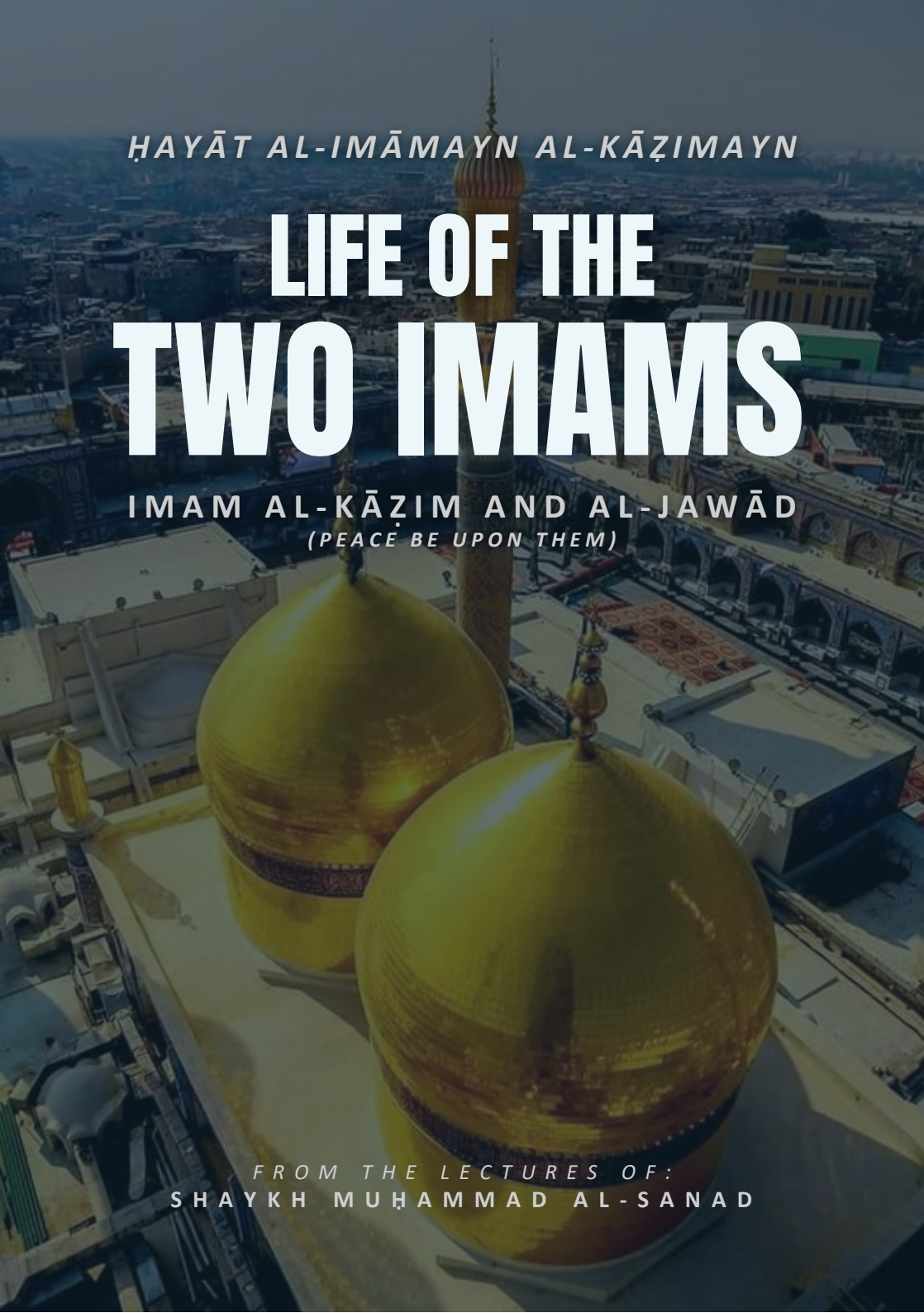




HAYĀT AL-IMĀMAYN AL-KĀZIMAYN

LIFE OF THE TWO IMAMS

IMAM AL-KĀZIM AND AL-JAWĀD
(PEACE BE UPON THEM)

FROM THE LECTURES OF:
SHAYKH MUḤAMMAD AL-SANAD

The English Translation of:

حَيَاةُ الْإِمَامَيْنِ الْكَاظِمَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ

Life of the Two Imams

Imam al-Kāẓim and al-Jawād (peace be upon them)

From the lectures of:

Āyatullāh Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad

With the pen of:

Ibrāhīm Ḥusayn al-Baghdādī

Dedication

To the Gateway of Needs and the Fulfiller of Wishes,

To the of the prolonged prostration and the abundant tears,

To the one tormented in the depths of prisons and the gloom of dungeons; The one whose legs were bruised/crushed by the rings of the chains.

And the funeral procession that was proclaimed with humiliation and disdain.

To the Doyen of political prisoners.

To the Leader who emerged from prison as a martyr.

To the Lion of Baghdad and its Protector.

To the Devout Worshipper (*Rāhib*) of the Family of Muḥammad.

To the man of civilization, Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (as).

My great Master, I dedicate this effort to you, hoping for your acceptance, O Gate of Needs.

Your servant, Ibrāhīm

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From the lectures of: Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad

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Diacritics Guidelines

Symbol	Arabic Letter	Sound	Example
’	أ \ ع	A (normal a)	Mu’min
‘	ع	A (heavy; middle of throat)	‘Ilm
Ā / ā	ا	aa	Jawāḏ
Ī / ī	ي	ee	Amīr
Ū / ū	و	oo	Mūsā
Ḥ / ḥ	ح / ح	H (heavy; middle of throat)	Ḥasan
Ṣ / ṣ	ص	S (heavier; emphasized)	Ṣādiq
Ṭ / ṭ	ط	T (stronger; emphasized)	Ṭālib
Dh / dh	ذ	Light dh	Dhikr
Ḍ / ḍ	ض	Dh (heavier; emphasized)	Riḍā
Ẓ / ẓ	ظ	Dh (between th and z)	Kāẓim

Terms

Term	Arabic Transliteration	Translation
(swt)	<i>Subḥānahū Wa Ta'ālā</i>	Glorified and Exalted is He
(ṣawa)	<i>Ṣallallāhu 'Alayhi Wa Ālih</i>	Blessings of Allah be upon him and his family
(‘as)	<i>'Alayhi al-Salām</i>	Peace be upon him
(sa)	<i>Salāmallāh 'Alayhā</i>	May Allah's peace be upon her
(‘ams)	<i>'Alayhim al-Salām</i>	Peace be upon them
(ra)	<i>Raḥmatullāh 'Alayh</i>	May Allah's mercy be on him
(‘aj)	<i>'Ajjalallāhu Farajah</i>	May Allah hasten his reappearance

Appendix

Book names are underlined.

- Eg. al-Kāfī, Bihār al-Anwār, Kitāb al-Ghaybah, etc.

Quranic Text is dark blue and bolded.

- Eg. **قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ**

Quran Translation is dark blue and italicized.

- Eg. “*Say, He Allah is One.*” (112:1)

Ḥadīth text is maroon and bolded.

- Eg. **إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيكُمْ النَّفْلَيْنِ**

Ḥadīth translation is maroon.

- Eg. “I leave behind for you two weighty things,”

Some *Arabic word transliterations* are italicized.

- Eg. *Maʿrifah*, *Kaẓm al-Ghayẓ*, etc.

Sūrah references are listed as: ‘Sūrah Name, Verse No.’.

- Eg. Sūrah al-Raʿd, Verse 10

Introduction

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

May Allah bestow His blessings upon our master and prophet, Muḥammad, and upon his pure and noble household. May He also grant endless condemnation upon all their enemies until the Day of Judgment.

And thereafter...

This book is a compilation of lectures delivered by the esteemed scholar, Āyatullāh Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad, near the sacred shrine of Imam Ali ibn Abī Tālib (‘as). These discussions were held on the annual commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) and his grandson Imam al-Jawād (‘as).

In these discussions, the revered scholar highlights the military and political strength that these two A’immah (‘ams) possessed, contrary to the misconception held by some that they were powerless and unable to take action.

Indeed, Imam al-Kāzīm (‘as) has often been portrayed as if his entire life was confined to imprisonment, as though incarceration alone defined his existence. Likewise, Imam al-Jawād (‘as) has been described as living under house arrest in a manner that rendered him utterly incapable and powerless.

However, if this were the case, why then would the Abbasid state place its intelligence force on high alert out of fear of them? If they truly lacked power, why were they both arrested in the holy city of Madinah, and thereafter forcibly transferred to Baghdad under intensified security and a meticulously concealed operation?

Had these two A’immah not been strong, capable leaders, had they not wielded an influence and strength that rivaled the power of the Abbasid regime, such extreme measures would never have been necessary.

Additionally, the esteemed scholar further delves into the deeper meaning behind Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as)’s famed patience and suppression of anger (*Kaẓm al-Ghayẓ*)—a characteristic that was not merely an aimless personal emotional reaction, as some might assume. Rather, his restraint of anger was a calculated political and military strategy designed to counter the oppressive forces of his time. All of this, dear reader, you will find intricately woven within the pages of this book.

We beseech the Almighty, Glorious and Exalted, to accept our efforts for the sake of Bāb al-Ḥawā’ij (The Door to Fulfilling Needs), Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as), and Bāb al-Murād (The Door to Fulfilled Wishes), Jawād al-A‘immah (‘as).

15th Shawwāl, 1434 AH

Martyrdom of Ḥamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib

Ibrāhīm Ḥusayn al-Baghdādī

Najaf al-Ashraf

Imam al-Kāẓim (‘as)

The Attributes of the Prophet and His Household (‘ams)

عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: لله عز وجل تسعة وتسعون اسماً، من دعا الله بها استجاب له، ومن أحصاها دخل الجنة¹

The Messenger of Allah said: “Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, has ninety-nine names. Whoever calls upon Him with them, his supplication will be answered, and whoever fully comprehends them will enter Paradise.”

The meaning of “comprehending” in this noble ḥadīth does not simply refer to memorizing these holy names. Rather, it refers to grasping the deeper knowledge behind them—understanding these divine names and the attributes they imply.² Attaining such knowledge grants a person an elevated level of complete monotheism—one that leads to the highest ranks of Paradise. These names represent an intellectual journey into the essence of Tawḥīd (the oneness of God).

There are also specific names that are exclusively attributed to the Prophet (ṣawa), distinguishing him from all others. These names are within themselves lessons in prophetic understanding, and the essence of prophethood. Among his names, are:

- al-Maḥmūd (The Praised One)
- al-Aḥmad (The Most Praised)

¹ al-Tawḥīd by al-Ṣudūq, 190; Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 3, p. 185.

² Take, for instance, the name ‘al-Raḥmān’ — the All-Merciful. Simply knowing the name and its translation is just the beginning. Within this one name lies a vast gateway to deeper understanding of Allah, inviting rich theological contemplation on the nature of His mercy and how this one attribute changes our perspective regarding Allah’s actions and plans.

- al-Ḥāshir (The Gatherer)³
- al-‘Āqib (The Successor)
- al-Māḥī (The Eraser of Falsehood)
- al-Khātīm (The Seal of Prophets)
- al-Muqaffī (The Follower of the Previous Prophets)
- Nabī al-Raḥmah (The Prophet of Mercy)
- And others.

What distinguishes these names is that they are not merely names designated by the people of the earth. Rather, they are names granted by Allah (swt) Himself. These names are spiritual ranks granted to the Seal of Prophets, reflecting his unique status.

If we carefully examine the supplications and salutations recited when visiting the Prophet’s shrine, we will find that they are, in essence, a collection of descriptions of the Prophet and his divine ranks.

Similarly, the names and attributes of the A’immah of Ahl al-Bayt, as well as the names of their mother, Fāṭimah (sa), are a path to attaining “*ma’rifah*” and understanding the status of the A’immah (‘ams) and their position. Each name and title hold a specific meaning, with some highlighting their shared responsibilities (as A’immah) while others reflect the unique qualities that distinguish one Imam from the others.

³ The one after whom people will be gathered. That is, people will be resurrected after him on the Day of Judgment—he will be the first to be brought forth, and the people will be gathered following him.

The Attributes and Names of the A'immaḥ (‘ams) – From A Leadership Perspective, Not Just an Individual One

Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) has been known by numerous titles, including:

- al-‘Abd al-Ṣāliḥ (The Righteous Servant)
- Zayn al-Mujtahidīn (The Ornament of the Scholars)
- al-Wafī (The Loyal One)
- Rāhib Āl Muḥammad (The Devout Worshipper of the Household of Muḥammad)
- al-Ṣābir (The Patient)
- al-Amīn (Trustworthy One)
- al-Zāhir (The Radiant One)
- al-Ṣāliḥ (The Virtuous One)
- And his most famous title: al-Kāzim⁴ (The One Who Suppresses [His Anger]).

This title, al-Kāzim, was not just given to him randomly. It was an attribute assigned to the Seventh Imam by his holy father and grandfathers (‘ams), signifying a deeper meaning. Before explaining the philosophy and wisdom behind this title—*Kāzim al-Ghayṣ* (The Suppression of Anger)—we must first establish an important point:

Some people tend to interpret the titles and attributes of the A'immaḥ of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) from an individualistic perspective. For example, they may define courage—a quality often associated with Amīr al-Mu‘minīn (‘as)—as merely an expression of physical

⁴ Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqib Āl Abī Tālib*, vol. 3, p. 437; al-Majlisī, *al-Bihār*, vol. 48, p. 11.

strength or personal bravery. They may assume that his courage was solely a display of bodily power or a form of spiritual boldness. While these interpretations are not incorrect, they are incomplete if viewed only from this individualistic lens.

Instead, these attributes must be understood in a broader, communal, and leadership-oriented context that extends beyond individual traits.

The courage of Imam Ali (‘as) was not merely a physical trait. It was the courage of a leader, a commander, a symbol, and a divinely appointed successor.

Some of the Prophet (ṣawa)’s companions, for example, were described as fleeing from battle, and their hesitation in times of crisis was seen as a weakness in leadership. However, Imam Ali (‘as)’s courage was never just about physical strength. It was about his unparalleled ability to navigate and resolve the most complex crises—whether on the battlefield, in governance, or in society at large—through his keen insight and unwavering wisdom.

Thus, if we were to interpret these attributes solely through a narrow, individual, physical lens, we would risk distorting the true essence of Imam Ali (‘as)’s courage.

The Universal Compassion of Imam Ali (‘as)

Another example of an attribute often reduced to an individualistic interpretation is Amīr al-Mu’minīn (‘as)’s merciful nature and kindness.

This trait is frequently emphasized, particularly during the month of Ramaḍān, when we hear countless stories of how Imam Ali (‘as) would go door to door, personally delivering food to orphans. This image portrays his compassion in a purely charitable sense, as if his benevolence was limited to personally knocking on doors to aid the needy orphans. While this depiction is true, it is only one aspect of his compassion.

In reality, Imam Ali (‘as)’s mercy extended far beyond individual acts of kindness—it encompassed the entire structure of the economic system.

His approach to governance ensured a fair distribution of wealth, the proper management of public funds (*Bayt al-Māl*), and the establishment of long-term policies that safeguarded the rights of all generations—not just those living at the time.

For instance, during the rule of the second caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, there was an attempt to divide the newly conquered lands among the soldiers who had participated in battle. However, Imam Ali (‘as) strongly opposed this, arguing that these lands were not to be divided as spoils of war but rather should belong to all Muslims—both those present at the time and future generations yet to be born.

He repeatedly rejected the notion of distributing these lands solely among the fighters, insisting that the benefits of these land should be shared, but the ownership of the land must remain to the government to ensure that future generations would continue to benefit from them.

This stance was a manifestation of true justice in wealth distribution, ensuring that economic policies served the entire society rather than merely a single class or generation.

Imam Ali (‘as) not only theorized this principle but implemented it in governance, as seen in his famous letter to Mālik al-Ashtar, where he laid out the foundations for just leadership and state administration. In every aspect of governance—whether in moral principles or societal structures—he remained a figure of immense compassion, particularly toward the marginalized and oppressed. His kindness was not limited to a specific group or nation; it was universal, embracing all of humanity.

So, we see there is a stark difference between viewing Imam Ali (‘as)’s leadership through an individualistic narrow lens and understanding it from a broader societal and communal lens—one that

acknowledges the efficiency of his economic, ethical, and social justice system and the level of care and governance that defined his leadership and the “*‘Alawī*” government.

Although he personally visited the homes of orphans, his compassion and justice extended to the administration of the entire state. Even Mu‘āwiyah could not deny this reality, admitting that no ruler had ever given the people the audacity to stand up against their leaders as Imam Ali (‘as) had.

This was our master Imam Ali (‘as)’s legacy—cultivating a society that held its leaders accountable and ensuring justice in both economic and political spheres. His influence was so profound that even a woman from a distant land was able to travel to Mu‘āwiyah’s court and publicly challenge him—something unheard of in most societies.

Amīr al-Mu‘minīn (‘as)’s tears, his mercy, and his compassion were not personal emotions alone; they were embedded in his leadership and government. His justice was not abstract—it was systemic, global, and timeless. His governance was a model for all eras, not just his own.

If this were not the case, why else would Kūfī ‘Anān, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, endorse Imam Ali (‘as)’s letter to Mālik al-Ashtar as a model of governance within the very halls of the UN?

This is the universality and calculated leadership of Imam Ali (‘as)—one that cannot be reduced to individualistic interpretation.

The Philosophy Behind the Title “Kāẓim al-Ghayẓ” (The One Who Suppresses Anger)

There is a well-known title associated with Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as)—a name frequently mentioned and revered: Kāẓim al-Ghayẓ, meaning “The One Who Suppresses His Anger.”

When Imam (‘as) was imprisoned, he endured immense suffering and faced relentless oppression at the hands of the Abbasid rulers. Was this simply done to him because he was merely an ordinary individual pursuing personal interests and living his own life?

Would the Abbasid Empire have gone to such great lengths to suppress just one man, had he not represented something far greater? The claim that the Abbasids persecuted him as a mere individual is completely illogical.

Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) was not just an ordinary pious man whom the rulers sought to silence—he was a movement, a methodology, and a leader with a strong ideological following. His presence was a direct challenge to the Abbasid dynasty, not only because of his spiritual status but also because of his political and civilizational influence.

The Abbasids sought to provoke him into responding aggressively, hoping to push him into an open confrontation that would justify eliminating him and his followers. Had the Imam (‘as) reacted with force, the Abbasids would have had the perfect excuse to eradicate his movement and destroy his legacy.

This is exactly the same political tactic we witness in modern geopolitics—powerful nations provoke weaker ones, luring them into wars they cannot win, ultimately leading to their downfall.

In these situations, restraint from the weaker country is not merely an individualistic moral virtue. It is a deliberate and calculated strategy to deny the enemy their desired excuse for war.

According to classified intelligence reports from the Abbasid court—as documented by al-Ṭabarī in his historical accounts (Tārīkh) and al-Kashshī in his biographical works (Rijāl)—the Abbasid rulers themselves admitted that Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) was the leader of a rival state—a competing power standing against the mighty Abbasid

Empire, which was consumed by corruption, indulgence, and moral decay, defined by nights of degeneracy and intoxication.

In contrast Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (‘as), embodied an entirely different civilization—one built on faith, wisdom, and ethical leadership. He is the beacon of guidance, knowledge, and wisdom for creation—the very essence of human development. A light that continues to draw millions of visitors to this day. So, who is the true builder of civilization—Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) or Hārūn, the so called ‘Rashīd’?

The greatest act of defiance by Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) was his ability to remain calm and patient in the face of constant provocation, denying his enemies the opportunity to justify attacking him.

Had he responded with violence, he would have given them exactly what they were waiting for—to launch a full-scale attack against him and his followers. Instead, his patience and strategic restraint protected the entire ideological foundation of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams)’s mission.

Thus, his patience foiled the Abbasid regime’s strategy to wipe out the civilization the messenger had advocated for, a civilization of faith and replace it with a corrupt, and materialistic culture—one centred on moral decay and reckless indulgence. But Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) refused to surrender to their vision. Instead, he upheld the principles of faith, reason, and virtue, ensuring that even if his own body and life were taken, the values he stood for would endure.

His struggle was not like that of the radical revolutionaries, such as the Zaydī movements or extremist rebels, who believed that change could only come through immediate action, violent uprisings, and the shedding of blood.

Instead, his *jihād* (struggle) was one of wisdom, foresight, and patience—a comprehensive strategy that accounted for the realities of

his time, the consequences of every action, and the long-term survival of faith.

Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) carried the legacy of Imam al-Ḥasan (‘as)—whose patience and restraint in the face of Mu‘āwiyah’s deceptions and provocations laid the groundwork for the pillars of faith and belief in the Ummah for generations to come.

This level of patience and perseverance is what made the path of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) so difficult to follow. As Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (‘as) stated:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: إِنَّ حَدِيثَنَا صَعْبٌ مُسْتَصْعَبٌ، لَا يُؤْمَنُ بِهِ إِلَّا نَبِيٌّ، أَوْ مُرْسَلٌ، أَوْ مَلَكٌ مُقَرَّبٌ، أَوْ عَبْدٌ أَمْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ لِلْإِيمَانِ.⁵

“Indeed, our teachings are not easy to bear and are hard to grasp. Only a prophet, messenger, angel close to God, or a servant whose heart God has tested with faith, can truly believe in them.”

Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) was not only a spiritual leader—he was a man of civilization, a man of resistance, and a man of peace.

Is there anyone who can unite both peacefulness and resistance, and at the same time establish a powerful underground resistance of immense strength? This shadow state was a structured, resilient community of believers, an ideological and social entity built upon tireless efforts, and driven by determination, and unwavering perseverance.

This entity did not rely on military force, yet it remained steadfast, refusing to surrender to oppression, and refusing to submit to weakness.

So, which historical leader has ever managed to build a shadow state strong enough to challenge a great empire—not through war or violence, but through a purely peaceful strategy—other than

⁵ al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt*, vol. 1, p. 64.

Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) and the noble A‘immah from his lineage (‘ams)?

Al-Kāẓim and the Mahdi of Muḥammad’s Progeny (‘ams)

The life of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) is like a vast ocean, filled with profound moments and significant events. Here, we will briefly highlight some of these blessed milestones.

One particularly noteworthy aspect of his life is that narrations from his forefathers (‘ams) suggest that he was originally destined to be the Mahdi of Muḥammad’s progeny (‘ams).

However, this title—“Mahdi of the Muḥammad’s progeny”—was also attributed to Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘as), the Master of Martyrs. Except that the believing Shia at the time failed in their responsibilities, as they were not adequately prepared to fulfill their role as soldiers of the Mahdi, so Allah delayed his coming.

فَعَنْ أَبِي بصيرٍ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، قَالَ: قُلْتُ لَهُ: مَا لِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ أَمَدٌ يَنْتَهِي إِلَيْهِ وَيَرِيحُ أَبْدَانُنَا؟ قَالَ: بَلَى، وَلَكِنَّكُمْ أَدْعَتُمْ فَأَخَّرَهُ اللَّهُ.⁶

Abī Baṣīr narrated from Abī ‘Abdillah (‘as): “I asked him, ‘Will there be a set time for this matter (the coming of the Mahdi) to unfold, bringing us relief?’ He replied, ‘Yes, but you revealed it and exposed this secret (revealed this set time which was meant to be hidden), so Allah delayed it.’”

