

FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH

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In the Name of God the Compassionate the Merciful

Introduction

This concise treatise is a summary of teachings of the beliefs in Shi'i theology. This work includes an introduction, followed by discussions in the Islamic worldview, covering monotheism (*tawhīd*), prophethood (*nubuwwa*), imamate, and resurrection (*ma'ād*).

In the introduction of this treatise, the preliminary issues such as the freedom of thought in Islam, the value of logic and intellect, the principles of worldview, and the issue of recognition (*shenākht*) will be discussed.

Freedom of Thought

Islam is a religion of freedom and freedom of thought; the Holy Quran introduces the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the messenger of liberation, and the proclaimer of freedom:

"الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْنُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ
وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَ يَحَرِّمُ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ".

“Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither

read nor write, whom they will find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear.”

(Quran 7:157, Pickthall translation)¹

The religion of Islam calls on its followers to be free thinkers, listen to various thoughts and ideas, and choose the best of them. The Glorious Quran points to this matter clearly in verses 17 and 18 of Chapter 39:

"وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادَ . الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ."

“And those who put away false gods lest they should worship them and turn to Allah in repentance, for them there are glad tidings. Therefor give good tidings (O Muhammad)

¹ All Quranic translations are from Pickthall

to My bondmen who hear advice and follow the best thereof. Such are those whom Allah guideth, and such are men of understanding. (Quran 39:17-18)”

This honorable call—to study diverse views, and freely choose the best of them—comes from Islam because Islam is a rich doctrine based on sound reasoning, logic, and proofs. Islam is not shaken by the stream of opposing thoughts, ideas, and ideologies.

Accordingly, the religion of Islam rejects any blind following of the foundations of the faith (*uṣūl al-dīn*) and the fundamentals of worldview. Moreover, Islam considers blind following in complete opposition to the divine values. The Holy Quran addresses this trait of Islam in chapter 43 verses 23-25:

"وَكَذَلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّقْتَدُونَ . قَالَ أُولُو جِنَّتِكُمْ يَأْهَدِي مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ . فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ ."

“Even so We sent never before thee any warner into any city, except that its men who lived at ease said, 'We indeed

found our fathers upon a community, and we are following upon their traces.' (23) Say: 'What, though I should bring you a better guidance than you found your fathers upon?' They say, 'We disbelieve in that you were sent with.' (24) So We took vengeance upon them; and behold how was the end of them that cried lies. (25)''

Based on these clear verses of the Quran, Islam rejects the blind following of the ancestors and their beliefs and worldview. Any person should reach the logical proof of their faith's beliefs and foundations on their own.

The Value of the Intellect in Islam

The religion of Islam, more than other religions, invites its followers towards rationality, the intellect, and wisdom. The Holy Quran encourages humankind to think about the divine signs, particularly in verse 38:29:

" كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ "

“A Book We have sent down to thee, Blessed, that men possessed of minds may ponder its signs and so remember.
(29)”

In Islam, the intellect is the main foundation for belief, and it is a valuable scale for human knowledge. Hence, the Prophet of Islam reckons the intellect as the scale for human values. In a hadith, narrated in the “Intellect and Ignorance” chapter of Shaykh al-Kulayni’s *Usul Kafi*, the Prophet says:

"إذا رأيتم الرجل كثير الصلاة و كثير الصيام فلا تباهاوا به حتى تنظروا كيف عقله".

“If you see a man who fasts and prays a lot, do not be proud of him unless you have examined his intellect.”

Imam Ali (AS) also considers the intellect equivalent to life, and the lack of the intellect equivalent to death and ruin:

"و فقد العقل فقد الحياة ، و لا يقاس إلا بالأموات".

“The lack of the intellect is the lack of life, and is equivalent to nothing but death.” (Ibid.)

Thus, the gem that gives value to human life is the intellect and thought. Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (AS) introduces the intellect as the source of guidance towards the divine religion and the path of humanity towards the highway of eternal happiness:

"من كان عاقلاً كان له دين ، و من كان له دين دخل الجنة".

“Whoever has intellect will have religion, and whoever has religion enters the paradise.” (Ibid)

Hereupon, the great leaders of Islam have advised us to strengthen our beliefs on the foundation of reasoning and intellectual proof, and to clearly identify the Islamic beliefs based on the light of the intellect and wisdom, and also to gain more knowledge.

Islamic Worldview

Worldview encompasses the following three main topics:

Ontology

Methodology/Knowing the Path

Anthropology

Ontology consists of a collection of intellectual subjects about the world and its origin of creation. Hence, ontology eventually leads to theology and monotheism.

Methodology, or Knowing the Path, encompasses topics on the happiness of humankind and the path to God, which is the divine religion. Because such a path comes from the way of revelation (*wahy*), this topic in worldview leads to the concept of prophethood.

Anthropology is the topic of knowing the truth of humankind and its existential gem, which is the incorporeal soul that stays after death. Therefore, anthropology eventually leads to the topic of afterlife and resurrection.

In light of the above, it is clear that main worldview foundations

lead to the three foundations of *monotheism* (*tawheed*), *prophethood* (*nubuwwa*), and *afterlife* (*ma'ad*). These three principles are, in terminology of the faith, called the Foundations of the Faith, which are acknowledged by all Muslims worldwide.

However, the other two principles of *justice* and *imamate* are known as the *Foundations of the Sect*. These two principles essentially follow the *Foundations of the Faith* because divine *justice* follows the theological concept of *monotheism*, and *imamate* is in line with the principle of *prophethood* since *imamate* is discussed as the leadership of the Islamic community (*umma*) after the Prophet.

In this work, to follow a logical sequence between the principles, first we will discuss theology and *monotheism*, followed by *justice*, *prophethood*, *imamate*, and finally *afterlife*.

Cognition and Its Types

Because cognition along with its types is the foundation of intellectual and logical concepts, it is worth to briefly discuss cognition before starting our discussion on the foundations of belief.

Human perception is generally divided into two parts:

- 1) Conceptualization (*tasawwur*)
- 2) Assent (*tasdiq*)

Conceptualization is the perception that is without judgment (*hukm*); for example, to conceptualize light or sound. However, Assent is the perception with judgment. An example of assent is, assenting that light is composed of photons, or that the speed of sound is lower than the speed of light.

Human knowledge and cognition is divided into several parts:

1) Sensory and Empirical Cognition

The source of this cognition is experience and sense, similar to cognition of concepts in the natural sciences like physics, chemistry, medicine, etc. Certainly, the intellect plays its role in the abstraction and generalization of sensory and empirical data.

