

Recognition of Imām



‘Allāmah
Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr (Ḥubb-i ‘Alī) Hunzai
(Sitarah-yi Imtiyāz)



“And all things (in the form of spirit and knowledge) We have encompassed in the manifest Imām (*Imām-i mubīn*).”
(36:12)

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by

°Allāmah

Naşīr al-Dīn Naşīr (Ḥubb-i °Alī) Hunzai
(Sitārah-yi Imtiyāz)

Translated from Urdu into English

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Published by

Institute for Spiritual Wisdom and
Luminous Science (ISW&LS)

New Edition © 2014
www.monoreality.org



"First, let me remind you, that for all murids of the Imam, whether they are from Central Asia, from India, from Pakistan, from the Western World, the fundamental principle is the recognition of the Imam of the Time."

Mawlana Hazir Imam Shah Karim al-Husayni^(c)

Moscow, Russia
29th January 1995

"In time, the Shia were also sub-divided over this question [of rightful leadership], so that today the Ismailis are the only Shia community who, throughout history, have been led by a living, hereditary Imam in direct descent from the Prophet."

Mawlana Hazir Imam Shah Karim al-Husayni^(c)

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27th February 2014

Acknowledgements

Shukran li'llāhi wa'l-ḥamdu li'llāh! The book “Recognition of Imām” Parts 1, 2 and 3 were originally translated by Mr. Khan Muhammad of Karachi many years ago. It is now being published as a new translation in one volume. A challenging and demanding exercise such as this has been completed thanks to the wonderful tradition of giving voluntary time, knowledge, skills and dedication of the students of Institute for Spiritual Wisdom and Luminous Science (ISW&LS) of both the east and the west. It is another example of what can be achieved where the hearts and minds of members are united for *‘ilmī khidmāt!*

Once again it is our happiness to acknowledge the devotion and commitment of Azeem Ali Lakhani, whose thorough proof-reading eliminates many human errors and enhances the quality of the book. With great happiness and some pride we mention the names of Asif Aslam Virani, his wife Dr. Sameera Asif, Fayyaz Akber Ali Motani, Kamran Wali and Noor-ullah Yaqubi for producing a comprehensive Index for this book at the eleventh hour!

Nizar Fath Ali adds another feat to his publishing achievements. He has both formatted the book and designed the attractive cover.

Zahir Lalani despite all the pressures of work and family has helped to edit all the three parts and contributed greatly to the smoother English expression.

When the project began we were daunted by the missing typed version of part 3. Naeem Jiwani, who at that time lived and worked in the UAE, re-typed it completely inserting all the diacritical marks. This service really lifted our spirits and motivated us to complete the work.

All of us who have worked on this particular book can derive tremendous satisfaction and happiness that working in unison we have once again ensured the publication of another piece of esoteric Ismaili literature. We are sure that this book will enhance the understanding of the central principle of the Ismaili *Ṭarīqah*, namely *Imāmat*.

Dedication

Şadr-i A'zam, Mustafa Momin Sahib and his family have once again demonstrated their commitment and dedication to the mission of disseminating *ḥaqīqī* and *ta'wīlī* knowledge by sponsoring the publication of this very important book, namely “The Recognition of Imām”, the three separate parts of which are, for the first time, being published under one cover. The list of services of his blessed family is too long to reiterate here. Suffice it to say that in recognition of their outstanding services, Buzurg-wār has given them the unique and well-deserved title of *Majma' u'l-Malā'ikah* (Assembly of Angels).

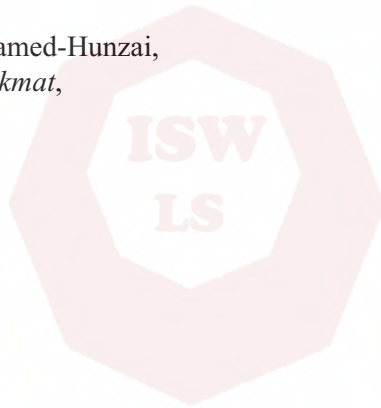
On a personal level *Şadr-i A'zam*, Mustafa Momin Sahib studies the books of esoteric knowledge meticulously. He has cultivated the habit of making a list of all the difficult and technical words in a book and looking up their meanings in a good dictionary. He once confided in us that often he studies the books of ISW&LS, which are in Urdu with their parallel English translations where these are available in order to understand them better. Both these methods are worth emulating.

On an institutional level he has recently, quietly completed a highly constructive service for the ISW&LS. Without any prompting, he undertook the valuable task of scanning all of Buzurg-wār's published and unpublished Urdu books and the books translated into English and put them on dedicated websites. He was inspired and motivated to do this beneficial work in the context of our fast developing technology, where particularly in the developed countries of the world more and more people are turning to iPads and other electronic reading tablets and the use of paper books is decreasing. *Şadr-i A'zam* had the vision to anticipate this profound change and he took steps to ensure that our books of *ḥaqīqī* knowledge would be available in the technology of the day. He has with the help of other members incorporated navigation features which make it easy for the reader to go from the Table of Contents directly to the article concerned. He deserves our sincere *mubārakbādīs* for his practical use of the *āfāqī* signs, namely the physical miracles to preserve and make more accessible the knowledge of *anfūs*, namely spiritual and luminous knowledge. Digitising Buzurg-wār's books in this way is making this precious knowledge readily available to all people everywhere, regardless of geography. Further in

doing this tremendous service, he as befits a true leader, inspired several other members of ISW&LS to contribute to this project.

Şadr-i A'zam, Mustafa Momin Sahib's entire family is devoted and dedicated to the work of our *bāṭinī* institutions, however here we particularly remember his Begum, Ḥaẓrat-i 'Āliyyah Mumtaz Sahibah, daughter Na'ṭiyah, son-in-law Nu'mān and grandson 'Ārif. May their exemplary services be a beacon of light for all of us to follow!

Rashida Noormohamed-Hunzai,
Markaz-i 'Ilm-ū Hikmat,
London,
23rd March 2014.



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Important Note

The following symbols have been used in the text with the names of Prophets and Imāms.

(s) = *ṣalla'llāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam* (May Allah send blessings and peace through him and his progeny).

(c) = *'alayhi's-salām / 'alayha's-salām / 'alayhima's-salām / 'alayhimu's-salām / 'alaynā salāmuḥu / 'alaynā minḥu's-salām* (May peace be through him / her / them both / them / may his peace be upon us).

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Being an explanation
of the 12 verses of the Qur'ān
that contain the word '*Imām*' or its plural '*a'immah*'

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Introduction

By the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!

Indeed God and His angels send *ṣalawāt* (blessings) through the Prophet. O you who believe, seek *ṣalawāt* through him and duly submit to him (33:56). *Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Muḥammadin wa ʿālī Muḥammad* (O Allāh send *ṣalawāt* through Muḥammad and the progeny of Muḥammad).

ṣalawāt

1. This book consists of the explanations and *ta'wīls* (esoteric interpretations) of those sacred Qur'ānic verses in which the Imām and Imāmat are clearly mentioned, although internally no verse of the wise Qur'ān is devoid of the subject of Imāmat. Therefore it is extremely important to discuss those verses.

The contents of this book

2. Verse (36:12) shows that God, may He be blessed and exalted, has kept every intellectual, spiritual and physical thing immersed in the light of the most noble Imām. According to the principles of Qur'ānic wisdom, it is clear that all subjects are condensed in the subject of Imāmat and all words in the word 'Imām'. Thus, it was necessary and essential to explain in one book all those verses in which the words Imām or *a'immaḥ* (pl. of Imām) are mentioned and to do so in the light of *ta'wīl*.

The secrets of the heart of the Qur'ān

All Qur'ānic subjects are condensed in the subject of Imāmat

3. Those *mu'mins* whose inner eye has opened can observe the reality that everything in the universe and among the existents testifies that the Imām is ever-living and ever-present in this world and nothing in the physical and spiritual world is without this testimony.

The Imām is ever-living and ever-present in this world

4. When it is apparent from the Qur'ānic verse (36:12) that everything is enclosed and encompassed in the sacred light of the manifest Imām, it necessarily has to appear immersed in the colour of the luminosity of the exalted Imām. Thus, not only everything of the Qur'ān

Everything is encompassed in the sacred light of the manifest Imām

and the *Ḥadith*, but everything of the [entire] universe also appears in this way.

One's own recognition
and God's recognition

The recognition of the
imperfect man alone
cannot be the example
of God's recognition

Everything is
perishable except
God's face

Imām's recognition is
God's recognition

All Divine sciences
are gathered together
in Imām's recognition

Ṣirāt-i mustaqīm i.e.
Islam is the path
which leads to union
with God

Four stages of Islam

In the light of *ma'rifat*
the reality of
everything can duly
be observed

5. If according to the *Ḥadith*: “He who recognises him/herself recognises his/her Lord”, it is accepted that one's own recognition (*khwud-shināsi*) results in God's recognition (*Khudā-shināsi*), then the Perfect Man's (Imām's) recognition cannot be exempt from this subject either. For, without the recognition of the Perfect Man, the recognition of the imperfect man alone cannot be the example of God's recognition. In fact, it is from the initial recognition of the Imām that one's own recognition is attained and from his final recognition, God's recognition.
6. In verse (28:88) God says: “Everything is perishable except His face.” It should be known that by God's face is meant His recognition, and God's recognition is that reality which is hidden in the Imām's recognition. As Mawlānā ‘Alī^(c) says: “I am the face (recognition) of Allāh in the heavens and the earth”.
7. When it is an indisputable fact that the Imām's recognition is God's recognition, then undoubtedly all Divine sciences are also gathered together in this recognition. This is why the Prophet Muḥammad^(s) said: “He who dies without the recognition of the Imām of the time, dies like a *jāhil* (pagan) and the *jāhil's* place is the hell-fire”. That is, he becomes deprived of the paradise of Divine knowledge.
8. The religion of Islam is the path which leads to union with God and it is called the straight path (*ṣirāt-i mustaqīm*). It has four stages, which are known by the names of *sharī'at*, *ṭarīqat*, *ḥaqīqat* and *ma'rifat*. It is obvious that the desired destination and the ultimate stage is *ma'rifat*, i.e., God's recognition.
9. It is said that *sharī'at* is like the night, *ṭarīqat* like the light of the stars, *ḥaqīqat* like the light of the moon and *ma'rifat* like the light of the sun. It is the light of *ma'rifat* in which the reality of everything can duly be observed.

10. *Maʿrifat* and *yaqīn* (certainty) mean the same thing. Certainty has three stages: knowledge of certainty, eye of certainty and the truth of certainty. Thus, the initial recognition is in the knowledge of certainty, the intermediary in the eye of certainty and the final, in the truth of certainty. To elaborate further: the initial recognition of the manifest Imām is in a knowledge which is free from any doubt and is absolutely certain; intermediary recognition is in a *didār* (vision) and *mushāhadah* (observation), which is seen by the inner eye and the final recognition is in the miraculous spiritual experience in which the 'I' of a true *mu'min* disappears in the Imām's light just as the darkness and blackness of a piece of coal disappears amidst the cinders of fire.
11. Without the Imām's recognition, the recognition of the Prophet's light is impossible and without the Prophet's light, God's recognition, because the gate of Prophethood is Imāmat and that of Divinity is Prophethood.
12. There are four stages of living existents: vegetative soul, animal soul, rational or human soul and the Holy Spirit. God's recognition is in the Holy Spirit, which is the blessed soul of the Perfect Man, namely the Imām of the time.
13. If someone asks: If *maʿrifat* means to see the Imām's soul, i.e., his light, why is it said: "He who recognises himself, (i.e., his soul) recognises his Lord"? The answer is that the soul which belongs to the Imām in its actual form belongs to the true *mu'min* in its potential form. In other words, the first soul of a *mu'min* can be attained from vegetables, the second from animals, the third from human beings and the fourth, namely, the Holy Spirit, from the Imām. A true *mu'min* must attain this, his final soul and recognise it duly.
14. If it is accepted that a human being has four souls, then we have to accept that they have four ways of entering his body. The vegetative and animal souls initially continue to enter through the navel and later on (i.e., after birth) through the mouth, and the rational soul and

Three stages of
maʿrifat

The final recognition
of the manifest Imām
is a miraculous
spiritual experience

The gates of
Prophethood and
Divinity

The Holy Spirit is the
blessed soul of the
Perfect Man

The soul which
belongs to the Imām
in its actual form
belongs to the true
mu'min in its potential
form

A human being has
four souls

the Holy Spirit initially through the physical ears and then through the ears of understanding (*gūsh-i hūsh*).

The Holy Spirit cannot enter the human heart and mind without spiritual food.

15. As it is absolutely impossible for the vegetative and animal souls to enter the human body without material food, similarly it is also absolutely impossible for the rational soul and the Holy Spirit to enter the human heart and mind without spiritual food. Spiritual food is the discourse of knowledge and wisdom.

How can the Holy Spirit be created in oneself?

16. The way of creating the soul which has *ma'rifat*, i.e., the Holy Spirit in oneself, by attaining the grace and blessings from the sacred light of the Imām of the time, is to follow his sacred *farmāns* related to both knowledge and practice and priority must be given to his pleasure over everything.

The basic condition for the Imām's recognition is belief

17. The basic condition for the Imām's recognition is belief, because the Imām's recognition cannot be attained by someone who does not have the correct belief. To attain correct belief it is generally essential to have a proper religious environment during childhood.

Imām's friendship and to love him is the second condition for his recognition

18. The second condition for the Imām's recognition is to have his friendship and to love him. Love is the developed form of belief and its development is in his obedience.

The third condition of the Imām's recognition is ardent love for him

19. The third condition of the Imām's recognition is ardent love (*ishq*) for him, which is the developed form of love. Its development lies in becoming aware of the physical and spiritual beauties of the Imām of the time, for a person cannot fall in love with someone until he sees his beauty and goodness or hears about them from a truthful person.

Ardent love develops for the Imām by knowing his physical and spiritual beauties

The Imām's love itself guides on the path of his recognition

20. If a *mu'min's* heart begins to be inflamed with the love of the Imām of the time, his mute expression (*zabān-i ḥāl*) and spoken word (*zabān-i qāl*), will indicate how a *mu'min* can progress on the path of the Imām of the time's recognition.

The gist of the above-mentioned points is that without the recognition of the Imām of the time, no spiritual goal in the

Ismāʿīlī faith can be achieved. All its virtues are hidden in the Imām's recognition. It is also evident from the realities mentioned above that the ever-living and ever-present Imām himself is the very means of his own recognition. Therefore, it is he who alone must be obeyed by the *mu'mins*.

It has already been said that a *mu'min* loves the Imām of the time only when he sees his incomparable beauties or hears about them from a truthful person. Thus, the purpose of writing this book is that the true *mu'mins* [by reading it become] aware of the knowledge, excellence, spirituality and luminosity of the exalted Imām of the time and attain his sacred *ʿishq* or ardent love and thereby attain his recognition.

Finally, it is my humble prayer in the court of the Lord of the worlds, that He, in His infinite grace and benevolence, may enrich all *mu'min* men and women with the limitless wealth of the Imām's recognition! Protect them from the sedition of the End of Time! Grant them the material and spiritual bounties and exalt them both in this world and in the next! *Āmīn*! O the Lord of the worlds!

A humble slave of the Imām of the time,
Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai,
Wednesday, 21 Jumādā II, 1392/2nd August, 1972.

Without the recognition of the Imām of the time, no spiritual goal can be achieved

How this book will help the true *mu'mins* to attain Imām's ardent love

Qur'ānic Wisdom of the Word 'Imām' and the Vastness of its Meaning

The word 'Imām' is mentioned twelve times in the wise Qur'ān

The exalted Imām's holy light is the Reality of realities

Was Ibrāhīm^(c) a Prophet or an Imām?

Ibrāhīm^(c) was tried with the Supreme Names of God

The word 'Imām', both in its singular and plural forms, is mentioned altogether twelve times in different places of the wise Qur'ān. If we collectively study all those sacred verses in which the word 'Imām' and its meaning and purport are mentioned with intelligence and wisdom, we will certainly come to know how comprehensively God has mentioned the realities of the Imām's recognition in His glorious Book and how infinite is the vastness of the meaning He has kept in the subject of Imāmat. In fact, the great universe of Qur'ānic wisdom is contained in the esoteric aspect (*bāṭin*) of the subject of Imāmat. Since the exalted Imām's holy light is the Reality of realities, then all the realities of the existents are gathered under his exalted Reality. Thus, here we are going to explain those twelve verses in whose meanings and purports are hidden innumerable wisdoms of the name 'Imām'.

In verse (2:124) God says: “And when his Lord tried Ibrāhīm with certain Words (*kalimāt*), he fulfilled them. He said: Lo! I am going to appoint you the Imām (leader) of (the entire) humankind”. Here it must be asked what kind of Words were those with which God tried Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c)? It must also be asked: Was he a Prophet or an Imām? If the answer is that he held both those positions, the question arises: What was he first, Prophet or Imām? If the answer is that first he was a Prophet and then he became an Imām, it would require more explanation. Further, it should be asked how Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c) became the Imām of the humankind of the entire world? That is, how did he convey [the Divine message to the people] and invite them to it in all the continents of the planet earth when the means of communication in his time were limited?

It should be known that the Words with which Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c) was tried were the Supreme Names of God in the form of physical and spiritual *ḥudūd* (religious hierarchy).

For instance, the first [Supreme] Name contained the spirituality of Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(e), the second contained the spiritual examples of Ḥaẓrat-i Nūḥ^(e), in the third light was shed on his own [conditions] of the past and future, in the fourth all the spiritual events and miracles of Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e) were shown, in the fifth was recorded the spiritual life of Ḥaẓrat-i ʿĪsā^(e), in the sixth the spiritual feats of the holy Prophet Muḥammad^(s) were shown and in the seventh Name or Word were hidden the spiritual miracles of Ḥaẓrat-i Qā'imul-Qiyāmat^(e). With each of these Names there were also the spiritual examples of the realities of how miraculously the Universal Intellect, the Universal Soul, *Jadd*, *Fath* and *Khayāl* convey *ta'yid* (spiritual help) to the Prophets and Imāms.

It should be known that God had first conferred the great office of Prophethood and Messengership on Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) and then he was exalted to the sublime office of Imāmat. Since the Imāmat has several ranks, some of them precede and some follow Prophethood, so that the Imām may appear in one of them and may remain present in this world according to the expedience of time.

There are several meanings in the appointment by God of Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) as the Imām of the entire humankind: First, he was the Imām of the entire humankind of the past from the time of Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(e) to his own time; secondly he was the Imām of the entire humankind in his own time; thirdly he will be the Imām of the entire humankind of the future through the chain of his progeny.

He was the Imām in the past, in the sense that his spirituality was working and partaking in the spirituality of the Prophets and Imāms of the cycles of Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(e) and Ḥaẓrat-i Nūḥ^(e), as were theirs in his. It is in this sense that it is said: “Lo! Ibrāhīm was an *ummat* (community, nation) obedient to Allāh, by nature upright, and he was not among the polytheists.” (16:120). *Ummat* means both Imām and community, and here both are appropriate for Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e). With respect to guidance he was the Imām and with respect to combining the spirit and spirituality of the Prophets and Imāms, he was a whole *ummat*.

Imāmat has several ranks

Ibrāhīm^(e) was appointed as the Imām of the entire humankind

Ibrāhīm^(e) was a community

The planet earth is divided into twelve islands

The *hujjats* receive miraculous guidance from the Imām.

Satan can cast *waswasah* in the hearts of people of near and far

How the Prophet and the Imām convey luminous guidance to the people

Ibrāhīm^(c) prayed to God to appoint for him a tongue of truth

He was the Imām of the entire humankind of the world in the present, i.e., in his own time, in the sense that the planet earth is divided into twelve islands (*jazā'ir*, sing. *jazīrah*). In each of these islands, in addition to one *hujjat-i shab* (*hujjat* of the night) and *hujjat-i rūz* (*hujjat* of the day), there are always thirty *dā'is* as well. These *hujjats* in the twelve islands of the planet earth receive miraculous guidance from the centre of guidance, whether that be the Prophet or the Imām. Thus, it is in this sense that Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c) was the Imām of humankind in his own time. However, unless these realities are observed and there is the sway of spirituality in this world, it is beyond the capacity of ordinary people to believe in such miracles of the Prophets and Imāms.

The holy Qur'ān speaks of the “sneaking whisperer (*khannās*)”, the Satan who, in the form of both *jinn*s and humankind, casts *waswasah* (disturbing thoughts, insinuations) in the hearts of human beings. If it is possible for Satan to cast *waswasah* in the hearts of people of near and far and lead them astray, then it is also possible for the Prophet or the Imām to convey the Divine guidance to people irrespective of their distance. Since Satan is *muẓill*, the misleading one and the Prophet or Imām is *hādī*, the guide [on the straight path], then if Divine power were to convey the voice of *muẓill* to people's hearts and not the voice of the *hādī*, it would be a great injustice for people and on the Day of Judgement people would argue against God as to why He was enabling the misleading one to reach everywhere in the world and limiting the means of guidance! This is not the case. The fact is that the Prophet and the Imām convey spiritual and luminous guidance to the *hujjats* of the twelve islands and they in turn, through their respective *dā'is*, to the people.

Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c) was the Imām of the entire humankind in the future in the sense that just as the miraculous spirituality of the Prophets and Imāms of the past was present in his exalted personality, so his living spirituality was present in the chain of his progeny, as it is said in the Qur'ān that Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c) prayed to God: “And appoint for me a tongue of truth (*lisān ṣidq*) in the coming generations” (26:84). It is also said: “And he (Ibrāhīm) made it (i.e. *Nubuwwat* and *Imāmat*) a Word enduring in

his progeny, that haply they may return (unto God)” (43:28).

The statement above that Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c) transferred his Prophethood and Imāmat to his progeny in the form of an enduring Word, further verifies that the Words with which God had tried him were His living Names in the spiritual form of Prophets, Imāms and the angels.

Thus it becomes evident that Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c) is the Imām of the people of the entire world in the sense explained above. If it is accepted that the light of Imāmat is always in this world, being transferred from one personality to another, then it is also necessary to accept that from the same light of Imāmat all the *ḥujjats* of the world, which is divided into twelve islands, continue to receive guidance through spiritual help (*ta'yīdī hidāyat*).

Ibrāhīm^(c) transferred his Prophethood and Imāmat to his progeny in the form of an enduring Word

The light of Imāmat is always in this world, being transferred from one personality to another

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The Literal Meaning of the Word 'Imām'

In verse (9:12) God says: “And if they break their pledges after their treaty (has been made with you) and assail your religion, then fight the Imāms (leaders) of disbelief – Lo! They have no binding oaths in order that they desist.”

The word 'Imām' is also used for the leaders of disbelief

This verse shows that the word *a'immah*, the plural of 'Imām' is also used for the leaders of disbelief. Thus, the literal meaning of the word 'Imām' is a 'leader' or 'head'. The leader or head of a group is the foremost and greatest of them. If, for instance it is said that a certain person is the disbeliever's leader, it means that there is no greater disbeliever than him; it is he who is the source and means of disbelief and infidelity and responsible for the entire disobedience and deviation of the disbelievers. Contrary to this, if someone is regarded as the leader of the believers and if he truly is the head, it means that there is no *mu'min* greater than him; it is he who is the source and means of faith and the entire faith and guidance is due to him. Such a leader of the believers can only be the Imām of the time.

The leader of the believers is the source and means of faith

Since the above verse establishes that there are always leaders of disbelief and infidelity, without whom the darkness of disbelief cannot spread in the world, it is also inevitable that there always have to be leaders of religion and faith, without whose existence and presence, the light of religion and faith cannot continue with the [passing of] time.

All Muslims throughout the world should be united under the command of one existing and present leader

Another point of wisdom implied in this verse is that all Muslims throughout the world should be organised, agreed and united under the command of one existing and present leader or Imām. For, it is said in the above-mentioned verse: “You (all Muslims) fight the Imāms of disbelief” (9:12). This Divine command cannot be accomplished unless there are the leaders of faith against the leaders of disbelief, whose command the world of Islam accepts. If someone claims that at present there is no such leader of faith who can organise all the Muslims, this would

tantamount to saying, God forbid, that He commands us to do impossible things without rhyme or reason, or that this command of *jihād* (holy war) is related and confined to the Prophet's time. How is it possible that God has now removed the main means (Imām) of an important pillar like *jihād* from the religion of Islam? Reflect carefully in the light of Divine justice and equity!

Muslims need a leader or an Imām for the *jihād* of knowledge, if not for the physical *jihād*. Reflect on the miserable and helpless state of the world's Muslims and give the main reason for their present condition everywhere. What other reason can be given except that the Muslims who were united and in agreement during the Prophet's time, are today divided and scattered into sects. Centuries have elapsed in this condition despite the fact that God had given them a timely warning to avoid this dangerous disobedience by commanding: “And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allāh, and do not be scattered into sects [for there is the danger of letting go of this Rope]” (3:103). The responsibility of scattering into sects rests on the Muslims, not on the Rope of God that it did not bring them together by force at one place. For in this verse God does not say: “O My Rope, keep all Muslim men and women attached to your recognition and do not let them be scattered into sects”. On the contrary, He says: '(O the community of Muslims) hold fast, all of you together, the Rope of Allāh, and do not scatter into sects’ (3:103).

Imām is the main means of *jihād* of knowledge

Rope of Allāh

Knowledge for a united humanity

Can a Heavenly Book be the Imām?

The Book of Mūsā^(e)
(Torah) was an Imām

In verse (11:17) God says: “Is he who is on a clear proof from his Lord and follows him a witness of him and before him the Book of Mūsā (Torah) which was an Imām and a mercy (for the people, testifies to him, better or someone else)?”

‘Alī-yi Murtaẓā is a
witness to the
truthfulness of the
Prophet

This verse teaches [us] that the holy Prophet is on a clear proof from his Lord, i.e., he is the true Prophet of Allāh and ‘Alī-yi Murtaẓā^(e), who is from him, follows him and is a witness to his truthfulness. Another witness in this connection is the Book of Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e) before him, which was an Imām and a mercy for the people. All these realities are universally accepted, but there is a question regarding the Book of Mūsā, the Torah, as to how it was an Imām?

The spiritual leader is
called the Divine
Book and vice versa

The answer to this question is that according to the rule of the Arabic language, sometimes a thing is called by the name of another thing which is most often associated with it. For example, the camel that carries the water-skin is sometimes referred to as the water-skin. Such examples can also be found in languages other than Arabic. Thus, the learned people know that in the glorious Qur’ān, the holy Prophet is mentioned as *ẓikr* (remembrance) (65:10-11), although *ẓikr* is the name of the Qur’ān. It is in this sense therefore, the holy Prophet is called the *ẓikr* (= Qur’ān). It is correct in many respects, some of which are external and some internal. Thus, it is established that from the *ta’wīlī* point of view, the spiritual leader (the Prophet or Imām) is called the Divine or Heavenly Book and vice versa.

Every Heavenly Book
is originally a living
light, which in reality
is the spirit of the
Imām

Another reason for calling the Book of Mūsā an 'Imām' is that every Heavenly Book is originally a living light, i.e., the soul of knowledge and wisdom, which in reality is the spirit of the Imām himself. The Holy Spirit of Mawlānā Hārūn^(e) was revealed to Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e) in the form of a spiritual Book, the description of whose spiritual states and events was written on paper to some extent as the Torah,

but the real Torah was in the spiritual and luminous form. That is, the real Torah was not separate from the light of the exalted Imām, as the wise Qur'ān says: “Say, who revealed the Book which Mūsā brought, a light and a guidance for humankind, which you put on the sheets of paper that you show, but you hide much of it” (6:91).

The wisdom of this holy verse shows that the Torah was in two forms: In the first and original form it was in Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(c) and Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(c)'s heart and mind as the miraculous light and all-embracing Holy Spirit of knowledge and wisdom, rectitude and guidance. From this miraculous light, according to “a light and a guidance for humankind” (6:91), the people used to receive miraculous guidance in such a way that the *hujjats* of the islands used to receive inspirational (*ilhāmī*) light directly and they used to guide the people through their respective *dā'is*. The other form of the Torah is described in the above-mentioned verse.

The explanation of this Qur'ānic wisdom establishes that the Torah was definitely an Imām in its original and luminous state, by which is meant the sacred light of Ḥaẓrat-i Mawlānā Hārūn^(c). For further verification and corroboration of this reality, the following holy verse should be reflected upon: “And thus We have revealed unto you (this Book in the form of) a spirit from Our Command. You knew not what the Book is, nor what the (ultimate perfection of) faith. But We made it (the spirit) a light whereby We guide whom We will of Our servants” (42:52). This verse shows that the wise Qur'ān too has a spiritual and luminous origin and reality, which is called the light of the Prophet and Imām.

