

The Shared Commandments in the Abrahamic Religions

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**In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most
Merciful**

*Thanks to God, the Lord of the worlds
And His blessing be upon Muhammed and his pure
infallible Progeny and his chosen companions.*

Table of Content

Introduction.....	10
Association with God is Great Injustice	14
First: The Cosmic System and Belief in God.....	20
The Issue of Coincidence:	24
Discussing the Idea of Coincidence	24
Second: Existence and Belief in God	26
Who Created God?	27
The Reason This Deduction is Invalid	28
Who Saw God?	28
The Creed	29
Monotheism.....	30
Features of Perfection	41
Features of Integrity:.....	45
The Justice of God:	46
The Summary of Characteristics:.....	46
The Name 'Allah' in Hadiths and Narrations.....	61
You are Allah.....	62
After Learning.....	78
Devotion	92
The Main Right of God	94
Stability of Belief	96
Stability of Religion.....	97
Sound Heart	98
How do you protect your heart from going astray?	99
Doctrinal Education	100

Proof of God’s Existence.....	103
The Holy Self: His Features	108
The Required Manner of Thinking.....	111
Total Monotheism is in One Chapter (Tawheed)	115
Why Was This Chapter Revealed?	117
Contents of ‘Ekhlas’	120
Interpretation of ‘Ekhlas’	124
The Second Commandment	164
Desire is the Scourge of Closeness to God	167
Responding to God, not Desire	170
Self-Worship is the Ultimate Form of Desire	175
Safe Self-love is the Ultimate Happiness	176
Demonic Desire is the Ultimate Misery.....	177
The Worship of Desire and Worship of God	178
Continuous Response to Satan.....	182
The Mission of the Divine Message is Guidance	185
No Duality in Worshipping God	187
Continuous Response to God is Required	189
How to Control Desire	190
The Divine Method is the Guarantee	192
The Divine Path	199
God’s Evidence for His Servant.....	200
God’s Light for Mankind	201
The Satanic Path	202
The Path of God is the Path to Heaven.....	205
The Self Between the Divine and Satanic Paths	208
The Self Between Obedience and Disobedience.....	209
Prophetic Education of the Self	211

He Accuses Himself	215
He Suffers from Himself.....	216
Accusing Oneself	217
The Self and the Manifestation of Servitude to God	219
The Self and the Manifestation of Divine Domination	220
Removing the Clothes of Desires.....	224
Abandoning Worries.....	226
Having Unified Concern.....	227
Sound Mind Produces Sound Ideas	234
Self-esteem Underestimates Desires.....	235
Living with God.....	236
Healing Blindness	243
The Law of Servitude.....	244
The Divine Method	246
Justice with Oneself: The Victory of Mind over Desire.....	248
Desire and the Path of Satan	252
A Scene from the Judgement Day	254
Satan Perishes with Repentance	256
Concealed Sins	259
Distancing from Divine Standards	260
Negative Attentiveness to the Self	260
The Nation between the Divine and Satanic Wills	268
Falling in the Trap of Satan	273
Satan has Hunting Tools	274
How to be Safe from the Traps of the Malicious One.....	275
No Negative Response with Desires	276
Divine Standards.....	277
God’s Sermon to Jesus (peace be upon him)	280

Compunction.....	281
Mind is the Enemy of Desire	282
Desires Lead to Blindness	285
Satan’s Plot is Weak.....	289
The Divine Self is not a Home for Desires.....	290
The Spirit between the Divine Habit and Satanic Habit	292
Following Desire is a Continuous Destruction	293
The Divine Method for the Successor Man	297
Qualifications of the Successor	298
Opposing Desires is the Most Important Feature of a Servant of God.....	300
Detaching from the Divine Method.....	302
Being Filled with the Satanic Method.....	304
Following Desires Leads to Inclination to the Earth	305
Perfecting the Formation of Man to Reach God.....	308
There is No Compulsion in Thought and Manner.....	309
Man is Free to Choose between Elevation and Inclination	311
The Image of the Declining Man	312
Intellectual and Practical Rejection is a Sign of Submitting to Satan	313

Introduction

It is universally acknowledged that God revealed all religions and that all religions are respectable. From an Islamic viewpoint, we must believe in all the previous prophets, Messengers, and their messages. This stance requires us to prevent any form of conflict with the followers of other divine religions. This is a Quranic instruction on the best possible way to socialize with others.

Moreover, we must pay attention to the factors that unite us rather than those which divide us. This meaning is evident in the following Quranic verse:

(Say: “O People of the Book! come to standard terms between you and us)⁽¹⁾.

(Common terms) are those terms that unite us. Many terms and conditions combine the followers of divine religions. We all must look for those common terms and practice them in our life. There are religious, humanitarian, and patriotic terms that must be highlighted. This is a Quranic stance, as clarified in the following verse:

(Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds)⁽²⁾.

Another verse states:

(And indeed, you or we are either upon guidance or in clear error)⁽³⁾.

1 Al Emran: 64

2 Shora: 15

3 Saba: 24

The Quran is eager to confirm the bond of brotherhood among believers, as in the following verse:

(Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve)⁽¹⁾.

Many divine instructions in the Torah and Gospels are close in meaning to those revealed in the Quran. This is even more obvious concerning the ten commandments. Though they are not mentioned and explained in the Quran, they are similar to the Quranic commandments. I comprehensively explain these similarities in this volume and the next.

The First Commandment

The Old Testament:

(Thou shalt have no other gods before me).

The New Testament:

(I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me, there is no God).

The Quran:

(Know that there is no God but Allah)⁽²⁾.

Another verse states:

1 Baqara: 62

2 Muhammed: 19

(Say, “Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you. [He commands] that you not associate anything with Him...)⁽¹⁾.

The statement:

(There is no God but Allah) is the first divine instruction. It is the core of the Quran and Islam; it is the core of all sacred religions. In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) used to state:

(The best thing the previous prophets and I brought to humanity is the statement (There is no God but Allah)).

(There is no God but Allah) is not only a plain statement: it is the core of faith and the method of life toward salvation in this life and the afterlife. It preserves Man’s dignity and independence. It leaves no place for others to enforce their dominance over his life. The only governing power in this method is that of equality and truth.

Social status, money, and other worldly possessions are not Gods to be worshipped. They are worth nothing unless they are spent in the path of God. All other grounds are fragile and cannot be reliable. God is the only Being who protects you and provides for you. The Lord God states in the Quran:

([He is] the Lord of the East and the West; there is no deity except Him, so take Him as Disposer of [your] affairs)⁽²⁾.

There is another divine Hadith that states:

1 Anam: 151

2 Mozamel: 9

(The statement: “There is no God but Allah” is my fortress; whoever recites it shall enter my fortress, and anyone who enters my fortress shall be safe from my torment).

Thus, anyone who absorbs the statement of monotheism by mind and heart and appoints it as a lantern in his life would guarantee the completion and perfection of his religion.

Association with God is Great Injustice

The topic of not associating with God or any other thing is an essential term in divine religions. Many Quranic verses encounter this issue, as the one mentioned in the chapter of Luqman:

(When Luqman said to his son while instructing him, “O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah. Indeed, association [with him] is great injustice”)⁽¹⁾.

Luqman orders his son not to associate anything with God. He wanted to implant monotheism in him. He wanted his son to discover his pure instinct, including monotheism and belief in God. He informed him of the following issues:

- ❖ If you associate anything with God, you will wrong yourself.
- ❖ If you associate anything with God, you will wrong your family.
- ❖ If you associate anything with God, you will wrong your nation.

Associating with God, other gods, or things leads you astray and away from religious values. In this case, you would become someone who lives without any religious morality. Luqman clarifies that:

(Association [with him] is great injustice).

1 Luqman: 13

This is a magnificent Quranic example of the best way to deal with the youth intellectually.

When you speak to a young person, give him some wisdom. When parents talk to their children and want them to follow the path of righteousness and morality, they must provide their speech with examples and insight. It must not be mere order.

Any young person believes himself to know many things. In this regard, when you provide your speech with reasoning and wisdom, he will respect your speech and tries his best to practice those instructions.

In the above verse, when Luqman started advising his son, he ordered him not to associate with God anything and provided his order with a reason. This method qualified him to give him more moral and practical instructions.

Luqman taught him the essential factor, not associating with God because it is great injustice. This injustice would lead to a sense of anxiety and depression. Therefore, the first person who becomes the victim of injustice is the person himself. He disrespected the position of his Lord and Creator.

When you fail to recognize your faith and instinct so that they are bound to the entire existence, you have wronged the existence and its parts. Therefore, the Quran claims: (Association [with him] is great injustice).

In addition to the Quran, many other Hadiths narrated from Ahlulbait concerning associating with God.

Muhammed bin Al-Hasan Al-Shaibani narrated from Imam

Jafar Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) his interpretation of the following verse:

(Say: “O People of the Book! come to common terms between you and us: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah.” If then they turn back, say ye: “Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah’s Will)).

The Imam stated:

(Common terms here are bearing witness that there is no God but Allah, Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah, Jesus is the servant of God, and he is created like Adam).

As we understand here, standard terms are the call to monotheism and denouncing any idea that leads to polytheism.

In a book titled “Al-Dor Al-Manthoor,” another Hadith is narrated concerning the following verse:

(Say: “O People of the Book! come to common terms between you and us: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah.” If then they turn back, say ye: “Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah’s Will)).

Ibn Jarir Al-Sadi narrated that once, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) invited the delegation of Najran and stated:

(Say: “O People of the Book! come to common terms

between you and us: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah.” If then they turn back, say ye: “Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah’s Will))⁽¹⁾.

Sahih Al-Bukhari mentioned the narration of Ibn Abas from Abu Sofian when he referred to the letter of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to Heraclius, the emperor of Rome. Abu Sofian said: “The emperor read the letter of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) in which it was written the following:

(In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

From Muhammed, the Messenger of God, to Heraclius, the emperor of Rome.

Peace be upon those who follow the Guidance.

I invite you to embrace Islam. Become Muslim, so you become safe. Become Muslim so that God rewards you twice. Otherwise, you will take the burden of the sins of all the Arians.

O People of the Book! Come to common terms between you and us: We worship none but Allah and bear witness that we are Muslims).

It is narrated that the letter of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to Al-Maqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, also included the following verse:

1 (Al Emran: 64)

(Say: “O People of the Book! come to common terms between you and us: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah.” If then they turn back, say ye: “Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah’s Will)).

Al-Dor Al-Manthoor narrates from Ibn Abas that the letter of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to the unbelievers included the following:

(Come to common terms as between us and you: That we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah.” If then they turn back, say ye: “Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to Allah’s Will)).

Thus, we understand that the common terms are related to monotheism and denouncing any other call to polytheism.

The letters of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) sent to the kings and emperors of Rome, Persia, and Egypt were not particular. They represented a universal call to anyone who goes astray, including the polytheists of his time who recognized God but associated with Him other gods.

Poofs of God’s Existence

First: The cosmic system and belief in God:

The cosmic system in the light of reasoning.

The cosmic system in the light of experimental sciences.

The cosmic system in the light of the Quran.

Coincidence and its problems.

Second: Existence and belief in God:

Existence proved by consciousness leads to faith in God.

The first issue: who created God?

The second issue: who saw God?

First: The Cosmic System and Belief in God

The Cosmic System in the Light of Reasoning

The universe follows a precise system toward a definite goal in an organized and arrayed manner. The question here is, who created this unique system? The sky is full of stars, planets, and moons. They all follow an exact rule. The earth and its seas, rivers, mountains, deserts, valleys, plants, animals, and gases follow a balanced system.

The plants, long trees, grasses, deep roots, tree legs, and their peels, their leaves and their inside factories which accomplish complex missions, their complex and strange flowers, their various colors, their wondrous odors which may differ according to the environment, their fruits of eclectic tastes and colors which are watered from the same source, they all follow a precise wise system.

As for animals, there are predators, domesticated birds which fly high in the sky, others that dive deep in the water, those which crawl on the ground, walk on their legs, those with hoofs, claws, unguis, and those animals with the feather, hair, wool, fur, shell, and the honey bees in their kingdoms, ants in their empires and their organizations, grows, population, emigration, defense mechanisms, food storage, they all follow a defined system toward a goal.

All the creatures, from the most sublime of them, the human, to the lowest ones, are born, grow, reproduce, and live in this world with other creatures in an arrayed manner.

This is apparent to any person who has a sober mind.

The question is, who created all these creatures so perfectly? Who mastered their creation, movement, life, and goals? Who guides them all?

It is God, the Lord of the worlds.

The Cosmic System in the Light of Experimental Sciences:

If we deeply investigate chemical and physical phenomena, the physiology of living creatures and their biological roles, and other fields of science in this vast universe, our minds would become numb. As we open a new gate of knowledge, we will recognize how ignorant we are. We would discover millions and millions of secrets in this unlimited universe.

One of the simplest examples of the existence of the Creator is the precision of the sun's light and heat that reaches the earth. We may also refer to the accuracy of the percentage of oxygen and other gases in the air, material, plants, animals, and their circle of life, including birth, death, decay, breathing, feeding, and the bacteria in the air and the dirt and their role in fermentation and disintegration.

We cannot forget the high percentage of salt in the seas and oceans, the role it plays in maintaining the life of water creatures, the rate of minerals in the blood, earth, fruits, water, and their role in the survival of all species.

We cannot forget the rate of glandular secretions in the human body, blood, flesh, bones, and digestive.

The same applies to the role of white and red blood cells, hemoglobin, and other blood components in transporting food and energy to all body parts and their role in defending the body against diseases, wounds, and other issues.

The quick transfer of information carried out by the nervous system is miraculous. The role of the gray layer in the brain and the brain region in it, the brain cavities, the structure of the skull and related nerves, the fall of the egg into the mother's womb, the way the male sperm seeks to fertilize it, the roles of the fetus's growth, the three protective membranes surrounding it to prevent heat, sound, and light, the miraculous method of the birth of the fetus and the composition of milk from its inception until its weaning, the abundance of spare fibers, the perishable veins and arteries, and the scarcity of what is not perishable in the human body, these all signify something.

In summary, one may author millions of huge encyclopedic books on what science has discovered concerning the precision of this universe and its living creatures. Yet, science can't include everything. The more science progresses, the more we recognize God's greatness and discover His existence.

Thousands of specialized scholars in different fields, like Descartes, Isaac Newton, Herzen, and others, have confessed as a conclusion of their studies and investigations that this universe must have a Wise Creator.

The Cosmic System in the Light of The Quran:

The Holy Quran invites us to use our minds and think about our bodies and their complex factories. God states in the chapter of Tareq, verse 5:

(So let man observe from what he was created).

The Quran also invites us to observe nature, the successive movements of night and day, orbiting of the solar system, rainfall, the direction of the clouds, the role of mountains in stabilizing the ground from collapsing, the movement of the ships in seas, and the inability of Man. We are required to observe the creation of Man, who is superior to all other animals. He cannot defend his dignity before the humblest of all creatures. The Quran states in Hajj / 73:

(And if the fly should steal away from them a [tiny] thing, they could not recover it from him. Weak are the pursuer and pursued).

After all these teachings, the Quran invites us to think and contemplate this world so we may reach the truth of God's existence. God states in Araf / 184:

(Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth and all that Allah created?)

God also states in Al Emran/190:

(Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding).

God also states in Fater/27:

(Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and We produce fruits of varying colors? And in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and [some] extremely black. And among people and moving creatures and grazing livestock are various colors similarly. Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who know. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Forgiving).

The Issue of Coincidence:

An ignorant may claim that the existence of this universe is only a coincidence. There is no creator behind these cosmic rules. The man was created by chance: his eyes, ears, nose, lungs, and other organs were formed.

It is a coincidence that located the eyebrow above the eyes to prevent direct light from entering the eye. Eye cilia, eyeballs, fluids of the eye, pupil, and nerves are all created by coincidence.

All the factories and organs of the body are created by chance. All other creatures and their body parts are also formed by chance.

Discussing the Idea of Coincidence

First, we must ask about the meaning of coincidence. Scholars proved that it has no meaning. Everything in this universe, no matter how big or small, is under the effect of a precise system of calculations.

We must ask the following question: is it logical to claim that the satellites launched by chance and are orbiting around the earth by chance and come back to the planet by chance? Can the radars be created by chance, or can the computers function without any calculations or engineering? If these dead devices cannot perform by themselves, it is also impossible for living organisms to work by chance.

Another example in this regard is that if we write thousands of the letter 'a' and 'b' and other alphabets and put them in a pocket, then throw them millions of times on the ground, can they, by any chance, form an epic, or a scientific study, or a political article, or a dramatic story? This would be a vain and sarcastic attempt. The same applies to the idea of chance and coincidence.

Second: Existence and Belief in God

Proved Existence by Instinct Leads to Belief in God

Many ideas are left inside the instinct. They are unchangeable, and only those suspicious ignorant, disbelieving people denounce them.

These instinctual issues are best to be presented in the form of questioning:

1- I did not exist, but now, I live by feeling and emotion.

(This applies to all humans, including our father, Adam).

2- Every creation has a creator, and every possible being needs another (because existence out of nothing is impossible).

3- I did not create myself.

(If I existed first, I did not need to be born again. And if I were the creator of myself, there would be a limitless circle of creations, which is impossible again).

4- The being that created me cannot be like me: it cannot require food, beverages, place, time, air, heat, and other necessary elements to survive. Otherwise, it would need another being that provides for it, and the other needs another, and thus, there is an endless chain of providers. This is, again, impossible.

5- I have lived in feeling and emotion.

Because the one who lacks something cannot give it to

others, inanimate, lifeless materials cannot provide me with life since they are not alive.

Therefore, I must have a creator who grants me life and does not need anyone or anything else. He must have a goal and control everything. He is superior to everything. He is God, the Lord of the worlds.

Who Created God?

One might ask, then, who is the creator of God? The answer, in short, is the following:

1- First, we have proved that all beings must have a creator. They cannot be without the first Creator, Who does not need anything or anyone else. In other words, he does not require any other creator. He exists by Himself (He begetteth not, nor is He begotten). Otherwise, the chain of creators would never end, which is also impossible. In other words, existence cannot be created by itself. It is a universal fact. The question is, who made these living creatures?

Someone may say: that the matter created them. Here, we ask: then, who made the matter? There are two answers: you may say that the issue is eternal without any starting point or creator and does not need anything else. Then, why would you deny our claim that the Creator of this universe, God, is eternal without any starting point or creator?

The other answer is that another matter created the matter before it, and another creator also created it, and thus continues the chains of creators. This unlimited number of creators is also invalid reasoning.

The Reason This Deduction is Invalid

If we admit the endless chain of creators, the result would be that all matters need others to survive. Therefore, they cannot exist without the interference of others. We must note that existence is there a priori. We see all living creatures, solar systems, and everything else in this universe. The question is, how do they exist? Thus, they must have a creator who does not need others. He is God the Lord of the worlds, as clarified in the Quran in Hadid/3:

(He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant and the Intimate, and He is, of all things, Knowing).

2- Second: if God had a creator, he would not become a God. He would become like any other creature who needs a creator. Being a divinity means being wealthy and perfect. The God in Whom we believe is the Creator of everything. He is independent and does not need anything or anyone else.

Who Saw God?

Why can't we see God?

Once, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was asked: "Have you ever seen your Lord?". The Imam replied:

(How can I worship a Lord whom I haven't seen?)

The Imam means he saw God with his insight. The fingerprints of God are everywhere. They witness that God exists. Everything in this universe, including the goal, order, precision, will, wisdom, strength, and all other phenomena,

are apparent and signify the existence of God.

God can neither be seen by eyes nor grasped by our imagination because the observable world or fantasy realm is only a limited world. They are not complete, while God is above everything and more extraordinary than anything. We believe that things exist, and our eyes cannot see them. We can only feel them, like electricity and gravity. Sometimes, we do not accept our eyes when we see something, like a mirage, the connection of the sky with the earth, the rotation and movement of trees and mountains when we move by a vehicle, the small size of the sun, and other deceiving scenes. In other words, not every observable thing is genuine, and not those things we do not see are untrue.

The Creed

The Islamic creed consists of the following elements:

1- Monotheism: It means that God is One, and He is the One Who created this entire universe, including the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, humans, and animals.

Monotheism is constituted of the following elements:

- 1- Belief in God.
- 2- Belief in His Oneness.
- 3- Belief in His perfection.

Monotheism

Existence OnenessPerfection

The Existence of God: Among the most critical proofs of the existence of God are the following:

1- Sense of Causation: When we see the structure of a school, we might ask the following question: did the school exist by itself? Surely it cannot build itself by itself. There were a group of workers and engineers who created it. We cannot convince ourselves that the school was built by itself because, by instinct, we know that nothing may come into existence without a creator. This applies to all other creatures in this universe. When we think about this principle deeply, we will recognize that there is a creator for this universe, Who is God. Thus, this sense that informs us about the impossibility of the existence of things without a creator is called 'the sense of causality.'

In short, the sense of causality means the instinctual acknowledgment that there must be a creator for everything in this universe.

There are a set of Quranic verses that support this idea:

1- (If indeed thou ask them who it is that created the heavens and the earth, they would be sure to say, “Allah”)⁽¹⁾.

In this verse, God addresses the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and tells him that if you ask people the following question:

“Who created the sky and the earth?”

They would answer you: “God.”

This springs from their sense of causality because the sky and the earth are also created, so they need a creator.

2- (Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]?)⁽²⁾

God addresses the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and asks him: “are people created without a creator? Or have people created themselves?”. The answer is that they cannot exist without a creator and have not created themselves alone. God created them all, and this deduction springs from the sense of causality. People need a creator to exist.

2- The Instinct of Belief: Let us imagine that we all are on a journey in the middle of the sea once a storm strikes us. Long heavy waves start shaking the ship harshly up and down, left and right. We are about to sink and die. In this horrible situation, we feel we are holding to a metaphysical power, and

1- Luqman: 25, Zumar: 38.

2- Tur: 35

we are sure it is the most powerful one. It is the only source of salvation. We regain our belief and touch our pure instinct at this specific moment. This instinct leads us to acknowledge the existence of an unseen power beyond any measurement's limit. This power is God.

Once, Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) was asked about God. He replied:

(Have you ever been on a ship?)

The man said: Yes

The Imam stated: Did it wreck, and there was no place to which you may resort, and you were sure that even swimming could not rescue you?

He said: Indeed.

The Imam stated: Did your heart hover around something that would rescue you?

He said: Yes.

The Imam replied: That thing is God, Who is capable of saving the crushed person at hopeless moments and rescuing the one who has no solution).

In short, the instinct of religiosity is a psychological motive that urges us to believe in God and his abilities when we are trapped in trouble, and only God can rescue us.

Many Quranic verses prove the existence of God through the instinct of religiosity, like the following one:

(It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a storm wind and the

waves come upon them from everywhere and they assume that they are surrounded, supplicating Allah, sincere to Him in religion, “If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful”⁽¹⁾.

3-The Integrity of the Cosmic System: When we see the phenomenon of rain and the way sea water turns into vapor, then comes back to the sea, we would ask the following question:

Who gave this heat to the sun in a way that turns water into vapor? The answer would be:

There is a creator who provided these effects to the sun and water. He is God.

We may also observe the way birds carry water and food and provide for their chicks, and also the way it protects them from predators; we would ask ourselves:

Who taught these birds compassion or engineering to build a nest in such an organized way?

A creator must entrust the birds with such kindness and feeling. He is the Lord God. As for the camels, they can survive for days without water or food. They store energy in their humps. We may ask:

From where did they get the hump? Who provided them with the ability to store energy in such a manner? The answer would be the following:

1- Younis: 22

Camels must have a creator who knows everything about their needs. He created the hump and gave it such a mission. The creator is God.

As for the planets hovering around in space, including the moon, the earth, and Mars. We may also ask the following question:

How can these planets with such huge masses swim in space without falling over each other? The answer would be the following:

They must have a creator who organized them in an orderly manner. That creator is God.

In short, the integrity of the cosmic system is the artistic creativity that we see in the cosmos, which signifies the existence of God and His unlimited power.

Several Quranic verses prove the existence of God through the method of the integrity of the cosmic system, as the following:

1- (Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth are signs for a people who use reason)⁽¹⁾.

2- (Then do they not look at the camels - how they are created?)(¹)

3- (He who gave each thing its form and then guided [it])(²).

This last verse refers to the inborn instinct of the animals by which they protect their lives and provide for their chicks.

Elements of Belief in God

- 1- Monotheism
- 2- Features of God
- 3- Names of God

1- Monotheism:

Meaning of Monotheism: It is the belief that the God of this universe is one, and He is Allah. He does not have any partner or equal in this universe.

The Proof: The proofs of monotheism are many, including the universe's precision. It shows that its Creator is of great perfection and does not need any partner. If God had a partner, they would be either equal in thinking or unequal. If they are similar in all their actions and wills, one of them would not need the presence of the other because of their independence. If they were different, the entire universe would go corrupt. For example, one of the gods would create something, and the other does not agree. They would never

1- Gashia: 17

2- Taha: 50

come into common consent because they have different goals. Their disagreement would corrupt the order of this world.

The Quran guides us to monotheism:

God mentions in the Quran in Naml/64:

(Is He [not best] who begins creation and then repeats it, and who provides for you from the heaven and earth? Is there a deity with Allah? Say, “Produce your proof if you should be truthful”).

In Qasas/88, He also mentions:

(And call not, besides Allah, on another god. There is no god but He. Everything (that exists) will perish except His Face. To Him belongs the Command, and to Him will ye (all) be brought back).

In Momenoon/91, God states:

(Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [If there had been], then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome others. Exalted is Allah above what they describe [concerning Him]).

In Anbia/22, God states:

(Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe).

In Ahqaf/4, God states:

(Say: “Do ye see what it is ye invoke besides Allah? Show me what it is they have created on earth, or have they a

share in the heavens bring me a book (revealed) before this, or any remnant of knowledge (ye may have), if ye are telling the truth!).

Sayings of Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) on Monotheism:

Within the same context, Imam Ali told his son Imam Hasan (peace be upon them) a way to educate all other Muslims:

(Know my son that if God had a partner, his messengers would come, and you would see the effect of his kingdom and the impact of his actions and features. Indeed, God is One, as He described Himself).

Proofs of the Oneness of God:

There are many proofs of the oneness of God, including the following points:

1- The Order of the Cosmic System: when we observe the solar system, we would see the sun in the center and all other planets revolving around it. There is ample space between each planet. As for atoms, they consist of positive electric named protons, while all particles are bound to the nucleus, and negatives are called electrons. They revolve around the nucleus at the speed of 2000 kps. It is the fastest speed ever known. There is such an ample space between the nucleus and electrons.

After some calculations, specialists found that the distance between the electrons and the nucleus is equal to the length of the earth to the sun.

The weight of the nucleus consists of %99,9 of the atomic weight, and it is equal in percentage to the weight of the sun, which consists %99,9 of the solar weight.

Thus, we find that every atom is similar to the solar system in space and weight.

This similarity between these creations shows that they have one creator. If God had any partner, they would disagree on many things, which would be evident in the design.

The summary is that the order of the cosmic system is apparent in all creation, which shows that there is only one creator.

Another Quranic verse that shows that God is one through the method of the order of the cosmic system is the following:

1-(You do not see any inconsistency in the creation of the Most Merciful. So return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks?)(¹)

Interpretation: You cannot find any disorder in the cosmic system. You may keep investigating this field. You cannot diagnose any troubles in the foundations because the creator of the universe is one, Who is the Lord God.

2-(Had there been within the heavens and earth gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined).

If there were any god other than Allah, there would be a conflicting disorder in the system of this universe and the creation of all species. The integrity of existence shows that there is only one creator, Allah.

1- Mulk/3

1- The Oneness of Effects: When two principals are in one school, many problems will occur in the school's management because they cannot agree on one opinion. The disorder would affect the quality of education in the school. The same would apply to the direction of a town. When there are two mayors, they are recognized for the effect of their work. For example, one of the mayors is identified from a hospital he built, and the other from paving the streets, lighting the town, and so on.

However, if one principal manages the school, we would not see the effect of his work and orders, and the results and projects of the town refer to the management of only one mayor.

When we think of the universe, we recognize that God has no partner when we see that no work refers to anyone else but God. Otherwise, we would discover other gods if they had created something.

As long as there are no creatures that other gods create, we would conclude that God is One and He has no partner.

We may conclude that the oneness of effects means that all creatures signify that there is only one creator, God.

Many Quranic verses refer to this meaning, as in the following:

1- (No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others! Glory to Allah. (He is free) from the (sort of) things they attribute to Him!) Mumenoon/91

Interpretation: God neither has a son nor a partner. If God has any other partner, we could observe his creation. God is exalted from having any partner.

2-Features of God:

Perfection of God: It is the belief that God is featured with all excellent characteristics. The proof is that these characteristics are present in His creation. If God lacks them, He cannot grant them to his creation. For example, if God was dead, He could not give life to humans. Thus, God is alive when we see that all species are actual.

The following are some of his characteristics:

1- The Ever-Living One: **(Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence)**. Baqara/255

2- The All-Knowing: **(And Allah comprehends all things in His) Knowledge**. Talaq/12

3- The All-Powerful: **(Allah has power over all things)**. Baqara/20

4- The Just: **(Allah is never unjust in the slightest degree)**. Nisa/40

5- The independence of all things: **(Indeed, Allah is free from the world's needs)**. Ankaboot/6

6- The Most Subtle One: **(Allah is Subtle with His servants)**. Shora/19

Features of Perfection

God exists by Himself. He is featured with all excellent characteristics. He is featured with the following:

1- He is Capable and Free to Choose:

He is capable of doing anything. Nothing may stop him in this universe. Otherwise, God would be unable, a feature that does not fit God. This meaning is clear in Haj/6:

(This is so because Allah is the Reality: He gives life to the dead and has power over all things).

2- The All-Knowing:

It means that God is knowledgeable of everything before and after it happens. Nothing can hide from him, not even sparks of thoughts, fantasies, and imaginations. Otherwise, it is a form of ignorance, a drawback that should not be part of God's features.

God states in Saba/2:

(He knows what penetrates the earth, what emerges from it, what descends from heaven, and what ascends therein. And He is the Merciful, the Forgiving).

God states in Tagabon/3:

(He knows what is within the heavens and earth and what you conceal and declare. And Allah knows of that within the breasts).

God states in Saba/3:

(From Whom is not hidden the least little atom in the

heavens or on earth: Nor is there anything less than that, or more extraordinary, but is in the Record Perspicuous).

3- The Ever-Living One:

It means God is the granter of life to all creatures, humans, and plants. He must also be alive. This does not mean He has a body that is alive or moves, gets old, and finally dies. These features need time and space. God states in Gafer/65:

(He is the Ever-Living; there is no deity except Him, so call upon Him, [being] sincere to Him in religion. [All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds).

4- The Willing:

God has two wills: cosmic and legislative. By His heavenly will, He created this universe and managed it. Whatever God wills, it is realized. His choices are for people's good because He never harms his creatures. Nothing is beyond the capability of God. God states in Yaseen/82:

(His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, "Be," and it is).

With His legislative will, God manages people's worldly and afterlife affairs. He states in Shora/13:

(He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein).

God put the love of belief in people's hearts and the hatred of disbelief, immorality, and sin in their hearts. He clarified the

path to His will so that they enjoy a happy life under the shade of divine blessing and Islamic virtues.

5- The Most Perceiving One:

It means that God perceives everything without the need for sense. If He had the sense of hearing and seeing, He would need other means; thus, He would not be God. He is knowledgeable of all auditory and visual elements. Nothing can hide from His knowledge. He states in Anam/103:

(Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision; He is the Subtle, the Acquainted).

6- The Speaking One:

It means that God can create speech as part of His creation. He started speech through a tree to speak to Moses (this is one of his most essential miracles). Speaking does not mean that He has speech organs, like the tongue. These organs are only for the limited species, while God is the Most Independent One. He is exalted from the need of any means. God states in Kahf/109:

(Say, “If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement”).

God also states in Luqman/27:

(And if whatever trees upon the earth were pens and the sea [was ink], replenished after that by seven [more] seas, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise).

7- The Honest:

It means that God is honest in everything He legislates for people. He also keeps His promise. He cannot lie because it is a vice, and God is exalted from any form of evil. He states:

(And We have come to you with truth, and indeed, We are truthful).

He also states in Anam/146:

([By] that We repaid them for their injustice. And indeed, We are truthful).

8- Non-Temporal, Pre-Eternal, The Abiding, The Everlasting:

It means that He existed before everything. No cause ever preceded Him. He abides without the dominance of nothingness because He is the reason for His existence. God states in Hadid/3:

(He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant and the Intimate, and He is, of all things, Knowing).

Features of Integrity:

God is integral to any vicious quality:

1- He is not compound because any compound creature needs other parts, while God is complete by Himself.

2- He has no partner; otherwise, the entire universe would be corrupt.

3- He is independent, and everything else needs Him. Otherwise, He would not be God.

4- He is not limited. Otherwise, He would need space, and God does not need anything. He dominates all areas, places, and the universe.

5- He is not a body because the body is limited, and God is unlimited.

6- The vision cannot grasp him because only the visible can be seen and must be located in a place. All these terms can fit the essence of God, neither in this world nor in the afterlife. This meaning is evident in the verse in which God addresses Moses:

(You shall not see Me, but look at the mountain). Araf/143

7- No Place is Beyond His Control: Otherwise, God would become limited and cannot dominate that specific place. He is (The light of Heavens and the earth):

(He is the First without a beginning and the Last without an end).

The Justice of God:

God is integral from doing any vice, like oppression and injustice. God never wrongs anyone and does not instruct doing injustice. Oppression is done for reasons, including the need for something, ignorance, inability, or absurdity. We know that God is integral to any of these characteristics. God states in Nahl/90:

(Allah commands justice, the doing of sound, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition).

God also states in Younis/44:

(Indeed, Allah does not wrong the people at all, but it is the people who are wronging themselves).

He also states in Al Emran/57:

(And God does not love the oppressors).

The Summary of Characteristics:

God is beyond description. He does not resemble anything. Nothing is beyond His control. Nothing can recognize His essence. He is the Most Just, the Wisest, the Most Knowledgeable, and the Most Powerful.

The features that our mind describes are those of creatures, whereas the characteristics of God are those of the Creator. For example, the elements of a shirt are not like those of its

tailor, or the features of a chair are not like that of its carpenter. He states in Shora/11:

(There is nothing like unto Him; He is the Hearing, the Seeing).

3- The Names of God:

God has blessed good names, including the following:

(He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise). Hashr/22-24

The All-Holy: He is pure from any form of deformity or lack.

The Peace: He is the provider of peace to His creation.

The Saver: He keeps His promises. He also protects His creatures when they abide by His instructions.

The Guardian: He is the dominant and protector of His creation.

The Mighty: He is the Dominant, the Victorious, the Glorious.

The Sovereign: He executes His will.

The Justly Proud: He is exalted above all the features of His creation. He is the owner of the perfect features.

The Creator: He is the Creator, the Molder, without any fatigue, without the need for anything.

The Results of Believing in God

1-Effect of Monotheism on Thoughts

2-Effect of Monotheism on Behavior

a. Observation of God

b. Love of God

1. Effect of Monotheism on Thoughts

Whoever believes that the creator of this universe, life, and humanity is God, and He is the One God, Who controls all affairs:

1-When he needs help, he resorts to God:
(It is Allah (alone) Whose help can be sought).

2-When he needs something, he will ask God:
(Allah the Eternal, the Absolute).

3-When he wants to improve his quality of life, he asks God: **(Allah is the All-Provider).**

4-When difficulties befall him, he asks God for help:
(Pray to Me, and I shall respond).

5-When he is blessed, he thanks God: **(And God loves those who are thankful).**

6-When he is in a holy battle, he tolerates the conditions for the sake of God: **(And God is with those who are patient).**

7-When he does something good, he asks God for a reward: **(And God has the best rewards).**

8-If he wants to survive, he resorts to God: **(Escape to God).**

2- Effect of Monotheism on Behavior:

a. Observation of God: Whoever surrenders to God in everything feels that God is in his heart, and He is observing his actions. This is clear in Ghafer/19:

(He knows which deceives the eyes and what the breasts conceal).

In this case, he is eager to avoid any situation that opposes the will of God, whether in private or in public, because God is with us everywhere.

b. Love of God: The belief in God and submitting to His will is a sign of the love of God. We are blessed with a great gift, which is monotheism. A believer loves God more than anything in this world. God states in Baqara/165:

(But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah).

