The Book of the Foundation of Interpretation (*Kitāb Asās al-Taʾwīl*)

By Qadi Nu'man

Table of Contents

The Book of the Foundation of Interpretation (*Kitāb Asās al-Taʾwīl*) 1

Introduction 3

Remarks and Summaries Concerning the Establishment of Interpretation and the Inner Meaning of What Has Come in the Reports and in Interpretation 7

The First Part: The Interpretation of Faith and Islam, and the Distinction Between Them 11

The Second Part: The Interpretation of Adam and the Imamate 24

The Third Part: The Story of Noah and Hūd 46

The Story of Noah, Peace Be Upon Him 46

Hūd and Ṣāliḥ in the Cycle of Noah 63

The Fourth Part: The Story of Abraham, Peace Be upon Him 72

The Fifth Part: From the Story of Abraham 89

The second interpretation 90

"Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet." 90

Among them was Lot 90

Among them was Joseph 95

The Sixth Part: The Ending of the Story of Joseph, the Story of Job, the Story of Shuʿayb, and the beginning of the Story of Moses. 112

The Story of Job 118

The Story of Shuʿayb 121

The Story of Moses, Son of Amram, Peace Be Upon Him 127

The Seventh Part: The Story of Moses 129

The Eight Part: The Story of Moses 149

The Ninth Part: Completion of the Story of Moses 169

The Tenth Part: The Story of Saul, of David, and the Beginning of the Story of Solomon, peace be upon them. 190

The Story of Saul 190

The Story of David 192

The Story of Solomon Son of David 200

The Eleventh Part: Completion of the Story of Solomon 203

The Twelfth Part: The Stories of Jonah, Zechariah, John, and Mary, peace be upon her and upon them 222
The Story of Jonah, Peace Be upon Him 222
The Story of Zechariah, John, and Mary, Peace Be upon Them 225
The Story of John 228
The Story of Mary 230
The Thirteen Part The Story of Jesus. 232
The Fourteen Part: The beginning of the Story of Muhammad. 245
The Fifteenth Part: The Story of Muhammad 257
The Sixteenth Part: The Story of Muhammad 269
The Seventeenth Part: The Story of Muhammad's Heir and the Asās of His Religious Law, ʿAlī 282
Ending 293
Claims of the Common People 293
1. Concerning the Story of Adam 293
2. Concerning the Story of Abraham 295
3. Concerning the Story of Joseph 296
4. Concerning the Story of Moses 296
5. Concerning the Story of Saul 299
6. Concerning the Story of David 299
7. Concerning the Story of Solomon 300

Introduction

Praise be to God, the Benefactor of blessings, and may God bless Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy, and his appointed heir ʿAlī, the protector of the community, and the purified Imams from among his virtuous descendants.

To proceed:

By God's support, His favor, His assistance, His grace, and His benevolence, we had previously set forth for those who had responded to the Call to Truth a book concerning the outward knowledge of the sacred law. We called it the **Book of the Pillars of Islam (*Kitāb Daʿāʾim al-Islām*)**.

In it, we mentioned the boundaries of faith, the distinction between faith and Islam, the obligation of allegiance, the indication of those who hold authority, the requirements of religious obligations, the chapters concerning what is lawful and unlawful, and matters of judicial rulings and legal judgments.

This was so that those who had responded might know these matters of the outward aspect of their religion, hold them as their belief, act upon them, neither oppose them nor abandon them. For this is the first boundary of instruction and the lowest degree of knowledge in understanding. It is what ought to be begun with for one in whom the spirit of faith and wisdom has arisen and who has passed from the boundary of darkness into the boundary of light.

It is like the first stages of caring for a newborn at the time of birth, when the breath of life is perceived as he emerges from the darkness of the womb into the light of the world. One begins by attending to his outward condition: cutting the umbilical cord that had been the connection between him and that which is not part of him; setting his limbs right; applying oil to his skin; applying dressings that strengthen and support him; and binding his body so that he does not move violently and thereby damage his limbs or weaken his joints, causing his form to become deformed or bringing upon himself something that would lead to his destruction and ruin.

Likewise is the condition of one who does not put his outward religion in order and make it upright: his religion is liable to be destroyed and demolished.

Therefore, we undertook for those who had responded what was required of us concerning this matter, hoping for their improvement and rectification. We read it to them and permitted those among them who wished to copy it to do so. We placed it before them, freely available, so that whoever among them wished might read it.

Some of them took it and benefited from it, though they were few among them, in accordance with God's saying concerning their like:

“Except those who believe and perform righteous deeds—and how few they are!”

Most of them turned away from it, as He, exalted is He, said:

“But most people do not know.”

And He said:

“Most people, even though you are eager for it, will not be believers.”

And He said:

“Among them are the believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient.”

Among them were those who turned away, the ignorant, and the misguided.

They said:

“This is merely the outward aspect that we know, and we see nothing in it from which we can benefit.”

By saying this, they resembled those whom God has described among those who denied His prophets and messengers:

“This is nothing but the customs of the former peoples.”

And:

“This is nothing but manifest falsehood.”

And:

“This is nothing but a falsehood he has fabricated.”

And others assisted him in it.

They have therefore come with wrongdoing and falsehood, and they said:

“This is nothing but the tales of the ancients.”

This is the path of one who rejects the boundaries of religion and what God's wisdom has established among the earlier and later generations.

Those whose religion was corrupted were the evil preachers whom those who entrusted them with authority from among the Friends of God thought would bring good, but they were contrary to what had been expected of them. They opposed their commands, altered what had been arranged for them, transgressed the boundaries they had established for some people, and prevented others from fulfilling what was obligatory upon them. Thus they went astray and led many others astray, and they themselves strayed from the straight path.

Had they obeyed the commands of their authorities and led the community along the path that those authorities had prescribed for them, circumstances would have been set right, and neither these people nor anyone else would have had anything to say against what had been told to them.

And God, through His Friend who devotes himself to correcting what has been corrupted in God's religion, restores what those who opposed him had corrupted, through His power, His strength, His generosity, and His mercy.

When those whom God had granted success had reached the extent they reached from what we had laid out for them concerning the outward aspect—even though they were few compared with the many—it was not appropriate for us to withhold from them what was obligatory for them.

We therefore saw that we should raise them to the next boundary of the inner aspect, namely, the boundary of **symbol and indication**. This is the gentlest of its boundaries and the closest of them.

Its likeness in raising children and nourishing bodies is the milk with which infants begin after their outward condition has been put in order, because their constitutions are too weak to tolerate coarse foods and their strength is insufficient to handle them. They continue with milk until they become strong enough for such foods, become prepared for them, and gradually take them.

Likewise, symbols and indications prepare the understandings of those who hear them and stir their faculties toward the wisdom to which they allude and which they indicate. Thus they become eager to hear it and prepare themselves to receive it.

Had it come to them all at once, without any introduction, it would have come upon them suddenly, and its arrival upon them in such a condition would have harmed them, just as giving infants solid food before its proper time harms them.

For this reason God established a limit for this matter among them, saying:

“Mothers shall breastfeed their children for two complete years, for whoever wishes to complete the nursing.”

Thus, after the *Book of the Pillars of Islam* that we had composed, we set forth for those whom we have mentioned a book called the **Book of the Boundaries of Knowledge (*Kitāb Ḥudūd al-Maʿrifa*)**.

We arranged it according to the boundaries of demonstrating the proof of interpretation against those who denied the inner aspect and those who rejected it, and we explained how it should be learned and how one should ascend through its degrees.

In it we laid out symbols and indications concerning the inner aspect from which people of understanding might benefit.

The conduct of the people toward it was the same as their conduct toward what preceded it: some accepted it and desired it, while others turned away from it and regarded it with disdain.

When we had reached a certain point in this matter, and it became incumbent upon us to give those who desired it what they deserved, we decided to set forth this book for them, at a boundary of inner interpretation that follows the boundary of symbols.

It is as though one who hears some of this contrary to its proper boundaries—among those whom we have mentioned as being different from this—were to alter it from the path by which he had previously heard it, or were to hear it without the explanation that had been given to him beforehand. His course would then be the course of those whom we mentioned who turned away from the two preceding boundaries: he would follow their path, trace their footsteps, and cast off the garment of his religion together with them.

Thus does God sift those who believe and destroy the unbelievers, as He has said:

"And if they had understood the saying of the truthful and wise one,"

and what had been conveyed to them from him concerning what he had explained of the inner meaning to some who were connected with him.

He said to him:

"O son of the Messenger of God, I heard you say this before, at another time, in a manner different from this."

He, peace be upon him, said:

"We speak concerning a single word of this according to seven aspects."

The man said:

"Seven, O son of the Messenger of God?"—considering that a great number.

He said:

"Yes, and seventy. Had he asked for more, I would have given him more."

Thus, the aspects of this knowledge correspond to its boundaries.

Let the one who hears it and benefits from it know this and ascend through its degrees.

This is a book whose foundations we have laid out. It is the first of its boundaries, and we have called it the **Book of the Foundation of Interpretation (*Kitāb Asās al-Taʾwīl*)**.

Our purpose in it is to explain the inner meaning of what we established in the *Book of the Pillars of Islam*, so that this may be the foundation of the inner aspect just as that book is the foundation of the outward aspect.

In God we seek assistance, and there is no power and no strength except through God, the h

Remarks and Summaries Concerning the Establishment of Interpretation and the Inner Meaning of What Has Come in the Reports and in Interpretation

We had already set forth at length in the *Book of the Boundaries of Knowledge*, mentioned above, the arguments establishing the science of interpretation and the refutation of those who deny it, using the Book, the Sunnah, and the statements of the Imams and the community.

We thoroughly discussed this matter, although we summarized it.

Nevertheless, it would not be appropriate for us to leave the beginning of this book without including some portion of it, so that it might serve as a proof for one who reflects upon it before proceeding to what follows.

We say, by the success granted by God, glorified and exalted is He:

Every sensible thing must have an **outward aspect and an inward aspect**.

Its outward aspect is that upon which the senses fall, while its inward aspect is what it contains and what knowledge comprehends as being within it, while its outward aspect encompasses it.

The inward aspect is its counterpart and companion.

God, exalted is He, said:

“And of everything We created two pairs, that perhaps you may remember.”

Everything that occurs in the reports and the Revelation is a “thing”; and every thing, even if it is one, must have a counterpart that makes its distinction clear from the Unity of the Creator, who is distinct from all His creation.

Nothing can subsist independently of Him except through what He has paired with it.

Take the human being as an example. He is one person, yet he consists of a body and a spirit. The body is the outward aspect and the spirit is the inward aspect.

Each of these two is itself composed of two things.

The body is composed of coldness and dryness, while the spirit is composed of heat and moisture.

When the spirit separates from the body, the body remains cold and dry.

Likewise, everything in the world, when considered carefully, must have a pairing.

God, exalted is He, has mentioned the inner aspect in several places in His Book.

He said:

“And He has bestowed upon you His blessings, outward and inward.”

And He informed us that He will question His servants concerning His blessings upon them, saying:

“Then, on that Day, you shall certainly be questioned concerning the blessings.”

If one does not know what the inner aspect of blessing is, while he knows that he will be questioned about it, how will he answer when he is questioned?

And He, without partner, said:

“And abandon the outward sin and its inward aspect.”

If one does not know what the inward aspect of sin is, how can he abandon it? Does he not have reason to fear that he may fall into it precisely because he is ignorant of it?

Then He mentioned it again in His Book, saying:

“He is the One who sent down to you the Book. Some of its verses are precise—they are the foundation of the Book—and others are ambiguous.”

—up to His saying—

“And none knows its interpretation except God and those firmly grounded in knowledge.”

We mentioned in the *Book of the Boundaries of Knowledge* the position of those who acknowledged interpretation but did not understand its proper nature, as well as the position of those who rejected and denied it, together with the proof against all of them.

He also said:

“Do they await anything other than its interpretation? On the Day when its interpretation comes, those who had forgotten it before will say: ‘The messengers of our Lord certainly came with the truth.’”

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said:

“No verse of the Qur'an was revealed to me except that it has an outward aspect and an inward aspect.”

We have mentioned in the *Book of the Boundaries of Knowledge* the consensus of the community concerning the soundness of this report, and the invalidity of interpreting it in an incorrect manner.

We also mentioned what they themselves acknowledged concerning the inner aspect when they found no way to avoid acknowledging it, and how necessity compelled them to acknowledge it when they could find no escape from it.

For example, they acknowledge that **water** means knowledge in one place, **death** means unbelief in another, **life** means faith in another, **light** means guidance in another, and **darkness** means misguidance in another.

Likewise, blindness, dumbness, and deafness have meanings other than their outward meanings in certain passages; and **ewes** may mean women in one place, along with many other examples whose enumeration would be lengthy.

Yet when they hear among such expressions something that requires affirming God's unity and declaring Him above the attributes of His creatures, they reject it, liken their deity to His creation, describe Him accordingly, and attribute to Him what God—blessed is His name—is exalted and sanctified above.

They have heard what God, exalted is He, repeatedly mentions in His Book concerning the use of parables for His servants, such as His saying:

“These are the parables We set forth for the people, but none understands them except those who possess knowledge.”

And His saying:

“For each of them We set forth parables, and each We utterly destroyed.”

And His saying:

“Indeed, God is not ashamed to set forth a parable—even of a mosquito or something above it. As for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, ‘What did God intend by this as a parable?’ Through it He misguides many and guides many; but He misguides none except the defiantly disobedient—those who break God's covenant after its confirmation, sever what God has commanded to be joined, and spread corruption upon the earth.”

And His saying:

“Indeed, We have set forth for people every kind of parable in this Qur'an.”

God, exalted is He, has also informed us that reports themselves have interpretations.

Thus, in the story of Joseph, peace be upon him, He said:

“And thus your Lord will choose you and teach you the interpretation of events.”

And He said:

“And thus We established Joseph in the land, that We might teach him the interpretation of events.”

There are many verses in His Book in which He mentions parables and the inner interpretation.

This is well known in the Arabic language in which the Qur'an was revealed and in which He addressed them. It is among its miracles and among the extraordinary features of its composition that He presents a single thing with one meaning in its outward aspect and another meaning in its inward aspect.

Thus, He, glorified and exalted is He, made its outward aspect a miracle of His Messenger, while its inward aspect is a miracle of the Imams from his Ahl al-Bayt.

It is found only with them, and no one else is capable of producing its like, just as no one is capable of producing the outward form of the Book except their ancestor, Muhammad, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him.

This is knowledge transmitted within them, inherited among them, and entrusted to them. It is found with no one else.

They address each people according to the measure of what they understand. They give every person from it what he deserves, withhold it from the one from whom it should be withheld, and repel it from the one who deserves to be repelled from it.

For God, exalted is He, says:

“This is Our gift, so bestow or withhold without reckoning.”

And now, with God's assistance and support, we shall begin to mention the interpretation that we promised to mention of what we set forth in the *Book of the Pillars of Islam*, and we shall mention its inner aspect according to what is required by this boundary that we have now begun, in the language of the person who hears it and according to the measure of his understanding.

God, exalted is He, said:

“We have not sent any messenger except in the language of his people, so that he might make it clear to them.”

For if the common people were addressed in the language of the elite, they would not understand most of what was being said.

Therefore, in addressing them, we have sought what comes closest to the understanding of those who hear it. We have not cast it in the forms of expression used by logicians and philosophers, as some who affect such matters have done.

We place our trust in God, our Lord, and He is sufficient for those who place their trust in Him.

The First Part: The Interpretation of Faith and Islam, and the Distinction Between Them

The first chapter that we established in the *Book of the Pillars of Islam* was the chapter on **Faith**, followed by the chapter explaining the distinction between **Faith and Islam**.

We have brought the interpretation of both together in this chapter because their origin is one, and because it is the point with which we begin.

Every one of the Messengers endowed with firm resolve established a foundation for his sacred law in the outward aspect, and that foundation had an inner aspect encompassing all of its boundaries.

The foundation of **Noah**, peace be upon him, was the Ark. He called those who believed in him to board it, and whoever did not board it with him drowned and perished.

The foundation of **Abraham**, peace be upon him, was the Kaaba. He proclaimed the pilgrimage to it among the people, called them to circumambulate it, and established its rites.

The foundation of **Moses**, peace be upon him, was the staff. He cast it down before those who denied him, and it swallowed up the falsehoods of those who opposed him.

The foundation of **Jesus**, peace be upon him, was the cross. He said to those who attached themselves to him and believed him:

"Whoever wishes to follow me, let him take up a cross with him."

The foundation of **Muhammad**, peace and blessings of God be upon him, was the testimony that there is no god but God.

He called people to it and to affirm it.

He said:

"I have been commanded to fight the people until they say, 'There is no god but God.' When they say it, their blood and property are protected from me, except by its due right, and their reckoning is with God."

And he said:

"Whoever says, 'There is no god but God,' sincerely, will enter Paradise."

The outward forms of these foundations differ, since each foundation encompassed all the boundaries of the sacred law of its respective messenger and all that God had prescribed for the community to which that messenger was sent.

Had this not been so, the messenger would not have called those to whom he was sent to that foundation, for it would not have encompassed everything by which they were commanded to worship.

Yet the majority of this community have claimed that the Messenger's call to the testimony that there is no god but God occurred only at the beginning of Islam.

They say that he initially called the people to something easy for them, so they answered him. Then, afterward, he imposed upon them the obligations, beginning with the easier and proceeding to the more difficult, until there came the obligation of fighting, in which lives and property were sacrificed.

According to some formulations of this view, the final matter was allegiance.

This is a claim incompatible with the action of a wise person.

For it would be a kind of deception and gradual entrapment. One should not call people to give their allegiance and offer their pledge upon something unless everything that he seeks from them and everything upon which they are pledging is contained within it.

However, even if it is stated in a comprehensive form, it may subsequently be clarified, its details explained, and its meanings expounded.

Islam is the statement upon which allegiance is given, and in religion it is a general, comprehensive statement; the religious obligations are established within it, and are subsequently made clear and explained to whoever responds to it. The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, was asked, when he called people to the statement "There is no god but God" sincerely and promised Paradise to whoever professed it with sincerity, about what sincerity in it consisted of. He said: "Believing in it, knowing its boundaries, and fulfilling its rights." Thus he made clear that it has conditions.

He, peace and blessings of God be upon him, also said: "The statement 'There is no god but God' will continue to repel the wrath of the Lord from this community, until they cease to care about what they diminish from their religion. When that happens to them, it will be rejected from them, and it will be said to them: 'You have lied; you are not sincere in it.'"

This falls within what al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, said, as we related from him in *The Pillars of Islam*: that "faith is a statement with the tongue, affirmation in the heart, and action with the limbs"; and his statement that "faith is all action, while the statement is one part of that action." He also described the division of faith among the limbs of a person, and that each limb has been entrusted with an act belonging to faith different from that entrusted to the other limbs. He mentioned this point gradually in a lengthy discourse recorded in *The Pillars of Islam*.

All of this establishes that the testimony encompasses all the requirements of the Sharīʿa.

It is established from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, that whenever he confronted the polytheists, he called them to it. If they responded to him and professed it, he brought them under the ruling of Islam and refrained from fighting them and from taking their property, except for what was required concerning it according to the ruling of Islam. If they refused it, he called upon them to pay the jizya by hand while they were humbled. If they refused, he fought them.

Thus the outward profession of the testimony by speech entailed the ruling of Islam, protected lives and property except where their lawful claims applied, and protected them from the humiliation of the jizya. This testimony is: “There is no god but God,” together with acknowledgement of the Messenger. This must be affirmed by the believer as part of the covenant when it is taken from him.

This is what God says—and He is the most truthful of speakers—in the story of Abraham, when his Lord said to him, “Submit,” and he said, “I have submitted to the Lord of the worlds.” Abraham enjoined this upon his sons, and Jacob likewise: “O my sons, indeed God has chosen the religion for you, so do not die except while you are Muslims.”

Thus Islam is the testimony to God's unity and to the Messenger's messengership. It is incumbent upon everyone who professes it to profess it with truth and sincerity. If he does not do so, his reckoning is with God, as the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said; his testimony will avail him nothing before God, since he did not make it sincere, and it will be rejected from him.

Likewise, according to legal judgment, if a person gives testimony concerning something whose boundaries he has not established, whose realities he has not understood, and concerning which he does not know the person for whom he has testified, it is not accepted from him even concerning a grain or anything greater than it. How, then, could it be accepted concerning the greatest and most exalted of all matters?

Therefore, whoever professes this testimony—great in rank and tremendous in significance—must know its reality and its boundaries, the one for whom he testifies to it, its outward and its inward aspects; he must believe in it and fulfill its obligations and conditions, so that it may be accepted from him and valid for him, rather than rejected.

For if he is ignorant of any part of it and denies it, his testimony is not complete and is not accepted from him.

Among the hidden secrets of the wisdom that God deposited with His friends and made a miracle for them is that “There is no god but God” encompasses the affirmation of God's unity, exalted is His remembrance, acknowledgement of His Messenger, the Imams of His religion, and their boundaries. It therefore makes their obedience, allegiance, and acceptance of their command obligatory. Thus it encompasses everything with which God, exalted is His glory, has charged His servants.

For this reason it was the foundation of the Sharīʿa. The Messenger called to it, promised Paradise to whoever professed it sincerely, and explained that its sincerity consists in believing in it, knowing its boundaries, and fulfilling its rights.

Its letters themselves express it and point to what it contains, just as they express its verbal form. Among the statements of al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, is:

“The first thing God created was the letters; through the letters the names were known, and through the names the persons were known.”

So empty your hearts, O company of the Friends, to hear wisdom. Turn yourselves toward it and contemplate it with true contemplation, so that its lights may illuminate you and its realities and secrets may be disclosed to you.

This testimony, “There is no god but God,” in its most evident outward sense requires that God is the one and only God, alone, without partner; that He is uniquely divine and distinguished by His oneness from all His creation.

The name “one” may be applied to a created being, and it may likewise exist in outward visible reality. But when one considers it in its inward aspect, it is composite and dependent upon something with which it is joined and paired, such as a human being and other animals. He is one individual numerically, existing in visible reality; but when considered, he is body and spirit. The body is his outward aspect, and the spirit is his inward aspect. We have already mentioned this previously.

Likewise, everything in the world necessarily contains two constituent substances: either hot and moist, hot and dry, cold and moist, or cold and dry. It cannot exist except through this. Nor is it free of two states: either it is present or absent; nor of two forms: either great or subtle; nor of two kinds: either animate or inanimate, subtle or dense, heavy or light, along with many other oppositions and differences whose enumeration would be lengthy.

But the Creator, exalted is His remembrance, is distinct from all these conditions of His creation and is not described by any of them. He is neither a being other than nonexistence, nor nonexistence other than being; rather, He is existent, affirmed by His signs and by the evidences of what He has created, demonstrating that He is distinct from all of them. None of what He has created resembles Him: “There is nothing like unto Him,” as God, exalted is He, said.

His statement, “There is nothing like unto Him,” has an interpretation that will come in its proper place.

Most of the common people say concerning it that it is a metaphor with which the Arabs were addressed in their language, because one of them says, “No one like me does this,” and “No one like so-and-so does such-and-such,” intending by this the person bearing the name and no other. But this is pure resemblance, for people have counterparts and likenesses, whereas God, exalted is His glory, is far removed from such a thing.

They also transmit that God says: “O son of Adam, obey Me and I will make you like Me: living so that you do not die, mighty so that you are not humbled, and wealthy so that you do not become poor.”

All of this will have its explanation in its proper boundary, God willing. To mention it all here would make the discussion lengthy and interrupt the explanation of the testimony that we intend.

We find, then, that the testimony consists of two divisions: one is negation and the other affirmation. “There is no god” is negation, while “except God” is affirmation.

Each of these divisions consists of two words. The first of each is connected to the second and is below it, while the second is higher than it.

Likewise, the division that is affirmation is higher than the division preceding it, which is negation.

Thus the final boundary, which is affirmation in the inward aspect, corresponds to the upper boundary; and the first boundary, which is negation, corresponds to the lower boundary.

The final word of the final division corresponds to the highest of the upper boundaries, while the word before it corresponds to the boundary immediately below it. The second word of the first division corresponds to the highest of the lower boundaries, while the word before it corresponds to the boundary connected to it beneath it.

The two words connected within the boundary of affirmation and the boundary of negation are both words in common usage: **lā** ("no") and **illā** ("except"). The two words connected to them in the two boundaries are higher and more exalted: **ilāh** ("god") and **Allāh** ("God").

This demonstrates the nobility of the upper and lower boundaries, even though each of them is connected to the other boundaries, one below it, and has fewer letters than it.

The final word, **Allāh**, contains three letters from among all the letters of the testimony: alif, lām, and hāʾ.

This is a general statement concerning the boundaries of the testimony. We shall clarify it to those who listen, by God's favor upon us and upon all of them.

We say that among what the elite and the common people have transmitted from the Messenger of God is that he said:

"The first of God's creation that He created was the Pen. Then He caused a river to flow, sweeter than honey, whiter than milk, and softer than butter. He commanded the Pen to draw from it. Then He created the Tablet and said to the Pen, 'Write upon it.' It said, 'What shall I write upon it?' He said, 'Write everything that will exist until the Day of Resurrection.' So the Pen recorded that upon the Tablet, and it is the Preserved Tablet that God mentioned in His Book."

The common people have taken this report according to what they know: that the Pen is made of reeds and that the Tablet is made of wood, according to what they observe.

But these are merely titles, names, and examples that require clarification, disclosure, explanation, and interpretation. This is among the interpretations of the hadiths mentioned by those who interpreted them.

The Pen is the highest of the boundaries of God that He established for His servants and whose transgression He prohibited. He said: "Whoever transgresses the boundaries of God has wronged himself."

He, exalted and mighty is He, is above boundaries, and He established them for His creation beneath Him, so that through them they might reach knowledge of Him and so that His command and prohibition might be conveyed to creation.

The Pen is therefore the bearer of the knowledge that it drew from and recorded upon the Tablet. The Tablet is a boundary of God beneath it; it received knowledge from the Pen, and that knowledge passed to it from the Pen. These are the two upper boundaries that we mentioned previously.

The river that God, exalted is His glory, caused to flow is the knowledge with which He supplied the Pen. Water is its inward counterpart, in the sense of knowledge.

God, exalted is He, said:

“And if they had remained upright upon the path, We would have given them abundant water.”

The “path” is the speaking Prophet in his age and the Qa'im Imam in his time after him.

The Most Truthful of speakers said:

“And We have created above you seven paths, and We were never heedless of creation.”

We shall mention this in full in its proper place.

This is among the matters concerning which the common people have acknowledged the inward interpretation, because they found no escape from it—namely, that water means knowledge—because outward water is given by God to the righteous and the wicked alike.

He, exalted is His glory, therefore informed us that if creation remained upright toward the one entrusted with authority over them, He would expand their knowledge for them, in order to test them through it—that is, to examine and test their acceptance of it and their acting upon it.

And He said:

“And whoever turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, He will make him enter an ascending punishment.”

Here “the remembrance of God” means their one entrusted with authority. Whoever turns away from him comes to God's punishment. He called him “remembrance” because He established him for the purpose of remembrance, and so he was named by its name.

This is known in the Arabic language: they name a thing by the name of that which accompanies it and is associated with it. Thus they called the water-skin **rāwiya**, although in their language *rāwiya* properly means the camel upon which water is carried. They named the water-skin by its name because it accompanied it. There are many examples of this in their speech.

And the Blessed, whose name is exalted, said:

“Indeed, We have sent down to you a Remembrance, a Messenger.”

He called the Messenger “Remembrance” because he bears the Remembrance.

Then, corresponding to these two upper spiritual boundaries, He established two other lower, corporeal boundaries: the **Nāṭiq** and the **Ṣāmit**.

The Nāṭiq in the age of the Messenger is the Messenger, while the Ṣāmit is the foundation of his Sharīʿa and the possessor of its taʾwīl.

The Messenger speaks concerning the outward, while the Foundation is silent concerning it and conveys the inward, on the basis of the Messenger establishing it within him—just as the Pen establishes knowledge in the Tablet.

Thus the Nāṭiq corresponds to the Pen, and the Ṣāmit corresponds to the Tablet.

Since the abode in which God established these two lower boundaries is an abode of transition, and since bodies are perishable, wisdom did not permit the abode to be without a proof. Therefore God, exalted is His glory, established the Foundation after the Nāṭiq to undertake the outward and other matters that the Nāṭiq had undertaken, so that he might take the Nāṭiq's place.

He established for him a Ḥujja and commanded him to convey the knowledge of the inward to him, and established that Ḥujja with him in his place, just as the Ḥujja had been with the Nāṭiq.

Then He established the Ḥujja after him as an Imam in his place and commanded him to appoint a Ḥujja for himself, according to the manner established by the practice of God, concerning which He said:

“You will never find any alteration in the practice of God, and you will never find any change in the practice of God.”

The matter continues in this way until the cycle of that Nāṭiq has passed through seven Imams. The Nāṭiqs are likewise seven:

Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and the Qa'im of the Age—may God's blessings be upon them all.

Five of them are endowed with firm resolve (*ulū al-ʿazm*), whom God mentioned in His Book when He said:

“So be patient as those endowed with firm resolve among the messengers were patient.”

Adam had no firm resolve. God, exalted is He, said:

“And We had already made a covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found no firm resolve in him.”

And every Nāṭiq, whether Messenger or Imam, has twelve successors in his age. We shall explain the seven and the twelve after this, God willing.

The four words of the testimony “There is no god but God” correspond to these four boundaries. Whoever establishes them, knows them, accepts from them, and testifies on their

behalf has completed the boundaries of their testimony. The testimony has gathered them, and they have gathered its boundaries.

As for those who affirmed these two upper boundaries but called them by names other than these two names, saying that they are the Intellect and the Soul, while they did not recognize the two lower boundaries: their testimony was not established, because they affirmed part of it and denied part of it.

As for the **Ḥashwiyya** among the common people, who held fast to the testimony and to the outward form of Islam, they affirmed the Pen, the Tablet, and the Nāṭiq among the prophets, but had no correct knowledge, and rejected everything beyond that. Thus they did not complete the testimony.

Their testimony was therefore not accepted from them except insofar as it protected their blood and safeguarded their property, except where their lawful claims applied, and prevented them from the humiliation of the jizya, just as the Messenger, by God's command, established that for them when they submitted.

Islam derives originally from *silm*, meaning reconciliation and peace, and from submission, which is to place oneself in the hands of obedience.

Faith is the boundary after it: it is knowledge of the boundaries of the testimony, belief in it, and fulfillment of its rights. That is sincerity, as the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said when he promised Paradise to whoever made it sincere and informed that it would be rejected from one who did not care about what he diminished from his religion.

What is diminished from it is that which is diminished from the testimony, since it is the foundation of the religion and the whole of the religion is gathered within it.

Thus, as we said, the Call was to it.

We then also considered its letters and what they indicate and testify to, and found them to consist of seven divisions:

lā ilāha illā Allāh

This was a proof and an example corresponding to the seven Nāṭiqs and the seven Imams in the cycle of each Nāṭiq, whom we have mentioned previously.

They are the signs of God that He mentioned in His Book, and His Words. The Exalted in speech said:

“And We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign.”

And He said:

“O Mary, indeed God gives you good tidings of a Word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, son of Mary.”

And He said:

“We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth.”

And He said:

“And on the earth are signs for those who are certain, and within yourselves—will you not then see?”

Their likenesses are present in the testimony through its divisions.

Their likenesses in heaven and earth are that the lowest heaven is like the Possessor of the Age, while the earth is like his Ḥujja. Just as water descends as rain from heaven to earth, causing trees and vegetation to grow, increase, and stir, so knowledge passes from the Nāṭiq to the Ṣāmit, causing the believers to grow and come alive through it.

The likeness of the believers in this respect is the likeness of trees and vegetation: they live through the knowledge that reaches them from the Ḥujja.

Their likenesses in heaven are also like the sun and the moon. The sun is like the Nāṭiq: through it the world is illuminated. Likewise, through the Nāṭiq the world is illuminated.

A report from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, likewise states that the sun will rise at the head of three hundred from its place of setting. This was the rising of the Mahdi, peace be upon him, with his radiant, illuminating light.

The moon is like the Ḥujja. Its light comes from the light of the sun; likewise, the knowledge of the Ḥujja comes from the knowledge of the Imam.

The likeness of the Imam in the body is like the heart, which is the commander of the limbs, while the likeness of the brain, which is the seat of the intellect, is that of the Ḥujja. Each of them is one in the body; likewise the Nāṭiq is one in the world.

The Nāṭiq is also like the tongue, through which expression takes place. The Nāṭiq and the Ḥujja together are like the two eyes, through which sight occurs; like the two ears, through which hearing occurs; and like the two hands, through which grasping and action occur.

Their likeness in the earth is like the east and the west. The east is like the Imam, from whom the light comes; the west is like the Ḥujja, who receives that light and to whom it reaches.

The seven Nāṭiqs are like the seven heavens, and the Ḥujjas are like the seven earths.

Their likenesses are also like the seven radiant stars, the governing ones that God mentioned in His Book:

“and those who regulate the affair.”

Their likeness in the earth is like the seven regions, for the earth has seven regions.

Among the souls, the human being was created from seven, according to the saying of God, exalted is He:

"And We certainly created man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a secure place. Then We created the sperm-drop into a clinging clot; then We created the clinging clot into a lump; then We created the lump into bones; then We clothed the bones with flesh; then We brought him forth as another creation. So blessed is God, the best of creators."

The parts of the human being are seven: hair, skin, flesh, blood, bone, veins, and marrow.

His height is seven spans by his own span, and his breadth is likewise seven spans, being the distance between the ends of his hands when he stretches them out.

He prostrates upon seven limbs: his face, his hands, his knees, and his feet.

And in his face are seven openings: his two eyes, his two ears, his two nostrils, and his mouth.

These are some of the proofs of the signs and boundaries of God, and of their likenesses and inward aspects in the greater world and the lesser world. There are many other corresponding proofs in both, whose mention would be lengthy. We have mentioned them in *The Numbers* more fully than this and in greater detail, even though we also abbreviated them there.

These are the boundaries that God commanded to be preserved, and by fulfilling and preserving which He marked the believers with faith and obligated Paradise for them.

He said, exalted is He:

"Indeed, God has purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth in exchange for Paradise. They fight in the way of God, so they kill and are killed—a true promise binding upon Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an. And who is more faithful to his covenant than God? So rejoice in the bargain you have made, and that is the great triumph."

Then He described the believers for whom this was made obligatory, giving them their characteristics:

"The repentant, the worshippers, the praisers, the travelers, those who bow, those who prostrate, those who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and those who preserve the boundaries of God. And give glad tidings to the believers."

This is some of the evidence for the seven, and we have mentioned it.

As for the twelve successors, they are the means associated with every Nāṭiq in every age.

Four of them are the highest and closest of them to the Possessor of the Age. He has appointed them, and they occupy from him the position of the four boundaries and the four pillars. Each one of them has two counterparts, like the right and the left, and thus they are twelve.

Four of them are like the birds of Abraham in the story of Abraham, in God's saying:

“Take four birds and draw them close to yourself.”

Among the twelve, they are like the four sacred months, according to God's saying:

“Indeed, the number of months with God is twelve months in the Book of God from the day He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are sacred. That is the upright religion, so do not wrong yourselves during them.”

Their likenesses in the testimony are its letters, which are twelve letters:

لا إله إلا الله

Their likeness in heaven is the twelve zodiacal constellations.

Their likeness in the earth is the islands, for the earth has twelve islands, each one having one of them.

They are like the angels because through the message of the Possessor of the Command they are directed, and their wings are the *dāʿīs*. Thus each one of them has, in an island, a number of *dāʿīs* appointed to him.

God, exalted is He, said:

“Praise belongs to God, Creator of the heavens and the earth, who made the angels messengers, possessing wings—two, three, and four. He increases in creation whatever He wills. Indeed, God is powerful over all things. Whatever mercy God opens for people, none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds, none can release thereafter.”

They are therefore, in the lower world, the counterparts of the angels in the upper world, according to God's saying:

“And of everything We created pairs, that you may remember.”

Thus the seven and the twelve are nineteen. They are those whom God meant by His saying:

“Over it are nineteen.”

The testimony has gathered them.

Whoever knows them, believes in their *walāya*, and acts according to what he receives from them is the believer, among the people of Paradise, whose testimony is accepted.

Whoever is unable to attain something of this, or falls short in it, and merely professes the testimony with his tongue, is a Muslim whose testimony is not accepted, and his reckoning is with God.

This is what came in *The Pillars of Islam* from the statement of al-Sadiq, peace be upon him:

“Faith shares with Islam, but Islam does not share with faith. A person may be a Muslim without being a believer, but he cannot be a believer until he is a Muslim.”

This testimony, as we have explained, concerns the foundations. Connected to it is a second testimony concerning the branches, namely:

Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

These are three words:

Muhammad — Messenger — God.

They correspond to the three upper ones after the two foundations, namely Isrāfīl, Mīkāʾīl, and Jibrīl.

They also correspond to the three corporeal, earthly ones after the Nāṭiq and the Foundation: the Imam, the Ḥujja, and the Successor.

Thus they are six divisions.

“Muhammad is the Messenger of God” corresponds to the six Nāṭiqs endowed with firm resolve whom we mentioned. It consists of twelve letters, corresponding to the twelve successors whom we have already mentioned:

م ح م د ر س و ل ا ل ل ه

The testimony concerning God, exalted is He, is the higher degree and concerns the foundations. The testimony concerning the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him, is the lower degree and concerns the branches.

All of it has entered into the higher testimony, just as all the letters of the testimony have entered into the name represented by the word **Allāh**, with one additional letter, because He, exalted and mighty is He, distinguishes Himself by His unity.

The outward aspect of the testimony is a statement with the tongue, while its inward aspect is statement, knowledge, belief, and action.

Its outward aspect is Islam, and its inward aspect is faith.

For this reason al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, said—as we established from him in *The Pillars of Islam*—when he was asked about faith, “Is it a statement, or a statement and action?” He replied:

“Faith is all action, while the statement is part of that action.”

So make sincere, O company of believers, the testimony to which you have been called. You have only been called to make it sincere, and its sincerity has been explained to you.

God, exalted is He, has forbidden you to refuse this, saying:

“And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called.”

So make it sincere through speech, knowledge, belief, action, and fulfillment of what you covenanted with God, exalted is He, and He will fulfill for you what He promised you of fulfilling His covenant with you, in His saying:

“Fulfill My covenant, and I will fulfill your covenant.”

He has promised you Paradise through the tongue of His Messenger if you make it sincere, and you have already come to know this.

So believe, do not doubt, and do not be uncertain. Act, do not neglect, do not be negligent, and do not be excessive. Then you will attain what God has promised you of Paradise, outwardly and inwardly.

For He, exalted is He, said:

“And for whoever fears the standing before his Lord are two gardens.”

Thus, in the immediate life, you will attain from knowledge and wisdom that with which you may roam through their gardens and attain their fruits and their spouses; and through it you will reach the Garden of Eternity in the abode of everlastingness in the hereafter.

There you will attain the reward of your Lord that He promised you, and you will be safe from His punishment with which He warned you if you violate what He commanded you, commit what He prohibited you from, and turn away from that to which He encouraged and called you through this testimony, in which He gathered everything with which He has charged you.

We have mentioned in this chapter—the chapter of Faith—what pertains to it from this testimony, what it indicates, and its boundaries.

We shall likewise mention the same in all the chapters of the book when discussing all the obligations contained within it, so that you may know that this testimony contains and encompasses all of them.

Know, therefore, that this is why the Messenger's Call was to it, and why the covenant was taken from you that what you learn after him is that you should profess it sincerely.

For before him you had already professed it with a verbal testimony upon your tongues. Then a covenant was taken from you that after him you would profess it with the testimony of belief in your hearts, action through your limbs, and knowledge with certainty encompassing the boundaries that were established for you and their signs that point to the path through which your salvation lies.

May God aid you in this, grant you success in it, and guide you toward it.

And may God send blessings upon Muhammad the Prophet, and upon the righteous of his progeny, the Imams who speak the truth, from his descendants.

To be followed by: The Story of Adam — Part Two of *The Book of the Foundation of Interpretation*, the Inward Aspect.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds, and His blessings upon Muhammad the Prophet and upon the Imams from his purified progeny.

The Second Part: The Interpretation of Adam and the Imamate

We have previously mentioned the interpretation of faith and Islam. This is the beginning of the chapters of the *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, whose contents we stipulated that we would set forth the expanded interpretation of in this book. We stated that following it would be chapters concerning the *walāya* of the Imams, encompassing the *walāya* of the Messengers and the *walāya* of those vested with authority, whose obedience God joined to obedience to Him, saying:

"Obey God, and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority among you."

Thus, we have gathered the interpretation of what is said concerning them, since God has joined them together in the obligation of obedience, even though their degrees and ranks differ.

The *nāṭiqs* are the highest of them in rank. They are seven:

1. Adam,
2. Noah,
3. Abraham,
4. Moses,
5. Jesus,
6. Muhammad, and
7. the Qaʾim of the Age.

Following them in excellence are the *foundations* (*usūl*), whom whoever among them established them appointed during his lifetime to carry out the inward in his place, and who establishes a *hujja* for himself to take his place, just as occurred during the lifetime of the *nāṭiq*. That foundation succeeds him afterward and becomes an Imam, and establishes for himself a *hujja* who takes his place after him. Thus it continues until the cycle of that *nāṭiq* is completed, and another *nāṭiq* comes after him with another *sharīʿa*. The matter proceeds as it proceeded initially, so that the earth may never be without one who establishes God's proof upon it, even for the blink of an eye.

Al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, was asked, "When does the successor (*tālī*) come within the rank of the predecessor (*māḍī*)?"

He said:

"In the last moment remaining of the breath of the predecessor."

This is so that excellence and perfection do not come together in two, but exist only in one after another, as a proof of the oneness of the Creator, in accordance with His saying, exalted is He:

"Had there been in them [the heavens and the earth] gods other than God, they would both have been corrupted."

The possessor of the Age, whether he is a prophet, messenger, or Imam, is called a *nāṭiq* because he speaks the outward and establishes it. His *hujja* is called a *ṣāmit* because he is silent concerning the outward and establishes the inward. He is the cause of the *lāḥiqs*, who are the twelve whom God mentioned in His Book:

"And We appointed from among them twelve leaders."

Between these and the *nāṭiq* are the matters we have previously mentioned concerning their signs, from the testimony and other things, among the inhabitants of the greater world and the lesser world. These two are among their analogues, and for this reason we said that their number is greater than what we can enumerate here.

The Imam and the *hujja* succeed one another just as night and day succeed one another. They too are among their analogues: day is an analogue of the Imam, while night is an analogue of the *hujja*, because of his concealment of the inward and his keeping it hidden.

Among the things God, exalted is He, says concerning this is:

"And We made the night and the day two signs."

We have mentioned that the signs of God in the inward are a proof against His creation. They are the Imams whose obedience God has made obligatory and whom He has required them to follow.

The name "Imam" applies to the *nāṭiq*, and the name "nāṭiq" applies to the Imam.

God, exalted is He, says:

"And when Abraham was tested by his Lord with words, and he fulfilled them, He said, 'I am making you an Imam for mankind.' He said, 'And from my progeny?' He said, 'My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers.'"

The Imam is called a *nāṭiq* because he speaks that which the Messenger, the *nāṭiq* who was in his cycle, spoke from the outward of the *sharīʿa* with which he was sent.

He is called an Imam because the servants follow him, just as the person who leads the congregational prayer is called their Imam because they follow him and because he goes before them. He is therefore their Imam, meaning that he is before them while they are behind him, following him.

Likewise, the leader of misguidance is called an Imam for those who follow him. God, exalted is He, says:

“And We made them Imams who call to the Fire.”

The name “prophethood” was not applied except to one who was connected to the celestial matter without an intervening lower limit between him and it.

Thus, the rank of the Imamate is below the rank of prophethood, even though their obedience is equal in obligation, just as their obedience is joined to obedience to God.

It is therefore necessary that we begin by mentioning the foundation of the Imamate in the lower limit, namely Adam, peace be upon him, and then arrange what follows him and comes after him, one thing after another, according to what this limit can bear in that regard.

We say—and through God we seek assistance:

Concerning the saying of God, exalted is His remembrance:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am placing upon the earth a successor.’ They said, ‘Will You place upon it one who will cause corruption therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and sanctify You?’ He said, ‘Indeed, I know what you do not know.’”

And His saying:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am creating a human being from clay.’”

The first thing that ought to be mentioned concerning this statement, from the stored knowledge of the awliyāʾ of God, peace be upon them, is that speech and discourse attributed to God, exalted is He, are intended to convey what falls within the understanding of those who hear them. They are not like what you observe and hear from the speech of speakers and the discourse of talkers: sounds that arise from bodies and cavities, emerge from their passages, and are articulated by the throats, tongues, and lips, produced by collisions between created bodies.

God is exalted far above attributing such things to Him or likening Him to anything of His creation—highly exalted is He above that.

In the language, speech and discourse may also be ascribed without a speaker producing the familiar sound and utterance. Thus the Arabs say, “The wall said, ‘It fell,’” and “The riding animal said, ‘Ride,’” and “The world admonished its inhabitants with its admonitions,” and “Time reproached so-and-so,” and similar expressions.

In this manner, God addressed them in terms they understood.

A person may also see in his sleep something he did not see with his sight and hear speech without a speaker, and sound without one producing the sound. Within God's power, His command reaches the one commanded in whatever manner He wills. He has no partner.

God, exalted is He, has said:

“Our command to a thing, when We intend it, is only that We say to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”

His saying, “We say to it, ‘Be,’” is according to what we have already explained concerning what the hearers understand. It does not mean that He says “Be, be” to every thing in the manner in which created beings say it.

“Be” consists of two letters, and this is the least by which speech can be constituted: one is vowelled and the second is silent. This is analogous to the two foundations, and there are many analogies.

What is contained within God's secret knowledge according to the awliyāʾ of God is that the angels whom God mentioned as having been addressed with what He said concerning Adam were not all the angels.

Rather, when God intended to create Adam—the second creation, which is the creation of knowledge, as God says:

“Then We brought him forth as another creation,”

and:

“He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation”—

and when He intended to establish him as an Imam, He selected twelve angels from among the angels to appoint them as his *nuqabāʾ*, taking from him and conveying from him to the people of the earth.

When He informed them that He would create him from clay—and clay, inwardly, is dense, corporeal outward knowledge—He had already created the angels in the creation of knowledge from subtle, inward, spiritual knowledge.

Among the knowledge that had reached them beforehand was that subtle knowledge becomes connected to matter, while dense knowledge can only be acquired through learning; and that subtle spiritual knowledge is not connected to actions. Rather, it is knowledge without action and without obligation, as is the case with the knowledge of the inward.

This is like the saying of the Commander of the Believers, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, when he mentioned the Qur'an:

“Its outward is an obligation requiring action, and its inward is a concealed knowledge.”

Likewise, the angels were not tested through actions.

Among the knowledge that had reached them was that one who is charged with obligation must inevitably slip and fall short. Thus they said:

“Will You place upon it one who will cause corruption therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and sanctify You?”

He said:

“Indeed, I know what you do not know.”

By this He meant that He would make Adam occupy, in relation to them, the position of *taʾyīd*, and that He would restore him if he fell short or erred, rescuing him from destruction.

Among them was Iblīs. He saw within himself that he was superior to Adam and more deserving of the rank than him. He disdained being his follower, one of his means, or one who received knowledge from him. He became arrogant before God's command.

God, blessed and exalted is He, intended to show the angels their incapacity. Thus He created Adam, as He says, "from clay," meaning that He began him with outward knowledge, just as this is begun according to the customary practice that He, exalted is His remembrance, established for His servants.

Adam remained in that state for a long period, knowing nothing beyond what had been taught to him.

This is what is related in the report that when God created Adam in the form of clay, he remained a body lying there for a long time before He breathed the spirit into him—meaning the inward spiritual knowledge.

Iblīs would come to him and tap him, and he would make a sound. Iblīs would say, "I have gained mastery over him; this is hollow."

By this he meant that he would come to Adam, converse with him, and engage him in knowledge, finding nothing with him except the outward. He rejoiced in this and declared that Adam was hollow, meaning empty of the inward, that there was no inward knowledge with him.

This occurred before Iblīs and the angels who had been appointed for this were commanded to obey him, because God, exalted is He, said to them:

"So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down before him prostrating."

That is, they were to submit to him in obedience when He supplied him with spiritual knowledge.

Iblīs, among them, continued to attend to him because of the enmity he had concealed toward him, the envy and arrogance he felt toward him. He saw himself as superior to him and rejoiced at what he perceived as Adam's lack of subtle spiritual knowledge. He thought that Adam would not be supplied with anything else.

Then, when God intended to honor him, He supplied him with that knowledge and taught him, as He says:

"And He taught Adam the names, all of them."

Meaning the names of everything whose knowledge human beings would need: everything had a name.

When He had taught him this, He presented him to the angels whom He had prepared for connection with him and began by asking them about what He had taught Adam. They did not possess that knowledge with which they could answer.

They said, as God, exalted is He, relates from them:

“Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”

He said:

“O Adam, inform them of their names.”

Then, when he had informed them of their names, He said:

“Did I not tell you that I know the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?”

Al-Ṣādiq, Jaʿfar ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him, said:

I performed the pilgrimage with my father, Muhammad ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him. One night he circumambulated the House, and I circumambulated with him. Then he went toward the Black Stone, prayed, and I prayed with him until I became tired. I sat while he remained standing in prayer.

A man then came and sat beside him while he was praying. I looked at the man: he was perfectly formed, large-boned, reddish in complexion and hair, wearing two coarse white garments.

When my father saw that he had sat beside him, he shortened his prayer, then gave the salutation and turned toward him.

He said to him, “Do you have a need?”

The man said, “I have come to ask you about the beginning of the creation of this House.”

My father said, “Yes.”

Then he mentioned that when God created Adam, and mentioned his story and what occurred concerning the angels and His saying to them:

“I know what you reveal and what you conceal.”

He said: “As for what they revealed, it was their saying, ‘Will You place upon it one who will cause corruption therein…’” and he recited the verse.

“As for what they concealed, they said within themselves, ‘We did not think that God would create a creation that would be superior to us, and then command us to prostrate before him.’

“When they said this, they realized that they had fallen into disobedience. So they sought refuge with the Throne and circumambulated it for a week, seeking the pleasure of their Lord. He was pleased with them and said to them:

‘Descend to the earth and build a House for Me there, to which whoever commits a sin from the children of Adam may seek refuge, and around which he may circumambulate just as you sought refuge in the Throne and circumambulated it. Then I will be pleased with him just as I have been pleased with you.’

“So they built this House. Then God raised it up at the time of the Flood, and it is in the fourth heaven. The angels perform pilgrimage to it until the Day of Resurrection. Abraham built this structure upon its foundation.”

He mentioned the remainder of the report.

It is a lengthy report, from which we have abbreviated the portion needed here.

Then God commanded the angels to prostrate before Adam—that is, He commanded them to obey him, connect themselves to him, and accept from him.

God, exalted is He, says:

“Have you not seen that to God prostrates whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth, and the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the beasts, and many among mankind?”

So they prostrated, as God says:

“Except Iblīs. He refused and was arrogant, and he was among the unbelievers.”

He was called Iblīs after this because he *ablasa*—despaired.

The scholars of language say that *Iblīs* is on the pattern *ifʿīl* from *ablasa*, meaning “to despair.” One says of a man, *ablasa*, when he has despaired.

Likewise, Iblīs despaired of the rank in which he had been. He *ablasa*.

It is also said that *ablasa* means that a man was cut off and had no argument. It is also said that *ablasa* means he became sorrowful, and *ablasa* means he became humble.

All these states came together in Iblīs.

God, the Most Truthful of speakers, says:

“And on the Day the Hour is established, the criminals will despair.”

God said to him, as He relates in His Book:

“What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?”

He said:

“I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay.”

Meaning: “You originated me in knowledge through the spiritual mode of creation and the knowledge of the flashing *taʾyīd*, beside which the corporeal has no standing; while You originated him from dense, thick, logical, natural, corporeal knowledge. How then should I prostrate to one over whom I am superior?”

Thus he revealed what he had concealed and openly declared his disobedience to his Lord.

God became angry with him and cursed him, saying:

“Get out of it, for you are accursed, and upon you shall be the curse until the Day of Judgment.”

He therefore expelled him from the limits of *taʾyīd*, severed it from him, and drove him away from it. *Laʿn* in the language means expulsion.

God created Eve from Adam, according to His saying:

“And He created from it its mate.”

This is the creation of religion.

God commanded Adam to undertake her *taʾyīd*, teach her, make her perceptive, join her to him, and make her his wife. She was his *hujja*. God gave her to him in place of Iblīs—not as the common people have claimed, that God caused Adam to sleep, then removed one of his ribs and created Eve from it.

Rather, they heard a portion of the *taʾwīl* without understanding or knowing it. They heard that God replaced Eve for Adam in place of one of his ribs. That rib was Iblīs, as we have explained.

Thus God had prepared him to be a rib for him and made him one of the twelve whom we mentioned previously, namely the *nuqabāʾ*.

Their counterparts in the outward creation of the human being are the ribs of the body, because a human has twelve ribs, six on each side.

The right side is an analogue of inward knowledge, while the left side is an analogue of outward knowledge. The *nuqabāʾ* in the inward are twelve, and it is likewise said that there are twelve limits in the outward.

Then God settled Adam and his wife in the Garden.

The Garden, inwardly, is the limits of the Messengers of *taʾyīd* and those below them, down to the *nuqabāʾ*.

Our statement concerning this and other inward matters is not a denial by us of the outward, since the two are paired. God, exalted is He, says:

“Of everything We created two pairs, so that perhaps you may remember.”

The Garden is among the greatest things He created, and He has made it glad tidings for the believers.

He says:

“On the Day you see the believing men and believing women, their light running before them and to their right: ‘Glad tidings for you today—Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. That is the great success.’”

And He, exalted is He, says:

“And for whoever fears standing before his Lord are two gardens.”

And He says:

“Give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds that they shall have Gardens beneath which rivers flow. Whenever they are provided with a fruit from them as provision, they say, ‘This is what we were provided with before,’ and it is given to them in resemblance.”

Thus He made the Garden glad tidings for the believers.

In another place He says:

“For them are glad tidings in the life of this world and in the Hereafter.”

He therefore informs us that they have the Garden in this world and in the Hereafter.

His saying, “Whenever they are provided with a fruit from it as provision, they say, ‘This is what we were provided with before,’” supports this.

Therefore, when we mention the inward of the Garden, let no one hearing us suppose that we deny that there is a Garden of eternity and an abode of bliss. Likewise, when we mention the inward of the Fire, this does not mean that we deny that there is an abode of Fire, punishment, and Gehenna.

Nor, whenever we mention the *taʾwīl* of something concerning the inward, do we thereby invalidate its outward meaning. God forbid!

No outward can stand except through an inward, just as in this abode we do not observe a spirit existing among human beings except in a body; and there is no inward without an outward. Had there been no outward, the inward would not have received the name “inward.”

Understand this thoroughly and precisely, O company of believers, and impress it upon your hearts. For most of those among the people of this knowledge who have perished have perished for this very reason.

Because of this Adam fell into error, and we shall mention what happened to him.

Believe in the outward of what God has revealed and in its inward, hold both as your belief, and act according to them.

God, exalted is He, says:

“And leave the outward and inward of sin.”

And He says:

“And He has lavished upon you His blessings, outward and inward.”

Thus the outward of the lawful is lawful, and its inward is lawful; the outward of the unlawful is unlawful, and its inward is unlawful.

Everything, as we have mentioned, has an outward and an inward.

This is what is obligatory concerning the outward and inward.

As for the parables that God, exalted is He, has set forth for His servants, He says:

“And these parables We set forth for mankind, but none understand them except those who possess knowledge.”

And He says:

“Indeed, God is not ashamed to set forth a parable, even of a mosquito or something above it. As for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, ‘What did God intend by this as a parable?’ By it He misguides many and guides many, but He misguides only the defiantly disobedient—those who break God's covenant after its confirmation.”

And He says:

“And We have certainly set forth for mankind in this Qur'an every kind of parable.”

There is therefore no way for the inward or the outward that the parable and the thing represented by the parable should both be established and intended as the fixed reality. Rather, what is established and intended is the thing represented by the parable, not the parable itself.

An example is God's saying:

“Guide us upon the straight path, the path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your favor.”

Ṣirāṭ in the language means “road.” Here the Imam is represented by the road, because whoever adheres to the road does not go astray, just as whoever adheres to the Imam does not go astray.

The intended “road” here is therefore the Imam, not a road traversed upon the earth.

We return to the mention of Adam and to the fact that the inward of the Garden is *taʾyīd* through true, pure, subtle, spiritual knowledge. Its bliss surpasses every bliss, and delight in it surpasses every delight.

For this reason, a person whose intellect is sound becomes detached from all the attachments of this world. They become insignificant in his eyes, and everything in it becomes small and of little consequence to him. It becomes easy for him to leave them because of his connection to that knowledge and his union with it.

He sees it as complete bliss, perfect delight, wealth with which there is no poverty, and honor followed by no humiliation.

Among this is the report of the Commander of the Believers, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, to Kumayl ibn Ziyād, in which he says:

“Knowledge is better than wealth. Knowledge guards you, while you guard wealth. Knowledge rules, while wealth is ruled over. Wealth diminishes through spending, while knowledge increases through expenditure. The treasurers of wealth have died, while the scholars remain as long as the age remains: their persons are absent, but their آثار remain present in the world.”

This is part of a lengthy discourse which we have mentioned in full in *Ḥudūd al-Maʿrifa*.

Then God, exalted is His remembrance, said:

“O Adam, dwell—you and your wife—in the Garden and eat freely from it wherever you both wish, but do not approach this tree, lest you both become among the wrongdoers.”

He warned him against Iblīs:

“Indeed, this is an enemy to you and your wife, so do not let him expel you both from the Garden, lest you suffer.”

And He made a covenant with him concerning this. Among what He says is:

“And We had already made a covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found no resolve in him.”

God permitted for Adam and his wife the limits of the Messengers, together with their conditions and obligations: making lawful what God had made lawful, declaring unlawful what God had declared unlawful, and abstaining from what He had prohibited and forbidden.

He made the tree from which He forbade him to approach and which He prohibited to him an inward analogue of the limit of the final Qaʾim, the possessor of the Resurrection, in whose limit obligation is lifted.

At that time no soul will benefit from its faith, as God, exalted is He, says:

"Its faith will not benefit it if it had not believed before, or earned some good through its faith."

Nor will ransom be accepted from it, nor compensation taken for it, nor intercession benefit it.

At that time the inward will become manifest and the outward will fall away. The inward will become outward, contrary to the condition it had in the limits of the Messengers before that. In their limits, the inward is entrusted to their *ḥujaj*, concealed with them, and carried from one to another, as a miracle for them and as knowledge by which they receive illumination.

It continues until it reaches its possessor, the possessor of the Resurrection, who brings it forth and strips it bare.

Before him this is prohibited and forbidden.

God therefore forbade Adam from it at the beginning so that God's established practice—which has no alteration—might proceed concerning him.

God says:

"You will never find any change in Our practice, and you will never find any alteration in Our practice."

Iblīs asked to be given respite until the appointed time.

By "the day" he meant the possessor of the Resurrection.

He said:

"If You delay me until the Day of Resurrection, I will surely take possession of his offspring, except for a few."

God said:

"Go! Whoever among them follows you, surely Hell will be your recompense, an ample recompense. And incite whoever among them you can with your voice…"

Meaning through your mention of them.

"…and rally against them your cavalry and your infantry…"

Meaning those among them who follow you upon your falsehood; use them to assist you in your affair.

“And share with them in wealth and children…”

By “wealth” is meant knowledge: enter upon them through your doubts and falsehood.

By “children” is meant those born through faith, because the people of the *daʿwa* of the *nāṭiq* are like his children.

God says:

“The creed of your father Abraham.”

The *nāṭiq* is therefore to the believers like a father, while the *hujja* is like a mother: she carries them, nurses them with knowledge, and raises them.

For this reason the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said to ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

“You and I, O ʿAlī, are the two fathers of the believers.”

By His saying, “And share with them in their children,” He meant the believers through his falsehood who had become, by their connection to them, their children.

Whoever among them he overcame through his falsehood, he had taken away from their birth—which is the birth of faith—and brought into his own birth, which is the birth of unbelief.

Thus he shared in them and promised them through the deception of his falsehood.

God made this a trial for them.

Then He informed us concerning His sincere servants that Iblīs would not gain mastery over them or turn them away entirely to himself. They would therefore become of His party and His children.

He said:

“Indeed, My servants—you have no authority over them.”

And He made for Himself a party among them, just as He made a party for Iblīs.

He says, describing the party of Satan:

“Have you not considered those who take as allies a people with whom God is angry?”

