

IMAMATE AND THE *RAISON D'ÊTRE* OF CREATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HOLY QUR'AN

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From the perspective of the Holy Qur'an, man is God's vicegerent on the earth. He has attained such exalted position owing to his knowledge of the divine names and their manifestations, and in this respect, he has priority over angels. It goes without saying that all human beings are not endowed with such quality. Those endowed with the privilege have been the perfect men in their times. Some have surpassed others by their knowledge and performing acts of worshipping God Almighty and have thus attained the highest degrees of God-wariness (*taqwā*) and it is through having been granted the exalted position of divine vicegerency that they have been qualified to serve as the Imam and leader in their societies. From Adam (AS) to the Seal of the Prophets (SAW), the Prophets served as divine vicegerents and leaders and guides of mankind on the earth. However, divine vicegerency and Imamate have continued after the Prophets, as reflected in the verse, "And he made it a word enduring among his seed, that haply they might return" (43:28), and the *riwāyas* narrated in its commentaries. The argument is further substantiated by numerous *riwāyas*, emphasizing the necessity of divine Argument (*Hujja*) among mankind until the Day of Resurrection and demonstrating that the divine Argument, i.e., the Prophet or the Imam, serves as the ultimate goal of creation of the world. The divine Argument is the Imam and leader of mankind. Imamate is thus the *raison d'être* of the creation of the world.

KEYWORDS: divine vicegerency; perfect man; divine Argument; Imamate; *raison d'être*.

INTRODUCTION

Imamate denotes 'leadership' and as a term in Islamic theology it is used in the sense of universal leadership of mankind in worldly and religious affairs (Suyūrī, 1405/1984, p. 325; Taftāzānī, 1409/1988, vol. 5, p. 234; Jurjānī, 1412/1991, vol. 3, p. 416), including the leadership of divinely appointed Prophets as well as the Prophets' custodians and the term, encompassing the Prophets' vicegerency or successorship, falls into the domain of the Prophets' caliphate or successorship (Taftāzānī, 1409/1988, vol. 5, p. 234; Qushchī, n.d., p. 365; Lāhijī, 1984, p.

107). Although the term *imāma* is not attested in the Holy Qur'an, but the terms *imām* and *a'imma* are attested in some verses. The references have been made to human and non-human; the former include the following:

1. False Imam: "Make war on the leaders of disbelief" (9:12); "We made them leaders inviting [people] unto the Fire" (28:41);
- 2.1 True Imam: Divinely Appointed Prophets: "And We made them [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] leaders guiding by Our Command" (21:73); "Indeed, I am going to appoint you [Abraham] an Imam for the people" (2:124); "And We appointed from among them (Children of Israel, Israelites) leaders providing people with guidance under Our Command" (32:24);
- 2.2 The Servants of God Adorned with Admirable Qualities: Their noble qualities include their invocation to God Almighty to "Appoint them as God-wary leaders" (25:74);
- 2.3 The Oppressed: It is divine Will to make the oppressed the inheritors of the earth and leaders of mankind, "And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors" (28:5).
3. True or False Imam: "We will call each group on the Day of Resurrection along with their leaders" (17:71). Different views have been expressed regarding the purport of the term 'Imam' in this verse among which mention may be made of the following: divinely appointed Prophets; divinely revealed Books; any leader in this world; the divinely revealed Book; traditions of any divinely appointed Prophet or leader at any time; record of deeds (Ṭabrisī, 1959, vol. 5, pp. 429-430). Considering the next verses wherein people fall into two groups of the guided and the misguided, the term Imam may imply therein a true or a false leader. However, it may convey the sense of 'true Imam', i.e., any leader whose obedience is incumbent on people, and it is the people who may opt for believing in the leader and obeying him or choosing to disbelieve in his Imamate and disobeying him. The term 'imam' may not convey the sense of 'record of deeds' since the latter implies the deeds and their consequences, rather than the object of obedience (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1393/1973, vol. 13, p. 167).

