be pleased with his words, accompany him, and take him as his guardian afterward. Thus, he will have preserved what he pledged to us,

▪ and his intention will be valid for us

"

▪ They said, "May God curse whoever did that

He, peace be upon him, said: Yes, and may God have mercy on whoever conveys this advice to us, just as we accepted it from him, and he disapproved of it in his heart when he heard it from him. So, take heed of such advice from yourselves and do not take intermediaries from us. By God, we have not made you in need of that. Otherwise, tell me, which of you, great or small, has written to me, by night or by day, saying that he wants to enter upon me and I have prevented him, or to meet with me for a need he desires or a matter he wishes to convey to me, and I have prevented him or turned him away? By God, none of you will say anything, nor will anyone have any claim against me. So what justification do you have for lowering yourselves to someone below

?

me when I desire your elevation and honor

▪ They kissed the ground before him, thanked him, and acknowledged his favor and kindness

Part Twenty-Four

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Hadiths in a gathering praising and thanking God Almighty and 251 acknowledging His favor

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God be pleased with him, said: I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din

Allah, peace be upon him, say, after the conquest of the city of Fez had been announced to him, after most people had despaired of it due to the long siege of the city by the armies, the flight of those who fled from it, the strength of its inhabitants, the abundance of food there, and the ruggedness of its trenches and fortifications:

"This is from the words of God Almighty: 'Until, when the messengers despaired and thought that they had been lied to, Our help came to them.' By God, the messengers of God did not despair of His favor and His help for them, but they despaired of those who abandoned them and did not fulfill the duty to God Almighty that He had ordained in fighting their enemy. So they cut off their hope from creation and connected it to God, their

"

▪ Lord, and He gave them the help with which He had promised them

Whenever news of Fez reached Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, that caused those who heard of it to despair of its conquest, he would say, and we heard it from afar, "If such a thing comes, I will not rely on anyone but God, who has no partner, and I will not hope in anyone but Him. I am

"

▪ confident in His favor and His victory

Then, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he said when the victory came to him: "By God, I sometimes want to ask God Almighty for an increase in His bounty in such a matter, but I am ashamed to ask Him for that because of the abundance of what He has already bestowed upon me. Praise be to Him, He has no partner. And I sometimes ask God Almighty to grant my enemy a long life so that God may humiliate him for

"

▪ his sins and he may see and hear what God has done to me that will afflict and pain him

Then he, peace be upon him, said: Do you know what I intended by the letter I wrote recently to the people of Fez, these wretched ones? He had written them a letter of safe conduct if they repented and

• acknowledged us, but when it reached them, they rejected it and did not accept it

"

• We said, "God and His guardian know best

He said, "By God, I intended nothing by this but their destruction by establishing God's proof against them. Otherwise, I knew that if such a message came to them while they thought themselves strong, and that our armies were weary of remaining against them and some had deserted, and then something like this came to them from me, they would reject it. So I wanted it to be like the letter of the Messenger of God, peace be upon him, to the ruler of Persia, when he came to him and tore it up, so God tore up his kingdom. And like the letter of al-Mansur Billah, may God's blessings be upon him, to the accursed Mukhallad and his companions when he besieged them in the fortress of Kiana, when he wrote them safe passage, and they rejected his letter, so God Almighty gave him power over them as soon as possible. And that is what I intended with my letter that you

"

• saw, and it was as I intended, by the grace and favor of God

Then he praised God Almighty as He deserves and thanked Him for His favor to the best of his ability

• and within his capacity

A discussion in a council regarding the arrangement of workers' .252 ***•employment***

He, may God's blessings be upon him, said, mentioning some of the saints regarding certain actions, "We may intend something like this for someone we appoint, but he sees himself as above what we appointed him to, and he thinks we have fallen short in that. We do not intend anything by appointing any of our saints or others to a task we assign them except to honor and elevate them. Nothing that God Almighty has assigned us to do for Him is insignificant. Those we appoint should not despise it or consider themselves above it. We are God Almighty's agents over them. We only transfer people as they should be transferred in circumstances, from one state to another. Whoever is elevated by his competence and advice, we elevate him. And whoever sits idle

"

• should blame no one but himself

We should not begin with someone until we have tested them with their previous actions and their performance in lesser matters. For if we do so, we risk their destruction. It has been said that if a person throws something from their hand, from the chest down to the ground below, it is understood that they did not intend to break or damage it. But if they raise it higher, above their head, and throw it to the ground, it is clear that they intended to break and weaken it. This is an example of what we have said: we may give to someone as a test and trial. If we see that they fulfill their obligations, are grateful for them, and discharge their trust, we increase their reward. But if they fall short, we decrease it. This is God's way with His creation. He has ordained a reward for those who obey Him and a punishment for those who disobey Him. He said, "If you are grateful, I will surely

"

• increase you [in favor]; but if you deny [My favor], indeed, My punishment is severe

words in a gathering on the virtue of intention 253

He said, and it was mentioned to al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, by one of his preachers, one of the agents of al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, that he had conquered a city but found little there. He was saddened by this and sent word to his close companions in the army that was with him, saying to them, "This is a well-known city that we conquered by force, and as you see, we found nothing there to present to the guardian of God and preserve our dignity before him. If we do not do this, we will be under suspicion. What calamity could be greater than what we are experiencing today? Would that we had not conquered this city and had returned from it, and had not become a target of accusations and the words of the rebels and the envious!" He showed us great

• distress because of this

They said to him, "What troubles you about this, when you are certain of yourself and the soundness of your intentions? We, the soldiers, have acquired much booty, and we will bring it all to you. Order it to be sold

" .and send the proceeds

He said, "By God, this has given some solace to my heart, and I also have blessings and favors from

" .God's friend upon me that we add to that and adorn ourselves with

The people left him to gather the spoils, and he entered the house where he had stayed, which was the residence of the sultan of that city. He lay down on his bed to sleep, but sleep eluded him. He held a fan to cool himself and began to think about selling his belongings and adding to his wealth with the collected spoils. He was troubled by the thought of taking them from the hands of the saints, who had fought for them, even though he had permitted them to take them. He pondered this and, lost in thought, tapped the wall with the fan.

Suddenly, he heard the wall creak as the fan struck it. He awoke and investigated, finding that it did indeed creak, as if something were hidden behind it. He called for an axe and struck it, revealing a great wealth that had been hidden within, exceeding all expectations. It was brought out and poured before him, and he rejoiced, his

.sorrow vanishing

The people he had addressed brought him a portion of the spoils and said, "This is what we have; we have begun with it. Take it and go out to the people and speak to them about it. When they know that we have hastened to give what we have, they will hasten to give what they have." So he informed them of what he had gained, thanked them, returned what they had given him, and sent the money. The news of this reached the

.Mahdi, peace be upon him, and he appreciated his position

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said, and one of his close associates told me that he brought him into his house one day in the place where he was working, and he had taken out a large sum of money to send to Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, from what he had collected from the proceeds of his work. That man said to me, "I had never seen a thousand dinars gathered together before, so when I saw the money before

"?'? me, I was amazed by its magnitude. He said to me, 'Do you know why I sent it to you

I said no

He said, "This money is with me, and it is the most I could afford," and he mentioned its amount to me.

" . "We are only afraid that our master, peace be upon him, might consider it insignificant

The man, who was from that town, said, "When he said that, I feared that if he sent all that money, it would become an unwritten rule for the town, and its people would not be able to afford it. So I said, 'May God support you, this is a great sum of money, the like of which has never been sent from this town before. If you send it all at once, you will be doing yourself a disservice, and you will not be safe from something that might happen to you in which you will need the money and have nothing of it. You will not be able to provide for such a need in the future. If you do not send it all, you will have exposed yourself to criticism regarding some of this money, as none of the officials before you carried a portion of it. So limit it to twice what your predecessor carried, for that will demonstrate your generosity and thrift. Keep the rest for when you might need it and save

" . for what you send later if the money in your possession is insufficient

He said, and I saw him change his tone at my words. He lowered his head and remained silent for a while, then raised it to me angrily and said, "By God, were it not for my knowledge of your sincere advice and affection, I would have said that you intended me harm and would have punished you accordingly. But I have no doubt that you meant only good, though sometimes a person intends good but errs. Would you have thought it appropriate for me to betray our master, peace be upon him, and withhold his money, and lie about what I send him, saying, 'This is what I have gathered'? Where is his covenant with me? Where is his favor upon me? Where is his kindness to me? What did he expect from my advice and trustworthiness? By God, I will not leave a single grain of it without sending it. If I need anything, I will inform our master of my need, and I hope that God will make me independent of it. If I do not find such a thing in the future, I will send what I find and rely

" .on God, trusting in the good opinion of His servant regarding what I believe and intend

He sent all the money and needed nothing after that, and his income increased every year until he died

.in that state

Then al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said: "This is one whose intention and sincere advice

led him to happiness. Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, appreciated his actions and praised his conduct, even though he was not among the most devout believers. He had some shortcomings, which God, if He wills, will forgive him and others like him among our allies. The testimony of faith has purified him and cleansed him of

his past sins, along with the satisfaction of God's chosen one, due to his sincere advice, trustworthiness, and

■ competence

Words on the desirability of justice and thanking those who uphold it 254

It was said that al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, had appointed a man to a district in the Zab region. This man brought in a great deal of money, but this was accompanied by disparaging remarks and complaints from the people. The Wali of Allah, peace be upon him, was not convinced of this, but it caused him great distress. He dismissed that official from the region and appointed another in his place. At the end of the year, the new official returned with less money than his predecessor, accompanied by the judge of the region and its prominent figures, who thanked him. Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, ordered that he and the others be brought before him. He drew him near and the judge close as well. They spoke of his good conduct, and all of them thanked him and described the kindness he had shown them. Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, was pleased by this and said, "God knows that we have never appointed anyone except to do what you describe this man's actions to do. We do not accept anyone disobeying our orders, nor do we find any justification for neglecting what is required of us. But you, the people, do not believe us, nor do you inform us of what is truly happening. When one of you complains, another refutes him and thanks the one who complains. If you all were to tell us the truth..." The doubts we had about you were dispelled, and your affairs were set right. You found in us a fairness and justice that exceeded your hopes. But you yourselves brought weakness upon yourselves. So be truthful with us, and you will find truth with us. By God, we have never believed those who harbored false suspicions about us, nor have we ever placed our hopes in us with good intentions only to be disappointed. We desire for you more good than you desire for yourselves, and more than your fathers and mothers desire for you. We are more compassionate towards you than they are towards you. God is witness to our intentions in this

■ matter, for you and for all Muslims and those under our protection

So they thanked him and kissed the ground before him. He treated them well and sent them back to their country. He then appointed that governor over them after he had brought him close, favored him, honored

■ him, welcomed him, increased his work, expanded his authority, and strengthened his position

Words on the greatness of gratitude towards the friends of God and the 254 ignorance of the ignorant

He said, and I heard al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioning a people who had been among the first to embrace faith and had a good standing with it. Then doubt crept into them, and some of them fell into hypocrisy—we seek refuge in God from such a calamity. He said, "These are among those of whom God, the Exalted and Glorified, said, 'When what they recognized came to them, they disbelieved in it.' So-and-so among them said to the Mahdi, peace be upon him, 'Show us your sign.' So God showed him the sign within himself, and he said to him, 'You are the Mahdi; there is no one after you.' The Mahdi, peace be upon him, said to him, 'If the favor were limited to one person, none of it would have reached us. But I have a favor that God, the Exalted and Glorified, has granted me, and for those who come after me, He will grant it to each one of them.' And another said, when the Mahdi, peace be upon him, passed away, 'We belong to God, neither this world nor the hereafter,' as if he imagined that God, the Exalted and Glorified, had cut off his favor, and that what he saw in the Mahdi and awaited had been severed and taken from his hands, and he disbelieved those who recognized him in him. What misery could be like this misery, and what calamity could be greater than this calamity? But ignorance and backwardness from knowledge, when combined with arrogance and pride, produce this as its fruit and consequence. And this one imagined The ignorant person knows that the key to something is

■ the treasure itself

So I mentioned to him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, the reason for the man who made this statement cutting ties with some of the preachers, and that he said one day to that preacher, "Tell us about this work that reaches you from the believers—meaning the charity—is it the work that God Almighty mentioned in His Book and commanded His servants to do, as He, the Most High, said: 'Say, "Work, for God will see your work, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers."' Or is it something else that you call

"? work

I said, and that preacher did not know what to say to him except to speak harshly to him and say to

" him, "You wanted to mislead the believers with this statement and turn them away from the religion of God