2) Rational Cognition

The source of this type of cognition is generally the human intellect. The intellect comprehends and analyzes the intellectual and abstract concepts (which in philosophical terminology are called the *secondary intelligibles*) to make the proper rational judgment, similar to the process in logic, philosophy, and mathematics.

Our cognition in the *Foundations of the Faith* and the principles of worldview in this book come from this type of cognition, the rational cognition. However, it is possible that some of the sensory and empirical data, also come from the abstraction of general concepts in this type of cognition.

3) Intuitive Cognition

Intuitive cognition, directly and without an intermediate, belongs to the essence of the cognized object; similar to one's cognition of oneself. This cognition is called *knowledge by presence*, which is in addition to *acquired knowledge* that comes from the mind acquiring an object's form.

Chapter One

Theology

Theology consists of two parts:

- 1) Proof for the existence of God, based on scientific and rational reasoning
- 2) Proof for monotheism and oneness of God, and effects of monotheism

Part One: The Proof for the Existence of God

In theology, there are multiple ways to prove the existence of God, three ways of which we will demonstrate.

- A) Proving the existence of God by the sheer magnificence of creation, and the beauty and the order in creation
- B) Presenting philosophical reasoning based on solid logical rules
- C) Proof by scientific principles

Method A

Every being in the world, from the small atom particles to massive galaxies, contains a spectacular order and structure. The more we become aware of the universe and the precise laws that govern it, the more we are in awe of the world's magnificence and the order in the natural laws.

The one that is aware of the secrets of creation, and has knowledge of the forces and laws that govern the parts of the universe, will realize the existence of an omniscient Creator that rules the world. Moreover, such an informed person will accept the power, magnificence, and wisdom of this Creator.

Open your heart's eye so you can see the soul

You shall see what is unseen

If you come to the land of love

You shall see rosary upon horizons

When you split a particle

You shall see a sun in it

When you pass the narrow sides

You shall see the vastness of the kingdom of placeless (*la makan*)

You shall hear what the ear has not heard

You shall see what the eye has not seen

-Hatef Isfahani

Here, we will mention a few examples of the exquisite order in the system of the universe:

One of the natural scientists says: When we study the anatomy of the eye, we find that the scientific laws of light (such as the laws of reflection, refraction, and lenses) have been implemented in the visual system. Likewise, when we examine the auditory system, we see that the scientific laws of sound have been observed in the structure of the ear.

This order exists in not only other organs, but also all creatures of the world. By thinking about the order in existence, we conclude that the system of the universe has an omniscient and omnipotent Creator, Who is the principal Lord.

Below is another example of the harmony and coordination

between the systems of creation:

We know that when humans and animals breath, the consumed oxygen from the air is absorbed by body cells to produce energy for the body. A byproduct of this process is the toxic gas carbon dioxide that is exhaled from the body out to the air.

Therefore, every moment some life-giving oxygen is used and instead the toxic gas, carbon dioxide, is produced. Accordingly, the limited oxygen in the air should have been consumed by now; and the humans along with animals should have been extinct because of the lack of oxygen. However, this extinction has not happened.

What factor prevented the destruction of oxygen, and inhibited this horrific incident of animal extinction from happening? Every intelligent human knows that this complex problem can only be solved by someone that has knowledge of the precise laws of creation, and is capable of resolving this enormous problem.

The Creator and Designer of the universe, with knowledge of the truth, created the plants in such an astonishing way that resolve the

above-mentioned problem. As plants and trees absorb the carbon dioxide in the air, they release oxygen into the air. In this manner, the lack of oxygen by human and animal consumption is compensated.

What was discussed above is just a small sample from the numerous phenomena that imply the existence of an omnipotent Creator and omniscient of the laws of creation.

Method B

Another method for proving the existence of God is by raising philosophical and logical arguments that need preliminary technical introductions. Because mentioning all the philosophical reasoning and explanations require technical introductions that are beyond the scope of this brief work, we shall only refer to a simple example of philosophical reasoning that does not need much of technical introduction:

The Proof of the Necessary and the Possible

Based on the judgment of the intellect, the existence of an existent is either from itself, which is called the *necessary existent*; or if its

existence depends on another being, then it is called the *possible existent*. Therefore, the *possible existent* only exists by a cause. On the contrary, the *necessary existent*, that relies on its own being, does not need a cause.

Furthermore, based on the judgment of the intellect, it is impossible that there are only *possible existents* without a *necessary existent*. This is because all *possible existents*, without exception, need a cause. Therefore, the chain of *possible existents* lead to a *Necessary Existent*, whose existence relies on no one but itself; and without this *Necessary Existent*, as the primary cause, the chain of *possible existents* would have never come to being.

Therefore, the existence of the *Necessary Existent* (whose existence relies on itself, and the existence of all *possible existents* relies on it) is proven. This first source of creation and the cause of causes is the Creator of the universe.

Method C

All scholars of the empirical sciences, such as physics, chemistry, biology, and astronomy agree that the universe has a systematic, coherent, and solid order that is astonishing and elegant. This precise order appears in all the numerous phenomena in the universe, from atoms to celestial groups.

The question that arises here is: where has this astonishing order in every being and force of the universe come from?

We can answer this question in two of the following ways:

First response: the mentioned order in all the world's beings and forces is accidental and without cause.

Second response: this astonishing and elegant order has come to existence by the command of a wise and powerful Creator.

Some scholars of mathematics, such as De Moivre, have invalidated the theory of accidental order of the universe and its numerous parts based on scientific reasoning. They have shown that it is impossible for so much order to exist accidentally and by itself. This scholar of mathematics has explained his view in the following simple

example of mathematics:*

“If we number ten identical coins with the same size, shape, and weight and place them in a box; and without looking, we want to draw them in order from one to ten, the probability of such an occurrence is as follows:

The probability of pulling out coin number one is one to ten, or one tenth. The probability to draw out coin number one followed by coin number two is one to a hundred. The probability of pulling out coins numbered one, two, and three in the consecutive order is one to a thousand. And, the probability to draw the coins from number one to ten consecutively is one to a billion.

Accordingly, if we know that the ordered and harmonious beings in the universe are countless in number and type, and that they are different in their order from each other, we would come to the logical conclusion that the probability of their accidental existence is zero.