Now, despite the clear explanation of the above-mentioned realities and recognition of the Heavenly Book and the light which are explained in the light of the Qur'ān, if someone still questions: How can the Heavenly Book be the light of the Prophet and the Imām? The detailed answer will be given in the light of logic. For instance, when you write a letter to one of your dear ones, the information which you write in it does not leave your mind and become confined to the letter unlike the case of a material thing when it is poured from one container to another, it does not

Two forms of Torah

The wise Qur'ān has a spiritual and luminous origin and reality

Logical proof of how the Holy Book can be the light of the Prophet and the Imām

The light of Qur'ānic wisdom had appeared in the holy personalities of the Prophet and the Imām

The Qur'ān's revelation is full of the descriptions of spiritual secrets

The light of the Qur'ān existed in the noble personality of the Prophet until the end

‘Alī^(e)'s light is the manifest Imām, the manifest Book, the Mother of the Book and the Guarded Tablet

remain in the former. In fact, the information written in the letter remains in your heart and mind in its original state; there is not the slightest decrease in it. As long as it is in the human mind it does not have a written form, it is only in an inner and mental state. It is a different matter whether a human being can write something through will power even in his/her imagination (*khayāl*). This example demonstrates the reality that the miraculous light of Qur'ānic knowledge and wisdom, which had appeared in the holy personalities of Muḥammad^(s) and ‘Alī^(e), would not decrease by being written down [in the physical form of] the Qur'ān.

Further, if an objection is raised that the Qur'ān was not written from the knowledge of the holy Prophet and the Imām but that God had revealed it to the Prophet from the Guarded Tablet, the answer is undoubtedly that it was indeed revealed to the Prophet from the Guarded Tablet, but it is necessary to know how it was revealed and what the Guarded Tablet is. Thus, it should be known that the Qur'ān was revealed to the blessed heart of the Prophet as a living spirit. The Qur'ān's revelation is full of the descriptions of spiritual secrets, which require a separate treatise. In short, whatever is revealed to the heart takes the form of knowledgeable and intelligible things and its scope expands gradually until it embraces the entire universe and the existents in it. Thus the spirit of the Qur'ān revealed to the Prophet had come to him in the form of the angelic world or the world of angels (*‘ālam-i malakūt*). It was a luminous, living and wakeful world of knowledge and wisdom and the unveiling of reality, the observations and experiences of which were expressed by the Prophet in the Arabic language and thus the holy Qur'ān was compiled in the written form. However, the spirit or the light of the Qur'ān existed in his noble personality until the end, without the slightest decrease.

Now the question: How did this spirit or light come to Mawlānā Murtaẓā ‘Alī^(e)? The answer is that according to the verse “And We have encompassed everything in the manifest Imām” (36:12), ‘Alī^(e)'s light is the manifest Imām, the manifest Book, the Mother of the Book and the Guarded Tablet, which contains everything. Other than the Imām's light, nothing can be in the position of the Guarded

Tablet. If due to the literal concept of the Tablet it is supposed that God has a huge Tablet on which everything is written, it can be argued that physical writing cannot contain everything, such as intelligence, consciousness, understanding, speech, discernment, happiness, grief, anger, knowledge, forbearance, life and also intellects, souls, angels, that is, everything in the universe and the existents such as time and its changing conditions, etc., whereas in 'everything' (36:12) all these things are included. Thus, it is clear that the Guarded Tablet is the name of the Imām's light, which comprises and embraces the exterior and interior of the universe and existents and it is this light which encompasses everything.

It should be known that the Universal Intellect is the living Pen of God and the Universal Soul His living Tablet. It should also be known that the Universal Intellect is Muḥammad^(s)'s light and the Universal Soul, ʿAlī^(e)'s. The Qur'ān is written in spiritual writing on the Tablet of the Universal Soul with the Pen of the Universal Intellect. So, from where did the spiritual writing or the Qur'ān reveal to the holy Prophet? It revealed from the light of the exalted ʿAlī^(e), which is known as the Guarded Tablet. Further, although the holy Prophet's light was in the position of the Divine Pen, but by the Command of God, it had written everything on the Guarded Tablet in pre-eternity (*azal*) and thus everything is now in it. Furthermore, it is clear that in order to write we have to use a pen and in order to read, a tablet. Thus, it is evident that the holy Prophet observed the wisdom of the Divine writings on the 'Mother of the Book' or the 'Guarded Tablet' of ʿAlī^(e)'s light, and it is from here that the Qur'ān has been received.

The Guarded Tablet which embraces the exterior and interior of the universe and existents is the name of the Imām's light

Universal Intellect = the living Pen of God = Muḥammad^(s)'s light

Universal Soul = the living Tablet of God = ʿAlī^(e)'s light

The Manifest Imām (*Imām-i Mubīn*)

In verse (15:79), God says: “So We took revenge on them, and lo! they both (ruined towns) are on an open highway (*imāmin-mubīn*).”

The communities
which were destroyed
by Divine
chastisement

This verse is apparently about Ḥaẓrat-i Lūṭ^(e)'s community and Ḥaẓrat-i Shu'ayb^(e)'s community and their dwellings, which were destroyed by Divine chastisement for disbelieving their Prophets. The traces and marks of destruction of the dwellings of Lūṭ^(e)'s community, Sodom and others and those of Shu'ayb^(e)'s community, Madyan, are visible even today on the way from Arabia to Syria.

Imām is the path of
God

It is clear that here the word 'Imām' is literally used in the sense of “path”. There is not the slightest doubt that with respect to wisdom also, the 'Imām' is the “path”, i.e., the straight path and the path of God. There are also other names for “path” [in Arabic] such as *mazhab*, *maslak*, *shari'at*, *tariqat*, *minhāj*, etc., and by all these words is meant the exalted Imām. This is because from a material and worldly point of view, a path and guide are two separate things, but from the spiritual and religious point of view the one light of guidance is both the path and the guide. A bright proof of this reality is from the holy Qur'ān: “Certainly my Lord is on the straight path” (11:56). That is, God is found in the light of the lamp of guidance and the illumination of the light of *ma'rifat*. To express it in simple words, the holy light of the Imām is itself the straight path on which there is God. It is on this path of light that the true concept of God, His vision (*didār*) and recognition are certain for God's servants and this path of light is forever.

The light of guidance
is both the path and
the guide

Another of this holy verse's wisdoms is that *Imām-i mubīn*, as mentioned above, means the straight path, which is the path of light. Thus, when the true *mu'mins* continue to walk on the path of *Imām-i mubīn*'s spirituality and luminosity, they can see innumerable examples of previous communities with their inner eyes including the

communities of Lūṭ^(c) and Shu'ayb^(c) and their dwellings.

Another wisdom in this verse is that according to the principle of numbers, 'one' stands for the unity of God, then comes 'two' which is between unity and multiplicity. That is, the number two is an intermediary between unity and multiplicity. One of the characteristics of this number is that it brings multiplicity closer to unity. Thus, according to wisdom, the number 'two' is ordained for the two creatures among the creatures and existents whose status is next to God in both the worlds, just as 'two' follows 'one' in numbers. Those two creatures are the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul. Thus in this respect, the *ta'wil* of “*Wa innahumā la-bi-imāmin mubin* = Indeed they two are with the *Imām-i mubin* (the manifest Imām)” (15:79), is that the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul are with the manifest Imām, as in this world and among the spiritual *hudūd*, these are the two supreme angels.

Further, it should be known that among the ranks of the universe the two supreme things are the Divine Throne and the Divine Pedestal; in the world of Divine knowledge they are the Pen and the Tablet; in the world of oneness they are Lordship (*rubūbiyyat*) and servanthip (*‘ubūdiyyat*); in the world of Islam they are the Qur’ān and the *Ḥadith*; among the physical *hudūd* they are the *nāṭiq* and *asās* (Muḥammad^(s) and ‘Alī^(c)); in the circle of existence they are spirituality and corporeality; in the stations of teaching they are the two joined oceans (*majma‘u’l-baḥrayn*); in the domain of existence they are this world and the next, etc. Thus, in the dual pronoun “*innahumā* (Indeed they two)” there is an allusion to these great things of the above-mentioned worlds, to which in reality, the number 'two' is applicable. Thus, it is clear that *Imām-i mubin* is the name of the one from whose exalted personality no reality is separate.

Wisdoms of the number 'two'

The Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul are with the manifest Imām

Two supreme things

Concept of the Perpetuality of the Imām

In verse (17:71) God says: “On the day when We shall call together all human beings (*kulla unāsīm bi-Imāmihim*) [of all times] with their [respective] Imām.” It should be borne in mind that, with respect to its literal sense, this verse is like: “*Qad ‘alima kullu unāsīn mashrabahum* (i.e., each tribe knew their drinking place)” (2:60). To understand the wisdom of this noble verse, it is necessary to understand the meaning of 'unās'. *Unās* is the plural of *ins* and another form of it is *unāsī*, which has been used in the Qur’ān for the division of small groups. For instance, Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e)'s people are called *ummat-i Mūsā* or *qawm-i Mūsā*. They can also be called *nās* without being related (to anybody), but they cannot be called *unās*, because in the Qur’ān it is used for small divisions of people. In other words, *unās* is used for each of Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e)'s twelve tribes. This means that the people are called *unās* in relation to the Imām of the time, just as they are called *ummat* or *qawm* in relation to the Prophet. This is because of the fact that in every *nātiq*'s cycle there are many Imāms and the people of the time of every Imām will be called *unās*, not *ummat* or *qawm*.

The people are called *unās* in relation to the Imām of the time

On the Day of Resurrection, God will summon the people of every age with their respective Imām to His court

The above realities reveal that the exalted Imām always exists and is present among the people of the world. This is why on the Day of Resurrection, God will summon the people of every age with their respective Imām to His court, because He made him the source of guidance and the means of salvation for them, but they did not recognise him. Further, the Imām is the witness of the people's deeds and unless he witnesses their deeds, God will not judge their good and bad deeds.

It is necessary to know the principle that certain of God's attributes are due to their relation to the Prophet and the Imām. In order to know such attributes one should look into God's one hundred names and then the Prophet and Imām's hundred names. Those attributive names of God, which are also mentioned among the Prophet and Imām's names are

His names in relation to them. For instance, one of God's attributive names is “*al-hādī*” (the guide) and the same is that of the Prophet and the pure Imām. Thus, for the wise people it is clear that God is the “guide” in the sense that He sent the Prophet for the sake of guidance and the Prophet is guide in the sense that he guided people in his own time and for their future guidance, he appointed the Imām from his progeny. In this way the work of guidance becomes complete with the Imām.

The work of guidance becomes complete with the Imām

Similarly, another such name among God's names is “*ash-shahīd*” (the witness), which is also the name of the Prophet and the Imām. This means that God has sent the Prophet as a witness and the Prophet, according to God's command, has made the Imām witness over the people in his own place. Thus, the absolute witness over people's deeds is the exalted Imām. This is the reason that God will call the people of every age with their respective Imām on the Day of Resurrection (17:71).

The absolute witness over people's deeds is the exalted Imām

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God Always Speaks to the Imām

In verse (21:73) God says: “And We made them the Imāms [of the people] who guide by Our Command.”

The true Imāms are appointed by God

The wisdom of this verse shows that the true Imāms are appointed by God Himself and they guide the people according to His will and command. Further this verse shows that in order to command and guide [the people], He always speaks to the Imām. Whether we call this Divine Speech the special favour (*tawfiq-i khāṣṣ*) or the luminous guidance (*nūrānī hidāyat*), it is received from God continually and afresh by the Imāms according to the requirements and needs of their time and place. Since the Divine command (*amr-i bārī*) is their prerogative, i.e., on the one hand they receive it and on the other they convey it to the people, then it is in this sense that they are called *ulu'l-amr* (those who possess the Divine command, 4:59).

The Divine command (*amr-i bārī*) is the prerogative of the Imām of the time

Every wise person who believes in God's existence can on reflection understand that, in view of the law of the mercy of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, it is absolutely impossible that He may remove His means of command and guidance (i.e., the Imām of the time) from among the world's people at any time. Again it is absolutely impossible that the people of the world may dispense with the source of His guidance at any time. Thus, it is necessary and indispensable that the Imām should always be alive and present among the people in human attire in every age, whether it is the cycle of Prophethood or the cycle of Imāmat.

The Imām is always alive and present among the people in human attire in every age

The cycle of Prophethood and the cycle of Imāmat

It should be clear that the time which has elapsed from Ḥazrat-i Ādam^(e) to the Seal of the Prophets, i.e., the holy Prophet Muḥammad^(s) is called the cycle of Prophethood and the time which continues from him till the Resurrection is called the cycle of Imāmat. The difference between these two cycles is that during the cycle of Prophethood, by God's command some Imāms used to perform the duties of Prophethood in addition to the function of Imāmat,

whereas in the cycle of Imāmat, since it is the cycle of Resurrection, the pure Imāms from the progeny of Prophet Muḥammad^(s) perform only the duties related to the matters of Imāmat.



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The Imām of the Righteous

In verse (25:74) the word “Imām” is mentioned in this way: “And those who pray: Our Lord! Vouchsafe us the joy of our eyes from our wives and our offspring (*zurriyyāt*) and make us the Imām of the righteous.”

The most noble
Imāms' prayer

One of the salient wisdoms of this verse is that this prayer is specially related to the most noble Imāms, for it is solely their characteristic to become Imāms even in the position of their progeny or offspring (see verse 3:33-34).

Mawlānā ‘Alī^(e) is
alive in the human
attire of the present
Imām

It is clear from this supplicatory verse that the true Imām can be Imām even in the personalities of his children and grandchildren. Thus the doctrine of the Ismā‘īlīs that Mawlānā ‘Alī^(e) is alive and present in the human attire of Mawlānā Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī^(e), is correct.

The chain of Imāmat
is infinite

The above-mentioned verse mentions in a wisdom-filled way that the chain of Imāmat is infinite. That is, according to this verse, every Imām will pray to his Lord not only in the past, but also in the present and the future to make him the Imām of the righteous in the position of his sons and the coming generations, in addition to his own personality and this will continue forever without any end. If, after many ages the planet earth's lifespan comes to an end, God will transfer the light of Imāmat to another planet just as in the beginning it had descended here from another planet, an event which is called “Ādam's descent”.

If earth's lifespan
comes to an end, God
will transfer the light
of Imāmat to another
planet

To be the Imām of the righteous should not be understood in the sense that first there are some righteous people and subsequently the Imām comes into existence. Rather, it means that people attain righteousness as a result of the Imām's guidance and then due to this relationship with them, he is called the 'Imām of the righteous'. Or, in other words, since the Imām is always here in this world, then as a result there are also righteous people and righteousness.

Another great wisdom in this verse is hidden in the word

“*zurriyyat*”. In fact, not only one, but innumerable wisdoms are hidden in it, however here they will be explained only briefly. The words *zurriyyat* and *zarrah* stem from the same root. Further, there is a great difference between *zurriyyat* (particles) and *awlād* (children). *Zurriyyat* is the name of the particles or atoms of soul (*zarrāt-i rūḥ*) or the dots of soul (*nuqāt-i rūḥ*), which are in the blood and cells of human beings which have not yet passed through the stages of procreation, whereas *awlād* (children) are those particles of soul which have passed through the stages of procreation. A clear proof of the reality that the Qur’ānic name of the innumerable particles of life or animal soul in the blood and cells of the human body is *zurriyyat* is in the following verse: “And a miracle unto them is that We bore their *zurriyyat* (i.e., particles of their life) in the laden ship” (36:41). That is, the particles of life (*zurriyyat* or *zarrāt*) of the unbelievers were in the blood and cells of the *mu’mīns* who were in Ḥaẓrat-i Nūḥ^(e)’s Ark during the deluge.

It is also said in the Qur’ān: “And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Ādam, from their loins their *zurriyyat* (particles of soul)” (7:172). This noble verse shows that the souls of the people of the entire world were included in the souls which were brought forth from the loins of Ādam’s children. This is because the purpose for which the sleeping souls were awakened from the sleep of negligence on that occasion was not related only to some but to all of them.

The gist of the above-mentioned three verses is that *zurriyyat* is the name of those innumerable souls which exist in the human blood and cells in a dormant state. From these souls only a few appear in the form of children according to the law of nature through procreation and the rest are transferred to relatives and strangers through the spiritual waves of imagination, attention, love, teaching and benediction, etc. The following points are also found in the above-mentioned supplicatory prayer of the Imāms; according to them the joy of the eyes (i.e., children) is possible in two forms: physical and spiritual. Thus, in “from our wives (*min azwājina*)” there is the mention of sons, grandsons, great grandsons and the future generations, but in “from our *zurriyyāt* ([*min*]

The difference between *zurriyyat* and *awlād*

The souls of the people of the entire world were brought forth from the loins of Ādam’s children

Zurriyyat is the name of those innumerable souls which exist in the human blood and cells in a dormant state

zurriyyātinā)” there is the mention not of physical children but spiritual children. This is the reason that in the prayer for this kind of joy of the eyes (i.e., children) the physical wives of the Imām are not included.



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Status of the Imām's Spiritual Children

In verse (28:5) the word Imām, which is in its plural form (*a'immaḥ*), is mentioned in the following way: “And We desired to show favour unto those who were deemed weak in the earth, and to make them Imāms [of the people] and to make them the inheritors [of the earth].”

In *zāhir*, this verse is about Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(c) and Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(c) and their obedient *mu'mins*, but in *bāṭin* it is about all true Imāms and all their spiritual children. The gist of this verse is that in this world the exalted Imām and his followers are deemed weak, they are oppressed and attempts are made to efface them from the face of the earth. However, God foils the disbelievers' malicious plans and bestows His favours on the Imām and his followers, provides opportunities for the tree of Imāmat to flourish, makes the Imām and his spiritual children the inheritors of the external and internal wealth and kingdom and grants them both the religious and worldly leadership.

By reflecting on this verse, one realises that the true *mu'mins*, i.e., the Imām's spiritual children, have been included in the rank of Imāmat and there is no doubt about it. For instance, when a victorious nation chooses its leader, the leadership belongs to the whole nation, that is, the entire nation is the leader. Secondly if a person succeeds to become a king, his relatives and friends are also included in this success. Thirdly if a father is a king, the son is also going to be a king or he is going to hold an important office, provided he is worthy and obedient.

Question: If a non-Muslim accepts Islam and becomes the true Imām's follower, how can he be the Imām's spiritual child while his soul has been formed by non-Islamic teachings?

Answer 1: He can be the Imām's spiritual child just as Salmān-i Fārsī had become the Prophet or the Imām's spiritual child, although in the beginning he was a fire-worshipper.

God foils the disbelievers' malicious plans of effacing the exalted Imām from the face of the earth

The Imām's spiritual children are included in the rank of Imāmat

Souls are transferred
to relations and
strangers

Answer 2: If a pool is filled with dirty and impure water, it can be easily cleansed by causing pure water from a stream to flow into it for some time. The fresh and pure water will force the dirty water to flow out through the pool's outlet and only the pure water will remain in it.

Answer 3: It has already been said that souls are also transferred to relations and strangers through the spiritual waves of imagination, attention, love, teaching, benediction, etc. In this process, just as the pure water takes the place of the dirty water in the pool, in the same way the pure souls expel the impure souls and take their place.

Soul is purified during
zīkr-ū 'ibādat

Answer 4: It is quite well known that every ordinary human being has three souls and the Perfect Man has four. Nonetheless, the collective particles of these three or four souls are innumerable and except for God, nobody can count them. Among these particles, one particle works at the centre of the "I" of the human being and the rest do the work of the organs to which they are related. However, every particle yearns to control the centre. Thus, as a result of *zīkr-ū 'ibādat* each particle gets a chance to control the centre. That is, during *zīkr-ū 'ibādat*, the central particle of the soul dissolves in God's light, and the one closest to the centre takes control of it and this process continues. According to the Šūfis, this process is called the dissolving (*tahlīl*) of the soul or the purification of the soul.

Knowledge for a united humanity

The Imām is the Fountainhead of Guidance

In verse (28:41) God says: “And We made them the Imāms who invite unto the fire and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be helped.”

This verse reveals the wisdom that the Pharaoh and Hāmān and other disbelieving leaders were such that they were inviting and leading people unto the hell-fire. This clearly shows that even though disobedience, deviation and disbelief are easy, they are still not possible without a chief or leader. If this is the case, how can obedience, guidance and faith [which are very difficult to attain] be possible without a guide or an Imām?

Further it is important to recognise that, if it is a necessity of Divine law for there to always be a person among the people to mislead and show them the path of hell, in contrast to this it is more necessary that there must always be a person in the world who is able to guide people on the straight path and make them enter Paradise. Such a person is only the Imām of the time.

When God makes a person the leader of disbelief, he is not a head merely in name, without any means. Rather, God gives him the external and material means of pomp and show, variety of riches and secular knowledge and skill, only then can he succeed in leading people astray from the true path and make them walk on the path of hell. As the holy Qur’ān says: “And Mūsā said: Our Lord! You have given Pharaoh and his chiefs splendour and riches in the life of the world, that they may lead men astray from Your way” (10:88). If this is the case, it is also necessary for God to give some kind of riches to the head of faith, namely the Imām, so that he may be able to guide the people. This is because by nature people do not pay attention to someone who has nothing at all. Thus, God has given the true Imām spiritual wealth and kingdom, which are in the form of knowledge and wisdom and due to which the people of intellect and wisdom turn towards him.

Disbelieving leaders
invite and lead people
unto the hell-fire

God has given
spiritual wealth and
kingdom to the true
Imām

On the Day of
Resurrection the
chiefs of disbelief will
not be helped

Among the wisdoms of the above verse, it is also said that on the Day of Resurrection, namely the cycle of spirituality, the chiefs of disbelief will not be helped. This implies that on the contrary, the heads of belief, the Imāms will be helped, that is, victory, succour and predominance will be granted to the holy Imāms and their followers.



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The Meaning of the Imām's Patience and Certitude

In verse (32:24) God says: “And We made from among them Imāms who guide according to Our Command and they were patient and had certainty about Our signs (spiritual miracles).”

The explanation of this verse is that God made the Imāms from the [chosen] category (*jins*=genus) of the Prophets, who adopted patience in physical and spiritual trials. The external trials that the Prophets and Imāms undergo are known to all, but very few are aware of the internal trials with which they are tested. It should be known that the internal trials are purely spiritual, and are full of knowledge, wisdom, rectitude and guidance. Through these trials, the son of the Imām ascends the ranks of the *ḥudūd-i dīn* one by one until he succeeds to the rank of Imāmat.

This verse also shows that the true Imām guides the people according to God's command. This means that whatever guidance the Imām gives to the people is, in reality, from God and thus God's command continues in this world. Indeed, only that guidance which is according to God's command is the right guidance. It leads to the ultimate destination, gives the correct answer to every difficult question and the right solutions for the problems created by time and place.

With regard to the Imāms' certainty it should be borne in mind that there is a great difference between believing in God's signs and having certainty about them, because belief is both common and special, whereas certainty is special only. Thus, in the above verse the statement that the pure Imāms have certainty about God's signs indicates that all the wisdoms and realities of the knowledge of certainty, the eye of certainty and the truth of certainty are manifest and evident to them and no sign of God is hidden from them.

The Prophets and Imāms undergo external as well as internal trials

The son of the Imām ascends to the rank of Imāmat

The true Imām guides the people according to God's command

Difference between believing in and having certainty about God's signs

All these matters are related to the Imām's recognition, that is, they are useful only to those who believe in the doctrine of Imāmat and have reached one of the levels of the Imām's recognition.



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All Things are Encompassed in the Light of Imāmat

In verse (36:12) God says: “Lo! We it is Who bring the dead to life. We record that which they send before (them) and their traces. And all things (in the form of spirit and knowledge) We have encompassed in the manifest Imām (*Imām-i mubīn*).”

The *ta'wīl* of this verse is that only when someone attains the Imām of the time's recognition can he be revived in the spirit of knowledge and wisdom from the death of ignorance and enjoy the bounties of this world and the next. In this verse God has first mentioned the bringing of the dead to life and then the deeds which are sent to the next world and the traces in this world and finally He says that all these are gathered in the blessed personality of the manifest Imām. Thus, it is clear how the dead come to life and how benefit can be obtained from one's deeds for the next world and the traces left in this world [and how] all these can be observed in the light of the manifest Imām's recognition.

Imām-i mubīn means the manifest Imām and the speaking Imām, that is, the ever-living and the ever-present Imām whose holy light in the form of the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul encompasses both the worlds within itself. Both the worlds contain everything and nothing is outside them.

In the sense of *mubīn*, the Imām is manifest and speaking in two forms: corporeal and luminous. That is, he is manifest both in the human form and in the luminous form. Similarly, he speaks in both the physical *ḥudūd* as well as in the spiritual *ḥudūd*.

Revival in the spirit of knowledge and wisdom from the death of ignorance

The holy light of the Imām encompasses both the worlds within itself

Imām is manifest both in the human form and in the luminous form

The Light of Imāmat is God's Speaking Book

In verse (46:12) God says: “And before it there was the Book of Mūsā, a guide (Imām) and a mercy (for the people); and this is a Book confirming (it) in the Arabic language, that it may warn those who do wrong and bring good tidings to the doers of good.”

The holy and blessed light of Mawlānā Hārūn^(e) was the real Book of Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e)

True *mu'mins* must know that it was the holy and blessed light of Mawlānā Hārūn^(e), which was the real Book of Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e). Since a heavenly Book is a living light in the state of revelation (*wahy*), then in this sense it was a guide (Imām) and a mercy for the people. How the Imām's Holy Spirit or light can be a Book has already been discussed in this book.

The *asās* of every *nātiq* is his luminous Book

When studying Ismā'īlī literature on *ta'wīl*, it will be noted that in the language of *ta'wīl*, the Book frequently stands for the Imām or the *asās*. Thus the *asās* of every *nātiq* is his luminous Book. Therefore, by Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā's^(e) Book is meant Ḥaẓrat-i Mawlānā Hārūn^(e), whose blessed light was called the Torah.

The physical Book in which people can interpolate, cannot be an Imām

If, contrary to this explanation, we accept that prior to the Qur'ān, the external Torah (with the interpolations made in it by the Jews) was a guide and a mercy for the people, it would be tantamount to saying that there was God's pleasure, guidance and mercy even in the interpolations made by the Jews in the Book. However, this cannot be true, because the physical Book (Torah) in which people have interpolated, cannot be an Imām and a mercy for the people, nor does the Qur'ān confirm this.



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Being an explanation
of those Qur'ānic verses in which
the word '*Nūr*' is mentioned 49 times



Note: The author uses the analogy of the sun, moon and the stars of classical cosmology as understood in the time of Ḥakīm Pīr Nāṣir-i Khusraw.

Introduction

In the name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful!

It is an incontrovertible fact according to all people that the light of the external (*zāhiri*) world is an example (*mithāl*) of the light of the internal (*bāṭini*) world (i.e., its *mamthūl* = reality, meaning). Therefore, we must first describe some of the characteristics of the external and material light, so that the travellers on the path of *ḥaqīqat* (reality) may be able to recognise its *mamthūl* (meaning) as a result of reflecting on the example.

The light of the external world is an example of the light of the internal world

It is common knowledge that in this world, the source of physical light is, in reality, only one, which is the sun. As for the light of the moon, the planets, and all the other sources, they are only the product of the sun, because in this world no material thing can exist, which can be a source of light or heat without being sustained by the various powers of the sun. These are not the only attributes of the material light, the sun. In fact, it is the Divine workshop, by whose creative action, the worlds of stars and planets are brought into existence in this huge universe, and whatever exists materially in each of them, is due to a sun.

Attributes of the material sun

Similarly, in the world of religion and the realm of reality, from pre-eternity the spiritual light is only one, through which all the Divine attributes continue to become manifest. Everything of the spiritual world has come into existence through this absolute light. For instance, it is this light through which God's holy command is continuously issued; it is this light through which Divine guidance is given continuously; it is this light, one of whose special forms is intelligence and understanding and knowledge and wisdom; it is this light whose name is the eye of the heart or the inner eye (*baṣīrat*); it is this light in which are hidden the secrets of the Divine marvels and wonders and signs of realities and recognition; it is this light which is the source and fountainhead of miracles; it is this light which is called the Soul of souls and the perfect Intellect, or the Pedestal and the Throne; it is this light which is called the luminous Book and luminous *ta'wīl*; it is this light which is

Everything of the spiritual world has come into existence through the absolute light

The physical world is governed by the physical light and the spiritual world by the spiritual light

The verse of *miṣbāḥ* and the verse of *sirāj*

The light of the moon and the stars of the world of religion is the same light of the sun of religion

called the higher world and the real Paradise; it is this light in which everything exists and everything is encompassed. In short, it is this spiritual light, which is the absolute light and is everything.

Since it is clear from the above explanation that the physical world is governed by the physical light and the spiritual world by the spiritual light, let us examine the light or the sun of the Qur'ān's world, which is the world of knowledge and wisdom. The exalted Imām has alluded that the sun of the Qur'ān's world is the verse of *miṣbāḥ* (24:35), the moon, the verse of *sirāj* (33:46) and the stars are the other verses of light. It is necessary to know that all the verses related to light (i.e., the moon and the stars of the Qur'ān) in the relationship of their meaning are linked with the verse of *miṣbāḥ*, just as the physical moon and stars in connection with their light are linked with the sun. To give an example of this reality, at night when the shining moon and the glittering stars are seen, a lay person may think that their light is their own. But the people of insight have come to know that this is not so. That is to say that, at this time if we were to fly to one of the bright worlds of the moon or the stars there would be no night, rather, there it would be day and if we were to look at the sky from there, we would be able to see the luminous sun. This means that in reality, the light of the moon and all the stars, is that of the sun.

