

Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

Home > Ain-Al Hayat, The Essence of Life > Chapter 4: Refulgence Or Rays Of Light > The Sixth Ray Of Light: The Qualities Of The Imam

## **Chapter 4: Refulgence Or Rays Of Light**

## The First Ray Of Light: The Need For The Imam

The Imam is the empowered entity who has been appointed by Allah as the Vicegerent of the Prophet (S) as guide for the spiritual and the temporal affairs of the believers. It has already been explained in the earlier chapter that guidance is not possible without the presence of the Prophet or his Vicegerents at all times.

Imam Ar–Ridha' (as) has said that Allah has clearly ordered the people about the do's and don'ts. He has also warned that the people should not go against His Commandments and become cause of controversy and punishment. Therefore it is imperative that the people have a mentor ordained by Allah who can enforce the Commandments and guide the people. If this were not the case then everyone would go his own way running after selfish motives.

Allah, therefore, in His wisdom, has nominated an Imam (as) for every period to prevent the people from discord and make them follow the norms laid down by Allah.

It is an established fact that no society or sect has functioned without a leader. Then how was it possible for the all-knowing Allah to leave His Creations without an Imam to guide them on the right path.

It is narrated that a group of people went to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). At that moment the Imam (as) asked his student Hisham, to narrate the discussion he had with Umro bin Ubaid of Basra. Hisham said, "O Son of the Prophet (S)! I feel shy to speak in your presence."

The Imam (as) said, "you must comply with the orders of your Imam."

Hisham said, "O Imam (as)! There was a lot of talk about the erudition of Umro bin Ubaid in Basra and he used to lecture a group of Ahl–ul–Jamaa. Having heard a lot about him I went to the Basra Mosque to listen to his talk. Umro was sitting proudly clad in the raiment of the learned. The people were asking him questions and he was answering them. I was seated in the back row. I stood up and asked him:

O learned person! I am a traveller. Do I have your permission to ask you some questions. He replied, "yes." I asked him, "do you have eyes?" He replied, "O son! What sort of question you asked? What reply can I give to this foolish question!" I said, "Yes this is my question; please reply." He said, "Yes I do have eyes." I asked him, "What do you do with these eyes?" He said, "I see with my eyes." I asked, "Do you have a nose?" He said, "yes." I asked him, "What do you do with your nose." He replied, "I distinguish between fragrant and foul smells with my nose." I asked him, "Do you have a mouth?" He said, "yes" I asked, "What do you do with the mouth?" He replied, "I find the taste of things through my mouth." I asked him, "Do you have a tongue?" He said, "yes." I asked, "What do you do with your tongue?" He said, "I speak through my tongue." I asked, "Do you have ears?" He said, "yes" I asked, "What do you do with your ears?"

He said, "I hear with my ears."

```
I asked, "Do you have arms?"
He replied, "yes."
I asked, "What do you do with your arms?"
He replied, "I lift things with my arms."
I asked, "Do you have a heart?"
He said, "yes."
I asked, "What do you do with your heart?"
He replied, "With the heart, I distinguish things that happen to the different parts of my body and the
senses."
I asked him, "Are these limbs and senses subordinate to the heart?"
He replied, "yes."
I said, "How is it that in spite of being fit, the limbs and senses are dependent on the heart?"
He replied, "Whenever these parts of my body have a doubt about something they seek the advice of
the heart to convert the doubt into clarity and decision."
I asked, "This means that Allah has provided the heart in the human body to make decisions when the
limbs and the senses are in doubt?"
He said, "yes."
I asked, "O father of Marwan! God has not left the limbs and other parts of human body without the heart
that controls and guides them. Is it possible that he would leave the world without an Imam or a guide?"
The scholar of Basra sat quiet for a long while. Then he turned towards me and asked, "Are you
Hisham?"
I replied, "No."
He asked, "Are you Hisham's companion?"
I replied, "No."
He asked, "Where do you hail from?"
I replied, "I am an inhabitant of Kufa."
```

Hearing this he said, "Then! I have no doubt you are Hisham!" Then getting up he embraced me and made me sit near him. After this dialogue Umro refrained from making any remarks against the True Faith.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) smiled and asked, "O Hisham! Where did you learn all this?"

Hisham said, "Master! These thoughts just came to my mind."

The Imam (as) said, "the things which came to you as an intuition are recorded in the books of Ibrahim and Musa (as)."

Imam Zainul 'Abidin (as) has said, "we are the Vicegerents of Allah and the Prophet (S) for the people of this world. We are the Masters of the pious and the shield against the retribution of Allah for them, the same way as the stars are the shields for the inhabitants of the sky. We are the people for whom, and because of whom, Allah has protected and kept the earth intact. With our intercession the rain falls. If the earth were devoid of us, the Imams (as), then it would break and its inhabitants would perish in the debris."

Then the Imam (as) added, "Ever since Allah created Adam (as), the earth has never been without a Vicegerent (*Hujjat*). This *Hujjat* or *Caliph* of *Allah* has always been there, either publicly proclaimed or in the state of hiding. If such was not the case, then there wouldn't have been the worshippers of *Allah* on this earth."

The narrator adds that he asked the Imam (as), "O son of the Prophet (S)! If the *Hujjat* or *Imam* remains in hiding, then what advantage will be there?"

The Imam (as) replied, "The Imam (as) remaining in hiding is like the time when the sun goes into hiding. You do understand the advantage accruing while the sun remains in hiding!"

Jabir Jaafi narrates that he asked Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) about the need of the people for prophets and Imams.

The Imam (as) replied, "The Prophet (S) or his Vicegerents are necessary for the human race to remain in a constant state of progress and protect them from Allah's Punishment through their Intercession."

Therefore, Allah has Himself observed, "O My Habeeb (*the endearment Allah has used for the Prophet Muhammad*)! As long as you are on the earth, I shall not inflict My *azaab* (punishment) on its inhabitants" The Prophet of Allah (S) has said, "The stars provide protection to the denizens of the skies so also my *Ahl–ul–Bayt*, the members of my family, are a guarantee for the protection of the people of the earth. If the stars are obliterated from the sky, the sky wouldn't exist. Similarly, if my Vicegerents are not on the earth, then the earth too would vanish."

The Prophet (S)'s Ahl-ul-Bayt is the group of Infallible members of the Prophet (S)'s family about whom

Allah says, "O believers! Obey Allah, His Prophet (S) and the *Uli al Amr*." *Uli al Amr* are those Infallible persons who are free of all sin, are pure and *Masoom* or Innocent, and the chosen people of Allah. Allah provides sustenance to the people with the blessings of these Infallible persons. The Ahl–ul–Bayt are with the *Qur'an* and the *Qur'an* is with them.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "If only two persons remain on the earth, one of them would be the *Imam* (as) of the time." He also said, "Jibrael came to the Prophet (S) and said, 'Allah has observed that He would not make the earth void of the Imams (as) and the learned (*Aalams*) who would instruct the people the ways of obeying Me and following My Commands. I shall not allow an interregnum between two Prophets (S) that the people don't remain without Guidance. I shall not leave the Satan unfettered that he goes about misguiding the people and they remain without the Divine *Hadi*, the Guide. This Guide, either with his physical presence, or from hiding, would continue to provide guidance and advice to the believers."

The Imam (as) also said, "Never shall this earth be without the person who will not warn the people who commit excesses in the Faith or make distortions (*thareef*) in the words, arrangement and interpretation or commentary of the *Qur'an*.

Besides everything, it is common sense that to keep the people of the world on the Right Path, an Imam, Guide and Leader is necessary at all times. It is also necessary that the *Imam* (*as*) should be appointed by Allah (*Mansoos min Allah*). When Allah has provided norms for every aspect of human life in the Book, then how would he leave the selection for the august office of the Imam to the discretion of the poor intellects of men.

All the Prophets (S) of the past themselves nominated their Vicegerents or successors. How is it possible that the Last Prophet (S), the Most Immaculate of all the Prophets (S) would keep quiet on the crucial aspect of succession after him. All the earlier prophets (as) were certain that there would be Prophets to follow them. Even if they did not appoint their Vicegerents, their followers would not have remained without Divine Guidance.

But the last of the Prophets (S) knew that after him, till the Day of Reckoning, there would not be another Prophet to come. In these circumstances it was imperative for him to nominate a Line of Vicegerents who would keep his people Guided till the Final Day. The Prophet (S) was so careful about his succession that whenever he was absent on his campaigns, he would take care to nominate a vicegerent to take care of the affairs in his absence. Then how was it possible that he would not prepare for his *Ghaebat al–Kubra*, The Final Departure, from this world, without nominating his successor and vizier.

For his followers he has given the advice that every individual must draw a will when the time for departure from this world draws nigh, then how is it possible that he himself would have abruptly departed intestate from the world! There is also a condition that the Successor (*Wasi*) and the *Imam* (the

spiritual and temporal leader) has to be a *Masoom* (immaculate and infallible) individual. Such Imams are the Chosen of Allah.

Saad bin Abdallah Qummi reports that once he had a discussion with a hardcore imposter. The man said, "Pity on you *Rawafiz* (dissenters) that you speak ill of the Prophet (S)'s companions and blame them that they had no affection for him. To the contrary, Abu Bakr, because of his eminence being one of the earliest converts to Islam, was better than all other companions of the Prophet (S).

The Prophet (S) used to hold him so close to his heart that on the eve of the Migration (*Hegira*) took Abu Bakr along in the cave for hiding to save him from the sword of the enemy and later on become his successor and Caliph. 'Ali (as) was left to sleep in the Prophet (S)'s bed that even if he was assassinated, it wouldn't have made any big difference in the matter of succession. Abu Bakr was the first to adopt Islam. Tell me, was his conversion voluntary or under any duress?"

Saad thought for a while, "If I accepted that the conversion was voluntary, then the person would say that there wouldn't be any question of *nifaq* (hypocrisy) in the conduct of Abu Bakr. And if I said that the conversion of Abu Bakr was under duress, then it would be a wrong statement that Islam had not become such a big force at that time that one could even imagine any use of coercion.

I was totally confused and sought some time from him to be able to answer his question. Along with some more queries I went to Sammara to meet Imam Hasan Al-'Askari (as). Along with me came Ahmed bin Ishaq, the Representative (*Vakil*) of the Imam (as) who carried with him 160 sachets of Dinarts and Dirhams as a presentation to the Imam from the Shi'as of our place.

We both went to the presence of the Imam (as) and respectfully greeted him. The Imam (as) reciprocated our greetings and asked us to be seated. The place was aglow with the radiance of the face of the Imam (as). On the lap of the Imam (as) sat a pretty child whose look would put to shame a hundred moons! In the hands of the child there was a pomegranate made of gold, with which he was playing.

Ahmed brought out all the sachets from his bag and put in front of the Imam (as). The Imam (as) put all that money in front of the child and said, 'Your Shi'as have sent you all this as a gift. Count it.' The child said, 'Does the Imam (as) permit me to touch the tainted and dirty money with my pure hands!' The Imam (as) told to Ahmed, 'Open one of the sachets and keep the money in front of your Imam (as) in waiting.' The child looked at the money once and said, 'This is so much money and is from such and such a person from Qom.

Out of the money so much is legitimate (*Halal*) and the rest is illegitimate (*Haram*) Out of the 62 gold sovereigns there are two with faded markings, they are illegitimate.' Ahmed counted the coins and found them to be exactly 62 in number. He was able to identify the two coins with faded markings. The Imam (as) looked at his son and said,

'O son! You are absolutely right!' Then Ahmed opened the other sachets, one after the other and the child correctly told about the number of coins in each and also about the legitimate and illegitimate money in each of them. Then the Imam (as) said, 'Collect the illegitimate coins and give them back to their owners.'

Then the Imam said, "O Ahmed! Where is the piece of cloth that was sent by a certain person for me?"

Ahmed said, "I have kept that cloth with my luggage. I shall immediately fetch it for you." When Ahmed went out to fetch the cloth, the Imam (as) turned his attention towards me and said, "What do you want to say?" I said, "I have certain questions for which I seek your guidance." The Imam (as) said, "You may refer yout questions to this son of mine."