The first degree of love is obedience in everything. You

become with God when you love God, and God will stand with you. You will live honored in this world and happy in the afterlife in the everlasting paradise. Once, a man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) about the time of Judgement Day. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) replied:

(What have you prepared for it?)

The man said: “The love of God and His Messenger. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(You are with the one you love).

Therefore, anyone who truly loves God, His Messenger, and the Purified Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) and manifests this love in his thoughts and actions will be in paradise. God states in Al Emran/193-194:

(Our Lord, indeed we have heard a caller calling to faith, [saying], ‘Believe in your Lord,’ and we have believed. Our Lord, so forgive us our sins and remove from us our misdeeds and cause us to die with the righteous. Our Lord, grant us what You promised us through Your messengers, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, You do not fail in [Your] promise.”)

1- The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(Whoever utters: There is no God but Allah, a tree shall be planted for him in paradise from red ruby. Its fruits are in white musk, sweeter than honey, whiter than snow, and better smelling than musk).

2- The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also stated:

(The best worship is saying: “There is no God but Allah”).

3- The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(The best worship is asking God for forgiveness, as stated in the Quran: “Know, therefore, that there is no god but Allah, and ask forgiveness for thy fault” Muhammed/19).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) once stated:

(Whoever prays the morning prayer and immediately repeats ten times: “There is no God but Allah, All the possessions are His. To Him go all the gratitude. He resurrects, ends his life, is All-Alive, and never dies. At His hand lies all the virtues, and He is capable of doing anything”. And repeats the same thing at dusk, he will meet God with no similar deed among all creatures unless another has performed the same).

5- Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) stated:

(There is no reward equals bearing the witness that there is no God but Allah, and that there is no equal to God and there is no associate for Him in His affairs).

6- He also stated:

(Whoever utters: “I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and He has no associates, and I bear witness that Muhammed is His servant and Messenger,” a million reward will be registered for him).

7- Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) stated:

(The price of Paradise is uttering: “There is no God but Allah, and Allah is the Greatest).

8- Imam Sadeq narrated from his forefathers (peace be upon them):

(Gabriel told the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household): “Blessed are those in your nation who utter: “There is no God but Allah, He is the One, He is the One, He is the One).

9- He also stated:

(Whoever repeats ten times before the sunrise and sunset: “There is no God but Allah, He is the One with no associates; He owns all the possessions; to Him, all the Kingdom and gratitude is attributed; He resurrects from death and ends life, and He is the All-Alive Who never dies; at His Hand lies all the virtues; He is capable of doing anything” all his sins at that day shall be forgiven).

10- He also stated:

(Whoever repeats this utterance ten times every day: “I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, He is the One with no associates; He is the One Only Everlasting God, Who has no wife or son,” God shall write for him in his record forty-five thousand rewards, and forgive forty-five thousand sins, and raise him forty-five thousand levels).

11- He also stated:

(Whoever repeats this everyday utterance: “There is no God but Allah, truly and honestly; there is no God but Allah, devotedly and servantly; there is no God but Allah, by honest faith and belief,” God shall embrace him and shall never abandon him until He leads him to Paradise).

12- He also stated:

(Whoever bears witness honestly that there is no God but Allah, Paradise becomes obligatory for him).

With His Holy Name (Allah)

(Allah) is the divine name. It is in the hierarchy of God’s names, which He chose for Himself. He insists on reciting them and praying with them. God states:

(And to Allah belong the best names, so invoke Him by them). Araf/180

He also stated in the Quran:

(Say, “Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Merciful. Whichever [name] you call - to Him belong the best names”). Asra/110

Allah is the name of the originator of creation. It is the greatest of all names. It is the name of the Truth. The name includes all the features of beauty, glory, and perfection.

Al-Bustani mentions in his book:

Allah is the name of the originator of creation. There are

twenty sayings on the etymology of this name. The correct one is that the origin of this world is (Elah) on the Arabic measurement of (Feal). It means the worshipped. It is called (O Allah) or (Allahoma). Divinity here means being worshipped.

It is also said that the origin of this word in Arabic is (Walah), but the 'w' was changed into 'a', so it became (Elah). It means that all the creation yearns to Him for their needs. They resort to him when they are in trouble. They ask for help from Him when they are in adversity, as when a child resorts to his mother.

The name 'Allah' is only God's name, and He assigned it as His first name and then added other blessed names to it. All other names are descriptions of the original name.

'Allah' is the reference name to God. It quilts all other names and descriptions of God. Therefore, they are known as the names of 'Allah' and not 'Raheem' or 'Ghafoor.'

Since all other names are added to the original name, some poets wrote poems on the names of God, ending each line with the name 'Allah.' They sought to prove that all other names were added to the original name 'Allah.' For example:

If the names are mentioned, 'Allah' is the first.

Glorify Him and say: He is Allah.

He is the Most Merciful Who resides on His Throne.

Even though He has a thousand names, He remains Allah.

He is distinct by the name 'the Most Gracious.'

Investigate Him, He is Allah.

I resort to the name ‘the Most Knowledgeable’ because

I know what He said in this life. He is Allah.

He manages all affairs, He is ‘the Wisest.’

It proves that He is Allah.

I felt His miracles because He is

**‘The Most Generous.’ He dominates all my entities
because He is ‘Allah.’**

Abu Hamed Al-Gazali said: “Allah is the name of the One Who deserves divine descriptions. He is described as divinity. He is the owner of true existence. Any other thing or creature cannot exist independently. God is described by His other names. All their derivations make understanding more complex”.

It is said that it is a derived name, and only God is named after it.

It is also said that all other names of God can be taken as names for humans. Only the name ‘Allah’ cannot be used for naming because it is a specified name. Other names of God show a relative existence of that description in that person.

It is also said that it is a derived name. There are debates on its meaning. Some say that it is derived from (Al-Elah) or (Al-Olooha) or (Al-Oloohia). They all mean worship. As a name, they represent the worshipped.

Another opinion proposes that the name ‘Allah’ is derived

from (Alaha) which means to be wondered because all minds are wondering about the essence of God.

It is said that it is derived from (Eleh), which means resorting to him because the hearts feel safe with Him.

Others think it is derived from (Aloha) which means shelter in times of adversity. It may be derived from (Lah), transcended, and hidden.

Ibn Haitham mentions in his book: “The origin of the name ‘Allah’ is derived from ‘Elah.’ God states in the Quran: **(No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him: (if there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created)** Momenoon/91

He cannot be God unless He is worshipped. He must also be the Creator, Provider, Organizer, and Powerful. Otherwise, other creatures without these sublime features are not gods, though they are worshipped.

In my other book, In the Presence of the Chapter of Tawheed, I mentioned the interpretation of (Say “Allah is One”). It is the most important and prominent name. It is derived from the word ‘Elah’ because the creation cannot recognize His essence and nature. He is the true worshipped God.

The name ‘Allah’ is a specific name of the Lord God. As no other creature shares His features and actions, the same applies to His name. Here, we have a two-sided monotheism: in name and Named. He neither has any associate in nature nor name.

In *Monotheism*, a book by sheik Al-Sadooq, there is a Hadith narrated by Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

(‘Allah’ means the Worshipped about Whom the creation are wondering and to Whom they resort. Allah is hidden from sights, imagination, and fantasy).

In the same book, another Hadith is narrated from Imam Muhammed bin Ali Al-Baqer (peace be upon him):

(‘Allah’ means the Worshipped about Whose nature and essence people are wondering).

The name ‘Allah’ is repeated 980 times in the Holy Quran. This shows the great emphasis on this name.

‘Allah’ is the greatest of the other ninety-nine God’s names because it signifies the Entity’s essence that includes all divine features. In contrast, the different names refer to only one action or ability.

The name ‘Allah’ is the most specific one among all other names. It cannot be used for naming other humans or creatures. Other names may be borrowed for naming, like ‘Qader,’ ‘Aleem,’ or ‘Raheem.’ As for ‘Allah,’ it is the holiest and most remarkable of all names.

Other names of God are known as the ‘Best Names.’ They are added to God as His descriptions, including: “The Most Patient (Saboor), The Most Praised (Shakoor), The All-Powerful (Jabar).” We cannot say that ‘Allah’ is the name of Saboor, Shakoor, or Jabar. This name does not need any description to be recognized. It stands by itself.

A wise scholar once stated: “The descriptive names of

God are like lights that erupted from the name 'Allah.' This name is the originator of all other names. It is His first name. It is the Word that Adam learned, and through it, he learned everything else".

Therefore, one is not officially Muslim unless he bears witness to monotheism, in which he must utter the greatest of names, 'Allah.' This name is mentioned many times in the Holy Quran (985). The following verses are some examples:

(In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious). This verse starts with all the chapters of the Holy Quran.

(Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence). Baqara/255.

(Allah - there is no deity except Him. He will surely assemble you for [account on] the Day of Resurrection, about which there is no doubt. And who is more truthful than Allah in the statement). Nisa/87

(Allah knows what every female carries and what the wombs lose [prematurely] or exceed. And everything with Him is by due measure). Raad/8

(Allah! There is no god but He! To Him belong the most Beautiful Names). Taha/9

(Allah - there is no deity except Him, Lord of the Great Throne). NamI/26

(Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs). Zomar/62

(Allah. There is no god but He, and on Allah, let the Believers put their trust). Tagabon/13

These are some examples of verses that mention the name 'Allah.'

In Quran, there are many verses in which we may believe they include 'The Greatest of Names,' including the following:

(But if they turn away, [O Muhammad], say, "Sufficient for me is Allah; there is no deity except Him. On Him, I have relied, and He is the Lord of the Great Throne"). Tawba/129

(Say, "O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will). Al Emran/26

(Say, "Allah begins creation and then repeats it, so how are you deluded?"). Yunis/34

(Say, "Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the One, the Prevailing"). Raad/16

(Say, "Allah [alone] do I worship, sincere to Him in my religion"). Zomar/14

(Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him). Ekhlas/1-4

The name 'Allah' is unique in many features which cannot be found in other names of God:

1- First Feature:

Morphologically, if you remove the letter 'A' from the name, you are left with 'Lilah' which is a specific name of God, as in the following verses:

(And to Allah belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth). Fath/4

(And to Allah belongs the depositories of the heavens and the earth). Munafeqoon/7

If we remove the letter 'L' from the remaining word, we are left with 'Lahu,' as in the following verses:

(To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth). Shora/12

(To Him belongs dominion and to Him belongs [all] praise). Tagabon/1

If we remove the remaining 'L,' we are left with 'Howa' (He), as in the following verse:

(Say "He is Allah the One"). Ekhlash/1

(He is the Ever-Living; there is no deity except Him). Ghafer/65

This topic was discussed in detail in the other book, In the Presence of the Chapter of Tawheed. The features mentioned above are found only in the name 'Allah' rather than other names.

2- Second Feature:

From a semantic perspective, there is uniqueness in the meaning of this name. When you call God 'Rahman' (the Most Gracious), you only describe Him with grace. When you call him 'Aleem' (The All-Knowing), you tell Him with knowledge only. But when you call Him "O Allah," you have summoned all His descriptions and features. Thus, the name 'Allah' includes meanings that are not present in other holy names of God.

3- Third Feature:

The statement of bearing witness that there is no God but Allah (the statement according to which an unbeliever becomes Muslim) did not get this effect until it included the name of God. For example, if the unbeliever says: "I bear witness that there is no God but Rahman, Raheem, Malek, and Qodoos), he is still an unbeliever.

Yet, if he utters: "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah," he moves from disbelief into Islam. This is the unique feature of this holy name.

The Name 'Allah' in Hadiths and Narrations

In the Hadiths of the Prophet and Ahlulbait, we find a distinct emphasis on this holy name. In a Hadith narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), he stated:

(The statement of belief is 'there is no God but Allah').

This statement is also called 'the word of devotion.' In

other words, it means there is no worshipped God but Allah. In this regard, God states in the Quran:

(And your God is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him). Baqara/163.

His Almighty also states:

(Indeed, Allah is the One God). Nisa/171

He also states:

(And there is no god but the One God). Maida/73

It is also called the word of charity, justice, the good word, and the enduring word. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(The best thing I and the previous prophets ever announced is the statement of ‘There is no God but Allah’; and the best statement is ‘There is no God but Allah’).

You are Allah

My God: when my thoughts soar to the sky where the stars scatter, and when the sight falls short of grasping the absolute darkness of the horizons, and when my soul submits to the awe of deep dominant silence, You shine from among these horizons; Your voice is heard from among that silence; Your greatness holds and saves the submitting soul of mine. That is when the dark sky seems smiling and shining, and silence turns into echoing whispers from all sides, and the falling soul rise and calls: “You are, You are Allah.”

My God: when a contemplating lonely person is standing at the shore of a sea and starts looking at the deep horizon of the blue sky mixed with the blue water of the sea, where the blazing sun slides slowly into the water like a piece of shining gold to hide in the unlimited salty deep dark water, where the ships with their white canvases mixed with the reddish color of the horizon, like a bird swimming in bliss, they give me the sense of greatness from beyond, he thinks of you only. It provides a sense of serenity, like the feeling of sailing ships in calm waters under the care of the Eternal God. His greatness is represented in a serene scene. It beats the heart with the tone of "You are Allah."

My God: when the ship sails away in a fierce dark sea, and storms start striking it, winds and clouds start soaring in the sky, the face of heaven frowns, thunders strike successively, darkness above the darkness, high waves overshadow the ship, and the crew did whatever they could, the ship is about to sink into darkness and oblivion, death is pushing the door of life by force, that is the moment when Your Light tears the darkness and fear, Your Mercy holds the hearts and minds, and Your Rope of salvation reaches to the hands, that is the moment when the heart and tongue keep repeating: "You are, You are Allah."

My God: when sickness holds tight to my body and soul, when the care of physicians and loved ones become futile, when I fall asleep in the crowd of hopes and prayers, sliding into hopelessness and despair, that is the moment when Your Mightiness shows its presence in lost and desperate hearts; that is the moment when You say: "I have decided" while

everyone says: "It is Your Will, You are, You are Allah."

My God: when I become a castaway, detached from this world, finding all the possessions slipping away from my hands, all my hopes are sinking into oblivion, all my desires deceitful, all my joys vanishing away, that is the moment when I find out that I do not need money or position because I am paralyzed by false hope and desires. That is when I recognize that nothing may fill my heart by Your name: "You are, You are Allah."

My God: when I see a flourishing flower, smiling eyes, and happy faces, glad souls while seeing the beauty of the dawn, the singing of the birds, and when I see relieved hearts filled with Your Light, that is the moment when I call: "You are, You are Allah."

My God: my soul feels the greatness of Your Presence, Mercy, Power, Judgement, Eternity, Beauty, Glory, Providing, Grace, Lordliness, Might, Immortality, and Sublimity, while I call: "You are, You are Allah."

The caller of the name 'Allah' must be sunk in the sea of the love of God. His heart must become a house of God alone; his work and efforts must be devoted to God. He must not hope for beauty from anyone rather than God. He must not fear anyone but God because he has recognized that He is the only trustworthy living Entity, and anything else is destined to perish. The Almighty states in the Quran:

(Everything (that exists) will perish except His Face).
Qasas/88

Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(The most direct line of poetry in Arabic is the one indicated by Labid: ‘Indeed everything except Allah is null.’)

We should also remember the statement of God:

(Say, “Allah [revealed it].” Then leave them in their [empty] discourse, amusing). Anam/91

Thus, we must always call Allah’s name and hold it in our hearts. We should feel and carry it in all conditions, thoughts, and practices. This name must be the standard of living.

Here, let us read a collection of holy Hadiths in this regard:

It is narrated from Ibn Abas that he said: “Once, a man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to teach him the strange parts of knowledge. The Prophet replied:

(Have you ever learned the head of knowledge, and now you are asking about the unknown parts of it?)

The man said: And what is the head of knowledge?

The Prophet stated: **(Knowing God as He deserves).**

He added: **(You should know Him without any identical, resemblance, or equal. He is the One, the Eternal, the Revealed, the Hidden, the First, the Last. He does not have any equals. That is knowing God as He deserves)”.**

Once, a man from Khawarij asked Imam Baqer (peace be upon him): “Abu Jafar, what do you worship?” The Imam replied:

(Allah).

The man said: "Have you ever seen Him?" The Imam stated:

(The eyes cannot see Him by vision, but the hearts feel Him by faith. He cannot be recognized by measurement; He can never be felt by sense; He does not resemble people; He is described by verse and identified by signs; He never oppresses in His Kingdom; He is Allah, and there is no God but Him).

It is narrated that the man left the place while whispering: "God is most knowing of where He places His message."

Once, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was asked: "How did you recognize your Lord?" He replied:

(By annulling the fixed decisions and endeavors. When I intended to do something, I changed my mind; when I decided on something, destiny opposed my decision; thus, I recognized that someone else is the organizer of affairs).

He was also asked: "How do you thank God for His blessings?". He replied:

(I saw how He diverted a trial from me to another person; that was when I recognized what a great bliss He provided to me, so I thanked him).

He was again asked: "Why do you love meeting Him?". He stated:

(When I recognized that He chose the creed of His angels, Messengers, and prophets, I concluded that since He dignified me, He shall never forget me. Thus, I loved meeting Him).

Once, a man asked Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him): “Our beloved son of the Prophet, show me, God, where is He? Many people debated with me and confused me”.

(Have you ever been on a ship?)

“Yes,” the man said.

(The Imam stated: Did it wreck, and there was no place to which you may resort, and you were sure that even swimming could not rescue you?)

He said: **Indeed.**

The Imam stated: **Did your heart hover around something that would rescue you?**

He said: **Yes.**

The Imam replied: That thing is God, Who is capable of saving the crushed person at hopeless moments and rescuing the one who has no solution).

In another narration, he also stated:

(If people knew the grace of knowing God, they would never wish what is at the hand of their enemies of these worldly gifts. They would see this world as a small one. They would be in the eternal bliss of knowing God, enjoying it as if they were in Heaven with its Hosts. Knowing God is the safehouse from any fear, companion in any loneliness, light

in any darkness, strength in any weakness, and healing from any illness).

Then, the Imam stated:

(There were people before you who were killed, burned, and sawed; they had no place in this big world. Yet, they never compensate for their belief. No adversity or trial could change their mind. They were the site of torture only because they believed in God. So, ask your Lord to grant you their level, and be patient with the trials of life so that you achieve their position).

In the book of Al-Kafi, Ibn Hamza narrates from Imam Ali bin Husain (peace be upon them) that he stated:

(If all the hosts of the Heaven and people of the earth gather to describe the Mightiness of God, they will fail).

Al-Sadooq, in his Tawheed, narrates from Imam Baqer from his forefathers (peace be upon them) that once a man asked Imam Ali: "How did you recognize your Lord?". The Imam replied:

(By annulling the fixed decisions and endeavors. When I intended to do something, I changed my mind; when I decided on something, destiny opposed my decision; thus, I recognized that someone else is the organizer of affairs).

He was also asked: "How do you thank God for His blessings?". He replied:

(I saw how He diverted a trial from me to another person; that was when I recognized what a great bliss He provided to me, so I thanked him).

He was again asked: "Why do you love meeting Him?". He stated:

(When I recognized that He chose the creed of His angels, Messengers, and prophets, I concluded that since He dignified me, He shall never forget me. Thus, I loved meeting Him).

In Jami Al-Akhbar, it is narrated from Imam Ali (peace be upon him) that he stated:

(The graces of God are the sign of His existence. Through minds, one can believe in Him; by contemplation, one can prove his evidence. He is known for His characters and acquainted with proofs).

Imam Jafar Al-Sadeq (peace be upon him) once stated:

(Know God by God, the Prophet with his Message, and your Imams with kindness, justice, and beauty of acts).

Knowledge is gradable and limitless. It depends on the holy relationship between a servant and his Lord and Creator: the more he improves his relationship with God, the better he knows Him.

In this regard, Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) gives a clear portrait of the person who acknowledges his servitude and devotion to God. He states:

(The divinely acknowledging person: his body is with people, and his heart is with God. If his heart forgets God for a moment, he will die yearning for Him. The divinely acknowledging person is trustworthy with the secrets of God; he is the cave of His Lights, the path to His Mercy

over the creation, the carrier of His Knowledge, and the measure of His Grace and Justice. He is independent of all the creation, all desires, and all the world. He does not have a close friend but God. He cannot speak or move or breathe away without God. He is sojourning in the Paradise of God. His bliss rains on him. Knowing God is the principle, and faith is the branch).

In this regard, we see that this knowledge is sacred, as clarified by Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

(Knowing God is the highest form of knowledge. Whoever knows God has completed his knowledge. Knowledge is the light of hearts; monotheism is the soul's life. Knowledge gets you to the highest divine status. Knowledge proves divine bliss. Learning is the first proof, and knowledge is the end of it. The fruit of learning is recognizing God. The fruit of faith is winning the prize of God. The goal of knowledge is fearing God).

In Lectures on the Interpretation of the Quran, authored by my greatest master, the grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ismail Al-Sadr (may God bless him), there is a section on the name of 'Allah': "The name of 'Allah' is the holy name of that Entity Who quilts the sublime form of perfection. It is a specific name of God. It is His unique name".

Some believe (like the author of Tafseer Al-Baian) that the name 'Allah' describes the essence of any worshipped god, and because the Lord God is a worshipped god, He is called by this name. It is an active name rather than a static one.

This reasoning cannot be accepted because if this name is as he described it, it would be a description: you can describe

Him as ‘Allah’ as any other description, like the Almighty, the Creator, the Provider, the Worshipped, and so on. Some may question this answer and say: “It can be used as an adjective and description because the Holy Quran used it so, as in Abraham/1-2:

(The Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy, Allah, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth).

The answer to this question is that there are two readings of these two verses: the first is that the name ‘Allah’ in the verse is considered the subject. So, it cannot be mistaken for an adjective. The second reading is replaceable with “the Praiseworthy,” a subject to which other adjectives are attached. Moreover, this word references a specific Entity rather than a general name. This Quranic chapter is about monotheism and worship of the One God. In other words, the entire context of the chapter is about the specific Entity of God. However, some may object to the uniqueness of the name of ‘Allah’ with the following objections:

First: As long as the essence of God cannot be imagined or comprehended completely, one cannot use a name for Him because when we name something, it means that we have learned its nature; otherwise, it cannot be named. The answer to this objection is that though naming demands comprehension of the nature of that entity, partial grasp suffices in this case. This is the limit of a human’s understanding of his Creator. He can never truly understand the nature of God. He cannot also grasp the essence of other minor things, like mind, soul, and power. If complete understanding was a

condition for naming, we should never name these items.

Second: If the name 'Allah' is a unique reference to God, it cannot stand the meaning of the following verse: **(And He is Allah, [the only deity] in the heavens and the earth)** (Anam/3). This verse shows a place for God, which is impossible. In this case, if the name 'Allah' is a unique name of the Worshipped, the verse would be read this way: "And He is the Worshipped in the heavens and the earth." The answer is that the meaning of this verse is all the heavens and the earth are at His grasp. It does not refer to a space that comprehends God. This meaning is also proposed in *Al-Burhan fi Tafseer Al-Quran*.

Third: If the name 'Allah' is a unique name of God, it cannot be mentioned in one verse with the word (Aleha), as in the following verse:

(And We did not wrong them, but they wronged themselves. And they were not availed at all by their gods (Aleha), which they invoked other than Allah). Hud/101

The answer to this objection is that "gods (Aleha)" is a plural name of (Elah) rather than (Allah). They are different words.

Again with the Features of the Name 'Allah'

This unique holy name has certain distinct features which are not found in any other name. Some of these are the following:

1- It cannot be used to name anything other than God. There is no case in history in which someone was named with this name. In a Hadith from Imam Ali (peace be upon him), he

stated:

(The name ‘Allah’ is the most important name of God. It is a name that must not be used for naming anyone else. Nobody was named with it before).

The Imam explains that it is not permissible to use this name for calling anyone else rather than God.

In an interpretation of this verse (Do you know of any similarity to Him?), Imam Ali (peace be upon him) proposes that:

(It means ‘Do you know anyone named ‘Allah’ except Him?).

This Hadith shows no example in history in which the name ‘Allah’ is used for naming people, as it is not permissible.

2- In fact, only the name ‘Allah’ quilts all the features and characteristics of God. In other words, when someone prays: (O Allah), he calls God with all his other names and attributes. He has summoned all the characteristics of perfection and glory.

3- It is the best link between the Creator and the created. It is the most effective word in the hearts. It references loyalty, modesty, compassion, and other virtuous features. This meaning is further emphasized when we think of the origin of the name, ‘Elah,’ and then the definitive Arabic article ‘Al’ is added, we will have a direct bond with the Worshipped God. We must remember that the goal behind this creation is worshipping God, as He stated in the Quran:

(And I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me). Thariat/56

4- If we drop the letter 'A' from the name 'Allah,' we will be left with 'Lelah,' which is also a specific name of God, as in the following verses:

(And to Allah belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth). Fath/4

(And to Allah belongs the depositories of the heavens and the earth). Munafeqoon/7

If we remove the letter 'L' from the remaining word, we are left with 'Lahu,' as in the following verses:

(To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth). Shora/12

(To Him belongs dominion and to Him belongs [all] praise). Tagabon/1

If we remove the remaining 'L,' we are left with 'Howa' (He), as in the following verse:

(Say "He is Allah the One"). Ekhlas/1

(He is the Ever-Living; there is no deity except Him). Ghafer/65

7- From a semantic perspective, there is uniqueness in the meaning of this name. When you call God 'Rahman' (the Most Gracious), you only describe Him with grace. When you call him 'Aleem' (The All-Knowing), you describe Him with knowledge only. But when you call Him "O Allah," you have summoned all His descriptions and features. Thus, the name 'Allah' includes meanings that are not present in other holy names of God.

9-The statement of bearing witness (the word by which a

non-believer converts to Islam) is valid only by the presence of this holy name, Allah. There is nothing similar to Him, and nothing equals Him. He is the One, the Eternal. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent. His Truth is the only ultimate truth. Nothing is essentially true without His presence. Any other entity in this universe gains its or his entity from His existence. All truths are true by His existence. The Oneness of God grants the oneness of existence. God is the subject of this universe. No soul other than God can do anything independently. This acknowledgment of God must be present both in mind and heart. It must be the eye by which we see the universe.

When we recognize this fact and interpretation, our hearts will yearn for God and His Truth. It is a devotion, servitude, loving, fearing, and hoping to yearn. All the veils are removed, and all impurities are cleaned. The soul will long to be in the presence of the One, Eternal, Almighty God.

This acknowledgment helps the heart be purified from worldly matters and anything related to this existence. After this purification, he sees no other truth than God's. He grasps no will and decision rather than that of God.

When the heart reaches a level in which it comprehends no truth other rather than the Truth of the Oneness of God, it will see God as the most sublime and perfect entity in this universe. It will be emancipated from any chain of illusions and delusions. It will be liberated from the chains of desires and weakness. There is no weakness in the presence of God the Almighty.

Whoever finds God will lose nothing ever after. There is no fear in the presence of God the Almighty. Whoever absorbs the idea of God by heart and mind will see nothing else but God in this universe. He represents the ultimate Truth for him.

The Quran paid particular attention to this topic. It sought to clarify it in any possible way to human thought. Many verses show that all means function only by the will of God:

(And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds). Takweer/29

God also states:

(When thou threwest, it was not thy act, but Allah's).
Anfal/17

He also states:

(And victory is not but from Allah). Al Emran/126

Many other verses show God only has the ultimate choice and decision. Everything is related to the first Causer, the Causer of all causes. This form of faith grants serenity to the heart of the believer. Then, he recognizes that God only has power over all the heavens and the earth. He will feel secure at times of adversity and trials because he knows that these obstacles and problems have no actual existence. After all, the only true existence is that of God. He is the Provider of life to everything in this universe.

God wants all people to tread upon this path toward this ultimate Truth, despite all the troubles in this life, which is the divine successorship God granted to humans. He knows all

its requirements. In this regard, these believers are confident that the only actual existence of God is His existence.

This interpretation springs from this honest and total devotion to God, representing servitude, faith, contentment, abidance, and embracing the divine will.

This is, in fact, a method of worshipping God. It is a method of learning from God the principles of belief, perception, moral values and standards, and obligations.

It is a method of living by divine standards to get closer to the ultimate truth. It facilitates our mission of removing all the veils that blind us from seeing the Glory of God.

In addition to its approximating one's position to God, it also binds the heart with all existence with the tie of love, compassion, and affection.

It is a transcendental method. It shows how this life is short and limited. It guides us to overcome all obstacles to the sublime goal. Yet, this does not mean we must be detached from this life or run from this world. It means that we must work to transcend in our servitude to God. We should improve human life to break all the chains that hold humanity from accomplishing its mission. It is the only path to finding true humanity. It is the path to free the soul to transcend to its divine source while still in this life.

This is the true essence of the name 'Allah.' It is the core of monotheism that God instructed. In this context, monotheism is a framework for understanding and interpreting existence. It is a method for life. It is not a simple word uttered by the

tongue: it is the entire matter, the entire religion. Other details are only the fruits of this Truth.

After Learning

As discussed earlier, the genuine acknowledgment of Allah's name must be in thought and practice. It is the truth that God wants to be in the hearts of his believers. A servant of God must realize this word's details and meanings in his life. This is of two dimensions:

First:

When someone is asked about the source of this universe, if he does not fall into the trap of inherited superstitions and delusions, he would find the answer in his instinct, as stated in the Quran:

(If you asked them, “Who created the heavens and earth and subjected the sun and the moon?” they would indeed say, “Allah.” Then how are they deluded?) Ankaboot/61

Second:

When adversities crush him, and he has no way out of them, that is the moment when his conscious pushes him to resort to God and ask him to rescue him, as proposed in the Quran:

(It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a storm wind and the waves come upon them from everywhere and they assume that they are surrounded, supplicating Allah, sincere to Him in religion, “If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful”). Yunis/22

When he listens to his pure instinct, which is still unstained by deviations and desires, he finds the source of all goodness and virtues. He seeks to stay in that safe shelter to avoid danger.

Thus, some have won this meaning of ‘divine life.’ They were chosen to be the carrier of divine messages:

(Allah is most knowing of where He places His message).
Anam/124

Others represented the divine guidance in thought and practice:

(That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whomever He wills of His servants). Anam/88

Others hosted God in their hearts, minds, behavior, practice, and morals:

(And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one in darkness, never to emerge therefrom?) Anam/122

These effects are found in the soul of those who understood the meaning of the name 'Allah' and used it to purify themselves with it. All the prophets and believers adopted this name to fill their hearts with His love and seek shelter in Him to keep them safe from the storms of trials, vices, doubts, and satanic whispers. They find resolution, strength, and reformation in Him. They admit that all their moves, thoughts, and decisions are realized only by His help and that they survive by His Mercy. They always raise this slogan:

(I seek refuge in God from the cursed Satan. In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful).

They accomplish their mission of divine successorship on the earth under His auspices. They live in His safe fortress, away from the whispers of Satan. They represent the divine successorship that was granted to them, as in the following verse:

(Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority). Baqara/30

Undoubtedly, whoever fills his heart with trust in God and always seeks help from Him will always be under His protection and guidance. He always looks for the Mercy and help of God to overcome worldly obstacles. The Lord God states:

(Indeed, those who fear Allah - when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember [Him], and at once they have insight). Araf/201

He also states:

(For Allah is with those who restrain themselves, and those who do good). Nahl/128

God explains this method in many verses, like when Noah wanted to help his deviated son, and God rebuked him. Noah responded:

([Noah] said, “My Lord, I seek refuge in You from asking that of which I have no knowledge. And unless You forgive me and have mercy upon me, I will be among the losers”). Hud/47

Then, God glorified him and granted him two great gifts:

(It was said, “O Noah, disembark in security from Us and blessings upon you and upon nations [descending] from those with you). Hud/48

This method is also clarified in the story of Joseph when the woman seduces him:

(He said, “[I seek] the refuge of Allah. Indeed, he is my master, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed”). Yusuf/23

Then, God removed the vice from him.

This is also present in the story of Moses when he was threatened with being killed:

(But Moses said, “Indeed, I have sought refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Judgement”). Gafer/27

Then, God protected him from harm, and painful torment befell Pharaoh and his supporters.

These are examples of the bond between God and people when they realize His instructions and methods in practice. They show how God intervenes to remove obstacles when people pray to Him and seek shelter in Him.

God ordered us to recite this statement when we read the Quran to avoid his presence. Satan sneaks into the chests of the readers of the Quran and tries to implant doubts in them:

(So when you recite the Qur'an, [first] seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the expelled [from His mercy]). Nahl/98

God also instructed us to recite this statement whenever we feel danger or vice is waiting for us. He shows us the way how to resort to Him:

(And if Satan's evil suggestion comes to you, seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing). Araf/200

He also states:

(And say, "My Lord, I seek refuge in You from the incitements of the devils). Momenoon/97

The last two chapters of the Quran include instructions on the way we stay safe from the vices of this world during day and night:

(Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak. From the evil of that which He created. And from the evil of darkness when it settles. And from the evil of the blowers in knots. And from the evil of an envier when he envies"). Falaq/1-5

In the chapter of Nas, He instructs us to seek shelter in Him from the vices of the demons of humankind and Jinns:

(Say: I seek refuge with the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, the King (or Ruler) of Mankind, the God (or judge) of Mankind,- From the mischief of the Whisperer (of Evil), who withdraws (after his whisper),- (The same) who whispers into the hearts of Mankind,- Among Jinns and men). Nas/1-6

Reciting the statement of 'Basmala' and the name of God is a method in all religions. It is the motto of faith and stability in every step. In the story of the prophet Solomon, he writes a letter to the queen of Saba, inviting her to accept the call of God and His worship and to put an end to her denial of Truth:

(“It is from Solomon, and is (as follows): ‘In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful: “Be ye not arrogant against me, but come to me in submission (to the true Religion)”’). Naml/30-31

As for Noah, he ordered his people to get on the ark while they were all trust in God:

(And [Noah] said, “Embark therein; in the name of Allah is its course and anchorage. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful”). Hud/41

God initiates the last phase of revelation to humanity by saying:

(Read by the name of your Lord). Alaq/1

Every chapter of the Quran starts with the name of God. It has a precise symbolic meaning: it gives serenity and strength

to the hearts of the believers. It is a strategy to bind the nation with the name of 'Allah' and its quilted meanings. This name dominates the entire life, universe, and existence. It controls both this life and the afterlife. Therefore, it must become a method of life in all conditions. It should become a guideline at every step. God must be the First, the Last, the Revealed, the Hidden, and the All-Knowing. He is the unprecedented First and the Last without anyone after Him; He is the Revealed without anyone above Him, and the Hidden without anyone below him.

He is the First and the Last Who goes beyond the concept of time. He is the Revealed and the Hidden beyond the concept of space. Nothing can stand independent from His Power. He is the All-Knowing: His knowledge has no equal because it is the ultimate Truth. His Truth inspires all other truths. All things are to perish; only God is the Eternal and Everlasting Who stands beyond everything.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) shows us how we realize these ideas in our life. Once, he was asked: "How did you recognize your Lord?" He replied:

(By annulling the fixed decisions and endeavors. When I intended to do something, I changed my mind; when I decided on something, destiny opposed my decision; thus, I recognized that someone else is the organizer of affairs).

He was also asked: "How do you thank God for His blessings?". He replied:

(I saw how He diverted a trial from me to another person; that was when I recognized what a great bliss He provided to me, so I thanked him).

He was again asked: "Why do you love meeting Him?". He stated:

(When I recognized that He chose the creed of His angels, Messengers, and prophets, I concluded that since He dignified me, He shall never forget me. Thus, I loved meeting Him).

Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) teaches us how to practice this feeling. He was asked: "Have you ever seen Him?" The Imam stated:

(The eyes cannot see Him by vision, but the hearts feel Him by faith. He cannot be recognized by measurement; He can never be felt by sense; He does not resemble people; He is described by verse and identified by signs; He never oppresses in His Kingdom; He is Allah, and there is no God but Him).

It is narrated that the man left the place while whispering: "God is most knowing of where He places His message."

In the same context, once a man asked Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him): "Guide me to God." The Imam replied:

(Have you ever been on a ship?

The man said: Yes

The Imam stated: **Did it wreck, and there was no place to which you may resort, and you were sure that even swimming could not rescue you?**

He said: **Indeed.**

The Imam stated: **Did your heart hover around something**

that would rescue you?

He said: Yes.

The Imam replied: **That thing is God, Who is capable of saving the crushed person at hopeless moments and rescuing the one who has no solution).**

Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) shows that any knowledge must be practiced. Otherwise, it is futile. The Imam stated:

(No deed is accepted unless one acknowledges His presence. There is no acknowledgment without work. Whoever recognizes Him and acknowledges His company will be guided to good work; otherwise, no deed is accepted by him).

