

A CRY FROM

QAṬĪF

By:
Şādiq al-Sayhātī

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Transliteration key

أ - 'ā	ض - ḍ
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ḏ
ت - t	ع - 'c
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - ḥ	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - w, ū
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, ī
ص - ṣ	

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم.

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله. أما بعد،

*To all who lived in that ancient city,
to all who walked along the shores of Al-Qaṭīf and were captivated by its
historic fortresses,
to my people and friends among whom I have lived, and still do,
to every Shīī who loves goodness for themselves,
and to every ardent lover of the Prophet's ﷺ pure and noble
family,
I dedicate this book.*

The Beginning

What started out as academic discourse in the year 1324 A.H resulted in the killing of five people, and the injuring of many others. This discourse is understood to be of the highest level of erudition by global standards. Notwithstanding this, certain verified sources emphatically declared that barely anyone listened to this debate, nor had they listened to any preceding debates.

Consequently, the opposing factions confirmed their refusal to further participate in any serious debate of this nature in the future. They went on to issue stern warnings against anyone who would be deluded enough to repeat any of these “irresponsible acts”. They emphatically declared that any further discussion was untenable and unlikely to be productive. They further stressed the importance of holding onto inherited practice, thereby urging all of their supporters across the globe to raise the flag of bigotry, epitomized by the pagan slogan of “*Burn him, and help your gods!*” (Sūrah al-Ambiyā’: 68).

In this manner, the proverbial wounds began to fester and rot; becoming a cesspool for all sorts of maggots and insects.

However, the pertinent question remains: Was the discourse the cause of the bombardment; or was it the toxic, violent mindset behind the bombardment that rejected any further discussion? Furthermore, who was responsible for this violent mentality taking root whilst civil dialogue remained an elusive dream for all who bore a sense of caution and self-pride?

Moreover, why do we have every sense of willingness to engage in discussion with the entire universe yet remain averse to any discussion amongst ourselves?

Şādiq al-Sayhātī

A Cry before the Storm

Throughout history, Prophets and reformers were repeatedly accused of being liars or insane. Similarly, everyone who brought novel ideas that were in conflict with those of wider society would be accused of betrayal or disloyalty; for no reason other than their contradiction with their predecessors.

إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم مُّقْتَدُونَ

*Indeed, we found our forefathers on a path, and upon **their** traces shall we [ourselves] follow.¹*

This is the method employed by falsehood over the centuries; it crushes any voice that fails to empower its ideas and applaud its mission.

Fir‘awn, Dhū Nuwās, and Namrūd all employed the same strategy before, but truth remained triumphant in the end. It prevails when people free themselves from servitude to other people and embark on the quest for the truth by themselves. The Prophets did not call people to believe them without evidence, nor did they ask them to follow them without reflection. Instead, they appealed to people to use their own intellects to reach objective reality.

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ۚ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يُنشِئُ
النَّشَأَ الْأُخْرَةَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

1 Sūrah al-Zukhruf: 23.

Say, "Travel through the earth and observe how He originated all creation. Thereafter Allah will bring about the subsequent existence. Allah has power over all things."¹

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا ۗ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الشَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۗ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

*It is He who stretched the earth and made therein anchoring mountains and rivers; and from every fruit he made two pairs. He covers the day with the night. Indeed, in these there are sure signs for people who reason.*²

The unfortunate reality is that truth has now become associated with personalities; so when a person of prominence posits something it is deemed the truth regardless of the veracity of his statement or the existence of any evidence supporting it.

If we are to aspire for an accurate perspective on the issues we discuss, then we must remember the saying of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: “Truth is not simply known because of men. Rather, recognize the truth for what it is and you shall recognize its people.”³

There is also the statement of Imām al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, “Wisdom is the lost property of the believer, so wherever one of you finds his lost property then he should seize it.”⁴

1 Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt: 20.

2 Sūrah al-Ra‘d: 3.

3 Al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 40/126.

4 Al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfī*, 8/167.

Marco Korbus, a Christian scholar who later converted to Islam, once said, “Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى mentions a man who would hear the verses of Allah being recited to him, only to turn his back on them without pondering over the reality of what he had heard. This entails that the human, one way or the other, is sinful for failing to verify the truth or falsehood of something he happens to hear.”

Thus, if we happen to find any statement that respects rational enquiry, concurs with the book of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, and the guidance of his Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then we accept it and follow it; and if this is not the case, then we discard the statement entirely, regardless of who said it.

Destroying the Fable

A lengthy debate ensued on the issue of loving the Prophet's ﷺ family, the Ahl al-Bayt, between myself and my ill-tempered interlocutor, a Palestinian from Nablus.

I said to him, “The books of Ḥadīth in your tradition do not mention reports from Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, just as a group of Sunnīs bear hatred for the Ahl al-Bayt and curse them.”

He responded saying that whoever hates the Ahl al-Bayt is not a believer, and proceeded to challenge me to cite a single Sunnī scholar who cursed the Ahl al-Bayt.

I thought to myself, “He dares to challenge *me*?” True to my unpersuadable nature, being a native of Qaṭīf, I accepted this challenge with bullheadedness and intemperate hubris. I proceeded to visit a friend with the unwavering confidence that I would easily find what was needed to support my claims. Having borrowed a number of books, I found what I was seeking effortlessly: dozens of citations of Sunnī scholars vilifying the Imāms, accessibly collected, and neatly arranged by *our* scholars.

These books were a treasure-trove. I could access the statement of any given *Naṣībī*¹ which was cited verbatim and referenced to the original books in which these statements could be found, with page and volume number. I gleefully wrote my findings on a page, eager to deal the fatal blow to my belligerent interlocutor.

1 *Nāṣībī* is a term used to refer to those who revile the Ahl al-Bayt. According to Sunnī doctrine, *Naṣb*, or hatred for the Ahl al-Bayt, is considered a reprehensible innovation (*Bid‘ah*). It is not uncommon for Shī‘īs to refer to Sunnīs as *Nāṣībīs* – Translator.

At our next meeting I said to him, “I have found dozens of examples of Sunnī scholars disparaging the Imāms عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and I have recorded some of these statements on this page.”

His reply annoyed me. Without raising his voice or objecting, he calmly requested me to read out these statements as they appear. I had nothing to fear, so I proceeded to read what I had copied down verbatim from the books of our [Shīʿī] scholars:

Ibn Taymiyyah, the ‘Naṣībī’, says in his book, *Minhāj al-Sunnah*:

‘Alī only waged war against the people for them to obey to him, not for them to obey Allah. Whoever takes lives for his own obedience, then he is one who seeks an elevated status and chaos in the world. This is the exact condition with which Allah describes Fir‘awn when He says, “The abode of the Next World, we grant it to those who do not seek neither exaltation nor corruption in the earth. The successful outcome is for those who are Godfearing.”^{1,2}

“They then have the audacity to claim that they love the Ahl al-Bayt! Listen to this and see their lies,” I thought to myself petulantly.

I then proceeded to read out the remaining examples that I had written down, whilst my interlocutor stood up to fetch his copy of *Minhāj al-Sunnah* from his bookshelf. He said, “I wish to verify what you have said.” Having dealt him a deathblow, I exhaled, triumphant, and in anticipation of the eventual frown of indignation on the forehead of

1 Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ: 83.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, 4/498-499.

my tenacious opponent. I could barely contain myself out of elation at my imminent victory.

After a short while, he turned to me and remarked stoically, “Perhaps you ought to read the statements from their original source; you will discover the error in your citations.”

Discombobulated, it took a few moments before I actually registered what he had said. I was still recovering from the shock from his unexpected reply that I could not believe my eyes after I began to read the discussion from the primary source first hand. I was dumbstruck to find that what I had previously cited was a distortion of fact! The original text read as follows:

Also, it has been authentically transmitted in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Messenger ﷺ said, “A renegade group will appear at a time of strife, from the Muslims, They shall be killed by the one closer to the truth from the two battling parties.”

He also said, “This son of mine is a leader, and Allah will reconcile through him two great factions from the Muslims.”

He also said to ‘Ammār, “The rebellious group will kill you,” and he did not refer to them as ‘the disbelieving group’.

These narrations are authentic according to the scholars of Ḥadīth, and they are narrated from various chains, it is not a case of them narrating from a common source. This necessitates the certainty of the purport of these narrations.

The Messenger ﷺ affirmed that the opposing parties are both Muslim, and he praised the one who would be the means of

reconciliation between them. He also said that a renegade faction will appear, and that the closer of the two groups to the truth will kill them.

Then, it will be said to these people that **should the Nāṣibīs say to you**, “Alī justified spilling the blood of the Muslims and fought them; not on the command of Allah and his Messenger ﷺ but to secure his rule, whereas the Messenger ﷺ said, ‘Cursing a Muslim is sinfulness and to fight him is disbelief,’ and he said, ‘Do not turn disbelievers after me, such that some of you strike the necks of the others’, as a consequence of which, ‘Alī is a disbeliever;” then your argument is not any stronger than theirs. This is because the narrations that **they** take as evidence are authentic; they say, “Taking a life is corruption. Thus, whoever takes lives for his own obedience then he is one who seeks an elevated status and chaos in the world. This is the same state that Allah describes Fir‘awn with, where He says, ‘the abode of the Next World, we grant it to those who do not seek neither exaltation nor corruption in the earth. The successful outcome is for those who are Godfearing.’¹ So whoever is a seeker of worldly elevation and corruption, they are not from the people of salvation in the next life.²

Notice the statement, “should the Nāṣibīs say to you,” meaning that Ibn Taymiyyah is quoting the statement of the Nāṣibīs; not positing these ideas as his own. However, the Shī‘ī scholar, in his ‘fairness’, attributed it to Ibn Taymiyyah himself.

1 Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ: 83.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, 4/498-499.

Thereafter, as we reviewed all of the statements that I had written down from our venerable [Shī'ī] scholars, I found all of them distorted and misquoted in a similar manner.

I was overwhelmed in embarrassment for my failure; all of the books that I had sifted through and carefully collected for an entire week turned out to be nothing more than lies and distortions!

I remained in a state of grief for days, enveloped by melancholy and helplessness. I was surrounded by the feeling that I could not trust anyone around me, and that my world around me was no more than a mirage that could not be trusted.

I looked at my library, specifically the shelf that contained religious literature, and felt a strong impulse to set fire to the library and all the lies contained therein. For what reason would these people be so deceptive?

I began to recall questions that once used to entice me, only to have me ignore them out of fear that entertaining them would eventually raise doubts about the way of the Ahl al-Bayt.

However, it became apparent that there was a methodology being followed that was extraneous to the Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, and that there were people who would defend it with a plethora of deceptive tactics in order to protect its best interests by imposing isolation on the part of laity among the Shī'ah, all the while causing strife in the ranks of the Muslims.

Thinkers and scholars like Ustādh Ḥaydar 'Alī Qalamdaran, the great scholars and Marja's Abū al-Faḍl Al-Burqa'ī, Al-Khālīṣī, Ḥusayn al-

Mu'ayyid, 'Allāmah Muṣṭafā Ḥusayn Ṭabaṭabā'ī, the famous thinker 'Alī Sharī'atī; are all names of scholars, Marja's, and thinkers that only a few Shī'ah have heard of. This appears to be the case for no reason other than the fact that they were individuals who called for reform and a return to what the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ actually stood for.

As a result, they were attacked by the fanatics, simply because they attempted to clarify to the masses what was wrongfully attributed to the school of the Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. It stands to reason that religious awareness among the general masses, and their being conscientized, is a major obstacle that stands in the way of those who have been exploiting them all this while.

So I tried to be honest with myself, true to my name, and asked myself, "What was my intention before the debate?"

I did not find any genuine motivation except for my own predisposition and partisanship; I did not engage or debate to arrive at the truth. My research and reading served no purpose other than fanatically defending our scholars.

I realized that I was incorrect in my endeavour, as nobody is truly responsible for defending the contents of a book aside from its author. I was not responsible for any opinion besides my own, and had nothing to do with the opinions others may have held.

I pondered over the years of slumber that I had spent in the cave that was my library, never aspiring to leave it in search of the truth. I never questioned myself: was there a Sun whose rays were to be sought outside of that cave, or was my cave the only truth whose solace I had in this world?

I decided that I needed to demolish the walls of that cave and expand my reach. I would read whatever literature I could get my hands on, and subsequently decide for myself whether or not its contents were accurate.

I made a resolution from that day onwards that I would not believe anyone blindly after that, Shī'ī, Sunnī, or otherwise, without confirming the truth for myself.

Allah gave me intelligence so that I may search for the truth and follow it, not so that I may blindly follow others. I wouldn't acquiesce any longer to others without thinking, and neither would I follow what others had to say without confirming the veracity of their statement.

I would discover the reality myself, and I endeavoured to formulate my own convictions, independent of the opinions of others. I gazed at my library once more and asked myself, "How did you read such a vast array of literature for no purpose save your own intellectual gratification, when you have read nothing about your religion except for propaganda that would support the preconceived notions determined exclusively on your geographical position? These ideas were only formulated by those around you, only since they were the same ideas posited by those who preceded them."

The only thing this propaganda was successful in was concealing some of the pressing questions that were suppressed inside; it was now time to find answers.

Once again, I recalled those books which were used for proselytization and marvelled at the lies and misrepresentations found in them!

It only reinforced my growing conviction that those claims were only to narrow the understanding of the masses, and to increase the internal strife in the Muslims. I came to the realization that the differences between the reformists and the extremists, which I initially dismissed as being nothing more than differing points of view, were effectively a struggle between the actual tradition of the Ahl al-Bayt and those foreign ideas that were falsely ascribed to them.

Returning to my discussion with my opponent who hailed from Nablus, he said to me, “Regarding your claim that the books of Ḥadīth do not contain reports from Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, I have found 536 narrations from him, which is substantially greater than the narrations from Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān. Why did you invent the claim that there are no narrations from ‘Alī? Read the words of Ibn Taymiyyah, whom you consider a Nāṣibī, where he says, “There is no doubt that *Muwālāt* (loving) ‘Alī is compulsory for every Muslim, the same way that it is obligatory for every Muslim to hold that same notion of *Muwālāt* for those who are like ‘Alī among the Muslims.”¹

He further says:

The books of the Ahl al-Sunnah, of all denominations, are filled with his virtues, censuring those who oppress or slander him from any group. They speak out against anyone who vilifies him. Whatever slander took place from the two battling parties is considered to be from the same reprehensible category as the very fighting that ensued. Ahl al-Sunnah are among the most outspoken in their denouncement of any slander or warfare against him. Rather, they are all unanimous on the fact that he

1 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, 7/27.

is of a greater rank, more deserving of leadership, and greater in the eyes of Allah and his Messenger ﷺ and the believers than Mu'āwiyah, his father, and his brother.¹

Regarding the asceticism of Imām 'Alī عليه السلام he says:

As for the abstinence of 'Alī رضي الله عنه from worldly possessions; that it is a matter beyond doubt. In fact, he was more abstinent than Abū Bakr and 'Umar.²

He says about the killing of Imām Ḥusayn عليه السلام:

Regarding those who killed Ḥusayn, assisted in his killing, or expressed satisfaction with his killing, then Allah's curse is upon him as well as the curse of the angels and all of humanity; Allah will accept none of his actions, be they obligatory or optional.

He proceeds to speak about the love of the Ahl al-Bayt:

Their love, according to us, is an obligation upon which there is divine reward.

He speaks about those who hate the Ahl al-Bayt:

Whoever hates them, meaning the Ahl al-Bayt, then the curse of Allah, the angels, and all of humanity is on them, Allah will not accept any of their obligatory or optional actions.³

1 Ibid, 4/396.

2 Ibid, 7/489.

3 *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 4/487-488.

Between Us and Greek Mythology

Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said, “Two types of people will meet destruction on account of me: he who loves me excessively to the point that he extols me with that which is not found in me, and he who hates me such that due to his hatred of me he would slander me.”¹

Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, quotes a similar statement from Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ:

Two [types of] men shall perish on account of me: an extremist in his love for me, and a slanderer who fabricates lies against me.²

This is similar to his other statement:

Two [types of] men will perish on account of their disposition towards me: an extreme lover and a begrudging hater.³

I was once with a friend on the day of ‘Āshurā’, discussing the *Ta‘ziyah* processions and the Imāms, when he surprised me by saying, “What is said about the Imāms has removed them from the constraints of mere mortals and made them appear as demigods!” I was taken aback at his statement, yet simultaneously overjoyed to find an enlightened youth who refused to follow what he had inherited from his predecessors without contemplation.

He continued by saying, “One of the books that contains simply comedic contents is *Al-Tuḥfat al-Riḍawiyyah fi Mujarrabāt al-Imāmiyyah*

1 Ibrāhīm Al-Thaqafī: *Kitāb al-Ghārāt*, 2/590.

2 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 4/108.

3 *Ibid*, 4/28.

by Muḥammad al-Riḍawī. This book could easily pass off as a book on witchcraft and magic. It demonstrates how to remove rats from the house by using specific talismans, and how to deduce the chastity of a woman by examining her name and her mother's name."¹

Anyone who peruses the books of miracles and similar material will find a distorted image of the Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. Some would consider this indicative of the virtue of the Imāms and of their lofty rank.

In the book *Madīnat al-Ma'ājiz* by al-Sayyid Hāshim Al-Baḥrānī, as well as in *Biḥar al-Anwār* by Al-Majlisī, this story is mentioned:

It is on the authority of Salmān Al-Fārisī, who said, "I said to 'Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, 'I would like you to show me the camel of Thamūd,' so he entered his house and returned with a black horse, then called for another horse to come out.

He then said, 'Mount O Salman.'

I mounted, when I saw that there were two wings attached to the horse's back, with which it began to fly in the air."