I said respectfully, "O Master! The son of My Master! We have heard the Prophet (S) had given the right of divorcing his wives to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). Therefore, at the Battle of Jamal, Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) sent a message to Um–al–Mu'mineen Ayesha, that she had become the cause of shedding the blood of Muslims. If she didn't refrain from proceeding further with the conflict, he would be constrained to divorce her from being the wife of the Prophet (S). What sort of divorce was this, that was to become effective even after the demise of the Prophet (S)?"

The Imam (as)'s son replied, "Allah has given the respected title of *Umm al Mu'mineen* (the mother of the Believers) to the Prophet (S)'s wives. The Prophet (S) had said to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) that if, after his demise, his wives behaved disobediently towards the Commandments of Allah, and confront you for battle, then you have the right to divorce them. This would mean that such wives would be deprived of the title of *Umm al Mu'mineen*."

I said, "O son of the Prophet (S)! Tell me about the tradition that Prophet Musa (as) was ordered by Allah to remove his footwear. Some scholars say that the footwear was made out of the skin of a cadaver and therefore it was unclean (*najis*) and unfit for wearing to the Holy Place."

He replied, "This is wrong. Prophet Musa (as) was a Prophet and there is no question of his not knowing whether a thing was *najis* or not. Prophet Musa (as) used the same footwear while offering his prayers."

I said, "Then what is the meaning of Allah asking Prophet Musa (as) to remove his *naalain* (the footwear)?"

He replied, "When Prophet Musa (as) reached the place where one should not have the thought of anyone else in his mind than Allah, Musa (as) was thinking of his wife. Therefore Allah told him, 'O Musa (as)! This is the Place of Nearness! One should not have the thoughts of love of anyone other than Allah at this Place! Therefor abdicate the love of the *Kafsh al-Pa* (the footwear) from your mind. (It is a general practice in the East to allegorically refer to wives as *Kafsh al-Pa-*Therefore if someone dreams of the theft of his footwear, the interpretation of the dream would be that he might be separated from his spouse.

Saad asked, "O son of the Prophet (S)! What is meant by the expression *Kaaf-Haa-Yaa-Ain-Suad* in the Holy Qur'an?"

He replied, "These are Hidden Message (*Akhbare Ghaibat*) from Allah. Their interpretation was first given to Prophet Zakaria (as) and then to our Prophet (S).

Prophet Zakaria (as) had prayed to Allah to be taught the names of the *Aal al–Aba* that he would recite them to ward off evil. Gibrael came and taught to Prophet Zakaria (as) the names of the Five Infallible Persons of the Prophet (S)'s Family.

Whenever Prophet Zakaria (as) uttered the names of Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima and Hasan, he used to feel delighted. But whenever he uttered Husayn (as)'s name, he would cry. Prophet Zakaria (as) asked Allah why he felt like crying whenever he took the name of Husayn (as)? Allah narrated about the Tragedy of Karbala and explained to him about the occurrence of the acronym

Kaa-Haa-Yaa-Ain-Suad in the Holy Qur'an:.

*Kaa* stands for *Karbala*, where the small entourage of Imam Husayn (as) consisting of 72 persons was martyred,

Haa stands for Husayn (as), who was the Chief of the Martyrs of Karbala,

Yaa for Yazid, the perpetrator of the Tragedy of Karbala,

*Ain* for *Atash* or *Thirst*, the thirst of the children, men and women in Husayn (as)'s camp who were denied access to water for three full days when the river Euphrates flowed nearby, **and** 

**Suad for Sabr, or,** patience and forbearance facing the cruelty of Yazid's men in Karbala, during the battle and, by the surviving members of the family, on the way to Syria and in the court of Yazid."

When Prophet Zakaria (as) came to know about the Tragedy, he didn't leave the Mosque for three days. He cried, wailed and repeatedly said, "O Allah! You will put your Beloved Person to such an extreme test. How will Your Habib, the Prophet Muhammad (S) feel about this episode? How will 'Ali (as), Your Prophet's Vicegerent bear the great loss? What will be the condition of Husayn (as)'s mother, Fatima Zehra (as)? How will Hasan (as) bear the irreparable loss?

O Creator! For the sake of the Noble *Panjatan* (the five Immaculate Persons of the Prophet (S)'s family give me one son, equal in looks and qualities to Husayn (as), fill my heart with his love, and put him to as severe a test as you would put Husayn (as)! Make me a witness to this tragedy that I become as sorrowful as your Habib, Muhammad (S)!"

Allah answered prophet Zakaria (as)'s prayers and gave him prophet Yahya (as) as his son. Prophet Yahya (as) was a premature born, delivered in the sixth month of conception, as was Imam Husayn (as),

and like Imam Husayn (as) he too was martyred in similar tragic circumstances."

Then I asked, "O! Son of the Prophet (S)! How is it that the people cannot select their own Imam?"

He replied, "The people would select an Imam who would either turn out to be the reformer of the society or can also turn out to be the enemy of the society and the people."

I rejoined, "Definitely, people would choose an Imam who would be a well-wisher and reformer of the people!"

The Imam said, "Is is not a possibility that the people unanimously select a person to be their Imam expecting him to be righteous, just and capable of reforming the society. But in practice he might prove himself unworthy of the trust placed in him, proves himself an enemy of the people!"

This is why, an Imam can be Decreed only by One who is Infallible in His actions and choice. And that Selector or Ordainer of the Imamate is none other that Allah. He knows the feelings of the hearts and knows the hidden things."

Then the Imam (as) asked, "Could Prophet Musa (as), one of the Prophets of Allah, have made an error in selecting his Succesor and Imam?"

I nodded in disagreement.

Then the Imam (as) said, "O Saad! Your opponent has also said that since the Prophet (S) knew that Abu Bakr would succeed him as the Caliph, he took him along on his journey of *Hegira*, lest he got killed staying back in *Mecca* and the matter of the succession getting jeopardized.

Why didn't you reply to the person this way. The Prophet (S) had said,' The Caliphate after me shall be for thirty years'. According to you people the thirty years' period saw the terms of the first four caliphs. Then, if the Prophet didn't want to put the Caliphate in jeopardy, he should have taken all the four along with him to the cave and not only one. Do you people think that the prophet (S) had no concern for the safety of the other three prospective caliphs?"

I asked the Imam (as), "Another question my opponent asked was whether the acceptance of the Faith of Islam by Abu Bakr and Omer was voluntary or was under some sort of duress?"

The Imam (as) said, "Why didn't you reply to your opponent that the acceptance of Islam by the two persons was neither voluntary nor under duress, but it was motivated by sheer avarice. These persons were in close league with the Jews and infidels and had heard from them of the predictions in the Torah of the coming of Muhammad (S) as the Prophet and that his reign would be farther and wider than the kingdom of *Bakht Nasr*. These two persons, therefore, adopted Islam that perhaps the State would, at some future time, come in their hands. But in their hearts, they continued with their original beliefs.

Therefore, whenever they felt that their plans were failing, they gave overt and covert indication of their true color. When the Prophet (S) was surrounded by the enemies during the battle of Ohud they thought everything was lost, and flew like the *munafiqeen* (the hypocrites) to the top of the hillock to save their own lives. There is also the incidence when these people hung empty leather oil containers near the Prophet's house with the purpose of scaring his camel to run wild and drop him down. But Allah forewarned the Prophet (S) of this foul scheme and saved him from harm.

Similarly, during the temporal Caliphate of Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), Talha and Zubair professed allegiance to him only with the craving to be nominated governors to important provinces of the realm. But when they failed in this attempt, they terminated the allegiance and prepared for battle with Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as).

Saad says that when the son of Imam Hasan Al-'Askari (as) completed his talk, the Imam (as) left to offer prayers along with his son. Saad came out of the house and found Ahmed bin Ishaq very disturbed and crying. When asked the reason, he said, "The piece of cloth that I had brought for the Imam (as) is not there in my luggage!" Saad told him, "What is the need for crying? Go to the Imam (as) and express your regrets that the cloth was lost or misplaced."

Ahmed went to the presence of the Imam (as) and immediately returned with a smiling face. Saad asked him about the sudden change of his mood. He said, "When I reached the presence of the Imam (as), I found the same piece of cloth under his feet, in the act of offering his prayer!" They stayed at Sammara for a few more days. Ahmed took two elderly persons from Qom for an audition with the Imam (as) and said, "A thousand salutations to you and your noble ancestors! Now I seek your permission to leave, although I do it with a heavy heart! I pray to Allah that I get another opportunity to meet you soon.

The Imam (as) said, "Ahmed! Don't pray for the fulfillment of this wish! This is your last journey in this world. After this, you will depart for the Other World."

When Ahmed heard this, he swooned with shock. When he regained senses, he told to the Imam (as), "O Imam (as)! Give me something of your raimeent that I use it in place of the shroud for my burial!"

The Imam (as) took out 13 Dirhams from under the carpet and gave to Ahmed and said, "Use this money for personal expenses. Your coffin will reach you in time!"

Saad says that on their return journey they halted at the stage of Halwan. At nightfall Ahmed asked them to leave him alone. They all went to every individual quarter to sleep. When they went to Ahmed's room early next morning, Kafur, the servant of Imam Hasan Al-'Askari (as) was emerging out of the room. He said, "May Allah help you bear the loss with forbearance! With the orders of the Imam (as) I have given the last bath and the shroud to Ahmed. You may now arrange for his burial."

Bin Babawiyah narrates from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that as many times as the Prophet (S) went for the *Meraj*, the most important order that he received from Allah was about the *Imamat*, Vicegerency, of

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). When the time for his death drew nigh, Jibrael brought a missive from Allah on which was recorded the duties of the Prophet (S) and his Vicegerents.

Jibrael, after conveying the Greetings from Allah, asked the Prophet (S) whether the instructions being conveyed are acceptable to him. The Prophet asked all the visitors to leave his presence and called Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) near to him. He then read the instructions given on the missive from Allah and told to Jibrael, "The Master's instructions are acceptable to his servant. Whatever hardships come in the way of fulfillment of these orders, we; myself and my *Ahl–ul–Bayt*, shall bear with equanimity as our duty."

Jibrael then departed. The Prophet (S) called his daughter, Fatima (as), and her sons, Hasan (as) and Husayn (as). He read to them Allah's instructions. Then he asked Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), "O Abu Turab! Will you bear the hardships in store for you? You shall have to be patient when the enemies inflict excesses on you. When they deprive you of your rights, you will have to keep your calm. O 'Ali (as)! When your beard will get smeared with blood, you should not utter a word of protest."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "O Prophet of Allah (as)! When all these things are acceptable to you, then I am only your slave and servant! Insha Allah! You will find me patient and forbearing." Then the Prophet (S) turned to his daughter, Fatima (as), and said, "O Fatima! Will you bear all the hardships in store for you with patience? Your belongings will be grabbed, the *Door of Imamat* will be demolished, Mohsin will be martyred. You shall be the witness to the hardships inflicted by his enemies on 'Ali (as)."

The obedient and loving daughter of the Prophet (S) said, "O father! When you are willing to bear all the hardships, then your daughter would bow her head to Allah's wishes. But, tell me, what have you read in the missive about my son Husayn (as). What is in store for him? Will he receive 1950 blows on his body after three days of hunger and thirst in the view of his family and children, will he witness his friends and sons martyred before him, and, even the six months old baby, Asghar, becoming victim of the venomous arrow. Will all this happen in your presence?"

The Prophet (S) replied, "No! My daughter! This will happen after me!" She asked, "Will Ab al Hasan, 'Ali (as), be a witness?" The Prophet (S) said, "No!" She asked, "Shall I be there?' He replied, "No! You too will not be there." When Fatima Zahra (as) heard this, she swooned and fell unconscious. The Prophet (S) tried to console his daughter, "Won't you bow down your head to the wish of Allah!"

Lady Fatima (as) revived and said, "O Baba! How could Fatima go against the wishes of the Creator, Allah! But Baba! I have nourished my child through hard work at the grinding stone. Can you not pray to Allah to spare Husayn (as) of the extreme Sacrifice? I am afraid, my delicate child might not bear the insurmountable hardships!"

