

necessarily result distress and harm (*al-haraj wa'l-darar*), both of which are excluded by reason and by texts (*al-'aql wa'l-naql*), and one would be charged to do what one cannot do. It is also established by several verses of the Qur'an and Traditions, indeed by consensus, since there is no longer anyone who would at the same time say that *taqlid* was forbidden and also affirm *ijtihād*. . . .

Notes

1. Mullā Aḥmad Muqaddas Ardabili, *Zubdat al-Bayān fi Ahkām al-Qur'ān* (Tehran, 1966/1386), pp. 343-47.
2. It is interesting to note that even in Ṭahmāsp's decree of 1533/937 (Chapter 11, Section 1, above), the term used for "following" is not *taqlid* but *tqiddā*, which has clear connotations of voluntariness.
3. See Chapter 10, Section 2, above.
4. The famous commentary on the Qur'an by al-Zamaksharī (d. 1144/538).
5. I.e., the opinion that if there is a choice of whom to follow, the more learned should be followed in preference to the more pious.
6. A singular noun with the definite article (*al-*) can be taken in Arabic to stand collectively for all things it denotes.

CHAPTER 13

Two Seventeenth-Century Persian Tracts on Kingship and Rulers¹

Translated and edited by William C. Chittick

The two works translated below represent the views of two of the most respected '*ulamā'*' of the Safavid period, Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī (1007-90/1600-79) and Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī (1037-1110/1628-99). Fayḍ was the son-in-law of the great philosopher Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640), and himself both an outstanding philosopher and an authority in the religious sciences. Majlisī was the foremost scholar of *ḥadīth* of the period and for the most part avoided philosophical approaches to his material. The two works were written with different goals and from sharply divergent points of view, yet they draw two deeply harmonious pictures of the proper role of kings and rulers in society.

Fayḍ Kāshānī. Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ was born in Kashan. He relates that he studied with a large number of teachers, but did not find the qualifications he was searching for until he met Mullā Ṣadrā in Qumm (1033/1623-24 or 1034/1624-25).² Under Mullā Ṣadrā, Fayḍ busied himself with spiritual discipline (*al-riyāḍa wa'l-mujāhada*), "until I gained clear vision (*baṣīra*) in the various esoteric sciences (*ḥunūn 'ilm al-bāḥim*)."³ After spending eight years with Mullā Ṣadrā in Qumm, Fayḍ married Ṣadrā's daughter. Invited by Shah Ṣafī (1038-52/1629-42) to come to Isfahan, he refused. Then he was invited by Shah 'Abbās II (1052-77/1642-67).

I wavered between accepting that command and rejecting it

people. They cover a large variety of topics, but are drawn mainly from the "transmitted" (*naqlī*) sources, not from the intellectual (*ʿaqlī*) tradition of which Fayḍ was a representative.⁷ The contrast between the two approaches is obvious in the two works translated below.

The Kingly Mirror

by Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī

Introduction

"The Kingly Mirror" (*Āīna-yi shāhī*), was written in 1060/1650 at the request of Shāh ʿAbbās II. As Fayḍ reports in his bibliographies of his own works, it is based largely upon an Arabic work he had written three years earlier, *Ḍiyāʾ al-qalb*, "whose like has never been seen."⁸ The basic structure and argument of the two is identical. The Arabic text is not quite twice as long, the added material being mainly in the form of Qurʾānic verses and *ḥadīths* quoted to support the argument. The Arabic text is obviously written for the '*ulamāʾ*' and those conversant with the language of scholarship; not only does Fayḍ quote many supporting texts, he also writes in a precise and almost aphoristic language that shows he assumes the reader is trained in logical discourse and has no need of long clarifications. In contrast, the simplicity and clarity of the Persian text show that it was written with a nonspecialist audience in mind. The arguments are developed generously and fluently, with many more words being employed than is really necessary. The supporting texts are neither quoted nor mentioned.

Fayḍ's approach is typically philosophical and even Sufi in that he considers kingship as one of a number of interrelated phenomena all of which center on the human self. In other words, he investigates kingship in its total context within God's creation, not as something that can be isolated from religion, psychology, or cosmology. Kingship is one form of rulership, he tells us, and its overall significance cannot be assessed until we know what a ruler is, what the object of rule is, and how ruling takes place.

"The Kingly Mirror" investigates the nature of those things which issue commands (*ḥākīm*) that human beings may either follow or reject. Fayḍ is dealing in a general fashion with the concept of *ḥukm*, a term which is used technically in a number of disciplines, principles of jurisprudence perhaps being the most relevant. The term *ḥākīm* might be rendered as "ruler," "sovereign," "governor," "judge," or "commander";

because of the afflictions it entailed through the sons of this world and their affairs. I kept on stepping forward with one foot and stepping back with the other until I finally made up my mind to go to his presence because of the possibility of propagating the religion. So I went to him, and when I met him I found him to be much better than I had heard; he gathered together the kingly virtues and was adorned with inward and outward perfections.⁴

Though Fayḍ was treated well at the king's court for some years, his high position made him many enemies who gradually caught the Shah's ear. He withdrew from courtly circles around 1065/1654-55.

Fayḍ is the author of 116 works in a wide variety of fields, including Qurʾān commentary, *ḥadīth*, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, supplications, ethics, philosophy, and theoretical Sufism (*irfān*). His enormous *al-Wāfi* is considered, along with Majlisī's *Biḥār al-anwār* as one of the four great books on *ḥadīth* written by the moderns.⁵ Fourteen commentaries have been written on his *Majāliḥ al-sharāʾi* in jurisprudence. Mishkāt, speaking for the tradition of the philosophically oriented Shiʿite '*ulamāʾ*', considers him one of a handful of major figures in the history of Islam who have brought together the perspectives of philosophy and the *sharīʿa*.⁶

Fayḍ's "Kingly Mirror" translated below is a perfect example of the type of contribution Mishkāt has in mind, though this may not be too obvious, since it is written for a popular audience and, therefore, avoids references either to the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth* or to the intellectual tradition which has shaped the coherent world view which so clearly underlies the text.

Majlisī. Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī is probably the most famous of the '*ulamāʾ*' of the Safavid period. His father, Mullā Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī was himself a well-known scholar. Born in Isfahan, Majlisī became the Shaykh al-Islām of the city in 1098/1687 for the last years of the reign of Shāh Sulaymān (1077-1105/1667-94) and the early years of Shāh Sulṭān-Ḥusayn (1105-35/1694-1722) until his death in 1110/1699. During this period he was in charge of the religious affairs of Persia, so his pronouncements on the benefits and dangers of dealing with kings have the ring of first-hand experience, even if they do take the form of quotations from the Imams.

Majlisī's most famous work is *Biḥār al-anwār*, a twenty-six-volume compilation of *ḥadīth*. Majlisī also wrote a dozen other Arabic works, including a twelve-volume commentary on al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*. His fifty-three Persian works are concerned mainly with translating the collected wisdom of the Prophet and the Imams into the language of the

I chose the last because it seems to do the most justice to English usage and the various senses of the term that come out in the text.

Text

Worthy gratitude and incumbent praise must be strewn before that Lord who made the designations of the revealed law coincide with the requirements of intellect and who subordinated both the nature and habit of the possessor of the perfect intellect to his intellect. Innumerable blessings be upon the soul of the prophets, the leader of the pure, who undertook to perfect the creatures with the most perfect intellect and the most complete revealed law, and upon the household of inerrancy and purity—through love and obedience toward whom God has caressed the delivered persuasion, the Shi'a.

Now to the point: The most noble mind of the most holy, exalted, independent highness, the sun of leadership's sky, the shining orb of religion's firmament, the scion of Muhammad's family, the descendant of 'Alī's clan, the confirmed by divine confirmation, Shāh 'Abbās the Second—God join his empire to the empire of the Twelfth Imam, upon whom be peace!—turned toward hearing a few words of the subtleties of true knowledge and the elegancies of wisdom, which are appropriate for the illumination of the heart and the nourishment of the soul. This least supplicant, Muḥammad ibn Murtaḍā known as Muḥsin, had earlier written a treatise in Arabic called *Ḍiyā' al-qalb* on knowing the human rational soul and training it through commanders in order to know the Lord and His lordship among men. I thought it appropriate to present its contents to that unique one of the age. Hence I have translated its gist and offered it as a gift to that paradise-like assembly. Since the meaning of kingship displays itself therein, and since it is ascribed to the king who is religion's patron, it came to be named the "Kingly Mirror." Hopefully, it will attain to the exalted station of acceptance.

Introduction

Know that as long as man is held by the bonds of this perishing life, he has no choice but to obey (*ʿarmānbar*) five commanders (*ḥākīm*) which the Lord of the world has put in place to train him and charged to strengthen him. The Lord has given him the choice to follow whichever commander he likes, but he cannot leave the command (*ḥukm*) of all of them. Obeying some will lead to his ascending to exalted degrees, and

obeying others will lead to his falling into the nethermost pits.

Two of these commanders are inside: intellect (*ʿaql*) and nature (*ṭabʿ*). Two are outside: revealed law (*sharʿ*) and common law (*ʿurf*). The fifth comes from outside and becomes established on the inside, that is, habit (*ʿādāt*), which is actualized through repetition and familiarity. Sometimes one of these gives a command contradictory to the command of another; at such times the obeyer may not know which he should obey to achieve his best interest (*maʿshakat*), so he remains in bewilderment. Sometimes a command is given and it is not known who has given it. Sometimes obeying one of the commanders will lead to loss, but the obeyer cannot go outside of its command; so he is forced to seek refuge in the Lord, who is the "Best of Commanders" (Qurʾān 95:8), in order to repel its evil.

These introductory remarks show that no one can escape the necessity of [I-V] knowing these five commanders, one by one; [VI] knowing his own self, which is obedient to them; [VII] knowing the levels of the commanders in excellence (*sharaf*) and virtue (*ṣaḥīlat*); [VIII] knowing the wisdom in their being given sovereignty (*salṭanat*) over man; [IX] finding the way to one's own best interest in spite of the differences among the commanders; [X] separating the command of some of them from that of others, given the fact of confusion; [XI] recognizing some of the favors of the Best of Commanders which aid and assist in this affair; and [XII] knowing how to seek refuge in Him—majestic is His majesty! Therefore this treatise has been written to explain these matters and has been arranged in twelve chapters, in the order mentioned.