He said, "I mislead and turn away the believers because I know more than many who consider themselves superior to others in knowledge," and so on. The conversation became heated between them, so he

cut it short and sever ties

So I said, if that caller had given an answer to him, as our master has explained today in the first chapter on the training of believers, relating what he narrated from his grandfather, Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, when the questioner asked him about faith: "Is it word or deed?" He replied, "Faith is entirely deed, and word is part of that deed." Then he explained this at length and supported it with many proofs from the Book of God, the Exalted and Glorified. This caller would have said, "What I have mentioned is deed, and other righteous deeds that God, the Exalted and Glorified, has made obligatory and that His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, has established are numerous. Each one of them, when considered individually, is deed. Likewise, the deeds of humankind." This would have clarified the matter for him and

spared him the trouble of including himself in it

Al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "If this were so, then what God Almighty said would not have happened: darkness upon darkness. The ignorant know nothing but ignorance, and the inferior cannot reach the level of the virtuous. And most of those who claim to follow our path do not err except

" through this approach, from a people who have gone astray and deviated greatly from the straight path So I said, "O my master, al-Mansur, may God's blessings be upon him, once asked me about something similar. He said to me, 'O Nu'man, tell me about those people whom al-Mahdi killed and imprisoned for eternity, those who had taken up his covenant from the people of Africa, because of what reached him from them regarding the permissibility of certain things. Do you have any knowledge of this from their preachers, or

"? have you heard anything about it from any of them

" So I said, "My master, I did not hear it, but I did hear it

"? He said, "How so

I said that the preachers of that time, in general, knew nothing of the outward aspects of God's religion, the Almighty, regarding what is permissible and forbidden. They were too proud to admit ignorance of anything they were asked about. I have not heard of a single one of their prominent figures being asked about any of these matters, such as purification, prayer, fasting, or any other religious obligations, rulings, and what is permissible and forbidden. If someone asked them about such a thing, they would rebuke and be harsh with them, saying,

"? "Why do you ask about this impossible outward matter and neglect the knowledge of the inner meaning I said, "If someone who can discern their condition and recognizes their backwardness hears this—that it stems from their ignorance of what they are asking about—and knows what they take in the covenant they hold regarding upholding the outward and inward aspects of God's religion, then he will remain steadfast in his position and reject their statement. But those who are backward, overcome by desires and wretchedness, like those others, will interpret their statement as a complete rejection of the outward aspects." And I mentioned to

him much that I had heard from many of them

He was horrified and greatly disturbed by this, and said, "Yes, many like him and his ilk have

" perished

Al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said to me, "Are such people called to us? By God, they are the ones who turn people away from God Almighty and from us. Whoever opposes our command, speaks falsely about us, and gives his own opinion on anything he attributes to our command without consulting us, and then refers back what he is ignorant of as God Almighty and others have commanded, is not calling to

" us

Hadiths in a gathering mentioning the symbols of God's saints 256

He said, and Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned one day the symbols of God's saints to their followers in situations of dissimulation (taqiyya) for themselves and for others, and in other

matters that wisdom dictates for them. He said, "A man from among the believers asked one of the imams about a matter, and he answered him with an answer. Then he said to him, 'It is as if I see you, after hearing my answer, asking so-and-so'—and he named a man—'and he will answer you with something different from what I

III

•gave you, so you will abandon my answer and take his

The man said, "I seek refuge in God from doing this, O son of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him)." The Imam was present at that time, and when the man turned away, the Imam followed him and called him back. He said to him, "Go to the man who told you this and ask him, for he will give you a ruling, just as the Imam (peace be upon him) told you, but contrary to what he told you. So act according to what the man tells

II

•you

"? He said, "How can this be, my lord

II

•He said, "Listen to what I tell you, for it is but a symbol I have used to signal you

Then al-Mu'izz, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever does not know the truth of our matter has strayed from our path. And most people are afflicted only because of that. God Almighty says: 'And We have certainly set forth for mankind in this Qur'an every [kind of] example.' And He said: 'These are the examples We set forth for mankind, but none will understand them except those of knowledge.' And He said in the story of Jesus: 'So she pointed to him. They said: 'How can we speak to one who is a child in the cradle?'

II

•And he mentioned after this knowledge and wisdom that healed hearts

sayings on rivers that must be completed to the guardian of God, may 257 God's blessings be upon him

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, one day urging the completion of what must be completed. Then he said after that, "As for what should be conveyed to us, and it is not permissible for him to conceal it from us, and whoever has it knows that it is his duty to convey it to us, as we have taken it upon him in our covenant with us, there is no doubt or ambiguity in it. So concealing it from us,

II

•for whoever finds a way to convey it to us, is treachery and disobedience to us

As for matters that can be kept silent about, which we have permitted our guardians to conceal, and in which they are not allowed to expose each other's private parts, and in which concealment is not forbidden, and in which the one who erred is expected to repent, and this is known to be true, then concealing and keeping it

•secret is preferable

As for what one doubts, if his knowledge has reached its limit and he does not know whether he can keep it to himself without us or must bring it to our attention, then he should hint at it. We know what he is alluding to. If we ask him, he will inform us, and if we remain silent about it, he will remain silent about us, and

•that will be the obligation he has over us

Hadiths in a gathering on the topic of wisdom 258

He said: Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, held a special place with Al-Qa'im, peace be upon him, and the Imams from his pure progeny since his youth. He would draw him near and confide in him, unlike his father. He was his messenger and ambassador to the people regarding what he commanded and forbade and what was needed from him. When he was alone, he would be in his presence, and when he was absent, he would

•send for him

Al-Mansur held such a high position with Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, that he was rarely apart from him when they were alone. He would speak to him in private, and no one knew what transpired between them. One of those who frequently entered Al-Mahdi's presence, peace be upon him, for essential reasons, told me that whenever he entered Al-Mahdi's presence in private, he would find Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, before him, conversing privately. Upon seeing him, Al-Mansur would step aside until the other man had finished his business. When he left, he would return to him. He said, "I never heard what transpired between them, and I know of no one among those close to Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, who held the same position as Al-Mansur. I

never saw anyone who was alone with him and then entered upon him without him speaking to him in my

" .presence and me hearing what transpired between them, except for Al-Mansur, peace be upon him Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned one day a similar situation of his, and that Al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, was nurturing him with wisdom and preparing him for the Imamate, according to

.what Al-Qa'im bi-Allah, peace be upon him, was doing to him

He said, "Among that which Al-Mansur, may God's prayers be upon him, told me was that he began with it. He said to me, 'I entered upon him one day, and I had just begun to look at the books. He said to me, "I

" " " .looked at some of the sciences and gathered some of the books

" .I said, "My lord, I have begun with something of that

.He asked me what I was looking at, so I told him what I was looking at

"? He said, "Have you looked into any of medicine

I said no

He said it was the most important thing he had ever considered and learned, and someone like you

.couldn't do without it

I said, "Whatever our master, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, commanded, I have come

" .to

" .He said, "I will bring out a book from it for you to look at

When I entered his presence the next day, he handed me a large book and said, "This is a noble book of medicine. Look into it, keep it safe, and let no one see it in your presence. Do not show it to your father, and do

" .not tell anyone what transpired between you and me in it. Preserve the book with utmost care

So I took it, thanked him, and left, thinking to myself, "What in medicine could the Mahdi, peace be upon him, attain such a level?" I concealed it as he had instructed. When I returned to my place, I examined it and found it contained esoteric knowledge, something I was unaware of at the time. I was perplexed and thought it was merely a collection of medical parables. I spent my day and night studying it, but I saw nothing but pure esoteric knowledge. The next day, when I entered the presence of the Mahdi, may God's blessings be upon him,

" .he drew me near and said, "I have examined the book

I said, "My master, I examined it and found nothing of medicine in it. If the Commander of the Faithful

" .intended medicine by it, then there is nothing of it in this book

Then he, peace be upon him, smiled and said to me, "My son, that is true medicine, the medicine of the souls that remain in the Hereafter. With it, one treats their pain and cures their ailments. As for mortal bodies, they are too insignificant to be elevated to such a degree. Examine it, understand its meanings, and memorize its principles, for it contains fundamental principles of noble knowledge. When you have memorized it and are

" .certain of its understanding, then apply it, and I will give you something else, God willing

Part Twenty-Five

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Hadiths in a gathering about the corruption of people 259

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God sanctify his soul, said: I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mention the corruption of the people's affairs, what he was trying to do with them, and the difficulty he faced in governing them. He said, "By God, we do not know which way to approach them that will bring us relief from what we are trying to do with them. God Almighty has entrusted us with their affairs and employed us to rectify their circumstances and care for them. They are in a terrible state, lacking justice and

goodness, and are extremely undesirable. If we turn away from them and abandon them, we will have neglected what God Almighty has obligated us to do with them. If we fulfill our duty towards them, we will destroy them all because of the widespread nature of their affliction. If we neglect them, we will have permitted what God

”
• Almighty has forbidden and prohibited. We seek refuge in God from that

By God, I have likened myself and them to a man burdened with a bad habit and a bad son. If he exposes their faults and tears down their veils, he will expose himself and tear down his own veil. If he leaves them as they are, he will suffer the pain, the loss, and the shame. And if he wants to reform them and guide them to what is in their best interest, they will resist him and make things difficult for him. So we ask God for success in what pleases Him from us in what He has entrusted to us concerning them, and for help in what we attempt

• regarding their affairs

Mention of a vision seen by Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God be pleased 260 with him)

One day, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he mentioned what the slanderers had spread and said—may God silence them and cut off their lineage—that he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him,

• would die in a year that had passed, because they claimed that the stars indicated it

He said, “I saw in a dream at that time one of our servants standing before me, urging me to go to the East and describing the weakness of its people. I was delaying it, and he kept urging me on. I said to him, ‘It seems you only mean by this what these despicable people say about the nearness of death. We must realize what God Almighty has decreed and ordained to bring about for us out of His grace and through our hands, from

”

• what He has promised us, whether our days are long or short

He said, "Then it was as if I had met with Al-Mansur Billah, may God's prayers be upon him, and he

”? said to me, 'What did so-and-so say to you, and what did you say to him

I repeated that to him, and he said to me, "Rather, God will grant you a long life so that you may attain

• your greatest wish, but how long will it take to resist the nations?" as if urging me to leave

Then I brought a gray horse, one of the finest and most noble of horses. Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, said to me, "This is the horse you will ride to the East." I did not have a gray horse like that one, and he gestured towards the horse that had been brought to him from Sijilmasa. I interpreted it as being the same horse, since it was similar in description to the one I had seen. However, when it was brought to me, I saw a reddish tinge, whereas the one I had seen in my dream was pure white. Today, that reddish tinge has disappeared, and its

• whiteness has become pure, as if it were the same horse I had seen in my dream

We said, may God hasten His promise to our master and leader, the Commander of the Faithful, peace

• be upon him, and fulfill it for him and bring him closer by His grace

”

• He said, "What God wills

Hadiths in a gathering about lying about the saints of God, peace be 261 upon them

He said, and he mentioned one day, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, the narration of most of the common people about the Imams from the family of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, which contradicts their sayings, and their lying about them and their distortion of their hadiths. He said, “We have a narration from our grandfather Ja'far ibn Muhammad, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, that a man came to Medina from among the common people, seeking hadiths, and he passed by his house, peace be upon him, and people were entering with books and inkwells in their hands, writing down what he said. When the man saw them, he entered among them and sat with them, and Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon

”? him, came out to them. When he saw him, he did not recognize him, so he asked him, ‘Who are you

A strange man said

"? He said, "What do you want
He said, "I am a man seeking knowledge of Hadith, and I saw these people dressed in the garb of its
" .people, so I went in with them to write

"? He said to him, "Do you know me
.He said no, but tell me, may God guide you, who you are and speak to me so I may write about you

"? He asked, "Did you write about anyone
He said yes
" .He said, "Show me what you have written
He took out a book from his sleeve and began reading to him a hadith that he had narrated from a man
who mentioned, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, things about the permissibility of intoxicants and
temporary marriage, which he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, never said nor narrated anything
about

"? He said to him, "Is the one who told you this story trustworthy in your opinion
" .He said, "Yes, indeed, he is trustworthy and reliable
Then Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "This is the one who narrated to you what he
"? narrated, do you know him

He said no
He said, "If you saw him after this and he denied that this had happened or that he had said it, what
"? would you do
He said, "What can I do? A trustworthy person told me about it, so I carried it, narrated it, and issued a
" .fatwa

"? He said, "Did you not believe the one who narrated it to you in his denial
" .He said, "No, by God, because the one who told me about him is trustworthy and reliable
He said, "Go about your business, man. I have nothing to say. These people only came to me because
" .they needed something

The man left, and Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, turned to his companions from among his
followers who were with him and said to them, "Have you not heard what this man said, and what we have been
afflicted with from the likes of him among the common people who lie about us and narrate that from among
"? them, then believe them in it and do not believe us if we deny it

.Then he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, expressed his astonishment at their ignorance

Hadiths in a gathering about withholding rights from their rightful 262 owners and giving them to others