عن أبي بصير قال: قلت له: ألهذا الأمر أمدٌ يريح إليه أبداننا وتنتهي إليه؟ قال: بلى، ولكنكم أذعتم فزاد الله فيه.⁷

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrated in al-Ghaybah through his chain from Abī Baṣīr: “I asked, ‘Is there a specific time when this matter will

⁶ al-Nu‘mānī, al-Ghaybah, p. 299; al-Ṭūsī, al-Ghaybah, p. 287.

⁷ al-Ṭūsī, al-Ghaybah, ḥadīth 416; also reported by al-Nu‘mānī, chapter 16, ḥadīth 1.

reach completion and bring us relief?’ “He said, ‘Yes, but because you exposed this secret, Allah postponed it.”

رُوي عَنْ أَبِي حَمْزَةَ الثَّمَالِيِّ، قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِأَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: إِنَّ عَلِيًّا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَانَ يَقُولُ: إِلَى السَّبْعِينَ بَلَاءً، وَكَانَ يَقُولُ: بَعْدَ الْبَلَاءِ رَخَاءٌ، وَكَانَ يَقُولُ: وَقَدْ مَضَتْ السَّبْعُونَ وَلَمْ نَرَ رَخَاءً!

فَقَالَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: يَا ثَابِتُ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى كَانَ وَقْتُ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ فِي السَّبْعِينَ، فَلَمَّا قُتِلَ الْحُسَيْنُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُ اللَّهِ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ، فَأَخْرَهُ إِلَى الْأَرْبَعِينَ وَمِائَةِ سَنَةٍ، فَحَدَّثْنَاكُمْ فَأَدَعَيْتُمُ الْحَدِيثَ، وَكَشَفْتُمْ قِنَاعَ السِّرِّ، فَأَخْرَهُ اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَنَا وَقْتًا. (وَيَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ).

فَقَالَ أَبُو حَمْزَةَ: وَقُلْتُ ذَلِكَ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، فَقَالَ: قَدْ كَانَ ذَلِكَ.⁸

Abū Ḥamzah al-Thumālī narrated: “I said to Abū Ja‘far (‘as): ‘Imam Ali (‘as) used to say: ‘Trials will last until the seventieth year,’ and he also said: ‘After this hardship comes ease.’ But now, seventy years have passed, and we have seen no relief!

“Abū Ja‘far (‘as) replied: ‘Yes, it was indeed decreed that this matter would be fulfilled in the seventieth year. However, when al-Ḥusayn (‘as) was martyred, Allah (swt)’s wrath intensified upon the people of the earth, and so He delayed it until the year 140.’

“Then, we told you of this matter, but you spoke openly about it, revealing its secret and uncovering what should have remained hidden. Because of this, Allah delayed it even further and has not revealed to us a certain time for its occurrence. *‘Surely Allah erases what He wills and establishes [what He wills].’*⁹

Abū Ḥamzah continued: “I mentioned this to Abī ‘Abdillah (‘as), and he confirmed: ‘Yes, that was indeed the case.’”

It was Allah’s decree that Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq (‘as) would be the Mahdi of Muḥammad’s progeny (‘ams). However, due to the

⁸ al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*, ḥadīth no. 417.

⁹ Sūrah al-Ra‘d (13:39)

believers' failure to adequately prepare in terms of security and strategy, this mission was delayed. The groundwork for this great movement should have been laid with wisdom, careful planning, and proper organization—rather than in a chaotic or haphazard manner.

فعن عثمان النّوّاء قال: سمعت أبا عبد الله (عليه السلام) يقول: كان هذا الأمر¹⁰ في فأخّره الله و يفعل بعد في ذريتي ما يشاء

‘Uthmān al-Nawwā’ narrated: “I heard Abā ‘ Abdillāh (‘as) say: ‘This matter was once decreed for me, but Allah delayed it, and He will carry it out in my progeny as He wills.’”

Even before this, Allah had destined that the Mahdi of Muḥammad’s progeny (‘ams) would be Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘as). However, due to the people's similar negligence and failure to fulfill responsibilities, the plan changed, the decree was altered, and this salvation for mankind was postponed.

وروي في تحف العقول عن محمد بن النعمان عن الصادق عليه السلام: فوالله لقد قرب هذا الأمر ثلاث مرات فأذعتموه فأخّره الله، والله ما لكم سرٌّ إلا وعدوكم أعلم به منكم.¹¹

In the book Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl, it is narrated from Muḥammad ibn al-Nu‘mān that Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘as) said: “By Allah, this matter was about to be fulfilled three times, but you failed each time, so Allah delayed it. By Allah, you have no secret except that your enemy knows it better than you.”

The same pattern continued during the time of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). Once again, the believers failed to establish the necessary security measures and strategic readiness. Meanwhile, their enemies were far more prepared and better equipped. As a result, the fulfilment of this mission was postponed until the time of the Twelfth Imam (‘aj).

¹⁰ al-Ṭūsī, al-Ghaybah p. 288

¹¹ Ibn Shu‘bah, Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl, p. 310; al-Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 78, p. 289.

These narrations highlight the immense efforts of Imam al-Kāẓim (‘as) in preparing the believers and strengthening the foundation of faith. He was on the verge of securing victory for the divine governance of the Prophet's holy progeny (‘ams). However, the believers did not fulfill their responsibilities in terms of security and mobilization, causing a historic opportunity to be lost.

A Look Through History

Several reports were submitted by the secret intelligence agencies of the Abbasid government. Among these reports, one reveals profound truths about Shiism and its history. History is not just a chronological series of events—it is a living civilization with deep layers of meaning. That’s why history should be studied through multiple perspectives, not just retold as simple narratives by storytellers. To truly understand history, one must approach it with expertise in several different fields: security studies, military strategy, psychology, and political analysis. This is why we find that each specialist studies historical truths—like those concerning Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as)—from the perspective of their own field. Economists analyze trade, agricultural scientists study farming practices, and ethicists examine moral lessons. History is a vast field, filled with complex and sometimes dangerous truths.

Rethinking the Battle of Uḥud

It is widely believed, and recorded in books, that the Battle of Uḥud ended with the Muslims’ defeat at the hands of the polytheists. The polytheists in this battle were led by Abū Sufyān, who had conspired against Islam and the Messenger of God (ṣawa). It is said that they defeated the Muslims after initially suffering losses. However, historical records often stop there, skipping the details of what happened next. These records state that the polytheists ceased their assault on Madinah and refrained from further destruction out of a sense of restraint.

But if you ask any security expert, military analyst, or political strategist, they will tell you that this version of events is misleading. There has been clear manipulation in how this history was recorded. And yet, some people still naively believe that these historical sources tell the full truth.

If the Quraysh simply left Madinah, then who mutilated the bodies of the fallen Muslim warriors? Who disfigured the body of Ḥamzah? The enemy behaved like wild beasts, eating the livers of the martyrs. Would such people really have stopped their attack and spared Madinah while they were victorious? Does that even make sense? This kind of naive and biased approach to history only leads to misunderstanding.

That is why analyzing history—and more importantly, uncovering the truth—requires knowledge from multiple fields. Every historical event has different angles that must be carefully examined.

The same applies to the tragedy of Karbalā'. There exist numerous accounts of this painful event. However, there are thousands of historical reports that were hidden and buried by the Umayyads and Abbasids—who were deeply hostile to Imam al-Ḥusayn ('as), the leader of the free and the symbol of resistance—which should not be surprising. Should we really expect them to tell the whole truth and not hide the gruesome details of this tragedy?

Rulers of Today and the Media

As we live in the modern age of social media and digital communication, how much truth do oppressive rulers, tyrannical leaders, and unjust powers conceal from their people? Do these oppressors not actively spread corruption through the media and manipulate events to mislead the masses?

Can we truly read our Islamic history with a naïve, simplistic perspective—one that sees events at face value, without questioning those whose hands are stained with the blood of the innocent, from

among their own people and others? Or should we instead view them with the reverence that some demand, believing it is forbidden to criticize or hold a ruler accountable, even if he is unjust, simply because he is said to represent divine authority over his people? After all, some doctrines still uphold the belief that “the ruler is the shadow of God on earth” whether he is just or not.¹²

This realization compels us to recognize the extent of distortion and deception in the writing of history by those in power. That is why history must never be read from a single, narrow perspective. If an event has a security dimension, it must be studied through the lens of security sciences. If it has a civilizational aspect, it must be examined through the study of civilizations. If it carries economic implications, it should be analyzed with economic knowledge. And so on—because history is not a simple, linear narrative but rather a vast and intricate web of interconnected fields and disciplines.

Intelligence Surveillance on the Imam (‘as)

There were intelligence reports that were regularly submitted to the ruling Abbasid authority regarding the life of the Imam (‘as), as well as the activities of his followers and the Shia of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams). These reports contained significant and revealing truths about the Imam (‘as) and his followers, but they must be read through a specialized and analytical lens to fully grasp their implications.

One such intelligence report reveals to us that the Abbasids had categorized and classified Shia scholars as different sects, factions, and divisions within Shia Islam (However, in reality they were all scholars united under one faith).

عن يونس، قال: قلت لهشام إنهم يزعمون أن أبا الحسن عليه السلام بعث إليك عبد الرحمن بن الحجاج يأمرك أن تسكت ولا تتكلم، فأبيت أن تقبل

¹² al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl*, vol. 2, p. 145.

رسالته، فأخرجني كيف كان سبب هذا؟ وهل أرسل إليك ينهاك عن الكلام أولاً؟ وهل تكلمت بعد نهيهِ إياك؟

فقال هشام: إنه لما كان أيام المهدي شُدُّ على أصحاب الأهواء، وكتب له ابن المفضل صنوف الفرق صنفاً صنفاً، ثم قرأ الكتاب على الناس،

فقال يونس: قد سمعت هذا الكتاب يقرأ على الناس على باب الذهب بالمدينة، ومرة أخرى بمدينة الوضاح،

فقال إن ابن المقعد صنف لهم صنوف الفرق فرقة فرقة، حتى قال في كتابه: وفرقة منهم يقال لهم الزرارية، وفرقة منهم يقال لهم العمارية أصحاب عمار الساباطي، وفرقة يقال لها اليعفورية، ومنهم فرقة أصحاب سليمان الأقطع، وفرقة يقال لها الجواليقية.

قال يونس: ولم يذكر يومئذ هشام بن الحكم، ولا أصحابه.

فزعم هشام ليونس أن أبا الحسن عليه السلام بعث إليه فقال له: كَفَّ هذه الأيام عن الكلام فإن الأمر شديد، قال هشام: فسكنت عن الأمر، فانتهايتي إلى قوله عليه السلام.¹³

Al-Kashshi narrates from Yūnus, who said: “I asked Hishām, ‘They claim that Abū al-Ḥasan (‘as) sent a message to you through ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Hajjaj, instructing you to remain silent and refrain from speaking, yet you refused to comply. Tell me, what was the reason for this? Did he initially send you a warning to stop speaking? And did you continue speaking after his prohibition?’

“Hishām replied: ‘During the days of al-Mahdi (al-‘Abbāsī; the Abbasid caliph), there was a severe crackdown on those labelled as ‘followers of misguided beliefs’ (which had just been different scholars of Shiism which they had classified as separate sects). Ibn al-Mufaḍḍal compiled a detailed classification of sects, listing them one by one, and then publicly read this document to the people.’

¹³ al-Kashshī, *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, ḥadīth no. 479.

“Yūnus said: ‘I personally heard this document being recited to the people at the Golden Gate in Madinah and again in the city of al-Waḍāḥ.’

“Hishām continued: ‘Ibn al-Muq‘ad categorized the various sects and factions, distinguishing between them in meticulous detail. He even stated in his book: ‘There is a faction known as the Zarāriyyah, another as the ‘Ammāriyyah, followers of ‘Ammār al-Sābāṭī. There is also a faction called the Ya‘fūriyyah, and a group known as the followers of Sulaymān al-Aqta‘, and another faction referred to as the Jawālīqiyyah.’

“Yūnus then added: ‘At that time, neither Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam nor his followers were mentioned in this classification.’

“Hishām told Yūnus: ‘Abū al-Ḥasan (‘as) later sent me a message, advising me: ‘Refrain from speaking publicly for now, as the situation is critical and dangerous.’ Hishām continued: ‘So I remained silent until al-Mahdi passed away and the tensions eased. This was what the Imam (‘as) had ordered me to do, and I obeyed his command.’”

The report stated different Shia jurists and students of the A‘immah (‘ams) as if they were separate groups, factions, and sects in Iraq and outside, but mostly in Iraq.

It is also narrated that when Hārūn al-‘Abbāsī heard of the strength of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam’s arguments, he reacted with alarm, saying:

قَالَ هَارُونُ الْعَبَّاسِيُّ: مِثْلُ هَذَا حَيٌّ وَيَبْقَى إِلَى مُلْكِي سَاعَةً وَاحِدَةً!
فَوَاللَّهِ لِلِّسَانُ هَذَا أَبْلَغُ فِي قُلُوبِ النَّاسِ مِنْ مِائَةِ أَلْفِ سَيْفٍ.¹⁴

¹⁴ al-Ṣadūq, Kamāl al-Dīn, p. 367.

“How has my kingdom lasted more than an hour when a man like him exists?! By God, his tongue is more dangerous in the hearts of the people than a hundred thousand swords!”

The Religious Authority Established by the A’immah (‘ams)

From this secret report, it becomes clear that the A’immah (‘ams) were the ones who established the system of religious jurists as an extension of their authority. This establishment dates back to the time of the Messenger of Allah (ṣawa) when the holy verse was sent down commanding a group of scholars from each community or tribe to acquire religious knowledge. Contrary to what some claim—that the institution of jurisprudence (and “*taqlīd*”) was founded in the fourth century or after the Minor Occultation—the system of religious authority was built and structured during the time of the A’immah (‘ams) and under their direct supervision.

A Western academic has written a thoroughly researched book on the school of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), which has been translated into multiple languages. However, this writer denies the existence of religious jurists during the era of the A’immah (‘ams). Yet, the historical evidence acknowledged by both major Islamic sects provides undeniable proof that the system of jurisprudence was firmly established during the A’immah (‘ams)’s time. This foundation was not exclusive to Imam al-Kāẓim (‘as); it also existed during the time of his father, Imam al-Ṣādiq, his grandfather, Imam al-Bāqir, and even Imam al-Sajjād (‘ams).

Some may ask: Does the system of religious authority and jurisprudence have a role in the era of the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (‘aj) or not? The answer is that the Imam (‘as)’s role was not limited to training scholars and jurists, nor was it merely to engage with and educate the common, ignorant masses. His role encompasses both—he trains scholars, and through them, he educates the common masses.

If we examine history from the time of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as), we see that this system (the system of establishing scholars and jurists for the masses to return to) is deeply rooted, covering theology, jurisprudence, and contemporary issues. It remains essential in shaping faith and its principles.

It is no coincidence that the most distinguished student of Abū Ḥanīfah, Ibn Abī Laylā, sought legal guidance from Muḥammad ibn Muslim, a student of Imam al-Bāqir, Imam al-Šādiq, and Imam al-Kāzim (‘ams). Ibn Abī Laylā, who was appointed as the Chief Judge by the Abbasid government in Baghdad, still sought knowledge from Muḥammad ibn Muslim, a disciple of the Imams (‘ams).

فمن السيارى قال: روى عن ابن أبي ليلى أنه قدم إليه رجل خصما له فقال:
إن هذا باعني هذه الجارية فلم أجد على ركبها حين كشفتها شعراً وزعت
أنه لم يكن لها قط قال: فقال له ابن أبي ليلى: إن الناس ليحتالون لهذا بالحيل
حتى يذهب به، فما الذي كرهت؟

فقال: أيها القاضي إن كان عيباً فاقض لي به قال: حتى أخرج إليك فإني أجد
أذى في بطني،

ثم إنه دخل فخرج من باب آخر فأتى محمد بن مسلم الثقفي فقال: أي شيء
تروون عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام في المرأة لا يكون على ركبها شعر أيكون
ذلك عيباً

فقال له محمد بن مسلم: أما هذا نصاً فلا أعرفه، ولكن حدثني أبو جعفر عن
أبيه عن آبائه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم أنه قال: كلما كان في أصل
الخلقة فراد أو نقص فهو عيب

فقال له ابن أبي ليلى: حسبك ثم رجع إلى القوم فقاضى لهم بالعيب.¹⁵

al-Sayārī narrates: “Two men approached Ibn Abī Laylā with a legal dispute. One of them said, ‘This man sold me a female slave, yet she lacks the ability to grow hair on her lower body.’ Ibn Abī

¹⁵ al-Tahdhīb by al-Tūsī, vol. 7, p. 265, ḥadīth no. 282/1026.

Laylā, amused, replied, ‘People would give anything to be in your position, so why do you complain?’

“The man, responded, ‘O Judge, if this is indeed considered a defect—one that warrants the annulment of the transaction and a full refund—then rule in my favour. And please do so swiftly, for my stomach aches.’

“Ibn Abī Laylā went to consult Muḥammad ibn Muslim and asked him, ‘What do you report from Abū Ja‘far (‘as) regarding a woman who has no hair on her lower body? Is this considered a defect?’

“Muḥammad ibn Muslim replied, ‘I do not know of any explicit narration on this matter. However, Abū Ja‘far (‘as) narrated to me from his father, from his forefathers, from the Prophet (ṣawa) who said: ‘Any natural feature that is missing or has an excess is considered a defect.’

“Upon hearing this, Ibn Abī Laylā said, ‘That is sufficient.’ He then returned to the court and ruled in favour of the man, recognizing the absence of hair as a defect.”

This confirms beyond doubt that jurists will exist even after Imam al-Mahdi (‘aj)’s reappearance. For raising scholars and having them serve as the bridge between the masses and the Imam has always been the established practice of the A‘immah (‘ams).

There are countless lessons to be drawn from the life of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). His life was marked by immense challenges and fierce resistance against the organized oppression of the Abbasid regime. His perseverance demands nothing less than our utmost reverence and admiration.

One striking example of his leadership and profound influence—even while under intense surveillance—is seen in the life of his student, Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Umayr (Muḥammad ibn Ziyād). He was a highly respected jurist, a scholar, and a successful merchant in Baghdad. He was also a strong supporter of the A‘immah (‘ams)’s

teachings. Like Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as), he was imprisoned and persecuted for his beliefs.

Ibn Abī ‘Umayr suffered extreme torture in Abbasid prisons—conditions so brutal that few humans could endure them. The authorities sought to extract from him the names of prominent Shia figures, their leaders, and other hidden information. They even tried to coerce him into accepting the position of Chief Judge under their rule, hoping this would compromise his integrity. Yet, he refused, resisting their pressure until they threatened his very life. Only through divine intervention was he ultimately spared.

This moment provides a glimpse into the profound influence of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) and the towering figures he nurtured and raised—jurists who served the followers of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), acting as intermediaries between the people and the Imam.

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) and the Establishment of the Abbasid State

The Abbasid Empire, the largest global power of its time, was a vast and dominant force. Its borders stretched from China and Russia to Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, Yemen, Africa, Syria, Turkey, Malta, Palestine, Egypt, and the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia etc.). This was built on the efforts of the devoted followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), who rallied under the banner of “al-Riḍā from the family of Muḥammad (ṣawa).” Similarly, the Umayyad state was established as an extension of the early caliphate system—a system founded with great discipline by the Messenger of Allah (ṣawa) and reinforced by his minister, Ali (‘as). The expansion of this system through military conquests was carefully orchestrated under Ali (‘as)’s leadership, as recorded in historical and biographical sources.

Through the efforts of the A‘immah of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), including Imam al-Ḥasan, Imam al-Ḥusayn, Imam al-Sajjād, Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘ams), then Imam al-Kāẓim (‘as), and the rest of the A‘immah from his lineage (‘ams), the foundation of Islam was preserved. They

safeguarded both the religious system and the order of the Muslim *Ummah*, resisting external threats from rival states and ideological factions, as well as internal attempts to distort and manipulate religious teachings.

Some may claim that the Islamic government was vast and complex, making it difficult to pinpoint its true architects. However, it is the responsibility of those who seek the truth to uncover them.

To truly understand history, we must go beyond surface-level readings. We need thorough research and critical thinking—not just a literal interpretation of texts. History should not be reduced to simplistic storytelling or shallow retellings. If we fail to examine its deeper layers, we risk treating it as nothing more than a lifeless collection of old records.

A closer look at history explains why the Abbasid rulers established an extensive spy network and a strict security apparatus to monitor the A'imma (‘ams). The Abbasid intelligence services considered them a threat, issuing strict orders to surveil, restrict, and suppress them.

The Abbasids feared that if they did not act, they would lose their rule. Their power was built on appropriating and usurping the sacred legacy of the Prophet and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams). They stole this heritage and claimed it as their own, yet its essence remained inseparable from its rightful heirs—the family of Muḥammad (ṣawa).

If Hārūn al-Rashīd failed to secure his rule, the grand act of theft would inevitably unravel. Despite all their efforts, the Abbasids and Umayyads still saw the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) as their greatest threat—a concern that persisted across generations and remains relevant even today.

Interestingly, history does not record figures like Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī, or al-Thawrī—all scholars from the School of the Caliphs—ever posed a threat to the ruling powers. On the

contrary, Mālik ibn Anas was highly esteemed by the authorities. In fact, the official Abbasid spokesperson in Madinah declared:

إِلَّا لَا يَفْتِي النَّاسَ إِلَّا مَالِكُ بْنُ أَنَسٍ وَابْنُ أَبِي ذَنْبٍ. 16

“None shall issue religious rulings except Mālik ibn Anas and Ibn Abī Dhi’b.”

The historian al-Dhahabī recounts that the Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr summoned Mālik ibn Anas and tried to win him over and lure him into working under his supervision, saying:

فِي رِوَايَةِ الذَّهَبِيِّ أَنَّ الْمَنْصُورَ أَحْضَرَ مَالِكَ بْنَ أَنَسٍ، وَأَعْرَاهُ بِتَسْوِيلِهِ قَائِلًا: لَمْ يَبْقَ عَلَى وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ أَعْلَمُ مِنِّي وَمِنْكَ، وَإِنِّي قَدْ شَغَلْتَنِي الْخِلَافَةُ، فَضَعَّ أَنْتَ لِلنَّاسِ كِتَابًا يَنْتَفِعُونَ بِهِ، تَجَنَّبَ فِيهِ رُخْصَ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ وَشِدَائِدَ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، وَوُطِّنَهُ لِلنَّاسِ تَوْطِنَةً. قَالَ مَالِكٌ: فَوَاللَّهِ، عَلَّمَنِي التَّصْنِيفَ يَوْمَئِذٍ. 17

“There is no one on earth more knowledgeable than you and me. But I am burdened by the caliphate. So, compile a book for the people to follow. In it, avoid the leniencies of Ibn ‘Abbās and the strict rulings of Ibn ‘Umar. Structure it in a way that makes it easy for people to accept.” At that moment, Mālik reportedly said: “By Allah, it was on that day that I learned how to compile books.”

The famous judge Qāḍī ‘Iyyāḍ also narrates that Mālik ibn Anas once told al-Manṣūr:

قَالَ الْقَاضِي عِيَّاضٌ: قَالَ مَالِكٌ: قُلْتُ لَهُ: إِنَّ أَهْلَ الْعِرَاقِ لَا يَرْضَوْنَ عِلْمَنَا. قَالَ: يُضْرَبُ عَلَيْهِ عَامَتُهُمْ بِالسَّيْفِ، وَتَقَطُّعُ عَلَيْهِ ظُهُورُهُمْ بِالسَّيَاطِ. 18

“The people of Iraq will never accept our knowledge (because they were Shia).” To which al-Manṣūr replied sternly: “Strike them with the sword and lash their backs with whips until they comply.”