Therefore, learning and recognizing God is the most sublime thing. It represents life and its details. It fulfills thought, mind, heart, work, manners, and morals. It means the afterlife and all its related unseen world, starting from death, grave, resurrection, and the Day of Judgement. In this regard, Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) states:

(If people knew the grace of knowing God, they would never wish what is at the hand of their enemies of these worldly gifts. They would see this world as a small one. They would be in the eternal bliss of knowing God, enjoying it as if they were in Heaven with its Hosts. Knowing God is the safehouse from any fear, companion in any loneliness, light in any darkness, strength in any weakness, and healing from any illness).

Therefore, we see the divinely acknowledging that people live with God's name in all stances and moments. It is their

life's light, joy, virtue, and security. They are with God in all details and steps. Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) states:

(The divinely acknowledging person: his body is with people, and his heart is with God. If his heart forgets God for a moment, he will die yearning for Him. The divinely acknowledging person is trustworthy with the secrets of God; he is the cave of His Lights, the path to His Mercy over the creation, the carrier of His Knowledge, and the measure of His Grace and Justice. He is independent of all the creation, all desires, and all the world. He does not have a close friend but God. He cannot speak or move or breathe away without God. He is sojourning in the Paradise of God. His bliss rains on him. Knowing God is the principle, and faith is the branch).

Therefore, we see those who have trodden upon this path have absorbed this ultimate truth. They did everything to arrive at their destination. Some claimed that they found God in everything. Others said that everything leads to the recognition of God. Others argued that they could only see God in this existence.

All these claims lead to one particular truth. Islam expects us to realize this truth and appoint it as our guideline in life, as presented in the following verse:

(And He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing). Hadid/4

The first step toward this exalted position is remembering God in all conditions. Every effort must begin with His name to prove our faith, obedience, servitude, and love of God. Here, we mention some of the Hadiths which encourage us to note the word of God at the beginning of every step and work. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(Whoever gathers his family at a table and they mention the name of God in the beginning and thank Him at the end will not remove the dishes unless God forgives all their sins).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also stated:

(When some people gather to eat, and one of them mentions the name of God at the beginning and thanks Him at the end, the food will be blessed).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also stated:

(If you recite: “In the name of God” (Bismillah), angels will protect you in Heaven. It is the remedy to any illness. God told Christ: “Recite (Bismillah) much and start your affairs with this statement. Whoever comes to Me and there is a handful of (Bismillah) is in his records, I shall release him from Hell”. Christ asked: “What is a handful of (Bismillah)?” The Lord stated: “One hundred times”).

It is narrated that once Luqman found a piece in which (Bismillah) was written in it. So he ate it. It is said that after

that, God blessed him with wisdom.

It is also narrated that if a believer enters Hell and he utters (Bismillah), the fire of Hell will keep away the distance of forty years.

In the same context, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated:

(Did you know that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) narrated from God that He stated:

Whoever does not mention the name of God in any affair will remain deficient. I said: Yes, my lord, I will never forget it. He replied: Then, you will have a happy life and ending).

Once, Abdullah bin Yahya asked Imam Ali about the meaning of (Bismillah). The Imam stated:

(Whoever starts reading or working with (Bismillah), it means he is declaring he is beginning the work with this name. Thus, anything that starts with (Bismillah) will be blessed).

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) also stated:

(All knowledge is included in the holy books, all the books are summarized in the Quran, the Quran is outlined in the chapter of Fateha, Fateha is summarized in (Bismillah Al-Rahman Al-Raheem), and it is outlined in (Bismillah)).

We see that God emphasizes in many positions that whatever is not done for His sake will perish and become invalidated. Everything will be in vain unless it is sought for His content. Worldly affairs are enduring inasmuch as they are related to God. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(Whoever does not mention the name of God in any affair will remain deficient).

God intends to teach people to start their affairs and works with His name. They must feel connected to God, and their activities are complete only when done for His sake. Reciting His name signifies that you are asking for His help and acknowledging his support. People must understand that pure servitude to God must be the basis of everything in life.

The name of God also signifies servitude to Him. It is a form of respect for the Lord. It is a statement and prayer of the need to be accompanied by God. It is a confession of one's weakness and dependence on the Creator. This name safeguards its utterer from corruption or deficiency in work and other worldly affairs. It is also a form of prayer and a request from God to provide us with His help. It is an announcement of the creed of Islam.

Thus, any individual must keep repeating His name and manifest it in manners and action in all fields of life. In this regard, we see Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) recites in the supplication of Saturday:

(In the name of God, the word of the abiding believers, and statement of the observers. I seek shelter in God from the oppression of the oppressors, the plotting of the envious, and the wrongdoing of the unjust. I thank Him beyond the gratitude of the grateful).

Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) shows the essential role of the name of God in our life because He is the Originator and Creator of everything. He is the Cause of everything, and by

Him, everything endures. The Imam also states:

(In the name of God, Whose blessing I seek and Whose justice I fear. I do not trust any word but His; I hold no rope but His. In You, I seek shelter, Who is the Forgiver and Blessor, and Protector from injustice, oppression, adversities of time, grief, unexpected trials, and loss of time before being prepared. I ask Your guidance to what is good for me. I seek Your support in achieving success. I seek Your enduring healing and protection. I seek shelter in You from the whispers of demons. I ask Your Power to confront the wrongdoing of unjust rulers. I ask You to accept my prayers and fasting and make my tomorrow better than this hour and day. I ask You to honor me among my tribe and people. Protect me in my waking and sleeping hours because You are God, the best Protector and the Most Merciful, and thanks to God, the Lord of the worlds).

Devotion

One of the main features that must characterize worshipping God is devotion. God states in the Quran:

(And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion). Baiena/5

After believing in Him, devotion is the best path to God. It shows the quality of obedience to God. It is the basis upon which all other acts are built, without which all deeds will be futile. There are many cases in which people think their deeds are purely dedicated to God. Someone used to say: "I spent thirty years of my life praying in a mosque in the first line. One day, I was late and obliged to return to the second line to pray. I was ashamed when people saw me standing in the second line. That was when I recognized that people's opinion of me was more important than the prayer itself.

Thus, devotion in work means that one must be dedicated to God in all conditions and never undergo the effect of what may spoil the deed. One must destroy all the bridges that transfer outside influences into the heart and remain focused on the name of God in all situations. In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated:

(Blessed are those who dedicate their worship and prayer to God, never engage their hearts with what their eyes see, never forget God when their ears hear falsehood, and never grieve when they see others are given what they have been deprived of).

Accordingly, all the deeds become dedicated to God in all terms and conditions. That is the moment when you become

purified from any sin. You become God-fearing, pious, and careful not to fall into traps of sins. Then, God will accept all your deeds and reward you in the afterlife. This is clarified in the following verse:

(Indeed, God only accepts from the righteous). Maeda/27

The primary question here is how we can achieve true devotion.

1- Removing all desires, controlling oneself, and overcoming greed. God states in the Quran:

(But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination). Nazeat/40

2- Befriending God, purity of intention, abiding by God's instructions, and containing His prohibitions.

3- Contemplating God's features and deeds.

4- Praying to God constantly so that His light fills the heart.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) referred to the true meaning of devotion:

(It is to say "my Lord is God" and remain on the right path as instructed. It is to work for the sake of God without expecting to be thanked. In other words, do not worship your desires; do not worship but your Lord, and remain on the right path in your worship as instructed).

The Main Right of God

There are numerous rights of God that people must maintain. Yet, the primary right of God is worshipping Him devotedly. In other words, we should not associate anything with God (in thought and practice). We should never deviate from His path (after we believe in Him).

Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) stated:

(As for the primary right of God, it is to worship Him and never associate anything with Him. If you do that devotedly, God will reward you by protecting you in this world and the Hereafter and preserving what is likable to you).

The fundamental principle of Islam, which forms the relationship with God, is devotion to monotheism. Monotheism is the basis of the Islamic creed and its deeds. Therefore, one must clean himself of any impurity and avoid 'atheism' which eradicates monotheism. In this regard, God states in the Quran:

(And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin). Nisa/48

He also stated in Al Emran/90:

(But those who reject Faith after they accepted it, and then go on adding to their defiance of Faith,- never will their repentance be accepted; for they are those who have (of set purpose) gone astray).

One might ask: "How can I purify my worship from any atheistic element?"

1- You should remember God in all conditions. This will leave no place for anything or anyone but God. Accordingly, you can clean yourself from the satanic whispers. God states in Shoara/88-89:

(The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, but only he (will prosper) that brings Allah a sound heart).

2- Devotion of intention in worshipping God. You should never wish for anything opposite God's will. You should seek shelter in God from committing sins. Quran narrates the announcement of Satan in Sad/83-84:

(Then, by Thy power, I will put them all in the wrong,- Except Thy Servants, sincere and purified).

3- You must engage in virtuous acts that get you closer to God. You should abide by His instructions in all your senses and actions and avoid what may distance you from His grace. God states in Fater/10:

(To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it).

Stability of Belief

It is not enough to say that we believe in God. What matters is to show and practically prove our belief in all fields of life.

As discussed earlier, we must prove our belongingness to dear Islam by stability and insistence on realizing its principles. We should be keen not to lose the way, never caring about the unexpected obstacles in our path to God.

The Protector of this sacred creed is the Most Powerful One, the King of kings, Allah. So why should we be afraid of anything? Those who are stable in their belief and insist on completing the path are blessed by God. They are granted serenity and calmness in this world and the Hereafter. God states in Abraham/27:

(God keeps firm those who believe, with the decisive word, in worldly life and the Hereafter).

Thus, you have to keep firm in your belief in God. You must do your best to stabilize further and strengthen your faith. For example, you must have blind trust in God and embrace all His decisions without any objection because God is the All-Knowing Who does what is best for you.

Furthermore, you must understand all the concepts and teachings of your religion and remove any misunderstanding regarding your religious instructions. You should improve your relationship with God by following His instructions and preventing His prohibitions.

God states in Anam/153:

(And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way).

Stability of Religion

Where are your steps taking you in life? Where are they heading? If you are moving toward worldly possessions, then your efforts are unstable. Finally, you will fall into oblivion. Whatever is not devoted to God will not last long. Your steps are blessed and stable only in the path of God. One may ask, “why are stability and security found only in the path of God?” Because when you find God, believe in Him, love Him, trust Him, and acknowledge His Lordship, He will take your hand and strengthen your steps. God loves those who love Him. He will bless their endeavor in life. He will facilitate the path to His meeting because nothing is greater than the meeting of lovers. In a divine Hadith, God states:

(Whoever takes My content as his basis in life, I will grant him three features: I will give him gratitude without ignorance, a name without oblivion, and a love that is not stained by the love of other creatures).

How Can You Remain Stable in Islam?

The first requirement to stabilize your path to God is to improve your faith and trust in Him. You should be keen to preserve His limits, abide by His instructions, and prevent His prohibitions in all fields of life. You must be more persistent

concerning the afterlife affairs, more patient toward the harms of this world, more willing to worship God, and more decisive in confronting the whispers of demons. Then, with the help of God, you will be able to overcome your desires and stabilize your steps on the path to God. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(A firm believer is better than a weak believer).

Sound Heart

Is there any other light than God capable of illuminating our hearts? The light of God on earth is for all humanity. No light ever can shine in the entire universe but that of God. He is the light of the Heavens and the world. This holy light is the light of divine guidance. This guiding light that shines in the hearts is the voice of God. It is the voice of our pure instinct, which naturally follows God because it does not want anything in this life but the mercy of God. Our hearts become clean and devoted to God in all conditions and situations.

Sound hearts are placed in stable and serene selves, finding peace and strength in the light of God. Therefore, there is no place for the whispers of demons to disturb this divine peace inside our hearts.

My brother, do you know why these hearts are safe and away from the malicious whispers of demons? Because the hearts are filled with God's love, they are also filled with purity and peace. There is no place left for sins. They are entirely submitted and devoted to God in this world and the Hereafter.

God states in Shoara/88-99:

(The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children, but only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart).

How do you protect your heart from going astray?

You must abide by the rope of God alone to keep your heart safe from deviation. It is achieved by improving your faith and trust in Him. You should seek refuge in Him in all conditions and situations.

You should also maintain the purity of your instinct -which God granted- and preserve it from misunderstanding or deviation.

Moreover, your pure instinct will keep your heart clean and lively. It would help if you were keen to keep it away from the stains of sinning. You must keep it away from the whispers and traps of demons and safeguard it from falling into the quicksand of forbidden worldly joys. It would help if you held yourself accountable continuously.

Imam Sadeq stated:

(Whoever has an honest intention also has a sound heart because one can only maintain a good heart by avoiding prohibitions and devoting the purpose to God only in all affairs).

Doctrinal Education

Doctrine, in this sense, means the principles that improve one's relationship with God with stable bases.

The core is always the doctrine. The more it is stable, the better the entire structure is built.

Therefore, in the first phases of the call for Islam, we see the Quran emphasized the importance of doctrine. The majority of the verses that were revealed in Mecca were doctrinal. The primary mission of Islam is to improve the doctrinal side of the religion. Islam sought to present it, clarify it, and prove it practically.

The doctrinal side of religion, also called the 'fundamentals of religion,' represents the entire belief in God and His Oneness (He is the One, He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him).

The next stage is the belief in prophethood. It is divine grace, an obligatory element to guarantee to find the path to God.

Grace is not granted without love. Therefore, God is the One Who loved His servant first. The servant must love God back. This is a Quranic principle:

(He loves them, and they love Him back). Maeda/54

As for divine justice, the Quran states:

(And your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants).
Fuselat/46

Among the fundamentals of religion is the belief in the Imams of Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) and their pious companions.

The doctrine also includes the belief in the Day of Judgement:

On the day someone calls: **(And stop them; indeed, they are to be questioned)**. Safat/24

On the day **(when the pages are made public)**. Takweer/10

(On the Day you see it, every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of Allah is severe). Haj/2

On the day when the criminals will say: **(“Oh, woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it?”)** Kahaf/49

Islam pays special attention to the internal construction of humankind and his mind because this is the path to maintaining a balanced personality. This is also a condition to realize the true meaning of servitude to God.

This doctrinal dimension is built upon the mind, faith, and knowledge. Our tenet is not only a metaphysical matter but also the knowledge that constructs this construction.

In this regard, Islam constructed humanity upon the true civilizational doctrine, which is the fruit of good mentality and conviction. It is intellectually equipped to find its path to God.

Thus, God seeks perfection for us in all fields of life. It can be realized by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), who is the ultimate carrier of religious values. He also shows us the path to God by instructing us on the best way to achieve love, abidance, faith, manners, and practice.

We see that Islam is eager to build humanity from the inside. Islam seeks to construct a sound mind, heart, and consciousness. It is the path to God in a way that is clarified in the Quran:

(He created me, and He guides me). Shoara/78

Islam is the first institution to guide any servant to God and teach him the obligations and prohibitions of God.

Islam seeks to construct a sound and practical mind according to the following Quranic rule:

(Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error). Baqara/256

When Islam moves toward constructing the doctrinal dimension of humankind, it is also keen to build a sound mind prepared to be practical and rational.

When the mind is used soundly, the results must also be sound. What will be achieved is complete faith in God and His Oneness, Justice. Moreover, one will achieve belief in prophethood, Imamate, and Judgement Day.

When the mind is adequately educated, it will naturally believe in God, love Him, and abide by His instructions. That is the moment when any individual will feel complete servitude

to God. It will be handled by his soul, feelings, and emotions.

This is the beginning of Islam. After achieving this level of relationship with God mentally and emotionally, one must pay special attention to two fundamental dimensions:

Spiritual dimension.

Worship dimension.

Islam is keen to educate any individual spiritually and improve his relationship with God. It also enhances the worship dimension to prove one's devoted servitude, love, and abidance to God.

Proof of God's Existence

A Hadith mentions:

(If there were gods other than Allah, you would see their prophets).

Islam is constituted of two essential dimensions:

The first dimension is mental.

The second dimension is the organization of worldly affairs.

The mental dimension is called the fundamentals of religion, and worldly affairs are called the branches of religion, also known as the acts of worship. Acts of worship work on organizing a proper relationship between Man and his Lord. It also improves social relationships among people.

Here, we should note that the organization of worldly affairs, represented by various kinds of worship, is based upon the fundamentals of religion. Worships cannot be comprehended or practiced without understanding and abiding by the fundamentals of religion.

It is universally acknowledged that branches must depend on fundamentals to become meaningful and purposeful. The fundamentals of religion are the doctrinal dimension of belief, which forms Man's relationship with God.

These fundamentals are monotheism, prophethood, and belief in Judgement Day. The school of Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) added two more principles: divine justice and Imamate. Justice comes after monotheism and Imamate after prophethood. Therefore, they come in the following order:

First: monotheism.

Second: divine justice.

Third: prophethood.

Fourth: Imamate

Fifth: belief in Judgement Day.

This order of fundamentals is not presented haphazardly. A believer cannot believe in the second fundamental without believing in the first one. His belief in the third depends on his dedication to the second fundamental; the same order applies to the fourth and fifth.

In this regard, the entire doctrine and religion are based on the first fundamental belief in God. This belief signifies

two elements: belief in the existence of God and His Oneness. Faith in God without believing in His Oneness is problematic. They both complete each other and lead to sublime results.

Our belief must be two-dimensional:

Belief in the existence of God and His Oneness.

The first dimension is related to the inside and outside messengers. The inside messenger is the pure instinct that God granted. It is mentioned in the Quran:

([Adhere to] the intuition of God upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of God). Rome/30

It is the instinct of belief in God. Therefore, it is called 'the inside messenger.' The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated in this regard:

(Everyone is born with the instinct [all times and places]; yet, his parents lead him astray [in another narration] and convert him to Judaism or Christianity).

In other words, he would find God if left alone with instinct. It also gives the feeling that an unseen power is always ready to save him. Thus, the inside belief instinct means believing in an unseen force always prepared to rescue any individual from his miseries.

When left alone, the instinct cannot recognize the other side of faith, which is the Oneness of God. The instinct alone enables people to believe in the existence of God. When the mind intervenes, we can also comprehend the Oneness

of God. Therefore, belief in God is an instinct related to the inside messenger, which is pure instinct. It is completed by the mind, which leads to comprehending the branches of religion and God's instructions.

Hence, the inside and outside messengers must accompany each other. As mentioned earlier, the inside messenger is the instinct, mind, and orientation toward faith. The external messenger is represented by God's prophets and messengers, some of whom brought sacred books. Next, it is also represented by the Imams of Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) and the succeeding scholars who show the path to God.

Thus, the inside theoretical belief cannot be completed without the outside physical faith.

This belief is the basis of all other fundamentals of religion, like divine justice, prophethood, Imamate, and Judgement Day. Proofs and reasoning must be present. After all, it is not permissible to resort to imitation regarding the doctrinal dimension of religion. Any Muslim must believe in God from two perspectives: belief in the existence of God and His Oneness. He must judge according to proof and reasoning. He cannot imitate even specialists, like jurists, philosophers, and theologians.

These proofs may be instinctual. They can be simple primitive proofs that match one's educational level.

Once, a simple nomadic was asked about his belief in God. He replied: "Any existing object or thing needs a creator."

This is instinctual proof. You cannot find an object without

a created one. Therefore, all these stars and planets must have a creator. As long as there is a creator, one must adopt the features of the creator and believe in him.

As mentioned earlier, belief in God and His Oneness need proof. These proofs must be convincing to you and absorbed by heart. It must not be a matter of imitating others.

Now, we are discussing the instinctual matter of belief. It is called instinctual because it is simple and does not require high levels of study or education. It is born to everyone. It is about the belief in God and His Oneness. Therefore, the Hadith states:

(If there were gods other than Allah, you would see their prophets).

This Hadith encounters two dimensions:

First, the existence of God.

Second, monotheism.

In other words, God exists, and He is the One without any associate.

There is a difference between one and oneness. One may have two, whereas oneness means that there is no second. Thus, this Hadith confirms the existence of God (**If there was any other God rather than Allah**). This appeals to instinct. Then, the Hadith continues: (**you would see his prophets**). This part appeals to the mind.

In summary, if there were a second god, he would have sent his messengers, books, and instructions. As long as there is no

god other than Allah, God is the One and has no associate.

The Holy Self: His Features

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) explained His features:

(Thanks to God, Who is not comprehended by senses, not limited by space, not seen by eyes, and not hidden by veils. He proved His eternity by creating existence and linking its survival to His presence. He is the One since He has no similar).

There are many Hadiths narrated from the successor of the Prophet, Imam Ali (peace be upon him), in which he clarifies the relationship of Man with God. He shows the nature of this relationship which is different from any parental, friendship, or societal one.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) seeks to show that it is a special relationship because one side of it is unique, Who is not similar to any other thing or person in this world.

The players of this relationship are not human beings who are not necessary for existence. It is a relationship between Man and God. It is a relationship between the Necessity of reality and the possibility of existence.

Therefore, we must recognize the limits of this relationship so that we comprehend God's features.

As for His features, they are the following:

(Who is not comprehended by senses).

The context here is specific to the sense of seeing. Because God is not a material body, He cannot be seen. Only material things which are placed in space and time can be seen. God cannot be comprehended by space and time, so He cannot be apprehended by senses.

Then, the Hadith moves to two conditions:

First: physical.

Second: spiritual.

As for the physical conditions, because God is not a body, He cannot be seen by eyes. He is the Light of the Heavens and the earth. No place may escape His domination. Therefore, no veil may hide Him. No insight can miss His Light. In this regard, in another Hadith, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(Blind be the eye which does not see You as an observer over him).

A believer sees God's presence everywhere. Anything in this universe is a representation of God's power.

He is also described with other features, like an eternity without a beginning. He existed before the creation. He created everything and will exist after the end of this creation.

One of the proofs that God is eternal and existed before this creation is that everything in this universe needs a creator. For example, humanity is an object in this universe, and this species requires a creator, God the Lord. Moreover, nothing in this universe resembles God in these features. He is the One and Eternal.

God is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth

Imam Jafar Al-Sadeq (peace be upon him) stated:

(God revealed Himself to the creation through His speech, but they cannot see Him).

One of the features of a believing person is that he always feels the presence of God as if he sees Him. In this context, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) addressed God:

(God, let me fear You as if I see You).

When a believer has a place for God inside his heart, mind, feelings, and emotions, he sees God's presence everywhere. He comprehends the meaning of those verses which present God as the Light of the Heavens and the earth. One of the features of light is that it can be seen. As long as God is like a light, His Mightiness can also be observed.

When a believer observes the Greatness of God, he also thinks of God's creation of the Heavens and the earth. The more he thinks about this issue, the greater God becomes in his eyes and heart. He will conclude that the method proposed by God is the best for the good of Man in all times and places. When this individual thinks of the existence of God, he naturally comprehends the greatness of God because these two concepts are interconnected. Imam Jafar Al-Sadeq (peace be upon him) clarifies this meaning in a Hadith narrated from his forefathers and the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household):

(God revealed Himself to the creation through His speech, but they cannot see Him).

The divine method consists of two sides: silent and speaking:

As for the silent approach, it is the universe, the Heavens, and the earth. We are required to think about them and observe them.

Concerning the speaking method, it is the Holy Quran.

Therefore, a believer sees God everywhere, before everything, and after everything. He cannot ignore the presence of God in his life. God's presence is evident in everything. His Wisdom, Power, and other features dominate this universe. Accordingly, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(Blind be the eye which does not see You as an observer over him).

The Required Manner of Thinking

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) stated:

(Think about the creation of God, not in God Himself).

One of the fundamental Islamic principles by which the Islamic nation is expected to abide is that they form their relationship with God upon worship, thinking, and mentality. These aspects are related to each other.

As for worshipping, it is the purpose for which God created humankind, as stated in the Quran:

(I did not create Jinns and humans but to worship Me).
Thariat/56

Worshipping God is a form of dignity. It is unlike what some may think is an obligatory immoral matter. God honored us when He ordered us to worship Him. Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) best explains this matter:

(God, if You did not order us to worship You, I would exalt You from my worship).

Thus, the divine order to the believing nation to worship God is a form of honor. We should understand the real purpose behind this worship. It aims to construct and develop the universe, the earth, and society. Therefore, God states in the Quran:

(I have not created Jinns or humankind but to worship Me). Thariat/56

Any activity that works on realizing the public good is worship. It must always be worship that is done out of understanding. It should represent the divine successorship on earth. It also seeks the service of other people.

When we interpret worship as the construction of the earth and the development of society, it must also be related to thinking and understanding.

Conscious worship must link individuals with God on the one side, and on the other, it must push them toward constructing this life and its reformation. Purity and reformation are the origins of this life, as stated in the following verse:

(And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation). Araf/56

This verse seems to refer to the fact that the earth is the

cradle of humanity, which includes all the elements of their happiness.

The required worship, which confirms the relationship with God on the one side, and on the other, one's responsibility towards others, cannot be achieved without thinking. Therefore, we mentioned earlier that worship and mind are both interconnected.

Worshipping God without thinking is futile. On the other front, thinking without worship is also dangerous. They both must be balanced because they complete each other.

Undoubtedly, the more one depends on his mind, the more fruitful his worship will be for the public good.

We always insist on connecting these two elements. The Quran continuously shows the necessity of abiding by both sides. There is also a rich heritage of Hadiths that highlights this attitude. They show that worship must be based upon thinking rather than imitation. When the mind is the origin of worship, the results are constructive. It invokes one to be responsible towards others. This is clear in the Quranic description:

(Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], “Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire). Al Emran/191

The verse starts with the topic of worship:

(Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides)

The concept of worship here includes all forms of obligatory or recommended acts, like reading the Quran or supplications. It also includes other activities like working in farms, factories, and other fields of life which are helpful for society. Any act or work that is useful for others and is practiced to approach God is considered worship. Therefore, the verse states:

(Who remember Allah while standing, sitting, or [lying] on their sides).

This verse is very general. It includes the worship practiced while standing, sitting, or lying in farms, laboratories, or factories. All these acts must depend on the mind and thinking. Therefore, the verse states:

(Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth).

When they think of the sky and the world, the result is the following:

([saying], “Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire).

It means God did not create this existence without purpose **(You did not create this aimlessly).**

(Then did you think that We created you uselessly and that you would not be returned to us?) Momenoon/115

Thus, we see a direct link between worship, knowledge, thinking, and learning.

In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(Think about the creation of God, not about God Himself).

We are required to build our worship upon thinking and knowledge. This contemplation must be about the creation of God, which represents His unlimited power.

We cannot think about God Himself because our minds will fall short. We must believe in the existence of God, His Oneness, Eternity, and that He is the Creator of this universe. He is also the best One to propose a method of life.

We cannot think about God Himself because we will achieve to result. He is beyond the limits of the human mind.

Total Monotheism is in One Chapter (Tawheed)

This Quranic chapter is titled 'Tawheed' because it summarizes all ideas of monotheism.

It is also named 'Ekhlas' (Devotion) because it represents devotion in servitude. It shows the honest relationship between Man and his Lord. Abiding with the ideas of this chapter leads to the completion of one's creed and faith. It is God's guidance to salvation and rescue on the Day of Judgement.

This chapter is also titled 'The Attribution of the Lord', as described by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household):

(Everything has an attribution, and the attribution of the Lord is the chapter of Ekhlas).

One day, the Jews and polytheists of Mecca visited the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and asked him to describe God. He waited for three days until God revealed the chapter “Say God is the One)⁽¹⁾. There are many other narrations regarding the history and explanation of this chapter.

This chapter is called ‘Qol Howa Allah Ahad’ (Say God is the One). This title is derived from the first verse of this chapter. It is a verse full of monotheism, devotion, and servitude.

Because this chapter clarifies God’s attributions, many Hadiths narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) show the greatness of this chapter and its weight in Islamic theology.

Many Hadiths invoke people to keep reciting them. Abu Al-Darda narrates from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) that he stated:

(Can’t you read one-third of the Quran in one night?)

People replied: “How is that even possible?”

The Prophet stated:

(“Say God is the One” equals one-third of the Quran).

In the same source, Aisha narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) sent Imam Ali (peace be upon him) with an armed group to a place. The Imam only read (Say God is the One) in his prayers. When they returned

¹ It is narrated by Sheikh Al-Sadooq in his *Al-Tawheed*, and by Sheikh Al-Tabrasi in his *Majma Al-Baian*, and by Jalal AL-Deen Al-Saiooti in his *Asbab Al-Nozool*.

to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), they complained about it. He said: **(Ask him about the reason)**. Imam Ali stated:

(It is the attribution of the Most Merciful, and I love reciting it in my prayers).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

(Tell him that God also loves him).

Sheikh Al-Sadooq also narrates in his *Al-Tawheed* from Imam Al-Sadeq (peace be upon him) that he stated:

(The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) prayed on the corpse of Saad bin Maath. He said: “Seventy thousand angels are delegated to pray on his corpse, including Gabriel. I asked Gabriel what made him come and pray for him. He replied: Because he kept reciting “Say God is the One” in all his conditions, standing, sitting, riding, walking, going, and coming).

Why Was This Chapter Revealed?

The Quranic verses are revealed due to two factors:

First Factor:

These verses are revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to be a guideline to monotheism and faith, illuminating the path of people to God. In other words, there are no specific historical events that led to the revelation of these verses.

Second Factor:

Some specific or unique events or certain queries or challenges require the revelation of these verses. They tended to solve problems, answer questions, or guide people to the safe side.

These conditions required the revelation of certain verses. They are called 'reasons of revelation' by the Muslims. Thus, the reasons for disclosure refer to specific historical contexts in the early years of Islam that required the revelation of these verses to solve specific problems or answer particular questions.

The chapter on 'Ekhlas' includes the most fundamental Islamic essentials, including monotheism, attributions of God, and His features. They are necessary guidelines to confront any opposing idea. Moreover, according to some Hadiths, this chapter coincided with the queries of the infidels and polytheists of Mecca.

In Tafseer Majma Al-Baian by Al-Saiooti, Obai bin Kaab and Jaber bin Abdullah Al-Ansari narrate: "The polytheists asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to describe God. Later, this chapter was revealed".

In *Al-Tawheed* by Sheikh Al-Sadooq, Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) stated:

(The Jews asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household): "Describe your Lord." He waited for three days, and then this chapter was revealed).

The same event is narrated by Ibn Abas from the Prophet

(peace be upon him and his Household).

In *Majma Al-Baian* and *Asbab Al-Nozool* by Al-Saiooti, Qotada and Al-Dahak narrate that once, some rabbis asked about the attributions of God, and then this chapter was revealed.

There is a probability that the difference in the place and time of the revelation of this chapter resulted in different narrations. Some interpreters believe it was revealed in Mecca, while others think it was revealed in Medina.

Some narrators, including Ibn Abas, believe that those who asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) about the attributions of the Lord were from Quraish, which means that it was revealed in Mecca. Other narrators believe that some rabbis in Medina were the askers.

Other sources mention that the asker was Abdullah bin Salam, and when this chapter was revealed in Mecca, the man converted to Islam. Yet, he did not announce his Islam until the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) emigrated to Medina.

This chapter was probably revealed in Mecca according to the narrated Hadiths. Moreover, the verses of this chapter encounter the doctrinal principles, which is the style of those chapters revealed in Mecca. In those early years, Islam was still working on stabilizing its roots. It mainly appealed to the instinct of people, which is the origin of faith in belief in God. According to the style and ideas of this chapter, it is probable that this chapter was revealed in Mecca.

Contents of 'Ekhlās'

One of the most important things that this chapter was keen to maintain was monotheism and implanting it in the heart and mind of any Muslim. It emphasizes the concept of the Oneness of God. There is no truth but His. The entire universe is dependent on His existence. It finds its validity only in His Truth, which is the Eternity of God. He has no associate or equal in features and decisions (greatly Exalted is God). Everything in this universe is only part of what God granted to this existence.

The Oneness of God is not only attributed to His existence: it is also a feature of His actions. Nothing can do anything without the support of God, disregarding the title of these individuals (close angels, prophets, or others).

(**The One**) mentioned in this chapter signify all these meanings. This Oneness is different from the word 'one.' Oneness is a unique feature that cannot be used for anything that can be more than one or counted. Any 'one' can be two or three. This may take place both physically and mentally. On the other hand, the One, or Oneness, cannot have any equal or second.

Therefore, God stated (**The One**) rather than 'one.' Oneness here cannot be divided or counted in existence or features. One may have two, whereas the One cannot have equal or similar.

God is the First, the Last, the Revealed, the Hidden, the One, the Creator, the Maker, and the Giver of existence to all things. He is the only One Who is necessary to exist, whereas

anything else can exist. Everything in this universe must depend on Him because He is the One with Power. As stated in the chapter, he is described with the word (Eternal). This word is precise and accurate.

Eternity here matches the meaning of Oneness. This refers to God as the only source of bestowal. Everything in the universe depends on Him, whereas He is the Most Wealthy, the Praiseworthy.

(**The Eternal**) in the chapter, He is the One Who fulfills the needs of people. Everything is dependent on Him and needs Him to exist and survive. God states in the Quran:

(Is it not His to create and to govern?) Araf/54

He also states:

(That to thy Lord is the final Goal). Najm/42

He also states:

(Say, "O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will, and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will, and You humble whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent). Al Emran/26

In Al-Tawheed by Sheikh Al-Sadooq, Jaber bin Yazeed Al-Jofi narrates that one day, he asked Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) about the topic of monotheism. The Imam replied:

(In fact, God exalted be His names, by which He is prayed, are sublime. He is the One by Unification. He executed it on His creation. He is the One, Eternal, Sainted, worshipped by

everything, on Whom everything is dependent, and Whose Knowledge comprehended everything).

(He executed it on His creation) means He granted this meaning and belief to His product in their instinct.

(On Whom everything is dependent): this refers to the instinct which God created.

Once, Dawood bin Al-Qasem Al-Jafari asked Imam Al-Jawad (peace be upon him) about the meaning of the Eternal. The Imam replied:

(He is the Lord to Which everything is dependent).

The first two verses of this chapter present the concept of the Oneness of God. The rest of the chapter defies what opposes this concept.

(He neither begets nor is born). Because God is the One and Eternal, any other feature that opposes these two must be rejected. God does not deliver any son and is not born by any parent. He is not begotten by anyone, as the polytheists used to claim and believe.

One of the features of this Oneness is that He does not have any associate or partner in His kingdom. He does not have any opponents in leadership. Nothing resembles Him. He does not need any help or support from anyone. He is the One and Eternal.

(Nor is there to Him any equivalent). He is independent in His kingdom, creation, and decision-making. Nothing resembles Him. He does not need anyone or anything. Nothing

shares His features. In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(God is too Exalted to have resemblance).

Imam Husain (peace be upon him) clarified this idea beautifully and perfectly. In a letter to the people of Basra, Imam Husain (peace be upon him) described the meaning of the Eternal. Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) narrates:

(The people of Basra asked Husain bin Ali (peace be upon them) about the meaning of the Eternal. He replied:

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful: do not dive deep into the Quran and do not debate about it; do not speak about it without knowledge. I have heard my grandfather (peace be upon him and his Household) state:

(Whoever interprets the Quran without knowledge should be prepared to enter Hell).

God Himself interpreted the meaning of the Eternal:

(God is the One. God is the Eternal). Then He interpreted these verses:

(He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent).

(He neither begets) means nothing comes out of Him, like a son or any other dirty thing from other creatures.

Nothing is ethereal like the Self. He does not have acts or feelings like others, like sleep, memory, grief, sadness, joy, laughter, crying, fear, hope, desire, tiresome, hunger, and satiety. Nothing gets out of Him, like a son, tangible or ethereal.

(Nor is born) means He is neither born out of something nor came out of something, as other things are born or created out of different things, or animals from animals, plants from the earth, water from springs, or fruits from trees. He is not like ethereal things created out of other things like the sight from the eyes, hearing from the ears, smelling from the nose, or tasting from the mouth...). To clarify this point, it means the creation of these senses in these organs. (... or speech from the tongue, learning, recognition from the heart, or fire from the stone. He is the Eternal God Who exists not from things, inside, or on things. He is the designer of things and their Creator. He creates things by His power. He annihilates things by His will and keeps others by His knowledge. He is the Eternal God Who neither begets nor is born. He is the Most Knowledgeable of the hidden and revealed worlds. He is the Most Exalted, the Most Powerful.

(Nor is there to Him any equivalent) Thus, there is no equivalent to Him, neither in this existence nor potentially. His features do not have any resemblance. Nothing can be His rival or parallel. His existence depends on Himself, without needing anything or anyone else).