Therefore, the accidental existence of the world is not possible from the logical and intellectual perspective. Therefore, we come to the validity of the second response discussed above, stating that “this astonishing and elegant order has come to existence by the command of a wise and powerful Creator”.”

(As reported in Yusuf Muruwwa, *Al-‘ulum al-tabi’iyya fi al-Quran*)

Solving a Problem

Some of the followers of Materialism say: The world consists of material, and that material is eternal, has existed always, and does not have a point of beginning; therefore, it does not need a creator.

The answer to this point is as follows:

Some of the scholars of the nineteenth century, like Lavoisier, believed that the universe is made of material, and that the amount of material has been eternally the same. Therefore, the world lacks the need for a creator as material is indestructible. This theory is called the

Conservation of Matter theory.

However, scholars of the 20th century, such as Albert Einstein, have disproved the above theory via the theory of relativity and the Big Bang. They have shown that the universe with all its matter are not eternal, rather they originated from the Big Bang 13 billion years ago.

Part Two

The Proof for Monotheism

In Islamic theology, there are many proofs for the oneness of God. Here, we shall point to a few examples:

First Proof

When we study the system of creation, we find the universe as an ordered and firm machine composed of many parts, such as stars, planets, and galaxies that are moving precisely and orderly in their path. Thus, by the intellect and wisdom we realize that because of the order in the parts of the universe and because of the harmony in the creation, the Creator of it is One. We also realize that the designer of the universe and its Governor is the One God, and that there is no other God to govern the world.

Here, we shall explain the above reasoning in a simple example:

Whenever we look at a beautiful, artistic painting that portrays the picture of for instance, a bird, with ordered and precise usage of colours, shadows, and sizes, thus creating a harmonious and coordinated portrayal of the bird, we realize that it has been painted by one artistic painter. The oneness of the painter is true because if there were a multiple number of painters for the bird, one of whom would paint the head, the other paint the wings, and a third paint the legs, that painting would have been closer to a caricature than a beautiful and harmonious portrayal.

To complete this reasoning, we will add the following point. If there was another God apart from the Creator of the universe, there are two possibilities: either the first God does not need the second God, or that He needs the other.

In the first case, the existence of the second God would be useless and in vain. In the second case, a God would be dependent on another. Both cases (God being useless and being dependent on another) are impossible and unacceptable for a God, who is the *Necessary Existent*,

the Creator of the spectacular universe, and the omniscient governor of the world.

Second Proof

Another proof for monotheism is as follows: If there were another God in addition to the lord of the universe, He would have sent prophets and holy scriptures of His own. This is while, all the prophets that have brought a heavenly religion, have presented themselves as the messenger of the One God, Who is the Creator of the world.

After discussing the reasons for monotheism, to further explore the dimensions of monotheism and its criteria, which is debated among the Islamic sects, we shall discuss the types of monotheism in our school of thought as compared to other schools of thought.

The Criteria for Monotheism

The most important issue in the discussion of monotheism and

polytheism (*shirk*) is the criteria in distinguishing the two. Unless this issue is effectively resolved, part of the problems that occur would never be settled. Therefore, we shall briefly explore the different dimensions of monotheism and polytheism:

1) Monotheism in Essence

Monotheism in essence has been presented in two ways:

- A) God (as named in theology, the *Necessary Existent*) is One and has no equal or like. This type of monotheism is mentioned in the Quran:

«لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ»

“Naught is as His likeness” (Q 42:11)

In another place, it says:

«وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفَوًا أَحَدٌ»

“And there is none comparable unto Him.” (Q 112:4)

However, this type of monotheism is generally interpreted to

portray a monotheism in number: there is one God, and not two. It is obvious that this type of monotheism in number is not deserving of the divine position.

B) God's essence is simple and not complex because a complex being of mental and external parts is in need of its parts. This need is a sign of *possibility*, and possibility is dependent on a cause, which is in contradiction with the position of the *Necessary Existent*.

2) Monotheism in Creation

Monotheism in creation is one of the levels of monotheism that is acceptable to the rationale and the tradition.

From the perspective of the rationale, anything apart from God has a system of possibility that lacks any type of perfection and beauty; and anything it possesses has been taken from the emanation of the essentially rich (*fayḍ ghanī bi al-dhāt*).

Therefore, whatever is seen of the beauty and perfection that exists,

come from Him.

There are many verses in the Quran that address the monotheism in creation; for example:

«قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ»

“Say: Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Almighty.” (Q 13:16)

Therefore, monotheism in creation cannot generally be a point of disagreement between theists. However, monotheism in creation has two interpretations that we shall discuss below:

A) Every type of causal system that exists between the creatures, leads to the Cause of all causes. In fact, the independent and original Creator is God, and all effect/cause by the creatures (not God) on their effected/caused, consequentially come from His permission and providence.

This theory admits to the causal system in the universe that has been explored by human knowledge. Yet, the entire system in a way belongs to God, and He is the one Who created it with causes that have

been given the causality to influence the effects.

B) There is only one Creator in the universe, Who is God, and there is no causality or influence between the beings in the universe. God is the direct Creator of all natural phenomena, and even the human power cannot influence His deed.

Therefore, there is not more than one cause in the universe, and He represents all the natural causes that science has presented. This interpretation of monotheism in creation is followed by some *ash‘arī* thinkers.

Nonetheless, some thinkers from that school of thought, like Imam al-Haramayn and recently Shaykh Muhammad Abduh in his *Treatise on Monotheism*, deny the latter interpretation, and have chosen the former interpretation.

3) Monotheism in Design/Contrivance (*tadbīr*)

Because creation is only from God, the design of the universal

system is also from Him. There is only one designer for existence; based on the same intellectual reasoning for monotheism in creation, monotheism in design is also implied.

The Holy Quran also, in several verses, introduces God as the only designer for the universe:

«قُلْ أَغِيرَ اللَّهُ أَبْغَى رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ»

“Say: Shall I seek another than Allah for Lord, when He is Lord of all things?” (Q 6:164)

Both interpretations of monotheism in creation are applied to monotheism in design. Moreover, from our perspective, the purpose for monotheism in design, is confined to the independent design from God. Therefore, the subordinate designs that exist among the creations of the system of the universe are all from God’s will and providence. The Holy Quran also refers to these designers, that are dependent to God:

«فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا»

“And those who govern the event.” (Q 79:5)

4) Monotheism in Governance

Monotheism in governance means that governance belongs to only God, and that He is the Governor over the community members, as the Holy Quran says:

«إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ»

“The decision [governance] rests with Allah only.” (Q 12:40)

Therefore, the governance of others must be under His providence so that the pious ones head the community affairs and lead the people towards happiness and perfection. The Quran says:

«يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ»

“O David! Lo! We have set thee as a viceroy in the earth; therefore judge aright between mankind.” (Q 38:26)

5) Monotheism in Obedience

Monotheism in obedience means that the obeyed by essence and the one whose obedience is necessary is God Almighty. Thus, the need

to obey others, such as the prophets, imams, jurist, and parents are all by His command and will.

