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Good Deeds of Non-Muslims

Outline Of The Discussion

One of the issues that are discussed regarding "Divine Justice" is the issue of the good deeds performed by non-Muslims.

Today, the issue of whether the good deeds of non-Muslims are accepted by God or not is under discussion among the different classes, whether learned or unlearned, literate or illiterate. If they are accepted, what difference does it make if a person is Muslim or not; the important thing is to do good in this world. If a person is not a Muslim and practices no religion, he or she has lost nothing. And if their actions are not acceptable and are altogether void, with no reward or recompense from God, how is that compatible with Divine Justice?

This same question can be asked from a Shia perspective within the bounds of Islam: Are the actions of a non-Shia Muslim acceptable to God, or are they null and void? If they are acceptable, what difference does it make if a person is a Shia Muslim or a non-Shia Muslim? What is important is to be Muslim; a person who is not a Shia and doesn't believe in the wilayah (Divinely-appointed guardianship) of the Ahlul-Bayt (a) has not lost anything. And if the actions of such a person are not acceptable to God, how is that compatible with Divine justice?

In the past, this issue was only discussed by philosophers and in books of philosophy. However, today it has entered the minds of all levels of society; few people can be found who have not at least broached the subject for themselves and in their own minds.

Divine philosophers would discuss the issue from the aspect that if all people who are outside the fold of religion are to face perdition and Divine punishment, it necessarily follows that in the universe, evil and compulsion are preponderant. However, the fact that felicity and good have primacy in the universe not evil and wretchedness–is an accepted and definitive principle.

Humanity is the greatest of all of creation; everything else is created for it (of course, with the correct conception of this idea that is understood by the wise, not the conception that the shortsighted

commonly possess). If humanity itself is to be created for the Hell-fire-that is, if the final abode of the majority of humanity is to be Hell-then one must grant that the anger of God supercedes His mercy. This is because the majority of people are strangers to the true religion; and even those who are within the fold of the true religion are beset by deviation and digression when it comes to practicing. This was the background of the discussion among the philosophers.

It has been nearly half a century that, as a result of easier communication among Muslim and non–Muslim nations, an increase in the means of communication, and greater interaction among nations, the issue of whether being a Muslim and a believer is a necessary condition for the acceptability of good deeds is being discussed among all levels of society, especially the so-called intellectuals.

When these people study the lives of inventors and scientists of recent times who weren't Muslim but who performed valuable services for humanity, they find such people worthy of reward. On the other hand, since they used to think that the actions of non–Muslims are altogether null and void, they fall into serious doubt and uncertainty. In this way, an issue which for years was the exclusive domain of the philosophers has entered the general conversations of people and has taken the form of an objection with regard to Divine Justice.

Of course, this objection is not directly related to Divine justice; it is related to Islam's viewpoint about human beings and their actions, and becomes related to Divine Justice inasmuch as it appears that such a viewpoint regarding human beings, their actions, and God's dealing with them is in opposition to the standards of Divine Justice.

In the interactions that I have and have had with students and the youth, I have frequently been faced with this question. Sometimes they ask whether the great inventors and scientists, with all the worthy services they have done for humanity, will go to Hell. Will the likes of Pasteur and Edison go to Hell while indolent holy people who have spent their lives idly in a comer of the mosque go to Heaven? Has God created Heaven solely for us Shias?

I remember that once an acquaintance from my city who was a practicing Muslim came to Tehran to visit me, and he raised this issue.

This man had visited a lepers' hospital in Mashhad and had been stirred and deeply affected by the sight of the Christian nurses who were sincerely (at least in his view) looking after the leprosy patients. At that time, this issue came up in his mind and he fell into doubt.

You are aware that looking after a patient of leprosy is a very difficult and unpleasant task. When this hospital was established in Mashhad, few doctors were willing to serve there, and similarly, no one was willing to care for the patients. Advertisements for the employment of nurses were taken out in the newspapers; in all of Iran, not a single person gave a positive answer to this invitation. A small group of so-called ascetic Christian girls from France came and took charge of nursing the lepers.

This man, who had seen the humanitarianism and loving care of those nurses towards lepers who had been abandoned by even their own parents, had been strongly affected by them.

He related that the Christian nurses wore long, loose clothes, and apart from their face and hands, no part of their body was visible. Each of them had a long rosary–which had perhaps a thousand beads–and whenever they would find free time from work, they would busy themselves in their recitations on the rosary.

Then the man would ask with a troubled mind and in a disturbed tone whether it was true that non–Muslims would not enter Heaven?

Of course, right now we are not concerned with the motives of those Christian ladies. Was it truly for God, in God's way, and out of pure humanitarianism that they did what they did, or was another motive in play? Certainly, we don't want to be pessimistic, just as we are not overly optimistic; our point is that these incidents and events have introduced our people to a serious question.

Several years ago, I was invited to an association to give a speech. In that association, in accordance with their tradition, the participants were requested to write down any questions they had so they could be answered at the appropriate time. Those questions had been recorded in a notebook, and that notebook had been given to me so I could choose the topic of my speech from among those topics. I noticed that the question that had been repeated more than any other was whether God will send all non–Muslims to Hell. Will Pasteur, Edison, and Koch be among those who will be punished in the Hereafter?

It was from that time that I realized the importance of this issue inasmuch as it had attracted people's thoughts.

Now, in this part of the book, we will discuss this issue. But before we begin, we clarify two points in order for the topic at hand to become completely clear.

1. The General Aspect Of The Discussion

The purpose of this discussion is not to clarify the status of individuals, for example to specify whether Pasteur will go to Heaven or Hell. What do we know about his true thoughts and beliefs? What were his true intentions? What were his personal and moral traits? And in fact, what was the sum of all his actions? Our familiarity with him is limited to his intellectual services, and that is all.

And this doesn't apply only to Pasteur. As a matter of principle, the status of individuals is in the hands of God; no one has the right to express an opinion with certainty about whether someone will go to Heaven or Hell. If we were to be asked, "Is Shaykh Murtada al-Ansari (may God have mercy on him), in view of his known asceticism, piety, faith, and deeds, definitely among the inhabitants of Heaven?" our answer would be, "From what we know of the man, in his intellectual and practical affairs we haven't heard of

anything bad. What we know of him is virtue and goodness. But as to saying with absolute certainty whether he will go to Heaven or Hell, that isn't our prerogative. It is God who knows the intentions of all people, and He knows the secrets and hidden things of all souls; and the account of all people's actions is also with Him. We can only speak with certainty about those whose final outcome has been made known by the religious authorities."

Sometimes people discuss and debate among themselves about who was the most virtuous and excellent among the 'ulama in terms of nearness to God. For example, was it Sayyid ibn Tawus, or Sayyid Bahr al ulum? Or Shaykh al Ansari? Or sometimes they ask about the most eminent among the descendants of the Imams. For example, is Sayyid 'Abd al Azim al-Hasani superior in God's view, or Sayyida Fatima al Ma'suma?

Once, one of the mujtahids was asked whether Abbas ibn Ali (a) was superior or Ali al-Akbar (a). And in order to give the question the form of a practical issue so the mujtahid would be compelled to answer it, they asked, "If someone vows to sacrifice a sheep for the most superior of the Imams' descendants, what is his duty? Is Abbas ibn Ali superior, or Ali al Akbar?"

It is obvious that such discussions are improper, and answering such questions is neither the duty of a *faqih* (scholar of Islamic law), nor of anyone else. Specifying the rank of God's creation is not our responsibility. It should be left to God, and no one has any knowledge about the matter except through God himself.

In the early era of Islam, there were instances when people expressed such unjustified opinions, and the Prophet (s) forbade them from doing so.

When Uthman ibn Maz'un died, a woman of the Ansar named Umm Ala', who apparently was the wife of the man in whose house Uthman ibn Maz'un was staying and whose guest he was, addressed his bier in the presence of the Prophet (s) and said, "May Heaven be pleasant for you!"

Although 'Uthman ibn Maz'un was an eminent man, and the Prophet cried heavily at his funeral and threw himself over the bier and kissed him, the inappropriate statement of that woman displeased him. He turned to her and with an unhappy look said, "How did you know? Why did you make a statement out of ignorance? Have you received a revelation, or do you know the accounts of God's creation?" The woman replied, "O Messenger of God, he was your companion and brave warrior!" The Noble Messenger (s) answered her with interesting words that are worthy of attention. He said,

I am the messenger of God, yet I don't know what will be done with me. 1

This sentence is the exact purport of a verse of the Qur'an:

قُلْ مَا كُنتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ وَمَا أَدْرِي مَا يُفْعَلُ بِي وَلَا بِكُمْ

Say, I am not a novelty among the apostles, nor do I know what will be done with me, or with you."!(Qur'an, 46:9)2

A similar incident has also been related regarding the death of Sa'd ibn Muadh. In that instance, when the mother of Sa'd said a similar sentence over his coffin, the Messenger (s) said to her, "Be silent; don't make a decision with certainty in God's affairs 3. على الله) (لا تحتمى

2. No Religion Except Islam Is Accepted

The other point that must be made clear before beginning the discussion is that the topic of the non–Muslims' good deeds can be discussed in two ways and in reality, is two discussions: First, is any religion other than Islam acceptable to God, or is Islam the only acceptable religion? That is, is it necessary only for a person to have some religion or at most follow a religion associated with one of the Divine prophets, without it then making a difference which religion that is, for example, whether one be a Muslim, Christian, Jew, or even a Zoroastrian? Or is there only one true religion in each era?

After we have accepted that the true religion in each era is only one, the other discussion is 'whether a person who doesn't follow the true religion but performs a good deed, one that is actually good and is also sanctioned by the true religion, is worthy of reward or not? In other words, is faith in the true religion a condition for one's good deeds to merit reward?

What will be discussed here is the second issue.

With respect to the first issue, we can say briefly that there is only one true religion in each era, and all are obligated to believe in it.

The idea that has recently become common among some so-called intellectuals to the effect that all Divine religions have equal validity in all eras is a fallacious one.

Of course, it is true that there is no disagreement or contradiction among the prophets of God. All of the prophets of God call towards a single goal and the same God. They have not come to create mutually contradicting groups and sects among humanity.

But this doesn't mean that in every era there are several true religions, and thus people in each era can then choose whichever religion they want. To the contrary, it means that a person must believe in all of the prophets and affirm that each prophet would give tidings of the prophet to come, especially the final and greatest of them; and likewise, each prophet would affirm the previous one. Thus, the necessary consequence of believing in all of the prophets is to submit in every era to the religion of the prophet of the time. And of course, it is necessary that in the final era we act on the final commands that have been revealed by God to the final prophet. And this is what necessarily follows from Islam, that is, submission

to God and acceptance of the missions of His messengers.

Many people in our day have subscribed to the view that it is sufficient for a person to worship God and be affiliated with and practice one of the Divine religions that were revealed by God; the form of the commandments is not that important. Isa (a) was a prophet, Muhammad (s) was also a prophet; if we follow the religion of Isa (a) and go to church once a week, that is fine, and if we follow the religion of the final messenger (s) and pray five times a day, that is also correct. These people say that what is important is for a person to believe in God and practice one of the Divine religions.

George Jordac, author of the book4 on Imam Ali (a), Gibran Khalil Gibran, the well-known Lebanese Christian author; and others like them have such a view.5 These two individuals speak of the Prophet and Amir al-Mu'minin and especially Amir al-Mu'minm -just as a Muslim would.

Some people ask how these people, in spite of their belief in Amir al–Mu'minin (a) and the Prophet (s), are still Christian. If they were truthful, they would have become Muslims, and since they haven't done so, it is clear there is something behind the curtain. They are being deceptive, and they aren't sincere in their expression of love and belief in the Prophet and Ali (a).

The answer is that they are not without sincerity in their expression of love and belief in the Prophet and Amir al-Mu'minin (a). However, they have their own way of thinking regarding practicing a religion.

These individuals believe that human beings are not held to a particular religion; any religion is sufficient. Thus, at the same time that they are Christians, they consider themselves admirers and friends of Ali (a), and they even believe that he himself held their view. George Jordac says, "Ali ibn Abi Talib declines to compel people to necessarily follow a particular religion."

However, we consider this idea void. It is true that there is no compulsion in religion:

There is no compulsion in religion. (Qur'an, 2:256)

But this doesn't mean that there is more than one religion in every age that is acceptable to God, and we have the right to choose anyone we please. This is not the case; in every age, there is one true religion and no more. Whenever a prophet was sent by God with a new religion, the people were obligated to avail themselves of his teachings and learn his laws and commandments, whether in acts of worship or otherwise, until the turn of the Seal of the Prophets came. In this age, if someone wishes to come near God, he or she must seek guidance from the precepts of the religion he brought.

The Noble Qur'an says:

وَمَن يَبْتَغ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَام دِينًا فَلَن يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

Should anyone follow a religion other than Islam, it shall never be accepted from him, and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter. (Qur'an, 3:85)

If someone were to say that the meaning of "Islam" in this verse is not our religion in particular; rather, the intent is the literal meaning of the word, or submission to God, the answer would be that without doubt Islam means submission and the Islamic religion is the religion of submission, but the reality of submission has a particular form in each age. And in this age, its form is the same cherished religion that was brought by the Seal of the Prophets. So, it follows that the word Islam (submission) necessarily applies to it alone.

In other words, the necessary consequence of submission to God is to accept His commandments, and it is clear that one must always act on the final Divine commandments. And the final commandment of God is what His final messenger has brought.

Good Deeds Without Faith

It has become clear that, first of all, our discussion has a general aspect, and we don't want to pass decisions about individuals.

Second, our discussion is not about whether the true religion is one or several; rather, we have accepted that the true religion is one and that all are obligated to accept it.

Third, our discussion is this: if a person, without accepting the true religion, performs a deed which the true religion considers good, does that person receive a reward for that good deed or not?

For example, the true religion has emphasized doing good to others. This includes cultural services like establishing schools, places of learning, writing, and teaching; health services like medicine, nursing, establishing sanitary establishments, and so forth; social services such as mediating disputes, helping the poor and disabled, supporting the rights of the exploited, fighting the exploiters and oppressors, assisting the deprived, establishing justice which is the aim and goal of the prophets' mission, providing the means of satisfaction for the broken–hearted and misfortunate, and such like. Every religion and every prophet has enjoined these things. In addition, the reasoning and conscience of each individual rules that these things are good and worthy.

Now, we ask whether a non-Muslim is rewarded if he or she performs such services. The true religion says to be trustworthy and not lie; if a non-Muslim acts in accordance with this principle, will he or she be rewarded or not? In other words, is it equal with respect to a non-Muslim to be trustworthy or treacherous? Are adultery and prayers equal with respect to him or her (سواء صلّى أم زنى)? This is the issue that we wish to discuss.

Two Ways Of Thinking

Normally, those with an intellectual inclination say with certainty that there is no difference between a Muslim and non–Muslim, and even between a monotheist and non–monotheist; whoever performs a good deed, a service like establishing a charitable organization or an invention or something else, deserves recompense from God.

They say that God is Just, and a God who is Just does not discriminate among His servants. What difference does it make for God whether His servant recognizes Him or not or believes in Him or not? Certainly, God will not ignore the good deeds or waste the reward of a person simply because that person doesn't have a relationship of familiarity and love with Him. And even more certainly, if a person believes in God and does good deeds, but does not recognize His messengers and thus does not have a relationship of familiarity and covenant of friendship with them, God will not cancel out and nullify his or her good deeds.