He then said, "We then reached a large tree, so he ('Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) split it with a twig in his hand, as a result of which a camel emerged, the height of which was 60 cubits, and the width of which was 40 cubits. He then called, and another camel emerged, even bigger than the first, the height of which was 120 cubits, and the width

1 Another book similar to *Al-Tuḥfat al-Riḍawīyyah* is *Ḍiyā' al-Ṣāliḥīn* by al-Jawāhirji. Professor Ḥusayn Bazbūz has written an important article about this book titled *Waqafāt ma' Ḍiyā' al-Ṣāliḥīn*, in which he has underscored the various aspects of superstition and magic found therein. The article can be accessed on this link: <http://www.altwafoq.net/v2/art6348.html>

of which was 60 cubits. Its head was made from ruby, its legs from emerald, and its udders from pearl. Its right side was made of gold and its left from silver. I drank from its udders pure honey.”

At the end of the tale he said, “All of a sudden there were 70 rows of angels at every corner. So, he (‘Alī) sat at one corner and the angels would come to greet him, until gave them permission to leave and they would disperse.”¹

More elaborate than this is the narration found in numerous works, including *Rawḍat al-Wā‘iẓīn*, wherein it is attributed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that he said:

Verily my beloved, Jibrīl, descended at the time of ‘Alī’s birth. He then said to me, “O beloved of Allah! Allah sends you salutations and congratulates you on the birth of your brother, ‘Alī.”

The story continues until he is reported to have said:

So, I stretched my hand to his mother, when ‘Alī suddenly was leaning on my hand, placing his right hand on his right ear, as he was calling the Adhān and Iqāmah announcing Ḥanīfiyyah², testifying to the oneness of Allah and to my prophethood.

This is what the narration states despite the fact that the Adhān was only institutionalized after migration to Madinah! In fact, at that time, the Messenger ﷺ was not even formally initiated as a Prophet, and neither did he know of that he was a Prophet! The story, however, does not end here. It continues as follows:

1 Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī: *Madinat al-Ma’ajiz*, 1/535; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 54/339.

2 Ḥanīfiyyah is the quality of turning away from the world towards Allah.

He (the newborn ‘Alī) then said to me, “O Messenger of Allah, should I recite?”

To which I replied, “Recite!”

By Him in whose hand lies the life of Muḥammad, he commenced with the scriptures revealed by Allah ﷻ to Adam, that were upheld by Shīth, and he recited them from the first to the last letter, in such a manner that were Shīth to be present, he would have attested to the fact that ‘Alī had memorized them better than himself! He then recited the Torah of Mūsā such that were Mūsā present, he would have attested to the fact that ‘Alī had memorized it better than himself! Then he recited the Zabūr of Dāwūd, and then the Injīl of ‘Īsa! He then recited the Qur’ān that Allah has revealed to me from its beginning to its end, such that I found his memorization of it equivalent in precision to my memorization of it at this moment!¹

Think about it carefully; ‘Alī, the infant, only just born, addressing the Messenger ﷺ, “O Messenger of Allah,” and reciting the Qur’ān that was not even completely revealed at that point, from beginning to end! All of this, whereas the Messenger ﷺ was not aware of his own Prophethood, and not one verse is yet revealed to him!

Consider how it relates to the incident of the Prophet ﷺ first receiving revelation. When Jibrīl descended to him with the revelation, the Messenger ﷺ was alarmed and went to Sayyidah Khadījah عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, trembling and said to her, “Cover me! Cover me!” He then went to Waraqaḥ ibn Nawfal who subsequently informed him that it was the same angel that was sent down to Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

1 Sayyid Hāshim Baḥrānī: *Ḥilyat al-Abrār*, 2/57-59; *Rawḍat al-Wā‘izīn*, pg.83.

There is another famous narration is mentioned in *Biḥār al-Anwār* that reads:

Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was born inside the Ka’bah and the wall of the Ka’bah opened for Fāṭimah bint al-Asad, the mother of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, so that she may enter. Then, after his birth, he saw his father Abū Ṭālib and greeted him. Later, when he saw the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ he greeted him saying, “Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah, and Allah’s mercy and His blessings.” He then recited, after his birth, Surat al-Mu’minūn.¹

Was the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ keeping up a pretence to those around him, creating the impression that he was unaware of being a Prophet?

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ ۗ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا
قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا ۗ فَاصْبِرْ ۗ إِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

*These are some of the accounts of the unseen. We reveal them to you. Neither you nor your people knew them before now. So be patient; the good outcome is for the Godfearing.*²

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says further:

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحًا مِّنْ أَمْرِنَا ۗ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ

1 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 35/17-18.

2 *Sūrah al-Hūd*: 49.

وَلَا الْإِيمَانَ وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ؕ
وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

In a similar way we have revealed to you a Spirit by our command. You knew neither the scripture nor faith, but we made it a light by which we guide whomsoever we will to guide from our slaves. You are truly guiding to the straight path.¹

Allah ﷻ informs us Himself that the Messenger ﷺ did not know a thing regarding his own Prophethood prior to his receiving revelation. On the other hand, we are fabricating reports to claim that Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ knows, and even recites, the Qur’ān in its entirety the first instant that he exits his mother’s womb to the world!

The narrations on the births of the remaining Imāms follow a similar pattern. What is strange is our bias and adherence to these narrations; even at the cost of rejecting the Qur’ān and sound reason. We have no reason for doing so save the fact that we have become fond of hearing these stories from the time we opened our eyes in this world.

In the book *Makānat al-Mar’ah fī Fikr al-Imām al-Khumaynī*:

Al-Zahrā’ was no ordinary woman; she was a sacred and angelic woman. Rather, she is an angelic being who appeared in this world in human image. On the contrary, she is a divine being who appeared in the form of a woman.²

1 Sūrah al-Shūrā: 52.

2 *Makānat al-Mar’ah fī Fikr al-Imām al-Khumaynī*, pg.23-24.

Thus, the logical conclusion to this is that Al-Zahrā' was not a human!

Allah ﷻ says about his Messenger ﷺ:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ

Say, "I am but a man like yourselves, [except] revelation is sent to me."¹

Al-Sayyid Hāshim Al-Baḥrānī mentions in his book, *Madīnat al-Ma'ājiz*:

Shādhān ibn 'Umar narrated to us — from Murrah ibn Qabīṣah ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd — Jābir ibn Yazīd al-Ju'fī told me, "I saw my master al-Bāqir عليه السلام when he had just made an elephant from clay. So, he mounted it and it flew in the air until he went to Makkah and returned on it."

I (Murrah) did not believe him until I met al-Bāqir عليه السلام myself and said to him, "Jabir informed of such-and-such regarding you?"

So he did the same and mounted, taking me with him to Makkah and then returning me.²

Flying elephants! Horses with wings! We do not deny the miracles of the pious. However, these are not miracles; they are fables that cannot be accepted by the intellect!

It is sufficient for the Imām what they have actually done for them to be illuminating lanterns that light up the world. They have no need

1 Sūrah al-Kahf: 110.

2 *Madīnat al-Ma'ājiz*, 5/10.

of anyone to invent outlandish tales about them! The Imāms are great figures in and of themselves, their personalities speak for them; they are in no need of our fabricating tales extolling them! The strange thing is that these stories are contrived in order to affirm that their abilities surpass human boundaries, but despite this, cowardice and silence in the face of oppression is also attributed to them! This is to the extent that when the house of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is attacked, and the rib of his pure wife is broken, on account of which she suffers a miscarriage, he simply looks on like a spectator without any reaction as if the matter does not concern him!

Do the Messengers of Allah conjure up miracles at will, choosing what they will bring about; or do these miracles manifest with the will of Allah in a manner that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ may not even know of a miracle except after its occurrence?

The people of the cave said, “We stayed (in the cave) for a day or part of a day.” They did not know that they had slept for over 300 years.

Allah’s Messenger, Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, threw his staff, and when he saw it as a slithering serpent, he turned away out of fear at the sight of it.

So, does the Imām do as he wishes, as if these affairs are under his control, by resurrecting the dead at some instances, taking control of the sun, peeking into the unseen, fulfilling people’s needs, and sending them their livelihoods at others?

Supernatural acts have been ascribed to the Imāms in a manner that elevates them from the realm of mere mortals to a realm beyond human comprehension. That being the case, how are we then to follow them when they bear these supernatural qualities, and we are only mortals?

When the Imām is providentially moulded in the worship of Allah, like the angels, then how can we emulate him?

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

*You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allah.*¹

We emulate the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ because he is a human being, the same way we are. He never said, “Follow Jibrīl or Mīkā’īl”. Why would He make us follow creatures who bear no likeness to us in our emotions, our feelings, and in our bodily composition?

Furthermore, who is better: one who was created as a normal human with their inclinations and proclivities, yet is able to overcome those inclinations with their firm resolve and strength of spirit; or one who is providentially predisposed to following divine guidance, and has no potential to stray from that path?

When miracles were demanded from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Allah ordered His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to emphasize the fact that he was human:

قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ يَنْبُوعًا أَوْ تَكُونَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَعِنَبٍ فَتَفَجِّرَ الْأَنْهَارَ خِلَالَهَا تَفْجِيرًا أَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَاءَ كَمَا زَعَمَتْ عَلَيْنَا كِسْفًا أَوْ تَأْتِي بِاللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ قَبِيلًا أَوْ

1 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 21.

يَكُونُ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرَفٍ أَوْ تَرْقَىٰ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَلَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ
 حَتَّىٰ تَنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتَابًا نَّقْرُؤُهُ ۗ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ هَلْ كُنْتُ إِلَّا بَشَرًا
 رَسُولًا

They said, “We will not believe you until you make a spring gush out from the earth for us; or until you have a garden of dates and grapes through which you make rivers come pouring; or make the sky, as you claim, fall onto us in pieces; or bring Allah and the angels to us face-to-face or have a house of gold; or ascend into the sky. Even then, we will not believe in your ascension until you send down on us a book that we may read.” Say, “Pure is my Lord! Am I anything but a human messenger?”¹

Imām al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said, upon hearing of those who had gone to extremes in their allegiance to him:

By Allah, we are nothing but slaves to that being who created us; we can neither harm nor benefit. If He shows mercy on us then it is out of His mercy, and if He punishes us, then it is as a result of our sins. By Allah we have no proof against Allah, and neither are we independent of Allah. Indeed, we are to expire, be buried, be resurrected and raised, and apprehended and questioned (on the day of judgement). Woe to them! What is the matter with them, may Allah curse them! They have disobeyed Allah and discomfited his Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in his grave, and they have discomfited the leader of the believers, as well as Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn, and Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī.²

1 Sūrah al-Isrā’: 90-93.

2 Rijāl al-Kashhī, 2/491; Biḥār al-Anwār, 25/289.

The Imāms are Humans

The Imāms are humans like ourselves; they were created the same way we were created. However, it was their great spirits and their pure hearts that made them great. It was their conduct, not their creation. Otherwise, they would not be rewarded or remunerated for their obedience, as they would have been divinely cast into their obedience. The angels are providentially made to be obedient, which is why they are neither rewarded nor punished; neither are they to be gratified in heaven, nor will they be punished in hell.

Imām Zayn al-‘Abidīn said:

May Allah curse those who lie about us. I remembered ‘Abd Allāh ibn Saba’ and every hair on my body stood on end; he claimed a very grave thing. What was the matter with him? May Allah curse him. ‘Alī was, I swear by Allah, a pious slave of Allah, the brother of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; he did not achieve any nobility except through his obedience to Allah and his Messenger, and the Messenger of Allah did not achieve any nobility except through his obedience to Allah.¹

The famous thinker ‘Alī Sharī‘atī says:

In Safavid Shī‘ism, *‘Iṣmah* (infallibility) denotes a physiological, biological, and parapsychological state lived by the Imāms that prevents them from undertaking any sinful activities. If I, hypothetically, were to be created like this, unable to commit any sins, then what would be the value of my God-consciousness then? What is the value of God-consciousness that stems from an inability to sin? A wall, according to this understanding, would

1 *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, 1/324; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 25/286.

be from the most God-fearing things because it is incapable, naturally, of sinning! Similar to this, in an attempt to invent miracles and virtues of the Imām, is the claim some preachers make in their sermons that the sword was incapable of piercing the body of the Imām, ignorant of the fact that this only serves to detract from the Imām and his bravery!

In Safavid Shīism the Imām enjoys an 'Iṣmah devoid of any value, be it human value, as he is incapable of sinning, or intellectual and instructional value, as people cannot emulate a person from whom they differ intrinsically. Safavid Shīism has transformed the Imāms into metaphysical beings who are abstract, imaginary, and superficial creatures of an independent species, formed of soil and water. Consequently, they purged Imāmah of its worth, just as they stripped the belief in Imāmah of its value and its potential to influence conduct and good practice which is the purpose behind emulation of those Imāms! All of this occurred under the guise of sanctifying the Imām, which was brought about through the Mullahs who were subservient to the dictates of Safavid rule. The Mullah would elevate the rank of the Imām to that of the angels, 'discovering' great virtues and accolades for Muḥammad, 'Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn. This Mullah would bestow upon the 14 infallibles an extremely lofty rank, ascribing them to a substance and composition superior to that of nature and human limits. He would posit that their creation was not of ordinary human nature, but that they were in fact elements of divine light manifested in human mould.

According to what these Mullahs opined, the Ahl al-Bayt held two categories of distinctions: one category was exclusively theirs and could not be held by others, and the other were human qualities in which they held the highest distinction, with nobody else

being able to draw close to their rank in these qualities. Even if these qualities were to be found in people other than themselves, then it would be comparatively minuscule, and these would be acquired traits. This is in contrast to the disposition of the infallibles, for whom these qualities were intrinsic, necessitated by their very essence, no effort would be required from their side to acquire these traits.

Consequently, this means—on account of their fallacious reasoning—that the followers of the Imāms are superior to them, due to the obvious nature of the fact that acquired accolades are superior to those one is intrinsically bestowed with.¹

Shaykh al-Mufīd states:

The Imāms from the family of Muḥammad used to know the inner secrets of Allah’s slaves, and they know knowledge of what was to occur before its coming into existence.²

How can we claim that the Imām holds knowledge of the unseen, when the Messenger ﷺ, who was greater than any Imām, happened to say of himself, and has been attested to in the Book of Allah:

وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ لَأَسْتَكْتَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ

*And if I was to know the unseen then I would have sought to gain much good and evil would not have touched me.*³

1 *Al-Tashayyu‘ al-‘Alawī wa al-Tashayyu‘ al-Ṣafawī*, pg. 250-252.

2 Al-Mufīd: *Awā’il al-Maqālāt*, pg. 67.

3 *Sūrah al-A‘rāf*: 188.

Are we meant to believe Shaykh al-Mufīd and discredit what Allah has said?

If the Imām knows the unseen then how is it possible that Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام would go to the prayer without any precautions, knowing full-well that Ibn Muljam is about to assassinate him?

The Imāms died of either being assassinated or poisoned. How, in that case, could the Imāms consume food which had been poisoned when they had knowledge of the unseen? Would this not be considered suicide; especially since the verse says, “evil would not have touched me,” which alludes to the fact that the Messenger must avoid harm when he knows of its affecting him and is able to obviate it?

The only plausible alternative is that the belief of the Imāms knowing the unseen is false, and nobody knows the unseen except Allah. Allah says:

قُلْ لَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

Say, “No one in the heavens or on earth knows the unseen save Allah.”
They do not know when they will be resurrected.¹

We abandoned the narrations that explain to us the asceticism of the Imāms, their worship, and closeness to Allah, all the while clinging to fabrications and fables. If only our people would have known.

1 Sūrah al-Naml: 65.

Exaggerations beyond the Imāms!

These obsessions with fantasy were not limited to the Imāms. By no means were the Marja's [Ayatollahs] not going to have their share of supernatural feats and claims to knowledge of the unseen realms.

In the book *Al-Karāmāt Al-Ghaybiyyah li al-Imām Al-Khumaynī* by Ḥusayn al-Kūrānī, he relates the story of a prison guard under a chapter bearing the title, *a prisoner or a freed captive*:

He used to inform me of fascinating things about this person [Ayatollah Khomeini]. He would always see him in the state of prayer; although at times he would disappear from the prison! On one occasion, after the guard could not find him, he opened the prison door which remained locked, entered the cell, but could not find him. So, he locked the door of the cell and returned to his work. After a short while, he saw him praying inside the cell! I was astonished at what my friend had related to me and wanted to confirm it for myself, so my friend and I switched duties, and I saw for myself that it was exactly as my friend had described.¹

Under the chapter titled, *where has the Imām disappeared*, he relates:

One Thursday night, at 3 am, the Security Service notified us that we needed to change shifts, so I approached the room of the Imām and ushered to him, “Yā Allah!”. When I received no response. I repeatedly called out him to leave with no avail. I then had no choice except to enter forcefully and was astonished not to see him inside! I was astounded, and hurried out to inform one of the workers in the Imām's home to check the other rooms.

1 Khomeini: *Al-Karāmāt Al-Ghaybiyyah*, pg. 51.

Naturally, the house was not so large that I was unable to search myself, but I was not fond of entering the bedrooms. The worker did not find him—this worker still works there. So, we entered the private quarters which was usually reserved for the females. One of the workers there told me that he was not to be found there either. I asked this woman to come with us to look for him in the room one more time, so the three of us went and were still unsuccessful in locating him.

I was extremely worried and requested that Sayyid Aḥmad Khomeini be woken, only to be informed that he had gone to Qom to visit his wife on Thursday night. My anxiety only grew with the realization that there is no one else who I could approach to seek assistance in this dilemma. Desperate for relief, I instructed Sayyid ‘Isa—the worker—to look for the Imām one more time, and when he returned, I saw from his face that he was elated. He said, “The Imām is sitting on his bed.” I was overjoyed, so I hurried to his room and found him sitting on his bed smiling. I kissed his hand and then the change of shift took place, all the while refraining from asking him the reason for his absence. Perhaps he was in a state in which he would not have liked us to see him, or perhaps he would not have liked to tell us what happened.