Meaning the Imams of misguidance and their followers.

“They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to falsehood while they know. God has prepared for them a severe punishment. Evil indeed is what they do. They have taken their oaths as a shield and turned others away from the path of God, so for them is a humiliating punishment. Neither their wealth nor their children will avail them against God in anything.

They are the inhabitants of the Fire; they shall abide therein. On the Day when God raises them all, they will swear to Him as they swear to you, thinking that they are upon something. Indeed, they are the liars. Satan has gained mastery over them and caused them to forget the remembrance of God. They are the party of Satan. Indeed, the party of Satan are the losers."

Then He described His party, saying:

"You will not find a people who believe in God and the Last Day showing affection toward those who oppose God and His Messenger…"

Meaning the Imams of oppression and their followers.

"…even if they were their fathers, their sons, their brothers, or their clan. Those are the ones in whose hearts He has inscribed faith and whom He has strengthened with a spirit from Him. He will admit them into Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. God is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. They are the party of God. Indeed, the party of God are the successful."

Thus He made clear that His party consists of those who devote themselves to Him and take His awliyāʾ as their allies.

As for the party of Satan, they are those over whom Satan has gained mastery and whom he has taken for himself, sharing with his allies in them. They take as allies his enemies and their enemies, disavow his *walāya* and theirs, and take Satan and his allies as their allies.

As for one whom Satan causes to stumble, but who regrets his stumble, seeks release from his fall, and repents to his Lord, he is not of Satan nor of his party.

God, exalted is He, says:

"Whoever does evil or wrongs himself and then seeks God's forgiveness will find God Forgiving, Merciful."

Al-Ṣādiq, peace be upon him, said:

"You will not find one of our awliyāʾ whose two feet both slip. Rather, whenever one foot of his slips, he relies upon the other."

Thus the accursed Iblīs caused Adam and Eve to stumble.

He said to them, as God relates in His Book:

"Your Lord has only forbidden you this tree lest you become angels or become among those who abide forever."

And he swore to them:

"Indeed, I am truly a sincere adviser to you both."

He made attractive to them the limit of permission concerning what God had prohibited to them.

He said to them that the limit of action and obligations was the limit of toil and exertion, and that if they left it within the limits of the spiritual angels, subtle spiritual knowledge would become pure for them, they would become detached from dense corporeal knowledge, and they would become immortal angels, having whatever they desired.

Thus he deceived them.

When they tasted from the tree, their private parts became apparent to them.

They had crossed beyond the limits of the *nāṭiqs* that had been permitted to them into the limit of the possessor of the Resurrection, which God had prohibited to them. They stretched their hands toward what was not theirs, took from it, and ate from the tree.

Thus they fell into disobedience.

The *taʾyīd* was severed from them. This was the garment of piety (*libās al-taqwā*) that God mentions in His Book:

“And the garment of piety—that is best. That is among the signs of God.”

They were stripped of it, and their private parts became uncovered.

By this is meant that what had been concealed within them became manifest: the density of the natural form, since they had been stripped of the garment of the Word whose light had concealed from them every darkness compounded within them.

Taʾyīd does not accompany the disobedient, and extending one's hand toward what does not belong to it entails, in legal judgment, its being cut off.

When *taʾyīd* was severed from them, they began, as God says:

“…to fasten over themselves leaves from the Garden.”

Meaning that they began clinging to the light of wisdom through remembrance, concealing with it the nakedness of what had become apparent from them and what had been exposed concerning their condition when *taʾyīd* was removed from them.

Because of ignorance of the limits, many who attached themselves to this matter perished and came to the doctrine of permissiveness.

Their Lord called to them, as God says:

“Did I not forbid you both from that tree and tell you that Satan is a manifest enemy to you?”

They said:

“Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall surely be among the losers.”

They did not persist in the sin as Iblīs persisted in his. Rather, they repented to God, returned to Him, and asked Him for His mercy and forgiveness.

Adam received, as God says, words from his Lord.

That is, he approached Him and He received his repentance through the upper limits established with him. He therefore accepted his repentance, as God, exalted is He, says:

“Indeed, He is the Ever-Relenting, the Merciful.”

Iblīs had no authority over Adam by which he could drag him to himself and gain mastery over him until he became one of his party. Rather, Adam was of the party of God because God accepted his repentance and forgave him and received his words.

The same applies to whoever among his descendants commits an evil deed.

Whoever persists in his sin, does not repent of it to God, and does not approach Him through His awliyāʾ is of the party of Iblīs and his soldiers.

God, exalted is He, says:

“If, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you and sought God's forgiveness, and the Messenger had sought forgiveness for them, they would have found God Ever-Relenting, Merciful.”

Thus He did not accept the repentance of those who repent except through receiving His words, nor did He forgive them until they sought forgiveness and the Words sought forgiveness for them.

This is the explanation of the parable of the tree from which God forbade Adam, and what occurred when he took from it, and the uncovering of his nakedness and the beginning of his exposure.

This is the inward *taʾwīl* of that matter within the limit expounded in this book.

It is not as the common people have interpreted it according to its outward appearance, saying that the tree was a wheat tree.

Others said it was a fig tree.

Others said it was a grapevine.

And some claimed that their garment was made of fingernails, which then peeled away from them, and that repentance overtook them, with some of it remaining upon the tips of their fingers. Thus, they claim, the same remained in their descendants, and most animals have claws or things resembling them, such as the hooves of beasts, the split hooves of cattle and sheep, and the talons of predators and birds.

But these animals are not among the children of Adam, nor did they experience what Adam experienced. Thus, how could that have remained upon their extremities?

Rather, this is a wisdom in their constitution which the Creator fashioned and determined.

If the garment had been made of fingernails, it would have been a mutilation.

This is among the interpretations that reason cannot accept and that cannot be established upon examination.

Likewise, what they claimed—that the nakedness of Adam and Eve became exposed and that they sewed garments for themselves from leaves of clay—is also something that does not stand when properly examined.

God is exalted and majestic beyond doing such a thing to a prophet whom He selected and honored.

If one of those who interpreted it in this manner were to see a human being who had committed a sin against a servant of his, and the master removed his clothing and left him naked with his private parts exposed as a punishment for his foolishness, he would regard such conduct as foolish.

Yet they attribute such a thing to their deity and god. God is exalted far above what they say.

Most of what they took of this interpretation came from those among their predecessors who had entered Islam from the Jews, such as Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām, and others.

They claim that this is how it is according to them in the Torah: that when Adam and Eve remained naked in the Garden, they perceived God walking through the trees of the Garden, so they hid from Him among its trees.

He called to them, “Where are you?”

They said, “We sensed You walking among the trees of the Garden while we were naked, so we were ashamed before You and hid.”

He said, “Ah! You have eaten from the tree.”

Adam said, “The woman fed me.”

The woman said, “The serpent commanded me.”

And the serpent said, “Iblīs entered into my belly.”

God is exalted far above this interpretation, or that it should be contained within any regions or perceived by any eyes.

In the Torah and the Gospel there are, like the Qur'an, parables, indications, symbols, and signs, and the outward is in need of the *taʾwīl*, which is the stored knowledge.

God, exalted is He, says:

“O People of the Book, you have no ground until you uphold the Torah and the Gospel and what has been sent down to you from your Lord.”

From this it follows that they cannot uphold them except through their *taʾwīl*.

It has been said concerning the inward interpretation that the Torah is an analogue of the outward and the Gospel an analogue of the inward.

God therefore commanded that both be upheld, according to what we have previously explained, through the knowledge that God revealed and deposited in Adam, and which He transmitted through the *nāṭiqs*, the foundations, the Imams, and their *lāḥiqs*, from his descendants, upon all of them be God's blessings and peace.

As for what was mentioned previously concerning His saying:

“And their Lord called to them,”

His calling to them means His connection to them, not that this call was like the call heard from those who produce sound.

Likewise, what we mention concerning His speech, blessed is His name, follows the explanation we have already given.

Sound, according to what created beings know, only comes from one producing sound, from a cavity, throat, lips, and tongue, or from something like the sound produced by the collision of bodies.

God is utterly free of these attributes and exalted above being described by any of them. He is highly exalted above that.

When God accepted Adam's repentance, He did not lower him from the rank of the vicegerency and Imamate for which He had established him, nor did He strip him entirely of the substance of His Word and Wisdom.

Rather, He caused him and Eve to descend from the limits of *taʾyīd* without a veil.

He said:

“Descend, some of you being enemies to others. For you shall have upon the earth a dwelling place and provision for a time.”

And He said concerning it:

“Therein you shall live, therein you shall die, and from it you shall be brought forth.”

And:

“O children of Adam, We have sent down to you clothing to cover your private parts and adornment, but the garment of piety—that is best. That is among the signs of God, so that perhaps you may remember.”

God therefore caused Adam to descend from the limit of *taʾyīd* without a veil, but did not deprive him of the substance.

Thus, what had been connected to him from the celestial spiritual limits descended upon him from those limits and became connected through him to the lower limits.

This is among the signs of God, as He mentioned.

The same occurred with the *nāṭiqs* among his descendants.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said:

“I receive revelation from Gabriel; Gabriel receives from Mikaʾīl; Mikaʾīl receives from Isrāfīl; Isrāfīl receives from the Tablet; and the Tablet receives from the Pen.”

Thus *taʾyīd* reaches the *nāṭiqs* through five upper limits and reaches the *mustajībūn* through five lower limits.

The upper limits are those whom we have mentioned.

The lower limits are the foundations, the Imams, the *ḥujaj*, and the *nuqabāʾ*. They are the possessors of the islands, while the possessors of the wings are the *dāʿīs*. The sixth of the two limits is the recipient (*qābil*).

Iblīs became the enemy and opposite of Adam.

Thus every walī of God among the descendants of Adam—whether a *nāṭiq*, *ṣāmit*, Imam, *hujja*, or one who takes them as his *awliyāʾ* and follows them—is of the party of Adam, which is the party of God.

Everyone who opposes the awliyāʾ, sets himself against them, deviates from their command, claims their rank, or usurps authority over their outward command, and whoever takes such people as his allies and follows them, is of the party of Iblīs, over whom Satan has gained mastery and caused to forget the remembrance of God.

“Forgetfulness” here means delay: he delayed them from the remembrance of God.

And “the remembrance of God” here, inwardly, means His awliyāʾ, through whom He is remembered, those who brought His remembrance.

The same pattern that occurred with Adam and Eve occurred among their descendants.

However numerous their descendants became, they did not exceed the two kinds to which Adam and Eve belonged: male and female.

Likewise, what occurred among Adam and Eve in obedience and disobedience occurred among all their descendants.

Adam's beginning in his creation and what occurred in his affair is an analogue of what occurs to his descendants at the beginning of their affair and their existence in this abode.

God's settling Adam and Eve in the Garden after what occurred to them is an analogue of God's settling in it those among their descendants who believe and act righteously and who belong to their party.

The repentance of those among them who repent is an analogue of their repentance.

The destruction of those who are destroyed through disobedience to God, and who come to God's punishment through their unbelief and committing what He, exalted is His remembrance, prohibited, is due to Satan's gaining mastery over them and their becoming part of his party, severing themselves from Adam and leaving his lineage.

They entered into the position of the one from whom they had become separated and were distinct from Adam because they had severed themselves from him.

This is in accordance with God's saying:

“Whoever among you takes them as allies is one of them.”

Whoever takes Iblīs as an ally is therefore one of his.

They are his children through the *daʿwa* to him and his people through their connection to him.

They became separate from Adam, according to God's statement concerning the son of Noah when he disobeyed him:

“He is not of your family.”

God also called them the party of Satan and named them by his name, saying:

“Indeed, Satan is a manifest deceiver.”

And He said to him:

“Indeed, My servants—you have no authority over them.”

Meaning Adam's descendants, except those who follow you among the deviators.

“And indeed, Hell is their appointed place, all of them.”

“It has seven gates; for each gate is a portion of them assigned.”

By the “gates” He means the Messengers, who are the gates of the pure outward. Each of them has a known *sharīʿa* and a designated division.

Whoever rejects them, they cause him to enter the Fire.

Among this is the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, to ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

“You are the divider of Paradise and the Fire.”

He established him for this purpose. He will say to it on the Day of Resurrection:

“This one is yours, so take him; and this one is mine, so leave him.”

The opposition of Iblīs to Adam and his enmity toward him is like the opposition of the enemies of the Messengers to them and their enmity toward them.

God, exalted is He, says:

“Thus We have made for every prophet an enemy from among the criminals.”

The sinner among the descendants of Adam who persists in his sin, does not repent of it, and does not cease from it, follows the action of Iblīs in his persistence.

He leaves the party of Adam, enters the party of Iblīs, enters into his position, and proceeds with him to God's punishment.

But the one who repents and abandons what he has committed, and the obedient one, is among the children of Adam and his party, which is the party of God, exalted is His remembrance.

God, exalted is He, says:

“Those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong themselves, remember God and seek forgiveness for their sins—and who forgives sins except God?—and do not persist knowingly in what they have done. Their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein. Excellent is the reward of those who act.”

God supported Adam through the *waṣāya*, settled him upon the earth, and made him His vicegerent over those upon it.

His descendants multiplied there, and he was God's *hujja* against them and the *nāṭiq* of the message to them.

He entrusted the *waṣāya* to his son Abel. Cain envied him and killed him, as God describes, during Adam's lifetime, so that the *waṣāya* might pass to him according to what he imagined and supposed.

He continued in disobedience, persisted in his sin, and became one of the party of Iblīs.

God granted Adam from his descendants Seth. He named him “God's Gift” (*Hibat Allāh*), deposited knowledge with him, entrusted its secret to him, and commanded him to conceal it as a precaution (*taqiyya*) against Cain, lest he kill him as he had killed Abel.

Thus the practice concerning the concealment of the covenant and its preservation was established.

God took Adam to what He had prepared for him of reward in the abode of permanence.

His *waṣī*, Seth, assumed the affair of the Imamate after him.

The affairs continued among his descendants according to what we have previously explained: one who establishes the matter after another, and one Imam after another.

Among those whom God mentioned in His Book was Idrīs, who belonged to the cycle of Adam, peace be upon him.

Then the matter reached Noah.

God sent him as a Messenger, a *nāṭiq* with a *sharīʿa* different from the *sharīʿa* of Adam.

God says:

"For each of you We appointed a law and a way."

Thus the cycle of Adam came to an end with the rise of Noah.

None of them assumed the Messenger's office except after having adhered to the *sharīʿa* of the one before him, having taken its covenant upon himself and adhered to it.

God says:

"And when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus son of Mary, We took from them a solemn covenant."

We have already mentioned this previously.

Understand, O company of believers, the *taʾwīl* of what God has sent down to you, and know the reality of that through which He has made you servants.

Know the inward of the Revelation through the *taʾwīl* concerning which He informed you in His Book that none knows it except Him and those firmly grounded in knowledge among His awliyāʾ—your Imams, upon whose *walāya* and following God has bestowed favor upon you.

Through this He made you part of His party, the party to which He promised His reward, and by this He rescued you from the party of Iblīs, whom He threatened with His punishment.

Act according to what God has made obligatory upon you, make your action sincere for His sake, and uphold it both outwardly and inwardly, as God has made this obligatory upon you.

Whoever among you commits a sin should repent to God from it, and should approach the Walī of his Age so that he may seek God's forgiveness for him; and he himself should seek forgiveness for his sin.

Then let him proceed toward what God has promised those who repent: those who seek forgiveness for their sins and for whom His awliyāʾ seek forgiveness.

Thus you will be among the party of your father Adam and the party of the awliyāʾ of God among his descendants—the party of God, exalted is His remembrance.

Distinguish yourselves from the party of Satan: those who persist in their sins as Iblīs persisted in his sin, and who despair within them as Iblīs despaired when he lost hope in his Lord.

Do not despair of your Lord and His mercy toward you.

He has said in His Book, relating the words of Jacob to his sons:

“Do not despair of the relief of God. Indeed, none despairs of the relief of God except the unbelieving people.”

And likewise He related the words of His intimate friend Abraham:

“And who despairs of the mercy of his Lord except those who are astray?”

May God grant you success in that which pleases Him and which He loves, preserve you from committing what He has forbidden and from disobeying Him, and open for you the way to obedience to Him and obedience to His awliyāʾ.

And may God bless Muhammad, His Prophet, and the pure Imams from his noble progeny, and grant them abundant peace.

The Second Part has been completed; it is followed by the Third Part, containing the Story of Noah, peace be upon him.

The Third Part: The Story of Noah and Hūd

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

The Story of Noah, Peace Be Upon Him

God sent Noah as a prophet and messenger with a renewed law, after the law of Adam had been altered and corruption had become widespread among its people, and corruption had become widespread among his descendants. Noah called the people to his law, and to worship and affirm the unity of God outwardly, as God, exalted is He, informed us of this in His Book, saying:

“We sent Noah to his people, and he said: ‘O my people, worship God. You have no deity other than Him. Will you not then be mindful?’”

Those of the oppressed among them who responded to him did so, while the arrogant rejected his words, as did those among them who remained upon the outward law of Adam, peace be upon him. They answered him with what God has related of their words:

“We do not see you as anything but a human being like us.”

That is, “You have brought us nothing but an outward aspect that is already known to us and in our possession, which we have inherited from those who came before you. You have approached us with the same thing with which we have already been approached. You are therefore a human being like us.”

In the language, *bashara* refers to the outward skin, and *mubāshara* means the touching of one skin against another. Thus, by this they meant the outward aspect: “What you have brought us is what we already possess, so you are like us and have no superiority over us.”

And:

“We do not see anyone following you except those who are the lowest of us, at first glance.”

By this they meant the outward—that is, the outward opinion upon which they themselves stood.

And:

“We do not see you possessing any superiority over us.”

By this they meant in knowledge.

It has already been stated that the nāṭiqs call people through the outward.

Noah said:

“My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed one whose wealth and children have increased him in nothing but loss.”

He meant their scholars, according to their own understanding of the outward, whose knowledge, and those to whom they called, increased them in nothing but loss.

Wealth, in the inward, is an analogy for knowledge, and children are an analogy for the *mustajīb* and his father in the Call: whoever responds to him and accepts from him what he calls him to, whether truth or falsehood.

“And they plotted a mighty plot.”

That is, a great one.

And they said:

“Do not abandon your gods.”

By this they meant their scholars, from whom they had taken their teachings.

“And do not abandon Wadd, nor Suwāʿ, nor Yaghūth, nor Yaʿūq, nor Nasr.”

They mentioned their great ones.

God relates Noah's words:

“And they have led many astray.”

That is, many of creation.

Noah called them through the outward for a long period. Then God revealed to him that:

“None of your people will believe except those who have already believed.”

That is, those who had previously affirmed him and believed in him.

“So do not grieve over what they have been doing.”

That is, their rejection of him.

And:

“Build the Ark under Our eyes and according to Our revelation.”

Thus He commanded him to construct the Ark, outwardly and inwardly. Likewise, He commanded him to establish whatever He commanded him to establish, so that the outward would be a symbol and proof of the inward, bearing witness to it through its boundaries and signs, and so that it would be depicted as an example containing all its boundaries and causes.

Thus he established the Ark as a symbol and proof for the foundation of his Call, and established his boundaries and set up the Call, so that the inward might be established by the command of God, exalted is He. This would be the salvation of the souls of the believers through the life of spiritual, luminous knowledge from drowning in disbelief and error, just as the Ark outwardly saves their bodies from physical drowning.

God informed us concerning those who rejected him that they would be drowned—that is, drowned outwardly and inwardly.

Thus he established the foundation of his Call and its boundaries, and established the Call for those who believed in him through the hidden and stored knowledge. He disclosed it to them and informed them of what their affair, and the affair of those who rejected him, would ultimately become.

He established the Ark and began constructing it. Whenever a group from his people passed by him, they mocked him. He said:

“If you mock us, then we will mock you just as you mock. You will soon know upon whom will come a punishment that disgraces him and upon whom will descend an enduring punishment.”

He made the outward Ark a proof by which those who believed in him could take guidance, and a symbol of the inward. Just as the Ark outwardly travels upon water and carries those

who board it upon the water, so too does the Call of truth travel upon knowledge and carry those who enter it upon knowledge.

Just as those aboard it take from it whatever they require for purification and nourishment according to measure, without drowning in it and perishing, so too is the likeness of the people of the Call of truth in what they take of knowledge.

We have already stated that water is an analogy for knowledge, and have cited the outward Qur'an as evidence for this. The Arabs, in whose language the Qur'an was revealed, say of a man possessing vast and abundant knowledge that he is a sea.

Whoever enters the sea without a ship drowns and perishes. Likewise, whoever approaches knowledge and seeks it from those who are not its people perishes in it.

The Ark is fundamentally composed of four kinds of things by which it is constructed and established: wood and iron, by which it is constructed and erected. Their analogy is that of the two upper Foundations, which we have already mentioned.

Then there is *kanbār*, with which its joints are fastened, and pitch with which it is sealed so as to prevent water from reaching it. Their analogy is that of the two lower Foundations, which we have also already mentioned.

These four foundations, as we have previously stated, are the foundation of the Law. We have already mentioned some of their equivalents and analogies, such as the Testimony and others.

Likewise, the Ark travels and anchors through seven things:

Two supports upon which it rests;

a mast, which stands in its center;

a crossbeam at its top, which is the *qiriyya*;

a sail into which the wind enters, causing it to travel;

an anchor, which holds it when it is anchored, namely the *hūjal*;

and a rope by which it is tied to it.

These seven are analogies for the seven nāṭiqs and the seven Imams between every two nāṭiqs.

Likewise, the Ark has twelve planks, an analogy for the twelve lāḥiqs, the twelve nuqabāʾ.

Four of them are foundations, corresponding to the four among the twelve whom we previously mentioned. They are analogous to what God, exalted is He, said:

“Indeed, the number of months with God is twelve months in the Book of God, on the day He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are sacred.”

The likeness of these four in the Ark is the four handles fixed upon it, to which the ropes of the mast are attached. They secure the mast so that it does not incline.

The remaining eight complete the twelve. Their likeness in the Ark is the eight ropes: two ropes for the two supports, with one rope on each support by which it is held and raised and lowered; four ropes from the top of the mast to the handles, securing it as we have described; and two ropes on the crossbeam, which is the transverse *qiriyya* at the top of the mast, with a rope at each end by which the wind-ropes are manipulated and by which they operate.

Thus its foundation is composed of four, corresponding to the foundation of the Testimony; its parts are composed of seven, corresponding to the parts of the Testimony; and its planks are twelve, corresponding to the letters of the Testimony.

As we have stated, the foundation of Noah's Law corresponds to the foundation of Muhammad's Law, which is the Testimony. Although their outward forms differ, their meaning unites them, as we have explained.

Hence God's saying, exalted is He:

“He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah.”

For Noah was the first to establish a law, and Muhammad was the last to establish one.

What we have described of the Ark is the foundation upon which it was built. Whatever additional equipment people subsequently add to some of its parts is an addition; the foundation is what we have described.

When Noah established his Call outwardly and the Call of his Foundation inwardly, no one responded to him except those who had already believed, as God said.

He then called upon his Lord:

“My Lord, indeed I have called my people night and day, but my calling has only increased them in flight. And every time I called them so that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted, and grew exceedingly arrogant. Then I called them openly. Then I proclaimed to them and spoke to them secretly, saying: ‘Ask forgiveness of your Lord; indeed, He is ever Forgiving. He will send the sky upon you with abundant rain, give you increase in wealth and children, make gardens for you, and make rivers for you.’”

The inward meaning of his statement, “I called my people night and day,” is through the outward and through concealment.

His statement, “I proclaimed to them,” means what was proclaimed of the outward Call for himself.

And “I spoke to them secretly” means what was concealed in the Call of his Foundation, in the inward.

They knew this, and the whole matter had reached them: he had established a secret Call through an inward other than the Call by which he had called them outwardly.

His statement:

“Every time I called them so that You might forgive them”

means: so that You might bring them into the boundary of concealment and the inward.

Ghafrān in the language means concealment. Hence a *mighfar* is so called because it conceals the head, and a *ghifāra* because it conceals, and *Ghafūr* means the one who conceals.

Thus he says: “I called them through the outward Call so that they might respond to it and thereby arrive at its inward.”

His statement:

“They thrust their fingers into their ears”

means that they did not listen to my Call, and filled their hearing with scattered and rejected speech.

And:

“They covered themselves with their garments”

means that they concealed themselves behind their outward appearance and what they had adorned themselves with.

The interpretation of his statement:

“Then I called them openly. Then I proclaimed to them and spoke to them secretly”

has already been given.

And his statement:

“Ask forgiveness of your Lord; indeed, He is ever Forgiving”

has likewise already been interpreted in regard to forgiveness: ask Him to disclose to you what is concealed of the inward.

“He will send the sky upon you with abundant rain.”

We have already stated that the likeness of the sky is the inward, and the likeness of water is knowledge. Thus, when He discloses the inward knowledge to you, He will pour knowledge upon you abundantly.

“And He will give you increase in wealth and children.”

We have already stated that the inward meaning of wealth is knowledge, and that children, in the inward, are the *mustajībūn*. That is, He will make some of you dāʿīs to Him, and servants will respond to them.

“And He will make for you gardens”

means a Call in the inward,

“and rivers”

means scholars of the inward.

Then He, exalted is He, said:

“Until, when Our command came and the oven boiled over...”

That is, when the knowledge of interpretation came forth, the Foundation spoke it, and the knowledge of *taʾyīd*, possessing the light, proclaimed it.

“We said: Carry therein of every pair two.”

That is, gather under the allegiance of the Foundation and his Call everyone whom you gather into pairing: let the Foundation be paired with the Imam, the Imam with the Hujja, and the nuqabāʾ with the dāʿīs.

Carry them according to the ranks of the upper boundaries and according to what has occurred of the operation of wisdom in the pairing of creation, so that this may be among the proofs of the unity of the Creator of creatures, exalted is His mention.

Likewise, do this in the outward matter of the outward Ark, so that the work may be outward and inward, as this is the case with the boundaries of the Messengers until the cessation of action with the manifestation of the affair of the Possessor of the Resurrection.

We have already mentioned some points concerning this matter, and we shall mention the remainder of what ought to be mentioned concerning his affair in this book, in the manner in which we have set it out, when we reach it, God willing.

And He said:

“Board it. In the name of God is its course and its anchorage.”

His statement, “In the name of God,” consists of two names, analogous to the two upper Foundations. They are seven letters, analogous to their letters. The two names and the letters are also analogous to the two lower Foundations and their letters.

Through this, the Call proceeded and became established among those with whom it became established.

“Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.”

We have interpreted *Ghafūr* and mercy from God as what He has mercy upon His servants with and graciously bestows upon them. He is Merciful by virtue of this.

The greatest mercy is *taʾyīd* and its effect within the inward knowledge. Mercy derives from *raḥim*, the womb. The counterpart of this is the effect of wisdom within the one endowed with *taʾyīd*, like the descent of the sperm into the interior of the womb and its nourishment there secretly until its creation is completed and perfected.

"And it sailed with them amid waves like mountains."

This means that the Foundation proceeded in his Call with those who responded to him through the sciences, from one boundary to another, bringing them to the Boundaries of Knowledge and their ranks.

The wave here is an analogy for one who has fashioned himself with knowledge and marked himself with it among the outward scholars, while being empty of knowledge. It disappears from before him just as a wave disappears.

When a wave gathers, it appears to the eye like a mountain. Likewise, the one adorned with outward knowledge appears to his followers like the true Imam, who does not waver from his command, does not depart from his rank, and whose knowledge does not disappear.

Thus the Call of truth travels upon the heads of these people who resemble scholars, and pierces through them, just as the Ark pierces through the waves and travels upon them.

They are terrifying in their falsehood, deceiving and embellishing, just as waves churn and surge. But the *mustajībūn* are at ease from following them and safe from their error, just as those aboard the Ark are safe from the waves of the sea.

And Noah called his son—that is, his biological son—who was in isolation, having separated himself from him. He had hoped that authority would come to him. But when Noah established another in his place, he envied him and refused to enter into his affair and submit to his authority, just as occurred with Iblis regarding Adam, and in the matter of Abel and Cain, the sons of Adam.

Noah called him to that matter, so that he might enter under the authority of his Foundation, but he refused and said:

"I shall take refuge in a mountain that will protect me from the water."

That is, "I shall seek refuge in one of the outward scholars and take from him that by which I may protect myself from the proof of your Foundation against me through his knowledge."

He said:

"There is no protector today from the command of God except the one upon whom He has mercy."

That is, these whom you have mentioned will not protect you. Rather, the one whom God has shown mercy will protect you.

We have explained the meaning of mercy: they are the people of *taʾyīd*.

Compassion for him then seized Noah, and he asked God to guide him:

“My Lord, indeed my son is of my family, and surely Your promise is true, and You are the best of judges.”

That is, “You promised me that You would carry my family in the Ark”—meaning the Call of truth and the Ark of salvation.

God said:

“He is not of your family. Indeed, it is unrighteous conduct.”

That is, when he did this and persisted in it, his lineage from you was severed, and he was attributed to the one whose Call he answered and whom he held fast to.

We have mentioned this previously, summarized it, and explained its meaning.

And the wave came between them, and he was among those drowned.

By the wave are meant the scholars of error. We have explained their condition. He drowned with them, outwardly and inwardly, in doubts, ambiguities, and destruction.

And it was said:

“O earth, swallow your water; and O sky, withhold.”

The earth here is an analogy for the Foundation whom Noah established for his inward Call. He commanded it to conceal the inward knowledge that had come to it, to protect it from those who were not its people, to take possession of it, and to gather it within itself.

The sky, as we have previously stated, is an analogy for the nāṭiq. Here it is Noah. He was commanded, after establishing his Foundation for the transmission of the inward knowledge, to withdraw from it and hand it over to the one whom he had established for it, and to turn toward the outward for which he had been established.

“And the water subsided.”

That is, the inward knowledge subsided within the Hujja, who is the Foundation of the Law. Its likeness is that of the earth in which water disappears and becomes concealed from sight.

Likewise, the hidden and protected knowledge came to rest in its proper place and station and disappeared within it.

“And it came to rest upon al-Jūdiyy.”

That is, the Call came to its end with the *mustajīb*.

The meaning of this is that the opening of the Call and the inward knowledge proceeded from the nāṭiq to the Foundation, but did not become established with him. Rather, it proceeded from him to the *atmiʾma*—that is, the Imams—but did not become established with them. Rather, it proceeded from them to the hujjas, but did not become established with them. Rather, it proceeded to the nuqabāʾ, who are their lāḥiqs, but did not become established with them. Rather, it proceeded from them to the wings, who are the dāʿīs, but did not become established with them. Rather, it proceeded from them to the *mustajībūn*, where it became established with them and did not depart from them. It became established upon them.

And it was said:

"Away with the wrongdoing people."

That is, they were kept far from it and had no share in it.

When God, exalted is He, said to Noah in response to his seeking fulfillment of the promise concerning the salvation of his son, since He had promised him the salvation of his family and he considered his son to be among them:

"He is not of your family; indeed, it is unrighteous conduct. So do not ask Me about that of which you have no knowledge. I admonish you lest you become among the ignorant."

Noah understood that he had erred in his question and argument by relying upon the promise previously made to him. He therefore sought refuge in God, asked His forgiveness, and sought His mercy, saying, as God relates:

"My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking You about that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy upon me, I shall be among the losers."

It was said:

"O Noah, descend with peace from Us and blessings upon you and upon peoples from among those with you. And peoples We shall grant enjoyment, then a painful punishment from Us will touch them."

The descent mentioned here does not mean a descent of diminution, because it is coupled with peace and blessings, unlike what He said to Adam and Iblis:

"Descend, all of you, from it, some of you being enemies to others."

Rather, He meant: "Descend to those below you with peace"—that is, with *taʾyīd*. Strengthen those before you with the *taʾyīd* of wisdom that We have given you, and convey to them the message with which We sent you.

He singled Noah and the peoples with him out for peace and blessings, saying:

"Descend with peace from Us and blessings upon you and upon peoples from among those with you."

That is, those who hold fast to the rope of God: the Foundations, the Imams, the hujjas, the nuqabāʾ, the wings, and the sincere *mustajībūn*.

God, exalted is He, singled them out for peace and blessings.

“And peoples We shall grant enjoyment, then a painful punishment from Us will touch them.”

That means those who enter his outward Call without holding fast to its inward. He will grant them enjoyment through their outward in the immediate world, preserving their blood and protecting their wealth from wrongful seizure, and removing from them the humiliation and degradation of the jizya.

Then, in the hereafter, a painful punishment from Him will touch them because they failed to attain the realities of faith through adherence to the covenant and pledge, belief in the unseen, establishment of the outward and inward, and their lack of *taʾyīd* through the preserved, hidden, spiritual knowledge.

God's statement:

“We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them for a thousand years less fifty years”

refers to the duration of his cycle and the duration of his Law.

His Law remained attributed to him, acted upon, and called to, and thus he is said to remain through the designation: he is called to in his name, and its boundaries, obligations, and rulings are established through practice and wisdom.

As for his remaining through his body, person, and physical form, that was only for the duration of his lifetime. God did not make human bodies and their natures, through which He established them, capable of remaining for such a length of time. Rather, He gave them an end before this end, and they scarcely surpass it or exceed it before they decay and perish.

God established complete and everlasting existence for souls in the Hereafter, after their separation from this world and from the bodies attached to them in the worldly abode.

As for what occurred concerning the people of Noah, and what the nations who followed them subsequently followed them in, God has mentioned this in several places in His Book.

He informs us that those who were first to respond to his Call were among the oppressed and the dull-witted among them. Their leaders, in their own estimation, refused to become followers of them. This is their statement:

“We do not see anyone following you except those who are the lowest of us, at first glance.”

And His statement:

“Nor do I say concerning those whom your eyes despise, ‘God will never grant them good.’”

That is, God had indeed granted them that good.

The same became the course of nations after them.

Among the things in which later nations followed them was their statement to their prophets when they first called them to the outward, according to God's established practice. Such was the statement of Noah's people, referring to Noah:

“This is nothing but a human being like you. He wishes to gain superiority over you. Had God willed, He would have sent down angels. We have never heard of this among our forefathers of old.”

We have already mentioned the interpretation of *bashar* and *mubāshara* in the outward.

Their statement, “He would have sent down angels,” means those who bring spiritual, inward knowledge, when they are among the spiritual beings.

And their statement:

“We have never heard of this among our forefathers of old”

means their forefathers from whom they had taken what they had taken, following the falsehood to which they had gone.

We have already explained how fatherhood applies in this matter.

They said, in effect: “What we know is that the messengers come with the outward and establish the inward through their Foundations,” and these are whom they meant by “angels.”

This was before Noah established his Foundation for transmitting the inward.

When he established it, they persisted in their disbelief, just as their father Iblis had persisted.

God, exalted is He, said:

“When there came to them what they recognized, they disbelieved in it. So the curse of God is upon the unbelievers.”

And:

“Evil indeed is that for which they sold themselves: that they should disbelieve in what God has sent down, out of envy that God should send down of His bounty upon whomsoever of His servants He wills. So they incurred wrath upon wrath.”

This was because of their disbelief in the first and the second.

The same occurred among the nations, as God, who is the truest of speakers, said concerning them:

“Have they enjoined it upon one another? Rather, they are a transgressing people.”

And:

“Their hearts resemble one another. We have made the signs clear for a people who are certain.”

Thus every nation says the same concerning its Messenger, as God, exalted is He, relates of them in His Book:

“This is nothing but a human being like you. He eats of what you eat and drinks of what you drink.”

They meant what they possessed of the outward, since no other aspect had been opened to them.

And like their statement:

“Shall we believe you while the lowest follow you?”

Thus the statement of Noah's people has been related by all the nations that rejected, denied, arrogantly resisted, and repudiated God's signs and deviated concerning His names.

Then God commanded Noah to praise Him, give thanks, and ask for steadfastness upon what had been bestowed upon him. He, exalted is He, said:

“So when you and those with you have settled upon the Ark, say: ‘Praise belongs to God, who has saved us from the wrongdoing people.’”

He commanded him to say this outwardly and inwardly when he settled upon the outward Ark and was saved in it from the destruction of those who had remained behind him.

Likewise, His statement in the inward:

“When you and those with you have settled upon the Ark”

means: when your inward Call has become established, its affair has been set right, it proceeds according to its boundaries, and it has been completed and brought into harmony.

Then say:

“Praise belongs to God.”

That is: praise the Benefactor and give Him thanks for what He has bestowed upon you, namely the distinction between imitation and demonstration.

The Messenger's, the nāṭiq's, call to the outward is a call to imitation: he commands people through it, and they respond by imitating him in that.

When they are tested through it, respond to it, and become believers in the unseen, as God, exalted is He, says, the Call of the inward is established for them through demonstration, and its Foundation is established for this purpose.

And:

“My Lord, cause me to disembark at a blessed landing, and You are the best of those who cause to land.”

That is: “Make my descent and my station, through the bounty You have bestowed upon me, a descent of blessing”—and that blessing is *taʾyīd*, which was its station at that time.

Noah was therefore commanded to ask God to preserve him in his station with Him, just as all believers are commanded to ask Him for guidance to the Straight Path.

The Imam of the Age is the Straight Path.

They have already been guided to him, but they are commanded to ask Him for steadfastness upon that guidance, because complete guidance is only attained through remaining steadfast upon it.

As for one who is guided and then strays, he is among those who have gone astray.

This is God's statement:

“Guide us upon the Straight Path, the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have incurred wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.”

Noah was commanded to make the supplication we have described, and the believers likewise, so that they might remain in a state of fear and apprehension regarding error, conscious of it and not feeling secure from it.

For whoever feels secure from it treats it lightly and thereby falls into it.

For this reason they were commanded to ask for it in every unit of their prayer, by night and by day, so that they would not neglect it or turn away from it and forget it.

Among the things in which the nations followed one another is what Noah's people said about him, as God relates:

“Before them the people of Noah denied, and they denied Our servant and said, ‘He is mad,’ and he was repelled.”

Just as Muhammad's people called him mad and repelled him, following the example of those who had rejected the prophets before them.

God similarly described the other nations. We have already mentioned how the nations corresponded to one another in this.

Among this is the statement of the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

“You will surely follow the ways of the nations who came before you, step for step and feather for feather, until even if they entered the hole of a lizard, you would enter it.”

We have mentioned this in the *Book of the Pillars of Islam*.

And in another report:

“You will surely follow the practices of those who came before you, cubit for cubit and armspan for armspan, until even if they entered the burrow of a *khashram*, you would enter it.”

The lizard is a small creature that dwells among stones. The Arabs hunt it and eat it, and it is well known.

The *khashram* is the dwelling place of hornets. It is a hole in clay that they construct, in which they live and reproduce.

The *dabr* refers to their collective group. They are the counterparts of bees, from which honey comes, and which construct their houses from wax, from which people benefit.

Hornets build their houses, but there is no good or benefit in them. They are therefore an analogy for the people of error who resemble the people of truth, whose counterparts are like bees.

The hole of the lizard is also its dwelling. It is analogous to the burrow of the jerboa, which is used as a parable for hypocrisy.

It is said that hypocrisy derives from *nāfiqāʾ*, because the jerboa has a burrow called *nāfiqāʾ* with two entrances. If one entrance to its burrow is blocked, it emerges from the other.

Thus the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him, intended that this community would follow the earlier nations in error and hypocrisy—not that they would literally enter the holes of lizards or the burrows of hornets. Nor would the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him, give a parable for something that could not occur.

God's statement concerning Noah:

“So We opened the gates of heaven with pouring water, and We caused the earth to burst forth with springs, and the waters met according to a command already decreed”

has an inward meaning.

The opening of the gates of heaven is the opening of the nāṭiq—that is, those whom He established for the outward—with outward knowledge.

And His statement:

“We caused the earth to burst forth with springs”

means the bursting forth of knowledge from the boundaries of the inward: the twelve nuqabāʾ whom his Foundation established for inward knowledge, with a nāqib, a lāḥiq to him, in every island.

A similar meaning is found in God's statement concerning Moses, peace be upon him:

“So We said: ‘Strike the stone with your staff.’ Then twelve springs burst forth from it. Every people knew its drinking place.”

Thus:

“The waters met according to a command already decreed”

means that the outward knowledge and inward knowledge are each apportioned according to the command assigned to each and do not cross into the other: imitation for the Messenger and demonstration for the Foundation.

Likewise, after the Messenger, imitation belongs to the Imam and demonstration to the Hujja, according to what we have previously stated concerning God's apportioning of what He has apportioned and arranging it for what He assigned to it, and according to the wisdom by which it operates among His servants.

And:

“We carried him upon one made of planks and nails.”

That means the Ark.

We have already interpreted the planks and stated that they are twelve, and that the Foundation gathers them.

The nails by which they are fastened are the lofty, celestial, dominical benefits that connect to them.

We have previously stated that iron, in general, is analogous to one of the two upper Foundations, and that the dominical benefits proceed from it according to what we have described of their movement through the upper and lower boundaries.

And God's statement:

“We sent Noah and Abraham, and We placed prophethood and the Book among their descendants. Some of them were guided, but many of them were transgressors. Then We sent Our messengers following in their footsteps, and We sent Jesus son of Mary following after them.”

The meaning is that the elect lineage from Adam passed from one individual to another among his descendants until it settled in Noah. Then, after him, it passed among his descendants in the same way, from one individual to another, until it reached Abraham.

Then, after him, it passed among his descendants and likewise continued until it reached the Messenger after them.

By “descendants” here is meant the purified and selected descendants from the loins of Noah and Abraham, peace be upon them, who are the prophets and messengers, the Foundations

and Imams, and their causes, from them and from other descendants through the birth of the Call, as we previously explained in the interpretation of the birth of religion.

Prophethood here means *taʾyīd*.

The Book here means the knowledge established with the Imams. It was called a "Book" because it was established in the Book.

And the Book, in the inward, is the Imam, as we have previously discussed in explaining the practice of naming a thing by the name of what accompanies it and is joined to it.

Thus *taʾyīd* and knowledge are in the purified descendants from the loins of Noah and Abraham, and in those whom they established as causes for them from their inward descendants—that is, the descendants of religion.

Many of these descendants, and many of the descendants of the physical loins who were not among the purified, are transgressors.

We have explained that they become severed from lineage through cause and descent by disbelief, transgression, and error when they persist in it without regret or repentance. Whoever among them repents remains upon what he had previously been upon.

The elect among the physical descendants are free from impurity, safe from confusion, pure and purified.

Muhammad, ʿAli, and the Imams from the descendants of Muhammad, from the children of ʿAli and Fāṭima, are included among the descendants of Noah and Abraham whom we have mentioned.

God placed *taʾyīd* and knowledge among them.

Those who share with them in physical birth and the birth of the Call without belonging to the elect among them include both obedient and disobedient people, just as among the rest of creation.

And the children of ʿAli and Fāṭima from the descendants of the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him, are through his mother Mary.

God, exalted is He, said:

"And that was Our proof which We gave Abraham. We raise in degrees whom We will. Indeed, your Lord is Wise, Knowing. And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; each We guided. And Noah We had guided before, and among his descendants were David, Solomon, Job, Moses, and Aaron. Thus do We reward the doers of good; and Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elijah—each was among the righteous."

Thus Jesus is established as belonging to the descendants through his mother, despite those who reject the possibility that descendants can be attributed except through the loins alone.

The descendants were attributed to Noah and Abraham because after them Moses and Jesus did not have Imamate proceeding among their descendants through physical birth, since neither had a surviving male line. Thus it returned to the line of Abraham.

Noah, peace be upon him, said:

“My Lord, do not leave upon the earth among the unbelievers any dweller.”

That is: “Do not give those who disbelieve in You any share of the reality. If You leave them, they will lead Your servants astray and will beget none but wicked disbelievers.”

That is: “If You give them this, they will use it to lead astray those of Your servants who worship You through the side of reality, and nothing will arise from their Call except one who is in a condition like theirs.”

“My Lord, forgive me, my parents, whoever enters my house as a believer, and the believing men and believing women.”

We have already interpreted forgiveness above.

“My parents” means the two who undertook his Call and nurtured him.

“And whoever enters my house as a believer” means those believers who entered his Call.

“And the believing men and believing women” means those among them who existed before him and those who would exist after him. He included all of them in the Call.

“And do not increase the wrongdoers in anything except destruction.”

Tabār means destruction.

And injustice, in the language, means placing a thing somewhere other than its proper place.

That is, those who placed the Imamate somewhere other than its proper place.

Hūd and Ṣāliḥ in the Cycle of Noah

During the cycle of Noah there were among those who were warned by his Law and called through his Call Hūd and Ṣāliḥ.

As for Hūd, he called ʿĀd, and God, exalted is He, has related that He destroyed them by the wind.

God, exalted is He, said:

“And to ʿĀd, their brother Hūd.”

He attributed him to their brotherhood because of the birth relationship, for he belonged to them both outwardly and inwardly.

As for the outward, he was one of their clan, sharing a common father with them, and was therefore their brother through outward birth.

As for the inward, he and they belonged to the community of Noah and were people of his Call. He was therefore their father inwardly, according to God's statement:

“The creed of your father Abraham.”

Whoever among them believed became connected to him, while whoever disbelieved became severed from him and departed from his lineage.

Thus God attributed him by brotherhood to those among them who believed, just as God said:

“The believers are but brothers.”

And God said:

“And concerning ʿĀd, when We sent against them the barren wind, it left nothing upon which it came except that it made it like decayed remains.”

And similarly His statement concerning them:

“When they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said, ‘This is a cloud bringing us rain.’ Rather, it is what you sought to hasten: a wind containing a painful punishment, destroying everything by the command of its Lord. And by morning nothing could be seen except their dwellings. Thus do We reward the criminal people.”

The inward meaning of the barren wind is the celestial knowledge that comes bearing God's matter to His awliyāʾ through compelling proofs against His enemies when they have become arrogant through their false proof against the people of truth.

It is not knowledge by which they are nurtured and through which the believers are born. Rather, it is a blow and a crushing of the unbelievers.

They debated Hūd and argued with him. He presented his proof to them through the outward, and they produced their own outward argument and used it to overwhelm him and intimidate him.

He therefore alluded to them through the proof of the hidden knowledge and promised them its manifestation.

They said:

“Then bring us what you threaten us with, if you are among the truthful.”

He said:

“Knowledge belongs only to God, and I convey to you what I have been sent with. But I see you to be a people who are ignorant.”

That is: “The knowledge of what I have symbolically indicated to you belongs to God. He will reveal it only through its boundaries. I have conveyed to you the knowledge with which I was sent, but you are a people ignorant of the boundaries of knowledge and recognition.”

Then *taʾyīd* came to him from God, suppressing them, breaking their falsehood, and exposing their doubts.

When he first disclosed something of this to them, they imagined that he intended to benefit them with his knowledge.

This is what is meant by:

“They saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, and they said, ‘This is a cloud bringing us rain.’”

We have already stated that water is an analogy for knowledge, and likewise rain.

He said:

“Rather, it is what you sought to hasten: a wind containing a painful punishment, destroying everything by the command of its Lord.”

That is: “This is what you said to me: ‘Bring us the punishment of God, if you are among the truthful.’ It is a punishment for you, not knowledge from which you will benefit.”

This occurred when their destruction had drawn near and God's wrath had descended upon them.

He therefore sent against them the outward wind, destroying their bodies, and the inward wind, namely the compelling proofs, destroying their souls before the separation of their bodies, so that they would not leave this world believing themselves to possess a proof for the error upon which they had stood.

For they had not responded to the outward Call as those called to it are required to do, nor followed the possessor of the outward until thereafter entering under the authority of the Hujja of the possessor of the inward, according to what we have previously explained.

Thus God's punishment came upon them outwardly and inwardly, and destroyed them, as God said:

“And He destroyed them all.”

Among those who were also in the cycle of Noah, who were called through his Law and his Call, and whom God mentioned in His Book, was Ṣāliḥ, who called Thamūd.

God said in His Book:

“And to Thamūd, their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said: ‘O my people, worship God. You have no deity other than Him.’”

His brotherhood with them is according to what we explained in the story of Hūd: the relationship of birth, since he belonged to them outwardly and inwardly.

His statement, and the statement of Hūd and Noah, and of every prophet who calls his people to worship God by saying:

“O my people, worship God”

is the Call to worship God through affirming His unity.

His unity can only be attained through the inward.

For whoever seeks knowledge of God without interpretation has no escape from one of two things: either he arrives at anthropomorphism, or he falls into negation.

If he takes the latter position, he absolves Him from anthropomorphism according to his own knowledge, but without proof.

If he takes this from his own speculation, or from a book that happens to reach him, or through hearsay from someone who was not authorized to convey it, God will not accept it from him, because of His statement, exalted is His praise:

“Do not eat of that over which the name of God has not been mentioned; indeed, it is transgression. And indeed the devils inspire their allies to dispute with you, and if you obey them, you are indeed polytheists.”

Everyone who affirms God's unity without the path of interpretation acquired through proof has deviated concerning Him, exalted is He.

For the human being is created through his outward and his inward, and through his intellect, by whose soundness he is rewarded when he obeys and punished when he disobeys.

He cannot escape being originated in all these respects.

Whoever is originated with these attributes cannot direct his indication except toward something originated that shares his origination among the creations of the Creator of creatures, exalted is His mention.

If he says, “One,” then the one falls under the boundaries of number and numbered things.

If he says that He is “a thing,” then the thing is *mashyʾ*, something that has been brought into being, and the *mashyʾ* is originated.

If he says:

“There is nothing like Him,”

then he has delimited Him, because he has thereby given Him an example and made Him a thing.

If he argues from language that the Arabs say, “It is not like so-and-so who does such-and-such,” intending by this “so-and-so himself” and not his likeness, it is said to them: so-and-so is created, and whoever says this is created, and there are likenesses and counterparts to him.

If you say this of the Creator of creatures, you have thereby given Him a likeness and counterpart.

If he says “a thing,” he makes Him originated; and if he says “nothing,” he falls into negation.

Rather, He is known through His names, exalted is He.

His names are His boundaries, which are below Him. Yet the name does not apply to Him in the same manner that names apply to named things, because names apply only to perceptible attributes.

This discussion has a proper place in which it can be established in full. Because of its length, and because it ought to be placed within its proper boundary among the Boundaries of Knowledge, when we reach that place we shall expand upon it, God willing.

Ṣāliḥ said:

“This is God's she-camel, a sign for you. So leave her to eat in God's earth.”

The she-camel was made an analogy for his Ḥujja, like the cow of the Children of Israel. Its mention will come in its proper place, God willing.

Among the Jews, according to what they claim in their Torah, and among the Christians, according to what they claim in their Gospel, there is no account of the she-camel. Nor do they know its significance in what is related of the story of Ṣāliḥ, outwardly or inwardly.

Male camels are analogies for the Imams, and female camels are analogies for the hujjas.

Likewise, the cow.

The Arabs, in whose language the Qur'an was revealed, call a noble man a *qarm*, which is the male camel.

Thus God gave them parables in terms that they could understand and recognize.

His statement:

“So leave her to eat in God's earth”

means that they should leave him with what God had bestowed upon him of his allotted share, represented by the earth from which the animal eats.

“And do not touch her with evil.”

That is: “Do not reject his knowledge or alter his actions.”

This was because he had been established to carry the inward and spread the Call.

“Otherwise a painful punishment will seize you.”

That is, if you do this.

And His statement:

“And remember when He made you successors after ʿĀd”

is addressed to those among them who followed Hūd. They became successors after him in his books and his exposition.

“And He established you in the land.”

That is: He settled you upon the interpretation of the Foundation.

“You take its plains as palaces.”

That is, what they were given of the boundary of demonstration and disclosure: they established wings for the Call.

“And you carve houses from the mountains.”

That is, you produce from the boundary of *taʾyīd* lāḥiqs.

These houses are a refuge for those seeking guidance, whose initial formation arose from dense, bodily speech, compounded like the outward houses for dense bodies.

“So remember the favors of God, and do not go about the earth spreading corruption.”

The “favors” are what we have previously mentioned.

He addressed by this a people who were among the people of Hūd's allegiance, remnants of the descendants of those who followed him, who had altered what he had been upon.

Ṣāliḥ therefore came to establish their affair, guide them, and rectify their condition.

“And do not go about the earth spreading corruption.”

That is: do not interfere with the boundary of interpretation by alteration and change.

And His statement:

“But they hamstrung the she-camel and rebelled against the command of their Lord, saying: ‘O Ṣāliḥ, bring us what you threaten us with, if you are among the messengers.’”

Their hamstringing of the she-camel means their rejection of the Hujja from his station, their overpowering of him, and their gaining control over his outward affair.

In another interpretation, it means that they killed him.

For this reason the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him, likened the killing of ʿAli to the hamstringing of the she-camel. He said:

"The most wretched of the earlier ones is the one who hamstrung the she-camel, and the most wretched of the later ones is the one who kills you, O ʿAli."

It is related in the report that they hamstrung her young one, her offspring, which its people had intended for his station after him, just as this community killed ʿAli, peace be upon him, and al-Husayn, peace be upon him.

Among this is the statement of the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

"You will surely follow the ways of the nations before you, step for step and feather for feather, until even if they enter the hole of a lizard, you will enter it."

Those whom they killed among the Imams were hamstrung; those who prevented them were also guilty of hamstringing them; and those who seized control of their outward affair also hamstrung them.

God's statement:

"This is a she-camel. For her is a share of water, and for you is a share on a known day."

It is related in the interpretation that the she-camel drank their water one day, while they drank nothing. Instead, they came to her, and she yielded milk to them, so they drank her milk that day in place of water. On another day they drank the water.

This is an interpretation through a symbol conveyed by one of the people of interpretation, which the common people then took literally.

We have already stated that water is an analogy for outward knowledge, and milk is an analogy for inward knowledge, because milk emerges from a breast in which it was concealed. It is therefore a symbol and indication of inward knowledge.

This is the first boundary of the inward for the *mustajībūn*, just as nursing is the first nourishment of infants.

We have already stated that the nāṭiq establishes the outward knowledge of the Law, while the Hujja establishes its inward.

He therefore intended that the inward of the water be divided between the nāṭiq and the ṣāmit—that is, knowledge in general—and that the ṣāmit receive the inward of knowledge from the nāṭiq.

Thus he informed them that the knowledge of the nāṭiq is divided between his Hujja and the common people of his Call: he gives the outward of it to the people of his Call, while he gives its inward to his Hujja.

His Hujja gives it to the lāḥiqs, the lāḥiqs give it to the wings, and the wings give it to the believers.

Thus the knowledge of the nāṭiq became twofold, as we have described.

Milk belongs only to females, and their analogues are the hujjas. It does not belong to males, whose analogues are the nāṭiqs.

His statement:

“Then they called their companion, and he undertook and hamstrung her”

means the enemy of the Possessor of the Age.

They gathered against him and agreed to rise against Ṣāliḥ's Hujja.

According to one account, he killed him; according to another, he removed him from his boundary and seized his place in the outward affair.

Whoever seizes control of the outward affair of the people entrusted with authority appears, in the eyes of those who do not know him, like a dead man; but in the eyes of those who know him, he is alive.

For domination over the affair of God's awliyāʾ occurs only through the domination of usurpers over the outward affairs of this world, and that has no weight with them.

As for the affair of God that He has assigned to them, it remains in their hands; it cannot be usurped or stolen.

Rather, they strive only to remove from what they have seized those who have seized it, so that they may re-establish what the falsifiers have caused to die of God's religion and revive His servants through His wisdom.

Were it not for this, they would pay no attention to anything that the usurpers had seized.

And His statement:

“And concerning Thamūd, when it was said to them, ‘Enjoy yourselves for a time.’”

That is, after they hamstrung the she-camel:

“Enjoy your outward condition until the time when punishment descends upon you.”

They rebelled against the command of their Lord, and the thunderbolt seized them.

The thunderbolt is the questions of the Possessor of the Age and his *taʾyīdī* hujjas.

We have mentioned this in the story of Hūd with its explanation.

“They were unable to rise.”

That is, they were unable to establish a proof for their falsehood.

“Nor could they defend themselves.”

That is, against the Possessor of their Age, who crushed them with his *taʾyīdī* proof before they suffered the lesser destruction through separation from this world, and then the greater destruction.

This is God's statement:

“And Thamūd—He left nothing.”

Among what is mentioned concerning their story is God's statement:

“And there were in the city nine groups who spread corruption in the land and did not reform.”

The inward city is the boundary of the sanctuary of the inward.

The groups of the sanctuary are nine classes.

Corresponding to each of these classes was a group from among their opposites who corrupted the boundaries of the Call.

The first class among the groups of the sanctuary is the nāṭiqs;

the second, the Foundations;

the third, the Imams;

the fourth, the hujjas;

the fifth, the nuqabāʾ;

the sixth, the *ayādī*;

the seventh, the wings;

the eighth, the authorized ones;

and the ninth, the *mustajībūn*.

Opposed to each of these peoples is an opposite among their enemies.

God said:

“Thus We have made for every prophet an enemy from among the criminals.”

We have covered what we have seen as belonging within this boundary that we have set out in the story of Noah and those who were in his cycle among the nāṭiqs and Imams whom God, exalted is He, mentioned in His Book.

We have informed you that Noah, peace be upon him, was the first of the Messengers endowed with firm resolve to resolve upon abrogating the law of the one before him and reviving his own law.

We have mentioned some of what his community established in opposition to him, and how the nations after him followed the same path, so that this may be a lesson for whoever hears it and a warning for whoever is granted understanding of it.

Therefore, O company of believers, follow the path of those righteous ones who preceded you, and do not imitate the actions of those who rejected.

Adhere to obedience to your Imams and the witnesses of God over you.

Know how the Imamate proceeded among those who came before you, cycle after cycle and generation after generation.

God established in every community a Messenger to uphold the outward of its Law, a Foundation for the inward of its Call, and Imams succeeding one another between every two Messengers, so that it would not be as God, exalted is He, said:

“That the people might have no argument against God after the messengers,”

and say:

“No bearer of good news or warner came to us.”

Know that the same practice continues with regard to the Imamate until the Day of Resurrection.

May God open for you the gates of good deeds, encompass you with the descent of blessings, and make you among those who give thanks for the bounty bestowed upon them, so that you may merit, through His prior promise, an increase from Him.

And may God bless Muhammad the Prophet and his pure Family.

This is followed by the Story of Abraham — Part Four of the Book *Asās al-Taʾwīl*.

The Fourth Part: The Story of Abraham, Peace Be upon Him

When the cycle of Noah, peace be upon him, had come to an end and the number of his Imams had been completed, God sent Abraham, peace be upon him, as a prophet and messenger and singled him out for intimate friendship. This is His saying: **“And God took**

Abraham as a close friend." This was because he fulfilled what Adam and Noah had not fulfilled. He described him accordingly, saying: **"And Abraham, who fulfilled."**

This refers to his completion of the words with which He tested him, in His saying: **"And when his Lord tested Abraham with words, and he completed them."** Adam received them after he had stumbled, and God accepted his repentance through them. God, Glorified and Exalted, makes such things known to whomever He approves among His creation, as He said concerning Idris, peace be upon him: **"And We raised him to a high station."** And He said concerning Jesus, peace be upon him: **"Rather, God raised him to Himself."** And He said concerning Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

"Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs."

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, related how he was taken on the Night Journey and how he ascended to heaven, and whom he saw there among the angels, prophets, and messengers who had preceded him, as well as what he did, what he was commanded to do, and what was said to him, in a lengthy account transmitted and well known from him.

The like of this is that God only makes these things known to the pure and excellent souls that have been purified for Him, refined in His obedience, and whom He has selected, chosen, singled out, and approved. He makes them acquainted with the Kingdom of the heavens, and this occurs through their souls being connected with the lofty, heavenly souls, not through the dense earthly bodies in which they reside.

Thus it is related from the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, concerning the Night Journey, that he was taken by night **with his soul**. It is also related from one of his wives, who was with him that night, that she said: "He spent the night only between my chest and my neck," meaning what appeared to her of his body. As for his soul, it reached the Kingdom, saw it, and moved through it, according to what has been related from him concerning that.

Likewise, the beginning of what came to him of revelation, according to what is related from him, was through a vision that he saw in his sleep. God likewise grants this to many of His friends. Hence the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him: **"The true vision is one part of the parts of prophethood."**

When revelation would overwhelm him, he would sleep and become completely absorbed in sleep; he would grow heavy and snore, and it would exhaust and distress him until he would be drenched in sweat. For this reason, when this first happened to him, they said that he was mad, because the matter of the message, and the communication of the lower souls with the higher souls, contains heaviness and hardship for them. Hence the saying of God, Exalted is He: **"We shall cast upon you a weighty word."**

It is in human nature that whenever a person sees someone he has never seen before, he is struck with awe by him, his natural disposition recoils from him, and he feels estrangement and fear until he becomes familiar with him and finds repose in him. Thus, when Abraham saw the first of the lofty, heavenly, celestial boundaries, he said: **"This is my Lord."** He said

the same concerning the second and the third. When he saw each one reaching toward what was above it, he abandoned the one that was finite and lower and adhered to the higher one, until that too reached what was above it and he abandoned it, as God, Exalted is He, described him in His Book.