6) Monotheism in Legislation and Decree

Monotheism in legislation means that the right to impose laws and decrees only belongs to God. Accordingly, our Holy Book considers any type of ruling that is out of the framework of the divine law, as a source of infidelity, debauchery, and oppression. It says:

«وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ»

“Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed: such are disbelievers [infidels].” (Q 5:44)

«وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ»

“Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed: such are evil-livers.” (Q 5:47)

«وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ»

“Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed: such are

wrong-doers [oppressors].” (Q 5:45)

7) Monotheism in Worship

The most important discussion about monotheism in worship is recognizing the meaning of “worship,” because all Muslims agree that worship is only for God; and that except Him no one can be worshiped.

The Quran says:

«إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَ إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ»

“Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help” (Q 1:5)

From the noble verses of the Quran, it is implied that this subject, is a common principle among the preaching of all of the divine messengers, who had been evoked to promote this very principle. About this matter the Holy Quran says:

«وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ»

“And verily We have raised in every nation a messenger, (proclaiming): Serve Allah and shun false gods” (Q 16:36)

Therefore, there is no argument against the principle of worship

only for God. No one but Him should be worshiped. Furthermore, we cannot consider anyone a monotheist unless they accept this principle.

Let us now discuss the criterion of worship. For instance, is kissing the hand of a teacher, parent, or scholar an act of worship? Is any type of humility considered worship? Worship is not necessary absolute humility and extraordinary humbleness, rather it contains an element, without which any type of humility including prostrating, would not be worship.

Now let us examine what that element, which turns humility into worship, is.

An Incorrect Conception of Worship

Some writers have interpreted the definition of worship as humility, or extraordinary humility. However, they fail to resolve the meaning of a series of Quranic verses. The Holy Quran, clearly, says that the angels were ordered to prostrate to Adam:

«وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ»

“And when We said unto the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam” (Q 2:34)

Prostrating to Adam was at the same state as prostrating to God, while in the case of the former it was humbleness, and in the case of the latter it was worship. Now, why have these two cases of prostration attained different meanings? In another part of the Quran, Jacob along with his children prostrate to Joseph:

«وَرَفَعَ أَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَ خَرُّوا لَهُ سُجَّدًا وَقَالَ يَا أَبْتِ هَذَا تَأْوِيلُ رُؤْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّي حَقًّا»

“And he placed his parents on the dais and they fell down before him prostrate, and he said: O my father! This is the interpretation of my dream of old. My Lord hath made it true.” (Q 12:100)

Joseph’s interpretation of his dream refers to his childhood, when

he dreamt in sleep that eleven stars (or planets) along with the sun and the moon were prostrating to him, as the Quran says:

«إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ رَأَيْتُهُمْ لِي سَاجِدِينَ».

“Lo! I saw in a dream eleven planets and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating themselves unto me.” (Q 12:4)

As Joseph interprets his family’s prostration to him as fortune telling of his dream, it becomes clear that the eleven stars were representations of his eleven brothers, the sun symbolized his father, and the moon his mother.

Therefore, it becomes clear that not only Joseph’s brothers, but also his father, Jacob the prophet, prostrated to him.

Resolving the Issue, and the True Meaning of Worship

Up to here, it has become evident that the principle of “forbidding worship of other than God” is common among all monotheists of the world. On the other hand, it became clear that the angels prostrating to Adam, and Jacob and his sons prostrating to Joseph were not considered worship.

Now, let us see what factor determines whether the same action is worship or not.

By referring to Quranic verses, it becomes clear that worship is humility towards a being that is known as a God or a being that takes divine characteristics. Accordingly, believing in God or believing in His abilities to do divine action, is the element that whenever delivered with humility, takes the color of worship.

The pagans of the world, including those living in the Arabian peninsula, would practice humility towards beings that they knew as God's creations. Nevertheless, they believed that these beings possessed some of the divine actions, including forgiveness of sins and lordship of intercession.

Some pagans of Babylon would worship celestial beings, considering them as lords rather than creators. The story of Prophet Abraham also revolves around his debates with those pagans who did not consider the sun, moon, and stars as the Creator gods, but as powerful creations that had lordship and governance over the world.

The Quranic verses that mention Abraham's debates with the pagans of Babylon, indicate the word lord (*rabb*), which means possessor and governor of its possessions.

The Arabs call a homeowner the lord of the home (*rabb al-bayt*), and the farm owner the lord of the farm (*rabb al-day'a*) because the homeowner or farm owner govern the property.

The Holy Quran, by presenting God as the ruler and lord of the universe, argues against the pagans and invites all to worship the One God:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَ رَبُّكُمْ فَأَعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ»

“Lo! Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path.” (Q 3:51)

And at another place it says:

«ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَعْبُدُوهُ»

“Such is Allah, your Lord. There is no Allah save Him, the Creator

of all things, so worship Him.” (Q 6:102)

In chapter 44, the Quran says:

«لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ»

“There is no Allah save Him. He quickeneth and giveth death; your Lord and Lord of your forefathers.” (Q 44:8)

The Holy Quran narrates from Prophet Jesus:

«وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ»

“The Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.” (Q 5:72)

From the above discussion it becomes clear that even if humility is at the lowest level, it is not considered worship as long as the object is not believed to possess divinity or lordship and is not believed to do godly actions.

Therefore, the humility of a child to their parents, and the humility of the Muslim community to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (which meets the above-mentioned condition) is never considered worship.

Accordingly, the following subjects are not considered worship:

- Subjects such as intercession
- Consecration towards God's Prophets and Imams
- Kissing their tombs and shrines
- Calling upon them
- Celebrating their birthdays or anniversary of death

Although some have considered the above actions as worship, as we elaborated the above, they are not worship.

Chapter 2

Divine Justice

Believing in divine justice is one of the principles of the Imami school of Shia. The followers of the *ahl al-bayt* believe that God is just in creation (justice in genesis- '*adl takwini*') and just in placing laws and rules (justice in sharia- '*adl tashri'i*').