This episode continues to occupy our minds till this day. Incidentally, his daughter-in-law, Sayyidah Ṭabaṭabā’ī once brought the matter up; he simply smiled and did not respond. She said, “I did not allow myself to repeat the question after this.”¹

The author then annotated these incidents saying that the saints have the ability to transport themselves wherever they please, along with a host of other issues which eventually led up to his claim that Imām

1 Ibid, pg. 53.

Khomeini knew the unseen. Among the many things he mentioned was the story of some pamphlets which Imām Khomeini instructed not be distributed. These pamphlets were then distributed without his being informed. Notwithstanding the surreptitious distribution of the pamphlets Imām Khomeini had knowledge of this.¹

Similarly, this statement which appears in the story of Naṣr Allāh Shāhābādī:

When Imām Khomeini came to Najaf, I related the dream to him, whereupon he smiled and remarked, “These events will become reality.” I asked, “How?” He replied, “It will become clear later on.” He went on to say, “What Imām Khomeini said about these events coming to light became evidently clear to me...”²

One time, one of my friends was uncertain about a matter, so he said to me, “I will contact a particular shaykh to do *Istikhārah*³ for me.’ After him having contacted the shaykh to seek divine guidance on this matter I asked him, “How will the shaykh do this *Istikhārah*?”, despite me already knowing the answer. He responded, “He will take a rosary, and then he moves two beads at a time, and if at the end of it, only one bead is left, then it means that I must go ahead with the decision. If two remain, then it means that I must not proceed with it. If three are remaining, then the *Istikhārah* must be repeated.” I now said to him, “If you were to now request him to repeat the *Istikhārah*, would the result not be the opposite of what he said just a little while ago?”

1 *ibid*, pg. 55.

2 *ibid*, pg. 27.

3 *Istikhārah*: A prayer seeking counsel, which is performed when a person is in need of guidance when facing a particular decision.

What difference is there between this and the superstitious rituals the pagan Arabs who resorted to arrows of divination in their decision-making? Go and seek help from the Lord of the worlds regarding your decision before consulting a rosary!

Let any shaykh that conducts this type of practice answer: Where is this proven in the Book of Allah or the Ḥadīth of the Messenger ﷺ and his pure Ahl al-Bayt? Alas, the hearts have held on to anything, even to a rosary, in seeking help in their affairs, yet we have abandoned the Lord of the worlds!

The Names Game

I was watching a documentary film on India with one of my Egyptian friends. This friend was from a Sufi family, although he did not fit the profile of a clichéd, eccentric Sufi. He had the capacity to think about things critically.

This documentary included a segment on a group of Buddhists. One was shown sleeping on nails, another was walking on coals, a third was driving a knife into his head, and so on.

My friend remarked, “These tricks are an exact replica of those done by the Sufis in Egypt who claim to have been given miracles!” He added mockingly, “Every Sufi ought to observe the ‘miracles’ from his pious saints, and then observe the same things are done by these idol worshipping non-believers.”

He commented, “Idols, made me pause and reflect for a moment. I remembered the story of idols appearing in the Arabian Peninsula, and how the idol, *Lāt*, was attributed to a pious person who used to make

porridge for the people. Upon his demise, people were very grieved, and made a statue to commemorate him, and before long it evolved into an idol which people worshipped as a deity besides Allah.”

I imagined an idol around which hundreds of people had gathered in seeking their sustenance and cure from their sicknesses with all of their humility and submission, only for Shayṭān to suddenly change it with a tree whilst the people remained the same as they were earlier, requesting their sustenance! Suddenly he would make the tree disappear, replacing it with a fire, after which they would continue to sit there! Then the fire was exchanged with a grave, and people continued to seek sustenance and blessing from it as if it would draw them nearer to Allah!

What is the difference between these elements, when the action associated with them is the same? What difference does it make if there is a tree in the centre, or a fire, or a grave, or anything else for that matter, when the action is one: beseeching other than Allah and requesting one’s needs from them?

I was amazed at Shayṭān’s crafty plan: by simply changing names or substituting objects, throughout history, his objectives were realized. It is as if Shayṭān wants to tell the naïve world of man:

Whoever does not worship Lāt will worship another; names are plenty yet Shirk is one.

Changing the name of alcohol does not make it permissible to consume. Calling it spirits, or nootropics, or any other name will not change the Islamic ruling on it. Just like this, the discovery of new types of beverages similar to alcohol in its intoxicating effect does not make it a permissible beverage!

Alcohol is not simply forbidden because its name is alcohol, but rather because it intoxicates. Thus, anything that intoxicates is impermissible, regardless of what people may call it. Drugs, opium, hashish, and even sniffing glue are all impermissible because they intoxicate in the same way that alcohol does.

In the same way, invoking idols is polytheism, not because of the name, idol, but rather because it is worship of a deity other than Allah. Hence, there is no difference between calling upon an idol and calling upon the sun, or the angels, or tombs of the deceased. All of this is worship of others besides Allah, regardless of what appellations they may hold.

Was the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent to us to tell us of the validity of seeking sustenance and cure from the Imāms, or was he sent to turn us to the worship of Allah alone? Ponder over the statement of Allah's Messenger Ibrāhīm عليه السلام when he said:

وَإِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِي

*When I am sick, then He is the one who cures me.*¹

Allah سبحانه وتعالى also says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ
أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ أَحْيَاءٍ ۗ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ أَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُونَ

*Those whom they call besides Allah cannot create anything, and they are themselves created. They are dead, not living. They do not know when they will be raised.*²

1 Sūrah al-Shu'arā': 80.

2 Sūrah al-Nahl: 20-21.

They are dead, not living. If this verse is not addressing calling upon the dead instead of Allah, then what else could it be addressing?

Someone may object by saying, “The Imāms are martyrs, and the martyrs are alive by their Lord, as Allah has said, *‘And do not think of those who were killed in the path of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive, being granted provision by their Lord.’*”

I would answer by saying that the disbelievers are also alive after their deaths. Their life is the life of the realm between this world and the next called *Barzakh*. However, Allah did not call this *life*, as it does not deserve this title.

Moreover, whoever uses this verse as evidence fails to complete it, and instead stops at “dead.” If those who used this verse as proof just paused to reflect over the remainder of the verse, which is, “Rather, they are alive, being granted provision by their Lord”, then they would notice that Allah said, “being granted provision” not “granting provision.” Allah sends provision to them, and they do not send provision to the people themselves. I say that if they had pondered over this verse then they would not have used it as evidence for the permissibility of seeking provision from the dead.

Imām al-Şādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said in an earlier mentioned Ḥadīth:

By Allah, we are nothing but slaves to that Being Who created us; we can neither harm nor benefit. If He shows mercy on us then it is out of His mercy, and if He punishes us, then it is as a result of our sins. By Allah we have no proof against Allah, and neither are we independent of Allah. Indeed, we are to expire, be buried, be resurrected and raised, and apprehended and questioned (on the

Day of Judgement). Woe to them! What is the matter of them, may Allah curse them! They have disobeyed Allah and discomfited his Messenger ﷺ in his grave, and they have discomfited the leader of the believers, as well as Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn, and Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī.¹

The Messenger ﷺ did not erect tombs or domes over the grave of his cousin Ja‘far, nor for his uncle Ḥamzah. Even Amīr al-Mu‘minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام did not erect a tomb over the grave of the Messenger ﷺ in his caliphate. The Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام did not do this either. As a matter of fact, the Messenger ﷺ cursed those who undertook such actions. Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and Al-Ḥurr Al-‘Āmilī narrate that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Do not take my grave as a qiblah or as a place of worship, for indeed Allah cursed the Jews for taking the graves of their Messengers as places of worship.”²

The Imāms as Intermediaries

I spoke to a friend regarding invoking the Imāms in supplication and seeking their aid, to which he responded, “The Imāms are intermediaries between Allah and the slave. For example, can you enter the office of an administrator or a high-ranking official without a contact?”

I said, “If this official was just and humble, and he allowed for people to see him, then yes I would be able to do so. However, if he was arrogant then I would not be able to do so. Do you feel that the need for an intermediary is just?”

1 *Rijāl al-Kashhī*, 2/491; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 25/289.

2 Al-Ṣadūq: *‘Ilal al-Sharā‘i’*, 2/358; al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī: *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, 3/235.

Allah disregarded all obstacles and intermediaries and proclaimed:

رَبُّكُمْ اذْعُونِي اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنِ عِبَادَتِي
سَيَدْخُلُوْنَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِيْنَ

*Call upon Me and I will answer you. Those who show arrogance from My worship, they shall enter Hell, utterly disgraced.*¹

He never said, “Call the Imāms, or bring intermediaries to me, so that I may answer you.”

The matter has greatly surpassed being confined to just the Imāms. There is now a shrine for Imām Khomeini that is visited by people seeking provision and cure from him. It is the old plan of Shayṭān that has come again, but in a different garb. In the past, when a man would die, they would mould an idol for him. Today, when a scholar dies, they erect a shrine for him. What used to take place by the idols now takes place in the shrines. There is no real difference.

The strange thing is that the propaganda literature that justifies this kind of action cites Aḥādīth that allow visiting graves for reflection and taking lesson from them; then combines this with the Aḥādīth of the Prophet’s ﷺ intercession on the Day of Qiyāmah. Thus, they justify Ṭawāf (circumambulating) of the shrines, and seeking help from those buried in those graves. I fail to realise the link between the permissibility of visiting the graves and the permissibility of calling on their inhabitants as opposed to calling on Allah.

1 Sūrah al-Ghāfir: 60.

All misguided religions placed intermediaries between the slave and his Lord. In some denominations of Christianity priests are intermediaries between the slave and his Lord, and idols hold the same position for the polytheists. Is this merely a case of Shayṭān applying a diverse and broad strategy for the deviation of the rest of humankind?

Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام advised Imām Ḥusayn, saying, “Seek refuge yourself for all affairs in the Being that you worship; for that is taking recourse to a cave of protection, and a strong defence. Devote yourself in your prayer to your Lord, for indeed giving and withholding are in His control.”¹

Imām al-Riḍā would often supplicate in the following manner:

O Allah, I am devoid of any power and might, and there is no true power and might except Yours. O Allah, I take refuge in you and I absolve myself of those who have claimed about us that which is not in us. I absolve myself from those who have said regarding us that which we have not said regarding ourselves. O Allah, creation is Yours, and provision is from You, and You, alone, do we worship and ask for help. O Allah, You are our Creator and the Creator of our early forefathers and our later forefathers. Divinity befits no one save You, and being worshipped is not for anyone besides You. Curse the Christians who belittled Your grandeur, and curse those who make similar claims from Your creation. O Allah, we are Your slaves, and the children of Your slaves. We do not hold any power to cause ourselves goodness nor harm, nor life nor death nor resurrection. O Allah, whoever claimed that we are deities then we are free from them. Whoever claimed that creation and sustenance is in our hands then we are free from them the same way that ‘Īsā, son of Maryam, is free from the

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 3/39-40.

Christians. O Allah, we did not call them to that which they claim, so do not hold us accountable for what they say. Forgive us for what they say, and do not leave any of them to inhabit the earth. If you leave them, they will misguide your slaves, and they will only beget immoral ingrates.¹

The Imām is dissociating himself from whoever seeks provision and blessing from him, yet some are insistent on calling him instead of Allah!

Would you like the Imām to disassociate himself from you on the Day of Judgement the same way that ʿĪsā, son of Maryam, dissociates himself from the Christians? Just as Imām ʿAlī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ says, “O Allah, I am free of those extremists the same way ʿĪsā, son of Maryam, is free from the Christians. O Allah, forsake them forever and do not assist any one of them.”²

Moreover, those who erected these shrines, what was their aim aside from stealing the people’s money? There are multiple cities claiming that Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is buried there: Cairo, Damascus, Raqqah, and ʿAsqalān. Now, seeing as Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is loved by all Muslims, these shrines will attract great sums of money for the upkeep of those shrines.

More astonishing than this is the fact that it is believed that the grave of Al-Yasaʿ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is in the South-western part of the village of Al-Awjām in al-Qaṭīf! O Allah! Who brought the grave of Al-Yasaʿ from Palestine to al-Qaṭīf?

1 Al-Ṣadūq: *Al-ʿItiqādāt*, pg. 99-100; Al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 25/343.

2 Al-Ṭūsī: *Al-Amālī*, pg. 650.

All the historical and religious evidence points to the fact that he lived his life between Mount Qasiyūn and Jerusalem; so, what moved his grave over here? Did he flee the siege of the Jews? Did his people disbelieve in him when he was alive, such that he escaped them after in death?

If the opportunity presents itself you may just be lucky enough to see his “grave” in al-Awjām, and you will hear someone reading the ceremonial Visitation of the Prophet Al-Yasa‘!

The latest absurd comment I came across on a news website online was the construction of a shrine for Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in Mazar-i Sharif!¹

Everyone is competing to increase their share of shrines so that they can amass the greatest possible revenue through people’s donations. This is the investment that will never fail as long as there are simple-minded people who insist on accruing the curses of Allah, His Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and the Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has said, “Do not take my grave as a qiblah or as a place of worship, for indeed Allah cursed the Jews for taking the graves of their messengers as places of worship.”²

Imām al-Riḍā had cursed whomsoever did such acts, as it appears in the Ḥadīth cited earlier.

1 <http://www.alfajer.org/index.php?act=artc&id=81&PHPSESSID=48d670d1710efa55c79bb60ade010236>

2 Al-Ṣadūq: *‘Ilal al-Sharā‘i’*, 2/358; al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī: *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, 3/235.

Devilish Tricks

A Sufi in Egypt told me that some families there hire people to claim miracles for their deceased, in hopes that people believe them and erect shrines through which the families may then accrue substantial amounts of money! This person's family had done this with his grandfather's corpse after his death, and he had witnessed all of these happenings as a child.

He said that his family hired men to carry the coffin, and once they reached the graveyard, they pretended that the coffin was pulling them back as they were trying to enter the coffin into the graveyard. This continued until they reached a plot of land belonging to the family, when suddenly the coffin became still. They said, "That's it then. It is certain that this person wishes to be buried over here!" A shrine was erected for him there, and this incident was among the primary reasons for this person abandoning them.

I sometimes wonder, "Where are the minds of such people?"

Colonialism and the orientalists would laud this type of backwardness. People like Goldziher, the famous orientalist, praised these phenomena, as is found in his correspondences with Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī.

Similarly, during French occupation they commissioned the erection of many of these shrines for the Sufis. To the extent that Sufi Shaykhs do not deny this; they even claim it to be divine assistance!

I once saw a person on a television program on Al-Jazeera saying he was guided to it by a Jew! These are the very people who take advantage of unsuspecting people's ignorance about their religion.

The Respected Shaykh ‘Abbās al-Mūsā, and invoking others besides Allah

I read an excellent article by the respected Shaykh ‘Abbās al-Mūsā titled *A Moment with the Truth that is more Deserving of Being Followed*. He says in this article:

The Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt have guided us to this: To the fact that we must turn to Allah [alone] to fulfil our needs, seek our sustenance, and so on, and that whoever does not turn to Allah then he is in a clear loss.

The most adept expression of this is what has been narrated from Imām al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام, where he said that he had read in some books that Allah, blessed and elevated is He, says, “I swear by My honour, My grandeur, My magnificence, and My loftiness over my throne, I shall thwart with despondency the hopes of whomsoever hopes of anything from anyone besides Me. I shall clothe him in the garb of disgrace among the people. I shall remove him from closeness to Me, and shall move him far from My grace.”

Imām al-Riḍā says, “For you is creation and from you is provision,” since provision is from Allah, not from the Imāms. He also says, “Whoever claimed that creation and sustenance is in our hands, then we are free from them the same way that ʿĪsā, son of Maryam, is free from the Christians.” The Imām is dissociating himself from whomever claims that the Imāms provide sustenance, whereas we, the Shīʿah, insist on the idea that they grant sustenance.

He concluded his supplication asking that Allah not spare anyone who claims that the Imāms grant sustenance. He said, “...Do

not leave any of them to inhabit the earth! If You spare them, they will misguide Your slaves, and they will only beget insolent ingrates.” He emphasized in his prayer that they, the Ahl al-Bayt, did not call the Shī‘ah or their followers, or anyone else for that matter, towards that which they claim about the Ahl al-Bayt.

It is mentioned in *Du‘ā al-Jawshan al-Kabīr* that which reinforces the idea that Allah alone is the Sustainer, as is mentioned in section 90:

O He, besides whom none knows the unseen! O He, besides whom none can remove harm! O He, besides whom none can create! O He, besides whom none can forgive sins! O He, besides whom none can bring bounties to completion! O He, besides whom none can change the hearts! O He, besides whom none can conduct any affair! O He, besides whom none can send down the rain! O He, besides whom none can spread sustenance! O He, besides whom none can give life to the dead...

Considering this, how can one say, “O ‘Alī, give me provision” or “grant me wealth”, when the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt deny this and forbid it, and accuse those who claim such things of lying, as well as suspecting them of extremism?

What a stark difference: the Imāms of Ahl al-Bayt are rejecting that it is claimed about them that they grant sustenance to the people in one way or the other, whilst their Shī‘ah claim that they grant sustenance!