Thus he turned toward the Creator of creation and Originator of the heavens and the earth, before whom every boundary and everything bounded by a boundary is beneath Him, and who is exalted above all boundaries and bounded things through His power.

The Kingdom of the heavens which God, Exalted is He, says He showed Abraham consists of the **lofty boundaries**, from which taʾyīd passes to the lower boundaries. We have already mentioned them previously. God showed them to him after honoring him with the message and choosing him for prophethood.

The **Kingdom of the earth**, which He also says He showed him, consists of the lower boundaries corresponding to the lofty boundaries. We have also mentioned them previously. He showed these to him at the beginning of his affair and the development of his creation within the religion, according to what we have explained earlier.

For everyone whom God, Exalted is He, singled out for prophethood, chose for the message, or selected for the Imamate, or for any of the lower boundaries of guidance among all human beings, was initially nothing. Then, through the power of God the Creator, he became a created being, just as all human beings were created from despised fluid. Then he was formed in the womb, carried, and born. He was an infant without understanding; then he acquired understanding and became a boy who was not yet subject to obligation; then he reached maturity and became subject to obligation.

At every one of these stages, God, Exalted is He, has among human beings on His earth people corresponding to that person—boundaries whom He established for His religion, as we have previously mentioned. Therefore, the one who has been specially chosen and selected must have among them a teacher to teach him, a guide to guide him, a director to direct him, and one who bestows blessings upon him, once he reaches the stage of obligation, until God approves him for the station for which He has prepared him and he enters into it.

Abraham was likewise, as was every prophet and Imam before and after him, and those beneath them among the earthly boundaries whom we have mentioned in various places.

He first became acquainted with the nearest of the earthly boundaries, namely **the dāʿī**. His likeness, as we have mentioned, is that of a star in the heavens. This is as God, Exalted is He, said:

“And when night covered him, he saw a star.”

The likeness of night, as we have mentioned, is concealment and secrecy. When the dāʿī took from him his solemn covenant and commanded him to conceal and keep secret, and that secrecy covered him—meaning that it concealed him from disclosure and public manifestation—and he did not yet make him acquainted with any other of the boundaries, but opened to him some of what he possessed that was appropriate to be opened to one like him, Abraham heard things whose hearing filled him with awe and magnified them in his estimation.

He imagined that this was the ultimate degree and that there was no one above it. Thus he said within himself: **"This is my Lord"**—that is, the one who governs my affair, the intermediary between me and the Creator, my educator, and the one who bestows blessings upon me.

This is like the saying of Joseph: **"Return to your lord and ask him about the women who cut their hands."** This is a recognized usage in the Arabic language: they say of a man that he is the *lord of a blessing* or the *lord of a slave*, meaning the owner of it and the one who bestows it.

When the star set—that is, when he was brought down from it, meaning that he was made acquainted with the boundary above it, namely **the hujja**, and was informed that what the dāʿī possessed came from the one above him, and he was told of his reports and connected with him—he became acquainted with something above what the first had shown him.

He imagined of this second boundary what he had imagined of the first, supposing that it was the ultimate degree and the furthest cause.

This is His saying:

"Then, when he saw the moon rising, he said: 'This is my Lord.'"

When the moon set—meaning that the hujja descended to the Imam, made him acquainted with him, directed him toward him, and showed him his proof—he said:

"Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among the people who have gone astray."

That is: "Unless I attain guidance from the **Master of the Age**, I shall indeed be among the misguided."

We have previously mentioned that the likeness of the moon is that of the hujja.

Then, when he became acquainted with the affair of the Imam, which is in the saying of God, Exalted is He:

"Then, when he saw the sun rising, he said: 'This is my Lord; this is greater.'"

That is, he acknowledged him and confessed that he was the greater one who governed his affair and was his educator.

When the sun set—meaning when he became aware of the descent of the Master of the Age and his humility before those above him among the lofty boundaries—he said:

"O my people, I am free of what you associate with God. Indeed, I have turned my face toward Him who originated the heavens and the earth, inclining exclusively toward Him and submitting, and I am not among the polytheists."

Thus he disavowed what his people had followed of associationism and devoted himself exclusively to the oneness of God, without partner. This occurred when he reached the furthest degree of the **mustajībūn** of the Call of Truth.

These, then, were the boundaries through which Abraham moved. They are the boundaries of the **Kingdom of the earth** which God showed him, through which He moved him, and whose affair He subsequently entrusted to him. He then caused his descendants to inherit it, as He said:

"And We bestowed upon the family of Abraham the Book and wisdom, and We bestowed upon them a mighty kingdom."

Then, when God raised Abraham to the degree of prophethood and singled him out for the message, He raised him to the **Kingdom of the heavens**, to show it to him, in the manner we have described concerning the raising of the simple, subtle soul to that which resembles it among the simple souls, rather than the dense body, which was not formed, developed, and constituted for ascent and elevation. Its composition, nature, and disposition are rather toward sinking and remaining upon the earth from which it was created and to which it returns.

When he first contemplated the nearest of the lofty boundaries, he likewise supposed that it was their ultimate degree, because of the exaltation of God's affair in his own soul and the awe he felt before the taʾyīd and power that confronted him.

The same was the case with the second and third boundaries, the latter being the culmination of the lofty boundaries.

When the taʾyīd of the Creator reached him, He made him aware of the greatness of His power, and His word reached him through it, he became acquainted with the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and encompassed and attained excellence both outwardly and inwardly. Thus he was as God described him:

"among those who are certain."

As for what the ignorant have interpreted—that he was the king of that time, that he learned that someone would be born who would seize his kingdom, and that he therefore ordered every newborn child to be killed; that Abraham's mother fled with him into the wilderness, took him into a cave after giving birth to him, and that he remained there, never emerging and never seeing the sun, moon, or stars until he grew up, and that when he emerged and saw them he said what he said—the outward form of this interpretation itself demonstrates its falsehood.

Had he been in a cave as they claim, one from which he could not see the sky, air could not have reached him there. If air could not have reached him, he would not have lived. And if this had happened and he nevertheless lived, then upon emerging suddenly into the air he would have perished.

Nothing would have prevented his mother, when she supposedly took him into caves, from bringing him out into the breeze and into the things to which human need necessarily requires him to be exposed. If that were the case, she would all the more have brought him out at night and at the two ends of the day, when no one would see him, while the sun, moon, and stars were before his eyes.

Moreover, had he not already known about the Lord, he could not have recognized Him. This is like a child: if he does not hear and recognize what is spoken, then when he does not hear it

he moves his tongue and produces a sound from within his mouth and throat, just as an animal that cannot distinguish speech produces sound, even though it has a tongue, uvula, and lips.

The falsity of what they have interpreted according to their opinions is clearer than to require an argument against them. Arguing the matter at length would take us too far, and we did not construct this book around it nor intend it for that purpose. When we saw that it would divert it from what we intended, we cut it short.

Likewise, we have not mentioned here the interpretation of the common people and the confused notions of this sort that they have brought forth in passages of this kind, where the inward is intended rather than the outward, and where the outward wording is a parable intended to signify the inward.

His saying, Exalted is He:

"And when his Lord tested Abraham with words, and he completed them,"

means the words with which Adam was tested, namely the **six boundaries of the possessors of the religious laws** that were made permissible to him and whose establishment he was commanded to undertake through obligations and duties, but not the seventh, toward which Adam extended his hand, transgressing when he took what God, Exalted is He, had forbidden him to take.

These are what Adam received when he repented, together with what he received of their lofty boundaries. We have already mentioned this.

The **word** is the possessor of the religious law.

Thus Abraham completed the six words, fulfilling the obligations and carrying out the work required by the law entrusted to him. He did not transgress beyond them, but fulfilled them. God therefore described him as one who fulfilled and completed.

Abraham established the lofty words—that is, the boundaries—by accepting from them within the degree of knowledge; and he established the lower words—the six **nāṭiqs**—by establishing their religious laws in the abode of action.

At that time Adam and Noah had established their respective religious laws. Abraham himself therefore established what had been neglected after them, that which God had commanded to be established. He established his own religious law and established outwardly what would serve as an indication of the religious laws of those who would come after him, and upon them, by themselves. He conveyed this inwardly to the one to whom it ought to be conveyed.

Thus he completed the words and fulfilled them all.

When he had completed this, God, Exalted is He, appointed him as an **Imam**, saying in His Book:

“And when Abraham's Lord tested him with words, and he completed them, He said: ‘Indeed, I am making you an Imam for mankind.’”

We have previously explained the interpretation of the Imam and Imamate.

Abraham said:

“And from my descendants?”

He asked God, Exalted is He, to place the Imamate among his descendants.

He said:

“My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers.”

Thus He, Glorified is He, answered him by placing it among those of his descendants who had not committed wrongdoing and forbidding it to those who had.

Ẓulm, “wrongdoing,” in the Arabic language means placing a thing somewhere other than its proper place.

When God, Exalted is He, established Abraham as a prophet and messenger with a religious law different from Noah's religious law, He established for it an outward foundation whose inward aspect indicated what his community was commanded to undertake, in accordance with what we have described concerning the way each prophet and messenger was established with his religious law.

The foundation of Abraham's religious law was therefore **the House**. He built it, called out among the people, proclaimed to them the pilgrimage to it and circumambulation around it, and established for it its rites, landmarks, and ritual practices.

He associated **Ishmael** with him in its construction.

The foundation of his religious law was established upon this.

God, Exalted is He, said:

“And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House: ‘Our Lord, accept this from us; indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.’”

And He, Exalted is He, said:

“And We charged Abraham and Ishmael: ‘Purify My House for those who circumambulate it, those who remain there in devotion, and those who bow and prostrate.’”

He established the House within the sanctuary of Mecca, where his son Ishmael was, and made it a likeness of him and of every Imam after him.

The people's pilgrimage to the House and their circumambulation around it are a likeness and indication that they must likewise come to the Imam from every place, whether near to him or far from him, seek refuge in him, surround him, and circumambulate around him.

His saying, Exalted is He:

“And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House”

has an inward meaning: their raising signifies the mention of the **four nāṭiqs** who came after them, namely Moses and Jesus, from the descendants of Isaac, and Muhammad and the Qa’im, from the descendants of Ishmael.

The foundations are therefore four.

Likewise, the House was made with four sides and four corners. They raised it during their respective periods as a sign of these four.

They marked off with the *Hijr* two of its corners. This is a likeness of the cessation of prophethood among the descendants of Isaac after Moses and Jesus, while its continuation remained among the descendants of Ishmael.

For circumambulation and touching take place only at the two corners that are the likeness of Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, and the Qa’im. The other two corners, whose likeness is Moses and Jesus, are neither touched nor approached for touching, nor are they approached during circumambulation. Rather, the circumambulation takes place behind the *Hijr* that is attached to them.

This is because their affair comes to an end, while circumambulation around the House remains, and it continues with the nāṭiqs who remain from the descendants of Ishmael, whose religious law the House was established as a likeness of at the beginning, and for the Imams one after another after him.

The House was given **one door**, as a likeness of its foundation, namely his successor—the Imam for whom the House was made a likeness.

Around it were **twelve doors**, which are the likenesses of the twelve **nuqabāʾ**. From each one, through each island, one reaches knowledge of the Imam, just as one who enters enters the House through a door.

The circumambulation around it was made **seven circuits**, and likewise the running between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa is a likeness of the seven nāṭiqs and the seven Imams.

The stone set in the corner is a likeness of the **hand of the nāṭiq**, and touching it is a likeness of shaking hands with the one who gives allegiance to him.

For this reason it is related in the tradition that **the Black Stone is the right hand of God**, and that when God took the covenant from the children of Adam, the Stone received it.

Therefore, the one who touches it says:

“O God, I have delivered my trust, and I have renewed my covenant, so bear witness for me before You that I have conveyed it.”

After circumambulating the House, they were commanded to perform two units of prayer, as a likeness of obedience to the Imam and the hujja, and to pray behind the Station, placing it before them.

They were not permitted to pray between it and the House. This is a likeness indicating that one does not turn toward the nāṭiq except through his successor, and that no deed is accepted from one who passes him by and rejects him, even if he obeys the nāṭiq and turns toward him.

This is because of the saying of God, Exalted is He:

“Obey God, obey the Messenger, and those vested with authority among you.”

Then they were commanded to drink from the water of Zamzam and to pour it over themselves. This is a likeness of accepting knowledge, seeking it, and striving after it.

Al-Ṣafā and al-Marwa are a likeness of the Imam and the hujja, and traversing between them is a likeness of obeying them and refraining from departing from their command or separating from them.

The explanation of the remaining rites will come when we discuss the pilgrimage in full. Here, however, we have only intended to relate the matter of the House, because it brought together and indicated the foundations of the religious law in the same way that the Ark brought together and indicated them.

The same applies to the **testimony**, according to what we explained when discussing it: the outward forms of the foundations differ, but their meaning is one in what they indicate and in that for which they are made a likeness.

Whoever does not know their boundaries and inward meanings and does not fulfill their rights gains no benefit from knowledge of their outward forms, nor does he know their true reality.

It is related of ʿUmar that he kissed the Black Stone and said:

“Indeed, by God, I know that you are merely a stone; you neither harm nor benefit. But I saw the Messenger of God doing this to you, so I did it.”

His saying, Exalted is He:

“And We charged Abraham and Ishmael: ‘Purify My House’”

means purification of the name of the sanctuary from every impurity.

“For those who circumambulate it” means the twelve *lāḥiqs*, the people of the islands. They are those who circumambulate the Imam in the islands, just as the twelve doors of the mosque circumambulate the House and surround it on every side. We have already mentioned that this is their likeness.

“Those who remain there in devotion” are the Imams who remain with him and reside there.

“Those who bow” are the *usūs*.

“And those who prostrate” are the nāṭiqs.

And:

“Proclaim the pilgrimage among the people”

means: announce the Call, so that the **mustajībūn** may respond to you.

Among what God, Exalted is He, mentioned concerning Abraham is His saying:

“And when Abraham said to his father…”

meaning the one from whom he had received knowledge of the outward, among the leaders of the people of the outward, and to whom he was attributed as a son on account of his relationship through outward knowledge.

When Abraham reached the point to which he had been elevated and became connected with the boundaries of the inward, he addressed the one who had raised him through the outward, urging him to enter what Abraham himself had entered.

He said:

“O my father, why do you worship that which neither hears nor sees, and can avail you nothing?”

That is, those from whom they took that outward knowledge, concerning whom God, Exalted is He, said:

“Deaf, dumb, blind.”

He said:

“O my father, knowledge has come to me that did not come to you, so follow me and I shall guide you to an even path.”

That means: what came to him of the stored spiritual knowledge.

“Follow me, and I shall guide you” means: I shall direct you to your Imam of the Age, who is the straight and upright path.

He said:

“O my father, do not worship Satan. Indeed, Satan has been rebellious toward the Most Merciful.”

That means: do not obey the adversary of the Master of the Age, who rebelled against his Creator by rejecting His trustee over His affair.

"O my father, indeed I fear that a punishment from the Most Merciful may touch you, and then you will become a friend of Satan."

That is, that you will become like him in your allegiance to the one whom he took as his ally.

He said:

"Are you turning away from my gods, O Abraham?"

That means his outward leaders and predecessors from whom he had received his knowledge.

"If you do not desist, I shall surely stone you. So leave me for a long while."

That is: if you do not turn back from what you are upon, I shall attack you with ugly accusations, so distance yourself from me.

He said:

"Peace be upon you. I shall ask my Lord to forgive you."

He prayed for his right guidance and said: I shall seek and ask that its benefits be bestowed upon you.

Among this is His saying:

"And We had certainly given Abraham his sound judgment before, and We were knowing of him."

That is: We gave him the taʾyīd of the Word from Us, and We knew to what his affair would ultimately reach.

"When he said to his father…"

meaning that he had learned the outward knowledge which we have previously mentioned.

As for the births of the nāṭiqs, they do not occur among the unbelievers.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said:

"I was transferred from noble loins to purified wombs."

The noble quality is piety.

God, Exalted is He, said:

"Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most God-conscious of you."

The God-conscious are the sincere believers.

Thus he said to his father, who had taught him the outward knowledge, as we have explained. Fatherhood, in the inward sense, can apply to a believer and an unbeliever alike.

He said to his father and to his people, the people of his sect among the outward:

“What are these statues to which you are devoted?”

That is, those who fashioned themselves as likenesses and imitated the people of truth while not being among them.

They said:

“We found our fathers worshipping them.”

They said: “This is what we found our fathers upon.”

He said:

“Indeed, you and your fathers have been in manifest error.”

They said:

“Have you come to us with the truth, or are you among those who jest?”

That is: “Do you possess a reality in what you say, or is your speech the speech of one who possesses no reality?”

He said:

“Rather, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, who originated them, and I am among those who bear witness to that.”

That means that He is the Creator of the outward and the inward of that.

“And those whom you invoke besides Him do not create anything, while they themselves are created.”

That means their inability to establish the Pillars and boundaries of the religion, while they themselves are governed by them.

“By God, I shall surely devise a plan against your idols after you have turned away and gone.”

He says: if you turn away from the truth, I shall show you how I will break your idols—that is, the people of falsehood from whom they take their knowledge—and break them through the proof of truth.

“So he made them into fragments”

means that when he addressed them and established the proof against them, he tore them apart and scattered them,

“except the largest of them, so that perhaps they might return to it.”

That means their leader. He did not confront him, leaving him so that they might return to him concerning what Abraham had broken for them and thereby learn that he had nothing to offer them in the matter.

They said—that is, his people, when it reached them that their leaders had been broken by the proof brought against them, while most of them did not know who had done this to their gods:

“Who has done this to our gods? Indeed, he is among the wrongdoers.”

They meant that, in their claim, he had deprived them of what was rightfully theirs.

They said—that is, those who had heard what he had first said:

“We heard a young man mentioning them; he is called Abraham.”

The *young man* in the interpretation is **one aspiring to the Imamate**.

They said:

“Bring him before the eyes of the people, so that they may bear witness.”

That is, bring him before the assembled people so that the multitude may hear his statement and theirs.

They said:

“Is it you who have done this to our gods, O Abraham?”

He said:

“Rather, this largest of them did it. So ask them, if they can speak.”

That means he confused them and concealed the truth from them through something that had no validity for them, but which had already been broken against them. He said: “Ask them if they can produce an argument.”

When they saw this, and neither their leaders nor their chief possessed an argument, **they returned to themselves**—that is, the followers returned to their leaders, from whom they had been taking their knowledge, when they saw that their arguments had been exhausted.

They said:

“Indeed, you yourselves are the wrongdoers.”

That is, because you placed the affair somewhere other than its proper place.

Then they were brought back down upon their heads. They said:

“You certainly knew that these do not speak.”

That is, they were brought back upon their heads, thinking about their affair and becoming entangled in examining the matter of their leaders.

Abraham rebuked them and said:

“Do you worship besides God that which can neither benefit you in anything nor harm you? Fie upon you and upon what you worship besides God. Will you not understand?”

That means: do you obey, besides God, one who makes lawful and unlawful for you according to his own opinion, making lawful what you make lawful and unlawful what you make unlawful merely by following them?

We have previously mentioned in several places the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, to ʿAdi ibn Hatim. He had been an Arab upon the Christian religion and then became Muslim. He heard the saying of God, Exalted is He:

“They have taken their rabbis and monks as lords besides God.”

He said: “We did not worship them, O Messenger of God.”

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said to him: “Did they not make lawful for you and make unlawful for you, and did you not regard as lawful what they made lawful and regard as unlawful what they made unlawful for you?”

He said: “Yes.”

He said, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

“That was your worship of them.”

They said:

“Burn him and support your gods, if you are going to act.”

That means their agreement to take him before the ruler of their time, denounce him before him, and incite the ruler against him.

This is permissible in the Arabic language. People say, “So-and-so burned so-and-so before the ruler,” when he denounces him to the ruler, brings trouble upon him, and makes accusations against him that anger the ruler against him.

We said:

“O fire, be coolness and peace upon Abraham.”

That means that God made their scheme and what they brought before their ruler into coolness in his heart; his heart did not become inflamed against him, nor did he become angry with him. Rather, he debated and argued with him, as God, Exalted is He, described:

“Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham concerning his Lord because God had given him kingship?”

When Abraham said:

“My Lord is He who gives life and causes death.”

That means outwardly and inwardly.

The king said:

“I give life and cause death.”

That is: “I pardon one who deserves execution and allow him to live, and I kill whomever I wish to kill.”

This was his statement outwardly. He also claimed in reality that he knew whom he wished and thereby gave him life; then, when he wished him dead, he overturned the matter against him, causing him to fall into doubt and perplexity, and then brought him out of it and caused him to die.

Abraham said:

“Indeed, God brings the sun from the east, so bring it from the west.”

By the sun, in the inward meaning, he intended **the Word of God**, which He manifested through the nāṭiq of the Age and whose setting He made to occur in his asās.

“If you are the possessor of the Word, then transfer it from him to the beneficiary.”

Thus the one who disbelieved was confounded—meaning that his argument was exhausted and he was defeated.

“And God does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

That is, those who place a thing somewhere other than its proper place.

We have interpreted this previously.

Likewise, this man had placed himself somewhere other than his proper place and claimed what did not belong to him, so God did not guide him to his sound judgment.

Among this is His saying:

“Indeed, I am going to my Lord; He will guide me.”

That means turning toward Him with his heart and limbs.

"My Lord, grant me [offspring] from among the righteous."

He says: grant me children who are **mustajībūn**, sincere and devoted.

"So We gave him good tidings of a forbearing boy."

We have already mentioned that the *boy* is one aspiring to the Imamate. He says: one prepared to receive the Word—namely **Ishmael**.

"And when he reached the age when he could strive with him…"

That means when he reached the stage at which he could undertake the training required of him.

He said:

"O my son, indeed I see in a dream that I am slaughtering you; so consider what you see."

That is: "I am taking from you the covenant of the Imamate and establishing you as Imam of my religious law. So consider what you think."

He emphasized this to him because he knew how weighty, difficult, and arduous the matter would be for him. We have already mentioned this previously.

He said:

"O my father, do what you are commanded. You will find me, if God wills, among the patient."

That means patient in carrying the burdens of the Kingdom.

"And when they had both submitted…"

That means both surrendered: Abraham by submitting to the command, and Ishmael by accepting it from him and bearing it.

"And he laid him down upon his forehead"

means that he laid him down and brought him into the station of acceptance from him, and Ishmael humbled himself before him.

"And We called to him: 'O Abraham, you have indeed fulfilled the vision.'"

That means We made him aware through revelation that he had fulfilled the command and surrendered to it.

"Indeed, thus We reward those who do good."

That means that the reward for one who does well in acceptance and execution is such an honor.

The **slaughter** is a likeness of taking the covenant, because slaughter produces death, which is the cessation of bodily movements.

Ishmael, peace be upon him, therefore rose to the degree of **taʾyīd, concealment, and undertaking the Call of the inward**, and establishing its boundaries. He became silent concerning direct address, exposition, and debate through the outward, and **Isaac**, peace be upon him, was appointed in his place within the degree of the Imamate.

This is the saying of God, Exalted is He:

"And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice."

It is stated outwardly that he was ransomed with a ram. The Arabs call a master who defends his people **the ram of his people**.

The sacrifice, in the inward meaning, is the taking of the covenant, as we have explained. This is taken from prophets, foundations, and Imams when they become qualified for the stations that they are to undertake, just as it is taken from the mustajībūn at the degree in which they are.

A prophet, asās, or Imam does not undertake anything for which he has become qualified until the covenant concerning it has first been taken from him, just as the mustajīb is not given direct access until his covenant has been taken from him.

When the prophet, asās, or Imam reaches his respective boundary, he becomes occupied with governing the body through the right hand, while the power of taʾyīd overcomes his body. Through the Kingdom he becomes acquainted with things before which the world and everything in it become insignificant in his sight.

Thus Ishmael was ransomed with Isaac and raised to the degree of the **asās**, while Isaac took his place below him in the degree of the Imamate to which Ishmael had been summoned. Ishmael responded and surrendered to God's command and patiently accepted remaining beneath his degree.

God therefore ransomed him from that station on account of his patience and submission to His command, and raised him to the degree of the asās. He honored him with prophethood and the message.

Thus He said, Exalted is He:

"And mention in the Book Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet. And he used to enjoin upon his people prayer and almsgiving, and he was pleasing to his Lord."

Part Four is complete.

Followed by Part Five of *Asās al-Taʾwīl*: The Inward Meaning.

The Fifth Part: From the Story of Abraham

God, exalted is He, says:

"And when Abraham said, 'My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead.' He said, 'Do you not believe?' He said, 'Yes, but so that my heart may be reassured.' He said, 'Then take four birds, draw them close to you, then place upon every mountain a portion of them; then call them, and they will come to you swiftly. And know that God is Mighty, Wise.'"

There is an interpretation of this beyond the interpretation. One of the two interpretations is that, at the beginning of his affair, he asked to see how the **mustajībūn** of the Call are given life from the death of ignorance, misguidance, and heedlessness. Here, "seeing" means a gift and bestowal, as in the saying of Moses, "My Lord, show me, that I may look at You," meaning, "Grant this to me and bestow it upon me."

Thus Abraham asked at that time for the rank of the **hujja**, while he was below it. God had promised to establish him as an Imam, in His saying, **"I am making you an Imam for the people."** So he asked for what he asked in order to have the promise fulfilled. He was told, **"Do you not believe?"** meaning, "Do you not believe in the promise?" just as God relates concerning the brothers of Joseph when they said to their father, **"You will not believe us,"** meaning, "You will not believe us, even if we are truthful."

He said, **"Yes, but so that my heart may be reassured,"** meaning that it might become settled with regard to that to which it had become attached.

He said, **"Then take four birds,"** meaning: undertake four of those **maʾdhūnūn** who have been authorized in the *mufātaḥa*. **"Draw them close to you"** means: bring them close to yourself and convey to them the ranks of the **nuqabāʾ**, and personally take charge of them through *mufātaḥa* and instruction. When you have done this with them and completed their affair, command each one of them to select for himself, just as you selected them, two men and to assume authority over them, after you have raised them to the ranks of the **nuqabāʾ**. Thus they will become twelve, corresponding to the months of the year, four of which are sacred. This is the upright religion according to which the practice of God has proceeded with regard to His friends.

Then, **"place upon every mountain a portion of them,"** meaning: appoint one of them in each of the islands of the earth, so that he may rise, by virtue of the truth with which He has supported him, over its mountain, being the one who prevails over it.

Then, **"call them and they will come to you swiftly,"** meaning: every person there will come to you obediently.

And know that God is Mighty, Wise.

Thus Abraham's Call encompassed the regions of the earth, and every community that acknowledged the Creator and the messengers had acknowledged His فضل and answered his Call.

The second interpretation

His saying, **"Show me how You give life to the dead,"** means: "Inform me of the way by which a servant among Your servants rises from his rank to the rank of **taʾyīd**."

He said, **"Do you not believe?"** meaning: "Do you not believe in what has come to you concerning this, and therefore affirm it?"

He said, **"Yes."** He had indeed affirmed it and known it, **"but so that my heart may be reassured,"** meaning: since this had occurred to one who was below me, I comprehended it, and my heart became reassured by it.

He said, **"Then take four birds,"** meaning: undertake four of the **maʾdhūnūn** authorized in the *mufātaḥa*. **"Draw them close to you"** means: bring them close to yourself through *mufātaḥa* and instruction.

When you have finished with them, **cut them apart**, meaning sever them by breaking them away from what you had gathered them upon in the exposition.

"And place upon every mountain a portion of them," meaning: add the breaking with which you broke them to your **lāḥiqs**, one after another.

Then, **"call them and they will come to you swiftly,"** meaning: when you have done this, call them by your **taʾyīd**, and you will see that taʾyīd has appeared in everything you planted in their hearts, as though they had never heard any breaking apart, separation, or anything of that kind. They will answer you by running.

When you see this, know that God is Mighty and Wise: Mighty through what He originated, and Wise through what He perfected.

Among those whom God mentions in His Book who were in the cycle of Abraham are **Ishmael and Isaac**. Concerning Ishmael, exalted is He, says:

"Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet."

Among them was Lot

He was one of Abraham's **nuqabāʾ**, and he had a great Call in an island where it had spread, multiplied, and become extensive. Then corruption entered it. Its people turned away from the ranks of the *hudūd* that had been assigned to them and from ascending through the degrees established among them.

Some of them began giving *mufātaḥa* to one another concerning taʾwīl and the inward, and some began breaking others apart from it. Lot, peace be upon him, forbade them from this and commanded them to adhere to their **dāʿīs**, to receive from them, and to conceal the knowledge of the inward as they had been commanded.

But they did not do so. They violated the veil, broke the covenant, applied the reality according to the course of the outward, sowed in a place other than the place of birth, and abandoned their wives, whom God had commanded them to approach outwardly and inwardly. Instead, some of them sufficed with one another in this matter, both outwardly and inwardly.

This is what Lot, peace be upon him, said to them:

"Do you approach males among the worlds, and leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives? Rather, you are a transgressing people."

That is, the **maʾdhūnūn** authorized in exposition and *mufātaḥa*; and **"leave what your Lord has created for you of your wives"** means the **lāḥiqs**, who are prepared for acceptance. Rather, you are a transgressing people.

They said:

"If you do not desist, O Lot, you shall surely be among those expelled."

They meant: "We shall expel you from attributing the Call to yourself."

When Lot persisted in admonishing them, they said:

"Expel the family of Lot from your city; indeed, they are people who purify themselves."

That is, they preserve the boundaries of the Call. Here "the city" means the Call. Thus they said: "Remove Lot and whoever remains among you from the Call, and appoint others in your own name."

They did so. They established the Call according to their own manner and attributed it to themselves. They permitted themselves the like of this with regard to the outward prohibitions, whose inward meaning this was. Some of them married one another, and Lot's **hujja** entered into this as well—that is what God, exalted is He, referred to metaphorically as his "wife."

Then God, exalted is He, sent angels to destroy, annihilate, and eradicate them, in the forms of human beings. They passed by Abraham, having been commanded to pass by him and to give him glad tidings of Isaac and Jacob.

This is what God, exalted is He, says:

"And indeed Our messengers came to Abraham with glad tidings. They said, 'Peace.' He said, 'Peace.'"

Before long, he brought a roasted calf.

That means that they gave him *mufātaḥa* concerning the reality, and he thought that they were some of the **mustajībūn**, so he gave them *mufātaḥa* on that basis and lodged them. This was according to what people used to do when they came to him after he had called them to

pilgrimage. He thought that they had come for that purpose, so he slaughtered a calf for them, roasted it, and brought it to them. But they did not extend their hands toward it.

When he saw this from them, he did not recognize them, as God, exalted is He, says:

"And he felt fear of them."

They said:

"Do not fear. We have been sent to the people of Lot."

In the inward sense, the calf was a **mustajīb** possessing the power of *mufātaḥa*. He brought him to them so that he could give them *mufātaḥa*, as he used to do with whoever came to him.

When they did not enter into conversation with him, he did not recognize them. Then they disclosed to him their affair and what they had been commanded to do.

"And his wife was standing, and she laughed, so We gave her glad tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac, Jacob."

His wife, in the inward sense, was his **asās**, standing in carrying out what had been commanded to him without deviation. She gained a share of that assembly from what transpired there between Abraham and the angels, and was strengthened by it; her strength in this matter became manifest.

The angels perceived what had affected him and gave him glad tidings of elevation and exaltation. This is what we previously mentioned: that he was transferred from the rank of **Imamate** to the rank of **asās**. They gave him glad tidings of Isaac, meaning that he was redeemed by him, and informed him that Jacob would attain that rank after Isaac.

She said:

"Alas for me! Shall I give birth while I am an old woman, and this husband of mine is an old man? Indeed, this is a wondrous thing."

That is: when the **nāṭiq** used to support me and assist me in work and exertion in the Call, I was eager for that, and my word was accepted among the people, yet no one answered me. Today, when he has withheld himself from me and from supporting me by his **taʾyīd**, because I have reached the point to which I have reached, and I have become incapable of accepting what I had previously been capable of, I am answered, so that I shall have a child.

They said:

"Do you marvel at the command of God? The mercy of God and His blessings be upon you, O People of the House. Indeed, He is Praiseworthy, Glorious."

When Abraham's fright had departed—that is, what had frightened him—and the glad tidings of Isaac and Jacob and of what they had been raised to had come to him:

“He began arguing with Us concerning the people of Lot.”

That is, he began asking about the people of Lot.

And His saying:

“And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the glad tidings, they said, ‘We are going to destroy the people of this city; indeed, its people have been wrongdoers.’ He said, ‘But Lot is in it.’”

He means: “In this Call which you intend to do what you intend, there is Lot, my companion, and the believers with him.”

They said:

“We know best who is in it. We shall surely save him and his family”—

meaning the believers in him—

“except his wife; she is among those who remain behind.”

They meant his **hujja**, who perished among those who perished, having altered and changed, so that he would be among those who remained with those upon whom the punishment would descend.

When they came to Lot’s Call, they went toward him. His people saw them and hurried toward them, as in His saying:

“And his people came rushing toward him.”

That is, they hastened toward him.

Previously, they had been committing evil deeds. They thought that those who had come to them were among the **mustajībūn** who had not entered into their way, and so they came in order to give them *mufātaḥa*. Lot also thought that they were likewise among those who had responded to him, and feared that his people would tempt them and turn them away from him toward what they themselves were upon.

So he went to those who had come and said:

“O my people, these are my daughters.”

Meaning his **lāḥiqs**, who would give you *mufātaḥa*.

“They are purer for you,”

since giving you *mufātaḥa* with them is permissible, whereas it is not permissible for you to give *mufātaḥa* to these, nor is it permissible for them to do so with you.

“So fear God and do not disgrace me concerning my guests. Is there not among you a rightly guided man?”

They said:

“You surely know that we have no right to your daughters, and you surely know what we want.”

That is: “We have no need of your **lāḥiqs**, and you know that what we seek is to turn these people away from you toward what we ourselves are upon.”

He said:

“If only I had strength against you, or could take refuge in a mighty support.”

He means: “If I am able to repel you, then I shall do so; otherwise I shall seek refuge with the **nāṭiq**, meaning Abraham.”

Then the angels disclosed their affair and said:

“O Lot, indeed we are the messengers of your Lord. They shall never reach you. So travel with your family during a portion of the night.”

They mean: “Take the people of your Call, the **mustajībūn** who have responded to you and who have neither altered nor changed in the Boundaries of Knowledge and the Stations of Exposition.”

And His saying, **“during a portion of the night,”** means with the remainder of your **lāḥiqs**, the people of concealment, who did not enter into the way of these others.

“And let none of you turn back”

means: let none of you turn back toward what had previously been the outward before entering into the reality—

“except your wife,”

meaning your intimate associate and keeper of your secret among your **lāḥiqs**, who entered with them. What struck them of punishment will strike her because she assisted them.

“Indeed, their appointed time is the morning. Is not the morning near?”

That means the manifestation of the affair of the **nāṭiq** with whom you are connected.

When Our command came—that is, when Our command became manifest through the **nāṭiq of the age**, Abraham—

“We made its highest part its lowest.”

He means: We brought down to the lowest rank those who had risen to the highest rank in the Call, reducing them to its outward aspect.

“And We rained upon them stones of baked clay, laid one upon another.”

He means: We cast upon them difficult questions from the **nāṭiq**, which struck them with the true inward meaning before their destruction in the outward, so that they would not leave this world without having had the proof established against them.

This is the inward meaning of what happened to them. God destroyed them through outward punishment and annihilated them all. Thus punishment overtook them outwardly and inwardly, just as they had transgressed outwardly and inwardly.

The affairs proceed to their completion in this manner. Had they existed inwardly without the outward, or outwardly without the inward, they would not have been complete in reality, just as nothing is complete except through its outward and inward aspects. There is nothing among things except that it has an outward and an inward aspect.

Among them was Joseph

He was Joseph son of Jacob son of Isaac son of Abraham, peace be upon them.

The Imamate had reached his father Jacob, who established his outward Call and then appointed his **lāḥiqs**.

When Joseph reached maturity and came to that rank, a vision of **taʾyīd** came to him from God, exalted is He. It showed him that the Imamate would come to him, and that the Imam, his **hujja**, and his **nuqabāʾ** would submit to him and come under his command, surrendering themselves to him.

He told this to his father Jacob, peace be upon him. This is his saying:

“O my father, indeed I saw eleven stars, and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating themselves before me.”

Jacob knew that this would happen and ordered him to conceal it from his brothers:

“O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they plot against you. Indeed, Satan is a manifest enemy to man.”

“And thus your Lord will choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives.”

That means the interpretation of the revealed books. Hence the saying of God:

“God has sent down the best of discourse, a Book consistent in itself.”

It also means the interpretation of the reports of the messengers and their words; that too is *hadith*.

“And He will complete His favor upon you and upon the family of Jacob, as He completed it upon your two forefathers, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, your Lord is Knowing, Wise.”

Jacob’s love for Joseph became intense, and he preferred him because he knew that the vision of **taʾyīd** had reached him and that he would attain what he had mentioned.

Joseph’s brothers learned of Jacob’s inclination toward him and toward a brother of his who was one of Jacob’s **lāḥiqs**, peace be upon him.

The ten gathered and said:

“Joseph and his brother are dearer to our father than we are, though we are a group. Indeed, our father is clearly in error.”

They meant the fatherhood of the Imamate: that he had strayed from the way of the Imamate if he intended to appoint Joseph and his brother, who were younger than them and, in their view, inferior to them in knowledge, when he intended to appoint them.

They had seen themselves as more entitled to it.

“Kill Joseph,”

meaning: cast him into an affair through which he would no longer be supported by **taʾyīd** and would no longer be fit for what Jacob had prepared him for.

“Or cast him into some land,”

meaning: attach him to one of those whom the people have made an authority over them,

“so that your father’s face may be free for you, and thereafter you may become a righteous people.”

That is: your Wali’s taʾyīd will become clear for you, and afterward you may repent from this event and reform yourselves.

One of them said:

“Do not kill Joseph,”

as though he regarded his killing—which was the cutting off of his taʾyīd—as grave, because that would corrupt the progeny and make the sin on account of it enormous.

“But cast him into the bottom of the well; some travelers will pick him up, if you are going to act.”

That is: cast him to the chiefs of the outward, so that he will be prevented from what you intend, without destroying his knowledge. Some of those who differ in the outward may pick up his speech.

They came to Jacob when they wished to depart for their **islands** and said:

“O our father, why do you not trust us with Joseph, while we are surely sincere toward him? Send him with us tomorrow; he may enjoy himself and play, and we shall certainly guard him.”

That is: “We shall cultivate him and set him right so that he may have a Call.”

“Send him with us” means: let him give *mufātaḥa* to the people and call them.

“And let him play” means: let him engage with his people in the outward.

“And we shall certainly guard him.”

That is: “We shall protect him from making a mistake.”

He said—meaning Jacob:

“It grieves me that you should take him, and I fear that the wolf may eat him while you are heedless of him.”

That means: you may become heedless of him through giving *mufātaḥa* to someone with whom you are giving it, while he is still new to the matter, and the one who steals by listening may extract from him some of what he possesses.

They said:

“If the wolf should eat him while we are a group, then surely we would be losers.”

That is: “If the thief reaches him in this way, we would lose what we intended from his improvement. We only wanted to train him, to have him deal directly with the people, and to learn the realities of what they are upon.”

So he permitted them to do this and released him into the Call as a **maʾdhūn**, to debate with the people of the outward.

When they took him away and agreed to place him in the bottom of the well—that is, they departed with him and went far from Jacob and agreed to cast him before one of the leaders of the outward so that he would occupy himself with him, turn him away from what he possessed, and overcome him by the strength of what he possessed of the outward—he would thus be in the depths and abysses of the outward.

“And We inspired him: You will surely inform them of this affair of theirs while they are unaware.”

That means that a vision of **taʾyīd** came to him concerning their plot against him, and that he would prevail over them and use what they had done to him as a proof against all of them.

They brought him to one of the leaders of the outward who possessed extensive knowledge. They said to him:

“Break this one apart, perhaps you will prevail over him.”

They said to that man:

“This is a person who has become attached to an affair in which he has departed from the truth. Perhaps you will acquire the merit of turning him away from what he has undertaken.”

Then they departed and left him.

They returned to Jacob while he knew nothing of what had happened and came to their father at night weeping.

That is: they came to him secretly, displaying grief over Joseph.

They said:

“O our father, we went racing one another and left Joseph with our belongings, and the wolf ate him.”

That is: they raced one another in argument and exposition and left Joseph behind with what had been entrusted to them of exposition. Then the one who steals by listening, whom you had warned us about, opposed him, took what he possessed, and devoured it.

“You will not believe us, even though we are truthful.”

And they brought upon his shirt false blood.

That is: they fabricated a doubt concerning his course that had never existed. This is one of the parables God mentioned to set before His servants.

As for anyone who takes this according to the outward wording, how could it be possible to believe their claim that a wolf had eaten him? A wolf does not prey upon a human being; and even if it had done so, it would not have eaten him completely. If they had reached his shirt, they would have reached the remainder of his body. The proof would therefore have been established against them concerning what they claimed, and they would not have abandoned an argument that did not stand for them.

Jacob said, having already known what had come to Joseph of the indications of **taʾyīd**:

“Rather, your souls have enticed you to something. So patience is beautiful, and God is the One whose help is sought concerning what you describe.”

Jacob trusted what was in Joseph, that he would not do what they had accused him of doing.

Joseph remained with that man, debating with him.

Then a group of travelers came—that is, a people who differed in the outward—to that man with whom Joseph, peace be upon him, was staying, to receive from him and learn from him.

They sent their water-drawer—that is, their spokesman and leader in speech. He entered the man's presence and found Joseph, peace be upon him, there. He lowered his bucket—that is, he cast his questions.

Joseph, peace be upon him, gave him *mufātaḥa* and found in him an abundance of receptivity to what he said. The man became attached to him and went with him to his companions, keeping him apart from the others.

He said:

"Good news! This is a boy!"

That is: "I give you good news: this is a man prepared and ready for the Imamate. I have heard from him what I have never heard from anyone before."

Joseph joined them and gave them *mufātaḥa*, and they admired him.

"And they concealed him as merchandise."

That is: they gathered what they had benefited from him, according to what they had been commanded.

They were from Egypt, so they asked him to travel with them there. He had been authorized to go wherever he wished, so he went with them.

They showed the man with whom he had been staying that they had no desire for him, so that he would not hold on to him out of fear for him.

When they arrived in Egypt—which at that time was the city of the Copts, and in it was their kingdom, whose ruler at that time was the one who held authority over their religion—Joseph had left the rank of Syria in which Jacob was Imam.

Joseph did not disclose his lineage. He remained with the people who had brought him. His reputation spread until it reached the king.

The king summoned those who had brought him and asked them about him. They denied knowledge of him. He gave them some dirhams and encouraged them with them, so they revealed him to him.

He summoned Joseph and gave him *mufātaḥa*. He admired what he possessed and attached him to his **hujja**, whom he had designated for his position. This was his wife, whom God, exalted is He, mentions.

This is His saying:

"And they sold him for a small price, a few dirhams, and they were among those who had little regard for him."

And the one in Egypt who bought him said to his wife:

“Honor his lodging; perhaps he will benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son.”

That is: “Perhaps we shall benefit from him”—meaning from his knowledge—“or we may adopt him as a son,” meaning that we may direct him toward what we ourselves are upon, so that he becomes our son in religion.

This was because he saw his exposition and the excellence of his guidance. This was the beauty for which Joseph was known.

The king’s **hujja** therefore attached him to himself, took him into his own care, gave him *mufātaḥa*, and was amazed by what he possessed. He honored and magnified him, and his own position was strengthened through him.

This is what God, exalted is He, says:

“And thus We established Joseph in the land, and so that We might teach him the interpretation of narratives.”

That is: We bestowed upon him knowledge of **taʾyīd**.

“And God is predominant over His affair, but most people do not know.”

When he reached maturity—that is, when he reached the rank of **taʾyīd**—

“We gave him judgment and knowledge.”

Meaning: the connection of taʾyīd to him.

“Thus We reward the doers of good.”

“And she in whose house he was sought to seduce him concerning himself.”

That is: the one with whom he was staying, who had been designated for his position, wanted him to disclose to her the knowledge of the reality because she saw him alluding to it.

Before this, Joseph had only given *mufātaḥa* through the outward, which supports the true inward knowledge. When taʾyīd became connected to him, he began alluding through it. The one with whom he was staying became aware of this and yearned for it. She pressed him concerning herself and assured him that she would accept from no one but him and would not disclose it to anyone else.

This is His saying:

“And she closed the doors and said, ‘Come to me.’”

That is: “Turn toward what I am inviting you to.”

Joseph said:

“God forbid! He is my lord; He has made my lodging good for me. Indeed, the wrongdoers do not prosper.”

That is: “He has supported me with His taʾyīd.”

“And she certainly desired him, and he would have desired her, had he not seen the proof of his Lord.”

That is: the **hujja of the king** desired him, and she intended to give him *mufātaḥa* concerning the true knowledge. He too intended this for her, had he not seen the proof of his Lord—that is, his taʾyīd—which prevented him from placing wisdom in a place other than its proper place, and outside its order, boundaries, and arrangement.

This is the interpretation of what God, exalted is He, mentioned concerning the story of Joseph, peace be upon him.

As for what the people of the outward attributed to him—that the king’s wife outwardly sought to seduce him, that she desired him and he desired her, and that he loosened his garment and sat in the place of circumcision with her—God has protected His friends from this, for that would be outward adultery.

And His saying:

“And they raced to the door”

means that each of them wanted to reach the door of the person in charge of that place before the other, in order to report what had happened between them.

“And she tore his shirt from behind.”

That means: she disgraced his outward course, exposed it, and brought it into disrepute.

“And they found her master at the door,”

meaning the king, who held authority over the Call of the land and the keys to the religion of its people.

She said:

“What is the recompense of one who intended evil against your family except that he be imprisoned or suffer a painful punishment?”

That means: “What is the recompense of one who intends to give your **hujja** *mufātaḥa* in a way other than the proper path and manner, except that he be prevented from *mufātaḥa* or be punished by being broken and cast down?”

He said:

“She sought to seduce me concerning myself.”

That is: “She wanted me to give her *mufātaḥa*, but I did not.”

And a witness from her family bore witness.

That is, one of the witnesses of the truth from among the people of the Call:

“If his shirt is torn from the front, then she has spoken the truth and he is among the liars.”

That means: if the speech she attributes to him is from the inward knowledge, then she has spoken truthfully concerning what he cast before her and gave her *mufātaḥa* about.

“But if his shirt is torn from behind, then she has lied and he is among the truthful.”

If it was from the knowledge of the outward, then she lied and he was truthful.

Had he given her *mufātaḥa* concerning the inward, she would have exposed it and violated its concealment, just as she exposed and violated the outward that he addressed to her.

When he saw that his shirt had been torn from behind—that is, when he saw what she had described concerning his knowledge of the outward—he said:

“Indeed, this is among your schemes; surely your schemes are great.”

And he said to Joseph:

“Turn away from this,”

meaning concealment, and manifest your affair and spread your Call.

And he said to his companion:

“Ask forgiveness for your sin,”

meaning what you intended against him when you sought to burden me with this matter.

Women in the city said—that is, the **maʾdhūnūn** in the Call:

“The wife of the ʿAzīz seeks to seduce her young man concerning himself; she has been overcome by love for him. Indeed, we see her in clear error.”

They said: “The **hujja of the ʿAzīz of our Call and of what we are upon has sought to seduce one who has prepared and established himself to become an Imam, calling to what he is upon and abandoning our Call. Indeed, he is clearly astray.”

When she heard of their scheme, she sent for them.

That means: when what they had said about her reached her, she gathered them together.

“And she prepared for them a banquet.”

That is: she established an assembly for *mufātaḥa* and discussion.

“And she gave each of them a knife.”

That is: she gave each one a decisive proof concerning what they were upon, so that he might have an addition to what he already possessed.

“And she said, ‘Come out before them.’”

Meaning Joseph: “Cast before them what you possess.”

When they saw him—that is, when he cast some of what he possessed before them—

“they were greatly amazed by him and cut their hands.”

That is: their hearts turned away from the guardians of their affairs and from what they had been upon toward what he had given them *mufātaḥa* about.

They said:

“God forbid! This is no human being; this is nothing but a noble angel.”

They meant: “This is not the speech of a corporeal human being. It is nothing but the speech of spiritual angels.”

She said:

“This, then, is he concerning whom you blamed me. I did seek to seduce him concerning himself, but he preserved himself. Yet if he does not do what I command him, he shall surely be imprisoned and shall surely be among the humbled.”

That is: “If he does not reveal to me what he possesses, I shall cut him off from *mufātaḥa* or cause him to fall from his rank.”

He said:

“My Lord, prison is dearer to me than that to which they invite me.”

That is: “My being cut off from *mufātaḥa* is dearer to me than releasing to them what ought not to be released to people like them, outside the proper boundaries required for it.”

“And if You do not turn their scheme away from me, I shall incline toward them and become among the ignorant.”

His Lord answered him and turned their scheme away from him—that is, He repelled those who sought from him what they ought not to seek and protected him from it.

Then it became apparent to them, after they had seen the signs, that they should imprison him for a time.

That means: it became apparent to them and to their companion that they should cut him off from *mufātaḥa* and prevent him from it for a period, in order to consider his affair, because his reputation had spread among the people and they feared that he would overcome them.

They silenced him after his signs had become manifest to them and they had known the truth of what he possessed. They silenced him concerning it, and with him they silenced two men who had answered his command and whose own affairs had been prepared to become among its causes.

This is His saying:

"And two young men entered the prison with him."

One of them said:

"Indeed, I see myself pressing wine."

That means: "I see myself undertaking the interpretation of the outward and its propagation."

The other said:

"Indeed, I see myself carrying upon my head bread from which the birds eat."

That means: "I undertake the good conduct of my Wali's course and its propagation, making it provisions for those who give *mufātaḥa*"—that is, through symbols and indications of inward taʾwīl.

They said:

"Inform us of its interpretation; indeed, we see you among the doers of good."

He said:

"No food with which you are provided shall come to you except that I shall inform you of its interpretation before it comes to you."

That means: no matter concerning which you gain a share will reach you except that I shall inform you of it beforehand—that is, I shall establish you upon it.

"That is from what my Lord has taught me. Indeed, I have abandoned the religion of a people who do not believe in God, and in the Hereafter they are unbelievers. And I follow the religion of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was not for us to associate anything with God. That is from the bounty of God upon us and upon the people, but most people are not grateful."

He therefore disclosed his affair to them, informed them of his lineage, and told them that the knowledge he possessed had been transmitted to him by his instructor through wisdom. He opened to them some of his secret.

Then he said:

“O my two companions of the prison,”

meaning, “O my two companions of concealment.”

“Are separate lords better, or God, the One, the Prevailing?”

That is: “Are Imams who have become divided and differed better”—meaning the people of the outward—“or an Imam who has established himself by the command of God, with no disagreement concerning what he has brought, but who is the One of the Age, established by the command of God, the One, the Prevailing?”

“You worship besides Him nothing but names which you have named, you and your fathers; God has sent down no authority for them.”

That is: “You have followed none but people whom you and your scholars appointed according to your own opinions, making lawful for you what they wished and making unlawful for you what they wished, and you obeyed them in this. Thus you worshipped them instead of God.”

This is like God’s saying:

“They have taken their rabbis and monks as lords besides God,”

and like the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, to ʿAdī ibn Ḥātim when he said, “We did not worship them, O Messenger of God.”

He said to him:

“Did they not make lawful for you what was unlawful and make unlawful for you what was lawful, and you accepted it from them?”

He said, “Yes.”

He said:

“That was your worship of them.”

“Judgment belongs only to God. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the upright religion, but most people do not know.”

He therefore gave them *mufātaḥa*, defining and instructing them in what established them upon it.

Then he said:

“O my two companions of the prison,”

meaning: “O my two companions of concealment and veiling.”

“As for one of you, he will give his lord wine to drink,”

that is, he will be his intimate companion, keeper of his secret, and possessor of his inward knowledge, transmitting it to those below him.

“As for the other, he will be crucified, and the birds will eat from his head.”

That means: he will be established as a noble **dāʿī**, and the **maʾdhūnūn** will receive from him the knowledge of the chief through him.

“The matter concerning which you both seek a ruling has been decided.”

That is: this matter has been completed for you both, and I have decreed it and established you in it.

And he said to the one whom he thought would escape among them:

“Mention me to your lord.”

Meaning his companion who was bound to him.

But Satan—that is, his own inclination which overcame him—caused him to forget to mention him to his lord. So he remained in the prison for several years.

They said: four, and they said nine. This corresponds to the nine **hudūd**, whose total is four. That is: one, two, three, four—four words that encompass nine numbers. Their complete explanation has already been mentioned.

Then the king said:

“Indeed, I see seven fat cows which seven lean ones eat, and seven green ears of grain and others dry. O assembly, explain to me my vision, if you can interpret visions.”

That means: the king who at that time ruled Egypt reflected upon what Joseph had conveyed to him of the symbols of wisdom. He gathered his intimate associates and his close companions and said to them, “I see such and such,” as he mentioned concerning the cows.

The **seven fat cows** mean the **hujjas of the nāṭiqs**, and the seven lean cows eating them mean the **hujjas of the Imams**. Their knowledge comes to the latter, so that the fatness and knowledge become theirs.

The **seven green ears** mean the seven Imams who became green through **taʾyīd**, while the dry ones are like the others from whom taʾyīd was cut off when they themselves became cut off.

“O assembly, explain to me my vision, if you can interpret visions.”

That means: “If you possess knowledge of taʾwīl, tell me its meaning.”

This was a question of examination on his part, not a question for the sake of acquiring knowledge. He wanted to demonstrate their incapacity so that the explanation might come through Joseph, whose affair they had rejected.

This was because he wanted to release his Call and desired to enter into his affair.

They said:

“A confused collection of dreams, and we have no knowledge of the interpretation of dreams.”

They meant: “This is confused speech, and we do not know its interpretation or meaning.”

The one of the two men who had been saved—that is, one of the two men connected to Joseph—remembered after a period:

“I shall inform you of its interpretation, so send me forth.”

That is: “Send me to Joseph.”

The king therefore sent him in their presence to Joseph and commanded Joseph to explain what he possessed and to make his speech concerning it public.

He said:

“O truthful one, give us your interpretation of seven fat cows eaten by seven lean ones, and seven green ears of grain and others dry, that I may return to the people so that perhaps they will know.”

He said:

“You shall cultivate for seven years continuously; whatever you harvest, leave it in its ears.”

The messenger returned to him with his answer.

That means: the reason for these numbered **hudūd** is that the seven **nāṭiqs** established their seven **asas** so that they might sow wisdom in the hearts of their **mustajībūn** during their cycles.

Whatever they harvested—that is, whatever fruit they obtained—they retained in its place and did not scatter it, so that they might live by it with eternal life.

“Except a little of what you eat.”

That means whatever knowledge the **asas** possessed in excess of the Imams was not transferred to them.

“Then after that will come seven difficult years.”

That means the Imams between every two nāṭiqs.

“They will consume what you have stored for them,”

meaning that this knowledge will come to them, and they will give it to their **hujjas**,

“except a little of what you preserve.”

That is, whatever knowledge the Imams possessed in excess of the hujjas would not reach them.

Thus he informed them of the cycles of the **nāṭiqs**, the cycles of the Imams, how they revolve, and how knowledge is transmitted among them.

“Then after that will come a year in which the people will be given rain and in which they will press.”

That means that after these cycles comes the **Qaʾim of the Age, the awaited one**, who will press every tradition so as to extract whatever subtle meanings and true knowledge it contains, just as grapes, olives, and other seeds are pressed, their pure substance being taken and their dregs discarded.

Joseph disclosed this to the messenger, who was the one associated with wine whom he had promised to establish in this rank. He released him and authorized him to give *mufātaḥa*.

He went to the king and his companions and informed them of it. They heard from him what had never occurred to their hearts.

The king sent for Joseph to come to him and give him *mufātaḥa*, after first making his status known among his intimate associates and informing them of his excellence, so that they would not object to him as they had objected to his companion previously.

Joseph therefore said to the messenger:

“Return to your lord and ask him what was the affair of the women who cut their hands. Indeed, my Lord knows their scheme.”

He, peace be upon him, wanted the king to establish his affair among them and to produce the proof against them, so that afterward they would have no argument against him.

The messenger returned to them and to the king. The king questioned them concerning what they had seen from him.

He said:

“What was your affair when you sought to seduce Joseph concerning himself?”

They said:

“God forbid! We know no evil of him.”

The **hujja of the king**, meaning his chief associate whom the king had now placed Joseph with, said:

“Now the truth has become manifest. I sought to seduce him concerning himself, and indeed he is among the truthful.”

That is: “I say this so that he may know that I did not betray him in his absence, and that God does not guide the scheme of the treacherous.”

“Yet I do not absolve myself. Indeed, the soul is surely commanding to evil, except whom my Lord has mercy upon. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful.”

The king said:

“Bring him to me; I shall select him for myself.”

That is: “I shall prepare him to save me and surrender all my affairs to him.”

They did so.

He said to him:

“Indeed, today you are established and trusted with us.”

He said:

“Place me over the treasuries of the land; indeed, I am a knowing guardian.”

That is: after Joseph had made an agreement with the king and taken a pledge from him, Joseph said to him:

“Remain as you are in your kingdom and your outward authority, while I shall be over the treasuries of the land”—meaning the rank of **asās** for which Jacob had prepared him and in which he had established him. “I shall spread the Call, establish its boundaries, and command that people be called to it.”

The king did so.

Joseph established his **lāḥiqs** in the islands, and his Call spread.

His news reached his father concerning what had been opened to him and what had come to him.

This is God’s saying:

“And thus We established Joseph in the land, so that he might settle therein wherever he wished.”

That means He established him in the rank of **asās**, allowing him to settle himself therein wherever he desired, with that matter made broad for him and nothing of it forbidden to him.

Joseph’s Call became active, connected, mighty, and manifest through the manifestation of the king’s authority and sovereignty when it came to Joseph.

The Call of Jacob weakened, and his **lāḥiqs**, who had done to Joseph what they had done, were cut off from wisdom. The **mustajībūn** who had followed them rejected them, and they became part of the common mass of the people.

People came from every direction to Joseph, peace be upon him, seeking to learn from him.

The brothers of Joseph came among those who came to him, wishing to learn what he possessed and benefit from him, since reports had reached them of the spreading of wisdom and eloquence of speech that they did not possess.

They did not suspect that he was their own brother.

This is God's saying:

"And the brothers of Joseph came and entered upon him, and he recognized them, while they did not recognize him."

That means: he recognized their rank, while they did not recognize his rank or what he had attained of **taʾyīd** and wisdom.

He refrained from identifying himself to them.

When he furnished them with their provision—that is, when he gave them some of what he ought to give them—his brother, whom Jacob had prepared to connect with him, was not among them.

He therefore asked them about their circumstances until they told him that they had a brother from their father.

He said:

"Bring to me a brother of yours from your father. Do you not see that I give full measure and that I am the best of hosts? But if you do not bring him to me, there shall be no measure for you with me, nor shall you approach me."

That means: "If you do not bring him to me, I shall not give you *mufātaḥa*, nor shall you obtain anything of wisdom from me."

They said:

"We shall seek to persuade his father concerning him, and indeed we shall do so."

And he said to his young men—that is, his **dāʿīs**:

"Place their merchandise in their saddlebags, perhaps they will recognize it when they return to their people, perhaps they will come back."

That means: answer them in their questions so that they may know your answer. Perhaps when they return to their companions they will come to recognize the reality of the truth, and this may become what calls them to return.

When they returned to their father—that is, when they returned to Jacob—they informed him of what had happened and said:

“O our father, the measure has been withheld from us.”

That is: “We were given none of the wisdom, and we were prevented from *mufātaḥa*.”

“So send our brother with us, that we may receive our measure, and indeed we shall guard him.”

That is: “Let us obtain *mufātaḥa* and benefit through him, for this is what has been said to us.”

He said:

“Shall I trust you with him except as I trusted you with his brother before? Yet God is the best guardian, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.”

When they opened their provisions—that is, when they discussed the questions that had arisen for them—they found that their merchandise had been returned to them.

That is: they found that Joseph’s **dāʿīs** had answered them with a general answer.

They said:

“O our father, what more can we ask? Here is our merchandise returned to us. We shall provision our people, guard our brother so that nothing from the opponents reaches him like what reached Joseph before, and we shall obtain an additional measure of a camel.”

That is: knowledge of an Imam obtained through him.

“That is an easy measure.”

Meaning: what they possessed before this discourse was little compared with what he possessed.