Similarly, when we look at the verses of light in the Qur'ān, from their exoteric perspective, at first glance we get the impression that there are many lights. That is, at first glance it appears that the heavenly Books, the Prophets, Imāms and dignitaries in religion are separate and different lights. But after contemplation and minute investigation, when the concept of a true *mu'min* reaches the heights of the meanings of these verses, then all at once the night of doubt and uncertainty about their unity is dispelled and the day of perfect certainty dawns. That is, after attaining *ma'rifat*, it becomes evident that the light of the moon and the stars of the world of religion is in reality, the same light of the sun of [religion as in] the verse of *miṣbāḥ* (24:35 as mentioned in one of the light verses 57:12) "*nūruhum* (their light)", i.e., the light of men and women, the *hudud-i din* = the moon and the stars of religion. From its literal meaning, it may appear that it is their own personal light with no connection to God's absolute light. Just as at night time the light of the

shining moon and the stars may appear to be their own, separate from the sun's light, whereas it is the sun which is the sole source of the unfathomable ocean of light. The same is true of the light which is attributed to the moon and stars of the world of religion. That is to say, when a true *mu'min* spiritually reaches the heights of his inner light, he comes to know that his light is, in reality, the very same absolute light [of God] mentioned in the verse of *miṣbāḥ*: "Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35). This means that there is always and everywhere a unique, ever-reaching, self-sufficient and all-inclusive light for the internal reality (*bāṭin*) of the universe and its existents where there is neither the need of another light nor is there, in reality, room for any duality.

From the above examples and evidences, it is evident that in the physical, spiritual and Qur'ānic worlds, light has the supreme rank and paramount importance and its presence is indispensable. Therefore, how can it be possible for the world of humanity to be devoid of a permanent light, whereas in each of these worlds, the light exists and is present according to its requirements? Had it been possible, the meaning of "*Rabbu'l 'ālamīn* (Nourisher of the worlds)" would have been devoid of a special aspect. It would be tantamount to saying that, God nourishes each and every world according to its requirements, but He does not duly nourish the world of humanity and the human intellect and soul with guidance and knowledge. Obviously, this is absurd and contrary to His mercy and guidance. Thus, it is evident that God's light is always living and present in the world of humanity or the world of religion and that it is present in the human attire of the true Imām, *ṣalawātu'llāhi 'alayhi*.

Since it is established that the exalted Imām has the status of the *maẓhar* of the Absolute Light [God], it is imperative and necessary for us to explain some realities of the verses of light, so that by studying them together and in the light of their collective wisdom, the realities of the recognition of the Imām may be easy and understandable for every *mu'min*. God willing!

The most humble servant,
Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai.

There is an ever-reaching and all-inclusive light for the internal reality of the universe and its existents

God nourishes each and every world according to its requirements

God's light is always living and present in the world of humanity in the human attire of the true Imām

In the name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The Word Light:

The word 'light' is mentioned forty-nine times in the wise Qur'ān

The prophecies of the holy Qur'ān about the blessed age of the forty-ninth attire of the light of Imāmat

Contemplate upon God's, may He be exalted, great wisdom that the word 'light' is mentioned forty-nine times in the wise Qur'ān, while our celebrated and glorious present Imām, Shāh Karīmu'l-Ḥusaynī, *‘alayhi’š-ṣalātu wa’s-salām*, is also the forty-ninth Imām in the holy succession of Imāmat in the progeny of the holy Prophet and descendants of Mawlānā ^{‘Alī}^(e). Thus, it is not impossible in God's wisdom and power that in this number of the word 'light', the holy Qur'ān prophesies that in the blessed age of the forty-ninth attire of the light of Imāmat, both the world of religion and the physical world will be illumined by spiritual and physical knowledge and wisdom. In this regard it is evident that, as a special sign, the atomic age has begun in the blessed age of the present Imām and man has hoisted the flag of victory and success on the moon in connection with the subjugation of the universe.

Once we are sure of this prophecy of the verses of light that now, by God's grace and munificence, both physically and spiritually it is the age of light and its sway, let us give some explanation of the above-mentioned forty-nine times in which the light of Imāmat is prominently mentioned, in accordance with the wisdom-filled teachings of Ḥaẓrat Pīr Sayyid Nāṣir-i Khusraw, may God sanctify his secret.

Real Light and Artificial Light:

The real guidance and the artificial guidance

The clear purport of the example of the real light and artificial light or the real guidance and the artificial guidance, given in the verse (2:17), is that two travellers have set out separately on a far distant journey in the darkness of the night. One of them has a unique, miraculous torch, which can be extinguished neither by wind nor rain. The other one has a match box. The one who has the miraculous torch walks and advances towards his desired destination and reaches it with great ease and satisfaction. The one with the match box cannot advance due to the absence of light. He gets fed up of the darkness and with

great difficulty, kindles a fire in the wilderness and wishes to travel some distance in its light. But how far can the light of a stationary fire reach! Finally, even that fire goes out and the traveller remains helpless in the dark night.

The *ta'wil* of this example is that, for the people of salvation, the recognition of the living and present Imām and his light, is that unique, miraculous torch, which can be extinguished neither by the wind of opposition and enmity, nor by the rain of the vicissitudes of the age. For, this holy and blessed light is the pre-eternal (*azali*) and post-eternal (*abadi*) light of God, the Omnipotent, and that of His true Messenger, which existed with every heavenly Book and with every Messenger and which, with the same glory, always continues to exist and is also present after the holy Prophet, so that guidance of the straight path may be attained in its light. Contrary to this, the example of any attempt which is made to attain guidance without this real light is mentioned in the language of wisdom in the above verse (2:17).

Light of Guidance and Darkness of Deviation:

God says in the verse (2:257): “Allāh is the guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of darkness into light. And those who disbelieve, the false gods are their guardians who take them out of the light into darkness; they are the inmates of the fire, they shall abide therein.” The gist of its purport is that, if there is always the darkness of deviation in the world, there is also always the light of guidance. Otherwise, if the world were only overcast by the dark clouds of disbelief and deviation, without the sun of faith and guidance, there would have been great injustice from the Divine law for the people of the world.

Luminous Book:

In verse (3:184) God says: “And if they belie you, then so did they belie the messengers before you, who came with clear signs (miracles), and scriptures, and the Luminous Book.” Here, the light is mentioned as the 'luminous Book', which means that the real and spiritual book is as the “One light” of the Prophet and the true Imām, called the Speaking Book. The light of this luminous Book, namely, the Perfect Man, is also called *ta'wil* or wisdom. (See *Wajh-i Din*, First Part, Urdu translation, pp. 64-65). *Ta'wil* is called the luminous Book, in the sense that on the highest

The recognition of the living and present Imām is a miraculous torch, which cannot be extinguished

There is always the light of guidance in this world

The real and spiritual book is the light of the Prophet and the true Imām

The light of the exalted Imām is the living and speaking soul of the holy Qur'ān

The light of the holy Imām manifests and speaks in a spiritual state

Both the light and the Qur'ān are manifest from one aspect and hidden from the other

level of spirituality and in the world of unveiling and observation (*mushāhadah*), it clearly shows and describes the realities and recognitions of the existents by illuminating them. In other words, the same light which is in the holy personality of the exalted Imām, is the living and speaking soul of the holy Qur'ān, which contains a living, spacious universe of the practical *ta'wil* of the wise Qur'ān. As a result of the *'ibādat* and spiritual exercise taught to our illustrious *pīrs* and luminaries [in their respective times] by the Imām of the time, they had attained complete observation and experience of this light (i.e., the Luminous Book) in their mind and heart and had come to know the living realities of both the worlds.

Nūr-i Mubīn (The Manifest and Speaking Light):

Verse (4:175) mentions the word "*nūr-i mubīn*", which means: manifest light and speaking light. In this verse, both these meanings are appropriate. In the verse (43:18) the word "*mubīn*" is used in the meaning of "speaking". Thus, the light of the holy Imām is manifest and speaking, not only in a physical form, but he also miraculously manifests himself and speaks in a spiritual state.

Thus, in the above noble verse, God says: "O mankind! Verily there has come to you a proof and We have sent down unto you a manifest light". Here, the office of Prophethood is called "proof" and that of Imāmat, is called "manifest light". If someone argues that by the proof is meant the glorious Qur'ān and by the light, the Prophet, even then one comes to the same conclusion. For, since the light of God is inextinguishable, therefore it is transferred from the Prophet to the chain of Imāmat and thus, even today it is manifest in the human attire of the living and present Imām and will last forever.

Light and Manifest Book:

In the verses (5:15-16), the Prophet and the Imām are considered as one light and the Qur'ān as the manifest Book. Here a question may arise: Why is it that sometimes the light (i.e., the Prophet or Imām) and sometimes the Book is called manifest? The answer is that it is the characteristic of both the light and the Qur'ān, that from one aspect they are manifest and from the other they are hidden. That is, the person of the light and the exoteric aspect

(*tanzīl*) of the Qur'ān are manifest, but the spirituality of the light and the esoteric aspect (*ta'wīl*) of the Qur'ān are hidden. Thus, where it is taught that the wisdom of the Qur'ān should be seen in the illumination of the light, there with respect to the person, the light is called manifest and where it is emphasized that the Imām should be recognised with the help of the Qur'ān, there the Book with respect to *tanzīl* or the exoteric aspect, is called manifest.

Purpose of the Torah:

In the verse (5:44), God says: “Indeed We revealed the Torah, wherein is guidance and a light, by which the Prophets who submitted themselves (unto Allāh) judged the Jews, and so did the rabbis and the priests by that wherewith they were entrusted Allāh's Book, and they were witnesses thereof.”

The above mentioned verse clearly reveals that the purpose of the Torah was guidance and light. That is, by the Torah was meant a guidance which may lead to the path of the light of recognition, and the recognition of the Imām of the time may thus be attained.

Further, this verse also reveals that there was the same purpose in the appointment by God of Prophets, Imāms and ‘ulamā’: that they may judge the people according to the guidance of the Torah, so that they may attain the recognition of the light by following this guidance.

Purpose of the Gospel:

In verse (5:46), God says: “And We bestowed on him (‘Īsā) the Gospel wherein is guidance and light, confirming that which was (revealed) before it in the Torah - a guidance and an admonition unto those who are righteous.”

This verse shows that the subject and purpose of the Gospel was the same as that of the Torah: that is, the people should be guided to and taught such words and deeds that they may thereby observe the light of Imāmat and recognise it.

The last part of the verse: “It is a guidance and an admonition unto those who are righteous” is a bright proof of the fact that the guidance and the admonition of the Gospel were followed only by those who warded off the carnal and worldly interests, so that they may be able to

The purpose of the Torah was guidance and light

The subject and purpose of the Gospel was the same as that of the Torah

observe and recognise the light of Imāmat. And this is the purpose and purport of every heavenly Book.

Purpose of the Qur'ān:

In verse (5:48), God says: “And unto you have We revealed the Book with the truth, confirming whatever Book was before it, and guarding it. So judge between them by that which Allāh has revealed”.

Qur'ān confirms and guards all the heavenly Books before it

Here the question arises: How does the Qur'ān confirm the heavenly Books before it and in what sense does it guard them? The answer is that the purpose of the Qur'ān is the same as that of the heavenly Books before it, therefore the fundamental subjects and teachings of the Qur'ān are the same as those of the Torah and the Gospel, etc. In this sense, the holy Qur'ān confirmed the heavenly Books before it in such a practical way that there cannot be a better confirmation than that.

The realities and recognitions which were mentioned in the previous heavenly Books are all guarded in the Qur'ān

The main subjects of the wise Qur'ān are guidance and the light

Now we will explain the sense in which the Qur'ān is the guardian of the previous heavenly Books. It should be known that the realities and recognitions which were mentioned in the previous heavenly Books are all guarded in the exoteric and esoteric aspects of the Qur'ān. It is in this sense that the Qur'ān is the guardian of the previous heavenly Books. From the two statements that the Qur'ān confirms the previous heavenly Books and is their guardian, it can be concluded that, just as the main subjects of the Torah and the Gospel were guidance and the light, so also they are the main subjects of the wise Qur'ān. Reflect on this verse: "Allāh guides to His light whom He pleases." (24:35). This means that God makes the one whom He pleases recognise His blessed and holy light through the Qur'ān, the Prophet and the Imām of the time (as they are the means of His will and guidance). Thus it is clear that, like the Torah and the Gospel, the main subject and supreme purpose of the Qur'ān are also guidance and the light.

Light versus Darkesses:

In verse (6:1), God says: "Praise be to Allāh, Who has created the heavens and the earth and has appointed darkesses and light. Yet those who disbelieve ascribe rivals unto their Lord".

In this verse, God is praised on account of the fact that He created the heavens and under them, the earth, and created darknesses and against them appointed the light. This means that God created the world of religion, which also contains within itself the heavens, the earth, darknesses and light. The importance of light is that without it, the world of religion will vanish, just as it is a fact that without the material sun in the centre of this material solar system, it would become dysfunctional and perish, for the subsistence and the order of the latter, depend on the former. Similarly, the subsistence and order of the world of religion depend on the light of Imāmat, which is the sun of the world of religion.

Without light the world of religion will vanish

The subsistence and order of the world of religion depend on the light of Imāmat

Light and Guidance:

In verse (6:91), God says: "And they estimate not the power of Allāh its true estimation when they say: Allāh has naught revealed unto human being. Say: Who revealed the Book which Mūsā brought, a light and a guidance for humankind that you have put on sheets of paper which you show [i.e., you transfer it from the luminous form to the written form on paper], but you hide much [of it]".

This verse contains numerous realities and wisdoms concerning the living spirit of the heavenly Book. In order to understand them, it is essential and necessary to be aware of the reality and nature of inspiration and revelation. Thus, inspiration and revelation takes place in the form of a light of knowledge and a living spirit, which is called the revelation of the Holy Spirit or the Trustworthy Spirit. In reality, it is this light of intellect and understanding or the spirit of knowledge and wisdom, which abounds in countless wonders and miracles called the heavenly Book, even though it might not have come into the written form on paper, passing through the blessed tongue of the Prophet and the tip of the scribe's pen.

The inspiration and revelation takes place in the form of a light of knowledge and a living spirit

It should be remembered that the heavenly Book always remains in the glorious spirituality of the Prophet, then in that of the Imām in its original form and state, without any decrease, even after being written on paper. It is this [luminous esoteric] book which is called the living light and real guidance of the Imām of the time.

The heavenly Book always remains in the glorious spirituality of the Prophet and the Imām in its original form

It should be known that the subject of the esoteric Book is first light, and then guidance whereas that of the exoteric Book is first guidance, and then light. This means that through the holy light of the Imām is found the path to the realities and recognitions of the Qur'ān and through the guidance of the knowledge and wisdom of the Qur'ān is attainable the recognition of the light of Imāmat.

Eternal Life is given if Light is attained:

In verse (6:122), God says: "Is he who was dead and We have revived him, and appointed for him a light wherewith he walks among men, as him whose similitude is in utter darkness whence he cannot emerge?"

The wisdom of this holy verse is that by "the dead" is meant the ignorant (*jāhil*); by "reviving" to give true knowledge; by "appointing a light", the attainment of the recognition of the true Imām and his light, and by "walking among the men by means of light" is meant to attain eternal life and enter the spirituality of the people, etc.

Following the Light after the Prophet:

In verse (7:157), God says: "Then those who believe in him and honour him and help him and follow the light which is revealed with him: they are the successful".

The wisdom of this holy verse is that, the *mu'mins*, together with believing in the Prophet, honouring and helping him, also believe in the Qur'ān. For, his messengership is in the form of the Qur'ān and not separate from it. As for the light the *mu'mins* follow, it is the light of Imāmat. For the Islamic cycle has two parts: the first part is the period of Prophethood, which is mostly related to the *tanzilī* or exoteric matters and the second is that of the Imāmat, in which mostly the *ta'wīlī* or esoteric matters are considered. This is why in the period of *tanzil* or Prophethood, the *mu'mins* obey the Prophet and in the period of *ta'wīl* or Imāmat, they obey the Imām.

It should also be known that in verse (7:157), in the mention of "following the light of Imāmat" after following the Prophet, it is prophesied that after the Prophet, the darkness of negligence and ignorance is going to spread, which can only be dispelled by the light of the holy Imām.

Abortive Attempt against the Divine Light:

In verse (9:32), God says: "They intend to extinguish the light of Allāh with [the blows of] their mouths, but Allāh disdains [aught] save that He will perfect His light, however much the disbelievers are averse".

One of the wisdoms of this noble verse is that the abortive attempt to extinguish the light of Allāh, is made by someone who does not recognise it and [due to ignorance] has enmity with it, for His light, like Ḥaẓrat ʿIsā^(e) and Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad Muṣṭafā^(s), is always manifest in front of the people in human attire. In short, the cause of the opposition and enmity with the Prophet and Imām is nothing but blindness and ignorance. For, it is impossible to find a disbeliever in this world who, first believes in God, then believes in someone as His light and then tries to extinguish it.

The cause of the enmity with the Prophet and Imām is blindness and ignorance

Perfection of Light:

Here arises an important question: How does God perfect His light? Is His light not complete and perfect pre-eternally and post-eternally? The answer is that undoubtedly, the light of God is eternally perfect and complete and as such there is never any imperfection in it. However, in the world of religion, in accordance with the providence (*maṣlaḥat*) of God, some cycles are fixed such that in each of these the blessed and holy light of God unites itself with a great number of pure souls through knowledge and good deeds. Thus, with respect to the illumination of these souls, it is said that He will perfect His light.

God will perfect His light with respect to the illumination of the pure souls

Luminous Oneness of the Sun and the Moon:

In verse (10:5), God says: "He it is Who appointed the sun a glow (*ẓiyāʾ*) and the moon a light (*nūr*), and measured for her stations, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning".

The *taʿwīl* of this verse is that, just as the sun and the moon are two with respect to body and one with respect to light, similarly the Prophet and the Imām are two with respect to corporeality, and one with respect to spirituality. Further, in the cycle of Imāmat, the Imām and the *ḥujjat-i aʿẓam* (*bāb*) are the sun and the moon of the world of religion, who are separate physically but one spiritually.

The Prophet and the Imām are two with respect to corporeality, and one with respect to spirituality

The times of religion
are created and
become known by the
spiritual sun and
moon

Another *ta'wili* wisdom of this verse is that, just as the number and reckoning of the worldly years, months, weeks and days become known by the external sun and the moon, similarly the times of religion are created and become known by the spiritual sun and moon, which are the Prophet and the Imām or the Imām and the *bāb* [in their respective time].

Darknesses and Light:

In verse (13:16), God says: "Say: Is the blind man equal to the seer, or are darknesses equal to light?"

In this verse, the wise Qur'ān draws attention, in its special language of *ta'wil*, to the fact that the one who is blind to the realities and recognition of religion, is never equal to the one who is bestowed with the bounty of insight and the inner eye; nor are the darknesses of disbelief and ignorance equal to the lights of faith and recognition (*ʿirfān*).

It should be known that here blindness and sight are related to the human heart, as it is said in verse (22:46): "For it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is the hearts, which are within the chests that grow blind".

Thus, it becomes evident that just as spiritual blindness and sight are related to the heart, spiritual darkness and light are also related to the eyes of the heart and not to the eyes of the head.

Spiritual darkness and
light are related to the
eyes of the heart

The Book, the Prophet and the Light:

It is a Divine habit and law that when He wills, He reveals the heavenly Book to one of His Prophets whereby he may bring the people to the light of the recognition of the Imām from the darkness of negligence and ignorance. Then, by the command of God, the Prophet after his own time, is guiding the people throughout his entire cycle, on the right path towards God through this light, i.e., the Imām, as God said to the Prophet: "*Alif, Lām Rā* is a Book which We have revealed unto you that thereby you may bring humankind from darknesses unto light, by the permission of their Lord, unto the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy" (14:1).

The Prophet guides
the people throughout
his entire cycle
through the Imām

The Guide and the Light:

It is said in verse (14:5): "And We verily sent Mūsā with Our signs, saying: Bring your people forth from darknesses

unto light. And remind them of “the days of Allāh” (*ayyāmu'llāh*). Lo! therein are signs for everyone who is patient and grateful”.

The wisdom hidden in this teaching of the Qur'ān is that, if there is always the darkness of disbelief and ignorance in this world, there is also always the light of faith and certitude. But the nature and habit of people are such that they themselves cannot come out of darkness and enter the light. Therefore God appoints a guide with His signs as the Prophet or the Imām, so that the people may recognise the guide of their age and according to his guidance, they may be able to abandon darkness and follow the path of light.

The people can abandon darkness by following the guidance of the Imām

Here it is necessary to ask: Why are the signs with which Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(c) was sent not common to everyone? Why are they specified to those who are patient and grateful? The answer is that, by patience and gratitude the inner eye opens, so that by observing His signs, His will may be understood and His light, the Imām of the time, be recognised. Contrary to this, the inner eye of the one who has been a prey to selfishness, sensuality, impatience and ingratitude, becomes covered with the veil of negligence and he cannot see God's signs, which are in the heavenly Book, or with the Prophet and the Imām.

The inner eye opens by patience and gratitude

The Light of the Imām of the Time is the Luminous Book:

In verses (22:8-9), God says: "And among humankind is he who disputes concerning God without knowledge or guidance or a luminous Book: Turning away in pride to beguile (men) from the way of God".

The *ta'wil* of this verse is that nobody can debate and discuss about the recognition of God without the recognition of a *dā'i*, a *hujjat* and the Imām of the time. For, in this verse the *dā'i* is knowledge, the *hujjat* is guidance and the Imām is the luminous Book, as they are on the levels of knowledge of certainty (*ilmu'l-yaqīn*), vision of certainty (*aynu'l-yaqīn*) and truth of certainty (*haqqu'l-yaqīn*), respectively.

Nobody can debate and discuss about the recognition of God without the recognition of the Imām of the time

This means that the *dā'i*, inviting the people through the knowledge of certainty, hands them over to the *hujjat* who,

The Imām shows all the realities of the physical and spiritual existents from the luminous Book of his light

guiding them through the vision of certainty, enables them to reach the luminous recognition of the Imām who clearly shows them all the realities of the physical and spiritual existents from the luminous Book of his light.

The Light of the Universe:

In verse (24:35), God says: "Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth; His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, and the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as though it were a glittering star; it is lit from a blessed tree, an Olive neither of the east nor of the west, the oil of which would well-nigh give light though no fire touched it - light upon light - Allāh guides to His light whom He pleases and Allāh strikes out parables for men; and Allāh all things does know".

The light of Allāh exists in the form of knowledge, wisdom, rectitude and guidance

The wisdom and *ta'wil* of this verse is that the light of Allāh exists in the form of knowledge, wisdom, rectitude and guidance, externally and internally, which rising from the blessed personality of the living and present Imām, illumines the heavens of the spiritual *hudūd* and the earths of the physical *hudūd*. This light belongs to the house of wisdom (i.e., the house of Prophethood or Imāmat), the chosen members of which are called *ahl-i bayt* (People of the House), who are like a niche for this light. The ancestral nobility of the Prophet and his position in knowledge are like a lamp, which is like a glittering star, in which the corporeality of the holy Imām is like the vessel of this miraculous lamp and his spirituality is likened to the oil of the Olive. By the Olive is meant the family of Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(c) and Ḥaẓrat-i Muḥammad^(s). In the oil of this lamp, the Universal Soul and the Universal Intellect, i.e., the Holy Spirit and the ever-reaching Intellect of the Imām, are like the wick and flame. By the fire is meant the miraculous *ta'yid* (help) and light upon light, means one Imām after the other.

Light upon light means one Imām after the other

The light of guidance radiates from the flame of the Universal Intellect of the holy Imām

Thus the light of guidance, which radiates from the flame of the Universal Intellect of the holy Imām, spreads in the interior and exterior of the universe and existents, through the spiritual and physical *hudūd*, so that the means of the existence and subsistence of the heaven, the earth, elements, mineral kingdom, vegetative kingdom, animal kingdom and humankind, may continue and each of the

existents and creatures may receive this guidance according to its capacity and receptivity.

Brief Arguments in support of these Realities:

Allāh has called Himself, the light of the heavens and the earth. This means that He, may His glory be exalted, is the light of universal or all-inclusive guidance of the heavens and the earth of the universe. That is, His light has brought forth the heavens, the earth and everything from the darkness of non-existence into the light of existence. In fact, the main cause of motion and rest in the heavens, in the planets and in the elements is the guidance of His light. The guidance of this light also governs all the generative, creative and protective forces of the universe.

The universal or all-inclusive light of God also means that, in the illumination of the recognition of His light, the secrets of the universe can be observed and studied externally and internally and the universe can be subjugated spiritually or physically. Thus, it is evident that the light of God is in the form of intellect, understanding, knowledge, wisdom, rectitude and guidance and not in the state of any material light.

When it is not a blemish for God to let the heavens, the earth with all sorts of animals and good and bad people dwelling in it, be immersed in His light, why should there be any doubt in saying that the centre of His light is in the exalted personality of the holy Imām?

If the vision (*didār*) and recognition of the light of God were impossible, He would not have likened His light to a thing that is a common object for the people. However, if He likens His light to an external (physical) lamp, it means that His luminous vision and recognition are among the possibilities and this is possible only through the holy Imām.

Again if the light of God were above and beyond close observation, externally and internally, His justice would have necessitated Him to liken it (His light) to the sun. But God did not do so, rather He likened it to the lamp of a house. This shows that His light is among the human beings in the human attire of the Perfect Man, i.e., the living and present Imām.

The guidance of God's light governs all the forces of the universe

The secrets of the universe can be studied in the illumination of the recognition of God's light

God's luminous vision is possible only through the holy Imām

The Imām of the time
is there to remove the
darkness from the
world of humanity

Further, if the light of God were not to change its physical attire and were to remain in the external world in one condition like the sun, again it would have been compared with the sun and not with the lamp.

As there is the sun in the universe and a lamp in the house in order to remove darkness, similarly in the world of humanity there is the Perfect Man i.e., the Imām of the time, to remove its darkness.

If in the view of intellect and understanding, ignorance is a kind of darkness and contrary to it knowledge and wisdom are light, then it is right to say that this light of knowledge, wisdom, rectitude and guidance, in its most perfect form, is in the Perfect Man.

The sun of the world
of religion has
intellect and soul

If the physical world (*dunyā*) is a world (*‘ālam*), religion (*dīn*) is also a world. The sun of the physical world is material and has no intellect and soul, whereas the sun of the world of religion has intellect and soul, and that is the Imām.

Light for the
microcosm and the
macrocosm

It is almost universally accepted that man, as an individual, is a microcosm or a small world and in it there is also a small specimen of light, known as the particular intellect. Similarly, humankind as a whole is a macrocosm or a big world and in it there is also a magnificent light, known as the Perfect Man or the Imām of the time.

When a man gazes at the blazing sun, his eyes are instantly dazzled due to the attack of the powerful radiation of the particles of light. In exactly the same way, when someone tries to assess and criticise the exalted personality of the Imām and his attributes, numerous kinds of thoughts occur in his mind concerning the personality of the Imām and he is blinded with respect to the eye of intellect.

However, if someone, instead of gazing at the sun directly, studies it in the light of knowledge and wisdom and physical science, he can understand many realities about the sun and attain more and more benefit from it. Similarly, if someone instead of looking at the Imām with the physical eye, tries to see the Imām through the eye of knowledge and recognition, he is very fortunate indeed.

Light upon Light:

If we do not believe that the light of the Imām has continued to be in the attire of humanity from eternity (*azal*) till today, then "light upon light" makes no sense. For, in "light upon light", there is a concept which implies that there was already a light, after which another light came into existence and they both together, become one light. This is a fact. Thus it is evident that the succession or continuation of one Imām after another has always been there. This is such a comprehensive reality that it contains all other realities.

Thus the concept of "light upon light" shows that apparently, there can be more than one light at one time, but their truth and reality is always one and the same, just as in the case of material light, besides the sun, the moon and the stars are also lights, but at the place of oneness, i.e., the sun, all of them are one and their ultimate purpose is also one.

Further, another vivid example of the uniformity and unity of light is that if we light some bulbs of different colours in a house, their light and colour become one. On the one hand, this is an example of the oneness of the Divine light and on the other, an example of the unity of the souls of *mu'mins*.

Among the wisdoms of "light upon light", another wisdom is that, first, the blessed and holy body of the Imām is created, which is the light of the external and physical guidance. The Imām's body is light in the sense that the light of external and basic guidance is due to his blessed body; then upon the light of the body there is the light of his speaking soul and upon this is the light of the Universal Soul, and upon it is the light of the Universal Intellect. This is the meaning of "light upon light" [from another aspect].

Light and the Divine Pleasure:

In verse (24:35), God says: "Allāh guides to His light whom He pleases". This means that without the pleasure and will of God, no human being can recognise and follow His light.

On the one hand, this verse shows that the light of Allāh is always in this world and on the other, it shows that there are

The succession of one Imām after another has always been there

An example of the oneness of the Divine light

two levels of guidance: At the first, there is the guidance of God by following which, His light is found and at the second level, there is the guidance of His light, by following which peace and eternal salvation are obtained.