Chapter I

On Knowing Intellect. Intellect is of two kinds. The first is "innate" (*ṭabīʿī*) and is possessed by man from his original creation. It is a faculty within him through which he can perceive things that he can only reach through thought. Through this faculty man is distinguished from other animals. The second is "acquired" (*muktasab*), since it must be gained. It is a faculty in man through which he can discern between those works which will give him profit in the hereafter and those which will give him loss. Hence he performs the works useful for the hereafter even if they result in a loss for him in this world, and he refrains from works that are harmful for the hereafter even if they result in a profit for him in this world. This faculty comes together around the time of puberty (*bulūgh*). Day by day it is made firmer with the help of correct knowledge and right activity, which have been and are gathered through the aid of the innate

intellect, while the angels guide and help the person from within. Both of these intellects are found in different degrees. Some people have been given more perfect intellects, others less perfect intellects; in the measure of the intellect's perfection and imperfection religious duties are prescribed, and to this extent people will be called to account.⁹

Chapter II

On Knowing the Revealed Law. The revealed law is a divine command sent for the servants in order that whoever accepts and obeys may gain everlasting happiness and eternal pleasures. Some of its commands are considered incumbent and necessary. Whoever does not accept and obey them becomes worthy of divine punishment and deprivation from the eternal pleasures. Some were made into supererogatory works. Whoever obeys them will find a reward and reach high degrees, but no punishment is necessary for the person who does not obey. Among the things considered incumbent, some were made the pillar of the religion and the supporting pole of the revealed law; whoever does not obey them leaves the religion.

Some of the commands were clearly explained, so that no one would be left with any excuse to refrain from obeying them. Some were made obscure and ambiguous, so that the servants would be tested and tried through them. Whoever observes caution in them [by obeying them] will be given high degrees in the hereafter as a reward, but whoever does not observe caution will be deprived of those high degrees. Or rather, it sometimes happens that because of the inauspiciousness of not observing them, he will also be deprived of success in obeying the incumbent commands.

In obedience people are diverse because of a diversity of levels in firmness of belief, abundance of certainty, purity of sincerity, and degree of submitting the body to everything that must be done and not done. Some believe and obey with heart, tongue, body, and soul, like the faithful who have true faith. Some deny with the heart and accept with the tongue, like the hypocrites. Some deny with the tongue and believe with the heart, like those ingrates who recognize the truth but deny out of envy or pride. Some deny with both heart and tongue, like the active unbelievers. Some admit with both, but they have a perverted understanding of the commands, like those who have gone astray. Some admit with both and understand correctly, but they do not submit to everything that must be done and not done, like the

disobedient and the ungodly. Then each of these groups has many degrees and innumerable levels.

Chapter III

On Knowing Nature, Which is also Called Caprice (*hawā*).¹⁰ Nature is a faculty in man through which he counts one thing as appropriate and agreeable and considers another as incompatible and disagreeable, whether in fact it be agreeable or disagreeable, that is, whether it brings him benefit or loss. That which he considers agreeable he tries to bring to himself; wanting that thing is known as "concupiscence" (*shahwat*). That which he considers incompatible he tries to push far from himself; not wanting it is known as "irascibility" (*ghaḍab*). If doing that thing is opposed to the requirements of intellect and the revealed law, then Satan by means of his whispering seeks help from imagination and fantasy or makes use of deception, guile, arrogance, and enmity to overcome intellect and the revealed law and bring the person out from under their command. Though Satan cannot command people independently, such that he would then have to be considered one of the commanders, through misguidance he displays to caprice the agreeable as disagreeable and the disagreeable as agreeable, and then caprice commands.

Chapter IV

On Knowing Habit. Habit is a faculty that incites man to do something which, through repetition and familiarity, has become agreeable to his intellect or caprice after the thing was not agreeable or after its agreeableness increased over what it had been before. It makes no difference whether this thing is conformable with the requirements of intellect or the revealed law, whether it is acceptable to the wise, and whether it is useful. Following habit strengthens and increases the thing, while holding oneself back weakens and decreases it, to the extent that it may be put to the side and eliminated.

Chapter V

On Knowing Common Law. Common law is a set of commands (*dastūr*) which the generality of people have established among themselves. They have made acting in accordance with it incumbent and necessary, while they consider opposing it ugly (*qabīh*). Even if acting

in accordance with it is disagreeable to nature and difficult, everyone thinks of another reproach with which to oppose nature.

This set of commands differs according to the diversity of times, countries, and peoples. Sometimes it conforms with intellect, revealed law, and nature, and sometimes not. Sometimes it is acceptable to intelligent people, and sometimes not. Adhering to that which is not conformable to those three things and not acceptable to this group is stupidity, unless for the sake of self-protection (*taqiyya*)¹¹ or the fear of loss.

If common law comprises conquering force (*ghalaba*) and mastery (*isilat*), then it is called sovereignty (*saljanat*). Every society (*jimma*) must have sovereignty in order for the collectivity to be put into order (*nizam*) and the means for the people's livelihood to be arranged.

The difference between the revealed law and sovereignty is that sovereignty sets aright the collectivity of individual souls and puts in order the means for their livelihood so that they can exist in this world, and nothing more; it comes into existence from individual souls, who can make mistakes. But the revealed law sets aright the whole collectivity and puts in order both this world and the next world, while leaving the right situation for both this world and the next in its own place. Hence the revealed law necessarily teaches society that there will be a return to another world above this world, an everlasting and eternal world which is true happiness; and that this cannot be actualized without turning one's desire away from the passions and pleasures of this world. So the revealed law distinguishes between works that will be useful in the hereafter and those that will not be useful or will be harmful; it makes people hope for the rewards of works and warns them of their punishments. This law cannot come into existence except through perfect intellects which are protected from mistakes and lapses. Therefore, the acts of sovereignty are incomplete and are only completed through the revealed law, while the acts of the revealed law are complete and have no need for sovereignty.

Moreover, the profit of most of the affairs of sovereignty are outside the person who is commanded, while the profit of the affairs of the revealed law are inside his own person. For example, sovereignty commands the display of pomp and splendor (*tajammul*) for the sake of onlookers who are outside of the person who does the displaying. The revealed law commands the daily prayers and fasting, the profit of which goes to those who pray and fast.

In short, in relation to the revealed law sovereignty is like the body in relation to the spirit, or like the slave in relation to the master. Sometimes the sovereign listens to the revealed law and obeys it, sometimes not. Whenever the sovereign obeys the revealed law and follows its

commands, the outward appearance of the cosmos, known as the "Kingdom" (*mulk*), follows the inward reality of the cosmos, known as the "Dominion" (*malakūt*).¹² Sensory things come under the shadow of intelligible things and parts move toward the whole. People desire "the abiding deeds of righteousness,"¹³ and renounce the perishing, ephemeral things; they gain relief from harmful things and acquire good deeds as habits. Each day that passes is better for man than the previous day. Day by day God guides the servants, aids them, and gives them success, especially the king who urges his subjects to follow the revealed law, and follows it himself. It sometimes happens that for this reason so many of the lights of the Dominion descend upon the heart of the king that he gains the vision of that plane; yearning to be like spiritual beings takes him to such exalted degrees that, just as he is a king in this plane, so also he becomes a king in that plane. Why? Because he has brought about the guidance of a large number of the subjects, so his spiritual reality must constantly receive effects and replenishments from their spiritual realities.¹⁴

But whenever the sovereign does not obey the revealed law, intellects are made prisoners of the senses and the Dominion is subjected to the Kingdom; the low cease to show humbleness and obedience before the high. People desire perishing things, renounce the abiding deeds of righteousness, and acquire evil qualities as habits. Each day that passes is worse for man than the previous day. Day by day God leaves the servants more alone and takes guidance and aid away from them. In short, the opposites of the things mentioned above take place. We seek refuge in God from that!

Chapter VI

On the Explanation of Knowing the Self (*k'hwud*), which is the Subject which obeys (*farmānbar*) the Five Commanders. The self is the human rational soul (*nafs-i nātiqa*), which in reality makes up the human being. The self does not remain in a single state, but rather fluctuates (*muḥalib*) between intellect and nature, such that whichever dominates over the person becomes identical with him; [hence] the self is called the heart (*qalb*).¹⁵ If the intellect dominates through the help of the angels, the person becomes an angel in attribute, since the intellect and the angel are derived from a single reality.¹⁶ If nature dominates over him in respect of concupiscence, he becomes a beast in attribute and enters into the ranks of livestock, for concupiscence is the stuff of beastliness. If nature dominates in respect of irascibility, he will become

a predatory animal in attribute and enter into the ranks of the beasts of prey, since irascibility is the meaning of predatoriness. If he should be dominated in respect of duplicity, guile, falsehood, and deception, he will become one of the human satans, since the reality of satan is united with these meanings.¹⁷

In respect of being dominated by the five commanders, the soul has four levels: If it incites itself to ugly actions and inappropriate speech, it is called the "soul that incites to evil." If it places one foot forward and blames itself for committing forbidden acts and accomplishing acts of disobedience, it is called the "blaming soul." If it moves one more step and sees its own loss, to the extent that it makes itself perform good deeds and always sketches praiseworthy pictures on the tablet of its own consciousness, it is called the "inspired soul." If it should advance still further so that it passes beyond bewilderment and fluctuation, having gained ease with the intellect and reached the beginning of the waystation of tranquility, then it is called the "tranquil soul."¹⁸

You should know that these commanders are always at war with each other inside man, and each is tormented by the others. The ranks of the angels constantly stand opposite the ranks of the satans; the soldiers of good and right continue to fight and struggle with the troops of evil and corruption until the coming of the final moment and the end of all hopes. In the final state, the felicitous person is he in whom the soldiers of the angels have dominated and conquered the army of the satans, while the wretched person is he in whom intellect has been overcome by nature and conquered by caprice.