He said:

“I will never send him with you until you give me a solemn pledge by God that you will surely bring him back to me, unless you are completely surrounded.”

When they had given him their pledge, he said:

“God is witness over what we say.”

And he said:

“O my sons, do not enter through one gate; enter through different gates.”

One interpretation is that he commanded them: “Do not approach a single **dāʿī** all together. Rather, disperse yourselves among the dāʿīs so that you may learn what each one possesses.”

Another interpretation is that he commanded them: “Do not ask about only one kind of knowledge. Rather, let each of you ask about a different kind.”

“Yet I cannot avail you against God in anything.”

That means: “Your affiliation with me does not entitle you to receive anything that is not due to you.”

End of Part Five.

The Sixth Part: The Ending of the Story of Joseph, the Story of Job, the Story of Shuʿayb, and the beginning of the Story of Moses.

When they entered from where their father had commanded them, it did not avail them against God in anything, except for a need in Jacob’s soul which he fulfilled. And indeed, he possessed knowledge of what We had taught him, but most people do not know.

He says: They found that what their father had told them was true: it did not avail them against God in anything. Thus, by their affiliation they were given only what was due to them of *mufātaḥa*.

And when they entered upon Joseph, he took his brother in to himself. He said, “Indeed, I am your brother, so do not grieve over what they used to do.”

That is, he drew him close to himself and brought him near, and disclosed to him what he ought to disclose to him of that with which he had been singled out, to the exclusion of them, from his *ḥadd*. He informed him that he had no cause to fear their plotting and envy, which had long been known from them toward him.

Then, when he had prepared their provisions for them—that is, when he had given them what they had earned of knowledge—he placed the drinking-cup in his brother’s saddlebag. That is, he placed in it what he had given him of the rank of the *daʿwa* and his share of *taʾyīd*, to the exclusion of them. He disclosed to him knowledge which he had not disclosed to them.

Then a crier called out, “O caravan, you are surely thieves!”

That is, one of the *dāʿīs* said to them: You have taken some of the wisdom that is not within your *ḥadd*, taking it where it was not proper for you to take it.

They said—and they turned toward them—“What is it that you are missing?”

They said, “We are missing the king’s drinking-cup.”

By the drinking-cup is meant the measure of wisdom which is given to people according to order and measure.

“And whoever brings it shall have a camel-load.”

That is, whoever comes into possession of it and acquires it according to his capacity, and brings it in its proper manner, shall have the station of an Imam’s load.

They said, “By God, you know that we did not come to cause corruption in the land, and we were not thieves.”

That is, we did not come to cause corruption in the *ḥadd* of interpretation, nor to steal from it something that had not been given to us. We are the children of Jacob; we came only to benefit from what has been given to us.

They said, “What shall be its recompense, if you are liars?”

They said, “Its recompense is that whoever is found with it in his saddlebag shall himself be its recompense.”

They mean: whoever is found to possess what has not been given to him, and extends his hand toward what does not belong to him and toward the *ḥadd* of another, shall have taken away from him what he possessed, both first and last. This is like the judgment concerning Adam, peace be upon him.

“Thus do We recompense the wrongdoers,” meaning those who put a matter in a place other than its proper place.

So he began with their vessels before the vessel of his brother.

He says: He began questioning them and examining them one by one before reaching his brother. They did not bring forth anything that would entitle them to a share of *taʾyīd*, nor did they answer except with what had been cast before them.

Then he questioned his brother, who answered with something that was not possessed by them and brought forth what entitled him to a share of *taʾyīd* beyond theirs.

This is what He says:

“Then he brought it out from his brother’s vessel.”

That is, the *word*.

“Thus We devised a plan for Joseph. He could not have taken his brother according to the king’s law, unless God willed it. We raise in degrees whom We will, and above every possessor of knowledge is one more knowing.”

He says: Thus We gave Joseph guidance toward conveying *taʾyīd* to his brother by means of gentleness, while he was under the authority of the king, so that he could bring him to himself and establish him in the station of the *muʾayyadūn*, by means of the gentleness that God permitted him to employ, through the *taʾyīd* with which He inspired him to do what he did.

They said, “If he steals, a brother of his stole before.”

They mean: if this one has transgressed into the *ḥadd* of another and taken what was not given to him, then his brother had done this before him: he stole from his father the *ḥadd* of another.

So Joseph kept it within himself and did not disclose it to them. He said, “You are in a worse position,” meaning in their false statement. “And God knows best what you describe.”

They said, “O exalted one”—that is, he who had been made exalted by what God, exalted is He, had bestowed upon him—“he has an aged father,” meaning he has reached in wisdom the rank of the Imams, and he possesses the sanctity of his grandfather.

“So take one of us in his place,” meaning take one of us into your protection in his place, according to the *ḥadd* of *mufātaḥa*, or establish him in whatever station you wish to establish him.

“Indeed, we see you as one of those who do good.”

He said, “God forbid that we should take anyone except him with whom we found our property.”

That is: refuge in God from taking someone to bear this matter except the one in whom God has placed its acceptance.

“Indeed, we would then be wrongdoers.”

That is, if we did that, we would have placed the matter in a place other than its proper place.

When they despaired of him, they withdrew to confer privately.

He says: They separated themselves and began speaking privately among themselves.

Their eldest—meaning the most knowledgeable among them, and he was the one who had advised them at first not to kill Joseph—said:

“Do you not know that your father took a solemn covenant from you before God?”

That is, he had taken their guarantee that they would bring him back.

“And before this you failed concerning Joseph.”

That is, he reminded them of what had previously happened in their affair concerning him.

“So I will not leave the land,” meaning I will remain where I am established, by myself, until my father gives me permission—

meaning my *walī al-amr*, the one entrusted with my affair—

“or God judges for me,” meaning according to what He wills. “And He is the best of judges.”

“Return to your father and say, ‘O our father, your son has stolen,’”

meaning he took from beyond his *ḥadd*, extended his hand to what exceeded it, and was detained because of his deed.

“And we bore witness only to what we knew.”

That is, this is what became apparent to us and what we came to know.

“And we were not guardians of the unseen.”

That is, there was something in this matter whose reality was concealed from us; we neither preserved it nor knew it.

“And ask the town in which we were,”

meaning the people of the *daʿwa* among whom we were,

“and the caravan with which we came,”

meaning the caravan, those who differed in the outward aspect.

So ask about this both the one who agrees and the one who disagrees. It is a matter whose appearance has become manifest and well known; the near and the distant know of it, and we are truthful.

They did what he had directed them to do and said this to Jacob, but he did not accept it from them.

Rather, he said, “No! Your souls have made a matter seem fair to you.”

That is, your souls have spoken to you about it in a way that is not so in reality.

“So patience is beautiful. Perhaps God will bring them all to me.”

That is, He will bring them both to a degree in *taʾyīd* that He reaches them with. “Indeed, He is the Knowing, the Wise.”

And he turned away from them—that is, he cut them off from his affair—and said, “Alas, my grief for Joseph!”

That is, my grief for him, if what has been cut off from me is not something by which I may be connected with him.

And his eyes became white from grief, while he was restraining his sorrow.

That is, what had been connected to him from the substance of the two foundations had become cut off from him, and that matter had passed to Joseph.

They said, “By God, you will not cease remembering Joseph until you become consumed or become one of those who perish.”

That is, you will not cease remembering Joseph until you lose what you possess. So abandon mention of him and attend to your own affair.

He said, “I only complain of my suffering and my grief to God.”

That is, I say this only between myself and God; I do not mention it to anyone beneath Him.

“And I know from God what you do not know.”

That is, I know that, through His preserving the matter for him, if He has cut him off from me, He has not removed him from Joseph, nor has He turned him away from him.

“O my sons, go and investigate concerning Joseph and his brother, and do not despair of the relief of God. Indeed, none despairs of the relief of God except the unbelieving people.”

He says: Investigate where the Imamate has settled between the two of them, and to whom the *bābiyya* has passed. And do not despair of the relief of God—that is, of the benefits of His mercy. For absolute despair of that is unbelief. But whenever despair enters you, hope for relief.

This is also from the saying of God, exalted is He:

“Until, when the messengers despaired and thought that they had been denied, Our help came to them.”

The messengers did not despair of the benefits of God’s mercy; rather, despair entered them concerning the people.

So when they entered upon him—that is, upon Joseph, according to his speech—they said:

“O exalted one, adversity has touched us and our family,”

meaning deficiency in benefits,

“and we have brought a meager commodity,”

meaning weak questions that do not lead us to the knowledge of what we hope for of the knowledge of reality.

“So complete the measure for us and be charitable to us. Indeed, God rewards those who are charitable.”

That is, bestow upon us, from your side, some of the benefits which perhaps we are incapable of asking about, and toward which our understanding does not reach.

He said, “Do you know what you did with Joseph and his brother when you were ignorant?”

He says: Have you considered what occurred from you concerning the Imam and his *bāb*, and that you committed what you did because of your ignorance of their rank?

They said, “Are you indeed Joseph?”

That is, are you the Imam?

He said, “I am Joseph, and this is my brother.”

And he disclosed to them the *ḥadd* of his brother in the Imamate and the *ḥadd* of his brother in *bābiyya*, and that he was his first of the *lāḥiqs*.

“God has indeed been gracious to us.”

Meaning through these two *ḥudūd*.

“Indeed, whoever is mindful of God and is patient, God does not allow the reward of those who do good to be lost.”

Meaning: whoever guards himself against entering into the *ḥadd* of another, and is patient with that, and does not allow his soul to aspire to what lies above it, God does not cause that to be lost for him with his Lord.

They said, “By God, God has indeed preferred you over us, though we were surely at fault.”

That is, He preferred you with the Imamate over us, while we had indeed erred in what we intended by removing you from your place.

He said, “There is no reproach upon you today. God will forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.”

That is, He will erase and conceal this from you.

“Take this shirt of mine and cast it over my father’s face; he will become seeing. And bring me all your family.”

Go with the *ḥadd* of the Imamate with which God has clothed me, and cast it upon my father’s face.

That is, disclose it to him, for *taʾyīd* will then become connected to him, and he will see what had previously become hidden from him.

“And bring me all your family.”

That is, bring all the people of your *daʿwa* back to me.

So they returned to him.

And when the caravan departed, their father said, “Indeed, I sense the fragrance of Joseph, if you do not think me senile.”

He says: When they came to him and had separated from their benefits, Jacob sensed *taʾyīd* from the direction of Joseph.

They said, “By God, you are indeed in your old error.”

Meaning what he had been upon before anything of the affair of God, exalted is He, became connected to him.

Then, when the bearer of good news came—that is, the imagination connected to him, which he knew—and cast it over his face, he regained his sight.

That is, he became *muʾayyad* as he had been.

He said, “Did I not tell you that I know from God what you do not know?”

They said, “O our father, ask forgiveness for our sins; indeed, we were at fault.”

He said, “I shall ask my Lord to forgive you. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”

They asked him for concealment and entry into the matter, and he promised to ask that for them.

Then, when they entered upon Joseph—that is, they entered into his *walāya*—he took his parents in to himself, meaning he disclosed to them their *ḥadd*.

He said, “Enter Egypt, if God wills, in safety,”

meaning safe, God willing, from falling away from it.

And he raised his parents upon the throne.

That is, his parents, those who had undertaken his *daʿwa*, and he gave them a share of the rank with which he had been singled out.

And they fell before him in prostration.

That is, they submitted by acknowledging what God had given him of the *ḥadd* of *taʾyīd*, and they accepted from him what he brought.

He said, “O my father, this is the interpretation of my vision before. My Lord has made it true. And He was good to me when He brought me out of prison,”

meaning from the *ḥadd* of deprivation—that is, from what you had initially entered me into—

“after Satan had stirred up matters between me and my brothers.”

That is, what had previously occurred between me and them.

The Story of Job

God mentioned him in His Book, saying:

“And remember Our servant Job, when he called upon his Lord: ‘Indeed, Satan has touched me with hardship and suffering.’”

By “Satan” is meant his opponent in his time, among the Pharaohs who had gained dominance. He had weakened him, overpowered him, and attracted the people of his *daʿwa* toward himself, so they inclined away from him toward the other. He drove him from his place and diminished him in the eyes of the people.

This is what God, exalted is He, says:

“And Job, when he called upon his Lord: ‘Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.’”

And in the report it is said that Satan was given power over him, so he killed all his children, took away all his blessings and everything he possessed of livestock and wealth, and then afflicted his body, so that it became weak and worms spread through it. He was cast upon a refuse heap, and no one approached him except his wife.

The interpretation of Satan is his opponent in his time. The killing of his children means that he turned the people of his *daʿwa* away from him toward the falsehood upon which that opponent stood.

The interpretation of the corruption of his body is the corruption of the outward aspect of his *daʿwa*.

The worms are their likeness: those who had responded to him and then turned away from him. They eat from his flesh—that is, they acquire from his knowledge—yet they are not of his kind and are not upon his form.

And in the report it is said that he would return whatever fell from the worms upon his body to them, saying, “Eat of the provision with which God has provided you.”

Its interpretation is that he would give them some of the knowledge, hoping that they might benefit from it, and he would return to himself those who had been torn away from him, even though they were not upon the path of uprightness.

His wife, who remained patient with him and stayed with him, is the possessor of his secret and his *hujja*.

The adversity that afflicted him is the inability to conduct the *daʿwa* and establish the *lāḥiqs* and *dāʿīs*.

The refuse heap is the outward aspect of a preceding *sharīʿa* attributed to him. Because of this, no seeker approached him, no *mustajīb* came near him, no desirous person turned toward him, and he was unable to establish anything of the affair of his *daʿwa*, because his opponent had overpowered him and brought him down from his station.

That was the great trial.

When God answered his prayer, He supported him with knowledge of reality, through a substance with which He supplied him. This is His saying:

“Strike with your foot. This is a cool bath and a drink.”

That is: hasten to establish one of your *ḥudūd* for the dissemination of this knowledge, for it washes away every impurity of ignorance that had been added to the outward aspect of your *daʿwa*.

So he did this, and the people of his *daʿwa* turned toward him, and others hastened to him.

This is His saying, exalted is He:

“And We granted him his family and the like of them along with them, as a mercy from Us and a reminder for those possessed of understanding.”

Thus God relieved him, manifested him over his enemy, and his *daʿwa* became upright.

And it is also related in the report that he bathed in water and his body was healed, and that God returned to him his family, children, livestock, and animals after they had died.

But their interpretation is that they were the people of his *daʿwa*: they returned to him, and his *daʿwa* became sound for him.

It is also related in the report that he had taken offense at his wife over some matter and swore that he would strike her a certain number of times. When the affliction had been removed from him and he recognized the goodness of her remaining with him, he regretted this.

God, exalted is He, said:

“Take in your hand a bundle and strike with it, and do not break your oath.”

Its interpretation is that he had discovered that his *bāb* had done something to him concerning something that had entered into him of deficiency. He therefore swore that he would remove him.

When God relieved him, he regretted what had preceded from his oath, out of his concern for his *bāb* and because of his patience with him, and he repented to Him of what he had done.

He was therefore told: Gather your *lāḥiqs*, and break this one upon whom you swore, by lowering him to one beneath her, or by cutting off something from him that was above him. In this way you will have lowered him without breaking your oath, while retaining him in the degree of the *lāḥiqs*. You have not cast him down for an established offense against him; rather, he turned away from it and repented to you of it.

A *ḍighth* is a collection of something, such as branches of vegetation gathered together. This is like his gathering of the *lāḥiqs*.

“Indeed, We found him patient.”

That is, his *bāb*, with whom he had taken the offense he had taken, meaning his patience with him.

“And an excellent servant! Indeed, he was ever turning back.”

That is, he returned to what pleased God and did not persist in what displeased Him. This was what came from him of turning in repentance and penitence concerning what had occurred.

The Story of Shuʿayb

He was the last of the Imams of the cycle of Abraham, and through him Moses was connected. He was the one who completed his *lāḥiqs*, whereas he had previously been unable to do so. We shall mention this in its proper place when we discuss Moses.

Shuʿayb was an appointed Imam in Midian. One of his *dāʿīs* was calling to him. He called Moses in Egypt and sent him to him after what had occurred to him; we shall mention this in its proper place, God willing.

Among what God mentioned concerning Shuʿayb is His saying:

“And to Midian, their brother Shuʿayb.”

Meaning their brother by physical birth, and brotherhood in religion, as we explained in the story of Hud, peace be upon him, and Ṣāliḥ, peace be upon him.

God only described in this way those who were Imams in the cycles of the messengers, attributing them to the fatherhood of that prophet, according to what we previously explained in the story of Hud and Ṣāliḥ, peace be upon them.

He said:

“O my people, worship God; you have no god other than Him.”

This is the call of all the *nāṭiqs* to the outward aspect through *taqlīd*.

“There has come to you a clear proof from your Lord.”

By “the clear proof” is meant himself and his Imams.

“So give full measure and weight.”

Its inward meaning is to undertake what the *nāṭiq* requires concerning the *ḥadd* of the outward, for this is the scale of God by which the deeds of created beings are weighed.

“Then, after accepting his outward aspect, accept the *walāya* of his appointed *bāb*, established for the interpretation of his outward aspect.”

For he is the measure of God by which wisdom is measured out to creation.

“And do not deprive people of their things.”

He says: Do not reject the command of God that has come to you, thereby depriving people of their share of it through your rejection of it.

“And do not cause corruption in the earth after it has been set right.”

He says: Do not corrupt the *ḥadd of the asās* which the *nāṭiq* established for the interpretation of his *sharīʿa*.

Its outward is forbidden just as its inward is forbidden: namely, deficiency in measure and weight, and corruption in the earth.

“And do not sit at every path, threatening.”

The *ṣirāṭ* in the language is the road, and so it is in interpretation: it is the path of religion.

Its beginning and origin, toward which one directs oneself, is the *nāṭiq*. God commanded the servants to accept his *ḥadd* first, which is the outward, and to practice it. Then they proceed along it toward the *ḥadd of the asās*, which is the inward and the interpretation, and arrive at it.

For the inward interpretation exists only on account of the outward. Therefore, interpretation should not precede the outward, because the interpreter interprets, explains, and expounds what has already preceded of the outward.

Among this is the saying of God, exalted is He:

“It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night precede the day.”

The sun is the likeness of the Imam, and the moon is the likeness of the *hujja*. Thus the Imam is the one who precedes, and likewise the *nāṭiq*. The *asās* follows and reaches the *nāṭiq*, and likewise the *hujja* follows and reaches the Imam; it is not that the Imam follows the *hujja*, nor that the *nāṭiq* follows the *asās*.

The likeness of the day is the outward, because things appear within it. It is the *ḥadd of the sun*, and through its rising comes the day, just as the outward is the *ḥadd of the Imam* and the *ḥadd of the nāṭiq*.

The night is the likeness of the inward, because things are concealed within it. It is the *ḥadd of the hujja* and the *asās*.

The *ḥujaj* are like stages along the road. Thus this is the likeness of the *ṣirāṭ* in the inward. Its origin is the *nāṭiq* in his age, the Imam in his time, and the *lāḥiqs* are its boundaries and stages.

Likewise is the road to the Sacred House.

We previously explained that its likeness is the Imam, the pilgrim is the likeness of the *mustajībūn*, and its house is the likeness of his *dāʿī*, to whom he comes for refuge and with whom he settles, just as a house is where one takes refuge, settles, is sheltered, and finds protection.

When he wishes to rise to knowledge of the *ḥadd of the Imam* and attain the rank of the reformers, he must take the road from his house—that is, from his *dāʿī*.

This is like the dāʿī raising him through the *ḥudūd of knowledge*, by means of the *lāḥiqs* and the signs that have been made for them as witnesses and landmarks.

He continues moving from one stage to another while remaining upon the road, until he reaches the Sacred House, which is the *ḥadd of the Imam*.

When he reaches it, recognizes it, learns its *ḥudūd*, circumambulates it, completes its rites, and fulfills its obligations, he returns to his house along the road, remaining attached to it.

That is, he returns to his *dāʿī* and takes refuge with him.

If, while traveling, he deviates from the road or from one of its stages, he misses the Sacred House and does not reach it.

Likewise, if he deviates from the road or one of its stages while returning, he misses his house, has no place of refuge, and is separated from his family.

This is likewise the case for one who turns away from the truth: he separates from the believers and becomes cut off from the Imam, his *lāḥiqs*, and his *dāʿīs*.

This, then, is the likeness of the straight path concerning which God commanded His servants to ask Him for guidance.

Its likeness in the inward is as follows:

The people of Shuʿayb used to prevent people from his *dāʿīs* and *lāḥiqs* and from those who sought to approach him. They threatened them and frightened them because of this.

This is His saying:

“And do not sit at every path, threatening, and turning away from the path of God those who believe in Him, and seeking to make it crooked.”

That is, you seek to distort this path by turning those who travel upon it away from its *ḥudūd* and from remaining upright upon it until they reach its intended end.

The *ṣirāṭ*, in its complete form and origin, comes from above, and its terminus is the first of the upper *ḥudūd*. We have also previously mentioned them, up to their connection with the Messenger, then with the *asās*, then with the Imam after him, then with his *bāb*, then with his *lāḥiqs*, then with his *dāʿīs*, then with those *maʾdhūnūn* who are appointed to address the *mustajībūn*.

The *mustajīb* rises through it by knowledge of these *ḥudūd*. Likewise, each *ḥadd* is reached from the one above it.

Each of these *ḥudūd* is a *ḥadd of the ṣirāṭ*. The one above it is like the road between two stages. The road is one, while its stages and *ḥudūd* are many.

The traveler upon it descends into these stages, takes refuge in them, settles in them, and rests in them. He obtains from them food and drink by which he lives and through which he gains the strength to continue his journey.

Likewise, the seeker in these *ḥudūd* obtains knowledge and wisdom by which his soul is given life and strengthened until he reaches his ultimate goal, where he finds everlasting, eternal life.

A close likeness from what is intelligible is that of a traveler and what he finds at the watering places, from which he obtains provisions for the remainder of his night's stay at that watering place and for the distance between it and the next watering place.

He continues in this manner until he reaches the place where he is to settle, the place toward which he was traveling. There he has provisions for as long as he remains there.

There are many proofs and indications for this. We have confined ourselves to those required by the *ḥadd* of interpretation that we have explained.

We have spoken at some length about the *ṣirāṭ* because it is fitting to mention it, given that God has made asking for it obligatory in every *rakʿa* of prayer, every day and night, and at every opening of a recitation in which the Opening of the Book is recited:

"Guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not those who have incurred wrath, nor those who have gone astray."

He excluded them from having a *ṣirāṭ* that they seek other than their Imam of the Age.

Even though they may sometimes travel among its stages and stop at them—as some people of ignorance and misguidance may sometimes incline toward some of the *ḥudūd* of the Friends of God, ask them about some of the outward aspects of their religion, and receive from them, and from the Friends of God, just as they received from ʿAlī and from his descendants after him, up to Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, and from those after them—

they do not believe in their Imamate, nor do they seek them for that reason, nor do they know their merit.

Their likeness in this is like that of someone who travels to Mecca while belonging to another religion, or someone who does not intend pilgrimage but seeks worldly gain through commerce and other things. He travels the road, stops at the watering places, takes shelter there, eats and drinks there, but his purpose is not to make pilgrimage to the Sacred House, nor does its merit—or the merit of its road and watering places—occur to him.

God did not decree that for him, according to His saying, without partner:

"And We placed between them and the towns which We had blessed towns that were visible, and We measured the journey between them: 'Travel through them by nights and days in safety.'"

We now return to what God mentioned concerning Shuʿayb's words to his people, following what we have previously mentioned, and explain it through interpretation.

This is His saying:

“And remember when you were few and He made you many.”

He says this to those among them who believed in him and then turned to hypocrisy against him.

“Remember when you were few at the beginning of your affair, and God made you many by causing people to respond to what you were upon. But today, when you have become numerous and God has favored you with strength and abundance, you have changed and opposed.”

“And look at how was the end of those who caused corruption.”

Meaning those who corrupted matters against the messengers and Imams, just as you have corrupted them, and what punishment God brought upon them.

“And if a group among you believed in what I was sent with, while another group did not believe, then be patient until God judges between us; and He is the best of judges.”

He says: If those among your community who have not believed have rejected what you entered into, then you should remain patient until God judges between us with His judgment, just as He judged those who came before us. Do not turn back to them, retreating upon your heels.

The chiefs who arrogantly exalted themselves among his people said—

meaning the leading figures among the people of Abraham’s *daʿwa*, who assumed leadership among them and attributed knowledge to themselves:

“We will surely expel you, O Shuʿayb, and those who believe with you, from our town.”

Meaning from this *daʿwa* upon which we have gathered.

“Or you must return to our religion.”

That is, you must return to what we are upon: pure outwardness without interpretation.

He said, “Even if we are unwilling?”

That is, even though we dislike returning to it?

“We would have fabricated a lie against God if we returned to your religion after God had saved us from it.”

That is, we would have lied against God if we rejected interpretation and denied it.

“And it is not for us to return unless God, our Lord, wills.”

“Our Lord encompasses all things in knowledge.”

“Upon God we rely.”

That is, it is not for us to return to pure outwardness and abandon interpretation unless God wills to establish for the corruptors an outward aspect with which they begin. He knows best whom that is appropriate for.

“Our Lord, decide between us and our people in truth, and You are the best of those who decide.”

That is: judge between us and them with the truth from You, and You are the best of those who open judgment.

Among this is His saying:

“They said, ‘O Shuʿayb, we do not understand much of what you say, and indeed we see you as weak among us.’”

This refers to those who heard about interpretation among those who had responded to his *daʿwa* and then opposed him.

They said: Your speech that your *dāʿīs* have brought to us from you concerning interpretation is strange speech; we do not understand it.

“And indeed we see you as weak among us.”

That is, weak in proof.

“And if not for your clan, we would have stoned you.”

That is, if it were not for those among us who have remained upon your affair and responded to you from among the people of your *daʿwa*, we would have attacked you with vile speech and broken down your argument.

But if we did that to you, we would have said the same thing about them as we say about you. Yet they are from among us, and so we would separate ourselves, contend with one another, and divide, and we would not know what would come of it between us.

“You are not dear to us.”

But those who are dear to us are those among us who have remained upon your affair.

He said:

“O my people, is my clan more honored by you than God? And have you taken Him behind your backs? Indeed, my Lord encompasses all that you do.”

Meaning: Are these people more honored by you than God? For you have spoken concerning them what you might speak concerning me, while you have denied His signs and His Friends.

“And O my people, work according to your position; indeed, I am working.”

That is: work according to your *ḥadd* of the outward, while I work according to my *ḥadd* of it and of its interpretation, through the one whom I have established for it.

“Soon you will know who will receive a punishment that disgraces him, and who is the liar. And watch; indeed, I am watching with you.”

And in another place He said:

“And a lasting punishment will descend upon him.”

Then God, exalted is He, said:

“And when Our command came, We saved Shuʿayb and those who believed with him by a mercy from Us, and the blast seized those who did wrong, and they became lying prostrate in their homes, as though they had never lived there. Away with Midian, just as Thamud was sent away.”

And in another place He said:

“So the earthquake seized them, and they became lying prostrate in their homes.”

And in another place:

“So the punishment of the day of the shadow seized them. Indeed, it was the punishment of a tremendous day.”

The *blast* is the striking of the *hujja* against them with the proofs of interpretation.

The *earthquake* is the shaking of their hearts through those proofs and their being cut off from any proof they might find against him.

This occurred when God intended their destruction.

The Master of the Age presented the proof against them so that they would leave this world tormented by the punishment of the *hujja*, overcome by proof, and destroyed by the punishment of the outward.

Then the punishment of God came upon them and destroyed them all, as God mentioned: an outward and inward destruction, just as He had destroyed those before them.

That was the complete and perfect destruction.

The Story of Moses, Son of Amram, Peace Be Upon Him

When the cycle of Abraham came to an end, and Shuʿayb was its final Imam, God, exalted is He, desired the emergence of a *nāṭiq*, as had already been established in the ordering of His wisdom. He was Moses.

He was among the descendants of the Children of Israel who had gone with Jacob to Joseph in Egypt, having departed from Syria, and had settled there. Moses was born and raised there.

The Copts were its rulers at that time, and Pharaoh, Moses' Pharaoh, was the one who held authority over it.

Shuʿayb, peace be upon him, had a *dāʿī* there who secretly called to what he was upon, out of fear that Pharaoh might become aware of it in his kingdom, and because of the weakness of Shuʿayb's affair that we have previously mentioned.

God, exalted is He, therefore desired to manifest the affair of Moses, support him with His Word, send him with the sword, and have him confront Pharaoh of Egypt through exposition and manifestation, breaking what Pharaoh had adopted for himself and calling him to the religion of God for which Moses had been sent.

Wisdom and the time required the station, *taʾyīd*, and power for this, because he was the middle one among the sent *nāṭiqs*.

Three of them were before him: Adam, Noah, and Abraham, whose stories we have mentioned.

And three were after him: Jesus, Muhammad, and the Qaʾim of the Resurrection, from his descendants. We shall mention their affairs later.

Moses was in the middle of them, and the middle of everything is stronger than its two ends.

Moses therefore became connected with the *dāʿī* of the island of Egypt, who was under the authority of Pharaoh's rule and concealed his faith, as God, exalted is He, said when describing him.

Outwardly, he had marked himself as following what Pharaoh followed, out of fear and *taqiyya*.

The time was one of constraint and hardship for the believers.

When Pharaoh perceived this, he claimed the affair for himself, established the *daʿwa* in his own name, attracted people toward himself, and turned the *dāʿīs* toward his own institution.

This was what we mentioned in the story of Shuʿayb: most of the people of his *daʿwa* turned away from him because Pharaoh attracted them through what he and those who called to him offered of worldly matters, through inducement and intimidation.

Only a few believers remained upon the truth.

Shuʿayb concealed himself in Midian, in the land of the Hijaz, and *taʾyīd* was cut off from him.

This is what is related in the report that he became blind.

When Pharaoh's affair reached the state that it reached, most of those who remained upon the religion in Egypt were the Children of Israel.

Among them were *dāʿīs* to Shuʿayb who were known.

Pharaoh summoned them to himself and ordered them to redirect the *daʿwa* toward him.

Shuʿayb outwardly declared his disavowal of this, as a matter of *taqiyya*, and they responded to him.

Shuʿayb permitted them to do this as a matter of *taqiyya*.

Thus those among them who were concealed called outwardly to Pharaoh. But whenever they saw one of the *mustajībūn* after another who possessed the strength to accept, they confirmed him upon the true *daʿwa*.

Whenever word of this reached Pharaoh and something of his affair became apparent to him, he killed him.

This is what God, exalted is He, says:

"And he kills their sons and lets their women live."

The sons are the likeness of the *mustajībūn*, while the women are the likeness of the *dāʿīs* who outwardly manifested toward him the acceptance they manifested and called toward him.

The sixth part of the Book of the Foundation of Interpretation is complete.

And praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds, and may God bless Muhammad, His Prophet, and all his Ahl al-Bayt.

The Seventh Part: The Story of Moses

Moses was among those who responded to one of Shuʿayb's *dāʿīs* who was in Egypt under Pharaoh's authority, outwardly proclaiming the *daʿwa* to him.

When that *dāʿī* saw in Moses the acceptance and strength that he saw, he disclosed to him the affair of Shuʿayb and the affair of those before him, and what had occurred in the cycles of the prophets, and how prophethood had passed among them. He also disclosed to him, from wisdom, what was required of him in his *ḥadd*.

All of this he received by instruction from him and accepted from him.

When that *dāʿī* saw from him what he saw, he informed the Master of the Age of his affair and consulted him concerning raising him to the rank of *bulūgh*—full attainment—and described his condition to him.

The Master of the Age became uncertain about his affair and feared for him from his enemy. So God revealed to him that he should command that *dāʿī* to raise and nurture him and to elevate him to the *ḥadd of taʾyīd*, and that God would support him with His Word and send him as a messenger to His creation.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

“And We inspired the mother of Moses: ‘Nurse him; and when you fear for him, cast him into the river. Do not fear and do not grieve. Indeed, We shall return him to you and make him one of the messengers.’”

The “mother of Moses” here, in the inward interpretation, is the *dāʿī* who called him. The inspiration was to the Master of the Age, instructing him to command that *dāʿī* concerning him. The inspiration is therefore attributed to her because the command became connected to him through her.

And in another place He says:

“And when We inspired your mother with what was to be inspired: ‘Cast him into the ark.’”

The ark encompasses what is within it, and this has an explanation: it is the *ḥadd of taʾyīd*.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

“And their prophet said to them, ‘Indeed, the sign of his kingship is that the ark will come to you, containing tranquility from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron left behind, carried by the angels. Indeed, in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.’”

“Cast him into the river, and let the river cast him upon the shore; an enemy of Mine and an enemy of his shall take him.”

That is: take from him the covenant of prophethood, then release him into the outward so that he may debate and act within it. For he will cast him toward the *ḥudūd* at the extremities of the outward.

“An enemy of Mine and an enemy of his shall take him.”

That is, some enemy of the religion will take him for himself.

Shuʿayb conveyed this to that *dāʿī*, who carried it out with Moses. He permitted him to speak concerning the outward affair of Pharaoh, to refute those whom he found strong in their religious commitment, and to direct them toward it.

That *dāʿī* conveyed this to him and released him as a *maʾdhūn*, permitting him to refute Pharaoh. He granted him permission to manifest the affair of Pharaoh by way of *taqiyya*, according to the condition in which he was.

Whenever he debated or refuted someone whom he saw as suitable for acceptance, he would disclose to him one thing after another. Once his affair had become firmly established and he saw him prepared for acceptance, he would direct him toward it so that he might take the covenant from him.

Thus Moses entered the rank of the *maʾdhūnūn*, and he was given glad tidings of the *ḥadd of taʾyīd*.

He began practicing the *ḥadd* of the *maʾdhūnūn*: outwardly proclaiming the affair of Pharaoh and debating on its behalf. Whenever he encountered someone whom he found receptive and strong in certainty, he would refute him, then disclose the matter to him.

When he saw that the person had become strong, he would disclose one thing after another to him until his affair was firmly established. Then he would raise him to his *dāʿī*, the one who had released him as a *maʾdhūn*, so that the *dāʿī* might take the covenant from him, just as the *maʾdhūnūn* did.

He eventually reached some of the *ḥudūd* who were at the extremities of the outward, among whom the affair of Pharaoh had become firmly established, though he did not know them.

He refuted one of them, and he came at him from the direction in which he found an opening. Moses disclosed to him some of what he possessed of knowledge, which had been taught to him by the one whom he had refuted.

That person informed against him to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh summoned him in order to kill him, as he used to kill those who were in a condition like his.

Pharaoh's *bāb* had already come to know him. He had spoken with him concerning what he outwardly manifested, had seen what pleased him, and had heard from his exposition what he admired.

So when Moses was brought before Pharaoh to be killed, the *bāb* intervened on his behalf. He informed Pharaoh of what he had observed in him and of his effectiveness in their affairs.

He said to him: If he is as they have described him, we should invite him to what we possess. He has strength and eloquence, so he could become one of us and part of our group.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

"And the family of Pharaoh picked him up, so that he would become for them an enemy and a grief."

This raises the question: How could they pick up something when they knew that it would become an enemy and a grief to them?

The common people say that "so that he would become for them" means that this eventually happened to them—that he became an enemy and a grief to them.

This is one of those interpretations which they accepted while altering it, letter by letter, when necessity compelled them toward its meaning.

"And Pharaoh and Haman and their armies were sinners."

That is, those who responded to him until they extracted what he possessed.

And His saying:

“And the wife of Pharaoh said, ‘A comfort of the eye for me and for you. Perhaps he will benefit us, or we may adopt him as a son,’ while they were unaware.”

Pharaoh accepted this proposal and ordered that Moses remain with him, and that he be called toward what Pharaoh followed and raised within it.

So he was brought to him.

Moses’ *dāʿī* learned of this and became distressed over his affair, fearing that Pharaoh’s *bāb* might influence him, disclose something of what he possessed, and attract him through worldly things.

So he sent a *maʾdhūn* who was like him, one who entered upon Pharaoh’s *bāb* and maintained contact with him, so that he might learn Moses’ condition and what he was upon.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

“And the heart of the mother of Moses became empty. She was about to disclose him, had We not strengthened her heart, so that she would be among the believers. And she said to his sister, ‘Follow him.’ So she watched him from a distance while they were unaware.”

Pharaoh’s *bāb* approached Moses, brought him near, singled him out, and repeatedly impressed upon him that Pharaoh was an Imam whose obedience was obligatory. He presented this to him through the embellishments of his speech and the deceptive appearances of his magic.

But God protected Moses from accepting it from him. No trace of acceptance appeared in him, although outwardly he accepted what Pharaoh’s *bāb* told him, responding to what he said.

He mentioned this to the *maʾdhūn* whom Moses’ *dāʿī* had sent to him to examine his condition.

This *maʾdhūn* was among the close associates of Pharaoh’s *hujja*, and he witnessed what took place between Pharaoh’s *bāb* and Moses.

For this reason the *dāʿī* had specifically chosen him: because of his position with Pharaoh’s *hujja* and his special relationship with him.

Pharaoh’s *bāb* secretly disclosed to him what he had observed in Moses and what had become apparent to him concerning his lack of acceptance.

That *maʾdhūn* said:

“He is a Hebrew, and you have *dāʿīs* among the Hebrews who are his family. Among them is so-and-so”—meaning the *dāʿī* whom he had sent—“and you know him, and you know the soundness of his belief in this matter.

If you direct Moses to him, it will be better for managing him and more appropriate for him, since he will speak to him in his own language and refute him from a position that Moses understands.

It will therefore be according to what you desire, and you will be relieved of the burden of raising him."

Pharaoh's *bāb* said to him, "You have spoken correctly, and you have made the right suggestion."

So he sent Moses with him to that *dāʿī*.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

"And We had forbidden him the nursing mothers before."

That is, we prevented him from benefiting from those who possessed knowledge of what preceded the *sharīʿa*.

Then his sister said—meaning the *maʾdhūn* who was in a condition like his, while their father in the inward sense was their *dāʿī*:

"Shall I direct you to a household who will care for him and are sincere toward him?"

"So We returned him to his mother, that her eye might be comforted and that she might not grieve."

Thus he returned to his *dāʿī*, and his affair increased in stature before him. He saw in him the acceptance and strength that pleased him.

He then released him as a *dāʿī*, after Pharaoh's *bāb* had learned that Moses had responded to him and that his affair had made a favorable impression upon him. Moses' *dāʿī* consulted him concerning releasing Moses into the *daʿwa*, and Pharaoh's *bāb* was pleased with this and gave him permission.

Moses therefore followed the way of the sincere, concealed *dāʿīs* of that age. He outwardly manifested the affair of Pharaoh and acceptance of him, and he called whoever came to him outwardly toward Pharaoh.

But whenever he perceived someone possessing firmness and strength, he called him to the true matter.

One day a group of the people of his *daʿwa* gathered with him. Among them were some to whom he had disclosed his affair, and others to whom he had disclosed only the outward aspect of what he followed.

He sat with them, and they debated among themselves and spoke in his presence.

One of those to whom he had disclosed some of what he possessed put forward an argument against a man to whom he had not disclosed his affair.

Moses saw that the man who followed Pharaoh had overcome his companion with an argument. Religious zeal seized Moses, so he produced a decisive argument against him and silenced him.

Then his judgment returned to him, and he regretted what he had done. He feared that his affair would eventually become manifest, just as it had become manifest at first, and he realized that he had transgressed by revealing this.

There were many in his assembly who followed Pharaoh's opinion.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

"And when he reached his full strength and attained maturity, We gave him judgment and knowledge. Thus do We reward the doers of good."

That is: when he reached the *ḥudūd* of the *daʿwa* and assumed them, and became established within them, We gave him judgment and knowledge when the one who raised him to that rank supported him with *taʾyīd*.

He was his *dāʿī*, and he was one of Shuʿayb's *nuqabāʾ*, the possessor of the island of Egypt, and the one who had authority to release the *dāʿīs*.

Then He said:

"And he entered the city at a time when its people were heedless."

That is, he entered his *daʿwa*, and most of those within it were heedless of what he was upon.

"He found therein two men fighting: one from his faction and one from his enemy."

The one from his faction appealed to him against the one from his enemy.

That is, he appealed to him when the opponent's argument had become binding upon him and sought his assistance.

"So Moses struck him and finished him."

That is, he produced a decisive argument against him that silenced him.

He said:

"This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is an enemy who clearly misleads."

That is, what he had done in making the matter manifest.

He said:

"My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me."

And He forgave him.

He said this when his judgment returned to him and he realized that he had manifested some of the wisdom which it was not yet proper for him to manifest, except at the time when its manifestation would become obligatory.

By his action he had placed himself in a position other than his proper one. He therefore acknowledged that he had wronged himself.

As we have previously stated, *ẓulm* in the language means placing a thing in a place other than its proper place.

His proper position had been to preserve the wisdom and conceal it from those who were not its people.

When he disclosed what he disclosed, he asked his Lord for forgiveness—that is, he asked Him to conceal him through His mercy.

This was his return to his teacher and his asking him to ask his Imam of the Age to seek forgiveness from God on his behalf.

Among this is the saying of God, exalted is He:

"If, when they had wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked God for forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found God Relenting, Merciful."

God therefore accepted the seeking of forgiveness only through the direction of His Friends.

And God forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

He said:

"My Lord, because of the favor You have bestowed upon me, I shall never be a supporter of the criminals."

By "my Lord" he meant his Imam of the Age, who had sought forgiveness for him.

He resolved upon migration to him and abandonment of what he had previously been doing in assisting Pharaoh and his people by outwardly proclaiming the *daʿwa* to them. After migrating to his Imam of the Age, he would devote himself entirely to proclaiming the *daʿwa* to him.

This was because he sensed within himself the strength to do so.

"So he became in the city fearful, watching."

Then the one whom he had assisted the previous day called out to him for help.

Moses said to him:

"Indeed, you are clearly misguided."

When he intended to strike the one who was the enemy of both of them, he says: From that day onward he became fearful because of what had happened the previous day.

He sat with the people of his *daʿwa*, and his companion of the previous day returned to debate another man. When his own confidence had grown, the other man overcame him.

Moses intended to produce an argument on his behalf.

The man who followed the outward affair of Pharaoh said to him:

"O Moses, do you intend to kill me as you killed a person yesterday? You only wish to become a tyrant in the land, and you do not wish to be among those who reform."

He says: Do you intend to argue against me on his behalf as you did with my companion yesterday, when you defeated him?

As we see it, you only want to rise above the proof of the king, acting tyrannically and overpowering the people of his *daʿwa*. We do not see you desiring anything but his reform.

They separated, and the report reached Pharaoh and his *hujja*. Pharaoh ordered that Moses be sought in order to kill him.

Then the *maʾdhūn* who had heard this, and who was with Pharaoh's *bāb*, came to warn him.

Moses fled and made his way secretly toward Shuʿayb in the Hijaz.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

"And a man came running from the farthest part of the city. He said, 'O Moses, indeed the chiefs are conferring together concerning you, to kill you. So leave; indeed, I am one of those who advise you.'"

"So he left it, fearful and watching. He said, 'My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people.'"

He made his way toward the Master of the Age, Shuʿayb, peace be upon him.

He said:

"Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the right way."

This is His saying:

"And when he turned his face toward Midian, he said, 'Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the right way.'"

That is, "the one who possesses my affair," just as the Arabs say *rabb al-thawb* and *rabb al-ʿabd* for the owner and master of the garment or servant.

He asks Him to place him among those who seek assistance from Him, those connected to Him, who are the path toward Him among the *ḥudūd*.

We have mentioned this when discussing the *ṣirāṭ*.

Abraham likewise said:

“Indeed, I am going to my Lord; He will guide me.”

Meaning the one who possesses his affair and raises him through His wisdom.

“And when he came to the water of Midian,”

meaning when he came to know that *ḥadd*,

“he found a group of people watering.”

He encountered a group of *dāʿīs* engaging in *mufātaḥa* with the people.

“And he found, apart from them, two women holding back.”

That is, apart from the *dāʿīs* he encountered two *maʾdhūnūn* who had a group of *mustajībūn* prepared for them, and they were bringing them toward the *dāʿīs*.

Moses asked them about their *ḥadd*, and they informed him of it.

He said, “What is your situation?”

They said:

“We do not water until the shepherds drive away, and our father is an old man.”

That is: we do not engage in *mufātaḥa* until those who have responded to these *dāʿīs* have reached the extent that is required of them. Then we bring these people to them, and they water them—that is, they engage in *mufātaḥa* with them.

Moses was free to engage in the *daʿwa* wherever he went.

“So he watered for them.”

That is, he called those whom they had brought, engaged them in *mufātaḥa*, and informed them that he was one of Shuʿayb’s *dāʿīs*.

He asked the *maʾdhūnūn* whom he had watered to inform him about their affair, and he sought a *bāb* among Shuʿayb’s *bābs*.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

“Then he withdrew into the shade and said, ‘My Lord, indeed I am in need of whatever good You send down to me.’”

Then one of the two women came to him, walking modestly.

She said:

“Indeed, my father invites you.”

He had asked God for the good of the Master of the Age, being in need of what was with his Lord.

The two *maʾdhūnūn* informed Shuʿayb of his affair, and Shuʿayb summoned him.

One of them came to him and said:

“Indeed, he invites you, so that he may reward you for having watered for us.”

When Moses came to him and related his story, Shuʿayb said:

“Do not fear. You have escaped from the wrongdoing people.”

One of the two said:

“O my father, employ him. Indeed, the best whom you can employ is the strong and trustworthy.”

That is, one of the *maʾdhūnūn* said to him: Release him into your *daʿwa* as a *naqīb*, for he is strong enough for that and trustworthy with it.

And he asked Shuʿayb for himself to be made a *dāʿī* on his behalf.

Shuʿayb said to him:

“Indeed, I wish to marry you to one of these two daughters of mine, on the condition that you serve me for eight pilgrimages. But if you complete ten, then that is from you. I do not wish to make things difficult for you. You will find me, if God wills, among the righteous.”

He said: “This is between me and you.”

That is: I wish to release you as a *naqīb* and entrust to you the affair of my *daʿwa*.

This is what is related in the report: that he employed him to tend his sheep.

This was because God, exalted is He, had disclosed to Shuʿayb his condition and what He had prepared him for through the messengership.

The condition was that Moses establish eight *nuqabāʾ* for him.

“If you complete ten, then that is from you.”

That is, it would be an act of generosity from you, not something imposed upon you by the condition.

“And I do not wish to make things difficult for you.”

Shuʿayb’s affair, as we have mentioned, had become weak. Most of the people of his *daʿwa* had apostatized, his *nuqabāʾ* and *dāʿīs* had become separated from him, and most of them had perished.

So he appointed Moses as a *naqīb*, on the condition that Moses establish ten *lāḥiqs* with him and with the one from whom he had taken the covenant.

Thus there would be twelve *nuqabāʾ* with him.

This is the completion of the affair of the Master of the Age when he finds them and is able to establish them.

We have mentioned this previously, and God willing we shall mention its completion in the proper place later.

Sometimes the affair of the Master of the Age becomes so weak that he has no one but himself.

At other times some are prepared for him while he is unable to establish others.

Most commonly, the Master of the Age charges four of his *bābs*, each of whom establishes two.

We have mentioned this previously.

The likeness of the four is that of the sacred months, while the likeness of the eight is that of the eight months remaining in the year.

Thus Shuʿayb, peace be upon him, charged Moses, peace be upon him, to establish ten *nuqabāʾ*, or eight whom he would derive and seek among those whom he called who were suitable for this.

This is difficult and arduous for the one who seeks them.

Shuʿayb knew what God, exalted is He, had bestowed upon Moses of *taʾyīd* and what He had prepared him for through the messengership. He saw that Moses was capable of this and found him able to do it.

He therefore desired not to leave the affair until it had been completed and perfected.

Moses accepted this from him, undertook his *daʿwa*, and became his *hujja* and his nearest *bāb*.

At first he was an ordinary person, then he responded to his *dāʿī*, then he moved into the rank of the *maʾdhūn*, then became a *dāʿī*, then moved until he became a *naqīb*, and then became a near *hujja*.

This is likewise how God moves His Friends along the straight path.

It is the later creation, resembling the first creation, because God, exalted is He, did not create human beings in their complete form all at once. Rather, He raised them through it, creation after creation, as He mentioned in His Book.

He brought them forth from the earth, from what their fathers consumed as nourishment, until they became drops of semen in the loins of men. Then He transferred them into the wombs of women, created them there as clinging forms, then as lumps, then as bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, then deposited spirits within them, and brought them forth from the wombs as children who knew nothing.

He then trained them at the hands of His servants and likewise transferred them through knowledge, degree after degree.

Glory be to Him, the Ordainer, the All-Powerful, in Whose hand is the affair and to Whom is the return.

Moses undertook the affair of Shuʿayb, peace be upon him, fulfilled what he had undertaken, and established ten *lāḥiqs* for him.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, was asked which of the two appointed periods Moses completed.

He said: “He completed the longer and better of them.”

This is what God, exalted is He, relates from him:

“Whichever of the two terms I complete, there shall be no injustice against me.”

That is, between establishing ten of the *ḥudūd* and eight during the period appointed to him for that, he completed the fuller of the two, namely ten.

Through him God revived Shuʿayb’s *daʿwa*. The *mustajībūn* became numerous, his *daʿwa* grew great, and the time came for Shuʿayb, peace be upon him, to depart.

His days came to an end after God had completed his affair through Moses, and Shuʿayb, peace be upon him, died.

Moses then traveled after him with the people of his *daʿwa*, a great number of people from the Hijaz, heading toward Syria, the homeland of his fathers, intending to settle there with the people of his *daʿwa* and move into a place of fertility and abundance, away from the narrowness of the Hijaz and its lack of resources.

When he reached the *Ṭūr*, a mountain among the mountains of Syria, the *ḥadd of the taʾyīd of prophethood* became connected to him from God, exalted is He.

At that time he was an Imam, because the Imam who had appointed him as his *hujja* had passed away, and he became Imam after him.

Then revelation from God came to him with prophethood and messengership.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

“And when Moses had completed the term and traveled with his family, he perceived a fire from the side of the mountain.”

The likeness of the fire is the *ḥadd of the nāṭiqs*, from the light of *taʾyīd*.

He says: He sensed within himself the light of *taʾyīd*.

The likeness of the mountain is the rank of the *nāṭiq*, which is the very essence of messengership.

He said to his family:

“Stay here; indeed, I have perceived a fire. Perhaps I shall bring you news from it, or a brand of fire, so that you may warm yourselves.”

He says: Remain upon what you are with me of the *ḥadd of the Imamate* and remain upright upon it. For I have sensed the *taʾyīd of messengership*. Perhaps I will bring you from it, when it becomes united with me, a light by which you yourselves will gain illumination and attain its benefit.

Then, when he came to it—that is, when he contemplated it—

“he was called from the right bank of the valley.”

That is, from the subtle rank of the *nāṭiq*.

For the *taʾyīd* that flows from above to below is of three divisions. The highest is the division of the prophets, the one beneath it is the division of the *asās*, and the one beneath that is the division of the Imams.

By “the right” he meant the highest, which is the *ḥadd of messengership*, in the blessed region, which is the *ḥadd of the Imamate*, from the tree—that is, from opposite the *ḥadd*.

All of this emphasizes the elevation of the rank and the superiority of the division that God, exalted is He, bestowed upon him.

“Indeed, O Moses, I am God, Lord of the worlds.”

This was the connection of the Word with Moses from God, exalted is He.

He attributed His identity to the Word which He manifested to him through the *ḥadd*, by way of unity, not by essence.

It does not mean that the Lord, glorious and exalted is He, was there.

Exalted is He above being encompassed by directions, and above being described as indwelling in a place or as having an essence confined to a location.

And in another place He says:

“And when he came to it, he was called: ‘Blessed is whoever is in the fire and whoever is around it.’”

He says: Moses was made aware that the *ḥadd* with which he had become united through *taʾyīd* was the blessing; whoever attained it became blessed.

The blessing also extends to those around it who are connected with the two blessed foundations, among the *lāḥiqs* and *ajniḥa*.

His saying, therefore:

“So glory be to God, Lord of the worlds.”

The interpretation of “glory be to God” is declaring God, the Creator of created things, glorious and exalted, to be far above being likened to anything beneath Him, being described as indwelling in one place rather than another, or having attributed to Him anything that occurs to created things in such a way that it is said to occur to Him likewise.

Glory and exaltation belong to Him far above this.

He is not one upon whom such a thing occurs, nor does any part of it occur to Him, nor is He described by it.

Rather, He is described as the Lord of all those upon whom such things occur, and that whatever occurs to them occurs through the power of His Word and His ability. He has no partner.

And His saying:

“O Moses, indeed I am God, the Mighty, the Wise.”

This is information from the one to whom the matter is conveyed concerning the Word of the Creator, glorious and exalted: that He is the Mighty, the Wise, whose existence cannot be encompassed and whose denial is impossible despite this inability to encompass Him.

Rather, it is through His Word, which became the cause of every thing, that whoever knows Him knows Him.

“And cast down your staff.”

The likeness of the staff is the *ḥadd of the Imamate* which he had received from the previous Master of the Age.

He was commanded to cast it upon what had subsequently been singled out for him from the higher realm.

Thus what he had received became like the staff which he had received from the Master of the Age, who had commanded him to establish his *asās*.

The staff therefore became its likeness.

“When he saw it moving as though it were a serpent.”

The *jānn* derives from *ijtinān*, concealment. The trembling or movement is apparent only in the outward aspect of a thing.

The first thing that became apparent to him from his proof was the manifestation of what ought to be manifested of that which conceals the inward, over which it has been veiled.

He therefore thought that it was purely outward and refuted it through its outward aspect.

This is His saying:

“So he turned away fleeing.”

That is, he gave his back to it.

Then it was said to him:

“O Moses, approach and do not fear. Indeed, you are among those who are secure.”

That is, you have been made secure from your proof being merely outward without an inward aspect. So approach it through the inward.

And in another place He says:

“Then suddenly it was a serpent moving.”

That is, it was alive through the pure inward, making it manifest.

When he approached it through the inward, what he found in it became apparent to him, and he found tranquility in it.

This is one aspect of the interpretation.

The *jānn* is a serpent that is not large.

As for His saying:

“So he turned away fleeing and did not look back,”

that is, he passed on and did not return to it.

Its meaning is that the power of the Word to subdue those who oppose it is like the power of a serpent that breathes fire: whoever it encounters, it leaves overcome by proof, like a deaf serpent that encounters nothing without destroying it.

This continues until His saying:

“O Moses, approach and do not fear; indeed, you are among those who are secure.”

He says: When Moses saw this, he was frightened and thought within himself that this was not the same power that had previously been with him.

Then the one who conveyed the Word to him from the Creator called out:

“O Moses, do not fear. Indeed, with Me the messengers need not fear, except one who has done wrong and then replaced evil with good. Indeed, I am Forgiving, Merciful.”

“And put your hand into your bosom; it will emerge white without harm.”

By the hand is meant his *asās*, the possessor of his secret.

He says: Make him aware, through the outward aspect of your *sharīʿa*, of the secret of what you have been given.

“It will emerge white without harm.”

That is, whenever you disclose this to him, he will emerge with a clear and luminous exposition of interpretation, one about which no one can doubt and whose explanation and clarification no one can reject.

“And these are nine signs for Pharaoh and his people.”

He says: You have been supported by nine signs. Go as a messenger to Pharaoh and his people.

The nine signs are what he received from above and what he was supported with from below.

That is, his *ḥadd* from the two upper foundations and the *ḥadd* beneath him extending down to the *mustajībūn*.

We have mentioned them in other places.

“They were indeed a transgressing people.”

He says: In reality, they had departed from the truth. This is the meaning of *fusūq*, as He, exalted is He, said:

“So they prostrated, except Iblis; he was of the jinn, and he departed from the command of his Lord.”

“And draw your wing close to yourself from fear.”

The wing is the hand, and it is his *asās*.

He says: Keep him close to you in what you have been supported with, because you fear that your outward aspect will be broken. He will establish the proof of your argument through the interpretation that he establishes for you.

“These are two proofs from your Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs.”

That is, what you and your *asās* bring them of exposition concerning the outward and inward will constitute the proof.

He says:

“My Lord, indeed, I killed one of them, and I fear that they will kill me.”

That refers to the incident of the man against whom he had established the proof, as previously mentioned.

He means: I fear that if I come to them with the outward alone and they establish an argument against me concerning it, I will become overcome by proof, and what happened to the one against whom I established the proof will happen to me.

“And my brother Aaron is more eloquent than I in speech.”

That is, he is the possessor of interpretation, and he is my tongue, and the proof is with him through it.

“So send him with me as a support to confirm me.”

That is, so that his interpretation may confirm my outward aspect.

“Indeed, I fear that they will deny me.”

He said:

“We shall strengthen your arm through your brother, and We shall give both of you authority, so they will not reach you. You two, and those who follow you, shall be the victorious.”

He says: We shall strengthen your outward affair through your brother—that is, through the interpretation he possesses—so that they will not reach either of you with an argument, while the signs of God are with you.

Thus you and those who follow you in this will be victorious.

God therefore sent Moses, peace be upon him, to Pharaoh and his people, calling them to believe in God and enter His *daʿwa*. He supported him with his brother Aaron and established him for the interpretation of his outward aspect, and joined him with Moses in the exposition.

Likewise, it is related from Muhammad, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, that when this verse was revealed:

“And appoint for me a minister from my family, Aaron, my brother; strengthen me through him and associate him with me in my affair,”

the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said:

“And I, O Lord, say as my brother Moses said: ‘My Lord, appoint for me a minister from my family, ʿAlī, my brother; strengthen me through him and associate him with me in my affair.’”

Moses then traveled with those who followed him and believed in him, by the command of God, exalted is He, toward Pharaoh and those with him in Egypt, until they reached his presence.

Moses called him to acknowledge God and to acknowledge him, and to affirm the truth of his messengership.

This is the saying of God, exalted is He:

“When Moses came to them with Our clear signs, they said, ‘This is nothing but fabricated magic, and we never heard of this among our forefathers.’”

They meant their forefathers from whom they had taken their religion.

By “magic” they meant Moses’ speech and exposition by which he called them.

They said: This is merely a stratagem and deception on your part by which you wish to incline us toward yourself. It is neither true knowledge nor guidance.

Moses said:

“My Lord knows best who has come with guidance and who will have the final outcome of the abode.”

By “the final outcome” he means the final outcome of the cycles of the messengers.

This is because one says *dār al-dawr*—“the abode of the cycle.” *Dār* is a past-tense verb. When the definite article *al-* is placed before *dār*, it becomes *al-dār*, and the listener may think that what is intended is *dār* in the sense of “abode,” whose plural is *diyār*.

This is a subtle symbolic expression whose meaning is found only among the Friends of God, exalted is He. Its explanation is lengthy in Arabic.

The entry of *alif* and *lām* is appropriate here, even though these letters do not normally enter upon verbs, because definiteness belongs to nouns and not verbs.

It is appropriate here because it is a symbol.

Among this is His saying:

“When the two were in the cave.”

If the *alif* and *lām* are removed from *al-ghār* (“the cave”), the sense of definiteness disappears, and two meanings become possible: one, that it is an indefinite noun; the other, that it is a past-tense verb from *ghāra al-rajul ʿalā ahlihi*—“the man became jealous over his family”—with *ghāra* following the pattern of *dāra*.

In some of this there is a clear explanation and proof for the person of understanding.

“Indeed, the wrongdoers do not prosper.”

We have already explained *ẓulm*, and *falāḥ* means remaining, as well as gain and victory.

Pharaoh said:

“O chiefs, I know of no god for you other than myself.”

By “the chiefs” he meant the leading figures among the people of his *daʿwa*.

The meaning of his statement “I know of no god for you other than myself” is: I know of no Imam for you other than myself.

“So kindle for me, O Haman, upon the clay, and make for me a lofty structure.”

He said this to the possessor of his affair, his greatest *dāʿī*, and the one who occupied the station of his *hujja*: Haman.

He said: Establish for me a *sharīʿa* and a foundation, and fill it with exposition.

“Perhaps I may look upon the god of Moses.”

That is, perhaps I may reach the *ḥadd of Moses*, from which Moses received his support.

“And indeed, I think him to be among the liars.”

As for the interpretation that the people of the outward impose upon this statement—that he made bricks and built a tower from which he intended to climb to heaven—this is impossible according to reason. It is inconceivable that anyone would attempt such a thing or believe that he could reach it.

“And he and his armies were arrogant in the land without right.”

That is, they were too arrogant to seek the exposition of Moses’ outward aspect from him, after acknowledging the outward aspect of Moses, so that what they had denied concerning him might become sound for them.

“So We seized him and his armies and cast them into the sea.”

The sea is the likeness of the outward.

He says: We cast them into the disagreement of their outward aspects and prevented them from receiving exposition, drowning them in the trial of the outward.