The Prophet (S) said, "My Daughter! What can I say to Allah! Even if you lift your hands towards the Heaven and curse the cruel people, then no living creature will remain on the face of the earth. But your son, through this supreme sacrifice, will be the saviour of the True Faith, and shall achieve a highly

elevated position. O my daughter! Your two sons, Hasan and Husayn (as), will be the chiefs of the youth of the Heaven, you will be the lady of the Heaven and 'Ali (as) will be keeper of the Cistern of Kawthar, and your father will be the master of the Heaven and the Intercessor on the Day of Judgement!"

Fatima Zahra (as) replied, "O Baba! If the Faith needs this supreme sacrifice, I accept it. But you must get the consent of Husayn (as) too." The Prophet (S) then called Imam Husayn (as) near him and said, "O my son Husayn (as)! Are you ready to offer the extreme sacrifice that has been ordered by Allah for you? Are you willing to face this difficult test? This will be in the best interests of the True Faith of Islam!"

Husayn (as) smiled and said, "O Grand-Father! Don't ask me. When on the sands of Karbala, the weapon of the assassin will be on my throat, there shall be the words of thanks for Allah on my tongue. You will yourself hear about it and witness the forbearance of Husayn!"

The Prophet (S) departed from this world, The Missive remained with Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). The Prophet (S)'s daughter bore the tribulations caused by her enemies with equanimity and passed away within three months of the demise of her father. Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) faced all the troubles and hardships till Bin Muljim attacked him with a poisoned sword while he was prostrating in prayer.

At that moment Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "By the Lord of Kaaba! I have succeeded! I have fulfilled my promise! I was, till now, the conqueror of Khaiber, now I am the Cupbearer of the Cistern of Kawthar! The Missive that I have will pass from hand to hand of the Imams (as) till it reaches the Last of the Imams! Every Imam will fulfil his duties exactly according to the norms laid forth in the Missive. But the Last of The Imams (as), who will be endowed with long life, will have the opportunity to reform the people of the Faith who have gone astray.

Finding the people disobeying the norms, then the *Hujjat* (object) of calling the people to reform would be over and the time for Allah sending retribution for the hardships inflicted on the Prophet and the Imams (as) would be ripe. All this will happen during the period of *Raj-at* (the Resurrection). Every Shi'a has to have Faith in the Institution of *Raj-at*. It has also to be borne in mind that the trials and tribulations of the Imams (as) were not to test their strong Faith, Allah, Who has the Knowledge of All Hidden Things is fully aware of the Faith of these Immaculate Imams. The trials were with the sole purpose to prove to the people that if Husayn (as) was chosen to be the Leader of the Youth of Heaven, it was because of his supreme sacrifice in the cause of the Faith.

In fact awarding the honor of the leadership of the Youth of *Jannat* is the Exclusive Prerogative of Allah and the *Hasanain* (as) were the chosen ones for that distinction.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) that Jibrael came to the Prophet (S) and gave him a Missive from Allah that had described the Duties of the Prophet (S) and all his successors. The Prophet (S) opened the missive, read it and said to Jibrael that he totally agreed to the orders of his Lord, the Creator.

Then Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) opened the portion of the Missive meant for him, read it, acted on it and departed after bearing all the tribulations in store for him. Lady Fatima (as) too fulfilled her obligations according to the Missive. Then followed Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (as) who measured up to the norms prescribed in the Missive. The Missive shall pass through the hands of all the Imams (as) till it comes in the possession of the Twelfth, the Last Imam (as). He will take revenge for the hardships inflicted by their enemies on the *Ahl–ul–Bayt*.

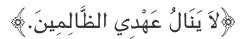
### The Second Ray of Light: The Chastity of The Imams

The True Faith of Ja'fariah professes that the Imam (as), from his childhood to the death is possessor of Immaculate Chastity and free of all minor and major sins. But those groups who say that chastity is not a necessary qualifying characteristic to be sought in an Imam, is because of the fact that candidates they put forth for the august position were for years in the darkness of infidelity prior to accepting Islam. Any person with right thinking knows that entrusting matters of Religious Reforms to a person with a sinful past cannot be effective when compared to the leadership of a True and Chaste Imam.

In fact, the edicts of a person of the former type might create a high degree of sedition in the society. When such a person is deposed from his office, on being discovered that he had been issuing harmful orders, might create dissension and schisms in the community. Either way, such leaders are a danger to the social fabric. The example of Yazid is a case in point that the temporal caliphate falling in his hands became the cause of great transgression and debauchery not only in him and his retainers, but it spread as a disease to the society. Therefore, Allah has ordered that the Chosen in Authority (*The Ulu al Amr*) are the Immaculate Innocents (*The masoomeen*) whose obedience is mandatory for the believers.

Therefore, Allama Fakruddin Raazi has written in his Commentary of the Qur'an that *Ulu al Amr* connotes only the *Masoom* and none else, and there is an injunction that they must be implicitly obeyed. To the contrary, obeying the orders of a person who approves of taboo (*Haram*) acts is forbidden. Allah will not order people obeying a person who is a sinner himself, and is advising others against sinning.

Allah, addressing Prophet Ibrahim (as), in the Holy Qur'an, clarifies the point thus:



#### "My Authority shall not reach the transgressors." (2:124)

The person who remained an infidel even for a day, is in the ranks of the transgressors (*thalemeen*). Therefore it is to the advantage of the people to be with the *Sadeqeen* (the veracious). And verily veracious are the Imams (as)!

# The Third Ray Of Light: The Verse Of Purity (The Ayat al-Tatheer)

It has been recorded at regular intervals that the Verse of Purity has been revealed in the praise of the *Ahl-ul-Bayt* who are recognized as the *Aaale Aba* and according to some traditions all the Imams (as) are the subject of this Verse.

The author of *Kashaf*, although a very biased person, records in detail the event of *Mubahila*. When the Prophet (S) invited the Christians of *Najran* for *Mubahila* (mutual imprecation to prove one's point), the Christians requested for some time that they wanted to discuss the matter with their Bishop. The Bishop said that Muhammad (S) was truly the Prophet and he has presented the truth in front of you. Whosoever takes recourse to an imprecation with a Prophet gets destroyed. If you take any such step, it will be calamitous for your community. If you wish to safeguard your community then go and seek for a truce.

On the morning of the appointed day the Prophet (S) came out for the purpose of *Mubahila* with Imam Husayn (as) in his arms, Imam Hasan (as) holding the finger of his right hand and behind him followed Fatima and 'Ali (as). Thus arrived the small group into the selected ground and the Prophet (S) told to the four Immaculates with him that the moment he uttered the prayer against the opponents, all the four of them should say, "Aameen!" On the other side, when the Bishop of Najran saw this scene, he told to his people, "O group of Christians! I see in front of me such faces that if they pray, the mountain will move from its place! Don't enter into an imprecation with them, otherwise there will not remain a single Christian on the Earth!"

Therefore, all those persons came to the presence of the Prophet (S) and told him that they decided not to have an imprecation with them.

The Prophet (S) then said, "If you don't wish to have an imprecation as per our previous agreement, then you accept Islam."

The Christians refused to accept this suggestion.

Then the Prophet (S) said, "In this event, prepare for a battle!"

They said, "we do not have the strength to battle with you and we want a truce."

Therefore the truce was made on the condition that every year two thousand *Hillas* were to be given in the month of *Safr* and one thousand in the month of *Rajab*, thirty high quality chains of arm to also be given every year. After the truce the Prophet (S) told them that if the Christians had not entered into this agreement and opted for the imprecation, no single person of the group would have lived. Even the birds on the trees of the forest would have perished and the entire community of Christians would have

perished within the period of one year.

The author of the book *Kashaaf* quotes from Um-al-Mu'mineen Ayesha that the Prophet (S) arrived from outside one day wearing a shawl made of black hair. Then came Hasan, Husayn, 'Ali and Fatima (as). He took all of them under his shawl. Then the Prophet (S) recited the following verse from the Qur'an:

"Allah wishes, O Ahl-ul-Bayt, to keep all sin (rijs) away from you, and keep you Pure as Pure could be." (33:33)

Then the author of *Kashaaf* asks a question why the Prophet (S) took along with him the same persons on the day of *Mubahila*? Usually, people don't involve their near and dear on such risky ventures where there is possibility of loss of lives. But the Prophet (S) was confident of the Truth of his Stand and he knew that, as mentioned in the Verse of Purity, they were all virtuous persons.

Malik, one of the Imams of Ahl-ul-Jamaa writes in his book, Mauta:

"After the Revelation of the Verse of Purity, for a period of about six months, the Prophet (S) used to stop at the door of Fatima (as)'s house every morning on his way to the Mosque for the *Fajr* prayer and say in a loud voice"

Prayer, OAhl-ul-Bayt. Allah wishes, O Ahl-ul-Bayt, to keep all sin away from you, and keep you Pure as Pure could be.

Saheeh *Abi Dawood* too records the event the same way. Anas, Saheeh Bukhari (Vol 4), Saheeh Muslim etc have narrated from Um-al-Mu'mineen Ayesha the same tradition. In the Saheeh Muslim, Volume 4, in the Chapter on the Qualities of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen, it is quoted from Saad bin Abi Wiqas that when the Verse of Imprecation (*Mubahila*) was revealed, the Prophet (S) called 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn (as) and asked them to enter under his shawl with him and told to Allah," These are my Ahl-ul-Bayt!"

Abu Dawood narrates from Umme Salema that the Verse of Purity was revealed in her house. She said that at that time 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn (as) were with the Prophet (S) under his shawl. She

was herself seated near the door when the Prophet (S) prayed to Allah, "O Allah! These are my Ahl-ul-Bayt. Keep all sin (*Rijs*) away from them". Umme Salema went forward and told to the Prophet (S), "Am I not one of your Ahl-ul-Bayt?" The Prophet (S) replied, "No! You are my spouse. You r Hereafter will be good!"

Similar statements are recorded in several books of the Ahl-ul-Jamaa. Here *Rijs* does not on ly mean sin, but implies all sorts of weaknesses and ills. It is Allah's Commitment that He will Keep the Ahl-ul-Bayt in Immaculate Purity! Therefore, these Holy Individuals wouldn't even utter a falsehood. It is an established fact of the history that every Imam (as) had publicly claimed that he was the Imam of the time appointed by Allah. This proves their claim was right and true!

## The Fourth Ray Of Light: The Excellence Of The Ahl-ul-Bayt

Bin Babawiyah quotes through reliable source that Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) has said that the Prophet (S) has observed, "The love for me and my Ahl-ul-Bayt will give succor to the believers on seven occasion, that are:

At the time of death

In the Grave.

- 1. At the time of Maba'th.
- 2. When the *Nama al–Aamal* (The Inventory of Deeds is compiled)
- 3. At the time of Audit of Deeds (*Ba waqt al-H'Isab*)
- 4. At the time of balancing of deeds (*Ba Waqt al-Meezan*)
- 5. While on the Bridge of Sirat."

Harith Hamadani says that once he went to the presence of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) who asked him,

"O Harith! What is the purpose of your coming here?"

Harith replied, "I have been drawn here by my desire to meet you!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "O Harith! Do you hold me as a friend?"

Harith said, "Without any doubt!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) then said, "Harith! When you will be in the throes of death, you will find me near yourself! I would be giving to you the waters of the Cistern of Kauthur at that moment. I would be warding away your enemies from you. You will be pleased to see me cross the Bridge of *Siraat* with the

Lawa al-Hamd in my hand! Insha Allah!!"

Abu Hamza Shamali has narrated from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) that the Prophet told to Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), "O 'Ali! Whosever has your love in his heart, while he traversed the Bridge of Siraat, if one of his feet faltered, his other foot would stabilize his progress till the moment Allah gave him entrance to the Heaven."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) has said, "The love of the Ahl-ul-Bayt wards off sins as the winds blow away the leaves."