¹⁶ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A‘yān*, vol. 4, p. 135.

¹⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Ṣiyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 8, p. 111; *Introduction of Ibn Khaldūn* p. 160.

¹⁸ al-Qāḍī ‘Iyyāḍ, *Tartīb al-Madārik*, p. 124.

Furthermore, al-Manṣūr imposed a strict condition on Mālik, which was that he should not narrate single ḥadīth in his book from Imam Ali (‘as). Mālik accepted this condition and carried it out with absolute precision.¹⁹

Yet history leaves no doubt about one undeniable truth: the greatest existential threat to the Abbasid state was not Mālik, nor any other scholar of the time. It was Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). This fact alone proves the extraordinary stature, influence, and sheer authority of Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (‘as).

The Secret Report

Confidential reports reached Hārūn, warning him of an extremely dangerous situation. The matter was so serious that he had to personally oversee it. The report was an order to confront and capture the Imam (‘as). This was a clear sign of how large and influential the community of believers had become, as well as the growing power of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). His influence was measured against the height of the mighty Abbasid Empire—if not even greater.

The secret informant for this confidential report told Hārūn:

أما علمت في الأرض خليفتين يجبى إليهما الخراج؟ فقال الرشيد إليك ومن؟
قال موسى بن جعفر.²⁰

“Are you not aware that there are now two caliphs on this earth to whom the people pay tribute?” (insinuating that power and wealth was now concentrated in the hands of two individuals Hārūn and the Imam (‘as)) Hārūn then asked, “Who [is the other caliph]?” The messenger replied, “Mūsā ibn Ja‘far.” And after the confidential report was read, Hārūn ordered the Imam (‘as)’s immediate arrest.

¹⁹ al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol. 14, p. 200.

²⁰ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 486; al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl* (Rijāl al-Kashshī), no. 478, p. 277.

In another account, Hārūn is recorded to have addressed the Imam (‘as) directly:

هارون قال مخاطباً الإمام عليه السلام: يا موسى بن جعفر خليفتيين يجبى إليهما الخراج؟²¹

“O Mūsā ibn Ja‘far, shall there be two caliphs to whom the people pay tribute?”

There exists yet another narration, in which Hārūn, describing the power of the Imam (‘as) to his treacherous son, he said:

وما كنت آمنه أن يضرب وجهي غداً بمائة ألف سيف من شيعته ومواليه، وفقر هذا وأهل بيته أسلم لي ولكم من بسط أيديهم وإغنائهم.²²

“How could I ever feel safe when I know that tomorrow, a million swords from among his followers and allies could be raised against me? It is surely safer for us that he and his family remain in poverty rather than gaining wealth and the means to rise in power.”

At this point, Hārūn—desperate to protect his throne—acted with full force. As the ruler of a vast empire built on conquest and control, he viewed the Imam (‘as) as a direct threat. He issued an order for his arrest.

Hārūn’s guards stormed into the place where the Imam (‘as) was praying near the grave of his grandfather, the Prophet (ṣawa). Without hesitation, they interrupted his prayer, seized him, and gave him no chance to finish.²³

What is even more astonishing is that, before ordering the Imam (‘as)’s arrest, Hārūn “al-Rashīd” went to the grave of the Prophet (ṣawa) in Yathrib to apologize in advance for the heinous crime he was going to commit. He stood there, greeted the Prophet (ṣawa), and spoke these words:

²¹ al-Ṭabṛasī, *al-Ihtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 1290; al-Ṣadūq, *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* (‘as).

²² al-Ṭabṛasī, *al-Ihtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 133.

²³ Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqib Āl Abī Tālib*, vol. 3, p. 440.

يَا بِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنِّي أَعْتَذِرُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ أَمْرٍ عَزَمْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَإِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَخَذَ مُوسَى بْنُ جَاعِفٍ فَأَحْبِسَهُ، لِأَنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ يُلْقِيَ أُمَّتَكَ حَرْبًا تَسْفِكُ فِيهَا دِمَاؤَهُمْ.²⁴

“May my father and mother be sacrificed for you O Messenger of God; I apologize to you for a matter I have intended to undertake. I intend to seize Mūsā ibn Ja‘far and imprison him, for I fear that he may lead your community into a war that will cause blood to spill.”

In these words, he acknowledges that the Imam (‘as) is of the noble lineage of prophethood. More than that, he implicitly admits that the Imam (‘as) is the legitimate leader of the *ummah*, as evidenced by his own words:

هَذَا إِمَامُ النَّاسِ وَحُجَّةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ وَخَلِيفَتُهُ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ.²⁵

“This is the true Imam of the people, the proof of God upon His creation, and His rightful successor over His servants.”

At the same time, Hārūn knew that the Imam (‘as) had the capability to launch a military uprising. However, this was not an accidental or improvised power—it was built over years of preparation. But this rebelling force would never lead such an effort unless the Imam himself gave the command.

Hārūn the so called al-Rashīd would also later rebuke his son al-Ma‘mūn, saying:

اسْكُتْ، لَا أَمَّ لَكَ، فَإِنِّي لَوْ أُعْطِيتُ هَذَا—الْإِمَامَ الْكَاطِمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ—مَا ضَمِنْتُهُ لَهُ، مَا كُنْتُ أَمْنْتُهُ أَنْ يَضْرِبَ وَجْهِي غَدًا بِمِائَةِ أَلْفِ سَيْفٍ مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ وَمَوَالِيهِ.²⁶

“Be silent! May you have no mother! Do you not understand that if I were to grant this man what he asks—Imam al-Kāzīm (‘as)—I

²⁴ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 48, p. 212.

²⁵ al-Ṣadūq, *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 84; al-Ṭabrasī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 165

²⁶ al-Ṭabrasī, *al-Iḥtijāj*, vol. 2, p. 165; al-Ṣadūq, *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, vol. 1, p. 86.

could no longer guarantee my own security? What assurance would I have that tomorrow he would not lead a million swords against me?”

This shows how much Hārūn feared the political and strategic power of the Imam (‘as). His influence stretched across the empire, and intelligence reports about his growing support were constantly reaching the caliph. The fact that Hārūn personally oversaw the surveillance of the Imam (‘as) speaks volumes about the depth of this concern.

If we analyze this secret report through the lens of security strategy, intelligence operations, and political science—rather than with a simplistic historical perspective—we will see that Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) was not just a religious figure; he was leading a powerful underground movement that stood in parallel to the Abbasid Empire.

For an empire as mighty as the Abbasids to feel truly threatened, its opponent had to be of comparable strength. This was the great, peaceful, and structured resistance state built and perfected by Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as).

The Imprisonment of the Imam (‘as)

Thus, Hārūn ordered the imprisonment of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) as a political prisoner rather than a civilian one, after sensing that secret surveillance and house arrest were insufficient. He remained in political imprisonment for either fourteen years or seven years, and there is no contradiction between these accounts. This is because the nature of historical records and documentation varies. A particular event may be recorded at its early stages, leading to a report stating it lasted four years. Later, another record from the middle of the period may state seven years. Then, after generations, it may be recorded again—or the original reporter or historical observer may have passed away, and a later reporter documents the event as lasting fourteen years.

This isn't a contradiction but a natural part of historical documentation. Understanding how events are recorded—through security reports, media, publishing, and different methods of transmitting news—helps us read history more accurately and uncover the real facts.

The Accuracy of the Secret Report

In reality, the report from the secret informant reflects certain aspects of the truth. It acknowledges that the Imam ('as) possessed financial power, military capability, and popular influence—despite his peaceful approach. Narrations in this matter indicate that Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as) was destined to be the Mahdi of Muḥammad's progeny ('ams), certainly the first of the twelve A'immaḥ to establish a manifest government which would prevail and last till the day of Judgement. This was the power of the Imam which competed with the power and might of Hārūn in Baghdad.

Nowhere in the reports from the head of intelligence or the surveillance teams assigned to spying on Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as) was it stated that there were three or four competing figures. Rather, they recorded the statement: "Have you not realized that there are two caliphs on this earth?"—meaning that true power was concentrated in the hands of only two individuals. One of them controlled the full resources and institutions of this great empire, while the other held the hearts and loyalty of the believers. Whether the opposing side acknowledges this reality or not, the intelligence report confirms it as an undeniable fact.

This was all true in spite of the presence of Abū Ḥanīfah and his disciples, Mālik and his disciples, and even the jurists of the Shia and the scholars of Egypt. None of these figures posed a significant threat to Hārūn the so-called al-Rashīd—except for Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as). In comparison to the Imam ('as), these other figures did not constitute a meaningful force, numerically or religiously, within the calculations of the Abbasid state.

This very same dynamic existed in the life of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('as), for he alone stood against the authority of Saqīfah.

The immense capability and influence that Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as) wielded was not the result of mere coincidence, an agreement, or a random turn of fate. Rather, it was the continuation of a clearly defined and uninterrupted legacy that extended back to the time of the Prophet (ṣawa), rooted in a heritage passed down through generations.

Surveillance was not limited to security matters alone—it extended to financial and economic affairs as well. Do not think that banks and financial transactions are only monitored today by America or the West; if such scrutiny exists now, then imagine the extent of financial surveillance at that time!

During the era of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as), the monitoring of the homes of the A'imma ('ams) was far more intense than anything seen today. Their houses were subject to sudden raids at any hour. Even the homes of their supporters, followers, and Shia were under constant threat. So how, then, did they manage to sustain themselves financially?

One striking observation is that the sons of Imam al-Ḥasan ('as) launched armed uprisings, as did the descendants of Zayd al-Shahīd ('as), engaging in fierce revolts against the brutal oppression of the Abbasid regime. Yet, despite their military campaigns, the secret intelligence reports did not deem them a significant threat in terms of power or competition.

The Abbasid Authority's Support for Mālik and Abū Ḥanīfah

It is no secret that the Abbasid authority heavily promoted the Mālikī school of thought, elevating Mālik to the position of the state's official jurist. The ruling power declared, "No one shall issue legal

rulings except Mālik,” thus formally establishing him as the empire’s chief religious authority.

At times, the Abbasids also extended their support to Abū Ḥanīfah. This is explicitly documented by al-Mizzī in the book Tahdhīb al-Kamāl, where he notes that before selecting Baghdad as his capital, the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr organized an academic conference, gathering prominent scholars from across the Islamic world.²⁷ With the aid of Abū Ḥanīfah, the event was strategically designed to challenge and discredit Imam Ja‘far al-Šādiq (‘as). This was a deliberate attempt to undermine the influence of Imam al-Šādiq (‘as). However, the outcome did not go as the Abbasid state had planned.

Despite all the propaganda and efforts aimed at diminishing the status of the A‘immah of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) in the eyes of the people, Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as)’s star rose in brilliance.

So, can it really be said that the powerful emergence of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) was mere coincidence or luck? There is no such thing as coincidence in this world. Otherwise, how can one explain the extensive security measures imposed against him, the years of house arrest, his repeated transfers from one prison to another, and ultimately, his assassination? Was that also just a coincidence?

This issue is not exclusive to the seventh Imam (‘as); the same pattern existed with his forefathers and descendants (‘ams). The ruling authorities consistently sought to suppress them, for the path of the A‘immah of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) had deep roots, tracing back to the very foundation of Islam by the Messenger of God (ṣawa).

If there was no real threat, then what justified the Abbasid state’s decision to imprison Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) for all those years, subjecting him to torture—despite the fact that he never engaged in armed rebellion or military action against the regime?

²⁷ al-Mizzī, Tahdhīb al-Kamāl, vol. 5, p. 79; al-Dhahabī, Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 6, p. 358.

Why, then, was there such extreme fear and an elaborate security campaign orchestrated against him (‘as)?

This, in itself, stands as a historical proof of his *Imāmah*, as asserted by al-Mufīd and al-Ṭabṛasī in the book *A‘lām al-Warā*. In fact, this is an irrefutable historical argument against the claims of the Ismā‘īlīs and the Zaydīs.

Power and Strength of the Imam (‘as)

The confidential report acknowledges the existence of a formidable military capability under the command of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). “O Hārūn, you have one hundred and twenty thousand skilled swordsmen, while Mūsā ibn Ja‘far has seventy thousand—or even one hundred thousand—swordsmen,” as stated in the accounts found in *al-Ihtijāj* and *‘Uyūn*.

If we examine this statement closely and interpret it in contemporary terms, it signifies that a great power possessed 120,000 elite warriors—highly trained in combat—while in opposition stood 70,000 elite swordsmen, all under the direct command of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). This was a specialized military force, a force so formidable that even the enemy bore witness to its existence.

But how? How did he manage to organize, lead, and shape such a military force in absolute secrecy, all while facing the might of an openly declared great empire? Where did this intelligence originate—was it mere coincidence? Can anyone truly conceive of an elite force, a battalion, or a formidable army operating without ever engaging in public activities or any form of political manoeuvring?

Even today, can a world power exist—equipped with advanced weaponry, military strength, and cutting-edge technology—without an opposing force rising against it? And if such an opposing force did exist, could it possibly remain completely hidden, its political, financial, and military operations unknown to the world?

Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) and the Universal State

The Imam (‘as) did not establish this military group in some distant corner of the Muslim world, far from the reach of the Abbasid authority, like the Zaydīs or the descendants of al-Ḥasan (‘as). So how did he (‘as) build this structure, organizing its security, economic, and educational systems while being under constant financial, security, and intelligence restrictions?

According to the narrations, he (‘as) was destined to be the Mahdi of the family of Muḥammad (ṣawa). This means that the groundwork had been laid—the moment of transformation was ready—for the establishment of the government of the Family of Muḥammad (ṣawa), on the hand of Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). However, failure occurred due to the mistakes and shortcomings of his followers, particularly in security planning and governance, and so divine intervention took its course, and the emergence of the Mahdi was postponed.

What is remarkable is that the state Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) sought to establish was not meant to collapse—it was designed to last until the Day of Judgment. This is the true meaning of the Mahdi of the Family of Muḥammad (ṣawa). From a political perspective, the concept of the Mahdi, represents a state that once established, will never fall. What kind of leadership creates a nation so enduring that it remains intact until the end of time, governed successively by the twelve A‘immah?

In other words, this was not just about forming a temporary government. It was about building a high civilization of faith—an everlasting divine state. If the goal had been merely to establish a political or military government with a limited lifespan, then Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) would not have concerned himself with it. Such a task would not have required extraordinary effort. After all, many Shia scholars and jurists have established governments throughout history, yet after a few decades, they faded into obscurity.

But the A'imma of Ahl al-Bayt ('ams) were not seeking a fleeting kingdom. Their mission was and is to create a lasting, universal civilization—one that would never perish. This is the true meaning of the Mahdi of the Family of Muḥammad (ṣawa).

Even their adversaries bear witness to these extraordinary visions, as Shaykh al-Mufīd argued in defence of their *Imāmah*. This is not merely an ordinary human plan, it is a human effort directed and upheld by divine will.

Between al-Mahdi and Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('ams)

Certainly, we do not have any narrations indicating that the Mahdi almost appeared and his manifestation was delayed due to reasons which Allah knows best. Or rather, the current research has not attained such an advanced level of refinement and expertise. Thus, now, after more than ten centuries, that we are living in the era of the occultation of the Twelfth Imam ('aj), it is hard to believe that the Seventh Imam ('as), in his brief lifetime, almost became the Mahdi of Muḥammad's family ('ams).

This is not something easy or spontaneous and no one can say that it happened all of a sudden.

Hence, we see that when Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as) was arrested, Hārūn the so-called al-Rashīd arranged for two houses for him. He had him secretly taken to one of them, from there he was sent to Ḥassān al-Sarawī and with a canopy over his ride, he was sent to Baṣrah where he was given in the custody of 'Īsā ibn Ja'far ibn Abī Ja'far who was its governor. He also sent, openly and during the day, another canopied camel to Kūfah, with a group of people, in order to conceal the location of Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as).

Would he conceal the whereabouts of the Imam and delude the people in this matter, unless he was aware of the extent of dangers posed by Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as) and the military forces having allegiance to him.

There is a narration from the Infallible A'immah (as), similar to Ḥadīth al-Qudsī (divine edict), that Almighty Allah gave Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as) two options: to be imprisoned or the killing of seventy thousand of his followers. So was this a coincidence or was this some kind of a pact between Divine Will and the *Imamah* of Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as).

The Abbasid Authority's Fear of the Imam ('as)'s Disciples

Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('ams) cultivated and raised a group of Shiite scholars and jurists. The Abbasid authority took precautionary measures and remained vigilant regarding these jurists, among whom was Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam—a disciple of Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as) and a student of Imam al-Ṣādiq ('as).

Hishām became the leading figure in the school of theology, doctrine, and knowledge. During the lifetime of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as), no one could claim to possess theological and intellectual insight that matched or rivaled Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam.

Hārūn the so-called al-Rashīd was deeply troubled by the presence of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, to the extent that he once said (as we mentioned), “How has my kingdom lasted more than an hour when a man like him exists?! By God, his tongue is more dangerous in the hearts of the people than a hundred thousand swords!”

What power did Hishām's words hold? What kind of wisdom and intellect did he carry from the teachings of Imam al-Ṣādiq and Imam al-Kāzīm ('ams)? Though he wielded no weapon, it was his powerful mind and profound thought that intimidated the rulers—a force of thought and knowledge so formidable that it threatened even a state considered to be from the golden ages of Islam.

Mūsā ibn Ja‘far: The Man of Civilization

There is an intense debate among many Islamic scholars about what truly defines the excellence of an Islamic civilization. Is it the expansion of the state, or is it something else entirely? The science of civilizations and the study of the progress of nations offer strategic insights into these questions.

It's not necessary that every nation succeeds in building a civilization. Some states come and go—some are merely service-based or fragmented political entities. But for a nation to emerge and genuinely build a civilization—that's something entirely different.

For instance, the state founded by the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣawa) within just ten years of political governance—and even if one considers his entire 23-year mission—managed to establish an Islamic government that extended over a quarter of the world's lands, and its influence endures to this day.

Establishing a great civilization, then, is an enormous achievement. Yet, there are writers who take pride in the architectural monuments built with clay by the Umayyads in Andalusia, considering them a source of pride for Islam. But is this perspective sound? Is it reasonable to boast about clay buildings and call them the standard and how we measure a great civilization? The same mindset exists in the West, where civilization is measured by technological advancements in metals or material machinery.

But what can one say about the collapse of family households and the moral and spiritual collapse within individuals and Western society as a whole? Can we truly call that civilization as well?

Though they uphold such measures as progress, it stems from ignorance, arrogance, and savage mentality. Our aim is not to solely criticize the West; rather the Umayyads, Abbasids, and the caliphs who came after the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣawa) must also be evaluated. The measure of civilization must hold everyone accountable.

In our modern era, for example, we often see the president of the United States or Western leaders showing off their military might—thundering and flashing their power. Meanwhile, there might be a humble advocate for peace who envisions a world of international harmony, security, reduced bloodshed, and diminished exploitation—an advocate who calls for nations to restrain from imposing their will on others for mere gain.

So, what truly defines civilization? Is it possessing lethal weapons and vast financial empires used to dominate humanity? Or is it the ability to win hearts and lead people toward peace, safety, and mutual respect?

Just a few months ago, a report from the United Nations revealed that the amount of wheat and food burned at sea by the United States to maintain capitalist market prices would have been enough to feed the world's hungry. Is this conduct truly reflective of civilization and progress? Or is the true civilization found in the one who cares for and supports the deprived and oppressed?

With these reflections in mind, one must ask: Who is the real man of civilization—Hārūn the so-called al-Rashīd, who flaunted power and wealth, or Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar (ʿas), who preserved human life despite possessing significant military and financial resources, as confirmed by secret Abbasid reports?

A Golden Age or an Age of Darkness?

There are those who claim that the Abbasid era was one of the golden ages of Islam. But is this vision based on their palaces, built to dazzle like the tales of “A Thousand and One Nights”? Or is it based on this government's filthy desires and indulgences? Was it truly a golden age because they imprisoned Imam Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar (ʿas) for fourteen long years?

Is a golden age one defined by violence, bloodshed, and the stripping of knowledge and scholars to serve the whims of tyrants and the splendour of their courts?

Imam Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar (ʿas) educated his disciples to serve Islam and humanity. Meanwhile, the Abbasid authority sought to appoint Ibn Abī ʿUmayr as the chief judge—a man entirely subservient to the royal court.

Why, then, was Hārūn al-ʿAbbāsī particularly fearful of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam, above all others? Despite the fact that Hishām carried no weapon, his only arms were knowledge and faith. This fear reveals something significant: Hārūn, the bloodthirsty ruler, only valued knowledge and scholars to use them for manipulation. If he chose to honour a scholar, it was purely to place them under his influence, politicizing their knowledge to reinforce his power.

Hārūn al-ʿAbbāsī and the Mercenaries

Hārūn al-Rashīd did not content himself with the military forces already at his disposal. Instead, he summoned a group of mercenary soldiers from distant Islamic lands that were under Abbasid control. He specifically chose them because of their lack of religious education and ignorance of the teachings of Islam and the Quran. This made them easily manipulated to carry out the assassination of the Imam (ʿas), as they had no understanding or reverence for the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿams).

If he had relied on local Islamic communities, they would not have supported such actions. Their approach did not align with Hārūn's vile desire to exploit the Muslim community and recruit it for enmity and aggression against the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿams). Therefore, he sought to recruit mercenaries from the farthest reaches of the land, training them specifically for oppression and bloodshed.

This very same pattern continues in our present time, where many modern armies and their leadership are composed of mercenaries from foreign lands, detached from the moral and cultural values of the communities they oppress.

Hārūn al-Rashīd established a military force whose loyalty and devotion were not to religion or values, but rather to an idol, a

symbol, and a dictatorial figure like himself. Their allegiance was not to God or justice but to a tyrant who ruled with an iron fist. This stands in stark contrast to the path laid down by Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as), whose teachings followed the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams). The ethos of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) rejects the idolization of individuals, affirming instead that the foundation and guiding principle should always be Islam—its values, principles, and moral compass.

In Islam, it is power that must be judged by knowledge, not knowledge by power. It is power that must be measured by legitimacy, not legitimacy by power. This rational and ethical framework was established and upheld by the forefather of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far, the Master of Martyrs, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘as), and was later carried forward by his grandson, the patient and steadfast Imam Mūsā al Kāzīm (‘as).

The Fidā’iyyū of al-Rashīd

This group, whose absolute loyalty Hārūn al-‘Abbāsī secured, became known as the “Fidā’iyyū of al-Rashīd” or Hārūn’s Sacrificial Legion. He indulged them in a life of luxury and comfort, turning them into bloodthirsty wolves. It mirrors what we see in our present time—where simple-minded Muslims are manipulated with catchy chants and resonant slogans that leave no room for reflection or critical thought.

These fanatical groups emerge under the banner of religion and faith, going so far as to inject their followers with drugs or administer pills that cause neurological and mental disturbances. The reason behind this is that the corrupt founders fear the innate nature of the exploited recruits—worrying that their natural instincts might awaken, snapping them out of their senselessness. To prevent this, they drown them in intoxication, conditioning them to stay numb and compliant. As a result, we witness the tragic spilling of believers’ blood in the name of “*jihād*” by movements that have sprung from the very lap of the West.