There is also an aspect of interpretation in the saying of God:

“And has the story of Moses reached you? When he saw a fire, he said to his family, ‘Stay here. Indeed, I have perceived a fire. Perhaps I shall bring you from it a brand, or find guidance at the fire.’”

He says: He sensed within himself a subtle *taʾyīd*, greater than the *taʾyīd* with which he had been supported in the *ḥadd of the Imamate*.

He therefore commanded those who followed him in the Imamate to remain upon their *ḥadd*, believing in it and not departing from any part of it.

He himself had sensed an increase within him.

He commanded them to follow him upon that *ḥadd* until he could bring them a sound report concerning what he had sensed, or find through the *taʾyīd* he had sensed a guidance by which he could guide them toward the rank to which he had been raised.

When he came to it, he was called:

“O Moses, indeed I am your Lord, so remove your sandals.”

He says: The upper *ḥadd* following without an intermediary between it and him called him:

“Indeed, I am your Lord,”

meaning your educator and supporter from the Creator, glorious and exalted, through what He had placed in my *ḥadd* of the *taʾyīd* of the messengers.

“So remove your sandals.”

He says: Remove what you have been upon of the outward of another.

The sandal is the likeness of the outward, while the *khuff* is the likeness of the inward.

Among the reasons for this is that the sandal is used outwardly for walking and movement outside. When the one who uses it for this reaches his place of settlement and takes refuge in his assembly, he removes it.

The *khuff*, however, is not removed in this way. It is used both outside and inside; one sits, walks, rides, and prays while wearing it, whereas the sandal is removed in most of these circumstances.

The upper *ḥadd* also informed him that, according to what the Creator had decreed for his *ḥadd*, he would be sent with a renewed *sharīʿa* that would abrogate the *sharīʿa* of those before him.

He commanded him to cast off what he had been upon.

“Indeed, you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā. You have been raised to the *ḥadd of the nāṭiqs*, and I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed.”

That is, listen to what has come from the Creator, exalted and glorified is He, in His saying to you:

“Indeed, I am God; there is no god but Me. So worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.”

He says: Make your worship for the One God, and call to His remembrance.

Prayer is like the *daʿwa*, and remembrance is the Messenger.

That is: call to yourself and to My remembrance, for you are My remembrance, through whom I remember by means of your reminding.

This is supported by God’s saying concerning Muhammad:

“And they say, ‘He is mad,’ but it is nothing other than a remembrance for the worlds.”

And His saying:

“We have indeed sent down to you a Book in which is your remembrance.”

And His saying:

“And God has sent down to you a remembrance: a Messenger.”

This also demonstrates that the matter and the question are to be referred back to the Imams from the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of God, because of His saying:

“So ask the people of remembrance if you do not know.”

That is, the people of the Messenger, and they are the Imams.

Part Seven is complete. It is followed by Part Eight, containing some of the Story of Moses.

The Eight Part: The Story of Moses

And His saying: **“Indeed, the Hour is coming; I almost conceal it, so that every soul may be recompensed for what it strives for. So let not one who does not believe in it and follows his desire turn you away from it, lest you perish.”**

He made him acquainted with the Qa’im of the Resurrection and established him upon belief in him, so that through him the number of the nāṭiqs, his brothers, might be completed. And He forbade him to let those who do not believe in him—those who follow their desires—turn him away from him.

As for His saying, **“I almost conceal it,”** the people of the outward interpreted it, according to the linguistic meaning, in two ways.

Some of them said: **"I almost conceal it,"** meaning, **"I almost make it manifest."** It is said from this that *khafā al-shayʾ* means that a thing became manifest. They recited as evidence a verse of Imruʾ al-Qays:

He made them manifest from the exhaustion of their journey, as though
the sound of them were the fall of rain from a rain-cloud.

He is describing the green meadow and saying that, through the force with which the edges of the horse's hooves struck the earth, he made manifest what of animals and creeping things had taken refuge in their burrows, just as a torrent of rain makes them emerge when it suddenly descends upon them.

The taʾwīl of this, in its inward meaning, is that God, exalted is He, is informing of the nearness of the affair of the Qa'im. For Moses is the intermediary among the nāṭiqs, as we have mentioned, and half the period leading to the Qa'im has already passed. Everything whose half has been traversed has thereby come near to its end.

The second interpretation they gave was that **"I almost conceal it"** means, **"I almost conceal it from Myself; so how could I make it manifest to another?"** Yet the Creator of creation, glorified is He, is exalted above having a self attributed to Him in the manner in which selves are attributed to created beings. Some of those who liken God to His creation attributed such a self to Him. Exalted is God far above what they say.

He, mighty and exalted, says: **"Every soul shall taste death."** Thus, whenever a *soul* is mentioned as being attributed to the Creator—exalted is He above its being attributed to Him in the manner of its attribution to His creation—what is intended by *soul* is the **Nāṭiq**, namely, the Tablet upon which what will occur until the Day of Resurrection has been recorded. It was called a soul because knowledge is deposited within the soul.

Likewise, they claimed that God, exalted is He, manifested Himself to the mountain, entered into a tree, and spoke to Moses from it as human beings speak. Exalted is God far above what they say. Rather, it was the upper *ḥadd* with which he was united that spoke to him, and the tree was an image of one of its *ḥudūd*, namely the *ḥadd* to which he had reached.

His saying, **"Indeed, I am God,"** means that his *ḥadd* called out to him with this on behalf of God, mighty and exalted. This is like what is said in Arabic: "The ruler called out such-and-such," when in reality it was called out by his command. His herald says in his proclamation, "Whoever does such-and-such will be punished with such-and-such," while it is known that the herald who proclaimed it did so at his command.

His saying, **"And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?"**: the *right hand* in taʾwīl is the *ḥadd* of the nāṭiq. It has been said elsewhere: **"And throw down what is in your right hand."**

A thing is not said to be *in* another thing unless one of them encompasses the other, and the thing encompassed is subtler than the thing encompassing it. Thus one says, "Zayd is in the house": Zayd is subtler than the house, while the house is denser than Zayd. Therefore it is correct that he be *in* it and that it encompass him. There are many similar examples whose explanation would be lengthy.

His saying, **"And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?"** makes clear that the right hand grasps what is being asked about. This is confirmed by His saying, **"Throw it down."** Its grasping of it is with the inner part of the hand.

Thus the staff was a subtle *ḥadd* among the *ḥudūd* of taʾyīd, with which the subtler aspect of his inner *ḥadd* was supported. Its outward aspect, the right hand, was a proof of the outward, while its inward aspect was a proof of the inward. The staff was subtler than it because it encompassed it.

Therefore he was asked about what was in his inward aspect with which he had been supported, and he said:

"It is my staff; I lean upon it."

He means: it is the substance of what I have been supported with, namely the subtle, balanced matter that has no crookedness in it.

Moses, peace be upon him, described it according to the extent of his attainment of it when he was questioned in a manner intended to test him regarding his *ḥadd* and his knowledge of it.

"I lean upon it" means, "I rely upon it."

"And with it I beat down leaves for my sheep" means, "I derive benefit from it for my community and govern them by means of it."

"And I have other uses in it" means, "I have other benefits for myself in that upon which I rely and by which I act."

He said:

"Throw it down, O Moses."

So he threw it down, **"and behold, it was a serpent moving."**

He means: throw it down to your *asās*—that is, teach it to him so that he may be the one who establishes and carries it.

This is supported by the saying of God, exalted is He:

"So cast the word to them,"

and His saying:

"They cast hearing."

In all such expressions the Arabs use the verb *alqā*, "to cast." It is not permissible to say that this applies only to something cast from the hand.

God, exalted is He, says:

“And We cast enmity and hatred between them.”

The word is derived from *alqaytu*, “I brought together,” from *liqāʾ*, meeting. The thing cast is something thrown down; what is thrown down is something left behind.

And He said to him:

“Take it and do not fear.”

The staff was made feminine in the expression, although in reality it was subtle knowledge. The way of knowledge is that it be mentioned; therefore it was made feminine with the implicit meaning that it was a benefit, a proof, an evidence, and a sign.

God, exalted is He, said after mentioning the staff:

“And draw your hand to your wing; it will emerge white, without harm—another sign.”

The staff was therefore the first sign, and the hand the second sign.

“And behold, it was a serpent moving” means that, because of its strength, it was like a living creature.

He said:

“Take it and do not fear. We shall restore it to its former state.”

He means: draw it to yourself; that is, attribute it to yourself, for it comes from you.

“And draw your hand to your wing.”

The hand here is an image of the *asās*, and the wing is an image of the power that had been given to him.

“It will emerge white, without harm” means that, through clear and excellent exposition containing no defect, another sign will become manifest.

That is, the first sign came to him from the Creator, mighty and exalted, while the second proceeded through His power from him to the one below him, namely his *asās*. Thus in the first there was a sign from God to him, and in the second a sign from him to his *asās*.

“That We may show you some of Our greatest signs” means the *ḥadd* of the Qa’im of the Resurrection. That is: “We shall show you that at its appointed time,” just as at your appointed time We showed you what We showed you.

“Go to Pharaoh; indeed, he has transgressed.”

Water is said to *ṭaghā* when it rises and overflows, and *ṭughyān*, transgression, is derived from this. Here it means that Pharaoh had exalted himself above taking knowledge from Moses and his *hujja*.

Likewise His saying, reporting Pharaoh:

“He and his armies exalted themselves in the land without right,”

and His saying:

“Indeed, Pharaoh exalted himself in the land.”

This was his arrogance in refusing to receive the truth from the *asās*.

Moses said:

“My Lord, expand my breast for me,”

meaning, through the taʾyīd that You bestowed upon me.

“And make my affair easy for me,”

meaning, make easy for me its delivery.

“And loosen the knot from my tongue, so that they may understand my speech,”

meaning the knot of the covenant with my *asās* during debate, so that he may argue with them through the truth and the knowledge of the inward.

“And appoint for me a minister from my family, Aaron, my brother.”

Its taʾwīl has already been mentioned.

Our discussion now returns to Moses’ address to Pharaoh.

Moses said:

“O Pharaoh, indeed I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds.”

And He said elsewhere:

“Go, both of you, to Pharaoh and say: Indeed, we are messengers of the Lord of the worlds.”

He said to Moses and Aaron:

“Send with us the Children of Israel.”

That is: release them from the rule of your kingdom and your Call, for they are my people, the people of my household, and the descendants of prophecy.

And He said elsewhere:

“And do not torture them.”

That is: do not torture them by what you call them to—following you and believing in your Imamate.

Pharaoh said to him:

“Did we not raise you among us as a child?”

That is: “Were you not among those who responded to our Call and were born among us, and among those whom we raised upon our knowledge? And you remained among us”—that is, in our Call—“for years.

“And you did the deed you did, and you are among the unbelievers.”

That is: what he had manifested by breaking away from the man against whom he had broken in argument.

He means: “You became an unbeliever at that time when what appeared from you was contrary to what you had previously held for us.”

Moses said:

“I did it then, while I was among those who were astray.”

He means: “At that time I was astray from that with which I have now been supported and which has been granted to me, and from the *ḥadd* of prophethood that was bestowed upon me. I did not know it, nor was I guided to it.”

Likewise the saying of God to Muhammad:

“And He found you astray, and He guided you.”

That means: He found you astray from the path of prophethood, and He guided you to it through taʾyīd.

This is supported by Moses’ saying:

“So my Lord granted me judgment and made me one of the messengers.”

“And is this a favor with which you reproach me, that you have enslaved the Children of Israel?”

He means: “This thing you have described as a favor that you bestowed upon me—you have enslaved the Children of Israel, and I am one of them. You have subdued us to your command and enslaved us to yourself.”

That is: “You appointed yourself as our Imam and compelled us to obey you. Thus it is not a favor with which you may reproach me, since you subdued and compelled us to it. It is a trial, not a favor, as you claim.”

Pharaoh said:

“And what is the Lord of the worlds?”

He was asking Moses about the nature of the Creator, mighty and exalted, and about His attributes.

Moses said:

“He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them, if you are certain.”

He said to those around him:

“Do you not hear?”

That is: “Do you not hear Moses’ answer, and how he answered me contrary to what I asked him? I ask him what the Creator is, while he answers me that He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.”

Thus he sought to make Moses appear ignorant of the answer.

Moses said:

“Yes—and your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.”

Pharaoh said:

“Indeed, your messenger who has been sent to you is mad.”

That is: “I asked him and he answered me with something other than the answer.”

Moses said:

“The Lord of the east and the west and whatever is between them, if you understand.”

All of this negates essential attributes from the Creator, mighty and exalted, and describes Him in terms of divinity.

Pharaoh said:

“If you take a god other than me, I will certainly make you one of the imprisoned.”

That means: “If you take an Imam other than me, I shall deprive you of *mufātaḥa*. Return to the belief in my authority that you formerly held.”

He was calling him to return to the matter he had outwardly professed in order to practice *taqiyya* toward him, since Pharaoh possessed authority.

Moses said:

“Even if I bring you something manifest?”

That is: “Even if I come to you with an evident proof in the outward state in which I stand?”

He said:

“Then bring it, if you are among the truthful.”

So he threw down his staff:

“And behold, it was a manifest serpent.”

That is: he manifested what he had been supported with in the form of exposition and proof, and behold, it was something that subdued and defeated them.

“And he drew out his hand, and behold, it was white to the beholders.”

That means: he manifested his *asās* in exposition, and behold, its exposition was a clear light. Thus he silenced Pharaoh.

Pharaoh said to the assembly around him:

“Indeed, this is a learned sorcerer.”

He means: “This is a man who possesses tricks of speech and deception. He wants to drive you from your religion by his magic. So what do you advise?”

They said:

“Delay him and his brother,”

meaning: postpone them and do not engage them in *mufātaḥa* over anything.

“And send gatherers into the cities,”

meaning those of his Call who would gather people for him,

“who will bring you every learned sorcerer.”

That is: whoever is like this man in his methods of argument and deception, among those who profess what you profess, so that he may oppose him and produce something like what he has produced.

Thus the sorcerers were gathered:

“For the appointed time of a known day.”

It was said to the people:

“Will you assemble, so that perhaps we may follow the sorcerers if they are the victors?”

That means: “Perhaps we shall follow those who devise arguments and employ rhetorical devices for us as this man has devised and employed them.”

When the sorcerers came, they said:

“Will we have a reward if we are the victors?”

They meant: “Perhaps we shall follow whoever employs arguments and rhetorical devices on our behalf.”

The sorcerers said this out of confidence in themselves, believing that no one could refute the proof they had established for Pharaoh. They asked that, if they overcame Moses, he grant them a reward as a preliminary honor and advancement.

He said:

“Yes, and indeed you will then be among those brought near,”

in the Call and in rank.

Moses said to them:

“Throw down whatever you are going to throw down.”

And elsewhere He said:

“O Moses, either you throw, or we shall be the first to throw.”

They meant: “Either you put your questions to us, or we shall put our questions to you.”

He said:

“Rather, you throw.”

So they threw down their ropes and staffs.

This means their ordered speech of exposition and their outward discourse. For every religious community has an outward aspect, and whoever confines himself to that outward aspect, when circumstances compel him to interpret it, devises for himself an interpretation that is corrupt and unsound and contains no explanation for the thoughtful seeker.

Thus the sorcerers brought the outward teaching of Pharaoh and its interpretation in this sense.

They said:

“By the might of Pharaoh, indeed, we shall certainly be the victors,”

out of admiration for themselves.

Then Moses threw down his staff:

“And behold, it swallowed up what they falsely devised.”

That was the exposition with which he had been supported; it invalidated their falsehood.

And He said elsewhere:

“Then behold, their ropes and staffs appeared to him, by their sorcery, as though they were moving.”

Thus fear entered the soul of Moses.

That is: it appeared to him that what they had brought through their tricks resembled the truth, and he feared that they might overcome his *asās*.

We said to him:

“Do not fear. Indeed, you are the superior. And throw down what is in your right hand; it will swallow up what they have made. What they have made is only the trick of a sorcerer.”

The right hand is that whose inner aspect casts something forth. Its inner aspect is therefore an image of the *asās* of the nāṭiq in one aspect of taʾwīl.

Its outward aspect pertains to the nāṭiq; grasping and extending are through its inner aspect, and benefiting from everything from which benefit is derived and upon which one acts is through it. By the soundness of its outward aspect, its inward aspect is strengthened.

Thus the outward depends upon the inward, and the inward supports and strengthens it. Likewise the inward is concealed by the outward and hidden within it, while the outward points to it and bears witness to it.

Therefore he was told: “Tell your *asās* to cast forth to them the true taʾwīl.”

We have already mentioned His saying:

“And loosen the knot from my tongue,”

and that what he intended by this was precisely this.

Moses therefore engaged them in *mufātaḥa* through the outward, while Aaron engaged them through the inward, just as Moses had asked for this, as we have previously mentioned.

They brought forth before them something concerning which they had no doubt that it was the truth, both outwardly and inwardly. This was what God permitted Moses to reveal of the inward to those who would not accept his outward teaching because of the force of the proof imposed upon them.

They therefore submitted to him, and they had no means of answering except confession and submission.

That is His saying:

“And the sorcerers fell down prostrate. They said: We believe in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron.”

Pharaoh said:

“You believe in him before I have given you permission?”

That is: “You affirmed him before I permitted you, while you are under my *ḥadd* and within my Call? Indeed, he is your chief who taught you sorcery!”

Then he said:

“I shall surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides.”

That means: “I shall cut off from you the substance of the two upper and lower foundations.”

“And I shall surely crucify you upon the trunks of palm trees.”

That means: “I shall publicize their affair among their *lāḥiqs*,” for he had established a Call by formally designating the Imams and claiming the Imamate for himself.

They said:

“No harm. Indeed, to our Lord we shall return. We hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins, since we were the first of the believers.”

And His saying:

“And We inspired Moses: Travel by night with My servants; indeed, you will be pursued.”

The *isrāʾ*, traveling by night, means that he supported them with knowledge of the inward and with concealment, and this is like the night.

“Indeed, you will be pursued” means that Pharaoh and his people would pursue them with proofs.

Thus he supported his companions, taught them, and instructed them.

Pharaoh sent gatherers into the cities,

meaning those whom he had gathered to himself.

Then he said to them:

“Indeed, these are only a small band, and they have enraged us, and indeed we are all on our guard.”

That is: he gathered another group to argue against them, because what had occurred through Moses and those who believed in him had enraged him.

Then the companions of Pharaoh who remained with the outward came to them with the outward knowledge they possessed.

This is His saying:

“So they pursued them at sunrise.”

Ishrāq, sunrise, is daytime, and its likeness here is the outward. Thus they came to them with the outward.

When the two groups saw one another—that is, when each looked at the other during the debate—the companions of Moses said:

“Indeed, we shall be overtaken.”

That is: “We shall be overtaken by the proof, because we had been looking only into the inward, while these people have come to us with the outward.”

He said:

“No indeed! My Lord is with me; He will guide me.”

Then We inspired Moses:

“Strike the sea with your staff.”

And it split apart, each portion becoming like a mighty mountain.

The sea is an image of the knowledge of the outward. Moses struck it with the taʾyīd with which he had been supported in the outward, and thereby he broke apart what they had brought of it, divided it, and separated it through his truth, distinguishing truth from falsehood within it.

Then God, exalted is He, said:

“And We saved Moses and all those with him. Then We drowned the others.”

That means they were drowned in the depths of their outward aspect. They perished within it in the inward, and they were likewise drowned in the outward, so that they would not depart this world until the proof of the people of truth had been established against them, according to the practice of God concerning those before them who were like them.

This, and everything that has preceded and will follow concerning mention of the inward, other than the parables, has an outward meaning that actually occurred. The parables are indications and signs pointing to the matter for which the parable was given.

Thus it is as the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said:

"Every verse has an outward and an inward."

In this book we have confined ourselves to mentioning the inward and the parables, leaving aside mention of the outward because its manifestation and its familiarity to most people make that unnecessary.

What we have mentioned here in general is what we intended to interpret in the *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*, the book which we composed this work as an interpretation of.

And with God is our help.

Pharaoh spoke the word of faith, but drowning had already overtaken him, and God, exalted is He, did not accept it from him.

That is His saying:

"Now? Yet you disobeyed before and were among the corrupters."

"So today We shall save you with your body."

That means: "We shall publicize your affair among the people, showing that what you used to claim concerning knowledge of the inward was a false claim, and that it was nothing but pure outward."

This is because the body is an image of the outward, while the spirit is an image of the inward.

His saying:

"Then he showed him the greatest sign"

means what Moses, peace be upon him, manifested to Pharaoh from what the Creator, mighty and exalted, had supported him with.

Pharaoh denied and disobeyed,

"then turned away, striving, gathered, and proclaimed, saying: I am your Lord, the Most High."

That means he gathered his people and established the Call among them for himself, claiming that he was the Imam of creation in his time.

So God seized him with the punishment of the Hereafter and the first life.

The punishment of the first is the manifestation of what He exposed concerning the corruption of his claim, and the exposure of what he had led creation to believe—that he possessed the truth and the inward.

The punishment of the Hereafter is what he will receive there and the torment to which he will come.

His saying:

"And We caused the people who had been oppressed to inherit the eastern and western regions of the land which We had blessed"

means that those whom Pharaoh and his people had oppressed were made heirs by God to the knowledge of the Imams and the *ḥujjas*. He taught them their outward and inward according to what pertains to their ranks and degrees.

"And the good word of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because they were patient."

"And We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people had been making and what they had been erecting."

That means the Word of God manifested itself to them through the nāṭiq who conveyed it, and God nullified the affair of Pharaoh and his people and what they had built in religion: a weak and flimsy structure whose likeness is that of an *ʿarīsh*, which resembles a house but is not a house.

"And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea."

That means: We raised them above the knowledge of the outward and its waves and delivered them from drowning in it through the explanation of taʾwīl.

Then:

"They came upon a people devoted to idols of theirs."

That means they passed by a people who had appointed leaders for themselves from whom they took knowledge of the outward.

They said:

"O Moses, make for us a god just as they have gods."

That is: "Establish for us a leader who will provide us, through his own opinion and choice, with the outward of what we need from our religion, just as these people have."

He said:

"Indeed, you are an ignorant people. Indeed, what these people are engaged in is doomed, and what they were doing is false."

That means: “The end of these people is destruction.”

He said:

“Shall I seek for you a god other than God?”

That is: “Shall I seek for you the God of the worlds, the Creator of creation?”

“And He favored you above the worlds,”

meaning through what He sent to them by means of the outward and inward.

“So after that, do you ask to be returned to the opinions of human beings?”

This occurred in the speech of the Children of Israel to Moses after God had destroyed Pharaoh and his people, when Moses set out with the Children of Israel toward Syria, intending it as the abode of their forefathers, and brought them out of Egypt.

When Moses had established among them the invalidity of relying upon human beings rather than the messengers, they asked him to establish for them someone who would teach them the true knowledge that comes from God, exalted is He.

So he asked God to do this for them.

God inspired him—and at that time they were twelve tribes—to establish for each tribe a *naqīb* who would teach them.

This is His saying:

“And when Moses sought water for his people, We said: Strike the stone with your staff, and twelve springs gushed forth from it; every people knew its drinking place. Eat and drink from the provision of God, and do not act wickedly upon the earth, spreading corruption.”

The staff here, as we have mentioned, is an image of the taʾyīd with which he had been supported.

The stone is an image of his *asās*. He commanded him to designate from the taʾyīd united with him what was due to him, and thereby establish the *lāḥiqs* through him.

Moses did this, and Aaron established for them the *lāḥiqs*, one man for each tribe, whom they recognized as their drinking place.

That is, they obtained knowledge from him.

Knowledge is like water, as we have mentioned previously.

Each tribe therefore became connected to its counterpart, and he established dāʿīs for them who would teach them taʾwīl and nourish them with wisdom, after Moses had taught them the outward of the Messengerhood and what they were commanded to establish from it.

“Eat and drink from the provision of God, and do not act wickedly upon the earth, spreading corruption.”

That means: “Take from the exposition and knowledge according to the extent of your capacity, little by little.”

Eating is an image of taking in something according to limited capacity, just as one who eats does not become full from nourishment except after a period of time.

Drinking is an image of taking in according to strong capacity, just as one who drinks can satisfy his thirst quickly at the appropriate moment.

If the strong and the weak in capacity are together when hearing knowledge, each receives only according to his capacity. It is like a group of people differing in health and appetite gathering around food or drink: each receives only according to his capacity.

This applies differently in its outward and inward aspects because human capacities differ to such an extent that scarcely can two people be found with exactly the same capacity, so that neither exceeds nor falls short of the other.

Likewise, even where outward forms resemble one another, there must be some distinction between every two forms.

When Aaron had established the *lāḥiqs* for them, and dāʿīs had been established to explain the taʾwīl of what they had been commanded to observe, they came to Moses and said:

“We cannot bear to remain upon pure taʾwīl alone. Ask God for us to bring forth, through the tongue of the *asās* you have established for us, various forms of outward knowledge in which we may diversify, so that we may engage in the various schools and move among the sciences.”

This is His saying:

“And when you said: O Moses, we cannot endure one kind of food, so call upon your Lord for us to bring forth for us what the earth produces—its herbs, its cucumbers, its garlic, its lentils, and its onions.”

He said:

“Do you exchange what is lower for what is better?”

That means: “You seek what is lower and nearer and exchange it for something better than it.”

“Go down to Egypt, for there you will have what you have asked for.”

That means: “Return to the outward of the nāṭiq and you will find there what you have requested.”

Egypt is an image of the nāṭiq.

From this comes the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

“I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate.”

They therefore turned away from taʾwīl and from the one appointed to deliver it to them, and returned to the outward. They plunged into it and became lost in the depths of its seas and the force of its waves when they lost taʾwīl.

They turned toward the outward of those who had preceded them and came to reliance upon opinions, imitation, and what their own souls adorned for them.

Then they asked Moses, as God, exalted is He, described them:

“Show us God openly.”

Then He, exalted is He, said:

“So the thunderbolt seized you while you were looking.”

The thunderbolt is death.

This is the death of the senses to the true knowledge through which souls live. Their thoughts died to it, and they became as God said:

“Dead, not alive, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.”

Then God, exalted is He, bestowed life upon them. He commanded Moses to establish the *lāḥiqs* and dāʿīs for them according to their condition, and Aaron established them for them by His command.

This revived and restored them.

That is His saying:

“Then We resurrected you after your death, so that perhaps you might be grateful.”

“And We shaded you with the clouds.”

That means: He placed between you and the upper *ḥudūd* the bodily *ḥadd* of the nāṭiq, under whose shade you could benefit from his light, secure from being burned by the subtlety of the upper *ḥudūd*.

“And We sent down upon you manna and quails.”

Mann is derived from *imtinān*, gracious favor.

God said:

“So God favored us and protected us from the punishment of the scorching wind.”

And:

“Rather, God has favored you by guiding you to faith.”

Whoever takes knowledge from the friends of God and their *ḥudūd* has attained the manna and the quails and all good things.

The people of the outward claimed that the manna was *taranjabīn*, and that the quails were a bird resembling the quail.

It was a bird whose true reality they did not know.

That is, they did not understand what the *lāḥiqs* conveyed, nor what the *ajniḥa* conveyed of knowledge with which they nourished those within their respective ranks.

“Eat of the good things We have provided for you.”

That means: “Take what has been given to you of knowledge, taking it as something good from what you have been provided.”

“They did not wrong Us, but they were wronging themselves.”

That means through what they altered of the speech they had heard and what they turned away from and abandoned.

As for His saying:

“And when We said: Enter this town and eat from it wherever you wish, freely and abundantly…”

its taʾwīl is that the town is the city.

The city, as we have mentioned, is an image of the Imam, because it gathers knowledge and wisdom just as a city gathers blessings and provisions.

What they were commanded to do was to accept the outward of Moses and what he legislated for them: accepting it through imitation and obedience, without explanation or proof.

“And enter the gate prostrating.”

The gate is an image of the *asās*, as we have mentioned from the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

“I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate.”

They were commanded to establish the outward and inward through submission to the *asās* of Moses—namely Aaron at that time.

And:

“Say: Ḥiṭṭa.”

The people of the outward said that *ḥiṭṭa* means: “Remove our sins from us.”

But if this statement removed sins, there would be no sinner left except that he would say it and be forgiven.

Rather, it is a word indicating lowering oneself, namely submission to the *ḥudūd* of the nāṭiq.

That is: acknowledge those who are the *lāḥiqs* in his time and those who come after him, the Imams in the cycle of the nāṭiq.

This will remove your sins.

That is His saying:

“We shall forgive you your sins, and We shall increase those who do good.”

Meaning those who act rightly: He will increase them in what He has promised them of reward after forgiveness.

“But those who did wrong replaced a word other than the one that had been said to them.”

Wrongdoing in the language means placing a thing in a place other than its proper place.

That means they altered the name of the Imamate and placed someone other than its rightful people in it, and placed its rightful people in positions that were not theirs.

And His saying:

“And We appointed for Moses thirty nights, and completed them with ten, so the appointed time of his Lord was forty nights.”

This was because he was commanded to establish forty *ḥudūd*: ten above him, namely the upper *ḥudūd*, as we have mentioned, and thirty below him.

These were the twelve *nuqabāʾ*, the twelve *lāḥiqs*, and the six Imams, because the seventh of them becomes a nāṭiq.

Thus they were thirty *ḥudūd* below him whose establishment God commanded Moses to undertake.

God completed them to forty with the ten upper *ḥudūd* above him.

Moses therefore occupied himself with establishing them and appointed his brother Aaron as his successor over the Children of Israel.

This is His saying:

“And Moses said to his brother Aaron: Take my place among my people.”

When they were left to themselves and Moses was absent from them, occupied with what God had commanded him concerning the establishment of the *ḥudūd*, they were tested through some of the sons of the *lāḥiqs*.

The likeness of the *lāḥiqs* in the inward is the likeness of cattle, and their children—those who received knowledge from them and whom they raised—are like their offspring, namely the calves.

One of them is called a *ʿijl*, a calf.

The people of Moses therefore took one of the sons of the *lāḥiqs* as an Imam and established him for themselves.

This is His saying:

“And the people of Moses took, after him, from their ornaments a calf, a body that had a lowing sound.”

That means: from what they had adorned themselves with from the ornament of faith, they took words that they had memorized and gathered and assigned them to one of those who benefited from the *lāḥiqs*, but who did not know how to explain them.

“It had a lowing sound” means speech without explanation, just as *khuwār* is a sound that emerges from the throat without being articulated by the uvula, tongue, and lips into clear speech. It was therefore merely a sound without exposition.

“Did they not see that it did not speak to them?”

That is: it did not speak to them with the speech of truth.

“Nor guide them to a path.”

That is, to any path of truth.

“They took it, and they were wrongdoers.”

That is, they placed it where it did not belong.

We have already mentioned that wrongdoing in the language means placing a thing in a place other than its proper place.

They therefore established him in the place of Aaron.

That is His saying:

“And they said: This is your god and the god of Moses, but he forgot.”

Do they not see that it does not return a word to them, nor possess for them the power to cause harm or benefit?

Aaron had already said to them:

“O my people, you have only been tested through it. Indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my command.”

They said:

“We shall never cease clinging to it until Moses returns to us.”

Part Eight is complete. It is followed by Part Nine of the Book of the Foundation of Interpretation, containing the conclusion of the Story of Moses.

The Ninth Part: Completion of the Story of Moses

When Moses had established the *ḥudūd* whose establishment God had commanded him to undertake and whose appointed time He had set for him, and when he had completed them—we have already mentioned them—this is His saying:

“And We appointed for Moses thirty nights.”

And Moses said to his brother Aaron:

“Take my place among my people, put things right, and do not follow the path of the corrupters.”

When Moses came to Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said:

“My Lord, show me, that I may look at You.”

This was because, when Moses occupied himself with establishing these *ḥudūd* until the appointed time of his meeting with his Teacher, which He had appointed for him—namely, his upper *ḥadd*, so that he might receive from it according to his rank and the time appointed for him—at the place where it would envelop him with revelation, he appointed Aaron as his successor over his people.

He established Aaron to deliver the outward which Moses himself had been undertaking, and the inward, which was Aaron's *ḥadd* as the *asās*.

The Samaritan envied him. He was among those who attended Moses, peace be upon him, and outwardly displayed acceptance of what he received from him, while inwardly his affair with him was otherwise.

He attracted the weaker members of Moses’ people and presented to them some of what Pharaoh had professed and asserted of falsehood. He devised an interpretation for it and appointed opposite Aaron a man from among some of the *mustajībūn* who had inclined

toward him. This is the man represented by the parable of the calf, whose account has already been mentioned.

Thus most of Moses' people were put to trial after him.

This is His saying:

"And what has made you hasten ahead of your people, O Moses?"

He said:

"They are close behind me, and I hastened to You, my Lord, so that You might be pleased."

He said:

"Indeed, We have tested your people after you, and the Samaritan has led them astray."

We shall mention the completion of this discussion in its proper place, after interpreting what we have already mentioned of His saying:

"My Lord, show me, that I may look at You."

The *Rabb* of Moses here means his teacher and trainer in wisdom, namely his upper *ḥadd*, which would envelop him with revelation from God.

This is known in the language of the Arabs. They call the one who possesses authority over a thing its *rabb*, just as they say *rabb al-ʿabd*, the master of the servant; *rabb al-dār*, the master of the house; *rabb al-thawb*, the owner of the garment; and similar expressions.

Among such examples is what God, exalted is He, relates concerning Joseph, peace be upon him, when he said to the king's messenger:

"Return to your lord and ask him about the women who cut their hands."

And:

"As for one of you, he shall give his lord wine to drink."

As for his saying:

"My Lord, show me, that I may look at You,"

he meant by *looking* consideration of all the knowledge that was with him, and of another *ḥadd* among the *ḥudūd of knowledge*: he asked to look into the *ḥadd* connected to him, the one above him.

In the language, *looking* can mean something other than visual sight. Thus they say, "So-and-so looked after himself," "He considered knowledge," and "He considered such-and-such a matter." A person says to another, "Consider my affair."

Thus he was asking for an increase in knowledge beyond what had been given to him and established as his *ḥadd*.

As for Moses asking to look upon the Creator of creation, mighty and exalted is He, while he was at the level of knowledge belonging to prophethood, that would contradict what is possible for him and for anyone below him in knowledge: that such a thing could occur or be possible.

Nor is it within human capacity to look upon the angels, because dense corporeal human beings do not possess the capacity to see the subtle spiritual angel, nor to hear his speech while not seeing him as human beings hear the speech of those like themselves.

The union that occurs between prophets and the upper *ḥudūd* of angels occurs only with great difficulty that overtakes them, since their nature is not suited to remain steady under it.

For this reason it is said that when the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, was enveloped by revelation, he would fall into a state of sleepiness and distress, sweat would pour from him, and his body would become heavy until it was difficult to carry him. He would become completely absorbed in it, to the point that those around him could not recognize outwardly whether he knew who was present or who was speaking to him.

Indeed, at the beginning of his affair they said that he was mad.

That is their saying:

“One taught by another, a madman.”

If a person were addressed by some animal he had seen and was accustomed to, or by a tree or stone while seeing it and knowing it, there would still be nothing in his nature that could accommodate such a thing. How much more so when he is addressed by something he does not know and has never been accustomed to seeing, or when he is asked to see it?

God, exalted is He, says:

“Had We made him an angel, We would have made him a man, and We would have confused for them what they themselves confuse.”

And His saying:

“By the star when it falls; your companion has neither gone astray nor erred, nor does he speak from desire. It is nothing but revelation revealed. He was taught by one mighty in power, possessing strength, and he rose to his true form while he was on the highest horizon,”

up to His saying:

“And indeed he saw him another time, at the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary.”

Most of the commentators among the people of the outward said that this referred to Gabriel, and that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, saw him twice on the night he was taken on the Night Journey.

We have already mentioned that the Night Journey occurred only with his spirit, and most of them likewise said this. That is according to the outward rendering of what we have described concerning the manner of revelation.

Those among them who said that he saw Gabriel claimed that Gabriel would appear to him in the form of Dihya al-Kalbi.

The anthropomorphists claimed that he saw God, the Creator of creation, mighty and exalted is He.

They likewise claimed that God, glorified is He, descended from heaven and entered into a tree and spoke to Moses with speech like the speech of human beings.

Glory be to God! He is exalted far above what the wrongdoers say.

Most reports concerning this are according to what we have mentioned: that he, peace and blessings of God be upon him, used to say that he heard the sound of revelation like the sound of a chain, and it is reported concerning Moses that he heard from the tree a sound like the sound of a cat.

It has been said that this was because of the subtlety of the angel, since he is not like dense human beings, and because human speech becomes coarse through emerging from corporeal form, whereas what emerges from the spiritual becomes subtle and delicate because it does not pass through an instrument.

Human speech becomes coarse because it emerges from the narrowness of the throat into the spaciousness of the mouth, like sound emerging thinly from the opening of a trumpet and then becoming coarse when it reaches its wide end, which corresponds to the mouth.

The common people likewise claimed that Moses asked to see God, exalted and sanctified above what they say.

The friends of God are far too exalted to be ignorant of something like this concerning His power and their own incapacity for it.

His saying:

“And his Lord spoke to him”

we have already explained as referring to his upper *ḥadd*, his teacher through taʾyīd from God and by His command, blessed is His name.

His speech refers to what enveloped him in revelation.

This is known in the Arabic language in which the Qur’an was revealed, as when they say:

“Life admonished its people,”

or:

“Life addressed them concerning its reports,”

or:

“Life warned them and cautioned them.”

This does not mean that life itself literally spoke.

His saying:

“He said: You shall not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it remains firm in its place, then you shall see Me.”

The mountains here are images of the *lāḥiqs*.

The *ḥadd* united with Moses, when Moses asked him for all that he possessed by saying, **“Show me, that I may look at You,”** said to him:

“That will not stand for him. It is not within your *ḥadd*, nor can your capacity bear it. If you wish to know this, then increase one of your *lāḥiqs* with something from what you possess beyond what has been established for him. If you see that he remains firm and bears it, then you shall be able to bear that which you have asked of me.”

When:

“His Lord manifested Himself to the mountain,”

the expression contains a precedence and postponement according to the usage of the Arabs.

That is, He manifested Himself to the mountain—meaning the *lāḥiq*—while his *Rabb* means Moses, his teacher through wisdom.

This occurred when Moses did what was described.

“He made it levelled to dust.”

That means it weakened, crumbled, and collapsed. It could not bear what had been added to it, and its powers became weak until it disappeared.

When Moses saw this, he was terrified and realized that if he were given what he had asked for, this would be his condition.

Thus:

“Moses fell down unconscious,”

meaning overcome and fainting from fear of what he had dared to ask for, namely to apprehend something outside his rank.

When he recovered, he said:

“Glory be to You! I turn to You in repentance, and I am the first of the believers.”

Thus he declared the Creator, mighty and exalted, far above commanding that a thing be placed outside its proper rank. He repented of what had occurred to him in his request and acknowledged that he was the first to affirm and believe that there is no way for anyone to receive what does not belong to his *ḥadd*.

He said:

“O Moses, indeed I have chosen you above the people through My messages and My speech. So take what I have given you and be among the grateful.”

That means revelation enveloped him with this from God, exalted is He, informing him that he had been supported with messengerhood in the outward, and with the call to accept him through imitation and affirmation.

His saying:

“And through My speech”

means through the exposition with which he was supported, namely the taʾwīl of what he called people to and its explanation, so that it might become established among those who received it from him through imitation and affirmation.

God called this **His speech** and attributed it to Himself as an act of glorification, just as He says:

“And know that whatever you acquire as spoils, one-fifth belongs to God.”

His saying:

“So take what I have given you and be among the grateful”

means: “Take what I have given you, be grateful for it, and do not aspire beyond what belongs to you.”

Then He, exalted is He, said:

“And We wrote for him on the tablets an admonition concerning everything and an explanation of everything. So hold fast to them with strength, and command your people to take the best of them.”

The tablets in taʾwīl are the *lāḥiqs*, among whom the *asās* establishes the knowledge of taʾwīl.

We have already mentioned their number and their position.

That is: He placed within what was established in the rank of the *lāḥiqs* everything required by those below them of knowledge, exposition, and admonition.

“And command your people to take the best of them”

means the exposition—namely taʾwīl—through which the outward revelation is established and becomes sound in hearts and intellects.

It establishes the proof against whoever rejects the outward rulings of the religious law and attacks the outward of what its adherents are commanded to observe, whether among the various religious communities, the Zindiqs, or others who attack the Islamic law.

The inward taʾwīl is what bears witness to the outward and establishes its validity for the one who rejects or doubts it because of his ignorance of its meanings, its intended purpose, and what has been made a proof and parable for it.

An example is the person who rejects the meaning of purification with water and earth, prayer and what it contains of bowing and prostration, facing the qibla, prostrating toward one of the built houses, pilgrimage to it and circumambulation around it, standing at the stations and sacred rites of pilgrimage, and all the other things with which God commanded creation, as well as what He permitted and prohibited for them.

It would be lengthy to enumerate all of these.

Many people who did not know their taʾwīl were led into Zindiqism when they rejected them and followed those who affirmed them without knowing the true reality of their taʾwīl.

Because they did not know the rank of the learned and the excellence of knowledge, they were led to likening the Creator, mighty and exalted, to His creation; to applying their own opinions, analogies, and desires to the religion of God; to denying many reports from the Messenger when they were ignorant of their taʾwīl; to declaring lawful what God had prohibited and prohibited what God had made lawful; to lying about His Messenger; and to altering taʾwīl according to their own opinions into whatever their intellects made attractive to them.

This is the path of all the common people.

But whoever seeks taʾwīl from the friends of God, those whom He has entrusted with it and into whom He deposited its knowledge, and learns from them what they convey to him, knows God with true knowledge of His unity, rejects the likenesses attributed to Him by the anthropomorphists, and knows the true reality of what God has commanded His servants to do, of what He has made lawful and what He has prohibited.

He also knows what is sound and what is unsound among the reports from the Messenger and other matters over which people have differed.

Taʾwīl clarifies and explains all of this. It is its **rūbāz**, its test and standard, its measure and balance, and the witness both to it and for it.

For this reason it is the best discourse and the most excellent of sciences.

God commanded Moses to command his people to take hold of it.

This is what is meant in the Qur'an:

"Follow the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord."

And:

"God has sent down the best discourse."

Moses therefore returned, as God says:

"Angry and grieved."

He said:

"O my people, did your Lord not make you a good promise? Has the covenant seemed too long to you, or did you desire that wrath from your Lord should descend upon you, so that you broke your promise to me?"

This was because of what they had undertaken after him by taking the calf, turning away from Aaron, rejecting the exposition of taʾwīl that he had established for them, and abandoning the outward whose establishment Moses had entrusted to him.

They said:

"We did not break your promise through our own power."

That is: "Not by our own choice."

"But we were made to carry burdens of the ornaments of the people."

That is: words from Pharaoh's speech were imposed upon us. They confused us with it and adorned it for us by carrying it to us through an interpretation that they established for us.

"So we cast them."

That means: "We rejected those questions when their corruption became clear to us."

"And likewise did the Samaritan cast."

They said: "Likewise was what the Samaritan cast before us"—that is, he was the one who did this to us.

These were among those who had turned away from him after the corruption of his affair became clear to them, before Moses came to them.

God relates their words:

“And when they saw that they had gone astray, they said: If our Lord does not have mercy upon us and forgive us, we shall surely be among the losers.”

When Moses, as God relates, cast down the tablets, he seized his brother by the head and pulled him toward himself.

He said:

“O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and almost killed me. So do not let the enemies rejoice over me, and do not place me among the wrongdoing people.”

And in another account:

“O Aaron, what prevented you, when you saw them going astray, from following me? Did you disobey my command?”

He said:

“O son of my mother, do not seize me by my beard or my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say: You have divided the Children of Israel and have not heeded my word.”

His casting down of the tablets is interpreted as his silencing of the *lāḥiqs* and dāʿīs as a punishment for his people because of what they had introduced after his departure.

We have already mentioned that their likeness is that of tablets upon which knowledge is written.

For this reason the upper *ḥadd* in which knowledge is established was called the Preserved Tablet.

We have already mentioned this earlier.

His taking his brother by the head means taking the outward by the two hands, by which Aaron's authority had been established when Moses appointed him as his successor.

His beard is an image of the inward which had been established for him, so that none of this would reach his *lāḥiqs*, since he had cut off the Call and raised the exposition as punishment for what they had introduced after him.

Aaron feared that this had arisen from Moses’ displeasure with him, so Moses asked forgiveness for him.

That is his saying:

“My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us into Your mercy.”

That is: “Cover us with Your mercy.”

This is not as the people of the outward claimed, that Moses struck the ground with the Torah God had revealed to him, which they said was made from emerald tablets, until they broke

apart because he became angry with his people, and that he seized his brother by his beard and head and dragged him toward himself upon the ground.

God has exonerated Moses from committing such an act with a Book that God had revealed to him, and with his brother, a noble prophet whom God joined to him in messengerhood.

If such an act were attributed to one of those who make this claim concerning a book that had come to him from one of his brothers—if it were said that he struck the ground with it—or concerning a servant of his, that he seized him by the beard or head and dragged him toward himself, he would deny such an act of himself and feel disgust and distress at being described in such a way.

Yet they find it easy to attribute such things and their like to the friends of God, whom God chose from among His creation, and to His prophets whom He appointed for His servants, claiming that He was pleased with such actions from them.

Exalted is God, and He declares His friends innocent of their falsehood.

Then Moses said to the Samaritan, as God relates:

“So what is your affair, O Samaritan?”

That is: “What led you to do this thing that you introduced and through which you tested the community?”

He said:

“I saw what they did not see.”

That means: “I saw an opinion from my own self contrary to what you saw”—meaning Moses, Aaron, and his *lāḥiq*—“through the taʾyīd with which you had been supported.”

“So I took a handful from the trace of the Messenger and cast it away.”

That means: “I saw within myself a power of messengerhood and taʾyīd, so I claimed it, established the calf as a gate for myself, and opened the Call and *muḍātaḥa* to it according to what my soul had suggested to me.”

Then he cast that aside, meaning he abandoned it.

The common people claimed that the Samaritan saw Gabriel come to Moses riding upon a donkey, so he took a handful of earth from the place upon which Gabriel's donkey had stepped. They claimed that this gave him knowledge, which he called them to, and that he threw that earth upon them, making his statement appear attractive to them.

If it were not for the length that would result, we would mention alongside every taʾwīl examples of the corrupt interpretations they produced of this sort.

But this is already known to those who have heard the truth, and through it its corruption becomes clear, God willing.

When the Samaritan turned away from what he had been doing, Moses had no choice but to do to him what he had done to his companions: deprive him of *mufātaḥa*.

That is His saying:

“So go away. Indeed, for you in this life is that you will say: No touching. And indeed, you have an appointment that you will not fail to meet.”

That means: “Leave our affair, which you confused for the people. Do not engage anyone in *mufātaḥa* concerning it, and do not let anyone engage you in it.”

“And indeed, you have an appointment that you will not fail to meet”

means the appointed matter of the Hereafter.

“And look at your god to which you remained devoted. We shall burn it, then scatter it into the sea completely.”

The *god* here is the calf which he established as a god for Moses’ people instead of God, and to which he remained devoted.

That means: “We shall remove the falsehood you established for it through the outward of what we possess, without its inward.”

The outward is like the sea, as we have mentioned in several places previously.

This was Moses’ contempt for its falsehood: he did not consider it necessary to argue against it through the inward of the religious law, but was satisfied with its outward because of the weakness and corruption of that falsehood and the frailty of its affair.

Among Moses’ people were some who had not been tested by the calf and remained upon obedience to Aaron.

Others had been tested by it, but then recognized the corruption of its affair and abandoned it.

The trial nevertheless became firmly established among most of them. They remained upon what they had adopted from it, found the obligations brought by Moses burdensome, and inclined toward what Pharaoh had permitted for them.

Thus the trial became firmly established among them.

Moses saw that leaving them and turning away from them would strengthen the causes of that condition among them.

He therefore established Aaron in his place concerning taʾwīl and commanded him to establish his *lāḥiqs* and *ḥudūd*.

Aaron completed this.

That is His saying:

“And when Moses’ anger subsided, he took the tablets.”

That means he reunited the *lāḥiqs* with himself.

“And in their inscription was guidance and mercy for those who fear their Lord.”

That means the believers who fear their Master of the Age.

Moses therefore established his Call and turned toward his people, calling them to enter into the affair of his *asās*.

This is what God relates:

“O my people, enter the land which God has prescribed for you, and do not turn back upon your heels, lest you become losers.”

That means: “Enter into the affair of my *asās* and my *hujja*.”

We have already mentioned that the land is an image of this.

“And do not turn away from it toward its opposite, lest you lose the righteous deeds that preceded you.”

They said:

“O Moses, indeed within it are a people of tyrants, and we shall never enter it until they leave it. If they leave it, then we shall enter.”

They meant those who had remained upon the affair of Aaron, because they had become enemies to them and separated themselves from them.

They were saying: “We shall never be with them upon one affair.”

Two men from among those who feared God, upon whom God had bestowed favor, said:

“Enter upon them through the gate.”

The gate here is Aaron, as the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said:

“I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate.”

“When you enter it, you shall be victorious.”

That is: “You shall overcome them in their affair because of your greater number, and the position and condition shall belong to you.”

This was because they disdained entering into the affair of Aaron, since they had introduced what they had introduced, and they would thereby become inferior to those who had not introduced anything, both in his eyes and in their standing with him.

“And upon God rely, if you are believers.”

That is: “Make your reliance upon God if you are affirming.”

They said:

“O Moses, we shall never enter it so long as they remain there. So go—you and your Lord—and fight. We shall remain sitting here.”

They meant: “Go, you and the Lord whom you have established for your people”—meaning Aaron—and argue against those who oppose you.

This was because of their perception of their own large number and the small number of believers who followed Moses.

Moses said:

“My Lord, I have authority over none except myself and my brother, so separate us from the defiantly disobedient people.”

That means: “Do not unite us with those who have acted defiantly, who have departed from Your command.”

Moses did not affirm that he could rely upon those of his people who had remained upon his affair, nor did he trust them. Thus he said that he possessed authority only over himself and his brother.

An example of this kind of supplication by Moses for his people is His saying:

“And when Moses said to his people: O my people, you have wronged yourselves by taking the calf.”

That means: “You have placed yourselves in a position other than your proper one because you obeyed one whom God did not command you to obey.”

“So repent to your Creator and kill yourselves. That is better for you.”

That means: “Overcome your souls with regard to what they call you toward of falsehood, compel them to the truth, and put them to death with regard to falsehood.”

God sent down to him a warning for his people and a devastating proof that shook the hearts.

Moses therefore began to plead for mercy on their behalf, hoping that they would return from what they were doing.

This is what God, exalted is He, says:

“And when the earthquake seized them, he said: My Lord, if You had willed, You could have destroyed them before, and me as well.”

That is, because of what they had introduced at that time, and because of the error into which he himself had fallen in his saying:

“My Lord, show me, that I may look at You.”

“Will You destroy us for what the foolish among us have done? It is only Your trial; by it You lead astray whom You will and guide whom You will. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, and You are the best of forgivers. And prescribe for us good in this world and in the Hereafter; indeed, we have turned to You.”

He said:

“My punishment—I inflict it upon whom I will, but My mercy encompasses all things. So I shall prescribe it for those who are mindful, who give the alms, and those who believe in Our signs: those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Gospel. He commands them to what is right, forbids them from what is wrong, makes lawful for them the good things, prohibits for them the impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles that were upon them. Those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the light that has been sent down with him—it is they who shall prosper.”

God, exalted is He, therefore informed Moses that He would not show mercy to them or to those who followed them except for those who reached Muhammad, believed in him, and affirmed Our signs.

Those signs were his Imams.

And they followed the light sent down with him, namely the explanation of taʾwīl by which one is illuminated, and the one into whom it had been entrusted.

“It is they who shall prosper”

means those who are saved from punishment among Moses’ people and those who believed in the signs before him—namely the Imams and *ḥujjas* of Moses.

Then God, exalted is He, mentioned His cursing them and transforming them, and the punishments with which He threatened them in various places in His Book.

Among these is His saying:

“And We said to them: Enter the gate prostrating.”

And:

“And We said to them: Do not transgress concerning the Sabbath,”

meaning: do not exceed what had been prohibited for you.

“And We took from them a solemn covenant,”

meaning the covenant He took from them.

And His saying:

“So because they broke their covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts hard. They distort words from their proper places.”

And His saying:

“As We cursed the people of the Sabbath.”

And:

“And We made among them apes and swine, and worshippers of the Ṭāghūt.”

And:

“You certainly knew those among you who transgressed concerning the Sabbath, so We said to them: Become apes, despised.”

“Thus We made it a deterrent for what was before it and what came after it, and an admonition for the mindful.”

Their transformation into apes means that the forms in which they had represented themselves in religion were changed into forms of disbelief, which are among the ugliest of forms, just as apes and swine are among the ugliest forms of animals.

Thus many people who conform to this interpretation are swine while remaining outwardly in human form.

Then God, exalted is He, removed from the people of Moses the virtue of the *asās* and what it contained of the exposition of taʾwīl.

This is His saying:

“For it shall be forbidden to them for forty years; they shall wander upon the earth.”

That is: they would doubt and be uncertain concerning the *asās*.

God took Aaron from among them, and the substance of exposition was cut off from them, and they wandered in the earth, as God, exalted is He, says.

It had already been established in the decree of God that He would establish the Imams only from the descendants of the *asās*.

Aaron left no child suitable for this.

The one who succeeded him in being suitable for it was still a child.

Thus the affair of Moses' people remained prolonged in this condition, deprived of exposition and of the *asās* who established it.

They came to know the excellence of what they had been deprived of, blamed one another for what they had perpetrated, and disputed over it.

God therefore commanded Moses to order them to choose from among themselves a man suitable to be Moses' *hujja* among them.

This is His saying:

"And when Moses said to his people: Indeed, God commands you to slaughter a cow."

They said:

"Do you take us in mockery?"

He said:

"I seek refuge in God from being among the ignorant."

The cow in taʾwīl is an image of the *ḥujjas*, while the slaughter is an image of taking the covenant.

That is: "Choose from among yourselves a man from whom the covenant of the *ḥujjas* may be taken, and establish him as a *hujja* for you."

The slaughter was attributed to them because they themselves were to establish him.

They said:

"Do you take us in mockery?"

That is: "Are you mocking us? When has a community ever established its own *ḥujjas*?"

Meaning: "If you were to do this on your own judgment, you would indeed be ignorant. But God has commanded it and has placed this matter in your hands, since ultimately it will return to the descendants of Aaron. Had God appointed him directly, this would have been firmly established for him and would have remained in his descendants thereafter."

They said:

"Ask your Lord to make clear to us what it is."

That is: "Explain to us which man this should be—the man who is to be your *hujja* in your lifetime and your successor after your death. Ask God to indicate him to us by his characteristics, so that we may recognize him through them, for we do not know whom to choose for this."

He said:

“He says that it is a cow neither old nor young, but midway between the two. So do what you have been commanded.”

That means: “Neither an aged one nor a young calf.”

That is: he is neither one who reached taʾyīd through knowledge long ago, nor one who is recent in that matter, but rather one midway between the two states.

They said:

“Ask your Lord to make clear to us what its color is.”

That is: “What is the course of the speech of this man whom we are to choose, and what is the character of his exposition?”

He said:

“He says that it is a yellow cow, bright in color, pleasing to the beholders.”

That means: he is a *lāḥiq* possessing beautiful, pure exposition, whose speech is clear and untainted by obscurity or alteration.

They said:

“Ask your Lord to make clear to us what it is. Indeed, the cows are similar to us, and if God wills, we shall surely be guided.”

That means: “Give us more exposition, for the matter of the one suitable to be a *hujja* has become confused for us. Through exposition, if God wills, we shall be guided to what we have been charged with.”

He said:

“He says that it is a cow neither trained to plough the earth nor to water the field, sound and without blemish.”

They said:

“Now you have brought the truth.”

So they slaughtered it, though they had scarcely been willing to do so.

That means: he is a *hujja* who does not submit to the people of the outward, yet has a position among them.

“Nor does it water the field” means that he does not engage them in *mufātaḥa* concerning any exposition.

“It ploughs the earth” means that he works through the taʾwīl of the *asās* and sets his affair in order.

So they slaughtered it and established Joshua son of Nun.

They had scarcely done so because the matter seemed weighty to them.

Moses entrusted the matter to him and appointed him as successor on behalf of the descendants of Aaron until the one among them who was entitled to the Imamate should reach the degree of eligibility and the matter could be handed over to him.

This was because Moses' departure was drawing near, and it was not fitting for the people to remain without a guardian of the affair.

Joshua son of Nun therefore carried out the testament and succession.

Then He, glorified and exalted is He, said:

"And when you killed a soul and disputed concerning it, God was going to bring forth what you had been concealing. So We said: Strike him with part of it. Thus God gives life to the dead and shows you His signs, so that perhaps you may understand."

By His saying **"you killed a soul,"** He means that they pushed the Imam—Aaron—away from his right and wronged him.

We have already mentioned that wrongdoing is an image of killing.

That is: "You pushed the Imam away from his right and established, from your own selves, someone opposed to him in his position, preventing the establishment of the *lāḥiqs* and the spreading of exposition and taʾwīl."

You disputed among yourselves concerning this and concealed it from the weaker members of the community, making them believe that he was the true *asās*.

"And God will bring forth what you were concealing."

To dispute is to push one another away.

We have already stated that some among them turned away from the affair of the Samaritan when the corruption of his position became clear to them, while another group remained obedient to Aaron, peace be upon him, and did not follow any of the Samaritan's affair.

They were fewer in number than those who followed the Samaritan.

Those who remained obedient therefore rejected what the disobedient had introduced and established the proof against them, but they did not accept it.

This was through Aaron's taʾyīd and permission.

That is His saying:

"And Aaron had already said to them: O my people, you have only been tested through it. Indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my command."

Their response was as God relates:

“We shall never cease clinging to it until Moses returns to us.”

They pushed Aaron away from his right, and they pushed those who obeyed him away from their degrees and ranks.

Thus He says:

“And you disputed concerning it.”

That is: you pushed one another away concerning it.

This was what occurred between them and those possessing strength and knowledge.

As for the weak and ignorant, they concealed the matter from them and confused truth with falsehood for them, as God relates:

“while they know.”

God said:

“And God will bring forth what you were concealing.”

That means the right of the Imam, your guardian.

This was the path followed by the community of Muhammad concerning his successor and his *asās*, exactly like one footprint following another, as the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said:

“You will surely follow the paths of the nations before you, exactly like one shoe following another and one feather following another, even if they entered a lizard’s hole, you would enter it.”

The *asās* was called a **soul** because his position in relation to the nāṭiq is the position of his soul.

For this reason the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said to ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

“You are to me in the position of Aaron to Moses, and in the position of my spirit to my body, and in the position of my head to my body.”

And because knowledge is contained in the soul in this same manner, the true knowledge of the nāṭiq—namely the inward taʾwīl that explains the outward revelation—is with the *asās*.

From him it passes to the Imams, and each Imam places it in his *hujja* when it becomes possible for him to have a *hujja*, just as the Prophet established the practice of placing it in the *asās*, who was his *hujja*.

Possibility, existence, and the times differ in this matter.

Among the messengers and Imams, some have a time in which it becomes possible and appropriate for them to establish their *hujja*, *lāḥiqs*, *nuqabāʾ*, dāʿīs, *maʾdhūnūn*, and all the other ranks connected with their Call throughout all the *jazāʾir*.

Among them are those for whom it becomes possible to establish some of these ranks but not others.

And among them are those for whom, at certain times and in certain periods, it is not possible to establish any of them—not a *hujja* nor anyone else.

We have already mentioned the condition of some of them in this respect, and the loss of this possibility at certain times.

What the people of Moses established concerning the affair of the calf became the cause of what subsequently occurred in the killing of the prophets, and God attributed this to them.

He said:

"Say: Why, then, did you kill the prophets of God before, if you were believers?"

"Moses came to you with clear proofs, then you took the calf after him, and you were wrongdoers."

Whoever establishes a precedent from which some affair arises bears responsibility for what proceeds from it and what is caused by it.

Among this is the saying of the Messenger of God:

"Whoever establishes a good practice, and it is acted upon and then acted upon after him, will have its reward and the reward of whoever acts upon it after him, without anything being diminished from their rewards. And whoever establishes an evil practice, and it is acted upon and then acted upon after him, will bear its burden and the burden of whoever acts upon it after him, without anything being diminished from their burdens."

And his saying, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

"A servant will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection and a bloodshed will be brought against him among the things for which he is being questioned. He will say: By God, I never shed blood. It will be said to him: You spoke such-and-such a word, and its affair continued until blood was shed because of it, so you have a share in it."

