THE WILL OF ALLAH AND OUR DESTINY

Part XI: Misguiding the Disbelievers

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Abstract: *In this part, the religious meaning of misguidance attributed to Allah is discussed in details, and that why Allah misguides, and whom He misguides. It is also discussed if this action of Allah negates His justice, and whether those who are misguided by Allah have any excuse for their wrong actions. Moreover, the role of the Satan in this type of misguidance is explained.*

Keywords: *Misguidance; gradual decline; will of Allah.*

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1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous part, everyone is lost, astray, and in darkness until Allah shows him His path. When Allah does not will to provide initial religious guidance for a certain individual, he is called *Dhaal*, which means: lost, astray, misguided, or not guided. He is a person who does not

know the right path and is not informed of it. Allah did not provide initial religious guidance to everyone, but He does not punish those who are not exposed to His religious guidance. However, there is another type of misguidance that Allah decrees it as punishment on those who are exposed to His guidance but rejected it. In a number of tokens of the holy Quran, Allah attributes this type of misguidance to Himself as He is the One who set this rule for the consequence of human disbelief and disobedience. For instance, Allah states:

وَ الَّذينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآياتِنا صُمٌّ وَ بُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُماتِ مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يُضْلِلْهُ وَ مَنْ يَشَأْ يَجْعَلْهُ عَلى صِراطٍ مُسْتَقيمٍ.

Those who reject Our signs are deaf and dumb (wandering) in darkness. Allah misguides whom He wills, and He puts whom He wills on a Straight path. (6:39)

On the other hand, in some other tokens, Allah attributes this misguidance to Satan and some people who misguide others. For example, we read:

أَ لَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يا بَني آدَمَ أَنْ لا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبينٌ - وَ أَنِ اعْبُدُوني هذا صِراطٌ مُسْتَقيمٌ - وَ لَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلاًّ كَثيراً أَ فَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ.

Did I not charge you a (rational) covenant, O Children of Adam, that you should not serve Satan, surely he is a manifest foe to you, and that you should serve Me, (as) this is a straight path. He led astray many a throng of you! Did you not understand? (36:60-62)

وَ أَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُ وَ ما هَدى.

Pharaoh led his folk astray and did not guide them. (20:79)

أَ لَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذينَ أُوتُوا نَصيباً مِنَ الْكِتابِ يَشْتَرُونَ الضَّلالَةَ وَ يُريدُونَ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا السَّبيل.

Have you not regarded those who were given a share of the Book, who demand and buy misguidance, and (also) desire that you lose the way. (4:44)

This fact suggests that the action of misguidance, though Allah decreed it, planned its details and its extent, and allowed it to happen, may take place by His creations voluntarily. In this part, more insight is provided concerning this issue.

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2 Decreeing Misguidance as Allah's Punishment

If one rejects Allah's guidance and light after He offered him, he is deserving of divine punishment. Of the punishments that Allah may decide for a person who insists on denying the truth, is to withdraw His guidance from him and to leave him in darkness. Such a divine rule would result in misguidance for that person due to lack of light, and temptation of Satan and his followers among men and the unseen creatures called *Jinn*. According to the traditions, in all instances in the holy Quran where the action of misguiding (*Idhlal*) has been attributed to Allah, it only means Allah's punishment for those who remain ungrateful to His favors and neglectful to His guiding signs. Thus, if Allah "misguides" such a person, He only acted according to His justice. Allah willed that avoiding the path guidance would result in misguidance and created the grounds for it to happen. Allah stresses this fact in Quran by saying:

فَما ذا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلاَّ الضَّلالُ.

Then after apart from truth, what remains but misguidance (Dhalal)? (10:32)

كَذلِكَ يُضِلُّ اَللَّهُ اَلْكافِرِينَ.

This way, Allah misguides those who disbelieve/conceal (the truth). (40:74)

وَ ما يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلاَّ اَلْفاسِقِينَ.

And He does not misguide anyone by it (i.e., the examples in the Quran) except the wicked. (2:26)

يُثَبِّتُ اَللَّهُ اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ اَلثَّابِتِ فِي اَلْحَياةِ اَلدُّنْيا وَ فِي اَلْآخِرَةِ وَ يُضِلُّ اَللَّهُ اَلظَّالِمِينَ وَ يَفْعَلُ اَللَّهُ ما يَشاءُ.

Allah confirms those who believe by a firm word in this world and in the Hereafter. But Allah misguides the unjust, and Allah does what He wills. (14:27)

وَ لا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِي إِنْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ إِنْ كانَ اَللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُغْوِيَكُمْ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ وَ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ.

(Noah *(PBUH)* said to his disbelieving folk:) My advice shall not benefit you even though I intended to advise you if it be that Allah intended to mislead you. He is your Lord, and to Him will you return. (11:34)

وَ ما كانَ اَللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْماً بَعْدَ إِذْ هَداهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ ما يَتَّقُونَ إِنَّ اَللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ .

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And Allah will not mislead a group of people after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid, for Allah has knowledge of all things. (9:115)

بَلِ اِتَّبَعَ اَلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْواءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ فَمَنْ يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اَللَّهُ وَ ما لَهُمْ مِنْ ناصِرِينَ.

Nay! Those who do wrong follow their own desires without knowledge. Then, who will guide those whom Allah has misguided? For them there will be no helpers. (30:29)

فَما لَكُمْ فِي اَلْمُنافِقِينَ فِئَتَيْنِ وَ اَللَّهُ أَرْكَسَهُمْ بِما كَسَبُوا أَ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اَللَّهُ وَ مَنْ يُضْلِلِ اَللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلاً.

Why should you be divided into two parties about the hypocrites while Allah has cost them of their (evil) deeds? Do you want to guide those whom Allah has misguided? For those whom Allah misguides, never shall you find a way. (4:88)

From the context of the above tokens, it is clear that the misguidance is Allah's decision in response to hypocrisy.

Allah further states:

إِنَّما يَبْلُوكُمُ اَللَّهُ بِهِ وَ لَيُبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ اَلْقِيامَةِ ما كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ وَ لَوْ شاءَ اَللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً واحِدَةً وَ لكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ لَتُسْئَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ .

... Surely, Allah wishes to test you by him, and on the Day of Judgment He will certainly make clear to you (the truth of) that wherein you disagree. If Allah so willed, He would certainly have made you all one people. But He misguides whom He wills, and He guides whom He wills; And you will certainly be called to account for all your actions. (16:92-93)

Since Allah never calls to account the action of a person who was not shown the path, the misguidance mentioned in the above token is for a person to whom Allah showed guidance but rejected it. On the commentary of above tokens, Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qummi (d. 307 A.H., one of the students of Imam Hasan al-Askari *(PBUH)* (the eleventh Imam) and teacher of al-Kulaini, has mentioned in his Tafsir that:

إِنَّما «يَبْلُوكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ» يَعْنِي بِعَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ ع يَخْتَبِرُكُمْ «وَ لَيُبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيامَةِ ما كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ- وَ لَوْ شاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً واحِدَةً» قَالَ عَلَى مَذْهَبٍ وَاحِدٍ وَ أَمْرٍ وَاحِدٍ «وَ لكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشاءُ» قَالَ يُعَذِّبُ بِنَقْضِ الْعَهْدِ «وَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشاءُ» قَالَ

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يُثِيبُ.

“‘Surely Allah wishes to test you by him’ means He tests you by Ali bin Abi Talib *(PBUH)*, ‘and on the Day of Judgment He will certainly make clear to you (the truth of) that wherein you disagree. And If Allah (so) willed, He could make you all one people’ means a single religion (*Madh’hab*) and single matter (i.e., *Walaya* of Ali *(PBUH)*). ‘But He misguides whom He wills’ means He punishes for breaking the (divine) covenant, ‘and He guides whom He wills’ means He rewards...”[1]

A person who rejects the guidance of the divinely assigned Imams and yet tries to live religious life without following their instructions, is on the path of destruction and falls prey to the temptations of Satan. So long as he continues this attitude, Allah continues to decree misguidance for him. In fact, by independent reason, one can prove that there exists no way towards Allah and His satisfaction except that which Allah opened, approved, and suggested. Moreover, it is clear form divine narrations (i.e., Quran and Hadith) that Allah has not opened any door towards Himself except through the guides that He appointed. Mufadhdhal bin Umar narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

مَنْ دَانَ اللَّهَ بِغَيْرِ سَمَاعٍ عَنْ صَادِقٍ أَلْزَمَهُ اللَّهُ التِّيهَ إِلَى الْفَنَاءِ وَ مَنِ ادَّعَى سَمَاعاً مِنْ غَيْرِ الْبَابِ الَّذِي فَتَحَهُ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ وَ ذَلِكَ الْبَابُ الْمَأْمُونُ عَلَى سِرِّ اللَّهِ الْمَكْنُونِ .

“He who worships Allah without hearing from a truthful[2], Allah necessitates for him to go astray towards destruction. He who claims there are (correct religious-related) sayings that he has heard from other than the door that Allah has opened, is a polytheist. And this is the secure door that has been treasured with the secrets of Allah.”[3]

A similar narration was reported by al-Hasan bin Is’haq from Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* from his ancestors with the following wording:

مَنْ دَانَ بِغَيْرِ سَمَاعٍ أَلْزَمَهُ اللَّهُ الْبَتَّةَ إِلَى الْفَنَاءِ وَ مَنْ دَانَ بِسَمَاعٍ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْبَابِ الَّذِي فَتَحَهُ اللَّهُ لِخَلْقِهِ فَهُوَ مُشْرِكٌ وَ الْبَابُ الْمَأْمُونُ عَلَى وَحْيِ اللَّهِ مُحَمَّدٌ ص .

The Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* said, “He who humbly adopts a religion and devotes himself to it without hearing (from Allah’s Messenger), Allah

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makes a binding decision about him (to go) towards (spiritual) destruction. He who adopts religion by hearing from other than the door that Allah has opened for His creation, is a polytheist." Then, the Imam *(PBUH)* continued, "And the trustworthy door on Allah's revelation is Muhammad *(PBUH&HF)*."[4]

Abd al-A'la narrated:

سَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِ وَ ما كانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْماً بَعْدَ إِذْ هَداهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ ما يَتَّقُونَ قَالَ حَتَّى يُعَرِّفَهُمْ مَا يُرْضِيهِ وَ مَا يُسْخِطُهُ.

I asked Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* about Allah's saying, "And Allah will not mislead a people after He has guided them until He makes clear to them whatever they should avoid." (9:115) He *(PBUH)* replied, "(it means) until He lets them know what pleases Him and what displeases Him."[5]

The punishment of misguidance manifests itself in different ways, some of which will be discussed in the rest of this article.

3 Misguiding From Paradise in the Hereafter

In several Hadith, the Imams *(PBUT)* interpreted the Quranic term of "guidance" as "direction to reach Paradise on the Day of Judgment", and "misguidance" as "losing the address of Paradise and getting lost on the Day of Judgment". A number of tokens in the holy Quran support this interpretation. Al-Hashimi narrated:

سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ جَعْفَرَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ ع عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ «مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَ مَنْ يُضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِداً» فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى يُضِلُ الظَّالِمِينَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَنْ دَارِ كَرَامَتِهِ وَ يَهْدِي أَهْلَ الْإِيمَانِ وَ الْعَمَلِ الصَّالِحِ إِلَى جَنَّتِهِ كَمَا قَالَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ «وَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَ يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ ما يَشاءُ» وَ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ».

I asked Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* about the saying of Allah, the mighty and the majestic, 'He whom Allah guides, is rightly guided; but he whom Allah leaves astray, you will not find for him any advising guardian. (18:17)' The Imam said, "Certainly, Allah—Whose name is holy, Whose remembrance is high—misguides the wrongdoers on the

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Day of Judgment from the house of His blessings (i.e., Paradise), and guides those who had faith and good deeds to His Paradise just as He said, 'Allah misguides the unjust, and Allah does what He wills.' (14:27) Moreover, He, Allah, the glorious, said, 'Those who believe, and do good deeds, their Lord shall guide them because of their faith (to the place where) beneath them will flow rivers in Gardens of Bliss.' (10:9)"[6]

In addition, Allah says in the holy Quran:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَ ظَلَمُوا (آل محمد حقهم) لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَ لا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ طَرِيقاً إِلاَّ طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خالِدِينَ فِيها أَبَداً وَ كانَ ذلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيراً.

Those who reject faith and oppress (the rights of the family of Muhammad *(PBUH&HF)* as per traditions[7]), Allah shall never forgive them nor guide them to a way except the way to Hell, to dwell therein forever, and this is easy for Allah. (4:168-169)

Regarding the following token:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اَللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلإِسْلامِ وَ مَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقاً حَرَجاً كَأَنَّما يَصَّعَّدُ فِي اَلسَّماءِ كَذلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اَللَّهُ اَلرِّجْسَ عَلَى اَلَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ .

He whom Allah intends to guide, He opens his bosom for submission (*Islam*), and he whom Allah intends to misguide, He makes his bosom constricted (or even) closed, as if he should evaporate into the sky. This way Allah puts doubt (*al-Rijs*) on (the heart of) those who do not believe. (6:125)

On the commentary of this token, Hamdan bin Sulaiman narrated:

سَأَلْتُ أَبَا الْحَسَنِ عَلِيَّ بْنَ مُوسَى الرِّضَا ع عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَ «فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلامِ» قَالَ مَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ بِإِيمَانِهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا إِلَى جَنَّتِهِ وَ دَارِ كَرَامَتِهِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلتَّسْلِيمِ لِلَّهِ وَ الثِّقَةِ بِهِ وَ السُّكُونِ إِلَى مَا وَعَدَهُ مِنْ ثَوَابِهِ حَتَّى يَطْمَئِنَّ إِلَيْهِ «وَ مَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ» عَنْ جَنَّتِهِ وَ دَارِ كَرَامَتِهِ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لِكُفْرِهِ بِهِ وَ عِصْيَانِهِ لَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا «يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقاً حَرَجاً» حَتَّى يَشُكَّ فِي كُفْرِهِ وَ يَضْطَرِبَ مِنِ اعْتِقَادِهِ قَلْبُهُ حَتَّى يَصِيرَ «كَأَنَّما يَصَّعَّدُ فِي السَّماءِ كَذلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ».

I asked Imam al-Ridha *(PBUH)* about the saying of Allah: "He whom Allah intends to guide, He opens his bosom for submission (Islam)." (6:125) He *(PBUH)* answered, "'He whom Allah intends to guide' towards Paradise and to the house of honor in the Hereafter because of his faith in this world, He

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opens his bosom for submitting to Allah, trusting in Him, and acquiring tranquility in what Allah has promised of the rewards to him until he becomes fully confident in Him. 'And he whom Allah intends to misguide' from His Paradise and the house of honor in the Hereafter, due to his disbelief and his disobedience toward Him in this world, 'He makes his bosom constricted (or even) closed,' until he becomes doubtful (even) in his *Kufr*, and his heart will (continue to) be perplexed in (false) beliefs 'as if he should evaporate into the sky. This way Allah puts doubt on (the heart of) those who do not believe.' (6:125)"[8]

Interpreting the term *al-Rijs* as doubt in the above-mentioned commentary of Chapter six, Token 125 by the Imam Ridha *(PBUH)* is noteworthy. According to the lexicons of Arabic[9] and the Hadith literature, The meanings of the word "*al-Rijs*" include, doubt (*Shakk, Raib*), perplexity, and temptations of Satan (*Waswasa, Hamaza*), as well as, filth and impurity. Doubt and perplexity is the most delicate and yet a very dangerous type of the impurity of heart.

As, noted in the above Hadith, Allah's will concerning one's misguidance is only because of one's denial of the truth. The outcome of misguidance is doubt in belief, darkness, losing the way to Paradise on the Day of Judgment, and arriving at Hell. On the other hand, the outcome of guidance for the believers is the increase of faith in Allah, peace of mind and confidence in His promises of rewards, and finally obtaining the rank of Paradise.

4 Leaving Disbelievers in Doubt

Allah has ruled some natural outcomes for rejection. One such outcome is that when one rejects a sign of Allah, doubt will gradually appear in his mind about the things he previously had no doubt. In this manner, when one continues to reject, one becomes increasingly doubtful about all of the signs of Allah, His rules, and His sayings.

The similitude of a disbeliever who has fallen into doubt to the extent that truth does not settle on his heart is the similitude of vapor that does not settle on earth and scatters in the sky. In other words, living with this much perplexity becomes intolerable for him as if he

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should go to the sky. This is another worldly punishment of the disbelievers. When Allah leaves them on themselves, the devils induce doubt on them. Thus, to put doubt on the heart of disbelievers by Allah means to decree that the devils would could induce doubt in them, and then to do nothing to remove their doubt, to fully withhold divine protection from them, and to treat them according to divine Justice. Inducing doubt in the hearts of disbelievers is the action of Satan, entertaining the doubt and rejecting faith are the actions of disbelievers, and allowing all these things to take their natural courses is due to the will of Allah.

Generally, there are two stages of doubt that should be distinguished. One is the doubt that exists before receiving initial guidance by Allah, which is not disbelief. However, when Allah shows a person His signs, if he then continues to entertain doubt in his heart about the truth and admits Satan's whispers into his heart, he becomes a disbeliever. According to the Quran and the traditions, this latter type of doubt is equivalent to disbelief, which is a voluntary practice of one's heart. Allah states:

إِنَّمَا اَلْمُؤْمِنُونَ اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَ رَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتابُوا وَ جاهَدُوا بِأَمْوالِهِمْ وَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اَللَّهِ أُولئِكَ هُمُ اَلصَّادِقُونَ.

Believers are only those who believed in Allah and His Messenger, then never entertained doubt, and strove with their properties and their souls in the cause of Allah; such are the truthful. (49:15)

وَ لَقَدْ جاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّناتِ فَما زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا جاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّى إِذا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اَللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولاً كَذلِكَ يُضِلُّ اَللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتابٌ.

And certainly in the past, Joseph came to you with clear evidence, but you kept doubt regarding some of what came to you through him; at length, when he died, you said, "Allah shall never send a messenger after him." This way Allah misguides the wasteful transgressors who entertain doubt. (40:34)

إِنَّما يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ اَلَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَ اَلْيَوْمِ اَلْآخِرِ وَ اِرْتابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ.

(O Prophet!) Only those ask you for exemption (from battle) who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt, so that they

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toss in their doubts back and forth. (9:45)

Hypocrites think that they can deceive while they are deceived by wandering in doubt and perplexity:

إِنَّ الْمُنافِقِينَ يُخادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَ هُوَ خادِعُهُمْ وَ إِذا قامُوا إِلَى الصَّلاةِ قامُوا كُسالى يُراؤُنَ النَّاسَ وَ لا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلاَّ قَلِيلاً ـ مُذَبْذَبِينَ بَيْنَ ذلِكَ لا إِلى هؤُلاءِ وَ لا إِلى هؤُلاءِ وَ مَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلاً.

The hypocrites seek to trick Allah, but Allah is tricking them: When they stand up to pray they stand up lazily, showing off to the people and not remembering Allah save a little; wavering all the time not toward these, not toward those, and whom Allah leads astray, you will not find for him a way. (4:142-143)

أَ لَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُا اَلَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَ عادٍ وَ ثَمُودَ وَ اَلَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلاَّ اَللَّهُ جاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّناتِ فَرَدُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فِي أَفْواهِهِمْ وَ قالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنا بِما أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ وَ إِنَّا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَنا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ.

Has not the story reached you, (O people), of those who were before you, of the people of Noah, Aad, Thamud, and those who (came) after them? None knows them but Allah. To them came messengers with evidence, but they put their hands over their mouths (to protest), and said, "We do deny (the mission) on which you have been sent, and we are really in (disquieting) doubt about what you invite us." (14:9)

As we pointed out, although the doubt comes to mind without having control over it, and thus it is not one's action and cannot be categorized as disbelief, entertaining doubt and admitting it into the heart after the truth is presented by Allah is equivalent to disbelief. Abu Is'haq al-Khurasani and others narrated that the Leader of the Faithful, Ali *(PBUH)*, said in some of his sermons:

لاَ تَرْتَابُوا فَتَشُكُّوا وَ لاَ تَشُكُّوا فَتَكْفُرُوا.

"Do not entertain doubt for you will fall into doubt. And do not (admit) doubt for you will disbelieve."[10]

Several traditionists narrated from Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* and Musa bin Ja'far *(PBUH)* that the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* said:

الرَّيْبُ كُفْرٌ.

"Suspicion is a disbelief."[11]

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Moreover, in his advice to Mufadhdhal bin Umar, Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

مَنْ شَكَّ أَوْ ظَنَّ وَ أَقَامَ عَلَى أَحَدِهِمَا أَحْبَطَ اللَّهُ عَمَلَهُ إِنَّ حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْحُجَّةُ الْوَاضِحَةُ.

"He who doubts (in Allah's vicegerents and His commandments) or distrusts, and keeps up any of these two, Allah shall nullify his deeds. Certainly, the Proof of Allah (*Hujjat Allah*) is the clear proof."[12]

Zurara narrated:

فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلى حَرْفٍ فَإِنْ أَصابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَ إِنْ أَصابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلى وَجْهِهِ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيا وَ الْأَخِرَةَ قَالَ زُرَارَةُ سَأَلْتُ عَنْهَا أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ ع فَقَالَ هَؤُلاَءِ قَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ وَ خَلَعُوا عِبَادَةَ مَنْ يُعْبَدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَ شَكُّوا فِي مُحَمَّدٍ ص وَ مَا جَاءَ بِهِ فَتَكَلَّمُوا بِالإِسْلاَمِ وَ شَهِدُوا أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَ أَنَّ مُحَمَّداً رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَ أَقَرُّوا بِالْقُرْآنِ وَ هُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ شَاكُّونَ فِي مُحَمَّدٍ ص وَ مَا جَاءَ بِهِ وَ لَيْسُوا شُكَّاكاً فِي اللَّهِ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلى حَرْفٍ يَعْنِي عَلَى شَكٍّ فِي مُحَمَّدٍ ص وَ مَا جَاءَ بِهِ فَإِنْ أَصابَهُ خَيْرٌ يَعْنِي عَافِيَةً فِي نَفْسِهِ وَ مَالِهِ وَ وُلْدِهِ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ وَ رَضِيَ بِهِ وَ إِنْ أَصابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ يَعْنِي بَلاَءً فِي جَسَدِهِ أَوْ مَالِهِ تَطَيَّرَ وَ كَرِهَ الْمُقَامَ عَلَى الإِقْرَارِ بِالنَّبِيِّ ص فَرَجَعَ إِلَى الْوُقُوفِ وَ الشَّكِّ فَنَصَبَ الْعَدَاوَةَ لِلَّهِ وَ لِرَسُولِهِ وَ الْجُحُودَ بِالنَّبِيِّ وَ مَا جَاءَ بِهِ.

I asked Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)* about the saying of the Lord of might and majesty, "Of people is he who worships Allah on the edge (of faith). If good befalls him, he is, therewith, well content; but if a trial befalls him, he makes a turnabout (on his faith). He loses both this world and the Hereafter. (22:11)" The Imam *(PBUH)* said, "They were people who (apparently) worshipped Allah and disowned worshipping the idols. But they had doubt about (the virtues of) Muhammad *(PBUH&HF)* and his teachings. They became Muslims and witnessed that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger and affirmed the Quran while they were doubtful about (the virtues of) Muhammad *(PBUH&HF)* and his teachings. They were not doubtful in (the existence of One) Allah. The Lord of might and majesty says, 'Of people is he who worships Allah on the edge (of faith),' means on doubt in Muhammad *(PBUH&HF)* and his instructions. 'If good befalls him,' means well-being in his health, wealth and children 'he is, therewith, well content' and is satisfied by it, 'but if a trial befalls him,' means an affliction in health or his wealth, he regards it as an evil omen and stops acknowledging the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)*

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and returns to his doubt and suspicion. Thus, he sets up enmity against Allah, and His Messenger, and denies the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and what came to him."[13]

There is a very interesting Hadith from Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)* or Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* through Muhammad bin Muslim, who related:

قُلْتُ لَهُ إِنَّا نَرَى الرَّجُلَ مِنَ الْمُخَالِفِينَ عَلَيْكُمْ لَهُ عِبَادَةٌ وَ اجْتِهَادٌ وَ خُشُوعٌ فَهَلْ يَنْفَعُهُ ذَلِكَ شَيْئاً فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ إِنَّ مَثَلَنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ مَثَلُ أَهْلِ بَيْتٍ كَانُوا فِي بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَ كَانَ لاَ يَجْتَهِدُ أَحَدٌ مِنْهُمْ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً إِلاَّ دَعَا فَأُجِيبَ وَ إِنَّ رَجُلاً مِنْهُمُ اجْتَهَدَ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ دَعَا فَلَمْ يُسْتَجَبْ لَهُ فَأَتَى عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ع يَشْكُو إِلَيْهِ مَا هُوَ فِيهِ وَ يَسْأَلُهُ الدُّعَاءَ لَهُ فَتَطَهَّرَ عِيسَى ع وَ صَلَّى ثُمَّ دَعَا فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ يَا عِيسَى إِنَّ عَبْدِي أَتَانِي مِنْ غَيْرِ الْبَابِ الَّذِي أُوتَى مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ دَعَانِي وَ فِي قَلْبِهِ شَكٌّ مِنْكَ فَلَوْ دَعَانِي حَتَّى يَنْقَطِعَ عُنُقُهُ وَ تَنْتَثِرَ أَنَامِلُهُ مَا اسْتَجَبْتُ لَهُ فَالْتَفَتَ عِيسَى ع فَقَالَ تَدْعُو رَبَّكَ وَ فِي قَلْبِكَ شَكٌّ مِنْ نَبِيِّهِ قَالَ يَا رُوحَ اللَّهِ وَ كَلِمَتَهُ قَدْ كَانَ وَ اللَّهِ مَا قُلْتَ فَاسْأَلِ اللَّهَ أَنْ يَذْهَبَ بِهِ عَنِّي فَدَعَا لَهُ عِيسَى ع فَتَقَبَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَ صَارَ فِي أَحَدِ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ كَذَلِكَ نَحْنُ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ لاَ يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ عَمَلَ عَبْدٍ وَ هُوَ يَشُكُّ فِينَا.

I said to the Imam *(PBUH)*, "We see a man among your opponents who worships (Allah), makes hard efforts (in acting upon good deeds), and is very humble. Do these acts benefit him anything?" He *(PBUH)* replied, "O Muhammad! The similitude of us Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* (and people) is the similitude of (Jesus and) a family who were among the Children of Israel. If any of them worshiped Allah for forty nights and then he called upon Allah, his prayer would have been granted (by Allah). Once, one of them spent forty nights in worship and then called upon Allah, but he was not answered. He came to Jesus *(PBUH)*, complained about what happened to him, and asked him to pray for him. Jesus *(PBUH)* made an ablution, performed Salat, and then prayed. Thereupon Allah revealed to him, "O Jesus! Certainly, this servant of mine came to me from other than the door that should arrive. He called upon me while he has doubt about you in his heart. Even if he calls upon me to the extent that his neck is broken and his fingers fall out, I shall not answer him." Jesus *(PBUH)* turned his face to the man and said, "Do you call upon Allah while you have doubt about (the rights and virtues of) His Prophet in your heart?" He replied, "O the spirit of Allah and His word! It was, by Allah, exactly as you said. So. Ask Allah that He may

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remove the doubt from my heart." Thereupon, Jesus *(PBUH)* prayed to Allah for him, and Allah accepted his request. Thus, he became like other members of his family (whose prayers were granted)." Then, the Imam *(PBUH)* continued: "Like this is the case of us Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)*. Allah does not accept the deed of a servant who doubts in us (i.e., doubts in our rights and virtues)."[14]

When one is doubtful, it is his duty to try his best to eliminate his doubt. This may involve several primary steps. The man mentioned in the above tradition did an intelligent shortcut for removing his doubt. He chose to ask Allah's vicegerent to pray for on his behalf for eliminating his doubt. Going to Jesus *(PBUH)* and making him the means of his prayed comprised the voluntary steps that he took for removing his doubt.

Resorting (*Tawassul*) to the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and his Ahl al-Bait *(PBUT)* and asking them to call upon Allah on our behalf are the best and the quickest remedy for clearing up the impurities doubts from our heart by leave of Allah. Moreover, the divinely appointed leaders have prescribed many supplications by which we can beseech Allah so that He may remove doubts from our heart and grant us certainty (*Yaqin*).

5 Authorizing the devils

When one voluntarily rejects the guardianship of Allah, which is manifested by the guardianship of His vicegerents on the earth, he has made himself ready for the guardianship of the devils (*Shayatin*) and their temptations because he has willingly left Allah's protection. Allah decreed that a person who leaves His protection becomes susceptible to satanic incitements. *Iblis* was the first creature who was named Satan (*Shaitan*). He was from the *Jinn* (a type of creature made of fire whom Allah granted volition just like the human being) and was the first person who violated the command of His Lord. *Iblis* arrogantly disobeyed Allah's order concerning submission to His vicegerent, Adam *(PBUH)*, and prostrate before him. For that matter, Allah cursed him and distanced him from His mercy. In the holy Quran, we read:

قالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْها فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ وَ إِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِي إِلى يَوْمِ

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اَلدِّينِ قالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ قالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ اَلْمُنْظَرِينَ إِلى يَوْمِ اَلْوَقْتِ اَلْمَعْلُومِ قالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلاَّ عِبادَكَ مِنْهُمُ اَلْمُخْلَصِينَ قالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَ الْحَقَّ أَقُولُ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَ مِمَّنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ.

(Allah) said, "Then, get out from there (i.e., the garden) for you are outcast, and unto you is My curse until the Day of Judgment." (Iblis) said, "O my Lord! Give me then respite until the day the (dead) are resurrected." (Allah) said, "Respite is then granted you until the Appointed Day." (Iblis) said, "Then, I swear by Your might, I will lead them all astray except those of your sincere servants." (Allah) said, "Thus, the truth is, and the truth I say, that I shall most certainly fill the Hell with you and those who follow you all together." (38:77-85)

Thus, Satan swore that he would mislead all humankind except those who put themselves purely under Allah's guardianship, and Allah permitted him to exercise his choice. In another location in the holy Quran we read:

قالَ هذا صِراطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ إِنَّ عِبادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطانٌ إِلاَّ مَنِ اِتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ اَلْغاوِينَ.

(Allah) said, "This is My straight path. Certainly you will have no authority over My servants, except he who follows you and puts himself in the wrong." (15:41-42)

Those among the human being and the *Jinn* who chose *Iblis* as their guardian and totally submitted to him, were also called devils. They follow what their master, *Iblis* (the greater devil), commands them. They are the enemies of the prophets *(PBUT)* and their teachings. Allah states:

وَ كَذلِكَ جَعَلْنا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَياطِينَ اَلإِنْسِ وَ اَلْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ اَلْقَوْلِ غُرُوراً وَ لَوْ شاءَ رَبُّكَ ما فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرْهُمْ وَ ما يَفْتَرُونَ.

And this way, We made for every prophet a (group of) enemy, devils from men and Jinn, inspiring each other with flowery discourses by way of deception. If your Lord had so willed, they would not have done it. Thus, leave them and the lies they forge. (6:112)

Allah has decreed that to the extent that an individual chooses to distance himself from Allah's guardianship, devils gain more authority over him as his guardian. However, giving permission to devils over the

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disbelievers does not make Allah responsible for the devils' actions. Allah may let them exercise their choice as He has let other wrongdoers do so. Moreover, satanic temptations are not the cause for the action of such people as they still exercise their own choice. It is only about losing Allah's shield, protection and assistance, losing discernment and awareness concerning the delusions and seductions of the devils, and being exposed more to their enticements. The devils only suggest and whisper. Accepting the devils as one's advisors and listening to their whispers is the voluntary action of a disbeliever. Thus, although enticing a disbeliever is the choice of the devils, admitting the devils' temptations into one's heart and rejecting faith is the choice of a disbeliever. About authorizing the devils, Allah says in the holy Quran:

وَ مَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اَلرَّحْمنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطاناً فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ.

And for anyone who withdraws from remembrance of the gracious Lord, We appoint for him a devil that will be an intimate companion to him. (43:36)

أَ لَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا اَلشَّياطِينَ عَلَى اَلْكافِرِينَ تَؤُزُّهُمْ أَزًّا.

Don't you see that We have sent the devils to the disbelievers and they excite them to a great degree? (19:83)

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا اَلشَّياطِينَ أَوْلِياءَ لِلَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ.

We made the devils guardians and masters for those who do not believe. (7:27)

Sending devils to entice men or making them their guardians refers to the will and plan of Allah to free them to exercise their choice, and Allah does not compel them do wrong.

وَ إِنَّ اَلشَّياطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلى أَوْلِيائِهِمْ لِيُجادِلُوكُمْ وَ إِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ.

And the devils indeed inspire their friends to argue with you. And if you were to obey them, you would indeed be polytheists. (6:121)

وَ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَ يَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطانٍ مَرِيدٍ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مَنْ تَوَلاَّهُ فَأَنَّهُ يُضِلُّهُ وَ يَهْدِيهِ إِلى عَذابِ السَّعِيرِ.

And among people is he who argues about Allah (and His sayings and commandments) without (divine) knowledge and follows every rebellious devil. It is written for him who follows a

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devil and accepts his guardianship that he will lead him astray, and will guide him to the blazing fire. (22:3-4)

اِسْتَحْوَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ اَلشَّيْطانُ فَأَنْساهُمْ ذِكْرَ اَللَّهِ أُولئِكَ حِزْبُ اَلشَّيْطانِ أَلا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اَلشَّيْطانِ هُمُ اَلْخاسِرُونَ.

Satan has gained the mastery over them, so he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the Party of Satan. Truly, it is the Party of Satan that will lose! (58:19)

Muhammad bin Muslim narrated via Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* and through his fathers that the Leader of the Faithful, Ali *(PBUH)*, said:

مَنْ تَصَدَّى بِالْإِثْمِ أَعْشَى عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَ مَنْ تَرَكَ الْأَخْذَ عَمَّنْ أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِطَاعَتِهِ قَيَّضَ «لَهُ شَيْطاناً فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ».

"Anyone who turn to sin shall withdraw from the remembrance of Allah, the Glorious. He who desists taking (religious issues) from whom Allah has commanded to his obedience, Allah 'shall appoint a devil for him and he shall become an intimate companion to him.' (43:36)"[15]

The fact is that no one on the earth is "free" in an absolute sense. People are only free in a relative sense. Those who make themselves free from Allah's obedience have already become the slaves of their desires, which, in reality, means they have yielded themselves to the slavery of Satan. On the other hand, the believers, by their service to Allah, become free from the obedience of Satan. What an intelligent choice!

Our protection against the Satan only comes from Allah. The believers are instructed to seek refuge in Allah so that He may guard them from the temptations of the Satan. The more we choose to request Allah's protection, the less are we influenced by the devils. This is how our volition takes part in keeping us away from the temptations of the devils. The glorious Allah says:

وَ إِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ اَلشَّيْطانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ إِنَّ اَلَّذِينَ اِتَّقَوْا إِذا مَسَّهُمْ طائِفٌ مِنَ اَلشَّيْطانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ.

If a temptation from the Satan attacks your (mind), seek refuge in Allah, for He hears and knows (all things). Those who observe piety, when an evil thought from Satan reaches them, remember (Allah) and become mindful (of His command), and then, they get insight

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and find (true) vision! (7:200-201)

فَأَمَّا اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَ اِعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَ فَضْلٍ وَ يَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَيْهِ صِراطاً مُسْتَقِيماً.

As for those who believe in Allah and seek protection from Him, He shall soon enter them to His mercy and grace, and shall guide them to him (who is) a straight way. (4:175)

وَ مَنْ يَعْتَصِمْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلى صِراطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

... And whoever seeks protection from Allah, he was, indeed, guided to a straight way. (3:101)

إِنَّ اَلْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقامٍ أَمِينٍ.

Surely the watchful are in a secure position. (44:51)

وَ مَنْ يَتَّقِ اَللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجاً وَ يَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَحْتَسِبُ وَ مَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اَللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اَللَّهَ بالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اَللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْراً.

... And whoever is watchful of (his duty to) Allah, He shall make for him an outlet, and shall give him from whence he thinks not. And whoever trusts in Allah, He is sufficient for him; surely Allah attains His purpose; Allah indeed has appointed a measure for everything. (65:2-3)

The claim that Allah cannot or may not protect one who resorts to Him and submits to His command is the denial of Allah's power and or denial of His justice. As we have seen in the above tokens, Allah has promised help for a person who observes *Taqwa* (i.e., he is mindful of his duties towards Allah) and seeks refuge in Him in facing the temptations of Satan. More protection from Allah paves the way for more submission to His command given that one steadfast in submission to the command of his Lord. On the other hand, more submission to His command will be rewarded with more protection from Allah. This positive loop may lead to a perfect protection if one always chooses what Allah chooses for him. Abdullah bin Sanan narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

أَيُّمَا عَبْدٍ أَقْبَلَ قِبَلَ مَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ أَقْبَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ قِبَلَ كُلِّ مَا يُحِبُّ وَ مَنِ اعْتَصَمَ بِاللَّهِ وَ بِتَقْوَاهُ عَصَمَهُ اللَّهُ وَ مَنْ أَقْبَلَ قِبَلَهُ وَ عَصَمَهُ لَمْ يُبَالِ لَوْ سَقَطَتِ السَّمَاءُ عَلَى الأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانَتْ نَازِلَةً عَلَى أَهْلِ الأَرْضِ فَشَمِلَتْهُمْ بَلِيَّةٌ وَ كَانَ فِي حِرْزِ اللَّهِ بِالتَّقْوَى مِنْ كُلِّ بَلِيَّةٍ أَ لَيْسَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقامٍ أَمِينٍ.

"Any servant who proceeds towards

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what Allah loves, Allah, the Lord of might and majesty, shall proceed towards all what the servant loves. He who seeks protection from Allah and holds fast to His shield, Allah shall protect him. And he towards whom Allah advances and protects, will not worry if the heaven falls over the earth or an encompassing affliction befalls the inhabitants of the earth, since he is in Allah's sanctuary and is shielded from every affliction. Is not that Allah, the—Whose name is holy, Whose remembrance is high—said, 'Surely the watchful are in a secure position?' (44:51)"[16]

Allah further says:

فَإِذا قَرَأْتَ اَلْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ اَلشَّيْطانِ اَلرَّجِيمِ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطانٌ عَلَى اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَلى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ إِنَّما سُلْطانُهُ عَلَى اَلَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُ وَ اَلَّذِينَ هُمْ بِهِ مُشْرِكُونَ.

When you recite the Quran, seek Allah's protection against the outcast and the accursed Satan. Certainly, he has no authority over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord. His authority is only over those who take him as guardian and who join partners with Allah. (16:98-100)

In the following Hadith, which has been attributed to Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* without documentation, some of the schemes of Satan in approaching the humans and some practical ways to confront him have been explained. According to this narration, Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

وَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ دَعَا عِبَادَهُ بِلُطْفِ دَعْوَتِهِ وَ عَرَّفَهُمْ عَدَاوَةَ إِبْلِيسَ فَقَالَ تَعَالَى إِنَّ الشَّيْطانَ لَكُما عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ وَ قَالَ إِنَّ الشَّيْطانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا فَكُنْ مَعَهُ كَالْغَرِيبِ مَعَ كَلْبِ الرَّاعِي يَفْزَعُ إِلَى صَاحِبِهِ مَنْ صَرَفَهُ عَنْهُ كَذَلِكَ إِذَا أَتَاكَ الشَّيْطَانُ مُوَسْوِساً لِيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ الْحَقِّ وَ يُنْسِيَكَ ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ مِنْهُ بِرَبِّكَ وَ رَبِّهِ فَإِنَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ الْحَقَّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ وَ يَنْصُرُ الْمَظْلُومَ بِقَوْلِهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ عَلى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ وَ لَنْ يُقْدَرَ عَلَى هَذَا وَ مَعْرِفَةِ إِتْيَانِهِ وَ مَذَاهِبِ وَسْوَسَتِهِ إِلاَّ بِدَوَامِ الْمُرَاقَبَةِ وَ الِاسْتِقَامَةِ عَلَى بِسَاطِ الْخِدْمَةِ وَ هَيْبَةِ الْمُطَّلَعِ وَ كَثْرَةِ الذِّكْرِ وَ أَمَّا الْمُهْمِلُ لِأَوْقَاتِهِ فَهُوَ صَيْدُ الشَّيْطَانِ لاَ مَحَالَةَ وَ اعْتَبِرْ بِمَا فَعَلَ بِنَفْسِهِ مِنَ الإِغْوَاءِ وَ الِاغْتِرَارِ وَ الِاسْتِكْبَارِ حَيْثُ غَرَّهُ وَ أَعْجَبَهُ عَمَلُهُ وَ عِبَادَتُهُ وَ بَصِيرَتُهُ وَ رَأْيُهُ وَ جُرْأَتُهُ عَلَيْهِ قَدْ أَوْرَثَهُ عِلْمُهُ وَ مَعْرِفَتُهُ وَ اسْتِدْلاَلُهُ بِعَقْلِهِ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَى الأَبَدِ فَمَا ظَنُّكَ بِنُصْحِهِ وَ دَعْوَتِهِ غَيْرَهُ فَاعْتَصِمْ بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ الأَوْثَقِ وَ هُوَ الِالْتِجَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَ الِاضْطِرَارُ بِصِحَّةِ الِافْتِقَارِ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي كُلِّ نَفَسٍ وَ لاَ يَغُرَّنَّكَ تَزْيِينُهُ لِلطَّاعَةِ عَلَيْكَ فَإِنَّهُ يَفْتَحُ عَلَيْكَ تِسْعَةً وَ تِسْعِينَ بَاباً مِنَ الْخَيْرِ لِيَظْفَرَ بِكَ عِنْدَ تَمَامِ الْمِائَةِ فَقَابِلْهُ بِالْخِلاَفِ وَ الصَّدِّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَ

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الْمُضَادَّةِ بِاسْتِهْوَائِهِ.

"… The Lord of might and majesty called His servants a call of mercy and made them aware of the enmity of *Iblis*. He—Whose remembrance is high—said, 'Verily Satan is an evident enemy of you,' (7:22) and said, 'Certainly, Satan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy.' (35:6) Thus, treat him the way a stranger treats a shepherd dog, that in order to repel it, he fearfully resort to the owner of dog. Thus, when the Satan comes to you with temptation to mislead you from the path of truth and to make you forget Allah, seek refuge from him in your Lord and his Lord. Certainly, Allah supports truth against falsehood and helps the oppressed, as He, the mighty and the majestic, said, 'Certainly, he has no authority over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord.' (16:99) No one has the ability to do this (i.e., to avoide the Satan) and to know of his presence and the methods of his temptations except by persistent watchfulness and commitment in sincere service (to Allah's cause), by fear from what was informed (by Allah), and by abundant remembrance. But, those who are negligent about their times are undoubtedly the prey of the Satan… Thus, hold fast to the rope of Allah, the most confident rope, which is seeking refuge in Allah and truly feeling urgent need before Allah with every breath. Let not Satan's embellishment of (your previous) worship allures you. Verily he may open for you ninety-nine gates of goodness in order to overcome you at the hundredth. Thus, confront him by opposition and by blocking his path and counteracting his temptations."[17]

6 Gradual Decline

One of the most terrible punishments for those who repeatedly reject the signs of Allah is mentioned in the holy Quran as *the gradual decline* (*al-Istidraj*). Allah states:

وَ اَلَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآياتِنا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَعْلَمُونَ.

Those who reject Our signs, We shall lead them gradually to ruin in such a way that they do not realize. (7:182)

On the commentary of this token, Sufyan bin Samt narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

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إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَرَادَ بِعَبْدٍ خَيْراً فَأَذْنَبَ ذَنْباً أَتْبَعَهُ بِنَقِمَةٍ وَ يُذَكِّرُهُ الِاسْتِغْفَارَ وَ إِذَا أَرَادَ بِعَبْدٍ شَرّاً فَأَذْنَبَ ذَنْباً أَتْبَعَهُ بِنِعْمَةٍ لِيُنْسِيَهُ الِاسْتِغْفَارَ وَ يَتَمَادَى بِهَا وَ هُوَ قَوْلُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَعْلَمُونَ بِالنِّعَمِ عِنْدَ الْمَعَاصِي .

"Certainly, when Allah intends a goodness (*Khair*) for a servant, if he commits a sin, He causes it to be followed by a (hasty) reprisal so that it reminds him to ask for forgiveness. But when Allah intends an evil (*Sharr*) for a servant, if he commits a sin, He makes it followed by a worldly favor and benefit so as to make him forget asking for forgiveness and to let him continue (the sin) excessively. And this is the saying of Allah, 'We shall lead them gradually to decline in such a way that they do not realize.' (7:182) This is done by (granting worldly) benefits when committing sins."[18]

Intending evil (*Sharr*), as we explained in Part 8, is intending punishment. What punishment is greater than depriving a disbeliever a correct feedback about his deeds? Since he is inattentive to the signs of Allah and continues to disbelieve, Allah deprives him His signs and may let him increase his sins excessively without further reproach. Allah states in the holy Quran:

ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنا مَكانَ اَلسَّيِّئَةِ اَلْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّى عَفَوْا وَ قالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ آباءَنَا اَلضَّرَّاءُ وَ اَلسَّرَّاءُ فَأَخَذْناهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَ هُمْ لا يَشْعُرُونَ.

Then We replaced (their) suffering/sins with (worldly) comfort until they increased, and they began to say, "Our fathers were (also) touched by suffering and affluence." Thereafter We took them (i.e., their souls) suddenly while they were unaware. (7:95)

وَ لا يَحْسَبَنَّ اَلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّما نُمْلِي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنَّما نُمْلِي لَهُمْ لِيَزْدادُوا إِثْماً وَ لَهُمْ عَذابٌ مُهِينٌ .

The disbelievers should not think that our respite to them is good for them. We give them respite in order to let them increase their sins, and for them is a humiliating punishment. (3:178)

قُلْ مَنْ كانَ فِي اَلضَّلالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ اَلرَّحْمنُ مَدًّا حَتَّى إِذا رَأَوْا ما يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا اَلْعَذابَ وَ إِمَّا اَلسَّاعَةَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَكاناً وَ أَضْعَفُ جُنْداً.

Say, "Whoever is in misguidance, the gracious Lord extends (His respite) to them, a great extension, until they see what was promised to them either in punishment or in (the approach of) the

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Hour (of rising (of *al-Qa'im*)). Then, they will at length realize who is worst in position, and (who is) weakest in forces!" (19:75)

Moreover, Allah may decree that the devils would be allowed to make evil deed of a disbeliever seem good to him. In the holy Quran, we read:

تَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنا إِلى أُمَمٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ اَلشَّيْطانُ أَعْمالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ اَلْيَوْمَ وَ لَهُمْ عَذابٌ أَلِيمٌ.

By Allah, We (also) sent (Our messengers) to peoples before you; but the Satan made their acts seem alluring to them. He is also their guardian today, and they shall have a painful chastisement. (16:63)

إِنَّ اَلَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ أَعْمالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُونَ .

As to those who believe not in the Hereafter, We have made their deeds pleasing in their eyes; and so they wander about blindly. (27:4)

أَ فَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ حَسَناً فَإِنَّ اَللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشاءُ فَلا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسَراتٍ إِنَّ اَللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِما يَصْنَعُونَ .

Is he, then, to whom the evil of his deed is made alluring, so that he looks upon it as good, (equal to one who is rightly guided)? Verily, Allah misguides whom He wills, and guides whom He wills. So let not your soul be wasted in regret for them. Certainly, Allah knows well all that they perform! (35:8)

The more we sin, the more we habituate ourselves to sinfulness and the less we feel guilty and even the more virtuous those acts appear to us in some viewpoints. The more we sin, the harder it is to choose light over darkness, and the more repulsive the right action seems to us; it is like someone living in a cave who is gradually pained by the light of the sun and runs back into the darkness for comfort. The more we do something, the more we tend to do it again. This situation is similar to classical behavioral conditioning. However, instead of "urgency" we consider "tendency" to relate the actions. Although, we may tend to a certain action due to our previous actions, we are not compelled to do it since we have been granted volition.

Allah has ruled that when one insists on committing a sin, his heart would gradually repel the truth so much so that

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he would no longer believe that such an action is a sin, and would effectively assume such attribution a lie to Allah and His religion. In other words, indulging into sin may gradually lead to disbelief and lying upon Allah. In holy Quran, we read:

ثُمَّ كانَ عاقِبَةَ اَلَّذِينَ أَساؤُا اَلسُّواى أَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِآياتِ اَللَّهِ وَ كانُوا بِها يَسْتَهْزِؤُنَ.

“The outcome of those who (indulged into) committing evil deeds was that they denied the signs of Allah and held them up to ridicule. (30:10)”

According to the traditions, a person who does not regret the sin that he has committed—even if he has committed it only once—is considered an insistent (*Musir*) and a disbeliever because he does not believe in the hereafter penalty that Allah has set for that specific sin. Believing in the Hereafter penalty of an action, makes one distressed and regretful, which is an introduction to repentance (*Tawba*). Regret obligates one to comply all other requirements of repentance. Regret is a voluntary internal reaction of a believer to sin by which he guards his heart from decline and maintains his faith according to the will of Allah. A believer is always repentant while a disbeliever does not feel sorry before Allah for his misconducts. Ibn Abi Umair narrated:

سَمِعْتُ مُوسَى بْنَ جَعْفَرٍ ع يَقُولُ لَا يُخَلِّدُ اللَّهُ فِي النَّارِ إِلَّا أَهْلَ الْكُفْرِ وَ الْجُحُودِ وَ أَهْلَ الضَّلَالِ وَ الشِّرْكِ ... مَا مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ يَرْتَكِبُ ذَنْباً إِلَّا سَاءَهُ ذَلِكَ وَ نَدِمَ عَلَيْهِ وَ قَدْ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ص كَفَى بِالنَّدَمِ تَوْبَةً وَ قَالَ مَنْ سَرَّتْهُ حَسَنَةٌ وَ سَاءَتْهُ سَيِّئَةٌ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَنْدَمْ عَلَى ذَنْبٍ يَرْتَكِبُهُ فَلَيْسَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ وَ لَمْ تَجِبْ لَهُ الشَّفَاعَةُ وَ كَانَ ظَالِماً وَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ «ما لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَ لا شَفِيعٍ يُطاعُ» فَقُلْتُ لَهُ يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَ كَيْفَ لَا يَكُونُ مُؤْمِناً مَنْ لَمْ يَنْدَمْ عَلَى ذَنْبٍ يَرْتَكِبُهُ فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا أَحْمَدَ مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَرْتَكِبُ كَبِيرَةً مِنَ الْمَعَاصِي وَ هُوَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ سَيُعَاقَبُ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا نَدِمَ عَلَى مَا ارْتَكَبَ وَ مَتَى نَدِمَ كَانَ تَائِباً مُسْتَحِقّاً لِلشَّفَاعَةِ وَ مَتَى لَمْ يَنْدَمْ عَلَيْهَا كَانَ مُصِرّاً وَ الْمُصِرُّ لَا يُغْفَرُ لَهُ لِأَنَّهُ غَيْرُ مُؤْمِنٍ بِعُقُوبَةِ مَا ارْتَكَبَ وَ لَوْ كَانَ مُؤْمِناً بِالْعُقُوبَةِ لَنَدِمَ وَ قَدْ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ص لَا كَبِيرَةَ مَعَ الِاسْتِغْفَارِ وَ لَا صَغِيرَةَ مَعَ الْإِصْرَارِ وَ أَمَّا قَوْلُ اللَّهِ «وَ لا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضى» فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَى اللَّهُ دِينَهُ وَ الدِّينُ الْإِقْرَارُ بِالْجَزَاءِ عَلَى الْحَسَنَاتِ وَ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَ مَنِ ارْتَضَى اللَّهُ دِينَهُ نَدِمَ عَلَى مَا يَرْتَكِبُهُ مِنَ الذُّنُوبِ لِمَعْرِفَتِهِ بِعَاقِبَتِهِ فِي الْقِيَامَةِ.

I heard Imam Musa bin Ja’far *(PBUH)* saying, “Allah does not keep anyone in Fire forever except people of disbelief, denial, misguidance and polytheism… There is no believer committing a sin

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except that it offends him and he regrets his action. Verily, the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* said, 'Enough is regret for repentance,' and he *(PBUH&HF)* said, "Whoever is delighted by good deeds and is saddened by evil deeds is a believer." On the other hand, he who does not regret for a sin that has committed is not a believer and is not entitled to intercession as he is unjust and Allah states, 'For the unjust there is neither a protecting friend nor an intercessor whose intercession is accepted.' (40:18)" I asked, "O son of the Messenger of Allah! How come is he not a believer if he does not feel regretful for his evil deeds?" He *(PBUH)* replied, "O Aba Ahmad! No one commits a great sin knowing that he will be soon chastised for that except that he regrets for what he has committed, and once he regrets he is a repentant and becomes entitled to intercession. On the other hand, if he does not regret for that, he is considered insistent. A person who insists on evil deeds will not be forgiven because his is not a believer in the divine penalty of what he has committed. Had he believed in punishment he would have surely regretted. Indeed, the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* said, "There is no great sin with asking for forgiveness (*Istighfar*) and there is no small sin with insistence (*Israr*) (i.e., by asking for forgiveness no great sin will remain in one's record and by persistence no sin will be counted as small in the record due to disbelief). As for the saying of Allah, 'They do not intercede save with whom Allah is pleased, (21:28)' it means they do not intercede except whom Allah is pleased with his religion. The religion is confession to the recompense for the good and evil deeds. For an individual whom Allah is pleased with his religion, regrets for what he commits of the sins due to his recognition of their consequences on the Day of Judgment."[19]

A person who is offended by the good deeds of others and is pleased with his or others' evil deeds is a disbeliever. Allah will record every sins of such a person as great sins and will not forgive him due to his disbelief. One should always view any of his sins before Allah a great sin and constantly keep himself in the state of regret and repentance

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beseech Allah for forgiveness and promise to His Lord that he will never return to those wrong deeds, because once he becomes careless about his sins, overlooks them, and considers them small, he becomes a disbeliever with a record replete with the greater sins. On the other hand, so long as he remains regretful and asks for forgiveness his record remains cleared.

7 Conclusion

In this article, we provided several pieces of evidence from the holy Quran and the sayings of the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and the Imams *(PBUT)* concerning the notion of misguidance attributed to Allah. Based on them, one can conclude that the misguidance attributed to Allah is just a natural rule that Allah set in His will as the outcome of people's wrongdoing and disbelief. The reason it is attributed to Allah is due to the creation of the will and planning of this rule by Him, not the action itself. In reality, the outcomes of unjust beliefs and unjust actions of the wrongdoers cause that they misguide their own soul and make themselves vulnerable to the temptations of the devils. This misguidance appears in the Hereafter as losing the address of Paradise and getting lost in the Hell. The custom and will of Allah should be regarded as a punishment for the individual's bad response to Allah's initial guidance. Therefore, if Allah does not guide such a person to the path of salvation, He has only acted according to His justice.

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[1] *Tafsir*, Ali bin Ibrahim al-Qumi, vol. 1, p. 389.

[2] Truthful in the domain of religion is limited to those assigned by Allah and supported by His revelation who relate the true message of Allah to people. Other individuals who invent a saying and attribute it to Allah are liars and impostors because there is no way to know what pleases or displeases Allah except through His apostles.

[3] *Wasa'il al-Shia*, vol. 27, p. 128, Hadith 33393, cited from *al-Kafi*.

[4] *Wasa'il al-Shia*, vol. 27, p. 129, Hadith 33395, cited from *Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha (PBUH)*.

[5] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 163, Hadith 5.

[6] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 5, p. 199, Hadith 21, cited from *al-Tawhid*.

[7] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 424, Hadith 59; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 24, p. 224, Hadith 15.

[8] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 5, p. 200, Hadith 22, quoted from '*Uyun Akhbar al-Rida (PBUH)*.

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[9] Refer to *Lisan al-'Arab*, vol. 6, p. 52, and p. 95.
[10] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 399, Hadith 2.
[11] *al-Kafi*, vol. 8, p. 82, Hadith 29; Mustadrik al-Wasa'il, vol. 18, p. 179, Hadith 22441; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 69, p. 127, Hadith 9.
[12] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 400, Hadith 8.
[13] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 413, Hadith 1; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 22, p. 132, Hadith 113.
[14] *al-Amali*, al-Mufid, p. 2, Hadith 2; *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 400, Hadith 9 (a similar narration).
[15] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 60, p. 192; *al-Khisal*, p. 634; *Tafsir*, Furat al-Kufi, p. 368.
[16] *Mishkat al-Anwar, p. 18*; *a similar narration exists in al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 65, Hadith 4.
[17] *Misbah al-Shari'a*, pp 79-80; *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 69, pp. 124-125.
[18] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 452, Hadith 1.
[19] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 8, p. 351, Hadith 1, cited from *al-Tawhid*.

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