THE WILL OF ALLAH AND OUR DESTINY

Part X: The Guidance of Allah

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Abstract: *In this part, the customs of Allah concerning His guidance towards His religion as well as people's role and duty in this regard are discussed in details. The classification of people to the unguided, the believers, and the disbelievers based on the received guidance is explained. Moreover, the accommodation of Allah for granting success to people is addressed.*

Keywords: *Guidance; pure nature (Fitra); belief; disbelief; success; forsaking*

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١ Introduction

The holy Quran makes it quite clear that guidance (*Hidaya*) and misguidance (*Idhlal*) is by Allah's permission. Allah guides whom He wills and leaves astray whom He wills. For instance, we read in the holy Quran:

ذلِكَ هُدَى اَللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ مَنْ يُضْلِلِ اَللَّهُ فَما لَهُ مِنْ هادٍ ... وَ مَنْ يَهْدِ اَللَّهُ فَما لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍ

This is the guidance of Allah. He guides by this whom He wills, and for he whom Allah misguides there will be no guide... And for he whom Allah guides there will be none to lead astray. (39:23, 36-37)

وَ لَوْ شاءَ اَللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً واحِدَةً وَ لكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ لَتُسْئَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

If Allah (so) willed, He would certainly make you all one people. But He misguides whom He wills, and guides whom He wills; and you will certainly be called to account for what you were acting. (16:93)

أَ فَلَمْ يَيْأَسِ اَلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ لَوْ يَشاءُ اَللَّهُ لَهَدَى اَلنَّاسَ جَمِيعاً

Have not yet the believers desperately realized that, if Allah (so) willed, He would have guided all mankind (to the right path)? (13:31)

Of the questions that may come to one's mind when reading these tokens are: Whom does Allah guide? Is guidance rationally incumbent upon Allah? Does Allah misguide any of His creations? If so, what is the meaning of misguidance attributed to Allah? Are guidance and misguidance Allah's actions? What is our role in receiving Allah's guidance? In this article, we mainly focus on the guidance of Allah, and in the next article of this series, we will discuss the meaning of misguidance attributed to Allah. However, we cannot separate these two issues completely as they usually appear together in sacred texts.

٢ Showing the Right Path

According to the holy Quran and sayings of the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and the Imams *(PBUT)*, there are different levels of guidance. The first level of guidance is *showing the way* and *giving the address*. Everyone is lost, astray, and in darkness until Allah shows him His path. When Allah does not will to provide initial 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. Such people constitute one of the three types of *Mustadh'afin* (those who are made weak) mentioned in the holy Quran.[١] A person who is not guided by Allah, will be eventually misguided by the false ideas produced by himself or others. Allah states:

قالَ لَئِنْ لَمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ اَلْقَوْمِ اَلضَّالِّينَ .

(Abraham* (PBUH) *said:) Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be of the folk who are lost (*Dhaal*). (6:77)

مَنْ يَهْدِ اَللَّهُ فَهُوَ اَلْمُهْتَدِ وَ مَنْ يُضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرْشِداً .

He whom Allah guides, is rightly guided; but he whom Allah leaves astray, you will not find for him any advising guardian. (18:17)

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Kumayl narrated that the Commander of Faithful, Imam Ali *(PBUH)* said:

يَا كُمَيْلُ لَوْ لَمْ يَظْهَرْ نَبِيٌّ وَ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُؤْمِنٌ تَقِيٌّ لَكَانَ فِي دُعَائِهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مُخْطِئاً أَوْ مُصِيباً بَلْ وَ اللَّهِ مُخْطِئاً حَتَّى يَنْصِبَهُ اللَّهُ لِذَلِكَ وَ يُؤَهِّلَهُ.

"... O Kumail! Had no Prophet appeared on earth while there was a mindful believer, do you think, in his call towards Allah, he would go wrong or right? Nay, by Allah! He would go wrong until Allah appoints him and qualifies him for that (i.e., makes him a prophet and teaches him how to worship Him)."[۲]

Creations have no way to the Creator by themselves. He is Allah who may grant His recognition by intellect (*Aql*) and the recognition of His religion by sending them religious packages (*Shar'e*) through His Messengers. Abd al-A'alaa narrated:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع أَصْلَحَكَ اللَّهُ هَلْ جُعِلَ فِي النَّاسِ أَدَاةٌ يَنَالُونَ بِهَا الْمَعْرِفَةَ قَالَ فَقَالَ لَا قُلْتُ فَهَلْ كُلِّفُوا الْمَعْرِفَةَ قَالَ لَا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْبَيَانُ لا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْساً إِلَّا وُسْعَها وَ لا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْساً إِلَّا ما آتاها. قَالَ وَ 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 said to Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)*, "May Allah rectify your matter! Did Allah place a device in people by which they could (independently) reach the recognition (of His religious rules by themselves)?" He *(PBUH)* replied, "No!" I said, "Then, are they required to have recognition (of those instructions) by themselves?" He *(PBUH)* said, "No! The explanation (of the rules) are for Allah. 'Allah does not require for a soul more than its ability,' (2:286) and 'Allah does not obligate any person beyond what He has brought for him.' (65:7)" I also asked about Allah's saying, "And Allah will not mislead a people after He has guided them until He makes clear to them as to what they should avoid." (9:115) He *(PBUH)* replied, "(it means) until He lets make them cognizant of what pleases Him and what displeases Him."[۳]

True religious guidance exclusively comes from Allah, and no one can find the path until Allah shows it to him through His messengers and His proofs, peace be upon them all. Thus, guidance to His religion is not our action. It is the action of Allah carried by His vicegerents, who are the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* and the Imams *(PBUT)*. Alternatively, we can say, guidance is the action of the Imams *(PBUT)*, which is carried out according to Allah's command and inspiration. Allah states:

وَ جَعَلْناهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنا وَ أَوْحَيْنا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ اَلْخَيْراتِ وَ إِقامَ اَلصَّلاةِ وَ إِيتاءَ اَلزَّكاةِ وَ كانُوا لَنا عابِدِينَ.

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And We made them Imams, guiding (men) by Our command, and We inspired them the doing of good deeds, establishing prayers, and giving charity; and they constantly served Us. (21:73)

وَ إِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلى صِراطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

And most certainly you (O Prophet) guide to a straight way. (42:52)

أُولئِكَ اَلَّذِينَ هَدَى اَللَّهُ فَبِهُداهُمُ اِقْتَدِهْ.