He said, and I heard him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, say: How wondrous is the
judgment of truth upon its people, and how heedless are the people of falsehood of its command! The people of
falsehood seize from the people of truth whatever they can and are able to, and they revel in the harm they
inflict upon them through their falsehood, their base ambitions, and their vile souls. They seize and attain
whatever they can from them, and neither truth nor nobility deters them from it. Such is their way with
everything that God has forbidden them and prohibited them from, and which He has not made obligatory for
them, and which truth stands between them and it. If they are able to seize it, they transgress against the truth
and transgress against the command of God, the Exalted and Glorified, and neither chivalry nor good manners
restrain them from it. As for the people of truth, truth prevents them from transgressing against them and seizing

what is not rightfully theirs from them, and nobility, modesty, and the honor of their souls prevent them from

• taking much of what is obligatory upon them and what is permissible for them from them

Then, due to their ignorance and bad character, they argue with the people of truth about what truth requires of them, thinking that they are exceeding their authority by doing so, if they have the opportunity and the power to do what they want from them. Then, many of them say to the people of truth that they cannot do to them what they can do to them, and that what they are known for in terms of truth and noble character falls short

• of them

Then, peace be upon him, he expressed his astonishment at this and said, “Yes, by God, they are as they say. They are only capable of what God Almighty has enabled them to do through obedience to Him and following His commands. As for disobedience and rebellion, the vile and wicked are no more capable of that than others. However, God’s limits and commands prevent those who obey and follow Him from transgressing them. His forgiveness, grace, and mercy restrain them from many things that He has permitted them. Their joy and delight in this are many times greater than the joy of those who follow falsehood in what they gain through their falsehood and their envy of what they attain through transgression. The people of truth look upon them sometimes with disdain and sometimes with mercy for what they have burdened themselves with and what they have put around their necks, which will cause them to suffer God’s painful punishment and fire, and will bring them shame and disgrace in this world. Praise be to God for the favor He has bestowed upon us, and we ask

”

• Him to grant us the ability to be grateful for His blessings

Hadiths in a gathering on the virtue of accepting the gifts of God's 263 saints, being content with what they have been given, and refraining from •overstepping and transgressing against others

Imam al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said, mentioning that most people aspire to attain the knowledge of God's saints beyond their capacity. He, peace be upon him, said, "They want to reach the utmost knowledge that God has entrusted to us, and the entirety of His favor with which He has favored us. We have been entrusted with the secret of His wisdom. If this were to be accepted by them and desired by them, we would have no advantage over them, for they have already possessed what we have possessed, understood what we have understood, and attained from God's favor to the same extent that we have attained. However, God Almighty has granted us from this by His grace what He has granted us, and He has given us from it what He has given us, and He has made it permissible for us to give from it to whomever we deem appropriate, and to withhold from whomever we deem appropriate, as He, the Most High, says: 'This is Our gift, so bestow or

”

• withhold without account

We should not give people everything we have, nor should we be stingy with what we have given them. Rather, we should give only what we can, as God Almighty has ordained, saying: "And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor miserly, but hold a moderate course between those extremes." And He

”

• said: "Do not make your hand [as] chained to your neck, nor extend it to its full extent

God Almighty did not decree that one whom He has given worldly possessions and provided for should give away all of it to those whose maintenance He has obligated him to provide for. Rather, He granted him only what is sufficient for his needs, without requiring him to give away all that He has bestowed upon him. He, the Exalted, said: “And do not entrust your wealth, which God has made a means of support for you, to the foolish. But provide for them from it and clothe them and speak to them words of appropriate kindness.” And

”

• He said: “And do not squander wastefully. Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils

If this is what God Almighty commanded regarding the preservation of the fleeting pleasures of this world, which He deemed insignificant and indifferent to, then how much more so should one be concerned with what He magnified, honored, and urged regarding knowledge and wisdom, which He bestowed only upon those of His servants whom He chose, and which He entrusted only to those of His creation whom He chose to

?

• safeguard

If only they had been grateful for what they were given, recognized its value, and acted upon it, they would have received more of it. Thus, they would have lived well, until they met God, grateful for His favor and seeking more from Him. But none of them is satisfied unless they take everything we have and everything like it. God Almighty did not grant this to them or to anyone else, excluding us. If it had been granted to anyone else,

they would have shared in our favor. God Almighty did not grant us any share in this for anyone. Would that they had acted upon what they were given, understood what they heard, and fulfilled their duty. But their only aim is to hear what they hear, then turn away from it and seek more than that, like the one who desires the fleeting pleasures of this world and is stingy with them. Their only goal is to accumulate it, and what they have accumulated does not benefit them. Their eyes are ever fixed, and their souls yearn for what is in the hands of others, so that they may gather it for themselves, even if they do not benefit from it, out of competition, greed,

▪ and desire

If those we have mentioned were like those with insight into worldly matters, content with what they have been given, praising God for it, and benefiting from it according to their means, without coveting what is beyond their reach, their circumstances would improve as well as those of these people in their worldly lives, and their lives would be pleasant. Just as those who are not content with what God Almighty has allotted them in this world, and whose gaze and desire are for the status of those above them, remain poor, weary, distressed, and sorrowful, so too will these people be in their aspirations if they are not content with what we have given

▪ them, and if they do not thank God Almighty for it and recognize His favor

If we were to provide a person with a house large enough for him and his family, and he were grateful and content with it, his life there would be pleasant. But if he found it insufficient and would only be satisfied with a dwelling like ours, he would be ungrateful for our kindness, and we would not give him more. His

▪ poverty and distress would intensify, and he would not attain what his aspirations aspired to

I said, "My master, just as there is no end to what is in this world that can be reached by one who desires it and is not content with what God has allotted him, then what is with God's saints of His bounty is more deserving of having no end. So, whoever desires that will not reach his goal unless he praises God and

"

▪ thanks His saints for what they have bestowed upon him

He said, "O Nu'man, do not say such a thing about this. By God, everything has an end and a limit. If someone hears that something has no end, it will be a pretext for abandoning the pursuit of what he perceives as having no end. But the ultimate goal of every person is to be desirous and seeking, and to be grateful for what he has been given and attained. If he is like this, he will continue to ascend the degrees of virtue, increasing in it until he meets God in the best of states. God Almighty has not made His favor with us without end. It has been said that the virtue of one of us who has passed on does not pass to his successor until the very last moment of his life, so that the virtue is not equal between two remaining individuals. God Almighty increases the successor's virtue many times over what the previous one gave him. Therefore, it has an end to which it reaches. If it had no end, the virtue of the last of us over the first would be equal to the distance between them. But God

"

▪ Almighty has made for this an end to which it reaches and a axis around which it revolves

I was then asked to explain this to him, and he gestured to me in a way that I understood. The gathering was full, so I remained silent and praised God for what had come to me from him, may God's prayers and peace

▪ be upon him

Hadiths in a gathering mentioning the backwardness of some preachers 264

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said, and mentioned some of the preachers and what they say to those connected to them when they ask them about some of the things they ask them about: You have not reached the level of this that you are asking about

He, peace be upon him, said: That is only because they have not attained the knowledge of what they are being asked about. If they were truthful about themselves and admitted this to the one who asked them, it would be better for them, as our grandfather Ali, peace be upon him, said: "Four things, even if mounts were saddled until they were exhausted, would still be little: that the servant hopes only in his Lord, fears only his sins, and that the ignorant one is not ashamed to learn, nor the learned one, when asked about what he does not

"

▪ know, say, 'I do not know

If they knew what they were asking about, they would have answered each questioner with a precise answer, as our ancestor Ja'far ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, said: "We answer a single question in seven ways, each with its own specific meaning." Those who heard him found this too much and said, "Seven ways, O son of the Messenger of God?" He smiled at him and said, "Yes, and seventy. If there were more, we would add

"

▪ more

If the one who says this were truly knowledgeable about these boundaries and aspects, he would have answered those concerned with each boundary in the manner they deserve, and would not have said what he did. Such a statement demonstrates a deficiency in knowledge and denies the argument to those who ask and receive no answer. Rather, he should be answered according to what is required of him within that boundary, thus acting in accordance with what is obligatory for someone of his stature and knowing what those concerned with that

▪ boundary need to know, so that he may progress from it to others and not be left to chance and neglect

Then he, peace be upon him, sighed deeply and said, "Where can we find someone who can undertake such a task and be relied upon, or who can be truthful about himself, not claiming what is not his, and who will refer back to us what he does not know? By God, if that were the case, no two people would disagree about our affairs. But most of those who undertake this task for us fall into one of two categories: either one who speaks according to his own opinion, doing whatever he sees as agreeing with what we have, without referring back to us or limiting himself to what we have given him, and many perish because of this; or one who hesitates about what he does not know, while pretending to know. Such a person is not far removed from the others we mentioned before. Few of them rely on our commands, and to that extent, God opens doors for them and works through them for our benefit. Many of them ask us questions, and we answer them as we have mentioned, according to the appropriate limits of what is required, and in a manner that allows for correspondence and letters. Sometimes, those who receive such answers from us may consider this a great shortcoming. It is sufficient for those to whom a matter of ours is entrusted to rely on it, submit to us in it, and be content and satisfied with it until they receive further instructions from us. If matters proceeded in this manner, they would be balanced and upright. May God grant success to our allies in this and unite them." He will grant us obedience

▪ through His grace, favor, power, might, and strength, God willing

Hadiths in a gathering on the obligatory duties of the rich and poor 265 ***believers***

He said, and the poor were mentioned in the presence of Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, and a man who was present said, "How wretched is the state of the poor! He surpasses the rich in his deeds, yet poverty holds him

"

▪ back from them

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: No, God will not fall short with him if his intention is good. If he intends that if he had wealth, he would fulfill God's obligation to him regarding it, then he is acting according to his intention. God has not imposed an obligation on anyone, nor has

▪ He given him what necessitates such an obligation

"?

The man said, "How can he and others have work while he has no work

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said to him, "We have already informed you that his intention suffices him in this matter. And whatever God Almighty has not obligated him to do, he will not be held accountable for. He must perform other deeds besides that, according to what God has commanded him and what he is capable of and able to do, from the obligations that God Almighty has imposed upon His servants. For spending in the way of God is not the only deed, but rather it is one of the deeds that God, Glory be to Him, has obligated. And whoever is unable to perform all or some of them is not obligated to do what he is unable to do, as God Almighty says, 'God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity,' and He says, 'God does not burden a soul except with what He has given it,' and He says, 'There is no blame upon the weak, nor upon the sick, nor upon those who do not find anything to spend, if they are sincere to God and His Messenger. There is no blame

""

▪ upon the doers of good. And God is Forgiving and Merciful

Part Twenty-Six

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Hadiths in a gathering on exerting effort from the poor 266

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad said: I mentioned to Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, the deeds of a group of believers of little means who were not well-known, yet they

• performed a few deeds, persevering and continuing in them

He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: By God, the little that these people and those like them bring from their meager earnings, despite their limited means and lack of understanding, without seeking fame or showing off, nor aiming to attain any worldly status, is purer in the sight of God Almighty and in our eyes than much of what the wealthy and affluent bring—those we know and whose contributions we observe and are aware of. For the little that the poor give diminishes their livelihood and disrupts it, while the much that the wealthy give does not diminish it, disrupt it, or affect their livelihood in the same way. That is why the

• Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said: The best charity is the effort of the poor

Then he, peace be upon him, said: “Those to whom we give and bestow upon us abundantly, so that it reaches them without toil or hardship, and from which God's right is due to us, are not equal to those who give

”
• it through their own labor and effort, and through the sweat of their brow and the work of their hands

”
• I said, “My master, whoever finds nothing but your bounty should give what is required of him

He said that according to his intention, and God rewards people according to their intentions. So, if his intention was that it was from his own earnings, and he was among those whose situation I described, and we do

• not know their names, and he did in that matter what they did, then he will have in that matter what they have

And whoever does something only for show and reputation, believing that if he did not do it, his standing with us would be lowered, then his intention is what matters. Therefore, the believer should believe and intend all his actions for God Almighty, without tainting them with pretense or hypocrisy. For God Almighty knows the treachery of the eyes and what the hearts conceal. The only thing that separates the acceptance or rejection of deeds is the belief in the intentions behind them. Thus, God Almighty has made the people of Paradise eternally in Paradise and the people of Hell eternally in Hell, because each group believed that if they were to live forever in this world, they would not deviate from their current state. So they were rewarded according to their intentions. And from this comes the saying of the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him): “The intention of the believer is more significant than his action.” For if he intends good but does not perform it, he is rewarded for his intention. But if he performs an action without intention, the action will not

• benefit him

Hadiths in a Council on the Argument of Reason 267

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, ordered that Ibn Wasul be brought

before him while he was in chains. When he stood before him, he ordered him to sit, so he sat while still in chains. Then he asked him about the news of Sijilmasa and its people, his conduct while he was among them, and what was said about him regarding his acceptance of praise that was not true of him and his pretense in his