Directly opposite to these people are those who consider almost all people worthy of punishment and believe in a good end and accepted actions with respect to only a few. They have a very simple standard; they say that people are either Muslim or non–Muslim. Non–Muslims, who are about three–fourths of the world's population, shall go to Hell because they are non–Muslims. The Muslims in their turn are either Shia or non–Shia. The non–Shias, who are about three–fourths of all Muslims, will go to Hell because they are non–Shias. And of the Shias, too, a majority–about three–fourths–are only Shia in name, and it is a small minority that is familiar with even the first obligation, which is to perform "taqlid" of a mujtahid (follow the religious rulings of a particular scholar), let alone their remaining obligations, and the correctness and completeness of those obligations depends on this obligation. And even those who perform taqlid are for the most part non–practicing. Thus, there are very few who will achieve salvation.

This is the logic of the two sides: the logic of those who, it can almost be said, are absolute conciliation, and the logic of those who we can say are a manifestation of Divine anger, giving anger precedence over mercy.

The Third Logic

Here there is a third logic, which is the logic of the Qur'an. In this issue the Qur'an gives us a concept that is different from the previous two ideas and that is peculiar to it. The Qur'an's view accords with neither the nonsensical idea of our so-called intellectuals, nor with the narrow-mindedness of our holier than-thou pious people. The Qur'an's view is rooted in a special logic that everyone, after learning of it, will admit is the correct position in this matter. And this fact increases our faith in this astonishing and remarkable book and shows that its lofty teachings are independent of the worldly thoughts of human beings and have a celestial source.

Here we present the proofs of both disputing groups (the so-called intellectuals and the so-called pious) and investigate them so that by critiquing them we can slowly arrive at the third logic in regard to this issue, that is, the logic and particular philosophy of the Qur'an.

The So-Called Intellectuals

This group brings two types of proofs for their view: rational and narrational.

1. Rational proof. The rational demonstration that says that good deeds entail their reward no matter who performs them is based on two premises:

The first premise: God has an equal relation to all existent beings. His relation to all times and places is the same; just as God is in the East, He is in the West, and just as He is above, He is below. God is in the present and past and future; the past, present, and future have no difference for God, just as above and below and East and West are the same for Him. Similarly, His servants and creation are also the same for Him; He has neither family ties nor a special relationship with anyone. Thus, God's showing grace or showing anger towards people is also the same, except when there are differences in the people themselves.6

As a result, no one is dear to God without reason, and no one is lowly or outcast without justification. God has neither ties of kinship nor of nationality with anyone; and no one is the beloved or chosen one of God.

Since God's relation to all beings is the same, there remains no reason for a good deed to be accepted from one person and not from another. If the actions are the same, their reward will also be the same, since the assumption is that God's relation to all people is the same. So, justice demands that God reward all those who do good–whether Muslims or non–Muslims–in the same way.

The second premise: The goodness or badness of actions is not based on convention, but on actual reality. In the terminology of scholars of theology and the science of principles of jurisprudence, the "goodness" or "badness" of actions is *dhati*, or innate. That is, good and bad deeds are differentiated by their essence; good deeds are good by their essence, and bad deeds are bad by their essence. Honesty, virtue, doing good, helping others, and so forth are good by their essence; and lying, stealing, and oppression are bad by their essence. The goodness of "honesty" or badness of "lying" is not because God has mandated the former and forbidden the latter. To the contrary, it is because "honesty" is good that God has obligated it and because "lying" is bad that God has forbidden it. In short, God's commanding or forbidding is based on the goodness or badness of actions in their essence, and not the other way around.

From these two premises, we conclude that since God does not discriminate, and since good deeds are good from all people, whoever does a good deed will definitely and necessarily be rewarded by God.

It is exactly the same way with regard to evil deeds since there is no difference between those who commit them.

2. Narrational proof. The Qur'an affirms in many verses the principle of non-discrimination among people in rewarding good deeds and punishing evil deeds-which was mentioned in the above rational proof. The Qur'an strongly opposed the Jews, who believed in such discrimination. The Jews believed-and still believe-hat the Jewish race is chosen by God; they would say, "We are the sons and friends of God. Supposing God sends us to Hell, it will not be for more than a limited time." The Qur'an calls such ideas wishes and untrue thoughts and has strongly combated them. The Qur'an also points out the error of Muslims who have fallen prey to such deception. Here are some of the verses in this regard:

1.

And they say, 'The Fire shall not touch us except for a number of days.' Say, 'Have you taken a promise from Allah? If so, Allah will never break His promise. Do you ascribe to Allah what you do not know?' Certainly, whoever commits misdeeds and is besieged by his iniquity—such shall be the inmates of the Fire, and they will remain in it (forever). And those who have faith and do righteous deeds—they shall be the inhabitants of paradise; they will remain in it (forever). (Qur'an, 2:80-82)

2. In another place, the Qur'an says in answer to the conjecture of the Jews:

and they have been misled in their religion by what they used to fabricate. But how will it be (with them) when We gather them on a day in which there is no doubt, and every soul shall be recompensed fully for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged? (Qur'an, 3:24–25)

3. In another place, the Christians have been added to the Jews, and together they have been opposed by the Qur'an:

And they say, 'No one will enter paradise except one who is a Jew or Christian.' Those are their

(false) hopes! Say, 'Produce your evidence, should you be truthful.' Certainly, whoever submits his will to Allah and is virtuous, he shall have his reward from his Lord, and they will have no fear, nor shall they grieve. (Qur'an, 2:111-112)

4. In Surah al–Nisa', the Muslims, too, have been added to the Jews and Christians. The Qur'an demolishes discriminatory thinking no matter who it is from. It is as though the Muslims had come under the effect of the thinking of the People of the Book, and in the face of they who without reason considered themselves superior, adopted such an opinion about themselves. The Qur'an says, refuting these immature fancies:

It will be neither after your hopes nor the hopes of the People of the Book: whoever commits evil shall be requited for it, and he will not find for himself any guardian or helper besides Allah. And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, should he be faithful—such shall enter paradise and they will not be wronged (so much as) the speck on a date-stone. (Qur'an, 4:123-124)

5. Leaving aside the verses that condemn baseless suppositions of honour and nearness to God, there are other verses that say that God does not waste the reward of any good deed.

These verses have also been taken as proof of the acceptance of the good deeds of all people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim. In Surah Zilzal, we read:

So, whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. (Qur'an, 99:7-8)

Elsewhere, God says:

Indeed, Allah does not waste the reward of the virtuous. (Qur'an, 9:120)

And in another place, He says:

Indeed, We do not waste the reward of those who are good in deeds. (Qur'an, 18:30)

The wording of these verses makes them universal statements that are not given to exceptions.

The scholars of the discipline of the principles of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*) say that certain universal statements do not accept exceptions; that is, the wording and tone of the universal is such that it resists any exceptions. When it is said, "We don't waste the reward of the doer of good," it means that God's divinity demands that He preserve good deeds; thus, it is impossible for God to disregard His divinity in one instance and waste a good deed.

6. There is another verse which is frequently referred to in this discussion, and it is said that it clearly points to the assertion of this group:

Indeed, the faithful, the Jews, the Sabaeans, and the Christians—those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day and act righteously—they will have no fear, nor will they grieve. (Qur'an, 5:69)

In this verse, three conditions have been mentioned for salvation and safety from God's punishment: belief in God, belief in the Day of Judgment, and good deeds; no other condition is mentioned.

Some who are apparently intellectuals have gone one step further and said that the aim of the prophets was to call towards justice and goodness, and in accordance with the rule "Comply with the spirit and not the letter of the law" we should say that justice and goodness are accepted even from those who don't believe in God and the Day of Judgment. Thus, those who don't believe in God and the Day of Judgment but have made great cultural, medical, economical, or political contributions to humanity shall have a great reward.

Of course, these people can argue on the basis of verses like, "We don't waste the reward of one who does good," and "So whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it," but verses like the one above contradict their assertion.

Below we take a look at the proofs of the other group.

The Rigid Group

In opposition to the supposed intellectuals who claim that good deeds are accepted by God from all people in all situations are the rigid pious ones; their position is directly opposite to the former group. They say that it is impossible for a non–Muslim's actions to be accepted. The actions of unbelievers and similarly those of non–Shia Muslims have absolutely no value. The non–Muslim and non–Shia Muslim

himself is rejected and rebuffed; his actions are even more worthy of being rejected. This group also brings two proofs: rational and narrational.

1. Rational Proof

The rational proof of this group is that if it is supposed that the actions of non-Muslims and non-Shia Muslims are to be accepted by God, what is the difference between Muslims and non-Muslims? The difference between them should be either for the good deeds of Muslims and Shias to be accepted to the exclusion of nonMuslims and non-Shia Muslims, or for the evil deeds of Muslims and Shias not to be punished, again to the exclusion of non-Muslims and non-Shia Muslims. But if we suppose that the good deeds of both groups entail reward and the evil deeds of both groups lead to punishment, what difference will there be between them? And what is the effect of being Muslim or Shia in such a case? The equality of Muslims and non-Muslims, and similarly Shias and non-Shias, in accounting for their actions means that in essence practicing Islam or Shiaism is unnecessary and without effect.

2. Narrational Proof

In addition to the above reasoning, this group also argues from two Qur'anic verses and several traditions.

In a few verses of Qur'an, it has been clearly stated that the actions of unbelievers are not accepted; similarly, in many traditions it has been said that the actions of non–Shias–that is, those who do not have the *wilayah* (Divinely–ordained guardianship) of the Ahl al–Bayt (a)–are not accepted.

In Surah Ibrahim, God compares the actions of unbelievers to ashes which are scattered by a strong wind and lost:

A parable of those who defy their Lord: their deeds are like ashes over which the wind blows hard on a tempestuous day: they have no power over anything they have earned. That is extreme error. (Qur'an, 14:18)

In a verse of Surah Nur, the actions of unbelievers have been likened to a mirage which appears to be water but upon being approached turns out to be nothing.

This verse says that great deeds that give people pause and, in the view of some simpleminded people, are greater than the services of even the prophets are all null and void if they are not coupled with belief in God. Their greatness is nothing but a fancy, like a mirage. The words of the verse are as below:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِندَهُ فَوَقَّاهُ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدُهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَاب

As for the faithless, their works are like a mirage in a plain, which the thirsty man supposes to be water. When he comes to it, he finds it to be nothing; but there he finds Allah, who will pay him his full account, and Allah is swift at reckoning. (Qur'an, 24:39)

This is the parable of the good deeds of unbelievers, which appear outwardly to be good. So, woe upon their evil deeds! We read their parable in the following verse in these words:

Or like the manifold darkness in a deep sea, covered by billow upon billow, overcast by clouds; manifold (layers of) darkness, one on top of another: when he brings out his hand, he can hardly see it. One whom Allah has not granted any light has no light. (Qur'an, 24:40)

By adding this verse to the previous verse, we deduce that the good deeds of unbelievers, with all their deceptive appearances, are a mirage that lacks reality. And as for their evil deeds, alas! They are evil above evil, darkness upon darkness!

The above verses clarify the status of the deeds of unbelievers.

As for non-Shia Muslims, from the point of view of us Shias, the traditions that have reached us from the Ahl al-Bayt (a) clarify their position:

Many traditions have reached us on this topic. Those interested can refer to *al-Kafi*; vol. 1, "Kitab al-Hujja," and vol. 2, "Kitab al-Iman wal-Kufr"; *Wasa'il al-Shia*, vol. 1, "Abwab Muqaddamat al-Ibadat"; *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il*, vol. 1, "Abwab Muqaddamat al-Ibadat"; *Bihar al-Anwar*; "Discussions about Resurrection," chapter 17 (Chapter on the Promise, Threat, Invalidation of Actions, and Atonement), and vol. 7 of the old print, chapter 227, and vol. 15 of the old print, section on ethics, p. 187. As an example, we relate one tradition from *Wasa'il al-Shia*:

Muhammad ibn Muslim said, "I heard Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) say, 'Whoever worships God and tires himself in worship but doesn't recognize the imam (leader) God has appointed for him, his deeds are not accepted, and he himself is astray and lost, and God abhors his actions ... and if he dies in this state, he dies not in the state of Islam, but in a state of unbelief and hypocrisy. O Muhammad ibn Muslim, know that the leaders of oppression and their followers are outside the religion of God. They themselves went astray, and they led others astray. Their actions are like ashes which are caught in a strong wind on a stormy day, and they cannot reach anything out of what they have earned. That is the distant deviation.7

These are the proofs of those who say that the basis of salvation is faith and belief.

Occasionally, some from this group go to extremes and consider simply the claim of having faith, or in reality a simple affiliation, to be the criterion of judgment. For example, the Murji'i sect in the era of Banu Umayya would propagate this idea, and fortunately, with the decline of Banu Umayya, they also ceased to exist. In that age, the Shia position, inspired by the imams from the Ahl al–Bayt (a), was opposite to the Murji'i one, but unfortunately the Murji'is' view has lately taken hold in new clothing among some of the common Shias. Some simpleminded Shias consider mere apparent affiliation with Amir al–Mu'minin (a) to be sufficient for salvation, and this idea is the basic factor behind the Shias' poor state in the modem era. The dervishes and Sufis of the recent era malign good deeds in a different way and under a different pretext; they have made the issue of goodness of heart a pretext, even though true goodness of heart encourages and affirms deeds rather than conflicting with them.

As opposed to these groups, there are others who have raised the value of deeds to such a point that they say that one who commits a major sin is an unbeliever. Such a belief was held by the Kharijites. Some theologians considered the committer of major sins to be neither a believer nor unbeliever, and held that there is a "state between the two states (of belief and unbelief)."

Our task is to see which of these positions is correct. Should we believe in the primacy of belief or the primacy of action? Or is there a third path?

To begin, let us discuss the value of belief and faith.

Value Of Belief

With regard to the value of belief, the discussion should proceed in three stages:

- 1. Is lack of belief in the principles of religion, such as the Oneness of God, Prophecy, and resurrectionand according to the Shia view, these three in addition to Divine justice and Imamate (succession)—always and necessarily cause for Divine punishment? Or is it possible for some unbelievers to be excused and not be punished for their unbelief?
- 2. Is belief a necessary condition for the acceptance of good deeds, such that no good deed of a non–Muslim or non–Shia is acceptable to God?
- 3. Do unbelief and rejection of the truth cause the invalidity of good deeds or not?

In the coming discussions, we will touch on each of these three stages.

Being Held Accountable For Unbelief

There is no doubt that unbelief is of two types: One is unbelief out of obstinacy and stubbornness, which

is called the unbelief of repudiation; and the other is unbelief out of ignorance and unawareness of the truth. With regard to the former, definitive rational and narrational proofs indicate that a person who deliberately and knowingly shows obstinacy towards the truth and endeavours to reject it deserves punishment. But with regard to the latter, it must be said that if the ignorance and unawareness do not spring from negligence, they shall be forgiven and overlooked by God.

To explain this point, it is necessary to speak a bit about submission and obstinacy. The Qur'an says,

the day when neither wealth nor children will avail, except him who comes to Allah with a sound heart... (Qur'an, 26:88–89)

Levels Of Submission

The most basic condition of soundness of heart is to be submissive to the truth. Submission has three levels: submission of the body, submission of the intellect, and submission of the heart.

When two opponents face each other in combat and one of them feels likely to lose, he may surrender, or submit, to the other. In such surrender, normally the losing opponent puts his hands up as a sign of defeat and desists from fighting, coming under the sway of his opponent. That is, he acts in accordance with whatever command his opponent gives.

In this type of submission, the body submits, but the mind and reason do not; instead, they are constantly thinking of rebellion, incessantly contemplating how to get a chance to overcome the opponent once again. This is the state of his reason and thought, and as for his feelings and emotions, they too continuously denounce the enemy. This type of submission–that of the body–is the most that can be achieved by force.