Despite this legacy that attempts to turn us towards Allah, we do not see anyone from the scholars (naturally, this is not a blanket ruling) who would turn us in the same direction. We have a

vested interest in the infallible Ahl al-Bayt, yet forgot their Lord and Creator. It is for this very reason that we say, “O ‘Alī, grant me sustenance” instead of saying, “O Allah, grant me sustenance”, that we confide in Ahl al-Bayt and not in Allah, that we supplicate to Ahl al-Bayt and not to Allah, that we seek our needs from Ahl al-Bayt , saying, “O Umm al-Banīn, help me”, instead of “O Allah, help me”, and that we seek cure from Ahl al-Bayt , saying “O Fāṭimah, cure me,” instead of, “O Allah, cure me.” When a calamity befalls us, our hearts turn to the Ahl al-Bayt and not to Allah.

Do we turn to the subsidiary and forget what holds primary importance? Allah is to be given primary importance, and the Ahl al-Bayt are subordinate.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الْفَاسِقُونَ

And do not become like those who forgot Allah, so Allah caused them to forget themselves. Those are the immoral ones.¹

In whom do we place our hope? From whom do we seek sustenance? Whom do we beseech for our needs and to remove the calamities affecting us?

Is the answer to all of those questions anyone than Allah? If so, then we are (according to the narration), those despondent, hopeless persons who have been moved away from proximity of Allah, and no prayers of ours are to be answered. This is truly the greatest tragedy.

1 Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr: 19.

Who taught us this? Is it simply a case of *We found our forefathers on a tradition, and we are simply following their footsteps*¹?

That is not the case. Rather, it is that these understandings have been placed in our minds by someone. Was it the books that did this? Was it the scholars? Was it our mothers and fathers? Irrespective of whom it is, there is someone who breeds this in the people.

Related to this discussion is the intense situation with which the scholars and narrators of Ḥadīth in the school of Qom (in earlier times) came face-to-face with the Mufawwidhah² in debate. Whoever is familiar with this epoch is aware of this struggle, where the scholars stood up to this ideology of the extremists with all of its literature that had spread at that time. They ended up deciding that whoever attributed superhuman qualities to the Imāms would be considered extremists, and as a result, banished from their city.³

The Degradation of Women

I recall a conversation that I once had with someone. He said to me, “Do you not think that *Mut‘ah*⁴ can be a solution to some problems?”

I retorted, “Pornography can also be a solution for some problems! Usury can also be a solution for some complex problems, and the same

1 Sūrah al-Zukhruf: 22.

2 An extremist group of Shī‘ah who believed that Allah had surrendered control of the universe to the Prophet ﷺ after having created him. Translator.

3 See: <http://www.fajrweb.net/?act=artc&id=3578>

4 Temporary marriage – Translator.

can be said for alcohol. Was it not Allah Himself who affirmed that alcohol, despite benefits for people, is a substance which carries great sin. He also said that its harm outweighs its benefit, and the simple ability of any entity to solve a problem in your opinion does not render it permissible. Even the Socialist regime had solved some problems, but that is not relevant. What is relevant is whether or not that system of governance was from Allah. If it was from Allah, then it is not possible that Allah who is All-Knowing and All-Wise, to legislate an edict that solves one problem and creates millions of others, or an edict that clashes with the nature and honour of the Human.”

Before discussing how Mut‘ah solves a single problem, consider the thousands of problems that will come as a result of it! Mut‘ah has been legislated in Iran; has it solved this problem that you speak of?

Mut‘ah created a myriad of problems for the Iranian government. In fact, if the police were to raid a brothel, all of the prostitutes would immediately claim that the brothel was a sacred centre where Mut‘ah marriages were being conducted! Considering that both cannot be distinguished on the basis of form or arrangement, nobody would be able to prove anything against them.

When the government decided, as a precautionary measure, to force both parties of the Mut‘ah to have a document proving the deal between them, prostitutes produced tens of counterfeit contracts to be used at the time of need, with the box for the names of both “spouses” left empty!

In a similar vein, many prostitutes began to take up Mut‘ah as a profession solely for monetary reasons. This is mentioned by Dr. Shahla

Haeri, the granddaughter of Ayatollah Al-Ḥā'irī, in her book, *Law of Desire: Temporary Marriage in Shī'ī Iran*.

Let us not start the topic of foundlings! Hundreds of orphans are routinely left in baskets at the doors of masjids and shrines. In the Shī'ī magazine, *al-Shirā'*, issue 684 in the fourth year of publication, there is a quote from then Iranian president Rafsanjani, indicating the existence of a quarter million orphans in Iran as a result of Mut'ah.

So, has Mut'ah then solved the problem, or has it incurred innumerable other problems of a greater magnitude that the Iranian government can neither tackle nor ignore? These problems, at the end of the line, forced them to place a moratorium on Mut'ah marriages.

If we were to proceed under the assumption that Mut'ah is permissible and that it is an Islamic marriage, then it follows that a man is allowed to marry an unlimited number of women throughout his lifetime. As for a woman, she is able to remarry after the post-divorce waiting period, which means that she can marry four men on a yearly basis. All considered, she would potentially have shared a bed with 16 men in just the four years she spends at university!

Moreover, seeing as there is no stipulation of a contract or witnesses, and not even of the permission of the legal guardian of the girl¹; you won't be blamed for allowing your imagination to run wild with regards to the number of relationships a young man or woman will potentially have engaged in throughout their lives. This is the spitting image of

1 Al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfi*, 5/541; Al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī: *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, 21/64; al-Khū'ī: *Ṣirāṭ al-Najāt*, 2/369.

what a young man or woman would be doing in countries wherein licentiousness is a common practice.

I then asked my friend, “Are you completely convinced of the permissibility of Mut‘ah?”

He replied with confidence, “Definitely, it is permissible!”

I said to him, “Seeing it is permissible, I would like to engage in it. Do you allow me to engage in Mut‘ah with your sister?”

He was dumbfounded, and barely managed to say “It is permissible, but we do not engage in it.”

I said, “If it is permissible, then why do you not engage in it; do you consider it dishonourable? If you cannot accept that your sister sleeps with a different person every few months, then why do you accept the same thing for others? Are you from Allah’s chosen people, where your honour is sacred and the honour of others is fair game? If neither your intellect nor your nature accepts this, why do you insist on holding onto opinions of people who can err just as they can be correct?”

The extremists went out of their way to fabricate narrations that encourage Mut‘ah and detail its rewards. Hereunder are some of them:

Şālih ibn ‘Uqbah relates from his father that he asked Imām Bāqir عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, “Does the one who engages in Mut‘ah accrue reward?”

He answered “If his intention by doing so is to please Allah, and to oppose so-and-so, then he will not speak one word to the woman except that Allah will write a good deed in his account, and as he

draws close to her, Allah forgives him equivalent to the amount of water that passes over his head!”

I asked “Equivalent to the amount of hair?”

He replied “Yes, equivalent to the amount of hair.”

Here is another narration attributed to Imām Bāqir عليه السلام where he is quoted saying:

When the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم was raised to the heavens he said, “Jibrīl met me and said to me ‘O Muḥammad, Allah, سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says, “I have forgiven those from your ummah who engage in Mut‘ah with women.”¹

Sayyid ‘Alī Ḥusayn Mīlanī attempts to falsify the report of the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم forbidding Mut‘ah on the Day of Khaybar, in addition to the fact that Ibn ‘Abbās ruled that it is impermissible. He states, “This is from that which we do not believe, as Ibn ‘Abbās was subservient to Amīr al-Mu‘minīn عليه السلام, especially in this type of issue which is considered from the essentials of the pure religion.”²

Mut‘ah is from the necessities of the religion? Subḥān Allah! If that is the case, then what is the ruling of one who denies it?

This is nothing more than seeking gratification for an insatiable sexual appetite under the pretext of religion. What else? What have the two parties participating in the communion of Mut‘ah even done to accrue all of this reward? What significance does Mut‘ah carry for it

1 *Man la Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, 3/463; *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, 21/31.

2 *Risālah fī al-Mutamatti‘īn*, pg. 34.

to be considered among the necessities of the faith? Is it one of the foundational pillars of Islam?

The bitter reality is that there are people who wish to exploit Muslim women and they seek to legitimize their perverted fantasies in the name of Ahl al-Bayt. How will there be any conception of a family when a man can simply go on Mut'ah spree, sharing intimacy with a different woman every few days, all without shouldering any responsibility? Why would a man need to get married when life allows for such promiscuity?

A Bitter Reality

An innocent young woman, in the prime of her youth, was beguiled by the empty promises of a cunning suitor whose expressions of affection led her to believe that he actually wanted to marry her immediately after graduating from university studies. This trope is an effective snare which many randy youths utilise to lure naïve damsels and then exploit them. He relentlessly tried to arrange a meeting with her, but all plans were failing him and she refused anything except marriage. He requested that he arrange a Mut'ah agreement. He swore that he would marry her in a permanent marriage later on, since his current situation would not allow for that. After she declined his request, he did his utmost to reassure her of the permissibility of the action, and asked her to consult the books of fatwā.

She began to apprehensively read those fatwā books, as she underwent an internal struggle between her instinct and the literature in front of her which stated the permissibility of this form of marriage. As a matter of fact, some books would emphasize the significant reward for one who engages in Mut'ah. In the end, she entrusted her affair to the guidance of the fatwā books.

It was merely a matter of months when she discovered that she was pregnant and approached her gallant would-be-suitor, whom she shared a bed with in a Mut‘ah arrangement, to inform him of the pregnancy. He replied nonchalantly, “What evidence is there to prove to me that this is my child?”

It is possible that this woman was mistaken in even entertaining conversation with this coward to begin with. She was partly responsible—in her simple-mindedness—for believing him, and consequently surrendering herself, her intellect, her honour, and her future to the fatwā books. However, she was not alone in this venture of hers; the crime is also shared by the scholars as well when they issued verdicts on its permissibility. Society is also to be blamed for acquiescing to such debauchery for no purpose at all other than in defence of those sanctified fatwās!

It is the shared responsibility of all of these parties, and the sin is on all of them. Why did they then disperse to carry on with their lives, leaving this woman by herself to bear all the consequences whilst the coward got away scot-free? If anything, he could have arranged Mut‘ah with a second, or a third, or a ninth woman for that matter, leaving his spawn in every household with the blessing of the clergy, the guardians of the society!

This woman, in the eyes of society, became the criminal who bears the shame of her deed until her death, but after what? After all of these people impressed upon her that what she would undertake was permissible and not blameworthy.

The woman herself is to bear all the pain; whilst the clergy—in their ivory towers with their narcissistic noses in the sky—simply ignore all

that goes on. Society, instead of putting a stop to this tragedy, seeks to creatively invent and propagate rumours about this poor woman who did nothing except submit herself to those same fatwas that they all sanctify.

What is the sin of the child that is to be born without a father as the society looks at it as if it were an illegitimate child? It is already decided before its birth that it will live scorned by the rest of society. By Allah, every child that was born as a result of Mut'ah will come on the Day of Reckoning and cling to the neck of those who gave the fatwā of the permissibility of this cursed marriage.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

Those who love that promiscuity spreads amongst those who believe, for them is a painful punishment in the world and the afterlife.¹

“Those who love that it spreads”, simply loving the spread of licentiousness necessitates a painful punishment, so what about those who actually spread it? What about those who issue fatwās to that end?

A relative of mine once told me that one of her neighbours was bereaved of her husband, and she had children. Her condition was such that she had no source of income. She went to a particular cleric seeking his help in providing for these orphans. He said, “Allow me to engage in Mut'ah

1 Sūrah al-Nūr: 19.

with you and I will help you...” She refused, naturally. Who would have the self-respect that this woman had? The Arabs have an adage, “A free woman would die, but she will not eat with her breasts.”

She refused because she is a woman of honour. When one of the brothers of this cleric came to him to reprimand him he replied, “I only asked her to engage in Mut‘ah in exchange for my help; I never asked for anything impermissible!”

To take advantage of the need and poverty of people, and demanding sexual gratification as quid quo pro is not impermissible! The idiom that best describes people like this, which could very well be their life motto is, “Only that which I am deprived from is Ḥarām; as for Ḥalāl, it is whatever is in your hands.”

Why is the woman so denigrated, and why is her dignity trampled on in such an ugly way? Does the woman have no honour in the eyes of these people? Why do they look at women the way that they were looked at in Jāhiliyyah, where she has no role to play except for fulfilling the lusts of people? What is the difference between European promiscuity and Mut‘ah?

A youngster in Europe chooses a girl with whom he spends some time, until he gets bored of her, upon which he leaves her and searches for another, and so on. In Mut‘ah, the youngster will take from the girl what he desires as if she was a piece of chewing gum, spitting her out when he is finished with her. Why is the woman treated like a commodity in the market? Is she not a human with feelings and honour? If that is really the case, then we ought to honour her the way that her Creator, the Most Merciful of those who show mercy, honoured her.

Burn him, and help your gods

My friend said to me, “Which Marja‘ do you follow?”

I smiled and said, “I follow the most honourable, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.”

After a long silence he turned to me and said, “You must follow a Marja‘ who is alive, or else all of your actions will not be accepted!”

I said “Name me a Marja‘ who doesn’t err and I will follow him immediately. Why should I follow a Marja‘ when he is a human being, when he could err in one fatwā and be correct in the other? For me to be convinced of any fatwa of his, you need to bring to me proof from the book of Allah. As for me following all that he says without any evidence, then this is tacit belief that he is a divine Messenger.”

He said, “What is better in your opinion: that you follow the Ahl al-Bayt or someone else?”

I said, “You follow the Marja‘ and not the Ahl al-Bayt. Where is the way of the Ahl al-Bayt in all that he says? Where is the way of the Ahl al-Bayt in fatwās with no evidence, either from the Qur’ān or from the Ḥadīth of the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ? Did the Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ come with a new religion, different from the religion of the most honourable Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, or did they traverse the path of the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the Qur’ān?”

I have yet to find a book of fatwā wherein the Marja‘ substantiated *half* of his fatwās with proof from the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth. Let alone one where *all* of the fatwās would be substantiated by proof from the Qur’ān or Ḥadīth. Where then is this alleged adherence to the teachings of the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.

Tell me that such-and-such thing is permissible or impermissible because Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى has said so, or the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, or his pure progeny عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ have said so. Present a proof which substantiates your claim. As for your saying, “This is permissible” or “This is impermissible” without any evidence, and then say, “This is the way of Ahl al-Bayt,” I can never accept this from you.

My way is the way of the evidence; my way is the Qur’ān; my way is the way of the authentic narrations from the most honourable Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and his pure family عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. If anyone contradicts the word of the blessed Qur’ān then we will reject his opinion outright, just as Imām al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ has commanded us to do.

Names do not concern me; give me the truth and call me whatever you wish. What is important is the actions and not the names given to them. If names were important instead of the things which those names were attached to, then the Christians would have been on the truth; simply because they ascribe themselves in name to ‘Isā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

I am from the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ and from the followers of the religion that was brought by Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Are those things which take place at the ceremonial Ta‘ziyah processions held in memory of the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and at the graves and shrines, from the guidance of the most honourable Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his pure family عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, or is it essentially the “guidance” of the Marja’s and the clergy?

Is it not absurd that not one fatwā book is fortified with proofs from the Qur’ān? It is as if I am reading fatwās by Jean-Paul Sartre or Lenin or Stalin, not by a Muslim scholar! We are followers of the Qur’ān, not of the clergy. We are the nation of the Qur’ān, not of the clergy.

Thus, if what the clergy say contradicts the Qur’ān or the intellect then we will throw what he says into the ocean! For me to be sectarian under the slogan, A goat even if it flew,¹ is the way that the Jews and Christians dealt with their rabbis and priests.

Imām al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said, “Whatever is narrated in terms of Ḥadīth, which does not correspond to the Qur’ān is simply an ornament.”²

Imām al-Riḍā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said, “When the narrations contradict the Qur’ān then I do not believe them.”³

I was speaking to one person once regarding seeking help from the Imāms and quoted to him some verses of the Qur’ān that prohibit calling on others besides Allah. He replied that Shaykh so-and-so and Marja’ so-and-so said that it is permissible.

I said, “*Subhan Allāh!* I say to you Allah said and you reply, ‘Shaykh so-and-so said and Marja’ so-and-so said’?”

What is truly astonishing is that the clergy have blind confidence in the fact that the masses will not research any further to verify the veracity of what they say or lack thereof.

Here is Shaykh Muḥammad al-Tījānī who says:

‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar said, while explaining a Ḥadīth of the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, “The Khulafā’ after me are twelve, all of

1 An Arabic proverb that is used for someone who displays obstinacy in accepting the truth.

2 Al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfī*, 1/69.

3 Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī: *Wasā’il al-Shī’ah*, 27/110.

them from Quraysh,' 'This Ummah will have twelve Khulafā' and they are: Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, 'Umar Al-Farūq, 'Uthmān Dhū al-Nūrayn, Mu'āwiyah and his son, the two kings of the blessed land, al-Saffāḥ, Salām, Manṣūr, Jābir, al-Mahdī, al-Amīn, and Amīr al-'Aṣab. All of them are from Banū Ka'b ibn Lu'ayy, and all of them are pious, the likes of whom shall not be burned in hell."

Then Shaykh al-Tījānī goes on to say about Ibn 'Umar:

His hatred and ignorance cost him his sight, just as his jealousy and rancour cost him his insight, such that he did not see any virtue of Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and gave priority to Mu'āwiyah, the Ṭalīq¹, his son, the heretic, and the criminal, Al-Saffāḥ. The longer you live, the stranger the things that time will show you.

He then said:

Ibn 'Umar helped the Umayyad dynasty and crowned Mu'āwiyah and his son Yazīd with the crown of the Khilāfah, lying against the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and accepted the Khilāfah of al-Saffāḥ and al-Manṣūr and all of the immoral Khulafā' of the Umayyads.²

A Ḥadīth of this kind is nowhere to be found and Shaykh al-Tījānī did not even inform us from which orientalist he procured this Ḥadīth!