He for whom God does not appoint Light, for him there is no Light:

In verse (24:40), God says: "And he for whom God has not appointed light, for him there is no light". It should be clear that God's appointment of light for someone is such that He commands His Prophet to do so, and the Prophet appoints a light for those whom He wills.

From the context of this blessed verse it appears that the disbelievers are not devoid of good deeds. They definitely have good deeds, but they are useless. For, since God has not appointed a light for them, therefore, the realities are hidden from them. Thus the example of their good deeds is as a mirage in a desert. From far away a thirsty person supposes it to be water, but when he comes to it and looks, he finds nothing but the sand. Or, the example of their deeds is like the darkness of a vast abysmal sea, covered by a huge wave above which is another wave, above which is a cloud, layer upon layer of darkness. If someone stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it (24:39-40).

The Sun and the Moon of the World of Religion:

In verse (25:61), God says: "Blessed be He Who has made constellations in the heaven, and has made in it a lamp (i.e., the sun) and a luminous moon".

It should be known that the real blessing is not in worldly things, but in religious ones. Thus, God is blessed in the sense that He has created the world of religion, in whose heaven of spirituality He made twelve constellations, i.e., twelve *hujjats*, and the sun and the moon, i.e., the Prophet and the Imām in the cycle of Prophethood and the Imām and the *hujjat-i a'zam* (the supreme *hujjat*) in the cycle of Imāmat.

Although there are twelve constellations, but due to the division of day and night, the same twelve constellations are reckoned to be twenty-four and with respect to mansions of the moon, they are twenty-eight. Similarly, the

Without light, good deeds are useless

Real blessing is in religious things

Twelve constellations

Imām has twelve *hujjats* of islands (*jazā'ir*), who with respect to night and day, become twenty-four *hujjats* and together with the four closest (*muqarrab*) *hujjats*, become twenty-eight.

Luminous Book:

In verse (31:20), God says: "... Yet of humankind is one who disputes concerning God without knowledge or guidance or a luminous Book".

Here, in the cycle of Prophethood, by knowledge is meant the *hujjat*, by guidance, the Imām and by a luminous Book, the Prophet; in the cycle of Imāmat, by knowledge is meant the *dā'i*, by guidance, the *hujjat* and by luminous Book, the Imām, for the *ta'wili* ranks and the *hudūd* of religion are in accordance with the requirements of time and place.

Further, it should be known that in the cycle of Imāmat, the *dā'i* is 'ilmu'l-*yaqīn*, the *hujjat* is 'aynu'l-*yaqīn* and the Imām, *haquq*'l-*yaqīn*. Thus, without these *hudūd* of religion, the discussion and debate concerning God's essence and attributes and His recognition and oneness, causes deviation.

From Darknesses unto Light:

In verses (33:41-44), God says: "O you who believe! Remember Allāh with abundant remembrance, and do His *tasbiḥ* morning and evening. He it is Who blesses (*yuṣalli*) you and His angels, that He may bring you forth from darknesses unto light; and He is merciful to the believers. Their salutation on the day when they shall meet Him will be: Peace! And He has prepared for them a goodly recompense".

The overall wisdom of these verses shows that the real recognition of light is not possible for someone until his faith has become duly perfect. And the sign of perfect faith is that he remembers God abundantly in his heart, by his tongue and in the form of knowledge, until he remembers God constantly in a state in which remembrance abounds in spiritual happiness; he glorifies Him, morning and evening, with the silent language (*zabān-i ḥāl*) and the spoken language (*zabān-i qāl*); his outer and inner and his speech and deed all become pure; he does *giryah-ū zārī* in the presence of God and by expressing his humility and

Knowledge, guidance and luminous Book

The real recognition of the light is not possible without perfect faith

Special mercy of God
is granted only to true
mu'mins

indigence morning and evening, purifies his soul. As a result, God and His angels send blessings on him and the darknesses of negligence, ignorance and disobedience gradually disappear from him and the single light of the Prophet and ʿAlī (may blessings be upon them and their progeny), begins to manifest in his heart and mind with the wonders and miracles of knowledge and recognition. This special mercy of God is granted only to true *mu'mins*. The day the pure *mu'min* attains the spiritual *didār* (vision) of this holy light, in his silent language (*zabān-i ḥāl*) he prays for eternal life and peace, which God, may He be exalted, accepts. By the grace of God, we have presented the gist of the *ta'wil* of the above verses collectively.

Luminous Lamp (*sirāj-i munīr*):

In verses (33:45-46), God says: "O Prophet! Lo! We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner and as a summoner unto Allāh by His permission and a luminous lamp".

Some everlasting and living attributes of the Prophet have been mentioned in the wisdom of these two holy verses above, which show that his other attributes are also everlasting and eternal. For instance, when it is accepted that the Prophet is witness over the deeds of his entire *ummat* (community) and witness means a person present at an event, then it should be understood that this attribute of the Prophet is living and everlasting.

All the attributes of
the Prophet are living
and everlasting

Some living attributes
of the Prophet

Similarly, his other attributes too are necessarily living and everlasting, such as bringer of good tidings and a warner. In order to give good tidings and warn the servants of God, the Prophet has to be present during their deeds, so that he may give good tidings to those who do good deeds and warn those who do bad deeds. Similarly, another such living attribute of the Prophet is his being a *dāʿi* or a summoner, which shows that even today he is inviting people towards the true path by the permission of God, just as he used to do in the time of Prophethood. This means that the mission of the Prophet is always according to the Divine revelation, which necessitates that the Prophet's holy light is living and present in the humanity of the Imām of the time.

The same applies to his being a luminous lamp. For, this

holy lamp of the Divine light should never be extinguished, nor should any defect or decrease occur in its attribute. The wise Qur'an asserts in many places, that the light of God is an everlasting reality. Thus, after the demise of the Prophet, all these living and lasting attributes, continue and last in the position of his light, and that light continues forever in the chain of the Imāmat of Ḥaẓrat-i Mawlānā 'Alī^(e) and his progeny.

The holy lamp of the Divine light is never extinguished

The attribute "luminous lamp" in the wise Qur'an is such a wisdom-filled and comprehensive supreme name of the light of Prophethood and Imāmat, that its reality and meaning contains the power and manifestation (*mazhariyyat*) of all the attributive names of God. Regarding this comprehensive light, which contains all Divine attributes and which, rising from the lamp of the personality of the Perfect Man, the Imām of the time, illumines the world of religion and the world of the heart, it suffices to say that in the verse of light (24:35), God, says: "Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth; His light is as a niche in which is a lamp", in spite of the fact that with respect to His incomparable Essence, He has no resemblance and similitude, as is said in the Qur'an: "Naught is as His likeness; and He is the Hearer, the Seer" (42:11).

The comprehensive light of Prophethood and Imāmat contains all Divine attributes

Darkness of Ignorance and Light of Recognition:

In verses (35:19-22), God says: "The blind man is not equal to the seer, nor darknesses to light; nor is the shade to the torrid heat; nor are the living equal to the dead. God makes to hear whomsoever He wills and you cannot make those in the graves to hear."

In these holy verses the results of correct faith are compared to those of wrong belief. In the language of wisdom, it is said that wrong belief causes blind-heartedness and folly, and the correct faith insight and wisdom. Blind-heartedness results in ignorance and insight in the light of recognition. The tranquil shade of rectitude and guidance is attained as a result of the light of recognition, whereas the darkness of ignorance causes wandering and leads to the scorching desert of deviation. Those under the shade of the light of recognition, rectitude and guidance, become eternally alive spiritually and those

Wrong belief causes blind-heartedness and folly

Those who attain eternal life can hear the discourse of God's knowledge and wisdom

in the scorching desert perish spiritually. Those who attain eternal life under the shade of the mercy and guidance of God can hear the discourse of His knowledge and wisdom and those who perish in the desert of deviation are buried in the graves of nothingness and non-existence. They cannot be made to hear the discourse of God's knowledge and wisdom.

Prophets' Miracles, Books and *Ta'wīl*:

In verse (35:25), God says: "And if they belie you, then surely those before them had also belied. Their messengers came to them with miracles (*bayyināt*) and books (*zubur*) and the luminous Book (*al-kitābu'l-munīr*)".

Three great things with the Prophet

This Qur'ānic teaching shows that there are three great things with the Prophets: miracles, books and the luminous Book. However, an important question arises here: What is the luminous Book besides the miracles and the books, because according to the Arabic words of this verse, *bayyināt* means 'miracles', *zubur* (pl. of *zabūr*) means 'books' and the translation of *al-kitābu'l-munīr* is 'the luminous Book'? Further, does the luminous Book still exist or not, while it existed with all the Prophets before the holy Prophet Muḥammad^(s)? The simple and easy answer to these questions is that the luminous Book is the name of the light of Imāmat, which existed with the last Prophet and which still exists. And it is this light which is in the form of the practical *ta'wīl* and profound wisdom of the heavenly Books of all the Prophets. For, it is this light of Imāmat alone which contains all the secrets of spirituality and all the bright realities and recognitions of the *ta'wīls*.

The luminous Book is the name of the light of Imāmat which contains all the secrets of spirituality

Expansion of the Heart (*sharḥ-i ṣadr*):

In verse (39:22), God says: "Is he whose chest Allāh has expanded for Islam, and then he follows a light from his Lord, (as those whose hearts are hardened)? Then woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of God! They are in plain error."

This holy verse is, first of all, about the Perfect Men, i.e., the last Prophet and the true Imām and then about other *ḥudūd* of religion also. For, the expansion of the heart, Islam (submission, obedience) and the light of God, granted to him by God, are also given to other *ḥudūd*

according to their ranks, through the Perfect Man, in whom, these and all other virtues are always in the most perfect form.

The wisdom-filled teaching of this holy verse begins with the expansion of the heart i.e., mentioning open-heartedness. And it is said that Islam cannot be duly accepted unless God grants someone open-heartedness. Further, with respect to another meaning of the word "Islam", it is said that he who is not granted open-heartedness by God, cannot obey God. For, Islam means obedience and submission. Then it is said that, he whom God has granted open-heartedness can, in a real sense, fulfil the true Islam or obedience. When he obeys the true Guide - the Imām of the time - the light of God gradually manifests in his heart and mind and the remembrance of God continues automatically, by which, tenderness and kindness are created in his heart as a result of which the chain of guidance(s) begins in the miraculous voice of God.

Contrary to this condition, which contains the living miracles of realities and recognitions, those whose hearts are hard and closed, cannot accept true Islam. As a result, their hearts cannot receive the light of God, nor can they continue His remembrance. Consequently, they become subject to the spiritual disease of callousness and perish in the desert of deviation.

The Earth will shine with the Light of its Lord:

In verse (39:69) regarding the diverse manifestations of the Divine light, namely, the light of Imāmat, it is prophesied: "And the earth shall shine by the light of its Lord, and the Book will be placed, and the Prophets and witnesses will be brought, and it will be judged between them with the truth and they will not be wronged".

This prophecy, made in this holy verse about the light of Imāmat and the spiritual events during the revelation of the Qur'ān, is related to four events: individual spirituality, collective spirituality or during the spiritual cycle: individual resurrection and collective resurrection.

The prophecy regarding the favour of the light of Imāmat, which a true *mu'min* receives in his individual spirituality,

Islam cannot be duly accepted unless God grants someone open-heartedness

Those who become subject to the spiritual disease of callousness, perish in the desert of deviation

When a true *mu'min* acts upon the guidance of the Imām, his heart is illuminated by the light of his Lord

is that when he will act upon the exoteric guidance (*tanzili hidāyāt*) of the Prophet and the esoteric guidance (*ta'wili hidāyāt*) of the Imām of the time, the earth of his heart will be illuminated by the light of his Lord and his spirituality will speak miraculously as a living book; the holy souls of the Prophets with their miracles and with all other events will appear to his spiritual vision and there will also be the spiritual manifestations of the holy lights of the witnesses, namely, the pure Imāms, and he will be judged with due equity and justice.

A time will come in which only the true faith and correct concept will last and flourish

The way the light of Imāmat has continued to rise from the chain of Imāms in the form of exoteric and esoteric guidance after the Prophet and the way it has continued to give the light of knowledge and wisdom to the people of this world, during the collective spirituality (or the spiritual cycle), a time will come in which the world of humanity will reach the pinnacle of perfection in science and art, intellect, understanding, nobility and unity. All kinds of vices will vanish; the truth will have victory over falsehood and there will be only the sway of the true and the truth; the wrong beliefs and concepts will become extinct altogether and only the true faith and correct concept will last and flourish.

The two states of individual and collective spirituality are also called the resurrection

This is the meaning of the earth shining with the light of its Lord. For here, by the earth is meant the humanity which is always in need of the favours of the Prophets' and Imāms' light; this is the meaning of judging the people according to the Divine law by placing the books of deeds of different faiths and concepts in front and bringing the Prophets and Imāms (to witness). For, all of them had the same religion to which they had invited the people exoterically and esoterically. Thus, such a time about which the Qur'ān has prophesied in many places, will be the day of victory and success of the Prophets, the Imāms and the *mu'mins* of every age. We can also call the above-mentioned two states of individual and collective spirituality, "resurrection", which takes place in this life.

As for the question of how the light of Imāmat is related to the resurrection, which takes place after the physical death individually, as well as collectively, its examples can be found in the above detailed description of the individual

and collective resurrection. However, it should be remembered that the spirituality or resurrection which takes place in physical life, is a partial one and the complete resurrection takes place only after death. In short, it is the holy Imām's light that the people of this world and those of the next world are always in need of.

The people of this world and those of the next world are always in need of the holy Imām's light

Great Secrets of Light:

A profound and comprehensive purport of the wisdom-filled language of the verses (42:51-52) is that, for a few moments, the resplendent effulgence of the vision (*didār*) of the holy Divine light is granted at the highest level of pure humanity. However, with this supreme *didār* there is no Divine speech. There is only one wisdom-filled allusion (*ishārah*). The Divine speech, from behind the veil, is granted prior to this *didār* and before this Divine speech, the revelation takes place through an angel.

This means that the long chain of spirituality consists of three levels. At the lowest level, Jibrā'il brings the revelation, above it, the Divine light itself speaks from behind the veil and at the highest level, the Divine light reveals itself for a few seconds in the Divine Image (*ṣūrat-i Raḥmānī*), but on the occasion of this supreme *didār*, there is no speech, there is only one all-inclusive allusion.

Three levels of the chain of spirituality

There is no divine speech during the supreme *didār*

Thus, according to this law, God had inspired the Prophet with a great Spirit from the world of Command and the holy Prophet was not aware of the highest levels of the heavenly Book and the faith prior to this. But God made his spirituality, which was a revelation as well as a spirit, a light in whose illumination he started to know everything. It is through the illumination of this light, that God guides whom He wills of His servants.

God guides through the illumination of His light

The summary of the explanation of the above-mentioned verses (42:51-52) is that the light of Imāmat in the sense of "*awḥaynā ilayka rūḥan* (We inspired you with a Spirit)" is not only a revelation and the speaking Qur'ān, but also a great Spirit; and where it is mentioned as "*ja'alnāhu nūran* (We made it a light)" it means that it is also a light for the hidden secrets of the heavenly Book, the silent Qur'ān. "*Nahdī bihi man nashā'u min 'ibādīnā* (Through it We guide whom We will from among Our servants)" shows

The Prophet appointed the Imām by the command of God and transferred the light to the Imām

that it is the same light through which God had guided all the Prophets before the holy Prophet Muḥammad^(s), by inspiring them with it. And "*wa innaka la-tahdī ilā širāṭin mustaqīm* (And you verily do guide to a right path)" shows that when the Prophet received this light, he guided the people to the right path through it, in his own time and for the guidance of the future he appointed the Imām by the command of God and the light was transferred to the Imām. Praise be to Allāh! These realities and recognitions have been explained from the language of Qur'ānic wisdom and in the light of spiritual observations and experiences.

Luminous Miracles:

In verse (57:9) regarding light, God says: "He it is Who sends down clear signs to His servant, that He may bring you forth from darknesses to light; and verily for you Allāh is Compassionate, Merciful".

There are darknesses from which a *mu'min* cannot come out by himself

Here it is necessary to reflect properly with intellect and understanding: What kinds of darknesses are those from which a Muslim or a *mu'min* cannot come out by himself, without the true Guide? Would it be true to say that they are the darknesses, which are created in the heart and mind of man by ignorance and by the confusions of the problems caused by time and place? Obviously here, it is this which is meant by the darknesses. If this is the case, then we have to necessarily accept that the means of coming out from such darknesses can be only the most recent guidance, which has been sent down by God and such a guidance after the Prophet, can be received only through the Imām of the time. It is this wisdom which is hidden in the above-mentioned verse.

The fountainhead of the guidance of Divine light continues forever in the physical and spiritual worlds

In the light of the blessed words of the wise Qur'ān: "He (Allāh) it is Who sends down clear signs to His servant", it becomes evident that not only is there always a chosen servant of God (Perfect Man) in this world, but that His act also continues, so that He may send the guidance to His chosen servant according to the changing conditions. True Divine justice also demands that the fountainhead of the guidance of Divine light may continue forever in the physical and spiritual worlds. Thus, during the time of Prophethood, the external signs of the Qur'ān used to reveal to the Prophet. These are known as exoteric (*tanzili*) signs

and guidance and in every age the esoteric signs of the wise Qur'ān called the esoteric (*ta'wili*) signs and guidance reveal to the true Imām, so that, on the Day of Resurrection, the people of a particular time may not make the excuse of not having an easy means of Divine guidance in their time.

If you want to personally investigate this fact more and become satisfied about how, after the completion of the exoteric revelation of the heavenly Book, its gradual *ta'wil* continues to reveal for a long time and how, after the completion of the revelation of *ta'wil*, the resurrection takes place, then reflect on the meaning of all those Qur'ānic verses which are related to *ta'wil*, particularly verses (10:39; 12:6,21,100,101) and more specifically, verse (7:53). By reflecting on the meaning of these verses, you will be sure that, not only does the *ta'wil* of the verses of the revealed Book gradually reveal, but also that there are many other such things whose *ta'wil* reveals after a long time.

Thus, it should be known that when the darkness of ignorance is removed from the heart of a true *mu'min* through the holy guidance of the Imām, the miracles of knowledge and recognition of the exalted Imām's light begin to manifest in his heart and mind and he always observes a wonderful world of knowledge within himself. This is the meaning of sending down clear signs to His chosen servant by God and the bringing forth of the *mu'mins* from the darknesses unto the light of recognition, *ma'rifat*, by the Perfect Man.

Mu'min Men, Mu'min Women and Light:

In verse (57:12), regarding the people of faith of the individual spirituality, the cycle of Resurrection and the light of Imāmat, it is said: "On the day when you will see the *mu'min* men and the *mu'min* women, their light running (*yas'ā*) before them and on their right hands, (and will hear it said unto them): Glad news for you this day of gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein you will live forever. That is the supreme triumph".

The wisdom-filled allusion of the above holy verse is that in the individual spirituality of every age, as well as in the cycle of Resurrection, the holy light of the living and

After the completion of the exoteric revelation of the heavenly Book, its gradual *ta'wil* continues to reveal

A true *mu'min* observes a world of knowledge within himself when the darkness of ignorance is removed from his heart

In the individual spirituality the holy light of the living and present Imām speaks to the *mu'mins*

The countless stages of spirituality are rapidly traversed in the illumination and guidance of light

Different relations and separate attributions of the absolute light

present Imām will speak to the *mu'min* men and the *mu'min* women from their forehead or from their right side. And "running (*yas'ā*)" here means that at this time the countless stages of the spirituality of the people of faith will be rapidly traversed in the illumination and guidance of this light. Further, it also means that this light will struggle for every kind of worldly and religious betterment of the true *mu'mins*.

Here it must be mentioned that the absolute light, with respect to its various dimensions, has different relations and separate attributions. That is, in the holy Qur'an, it is sometimes attributed to God by saying "The light belongs to Allāh" and sometimes phrases such as the "Luminous Lamp" allude that "The light belongs to the Prophet"; some verses say in the language of wisdom that "The light belongs to the Imām" and in the above-mentioned verse it is said that "The light belongs to the *mu'min* men and the *mu'min* women". Thus, true *mu'mins* should reflect well on the law of oneness (*qānūn-i waḥdāniyyat*) and the system of all-inclusiveness of the holy light and ask what is the secret in the seeming multiplicity of the one light?

However, it should be known that these different relations of the light are true in their respective places and there is no doubt in any of them. Further, it should also be known that, despite these different relations, the light is only one and there is no duality in it. Similarly, its meaning, reality and perfect attributes are also the same as they are at the place of "Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35).

Hypocrite Men, Hypocrite Women and Light:

In verse (57:13), regarding the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women and the light of Imāmat, God says: "On the day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to those who believe: Look on us that we may borrow from your light: it will be said: Go back and seek for light".

The hypocrites envy the rapid spiritual progress of the *mu'mins*

It should be known that the hypocrites will envy the rapid spiritual progress of the *mu'mins*, not only in the cycle of Resurrection (or the cycle of spirituality), but rather in every age, looking at the splendid guidance of the light of Imāmat and the progress and success of the *mu'mins*, their

souls cry out in their silent language: Wait for God's sake: so that we may also traverse the destinations of the external and internal success in the guidance of the light of your Imām. But they will be told in a silent language: Go back on the path of history and beliefs and search for them anew and think about the crossroad where you had abandoned the holy hem of the light, confess your errors and rectify all your beliefs, it may then be possible for you to receive the light.

The status of attaining Light:

In verse (57:19), God says: "And those who duly believe in Allāh and His messengers are the truthful (*ṣiddiqūn*) and the martyrs (*shuhadā'*) with their Lord; they have their reward and their light".

This glorious verse contains many great and profound wisdoms. One of them, which has already been alluded to, is that faith (*īmān*), from its beginning to the end, has many stages. Among these stages, one is truthfulness (*ṣadāqat*), an attribute attainable when the faith becomes perfect. Further, truthfulness has many ranks, when it becomes perfect, the zeal for *jihād* and yearning for martyrdom (*shahādat*) are created in a true *mu'min*. Martyrdom also has many stages. Then come the stages of reward (*ajr*). Reward too has many stages and at the end of all these stages (or virtues), the door of light opens.

Thus, it is evident that the highest stage of the spirituality of a true *mu'min*, is the one where he can be blessed with the miraculous *didār* (vision) and the soul-exhilarating observation of the blessed and holy light of the true Imām. This is the place of oneness, where the souls of the true *mu'mins* merge in the light of the holy Imām and become one with it. It is in this sense that the Qur'ān says that those who have duly believed in Allāh and His messengers, are like *ṣiddiqs* (truthful ones) and *shahīds* (martyrs, witnesses) with their Lord. That is, such *mu'mins* have merged in the light of the *asāses* and Imāms. For, in the language of *ta'wil*, *asāses* are called *ṣiddiqūn* and the Imāms *shuhadā'*. It is in this sense that each of the six *nātiq*-messengers had an *asās* (who used to confirm the truthfulness of the Prophethood and the Messengership of the *nātiq* by doing the *ta'wil* of the Book and the *sharī'at*).

Truthfulness is attainable when the faith becomes perfect

The highest stage of spirituality is the one where a true *mu'min* is blessed with the miraculous *didār*

Asās confirms the Messengership of the *nātiq* by doing the *ta'wil* of the Book and the *sharī'at*

The Imāms are witnesses over the deeds of the people of this world

The initial existence of a religion cannot be established without accepting an embodied light

The *asās* of the last *nāṭiq*, the holy Prophet Muḥammad^(s) was Mawlānā ʿAlī^(e), who through the *taʿwīl* of the Qurʾān and the *sharīʿat*, confirmed the truthfulness of his Prophethood and Messengership, not only personally in his own time, but also forever by keeping the door of *taʿwīl* open through the chain of Imāmat of his pure progeny. It is in view of this need of the *taʿwīl* affirmation of the Prophethood for every *nāṭiq* that a *ṣiddiq* was appointed by God, as *ṣiddiq* means the one who confirms and establishes the truth. The Imāms are called *shuhadāʾ* (witnesses) in the sense that they are witnesses over the deeds of the people of this world. For, they live and are present successively in this world and in all times.

Light is the Source of Guidance:

No belief and no religion can pass safely through the dangerous darknesses of the long course of time and reach the pond of *kawthar*, without the presence and guidance of the light appointed by God. Nor can the initial existence of a religion be established without accepting an embodied (*mujassam*) light. In this regard, in verse (57:28), God says: "O you who believe! Fear Allāh and believe in His messenger. He will give you twofold of His mercy and will appoint for you a light, by which you shall walk, and will forgive you. Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful".

The explanation of this blessed verse is: O you who have entered the pale of Islam! Now fear God. That is, fear God in intention, speech and deed and duly believe in His Messenger, the Prophet Muḥammad^(s). That is, be true *muʾmins*, so that God will give you twofold of His infinite mercy through the Prophet. That is, He will provide the means of exoteric and esoteric guidance and He will appoint a light, i.e., an Imām for you, whose chain will continue till the Day of Resurrection, so that through this light you will be able to advance from stage to stage, in both worldly and religious matters according to the time, until you reach the pond of *kawthar* safely.

The Prophet and the Imām's Light is the Light of God:

It must have become evident for you from the realities and recognitions of the verses of light which have been explained in connection with the topics of this booklet that,

the *mazhar* of God's holy light is always present in this world in the attire of humanity for the guidance of humankind. Without his existence and presence, the existence and survival of the world of religions is absolutely impossible. One of its sound and bright proofs is the material light or the sun. Without the existence of the sun, the existence and order of the material world cannot last even for a moment. For, the entire solar system and what it contains have been created by the immense generative powers of the sun and this entire material order is based on its all-inclusive and ever-pervading powers. All this is the example of the *mazhar* of the light of God, who sometimes is in the position of a Prophet and sometimes in the form of an Imām, from whose blessed eternal existence the world of religions gradually emerged, and constantly receives guidance from him according to their status. This means that if this *mazhar* were not to exist in the world of religions, they would have all perished. It is in this sense that God says: "And We have encompassed everything in the manifest Imām" (36:12). This means that everything is preserved due to the luminous existence of the Imām, for his holy and luminous existence is like the Guarded Tablet, as his light has encompassed everything.

The world of religions constantly receives guidance from the blessed eternal existence of the Imām

Everything is preserved due to the luminous existence of the Imām

Thus, regarding the continuity of the light of Imāmat and the desire and abortive endeavour of the disbelievers to extinguish it, God says in verse (61:8): "They desire to extinguish with their mouths the light of God; but God will perfect His light, though the disbelievers be averse".

It should be known that if the *mazhar* of God's light were not in the external world and were only in the internal world, the disbelievers would not have desired to extinguish it, because their desire is confined to things of the external world. Additionally in also rejecting their desire, Allāh would not have said that He will perfect His light. Thus, it is clear that God's light is manifest in this world.

The disbelievers desire to extinguish God's light

God, the Prophet and the Light of Imāmat:

In verse (64:8), God says: "So believe in Allāh and His messenger and the light which We have revealed. And Allāh is aware of what you do".

No wise person will deny the reality, which clearly reveals

God has commanded to duly believe in three holy beings

What does believing in Allāh mean?

All the pure Imāms of the chain of the Imāmat are appointed by God

from this verse that in it, three holy beings are mentioned separately and it is commanded to duly believe in all three of them respectively.

Thus, first of all it is commanded to believe in Allāh. Under this command come all those good things which are related to belief in God. For instance, to believe in the existence of God, in His names and attributes, in His angels, in His Books and in His Messengers, who were sent before the holy Prophet.

Then it is commanded to believe in His Messenger, the Prophet Muḥammad^(s). Under this command, come all those essential things which are related to the acceptance of Islam, for instance, to believe in the Prophethood and the Messengership of Ḥaẓrat-i Muḥammad^(s), in the holy Qur'an, in Islam and all other teachings of the Prophet.

Then it is commanded to believe in the "light which We have revealed". It is obvious that this light is the light of Imāmat, which exists eternally and which God has revealed from the luminous heaven of the *nāṭiq* to the earth of the *asās*' personality. In other words, this light was transferred from the exalted personality of the Prophet, to the holy personality of Ḥaẓrat-i Mawlānā 'Alī^(c) and which continues till the Resurrection in the chain of the Imāmat of his progeny. Thus, to believe in this light means to accept that all the pure Imāms of this chain are appointed by God and to act upon their exoteric and esoteric guidance. In the allusion of light, it should be understood that there have to be numerous kinds of darknesses on the long path of humanity and religion, in which the light of Imāmat is indispensable.

It should be known that the purpose and purport of this verse is the same as that of the verse of obedience (4:59): "O you who believe! Obey God and obey the Prophet and the *ulu'l-amr* (those who possess [the Divine] command) among you".

Thus it is evident that the Imām has the exalted rank of both command (*amr*) and light. That is to say that, as God and the Prophet have appointed the Imām as *ṣāhib-i amr* or *ulu'l-amr* (possessor of command), in the same way they

have also entrusted him with the light. For, without light, command cannot be given according to the will and pleasure of God, nor is there a superior and greater purpose of light other than to command and guide.