The matter doesn't stop there. Just as Hārūn al-‘Abbāsī prepared all the elements of moral corruption for his mercenaries and suicide fighters, today, they are offered “red nights” (in Arabic, it typically refers to nights associated with immoral or indecent behaviour, particularly involving promiscuity, debauchery, or immoral gatherings) under the facade of “sexual *jihād*.” How eerily similar yesterday is to today—these people are the offspring of those very same corrupt forebears.

This demonstrates the critical importance of studying history and bringing it to life in a way that serves as both a lesson and a bridge to our current reality. We must strive to understand it with wisdom and insight, not through shallow or simplistic interpretations.

The Nation of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as)

Despite everything Hārūn al-‘Abbāsī did to empower his military Fida’iyyū force—filling them with immorality and vice under the pretence of Islam and calling himself the Caliph of God on Earth—he ultimately commanded them to kill Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). Yet, they couldn't do it.

As soon as they saw Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as), they fell to their knees before him like children seeking comfort from their father, kissing his feet in reverence. One might wonder—what did Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) do to them? Did he cast a spell over them? Did he terrify them? Yet he was unarmed—where and why did their loyalty to Hārūn al-‘Abbāsī vanish? Where did all those elaborate security plans and strategies disappear to?

Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) was detained, first in Madinah and then in the prisons of Baghdad and Baṣrah. How did he manage to establish such profound influence over them? How did this spiritual and personal connection emerge despite his captivity?

It has been narrated by Ibn Shahr Āshūb in al-Manāqib:

عن عليّ بن حمزة، قال: كان يتقدم الرشيد إلى خدمه إذا خرج موسى بن جعفر من عنده أن يقتلوه، فكانوا يهيمون به فيتدخلهم من الهيبة والزمع. فلما طال ذلك أمر بتمثال من خشب وجعل له وجهاً مثل وجه موسى بن جعفر، وكانوا إذا سكروا أمرهم أن يذبحوها بالسكاكين، وكانوا يفعلون ذلك أبداً،

فلما كان في الأيام جمعهم في الموضع وهم سكارى وأخرج سيدي إليهم، فلما بصروا به هموا به على رسم الصورة، فلما علم منهم ما يريدون كلمهم بالخرزية والتركية فرموا من أيديهم السكاكين ووثبوا إلى قدميه فقبلوها وتضرعوا إليه وتبعوه إلى أن شيعوه إلى المنزل الذي كان ينزل فيه، فسألهم الترجمان عن حالهم، فقالوا: إن هذا الرجل يصير إلينا في كل عام فيقضي أحكامنا ويرضي بعضنا من بعض، ونستسقي به إذا قحط بلدنا وإذا نزلت بنا نازلة فرعنا إليه، فعاهداهم أنه لا يأمرهم بذلك فرجعوا.²⁸

From Ali ibn Ḥamzah, who said:

“Hārūn al-Rashīd would command his servant that whenever Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) left his presence, they were to kill him. But whenever they approached him to carry out the order, they were overtaken by a sense of awe and reverence, unable to act. Eventually, Hārūn devised a plan: he had a wooden effigy crafted with a face resembling Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as). Whenever the guards were drunk, he would order them to stab it with knives repeatedly. This practice became routine.

“One day, as usual, when the guards were gathered drunk, Hārūn brought out Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) himself. When they saw him, they mistook him for the wooden figure they had been accustomed to stabbing, and they rushed toward him. But as they drew closer, they recognized him, threw down their knives, rushed to his feet, kissed them, and clung to him, weeping and pleading.

²⁸ al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 48, p. 140.

“Hārūn, puzzled by their reaction, questioned them about it. They replied, ‘This man comes to us every year to resolve our disputes, reconcile our differences, and pray for us when drought afflicts our lands. Whenever hardship befalls us, we turn to him, and his prayers are answered.’ Hārūn then promised them that he would not order them to harm him again, so they left him unharmed and returned.”

There are documented instances of some of Hārūn’s governors resisting his commands. One such instance was when Hārūn wrote to ‘Īsā ibn Ja‘far, ordering him to kill the Imam (‘as). ‘Īsā summoned his most trusted advisors and consulted them on the matter, and they advised him to refrain and request exemption from carrying out the order.

‘Īsā wrote to Hārūn, saying:

...وَأِنْ نَفَذْتُ إِلَيْهِ، مَنْ يَتَسَلَّمُهُ مِنِّي—أَيُّ الْإِمَامِ الْكَاطِمِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ—وَأِلَّا
خَلَيْتُ سَبِيلَهُ فَإِنِّي مُتَحَرِّجٌ مِنْ حَبْسِهِ.²⁹

“... And if you send someone else to take him from me—meaning Imam al-Kāzim (‘as)—then do so, for I cannot bear to be responsible for his detention.”

Similarly, when Hārūn ordered Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā to execute the Imam (‘as), he hesitated and refused to comply, which greatly angered Hārūn, who then distanced himself from him.³¹

One might find it astonishing how Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) managed to maintain control over such a vast and secretive network of influence. How did he preserve his vitality and maintain his presence while being known to figures from various cities, seamlessly managing both social and personal connections with them? At the same time, he was dedicated to nurturing a generation of scholars and theologians, guiding them with wisdom and knowledge while

²⁹ al-Nayshābūrī, *Rawḍat al-Wā‘izīn*, p. 219; al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād*, vol. 2, p. 239.

³¹ al-Ṭabrasī, *A‘lām al-Warā*, vol. 2, p. 233; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, p. 334.

overseeing the affairs of believers both near and far. Meanwhile, he remained devoted to worship—so much so that he was known as “The One Who Prostrates for Long Periods” and “The Monk of the Family of Muḥammad” (‘as). What kind of extraordinary ability could lead and maintain a hidden state like that of Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as)?

These incidents and glimpses reveal the profound reality of *Imāmah* and its leadership. An Imam does not merely perform public and declared roles, but often fulfills secret responsibilities that no human wisdom can grasp—roles enabled solely by the divine knowledge bestowed by God Almighty.

This is the true power, leadership, and *Imāmah* of Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as), which stood resilient against the mightiest empire of his time.

The Offsprings of the Imam (‘ams) and Their Widespread Influence

One of the most telling indicators of his immense influence over the Islamic nations is the fact that the offsprings of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘ams)—numbering more than ten—were relentlessly pursued by the Abbasid authorities across the vast expanse of the earth. Their presence was so influential that they could not find a stable place to settle, as people would gather around them with remarkable speed and loyalty wherever they appeared.

This situation would often lead to rebellion and resistance against the Abbasid pursuit, as happened with Zayd ibn Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far and his brothers. A similar event occurred with Aḥmad and his brothers when they accompanied their sister, Fāṭimah al-Ma‘šūmah (sa), on her journey from Shirāz to Qum. Crowds of people flocked around them to such an extent that they formed an army, standing as a formidable force against the Abbasid military units. This eventually led to violent clashes, resulting in the martyrdom of Aḥmad. The Abbasid authority, fearing the impact of their presence, blocked their way to Khurāsān and likely plotted their assassination

through poisoning. Similarly, the remaining sisters, whose graves are now scattered across various cities in Iran and Azerbaijan, faced persecution and suppression.

In some cases, the necessity of survival forced them into hiding and concealing their identities, as was the case with Qāsim. Despite this, his descendants (‘ams) continued to represent a living extension of their father, Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as), which inevitably led to widespread support and loyalty from the Muslim masses.

His Companions (‘as) and the Abbasid Authority

There were significant and influential positions within the Abbasid state that were effectively under the control of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as), as they were held by his companions and disciples. Among them were:

1. **Ali ibn Yaqqīn:** He served as a minister to Hārūn al-‘Abbāsī.³⁰
2. **‘Abdullāh ibn Sinān:** He was a treasurer for al-Manṣūr, al-Mahdī, and al-Rashīd.³¹
3. **al-Ḥasan ibn Rāshīd, a servant of Banī al-‘Abbās:** He held the position of minister under al-Mahdī, AlḤadī, and Hārūn al-Rashīd.³²

And many others from among his disciples and companions.

The Imam (‘as) and the Hidden State

Waḥīd al-Bahbahānī mentioned in his commentary on Minhaj al-Maqāl, in the biography of Ali ibn al-Musayyib, according to some reliable books, that Ali was taken from Madinah along with al-Kāẓim (‘as) and imprisoned with him in Baghdad. After a long period of

³⁰ al-Kashshī, Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl, vol. 2, Ḥadīth. 340, 355, 819, 820.

³¹ al-Najāshī, Rijāl al-Najāshī, p. 214, no. 558; al-Kashshī, Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl, vol. 2, p. 411, no. 771.

³² al-Najāshī, Rijāl al-Najāshī, p. 138, no. 76.

imprisonment, longing for his family overwhelmed him. The Imam ('as) said to him:

اغْتَسِلْ فَاغْتَسِلْ، فَقَالَ: غَمَضُ، فغَمَضُ، فَقَالَ: افْتَحْ فَفَتَحَ ف رَأَهُ عِنْدَ قَبْرِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَصَلَّى عِنْدَهُ وَزَارَهُ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: غَمَضُ وَقَالَ افْتَحْ فَرَأَهُ مَعَهُ عِنْدَ قَبْرِ الرَّسُولِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، فَقَالَ: هَذَا بَيْتُكَ فَادْهَبْ إِلَى عِيَالِكَ وَجِدْ الْعَهْدَ وَارْجِعْ إِلَيَّ، ففَعَلَ فَقَالَ: غَمَضُ وَافْتَحَ، قَالَ فَرَأَهُ مَعَهُ فَوْقَ جَبَلِ قَافٍ وَكَانَ هُنَاكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءِ اللَّهِ أَرْبَعُونَ رَجُلًا، فَصَلُّوا وَصَلُّوا مُقْتَدِينَ بِهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ غَمَضُ وَقَالَ افْتَحَ، فَفَتَحَ فَرَأَهُ مَعَهُ فِي السِّجْنِ.³³

“‘Perform ablution.’ So, he did. Then the Imam said: ‘Close your eyes.’ He closed them. The Imam said: ‘Open your eyes.’ He opened them and found himself at the grave of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('as). They both prayed and performed visitation (*ziyārah*). Then the Imam said: ‘Close your eyes again.’ He did so. The Imam ('as) said: ‘Open your eyes.’ He opened them and found himself at the grave of the Messenger of Allah (ṣawa). The Imam ('as) said: ‘This is your home. Go to your family, renew your covenant with them, and then return to me.’ Ali did as he was instructed. The Imam ('as) then said: ‘Close your eyes and open them again.’ He did so and found himself with the Imam ('as) on Mount Qāf, where forty men from the saints of Allah were present. The Imam ('as) led them in prayer, and they prayed behind him. Then the Imam ('as) said: ‘Close your eyes again.’ He did so, and when he opened them, he found himself back in the prison with the Imam ('as).”

Ali ibn Suwayd was imprisoned with Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far ('as) for a period of time. Ali was a resident of Madinah and deeply missed his family. The Imam ('as) said to him: “We will leave before noon to Madinah, and we will be back to perform the noon prayer outside the city. I will visit my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah (ṣawa).” The Imam ('as) instructed him: “Go to your family, tend to

³³ al-Ḥā'irī, *Muntahā al-Maqāl*, under the entry for 'Alī ibn al-Musayyib; al-Qummī, *Muntahā al-Āmāl*, vol. 2, p. 1326, quoting from Waḥīd al-Bahbahānī's commentary on *Nahj al-Maqāl*, no. 95, under the letter 'Ayn (ع).

your affairs, and then return.” And indeed, the Imam (‘as) left with Ali ibn Suwayd, and the earth was folded for them (a miracle allowing rapid travel). The prison guard, who was one of the Imam (‘as)’s followers, feared for his life, worried that someone might come and find the shackles and chains left behind without the presence of the Imam (‘as).

During the journey, Ali ibn Suwayd witnessed a remarkable scene. He saw a group of people from various lands: from Syria, Yemen, the West, and the East, all gathered there. After performing ablution from a clear spring atop a mountain, they joined the Imam (‘as) in prayer. Ali ibn Suwayd asked Imam al-Kāzim (‘as) about them, and the Imam (‘as) replied: “These are my loyal followers whom Allah has gathered here to pray with me.” This narration highlights that Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) had a vast hidden network spread across many lands, just as mentioned earlier regarding the soldiers Hārūn had gathered from remote regions. This hidden governance and strategic management of the Imam (‘as) are concepts understood by Sufis and mystics. Even strategic analysis centres grasp the depth of this role of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams). However, the opponents of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), who are filled with envy and resentment, fail to recognize their greatness and true stature. They are unwilling to see the profound significance of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), despite the Quran itself narrating the story of Khidr (‘as) in Sūrah al-Kahf, presenting it as a real and meaningful narrative rather than a legend and a myth. The story of Prophet Mūsā (‘as) being taught hidden knowledge by Khidr (‘as) shows that even a prophet of great resolve needed guidance from a hidden master of divine knowledge. This highlights that there is indeed a hidden network on earth, one that operates discreetly to maintain divine order within this world without being seen.

Imam al-Jawād (‘as)

Imam al-Jawād (‘as), the Most Blessed

It has been narrated that the A’immah (‘ams) possess unique attributes specific to each of them, even though they are all from one divine light. Among these illustrious A’immah, Imam al-Jawād (‘as) holds a distinctive position, as numerous statements from his infallible forefathers (‘ams) affirm that he is the most blessed among them.

It is reported that Yaḥyā al-Ṣan‘ānī said:

قَالَ: دَخَلْتُ عَلَى أَبِي الْحَسَنِ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَهُوَ بِمَكَّةَ، وَكَانَ يَقْشِرُ مُوزًا وَيُطْعِمُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ، فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ، هَذَا الْمَوْلُودُ الْمُبَارَكُ؟ قَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: نَعَمْ يَا يَحْيَى، هَذَا الْمَوْلُودُ الَّذِي لَمْ يُولَدْ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ مَوْلُودٌ أَعْظَمُ بَرَكَهَةً عَلَى شَيْعَتِنَا مِنْهُ.³⁴

“I entered upon Abī al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā (‘as) while he was in Makkah. He was peeling a banana and feeding Abā Ja‘far. I said to him, ‘May I be sacrificed for you, is this the blessed newborn?’ He (‘as) replied, ‘Yes, O Yaḥyā, this is the newborn. There is no one born within Islam with a greater blessing upon our Shia than him.’”

To interpret this noble attribute, we must expound upon several matters:

The Path of Knowledge

A number of prominent Imāmī scholars, such as Shaykh al-Mufīd, Sayyid al-Murtaḍā, and Shaykh al-Ṭabrisī, among others, emphasize and assert that the evidences of the *Imāmah* of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) are not confined solely to the Quranic text or the Prophetic narration—that is, the divine text, despite its dignity and greatness. No one should presume that the *Imāmah* of Ali (‘as), for

³⁴ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 6, p. 360; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 50, p. 200.

example, is exclusively proven through the method adopted by al-Amini in his book al-Ghadīr. There are many other approaches beyond textual evidence, such as the one found in the book Epic of al-Ghadīr by Paul Salama, a Christian author. Despite his faith, his work clearly demonstrates the *Imāmah* of Imam Ali (‘as) through a different method and perspective. It also aligns with how the United Nations has endorsed the covenant given to Mālik al-Ashtar—which outlines the principles of administrative and legal governance for a state—as a modern framework for state administration. Indeed, the entire Nahj al-Balāghah has been recognized as a source for legislative frameworks in contemporary nations.

Likewise, for instance, the book Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ ‘alayhā al-salām: Wataraqī Muḥammad by Sulaymān Kattānī presents another method in portraying the esteemed status of Lady Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ (sa), which differs significantly from the textual approach, as is evident.

There are, indeed, various approaches concerning the *Imāmah* of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams). When we speak of methodologies for establishing proofs of their *Imāmah*, it does not necessarily imply that the sole outcome of these proofs is merely the attainment of certainty and faith in the *Imāmah* of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams). Rather, the matter transcends this knowledge, for when this understanding is perfected and its intricacies comprehended, it leads to the most complete intellectual perspective.

The Knowledge of Imam al-Jawād (‘as)

If we wish to open the hearts of humanity to the light of Islam and the radiance of faith, we must bring forth the remarkable personalities of the Infallible A’immah (‘ams). Among them, if we focus on the character of Imam al-Jawād (‘as), we find that despite his tender age, not having yet reached puberty, he established formidable intellectual achievements. He did so even within the court of al-

Ma'mūn, the Abbasid caliph, where he astonished Yaḥyā ibn Aktham, the most learned jurist and chief judge of Baghdad at that time.

Ma'mūn summoned Yaḥyā ibn Aktham to test Imam al-Jawād ('as), who was merely nine years old at the time.

قال له: أتأذن لي - جعلت فداك - في مسألة؟ فقال الإمام عليه السلام: سل إن شئت.

ووجه يحيى مسأله إلى الإمام قائلاً: ما تقول - جعلني الله فداك - في مُحَرَّم قتل صيدا؟

فقال الإمام عليه السلام: قتله في حِلٍّ أو حَرَمٍ، عالمٌ كان المُحَرَّم أم جاهلاً...
35

Yaḥyā sought permission from the caliph to examine the Imam, and when granted, he approached the Imam and said: "May I, with your permission—may I be your ransom—pose a question?" The Imam ('as) replied: "Ask as you wish."

Yaḥyā then posed his question: "What is your ruling—may Allah make me your ransom—regarding a pilgrim who kills an animal while in the state of ritual consecration (*iḥrām*)?"

The Imam ('as) replied: "Did he kill it inside the sanctuary or outside? Was he aware of the prohibition or unaware?"

He continued with further questions, revealing his deep understanding of jurisprudence. Upon hearing this comprehensive response, Yaḥyā was left bewildered, utterly incapable of forming an answer, and the mark of defeat appeared on his face.

The same incident had previously occurred with al-Ma'mūn when he tried to test Imam al-Riḍā ('as), but this time, the questioning took place in the context of a scholarly debate. In the history of Islam, such profound wisdom from one so young was unprecedented except through Imam al-Jawād ('as). This extraordinary achievement and

³⁵ al-Mufīd, al-Īrshād, p. 361; al-'Āmilī, Wasā'il al-Shī'ah, vol. 9, p. 187.

many more are what led to him being described, by his father, Imam al-Riḍā (‘as), as the greatest blessing, as we have previously mentioned.

Due to this profound knowledge at such a young age, some narrations compared Imam al-Jawād (‘as) to ‘Isā son of Maryam (‘as), for just as God challenged humanity with a prophet in his infancy, likewise, in Islam, God challenged humanity with Imam al-Jawād (‘as)’s profound knowledge at such a young age.

It is narrated by Muḥammad al-Maḥmūdī on the authority of his father, who said:

كنت واقفاً على رأس الإمام الرضا عليه السلام بطوس، فقال له بعض أصحابه: إن حدث حدث فإلى من؟ وإنما سألته عن الإمام من بعده حتى يدين بطاعته والولاء له.

فَقَالَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لَهُ إِلَى ابْنِي أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ، وَكَانَ الْإِمَامُ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فِي مَرْحَلَةِ الطُّفُولَةِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ إِنِّي اسْتَصَغِرُ سِنَّهُ! فَرَدَّ عَلَيْهِ الْإِمَامُ هَذِهِ الشُّبْهَةَ قَائِلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَعَثَ عِيسَى بْنَ مَرْيَمَ قَانِمًا فِي دُونِ السِّنِّ الَّتِي يَقُومُ فِيهَا أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ.³⁶

“I was standing at the head of Imam al-Riḍā (‘as) in Tūs (near the modern city of Mashhad) when some of his companions asked him: ‘If something were to happen, to whom should we turn? Who will be the Imam after you, to whom we pledge our loyalty?’

“The Imam (‘as) replied: ‘To my son, Abū Ja‘far.’ At that time, Imam Abū Ja‘far (al-Jawād) (‘as) was still in his childhood. Someone objected, saying: ‘I find his age too young!’ The Imam (‘as) refuted this doubt, stating: ‘Indeed, Allah appointed ‘Isā son of Maryam as a prophet while he was even younger than Abū Ja‘far.’”

This was a divine precedent that astonished not just Muslims but also Christians and Jews. It was a heavenly decree that challenged

³⁶ al-‘Āmilī, *al-Durr al-Nazīm*, p. 704; al-Qurashī, *Ḥayāt al-Imām al-Jawād*, p. 490.

human perception, even provoking jealousy and envy, to the extent that some sought to defame Imam al-Jawād ('as) from Abī Dāwūd al-Sajistānī before al-Mu'taṣim (The Abbasid caliph).

Zarqān, a close companion of Abū Dāwūd, reported that Abū Dāwūd returned from a meeting with al-Mu'taṣim feeling distressed. When asked about his grief, he replied:

قَالَ: إِنَّ سَارِقًا أَقَرَّ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بِالسَّرِقَةِ، وَسَأَلَ الْخُلَيْفَةَ تَطْهِيرَهُ بِإِقَامَةِ الْحَدِّ عَلَيْهِ، فَجَمَعَ لِدَٰلِكَ الْفُقَهَاءَ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ، وَقَدْ أَحْضَرَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، فَسَأَلْنَا عَنِ الْقَطْعِ فِي أَيِّ مَوْضِعٍ يَجِبُ أَنْ يُقَطَعَ؟

فَقُلْتُ: مِنَ الْكَرْسُوعِ، لِقَوْلِ اللَّهِ فِي التَّيْمَةِ: ﴿فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ﴾،³⁷ وَاتَّفَقْتُ مَعِيَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ قَوْمٌ

وَقَالَ آخَرُونَ: بَلْ يَجِبُ الْقَطْعُ مِنَ الْمِرْفَقِ
قَالَ: وَمَا الدَّلِيلُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ

قَالُوا: لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَالَ: ﴿وَأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ﴾.³⁸

قَالَ: فَاتَّفَقْتُ إِلَى مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَقَالَ مَا تَقُولُ فِي هَذَا يَا أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ

قَالَ: قَدْ تَكَلَّمْتُ الْقَوْمَ فِيهِ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

قَالَ: دَعْنِي مِمَّا تَكَلَّمُوا بِهِ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَكَ

قَالَ: أَعْنِي عَنْ هَذَا يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

قَالَ: أَقْسَمْتُ عَلَيْكَ بِاللَّهِ لَمَّا أَخْبَرْتَنِي بِمَا عِنْدَكَ فِيهِ

فَقَالَ: أَمَّا إِذَا أَقْسَمْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنِّي أَقُولُ إِنَّهُمْ أَخْطَأُوا فِيهِ فِي السَّنَةِ فَإِنَّ الْقَطْعَ يَجِبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ مُفْصَلِ أَصُولِ الْأَصَابِعِ فَيَنْتَرِكَ الْكَفُّ

قَالَ: لِمَ ذَا

قَالَ: قَوْلُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ السُّجُودُ عَلَى سَبْعَةِ أَعْضَاءِ الْوُجْهِ وَالْيَدَانِ وَالرُّكْبَتَيْنِ وَالرِّجْلَيْنِ فَإِذَا قُطِعَتْ يَدُهُ مِنَ الْكَرْسُوعِ أَوْ الْمِرْفَقِ لَمْ يَبْقَ

³⁷ Sūrah al-Nisā', Verse 43.

³⁸ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, Verse 6.