Since the heart, in keeping with the root of its primordial nature (*fiṭrat*), was created pure and subtle, it stands in an equal relationship to accepting the traces of angelic and satanic qualities. If the heart is able to withstand the army of the satans, it will keep the hand of untrue opinions and false suppositions far from itself and follow the path of gaining similarity to the character traits of the pure and assuming the moral attributes of the wise, thus becoming the seat of angels and the place of descent for celestial messengers. But if the heart follows concupiscence and irascibility, which are the concomitants of nature and caprice, and if it lets Iblis come and go within itself, then it will reach the point of being the nest of satans and the playground of Iblis's children.

Chapter VII

On the Explication of the Levels of the Commanders in Nobility and Excellence. There is no doubt that intellect and the revealed law

are nobler and more excellent than the other commanders. Of these two, intellect is more excellent, more knowledgeable, and nobler if it has reached perfection, since through intellect one can know the reality of each of the commanders and discern them from one another. If there were no intellect, the revealed law would also not be known. In reality, intellect is a revealed law within man, just as the revealed law is an intellect outside of man. The most honored favor which God has given to His servants is intellect. Why? Because it is the substance of life and the foundation of subsistence. From it come understanding and knowledge, and through it can be preserved and witnessed the way of professing God's Unity (*tawḥīd*). Through its illumination one can see, and through its guidance one can reach high degrees. In short, the source of all goods and the origin of all perfections is intellect.

Below intellect and revealed law in nobility and excellence stand nature and habit. For nature and habit put the body in order, while intellect and the revealed law put the spirit in order. It is clear that the body was created to serve the spirit. So intellect and the revealed law are more excellent than nature and habit. The relationship of nature to habit is like that of revealed law to intellect; indeed, habit is a nature from outside, just as nature is a habit from inside. In the same way that intellect and the revealed law aid each other and gain strength from each other so that each is perfected and completed through the other, nature and habit help each other and gain strength from each other, to the extent that they seem to be a single thing.

Common law is lower than all of these, but in spite of its lowness, it commands all of them, dominating and overpowering them in most people. Both intellect and the revealed law say that it should be followed, so long as it does not conflict with their laws. But when it does conflict, it must be avoided, unless by reason of self-protection or fear of loss.

Chapter VIII

On the Explication of the Wisdom of the Mastery of these Commanders over Human Beings. Know that the fundamental goal in the creation of man is for his rational soul to advance, little by little, until it reaches the perfection that is fitting for it. The body was created to be the soul's instrument in actualizing this perfection. The ultimate end of this perfection is for man to know and recognize existence as it is, to bring together in himself all the existent things, and to gather together all created things in his own world through a gathering that is free of the stain of dispersion and a unity that is rid of the color of multiplicity.¹⁹

That is why the peerless God placed in man's constitution examples from the three worlds, that is, intellect, imagination, and sense perception; He gave him a share of each of these so that day by day he will put each of his limbs and faculties to work in its own place, and little by little he will subject the lower to the nobler, until finally he will lift his head out from the collar of all existent things, so that to him will belong everything that occurs within each. In reality, he becomes the soul of the heaven and the earth and the spirit of all existent things, high and low. Nor is this a place for surprise, since the human reality possesses along with unity and noncompositeness the perfection of all-comprehensiveness (*jāmi'iyyat*), such that it actualizes all the existent things of the world of generation and corruption, that is, animals, plants, and minerals. It accomplishes the work of all three of these. So why should it not be able to traverse God's path so that, having travelled on the Straight Path, it reaches a place where its all-comprehensiveness and all-inclusiveness increase even more? It is clear that one reaches this high station by following intellect and the revealed law and puts on this beautiful cloak with the help of doctrine and practice.

The wisdom of nature's being given mastery over man is that during this period [of spiritual growth] nature serves the body and protects the physical constitution so that the spirit can control the body with ease. The spirit throws away everything that is contrary and opposed and brings near to itself everything that is agreeable and conformable. But this cannot be accomplished without the help of habit; it becomes easy with the assistance of the praiseworthy moral traits that habit actualizes.

The profit of the mastery of common law over man is that it helps and aids him to follow the other commanders. Were there not the halter of the common law, the mount of the body would bolt and find it easy to follow the various forms of concupiscence. Then immersion in perishing pleasures, which contradict the basic goal, would increase day by day. For example, if people were secure from the backbiting of the backbiters and the spying of the faultfinders and if they did not fear the criticism of their peers and relatives, they would not be so careful about preserving themselves from ugly acts and mortal perils, nor would they persevere as they should in acts of obedience and worship. From here it should be obvious that the wretched have a tremendous part to play in perfecting the felicitous; people receive benefits from their enemies that they could never receive from their friends.

Chapter IX

On the Explication of Which Commander it is in one's Best Interest

to Follow when the Commanders Differ. When the intellect is perfect, it has priority over the other commanders. As long as it is present, none of the others can command. Hence, if another should command something opposed to it, one must not listen. Why? Because it is nobler and more excellent than all the others and always conforms to the revealed law, while the other commanders are subordinate to it. Moreover, intellect has no need for weighing and distinguishing alternatives, since it knows no contradiction or obscurity. However, this intellect pertains exclusively to the prophets and the friends of God (*awliyā'*).

A person who does not have this perfect intellect must give priority to the revealed law over all else, since the revealed law stands in the place of the perfect intellect for the person who does not possess it. Hence the owner of an imperfect intellect must follow the revealed law. In other words, if a person finds the law in conflict with his own intellect, he must consider his own intellect mistaken and not criticize the revealed law.

After intellect and the revealed law, a person must follow nature and habit. Since both of these have been placed in the human body in order to preserve it for a time so that the spirit can acquire perfection and attain to the utmost perfection that is appropriate to it, whenever their commands differ, the command of that one which is more pertinent to this aim must be given priority. Thus the person will have shown greater obedience to his Creator and accomplished more toward the best interest for which he was created. If both are equal for this aim or neither is pertinent, he can give priority to whichever one he wishes, since in this situation obeying and disobeying them are the same.

Whenever common law aids intellect and revealed law more than nature and habit, it must be given priority over them. In the same way, whenever it aids the one of the two that is more pertinent to preserving the body, it has priority over the other.

In short, since the aim of placing the commanders within man was for the World of the Kingdom to serve the World of Dominion, the forms of concupiscence to be subjugated to intellect, and man to gain next-worldly perfections in this world so that he will have comfort and enjoyment in the next world and be freed from punishment, every work which brings this about or is useful for it must be accomplished, everything which destroys it or harms it must be avoided, and everything which is neither useful nor harmful must be considered indifferent.

Chapter X

On Separating the Commanders from each other when there is

Confusion among them. In some people there is a reality similar to intellect which makes them seek to acquire their livelihood. The common people name this "intellect" or "sensible conduct" (*rushd*). In the same way, in the midst of the commands of the revealed law there is a command which some people imagine to be the revealed law, whether because of a mistaken judgment or having learned it from someone who is unqualified. Both of these must be attached to caprice and nature. Therefore man must know the intellect well and learn the revealed law properly from its qualified spokesmen so as not to fall into these doubtful areas.

If ever any one of the five commanders should leave its original nature and purity and become mixed with another, such that the mixture brings about confusion, the possible kinds of confusion are ten in number, resulting from the multiplying of each by the others and eliminating the repetitions.

If a person should learn, though it be through intermediaries, the regulations of the revealed law from the Prophet and his executors—upon them be peace—all of whom are protected [by God] from error and lapses and were placed [among us] for the guidance and instruction of the creatures; if he does not let any of the other commanders influence the revealed law—i.e., he does not allow nature, habit, and common law to mix with it; if he refuses to formulate an independent opinion (*ijtihad*) based on his own imperfect intellect; and if he does not consider it permissible to deduce a view by interpreting (*ta'wîf*) ambiguous verses; then he will be delivered from confusing the revealed law with the rest [of the commanders]. If in this affair he also employs the commands of the revealed law in a manner that is appropriate and fitting with sincere intention, and if he remains steadfast in that in a single state, accomplishing the rules of conduct and prescriptions, he will leave aside all confusions.

If he is not able to do this, he should look and gaze upon the commandment of that commander which is commanding him. If the commander's view in this command is firmly fixed upon sheer truth and takes into account his situation in the next world—even if this should be in the form of the work of this world—then he should know that this commander is sheer intellect. Naturally he should follow it and thank God. If the commander's view is fixed upon this world, he should know that it is sheer nature, or nature mixed with satamiy, or caprice, or intellect contaminated with one of these, or revealed law adulterated with caprice, or common law unacceptable to the intellect, or the base habit of the foolish. In any case, he certainly has to refrain from that command and not follow it.