This is also the meaning of His saying:

"So We said: Strike him with part of it. Thus God gives life to the dead and shows you His signs, so that perhaps you may understand."

He means:

“Strike those who are dead”—that is, those among you who are dead through ignorance—“with part of it,” meaning with part of the cow, whose likeness is that of the *hujja* they established.

He informs that everyone who is dead with respect to truth, when the taʾwīl of the *asās* strikes his ear and his heart, becomes alive through what he receives from it.

It has already been established, without disagreement, that God has used death as an image for ignorance in numerous places in His Book.

Among these is:

“Is one who was dead, then We gave him life…”

And:

“Dead, not alive, and they do not perceive when they will be resurrected.”

And:

“O you who believe, respond to God and the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life.”

Likewise:

“Thus God gives life to the dead,”

meaning that He shows you which of His friends accomplishes this, so that perhaps you may understand their actions toward those who respond to them.

Then He informed concerning those among Moses’ people who persisted afterward in misguidance:

“Then your hearts became hardened after that, so that they were like stones or even harder in hardness.”

He meant that their hearts did not move toward accepting knowledge and wisdom, but were like dead matter, like the outward stones.

Then He said:

“And indeed, among the stones are those from which rivers gush forth.”

That means they are capable of being used in parables.

God therefore made the stone an image of the *asās*, because of its soundness and firmness in its religion and belief. From it emerge the twelve *lāḥiqs*.

We have already mentioned the taʾwīl of this previously.

“And indeed, among them are those which split and water comes out of them.”

That means that among the dāʿīs are those who possess firmness in religion and from whom knowledge emerges during *mufātaḥa*.

“And indeed, among them are those which fall down from fear of God.”

That means that there may be believers who do not reach the rank of the *ḥudūd*, yet possess firmness and strength in their religion, while lowering themselves in submission to the *ḥadd* above them, out of fear of God, mighty and exalted is He.

The Tenth Part: The Story of Saul, of David, and the Beginning of the Story of Solomon, peace be upon them.

The Story of Saul

The Imamate in the cycle of Moses continued until it reached Saul. This is what God, exalted is He, says: **“And their prophet said to them, ‘Indeed, God has appointed Saul as a king for you,’”** meaning an Imam. And likewise God, exalted is He, says: **“Or do they envy the people for what God has given them of His bounty? For We gave the family of Abraham the Book and Wisdom, and We gave them a great kingdom.”**

They said, **“How can he have the kingdom over us when we are more entitled to the kingdom than he, and he has not been given abundance of wealth?”** Those who were his counterparts at that time among the lāḥiqs said this. One of them was Saul, and they considered him the least learned among them. This is what they meant by saying, **“and he has not been given abundance of wealth,”** meaning knowledge in the inward sense: that is, he had not been expanded in it as we had, so we are more entitled to the Imamate than he.

He said, **“Indeed, God has chosen him over you and increased him in breadth of knowledge and body. And God gives His kingdom to whom He wills, and God is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.”**

Thus he informed them that God had increased him in breadth of knowledge. Here He makes clear that **wealth is knowledge in the inward sense**, while **the body is the outward**, meaning that He strengthened him with both together.

Saul was the Imam of the Age. Opposite him was Jalut, one of the people of domination who claimed the Imamate. He and Saul challenged one another to a disputation as to which of them was more entitled to the Imamate. Each of them therefore gathered the people of his Call for the disputation.

David was one of Saul's nuqabāʾ. He proceeded with those who accompanied him. Among what the commentators mention concerning the outward account is that Saul had married David to his daughter, and that David said to him, “Take me with you,” so he took him. David took three stones in his pouch and went with Saul.

His being married to his daughter means that he attached to him some of his lāḥiqs and their people for entrusting and instruction, just as Shuʿayb had done with Moses, as has already

been mentioned. The three stones were three questions that he had prepared for Jalut and his companions.

When Saul set out with those whom he had chosen from among the people of his Call, he informed them of what God would test them with. This is what God says:

“And when Saul departed with the troops, he said, ‘Indeed, God will test you with a river.’”

That is, He would test you with knowledge that He would cause to flow upon the tongue of an ordinary person. **“Whoever drinks from it is not of me, and whoever does not taste it is indeed of me, except one who scoops up a handful with his hand.”**

That means: except one who takes from it only what he has received from the one upon whom the Benefactor has bestowed explanation, so that he recognizes what is sound in it from what is unsound.

This was because they needed to prepare themselves with knowledge for the disputation with Jalut and his companions. They plunged into this matter, and every group among them became engrossed in seeking what would prepare them for the disputation. They sought it through its proper channel and through other than its proper channel, from its people and from those who were not its people. That was what they were tested with and warned against.

They were to take this knowledge from their dāʿīs and from those who had bestowed knowledge upon them, those possessing the “hands” among them. For this reason the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him, forbade **al-karaʿ** in water—that is, drinking directly from it with the mouth as an animal drinks—and commanded drinking with vessels. The vessels are likenesses of the dāʿīs.

He said, **“If you do not find them, then drink with your hands, for they are the best of your vessels,”** meaning those above the dāʿīs, among the lāḥiqs and hujjas.

Saul therefore commanded his followers among the believers not to take the knowledge with which they wished to prepare themselves for the disputation except through his nuqabāʾ. He forbade them to take it through the common people. Yet only a few of them accepted this from him. This is what God says:

“So they drank from it, except a few of them.”

When he crossed it, together with those who believed with him—that is, when they left it and did not turn toward it—those who opposed him said, **“We have no strength today against Jalut and his troops.”**

This was because, when they opposed the one entrusted with authority over them and took knowledge from the source from which he had forbidden them to take it, they gained no substantial benefit from it. They saw that they would be defeated.

Those who thought that they would meet God—that is, those among them who obeyed the one entrusted with authority over them and took knowledge only from those whom he had commanded them to take it from—said:

“How many a small company has overcome a large company by God's permission, and God is with the steadfast.”

By the small company they meant the smallness of their number, and by the large company the multitude of Jalut's companions.

And His saying:

“And when they came out against Jalut and his troops, they said, ‘Our Lord, pour upon us patience, make our feet firm, and grant us victory over the unbelieving people.’”

Their coming out against him means their presenting themselves for the disputation, after those among them who had lost courage, or who had opposed the Master of the Age, mixed matters together and took knowledge from those from whom they had been forbidden to take it. These fell behind and perished, and they were the majority of Saul's companions, as God, exalted is He, mentioned concerning them in His saying:

“So they drank from it, except a few of them.”

It is related in the report that Saul's companions numbered four thousand. Three thousand of them were defeated and killed, while one thousand remained steadfast, and they defeated the companions of Jalut.

This is what God says:

“So they defeated them by God's permission, and David killed Jalut.”

That means that David was foremost in disputing Jalut, using the questions he had prepared for him. He defeated him with them and silenced him, along with those who had assisted him.

This is what is related in the report: that he struck him with a stone and it passed through him and struck three. But a stone does not do such a thing. Rather, the explanation is that he defeated him with the proof, together with two men who had assisted him and disputed alongside him.

And God gave David knowledge and wisdom.

The Story of David

Then the Imamate passed to David after Saul's departure. He encompassed the outward and the inward, and he established his son Solomon as his hujja and entrusted him with the affair of the inward.

This is what God, exalted is He, says:

“And We gave David and Solomon knowledge. They both said, ‘Praise belongs to God, who has favored us over many of His believing servants.’”

And His saying:

“And David and Solomon, when they judged concerning the field, when the sheep of the people strayed into it at night—and We were witnesses to their judgment. So We gave Solomon understanding of it, and to each We gave judgment and knowledge.”

The field is a likeness of the Call, when the people's sheep grazed in it—that is, grazed it at night, meaning that the people of the Call from one group entered among those of another group beyond their proper boundaries. And We were witnesses to their judgment.

“So We gave Solomon understanding of it” means that He gave him knowledge of the wisdom in that matter, because the judgment of the Call and of the dāʿīs belongs to the hujja, by authority of the Imam, through his commanding him to do so and granting him freedom to exercise it.

“And to each We gave judgment and knowledge.”

Knowledge belongs to the nāṭiq, while judgment belongs to the hujja, by his command and authorization.

The matter was that a man who cultivated a field—which means the maʾdhūn entrusted with nurturing the believers—and a shepherd—which means a dāʿī in another region, other than the dāʿī who had authorized this maʾdhūn—brought their dispute before him.

The maʾdhūn stated that the people of this dāʿī's Call had mixed with his companions, whom his own dāʿī had authorized him to nurture. They had exposed them to taʾwīl and corrupted them for him.

Solomon therefore judged that the dāʿī who had **mufātaḥa** with companions who were not from his own people of the Call should surrender to him a number of people from his Call equal to the number whom he had corrupted by engaging them in mufātaḥa. They would leave the body of his Call and join the one whose companions he had corrupted.

He judged this against him because it was his responsibility to protect them and prevent them from engaging in inward mufātaḥa, because they were within his sanctuary. Had he engaged them only in the outward, there would have been nothing against him in that.

The same principle applies in the outward as well.

In the outward report, it is related that a man who cultivated a field and a man whose sheep grazed it at night brought their dispute before him. **Nafsh** means grazing at night.

Solomon said that the people who owned enclosed fields must protect their fields during the day. If sheep belonging to some people escaped into them, without their owners deliberately releasing them there, the owners of the fields were not liable for anything.

This, as we have said, is a likeness of the **mufātaḥa of the mustajībūn in the outward**, and their dāʿī bears no responsibility for it when they undertake it on their own.

He said that the owners of livestock must protect them at night. If they escaped and damaged the crops, their owners were liable for what they damaged.

This is like the **mufātaḥa of the mustajībūn in the inward**, and judgment in it is as we have described. The same applies equally in the outward.

It is likewise related in the report that Solomon judged that the owners of the sheep whose animals had escaped at night and grazed the crops should compensate the owners of the fields with an equivalent amount.

This is how the judgment continues to this day, both outwardly and inwardly.

And His saying:

"And We subjected the mountains to David, glorifying with him, and the birds."

The mountains are likenesses of the lāḥiqs, and the birds are likenesses of the dāʿīs. Their glorification with him is their engaging the mustajībūn in the Call, nurturing them, and responding to David.

Their being subjected to him means that they were made to serve him in this, calling people to him under compulsion.

"And We taught him the making of coats of armor for you, to protect you from your violence. Will you then be grateful?"

This means what God taught him of explanation and proof, and commanded him to teach it to the mustajībūn of his Call, so that it would protect them from the violence of their enemy and repel from them the attacks made against them with their proofs. This is like armor protecting its wearer in war from the blows and thrusts of enemies.

And His saying, exalted is He:

"And We certainly gave David bounty from Us: 'O mountains, repeat praises with him, and the birds.'"

We have already mentioned the interpretation of the mountains and birds.

"Repeat with him" means that they travel along with him wherever he travels. **Taʾwīb** means continuing the journey for the traveler.

The mountains and birds did not literally travel outwardly with David wherever he went. Thus the statement applies specifically to the inward.

And His saying, **"And We softened iron for him,"** has the same inward meaning. It means: We made difficult speech easy for him.

As for iron in the outward sense, even though armor was made from it, it remained according to what it naturally is. People still make armor from it today in accordance with what David made, so he was not uniquely distinguished in that respect.

“Make full-length coats of mail.”

The **sābigh** is something complete, ample, and extensive. It means a praiseworthy course and complete customs within a firmly established religious law based upon knowledge and wisdom, by which you repel the attacks of those who attack the people of your religious law.

We have already discussed this earlier.

And **“measure the links”**—*sard* means weaving, and measuring it means making it firmly constructed, without unevenness. Likewise, he was commanded to establish his religious law, customs, and conduct with moderation, without anything in them differing, becoming uneven, or contradicting another.

It has also been said that the measuring in *sard* means making all the rings proportionate, so that they are not thick and break the rings, nor thin and become unstable.

Its meaning in the composition of speech is that it should not be excessively subtle, disappearing into subtlety so that only a few understand it after hardship and exertion; nor should it be coarse, repelling the ears and becoming alien to the hearts. Rather, it should be intermediate between the two.

And His saying:

“And remember Our servant David, possessor of strength.”

That is, possessing strength in the matter of his religion.

“Indeed, he was ever turning in repentance.”

That is, returning to his Lord in all his affairs.

“Indeed, We subjected the mountains with him, glorifying at evening and sunrise, and the birds gathered.”

We have already mentioned the interpretation of the mountains and birds.

“Each was ever turning back.”

That is, each returned to his command.

“And We strengthened his kingdom.”

That means We strengthened his Imamate.

“And We gave him wisdom”—meaning true knowledge—**“and decisive speech,”** meaning the judgments by which disputes brought before him are distinguished and decided. This is knowledge of the inward and knowledge of the outward.

And His saying:

“And has the report of the disputants reached you, when they climbed over the wall of the sanctuary? When they entered upon David and he was frightened by them. They said, ‘Do not fear. We are two disputants; one of us has wronged the other, so judge between us with truth’”—

meaning, with the judgment of truth in the inward—

“and do not transgress, and guide us to the straight path,”

meaning, guide us through your judgment to the justice of the Imam.

“Indeed, this brother of mine has ninety-nine ewes, while I have one ewe, and he said, ‘Entrust it to me,’ and he prevailed over me in speech.”

That is: this is a brother of mine among the dāʿīs. He has ninety-nine maʾdhūnūn who nurture people for him, guide them to him, and break them down for him, while I have one maʾdhūn whom he wished to take from me, and he prevailed over me in speech.

He said:

“He has certainly wronged you by asking for your ewe in addition to his ewes. Indeed, many partners wrong one another, except those who believe and perform righteous deeds—and few are they.”

When they had said this to him, and he had answered them with what he answered them, he looked at them while they were before him, but he saw no one.

He therefore knew that this was a trial from God, exalted is He.

This is His saying:

“And David realized that We had only tested him, so he sought forgiveness from his Lord and fell bowing and repented.”

That is, when he became certain, upon seeing that they had disappeared from him, that they were two angels who had appeared to him in human form, he understood what they had hinted at and sought God's forgiveness for it.

The common people, in their interpretation, have claimed that David—so they allege—had a beautiful bird appear before him, unlike any bird he had ever seen. He intended to take it, but it moved a little farther away and landed not far from him. He rose toward it, but it moved to a rooftop. He climbed toward it and looked over the house of Uriah ibn Hannan, who was one of his close men.

There he saw his wife bathing. When she saw him, she moved her hair, which was abundant, and concealed herself with it. David was tempted by her when he saw her, so he sent Uriah ibn Hannan on an expedition and made him the commander of the Ark, although he was not normally placed in such a position, intending thereby that he be killed so that David could marry his wife.

He was killed, and David married her. They say he already had ninety-nine wives, while Uriah had no wife other than her.

They said that the two angels then presented him with the example of what he had done.

But God, exalted is He, has declared His friends innocent and purified them from this and similar ruinous major sins. Rather, the people heard an example concerning this and took it according to its outward meaning.

Its true meaning is in the inward, and it is what had actually happened: David had ninety-nine maʾdhūnūn, as we have mentioned, who called to him and nurtured people for him. Uriah ibn Hannan was one of his dāʿīs, and he had one maʾdhūn who nurtured the mustajībūn of his Call.

One of the maʾdhūnūn appointed by David died. David wished to appoint another man in his place so that nothing would be diminished from the number he had chosen and approved. He therefore asked who was suitable for this.

Someone he trusted and whose creed he approved was mentioned to him.

This is the meaning of the example of the bird that the common people say fell before David and that Satan appeared in its form. It was not as they said. Rather, it was an example they had heard but did not understand.

That is why they said that it was one of the most beautiful birds David had ever seen.

Their saying that he wished to take it means that he wished to appoint the man in place of the deceased and attach him to himself.

The man therefore directed him to Uriah's maʾdhūn, just as they say that the bird moved about before David in order to direct him to Uriah's wife.

As for what they mention about the bird ascending to the roof, that means his examining the candidate and being guided by true celestial knowledge—not by desire and opinion. Through it he distinguished the man whom the one who directed him had identified, his creed and inner character, and his ability to undertake what David wished to entrust to him.

As for what they mention of David looking at Uriah ibn Hannan's wife and contemplating her while she was naked and bathing, and that he admired her and was tempted by her, and that when she saw him looking at her she concealed herself with her hair—God has protected His prophets and declared them far above such a state. If an ordinary person were to undertake and commit such an act, it would be a deficiency and a stain upon his religion.

Rather, David examined the man's affair, investigated his closeness and the inward aspects of his deeds, and admired what he saw in him.

When the man realized this about David, he concealed himself from him in the outward. This is like the hair with which they say Uriah's wife concealed herself when David looked at her while she was naked.

Likewise, when David examined the man's inward state and uncovered it, the man concealed himself behind the outward, out of humility and self-effacement, because David saw him as he truly was in the excellence of his creed.

David therefore admired Uriah for having developed this man, for taking charge of his affairs until he raised him to this rank, for the care and nurturing he had given him, and for the knowledge he had taught him.

David raised Uriah to the rank of the lāḥiqs when he saw how well he performed, educated, and approached him, and he established him before him.

This is what they mean by saying that he made him commander of the Ark. They heard the outward wording but did not know its inward meaning.

The Ark is the outward body of the Imam in the inward interpretation.

This is also the meaning of God's saying:

“And their prophet said to them, ‘The sign of his kingdom is that the Ark will come to you, containing tranquility from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron left behind, carried by the angels.’”

The Ark is what we have described.

The **tranquility** is the Imamate.

The **remnant of the family of Moses and the family of Aaron** is what they preserved of it and of knowledge and wisdom for whoever would undertake it, and what they entrusted to those who succeeded them and inherited it, Imam from Imam, from what the angels carried from God, exalted is He, to the messengers, and which came from them to these successors.

David saw that Uriah had surpassed him in excellent cultivation. He treated him well, raised his maʾdhūn to himself, and elevated him above his rank, without informing Uriah of this, conducting the matter through him, or consulting him about it.

David thought that he had greater authority over his community and that he could do with them what he wished and alter their affairs as he pleased without consulting any of them.

Something of this entered Uriah's heart. Since David had neither informed him of it nor conducted it through him nor consulted him, he remained silent and revealed nothing.

But his right before God was that his labor and his undertaking in nurturing the man whom he had nurtured and developed should not be wasted, and that his share should not be cut off. It was incumbent that the matter be conducted through him.

God, exalted is He, therefore fulfilled his expectation and took David to account for his action. He alerted him to what he had neglected of Uriah's right through the example of the two angels whom He presented to him in the form of disputants.

David learned what had been hidden from him, sought God's forgiveness for it as mentioned, and fell bowing and repented.

That means he humbled himself before Uriah, returned the affair of his companion to him, and established for him the right that belonged to him.

God forgave him, as God, exalted is He, says:

"So We forgave him that, and indeed he has nearness to Us and an excellent return. O David, We have made you a vicegerent upon the earth, so judge between people with truth and do not follow desire, lest it lead you astray from the path of God. Indeed, those who stray from the path of God will have a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning."

Thus God, exalted is He, emphasized the matter concerning which David had judged, because he followed his own inclination and did not give the one who possessed the right his full due.

In this manner God reproves His prophets and disciplines them for mistakes they make without deliberately intending sins. As for the indecencies and major sins that the common people attribute to them, God, glorified is He, has declared them innocent of these and purified them from them.

His saying, **"So judge between people with truth,"** applies to everyone who brings a matter before another or has a matter brought before him among all people.

But the address and reproach here concerned those entrusted with wisdom: the officers of his Call among his lāḥiqs, nuqabāʾ, dāʿīs, and maʾdhūnūn.

It means: give each of them his right and judge it in his favor. Do not follow your desire concerning them, but follow what you were commanded and what was established for you, for those before you, and for those who come after you of your kind.

God's judgment is one and His practice is one among the earlier and later generations; it does not change or alter.

As God says:

"You will never find any alteration in the way of God."

As for His saying, **"lest it lead you astray from the path of God,"** the path of God is the Master of the Age. David was the Master of the Age in his time. But by it He means the Master of the Age who would come after him.

For if David followed his desire concerning the officers of his Call, and did not judge among them according to what their rights, deeds, and entitlement required, he would be led astray from recognizing which of them was entitled to succeed him and whose rank would necessarily come after him.

Whoever is led astray from recognizing the Imam of his Age is among those whom God has threatened with His punishment.

This was because it occurred from David before he established Solomon as his hujja. Had Solomon already been established, consideration of the affairs of those carrying the Call and the matter of the inward would have belonged to the hujja, and David would not have examined them himself, since he had not yet appointed a minister.

Then God bestowed Solomon upon him and established him as his hujja, entrusting the affair of the Call and the dāʿīs to him.

This is God's saying:

“And We bestowed Solomon upon David. How excellent a servant! Indeed, he was ever turning in repentance.”

The Story of Solomon Son of David

When God permitted David's departure and he left this world, Solomon assumed his place. The Imamate therefore became his after him, and the inheritance of his Imamate, kingdom, and judgment passed to him.

This is God's saying, exalted is He:

“And Solomon inherited David, and he said, ‘O people, we have been taught the speech of birds, and we have been given of everything. Indeed, this is surely the manifest bounty.’”

His saying here, **“O people,”** addresses the people of his Call who were entrusted with his wisdom, informing them of the greatness of God's blessing.

His saying, **“We have been taught the speech of birds,”** refers to birds in two ways.

One kind among them is a likeness of the celestial beings: the angels who descend by God's command to His prophets.

Their counterparts among the lower ranks are the dāʿīs who carry out the Call to the Imams and convey their teaching from them.

By the **speech of birds** he therefore meant wisdom and knowledge, and what is transmitted by the angels, from God to His messengers, then from His messengers to their successors, the Imams of His religion, and then upon the tongues of those who administer their Call, from them to all the mustajībūn of their Call.

This is the speech of birds that Solomon said he had been taught.

It does not mean, as the common people claim, that he spoke to birds and they spoke to him, meaning these outward birds.

God, exalted is He, specifically granted human beings speech and articulate language. As for other animals, they merely have sounds expressing various states of theirs, such as the calling

of birds during mating, or the sounds they make when some of them fight one another, and the sounds of beasts and other animals in such circumstances and others, and their yearning for their young, and things resembling this that are known of them in each state.

But articulate speech and expression with the tongue concerning intentions, relating reports, and the other forms of intended communication are specifically granted by God to human beings. He has favored some of them over others in eloquence.

His saying, **"And we have been given of everything,"** does not say, "We have been given everything," because possessing everything belongs uniquely to the Creator of creation, exalted is His remembrance. He gives His servants of it whatever they need, according to what He has charged them with.

The same is His saying:

"We have certainly set forth for people in this Qur'an every kind of example."

And His saying:

"They ask you about Dhū al-Qarnayn. Say, 'I shall recite to you something of his account. Indeed, We established him in the earth and gave him a means to everything.'"

There are many similar examples in the Qur'an.

Then He says:

"And Solomon's hosts were gathered for him—of jinn, humans, and birds—and they were arranged in ranks."

That means those who carried out the affairs of his Call were gathered for him, those who defended it and protected it.

The **jinn** here, in the inward interpretation, are the bearers of his knowledge, those who concealed it—that is, concealed it from others—and they are his lāḥiqs.

The **humans** are those who were familiar with his wisdom, namely his nuqabāʾ.

The **birds** are his dāʿīs.

"They were arranged in ranks" means that they urged one another forward, crowded together, and competed in righteous works.

The lower among them would strive to overtake those above them through righteous action, so that he might rise to a rank resembling that person's share, without envy between them. Rather, they competed in lofty affairs and elevated stations.

Until they came to the **Valley of the Ants**.

The ants here are likenesses of the maʾdhūnūn. They are those whom the dāʿīs authorize to break down the people of the outward for them, to direct those whom they have broken down toward them, and to nurture and teach those whom they call.

We have already mentioned that their likeness is that of the ewes that feed and nurture the young sheep, which are themselves likenesses of the believers. These maʾdhūnūn likewise nurture the mustajībūn.

Thus:

“Until, when they reached the Valley of the Ants, an ant said, ‘O ants, enter your dwellings.’”

That is: when they reached the speech of the ranks of the maʾdhūnūn, and they heard from them what was appropriate to their rank, one of the maʾdhūnūn said:

“O maʾdhūnūn, enter your dwellings.”

That is, return to those with whom you dwell, your dāʿīs from whom you take knowledge, and take from them what they give you according to the measure of your ranks.

“And depart, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you without realizing it.”

That is: you have heard what you ought to hear in your rank, so rise and depart. Rely upon your dāʿīs before something should proceed from the speech of Solomon, his lāḥiqs, and his nuqabāʾ that you cannot bear, crushing what you possess while Solomon and his companions are unaware of what befalls you if you become too expansive in subtle speech that you cannot bear.

The one who said this among the maʾdhūnūn was among the most learned of them, the most penetrating in knowledge, and the one most aware of what was required.

He feared that the speech might continue through the lāḥiqs and nuqabāʾ while they remained unaware of them, and that something might proceed from them that they could not bear because they had not reached its rank.

“So Solomon smiled, laughing at her saying.”

That means he admired what the man had said and approved of it, and thereby recognized his intelligence and alertness.

He said:

“My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and to do righteousness that pleases You, and admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous servants.”

This was because he saw in the man the intelligence and excellent discernment appropriate to someone in a lower rank.

He mentioned the measure of what God, exalted is He, had given him and bestowed upon him from His bounty, and by which He had raised his rank.

He asked God to enable him to give thanks for the blessing He had bestowed upon him and his parents—that is, the Imam of his Age when he called him, and his hujja, who called for them both. He prayed for them as he prayed for himself, even though they had already passed away.

He did not mean that God should enable them both to give thanks for the blessing. Rather, he meant that He should enable **him** to give thanks for what God had bestowed upon him through the blessing He had bestowed upon them and through what had come to him from them.

And His saying:

"And admit me by Your mercy among Your righteous servants"

means among those Imams who had preceded him in obedience to God, exalted is He, and with whom He was pleased because they had set themselves right.

He therefore asked for the same for himself: that it be granted to him and that he be sealed with it, so that he would enter among their company.

The Eleventh Part: Completion of the Story of Solomon

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Then God, exalted is He, said:

"And he inspected the birds and said, 'Why do I not see the hoopoe? Or is he among the absent?'"

The birds, in the inward interpretation, are likenesses of those connected to the messengers from the celestial ranks. They are also likenesses of the dāʿīs from the lower ranks.

God, exalted is He, says:

"Praise belongs to God, Creator of the heavens and the earth, who made the angels messengers possessing wings, two, three, and four. He increases in creation whatever He wills."

He described the angels as possessing wings, and wings are among the implements of birds.

And He said concerning the dāʿīs:

"Take four birds and draw them close to yourself, then place upon each mountain a portion of them; then call them, and they will come to you swiftly."

We have already mentioned the interpretation of this in the Story of Abraham, peace be upon him.

Thus there are two interpretations of his saying, **“And he inspected the birds.”**

One is that he meant the celestial rank connected to him among them.

The other is that he meant one of his lower ranks.

The name **hoopoe** is derived from *guidance*, meaning one who was guided and then guided others.

He may have meant both together, while God narrated it using a single expression. Or he may have meant one rather than the other, inspecting him when he was absent from him and from connection with him.

His saying:

“I will surely punish him with a severe punishment or slaughter him”

means that if he intended the celestial rank connected to him, his punishment meant withholding himself from questioning him, since he thought that his delay was on his own account.

His slaughter meant cutting him off so that another might become connected to him.

An example of this is the Messenger's, peace and blessings of God be upon him, impatience with Gabriel when Gabriel delayed coming to him for a time and he thought that this was on his account. Then God revealed:

“We do not descend except by the command of your Lord.”

If he intended the lower rank connected to him, then punishing it means preventing it from freely transmitting taʾyīd, while slaughtering it means renewing the covenant with it and beginning its affair anew, as is done with one who slips and repents.

“Or let him bring me clear authority”

means a compelling proof concerning his absence.

Both interpretations have therefore been transmitted together.

The hoopoe said:

“I have encompassed what you have not encompassed, and I have brought you from Sheba certain news.”

His encompassing what Solomon had not encompassed means knowledge of something that had not reached him and which he had not attained.

This can apply to the higher and lower ranks alike: one may witness something that the one above him or below him has not witnessed, and news may reach him that has not reached the other, so he brings it to him.

Likewise, his celestial rank brings him knowledge of the unseen concerning him.

His saying:

"I found a woman ruling over them, and she has been given of everything"

means a lāḥiq from his own lāḥiqs, or from the lāḥiqs of someone who preceded him, who had been given "everything"—meaning knowledge.

He called them to himself.

"And she has a mighty throne."

That is, a great Call.

"I found her and her people prostrating to the sun instead of God."

This means that they believed the Imam to be the Creator, exalted is God far above that, and He has purified His friends from what the wrongdoers say.

Groups among nations have held such beliefs concerning their Imams when they exaggerated concerning them, altered and changed what they had been commanded, and Satan made their deeds appear beautiful to them.

That is, the one who called them to this was called Satan because he had *shatana*—distanced himself—from his wali.

He therefore turned them away from the path, and they were not guided.

The path is the Master of the Age. He turned them away from him when he called them to himself and to what he had invented and innovated, setting himself up among them in the place of the Imam and setting the Imam up in the place of the Creator.

God is exalted far above that, and He has purified His friends from saying or claiming such a thing.

His saying:

"So that they do not prostrate to God, who brings forth what is hidden in the heavens and the earth"

means the Creator, from whom come the benefits to the Imams, hujjas, nāṭiqs, and the foundations before them, connected to them through those before them.

"And He knows what you conceal" means the inward, **"and what you reveal"** means the outward.

What you conceal can mean what the celestial rank brings to the nāṭiq, while what you reveal is what the nāṭiq makes manifest and what he who teaches it to the one below him makes manifest.

God knows all of this.

“God—there is no god but He, Lord of the Great Throne.”

That means that the Creator is the possessor of the great Call, which spread from the highest celestial ranks until it became connected to the lowest of the lower ranks, and He is its Lord.

Why then did they not reflect upon this and realize that the Imam is poor and in need of those celestial ranks connected to him, which are intermediaries between him and the Creator, and therefore refrain from equating him with Him or assigning His name to him?

He said:

“We shall see whether you have spoken truthfully or whether you are among the liars.”

This address does not apply to the celestial rank connected to him except metaphorically, meaning: “We shall test their affair. If they persist in what you have said, then your statement concerning them and your supposition about them are true. If they are otherwise and return to the truth, then the supposition concerning them is false.”

It may also be an address from the lower rank to the one above it, according to the outward wording, concerning the testing of what it has brought, if he is uncertain about it.

It proceeds as metaphor, as we have previously explained.

We wished to clarify that this can be understood according to the two aspects we have mentioned.

Then he said:

“Go with this letter of mine and deliver it to them. Then withdraw from them and see what they return.”

The Book of God, in the inward interpretation, is His Messenger and whoever among the Imams He established in his place after him.

Accordingly, the book of the Messenger and Imam is whoever he establishes to convey and communicate from them.

Thus, in the interpretation, he sent a dāʿī to them, calling them to him and making known to them his rank from his Lord, and that he was the Master of the Age to whom the affair had passed.

She said:

“O assembly, a noble letter has been delivered to me.”

That is, one ennobled by knowledge and wisdom from Solomon.

This is his saying:

“It is from Solomon, and it is: In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.”

That means what he had caused her to understand concerning his ranks.

We have previously discussed the *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* and what it indicates concerning the ranks.

“Do not exalt yourselves against me and come to me in submission.”

That is: do not act arrogantly, for I am the one entrusted with authority over you; submit to my command.

The people consulted one another concerning this.

This is her saying:

“O assembly, advise me concerning my affair. I would not decide an affair until you bear witness.”

They said:

“We possess strength and possess mighty force,”

meaning that they possessed knowledge, wisdom, and decisive arguments against whoever disputed with them.

“And the command is yours, so see what you will command.”

She said:

“Indeed, when kings enter a town, they corrupt it and make its honored people humble; and thus they do.”

That means that when the Imams gain authority over a people of the Call, and the people of that Call respond to them, they corrupt what had been in their hands and what they had been upon, transferring them to what they follow.

They make its honored people humble.

This is what they do: they make one who possessed leadership through knowledge and precedence in his doctrine into a learner from the beginning, deriving benefit like all other learners.

“And I am sending them a gift, and I shall see with what the messengers return.”

That means: I think I shall offer them some of the knowledge I possess, in the form of benefits. If they accept it, they are in need of what I possess. If they do not accept it, you will know that you return to them as beneficiaries and humbled in their hands.

When she came to Solomon, he said:

“Do you provide me with wealth? What God has given me is better than what He has given you. Rather, you rejoice in your gift.”

That means: what God has supplied him with is superior to what was supplied to those before him, who attached themselves to it and introduced into it the corruption that they introduced.

“Return to them,” he said to his messenger, **“for we shall certainly come to them with troops against whom they will have no power, and we shall certainly expel them from it humbled, and they will be abased.”**

That means: I shall send among them dāʿīs against whom they will have no proof by which to stand. I shall remove them from the Call which they corrupted.

And he did this to them.

Then he said:

“O assembly, which of you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?”

He said this to his hujjas and lāḥiqs:

Who among you knows the knowledge of their Call, what they established it upon, and the arguments they used to support it, so that this knowledge may be with me before they come to me submitting?

Then I shall know their affair and address them from a position of knowledge.

There may be among the causes of the Master of the Age one who has become deeply learned in knowledge and knows the doctrines of people, the sayings adopted by sects, and their arguments. Such knowledge may be among what God supports that wali with through his tongue.

An **ifrit from the jinn** said:

That is, a powerful dāʿī:

“I shall bring it to you before you rise from your place, and I am strong and trustworthy concerning it.”

That is: I am strong in knowledge of this matter and trustworthy regarding it, such that I will not distort or alter any part of it.

“I shall bring it to you before you rise from your place” means before you occupy yourself with seeking it and leave the station in which God has established you: carrying out His command and examining the true knowledge for which He chose you.

Then:

“The one who possessed knowledge of the Book said, ‘I shall bring it to you before your glance returns to you.’”

That is, his hujja, to whom he had passed on his knowledge, said:

“I shall bring it to you before your glance returns to you,”

meaning before the rank that brings you taʾyīd from your Lord returns to you.

Then he mentioned the whole matter in its proper place.

When he saw it firmly established with him—that is, in the station that he had approved for him, singled him out for, and established him in as his successor after him—and knew the varieties of knowledge he possessed, he said:

“This is from the bounty of my Lord, to test me whether I shall be grateful or ungrateful. Whoever is grateful is grateful only for himself, and whoever is ungrateful, then my Lord is Self-Sufficient, Generous.”

That means: whoever gives thanks for God's blessing upon him, that thanks is only for his own benefit, because of what God has promised those who give thanks of increase.

And whoever is ungrateful—that is, conceals the blessing and does not manifest it through gratitude—God is independent of his gratitude, and He is Generous in what He bestows upon His servants even if they do not praise Him.

He said:

“Disguise her throne for her; let us see whether she will recognize it or be among those who are not guided.”

This was after he had sent his dāʿīs to reject what had been sent by the one who had set himself up in that position, and had broken his argument, knowing that he would come to him submitting to his command.

He said:

“Disguise her Call for her.”

He said this to his lāḥiqs and his means, meaning: represent it to her when you encounter examples resembling it of falsehood.

“Let us see whether she will recognize it or be among those who are not guided.”

That is: let us see whether she recognizes the truth in this and acknowledges it, or persists in the falsehood upon which she had been and clings to it.

When she came, it was said:

“Is your throne like this?”

This is a brief expression whose complete meaning is that he made known what she had been calling to and what she had established as the foundation of her Call, and presented it without even asking her about it.

He thus knew that Solomon and his companions possessed knowledge of what she had been upon, of what she called to, and of what she had established.

Then he represented that falsehood to her in a way that exposed what was corrupt in her possession, and compared it to what was shown to her.

She was effectively asked:

“Is what you called to—your delusion and falsehood—like this example that has been presented, like a mirage, foam, and their likenesses?”

She said:

“It is as though it is the same.”

That is, it is like what she had established and founded.

And they said:

“We were given knowledge before her, and we were submitters.”

This is Solomon's companions speaking. When they defeated that altered lāḥiq with their proofs, they informed him that they had been given knowledge before him and that there was no knowledge with him.

They were **submitters**, meaning submissive to the one entrusted with authority over them.

“And what she used to worship besides God prevented her, for she was from a disbelieving people.”

That is, what she had followed and worshiped among the people of falsehood prevented her from guidance.

She was among a people who concealed the truth, for disbelief means covering and concealing a thing.

It was said to her:

“Enter the palace.”

In the language, *ṣarḥ* means a palace.

Among the common people's interpretation is the story that Sheba's father was a jinn, and that the jinn feared Solomon would see her and be attracted to her and marry her, whereupon she would reveal their secret to him.

They said that the offspring of jinn and human beings have feet resembling the hooves of donkeys, in order to discredit her in his eyes.

Solomon therefore wished to learn this without allowing her to realize that she was being tested. He sat her upon a couch in his palace, made the floor a pool of water, and covered it with glass.

When she entered, she thought it was water and uncovered her legs. He saw her feet.

The inward interpretation of **"It was said to her, 'Enter the palace'"** is that she entered into the knowledge of the nāṭiq.

The Messenger said:

"I am the city of knowledge and ʿAlī is its gate."

When she saw it—that is, became acquainted with it—and was engaged in mufāṭaḥa, one of Solomon's means engaged her in mufāṭaḥa through his true knowledge and began with her at the first thing with which she ought to begin: the inward, upon which there was a thin covering of the outward.

She did not doubt that it was the pure inward, so she uncovered her inward.

Water in the inward is a likeness of knowledge.

Their saying that he covered it with glass means what he concealed beneath the thin covering of the outward.

That lāḥiq therefore imagined that it was the pure inward.

This is His saying:

"And she thought it was a deep pool, and she uncovered her legs."

That means her two inward principles.

This is like God's saying:

"On the Day when the shin is uncovered."

It was said to her that it was not the pure inward, but rather it was concealed beneath a thin covering of the outward.

When she understood this, she was bewildered by the greatness of what she had heard and was awed by it when she was told that it was the lowest of the ranks of knowledge.

She acknowledged her falsehood and submitted to Solomon's command when the proof became clear to her.

This is God's saying:

“She said, ‘My Lord, I have wronged myself, and I submit with Solomon to God, Lord of the worlds.’”

That means that, because of what had preceded of denial and alteration, she acknowledged her wrong and submitted.

It is related in the report that Solomon married Bilqis when her submission became sound.

The inward meaning is that this lāḥiq, when he submitted to Solomon's command, entered his Call, responded to his command, and his state became good, was established among his lāḥiqs. His wives are their inward likeness.

And God's saying:

“And for Solomon the wind—its morning journey was a month and its evening journey was a month”

means that He gave him such supplies of wisdom and knowledge that mercy for the believers proceeded from him. Through it he nurtured and nourished them and gathered benefits for them, just as the wind gathers clouds and drives them until they rain.

It also contained the decisive, overwhelming proofs against the people of falsehood, just as the wind can contain punishment and wrath.

His saying:

“Its morning journey was a month and its evening journey was a month”

means that morning is the receiving of the day and evening the receiving of the night.

God completed for him his lāḥiqs in the outward and inward.

And His saying:

“And We caused the spring of molten copper to flow for him.”

That means: We caused the dense knowledge of the outward, whose inward people do not know, to flow for him. We made it fluid and flowing like molten copper, visible because of its purity and emergence from the mineral rank into flowing.

Thus He opened the outward for him to its inward.

And His saying:

“And among the jinn were those who worked before him by permission of his Lord, and whoever among them deviated from Our command, We made him taste the punishment of the Blaze.”

The word **jinn**, in the inward interpretation, is derived from concealment. They are the people of the inward who conceal it.

Here He means his hujjas and lāḥiqs, who worked for him whatever he wished:

“sanctuaries”—that is, they established for him the dāʿīs whom the people seeking guidance took as their direction.

“And statues”—that is, the examples they set forth in their speech to people in their Call, and the examples from the Qur'an that they explained to them.

“And basins like reservoirs”—that is, broad bowls, meaning the maʾdhūnūn whom they appointed for breaking down, explaining, and engaging in mufātaḥa.

They are compared to basins because those seeking guidance receive benefits from them just as people eat food from dishes.

“And firmly fixed cooking pots”—that is, those who remain firmly established.

These are the ranks that have become firm through the hujja of their lāḥiq and have settled upon the benefits of the proof of the one entrusted with authority over them, like firmly fixed cooking pots settled upon the earth.

Thus God established for him, from among his hujjas, lāḥiqs, dāʿīs, and means, those who maintained his Call, carried his affair for the mustajībūn, engaged them in mufātaḥa, conveyed knowledge, and extracted from it what ought to be extracted for them.

He means that they undertook this on his behalf.

Whoever among them did not do so, He made him taste the punishment of the Blaze—that is, He cut him off from the source and from divine assistance and afflicted him with ignorance.

Among God's favors to His prophets and the Imams of His religion is that He grants them helpers in goodness who establish for them the means of their Call, carry from them the burden of their responsibilities, and complete through them their ranks and means.

For some of them, however, this does not become complete or fully established, and he undertakes it himself because God wills to perfect his reward and recompense.

God is vast in bounty and mercy. Whatever He apportions to His friends contains bounty, happiness, and blessing for them.

And this is among the meanings of His saying:

“And among the devils were those who dived for him and performed other work besides that,”

and His saying:

“And the devils—every builder and diver, and others bound together in fetters: ‘This is Our gift, so bestow or withhold without reckoning.’”

That means that He subjected to him those who had become estranged and distant from the other Imams—those among his lāḥiqs and dāʿīs who dived into subtle knowledge for him, extracted its fine points, and explained its meanings to people and opened its questions for them.

All of this was what he cast upon them of the summarized form of wisdom. They bore from him the labor of thought and physical effort involved in explaining and clarifying it.

Its origin came from him through the substance of God connected to him.

Among this is the saying of ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

“The Messenger taught me a thousand chapters of wisdom and knowledge, and from each chapter a thousand chapters are opened to me.”

And Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh said:

“The heir of the heirs, Muhammad ibn ʿAlī, peace be upon him, furnished me with knowledge and taught me a thousand questions, and from every question a thousand questions were opened to me.”

The friends of God convey from His wisdom to their means general principles according to their capacities and according to what is suitable for each of them. They branch these out and derive from them, through explanation and clarification, what they convey to people according to their abilities, the extent of their knowledge, and whatever God uniquely grants them of the substance coming from him.

Thus they carry this on behalf of His friends.

No human being possesses the capacity to undertake all things without assistance. Only the Creator, exalted is He, possesses this uniquely. By this He makes manifest His power and unity, and their incapacity and need.

When the means of God's friends remain firm in obedience to them and in belief in them, and their intentions in accompanying them are sincere, God's safety and assistance accompany them. They undertake what they have been entrusted with, are guided to correctness in their words and deeds, and their affairs and the affairs of those connected to them among the mustajībūn and seekers of guidance proceed according to what is right and sound.

But when self-admiration enters them, and they become arrogant toward the friends of God, or claim something of this for themselves, believing and saying that what they possess is the

product of their own ingenuity or their own inherent strength, they are deprived of divine assistance and left to themselves.

The substance of God is cut off from them, and they distort words from their proper places and alter them. They perish, and those who cling to them and follow their command perish with them, if they have heard this from them or witnessed signs of it in them.

Through this, earlier nations perished.

This is among the meanings of God's saying:

“Whoever among them deviates from Our command, We shall make him taste the punishment of the Blaze.”

And among it is His saying:

“And they followed what the devils recited during the reign of Solomon. Solomon did not disbelieve, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic.”

That means falsehood which they make resemble truth.

When they do this, they go astray, as God, exalted is He, says:

“And they led many astray, and they themselves strayed from the straight path.”

That is, they led them astray from the Master of the Age and separated them from him, and they led others astray from him through the falsehood they presented to them, attributing it to him and claiming it on his behalf.

This does not harm God's friends, just as what the devils recited against Solomon and fabricated concerning him did not harm Solomon.

Nor does the falsehood of those who lie about God harm God, nor does it harm those who cling to the command of God's friends when they disassociate themselves from those who perpetrate it.

It only harms the one who fabricates it and the one who follows him in it after having learned about it and witnessed in his conduct what separates him from the foundation to which he was called.

The covenant of God taken from the servants—which is the first thing the mustajībūn hear and which is taken from them for God's friends—contains the foundations of everything to which they call.

It is God's proof and the proof of His friends against the one who takes it and against the one from whom it is taken.

Whoever departs from any part of it and opposes it is ruined, and those who follow him are ruined.

May God protect all His believing servants from ruin and grant them success in what contains salvation and protection.

As for God's saying:

“Every builder and diver,”

this means those who build houses of wisdom in which those seeking guidance take shelter.

They are the dāʿīs established by the hujjas and the maʾdhūnūn.

“And others bound together in fetters”

are those who have not been authorized to engage in mufāṭaḥa, among those forbidden to do so, who have been restrained by covenants and solemn pledges.

“This is Our gift, so bestow or withhold without reckoning.”

That is, they are not held accountable for bestowing upon one who deserves it according to their judgment, nor for withholding from one who deserves withholding.

“And indeed he has nearness to Us and an excellent return.”

That is, Solomon has nearness from Him and an excellent return in the Hereafter because of what he undertook of His command.

As for God's saying concerning the Story of Solomon:

“Then when We decreed death for him, nothing indicated his death to them except the creature of the earth eating his staff. When he fell, the jinn realized that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in humiliating punishment.”

The common people have gone in their interpretation to the claim that Solomon used to stand over the jinn while they were subjected to him, working for him, leaning upon a staff. They say he died while in that state and remained as he was, while the jinn continued working, believing him to be alive until woodworm ate through his staff, after a long period, and he fell. Only then did they realize that he had died.

This is among the clearest evidence of the corruption of their interpretation.

How could a dead man remain standing upon a staff? How could the death of a dead man remain hidden from those who saw him?

Even supposing this had been hidden from the jinn, what of his close people, family, and companions who attended to his food, drink, mounts, and bedding? They would not see him resorting to any of these or leaving his place, standing there day and night until his staff was consumed.

His limbs and body would have been more likely to decay before the staff.

There are many other indications and proofs of the corruption of this account, but we leave them aside for brevity.

Its inward interpretation is that it is one of the examples God sets forth in His Book, concerning which He says:

“These examples We set forth for people, but none understands them except those who possess knowledge.”

His saying:

“When We decreed death for him”

means: when his departure approached and We decreed that he should surrender what was in his hand to the one entrusted with authority after him, he did so secretly, without anyone among his lāḥiqs becoming aware of it.

“Nothing indicated his death to them”

means that nothing indicated this to them except the **creature of the earth**—that is, the one who rose to carry the affair after him, whom he had appointed.

“Eating his staff.”

The *minsaʾa* in the language means a staff. Its likeness in one aspect of the inward interpretation is **taʾyīd**, upon which the one appointed by God, exalted is He, relies.

Thus, when they saw the taʾyīd manifest in the one he had appointed, this indicated to them his station.

He was called the **creature of the earth** because the one who undertakes the affair after the departure of the Master of the Age conceals it intensely and keeps it hidden. During the life of the one holding the position, scarcely anyone becomes aware of his affair except those whom he informs.

He was therefore likened in his conduct to the creeping of an ant upon the earth, which can scarcely be seen or perceived except by one who carefully observes it.

This is because of the dissimulation required for him against his counterparts and against those who believe themselves entitled to his position and imagine that they will attain it.

If that were not the case, and all of them acknowledged his superiority, he would make his affair manifest during the life of the existing one and take up the authority.

This has been known concerning many of them.

Solomon was one of those concerning whom this was known. He undertook the affair during the life of David, and there was no counterpart to him who sought to elevate himself to David's position.

Among this is God's saying:

“And David and Solomon, when they judged concerning the field, when the sheep of the people strayed into it, and We were witnesses to their judgment. So We gave Solomon understanding of it, and to each We gave judgment and knowledge.”

We have already mentioned its interpretation above.

Thus God, exalted is He, informed us that Solomon's judgment prevailed during David's lifetime. But this did not become expansive or established for a successor after him, so he concealed it during his lifetime out of dissimulation.

Among this concealment is God's saying concerning this community:

“And when the word falls upon them, We shall bring forth for them a creature from the earth who will speak to them.”

This means the appearance of one of the lāḥiqs of the Qa'im at the end of time, appearing before him and conveying taʾwīl from the Qa'im secretly and in concealment until the Qa'im appears.

And His saying:

“When he fell, the jinn realized that if they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in the humiliating punishment.”

That means: when Solomon submitted to the one he had appointed—that is, when he made his affair manifest, submitted to him in obedience, and established him in his position—the lāḥiqs, hujjas, and dāʿīs recognized his affair.

Had they known what had previously been concealed from them concerning his affair, they would not have remained—that is, for that period—in the humiliating punishment, meaning the doubt in which they had been concerning him from the time they had seen signs of taʾyīd in him until the truth of his affair was disclosed to them.

Among the meanings of **falling**, and of it being submission through obedience and surrender, is God's saying concerning Joseph:

“And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they fell before him prostrate.”

We have already given its interpretation.

And among this is His saying:

“And if it is the weight of a mustard seed, We shall bring it forth, and sufficient are We as Reckoners.”

The mention of the mustard seed is an allusion to the believer who **falls**—that is, submits in obedience to the one entrusted with authority—and directs another to him.

If he is a maʾdhūn, he does so through his Call; if he is among those forbidden from doing so, he does so through his righteous action.

God, glorified is He, has informed us through what He related concerning Solomon of the inability of creation—even those among them who are close to God's friends—to know anything of their affairs except what those friends disclose and teach them.

They do not know the unseen—which is taʾwīl and the realities of knowledge—except what God's friends convey to them and teach them.

Among this is His saying, narrating the words of those connected to Solomon from among his close hujjas, lāḥiqs, dāʿīs, and means:

"If they had known the unseen, they would not have remained in the humiliating punishment."

And His saying:

"And We certainly tested Solomon and cast upon his throne a body."

That means that one of the people of falsehood gained control over his Call. He called him a **body**, meaning that he possessed no spirit of true life, just as He says concerning the unbelievers:

"They are dead, not alive."

Then:

"He repented."

That means Solomon repented of a fault he had committed and said:

"My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom that should not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower."

God therefore destroyed his enemy and granted him the kingdom he had requested.

"That should not belong to anyone after me"

means the Imamate that should belong to no one other than him during his lifetime.

His saying **"after me"** means after God had given it to him, so long as he remained alive. It does not mean that it would belong to no one after his death.

Solomon could not have been ignorant that God would not leave His earth without an Imam whom He established, and therefore ask God for something He would not do.

Rather, when he was tested by what was cast upon his throne by those who had usurped authority over his affair, he asked God, when He returned his kingdom to him and destroyed the usurper, not to test him with the like of it.

And:

“We bestowed upon David Solomon. How excellent a servant! Indeed, he was ever turning in repentance. When the well-trained swift horses were displayed to him in the evening, he said, ‘Indeed, I have preferred the love of good things to the remembrance of my Lord,’ until they disappeared behind the veil. ‘Bring them back to me,’ and he began wiping their legs and necks.”

The common people claim that horses were displayed before him and that he became occupied with them instead of the afternoon prayer until the sun set, whereupon he slaughtered the horses for this reason.

If one of them had done such a thing, they would condemn him for it because of what it entails, including slaughtering horses, which are provisions in the path of God, without any fault on their part. The fault, if their claim were true, would instead lie in neglecting the prayer.

The interpretation of this is an example set forth by God, exalted is He.

The **ṣāfināt** are horses in the language, and the horses in the inward are likenesses of the hujjas.

What was displayed before him was what proceeded from their Call in its concealed form. He admired it and found their affairs excellent.

He said:

“Indeed, I have loved the love of good things above the remembrance of my Lord.”

The remembrance of his Lord here is the Imam who preceded him, who taught and benefited him and commanded him to love them.

“Good things” here are the horses.

This is likewise how it was interpreted in what the common people interpreted, according to the Messenger's saying, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

“Goodness is tied to the forelocks of horses until the Day of Resurrection.”

In the inward interpretation, these are the hujjas, as we have mentioned.

He therefore spoke of them when what they had accomplished in the Call was displayed before him, and he admired it because of his love for them.

“Until they disappeared behind the veil.”

That is, he continued considering and mentioning this until they withdrew from him and their veil concealed them from him.

He said:

“Bring them back to me.”

So they returned them to him.

He opened to them from wisdom and increased them in taʾyīd, by which he wiped their **legs**, meaning their inward, and their **necks**, meaning their outward.

That is, he wiped these with wisdom from them.

We have already discussed the uncovering of the shin and that it means uncovering the inward.

The shin is concealed in the likeness of the inward, while the neck is outward and is therefore a likeness of the outward.

Thus he increased them in knowledge, explanation, and taʾyīd in the outward, by which they break down the people of the outward, act, and command their followers.

In the inward, he raised them in their rank and their means to a degree they had not reached. He brought them to it because he approved of their deeds and of what had proceeded from them in their Call and their obedience in that to what he had commanded them, without altering, adding to, or diminishing anything from it.

He rewarded them for this after having praised them and described his love for them, granting them thereby the supreme station.

This is what the friends of God do for whoever benefits himself by obeying them and complying with their command, whether he is near to them or far from them.

They continually raise whoever does this from one degree to a degree above it, so long as he remains steadfast in that degree.

The degrees of merit with them are many, and the sincere believers devoted to them continually ascend through them so long as they remain upon what pleases them throughout their lives.

May God grant all of them, through this, what pleases Him and what contains their benefit and happiness, and may He cause His friends to be pleased with them, by His power, strength, generosity, and grace.

Indeed, He has power over all things.

The eleventh part of the Book of the Foundation of Interpretation is complete.

The Twelfth Part: The Stories of Jonah, Zechariah, John, and Mary, peace be upon her and upon them

The Story of Jonah, Peace Be upon Him

Jonah, in his time, was the Master of the Age in the cycle of Moses. He had established his ranks and disseminated his Call, and his affairs had proceeded properly for him. Then the people of his time became corrupt toward him, transgressed his command, and departed from much of his obedience and from what he had prescribed and commanded them. He sought to set them right, but was unable to do so. His breast became constricted because God had not granted him success in that matter, for those who were around him, in his place of residence and emigration, had become corrupt.

So he abandoned it and went away, fleeing from them to an island where he had a powerful Call whose affairs were in a state of rectitude, and where he had a lāḥiq who administered their affairs. He took refuge with him. This is what God, exalted is He, says:

"And indeed, Jonah was among the messengers, when he fled to the laden ship."

The *fulk* in the language means a ship, and in the inward interpretation it is the Call. We have already explained this in the account of Noah, peace be upon him.

And likewise the saying of God, exalted is He:

"And [remember] the Man of the Fish, when he went away in anger…"

That is, against his people, when they had corrupted his affairs and stubbornly opposed his command. This was an error on his part. What was incumbent upon him was to be patient, trust in God, and know that He was capable of correcting what had become corrupt for him and restoring what had become crooked.

It was as though he despaired of that, and this is the meaning of God's saying:

"And he thought that We would not constrain him."

God tested many of His friends with something like this, and they were patient until God's help came to them. This is what God says:

"And messengers before you were indeed denied, but they were patient concerning what they were denied and harmed until Our help came to them. And there is no changing the words of God."

That is, God does not replace His friends with their enemies, those who set themselves against them and usurped their authority.

Jonah did not remain patient as they did. He thought that his enemy would prevail over him, so he fled from before him and took refuge with one of his lāḥiqs, complaining to him of what had befallen him and seeking his assistance in his affair. By doing this he placed himself beneath that one, whereas God had raised him above him and exalted his rank.

God desired to show him a sign of His power and to show him the error of what he had done by failing to remain patient until His help came.

When he reached that Call, disorder and disagreement arose within it. In the report it is said that when he took refuge in a ship, it became agitated, swayed, and stopped, although the wind was favorable. The pilot said, “This can only be because of a sin committed by one of the sinners among us.” They gathered the people of the ship, but could not determine who the sinner was. So he ordered them to cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. This is what God says:

“Then they cast lots, and he was among those who were rejected.”

The pilot was the master of that Call, one of Jonah’s lāḥiqs with whom he had taken refuge after seeing that his Call had become corrupt and disordered. He gathered his dāʿīs and his other means, with Jonah among them, and began asking about the causes of the corruption that had arisen in his Call: from where it had entered, how it had come about, and what had produced it.

They discussed this until they traced it back to Jonah, and concluded that it had resulted from his abandoning the command and fleeing from his place of residence and emigration, thereby placing himself under one who was beneath him. The doubt had entered those among whom it had entered because of this.

This was the meaning of their casting lots: he examined the circumstances of each one of them and found each of them innocent of having altered anything in the Call. They concluded that the proper course for Jonah was to depart from them and conceal himself among the people of the outward until God restored his affair, as He had promised His friends.

This is what is related in the report: that they threw him into the sea. The sea is like the outward, as we have already explained fully above.

When he departed from them, one of the *maʾdhūnūn* among those belonging to the people of the outward encountered him. This man had no Call of his own. That maʾdhūn sheltered Jonah, took him under his protection, and surrounded him with his care, and by this Jonah became like one receiving a favor from him. Thus his condition became worse than it had been before.

This is what God, exalted is He, says:

“Then the fish swallowed him, while he was blameworthy.”

That is, blame attached to him because of what he had done.

And from this comes the report that when they brought him to the side of the ship and threw him from it, a fish from the sea received him and swallowed him, while the ship continued on and became steady.

Jonah, peace be upon him, became certain that he had fallen into error. He regretted what he had done, turned back to God, and acknowledged his error. God accepted his repentance and manifested his authority in the region to which he had gone. A number of its people

responded to him, and he gained strength there, took it as his place of emigration, and his affairs became orderly.

This is what God says:

“Had he not been among those who glorified Us, he would have remained in its belly until the day they are resurrected.”

That is: had he not glorified God—meaning, affirmed His oneness, exalted and sanctified Him above what is beneath that rank—he would have remained there.

This was the completion of his affirmation of divine unity and transcendence: he turned toward that, giving everyone who possessed a right his due and not taking what did not belong to him.

And likewise His saying:

“And he called out in the darknesses: ‘There is no god but You; glory be to You! Indeed, I was among the wrongdoers.’ So We answered him and delivered him from distress. And thus do We deliver the believers.”

It is said in the report that he called upon his Lord with this while in the darkness of night, the darkness of the sea, and the darkness of the belly of the fish.

The darkness of night is an example of concealment and secrecy, because he had become concealed and hidden after God had established him in a position of manifestation and taʾyīd.

The darkness of the sea is the darkness of knowledge of the outward stripped of the inward and of taʾwīl. Those who claim that there is no knowledge beyond it are in darkness concerning this.

He drank it as salt, bitter water, until its sweet part was purified and rose while its salt and bitterness settled below. When seawater is exposed to fire, the sweet portion of what rises from it ascends, while the salty water remains below. Likewise, whatever adulteration enters gold, silver, or any mineral capable of melting is removed when it is subjected to this process.

The darkness of the belly of the fish is his concealment and his being under the authority of the maʾdhūn who had surrounded him.

Thus he called upon God with this affirmation of His unity, and God delivered him from his distress—that is, from the distress and anguish of that condition—manifested his authority, supported him with His help, and restored him through His mercy to what he had previously been.

And likewise the saying of God:

“And We sent him to a hundred thousand or more, and they believed, so We gave them enjoyment for a time.”

God replaced for him those who had disbelieved in him, disobeyed his command, corrupted his Call, and opposed him, with these others. This is what He makes the outcome for those of His friends who are sincere to Him, as He promised them in His Book:

“And the good outcome belongs to the God-fearing.”

Had God not restored him through his turning back to Him, he would have remained concealed and humiliated under the authority of the one with whom he had taken refuge. He had not established a Call for him; rather, he was a maʾdhūn of one of the dāʿīs.

As for His saying:

“Then We cast him onto the bare shore while he was sick,”

al-ʿarāʾ in the language means land in which nothing is concealed. That is, he came to a land where there was no concealed Call, and he was sick—that is, weak in condition because of the trial that had befallen him—and had come to a people who knew nothing of the inward.

And His saying:

“And We caused a gourd vine to grow over him,”

the *yaqṭīn* in the language is any plant that spreads along the ground rather than standing upon a stalk, such as gourds, melons, colocynths, and the like.

The general interpretation says that after the fish swallowed him, he remained in its belly for three days. Then God commanded the fish to cast him out, and it cast him onto a desert land where nothing concealed anything—not a tree or anything else. They say that he emerged naked, and God caused a gourd plant to grow from his navel, spreading over him and covering him.

In the inward interpretation, he found a man who had become connected to one of his hujjas. He had taken from him some knowledge that was of little benefit, which did not raise him or elevate him. Jonah made him a hujja for himself, established a Call through him, and concealed himself behind him. Those whom God mentioned responded to him. We have already discussed this previously.