Interpretation of 'Ekhlās'

This blessed chapter includes sufficient answers to all the questions raised about God's existence and His Oneness, features, and other related topics.

The leaders of polytheists, Jews, and Christians asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to describe

the attributions of God. Afterward, God revealed the chapter of 'Ekhlās,' which includes the answer to all their questions.

It is a fantastic example of monotheism. It is narrated from Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) that he stated:

(God already knew that some people would deeply engage in knowledge at the end of times. Thus, He revealed this chapter).

Osool Al-Kafi narrated from Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) that he stated:

(God already knew that some people would deeply engage in knowledge at the end of times. Thus, He revealed this chapter, "Say God is One." He also revealed the verses of the chapter of 'Hadeed': "He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant and the Intimate, and He is, of all things, Knowing. He created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He knows what penetrates the earth, what emerges from it, what descends from the heaven, and what ascends therein; He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing. His is the dominion of the heavens and earth. And to Allah are returned [all] matters. He causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night, and he knows of that within the breasts").

Thus, this chapter sought to answer the questions of the early polytheists and those learned people at the end of times. We must acknowledge that the Quran is for all people, in all times and places. It addresses all minds with various cultural and academic backgrounds.

In this regard, the chapter on 'Tawheed' presents a

complete image of monotheism. It equals the blessing of one-third of the Quran because it includes the essential guidelines for the pure understanding of the features of God. It is the most profound idea that Heaven may reveal.

This chapter confronts all the misconceptions about God that are the product of the human mind. These wrong ideas are the whispers of demons to humans.

This chapter was revealed to clarify Islamic monotheism. In the same context, the chapter on 'Kaferoon' nullifies all the ideas of polytheism adopted on the opposite front of Islamic theology. These two chapters encounter all the positive and negative arguments related to monotheism. The Quran also maintains many other verses in this regard, such as the following:

(And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful). Baqara/163

(Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence). Baqara/255

(Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence). Al Emran/ 2

(There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise). Al Emran/18

(There is no deity except Him, the Creator of all things). Anam/102

(Allah! There is no god but He! To Him belong the most Beautiful Names). Taha/8

(Allah - there is no deity except Him, Lord of the Great Throne). Naml/26

(Allah: there is no god but He: all things He comprehends in His knowledge). Taha/98

(He is the Ever-Living; there is no deity except Him, so call upon Him, [being] sincere to Him in religion). Gafer/65

(There is no deity except Him; He gives life and causes death. [He is] your Lord and the Lord of your first forefathers). Dokan/8

(He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, Knower of the unseen and the witnessed. He is the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful. He is Allah, other than whom there is no deity, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Perfection, the Bestower of Faith, the Overseer, the Exalted in Might, the Compeller, the Superior. Exalted is Allah above whatever they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor, the Fashioner; to Him belong the best names. Whatever is in the heavens and earth is exalting Him. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise). Hashr/22-24

(That is Allah, your Lord, Creator of all things; there is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?). Ghafer/62

The statement “There is no God but Allah” includes all the monotheistic values, which have no parallel. It contains both negative and positive aspects. It nullifies the existence of any God rather than Allah. Accordingly, it signifies all the features of divine perfection.

The previous statement quilts a set of other attributions: the Most Merciful, the Most Graceful, the Most Eternal, the Wisest, the Creator, the Most Knowledgeable, the Giver of Life

and Death, the King, the Peace, the Believer, the Dominant, the Most Loved, the Mighty, the Magnificent, to Whom the Throne and beautiful Names belong.

This chapter defies any feature that does not fit His divine attributions. Therefore, the chapter addresses the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household):

(Say...).

It means that you speak what you have in mind. The order 'Say' refers to specific ideas:

First: The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) never speaks, depending on revelation. If he speaks from his ideas, they are all inspired by Heaven.

Second: One must express what he has in mind and heart. The doctrine of monotheism must be revealed by all means possible. The polytheists must recognize them.

Third: It is necessary to express monotheistic ideas publicly. It should not remain a matter of consciousness. It should be clearly defined to the deniers of God's unification. In this regard, Imam Jafar Al-Sadeq narrates from his father Imam Baqer (peace be upon them) when he interpreted the verse: (Say: "God is the One"). The Imam stated:

((Say) means publicly express what was revealed to you and utter the words that We conveyed to you so that you guide those who hear you; God is the best Witness).

Thus, the word (Say) is an order to express what is in the heart and guide those who have lost the way, deny God's

existence, or associate other gods with Him.

(Say) This statement defies all false ideas: (Say) these are God's attributions. **(Say)** that my God is entirely different from your gods.

This chapter has various names. They are derived from the meanings this chapter carries. They are the following:

- 1- Unification.
- 2- Divestiture.
- 3- Devotion.
- 4- Monotheism.
- 5- Guardianship.
- 6- Salvation.
- 7- Attribution.
- 8- Acknowledgment.
- 9- Beauty.
- 10- Vindicator.
- 11- Protector.
- 12- The Eternal.
- 13- Basis.
- 14- Preventer.
- 15- Presenter.
- 16- Summoner.
- 17- Renunciation.
- 18- Reminder.
- 19- The Light.
- 20- Safety.

It is called 'Unification' because it emphasizes the Oneness of God.

It is called 'the Divestiture' because it exalts God from any undivinely attribution.

It is called 'Devotion' because it teaches the true meaning of devotion to God.

It is called 'Monotheism' because it emphasizes the meaning of God's unification.

It is called 'Guardianship' because it shows the dominance of God over mind, worship, and abidance.

It is called 'Salvation' because its guidelines save people from polytheism and all forms of disbelief.

It is called 'Attribution' because it presents the primary attributions of God, which humans can understand and comprehend.

It is called 'Acknowledgement' because it invites people to acknowledge the existence of God.

It is called 'Beauty' because it shows the beauty of God through His attributions.

It is called 'Vindicator' and 'Protector' from the demons and their followers.

It is called 'the Eternal' because God is not a body and does not have human features.

It is called 'Basis' because it is the basis of religion and doctrine.

It is called 'Preventer' because it prevents deviation from the right path.

It is called 'Summoner' because one can summon the close angels by reciting it.

It is called 'Renunciation' because one renounces the doctrine of polytheism by reciting it.

It is called 'Reminder' because it reminds its reader of the existence of God and His attributions.

It is called 'the Light' because it illuminates the mind with valuable ideas and doctrine.

It is called 'Safety' because it safeguards its believer in this world and the Hereafter.

(Say: "God is the One").

God is not a human. He cannot be thought of as a person or group of individuals. No space or time can limit His presence. He is beyond the comprehension of the senses.

He cannot be seen by eyes, not because He hides behind veils. No person or thing can grasp Him by sight.

He cannot be comprehended in any sense, as stated in the Quran:

(No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things). Anam/103

He is beyond the ability of the senses to grasp Him, as clarified by Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

(He cannot be sensed, felt, touched, or caught by the five senses).

Despite this, He is closer to us than our jugular vein.

The pronoun 'He' here refers to an unwrapped fact. Codes best understand him. His essence is a mystery, though He is present everywhere. His nature is different from all other natures because nothing can resemble Him, as explained by Imam Baqer (peace be upon him):

(‘He’ is a pronoun that refers to individuals who can be seen and absent when they are not here. The infidels referred to their gods with this pronoun. Once, they told the Prophet: “These are our observable and seen gods. So Muhammed, you used the same pronoun with your God. We have to see Him so that we worship Him”. Then, God revealed: “Say: God is the One.” [In Howa: He] ‘H’ is a reference to the stable nature of God, and ‘wa’ is a reference to the One Who is beyond the grasp of eyes and sense. God is Exalted from all these. He is the One Who feels all senses, the creator of vision and other senses).

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) recited in his supplications:

(O ‘Howa’, there is no ‘Howa’ but ‘Howa’).

Only God has perfect complete attributions. He is a thing but not like any other thing. He is like what the Imam described:

(He is beyond the two limits: the limit of nullification and the limit of resemblance).

He is hidden as the Self but evident in signs.

A hidden person is absent because he is not in this place,

though he is felt and sensed. Others are absent because they are located in some other times: past or future. Things may be hidden because they are small in size. Sometimes, things cannot be seen because there is a problem with vision. They cannot be seen because we do not have the proper instrument to see them. However, they are present and can be seen once these veils are removed.

On the other hand, the nature of God is an eternal sublime. He cannot be grasped by vision. Only His signs can be comprehended.

He is like what a philosopher described in his poem:

He is the One Who hid because of the exaggeration of His Light.

He is revealed and hidden in all conditions.

With the Light of His Face, everything is illuminated.

All other things are nothing but darkness when compared with His Light.

Thus, the pronoun 'He' refers to divinity. God is hidden through the occult, though He is as apparent as the noontime sun.

The pronoun 'He' (Howa) is an occult name of God. It is a pronoun of the person who is not present. God is entirely unseen but not absent.

In *Al-Tawheed*, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(I had seen prophet Khudr (peace be upon him) in a dream the night before the battle of Badr. I told him:

“teach me something with which I can be victorious over the enemies.” He told me: “Say: O Howa [He], there is no Howa but Howa.” The following day, I told the dream to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household). He stated: “Ali, you are taught the Greatest of Names.” So I kept reciting it on the day of Badr).

(He is Allah).

(Allah) is the revealed or prominent name of God. It is derived from (Aleha) which means wondering or inability to catch the true essence of God. He is the true worshipped God, and there is no other god to be worshipped.

It is also derived from (Elah) which means all the creation failed to comprehend His true nature. Thus, they sought refuge in Him. It is a name that is uniquely His. As no one or anything can share His practical features, it is also impossible for anyone or anything to share His name. In *Al-Tawheed* by Sheikh Al-Sadooq, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(‘Allah’ means the Worshipped about Whom the creation are wondering and to Whom they resort. Allah is hidden from sights, imagination, and fantasy).

In the same source, Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) stated:

(‘Allah’ means the Worshipped about Whose nature and essence people are wondering).

The name ‘Allah’ is repeated 980 times in the Holy Quran. This shows the great emphasis on this name. The name **(Allah)** is an interpretation of the divine pronoun **(He)**, as **(the One)** is the interpretation of **(Allah)**. **(Eternal)** also interprets **(the**

One) and other names mentioned in this chapter.

(Allah is the One).

There are many differences between the One and one.

The One is a unique name that signifies meanings and attributions. As for 'one,' it is part of many other things. The One quilts a group of features that are uniquely for God. They are not as trivial as many other things.

For example, a human is one of a group or people or nation. He is a whole which is consisted of billions of particles and atoms. He is a number that is part of a group. He will be increased by number by begetting sons and grandchildren.

As for God, His Oneness is not part of a sequence of numbers. He is not part of a whole. He is not born, not a number, does not increase, and does not beget any children. He is the Eternal One. He is the One in nature and practice. There is no limit to His Oneness.

It is narrated in the book of Sheikh Al-Sadooq that in the days of the battle of Camel, an Arab asked Imam Ali (peace be upon him): "Do you say that God is one?" The Imam's companions rebuked and silenced him, for his question was not posed at a good time. The Imam stated:

(Let him speak. This man is looking for exactly why we are fighting these people. Behold Arab: when you say that God is one, it has four dimensions. Two cannot be attributed to God, and two can be related to Him.

The two dimensions that cannot be attributed to God are when someone mentions God as one as a number because

when something cannot move from one to two, it cannot be enumerated. Don't you see that those who said (God is the third of the three) have blasphemed? Sometimes, you may say that God is one as if He is one in a group of things or species. This is untrue as well because it is a comparison. And God is too holy to undergo these descriptions and comparisons.

The two other dimensions related to Him are when you say, "God is One without any similar." You may also say, "God is unified in meaning, "He cannot be divided in existence, mind, or imagination. Exalted is our Lord).

God is One as the following:

- 1- Eternal Oneness: without a beginning or end.
- 2- Oneness in Self: without a second or associate.
- 3- Oneness in features: He has no similar.
- 4- His attributions are exactly His Essence: in other words, these attributions do not add any meaning, truth, fact, or perfection to His Essence.
- 5- Oneness in Immortality: He is the only Immortal Self in this existence. He is the First and the Last.
- 6- He is the One in Creation. He states in the Quran:

(Is there any creator other than Allah?) Fater/3

(Allah is the Creator of all things: He is the One, the Supreme and Irresistible). Raad/16

There is no other creator but Him unless He grants permission.

He also states:

(When you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission). Maeda/110

It means he is dependent on God in this creation.

7- Oneness in worship: nothing else is deserved to be worshipped. God states in the Quran:

(And that you worship [only] Me? This is a straight path). Yaseen/61

(So invoke Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion). Gafer/14

Thus, He is the One in all features and practices. He cannot be divided into parts. He is different from His creation. Anything except God that is named is created. He is not unified with His creation. His Oneness distinguishes Him from this existence. This distinction is an attribute rather than detachment. He is the Creator Lord and not created worshipper, as explained in a Hadith.

He is One, not as a number. He is the One without a second. He cannot be enumerated. He cannot be diverse in nature or meaning, though 'one' is part of a sequence of numbers:

1- One, two....

2- I am one, consisting of millions of particles, whereas 'the One' as divine attribution quilts all the proving and negating features. It is completed with 'Eternity.' Thus, the Oneness of the Self, of Giving, of Eternity, and Divinity, all undergo the term 'Oneness.'

(Allah, the Eternal, Absolute).

(Howa) is the interpretation of **(Allah)** and **(Oneness)**. ‘The Eternal’ also interprets **(He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him)**.

In Tawheed, Al-Sadooq mentions that imam Baqer (peace be upon him) referred to the event in which Imam Husain (peace be upon him) replied to the letter of the people of Basra when they asked him about the meaning of ‘the Eternal’:

(In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful: do not dive deep into the Quran and do not debate about it; do not speak about it without knowledge. I have heard my grandfather (peace be upon him and his Household) state: (Whoever interprets the Quran without knowledge should be prepared to enter Hell). God Himself interpreted the meaning of the Eternal:(God is the One. God is the Eternal). Then He interpreted these verses:(He neither begets nor is born. Nor is there to Him any equivalent). And (the Eternal) means the One who does not have cavities; He is not a body. He is not spiritual because He includes all the perfect unlimited attributions. He does not lack any features. He does not have any spiritual emptiness).

Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) stated:

(He is the Eternal without any threshold).

Everything has an entry and beginning.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) also stated:

(He is the Eternal without being enumerated).

The Eternal cannot be divided or enumerated. He does not

have any beginning or an end.

Any matter must be composed of particles and parts. Any matter must also have hollowness or emptiness. Otherwise, it will not be a matter. The matter is empty in physical and spiritual meanings: it is empty in shape and features because it lacks many perfect features.

Therefore, the matter is not eternal. God is eternal because He does not have any emptiness. He is not material to have material emptiness. In this regard, any temporal feature does not fit His nature. God is Eternal and Perfect.

The Eternal, thus, is the reference point of all perfections, Who has no end for His sublime attributions.

In Tawheed, Al-Sadooq narrates from Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) that he mentioned the Hadith of his grandfather Imam Husain (peace be upon him):

(The Eternal means He has no hollowness. The Eternal means He does not sleep. The Eternal means He was, and He still is).

Majma Al-Baian narrates that a man asked Imam Ali (peace be upon him) about the meaning of this sentence:

(Say, “Allah is the One.” He cannot be interpreted with enumeration. He is the Eternal Who cannot be divided or dispersed).

(He is the Eternal Who cannot be divided or scattered).

It means that God does not need space to be divided and dispersed. He is not a body. He is the Eternal Who does not

have a hollow.

Muhammed bin Muslim narrated from Imam Jafar Al-Sadeq (peace be upon him) that he stated:

(The Jews asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household): “What are God’s attributions?” He waited for three days, and then this chapter was revealed).

I asked: “What is the meaning of the Eternal?”

He replied:

(It means the One Who does not have any hollow).

It is also narrated from him that he stated:

(He is the Eternal Who does not have any threshold).

(He begetteth not, nor is He begotten)

He is neither a father, as the trinity theology claims, nor a son with a parent, as they believe. He “begetteth not.” His creation is not like begetting children. All these illusions are false.

He “begetteth not.” He created all the creation from nothing. He did not create things by detaching them from Himself, but they are created from nothingness. Thus, they cannot be immortal like Him.

“Nor is He begotten” means He is not born in illusion, so He becomes an imaginary God, Who does not have any reality. He is not born from another god, so He has a beginning point in time. He is too Exalted to be begotten by anyone, so He finally dies. He is not begotten, so He has an associate.

According to the interpretation of Imam Husain (peace be upon him), we may understand this idea better:

((He neither begets) means nothing comes out of Him, like a son or any other dirty thing that comes out of other creatures. Nothing is ethereal like the Self. He does not have acts or feelings like others, like sleep, memory, grief, sadness, joy, laughter, crying, fear, hope, desire, tiresome, hunger, and satiety. Nothing gets out of Him, like a son, tangible or ethereal. (Nor is born) means He is neither born out of something nor came out of something, as other things are born or created out of different things, or animals from animals, plants from the earth, water from springs, or fruits from trees. He is not like ethereal things created out of other things like the sight from the eyes, hearing from the ears, smelling from the nose, tasting from the mouth or speech from the tongue, learning and recognition from the heart, or fire from the stone. He is the Eternal God Who exists not from things, inside, or on things. He is the designer of things and their Creator. He creates things by His power. He annihilates things by His will and keeps others by His knowledge. He is the Eternal God Who neither begets nor is born. He is the Most Knowledgeable of the hidden and revealed worlds. He is the Most Exalted, the Most Powerful. Nor is there to Him any equivalent).

(Nor is there to Him any equivalent).

It means that there is nobody in all times who can be equivalent to Him in divinity. Nothing can support or confront Him. He does not have any equivalent, not in the form of a parent or son.

In his reply to the people of Palestine, Imam Baqer (peace

be upon him) stated:

(He does not have any equivalent so that he shares Him in His kingdom and the glory of divinity).

Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) also stated:

(He does not beget any son because children are similar to their father. He is not begotten because He resembles those who preceded Him. He does not have any equivalent among His creatures. Exalted is He from having a match).

Thus, He is the Eternal One in divinity without any equivalent. He is the Creator, the Granter, the Giver of life and death, the Succeder, the Supporter, the Guider, the Owner of the Religion, Who has no equivalent. He only sent some messengers to call to His path, and they have no other matter in life.

The last verse of this chapter shows that God neither begets a son nor is begotten. Otherwise, His son or parents would be equivalent to Him. This idea is entirely rejected in the Quran.

This sacred chapter negates any feature that does not fit the nature of God and confirms His attributions. This chapter summarizes the attributes of God. Other details are found in a quarter or one-third of the Quran.

This chapter, then, proposes the most observable proofs of monotheism. Each verse interprets the preceding and following ones. For example, (Allah) interprets (Howa). In other words, the Occult One is named Allah. Other names are not gods. (Allah) is the One. Complete Oneness is an attribution of the Unseen, Who is (Howa). (Allah is the One)

is followed by (the Eternal, the Absolute). It means that He does not have any hollowness or emptiness. Otherwise, He would disperse, negating His feature of Oneness. In this case, He lacks perfection. So, because He is (the Eternal), He also (begets not nor is begotten) because a parent is not one whole: he is divisible. Thus, He is One Eternal. Nothing gets out of Him because He does not have parts. Any limits do not bind him. (Nor is begotten) because reproduction is a feature of an incomplete creature. As long as He is Eternal, He does not need to reproduce.

(And there is none like unto Him). If God had an equivalent, it means that He reproduces. He does not beget children since He is Eternal.

An equivalent must be an independent creature from God. In this case, it becomes limited, lacking sublime perfect features. As mentioned earlier, the Eternal Unlimited God is indivisible. Division is a limit, and it cannot be applied to the nature of God. He does not have any associates. He does not have a son, parent, or associate god. He does not have any equivalent.

Finally, we see the lord of the fluent preachers, the Imam of monotheists, Imam Ali (peace be upon him), summarizes the meaning of this chapter:

(Say, “Allah is the One.” He cannot be interpreted with enumeration. He is the Eternal Who cannot be divided or dispersed. He does not beget any son, so He is doomed to cherish. He is not begotten so that other gods share His glory. There is no equivalent to Him among His creatures).

Once More, with the Interpretation of “Ekhlās”

This small chapter in the number of verses, yet significant in meanings and connotations, equals one-third of the Quran, as announced in some Hadiths. Once, a person heard another one reciting this chapter repeatedly. The following day, he asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) about what he saw. The Prophet replied:

(By the One Who has my life at His Hand, it equals one-third of the Quran).

Another Hadith mentions that Imam Ali (peace be upon him) used to recite it in his prayers after ‘Al-Fatiha.’ A man told the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) about it. He replied:

(By the One Who has my life at His Hand, it equals one-third of the Quran).

One must not be surprised when he hears about the greatness of this chapter because it includes the basics of the doctrine of Islamic monotheism. It contains the Oneness of God, which was imposed on the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to be announced: **(Say: “God is the One”)**. This Oneness is an interpretation of the existence, the doctrine of the conscious, and the method of life. It contains the main guidelines of the facts of Islam.

(Say: “God is the One”) is different from number one. The verse announces that God is the One who has no equivalent.

God is the One without any resemblance. This Oneness reveals the truth of this existence. It also refers to the truth of the independent Self. He is the only One Who is the ultimate

Doer independently.

If this meaning is absorbed by the heart, all misconceptions or veils will be removed. It links the heart with the ultimate One Eternal God. Afterward, an individual shall not see anything in this universe by the existence of God. No action is independent of the Will of God.

When the heart reaches the level in which it does not sense anything in this universe except the existence of God, this ultimate Truth will become exalted and superior to everything around it. It will break all material chains and false illusions. Such an individual will be emancipated from his desires, weakness, and other worldly chains.

There will be no place for weakness because he will be united with the Eternal One. He will lose nothing once he finds God. He will fear nothing when everything undergoes the will of God.

When this idea and doctrine is implanted in the mind and absorbed by the heart, such a person sees nothing but the Truth of God. It accompanies him at all times and places. He sees the Power of God in everything because they are His creation. He will sublimate to a point where he only sees God because He is the only ultimate eternal Truth.

As this doctrine leads the individual to see nothing but the Truth of God, he will attribute everything in this universe to Him because He is the First Creator.

This doctrine is significantly highlighted in the Quran. It explains this method to everyone, including removing all veils

hiding this truth. For example, God states in the Quran:

(And you do not will except that Allah wills - Lord of the worlds). Takweer/29

God also states:

(When thou threwest, it was not thy act, but Allah's).
Anfal/17

He also states:

(And victory is not but from Allah). Al Emran/126

Many other verses show God only has the ultimate choice and decision. Everything is related to the first Causer, the Causer of all causes. This form of faith grants serenity to the heart of the believer. Then, he recognizes that God only has power over all the heavens and the earth. He will feel secure at times of adversity and trials because he knows that these obstacles and problems have no actual existence. After all, the only true existence is that of God. He is the Provider of life to everything in this universe.

God wants all people to tread upon this path toward this ultimate Truth, despite all the troubles in this life, which is the divine successorship God granted to humans. He knows all its requirements. In this regard, these believers are confident that the only actual existence of God is His existence.

This interpretation springs from this honest and total devotion to God, representing servitude, faith, contentment, abidance, and embracing the divine will.

This is, in fact, a method of worshipping God. It is a method of learning from God the principles of belief, perception, moral

values and standards, and obligations.

It is a method of living by divine standards to get closer to the ultimate truth. It facilitates our mission of removing all the veils that blind us from seeing the Glory of God.

In addition to its approximating one's position to God, it also binds the heart with all existence with the tie of love, compassion, and affection.

It is a transcendental method. It shows how this life is short and limited. It guides us to overcome all obstacles to the sublime goal. Yet, this does not mean that we must be detached from this life or hate or run from this world. It means that we must work to transcend in our servitude to God. We should improve human life to break all the chains that hold humanity from accomplishing its mission. It is the only path to finding true humanity. It is the path to free the soul to transcend to its divine source while still in this life.

It is a troublesome taming of the self. Yet, it is the only means to achieve humanity. It is the means to maintain transcendence to sublime divine levels so that we become qualified to carry the message God entrusted.

It is the core of monotheism that God instructed. In this context, monotheism is a framework for understanding and interpreting existence. It is a method for life. It is not a simple word uttered by the tongue: it is the entire matter, the entire religion. Other details are only the fruits of this Truth.

The origin of all deviations that disoriented the people of the Book before Islam is that they had certain misconceptions

regarding the doctrine of monotheism. What distinguishes Islamic monotheism is that it sought to realize this doctrine in all fields of life and assign it as a method of life. When the Quran mentions these guidelines, that God is One; He is the Eternal and Absolute; He neither begets a son nor is begotten, it seeks to emphasize the meaning of this attitude.

(God is the Eternal, Absolute) means that God is the Independent Lord, Whose permission is necessary to realize things in this world. He is the only Lord in existence. He is the One Who is worshipped by all creatures. He is the only God Who is prayed and realizes wishes. He has no associate with Him in all these dimensions.

(He neither begets a son nor is begotten). It is the ultimate unchangeable truth that everyone accepts. He is the utmost perfection in all conditions. Birth signifies a starting point; it refers to a lack or pre-birth nothingness, which is impossible for God. The divine feature of 'Eternity' means that there is no reproduction process like God.

(Nor is there to Him any equivalent). He is the One Who has no counterpart or rival. Nothing shares anyone of His attributions.

This chapter was revealed to clarify Islamic monotheism. In the same context, the chapter on 'Kaferoon' nullifies all the ideas of polytheism adopted on the opposite front of Islamic theology. These two chapters encounter all the positive and negative beliefs related to monotheism.

Many Hadiths further clarify this doctrine of monotheism. Osool Al-Kafi narrated from Imam Sajad (peace be upon him)

that he stated:

(God already knew that some people would deeply engage in knowledge at the end of times. Thus, He revealed this chapter, “Say God is One.” He also revealed the verses of the chapter of ‘Hadeed’ till the verse: and he knows of that within the breasts. Whoever denies that he will perish).

In Al-Tawheed, Al-Sadooq narrates from Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) the interpretation of the following verse: **(Allah’s handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made humanity)**. The Imam states:

(He created humankind on monotheism).

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) explains monotheism and divine justice in Nahjul Balaga:

(Monotheism means you should not imagine Him, and justice means you should not accuse Him).

Al-Bihar narrates from Ibn Abas that he said: “Once, an Arab asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household):

To teach him the strange parts of knowledge. The Prophet replied:

(Have you ever learned the head of knowledge, and now you are asking about the unknown parts of it?)

The man said: And what is the head of knowledge?

The Prophet stated: **(Knowing God as He deserves).**

He added: **(You should know Him without any identical, resemblance, or equal. He is the One, the Eternal, the**

Revealed, the Hidden, the First, the Last. He does not have any equals or counterparts. That is knowing God as He deserves)".

Once, a man from Khawarij asked Imam Baqer (peace be upon him): "Abu Jafar, what do you worship?" The Imam replied:

(Allah).

The man said: "Have you ever seen Him?" The Imam stated:

(The eyes cannot see Him by vision, but the hearts feel Him by faith. He cannot be recognized by measurement; He can never be felt by sense; He does not resemble people; He is described by verse and identified by signs; He never oppresses in His Kingdom; He is Allah, and there is no God but Him).

It is narrated that the man left the place while whispering: "God is most knowing of where He places His message."

Al-Kafi also narrates from Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) that he stated:

(If all the Hosts of the Heavens and the people of the earth gather to describe God and His Greatness, they will fail).

Once, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was asked: "How did you recognize your Lord?" He replied:

(By annulling the fixed decisions and endeavors. When I intended to do something, I changed my mind; when I decided on something, destiny opposed my decision; thus, I recognized that someone else is the organizer of affairs).

He was also asked: "How do you thank God for His blessings?". He replied:

(I saw how He diverted a trial from me to another person; that was when I recognized what a great bliss He provided to me, so I thanked him).

He was again asked: "Why do you love meeting Him?". He stated:

(When I recognized that He chose the creed of His angels, Messengers, and prophets, I concluded that since He dignified me, He shall never forget me. Thus, I loved meeting Him).

Once, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was asked to prove the existence of God. He stated:

(Droppings refer to the camel, dung refers to the donkeys, and footprints refer to the passing of a human being. So, the accurate heavenly structure and complex earthly construction must refer to the existence of the Wise Knowing God).

He also stated:

(The creation of God refers to His existence. Utilizing minds, we can recognize Him. By thinking, we can prove His existence. He is evident with signs and shreds of evidence).

He was also asked to prove the existence of the Creator. He replied:

(Three things prove His existence: the transformation of conditions, instability of cornerstones, and disruption of final decisions).

Imam Al-Sadeq (peace be upon him) stated:

(Know God by God, the Prophet with his Message, and your Imams with kindness, justice, and beauty of acts).

Moreover, Imam Hasan Al-Askari (peace be upon him) commented on 'In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful':

(God is the refuge in which people seek help in their adversities. They wish for His salvation when there is no hope in the world. You recite: "Bismillah," which means you seek God's help in all your conditions. Only He deserves to be worshipped. He is the Supporter when invoked and Replier when asked).

Once, a man asked Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) about God. He said that he was confused because of the different ideas about him. He replied:

(Have you ever been on a ship?

The man said: Yes

The Imam stated: Did it wreck, and there was no place to which you may resort, and you were sure that even swimming could not rescue you?

He said: Indeed.

The Imam stated: Did your heart hover around something that would rescue you?

He said: Yes.

The Imam replied: That thing is God, Who is capable of

saving the crushed person at hopeless moments and rescuing the one who has no solution).

Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) also states:

(No deed is accepted unless there is an acknowledgment of Him. There is no acknowledgment without work).

It is narrated from Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) that he stated:

(If people knew the grace of knowing God, they would never wish what is at the hand of their enemies of these worldly gifts. They would see this world as a small one. They would be in the eternal bliss of knowing God, enjoying it as if they were in Heaven with its Hosts. Knowing God is the safehouse from any fear, companion in any loneliness, light in any darkness, strength in any weakness, and healing from any illness).

Then, the Imam stated:

(There were people before you who were killed, burned, and sawed; they had no place in this big world. Yet, they never compensate for their belief. No adversity or trial could change their mind. They were the site of torture only because they believed in God. So, ask your Lord to grant you their level, and be patient with the trials of life so that you achieve their position).

Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) states:

(The divinely acknowledging person: his body is with people, and his heart is with God. If his heart forgets God for a moment, he will die yearning for Him. The divinely acknowledging person is trustworthy with the secrets of

God; he is the cave of His Lights, the path to His Mercy over the creation, the carrier of His Knowledge, and the measure of His Grace and Justice. He is independent of all the creation, all desires, and all the world. He does not have a close friend but God. He cannot speak or move or breathe away without God. He is sojourning in the Paradise of God. His bliss rains on him. Knowing God is the principle, and faith is the branch).

Al-Sadooq narrates in his *Al-Tawheed* from Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) that he stated:

(God has forbidden the flesh of the monotheists to be touched by the fire of Hell).

Imam Reda (peace be upon him) narrated from his forefathers from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) that he stated:

(The price of monotheism is Heaven).

Imam Sadeq (peace be upon him) also narrates that once, a man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household): “Our beloved Messenger of God, is there a price for Heaven?”. The Prophet replied:

(Yes.)

The man said: “What is it?”

He stated: **(Reciting devotedly, “there is no God but Allah.”)**

The man said: “What is its devotion?”

He stated: **(Abiding by what I have been appointed with**

and loving my Household).

He said: “My lord, and loving the Household is part of it?”

The Prophet stated: **(Their love is of the most significant rights).**

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) also stated:

1- (Knowledge is the light of hearts, and monotheism is the life of selves).

2- (Knowledge leads to winning sacredness).

3- (Knowledge is the proof of superiority).

4- (Learning is the first proof, and knowledge is the last seal).

5- (The fruit of knowledge is the recognition of God, and the fruit of faith is winning what God saves [for His servants]).

6- (The fruit of knowledge is being detached from this world).

7- (I wonder about those who recognize God but do not fear Him).

8- (I wonder about those who recognize God but do not work on winning the afterlife prize).

9- (God is known for disrupting final decisions, nulling contracts, and saving those who believe devotedly).

10- (The goal of recognition is fearing God).

11- (Whoever identifies himself, he identifies his Lord).

12- (Whoever recognizes God, he perfects his knowledge).

13- (Whoever acknowledges God becomes superior).

14- (Recognizing God is the most sublime form of knowledge).

In the Arms of (He) in “Say: God is the One”

(He) is a pronoun that refers to God. It means that He is the Everlasting Present. For linguists, He is the subject of the sentence, and for people of divine knowledge, He is complete by Himself. He is the only Entity Who fills their hearts.

Some people of divine knowledge claim that (Howa) or the Arabic pronoun ‘He’ has many meanings concerning God. The letter ‘H’ is created in the vocal cords without obstacles. As for ‘w,’ it is created by the lips, the last organ of the language production factory. Symbolically, this pronoun of God begins everything and seals everything. The Quran presents it as (He is the First and the Last).

A mystic narrates that once, he saw a person who was deeply engaged and devoted to God. He says: “What is your name?” He said: “He.” I said: “Who are you?” He replied: “He.” I said: “Who is Ibn Yahya?” He replied: “He.” “What do you mean by He?” I asked. He said: “He.” He answered all my questions with “He.” I said: “Do you mean God?”. He screamed and fell dead.

Others claim that God reveals secrets when one recites “He” devotedly. He also shows what is there in the heart by His other names.

Fakhr Al-Razi narrates that some mystics believe God's most significant name is "He." When some people tend to emphasize the tone of their prayers, they say: "O He, there is no He but He. He grants identity to every He". They interpret this saying as the following:

First: the pronoun 'He' refers to an absent Entity, Which includes all attribution of glory and perfection. He exists by Himself independently; He is the Creator of existence. He is the Eternal One. Other creatures do not see him because He is impossible to be divided. He is unchangeable. Thus, there is no familial relationship between Him and other creatures. All the attributions of 'He' do not fit anyone but God. 'He' is the unique name of God.

Second: the fact that all creatures depend on God is mentally acknowledged. It is a necessity. Therefore, God states in the Quran:

(If indeed thou ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they would indeed say, "Allah"). Zomar/38

Therefore, the pronoun 'He' in this context refers to the Creator Who molded all creatures and minds.

'He' refers to the fact that God is the unveiled Eternal Secret. He is also the most apparent Entity due to all the signs that refer to His existence. Accordingly, 'He' is the greatest of all names of God.

A mystic proposed that 'He' is the name that grants the heart's serenity. Those who devotedly recite His name will find its sweetness, security, and breeze. It purifies the hearts

of any wrong idea.

‘He’ is the most glorious name because it guides you to the divine Truth. Other names of God do not have such an impact. Each refers to one attribution. Accordingly, some scholars believe these attributions do not complete God because He is Perfect independently. ‘He’ guides you to the source of glory, mercy, and sublimity.

‘He’ is the reward of those close individuals to God who won a serene heart. When this name is absorbed by the heart, there is no more place for anything else.

The name ‘He’ was mentioned many times in the Quran:

(Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence). Baqara/255, Al Emran/2

(He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Might, the Wise. He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: In it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning)). Al Emran/6-7

(Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him, the Exalted in Might, the Wise). Al Emran/18

(It is He who created you from clay and then decreed a term and a specified time [known] to Him; then [still] you are in dispute. And He is Allah, [the only deity] in the heavens and the earth. He knows your secret and what you make public, and He knows that which you earn). Anam/2-3

(And if Allah should touch you with adversity, there is no remover except Him. And if He touches you with good - then He is competent. And He is the subjugator over His servants. And He is the Wise, the Acquainted [with all]. Say, "What thing is greatest in testimony?" Say, "Allah is witness between me and you. And this Qur'an was revealed to me that I might warn you and whomever it reaches. Do you [truly] testify that with Allah there are other deities?" Say, "I will not testify [with you]." Say, "Indeed, He is but one God, and indeed, I am free of what you associate [with Him]").
Anam/17-19

(The decision is only for Allah. He relates the truth, and He is the best of deciders). Anam/57

(And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls, but He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkneses of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record. And He takes your souls by night and knows what you have committed by day. Then He revives you therein that a specified term may be fulfilled. Then to Him will be your return; He will inform you about what you used to do. And He is the subjugator over His servants, and He sends you guardian angels until, when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him, and they do not fail [in their duties]. Then His servants are returned to Allah, their true Lord. Unquestionably, His is the judgment, and He is the swiftest of accountants).
Anam/59-62

(Say, "He is the [one] Able to send upon you affliction from

above you or from beneath your feet or to confuse you [so you become]sects and make you taste the violence of one another.” Look how We diversify the signs that they might understand). Anam/65

(To establish regular prayers and to fear Allah: for it is to Him that we shall be gathered together. It is He who created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): the day He saith, “Be,” behold! It is. His word is the truth. His will be the dominion the day the trumpet will be blown. He knoweth the unseen as well as that which is open. He is the Wise, well acquainted (with all things)). Anam/72-73

(It is He Who maketh the stars (as beacons) for you, that ye may guide yourselves, with their help, through the dark spaces of land and sea: We detail Our signs for people who know. It is He Who hath produced you from a single person: here is a place of sojourn and a place of departure: We detail Our signs for people who understand. It is He Who sendeth down rain from the skies: with it; We produce vegetation of all kinds: from some, We produce green (crops), out of which We make grain, heaped up (at harvest); out of the date-palm and its sheaths (or spathes) (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near: and (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety): when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! There are signs for people who believe). Anam/97-99

(To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: How can He have a son when He hath no consort? He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things.