Moreover, how did Ibn 'Umar accept the rule of al-Saffāḥ and al-Manṣūr when he died years before them? Did he come out of his grave to proclaim his acceptance of their Khilāfah? Otherwise, did he accept them before they were born? Did he know the unseen?

1 A title for those companions who embraced Islam when Makkah was conquered, sometimes used derogatorily, such as in this passage – Translator.

2 Al-Tījānī: *al-Shī'ah hum Ahl al-Sunnah*, pg. 153-154.

It is amusing that I was once speaking to someone about the frightful number of fallacies and deception in the books of Shaykh al-Tījānī, which enraged him. He said to me aggressively, “Who are you to speak of al-Tījānī like this?” He was gracious enough to shower me with accusations and insults after this.

I replied, “Shaykh al-Tījānī is of no concern to me; I have never met him to have developed any animosity towards him. However, I read his books and came across some important realities. The author does not concern me at all; I am not against personalities, only his ideas.

I have simply informed you that I have found deception and fallacious claims in his books. Are you incapable of opening up the book for yourself and verify what he says by checking his references first hand? Instead of hurling accusations against me and insulting me simply do your research.

Anyone, myself included, who expresses his ideas or perspectives to people; then it is their right, if not their duty, to firstly verify the veracity of the information. Secondly, they have a right to express their own opinion on the matter, whether it is one of praise or criticism. I reiterate that criticism is not to be understood as an insult or a lack of respect.”

He apologized for losing his composure, and we finished our conversation. I made it a point to mention the book *Al-Shī'ah wa Al-Taṣhīh* in order to gauge his reaction.

He had scathing remarks to offer about the author.

I responded, “Are you not proficient in anything aside from insulting and accusing anyone who disagrees with your opinion? Whenever a

book emerges that contradicts our inclinations, we leave the contents of the books and immerse ourselves in fabricating stories against the author. When I spoke of Shaykh al-Tījānī I did not insult him or accuse him of anything, but only mentioned what I found in his books in terms of his fallacies, after having read the books. Have you read the book *Al-Shī'ah wa Al-Taṣḥīḥ* for you to be able to say all of these things about the book?"

He replied, "No, but I have heard a lot about it!"

I said, "*Subḥān Allāh!* You say all of these things about a book that you have not read, and you attack me for mentioning fallacies in books that I have actually read? Did Allah create the intellect for it to be a parrot, repeating all that it hears without any proof, or in order for it to search for the truth independently?"

I have read multiple rebuttals of Mūsā Al-Mūsawī wherein the authors of the rebuttal left out discussing the actual ideas of the book, instead pouncing on the author, accusing him of being a spy, an agent, and a traitor. Al-Mūsawī's political views do not concern me, as I have no involvement in politics. Al-Mūsawī as a person does not concern me either. What concerns me is what he has presented in terms of theological views. If he was an agent for having contradicted you in his opinion then there are scholars and Marja's of the Shī'ah who agree with him in either some or most of what he has opined in terms of beliefs, the likes of Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Faḍl Allāh, Ustāḍ Ḥaydar 'Alī Qalamdarān, Al-Khālīṣī, Abū al-Faḍl al-Burqa'ī, Shaykh 'Abbās al-Mūsā, Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī, and Shaykh Ṭālib al-Sanjārī. Are all of these people covert agents as well?

Whom do we Follow?

The extremists would like to transform Islam into the church of the middle ages, where people would not appeal to anyone except the papal hierarchy and to the priest. They should have no recourse in thinking critically about anything. It is an extension of the notion that the Bible could only be understood by the priests!

The extremists said, “The Qur’ān has an esoteric meaning that the masses cannot understand, just as there is no book wherein the authentic narrations have been exclusively collected for people to refer back to.”

Consequently, the masses fall into confusion; the books are filled with spurious narrations, and the Qur’ān is only understood by the clergy. What then remains for them from which they may draw their religion?

As I mentioned earlier, the Marja’s do not mention proofs for the majority of their fatwās. I have come across many books of fatwā, such as *Minhāj al-Ṣāliḥīn*, *al-Masā’il al-Muntakhabah*, *Ajwibat al-Masā’il*, *Ajwibat al-Istiftā’āt*, *al-Fatāwā al-Muyassarah*, amongst a host of others. I found that there is generally no evidence for these fatwās, neither from the Qur’ān, nor the Ḥadīth of the most honourable Messenger ﷺ, nor from the sayings of the blessed progeny. Where, then, is the way of the Ahl al-Bayt in all of this?

One or two verses are mentioned in the author’s introduction or in the introduction of the translator. Were you to remove this introduction, you would not be able to tell whether you are reading a book of fatwās from a Muslim scholar or a book of legal rulings authored by a rabbi or priest. People, out of their simple-mindedness or their innocent-confidence, follow these fatwās without demanding evidence for their

statements! Is the adherence to the way of the Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, nothing more than an empty claim, and an invention of a new system that contradicts their way? Can the Marja's claim compliance with the Qur'an, and the way of the Ahl al-Bayt?

Let us assume that a Christian, or anyone else for that matter, wants to know what Islam is; what are we meant to tell him? Do we say, "The primary source of legislation for the Muslims is incomprehensible directly but has an exegesis; you need this exegesis as an intermediary to decipher the Qur'an's cryptic passages."?

Would a person fleeing from the ordination of ministers accept my invitation to the ordination of Marja's? Would anyone accept that I said to them, "Our Prophet failed to influence those around him in his era," and, in the same breath, claim that he is the greatest personality in history?

Alternatively, is it better for me to simply be embarrassed of my religion and its teachings, and apply the Ḥadīth falsely attributed to Imām al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, "O Sulaymān! You are upon such a religion that whoever conceals it will be honoured by Allah, and whoever reveals it will be disgraced by Allah."¹

There is a group that has proliferated our society, a group that is duped and blinded from reality, a group upon whom the charlatan clergy apply the Ḥadīth falsely ascribed to Imām al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, "Hold firm to *Taqiyyah* (subterfuge), for he is not from us who does not make it his distinguishing characteristic with those from whom he is safe, so that it may become his disposition with those whom he fears."²

1 Al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfī*, 2/222; Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī: *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, 16/235.

2 Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī: *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, 16/212; al-Majlisī: *Bihār al-Anwār*, 72/395.

So, they employed the concept of lying and deceit in order to find justifications for the illogical positions that they hold, giving the false impression that this is the religion of the most honourable Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his pure Household عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

Why do these People Lie?

In a discussion on an internet forum, a person claimed that Russian scientists had found fragments of the ark of Nūḥ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ on which it was written, “O Ḥusayn... O ‘Alī... O Zahrā’...”¹ implying that even the Prophet of Allah, Nūḥ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, used to seek the intermediary of the Imāms. He claimed that the fragments were found in the museum of ancient artifacts in Moscow.

Someone commented saying, “Did they also find something like this in the Titanic?”

So, fuming with anger, he retorted, “Are you mocking me? This is a serious issue, and I will share it on all forums on the internet.”

His questioner responded saying, “I contacted the Ministry of Tourism and Administration of Museums and asked about these fragments and about the museum. They answered that there is no museum by this name in all of Russia, and that they had never heard of these fragments before! Whoever would like to verify for themselves may visit the website of the Ministry of Tourism and Administration of Russian Artifacts on the internet or contact them via email.”

1 This story is mentioned in the book *Fāṭimah Al-Zahrā’ min Qabl Al-Mīlād ilā ba’d al-Istishhād* by ‘Abd Allah ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Al-Hāshimī.

After that, our friend, the “man of the ark”, vanished! Was he lying when speaking of the ark?

The report was false, but the man was not deliberately lying. It was his blind confidence in what the clergy said that gave him the confidence to spread this story, not doubting its authenticity.

For how long will we remain gullible, believing all that is said without any attempt to research or think critically? For how long will we allow ourselves to be lied to?

The Glaring Difference between one narrative and another

One day Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام set out to the outskirts of Madīnah in search of some work by which he could earn something with which he could subdue his hunger. He found a woman who was preparing to build a house, so he made an agreement with her that he would fetch water for her from the well and that she would pay him one date in exchange for each bucket of water that he drew. Under the burning rays of the sun, he placed his chest against the edge of the well, and began to pull on that coarse rope whose coarseness could be like a branch of thorns, tearing the skin off his hands. He continued in his work until he drew 16 buckets of water, upon which the woman gave him 16 dates. He took these dates and went to eat them with the most beloved of people to him, Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.¹

Imagine that! The Imām, working until his blessed hands began to tear, all for only 16 dates?

1 Sayyid Hāshim Al-Baḥrānī: *Ḥilyat al-Abrār*, 2/250.

The Imām was a person of nobility, and of a dignified spirit, one whose dignity refused him from accepting favours from anyone. He would not accept anything besides eating from the labour of his own sweat and blood. It was unacceptable to him to exploit his religious or societal position in acquiring any wealth from anyone.

He would often say:

The afterlife is facing towards you and the worldly life has turned its back, and each of them has children; be from the children of the afterlife and do not be from the children of the worldly life. Today there is action without any reckoning, and tomorrow there is reckoning with no chance to act.¹

All of this for only 16 dates, O Imām!

How do you compare that with those who make their living off the livelihoods of other people, all in the name of affiliation to Ahl al-Bayt? How do you compare those who amass millions at the expense of the hungry and poor?

Ah! Just 16 dates? O Imām, you are truly as the poet describes:

You are the truth and all people are lies.

You are the Qur'ān of the Qur'ān, the seal of all sorrow, the Gospel of all Gospels.

Here are only those whose pass-time is in drama.

You would be treated with the shiniest turbans for the evening performance, with the most exquisite cosmetics.

¹ Al-Mufid: *Al-Amālī*, pg. 208; Al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 74/423.

Here are the Mullah's of the pipes and the Shaykhs of oil-barrels.

Today they are in Piccadilly, Kūfah, and then on the shores of the Nile.

To shed tears for your sacrifices they perform,

Yet they hold fast a wash line

Many years back, I went with one of my relatives to the house of Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Al-Bayābī, in al-Maḥḍud district on Tārūt Island. His sitting-room was filled to the brim, there was no place to sit.

The sitting room was more or less rectangular, with light brown carpets and red cushions, and no furniture besides a table with some vases, as well as some books and scattered papers on it. I later discovered that these papers were papers on which people had recorded their assets so that the Shaykh could calculate the *Khumus*¹ they were obliged to pay.

Close to the Shaykh was an impoverished person who had come to seek financial assistance from him. The Shaykh maintained silence for a while before addressing him, "How many times have I helped you?" He went on to speak to someone else, only to return to the person and say "I will help you, but for how long am I going to keep on looking after you?"

I was overcome by a feeling of extreme anxiety, as well as one of embarrassment. The Shaykh's reaction troubled me, even though his speech was not directed to me. I asked myself, "What must this person be feeling while he is receiving these condescending remarks?"

1 One fifth, 20 % of one's annual income, which every Shī'ī is religiously bound to pay to the Shī'āh clergy – translator.

The reason for my relative's visit was to calculate the Khumus due on the "huge fortune" that he possessed. He was only a student at university, and his father was barely able to provide his family with the bare minimum. Were it not for the university stipend, he would have been eligible for charity.

I was intrigued to find out how much this pauper owned for him to be able to calculate a Khumus. I took the paper from him on which he had recorded his fortune, and I found that he even recorded his clothes and shoes in the list, along with other necessities of his. I thought that the Shaykh would prohibit him from calculating Khumus on the limited items that he owned! Why not, seeing as he was a miserable pauper!

However, strangely enough, the Shaykh took the paper and began to calculate this fortune, as if it were Aladdin's treasure.

My relative asked about the apartment that he was renting with some classmates close to the university, to which the Shaykh replied "Calculate the cost of the rent, then divide it by the amount of roommates, and calculate the Khumus from your share!"

I looked at the stack of papers on which Khumus calculations were recorded, piling up on the desk, and I began to wonder what the total sum that would be given to the Shaykh was. I then looked at those around the Shaykh, and realized the look of misery and neediness on their faces.

I do not know whether I should blame these poor souls for being so naïve, or whether I should feel sorry for them. They only did whatever they did believing that it was an act of worship for Allah, Lord of the worlds!

These Shaykhs realized that they could embezzle people exploiting their good nature and their love for Ahl al-Bayt. In the name of religion, they would amass fortunes. The question is whether these people would ever wake up from their slumber and smell the coffee? When would they abandon the deification of personalities, and start following the word of their Lord? For how long will they allow themselves to be the prey to those fiendish predators who use the tragedy of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام to exploit people so that they may live in luxury? For how long will they allow themselves to be patsies whose conscience will be played on by those whose dramatized renditions of the thirst of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام will legitimize their sucking the blood out of the poor and needy?

For how long will they have to be taken advantage of by those who seek their livelihood through their vocational titles of Shaykh, ‘Allāmah, etc., with no means of income aside from his being called a Shaykh?

He gives you in the jurisprudence of women nobility,

and his tongue is concealed from the impoverished.

So, ask him regarding the Khumus when they are made permissible,

and come to meet me to see if he answers or gives any news.

Devotional Acts of Worship “Like this and Like That”

One of the more affluent people in the area decided to go for Ḥajj, but he was told that he had to give Khumus before going, otherwise his Ḥajj would not be valid!

He calculated the amount he needed to pay as Khumus and it turned out to be one million Riyals; so, he postponed his trip and said he would go for Ḥajj the next year. The next year, after calculating his wealth again

he found the Khumus to be the same large amount, and so he delayed his Ḥajj again. After a number of years, he went for Ḥajj and when he was asked about the amount of Khumus that he had to pay, he replied, “I went to Shaykh so-and-so and he said to me ‘Give me one hundred thousand and go for Ḥajj!’”

Are there seasonal mark-downs on devotional worship or is this simply deception? By Allah, if he distributed his Khumus among the destitute of al-Qaṭīf, not a single needy person would remain. If this wealth would be used in public welfare projects or to eradicate youth unemployment, everyone would have some job. Unfortunately, these people are only looking after their own interests; what happens to the broader society is no concern of theirs.

I was once having a chat with a relative of mine who runs a huge business project of her own. The conversation eventually led to the issue of Khumus. She said that her father forces her to pay Khumus to the Shaykh, and she said, “Why should I give it to the Shaykh when my relatives and neighbours are living below the poverty line? Why should I not give it to the poor directly?”

It appears there are middle-men in everything, even between the donor and the poor. Perhaps the Shaykh would like to invest the money of the needy only to give it to them on the Day of Judgement, the day when they will rush towards him to take his good deeds and unburden themselves of their evil deeds and hand them over to him!

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ ۚ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَاَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ

of the imagine did these fellows arrive at the rule that the Khumus must be collected from the wealth of the Muslims?

They have conveniently interpreted the word of Allah in a way that serves their own interest, far as it may be from the truth. They made the Qur'ān fragments, holding onto the verses that serve their needs, forgetting the rest.

Another point to consider is that the categories of Shaykh or Marja' have not been allocated a share of the Khumus. So even if one assumed that Khumus were obligatory, why do the Shaykhs and Marja's receive it? Why is it not given directly to its rightful recipients?

One of my colleagues mentioned that he met Shaykh 'Alī Āl Muḥsin at his home in Saihat and asked him about the Khumus, and regarding the proof that it must be given to the clergy. The Shaykh replied by saying that the matter is simply, "Like this!"

Perhaps the honourable shaykhs expect society to pay them *Jizyah* too! *Jizyah* is taken from the disbelievers; not from the Muslims. That being said, even *Jizyah* is less than Khumus. Why do we take an insignificant sum from the non-Muslims and seize 20 percent of the Muslim's wealth? If it was argued that this is *Jizyah*, then we ought to understand that *Jizyah* is taken from non-Muslims in return for Muslim protection. When Muslims are unable to protect them, they are not obligated to give anything. Accordingly, what protection do the shaykhs afford us?

What have they done in combatting corruption that has become so widespread? What have they done to deal with armed robbers? Where are they when it comes to the armed violence that has spread in such an unpleasant way? Where are they when it comes to the armed gangs that

cruise through the streets on their motorcycles? Have the incidents of murder in our community of al-Qaṭīf not increased in an alarming way?

Was the youngster Muhammad Turki Faraj not killed in his car in the suburb of *Shukr Allāh* in *Awāmiyyah* on the 9th of Muharram?

Where are they in terms of dealing with the rampant drug trade that is affecting our own children in middle and secondary school? What have they done in curbing the systemic growth of institutionalized corruption?

Most of the welfare and social initiatives in al-Qaṭīf are managed and organized by people who are otherwise from the laity, not the clergy. The clergy is only concerned with continuing the ceremonial traditions which have erroneously been associated with religious practice. In maintaining the status quo, they can insulate themselves and secure a steady flow of income into their accounts.

The reality that morals and values are at the brink of collapse under the barrage of atheism and promiscuity is of little or no concern to them as long as their income is secure. Society can go to hell, for all they care. All they really care for is the steady stream of the Khumus into their pockets!

The great intellectual and thinker, ‘Alī Sharī‘atī, in his discussion on these types of people, says:

The representative of the Imām exists, obviously. However, his existence is not for the sake of *jihād* or any such cause. Instead, it is simply to gather religious funds and taxes, and to collect the share of the hidden Imām. As for commanding good and forbidding evil, these are two responsibilities that are forgone

except in individual capacities, and on matters of personal conduct, through brotherly advices, in terms of the benefits of good actions and the harms of evil actions.¹

Exorcism Ceremonies

The Mullah spoke at length on the virtue of *Ta'ziyah*, the mourning processions which include bloodletting and self-flagellation. He concluded his speech by saying, “Arise to commence the mourning procession, attaining thereby divine reward!”