And His saying:

“And they believed, so We gave them enjoyment for a time,”

means that they enjoyed what they had received from him of knowledge and wisdom until the appearance of the Qa’im after him.

The Story of Zechariah, John, and Mary, Peace Be upon Them

Zechariah was an Imam at the end of the cycle of Moses. He knew that he would not reach the age of Jesus. Imran had been the Master of the Age before him, but he had not been able

to establish an Imam from his own Call. So he established Zechariah from another [Call] and attached to him a man from his own Call whom he had thought might assume the Imamate.

He did not find in him the strength necessary to undertake that office, so he attached him to Zechariah. He is the one whom God referred to by the name Mary, because he subsequently became a hujja.

This is what God, exalted is He, says:

"When the wife of Imran said: 'My Lord, I have vowed to You what is in my womb, dedicated entirely to Your service, so accept it from me. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.'"

That is, the hujja knew that he would precede Imran in the transition and pass away before him. He therefore hoped that someone whom he had called might assume his place and become Imam after Imran.

When he placed him under examination, it became clear to him that he could not undertake the Imamate, because he did not possess the degree of eloquence and capacity required to be anything other than a hujja.

This is the meaning of:

"When she delivered her, she said: 'My Lord, I have delivered her as a female,' and God knew best what she had delivered. 'And the male is not like the female. And I have named her Mary, and I seek refuge for her and her offspring with You from Satan, the accursed.'"

That is: I have fulfilled my vow concerning him and entrusted his affair to You, so protect him from the plot of the opposing adversary who seeks to usurp him.

"So her Lord accepted her with a good acceptance,"

that is, the one who would be nurtured after Imran, and whose hujja was Zechariah, accepted him with a good acceptance—that is, by turning toward him with knowledge and wisdom.

"And caused her to grow with a good growth,"

that is, He raised him with a good upbringing through that knowledge.

"And Zechariah took charge of her."

That is, He placed him under his protection, preservation, and supervision.

"Whenever Zechariah entered upon her in the sanctuary, he found provision with her. He said: 'O Mary, from where is this for you?' She said: 'It is from God.'"

That is, whenever he engaged him in *mufātaḥa* and addressed him by way of the Imamate, he found with him a subtle form of knowledge beyond what he had intended to impart to him.

“Indeed, God provides for whom He wills without measure.”

That is, God inspired him through His taʾyīd with what had occurred for him, not from his own source.

Zechariah's own affair had become weak and his inward Call had grown feeble. This is what is indicated by:

“Kāf, Hāʾ, Yāʾ, ʿAyn, Ṣād. A mention of the mercy of your Lord toward His servant Zechariah, when he called upon his Lord with a hidden call. He said: ‘My Lord, my bones have weakened, and my head has flared with gray hair, and I have never been, in calling upon You, my Lord, disappointed.’”

This was when he had reached, in the Imamate, the degree at which he saw that his transition was approaching, yet he had not produced a son.

“And I feared the successors after me,”

that is, I feared that the Imamate after me would return to the people of the Call of those who preceded me.

“And my wife is barren, so grant me from Yourself an heir.”

That is, I have not been granted, through the Call of my hujja, one suitable for the Imamate, while Mary was from outside my Call.

This was what he feared.

“So grant me from Yourself a guardian who will inherit me,”

that is, a respondent to my Call who will inherit the Imamate,

“and inherit from the House of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, pleasing.”

“O Zechariah, We give you good news of a boy whose name is John. We have not given anyone before him the same name.”

That is, a respondent who was fit for the Imamate, with no one equal to him in excellence.

And likewise His saying:

“Thereupon…”

when he saw the taʾyīd that Mary possessed, Zechariah called upon his Lord:

“My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring. Indeed, You are the Hearer of prayer.”

Then the angels called to him—that is, the upper boundaries supplied him with knowledge concerning this—while he was standing in prayer in the sanctuary, that is, while he was in the rank of the Imamate:

“God gives you good news of John, confirming a Word from God,”

that is, he is a Word from God who makes Him known to His servants,

“and a master,”

that is, an Imam,

“and chaste,”

that is, he would not take a woman and approach her, because God had already decreed through Imran concerning Mary that he would be a hujja without himself establishing him as Imam. Knowledge had already reached him from the two Imams before him.

Furthermore, he was female in the outward sense and therefore could not occupy the rank of Imamate. God only used this expression as a *kunya* for him because he was a hujja from the Call of Imran, and Zechariah took charge of him under the name Mary because he was the one who subsequently administered the affairs of Jesus while Jesus was in the rank of the hujjas, without the Master of the Age appointing him as Imam.

Thus God alluded to him through Mary and named him by her name, because he was the mother of Jesus from the perspective of the birth of the inward religion, just as Mary was his mother through outward birth. He was therefore named by her and referred to through her.

He was the one intended by the pregnancy without mention of a man, and by the birth and the other matters that God narrated concerning Jesus. We shall mention this in its proper place, God willing.

The Story of John

The same applies to what occurred with John. He was the maternal cousin of Jesus through both outward and inward birth. The mother of John was the sister of the mother of Jesus in outward lineage. The mother of Jesus, whom the inward interpretation refers to as Mary, likewise had this relation.

The matter was that when Zechariah wished the Imamate to remain among his descendants, he asked God to grant him a boy—that is, someone fit to be Imam. He therefore appointed the best of the lāḥiqs he had seen as a hujja.

The one referred to by the name Mary occupied the rank of a hujja. John belonged to the Call of the hujja whom Zechariah had established, while Jesus belonged to the Call of the one referred to by the name Mary.

John was among the hujjas of Zechariah and among the people of the Call of Imran, except that Zechariah raised him and took charge of him afterward.

Zechariah wished the Imamate after him to remain among the people of his own Call, as we have explained previously, and his son John was among them. God informed him that John would be an Imam, but that no Imam would descend from him afterward.

God singled out the one named Mary, whom Zechariah had taken under his care, by making prophethood and the Imamate arise from his Call, because of the precedence of the excellence that had been allotted to him. God brought this about for him without his himself being an Imam or being connected to someone who would arise from him to undertake the office of an Imam.

His example was like the Word that God made a sign for him and an exclusive distinction with which He singled him out.

When God caused Zechariah to pass away, John assumed the Imamate after him. Jesus had already been born, and God singled him out with the taʾyīd that we shall mention in its proper place.

John recognized his excellence during Zechariah's lifetime. Among the reports concerning this is the report that each of them was in his mother's womb and that John prostrated to Jesus while in his mother's womb.

Its inward meaning is that each of them was in a rank of upbringing, each with one of Zechariah's hujjas. This occurred after the one named Mary had called Jesus. We shall explain how this was in its proper place.

John saw in Jesus an excellence, strength, knowledge, and wisdom that he himself did not possess, so he submitted to him and recognized his excellence.

When the Imamate passed to John, Jesus submitted to his command, came under his authority, and entered among the people of his Call.

Among the reports concerning the two of them is the report that Jesus came to John so that John might baptize him. John said to him:

“How can I undertake that for you when you are my master and the master of others?”

This was because he recognized the excellence in him and knew that he would become a nāṭiq and messenger.

Jesus said:

“Today you are my master and the master of others, and I have no choice but to enter into your command. So baptize me.”

Thus he baptized him and immersed him in Lake Tiberias.

What this means is that John took the covenant from him for himself and imparted to him the knowledge that is given to those of his rank.

When Jesus reached the rank of messengership, John handed over the affair to him, relinquished what was in his possession to him, and came under his authority.

The Story of Mary

Among the distinctions God granted in excellence to the lāḥiq whom Imran left behind and whom Zechariah took under his care, the one named Mary, is God's saying:

“And when the angels said: ‘O Mary, indeed God has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the worlds. O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord, prostrate and bow with those who bow.’”

By this He meant that the upper boundary became united with him through taʾyīd, without the mediation of his teacher who had taken charge of him, as we have explained previously. This was an exclusive distinction from God.

God revealed to him that He had chosen him over all the other hujjas, purified him, and commanded him to be devoutly obedient and to prostrate before his teacher.

That is, he was not to raise himself above him because of the distinction God had granted him independently of Zechariah's hands. Rather, he was to make his Call toward him, submit to his foundation, which was John, until what came to him from God came to him.

As for His saying:

“And you were not with them when they cast their pens to determine which of them would take charge of Mary,”

this occurred during the time of Imran.

He gathered his lāḥiqs together to determine which of them was fit to be made a hujja. All of them eagerly desired this position. He therefore ordered each one to present what he possessed of explanation, so that he might see what taʾyīd and strength each possessed.

Each one presented to him what he had of this. These were their “pens” in the inward interpretation.

It is related in the report that they cast their pens into a flowing river, so that whichever pen moved ahead would establish its owner's precedence.

The inward meaning is that they cast what they possessed of explanatory knowledge into the knowledge of the Master of the Age, so that he might know through his knowledge which of them was foremost in knowledge, most firmly established in it, and strongest in his ability to bear it.

He saw that this was the one named Mary.

He then took charge of his affair and tested him, finding him sound in explanation within the rank of the hujjas, but unsuitable to be an Imam. So he established Zechariah, as we have explained above, and attached him to him so that he might be his hujja until he became prepared to receive the rank of Imamate and Zechariah could establish him.

Zechariah wished for this to occur among the people of his own Call, according to what we have previously explained.

This is also the interpretation of His saying:

"When the angels said: 'O Mary, indeed God gives you good news of a Word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, honored in this world and the Hereafter, and among those brought near. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity, and he will be among the righteous.'"

When the angels say:

"O Mary, indeed God gives you good news of a Word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary,"

the Mary being addressed is the hujja belonging to Zechariah.

Their saying:

"Jesus son of Mary,"

means Mary as his mother in the outward sense.

Their saying:

"A Word from Him,"

means Jesus.

The prophets of God and His friends are His Words through whom He addresses His creation, and through whom God makes His intention clear to them, just as speech makes clear what the speaker intends.

God does not resemble His creation, nor is He described by their attributes.

Their saying:

"Honored in this world and the Hereafter,"

means one possessing rank in both: in this world through prophethood and messengership, and in the Hereafter through connection to the upper boundaries and being among those brought near from those boundaries.

And His saying:

“And he will speak to the people in the cradle,”

the cradle is the rank of upbringing through wisdom, just as a small child is raised in it and moved within it.

Likewise, the rank of the one who is being nurtured through wisdom involves his being brought near at one time and held back at another, just as the one who moves a child's cradle does this.

Thus he speaks with wisdom and addresses people with it while he is in the rank of childhood—that is, in the rank of being educated and nurtured.

And:

“and in maturity,”

means after he reaches the rank of one who is authorized to speak.

We have already explained the meaning of what the angels said to her above.

This completes Part Twelve of the Book of the Foundation of Interpretation.

The Thirteen Part The Story of Jesus.

It has already been said that, in the inward interpretation, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was one of the lāḥiqs of ʿImrān, the Master of the Age before Zechariah, and that ʿImrān established Zechariah and joined to him his lāḥiq, who is designated in the inward interpretation as Mary, intending that he be his hujja, since he was among the people of his Call, whereas Zechariah was not from it. He was compelled to do this because he did not see in that lāḥiq the strength of the Imamate, but found that he was fit to be a hujja. Zechariah then established a hujja for himself and made the matter belong to John, from among the people of his Call, so that the matter after him would remain in him.

We now wish to explain the birth of Jesus in the inward sense, which is the **birth of the Call**, rather than the outward birth upon which the people of the outward have based this birth, while failing to establish an inward meaning for it or recognize it.

When Zechariah transferred the matter to John, he also wanted there to be a hujja from among the people of his Call. God, glorified be He, desired to complete for ʿImrān what he had hoped and wished for: namely, that prophethood should be in the descendants of his Call, after God had answered the prayer of Zechariah and granted him John, as God says in His Book, and made the Imamate belong to him after him.

Then He strengthened the lāḥiq of ʿImrān who is cryptically designated as Mary, the mother of Jesus in the outward sense, since that lāḥiq, cryptically designated as Mary, was the mother of Jesus in the inward sense, according to the foundation that ʿImrān had established for him and for whose sake Zechariah had cared for him.

Zechariah had established John only in the hope that the matter would remain in his descendants and among the people of his Call. The spiritual substance from God was connected to that lāḥiq called Mary without Zechariah knowing of it. John, in his rank as his hujja, likewise did not know of it.

The one called Mary remained in his original rank, among the ranks of the lāḥiqs, since he did not possess the explanatory capacity that would bring him to the rank of the Imamate. He therefore remained at his degree. Yet the upper boundaries became connected to him from the side of the Creator, informing him of the distinction and election with which God had singled him out above the other lāḥiqs, and commanding him to believe in the Imamate of Zechariah and submit to him, so that he would not depart from obedience to the Imam of the Age.

This is the meaning of God's saying:

“And when the angels said: O Mary, indeed God has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the worlds. O Mary, be devout to your Lord, prostrate and bow.”

By His saying, **“above the women of the worlds,”** He means the lāḥiqs.

“O Mary, be devout to your Lord”—that is, make your Call to the Imam of your Age.

“And prostrate”—that is, submit.

“And bow”—that is, humble yourself before the rank of your asās.

That is from the accounts of the unseen which We reveal to you. He says this to Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, since He disclosed this inward matter to him.

Then the angels gave him glad tidings that he would call a man who would respond to him, whose rank would rise and who would become a nāṭiq prophet with his religious law after him. Thus prophethood would come from the descendants of his Call.

This is the meaning of God's saying:

“When the angels said: O Mary, indeed God gives you glad tidings of a Word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, distinguished in this world and the Hereafter, and among those brought near.”

He informed him of his name and the name of his mother in the outward sense.

Had his mother been the woman being addressed, as the people of the outward claim, there would have been no meaning in mentioning her here, because addressing her would make mentioning her unnecessary. For if a woman were told, “You will give birth to a boy whose name is so-and-so, your son,” the expression “your son” would be meaningless, because telling her that she would give birth to him already entails that he is her son. Whoever gives birth to him knows that he is her son.

His saying, **“a Word from Him,”** is an indication that he would be a prophet. The prophets of God are His “words,” because they are those who announce from Him, by His command, what He intends for His servants.

For this reason the Qur'an is called the speech of God: it is an expression given to His Messenger by which he announces to people God's intent. The same applies to the other books that He, blessed is His name, sent down.

Whoever believes that this comes from God as a literal utterance in the same way as the speech he observes from himself and other human beings has likened God to His creation. Glory be to Him; He is exalted far above that.

His saying, **"his name is the Messiah,"** means that he wipes away what is outward and what is inward. *Masḥ* means uncovering or removing what is harmful. Hence it is said to the sick person, "May God wipe away your affliction," meaning that He remove it from you.

Likewise, Jesus wiped away from those who responded to him what had mingled with them of the disease of religion, both in their outward affairs and in their inward affairs. For this reason he was called the Messiah. He too was wiped clean of that.

His saying, **"distinguished in this world and the Hereafter,"** means that he will possess rank in both.

In this world, through prophethood and messengerhood; and in the Hereafter, through connection with the upper boundaries and being among those brought near to them.

"And among those brought near" means that he is brought close to those boundaries.

"And he will speak to people in the cradle" means that he will speak to those who are accustomed to him while he is in the rank of upbringing, before reaching the rank of *mufātaḥa*, with speech appropriate to one who has reached that rank.

"And as a mature man" means that he will do this after reaching maturity in that rank.

Thus, while still in the rank of childhood, he will provide a degree of explanation resembling what the lāḥiqs provide, and afterward a degree resembling what the lāḥiqs provide after reaching their proper rank. This is described as excellence of explanation, knowledge, and wisdom.

Mary said:

"My Lord, how can I have a son when no human being has touched me?"

This is the lāḥiq speaking to the angels: "How can I make a Call when no direct contact from the Imam of the Age has touched me by authorizing me to do so?"

In another verse she says:

"And I have not been unchaste."

That is, "I would not act against him by doing this without his command."

The angelic upper boundary said to him:

“Thus it is. God creates whatever He wills.”

It says to him that all creation occurs, as you have learned, according to the established practice governing most matters—namely, the creation of religion does not ordinarily occur except through an Imam and a hujja. Yet God may cause this to occur through whomever He wills.

“When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, ‘Be,’ and it is.”

“And He will teach him the Book”—that is, afterward he will recognize the Imam of the Age and submit to him.

“And wisdom”—that is, the knowledge particular to one of the nāṭiqs.

“And the Torah”—meaning the outward.

“And the Gospel”—meaning the inward.

“And a messenger to the Children of Israel”—that is, He will thereafter single him out and choose him for messengerhood to those among the people of the Children of Israel who had responded to the Call from the cycle of Abraham up to his own time.

He will say:

“Indeed, I have come to you with a sign from your Lord.”

Meaning himself and the one whom he establishes after himself.

“Indeed, I create for you from clay the likeness of a bird.”

That is, I establish for you from those among you who have responded to me—namely, the believers and their counterparts—likenesses of the earth.

For this reason the Messenger, peace and blessings of God be upon him, cryptically designated ʿAlī as **Abū Turāb**, when he established him and announced that he would be the father of the believers after him, meaning their Imam.

Water is the likeness of knowledge. When it mixes with earth, it becomes clay. Thus he says: “I impart through knowledge to the one who has responded to me from among you someone fit to become a dāʿī.”

The bird is the likeness of the dāʿī. When it takes that form, **“I breathe into it the spirit of life”**—that is, the knowledge of taʾyīd that is conveyed to the dāʿīs—and it becomes a bird.

That is, I send him as a dāʿī **“by God's permission”**—meaning by what God has authorized me to do.

“And I heal the blind and the leper.”

That is, through wisdom I cause one who had been blind to it to see.

The blind person is the one who cannot see. Hence God, exalted be He, says regarding the unbelievers:

“Deaf, dumb, blind.”

The leper, in the inward sense, is the one whom doubt and error have touched and thereby altered.

“And I give life to the dead, by God's permission.”

That is, through my Call I bring the unbelievers back to life as believers when they respond to me.

In the inward sense, disbelief is death, and the dead person is the unbeliever.

God, exalted be He, says:

“Dead, not alive.”

And He says:

“You were dead, and He gave you life.”

Thus I do this by God's permission given to me, not by doing it independently of Him.

“And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses.”

That is, I teach you knowledge by which your souls live, just as your bodies live through the food you eat.

Your souls likewise live through knowledge and wisdom.

“And what you store in your houses” means what is held by the lāḥiqs and dāʿīs as a store of knowledge for those among the mustajībūn who deserve it and who ascend to the degrees of excellence. They are houses for those beneath them, who take refuge with them.

“Indeed, in that is a sign for you, if you are believers.”

That is, in what I inform you of there is a manifest sign, if you are among those who believe and affirm what I say.

“And confirming what was before me of the Torah.”

That is, I affirm the outward and command it, but I do not affirm the inward while abandoning it.

“And to make lawful for you some of what was forbidden to you.”

That is, I permit you some of the knowledge of the inward whose hearing had previously been forbidden to you.

Thus he gave that lāḥiq glad tidings concerning what would happen in the matter of Jesus. He informed him of this when the lāḥiq found it difficult to believe that he could possess a Call without authorization from the Imam of the Age, and that such a thing could occur in the manner that God had described concerning him.

He also informed him that such a thing had occurred in the case of Adam.

This is God's saying:

“Indeed, the likeness of Jesus before God is as the likeness of Adam. He created him from dust, then said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was.”

He informed him that God had strengthened him through a believer like himself, then raised him, without the mediation of any human being, to the rank of prophethood.

When God desired to complete what He had promised that lāḥiq concerning Jesus, He commanded him to withdraw from the people of the Call of his time, to believe in the Imamate of the Imam of the Age, to withdraw from his lāḥiqs, and to conceal himself from them.

This is God's saying:

“And mention Mary in the Book.”

That is, God tells the one conveying this to Muhammad to mention this to him and disclose this matter of the unseen to him.

“When she withdrew from her people to an eastern place.”

That is, she directed herself toward the Imam of the Age and rejected his lāḥiqs.

“And she took a veil apart from them.”

That is, she concealed herself from them and concealed the matter of what she desired and awaited from the glad tidings that had been given to her.

“Then We sent to her Our Spirit.”

That is, the Trustworthy Spirit, which is connected with the prophets from God.

Hence God's saying:

“The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down upon your heart, so that you might be among the warners.”

Meaning Muhammad.

Then the angel appeared to that lāḥiq, commanding him on God's behalf to accept the covenant from Jesus. He beseeched God concerning this because he was not among the

people of *taqiyya*, saying what he had not been commanded to say and what was not within his rank. Such a thing was not lawful for either him or her to hear.

This lāḥiq became doubtful concerning this and found it difficult for himself.

The angel said:

“I am only a messenger of your Lord, that I may grant you a pure boy.”

The angel said to him that what he had brought had come by God's command. He reinforced this for him when he found it difficult to accept, repeating to him what he had first said to those who had given him the glad tidings.

She said:

“How can I have a son when no human being has touched me, and I have not been unchaste?”

The explanation of this has already been given.

In taʾwīl, the boy is the one deserving of the Imamate from among those who are connected to it.

The angel said:

“Thus has your Lord said: ‘It is easy for Me.’”

That is, the angelic upper boundary says to him on behalf of God:

“It is easy for Me, and I created you before, when you were nothing.”

That is, I brought you into being through taʾyīd without the mediation of an Imam.

“And We shall make him a sign for the people and a mercy from Us.”

Meaning Jesus: We shall make him a messenger to the people and a mercy from Us.

“And it is a matter decreed.”

That is, God had decreed and determined it.

That lāḥiq therefore became certain of the matter. He recognized Jesus, called him, and Jesus responded to him. He took the covenant from him, and the hujja of Zechariah undertook his upbringing and submitted to Jesus when he saw the excellence of his explanation and the strength of taʾyīd within him.

This occurred during the lifetime of Zechariah, as we have mentioned.

Zechariah subsequently died, and the matter passed to John. Jesus reached the degree of taʾyīd.

The lāḥiq was then shown that it was incumbent upon him to raise Jesus to the rank of maturity. He found it difficult to do this on his own, and saw no alternative except to disclose his affair and approach one of John's hujjas, fearing that John might confront him over the matter.

He secretly informed him of what had occurred and made known to him the grief that this caused him.

This is God's saying:

“And the pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of the palm tree.”

The pains of childbirth occur at the time of birth—that is, at the time when the one being raised is brought forth into the rank of maturity.

In the inward sense, pregnancy means **upbringing by the Imam**, while giving birth means bringing the one being raised into the rank of maturity.

Thus, when that lāḥiq perceived the taʾyīd in Jesus, he was compelled to seek refuge with a lāḥiq from among the lāḥiqs of his Imam of the Age. He informed him of the matter so that he could convey it on his behalf to John and make an excuse for him before John.

He revealed to him the grief and sorrow that he felt over the matter.

This is his saying:

“Oh, would that I had died before this and had become something forgotten, utterly forgotten.”

The lāḥiq then informed John of this and John understood the matter of that lāḥiq, concerning which he could say nothing but the truth. He also saw the taʾyīd in Jesus and became certain of the strength within him.

He discovered through him the connection of the upper boundaries to Jesus while he was still in the rank of upbringing.

This is what is related in the report that John said:

“I saw a white dove upon his head. While I was looking at it, it entered his head and disappeared into it.”

He then knew that this was revelation descending upon him. He submitted to his command.

John sent that lāḥiq to the lāḥiq who had brought him the message, informing him that he had submitted to the matter and accepted it, and forbidding him to grieve over it. He also strengthened him with knowledge that he was to convey to him, commanding him to conceal this from the other lāḥiqs and others.

He then instructed him to make his matter manifest and took the covenant from him.

That lāḥiq came to him with what had occurred with John.

This is God's saying:

“Then the pains of childbirth came upon her, and she withdrew with him to a remote place.”

And:

“Then he called to her from beneath her: ‘Do not grieve.’”

That lāḥiq informed her of this while he was beneath her and lower than her in rank.

“Your Lord has placed beneath you a stream.”

That is, “He has strengthened you, through what He has caused to reach you with me, with knowledge that He has made available to you.”

“And shake toward yourself the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you fresh ripe dates.”

“So eat and drink and be comforted.”

That is, “Be relieved by what I have brought to you and grant you; you will receive from it that which brings comfort to you, and through it you will know His satisfaction and acceptance of what you have done.”

“And if you see any human being, say: ‘Indeed, I have vowed a fast to the Most Merciful, so I will not speak today to any human being.’”

That is, conceal this matter and do not engage in *mufātaḥa* concerning it with anyone among the people of the sanctuary.

So he did this.

Then he commanded Jesus to make himself known to John. He came to him, and John brought him near. Jesus asked John to convey him.

This is what is related in the report that he came to John and John brought him near while he was on the Sea of Galilee baptizing people.

Jesus said:

“Baptize me.”

John said:

“How can I undertake this from you when you are my master, and I am not worthy even to remove your sandals?”

Jesus said:

“Today you are my master.”

So John baptized him.

He then commanded that lāḥiq to make his matter manifest, without mentioning what had occurred previously, since God had not made the matter his responsibility.

He did so.

This is God's saying:

“Then she came to her people carrying him.”

They said:

“O Mary, you have certainly brought something extraordinary. O sister of Aaron, your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother unchaste.”

That is, they said to him:

“You have committed a tremendous wrong, O sister of Aaron.”

Aaron was one of the lāḥiqs along with this lāḥiq and possessed excellence.

They said to him:

“You have done this while Aaron, your brother in excellence, is present. Your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother unchaste. So from where did you do this?”

Nor would the Imam and the hujja from whom you descend have done such a thing. They would not depart from the proper bounds of the matter, nor employ it except according to the established practice.

Then she pointed to him—that is, that lāḥiq instructed Jesus to answer them.

This occurred after the connection of the upper spiritual substance, and after the Master of the Age had submitted to him, recognized his right, and submitted to his command.

They said:

“How can we speak to one who is in the cradle, a child?”

The cradle, in the inward sense, is the **rank of upbringing**.

They were saying:

“How can we speak to one who is in the rank of upbringing?”

For one who is in this rank is sometimes brought closer by his educator through what he opens to him of knowledge and sometimes moved away when the educator fears that he

cannot bear it—just as one rocks a cradle. The child is drawn toward the one rocking it at one moment and moved away from him at another.

Jesus then spoke to them with prophethood and called them to himself:

“Indeed, I am the servant of God. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet.”

That is, “He has given me the Imamate and prophethood.”

“And He has made me blessed wherever I may be.”

That is, He has given me blessing—taʾyīd—wherever I may be among the ranks of the Call.

“And He has enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving as long as I live.”

That means establishing the Call, appointing the asās, and composing the religious law.

“And dutiful toward my mother.”

That is, toward that lāḥiq.

“And He has not made me arrogant, wretched.”

That is, I do not dare to act arrogantly toward anyone beneath me because of what God has bestowed upon me from His bounty.

“And peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised alive.”

That is, taʾyīd does not leave me in any of my states, wherever I may be.

God, exalted be He, says:

“That is Jesus, son of Mary—the word of truth concerning which they dispute.”

He says this to Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, that this inward interpretation concerning him is the word of truth over which they dispute.

“It is not for God to take a son.”

Glory be to Him. He declares Himself far above having a son, as the unbelievers who were ignorant of Him attributed such a thing to Him. Exalted is God far above what they say.

Jesus then undertook the messengerhood, and John submitted to his command, followed him, and believed in him. He called his people, but they rejected him except for a few.

He therefore turned away from them, took strength from those who believed in him, and withdrew from them.

This is God's saying:

“When Jesus sensed disbelief from them, he said: ‘Who are my helpers toward God?’ The disciples said: ‘We are God's helpers. We believe in Him, and bear witness that we are Muslims.’”

They asked him to bear witness for them to what they had offered of themselves.

“Our Lord, we believe in what You have sent down, and we follow the Messenger, so write us among the witnesses.”

They asked to be among the Imams, in their company, because they followed them.

He followed him and the disciples believed in him. They were his lāḥiqs.

It is related in a report that they were fishermen. This is because they “fish” through the Call those who have turned away from the truth.

It is also said that they were launderers, and it is also said that they were dyers. This is because they transform people from the state of error to guidance and from disbelief to faith, just as dyers and launderers transform garments and goods.

Those who said this about them merely intended it as a metaphor for them, but the general populace took the statement according to its outward meaning and attributed those occupations to them literally.

As for God's saying:

“When the disciples said: ‘O Jesus, son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table spread with food from heaven?’ He said: ‘Fear God, if you are believers.’”

They asked that one of them receive from the spiritual substance from God something like what he had received.

He commanded them to fear God and to take from the one whom He had appointed.

They said:

“We wish to eat from it, that our hearts may be reassured, and that we may know that you have spoken truthfully to us, and that we may be among its witnesses.”

That is, when the matter came to them directly from the upper boundaries without mediation, they would know the truthfulness of what had reached them.

Jesus son of Mary said:

“O God, our Lord, send down to us a table from heaven that will be a festival for us, for the first of us and the last of us, and a sign from You. Provide for us, for You are the best of providers.”

God said:

“Indeed, I am sending it down to you. But whoever disbelieves afterward among you, I shall punish him with a punishment with which I shall not punish anyone among the worlds.”

Thus that spiritual substance became connected to them.

This is God's saying:

“And when I inspired the disciples: ‘Believe in Me and My Messenger,’ they said: ‘We believe, and bear witness that we are Muslims.’”

It is also said that this was the image of the Messiah that appeared to them after he had departed from them several times, and that through it he informed them of what was occurring in their hearts.

No such thing had occurred to any of the nāṭiqs before him or after him.

The disciples believed in him, while others disbelieved and said:

“This is nothing but manifest sorcery.”

This is God's saying:

“And when I restrained the Children of Israel from you when you came to them with clear proofs, those among them who disbelieved said: ‘This is nothing but manifest sorcery.’”

When they rejected him and turned away from what had come to them from His command, He commanded him to turn away from them.

This is His saying:

“And when God said: ‘O Jesus, indeed I am taking you, and raising you to Myself.’”

That is, “I am transferring you from the rank of conveying the message to the rank of withholding yourself from them.”

“And raising you to Myself” means, “I am bringing you closer to the rank of taʾyīd from Me and drawing you near by removing the intermediaries of taʾyīd, so that there will remain between Me and you only some of them.”

“And purifying you from those who disbelieved.”

That is, because they disbelieved in what you brought them from Me, I will not bring you close to them. I will deprive them of your excellence and sever what lies between them and you as punishment for them and elevation for you.

“And making those who followed you above those who disbelieved, until the Day of Resurrection.”

That is, until the end of the Qa'im's affair, who is the Master of the Resurrection, through whom God gathers His servants. At that point they will be equal before him in reward and punishment: he will reward the believers and punish the unbelievers.

“Then to Me is your return, and I shall judge between you concerning that over which you differed.”

That means the return to the abode of the Hereafter.

“As for those who disbelieved, I shall punish them with a severe punishment in this world and the Hereafter, and they shall have no helpers.”

Their punishment in this world is what they experienced of doubt, bewilderment, and error. Their punishment in the Hereafter is what they will come to in it, of that which God, exalted be He, promised them.

“And as for those who believed and performed righteous deeds, He will give them their rewards in full.”

That is, the rewards for what they did in this world: their affirmation of God's oneness, their belief in the messengers, and their affirmation of the Imams.

“And God does not love the wrongdoers.”

That is, those who place the matter somewhere other than its proper place.

“That is what We recite to you of the signs and the Wise Reminder.”

He says this to Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, informing him of the accounts he has related concerning those messengers who came before him.

The **Wise Reminder** is the knowledge of the interpretation of these accounts and of the parables that have been set forth within them.

This is the complete account concerning Jesus, peace be upon him, and what constituted the foundation of his religious law, as well as the cross which he commanded those who followed him to take with them. Its interpretation has already been explained in what preceded, so that makes it unnecessary to repeat it here.

Part Thirteen is complete, and praise belongs to God, Lord of the worlds.

The Fourteen Part: The beginning of the Story of Muhammad.

When we desired to set forth this book, which is the *Book of the Foundation of Interpretation* concerning the inward meaning, so that in it we might explain the interpretation of what we had set forth in the *Book of the Pillars of Islam* concerning the outward meaning—namely, what we had set forth there regarding the affirmation of God's oneness, knowledge of Islam and faith, prophethood and the Imamate, knowledge and the learned, the lawful and the unlawful, cases and judgments—which one ought first to begin knowing from the direction of

the Wali of the Age, for whoever has responded to his Call, so that what he has been charged with outwardly may become sound and established for him, and so that he may act upon it and receive it from the direction of his Imam.

We mentioned that this is like what should first be done to one born outwardly: correcting the outward form of his body through rubbing and straightening him, binding him with swaddling bands, and cutting his umbilical cord from what had been attached to him but was not part of him—that is, the placenta from which he emerged.

Its likeness is the outward doctrine that the mustajīb had previously believed from someone other than the Wali of the Command. When his outward is thus corrected and straightened, he is protected from distortion and from the disorder of his constitution that would afflict him if he were left without this being done to him.

Then the child is turned toward nursing.

Since we had set forth the *Book of the Pillars of Islam* concerning the outward prescribed acts, whose likeness is the correction of the outward state of the newborn, so that the mustajīb might thereby correct the outward aspect of his religion, we subsequently set forth the *Book of Nursing* in the inward sense. What it contains of knowledge, wisdom, symbols, indications, admonitions, and exhortations is like the milk by which the newborn is nourished during the two years of nursing. We measured it according to what the believing mustajībūn hear and comprehend through hearing during two complete years.

We then set forth this book in order to explain the inward meaning of what is in the *Book of the Pillars*, so that the mustajīb may act according to what is in the *Book of the Pillars* of the outward prescribed acts, and may learn the realities of the outward knowledge and rulings from the Imam.

Thus his outward is corrected. He then prepares himself through what he hears and what has been presented to him beforehand of the outward contained in this book, comprehending it as knowledge and belief. He learns the reality of that outward knowledge which has been prescribed for him and of the rulings whose establishment he has been charged with.

He rejoices in them, perseveres in them, and fulfills what he has been charged with establishing.

After that, he ascends through the Boundaries of knowledge and wisdom according to his capacity for acceptance and his deserving, boundary after boundary and degree after degree.

When, in this book, the *Book of the Foundation of Interpretation*, we came to mention the Imamate, which we had set forth in the *Book of the Pillars of Islam* in a chapter devoted to it, since it is the pivot of religion upon which it revolves, and since action is neither sufficient nor accepted except after knowledge of the Imam of the Age, it became necessary for us to mention its explanation and interpretation in this book.

We therefore needed to begin mentioning it from Adam.

We began with him and mentioned his story, his cycle, and what occurred within it; then the cycle of every nāṭiq after him and the account of what occurred in each. We also mentioned

what God related to Muhammad of their accounts in the Book He revealed to him, and the inward meaning of those accounts.

We also mentioned the Imams who existed during the cycles of the prophets, and those among them whom God singled out for prophethood and messengerhood to the people of their time when they had changed and their circumstances had become corrupt under the religious law of the nāṭiq who was in their cycle. We have given a brief account of the others.

We have mentioned that after every nāṭiq in his cycle, there arise, according to his religious law, **seven Imams**. Excellence reaches its culmination in the seventh of them.

The sixth is called the **Mutim**—the completer—because the explanation reaches completion through him, while no independent explanation proceeds from him himself.

Then the seventh comes with the explanation, and the strength of taʾyīd becomes manifest in him.

If he is prepared to be a messenger, he becomes one. If the cycle of the nāṭiq before him has ended, he becomes a nāṭiq. If he is not prepared for that, another sevenfold sequence follows after him in the same manner until he becomes prepared for it.

God ended prophethood and messengerhood with Muhammad and preserved the Imamate among his descendants. He caused it to continue in the same manner through sevenfold sequences.

The sixth among them is a completer, restricted to explanation, except for his hujja, who is the seventh of the Imams. The five before him explain on his behalf the inward explanation, while the seventh undertakes explanation and proof, and the strength of taʾyīd becomes manifest in him.

They proceed in this manner during the cycle of Muhammad just as occurred with every nāṭiq in his cycle, except that there is no prophet and no messenger, because God ended prophethood with Muhammad.

This is an honor bestowed upon him, so that his religious law and messengerhood would not be abrogated by a messenger who would come after him. God had gathered the truth through him and made clear through him the obligations and rulings, the lawful and the unlawful. He preserved and affirmed all of that as he had brought it.

Therefore none of the Imams of his cycle has the right to alter it, change it, diminish anything from it, replace it, or bring anything contrary to it.

Previously, the Imams of the cycles of the nāṭiqs had done such things because revelation from God came to them concerning them. But revelation ceased with the passing of Muhammad, messengerhood ended, and the Imamate remained in its state and according to the practice of God concerning it.

Among this is the saying of Jaʿfar ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him:

“We possess the obedience that the Messenger of God possessed, except that we do not declare unlawful except what he declared unlawful, and we do not declare lawful except what he declared lawful.”

When the matter reached the **Mutim of the final sevenfold sequence of the cycle of Jesus**, God desired to abrogate his religious law with the religious law of Muhammad and to send a nāṭiq prophet after him, since Jesus had given his people glad tidings of him, as God relates from him in His Book:

“And when Jesus son of Mary said: ‘O Children of Israel, indeed I am God's messenger to you, confirming what was before me of the Torah, and giving glad tidings of a messenger who will come after me, whose name is Ahmad.’ But when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: ‘This is manifest sorcery.’”

Likewise, every nāṭiq prophet gives glad tidings of the nāṭiq after him and warns his people against rejecting him.

Moses and the others among the Imams of his cycle gave glad tidings of the Messenger of God, Muhammad, as did Jesus and his Imams.

This is found in what the People of the Torah and Gospel read in their Torah and Gospel, according to what they acknowledged after having altered and changed them, as God has mentioned concerning much of it.

They also mentioned what is found in the First Book, concerning what God said to Abraham when he prayed for his son Ishmael. He said to him:

“As for Ishmael, I have heard your prayer and answered it. I have blessed him, increased him, and greatly magnified him. He shall father a king, and I shall make twelve great ones from him, and I shall make him the father of a great nation.”

Among the descendants of Ishmael there was no prophet who had a great nation except Muhammad. The twelve great ones are his Boundaries, and they are the **nuqabāʾ in every age**.

In that book it is also stated that when Hagar fled from Sarah, an angel appeared to her and said:

“O Hagar, handmaid of Sarah, return to your mistress and submit to her. God will greatly multiply your descendants and offspring until they cannot be counted for multitude. Behold, you are pregnant and will bear a son, and you shall call him Ishmael, because God has heard your submission. His hand shall be above all, and the hands of all shall be extended toward him in submission.”

This occurred in the Messenger descended from him, after prophethood and kingship had previously been among the descendants of Isaac. Then God transferred kingship and prophethood to the descendants of Ishmael, as He had promised.

Among what is contained therein is:

“God came from Sinai, shone forth from Seir, and appeared from the mountains of Paran. He will come from the heights of holiness, and in His right hand is a fire that is a religious law for him.”

He said that His coming from Sinai refers to His sending Moses, when He sent down the Torah upon him at Mount Sinai.

His shining forth from Seir refers to His sending Jesus from there, for he lived in a village called Nazareth, which is in the land of Hebron, Seir.

Likewise, His appearing from the mountains of Paran refers to His sending Muhammad. Paran is Mecca in the language in which God revealed the Torah. In its mountains the news of Muhammad was remembered and known: God would send him, reveal His Book to him, and bring him from the heights of holiness.

The coming from the heights of holiness refers to the appearance of the **Qaʾim of the Resurrection**, and the religious law that is a fire in his right hand refers to his making the inward interpretation manifest.

We shall mention his story in its proper place, God willing.

In the fifth book of it is the statement that God said to Moses:

“I shall raise up for the Children of Israel a prophet from among their brothers like you. I shall place My words upon his mouth, and he shall speak only by My command.”

The brothers of the Children of Israel are the descendants of Ishmael, and the prophet among them is Muhammad.

Moses, by God's command, gave them glad tidings concerning him.

Among what they mention of this in the Gospel is the statement of Christ Jesus son of Mary to the disciples:

“I am going to my Father and your Father, and the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, will come to you. He does not speak from himself; rather, he speaks according to what he is told. He bears witness concerning me, and you bear witness concerning me, because they have been with me from the beginning before the people. Everything that God has prepared for you, he will inform you of.”

In John's account of Christ, he says:

“The Paraclete will not come to you unless I depart. When he comes, he will reprove the world concerning sin. He will not say anything from himself, but whatever he hears, he will speak to you. He will guide those among you who delight in truth, tell you the truth, and inform you of events and unseen things.”

And in another account:

“The Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, whom my Father will send in my name, will teach you everything.”

And he said:

“I shall ask my Father to send you another Paraclete who will remain with you forever and teach you everything.”

That is, by his saying that he would be “your teacher forever,” he means a religious law that will remain forever.

And in another account:

“The Son of Man is departing, and the Paraclete will come after him, bringing you the mysteries and explaining everything to you. He bears witness concerning me just as I bore witness concerning him, for I came to you with parables, and he will come to you with interpretation.”

And in it—that is, in the Gospel—it is stated that when John son of Zechariah was imprisoned to be killed, he sent his disciples to Christ and told them:

“Say to him: Are you the one who is coming, or should we expect another?”

They informed him of this, and Christ said to them:

“In truth, in certainty, I tell you that among women there has not arisen anyone greater than John son of Zechariah.”

And that the Torah and the books of the prophets succeed one another through prophethood and revelation until John came.

“But now, if you wish, accept, for the Paraclete is determined to come after me. Whoever has two listening ears, let him hear what I say. Truly, accept the truth as I have told you.”

Among what they mention as being in the Zabur is:

“Praise the Lord with a new praise. Praise Him whose sanctuary is the righteous. Let Israel rejoice in its Creator and the houses of Zion, because God has chosen a nation for Himself, given it victory, and strengthened its righteous ones with honor. They praise Him upon their beds and magnify Him with loud voices. In their hands are swords with two edges. Through them God takes vengeance upon nations that do not worship Him. They bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters.”

This occurred only with Muhammad and his community.

And in another cryptic passage:

“Take up the sword, O mighty one, for your praise is Ahmad, and your law and religious code are joined to the form of your right hand, and your arrows are poisoned, and the nations fall beneath you.”

And in another cryptic passage:

“He shall pass from sea to sea and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. The people of the islands shall fall before him upon their knees, and his enemies shall lick the dust from beneath his feet. Kings shall bring him offerings, and the nations shall bow and submit to him in obedience and compliance, because he delivers the oppressed sufferer from one stronger than him, rescues the weak who has no helper, and has mercy upon the weak and needy. He shall be given the gold of the land of Sheba, prayer shall be made for him at all times, he shall be blessed every day, and his remembrance shall endure with the remembrance of God forever.”

And in it is a saying of David:

“O God, send the one who establishes the religious law, so that people may know that he is a human being.”

Among what they mention as being from the speech of Isaiah is his statement concerning God:

“My servant, My chosen one, through whom I have honored Myself. I shall pour My spirit upon him and send down My revelation upon him. He will manifest My justice among the nations and command them with commandments. He will not laugh, nor will his voice be heard in the marketplaces. He will open the eyes of the blind, make the deaf ears hear, and give life to the sealed hearts. What I have given him I have not given to another. Ahmad, who praises God with much new praise, comes from the farthest reaches of the earth. The wilderness and its inhabitants rejoice; they praise God upon every height and magnify Him upon every hill. He will not weaken, be overcome, or incline toward desire. He will not humiliate the righteous, who are like a weak reed; rather, he will strengthen the truthful. He is the pillar of the humble. He is God's light, which is neither extinguished nor defeated, until he establishes His proof upon the earth and removes the excuse. To his Torah the jinn and mankind will submit”—meaning his Book, which he will bring like the Torah.

And among his words:

“I have magnified you in truth, strengthened you, and made you a light for the nations and a covenant for the peoples, so that you may open the eyes of the blind and rescue captives from darkness.”

The mark of his authority is upon his shoulder.

And in the fifth chapter, according to the Syriac and Hebrew interpretation:

“Upon his shoulder is the sign of prophethood.”

And among his words:

“I was told: ‘Rise, watchman, look at what you see and report it.’ I said: ‘I see two riders approaching, one upon a donkey and the other upon a camel.’ One of them says to his companion: ‘Babylon has fallen, and its carved idols.’”

By the rider upon the donkey he meant Jesus, peace be upon him, and by the rider upon the camel he meant Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. By the fall of Babylon and its idols he meant the disappearance of the Persian kingdom at his hands.

And among his words:

“The wilderness and the cities shall be filled with the palaces of the descendants of Qedar, praising God. From the tops of the mountains they shall call out. They are those who give God honor and establish His praise on land and sea. A banner for all the nations shall be raised for them from the farthest distance, and then they will come swiftly to it.”

The descendants of Qedar are the Arabs, because Qedar was the son of Ishmael. The raised banner is the Messenger of God.

And from the speech of Hayqūf in the time of Daniel:

“God came from Yemen and holiness and from the mountains of Paran,”

meaning Mecca, and that God would send Muhammad from it.

“The earth was filled with the praising of Ahmad and his sanctification, and he possessed the earth with his right hand. The necks of the nations submitted to him. The earth shone by his light, and his cavalry crossed the sea.”

And among his words:

“You will draw your bows and the arrows will be filled according to your command, O Muhammad.”

This is an explicit statement of his name, peace and blessings of God be upon him. This is what they acknowledged and affirmed, apart from what they altered and changed, as God, mighty and exalted, has informed us.

Its outward meaning concerns the signs of the Messenger, and it has an inward meaning containing proof.

Among those who mentioned him and the fact that prophethood was in him before he was sent, during the period of interruption that we mentioned earlier, were a group of Christians from Abyssinia.

They saw him while his wet nurse was carrying him. She was Habīra, who had nursed him among the desert people and was returning him to his mother in Mecca.

They saw in him the sign of prophethood concerning which they had been informed. They intended to take him from the woman and bring him to their land, but she did not free him from them except with difficulty, after the people who were with her overcame them and prevented them.

Among this is his story with the monk Baḥīrā.

This occurred between Mecca and Syria. His uncle Abū Ṭālib had taken him out with him, and they stopped beneath a tree.

Baḥīrā looked from his cell and saw a cloud-like shadow over him, shielding him from the sun, and saw the branches of the tree intertwining and bending over him, shading him from the sun.

He knew that he possessed a special matter.

He prepared food and invited the group to him, bringing him along with them.

When they had eaten, he asked about him.

They said:

“He is Muhammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh.”

He said:

“With whom is he?”

They said:

“With his uncle.”

He said:

“And where is his father?”

They said:

“He died, and his mother died. His grandfather cared for him, then died, and his uncle cared for him.”

This was among the things he recognized as signs concerning him.

He withdrew privately with him and said:

“My son, I ask you by al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā not to conceal from me what I ask you.”

Muhammad said to him:

“Al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā have no right over me, and there is nothing I hate more than them.”

This increased Baḥīrā in certainty.

He said:

“Then I ask you by God.”

He said:

“You have asked me by something tremendous.”

He asked him about various matters concerning his condition, and Muhammad informed him of what corresponded to the signs that Baḥīrā knew.

He then withdrew privately with Abū Ṭālib and said to him:

“Protect this nephew of yours from the Jews. Do not expose him to them, for they are his enemies and the enemies of those like him before him, and they killed them. So beware of them concerning him.”

He had hoped to live until Muhammad's time, but he died before that.

Among these accounts is that Khadīja daughter of Khuwaylid possessed wealth with which she traded and sent merchandise with men.

When the Messenger of God reached maturity and she heard of the excellence, purity, and trustworthiness upon which he had been raised, she sent him money and entrusted merchandise to him to take to Syria. She also sent a servant of hers with him to serve him.

He returned to her with considerable profit.

The servant told her that whenever the heat became intense, he saw two great birds above his head shading him.

He also told her that one day he stopped and slept beneath a tree, near which there was a monk in his cell.

When the monk saw him stop and saw him sleeping, he asked the servant about him.

The servant informed him.

The monk said:

“No one has ever slept beneath this tree except a prophet.”

Khadīja had by then become a widow after Abū Hāla, her husband.

Waraqa ibn Nawfal, her cousin, had proposed to her and used to visit her. He followed the Christian religion.

She informed him of what the servant had told her.

He said:

“By God, I hope that he is the prophet of this community, for the time of his appearance has drawn near, and we know this. We find his description in him.”

Khadīja then sent for him and offered herself to him in marriage because of the excellence she had recognized in him.

He married her.

Waraqa ibn Nawfal awaited his prophethood and asked Khadīja about his circumstances. She would tell him, and he would say:

“By God, he is the prophet of this community.”

He had many well-known verses concerning this before Muhammad was sent as the Messenger of God.

Knowledge of his affair spread, and people of knowledge and truth from among those who knew of him came to him at the end of the cycle of Jesus, peace be upon him.

They reached the one who had been appointed among them and disclosed what they possessed.

Then God honored him with prophethood and sent him as a messenger.

This is God's saying:

“He is the One who sent among the unlettered a messenger from among them, reciting to them His signs, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although before that they had been in manifest error; and others among them who have not yet joined them. He is the Mighty, the Wise. That is the bounty of God; He gives it to whom He wills, and God possesses tremendous bounty.”

The **ummiyyūn** are the people of truth among the believers.

They were called *ummiyyūn* because they are attributed to the hujja of the nāṭiq of the Age, to whom the affair of the inward Call belongs. In the inward sense, he is their mother and the nāṭiq is their father.

Likewise, the lower and higher boundaries are related to one another in this manner. The lower boundary is in the position of the female and the higher in the position of the male. The mustajībūn are like their children: the higher is their father and the lower their mother.

God sent Muhammad to those who had joined him from the end of the cycle of Jesus. These are the *ummiyyūn* whom He mentioned.

Those who had not yet joined them are the polytheists.

He therefore sent him as a messenger to all the worlds.

This is God's saying:

“That is the bounty of God; He gives it to whom He wills, and God possesses tremendous bounty.”

The group of prophets before him were generally sent to named peoples, and God mentioned this in His Book.

But He sent Muhammad to all humanity.

Among this is His saying:

“O mankind, indeed I am the Messenger of God to you all.”

And his saying:

“I was sent to the red and the black.”

Thus God made him a hujja over all His creation, since He ended prophethood with him and did not appoint a prophet after him.

The *ummiyyūn* here are the believers during the period of interruption, because of their attribution to the nāṭiq of their Age through his hujja.

Among this is God's saying:

“The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers.”

In one reading, it is:

“He is their father.”

His wives, in the inward sense, are his hujjas.

The foremost of the walīs is the father, followed beneath him by the son, the brother, and the wife. A wife only becomes a mother through her husband, becoming the mother of his children, except for what was particular to Mary, whose story has already been related.

The *ummiyyūn*, in the Arabic language in which the Qur'an was revealed, are those who do not read the Book and do not write.

The same applies to those among the believers who were in the period of interruption.

This was their condition throughout the latter cycle of the Messiah until Muhammad was sent to them.

No one engaged them in *mufātaḥa* concerning any of the Imam's knowledge, whose likeness in the inward sense is that of the Book.

He himself was likewise in this condition until God singled him out for prophethood.

Among this is the expression:

“the unlettered Prophet.”

And His saying:

“You did not recite any book before it, nor write it with your right hand, for then the falsifiers would have doubted.”

Rather:

“It consists of clear signs in the breasts of those who have been given knowledge.”

The **right hand**, in its true meaning, is the Imam of the Age.

The meaning is:

“You did not establish an Imam, appoint an asās, or compose a religious law until God singled you out for this, while you were unlettered and did not know the knowledge of these things.”

Had you possessed such knowledge beforehand, the falsifiers would have doubted and said:

“He knew this knowledge and claimed it for himself.”

This is among the miracles by which human beings are rendered incapable and which they cannot accomplish except through the taʾyīd of the Creator.

These signs establish that Muhammad was sent from a people whose rank was the same as his rank, according to what we have described, and then he raised them and elevated them.

This occurred when God, exalted be He, desired to transfer prophethood from the descendants of Isaac to the descendants of Ishmael during the period of interruption, so that the one to whom the matter would pass would not be tested by having to hand it over to one who was too weak to bear it, out of mercy toward His creation and gentleness toward His servants.

The Fifteenth Part: The Story of Muhammad

The one whom the Mutim of the cycle of Jesus had appointed as his successor, as we have mentioned, had reached the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, when his affair had reached him. He had learned his description and characteristics, informed him of his own affair, taken his covenant from him, and delivered to him his trust, according to the practice of God that had prevailed among His prophets and messengers.

This is His saying:

“And when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus son of Mary; and We took from them a solemn covenant.”

He and the lāḥiqs of the Mutim whom he had appointed as his successor, together with his *asbāb* from among the Arabs and non-Arabs, used to visit him. That appointed successor was a non-Arab.

When God singled out Muhammad for messengerhood, honored him with prophethood, and he called his people, some of them rejected him. They said:

“Muhammad was only taught this which he is calling us to by that non-Arab who frequents him and associates with him.”

Among this is God's saying:

“And they said: ‘Only a madman teaches him.’”

And His saying:

“Indeed, they say: ‘A human being only teaches him.’ The language of the one to whom they incline is foreign, while this is a clear Arabic language.”

The practice of God had proceeded with all those whom He sent: the nāṭiq Messenger would establish the outward of the religious law and revelation, and he would establish an *asās* from among those closest to him, from those who had responded to his Call, whom he had tested and whose capacity to undergo the test he had approved, to undertake the inward and interpretation.

The Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, established the outward religious law and appointed its Boundaries to carry it out.

God revealed to him:

“And We have sent down to you the Reminder, so that you may make clear to the people what has been sent down to them.”

Thus he made part of the explanation clear to the one whom he appointed and established, before he established an *asās*, and he informed them that he would establish him.

Because of this, some of them became hopeful of that position, and ʿAlī was the youngest of them.

Then God revealed to Muhammad:

“Do not move your tongue with it to hasten it. Indeed, upon Us is its gathering and its recitation. So when We recite it, follow its recitation. Then upon Us is its explanation.”

He therefore knew that he ought not to explain it on his own behalf, and that the explanation could only come from God, through the one whom He would command the Messenger to establish.

“And warn your nearest kindred.”

So he gathered the Banū ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.

I have mentioned the account of his gathering them, how he gathered them, and what he offered them concerning their supporting him in the *Book of the Pillars of Islam*. It is a well-known report transmitted by many among the common people.

He gathered them over the thigh of a sheep and a bowl of milk. They ate until they were satisfied and drank until they were full. There were forty men, most of whom could eat a *jafra* and drink a *faraq*.

Its inward likeness was what he imparted to them of knowledge and wisdom.

In their intellects, minds, and understanding, they were capable of bearing and comprehending knowledge beyond that. Yet they were incapable of what the Messenger brought to them and of what he disclosed to them concerning his intention to establish his *asās*.

He presented to them what he had taught them. All of them were incapable of undertaking and bearing it, while ʿAlī undertook it.

He established him in their presence and made those present bear witness to it, including those whom he had appointed to the Boundaries of the outward religious law.

This was grievous to both their believers and their unbelievers, except for those believers whom God protected, when they saw that they were more deserving of that than he was.

This was among the first instances of the arrogance of the polytheists and of the hypocrisy of those among the Muslims who called themselves Muslims.

I have mentioned in the account their saying to Abū Ṭālib:

“May it be congratulations to you! Your son has been placed above you.”

Then they departed mocking.

This was grievous to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him. He regarded it as tremendous, his breast became constricted, and he concealed the matter from the rest of the people out of fear of them, until God revealed to him during the Farewell Pilgrimage:

“O Messenger, convey what has been sent down to you from your Lord. If you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His message. And God will protect you from the people.”

So he stood at Ghadīr Khumm concerning the allegiance to ʿAlī, peace be upon him.

The account is famous and transmitted by both the common people and the particular. I have mentioned it in the *Book of the Pillars of Islam*.

When this matter became grievous to the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, God revealed:

“We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth, and indeed the Hour is coming.”

That is, the Qaʾim of the Resurrection.

“So pardon with a beautiful pardon.”

That is, turn away from those who harmed you because they disliked the one whom you established.

“Indeed, your Lord is the Creator, the Knowing.”

That is, the One who determined this through His knowledge.

And:

“And We have certainly given you seven of the oft-repeated.”

That means the seven Imams after the *asās*, from the descendants of those among whom excellence culminates in the seventh. The sixth among them is likewise prohibited from explanation, until the seventh is the Qaʾim, through whom God gathers the affair of the servants.

“And the Great Qurʾan.”

That means his *asās*, whom He established for him.

“Do not extend your eyes toward what We have given some pairs among them to enjoy, and do not grieve over them.”

That means those who had joined together in rejecting what he had done in establishing his *asās*, among the unbelievers and hypocrites, and what they had been allowed to enjoy of continued life until the appointed term, without the punishment being hastened against them.

“And lower your wing to the believers.”

That means those who approved of this and submitted to his command concerning it.

And:

“And say: ‘Indeed, I am the clear warner.’ Just as We sent down upon the dividers, those who made the Qurʾan into fragments.”

That means those who wanted that matter to be among them.

“So, by your Lord, We will surely question them all about what they used to do.”

And:

“So proclaim what you have been commanded and turn away from the polytheists. Indeed, We are sufficient for you against the mockers.”

That means those who mocked what he had done in establishing his *asās*.

“Those who set up another god alongside God—they will come to know.”

And:

“Indeed, We know that your breast is constricted by what they say. So glorify the praise of your Lord and be among those who prostrate. And worship your Lord until certainty comes to you.”

So He gave him glad tidings concerning the one whom he had established, concerning the Imams who would arise from his descendants, and concerning the Qaʾim at the end of time from among his descendants.

He consoled him regarding what had become grievous to him and constricted his breast: their refusal to accept the establishment of the one whom he had established, following the precedent of those nations that had come before them.

Just as the people of Moses had rejected Aaron when he established him, and the Sāmirī led them astray and they took the calf instead of him.

Likewise the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, said:

“You will certainly follow the paths of those who came before you, exactly as one shoe resembles another and one feather resembles another, until, even if they entered the hole of a lizard, you would enter it.”

That is, if those before you had answered the call of a lizard, you would answer the call of a lizard like it and enter into it—meaning someone whose downfall and stupidity are beyond doubt.

Thus the Messenger of God consoled himself with the consolation of God, turned away from those whom He had commanded him to turn away from, and devoted himself to what God had commanded him.

He established his *asās* and guarded him, concealing him until God made his affair manifest, as we have mentioned, on the day of the feast at Ghadīr Khumm, when God made manifest what He made manifest.

For when his departure approached, God strengthened this upon him so that God's hujja might stand against whoever opposed his command.

When the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, had done this and turned away from those who had remained behind from him, God increased him in glad tidings through what He revealed to him:

“Indeed, We have granted you a manifest victory.”

That is, We have opened for you what had been closed in your religious law concerning explanation, by establishing your *asās* for that purpose.

“So that God may forgive you your earlier sin and your later sin.”

That means what you had undertaken of explanation before him and what you would undertake thereafter, and complete His blessing upon you through the appearance of the Qaʾim from your descendants at the end of time.

“And guide you upon a straight path.”

That is, guide you to establish the one who would undertake this from among his descendants.

“And God will grant you a mighty victory.”

That means that through him He will make him prevail over all his community.

As God, exalted be He, said:

“That He may make it prevail over every religion.”

That means through the Qaʾim from his descendants.

Thus His saying:

“Indeed, We have granted you a manifest victory”

means:

“We have established for you an *asās* who will undertake explanation on your behalf.”

We have mentioned previously that this and other Boundaries may sometimes be impossible for the Wali of the Age to establish, in which case he undertakes what is necessary for him himself.

Among what God opened for His Messenger was what He singled him out for.

Then God raised him to the world of His dominion, showed him the Boundaries of His heavens, taught him the knowledge of His unseen, and favored him through this over all the prophets, bringing him near to the higher Boundaries with Him.

This is His saying:

“Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”

His saying:

“Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night”

means that *subḥān* declares the Creator transcendent above the attributes of His creation and the characteristics of His creatures.

His servant here is Muhammad.

And:

“He carried him by night”

means that He caused him to travel by night.

Asrā and *sarā* have the same meaning in the Arabic language. They say, “So-and-so *asrā* with so-and-so” when he traveled with him by night, and *sarā* means traveling by night.

Night, in interpretation, is like concealment and secrecy concerning the inward.

This means that He raised him and caused him to travel through the knowledge of the inward between himself and the Mutim of his cycle, who was the sixth of the Imams, and the seventh after him, to whom excellence culminates.

We have mentioned this, and we shall complete the discussion of it later in its proper place, God willing.

The Sacred Mosque is like the nāṭiq of his age, whether he is a prophet or an Imam.

The Farthest Mosque is like the Mutim, who is the sixth, who is prohibited from *mufātaḥa*.