That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, the Creator of all things: then worship ye Him, and He has the power to dispose of all affairs. No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision: He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things). Anam/101-103

(Follow what thou art taught by inspiration from thy Lord: there is no god but He: and turn aside from those who join gods with Allah). Anam/106

([Say], "Then is it other than Allah I should seek as judge while it is He who has revealed to you the Book explained in detail?" And those to whom We [previously] gave the Scripture know that it is sent down from your Lord in truth, so never be among the doubters. And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice. None can alter His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing). Anam/114-115

(And why should you not eat of that upon which the name of Allah has been mentioned while He has explained in detail to you what He has forbidden you, excepting that to which you are compelled? And indeed do much lead [others] astray through their [own] inclinations without knowledge. Indeed, your Lord - He is most knowing of the transgressors). Anam/119

(And He it is who causes gardens to grow, [both] trellised and untrellised, and palm trees and crops of different [kinds of] food and olives and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Eat [each of] its fruit when it yields and give its due [zakah] on the day of its harvest. And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess). Anam/141

(It is He Who hath made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks, some above others: that He may try you in the gifts He hath given you: for thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful). Anam/165

As presented previously, the name 'He' has been repeated over twenty times in the chapter of Anam.

In the chapter of Araf, God states:

(And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy). Araf/57

(Hold yourselves in patience until Allah doth decide between us: for He is the best to decide). Araf/87

(To Whom belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: He That giveth both life and death). Araf/158

(They ask thee about the (final) Hour - when will be its appointed time? Say: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone): None, but He can reveal as to when it will occur. Heavy were its burden through the heavens and the earth. Only, all of a sudden, will it come to you"). Araf/187

(It is He Who created you from a single person). Araf/189

God also states in the chapter of Hadeed:

(He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant and the Intimate, and He is, of all things, Knowing). Hadeed/3

He is (The First) before Whom there is nothing, and (The

Last) after Whom there is nothing, and (The Concealed) beyond Whom there is nothing. He is the First and the Last Who has exceeded the time limit. He is the Concealed and the Revealed Who has defeated the concept of space. When one investigates this existence clearly, he will recognize that there is no truth but His. This is the original truth that grants existence to this universe.

(And He is, of all things, Knowing). He has the ultimate knowledge. The truth of everything springs from His Truth. Therefore, He comprehends the knowledge of everything. It uniquely belongs to God, and nothing shares this knowledge with Him.

Thus, nothing has an independent truth unless God inspires it. All this universe is an illusion that, one day, will go into oblivion, and nothing remains but the Face of the Eternal God.

Therefore, we see that some scholars and mystics recognized this fact. They detached themselves from everything and remained focused on Him only. Some of them claimed that they see God everywhere in this universe. They cannot see but God in this existence. Regardless of the wording, there is a fact in these statements: Islam wants us to discover the Truth of God and absorb it so that we may be successful successors of God on earth.

God states in the chapter of Hadeed:

(It is He who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it and

what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein, and He is with you wherever you are. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing). Hadeed/4

He also states:

(He causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night, and he is Knowing of that within the breasts).
Hadeed/6

The Second Commandment

The Old Testament:

(Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth).

The New Testament:

(You shall not make idols for yourselves).

The Quran:

(And [mention, O Muhammad], when Abraham said, “My Lord, make this city [Makkah] secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols). Abraham/35

In another Quranic verse, the Lord states:

(Verily, this is My way, leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path: thus doth He command you. that ye may be righteous).
Anam/153

The relationship with God consists of various levels. The same applies to one's relationship with Satan: it is determined by one's submission to the will of Satan and his command. Therefore, there is a Hadith that states:

(And still, the self endeavors to commit a desired sin).

It means it finishes committing one sin, starts another, and then another, and the sequence of sins never ends.

Here, we must pay further attention to this Hadith:

(And still, the self endeavors to commit a desired sin).

Here, we see that any sin results from one's desires. The results will also be improved if we reform and control our desires.

In this respect, we see that the Hadith highlights this meaning:

(And still, the self endeavors to commit a desired sin).

In other words, the motivation to commit any sin is one's desire. We must be noted that there are different forms of desire: the desire for money, position, sex, and fame. Therefore, any sin is committed due to these desires.

We must change our perspectives here. If one's desire were the content of God, he would change from one attitude to another. When someone's desire becomes the Quran, he will transform his perspective into a holy one. When he changes his desire from forbidden acts into the love of Muhammed and his Household (peace be upon them all), he changes his life from degeneration into sublimity. When he transforms

his desires into committing to the teaching of the chosen and close companions of the Prophet and his Household, he will be a positive player in society. If he replaced forbidden desires with the love of scholars and pious individuals, he would become a different person.

Thus, if there were no place for forbidden desires in the heart, one would never commit any sin. God would also take his hand to the right path, as stated in the Quran:

(We will indeed make smooth for him the path to Bliss).
Lail/7

Accordingly, his path to Bliss would become straightforward. All his dreams become achievable. Quran would become a bliss to his heart, and his relationship with God would reform. The love of the Prophet and his Household (peace be upon him) would become the cornerstones of his faith. Thus, he would get closer to God's grace, support, and blessing.

In this regard, a Hadith is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) in which he announces:

(Beware of your desires as you beware your enemies).

(Beware) here means that the danger is close to us. It is a warning to pay attention to near peril.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) wants us to beware of our most fierce enemies, our desires. He wants to clarify the stance of desires to us. Therefore, he stated:

(Beware of your desires as you beware your enemies).

When you have an enemy, how do you plan to keep yourself safe from him? How do you observe his movements? You always watch his steps, words, signs, and anything that may be hazardous to you. The same carefulness must be applied when dealing with our desires. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) seeks to pay our attention to the nest of Satan in ourselves, from which he works on deviating us from the right path. According to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), these desires are our greatest enemies:

(Beware of your desires as you beware your enemies).

Desire is the Scourge of Closeness to God

By desire or passion, we mean one's yearning and love to the lust that leads to destruction. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) stated:

([In Arabic] desire is named "Hawa" because it pushes its carrier [into darkness]).

Positive Desire

Religiously speaking, one's desire must be devoted to God. From a divine perspective, one's relationship must be dedicated to God. It must be based upon a unique love that has no counterpart. It must even move further from love into adoration. One must live in a continuous stance of yearning to God. It must dominate all his spirit and body. He should love

what God loves and despise what God despises. That is the condition in which God becomes his Lord, Creator, Guardian, and Existence in life. When God becomes his desire, he will see everything through God, a stance in which he becomes a devoted worshipper. He absorbs that God is the First, the Last, Revealed, and the Concealed. God becomes his first Loved One. This love forms the bond between him and his Lord. It dominates all fields of his life, leading him to perfection. This condition is described in the Quran:

(He love them, and they love Him back). Maeda/54

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also describes this bond:

(You are not true believers unless God and His Messenger are loved to you more than yourself, your families, and your possessions).

This Hadith refers to the three dearest things in life: oneself, family, and belongings. We understand from this Hadith that the love of God must overshadow the love of this world and everything in it. It must be a unique kind of love because the loved One is different from anything else. He is the ultimate Truth and origin of existence.

Accordingly, His love must be unique. It should be love, yearning, adoration, and unity. All organs of his body must absorb these feelings; they must move with his blood in all veins of the body. It should even go beyond this condition. God must be everything to him.

After achieving this stance, one lives by God, dies by God, and remains with God even after his death. He will only

see God's presence with him in all conditions. This feeling intensifies when he gets closer to Him after death.

Therefore, we are required to form a unique relationship with God. We must remain loyal to our Creator as long as God creates us. We must be committed to the promise that God took from us in the pre-birth realm. Yet, because God is the Most Generous, He gave us the right to choose our faith, love, and loyalty.

The freedom to choose is a path to realizing divine successorship on earth. Otherwise, humans would be unable to recognize this successorship on earth. God would replace us with angels.

Moreover, the freedom of choice leaves us to go through all types of trials so that:

(He separates what is evil from what is good). Al Em-ran/173

This process qualifies us to deserve divine reward and positions or justly tormented in the afterlife.

Negative Desire

As long as Man is left to choose, he may not choose the path of God. He may go astray and follow the path of Satan, loss, deviation, demonic desire, disbelief, and immorality.

Any individual is a vessel: it can either be filled with God's love and worship or with a relationship with Satan, which the Quran describes as (following the desire). That is the moment

when Satan will be his lord and instructor.

We find many moral topics in the supplication (the Prayers of the Grateful) by Imam Sajad (peace be upon him). The Imam shows the result of losing the path of God and the way Satan dominates our life. He states:

(My God, I complain to you about an enemy who leads me astray and a Satan who seduces me; he filled my chest with his whispers and his obsessions encircle my heart).

One of these malicious obsessions is:

(He deludes me with desire).

After Satan recognized that the heart belongs to God, created and molded by His Grace, Power, and Miracles and that it is a sacred house for God, he cannot leave Man alone. He must delude him with desire.

(He deludes me with desire) means that Satan seeks to make desire my companion, friend, brother, and beloved.

Responding to God, not Desire

The Quran proposes this meaning:

The original attitude of any person is to respond voluntarily to God and interact with His instructions. Anyone is willing to undergo the grace of God and fulfill his mission on earth, which is divine successorship.

This idea is explained in the Quran when God addresses

His Messenger Muhammed (peace be upon him and his Household):

(But if they hearken not to thee, know that they only follow their lusts: and who is more astray than one who follows his lusts, devoid of guidance from Allah? for Allah guides, not people given to wrong-doing). Qasas/50

The overall meaning of this verse is that we may respond to God by following the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), who is the means to find God.

Our relationship with God is a servitude relationship based on obedience, submission, and reverence. Our desire must lead us only to God. We must transform our hearts into a house for God. Our minds, thinking, and practices must abide by the will of God.

This idea is declared in the Quran:

(And I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me). Thariat/56

Once Man does not commit to this reason of creation, he opposes his original nature. Therefore, God addresses the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household):

(But if they do not respond to you).

We must be noted that responding to the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) is, in fact, a response to God. The Prophet does not speak out of his passion; he utters pure divine revelation. His speech, his work, and his acts are all sacred traditions.

Deviating from the path of God and blindly following desires is not a normal human condition. The human vessel becomes empty from any divine grace. It will be filled with the whispers of Satan and his desires.

When one's desires become the dominant power in the heart, they will drive him away from God's teachings and illumination.

There are different conditions of the self. Sometimes it becomes the site of divine and prophetic grace. It absorbs angelic features and becomes even superior to the angels.

However, when this self loses the way intentionally, it becomes the site of inhumane attitudes, like animals and even worse. It becomes an easy target for demons to manipulate. The remedy follows the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and his divine teachings.

(But if they do not respond to you - then know that they only follow their [own] desires).

This verse tends to calm the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) because he was burning from the inside. This verse aims to tell the Prophet that he did his best and accomplished his divine mission in the best possible way. God addresses the Prophet that if they respond to your call, they will succeed at representing devoted servitude to God. Otherwise, they only follow their desires.

(Indeed, [O Muhammad], you do not guide whom you like). Qasas/56

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) was

keen to lead all humanity to the right path. He was in pain for seeing people astray. Therefore, he used to publicly announce (that there is no God but Allah and that he is the Prophet of God). Stones hit him until he bled. He went home with Ali (peace be upon him), who used to prevent children from throwing stones at him. His wife Khadija (may God bless her) bandaged his wounds. After all these sufferings, he prayed to God, saying:

(My God, guide my people, for they know not).

This statement shows the ultimate mode of love.

Back to this verse:

(But if they do not respond to you - then know that they only follow their [own] desires).

In other words, they follow Satan and his whispers. As Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) proposed, demons tend to appoint our desires as our leaders in life. These leaders will finally lead us to everlasting loss. We will be away from God, the Prophet, Ahlulbait, and chosen companions. Satan will be our companion in all conditions. Therefore, the verse states:

(And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah?)

This is the ultimate form of loss.

We investigated carefully, we understand from this verse that there is divine guidance and divine desire. There are demonic whims, whispers, and wishes on the other front.

As proposed in the above verse, a devoted believer follows

divine guidance because he is entirely submitted to God and cannot see anything in this life but His presence. In such a condition, his desires become divine. He only seeks what contents God and approaches His will.

On the other front, there are demonic whims and whispers which strive to lead us astray.

(And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah? Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people).

God will not guide these people because they do not open their hearts to His Light. They cannot be led to the right path.

The verse emphasizes that:

(Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing of people).

They have chosen to stay away from God and close their minds to understanding God's instructions. Therefore, their hearts have become as hard as a stone, or even more.

This is the stance of the wrongdoer. They are closer to Satan and desires than to God. This is declared in the following verse:

(But those who wrong follow their [own] desires without knowledge).

They have chosen to follow their companion demons. Therefore, they have wronged themselves first in this world and the Hereafter.

Self-Worship is the Ultimate Form of Desire

We understand this idea in the following verse:

(Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire). Jathia/23

Any human is expected to appoint God his goal and desire. To manifest the ultimate form of servitude, he must be in continuous contact with God and interact with His instructions. He must also submit, devote, and surrender to God. His work must be a response and realization of divine teachings.

A devoted believer assigns the will of God his cause in life. His instructions are part of his daily life. They become the mental framework by which he sees the world.

Accordingly, he must submit to Him in all conditions to maintain a good relationship with God. He must see nothing but the presence of God in all stations of life so that he manifests the true meaning of servitude to God.

As for the one who is weak before the temptations of Satan, he will be the intended individual in this verse:

(Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire). Jathia/23

This verse intends to clarify the stance of such a person. He adopted an alternative method in life, far away from the divine one. Egoism becomes the leading factor in his life, and he sees nothing but his self-benefit.

Satan sneaks through the weak points. These weaknesses

may vary from one person to another. For example, one may have a good relationship with his family. Satan seeks to manipulate this point and plant hatred among the family members. Others may become weak regarding money, social status, power, or self-love. He uses these points to sneak into the mind of people to change their paths.

Safe Self-love is the Ultimate Happiness

We must acknowledge that all the Islamic instructions presented by the Quran, the Prophet, Ahlulbait, and the chosen companions never contradict the idea of self-love. Islam seeks to frame it with correct opinions and attitudes.

Self-love is a matter of instinct. In this context, Imam Kadim (peace be upon him), in his reply to one of his companions when he asked him to give him a piece of advice, stated:

(Do good to the one you love).

The man asked the Imam to clarify further. He replied:

(Behold, know that yourself is the most loved self to you. So, do good to it by abiding by God's instructions).

As presented, Islam never denies the legitimacy of self-love. Islam is keen to locate this feeling within the framework of servitude to God because the more one has self-love, the more devoted he becomes to God.

The only way to bring happiness and eternal joy to yourself in this world and the Hereafter is by treading God's path. Self-love must become a motivation for integrity and righteousness

in all fields of life. Otherwise, you wrong yourself unjustly. Servitude to God and favoring yourself is the required attitude to maintain a good life.

Demonic Desire is the Ultimate Misery

Servitude to one's demon and responding to the unlawful call of the self and ego that drifts him away from divine values is the ultimate misery and remorse. Therefore, the Quran states:

(But those who wrong follow their [own] desires without knowledge). Rome/29

Such a person has wronged himself in the first place. Wronging oneself leads to wronging his family and, later, the entire society.

Any individual must become a positive player in society. This goal cannot be achieved when he follows his egoism and desires.

One's egoism paralyzes him from taking any positive step toward reforming his life. He cares only about his desires and neglects all his surroundings. He lives in misery, dies in distress, and will meet God in desperation.

Therefore, he loses this life and the afterlife. It is the ultimate mode of loss. He will fluctuate between adversities and misfortunes. He lives in false satanic promises. He cannot do good to himself and remains in everlasting remorse.

Such a person lives depending on demonic values and

egocentric standards, which keep him away from God's teachings. They are severe obstacles in the path of servitude to God. He becomes a servant of Satan instead.

The Worship of Desire and Worship of God

There is a divine Hadith that presents two types of worship: worship of desire and worship of God.

The first stance represents all forms of degeneration and negative features, whereas the second one quilts all perfections, self-esteem, and happiness in this life and the Hereafter.

Imam Baqer (peace be upon him) narrates from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) that He stated:

(God states: "I swear by My Glory, Greatness, Might, Light, and Sublimity and High Status that whoever prefers his desire over My will, I distort his affairs, disorient him in life and engage his heart with its love; he will not get from this life beyond what is destined for him)."

Here, God swears by Himself and some of His attributions (Glory, Greatness, Might, Light, and Sublimity) which belong to the Necessity of existence, that anyone who follows his desires and favors his whims over the will of God will have a limited unhappy life. He preferred his self-love over the love of God, abiding by His instructions and following His path.

This person disobeyed God despite all reformation factors inside his spirit and instinct, despite all the cosmic and natural signs that lead to God. This person refused to listen to his

internal messengers, like the instinct, mind, and pre-birth oath, and external messages, like the prophets, Imams, jurists, and preachers.

Such an individual has practically disbelieved in God because he refused to follow his mind, instinct, pre-birth oath, and the entire universe, which is proof of the existence of God.

This person who blasphemed and refused to respond to the Apostle of God, the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him and his Household), and denied the guidance of the Quran turned his back to the lanterns of salvation which are the Household of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), such a person has fallen in everlasting darkness and replaced the love of God with the love of his desires.

The result of this stubbornness is clarified in the above-mentioned divine Hadith:

(Whoever prefers his desire over My will...).

The first result of this disorientation is that he will get away from his Lord.

(I distort his affairs).

The nature of any human is based upon following God and improving the relationship with Him. He is created based on the dependence on God:

(He has created me, and He will guide me). Shoara/78

Accordingly, guidance is an essential factor in this life. The entire world needs divine guidance to achieve a safe and secure life. After all, there is no Lord, Worshipped, Creator,

All-Knowing, and All-Wise god but Allah. Everything must be related to Him.

If one gets away from God and practically disbelieves in Him by favoring his desire over the will of God, he will be wholly lost since he is deprived of the origin of life and success.

The alternative is that he will be exposed to various sources of values and standards. He will fluctuate between different values, like the desire for money, power, unnatural love of wife or children, etc. Once one loses the source of guidance, he will be lost among different standards. Therefore, the divine Hadith claims:

(I distort his affairs).

He will stumble over disorientation and decentering. He cannot belong to one set of principles. Servitude to God means having a clear vision in life and depending on one center and base. He has an unmistakable identity. Therefore, there is a Hadith that announces:

(You are not true believers unless God and His Messenger are loved to you more than yourself, your families, and your possessions).

A true believer must be entirely devoted to God so that God becomes devoted to him. There is a divine Hadith that clarifies this idea further:

(All heavens and the earth failed to comprehend Me, but the heart of my believing servant did).

However, when one fluctuates between different desires and whims, he will finally reach this end:

(I distort his affairs).

He will live in disorientation, anxiety, and loss. The following result of this detachment from God is the following:

(disorient him in life).

The natural end of detaching from God is abiding by the world. Such an individual thinks life will grant him everything and keep all its promises. He believes this life is the best place to realize all the desired goals. Here, we should mention the famous Hadith that states:

(The world's love sits at the top of all sins).

In other words, the love of this life is the master key to demonic manipulation. It is the gate to the dark world of Satan. This disorientation deprives one of recognizing his path in life.

Because such a person neglects the divine standards upon which he can measure everything, he will follow his unstable desires and become submitted to Satan and his whispers.

There is no rationality or reason in desires. He cannot find his path in life. He becomes unqualified to act reasonably. These dark conclusions are nothing but the effect of getting disoriented in life.

He loses the ability to recognize the beginning and the end. He cannot find his place in life. He does not care about his servitude to God and his responsibility to establish divine successorship on earth. This world is like a turbulent sea whose high waves throw him everywhere. His life is like a mirage that

locks him in the middle of nowhere.

Thus, the first drawback is the following:

(I distort his affairs).

The second is:

(disorient him in life).

The third is:

(and engage his heart with its love).

This is a natural result of abiding by worldly desires. After all, the heart is like a vessel, which can be filled with whatever one chooses. It can be the place of God. Otherwise, it is a house of Satan. His primary weapon is the love of life. This person deals with the world as if it is eternal and the goal of life. He becomes more even attached to it.

Continuous Response to Satan

In the Hadith of our Imam and lord Muhammed Al-Baqer (peace be upon him), which is narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), God states:

(God states: “I swear by My Glory, Greatness, Might, Light, and Sublimity that whoever prefers his desire over My will, I distort his affairs, disorient him in life, and engage his heart with its love; he will not get from this life beyond what is destined for him).

As discussed earlier, this divine Hadith clarifies the two

opposing fronts in life: the front of Satan and his whims and the front of God and its blessing.

The first half of the Hadith shows the nature of the satanic attitude and how one may lose this life and the Hereafter since he continuously responds to his desire and whispers of demons. The result will be the distortion of his affairs. He cannot recognize his position in life since he is completely disoriented. This is the most challenging feeling one may experience. Not having a goal in life conveys a painful sense.

He lives without a stable identity, a beginning, an end, and a goal. He is similar to the status of Hell, as presented in the Quran:

(On the Day, We will say to Hell, “Have you been filled?” and it will say, “Are there some more”). Qaf/30

He wants to gain worldly rewards by any means possible. He likes its ornamentations, joys, and its permitted and prohibited happiness. He wants what belongs to him and others. He strives to get all sound and corrupt earnings. He acts as if all the world belongs to him. He thinks that the world as a whole is created for him alone. There is no problem with claiming that this world was created for him, provided that he becomes a positive player in it and a circle in the big chain of creatures that submit to the will of God.

God expects us to keep away from this selfishness and destructive desire. We are too dignified to get as low as these animalistic tendencies. We are entrusted with the responsibility to develop this world and to sublimate ourselves from these egoistic attitudes. We have to be the reference

point of this Quranic verse:

(And contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth). Al Emran/14

This verse can be read in the way some scholars believe. It states that we must be part of this immense universe and interact with it positively. Thus, a true believer lives within the divine framework and never forgets his true mission in life.

We cannot expect humans to reach the infallibility level because only a few individuals have attained this sublime level. However, they can strive to improve their life and stance toward perfection. They may achieve some form of infallibility, as is the case of some of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and Ahlulbait (peace be upon them).

As discussed earlier, there are two opposing fronts presented in the divine Hadith:

The divine front and the satanic front, and each one has its supporters and followers. The Hadith started explaining the satanic front first. This is because the followers of Satan overshadow those guarding the divine front, as presented in the Quran:

(And few of My servants are grateful). Saba/13

As for the followers of divinity, the Quran states:

(A number of people from those of old, and a few from those of later times). Waqea/ 13-14

(A (goodly) number from those of aging, and a (goodly) number from those of last times). Waqia/39-40

These verses show that the virtuous are only the minority, whereas most people have forgotten God, so God made them forget themselves.

The Mission of the Divine Message is Guidance

We have to be acknowledged that the mission of the divine message, the task of Muhammed and his Household (peace be upon them all), and the mission of the Quran is to guide these lost people into the right path and to recognize God. They should understand that there is no other path but His.

The mission of religion is to move people from the path of self-desire into the way of righteousness. Its primary mission is to save people from distortion and chaos, as explained in the following verse:

(Then did you think that We created you absurdly and that to Us you would not be returned?) Momenoon/115

Being disoriented leads to living a futile life and spending time uselessly. Naturally, this loss of purpose is a health, mental, and physical collapse. When adversity befalls him, he cannot find any supporters because he is far from God.

As for a believer, he always prays to God. He says:

(I call you the Supporter of those who have no supporters; the Saver of those who have no savers; the Helper of those who have no helpers; the Protector of those who have no

supporters; the Safe Refuge of those who have no refuge; I pray to you my Refuge when everyone refuses me).

As for the one who lives detached from God, he is always distorted and works uselessly. This is the goal of Satan. He wants to devour us and blind us from seeing the right path. What complicates the problem is that when he stands in the courtroom of God, he will say: "I did not oblige him to do anything. He was the one who was following me, and I denounce him today".

Thus, we must always observe these two fronts. We should guard ourselves against the whispers of demons. We should remember that Satan will never stand with us and finally leave us alone.

When God distorts his affairs and disorients him, he fails to recognize his goal in life. He becomes disqualified from thinking clearly. He will get attached even more to this life when this loss is further complicated. It is hazardous to abide by the whims of this world while we are living disoriented and anxious.

We need to discover our path and distinguish the truth from the false. That is when we will enjoy a happy life because our hearts will be with God. It is the only stable, clear path in life. Therefore, God states:

(The right course has become apparent from the wrong).
Baqara/256

The course of Satan is full of forbidden desires, torsions, and obstacles. Being attached to this world is nothing but self-

punishment. One is confused when he cannot recognize his proper position in life. We should remember that this world is only a set of delusions and false promises. There is nothing eternally true in it. Therefore, the divine Hadith states:

(And engage his heart with its love).

This is the first.

Second, God does not want any associate with him under any condition. He wants the heart to belong to him only. Otherwise, desires, demonic whispers, and the love of the world, which are considered the associates of God, will lead the heart astray. The Exalted Mighty God does not accept being in one place with other associates, like Satan.

No Duality in Worshipping God

God wants a devoted servant who submits his consciousness, mind, heart, spirit, work, manners, and standards to Him. This is the meaning of worship. There is no place for dualism in this area:

(Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his (one) body). Ahzab/4

Once an individual responds to Satan and his desires, God will engage him with his desires because it was he who sought this path and goal as if God addresses him: "Have you placed me equal to your desire? Have you appointed Satan your lord beside me? Do you worship me beside your whims, desires, selfishness, and egoism?". We see as if God addresses

him: "You choose either me and my worship or your desires, including your possessions, self-desire, and power."

We must be careful not to fall into the trap of this dualism because it leads us astray and blind. Despite all the works and difficulties that one experiences in this world, God states:

(He will not get from this life beyond what is destined for him).

Despite all these compensations, loss of consciousness, and humanity, he will get nothing beyond what is destined for him despite wavering his relationship with God.

This part of the relationship between a servant and God needs further analysis:

First: We must be noted that not everything destined for a person is in his interest. After all, God knows the findings and endings of every step. This is not determinism. Everyone is free to choose his path, but because God is the Most Knowing, He knows what happened in the past, what happens in the present, and what will happen in the future. The concept of time cannot comprehend God.

Second, God left everyone free to choose his path. The result is:

(That man can have nothing but what he strives for).
Najm/39

He will be rewarded and acknowledged if his work is devoted to God. Otherwise, he will be addressed: "Go to Satan and ask for your reward from him." Therefore, the divine

Hadith states:

(He will not get from this life beyond what is destined for him).

Therefore, he will remain in a vortex of futile endeavors. He will see nothing but an everlasting mirage. This is the first part of the Hadith, which is about desire and the worship of deluding whims.

As for the second front, which is the worship of God, devotion, submission, and abidance to His will, one can easily find his path in life. He lives a life of surrender to God's contentment. His heart is filled with the love of God. He cannot see anything in this universe but the existence of God because He is the eternal Light of the Heavens and earth.

Continuous Response to God is Required

After the divine Hadith presents the results of worshipping Satan and desire, it states:

(I swear by My Glory, Greatness, Might, Light, and Sublimity and High Status)

This statement (**High Status**) means spiritual status, not physical because God is not a body to move in places.

(I swear by My Glory, Greatness, Might, Light, Sublimity, and High Status: whoever favors My Will over his desire, I shall protect him with My angels; I shall preserve his sustenance in the heavens and earth; I shall prioritize his benefit over all other merchants; the world shall submit to

his will devotedly).

This second tendency is a devoted submission to God. Its first feature is: (that he favors the will of his Lord over his desire). Because he acknowledges his servitude to God, he naturally submits to His will.

He always turns his face to God and asks Him for guidance. He acknowledges that God is Most Knowing and proposes a comprehensive method for all fields of life. He is confident that God can't create him uselessly. One day, he will go back to the courtroom of God and will be judged for every detail of his life. All his records will undoubtedly be investigated carefully.

Therefore, he adopts divine methodology and asks for God's help and protection. He practically realizes the meaning of (there is no power and no strength but in God).

How to Control Desire

In one of the supplications of Imam Sajad (peace be upon him), named 'the Soliloquy of Complainers,' he complains to God about the malicious attempts of demons to delude the heart and make desires our companions and close friends. They work on making these desires our lovers. Once one reaches this level, he will be very submissive to his friend and lover. **(His desire becomes his god).**

Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) complains to God about these spiritual drawbacks which prevent us from getting closer to God. We must be noted that Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) aims to give educational and moral lessons to people through these supplications. He wants to teach them how to

diagnose these problems and the way we fix them.

As a pillar of religion, the Imam seeks to show the psychological dimensions of humanity and the best way to deal with them. All these procedures tend to plant awareness about these psychological drawbacks. This education's goals are not public speaking or memorizing Quran and Hadiths, though they are necessary and beautiful. The requirement is to improve psychological education. One needs to learn how to control his desires. After all, all humans have a set of whims and desires. They have to learn the way to purify from unwanted tendencies and wishes.

We are required to memorize certain Quranic verses and Hadiths and practice them daily. They contain the best guidelines for a clean and spiritually healthy life.

We read in the Quran in Rome/29:

(But those who wrong follow their [own] desires without knowledge).

How can we benefit from this verse? How can it impact us spiritually, mentally, and consciously? Have we observed ourselves and recognized our moves? Do we consider God's will, or do we care only about our desires? We come into a misconception that our benefit is the standard upon which we live and interact with society.

In this regard, Imam Sajad, as well as all the Imams of Ahlulbait (peace be upon them), tend to use supplications to educate people on reforming their relationship with God. These supplications highlight and fix the internal weak points

in one's relationship with God. They move further to improve their relationship with others and the entire society. Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) never left any issue behind: he encountered all the critical problems and proposed the best possible solutions.

Addressing these problems through supplications is effective because it springs from yearning, servitude, and emotional interaction with the issues. The results would be effective and direct.

In the divine Hadith mentioned previously, we find a set of ideas that encourage people to tread upon the right path:

(I swear by My Glory, Greatness, Might, Light, Sublimity, and High Status: whoever favors My Will over his desire, I shall protect him with My angels; I shall preserve his sustenance in the heavens and earth; I shall prioritize his benefit over all other merchants; the world shall submit to his will devotedly).

This Hadith classifies servitude into two types: the one offered to desires and the other to God.

The Divine Method is the Guarantee

The divine method is servitude to God. It is the religious requirement for a perfect society. God promises those who abide by this method that they will achieve two things:

First: they will enjoy a smooth and beautiful relationship with God, as discussed earlier.

Second: physical and material security, as proposed in the Hadith:

(I swear by My Glory, Greatness, Might, Light, Sublimity, and High Status: whoever favors My Will over his desire, I shall protect him with My angels).

As presented, an enthusiastic response to God and interaction with His cause guarantees a safe and secure life. This method leads to perfection and sublimity.

(I shall protect him with my angels).

This protection is not limited to a place or time, or condition. It is a protection of the inside and the outside. It shows an alluring relationship with God, improved by the presence of the angels. They play a role in reminding him of God and His presence in his life.

The angels are the carriers of divine knowledge. When they are assigned the protection of an individual, the first thing they do is improve their relationship with God and save it from corruption and instability. They are keen to preserve a strong bond between him and God so that he keeps his heart a house of God and his organs all mosques for God.

But why are the angels so keen on preserving this relationship? Because God observed this love in His servant's heart, He rewarded him with His love. God wants to honor and protect him and be located within His fortress. As stated in a Hadith:

(The statement “there is no God but Allah” is My fortress”).

Does not God move toward His servant once He sees him taking one step devotedly?

Thus, God loves His servant and does not wish this bond breaks. He assigns these angels to protect and improve this bond.

Second: they are also assigned to protect the physical organs of the servant. We should be noted that they cannot prevent any person from doing something by force. Yet, they continuously remind him of God and the perils of following the whispers of Satan.

For example, when he tends to utter a word, the guardian angels remind him of his stance:

“Do not say something that may affect your relationship with God. Do not gossip, accuse falsely, or backbite others. This tongue must be devoted to God. It would help if you used it for your benefit. If you use it in the path of God, it will be a useful tool in your life, whereas if you use it to serve your desires and demons, it will harm you”.

These are not the angels that record your good or evil deeds. They only remind you of your position in life. They do not ban you from committing evil acts. This level can only be achieved when a servant submits to God. It is aligned with the guardianship of God, as stated in the Quran:

(Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness, He will lead them forth into light).
Baqara/257

Therefore, God loves him and always cares about him. This is the meaning of lordship. When He observes honesty and devotion in the deeds of this servant, He will be with him in all conditions, supporting and helping him.

God's position to all humanity is as stated in the Quran: **(Indeed, from Allah nothing is hidden in the earth nor the heaven)** and to individuals, **(We are closer to him than [his] jugular vein)**. He also **(Allah intervenes between a man and his heart)**.

He is the ultimate instructor because nothing resembles Him. He is the only Necessity of existence, and anything else is possible of necessity.

God's ability to take one's hand and show him the right path is unlimited. As for the angels, they guard body organs, like the tongue, eyes, hands, feet, stomach, and private organs, so they do not commit any mistakes. This helps maintain a genuine and honest relationship with God.

(I shall protect him with my angels).

This is the first.

One should not be a Servant of the World: Servitude is for God

The second part of the divine Hadith is the following:

(I shall preserve his sustenance in the heavens and earth and prioritize his benefit over all other merchants).

This Hadith refers to the economic and financial aspects

of life. Some believe maintaining a relationship with God leads to poverty, isolation, and financial repression. This is a misconception that many people adopt. Mysticism is not abandoning this world. It means:

(So that you do not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you). Hadeed/23

This verse teaches us that one must not be attached to this world. He must work to achieve success and be rewarded by God. He must see the existence of God at all times and places. In case he earns no reward, he must thank God and say:

(Probably what was delayed for me is better since You know the end of things).

A true believer must be honest with God and interact positively with God and with His creation. He must become a positive player in this universe. He cannot reach that level unless he seeks the will of God and the good of people.

A faithful servant of God, who favors the will of God over his desire, must depend on a divine standard in all fields of his life. He must not become a burden on himself and others. He must be productive in this world.

Once he keeps this relationship with God and devotedly abides by His instructions, angels become his guardians. His sustenance will be achievable easily and pleasingly. At this point, all the heavens and earth will be on his side. This companionship is not temporal, special, or physical. They will be ordered to interact with him positively. God created the heavens and earth for Man. What kind of Man? The intended person is the one who follows the Quran, the Prophet, and

Ahlulbait.

Therefore, the heavens and earth will take care of his sustenance and respond to his wishes because he is close to God. He observes the will of God in all his deeds. He is an inseparable part of this universe, keen to maintain a good relationship with God.

In this regard, he takes his natural place in the universe that God appointed. He will accomplish the mission that was entrusted to him by God.

After all these procedures (angels guarding and guiding him, heavens and earth interacting with his cause), it is time for the crowning station. It is the most sublime state that any person may achieve. It is as the divine Hadith states:

(I shall prioritize his benefit over all other merchants).

This shows the special divine care that this person enjoys. God becomes his supporter in all stances. Trading in this context is an inclusive term. It includes the trading of goods, deeds, and beliefs. It is as explained in the Quran in Saf/10-13:

(O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous Penalty?- That ye believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah, with your property and your persons: That will be best for you if ye but knew! He will forgive your sins and admit you to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow and to beautiful mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the Supreme Achievement. And another (favor will He bestow,) which ye do love,- help from Allah and a speedy victory. So give the Glad Tidings to the Believers).