لَهُ يَدٌ يَسْجُدُ عَلَيْهَا وَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: (وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ) يَعْنِي بِهَا هَذِهِ الْأَعْضَاءُ السَّبْعَةُ الَّتِي يُسْجَدُ عَلَيْهَا، (فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا)،³⁹ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ لَمْ يَقْطَعْ

فَاعْجَبَ الْمُعْتَصِمُ ذَلِكَ فَأَمَرَ بِقَطْعِ يَدِ السَّارِقِ مِنْ مُفْصِلِ أَصُولِ الْأَصَابِعِ دُونَ الْكَفِّ

قَالَ زَرْقَانُ: أَنَّ أَبَا دَاوُدَ قَالَ صَرْتُ إِلَى الْمُعْتَصِمِ بَعْدَ ثَلَاثَةِ فَقَالَ إِنَّ نَصِيحَةَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيٍّ وَاجِبَةٌ وَأَنَا أَكَلِمُهُ بِمَا أَعْلَمُ أَنِّي أُدْخِلُ بِهِ النَّارَ قُلْتُ لَهُ: إِذَا جَمَعَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي مَجْلِسِهِ فُقَهَاءَ رَعِيَّتِهِ وَعُلَمَاءَهُمْ لِأَمْرِ وَاقِعٍ مِنْ أُمُورِ الدِّينِ فَسَأَلَهُمْ عَنِ الْحُكْمِ فِيهِ فَأَخْبَرُوهُ بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْحُكْمِ فِي ذَلِكَ

وَقَدْ حَضَرَ الْمَجْلِسَ أَهْلُ بَيْتِهِ قَوَادُهُ وَوَزَرَائِهِ وَعَتَابَتُهُ وَقَدْ تَسَامَعَ النَّاسُ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ بَابِهِ ثُمَّ تَرَكَ أَقَاوِيلَهُمْ كُلَّهُمْ لِقَوْلِ رَجُلٍ يَقُولُ شَطْرَ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ بِإِمَامَتِهِ وَيَدْعُونَ أَنَّهُ أَوْلَى مِنْهُ بِمَقَامِهِ ثُمَّ يَحْكُمُ بِحُكْمِهِ دُونَ حُكْمِ الْفُقَهَاءِ قَالَ: فَتَغَيَّرَ لَوْنُهُ وَأَنْتَبَهَ لِمَا أَنْتَبَهْتُ لَهُ وَقَالَ جَزَاكَ اللَّهُ عَنِ نَصِيحَتِكَ خَيْرًا.⁴⁰

“A thief confessed to his crime and requested purification through punishment. The caliph assembled the jurists and scholars, and among them was Muḥammad ibn Ali (al-Jawād) (‘as). The question was posed: ‘What is the ruling on cutting off the thief’s hand and where should the cut be made?’ Some said it should be cut from the wrist, citing the verse on ritual purification: ‘*And wipe your faces and your hands (to the elbows).*’ Others argued that it should be cut from the elbow, citing the verse: ‘*And your hands to the elbows.*’

Then the caliph turned to Muḥammad ibn Ali (‘as) and asked: ‘What do you say, O Abū Ja‘far?’ The Imam replied: ‘The people have spoken their opinions, O Commander of the Faithful.’ The Caliph said: ‘Forget about what they said, what do you think?’ The Imam

³⁹ Sūrah al-Jinn, Verse 18.

⁴⁰ al-‘Ayyāshī, *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī*, vol. 1, p. 319; al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 50, p. 5; al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, vol. 18, p. 490.

(‘as) replied: ‘Excuse me from answering, O Commander of the Faithful.’ The Caliph insisted: ‘I swear by Allah; you must inform me of what you have.’ The Imam (‘as) responded: ‘If you command me by Allah, I will say: They have erred in following the Sunnah. The hand should be cut from the fingers, leaving the palm intact.’

“The caliph asked: ‘Why so?’ The Imam (‘as) said: ‘Because the Messenger of Allah (ṣawa) said: ‘Prostration is upon seven parts: the face, the hands, the knees, and the feet.’ If the hand is cut from the wrist or elbow, the palm would be lost, which is part of the prostration. Furthermore, Allah said: *‘And that the places of prostration are for Allah, so do not invoke anyone beside God.’* Hence, the palm should not be cut, as it is Allah’s.’

“al-Mu‘taṣim admired the answer and ordered the thief’s hand to be cut at the fingers, preserving the palm. Zarqān later reported that Abū Dāwūd told him: ‘I went to al-Mu‘taṣim three days later and warned him: ‘You have assembled the scholars and jurists of your state and asked them for a ruling. Then you disregarded all their opinions and followed the judgment of a man whom half of the people regard as their Imam. They believe he is more deserving of your position. You have thereby legitimized his authority before them.’ The caliph took this warning seriously and thanked him for the advice.”

The Life of Imam al-Jawād (‘as)

We will discuss the life of Imam al-Jawād (‘as) through two key aspects of his noble earthly existence. Our approach will be modern and analytical, free from unnecessary complexity, and in line with contemporary discourse.

The two focal points are:

1. The *Imāmah* of al-Jawād (‘as) in the earthly existence.
2. His political life.

First: The *Imāmah* of al-Jawād (‘as) in the Earthly Existence

The Existence of Human Beings on Earth

There are several distinctive features that define the *Imāmah* of Imam al-Jawād (‘as). One of the most remarkable of these features as we mentioned is his young age. Despite being of tender years, it was an undeniable divine challenge—an embodiment of God’s supreme power that transcends human capability, similar to what is known about Prophet ‘Īsā (‘as).

One of the most certain matters emphasized by divine revelation in the Holy Quran is that the divine will is not limited by age or human expectations. Just as God appointed ‘Īsā as a prophet in his infancy, the *Imāmah* of al-Jawād (‘as) serves as a testament to divine wisdom that knows no bounds.

In the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), it is affirmed that the age of a human being is not limited to the earthly lifespan alone. Rather, according to the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), the Quran indicates that human existence is ancient and transcendent, existing in other realms before appearing in this worldly form.

It is a mistake to assume that earthly existence marks the beginning of human existence. Unfortunately, this misconception has been adopted by some philosophers and certain mystics, despite the clear guidance of divine revelation. Revelation tells us that human existence preceded earthly life, emerging from earlier realms and epochs. The human position within those previous worlds was significant and influential in shaping our earthly existence today.

Modern science, through DNA research and genetic engineering, has revealed that human origins trace back to Prophet Ādam (‘as). The fundamental elements of human life were already present in his lineage, even before the womb that eventually bore us. Our existence didn’t just begin with our immediate fathers and

mothers. Instead, every human being has been present as a living entity since the time of Ādam (‘as).

This means that the entire blueprint of human life—including physical traits, lifespan, and characteristics—is encoded within our genetic structure. Even though science is only now uncovering these truths, divine revelation already contained far greater insights. Modern discoveries are gradually confirming what revelation had already established centuries ago.

The *Imāmah* of Imam al-Jawād (‘as) and His Youthful Age

One of the key meanings of divine selection (*iṣṭifa’*) is that it serves as a reward given to human beings based on the results of their previous trials and tests (in previous realms). It’s as if God rewards them by choosing them for a noble purpose because of what He already knows about their future deeds. In this sense, divine selection is not just about favouring someone, but about preparing them for a role that matches what God knows they will accomplish in the future. God knows ahead of time how a person’s life will unfold—whether they will do good or evil. Therefore, He sets up an environment that matches their future actions and qualities. This concept resembles what we see today in modern educational institutions, where guardians and mentors anticipate and nurture the latent potential within students, even though they may not fully understand its nature or the outcomes it will produce. They create an environment tailored to each individual’s abilities, ensuring that their growth aligns with their potential. Otherwise, neglecting this responsibility would be an act of injustice—a failure to provide the necessary care and guidance.

Understanding this, if we want to study and understand the character of al-Jawād (‘as) as an example of the divinely chosen ones, we cannot limit our examination to the period between his eighth and twenty-third years of life. These years represent just one phase of his existence, and they do not encompass his entire role or identity.

As the Almighty says:

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُن شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا.

“Has there not been over man a period of time when he (man) was not a thing even mentioned?”⁴¹

This means that there was a time when he was not even mentioned—when he was nothing. Then, he became something mentioned, followed by creation, formation, and ultimately, the detailed configuration, as stated:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ

“He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms.”⁴²

Human life goes through many stages and passes through different worlds, with each stage being a distinct phase of existence. The Quran contains many verses that talk about the different levels of creation and the elevated dimensions of existence. One example is the verse:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ

“God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His Light is like a niche in which there is a lamp [and] the lamp is placed in [a clear] glass which shines like a star.”⁴³

Another example is the verse:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

⁴¹ Sūrah al-Insān, Verse 1.

⁴² Sūrah al-Ḥashr, Verse 24.

⁴³ Sūrah al-Nūr, Verse 35.

“And He taught Adam the names—all of them. Then He presented them to the angels and said, Inform Me of the names of these if you are truthful.”⁴⁴

The word “*these*” here points to living, conscious beings—intelligent entities with awareness and perception. It shows that there are living, thinking beings in the spiritual realms that existed even before human beings were physically present.

The Quran shares these profound truths in many chapters, and the teachings of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) elaborate on them in great detail. Unfortunately, many interpreters have merely glossed over these verses without giving them their due attention. One might wonder why the Quran places so much emphasis on these concepts—on light and names.

The reason is that God wants to convey to humanity that not all calculations, deductions, and systems are confined to just one segment of creation—specifically, the earthly and worldly existence. The divine wisdom and the comprehensive order of creation extend far beyond what is merely visible in the physical world.

When Does the Role of Imam al Jawād (‘as) Begin?

The role of al-Jawād (‘as) was not limited to the fifteen years of his life that marked his period of *Imāmah*. Rather, his *Imāmah* serves as a pivotal and divinely chosen moment that intersects with numerous previous and future worlds yet to come. It is essential to understand that *Raj‘ah* (the return) is distinct from *Qiyāmah* (The Resurrection/The Day of Judgment), as is well known.⁴⁵ Right now,

⁴⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 31.

⁴⁵ The *Raj‘ah* in Twelver Shi’a theology refers to: The return of a group of believers and disbelievers to life in this world after death, but before the Day of Judgment, in order to establish divine justice visibly on earth. According to narrations: the A’immah of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) will return, along with a group of devout believers and notorious disbelievers (such as the killers and oppressors of the A’immah), so that God’s vengeance is made manifest.

we are focusing on his role in the first earthly existence, but there are other realms where his influence was and will be crucial.

In the Holy Quran, we find a profound statement from Allah:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

“And when your Lord said to the angels, Indeed, I will make upon the earth a vicegerent.”⁴⁶

This statement clarifies that the vicegerent, to whom the angels prostrated, was not merely an earthly necessity. His leadership and guidance are not limited to human, plant, animal, aerial, mineral, or environmental spheres. Rather, it is also an angelic necessity. Even the angels require a guide, a commander, and a regulator of their affairs.

Without such leadership, their system would collapse, despite the fact that all angels are inherently complete and infallible:

لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

“They do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and they do as they are commanded.”⁴⁷

However, even with their completeness, Allah has stated:

فَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ

“Above every possessor of knowledge is one more knowledgeable.”⁴⁸

Perfection has levels, and those with great knowledge in the angelic hierarchy still need support from a higher source. Without it, confusion and disorder could arise. This principle leads to the core of *Tawhīd* (monotheism) and the understanding that all creatures are inherently dependent and in need of divine guidance.

⁴⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 30.

⁴⁷ Sūrah al-Taḥrīm, Verse 6.

⁴⁸ Sūrah Yūsuf, Verse 76.

Between the ranks of perfected beings and the infinite essence of God, there are intermediaries—chief among them being the Imam and the vicegerent, to whom even the angels bowed.

The necessity of a divine vicegerent within the system of angels is evident, as shown in Sūrah al-Baqarah and six other chapters of the Quran. It's important to note that this concept is not rooted in the earthly context but existed before the earth and will continue beyond it. These angels are present in every realm of existence and in heaven and hell:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe: they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, but do what they are commanded.”⁴⁹

These grand concepts are not just connected to the people of the earth but to all realms of existence— both before and after the earthly creation. The Quranic vision makes it clear that the Imam is the central axis around which all these realities revolve. His leadership isn't limited to humans or jinn or even to the natural world—it's a fundamental, universal necessity that encompasses countless beings, worlds, and creations.

If the Quran illustrates the significance and necessity of Allah's vicegerent in such a profound way, and if Imam al-Jawād ('as) is one of the successors explicitly mentioned in the Quran, it would be a mistake to view his life solely through the lens of his presence on this earth—ranging from eight to twenty-three years. Yet even within that brief span, his life represents a miraculous and unparalleled era.

⁴⁹ Sūrah al-Tahrim, Verse 6.

The Number of Months and the Righteous Religion:

The Sky and the Earth's Constellations

The Almighty says:

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا
الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَأَفْئَةٍ كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَأَفْئَةٍ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

“Indeed, the number of months through Allah’s will is twelve [lunar] months in the book of Allah from the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these months, four are sacred. That is the correct religion, so do not wrong yourselves during them. And fight against the polytheists collectively as they fight against you collectively. And know that Allah is with the righteous.”⁵⁰

If we carefully examine this noble verse, we notice a profound connection between the heavens and the earthly constellations. Our earthly sky—nothing but a mere drop in the vast ocean of the first heaven—has its twelve divisions just as the seventh heaven and those below it. The verse discusses and conveys a clear link between the number of months and the true religion. But what is the secret behind this connection and what is its reason?

The answer is clear: The months are not merely referring to the constellations of celestial stars, but rather to the successors appointed by Allah—those around whom revolve the ages of existence and the timelines of differing realms. Allah has established vicegerents and successors, before whom every inhabitant of the heavens and the earth—including His angels—prostrate.

Knowing this, it would be wrong to limit the role of Imam al-Jawād (‘as) to just an earthly existence. His noble presence goes far beyond the physical world, and even though his earthly life and age are tied to his human form, his influence transcends his physical

⁵⁰ Sūrah al-Tawbah, Verse 36.

existence and human understanding. No one can deny this truth or dismiss its significance.

He presided over the affairs of a faction among the Muslims—so great that even the Abbasid authority of the time was in awe. The Abbasid Empire was the largest on earth, but despite the internal conflicts that could have shattered or weakened this community—politically, intellectually, scientifically, and spiritually—his leadership remained steady and unbroken. We witness him, peace be upon him, holding firmly the reins of intellectual guidance for the Muslims.

While the Imam (‘as) was bearing this great responsibility, scholarly conferences were convened by the Abbasid state during his time to challenge him, just as they were during the era of his father, Imam al-Riḍā (‘as). Yet, despite the relentless attempts, no intellectual challenge or controversy managed to rival the profound depth of his scholarly and religious standing. The intellectual and theological prowess of Imam al-Jawād (‘as) remained unchallenged, towering high above any doubt or ambiguity.

Second: The Political Life of Imam al-Jawād (‘as)

Before delving into this topic, it is essential to establish a foundational premise upon which our discussion will be built.

Understanding History and Civilizational Mechanisms

The historical events that took place in the lives of the prophets—especially the Master of the Prophets (ṣawa) and his successors (‘ams)—can be understood in increasingly deeper layers. There is no final limit to how much we can uncover, though we may never grasp the full extent of their complexities. However, we can gradually gain a richer and more nuanced understanding over time.

From this perspective, it becomes crucial to interpret events within the context of the time in which they occurred. A person is

naturally more connected to their own era, its culture, and its environment than to a distant past. The language, customs, and way of thinking of one's own time shape how one perceives the world more than those of previous generations. A person interacts with and absorbs their present time more than any other because it is a living, dynamic, and immediate reality.

Moreover, the contemporary cultural language that people engage with is one they find familiar, grasp intuitively, and relate to more deeply than the cultural language of preceding historical periods. It is evident that “culture” is a vast domain encompassing all aspects of daily life. While we may understand the language and traditions of earlier eras in a general sense, they often feel distant and theoretical rather than something we can fully experience.

Thus, this constitutes a universal principle—whether we refer to it as a guideline in historical analysis, a mechanism of civilizational evolution across generations for reading history, a principle in the field of sociology, or any other scholarly term. This is a well-established concept recognized in sociology, linguistics, political science, the study of civilizations, and historical analysis. It is self-evident people naturally relate more to events that happen in their own time or to cultures that feel familiar, even if the same event occurred in different places or periods.

A narration from Abū Hāshim al-Jaʿfarī⁵¹ states:

**فَعَنْ أَبِي هَاشِمٍ الْجَعْفَرِيِّ قَالَ: كُنْتُ بِالْمَدِينَةِ حَتَّى مَرَّ بِهَا بَغَا أَيَّامَ الْوَأَثِقِ فِي
طَلَبِ الْأَعْرَابِ.**

⁵¹ Dāwūd ibn Qāsim ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Tālib, Abū Hāshim al-Jaʿfarī—he was esteemed by the Aʿimmah (ʿams) and considered reliable—*Rijāl al-Najjāshī* pg. 156. Shaykh al-Najjāshī says “He is from Baghdad, honourable, highly respected by the Aʿimmah (ʿams) and he has witnessed several of them, from Imam al-Riḍā, al-Jawād, al-Hādī, al-ʿAskarī and Ṣāhib al-Amr (ʿams). He has narrated traditions from them all—*Muʿjam Rijāl al-Aḥādīth* Vol 7 pg. 117.

فقال أبو الحسن — الإمام علي الهادي عليه السلام: أخرجوا بنا حتى ننظر إلى تعبيّة هذا التركي فخرجنا فوقفنا فمرت بنا تعبيّة، فمرّ بنا تركي فكلّمه أبو الحسن بالتركية، فنزل عن فرسه فقبل حافر دابته،

قال فحلّفت التركي وقلت له ما قال لك الرجل؟!

قال: هذا نبيّ؟

قلت ليس هذا نبيّ.

قال دعاني باسم سمّيت به في صغري في بلاد التركية ما علمه أحد إلا الساعة.⁵²

“I was in Madinah during the reign of al-Wāthiq. Abū al-Ḥasan—Imam Ali al-Hādī (‘as) said:

‘Let us go out and observe the deployment of this Turk.’ We went out and stood watching as the troops passed by in formation. A Turk passed by us, and the Imam (‘as) spoke to him in Turkish. The man immediately dismounted from his horse and kissed the hoof of the Imam (‘as)’s steed. I swore to the Turk and asked him, ‘What did the man say to you?!’ He replied, ‘Is this man a prophet?’ I said, ‘No, he is not a prophet.’ The Turk then said, ‘He called me by a name that I was given in my childhood in the land of the Turks—a name that no one has known until this very moment.’”

Ali ibn Mahziyār narrates:

وَعَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مَهْزِيَّارٍ قَالَ: أُرْسِلْتُ إِلَى أَبِي الْحَسَنِ غُلَامِي وَكَانَ سَقْلًا بَيًّا، فَرَجَعَ الْغُلَامُ إِلَيَّ مُتَعَجِّبًا

فَقُلْتُ: مَا لَكَ يَا بُنَيَّ

قَالَ: كَيْفَ لَا أَعْجَبُ؟ مَا زَالَ يُكَلِّمُنِي بِالسَّقْلَانِيَّةِ كَأَنَّهُ وَاحِدٌ مِنَّا! فَظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ إِنَّمَا دَارَ بَيْنَهُمْ⁵³

⁵² al-Ṭabṣārī, I‘lām al-Warā, p. 343.

⁵³ al-Ṣaffār, Baṣā‘ir al-Darajāt, vol. 2, p. 135.

“I sent my servant—a Slav (with Slavic origin)—to Abū al-Ḥasan. When my servant returned, he was astonished. I asked him, ‘What is the matter?’ He said, ‘How could I not be astonished? He spoke to me in Slavic (*Siqlābiyyah*) as if he were one of us!’ I assumed that he had lived among them.”

Another narration states that Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (‘as) once spoke five different languages in a single gathering.⁵⁴

Through these narrations, we observe how the Imam (‘as) engaged with people.

Sometimes, even within the same city, linguistic variations exist between neighbourhoods and even households—let alone between countries and continents. Speech inflections within a specific relationship can profoundly impact an individual’s emotions, sentiments, and interactions more than other factors. If such linguistic and cultural variations exist within the contemporary world, how much greater must they have been across centuries or between different nations and religious traditions?

For example, if one seeks to study the history of Christianity, Judaism, or Buddhism, one must employ multiple analytical tools to truly grasp their histories with a sense of emotional and intellectual depth—tools such as understanding their languages, religious customs, cultural frameworks, historical contexts, and so on.

This is neither a new nor unfamiliar concept, but highlighting it is crucial for benefiting from it in studying the lives and biographies of the A’immah (‘ams).

The A’immah (‘ams) and the Politics of the Abbasid Authority

At the time of the Abbasid rule, the Islamic state was among the greatest nations on the face of the Earth and its most powerful.

⁵⁴ al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt*, vol. 2, p. 134.

Yet, despite its grandeur and Islamic identity, the authority could not bear or allow the A'imma of Ahl al-Bayt ('ams) their independence and position within the body of society and the Islamic nation—starting from the era of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far ('as).

This phenomenon was not exclusive to the Abbasid authority; it had also been present during the Umayyad rule, which followed the same oppressive and hostile political approach toward our A'imma ('ams) with aggression and bitterness. Imam al-Bāqir ('as) was summoned multiple times, and both he and his son al-Ṣādiq ('as) were arrested and taken from Madinah to Syria.⁵⁵

The Arrest of Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq ('ams)

If we observe how the arrest of Imam al-Bāqir and his son Imam al-Ṣādiq ('ams) was carried out, we see that it was executed by a special military unit under the Umayyad regime. This unit came from Shām to Madinah, under tight surveillance and heavy security. Upon their arrival, they (the A'imma ('ams)) were interrogated in the presence of the head of state, inside the presidential palace, and in front of all the ministers, security commanders, and international delegations including ambassadors and others.

This arrest took place due to a political sermon delivered by Imam al-Ṣādiq ('as) during the *Hajj* season, under the guidance of his father, Imam al-Bāqir ('as). At the time, Imam al-Bāqir ('as) was under the rule of a tyrannical Umayyad authority that controlled the largest and most oppressive empire. Despite being under surveillance and scrutiny, he instructed Imam al-Ṣādiq ('as) to deliver a doctrinal-political sermon in which he affirmed that the legitimacy of the Islamic system belonged solely to the Ahl al-Bayt ('ams). This was during the *Hajj*, a season where all sects from across the world gather,

⁵⁵ al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 46, p. 264; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *al-Manāqib Āl Abī Tālib*, vol. 3, p. 322.

and he had no military or security escorts to protect him from the violent grip of the brutal Umayyad regime.