The next level of submission is the submission of the intellect and reason. The power that can make the intellect submit is that of logic and reasoning. Here, physical force can't accomplish anything. It is absolutely impossible through physical force to make a student understand that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles. Mathematical propositions must be proven through reasoning and not through any other way. The intellect is forced to submit through thinking and reasoning. If sufficient proof exists and is presented to the intellect and the intellect understands it, it submits, even if all the powers of the world say not to submit.

It is well-known that when Galileo was tortured for his belief in the movement of the earth and centrality of the sun in the solar system, out of fear that they would bum him alive, he expressed repentance of his scientific view; in that condition, he wrote something on the ground. It is said that he wrote, "Galileo's

repentance will not make the earth stand still."

Force can compel a person to recant his or her words, but the human intellect does not submit except when faced with logic and reasoning.

Say, 'Produce your evidence, should you be truthful. (Qur'an, 27:64)

The third level of submission is the submission of the heart. The reality of faith is submission of the heart; submission of the tongue or submission of the thought and intellect, if not coupled with submission of the heart, is not faith. Submission of the heart is equal to submission of the entire existence of a person and the negation of every type of obstinacy and rejection.

It is possible that someone may submit to an idea as far as the intellect and mind are concerned, but not the spirit. When a person shows obstinacy out of prejudice or refuses to yield to the truth because of personal interests, his or her mind and intellect have submitted, but the spirit is rebellious and lacks submission, and for this very reason lacks faith, since the reality of faith is the submission of the heart and soul.

God says in the Qur'an:

O you who have faith! Enter into submission, all together, and do not follow in Satan's steps. (Qur'an, 2:208)

That is, your soul should not be at war with your intellect; your feelings should not be at war with your perceptions.

The story of Shaytan that has come in the Qur'an is an example of unbelief of the heart even though the intellect has submitted. Shaytan recognized God, believed in the Day of Judgment, completely recognized the prophets and their legatees and admitted their position; at the same time, God calls him an unbeliever and says of him:

and he was one of the faithless. (Qur'an, 2:34)

The evidence that, in the view of the Qur'an, Shay tan recognized God is that the Qur'an explicitly says

that he confessed that He is the Creator. Addressing God, he said:

'You created me from fire and You created him from clay.' (Qur'an, 7:12)

And the evidence that he believed in the Day of Judgment is that he said:

'Respite me till the day they will be resurrected'. (Qur'an, 7:14)

And the evidence that he recognized the prophets and infallibles is that he said:

He said, 'By Your might, I will surely pervert them, except Your exclusive servants among them.' (Qur'an, 38:82-83)

The meaning of the purified servants, who are pure not just in their actions, but whose entire existence is purified and free of all except God, is the friends of God and the infallibles; Shayt an recognized them, too, and believed in their infallibility.

The Qur'an, while describing Shaytan as knowing all these things, calls him an unbeliever. Thus, we come to know that mere recognition and knowledge, or the submission of the intellect and mind, is not sufficient for a person to be considered a believer. Something else is necessary as well.

In the Qur'an's logic, why has Shaytan been regarded as an unbeliever in spite of all his knowledge?

Obviously, it is because while his perception accepted reality, his feelings rose to battle it; his heart rose against his intellect; he showed arrogance and refused to accept the truth: he lacked submission of the heart.

True Islam And Regional Islam

Normally when we say so-and-so is Muslim or isn't Muslim, our view isn't toward the reality of the matter. Those who geographically live in a particular region and are Muslims through imitation and inheritance from their parents we call Muslims; and those who live under different conditions and are affiliated with another religion or have no religion altogether, again out of imitation of their parents, we call non-Muslims.

It should be known that this aspect does not have much value, neither the aspect of being a Muslim nor that of being a non-Muslim and an unbeliever. Many of us are imitative or geographical Muslims; we are Muslims because our mothers and fathers were Muslim and we were born and raised in a region whose people are Muslim. That which has value in reality is true Islam, and that is for a person to submit to truth in the heart, having opened the door of one's heart to the truth to accept and act on it, and the Islam that he or she has accepted should be based on research and study on the one hand, and submission and lack of prejudice on the other.

If someone possesses the trait of submission to the truth and for whatever reason the reality of Islam has remained hidden from him or her without that person being at fault, God will most certainly refrain from punishing him or her; he or she shall achieve salvation from Hell. God says

We do not punish (any community) until We have sent (it) an apostle. (Qur'an, 17:15)

That is, it is impossible for God, the Wise and Munificent, to punish someone for whom the proofs (of truth) have not been completed. The scholars of the principles of jurisprudence have termed the purport of this verse, which acts to confirm the dictate of reason, "the improperness of punishment without prior explanation." They say that until God has made clear a reality for a person, it is unjust for Him to punish that person.

To show the fact that it is possible to find individuals who possess the spirit of submission without being Muslims in name, Descartes, the French philosopher–according to his own words–is a good example.

In his biography, they have written that he began his philosophy from doubt; he doubted all that he knew and began from zero. He made his own thought a starting point and said, "I think, therefore I am."

After proving his own existence, he proved the spirit, and likewise the existence of body and God became definite for him. Gradually the issue of choosing a religion arose; he chose Christianity, which was the official religion of his country.

But he also says, "I don't say that Christianity is definitely the best religion that exists in the entire world; what I say is that among the religions that I currently know and that are in my reach, Christianity is the best religion. I have no conflict with the truth; perhaps there is a religion in other parts of the world that is superior to Christianity." Incidentally, he mentions Iran as an example of a country about which he lacks information and doesn't know the religion of; he says: "What do I know? Perhaps there is a religion in Iran that is better than Christianity."

Such people cannot be called unbelievers, since they have no obstinacy; they are not deliberately seeking unbelief. They are not involved in concealing reality, which is the essence of unbelief. Such

people are "dispositional Muslims." Though they cannot be called Muslim, they also cannot be termed unbelievers, since the opposition between Muslim and unbeliever is not like the opposition between affirmation and negation or that between the existence and non–existence of a trait in a subject capable of possessing the trait (according to the terminology of logicians and philosophers). Instead, it is the opposition of *tadadd*; that is, it is the opposition of two existential things, not that of one existential and one non–existential thing.

Of course, the fact that we mentioned Descartes as an example was not to depart from the basic principle we explained earlier. We stipulated from the beginning that we were not to express opinions about individuals. Our intent in mentioning Descartes as an example is that if we suppose that what he said is true and he is as submissive to the truth as his words indicate, and on the other hand truly did not have more ability to research, then he is a dispositional Muslim.

Sincerity, The Condition For The Acceptance Of Actions

The second of the issues that we raised regarding the value of faith is what influence faith can have in the acceptance of actions.

Previously, in relating the proofs of those who say that the good deeds of unbelievers are acceptable to God, we said that they say that the goodness and badness of actions is related to their essence. A good deed, whether of a believer or an unbeliever, is good by its essence and must inevitably be accepted by God, since good is good no matter who does it and bad is bad no matter who does it, and since God's relation to all people is the same.

Now, we would like to add that though what has been said in the above reasoning is correct, a basic point has been neglected in it. To explain this point, we must first explain another term from the subject of the principles of jurisprudence, which is that goodness and evil are of two types: action–related, and actor–related.

Every action has two aspects, and every one of the two aspects has a separate ruling with regard to goodness or badness. It is possible for an action to be good from one dimension and not be good from the other. Similarly, the reverse is possible; and it is also possible for an action to be good or bad from both dimensions.

The two dimensions consist of the action's beneficial or harmful effect in the external world and human society, and the action's association to its doer and that person's spiritual motivations which caused that action and the goal to which the doer aspired by performing it.

From the point of view of the former, one must determine the extent of the beneficial or harmful effect of the action. And from the point of view of the latter, one must determine what type of action the doer has performed in his or her mental and spiritual framework and what goal he or she has pursued.

Human actions, in terms of the trajectory of their beneficial and harmful effects, are recorded in books of history, and history passes judgment about them; it praises them or condemns them. But the aspect of attribution to the human soul is only recorded in the otherworldly books (of human deeds). Books of history like great and influential actions and praise such actions; but the Divine otherworldly and celestial books, in addition to this aspect, are in search of actions that have spirit.

The Qur'an says,

He, who created death and life that He may test you (to see) which of you is best in conduct. (Qur'an, 67:2)

It refers to "the best deeds," not "the most deeds," since the important thing is for us to know that when we perform an action under the influence of spiritual motives, aside from the outward appearance of the action—which is a series of movements and has its own social effects and value—spiritually we actually move in a certain direction and traverse a certain path.

The issue is not so simple as to say, "All that exists is the 'action,' the work, the muscular energy that is spent. As for the thoughts and intentions, their value lies only in preparing for the action; they are no more than a mentality and preliminary. And whatever the preliminary may be, the main thing is the action itself." To the contrary, the importance of the thought and the intention is not less than that of the action. Such a way of thinking, which maintains the primacy of action rather than the primacy of the intention and belief, is a materialistic thought. Under the names "objectivity" and "subjectivity" it gives the belief and intention behind the action no more than preliminary value. Leaving aside the fact that the invalidity of this school is clear in its own right, what is certain is that the Qur'anic teachings cannot be interpreted on the basis of such ways of thinking.

In the view of the Qur'an, our true personality and self is our spirit, with every voluntary action, the spirit moves from potentiality to actuality and acquires an effect and an attribute commensurate to its own intention and aim. These effects and habits become a part of our personality and carry us to a world appropriate to themselves from among the realms of existence.

Thus, from the first dimension the goodness and evilness of actions depends on the external effect of those actions; and from the second dimension goodness and evilness depends on the manner in which that action was performed by its doer. In the first case, our position about an action is based on its external and societal outcome; and in the second case, it is based on the internal and mental effect of the action on its doer.

If a person establishes a hospital or performs some other charitable deed with respect to the cultural, health, or economic affairs of a country, without doubt from a societal point of view and in the view of

history, that action is good. That is, it is an act that benefits God's creation. In this regard, it doesn't matter what the intention was of the person who established the hospital or other philanthropic institution. Whether the intention is to show off and fulfil one's selfish instincts or whether the intention is altruistic and unselfish, from a societal point of view a charitable institution has come into being. The ruling of history with regard to people's actions is always from this aspect and in view of this particular dimension. History has no concern with people's intentions. When the masterpieces of art or architecture in Isfahan are mentioned, no one is concerned with what intention or aim the maker of the Shaykh Lutfullah Mosque, the Shah Mosque, or the Thirty–Three Bridge had; history sees the outward form and calls the action a "good deed."

However, in ascertaining an action's actor-related goodness, our attention doesn't go to the societal and external effect of the action. Instead, from this aspect, we are concerned with how the action relates to its doer. In this reckoning, it is not enough for the action to be beneficial in order for it to be considered a "good deed." What counts is what the doer's intention was in performing the action, and what goal he or she wanted to attain. If the doer had a good intention and aim and performed the action with a good motive, that action is good-that is, it possesses actor-related goodness. The action itself is two-dimensional; that is, it proceeds in two dimensions: the historical and societal dimension, and the spiritual dimension. But if the doer performed the action to show off or to attract material benefit, the action is one-dimensional. It goes forward only in time and in history, and not in the spiritual dimension; and in Islamic terminology, the action does not ascend to the higher realm. In other words, in such instances, the doer has served society and raised its level but has not benefited him or herself, and may actually have committed treachery. Instead of ascending spiritually by performing the action, the doer's soul may have descended to a lower spiritual level.

Of course, our intent is not that the action–related goodness of an action is totally separate from its actor–related goodness, and that from a spiritual point of view a person should have nothing to do with actions that are beneficial to society. The intent is that a socially beneficial deed is only spiritually beneficial when the spirit, by performing that action, has travelled a spiritual path as well, having left the station of selfishness and pleasure–seeking and set foot on the station of sincerity and purity.

The relation between action–related goodness and actor related goodness is the relation of the body to the spirit. A living being is a combination of spirit and body. Likewise, the second type of goodness must be breathed into the body of an action possessing the first type of goodness for that action to come alive.

Thus, the rational proof of the so-called intellectuals is fallacious. This proof states that "God's relationship with all His creatures is equal, and the goodness or evilness of actions is innate to them. Thus, good deeds are equal for all people. And the corollary of these two equalities is that in the hereafter, the recompense of believers and unbelievers shall be the same." In this reasoning, the actions and the equality of the creatures before the Creator have been given attention; but the doer and his or

her personality, aim, motive, and spiritual path-all of which necessarily cause actions to be dissimilar and cause a difference among them similar to the difference between the living and the dead-has been forgotten. They say, "What difference does it make for God whether the doer of a good deed recognizes Him or not or is familiar with Him or not? Whether he or she performed the action for His pleasure or with some other purpose, whether the intention be seeking nearness to God or not?"

The answer is that it makes no difference for God, but it makes a difference for that person him or herself. If the person doesn't recognize God, he or she will perform one type of spiritual action and another type if he or she is familiar with God. If one doesn't know God, one's action will be one-dimensional; the action will have only action-related and historical goodness. But if one knows God, one's action will be two-dimensional and will have actor-related and spiritual goodness. If one knows God, one's action and one's self will ascend towards God, and if one doesn't know God one will not ascend. In other words, it makes no difference for God, but it does make a difference for the action. In one case, the action will be a living, ascending action, and in the other case it will be a dead, descending action.

They say that God, who is Wise and Just, will certainly not nullify the good deeds of a person on account of not having a relationship of friendship with Him.

We too believe that God will not nullify them, but we must see whether a person who doesn't recognize God actually performs a good deed that is good both in its effect and its relation to its doer, good both from the aspect of the societal order as well as from the doer's spiritual aspect. The fallacy arises because we have supposed that for an action to be beneficial to society suffices for it to be considered a "good deed." To suppose the impossible, if a person doesn't know God and yet ascends toward God through his or her action, without doubt God will not send that person back. But reality is that a person who doesn't know God doesn't break the curtain to enter the spiritual realm, doesn't traverse any of the stations of the soul, and doesn't ascend towards God's spiritual realm in order for his or her action to acquire a spiritual aspect and a form that will be a source of pleasure, felicity, and salvation for him or her. The acceptance of an action by God is nothing other than for the action to possess these qualities.

One of the primary differences between Divine laws and human laws is this very point; Divine laws are two dimensional, and human laws are one-dimensional. Human laws have nothing to do with the spiritual order or spiritual advancement of the individual. When a government legislates taxes in the interests of the country, its goal is solely to obtain money and cover the country's expenses. The government has no concern with the intention of the taxpayer. Does he or she pay taxes freely and willingly out of love for the country and its government, or out of fear? The government's purpose is only to obtain money; even if the taxpayer curses the government under his or her breath, the government's purpose has been attained.

Similarly, when a government calls its armed forces to defend the country, it does not concern itself with the intention of the soldiers; it desires the soldiers to fight its enemies in war. It makes no difference to

the government whether the soldier fights out of his free will and inclination or out of fear of the gun to his head; or whether his fighting is to show off, as a result of foolish prejudices, or in defense of truth and what is right.

However, Divine laws are not like that. In these laws, monetary dues and warriors are not wanted in absolute terms, but together with a pure intention and desire to seek nearness to God. Islam desires actions with a soul, not soulless actions. Thus, if a Muslim pays *zakat*, but with an element of showing off, it is not accepted; if he performs Jihad, but does it in order to show off, it is not accepted. The Divine law says that a coerced soldier is useless; I want a soldier who has the soul of a soldier, who has accepted the call, "Verily God has purchased from the believers their souls and their belongings in return for Paradise"s and answered it sincerely.

It has been related from the Messenger of Islam (s) in a consecutively–narrated tradition among both the Sunnis and Shias that he said

The value of deeds is based on the intention.

Every individual shall have what he or she intended.