Light as a Living *Zikr* (Remembrance):

It should be known that a miracle is always extremely wondrous and marvellous. Had it not been so, it would not have been called a miracle. Thus some true *mu'mins*, in a higher stage of the recognition of their self, come to know that the light of Imāmat is a bright and resplendent world, not only in itself, but also in the heart of every *‘arif*, where it appears as a resplendent and luminous world. As far as the light of Imāmat itself is concerned, there is no doubt that its intellect and soul are the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul, but the amazing thing is that everything in it is like an angel, who also has a pure soul and a perfect intellect.

Thus it should be known that among the countless attributes of the light, each one is as an angel. For instance, in this connection one living attribute of the light is "*zikr*", which means: (1) Remembrance of God, which is of many kinds; (2) Memory or the faculty of remembrance; (3) the wise Qur’ān; (4) Exhortation; (5) A title of the Prophet and the Imām.

Q. In what sense does light mean *zikr* or the remembrance of God?

A. The true *mu'mins* should be sure that the sun of the light of Imāmat is in the heaven of Imāmat, as well as in the state of reflection in the mirror of an *‘arif’s* heart as a constant, miraculous remembrance of God. That is, it is among the miracles of light in which one of the Supreme Names of God automatically turns into a Divine voice and remembers itself continuously and constantly. An external example of it is when an astronaut goes beyond the domain of the gravitational pull of the planet earth in his rocket, then the state of weightlessness continues to propel him and his rocket whether he flies it or not. This is the state of an *‘arif* whose *zikr* has gone beyond the domain of the gravity of the sensual desires and has reached the space of the light of Imāmat.

The light of Imāmat is a bright and resplendent world in the heart of every *‘arif*

Among the countless attributes of the light, each one is as an angel

In an *‘arif’s* heart, the Supreme Name of God automatically turns into Divine voice and remembers itself constantly

Q. We accept that one of the names of light is *zīkr*, but how is the light in the sense of the *zīkr*, the Qur'ān ?

The light, the *zīkr* and the spirit of the Qur'ān are different names of the same one reality

The living spirit of the Qur'ān is in the Supreme Name of God, which is the light of the Imām of the time

Some other meanings of *zīkr*

The Supreme Name is cast in the pure hearts and minds of the true *mu'mins* and *ʿarifs*

A. The light in the sense of *zīkr* is the Qur'ān for the reason that if the *zīkr* is the light on the one hand, on the other it is the spirit of the Qur'ān. Thus the light, the *zīkr* and the spirit of the Qur'ān are different names of the same one reality. The proof of this is that according to verse (42:52), even now the Qur'ān is a great spirit and a light in the state of revelation. Also, the same spirit and light is called *zīkr* in verse (54:22). As it is said: "And in truth We have made the Qur'ān easy to remember but is there any that remembers?" Making the Qur'ān easy for remembrance means that the living spirit of the Qur'ān is in the Supreme Name of God, which is the light of the Imām of the time. Before [receiving] the Prophethood, the holy Prophet used to remember this Supreme Name and it is this Supreme Name from which the holy Qur'ān revealed. Even today the spirituality and luminosity of the holy Qur'ān is in this name and in this *zīkr*.

Several other meanings of *zīkr* have been mentioned above, such as (1) Remembrance of God, which is of many kinds; (2) Memory or the faculty of remembrance; (3) the wise Qur'ān and (4) Exhortation. Further one of the names of the light is also *zīkr* in the sense of a title of the Prophet and Imām. In verse (65:10-11) God says about this reality: "Indeed Allāh has sent down unto you a *zīkr*, a messenger, who recites the clear signs of Allāh so that he may bring forth those who believe and do good deeds from darknesses unto light".

The exoteric meaning of these wisdom-filled verses is that God sent down to the world of Islam, a living and embodied *zīkr*, which contained all the above-mentioned meanings and attributes in the most perfect form, and that was the Prophet. Their esoteric meaning is that the *zīkr*, the Supreme Name which contains the one light of the Prophet and the Imām and which always recites the bright signs of spirituality, guidance, knowledge and wisdom, is cast in the pure hearts and minds of the true *mu'mins* and *ʿarifs* so that they may be brought forth from the darknesses of ignorance into the light of the ultimate recognition of their self.

Light and the Cycle of Spirituality:

In verse (66:8), God says: "O you who believe! Turn unto Allāh in sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will remit from you your evil deeds and cause you to enter gardens underneath which rivers flow, on the day when Allāh will not abase the Prophet and those who are with him (due to their obedience to him). Their light will run before them and on their right hands: they will say: Our Lord! Perfect our light for us! Forgive us! Indeed You are Powerful over everything".

The wisdoms of this holy verse are that the Muslims in general and those in the time of Prophethood in particular, are told: Turn to Allāh in sincere repentance. That is to say, 'O you who have accepted Islam abandon the external and internal sins with the utmost repentance and duly rectify your intention, speech and deed'. For, turning unto Allāh in sincere repentance means to turn unto Him with heart and soul, which requires the purification of the soul and refinement of the heart.

In the words which follow, the revolutions of the light and the spiritual cycle are prophesied. Regarding the spiritual cycle it is necessary to know that it has two forms: one is internal, which always continues and the other is external, which appears in a fixed time and affects the people of the world.

Here the principle of Qur'ānic wisdom should be mentioned that where the holy Qur'an prophesies about the collective condition of the people of the world, the individual condition of the people is also prophesied. For instance, in the verses in which the Resurrection after death is mentioned, the mention of the personal Resurrections of individuals is also included.

Thus after commanding to do sincere and true repentance, it is said: "It may be that your Lord will remove from you your evil deeds". This verse, on the one hand shows that even after sincere repentance, certain shortcomings remain in the *mu'mins*, which they themselves cannot remove. On the other hand, it shows that after sincere and true repentance there is the hope of the opening of the door of mercy, through the Imām of the time.

Turning unto Allāh in sincere repentance requires the purification of the soul and refinement of the heart

The spiritual cycle has two forms: internal and external

After sincere and true repentance there is the hope of the opening of the door of mercy

In order to remove false concepts concerning religion, sincere repentance alone is not sufficient

Underneath the gardens of the paradise of spirituality flow the rivers of Divine help

In the cycle of spirituality the light of Imāmat speaks to the *mu'mins* from their right ear and from the forehead

An essential question arises here: What are the evil deeds which a *mu'min* cannot remove from himself, even after sincere repentance? The answer is that after the utmost sincere repentance the possibility of sensual sins definitely ceases, but false ideas and concepts concerning religion are such that in order to remove them, sincere repentance alone is not sufficient, but special guidance and the knowledge of oneness (*tawḥīd*), which can be attained from the Imām of the time, are also needed.

Then it is said: "And He will cause you to enter gardens underneath which rivers flow". This is the mention of the gardens of the paradise of spirituality, which are related not only to the next life of a human being, but can also be partially observed in the spirituality of this life. In these gardens there are all kinds of favours and pleasures for the human intellect and soul. Underneath these gardens flow the rivers of Divine *ta'yid* (help). That is, in these spiritual ranks flow the powers of the *ta'yid* of the Universal Intellect, the *takhlīq* (creation) of the Universal Soul, the *tanzil* of the *nāṭiq* and the *ta'wil* of the *asās*.

Then it is said: "On the day when Allāh will not abase the Prophet and those who are with him [due to their obedience of him]". This event is related to the spiritual cycle, which is in this world as well as in the hereafter; before the fixed time in an individual case and in the collective form when the time comes. In this cycle God will not abase the Prophet and those *mu'mins* who are with him with respect to their obedience, devotion and spirituality and with respect to their companionship with the light of the Imām, they are with the Prophet [as the Imām's light is the Prophet's light].

Then it is said: "Their light (*mu'mins'* light) will run before them and on their right hands". This means that in the cycle mentioned above, the light of Imāmat, which is the light of *īmān* (faith), will also speak to the *mu'mins* from their right ear and from the forehead and in this speech there will be rectitude, guidance, knowledge and wisdom for them concerning this world and the next. For, in the language of *ta'wil*, by the right side is meant external, which means this world and by 'before' is meant the hereafter, because it is in the future for human beings.

Then it is said: "They will say: Our Lord! Perfect our light

for us, and forgive us". This means that the *mu'mins* will then realise that previously, due to lack of knowledge and despite their need for it, they were unaware of this infinite mercy, i.e., the light, therefore, they will pray to God: O our Lord! Perfect our light, i.e., make our individual spirituality merge in the origin of light and forgive us for remaining unaware of this mercy, which was possible to attain before this and forgive our future sins also.

Then it is said: "Indeed You are Powerful over everything". This means that when the *mu'mins* will observe the countless miracles and powers of Almighty Allāh in the spiritual cycle, they will say with both the spoken and the silent language: Undoubtedly You are Powerful over everything and "Nothing is impossible" in Your power.

The Sun and the Moon:

In verses (10:5, 25:61 and 71:16), the sun and the moon are mentioned together in a way that the sun is the source of the external and material light of this universe and the moon is its *mazhar*.

These wisdom-filled verses are related to the same one subject, namely, the light and its explanation. By studying these verses together and reflecting on them, we come to know many realities and recognitions, which significantly help to understand, in addition to the concept of light and its *mazhar*, other sublime concepts of *tawhīd* such as, '*hamah azūst* (Everything is from Him)' or '*hamah ūst* (He is everything, i.e. Monorealism)'.

Thus in verses (71:15-16), God says: "See you not how Allāh has created seven heavens corresponding to one another, and has made the moon a light therein and made the sun a lamp (*sirāj*)".

It should be known that one of the principles of Qur'ānic wisdoms is that a pearl of reality (*gawhar-i haqiqat*) is shown not only from its different dimensions, but also every dimension from different angles. Thus in the above-mentioned verses, which are related to the sun, the moon and their light, sometimes it is said that the sun is a lamp, i.e., an empty vessel; sometimes a resplendent lamp and sometimes the sun is like the vessel of a lamp and the moon, its light (i.e., flame).

Nothing is impossible

Moon is the *mazhar*
of the sun

The concept of *hamah ūst* (He is everything)
i.e. Monorealism

When the soul of everything reaches the essence of God, it merges in it and is transformed into the light of His attributes

The true *mu'mins* should know that the meanings (*mamthūlāt*) of the above mentioned parables are that, where the sun is likened to an empty lamp which needs oil to light it, there it is alluded to the concept of '*hamah ūst* (monorealism)'. That is, just as all the particles of the parts of the solar system reach the place of the sun one after another and are transformed into light, similarly, when the soul of everything reaches the essence of God, it merges in it and is transformed into the light of His attributes. This is the concept of "*hamah ūst* (He is everything)" or "monorealism".

Where it is mentioned that the sun is a resplendent lamp which spreads light throughout the solar system, there it signifies "*hamah azūst* (Everything is from Him)" or "monotheism". For just as the physical existence of everything is from the sun, similarly, the spiritual existence of everything is from God.

Where with respect to night, the sun is considered the lamp and the moon its light i.e., flame, there it means that the light of the invisible attributes of God and His true Prophet manifests itself from the Imām of the time. For, it is the Imām who is the Perfect Man and who is the *mazhar* of God.

As for the light itself, whether it is directly from the sun or indirectly from the moon, in any case it is one and the same and there is no duality in it. Nonetheless, there is definitely the difference that the light which comes from the moon to the earth during the night does not come directly, rather it reaches the earth by being reflected off the surface of the moon and therefore is not as intense and hot as the light of the sun. The reason for this is that at night we are not only farther away from the sun but the moon too is far from us. However, if we go to the moon during the night, there it will be day instead of night and we will see the sun directly. The *ta'wil* of this example is that for someone who accepts the Imām of the time, the Imām's personality is like the moon and his guidance the light of the moon. When passing through the stations of *ma'rifat*, he reaches his holy essence, the guidance of the Imām will prove to him to be the guidance of God and that of the Prophet, just as at the moment one reaches the moon in its light, it turns out to be the sun's light.

Imām is the Perfect Man and is the *mazhar* of God



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Being an explanation
of some of the Qur'ānic verses
which contain the word '*kull*' (universal)

Introduction

Before the creation and annunciation of Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(c), God Almighty said to all the angels: “I am going to appoint (*jā'il*) [forever] a vicegerent (*khalifah*) in the earth” (2:30). The main purport of this Divine statement was the prediction and proclamation that the blessed and sacred office of Divine vicegerency and representation would continue and last forever in Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(c) and in the succession of the revered Prophets and the glorious Imāms from his progeny. Thus, according to Divine Will, this Divine office continued from generation to generation, first in the cycle of Prophethood and then in the cycle of Imāmat, one after the other in [a human] attire, until the present day. God willing, it will continue forever in the future.

If a wise person would like to investigate this fact with certainty and meticulousness, first of all, he should think and reflect deeply over the meaning of the word '*jā'il*', which is on the pattern of '*jā'il*', i.e., the active participle. Here the extensiveness of its meaning is related to “in the earth (*fi'l-arḍ*)”, by which are meant all those people who will continue to live on the planet earth from the time of Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(c) till the Resurrection. This fact is proven by the word “*khalifah* (vicegerent)” in two ways. First, “*khalifah*” means a vicegerent, who in one respect is Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(c), the single vicegerent of God from whose children, all the Prophets and Imāms were the heirs, guardians and representatives of his vicegerency in their respective times. In the other respect, it is also true to say that every Prophet and every Imām is a vicegerent of God in his own time. Both these statements have the same meaning.

If Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(c)'s vicegerency was not to last in the succession of the Prophets and Imāms from his descendants till the Resurrection, why did the angels object to it? Although they were not aware of the realities of

The sacred office of Divine vicegerency will continue forever in human attire

Every Prophet and every Imām is a vicegerent of God in his own time

The physical and spiritual vicegerency of God is for the sake of people's guidance

The holy Imāms are the custodians of the Divine command

It is extremely necessary for every faithful devotee to attain Imām's recognition

things, yet in some ways they knew of the external condition of the events that were to take place in this world. Their way of objection shows the ever-presence of the vicegerent of God among the people in this world, as they said: "Will You appoint therein one who will make mischief and shed blood?" (2:30). In reply to this God said: "I know what you know not" (2:30).

There is always the physical and spiritual vicegerency of God, may He be exalted for the sake of people's guidance and the help and support of right and justice. Therefore, He has said: "O Dā'ūd! We did indeed appoint you vicegerent in the earth: so judge (*fa'hkum*) you between humankind with the truth" (38:26). From this noble verse it becomes absolutely clear that the "judgment (*hukm*)" related to the inhabitants of the earth had been entrusted by God, the Wise, to His chosen vicegerent with all its meanings. Otherwise, the title of vicegerent would have been meaningless. According to this teaching of the holy Qur'ān, when "judging (*hukm*)" is not permissible without God's vicegerency, then how can "commanding (*amr*)" be permissible without it? Thus, it becomes self-evident that the holy Qur'ān calls the holy Imāms *ulu'l-amr* (the custodians of the Divine command), due to the fact that God has conferred upon them the honour of His vicegerency in the earth and made them the masters and authorities of (His) command.

We have discussed the vicegerency of Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(e) in the beginning of this book, "Recognition of Imām", because not only is it the foundation of the office of Prophethood, but undoubtedly that of Imāmat as well. Thus, in doing so with the Qur'ānic proof of the vicegerency of Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(e) and Ḥaẓrat-i Dā'ūd^(e), we have shown clearly that the Imām, as the spiritual vicegerent of God, is always present and living in this world, and it is extremely necessary for every faithful devotee to attain his recognition. Hence, for our Ismā'īlī brothers and sisters, we have started a series of books consisting of diverse topics on the recognition of Imām. Two of these books have already been completed and the third of this series, which is the present book, is now complete and in your hands, by God's kindness and benevolence.

This book is based on the evidences of such Qur'ānic verses in which the word “*kull* (whole, universal)” is mentioned. The necessity and importance of the recognition of Imām is shown from the realities of each of them by considering such verses as “*kullīyyāt* (sing. *kullīyyah*)” i.e., universals or general laws. The reason for adopting this method of essays in this book is because of the fact that one famous *kullīyyah* or universal law of the recognition of the Imām in the wise Qur'ān is: “*Wa kulla shay'in aḥṣaynāhu fī imāmin mubin*” (36:12), which means that God has encompassed everything (*kull*) in the personality of the manifest Imām. Since it is a universally accepted fact that the manifest Imām encompasses everything, it has to be accepted that the subject of the recognition of Imām also encompasses every subject. Thus, we had [undertaken] to prove and show how the above mentioned universal law has encompassed all the other universal laws of the Qur'ān. Now by studying this book you can come to know that indeed, all the universal laws of the wise Qur'ān are contained in the universal law of “*Imāmin mubin* (manifest Imām)” and all the verses of the Qur'ān are contained in the universal laws.

The subject of the recognition of Imām encompasses every subject

All the universal laws of the wise Qur'ān are contained in the universal law of the manifest Imām

Besides the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth*, commonsense also testifies that everything has a door. Thus, the various wisdoms which are housed in the Qur'ān's treasures also have doors. These doors have locks with keys, as the holy Qur'ān says: “Do they then not ponder over the Qur'ān or are there locks on their hearts?” (47:24). Thus, in the light of the recognition of the True Imām, the special keys which I have mentioned in this book are indeed, God willing, the keys of the treasures of the recognition of the Imām and Qur'ānic knowledge and wisdom for the true *mu'mins*.

The special keys which are mentioned in this book are the keys of the treasures of Qur'ānic wisdom

I do not feel ashamed, rather it gives me immense happiness, to say that I am not rich in knowledge, but I am an indigent (*darwish*). Day and night, I call out *shay'an li'llāh* and beg for charity in the name of God at the door of spirituality of the exalted Imām. Thus, if my writings can provide any kind of service of knowledge for the *Jamā'at*, it is only due to this *Shāh-i walāyat* (king of *walāyat*) and the light of guidance, and any shortcomings in expression are due to the impurities of my own soul.

Finally, I seek the sincere prayers of the group of *mu'mins*

so that God, may He be exalted, through the mediation of His custodian of command, the living and present Imām, grant this humble servant more and more success and courage to serve the cause of knowledge. *Āmīn!* O the Lord of the worlds!

The humble writer,
12th March, 1974.



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KEY 1

Perfect Power

The power of God, may He be exalted, is called the perfect power. Among the wisdom-filled universal laws of the wise Qur'ān, the first is mentioned in verse (2:20): “Indeed, God is powerful over 'everything' (*kulli shay'in*).”

Here the most important element is the elucidation of “everything”. “Everything” means, not only the possibilities, but also the impossibilities, because nothing is impossible for God, the Omnipotent. One clear and bright proof of this is that many of the things which were impossible for the ancient sages have become possible due to the scientific revolution, and the chain of such discoveries and inventions continues. It would then not be wrong to estimate that in the coming few centuries, innumerable impossibilities will be included in the possibilities and gradually the concept of impossibility will definitely come to an end.

Thus, what else should be a greater proof of God's omnipotence and of nothing being impossible for Him, than the fact that man, who is one of His creatures, continues every day to make some impossible thing possible? All this is due to His perfect power.

In connection with the discussion of God's perfect power, the discussion of man's power is also broached, for this is not an issue to be ignored. For it is the concept of “impossible” which has closed the doors of knowledge and wisdom and blocked the avenues to progress and success for many nations of the world. Therefore, it should be known that man, whether he is in the field of materiality or spirituality, is the *mazhar* (manifestation) of God's power. For, it is man through whom all the miracles of God, the Wise, continue to manifest. As God says: “We shall show them Our miracles (*āyāt*) in the external world and in their own souls until it will be manifest unto them that He is the True.” (41:53)

The power of God is called the perfect power

Nothing is impossible for God

All the miracles of God continue to manifest through human beings

In the spiritual cycle
there will be the sway
of spiritual miracles

From the above Qur'ānic prophecy, it is clear for the wise that first the miracles of the external and material kind had to appear in this world, a process which still continues. Then the human souls are going to be affected by the advent of the spiritual cycle, due to which there will be the sway of the miracles of a spiritual kind. Therefore, *mu'mins* should prepare themselves to adjust to the revolutionary cycle of spirituality. How can this preparation be made? It can be made by the knowledge of certainty, the knowledge of the recognition of the Imām and by personal spiritual experiences. Moreover, by reflecting on the universal laws of the wise Qur'ān, which contain the knowledge and wisdom of the laws of everything and the reality and recognition of everything, on the one hand the concept of "impossible" may give way to the concept of "possible" and on the other, the capacity to bear the effects of the spiritual cycle may be created.

Despondency is
disbelief

As long as man is imprisoned in the narrow and dark boundaries of materialism, lacking spiritual knowledge and unaware of the limitless expanse of possibility, how can he believe that the mercy and knowledge of God, may He be exalted, have made everything possible for humankind! Nothing is impossible. In fact, everything, every word and every deed is possible. Nonetheless, it is true that an appropriate place and a specific time or a necessary condition is fixed for every possible thing. That is, man is going to have countless opportunities of the possibility of [attaining] everything from pre-eternity to post-eternity, from this world to the next and from the spatial world to the non-spatial world. Therefore, it is said that despondency is disbelief. Thus, in this sense it is said: "And He has given you of all you asked of Him" (14:34).

God has favoured the
Prophets and Imāms
with the spiritual
power of numerous
kinds of miracles

Along with the discussion of God's perfect power and of possibility and impossibility, it is also necessary to briefly mention the external and internal miracles of the Prophets and Imāms and those related to their knowledge and practice. Thus, it is necessary to know that God, the Omnipotent, has appointed the Perfect Men, for the guidance of humankind and made them bearers of the sacred light of Prophethood and Imāmat. He has also favoured them with the spiritual power of numerous kinds of miracles to prove the reality and veracity, so that those who believe in them may believe completely and those

who deny them may also believe in them because of the miracles and for those who deny to the extreme limit, the Divine law may pass a verdict on them. Such is the quality and reality of the external and sensory miracles. However, quite often it has so happened that even those who initially believed in the miracles gradually became so habituated that they no longer remained miracles in their eyes. They considered them as ordinary as an article of their daily use. Why did this happen? Because callousness was created in their hearts, due to which their faith diminished day by day. An example of this fact is found in the Qur'ānic story of the children of Israel.

Contrary to this, when the wonders and miracles of faith, certainty, knowledge and wisdom, which are in the true obedience of, devotion to and ardent love for the True Guide, occur frequently to the *mu'mins*, their faith increases and no danger exists for them in such miracles.

Due to callousness of heart, faith is diminished

The wonders and miracles of faith are in the true obedience of the True Guide

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KEY2

Divine Knowledge

God knows
everything perfectly

The second Qur'anic universal law is about Divine knowledge, which is in verse (2:29): "And He is Knower of all things (*kulli shay'in*)". *Mu'mins* and Muslims do not have the slightest doubt about the fact that God knows everything perfectly. Nothing is hidden from His knowledge, nor is there anything outside the domain of His knowledge. But, according to the people of spiritual insight (*baṣīrat*) who are aware of His *tawḥīd* (unity) and *ma'rifat* (recognition), this is not an outstanding attribute of God. For, as a result of His obedience, even the Divine Pen (*qalam-i qudrat*), i.e., the Universal Intellect and the Guarded Tablet, i.e., the Universal Soul, are also given the knowledge of and power over everything.

The Divine hand has
encompassed the
knowledge of
everything in
luminous writing in a
living Book

In addition, God, may He be exalted, has a living and truthful Book in which the Divine hand has encompassed the knowledge of everything in spiritual and luminous writing as shown in the following two verses: "And with Us is a Book which speaks the truth" (23:62); "And We have encompassed everything in a Book" (78:29). Since it is a universally accepted fact that all these things are contained in this luminous Book of God and nothing is outside it, it is necessary to accept that it contains even the things which specially belong to God, as the Book itself belongs to Him. What are the things which specially belong to God? They are His attributes among which first and foremost are life, knowledge, will and power. When it is evident that the treasures of all God's attributes are contained in His living and speaking Book, then it should also be accepted that the Book which possesses all His attributes cannot be other than His holy light.

The treasures of all
God's attributes are
contained in His
living and speaking
Book

The bearers of the holy light of God are the Prophets and Imāms only, whom He has chosen for His vicegerency in the earth, in the sense that He has made them the lamp of the absolute light in their respective times, so that by the radiance of their guidance, knowledge and wisdom, the world of religion may continue to be illumined, as is

evident from verse (33:46) of the wise Qur'ān, that the holy Prophet was the luminous lamp of the Divine light in his time.

It is our belief and faith that the manifest Imām (*imām-i mubīn*), i.e., the Imām of the time, is the Vicegerent of God, the *mazhar* of His Pen and the Guarded Tablet, the Speaking Book and the light and successor of the holy Prophet of the last time. The concept of the manifest Imām according to us is an eternal (*azalī-ū abadi*) reality, as the glorious Qur'ān says: “And We have encompassed everything in the manifest Imām” (36:12).

If someone says that by the manifest Imām is meant the Guarded Tablet, I would ask: “Well, sir, tell me what the Guarded Tablet is made of? That is, what is the quality and reality of its existence? Is it made of one of the gems? Is it among the intelligible existents, or from among the spiritual ones?” His reply has to be one of these.

If he replies that the Guarded Tablet is an intellectual existent, this reply is wrong on the ground that, since in “everything” are mentioned all the three (kinds of existence) – intellect, spirit and body, then how is it possible for the Guarded Tablet of mere intellect to possess all three of them if the spirit and body are not included in it? If he replies that the Guarded Tablet is a great soul, again his reply will not be correct, for in the Guarded Tablet of pure soul, with the exclusion of intellect and body there can only be spiritual things. In “everything” there is the mention not only of spiritual things, but rather of all things.

If he says that the Guarded Tablet is made of some precious stones without accepting a *ta'wīl* for such a statement, it would also be wrong. For the precious stones are without intellect and soul and have no significance for God. Thus, how can a precious stone contain intellectual and spiritual things?

From this explanation, it is established that by *Imām-i mubīn* is meant the manifest Imām in whose blessed and sacred personality there is the combination of intellect, soul and the perfect human body, due to which he is the bearer of every subtle thing, including the Guarded Tablet itself.

The Imām of the time is the Vicegerent of God and the successor of the holy Prophet of the last time

What is the Guarded Tablet made of?

The manifest Imām is the bearer of every subtle thing, including the Guarded Tablet

God reveals His entire
ghayb to a chosen
messenger

In connection with Divine knowledge, it is necessary to explain briefly the knowledge of the unseen (*‘ilm-i ghayb*), so that the subject may not remain incomplete. Regarding it, God says: “(He is) the Knower of the unseen and He reveals unto none His unseen (*ghaybihi*) except a messenger whom He has chosen” (72:26-27). Here the meaning of “*‘alā ghaybih*”, which means “on all His *ghayb* (secret)”, is worth pondering upon. This means that God also reveals His entire *ghayb* to a chosen messenger.

God had granted the
knowledge of the
unseen to Ḥazrat-i
Ādam^(e)

The gist of what has been discussed so far about the subject of Divine knowledge is that His greatest attribute in relation to it is that He confers upon His chosen servants His gifts of special knowledge, to the extent that He does not even withhold the knowledge of the unseen. As from the verse: “And He taught Ādam all the names” (2:31), it is clear that God Himself is the teacher of Ḥazrat-i Ādam^(e). Further, the knowledge of names (*‘ilmu’l-asmā’*) is not a bookish and external knowledge, rather it is indeed the knowledge of the unseen, which except for God was not known even to the angels. Thus God had granted to Ḥazrat-i Ādam^(e), the father of humankind, the knowledge of the unseen.

In order to know more realities regarding the knowledge of the unseen, reflect on this noble verse: “And with Him are the keys of the unseen. None but He knows them. And He knows what is in the land and the sea. Not a leaf falls but He knows it, not a grain in the darkness of the earth, naught of wet or dry but [it is recorded] in a clear Book.” (6:59)

The living and
speaking pictures of
all things are in the
light of Imāmat

From this verse it is clear that God's knowledge of the unseen is in the Speaking Book. That is, the living and speaking pictures of all things are in the *kitāb-i mubīn* (Speaking Book), i.e., the light of Imāmat.

It should be remembered that by the knowledge of the unseen is meant the knowledge of the secrets of the things in the heavens and the earth and the apparent and the hidden. When such knowledge is revealed, it no longer remains the knowledge of the unseen. It is thereafter called the exoteric knowledge. However, the wisdom and *ta’wīl* of what is revealed still remain the knowledge of the unseen. Thus by the command of God, Ḥazrat-i Jibrā’īl^(e) was not

niggardly in telling the holy Prophet the secrets of the unseen, as is said in the wisdom-filled speech of God: “And he (Jibrā’īl) is not niggardly about (telling the secrets of) the unseen” (81:24).

With regard to the treasure of the knowledge of the unseen being hidden in the Speaking Book or the Speaking Qur’ān, it is said: “And there is not a thing of unseen (*ghā’ibah*), in the heaven and the earth, but it is in a Speaking Book (*kitābin mubīn*)” (27:75). By this Speaking Book is meant the light of Imāmat.