‘Umārah ibn Zayd al-Wāqidi said:

فَعَنْ عِمَارَةَ بْنِ زَيْدٍ الْوَاقِدِيِّ قَالَ: حَجَّ هِشَامُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ بْنِ مَرْوَانَ سَنَةً مِنَ السِّنِينَ، وَكَانَ قَدْ حَجَّ فِي تِلْكَ السَّنَةِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ الْبَاقِرُ، وَابْنُهُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ، فَقَالَ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ فِي بَعْضِ كَلَامِهِ: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا بِالْحَقِّ نَبِيًّا وَأَكْرَمَنَا بِهِ، فَتَحْنُ صِفْوَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ، وَخِيَارُهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ، فَالْسَّعِيدُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَنَا، وَالشَّقِيُّ مَنْ عَادَانَا وَخَالَفَنَا، وَمَنْ النَّاسُ مَنْ يَقُولُ إِنَّهُ يَتَوَلَّانَا وَهُوَ يُوَالِي أَعْدَاءَنَا، وَمَنْ يُلِيهِمْ مِنْ جُلَسَائِهِمْ وَأَصْحَابِهِمْ أَعْدَاؤُنَا، فَهُوَ لَمْ يَسْمَعْ كَلَامَ رَبِّنَا وَلَمْ يَعْمَلْ بِهِ

قَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: فَأَخْبَرَ مُسَيْلِمَةَ بْنَ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ أَخَاهُ بِمَا سَمِعَ، فَلَمْ يُعْرِضْ لَنَا حَتَّى انصَرَفَ إِلَى دِمَشْقَ، وَانصَرَفْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ، فَأَنْقَذَ بَرِيدًا إِلَى عَامِلِ الْمَدِينَةِ بِأَشْخَاصِ أَبِي وَأَشْخَاصِي مَعَهُ، فَأَشْخَصْنَا إِلَيْهِ، فَلَمَّا وَرَدْنَا دِمَشْقَ حَجَبْنَا ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ أَذِنَ لَنَا فِي الْيَوْمِ الرَّابِعِ، فَدَخَلْنَا وَإِذَا هُوَ قَاعِدٌ عَلَى سَرِيرِ الْمَلِكِ وَجُنُودُهُ وَخَاصَّتُهُ وَقُوفٌ عَلَى أَرْجُلِهِمْ سُمَاطِينَ مُتَسَلِّحِينَ، وَقَدْ نَصَبَ الْبَرْجَاسَ حِذَاهُ وَأَشْيَاخَ قَوْمِهِ يُرْمُونَ

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“Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān performed the *Hajj* one year, and in that same year, Muḥammad ibn Ali al-Bāqir and his son Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad (‘ams) also performed *Hajj*. Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad said in one of his addresses: ‘Praise be to Allah who sent Muḥammad with the truth as a Prophet and honoured us through him. We are the chosen ones of Allah among His creation and His elite among His servants. The fortunate is the one who follows us, and the miserable is the one who opposes and contradicts us. Some people claim to follow us, while in reality they align themselves with our enemies. Whoever befriends our enemies and sits alongside them is

⁵⁶ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 471, ḥadīth no. 5; al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 69, p. 181; al-Ṭabarī, *Dalā’il al-Imāmah* by, p. 103

indeed our enemy. Such a person has neither listened to the words of our Lord nor acted upon them.’

“Abū ‘Abdillāh Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad (‘as) said:
‘Musaylamah (ibn ‘Abd al-Malik) informed his brother of what he heard. He did not confront us (the A‘immah (‘ams)) until he returned to Damascus, and we returned to Madinah. Then, he dispatched a courier to the governor of Madinah, ordering the arrest of my father and myself. We were brought to him, and when we arrived in Damascus, we were held for three days. On the fourth day we came to him, we found him seated on his royal throne, with his guards and elite standing on either side, armed and lined up in two rows. The archery target was set up in front of him, and the elders of his tribe were practicing archery...”

Such was the fear that the greatest Islamic state harboured toward the two Imams, Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘ams). Their stance demonstrated a delicate political balance—they were not publicly aligned with the ruling regime in a way that would obscure the path of the truth from the awareness of the Muslim nation. Despite all this, the head of that regime could not find any justification for their arrest and was thus compelled to release them and return them safely to Madinah.

Yet, out of spite and intense hostility toward the family of Muḥammad (ṣawa), he issued orders to the governors of the cities through which the caravan of the two A‘immah (‘ams) would pass, instructing the local populations to shut down their markets and refrain from any dealings with the two A‘immah (‘ams).

From Abū Bakr al-Ḥaḍramī:

فَعَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الْحَضْرَمِيِّ قَالَ: لَمَّا حُمِلَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ إِلَى الشَّامِ إِلَى هِشَامِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ، وَصَارَ بِبَابِهِ،

قَالَ هِشَامٌ لِأَصْحَابِهِ: إِذَا سَكَتَ مِنْ تُوْبِيخِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ فَلْتُوْبِخُوهُ. ثُمَّ أَمَرَ أَنْ يُودَّنَ لَهُ، فَلَمَّا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ قَالَ بِبَيْدِهِ السَّلَامَ عَلَيْكُمْ، فَلَمْ يَفْهَمْهُمْ

بِالسَّلَامِ جَمِيعًا، ثُمَّ جَلَسَ، فَأَزَادَ هِشَامٌ عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا بِتَرْكِهِ السَّلَامَ بِالْخِلَافَةِ،
وَجَلُوسِهِ بِغَيْرِ إِذْنٍ،

فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ لَا يَزَالُ لِرَجُلٍ مِنْكُمْ قَدْ شَقَّ عَصَا الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَدَعَا إِلَى
نَفْسِهِ، وَزَعَمَ أَنَّهُ الْإِمَامُ سَفْهًا وَقِلَّةَ عِلْمٍ، وَجَعَلَ يُوبِخُهُ.

فَلَمَّا سَكَتَ أَقْبَلَ الْقَوْمُ عَلَيْهِ رَجُلًا بَعْدَ رَجُلٍ يُوبِخُهُ، فَلَمَّا سَكَتَ الْقَوْمُ نَهَضَ
قَائِمًا ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ؟ وَأَيْنَ يُرَادُ بِكُمْ؟ بِمَنِ اهْدَاهُ اللَّهُ أَوْلَكُمْ،
وَبِمَا يُخْتَمُ آخِرُكُمْ، فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ مَلَكٌ مُعْجَلٌ فَإِنَّ لَنَا مَلَكًا مُوَجَّلًا، وَلَيْسَ بَعْدَ
مَلَكِنَا مَلَكٌ، لَأَنَا أَهْلُ الْعَاقِبَةِ، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: **(وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ)**. فَأَمَرَ بِهِ
إِلَى الْحَبْسِ، فَلَمَّا صَارَ فِي الْحَبْسِ تَكَلَّمَ، فَلَمْ يَبْقَ فِي الْحَبْسِ رَجُلٌ إِلَّا رَشَقَهُ
وَحَنَّ عَلَيْهِ. فَجَاءَ صَاحِبُ الْحَبْسِ إِلَى هِشَامٍ، وَأَخْبَرَهُ بِخَبْرِهِ، فَأَمَرَ بِهِ فَحُمِلَ
عَلَى الْبَرِيدِ هُوَ وَأَصْحَابُهُ لِيُرْتَدُّوا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ، وَأَمَرَ أَلَّا تُخْرَجَ لَهُمُ الْأَسْوَاقُ،
وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الطَّعَامِ وَالشَّرَابِ، فَصَارُوا ثَلَاثَةً لَا يَجِدُونَ طَعَامًا وَلَا
شَرَابًا، حَتَّى انْتَهَوْا إِلَى مَدِينَةٍ فَأَغْلَقُوا بَابَ الْمَدِينَةِ دُونَهُمْ، فَشَكَتْ أَصْحَابُهُ
الْعَطَشَ وَالْجُوعَ، فَقَالَ: فَصَدِّ جَبَلًا وَأَشْرَفْ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَقَالَ بِأَعْلَى صَوْتِهِ: يَا
أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا! أَنَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ: **(بَقِيَّةُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ**
مُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ).

قَالَ: وَكَانَ فِيهِمْ شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ فَأَتَاهُمْ فَقَالَ: يَا قَوْمَ هَذِهِ، وَاللَّهِ، دَعْوَةُ شُعَيْبٍ عَلَيْهِ
السَّلَامُ، وَاللَّهِ لَنْ لَمْ تُخْرَجُوا إِلَى هَذَا الرَّجُلِ بِالْأَسْوَاقِ لَتُؤَخَذَنَّ مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ
تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ فَصَدَّقُونِي هَذِهِ الْمَرَّةَ وَأَطِيعُونِي وَكَدِّبُونِي فِيمَا تَسْتَأْنِفُونَ، فَإِنِّي
نَاصِحٌ لَكُمْ. قَالَ فَبَادَرُوا وَأَخْرَجُوا إِلَى أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الْأَسْوَاقَ.⁵⁷

“When Abū Ja‘far was taken to Shām (Syria) to Hishām ibn ‘Abd al-Malik and reached his gate, Hishām said to his companions that once he finishes rebuking Muḥammad ibn Ali, then rebuke him yourselves.’ He then gave permission for him to enter. When Abū Ja‘far entered, he greeted everyone with a single general greeting,

⁵⁷ al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 46, p. 264; Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *al-Manāqib Āl Abī Tālib*, vol. 3, p. 322.

including Hishām, and sat down. Hishām’s anger increased because he did not give the greeting specific to the caliphate and because he sat without permission.

“Hishām said: ‘O Muḥammad ibn Ali, there is always someone among you who splits the unity of Muslims, you call people to himself and claim to be the Imam out of ignorance and foolishness.’ He went on to reproach him. Then the people each began to scold him, one after the other. When they finished, he (Imam al-Bāqir (‘as)) stood and said: ‘O people! Where are you headed? And what are you being led toward? Through us, Allah began your guidance, and through us, He will seal it. For if you have a temporary kingdom now, we have a promised one—and after our kingdom, there will be no other, for Allah says: *‘the pleasant destination is for the pious ones.’*”

“He was then ordered into imprisonment. But once he was in prison, he began to speak, and there was not a single man in that prison who was not moved by him or softened toward him. The prison warden went to Hishām and informed him of what had happened. Hishām then sent a courier ordering that he (the Imam (‘as)) and his companions be returned to Madinah. He also ordered that no markets be opened to them, and that they be cut off from food and drink.

“They travelled for three days without finding food or water, until they reached the town of Madyan, whose gates were shut in their faces. His companions complained of thirst and hunger. So, he climbed a mountain and looked down and called out at the top of his voice: ‘O people of this town, whose residents are oppressors! I am the remnant of Allah, and Allah says: *‘The remnant of Allah is greater for you if you are believers, and I am not a guardian over you.’*”

“There was an elderly man among them who came and said: ‘O my people! By God, this is the call of Prophet Shu‘ayb (‘as). I swear, if you do not go out and open your markets for this man, punishment will strike you from above and below.’ He continued: ‘Believe me this time and you can reject me in future instances for I

am sincerely advising you.' So, the people rushed out and opened their markets for Abū Ja'far and his companions."

This second narration also shows that Imam al-Bāqir (‘as) did not back down nor compromise on affirming that legitimate leadership belongs to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams)—even when standing in the palace of the Umayyad power. Then, his refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Umayyad ruler, his disregard for him, and his lack of fear of the oppressive brutality of the Umayyad gang still showed his daring to make this declaration. He was imprisoned for it, yet his presence in prison had an undeniable impact on the inmates. All of this reveals the true path of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), and how much the regime feared their influence and survival. It also reflects the nature of the political path taken by Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘ams), and how they dealt with the Umayyad rulers, while never resorting to open warfare against them.

Imam al-Jawād (‘as) and al-Ma’mūn al-‘Abbāsī

Surveillance intensified on the rest of the A’immah from the lineage of Imam Mūsā ibn Ja’far (‘ams). He himself was arrested, interrogated, and imprisoned multiple times which added up to nearly 14 years of imprisonment. Then the security surveillance and restrictions grew more severe for Imam al-Riḍā (‘as).

After the arrival of al-Ma’mūn (the treacherous Abbasid) to power, he dispatched a military unit to arrest Imam al-Riḍā (‘as) and take him from Madinah to Khurāsān. He ordered them not to take the route through Kūfah and Qum, but rather through Ahwāz, because he knew that the Imam (‘as)’s Shia were abundantly present in those cities.⁵⁸ And he (‘as) remained under house arrest until the day of his martyrdom, may God’s blessings be upon him.

As for Imam al-Jawād (‘as), Ma’mūn was not content with arresting and imprisoning him in Baghdad, but placed him under

⁵⁸ al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 49, p. 117.

house arrest in the very same presidential palace, and even married him to his daughter—which meant that one of his spies had to be stationed right within the residence of Imam al-Jawād (‘as).

So, notice: a young man in the prime of his youth, taking on the responsibilities of divine leadership, surrounded by one of the most powerful intelligence, police, military, and security states. He was under siege inside the palace, with surveillance reaching even his bedroom, and a spy watching his every move.

So how could such an Imam grow, prepare himself, and become capable of leading a nation and guiding the people while still so young—especially with such an intense security apparatus constantly mobilized and watching over him?

The Immense Leadership in Governance Despite Young Age

Imam al-Jawād (‘as) took on this divine trust and leadership while he was in his eighth or tenth year of age, facing all the same suffocating challenges and hardships that his forefathers had endured—yet they descended upon him with even greater intensity.

If we observe—for example—Amīr al-Mu’minīn Imam Ali (‘as): he was in his home when they stormed in. A group of his companions and sincere followers were with him. Yes, what happened to him was a great calamity and a military coup against the divine succession, which the Quran foretold and reported. No one can undermine and reject this tragedy. But he had his supporters and his children, and by his side stood Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ (sa), the daughter of the Prophet (ṣawa), who demanded his right (caliphate and successorship). She represented prophethood itself, as she was the Prophet’s only daughter. He was also not under house arrest.

The same is true of Imam al-Ḥasan and Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘ams), and likewise of Imam al-Sajjād, Imam al-Bāqir, and Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘ams). But in terms of the mechanisms of pressure employed

by the supreme state, what Imam al-Jawād (‘as) endured was more intense than what Imam al-Riḍā (‘as) faced—and what Imam al-Riḍā (‘as) faced was more intense than what Imam Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (‘as) experienced.

When we come to Imam al-Jawād (‘as), we find him inheriting the legacy, responsibilities, and accomplishments of his forefathers. Yet at the same time, he was the one personally responsible—God’s appointed trustee—tasked with managing and preserving all of those achievements under intense security conditions and tight surveillance, while he was still in his young age, blessings of Allah be upon him.

This, in truth, is a massive challenge, managing and solving the tensions and problems of both the earth and the skies while being under house arrest and harsh monitoring. Even within his own home, through his wife Umm al-Faḍl, the daughter of al-Ma’mūn (the treacherous Abbasid) he was being watched. This marriage had been orchestrated for purposes of security control, political manipulation, and dominance, with the aim of completely surrounding and tightly gripping the movements of the opposing party in preparation for confrontation.

That is why Imam al-Jawād (‘as) had to possess extraordinary strategic awareness and security insight—enough to deal with all these pressures, conflicts, and tensions, while leading the Islamic nation. Doing so required access to secure networks, information systems, financial tools, and administrative structures.

We cannot simply say all of this happened miraculously. Yes, Allah (swt) has the power to complete these tasks miraculously without any hardship—but God has willed that things unfold through their natural causes (without supernatural intervention).

Imam al-Jawād (‘as) Challenges the Iron Grip of Abbasid Power

The Leadership of al-Jawād (‘as): A Divine Force

It is clear that the leadership of Muslims was never truly in the hands of those so-called caliphs who spent their lives in corruption, indulgence, and immoral pleasures. If it weren’t for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) holding the reins behind the scenes—not just of the Muslim community but of humanity at large, generation after generation—things would have fallen into chaos long ago.

This is exactly what the Prophet (ṣawa) meant when he said:

الخلفاء (أو الأمراء) بعدي اثني عشر لا يزال أمر المسلمين أو أمر الناس أو
أمر الدين بخير ما بقوا⁵⁹

“The caliphs (or rulers) after me will be twelve. As long as they remain, the affairs of the people, the Muslims, and the religion will be in good order.”

Without that guidance, confusion, disorder, and collapse would have spread through the world.

So, what were the systems? What were the structures in place—spiritually, politically, economically, and in terms of security and education—that Imam al-Jawād (‘as) established, enabling him to regulate the affairs of the Islamic nation? How did he do so in a way that ensured this movement would last and spread across the far corners of the earth without disruption?

This is a form of divine challenge—a clear and manifest divine proof: that this young boy, in his physical form, was the central axis around which the grand divine mission revolved, carrying out its greatest tasks with all of their mechanisms and natural means. Yes, the matter of folding the earth (*tayy al-arḍ*) (some form of transportation)

⁵⁹ al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Kitāb al-Imārah*

and the realm of the unseen certainly exists, without a doubt. But the natural causes, natural channels, and the worldly systems of governance—at the highest imaginable levels of planning, coordination, transition, global reach, and integration—were all managed by the A'immaḥ of Ahl al-Bayt ('ams).

And naturally, the more the path and methodology of Ahl al-Bayt ('ams) extended and spread, the more the great world power grew anxious. As their strength steadily increased, the ruling authority responded with greater alertness. This is exactly what we see in the lives of the two A'immaḥ, Imam Ḥasan al-'Askarī and Imam Ali al-Hādī ('ams), where the state of security, readiness and mobilization reached its peak in Sāmarrā'.

The Intellectual Challenge Faced by Imam al-Jawād ('as)

From a knowledge standpoint, Imam al-Jawād ('as) wasn't just a scholar—he was a unifying source of knowledge for the entire Islamic nation. The debates that took place between him and others inside the Abbasid caliphate's palace weren't just about asking and answering questions. These were serious intellectual challenges—meant to test his mind, not just by the state, but by the whole world around him. And the full weight of that test was placed on Imam al-Jawād ('as).

In other words, he was being called upon to validate his claim to the *Imāmah* through real-world action—by offering solutions to the crises and predicaments facing humanity and the Muslim world. The unspoken demand was clear: “You claim to be Imam, a divinely appointed leader? Then give us a treatment, a cure for these crises.”

At the same time, the Abbasid regime saw that the Imam ('as) was highly capable—especially in leading and guiding the Muslim community. And since the A'immaḥ of Ahl al-Bayt ('ams) always carried the burden of helping the *ummah*, and saw that as their duty, they brought Imam al-Riḍā ('as) and placed him under house arrest.

Later, they did the same to Imam al-Jawād (‘as), but with even more intensity.

Their goal was not just to keep him under control. They also wanted to use the strength and influence of this growing opposition—which was expanding across the Islamic world—to help them run the state, since the ruling family (The Abbasids) itself wasn’t competent enough to handle its problems and solve its government’s many issues.

The same thing happened during the time of Imam al-Bāqir (‘as), when the state was hit by a severe financial crisis. This occurred during the Umayyad rule, after the Roman Empire had moved to invalidate Roman currency, which had been widely accepted in economic dealings across the Islamic lands. Imam al-Bāqir (‘as) addressed this crisis by replacing and reforming the currency.

There were many motives behind the Abbasid regime’s decision to place Imam al-Jawād (‘as) under house arrest. Chief among them was fear of his unmatched ability—and at the same time, a desire to exploit that ability. This was an implicit admission that, despite his young age, he was a true manager and capable leader—someone the great empire desperately needed to rely on. They needed to contain him under tight surveillance and house arrest, close to the heart of power. So, peace be upon him the day he was born, the day he was assassinated, and the day he shall be raised again alive.

The Knowledge of Imam al-Jawād (‘as) and Its Influence

This topic branches into many sections and chapters. The subject of the Imam and the concept of *Imāmah* has become one of the central themes in Islamic thought. What makes it so essential is that any discussion about the Imam naturally leads to many other questions.

Among them is the matter of his authority and the pledge of allegiance. And does this authority and allegiance change depending on whether the Imam is physically present and visible, or if he is absent and in occultation?

Does it make a difference whether he takes on a public role in the government, or whether he does not hold any visible political position—like the case of Imam Ali ('as), who did not lead the government for twenty-five years?

There are further questions about the nature of his authority: Is it only a legal, symbolic form of authority? Or is it also an ontological authority (*wilāyah al-takwīniyyah*)?⁶⁰

In any case, exploring the nature and dimensions of this authority depends deeply on understanding the Imam ('as)'s knowledge.

The Reality of the Imam's Authority (*Hujjiyyah*)

Likewise, the discussion on the *hujjiyyah* (authoritativeness) of the Imam ('as): What is the concept that arises from it among those who believe in his *Imāmah*? Or what is the notion that emerges among those who do not believe in his *Imāmah*? What does "*hujjiyyah*" actually mean?

And after establishing and understanding the essence and nature of the bindingness of the Imam's words (the *hujjiyyah* of his words), we then ask: what is the meaning of the Imam's *hujjiyyah*? Is the bindingness of Imam's opinions and rulings similar in form and weight to that of reliable narrators and trustworthy informants? Or is it entirely different from the *hujjiyyah* of trustworthy transmitters among the Muslims—such as Zurārah, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, Salmān al-

⁶⁰ Ontological authority (*Wilāyah al-Takwīniyyah*) means that the Imam does not only have religious or legal authority (like issuing rulings or leading the community), but he also has the God-given ability to influence the natural world—such as performing miracles, healing the sick, knowing hidden truths, or altering events beyond ordinary human capacity.

Fārisī, Abū Dharr, or Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Anṣārī—whose trustworthiness is accepted as exemplary by both schools of thought (Shia and Sunni)?

Is the authority of his rulings (*fatāwā*) and its bindingness of the same kind and weight as the rulings issued by jurists (*fuqahā*) who are not divinely appointed by God? When a jurist (*faqīh*) wishes to issue a ruling, he deliberates, extracts a verdict, and reviews the foundational sources, the general principles and rules available, the exceptions to those principles, and the absolute texts that exist. Any jurist among the Muslim scholars, when intending to derive a ruling and issue a *fatwā*, refers to the Noble Quran, the Prophetic Sunnah, and so on.

He proceeds to work through the stages of investigation (*taḥqīq*), derivation (*istinbāt*), comparison, and synthesis of evidence, bringing together the different proofs. In short, he follows all the steps involved in the process of *ijtihād* and legal deduction (*istinbāt*).

So: can we say that the authority of the Imam’s *fatāwā*, the rulings he clarifies, and the judgments he issues are of the same nature, on the same level, and just as binding as those of the Muslim jurists? Or is the nature of his *ḥukm*—his legal ruling—of a fundamentally different and higher kind?

And if we distinguish between the nature and the bindingness of the Imam’s authoritative word—his statements, rulings, and *fatāwā*—and the *ḥujjiyyah* of narrators and jurists, then is his authority like that of or as binding as Prophetic ruling?

Though the authority of the Prophet (ṣawa)’s words, rulings, or *fatāwā*—peace and blessings be upon him and his family—is grounded in the source of revelatory knowledge (*‘ilm al-waḥy*), and the Imam does not claim that his knowledge is of this kind.

So, the authoritative and binding nature of his words is neither that of the second category (the jurists) nor that of the first (the Prophet)—but rather, a third category altogether.

The Reality of *Imāmah*

In the perception of many Muslims, when we speak of the Imam's knowledge in affirming his *Imāmah*, what is understood by *Imāmah* is nothing more than a political, legal, and symbolic leadership claim—one that does not go beyond that meaning.

What is *Imāmah* in the Books of the Theologians (*Mutakallimīn*)

Imāmah, however, is a religious and worldly leadership aimed at preserving the faith and upholding governance among Muslims.

What becomes evident is that the definition of the status of the Imam, and the bindingness (*hujjiyyah*) of the Imam's opinions and ruling, is deeply affected by— and primarily linked to—the Imam's knowledge (for the Imam's words and opinions would not be binding and authoritative if it were not for their immense and divinely bestowed knowledge).

Thus, here lies another important dimension influenced by the Imam's knowledge: namely, the authority of the Imam's statements, his actions, his legal verdicts (*fatāwā*), and his rulings. Yet, in many cases, our Muslim brethren fail to recognize the true nature of the authority of their statements and instead compare it with the authority of jurists (*fuqahā'*), or the reliable, just narrators.

Another matter that is influenced by the Imam's knowledge is the very definition of *Imāmah* itself (understanding the knowledge of the imam helps us better understand the reality of this position). Hence, this entire discussion (regarding the Imam's knowledge) strikes at the very core of the discourse on *Imāmah*.