No deed is accepted without an intention.9

One tradition has been narrated in the following words:

The value of actions is in their intention, and a man shall only get that which he intended. So, whoever migrated for the sake of God and His messenger, his migration is towards God and His messenger; and whoever migrated for the sake of worldly wealth or a woman he wished to marry, his migration is towards that thing. 10

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Perform your actions for the sake of God and not people, because whatever is for

God, (ascends) towards God, and whatever is for the people, does not ascend towards God."

The intention is the soul of the action, and just as the body of a human being is noble because of the human soul, so too does the nobility of a human being's action depend on its soul. What is the soul of an action? The soul of an action is sincerity. The Qur'an says:

Though they were not commanded except to worship Allah, dedicating their faith to Him. (Qur'an, 98:5)

Quality Or Quantity?

From the above discussion, an interesting conclusion can be obtained, which is that in the reckoning of God, the value of actions is by their quality rather than their quantity. Inattention to this point has caused some people to make up fantastic stories regarding the extraordinarily valuable actions of holy personages when they see the societal dimension of those actions to be insignificant. For example, with regard to the ring that Imam Ali (a) bestowed on a beggar while bowing in prayer, about which a verse of Qur'an was revealed, they say that the value of that ring was equal to the revenue of greater Syria; and in order for people to believe that, they gave it the form of a tradition. In the view of these people, it was hard to believe that a great verse of Qur'an would be revealed about the bestowal of an insignificant ring. And since they were unable to believe such a thing, they created a story and raised the ring's material value. They didn't stop to think that a ring equal in value to the revenue of all of Syria would not, in the poor and indigent Madinah, be found on the finger of Imam Ali (a). Supposing such a ring was in Imam Ali's possession, he would not give it to just one beggar; instead, with such a ring he would make Madinah flourish and save all the city's needy.

The intellect of these fantasy-weavers hasn't understood that for God a great deed has a reckoning different from material reckonings. It is as if they have supposed that the value of the ring caught God's attention and compelled Him to praise Ali (a) for the great deed he did-God be exalted from such suppositions!

I don't know what these short-sighted people have thought up regarding the pieces of barley that Ali and his family (a) bestowed in charity and about which surah "Hal Ata" was revealed. Perhaps they will say that the flour of that bread was not from barley, but from gold dust!

But in fact, that is not the case. The importance of Ali and his family's action (a) is not in the material aspect which attracts our attention; the importance of their action is that it was pure and entirely for God's sake; it was at a level of sincerity which it is beyond us even to conceive, a sincerity which was reflected in the highest realm and elicited Divine praise and glorification.

In the words of Shaykh Farid al-Din Attar,

It is beyond (the power) this world to describe his spear;

It is beyond that world to describe his three pieces of bread.

The importance of their action lies in what the Qur'an has quoted:

(saying,) 'We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We desire no reward from you, nor thanks. (Qur'an, 76:9)

These are the words of their heart which God, the A ware, has made known; that is, with their selflessness and sacrifice, they desired from God naught but God Himself.

The fact that the Qur'an regards the actions of unbelievers to be like a mirage, hollow and devoid of reality, is because their actions have an adorned and misleading exterior, but since they are done for lowly material and individual motives and not for God, they have no spiritual aspect.

Zubayda, the wife of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid, caused a river to be dug in Makkah which has been used by visitors of God's sanctuary from that time until today. This action has a very righteous exterior. The resolve of Zubayda caused this river to flow to barren Makkah from the rocky land between Taif and Makkah, and it has been close to twelve centuries that the hot, thirsty pilgrims have been making use of it.

From a worldly perspective, it is quite a great deed; but how about from a spiritual perspective? Do the angels reckon as we do? Is their attention, like ours, drawn to the apparent magnitude of this act?

No, their reckoning is different. Using a Divine scale, they measure the other dimensions of the action. They take account of where Zubayda obtained the money for this act. Zubayda was the wife of an oppressive and tyrannical man who had control of the public treasury of the Muslims and would do as he pleased. Zubayda had no money of her own, and she didn't spend her own wealth in this charitable act; she spent the people's money on the people. The difference between her and other women in her position is that others would spend the public's money on their personal desires, and she spent a portion of this money on a project for the public good. Now, what was Zubayda's purpose in this action? Did she wish for her name to remain in history? Or did she truly have God's pleasure in her mind? Only God knows.

It is in this reckoning that it is said that someone saw Zubayda in a dream and asked her what God gave her for the river she ordered to be made. She replied that God had given the entire reward of that action to the original owners of that money.

The Mosque Of Bahlul

It has been related that once a mosque was being constructed when Bahlul arrived and asked, "What are you doing?" They replied, "We are building a mosque." Bahlul asked, "What for?" They replied, "What kind of question is that? We are building it for God."

Bahlul wanted to show the doers of that charitable work their level of sincerity. Secretly, he had a stone engraved with the words, "The Bahlul Mosque," and at night he affixed it above the mosque's main gate. When the builders of the mosque came the next day and saw the sign, they became angry. They found Bahlul and beat him for portraying the toils of others as his own work. Bahlul retorted, "But didn't you say you built this mosque for God? Suppose that people mistakenly think it was I who built it; God won't make such a mistake!"

How many great deeds there are which are great in our eyes, but are worthless in the eyes of God! Perhaps many great buildings, whether mosques, mausoleums, hospitals, bridges, rest houses for travellers, or schools, have such an end; the account of such things is with God.

Belief In God And The Hereafter

The relation of this world to the hereafter is the relation between the body and the spirit, or the relation of the outer aspect to the inner aspect. This world and the next are not two wholly and entirely separate worlds; this world and the hereafter together are one unit, just as a sheet of paper has two pages and a coin has two sides. This same earth that exists in this world will appear in the hereafter in its otherworldly form. The plants and objects of this world will appear in the hereafter in their otherworldly aspect. Fundamentally, the hereafter is the celestial, or *malakuti*, form of the present world.

The condition for an action to acquire a good otherworldly aspect is for it to be performed with attention to God and in order to ascend to God's higher realm. If a person doesn't believe in the hereafter and isn't attentive to God, his or her action will not have an otherworldly aspect, and thus will not ascend to the higher realm. The otherworldly aspect is the higher aspect, and the worldly aspect is the lower aspect. As long as an action does not acquire illumination and purity through intention, belief, and faith, it cannot attain to the highest realm; only an action that has a spirit can attain that station. And the spirit of an action is its otherworldly aspect.

How beautiful are the words of the Qur'an:

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ

To Him ascends the good word, and He elevates righteous conduct. (Qur'an, 35:10)

This verse can be understood in two ways, and both have been mentioned in books of exegesis. The first is that good deeds raise pure words and pure belief; the other is that pure words and pure belief raise good deeds and make them otherworldly. The two explanations—both of which are correct and possibly both are intended—together convey the principle that faith has an effect on the acceptance of actions and their ascent to God, and actions have an effect on the perfection of faith and on increasing the degree of faith. This principle is an accepted one in the Islamic teachings. Our reference to this verse is based on the second explanation, though as we indicated, in our view it is possible that the verse has intended both meanings at the same time.

In any case, it is a mistake for us to think that the actions of those who don't believe in God and the Day of Judgement ascend to God and acquire an otherworldly aspect.

If we are told that someone has taken the northbound highway from Tehran and continued to travel northward for several days, we will obviously not expect that person to reach Qum, Isfahan, or Shiraz (which lie south of Tehran); if someone were to entertain such a possibility, we would laugh and tell him that if that person wished to go to one of those cities, he or she would have to take the southbound highway from Tehran and travel on it.

It is impossible for someone to travel towards Turkistan, yet reach the Ka'bah.

Heaven and Hell are the two ends of a person's spiritual journey. In the next world, every person sees him or herself at his or her journey's final point; one above, and the other below; one the highest of the high, and the other the lowest of the low.

the record of the pious is in Illiyun. (Qur'an, 83:18)

The record of the vicious is indeed in Sijjin. (Qur'an, 83:7)

How is it possible for a person not to travel towards a certain destination, or to travel in a direction opposite to it, yet still reach that destination? Moving towards the highest heaven (*illiyyin*) requires an intention and desire to reach it, and that in turn requires recognition and belief on the one hand, and facilitation and submission on the other. If a person has no belief in such a destination, or lacks the quality of facilitation and submission, and in short has neither any desire nor takes even the smallest step to reach it, how can one expect him or her to attain that destination? Without doubt, every path leads to its own destination. And unless God is that destination, the path does not lead to God.

The Qur'an says,

Whoever desires this transitory life, We expedite for him therein whatever We wish, for whomever We desire. Then We appoint hell for him, to enter it, blameful and spurned. Whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it with an endeavour worthy of it, should he be faithful—the endeavour of such will be well-appreciated. (Qur'an, 17:18-19)

That is, if a person's level of thinking is no higher than this world and he or she has no goal higher than this world, it is impossible for that person to attain the high target of the hereafter; but Our Divine grace and benevolence demand that We grant him or her something of the worldly goal he or she desired to achieve.

There is a subtle point here: this world is the world of nature and matter; it is the world of causes and reasons. Worldly causes are in conflict with each other, and constraints also exist in this material world. Thus, for a person whose goal is this world, there is no guarantee that he or she will definitely attain that goal. The words the Qur'an has chosen to impart this point are as follows:

"We expedite for him therein whatever We wish, for whomever We desire."

However, one who has a higher goal in his or her spiritual makeup, has not given his or her heart to trifling goals, and who, moving forward with faith, takes steps towards a Divine object will certainly attain the goal, since God recognizes the value of good deeds; He accepts and rewards those good deeds that are presented to Him.

Here, effort and endeavour are necessary, since it is impossible for a person to move forward and attain the goal without taking a step.

Then in the next verse, the Qur'an says

To these and to those—to all We extend the bounty of your Lord, and the bounty of your Lord is not confined. (Qur'an, 17:20)

That is, Our bounty is limitless; whoever sows a seed, We bring it to fruit; whoever moves towards a goal, We convey him or her to that goal.

The Divine sages say that the Being who is necessarily existent by essence is necessarily existent from

all aspects and dimensions. Thus, He is necessarily Bountiful (*Fayyaz*). As a result, whoever wishes something, God assists him or her. It is not the case that if someone seeks the world, God says to him or her, "You are misguided and have acted contrary to Our guidance and direction, so We will not assist you." That is not the case; the seeker of the world is also supported and assisted by God in seeking this world and benefits from His unhesitant bounty within the limits permitted by this world of causes, mutual exclusivity, and conflicting outcomes.

In other words, this world is a place appropriate for and given to planting, growing, increasing, and harvesting. It all depends on what seed a person chooses to grow and develop and what harvest he or she wishes to reap. Whatever seed he or she chooses is exactly what will grow and develop in the rich and fertile land of this world.

True, there is an exclusive assistance particular to the people of Truth, which is called the *rahimiyya* (exclusive) mercy; the seekers of this world are deprived of this mercy, since they do not seek it. But the *rahmaniyya* (general) mercy of God applies equally to all people and all paths. In the words of Sa'di, 12

The earth's surface is His all-encompassing table,

From this table all partake, whether friend or foe.

From what has been said in this discussion, a portion of the issues under discussion are resolved.

We made clear that action-related goodness is not sufficient for reward in the hereafter; actor-related goodness is also necessary. Action-related goodness is similar to a body, and actor-related goodness is similar to its spirit and life. And we explained that belief in God and the Day of Judgement is a fundamental condition of actor-related goodness. This conditionality is not based on convention, but is instead an essential and actual conditionality, just like the conditionality of a particular path with respect to reaching a particular destination.

Here, it is necessary to clarify one point, which is that some will perhaps say that actor-related goodness does not necessarily require the intention of seeking nearness to God; if a person does a good deed because of one's conscience or out of a feeling of compassion or mercy, that is sufficient for his or her action to possess actor-related goodness. In other words, a humanitarian motive is sufficient for actor-related goodness; as long as a person's motive is other than the "self," actor-related goodness is present, whether the motive be "God" or "humanism."

This point is worthy of consideration. While we don't affirm the view that it makes no difference whether one's motive be God or humanism, and we can't enter this discussion in depth right now, we do truly believe that whenever an action is performed with the motive of doing good, serving others, and for the sake of humanity, it is not the same as an action that is performed solely with selfish motives. Without doubt, God will not leave such people without any reward. Several traditions indicate that on account of their good deeds, polytheists like Hatam al–Ta'i will not be punished or their punishment will be reduced,

even though they were polytheists.

We can understand this point from many traditions that we have before us.

1. Allamah Majlisi quotes from *Thawab al–A'mal* of Shaykh Saduq that Ali ibn Yaqtin narrated from Imam Musa Kazim (a) that he said, "Among the Banu Isra'il there was a believer whose neighbor was an unbeliever. That unbeliever would always show kindness and good conduct towards his believing neighbor. When he died, God made for him a house out of a type of mud which shielded him from the heat of the fire, and his sustenance would be given to him from outside his own environment, which was of fire. He was told, 'This is because of your kindness and good conduct towards your believing neighbor." 13

Allamah Majlisi, after quoting this tradition, says: This tradition and others like it are evidence that the punishment of some unbelievers in Hell will be lifted, and the verses of Qur'an that say the punishment of the unbelievers shall not be lightened are with regard to those who have not performed such good deeds.

2. He also narrates from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) that he said, "There was a believer who lived in the land of an oppressive king. That oppressor threatened the believer, and he fled to a non-Islamic land, arriving at the place of a polytheist man. The polytheist sat him beside himself and hosted him well. As soon as he died, God addressed him, 'I swear by My Honour and Glory that if there were a place in Heaven for a polytheist, I would put you in that place; but O' fire, make him fear, but don't harm him."

Then the Imam said, "Every morning and evening his sustenance is brought for him from outside that environment." The Imam was asked, "From Heaven?" He answered, "From where God wills." 14

- 3. The Noble Messenger (s) said about Abdullah ibn Jadan, who was one of the well-known unbelievers in the Age of Ignorance and one of the chiefs of Quraysh, "The one who has the lightest punishment in Hell is Ibn Jadan." He was asked why, to which he replied, "He used to give people to eat."
- 4. And the Prophet (s) said with regard to several people who lived in the Age of Ignorance: "I saw in Hell, the possessor of the tunic and the possessor of the cane who would drive the pilgrims, and also the woman who had a cat which she had tied up and which she would neither feed nor set free so it could find its own food. And I entered Heaven and I saw there the man who saved a dog from thirst and gave it water.'?" 15

Such people, who are found in more or less every age, will at least have their punishment lightened or else their punishment will be lifted altogether.

In my view, if there are individuals who do good to other people or even to another living being-whether a human being or animal-without any expectation, not even because they see themselves mirrored in the existence of the deprived (*i.e.*, fear that one day they may be in similar straits is not the moving

factor in what they do), and instead the motive of doing good and serving others is strong enough in them that even if they know that no benefit will accrue to them and not even a single person will come to know of what they did or say so much as "God bless you" to them, yet they still do good deeds, and they are not under the influence of habit and such like, one must say that in the depths of their conscience there exists the light of recognition of God. And supposing they deny it with their tongues, they confess it in the depths of their conscience; their denial is in reality a denial of an imagined being which they have conceived in place of God, or a denial of another imagined thing which they have conceived in place of the return to God and the Day of Judgement, not a denial of the reality of God and the Resurrection.

Love of good and justice and doing good because it is good and just and worthy, without any other factor, is a sign of love of the Essence possessed of Absolute Beauty; therefore, it is not farfetched that such people actually will not be resurrected among the unbelievers, though by their tongues they are considered deniers. And God knows best.

Belief In The Prophecy And Imamate

Now we will discuss another aspect of the issue, which is the position of those non-Muslims who are monotheists and believe in the Resurrection and perform their actions for God.