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) said, "The Prophet (S) has said that he would intercede on behalf of four type of person on the Day of Reckoning: 1. Those who had whole-heartedly helped my Ahl-ul-Bayt. 2. Those who had helped them in the times of need. 3. Those who had considered the Ahl-ul-Bayt as their friends from the depths of their hearts. 4. Those who made sincere efforts to keep my Ahl-ul-Bayt safe from the harm's way." Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) also said that the Prophet (S) has said, "One who befriended my Ahl-ul-Bayt, Allah will befriend him on the Day of Judgement, and he will not have any fear of that Day."

In the Book *Basair ad Darajat* it is mentioned that Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as) narrated that the Prophet told to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), "O 'Ali! I have seen every child and adult of my believers in the realm of spirits, I have seen you and your *Shi'as* and have prayed for their Deliverance!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) asked the Prophet (S), "O Prophet of Allah! Please tell me about the qualities of the Shi'as."

The Prophet (S) replied, "O 'Ali! When you and your Shi'as are raised from the graves, their faces will shine like the full moon. Sorrow and sadness will not come near you. Other people will be sad, but your group will will be tranquil and happy under the shadow of the Firmament (*The Arsh*). The others will be occupied in giving account of their deeds and you, and your Shi'as, will be enjoying the Bounties of the Heaven."

Imam Ar–Ridha' (as) said that the Prophet (S) has said that, "whoever is a friend of 'Ali (as), will be at a place where the Prophets will be accommodated on the Day of Judgement. 'Ali's enemies will find themselves treated like the Jews on the Day of Reckoning."

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) said that there are seventy types of angels in the sky. Each type of the angels is in numbers higher than the entire human population in the world. All these angels believe and profess our *Wilayat* (Saint hood).

Sheik Toosi narrates from Maitham al-Tammar that one night he was with Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) when the Imam told him, "Allah showers his Blessings every morning on all the persons in the world who have our love in their hearts. Allah curses those persons who have enmity for us in their hearts. When I

awake in the mornings, I feel happy that our friends are receiving Allah's Blessings! Pity on our enemies that with dawn every day they draw nearer to Hell! Our enmity and friendship cannot assemble in one heart. One who professes our friendship, he should keep it clean as the gold is kept free of impurities."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) told told to Abi Abd Allah Jadli, I shall show you that because of the good deeds you will not have any fears on the Day of Judgement. For the sins committed Allah will throw the person in the hell. When Abi Abdallah asked about the good and bad deeds, Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said that the good deeds are your love for us and the sins are the enmity that people have for us.

Salman narrates that one day he went to the Prophet (S) when Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) too arrived. The Prophet (S) had a pebble in his hand. He put the pebble in Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as)'s hand. The pebble uttered the twin witness of *la ilaha ill Allah, Mohammadur Rasool Allah.* Then the pebble also uttered its faith in the *wilayath* of Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). The Prophet (S) then said that whosoever witnessed that Allah is one, Muhammad (S) is His Prophet and 'Ali (as), the *Wali* and Vicegerent can have no fear of going to the Hell.

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) has narrated from his ancestors that they had heard from the Prophet (S), who in turn had received the information from Jibrael and Mikael that Allah has said, "the *Wilayath* of 'Ali (as) is like a fort where every person is safe from My Retribution."

Books of all the schools mentioned that the Prophet (S) has said, "If all the people were united on the matter of the *Wilayath* of 'Ali (as), Allah would not have created the Hell.

Anas narrates from the Prophet (S), "Allah will send a group of people who's faces will radiate light, who will be sitting on shining chairs and will be dressed in bright raiment. They will be seated under the shade of the firmament. They will be sitting in the company of the Prophets (S) although they will not be the Prophets themselves, they will accompany the martyrs although they may themselves not be martyred people." Then the Prophet (S) also said, "(keeping his hand on the head of Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) that these people will be his *Shi'as* (friends)."

Sheik Toosi narrates from Imam Ar–Ridha' (as) that the Prophet (S) told to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) that on the Day of Judgement, after completion of the account of good deeds and sins of the people, Allah would give to him the Keys to the Heaven and the Hell. Then the Prophet (S) would in turn hand over the Keys to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) and tell him, "O goblet–bearer of the Cistern of Kauther! Whomsoever you wish to send to the Heaven or to the Hell, you may do that!"

Bin Babawiyah quotes from reliable source of having heard from the Imams (as) that on the Day of Judgement a pulpit will be arranged. Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), with orders of Allah will sit on this pulpit. An Angel will stand on his right and another on the left. The Angel on the right will announce that Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) is sitting on the pulpit and he will send the deserving people to the heaven. The Angel on the left too would announce that the persons deserving of punishment will be sent by Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) to the Hell.

Abdallah bin Umar reports that the Prophet (S) told to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), "When the Day of Judgement comes, O 'Ali! You will be astride a horse made of light. On your head there will be a shining crown. The light of this crown will make the eyes blink. At that time an announcement will be heralded by Allah,' O the friend of My friend (Muhammad Mustafa)! Where are you?' O 'Ali! You will say that you are at His service! Then Allah will say, 'O 'Ali! It is you who is the arbiter who will decide as to who should go to the Heaven and who should go to the Hell.'

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) narrates that Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said that one day he was sitting with the Prophet (S) near the Kaaba when one old man with a bent body having a staff in his hand, wearing a red cap on his head and a woolen overall came near the Prophet (S) and said, "O the Prophet of Allah! Kindly pray that Allah pardons me!" the Prophet (S) replied, "Your expectation is of no avail. Your wish to get a pardon cannot be fulfilled." When the person was departing in disappointment, the Prophet (S) asked Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), "have you recognized this old person?" Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) replied, "I have not been able to place him." The Prophet (S) said, "it was the accursed Satan. Hearing this he rushed towards the Satan, caught hold of his neck and threw him to the ground. He shouted, "O Abul Hasan! Allah has given me respite till the Dooms Day! Please don't kill me."

Salman narrates that once the Satan came across some people who were talking ill of Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). He stood near them. The people asked him who he was and he replied that he was *Abu Marra.* Those persons asked him if he overheard what they were talking about. He said, "May evil overtake you! You talk ill of your own master 'Ali (as)!" Those persons asked him why he was saying that 'Ali (as) was their master.

The Satan said, "According to the announcement of your Prophet, 'Ali (as) is the master of all those of whom the Prophet (S) is the master and also that 'Ali (as)'s friendship is Allah's friendship and enmity with 'Ali (as) is enmity with Allah." Those persons asked him, "Are you a Shi'a of 'Ali (as)?" the Satan said, "No. However I am a friend of 'Ali (as) and I am also present in the progeny of his enemies." Those people asked him, "O Abu Marra! Can you recount some of 'Ali (as)'s excellence.

The Satan replied, "O group of misguided persons! You have become heretics! I was busy in prayer with some people on the land for twelve thousand years when those persons were destroyed by Allah. I was left all alone. I protested to Allah about my loneliness. Allah, in His Kindness, raised me to the Heaven where, along with the Angels I was busy in prayers for another twelve thousand years. One day when I was busy praying to Allah, I noticed a ray of light pass by. The Angels fell down in prostration and said that this light was that of some great Prophet (S). A proclamation came from Allah, "O My Angels! The light you have seen is that of my *Wali*, Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali bin Abi Talib (as)."

Abu Hurara narrates that a person came to the Prophet (S) and said that a poor person went to China. From China he came back with so much riches that the people in the town started envying him. The Prophet (S) said, "can this transitory world cause people to envy others. The person who is sitting here has acquired the riches about which even the Angels in the firmament will be envious.

We noticed that one Ansari arrived near the Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) said, "This man has amassed great amount of wealth and has deposited a part of his treasure in the high seat of *Arsh*. The man shall receive so much reward for this that if it is distributed amongst all the inmates of the Heaven and the Earth, all their sins would be pardoned and entry to the Heaven for them will become mandatory!"

The companions asked the person, "What good deed you have done today that you have qualified for such a high reward?"

The man said, "I stirred out of my house for some important work. On the way I thought that I have delayed myself in the matter and perhaps I may not be able to achieve my end. Suddenly I had an idea at that time that instead of going for my own task, I try to do some good turn. Therefore I went to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) to get a glimpse of his radiant face. I am aware of the Prophet (S)'s tradition that looking at Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali's face is like offering prayer."

The Prophet (S) said, "No doubt! By Allah looking at 'Ali is like offering prayer! You started from home in the search of wealth and went to 'Ali instead and set your eyes on his Holy face with the knowledge and intention that it was like offering prayer. Since your act was with purity of heart you have earned Allah's reward. If the entire world becomes of gold and all of it is distributed in charity, it will not be equivalent to the reward for setting eyes on the face of 'Ali!"

## The Fifth Ray Of Light: Prayer And The Love Of Ahl-ul-Bayt

The correctness of prayer depends on the Faith in the Twelve Imams (as). Any prayer without this belief is futile. In fact any amount of prayer without the love for the Ahl–ul–Bayt of the Prophet has negative effects.

Bin Babawiyah narrates from Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as) that when a person goes for accounting of his deeds on the Day of Judgement, he will first have to attest his Faith in the Wilayeth of the Imams (as) before he accounts for his *Salat* (Prayer), *Sawm* (fasting), *Zakat* (the tithe) and the *Haj.* If at the time of his death, a person has faith in the *Ahl–ul–Bayt*, his compliance with the *Furoo al–Deen*, the religious practices mentioned here, will be acceptable to Allah.

The Imam (as) also said that Jibrael came to the Prophet (S) and said, "Allah sends you His Greetings and says that He has created the earth and the sky as also the *Muqaam al-Ibrahim* (the Place of Ibrahim). If a human being worships Him sitting near the Place of Ibrahim, at the Door of the Kaaba, throughout his life, or even from the day the Universe was Created till the Doomsday, with no love for 'Ali Bin abi Talib (as) in his heart, will be put in the Hell."

It is also narrated that it was Revealed by Allah to His Prophet (S) even if a person becomes lean like a dried leather water pouch in His Prayer without the love for the Ahl-ul-Bayt, he will not earn an entry to the Heaven.

Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) narrates that the Prophet (S) said that a person who has good deeds in his account equivalent to the good deeds of seventy prophets, and has no love for the Ahl-ul-Bayt, will never be admitted to the Heaven by Allah. The Imam (as) also asked his companions, "Tell me, which place is the most sacred?" The companions said, "The Imam (as) knows the best!" He said that the most sacred place is the *Muqam al-Ibrahim*. But if a person, with the longevity equal to that of *Noah*, sits there and prays all his life, and has no belief in our *Wilayeth*, his prayers will be futile."

This tradition is accepted by all the schools of thought that, "One who did not recognize the Imam (as) of his time, he died an infidel." Therefore for every Muslim the knowledge about the Imam is absolutely necessary.

## The Sixth Ray Of Light: The Qualities Of The Imam

Since the commoners depend on the norms of the Faith and the Society, it is essential that the Imam (as) must be fully versed with the Knowledge of the laws and jurisprudence. He should have full knowledge of the *Mohkam* (Firm), the *Mutashabeh* (Ambiguous), the *Mujmi* (Abstract), the *Mufassil* (Detailed), the *Nasiq* (Current) and the

Mansooq (Void) verses of the Holy Qur'an. He has to be an erudite scholar of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) and well versed in all branches of knowledge and learning. The Imam (as) has to possess exemplary bravery that he is capable of confronting the enemies of the Faith. The Imam (as) should be superior in learning to all his followers because it is undesirable that the students have knowledge superior to the mentor and the ignorant better informed than the scholar. Allah, therefore, says in the Holy Qur'an:

#### "Whatever you wish to know, ask of the possessors of Knowledge." (16:43)

This is the reason why Allah made Adam (as) superior to the Angels in knowledge and asked them to prostrate before him. About knowledge Allah poses a question in the Holy Qur'an:

#### "Are the learned and the ignorant equal?" (39:9)

It is also imperative that the *Imam* has to be the guide, the mentor, superior and perfect in knowledge to

show the Right Path to the *mamoom* (the follower). The *Imam* is the Vicegerent of the *Prophet* and his successor. Therefore the task of the *Imam*, as that of the *Prophet*, is to Guide his *Umma* (the Flock). If the Imam is imperfect in Knowledge, then the predicament of the flock can well be imagined!

Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) says that there are certain characteristics by which an Imam is recognized:

- He should be the wisest of his time.
- He should be most pious.
- He should be most suave and forbearing.
- There should be none equal in bravery and generosity to him.
- He must be the most committed to the Prayer of Allah.
- He is born naturally circumcised.
- He is born totally clean.
- He has the faculty to see in his back without turning his eyes backwards.
- His shadow is not cast on the ground.
- At birth, he puts his hands on the ground and recites the Witness: *La ilaha il Allah Mohammadur Rasool Allah.*
- He doesn't get night-dreams (*Ehtelam*)
- Although his eyes sleep, the eyes of his heart are always awake.
- He gets informed of the future events through his dreams.
- The *angels* converse with him.
- The chain armor of the Prophet would fit him like a glove.
- None would have seen his feces.
- His body would radiate a fragrance better than that of musk.
- People would be willing to lay down their lives for him.
- He will be more affectionate towards the *Mu'mins* than their own parents.
- He will be most generous and kind.

- He always sets examples for his followers.
- Whatever he asks his followers not to do, he himself abstains to do.
- His prayer is so effective that if he wishes, stones would shatter to smithereens in a moment.
- All the arms of the Prophet would be in his possession.
- He will be the carrier of the Twin-Edged Sword, the Dhual Figar.
- He will possess a document on which the names of his friends and foes are recorded.
- He will be the exponent of *Jafr al–Akbar* and *Jafr al–Asghar* that have record of all the events past, present and future.
- He will have with him the Sahifa al-Fatima.
- He will possess *Ilm al-Laddunni*, that is, he will not need a mentor or tutor to teach him.

Kulaini narrates that Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) has enumerated the characteristics of the *Imam*:

The Imam is pure from birth and is born naturally circumcised.

Immediately after birth, the Imam would put both his hands on the ground and loudly utter the Witness that there is no god, but Allah, and Muhammad (S) is his Prophet.

- The Imam will not have wet dreams.
- The eyes-of- the-heart of the Imam never go to sleep.
- The Imam never yawns.
- The Imam can see things at his back as well as the things in his front without requiring to turn his face backwards.
- The Prophet's Armor of Chain fits the Imams exactly.
- The Imams converse with the Angels.

Humairi narrates in his book "*Qurb al Asnad*" that Abu Naseer once went to Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) and asked him, "How to identify an Imam?" The Imam (as) replied, "the first characteristic of an Imam is that he must have been nominated by his father to succeed him as a mark of *Itmam al-Hujjat*, or fulfilling his duty. This is the same way as the Prophet (S) had nominated Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) as his Vicegerent or *Imam*. The other characteristic of an Imam is that he is able to give answer to any question that is asked of him, and has the faculty to give the reply to a question before it is asked. The

Imam can answer the question in the language of the questioner."

Then the Imam (as) said, "Be seated that I give you the Proof of my Imamat." At that time a Persian, from Khorasan, came there and asked a question in the Arabic language. The Imam replied him in Persian, the man's mother tongue. The Khorasani said, "O Holy Imam! I had put my question in the Arabic language thinking that you might not know Persian! But you speak better Persian than me!" The Imam (as) told to the man, "If I cannot reply you in your language, then you become superior to me; but then, how could I be your Imam if I don't know your language?" Then the Imam (as) said, "O Abu Muhammad! The language of no person is strange to the Imam. He knows the tongues of the animals, birds and all the living creatures. The Imam can be identified and recognized with these characteristics. If a person claims to be an Imam and doesn't have these manisfestaions, then he is not an Imam."

Abu Baseer narrates that he asked Imam Ar–Ridha' (as) about the sign of an Imam. The Imam (as) replied, "The first sign of the Imamate is that the incumbent is the first born of the Imam. He is superior in knowledge, in learning, to all his contemporaries. The Armor of the Prophet (S) to be in his possession and would exactly fit him. He would also possess the Standard used by the Prophet (S). Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) had said, 'The Prophet had taught to me a thousand chapters of learning, and from every chapter another thousand chapters became manifest to me.'"

The Imam (as) further said, "O Abu Muhammad! I have the *Jameah*" I asked him, "What is *Jameah?*" The Imam (as) replied, "*Jameah* is a document dictated by the Prophet (S) to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). This contains the details of everything that is legitimate (*Halal*) and

taboo (*Haram*) for the believers." Then the Imam said, "We have the *Mushaf al–Fatima* (the Book of Fatima). This Book is three times more voluminous than the Holy Qur'an and contains, besides the Qur'an, all the information about the past and about the times to come."

It is narrated from Hammad bin Othman that the Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as) has said that the *Zanadiqah* (Hypocrite Fire–Worshippers) will appear in one hundred and twenty eight. I have myself read about it in the *Sahifa al–Fatima*." I asked, "What is the *Sahifa al–Fatima*?"

The Imam (as) said, "When the Prophet (S) departed from this world, Lady Fatima (as) became very sad and disconsolate. She used to grieve most of the time. To console her, Allah deputed an angel to narrate to her the events to take place in the future. As the angel continued the narration, Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) took notes. This compilation is called the *Sahifa al–Fatima*. This Book does not contain any instructions about *Halal* and *Haram* but contains the description of events in store for the future.

Abi Yahya was told by Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as), "O AbuYahya! Allah has rewarded us with high status! Every Friday night Allah permits all the Prophets of the past and your current Imam to visit the Firmament When they are in the Firmament, they offer two *Rakat* each of prayer at every station there. They acquire lot of knowledge during the visit. Your Imam too comes back with a fund of newly acquired

#### knowledge."

Saif Tammar narrates that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "If I was with Prophet Musa and Al-Khidr (as), they would have accepted that I was better informed than they were. I would have brought to their knowledge certain things they were unaware of. They had knowledge of only the things past, and we know everything of past, present and future! This knowledge has come down to us from our Prophet as an inheritance." Then the Imam said, "The Beneficent and Merciful Allah bestows kindness on His creations much more than their own parents. Allah has kept us informed of the events taking place on the earth and the sky."

The Imam (as) also said, "Jibrail came to the Prophet (S) and gave him two pomegranates. The Prophet (S) ate one of them and made two portions of the other. One half of this he ate and gave the other half to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) to eat. Then he said, 'O 'Ali! Do you know anything about these pomegranates? One of the fruits, from which you did not get any portion to eat, contained Prophet–hood. But the other pomegranate, that we shared, contained knowledge.' The narrator asked the Imam (as),' How was 'Ali (as) a partner in the knowledge of the Prophet?" The Imam (as) replied, "Allah has not endowed any knowledge to the Prophet that He didn't transmit to Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali! In turn, that knowledge has come to us, the Imams!"

Then the Imam (as) added, "When Prophet Musa and Al-Khidr wanted to go their different ways from the bank of the river, they noticed a bird. The bird put a drop of water towards the east, another towards the west; one skywards and another drop of water on the earth. Then finally, the bird put one drop of water in the river. Both were wondering at this riddle.

At this moment one hunter emerged from the river and explained to Prophet Musa (as) and Al–Khidr (as) that the bird wanted to express that in the final Epoch there will be a Prophet (S) who will possess the knowledge of the east, the west, the earth and the sky. The bird put the fifth drop in the river to demonstrate that the knowledge of the Prophet (S) will be free flowing like the waters of the river. This knowledge will be in the possession of the Vicegerent and cousin of the Prophet (S). Telling this, the hunter vanished."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "I possess the knowledge of the Book of Allah from cover to cover. The Qur'an, that contains information about the earth and the sky, of the past and the future, is firmly in our hands. We have the knowledge of everything!"

Then the Imam (as) said, "Allah has taught two *Ism al–Azam* (Miraculous Words) to Prophet 'Isa (as), which caused the miracles credited to him. Allah taught four *Ism al–Azam* to Prophet Musa (as), eight to Prophet Ibrahim (as), fifteen to Prophet Nooh (as) and twentyfive to prophet Adam (as). There are 73 *Ism al–Azam* in all, and our Prophet (S) has been informed of 72. There is one *Ism al–Azam*, about which Allah has not imparted the knowledge to anyone!"

Imam 'Ali Naqi (as) narrates that Allah has 73 Ism al-Azam out of which only one was known to Asif bin

Barqiah through which he was able to fetch the *Throne of Bilqis* in the time taken to wink the eyes. We, the *Ahl–ul–Bayt* have the knowledge of 72 *Ism al–Azam!* There is one *Ism al–Azam* of which, none other than Allah has the knowledge. Imam Muhammad Al–Baqir (as) said that the staff of Prophet Musa (as) was with prophet Adam (as), then it came down to Prophet Shoeb (as) and then to prophet Musa (as). The staff is now in our possession. It is still fresh and green, as if, it has just been separated from the tree. If talked to, the staff gives replies. This staff will reach the Last Imam (as), from hand to hand. The Last Imam (as) will throw the staff towards his enemies and it would turn into a serpent and swallow them."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) says, "The Tablets of Musa (as) and his Staff are with us. We are the inheritors of the Prophets (S)."

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) says, "When the Last Imam (as) will appear in Mecca, it will be ordered that no person should carry any eatables with him. The Imam (as) will have one Tablet of Musa (as) on his camel's back. With the help of this tablet food and other necessary things will become available, whenever required."

Mufassil narrates that one day Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) asked him, "Do you know! What was the raiment of Prophet Yusuf (as)?" Mufassil expressed his ignorance about this. The Imam (as) said, "When Prophet Ibrahim (as) was thrown into the fire of Nimrod, Allah sent a raiment for him. This raiment was not affected by extremes of heat and cold. Prophet Ibrahim (as) gave this raiment to Prophet Ishaq (as) at the time of his death. Then it came to Prophet Yaqoob (as) who, in turn, gave it to his son Prophet Yusuf.(as) This was the same raiment, smelling which, Prophet Yaqub (as) said that he was getting the fragrance of his son Prophet Yusuf (as) from it."

Mufassil asked the Imam (as), "Then! Where did the raiment go?"

The Imam (as) said, "The raiment then went to the deserving, the *Ahl al Baiyt!* It is now with us along with the other Holy Relics viz. The Bier of Bani Israel, the arms and armor of the Prophet (S) etc. The one who possesses these things is the Vicegerent and Successor of the Prophet (S)."

"O Mufassil! The Vicegerent of the Prophet (S) is one who is visited by the angels. These angels offer their prayers standing behind him. The angels will protect the Vicegerent from the evil enemies. The angels also inform the Vicegerent about the kings who are to die and those who will ascend to the thrones!"

Sadeer Sairfi narrates that Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) ordered him to go out from Medina for some errand. He was still on his way when a man overtook him and gave him a letter that had a fresh seal on it. He opened the letter and found that it was from the Imam a.s.). The letter contained fresh instructions for him. He was wondering how the carrier could reach him so fast that he had already travelled more than fair distance towards his destination. Then he thought, the carrier must be an angel to have reached him with the Imam (as)'s missive so fast!.

On his return he asked the Imam (as), "O my Master! Did you send that letter to me with some angel?" He replied, "No! It was a Jinn who is generally present in our service!"

Abu Hamza Shimali narrates that he was once travelling with Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) half way between Mecca and Medina when he noticed a dog coming in their direction. When it came near them, he saw that it was a bird. Surprised, he asked the Imam (as), "O my Master! What is this?" He replied, "This a Jinn who brings the news of the death of Hisham."

Kulaini narrates from Saad Askaf that he went to the presence of Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as). When he was taking leave, the Imam (as) said, "Wait awhile!" In the meanwhile some tall persons with yellowish faces entered the place of the Imam (as). I asked the Imam (as), "Who these people are?" The Imam (as) said, "These are Jinns, your brothers In Faith. They have come here to seek clarification about things *Halal* and *Haram*."

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) narrates that, one-day, Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) was seated on the pulpit of *Masjid al-Koofa* when a serpent entered the threshold of the mosque. The people tried to kill it. Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) prevented them from doing so. The serpent came near the pulpit, rose and greeted the Imam (as). Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) inquired the reason for its coming there. It said, "O Master! I am Omer bin Othman. My father was appointed the head of the Jinn by you. He is no more. Before his demise he had asked me to come to your presence and take your orders."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "I advise you to be pious! I order you too to take the place of your father and continue discharging the duties of the chief of the Jinns.'