• presence. He denied much of that and answered much of what the Commander of the Faithful asked him about. Then the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, looked at us and said, “I saw him—meaning Ibn Wasul—a few nights ago, and it was as if he were before me. I was saying to him about what had reached me from him concerning his statement about Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, that he was a child like this on the day al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was martyred—and he pointed to his little finger—and I said to him something, by God, I had never heard before that nor had it ever occurred to me. Do you see this that you mentioned before, that Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was a child like this on the day al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was martyred—and he pointed to his little finger—and I said to him something, by God, I had never heard before that nor had it ever occurred to me. Do you see this that you mentioned before, that Ali ibn

al-Husayn was a child on the day al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was martyred—he goes on to say that the Imamate was not due to him on that day. So what do you say about a man who died and left behind a pregnant woman? Doesn't the one she gives birth to have a share of the inheritance? So let's say Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was a fetus on the day his father, peace be upon him, was martyred—doesn't he have his inheritance? If the matter was for his father, then it is for him, whether he was young or old. And if his father

"
" .had nothing, then he has nothing, even if he was old

Ibn Wasul was astonished by this and said, "By God, this is the truth!" He also said, "By God, I have

"
" .never heard of such an argument! I bear witness that it is as the Commander of the Faithful said
The Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) said to him, "How do you know that this is the

"? truth

:" This statement and the evidence that reason confirms, O Commander of the Faithful, is as follows
He said to him, "Everything you have said and adhered to in your religion and beliefs is based on this,

"
" .as your intellect testifies
He said yes

"? He said to him, "Isn't what you were doing before this contrary to what your own mind testifies to
He said yes

"? He said, "Isn't he wrong in what he said before
He said yes

He said, "How do you know that he was wrong again, and that the truth lies in something other than

"? what he testified to, since you already know that he was wrong the first time
Ibn Wasul remained silent and offered no reply, saying, "By God, it is as the Commander of the

"
" .Faithful said, but the Commander of the Faithful's statement is the proof
He said to him, "How do you know that I didn't intend to mislead you and make you admit your

"? mistake

"? He said to him, "Or could this be from the Commander of the Faithful
He said yes, because God says, and He is the most truthful of speakers, "And We would have confused them as they confuse others." So if We wished to confuse you and test you, We would do so. And God Almighty tested Abraham, peace be upon him, by the sacrifice of his son, and that was not what He wanted from him, nor what He commanded him to worship in your words. Likewise, God Almighty tested His allies for the sake of truth, and He tested many of His creation. But the truth has a beacon; if it is erected and established, it is

the proof

Ibn Wasul remained silent, looking astonished and bewildered, unable to find the right question to

answer

The Commander of the Faithful, Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, provided me with his argument in refuting those who advocate the argument of reason, which is too lengthy to recount here and would exceed the scope of this book. I have included it in my book, "The Differences in the Principles of the Schools

"
" .of Thought

What he, peace be upon him, mentioned concerning Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, is some of the deception perpetrated by Ibn Wasul, and the proof against him lies in what he himself said and believed. As for Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, on the day al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was martyred, he was a fully grown man. Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali, peace be upon him, was born to him that day. He was with him, carried among the women, and Muhammad, peace be upon him, was five years old at that time, as he was born in the year 56 AH, and al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was martyred in the year 61 AH. Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, died in the year 114 AH at the age of 58. Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was born in the year 32 AH, and on the day al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was martyred, he was 29 years old and died in the year 94 AH. This is what the historians have said in more than one book they authored, and although some of them differed on this, it is the most reliable of what they said. On the day al-Husayn ibn Ali, peace be upon him, was martyred, as they also mentioned, Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him, was very ill and severely ailing, so he did not participate in the fighting. His brother, Ali al-Asghar, did participate and was killed among those who

were killed, and he, peace be upon him, was carried to Yazid, may God curse him, in a state of... His illness and the fact that his son Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, was with him along with the family of Al-Hussein and his companions, may God's prayers be upon him

Hadiths in a gathering on the prohibition of exaggeration regarding the 268 saints of God, peace be upon them

He said, and I heard him, peace be upon him, say: News reaches us of some who claim to be our followers and some who claim to call to us, of their exaggeration concerning us and their attribution of things to us that we never said ourselves and that none of us ever heard, as if they knew better than us what they say about us. We disavow ourselves before God of their lies against us and their fabrications about us. We are servants of God, created and subservient. We have no knowledge except what we have learned and what has been passed down to us from His Prophet, our ancestor Muhammad, peace be upon him, from what God entrusted to him and what we inherited from those after him. We do not encompass His knowledge except what He wills, nor His unseen knowledge except what He reveals to us through those He has chosen, as He loves and wills. We do not claim prophethood or messengership, but we are the guardians of the Imamate. Our lawful and unlawful things are from the Book of God, and obedience to us is obligatory upon God's servants by His decree. Whoever knows us knows God, and whoever is ignorant of us is ignorant of Him. We are the ones who guide to Him by His wisdom and carry out His commands to His servants. We are less than what the extremists say and

■ more than what the ignorant think

Those who claim to possess knowledge of the unseen and attribute to us the revelation of divine messages, and who claim to call upon us, only intend to use this as a prelude to their hypocrisy against us. When they achieve this, they say to those they have called upon, "I only called you to the one I described to you," thus turning them away from us. May God curse those who turn people away from us, for they turn people away from God and trifle with His religion. They desired worldly gain, but finding it difficult to attain through legitimate means, they sought it through religion to gain from its fleeting pleasures, which will soon vanish for them, and for which they will be held accountable. Blessed is he who accepts from us what we give and is

■ content with it, and does not claim anything else, nor burdens himself with words he does not know

It has come to my attention that some of them said, "I wish that if I were asked about something that cannot be, I could answer it." They considered themselves, and those who heard and believed them, to have demonstrated their knowledge and took pride in it. If someone guided to the truth were to reflect upon this statement, it would become clear to them that their error lies in the fact that there can be no answer to something

■ that cannot be, because it cannot exist

In this statement, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he gathered a collection of wisdom, from which questions arise concerning this speaker that extend beyond the scope of this book. God Almighty asked the angels about matters He had not revealed to them, and they replied, acknowledging their inability, "We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise." So how can anyone other than them claim knowledge of what God Almighty did not create, what will not be, and what

? cannot be said to exist, so that its ruling would be such and such if it were so

If someone were to ask, "If a man dies, his inheritance is divided, his wives are married, and then he lives again after death, does he reclaim his wealth and family, or does it belong to the one who inherited from

■ him?" it would not be appropriate for the person being asked to answer, because it is something that cannot be

If someone were to ask, "If night and day, sun and moon were to disappear, and the world and its inhabitants remained as they are, when would they pray, perform Hajj, and fast, given that they do not know the night and day by which they worship, and at whose appointed times they perform these acts?" the person being questioned would still have no answer, because it is something that cannot happen. Such questions are frequently discussed, and ignorance is attributed to the questioner and the one claiming to have an answer. God has forbidden speaking about what one does not know, about what has not been and will not be, and about which people have no knowledge. The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever gives religious rulings to people without knowledge, the angels of heaven and the angels of earth will curse

■ him

.A magnificent poem by Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him .269

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad, may God sanctify his soul, said: My agent in some of the desert regions informed me that I had a suitable plot of land there for building a quarter-federation that would yield about thirty dinars a year. He kept urging me to build it and repeated this to me until I realized that neglecting it would be a

▪ waste of money, which is forbidden

So I asked permission from Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah Sal'a in a note I raised to him out of respect for him,

"

▪ and he replied, "May God bless his son

I never trusted anything as much as I trusted that it would bring blessings, so I ordered the agent to build. He returned to me saying that a certain place belonged to a man, so I ordered him to give it to him and

"

▪ said, "Build on what remains

"

▪ He said, "It is less than what I said

▪ I said no, rather it will increase, God willing

He paid him, then returned to me and said that the man wanted to sell what I had given him, along with something of his that was connected to it, and that connected to that were two places belonging to two men who

▪ were selling them

?

I said, how many are they all asking

He said something like forty dinars

"

▪ I said, "Buy from them and pay them

So he did, and built a quarter in the whole, in a place that people desired and increased in renting. Its rent reached about two hundred dinars a year, after it was built with minimal expense in less than two months. I have never seen a prayer answered more quickly, nor a blessing more beneficial and abundant in the shortest time and in the shortest period, in a way that no one could have imagined. And it was by the grace of the prayer of the saint of God, may God's blessings be upon him. May God grant us and all believers mercy and

▪ forgiveness for the abode of the Hereafter, which is greater in reward and greater in recompense

Hadiths in a gathering on the virtues of saints 270

He said, and a group of people from Kutama entered upon him, peace be upon him, having come from their lands. He approved of their conduct there, and they were young men who had grown up in his state, while their fathers and grandfathers had passed away during the time of the pure Imams before him. He praised them well and said, "By God, if you knew the favor and love we have for you and all our friends, you would be overjoyed. We do not turn away from whomever we turn away from among you, nor do we punish whomever we punish, except to discipline and correct them so that they may increase in virtue and goodness. If your fathers and those of your ancestors who passed away knew before they died what befell them among you after them, they would have wished for death during their lifetimes, for they would have been content with what you have received after them, since they were in a lesser position than you are in our time. And although the Imams, peace be upon them, did not cease to be kind to them, they did not attain with them what you have attained with

"

▪ us today

Every era has its own circumstances dictated by wisdom, and within it, punishment and mercy are exercised. By God, if we kill you, we intend nothing for you but eternal life, if purification through death is necessary in this life. And if we punish you without such punishment, we do not punish you out of malice, hatred, or loathing, but rather we do so with our own hands to purify you. And if we pardon you and treat you kindly, we are people of pardon and kindness. By God, you are with us in all circumstances and in all matters,

▪ however you act and however our plan for you unfolds, for your salvation, goodness, safety, and happiness

So acknowledge our right and our favor, submit to our rule and our command, and do not doubt us or question what we do or forbid concerning your affairs, however circumstances may be with you. Your hearts

▪ will be at peace with us, and you will attain your share in this world and the hereafter

They thanked him as much as they could, kissed the ground before him, and said, "O Commander of the Faithful, we are your servants and protégés, and we acknowledge your favor. Whatever we have achieved is through your guidance and instruction, and whatever we have erred in, we hope for your compassion and

”

▪ mercy

He, peace be upon him, said: “God will protect you from error through our guidance and correction, for we do not see any slip in any of you without alerting you, nor any negligence without awakening you, nor any slackness without motivating you, nor any shortcoming without admonishing you. Thus, none will perish except the wretched one whose wretchedness has overcome him. And God will protect you from wretchedness through

”

▪ our guardianship and our good opinion of you, God willing

Part Twenty-Seven

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Hadiths in a gathering on the virtue of intention and the dislike of self- 271 admiration

Judge Nu'man ibn Muhammad said: I heard Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, say:

"Those who perished among people did so because of their self-admiration and pride in their deeds, and because their hearts were filled with belief in what they admired about their actions and strength. Thus, God nullifies their deeds and abandons them to their own devices, and does not guide them to any of the right path or what would bring them happiness. But as for those whose intentions are good, who work to the best of their ability,

▪ and who consider whatever good they do to be insignificant

I believe that whatever good he did was by the grace of God Almighty, and whatever he did for us and was purified through his hands was by the favor of God upon us and His customary work, not by his own power or strength. He did not consider this too much for himself. Such a person is truly fortunate and successful in this world and the hereafter. God Almighty grants him success and assistance, bestows upon him abundant reward and recompense, and earns him our satisfaction beyond his hopes and aspirations. This will reach him as long as he continues to do so, seeking only God's pleasure and intending it for Him alone, without desiring anything else. For everything ultimately comes down to intentions; through them, people are rewarded, compensated, held accountable, and punished. And whoever is pleased with himself and his deeds, God Almighty will deliver

▪ him to that which pleases him

Then, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, he wanted to say something, but he stopped, turned his face away, and lowered his gaze as if ashamed of what he wanted to say. He said, “What can I possibly say?