There are several rational reasons to prove divine justice. In this work, some of these proofs will be shown:

Justice is sometimes defined as judgment and observing others' rights, and sometimes it is interpreted as rectitude and placing everything in its own place.

There is no doubt that justice in both its definitions is a value and perfection for the one who is just. Moreover, the lack of justice, oppression, is an egregious flaw and an obvious defect.

On the other hand, we know that God is the absolute perfect and the creator of all perfections in the universe. Therefore, there is no flaw and defect in the Holy Divine; it is impossible for the *Necessary Existent*, who bears all the perfect attributes, to be associated with flaws and oppression.

The reason for this matter is that if we assume that God is unjust and an oppressor, it implies that He would be unjust because he needs oppression, or that He is ignorant of the obscenity of oppression and therefore lacks reason and wisdom. We know that these assumptions are untrue for the God who is the omnipotent, omniscient, and the wise who does not need anything. Thus, God's absolute justice is proved by reason.

Hence, the Holy Quran has mentioned divine justice with regards to creation, decree, and legislation:

"تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعَالَمِينَ".

“These are revelations of Allah. We recite them unto thee in truth. Allah willeth no injustice to (His) creatures.” (Q 3:108)

"وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ"

“Allah willeth no injustice for (His) slaves.” (Q 40:31)

"وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَاعِبِينَ"

“We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between them in play.” (Q 21:16)

"وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ
لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ"

“And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between them in vain. That is the opinion of those who disbelieve. And woe unto those who disbelieve, from the Fire!” (Q 38:27)

"إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ". (القمر ، 49).

“Lo! We have created every thing by measure.” (Q 54:49)

Chapter Three

Prophethood

The subjects in this chapter will be divided into two parts:

Part one consists of fundamental and general matters about the prophethood of the apostles and proving the humanity's need for heavenly religion. Moreover, it consists of the description of the prophets' qualities.

Part two, however, consists specifically on matters related to the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the proof for his prophethood and his eternal miracle, the Holy Quran.

Hence, the first part is called "general prophethood" and the second part is called "particular prophethood."

The Humanity's Need for a Heavenly Religion

The humanity's distinction from other beings is knowledge and

understanding of the truth. Therefore, the sages have identified human's value in thinking and reflection, and have said:

“Oh brother, you are the same as thought
The rest, you are bones and roots
If your thought is flower, you are a garden
If it is thorn, you are the firewood of furnace”

Although humanity has achieved significant achievements in knowledge and science, it has yet suffered from the lack of knowledge of itself and other important issues. For example, even though humanity has taken great steps in studying the human body, without the continuous stream of knowledge from the heavenly religions it would remain unaware of its origin, destiny, and its purpose for being in this world.

Also, despite following the line of the universe's creation from the point of Big Bang, humanity is ignorant of what precedes that moment. It is also unaware of what would happen by the end of the existence of the physical universe.

Therefore, human knowledge is incomplete and needs an eternal source of knowledge that answers its fundamental questions about the beginning and end of the universe and the path to happiness and salvation.

This eternal source of knowledge is the heavenly religion that guides the confused humans to the shore of salvation, and satiates the ones who are thirsty for the truth and the water of life.

Qualities of the Prophets

Because the prophets are the carriers of divine knowledge and are the connecting link between heavenly revelation and the carnal earth, they must possess the necessary and special qualities to complete their hefty responsibility.

Scholars of Islamic theology have mentioned the prophetic qualities in their detailed writings, two of which are:

- 1) Infallibility
- 2) Miracle

Infallibility means being pure from sins or mistakes. The reason for infallibility as a necessary quality of prophethood is that the prophet must be the best model and example for humanity in order for him to guide humanity from the storms of aberrance to the shore of guidance, and from the swamps of sins to the divinely paradise of submission.

Therefore, if a prophet sins or commits a disobedience from God, how can the followers of his religion, who see him as an example, trust him? The position of such an individual who commits sins falls from spiritual leadership to the swamps of disobedience. This issue is in contradiction with the purpose of sending prophets for the guidance of humanity.

Another rational proof for the necessity of the infallibility of God's prophets is that if the prophets were to commit sins or mistakes, any action or saying could be possibly untrue. Therefore, it would not be obligatory for his followers to follow him. This issue contradicts the philosophy of prophethood and the purpose of their mission.

On the other hand, miracle means an action that humanity cannot

do. Therefore, a miracle that comes with the claim for prophethood, is a reason for the validity of the prophet's saying. This is because whenever God sends His prophet, it is necessary for the prophet to be known as a true messenger, and this matter only is possible by a miracle that no one other than a prophet can do.

Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad

The proof for the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad is his miracles, especially his eternal miracle, the Holy Quran. Since his prophethood is eternal and limitless, his miracle should also be eternal and everlasting. Hence, here we emphasize on the eternity of the Holy Quran.

To prove this matter, Muslim scholars have brought numerous reasons in their theological and exegetical works. Here we shall explore a few of them:

The obvious reason for this claim is the Quran's scientific and narrative challenge to its dissidents to bring a book like the Quran in eloquence, rhetoric, fluency, beauty, scientific constancy, and

wholesomeness of its content.

The Quran challenges as follows:

"قُلْ لِّئِنْ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ
وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا"

“Say: Verily, though mankind and the jinn should assemble to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce the like thereof though they were helpers one of another” (Q 17:88)

Furthermore, the Quran asks its dissidents to bring ten chapters like it if they can:

"أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيْتٍ وَادْعُوا مَنْ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ"

“Or they say: He hath invented it. Say: Then bring ten surahs [chapters], the like thereof, invented, and call on everyone ye can beside Allah, if ye are truthful!” (Q 11:13)

Because the infidels and the dissidents could not bring even ten chapters like the Quran, the Holy Quran challenges them to bring only

one chapter like it:

"وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ"

“And if ye are in doubt concerning that which We reveal unto Our slave (Muhammad), then produce a surah of the like thereof, and call your witness beside Allah if ye are truthful” (Q 2:23)

Because throughout history, the dissidents of Islam have not brought a single chapter similar to the Quran in beauty, eloquence, and correctness of content, it becomes clear to us that the Holy Quran is a divine miracle that is impossible for human beings to compose the like of it.

Chapter Four

Imamate

Belief in the principle of imamate is one of the foundations for Shia belief.