The chorus band began to sing and the mourning ceremony commenced. Everyone assembled in the centre of the *Ḥusayniyyah*² with the exception of two people, I was one the two. I was too embarrassed, and my self-respect would not allow me to strike my chest in such a manner. The other person happened to be the Shaykh himself!

The important question is: Why are you aloof, O respected master? Do you also feel embarrassed; and does your self-respect also prevent you from participation? Was it not a few moments ago that you were lecturing about the virtue of striking oneself and wailing?

In the middle of the quad was an elderly man striking himself, whilst the Shaykh sat at the front of the *Ḥusayniyyah*, looking on at the scene before him like a spectator, observing what his own hands had caused!

It saddened me deeply to see a man in the twilight years of his life beating himself in this uncivil manner, all while thinking that he is

1 *Al-Tashayyu' al-'Alawī wa al-Tashayyu' al-Ṣafawī*, pg. 262.

2 A Shī'ī place of worship – translator.

fulfilling an act of worship through which he would achieve proximity to Allah. Who will bear the sin of these people?

It had been an awkwardly long time since I last attended such gatherings. It was only out of amusement and my inquisitive nature that brought me here today. In hindsight, I wish that I had not come and witnessed the embarrassment of fellow man.

Did the Prophet ﷺ ever beat himself in this way? Would he accept this for his Ummah? Did any of the Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ do this? Was this not the bequest of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to his sister Zaynab:

O my beloved sister, I have taken an oath so fulfil my oath; do not tear your collar because of me, and do not scratch your face because of me, and do not wail over me in lamentation when I perish.¹

In fact, the grandfather of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, the Greatest Messenger ﷺ, said to al-Zahrā' عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, “When I am deceased then do not scratch your face and do not hang any hair over me, and do not wail over me, and do not carry out any lamentation for me.”²

The clergy’s adamancy on observing these rituals serves absolutely no purpose other than bolstering their position and securing funds for their centres. Since time immemorial they have been discussing the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, his miracles, and supernatural feats. Not once have they focused on his life prior to his martyrdom. Never do they discuss his life of abstinence and piety, nor the manner in which

1 Al-Mufīd: *Al-Irshād*, 2/94; Al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 3/45.

2 Al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfi*, 5/527; Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī: *Wasā’il al-Shī’ah*, 3/272.

he worshipped his Lord and Creator. Instead, they will harp on about the permissibility of calling upon him instead of Allah.

They never once discuss the fact that Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ participated in the conquest of North Africa, and that he fought with the Muslim armies from Egypt all the way till Morocco.

They only discuss his birth and his martyrdom, as if he was born and immediately assassinated, as if there were nothing significant or worthy of mention in his life but these two events. His actual contribution and achievements are of little or no concern to them.

What concerns them instead, is the resting place of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ; perhaps on account of this being such a lucrative asset. Their concern is how they can exploit his tragedy, which in turn fuels their lust for power and wealth as it is easy to prey on the sympathies of the ordinary folk. As long as people continuously visit these tombs, the Mullah's have a secure income stream. They manipulate the emotions of the simple-minded and work them up in a frenzy, encouraging them to self-flagellate and mourn; whilst they themselves are not motivated by the love of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ but for the love of filling their own bellies.

Some have tried to present a justification for these practices from the Sharī'ah; saying that the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ cried over his son Ibrāhīm when he passed away, as well as over his uncle Ḥamzah when he was martyred.

There is no denying that the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ cried on these occasions but did he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ resort to beating himself every year to commemorate the passing of his son or uncle? Crying at the time of

someone's passing is only natural, but extending that to an annual procession or ritual is something else entirely.

Did the Messenger ﷺ call people for parades every year where he instructed them to slap their faces and chests in memory of his son's passing? Did he say that slapping oneself was an act of worship, earning those who perform it a magnanimous reward?

On the other hand, if these were not mandated by the Prophet ﷺ what right does anyone have to invent additional rituals based on his own whims and fancies, rituals for which Allah has not revealed any proof, yet to declare to the people that Allah will reward them for such action? Since when has the Divine right for determining reward and punishment been transferred to man? Furthermore, what is the purpose of bearing patience in the face of calamity if mourning ceremonies become part of the religion? Is it that the Qur'an encourages Ṣabr (patience) in vain?

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالشَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ
قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ
وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

We shall certainly test you with fear and hunger, and loss of wealth, lives and fruits. And give glad tidings to the patient ones: those who, when a calamity befalls them, say, "We surely belong to Allah and to Him are we to return." Such are the people upon whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the ones who are rightly guided.¹

1 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 155-157.

Reflect on what awaits those who endure Ṣabr in the face of affliction: blessings, mercy, and guidance!

The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, at whose hands the religion was completed and who described the acts of worship in detail, did not advocate these *Ta'ziyah* performances. Are the clergy more knowledgeable than the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ for them to claim that this is an act of worship, worthy of reward? Has Allah سُبحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى revealed something new upon these scholars for them to invent new rites of worship?

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمُ الْكُذِبَ هَذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ
لْتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ لَا
يُفْلِحُونَ

And do not say to that which your tongues describe that “this is permissible and this is impermissible” such that you ascribe to Allah falsehood. Those who ascribe falsehood to Allah will definitely not succeed.¹

The link Between the Mourning Processions and the Parasites

I was once chatting to a Christian via email so he said to me “What do you know about Christ?”

I replied, “The word of Allah, and a Prophet from those distinguished among the Prophets.”

1 Sūrah al-Naḥl: 116.

He said “This is according to you.”

So, I asked, “Then what is correct, in your view?”

He replied, “The son of Allah (Allah is transcendent from what this man said) and he came to sacrifice himself for the sins of man.”

To which I remarked, “Why is he punished for the sins of others?”

He replied, “If we imagined that you were accused of a crime and put into prison, would your father, out of his intense love, not have the willingness to bear that punishment in your place?”

So, I said “Let us assume that he would be willing. The more important thing is: is this justice or not? If the judge was just, would he have ruled that my father be imprisoned because I am the criminal? Moreover, if Christ has taken my sin and the sin of others, then why should I not act immorally and promiscuously, doing as I please? After all, Christ has taken my sin and the matter is over.”

He said “If your father was imprisoned due to a sin that you had committed, would you have increased in your disobedience?”

I said, “Did he not bear the punishment, and did the matter not cease at that? My immorality will not increase his punishment, and neither will my piety lighten it! Also, I will not be punished regardless of what I do, so that is that. Do not try to invent justifications and flimsy excuses. For the matter to be correct, it is imperative that a man carries the results of his own actions, not that someone else bears them on his behalf.”

When he realized that he had no escape from these arguments he blocked me. A while after that, he sent me an email in which there were pictures of the *Ta'ziyah* rituals with blood flowing over the faces and bodies of the participants. He commented, “Look at the backwardness of Islam. These are the Muslims.” Among the pictures were pictures of children who were barely one or two years of age, and their mothers had made wounds on their heads with knives so that some blood can flow from them for the sake of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ!

I was caught by surprise; how I was meant to answer him!

It was not long before my inspiration came so I wrote back, “If there is a careless driver who defiantly drives through a red light, then the problem is not with the car nor in the rules of the road. The driving rules do not allow for this. In fact, whoever does this will be reprimanded by the law. It is either that this driver does not know the rules or that he knowingly contravenes them. In either case, he is the blameworthy one, not the rules.”

There are hundreds of narrations from the Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ that prohibit this type of behaviour. They include the narration from Imām al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ where he says, “Wailing over the deceased is not permitted, and neither is it appropriate, but the people do not know.”¹

He also said, “He is not from us who smacks the face and tears the collar (in mourning).”²

Shaykh al-Tijānī has explicitly stated that these practices are prohibited.

1 Al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfī*, 3/226; Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī: *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, 3/273.

2 Al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 79/93; Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī: *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, 2/452.

He says:

The reality is that what some of the Shī'ah practice is not part of the religion at all; even if the scholars have exercised their reasoning, and the jurists have given fatwās stipulating great reward for those actions. They are nothing more than customs and traditions. On account of unbridled emotions people do not behave normally and these evolve into rituals of folklore which children inherit from their parents in their blind acceptance, without any realization. In fact, some of the laypeople believe that self-flagellation is a means of gaining proximity with Allah, and some of them even believe that one who does not do so does not love Ḥusayn.

He writes further:

I was not convinced [of the correctness] of those sights which most people with a sound disposition find repulsive; that a man sheds his clothes, holds a blade in his hand, and starts striking himself in violent motions, chanting at the top of his lungs in hysteria, 'Ḥusayn! Ḥusayn!'. The irony is that in their frenzy you might be led to believe that they are overcome with grief, yet after a short while when the hysteria wears off, they are observed in a festive mood, enjoying expensive sweets, celebrating, and enjoying themselves. The sombreness is replaced by merrymaking as soon as the procession is over.

Even more strange is the fact that majority of these people are not even observant; which is why I allowed myself to criticize them directly a number of times and said to them that what they are engaged in is only folklore and blind adherence to customs.

He went on to clarify that the Imāms: ‘Alī, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, and Sajjād عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ did not engage in these frivolities. Imām Sajjād عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was present at a gathering that none of the people had attended; he witnessed firsthand the tragedy of Karbalā’ wherein his father, his uncles, and his brothers were all murdered. He witnessed such tragedies that would make mountains move, except that history bears absolutely no record of any of the Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ ever participated in anything of this sort, or that that they ordered their followers or their Shī’ah to do so.¹

The Phobia of the Community

I was once speaking with one of my female relatives and the conversation went in the direction of the *Ta‘ziyah* processions, when she blurted out that she was not comfortable with them.

So, I asked her, “Why do you go then?”

She dolefully responded, “If I do not go then everyone will criticize me, and cause me harm in one way or another. They will break ties with me and I will be forced to live as an outcast.”

The gatherings of mourning are social rituals, they are habits and customs. Whoever does not adhere to them will be ostracized from the society and made an outcast. They will be the object of gossip regardless of whether they frequent the masjid or observe the night prayer.

I know dozens of people who frequent the Ḥusayniyyah gatherings, whereas they neither pray nor fast! In fact, there are some who engage in promiscuity and grave sins, but when the days of ‘Āshūrā’ commence, they avoid these vices until the first ten days of Muḥarram pass. Once

1 Muḥammad Tījānī: *Kull al-Ḥulūl ‘ind Āl al-Rasūl*, pgs. 148-151.

they have passed, they leave no stone unturned in engaging in every depravity year round, even during Ramaḍān! They fear being a cause of discomfort to Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ if they were to sin during the days of ‘Āshūrā’!

They fear being a cause of discomfort to Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ by staying absent from the processions of mourning! What a paradox: they fear being a cause of discomfort to Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ yet they do not fear that the Lord of Ḥusayn will transmute them into another creature (out of their disobedience)!

It is farcical that society would honour these bizarre types yet hegemonize those who call for a return to what the Ahl al-Bayt stood for, and call for the abandonment of extremism and superstitions.

The overwhelming majority of society continue to adopt a mindset that mirrors the mindset of *Jāhiliyyah*; a mindset that abhors constructive dialogue, almost as if it was controlled by dark forces. They engage in a type of ideological terrorism on anyone who holds opinions, a divergent view, and on anyone who allows himself to think independently.

Despite this gloomy backdrop, a glimmer of hope remains as I have met many people who disapprove of this autocratic methodology which is foreign to the actual school of Ahl al-Bayt. I am still optimistic that I will soon see a return to the original way and it will not be very long before this movement of revival will gain traction, if Allah so wills.

So, it is now upon you; you who read my words and are convinced by my ideas. This is a call to action for you to play your role in conveying this truth and goodness to the children of our society who have either been heedless or have been made heedless of these realities.

Between Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and ‘Amr ibn Hind

One day ‘Amr ibn Hind said to his friends, “Whose mother would dislike having to serve my mother?” It was said to him, “‘Amr ibn Kulthūm.” So ‘Amr ibn Hind, under the pretext of soliciting their support sent for ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm and his mother, whereas his actual motive was to humiliate the mother of Ibn Kulthūm.

‘Amr bn Hind beckoned to his mother to send the servants aside when the food would be brought, and to then seek some assistance from the mother of Ibn Kulthūm. Ibn Hind then called for a table and placed it, after which they began to eat. He then called for different containers that were laden with food. So Hind, the mother of ‘Amr ibn Hind said, “Laylū (the mother of Ibn Kulthūm), hand me that plate.” At this, Layla replied “The woman who requires something should tend to her own need.” Hind repeated what she said and persisted, to which Laylā raised her voice, “What disgrace, O family of Taghlib!”

When ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm heard this, he realized what was transpiring, and the blood in his veins boiled as he stared at ‘Amr ibn Hind, whose face revealed the sinister motive behind the entire affair. Instinctively so he rose, grabbed hold of the sword of ‘Amr ibn Hind which was hanging by the curtain, and struck the head of Ibn Hind. He spontaneously recited these couplets:

And the tribes of Ma‘add have known well, when tents are erected in its valleys,

That we are the ones who will feed when we are at ease, yet we are also the ones who will destroy when tested.

When the king imposes oppression on the people, we refuse to allow disgrace to come to us.

When any boy of ours reaches weaning, the tyrants fall down to him in prostration.

How beautiful is this portrait of honour, self-respect, and defiance with gallantry! The nature of the Arabs would never accept humiliation. Contrast this with the repugnant portrait that has been wrongfully painted of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

The Imām was a person of proverbial bravery and honour, he never knew cowardice. Is it even conceivable that ‘Amr ibn Kulthūm was more courageous than Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ? Is it remotely conceivable that someone could forcefully enter the house of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, whereupon he hides behind his wife and sends her to fend of the attackers? Where is the bravery of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ? Where are the Muhājirīn? Where are the Anṣār? Where are the Banū Hāshim? Are they all scared of ‘Umar? Are they all cowards?

Could it happen that the honourable Fāṭimah عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ, ‘Alī’s wife, and the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ daughter be accosted whilst the Imām simply looks on?

Is it possible for the most honourable and courageous of the Arabs to be dragged by a rope around his neck?

How deplorable is this scene? It is a scene that could only be imagined by a Nāṣibī who hates the Imām and wishes to defame him. No one who loves the Imām and knows his true character would ever dare to think of the Imām in such cowardly behaviour!

In fact, it is believed by some that ‘Umar slapped Fāṭimah عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ on her face so hard that her earring was ripped from her ear. All the while Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ watches what happens but does not retaliate! Do these people think the Imām to have no honour?

Can ‘Umar be a disbeliever, having barged into the home of the Imām and breaking the rib of his wife, and, worse still, killing her unborn child; only to have the Imām marry his daughter Umm Kulthūm off to him?¹

When I searched for a suitable explanation for this marriage from the scholars, I only found the worst of disasters!

Some of them said that Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ married her off to ‘Umar against his will and against her will! This is the epitome of defamation of Imām ‘Alī and his pure daughter عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ!

I say: Fear Allah in regards to our Imām, O people! Fear Allah, O scholar! You stripped the Imām of all bravery and revealed him as an incompetent coward!

Others have said that ‘Umar married a *Jinn* who assumed the form of Umm Kulthūm, and that it was not the real Umm Kulthūm, the daughter of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ!² Dear God! Allah has bestowed man with intellect and reason by which he can understand the religion; yet the best our scholars could come up with is a *Jinn*? We just heard the story of flying elephants and the vanishing of Imām Khomeini, only to be entertained with a tale of a *Jinn*!³

1 Al-Kulaynī: *Al-Kāfī*, 6/115-116.

2 Al-Majlisī, *Mir’āt al-‘Uqūl*, 2/45.

3 See the earlier chapter “Between Us and Greek Mythology”.

It was not enough for them to detract from the status of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ by inventing this tale; they went ahead and said regarding Imām ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ that he became a disgraced slave of Yazīd.

‘Allāmah Majlisī writes in *Biḥār al-Anwār*:

It is related from Imām Bāqir عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ that Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiyah entered Madīnah on his way for Ḥajj, so he sent for a man from the Quraysh, who came to him. Yazīd then said to him “Do you accept that you are a slave to me, such that if I wish I can sell you and if I wish I can retain you?”

The man replied, “By Allah O Yazīd, your lineage is not more noble than my own, nor was your father better than mine in Jāhiliyyah and Islam. You are not more virtuous than me in faith and neither are you a person of better than me (in any way). How, then, can I accept what you have asked of me?”

Yazīd then said to him, “If you do not accept this from me then by Allah, I will kill you.”

The man said, “Your killing me is not greater than your killing of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī, the son of Rasūl Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.”

Yazīd ordered for him to be killed. He then called ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and said to him what he told the man from Quraysh whom he had just killed. So, ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said to him, “Tell me, if I do not accept, will you kill me as you killed that man yesterday?”

Yazīd replied, “Yes,” to which ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn then said, “I have accepted from you what you asked; I am a slave that is coerced, if you so wish then keep me, and if you so wish then sell me.”¹

1 Al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 34/137.

The great intellectual and thinker ‘Alī Sharī‘atī writes in his book *Al-Tashayyu‘ Al-‘Alawi wa al-Tashayyu‘ Al-Ṣafawi* regarding this narration:

What is strange is that ‘Allāmah Majlisī did not suffice with narrating these disgusting reports that were fabricated by hired hands of Banū Umayyah. Rather, he began defending this report and refuting the objections that could be raised against it. He alluded to an objection raised by the historians on this report, which is that Yazīd did not go for Ḥajj, and, in fact, did not leave the borders of al-Shām for the entire period of his rule. This is correct, especially because Yazīd was unable to go to Makkah due to the presence of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr. ‘Abd Allāh had set out for Makkah the same as Imām Ḥusayn, out of refusal to pledge allegiance to Yazīd. The only difference being the fact that Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام left Makkah for Kūfah, whereas ‘Abd Allāh remained stationed in Makkah, making it as the centre of his power. He had eventually established his rule there, as did his brother Muṣ‘ab after him. So how, and when, did Yazīd find the opportunity to go for Ḥajj?