They are those whom Allah guided. Thus, follow their guidance. (6:90)

The guiding Imams *(PBUT)* received their guidance from Allah, and since they only guide according to Allah's instructions, Allah attributes their action to Himself in other tokens of the holy Quran.

Once Allah wills to guide a servant, He may motivate him to search for the truth by providing some signs in his heart and invoking his intellect. After this awareness, his intellect obligates him to search for the truth, and which paves the way find the guidance of His vicegerents, provided that Allah has dispatched one. In this case, he does some voluntary steps to reach the truth. Several traditionists narrated that Imam Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَلَّ وَ عَزَّ إِذَا أَرَادَ بِعَبْدٍ خَيْراً نَكَتَ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةً بَيْضَاءَ فَجَالَ الْقَلْبُ يَطْلُبُ الْحَقَ ثُمَّ هُوَ إِلَى أَمْرِكُمْ أَسْرَعُ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ إِلَى وَكْرِهِ.

"When the Lord of might and majesty intends a goodness for a servant, He puts a white spot (of light) into his heart, which instigates his heart to search for the truth. Then, his (willing) approach to your faith shall be quicker than the approach of a bird towards its nest."[۴]

Moreover, Abd al-Hamid Ibn Abi al-Ala narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِذَا أَرَادَ بِعَبْدٍ خَيْراً نَكَتَ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةً مِنْ نُورٍ فَأَضَاءَ لَهَا سَمْعُهُ وَ قَلْبُهُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ أَحْرَصَ عَلَى مَا فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْكُمْ.

"Verily once the Lord of might and majesty intends a goodness for a servant, He places a spot of light into his heart that enlightens his hearing and his heart so much so that he will become more eager than you in what is in your hands (of our teachings and *Walaya*)."[۵]

Anyone who sees or hears some people of different faiths is no longer weak because Allah has granted him discernment to distinguish religious disagreements, and rationally motivated him to find His last religion and to respond to His warnings and glad tidings. This is of course with the assumption that Allah has intended to show him the right path and has already

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sent a message that is not out of his reach. After reviewing the message attributed to Allah, if he became faithful based on the rational elements of the message such as the Unity of Allah, his faith would be excusable for him before Allah. If what he thought as evidence of the truth of religion was not accurate, he will be again considered "not guided" (*Dhaal*), though he is no longer weak. However, such wrong certainty will soon replace with doubt. About weakness, Abu Basir narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

قَالَ مَنْ عَرَفَ اخْتِلاَفَ النَّاسِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُسْتَضْعَفٍ.

*"He who recognizes the disagreement of people (about religion), he is not weak (*Mustadh'af*)."*[۶]

Moreover, in reply to a letter by Ali bin Suwayd who asked Imam Musa al-Kadhim *(PBUH)* about the meaning of weak, the Imam *(PBUH)* wrote:

الضَّعِيفُ مَنْ لَمْ تُرْفَعْ إِلَيْهِ حُجَّةٌ وَ لَمْ يَعْرِفِ الِاخْتِلاَفَ فَإِذَا عَرَفَ الِاخْتِلاَفَ فَلَيْسَ بِمُسْتَضْعَفٍ.

"A weak is a person for whom (Allah's) evidence/proof has not been established and does not recognize the disagreements (of people about the religion). But when he recognizes the disagreement, he is no longer weak."[۷]

The above sayings imply that the weak who have not given any clue by Allah towards the truth are few in number especially in today's world of communication.

۳ Placing the Servant on the Right Path

Allah may not only motivate towards His path, but may decide to initially bring His servant on to the right path. This is all due to His mercy. Allah says:

وَ مَنْ يَشَأْ يَجْعَلْهُ عَلى صِراطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.

And whomever He wills He places on a way that is straight. (6:39)

Several traditionists narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى إِذَا أَرَادَ بِعَبْدٍ خَيْراً أَخَذَ بِعُنُقِهِ فَأَدْخَلَهُ فِي هَذَا الْأَمْرِ إِدْخَالًا.

"Verily once the Lord of might and majesty intends a goodness (*Khair*) for a servant, He takes him by his neck and arrives him on this matter (i.e., our *Walaya*) in an amazing way."[۸]

Moreover, Nabata Ibn Muhammad narrated:

أَدْخَلَنِي مُيَسِّرُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ عَلَى أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع وَ

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فِي الْبَيْتِ نَحْوٌ مِنْ أَرْبَعِينَ رَجُلًا فَجَعَلَ مُيَسِّرٌ يَقُولُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ هَذَا فُلَانُ بْنُ فُلَانٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِ كَذَا وَ كَذَا حَتَّى انْتَهَى إِلَيَّ فَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَيْسَ فِي أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ أَحَدٌ يَعْرِفُ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ غَيْرُهُ فَقَالَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَرَادَ بِعَبْدٍ خَيْراً وَكَّلَ بِهِ مَلَكاً فَأَخَذَ بِعَضُدِهِ فَأَدْخَلَهُ فِي هَذَا الْأَمْرِ.

Muyassar Ibn Abd al-Aziz came to us in the presence of Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* while there were some 40 men in the house. Then, Muyassar said to the Imam *(PBUH)*, "May I be sacrificed for you! The name of this man (referring to one of the audience) is so-and-so, son of so-and-so from such and such family, and none among his family except him recognizes this matter (i.e., the *Walaya* of Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)*)." Thereupon, Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said, "Certainly, when the Lord of might and majesty intends a goodness (*Khair*) for a servant, He puts an angel in charge of him, who takes his upper arm and enters him into this matter (submission to divinely appointed leaders)."[٩]

Consider a child who listens to his father though sometimes unwillingly. His father may limit his friendship, and forces him to go to a religious school against his will. Although the child does not like such restrictions at the beginning, he may later on, appreciate the action of his father, his care and concern. He may gradually become interested in the religious way of life, and willingly submit to the instructions of religion. With much greater care and concern, and due to His mercy, Allah may initially force a servant to the right path against his will if He knows (in His foreknowledge) that he will later become interested in righteousness and will eventually follow His path willingly. Fudayl Ibn Yasar narrated:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع نَدْعُو النَّاسَ إِلَى هَذَا الْأَمْرِ؟ فَقَالَ لَا يَا فُضَيْلُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا أَرَادَ بِعَبْدٍ خَيْراً أَمَرَ مَلَكاً فَأَخَذَ بِعُنُقِهِ فَأَدْخَلَهُ فِي هَذَا الْأَمْرِ طَائِعاً أَوْ كَارِهاً.

I said to Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)*, "Shall we summon people to this faith?" He *(PBUH)* said, "No, O Fudhail! Verily when Allah intends a goodness (*Khair*) for a servant, He commands an angel who grasps his neck and brings him into this matter willingly or unwillingly."[١٠]

Thus, if Allah blocks the path of destruction and initially compels a servant to the right path, it is only due to His mercy. Although some prior good and wise behaviors from a servant may help in receiving this type of superior guidance, Allah may initiate mercy without one being worthy of it and He does this for whom He wills. In contrast, Allah never initiates wrath and in no way compels anyone to a wrong path. It is the disobedient servant who chooses to follow the whispers of the Satan, and

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Allah may open the way of violation for Him if He wills to treat him according to His justice.

٤ Is Guiding Everyone Incumbent Upon Allah?

In one classification, Allah's guidance can be divided into two types: the natural guidance (*Hidayat al-Takwini*), and the instructive guidance (*Hidayat al-Tashri'i*). The first type is related to Allah's set laws of creation and natural evolution. The second type is related to the laws of religion and the commands that are sent down for people to follow without forcing them. None of these types of guidance is incumbent upon Allah. He created what He willed and guided what He willed. However, the first type of guidance for all of His creation is natural outcome of Allah's choice on starting and maintaining the creation. This includes all the natural phenomena in the universe, which happen according to what Allah has chosen, planned, and decreed as the laws of universe, and no one else has any choice or ability to break or change these laws. Only Allah can change them as He wills.

The second type of guidance is natural outcome of Allah's decision to bestow humankind reason, to try them, and to give reward and penalty for their actions. Allah provides His religious guidance by dispatching messengers enjoyed with formal inspiration. Allah did not provide this type of guidance to everyone in this world. Nor did anyone who received religious guidance followed it, because this type of guidance is not an imposed one. Everyone has been granted pure nature (*Fitra*), which is interpreted in the traditions as (innate) monotheism. This natural belief is due to the built-in minimal intellect (*'Aql*) that Allah bestowed to all his servants initially, by which they can acknowledge His messengers and have the ability to understand their message and follow their instructions, which is called *monotheism in practice*. However, not everyone received explicit religious guidance through His messengers. The very existence of the weak (*Mustadh'afin*) proves that Allah does not guide everyone to His religion. Guidance is a privilege, and is not a right, because no creation has any right over Allah. According to the holy Quran, those who are guided by Allah are indebted to His grace and bounties without having any right to it. Allah states in the Quran:

يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلامَكُمْ بَلِ اَللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَداكُمْ لِلإِيمانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صادِقِينَ .

They impress on you (O Prophet) as a favor that they have embraced Islam.

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Say, “Count not your Islam as a favor upon me. Nay! Allah has conferred a favor upon you that He has guided you to the faith, if you be true and sincere.”(49:17)

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اَللَّهُ عَلَى اَلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولاً مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آياتِهِ وَ يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَ يُعَلِّمُهُمُ اَلْكِتابَ وَ اَلْحِكْمَةَ وَ إِنْ كانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلالٍ مُبِينٍ .

Indeed, Allah confer a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a messenger from themselves, reciting unto them the signs of Allah, cleansing them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest aberrance (*Dhalal*). (3:164)

Calling something a favor is meaningful only when the person who has received the favor did not have any right over the benefactor for that. If Allah guides a person, He has acted according to His grace. If He chooses not to, He has only withheld some of His bounties and He cannot be questioned for doing so, because it is not an act of injustice. In the holy Quran, we also read:

قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ اللَّهُ واسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ اللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ.

Say, “Truly grace is in the hand of Allah. He grants it to whom He wills, and Allah abundant grantor and knowers of (all things).” He designates His (special) mercy for whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of the great favor. (3:73-74)

Nonetheless, a person who is not initially guided by Allah, will not be treated unjustly, and will not be punished for not following the religion that did not reach him as opposed to those who hear the message but reject it. Allah, the sublime, informed us that:

وَ ما كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّى نَبْعَثَ رَسُولاً .

And We do not punish until We send a messenger (to give instructions and warnings). (17:15)

رُسُلاً مُبَشِّرِينَ وَ مُنْذِرِينَ لِئَلاَّ يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اَللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ اَلرُّسُلِ وَ كانَ اَللَّهُ عَزِيزاً حَكِيماً.

(We sent) messengers who gave glad tidings as well as warning so that mankind have no plea against Allah after (receiving) the messengers. And Allah is mighty and wise. (4:165)

If Allah does not provide any religious guidance for a person, he will not have any opportunity to accept or reject His signs. Therefore, he is neither a believer nor a disbeliever. We recite in the holy Quran:

كانَ اَلنَّاسُ أُمَّةً واحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اَللَّهُ اَلنَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَ مُنْذِرِينَ.

Mankind was one nation (i.e., they were

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not divided to believers and disbelievers). Then Allah sent prophets with glad tidings and warnings. (2:213)

On the commentary of the above token, Ya'qub Ibn Shu'ayb narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

كان هذا قبل نوح أمة واحدة فبدا لله فأرسل الرسل قبل نوح، قلت أ على هدى كانوا أم على ضلالة قال بل كانوا ضلالا، كانوا لا مؤمنين و لا كافرين و لا مشركين.

"This is about a period before Noah *(PBUH)* (during which Allah had not sent any messenger). Then Allah made *Badaa* (initiated a change) and sent some messengers before Noah *(PBUH)*." I asked, "Were they on guidance or misguidance?" He *(PBUH)* replied, "They were astray (*Dhaal*). They were neither believers nor disbelievers nor polytheists."[١١]

In another Hadith, Mas'ada narrated that concerning this token of the holy Quran, Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

كان ذلك قبل نوح، قيل فعلى هدى كانوا قال بل كانوا ضلالا،... لم يكونوا على هدى كانوا على فطرة الله التي فطرهم عليها لا تبديل لخلق الله، و لم يكونوا ليهتدوا حتى يهديهم الله أ ما تسمع يقول إبراهيم لَئِنْ لَمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ أي ناسيا للميثاق.

"This is about an era before Noah *(PBUH)* when people were lost and astray... They were not under (religious) guidance. However, they lived by the nature (*Fitra*) based on which Allah had made them. And there is no change in the creation (of *Fitra*) by Allah. Yet, they were not (religiously) guided until Allah provided them guidance (through the prophets). Haven't you heard (how the Quran recounts) that Abraham *(PBUH)* said, 'Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be of the folk who are lost (Dhaal)' (6:77) which means being in the state of forgetfulness with regard to the covenant (that they made in the world of particles (*Dhar*))."[١٢]

As implied by the traditions quoted in the previous part of these series, *Fitra* means the intrinsic acknowledgement of monotheism before the mind becomes biased by false doctrines.

As a side comment, the existence of the unguided people does not negate Allah as being "the best of the creators" (mentioned in chapter 23, token 14). This token does not necessarily imply that Allah can only have one perfect possible plan in His creation. The token states that He is the best of the creators, not that His creations and plans should be the best possible choice that He could undertake. The word "best" refers to Allah's capability and power in creating, not necessarily the situation of all His creations. The best creator may decide to create a deficient, weak, immature, infertile creation or phenomenon. He

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may also intend to create handicapped individuals according to His will just as a knowledgeable person who is the master of speech may decide to give a weak speech in a certain place due to some reason that may be unknown to us. The Essence of Allah is pure from any weakness, but His creations are not. Moreover, as we mentioned, the "best possible" plan is not a fixed reality beside Allah. This is because Allah is the creator of His plan, and everything He wants to do at any time becomes a possible reality.

It should be noted that the existence of unguided individuals does not nullify Allah's aims on creation. It is not necessary that Allah inform His creation of His aims. In fact, His creation may be totally ignorant of His aims and this does not necessarily make His actions void. Neither did Allah require us nor did He grant us the capability to rationalize all His actions. We do not encompass His will so as to understand His aims. Only those aims that He Himself has informed us through His Messengers can be attributed to Him. Had Allah willed to show guidance to all people, He would have done so, and in that case, it would have been just fine as another possible plan. However, we know that He did not will so, and we are not in a position to question Allah's choice. We regard Allah pure from acting aimlessly, and we know that His actions are goal oriented. However, the choice of goal is of Allah's creation, and Allah is far above being restricted by His own creation. He could have created His aim differently, in the first place. He can also make *al-Badaa*, i.e., change the created goal and re-plan accordingly. This issue had been addressed in part 4 of this series

Thus, although He has aims in all of His actions, His aims do not regulate Him. Rather He regulates His aims. Note that Allah has no goal for Himself, as He does not evolve, thus, He defines the goal only for His creation.

Although there is no rational necessity that Allah informs of His aim on creation, He willed to notify us through His Messenger that He has created humankind to worship Him voluntarily, while He is free from all needs and does not need our worship. It is humankind that Allah has favored with this opportunity to recognize Him and voluntarily worship Him so as to get near to Him and enjoy His great blessings. Only people who receive His recognition and guidance can practically submit to Him voluntarily. Although, a natural recognition was built into their *Fitra*, and even though they received a type of recognition in the word of particles (*Aalam al-Dhar*), they have forgotten it in this world. Allah may bring some severe situation for any

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individual so that he remembers Him as the only source of refuge when he becomes helpless, and in this manner, He grants him His recognition. However, to the time that external guidance (through the prophets) does not reach him, He does not know His commands so as to submit to His guidance. The traditions state that people for whom Allah did not will to receive His formal commands in this world, will be put under a test on the Day of Judgment, were they will recognize Allah and will receive an order from Him. Those who submit to Him at that time will join the believers and will enter Paradise. On the other hand, those who violate His command will become disbelievers. Zurarah narrated:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ سَأَلْتُهُ هَلْ سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص عَنِ الْأَطْفَالِ فَقَالَ قَدْ سُئِلَ فَقَالَ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا عَامِلِينَ ثُمَّ قَالَ يَا زُرَارَةُ هَلْ تَدْرِي قَوْلَهُ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا عَامِلِينَ قُلْتُ لاَ قَالَ لِلَّهِ فِيهِمُ الْمَشِيئَةُ إِنَّهُ إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَامَةِ جَمَعَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ الْأَطْفَالَ وَ الَّذِي مَاتَ مِنَ النَّاسِ فِي الْفَتْرَةِ وَ الشَّيْخَ الْكَبِيرَ الَّذِي أَدْرَكَ النَّبِيَّ ص وَ هُوَ لاَ يَعْقِلُ وَ الْأَصَمَّ وَ الْأَبْكَمَ الَّذِي لاَ يَعْقِلُ وَ الْمَجْنُونَ وَ الْأَبْلَهَ الَّذِي لاَ يَعْقِلُ وَ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ يَحْتَجُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ فَيَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِمْ مَلَكاً مِنَ الْمَلاَئِكَةِ فَيُؤَجِّجُ لَهُمْ نَاراً ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِمْ مَلَكاً فَيَقُولُ لَهُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَثِبُوا فِيهَا فَمَنْ دَخَلَهَا كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ بَرْداً وَ سَلاَماً وَ أُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَ مَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهَا دَخَلَ النَّارَ.

I asked Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)*, "Was Allah's Messenger *(PBUH&HF)* asked about the destiny of those who die in childhood?" He *(PBUH)* replied, "Yes, he was asked, and he answered, 'Certainly, Allah knows better what they would do (when given an opportunity).'" He *(PBUH)* then said, "O Zurara! Do you know what he *(PBUH&HF)* meant by this saying?" I replied, "No!" The Imam *(PBUH)* continued, "Allah has a will on (testing) them. Certainly, when the Day of Judgment arrives, the Lord of might and majesty shall gather all the children (who died in childhood), (the weak) people who died according to their nature (*al-Fitra*), those of elderly who met the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* while they could no longer comprehend (due to their age), those of the (physical) deaf and the dumb who could not understand, the insane, and the idiots. All of them will advance arguments to Allah, the mighty and the majestic (about their state). Thus, Allah will send to them an angel who will set fire before them. Then, Allah will dispatch an angel who will state to them, 'Certainly your Lord has commanded you that you should leap into it.' Whoever enters into it, the fire will become cool and peaceful with him, and whoever turns away from it will enter the Hell fire."[١٣]

Thus, in contrast with some deviant views, the above-mentioned saying of the Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* (*Certainly, Allah knows better what they would do*) does not mean that Allah will punish

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them according to His knowledge of unseen (*al-Ghaib*) without testing them in reality. The knowledge mentioned here is about the knowledge of what Allah willed, not the knowledge of what He did not will. Although Allah knows in His *Ghaib* what the weak do if they are given an opportunity, Allah has willed that everyone should receive explicit guidance and should be tested for obedience before entering the Paradise or Hell.

Thus, all human beings will eventually have an opportunity to worship Allah and to obey His commandment. Just as we do not consider the life of a person who receives guidance a moment before his death as worthless, the life of those who did not receive guidance in this world is not worthless either, because life is not limited to this world.

The existence of the weak (*Mustadh'afin*) in this world may have several reasons that we may be largely unaware. However, now that we know Allah's will on not guiding everyone in this world, we can say that the least advantage of the existence of the weak is that one can truly sense and comprehend the value of the divine gift and privilege of 'guidance' when observing some people who are not blessed with such a gift, just as one values his health when visiting the ill and the handicapped.

٥ Allah's Guidance vs. Our Choice

As we have shown previously, guidance is the action of Allah and is of His art; therefore, it is not our choice. Once Allah shows us the way (or puts us on it), we are considered initially guided, and are no longer lost and astray in an absolute sense. At this time, we have a choice to accept Allah's guidance or to reject it. He who accepts guidance is a believer, and he who rejects it is a disbeliever. Thus, presenting the guidance to religion and accepting it are two separate issues. The former is the voluntary action of Allah while the latter is our voluntary action. We are not responsible for the voluntary action of Allah, while we are responsible for our voluntary action. Burayd Ibn Mu'awiyah al-Ijilli narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

لَيْسَ لِلَّهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ أَنْ يَعْرِفُوا قَبْلَ أَنْ يُعَرِّفَهُمْ وَ لِلْخَلْقِ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُعَرِّفَهُمْ وَ لِلَّهِ عَلَى الْخَلْقِ إِذَا عَرَّفَهُمْ أَنْ يَقْبَلُوهُ.

"It is not the duty of the creation towards Allah to recognize (His religion) before Allah informs them. It is for Allah to introduce (it) to the creation. The duty of the creation towards Allah is that if He presented them (the religion), they accept it."[١٤]

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In contrast to guidance that comes from Allah, belief (i.e., accepting the guidance) and disbelief (i.e., rejecting the guidance) are our actions and are not imposed by Allah though He wills them (i.e., He knows and permits our choice). In fact, the holy Quran makes a clear distinction between presenting guidance and accepting it. For instance:

إِنَّا هَدَيْناهُ اَلسَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شاكِراً وَ إِمَّا كَفُوراً .

We have guided him to the path, be he grateful or ungrateful. (76:3)

فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدىً فَمَنِ اِتَّبَعَ هُدايَ فَلا يَضِلُّ وَ لا يَشْقى.

... Thus, if My guidance comes to you, whosoever follows My guidance, will not be lost and will not fall into misery. (20:123)

In another token, Allah states that He presented guidance to the people of *Thamud*, but they rejected it:

وَ أَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْناهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا اَلْعَمى عَلَى اَلْهُدى فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ صاعِقَةُ اَلْعَذابِ اَلْهُونِ بِما كانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ.

As to the Thamud, We gave them guidance, but they preferred blindness (of heart) to guidance. Thus, the thunderbolt of the chastisement of humiliation seized them for what they had earned. (41:17)

Sulaym Ibn Qays al-Hilali narrated:

سَمِعْتُ عَلِيّاً ص يَقُولُ وَ أَتَاهُ رَجُلٌ فَقَالَ لَهُ مَا أَدْنَى مَا يَكُونُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ مُؤْمِناً وَ أَدْنَى مَا يَكُونُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ كَافِراً وَ أَدْنَى مَا يَكُونُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ ضَالًّا فَقَالَ لَهُ قَدْ سَأَلْتَ فَافْهَمِ الْجَوَابَ أَمَّا أَدْنَى مَا يَكُونُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ مُؤْمِناً أَنْ يُعَرِّفَهُ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى نَفْسَهُ فَيُقِرَّ لَهُ بِالطَّاعَةِ وَ يُعَرِّفَهُ نَبِيَّهُ ص فَيُقِرَّ لَهُ بِالطَّاعَةِ وَ يُعَرِّفَهُ إِمَامَهُ وَ حُجَّتَهُ فِي أَرْضِهِ وَ شَاهِدَهُ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ فَيُقِرَّ لَهُ بِالطَّاعَةِ قُلْتُ لَهُ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ إِنْ جَهِلَ جَمِيعَ الأَشْيَاءِ إِلاَّ مَا وَصَفْتَ قَالَ نَعَمْ إِذَا أُمِرَ أَطَاعَ وَ إِذَا نُهِيَ انْتَهَى وَ أَدْنَى مَا يَكُونُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ كَافِراً مَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّ شَيْئاً نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَمَرَ بِهِ وَ نَصَبَهُ دِيناً يَتَوَلَّى عَلَيْهِ وَ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّهُ يَعْبُدُ الَّذِي أَمَرَهُ بِهِ وَ إِنَّمَا يَعْبُدُ الشَّيْطَانَ وَ أَدْنَى مَا يَكُونُ بِهِ الْعَبْدُ ضَالًّا أَنْ لاَ يَعْرِفَ حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى وَ شَاهِدَهُ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِي أَمَرَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ بِطَاعَتِهِ وَ فَرَضَ وَلاَيَتَهُ.

Imam Ali *(PBUH)* was asked, “What are the least (specifications) by which a servant is a believer, a disbeliever, or is considered not guided (*Dhaal*)?” The Imam *(PBUH)* replied to the questioner, “You asked your question, and now reflect on (my) answer. The lowest limit that categorizes a servant as a believer is that Allah, the sublime, introduces Himself to him and he acknowledges obedience to Him, and He introduces to him his prophet and he admits obedience to him, and He introduces to him his Imam—who is His proof on His earth and His witness over His creation—and he accepts obedience to him.” I asked, “O the Leader of the Faithful! Is he a believer even if he is ignorant of everything other than those you described?” He *(PBUH)* said, “Yes, because if he is commanded (i.e., if an

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Allah's command reaches him) he will obey, and if he is prohibited he will quit. On the other hand, the least thing that makes a servant a disbeliever is that he assumes something that Allah prohibited (in reality) as something that Allah has commanded, and sets it as a religious command (without any evidence having reached him) and adheres to it. He thinks he serves what Allah has ordered, while, in reality, he serves the Satan. And (finally) the least thing that categorizes a servant as a *Dhaal* (not guided) is that he does not know the proof of Allah, the sublime, who is His witness over His servants, whom Allah has commanded to his obedience and made obligatory accepting his guardianship (*Walaya*)."[١٥]

A person who seeks Allah's guidance and accepts it, is called *Muhtad*. According to the holy Quran, if one accepts Allah's previous guidance and seeks more guidance, Allah will increase His guidance for him. This means that Allah will make him more aware of His instructions. Again, this is not an urgent reaction and does not happen automatically, nor is Allah compelled to provide it. Rather, it is the custom (*Sunna*) of Allah, and Allah has chosen to act in this manner. Allah says:

وَ اَلَّذِينَ اِهْتَدَوْا زادَهُمْ هُدىً وَ آتاهُمْ تَقْواهُمْ.

For those who accepted guidance, He increased their guidance and bestowed on them their *Taqwa* (shield from misconduct). (47:17)

The root of word *Taqwa* is *W-Q-Y* (وقي) which means: to hold back. According to the above holy token, *Taqwa* (shield and protection from misconduct) is something that comes from Allah, and is given only to those who accept Allah's guidance and submit to Him. In other tokens, Allah commands us to observe *Taqwa* (to keep off from evil and to be watchful). This shows that, like guidance, *Taqwa* has two sides. Providing the shield is the action of Allah, while accepting this protection and avoiding the sin is our action because the shield that Allah provides is not a compulsory shield and one may walk away from it. The more we choose to avoid misconduct and the more we seek refuge in Allah, the greater protection we receive from Allah, which facilitates better conduct. About increasing the believers' guidance, Allah, to Whom belongs might and majesty, says:

وَ يَزِيدُ اَللّهُ اَلَّذِينَ اِهْتَدَوْا هُدىً.

And Allah advances in guidance those who seek/accept guidance. (19:76)

قُلْ إِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَإِنَّما أَضِلُّ عَلى نَفْسي وَ إِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ فَبِما يُوحي إِلَيَّ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ سَميعٌ قَريبٌ.

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Say: “If I let myself go stray, then I stray to my own loss. And if I am guided, then it is because of what my Lord inspired to me. He is Hearer, Near.

مَنِ اِهْتَدى فَإِنَّما يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَ مَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّما يَضِلُّ عَلَيْها وَ لا تَزِرُ وازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرى وَ ما كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّى نَبْعَثَ رَسُولاً.

He who seeks/accepts guidance, seeks/accepts it for his own soul, and he who prefers deviation and let himself go stray does so to his own loss. No bearer of burdens bears the burden of another, nor would We punish until We had sent an Messenger (to give warning). (17:15)

Thus, although guidance is the action of Allah, good behavior of a servant may draw near Allah’s blessings and His guidance. It is narrated that the Leader of the Faithful said:

قَدْ بُصِّرْتُمْ إِنْ أَبْصَرْتُمْ وَ قَدْ هُدِيتُمْ إِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُمْ وَ أُسْمِعْتُمْ إِنِ اسْتَمَعْتُمْ.

“Certainly, you have been made to see if you have looked attentively. You have been guided if you sought/accepted guidance. And you have been made to hear if you have listened.”[١٦]

٦ People’s Role in the Guidance of Others

A question that may rise here is that to what degree is one responsible for inviting others into religion? As we know, guidance is Allah’s choice and He guides whom He wills. However, Allah may will that a misguided individual become informed of the message of Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)* through what is in the hand of others from their teachings. This will happen one way or another, but exactly according to what Allah already planned. Therefore, if a certain person fails to inform the one whom Allah intended to guide, it means Allah has blessed another person to perform this task exactly as He willed.

However, we are commanded to call people by our actions, not by our tongues. This requires that we practice the religion before we want to teach it to others. Moreover, we are prohibited to dispute with people over the religion. It is neither guaranteed that a certain individual understands the message (so that he then becomes responsible for it) nor is it guaranteed that such a person would accept guidance. The former is due to Allah’s choice (He let understand whom He wills) while the latter is due to the choice of the individual in accepting and rejecting Allah’s guidance.

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Moreover, the traditions discourage us to indiscriminately target the general populace in our call to Allah's religion. According to the holy Quran, the majority of people on earth will not believe,[١] are wicked,[١] are[٧] not thankful,[١] and will abide in Hell.[٢] These tokens imply that—contrary to what is usually assumed—the weak (i.e., people who are not initially guided by Allah) are in minority in the world, and most people have heard and perceived the truth albeit not in the same level. Summoning the general populace to religion with clear evidence is the duty of Allah's representatives in order to cut people's excuse on the Day of Judgment. However, we only become responsible for the minority who ask us for help, are eager to know the truth, or show good potentials in following the religion and submitting to Allah alone. We may give some hints about the religion only to those who are willing to hear it from us. Then, whomever Allah wills to guide will get the hint and will look for the truth. Let us now consider some of the traditions in this regard. Ibn Sadaqah narrated that Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* said:

كُونُوا دُعَاةَ النَّاسِ بِأَعْمَالِكُمْ وَ لَا تَكُونُوا دُعَاةً بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ فَإِنَّ الْأَمْرَ لَيْسَ حَيْثُ يَذْهَبُ إِلَيْهِ النَّاسُ إِنَّهُ مَنْ أَخَذَ مِيثَاقَهُ أَنَّهُ مِنَّا فَلَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنَّا وَ لَوْ ضَرَبْنَا خَيْشُومَهُ بِالسَّيْفِ وَ مَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَّا ثُمَّ حَبَوْنَا لَهُ الدُّنْيَا لَمْ يُحِبَّنَا.

"Be the callers of people by your deeds, and do not be the callers by your tongue! Certainly, this matter (i.e., accepting our *Walaya*) is not like how people think. Verily, he who has taken his covenant shall be with us and shall not be left out of us even if we (Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)*) hit his nose with a sword. And he who is not of us, even if we grant him the (entire) world, will not (choose to) love us."[٢١]

Ali Ibn Uqba narrated from his father who said: I heard Imam al- al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* saying:

اجْعَلُوا أَمْرَكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَ لَا تَجْعَلُوهُ لِلنَّاسِ فَإِنَّهُ مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ لِلَّهِ وَ مَا كَانَ لِلنَّاسِ فَلَا يَصْعَدُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَ لَا تُخَاصِمُوا النَّاسَ لِدِينِكُمْ فَإِنَّ الْمُخَاصَمَةَ مَمْرَضَةٌ لِلْقَلْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ لِنَبِيِّهِ ص إِنَّكَ لا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَ لكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ قَالَ أَ فَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ذَرُوا النَّاسَ فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ أَخَذُوا عَنِ النَّاسِ وَ إِنَّكُمْ أَخَذْتُمْ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ أَبِي ع يَقُولُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِذَا كَتَبَ عَلَى عَبْدٍ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ فِي هَذَا الْأَمْرِ كَانَ أَسْرَعَ إِلَيْهِ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ إِلَى وَكْرِهِ.

"Set your affairs for Allah, and do not set them for people. Whatever is for Allah, will be counted as His, and whatever is for people, will not rise up to Allah. Do not dispute with people about your faith because argument and disputation sickens the heart. Allah, the

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sublime, said to His Prophet *(PBUH&HF)* 'Certainly! You do not (independently) guide whomever you want, but Allah guides whomever He wants (through you)' (28:56) and also said, 'Do you want to force people to become faithful?' (10:99) Leave people alone because people take (their religion) from people and you have taken it from the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)*. I heard my father *(PBUH)* saying, 'When the Lord of might and majesty writes for a person to enter in this matter (i.e., our *Walaya*), he shall arrive at it faster than the flight of a bird to its nest.'"[٢٢]

Humran Ibn A'ayun narrated:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع أَسْأَلُكَ أَصْلَحَكَ اللَّهُ فَقَالَ نَعَمْ فَقُلْتُ كُنْتُ عَلَى حَالٍ وَ أَنَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَى حَالٍ أُخْرَى كُنْتُ أَدْخُلُ الْأَرْضَ فَأَدْعُو الرَّجُلَ وَ الِاثْنَيْنِ وَ الْمَرْأَةَ فَيُنْقِذُ اللَّهُ مَنْ شَاءَ وَ أَنَا الْيَوْمَ لَا أَدْعُو أَحَداً فَقَالَ وَ مَا عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تُخَلِّيَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَ بَيْنَ رَبِّهِمْ فَمَنْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَهُ مِنْ ظُلْمَةٍ إِلَى نُورٍ أَخْرَجَهُ ثُمَّ قَالَ وَ لَا عَلَيْكَ إِنْ آنَسْتَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ خَيْراً أَنْ تَنْبِذَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْءَ نَبْذاً.

I said to Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)*, "May Allah rectify your matter! Before, I used to go out and invite one or two men and women to my faith, and Allah saved (from misguidance) whom He willed, but recently I do not do that anymore. The Imam *(PBUH)* replied, "It is doesn't matter if you do not intervene between them and their Lord, because If Allah intends to bring a person from darkness into light, He shall do it. But if you realized a goodness in someone there is no problem if you just drop him a hint."[٢٣]

However, one has much greater responsibility about those who listen to him and are under his guardianship, such as one's family. Sulayman Ibn Khalid narrated:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع إِنَّ لِي أَهْلَ بَيْتٍ وَ هُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ مِنِّي أَ فَأَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى هَذَا الْأَمْرِ فَقَالَ نَعَمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ يَقُولُ فِي كِتَابِهِ يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَ أَهْلِيكُمْ ناراً وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَ الْحِجارَةُ.

I said to Imam al-Sadiq *(PBUH)*, "I have a family who listen to me. Should I call them to this matter?" He *(PBUH)* said, "Yes! Verily, the Lord of might and majesty states in His Book, 'O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones.' (66:6)"[٢٤]

٧ Granting Success and Forsaking

According to the holy Quran and the sayings divinely-appointed leaders, all good things a servant performs and all evil deeds he avoids are due to Allah's help, assistance, and His arrangement, accommodation, well-suiting the

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situation. When one intends to conform to Allah's commandments and comply with His rules, Allah conforms the situation for him to succeed. This is called *Tawfiq*, which is usually translated as success but originally means "success in conforming to Allah's command". Thus, if Allah grants success to His servant in doing any good or avoiding any evil, he has acted according to His mercy and His grace.

On the other hand, After Allah sees individual's strong intention for sin, He may not prevent him from sin. This decision of Allah may also be as a response to one's previous bad deeds or disbelief. When one forsakes Allah's commandments and prohibitions and intends disobedience, Allah *may* forsake him and withdraw His help. Forsaking (*Khidhlan*) is the opposite of conforming for success (*Tawfiq*).

Allah does not forsake a person who intends to do good. However, He may or may not forsake him who intends to commit a sin. If He forsakes him and does not intervene between him and the situation of sin, it means that He wants to treat the person according to His justice, and if He does not forsake him, He has treated him according to His mercy. A forsaken person will certainly accomplish his intention in committing sin willingly by leave of Allah, but Allah does not compel him to sin. For any evil deed that man does, Allah's forsaking coincides according to His will without causing coercion.

On the other hand, a person who is assisted by Allah will accomplish his intention in acting upon a good deed willingly. Allah helps him because He knows the servant's intention for the good deed and because He wants to favor him achieve his action. For a goodness to manifest, Allah's accommodation is needed to coincide one's action.

The above arguments prove that neither does Allah's help compel the servant to good deed nor does Allah's forsaking compel him to evil deed, though they are necessary elements for the *manifestation* of good and bad deeds. Moreover, we noticed that conforming has two side so does forsaking, and they are all performed voluntarily. Allah's conforming or forsaking is due to His choice and is based on His knowledge on the servant's voluntary intention of conforming or forsaking Allah's commandments and prohibitions, respectively.

Jabir al-Ju'fi narrated:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ سَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ مَعْنَى لَا حَوْلَ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ فَقَالَ مَعْنَاهُ لَا حَوْلَ لَنَا عَنْ مَعْصِيَةِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بِعَوْنِ اللَّهِ وَ لَا قُوَّةَ لَنَا عَلَى طَاعَةِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بِتَوْفِيقِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ.