The non-human references to imam in the Qur'an include the following:

1. The Preserved Tablet: "And of all things We have taken account in a 'clear book' (*kitāb al-mubīn*, 36:12; Ṭabrisī, 1379/1959, vol. 7, p. 418);
2. A Road Plain to See: "And the two [cities of the peoples of Lot and Shu'ayb on whom divine retribution was inflicted] are on a road plain to see" (15:79; Ṭabrisī, *ibid*, vol. 5, p. 343);
3. Divinely Reveal Book: "And before this [Quran], the Book of Moses was [revealed as] a guide and mercy" (46:12).

The present study, having adopted a descriptive-analytical research methodology and based on the Holy Qur'an and at times the *riwāyas* clarifying the verses, treats the human and true Imamate that includes divinely appointed Prophets and their trustees and successors,

in particular the successors of the Noble Prophet of Islam (SAW) and further touches upon Imamate as the *raison d'être* of creation from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an.

1. MAN AND DIVINELY APPOINTED VICEGERENCY.

Having willed to create Adam (AS), the Wise Lord said unto the angels, "Indeed I am about to place a vicegerent on the earth." Surprised at the divine decision, they said, "Will You place on it one who will spread mischief and shed blood while we celebrate Your glory and extol Your holiness?" He replied, "Surely, I know what you do not know" (2:30-32).

The angels intended to say that the divinely appointed vicegerent needs to be a holy and incorruptible being, a characteristic particular to angels, the heavenly and luminous beings, rather than an earthly being whose wrongdoing and corruption are incommensurate with the exalted position of divine vicegerency,¹ since only one representing divine beauty and glory may be qualified to serve as divinely appointed vicegerent and such quality is wanting in an earthly and wrongdoing being. God Almighty did not disagree with the angels, but said, "I know what you do not know" (2:32), i.e., there will be certain qualities in the being who will be created on the earth to serve as the divine vicegerent wherewith he will be able to free himself from corruption and attain to a position more exalted than that of angels. The 'knowledge' herein intended is that of exalted truths unbeknownst to angels.

God taught Adam (AS), the earthly being serving as the divine vicegerent on the earth, all divine names, "And He taught Adam all the names, then he presented them to the angels and said, 'Tell me the names if you are true in your claim that you are worthiest to serve as divinely appointed vicegerents' (2:33). Unaware of the names, they said to God, 'We have no knowledge except what You taught us. You, only You, are the All-Knowing, All-Wise' (2:32).

Although the quintessence of the knowledge taught Adam (AS) by God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, is unbeknownst to us, but the divine words addressed to the angels, "Did I not say to you that I know everything about the heavens and the earth" (2:33) convey that the knowledge divinely bestowed on Adam (AS) as His vicegerent on the earth is far beyond that of the outer aspects or manifestations of heavenly and earthly beings; it must be the knowledge of the hidden aspects of the heavens and the earth. A similar theme is to be found in the verse 6:75, "Yet the same signs were observed by the perceptive Abraham, and the physical phenomena helped him arrive at the Truth" and attain certitude, an exalted rank bestowed on divinely appointed vicegerents.

Different views have been expressed regarding the quality wherewith Adam (AS) was qualified to serve as divinely appointed vicegerent on the earth, e.g., acting upon an obligation; obedience to God despite bodily qualities, e.g., sensuality (*shahwa*) and irascibility (*ghadabiyya*); combining the qualities of angels and beasts. Şadr al-Mu'allihīn, i.e., Şadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, also known as Mullā Şadrā, proceeds to say, "The most acceptable argument in this respect is that the criterion for choosing Adam (AS) for divine vicegerency on the earth was his comprehensive knowledge of all the manifestations of divine names (Mullā Şadrā, 1416/1995, vol. 2, p. 300).

It goes without saying that 'teaching Adam (AS) the names' does not convey teaching words to express meanings, as it is the case in denotations or definitions of forms, since such

knowledge may not be considered as existential perfection whereby Adam (AS) qualified for divine vicegerency. Therefore, existential truths (i.e., referents, *musammiyyāt*) are intended by names. To Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, they connote universal and partial truths of the world, the principles of knowledge, the laws governing professions, and the manner of making the required instruments such that Adam (AS) could serve as a perfect referent of all existential worlds, i.e., the material world; the world of images or representations (*'ālam al-mithāl*), and the hereafter (ibid, vol. 2, pp. 318-319).