Therefore, trading is a comprehensive concept. It includes any deed that approaches one God. This part of the Hadith shows that God wants to say:

“I am with my servant in all details. I support all his utterances, deeds, and actions”.

Here, we must refer to God being with all creatures. He is closer to them from their jugular vein. He separates between a man and his heart. However, His devoted servants have distinct specifications. He has favored the will of God over his desires. He supports all his utterances, deeds, and actions. Thus, such an individual does not tread upon any path that may oppose the content of God. In this regard, we understand the divine Hadith:

(I shall prioritize his benefit over all other merchants).

There are two types of commerce: worldly commerce and afterlife commerce. God observes both kinds of business. We must remember that trading for worldly affairs is legitimate if it follows God’s instructions. God also accompanies us in the afterlife commerce.

God states in Abraham/27:

(Allah will strengthen those who believe, with the word that stands firm, in this world and the Hereafter).

As we understand from these verses and Hadiths, God interacts with His servants much more than they do. This is linked to the quality of devotion and honesty of a servant. This divine care depends on one’s submission and servitude to God.

Thus, God blesses the trading of any trader in this world and the Hereafter. Worldly commerce will be rewarded as long as it aims at the content of God.

Any person who works within the framework of religion and does his best to provide for himself and his family will be rewarded in the afterlife. This commerce may take many forms: trade of speech, worship, good deeds, and any act that benefits others.

In addition to all these privileges, God promises the following:

(The world shall submit to his will devotedly).

Many Quranic verses and Hadiths show that for anyone honest in seeking the afterlife, God shall grant him the beauties of both the afterlife and this worldly life. In contrast, anyone who thinks only about this world will get nothing beyond what is destined for him and will not get anything from the afterlife.

The Divine Path

As discussed earlier, the divine Hadith shows that there are two primary paths in life: virtuous and vicious, godly and satanic, worship of God and worship of desires, will of God, and whim of the self. This Hadith supports this verse:

(So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord like him to whom the evil of his work has been made attractive, and they follow their [own] desires?) Muhammed/14

This verse presents the nature of these two paths. There are

two methods for life: one divine and the other satanic. Each one has its distinct features and characteristics. Therefore, the verse states:

(So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord).

This is the divine path trodden by those who worship God devotedly. They are keen to realize God's instructions in all fields of their life.

There are different manifestations of this evidence from the Lord:

First: they are the internal messengers granted at the creation of Man, like the instinct, pre-birth oath and promise, mind, and the tendency to believe.

Second: cosmic evidence cannot be neglected. One can see the presence and dominance of God in every particle in this universe.

The issue of belief in God is a necessity. Many verses propose this meaning:

(Can there be doubt about Allah, Creator of the heavens and earth?) Abraham/10

God's Evidence for His Servant

there is much of God's evidence sent to His devoted servants. They are the messengers, prophets, Imams, chosen companions of the Prophet, religious scholars, and preachers. This is encountered in the Quran as well:

(So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord).

As for the second issue, we must investigate how this servant interacts intellectually, practically, and morally with this evidence.

When a servant finds this evidence from his Lord, he must abide by them and interact with them positively. They are the paths to God.

Following this evidence prevent him from going astray. He always follows a lantern to find his destination. He is safe in his journey to righteousness and to what contents the Prophet and his Household (peace be upon them), the chosen companions of the Prophet, scholars, and preachers.

God's Light for Mankind

(So is he who is on clear evidence from his Lord).

This verse may be read from a different perspective. The evidence from God is like a light on one's path to God. When the servant interacts with this evidence, he will earn the divine light to remain on the right way.

It may also be called clarity, support, or guidance. There are many verses in which the issue of the divine light is encountered. It can be achieved when a servant becomes an honest and submitted worshipper of God. He abides by God's teachings in thought and practice. He offers to God by heart, mind, emotions, and feelings.

At this level, he will comprehend the divine evidence completely. He is armed against any doubt or misunderstanding.

He can never lose the way as long as he lives with God. He is religiously armed because he is a devoted servant to God. He can never fall because God is his protector and supporter.

He lives in this world secure and assured despite all challenges and obstacles. He abides by divine standards and interacts with the world from a heavenly perspective.

Servitude to God means practicing its features. It means the love of God, loving the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and abiding by his teachings, adopting the teachings of the Quran, submitting to Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) and loving them, and responding to the call of the scholars and preachers.

Thus, one can live a life based on divine shreds of evidence and clarity without being affected by demonic temptations and deviations.

The Satanic Path

The path of Satan has a set of negative features which may impact any individual. Some of them are the following:

Self-worship, egoism, and unlimited desires are only some of them. They are the weapons of Satan to drag any person astray from the path of God, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), the Quran, Ahlulbait (peace be upon them), chosen companions of the Prophet, scholars, and preachers. Therefore, the verse announces:

(Like him to whom the evil of his work has been made

attractive).

From a moral perspective, these deeds are vicious because they follow the needs of the self.

The task of Satan is to ornament these vicious acts and encourage these people to do more.

There are many differences between the deeds devoted to God and those to Satan:

As for the acts of God, they do not need to be ornamented. It is beautiful in itself because it carries devotion and servitude to God. In contrast, the works of Satan need adornment because it is dark and vicious. The deeds devoted to God are very easy: they can be simple good words, as explained in the Quran:

(A goodly word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens,- of its Lord. So Allah sets forth parables for men so they may receive admonition. It brings forth its fruit at all times by the leave of its Lord). Abraham/24-25

The goodly divine word is the most sublime word to which one may adhere. Working for Satan is a harsh word that may become everlasting. The excellent word becomes the source of virtue because it is based on reformation, whereas the vicious word is the origin of corruption and degeneration.

Thus, as stated in the verse of the chapter of *Muhammed* (peace be upon him and his Household), there are two paths: The path of servitude to God and the path of Satan and deviated desires. The second path leads to worldly and afterlife problems. It leads to the corruption of both worlds.

In this regard, there is a Hadith that states:

(Submitting to the self and following its desires is the foundation of any adversity and the top of any deviation).

As presented in the previously mentioned verse, desires ornament vicious deeds and encourage any individual to commit them. They are the key to many other adversities and deviations.

These adversities may take various forms: the trouble of keeping away from servitude to God, the misfortune of keeping away from the Quran, the Prophet and his Household (peace be upon him and his Household), scholars, and preachers. It may be the adversity of the absurdity of life, which is dominated by demons, leading individuals astray.

Thus, it is the utmost form of adversity. The results will be catastrophic. An unlimited number of temptations occur to such an individual: the lure of money, sex, food, position, etc.

They all seek to deviate from the self and dominate their worldview. They change attire depending on historical and social contexts. The deviated individual will successively fall into temptations without being able to emancipate himself.

All these evil desires result from the harsh word that leads people astray from the Quran and the message of Muhammed and his Household (peace be upon them all).

The tempted individual loses the ability to diagnose corruption properly. He thinks that these vicious deeds benefit him in this life. The result will be the machiavellian principle:

“aims justify means.” He strives to quench the needs of his desires and egoism by any means possible. He wants to submit the entire universe for his service.

Some of these individuals justify their acts with religious justification. They tend to propose Islam to fit their desires as if it was revealed for their aims. Therefore, they offer those parts of Islam that benefit their cause and abandon those parts that hold them accountable.

Accordingly, they start to issue some legislations that justify their positions, though they oppose the principles of Islam. They think that such a tendency will stabilize their authority.

We should remember that many leaders of deviated parties started their corruption by feeding their egoism and the desire to gain more power.

Therefore, through the Quran or the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), Islam always emphasizes that there are two paths in life: divine and satanic, as proposed in the following verse:

(Be he grateful or be he ungrateful). Ensan/3

In this regard, all the verses and Hadiths tend to pay attention to the perils of the desires and their power to drag us astray when we reject divine teachings and standards.

The Path of God is the Path to Heaven

Imam Ali (peace be upon him narrates from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) that he stated:

(Trials surround heaven, and desires encompass Hell. Note that abidance to God's teachings is based upon aversion, whereas disobeying God is based upon desires.

God's mercy is upon the one who removes his desires and strips his whims. The self is hard to tame and insists on disobeying God by following passions. Behold you servants of God: any believer continuously accuses himself. He is never contented with himself and always seeks more devotion).

This is the advice of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) to his nation. He tends to clarify two tendencies:

The first is the path of God which leads to Heaven, and the other is the path of Satan, guided by desires and whims. The Prophet states:

(Trials surround Heaven).

We understand from this segment that there are levels of relationship with God. The introductory level is the one in which trials surround Heaven. In other words, one has to work on those deeds which are undesired.

Heaven demands true worship. It requires prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and paying alms. These deeds form a specific level of relationship with God. The doer of these rituals may not like what he is doing. He prays undesirably or goes on pilgrimage because it is an obligatory act of worship; he only fasts because God ordered us to do so; he pays zakat because it is a divine obligation. He avoids forbidden deeds because God called us to do so. This is an introductory level of relationship with God.

We also understand the term 'trial' in the Hadith as a

physical hardship rather than a psychological one. Sometimes, a servant willingly interacts with God's instructions, but they require physical effort. This is another interpretation of trials in the Hadith.

As for the third interpretation, sometimes, we think that only these acts of worship lead us to Heaven. We should remember that worship is not only fasting, praying, going to pilgrimage, or paying zakat; it is any act in life. Therefore, winning the everlasting joys of Heaven demands an entire life filled with acts of worship. In other words, Heaven requires a lifetime endeavor towards winning the content of God. Therefore, a true believer never rests: he always seeks more. This is a natural result of one's interaction with God. The more he presents to God, the more he feels low pain, remorse, and emptiness. He lives in a stance of hatred that he gave nothing to God.

He always acknowledges the grace of God. Therefore, he wants to present all his life, body, and efforts to God.

This is the required relationship with God. It must be based upon servitude, abidance, readiness, love, submission, and devotion.

One must always be prepared to respond to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), the Quran, Ahlylbait (peace be upon them), chosen companions of the Prophet, scholars, religious jurists, and preachers. One must abide by all means that lead to God.

The Self Between the Divine and Satanic Paths

As for the divine path, it demands education and continuous worship. Concerning the satanic course, it represents irresponsibility, loss of direction, and goal. It is anxiety, disorientation, chaos, and lack of belonging.

In this path, one does not feel he is part of a group. He does not recognize his place in this universe. He thinks that he is different from all other creatures.

We should note that as long as the Creator of this life is the Planner, we must follow his instructions because He is the All-Knowing.

Once one distances himself from God, Satan pushes him into the trap of desires. It is the threshold to all adversities, deviations, mistakes, and immoralities. It is the key to disobeying God and neglecting His Quran and traditions. It blindfolds him from seeing his actual position to God.

We should never forget that the divine path is the path of self-education, whereas the path of Satan is the path of chaos and deviated desires.

This deviated person is always willing to do foul deeds to quench his sex desire, steal to feed his craving for money, and lie and accuse to provide for his passion for power.

He continues to tread upon Satan's path until he finds himself falling into Hell, the place God created with His anger and revenge.

The Self Between Obedience and Disobedience

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) clarifies further these two paths: that of God and that of Satan. The first guides to Heaven and the other to Hell. He states:

(Trials surround heaven, and desires encompass Hell. Note that abidance to God's teachings is based upon aversion, whereas disobeying God is based upon desires. God's mercy be upon the one who removes his desires).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) proposes that obedience requires patience, a feature against one's nature. Humankind is created with the trait to be in a hurry; he hates patience.

According to ethics, patience is divided into a few types:

- Patience in the face of adversities.
- Patience of obedience.
- Tolerance of preventing forbidden acts.

Thus, when the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) states:

(Note that the abidance to God's teachings is based upon aversion),

It means that abidance requires patience and self-education.

One can amend this issue by beautifying these deeds and comprehending the positive results of obedience. Once this level is achieved, patience over submission becomes tolerable,

smoother, and more natural.

We must be noted that disobedience is as lovely and desiring as obedience is unlikable and difficult.

As discussed earlier, desire is not limited to one condition: it includes all types of desires, like money, stomach, power, and sex. Some desires are less appealing than others. Some cause one to enter Hell directly.

There is a Hadith that states:

(Is there any other reason people are thrown in their faces in Hell than the harvests of their tongues?).

The desire for tongue leads to accusation and depriving others of their social status.

Another Hadith announces:

(The primary reason people enter Hell is the two small organs: the private part and tongue).

This Hadith interprets the earlier one when the Prophet states:

(Whereas disobeying God is based upon desires).

In other words, at moments of disobedience, one is distant from God and becomes submissive to Satan. He entirely interacts with his desires and provides for his whims in a way that he forgets all his principles and morals.

Prophetic Education of the Self

After the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) clarifies the features of both paths, he adds:

(God's mercy be upon the one who removes his desires and strips his whims).

As we understand from the Hadith, the divine expectation is that we remove our desires. The Prophet is precise: he does not want us to remove all our desires because they will remain in our attitudes. He asks us to take the leadership of our desires and drive them in a way that coincides with the will of God.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) states:

(God's mercy be upon the one).

This segment proposes that when you submit to God devotedly, work on your self-education, and control your desires, God will certainly shower you with His mercy. God's mercy refers to His support, strengthening, and help. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) shows that any person is born weak, alone, and vulnerable. Thus, your attempts to control your desires and whims are under God's support. Therefore, do not think you are facing a challenging mission: be solid and honest because God is with you and will shower you with His mercy.

(God's mercy be upon the one who removes his desires and strips his whims).

In other words, he controls his egoism and selfishness. After all, one is the most loved self of any person. Yet, this

love may be a positive one, as stated by Imam Kadim (peace be upon him):

(Do good [to yourself] by abiding by God's instructions).

Thus, the divine requirement is to remove your desires to achieve divine mercy. You should not think of yourself in the presence of God. We should never forget that we are His creation and remain in His need eternally.

Can anyone see any value or strength for himself in God's presence, this vulnerable, powerless, and weak self? From this perspective, one needs to control his desires and whims.

As discussed earlier, one's relationship with God is between servitude and lordship. Therefore, one should not have any desire except that of His Creator. He must look at this life through God's lenses. His worth is only to submit to God since he is designated the successor of this earth by God. As long as he maintains this relationship with God, he remains within the circle of God's mercy.

In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) states:

(God's mercy be upon the one who removes his desires and strips his whims).

This tendency fits the servitude framework and the reason behind this creation. It matches the best possible manners according to which one must live.

We need a continuous comparison between divine desire and forbidden desire. The passion that coincides with the will

of God and the desire that quenches the needs of Satan.

This topic is discussed to reach the best solutions. We tend to diagnose the problem and solve it.

In the Hadith mentioned above, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) finally addresses his nation. It pays attention to the importance of self-education and self-accountability.

In discussing desires and their dimensions, he seeks to clarify matters and the best way to protect ourselves from going astray.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) continues:

(Behold you servants of God).

He aims to focus on two primary issues:

First: he wants people to recognize the negative impacts of desire. He wants them to diagnose these problems and protect themselves from falling into the trap of Satan.

Second: he aims to remind people of their proper position to God. After all, we are the servants of God. Therefore, he states:

(Behold you servants of God).

It seems that he addresses us and says:

Are you the servants of God or Satan? Servitude to God is cosmic. In other words, this label applies to all creatures, including humans. Have you devoted servants to God or

disobedient castaway individuals? Do you admit your servitude to God but do not abide by it? Do you accept your servitude to God but do not interact with it?

You must abide by God's teachings if you are faithful servants of God. Thus, the Prophet addresses people with this statement:

(Behold you servants of God).

It is acknowledged that a servant does not abandon his lord unless he is a disobedient servant. If you are faithful servants of God, then:

(Behold you servants of God: any believer [this is practical servitude, self-accountability, and opposing self-desires] continuously accuses himself).

In other words, he must always hold himself accountable because a convict always observes himself.

When one abides by this framework, holds himself accountable, and live depending on the divine standards, he will succeed at controlling himself and his whims. He can manifest higher levels of servitude to God. If he lives a life of complacency only because he prays or helps the needy, goes on pilgrimage, or studies some fields of knowledge, he cannot benefit from all these deeds. They remain futile because they are not devoted to God. They begin to function negatively and feed one's egoism because they are not serving the will of God.

True servitude means that one remains accusing himself and holds himself accountable. He strives to reduce the gap

between him and God and asks for repentance when he sins.

(Any believer continuously accuses himself. He is never contented with himself and always seeks more devotion).

He Accuses Himself

In prophetic, pure, beautiful, and magnificent Islam, we see a special relationship with oneself. One must always accuse himself and belittle his efforts toward God. This feeling must not be momentary but a persistent one. Therefore, the Hadith states:

(Any believer continuously accuses himself).

This insistence on the continuity of self-accusation is because Satan is a permanent companion of any believer. As long as demons never strop their efforts, one must remain watching himself and control them. He should observe every word, step, and action.

His worship must not delude one that they suffice to guard him against the temptations of demons. Extended worship does not grant infallibility to anyone. Total chastity is a feature of specific chosen individuals. As for other people, they are prone to mistakes. If one becomes lenient with himself, he will lose control and fall into forbidden traps.

Humans are created upon forgetting. This is why they are called 'Ensan' in Arabic, a derivation of 'Nasa' which means to fail.

Therefore, any individual must live within the Islamic

guidelines, as proposed by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household):

(Any believer continuously accuses himself).

We should be noted that there are levels of perfection. Even though one reaches certain sublime levels in which he starts to dislike committing sins, he must always **(accuses himself)**.

There are many levels of servitude to God. Another one overshadows any story. A true believer must always live in the feeling of accusation to succeed in achieving that higher level. Otherwise, when one lives in the sense of complacency, he will distance himself from God.

He Suffers from Himself

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) describes the pious:

(He suffers from himself while people are secure from his harm).

The meaning of **(He suffers from himself)** is the following:

He continuously holds himself accountable. He always observes his steps and deeds. He never ceases rebuking and threatening himself. He always reminds himself that God is the Watcher and that one day, he will stand in the courtroom of God, and the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) will be the witness.

Therefore, he must constantly suffer from himself. He

should never be lenient with himself and never feel secure from going astray.

The problem is that when one gains self-satisfaction, he will slide into further unexpected issues. The more he feels satisfied with himself, the more distanced he gets from his Lord. The critical stance must trust in God, a refuge in God, servitude to God, and a loving relationship with God. On the other hand, his relationship with himself must be based upon suspicion. He must always expect to be prone to deviation and losing the path. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) states:

(Any believer continuously accuses himself).

Accusing Oneself

The Prophet adds furthermore:

(He is never contented with himself and always seeks more devotion).

A true believer must never be contented with himself and hold himself accountable.

Holding oneself accountable means always having a clear idea about the position of things: what is devoted to God and individual desires.

This is an obligation to all people, Muslims, and believers, especially those who assign themselves to religious preachers. They need to hold themselves accountable and especially observe their acts. This way, they can abide by their mission

and convey their message. They must do their best to be qualified to be the carrier of the notice of Muhammed and his Household (peace be upon them) and the heirs of the prophets.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) does not want simple self-accusation: one must rebuke himself continuously. After all, any self's value depends on its purity range.

We should note that this does not mean hatred or underestimation because this self is the creation of God. The divine requirement is self-reformation. It should be tamed, rebuked, and observed.

This self is related to the quality and type of ideas that come into the mind. We are unsure which one of those ideas will permanently affect our attitudes. Therefore, we should protect our minds and manners by observing and rebuking ourselves continuously.

Satan is a lifetime companion. In this regard, Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) states in his supplication of Complainers:

(Support me with desire).

This means that Satan seeks to give false power to me through desires. As long as he has such deceitful means and manners, we must confront him by rebuking ourselves and striving to do better.

Seeking more devotion to God has various manifestations: self-education, self-purification, and self-observation. One must put himself into different trials and continuously rebukes

himself. In this way, he treats himself properly and seeks straightforwardness. He works on achieving divine content and divine perfection.

Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) addresses his nation:

(Behold you servants of God: any believer continuously accuses himself. He is never contented with himself and always seeks more devotion).

In this regard, we see our leader and example, Imam Ali (peace be upon him), who treads the path of the Quran and the Prophetic traditions and clarifies the best way to achieve this sublime goal. The Imam proposes the best and safest way to build an everlasting relationship with God in thoughts and practices.

The Self and the Manifestation of Servitude to God

The more one submits to the will of God, the more he finds divine power in himself. He sees the statement's impact **(There is no God but Allah)**. In this regard, Imam Ali states:

(Behold servants of God).

This opening statement reminds us of the words of Imam Kadim (peace be upon him).

Once, the Imam saw a moral deviation from a man. He asked about him. His servant-woman informed the Imam about his name. He then asked:

(Is your master a free man or an enslaved person?)

Wondering, she replied: "I told you he is my master, and you ask whether he is a free man or a slave. He is a free man". The Imam stated:

(Indeed, if enslaved, he would obey his Master).

Thus, when the Prophet and Imam Ali (peace be upon them) state: **(Servants of God...)** they seek to pay people's attention to the meaning of servitude, one of its cornerstones is obedience. One must be responsive to the Lord, the Creator, to God. They aim to clarify the true meaning of servitude to God, which is the most sublime form of freedom. Therefore, Imam Ali states:

(Servants of God).**The Self and the Manifestation of Divine Domination**

The Imam states:

(The most loved servant to God is the one God supports to be victorious over himself).

From this part of the Hadith, we understand that there is a loving bond between God and His servant. This love is not a simple emotion. It is divine support, help, and protection for His servants. The question here is, when can one achieve this love? We all acknowledge that He loves all his creatures unconditionally, but when does it become a source of divine support?

These privileges are achieved when the servant begins to love his Lord back. We see this condition in the Quran:

(He loves them, and they love Him back). Maeda/54

We should note that there is general love because God produces nothing terrible: He is the source of beauty, benevolence, mercy, charity, and goodness. He loves all His creatures. However, these privileges are comprehensible only to those who can embrace them. This capacity is only found in those who love God devotedly in mind, practice, manners, and attitude.

Anyone may love God, but this love sublimates individuals when they devotedly submit to God and worship Him by all their senses. Therefore, divine support is granted depending on the quality of love for God.

In this regard, we understand the Hadith of Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

(Behold the servants of God: the most loved servant to God is the one God supports to be victorious over himself).

At this moment, he manifests servitude to God, submission to his Creator, and truly loves Him. At this moment, he becomes the site of divine grace and blessing.

The meaning of **(supported by God to be victorious over himself)** is controlling the source of all vices: the self and the whisperer to the self. Satan is the source of all deviations and selfishness. When Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) complains to God, he states:

(My God, I complain to you about an enemy who leads me astray and a Satan who seduces me; he filled my chest with his whispers and his obsessions encircle my heart).

The Imam seeks to highlight the source of all errors and deviations and that we must find refuge in God to remain safe from these degenerations. People will be prone to going astray unless they submit to God, practice their servitude, and love Him devotedly. At this level, they will achieve divine support:

(Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from the darknesses into the light). Baqara / 257

The Hadith of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) explains this verse:

(The most loved servant to God is the one God supports to be victorious over himself).

God supports his servant to be victorious over himself, his desires, his egoism, his selfishness, and all other harmful features.

This victory leads to achieving a clear sight, straightforward thinking, and quickly finding the right path. He gains these privileges because he treads upon the way of God and admits to His servitude. In this regard, the supplication states:

(O God: introduce Yourself to me because if You do not introduce Yourself to me, I shall not recognize Your Prophet. O God: introduce Your Prophet to me because if You do not introduce Your Prophet to me, I shall not recognize Your Proof. O God: introduce Your Proof to me because if You do not introduce Your Proof to me, I shall deviate from Your religion).

Thus, the first step is building a strict relationship with God and realizing it practically. This is the meaning of (O God, introduce Yourself to me). In other words, teach me how to worship And submit to Your will. However, recognizing the path of servitude cannot be achieved without identifying the Prophet. Once I realize the Prophet, I will locate the Proof of the Imam and the Quran.

When I recognize the Imam of my time, I will find the path to God. Otherwise, I will go astray and lose the course to God. Satan will dominate my mind and heart and deceive me with desires.

The creed, composed of the Quran, the Hadiths of the Prophet, and his Household (peace be upon them), wants us to become devoted servants to God so that we achieve the support and blessing of God. At this level, one does not see himself alone but finds the entire universe standing by his side and the Creator of this universe standing with him.

Therefore, the more one submits to God and abides by His teachings, the stronger and more stable he becomes.

This is the actual existence of Man in this universe. He finds his identity and meaning when he finds his relation to God. When he recognizes his mission in this life, which is the divine successorship on this earth, he will find the meaning of his life. Otherwise, he cannot depend on any other explanation in life and prefers not to exist. He will fail in the divine trial. After he dies, he will beg God:

(O my Lord! Send me back (to life) so that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected).

Muminoon / 99-100

The response is:

(“By no means! It is but a word he says.”- Before them is a Partition). Muminoon / 100

This verse wants to explain that if they return to life, they will resume their evil deeds. They would forget God as they had forgotten him in the first life. They would live in ignorance and irresponsibility. They would deny their servitude to God.

Thus, God supports any servant depending on the range of his submission, devotion, honesty, and sincerity.

Removing the Clothes of Desires

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(He has removed the clothes of desires).

This statement needs deep insight. He uses a metaphor in which he deals with desires as clothes that can be taken off. The origin of this self is the divine self-related to God. Because of specific circumstances, one becomes vulnerable to the forces of desires. The clothes of desires are momentary rather than permanent. This is the first.

Second, we understand from the Hadith of Imam Ali that any person, using his will, determination, and devotion to God, can achieve divine support and take off the clothes of desires. He can find his path to his original state of purity, servitude to his Lord, and love of His decisions.

Thus, any person God loves will become the site of

divine support and can easily remove the clothes of desires. Individuals are surrounded by many deviating forces, including the passion for money, power, food, sex, etc. Each one has its special outfit, values, and tendency.

When he ultimately submits to God's will, He will help him remove these dirty and unrealistic clothes. Satan makes them lead him astray from the right path. Therefore, these outfits are temporary, and the original tendency of any human being is submission to God. The prophetic Hadith confirms this state:

(Any human being is born with the original instinct, but his parents convert him to Judaism or Christianity).

In other words, the surrounding circumstances affect his mind and belief.

Accordingly, responding to evil is an urgent temporary state. Once one devotes his deeds, heart, and manners to God, he will receive God's support. The first divine aid is that he becomes qualified to remove all forms and types of clothes of desire. The Imam continues his Hadith:

(He has removed the clothes of desires and abandoned all his worries but one).

Abandoning Worries

The Hadith mentioned above clarifies several issues. First, desires are the source of worries in this world and the Hereafter. As for this life, desires become a burden because an individual cannot concentrate on anything but his whims. Desires become the food of greed that never rests.

If one has the desire for money, he always asks for more. If someone lusts for power, he always seeks more power. The same applies to the passion for sex, food, and other worldly desires. Therefore, when someone lives without any divine framework, it becomes a burden filled with worries and anxieties. These psychological obstacles make life more difficult and thornier. We should always remember that these sins and desires lead to everlasting anxiety. He can never attain self-satisfaction. He lives in a continuous sense of remorse.

Indeed no individual sins and enjoys a happy life. He might seem pleased in public, but deep inside, he suffers psychologically. He lives a sad, dark, painful life. As for the afterlife, the case will be much more difficult. There will be many stations that cannot be passed without detailed investigations. The condition will be as the Quran describes:

(And stop them; indeed, they are to be questioned).
Safat / 24

Each question is a type of worry. Any question bears with it a trial and adversity. These challenging stations will start when one enters his grave until he is resurrected on Judgement Day. On that day, all organs of the body will bear witness to his actions. The Quran describes the awe of that day:

(The Day ye shall see it, every mother giving suck shall forget her suckling-babe, and every pregnant female shall drop her load (unformed): thou shalt see humanity as in a drunken riot, yet not drunk: but dreadful will be the Wrath of Allah). Haj / 2

Thus, the one who loses control over himself and his desires and follows the path of Satan will be filled with worries in this world and the Hereafter.

Having Unified Concern

Any individual who submits to God in thought and practice will have a unique position to God. This stance is evident in the divine Hadith:

(My believing servant keeps approaching Me by volunteering prayers until I love him, and when I love him, I shall be his eye by which he sees and his ear by which he can hear).

When God supports, helps, and aids his servant by removing the outfits of Satanic desires, he no longer has any worry, neither in this world nor in the Hereafter. His heart is filled with good thinking about God. His attention is directed only to God, and he has no other worries. His concern is to maintain this divine bond in the best possible way. In this regard, he removes all worldly worries and starts interacting with this world from a religious perspective.

(He has removed the clothes of desires and abandoned all his worries but one).

This one worry is maintaining the bond with God. A poet beautifully expresses this:

I wish my relationship with you is cherished,

And my relationship with the world perishes.

This divine bond, firstly, benefits the individual himself because it saves him from destructive desires. Divinity grants a scope by which one can see the path in this world and qualifies him to realize divine successorship on the earth.

One may ask God to reform his relationship with Him so that he can attain the promised prize presented in the following Hadith:

(Reform your relationship with God, so God reforms your affairs in this world and the Hereafter).

In other words, when your relationship with God is healthy, God will take care of your other worldly affairs. He will also guarantee your happiness in the afterlife.

(He has removed the clothes of desires and abandoned all his worries but one).

Accordingly, nothing may stand in his way to God when he abandons all worldly worries. These concerns erupt when one directs attention to his private interests and desires. They will negatively affect the quality of his life. So, when one reforms his relationship with God, he will attain serenity and happiness. Nothing can affect the quality of his life because he is guarded by divine peace and granted successorship on this earth.

His only concern remains to maintain his relationship with

God and to accomplish the divine mission he was granted. Therefore, the Hadith proposes that:

(And abandoned all his worries but one).

This worry remains the motivating force toward improving the relationship with God. It shows the path to His content and support. In such a condition, all other paralyzing desires are overcome, and nothing survives but His love. He remains the ultimate Granter of power:

(O God: if You elevate me, who can drag me down? And if you drag me down, who can promote me? O God, there is no lifter for the one whom You put down, and there is no insulter for the one whom You encourage).

Therefore, power remains at the hand of his Lord and Beloved One.

The same applies to all other worldly affairs. Accordingly, he will live within a divine framework. He will only wish for what content God. He will see the world through religious perspectives. He will have no worries because he knows the actual condition of humanity:

(And you have certainly come to Us alone as We created you the first time). Anam / 94

This life is a concise journey, just like a dream. So, why should we be worried when we know the end of all things? Such an individual is emancipated from all worries but one, which is divine content. He can achieve it through hard work and self-observation.

We have three types of worship: the worship of enslaved

people, the worship of merchants, and the worship of freemen. The word 'worship' here is replaceable with the relationship. So we may say there are three types of divine relationships: the relationship of slaves, merchants, and freemen. We should note that the term 'relationship' is not superior to 'worship.' Yet, we replace these two terms only to reach a specific conclusion. After all, worship is a form of relationship.

The relationship of slaves with their masters is based on fear. The relationship of merchants with their Lord is based upon profit. The relationship of freemen with God is based on elitism. It is that of Muhammed and his Progeny (peace be upon them all):

(And the forerunners, the forerunners. Those are the ones brought near [to Allah]). Waqea / 10-11

It is the relationship of:

(A [large] company of the former peoples). Waqea / 13

It is the relationship of freemen, who have no concern for divine reward and Heaven or fear of punishment and Hell. Their mere concern is sacred content, which is greater than Heaven, as explained by the Quran:

(But the most incredible bliss is the good pleasure of Allah). Tawba / 72

The blessings of Heaven are more significant than any other pleasure that we may imagine because it is overwhelmed by the content of God. His range and presence cannot be defined, measured, or specified. He is the First, the Last, the Revealed, and the Concealed, and He is the One Who has no similar.

This divine feeling cannot be measured to anything, expressed by any utterance, or specified by any limit. In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) explains his sacred relationship with God as the following:

(O God, I have not worshipped you out of fear from Your Hell or longing for Your Heaven. I have only worshipped You because You deserve to be worshipped).

This is the ultimate mode of servitude, love, interaction, self-denial, and unification with God. This is the divine perspective by which one can arrive at the sublime level of servitude to God. He has no concern for Heaven or Hell because he has experienced both in this world. This Hadith applies to Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

(They live as if they reside in Heaven and enjoy its blessings; they live as if they reside in Hell and are punished by its fire).

This is the stance of the chosen companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), Imam Ali, and other Imams of Ahlulbait.

Thus, they experience the pleasures of Heaven while they are still in this world, and they feel the torture (of detachment from God) while they are still alive. Therefore, they have no choice but to approach God and win his approval. In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(And abandoned all his worries but one).

It means that the love of God overwhelmed his mind, heart, and feelings.

The distinct feature of this honest servitude to God is that the more the servant tastes it, the more he longs for it. Unlike any other material need, one can never get enough of it. Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) expresses this stance in one of his supplications:

(Who tasted the sweetness of Your closeness and then asked for something else?)

The sweetness of intimacy with God is honest servitude. This does not mean that we discriminate against certain people because all people are God's servants. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and his Progeny are our examples. We may learn from them the best manner of maintaining this special relationship with God while still socializing with people in the best possible way.

Such an individual sees God's presence in everything, before everything, and after everything. His only concern is God. This attitude grants pure servitude to an individual. He feels the divine presence in his life as if he sees Him. This is clarified in the conversation between Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and a man when he asked the Imam: "Did you see your Lord?". The Imam replied:

(How can I worship a whom I have not seen?).

He observed His presence in the entire universe and felt it with every heartbeat and breath.

Accordingly, he can realize honest servitude. Once a servant achieves this level, he will be as the Imam describes him:

(He gets healed from blindness).

As stated, removing these blinding layers from the eyes qualifies one to see the light clearly and interact with God in the best possible way:

(For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts within the breasts). Haj / 46

When one purifies his heart and feelings, he will find his original instinct, devoted to God. He will find the path to a happy divine life. On the other hand, the path of Satan is the path of blindness and degeneration.

Why are deviated people called blind when they have a pair of healthy eyes? Because they do not see their way and cannot diagnose what may harm them. He cannot measure things correctly. He cannot recognize his true self and position in this world. Otherwise, he would remember God easily, as stated in the Hadith:

(Whoever identifies himself realizes his Lord).

When someone devotes his life to Satan, desires, selfishness, and the world's love, he becomes blind, despite having a pair of healthy eyes. He lost the ability to see the proper path.

We are expected to see, think, interact with the universe and finally find ourselves. We should consider ourselves part of this existence devoted to God.

Back to the statement of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), when a faithful servant of God abandons all his worldly and afterlife worries, he will have only one concern: approaching God and winning His approval. In this way, he will be healed

from blindness because he will see with the light of God. He can easily recognize the true nature of things because, as stated in the divine Hadith, God becomes his eye:

(I shall be his eye by which he sees).

With the support of God, he will leave behind all kinds of darkness and blindness and start observing the existence with the light and eye of God. This sublime level is achievable only through devoted and honest servitude to God.

Sound Mind Produces Sound Ideas

The soundness of the mind is directly linked to one's relationship with God and his interaction with divine teachings.

It is acknowledged that a sound mind improves the relationship with God. It is also a preventive means to avoid moral and practical deviations.

A straight mind is always related to God. It is programmed to live according to divine standards. In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(Fight your desire with your mind).

The mind is the best tool by which one can reach God. Attaining this position qualifies any individual to diagnose the problems in his life and solve them because he abides by divine instructions, whereas desire leads to Satan. Therefore, the Imam insists:

(Fight your thirst with your mind).

Desire is a sign of the loss of all moral values. It is detachment from God, which finally results in unclarity and confusion.

Back to the statement of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) regarding divine support. The Imam states:

(The most loved servant to God is the one God supports to be victorious over himself).

We have discussed the meaning of servitude to God and divine support. We also mentioned the best path to achieving self-dignity and protecting ourselves in the face of moral illnesses, deviation, and errors.

Self-esteem Underestimates Desires

Here, we must remember the statement of Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

(Whoever dignifies himself will underestimate his desires).

When one has no worth, one responds to the desires because they lead to degeneration and moral crises. It affects the stability of the heart, consciousness, and mind. When one does not protect and dignify himself, he will follow his desires, selfishness, and greed.

On the other hand, when someone has self-esteem, he would give worth to himself and sublimate himself from mean and immoral practices. A human being is labeled a human only because he is a servant of God who can realize divine successorship on earth. Therefore, the Imam states:

(Whoever dignifies himself will underestimate his desires).