The narrator asked Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) if Omer bin Othman ever comes to him and is he duty bound to obey him? The Imam (as) replied, "Yes!"

Noman bin Bashir narrates that after a visit to Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) in Medina he was on his way back to Kufa along with Jabir bin Yazid Jaufi and other persons. On the way they noticed a very tall person approaching them from the opposite direction. The person gave a letter to Jabir having a very fresh seal on it. Jabir kissed the letter, put it to his eyes, opened and read it.

On reading the letter, Jabir had a very sad expression on his face. After reaching Koofa, I went to Jabir's place one day. I found him running around on the streets, riding on a bamboo stick along with urchins, shouting that Mansoor has become the emir of Koofa. Jabir looked at me, but he didn't greet or talk to me. He recited a few couplets of poetry and continued pranking with the urchins. People expressed their sorrow that Jabir had gone mad.

After a few days Hisham bin Abdul Malik's orders came to the chief of Koofa to execute Jabir and send his head to him.

The chief of Koofa asked the people to identify Jabir for him. The people said, "Jabir is a reputed

scholar, narrator of traditions and has performed the Haj several times over. But presently he has lost his mental balance and has gone mad!"

The chief of Kooka said, "Alhamd u Lillah! It is not obligatory for me to execute him now!"

A few days after the event, Mansoor was appointed chief of the city of Koofa and Jabir's prediction was proved true.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said, "Allah has two types of learning, one is for Himself, that has not been taught to anyone else. The other type of learning is that which has been transferred to the prophets (S) and the angels, that also has come down to us.

Authentic traditions credited to the Imams (as) record that the Torah of prophet Musa (as), Bible of the prophet 'Isa (as), the Zuboor of the Prophet Dawood (as), the Book of Ibrahim (as) and the books of other Prophets (as) are there with the Imams (as). The Imams (as) recite the Books as did the Prophets (as) of those times and are also familiar with their commentaries and interpretations.

Jaweria bin Mushir narrates that he, with others, was returning with Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) after battling with the excommunicated (*Khawarij*). When they reached near Babel, Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "Speed away from this place! This is the place where Allah's curse descended thrice and also it is the land whre pagan worship first started in the world!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said that the time for the *Asr* prayer was running out and they were still not out of the precincts of *Babel*. We were rushing fast, but the sun sank in the West before we could offer our prayer. The time for the *Asr* prayer, therefore, was over. However the Imam (as) asked the men to do the ablution for the prayer. Jaweria was astonished to see that Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as), pointing his finger toward the already setting sun, brought it back on the horizon and we offered the *Asr prayer* standing behind him. Then the sun set once again, immediately thereafter, and the sky was aglow with the stars. Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "O Jaweria! Don't be so much surprised! Allah has said,

*'Fasabbeh beisme Rabbekal Azeem'* I called Him with His Great (*Azeem*) name. For my sake He made the sun reverse its journey!"

Safar narrates that he, along with others, reached a place called *Aaqool* in the company of Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). They found a dry and withering tree there. Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali(as) touched the tree and said, "Return to your pristine condition with Allah's orders!" Suddenly the tree put on fresh branches and fruits of the shape of guava fruit on the branches. The next day when we looked at the tree, it was fresh and green.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that Imam Hasan (as) was on his way to Mecca for *Umrah*, the Minor Pilgrimage. One of the sons of Zubair was travelling along with him. They rested for a while under the shade of a tree. The son of Zubair said, "How I wish, the tree was bearing fruits that we ate them!"

Imam Hasan (as) asked him, "Do you really want to eat the fruits?" The son of Zubair said, "Yes! O Master! I have a desire to eat the fruits."

Imam Hasan (as) raised his hands towards the sky and prayed. Lo and behold! The tree was instantly loaded with the fruits! One of the camel drivers said, "What a magic that fruits appear on the barren tree!"

The Imam (as) said, "Don't call it magic. The Prophet (S)'s son's prayer has been answered by Allah!"

Salman bin Khalid narrates that he, along with others, was on a journey with Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as). They reached near a dried date palm. The Imam (as) ordered the tree, "O tree! With the Orders of Allah, let us taste of your fruits!" Immediately the tree put on fresh and juicy dates that fell to the ground. Every person in the party ate to their fill. Abd Allah Balqi said, "O son of the Prophet (S)! What we had heard happening for Lady Maryam (as), we have seen happen before our eyes today!"

Hasan bin Abdallah wanted Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) to show him his miracle. The Imam (as) noticed that there was a tree nearby. He asked Hasan to go near the tree and tell that the Imam (as) wanted it to come to him. Hasan did likewise. The tree, rending the soil holding its roots, proceeded fast towards the Imam (as). The Imam (as) ordered the tree to return to its original place, which it did!

Hasan narrates from Abu Baseer that one day he was in the presence of Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) when he asked him, "O Master! Are you the Vicegerent of the Prophet (S)?"

The Imam (as) replied, "No doubt! I am the successor of the Prophet (S)."

Abu Baseer said, 'The Prophet (S) was the successor of the earlier Prophets (as) and had all the characteristics of theirs in him. Similarly these characteristics should be there in you too!"

The Imam (as) said, "No doubt! They are there!"

Abu Baseerasked, "O Imam (as)! Can you bring back the dead to life and give light to the eyes of a blind person?"

The Imam (as) replied, "Yes! With Allah's orders such thungs can happen." Then the Imam (as) called Abu Baseer near him and touched his eyes with his fingers. The sight of both his eyes was instantly restored. The Imam (as) asked him, "Do you wish to remain with the restored eyesight? Or you wish to return to the former condition to be eligible for entry to the Heaven?"

Abu Baseer said, "I want to be back to my earlier condition!"

'Ali bin Mugheera narrates that in Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) was at *Mina* when he passed near a woman who, along with her children, was lamenting about the death of her cow. The Imam (as) asked her the reason for her sorrow.

The woman said, "My children are orphaned and the cow was the only source of sustenance for us."

The Imam (as) said, "Shall I put the cow back to life for you?"

The Woman said, "Yes."

The Imam (as) offered two *Rakat* of prayer, went near the cow and kicked it, saying, "*Qum beizn Allah!* – Rise with Allah's Orders" The cow was restored to life.

Seeing this the woman cried, "You are no doubt, 'Isa bin Maryam (as)!" The Imam (as) mingled with the crowd discreetly to avoid the attention of the people.

Dawood bin Katheer narrates that once he left home with his wife to go the presence of Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as). On the way his wife expired. He went to the Imam (as) and related the tragic incident.

The Imam (as) said, "Go! And you will find your wife is having her meal.

Dawood went back to the place where he had left his wife. He, no doubt, found her busy eating.

It is narrated from Imam Musa al–Kadhim (as) that one day his father, Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as), was proceeding towards *Areed* when a pious, grey–bearded person met him on the way. The Imam (as), seeing the person, went forward respectfully, greeted him and kissed his forehead and the hand. The reverend person gave some advice to the Imam (as). The person who met Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as) was none other than Imam Muhammad Al–Bagir (as).

Samaa narrates that one day, after the demise of Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as), he went to the presence of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). He said, "Do you wish to see my late father?" Samaa said, "Yes!" The Imam (as) said, "Enter that room."

Entering the room, Samaa found Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) sitting there. Then the Imam (as) said that after Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) was martyred, some Shi'as approached Imam Hasan (as) and asked certain questions. After giving the replies the Imam (as) said, "Will you recognize my father, if you see him?" The persons said they would, certainly. The Imam (as) said, "Remove the curtain in front of you!" They removed the curtain and found Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) sitting there.

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) nsrrstes that when Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) decided to proceed for the battle of *Siffin,* he crossed the river *Euphrates* and reached near a hill. It was the time of *Asr* prayer and therefore he did his ablution mandatory prior to any prayer. The call for prayer, the *Adhaan,* was given when the hill broke asunder and a loud sound came, "O Vicegerent of the Last Prophet (S)! O Chief of the believers! Greetings to you!"

In reply the Imam (as) said, "My greeting too, O brother *Shamoun bin Hamoun,* the Vicegerent of 'Isa (as) bin Marium! How are you!"

In reply Shamoun said, "Alhamdu Lillah!" He also said that he was awaiting the arrival of prophet 'Isa (as) that he comes and helps Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as)'s son and Vicegerent. He added, "O Amir'ul–Mu'mineen (as)! If those people had realised your position in the eyes of the Creator, they would never have thought of fighting with you. If the persons, who have come forward to help you, had known about your status, they would fight in your cause till any part of their bodies remained!"

Then Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) offered his prayer. Amongst his companions there were Ammar bin Yassir, Malik al–Ashtar, Bin Abbas etc. They asked him, "O Amir'ul–Mu'mineen (as)! Whose voice was that?" He replied, "It was *Shamoun the Vicegerent of prophet 'Isa (as)*."

Ibada Asadi narrates that, once he went to the presence of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as). The Imam was busy conversing with a person. After the person departed, he asked the Imam (as) who that person was.

He replied, "He was *Haroon* (as), the Vicegerent of Prophet Musa (as)!"

It is narrated from Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) that at the time of his demise the Prophet (S) told him that after giving him the last bath, the *Ghusl*, he should be put in a sitting posture. Then he may be asked any questions Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) liked to ask.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) narrates that he accompanied his father, Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as), to Mecca. On the way they found a person who had a chain around his neck and another person was pulling him. The person with the chain was crying and asking for water. The other person was saying, "O! Accursed person! There is no water for you!" This was the same person who fought with Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) in *Siffin* and raised the Holy Qur'an on the lance.

Abu Hamza Shimali narrates that once he was in the presence of Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) when some birds came there. The Imam (as) asked, "O Abu Hamza! Do you understand what these birds are saying? They are singing the praises of Allah and claiming for the day's sustenance!"

Fazeel bin Yasaar narrates that he went to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) when a pair of pigeons came there. The Imam (as) asked Fazeel if he knew what the birtds were telling. When Fazeel replied in the negative, the Imam (as) said, "The male is telling to the female that there is nothing more dear to him that her! But this Imam (as), our Master, is dearer to me than even you are!"

Muhammad bin Muslim narrates that one day he was in the presence of Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) when a pair of pigeons came and started conversing with the Imam (as) and flew away. He asked the Imam (as) about what transpired between them.

The Imam (as) said, "O Mohjammed bin Muslim! Allah has made all the animals more obedient than the human beings to us. The male pigeon was suspicious of its female about her chastity. The female was not able to convince the male about her good character. Therefore, the female asked the male that they would seek my judgement on the matter.

I told the male pigeon that his female was chaste and he should trust her. This convinced him and the pair flew away happily."

Salman Jafferi narrates that he was sitting with Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) in his garden. At that time a bird came, started rolling on the ground. The Imam (as) went inside the house for a while. On his return, he asked me, "O Salman! Do you know what this bird was complaining about?" I said, "I don't know!"

The Imam (as) said, "A snake was eating away its chicks. Even today the snake came to swallow its xhicks. The bird came to complain to me about the snake. I went and killed the snake!"

Ahmed bin Haroon narrates that once Imam Musa al-Kadhim (as) came to my tent and left his horse near the rope of the tent and started conversing with me. Suddenly the horse made a loud noise. The Imam (as) smiled hearing this and told to the horse, "Go relieve yourself and come back!" The horse went some distance away from the tent, relieved itself and came back. The Imam (as) said, "O Bin Haroon! You know that Allah has given more miracles to Muhammad (as) and the descendents of Muhammad (as) than to Dawood (as) and the progeny of Dawood (as)."

Muhammad bin Muslim narrates that he was travelling with Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) from Mecca to Medina when a wolf came down a hill and running towards the Imam (as)'s horse. It raised the forelimbs sky-wards and put its face to the ground. The Imam (as) bent down and heard what the wolf way saying. He then told something to the wolf. The wolf was satisfied and ran away. The Imam (as) then asked me what had transpired between him and the wolf. When I said that I couldn't comprehend anything, the Imam (as) said, "The wolf's female is in the pains of delivery. It said that we are the resolvers of difficulties and it wanted me to pray that the delivery became easy for its female. It also wanted me to pray that its off springs don't cause harm to our Shi'as."