'Allāma Ṭabātabā'ī holds that the names are beings in possession of life and intellect and also concealed by the veil of the unseen from whom spring all the truths of the world and they may be exclusively known by an earthly being upon whom divine blessings and favors have been bestowed. Angels may not know such truths. It is this knowledge wherewith Adam (AS) was qualified to serve as the divinely appointed vicegerent on the earth (Ṭabātabā'ī, 1373/1973, vol. 1, pp. 116-118).

Conclusion. The divinely appointed vicegerent on the earth is the perfect man whose existential perfection surpasses that of angels, let alone human beings who are far inferior to angels in terms of their knowledge and actions.

2. THE PERFECT MAN AND THE *RAISON D'ÊTRE* OF CREATION

It is reflected in the verses of the Holy Qur'an that the sky (the natural world or that of possibilities or creatures) and the earth have been divinely created for mankind, "It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on the earth" (2:29); "Who has made the earth your couch, and the heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance" (2:22).

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an. It goes without saying that the goal of creation of the world is man's spiritual life, rather than his material and natural life, e.g., as reflected in the rest of the verse 2:22, "then set not up partners unto Allah when ye know (the truth)," i.e., polytheism is a false belief, unbefitting to one adorned with wisdom and knowledge who is endowed with an exalted position.

In another verse, it is said, "We have indeed made whatever is on the earth [i.e., earthly phenomena, e.g., trees, seas, mountains] as an adornment for it, in order to test which of them is best in deeds" (18:7).

It is narrated that the Prophet (SAW) was asked by a Companion regarding the meaning conveyed by the verse. He replied, "You are tried by God so that it will be manifest to you that which of you are wiser, more God-wary in avoiding what has been divinely rendered unlawful, and quicker in obedience to Him" (Suyūṭī, 1421/2000, vol. 5, p. 217). Reference has been made in this hadith to the significance of 'reason' in achieving success in the divine trial and that God-wariness and obedience to God are the signs of human intellection and reasoning.

The goal of creation of jinn and mankind, from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an, is worshipping God, "I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me" (51:56). The desired worship springs from knowledge and total devotion. Imam al-Ḥusayn (AS) is narrated as saying, "God Almighty did not create His servants but to know Him; when they

know Him, they worship Him; when they worship Him, owing to their worshipping Him, they will be needless of worshipping any other object of worship.”²

Endowed with superiority in terms of existential and spiritual aspects, the Imam is also superior to other people in worshipping God; accordingly, the ultimate goal of creation of jinn and mankind is to worship God. In this respect, Şadr al-Mu’allahīn says, “The ultimate goal of the existence of jinn and mankind lies in the existence of the Imams, as reflected in the Holy Qur’an, “I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me” (51:56). They worship God and know Him and their knowledge is based on insight and intuition (*kashf*; Mullā Şadrā, 1416/1995, vol. 2, p. 476).

Another argument supported by the Holy Qur’an is that believers are supposed to be truly God-wary, “O believers! Be mindful of Allah in the way He deserves” (3:102), in that God-wariness (*taqwā*) lies in man’s forbearance or self-restraint against committing sins and also his unwavering obedience to divine commands. There are degrees in this state through which the stages of human perfection are being evaluated. Therefore, the most God-wary individual is the most honored in the sight of God, “Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most God-wary of you” (49:13). Accordingly, the ultimate goal of creation of the world is the man who, at any time, is in possession of the most exalted degree of God-wariness, spirituality, and existential perfection imaginable to any being other than God Almighty.

Conclusion. The ultimate goal of creation of the world³ is the existence of God-wary and faithful men, some of whom are in possession of exalted degrees of faith and God-wariness, and they are referred to as ‘the perfect man’, the vicegerent of God on the earth. Therefore, 1. The perfect man is God’s vicegerent; 2. The perfect man is the *raison d’être* of creation of the world; 3. The *raison d’être* of creation of the world is God’s vicegerent.