Among the People of the Book, people can be found who neither believe the Messiah nor Ezra to be the son of God; they are neither dualists nor fire-worshippers. They do not say, "The Messiah is the son of God," or "Uzayr is the son of God," nor that Ahriman is the god of evil; they also believe in the Day of Judgement. What is the outcome of the actions of such people?

Right now, our discussion is not about those inventors, innovators, and servants of humanity who are materialists and deny God's existence, and whose practical motives naturally do not transcend the material realm. From the preceding discussions, our view regarding them from the perspective of Islam was made clear. Our discussion in this section pertains to those good–doers who believe in Creation and in the Resurrection, and thus are able to have a higher motive in their actions and work towards a goal that goes beyond the material. It is said that Edison and Pasteur were such people, that they were religious people and had religious motives. That is, in their actions they, just like religious Muslims, worked for God's pleasure and with a Divine motive. In reality, these Christians are not Christian, because if they were true Christians and believed in the creeds of the existing Christianity, they would regard the Messiah as God, and naturally it would not be possible for them to be true monotheists; perhaps few of today's Christian intellectuals believe in the superstitions of the Trinity.

In order to answer this question, one must determine in what way faith in the Prophethood and Imamate are necessary, and why such faith is a condition for the acceptance of actions.

It appears that faith in the Prophets and friends of God is involved in the acceptance of actions for two reasons:

First, recognition of them goes back to recognition of God. In reality, recognition of God and His affairs is incomplete without recognition of His friends. In other words, recognition of God in a complete form is to recognize the manifestations of His guidance.

Second, recognition of the station of Prophethood and Imamate is necessary because without it, it is not possible to obtain the complete and correct program of action to achieve guidance.

The big difference between a Muslim good-doer and an unbelieving good-doer is that the unbeliever who does good deeds does not possess the proper program to achieve guidance and thus has only a negligible chance of success. In contrast, since the Muslim has submitted to a religion that has a comprehensive and proper program for guidance, he or she is assured of success if he or she implements that program correctly. Good deeds do not consist only of doing good to others; all obligatory, forbidden, recommended, and disliked actions form the part of the program of good deeds. The practicing Christian, who is outside the fold of Islam and lacks the correct program, is deprived of its great gifts, since he or she commits actions which are prohibited. For example, alcohol is forbidden, but he or she drinks it. We know that alcohol was prohibited because of its personal, societal, and spiritual harms, and naturally one who drinks alcohol will face its harms, similar to how a person who is deprived of the guidance of a doctor may do something which makes his or her heart, liver, or nerves prematurely sick and shortens his or her life.

In the program of Islam, there are some commands which it is conditional to act upon for spiritual perfection and development. It is obvious that a non–Muslim, no matter how unprejudiced and free of obstinacy, by virtue of being deprived of the complete program of human perfection, will also remain deprived of its features.

Such a person will naturally be deprived of great acts of worship, such as the five daily prayers, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and pilgrimage to the House of God. He or she is like someone who plants seeds without a systematic method of farming; in no way will the product such a person obtains be like that obtained by a person who sows the earth according to a comprehensive and proper program, plants at an appropriate time and weeds at the proper time, and in short performs all the necessary technical steps.

The difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim good doer can be explained like this: the Muslim good-doer is like a sick person who is under the care and direction of an expert doctor; his or her food and medicine are all under the direction of the doctor. With regard to the type of medicine and food and its timing and amount, he or she acts entirely as directed. However, the non-Muslim good doer is like a sick person who has no such program and acts as he or she pleases; he or she eats whatever food or medicine comes into his or her hand. Such a sick person may occasionally consume a beneficial medicine and get a positive result, but it is just as likely that he or she will make use of a medicine that is harmful or even fatal. Similarly, it is possible he or she may eat a beneficial food, but by subsequent negligence or by eating the wrong food, may cancel the beneficial effect of the first food.

With this explanation, it becomes clear that the difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim who believes in God is that the Muslim is a theist who possesses a proper program, while the non-Muslim theist performs his or her actions without a correct program. In other words, the Muslim has been guided, and the non-Muslim, though he or she believes in God, is misguided. In this very regard the Qur'an says,

If they submit, they will certainly be guided (Qur'an, 3:20)

From all that we have said in the last two sections, it has become clear that all non–Muslims are not equal in terms of being rewarded for good deeds; there is a great difference between a non–Muslim who doesn't believe in God and the Resurrection and one who believes in God and in the Day of Judgement but is deprived of the gift of faith in the Prophethood. For the first group, it is not possible to perform an action acceptable to God, whereas for the second it is possible. It is possible for this group to go to Heaven under certain conditions, but for the first group it is not possible. Apparently, the reason that Islam differentiates between polytheists and the People of the Book in its laws of interaction–in that it doesn't tolerate the polytheist but tolerates the People of the Book, it forces the polytheist to abandon his or her belief but doesn't force the People of the Book–is that the polytheist or atheist, by virtue of his or her polytheism or denial, forever closes the gate of salvation for him or herself and is in a condition of having deprived him or herself of crossing the material world and ascending to the higher world and eternal Paradise. However, the People of the Book are in a condition in which they can perform good deeds, even if in a deficient manner, and with certain conditions can attain the results of those actions.

The Qur'an says, addressing the People of the Book:

Come to a common word between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allah, that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that some of us will not take some others as lords besides Allah. (Qur'an, 3:64)

The Noble Qur'an has given the People of the Book such a call, but has absolutely not given and does not give such a call to polytheists and atheists.

Affliction

The third issue that deserves attention in relation with the value of faith is the negative value of unbelief and obstinacy. That is, do unbelief and obstinacy cause a good deed to become null and void and lose

its effect, making it go bad as an affliction does? In other words, if a person performs a good deed with all the conditions of action-related and actor-related goodness, and yet on the other hand that person shows obstinacy with respect to truth, especially a truth that is one of the principles of religion, in this situation, does this deed-which in and of itself is good, otherworldly, and luminous and free of defect from the Divine and celestial dimension-become null and void because of this stubbornness and obstinacy or other devious spiritual condition? Here the guestion of affliction comes about.

It is possible for an action to have both action–related and actor–related goodness, and in other words to have both the proper body and a sound soul and spirit, to be good both from the worldly and from the otherworldly point of view, but at the same time to be destroyed and become null from the otherworldly point of view through affliction, just like a sound seed that is planted in fertile ground and even gives fruit, but which falls prey to an affliction before it can be used, and is destroyed, for example, by locusts or lightening. The Qur'an calls this affliction "habt" (invalidation).

Such affliction is not exclusive to unbelievers; it can take place with respect to the good deeds of Muslims as well. It is possible that a believing Muslim may give alms to a deserving needy person for God's sake and for that deed to be accepted by God, but for him or her to later destroy that good deed and make it void by lording it over the other person or some other form of mental torment.

The Qur'an says,

O you who have faith! Do not render your charities void by reproaches and affronts. (Qur'an, 2:264)

Another of the afflictions of good deeds is jealousy, as has been said,

Verily jealousy eats away good deeds just as fire destroys wood. 16

Another affliction is *juhud* (denial), or a condition of fighting with the truth. Denial means that a person perceives the truth but at the same time opposes it. In other words, denial is when one's mind has submitted through reason and logic and truth has become clear to one's intellect and power of thinking, but the spirit and its selfish and arrogant feelings rebel and refuse to submit. The essence of unbelief is opposition and resistance to truth while recognizing what it is. Previously, when we discussed the levels of submission, we gave some explanation regarding this condition. Here, we provide some further explanations relevant to the discussion of afflictions.

Imam Ali (a) says, defining Islam:

Islam is submission. 17

That is, when personal interest, prejudice, or habit conflicts with truth and reality, for a person to submit to truth and turn away from all that isn't truth is Islam.

Denial means a condition of willful unbelief, the condition that Abu Jahl possessed. He knew that the Noble Messenger (s) was truthful in his claim of being a prophet, but because he had a condition of wilful unbelief, he didn't believe in him. Sometimes people can be heard to say things like, "We're willing to go to Hell, but not to do such-and-such a thing." That is, even if that action is the truth, we still are not willing to accept it. Other expressions, such as to be a mule, to be intractable, and such like all describe this quality of denial. The Qur'an has excellently described the presence of this quality in some people where it says

And when they said, 'O Allah, if this be the truth from You, rain down upon us stones from the sky, or bring us a painful punishment. (Qur'an, 8:32)

What a picture the Qur'an has painted! By narrating one sentence, it indicates the sick mentality of some people.

The obstinate person whose words have been quoted in this verse, instead of saying, "O' God, if this be the truth from You, then make my heart ready to accept it," says, "If this be the truth, send upon me a punishment and annihilate me, because I haven't the strength to remain alive and face the truth."

This condition is a very dangerous one, even if it be in small matters. And it may well be that many of us are suffering from it–God forbid! Suppose that an eminent doctor, or *mujtahid*, or some other specialist who has a worldwide reputation makes a determination and expresses an opinion in an issue related to his or her specialization; then, some unknown, a doctor or a young student, expresses a conflicting opinion in the same issue and even presents definitive proofs, and that eminent personality him or herself affirms in his or her heart the truth of what that person is saying, but other people remain unaware as they were before, and in view of the reputation of that eminent person, accept his or her view. In this situation, if that famous expert submits to the opinion of that young doctor or student, that is if he or she submits to reality and admits his or her own mistake, he or she is truly a "Muslim," because "Islam is submission," and in a way it can be said this is an example of the verse "Rather, one who submits himself to God." 18 Such a person is free of the impure trait of denial. But if he or she engages in

denial and opposes the truth to save his or her standing and fame, he or she is willfully seeking unbelief and is in a state of *juhud*.

If that doctor, for example, is not entirely unfair, he or she may not take back his or her words, but may change in practice; and if he or she is very unfair, he or she will not change in practice, either, and will give the same prescription and perhaps kill the patient, then say that the patient was beyond treatment. And the same goes for any other eminent intellectual. The opposite of this condition also occurs frequently. There is a tradition in *al–Kafi* that sheds light on this reality:

Muhammad ibn Muslim narrated that he heard Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) say

"Everything that results from confession and submission is faith, and everything that results from denial and rejection is unbelief." 19

They say that the late Ayatullah Sayyid Husayn Kuhkamari, may God be pleased with him, who was one of the students of the author of *Jawahir al–Kalam* and a prominent and well–known mujtahid and recognized teacher, would go daily at an appointed time, as was his pattern, to one of the mosques of Najaf and teach.

As we know, the post of teaching the level of "kharij" of jurisprudence and its principles is the grounds for leadership and religious authority. Leadership and religious authority for a seminary student mean to go suddenly from zero to infinity, since a student is nothing as long as he is not a religious authority (marji), and his opinion and belief are not given the least importance, and usually he lives a meagre life. But as soon as he becomes a religious authority, all of a sudden, his view is obeyed and no one has anything to say in the face of his opinion. Financially as well as intellectually, he has full discretion without being held accountable to anyone. Thus, a scholar who has a chance of becoming a religious authority passes through a sensitive stage; the late Sayyid Husayn Kuhkamari was in such a stage.

One day he was returning from somewhere, perhaps from visiting someone, and no more than half an hour remained until his class. He thought to himself that if he were to return home in that short time, he wouldn't have time to accomplish anything, so it was better to go to the appointed place and wait for his students. He went and saw that none of his students had come yet, but he saw that in a comer of the mosque a humble looking shaykh was seated and lecturing to a group of students. The late Sayyid listened to his words, and with great surprise he realized that the shaykh's discourse was very scholarly. The next day, he was motivated to deliberately come early and listen to the words of that shaykh. So, he came and listened, and his conviction from the previous day became stronger. This was repeated for several days, and the late Sayyid Husayn became sure that the shaykh was more learned than he himself and that he could benefit from his lectures, and if his own students were to attend the shaykh's

lectures, they would benefit more.

Here it was that he saw himself as being offered a choice between submission and obstinacy, between faith and unbelief, between the hereafter and this world.

The next day when his students came and gathered, he said, "Friends, today I want to tell you something new. The shaykh who is sitting in that corner with a few students is more deserving to teach than I am, and I myself benefit from his lectures, so let us all go together to his lecture. From that day, he joined the circle of students of that humble shaykh who's eyes were slightly swollen and in whom the signs of poverty were visible.

This austere shaykh was the same scholar who later became famous as Shaykh Murtada al-Ansari, earning the title "teacher of the latter-day scholars."

Shaykh Ansari at that time had just returned from a trip of several years to Mashhad, Isfahan, and Kashan, and he had acquired much knowledge from this trip, especially from the presence of the late Hajj Mulla Ahmad Naraqi in Kashan.

Whoever this condition is found in is an example of the verse "one who submits himself to God."

Thus, unbelief and denial mean to willfully stand in the face of the truth and show obstinacy. Later, we will mention that in the view of the Qur'an, the unbeliever has been called an unbeliever because he or she is in a state of denial and obstinacy while at the same time perceiving the truth; and it is this state that causes nullification and is considered an affliction of good deeds. This is why God says about the actions of those who disbelieve that they are like ashes which a strong wind blows upon and destroys:

A parable of those who defy their Lord: their deeds are like ashes over which the wind blows hard on a tempestuous day.. (Qur'an, 14:18)

Suppose that Pasteur performed his intellectual research, which led to the discovery of bacteria, for God and that his intention was to serve humanity and seek nearness to God. That is not sufficient for him to be rewarded by God in the end. If he possessed qualities like denial and such like and was prejudiced in favour of his own beliefs without doubt all his actions are null and void, since in this case, he is in a state of denying the truth, and this state of opposing the truth destroys all a person's efforts. This would be the case if, for example, it were said to him, "Christianity is a regional and an ancestral faith for you; have you researched whether there is a better and more complete religion than Christianity or not?" and he were to reject those words and—without being ready to study and search—say, "The best religion is Christianity." A person's actions, in such a case, are like ashes subject to ruin by a swift wind.

We only mentioned Pasteur as an example; we don't mean to say that Pasteur was like this. God alone knows that. If we, too, are obstinate towards to the truth, we fall into this general rule. O Lord! Protect us from the state of unbelief, obstinacy, and opposition to the truth.

Apart from what has been mentioned, there are also other afflictions that befall good deeds. Perhaps one of these afflictions is apathy and indifference in defending truth and righteousness. One must not only avoid denial and rejection of truth, one must also not be neutral, and instead must defend the truth. The people of Kufah knew that truth was with Husayn ibn Ali (a), and they had even admitted this fact, but they were neglectful in supporting and defending the truth. They didn't show resolve and perseverance. Not to support the truth is to deny the truth in practice.

Lady Zaynab (a), in her famous address to the people of Kufah, rebukes them for their negligence in coming to the defense of the truth and for oppressing and sinning against it. She said:

O' people of deception treachery and disloyalty, do you weep? So, let your tears not dry, and your cries not cease! Your parable is that of the woman who undid her weaving after having made it firm." 20

Another of the afflictions that can befall actions is conceit and vanity.

Boasting about one's deeds, like jealousy and conceit and denial, destroys actions. There is a tradition that says:

"Sometimes a person performs a good and worthy deed, and his or her action finds a place in the *'illiyyin*, but later he or she mentions that action in public and boasts of it. This causes the action to descend. If he or she mentions it again, it descends further. When it is mentioned a third time, it is destroyed altogether, and sometimes is converted into an evil deed."

Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) said,

"Preserving a deed is harder than the deed itself." The narrator asked what preserving a deed meant. The Imam replied, "A person does a good deed and gives something in the way of God, and it is recorded for him as an act done in secret. Then he mentions it, so it is erased and recorded as an act done in public. Then he mentions it, so it is erased and recorded as an act done to show off."21

Below The Zero Point

So far, our discussion has been of the acceptance and nonacceptance of acts of worship and good and positive deeds of non-Muslims, and in other words the above discussion was about what is above the zero point; the discussion was whether their good deeds cause them to ascend or not.