Notwithstanding this, ‘Allāmah Majlisī did not accept admission of the fact that this report is indeed fabricated. Instead, he went out of his way to support it and rejected the position of the historians arguing that “The claim of a historian cannot be relied upon,” in total disregard for all the historical and rational proofs that disprove the narration. Eventually claiming that this is how the objection against the narration is put to rest. If only he would have sufficed with that, instead of volunteering his absurd point of view and his strange conclusion that he arrived at for this specific narration. This conclusion of his that aroused my anger to such an extent that I could not sleep that night until the morning, as I remained tossing and turning in my bed like one

who has been bitten by a viper, screaming inside, “He isn’t even an Imām! He isn’t even a walī or a child of Ḥusayn, ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, and Muḥammad, he is simply an Arab from the Quraysh.”

As for you that support this narrative, you do not have to be a scholar, or a spiritual person, or a Shī‘ī, or a Muslim, at least be a human! How, then, do you have the audacity to accuse the Imām of this lowly insinuation?

The other apprehension that I experienced was that if I intended to call ‘Allāmah Majlisī into question then I would have to prepare myself mentally as I was about to dive head first into a battle of life and death. Initially I could not bring myself to question the sanctified personality of ‘Allāmah Majlisī, but when I realized that upholding the sanctified status of ‘Allāmah Majlisī was mutually exclusive to that of the Imām, I resolved to give preference to the latter, regardless of what the consequences. Moreover, I came to realize that I had nothing to lose effectively, so why the apprehension and silence?¹

Battalions in Defence of the Takfīrīs

Shaykh Ja‘far al-Subḥānī says, “We, the Shī‘ah, do not do *Takfīr*² of any of the Ṣaḥābah, neither do we defame them. Rather, we criticize their lives. The expression ‘cursing the Ṣaḥābah’ has become a barrier that prevents any honest critique or objective study of the lives of the Ṣaḥābah.” He then goes on to say, “Cursing and swearing is the trait of ruffians and the uncivilized commoners.”³

1 ‘Alī Sharī‘atī: *Al-Tashayyū‘ al-‘Alawī wa al-Tashayyū‘ al-Ṣafawī*, pg. 198-203.

2 *Takfīr* is a term used to describe one party anathematizing another, declaring them disbelievers.

3 *Ḥiwār ma‘ al-Shaykh Ṣāliḥ Al-Durwaysh Ḥawl al-Ṣuḥbah wa al-Ṣaḥābah*, pg. 6.

Let us embark on a brief journey into some of the authoritative works and then see whether or not Shaykh Ja‘far Al-Subḥānī still maintains that these traits are of “the ruffians and uncivilized commoners.”

1. In his book *Al-Anwār Al-Nu‘māniyyah*, Ni‘mat Allah Al-Jazā‘irī writes:

‘Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb was afflicted with a sickness in his rectum for which the only relief was the semen of men.¹

2. Al-Majlisī states:

There is no scope for any sane person to doubt the disbelief of ‘Umar. So, may the curse of Allah and His Messenger be on him, and on whoever considers him a Muslim and desists from cursing him.²

3. He states elsewhere:

The narrations that prove the apostasy of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and their ilk; as well as those that prove the reward of cursing them and dissociating oneself from them and what their misguidance entails, are greater in number than what can be mentioned in this volume or in multiple volumes.³

Are these the ethics of the followers of Ahl al-Bayt, or are they the ethics of the “ruffians and uncivilized commoners,” that the ‘Allāmah was talking about?

1 *Al-Anwār Al-Nu‘māniyyah*, 1/63.

2 *Jilā’ al-‘Uyūn*, pg. 45.

3 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 30/399.

We want an honest answer from people who possess a modicum of sound reason and objectivity. We want an answer from the people of principles and ethics.

I read a number of books that attempt to deny Takfīr of the Ṣaḥābah, whereas every Shī'ī on the face of the earth knows that the majority of Shī'ah in fact, do Takfīr of the Ṣaḥābah, and that what these people are claiming is nothing but Holy Subterfuge, *Taqiyyah*.

One person said, “We sometimes criticize an individual Sahabi, but its only to the extent of mentioning what’s objectionable, not that judgement is passed on the said individual that he apostatized.”

Were the above citations from our authoritative works merely mention of their shortcomings or was it unabashed Takfīr, coupled with cursing and defamation? What a farce, “Only what’s objectionable.”

Why is nothing mentioned about the Ṣaḥābah except for fabricated stories which imply nothing but their betrayal of Islam and the most honourable Prophet ﷺ?

Why is there not one virtue mentioned about them? Let us forget, momentarily, what is mentioned in the books.

I heard numerous lectures of Shaykh Ḥasan Shaḥḥatah wherein he dishes out insults about the Ṣaḥābah that are no different from the ones cited earlier. One of the insults that he mentioned was exactly what was mentioned in *Al-Anwār Al-Nu'māniyyah* about 'Umar. He said, “The mother of Umar was an adulteress and she begot Umar as a result of adultery.” He mentioned a host of insults against the Ṣaḥābah and of the Prophet's ﷺ two wives, 'Ā'ishah and Ḥafṣah. Do these qualify as being simply “shortcomings”.

I also heard lectures of Shaykh Yāsir al-Ḥabīb which are no less repugnant. The same for Shaykh Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār, Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir Al-Fālī, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Al-Muhājir, and so many others. The defining theme of their discourse is Takfīr and cursing of the Ṣaḥābah. I do not know what damage-control they are trying to do when they say we “only mention their shortcomings.”

If it is conceded that Shaykh Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār did Takfīr and cursed the Ṣaḥābah, it is equally worth acknowledging that both Shaykhs, Shaḥḥātah and Ḥabīb have said things which can only be described as squalid, unbecoming on anyone who possesses even a modicum of decency and common courtesy, let alone a Muslim, or a Shaykh!¹

My advice to anyone who intends writing on such polemics is that before writing a single word in defence of the likes of these people, tell those people to respect the way of the Ahl al-Bayt. It is expected of anyone who intends writing about Ahl al-Bayt that they adopt the civility of Ahl al-Bayt before volunteering a defence for the *Takfīrist* who lacks any propriety, and is found wanting in terms of the basic decorum required from those who ascribe to the way of Ahl al-Bayt!

If they genuinely do not consider the Ṣaḥābah apostates and it not simply Taqīyyah, then they ought to publicly censure *Takfīrists* and disassociate from them, instead of inventing stories about the Ṣaḥābah whereby they sow the seeds of hatred and rancour. If they genuinely believe what they say, it would be expected of them to address their congregations candidly and equivocally declare Takfīr of the Ṣaḥābah

1 The authors intuitions and sarcasm in this chapter are rather augural, and it appears that at the time of writing he had not yet observed their discourse devolve into undisguised Takfīr. Translator.

prohibited. They should not be simply making politically correct statements on television channels and advancing a completely different narrative in their closed gatherings at the Ḥusayniyyahs.

Do they not say, “Whoever anathematizes a Muslim through disbelief, then he, himself, is a disbeliever”? If so, then why do they not clarify to the common-folk the danger of Takfīr of the Ṣaḥābah; or is it that they have selective memories?

The situation of those who invent these fairy tales is just as perplexing; they go out of their way to contrive such explanations for Allah’s Word that cannot be accepted by sound reason nor logic. They insult the Ṣaḥābah of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ with the most pejorative and callous expressions. Inadvertently they even go as far as accusing Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ of cowardice, lacking chivalry. All to what end? Only to present an argument that over 1400 years ago, Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was more deserving of the leadership than Abū Bakr. Folks, allow your selves some latitude to think critically!

The story does not end there; people went on to claim that the Qur’ān was tampered with. They based their argument on the fact that it does not have any mention of Imām ‘Alī’s عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ successorship which would subsequently be inherited by the Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. Others have emerged who believe in the doctrine of *Raj’ah*, meaning that the Imāms will return to life in order to rule, as will those who usurped the caliphate so that the Imāms can take revenge from them!

All of these ideas were invented to prove that the incumbency of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ!

Mayhem of the Enlightened or Mayhem of the Extremists and Scholars?

The academic, Ḥasan al-Sulṭān wrote an article titled, “Who Will Stop the Mayhem of the Enlightened Shīʿah?”¹ wherein he states:

Unfortunately, some of these individuals who subscribe to Shīʿism are such that the broader Shīʿī community has experienced more harm from them than the benefit that is believed by some. This is especially true of those who adopt the approach of cursing and swearing; as if it is the best relief after the ‘dark days’ they experienced, to put it in their terms.

If we were to just take recourse back to logic and intellect, then even if there was a difference of opinion on the issue of cursing, it is not necessary to do it openly as if it is an accepted phenomenon throughout Shīʿī history, especially in the case of *Shīʿī* discourse spanning the past few decades. Swearing and cursing was not used on the pulpits in the past, in stark contrast to what we witness on our pulpits of present, from even those who are considered moderates. It has evolved into a tolerated practice. In fact, some actually encourage it.

I appeal to the Shīʿah community from hereon that they pause for moment to reflect on the inadvertent yet gradual distortion of the school by some who identify as Shīʿah. Through this approach of theirs, they reflect a very negative image on us, especially because some of them do not simply curse, but instead resort to squalid language which does not befit a Muslim. Worse still is when such a person occupies a position of prominence

1 The article can be accessed at <http://walfajr.org/index.php?act=artc&id=8439&hl>.

like a *Khaṭīb* (orator) for example. I am absolutely certain that they will cast an extremely negative reflection of Tashayyu‘, if they continue on their current course. A lifetime of cursing will neither bring any good nor will it dispel any evil.

Oftentimes when treating a specific phenomenon, we tend to look to the symptoms and ignore the underlying causes. In essence, identifying the causes and recognizing them assists greatly in solving problems. Ustādh Ḥasan went to great lengths in explaining the symptoms and ignored the causes. There is no doubt that his condemnation of this phenomenon would be considered an act of boldness and courage. I was impressed when he said in the beginning of his article, “I will be more clear, and whatever may be said hereon does not concern me, as I am a believer in what I say.”

The main cause of this phenomenon is the books and the tradition. The other issue is the bigoted defence of these troublemakers by the scholars and Marja‘a!

For example, Ḥasan Shaḥḥātah lives in Qom, and in Muḥarram 1423, he delivered lectures wherein he overstepped the red line with regards to the Ṣaḥābah, having used profanities against them. He continues to do so until this day via programs like Paltalk, in Shī‘ah chatrooms. The cursing and profanities continue without reproval.

In the same vein, if we were to survey the tradition, then we will find an overwhelming number of narrations from extremists that are sanctioned. The tree of “enlightenment” continues to be watered so that it may bear the bitter fruit of sedition. So, what is more deserving of censure: the “enlightened” or the narrations of the extremists and scholars?

The Best Nation that Never Believed

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ

*You are the best nation brought forth for mankind.*¹

So, when was it like that, when they are those who claim that during the time of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ he was surrounded by hypocrites? Worse still, when the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passed away, all of the people apostatized and his Companions usurped the Khilāfah from Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. When it was the reign of Amīr al-Mu'minīn it was plagued by wars and conspiracies, and those who pledged their support to him betrayed him. It reached a point where he عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said, "I wish that I never saw you or knew you, it is an acquaintance that brought regret and followed by sorrow."² This was followed by the murder of Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام when the people of Kūfah deserted him.

The catastrophes relentlessly continued, one after another until today, so *when* were we the best nation? If not in the time of the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his Companions, then when? In the era of George Bush or Obama? Let our intelligent ones respond!

If everyone had apostatized after the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise, and leadership was subsequently usurped by a disbeliever (as is claimed), then why did they not return to the religion of the idols after Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise? What was there to prevent them? Would Imām 'Alī

1 Sūrah Āl 'Imrān: 110.

2 Al-Kāfi, 5/6; Nahj al-Balāghah, 1/70.

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ have stopped them? The same Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who, based on the narrative of our scholars, stood by idly whilst his wife beaten in front of him; only for him to cry over his misfortune like a woman? Would anyone who has the slightest respect for Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ dare say such a thing?

One of the orientalist, who wanted to disprove the fact that the Qur’ān was not revelation, but rather of the authorship of Muḥammad, said, “The Qur’ān praises the Companions of Muḥammad, but they opposed him and changed after his demise.” His evidence for this was the Shī’ah scholarly tradition on the issue of the apostasy of the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Companions. He said, “If the Qur’ān was from Allah then it would not have praised people that were to apostatize. Rather, this Qur’ān is from the authorship of Muḥammad, who wanted to appease his Companions so that he could attract their assistance.” The strange thing is the internal contradiction on the events that followed the demise of the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

At times it is said, “It does not make sense that all the people apostatized at once, but what happened was that all of the Ṣaḥābah pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr out of fear!”

Glory be to Allah! All of the Ṣaḥābah were scared of a single man who barely had any followers. These are the same people who fearlessly challenged the leaders of the Quraysh with no care for the consequences of doing so. They are same ones who were branded with fire and searing iron so that they would acquiesce to returning to the religion of their forefathers. Notwithstanding the persecution and external pressure, they resisted and demonstrated a firm resolve, rejecting every offer of worldly gain for the establishment of Allah’s religion!

The valiant warriors, who banished the leaders of disbelief from the Arabian Peninsula and fought the Romans without any fear of their formidable armies, are scared of one man from a weak tribe!

Relate to a sane person a tale that is not befitting, and if he believes it then he has no intellect!

At other times our scholars say, “No! All the people turned apostate, and favoured this worldly life and their personal ends. This is why they pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr!”

People entered Islam in droves prior to the demise of the Messenger ﷺ. Thousands from all over the Arabian Peninsula accepted Islam. Did all these people suddenly turn apostate in a blink of an eye?

Those same people, who left behind their wealth and forsook their families seeking the pleasure of Allah, are now seeking the worldly gain over Allah’s religion? Why would they then endure hardship and persecution at the hands of the disbelievers, if they were simply motivated by worldly gain?

Viewed from this perspective, the only ones to enter Paradise are the pure Imāms عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ and a few dozen of their inner-circle!

Since when has the decision about heaven and hell become ours that we have the right to declare who has achieved salvation and who is doomed for destruction? Are we so obtuse to the fact that we have done Takfir of the entire community of the most honourable Messenger ﷺ, sealing their fate and condemning them into the hellfire; and then too, we proclaim that we are not *Takfirist*!

What answer will we present before Allah, Lord of the worlds, when He asks us, “Who is the one who seeks to impose his authority on Me? Who is the one who has the audacity to claim that this person is in heaven and the other is in hell?”

Will we then say, “We followed our leaders and our narrations, and we denied Your words, O Lord.”?

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ
بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

*And the forerunners from the Muhājirīn and Anṣār, and those that have followed them in goodness, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will stay forever. That is the magnificent achievement.*¹

For what reason are we carrying this great sin, the sin of declaring another Muslim a disbeliever? Are we prepared to answer for this sin on the Day of Reckoning before Almighty Allah?

We have before us the example of Shaykh Rā'id Jawād in his book, *Faḍḥ al-Jānī Muttahim al-Tījānī*, whose final tally of those who did not apostatize; their number barely reaching 10! He says:

1 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 100.

We suffice with this much, and whoever wants more information should refer to Al-Iṣābah of Ibn Ḥajar vol. 1, *Al-Istī'āb* vol.3, *Usd al-Ghābah*, *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, and other biographical dictionaries, to understand that the Shī'ah are innocent of what has been attributed to them by those who are prejudiced, and so that the reader will be aware of the ramblings of the haters!¹

Pause for a moment to think of any reason why Shaykh Rā'id relied on the sources of the other factions? Is this an indirect admission of the fact that our own references indicate the contrary; that our own sources actual declare the Ṣaḥābah apostates?

No doubt, the true Shī'ah of Imām 'Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام are innocent of Takfīr of any of the Ṣaḥābah, on account of adhering to their Imāms. However, the extremist Shī'ah are the ones who do Takfīr of them.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ
الْأَوَّلِينَ وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ

*And Foremost shall be the foremost. Those are the ones who are [blessed] with nearness (to Allah), in gardens of bliss, many (of them) from the former generations, and a few from the later ones.*²

If we are to claim that the predecessors are all disbelievers then where will the people of the later generations go?

1 Rā'id Jawād: *Faḍḥ al-Jānī Muttahim al-Tijānī*, pg. 30.

2 Sūrah al-Wāqī'ah: 10-14.

Why Did Allah send the Most Honourable Prophet ﷺ?

A group of people of Iraq came to Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and they spoke ill of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān. Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ allowed them to say whatever they had to say then enquired:

*Are you from the early Muhājirīn, about whom Allah says, “Those that were exiled from their homes and possessions, seeking Allah’s bounty and pleasure and who help Allah and His Messenger. Those are the truthful ones.”?*¹

They replied in the negative. He then said:

*Then are you, “Those who already settled in the Abode and [the abode of] Faith, who love those who migrated to them and do not find any need for what they were given, and prefer others over themselves even if they may be afflicted with poverty.”?*²

They replied in the negative. So, he said:

*If you have dissociated yourselves from being from either of these two groups, then I can testify that you are not from the group about which Allah has said, “And those that came after them saying, ‘O our lord, forgive us and our brothers who have passed us with faith, and do not create in our hearts any malice for those who believe.”*³
Leave me, may Allah do such-and-such to you!⁴

1 Sūrah al-Ḥashr: 8.

2 Sūrah al-Ḥashr: 9.

3 Sūrah al-Ḥashr: 10.

4 Al-Irbilī: *Kashf al-Ghummah fī Ma‘rifat al-A‘immah*, 2/291.

If Abū Bakr was a hypocrite then why would he not try to kill the Messenger ﷺ when they were both alone in the journey of Hijrah? Why did he not reveal information of his whereabouts to the disbelievers of the Quraysh, when they were close to them?