At this point, he starts to despise his desires, underestimate his whims, and demean his wants. Desires and wishes do not form a complete human being; mind, determination, and hard work give worth to humans.

Living with God

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(He has removed the clothes of desires and abandoned all his worries but one).

It is the worry of one's relationship with God and attaining his approval. It is the need to embrace the blessings of God with soul, body, mind, feelings, and emotions. Such an approximate can be realized by abiding by God's teachings, moral values, and accomplishing duties. After all, God does not need anything or anyone. The feature of need belongs to humans.

Thus, one's worry must be servitude to God and abiding by His instructions. In this way, he can remove all the outfits of his desires. When he achieves this level,

(He gets healed from blindness).

The first result he achieves is overcoming blindness. He can see through God and live with God. The second level is

(He is freed from the practices of the people of desires).

Desires are the path to Satan, whereas the mind is the path to God. When someone chooses to be among the people of desire, he willingly submits to Satan and his plots. Such people will not have an easy day on Judgement Day. Satanic values will measure their deeds. He has his standards, which lead one astray. Satan's only wish is to see people following their desires.

Therefore, the mind is the best preventive tool that helps one survive going astray. One can recognize his God with reason and find the path to eternal happiness through this invaluable tool. He needs to use his mind and disobey his desires. Failing to abide by the teachings of the mind leads to degeneration and failure in life. The results of deviating from the divine path are many, mainly oppressing oneself, one's family, and society. He becomes a paralyzed, worthless member of the community.

In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(There is no mentality like opposing the desire; there is no power like overcoming the desire; there is no tyranny like approving the desire; there is no holy battle like fighting the desire).

Desires represent the dark side of the soul. When the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) was going back home from a battle, he told his companions:

(We have accomplished the minor Jihad. Now we must win the central Jihad).

The companions did not understand the statement of the Prophet because what could be better than sacrificing the

self and shedding blood for the sake of God? They asked him: "Our beloved Prophet, what is the major Jihad?". He replied:

(Confronting the self).

In other words, he was fighting the deviated desires which led to Satan. This procedure becomes the only worry of a servant of God. Servitude to God heals one from blindness. He refuses to participate in the wicked plots of the people of desire and their evil doings. He never stains his record with their false ideas, feelings, manner, values, or any other wicked act.

However, this does not mean that one must detach from society. A true believer must grant a proper position in his life to other creatures of God. After all, they all are creatures of God. He must not despise them: he must wish them goodness, guidance, reformation, and good prosperous life.

This is the tendency of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) in the early phases of the Islamic call. When he announced the statement of monotheism (There is no God but Allah) in public, people used to reply to him with stones and sticks and harmful acts. When he went home, Khadija and Ali bandaged his wounds. Then, he prayed to God, saying:

(My God: guide my people, for they know not).

When the Prophet left the people of desire, he left them carrying his values and ideas. He never despised them or cursed them. He wished goodness for them because he quilts all forms of goodness and charity. He represents the divine blessing. This manner is evident in many Hadiths, including

the following one:

(A believer is nothing but goodness).

His ideas, practices, words, values, and morals are good. He carries nothing but good to those who harm and reject him.

A true believer never holds grudges toward others. He does not interact with others depending upon his egoism. The only standards according to which he interacts with people are divine.

In this regard, the servant who lives devotedly to God removes all phony outfits of desires, deviation, and degeneration. He distances himself from the people of passion, wishing only God's contentment and approval.

After all these reformative acts, this devoted servant gets to the conclusion, which the Imam beautifully expresses:

(He is a mineral of God's religion).

Does the religion have any minerals? What does this statement mean?

Religion is composed of ideas, statements, and practices. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) describes his faith in God and his belief:

(It is a confession by heart, utterance by the tongue, and practice of the principles).

These guidelines lead to maintaining true belief in God and his instructions.

We should note that religious teachings must be done according to God's will. For example, we should do the noon prayer with four kneelings, not three or five as we wish. The same applies to all other religious practices.

In this regard, every divine instruction is a mine, to which the Imam refers:

(He is a mineral of God's religion).

A mineral is a valuable thing. God's instructions are like minerals valuable. However, these practical instructions need someone to practice them. They must be manifested in society so that everyone else learns them. These practices purify and sublimate the community and make them a devoted Muslim one, as presented in the Quran:

(Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You). Baqara / 128

In this context, Muslim means devotion and submission to God. Any individual is required to be interactive with God and his religion. He should practice divine instructions so that he becomes a mine of faith.

It is a necessity that any nation takes an example of specific individuals who succeeded in manifesting the divine method perfectly. The Quran also invokes us to take the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) as an example in our life:

(Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example).
Ahzab / 21

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also

asked us to take his infallible progeny as an example in life. Following the path of the chosen companions and scholars is also recommended. Once, the wise Luqman advised his son and told him:

(Attend the classes of the scholars and sit very close to them).

Thus, we must take specific individuals as examples and follow their path of worship, reformation, and good acts.

This context explains the statement of Imam Ali (peace be upon him) when he says that whoever devotedly worships God will find God's support to remove all the clothes of desires and abandon all his worries but one, which is the content of God. At this level, he will become a mineral of God's religion.

Another result of submitting to God is the following:

(He is a dowel of the earth).

In addition to being a mineral of religion, he is also a dowel of the earth.

A dowel may be understood both literally and symbolically. Here, the literal meaning is not intended. After all, God created the universe without the need for any dowel. The symbolic meaning is intended in this Hadith.

The dowel may be understood as the necessary support for sustaining the creation of the universe, or it may also be interpreted as maintaining the right path in life.

As for the meaning related to the creation of the universe,

there is a divine Hadith regarding the position of Ahlulbait (peace be upon them all). God states:

(I have not created a lifted sky, bare earth, an illuminating moon, or a bright sun but for the love of these).

They are the Prophet and his Household (peace be upon them all). They reached a level that our minds cannot comprehend. God honored them with this position.

As for sustaining the universe, God created everything for the love of these devoted individuals. This matches the other Quranic verse:

(And I did not make the jinn and humanity except to worship Me). Thariat / 56

About this verse, the original reason behind the creation of this universe is worshipping God and submitting to His will.

Despite the presence of the deviated lost people, there must be good servants of God to become a lantern for people in this world. They are the dowels of this earth.

Such individuals exist in all times and places. They are the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), his Household, the chosen companions, good scholars, and other devoted servants of God.

Another feature of such devoted individuals is justice. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(He binds himself to judge).

Justice is the basis of everything. It paves the path to God.

The first manifestation of justice must be present in oneself.

The primary meaning of justice is to put things in their proper place. One should not proceed or delay things from their position. In other words, one must abide by the teachings of the Prophet and his Household (peace be upon them all). We recite this idea in certain supplications when we pray to them:

(Whoever proceeds, you leave the religion, and whoever delays shall go astray).

Thus, survival is only by abiding by their teaching. Justice lies in their path.

Justice must be found in one's attitude before practicing it in other places. One must tame himself and control his desires to win God's approval.

Healing Blindness

As mentioned earlier, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) describes those devoted to God as healed from moral illnesses, desires, and egoism. The only remaining worry is winning the approval of God.

At this level, their hearts are purified, and their sights are crystallized. They achieve an extraordinary insight, as stated in the Hadith:

(Beware the countenance of a believer).

They are healed from all forms of blindness. They enjoy a

clear and clean relationship with God. They have improved insight into reality.

Because of this divine support, they can quickly diagnose the traps of Satan and his followers. By achieving this level, they become a mineral of God's religion. They are priceless people who cannot be compensated with anything else. They are, furthermore, the dowels of this earth.

The Law of Servitude

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(He binds himself to justice. The first manifestation of his righteousness is that he purges himself from desires).

The Imam appoints the self as the starting point. It is the first step toward servitude and divine content. It is the first act to build a solid and sacred bond with God. Therefore, the servant must first:

(Binds himself to justice).

This law must have specific purposes.

We might ask whether there are priorities in this law. The Imam replies: it is oneself. The self has priority over anything else because it represents the base of the construction of servitude to God.

Any devoted believer must qualify himself first to interact with this divine construction in the way God requires. Thus, the law states:

(He binds himself to justice).

Abiding by this standard shows the sincerity of the individual and his belief in the ideas about which he speaks. He must comprehend these ideas, submit to them, interact with them, and employ them to reach the sublime level of servitude.

The Imam continues:

(The first manifestation of his justice is that he purges himself from desires).

Accordingly, the first step is reforming oneself. It is the first site to absorb these divine standards. The reason is that God creates this self. It is entrusted to us. The first manifestation of justice is preserving and sustaining this self. It must be used in the path of its Creator. It should be protected from any moral illness. This is the first.

Second, after sustaining it, justice must be practiced by driving this self toward accomplishing the divine mission. Furthermore, one cannot be just with others unless he has already absorbed the meaning of justice in his acts. According to the universally acknowledged saying:

(What is missing cannot be given).

And:

(An unlearned person cannot teach others).

In other words, any individual who adopts the slogan of justice must first realize this value in their acts to teach it to others.

When someone does not believe in the necessity of justice cannot grant it to others. It must first be found in one's practices. It represents the practice of religious instructions and the prevention of prohibitions. To clarify this idea further, we must note that justice needs three aspects to be realized:

First: practice the obligatory instructions.

Second: preventing the prohibitions.

Third: being responsible toward the religion and people. Anyone who lacks justice in his life cannot practice it with others.

The Divine Method

Justice, as discussed earlier, means adopting the divine method. It includes doing obligatory worship and preventing prohibited acts. This tendency needs one to learn the principles of religion and its requirements. One also needs to recognize his responsibilities in society. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) refers to this meaning in his Hadith:

(Whoever passes his day and night not caring about Muslims' issues is not one of them).

Practically speaking:

(You all are shepherds, and you are responsible for what you shepherd).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) also adds:

(Whoever sleeps at night while his neighbor is hungry has not truly believed in me).

These principles are necessary for understanding the meaning of justice. Religion is one whole and cannot be eclectic. We cannot adopt only the parts which fit our will. We cannot simply do the daily prayers and fast during Ramadan and keep lying and remaining to deviate from the right path. This cannot be the justice that God asked us to follow. This stance is like what God stated in the Quran:

(And of the people is he who worships Allah on edge).
Haj / 11

This verse is interpreted by Imam Husain (peace be upon him) in one of his sermons:

(People are the slaves of this world, and religion is nothing to them but a tongue lick. They adopt it as long as it does not harm their interests. Once they undergo any trial, only a few people remain religious).

The Imam clarifies that when a religious instruction contradicts people's interests and greed, they will refuse it, ignore Quran, and disobey the Prophet and his Household (peace be upon them). For example, if one of these people becomes guardian over the money of some orphans and religion orders him to save the money, he ignores this order and does what he likes.

Therefore, as the Imam requires, one must abide by divine instructions in all fields of life and maintain God's method. Accordingly, he can save himself from falling into the trap of desire and reform his attitudes in life.

Justice with Oneself: The Victory of Mind over Desire

The individual who responds to Satanic desires and moral deviations is not a stable and average person. He does not have self-content. He lacks justice for himself because the shadow of Satan covers his heart and mind. His relationship with God is too weak to save him from vicious deeds.

When his deeds correspond with his desires (which is the path to Satan), his mind remains unsatisfied with this act. He suffers from an inner struggle. Pangs of consciousness irritate him continuously. As acknowledged, any individual is composed of mind and desires. He is required to give the lead of his attitudes to his mind.

In this regard, Imam Sadiq narrates a Hadith from Imam Ali (peace be upon them). Someone asked Imam Ali (peace be upon him): "Who is before the other: angels or humans?". Imam Ali (peace be upon him) replied:

(God planted mind without desire in angels; He planted desire without reason in animals; He planted both in humans).

Here, we experience the trial of using the mind. We can show how we use our minds and the range of interaction with God. The Imam continues:

(Whoever gives the lead to his mind over his desire becomes superior to the angels. And whoever gives the information to his passion over his reason becomes inferior to the animals).

In this Hadith, the Imam intends to show us the difference between humans on the one side and angels and animals on the other side. Angels cannot sin because they are deprived of the ability of choice, and animals are created without mind, so they cannot be judged. As for humans, they are entrusted with the most precious thing, which is the mind. It is how one can recognize his Lord. God shows the importance of the mind in a divine Hadith. When He created the reason, He told it:

“Come,” so it came. “Go,” God said, so it went. God, then, stated: “Through you, I reward and punish”).

Accordingly, when the mind takes the lead in life, one becomes superior to angels because he adopts justice as his method in life. On the other hand, if his desires take the information, he becomes even worse than the animals because he does not use his mind correctly. He chose to drive himself away from the path of God. The Lord states in the Quran:

(Do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah. Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment for forgetting the Day of Account). Sad / 26

Under the light of the above verse, when someone freezes his mind and responds to his desires, he chooses to go astray, adopting his desires as his god.

Being a faithful servant of God means abiding by His instructions, whereas when someone follows his desires, he worships them and takes them as his god. The result of such a deviation is that his heart will submit to Satan. He cannot respond to God and his Apostle. The Quran describes such a

stance:

(But if they do not respond to you - then know that they only follow their [own] desires. And who is more astray than one who follows his passion without guidance from Allah? Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people).

Qasas / 50

When someone refuses to respond to God, he will fall into the trap of his desires. Satan will dominate his heart and mind. There will be no place for the name and blessing of God in his heart, as stated in the Quran:

(Do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever [in] neglect). Kahf / 28

Because such a person follows his desires, he forgets to remember God in his mind, heart, tongue, and practice. We should note that the remembrance of God always takes us back to the right path and hold us accountable for our actions.

God's remembrance not only mentions His name but also abides by His instructions and practices them in our life. His values must be the standards according to which we live and interact with others.

Neglecting the remembrance of God takes one to be within the circle of the oppressive people. By this negligence, he oppresses himself, as clarified in the Quran:

(But those who wrong follow their [own] desires).

Therefore, following the desires makes one oppressive. The first he oppresses is himself because it is entrusted to us

by God. We must never forget the statement of Imam Kadim (peace be upon him) when someone asked him to give him a piece of advice:

(Do good to the one you love).

The man said: "Give me more, my lord." The Imam replied:

(Know that yourself is the most loving self to you. So do good to it by abiding by God's instructions).

It means that one must be just with himself. When he follows his desires, he becomes oppressive to himself, as stated in verse mentioned above:

(But those who wrong follow their [own] desires).

This wrongdoing may take different forms. It may be done by following the ego. They neglect religious values in life. Another verse insists that:

(Then who can guide one whom Allah has sent astray? And for them, there are no helpers). Rome / 29

The result is that he is punished by divine torment without help from others. God's use is granted only to those who are honest with God:

(If you support God, He will sustain you back)

Muhammed / 7

God helps those who are honest with Him and follow his path. He will illuminate their hearts and guide them in the right direction. On the other hand, those who follow the path of Satan are left alone without any support:

(Those who avoid the major sins and immoralities, only [committing] slight ones. Indeed, your Lord is vast in forgiveness. He knew most of you when He produced you from the earth and when you were fetuses in the wombs of your mothers. So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He knows most of those who fear Him). Najm / 32

Divine help is granted only to those who avoid major sins and immoral acts. They submit to the will of God and follow the path of the infallible Imams from the progeny of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household).

Desire and the Path of Satan

As acknowledged, desire is the path of Satan. Anyone who submits to his desires has advanced to the will of Satan. He becomes his guide and leader.

To prevent the whispers and deviations of Satan, one must seek resort in God. He must ask for His support and guidance so that he remains safe from the misleading of Satan.

Once one submits to his desires and grants rein to this vicious leader, he starts following his instructions, leading to catastrophic conclusions.

Desire is Self-harm

Submitting to desires signifies the beginning of wrongdoing, first, with himself. It will complain to God on Judgement Day. It is entrusted to us by God, so we have to sustain its safety. We must give ourselves back to the Creator as we received them, pure and clean.

Thus, the first oppressive act is done to oneself. It will stand on Judgement Day and complain to God for what we have done to ourselves. This meaning is mentioned in a Hadith by Imam Sajad (peace be upon him):

(Stop harming yourself; do not follow your desires toward disobeying God. It will complain about what you have done to it; parts of you will curse other parts of you).

This Hadith addresses the nation to stop harming itself. We understand two points here:

First: the divine love for the self is evident in this Hadith. God never stops His blessing over us.

Second: God granted specific guarantees to ourselves. He qualified the self to purify itself from any illness only if its owner does not oblige it to do something wrong. Therefore, the Hadith claims:

(Stop harming yourself).

God loves it; it is under the support of God. God granted you this self and honored you by positioning you in this life as His successor. So, it would help if you sustained its exalted position:

(Stop harming yourself; do not follow your desires toward disobeying God).

In other words, it has been created for a specific mission in this life. So you have to use this body for this mission in particular.

We should be noted that this does not mean one is

infallible. Humans are created with desires. Individuals must do their best to protect it from slipping into the traps of deviation. One must purify, sterilize, feed, and train himself so that it succeeds at its divine mission. The original stance in oneself is responding to God rather than following Satan and his whispers. If one commits inevitable mistakes, he must ask for forgiveness and fix the harm he has done. These wrongdoings are the result of inadequate feeding. This self must be fed with religious values to remain on the right path.

A Scene from the Judgement Day

Imam Sajad (peace be upon him) states:

(Stop harming yourself; do not follow your desires toward disobeying God. It will complain about what you have done to it; parts of you will curse other parts of you).

This Hadith displays a scene from Judgement Day. It is both realistic and horrible. It presents the feeling of that day.

As mentioned in the Hadith, one quarrels with its owner on Judgement Day as if they both are adversaries. They both stand in the courtyard. They are the claimant and defendant. Oneself sues its owner, and the defendant is the individual. As for the witness, he is the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and his infallible progeny (peace be upon them all). Other witnesses are placed on different levels. They are the chosen companions, the believers, and even one's organs; time and place will also bear witness on that day.

The trial begins with the opening statement of the claimant,

which is the self. It says: (My God, why did you give me to this person who was harming me by committing sins? He was abusing me by distancing me from you. God obliged me to do these sins and betrayed Your trust. My God, I ask you to look into my case).

This self addresses God and says:

(My God, it is true that the whispers of Satan stained me, but your blessing and beauty are the origins of this self. It was he who dragged me away from Your blessing toward Your wrath and revenge).

This fantastic scene presented by the Hadith shows us the range of love we hold to ourselves. It reminds us of our stance toward God, whether we are faithful servants of God or Satan.

Therefore, the self has certain rights that must be maintained. This is the first. Second, one must accomplish the mission with which he is entrusted. Otherwise, you are considered delinquent, a wrongdoer, and a traitor. The Hadith states:

(It will complain for what you have done to it; parts of you will curse other parts of you).

The spiritual aspect, which the self represents, condemns the material part, the body. It will curse the mind, which was supposed to be used to recognize God.

Thus, one must be in a continuous state of self-accountability. He should always observe his deeds to remain safe on Judgement Day.

Satan Perishes with Repentance

God resides within us. We must employ our minds properly to remain safe from the harms of desires. We should be devoted servants, so we leave no place for demons in our hearts. They look for any vulnerable point through which they can deviate from us.

Satan clarifies the type of relationship he has with true devoted believers. He is an eternal companion that never leaves us alone. He works continuously to deviate us from the right path. Yet, he complains about those individuals who guard themselves against his endeavors. He explains his relationship with such people:

(I doomed them with sins, and they convicted me with repentance).

Satan increases his endeavors according to individuals. First, he tries to tempt them with apparent sins and immoralities, like adultery, drinking intoxicating beverages, usury, and other forbidden acts. As for devoted believers, they do not undergo such temptations. They always resort to God. They always remember this divine statement:

(But Allah would not punish them while you, [O Muhammad], are among them, and Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness). Anfal / 33

They continuously remember God, his torment, and Judgement Day. They regret their sins, so they always ask for God's forgiveness. At this moment, they drag Satan into his doom. He wanted to harm and seal their hearts by committing sins, but they turned their backs on him and disappointed him.

When someone truly repents, he becomes like someone who has not sinned. They perish Satan by asking for repentance. This is the first failure of Satan's long journey, which is as he promised:

(By Your Might, I will indeed mislead them all. Except, among them, Your chosen servants) Sad / 82-83

We must always pray to God to appoint us as one of His chosen servants. Thus, Satan never leaves us alone. He keeps trying with his different means. Here comes the second stage.

As stated by Satan:

(I doomed them with sins, and they convicted me with repentance).

The second stage is more vicious and complicated. Here, Satan uses all his wit and means to overcome us. He says:

(When I see them thus, I will perish them with desires. They think they are guided to the right path, so they withhold repentance).

As for the first stage, Satan's means are apparent sins. Concerning the second, they are hidden, which are one's desires. These sins have different branches. Yet, the origin of all these sins is one's ego. This ego deludes the individual that it is devoted to God. One thinks it is the path to God, and anything else is wrong.

In this regard, Satan seeks to delude him that what he is doing is the right thing. He begins to justify his acts and criticize others. He thinks that he sits at the top of the divine hierarchy. Therefore, Satan says:

(When I see them thus...).

It means they guarded themselves with repentance when he sought to perish them with apparent sins. Then, he started the second stage of temptation.

(When I see them thus, I will perish them with desires. They think they are guided to the right path (they think they are doing good), so they withhold repentance).

Such an individual forgets that he is, after all, a human being and must always hold himself accountable. He must continuously accuse himself and evaluate his actions. He must be aware because God wants him, first, to protect himself and, second, to protect his family and others. God states in the Quran:

(Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones). Tahreem / 6

Here, we see Satan does his best to tempt these people by employing their desires. When they fall into the trap of selfishness, every other sin is possible. He starts thinking that the fraudulent acts he is doing are the best he presents to God and people.

In this life, one must always hold himself accountable. He should not give himself any divine and virtuous position because only God is the All-Knowing Who grants the proper place to the appropriate person.

Thus, there are many obstacles ahead: whoever succeeds in overcoming them is safe, and whoever fails will be in adversity. We do not know who will be considered one of

the people of Heaven and who will be counted as the people of Hell on Judgement Day. We should always beware of our deeds and ask for God's repentance.

Concealed Sins

We have been discussing the temptations of Satan and his seductions. As presented, Satan has different means, plots, shapes, attempts, and tendencies. He always seeks to plant the seeds of desires and deviation in ourselves so that one day we respond to his wishes. Once we respond to his attempts, we will fall into the abyss of darkness and regret.

In the beginning, Satan starts with apparent and obvious sins. He pushes us to kneel to the seduction of our desires. Yet, once we recognize that God forbids them, we start to protect ourselves. As for those who are not determined to stop these temptations, they easily submit to them and fall into the hands of Satan.

As Satan does his best to perish us with sins and disobedience of God, he can also be passed and destroyed by repentance.

He will be disappointed. He failed to penetrate the servant's heart and lead him astray. He moves to the second stage by tempting him with concealed sins. Desires disguise them. Desires are not necessarily physical needs, like sex, money, and power: they may be selfishness and egoism.

Distancing from Divine Standards

When someone submits to his desires, he does not necessarily commit adultery, steal, or drink intoxicating beverages. He may distance himself from God by refusing to abide by religious values and instructions.

He begins to follow the path of his desires. The problem is further complicated because he thinks he is doing the right thing and moving toward a sublime goal, but he is only feeding his ego and selfishness.

Crushed by these chaotic ideas, he thinks he is doing a virtuous act and approaching God. In truth, one can never approach God devotedly while he follows the path of his desires selfishly.

Negative Attentiveness to the Self

Attentiveness to the self means being independent, whereas servitude implies no independence. In other words, one does not have a separate identity because God is the only compelling entity in this existence. Other creatures need His help.

In case one needs to give existence and strength to himself, he must first seek his presence in God. Therefore, there is no place for ego or selfishness. A faithful servant of God must submit to the existence of God.

As discussed earlier, one must continuously observe himself and hold himself accountable. He must adopt divine

standards as a method in life.

One has to interact with everything in this universe as the creatures of God. This is the primary lesson one may learn from the religion revealed to us by God.

Our Lord is our first teacher Who shows us the means to sublimate ourselves and protect ourselves from Satan's temptations. These vicious creatures start with apparent sins. He moves to the second stage when he fails, exploiting one's intentions and ideas. When this person submits to the attempts of Satan, he starts to think that what he is doing is devoted to God, but in essence, they are dedicated to his ego and feed his arrogance.

Like the prophets, God's chosen people never paid attention to their egos and desires. They had self-denial in a way that they never listened to their inner voice. They were the ambassadors of Heaven to the people of earth. The same applies to the infallible Imams of Ahlulbait (peace be upon them all).

Plots of Satan

Satan keeps directing his efforts toward Man in all circumstances. He seeks to make him think that he is doing virtuous acts and that his deeds are devoted to God. Therefore, he is disoriented about whether or not he is doing the right thing. He cannot recognize whether his efforts seek the content of God or Satan. Going back to the statement of Satan and his relationship with humans, we find that he refers

to several issues:

(I doomed them with sins, and they convicted me with repentance. (When I see them thus, I will perish them with desires. They think they are guided to the right path, so they withhold repentance).

They think they are guided to the right path and do not need repentance. He cannot diagnose his faults and, thus, does not need any repentance.

Therefore, any individual must be evident with himself and further understand the essence of things. After all, God is the Most-Knowing and recognizes inner thoughts. In this case, one should not misguide himself and lie to himself.

Here, we should note that, as Muslims, we must presuppose that others base their deeds upon good intention, as instructed in the Hadith:

(Justify your brothers' deeds with seventy justifications. If you do not find one, tell yourself: "He may have on").

We interact with others when we find good intention and straightforwardness in their deeds. Religion wants us to be patient before judging others. We must investigate the related issues in depth before any judgment. We must interact with others as if they are good people unless they prove the opposite. As for ourselves, things are different.

One must not think he is on the safe side and is definitely treading the right path. He must continuously accuse himself. This is how to protect himself from falling into the traps of Satan and his desires.

The Quran states:

(But there came after them successors who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so they will meet evil). Mariam / 59

This verse does not necessarily refer to those who stop praying to God and abiding by His worship. Though they may pray in the best official form, they neglect its spirit. They have lost the meaning and effect of prayer (the impact on their relationship with God). They ignore the fruits of prayer in social life. In this case, they will have further responsibility because they know but do not employ their knowledge. This is clear in verse mentioned above:

(But there came after them successors who neglected prayer).

In this context, the Quran states:

(Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing). Ankaboot / 45

Thus, whoever commits immorality and wrongdoing, has neglected his prayer. The same applies to those who respond to their desires and justify their acts religiously, while the primary force that drives them is their ego.

The Quran renounces responding to desires. It opposes servitude to God because prayer is the most sublime form of submission.

One must learn to give priority to God in everything in life, as stated by the Quran:

(He is the First and the Last, the Ascendant and the Intimate, and He is, of all things, Knowing). Hadeed / 3

Otherwise, one may take his desires as his God. This spoils one's relationship with God because one cannot have two hearts submitted to two opposing paths.

As discussed, neglecting prayer means abandoning its results and effects. It must be taken as a standard in life upon which one can measure his acts.

The Quran shows that neglecting prayer comes from specific findings, mainly:

(And pursued desires).

The most potent form of desire is ego and prioritizing one's selfish tendencies. One may destroy the effect of his worship when he mixes these acts with ego.

(But there came after them successors who neglected prayer and pursued desires; so, they will meet evil).

The verse presented the conclusion before even discussing the details due to the weight of the situation.

God wants Man to be clear with himself and evident in his life. God wants him to recognize the unfortunate result so he may redirect himself to the right path.

The effect would be more substantial when the conclusion is presented without preliminaries. The decision is losing the path, religion, relationship with God, and servitude to God. The result of this loss is following desires, springing from the prime reason, which is ego.

One may ask that we keep highlighting the importance of ego. The answer is that it is the basis of all vices. We must study this base deeply to protect ourselves from falling into this loss. We must understand the meaning of serving God to improve our stance on His will and content. If there is some ego in one's mentality, it will become a growing tumor affecting our divine relationship with God.

Therefore, there must not be any selfishness in our attitudes. In case there is any, it must be diagnosed and treated. It is a psychological disorder with which we must deal immediately.

Moreover, this increased attention to the concept of ego is necessary because it is the driving force of Satan. Even the Quran discusses this concept in detail. When this problem is solved, the result is the following:

(Their abode will be the Garden). Naze'at / 41

One cannot prevent himself from the trap of selfishness unless he diagnoses its form, content, and types so that he finally resides in the Garden for eternity.

Necessary Immunity to Desires

Immunity consists of various types, mainly the following:

First: Intellectual.

Second: Psychological.

Third: Social and Environmental.

Fourth: Behavioral and Moral.

We must pay special attention to these four drawbacks.

By intellectual drawback, we refer to the condition in which Satan and his followers always respond to their desires and ego. They seek to create an ideology to fill their followers' mental vacuum.

No individual can live without a specific ideology. He must lean on a particular tendency. When this ideology is safe, the results will be positive.

Satan does not wish security for any human being. The first step is that he provides people with deviated ideas that lead to loss.

The second drawback is psychological. It refers to the condition in which one thinks he is safe from deviation and loss. In this case, he cannot submit to God and interact with His instructions. He remains away from divine content, Prophetic traditions, and the framework of Ahlulbait.

Any individual is expected to form a psychological defense mechanism so that he does not respond to those deviated ideas that lead one away from God, His apostles, and books.

As for social and environmental reformation, it is the requirement that any individual must locate himself in a society that helps him reform himself and encourage him to submit to the will of God in all conditions.

Many religious instructions push us toward choosing excellent and honest friends. Many Hadiths encourage us to accompany scholars and pious people. They also insist on the necessity of living in a morally healthy society so that one finds immunity to satanic whispers.

When someone is located in a clean and sterilized place, he remains pure and unstained. On the other hand, when he sits in a dirty business, he becomes exposed to uncleanliness and illnesses.

This does not mean that he must detach himself from society. Islam wants us to remain close to culture and maintain friendly relationships with others. What is required is accompanying those morally sick people because they affect one's attitudes.

As for behavioral and moral aspects, they can remain safe when the other three features maintain clarity and safety.

When the intellectual factors remain safe, his mind maintains straight ideas. When one is psychologically immune, he remains interacting with the divine methodology. His relationship with God remains safe when there is social and environmental immunity. As for the fourth aspect, the behavioral and moral aspects, one must have a stable and secure mind, psychology, and society to remain morally certain.

These immunological aspects are necessary to remain safe from Satan's attempts.

The Nation between the Divine and Satanic Wills

As discussed earlier, there is a divine method for humanity to find its path to salvation and submission. There is also the satanic will to deviate all people from the right direction. In this regard, the Quranic verse mentions:

(To digress [into] a significant deviation).

Satan and his followers do whatever they can to push an individual into the abyss of deviation, degradation, and immorality.

In addition to following the path of God, interacting with His instructions, and submitting to His will, people must also beware of falling into the traps of Satan and his primary weapon, which is desire.

When we do not submit to God's will and follow His teachings, we will fall into Satan's traps, and he will finally lead us astray.

Typically, we are born with the tendency to follow the path of God, the mind, Muhammed and his Household (peace be upon them), the Quran, and the chosen followers of Islam. However, desire, Satan, and his followers want us to deviate from the right path. Therefore, the Quranic verse explains:

(But those who follow [their] passions want you to digress [into] a significant deviation).

When someone lacks intellectual immunity, he will be overwhelmed by false ideas. When he loses psychological immunity, he will be exposed to mental deviation. When he

loses social and environmental immunity, he will be prone to the attempts of Satan by assigning many immoral friends to accompany him throughout his life. He will fall into all kinds of immoralities when he loses moral and behavioral immunity. Therefore, the verse declares:

(To digress [into] a significant deviation).

Satan starts by diminishing the pain of minor sins, and then he starts to increase his attempts. He starts whispering to him and says: “This is only a small step. Why do you care so much? Do this and say that. They do not have any real impact on your life”. He asks him to humiliate his brother. He swears to him, beats him, and disrespects him.

Satan also asks his target to cheat in his trade by stealing from the balance. It starts with small steps until it reaches great stealing.

Therefore, following the steps of Satan leads to the abyss of degeneration and immorality. He kills one’s pure spirit as cancer when he kills the patient.

These attempts of Satan are like small drops of poison. One tiny drop of poison may kill a person or even more than one person. This killing is a physical one. On the other hand, spiritual poison may destroy one’s soul and cleanliness.

As for spiritual murder, it must be studied further. To clarify this idea, once, an atheist professor was giving a lecture to his students. In his speech, he sought to prove that we cannot believe in something we cannot see. He tried to prove that belief in the unseen is an absurd idea. We should only think

about material things. One of his students said:

“In that case, I think you do not have a mind.” His teacher was offended. The student said: “Show me your mind so I believe in it.” The professor could not reply. Another student threw a stone at him. The professor shouted out of pain. The professor said: “Why did you do that? You hurt me”. The student said: “Who says you are in pain. I cannot see it”.

Thus, the spiritual side is represented in mental productions. Toxic thoughts that affect the functions of the mind are those atheist and deviated thoughts detached from God, the Quran, the Prophet, and his Ahlulbait (peace be upon them). These thoughts provide certain ideologies that lead one astray.

The poison of the mind is the process that changes the way it thinks about specific deviated paths.

Any individual is exposed to being deviated and losing the right path. Therefore, God granted Man with the tool that immunes him from going astray. That tool is mind.

The mind must be used attentively, so it leads to the truth. The reason is the machine of knowledge production. Knowledge is culture, objectivity, and safety in life.

Knowledge is proximity and submission to God, as stated in the Quran:

(Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who know). Fater / 28

In other words, the more one becomes knowledgeable, the more he submits to God and His instructions.

In this context, knowledge does not refer to one specific field of science. It includes all sciences that benefit this universe.

We should note that no matter how deep one may dive into the sea of knowledge, his comprehension remains limited. Here, Satan's poisonous attempt starts attempting to deviate the mind from the right path. The thinking process starts away from rationality, leading to false conclusions.

For example, one of these poisonous ideas is that this universe was created by chance. Satan and desires implant this false idea. The problem with these toxic ideas is that the thinking process is based upon faulty foundations. All the conclusions deviate from the right path toward subjectivity and irrationality. This poison may also lead an individual to question basic and for-granted ideas. It is universally acknowledged that discussing axioms leads to deadlocks. This is a form of spiritual degeneration.

The spirit is created based on purity. It is linked to God based on the oath that the children of Adam took.

Therefore, the spirit appeals to God. Yet, Satan seeks to stain this purity and transforms the pure and honest nature of the soul into a dark and mean entity. In that case, it cannot interact with God's teachings. It can no longer submit to the will of God. This is the most excellent form of murder. It is the most harmful poison in this existence.

In this respect, Satan employs all its power to drive away one's attention to his animalistic desires. Only animals are concerned about their desires. Selfishness is a trait of animals

that see nothing but themselves. In many cases, animals behave according to specific moral values, like honesty and trust. Some people are even worse than animals.

Desires are like poison that sneaks into the self to deviate from the right path. It will not be able to interact with this universe and its Creator anymore. Desires can damage the soul, though we cannot truly understand its essence, as claimed by the Quran:

(Say, “The soul is of the affair of my Lord”). Asra / 85

After all, the soul remains a symbol of purity and honesty in the relationship with God. It is how one can submit to the will of God.

Therefore, Satan employs all his power to stain its purity. He tries to detach it from the mercy of God by overcoming desires. Satan always strives to put walls between the soul and its Creator (though this wall is put by Man’s permission because he did not stand in Satan’s way and yielded to his attempts). When the soul is detached from God, destruction and deterioration shall overcome its progress. It will fall into despair and loss. It will move away from the will and grace of God.

Falling in the Trap of Satan

Satan employs desires as a weapon to push people away from the right path and bind them to selfishness and egoism.

In the first stage, Satan seeks to poison us and kill our spiritual motives. Then, when he succeeds, we become submissive to his will and motives for destroying the entire society.

Any individual may become both a tool and an aim in the hands of Satan. He is an aim because he may become one of his followers and soldiers. Afterward, he becomes a means of Satan to deviate other people from the right path.

In this regard, the Quran and the Hadiths from the Prophet and his Household (peace be upon him) warn us from following Satan and the related desires.

He seeks to kill the humanity of human beings. Individuals are considered human beings with minds, spirits, and souls. One becomes an actual human being with servitude to God and successorship on earth. His free will, determination, and humanistic traits assign him as a human being. Yet, if he submits to his desires, he will no longer be an actual human being who is the successor of God on earth.

In this regard, desires are the trap of Satan. He seeks to use his desires to deviate people from the right path, which is the path of salvation.