It should be known that in the light of the Speaking Book, i.e., the Speaking Imām, there are such luminous pictures of everything in the heaven and the earth, which according to “*ṣibghatu’llāh* (colour of God, 2:138)” abound in the colours of the intellect and the soul, and by the permission of God each of these pictures can demonstrate the example of the thing to which it is related in the universe and the existents. This reality is called the luminous *ta’wīl*. Thus, in this sense, Ḥaẓrat-i Yūsuf⁽⁶⁾ was in the position of the “Speaking Book” in his own time and could tell the condition of any hidden thing through the luminous examples in him. Thus, in order to draw attention towards the knowledge of the unseen [possessed by him] as a true Guide, he said to his two mates in the prison: “The food which you are given shall not come unto you but I shall tell you its *ta’wīl* before it comes unto you. This is of that which my Lord has taught me” (12:37).

There are two kinds of the knowledge of *ta’wīl*: luminous and bookish. The knowledge of *ta’wīl* which is with the Prophets and Imāms is in a luminous form and is also called the given knowledge (*‘ilm-i ladunni*) or the knowledge of the unseen.

In the light of the Speaking Book, the luminous pictures of everything abound in the colours of the intellect and the soul

The knowledge of *ta’wīl* is in a luminous form with the Prophets and Imāms

KEY 3

Direction (*Qiblah*) of Every Group

In verse (2:148) of the glorious Qur'ān, God says: "And everyone has a direction to which he turns." This wisdom-filled verse has several meanings. First: "And there is a direction fixed for every group, which they face [while worshipping]." Second: "And there is a law (*sharī'at*) fixed for every nation, to which it heeds." Third: "And there is a teacher for every individual, to whom he has recourse." Fourth: "And every seeker of spirituality has a goal, for which he continues to search." Fifth: "And for every religious rank, there is a higher rank for which he yearns." Sixth: "And there is a *qiblah* for each of the stations of *sharī'at*, *ṭarīqat*, *ḥaqīqat* and *ma'rīfat*, to which the respective people turn their face." That is, the *qiblah* of the people of *sharī'at* is the *Ka'bah*, that of *ṭarīqat* is *pir* or *Murshid*, that of the people of *ḥaqīqat* is the Prophet or Imām and that of the people of *ma'rīfat* is the light of God.

Then the verse continues: "So vie with one another in good works. Wheresoever you may be, God will bring you all together. Indeed, God is powerful over everything" (2:148). The allusions of the wisdom of this holy verse are [directed] not only to the religions of the world, but also to their individual followers. For, just as the respective states of groups are different in relation to the external *qiblah*, similarly the states of individuals differ in relation to their internal attention. Thus, the secret of focusing all the divergent views on the concept of the unity of God lies in that the Muslims and *mu'mins* should excel over the people of other religions in good deeds and become examples of doing good deeds in the whole world. The practical aspect of the mission of Islam may therefore be effective and as a result, the people of the world may realize that Islam is the religion of God and Ḥazrat-i Muḥammad Muṣṭafā, peace and salutation of God be upon him and his progeny, is His True Messenger and the Last Prophet.

The reason that the individual's attention is mentioned in describing the collective *qiblah* is that the guidance, which

There is a *qiblah* for each of the stations of *sharī'at*, *ṭarīqat*, *ḥaqīqat* and *ma'rīfat*

The Muslims should excel over the people of other religions in good deeds

is revealed for various groups in the Qur'ān, is also for individuals. For example, if a person cannot concentrate during *‘ibādat* and feels that various kinds of thoughts are created [in his mind], then in the light of this Qur'ānic wisdom, he should realize that the capacity of doing good deeds is diminishing in him. In such a case, he should create within himself the zeal to excel in good deeds and practice accordingly. He will see that consequently concentration in *‘ibādat* and spiritual peace will be created in his heart.

How is spiritual peace created in the hearts?



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KEY 4

Experience of Death

There is a special death which is full of the observations and experiences of spirituality

We have termed this topic the “experience of death.” But who has attained the experience of death, since with its occurrence all the experiences of the deceased vanish? However, it is true that among deaths there is also a special death, which is full of the observations and experiences of spirituality, certainty and recognition and abounds in the kernel of knowledge and wisdom. In order to know the reality of this kind of death you should carefully study the following explanation:

Why is the experience of death compared to the tasting of a material thing?

In verse (3:185) of the noble Qur’ān, the universal law of death is mentioned as follows: “And every soul has to taste death.” Two important questions arise regarding this universal law of death: One, when human existence is a composite of three things, namely, intellect, soul and body, why is the experience of death related only to the soul? The second question is: why is the experience of death compared to the tasting of a material thing?

The living and dying of the body is through the soul

The answer to the first question is that, although human existence is a composite of intellect, soul and body, in reality intellect transcends death because it does not die, as is the case with angels who are intellects and never die. Also death is not applicable to the body, such as stones. In contrast, the soul, which is animal, dies. This shows that the direct relation of death is with the soul. It does not occur to the body directly, it occurs only through the soul. That is, the living and dying of the body is through the soul. This is the reason that the wise Qur’ān has related death only to the soul in this universal law.

The answer to the second question is that death is compared to the tasting of a material thing for the reason that it is indeed a sort of spiritual taste, which is both extremely sweet and extremely bitter. Another aspect of this answer is that the wise Qur’ān has presented the concept of death as the tasting of a material thing because, for the people of *ma’rifat*, the special death consists of spiritual events and

experiences of knowledge and recognition, which according to “Die before you die” is accepted before physical death through *‘ibādat* and spiritual exercise. The purpose of this death is recognition (*ma‘rifat*), in which are hidden the secrets of spiritual peace and eternal salvation. Thus, with respect to the realities and recognitions that are experienced under the title of spiritual death, it is a fact which can be compared to the experience of tasting a material thing.

That spiritual death which occurs due to the special *‘ibādat*, spiritual exercise and mortification of the carnal self in the light of the guidance of the True Guide, is the introduction to spiritual events and experiences, in the sense that by it (such death), all the doors of the recognition of the self become unlocked. Thus, this voluntary death becomes the means of obtaining the realities and recognitions, spirit and spirituality and the secrets of God's recognition.

There are many wisdom-filled allusions in the noble Qur’ān about the occurrence of a special and voluntary death, or the experimental (*tajribāti*) death before the usual and involuntary death. One of them is that human existence does not only have one soul, but rather innumerable souls. It is an extremely astonishing power of God, may He be exalted, that the abode of souls is not only the human heart and mind but every cell too and that the unity of these innumerable souls is the human “I (*anā*)”.

This Divine wisdom is also extremely astonishing that on different occasions, these souls of a human being are seized i.e., whereby on the one hand they come out one by one, and on the other hand they continue entering him. In other words, during his life, man constantly dies on the one hand and revives on the other simultaneously, until a day comes when he dies totally.

The above mentioned death should be called a partial death. It is due to this partial death that the reformation, revival and reconstruction of the human soul and body continue all the time, to the extent that after forty days not a single old particle of the human soul and body remains unchanged. As per this calculation, a human being transforms from his old body to the new one nine times every year.

The purpose of the special death is recognition, in which are hidden the secrets of spiritual peace and eternal salvation

The spiritual death occurs due to the mortification of the carnal self

The voluntary or the experimental death occurs before the usual and involuntary death

A human being transforms from his old body to the new one nine times every year

Human life is like a river of souls, which comes from the mountains of the angelic world and the valleys of the human world and flows constantly. However, it is true that sometimes it decreases and sometimes it increases; sometimes it is clear and transparent and at other times it is murky.

At this point, I recall a couplet of Ḥaẓrat-i Pīr Nāṣir-i Khusraw, may God sanctify his secret. He says in his *Rawshanā'i-nāmāh*:

*zi dunyā tā ba-^ʿuqbā nīst bisyār
walī dar rah wujūd-i tust diwār*

There is not much distance between this
world and the next;

Except that your existence is a wall between
them.

When the voluntary
death occurs, the true
mu'min is able to
experience the events
of spirituality

This means that by special *'ibādat* and intense spiritual exercise, when the voluntary death occurs to a true *mu'min*, this wall of “being” will be removed and he will be able to experience the events of *qiyāmat* and spirituality.

One's own carnal soul
is the wall and veil
between here and the
hereafter

God be hallowed! How excellent is this wisdom-filled example of the exalted *Pir*, that your own carnal soul is the wall and veil between here and the hereafter! When you pass the exam of special *'ibādat*, spiritual exercise and the purification of the carnal soul, in the light of the sacred *farmān* of the True Guide, the dense and murky wall of your existence and self will either be removed from in front of you, or be made of transparent glass, or a door will be made in it. Then you will gain not only the experience of the wonders of death, but also the doors of the treasures of the knowledge of *qiyāmat* and spirituality and the recognition of God will be open to you forever.

Death is the door to
the spiritual world

Now as for the question: Is anyone exempt from this universal law of death? The answer is mentioned within the universal law itself that no soul, i.e., human being is above this law. Since no door to spirituality can open without the voluntary death, and since according to the holy Qur'ān (39:42), even sleep is a kind of death, and physical death is complete freedom for a *mu'min*, then reflect carefully how necessary death is for real *mu'mins*. Thus, it is clear that death is the door to the spiritual world, without entering through which neither is spiritual progress possible, nor eternal life.

KEY 5

Spiritual Meeting with Everything

The eighth part of the holy Qur'ān begins: “And though We should send down the angels unto them, and the dead should speak unto them, and We should gather against them all things in array, they would not believe unless God so willed. How be it, most of them are ignorant” (6:112).

Always remember the principle of wisdom that the wise Qur'ān presents for human beings only the concepts of those things which are possible for them, because the holy Qur'ān as the sacred speech of God, may He be exalted, contains the substance of utmost truth and justice. Thus, if the spiritual meeting and conversation with the angels, the dead and the souls of everything were impossible for man and if God, may He be exalted, had never actually tested the *mu'mins* and the infidels with such miracles in any time, then (God forbid), there would be neither justice nor truth in mentioning this miracle. Hence, it becomes evident that whatever has been mentioned in the above universal law is a practical reality. According to the real *mu'mins*, this event is called the unveiling of spirituality (*kashf-i rūḥāniyyat*). According to Divine expediency this miracle also happens to infidels, in which case it is called “descent of Divine punishment”.

The spiritual meeting and conversation with the angels, the dead and the souls of everything is possible

Those real *mu'mins* who want to attain the rank of the vision of certainty (*‘aynu'l-yaqīn*), with the help of the knowledge of certainty (*‘ilmul-yaqīn*) have to believe in these realities of spirituality that the spirit, in contrast to the external and material things, is a miraculous substance. It is among the miracles of the world of command (*‘ālam-i amr*), where everything appears by the Will of “Be” (*kun*). Thus, the spirit is endowed with the characteristic of presenting all the miracles of knowledge. It is an indisputable fact that the spirit of every *mu'min*, who has recognized God, can adopt the spiritual form of the universe and existents and demonstrate an example of the occurrence of Resurrection and of the next world. In such a state, the *mu'min* finds himself in the midst of a stormy and

The spirit is among the miracles of the world of command

With the true obedience of the ever-present Imām, the spirit of a *mu'min* can attain the lofty experiences of spirituality

What is the mutual relation between the light of Imāmat, the Holy Spirit and a *mu'min's* spirit?

The increase and decrease in a *mu'min's* spirit is due to closeness to or remoteness from the light of Imāmat

turbulent ocean of spirits, which appear in the form of angels, the dead, the alive, Gog and Magog and everything else, so much so that these spirits include the spirits of inanimate things too. However, it must be remembered that great sacrifices have to be made in order to attain such lofty experiences of spirituality.

If one questions how a *mu'min's* spirit can accomplish such a great feat, my answer is only in one sentence that, with the true obedience of the ever-living and ever-present Imām, the spirit of a *mu'min* can accomplish this great feat.

Again, if one asks what the mutual relation between the light of Imāmat, the Holy Spirit and a *mu'min's* spirit is, the answer is that the Holy Spirit is not separate from the light of the exalted Imām, nor can a *mu'min's* spirit alone accomplish any great deed without the help of the Holy Spirit. The mutual relation of these three spiritual realities is like that of the sun, the sea and the rivulet. That is, the light of Imāmat is the sun, the Holy Spirit is the sea and the *mu'min's* spirit is the rivulet. Whence does the water of the rivulet come? It comes from the mountains, where it is the product of the rain and the snow. What is the source of the rain and the snow? It is the clouds which rise from the sea. How are clouds formed from the sea? By the heat of the sun.

The water of the rivulet can decrease, as well as increase. It decreases when the light of the sun is far from the mountains or when the clouds without rain cast their shadows on them. In the same way, there is the increase and decrease in a *mu'min's* spirit, which is due to closeness to or remoteness from the light of Imāmat.

When the sun is near and the sky is clear, its rays are cast on the rivulet everywhere and its water also increases (due to melting ice and snow). However, this is not a great miracle of the sun. The rivulet will see a great miracle of the sun where it meets the ocean and merges with its unity, and realises how comprehensively it (the unbounded ocean) is in the grip of the heat of the sun and how, having saturated the whole world with a substantial portion of itself, returns its surplus [to the ocean] in the form of rivers and then continues to rise to the heights of the sky in the form of vapour and clouds!

Likewise, the spirit of every true *mu'min* can have the vision (*didār*) of the light of the Imām of the time at one or the other spiritual stage and can also progress spiritually. But this is in no way a great *didār* and a great miracle. Of course, the great miracle is the place where a *mu'min's* spirit, riding on the river of the knowledge of *Pirs* and dignitaries [of faith] merges in the ocean of the Holy Spirit. One of the innumerable miracles of this place is that the True Guide's light continues to send out countless guiding spirits to all sides of the world from the ocean of the Holy Spirit. The natural and reflective guidance of every group, every class, every rank and every individual is based on this system. The holy light of the exalted Imām does not care whether a group or an individual acknowledges his universal guidance or not. Nonetheless, in this guidance, there is definitely a differentiation with respect to the ranks of *ma'rifat* and according to the need of people. Or in other words, [in order to receive the guidance] the capacity of its acceptance is an essential condition.

In short, the fountainhead of all the miracles is the Holy Spirit, which is under the influence of the True Guide's light. Every miracle results in two forms: either as prosperity of the souls or their destruction. If a true *mu'min* prepares himself to endure the miracles by means of obedience, *ibādat*, spiritual exercise and the knowledge of certainty and progresses further and further [in bearing] the gradual miracles, they are only mercy for him. Whereas if a human being encounters a great miracle all of a sudden [without preparation], it causes destruction, unless the Imām of the age helps him even in such a situation.

The spirit of every true *mu'min* can have the vision (*didār*) of the light of the Imām of the time

The True Guide's light continues to send out countless guiding spirits to all sides of the world

The fountainhead of all the miracles is the Holy Spirit

KEY 6

Devils of Humankind and *Jinn*

In verse (6:113), there is the mention of a universal law about the Prophets: 'Thus have We appointed unto every Prophet an adversary - devils of humankind and *jinn* who inspire in one another plausible discourse through guile.'

There are two kinds
of devils

The first teaching which this verse shows is that there are two kinds of devils. One kind is from among human beings and the other from among *jinn*s. The devils that are from among human beings do not actually appear as devils, because outwardly they do not have a peculiar shape or form. In their outward appearance they are exactly like other human beings, but, in reality, they are human devils. However, it is not necessary that they may recognize themselves as being included in the army of Iblis.

The devils who are from among the *jinn*s, except for special cases, always remain invisible to our sight, because they are in the attire of such a subtle body that it does not appear at all, except where there is God's expediency.

God made the devils,
the adversaries of
every Prophet and
every Imām

The second teaching of this verse is that the expediency and wisdom of God, the Knowing, the Wise, lay in that He made the human and *jinnī* devils the adversaries of not only every Prophet, but every Imām as well, so that in the test-field of action of Ādam's children, all the means of rectitude and guidance may always be available on the one hand, and those of deviation and going astray on the other.

The Prophet, the
Imām, *Hujjats* and
Pirs are able to
converse spiritually
through Divine power

The third teaching of this wisdom-filled universal law is that in the permanent war of good and evil, which continues from the cycle of Ādam till the Resurrection and in which right and wrong are combating each other, it is not only the devils of humankind and *jinn* who are given the chance to spiritually inspire the plausible discourse in the hearts of one another in order to spread evil in this world, but so too are the Prophet, the Imām and the higher ranks, such as *Hujjats* and *Pirs* who are also able to converse spiritually

through Divine power. How excellently an *‘ārīf* (one who has attained *ma‘rifat*) has said in this regard:

*az dil-i ḥujjat ba-ḥaẓrat rah buwad
ū ba-ta'yīd-i dilash āgah buwad*

There is a (spiritual) path from the heart of the *ḥujjat* (i.e., *Pīr*) to (the holy personality of) the Imām of the time, who is always aware of inspiring *ta'yīd* (spiritual help and guidance) in his heart.

The Imām of the time, is always aware of inspiring *ta'yīd* in *ḥujjat*'s heart

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KEY 7

Explanation of Everything in the Celestial Book

In verse (6:155) God, may He be purified, says: “Then We revealed such a Book on Mūsā that was for the doers of good, perfect and everything was detailed in it and it was guidance and blessing so that they might believe in the vision (*didār*) of their Lord.”

In Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e)'s celestial Book, nothing was lacking of religious and worldly guidance

From this verse it is clear that in Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e)'s celestial Book (Torah), nothing was lacking of religious and worldly guidance for the righteous people of that period. It contained the detailed description of everything and every kind of guidance and mercy, as a result of which they would have been sure of the *didār* of their Sustainer.

The Torah was mercy in the form of wisdom and *ta'wil*

This verse invites the wise people to reflect on how the benefits of the Torah could be confined only to the righteous whilst it was complete and comprehensive and contained every kind of guidance. It is not possible unless it was an unbounded treasure of wisdom and *ta'wil*, because had it not contained wisdom and *ta'wil*, it would have been equally beneficial for the common people as well as the chosen (i.e., the righteous). Thus, it is clear that the Torah was complete, comprehensive and full of guidance and mercy in the form of wisdom and *ta'wil*. This is possible only if, along with the Divine Book, there is also a teacher appointed by God. Thus, the greatest virtue of the Torah was that its living spirit was in the noble person of Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e), who was Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e)'s *vizier* (minister) and the Imām of that time.

The living spirit of Torah was in the noble person of Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e)

Now as for a clear proof of the fact that Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e) was the *vizier* of Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e) and that the Holy Spirit of the Torah i.e., living wisdom and speaking *ta'wil* were hidden in his spirituality, is to be found in the following blessed verse of the holy Qur'ān: “In fact, We had given Mūsā the Book (Torah) and We had appointed his brother Hārūn, his *vizier*.” (25:35)

This verse shows that whether Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e) was or was not the *vizier* of Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e) in any other matter, but in matters of spiritual guidance, wisdom and *ta'wīl* of the Torah, he was definitely his *vizier* in the first and foremost sense, because *vizier* is mentioned with the Book in the context of the words and meaning of this blessed verse. Since *vizier* literally means the one who carries the burden, it is in this context and relation that Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e) was carrying the heavy burden of the *tanzīl* (revelation) and the *ta'wīl* of the Torah. Further, every celestial Book, in reality, is as a living and speaking spirit or a light, hence this spirit or light that was known by the name of Torah in the time of Ḥaẓrat-i Mūsā^(e) was hidden within the personality of Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e).

Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e) was carrying the heavy burden of the *tanzīl* (revelation) and the *ta'wīl* of the Torah

When it is conceded that the Torah was not only that which was silent in the form of external writing, but was also living and speaking in the luminosity, spirituality and corporeality of Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e), then one must be sure that the verse: “Then We revealed such a Book on Mūsā that was for the doers of good, perfect and everything was detailed in it and it was guidance and blessing so that they might believe in the vision (*didār*) of their Lord.” (6:155), which is mentioned in the beginning of this subject, is revealed in this sense.

Torah was living and speaking in the luminosity, spirituality and corporeality of Ḥaẓrat-i Hārūn^(e)

Then related to these realities, God, may He be exalted says: “And this Book (Qur’ān) that We have revealed is blessed; so obey it and become pious, so that you may find mercy.” (6:156)

In the meaning of the “blessed book” again are contained all those realities that are mentioned above in connection with the Torah. The abundance of knowledge and wisdom, rectitude and guidance and plenitude of goodness and blessings are in the wise Qur’ān in the sense that it abounds in the wisdoms of *tanzīl* and *ta'wīl*, well-being and success and its living realities and recognition are preserved in the holy light of the True Guide, may peace be on him. It is in this sense that the holy Qur’ān is “an explanation of all things” (16:89). Hence, one must know that the celestial Book explains everything only in the company of the True Teacher.

The celestial Book explains everything only in the company of the True Teacher

KEY 8

Recognition of Every Person

The men on the heights of *ma'rifat* are Mawlānā Murtaẓā 'Alī^(e) and the holy Imāms from his descendants

In the Imāmī books, referring to the saying of the holy Prophet and the pure Imāms, it is mentioned that by “the men on the *A'rāf* (the heights)” in the verse: “And on the *A'rāf* (heights) are men who recognize them all by their foreheads!” (7:46), are meant the men who are on the heights of *ma'rifat* (recognition of God), and they are Ḥazrat-i Mawlānā Murtaẓā 'Alī^(e) and the legatees, namely, the holy Imāms from his descendants (see *Da'ā'imul-Islām*, Part I, p. 25).

Since it is a Qur'ānic fact that on the Day of Judgement, the Imām of each respective time will recognize all those who used to recognize him in the world by the light on their faces, it is evident that this Divine law of [providing] the means of (His) mercy, guidance, intercession and salvation i.e., the presence of Imām among the people of the world, is ordained not only for the cycle of the last holy Prophet, but equally for the cycles of all the Prophets. This leads to the conclusion that the Imām of the time is always present and living amongst the people of every time, as confirmed and corroborated in the following verse: “On the day We shall call all people with their Imām” (17:71). This means that on the Day of Reckoning without the Imām of the time, no witness, justice, intercession and salvation is possible for the people. Thus, it becomes evident that from the beginning of the world to the time of Ḥazrat-i Ādam^(e), from Ḥazrat-i Ādam^(e) to the Seal of the Prophets, and from the Seal of the Prophets till the Day of Reckoning, the holy chain of Imāmat continues.

Without the Imām of the time, no witness, justice, intercession and salvation is possible for the people

The Imāms of guidance are the intermediaries and the means between God and the people

With respect to the above-mentioned verse (17:71), it is also correct to say that on the Day of Resurrection, God will call people through their Imām of the time, for the Imāms of guidance are the intermediaries and the means between God and the people. This shows that every act of God related to command and guidance and every task related to the people's obedience of God and His pleasure is

accomplished through the custodian of command (*ṣāhib-i amr*).

From the facts which came to light in connection with the exegesis and *ta'wīl* of the verse of “*A‘rāf*”, it becomes clear that it is only through the recognition of the Imām that the doors of bliss of both the worlds and eternal salvation can be opened, as the wise Qur’ān says: “Those who deny Our *āyāt* and scorn (*istakbarū*) them, for them the gates of the heavens will not be opened, nor will they enter the Paradise until the camel goes through the needle's eye” (7:40). It should be known that the *āyāt* of God, in the sense of both miracles and signs, are the holy Imāms, and those who do not recognize them, scorn (*istakbarū*) them. For, the word “*istikbar*” implies two opposite meanings: to deem oneself great and to consider another person lowly. These opposite meanings can be applied only to members of the same genus. The clear implication of this is that these meanings cannot be applied to the Qur’ānic and cosmic *āyāt*, they can only be applied to the Prophets and Imāms, who are from their genus. Iblīs, who had shown arrogance, was also a human being who had attained the rank of angelicity in knowledge. He considered his homogenous, Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(c), lowly and deemed himself great.

Moreover, wherever in the holy Qur’ān it is mentioned that the angels are not too proud to worship their Sustainer (21:19), its *ta'wīl* is that *mu'mins*, who are the angels of the realm of recognition (*‘ālam-i ma‘rifat*), do not disobey the Imām of the age, whose obedience is the worship of God, because the Imām of the age is the Supreme Name of God, whose obedience is the worship [of God] in *ta'wīlī* language.

It is only through the recognition of the Imām that the doors of bliss of both the worlds and eternal salvation can be opened

Iblīs was also a human being

The Imām of the age is the Supreme Name of God

KEY 9

Measure of Everything

In verse (13:8), it is said: “And everything with Him is in a measure.”

With God everything
is limited and in a
fixed measure

This universal law means that although certain things of time and space, such as time and the universe appear unlimited and unending to humankind, but with God everything is limited and in a fixed measure. Although modern scientists think that this universe, in which there are innumerable worlds of planets and stars, is unbounded and limitless, the above-mentioned universal law says that this great universe too, despite its greatness and vastness, is according to a fixed measure of Divine law and similarly time too, despite its unrestricted duration, is in a fixed measure.

Thus, if a wise person studies this book with insight, every universal law will show that all those universal laws which are mentioned here demonstrate each other's reality. Thus, they also corroborate the above-mentioned reality that everything with God is limited.

God's power has
surrounded everything

As mentioned in Key 1, God is powerful over everything. This means that God's power has surrounded everything and everything is confined within His power.

The same is true of His knowledge, with regard to which it is mentioned that everything is confined in the light of the manifest Imām.

If everything is in a limited measure with God, it should be known that this fact too is not outside the domain of the manifest Imām's light and circle of knowledge. For God, may He be exalted, has confined and encompassed everything in his holy personality.

Everything rotates on
the cycle of
annihilation and
survival

Having known that everything is limited and in a fixed measure, it is also necessary to know that due to its rotation on the cycle of annihilation and survival or transformation

and change, it is also correct to say that everything is infinite. For example, although day and night are definitely limited, yet the cycle of time that is formed by their rotation is infinite. In the same way, a greater circle than that of the rotation of day and night is formed by the rotation of the year; then there are the circles of the aeons, and ultimately there is the circle of annihilation and origination of the universe, which is endless. This leads to the conclusion that if everything is limited from one aspect, it is limitless from the other. The characteristic of Divine law is that it has all the qualities of beginning and beginningless and ending and endless.

Everything is limited from one aspect and limitless from the other

There are several such verses in the wise Qur'ān, whose deep wisdoms show that everything, despite being in a limited measure, is limitless. The fact is that everything is in a pair, that is, everything has an opposite or a contrary, e.g., day and night, light and darkness, this world and the next world, corporeality and spirituality, existence and non-existence, etc. Then by the rotation of each pair, a cycle is formed such as the rotation of day and night and the recurrence of months and years. In the same way, the existence of the universe is a very long day and its non-existence is a very long night, which also makes a cycle. That is, the existence and non-existence of the universe and the existents is a circle, which is the greatest of circles. It is due to the endless rotation of this circle that every limited thing becomes unlimited. God willing, we shall explain this further in Key 22.

Knowledge for a united humanity

KEY 10

***Mu'mins* are given Everything**

It is said in verse (14:34): “And He has given you of all you asked of Him, and if you would count the bounties of God, you cannot reckon them. Lo! Man is verily very unjust, very ungrateful.” It is clear from this verse that, whatever the real *mu'mins* have asked for from the Sustainer, He has granted them all either in corporeality or spirituality and either with the spoken language or circumstantial language. Now the question arises: What is the thing which contains everything? The answer is that the most comprehensive (*jāmi'u'l-jawāmi'*) thing which contains everything is the recognition of the manifest Imām. For it is his holy light in which there is everything.

The most comprehensive thing which contains everything is the recognition of the manifest Imām

According to the glorious Qur'ān, the length and width of paradise is that of the universe, which alludes to the Universal Soul. That is, the Universal Soul is the spiritual paradise which contains everything and which is the spirit, namely the light of the Imām. [Having understood] this, the question of whether everything should be found in paradise or in the soul of the Imām does not arise, because paradise and the Imām's soul and its recognition are one and the same reality.

Paradise and the Imām's soul and its recognition are one and the same reality

Thus, the following verse of the noble Qur'ān does not differ from the above-mentioned purport: “He has subjugated to you whatever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; it is all from Him.” (45:13)

One should always remember the principle that when a great thing is attained, all those things which are related to it are automatically gained. For instance, if a person is given a garden, he automatically gets all those things that are in the garden, such as fruits of all sorts, scenic spots, comfortable shade, fragrant flowers of various colours, etc. Similarly, if a fortunate person attains the greatest treasure that contains the keys to all the treasures of God, may He be exalted, then undoubtedly he receives all of God's treasures. The treasure that contains the keys to all the treasures of God, may He be

The treasure that contains the keys to all the treasures of God is the recognition of the manifest Imām

exalted, is the recognition of the manifest Imām, by gaining which everything is gained.

It is said in a noble *ḥadith*: “*Man kāna li'llāhi kāna'llāhu lahu* = He who belongs to God, God belongs to him.” That is, he who becomes God's possession with all one's resources (*tan, man, dhan sē*) by following His commands, then as a result, God also becomes his Invaluable Treasure. Undoubtedly, God is the Hidden Treasure and according to a *Ḥadith-i qudsī* (Sacred Tradition), this Treasure can be found on the path of *mā'rifat* (recognition). However, everyone knows that without the recognition of the Prophet, the recognition of God is not possible and nor is the Prophet's recognition possible without the recognition of the Imām of the time. Again one finds the same reality that everything is contained in the manifest Imām.