In the outward, the Sacred Mosque is the mosque of Mecca, in which is the House toward which pilgrimage is made. The Farthest Mosque, outwardly, is the mosque of Jerusalem, and pilgrimage is not made to it except that there is circumambulation of a House.

Accordingly, the Mutim does not engage anyone in *mufātaḥa* in his age except his hujja, whom he establishes after himself. After him comes the seventh of the Imams, to whom excellence culminates.

Likewise, the report states that he was carried by night from Mecca to Jerusalem.

The meaning of this is that he was raised in knowledge to what lay between himself and the Mutim of his cycle, and the knowledge and wisdom belonging to them and what would occur in their affairs were gathered for him, as well as how their Boundaries would be, according to what he was shown of the higher Boundaries, which he saw with his own sanctified soul.

Among this is God's saying:

“The heart did not deny what it saw”

up to His saying:

“The sight did not swerve, nor did it transgress. Indeed, he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

By all of this He means the higher Boundaries. He saw them with the sight that did not swerve, namely the sight of the soul purified of impurity.

For this reason, it is related from one of his wives that she said:

“By God, on the night he was carried by night, he spent the night only between my breastbone and my neck.”

And in the report it is stated that when he reached Jerusalem, Gabriel brought him a mount smaller than a camel and larger than an ordinary beast, called al-Burāq.

He mounted it.

In interpretation, this is the **shining knowledge**, the illuminating knowledge which is the explanation, above the knowledge of the lāḥiqs and below the knowledge of the Imam.

His riding it means his mastery over it and his ascent to the heavens.

In interpretation, this means that he was shown their dominion and learned what was within them.

Among this is God's saying:

“Thus We showed Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, so that he might be among those possessing certainty.”

It is related that he prayed with all the prophets assembled, and his prayer with them, in the inward sense, was his Call to all the communities, even though he had been sent to particular peoples.

His saying:

“So that We might show him some of Our signs”

means that among the signs of God which He showed him were His Boundaries, which He had established between him and His prophets from among His angels.

He saw one of the greatest of them.

This is His saying:

“Indeed, he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.”

And His saying:

“He was taught by one mighty in power, possessing strength. He stood firm, while he was on the highest horizon. Then he drew near and came close, so that he was at the distance of two

bows or nearer. Then He revealed to His servant what He revealed. The heart did not deny what it saw. Will you then dispute with him concerning what he sees? And indeed, he saw him another time, at the Lote Tree of the Uttermost Boundary, near which is the Garden of Refuge, when there covered the Lote Tree that which covered it. The sight did not swerve, nor did it transgress. Indeed, he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord."

All of this means the higher Boundary whom he saw with the eye of his heart, whose insight was pure, and from whom he heard with his hearing ear.

This is His saying:

"Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing."

And His saying:

"to the Farthest Mosque"

We have mentioned that this is like the Mutim, who is prohibited from *mufātaḥa*.

And His saying:

"whose surroundings We have blessed"

means that the blessing is taʾyīd and *mufātaḥa*.

This existed in those who came before him and those who came after him.

And His saying:

"so that We might show him some of Our signs"

means that when he was given access to this knowledge of the higher Boundaries, he established corresponding lower Boundaries.

From this knowledge that he had been given, he imparted to his *asās* what he was required to impart to him, and taught it to him.

He entrusted him with the duty of conveying from it to whoever would receive it from him in secret, and of establishing him after himself according to what was required of one like him, and of transmitting it in this manner from one person to another.

Likewise, he entrusted him with his affair: that he should convey it and convey on his behalf whatever the outward religious law required that the servants needed.

Then He said—and He is the most truthful of speakers:

"He is the One who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers so that they might increase in faith upon their faith."

By "the believers" here He means the Imams.

The *sakīna*, tranquility, is the taʾyīd through which hearts become tranquil in knowing the truth, so that they recognize what they are to remain established upon when they are guided to it through taʾyīd.

A believer (*muʾmin*) in the language means one who affirms and believes.

God said, relating the words of Joseph's brothers:

"You will not believe us, even though we are truthful."

Thus this name applies to everyone who affirms.

God said:

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and the believers; each believes in God, His angels, His Books, and His messengers."

And He said, relating the words of Moses:

"Glory be to You. I repent to You, and I am the first of the believers."

Thus a prophet is called a believer because he believed in God.

An Imam is called a believer because he believed in God and His Messenger.

And a believer is called a believer because he believed in God, the Messenger, and the Wali of the Age—that is, he affirmed them.

Among this is God's saying concerning the Imams:

"Those who believe in God and the Messenger—they are the truthful."

And among this is God's saying:

"And the prophets and the witnesses will be brought."

The witnesses are the Imams, and they are the truthful.

And among this is God's saying:

"And the prophets and the witnesses will be brought, and judgment will be made between them in truth, and they will not be wronged."

And His saying:

"So how will it be when We bring from every community a witness, and bring you as a witness against these?"

And:

“Joseph, O truthful one.”

And the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him:

“Beware of the insight of the believer, for he looks by the light of God.”

That means the Imam.

“so that they may increase in faith upon their faith”

means that, through what was sent down of tranquility into their hearts, when the affair of the Imamate reached them, they increased in faith.

They had been believers before that, and their faith increased through attaining the rank of the Imamate.

And His saying:

“And to God belong the armies of the heavens and the earth.”

The armies of the heavens are the higher Boundaries, and the armies of the earth are the lower Boundaries.

Among this is His saying:

“And indeed, Our army will be victorious.”

They were called an army because they defend the sanctities of God with their hands and their tongues, just as an army defends those to whom it belongs and whoever appoints them to defend him.

Then He said:

“Indeed, We have sent you as a witness.”

That means a witness over those among creation who are in your age.

Whoever among them answers you, you are a witness for him; whoever does not answer you, you are a witness against him.

Among this is His saying:

“So how will it be when We bring from every community a witness, and bring you as a witness against these?”

Then He said:

“and as a bringer of glad tidings and a warner.”

That means that he gave glad tidings concerning the *asās* and the Imams from his descendants who would come after them and complete their affair through them.

And he was a warner concerning the Qaʾim from his descendants and concerning what would befall the disobedient at his hands, both of the immediate punishment and the punishment of the Hereafter.

Then He said:

"so that you may believe in God and His Messenger."

That is, We sent this Messenger with what We sent him so that you would believe in what he brought to you from his Lord,

"and strengthen him, honor him, and glorify Him morning and evening."

That is, so that you would magnify and venerate God and glorify Him in the rank of the outward through speech and belief, and in the rank of reality through knowledge and certainty, so that you might affirm His oneness with the true affirmation of His oneness and declare Him transcendent above the spiritual and corporeal beings among His creation.

Then He mentioned what He commanded concerning the pledge of allegiance and the taking of the covenant and solemn compact that had been the practice of God among the earlier and later generations.

He commanded His Messenger to implement this in his religious law, saying:

"Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you are only pledging allegiance to God. The hand of God is above their hands. So whoever breaks it, breaks it only against himself; and whoever fulfills the covenant he has made with God, He will give him a tremendous reward."

He means that whoever is one from whom you have taken, or for whom you have taken, the pledge, covenant, and solemn compact is thereby pledging allegiance only to God, who commanded you to do so.

And "His hand"—at the time the pledge is contracted and the clasp is given through the handshake—is the hand of God, because the hand of the one who takes it is doing so by God's command. It is therefore the hand of God that He has placed in that position and established there, by way of attribution.

This is like what someone says in the Arabic language to one whom he appoints to watch over him:

"He is my eye."

And to one whom he appoints to hear on his behalf:

"He is my ear."

And to one through whom he takes and gives:

“He is my hand.”

And to one through whom he defends:

“He is my sword and my spear.”

And things similar to this.

God therefore addressed the Arabs in the language by which they understood the address they heard.

His saying:

“So whoever breaks this pledge”

means whoever dissolves its bond and breaks its solemnity.

“then he breaks it only against himself”

That is against himself, not against you, because he is the one who is punished for that action.

“And whoever fulfills the covenant he has made with God, He will give him a tremendous reward.”

That is, He will reward him with a great recompense, hastening for him what is to be hastened and postponing for him what is to be postponed.

End of Part Fifteen of the *Book of the Foundation of Interpretation*.

The Sixteenth Part: The Story of Muhammad

Then God, exalted is He, said:

“He it is who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, so that He may make it prevail over every religion, even though the polytheists dislike it.”

That is, He sent Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, with guidance, which is the explanation by which the believers are guided to the truth; and “the religion of truth” means what He prescribed of His religious law, “so that He may make it prevail,” meaning that He may cause it to overcome every religion. And *ẓuhūr* means victory and domination. It is said: “We prevailed over the enemy,” and “God caused us to prevail over him.”

He, exalted is He, has indeed caused it to prevail over many religions, while the completion of His promise will take place with the appearance of the Qa’im at the end of time, from his descendants, the one who establishes his religious law. He will bring the people of every religious law and every community under his authority through domination and victory.

Among this is the saying of God, exalted is He:

“And We have already written in the Zabur, after the Reminder, that the earth shall be inherited by My righteous servants. Indeed, in this is a proclamation for a people who worship.”

And His saying:

“Indeed, We shall surely support Our messengers and those who believe in the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses arise.”

And He, blessed is His name, said:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and those with him are severe against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves.”

“Those with him” are those who followed him in truth, believed in him, affirmed him in his outward and inward aspects, and carried out his command during his lifetime and after his death. These are his *asbāb* who were in his time, and the Imams after him. They are “with him” by following him, adhering to his command, and being connected to him, because they are within one system with him.

They are the rope of God, one end of which is in the hand of God and the other end in the hands of the servants, as the Messenger of God described it. The Messenger is the first rank of the rope in the lower world; the Asās is connected to him; and the Imams are connected to the Asās, one after another. The lower end, which is in the hands of the servants, is the Imam in every age. Whoever holds fast to him has held fast to the rope of God.

Every one of them in his time is the firmest handhold that has no breaking, like a chain, each link of which is connected to the next. Whoever holds fast to its lowest link has thereby held fast to all of it, because its parts are joined one to another.

This is the meaning of God’s saying:

“Muhammad is the Messenger of God, and those who are with him…”

They are the Imams.

We have explained elsewhere that the name “faith” applies to the Messengers, the Asāses, the Imams, and all the believers who are connected to them.

Thus God, exalted is He, informed us concerning His Messenger, his *asbāb*, the Imams after him, and their *asbāb*: their command concerning them remains connected and continuous for as long as time remains. His religious law shall not cease, His law shall not be abrogated, and his religion shall not be altered; rather, it will not cease until the world itself ceases. Then those who truly hold fast to it will attain the everlasting bliss of the Hereafter.

Thus He joined for them the good of this world with the good of the Hereafter.

This was because the polytheists said that Muhammad had no son to succeed him, and that when he died, his mention and his command would come to an end. So God, exalted is He, informed them of what would occur concerning the continuance of his religious law through

his successors and Imams, and their carrying out of the affairs of his community, together with those of their *asbāb* who were connected to them.

He said:

“Severe against the disbelievers…”

Meaning those who disbelieve in them and deny them: they do not allow them any part of the explanation.

“Merciful among themselves…”

Meaning their *asbāb* and those connected to them.

“You see them bowing and prostrating…”

That is, submitting to the nāṭiq and his hujja.

“Seeking bounty from God and His pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the effect of prostration.”

By this He means obedience to the Imams.

“That is their likeness in the Torah…”

That is, in the outward aspect which they carry out for their Imams: submission, obedience, and sincerity toward them.

Then He said:

“And their likeness in the Gospel…”

That is, in the inward aspect:

“like a plant that brings forth its offshoot.”

An offshoot of a plant, in the language of the Arabs, is its branch or shoot that emerges from its root. It is said that a plant *shaṭaʾa* when it produces shoots—that is, when one among them rises, others emerge from them who succeed him.

“Then He strengthens it…”

Meaning that he becomes a minister and a hujja.

“Then it grows strong and stands firmly upon its stalks…”

That is, when the one who preceded him passes away and the one appointed as his successor rises after him, and is established by taʾyīd upon his stalk.

Suq is the plural of *sāq*, "stalk." This means that he establishes his *lāḥiqs* and his *asbāb*, and is established over them in the elevated rank through taʾyīd.

"Delighting the sowers…"

Meaning the *lāḥiqs* and the dāʿīs who sow wisdom in the hearts of the believers,

"that He may enrage the disbelievers through them."

Meaning those who make it appear that the affair of Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, will come to an end because they saw what happened among those whom they witnessed among themselves, and they became certain that his affair continued through those who followed them and spoke as they did in every age and time.

"God has promised those among them who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness and a great reward."

Meaning, from all of them, what He grants them of reward in this world and the next.

Among this is His saying, exalted is He:

"Indeed, We have given you al-Kawthar. So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. Indeed, your hater is the one cut off."

It is said that ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, the accursed, said to the unbelievers of Quraysh: "Remain steadfast upon what you are upon, for Muhammad has no son. When he dies, his mention and his affair will come to an end."

This reached the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, and grieved him. So God sent down this sūra upon him.

Al-Kawthar is said in the interpretation to be a river in Paradise. The likeness of the river is the likeness of immense knowledge, namely what God gave him of the knowledge of inward interpretation.

His saying:

"So pray to your Lord"

means: establish the Call to God inwardly, for this is the inward aspect of prayer, and establish it outwardly as well. The establishment of the inward does not suffice without the outward, nor the outward without the inward.

His saying:

"And sacrifice"

means: take the covenant of the Asās upon your Asās and appoint him for the explanation, so that your inward progeny may continue and multiply—that is, the *mustajībūn* of his Call—and the affair of your hater and of the one who said this against you will be cut off.

And so it happened as God, mighty and exalted is His mention, promised.

The sacrifice here is only of camels, which are likenesses of the Imams. The slaughtering is of sheep, which are likenesses of the believers. Cattle are likenesses of the hujjas.

Thus He gave the likeness of the Asās of Abraham as a ram, the Asās of Moses as cattle, and the Asās of Muhammad as a camel.

This is because what was related concerning Abraham's saying to his Asās, Ishmael:

"Indeed, I see in a dream that I am sacrificing you,"

was only the taking of the covenant of faith from him initially.

And what was related concerning Moses's saying to his people:

"God commands you to slaughter a cow,"

was the establishment of a hujja, as we have mentioned.

As for Muhammad's being commanded to sacrifice, this means that he was commanded to take the covenant of the Asās from ʿAlī.

As for His saying:

"Have We not expanded your breast for you?"

this means the expansion of the outward aspect that was in his breast through establishing his Asās, in order to explain it.

"And We removed from you your burden"

means what he had carried of the outward without explanation,

"which had weighed heavily upon your back."

That is, it had burdened him because of what he was conveying from it to the *mustajībūn* without explanation.

"And We raised for you your mention."

That is, among the highest assembly, through what is mentioned therein.

"Indeed, with hardship comes ease."

He says: with the outward revelation there is an explanation of the inward, which clarifies it and makes it easy for one for whom its affair was difficult through the explanation that is interpretation.

"Indeed, with hardship comes ease."

He says: with the Call to the outward there is an inward Call containing its explanation and making it easy.

“So when you are free, devote yourself.”

He says: exhaust yourself and strive in establishing the Asās and establishing the inward Call.

“And to your Lord turn your desire.”

That is, desire Him and ask Him for assistance in that, and for the turning of the *mustajībūn* toward Him.

Among what He symbolized in the supplication toward Him is His saying:

“Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good admonition.”

He says: call to your Asās whom you appointed and established by the command of your Lord, and whom you made a path toward which one turns through him, with the wisdom that you entrusted to him, which is the explanation; and with good admonition, which is what he admonishes those who do not accept him, turn away from his command, and turn elsewhere because they think themselves more worthy of that than he is.

“And argue with them in the way that is best.”

That is, debate them and argue with them concerning which of the two paths is better: the one you established for them, or the one they desired.

“Indeed, your Lord knows best who has strayed from His way.”

Meaning the one who turns away from the one you established. And He knows best those who are guided to him, those who submit to his command.

Among this is His saying, exalted is He:

“O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of good tidings, a warner, and a caller to God by His permission, and as an illuminating lamp.”

The outward meaning of this statement is that He sent him as a witness over his community whom he witnessed and who were in his time, concerning what they did of obedience and disobedience, disbelief and faith, in the outward aspect of what he brought them and its inward aspect; and concerning the obedience of those among them whom he commanded to obey him and the disobedience of those among them who disobeyed his command.

“A bearer of good tidings” means that he gives the obedient among them good tidings of His reward.

“A warner” means that he warns the disobedient among them of His punishment.

“A caller to God by His permission” means by His command: he calls people to obey Him and to carry out what He commanded.

“And an illuminating lamp” means that one is guided by him in the darkness of ignorance and gains sight through him, just as one is guided by a lamp in the darkness of night.

In the inward aspect, this means that in this verse He clarified the number of those whom he would appoint over the community, according to their ranks.

The **witness** refers to the nāṭiq, who is the Messenger in his age; and every Imam of every age after him occupies this rank and is a witness over the people of his time.

The **bearer of good tidings** is the Asās in the age of the Messenger, and the hujja in the age of every Imam in this rank. He gives good tidings to whoever responds to his Call, accepts his interpretation, is guided by it, and acts according to what he is commanded, outwardly and inwardly, of success, salvation, and felicity in his worldly life and his Hereafter.

The **warner** is the *lāḥiq* among the hujjas in every *jazīra*. Each one of them in this rank warns the people of his *jazīra* concerning the one whom the dāʿīs appointed there, of the punishment of God for whoever fails to respond to it.

The **Mutim**, who is the sixth of the Imams, is prohibited from engaging in *mufātaḥa* with anyone other than his hujja, who is the seventh Imam after him. He warns the people of his age, by establishing him, of what is anticipated from the completion of excellence reaching him and of the perfection of the affair through him, so that they may hasten toward him.

The **caller to Him** is the one whom the Master of every *jazīra* authorizes to conduct the Call. They are the dāʿīs, each one of them occupying this rank.

The **illuminating lamp** is the *maʾdhūn* whom the dāʿī authorizes, so that he may break for him the resistance of whoever sees resistance to him and explain to him the path toward him. Thus he is likened to a lamp by which one is guided in darkness to the place of need.

These, then, are the five lower Boundaries which God, exalted is He, commanded to be established on earth for His servants, corresponding to the five higher Boundaries which are in heaven. We have already discussed them at the beginning of this book.

When these are completed in the age of a Prophet or an Imam, and time assists him, the community obeys him, and there is found among them one fit for these ranks, then his affair is complete—provided that he also finds it possible to establish in every *jazīra* of the earth, which are twelve *jazīras*, a *lāḥiq*, and in every region such a number of dāʿīs and *maʾdhūns* as is appropriate.

This will be mentioned in its proper place, God willing.

Or he may exceed that number, until all the people of the earth respond to the seventh in the final cycle and the seventh Imam from the descendants of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, willingly or unwillingly, through domination and victory.

Then the religion will be, as God, exalted is He, said, entirely for God.

And His promise to Muhammad will be fulfilled through the appearance of his religion over every religion, even though the polytheists dislike it—that is, those who persist in what they were upon, until he prevails over them and they enter under the rule of the Master of that age.

The affair will proceed among them according to what we shall mention when we reach its proper place, God willing.

Sometimes this is not prepared for him, nor is it made possible for him, because of what God brings about of His favor toward His servants in whatever age or time He wills that it occur. It is like how He sends rain when He wills and withholds it when He wills; makes the earth fertile at one time and barren at another; and brings forth blessings at one time and removes them at another—through hardship at one time and ease at another.

All of this is only a favor from God toward His servants. He gives it to them when He wills, as a punishment for some of them, and as a trial and reward for others when it comes upon them.

As for the friends of God in every age, whether in hardship or ease, blessing or affliction, they possess the favor that God has assigned to them. The turning away of the servants from them does not diminish anything of it when they turn away, nor does their turning toward them increase anything of it.

Yet they love, because of the excellence, compassion, and mercy with which God created them toward His servants, that they turn toward what contains their happiness and welfare, and that their affairs thereby be completed. They strive for this and expend themselves in it, seeking through it the reward of God for that in which He has employed them for the welfare of His servants.

They exert themselves in this, exhaust their bodies in it, and reach the utmost of what they are able to accomplish, according to what they have been charged with, commanded to do, and employed in doing.

Among this is the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, to ʿAlī, peace be upon him:

“If God guides one man through you, it is better for you than all that upon which the sun has risen or set.”

And in another statement:

“It is better for you than red camels.”

What God commanded the believers concerning the outward law of Muhammad to believe in its inward aspect is His saying:

“O you who believe…”

Meaning, believe in the outward aspect of Muhammad—that is, affirm him.

“Fear God and believe in His Messenger.”

He says: once you have affirmed the outward, act according to what you have been commanded to act upon therein and establish it.

This is His saying:

"Alif, Lām, Mīm. This is the Book in which there is no doubt, a guidance for the God-fearing, those who believe in the unseen and establish prayer…"

That is, its outward and inward aspects,

"and spend from what We have provided them."

Meaning, from the outward wealth, what is obligatory therein; and from the inward aspect, what pertains to it, namely knowledge of what ought to be acted upon from it and teaching it to whoever ought to know it.

This is the description of the God-fearing. It is a comprehensive statement embracing all the obligations in the outward and inward aspects, and God described them by it. Wherever God, exalted is He, commands *taqwā* in His Book, this is what He intends by it.

This is among the concision characteristic of the Arabs to whom the Qurʾan was addressed.

His saying here concerning the believers in the outward aspect of the Messenger means: believe in the inward aspect and take it from the one whom he established to convey it, just as you took from him what he established for you.

"Fear God" encompasses all of this.

And:

"Believe in His Messenger"

means: affirm him concerning what he brought in the outward aspect, act upon what is obligatory therein, and hold as your belief what you have learned and believed concerning what is obligatory in the outward aspect.

"He will give you two portions of His mercy."

That is, two shares of His reward: one share for your belief in and practice of the outward aspect, and another corresponding share for the inward.

"And He will make for you a light by which you walk."

That is, learned guides by whom you are guided.

"And He will forgive you, and God is Forgiving, Merciful."

Forgiveness means covering: He covers you by His mercy from His punishment and grants you success in concealing what you were commanded to conceal, so that His reward becomes obligatory for you.

Among what further establishes this for the servants is His saying, mighty is His mention:

"And a declaration from God and His Messenger to the people on the day of the greater pilgrimage: God is free from the polytheists, and so is His Messenger. So if you repent, it is better for you; but if you turn away, then know that you cannot frustrate God. And give those who disbelieve good tidings of a painful punishment."

In the outward aspect, this was a warning in the age of the Messenger to those who were polytheists toward him.

It is related that he commanded Abū Bakr to go out to Mecca during the pilgrimage season and warn them with it. He wrote for him the sūra of Barāʾa and sent him with it. Then God revealed that no one could convey it from him except one who was from him, who would be the witness after him, as He said:

"Is one who possesses a clear proof from his Lord…"

meaning,

"and a witness from him follows him…"

meaning ʿAlī.

So He commanded him, and he caught up with Abū Bakr, took the document from him, and conveyed it on his behalf as God had commanded.

In the inward aspect, this proceeds in the same manner, just as night and day, the sun and moon, and everything in the Book of God continue.

This is because the Qurʾan remains established, and created beings remain bound to what is in it.

If every verse in the Qurʾan had been revealed concerning one particular man or one particular thing, or addressed only to those who were in the age of the Messenger, and those people then passed away, causing its ruling to disappear, its obligation to fall, and its like to disappear, then the entire Qurʾan would have disappeared.

Rather, it revolves in every cycle and age and over every generation of generations, just as the sun and moon revolve, and it operates among them as night and day operate.

Those who were present at the time were addressed by it concerning the obligations of establishing prayer, giving zakāt, and other things. That address continues to apply to those who come after them until the Hour is established, and those obligations remain binding upon them.

The same applies to everything contained in it.

Thus His saying here:

"And a declaration from God and His Messenger…"

is an announcement and notification, as the caller to prayer announces and informs concerning the prayer, and as He, exalted and sublime is He, said:

“I have notified you equally.”

In the inward aspect, His saying:

“to the people”

means those made familiar with wisdom, namely the believers who have responded.

That is an announcement from Him to them that He and His Messenger are free of the polytheists. These are everyone who associates anyone other than Him with Him or with one of His friends.

And:

“on the day of the greater pilgrimage”

in the inward aspect refers to the nāṭiq. The declaration here from him to him is the taʾyīd that proceeds to him; from him it proceeds to his Asās; from the Asās to his Boundaries; and from the Boundaries to the *mustajībūn*, according to the rank and measure belonging to each one of them.

The lesser pilgrimage is the Imam.

Through this declaration, God intended to warn all the people—those who received the declaration at that time and those who would come after them in the cycle of Muhammad, from the beginning of his religious community to its end—against associating partners with Him or with His friends, whether the association is subtle or great.

We have already mentioned earlier, in the discussion of the Boundaries of Knowledge, various forms of this.

ʿAlī said that among polytheism is that which is more hidden than a black ant upon a black rock on a dark night.

The general statement concerning this is that a person should not believe of any one of them something that God did not assign to him, nor deny anything that God assigned to him, nor take anything of his religion from someone whom God did not appoint as one from whom it should be taken, nor turn away from the one whom He appointed for that purpose.

All of this is polytheism.

To give every possessor of a right his due right, and to take from the one whom God commanded that one take from, is part of the oneness of God.

We have mentioned a number of passages and points from the story of Muhammad, the Messenger of God, and a general account of his mission and of the foundation of what is obligatory in his religious law, which is contained in the Book of God.

Had we traced everything in the Qurʾan concerning this, it would have gone beyond the bounds of this book. We have only expanded upon it as we mentioned: as a foundation for interpreting what we expanded upon of the outward aspect in the *Daʿāʾim al-Islām*.

When we reached the chapter on the Imamate, we thought it appropriate to elaborate somewhat upon it and mention its foundation and branch. So we brought its account from Adam to Muhammad.

It became lengthy, even though we abbreviated it and spoke concisely concerning it.

God willing, we shall mention everything in the Qurʾan concerning this and other matters within their appropriate Boundary of Knowledge, with the assistance, taʾyīd, success, and guidance of God, and with the substance connected to His friends, whose measures proceed from them among His servants.

When Muhammad, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, had fulfilled what God, exalted is He, had entrusted to him, established his religious law and what God had commanded him to establish, and his departure drew near, he summoned his community—as we have mentioned—to witness the appointment of his heir, established him among them in his place, and informed them that he was the *mawlā* of whoever among them regarded Muhammad as his *mawlā*.

God, exalted is He, then revealed:

"Today I have perfected for you your religion, completed My favor upon you, and approved Islam for you as a religion."

The Messenger of God responded, as did those who responded, while others held back.

Then God revealed to him:

"When the help of God and the victory come, and you see the people entering the religion of God in multitudes, then glorify the praise of your Lord and seek His forgiveness. Indeed, He is ever Relenting."

By this He announced to him his own death and informed him that his departure was near, after he had established what he established of his religious law and appointed, by His command, the one whom he appointed for his community to take his place after him.

This is His saying:

"When the help of God and the victory come…"

That is the help with which He supported him and strengthened him through the establishment of his heir, his minister, and his brother, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him.

And it is the victory He opened for him and through his hands: the outward victory by his hand and sword, and the inward victory by his tongue and knowledge, which he entrusted to him by the command of his Lord, consisting of the interpretation of his religious law and the

explanation of the interpretation of what he brought, together with his mastery of this and his fulfillment of the obligation incumbent upon him concerning it.

God showed him of this that which gladdened his eye, pleased his soul, and brought rest to his heart, when he saw during his lifetime his successor after him, just as those of his brothers among the Prophets and their Imams before him had seen it, and as his Imams after him would see it until their final one.

These are the gifts of God to His friends during their lifetimes.

The turning away of those who turn away from them, and from those whom they appoint after them, does not harm them or grieve them, as we have mentioned, nor does it diminish anything of their excellence.

Even so, because of the excellence implanted in them, they love that the community of each one of them should attain the mercy of God through him and by his hand.

His saying:

“Then glorify the praise of your Lord”

means: declare Him transcendent, praising Him with the praise due to Him, for what He bestowed upon you, gave you, and granted you, from the attributes of His creation. Do not associate anyone else with Him in this, so that you do not suppose that any of the higher Boundaries between you and Him possesses any superiority over you in this matter.

Devote the praise and thanks for this entirely to Him, acknowledging that it comes from Him, without denying the right of any possessor of a right among them or diminishing what is obligatory toward him, as we explained in the Boundary of Divine Oneness: that doing so is among the forms of polytheism.

“And seek His forgiveness”

means: ask Him to cover you by His mercy and to cover what you were commanded to conceal in your religious law.

“Indeed, He is ever Relenting.”

That is, toward whoever does this and devotes himself sincerely to Him.

Then God, exalted is He, took him when He desired to bestow honor upon him, and brought him down to the abode of His security and reward for what he had undertaken.

Peace and blessings of God be upon him and upon the Imams from his descendants.

End of Part Sixteen of the Book of the Foundation of Interpretation.

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds. May God bless His Messenger Muhammad and the pure ones of his progeny, his purified descendants, and grant them abundant peace.

God is sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs.

The Seventeenth Part: The Story of Muhammad's Heir and the Asās of His Religious Law, ʿAlī

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

When the departure of Muhammad drew near, God commanded him to explicitly designate his heir, the Commander of the Believers, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

He feared the people and the hypocrisy of his hujjas after him, and the Messenger of God's breast became constricted because of this. So God revealed to him:

"O Messenger, convey what has been sent down to you from your Lord concerning ʿAlī; and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His message. God will protect you from the people."

This occurred when he was returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage.

When he reached Ghadīr Khumm, he ordered those who had gone ahead to return and those who were descending to stop. He ordered the bushes to be cleared of what was beneath them and had stones arranged for him in the form of a pulpit.

He gathered his *lāḥiqs*, his dāʿīs, and those who had responded to his Call. He explicitly designated the Commander of the Believers as his heir and established him beside himself.

Then he said:

"Am I not more entitled to you than your own selves?"

They said:

"Yes, O Messenger of God."

He said:

"O God, bear witness to their acknowledgment."

Then he said a second time:

"Am I not more entitled to you than your own selves?"

They said:

"Yes, O Messenger of God."

He said:

“O God, bear witness to their acknowledgment.”

Then he said a third time:

“Am I not more entitled to you than your own selves?”

They said:

“Yes, O Messenger of God.”

He said:

“Whoever has me as his *mawlā*, then ʿAlī is his *mawlā*. O God, befriend whoever befriends him, oppose whoever opposes him, support whoever supports him, forsake whoever forsakes him, and make the truth turn with him wherever he turns.”

Then he handed over to him his books, his weapon, and the inheritances of the Prophets, as those Prophets before him had done.

His hujjas were overcome by envy, just as Iblīs and the angels had been overcome by envy toward Adam.

Many of the angels followed Iblīs, as God, exalted is He, said:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am placing upon the earth a successor,’ they said, ‘Will You place upon it one who will cause corruption therein and shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and sanctify You?’ He said, ‘Indeed, I know what you do not know.’ And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then presented them to the angels and said, ‘Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.’ They said, ‘Glory be to You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, You are the Knowing, the Wise.’ He said, ‘O Adam, inform them of their names.’ Then when he informed them of their names, He said, ‘Did I not tell you that I know the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you were concealing?’ And when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ they prostrated, except Iblīs…”

God commanded the angels to prostrate before Adam, and they prostrated after having manifested their opposition and argument against their Creator, exalted is His mention.

But Iblīs persisted in his transgression, disobedience, and argument against his Lord, and was partisan toward his own element. He boasted over Adam through his arrogance and his attribution of himself to a flame of fire, saying:

“I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay.”

So God expelled him from Paradise because of his action, disgraced, and made him, through his disobedience, an accursed Satan.

He said, lowering his rank and diminishing his station:

“Go down from it, for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So go out; indeed, you are among the humiliated.”

He diminished him because of his arrogance and lowered him because of his tyranny.

Adam, however, did not know whom to appoint as his heir and successor after him. So God commanded him to order Cain and Abel to offer sacrifices. Whoever’s sacrifice was accepted would be his heir, as God, exalted is He, said:

“And recite to them the story of the two sons of Adam in truth, when they both offered a sacrifice and it was accepted from one of them but was not accepted from the other. He said, ‘I will surely kill you.’ He said, ‘God only accepts from the God-fearing. If you stretch your hand toward me to kill me, I shall not stretch my hand toward you to kill you. Indeed, I fear God, Lord of the worlds. Indeed, I wish that you should bear my sin and your sin, and thus become among the inhabitants of the Fire. That is the recompense of the wrongdoers.’ But his soul induced him to kill his brother, so he killed him and became among the losers.”

Iblīs intensified his disobedience and persisted stubbornly in his transgression.

Likewise, Muhammad’s *lāḥiqs* were overcome by what had overcome the angels, because the *lāḥiqs* are angels in potentiality. When they depart from this corporeal world and pass into the spiritual world, they become angels in actuality, because through their deeds they ascend to the world of permanence. Their deeds consist of establishing the Call and spreading the explanation among those who belong to it.

When Muhammad invested ʿAlī, his heir, with the authority of the Commander of the Believers and handed over to him the inheritances of the Prophets in the presence of his *lāḥiqs*, they envied him, as we mentioned concerning the envy of Iblīs and the angels and their objection to Adam, and like Cain’s envy of his brother Abel and his killing him.

So some of Muhammad’s *lāḥiqs* said to one another:

“Muhammad only did this with ʿAlī because of his kinship to him.”

This reached him, and God revealed to him:

“Say: Have you considered, if it is from God and you disbelieve in it, while a witness from the Children of Israel bears witness to the like of it, and he believes, while you are arrogant? Indeed, God does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

The interpretation of this is:

“Say to the companions of Muhammad and his hujjas: If the appointment of this heir is from God, by His command, and you disbelieve in it”—meaning that you conceal the rank that God selected and chose for him—“while Moses bore witness to its like.”

He commanded the Children of Israel, and they acknowledged the one whom he appointed as their successor.

Then envy entered them, and they took the calf, and the Sāmirī led them astray.

Likewise, what had entered Muhammad's *lāḥiqs* of envy entered them. So they took a calf, a physical body that made a lowing sound.

A *khuwār* is something that has no reality and cannot be established by reason.

When the Messenger was absent, they concealed the rank of his Asās, suppressed the designation of the Messenger and the pledge that they had given at Ghadīr Khumm, and followed Iblīs, Cain, and the Sāmirī, exactly, like one sandal matching another and one feather matching another.

They took his seat, assumed his name, and claimed his station of succession and the command of the believers.

They clung to the outward aspect and distorted it.

So the Asās confronted them with the proof of the Qurʾan that had been revealed to Muhammad. He gathered them and brought it to them.

They said:

"What we have with us of the Book is sufficient for us. We have no need of what you have with you from it."

So he took it and withdrew from them. He found no helper or supporter, and his trial became severe. Their abuse of him increased until they intended to kill him during his prayer.

This was because the First Adversary had ordered Khālid ibn al-Walīd that when ʿAlī prayed with them in the first row, he should say to him:

"When you finish the prayer, strike ʿAlī while he is still in his prayer, during his tasbīḥ, and kill him. Then you will become a leader in this matter."

When Abū Bakr prayed, however, he reflected upon the strength of Banū Hāshim and upon the possibility that Khālid might not succeed in killing ʿAlī, causing the people to turn against him, return to ʿAlī concerning their pledge, and kill him.

So he prolonged his sitting before the final salutation until the sun was almost to rise.

At that point he said aloud:

"Khālid must not do what I commanded him to do."

Then he gave the salutation.

ʿAlī said to Khālid:

"Woe to you! Were you actually going to do it?"

And he extended his hand toward his limbs. No one was able to free Khālid from his grasp until Khālid relieved himself in his clothes.

They said to the Second Adversary:

“Swear to him by the master of the grave.”

They made him swear by him, and he then released him.

His trial continued until the First Adversary died and the Second Adversary took his place. He was more severe upon him than the First in trial, affliction, and exertion.

Despite all this, they would come to him concerning the difficult matters that befell them and concerning judgments, and they would find with him relief and a way out for them.

He could not wage war against them until he had established his hujjas and his Call had spread.

Then he acquired a place of migration, as the Messenger of God had done, and as he had been patient with the harm of the polytheists of Quraysh.

When he acquired a place of migration, he drew the sword of revelation and fought the polytheists.

His heir did likewise according to his example.

He was patient as the Messenger had been patient, until he acquired a place of migration and established its Boundaries in the inward Call.

Then he drew the sword of interpretation and killed the *nākiṯūn*, the *qāsiṭūn*, and the *māriqūn*.

He became connected to the higher Boundaries.

The nāṭiq established himself, in the world of composition, in the position corresponding to the First in the higher world—the world of the divine intellect, the world of primordial pleasure, permanence, and happiness.

He established his Asās beneath him, corresponding to the Second in the spiritual world of the Soul.

The world of the Soul is spiritual, and they live by the light of the world of permanence and pleasure and do not die, because their substance comes from the First, which is the Universal Intellect, through the mediation of the Second in the spiritual world of the Soul.

Likewise, in the world of composition, no corporeal person reaches knowledge of the realities represented by the religious law, its symbols, and the decisive interpretation of these except through the inward Call of the Asās.

From it, one ascends to knowledge of the spiritual Soul.

Thus the nāṭiq is an example corresponding to the Universal Intellect in the world of composition, while the Asās is an example corresponding to the Universal Soul.

The nāṭiq speaks with the wisdom of interpretation in order to make clear the excellence of the nāṭiq in what he indicates.

And the *amān*—the fruit produced between the nāṭiq and the Asās—is like thought, which is produced between the Intellect and the Soul.

Thought manifests the virtues of the Intellect and the world of lordship, and it manifests the virtues of the Soul and its characteristics in the spiritual world without extinction.

Likewise, the Imam manifests the virtues of the nāṭiq, discloses his symbols and represented meanings in the outward revelation and religious law, and carries out the interpretation of the Asās's Call and the inward wisdom of the Asās.

When the nāṭiq disappeared, ascending to the spiritual world, his Asās ascended to his rank and inherited his station. He established himself in the position of the First and established the mustawdaʿ Imam beneath him in the position of the Second in the world of the Soul.

When the Asās disappeared, the Mutim ascended to the rank of the Asās, established the Imam, pointed him out, and delivered to the two of them what he had held in his hand of the deposit of the inheritances of the Prophets.

Then the Mutim disappeared, and the Imam ascended to the station of the nāṭiq, corresponding to the station of the First.

Thus he was an intellect for everything in the world of composition and established the hujja beneath him to provide explanation on his behalf, corresponding to the Second in the world of the Soul.

He established the hujja, the Master of the *jazīra* of the Call, beneath him, just as the Second is established beneath the nāṭiq and calls toward the First through the mediation of the Second.

Likewise, the rank of the dāʿī from the hujja, the Master of the *jazīra* of the Call, is like the rank of the Asās from the nāṭiq.

And the rank of the hujja from the Imam is like the rank of the Soul from the Universal Intellect.

The Messenger indicated the rank of his heir and successor when he said:

"I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate."

By the outward meaning of his statement, he indicated that no one among the Boundaries of the nāṭiq can claim to have reached the wisdom of revelation and religious law except through his heir, who is the gate of the city.

The city, in interpretation, is that by which the world practices its religion, namely the outward revelation and the represented meanings of the religious law, which the nāṭiq made like a fortress for the city.

No one reaches the city except through its gate.

In the city there are buying and selling, merchants, and people engaged in trade in the markets. A wall surrounds the city, so nothing within the city can be reached except through its gate.

As God, exalted and sublime in His praise and thanks, said:

"And He placed between them a wall with a gate; its inward side contains mercy, while its outward side, toward them, contains punishment. They call to them: 'Were we not with you?' They say: 'Yes, but you tempted yourselves, waited, doubted, and were deceived by wishful thinking until the command of God came, and the deceiver deceived you concerning God.'"

The city is the religious law of the Messenger, which he made like a fortress for the city.

The goods are a likeness of the outward and inward aspects of the religious law.

The markets are likenesses of the hujjas, the masters of the *jazāʾir*.

The merchants in the markets are the dāʿīs.

Buying and selling are a likeness of the one who takes the pledge and pledges allegiance to the Imam of his age, and purchases himself from the Imam of his age, as God, exalted is He, said:

"Indeed, God has purchased from the believers their selves and their wealth, in exchange for Paradise."

Within the city are palaces, which are like hidden Boundaries concealed by the religious law in the inward Call. Knowledge of their ranks has been curtailed from the people of the religious law.

Thus God said:

"And keep yourself patient with those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face. Do not let your eyes turn away from them, desiring the adornment of the life of this world, and do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his desire and whose affair is excessive."

God commanded His Prophet to keep himself with them, not to separate from them, and not to let his eyes turn away from them.

They are the Imams, whose stations the people of the religious law have been unable to know and whose ranks they have not recognized.

All of this is in the City of Knowledge, of which ʿAlī is the gate.

The wall is the outward religious law.

No one reaches knowledge of the realities of what he worships God through, outwardly and inwardly, except through the inward Call, whose possessor is the gate of the city.

Through him one reaches knowledge of what the Messengers brought, its symbol, and its concealment.

Through the gate whose inward side contains mercy and whose outward side toward them contains punishment, one reaches what lies within the wall.

Then the people of the outward aspect say:

"Were we not with you in the religious law of the Messenger?"

It is said to them:

"Yes, but you tempted yourselves through the one whom you established as the likeness of the Sāmirī's calf, and you devoted yourselves to him, just as those before you did—exactly, like one sandal matching another and one feather matching another. And you doubted the Call of the Asās to which he called you, refused it, and waited for him for the vicissitudes of fate."

And in another report confirming against them that they cannot reach knowledge of what he brought from his Lord except through his heir, he said:

"I am the house of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate. Whoever desires knowledge, let him come to the gate."

The nāṭiqs are the houses of God's wisdom, His secrets, and the hidden depths of His concealed knowledge.

Thus He said:

"In houses which God has permitted to be raised and in which His name is mentioned; He is glorified therein morning and evening."

Meaning the outward and the inward.

And He, exalted is He, said:

"Righteousness is not that you enter the houses from their backs, but righteousness is that one fears God. Enter the houses through their doors."

Muhammad is the greatest of the houses, and his gate, ʿAlī, is the greatest of the gates. Whoever enters through it is secure, as He said:

“Its inward side contains mercy, while its outward side toward them contains punishment.”

Everyone who opposes the inward Call of the Asās and remains upon the outward without the inward is in outward punishment.

And ʿAlī is the greatest of the gates of the houses of the Boundaries of God, who are the nāṭiqs.

The wisdom of God is preserved and concealed in His houses.

The greatest of His houses is Muhammad, and the greatest of the gates of His houses is his Asās.

He informed us—being the one who knows what lies within the hearts and reports concerning the veiled matters of the unseen—that those whom the Pharaohs have veiled from it cannot reach it or know it.

Thus He said:

“In a hidden Book, touched only by the purified.”

The *maknūn* is that which is hidden and concealed, so no one knows it because of its concealment and being hidden away.

The Book is the Asās in which the nāṭiq wrote the explanation of the interpretation of his religious law and its represented meanings, then concealed and veiled it.

None touches it except the purified, who are the Imams from his descendants.

We shall mention the story of each of their Mutims in its proper place, God willing.

The Second Adversary died, and he had been more severe in his Pharaoh-like conduct toward him.

He left the affair as a council of six, among whom were the Commander of the Believers, peace be upon him, and ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, and among them was Ṣuhayb al-Rūmī.

He said:

“If the four agree upon the fifth and the sixth opposes them, let the five kill him.”

ʿAlī remained in his house and did not seek the matter.

The people then pledged allegiance to the Third Adversary, ʿUthmān.

They abandoned ʿAlī.

ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān began consuming the wealth of the Muslims: the fifths, zakāts, tenths, and charitable gifts.

He withheld from ʿĀʾisha what her father used to give her, and what ʿUmar after him had given her.

The Muslims resented ʿUthmān for these reasons, which we have mentioned: his negligence concerning the wealth and his consumption of it, and because he favored non-Arabs and abandoned the Arabs.

Through all of this, ʿAlī was occupied with establishing his inward Call, which was his rank and which God had commanded him to establish through the mediation of the Messenger.

The people spoke about ʿUthmān and went to ʿĀʾisha, complaining to her about what ʿUthmān was doing, his favoring of non-Arabs, and his abandonment of the Arabs.

She said:

"Kill Naʿthal. May God kill Naʿthal, for he has altered the religion of God from beginning to end."

The Muslims fought him and besieged him in his house for three days, fighting him by night and by day.

ʿAlī, peace be upon him, remained in his house, together with his *lāḥiqs* and those who had responded to his Call.

When the affair of ʿUthmān became prolonged and he became certain that he would be killed, he wrote a letter to ʿAlī, saying:

"O Commander of the Believers, the flood has reached the hills, and the matter has reached the point of hardship and distress."

Poetry:

If I am to be eaten, then you be the one to eat me;
Otherwise, come to my aid before I am torn apart.

So he sent his son al-Ḥasan to him to protect him.

But he did not reach them until they had already entered the house with him. They seized al-Ḥasan and pulled him until his upper garments were torn, and ʿUthmān was killed.

The people then came to the Commander of the Believers asking him for the pledge of allegiance.

He refused them.

They pressed him insistently.

The first to extend his hand to pledge allegiance and clasp hands with him were Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr.

He said:

“A withered hand does not fulfill, and an affair will not be completed.”

The people pledged allegiance to him.

They pressed upon him, and ʿĀʾisha subsequently departed intending to perform the lesser pilgrimage.

The Commander of the Believers, peace be upon him, undertook the matter of the Imamate.

Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr came to him, each asking for his allotted share.

He gave them what a Muslim servant receives from the spoils.

They said to him:

“Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān used to grant us something; so grant us something on account of that.”

He said to them:

“I have granted you according to the practice of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him.”

And he divided the wealth equally among the people.

They resented him for this, concealed their hypocrisy from him, and kept their affair secret.

Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr set out intending to perform the lesser pilgrimage. They sought permission from ʿAlī, peace be upon him, for the lesser pilgrimage, while intending something else.

They departed and met with ʿĀʾisha.

ʿAlī, peace be upon him, proceeded to complete his affair and went to his place of migration to convey the command of God and spread his Call in interpretation.

He traveled to Kūfa.

Kūfa is a likeness of his place of inward migration, in which the people of the religious law of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God and his family be upon him, found sufficiency, and his migration from the cave of dissimulation.

ʿĀʾisha traveled with Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and a group of the Emigrants and others to Basra, and she fought ʿAlī.

Most of them were killed, and the remainder fled after Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr were killed.

ʿĀʾisha entered Basra.

And ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be upon him, called upon Hamdān, and one hundred men from among them responded to him, wearing coats of mail.

End of Part Seventeen of the Book of the Foundation of the Inward Interpretation.

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds. May His blessings be upon His Messenger, our master Muhammad, and his pure progeny, and may He grant abundant peace.

Ending

The copying of the Book of the Foundation of Interpretation was completed on the twentieth day of the month of Rabīʿ al-Ākhir in the year 1424, on the birthday of the dāʿī of the age and the ḥijāb of the Commander of the Believers, the deputy of the Imam of the God-fearing, the mainstay of the monotheist scholars, the crown of the resplendent Ṭayyibī Call, our master and lord, Abū al-Qāʾid Jawhar Muḥammad Burhān al-Dīn.

This was his ninety-second birthday.

May God prolong his noble life until the Day of Judgment.

I congratulate him on his blessed and auspicious birthday.

I am his lowliest servant and the servant of al-Jāmiʿa al-Sayfiyya, ʿAbd ʿAlī al-Shaykh Qamar al-Dīn Madārwālā.

May God establish him in obedience to Him and obedience to His Boundaries, and grant him success in fulfilling his rights and their rights, by the right of Muhammad and his pure progeny, who are the meanings within all the religious laws, and upon the meanings are the levels of the words;

and by the right of their absolute dāʿīs, who are likenesses of the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary—may the blessings of God be upon them all—and may He gather us with them among the ranks of those who stand in rows and glorify Him.

Our openings are the best of openings; through them we have awakened,
and through them we pray for the best of outcomes.

Claims of the Common People

1. Concerning the Story of Adam

(pp. 44–46)

It is not as the common people interpreted it according to its outward meaning, claiming that the tree was a wheat tree. Others said it was a fig tree, and others said it was a grapevine; and that their clothing was made of fingernails, which then receded from them, and repentance overtook them, while what remained at the ends of their fingers remained there, and consequently the same thing remained in their descendants.

Most animals have claws or things resembling them, such as the hooves of beasts of burden, the cloven hooves of cattle and sheep, and the talons of predatory animals and birds. Yet these are not descendants of Adam, nor did what happened to Adam happen to them, such that something of it would have remained at their extremities.

Rather, this is a wisdom in their constitution which the Creator fashioned and ordained.

Had their clothing been made of fingernails, that would have been a mutilation. This is an interpretation that reason cannot accept and that does not stand up under examination.

Likewise, what they claimed—that Adam and Eve's nakedness was exposed to them, so they stitched garments for themselves from fig leaves—is also something that does not stand up when examined.

God is exalted and far above doing such a thing to a prophet whom He selected and honored.

If one of those interpreters had seen a human being who had committed a sin against a servant of his, and had seen him strip that person of his clothes and leave him naked with his private parts exposed, he would have regarded the act as foolishness. Yet they attribute such a thing to their object of worship and their god. Exalted is God far above what they say.

Most of what they took of this interpretation was taken from those among their predecessors who had accepted Islam from the Jews, such as Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām, and others.

For they claim that this is how it is according to their Torah: that when Adam and Eve remained naked in Paradise, they sensed God walking among the trees of Paradise. So they hid from Him among its trees.

He called to them:

“Where are you?”

They said:

“We sensed you walking among the trees of Paradise while we were naked, so we were ashamed before you and hid ourselves.”

He said:

“Ah! You have eaten from the tree.”

Adam said:

“The woman fed it to me.”

And the woman said:

“The serpent commanded me.”

And the serpent said:

“Iblīs entered inside me.”

God is exalted far above this interpretation, and far above that the regions should contain it or the eyes behold it.

In the Torah and the Gospel there are examples, indications, and symbols just as there are in the Qurʾan.

---

2. Concerning the Story of Abraham

(pp. 87–88)

As for what the ignorant interpreted—that the king of that time saw in a dream that someone would be born who would seize his kingdom, and that he ordered every newborn to be killed, and that Abraham's mother fled with him into the wilderness and took him into a cave after giving birth to him, where he remained and from which he did not emerge, and where he saw neither sun nor moon nor star until he grew up; then, when he came out and saw these things, he said what he said—

the outward form of this interpretation itself testifies to its falsehood.

If he had been in a cave as they claim, with no view of the sky, air would not have reached him there. If air had not reached him, he would not have lived. And if he had lived in such a state and then suddenly emerged into the air, he would have died.

Furthermore, what would have prevented his mother, when she supposedly took him into caves, from bringing him out into the fresh air and into those places to which he necessarily needed to emerge for human needs and other matters?

And if that were the case, she would have been even more likely to bring him out at night and at the two edges of the day, when no one would see him, while the sun, moon, and stars would be before his eyes.

Had he not known the Lord, he would not have recognized Him.

It is like a child who, if he has neither heard nor learned what people speak, when he has not heard it, moves his tongue with it: he produces sound from inside his body and throat, just as an animal that does not distinguish speech produces sound, even though it has a tongue, uvula, and lips.

The invalidity of what they interpreted according to their own opinions is clearer than to require an argument against them. Argument concerning it would be lengthy, and we did not construct this book upon it, nor did we intend it for that purpose.

When we saw that it would divert us from what we intended, we stopped discussing it.

Likewise, we have not mentioned in it the interpretations of the common people and what they brought forth of such confused material in places of this kind, where the inward is intended rather than the outward, and where the outward statement is an example intended to signify the inward.

---

3. Concerning the Story of Joseph

As for whoever takes this according to the outward meaning of its wording, how can they make it consistent with their claim that the wolf ate him? A wolf does not devour a human being, and even if it did such a thing, it would not eat him entirely. And if they had reached his shirt, they would have reached the remainder of his body as well.
(p. 110)

As for what the people of the outward aspect attributed to him—that the king's wife, outwardly, attempted to seduce him, desired him, and that he desired her, and that the two garments were loosened, and that he sat in the position of circumcision—God has protected His friends from this, for this is manifest adultery.
(p. 113)

As for what the people of the outward aspect made of this statement—that he worked with clay and built a tower from which he intended to ascend to heaven—this is impossible according to reason, for no one would attempt such a thing or imagine that he could reach it.
(p. 162)

---

4. Concerning the Story of Moses

His saying, "I almost conceal it": the people of the outward aspect interpreted it linguistically in two ways.

Some of them said:

"I almost conceal it" means "I almost reveal it."

For it is said that something is *khafiya* when it is revealed.

They recited as evidence the poetry of Imruʾ al-Qays:

He concealed them through their scattering, as though
a downpour from a cloud-laden sky had concealed them.

He is describing the green plants of the horse pasture, and that through the force of the striking of its hooves upon the earth, it caused whatever animals and vermin were hiding in their burrows to emerge, just as a flood of rain causes them to emerge when it overtakes them there.

This interpretation has as its inward aspect an announcement from God, exalted is He, of the nearness of the affair of the Qa'im, because Moses is the intermediary of the nāṭiqs, as we have mentioned. He has therefore passed beyond half of the period toward the Qa'im, and everything that has passed beyond its halfway point has drawn near to its end.

The second interpretation is that they said:

"I almost conceal it"—meaning, "I almost conceal it from Myself. How then could I reveal it to someone else?"

Yet the Creator of creation, exalted is He, is far above the attribution of a self to Him in the same manner in which selves are attributed to created beings.

Some of the anthropomorphists attributed this to Him.

Exalted is God far above what they say, with great exaltation.
(pp. 165–166)

Likewise, they claimed that God, exalted is He, manifested Himself to the mountain, entered into a tree, and spoke to Moses from it as human beings speak.

Exalted is God far above what they say, with great exaltation.
(p. 166)

The people of the outward aspect claimed that the manna was tarannajabīn and that the quails were a bird resembling the quail.
(p. 180)

And concerning their saying "ḥiṭṭa": the people of the outward aspect said that its meaning was, "Remove our sins from us."

If this statement actually removed sins, no sinner would remain once he said it, for his sins would be forgiven.
(p. 181)

Most of the commentators among the people of the outward aspect said that what was meant by this was Gabriel: that the Messenger of God, peace and blessings of God be upon him, saw him twice on the night he was taken on the Night Journey.

We have mentioned that the Night Journey was only with his spirit, and most of them likewise said this.

This accords with the outward revelation concerning what we have mentioned about the manner of revelation.

Those among them who said that he saw Gabriel claimed that he would appear to him in the form of Diḥya al-Kalbī.

The anthropomorphists claimed that he saw God, the Creator of creation, exalted and sublime is His mention.

Likewise, they claimed that God, glorified is He, descended from heaven, entered into a tree, and spoke to Moses with speech like that witnessed among human beings.

Blessed and exalted is God, far above what the wrongdoers say, with great exaltation.

Most reports concerning this accord with what we have mentioned: that he, peace and blessings of God be upon him, used to say that he heard the sound of revelation like the sound of a chain; and it is related in the report concerning Moses that he heard from the tree a sound like the sound of a cat.

It has been said that this was so because of the subtlety of the angelic being, since it is unlike dense human corporeality; and because human speech becomes heavy through emerging from corporeal form, whereas what emerges from the spiritual is subtle and fine, since it does not pass through an instrument.

Human speech becomes heavy because it emerges from the narrowness of the throat into the spaciousness of the mouth, just as sound emerges thinly from the narrow opening of a trumpet, then becomes heavy when it reaches its wide end, which corresponds to the mouth.

The common people likewise claimed that Moses only asked to see God, exalted and sanctified is He above what they say.

But He declared His friends free of ignorance concerning such a matter of His power and their inability to do it.
(pp. 186–187)

It is like one who rejects the meaning of purification with water and earth, prayer and everything in it of bowing and prostration, turning toward the qibla, prostrating toward one of the constructed houses, pilgrimage to it and circumambulation around it, standing at the stations and sacred rites of the pilgrimage, and other things with which God has charged His creatures, and what He has made lawful and unlawful for them—the mention of all of this would be lengthy.

What has driven many of those who do not know its interpretation out of the boundary of the scholars and the excellence of knowledge is that they reject it, while sitting with those who affirm it without knowing the reality of its interpretation.

This leads them to anthropomorphize the Creator, mighty and exalted is He, by likening Him to His creatures; to employ their own opinions, analogies, and desires concerning the religion of God; to reject many reports of the Messenger because they do not know their interpretation; to declare lawful what God has forbidden and forbidden what God has made lawful; to lie about His Messenger; and to distort interpretation according to their opinions into whatever their intellects have adorned for them.

This is the way of the common people as a whole.
(pp. 189–190)

Not as the people of the outward aspect claimed: that Moses struck the ground with the Torah which God had revealed to him, which they said was made of emerald tablets, until

they broke apart because he became angry with his people; and that he seized his brother by his beard and head, dragging him toward him along the ground.

God has declared Moses far above committing such an act with a Book that God, exalted is He, had revealed to him, and with his brother, a noble prophet whom God, exalted is He, had joined with him in prophethood.

If such an act were attributed to one of those making this claim, in connection with a book that had come to him from one of his brothers—if it were said that he struck the ground with it—or in connection with one of his servants—if it were said that he seized him by his beard or head and dragged him toward himself—he would deny this about himself, recoil from it, and be distressed that such a thing should be mentioned of him.

Yet it is easy for them to attribute this and things like it to the friends of God, whom God selected from His creation, and to His prophets whom He appointed for His servants.

Exalted is God, and may He declare His friends innocent of their falsehood.
(pp. 192–193)

The common people claimed that the Sāmirī saw Gabriel come to Moses riding upon a donkey. He took a handful of dust from the place upon which Gabriel's donkey had stepped, and this gave him knowledge which he called them toward. He threw that dust upon them, and his statement became appealing to them.

Were it not that the discussion would become lengthy, we would mention with every such interpretation examples of this kind of corrupt material that they brought forth and interpreted.

But this material exists; whoever has heard the truth can hear it and recognize its corruption, God willing.
(p. 193)

---

5. Concerning the Story of Saul

Among this is what the commentators mention concerning the outward aspect: that he married his daughter to him, that he said, "Take me with you," and he took him with him, and that David took three stones in his pouch.
(p. 206)

---

6. Concerning the Story of David

The common people claimed in their interpretation that, according to their account, Iblīs appeared to David in the form of a beautiful bird the like of which he had never seen.

It landed before him, and David wanted to seize it. It moved away a little and landed not far away. He rose toward it, but it moved to a rooftop. He climbed toward it and looked down upon the house of Uriah ibn Ḥannān, who was one of his close men.

There he saw his wife purifying herself. When she saw him, she moved her hair, which was abundant, and covered herself with it.

David was captivated by her when he saw her.

He sent Uriah ibn Ḥannān with an expedition and placed him at the front of the Ark, even though he would not ordinarily have been placed in such a position, intending thereby to have him killed so that he could marry his wife.

Uriah was killed, and David married her.

They say that David already had ninety-nine other wives, whereas Uriah had only this one.

They said that this was what the two angels presented to him as an example of what he had done.

God, exalted is He, has declared His friends innocent and purified them from this and from similar grave sins that bring destruction.

Rather, the people heard an example concerning this and applied it to its outward meaning.
(pp. 213–214)

---

7. Concerning the Story of Solomon

Not as the common people claimed: that he spoke to birds and they spoke to him, meaning the outward bird.

God, exalted is He, uniquely endowed human beings with articulate speech and language.

As for other animals, they possess only sounds through which they express a number of their conditions, such as the calling of birds during mating, and what occurs among them otherwise when some fight one another, and the sounds of beasts and other animals in such circumstances and others, and their longing for their offspring, and things resembling this, which are known from them in every condition.
(p. 219)

It is related in the interpretation of the common people that Sabaʾ's father was one of the jinn, and that the jinn feared that if Solomon saw her, he would admire her and marry her; and if he married her, she would reveal to him their secret.

They said to him that the offspring of jinn by human beings has a leg like a donkey's hoof, intending thereby to make him dislike her.

He therefore wanted to discover this without letting her know that he was testing her.

So he sat for her upon a throne in his palace and made the floor of the room a pool of water, covering it with glass.

When she entered upon him, she thought it was water, so she uncovered her shins.

He saw her feet.
(p. 229)

The common people claimed that horses were presented to him, and that he became occupied with them to the point that he missed the afternoon prayer until the sun had set, and that he slaughtered the horses on account of this.

If one of them had actually done this, they would have condemned him for it, because of what would require slaughtering the horses, which are equipment in the path of God, without any sin on their part.

Rather, the sin—if what they said of him were true—would have concerned what he neglected of the prayer.
(pp. 239–240)