Definition of Shia

Shia in Arabic means “follower.” The Quran says:

«وَإِنَّ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ لَإِبْرَاهِيمَ»

“And lo! Of his persuasion verily was Abraham” (Q 37:83)

However, in Islamic terminology Shia refers to the group of Muslims that believe that before his passing away, the Prophet Muhammad appointed a successor and caliph for the Muslims on many occasions during his life, including on the 18th of the Dhu al-Hajja month of the 10th Hijri year on the famous day of “Ghadeer” to a great assembly where he appointed Ali as his political, scholarly, and religious

successor of the Muslim community.

After the Prophet Muhammad's death, the Muhajir and Ansar broke into two groups:

1) A group believed that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not disregard caliphate, and had indeed appointed his successor who was Ali ibn Abi Talib, the first person that had believed in the Prophet Muhammad.

This group was called the Shia of Ali and it consisted of both the Muhajirs and Ansar, including people of the Bani Hashim and some of the great companions of the Prophet, namely Salman, Abu Zar, Miqdad, Khabbab ibn al-Aratt, and others.

Moreover, the Prophet had named this group of the followers of Ali as the Shia while he was alive. The Prophet said:

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، إِنَّ هَذَا وَشِيعَتَهُ لَهُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ».

(جلال الدين سيوطي، در المنثور، ج 6).

“I swear to the One Who has my life in his hand, He (Ali) and his followers are the prosperous ones on the Day of Resurrection.” (Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Durr al-manthur*, Vol. 6, in his interpretation of the verse,

“(And) lo! Those who believe and do good works are the best of created beings.” (Q 98:7))

Therefore, Shia is defined as the group of early Muslims who because of belief in following the Prophet’s designation of *wilaya*, were named as such. Ever since, this group has remained faithful to the line of *wilaya* and following the *ahl al-bayt*. The position of Shia comes from such a defined path. Therefore, the ignorant forgers who claim that Shia was born in later times are deemed baseless. To study the history of Shia further, refer to *Asl al-Shia wa usuluha*, *al-Muraja’at*, and *A’yan al-Shia*.

2) The other group believed that the caliphate is elected; therefore, they pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr and were later called the Sunnis.

Hence, it becomes clear that these two Islamic sects, despite their many common principles, disagree on the issue of caliphate and succession of the Prophet Muhammad. The core of both sects consist in their early stages were the Muhajirs and the Ansars.

The Qualities of the Imam and the Successor of the Prophet

From the Shia perspective, the Imam and successor of the Prophet should have the following qualities:

- 1) Infallibility
- 2) Being appointed by the Prophet in his speech
- 3) Being the most knowledgeable of his time

The reason for the infallibility of the Imam is the same as we described in chapter three with regards to the infallibility of the prophets.

With regards to the Imam being appointed through the Prophet's speech, no one but God and the Prophet knows of the position of infallibility; therefore, no one can appoint the successor but the Prophet.

With regards to the quality of being the most knowledgeable of his time, the Imam is the successor of the Prophet at any era, and he is the leader of the community in guidance towards salvation and happiness. Therefore, he must be more knowledgeable than anyone in the religion of Islam and the path to happiness and perfection.

Thus, the Shia believe in the imamate and caliphate of the Imams based on the above mentioned qualities.

To prove the imamate of those great leaders and successors of the Prophet, let us examine the following:

The Proof for the Imamate and Caliphate of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib

As we discussed above, the Shia believe that the Imam was appointed directly through the Prophet's speech. The biography of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) shows this principle because he spoke of Ali as his caliph on numerous occasions, three of which we shall mention here:

1) At the beginning of his prophethood, when the Prophet was given the divine mission to call his relatives to Islam:

«وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ»

“And warn thy tribe of near kindred” (Q 26:214)

On this occasion, the Prophet said: “Whoever helps me in this path, he is my successor, vizier, and inheritor.” He said the following:

«فَأَيُّكُمْ يُوَازِرُنِي فِي هَذَا الْأَمْرِ عَلَى أَنْ يَكُونَ أَخِي وَوَزِيرِي وَخَلِيفَتِي وَوَصِيِّي فِيكُمْ».

“Which one of you will help me in this matter so that he be my brother, vizier, inheritor, and successor among you?”

The only person who responded positively to this divine calling was Ali ibn Abi Talib. At that time, the Prophet told his relatives:

«إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي وَوَصِيِّي وَخَلِيفَتِي فِيكُمْ فَاسْمَعُوا لَهُ وَاطِيعُوهُ». (تاريخ طبري، ج 2، ص 62 - 63. و تاريخ كامل، ج 2، ص 40 - 41. و مسند احمد، ج 1، ص 111 و شرح نهج البلاغه (ابن ابي الحديد)، ج 13، ص 210 - 212).

“He (Ali) is my brother, inheritor, and successor among you. Listen to him and obey him.” (*Tarikh Tabari*, Vol. 2, pp. 62-23. *Tarikh kamil*, Vol. 2, pp. 40-41. *Musnad Ahmad*, Vol. 1, p. 111, *Sharh nahj al-balagha* (Ibn Abi al-Hadid), Vol. 13, pp. 210-212)

2) In the Expedition to Tabouk, the Prophet (PBUH) said to Ali:

«أَمَا تَرْضَى أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنِّي بِمَنْزِلَةِ هَارُونَ مِنْ مُوسَى إِلَّا أَنَّهُ لَأَنْبَى بَعْدِي». (سيره ابن

هشام، ج 2، ص 520. و «الصواعق المحرقة» (ابن حجر)، طبع دوم در مصر، باب 9، فصل 2، ص 121).

“Do you not feel happy to be to me as Aaron was to Moses, other than there was no prophet after Moses?” (*Sirah ibn Hisham*, Vol. 2, p. 520. *Al-sawa‘iq al-muhriqah* (Ibn Hajar), 2nd ed., Egypt, chapter 9, section 2, p. 121)

This means that you will be my caliph and successor like Aaron was the direct inheritor and successor to Moses.

3) On the tenth year of the Hijri calendar, the Prophet (PBUH) when returning from his final pilgrimage of Hajj, introduced Ali to a great number of his followers and believers in a location called Ghadir Khum. He said:

«مَنْ كُنْتَ مُؤَلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مُؤَلَاهُ».

“Whoever I am his master (*mawla*), from now Ali is his master (*mawla*).”