God knows that I may pray and exert myself to the utmost in completing the prayer, yet I turn away from it feeling that I have not finished it, nor that it has been accepted from me. This is not due to any ill opinion of God, the Exalted and Glorified, but rather because I consider my own efforts insignificant. What can the work of a weak and poor creature be compared to what he hopes for from his Lord's reward and gratitude for His blessings? Even if he were to spend his entire life in obedience to Him, he would not attain the full reward of even a fraction of His blessings. It is sufficient for the believer to exert his utmost effort in obeying his Lord and His chosen one, to acknowledge his inability to fulfill his obligations in this regard, to be sincere, and to believe in good intentions. This can only be achieved through the good guidance and favor of God, the Almighty and

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▪ Majestic

Hadiths in a gathering about God's good treatment of His saint, peace 272 be upon him

He said, and a letter reached me from the head of the endowments in the city of Sousse, in which he mentioned that seven well-made primary cisterns, some of which connect to others, had appeared in the shipyard there. They were buried underground, but they needed some repair and a cistern to carry the water to them. When they were filled with water, the people of the city would be self-sufficient and would provide a reserve for ships and other needs. I reported this to Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace, and he was pleased with it and ordered that they be repaired, that this cistern be repaired, and that a

▪ mosque be built

He had previously mentioned to him the overcrowding of the shipyards in Mahdia due to the large number of ships and the increase in their size, and that the two shipyards had become disobedient because of it. He then mentioned the construction of the shipyard in Sousse and the building there, and the existence of these cisterns was a prelude to the good that would come to it. Then he, may God's blessings be upon him, said: If our stay here is prolonged, we will, by God's power and might, bring the sea to us in a bay so that our ships may

▪ dock and sail in our presence

So I said, "May God grant our master his wish by His power and might, and fulfill His promise to him,

”

▪ God willing

He said, "I praise God and His blessings upon us, which are too numerous to count. He has bestowed upon us the utmost favor and grace. God has empowered us, granted us authority, and expanded His blessings upon us, giving us what He has not given to anyone else. Even if our enemies and those who have usurped our rights see that they have acquired more of this world than we do, God Almighty has placed blessings in what He has given us. We attain more than they attain, and we give our allies, our men, and the supporters of our state more than they give. And, by God's grace and favor, we have more than they possess, and our men are superior to theirs in their love for us, their insight into our cause, their soundness of allegiance to us, their long-standing companionship, and their perseverance in fighting our enemies. The kings of the world before us preferred to settle only near rivers and mines, while we, by God's grace, have settled upon the mine of allegiance and the gathering of the saints, whose number is countless and whose support is inexhaustible—meaning the Kutama. The land has gathered them, and allegiance and love have united them. Their fathers and grandfathers have been with us in this way, and those who are with us have grown up with it and are naturally inclined towards our allegiance. And indeed, we are counted..." Kings and wealth are for men, for God, in His grace, has given us men and wealth, and extended our power over our enemies, and united the word of our allies under our authority, and our servants under our love, and obedience to us, and gratitude for what He bestows upon them of

▪ our favor

Some of those present at the council from the East said, "O Commander of the Faithful, how can the gifts of others compare to yours? What your enemies give their soldiers is meager compared to what you give your allies. Your enemies only give their commanders, one after another, to their followers, those they have placed above them, their slaves, and all their other resources. The commanders then take much of it for themselves and distribute the rest to those they have appointed, sometimes even exchanging it with them. What they receive is not even a fraction of what the humblest slave of our Master, may God's blessings be upon him, receives. Our Master bestows upon his allies and servants gifts, provisions, clothing, mounts, fodder, and stipends for their wives and children, which they receive directly. If they go on a campaign, he provides for them, delivers their provisions, and ensures their sustenance continues while they are away. He also maintains the stipends for those they left behind. If one of them is martyred or dies, he maintains the stipends for those he left behind. He distributes weapons, mounts, tents, and all travel equipment to them when they travel with their assigned lands." And the loss and their employment in work, and their being provided with generous gifts and noble presents, and their provision upon their return from expeditions with clothing, gifts, mounts, and

?

provisions—where else but the Commander of the Faithful could such generosity be found

He said, "Praise be to God who has brought together our friends in this world and the hereafter, and brought that together for us through His grace upon us and His abundant favor to us. Praise by which we attain

”

▪ His pleasure and fulfill the gratitude for His blessings

.Hadiths in a session on using astrology as a guide 273

He said, "The rain was scarce during the planting season and the time when it was most needed. The astrologers had predicted that it would be a year of drought and famine, but it wasn't long before God Almighty sent down rain and water such as they had never seen before, and it lasted for days until the people were afraid

"
".because of it

I attended the council of Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, at that time, and the words of the astrologers were mentioned to him. He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: "This rain was nothing but a confirmation of what the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said in the hadith narrated from him when it rained in Medina. Some people said, 'We were rained upon by such and such a star,' and others said, 'We were rained upon by the grace and mercy of God Almighty.' The Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, said: 'People have become of two kinds: one who believes in God and disbelieves in the

" "
".stars, and one who believes in the stars and disbelieves in God

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: "As you know, they unanimously agreed upon what they agreed upon regarding famine and high prices. But God Almighty brought about something contrary to what they agreed upon. Their consensus was not erroneous, as the astrologers had said. Rather, their statement, and what came from their predecessors, indicated what they had said. They spoke only of what the early astrologers had said and what was in the books, without any disagreement among them. But God Almighty brought about something contrary to their statement, confirming the words of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, and refuting those who claimed knowledge of the unseen, which He did not reveal except to those He

"
".chose from among His messengers

Hadiths on following the desire for knowledge 274

He said, "One day I accompanied Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, on one of his outings. He mentioned something of knowledge in a particular field, and said, 'I mentioned something similar a few nights ago, and I know of a book containing a detailed discussion of it.' So I ordered it to be brought, but the custodian of the books didn't know its location. I went myself to the library and opened some of the chests while standing, searching for that book from the place I thought it was in. This was at the beginning of the night. I turned over the books, and whenever I came across one, I would browse through it, and something I wanted to explore would appear in it. Then another would come to my attention, and I would do the same. I continued standing like that, browsing book after book, and this distracted me from remembering what I was doing. I sat down until midnight, when a severe pain in my foot from standing for so long alerted me to my

"
".predicament. I left, and in the morning, I experienced a painful ache in my leg, which was the cause of that So I said, "By God, my master, this is the passion for knowledge and the desire for it that no one before the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) has ever spoken of. May God bless him for what God has

"
".bestowed upon him of that and grant him success in it

• He lowered his gaze as if ashamed to mention it and spoke in a low voice that I did not understand

Wills in Council 275

He said, and some of the saints died. One of them was an official in a district and left behind a young son. Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, appointed him to his father's position and placed him in it to preserve the favor he had done for him and to protect his descendants, according to his custom, peace be upon him, with his deceased saints. This son was absent from his father's place of work when his father died, and his father died in the capital. By the grace of God, the news did not reach him until it came with the covenant of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, appointing him to his father's position. He remained in his post until he had perfected what he deemed necessary in the affairs of the office. Then he sought permission to come to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and permission was granted. He came and entered the presence

of the Commander of the Faithful, who treated him with such kindness that those present wished he would die in

▪ a long life and in accordance with his will, so that he might succeed his descendants in a similar manner

When he wanted to leave for his work, he asked permission to enter upon the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him), and permission was granted to him. So he entered to bid farewell. When he stood before the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) and kissed the ground, the Commander of the

"? Faithful (peace be upon him) said to him, "Have you decided to leave

" .He said, "I have resolved to do what the Commander of the Faithful sees fit

He said, "Go forth with God's blessing and good health. We hope that God will bestow His blessings upon you and guide you to goodness, so that you may be better than your father. You are from our land, you have nurtured our days, spread our state, and nourished our bounty. Therefore, make it your intention to act according to our commands, refrain from what we have forbidden, and adhere to what we have specified for you. Take this as your guide and do not transgress it, so that your circumstances may improve, your deeds may be purified, and you may attain our complete satisfaction. Make truth your aim and justice your way, and keep our commands and prohibitions before your eyes and in your mind. If you are angry, let your anger be for the sake of God Almighty and for us. If you are pleased, let your pleasure be for the sake of this cause. Leave your anger and pleasure to yourself. Whoever transgresses against you in a way that might anger or diminish you, let them transgress against us, and you will find with us a victory that you cannot achieve for yourself. Inform us of your affairs and what you intend to do before you act upon it. Whatever comes to you, proceed with it according to our instructions, so that you may be on the path of salvation, safety, and comfort in all your affairs, and the argument against you will be removed in what you fear might be brought against you. For he who consults us in the matter has not regretted it." He commanded us and informed us of it, and he did not lack regret for those like you who abandoned that and relied on their own desires and opinions. May God guide you and grant you

▪ success

▪ He kissed the ground repeatedly, prayed as much as he could, and departed

signatures in establishing the right of God Almighty 276

He said, and the Commander of the Faithful, Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, issued a prohibition against wailing over the dead, based on what was transmitted from his forefathers, from his grandfather, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, and the pure Imams from his progeny. I have already issued a prohibition on this matter, emphasizing its severity, and making it

▪ widely known

I then found women wailing, so I punished them with severe beatings, public shaming, and long imprisonment until they repented. All the women who knew of this came to me and sincerely repented before me, calling upon God and those present to witness. I secured their oaths with firm guarantees, and guarantors stood surety for them. I then released them. Those I had ordered to search for them, who were responsible for such matters, withdrew from the court and went into hiding. Those I had tasked with searching for them, and those under their authority, reported that they were unable to apprehend them. They swore to me that if any

▪ woman wailed, they would arrest her and bring her to me

This continued for a long time, then I received word that they had returned to wailing in secret and inside their homes. I questioned the person responsible, who denied and refuted it. The news then spread and became widely known, and I heard the wailing in other places. I sent for the women wailing, but they mingled with the women at the mourning gathering and concealed themselves among them, and no one could apprehend them. I thus took control of the affairs of those who were investigating such corrupting influences, given what I had heard about their activities. I also received word that he had released them for something he had done to them, and he offered a vague explanation, mentioning that he was consulting with the Commander of the Faithful, our master, may God's peace and blessings be upon him. The matter continued in this manner, and I

▪ found no way to apprehend these wicked women

Their case reached the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, and I feared that I might be accused of negligence in their matter. So I wrote a note detailing their story, what I had done regarding their

▪ case, and what had transpired, while also reviewing what I had done in that regard

By God, Nu'man, I swear I don't know what to say to you. I am greatly astonished by you, given our long companionship and close association. Have our morals ever been hidden from you? When have you ever known us to begin or end up abandoning the rights of God and to be content with selling the Hereafter for this world? I pray to God that we do not live to see the day when we are in such a state. I implore you, send helpers to seek out the wicked ones—those who orchestrated this wailing—and bring them to you. Seize them severely by bringing these wicked women to you—the wailing women—and beat them severely, and imprison them in the gallows. Command that despicable so-and-so—the leader of these troublemakers—to have ten helpers until he brings them to you this very hour. Do not accept any excuses in this matter, for they will not be accepted from you. Whatever shortcomings occur in what we have commanded you to do regarding the establishment of justice, God will hold you accountable for them. We have entrusted you with our confidence and placed our trust in you. If you yourself harbor doubts about what the lowly say about us, what do you think of the common people who love to spread immorality about others? God purified him and protected him by His grace, and all

▪ praise is due to Him

When I came across such a signature, I did not put it down until I had proceeded with what he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, had commanded regarding obligating the assistants to those he had ordered to be obligated. This occurred on a day of intense storms, and I was overcome with grief because of what he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, had decreed, for I was among those who harbored doubts about it—we seek refuge in God from such a thing—and I was unaware of my own state. So I submitted a note to him explaining what I had done and describing the grief that had befallen me due to the aforementioned doubts. I mentioned that I had only hesitated to sign in the hope of rectifying the matter without burdening him with the same concerns he had. When I found no such concern, I presented it to him so that the action might be

▪ carried out according to his command, which is linked to happiness and success

So, Nu'man, we have read what you mentioned in this letter of yours, and by God, we believe that the distress you experienced from what you described is greater than what we experienced when we read what you mentioned in that letter. May God curse those who divorce them and those who feed them for that reason, and may His threat against them be fulfilled. If there were no other ill-omens from them than what has already occurred, it would be enough for them. As for our finding fault with you in a way that would lead to sin, God forbid! But we wish that you would be as we wish you to be: resolute and decisive. Or, we bring to your attention a matter that we have rejected and have advised you to change. So, hold back on it for a while until you can be gentle with so-and-so and others, so that they, with their falsehood and their audacity against God and His allies, will be more resolute than you in establishing God's right. This is what we want, nothing else. So proceed with what we have commanded you, and do not let the helpers be with the despicable one, or he will bring them. And whoever among them is with any of the followers of Iblis, not our men, go to them about them and seize them with the utmost severity, and warn them of our might. If they protect themselves They should adhere to what we have commanded you, for it is more beneficial to all. If you receive any other information about them, then send someone to raid them and expel them in the worst possible way from the place where they are, even if they are in our palace. May God distance the perpetrator of evil and those who approve of it. As for what you saw regarding their situation with the neighbors, it was a good thing you saw, so proceed with that,

▪ God willing

Then he went out to his assembly, may God's blessings be upon him, and sat down. Those who entered according to the customary procedure were present, and among them was the one who had ordered the assistants to be compelled to do so. He complained to him about this, so he spoke harshly to him about the permissibility of wailing. The man denied it, swearing to it by something our master knew to be contrary to it. So he turned away from him out of decency, not wanting to confront him with his denial that the Commander of the Faithful had forbidden it. He said to him, "O vile one, if you dare to do such a thing in my presence, then we can deny what the pure forefathers conveyed to us from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, who said, 'Whoever feeds a dirham to a group, God will compel him to bring it out with his mouth from the depths

"