Now let us see what is the state of what is below the zero point, that is, what happens to the sins and evil deeds of non-Muslims. Are they all alike from the aspect of our discussion, or is there a difference? In addition, in these actions that are evil and bring a person down, is there a difference between Muslims and non-Muslims, and similarly between Shias and non-Shias? Does a Muslim, and especially a Shia Muslim, have a sort of protection with regard to such actions, or not?

In the preceding matter, it became clear that God only punishes people when they commit wrong deeds out of culpability (*taqsir*), that is, when they do so deliberately and with knowledge, not out of incapacity (*qusur*). Previously, we translated and explained the verse of Qur'an from which scholars of the principles of jurisprudence derive the rule that says "It is evil to punish one without having explained his or her duty." Now, to clarify the situation of non–Muslims with respect to actions that fall below the zero point and to study their punishment and retribution for the evil deeds they commit we have no choice but to broach another issue that is touched upon in Islamic sciences and is rooted in the Noble Qur'an; and that is the issue of "incapacity" and "powerlessness" (*istid'af*). Here, we begin our discussion under this heading.

The Incapable And The Powerless

The scholars of Islam make use of two terms; they say that some people are "powerless" (*mustad'af*), or are "awaiting the command of God" (*murjawn li–amrillah*). "Powerless" refers to the unfortunate and unable; "those awaiting the command of God" denotes people whose affairs and status are to be regarded as being with God and in His hands; God Himself shall deal with them as His wisdom and mercy dictate. Both terms have been taken from the Qur'an.

In surah al-Nisa, verses 97-99, we read

And those whose souls the angels take while they are oppressive of themselves; they say, 'What state were you in?' They say, 'We were weak in the land.' They say, 'Was not God's earth wide, that you may migrate in it?' So, the abode of those people is Hell, and evil an abode it is, except the powerless among the men, women, and children who neither have access to any means nor

are guided to anyway; so perhaps God may pardon them, and God is Ever Forgiving, Ever-Pardoning. (Qur'an, 4:97-99)

In the first verse, mention is made of the interrogation of some people by the Divine appointees (in the grave). The angels ask them, "What state were you in in the world?" They forward the excuse: "We were unfortunate, our means were inadequate (and we were unable change our state)." The angels will say, "You were not powerless, since God's earth was spacious and you could have migrated from your homeland and gone to an area where you had greater opportunity; thus, you are culpable and deserving of punishment."

In the second verse, the state of some people is mentioned who are truly powerless; whether they be men, women, or children. These are people who had no means and no way out.

In the third verse, the Qur'an gives tidings and hope that God may show forgiveness towards the second group.

In his commentary of the Qur'an, *al-Mizan*; our most esteemed teacher, Allamah Tabatabai, has this to say regarding these very verses:

"God considers ignorance of religion and every form of preventing the establishment of the signs of religion to be oppression, and Divine forgiveness does not encompass this. However, an exception has been made for the powerless who did not have the ability to move and change the environment. The exception has been mentioned in such a way that it is not exclusive to when powerlessness takes this form. Just as it is possible for the source of powerlessness to be an inability to change the environment, it is possible for it to be because a person's mind is not aware of the truth, and thus remains deprived of the truth."22

Many traditions have been narrated in which those people who for various reasons have remained incapable have been counted among the "powerless." 23

In verse 106 of surah al Tawbah, God says,

(There are) others waiting Allah's edict: either He shall punish them, or turn to them clemently, and Allah is all-knowing, all-wise. (9: 106)

The term *murjawn li–amrillah* (those awaiting God's command) has been taken from this verse.

It has been narrated that Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) said about this verse:

"Verily there was a people in the early era of Islam who were once polytheists and committed grave

misdeeds; they killed Hamzah and Ja'far and people like them from among the Muslims. Later, they became Muslims; abandoning polytheism for monotheism, but faith did not find its way into their hearts for them to be counted among the believers and become deserving of Heaven, while at the same time they had forsaken denial and obstinacy, which was the cause of their being (deserving of) punishment. They were neither believers, nor unbelievers and deniers; these then are the *murjawn li–amrillah*, whose affair is referred to God."24

In another tradition, is has been narrated that Humran ibn A'yan said, "I asked Imam Sadiq (a) about the powerless." He replied, "They are neither of the believers nor of the unbelievers; they are the ones whose affair is referred to God's command."25

Though the purport of the verse regarding those whose affair is referred to God's command is that one should say only that their affair is with God, still, from tone of the verse regarding the powerless, a hint of Divine forgiveness and pardon can be deduced.

What is understood in total is that those people who in some way were incapable and not blameworthy will not be punished by God.

In al-Kafi, there is a tradition from Hamzah ibn Tayyar who narrated that Imam Sadiq (a) said,

"People are of six groups, and in the end are of three groups: the party of faith, the party of unbelief, and the party of deviation. These groups come into being from God's promise and warning regarding Heaven and Hell. (That is, people are divided into these groups according to their standing with respect to these promises and warnings.) Those six groups are the believers, the unbelievers, the powerless, those referred to God's command, those who confess their sin and have mixed good deeds with evil deeds, and the people of the heights (*a'raf*).26

Also in *al-Kafi*, it is narrated from Zurarah that he said,

"I visited Imam Baqir (a) with my brother Humran, or with my other brother Bukayr. I said to the Imam, "We measure people with a measuring tape: Whoever is a Shia like ourselves, whether among the descendants of Ali or otherwise, we forge a bond of friendship with him (as a Muslim and one who will achieve salvation), and whoever is opposed to our creed, we dissociate from him (as a misguided person and one who will not achieve salvation)." The Imam said, "Zurarah! God's word is more truthful than yours; if what you say is correct, then what about God's words where He says, 'Except the powerless among the men, women, and children who find no way out nor find a path?' What about those who are referred to God's command? What about those regarding whom God says, 'They mixed good deeds and other, evil deeds?' What happened to the people of the heights? Who, then, are the ones whose hearts are to be inclined?"

Hammad, in his narration of this event from Zurarah, narrates that he said,

"At this point the Imam and I began to argue. Both of us raised our voices, such that those outside the house heard us."

Jamil ibn Darraj narrates from Zurarah in this event that the Imam said,

"Zurarah! (God has made it) incumbent upon Himself that He take the misguided (not the unbelievers and deniers) to Heaven."27

Also in *al–Kafi*, it is narrated from Imam Musa Kazim (a) that he said,

"Ali (a) is a gate among the gates of guidance; whoever enters from this gate is a believer, and whoever exits from it is an unbeliever; and one who neither enters from it nor exits from it is among the party whose affair is referred to God."

In this tradition, the Imam clearly mentions a party who are neither among the people of faith, submission, and salvation, nor among the people of denial and annihilation.28

Also in *al–Kafi*, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a)

If only people, when they are ignorant, pause and don't reject, they will not be unbelievers."29

If one ponders the traditions which have come down from the pure Imams (a) and most of which have been collected in the sections "Kitab al-Hujjah" and "Kitab al-Iman wa al-Kufr" in *al-Kafi*, he or she will realize that the Imam's (a) position was that whatever (punishment) befalls a person is because truth was presented to him or her, and he or she showed prejudice or obstinacy towards it, or at the very least was in a position where he or she should have researched and searched, but didn't do so. And as for people who, out of incapacity of understanding and perception, or because of other reasons, are in a position where they are not in denial or negligent in researching, they are not counted among the deniers and adversaries. They are counted among the powerless and those referred to God's command. And it is understood from the traditions that the pure Imams (a) view many people to be of this category.

In al-Kafi, in the section "Kitab al-Hujjah," Kulayni narrates several traditions to the effect that:

"Whoever obeys God with an act of worship in which he exhausts himself, but doesn't have an Imam appointed by God, his effort is not accepted.'30

Or that:

لا يقبل الله أعمال العباد إلا بمعرفته

"God does not accept the actions of His servants without recognition of him (the Imam)."31

At the same time, in that same "Kitab al-Hujjah" of al-Kafi it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a):

"Whoever recognizes us is a believer, and whoever denies us is an unbeliever, and whoever neither recognizes nor denies us is misguided until he or she returns to the guidance of our obedience which God enjoined upon him or her. So, if he or she dies in the state of misguidedness, God shall do what He pleases."32

Muhammad ibn Muslim says,

"I was with Imam Sadiq (a). I was seated to his left, and Zurarah to his right. Abu Basir entered and asked, "What do you say about a person who has doubts about God?" The Imam replied, "He is an unbeliever." "What do you say about a person who has doubts about the Messenger of God?" "He is an unbeliever." At this point the Imam turned towards Zurarah and said, "Verily, such a person is an unbeliever if he or she denies and shows obstinacy. '?"33

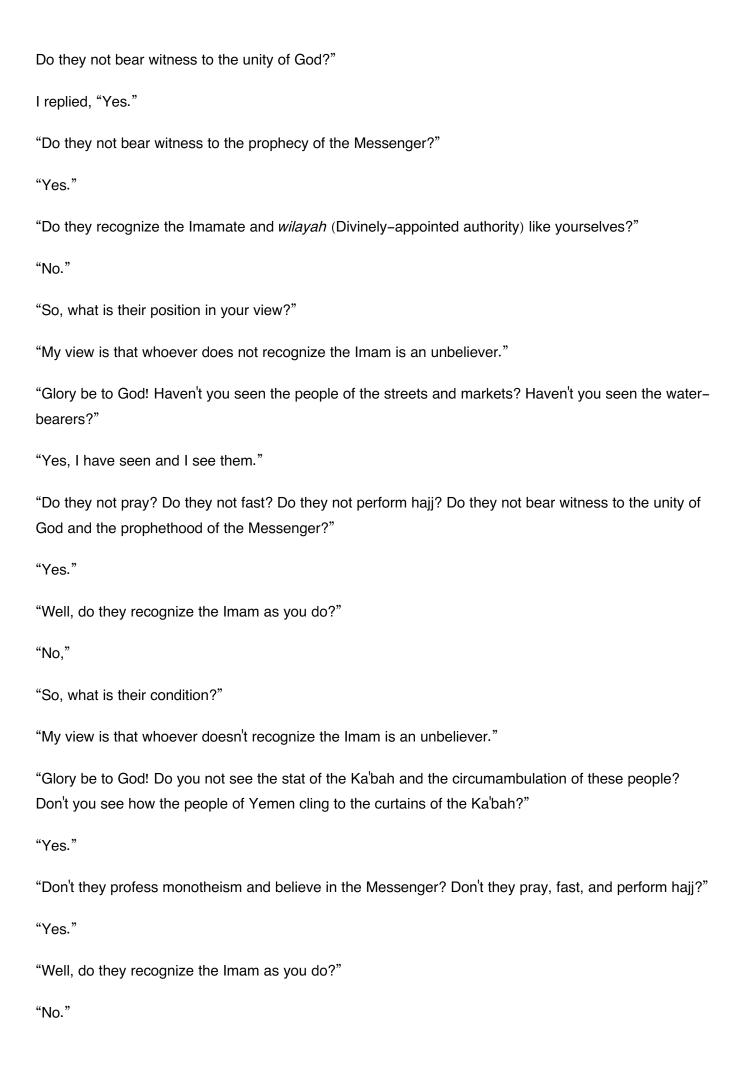
Also, in *al-Kafi*, Kulayni narrates that Hashim ibn al-Barid (Sahib al-Barid) said:

"Muhammad ibn Muslim, Abu al-Khattab, and I were together in one place. Abu al-Khattab asked, "What is your belief regarding one who doesn't know the affair of Imamate?" I said, "In my view he or she is a unbeliever." Abu al-Khattab said, "As long as the evidence is not complete for him or her, he or she is not a unbeliever; if the evidence is complete and still he or she doesn't recognize it, then he or she is a unbeliever." Muhammad ibn Muslim said, "Glory be to God! If he or she doesn't recognize the Imam and doesn't show obstinacy or denial, how can he or she be considered an unbeliever? No, one who doesn't know, if he doesn't show denial, is not an unbeliever." Thus, the three of us had three opposing beliefs.

When the hajj season came, I went for hajj and went to Imam Sadiq (a). I told him of the discussion between the three of us and asked the Imam his view. The Imam replied, "I will reply to this question when the other two are also present. I and the three of you shall meet tonight in Mina near the middle *Jamarah*."

That night, the three of us went there. The Imam, leaning on a cushion, began questioning us.

"What do you say about the servants, womenfolk, and members of your own families?



"What is your belief about them?"

"In my view, whoever doesn't recognize the Imam is an unbeliever."

"Glory be to God! This belief is the belief of the Kharijites."

At that point the Imam said, "Now, do you wish me to inform you of the truth?"

Hashim, who in the words of the late Fayd al-Kashani, knew that the Imam's view was in opposition to his own belief, said, "No."

The Imam said, "It is very bad for you to say something of your own accord that you have not heard from us."

Hashim later said to the others:

"I presumed that the Imam affirmed the view of Muhammad ibn Muslim and wished to bring us to his view."34

In *al-Kafi*, after this tradition, Kulayni narrates the well-known tradition of the discussion of Zurarah with Imam Muhammad Baqir (a) in this regard, which is detailed.

In *al-Kafi* at the end of "Kitab al-Iman wa al-Kufr," there is a chapter eutitled, "No action causes harm with belief, and no action brings benefit with unbelief.'?"35

But the traditions that have come under this heading do not affirm this heading. The following tradition is among them: Ya'qub ibn Shu'ayb said, I asked Imam Sadiq (a):

"Does anyone aside from the believers have a definite reward from God?" He replied, "No."36

The purport of this tradition is that God has given a promise of reward to none but the believers, and without doubt He will fulfil His promise. However, aside from the believers, God has not given any promise for Him to have to fulfil of necessity. And since He has not given any promise, it is up to Him Himself to reward or not to reward.

With this explanation, the Imam wishes to convey that the non-believers are counted with the powerless and those whose affair is referred to God's command in terms of whether God will reward them or not; it must be said that their affair is with God, for Him to reward or not to.

At the end of this chapter of *al-Kafi* there are some traditions which we will mention later under the heading, "The Sins of Muslims."

Of course, the relevant traditions are not limited to those mentioned here; there are other traditions as well. Our deduction from all of these traditions is what we have mentioned above. If someone deduces something else and doesn't affirm our view, he or she may explain his or her view with its evidence, and perhaps we can benefit from it as well.

From The View Of The Islamic Sages

Islamic philosophers have discussed this issue in a different way, but the conclusion they have reached in the end corresponds with what we have deduced from the verses and traditions. Avicenna says,

"People are divided into three groups in terms of soundness of body or physical beauty: one group is at the stage of perfection in soundness or beauty, another is at the extreme of ugliness or illness. Both of these groups are in a minority. The group that forms the majority are the people who in the middle in terms of health and beauty; neither are they absolutely sound or healthy, nor do they, like the deformed, suffer from deformities or permanent sickness; neither are they extremely beautiful, nor ugly. Similarly, from the spiritual point of view, people fall into the same categories; one group is in love with truth, and another is its stubborn enemy. The third group consists of those in the middle; and they are the majority, who are neither in love with truth like the first group, nor its enemies like the second. These are people who have not reached the truth, but if they were shown the truth, they wouldn't refuse to accept it."

In other words, from the Islamic perspective and from a jurisprudential viewpoint, they are not Muslims, but in real terms, they are Muslims. That is, they are submissive to truth and have no stubbornness toward it.

Avicenna says, after this division

"Believe God's mercy to be encompassing."37

In the discussions of good and evil of *al-Asfar*, Mulla Sadra mentions this point as an objection:

"How do you say that good overcomes evil even though, when we look at the human being, which is the noblest creation, we see that most people are caught in evil deeds in terms of their practice, and stuck in unsound beliefs and compound ignorance in terms of their beliefs? And evil deeds and false beliefs destroy their position on the Day of Judgment, making them worthy of perdition. Thus, the final outcome of humanity, which is the best of creation, is wretchedness and misfortune."