It is noteworthy that in the beginning of his speech, the Prophet said “Am I not prior to you than yourselves?” The Muslims all

acknowledged yes. Therefore, we should state that what the Prophet meant by the word *mawla* was the position of being prior to the Muslims, and their leader and the absolute authority.

We can also conclude that the same priority position that the Prophet had, was shown for Ali.

The Hadith of Ghadir is one of the valid hadiths that not only Shi'i scholars but approximately 360 Sunni scholars have also narrated it. The proof is linked to 110 of the companions, and 26 of the great Muslim scholars have written books on this hadith.

Abu Ja'far Tabari, the famous Muslim historian, has collected the documents and narrations of this hadith in a two volume book. Refer to the book, *al-Ghadir* for more details (also see *al-Sawa'iq al-muhriqa* (Ibn Hajar), 2nd ed., Egypt, chapter 9, section 2, p. 122).

In addition to these valid narrations, some verses of the Quran also show this truth. Here we shall review the following example:

«إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَ رَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَ يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَ هُمْ

رَاكِعُونَ»

“Your guardian can be only Allah; and His messenger and those who believe, who establish worship and pay the poor due, and bow down (in prayer)” (Q 5:55)

Narrations from Sunni *Sahih* and *Musnad* books explain that this verse was revealed in honour of Imam Ali, when he donated his ring while he was in bowing down in prayer. We shall only mention a few of the documents of this narration below:

- 1) *Tafsir Tabari*, Vol. 6, p. 186.
- 2) *Ahkam al-Qur'an (Tafsir al-Jussas)*, Vol. 2, p. 542.
- 3) *Tafsir Baydawi*, Vol. 1, p. 345.
- 4) *al-Durr al-manthur*, Vol. 2, p. 293.

When this verse was revealed for Ali, Hassan ibn Thabit wrote the following poem in honour of the occasion:

فَأَنْتَ الَّذِي أُعْطِيتَ إِذْ أَنْتَ رَاكِعٌ

فَدَتْكَ نَفُوسُ الْقَوْمِ يَا خَيْرَ رَاكِعٍ

فَأَنْزَلَ فِيكَ اللَّهُ خَيْرَ وَلايَةٍ

و بينها في مُحْكَمَاتِ الشَّرَائِعِ

“You are the one who gave while bowing down

May our souls be sacrificed for you, oh the best of worshipers

God sent the best of authority (wilaya) for you

And He placed it among the unswerving sharia”

The Twelve Imams

The Prophet of Islam declared during his life: After him there will be 12 successors, all of whom are from the Quraysh tribe; and the dignity of Islam will be from their caliphate.

Jabir ibn Samarah says:

«سمعت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) يقول لا يزال الاسلام عزيزاً إلى اثني عشر خليفة ثم

قال كلمة لم اسمعها فقلت لأبى ما قال؟ فقال: كلهم من قريش». (صحيح مسلم، ج 6، ص 2، ط مصر).

“I heard from the Prophet (PBUH) that said: Islam will be keep its dignity with 12 caliphs. Then he said something that I did not hear. I asked my father there, and he said all [12] are from Quraysh.” (*Sahih*

Muslim, Vol. 6, p. 2 t, Egypt)

In the history of Islam, one cannot find 12 caliphs who were protectors of the Islam's dignity but the 12 Imams of Shia. Each one of the successors is subsequently introduced after the previous successor.

Now we can ask who these 12 individuals are? If we name the first four Caliphs, also known to the Sunnis as the *rashidun caliphs*, we cannot count the rest of the Caliphs as a source dignity for Islam. The history of the Umayyads and Abbasids is the witness to this fact. However, the 12 Imams of Shia, all of whom were manifestations of piety and righteousness, are the protectors of the Prophet's tradition. The companions of the Prophet, the following generations, and historians bear witness to the 12 Imams' knowledge and credibility. These 12 Imams are:

- 1) Ali ibn Abi Talib
- 2) Hassan ibn Ali (Mujtaba)
- 3) Hussein ibn Ali
- 4) Ali ibn Hussein (Zayn al-Abedin)

- 5) Muhammad ibn Ali (Baqir)
- 6) Jafar ibn Muhammad (Sadiq)
- 7) Musa ibn Jafar (Kazim)
- 8) Ali ibn Musa (Rida)
- 9) Muhammad ibn Ali (Taqi)
- 10) Ali ibn Muhammad (Naqi)
- 11) Hassan ibn Ali (Askari)
- 12) Imam Mahdi (Qa'im)

To see the biography of these great Imams, whose names have been mentioned by the Prophet Muhammad, refer to the following books:

- 1) *Tadhkira al-khawas*
- 2) *Kifaya al-athar*
- 3) *Wafiyat al-a'yan*
- 4) *A'yan al-shi'a*

The Reason for the Infallibility of the Imams

There are numerous reasons for the infallibility of the Imams. We shall mention only one as an example:

According to both Shia and Sunni scholars, the Prophet (PBUH) said the following in his last days:

«إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ الثَّقَلَيْنِ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَ أَهْلَ بَيْتِي وَ أَتَهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقَا حَتَّى يَرْدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضِ». (مستدرک حاکم، جزء سوم، ص 148. الصواعق المحرقة، باب 11، فصل اوّل، صفحه 149. «کنز العمال»، جزء اوّل، باب الاعتصام بالکتاب و السنّه، ص 44. در مسند احمد، جزء پنجم، صفحه 182 و 189).

“I have left two weighty things among you: the Book of God and my household (*ahl al-bayt*). The two will never separate from each other until they come to me (on the day of Judgment) at the pool of Kawthar.” (*Mustadrak hakim*, Vol. 3, p. 148. *Al-Sawa‘iq al-muhriqa*, chapter 11, section 1, p. 149. *Kanz al-ummal*, Vol. 1, p. 44. *Musnad Ahmad*, Vol. 5, p. 182, 189)

While the Quran undoubtedly lacks any mistake or deviation, how can its delivery through the Prophet and divine revelation contain a

mistake? Both the revelation and the Prophet, just like the Quran, are immune to any mistakes. Moreover, when the Quran is infallible, the *ahl al-bayt*, as the leaders of the community, are also infallible because in the above hadith the *ahl al-bayt* are in the same line as the Quran.

There is no point if fallible individuals are in contiguity with the Quran. The clearest proof for the infallibility of the Imams is the Prophet's expression from above:

«لَنْ يَفْتَرَقَا حَتَّى يَرِدَا عَلَى الْحَوْضِ»

“The two will never separate (in guidance) from each other until they come to me (on the day of Judgment) at the pool of Kawthar.”