▪ of Hell.' What denial could be harsher than this? May God curse the oppressors

He looked at me and said, "By God, I heard the sound of a wailing woman a few nights ago while I was standing in prayer. I didn't know how to finish it, out of anger for God Almighty and for what I had done to disobey His commands. When I finished praying, I said, 'O God, You know that I did not approve of this sound, nor did I permit it, and that I forbade it and spoke harshly about it. O God, punish whoever permitted it. My

" "

▪ anger towards You has intensified because of Your negligence in this matter

So I said, God knows that the servant of the Commander of the Faithful was not unaware of this, and he exerted his utmost effort in it. He could not do more than what he did, nor could he punish those who committed it. But if the Commander of the Faithful orders those who permitted this to be brought before him,

then the servant of the Commander of the Faithful will take the strictest course of action and exert all his effort in the hope of eradicating this evil, by the power and might of God, and by the good opinion and blessing of the

▪ Commander of the Faithful

He said, "We have appointed you to enforce rights, deliver justice to the oppressed, and rectify wrongdoing. We have given you free rein and will not withhold it from anyone. So be firm and resolute in upholding justice. Show no leniency to anyone, regardless of their status, and do not address any of our men regarding this matter or anything else we command you to do in our palace. Rather, bring them before your court and enforce what is due to them. Whoever disdains to appear before you with their opponent, whoever they may be, let them be just, or relinquish their claim if it is their right. Let them stand in the face of justice as the humblest of people, even if they consider themselves noble. For in the face of justice, the position is the same for the strong and the weak, the noble and the lowly. Whoever thinks otherwise, or is arrogant, or imagines

” ▪ that they have an advantage over others in upholding justice, may God distance them, whoever they may be

She kissed the ground before him and thanked him as much as she could. She obeyed the command he mentioned, carried out what he ordered, and publicized it on his behalf, may God's prayers and peace be upon him. She ordered that any of the mourners who were captured be taken to prisons if they gathered, and she

▪ punished those among them who deserved it

Part Twenty-Eight

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful

Words on the mention of the Imamate, proceeding in accordance with 277 the Sunnah

He said, "One day I accompanied Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, on one of his outings. He mentioned the Mahdi, peace be upon him, and said, 'I remember the day I was carried to him. I was a weaned infant at the time, but I could understand speech and remember what would happen. He took me in his arms, kissed me, and placed me under his cloak. He uncovered my stomach and pressed it against his own. Then he took me out, blessed me, asked about my well-being, and sat me on his lap. He called for food for me, and a gilded silver tray was brought, containing bananas, autumn apples, and grapes. It was placed before me, but I did not take any of it. He took it in his hand and handed it to me, and I took it. He said, 'Take it and eat what is in it, and give the tray to so-and-so,' and he mentioned some of the girls, who was about my age at the time. I said to him, 'No, I will take the tray and give it to her.' He laughed and was amazed at my awareness of this. He prayed for my well-being and told the servant to carry it. So I carried it, and he carried the tray with me. He said, 'He will have a story,' and similar words, which I did not record on the authority of al-Mu'izz, peace be upon

III ▪ him

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said: The Mahdi was the one of his time, the hidden treasure of the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him and them, their scholar, and the one who would unveil the cloak of tribulation for them. Then he mentioned a hadith from him, peace be upon him, which we had heard long ago, narrated from him, peace be upon him. It was said that he used to allude to a tribulation that would occur, a tribulation that would appear, and hypocrisy that would encompass most of the nation. For this reason, he built al-Mahdiyya and fortified it, and moved to it. It was reported that when he looked at its high, fortified wall and its iron gates, and those present spoke about it and described it as impregnable and said that nothing like it had ever been built, he would say: "All of this we have prepared for a brief moment of the day." We did not

understand the meaning of his words until the Antichrist, Mukhallad ibn Kaydad, appeared, and his tribulation raged and encompassed most of the nation. He came with his followers until he stood at the gate of al-Mahdiyya for a brief moment of the day. That was the end of his reign, and he continued to decline and fall until God

Almighty empowered al-Mansur, peace be upon him, who dispersed his forces and captured him, having searched for him in the deserts, wastelands, and high mountains, until God Almighty granted him victory over

▪ him and enabled him to seize him and unveil the truth. With the cloak of that ordeal, he extinguished its fire

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, mentioned the hadith that we also heard attributed to al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, concerning the removal of this tribulation and the extinguishing of the fire of this strife. He mentioned it on one of his days, saying, "The Master of this affair is currently in his mother's womb and will soon be born." Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, was pregnant at that time, and al-Mahdi, peace be upon him, was also pregnant. Al-Mansur, peace be upon him, was born, and Abu al-Hasan was born to al-Mahdi. His mother had said, while pregnant with him, to al-Mahdi, "I saw the moon in my lap, and I was nursing it." When al-Mansur was born and al-Mahdi brought him to him to bless him, he called for the mother of his son Abu al-Hasan, who had just given birth. He gave al-Mansur, peace be upon him, to her and said, "Nurse him along with your son." She did so, delighted and happy. When she nursed him, al-Mahdi said to her, "Do you remember the

"? vision you saw, that you were nursing the moon while it was in your lap

"
 .She said, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful

Then al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) told her, "This is the interpretation of your dream." Soon after, her son Abu al-Hasan contracted smallpox and lost his sight. She then became certain that her dream had been about

.al-Mansur (peace be upon him), along with al-Mahdi's (peace be upon him) interpretation for her Al-Mu'izz said, "After that, she was of the utmost certainty and allegiance to us, as is the case with the sincere. She grew old and aged while remaining in that state. She used to say to the son of Al-Mahdi and his wives after his death, 'By God, this matter has departed from this palace'—meaning the palace of Al-Mahdi, may God bless him and grant him peace—'and will never return to it. It has gone to that palace'—meaning the palace of Al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah—'and it will remain in the progeny of its owner as long as the world remains.'

If one of our women saw this, she would say to one of them, 'This lady has given birth to an Imam.' Her daughters would say to her, 'You have grown old and confused.' She would say, 'As for old age, yes, but as for

"
 .confusion, no, by God, I am not confused. But I heard that from the knowledge of the Imams

.She remained in that state until he died

I said, may God have mercy on her

.He said yes, and her belief benefited her

Hadiths on keeping pace 278

He said, "One day I accompanied Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God protect him from all harm) on one of his outings. He began by asking me about his noble self, may God protect him from all harm, about his family, children, and concubines. Had this question come from one of my friends of equal standing, I would have been greatly impressed by it, believing he had done me a favor, and I would have been overly familiar with him because of his generosity, like a servant confident in his master's affection and favor. I described the state of the concubines, children, and young girls according to what transpired between us, without any affectation. He, with his beautiful and noble face, smiled at the stories he heard about them and encouraged me to continue until I reached the point of mentioning the daughters and their children and related matters. He generously inquired

"
 .about their young and old, and their circumstances

"
 .Then he mentioned his two sons, Abdi, and said, "They have no children yet

So I said, "My lord, each of them has a slave girl, and it seems they were not content with them for

"
 .having children, and their souls yearned for something better and for marriage

.I told him what prevented me from doing so, namely that I had not yet seen them in their dwellings

He said, "And I think you also leaned towards the slave girls to get a lower price, so you bought them

"
 .things that are not suitable for their kind

I said, "No, by God, I did not buy them, but they were slaves that our master, peace be upon him, had

"
 .given to his slave from the spoils of war

He said, "This is the most amazing thing about them; they are suitable for such a situation, and I have

"
 .restricted them

"
•I said, "My lord, your servant should look after each of them in a dwelling and marry them
He, peace be upon him, said: How long will this continue? By God, if they do not rejoice and are not
happy during our days and our coming to you and them, and if all our friends are not happy likewise, then they

•will have a similar joy

I kissed the horse's mane and said, "May God extend the days of the Commander of the Faithful (peace
be upon him) and grant him continued favor upon his servants and all his allies, so that he may gladden their

"
•descendants and bestow upon them from His bounty what pleases them and subdue their enemies
He said, "God did that. As for what you mentioned about their marriage, I implore you to reconsider it.

Women rarely find agreement, and even if they agree, we are not immune to disagreement from in-laws and
those who seek closeness to them. Mixing with someone of a different nature will only bring you together. And
how can this be, when most women today are unsuitable? A suitable slave girl should be tested and tried. If she
is suitable, she should be chosen; if not, then another should be considered, as she is better and more

"
•appropriate

So I said, "The Commander of the Faithful has spoken the truth, may God guide him to the right path
and grant him success in his words. May God perpetuate his success, happiness, and guidance in what he has
seen for his servants. This is an hour that has brought them good fortune through his sound judgment and
beautiful vision. May he extend his favor to his allies and servants, and to religion and the world, during his

"
•days of glory, empowerment, long life, and lasting joy

I left, filled with joy at the honor of his singling me out with something that no friend would bestow

•upon another, nor even a close confidant upon another

signatures 279

Then Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God be pleased with him) ordered me to compile some
knowledge, explaining all its meanings and origins to me, and giving me a summary of what he said
about it. Before that, I had not previously undertaken any work on it, nor had my knowledge been
sufficiently broad in this regard. Its breadth necessitated that I proceed with its classification. When the
meaning within it was revealed to me, summarized, and its meanings clarified, and I was commanded
to compile and elaborate upon it, I proceeded with that, confident in God's help, for it was by his
command, may God's prayers and peace be upon him. I was in awe of his command, and I did not see

•myself exaggerating in it, nor reaching a point that would please him

So I began a portion of it, which I submitted to him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, and I
did not finish it except with great difficulty. I feel that I have fallen short in what I have been entrusted with, and

•I submitted with it a note in which I described some of what I experienced in it

Then, at the bottom of it, peace be upon him, he wrote: "O Nu'man, I have reviewed the book you have
written and found it to be excellent, beyond compare. Continue your work on it, may God grant you the best of

"
•help and reward you abundantly

By God, no sooner had I read his signature in his own handwriting, peace be upon him, and kissed it
and placed it on my chest, than it was as if God Almighty had delivered to my heart a portion of the aid for
which he, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, had prayed for me. It opened what had been closed to me
of the meanings of what I had begun with, and I had thought it would be brief. But its meanings and aspects of
its various kinds were revealed to me in a way that exceeded my hopes and many times more than I had
imagined. And I began with what followed what I had raised up, and it was the easiest and simplest thing for

•me. So I saw the hastening of the answer to his prayer for me with good assistance in it

other signatures 280

He said: Al-Mu'izz, may God's blessings be upon him, allocated places for his close friends to build in the blessed Mansuriyya. The sons, daughters, and some of the close female relatives asked me to request this for them so that they might be reunited and their dwellings brought closer together. This would also provide privacy for the women when they needed to visit and check on one another, and allow them to enjoy each other's company. Furthermore, they suffered loneliness and isolation when separated, and some of their dwellings were cramped. Some of them were with me in a dwelling that became too small for them, as God's favor and

▪ blessings upon us had increased

So I raised a note to him, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, asking him for that, out of reverence for him, and I mentioned what prompted me to ask that, from the question of the child and from what I mentioned to him, and that if it were for myself, it would be at the least of my needs, given my old age and the

▪ approach of death

My elevation to this position was on a Friday, and I asked him for a publication concerning my need and what he read that day to the congregation of believers, as he was accustomed to reading to them every Friday. He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, would then read it to me after he had finished the Friday prayer, and after the discussion circle and the reading of books of jurisprudence in the mosque. And after the believers had gathered in his palace, may God grant him a long life, I would read to them every Friday what

▪ came to me of wisdom, advice, admonition, and true knowledge

So, Nu'man, we have brought to you what we read today, and what you asked about concerning the register. He has gathered with Jawhar to write it for you. Do not describe yourself as arrogant, nor speak of the nearness of death, for God Almighty will grant you safety and well-being so that you may live in our time and with us, in the place that God chooses and is pleased with for us in the land of the East, with spacious and magnificent buildings. God has granted us the fulfillment of our hopes in religion and worldly matters, and that is not difficult for God. We will grant you what you asked for and even more than what you hoped for, God

▪ willing

So I accepted his signature, and from that moment on, I felt God's knowledge and strength within me. My hope expanded, and I became certain that God Almighty would keep me alive until I attained what he hoped for, may God's blessings be upon him. I cannot count what I heard him say, peace be upon him, about what I saw God Almighty grant him his hopes for, things that were more difficult and far-reaching than what he mentioned and wished for. I even said to him, regarding some of what I witnessed, "My master, wish for more,

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▪ for we have always seen that God Almighty grants you all that you hope for

other signatures 281

He said, and when he appointed himself, may God's blessings be upon him, to take the covenant from those who responded to him, and he was entrusted with producing what was to be read to them, as previously mentioned, by which they would be nurtured and those who ascend in the degrees of true knowledge would be elevated, he appointed me, may God's blessings be upon him, to read it to them so that there would be no deficiency, addition, or alteration in it, since it was written in a book that was to be read without addition or omission. So the responders multiplied, and their desires grew, and they came from every horizon, crossing seas and deserts to attain his mercy. And in every land, they had a community, and a bond and a gathering to seek knowledge and wisdom. And he, may God's blessings be upon him, disseminated among them what was to be read to them, and letters from a group of people from near and far lands came to me frequently, asking for an