It is most strange that these “hypocrites”, as the clergy consider them, did not try, if even once, to kill the Messenger ﷺ, or to revolt against his rule.

Can you see this through to its logical conclusion: The Messenger ﷺ, the greatest personality in human history, fails dismally in his mission and all of the people apostatize after his passing. Worse still, his own Companions manage to fool him as they were simply hypocrites biding their time, the poor, displaced, weak man! On the other hand, others of much lower status are successful in their mission, accruing thousands of followers, and getting the community to love them during their lifetime and respect them after their deaths!

If it was said to you that the companions of Imām Khomeini are disbelieving hypocrites, would you have accepted that? Why then would you be willing to accept that the most noble Messenger ﷺ failed in influencing a community and in rearing those around him on Islam, when thousands of personalities throughout history are successful? Is this not a blemish on the status of the Messenger ﷺ and his personality?

Is it even conceivable that ‘Ā’ishah and Ḥaḥḥah were disbelievers whom the Messenger ﷺ married, when Islam does not permit marrying a disbeliever? The earlier nations allowed this type of marriage but Islam abrogated it “*and do not hold onto the marriages of unbelieving women.*”¹

1 Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah: 10.

If the greatest Messenger ﷺ was infallible then how did it come to be that he would marry his daughter off to ‘Uthmān whilst he is a disbelieving hypocrite? Further still, when she passes away, he marries off his second daughter to him! Is it permissible for a Muslim woman to marry a disbeliever? Or, is it that the Messenger ﷺ is simply trying to appease people at the expense of Allah’s religion and at the expense of his daughter’s dignity?

Why are they willing to accept for the Messenger ﷺ what they would not accept for themselves?

If it was said that a man in authority, who was believing, pious, and Allah-fearing, ruled over a community, some of whom were believers and others were hypocrites; and by Allah’s favour he could distinguish the hypocrites by their manner of speech, but despite this, he distanced himself from those who were upright and chose the hypocrites in their stead, giving them positions of authority and made them leaders of the people in his lifetime, and in fact, went a step further by even marrying off his children to some of them, and when he passed away he was pleased with them; what would you say regarding this man?

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ
جَهَنَّمُ ۗ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

*O Messenger, wage jihad against the disbelievers and the hypocrites and be harsh against them. And their abode is the hellfire, and what an evil abode that is.*¹

1 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 73.

Did the Messenger ﷺ disregard the command of Allah to be harsh against the hypocrites?

A Reflection on Imāmah

According to our scholars, it is generally understood that leadership was meant to pass on to Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ after the Messenger ﷺ, then to Imām Ḥasan عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and then Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and it would continue in succession for the remaining 12 Imāms, until it eventually reaches Imām Mahdī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

Let us now imagine a scenario where the Muslims did not apostatize, and that Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ took control of the affairs of the Muslims and ruled over them as he was destined to, and it continued accorded to the divinely-ordained sequence, until Imām Mahdī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ; would Imām Mahdī have assumed power for all eternity after that? Who would have succeeded him? Is there any potential for more Imāms after that?

Was the Prophet’s ﷺ mission determined by who would succeed him or did he come to call towards the worship of Allah?

The matter of succession after the most noble Messenger ﷺ can be reduced to three possibilities:

1. The Ṣaḥābah did not disbelieve.

Whereupon we ask: Why did the Ṣaḥābah not pledge allegiance to Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ if the Messenger ﷺ had truly bequeathed that only he would succeed him?

2. The Sahabah did apostatize.

In which case we ask: What would the Imām achieve by ruling over a group of disbelievers? Is his primary concern simply to assume the role of leadership and rule over people and nothing else? Was it the intention of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to impose himself to rule over the people, like a dictator who rules over them against their will?

Moreover, this scenario bears the unavoidable implication that the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was unsuccessful in effecting any change in those around him. The necessary consequence of the apostasy the Ṣaḥābah is that they managed to fool him صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and remained for years in his presence as hypocrites, only to reveal their true colours after his demise. What, then, would Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ have accomplished if he was to rule over them?

If the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, who is greater and more virtuous than Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, failed in his mission, then what was Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ hoping to achieve?

What is astounding is that some people claim that he was coerced into pledging his allegiance! I do not know a greater travesty than allowing the affairs of the Muslims, after the passing of their leader, to be handed over to two-faced hypocrites! Also, where were the Ṣaḥābah who, despite their limited numbers, fought the mighty Quraysh? Moreover, did the Imām counsel the “imposters” under duress? Did he fight alongside them under duress? Was he coerced into accepting positions of leadership under them? Lastly, was he coerced into accepting the Khilāfah after their demise?

3. The final possibility is that the Muslims pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr willingly. If this is the case, then we say to them: what more do you want? When the Muslims chose their leader, and Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ pledged allegiance to them, why must you, centuries later, insist on inventing a dispute?

Did the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ come to make Islamic governance a monarchy?

All civilizations throughout human history are known to have enslaved people and crushed them. The Assyrians, the Greeks, the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Persians: all of them suppressed mankind in the name of religion, claiming that the religion had granted them the right to rule and administration. Whenever a king died this right would be transferred to his heir and kinsman. The citizens had no say in the matter; it would simply be imposed upon them.

Islam came to abolish these notions and to institute a form of law that would guarantee man his honour, his humanity, and would emancipate him from the servitude of fellow man to the servitude of the Lord of humankind. It came to elevate both the individual and society to the highest levels of freedom, such that they become free in choosing who rules them and represents them. It did not come to simply confer rule to the Ahl al-Bayt, the noble family of the most honourable Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

Is it conceivable that the democratic legislation of Europe is better than the divine legislation? No Muslim who respects the religion that Allah has chosen for the people would dare say this.

No legislation was ever found in the history humankind that is more just than Islam. No legislation more advanced than that of Islam had

ever come to people. The matter is decided by consultation among the Muslims, whereupon the Muslims pledge allegiance to the ruler and unite under him. Islam preceded all of the civilizations of the world in placing a system that was the pinnacle of progress, the like of which history has not witnessed until this day.

Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ affirmed this as has been related from him in *Nahj al-Balāghah*:

Consultation is especially for the Muhājirīn and Anṣār; if they agree on a man and make him their leader then it is acceptable to Allah.¹

The ruler is no more an employee whose responsibility is the management of the affairs of the Muslims, and implementing the law of Allah in the state. The ruler is a human like anyone else under his rule; he is subject to the authority of the Book of Allah. When he is faced with a case then he is to appeal to the divine law and to the authorities of the courts, standing before the judge just like any ordinary citizen. This is found in the case of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and the Jew. In fact, he got angry when the judge called him by his patronymic title as a gesture of respect and only addressed the Jew by his name.²

Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ says:

Consultation is especially for the Muhājirīn and Anṣār; if they agree on a man and make him their leader then it is acceptable to Allah. If anyone were to undermine their agreement through

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, 3/7.

2 Ibn Shahr Āshūb: *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, 1/373; Al-Majlisī: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 54/56-57.

criticism or innovation, he will be forced back into line with the rest of them. If he refuses then they will fight him on grounds of him following other than the path of the believers, and Allah will abandon him to pursue whatever end he is after.¹

It is for this reason that when the Khilāfah was offered to him he simply responded, “Leave me and seek out someone else.”²

He also said:

I swear by Allah, I did not have any interest in Khilāfah and neither did I have any desire of leadership, but you people have called me to it and imposed it on me.³

Had leadership been divinely mandated for him it would not have been permissible for the Imām to refuse it, and it would not have been permissible for Imām Hasan عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ to relinquish it to Mu‘āwiyah.

Narrations were eventually invented that would ostensibly prove the doctrine of Imāmah. To the extent it is claimed that Allah ordered all of His Messengers to establish Imāmah. It is as if Allah created the world and sent Messengers for the sole purpose of Imāmah and not to call their people to the Oneness of Allah.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says:

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

1 Nahj al-Balāghah, 3/7.

2 Ibid, 2/184.

3 Ibid, 2/184.

And we most definitely sent in every nation a Messenger (who would say), “Worship Allah and avoid the Taghut (false deities).”¹

If Imāmah was truly a central pillar of the religion, such that anyone who doesn’t believe in it is disbeliever, then why is there not one clear verse in the Qur’ān that establishes this great pillar which has become the criterion between belief and disbelief?

Allah ﷻ says:

مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

*We did not leave anything out from the book.*²

Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ says regarding the pledge to Abū Bakr:

So, I walked up to Abū Bakr and pledged allegiance to him and strove in those events (the apostasy that was spreading) until falsehood was vanquished and the word of Allah reigned supreme, even if the disbelievers disliked it. Abū Bakr took control of those affairs and demonstrated moderation diligence. So, I accompanied him in good faith and with sincere motives, and I obeyed him, striving, in that in which he obeyed Allah.³

This is the Islamic system: Muslims are free; *they* choose their leader and pledge allegiance to him.

1 Sūrah al-Naḥl: 36.

2 Sūrah al-An‘ām: 38.

3 Al-Thaqafī: *Al-Ghārāt*, 1/306-307.

They Embraced Islam when it was Weak, and Abandoned it when it was Strong

When do hypocrites emerge and why? Any hypocrite, regardless of time or place, has one of two possible aims:

1. He fears something from which he wants to escape,
2. or desires attaining a certain benefit.

Therefore, hypocrites did not emerge in the Meccan period of the Prophet's ﷺ mission. After all, who would try to be two-faced with a person who had neither wealth nor power, a person who brought a new way of life which made its adherents targets for persecution. Why would anyone wish to align himself with the Messenger ﷺ at a time when the disbelievers of the Arabian Peninsula were persecuting him and his supporters?

Who would even contemplate assisting the Messenger ﷺ in the early days of his mission in Makkah; at a time when the disbelievers of Makkah could potentially drag him over the burning sands of the desert, and brand him with fire and searing iron, as they had done for some of his supporters?

What incentive would there be for someone to be a hypocrite simply to appease a person who—at least based off the perception of his immediate community—was destined for failure, and whose religion was to undoubtedly perish?

Everyone who embraced Islam in Makkah faced persecution and torture beyond imagination. Despite this they remained resilient, motivated, seeking the next life and the magnanimous reward of their Creator.

In light of this situation, there was no benefit in anyone trying to curry favour with the Messenger ﷺ, or in even treating him amicably for that matter. However, when the Muslims gained strength after their migration to Madīnah, and after establishing a state, a group emerged who pretended to be Muslim. Their motives were either out of fear of the Muslims, or to attain a worldly benefit. Verses of the Qur’ān have been revealed exposing them and warning against them.

Nonetheless, it does not mean that all the Muslims at that time, especially the ones who accepted Islam in Makkah and were subjected to persecution and torture at the hands of the disbelievers of Quraysh, were apostates and infidels.

Allah ﷻ says:

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ ۚ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ ۚ مَرَدُّوا
عَلَى النَّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ ۚ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ ۚ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ
يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ

*And some among the Bedouins around you are hypocrites, as well as some of the people of Madīnah. They are fanatical in their hypocrisy. You do not know them. We know them. We will soon punish them twofold, and then they will be returned to a great punishment.*¹

As for the Meccan period, hypocrisy did not raise its head yet.

How does it come to be then that we do Takfīr of whomsoever we like, without care or consequence? This is an attempt to impose our authority upon Allah, Who is Supreme over all creation.

1 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 101.

The Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Whoever does Takfīr of another Muslim then he has disbelieved himself.” Are we not conscious of what we utter, and do we not fear Allah in respect to the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Companions?

Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامٌ withholds the Inheritance of Fadak

The issue of Fadak has been seen as a point of criticism for Abū Bakr, but is it perhaps misplaced criticism? Think about it carefully.

The Khilāfah is usurped from Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامٌ; Fāṭimah عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is physically beaten, her unborn child is killed, yet nobody says anything or demands any retribution? Then Fāṭimah عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ makes a demand. What does she demand? Her inheritance! Whom does she demand it from? From the same people who broke into her house and caused the death of her unborn child. It doesn’t stop here; she expresses her anger at Abū Bakr because he refused her, her inheritance!

The Khilāfah was stolen but she is only angry about the inheritance! Her child is killed yet she is upset about the inheritance!

Think about it realistically: Had all of these events really transpired, would al-Zahrā’ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ only go to demand inheritance? Does this fall within the realm of sound reason?

Shaykh al-Tijānī, in his book, *Then I was Guided*, says:

Fāṭimah عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, the daughter of the Messenger, sent for Abū Bakr to demand from him her inheritance from the Messenger of Allah, to which Abū Bakr refused.

Abū Bakr heard the Messenger ﷺ saying, “The Messengers leave nothing in inheritance: not one dinar or dirham.” For this reason, he did not distribute any of the inheritance.

When we say that Abū Bakr wronged Al-Zahrā’ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ by not handing over Fadak to her, and that ‘Umar came after him and maintained the policy of oppression by not giving the heirs of Al-Zahrā’ their rightful share of Fadak. Then ‘Uthmān came along and continued that trend. But what about Amīr al-Mu’minin عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ? When he assumed leadership formally, he also did not give over Fadak to the heirs!

Why, then, did he not hand over Fadak to our Imāms, Ḥasan عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and Umm Kulthūm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who are all the heirs of Al-Zahrā’ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

Another point to consider is this: if Fadak was indeed inheritance that was meant to be distributed after the Prophet’s ﷺ demise, then it would be necessary to distribute it among all the heirs. Thus, Al-Zahrā’, along with all of the wives of the Messenger ﷺ, stood to inherit, including ‘Abbās, as they are all heirs of the Messenger ﷺ from his close family.

The Children of the Imāms in the Darkesses of Oblivion

Why is there no mention of the children of the Imāms who were martyred in *Al-Ṭaff* alongside Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in the *Ḥusayniyyah* gatherings? The likes of Abū Bakr ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. They were all martyred with Imām Ḥusayn in *Al-Ṭaff*.¹

1 A place in Iraq near Kūfah by the river of Karbalā’. It is said that the grave of Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is there.

Just like them are the children of Ḥasan: Abū Bakr ibn al-Ḥasan, and ‘Umar ibn al-Ḥasan, and all of them witnessed Karbalā’ with their uncle Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and they were martyred.

What explanation do we have for this? Are they not the children of the Imām? Did they not fight alongside Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and get martyred with him?

Is it not a travesty that even the names of the slaves that fought with Imām Ḥusayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in Karbalā’ are mentioned, but his own brothers and nephews are not mentioned? There is no plausible reason except that their names are the same names of the Ṣaḥābah of the Messenger صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ? That they happen to be names of personalities which are despised by the clergy! It is astounding how hatred can blind the hearts.

I find it perplexing, this insistence on Takfīr of the Ṣaḥābah drives them to deny verses of the Qur’ān. It defies all logic and sound reason, and even marginalizes the sacrifices of the children of the Imāms simply due the fact that their names resemble the names of the Ṣaḥābah.

The End of the Debate

He concluded the debate with me by saying, “You have an incorrect mindset and misguided beliefs.”

At that moment, I recalled an article titled, *Why Do They Not search for Truth?* The author writes there:

The human self does not like to hear anything which contradicts its own opinions. This gives it the illusion of security. When thoughts and questions come that contradict its convictions, it

rejects them, attempting to avoid thinking about them as a self-defence mechanism. For this reason, you do not find them reading anything other than what reinforces their own convictions, it gives them a sense of self-assurance. If they could overcome this perception for a few minutes, they would recognize the truth and follow it. After all, to confront pain once is better than living with it for the remainder of one's life, and spending eternity in punishment after death.

That is intellectual apathy; where a person senses a doubt in themselves regarding a certain issue, yet despite that they will not research it. However, what made me laugh was his statement to me, "You have an incorrect mindset and misguided beliefs."

My respected friend, for whom I bear nothing but respect and honour, what is sought from me for me to be of sound ideology and mindset?

Am I expected to do Takfīr of the Prophet's ﷺ Ṣaḥābah in order for me to hold a sound disposition? Do I need to call on someone besides Allah for me to hold sound beliefs?

Do I have to believe that all of the Imāms know the Unseen and that they grant sustenance, so I may pray to them and abandon praying to their Lord?

Is it imperative that I declare anyone Kāfir for me to be considered a Muslim?

Did the Imāms raise the flag of Takfīr and say, "Whoever does not consider the Ṣaḥābah to be disbelievers is not from our sect, and not from our Shī'ah"?

Is it out of veneration and love of Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ that I believe that ‘Umar slapped Al-Zahrā’ عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ whilst he, the Imām, simply watched?

What irritates you about my disposition? What concerns you about my beliefs?

Or is it that what really irritates you is the fact that the greatness the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ personality had a profound influence on all such that they adopted some of his radiance and subsequently became great figures?

I am very sorry my friend, I do not want to bear the sin of cursing or anathematizing anyone in front of Allah on the Day of Reckoning. I do not wish to pray to anyone other than Allah; I was commanded to pray to Him alone, and to forsake everyone besides Him.

Allah will ask me regarding what I did in life, and He will not ask me regarding what so-and-so did.

He will not ask me, “Is so-and-so a disbeliever or not?”

He will not ask me, “Why did you not do Takfīr of so-and-so and curse him?”

He will not ask me, “Why did you pray to Me and abandon invoking the Imāms?”

He will, however, take me to account for declaring a Muslim a disbeliever, and He will hold me accountable if I worship anyone other than Him. He will ask me if I invented lies about the Companions of the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

As for you, respected friend, then I say to you as Imām ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said to ‘Imrān ibn Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh when he entered upon him:

I hope that the father of this man and I will be from those about whom Allah has said, *“And we removed what was in their bosoms in terms of hatred, (such that they are) as brothers, [reclining] on couches facing one another.”*¹

1 Sūrah al-Ḥijr: 47.