Mulla Sadra, in answering this objection, points to the words of Avicenna and says,

"In the next life, people are the same as they are in this life in terms of their soundness and felicity. Just

as the extremely sound and exceedingly beautiful, and likewise the very ill and exceptionally ugly, are a minority in this world, while the majority is in the middle and is relatively sound, so too in the next world the perfect, who in the words of the Qur'an are *al-sabiqun*, or "the foremost ones," and similarly the wretched, who in the words of the Qur'an are *ashab al-shimal*, or "the people of the left," are few, and the majority consists of average people, whom the Qur'an calls *ashab al-yamin*, or "the people of the right."

After this, Mulla Sadra says,

"Thus, the people of mercy and soundness are predominant in both worlds."

One of the latter stages, perhaps the late Aqa Muhammad Rida Qumshi'i, has some unique verses of poetry about the vastness of the Lord's mercy; in these verses, he reflects the belief of the sages, and rather the broadness of the 'arifs' (mystics') stand. He says,

Consider all to be Gods', accepted and non-accepted,

From mercy it commenced and to mercy it will return.

From mercy the created ones came, and to mercy they go,

This is the secret of love, which baffles the intellect.

All of creation was born with the innateness of Divine Unity,

This polytheism is incidental, and the incidental subsides.

Says wisdom: Keep hidden the secret of truth;

What will the prying intellect do with love, which pulls aside the curtains?

Consider the story of what was and what will be to be a dot,

This dot sometimes ascends and sometimes descends.

None but I strove to keep the trusts,

Whether you call me oppressive or call me ignorant.

The discussion of the sages pertains to the minor premise of an argument, not the major premise. The sages don't discuss what the criterion of a good deed or the criterion of a deed's acceptance are; their discussion is about the human being, about the idea that relatively speaking, in practice the majority of

people-to differing extents-are good, remain good, die good, and will be resurrected good.

What the sages wish to say is that although those who are blessed to accept the religion of Islam are in a minority, the individuals who possess *fitri* (innate) Islam and will be resurrected with innate Islam are in a majority.

In the belief of the supporters of this view, what has come in the Qur'an about the Prophets interceding for those whose religion they approve of is in reference to the innate religion, and not the acquired religion, which, through incapacity, they haven't reached, but towards which they show no obstinacy.

The Sins Of Muslims

As for the sins of Muslims, this issue has the exact opposite form of first issue (the good deeds of non–Muslims) and is the completion of the previous discussion. The issue is whether the sins committed by Muslims are similar to the sins of non–Muslims with regard to punishment or not.

Broaching the previous issue was necessary from the aspect of its being a matter of intellectual belief; but broaching this issue is a practical necessity, because one of the factors in the fall and ruin of Muslim societies in the present age is the undue pride which in the latter days has come into being in many Muslims, and also in many Shias.

If these individuals are asked whether the good deeds of non-Shias are acceptable to God, many of them answer, "No." And if they are asked what ruling the evil deeds and sins of Shias have, they answer, "They are all forgiven."

From these two sentences, it is deduced that actions have no value; they have neither positive nor negative value. The necessary and sufficient condition for felicity and salvation is for a person to name him or herself Shia, and that's it.

Normally, this group argues as follows:

First, if our sins and those of others are to be accounted for in the same way, what difference is there between Shias and non-Shias?

Second, there is a well-known tradition:

"Love of Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) is a good deed with which no evil deed can bring harm."

In answer to the first argument, it must be said that the difference between Shias and non-Shias becomes apparent when a Shia acts on the program his or her leaders have given him or her and the

non–Shia also acts on the teachings of his or her own religion. In such a case, the precedence of the Shia, both in this world and in the other, will become clear. That is, the difference should be sought in the positive side, not the negative side. We shouldn't say that if the Shia and non–Shia put the teachings of their religion under their feet, there must be some difference between them–and if there is no difference in that case, then what difference is there between Shias and non–Shias?

This is exactly as if two patients were to refer to a doctor, one referring to an expert doctor and the other to a doctor with less expertise, but when they receive the doctor's prescription, neither of them acts in accordance with it. Then the first patient complains, saying, "What difference is there between me and the patient who referred to the non-expert doctor? Why should I remain sick like him, even though I referred to an expert doctor and he referred to a non-expert doctor?"

Just as in the example of the two patients, it is not correct for us to differentiate between Ali (a) and others by saying that if we don't act according to his commands, we will see no harm, but for them, whether they act according to the words of their leader or not, they will be in loss.

One of the companions of Imam Sadiq (a) said to the Imam that some of your Shias have gone astray and consider forbidden actions to be permissible, saying that religion is recognition of the Imam and no more; thus, once you have recognized the Imam, you may do whatever you want. Imam Sadiq (a) said:

"Verily we belong to God and to Him shall we return. These unbelievers have interpreted that which they don't know according to their own ideas."

The proper statement is, "Acquire recognition (of the Imam) and do whatever good deeds you want, and they will be accepted of you, for God does not accept actions without recognition."38

Muhammad ibn Marid asked Imam Sadiq (a): "Is it true that you have said, 'Once you have recognized (the Imam), do what you please'?" The Imam (a) replied, "Yes, that is correct." He said, "Any action, even adultery, theft, or drinking wine?!" The Imam (a) replied:

"Verily we belong to God and to Him shall we return. I swear by God, they have wronged us. We (the Imams) ourselves are responsible for our actions; how can responsibility be lifted from our Shias? What I said is that once you have recognized the Imam, do what you wish of good deeds, for they will be accepted from you."39

As for the tradition that says, "Love of Ali (a) is a good deed with which no evil deed will cause harm," we must see what its interpretation is. One of the eminent scholars–I think it was Wahid Bihbahani has interpreted this tradition in a noteworthy way. He says that the meaning of the tradition is that if one's love of Ali (a) is true, no sin will bring harm to a person. That is, if one's love of Ali (a)–who is the perfect example of humanity, obedience, servitude, and ethics–is sincere and not out of self–centeredness, it will prevent the committing of sins; it is like a vaccine that brings immunity and keeps sickness away from the vaccinated person.

Love of a leader like Ali (a), who is the personification of good deeds and piety, causes one to love Ali's character; it chases the thought of sin from one's mind, with the condition, of course, that one's love be true. It is impossible for one who recognizes Ali (a)–his piety, his tearful prayers, his supplications in the heart of the night–and one who loves such a person, to act in opposition to his command, he who always commanded others to be pious and do good deeds. Every lover shows respect to the wishes of his or her beloved and respects his or her command. Obedience to the beloved is a necessary result of true love; thus, it is not exclusive to Ali (a); true love of the Prophet (s) is the same way. Thus, the meaning of the tradition:

Love of Ali (a) is a good deed with which no evil deed can cause harm"

is that love of Ali (a) is a good deed that prevents evil deeds from bringing harm; that is, it prevents their occurrence. It doesn't indicate the meaning that the ignorant have understood, which is that love of Ali (a) is something alongside of which no sin you may commit will have an effect.

Some dervishes on the one hand claim to love God and on the other hand are more sinful than all other sinners; these, too are false claimants. Imam Sadiq (a) said:

You disobey God while claiming to love Him,

This by my life is an incredible deed.

If your love were true, you would obey Him;

Verily the lover shows obedience to the beloved.

The true friends of Amir al-Mu'minin (a) would always abstain from sins; his patronage (wilayah) would protect from sin, not encourage it.

Imam Baqir (a) said:

"Our patronage is not attained except through deeds and piety."40

Now, some traditions in support of this point:

1. Tawus al-Yamani says:

"I saw Ali ibn Husayn (a) circumambulating the House of God and busying himself in worship from the time of 'Isha prayers until the last part of the night. When he found himself alone, he looked toward the sky and said, "O God! The stars have disappeared in the horizon and the eyes of the people have slept, and Your gates are open to those who seek ..."

Tawus narrated many sentences in this regard from the humble and worshipful supplications the Imam (a), saying, "Numerous times in the course of his supplication, he wept." He said:

"Then he fell to the earth and prostrated on the ground. I approached and, putting his head on my knees, wept. My tears flowed and fell on his face. He rose, sat, and said: "Who has busied me from the remembrance of my Lord?" I said: "I am Tawus, O son of the Messenger of God. What is this agitation and disquiet? We, who are sinners and full of shortcomings, should do thus. Your father is Husayn ibn Ali, your mother is Fatima Zahra, and your grandfather is the Messenger of God (a)-that is, with such a noble ancestry and lofty link, why are you in discomfort and fear?" He looked to me and said,

هيهات هيهات يا طاووس دع عنّي حديث أبي وأمّي وجدّي ، خلق الله الجنة لمن أطاعه وأحسن و لو كان عبدًا حبشيًّا ، و خلق النّار لمن عصاه و لوكان ولدًا قرشيًّا. أما سمعت قوله تعالى: " فإذا نفخ فى الصّور فلا أنساب . بينهم يومئذ و لا يتساءلون". والله، لا ينفعك غدًا إلّا تقدمة تقدّمها من عمل صالح

"Not at all, O Tawus, not at all! Leave aside talk of my ancestry. God created Heaven for those who obey Him and do good, even if he be an Abyssinian slave, and He created Hell for those who disobey him, even if he be a Qurayshi lad. Have you not heard the words of God: "so when the trumpet shall be blown, there will be no relations among them, nor shall they ask one another?" By God, nothing shall benefit you tomorrow except what good deeds you send forth.41

The Messenger of God (s), after the conquest of Makkah, ascended the hill of Safa and called out: "O sons of Hashim! o sons of Abd al-Muttalib!" The descendants of Hashim and Abd al-Muttalib assembled; when they came together, the Messenger (s) addressed them:

إِنِّي رَسُولُ اَللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ وَ إِنِّي شَفِيقٌ عَلَيْكُمْ لاَ تَقُولُوا إِنَّ مُحَمَّداً مِنَّا َفُواَللَّهِ مَا أَوْلِيَائِي مِنْكُمْ وَ لاَ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِلاَّ اَلْمُتَّقُونَ فَلاَ تأتوني يَوْمَ تَحْمِلُونَ اَلدُّنْيَا رِقابِكُم وَ يَأْتِي اَلنَّاسُ يَحْمِلُونَ اَلْآخِرَةَ أَلاَ و إِنِّي قَدْ أَعْذَرْتُ فِيمَا بَيْنِي وَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَ فِيمَا بَيْنَ اَللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ بَينَكُم و إِن لي عملي و لكُم عَمَلُكِم

2. "Verily I am God's messenger to you; verily (am your well-wisher. Don't say that Muhammad is from

among us, for I swear by God, my friends from among you and from among others are only the pious ones. So do not let me see you come to me on the Day of Judgment carrying the world on your shoulders, while the people come carrying the Hereafter. Aye, I have left no excuse between myself and you, and between God the Exalted and you. Verily, for me are my deeds and for you are your deeds. '42

3. Books of history have written that the Noble Messenger (s), in the last days of his life, went out alone at night to the Baqi graveyard and sought forgiveness for those buried in it. After that, he said to his companions, "Each year Jibra'il would show the Qur'an to me once, and this year he recited it for me twice. I think this is a sign that my death has approached." The next day he went to the pulpit and declared, "The time of my death has approached. Whoever I have made a promise to, let him come forward so that I may fulfil it, and whoever is owed something by me, let him come forward so that I may give it."

Then he continued his words thus:

"O people! Verily there is no kinship between God and any person, nor is there anything on account of which He will do good to a person or cast away evil from him except deeds. Aye, let no one claim or wish (otherwise). I swear by Him Who sent me with the truth, nothing will give salvation save (good) deeds along with mercy, and if (even) I were to disobey, I would perish. O God! I have conveyed."43

4. Imam Ali Al-Ridha' (a) had a brother known as Zayd al-Nar. The character of this brother of the Imam (a) was not very pleasing to the Imam. One day, during the time that the Imam was in Marw, Zayd was present in a gathering in which there was a large group of people who were speaking to each other. While the Imam was speaking, he noticed that Zayd was talking to a group of people and speaking of the station of the Messenger's family, and in a proud manner would constantly saying, "we this" and "we that." The Imam (a) cut short his own words and said, addressing Zayd:

"What are these things that you are saying? If what you say is correct and the descendants of the Messenger of God (s) have an exceptional status; that is, if God is not to punish their evildoers and will reward them without their doing good deeds, then you are more honourable near God than your father Musa ibn Jafar (a), because he would worship God until he attained the stations of Divine proximity, whereas you think that without worship you can attain the station of Musa ibn Jafar (a).

The Imam (a) then turned to Hasan ibn Musa al-Washsha', one of the scholars of Kufah who was present in that gathering, saying,

How do the scholars of Kufah recite this verse:

"O Nuh! Verily he is not of your family; he is a (doer) of unworthy deeds."

He replied: They recite it thus:

That is, he is not your son and is not from your seed; he is the son of an unrighteous man.

The Imam (a) said, "Such is not the case. They recite the verse incorrectly and interpret it incorrectly. The verse is thus

That is, your son himself is unworthy. He was actually the son of Nuh; he was driven away from God and drowned because he himself was unrighteous, even though he was the son of Prophet Nuh (a).

Thus, being descended from and related to the prophet or imam has no benefit; good deeds are required."44

Creational Conditions And Conventional Conditions

Usually, people compare the Divine rules in creation, reward and punishment, and salvation and perdition to human societal rules, even though these affairs are in accordance with creational and actual conditions and are a portion of them, whereas social conditions and rules follow conventional, manmade rules. Social rules can follow conventional conditions, but the rules of creation, and among them Divine reward and punishment, cannot follow these conditions, and instead follow creational conditions. To clarify the difference between a creational system and a conventional system, we present an example:

We know that in social systems, every country has its own particular rules and laws. Social rules, in some issues, differentiate between two people who are equal in physical and creational conditions, but different with respect to conventional conditions.

For example, when they wish to hire someone in Iran, if an Iranian and an Afghani apply to for the job and both are equal in terms of creational conditions, it is possible that the Iranian will be hired rather than the Afghani, simply because he is not an Iranian. In this case, if the Afghani says that I am completely equal in terms of physical conditions to the Iranian who was hired-if he is healthy, I too am healthy, if he is young, so am I, if he is a specialist in such-and-such a field, so am I-he will be given the answer that administrative rules do not permit us to hire you.

Based on a conventional and man-made decision, the position of this same Afghani individual can change and become like others; that is, he can apply for and receive Iranian citizenship. It is obvious that citizenship papers have no effect on his actual personality; but from the view of social rules, he has become another person. Normally, the observance of conventional conditions is concurrent with a lack of observance of equality in actual and creational conditions.

But in issues that do not follow social and conventional rules and instead follow only creational conditions, the case is different.

For example, if God forbid, an illness or an epidemic comes to Iran, it will not differentiate between a citizen of Iran and that of another country. If an Iranian and an Afghani are equal with respect to temperamental, environmental, and all other conditions, it is impossible for the bacteria that cause illness to discriminate and say that since the Afghani is not a citizen of Iran, I have nothing to do with him. Here, the issue is of creation and nature, not society and societal conventions; the issue pertains to creation, not to legislation and rule–making.

The Divine rules with respect to reward and punishment and salvation and perdition of individuals are subject to actual and creational conditions. It is not the case that if someone claims, "Since my name is recorded in the register of Islam and I am Muslim by name, I must have special treatment," it will be accepted of him or her.

Let there be no confusion; here we are concerned with the discussion of reward and punishment, salvation and perdition, and the conduct of God with His servants; we are not talking about the laws that Islam has legislated in the Muslims' social life.