It is said in the holy Qur'ān in verses 2:155-157: “Indeed, we are God's and we return unto Him.” Who are they who say so? It is the patient ones who say so. They have full conviction that they have come into this world from the Presence of God, i.e., His light, therefore they are hopeful that when they will return, they will merge again in the Unity of God. In that state, they will be given everything in the form of the spiritual kingdom. But here, the question arises as to whether anyone can be called patient without acting according to the Divine command: “Obey God and obey the Messenger and those who possess the command from amongst you [i.e., the Imām].” If the reply is negative, then we are justified in our claim that all the beauties of Islam (submission) and *imān* (faith) can be found from the manifest Imām.

Prophets and Imāms come into this world in order to guide the people of the world correctly, so that they may walk on the Right Path steadily and may reach the Presence of God. Thus they (the Prophets and Imāms) guide the people, not only by word of mouth, but also through presenting a practical example of following the guidance, and also openly declaring the reward which is going to be granted for following the guidance. What is that reward? It is the Messenger and the Imām of the time, in whose holy light there is everything. As God, may He be exalted says: “And He will make them to enter the heaven, which He has made known to them (beforehand)” (47:6).

He who becomes
God's possession,
God also becomes his
Invaluable Treasure

All the beauties of
Islam and *imān* can be
found from the
manifest Imām

The Prophets and
Imāms guide the
people through
presenting a practical
example of following
the guidance

KEY 11

Treasures of Everything

God, may He be exalted, says in verse (15:21): “And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it. And We reveal it not save in a known measure.”

From this holy universal law it appears that with respect to excellence and honour, knowledge and recognition, though not in a spatial respect of course, God, may He be exalted [also] has a nearness and proximity where there are the treasures of everything, and [that nearness and proximity] is the manifest Imām's holy light, which contains all those treasures. An example of this reality can be given from the external sun, which contains the endless treasures of creative wealth, i.e., the treasures of the material kind of wealth of all the stars and planets of the solar system. That is, by the command of God not only every star and every planet, but also the elements, the mountains, inorganic matter, the minerals and vegetation, including the body of animals and human beings are created from the sun. In the same way, the treasures of the creative wealth of the spiritual world are in the manifest Imām's holy light.

The treasures of the creative wealth of the spiritual world are in the manifest Imām's holy light

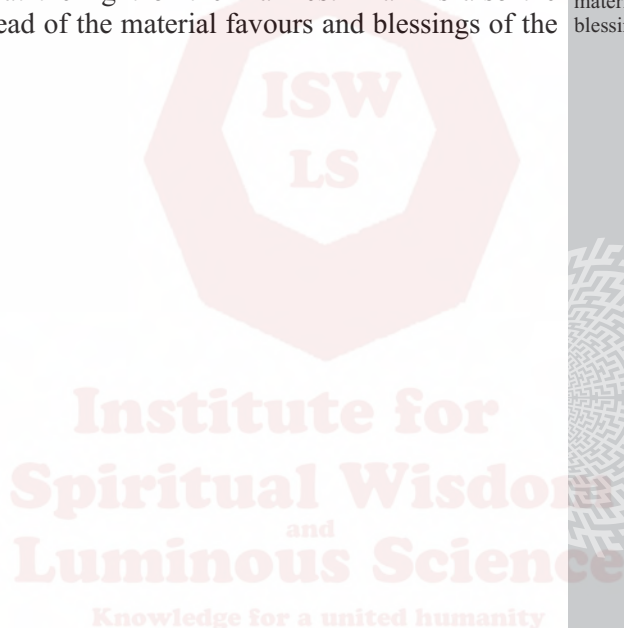
Having given this fine example of the sun, it is our duty as teachers (*‘ilmī farṣ*) to prove to you where the fountainhead of the moving spirit of the unlimited powers of the sun is. The above-mentioned verse shows that the treasures of everything are near God, which, as has been explained, are in the manifest Imām's holy light. Now, when all the treasures of God, may He be exalted, are in the holy light of the True Imām and nothing is outside it, then it is evident that the moving spirit of the unbounded and endless power of the world illumining sun also flows and permeates from the treasures of the Imām's light.

God had sent the holy Prophet as the absolute light and universal mercy for all the worlds

Another example (lit. proof) of this reality is that it is said in the wise Qur'ān that God, may He be exalted, had sent the holy Prophet as the absolute light and universal mercy for all the worlds. If the holy Prophet was the light and mercy for the entire universe and all the worlds, then necessarily

he was the source of light and mercy for the sun as well, because the sun is also included among the 'worlds'. That is, the sun was receiving its soul from the Prophet in the form of natural guidance (i.e., light) and mercy. After him, the same position is held by his heirs and successors i.e., the pure Imāms successively, one after the other. It is the unalterable and unchangeable law of God, may He be exalted, that in every age His light and mercy have to have a *mazhar*, whether he is a Messenger or an Imām. Thus, it is evident that the light of the manifest Imām is also the fountainhead of the material favours and blessings of the sun.

The light of the manifest Imām is the fountainhead of the material favours and blessings of the sun



KEY 12

Example of a Bee

God, may He be exalted says in verse (16:69): “Then eat of all the fruits and follow the ways of your Lord, made smooth [for you].”

With respect to the *zāhir* and *tanzil*, the above is addressed to the bee by the Sustainer of the worlds, but with respect to the *bāṭin* and *ta'wil*, it is addressed to the *hujjat* or *pīr*. For, it is he who is the *mamthūl* of the bee, who the Imām of the time appoints by the title of *hujjat*, *pīr* or *dā'i* or sometimes by any other name, and the bee is his similitude (*mithāl*). For, just as the bee sucks the nectar of different fruits and flowers and turns it into honey in its belly, in the same way, with respect to knowledge, the representative of the True Imām prepares the honey of the science of *ta'wil* within his heart, from the flowers and fruits of spirituality. For him the paths of knowledge and wisdom are as clear, smooth and easy as those of the bee, who can very easily fly from one flower to another.

The representative of the True Imām prepares the honey of the science of *ta'wil* within his heart

The *hujjat* makes an agreeable *ta'wil* from the different *tanzils*

The honey which the bee makes from diverse flowers and fruits, unites all their various tastes into just a single taste. In the same way, the *hujjat* who has the *ta'yid* (spiritual help) of the ever-living and ever-present Imām, makes such an agreeable *ta'wil* from the different *tanzils* (revelations) that it becomes palatable and certain like honey to the intellect, and no inconsistency is found in it.

In the above-mentioned verse, the bee is commanded in the form of *tanzil*: “Then eat of all fruits and follow the ways of your Lord, made smooth [for you]”. Every wise person can realize the importance of *ta'wil* here, since wherever bees may be found in this world, there can neither be every kind of fruit nor every kind of flower. In addition, neither can the paths of God be found in the gardens and jungles where the bees are found. This shows that [the *tanzili* form of the verse does not convey any logical sense and therefore, we need its *ta'wil*] the *ta'wil* which we have of this blessed verse is correct and proper, although it has other *ta'wils* too.

Thus, in the physical and external state it is absolutely impossible for there to be all the flowers and fruits of every season and every country in any one place in the world. However, in contrast to this, spiritually and internally, it is possible for every kind of flower and fruit to be in one place. As God, may He be exalted says: “Have We not established a sure sanctuary, whereunto the fruits of all things are brought, a provision from Our presence? But most of them know not” (28:57). It should be known that the *ta'wīl* of “sanctuary” is the Imām of the time, because it is he who is the real sanctuary of God's sacred light and the hidden house of the secrets of His *tawhīd* (Oneness), where all kinds of spiritual fruits continue to be drawn. This provision however, is not of this world in fact it comes from God's presence.

From the above, this *ta'wīl* becomes evident that the one who attains the office of *hujjat* is commanded: “Enter into the spirituality of the Imām of your time and prepare the honey of *ta'wīl* from the flowers and fruits of every kind in the gardens of *tanzīl* and move about the paths of knowledge and wisdom of your Sustainer, which are made smooth for you.”

The collective *ta'wīl* of what is said about the bee in *Sūratu'n-Naḥl* is: “And your Lord inspired the honey bee” means “Your Sustainer addressed the would-be *hujjat*”; “Choose habitations in the hills” means “Establish spiritual rapport with the other *hujjats* prior to you, who were the mountains of knowledge”; “And [choose habitation] in the tree also” means “After the *hujjats*, attain the recognition of the Imām of the time, who is the ever-blossoming tree of Imāmat”. That is, the Imām is the Pure Tree (*shajarah-yi ṭayyibah*), which gives fruit all the time”; “And [choose habitation] in that which they thatch” means “In the light of the recognition of the Imām of the time, attain benefit from the wisdoms of the higher *ḥudūd*” “Then eat of all fruits” means “Eat from the fruits of spirituality and knowledge”; “And follow the ways of your Lord made smooth” means “Move about in the field of knowledge and wisdom of your Lord, as there is no hindrance and confusion for you”; “There comes forth from their bellies a drink diverse of hues” means “From the *bāṭin* of the *hujjat* appear diverse *ta'wīls* which are a spiritual nourishment”; “Wherein is healing for

The Imām of the time is the real sanctuary of God's sacred light where all kinds of spiritual fruits continue to be drawn

God addresses the would-be *hujjat*

humankind” means “Due to the *ta'wils* of the *hujjats*, people are healed from the disease of ignorance”; “Lo! Herein is indeed a portent for people who reflect” means “The people who contemplate and reflect with wisdom and knowledge, know the reality that all these things that are described belong to the miracles of spirituality and knowledge of the True Imām.”

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KEY 13

All (Kinds of) Similitudes

It is said in verse (18:54): “And verily We have displayed for humankind in this Qur’ān every kind of similitude”.

The obvious purport of this sacred universal law is that the Sustainer of the worlds has described the similitudes of the one all-embracing reality in various ways in the holy Qur’ān. Thus, in every similitude there is hidden a form of this one Reality or the Supreme Similitude or the Reality of realities (*ḥaḳīqatu’l-ḥaqā’iq*). This means that all similitudes are varying forms of this Supreme Similitude and all realities are different explanations of the one Reality.

Thus, with regard to this Supreme Similitude God says: “His is the Supreme Similitude in the heavens and in the earth. He is the Mighty, the Wise.” (30:27)

It is obvious from this blessed verse that although God as such has no similitude, yet He has chosen one from among the myriad of similitudes to ascribe to Himself, as He says: “Nothing is like His Similitude. And He is the Hearer, the Seer” (42:11). The *ta’wīlī* allusion of this is that there is nothing resembling His Similitude. That is, He has a Supreme Similitude, but nothing can be the similitude of that Similitude. All these allusions are hidden in the phrase “*kamithli-hi* (like His Similitude)”. This means that the Supreme Similitude is the most high and the most exalted of all similitudes in the sense that it is distinct and distinguished from others by virtue of the beauties of its meaning and *ta’wīl*.

It should be known that the Supreme Similitude is mentioned in the *Sūratu’n-Nūr*, as God, may He be exalted says: “God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche, wherein is a lamp” (24:35).

Thus that Supreme Similitude, which encompasses and

All similitudes are varying forms of the Supreme Similitude and all realities are different explanations of the one Reality

God has a Supreme Similitude and nothing can be the similitude of that Similitude

God is free from every attribute and description, because He is the Sustainer of the Honour

The light of the manifest Imām is the Supreme Similitude and the Reality of the realities

God considers the word and deed of the Perfect Man to be His own

comprehends the entire universe and the existents, is the one mentioned above. No individual can describe the beauties of its meaning and *ta'wil*. Its main beauty lies in the fact that the light of God alluded to, the Messenger and the manifest Imām are the one and the same light. This is the one light which has all perfect attributes, whereas God as such is free from and above all attributes, as is said: "Purified be your Lord, the Lord of Majesty, from that which they attribute [unto Him]" (37:180). Here it is quite evident that God as such is free from and independent of every attribute and description, because He is the Sustainer of the Honour. That is, He is the elevator of the honour of the spiritual and the physical *ḥudūd* to the pinnacle of honour, but He Himself is free from every attribute and independent of everything.

In the light of the above-mentioned description, it is now easy to state that the light of the manifest Imām is not a limited light, rather it is the same absolute light, the *mamthūl* (meaning) of the Supreme Similitude and the Reality of the realities. As a result of all these meanings, it is called the light of God, in which there are all those attributes ascribed to God.

Since it is evident that the absolute light is only one and its bearer is always the manifest Imām, we will now explain how it is possible for that one reality to have numerous similitudes or modes. In this connection, it is clear that in the verse of *bay'at* (oath of allegiance) God has considered the holy Prophet's hand as His own Hand. Also, in the same simile, He adopted the action accomplished by the holy Prophet's hand, as is said: "God's Hand is above their hands" (48:10). This means that the Messenger's hand that took allegiance from the Muslims is God's Hand and similarly his act of taking the oath of allegiance becomes God's act. Thus, from the blessed words of the verse of allegiance it becomes evident that not only can there be many modes of the one reality, but that God also considers the word and deed of the Perfect Man to be His own.

It is also said: "And (O Muḥammad!) when you had cast pebbles you had not; rather God had cast" (8:17). This verse also implies the same reality that God has considered the action of the Perfect Man His own.

Now, reflect on whether the similitude of the holy Prophet can merge and become one with the Supreme Similitude or not? Regarding this, God, may He be exalted, has said: “And you are a summoner unto God by His permission and a luminous lamp” (33:46). God has also said in the holy Qur’ān that the holy Prophet was a mercy for the entire universe (21:107).

Now if we think of the vastness of the light of this Divine luminous lamp according to the nature of universal mercy (mentioned in 21:107), then it would be inconceivable that there could be a light other than the light of this Divine lamp in the heavens and the earth. Thus, it is clear that the similitude of the holy Prophet is indeed merged with the Supreme Similitude.

Reflect too on the similitude of the manifest Imām mentioned (in the Qur’ān): “O you who believe! Fear God and believe in His Messenger. He will give you two-fold of His mercy and will appoint a light for you wherewith you will be able to walk, and will forgive you” (57:28).

It should be known that here [the meaning] in: “Duly fearing God and believing in His Messenger!” is the command to act on the holy Qur’ān and the *shari‘at*. With regard to the question of the reward [of acting upon them], which should be received externally and internally in this world and in the hereafter, it is in the sense that God appoints an Imām through His Messenger for the guidance of the *mu’mins*, so that they may be able to walk in his light.

It is accepted that the exoteric meaning of the light that has been appointed for the *mu’mins* by God and the Prophet, is the Imām, but what is its esoteric meaning or *ta’wil*? Please tell us what its *ta’wilī* meaning is?

Answer: The *ta’wil* of God and the holy Prophet appointing a light for true *mu’mins* is that, as a result of their ardent love and obedience, the light of the lamp of Imāmat starts to manifest in the niche of their hearts. Then, according to the principle of “light upon light”, its light of knowledge and recognition continues to increase till its radiance surrounds the entire universe and the existents, encompassing them within itself. In this sense, it is said: “And We have

How vast is the light of the Divine luminous lamp?

The light of the lamp of Imāmat manifests in the niche of the hearts of the true *mu’mins*

encompassed everything in the manifest Imām” (36:12). This is a secret command of God, may He be exalted, that you should have recourse to the manifest Imām in each and every matter. Thus, it is established that in the *ta'wīl* of the Supreme Similitude, there is only the one light of God, the Messenger Prophet and the True Imām.



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KEY 14

Zu'l-Qarnayn

Who was Zu'l-Qarnayn? Was he a world-conquering king, or a Messenger or an Imām of his time? A correct answer cannot be given to this question until those Qur'ānic realities, which are in the story of Zu'l-Qarnayn, are discovered.

Who was Zu'l-Qarnayn?

So in verses (18:83-85), God, may He be exalted says: “(O Muḥammad!) they ask you about Zu'l-Qarnayn. Say: I shall recite unto you an account of him. Indeed, We gave him power in the earth [of spirituality] and gave him unto everything a path. And he followed a path.”

This blessed speech of God, may He be exalted, invites the wise *mu'mins* to ponder on it, through which they should reach the depths of its meaning and attain its realities. Thus, the real meaning of “And gave him unto everything a path” is that God, may He be exalted, provided Ḥazrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c) the means of everything of the heavens and the earth and of the *zāhir* (physical world) and the *bāṭin* (spiritual world). Thus for real *mu'mins*, the meaning of this Divine speech is exactly the same as that of “And We have encompassed everything in the manifest Imām”.

God provided Ḥazrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c) the means of everything of the heavens and the earth

Just as in all the essays of this book, those Qur'ānic verses are discussed in which the word “*kull*” (whole, universal, everything) is mentioned, and those verses which are among the “universals” (*kullīyyāt*) are presented so as to establish that whatever is mentioned in them is about all kinds of physical and spiritual things, similarly in the above-mentioned verse too, by “everything” is meant all spiritual and physical things.

By “everything” is meant all spiritual and physical things

Here, another example of the same reality from the wise Qur'ān is mentioned: “Or is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them theirs? Then let them ascend by the stairs” (38:10).

It should be known that this example, both in the exoteric

God grants the
spiritual kingdom of
the heavens and the
earth to whomsoever
He pleases

and esoteric senses, has the dual meaning of possibility and impossibility. The possibility is that God, may He be exalted, grants the spiritual kingdom of the heavens and the earth to whomsoever He pleases, and the means or ways through which the spiritual kingdom of the universe can be obtained are like the keys to the heavens and the earth, as the Creator, may He be exalted says: “And His are the keys of the heavens and the earth, and those who disbelieve the signs of God, such are they who are the losers” (39:63). It should be noted that a house has a door, a lock and a key for the reason that the owner may let in the one whom he wishes and not let in the one whom he does not wish.

Thus, in the holy Qur’ān in verse (6:75), it is said: “And thus did We show Ibrāhīm the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he may be of those possessing certitude”. This verse shows that God, may He be exalted had given keys to Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) to see the kingdom of the heavens and the earth; or it may be said that God had taught him the means or paths of all the things in the heavens and the earth. The same is true of Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(e) also, that he was taught the spiritual paths of everything in the heavens and the earth, because he was the Imām of his time.

Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-
Qarnayn^(e) was taught
the spiritual paths of
everything in the
heavens and the earth

The short story of Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(e) in the holy Qur'an in fact needs *ta'wīl*. For example, the *ta'wīl* of “He reached the setting place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring” (18:86), is that this was not the material and worldly sun, rather it was the spiritual and religious sun, which in other words is called the light of *tawḥīd*. By the “muddy spring” are meant two physical *ḥudūd*, who are the two spiritual wests, namely *nāṭiq* and *asās*. With regard to the creation of Ādam [the first *nāṭiq*], it is said: “And verily We created Ādam from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape” (15:26). The *ta'wīl* of the “east” is the Universal Intellect and the Universal Soul, from where the light of *tawḥīd* rises and sets in the *nāṭiq* and *asās*.

The light of *tawḥīd*
rises from the
Universal Intellect
and the Universal
Soul and sets in the
nāṭiq and *asās*

In the book *al-Imāmatu fī'l-Islām* (p. 148), it is written that Ḥaẓrat-i Zū'l-Qarnayn^(e) was from the lineage of the permanent Imāms of the cycle of Ḥaẓrat-i Nūḥ^(e), whose genealogy is: Zu'l-Qarnayn^(e), son of ʿĀbir^(e), son of Shālikh^(e), son of Qaynān^(e), son of Arfakshād^(e), son of Sām^(e), son of Nūḥ^(e); which means that he is the seventh in the line of succession from Ḥaẓrat-i Nūḥ^(e).

From the above facts, it is evident that Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(e) was the Imām of his time and the entire story of his journey of the east and west is a spiritual and *ta'wīlī* story.

It is also proven from a blessed *ḥadīth* of the holy Prophet that, Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(e) was an Imām. The holy Prophet said to Mawlānā 'Alī^(e): “O 'Alī there is a [special] house for you in Paradise and you are the Zu'l-Qarnayn of this *ummat*”. God be hallowed! How exalted is the position of the meaning of the Prophet's *ḥadīth*! It contains all the secrets of the recognition of the Imām. One of them is that, if 'Alī is like Zu'l-Qarnayn, then Zu'l-Qarnayn is also like 'Alī. Further, if 'Alī is Imām, then Zu'l-Qarnayn was also an Imām in his time. The second [secret] is that in the *ta'wīlī* story of the Qur'ān, the praise and glory which are related to Zu'l-Qarnayn also relate to 'Alī, as 'Alī and Zu'l-Qarnayn have the same attributes. The third [secret] is that, so long as the *ummat* of the holy Prophet is in the world, 'Alī is also there, present and living with the attributes mentioned above. For, the holy Prophet in the above *ḥadīth* has made the blessed existence of a Zu'l-Qarnayn indispensable amidst his *ummat*.

Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(e) was the Imām of his time

'Alī and Zu'l-Qarnayn have the same attributes

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KEY 15

Gog and Magog

Diverse versions of narrations are found in the exoteric books about Gog and Magog. It is not an easy task to remove the veil which conceals their reality due to the multitude of differences. However, here this subject is discussed with reliance upon the help and support of the Imām of the age (who is the True Guide on behalf of God and the holy Prophet).

In the wise Qur'ān, Gog and Magog are briefly mentioned twice: in the *Sūratu'l-Kahf*, in connection with the story of Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c) (18:92-99) and in *Sūratu'l-Anbiyā'* (21:95-97).

Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c) observed all the souls of the creatures of the world in his luminosity

Since, as the Imām of the time, all the doors of the spiritual world were open to Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c), he observed all the souls of the creatures of the world in his luminosity. These souls were of three kinds: the souls of the people of the world, which were also called Gog and Magog, the souls of the people of religions and the souls of the people of God. Wisdom demanded that first the souls of the people of religion must be observed. Thus, Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c) saw such people in the west of the light of guidance. They had the capability of doing both good and evil. Thereafter, he reached the east of spirituality, where he saw such souls upon whom the sun of the light of guidance was always rising directly. These were the souls of the people of God, who had nothing but goodness. In the end, Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c) reached such a place of spirituality where it becomes possible for the Vicegerent of God, i.e., the Messenger or the Imām to protect the *mu'mins* against the evil and corruption of the souls of the people of the world, in which case it also becomes obligatory for the *mu'mins* to obey his *farmān* absolutely.

The Imām protects the *mu'mins* against the evil and corruption of the souls of the people of the world

Gog and Magog are the souls of the people of the world

Thus, in order to be protected from the evil and corruption of the souls of the people of the world, i.e., Gog and Magog, the *mu'mins* appealed to Ḥaẓrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c), who was the Imām of the time. As a result, through his spiritual

knowledge and the physical action of the followers, a strong wall of protection and safety was erected in front of Gog and Magog, which they could not scale nor pierce. Ḥaḡrat-i Zu'l-Qarnayn^(c) said: “This is a mercy from my Lord, but when the promise (of Resurrection) of my Lord comes to pass, He will smash it to pieces. And the promise of my Lord is true” (18:98).

There is a clear indication in the wise Qur'ān that, in the beginning of the cycle of Resurrection, i.e., cycle of spirituality, Gog and Magog (i.e., the souls of the people of the world) would be given an opportunity for some time, during which some of them will be involved in evil and corruption physically and some of them spiritually. Then, after a period the trumpet (*ṣūr*) will be blown, due to which all the souls of the creatures of the world will be strung in one single thread of communal unity.

In another place of the glorious Qur'ān, Gog and Magog are mentioned as follows: “And there is a ban upon any community which We have destroyed, that they shall not return (i.e., it is impossible for the souls of the people who have been destroyed by Divine punishment to return to this world), until Gog and Magog are let loose, and they hasten out of every height” (21:95-96). It should be noted that here, by “every height” is meant the spirituality of real *mu'mins*, which is higher than that of the people of the world. Since Ḥaḡrat-i Isrāfīl^(c) will blow the trumpet from the spirituality of real *mu'mins*, therefore Gog and Magog and all the other souls will run towards the sound of the trumpet, whence they will scatter again in the world, as the holy Qur'ān says: “Then when the trumpet will be blown, behold! They will start running from their graves towards their Lord” (36:51). That is, all the souls that are buried in human bodies, rising from there by God's command, will gather near the trumpet of Isrāfīl, which is in the real *mu'mins* and where the light of their Lord is in the form of the Supreme Name.

In the beginning of the cycle of Resurrection, Gog and Magog are involved in evil and corruption

Ḥaḡrat-i Isrāfīl^(c) blows the trumpet from the spirituality of real *mu'mins*

KEY 16

Creation and Guidance of Everything

In verse (20:50) of the holy Qur'ān, it is said: “[Moses said] Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation (i.e., material shape and form), then guided it.”

Everything exists eternally in the world of Command in an intellectual and spiritual state

Whatever is comprehensible among the innumerable wisdoms of this sacred universal law is explained here. Firstly, this verse says in the language of wisdom that everything exists eternally (*azalī wa abadī*) in the world of Command i.e., the spiritual world, whose existence and form is purely in an intellectual and spiritual state.

Secondly, the realities of the world of Command are called “*ashyā*” (things). In fact it is they which are things in the real sense, because every material thing of this world is but a shadow of the real thing of that world. In reality, this means that in “everything” there is the mention of the things of the world of Command. However, it is also true that where “everything” is mentioned, the shadows of the real things are also included.

The physical form of things is repeatedly effaced and created but their spiritual form is imperishable

Thirdly, whereas everything in the world of Command exists forever, each thing is also given a material existence in the world of creation. This is the meaning of God giving everything its creation. Whereas material existence i.e., the physical form of things is repeatedly effaced and created, their spiritual form is imperishable.

God is the light of guidance for everything in the exterior and the interior of the universe

Fourthly, everything which exists in this world and in the hereafter simultaneously is given guidance, that is, guided according to its need. The fountainhead of this all-embracing and ever-reaching guidance of both the worlds is God's light, as it is said: “Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth”. This means that God is the light of guidance for everything in the exterior and the interior of the universe. However, as it is said, this guidance acts according to the stages (*darajāt*) of the existents and creatures.

At this juncture, we should discuss a little about the guidance of the things of the world of creation. From the absolute light of God, about whose recognition this book is written, guidance is first of all given to the skies, the planets and the stars, on the strength of which, not only did they come into existence, but are also engaged in their respective tasks of orbiting in their assigned circles.

Then on the second level, guidance is given to the four elements, which is hidden in the natural state of heat, coldness, dryness and moisture. The guidance of the third stage is given to the three kingdoms of nature: mineral, vegetative and animal, and it (guidance) is given in accordance with their respective stages. For example, guidance to minerals is concealed in their natural state; to vegetables it is in the form of the faculties of the vegetative soul; to animals it is in the form of the sensory or animal soul and the guidance of humankind is through the conscious faculties of the rational soul.

Since the rational soul or the human soul, is linked to the animal soul on the one hand and on the other it is also linked with angelic forces, hence groups of diverse views and numerous individuals of different habits are included in the extraordinarily vast circle of humanity. Thus, it became imperative that the guidance which humankind needed from the light of God be received gradually, according to the changing circumstances of the people. Indeed, this is the case.

Knowledge for a united humanity

When it is true that the guidance, which the children of Ādam receive from God's light is in different stages, then it is imperative to ascertain which is the supreme rank of guidance. In this connection, when we have recourse to the wise Qur'ān we find that the supreme guidance is that of *ma'rifat*, which is the stage of the true recognition of the manifest Imām and the utmost proximity of the light of guidance.

Guidance acts according to the stages of the existents and creatures

The human soul is linked to the animal soul on the one hand and with angelic forces on the other

The supreme guidance is that of *ma'rifat*

KEY 17

Perishing of Everything

In the end of *Sūratu'l-Qaṣaṣ* (28:88), it is said: “Everything will perish save His Countenance (*wajhahu*). His is the command and unto Him you will be returned.”

“*Wajhu'llāh*” literally means Countenance of God and its *ta'wili* allusion is to the Imām of the time, just as Mawlā ‘Alī^(e) says: “*Anā wa'llāhi wajhu'llāh* (By God, I am God's Countenance)”. Also, the holy Prophet has said: “*Man ra'ānī faqad ra'al-ḥaqq* (He who saw me, saw God)”.

God, may He be exalted, has considered the light of Prophethood and Imāmat His Spirit, as the wise Qur'ān says that God breathed His Spirit into Ādam. Also note in the Qur'ānic story of Ḥaẓrat-i Maryam^(e) that God considered the Holy Spirit as His Own Spirit. It is then not surprising that God, may He be exalted, may consider the Imām of the time His Countenance, in the sense that the *didār* (vision) of the Imām is the *didār* of God and the recognition of the Imām is the recognition of God, as the blessed *farmān* of *Amīrul-Mu'minīn* ‘Alī^(e) says: “I am the Countenance of God (i.e., facing me is facing God); I am the side of God (i.e., reaching me is sitting by the side of God and to reach His extreme proximity); I am the Hand of God (i.e., whatever He does, He does through me; whatever comes from Him, comes through my hand - and my doing is called His Act); I am the Eye of God (i.e., I see the universe through His eye: the world to me is like the pupil of the eye); I am the Speaking Qur'ān, I am the True Proof (i.e., my existence is truth and proof of the existence of Truth); I am the Guarded Tablet (i.e., I am the bearer of the Divine secrets); I am the Supreme Pen (i.e., whatever God has written on the surface of the world of possibility, He has done so through me); I am *alif lām mīm zālīka'l-kitāb* (i.e., the Book of Action and the Book of Speech, both are my true existence); I am *kaf-hā-yā-‘ayn-ṣād*; I am *tā-hā*; I am the *hā* of *ḥawāmim*; I am the *tā* of *ṭawāsin*; I am the one who is praised in “*Hal atā* (76)””; I am the dot beneath the *bā*, (in which the entire Book is gathered)” (*Kawkab-i Durri*).