3. DIVINE VICEGERENCY AND IMAMATE

According to the verses of the Holy Qur’an, divinely appointed Prophets were God’s vicegerents on the earth and they also served as the guides and leaders of mankind. For instance, concerning the Prophet David (AS), it is said, “O David! We have surely made you an authority in the land, so judge between people with truth. And do not follow [your] desires or they will lead you astray from Allah’s Way” (38:26). Therefore, judging between people truthfully is a qualification of the Imamate and God’s vicegerency on the earth. This exalted rank is not particular to David (AS), but all divinely appointed Prophets were endowed with it. The verse 2:213 says, “Then Allah raised Prophets as deliverers of good news and as warners, and revealed to them the Scriptures in truth to judge among people regarding their disputes.” Whenever the scriptures served as standards in judgment, the Prophets served as the judges as well.

Prophet David (AS) was endowed with divine vicegerency since he was a Prophet. Therefore, his divine vicegerency was not one of his own qualities. The majority of divinely appointed Prophets served as God’s vicegerents on the earth. Having enumerated some of the Prophets, the Holy Qur’an says, “We chose them and guided them to the Straight Path. This is Allah’s guidance with which He guides whoever He wills of His servants.” (6:87-88).

Then, the Holy Qur'an says, "Those were the ones to whom We gave the Scripture, the position of judging between people, and Prophethood" (6:89).

Concerning the Prophet Abraham (AS), it is said, "When Abraham was tried by his Lord with [certain] words [i.e., tests, trials] in which he perfectly succeeded, Allah said, 'I made you a leader for the people'" (2:124).

Regarding the Children of Israel (Israelites), the Holy Qur'an says, "And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our command, [and We granted them the position] so long as they persevered on the path of faith and continued to have faith in Our Signs" (32:24).

It is said elsewhere regarding Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, "And We gave him Isaac and Jacob in addition, and all [of them] We made God-wary. And We made them leaders guiding by Our command" (21:73-74).

The divinely appointed Prophets possess the following qualities: 1. Serving as God's vicegerents on the earth; 2. Being endowed with the exalted position of receiving divine revelations and serving as Prophets; 3. Being divinely favored by Prophethood and conveying divine messages to mankind; 4. Served as the leaders of mankind.

4. CONTINUITY OF VICEGERENCY AND IMAMATE

It is reflected in the verses of the Holy Qur'an that divine vicegerency on the earth and the Imamate of divine vicegerents over mankind will be continuous and everlasting. One of the arguments introduced in the Holy Qur'an regards the creation of Adam (AS) and the position of divine vicegerency on the earth, in that divine appointment of the vicegerent is ongoing since "I appoint a vicegerent on the earth" (*innī jā'il^{un} fī al-arḍi khalifa^{tan}*, 2:30) is a nominal clause (*jumla al-ismiyya*), indicative of continuity and stability; further, it stands to reason that mankind requires a vicegerent to assume the responsibility of Imamate and leadership and it is true at all times, be it the time of Adam (AS) or that of David (AS) or any other time. Accordingly, whenever, after Adam (AS) until the day of resurrection, the earth happened to be in want of an individual equal to Adam (AS) in terms of human qualities of perfectness, the angels' question concerning the *raison être* of the creation of mankind on the earth would be unaddressed (Şadiqī, 2002, vol. 1, pp. 96-97).

The argument is further corroborated by other verses, e.g., "[Remember, O Prophet] when Abraham declared to his father and his people, 'I am totally free of whatever [gods] you worship, except the One Who originated me, and He will surely guide me.' And he left this enduring declaration among his descendants, so they may [always] turn back [to Allah]" (43:26-28). It goes without saying that "and He will surely guide me" indicates a particular, divine guidance beyond human intellectual capacities. It was through this particular divine guidance that Abraham (AS) attained to the exalted position of Imamate. This particular guidance divinely survived everlastingly through which mankind may be guided to the straight path. There is a body of Hadith narrated from the Imams of the *Ahl al-Bayt* wherein the 'enduring declaration' (*kalima^{tan} bāqiya^{tan}*) is interpreted as Imamate which is continuous in the *Ahl al-Bayt* of the Prophet (SAW) and the descendants of Imam al-Ḥusayn (AS) until the day of resurrection (Baḥrānī, 1993, vol. 4, pp. 138-140; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1973, vol. 6, p. 18).