▪ increase in his bounty and favor

I conveyed this to him and asked him to provide them with some means to perform the ritual prayer for those present. I also informed him of their requests and demands. The majority of the believers were present, and the disbelievers were defeated. I and they only asked for what they needed to be provided with. We will

▪ examine what is suitable for them and deliver it to them, God willing

other signatures 282

He said, "I may have benefited from God's bounty and the bounty of His chosen one, in the form of goods, food, and other things for which God's right is due, which He, the Almighty, commanded to be given to His chosen ones and distributed to them. I would strive to gather it all and deliver it in one go. Sometimes, some of it might not be readily available for sale, and some of it might be needed at that time. I would postpone the obligation until it became available, and I would record what was due to me in my will, fearing unforeseen circumstances. I could do no other way. Then, fearing that I might be committing a sin, I decided to consult our master, al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, and asked him to absolve me of this obligation through his grace, if he saw fit, or to order me to do what I should do. He replied, 'O Nu'man, you are absolved of this obligation, and your intention will suffice on your behalf. May God benefit you through it in

""
▪ this life and the hereafter

words on keeping up 283

He said, and I followed Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, in some of what he went out to do. He mentioned what is attributed to the Imams by those who call themselves their guardians and claim to call to them afterward, and he distanced himself from them from the falsehood from which God Almighty exonerated them and purified them. They attribute to them something that is beyond the limits of the ranks to which God Almighty established them, to something that deviates from the religion of their grandfather, peace be upon him, and severs the call to which God Almighty appointed them to revive what the falsifiers and the innovators had killed of its traditions, and God Almighty made them guardians of it. So he cursed whoever among them did that and said it and attributed it to the Imams of guidance, may God's peace

▪ and blessings be upon them

Then he said, "I am amazed by what these wicked people claim and believe regarding altering God's religion, deviating from it, and attributing their beliefs to us. Some of them have even dared to openly display this to us, corresponding and writing to us with their embellished falsehoods and their disbelief in God and His Messenger, our ancestor Muhammad (peace be upon him). They elaborate on their claims of changing God's law, destroying His religion, and inventing innovations within God's religion of their own accord. They cling to what they take from the fabricated religions of the disbelievers and the embellishments of their falsehoods, which they then compile into books and attribute to us. Some of them have even written to us claiming that they have established a new law and reinforced it with arguments that are acceptable to the mind, undeniable to anyone who hears them, and inseparable from them. They have even written a book for it, like the Quran for the Islamic law, and that divine inspiration has guided them to establish it for us and to pray for us in their book.

""
▪ Such is truly astonishing

His prayer upon himself was like saying, "This is filth, and God knows the sorrow and loneliness that filled me. What frightened me most, and what I was able to do, was to disavow his words before God Almighty and curse him. This is from the snares of Satan, and what he wants is to turn people away from us who hear that such a thing is attributed to us. We are innocent of it, by the grace and favor of God, in our relationship with God and with our guardians who receive from us the truth of what we are upon, those who know the stations that God Almighty has placed us in, stations of the imams of His religion whom He appointed for His servants.

God willing, the slander of the unjust and the falsifiers against us and what they attribute of falsehood and slander to us will not harm us. Rather, it is because of this that those who fabricate and invent it, and those who believe it and accept it from them, from among those who claim to be our guardians, or those who take it as an

""
▪ argument against us from among our enemies, will perish

So I said, "May God protect His saints and absolve them from the words of the liars and false accusers who speak about them contrary to their true nature. And the most astonishing thing that the servant of the Commander of the Faithful heard from this speaker is his claim that he resorted to tricks, making them believe that what he fabricated was the truth. If he has admitted that it was trickery he resorted to, how can he claim that

"? it was the truth

He, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Is it not so that this wicked man and those like him, who say what he says, claim that what the prophets brought of proofs, books, and signs was only through tricks they devised and matters they used to deceive people? This is the belief of everyone who rejects the

prophethood of the prophets, may God's peace and blessings be upon them all, whom God has exonerated and cleared of the words of these wicked people. This accursed one is one of them, and there are many like him. Because he believed such a thing, and Satan embellished it for him, he knew that if he claimed it to someone who knew him and attributed it to himself, it would not be accepted from him. So he wanted to attribute it to us to achieve what he wanted: to amass worldly gains and to deceive us into thinking that he intended by this to call people to us and magnify our importance in the eyes of those who call upon him and respond to him. He imagined that this would be acceptable to us and that we would accept it from him, so that he would draw people to our truth with the falsehood that he embellished and adorned with his claim to us. What is his corrupt belief, based on his misguided and misleading opinion? May God curse him and those like him and give us power over them so that He may purify the earth from their filth and remove their ugliness from us by His

”
 . grace

Words on the virtue of inner strength 284

He said, "I accompanied Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (may God bless him and grant him peace) one day on one of his outings, and he mentioned the virtue of the soul. He said, 'Two days ago, a dead lion of immense size and huge limbs was brought before me. Those present were turning over its fangs and claws, gazing at its magnificent form and the outward signs of its strength and power. They were amazed and stunned by it. I said to some of them, 'This is the outward appearance of what it used to attack, and what people feared because of its might and power. You turn it over with your hands now, and you neither fear nor guard against it, nor dread its attacks. Do you think that this avails anything, or that anyone fears it, since what was hidden within it—the soul—has departed? It was by its power that these instruments functioned as they did, and it was this soul that enabled it to do what it did, and it was this soul that used it for what inspires fear and dread. This body and its immense form, which you now consider great and awe-inspiring, and whose appearance you find terrifying, avails nothing because the power that was hidden and concealed within it has departed. So reflect upon it, and be amazed and stunned by it, and consider the power of God Almighty and His plan within it.'" Consider it and its rulings, and reflect upon it with due consideration. It is from this that you look, and it is what

. you fear and hold in awe

In this statement, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he presented a fundamental principle of clarity and proof, requiring extensive intellectual exploration and yielding lessons and insights. His virtue is

. evident in what is hidden, and he stands as a proof and evidence for those who are guided and enlightened

Hadiths on the Wonders of the Imams 285

He said, and Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned one day, while I was sitting before him, the matter of the tribulation and the trials that occurred during it. Then one of those present mentioned, in a general way, the amount of money that the Qa'im, peace be upon him, spent during it, considering it a great and significant amount. So al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, said, "Shall I not

"? tell you the total amount that was spent during it

" . I said, "Tell the Commander of the Faithful what I love, for we love that too

He, peace be upon him, said, "Order this uncle," and he gestured with his hand to the treasurer of the treasury of the Qa'im, who was before him, "that no expenditure be made for this matter except from his own money." He set aside for him one hundred thousand dinars and twelve million dirhams and said to him, "Beware of spending anything on this tribulation except from this money, for if you spend anything from other than this,

" . it will be wasted, and this entire sum will inevitably be exhausted in this expenditure

By God, he neither increased nor decreased it, and his expenses were only sufficient until the strife

. ended with his departure

"? Then he looked at the treasurer and said, "Wasn't that how it was

He said, "Yes, that is what the Imam, peace be upon him, commanded me to do, and I did not spend

■ anything else, and nothing remained of it, not even a dirham or more, and I did not need anything else

On asceticism in this world 286

He said, and Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, mentioned one day the construction of some of the ancients and the wonders therein. Then he mentioned some of those who were present at the construction of Al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, and what God Almighty had provided in terms of building the Al-Mu'izz River and its flow in the wondrous canal lined with stone, and the miraculous structure built with it, a day's journey in length. Then he mentioned the construction of the lofty, magnificent palace, built of hewn stone cut from the mountain at a great distance, and none of the kings of the world who ruled the place had been able to place stone upon stone there. And he mentioned the construction of the wondrous, lofty iwan and the hauling of the enormous columns from a day's journey to it and raising them after the people agreed that even if all the

■ people of the earth were gathered together, they would not be able to do that

Al-Mu'izz, may God's blessings be upon him, praised God for what He had provided for him and renewed his thanks. Then he said, "By God, we did not intend by this to gain power or to boast. I am fully aware, certain, and prepared to part with this and leave it soon, just as others have left theirs. But since God Almighty has given us dominion and bestowed upon us His blessings, we have shown His favor. The world and all that is in it have no share in our eyes. If it did, we would not have given it away to these people." He gestured with his hand towards the wealth before him and towards the people, both Bedouin and settled, who were passing by him with their children being circumcised. He gave to each one of them, young and old, noble and

■ commoner

In mention of victory 287

It was reported to al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, peace be upon him, that some Berbers on the outskirts had attacked a caravan coming from the west, plundering their belongings. So, peace be upon him, he sent one of his servants against them, along with some of his own cavalry. They, and all who saw them, thought that some of them would overpower their equals. So they set out, stealthily approaching them, and covered a distance of ten days' journey in two days and a few days, until most of their horses broke down, and many of them stopped, rushing towards them lest they escape. They thought they had power over them. The news reached the Berbers, so they turned and fled before them, and they caught up with them. They charged them as one man, stealthily approaching them, and seized their tents, killing a group of them and seizing the spoils and wealth. The Berbers then attacked them, having scattered, and inflicted losses upon them, defeating them. Night fell between them,

■ and the Berbers fled into the sands, escaping them. The expedition then departed

Then al-Mu'izz, peace be upon him, said as they departed: "These people suffered the same fate as the companions of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, on the day of Hunayn, as God Almighty recounted in His words: 'And on the day of Hunayn, when your great numbers pleased you, but they availed you nothing, and the earth, vast as it is, became constricted for you, and you turned back in retreat.' By God, no people have ever relied on themselves without God abandoning them to their own devices, nor have they ever underestimated their enemy without being overcome by them, nor have any people, whether few or many, ever placed their trust in God, sincerely dedicating their intentions to Him and certain that there is no power or strength except through Him, without God supporting them with His victory. This is what He says, 'He has no partner,' as a narration about Saul and his companions in His words: 'And when they advanced against Goliath and his soldiers, they said, "Our Lord, pour upon us patience and make firm our foothold and give us victory over the wrongdoing people." And His words, 'And He is the most truthful of speakers: How many a

■ ■ ■

■ small band has overcome a large band by permission of God. And God is with the patient

Then Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "The tribulation came upon us while we were seventy thousand fighters or more. They underestimated the enemy, and we continued to inflict losses upon them and diminish their numbers until the arrogant among them, the dissenters, and those who were confident in themselves perished. When only seven hundred men remained of us, while the enemy's

numbers were countless, God granted us victory over them, enabled us to capture their leader, disperse their forces, and kill them at our hands and the hands of our allies who were sincere to God, relied upon Him, and were certain that there is no power or strength except in Him. They knew their weakness and their small numbers, and He destroyed our enemy because they became arrogant, wicked, and pleased with themselves because of what they had gained. This is God's way with those who came before and those who will come

”
• after

Then he gestured with his hand towards one of his close associates who had gone out on an expedition and suffered a calamity. He said, “By God, he told me this when he headed to the place he had been assigned to, when he saw the large number of people and equipment he had with him. By God, if he had ordered me to take

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• these people to the ends of the earth, I would have done so

I told him at the time, "Don't say such things, and don't let pride enter your mind about yourself and

”
• those with you. Put your trust in God and have faith in His victory

He attained what he attained, and I believe that was only due to his admiration for those who were with him and the strength that was made available to him, even though after that his work was praised and God

• granted him success and victory, as He has accustomed us to His favor

Likewise, we had ordered someone to address these vile Berbers, demanding the return of what they had plundered from the people of this group, but they refused. When the calamity that befell them occurred, even if they escaped, many of them were killed and scattered to a place where they could not remain without perishing from destitution. They then sent word to us, pleading and asking for safe passage, on the condition that they would return what they had taken from the people of the group and bring us money which they offered in

• order for us to guarantee their safety

This is God's beautiful custom with us: whoever among our allies and soldiers becomes arrogant and conceited, God disciplines him in the same way He disciplined those we mentioned, without any weakness affecting us or deficiency being attributed to us. This is because of God's grace, favor, generosity, and bounty,

• which He, the Exalted and Glorified, has accustomed us to. To Him belongs all praise, and He has no partner

visions seen by Al-Mansur, peace be upon him 288

He said, and Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, Al-Mansur, may God sanctify his soul and bless him, mentioned what he did regarding the sedition until God dispelled it through him, and what he endured in pursuing the accursed Mukhallad in the deserts and mountain peaks until God Almighty

• granted him power over him, and the ailments that this caused him

He, peace be upon him, said: He, may God's blessings be upon him, told me after his departure that when he fell ill in Tahert with the illness from which he was nearly killed, his pain intensified one day and he despaired of his life. He said: So I remembered what is due to God Almighty from me, which is to entrust the matter to you and make that will, and what I must bequeath. So I sent for so-and-so and so-and-so, and he mentioned a group of his close friends, to remind them of my covenant with you. He said: After the messenger left, I slept, and I had not slept before that. Then I saw a man standing before me, and he said: What did you