God breathed His
Spirit into Ādam

The Imām of the time
is God's Countenance

When it is not unusual for God to consider the holy Prophet's blessed hand as His Own Hand, although He in no way is a human being with a hand, then it also is not unusual for Him to consider the True Imām as His Countenance, in the sense that Imām is His light.

The holy Qur'ān mentions God's Shin (68:42), although God, the Holy, is above and free from limbs and organs. When it is appropriate for the purpose of example and *ta'wil*, then it is also true that the Imām of the time is the Countenance of God, because in the concept of Imām are hidden the secrets of God's recognition.

In verse (39:56) of the holy Qur'ān, "*janbu'llāh*" (Side of God) is mentioned literally. When the relation of the Side is acceptable for God, who can doubt about the present and living Imām being His Countenance and His Side?

When it is established that the Imām of the time is the Countenance of God, by God's grace we can now discuss the *ta'wil* of "perishing of everything". So, the sacred universal law under discussion was: "Everything is perishable save His Countenance. His is the Command and unto Him you will be returned" (28:88).

It should be noted that there are at least four places of *ta'wil* of this verse. The first one is that there are certain such selected servants of God, may He be exalted, in whose luminous conception and imagination or before their inner eye, everything of the universe and the existents perishes in the immense theophanies of the secrets of Divine light, as is said in the holy Qur'ān: "And whithersoever you turn, there is the Countenance of God" (2:115). This is the meaning of the perishing of everything, the everlasting of God's light, the coming of the cycle of the Divine Kingdom and the return of a *mu'min* to God [in his personal world].

The *ta'wil* of the second place is that in this very world a time is going to come in which spirituality will hold sway; every material object, being subdued under the spiritual forces, will be virtually reduced to non-existence. That spiritual power will be that of God's Countenance, i.e., His light. At that time, there will only be the Kingdom of God on the surface of the earth, and in that state *mu'mins* will be returned to God. This is the perishing of everything in the collective world of the *mu'mins*.

The secrets of God's recognition are hidden in the concept of Imām

A time is going to come in which spirituality will hold sway

How everything
perishes in the
collective resurrection

In the world of
spirituality,
everything flourishes
with the life and
wisdom of the Holy
Spirit

The *ta'wil* of the third place is that when a *mu'min*, upon having left this world, enters the paradise of the spirituality and luminosity of the Imām of his time, everything perishes before him except the light of the Imām. In the personal paradise of such a *mu'min*, there is only the Kingdom of God. It is obvious that in this state, he will have returned to God. This is the meaning or the *ta'wil* of the perishing of everything in the individual resurrection of a *mu'min*.

The *ta'wil* of the fourth place is that, at a certain time this material world i.e., the entire universe will perish completely, as has also been mentioned in Key 9. In that case, the servants of God will find themselves alive in the light of God, which is the spiritual world and the eternal paradise. In that state, the Kingdom will be God's and the *mu'mins* will have returned unto Him. This is the perishing of everything in the collective resurrection.

A clear example of the above-mentioned *ta'wil* is that, when someone is in the world of dream, everything other than the world of dream is annihilated for him, that is, this material universe along with all its existents and creatures becomes invisible and hidden from his sight, but in his world of dream everything exists under the sway of and has recourse to the dream. This is the example of the individual as well as the collective spirituality and resurrection. However, as the proverb says: *chih nisbat khāk rā bā 'ālam-i pāk* (So the low bears no comparison to the high), how is comparison possible between the dark and dead world of dreams and the radiant and resplendent world of spirituality and Resurrection, where everything flourishes with the life and wisdom of the Holy Spirit!

KEY 18

Everything in the Manifest Imām

In verse (36:12), the Lord of the world says: “And We have encompassed everything in (the luminosity of) the manifest Imām.”

Question: If this title of the “manifest Imām” is meant for the present Imām only, please explain to us how everything of the universe and the existents, i.e., all physical and spiritual things are encompassed in the person of the Imām?

Answer: Yes, the “manifest Imām” is the blessed title of the present Imām, because he has the status of the sacred light of God, the Holy, which has encompassed the expanses of the earth and the heavens.

There are several concepts of how the Imām of the time, as the absolute light of God, may He be exalted, comprehends all things of the universe. One of them is that there is a continuous intellectual and spiritual (i.e., conscious and living) reflection of the things of both the worlds in the inner (*bāṭin*) mirror of the True Imām. In other words, the living picture and form of everything exists on the Guarded Tablet (*lawḥ-i maḥfūz*) of the luminous heart of the holy Imām.

The second concept is that the True Imām is the soul and intellect of this great universe in the sense that the intellect of the Imām is the Universal Intellect and his soul is the Universal Soul. Thus, all intellects and all souls are encompassed in his intellect and his soul.

The third is that, since the True Imām is the Eye of God, therefore, the external and the internal states of all existents are confined and encompassed within his sight, as Mawlānā ‘Alī^(e) says: “I am God's Eye in the earth and His Speaking Tongue among His creatures. I am that light of God that cannot be extinguished. I am God's door through which one can reach Him and I am His *ḥujjat* (proof) for His servants.”

The manifest Imām has the status of the sacred light of God

There is a continuous intellectual and spiritual reflection of the things of both the worlds in the inner mirror of the True Imām

The True Imām is the soul and intellect of this great universe

The True Imām is the Eye of God

The manifest Imām is the sun of the souls of all creatures and all things

The fourth concept of everything being contained in the sacred person of the manifest Imām is that the Holy Spirit of the exalted Imām has the status of the Universal Soul, the Supreme Spirit, the Spirit of spirits and the spiritual world. Therefore, the manifest Imām is the sun of the souls of all creatures and all things. Now the example of those souls that have come into this world is like that of the rays of the sun that have reached the earth's surface; and the souls, which having come into the world, have merged in their Origin or that have not yet come into the world, resemble that substance of the light that exists in the sun's fountainhead. Thus, the souls that are still in the sacred light of the manifest Imām and also the ones which have come into the world, are all confined within the personality of the Imām of the time, just as the rays of the sun that have not yet emitted from the sun are definitely confined in its light, but even those that are emitted and spread in the six directions of the universe are also confined in it (the sun) due to their link with it.

The holy Prophet was the ever-reaching and all-embracing universal mercy

In this connection, in addition to these concepts, there is also a Qur'ānic proof mentioned about the holy Prophet: "We did not send you except as a mercy for all the worlds (i.e., the whole universe)" (21:107). This verse shows that the holy Prophet, as the ever-reaching and all-embracing universal mercy, contained the entire universe and all existents within himself, as mentioned in the preceding pages that God, may He be exalted, has comprehended everything i.e., the universe, in His mercy and knowledge, as the Qur'ān says: "Our Lord! You have comprehended everything in mercy and knowledge" (40:7). Since the manifest Imām is the Vicegerent of God and the holy Prophet, therefore the Imām's spirituality is God's ever-reaching mercy and his light is God's all-encompassing knowledge. Thus, it is evident that the spirituality and luminosity of the manifest Imām surround the expanses of the earth and the heavens.

The Imām's spirituality is God's ever-reaching mercy and his light is God's all-encompassing knowledge

A few examples of how all the things of the universe are contained in the light of the manifest Imām are presented in the following:

1. The sun has immersed the entire solar system in its unbounded ocean of light even though it is a limited body within it.

2. It is a sure fact that the holy Qur'ān's entire exoteric and esoteric is contained in the dot under the *bā'* of *bismi'llāh*.
3. The seed of a tree contains a kernel, within which is a tiny dot in which is hidden a huge tree.
4. An entire universe of souls of the people was hidden in the loins of Ḥazrat-i Ādam^(c).
5. There are many subtle worlds contained in the human heart and mind, such as the world of dream, the world of imagination, the world of thinking, the world of intellect and wisdom, the world of experiences, the world of love and affection, etc.
6. There is a dot of wisdom in the heart of a believing servant (*bandah-yi mu'min*) and within this dot is so much capacity that it can contain God, the Beneficent, and all His attributes of majesty and beauty.
7. The holy Spirits of all the Prophets, the heavenly Books, the Divine sciences and the faithful souls of all the communities (*ummats*) were gathered together in the blessed personality of the holy Prophet. Alluding to all these realities, he said: "I am the house of wisdom and 'Alī is its door". This means that the light of the holy Prophet, which contained everything, is also in the manifest Imām.
8. This great universe has come into being by the two letters (*kāf* and *nūn* - *Kun* - Be) of the Divine Command and eventually it is going to merge in it.
9. Man has intellect and knowledge in his heart and mind, and that intellect and knowledge contain man. That is, man is confined within the circle of the things known (*ma'lūmāt*) to him.
10. On the Day of Judgement the entire earth will be in the Fist of God and the heavens will be rolled up in His right Hand (39:67).
11. Potentially all the sciences of the entire world are contained in an ink-pot, in the sense that every kind of writing and knowledge can be produced from it.

Few examples of how all the things of the universe are contained in the light of the manifest Imām

An entire universe of souls of the people was hidden in the loins of Ḥazrat-i Ādam^(c)

Potentially all the sciences of the entire world are contained in an ink-pot

Thus, from the above arguments and examples, it has become clear that the exterior and interior of the universe and existents are confined in the circle of light of the manifest Imām. Praise be to God, this universal law stands as the key to that unique treasure in which the keys of all hidden treasures of the heaven and the earth are preserved, which were mentioned in Key 10.

KEY 19

Kingdom of Everything

It is said in verse (36:83): “Purified is He in Whose hand is the kingdom (*malakūt*) of everything! Unto Him you will be returned”.

In the world of command everything exists in a pure spirituality

“*Malakūt*” means kingdom, dominion, spirituality, world of souls, wonders and the world of angels; “*malakūt* of everything” means the spirituality of everything, spiritual miracles of everything and the spiritual form of everything that is in the world of command where everything exists in a pure spirituality free from any material or physical state. An example of this state is the world of dream, where all things exist in a spiritual state free from body and matter.

Everything of the universe and existents is in God's hand

Malakūt also means the angelic and spiritual kingdom of everything, because although everything of the universe and existents is in God's hand and will, it appears in the physical and material world and the people can see it, whereas the spiritual existence of things is not such that everyone can observe its wonders. So, with respect to this specific characteristic of spiritual existence, it is said that the spirituality of everything is in God's hand. By “God's hand” is meant the master of the command (*ulu'l-amr*), i.e., the Imām of the time, because after the Prophet, the hand which takes *bay'at* (allegiance) from the *mu'mins* on behalf of God is that of the True Imām.

By God's hand is meant the Imām of the time

This means that the spirituality of all things can be observed in the radiance of the light of Prophethood and Imāmat. Then as a result of attaining the realities and recognitions of all things, the return to God, i.e., His recognition (*ma'rifat*) is possible. This is the meaning of the context of the words in the above-mentioned verse.

The hand of God is mentioned in this blessed universal law. Nonetheless, it is obvious that God's transcendence (*subḥāniyyat*), that is, His being free from any attributes, is also alluded to. Therefore, by God's hand, whether we mean His Will or His Power, its ultimate *ta'wīl* has to be the

ulu'l-amr, the manifest Imām. The *malakūt* of everything is in the light of the manifest Imām and nothing is outside his light.

Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e), in addition to being the *ulu'l-amr*, the Imām of his time from God, had also seen the *malakūt* (spirituality) of the heavens and the earth. Since he was the Imām of his time and he had seen the world of *malakūt* (spirituality) with his inner eye in his own light, he said in the language of wisdom: He who follows me will be able to see the world of *malakūt* (spirituality) according to his capacity. These realities are mentioned in verses (6:76 and 14:36), but without the powers of faith and certitude, it is extremely hard to believe in them. The realities of a verse of the wise Qur'ān can duly be understood, if the related Qur'ānic subject is deeply studied and the luminous *ta'yid* of the Imām is granted.

In the context of following Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) and the observations of the *malakūt* (spiritual world) another verse is: “Lo! Those of humankind who have the best claim to Ibrāhīm are those who followed him, and this Prophet [Ḥaẓrat-i Muḥammad] and those who believe (with him); and God is the protecting friend of the believers” (3:68). This means that from among all the people, those who had more characteristics, more friendship and who were closely related in a spiritual and luminous sense to Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e), were those who followed him in a true sense, such as the Prophets and Imāms from his progeny and their real *mu'mins*, as well as the holy Prophet and the *mu'mins* from his *ummat*.

Several wisdoms appear from this verse, which is related to following Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e). The first wisdom is that the real obedience of Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) *Khalilu'llāh* is to follow him on the spiritual and luminous path, on which he had seen the wonders of the *malakūt* of the heavens and the earth, the living proof of which are all the Prophets and Imāms from his progeny and also the holy Prophet Muḥammad^(s) and all the holy Imāms from his progeny.

The second wisdom is that, whether it is following Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) or any other Messenger, it is only in two forms and there cannot be a third form. The first form is direct

The realities of a verse of the wise Qur'ān can duly be understood, if the luminous *ta'yid* of the Imām is granted

The real obedience of the manifest Imām is to follow him on the spiritual and luminous path

following and the second is indirect following. Direct following is during his lifetime and indirect following is after his demise, through his Book and true successor.

The third wisdom is that in order to follow Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) *Khalīlu'llāh*, the chain of Imāmat continued from his dutiful son Ḥaẓrat-i Ismā'īl^(e) till Ḥaẓrat-i Abū Ṭālib^(e), without which the real following of Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) was impossible, because his heavenly Book did not exist in front of the people.

The fourth wisdom is that the holy Prophet, before his annunciation as such, used to follow Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e) through the Imām of that time.

God is the *walī* of
mu'mins

The fifth wisdom is that in the above-mentioned Qur'ānic verse (3:68) it is said that God, may He be exalted, is the *walī* of *mu'mins*. *Walī* means accomplisher, friend, supporter, governor, master etc. However, its real meaning is that God has never left *mu'mins* without the manifest Imām in any time. Since He has made the manifest Imām encompass and comprehend everything, his presence in every period is indispensable, just as in the material and physical world there cannot be anything without time and space.

The *malakūt* or
spirituality of
everything is in the
sacred light of the
manifest Imām

The gist of this essay is that when the manifest Imām comprehends everything in his sacred light, then it is true that the *malakūt* or spirituality of everything is also in his sacred light, as it is clear from the example of Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e), who undoubtedly was the manifest Imām in his own time. Thus, all the topics in the holy Qur'ān are connected with the topic of Ḥaẓrat-i Ibrāhīm^(e), and his topic is connected with the topic of the manifest Imām.

KEY 20

Comprehension of Everything in Mercy and Knowledge

The holy Qur'ān says in verse (40:7): “Our Lord! You comprehend all things in mercy and knowledge.”

This noble verse alludes in a wisdom-filled way to the fact that the living mercy of God, may He be exalted, is the spirituality of the Universal Soul and His living knowledge is the luminosity of the Universal Intellect. All the things of the universe and the existents are submerged in the two oceans of spirituality and luminosity. This fact, in reality, is such that the Universal Body, which consists of the heavens, the stars, the planets and all the material objects, is submerged in the spirituality of the Universal Soul. The Universal Soul in turn, along with all these things (i.e., the Universal Body) is submerged in the luminosity of the Universal Intellect. So, this is the [meaning of] comprehension of everything in mercy and knowledge.

In addition, there is a special form of the comprehension of all things of the universe and the existents in mercy and knowledge, which is that all things, in addition to their external and material form, are also living and existing spiritually in mercy and intellectually in knowledge. In other words, everything exists simultaneously in three forms or in three places. That is, physically it exists in the Universal Body, spiritually in the Universal Soul and intellectually in the Universal Intellect.

A clear proof of this fact (that everything exists in the physical world in a material form, in the world of souls in a spiritual form and in the world of intellects in an intellectual form) is that in pre-eternity (*azal*), the Pen of the Universal Intellect, by the Divine Command, had inscribed the spiritual i.e., living pictures of all things of the world of its existence, on the Guarded Tablet of the Universal Soul, despite the fact that the things of the world of the Universal Intellect remained intact in their own places. Similarly, in accordance with the spiritual pictures

The living mercy of God is the spirituality of the Universal Soul and His living knowledge is the luminosity of the Universal Intellect

All things, in addition to their material form, are also living and existing spiritually in mercy and intellectually in knowledge

The shadow of the intellect is the soul and the shadow of the soul is the body

Mu'mins are angels in their souls and human beings in their bodies

The supreme Soul of the manifest Imām is the source of mercy and his perfect Intellect is the source of knowledge for all the worlds

of the Universal Soul or the Guarded Tablet, the material things of the world were created without anything being diminished from them.

From the above description, not only is it proven that everything is comprehended in mercy and knowledge, but it is also learnt that mercy is the attribute of the Universal Soul and knowledge is the attribute of the Universal Intellect. In addition, it also became evident that everything exists simultaneously in the intellect, soul and body. As one would say, the shadow of the intellect is the soul and the shadow of the soul is the body.

It is mentioned in a blessed *farmān* of the exalted Imām that *mu'mins* are angels in their souls and human beings in their bodies. It is certain that the *mu'mins* who are angels in their souls are also angels in their intellects. The proof of this fact is the external existence of a human being, which consists of three things: body, soul and intellect.

When it is accepted that everything which is in the physical world, is also in the spiritual world as well as in the intellectual world, and it is also accepted that the spiritual world is the Universal Soul and the intellectual world is the Universal Intellect, this results in that the soul of the leader of the world of humanity, namely the manifest Imām is the spiritual angel who is called the Universal Soul and his intellect is the intellectual angel, who is called the Universal Intellect. The gist of this essay is that the supreme Soul of the manifest Imām is the source of mercy for the universe and his perfect Intellect is the source of knowledge for all the worlds.

KEY 21

Speaking of Everything

In verse (41:21), it is said: “They will say that God, Who has granted speech to everything, has also granted us speech.”

Before explaining this blessed universal law, we should say something about the reality of speech or the power of speaking. So it is necessary to know that although according to some sages, speech is the property of the human soul, in reality it is first the property of the intellect and it is the intellect through which the human soul receives the faculty of speech.

The first proof of the fact that the human soul receives the faculty of speech through the intellect is that, in the order of the world of religion, the foremost and highest rank is the Divine Word (*kalimah-yi bāri*), which is also called the Word “Be (*kun*)”, and the “Universal Command (*amr-i kull*)”. This Divine Word is like the speech of the World of Religion. By the Command of “Be (*kun*)” the Angel of the Universal Intellect, who is like the intellect of the World of Religion, came into existence and from the Universal Intellect, was created the Universal Soul, which stands for the soul of the World of Religion. From this simile it is evident that the perfection of the soul is by the Intellect and that of the Intellect is by the speech.

The second proof is that the human body depends on the soul; the soul is protected by the intellect and the intellect is nourished by the speech.

The third proof is that the intellect cannot be without speech, the proof of which is an angel, but the soul can be without it, the example of which is an animal.

The fourth proof is that knowledge, whether it is inspired (*ladunni*=^c*aṭā'i*, given) or acquired (*iktisābi*), it nonetheless comes in the form of speech, including the sign of revelation, which too is a kind of speech. It is first

The human soul receives the faculty of speech through the intellect

In the order of the world of religion, the foremost and highest rank is the Divine Word

The indication of revelation is also a form of speech, which is first accepted by intellect and consciousness, and then it reaches the soul.

accepted by the intellect and consciousness and then it reaches the soul.

Knowledge comes in the form of speech

The fifth proof is that a child who cannot hear from the very beginning is called deaf. Deafness results in being dumb or unable to speak. Such a child is deprived of the wealth of intellect. Why is this so? The reason for it is that since he was deprived of the faculty of hearing, he also became deprived of the faculty of speech, intellect and knowledge. This proves that the means of the perfection of the intellect is the faculty of speech.

The partial intellect of a *mu'min* attains perfection from the wisdom-filled *farmān* of the Imām of the time

From the above-mentioned proofs, it is clearly established that just as in the World of Religion, the Universal Intellect came into existence from the Divine Word, namely, the command of “Be (*kun*)” and the Universal Soul from the Universal Intellect, similarly, in the personal world of a *mu'min*, the partial intellect attains perfection from the wisdom-filled *farmān* of the Imām of the time, which is like the Divine Word, and then from such an intellect his [soul attains perfection]. That is, his soul becomes the soul of faith (*rūḥu'l-imān*). Then as a result, his inner senses are awakened and can observe the realities of things (*ḥaqā'iq-i ashyā'*) which is that all things have three kinds of existence: physical, spiritual and intellectual. Everything in its intellectual and spiritual existence continues to speak. In addition [he observes that even] the physical existence of things is not devoid of miraculous speech.

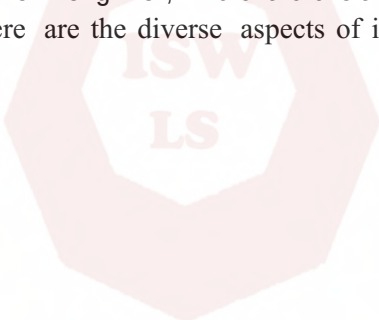
Physical things speak in two ways

Thus, the external and physical things speak in two ways: by mute expression (*zabān-i ḥāl*) and by the spoken word (*zabān-i qāl*). Since mute expression is a universally accepted fact, therefore there is no need to explain its nature. We will only explain the nature of the spoken word. The spoken word also is in two forms: first, the voice and sound of things under the control of the Holy Spirit turn into miraculous speech and *zīkr-ū tasbiḥ* (remembering God and extolling Him that He is free from any attributes). Secondly, such a miraculous sound is produced from things which do not have any sound that it cannot be duly explained.

In the state of the unveiling of spirituality, all things do the *zīkr-ū tasbiḥ* of God

When all things, with and without sound, start to do the *zīkr-ū tasbiḥ* of God with the spoken word, then from one

point of view we can say that God, by His Perfect Power, gave them speech. From another, it can be said that it is the miracle of the mu'min's own soul of faith. In a third, it can also be accepted that it is the Holy Spirit's miracle. From a fourth point of view, it is also true to say that all this is the state of the unveiling of spirituality (kashf-i rāʿiyyat kà ʿÀlam) through the light of the manifest Imām. Thus, all these points of view are true and correct in their respective places and none of them is wrong. For, where there is the unity of all realities, there are the diverse aspects of its state.



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KEY 22

Pairs of All Things

God, may He be exalted, says in verse (51:49): “And We created everything in pairs, so that you may remember.”

As was briefly mentioned in Key 9 all things are created in pairs. Here, the same theme is going to be explained in some detail. Everything has an opposite, for example man and woman, day and night, light and darkness, dryness and moisture, heaven and earth, spiritual and material, happiness and sorrow, affluence and poverty, this world and the hereafter, existence and non-existence, creation and command, etc.

It is extremely necessary to know that there are two kinds of pairs: In one, both its members can live together, such as man and woman; and in the other, its members are mutually exclusive such as day and night.

Similarly, if we consider the survival of this universe as the day and its annihilation as the night, they will also become a pair among the others mentioned above. However, it is necessary for the day and night of existence and non-existence, that is, the survival and annihilation of the universe, to continue forever. Indeed, it is a fact that day and night are an infinite chain or succession (of events).

By observing with insight in the light of the above-mentioned universal law, it becomes evident that the chain or succession of the existence and non-existence of the universe and its existents has neither a beginning nor an end. Rather, from this chain an extremely extensive circle of perpetuity is created, as in the example of day and night, the endless rotation of the survival and annihilation of the universe is established. Otherwise, if we accept that in the beginning there was nothing except God, and that this world came into existence by the command of God, and that again one day it will be annihilated, then this belief implies three things: first, non-existence, then existence and again non-existence. This belief will be without a pair,

Everything has an
opposite

The survival and
annihilation of the
universe continues
forever

while according to the above-mentioned universal law, there has to be an existence after a non-existence and a non-existence after an existence. For other than God, there cannot be anything without its pair.

Further, leaving aside existence, if we reflect on the state of non-existence, the same reality will appear clearly that nothing is exempt from the control of Divine Law. That is, the decree of “We created pairs” has to be equally applied to both the members of every pair. This means that just as existence is created by God, non-existence too is created by Him. When we accept that non-existence is not a thing or a condition which can be found by itself automatically without the control of the Divine Act, rather, whatever state or condition it may be in, it is created by God, then we have to also accept that non-existence is nothing but a transformed form of existence, just as night is a transformed form of day. Thus, the conclusion is that there is no non-existence which is not preceded by existence; and there is no existence that is not preceded by non-existence. Thus, in the holy Qur’ān, it is repeatedly said that, by the command of God, as the day is hidden in the night, the night is hidden in the day. In exactly the same way, existence is hidden in non-existence and non-existence in existence.

Some people believe that non-existence is a nonentity (*lā-shay’*) and that it is only a name without a named (i.e., an entity), but the fact is to the contrary, as the holy Qur’ān says: “It is He Who created death and life, so that He may test you as to who among you does good deeds” (67:2). From this verse, it is clear that non-existence and existence are both among the creatures of God. Thus, it is evident that non-existence is (also) a kind of creature which God has created from existence.

We accept both the realities of negation and affirmation. That is, undoubtedly everything becomes annihilated, but from that very annihilation, the same thing is created, as God, may He be exalted, says: “How disbelieve you in God when you were dead and He gave life to you! Then He will give you death, then life again, and then unto Him you will be returned” (2:28).

If you reflect well with a clear mind about the wisdom of this blessed verse, you will come to know that the human

Existence and non-existence are created by God

Existence is hidden in non-existence and non-existence in existence

Everything becomes annihilated and from that very annihilation, the same thing is created

Going to God's presence is not without paradise nor is paradise without God's presence

The existents and creatures continue to rotate on the circle of the existence and non-existence of the universe

soul is eternal. Its spiritual and physical life is endless. Thus, in the above verse it is alluded that humankind has repeatedly continued to pass through the experiences of life and death. At one time, he was in the Presence of God where there was the real paradise for him, but like Ḥaẓrat-i Ādam^(e), he too descended from there and came to this world due to some excuse and eventually he has to return there. Going to God's presence is not without paradise nor is paradise without God's presence.

The gist of this explanation is that all things are in pairs, and from each pair is created a circle, just as there is the circle of day and night. Similarly, there is the circle of the existence and non-existence of the universe, which is the greatest circle on which the existents and creatures continue to rotate, passing through life and death in turn.

Al-ḥamdu li'llāhi °alā iḥsānihi (Praise be to God for His favour)! All these maxims are in the treasures of the recognition of the manifest Imām and there is nothing outside this recognition. Therefore, it is necessary for a *mu'min* to be perfect in the recognition of the Imām and to study the books on the recognition of Imām regularly, so that the light of the secrets of Imāmat may be created in his heart.

Wa's-salām (Peace).

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Die before you die.	91
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I was a hidden treasure.	105
O ʿAlī there is a [special] house for you in paradise and you are the Zū'l-Qarnayn of this <i>ummat</i>	117
He who saw me, saw God.	122
I am the house of wisdom and ʿAlī is its door.	127

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By God, I am God's Countenance.	122
I am the Countenance of God (i.e. facing me is facing God); I am the side of God (i.e., reaching me is sitting by the side of God and to reach His extreme proximity); I am the Hand of God (i.e., whatever He does, He does through me; whatever comes from Him, comes through my hand - and my doing is called His Act); I am the Eye of God (i.e., I see the universe through His eye: the world to me is like the pupil of the eye); I am the Speaking Qur'ān, I am the True Proof (i.e. my existence is truth and proof of the existence of Truth); I am the Guarded Tablet (i.e., I am the bearer of the Divine secrets); I am the Supreme Pen (i.e., whatever God has written on the surface of the world of possibility, He has done so through me); I am <i>alif lām mīm zālīka'l-kitāb</i> (i.e., the Book of Action and the Book of Speech, both are my true existence); I am <i>kaf-hā-yā-ʿayn-ṣād</i> ; I am <i>ṭā-hā</i> ; I am the <i>hā</i> of <i>hawāmīm</i> ; I am the <i>ṭā</i> of <i>ṭawāsīm</i> ; I am the one who is praised in " <i>Hal atā</i> (76)"; I am the dot beneath the <i>bā'</i> (in which the entire Book is gathered).	122
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7. Caskets of Pearls (Part I)
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* Unpublished



*‘Allāmah
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He is the author of over a hundred books related to the esoteric interpretation of the holy Qur’ān. He writes both prose as well as poetry. He is the first person to have a Dīwān of poetry in Burushaski, his mother tongue, and is known as “Bābā-yi Burushaski” (Father of Burushaski) for his service to that language. He also composes poetry in three other languages: Urdu, Persian and Turkish. His contribution to spiritual science is widely recognized. His works include “Practical Sufism and Spiritual Science”, “Balance of Realities”, “What is Soul?”, “Book of Healing” and “The Wise Qur’ān and the World of Humanity”. He is the co-author of a German-Burushaski dictionary published by Heidelberg University, Germany and “Hunza Proverbs” published by Calgary University of Canada. He is a recipient of “Sitārah-yi Imtiyāz” awarded by the Government of Pakistan for his contribution to Literature.



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