

NECESSITY OF IMAMATE FROM MULLA SADRA'S PERSPECTIVE

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In proving the necessity of imamate, Mullā Ṣadrā (1571-1640) attends to the Imam's societal, political, and governance aspects and the role he plays in leading individuals and the society. The zenith of his thoughts lies in the Imam's guidance and existential aspects and their role in creation. He studies the necessity of the Imam's existence through maintaining societal and public life as well as the necessity of the guide (*hādī*) and Argument (*ḥujjah*), and having been inspired by the Qur'an, the *riwāyahs* (narrations), and the affirmation of philosophical principles, Mullā Ṣadrā concludes that the earth may never be devoid of the divinely designated Imam and Argument for whom the world and existence have been divinely created.

KEYWORDS: Necessity of Imamate; the Messenger's Successor; Divine Providence; Emanation Intermediary; Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā

INTRODUCTION

Discussions on the Imam, the principle of imamate, and the related questions, e.g., necessity of imamate and successorship to the Messenger of God (SAW) lie within the domain of theology; however, Muslim philosophers have also attended to the question. The latter have treated the principle of the existence and rank of the Imam, Argument (*ḥujjah*), the divine vicegerent (*khalīfah Allah*), and the topic of the ruler of the Virtuous City (Utopia, *Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*), but at the same time have discussed his *raison d'être*, e.g., functions, obligations, and the methods of identifying and designating him.

Significant questions regarding imamate include the principle of its necessity, irrespective of specifying who is the referent (*miṣḍāq*) of the Imam? The Three Caliphs (*Khulafā' al-Thalāthah*) or 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (AS) and his infallible descendants? Or the necessity of the Imam's successorship to the Messenger of God? Who is supposed to designate him? God (designates) or people (elect)?

The present study makes an attempt to treat the said questions from the perspective of the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. Collecting and reviewing philosophers' treatments of mainly theological topics deepen the discussions and lead to many benefits which have not been sufficiently attended by scholars and the significant topic treated in the present study has not been addressed in scholarly contributions.

The essential or main question addressed in the present study is the following: Has the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā treated the necessity of imamate in the era following the Messenger of God (SAW)?

SUBSIDIARY QUESTIONS

Does the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā prove the necessity of imamate solely through introducing rational (*'aqlī*) arguments or narrative (*naqlī*) arguments have been put forward as well?

Do the set of arguments put forward regarding the necessity of imamate lead to designation or consultation and election? Does Mullā Ṣadrā provide any response to the seeming incompatibility between the necessity of imamate with the Imam's occultation (*ghaybah*)?

Is a rational and/or narrative *sine qua non* (*ḥatmiyyah*) intended by the necessity discussed in theological literature, i.e., does transcendental philosophy (*ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah*), in its treatment of the necessity of imamate, derive the necessity from reason or narration or from both?

General imamate (*imāmah al-'āmmah*) is here intended by imamate, i.e., the principle of the necessity of the Imam following the Messenger of Allah, irrespective of who the Imam may be, the Three Caliphs or the Twelve Imams from the *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS)? Discussions on particular imamate (*imāmah al-khāṣṣah*), e.g., the arguments put forward for the true imamate of Imam 'Alī (AS) and his infallible descendants, and particular designations (*nuṣūṣ al-khāṣṣah*), are not treated here. Mullā Ṣadrā's (also known by the epithet Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, lit. 'Master of those who would be divine') major philosophical works are herein intended by 'the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā' and, at times, the commentaries written on them have been used.

Each school of thought, e.g., peripateticism (*mashā'*), illuminationism (*ishrāq*), and transcendental philosophy (*ḥikmah al-muta'āliyya*), possesses particular fundamentals regarding ontology, theology, cosmology, religious studies – including guide studies – the sum total of which has shaped a particular school. In discussions on imamate, Muslim philosophers' views approach those of Shia theologians¹ and they share common grounds, notwithstanding certain differences, e.g., the former adopt an ontological perspective, maintaining that the Imam's existence is continuously effective on the process of creation and on creatures.

The main function of transcendental philosophy is to assimilate the views held by philosophers (peripatetics and illuminationists), theologians, and mystics, and to verify the conclusions through verses of the Qur'an and narrations (*riwāyahs*). The school, a developed form of former intellectual and philosophical schools, emphasizes rectification

of its predecessors' shortcomings and building on their strengths, a methodology explicitly demonstrated in discussions on the Imam, Argument (*ḥujjah*), and divine vicegerent (*Khalīfah* Allah). Intermediation (*wisāṭah*) between the grades of being (*marātib al-wujūd*) and the role played by the arcs of descent (*nuzūl*) and ascent (*ṣu'ūd*) in creating the degrees of being and deepening unity (*waḥdah*) in the universe and its relation to existence and actualization of the improved form of causality (*'illiyyah*) beyond natural and motive (*tahrīkī*) causes and the one preparing the ground for the creative cause were treated in earnest,² thus presenting an evolved depiction of the nature of creation.

In his works, Mullā Ṣadrā treats, in general terms, the Argument and the Imam, including the Prophet, the Messenger, and the Imam³ while considering all the Imam's existential aspects such as the Imam's political leadership and governance obligations which are not overshadowed by his existential and creative aspects. Mullā Ṣadrā thus treats the Imam's every aspect, function, and position in the world of existence.⁴ The present study exclusively treats the arguments provided in Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy for the necessity of the Imam's and vicegerent's existence after the Prophet.