If he does not know what the commander has in view, and he is

bewildered in trying to discern it, he must refer to the perfect intellect, that is, he must consult with the possessor of the perfect intellect or someone who is near to such a person in intellect, if possible. If not, he must plead and beg at the threshold of the Creator and ask the Divine Side to guide and instruct him or to guide him to a guide. Beware! Without thorough consideration let him not undertake anything before the reality of the situation becomes clear to him. Why? Because it often happens that Satan displays pure evil in the form of plain good to the view of his companion and in this way pulls him to wretchedness. Hence no one has any choice but to investigate every thought that passes through his heart in order to see if it derives from the inspiration of the angel or the whispering of Satan, even if that thought should take the form of an act of worship. The investigation can be done in the manner mentioned.²⁰

Chapter XI

On Remembering some of the Favors of the Best of Commanders which aid and assist in this Affair. Every servant has no choice but to know that he has an omniscient Lord and an omnipotent Creator who has bestowed upon him the robe of existence, generously given him the character of judgment, gracefully endowed him with seeing eyes and hearing ears, conferred upon him a speaking tongue and strong limbs, and appointed for him a wakeful heart and an aware intellect, that he might separate good from evil and discern gain from loss. He must know that he has need of God Himself for life and subsistence, of His help in the degrees of the spiritual path, the ascent, and the truth, of His facilitation and grace in obeying His commandments, and of His protection and preservation in refraining from His prohibitions. He must know that nothing whatsoever is hidden from Him, whether large or small, manifest or concealed. Whenever the servant knows this through the "knowledge of certainty" (*ilm al-yaqîn*) or contemplates it through the "eye of certainty" (*ayn al-yaqîn*), his business will reach a place where he never neglects his Lord and never forgets Him in any state. On the contrary, in most times and the great majority of states he will busy himself with meditation (*fîkir*) and remembrance (*dhîkir*) of Him. In all states he will call upon Him, in every hope he will seek access to Him, in each sort of concern he will address Him and speak to Him, and in every kind of retreat he will converse intimately with Him. Little by little he will reach a place in contemplation and careful watchfulness where he is completely cut off from everything other than God and joined with Him; he will have no need for anyone else and will be connected only to Him. Once he wins

this high station, God will bring him near to Himself and place him in His own neighborhood. He will raise up his worth and exalt his degree. He will add him to the string of His friends, commingle him with His pure devotees, bring him into the ranks of the angels, and caress him with everlasting joys and eternal felicities.

Chapter XII

On How to Seek Aid from the Divine Side. In the *ḥadīths* of the inerrant Imams (God's blessings be upon them all!) it has been mentioned that the servant will find the best access to the Divine Side, have his prayers answered, and gain victory over enemies—whether in the Lesser Struggle (*Jihād-i aṣghar*), which is the war with outside enemies, or the Greater Struggle (*Jihād-i akbar*), which is the war with one's inner enemies—by seeking access to the Seal of the Prophets, who is the leader of the pure, and all the Imams of guidance (God's peace be upon them!). In other words, he should mention them by name in intimate prayer to God and seek his need and object of supplication through their rank and high standing. The reason for this is that in past times and previous nations, seeking access revolved around them. Whenever a tremendous affliction happened, an enemy appeared, a person's task became difficult, a sin was committed, grief and heartache arrived, or days of hardship became long, people would seek access to the high standing of these great ones and seek blessing through their famous names. They were the constant savior of their wounded hearts and undid the locks of their closed doors. The past prophets constantly borrowed lights from them and the cavalry of the messengers turned their attention toward the kibra of their spirits. Adam's repentance was accepted through the blessing of their blessed names, Noah's ark was [delivered with their aid, Abraham] reached the station of friendship [through their help].²¹ Moses found the degree of speaking with God and election through the blessing of fulfilling their covenant, Jesus son of Mary reached the level of being the spirit of God through the light of knowing them, and the Holy Spirit plucked fresh fruit in paradise from the gardens of their knowledge.²²

Hence the Shi'a, the community which is the object of mercy and which is their community, the delivered persuasion which is ascribed to them, are much more worthy [than previous religious communities] of seeking access to the side of God through their rank and of making them their intercessors in that Court. Hence, if the situation of one of the Shi'a should become constrained, he must plead and beg at the Creator's court and say:

Oh God, though I am a sinner
and the shame and disgrace of sin
have left me not the face to ask, yet [I say]:
By the high standing and rank
of the great ones of Thy Court
and by the exaltation and proximity
of those brought near to Thy Threshold
—those whose love
Thou hast placed in my heart
through the bounty of Thy mercy,
those whom
Thou hast allowed
my spirit to recognize,
Muḥammad,
'Ali,
Fāḫima,
Ḥasan,
Ḥusayn,
'Alī ibn al-Husayn,
Muḥammad ibn 'Alī,
Ja'far ibn Muḥammad,
Mūsā ibn Ja'far,
'Alī ibn Mūsā,
Muḥammad ibn 'Alī,
'Alī ibn Muḥammad,
Ḥasan ibn 'Alī,
and the Standing Proof
(the blessings of God be upon them all!)—
protect me from disobedience and error,
give my soul refuge from Satan and caprice,
forgive my sins,
make my enemies miserable and disappointed,
increase [?] my understanding,
and through Thy kindness and compassion
caress this poor needy one.
For their measure with Thee is greater
than that Thou wouldst reject the supplication
of him who seeks access through them
or deal badly with him,
whatever bad he might have done.

Every sin and every fault
that from me has appeared
and will appear
forgive, by those people pure
of every sin
and every fault.
Through Thy bounty place me
in their neighborhood,
since in my heart love for them
has found a place.

The Fountainhead of Life (extracts)²³
by Mullā Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī

Introduction

The following passages are taken from one of Majlisī's many Persian works written for a popular audience, *ʿAyn al-ḥayāt*. It is a long commentary (606 pages in the printed edition) on a testament given by the Prophet to Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 31/652), one of the leaders of the "faction of 'Alī" among the Prophet's Companions and an important traditionist in Sunni as well as Shi'ite sources.²⁴ Majlisī cites the Arabic text of the hadith section by section, writing a detailed commentary on each of the issues that it raises. Most of the text consists of quotations of other *ḥadīths* from the Prophet and the Imams. The book is divided into fourteen major parts dealing with a wide range of topics, such as intention versus works, the objects of faith (including a good deal of theological and cosmological material), the nature of prophecy, the Imamate, eschatology, ethics, virtues and vices, abstinence, piety, fear of God, supplications, the excellence of the Qur'ān, and the rules of Qur'ān recitation. One long section, most of which is translated below, discusses the role of kings and rulers in society. It is inspired by the third part of the following passage from the Prophet's testament:

Oh Abū Dharr! Part of magnifying God is to honor (*ikrām*) the aged Muslim, to honor those who carry and act in accordance with the Qur'ān, and to honor the just king (*al-sultān al-muqstf*).²⁵

As stated above, most of Majlisī's text is taken up by translations of *ḥadīths*. These are linguistically rather loose, but on the whole quite accurate in conveying the sense of the *ḥadīth* in fluent Persian. Majlisī is

perfectly aware that he is not writing for the '*ulamā'*, who expect every *isnād* to be in place, but rather for the mass of the people who are interested in increasing their religious knowledge. His task is not to produce a scholarly or literary masterpiece, but a work accessible to all. He writes

I have not attempted to produce beautiful texts and precise translations. Rather I have tried to render the contents of the texts in expressions easily understood, and to solve with brevity the difficulties in those passages in need of commentary and explanation where it is not simply a case of understanding the meaning of the words. Thereby the totality of the believers and the generality of the Shi'a may have a full share and perfect portion from this divine repast and lordly benefit.²⁶

One of the methods Majlisī follows in translation is to render a single word by two synonyms, in keeping with the habit of many Persian writers down to the present day and as illustrated in the last sentence just quoted. In translating the texts I have followed the Persian, though I have also compared the texts with the original Arabic where possible; the sources for most of the Arabic texts—which Majlisī often translates in blocks from *Bihār al-anwār*—are provided in the notes. With one exception (n. 66) the only serious discrepancies between the original and the translation are instances where Majlisī has dropped parts of the text; these are duly noted.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that the original sources for the vast majority of the *ḥadīths* quoted go back to the fourth/tenth century and the works of two of the three major Imamite authorities, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991-92) and al-Kulaynī (d. 329/950-51). The *ḥadīths* provide a fair cross-section of the types of *ḥadīth* found in the standard works. In other words, the views that Majlisī presents are nothing new to Shi'ism, but represent the earliest sources of the tradition.

Text

The Third Spring²⁷

On the Explication of a few of the situations of rulers (*salāṭin*) and commanders (*umarā'*), on associating (*mu'āsharat*) with them, and on their justice (*ʿadl*) and injustice (*jawr*). The mention of this will flow in several streams.

The First Stream
On the Explication
of their Justice and Injustice

Know that the justice of kings and commanders is one of the greatest benefits of the people. Their justice and righteousness (*ṣalāh*) give rise to the righteousness of all God's servants and the flourishing state of the cities, while their ungodliness (*fīṣq*) and lewdness (*fujūr*) disrupt the order of the affairs of most of the world's inhabitants and incline most people toward their condition.

(1) Thus it is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the Messenger of God said, "If two groups in my community are righteous and worthy, my community will also be righteous; and if they are corrupt, my community will also be corrupt." The Companions asked him who they are. He replied, "The jurists (*fuqahā*) and the commanders."²⁸

(2) By another chain of authority it is related that the Prophet said, "For two people there will be no intercession: the possessor of sovereignty (*ṣalṭanat*) who does wrong, works injustice, and transgresses, and the person who exceeds proper bounds (*ghulūw*) in religion and leaves the religion."²⁹

(3) It is related that [the sixth] Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said, "I have hope for the deliverance of those in this community who recognize my right (*ḥaqq*), except for three groups: the possessor of kingship who works injustice, the person who innovates (*bid'at*) in the religion according to his own desire, and the ungodly person who commits sins openly and does not care."³⁰

(4) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the Prophet said, "At the resurrection, the fire of Gehenna will speak to three people: the commander, the Qur'ān reciter, and the man of wealth. To the commander it will say, 'Oh you whom God gave kingship and domination, but you were not just toward those under you!' Then it will steal him away like a chicken who takes a sesame seed. To the Qur'ān reciter it will say, 'Oh you who adorned yourself beautifully in the eyes of the people, but acted with disobedience in the presence of God!' Then it will steal him away. To the man of wealth it will say, 'Oh you whom God gave the spaciousness of the lower world and then sought to borrow a little of that from you, but you did not lend it and were miserly!' Then it will steal him away."³¹

(5) It is related that the Commander of the Faithful [ʿAlī] said, "Be on guard for your religion against a possessor of kingship who imagines that obeying him is obeying God and disobeying him is disobeying God. He is lying, for he is in the midst of nothing but disobedience toward his

Creator, and it is not necessary to obey someone who disobeys God. Obedience is only mandatory toward God, the Messenger, and those in authority (*ulu'l-amr*),³² who are the inerrant (*maṣūm*) Imams. God commanded that the Messenger must be obeyed because he is inerrant, purified from sin, and does not command to disobedience. God commanded that those in authority should be obeyed because they are inerrant, purified of evils and sins, and do not command the people to disobedience."³³