Satan has Hunting Tools

When a true believer abides by his instinct and is responsive to his oath and mind, he will remain on the right path. However, demonic forces always try to push him away. Satan uses specific tools to hunt such a person. There are primary and secondary tools.

As for primary tools, they are selfishness and ego. Concerning secondary means, they are desires.

Satan always looks for a weak point through which he can sneak into himself. He continually studies all the dimensions of one's personality to find the vulnerable ports in the soul. He depends on his primary tool, which is selfishness and egoism. Then, he starts looking for the most effective manifestation of narcissism: sex, power, money, etc. He manipulates one of these Achilles' heels to push him away from the path of God.

One's strength to resist these whispers depends on his relation to God. In this case, he is closer to being straightforward. However, Satan never ceases his attempts.

Satan always sets traps for people. He never leaves one alone. He tries to kidnap him from the kingdom of God into the abyss of desires and selfishness.

When one finds his proper place in this universe and recognizes his mission in life, he will be on the right path. When one turns his back to Satan and his whispers, he confirms his servitude to God.

Demonic traps are placed in all places and at times. One must always watch his steps and calling in life.

How to be Safe from the Traps of the Malicious One

Therefore, religion seeks to improve one's relationship with God in any possible way. For example, when a believer wants to leave his house, he is better to recite the chapter of Tawheed six times, as if it is a protection from six sides: ahead, behind, left, right, above, and below. But why this specific chapter?

The chapter of Tawheed equals one-third of the Quran. This chapter represents the divine attributions in the best possible way. In short, it shows the servitude relationship between a servant and his Lord.

Therefore, when he reads the chapter of Tawheed six times, he resorts to God from all sides. God becomes the starting point in his life.

This sacred bond between a believer and God protects him from the malice attempts of Satan. The latter will become mean, weak, and powerless, as shown in the chapter of Nisa / 75:

(Feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan).

This will only happen when we seek power in God, when we are honest with God and when we are honest with our Lord and Creator. We should beware of the plots of Satan and his means, mainly our desires. We cannot keep ourselves safe unless we submit to the will of God.

Thus, we must always be functional on two fronts: first, entire submission to God in a way that we should not see God in this life. At the same time, we must improve the protective

tools and plans in the face of the attempts of Satan and his soldiers. We must always beware of the plots of Satan and the doors through which he snakes into our souls, which are our desires and ego. He is our prime enemy who pushes us towards deviation and loss. He always seeks to drive us away from the path of God.

No Negative Response with Desires

A prophetic Hadith states:

(Abandon desires, for they accustom you to mounting sins and driving you to trespass).

This Hadith encourages you to abandon desires and keep away from them. Then, it justifies this instruction: desires lead to sinning. In other words, responding to desires leads to interacting with their motives. One becomes a tool at the hands of these desires.

We understand from this Hadith that not abandoning these desires, even for once, will lead to repeating the related sins. This is a clear satanic path. Satan asks one to take one small step toward him and then will ask for more until he loses his power to stop and protect himself from his traps.

(They accustom you).

They accustom us to commit sins. If we keep away from them, we can take rational and humanistic steps, detached from desires and selfishness.

Divine Standards

When we become weak in the face of our desires, we must return to God, repent, and ask for his forgiveness.

The standards upon which this world is divine. Humanity's original nature is to keep away from desires and abide by the instructions of the Prophet and his Household (peace be upon them). Their path is the one that leads to the unlimited content of God. Thus, when we sin, we must repent as soon as possible, so we do not get accustomed to mounting sins.

However, when the standard becomes our desires, we will fall into the trap of Satan:

(They accustom you to mounting sins).

Sins may have various manifestations. For example, sin may be a kind of cheating, lying, stealing, gambling, or usury.

(They accustom you to mounting sins).

This Hadith tends to show that they will accustom you to oppose your original nature, purity, and servitude to God. Therefore, you must abandon your desires to get an honorable life the way God wants for you. Otherwise, you will get accustomed to committing sins.

When we analyze this Hadith further, we find layered meanings. The expression of mounting cannot be used for obedience. We cannot say "mounting obedience" because obedience is a practice that matches our original nature, which God granted. On the other hand, sins and mistakes oppose our nature. They must remain away from us. When

they are committed, they are chosen by us consciously. We choose to commit sins and disobey God and His instructions. This is the first.

Second:

(And driving to trespass).

In other words, if you do not abandon your desires, there will be two consequences:

First: getting accustomed to committing sins.

Second: driving to trespass.

This Hadith shows the morally deteriorating condition in which a person lives when he is away from God. His god becomes his desires. He does not merely commit sins: he also falls into trespassing moral and religious boundaries.

The path to God is integral. One's relationship with God may continue to improve. In return, God supports his servant continuously. He enters him within His fortress and protects him from the plots of Satan.

Back to the Hadith, this person used to mount on sins in the beginning. Later, Satan pushes him to move further to make such violations of his habits.

This individual drives towards trespassing boundaries. One does not reach this level unless he becomes deeply involved in sins.

Any individual needs to think and understand their steps. The problem is that he will freeze his rational abilities when

he is responsive to his desires. He will be detached from moral attitudes. He will live a jungle-like life, lacking any natural features and separating from religious tendencies.

We understand from the Hadith that committing sins is a consequence of rational weakness.

There are good thoughts and evil thoughts. When an individual does not abandon his desires, he will commit sins and violates reasonable beliefs. He will abide by bad ideas in his life. Desires become one's lesion in life.

In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(Whoever rushes to desires, lesions will rush to him).

In another Hadith, he states:

(Protect yourself from desires so you will be safe from lesions).

Lesions may be intellectual and may be practical. One of the most demeaning lesions, which is a consequence of selfishness, is a disgrace. When one becomes responsive to his desires, he always hides his steps. He acts like a thief. A thief always seeks to hide because he takes a possession that does not belong to him. However, he will no longer hide when he gets accustomed to committing sins.

The result of insisting on committing sins is a disgrace. This disgrace is both in this life and the afterlife. Therefore, we always insist that one needs to locate himself in a morally healthy place so that he helps himself to stay on the right path. Most of the time, one tries to keep himself unstained

only because people watch him, not because he fears the observation of God.

God's Sermon to Jesus (peace be upon him)

In a long sermon, God gives many instructions to his prophet Jesus (peace be upon him). In part, God states:

(Wear yourself off desires and sins; abandon any selfishness that distances you from Me).

This is God's advice to Jesus to wean himself off forbidden desires that distance him from God.

This Hadith is in the same context as the previously mentioned Hadith of Prophet Muhammed when he states:

(Abandon desires).

Prophet Muhammed's Hadith concerns practical sins in life. As for God's advice to Jesus (peace be upon him), it affects the spiritual side of a believer's relationship with God. This second Hadith invokes us to abandon any sin that distances us from God.

In this regard, we may find two meanings in this Hadith:

First, we see God's concern with keeping his servants close to Him. He wants them nearby.

Second, God is always close to us, regardless of the situations and conditions that we experience. Therefore, God tells Jesus (peace be upon him):

(Wean yourself off desires and sins; abandon any selfishness that distances you from Me).

God does not state: “I distance from you” because He is always close to us, as clarified in the Quran:

(We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein). Qaf / 16

God is the One Who intervenes between a man and his heart. Therefore, one must not place any wall between him and God. Otherwise, when he responds to the force of his desires, he will no longer be able to perceive the existence of God in his life. Therefore, God insists:

(Abandon any selfishness that distances you from Me).

God asks us to abandon any sin and desire that places an obstacle between God and us.

Compunction

The one who does not care about protecting himself from sins, his relationship with himself is unhealthy and harmful. He feels the pressure of compunction.

Anyone who is responsive to his desires understands he has done something wrong. He will suffer from internal conflict. He will feel his low moral status. Therefore, we see that another divine Hadith clarifies that:

(Whoever enjoys committing sins, God shall place him inside humiliation).

Because he seeks to quench his desires, he will live in

humiliation and disgrace. This condition can be named 'negative humiliation.'

As for positive humiliation, it is submission to God and being friendly to other believing brothers.

Sins and desires, on the other hand, place one in damaging humiliation and disgrace. He lives in the pain of distance from God.

When this individual lives in humiliation and distance from God, he will have an everlasting stance of anxiety and depression regarding others. Because he is submissive to his desires, he starts to wrong his friends, family, and society. Therefore, the Hadith declares:

(The level of anxiety is as high as the level of pleasure).

The pleasure of these forbidden desires leads to anxiety because he knows he is wronging his people and society.

Mind is the Enemy of Desire

As stated in the Hadith:

(Desire is a worshipped god, and the mind is a favored friend).

It explains the Quranic verse:

(Then, seest thou such a one as takes his own vain desire as his god?) Jathia / 23

As explained earlier, there is a path that leads to God.

Anyone who treads upon this path has practically taken Allah as his God. On the other hand, there is a path that leads to Satan. When one becomes responsive to his desires, he has taken this dark path in life's journey. Desires become his god.

(Desire is a worshipped god, and the mind is a favored friend).

This Hadith shows that the mind confronts desires. Responding to desires will deactivate the reason.

Mind refers to knowledge, thinking, investigation, evaluation, and assessment. It is the tool by which we worship God and recognize his prophets. Therefore, the mind is a favored friend.

The mind represents the divine path, whereas desires represent the evil path. There is no third path. We find this meaning in the following Hadith:

(Under the dome of heaven, to Allah, no god is more effective than a followed desire).

You either worship God because you follow your mind, or you worship Satan because you follow your passions. The consequence of this deviation is disgrace and humiliation. Such an individual will be haunted by everlasting anxiety.

All steps and decisions are related to one another as a chain. When the relationship with God is graceful, the relationship with people will also be fair.

When the base is unstable, the entire construction will not be safe. When the bond with God is not strong, the relationship

with society will not be perfect.

We cannot worship God and accept his instructions in one dimension only. God must be comprehended from all sides and dimensions. We should embrace His teachings by heart and mind. Our abidance to His concepts must be manifested in our daily life.

All the narrated Hadiths from the Prophet and Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) insist on improving the relationship with God. They also highlight the importance of abandoning the desires that push away from the right path.

The Quran also advises all people to turn their backs on their desires:

(Nor follow thou the lusts (of thy heart), for they will mislead thee from the Path of Allah). Sad / 26

This verse refers to the fact that lusts and desires show us a deviated path and methodology that are distanced from God and his instructions.

On the one side, desires attach us to Satan and make us worship him. They replace our instinct with a demonic one.

(Nor follow thou the lusts (of thy heart), for they will mislead thee from the Path of Allah).

Following desires will make us closer to Satan and distance us from the grace of God.

Desires Lead to Blindness

In one of the sermons of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), he states:

(I advise you to keep away from desires).

But why does the Imam always insist on this part? He justifies his claim:

(I advise you to avoid desires because they lead to blindness).

In other words, when an individual becomes too responsive to his desires, he will not abide by the truth, though he sees it. Is there any further blindness than this case?

Thus, he will live in physical and spiritual blindness. He becomes spiritually blind because he does not abide by the truth. He is also physically blind because he sees the truth clearly without adopting it.

Accordingly, desires lead to both kinds of blindness. The Imam then states:

(It is aberrance in this world and the Hereafter).

In this case, one begins to live without a straightforward method or plan. Such a person lives in contradiction. His desires start to oppose each other. He will be at a permanent loss.

He cannot recognize his needs or his goals. He cannot understand the reason for his existence, his responsibilities in life, and his servitude to God. This is the ultimate mode of

aberrance.

He lives with chronic anxiety and depression. He is lost and cannot recognize his place in life.

As for the afterlife, he will be even more lost. He cannot find his position on Judgement Day. He does not know where he must go. If he goes to Ahlulbait (peace be upon him), they will tell him: "We renounce you because you did not abide by the teachings and instructions of God, the Prophet, and us in life."

He goes to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household). He tells him: "Why didn't you follow me in life? Following me is following God. You have chosen this tragic ending".

He remains lost on the Day of Judgement without recognizing his place. Finally, the divine order issues:

(Stop them, for they must be asked). Safat / 24

At that moment, all his acts and intentions will be revealed:

(That Day shall a man flee from his brother, mother, father, wife, and children. Each of them that Day will have enough concern (of his own) to make him indifferent to the others). Abas / 34-37

He is wholly disoriented as a result of his misbehavior in this world. His deeds lead him astray.

Therefore, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states in the last part of his sermon:

(If you submit to your desires, they will make you deaf and blind; they will destroy your afterlife and disorient you).

The problem here is further complicated. Sometimes, one becomes physically and spiritually blind because he disobeys the truth. In this case, the individual hears the truth but holds his ears to prevent the fact. He hears the truth and understands it but does not interact with it. Therefore, the Quran describes them as: (deaf, dumb, and blind). This resembles the statement of Imam Ali (peace be upon him):

(If you submit to your desires, they will make you deaf and blind; they will destroy your afterlife and disorient you).

Similarly, in another sermon, he states:

(If you assign desires as your leaders, they will make you deaf, blind, and disoriented).

Accordingly, we understand that any human being must take the divine path. He must submit to Allah as his God alone. He must take the Prophet and Ahlulbait (peace be upon them) as his leaders who show him the way to the Quran and eternal happiness in this life and the afterlife.

In this context, we remember one of the followers of Imam Husain (peace be upon him) when he started to recite the following lines:

My lord is Husain. What a perfect lord he is.

He is the joy of the Prophet.

Ali and Fatima are his parents.

Do you know any equal to him?

He chose Imam Husain (peace be upon him) as his leader,

whereas Satan seeks to make desires his leader.

When he says: **(My lord is Husain).**

It means his lord is identical to the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), similar to Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and equal to lady Fatima (peace be upon her), whose contentment leads to the contentment of God, and whose anger leads to the wrath of God.

Therefore, when he says: **(My lord is Husain)**, it means that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) is his lord because he had already stated:

(Husain is from me and I am from Husain).

God also states:

(Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern). Ahzab / 21

Imam Ali (peace be upon him), in this regard, states:

(Whoever follows his desires will blind, deafen, humiliate, and disorient him).

We have already discussed the meaning of each keyword in the above Hadith.

God wants us to desire His will alone. He must be the First, the Last, the Revealed, and the Hidden in our minds, thoughts, feelings, emotions, sayings, deeds, steps, and manners. He must be the measure according to which we live our life.

Responding to desires is the source of all misfortunes and calamities. They will reflect on their effect on this life and the

afterlife.

In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(Beware the domination of desires. Their first effect is misleading, and the last is calamity).

This Hadith encourages one to keep away from the source of danger and improve his relationship with God. In the beginning, he states:

(Beware the domination of desires).

Then, he justifies his statement:

(Their first effect is misleading, and the last is calamity).

In another Hadith, he states:

(The first effect of desires is pleasure, and the last is destruction).

Thus, when someone interacts with his desires, he thinks he has won everlasting joy, but later, he recognizes that he has fallen into darkness.

Satan's Plot is Weak

God states in the chapter of Nisa / 76:

(Feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan).

Any individual must live with clarity in their life. This clarity also defines his relationship with God. It also shapes his mission in life, which is divine successorship on earth. Therefore, Satan is always weak and ashamed before him. Satan is always defeated. However, he can overcome Man's determination

when the latter cannot manifest his humanitarian features in life. Satan can dominate Man's life when he refuses to submit to the will of God. Otherwise, Satan will remain defeated, as stated in the Quran:

(Feeble indeed is the cunning of Satan).

In other words, when you manifest your humanitarian features and succeed in your mission of divine successorship, Satan will be defeated and cannot overcome your will.

Unfortunately, because of a lack of thinking and objective plans, in addition to forgetting the oath with God, one may live in loss and disorientation.

In this case, he becomes easy prey for Satan, desires, and selfishness. He starts to think that he is the center of this world and everything must be at his hand. It is true that everything yields to the will of Man, yet within clear divine limits. Thus, because of one's distance from God, he loses his power, and Satan begins to overcome his will. This person's life starts with temptations and ends with calamity.

The Divine Self is not a Home for Desires

We always need to improve the protection means to defend ourselves from the greatest enemy, desire. It is the base of Satan, from which he attacks us and seeks to control our spirits. Once he takes control of our souls, desires dominate our hearts and minds.

In this regard, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states:

(Beware the domination of desires over your hearts because they start with deception and end with disaster).

When we allow Satan to sneak into our spirits, emotions, and consciousness, using our desires, when we allow our minds to be responsive to Satan, when we leave our hearts to be a place for desires, that is the moment when we leave the rein at the hands of desires. They become the driving force in determining our tendencies. At this stage, one seeks the satisfaction of his desires. Such an individual does not see anything in this world but himself. Here, two images are displayed: one is bright and beautiful, and the other is dim and horrible.

As for the bright image, it mirrors submission to God and overcoming desires. It signifies pride and healthy life in this world and the afterlife. On that day, he will hear the call of his Lord:

(O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back to thy Lord - well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him! Enter thou, then, among My devotees! Yea, enter thou, My Heaven!) Fajr / 27-30

The other image is the dim, painful, and shameful one. It is the condition in which one's desires dominate his attitudes and life. He becomes a devotee of Satan. He starts to commit all kinds of forbidden acts.

(Beware the domination of desires over your hearts).

The Imam intends to clarify that once desires take control of our hearts, they will become the driving force that leads to Hell.

(One Day, We will ask Hell, “Art thou filled to the full?” It will say, “Are there any more (to come)?”) Qaf / 30

The Spirit between the Divine Habit and Satanic Habit

There are two images in this regard. First, the divine image represents holiness, righteousness, and justice. When an individual seeks to abide by right, he will be closer to God. He will be more submissive to His will. When the divine habit overcomes his attitude, he will be eager to spend his time serving God and His creation. He lives in the presence of God all the time. He cannot distance himself from God because he cannot survive without the grace of God. To him, God represents everything: He is all the life, world, afterlife, air, and water. He is the First, the Last, the Revealed, and the Hidden. This is the habit that is formulated according to the will of God.

As for the habit that is based upon selfishness and egoism, it leads to sinful acts and moral deviations. He works only to satisfy his desires.

Man has the power to control his whims and desires. He has the determination to take the lead in his wishes. Yet, when he refuses to take the leadership of his life, he will become a victim of Satan and his temptations.

In the second case, the mind is present yet unused. There is still hope. If this individual uses his mind correctly, he will remember his life position and find his path to God.

Therefore, though someone may be deeply involved in his desires and sinful acts, he can return to the right path.

Sinful acts are not an obstacle in the path of self-reformation. The door is always open for repentance. Yet, when he insists on treading the wrong way, this habit will remain the leading force in his life.

Following Desire is a Continuous Destruction

The end is already determined: worldly destruction and afterlife destruction.

As for worldly destruction, once one's pleasures and desires are expired, he will go into the quicksand of oblivion as if he did not ever exist. This is the improved scenario. The typical case is that he will be remembered with disdain and hatred. He lives loss and destruction in both worlds. It does not matter whether he existed or not. After all, existence is not a mere physical presence in this world: it is spiritual existence. One's relationship with God determines this existence. Once this bond is broken, he will cease to exist. He will be equal to a stone that has no effect in life. Stones may even be better than this person because he has an unused mind.

This is the true meaning of destruction that the previous Hadith mentioned. It refers to the fact that the end of desires is destruction. They transform an individual into a non-human being.

After all, the standard according to which one is considered a human is his relationship and interaction with God.

Moreover, one is considered human when he recognizes his responsibility towards others.

The problem is that his presence in life becomes futile when he loses his bond with God and becomes irresponsible towards others. His life becomes negative. He becomes even worse than a stone because a stone has some use in constructing buildings. If the stone does not benefit anyone, it does not harm anyone. As for an individual who is distanced from God, he is destined to be destroyed. When someone does not have a positive relationship with God, he will have a negative one. He darkens his records once he distances himself from God and becomes irresponsible towards others.

This person does not stop at one point. He keeps deteriorating until he falls into the abyss of desires and selfishness. He becomes too responsive to his wishes and egoism. He is destroyed every day, every hour, and every minute. The destruction here is spiritual because our worth in life is linked to our spiritual existence. The same problem will follow him in the afterlife, as stated in the Quran:

(As often as their skins are roasted through, We shall change them for fresh skins). Nisa / 56

Therefore, the penalty and destruction are continuous. His skin keeps changing so that he feels the pain of torture. This individual who is distanced from God and deeply involved in his desires will remain in eternal torment.

This person may not feel this destruction because there is a curtain between him and his Lord.

He may feel the pain in the form of pangs of consciousness. After all, any individual recognizes that he is doing the wrong thing. There is no rational person who claims that gambling is a good thing or adultery is permissible, or cheating, stealing, and lying are permissible. Nobody can argue that selfishness and denying religious values are acceptable.

Therefore, though he is deeply involved in his desires, pangs of consciousness never release him from their chains. He remains in continuous torment of consciousness.

You can never find someone involved in his desires and still satisfied with himself. He thinks he is enjoying his life because Satan veils the reality of his deeds.

He is doomed to destruction in this world and the Hereafter. Anyone who lives to satisfy his desires and vicious habits is doomed to fail in all parts of his life. An average individual must protect himself and work to abide by the standards according to which they are created. When he neglects these values, he tends to appoint his desires and selfishness as the basis of his life.

The result of Submitting to Desires is the Breakdown of the Mind and Spirit

Such an individual always suffers from the spiritual illness. His spirit does not belong to stable ground. It is disoriented without having a clear plan in life. It has no predetermined goal towards which it moves.

He does not have any goal because the only goal he seeks to accomplish is his ego. He cannot find peace because he is mentally and spiritually unstable.

A sound mind always depends on a straightforward principle according to which it takes its steps. Otherwise, it is lost in disorientation and deviation.

In this case, his desires begin to overcome all his rational and spiritual senses. He becomes ignorant and weak because he does not depend on a sensible and straightforward method in life.

The chain cannot be broken here. When the beginning is submission to desires and ego, the result will be mental and spiritual instability. When the mind is left unattended and fed with unhealthy thoughts, it will lean towards desires more and more.

We must be eager to practice servitude to God in all fields of life. We should not only pay attention to the spiritual side and neglect the physical side. All dimensions must be observed and improved to maintain a perfect interactive life with God and His creation. Otherwise, such an ignorant person will be submissive to desires and ego.

He will be humiliated by his desires because he seeks to provide for his unlimited wants and needs. This tendency will distance him from God, the Quran, the Prophet, and his Household (peace be upon them).

The Divine Method for the Successor Man

As for those who abide by the Quran, the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), those who accomplish their missions and responsibilities perfectly, those who tread upon the path of God, those who chose to perfect themselves in the way of God, those who seek to improve their bond with God, people, and the entire universe, those who submit to God devotedly, the first step they took was improving themselves by purifying their spirits. They abided by the divine method that God designated. This method is that of divine successorship on the earth. God offered this responsibility of Trust to Heavens and mountains, but they refused to take the blame, as stated in the Quran:

(We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens, the Earth, and the Mountains, but they refused to undertake it).

Ahzab / 72

God had already known that only Man could accept this Trust because he was qualified to get it due to the potential that was provided to him by God.

Therefore, God chose Man to be His successor on earth. This successor must have a plan in life. God Himself designed this plan for mind and spirit.

This plan and method are composed of a set of teachings and preventions included in the verses of the Quran. Some of those verses discuss the kinds of worship. Others encounter the manners of people in life. The Quran consists of a method for all fields of life. These teachings cannot be separated.

Qualifications of the Successor

Because God chose Man to be His successor on earth, he must have specific qualifications. The following are some of the essential features of the successor:

He can control his manners, mind, thoughts, spirit, and heart. God has honored Man by granting him certain unique features. When he becomes responsive and submissive to the will of God, he becomes superior even to the angels, as clarified in some Hadiths.

In this regard, the best example of the perfect human being is the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household). No individual can compete with him in perfection. He was so close to God, as stated in the Quran:

(Then he approached and came closer, and was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer; So did (Allah) convey the inspiration to His Servant- (conveyed) what He (meant) to convey. The (Prophet's) (mind and) heart in no way falsified that which he saw). Najm / 8-11

He is the one who ascended to Heaven side by side with Gabriel. When they reached a level, Gabriel stopped. The Prophet asked him to proceed. He replied:

(If I move even for an iota, I shall burn).

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) keeps ascending to a level that only God can recognize. He reached a certain level, as described by the Quran:

(Then he approached and came closer and was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer).

The Household of the Prophet (peace be upon them) was on the same path. They are purified and honored by God. They sacrificed everything to raise the statement of monotheism **(There is no God but Allah, and Muhammed is His Apostle).**

The Islamic nation can be showered with God's grace when it follows the path of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) and the teachings of the Quran. This is the method that is designed for humanity so that they achieve happiness both in this life and the afterlife.

Opposing Desires is the Most Important Feature of a Servant of God

Because the servant of God submits to the will of God and opposes the whispers of Satan, he will be rewarded with two heavens, as stated in the Quran:

(But for such as fear the time when they will stand before (the Judgment Seat of) their Lord, there will be two Gardens). Rahman / 46

Submission to God is the original tendency in Man. Any servant of God must be grateful to God and always fear God's Judgment Seat. Fear is not from God's punishment but fear of losing God's contentment.

(There will be two Gardens).

This world becomes a garden for him, and the afterlife will also be an everlasting paradise. This world becomes heavenly because he feels the joy of proximity to God. Abiding in God's instructions fills the heart with divine grace. The result will be the contentment of God. It is a unique joy that is beyond description. In this context, one of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household) asked him whether God was contented with him. The Prophet replies:

(See your heart, is it contented with God? If yes, then God is contented with you as well).

Any believer must achieve this level. His heart must be filled with divine contentment. He must abide by the instructions of God. He has to submit devotedly to the will of God. When he lives a stance of contentment with God, God will also be

contented with him. The result is that such a person will live in a divine garden in this life, and in the afterlife, he will win an everlasting garden filled with God's grace. That garden will provide whatever one desires, as described by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household):

(In it, you will find what no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard about, and no mind has ever imagined).

The garden that is greater than anything is divine contentment. The Quran describes this idea:

(But the most incredible bliss is the good pleasure of Allah). Tawba / 72

It is more significant than even Heaven and its components. This pleasure cannot be described unless it is lived. This pleasure cannot be described in words and sentences.

This divine contentment can give everlasting joy once experienced by a devoted servant. This is the honor that God grants to his servants.

Detaching from the Divine Method

When someone detaches from the divine method and neglects the teachings of God, he will be a representation of the following Quranic verse:

(Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our signs, but he passed them by Satan followed him up, and he went astray). Araf / 175

This verse addresses the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household):

(Relate to them...).

This verse asks the Prophet to relate to his people the story of the one:

(To whom We sent Our signs).

These signs may be creational. In other words, these signs are provided to any human being at birth. Another set of signs includes revealed signs like the prophets, divine Books, and religious instructions.

(But he passed them by).

He disregarded and neglected those signs. This neglect may be the result of disbelief, or it may be a consequence of practical negligence.

A disbeliever does not believe in these signs because he publicly asserts his disbelief. Other people believe in God and His religion but do not follow His instructions.

Official belief in Islam is the mere announcement of the

two Witnesses. Anyone who bears witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammed is the Apostle of God becomes Muslim; he has all the Islamic rights. However, in the afterlife, in the courtyard of God, he will be blamed for not practicing the instructions of his religion. After all, practicing the Islamic teachings must be the priority in life, as stated in the Quran:

(Those who believe and work righteousness) Hud / 23

(The man we sent Our signs, but he passed them by).

As clarified in verse, such a person does not respond to divine requirements. He understands these signs but neglects them.

(To whom We sent Our signs).

This verse insists that these signs have been revealed to this person, but he turned his back and neglected them.

The phrase (passed them by) means that they were apparent to him, but he dropped them away. He chose to neglect and ignore them.

This detachment leads to abandoning the divine method that God assigned. At this stage, he becomes an empty individual who lives in a spiritual vacuum.

As discussed earlier, any human being is a vessel that must be filled with something. He may be filled with the divine bond with God or with the method and whispers of Satan.

Being Filled with the Satanic Method

When someone abandons the divine method, he becomes empty. Now, he needs to be filled with the alternative content, which is the satanic one. Therefore, the verse mentioned above states:

(So Satan followed him up).

Any individual needs to follow a specific method in life. As for the one who believes in God, he follows the divine teachings.

Once this person abandons the divine teachings, the alternative method replaces the divine one.

As for the satanic method, it seeks to fill human life with desires and deviations, as clarified in verse:

(Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our signs, but he passed them by: so Satan followed him up).

According to this verse:

First, any human being is a vessel that must be filled with something. If he is not filled with the thoughts of the divine method, he will be dominated by satanic beliefs.

Second, (So Satan followed him up): this part of the verse refers to Satan always watching our steps and moves. He always seeks to overcome our defensive lines to dominate our minds and hearts. Satan's mission becomes more manageable when we ignore God's teachings.

Therefore, Satan always follows Man. He does his best to push him into the abyss of loss and deviation. He endeavors to lead Man to the path of desires and departure, as stated in verse:

(And he went astray).

He became distanced, ignorant, sinner, deviated, and forgetful.

Following Desires Leads to Inclination to the Earth

The Quran states:

(If it had been Our will, We should have elevated him with Our signs; but he inclined to the earth, and followed his vain desires. His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue. That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs, So relate the story; perchance they may reflect).

Araf / 176

The verse wants to show that the signs provided to Man yet ignored would elevate him to a high status and improve his bond with God. They would confirm the high quality of Man in this world.

These signs are a method for life that leads to eternal pleasure and serenity. Therefore, if he abided by them, he would achieve a sublime status in this world and the Hereafter.

These signs show the path to divine contentment, as stated in the Quran:

(Who has created me, and it is He Who guides me).
Shoara / 78

One of the graces of God is that when He created Man, He also created the signs that led him to the right path. Yet, some people refused to abide by these signs, and the result is:

(He inclined to the earth).

The idea of inclining the earth is crucial. When the Quran encounters the concept of divine signs, it refers to the entire world and sky. They are not limited to a specific earth. God is

(The Light of the heavens and the earth). Noor / 35

Accordingly, his signs fill all the heavens and the earth. Yet, we always feel that divine support is heavenly. We have such a feeling as we think in awe of the sky. This feeling may be ascribed to our ambiguity toward the sky. Therefore, the verse states:

(Inclined to the earth).

This verse refers to the opposite of the sky as if it has pure and sublime values. It is still unstained by the deeds of Man. On the other side, the earth is stained by the vicious acts of Man. Thus, the verse states:

(Inclined to the earth).

We understand from the verse that if this individual submitted to God devotedly, he would live in spiritual purity and cleanliness: and elevate to the heavens. Yet, his ego and selfishness inclined him to the earth.

The verse continues:

(And followed his vain desires).

This part of the verse shows that following vain desires lead to inclining to the earth, which is a place of vile material belongings.

This Man who was honored by unlimited divine blessing and grace, who was honored by the Trust of successorship, has ignored the signs of God. He distanced himself from servitude to God and missed the path that leads to God. This person who denied the teachings of the Quran, the Prophet, and Ahlulbait (peace be upon them), such a person is like a dog.

The Quran seeks to show us our essence and truth. This book highlights our place in the universe and how animalistic we are. It aims at showing our distance from God and Satan. The Quran always uses parables to clarify its ideas.

Perfecting the Formation of Man to Reach God

The Quran refers to this idea in some detail:

(Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our signs, but he passed them by, so Satan followed him up, and he went astray. If it had been Our will, We should have elevated him with Our signs; but he inclined to the earth and followed his vain desires. His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue. That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs, So relate the story; perchance they may reflect). Araf / 175-6

We have already discussed the meaning of passing by the signs of God and how Satan occupies this spiritual vacuum. Here, we must pay further attention to this part of the verse:

(If it had been Our will, We should have elevated him with Our signs; but he inclined to the earth, and followed his vain desires).

This verse seeks to show that God provided Man with all the necessary means that lead to His kingdom. Individuals are qualified to find the path of servitude and successorship on earth.

There is No Compulsion in Thought and Manner

Providing Man with the means to find God does not mean that there is compulsion in this regard. Any individual is free to choose, as stated in the Quran:

(Let there be no compulsion in religion). Baqara / 256

Because:

(Truth stands out clearly from Error). Baqara / 256

In other words, all the vital signs that lead to God are present in oneself.

Moreover, there is no compulsion in work and manner. Otherwise, there would be no meaning for divine reward or punishment because we are obliged to do good or evil deeds. The Quran clarifies this idea: God provided you with the necessary tools, and the rest is on you.

Man is left free to choose, so he deserves reward or punishment. Therefore, the previous verse states:

(If it had been Our will, We should have elevated him with Our signs).

In other words, we could elevate this person with the signs, but they would become like angels who are obliged to do good deeds. They cannot oppose God's will since they do not have any desire.

Thus, God gave Man the qualification of free will as a sign of honor. He has become independent in life. He can create unbelievable things when he uses this free will and the power

granted to him. He can sublimate to unique divine levels.

Back to the verse:

(If it had been Our will, We should have elevated him with Our signs).

This verse shows that there is no compulsion in religion. Because Man is free to choose, he degenerated into the earth, ignoring God's divine blessings.

There are unlimited blessings that cannot be counted. For example, the very air we breathe is at the hand of God. It is a sign that leads to the recognition of God. Since air is at the hand of God, our entire life is also at the hand of God. He is the Giver of life in this world and the Hereafter.

(But he inclined to the earth and followed his vain desires).

He inclines to the earth or elevates to the sky only because he has free will.

Man is Free to Choose between Elevation and Inclination

Any individual has the freedom to choose between living in approximation with God. On the opposite front, one may keep degenerating to deprivation and loss.

Therefore, two fronts determine one's status in life:

(But he inclined to the earth and followed his vain desires).

After comparing divine sublimation and satanic degeneration, one must never forget the blessings of God in all fields of life. Once he denies these everlasting blessings, he becomes ungrateful for all the gifts of God. Therefore, the Quran describes him as the following:

(His similitude is that of a dog).

We all acknowledge that a dog is a creature of God. It has a soul. In religious instructions, many Hadiths encourage us to be polite and sympathetic to animals. We do not have the right to harm them. For example, we should never slaughter an animal in front of another. Yet, the above verse seeks to show the similarity between this person who is assigned as a successor of the earth and a dog.

This dog example only reminds the readers that the one who is distanced from God and his servitude becomes like a dog. A true believer follows the instinct given to him in the pre-birth realm. After coming into this world, he faced many other signs, including the divine Books and prophets. Thus, when one denies these signs, he becomes like an animal and even

worse. Both the animal and the denier have deactivated their minds and cannot acknowledge the oath that God took. This person may become even worse than an animal because the latter does not have a reason, whereas this person qualifies to become a servant of God who is a successor of the earth.

The Image of the Declining Man

The verse shows the condition of this dog:

(If you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue).

This is the image of the one distanced from God who refuses to submit to his signs. Satan follows him to push him away from the right path. He keeps lolling out his tongue like a dog. When deeply indulged in his desires and whims, he lolls out his tongue and will never be quenched.

(If you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue).

When he does not commit one of these low deeds, he keeps lolling out his tongue, looking for one of those sinful acts. He strives to find an opportunity to quench his desires. Thus, when the dog lolls out his tongue in both conditions, the same is found in the one inclined to the earth, looking after his desires. He cannot be quenched because he does not follow any moral method. Accordingly, there is no limit to his wants and desires.

Intellectual and Practical Rejection is a Sign of Submitting to Satan

The Lord God states:

(If you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue. That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs).

Rejection may be both intellectual and practical. One may reject the origin of the idea. He denies the very existence of God's signs. At other times, he may leave the signs of God practically. He refuses to realize the divine successorship on earth.

Practical rejection may be more effective and submissive to Satan. The verse states:

(That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs).

The word (That) is a demonstrative pronoun that refers to the person detached from God's signs and refusing to acknowledge them. This individual who rejects to submit to the signs of God is similar to a dog, as clarified in the Quran:

(That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs).

Rejection represents all these vile features. It means detachment from the teachings and instructions of the Quran. It is following the whispers of Satan who pushes one astray from the path of God.

This denial of God's signs is odd because the denier is

turning his back on his instinct. There is a Hadith narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him and his Household), in which he confirms this meaning:

(Every person is born with an instinct).

Instinct in this Hadith refers to the belief in God, His signs, and His instructions.

Individuals who turn their back on their instinct fall into the abyss of anxiety, loss, and disorientation. Satan drags him to the path of failure and oblivion. He will remain in the quicksand of egoism, desire, hatred, and irresponsibility. Therefore, he becomes a representation of this verse:

(That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs; So relate the story; perchance they may reflect).

And Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds