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I asked Imam al-Baqir *(PBUH)* about the meaning of *"There is neither any deterrence*[۲۵] (*Hawl*) *nor any strength* (*Quwwa*) *except by Allah."* The Imam *(PBUH)* replied, "It means there is no obstacle for us against Allah's disobedience except by Allah's assistance (*'Awn*), and there is no strength for us for Allah's obedience except by the accommodation and conformation (*Tawfiq*) of Allah, the mighty and the majestic."[۲۶]

Al-Hashimi narrated:

سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ جَعْفَرَ بْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ ع عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ ... وَ ما تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ وَ قَوْلُهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلا غالِبَ لَكُمْ وَ إِنْ يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ فَقَالَ إِذَا فَعَلَ الْعَبْدُ مَا أَمَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ بِهِ مِنَ الطَّاعَةِ كَانَ فِعْلُهُ وِفْقاً لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ سُمِّيَ الْعَبْدُ بِهِ مُوَفَّقاً وَ إِذَا أَرَادَ الْعَبْدُ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ فِي شَيْءٍ مِنْ مَعَاصِي اللَّهِ فَحَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ تِلْكَ الْمَعْصِيَةِ فَتَرَكَهَا كَانَ تَرْكُهُ لَهَا بِتَوْفِيقِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَ مَتَى خُلِّيَ بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ الْمَعْصِيَةِ فَلَمْ يَحُلْ بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَهَا حَتَّى يَرْتَكِبَهَا فَقَدْ خَذَلَهُ وَ لَمْ يَنْصُرْهُ وَ لَمْ يُوَفِّقْهُ.

I asked Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq *(PBUH)* about the saying of the Lord of might and majesty: "(Jethro [Shu'aib *(PBUH)*] said:) and my success (*Tawfiq*) is only by Allah," (11:88) and His saying, "If Allah helps you, none can overcome you, and if He forsakes you, who is there, afterwards, that can help you?" (3:160) The Imam *(PBUH)* said, "When a servant acts upon a commandment that the Lord of might and majesty ordered, his action is in conformity (*Wifq*) with the commandment of Allah, and thus, such a servant is called successful or well-conformed (*Muwaffaq*). Moreover, if a servant intends to commit a sin, but Allah intervenes (by giving him signals or by putting some obstacles on his way as reminders) and he leaves it, his leaving the sin was by Allah's accommodation and conformation (*Tawfiq*) (towards obedience). However, if Allah does not intervene between the servant and the sin, and He does not make barrier until he (voluntarily) commits it, He has, indeed, forsaken him (*Khidhlan*), did not help him, and did not grant him success."[۲۷]

۸ Conclusion

In this article, we have shown that presenting and directing to the right path are the action of Allah, and are not the servant's choice. Guidance is not rationally incumbent upon Allah, and is just due to His mercy for whom He wills. Everyone is lost until Allah directs him to His path. Thereupon, such a person has a choice to accept Allah's guidance or to reject it, and thus, becomes a believer or a disbeliever, respectively. Unlike presenting the guidance, accepting or rejecting it is our

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voluntary action, which holds us accountable before Allah. Also we provided evidence to the fact that it is the custom of Allah that He increases the guidance of he who accepts His previous guidance. Moreover, we discussed the notion of Allah's conformation or forsaking which shows Allah's accommodation for the actions that takes place in His kingdom. In the next part, we discuss the notion of misguidance attributed to Allah as reported in the holy Quran and the sayings of the Messenger of Allah *(PBUH&HF)* and the Imams of his progeny *(PBUT)*.

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[١] The terms *Mustadh'af* (weak) and *Istidh'aaf* (weakness) are used in the holy Quran with reference to three distinct groups: First, those who were not guided and did not get religious direction from Allah. They also include people who were mentally oppressed by tyrants and were kept away from the truth. They are those for whom Allah did not will religious guidance. (See, for instance, Segments: ٤:٩٨, ٢٨:٤ of the holy Quran). Second, people who were under oppression, but received guidance from Allah and rejected it, and thus, they are a subgroup of disbelievers (See 4:97, 34:32-33, 14:21, ٤٠:٤٧). Third, the best believers (e.g., the Ahl al-Bayt *(PBUT)*) who were source of guidance, but were physically oppressed and were deprived of their rights (See ٢٨:٥, ٧:١٥٠).

[٢] *Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, p. 175, from the short advice of Imam Ali *(PBUH)* to Kumayl Ibn Ziyad (RA); Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 418.

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

[4] *Tuhaf al-'Uqul*, p. 313.

[5] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 214, Hadith 6.

[6] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 406, Hadith 10.

[7] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 406, Hadith 11.

[8] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 5, p. 198, Hadith 17, pp 204-205, Hadith 35, 36, & 39.

[9] Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 5, p. 205, Hadith 40, cited from *al-Mahasin*.

[10] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 167, Hadith 4.

[11] *Tafsir*, al-Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 104, Hadith 306.

[12] *Tafsir*, al-Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 104, Hadith 309.

[13] *al-Kafi*, vol. 3, p. 248, Hadith 1.

[14] *al-Tawhid*, p. 412, Hadith 7; *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 164, Hadith 1 (similar narration).

[15] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 414, Hadith 1.

[16] *Nahj al-Balaghah*, maxim 157 (a similar wording is also found in Sermon 20); Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 5, p. 305, Hadith 21.

[17] See segments 13:1; 16:83; 17:89; 26:8; 30:8.

[18] See segments 6:116; 5:49; 5:100.

[19] See segments 2:243; 7:10; 23:78; 27:73; 34:13.

[20] See segments 7:179.

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[1] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 5, p. 198, Hadith 19, cited from Qurb al-Isnad.

[2] *al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 166, Hadith 3.

[3] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 211, Hadith 3.

[4] *al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 211, Hadith 1.

[5] The word *Hawl* originally means: deterrence, hindrance and barrier that forces or suggests change the direction of movement. The word *Haa'il* (barrier) and *Muhawwil* (turner) all come from the same root. Depending on the type of barrier, this change of direction may be willingly or unwillingly.

[6] *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 5, p. 203, Hadith 29, cited from Ma'ani Al-Akhbar.

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

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