? intend to say to these people whom you ordered to be brought to you

I said I wanted them to witness my promise and my will

• He asked me why

• So I said, because of the illness I was in, and I had despaired of myself

He said, “Did you think that God would cut off your hope after you stood up for Him and gave yourself so much in His obedience? No, by God, nothing of what you feared will befall you until God reunites your

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• affairs and grants you what you desire in this matter. So be of good spirits and be content, and do not fear

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• He said, then I noticed the messenger standing there and he said, "The people have arrived

I said, "Bring them in," so they brought them in to me. I told them what I had sent them with and what

I had seen while I was in such a state of illness and weakness that no one who saw me would hope for my

survival. By God, I did not spend the night except fully recovered and healthy, and strength returned within a few days with the continuation of my health. So I departed after achieving my hope, attaining my desire, and

▪ triumphing

Mention of the purification of the son of Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may 289 God's prayers be upon him

He said: When Imam al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, wanted to circumcise his sons Abdullah, Nizar, and Aqil, he addressed his close associates, his close friends, all his soldiers and servants, all his men, and all those present in the capital, including merchants, craftsmen, and the general populace in al-Mansuriyya and al-Qayrawan, and all the inhabitants of the cities and districts of Ifriqiya, both settled and nomadic. He ordered letters to be sent to the governors from Barqa and its districts to Sijilmasa and its borders, and all that lies between them and within his realm, and to the island of Sicily and all its inhabitants, both settled and nomadic, instructing them to proceed with the circumcision of their sons on Tuesday, the first day of Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 351 AH, until the end of that month. He also ordered that money and robes of honor be sent from the capital to each of these regions to be distributed among all the circumcised sons of

▪ Muslims, both commoners and elites

What we saw was that Sicily carried fifty camel-loads of money, in addition to the robes of honor and similar items, to each official to distribute among his people. On that aforementioned Tuesday, may God's blessings be upon him, he oversaw the circumcision of his son and personally attended the circumcisions of all the people of the city and those from the surrounding countryside. He ordered tents to be erected in the courtyard of the Sea Palace around the water, and that boys be brought in along with their fathers, mothers, slaves, servants, and any slaves they wished to have circumcised. He resolved that the circumcisions should continue throughout the entire month. It became widely known that he, may God's blessings be upon him, had decreed that whoever did not have a child circumcised during this circumcision and then circumcise him again for seven years would have forfeited his favor and disobeyed his command. So the people hastened with their sons and slaves, and when the news of this reached him, he said, "He who spread this news has done well, and

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▪ no one who loves our days will stay behind

He, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, would sit from the early morning until the time of the circumcision. He would remain seated while the children were being purified and passed before him. He would clothe them and provide for them, and none of them, whether noble or commoner, free or slave, near or far, present or absent, would be left out. The circumcisers sat in tents on chairs, with platforms before them for the boys and men to sit in. They held the boys in their laps and sprinkled the blood-stopping powder on their circumcisions. They stood amidst incense and rosewater, and sprinkled it on their faces to soothe the fear and distress they experienced. Various games were played with them, entertaining them, and those who had been

▪ purified were escorted to their homes

The gifts and stipends given by the elite varied greatly, too numerous to mention. The general public gave between two hundred and one hundred and fifty dirhams to each boy, excluding clothing. The least given to the unknown Bedouin, their peers, and their slaves was ten dirhams per boy. Each day of this month, between ten thousand and five thousand boys were circumcised. People discussed this extensively, considering it a great undertaking. Initially, they agreed that it would not be completed and that the funds would not suffice. They remarked, based on the sheer number of people they saw, that if it continued for a year, the number would never

▪ cease, and it would never be exhausted

I was among those who were greatly concerned about this and felt apprehensive about it. One day I mentioned it to him, and he said to me, "O Nu'man, be of good cheer. We have set aside for this what we do not think we can fully cover. By God, it is not something we would have given any thought to, nor did we find any deficiency or flaw in its expenditure. We did not consider it among our treasures, nor among the treasures of our forefathers, peace be upon them. It is simply something that was not given much thought. Many of the kings of the world before us spent similar amounts, and many times more, on sins against God Almighty and on things that would bring shame upon Him. This is something we intended for the sake of God, to fulfill His obligation, and to revive the Sunnah of our grandfather, His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, and the religion of His friend Abraham, peace and blessings be upon him and his family. We intended nothing by this except God Almighty, to draw closer to Him. None of these people intend by this to gain His favor or to adorn themselves before Him. We have set aside money for this, which we must spend on it, and we have set a

time for it, which we must reach if we live—meaning the duration of this month, which he, peace be upon him,

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▪ has set for this purpose

It was by the will of God Almighty that on Wednesday, the last day of Rabi' al-Awwal, all those present in the palace and those who had come from the desert had departed. On that day, approximately twelve thousand boys gathered and were all purified. The following day, the remaining three hundred joined them. Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's blessings be upon him, saw them gathered at the palace gate and ordered their purification. All the people departed at the appointed time and within the allotted time, so much so that even if they were to calculate and divide the days, it would not be possible to match what God Almighty had ordained

▪ for them, their complete departure at the appointed time

This was done by all the people of the districts and towns in every way, and the expenditures on it amounted to sums of money and gifts that only those who witnessed it could count. The days of this month were days of celebration, joy, happiness, and gifts in every direction throughout the kingdom of the Commander of the Faithful, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, from the Bedouin and the settled populations. His bounty encompassed them all, its effects were evident upon them, their rich benefited from it, their poor were revived by it, and joy entered every household. It was a beautiful effect, unprecedented by anyone before him, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, and I do not think anyone could match it. Praise be to God for

▪ what He has bestowed upon His chosen one and the blessings He has granted him

words on gifts and connections 290

He said: When the matter of this purification, the account of which was given in the previous session, was completed, it coincided with the arrival of messengers from some of the preachers of the eastern regions, bringing with them funds from the works of the believers, as well as rare and precious items. Al-Mu'izz, may God's blessings be upon him, sat on Thursday, the first day of Rabi' al-Thani, following this purification, and ordered that his close associates from the Kutama and others be brought in. He read the letters of his preachers, detailing their improved circumstances, the stability of their affairs, the spread of their message, and the expansion of their mission. Those present praised God for this and offered prayers as they could. Then they mentioned the favor bestowed upon the Commander of the Faithful by the general public, the widespread praise for him, and the prayers offered for him by both his supporters and opponents. They also spoke of his evident generosity towards the poor and needy, as one of them would bring three, four, or even more of his children, and

▪ he would give each of them a gift the likes of which he had never before seen

Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, said: “By God, I was saddened by what I saw of the poor and destitute people passing by me, even though they were few in number, because they are our subjects and among those whom we wish to be rich, so that the blessings of God Almighty may be

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▪ evident upon them through us, since such a thing has happened

Our general assembly of guardians and those whom we appoint over our subjects, in whom we place our trust and expect goodness, were present. We believe they will obey our commands and fulfill their duty of good conduct towards them, ensuring the wealth of the rich is used to support the poor, as is required. They will uphold justice for young and old alike, and act according to our instructions. May God have mercy on those who do this and obey, but may He have no mercy on those who transgress and exceed this bounds, nor forgive them, and deprive them of our intercession. By God, we have spared no effort in ensuring that those we appoint adhere to what we desire and love: justice, fairness, good conduct towards the subjects, kindness, and benevolence. I disavow before God anyone who disobeys my commands concerning them and fails to comply with them. By God, there is no higher place in my eyes than yours, and none of my children is dearer to me than you, except those whom God has granted a special status among them. This is due to the bonds you have forged with us,

▪ from generation to generation, father to father, and son to son

You are our people, and we obey you. You are the dearest of creation to us. If only you would aid us with hearing, obedience, and compliance with our commands. We have no doubt about your good faith in our leadership and the purity of your intentions towards us. However, the world may have seduced many of you with its fleeting pleasures, and zealotry and passion may have led many of you astray from our cause, especially the envy and rivalry that some of you harbor towards one another. This can lead to wars, killing, and the violation of women in your midst, as you seek to settle scores with one another. This grieves us and pains us deeply. It is incumbent upon you to forgo what you desire—the satisfaction of your anger and the fulfillment of

your desires—for what we desire: the preservation of your lives, the improvement of your affairs, and the continuation of God's blessings upon you. Furthermore, what do you offer yourselves to those who have no authority over you, those who claim to be better than you, those who seek our favor and generosity, using this to

? gain your favor and boast of it to you

It is incumbent upon you and all who follow us and recognize our virtue to base their attention and reliance on our commands. Whoever we elevate and command to follow and obey, let him submit to our command and obey us. And whoever we do not elevate or give precedence to, let him not pay attention to him, nor give him what we do not give him, nor take any intermediaries besides us. By God, we have not made you dependent on anyone, and let none of you accuse me of making you dependent on anyone other than me, thinking that he can benefit or harm you in my eyes, to the point of enduring for him what many of you endured for those upon whom God's wrath and curse fell—meaning the accursed Caesar—going to him and coming to him before going to us. That was his obligation, and we were merely a supererogatory act in his eyes. Whatever favor he receives from us, he sees as having reached him through it. And what he might give without us is treachery and ill-gotten gain, which he possesses and magnifies in his heart, and our favor over him expands. By God, a single dirham we give to one of you, which he accepts from us with gratitude, is of greater virtue, blessing, and purity in the sight of God than the entire world and all that it contains. Her face, with all the joy it

• brings to the soul and the nobility of her character

Some of our sheikhs who responded to our callers contacted us, saying that he used to receive a favor from a caller who received it from us. One of them met him one day and mentioned that he had mentioned him to that caller, so he ordered that he receive something that he used to give him. He said, "I have reached a point where I am not mentioned until you mention me. May God not keep me alive until the day when I am forgotten

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• by the One I hope for, until someone else mentions me

Thus, I want your souls and aspirations to be commensurate with your place and position with me. I love to boast and take pride in you in this world and the hereafter, as our grandfather, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said to those of his time: "I will boast of you before the nations on the Day of Resurrection." And God Almighty said: "So how will it be when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you, [O Muhammad], as a witness against these?" And He said: "On the Day We will call every people with their leader, then by God, you will be called upon Me, and I am the witness over you. I do not think that someone like me will bring forth a righteous people, and I will bring forth a people in whom there is

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• no good

The people fell silent, and I saw that this had lowered their spirits. I said, "The Commander of the Faithful has admonished his servants, and he has been thorough in his admonition, alerting them and showing them favor. We ask God not to deprive us of the guidance of His chosen one, and not to make us among those

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• who turn away from him and abandon him to his own choice

He, peace be upon him, said: "If they were not in my esteem, those whose well-being I cherish and whose guidance I desire, I would not have spoken to them as I did. Were it not for my fear for them, I would have made them aware of their place with me and their standing in my heart. Had I wished, I could have punished the wrongdoer with a punishment befitting his sin, and I could have killed those whose execution is necessary for the well-being of the state, while sparing those who are beneficial to it. However, I have acted according to the dictates of time and the test of God's gracious custom with me. God Almighty says, 'And as for the favor of your Lord, speak of it.' This is one of God's favors upon me. He has granted me authority, empowered me, bestowed upon me, enabled me, and granted me power, and has elevated me beyond my hopes and beyond the attainment of those who came before me. Indeed, among your forefathers and ancestors, there were those whom people say were superior to you. I say only that you are superior to those who preceded you, by the grace God has bestowed upon you during my time, my mercy, and my life. Even though those forefathers, peace be upon them, spared no effort in showing kindness and generosity to those of their era, and even though their conduct towards them was for the benefit of all, every era has its men. And many will perish tomorrow because of my conduct today." Those who think that the matter is no more than what I am today should recognize the extent of God's blessings upon them and thank Him, and He will increase His bounty upon

• them

Some of those present asked, "How can we ever thank the Commander of the Faithful for what he has

"? bestowed upon us

He said that what God has bestowed upon His servants is greater and more sublime, and God Almighty has informed us that some of His servants have thanked Him, as they have thanked Him to the best of their

▪ ability. So purify your intentions for Him, for He desires nothing from you but sincerity

They kissed the ground repeatedly before him and thanked him as best they could, then departed. On that day, he bestowed upon all those present at the gathering magnificent robes of honor. It was a day of joy, concluding the days of purification, the joy of which we have already mentioned, and the people's knowledge of the virtue of God's chosen one through it, may God's blessings be upon him and upon the pure Imams from his

▪ predecessors and the guided elite from his successors. And peace be upon him abundantly

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds

The writing of this blessed book was completed on the computer on the day of the martyrdom of our Lady Fatima al-Zahra, the Mistress of the Women of the Worlds, the tenth day of Jumada al-Ula, 1419 AH, may

▪ God's peace be upon her