(6) In another *ḥadīth*, it is transmitted that ʿAlī said, "There is a mill in Gehenna that is turning." He was asked what it grinds and replied, "Lewd men of knowledge (*ʿulamā*), ungodly Qur'ān reciters, wrongdoing tyrants, traitorous viziers, and lying chiefs and leaders."³⁴

(7) In another *ḥadīth*, he said, "Six people will be chastised for six traits: the Arabs for ardent tribalism, landholders and owners of farms for arrogance, commanders and kings for injustice, jurists and men of knowledge for envy, merchants for treachery, and peasants for ignorance."³⁵

(8) It is related by trustworthy chains of authority that the Messenger of God said, "There are seven people whom I have cursed and whom every prophet whose prayers have been answered before me has cursed: a person who adds something to the Book of God; a person who denies God's reordination and destiny; a person who opposes my Sunna and produces innovation; a person who considers it lawful (*ḥalāl*) to wrong my family and to take by force³⁶ their rights, though God has declared this unlawful (*ḥarām*); a person who through coercion becomes the master of the people in order to exalt a group whom God has abased and to abase a group whom God has exalted; a person who takes possession of the common property of the Muslims for himself and considers this lawful; and a person who considers unlawful something that God has declared lawful."³⁷

(9) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the Prophet said, "The first persons who enter Gehenna will be a commander and possessor of mastery who does not do justice, a property owner who does not give God His right, and a poor person who is proud and arrogant."³⁸

(10) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that [the eighth] Imam Riḍā said, "When rulers lie and issue unrightful decrees, rain is imprisoned in the sky. When kings act with injustice, their dynasty will be thrown down. When people forbid the alms-tax, four-legged animals will perish."³⁹

(11) It is related that the Messenger said, "No one becomes a commander over ten people or more without his being brought at the

resurrection with his hands manacled to his neck. If he is a good-doer, his hands will be freed, but if he is a bad-doer and wrongdoer, more manacles will be added."⁴⁰

(12) By another chain of authority it is related that the Messenger said, "If anyone is made the leader of a people and does not act well among them, God will imprison him at the edge of Gehenna one thousand years for every day he was their ruler."⁴¹

(13) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Ziyād Qandī came to see Imam Ṣādiq. The Imam asked him, "Oh Ziyād! Have you been appointed by the Caliphs of injustice?" He replied, "Yes, Oh son of the Messenger of God! I am a chivalrous man and do not gather possessions. That which I bring together I give to my brothers in faith, spending it on them as a brother." The Imam said, "If you do this, then, when your ego calls you to do wrong (*ẓulm*) to the people while you have power over them, remember the power of God over punishing you on the day when the wrong you did toward the people has passed and its sin remains for you."⁴²

(14) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "When God gives kingship to someone, He appoints for him a period of nights, days, months, and years. If the kings should do justice among the people, God commands the angel who is placed in charge of the sphere of their empire to turn the sphere slowly; hence the days, nights, months, and years of their empire become long. But if they should work injustice and wrongdoing, God commands the angel to turn it quickly. So the days, months, and years of their empire pass quickly."⁴³

(15) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that 'Alī said to Nawf Bikālī, "Accept my advice: Never become headman, leader, commander, tithe-collector, or officer!"⁴⁴

(16) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Riḍā said, "Justice and good-doing are the sign of long blessings."⁴⁵

(17) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "There are three people who will be the nearest to God on the Day of Resurrection until He finishes settling the accounts of the creatures: A person who in the state of anger is not moved by his power to wrong someone under him, a person who judges or walks between two people and does not incline by a single barley-corn to the one or the other, and a person who speaks the truth, whether it be to his loss or his benefit."⁴⁶

(18) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "Justice is sweeter and more wholesome than water found by a thirsty man! How spacious and conducive to plenty and well-being is justice, even if it be but little!"⁴⁷

(19) In another *ḥadīth*, Imam Ṣādiq said, "Justice is sweeter than honey, softer than butter, and more fragrant than musk."⁴⁸

(20) It is related that [the fifth] Imam Muḥammad Bāqir said, "My father counselled me as follows at the time of his death: 'My son, beware of wrongdoing (*ẓulm*) toward someone who has no help against you but God.'"⁴⁹

(21) It is related that Imam Ṣādiq said, "When a person wakes up and does not have in his mind to do wrong toward anyone, God forgives his sins on that day, unless he should unrightfully spill someone's blood or consume the property of an orphan unlawfully."⁵⁰

(22) It is related by sound chains of authority that the Messenger said, "Avoid tyranny (*ẓulm*), for it is the shadows (*ẓulumāt*) of the Day of Resurrection", that is, it will result in darkness on that day.⁵¹

(23) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "No one commits a wrong without God afflicting him by reason of that wrongdoing in himself, his property, or his children."⁵²

(24) In another *ḥadīth*, he said, "God revealed to one of His prophets, in whose country there was a tyrannical king, 'Go to this tyrant and tell him that I have not appointed him to spill the blood and take the property of the people. On the contrary, I gave him power to keep from Me the sound of the weeping of the wronged. Surely I will not refrain from coming to their aid in the wrongs that have been done to them, even if they are unbelievers.'"⁵³

(25) In another *ḥadīth*, Imam Ṣādiq said, "The wronged person takes more from the religion of the wrongdoer than the wrongdoer takes from the property of the wronged." Then he also said, "A person who does evil toward people knows that evil has also been done toward himself. Surely the child of Adam reaps only what he sows. No one has reaped bitter from sweet or sweet from bitter."⁵⁴

(26) The Commander of the Faithful said, "What bad provisions for the Day of Resurrection—transgression and wrongdoing against the people!"⁵⁵

(27) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that a person came to Imam Muḥammad Bāqir and said, "From the time of Ḥajjāj [ibn Yūsuf] to now I have been the governor of the people. Is my repentance acceptable?" The Imam did not answer. The man repeated the question. The Imam replied, "Your repentance is not acceptable until you give to everyone who has a right his right."⁵⁶

(28) It is related that the Messenger said, "If a person wrongs someone and cannot find him to compensate him for it, he should pray for forgiveness for him, since that is the wrongdoer's expiation (*kaffāra*)."⁵⁷

The Second Stream

On the Explication of the Associating of Commanders with Subjects (ra'āyā) and on the Explication of a few Rights (haqq) that the Subjects have against them

(29) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that [the fourth] Imam 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn said, "The king must know the rights of the subjects against him. They have been made subjects since God has made them weak and given him power. Hence it is incumbent upon him to act with justice among them and to be like a compassionate father toward them. If they should do something in ignorance, he should forgive them and not punish them, thanking God for the power He has given him over them."⁵⁸

(30) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "When a person is put in charge of the affairs of the Muslims and acts with justice, leaves the door to his house open, removes the curtains and the veils from between himself and the people, investigates the people's affairs, and takes care of their business, then God will change his fear at the Resurrection to security and take him into paradise."⁵⁹

(31) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Muḥammad Baqir went before [the Caliph] 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz. The latter said, "Counsel me!" The Imam replied, "Oh 'Umar, open the doors to your house and place no doorkeeper between yourself and the people. Help those who have been wronged and correct the misdeeds that have been done against the people."⁶⁰

(32) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the Commander of the Faithful said, "If a governor keeps himself veiled from the people and does not take care of their affairs, at the resurrection God will not take care of his needs. If he takes a gift from the people, he has stolen, and if he takes a bribe, he has associated another god with God."⁶¹

(33) It related that Imam Ṣādiq said, "If a person is put in charge of one of the affairs of the Muslims and leaves them unattended, God will leave him unattended."⁶²

In this connection there are many *ḥadīths*. But since they are of no use for most people, we will content ourselves with this amount. Anyone who wants [to know more about] the proper modes of behavior (*ādāb*) of commanders and rulers should refer to the clear letters which the Commander of the Faithful wrote to the governors and commanders of outlying areas, especially the long letter he wrote to Mālik Ashtar⁶³ and the letters he wrote to Sahl ibn Ḥunayf and Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr.⁶⁴

You should know that in this world God has given everyone a sovereignty (*salṭanat*). Thus the Prophet said, "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you" at the resurrection "will be asked about his flock"⁶⁵ and how he conducted himself with it. Thus God gave kings power over their subjects, commanders and ministers power over some of the subjects, and owners of farmlands and property power over a group of farmers. God bestowed upon him who has houses, servants, wives, and children authority and abundance over male and female slaves, servants, women, and children, and He made him the means of their daily provision. He appointed the men of knowledge (*ʿulamāʾ*) shepherds of the seekers of knowledge, making the seekers the flock of the men of knowledge. He gave everyone power over certain animals, and made each individual the governor of his own faculties, limbs, and organs, so that he may keep them busy with affairs that will not result in their punishment in the hereafter. God also put works, moral qualities, and acts of worship under the authority of each person and commanded each to observe them. Hence there is no one in this world who does not have a share of governorship and rule and under whose command there is not found a certain group. In associating with each kind of subject there is an injustice and wrongdoing. Everyone has been given certain blessings worthy of that over which he has been given power. In keeping with that blessing each person has been asked to show gratitude. Gratitude for each blessing results in an increase in the amount of that blessing. Gratitude for each lies in this: He associates with each blessing in the manner that God has commanded and observes the rights that God has set down for them. When he does this, God increases the blessing. If he shows ingratitude, God takes it away.