If the *ahl al-bayt* are not immune to mistakes and occasionally commit mistakes, they will separate from the Quran which is infallible. Therefore, the hadith shows that the Prophet denies the fallibility of the *ahl al-bayt*.

The meaning of *ahl al-bayt* as household does not refer to all those related to the Prophet because some may mistake.

Hence, only a special group from the Prophet's progeny had such a

honourable position. And, they are the Imams from the *ahl al-bayt*, who have shown throughout history that they are the protectors of the religion and the Prophet's tradition.

Imam Mahdi

One of the common issues of the heavenly religions is the “global peacemaker” who will appear on the apocalypse. Not only the Muslim community, but also the Jewish and Christian communities are awaiting the arrival of this just leader. This matter is clear in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

On this matter the Prophet Muhammad says the following:

«لو لم يبق من الدَّهر إلاَّ يوم لبعث الله رجلاً من أهل بيتي يَمْلأها عدلاً كما مُلِئت جَوْرًا».

(صحيح ابى داوود، طبع مصر، المطبعة التازية، ج 2، ص 207 و ينابيع المودة، ص 432 و نورالابصار، باب 2، ص 154).

“If there remains only one day to the end of the world, God will

indeed call on a man from my progeny to fill the world with justice as it was filled with oppression” (*Sahih Abi Dawood*, ed. Egypt, al-Matba‘a al-taziyya, Vol. 2, p. 207. *Yanabi‘ al-mawadda*, p. 432. *Nur al-absar*, chapter 2, p. 154)

Therefore, as it has been shown, the belief in this just peacemaker is common among the followers of the heavenly religions. Moreover, there are many hadiths about Mahdi in Sunni hadith literature. Both Shia and Sunni theologians and researchers have written books on the Mahdi, such as *Kitab al-bayan fi akhbar Sahib Zaman* by Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn al-Kanji Shafi‘i, *Kitab al-burhan fi ‘alamat Mahdi akhir zaman* by Ali ibn Hossam al-Din know as Muttaqi Hindi, and *Kitab al-mahdi wa al-mahdawiyya* by Ahmad Amin Misri.

On the other hand, Shia scholars have written numerous works on the subject, for example *al-Malahim wa al-fitan*.

These narrations designate certain qualities of the Mahdi, as they apply to the direct descendent of Imam Hassan Askari who was the 11th Shia Imam (*Yanabi‘ al-mawadda*, B 76, *Manaqib* by Jabir ibn Abdallah

Ansari).

According to this narration, the Mahdi has the same name as the Prophet Muhammad (*Sahih Tirmidhi*, ed. Dehli, 1342, Vol. 2, p. 46. *Musnad Ahmad*, ed. Egypt, 1313, Vol. 1, p. 376).

And he is the 12th leader (*Yanabi' al-mawadda*, p. 443). He is from the progeny of Imam Hussein ibn Ali (*Yanabi' al-mawadda*, p. 432).

Mahdi was born in 255 Hijri and has ever since lived like the other people in this world. It is noteworthy that such a long lifespan is not incompatible with science nor the logic of revelation. The scientific world is now in search of a way to extend the human lifespan and believes that human beings can live much longer lives. History has also named those who have lived long lives:

The Quran says about Prophet Noah:

«قَالِبَتْ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ عَامًا»

“And he continued with them for a thousand years save fifty years”

(Q 29:14)

The Holy Quran says about Prophet Jonah:

«فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسْتَجِيبِينَ لَلِّبْتُ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ»

“And had he not been one of those who glorify (Allah) [143] He would have tarried in its belly till the day when they are raised” (Q 37:143-144)

Also, Prophet Khidr and Prophet Jesus are still alive according to the Holy Quran.

Chapter 5

Afterlife

Belief in the afterlife and the day of resurrection is one of the principles of Islam, and also exists in other heavenly religions.

Scholars of theology have brought many reasons based on rationality and tradition to prove afterlife; because reason and wisdom acknowledges the necessity to reward the good and punish the oppressor.

The reasons based in tradition, such as the Quran and hadiths from the Prophet and the Imams exceed the space of this concise work. Based on the research done, there are approximately 400 verses in the Quran on this subject.

Here, we shall review a few verses as a sample:

1) God says in chapter Yasin verses 78 and 79:

"وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ. قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ".

“And he hath coined for Us a similitude, and hath forgotten the fact of his creation, saying: Who will revive these bones when they have rotted away? [78] Say: He will revive them Who produced them at the first, for He is Knower of every creation” (Q 36: 78-79)

2) In chapter Qiyama verses 1 to 4 it says:

"بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ . لَا أَقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ . وَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ . أَيْحَسِبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ. بَلَى قَادِرِينَ عَلَى أَنْ نُسَوِّيَ بَنَانَهُ".

“Nay, I swear by the Day of Resurrection; [1] Nay, I swear by the accusing soul (that this Scripture is true). [2] Thinketh man that We shall not assemble his bones? [3] Yea, verily. We are able to restore his very fingers [4]” (Q 75:1-4)

3) In chapter An‘am, verse 12 it says:

"قُلْ لِمَنْ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ".

“Say: Unto whom belongeth whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth? Say: Unto Allah. He hath prescribed for Himself mercy, that He may bring you all together to the Day of Resurrection whereof there is

no doubt.” (Q 6:12)

4) Also, in chapter Mu'minun verses 15 and 16 it says the following:

"ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ . ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ".

“Then lo! after that ye surely die. [15] Then lo! on the Day of Resurrection ye are raised (again) [16]”

These verses clearly substantiate the afterlife and resurrection on the day of Judgment, and proves that humans will be accountable for their actions by rewards and punishments.

Index

Subjects:	Page No.
Introduction	3
Freedom of Thought	3
The Value of the Intellect in Islam	6
Islamic Worldview	9
Cognition and Its Types	10
Chapter One: Theology	13
Part One: The Proof for the Existence of God	13
Part Two: The Proof for Monotheism	23
The Criteria for Monotheism	25
Chapter 2: Divine Justice	41
Chapter Three: Prophethood	44
The Humanity's Need for a Heavenly Religion	44
Qualities of the Prophets	46
Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad	48

Chapter Four: Imamate	51
The Twelve Imams	60
The Reason for the Infallibility of the Imams	63
Imam Mahdi	65
Chapter 5: Afterlife	69