Verses 17:71-71 also demonstrate the continuity of the true Imamate until the Day of Resurrection: “The day We shall summon every group of people along with their Imam, then whoever is given his book in his right hand, they will read it, and they will not be wronged so much as a single date-thread [i.e., they will receive their rewards in their entirety]. But whoever has been blind in this [world], will be blind in the Hereafter, and [even] more astray from the [right] way.”

These two verses say that people will enter the Plain of Resurrection in groups on the Day of Resurrection to wait for the judgement and what is in store for them in terms of happiness and unhappiness, heaven and hell. They will be called for along with their leaders at the court of divine justice. Those who followed the true Imam will be given their record of deeds in the right hand. They will be the saved, reaping fully the rewards of their good deeds. Those who were blind to the truth in the world, having failed to recognize and follow the true Imam, will be deprived of salvation and happiness in heaven.

The word *imam* in verse 17:71, therefore, is used in the sense of true and false leader. However, the context indicates that the true Imam will be with mankind until the Day of Resurrection; in contrast, there is a false imam as well.

5. NECESSITY AND CONTINUITY OF IMAMATE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF *RIWĀYAS*

It is also explicitly reported and emphasized in *riwāyas*⁴ that the earth has not and will not be without a divinely appointed vicegerent and divine Argument following the creation of Adam (AS)⁵ until the Day of Resurrection. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Alī (AS), is narrated as saying, “The earth shall never be devoid of one who rises to establish and maintain the divine Argument, be him apparent and manifest or in hiding and in fear, so that clear, divine arguments and signs would not be invalid. But how many and where are they? By God! They are few and their rank in the sight of God is quite exalted. It is through them that God maintains His clear signs and arguments so that they pass them unto similar individuals in whose hearts they plant their seeds” (Sayyid al-Raḍī, 2003, pp. 660-661). “Knowledge adorned with ‘keen insight’ (*baṣīra*) has fallen into their share.”⁶ They have perceived the spirit of certitude and they find convenient what is hard on those who seek worldly pleasures and ease. They are attuned to things of which the ignorant live in fear. They live in bodies in this world but their spirits are from the highest realm. They are divine vicegerents on the earth, calling people unto the religion of God.⁷ In other words, the divine vicegerent is one whose spirit is from the highest realm and has attained the exalted rank of closeness to the divine, in that he has been granted a high rank similar to that of Adam (AS) for which he dons the attire of divine vicegerency on the earth.

As reported by Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, the Commander of the Faithful’s saying clearly demonstrates the true argument put forth by the Imāmīs regarding Imamate, i.e., the necessity of the existence of the Imam and the divine Argument at all times and the existence of the Hidden Imam (AS) succeeding Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askarī (AS), even though it has been interpreted by the Mu‘tazilīs as the existence of *Abdāl*⁸ mentioned in the hadiths narrated

from the Prophet (SAW), according to which the earth has not and will not be devoid of them and some of whom are known and some others unknown.

The *Riwāyas* Narrated from the Immaculate Imams. The *riwāyas* successively (*mutawātir*)⁹ narrated regarding the existence of divine Arguments on the earth at all times from the creation of Adam (AS) onwards and that the world has not and will not be lacking, following the Prophet's (SAW) time, divine Arguments and Imam, from the Prophet's (SAW) *Ahl al-Bayt*, whose knowledge, firm belief, noble qualities, and good conduct serve as the standards through which truth and untruth are distinguished (Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1965, pp. 211, 214; Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 178; Majlisī, 1982, vol. 23, p. 2).

The following themes are to be found in those *riwāyas* regarding the Imam's role as a guide:

1. The path of guidance is towards God;
2. He revives the truth;
3. He is aware of the lawful and the unlawful and people's needs;
4. He clarifies the alterations made to religion, rejects the additions and rectifies the shortcomings;
5. He is the divine Argument for the servants of God.

It is emphasized in the *riwāyas* that the earth would destroy its inhabitants had there been no Imam or divine Argument. Two *riwāyas* will follow.

- a. The earth would swallow its inhabitants had there been no Imam (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 1, p. 179).
- b. Had the earth been deprived of the Imam, it would have devoured its inhabitants like an agitated sea (loc. cit.).