Thus, if kings show gratitude for their power and domination and if they observe the state and rights of the subjects, their kingdoms will last. Otherwise, they will soon disappear. Thus it has been said that a king will remain while he is an unbeliever, but not while he is a wrongdoer. The same can be said about someone who has slaves and servants. If he should treat them wrongly and fail to observe their rights, his control over them will soon be taken away. If a possessor of knowledge should act badly with his flock, his knowledge will soon be taken away from him; otherwise, it will be increased. If a person employs his limbs and organs to disobey God, they will soon be overcome by afflictions and he will cease reaping benefit from them. Reward and punishment in the hereafter depend on observing or not observing these rights. If someone would like details about these rights, let him refer to the long *ḥadīth* about rights that has been recorded from Imam 'Alī ibn Ḥusayn.⁶⁶

The Fifth Stream

*On the Rights of Kings,
and on Observing those Rights,
Praying for Kings to be made Righteous,
and Avoiding their Fitts of Anger*

Know that kings who follow the true religion have many rights upon the subjects, for the kings guard and defend them and repel the enemies of religion from them. Kings preserve and protect their religion, life, property, and honor. Hence people must pray for them and recognize their rights, especially when they act with justice.

Thus the Prophet said in this noble *ḥadīth* [upon which this commentary is being written], "Part of magnifying God is to honor . . . the just king," even though he is apparently referring to the Imam and those connected to him, since another *ḥadīth* has the same content and "just Imam" in place of "just king."⁶⁷ Other *ḥadīths* will be mentioned shortly.

If kings oppose the way of righteousness and justice, people must pray that they be set aright, or they must set themselves aright in order that God may set the kings aright, for the hearts of kings and of all creatures are in the hand of God. Tyrannical and wrongdoing kings must also be obeyed unconditionally, while self-protection (*taḥiyya*)⁶⁸ in respect to them is mandatory: People must protect themselves from them and not make themselves objects of their wrath.

(34) Thus [the fourth Imam] Sayyid al-Sajjīdīn says in the "*ḥadīth* of rights," "The king's right upon you is that you know that God has made you a trial (*ḥirna*) for him. God is testing him by giving him power and kingship over you. You must know that you are obligated not to make yourself the object of his wrath and anger and thereby throw yourself to destruction and become his partner in his sin through the harm and punishment which he brings down upon you."⁶⁹

(35) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "After Nimrod threw Abraham into the fire and exiled him from his kingdom, Abraham entered the kingdom of the king of the Egyptians. He had built a trunk and placed Sarah within it so that no one would gaze upon her. In that kingdom he reached a tithe-collector. When the man came to take the tithe from Abraham's property, he told Abraham to open the trunk so that he could see what is inside it. Abraham replied, 'Calculate as you wish and take its tithe.' The man replied, 'I will not be satisfied until you open the trunk.' When Abraham opened the trunk, the tithe-collector asked who this was in the trunk. He replied that this was his wife, the daughter of his mother's sister.

"When the tithe-collector saw her beauty and loveliness, he reported

the situation to the king, who ordered that they be brought before him. When Abraham entered the court of the king, the king ordered him to open the trunk. Abraham replied, 'My honor and cousin is in this trunk. Whatever I have I will sacrifice in order not to open it.' The king insisted, so he opened the trunk. When the king saw the beauty and loveliness of Sarah, he extended his hand toward her. Abraham said, 'Oh God, hold back his hand from my honor.' Immediately the king's hand withered; he was not able to stretch it toward Sarah, nor was he able to pull it back. The king said, 'Did your God do this to my hand?' Abraham replied, 'Yes. My God is a jealous God who is the enemy of the forbidden. He came between you and my honor.'

"The king said, 'Pray to God to return my hand. If he answers you, I will not turn toward your wife.' Abraham prayed and the king's hand became healthy again. Again the king looked upon Sarah and stretched out his hand, and again Abraham prayed and his hand became withered. Then the whole story repeated itself a third time. When his hand was mended the third time, the king showed Abraham great honor and respect and said, 'Go wherever you like. But I have one request from you.' Abraham asked what it was. He replied, 'I have a beautiful and intelligent Egyptian slave girl. Allow me to give her to Sarah to serve her.' So he gave Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, to Sarah.

"Abraham went his way, and the king came out to escort him. Abraham went ahead, the king following behind in order to show respect for him. In the midst of the way a revelation reached Abraham: 'Stop, and walk not in front of the tyrannical king!' Abraham stopped and said to the king, 'My Lord has just sent me a revelation that I should honor you, put you in front of myself, and walk behind you.' The king replied, 'I bear witness that your Lord is merciful, clement, and generous.'⁷⁰

(36) The Prophet counselled the Commander of the Faithful as follows: "There are eight people who, if they are abased and made lowly, have none to blame but themselves: A person who makes himself present at a meal without having been invited, a guest who orders around his host, a person who seeks good from his enemies, a person who seeks bounty and beneficence from the base, a person who places himself between two people in their secret matter which they have not shared with him, a person who shows contempt for a king, a person who sits in a place where he has not the worthiness to sit, and a person who speaks to someone who does not listen to him."⁷¹

(37) It is related that Imam Ṣādiq said, "If anyone disputes with one of these three people, he will be laid low: father, king, and creditor."⁷²

(38) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the Prophet said, "God says, 'I am God other than whom there is no god. I created

The corruptions which proximity to kings and commanders brings about are many:

1. Helping them in wrongdoing. It is perfectly clear that it is impossible to address them a great deal without helping them in certain acts of wrongdoing.
2. Affection and love toward them. Frequency of association causes love and affection, but God says: "Lean not on," that is, incline not toward, "the wrongdoers, or the Fire will touch you" (Qur'an 11:113). *Ḥadīths* forbidding amicable relations with them are many.
3. Approving their ugly acts. This also comes about by frequency of association. A person who approves an act of wrongdoing is a partner in it.
4. Through frequently witnessing their blameworthy dealings, a person will no longer see their ugly states but will even consider them beautiful. This will lead to his inclination and desire for those works and acts, and soon he also will be afflicted by them.
5. In their gatherings one must not appear to go against the customs of common usage. Following the customs in such a gathering means that whenever they utter some vanity or desire some ugly thing, one must praise and extol it. But this is nothing but hypocrisy and inventing lies against God and the Prophet.
6. If a wrong is committed in their gathering, according to the common usage a person cannot forbid it. And a person who wants to be a favorite and companion must speak in confirmation of their words. Thereby he abandons "forbidding evil" (*naḥy az munkar*), and this is a major sin.
7. The person will want them to continue in their wrongdoing so that he may remain honored by them; or, he will want honor through their friendship, which is also not permissible.
8. The person must enter into their houses, which are of doubtful legitimacy, walk upon their doubtful carpets, and eat their doubtful morsels. All of this will lead to hardness of heart. Or rather, through frequent mixing with them the person will come to know for certain that all these things are forbidden; he will no longer have any doubt concerning their legitimacy, yet he will still have to overlook the things which have been misappropriated.

There are many other causes of corruption which this treatise does not have the scope to mention. Concerning the above meanings there are many *ḥadīths*:

(43) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "A miser has no ease, an envier has no pleasure, kings have no faithfulness (*wafā*), and a liar has no manliness."⁷⁸

kings and their hearts are in My hand. If a people obey Me, I will make the hearts of kings compassionate toward them, and if a people disobey Me, I will make the hearts of kings angry toward them. Busy yourselves not with cursing kings! Repent toward Me of your sins and I will incline their hearts toward you and make them compassionate."⁷³

(39) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "When God wants good for certain subjects, He appoints for them a compassionate king and ordains for him a just vizier."⁷⁴

(40) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that [the seventh] Imam Mūsā Kāzīm said to his partisans (*shī'iyān*), "Oh partisans, do not make yourselves lowly by failing to obey your king. If he is just, ask God to preserve him, and if he is tyrannical and unjust, ask God to set him aright. Surely your righteousness lies in the righteousness of your king. Surely a just king is like a compassionate father. So desire for him what you desire for yourselves, and dislike for him what you dislike for yourselves."⁷⁵

(41) It is related that the Prophet said, "He who fails to obey the king has failed to obey God, for God says, 'Throw not yourselves by your own hands into destruction' (Qur'an 2:195)."⁷⁶

(42) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "If a person resists a tyrannical king and is thereby afflicted by an affliction, God will not give him the wages of that affliction, nor will He give him patience in its severity."⁷⁷

The Sixth Stream

On the Explication of the Corruptions

Caused by Proximity to Kings;

on not Depending on their Nearness;

and on the Prohibition of Aiding Tyrannical Rulers,

Being Content with their Tyranny,

Eating their Food,

and Praising them

Know that proximity to kings and commanders results in loss in this world and the next. In this world a few days of authority and reputation are polluted by a hundred thousand lowlinesses and trials. These quickly pass and the person is miserable in this world and the object of God's wrath in the next. In order to know this it is sufficient to witness the diverse states of the lords of empire and the speed of the disappearance of their empires. If a person has any news of their states, he will know that in spite of their authority and reputation they have not a moment of ease, and they envy the situation of the poor and the helpless.

believer to help the believer if he should be present. But if you are not present and know nothing about it, there will not be a complete argument against you."⁸⁸

(53) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Muḥammad ibn Muslim said, "One day Imam Muḥammad Bāqir passed by and saw that I was seated before one of the judges of Medina. The next day I went to see the Imam. He said, 'What was that gathering in which you were seated yesterday?' I replied, 'May I be your sacrifice! That judge honors me and I sometimes sit with him.' The Imam said, 'What makes you sure that no curse will descend upon him from God, encompassing everyone in the gathering?'"

(54) When the Commander of the Faithful was dying, he charged Imam Ḥasan saying, "Love the righteous person for his righteousness, and humor the godless person to preserve your religion from his evil, but have enmity toward him in your heart."⁸⁹

(55) It is related that Imam Ṣādiq said, "If a person excuses a wrongdoer in his wrongdoing, God will turn him over to someone who will wrong him, and if he prays for the removal of that wrongdoing, his prayer will not be answered and he will not be given the wages of the wronged."⁹⁰

(56) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the same Imam said, "At the resurrection the helpers of the tyrannical rulers will be kept in pavilions of fire until God is finished with the accounts of the creatures."

(57) In another *hadīth*, Imam Ṣādiq said, "It is part of 'leaning on the wrongdoers' (Qur'ān 11:113) to go before a tyrannical king and pray for his long life so much that he puts his hand into a sack and gives a reward."

(58) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the Prophet said, "On the Day of Resurrection a caller will call from the direction of God, 'Where are the tyrants and their helpers?' Anyone who placed a tuft of cotton in their inkwells, tied shut a sack for them, or put ink into their pens will be gathered with the wrongdoers."⁹¹

(59) The Prophet said, "No servant is brought near a king without going far from God, nor does he gain more possessions [without his account being more severe, nor do his followers increase] without his satans increasing."⁹²

(60) The Prophet also said, "Beware! Avoid the courts and entourage of kings. Whoever is nearer to their courts, entourage, and followers is farther from God; whenever a person chooses the king over God, God will take away his abstinence and leave him bewildered."⁹³

(61) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam

(44) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the Prophet said, "Of all people, kings have the least faithfulness; of all people, kings have the fewest friends."⁷⁹

(45) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "If you should have a friend who is appointed to a governorship and you find him acting toward you one-tenth of the way he used to, he is not a bad friend."⁸⁰

(46) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Mūsā Kāzīm said, "Four things corrupt and harden the heart and cause hypocrisy to grow in it, just as water causes a tree to grow: listening to music and song, speaking ugly words, entering the houses of kings, and hunting (*jalab al-ṣayd*)."⁸¹

(47) It is related that the Prophet said, "Whoever keeps company with a king is being tempted; the closer he is to the king, the farther he is from God."⁸²

(48) It is related that Imam Ṣādiq said, "The possessor of abstinence (*wara'*) is he who abstains from the things prohibited by God and avoids doubtful things. If he does not avoid doubtful things, he will fall into forbidden things out of ignorance. A person who sees an evil (*munkar*) without disapproving of it while he is able to do so has loved to see God disobeyed, and anyone who loves to see God disobeyed has openly shown enmity toward God. A person who wants wrongdoers to remain has loved to see God disobeyed, though God has praised Himself for destroying wrongdoers (Qur'ān 6:45)."⁸³

(49) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that the Commander of the Faithful said, "The wrongdoer, the person who aids him in his wrongdoing, and the person who approves his wrongdoing are all partners in wrongdoing."⁸⁴

(50) It is related that Imam Ṣādiq said, "Jesus said to a group of the Children of Israel, 'Help not the wrongdoer in his wrongdoing, or your excellence will be nullified.'"⁸⁵

(51) It is related that the Prophet said, "If a person praises a tyrannical king and humbles himself before him out of desire for this world, he will be his companion in Gehenna. If a person directs a wrongdoer to wrongdoing, he will be the companion of Haman⁸⁶ in Gehenna. If a person should contend on behalf of a wrongdoer or aid him, when the angel of death comes to him he will say, 'Good news to you: God's curse and the fire of Gehenna!'"⁸⁷

(52) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Muḥammad Bāqir said, "Do not be present at a gathering where a tyrannical king beats or kills someone out of wrongdoing and enmity or acts wrongly toward him unless you help him. For it is incumbent upon the

Ṣādiq said, "Guard your religion through abstinence, strengthen your religion through self-protection, and through God become free of seeking your needs from kings. Know that if a believer displays humility before a king or before someone who is opposed to him in religion out of desire for what that person has of this world, God will throw him into obscurity, consider him His enemy, and leave him to his own devices. If he should acquire something of this world, God will take away the blessing of that thing. If he spends any of that property for the *hajj*, the *'umra*, or freeing slaves, it will not have any reward for him."⁹⁴

(62) It is related that Imam Ṣādiq said, "If a person should help a wrongdoer against a wronged person, God will remain angry with him until he desists."⁹⁵

The Seventh Stream

On the Explication of Several Reasons for which a Person may go to the Houses of Rulers and Commanders

Know that sometimes associating with them and entering and leaving their houses becomes mandatory, for several reasons.

1. Self-protection (*taḡiyya*), as was mentioned earlier. If a person by not going to see them should fear losing his life, property, or honor, it is necessary to see them in order to repel that loss. The inerrant Imams (God bless them!) used to come and go at the houses of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphs (curses be upon them!) and their relatives by reason of self-protection, and when speaking with them they would agree with them and humor them.

2. That his goal in going should be to repel a loss from someone who has been wronged or to benefit a believer. For this reason sometimes it is mandatory and necessary, as was seen in various *ḥadīths* in the chapter on going to the aid of the wronged and taking care of the needs of the believers.⁹⁶ Or rather, if a person has the power to remove a wrong from a believer, but he takes into account his own honor and reputation and does nothing, he is a partner in that wrong and will be punished; God will make him lowly.

(63) Thus it is mentioned in a *ḥadīth* that everything has an alms-tax (*zakāt*), and the alms-tax of position and reputation is that a person spend it in taking care of the needs of his brother believers. Just as property increases through giving the alms-tax, so position and honor spent in the way of God will increase; and just as property disappears when the alms-tax is not paid, so also reputation disappears by refusing to spend it, and God will make the person lowly.⁹⁷

(64) In the same way it is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Mūsā Kāẓim said, "The Prophet said, 'Present to me the need of someone who cannot present his need to me himself. Surely when a person presents to a king the need of another who is not able to present it, on the Day of Resurrection God will steady his feet on the Narrow Bridge.'"⁹⁸

(65) It is related by another trustworthy chain of authority that the Prophet said, "If I should fall down a mountain and be broken into pieces, that would please me more than that I should support one of the works of the wrongdoers or walk upon one of their carpets, unless it be in order to allay the grief of a believer, free a prisoner, or pay the debt of a believer. Surely the least that will be done to the helpers of the wrongdoers is that their heads will be placed in tents of fire until God is finished with the accounts of the creatures."⁹⁹

(66) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "There is no tyrant who does not have with him a believer for the sake of whom God will repel the evil of that tyrant from the Shi'a, but the share of that believer in the hereafter will be less than all other believers because of his companionship with that tyrant."⁹⁹

(67) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Mūsā Kāẓim said, "God has friends with kings, by reason of whom He repels loss from His friends."

3. That he go before kings with the aim of guiding them, if they have the capacity to be guided, or to learn a lesson from their states.

(68) It is related by a trustworthy chain of authority that Imam Ṣādiq said, "Luqmān used to go to the houses of judges, kings, commanders, and rulers and preach to them. He used to have compassion toward them because of the affliction by which they were afflicted and the fact that they had fastened their hearts upon the passing considerations of this world. So he would learn from their states and take benefit from their dealings, and through that he was able to conquer his own lower soul and struggle against its desire and caprice."¹⁰⁰

Notes

1. My thanks to the editor of this volume, who suggested I translate this material and provided me with the texts.
2. Fayḍ Kāshāni, *al-Maḥajjat al-bayḍā' fi ihyā' al-Ihyā'*; S.M. Mishkāt, ed., 4 vols. (Tehran: al-Maktabat al-Islāmiyya, 1339-40/1960-61), vol. IV, pp. 6, 11.
3. *Al-Maḥajjat al-bayḍā'*, IV, p. 7.
4. *Ibid.*, IV, pp. 8-9.

5. Ibid., I, p. 24; the other two are *Wasā'il al-shī'a* by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1104/1692-93) and *Jawāmi' al-kalim* by Muḥammad ibn al-Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn, known as al-Sayyid Mirzā al-Jazā'iri (a teacher of both Majlisī and Ḥurr ʿĀmilī).
6. Ibid., I, p. 23.
7. On Majlisī's works, teachers, and students, see the introductory volume (numbered "0") to the new edition of *Biḥār al-anwār* (Qumm and Tehran, 1376-94/1956-74).
8. *Al-Maḥajjat al-bayḍā'*, vol. II, p. 12, no. 29. *Ā'ina-yi shāhi* was printed along with two other Persian treatises by Fayḍ, *Tarjamat al-shāhī* and *Uḥfa-nāma* (Shiraz: Chāpkhāna-yi Mūsawī, 1320/1941). *Ḍiyā' al-qalb* was lithographed along with five more of Fayḍ's short Arabic treatises in Tehran, 1311/1893-94.
9. Allusion to a fundamental principle of Islamic law, stated most succinctly in the Qur'ānic formula, "God charges no soul save to its capacity" (2:286).
10. Nature is the philosophical term, "caprice" the Qur'ānic term. For example, "Obey not him whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance, so that he follows his own caprice" (18:28); "Who is further astray than he who follows his own caprice without guidance from God?" (28:50).
11. Or, "dissimulation of one's faith." Cf. note 68.
12. These are standard cosmological terms derived from the Qur'ān, referring to the two fundamental kinds of created things. The Kingdom is the visible, sensory, or corporeal world; the Dominion is the invisible, intelligible, or spiritual world.
13. Reference to Qur'ān 18:46 and 19:76.
14. The last four sentences, beginning with "Day by day," are clearly directed at the Shah, since they have no parallel in the Arabic original.
15. As a verbal noun, the word "heart" (*qalb*) means fluctuation and change. There are allusions to the fluctuation and constant transformation of the heart in the *ḥadīth*, and many Sufis—especially Ibn al-ʿArabī and his followers—devote a good deal of attention to the heart's changing nature.
16. Again, this is a standard cosmological teaching, found, for example, in philosophers such as Avicenna and the Sufis.
17. This paragraph is derived, most likely without any intermediaries, from Ghazzālī's *Ihyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* III.1.5; cf. Fayḍ's own revision of the *Ihyā' al-Maḥajjat al-bayḍā' fi ihyā' al-Ihyā'*, III, pp. 14-15. Part of the *Ihyā'* passage is translated by R.J. McCarthy in *Freedom and Fulfillment* (Boston: Twayne, 1980), pp. 376-78. Mullā Ṣadrā refers to the same threefold division of wretched souls in some of his works; cf. J.W. Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 144ff.
18. These four stages are commonly described in Sufi works, and, as Fayḍ points out carefully in *Ḍiyā' al-qalb*, the terms are derived from four Qur'ānic verses (12:53, 75:2, 91:8, and 89:27, respectively).
19. Parallel passages in the writings of the philosophers are plentiful, for example, Ibn Sinā, *al-Najāt* (Cairo: Maḥḥabāt al-Sa'āda, 1938), p. 293; translated in A. J. Arberry: Avicenna, *On Theology* (London: J. Murray, 1951), p. 67. Cf. Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Aḥḍār*, 1282/1865-66, p. 853.
20. From this point on, the text of *Ḍiyā' al-qalb* diverges completely from the present work, though the spirit is not much different.
21. The two passages within brackets are not in the printed text but are demanded by the context; something to this effect has probably been dropped by a copyist or the editor.
22. Cf. Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 26, pp. 319ff., Chapter 7: "That the prayers of the prophets were answered through their seeking the aid and intercession of the Imams". The first *ḥadīth* cited there, from Imam Ṣādiq, corresponds largely with the present passage.
23. Majlisī, *ʿĀyn al-ḥayāt*, Tehran: Kitābīfurūshī-yi Mūsā ʿImī, 1333/1954, pp. 487-92, 499-506; pp. 492-99 deal rather indirectly with the topic and were dropped to save space.
24. The full text of the *ḥadīth* is given by Majlisī in *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 74, pp. 73-91; he quotes it from Ḥasan ibn Faḍl al-Ṭabarī (sixth/twelfth century), *Makārim al-akhḥāḡ* (Iran, 1376/1956-57), pp. 537ff.; and Shaykh al-Ṭāʾifa al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067-68), *al-Amālī* (Iran, 1313/1895-96), II, pp. 138ff. On Abū Dharr, cf. A.J. Cameron, *Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī: An Examination of his Image in the Hagiography of Islam* (London: Luzac, 1973).
25. *ʿĀyn al-ḥayāt*, p. 446; *Biḥār al-anwār*, vol. 74, p. 85.
26. *ʿĀyn al-ḥayāt*, p. 3.
27. The first and second "springs" concern the first and second topics mentioned in the *ḥadīth* quoted above, that is, the aged and the Qur'ān.
28. *Biḥār al-anwār* (hereafter, BA), vol. 72, p. 336, no. 1. From Shaykh al-Ṣādūq, *al-Khiṣāl*, Iran, 1302/1884-85, vol. I, p. 20. In the notes that follow, all references to BA are from volume 72 (*mujallad* XVI, *abwāb* 31-96), unless otherwise indicated. The original sources of the *ḥadīths* are supplied as given by the editors of BA.
29. BA 336.3; Ṣādūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:33.
30. BA 337.6; Ṣādūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:59.
31. BA 337.7; Ṣādūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:55.
32. Reference to Qur'ān 4:59; "Oh believers, obey God, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you."

33. BA 337.8; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:68. Abbreviated.
34. BA 338.14; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:142. Abbreviated.
35. BA 339.15; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:158.
36. Reading *ghaṣb* for *ghaḍab*.
37. BA 339.17; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* II:6.
38. BA 341.22; Şadūq, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* (Iran, 1318/1900-01), II:28.
39. BA 341.23; Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* (Iran, 1313/1895-96), I:77.
40. BA 341.24; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* I:270.
41. BA 343.34; Şadūq, *al-Amālī* (Iran, 1300/1882-83), p. 259. Abbreviated.
42. BA 341.26; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* I:309.
43. BA 342.29; Şadūq, *ʿIlal al-sharāʾiʿ* (Iran, 1321/1903-4), II:253.
44. BA 342.30; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:146. Abbreviated.
45. BA 26.9; Şadūq, *ʿUyūn akhbār al-Riḍā* II:23.
46. BA 26.7; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 215.
47. BA 36.32; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī* (Iran, 1375/1955-56), II:146.
48. BA 39.37; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī* II:147.
49. BA 308.1; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 110.
50. BA 323.55; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī* II:331.
51. BA 309.7; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:83. Abbreviated.
52. BA 313.23; Şadūq, *Thawāb al-ʿamāl* (Iran, 1375/1955-56), p. 243.
53. BA 331.65; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī* II:333.
54. BA 328.58; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī* II:334. Abbreviated.
55. BA 309.4; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 267.
56. BA 329.59; Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī* II:331.
57. BA 320.44; Shaykh al-Muḥīd (d. 413/1022), *al-Ikhtisās* (Iran, 1379/1959-60), p. 235; also BA 313.27; Şadūq, *Thawāb al-ʿamāl*, p. 244.
58. BA, vol. 71, p. 5; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* II:126ff. This is a portion of a nine-page *risāla* on "rights" (*huqūq*).
59. BA 340.18; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 148.
60. BA 344.36; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:51.
61. BA 345.42; Şadūq, *Thawāb al-ʿamāl*, p. 233.
62. BA 345.41; Şadūq, *Thawāb al-ʿamāl*, p. 232.
63. Translated in W. C. Chittick, *A Shiʿite Anthology*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1981, pp. 68-82.
64. Majlisī gives the text of the letter to Muḥammad ibn Abū Rakr in BA, vol. 74, pp. 385-91; Muḥīd, *al-Majālis*, pp. 152ff, and Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* I:24ff.
65. This *ḥadīth* is well documented in Sunni sources, for example, Bukhārī, Jumʿa 11, Janāʾiz 32, Istiqrāḍ 20, and so forth.
66. This is the *ḥadīth* of "rights" mentioned above; BA, vol. 71, pp. 1ff. For a complete translation, see the introduction to W. C. Chittick, *The Psalms of Islam* (London: Muhammadi Trust, 1988).
67. BA 137.5; Faḍlallāh ibn ʿAlī al-Rāwandī (d. 580/1184-85), *al-Nawādir* (Najaf, 1376/1956-57), p. 7.
68. *Taḥṭīyya* is to hide one's true faith and specifically one's attachment to the Imams out of fear for life or property. It is often translated as "dissimulation," but I prefer the literal sense of the term since it makes the point more clearly.
69. BA, vol. 71, pp. 4-5; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* II:126ff.
70. BA, vol. 12, pp. 45-47; from Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, *al-Rawḍa* 370-73. The story is extracted from a much longer narrative and the text is then much condensed.
71. BA 371.12; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* II:40.
72. BA 338.10; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:91.
73. BA 340.21; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 220.
74. BA 340.19; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 148.
75. BA 369.2; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 203.
76. BA 368.1; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 203.
77. BA 372.16; Şadūq, *Thawāb al-ʿamāl*, p. 222.
78. BA 338.13; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:130.
79. BA 340.17; Şadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 14.
80. BA 341.25; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* I:285.
81. BA 370.10; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:108.
82. BA 371.13; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* I:270.
83. BA 369.6; Şadūq, *Māʿāni al-akhbār* (Iran, 1379/1959-60), p. 253.
84. BA 312.16; Şadūq, *al-Khiṣāl* I:53.
85. BA 370.6. Majlisī gives a reference to Şadūq, *Māʿāni al-akhbār*, but

the editors note that they were not able to find the text of the *ḥadīth* in that work.

86. The vizier of Pharoah, mentioned in six Qur'anic verses.
87. BA 369.3; Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī*, p. 256. Abbreviated.
88. BA 17.2; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Ḥimyarī, *Qurb al-asnād* (Iran, 1370/1950-51), p. 26.
89. BA 369.4; al-Mufīd, *al-Majālis (al-Amālī)* (Najaf, 1351/1922-23) p. 129; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* 1:6. To "humor" someone (*mudārāt*) is taken as a near synonym of "self-protection" (*taḥiyyā*); cf. BA, vol. 72, chapter 87, which is called "al-Taḥiyya wa'l-Mudārāt" (pp. 393-443).
90. BA 372.21; Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-a'māl*, p. 244.
91. BA 372.17; Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-a'māl*, p. 232.
92. BA 372.18; Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-a'māl*, p. 233. The phrases in brackets, taken from the Arabic, were apparently dropped from the Persian text.
93. BA 372.19; Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-a'māl*, p. 233.
94. BA 371.15; Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-a'māl*, p. 220.
95. BA 373.22; Ṣadūq, *Thawāb al-a'māl*, p. 244.
96. *'Ayn al-ḥayāt*, pp. 492ff.
97. This seems to be a free translation and interpretation of BA, vol. 93, p. 9.5, a passage from the *Tafsīr* attributed to the eleventh Imam, Ḥasan al-'Askarī (Iran, 1315/1897-98), p. 166.
98. BA 384.3; Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī* 1:206.
99. This seems to be identical with a portion of BA 379.40; Saḍīd al-Dīn Abū 'Alī ibn Ṭākir al-Sūrī, *Qaḍā' ḥuqūq al-mu'minin*. However, the Arabic text has in the second part, "Such will have the greatest share of reward on the Day of Resurrection."
100. BA, vol. 13, p. 410; 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 329/940-41), *Tafsīr* (Iran 1313/1895-96), pp. 506ff. These sentences are condensed from the midst of a long narrative.

CHAPTER 14

Lives of Prominent Nineteenth-Century 'Ulamā' from Tunikābunī's Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā'

Translated and edited by Hamid Dabashi

Qiṣaṣ al-'Ulamā' is a rare and precious document on the lives and culture of the Shi'ite 'ulamā' during the first half of the nineteenth century. Its author, Mirzā Muḥammad b. Sulaymān Tunikābunī (b. 1235/1819-20, d. 1302/1885), completed it in 1290/1873-74.¹ Except for Narāqī, he had studied with all the figures whose biographies are presented below, and writes about their times and the naïveté and bluntness of a native of a scholar in the inner circles, and the remarkably candid and revealing picture of life in the Shi'ite centers of learning and their surrounding world. (Ed.)

Ḥājji Mullā Aḥmad Narāqī

He was one of the most famous religious authorities of Iran, and an eminent Muslim scholar. . . . He also had an excellent poetic pre-disposition.

When his noble father [Mullā Maḥdī Narāqī] passed away, the students of his father appointed Mullā Aḥmad as their teacher. At the time, he was not a particularly knowledgeable person. He taught [Taftāzānī's] *Muṭawwal* and [Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn's] *Ma'ālim [al-Uṣūl]*.

**AUTHORITY
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**EDITED BY
SAID AMIR ARJOMAND**

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