There is no doubt that the laws of Islam, like all other legislations of the word, are a series of conventional laws, and a series of conventional conditions has been observed in them. And in these laws which are related to their worldly life, human beings of necessity must follow a set of conventional conditions.

But the actions of God, and the operation of Divine will in the system of creation-including the granting of salvation and leading to perdition of individuals and rewarding and punishing them-do not follow social rules, and instead are of another type altogether. God, in carrying out His absolute will, does not act on the basis of conventional rules. Conventional matters which naturally have a major effect on social systems have no role in the creational will of God.

From the viewpoint of the rules Islam has legislated that pertain to the social conduct of human beings, whenever a person recites the two testimonies, he or she will be recognized as a Muslim and will benefit from the advantages of Islam. But with regard to the rules of the hereafter and from the viewpoint of God's conduct, the laws of

Whoever follows me, is from me... (Qur'an, 14:36)

And

prevail.

Verily the most honourable of you near God is the most pious of you." (Qur'an, 14:36)

The Messenger of God (s) said,

"O people! Verily your father is one, and your Lord is One. All of you are from Adam, and Adam was from dust. There is no pride for an Arab over a non-Arab, except through piety."45

Salman al-Farsi, who strove to reach truth, reached such a station that the Noble Messenger (s) said of him,

Salman is one of us, the People of the House.

There are some who have come under the influence of satanic whisperings and have contented themselves with the thought, "Our name is among the names of Ali ibn Abi Talib's (a) friends. However, we may be, we are considered his subjects. Or we will make a will that a large sum out of the money that we have acquired through wrong means or that we should have spent in our lifetime in good causes—but didn't—should be given to the caretakers of one of the holy shrines in order for us to be buried near the graves of God's saints, so that the angels don't dare punish us." Such people should know that they have been blinded and the curtain of negligence has covered their eyes. Their eyes will open when they will find themselves drowned in Divine punishment and they will suffer from such regret that if it were possible to die, they would do so a thousand times. So, let them awake from the slumber of carelessness today, repent, and make up for what has passed.

Warn them of the Day of Regret, when the matter will be decided, while they are (yet) heedless and do not have faith. (Qur'an, 19:39)

From the point of view of the Qur'an and the Islamic traditions, it is definite that the sinner, even if Muslim, will be punished by God. True, since he or she has faith, he or she will in the end achieve salvation and liberty from Hell, but it may be that this salvation will only come after years of hardship and punishment. Some people's account of sins will be cleansed by the hardships of dying; another group will pay the penalty for their sins in the grave and *barzakh* (intermediary realm between this world and the next); another group will get their retribution in the horrors of Resurrection and difficulties of accounting for their deeds; and yet others will go to Hell and linger for years in punishment. It has been narrated from the sixth Imam, Imam Ja'far Sadig (a) that the verse

لَّابِثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا

to reside therein for ages, (Qur'an, 78:23)

pertains to those who will attain salvation from Hell.46

Here we mention some examples of traditions that talk of the punishments of the time of death and after death so that they may help us take notice, awaken, and prepare ourselves for the daunting and dangerous stations we have ahead of us.

- 1. Shaykh Kulayni narrates from Imam Sadiq (a) that Ali (a) was once suffering from pain in the eye. The Prophet (s) went to visit him at a time when he was crying out from the pain. He said, "Is this cry from impatience, or because of the severity of pain?" Amir al–Mu^lminin (a) replied, "O Messenger of God, I have not suffered any pain like this until today." The Prophet (s) began to narrate the terrifying account of what happens to unbelievers when they die. Upon hearing this, Ali (a) sat up and said, "Messenger of God, please repeat this account for me, for it made me forget my pain." Then he said, "O Messenger of God! Will anyone from your community face such a death?" He replied, "Yes: a ruler who oppresses, and one who usurps the property of an orphan, and one who bears false witness."47
- 2. Shaykh Saduq narrates in *Man la Yahd uruhu al-Faqih* that when Dharr, the son of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, died, Abu Dharr stood by his grave, put his hand on the grave, and said:

"God have mercy on you; I swear by God that you were good to me and now that you have left me I am pleased with you. I swear by God that I am not worried because of your leaving; nothing has been diminished from me, and I am in need of none but God. And were it not for the fear of the time of notification, I would wish that I had gone in your place. But now I wish to compensate for what has passed and prepare for the next world, and verily my grief for your sake has prevented my grief over you. (That is, I am absorbed in thinking about doing something that could benefit you, and so I have no time to grieve at being separated from you.) I swear by God that I have not wept on account of your

separation, but I have cried thinking about how you are and what you have gone through. I wish I knew what you said and what was said to you! O God! I have forgiven the rights that You had made obligatory on my son for me, so You too forgive him Your rights over him, for magnanimity and generosity are more befitting of You." 48

- 3. Imam Sadiq (a) narrates from his noble ancestors that the is (s) said, "The squeezing in the grave for a believer is an atonement for the shortcomings he or she has committed."49
- 4. Ali ibn Ibrahim narrates from Imam Sadiq (a) regarding the verse

and beyond them is a barrier until the day they shall be resurrected. (Qur'an, 23:100)

that he said,

I swear by God, I fear nothing for you except *barzakh*; as for when the affair is committed to us, we are more worthy of you."50

That is, our intercession is related to after *barzakh*; there is no intercession in *barzakh*.

In general, there are so many Qur'anic verses and clear traditions regarding the punishment for sins like lying, backbiting, false accusation, treachery, oppression, usurping other's property, drinking, gambling, tale bearing, defaming, abandoning prayer, abandoning fasting, abandoning pilgrimage, abandoning jihad, and so forth that it is beyond reckoning; none of them is exclusive to unbelievers or non–Shias. In the tradition of the *m'iraj* (Prophetic ascent to Heaven), we find many examples where the Prophet (s) says: I saw various groups of my community, men and women, in different forms of punishment, who were being punished on account of various sins.

Summary And Conclusion

From all that has been said in this section about the good and bad deeds of Muslims and non-Muslims, the following conclusions can be reached:

1. Both salvation and perdition have degrees and levels; neither the people of salvation are all at the same level, nor are those of perdition. These levels and differences are called *darajat* "levels of ascent" with regard to the people of Heaven and *darakat* "levels of descent" with regard to the inhabitants of Hell.

- 2. It is not the case that all of the dwellers of Heaven will go to Heaven from the beginning, just as all of the people of Hell will not be in Hell for eternity. Many dwellers of Heaven will only go to Heaven after suffering very difficult periods of punishment in *barzakh* or the hereafter. A Muslim and a Shia should know that, assuming he or she dies with sound faith, if God forbid he or she has committed sins, injustices, and crimes, he or she has very difficult stages ahead, and some sins have yet greater danger and may cause one to remain eternally in Hell.
- 3. Individuals who don't believe in God and the hereafter naturally don't perform any actions with the intention of ascending towards God, and since they don't perform good deeds with this intent, by necessity they do not embark on a journey towards God and the hereafter. Thus, they naturally don't ascend towards God and the higher realm and don't reach Heaven. That is, because they were not moving towards it, they don't reach that destination.
- 4. If individuals believe in God and the hereafter, perform actions with the intention of seeking nearness to God, and are sincere in their actions, their actions are acceptable to God and they deserve their reward and Heaven, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims.
- 5. Non-Muslims who believe in God and the hereafter and do good deeds with the intention of seeking nearness to God, on account of being without the blessing of Islam, are naturally deprived of benefiting from this Divine program. That proportion of their good deeds is accepted which is in accordance with the Divine program, such as forms of favours and services to God's creation. But invented acts of worship that without base are naturally unacceptable, and a series of deprivations resulting from unavailability of the complete program apply to and include them.
- 6. Accepted good deeds, whether of Muslims or otherwise, have certain afflictions which may come about afterwards and corrupt them. At the head of all of these afflictions is rejection, obstinacy, and deliberate unbelief. Thus, if non-Muslim individuals perform a great amount of good deeds with the intention of seeking nearness to God, but when the truths of Islam are presented to them show bias and obstinacy and set aside fairness and truth-seeking, all of those good deeds are null and void, "like ashes caught in a strong wind on a stormy day."
- 7. Muslims and all other true monotheists, if they commit indecencies and transgressions and betray the practical aspect of the Divine program, are deserving of long punishments in *barzakh* and the Day of Judgment, and occasionally because of some sins, like intentionally murdering an innocent believer, may remain in eternal punishment.
- 8. The good deeds of individuals who don't believe in God and the Day of Judgment and perhaps may ascribe partners to God will cause their punishment to be lessened and, occasionally, be lifted.
- 9. Felicity and perdition are in accordance with actual and creational conditions, not conventional and man-made conditions.

- 10. The verses and traditions that indicate that God accepts good deeds do not look solely to the action-related goodness of actions; in Islam's view, an action becomes good and worthy when it possesses goodness from two aspects: action-related, and actor-related.
- 11. The verses and traditions that indicate that the actions of those who deny Prophethood or Imamate are not acceptable are with a view to denial out of obstinacy and bias; however, denial that is merely a lack of confession out of incapacity (*qusur*) –rather than out of culpability (*taqsir*}–is not what the verses and traditions are about. In the view of the Qur'an, such deniers are considered mustad'af (powerless) and *murjawn li'amr illah* (those whose affair is referred to God's command).
- 12. In the view of the Islamic sages such as Avicenna and Mulls Sadra, the majority of people who haven't confessed to the truth are incapable and excusable rather than culpable; if such people do not know God they will not be punished though they will also not go to Heaven–and if they believe in God and the Resurrection and perform pure good deeds with the intention of seeking nearness to God, they will receive the recompense for their good deeds. Only those will face perdition who are culpable, not those who are incapable.

O God! Seal (our fate) for us with goodness and felicity, and cause us to die as Muslims, and join us with the righteous, Muhammad and his noble progeny, upon whom be peace.

- 1. Usd al-Ghaba, under Uthman Ibn Maz'un
- 2. The objection may come to mind that the purport of this verse is contrary to what is accepted by Muslims as established fact, meaning that the Prophet (s) informed of his praiseworthy place on the Day of Judgment and of his intercession for various sinners, and is rather contrary to the purpose of various verses, like "and verily your Lord will grant you until you are pleased" and "for God to forgive that which has passed of your mistake and that which is to come."

The answer is that the purport of the verse, as is also understood from the preceding tradition, is that the end result of a person's actions are not known with certainty by anyone; only God has certain knowledge of the final result, and if others come to know, it is only by Divine revelation. So the verse that negates knowledge of the final end relates to the Prophet (s) or someone else making a forecast relying on his or her own actions; and the verses that the verses that indicate that the Prophet (s) has knowledge of his own or other people's final end are through Divine revelation."

- 3. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 3. p. 165
- 4. The Voice of Human Justice
- 5. George Jordac's words about the Prophet (s) indicate he believed in his prophecy and receiving Divine revelation, and he also believed firmly that Ali (a) was a man of God and regarded him as being like 'Isa (a), but at the same time he did not abandon Christianity. Gibran Khalil Gibran says of Ali (a): "In my view, Ali was the first Arab to have contact with and converse with the universal soul [of the world]"

He expresses greater love for Ali than even the Prophet. He has unusual statements about Ali; for example, he says, "He died while prayer was between his two lips." And he also says of Ali, "Ali was before his time, and I don't know the secret of why destiny sometimes brings people to the world before their time."

Incidentally, this point is the meaning of one of Ali's (a) own statements; he says, "Tomorrow you will see my days and my secrets will be exposed to you, and you will know me after my space has become empty and others take my place."

<u>6.</u> Of course, this does not mean that all things have the same relation to God and deserve the same treatment. The relation of things to God is not the same, but the relation of God to things is the same. God is equally close to all things, but things are different in their closeness and distance from God. There is an interesting sentence in Du'a al– Iftitah in this regard: Text in Arabic on page 272. In this sentence, God has been described thus: "Who is distant and thus cannot be

seen and Who is near and thus witnesses all conversations." In fact, it is we who are far from Him, while He is close to us. This is an enigma; how is it possible for two things to have a different relation with each other in terms of closeness and distance? But yes, such is the case here; God is close to things, but things are not close to God-that is, they have varying states of closeness and distance. The interesting point in this sentence is that when it describes God as being "far" it mentions an attribute of His creations as evidence, which is the attribute of sight. "None can see Him." And when it describes God as being near, it mentions an attribute of God as evidence, which is the attribute of Divine presence and awareness. When speaking of our state, we use the attribute of distance, for God, and when speaking of His state, we use the attribute of "closeness". Sa'di says, "He is a Friend closer to-me than myself, and amazing it is that I am far from Him. what to do: who can I tell that the Friend is by my side, and I am forsaken!"

- 7. Wasail al-Shia, vol. 1, part 1, p.90
- 8. [Qur'an, 9:111]
- 9. This and the previous two traditions are in Wasail sl-Shia, vo.1, p.8
- 10. Sahih Muslim, vol.6, p.48
- 11. Also known as Surah Al-Insan, the 76th Surah of Holy Qur'an.
- 12. See Endnote 81
- 13. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.3, p. 377
- 14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.3, p. 382, from al-Kafi
- 15. This and previous tradition are in Bihar al-Anwar, vol.3, p. 382, from al-Kafi
- 16. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 15, part 3, p. 132-133
- 17. Nahj al-Balagha, saying 125.
- 18. Qur'an, 2:112
- 19. Al-Kafi, vol.2, p.387
- 20. Nafs al-Mahmum, p. 393
- 21. Wasail al-Shia, vol. 1, p.55
- 22. Al-Mizan, vol.5, p.51
- 23. Refer to al-Mizan, vol. 5, p. 56-61, 'Discussion of the Traditions'
- 24. al-Mizan, vol. 9, p. 405, from al-Kafi
- 25. al-Mizan, vol. 9, p. 407, from Tafsir al-Ayyashi
- 26. Al-Kafi, vol.2, 'Kitab al-Iman wa al-Kufr", section Asnaf an-Nas, p.31.
- 27. Ibid, p.382. The last sentence of the tradition is (text in Arabic) translated as above. But in some texts it is as follows: (text in Arabic), which would mean that the Imam (a) changed his opinion and accepted the view al–Zurarah. Obviously. this isn't correct, but based on this reading another meaning is possible, which is that the Imam (a) may have intended that these people will not be punished, but they will also not go to heaven.
- 28. Ibid, p.388
- 29. Ibid, p.388
- 30. al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 183
- 31. al-Kafi, vol. 1, p.203
- 32. al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 187
- 33. al-Kafi, vol. 1, p.399
- 34. al-Kafi, vol.2, chapter on deviation (zalal) p.401
- 35. al-Kafi, vol.2, p.463
- 36. al-Kafi, vol 2, p.464
- 37. Al-Isharat, towards the end of the seventh section (namat)
- 38. Mustadrak al-Wasail, vol. 1, p.24.
- 39. al-Kafi, vol.2, p. 464.
- 40. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 12
- 41. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11, p.25, "Chapter on the Nobel Morals of Imam Zain al Abedin (a).
- 42. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 21, p. 111, from Attributes of Shia by Shaykh Sadduq.

- 43. Nahj al-Balagha, Sharh Ibn Abil Hadid, vol.2, p.863.
- 44. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 10, p.65
- 45. Tarikh al-Yaqubi, vol.2, p.110.
- 46. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 3, p.376-7
- 47. Shaykh Abbas Qummi, Manazil al-Aakhirah, p. 5-6
- 48. Ibid. p. 24-25
- 49. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 3, p. 153, from Thawab al-A'mal and Amali of Shaykh Sadduq.
- 50. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 3, p. 151, from Tafsir Ali ibn Ibrahim.

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