Inheritance in *Imāmah*

Yet another subject in the study of *Imāmah* that is also influenced by the Imam's knowledge is: inheritance. Many Muslims may instinctively assume that the inheritance mentioned in

discussions of *Imāmah*, particularly in the Shi‘i tradition, is similar in form and meaning to the tribal and symbolic lineage-based inheritance—a blood-based, genealogical inheritance found in systems of lineage-based rulership, or the common familial successions among human societies.

But the type of inheritance mentioned in the Quran is not meant in that conventional sense.

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُودَ

*“And Solomon inherited from David.”*⁶¹

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ (٣٣) ذُرِّيَّةَ بَعْضُهَا مِن بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*“Indeed, Allah chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of ‘Imrān over all peoples, offspring, some of them from others.”*⁶²

The discussion on inheritance, in any case, is a critical and sensitive subject within the broader study of *Imāmah*—and it is not only connected to, but fundamentally dependent upon, the subject of the Imam’s knowledge.⁶³

The Reality of the Imam’s Infallibility

There is also another topic within the discourse on *Imāmah* that is influenced by the discussion of the Imam’s knowledge: the infallibility of the Imam—his infallibility in both knowledge and action. In fact, his infallibility in knowledge is in essence, the very core of the Imam’s knowledge. And there is no doubt that this intellectual infallibility is also affected by, or at least dependent upon, the Imam’s knowledge. We notice many discussions whose foundation

⁶¹ Sūrah al-Naml, Verse 16.

⁶² Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, Verses 33-34.

⁶³ Because the inheritance mentioned in discussions regarding *Imāmah* by Shias is the inheritance of knowledge from their grandfather Prophet Muḥammad (ṣawa).

lies in the Imam's knowledge—it is the trunk of the tree from which the branches of *Imāmah*-related discussions extend.

Thus, vigilance and careful attention are necessary in examining the chapters, subtopics, and various angles of these discourses—so that we may precisely and accurately define the Imam's knowledge, which we have already established as one of his essential qualities. Only then can we proceed to explore other aspects of *Imāmah*—such as his authority, his infallibility, his inheritance, or any other subject connected to the broader discussion of *Imāmah*.

The core focus, then, is to clearly define the Imam's knowledge. Of course, our current discussion on the Imam's knowledge assumes that we have already completed the proof for the *Imāmah* and for the Imam himself. Once that has been established—whether through rational or textual evidence, whether through pure reason or transmission—and after concluding the analysis of the proofs that lead us to the belief in the *Imāmah* of the A'imma in general, and after affirming their existence and legitimacy only then does the turn come to the investigation of the Imam's knowledge.

According to the natural and logical sequence of inquiry, this subject (the discussion regarding their knowledge) follows directly after the proofs of *Imāmah*—without question. We will also see how our perspective regarding revealed texts and transmitted proofs about the *Imāmah* of the Imams is directly shaped by the topic of the Imam's knowledge.

For example, the well-known *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn*—“the two weighty trusts”—which is narrated by both Sunni and Shia traditions, is a clear and central example. There are many verses in the Quran whose meaning aligns with the message of this ḥadīth, as clarified in the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams). What's more, the chain of transmission for *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn* is not limited to the widely reported (*mutawātir*) narrations found in the major collections of both Sunnis and Shias. In fact, its authority stems from the Quran itself, and its meaning is also rooted in the Quran.

So, regardless of how one approaches it, *Ḥadīth al-Thaqaalayn*—being one of the most important proofs for the *Imāmah* of the A'imma—demands an answer: what is its true implication?

The Implication of Ḥadīth al-Thaqaalayn

It is perhaps the case that many Muslims interpret the *Ḥadīth al-Thaqaalayn*—

إني تارك فيكم الثقلين: كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي.⁶⁴

“Indeed, I am leaving among you the two weighty trusts: the Book of Allah and my progeny, the people of my household”—to mean that the authority of the A'imma and the bindingness of their instructions (*hujjiyyah*) of the Prophet's family ('ams) is on par with the authority of the narrators of ḥadīth, or the legal verdicts (*fatāwā*) of jurists, assuming that they are simply righteous and trustworthy individuals.

This impression of the ḥadīth's meaning stems from a lack of attentiveness to the precise implications of its content as conveyed through its transmitted wording, and to the Quranic understanding of this ḥadīth. Indeed, *Ḥadīth al-Thaqaalayn* is explicitly affirmed in the Noble Book itself.

Thus, the understanding of the scriptural texts that point to their *Imāmah* is directly affected by the discourse on the Imam's knowledge. This serves as an introduction to the subject of the Imam's knowledge.

What Is the Meaning of the Imam's Knowledge?

Before entering the subject of the Imam's knowledge, it is necessary to recognize that the discussion revolves around the nature of knowledge itself. The kind of knowledge possessed by the A'imma is sometimes referred to as divinely bestowed knowledge

⁶⁴ al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 294

(*‘ilm al-ladunnī*).⁶⁵ This form of knowledge is extensively addressed in the works of Imāmī scholars and theologians when discussing the knowledge of the A’immah from the Prophetic Household.

The discussions encompass numerous areas or are divided into various issues. Yet in our investigation, we do not aim to cover every aspect of the Imam’s knowledge; rather, we are focusing on a particular and specific dimension of it. Otherwise, the subject of the Imam’s knowledge requires many chapters and volumes to explore fully.

To give a sense of how broad the topic is, here are some of the areas that are usually mentioned:

- The A’immah (‘ams)’s knowledge of the Quran
- Their ability to interpret the Quran
- Their knowledge of people’s actions

وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ

*“Say: Act! And Allah will see your actions, and so will His Messenger and the believers.”*⁶⁶

- Their knowledge of deeds and intentions
- Their knowledge of people’s lineages and origins
- Their awareness of calamities and death
- Their ability to interpret ḥadīth
- Their knowledge of interpretation of existence and its different kinds as presented by the Noble Quran.
- Their understanding of the language of animals and birds
- Their knowledge of past and future events
- Their understanding of legal rulings
- Their insight in apparent and hidden matters

⁶⁵ *al-ladunnī* refers to something that is from God’s side or granted by divine origin. It is not acquired through study, experience, or human effort—it is bestowed through divine inspiration or direct knowledge from God.

⁶⁶ Sūrah al-Tawbah, Verse 105.

There are also important discussions regarding the levels of the A'imma's knowledge. Among the Prophet's Household (ṣawa), how were their levels of knowledge structured? Were they of one rank and measure, or did they vary? What were the sources and channels of the Imams' knowledge? What are the limits of this knowledge?

Al-Kulaynī in Uṣūl al-Kāfī dedicated chapters to this subject. Al-Ṣadūq did likewise in several of his works such as al-Tawḥīd, 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā ('as), Ma'ānī al-Akhbār, and 'Ilal al-Sharā'i. Al-Majlisī, may God have mercy on him, in Bihār al-Anwār, also compiled various chapters under these themes—examining the origins, routes, and categories of their knowledge.

So, the intended point is this: The doors into the study of the Imam's knowledge are many, and its chapters are numerous. And what we aim to emphasize in this discussion, after this introduction, is the distinction between the Imam's knowledge and that of the jurist or the narrators of ḥadīth on one hand, and on the other, its distinction from the prophetic knowledge, which is this exclusive type of divine revelation that was revealed to the prophets (*wahy*).

In the Glorious Quran and the narrations in the Sunnah [of the Prophet (ṣawa)], there's a special kind of knowledge called *'ilm al-ladunnī*, or divinely gifted knowledge. It has its own types and branches.

This kind of knowledge is completely different from the knowledge of narrators or scholars—and it's also different in kind from prophetic knowledge, which comes through revelation (*wahy al-nabawī*).

The Meaning of Revelation

In Quranic terminology, *wahy* (revelation) carries two main usages and meanings. One is revelation in the prophetic sense, and the other refers to the general concept of divinely bestowed knowledge.

Whatever form the Imam’s knowledge may take, that which is referred to in the Noble Quran, and described in narrations and the noble Sunnah of the infallibles, is classified—by its title and nature—as divinely granted knowledge (*‘ilm al-ladunnī*) (infused or direct knowledge from God). This term and the distinction it carries are not used for the knowledge of jurists or ḥadīth narrators. Their knowledge relies on physical observation and the senses—what we might call “empirical” or “worldly” knowledge—based on what can be seen, heard, or measured.

So, there is a real and essential difference between types of knowledge: the knowledge held by jurists and transmitters, the knowledge held by the A’immah, and the knowledge of the prophets. Understanding the source of knowledge for each group and the differences between them is crucial. This is just the foundation of research in *Imāmah*. Any meaningful inquiry into *Imāmah* and its various dimensions—or into the Imam’s knowledge—must begin with awareness of this distinction. Failing to notice this foundational distinction leads to confusion.

Many of the errors and oversights found in formulating discussions about *Imāmah* are in fact a direct result of ignoring this distinction and difference.

The Imam’s Knowledge as Divine (*ladunnī*) Knowledge

The main point we want to highlight here is that the Imam’s knowledge is *ladunnī*—a form of divine knowledge directly bestowed by God.

Before we begin looking at the Quranic verses that support this, we need to briefly introduce and also explain how we’ll be approaching those verses.

When we say the Imam’s knowledge is *ladunnī* (is not based on sensory experience or physical observation, like the kind of

knowledge jurists or ḥadīth narrators rely on) this raises concerns—especially among Muslims influenced by Western scientific thinking or secularism. Some may view this claim as a form of exaggeration (*ghulūw*) with the knowledge of the Imam.⁶⁷ Some may even describe it as superstitious beliefs. These topics are usually discussed in broader discussions about extremism in belief (*ghulūw*) or overly spiritual interpretations which is within itself a grand discussion within *Imāmāh*.

This subject (discussing the exaggeration regarding the status and attributes of the Imam) is one of the key topics in the study of *Imāmāh*. It's a core part of understanding who the Imam is and what role he plays. Yes, similar discussions do appear in the context of prophethood—for example, in how some earlier religious groups exaggerated in their view of the Prophet ʿĪsā (ʿas) or others. But the real place for this discussion is in the study of the Imam, especially within the context of Islam.

It's a deep and complex topic in its own right. But here, we mention it briefly and purposefully—to address certain objections or questions.

When dealing with sensitive topics like this, it's important to stay balanced and fair. Whether we're explaining religious, theological, or spiritual beliefs, we must take a middle path—avoiding both extremes: going too far or falling short. Just as we must avoid exaggeration in the Imam's knowledge, abilities, and status (*ghulūw*), we must also avoid downplaying or dismissing these attributes (*taqṣīr*).

Moderation Within Discourse

In many theological discussions and fields of knowledge, moderation means discovering the truth without going to extremes—neither overdoing it nor falling short. For example, in the discussion

⁶⁷ *Ghulūw* when used in this context means to attribute attributes to the A'imma (ʿams) that exceed proper limits which often leads to deification and leaving the folds of Islam.

about free will, we reject both absolute compulsion (*jabr*) and complete delegation (*tafwīd*).⁶⁸

Similarly (trying to avoid both extremes), in the topic of God's attributes, we must not separate God's essence (*dhāt*) from His attributes (*ṣifāt*), because doing so suggests a flaw in the divine essence—even if some think that this is a form of honouring God. At the same time, we shouldn't go to the other extreme and deny God's attributes altogether—a path known as *ta'īl* (negation). Nor should we follow the path of *tashbīh* (similarity), where God is likened to His creation. Instead, the correct view is a balanced understanding that affirms God's attributes and the oneness in His attributes.

In fact, in many topics in theology and knowledge there are excessive views, and there are negligent views. So, we must not become so focused on avoiding excess that we ignore the dangers of neglect. Both excess and deficiency are types of blindness to the truth. They're like being deaf or mute in the face of reality. They're both forms of deviation, no matter what shape they take. Yes, excess is clearly a deviation—but falling short is also a clear form of ignorance. Whether it's going too far or falling short, both are deviations in belief—and neither is better than the other.

This applies just as much to the study of the Imām and *Imāmah*, as it does to prophethood and the Prophet. Just like we avoid exaggerating the Prophet's status to the point of deifying him, we also have to avoid underestimating his true position, peace be upon him and his family. Falling short in understanding the Prophet (ṣawa) or the Imām is itself a serious mistake during our pursuit of knowledge.

⁶⁸ *Tafwīd* is the idea that God created human beings and then completely delegated all power to them—leaving them to act entirely on their own, without God's involvement or control. Shias believe in a sort of middle path between the two, believing in a form of free will that is not free from Allah (swt)'s involvement.

Between Exaggeration (*ghulūw*) and Undermining (*taqṣīr*)

Do you not see those great attributes with which God adorned His Prophet in the Noble Quran? While the Quran clearly forbids exaggeration and deification of the prophets—such as in His saying:

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ

“Do not exaggerate in your religion” ⁶⁹ —it likewise warns against falling into deficiency in recognizing their true station, and undermining their status, as in His saying:

قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا

“Has Allah sent merely a human as a messenger?” ⁷⁰

فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأَوَّلِينَ

“The disbelieving eminent [wealthy] figures in his tribe said [to the rest], “He is only a human like yourselves, he wants to gain superiority over you and if God had willed [to guide us]. He would have sent down angels [as a messenger instead]. We have not heard such a thing from our ancestors.” ⁷¹

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ

“And indeed, we know that they say, ‘A human being teaches [the Quran] to him’” ⁷²

These were the very words of those who denied the status of their prophets and disrespected them.

God described them:

انْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا

⁶⁹ Sūrah al-Mā'idah, Verse 77.

⁷⁰ Sūrah al-Isrā', Verse 94.

⁷¹ Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, Verse 24.

⁷² Sūrah al-Nahl, Verse 103.

“See how they coin comparisons for you and have gone astray—they can no longer find a way.”⁷³

The best example (for the holy attributes Allah (swt) adorned His Prophet (ṣawa) with) is the verses of the Noble Quran in Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt. From the very beginning of the Sūrah, a sense of reverence and sanctity is established for the Prophet (ṣawa)—not a sanctity or glory akin to that of worldly kings, but rather a sanctity and majesty that is divinely ordained and bestowed upon the Prophet. So much so that raising one’s voice in his presence is something the Quran warns will nullify all deeds. The Quran warns that merely raising one’s voice before him is enough to void all one’s actions. This is the kind of greatness and status God intended for His Prophet—which is far from deification and exaggeration and yet does not fall under the umbrella of (*taqṣīr*) undermining or belittling him.

So just as we must be wary of exaggeration (*ghulūw*) and various forms of esotericism—and everything that resembles them from among the extreme deviations—we must likewise be on guard against neglect, undermining, and devaluing (*taqṣīr*).

In reality, undermining (*taqṣīr*) this holy family’s status may be caused from the fear of exaggeration. And today, in contemporary intellectual circles—especially within Islamic discourse—this deficiency often arises from the dominance of empiricism.⁷⁴

This method, deeply rooted in modern Western philosophy and academic institutions, has subtly influenced many Muslim thinkers. Consequently, many are affected by its framework, leading to a mindset that leans toward a lot of undermining and negligence (*taqṣīr*) in theological and metaphysical inquiries. Some fall into this trap (the trap of undermining and underestimating the status of the

⁷³ Sūrah al-Isrā’, Verse 48.

⁷⁴ A way of thinking that limits reality to only the physical world. One that rejects unseen truths, like angels, miracles, divine knowledge, divine authority... and relies solely on sensory experiences to understand truth.

prophets and Imam's holy attributes) out of fear of exaggeration, while others do so due to their immersion in sensory empiricism.

Therefore, it is imperative to be just as cautious of neglect and undermining and as we are of exaggeration and esoteric deviation.

The Meaning of *Ghulūw* (Exaggeration) and *Bāṭiniyyah* (Esotericism)

Ghulūw is ascribing to a created being godly attributes and qualities, or assigning them a godlike rank or position, or going beyond the limits of what a person's qualities actually are. As for *bāṭiniyyah* (esotericism), it means to wrongfully focus only on the “inner” or “hidden” meanings of the Quran and religious texts, while ignoring their outward, clear meanings. This, in summary, is the combined meaning of *ghulūw* and *bāṭiniyyah*.

We will soon clarify that our basis in claiming that the Imam possesses *‘ilm ladunnī* (divine, directly granted knowledge) rests upon Quranic proofs (to prove that attributing them to this knowledge is not a form of exaggeration), and it adheres to outward and apparent standards and standards (to prove that this belief does not stem from esotericism rather it's what's apparent and clear from the verses of the holy Quran).

This *‘ilm al-ladunnī* is not a form of deification. Thus, this misconception or imagined association must be dismissed—because the Noble Quran affirms *‘ilm al-ladunnī* for a number of sacred figures, including prophets, messengers, or saintly proofs (*hujaj*). It affirms this type of knowledge for them, and the legitimacy and necessity of such knowledge for figures of this stature is a matter well-established and acknowledged by Muslims.

Accordingly, then, our affirmation of *‘ilm al-ladunnī* for the Imam does not transgress outward standards and proofs, nor does it violate the fact that they are created beings, in need, and servants entirely dependent upon their Lord (deeming it far from exaggeration, deification, and *ghulūw*).

In any case, there's a clear and decisive verse in the Quran from among the *muḥkamāt* (clear, decisive verses) that supports this idea: God grants this kind of divine knowledge only to those He chooses and is pleased with. This verse offers a strong, general proof that helps distinguish between the source and the kind of knowledge Imams possess and that which is acquired by narrators or jurists. We'll also explain in more detail later how this knowledge differs from prophetic revelation.

The verse appears in Sūrah al-Jinn, verses 26–27:

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا (٢٦) إِلَّا مَن ارْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ

“[He is] the Knower of the Unseen, and He does not disclose His unseen to anyone, except to a messenger whom He is pleased with.”

The knowledge of the unseen (*‘ilm al-ghayb*), as an intrinsic attribute, is an exclusive trait of God (swt). However, the disclosure of this unseen knowledge may be granted by God (swt), to whomever He is pleased with among His proofs and messengers (Allah (swt) possesses this knowledge inherently; He is its origin and source and does not receive it from any other being. As for the messengers, they acquire this knowledge only after Allah (swt) grants it to them).

This verse, then, is a general and comprehensive statement—a broad proof affirming the nature of this category of knowledge that God bestows upon His chosen ones.

The Verses of the Two Weighty Things (*Thaqalayn*)

Before delving into the Quranic evidence affirming that the Imam's knowledge is divinely bestowed (*‘ilm ladunnī*), and before mentioning a group of those whom God has granted such knowledge, let us review the verses that address the ḥadīth of the two weighty things (*thaqalayn*). This is because those verses which address the *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn* are the primary, foundational, and essential evidences in clarifying that their knowledge is *‘ilm ladunnī* and not sensory-based. Among those verses:

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

“And We have sent down to you the Book as a clarification for all things.”⁷⁵

This is the first of the two weighty things (the Quran).

This verse is one of the epic verses in the Quran—verses that leave interpreters puzzled. How can the Quran encompass all fields of knowledge? Many scholars, when explaining this verse, get caught in lengthy and tangled discussions.

Another verse in the Quran reveals to us the second of the two weighty things (the A’immah), where the Exalted says:

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ

“It (the Quran) is clear verses in the hearts of those who have been granted the knowledge.”⁷⁶

This verse, in general, indicates that there exists a select group within this nation that the Quran, in its entirety, is manifest and evident to them.

Thus, in one verse the Quran claims that it contains clarification for everything—and in another verse in Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt, the Noble Quran informs us that this clarification within the Quran can only be comprehended by a select group within this nation— this means that the Quran was not revealed to be idle (rather it was sent to be used and applied by all mankind), nor is it something whose clarification is accessible to all members of the nation; rather, it is only a few among this nation who are capable of grasping it.

And Allah (swt) Himself bore the responsibility and took it upon Himself to explain the verses of the Noble Quran (which He does through the members of this nation that He has granted the full knowledge of the Quran to), as pointed to in Sūrah al-Qiyāmah:

⁷⁵ Sūrah al-Nahl, Verse 89.

⁷⁶ Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt, Verse 49.

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ⁷⁷ ... ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ⁷⁸

‘Indeed, upon Us is its collection and its recitation’ “then indeed, upon Us is its explanation.”⁷⁹

The Quran is meant to be a source of guidance for Muslims and for all humanity until the Day of Judgment. That guidance must continue to evolve and clarify new matters (because as mentioned the Quran is a source of guidance for all mankind and not a specific era), across all aspects of life and creation.

It is therefore necessary that those select individuals who have been granted knowledge, and within whom the Quran becomes clear, must continue to exist as long as the Quran remains (to clarify new matters and provide the Quranic solution to these issues). This is what the two verses necessitate.

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ

“And We have sent down to you the Quran, so that you may clarify to people what was revealed to them.”⁸⁰

One of the Quran’s roles is to continue offering clarification across generations, all the way to the Day of Judgment. And the Quran itself entrusts that responsibility of explanation to divine position: “Indeed, upon Us is its explanation.” And it also tells us who has been given that explanation: “Rather, it is clear verses preserved in the hearts of those who have been granted knowledge.”

⁷⁷ Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, Verse 17.

⁷⁸ Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, Verse 19.

⁷⁹ The Quran declares itself a clarification for all things, as stated in one of its verses. The knowledge required to fully understand these clarifications is divinely granted to a specific group of individuals who serve as intermediaries between this sacred knowledge and the people. According to the Quran, Allah has taken it upon Himself to explain the verses, and He fulfills this through these chosen individuals. This forms the basis of the concept of Imāmah, as believed by the Shia, wherein these divinely appointed figures are entrusted with the interpretation and explanation of the Quranic message.

⁸⁰ Sūrah al-Nahl, Verse 44.

This meaning—that the message of the *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn* is found in these verses—is mentioned within the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams). And these verses, as scholars say, are enough as rational evidence to prove the existence of the A’immah and the divine knowledge that is attributed to them by the Shia.

The Indication of the *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn* on Divinely Bestowed Knowledge (*‘Ilm al-ladunnī*)

There are other verses that also point to and convey the same message as the *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn* (the Ḥadīth of the two weighty things the Prophet ordered us to hold onto). Some may think that discussing this ḥadīth is a side topic, unrelated to the main issue (understanding the divinely bestowed knowledge). But in fact, this discussion is deeply connected to our central theme: the Imam’s knowledge.

In Sūrah al-Wāqī‘ah, God says:

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ (٧٥) وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لِّوَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٍ (٧٦) إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ
كَرِيمٌ (٧٧) فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ (٧٨) لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ (٧٩)

*“So I swear by the positions of the stars—and indeed, it is a great oath if only you knew—it is indeed a noble Quran, which is in a well-preserved tablet; none touch it except the purified.”*⁸¹

The Quran magnifies this oath (“*So I swear by the positions of the stars—and indeed, it is a great oath if only you knew*”). What is being sworn upon is:

“Indeed, it is a noble Quran, which is in a well-preserved tablet”. “*Protected/preserved*” here means preserved in safekeeping and divine protection. Then the Āyah states: “*None touch it except the purified.*”

⁸¹ Sūrah al-Wāqī‘ah, Verses 75–79.

When the Quran says “*None touch it except the purified*” this is a declarative sentence, the Quran is stating a fact and informing, it is not prohibiting.⁸² This is what’s clear from the verse as we will soon explain. Yes, the prohibition of touching the holy Quran with purity is implied and alluded to. The verse doesn’t directly declare a ban on touching the Book without purification. Instead, this ruling is inferred through indirect hints and what the verse logically implies.