It is narrated that one day Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) was sitting with his companions when one female deer, a doe, came complaining. The Imam (as) asked the companions about what the animal was saying. When the companions expressed their ignorance, the Imam (as) said, "The deer said that a certain Qureishi has captured its little one, the fawn. She requested me to recommend its release so that it can be suckled. It would return the fawn to the Qureishi after feeding it."

The Imam (as) then asked his companions to accompany him to the Qureishi's house. He called the person and told him to release the fawn that it would get a feed from its mother and comes back. The Qureishi brought the cub, the deer fed it and returned to the man. The Imam (as) asked the Qureishi to give the little fawn to him. The man readily agreed. The Imam (as) then returned the fawn to its mother. The deer raised its head towards the Heaven as if it was saying a prayer. The companions asked the Imam (as), what the deer was saying.

The Imam (as) replied, "The deer was praying to Allah that the way we helped her to get its little one, our children to be safe with us!"

Yunus bin Tabian narrates that once he and some other persons were in the company of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). The Imam (as) observed, "Allah has made us the masters of the treasures of the earth." Then he hit the ground with his foot and gold emerged out of it.

We said, "O master! When you own such treasures, why your Shi'as are in abject penury!"

The Imam (as) said, "The wealth of this world is transitory! We don't prefer transitory gains for our Shi'as. The wealth of the Hereafter is Permanent, that is in store for our friends!"

It is narrated that one day Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) was seated in the *Koofa Mosque* with his companions They asked him, "How is that more wealth and riches have been bestowed by Allah on your foes than your friends?"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) replied, "Do you think that we aver the worldly riches, and that Allah is not bestownig them on us! "Saying this, he picked up a handful of pebbles from the ground. They saw that all the pebbles turned into precious stones.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) then said, "If we wish, the entire surface of the earth will turn into jewels But we are not fond of worldly riches!" Saying this, he threw all the precious stones on the ground and they again turned into pebbles.

Abdu Samad bin 'Ali narrates that a person went to Imam Zain-ul-'Abidin (as) and said that he was a sooth-sayer. The Imam (as) told him that he would tell him of a person who has, since you have arrived here, has travelled around fourteen worlds, each one thrice as large as This!"

The man asked, "Who could be such a person?"

The Imam (as) said, "I am that person! If you ask I can tell you in detail what you have eaten today and what all you have hidden in your house!"

'Ali bin Hasan says that while he was at *Sammurah* he heard that a person was arrested and brought from Syria with the accusation that he had claims to prophet hood. 'Ali went to the person and made some inquiries with him. The man said, "I was at the place in Syria where the severed head of Imam Husayn (as) was kept. While I was offering prayer, a person appeared and said,' Get up and come with me!' I went with the person.

After a while we reached the *Mosque of Koofa*. He asked me if I recognized the place. I replied in the affirmative. Both of us offered prayer there and were blessed with the sighting of the Prophet (S). Then we reached *Mecca* and performed Hajj. Immediately after the Hajj I found myself again in Syria and the person I had accompanied had vanished. The following year same person again met me and took me round, as he did earlier, and brought me back to Syria. I was surprised and under an oath of the Creator asked him as to who he was? He stood with his head bent for a while and then said, 'I am Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Musa (as)!' This news spread like wildfire and Abdul Malik called and imprisoned me."

I asked him to write down all the details and petition for his release. I provided a quill and ink to the man. He wrote down the details and sent the petition to Abdul Malik. Abdul Malik wrote back saying that one who could take him round to all the places in one night, can as well release him!

When I heard this outcome of his petition, I started crying but I also tried to commiserate with the person. The next day I went to the gaol? to inquire about the person. The gaolers? were confounded as to where the prisoner would have vanished despite the strict vigilance.

Hafs Tammar narrates that when Maala bin Khanees was to be executed, he went to the presence of Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). The Imam (as) said, "Maala did not pay heed to what I said and is bearing the consequences. One day he was very morose. I asked him if he was worried because of separation from his family?" He replied in the affirmative. After a while I put my hand over his face and asked him, 'Where are you now?' He replied that he was with his family. Again after sometime I put my hand over his face and asked him where he was? He replied that he was with me in Medina.

Then the Imam (as) told him, "O Maala! One who protects our secrets Allah protects him Do not reveal our secrets to others. One who betrays us, meets a very sorry end. He will either be executed or incarcerated for long terms. You have revealed our secrets and you must prepare yourself for your execution!"

It is narrated by Abd Allah bin Sinan that Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said, "We own a pond that lies between Basra and Yemen. Would you like to see it?"

Abd Allah said, "I shall certainly like to see the pond!"

The Imam (as) held his hand and brought him out of Medina and hit his foot on the ground. A canal became visible, one side of which very pure water flowed and on the other side flowed milk of the highest purity. In the center of the canal flew a beverage of red hue. The scene was very attractive.

Abd Allah said, "My Master! Where is this canal!"

The Imam (as) replied, "Allah has referred of this canal in the Holy Qur'an. This is one of the canals in the Heaven!"

Abdallah noticed very pretty *houris* on the branches of the trees along the banks of the canal. They held goblets of different hues in their hands. The Imam (as) looked towards one tree which bent low and the *houri* thereon offered him a cup from which the Imam (as) drank the beverage and gave some to him too. He had never tasted such a delicious *sherbet*.

The Imam (as) said, "This will be the resting place for our *Shi'as* when they enter the Heaven. Their thirst will be quenched with the *Sharab al–Tahoor* and our enemies, when they die, will be taken to the *Valley of Barhoot* where they will be fed on *Zhaqoom* (a bitter fruit) and they will get *Hameem* (very hot water) to drink. May Allah protect people from the hardships of this valley!"

Jabir Jaufi narrates that he asked Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as) to tell him about the journey made by prophet Ibrahim (as) under Allah's orders to the Dominions (*Malkoot*) of the earth and the Firmament. He was sitting with his head bent when the Imam (as) pointed skywards with his finger and said, "Look up!" When he looked up, he saw the roof of the house developed a hole and there was a strange light in the sky. The Imam (as) said, "Prophet Ibrahim (as) had seen the *malkoot* of the sky and the earth like this!" The Imam (as) asked me to look down. I did, and found the roof of the house intact again.

Then the Imam (as) held my hand and took me to another place and said, "Do you know what place is this! This is the place where *Dhual Qarnain* went, this is called *thulmat* (the region of darkness)." Jabir said, "O Master! Can I open my eyes?" The Imam (as) said, "You may open your eyes, but you cannot see anything in the darkness!"

Then the Imam (as) took him to another place. He said, "This is the ma'ul *Hayat* (the water of Eternal Life) which Al-Khidr (as) had drunk." Then the Imam (as) added, "These are the domains of the sky and the earth that prophet Ibrahim (as) was taken around."

Then the Imam (as) took Jabir on a trip to many other worlds in the universe. Alas, the Imam (as) asked him to open his eyes. When he opened his eyes he found himself in the same place from where they went. Jabir asked the Imam (as), "My Master! How much time we have spent going round?" the Imam (as) replied, "Three hours!"

Abu Baseer narrates that he went to Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as). The Imam (as) stamped his foot on the ground when a river appeared at that spot. On the bank of the river there were boats made of silver. We boarded those boats and reached a place where there were tents made of silver. The Imam (as) entered all the tents pitched there and came out. He said that the first tent he entered at the place belonged to the Prophet (S). The second was for Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) and the third that of Lady Fatima Zahra (as), the fourth of Lady Khadija (as), fifth of Imam Hasan (as), sixth of Imam Husayn (as), the seventh for Imam 'Ali bin al Husayn (as), the eighth belongs to my revered father (as) and the ninth is for me. Whosoever of us departs from the world, rests in his tent here.

Saleh bin Saeed narrates that Imam 'Ali Naqi (as) was made to camp in the *Serai of the Faqirs*. He went to the presence of the Imam (as) and said, "O Master! I am very sorry that you have been accommodated in such a place. The cruel people have tried to belittle you!"

The Imam (as) said, "O Saleh! You still don't know us!" Then he pointed in the direction opposite him. Saleh saw a beautiful garden in which canals of fresh water were flowing. There were groups of *houris* from the *Heaven* everywhere. There were fruits and flowers of all hues and fragrance in plenty. Saleh was surprised at this spectacle.

The Imam (as) then said, "Wherever we are, all these things are available to us!"

A reliable source quotes Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) as saying, "the world is like a walnut for us that we

can turn it the way we want!"

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (as) narrates that *Du al Qarnain* was given the authority to select one of the two types of clouds (*Sahab*)—the *Sahab al–Zalool* (the soft clouds) or the *Sahab al–Saab* (the hard clouds). *Du al Qarnain* selected *Sahab al–Zalool* and left the *Sahab al–Saab* for the Holy Imams (as).

The Imam (as) was asked, "What is Sahab al-Saab?"

The Imam (as) said, "It is the cloud that has thunder, lightning, and thunderbolt. The Saheb-al-Amr, the Twelfth Imam (a.j.), will ride on these clouds on his weekly trips of the Seven layers of the universe."

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that when Allah wishes, He Creates the Imam (as). Then he asks an angel to take the beverage from the *Taht al Arsh* to the Imam (as) for drinking. When the Imam (as) drinks this beverage, his successor is conceived. He keeps quiet in the womb of the mother for forty days. After this period he starts to speak from within the womb. After birth, he observes the actions of all the creations.

The Imam (as) also said that when the mother of the Imam (as) is pregnant, she feels a kind of laziness and hears a voice congratulating her of the arrival of the wise and sagacious son. After this, there are no symptoms of pregnancy in the mother. After completion of the nine months, the mother of the Imam (as) again hears a voice and only the parents see a light in their surroundings. Then the Imam (as) is born. After the birth, the baby sneezes thrice and after every sneeze utters, "Al hamdu Lillah" loudly. The Imam (as) is born naturally circumcised."

Safar narrates from Imam Ja'far As–Sadiq (as) that Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) has said, "There is a city of Allah on the rear of the West, by name *Ja Balqa?*. There are people of 70,000 Faiths (*Ummas*) living there. The population of every faith is equal to the entire population of this world. They never ever indulge in any sins or misdeeds. They don't have to do any work other than uttering *curses on the enemies of the Ahl–ul–Bayt!*"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) said that the other side of the sea there is a city whose width is equal to the journey made by the sun in forty days. The inhabitants of the city are unaware of sinful acts and they even don't know the name of Satan. Whenever they meet us, they ask lot of questions and are very pleased to hear our answers. They ask as to when the Last, the Twelfth Imam (as), will arrive. These people keep themselves busy in the worship of Allah. They recite the Holy Qur'an as instructed by us. They are our true followers. These people will join the *Jihad* when the Twelfth Imam (as) makes his appearance to banish evil from the face of the earth. No weapon will have any effect on their bodies. Their swords are made of such tempered steel that if they hit a rock with them, the rock will get sliced.

The Imam (as), after his appearance, will be accompanied by these troops to Rome, Turkey, Deelam and Tabriz. Then he will make a skirmish on a place lying between *Ja Balqa* and *Ja Balsa?*. These are the two cities, one in the East and the other in the West. People of all the places will be invited to

profess the Faith of Islam. A time will come when the entire population of the world would have embraced Islam.

Imam Hasan (as) says that there are two cities, one in the East and the other in the West. Around each of the two cities there is a rampart made of steel. Every rampart has seventy gates and from every gate seventy thousand caravans enter. The people of every caravan speak a different tongue. But we can understand and converse in all these languages. None other than my brother Husayn (as) and me can visit these cities.

The Prophet of Islam (as) has said,

"O Abu Dharr! Allah has compared my Ahl-ul-Bayt to the Canoe of Noah. Whosoever boarded the Canoe, got deliverance. The dissenters got drowned in the rough waters of the storm. The people who board the ship of my Ahl-ul-Bayt's love and obedience, will get free of the curse of infidelity. Others who turn away from them, will drown in the sea of wretchedness and depravity. The only way to deliverance is through love and affection (*Mawadda*) for us."