Two arguments have been put forward concerning what is intended by the earth devouring its inhabitants: as a figure of speech, it implies that the earth will drown and perish in wars, confrontations, and corruption without an Imam and divine Argument; the earth will truly devour people as it swallowed Kora (Qārūn) and his material wealth (Mullā Ṣāliḥ Māzandarānī, 1991, vol. 5, p. 126; Majlisī, 1991, vol. 2, p. 297; idem, 1982, vol. 23, p. 21). The latter is preferable, since it would be inappropriate to interpret *riwāyas* where the literal meaning is capable of conception (*taṣawwur*) and assent (*taṣdīq*).

The *riwāya*, as stated by Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn,¹⁰ demonstrates that the necessity of the existence of the Prophet or the Imam is not only for the improvement of religious and worldly affairs of people, but he is the final goal of the creation of the earth and its inhabitants, in that the earth and its inhabitants would not exist had he ceased to exist but for a single moment. Had the necessity of the Prophet's or Imam's existence been but for improvement of religious and worldly affairs of people, no such result would have followed (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2004, vol. 2, p. 502).

CONCLUSION

The perfect man is the divine vicegerent on the earth and the *raison d'être* of the creation of the world. One endowed with the exalted position of divine vicegerency is the divine Argument and leader of mankind. The Prophets and their trustees¹¹ have been divine Arguments and divinely appointed leaders. Accordingly, Imamate in the two manifestations of Prophethood (*nubuwwa*) and trusteeship (*wiṣāya*, i.e., universal and particular leadership or *imāma*) is the *raison d'être* of the creation of the world.

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NOTES

1. An earthly being is material and composes of irascible and sensual forces and the material world is one of disagreement whose composites are subject to dissolution and whose laws and developments are exposed to corruption and annihilation; human life may not be organized but through social life and survival is subject to living in society and cooperation; therefore, it cannot be devoid of corruption and bloodshed. Attending to this fact, the angels knew that the vicegerency divinely bestowed on an earthly being would involve corruption (Ṭabātabā'ī, 1373/1973, vol. 1, p. 115).
2. إن الله عزوجل ما خلق العباد إلا ليعرفوه فإذا عرفوه عبده، فإذا عبده استغنوا بعبادته عن عباده من سواه (Shaykh Ṣadūq, 1965, vol. 1, p. 9).
3. However, the verses wherein it is reflected that man is the goal of creation of the world are pertained to the natural world but it may be concluded from those according to which angels are divinely appointed to supervise the affairs of the world that the goal of their creation also lies in the existence of the perfect man, i.e., God's vicegerent on the earth (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 2005, vol. 1, p. 507).
4. Hadiths, in particular those narrated from the source through an uninterrupted transmission chain [transl.].
5. The types of creatures and the nature of divine vicegerency in pre-Adam (AS) times are not explicitly attested in the verses of the Holy Qur'an nor in the *riwāyas*; however, it stands to reason that the creation of the earth at that time was preliminary, i.e., the proper conditions for the creation of a divine vicegerent must have been produced, such that divine vicegerency from Adam (AS) to the Seal of the Prophets (SAW) and thereafter must have served as a preliminary for the establishment of the universal rule of the Master of the Age (*Walī al-'Aṣr*).
6. Knowledge along with true, keen insight has come to them instantly, i.e., they have occurred to them and penetrated their reasons in an instant, since their knowledge is divinely granted (*ladunniyya*) and intuitive (*ḥadsiyya*; Baḥrānī, n.d., vol. 5, p. 326).
7. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, 1421/2000, vol. 18, p. 291.
8. *Abdāl*, literally denoting 'substitutes', as the plural form of *badal*, is herein employed in the sense of the elite divinely chosen to maintain the world of whom it is never devoid and that another *badal* succeeds by divine will when one of them passes [transl.].
9. *Mutawātir*, as a term in hadith studies, is employed in the sense of a successively and thus frequently transmitted narration whose veracity is unquestionable since it is inconceivable that the narrators could have agreed upon an untruth.
10. Mullā Ṣadrā, Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (transl).
11. *Awṣiyā'*, the plural form of *waṣiyy* (transl).