We say that this statement is a declarative sentence not a prohibitive one because oaths such as this one are never made upon a commanding or prohibitive sentence. For example, “*I swear by the positions of the stars—and indeed, it is a tremendous oath, if only you knew—that I am commanding you to pray*”—this kind of statement (a commanding or prohibiting sentence) doesn’t form the basis for a meaningful oath. An oath must be tied to an informative, existing, or real matter, whether past or future. An oath over something instructive has no clear sense.

So, when God swears here, it’s over a real truth: that the Quran is noble, preserved, and will only be touched by the purified. The word *al-muṭahharūn* (the purified ones) is a Quranic term which describes certain people such as:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

“Indeed, God intends to remove all impurity from you, O People of the House, and to purify you completely.”⁸³ And also:

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ

“And when the angels said, O Mary, God has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of all the worlds.”⁸⁴

⁸² The Quran is informing us that this book will not be touched by impure. It is not conveying a command or prohibiting us from touching the Quran while impure.

⁸³ Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, Verse 33.

⁸⁴ Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, Verse 42

The verses of purification in the Quran point to the distinction between *al-muṭahhar* (the purified one) and *al-mutaṭahhir* (the one who purifies himself). The first refers to one who has attained purity from sin and wrongdoing through divine selection. The second refers to one who purifies himself from sin through personal effort—through repentance, ritual washing, or ablution. As the Quran says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ⁸⁵

“Indeed, God loves those who repent, and He loves those who purify themselves.”⁸⁶

This verse (“...it is indeed a noble Quran, in a protected book; none touch it except the purified.”) thus, also indicates that the entire Quran is beyond human access—that it is preserved and out of reach from ordinary human grasp. But this does not mean the Quran is rendered inaccessible or nullified, as one might mistakenly think. Rather, it shows the necessity of the Quran being accompanied by the People of the Verse of Purification—in order for the Quran to remain living and effective in all its levels. There is no nullification of the Quran here, but rather a statement of the need for one who stands as its custodian and divine teacher—someone who clarifies the Quran.

In other words, reaching all of what is contained in the Quran—its knowledge, its truths, and its meanings—is safeguarded from human access. No one can attain it except through the purified ones (who are the A’immah).

This verse is among those whose meaning and implication align with the *Hadīth al-Thaqalayn*, indicating that in this nation, there exists someone who is purified, who touches the entire Quran—and that the Quran, in all its fields, all its levels, and all its realities, is not concealed from him. Rather, he is fully capable of reaching and accessing it.

⁸⁵ Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 222.

⁸⁶ Purification here is not the same form of purification stated in the verses before. This refers to purification through repentance and ritual washing.

There's also a third group of verses that tie into the meaning of the *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn*. These verses are mentioned in the sayings of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), and their meaning is clear enough through reason—they don’t need further legal proof. One of them is from Sūrah al-Ra‘d, verse 43:

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ
عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ

“And those who disbelieve say: ‘You are not a messenger’. Say: Allah is sufficient as a witness between me and you and he with whom is the knowledge of the Book.”

One of the witnesses to the Prophet’s message and its truth is the Quran itself. Although the verse names Allah (swt) as the witness, God’s testimony for His Prophet is delivered through the Quran. The Quran stands as a sufficient, self-evident proof and witness to the Prophet’s truth and divine mission—and with all its miraculous qualities, it stands as absolute truth and provides unquestionable certainty.

This certainty in the Quran is attained either through reason and reflection (what theologians call “acquired knowledge”)—or through a kind of direct, spiritual seeing—intuitive knowledge, a deeper awareness that the Quran brings into the heart. The Quran’s proof for the Prophet’s message is not just rational or empirical—it is a direct, experiential vision—an immediate, intuitive knowing.

There’s a light in the Quran—a flash of divine presence that awakens something within the soul. It’s not just intellectual. It’s experienced, felt, and known at a deeper level.

So then, the first witness to the Prophet’s message and its truth is the Quran—the Word of God, and the second is: “*The one who possesses knowledge of the Book.*” It’s clear this person’s testimony must be on the same level as the Quran’s testimony since his testimony is put alongside the Quran’s. This isn’t just an ordinary witness like a narrator or a scholar. No—this is someone whose entire

knowledge is rooted in and comes from the Book of God. The verse doesn't say "someone who has some knowledge of the Book." It says: *"the one who has knowledge of the Book"*—meaning all of it.

This tells us that this person's knowledge is fully connected to the Book. He carries its entirety. And this proves the claim we made, the verses about al-Thaqalayn are directly related to this key idea: The Imam's knowledge is divinely bestowed and different to that of scholars and narrators—they possess *'ilm ladunnī*.

The Imam Possesses the Knowledge of the Book

Among the other titles pertaining to the Imam's knowledge is that he possesses the knowledge of the Book. In this nation, there is one who carries the knowledge of the Book. The noble verse refers to the validity and bindingness of his testimony, regardless of its form or context.

So then, there is one who possesses the knowledge of the Book. And the Book, as described in the Noble Quran, bears endless attributes indicating that it encompasses all things.

For example, the verses:

يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

*"Allah erases and establishes what He wills; and with Him is the mother (source) of the Book"*⁸⁷—in the mother of the Book, and in the Book itself, lies everything.

مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

*"We have neglected nothing in the Book."*⁸⁸

Meaning, nothing is absent from the Book.

⁸⁷ Sūrah al-Ra'd, Verse 39.

⁸⁸ Sūrah al-An'ām, Verse 38.

وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا
يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

*“And no leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkness of the earth and nothing moist or dry but that it is [written] in a clear Book.”*⁸⁹

The Clear Book is also one of the names of the Quran, as indicated by many chapters and verses:

الر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

*“Alif, Lām, Rā. These are the verses of the clear book.”*⁹⁰

And likewise, in: Sūrah al-Shu‘arā’ Verse 2, Sūrah al-Zukhruf Verse 2, Sūrah al-Dukhān Verse 2, Sūrah al-Naml Verse 1, and Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ Verse 2. It becomes evident through these verses that the Clear Book is one of the names of the Noble Quran.

Another example is:

وَمَا مِنْ غَائِبَةٍ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

*“And there is nothing hidden in the heaven and the earth, but it is [recorded] in a Clear Book.”*⁹¹

The knowledge of this Book, within which is recorded the knowledge of all things, belongs to the one in this nation who bears witness to the Messenger (ṣawa)’s mission and whose knowledge is tied to the entirety of the Book—fully and completely.

In contrast, there was a person among the nation of the Children of Israel who possessed knowledge of some of the Book—he was one of Solomon’s trustees, namely Āṣif ibn Barkhiyā, as presented in the story of Solomon in the Quran:

قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ

⁸⁹ Sūrah al-An‘ām, Verse 59.

⁹⁰ Sūrah Yūsuf, Verse 1.

⁹¹ Sūrah al-Naml, Verse 75.

“He who had knowledge of a part of the Book said: ‘I will bring it to you before you blink.’”⁹²

The point here is that there is a subtle but deliberate distinction in reading between these two expressions: “*He who possesses the knowledge of the Book*” and “*He who possesses knowledge of a part of the Book.*” This distinction was highlighted by the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams), and one made by the creator himself who perceives the slightest distinctions between different wordings.

There’s a fourth set of verses in the Quran that point directly to the Ḥadīth of the Two Weighty Things—specifically the second of the two (*Imāmah*):

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

“Then We caused those whom We chose from among Our servants to inherit the Book.”⁹³

As we mentioned inheritance in this context isn’t referring to the literal book being passed down. Rather, it refers to the knowledge of this book which encompasses all of creation to be passed down to these chosen servants as mentioned in that verse.

Another set of verses tied to the Ḥadīth of the Two Weighty Things appears in Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ
مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ
وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ
كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا

“It is He who sent down to you the Book. In it are verses that are clear and firm—these are the foundation of the Book—and others that are ambiguous. Those with deviance in their hearts pursue what is

⁹² Sūrah al-Naml, Verse 40.

⁹³ Sūrah al-Fāṭir, Verse 32.

ambiguous in it, seeking discord and trying to interpret it. But no one knows its true interpretation except Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge. They say: 'We believe in it; all of it is from our Lord.'" 94

Some say that “and” in the Quranic verse is the start of a new sentence causing the meaning of the verse to be as follows: *No one knows the true interpretation of the ambiguous verses except Allah. And those firmly rooted in knowledge say we believe in it; all of its from our lord.* This is the wrong understanding of this verse for it would deem a lot of the Quran unusable.

Why? Because there are ambiguous verses in the Quran that only Allah understands—and if His creation is cut off from that knowledge, then a significant portion of the Quran would go unused. And suspending even part of the Book goes against the very purpose of its revelation. The Quran was sent down to be followed. So, those “*firmly rooted in knowledge*” are essential—not just grammatically in the verse, but in their real, divinely designated role.

Furthermore, the Quran which describes the knowledge of mankind as:

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“*You have not been given of knowledge except a little*”⁹⁵ describes the knowledge of this special group in the nation as—deeply rooted—and that kind of knowledge comes from total understanding and full awareness.

It is also clear that this group must continue to exist across all generations of this nation. Otherwise, the Quran would end up suspended, unusable, and left without interpretation. So, there must always be a group that has full understanding of the Quran’s meanings.

⁹⁴ Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, Verse 7.

⁹⁵ Sūrah al-Isrā’, Verse 85.

This verse also shows that grasping the full scope of the clear verses in the Quran is also impossible for the general public without the help of this group—those firmly rooted in knowledge, not only the ambiguous verses. If someone were able to fully understand all the clear verses on their own, without them, then he would also understand the ambiguous.

But that's not the case—and such a claim is false. Ambiguous verses can only be understood through knowledge of the clear ones. And full knowledge of the clear verses is only found with those firmly grounded in knowledge.

So, this foundation of the Book, and the clear verses it contains, can only be truly understood—and used to interpret everything ambiguous—by Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge. Interestingly this verse indicates that the clear verses are “*the mother of the Book*”. The mother of the Book has been mentioned in Sūrah al-Ra‘d, verse 39, that it is the clear verses and everything is written in it.

يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Allah effaces and confirms whatever He wishes and with Him is the Mother of the Book.

It has also been referred to in Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān as:

“the Mother of the Book which are the clear verses of the Quran. Only Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge have encompassing knowledge of the clear verses through which they know the rest of the ambiguous verses.”

This is just another set of verses that affirm what is portrayed by the Ḥadīth of the two weighty things.

Also included in this category—or perhaps distinguished as its own—is the verse from Sūrah al-Nisā’, verse 83:

وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ

“If they had referred it to the messenger, and those in authority among them, then the ones who [can] draw correct conclusions from it would have known about it”⁹⁶

The apparent meaning of this verse points to the fact that in this nation, there exists a group referred to as “those in authority.” This group is capable of deriving from the Quran any legal ruling for any situation or event that arises for the Muslim community—up until the Day of Judgment. Whether it pertains to legal matters, ethics, conduct, events, or any field of knowledge, this group has that capacity.

This group follows the footsteps of the Messenger (ṣawa) and that very group within this nation is the one for whom no new situation is too difficult to interpret through the lens of the Quran. At that point, it becomes evident that this group is the same group mentioned within the verse we mentioned in Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān:

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ

“And none knows its [true] interpretation except Allah and those firmly rooted in knowledge.”⁹⁷ (Because to be able to derive the correct rulings from within the Quran you must know the true interpretation of the Quran.)

In any case, the Quran refers repeatedly to a group within this nation that has been granted divine knowledge. Consider, for example, Sūrah al-Ḥajj:

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوا

“So that those who were given knowledge may know that it is the truth from your Lord and thus believe in it”⁹⁸

And in Sūrah Saba’:

⁹⁶ Sūrah al-Nisā’, Verse 83.

⁹⁷ Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān, Verse 7.

⁹⁸ Sūrah al-Ḥajj, Verse 54.

وَيَرَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ

“And those who were given knowledge see that what has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth.”⁹⁹ Here, the “seeing” is attributed to the revealed revelation itself: “What was revealed to you from your Lord.”

In fact, this meaning (divinely bestowed knowledge to a certain group of people) is echoed in Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt:

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ

“Rather, they are clear verses [preserved] in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge.”¹⁰⁰ This means that the Book—the Quran—has gathered within it verses that are clear, preserved in the hearts of that very group who have been granted knowledge.

In summary, numerous narrations from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘ams) have pointed to this. The Ḥadīth of the Two Weighty Things is not merely a prophetic tradition; it is deeply rooted in the Quranic message itself. The Quran speaks directly to the meaning of this ḥadīth in many of its verses.

And the ḥadīth itself emphasizes that the authority and the binding nature of this group’s opinions and ruling is rooted in something beyond ordinary scholarship. Their authority and legitimacy, their knowledge and its source, are rooted in something equivalent to the Quran’s own authority and bindingness. Their knowledge is not of a typical academic type—it is knowledge of the Book.

The Quran has been described with profound, unseen, metaphysical qualities. It is the Book in which every small and great thing is recorded; where nothing hidden in the heavens and earth escapes it; where not a leaf falls, nor anything dry or moist, except

⁹⁹ Sūrah Saba’, Verse 6.

¹⁰⁰ Sūrah al-‘Ankabūt, Verse 49.

that it is in this book, nothing—no matter how small or great—is outside this Book.

Thus, the Quran, in its unseen and transcendent dimensions, has been characterized with many attributes of comprehensive knowledge. And whatever that knowledge may entail, the knowledge of this Book exists with this group within the Ummah.

This is the collective meaning and summary of the verses connected to the Hadīth of the Two Weighty Things. We may refer to them as The Verses of the Two Weighty Things.

And so, these verses honour us and inform us—clearly and beautifully—of the presence of such divine guidance within this nation. Their knowledge is not of the ordinary or sensory kind. Rather, it is divinely bestowed (*ladunnī*).

This type of knowledge and the knowledge of the Quran that they have been given is directly mentioned in the Quran as being a well-guarded, hidden, and other worldly kind of knowledge which only a certain group can access. Sūrah al-Wāqī‘ah states:

نَهْ لَقْرَآنَ كَرِيمٍ (٧٧) فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ (٧٨) لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ (٧٩)

*“It is indeed a noble Quran, which is in a well-preserved tablet; none touch it except the purified.”*¹⁰¹ This is not the kind of knowledge that can be reached through physical or sensory means.

The knowledge granted to the infallible Imam is not like that of prophethood, nor is it like the knowledge of narrators or jurists—for their knowledge is based on sensory perception and intellectual acquisition. But the Imam’s knowledge is *ladunnī*—it is direct, divine, and innate.

There are numerous verses that indicate God (swt) is one who provides, gifts, and grants His chosen representatives (*hujaj*) the divine knowledge known as *‘ilm ladunnī* (knowledge directly

¹⁰¹ Sūrah al-Wāqī‘ah, Verses 77–79.

bestowed from God). This is not a form of deification, nor is it a form of exaggeration or mystical delusion.

Why isn't it exaggeration? Because the Quran clearly states that some of God's chosen people—whether prophets or not—have been granted this kind of divine knowledge. So how could that be considered going too far? There's nothing in it that oversteps the bounds of human beings.

Why isn't it a strange and baseless mystical claim? Because we only rely on the clear, outward meanings and solid standards from the sciences of language and literature. We are not relying on meanings that are detached from the verse's clear and apparent language.

There is also an entire set of verses that affirm the existence of humans who were given divine, non-sensory knowledge—knowledge that is neither empirical (like what scholars and narrators possess) nor prophetic. This group is mentioned throughout several chapters and verses in the Quran. One clear example is in Sūrah Luqmān:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ

“We gave Luqmān wisdom: ‘Be grateful to God.’”¹⁰²

Luqmān's knowledge, despite the fact that he was not a prophet (and it is agreed upon by Muslims that he was not), was not the kind of knowledge narrators possess, nor was it the jurisprudential knowledge of scholars. His knowledge did not come from sensory experience or human learning. And it certainly was not prophetic knowledge.

So, when we say that the Imam's knowledge is divinely granted, not prophetic, and not empirical—are we introducing an

¹⁰² Sūrah Luqmān, Verse 12.

innovation and unfounded idea? Certainly not—unless we were to disregard our belief in the Quran altogether.

In fact, the Noble Quran itself tells us in Sūrah Luqmān that Luqmān possessed wisdom, authority, and divine knowledge. Among the types of *‘ilm ladunnī* (divinely bestowed knowledge) that are granted by God is wisdom. And if that was true for Luqmān, how much more so for the A’immah, whom God has appointed as His proofs upon the earth?

We’ve already established, through the Quran and the Sunnah, the A’immah’s rightful position. The current discussion is not about whether they are divinely appointed—that’s already been proven (within the context of discussing their knowledge). Rather, the question now is about the nature of their knowledge after accepting the truth of their authority.

If Luqmān was neither a prophet nor a divinely appointed successor (*waṣī*), yet the Quran declares that he was granted divine knowledge and not learned knowledge, then how much more fitting is it for the divinely appointed proofs of God to possess such knowledge? In truth, these verses on *‘ilm ladunnī* are, by themselves, independent proofs of the divinely ordained *Imāmah*, which stands apart from prophethood and messengership.¹⁰³

Another reason why attributing this divinely bestowed knowledge to a certain group of people is not considered deification is because the Noble Quran addresses us directly:

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ (٥) لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ (٦)

“If you truly knew with the knowledge of certainty (*‘ilm al-yaqīn*), you would see the blazing fire (of Hell).”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Because A’immah are divinely chosen guides who carry divine knowledge to interpret the Quran. Their presence ensures the Quran is never left without interpretation. So, proving a group of people possess knowledge of the whole Quran proves the concept of *Imāmah*.

¹⁰⁴ Sūrah al-Takāthur, Verses 5-6.

Note—it does not say: “No! If you were gods, you would know with certainty and see the fire.” The Quran does not frame it like that at all. Nor does it say: “If you were prophets, you would know with certainty and see the fire.” Instead, it addresses us plainly: *“No! If you truly knew with the knowledge of certainty (‘ilm al-yaqīn), you would see the blazing fire.”*

This confirms that the Quran recognizes a type of knowledge known as *‘ilm al-yaqīn*—the knowledge of certainty, and that this knowledge is not considered deification or exaggeration. It is not learned. It is not empirical. It is a divine kind of knowledge—one that the Quran confirms is granted to a select group among humanity, not to everyone.

Thus, divinely bestowed knowledge (*al-‘ilm al-ladunnī*) contains no deification nor is it mystical or esoteric exaggeration. I’ll now briefly walk through several verses that illustrate this point and bring the discussion to a close:

In Sūrah al-Baqarah, God says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

*“And when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am placing a successor on the earth.’”*¹⁰⁵

He didn’t say, “a prophet” or “a messenger” or even “Ādam.” He said something much broader and deeper: a successor—a divine role that applies beyond just one individual. This divine successor—whom God informed the angels about, and commanded them to honour and follow—what made him worthy of that role?

It is what is mentioned in the verse after:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

*“He taught Adam the names—all of them.”*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 30.

¹⁰⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 31.

This knowledge is not prophetic revelation; rather, it is divinely bestowed knowledge—the comprehensive knowledge of the names. This status is none other than that of *Imāmah*, the divinely ordained vicegerency on earth. It is a role that neither ends nor is interrupted, and this is what the Shia school of thought (the *Imāmiyyah*) believes: that *Imāmah* is distinct from prophethood and messengership, and that God’s chosen representative on earth leads through this all-encompassing knowledge of the names.

This also appears in *Sūrah Yūsuf*, where we find reference to another form of divinely granted knowledge:

وَكَذَلِكَ يَجْتَبِيكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَأْوِيلِ الْأَحَادِيثِ

*“Your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of stories/events.”*¹⁰⁷

This kind of knowledge is not legislative prophethood. The knowledge of interpreting events, with which *Yūsuf* was endowed, is not a matter of legal rulings or legislative authority (prophetic knowledge): *“He will teach you the interpretation of stories.”* The knowledge that *Yūsuf* (Joseph) was given was not the type of knowledge that comes with prophethood, but another form of divine knowledge, it is *‘ilm al-ladunnī*.

We see the same in *Sūrah al-Kahf*, God says:

فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا آتَيْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا عِلْمًا

*“They found one of Our servants, to whom We had given mercy from Us and taught knowledge directly from Us.”*¹⁰⁸

This was about the mysterious figure known as *al-Khiḍr*, who accompanied *Mūsā*. He wasn’t described as a prophet, but as someone who received knowledge straight from God.

Likewise, in *Sūrah al-Anbiyā’*:

¹⁰⁷ *Sūrah Yūsuf*, Verse 6.

¹⁰⁸ *Sūrah al-Kahf*, Verse 65.

فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكُلًّا آتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ
وَالطَّيْرَ وَكُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ

*“We granted understanding to Sulaymān—and to both (Dāwūd and Sulaymān) We gave judgment and knowledge. And We subjected the mountains and birds to Dāwūd, all glorifying [Us]. And We were the ones who did it.”*¹⁰⁹

This knowledge, too, did not stem from prophethood. Rather, it was divine insight.

In Sūrah al-Naml:

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ
عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*“We granted knowledge to Dāwūd and Sulaymān. And they said: ‘All praise is due to God, who has favoured us above many of His believing servants.’”*¹¹⁰

And:

وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُدَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عَلِمْنَا مَنَطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأُوتِينَا مِنْ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ

*“Sulaymān inherited from Dāwūd and said, ‘O people! We have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given all things.’”*¹¹¹

Likewise, in Sūrah al-Baqarah regarding Dāwūd:

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا
يَشَاءُ

*“And God granted him kingship and wisdom and taught him whatever He willed”*¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Sūrah al-Anbiyā', Verse 79.

¹¹⁰ Sūrah al-Naml, Verse 15.

¹¹¹ Sūrah al-Naml, Verse 16.

¹¹² Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 251.

And regarding Ṭālūt:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ

“Indeed, God has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge.”¹¹³

This is another example of divine knowledge (*ilm ladunnī*).

These are glimpses from the Quran that point to and confirm the existence of divinely bestowed, non-prophetic knowledge—a type of knowledge distinct from prophethood and distinct from empirical, sensory knowledge. These are clear verses, and their meanings are apparent at face value.

We are not resorting to esoteric interpretations, nor are we reinterpreting or twisting their meanings. The apparent meanings are aligned with sound interpretive principles. The Quran affirms a position, and a kind of knowledge separate from prophethood, and distinct from empirical science—a knowledge that is divinely granted to a select group of God’s chosen representatives.

Peace and blessings be upon you all.

¹¹³ Sūrah al-Baqarah, Verse 247.

LIFE OF THE TWO IMAMS AL-KAZIMAYN

ḤAYĀT AL-IMĀMAYN AL-KĀZIMAYN

This book is a compilation of lectures delivered by the esteemed scholar, and Marja', Ayatollah Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad, near the pure shrine of Imam Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him). These discussions were held on the annual commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Mūsā bin Ja'far and his grandson Imam al-Jawād (peace be upon them).



**SHAYKH MUḤAMMAD
AL-SANAD**

In these discussions, the revered scholar highlights the military and political strength that these two Imams (peace be upon them) possessed, contrary to the misconception held by some; that they were powerless and unable to take action.

Additionally, the esteemed scholar further delves into the deeper meaning behind Imam Mūsā bin Ja'far (peace be upon him)'s famed patience and suppression of anger (Kazm al-Ghayṣ)—a characteristic that was not merely an aimless personal emotional reaction, as some might assume. Rather, his restraint of anger was a calculated political and military strategy designed to counter the oppressive forces of his time. All of this—dear reader—you will find intricately woven within the pages of this book.



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