Imam Hasan Al-'Askari (as) wrote to Ishaq bin Ismail, The duties made mandatory for you by Allah are His favors on you because He is not in need of your prayers. His purpose in making prayer compulsory has been to distinguish between the righteous and the evil. He gauges the righteous through the yardstick of regularity in offering of prayers and awards them the higher place and position.

Therefore, it is mandatory on you also to perform *Hajj, give Zakat*, fast during the month of *Ramadhan*, offer mandatory prayers and have Faith in the *Wilayah of the Ahl–ul–Bayt*. For you the entrance to all virtue is through the obedience of the *Ahl–ul–Bayt*. If Muhammad (S) and his Vicegerents (as) were not there, the people would have been in gross ignorance like the animals. Can you enter a city without going through the gateway? Allah has appointed the *Imams* (as) after the Prophet (S) for the Guidance of the people. It is His Favor on the mankind. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, 'Today I have completed the Faith of Islam, completed all the favors and bounties for you and Am satisfied with it.'"

Bin Babawiyah narrates from a reliable source that Imam Ar-Ridha' (as) has quoted Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) saying that the Prophet (S) had observed. "Allah has not created others better than us." Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali asked, "O Prophet of Allah! Are you superior than the angel Jibraeel?" The Prophet (S) replied, "O 'Ali (as)! Allah has made the Prophets (as) and the Messengers superior than the angels and I have the distinction of superiority over all other prophets (as). After me, you and the Imams (as) in your progeny have been bestowed with superiority. The angels are all at our service! O 'Ali (as)! The angels who are stationed in the Heaven, keep praying for the deliverance of our friends. 'Ali (as)! If we were not created, Allah would have created neither prophet Adam (as) nor Hawwa (as); neither there would be the Janna nor the Jehannam, even the earth and the skies would not have come into existence! And how is it possible that we are not superior to the angels that we had the Knowledge of the Creator, Allah much before they did.

Our Spirits were the First Creations of the Almighty before anything else came into existence! We have been the first who bore witness to His Unity and busied ourselves in His Worship and Prayer! Then, later on, the angels were created. We were all in the form of a Light. When the angels saw us, they wondered very much. Observing their wonderment, and fearing that they might think of us as the greatest, our Light said, "Subhan Allah! hearing this Glorification, they too started emulating. Fearing that they might include us, too, in the Glorification, we uttered, "La Ilaha il Allah". The angels now understood that the Glorification can only be for Allah. To preclude the chance of their terming us the greatest, we uttered, "Allah Akbar!" The angels understood what we meant, and followed suit.

We said, "La haula wa laquwwata illa Billah" that the angels understood that all the power that we can exercise is given by Allah, and none else! The purpose of saying this also was that the angels might start thinking wrongly that our power was perhaps because of our ceaseless supplication and prayer! In the end we said, "Alhamdo Lillah, Praise be to Allah, This is how the angels learned from us the method of Glorifying Allah. Then prophet Adam (as) was created by Allah and He put our Nur in him. Because our Nur was with prophet Adam (as), Allah ordered the angels to prostrate before him. The angels then prostrated to prophet Adam (as)!"

"Therefore we are, because of precedence in our creation and knowledge of Allah, superior to the angels. When Jibrael took me to the Firmament, he said the *Adhaan and Iqamah* and requested me to lead the prayer. I asked him, 'Do you consider me superior to yourself?' Jibrael said, 'Of course! Allah has made the prophets (as) superior to the angels and you are the most superior of all the prophets!'Then, when we reached the *Hijab al–Noor* (the Curtain of Light) Jibrael said,' You must enter this place alone. I am not permitted to go any further!'I asked him, 'Are you departing leaving me alone?' Jibrael replied, 'If I venture any further all my feathers and hair will get burnt!'

"Then I entered the *Nahri–Noor* (the River of Light). This is the place where the angels don't enter. I heard a voice there saying, 'O Muhammad (as)!' I said, 'Labbaik, Ya Rub (At Your beck and call, O Allah!). Allah said, 'O Muhammad (S)! You are My Creation! I Am your Lord! Worship Me only and depend on Me! You are My Noor that I have sent to the people as My Manifestation. I have created the Heaven for you and your descendents. There are elevated positions for your Vicegerents (as) and great rewards fot their Shi'as!' I asked, 'Who are my Vicegerents?' The voice came, 'The names of your Vicegerents have been engraved on the *Saq al–Arsh* (the Shank of the Firmament)' I looked in that direction and found written in the gold the names of all the Vicegerents (as) starting with the name of 'Ali (as) and ending with that of *Mehdi* (a.j.), the Last of the Imams (as).

I asked, 'O my Allah! Are all these my Vicegerents?' The voice came, 'They are all my *Aulia* who will be My *Hujjat* (Representatives) for the people after you. I shall keep my *Faith and Religion* flourishing and thriving in the world through them. The last of these Vicegerents (as), *the Qaim*, will cull the world of all My enemies and purify it. He will be the sovereign of the East and the West. His sway will be there till the world lasted'"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that whenever Jibrael visited the Prophet (S), he used to sit politely like a slave. He never entered without obtaining the permission of the Prophet (S)

Imam Hasan Al-'Askari (as) narrates that someone asked the Prophet (S), "Is 'Ali (as) superior or the angels?"

The Prophet (S) replied, "A person who has true love for 'Ali (as) in his heart is superior to the angels!"

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq (as) narrates that one day a Jew came to the presence of the Prophet (S) and asked, "Tell me! Are you, and your Vicegerents (as), superior to Prophet Musa (as)?"

The Prophet (S) replied, Praising oneself is not right. But, since you have asked the question, I shall have to give the reply! Therefore, listen, and listen with care!

When prophet Adam (as) committed the mistake, then he offered a prayer to this effect: 'O Allah! For the sake of Muhammad (S), and his progeny, forgive my mistake!' Allah, therefore pardoned Adam (as).'

When Noah (as)'s Ark was caught in the cyclone, he prayed to Allah,' O the Creator! For the sake of Muhammad (S) and his progeny, guide my ark safely out of the cyclone! His prayer was answered.

When Nimrod consigned Ibrahim (as), the Friend of Allah, to the fire, Ibrahim (as) prayed, 'O Creator of Ibrahim (as)! For the sake of Muhammad (S) and his progeny, make the fire cool on me!" The fire went cold.

When the magicians in the court of the Pharaoh attacked Musa (as) with their serpents, Musa (as) got scared and prayed, 'O Allah! For the sake of Muhammad (S) and his Vicegerents (as) deliver me from this danger!' Musa (as) was ordered to throw his staff. He complied, the staff became a bigger serpent and swallowed all the serpents of the magicians. Musa (as)'s prayer was thus answered.

O Jew! If Musa (as) comes today and does not accept me as the Prophet (S), then his own prophet hood would go void! O Jew! I have a descendent; when he appears with the Order of Allah, 'Isa (as) will descend from the Heaven and offer prayers standing behind him.

An authentic source records that on the day when Allah took an oath from the progeny of Adam (as), He asked all the prophets (as) and the angels, "Am I not your Creator, your Lord? Isn't Muhammad (S) your Prophet? Aren't 'Ali (as) and his Immaculate Progeny (as), your *Imams*?"

All of them replied in unison, "Definitely! Yes!!"

Those prophets who took the earliest initiative in affirming this, were put in the rank of *ulu al azm* (The superior) prophets. The angels who took precedence over the other angels in responding, they became *Muqarrabeen*, or the angels closest to Allah!

The prophet of Allah (as) said,

"O Abu Dharr! Please remember what I am advising you and act on it! There are two blessings that men are oblivious of! One, the health of the body and the second is the leisure they get! They don't make good use of these two blessings and repent later on!

And Abu Dharr! Be thankful for five things and appreciate them:

Appreciate that youth is before old age! Because there is no pleasure of prayer in the old age!

Appreciate good health before you fall ill, because prayer can be best offered when one is in good health.

Appreciate affluence before you become a beggar that you might do charity in the name of Allah!

Appreciate the leisure you have, before you get busy that you offer prayers to your heart's content.

Appreciate life before death catches up with you, that you cannot do anything once you are dead.

And O Abu Dharr! Don't delay doing good deeds! What good turn you have decided to do, do it today! Who knows, you may be there tomorrow or not. O Abu Dharr! There were lots of people there, but they are no more now! There were lots of them who kept their tasks for the morrow! But before the morrow came, they were no more!

O Abu Dharr! If you know the speed with which the steed of death is running and the speed with which it is taking you closer to death, you will abstain from lots of wishes and desires!

O Abu Dharr! This world is like a *serai*?! Spend life like a traveler in it. Don't consider it your land. Your land is only the small area of the grave, and always think of inhabiting it!

O Abu Dharr! In the morning stop thinking of the evening! It might happen that your evening might not meet you!

O Abu Dharr! Make good use of your health, before ill health catches up with you! Make good use of life, before death overtakes you! Who knows, tomorrow your name might be in the list of the living, or the roster of the dead! Or on the Day of Judgment, whether your name will be on the list of the good people or with the sinners.

O Abu Dharr! Do whatever good turns, now, when you live. Don't neglect the Hereafter by chasing and accumulating transitory riches. The persons to whom you leave behind the riches, will not praise you for your largesse!

O Abu Dharr! I am wondering that people worry at the slightest hardship! How will they bear the Hellfire and hardships of *Jahannam!* I see the people spending sleepless nights to acquire the worldly pleasure! I also wonder seeing people sleep and neglect their chances of acquiring the pleasures of the Heaven as a recompense for their prayers.

O Abu Dharr! Appreciate the short span of life given to you! Be miserly in not spending it on the transitory wealth of this world.

One very well known astrologer came to the presence of Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) and said, "I am a sooth sayer! I have heard that you too predict about the events of the future! Do you want me to ask you some questions or wish to answer my queries?"

The Imam (as) said, 'Only Allah knows what is not in our present knowledge and sight! But I know whatever He has taught me! If you have claims of knowing the unknown, tell me what is enclosed in my fist.' Then Amir'ul–Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) put before him his folded fist.

The man thought for a long while. Then Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "You are unable to answer!"

The man replied, "This is a very small matter! I was, in fact, wondering, as to how, whatever is in your hand, has come there. In your folded fist there is the nest of a bird and its egg from the peak of a mountain which has never been scaled by any human being! I am really wondering how you have brought it almost in the time needed for the winking of the eye."

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) opened his fist that did contain the egg and the nest! Amir'ul-Mu'mineen (as) folded his palm once again and asked him, "Now tell me, what is there in my folded fist?"

The astrologer said, "The nest and the egg have been restored to their original place on the peak of the mountain!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) opened his fist and, there was nothing there!

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) told to the man, "I shall ask you another question, if you agree to reply truthfully!"

The man promised to tell the truth.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) asked, "From where you have learnt your tricks?"

The astrologer said, "This is the first question you have asked, otherwise I wouldn't have been obliged to reply. This skill is because of a mystic exercise I had undertaken. The exercise is that whatever my base instinct (*nafs*) desires, I persevere and insist on its fulfillment.

The Imam (as) asked, "What does your nafs say about becoming a Muslim?"

The man refused to reply.

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, "Why didn't you persevere and insist on becoming a Muslim?"

The man wondered and converted to Islam.

Now Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) asked, "Tell me, what is there in my closed fist?"

The man thought for a long while and was unable to give any reply. He said, "By accepting Islam, I have put myself to great loss. I have lost the faculty that I possessed earlier!"

Amir'ul-Mu'mineen 'Ali (as) said, O Person! You have not lost anything! In fact, you have gained! The *tazkia nafs* (purification of the mind) that you have undergone shall bring you great benefits in this life and the life Hereafter. You will have an august position in the Other World, which I guarantee.

For the description of the above, study of the three objectives is essential, which are dealt in the next chapter.

#### Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/ain-al-hayat-essence-life-muhammad-baqir-al-majlisi/chapter-4-refulgence-or-rays-light