Notwithstanding his treatment of the Imam's societal, political, and governmental aspects as well as his role in guiding the society and individuals, Mullā Ṣadrā's zenith of thought, as reflected in his works and particularly in his *Commentary (Sharḥ, 1984)*, lies in the Imam's aspects of existence and guidance and the role he plays in creation. The Imam's attributes and his existential rank, as attested in narrations (*riwāyahs*), are rationally and philosophically treated by Mullā Ṣadrā in his transcendental philosophy.

1. The Imam as the Guardian of Societal Life

Similar to other philosophical schools, transcendental philosophy attends to the dimension of politico-societal governance of the leader and treats the foremost obligation and the role of the Imam such that the absence of the divine Argument and the Imam disrupts political and societal life in that in such case individuals will be stripped of leadership and guidance which entail disruption and destruction which will be against divine wisdom, hence the necessity of imamate. Transcendental philosophy thus takes for granted the Imam's legislative, governmental, and leadership roles. He is the savior of the societal and individual life of mankind.⁵

Mullā Ṣadrā maintains that man is a social creature whose life may not be properly organized without civilization, society, and cooperation. Self-interest and engaging the services of others drive man towards seeking one's own interests which leads to conflicts and disruption of the societal foundation. Owing to the ignorance of all human aspects and seeking self-interest, individuals are unable to legislate and enforce laws and provide others with guidance, hence the necessity of divine laws and divinely designated leaders, i.e., the Prophets and their successors, i.e., the Imams. He elsewhere makes a reference to the Virtuous City (Utopia, *Madīnah al-Fāḍila*), wherein humans attain to their exalted divine and human goals, and likens it to a healthy body whose organs function under the supervision of a healthy heart.⁶

The attributes and conditions which he enumerates for the political leader of the society clearly demonstrate that the right to governance, first and foremost, falls into the Imam's share in whose absence, i.e., when people are deprived of such leadership, governance falls into the share of the worthiest of individuals.⁷

Mullā Ṣadrā's argument regarding the necessity of the Imam's existence from a sociological perspective is as follows. Since it is proved that the order and organization of religious and worldly affairs solely depend on the existence of the Imam whom people need to follow and from whom seek guidance and learn to fear God, the need for him is far greater than that of food, clothes, and the like. Accordingly, divine providence necessitates that the earth and its inhabitants should not be deprived of the Imam whose absence would necessitate God's ignorance of the need for the Imam and His inability to create the Imam, and withholding the creation of such Imam from people, each of which would entail an impossibility and God is greater than such shortcomings and defects.¹⁰

Having proved divine creativeness, omniscience, and wisdom as well as the intermediaries of divine emanation and providence and people's need for laws, he provides arguments for the necessity of divine laws and Argument:

The need for the existence of such individual in the survival of mankind and their existence are greater than the benefits unnecessary for survival, e.g., causing eyebrows to grow and the arches of human feet; accordingly, God would not will the benefits unnecessary for existence and withhold those necessary for it. It would be an impossibility that God and the angels be aware of unnecessary benefits and be ignorant of the necessary ones. It would be another impossibility that God be aware of the existence of some possible requirement in creation and withhold its creation.¹²

2. Imam as Divine Argument and Guide

Mullā Ṣadrā maintains that God designated two types of Arguments for guiding mankind: exoteric and esoteric. Exoteric Arguments, i.e., the Prophets and the Imams, may be known and proved through miracles and also through rational arguments. The former is for common and superficial people who may turn away from truth by a shred of doubt, as the people of Moses (AS) did. Nonetheless, the rational method is stronger and more effective than thousands of miracles. The knowledge deriving from rational thinking transcends the exoteric aspect and leads to obtaining an esoteric knowledge of divine Arguments. Such knowledge is a light termed as guidance in the verse 6:90, "Those [Prophets] were rightly guided by Allah, so follow their guidance," which is the path demonstrated in the blessed verse 12:108, "This is my way. I invite to Allah with insight – I and those who follow me."¹⁴

Numerous rational arguments have been provided in discussions on the necessity and benefits of obligation and designation of Prophets, according to which God Almighty, the All-Wise, besides granting the power of reasoning (the esoteric Argument) to mankind for their guidance and happiness, designates the esoteric Argument, the divinely designated leader and guide, to perfect the blessings divinely bestowed on mankind and thus leaves no room for any pretext to which disbelievers and those led astray may resort.¹⁵

Actualization of divine obligations and the chastisement of disbelievers, according to the Holy Qur'an,¹⁶ follows only providing mankind with the divine Arguments and having commanded mankind to follow them. The divine Argument who, along with the divinely revealed Book, provides people with leadership and guidance, appears at times in the form of the Prophet or the Messenger, and at times in the form of his trustee and successor. The divine Argument continues to exist after the last Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), so that the divine blessing of 'never punishing people without having sent a Messenger to them to leave no room for disbelief' stays intact.

In his commentaries on the *riwāyahs* demonstrating the divine blessing in question, Mullā Ṣadrā produces reliable evidence. For instance, Imam 'Alī (AS) is narrated as saying, "Your earth will never be deprived of Your Argument for Your creatures," regarding which Mullā Ṣadrā says, "He (AS) is saying, 'O Lord, You never leave the earth without the blessing of bestowing Your Argument on people, whereby they may find guidance to follow the path of proximity to You and obtaining Your Mercy and finding deliverance from Your punishment and wrath.'"¹⁷

Imam al-Bāqir (AS) is narrated as saying, "God has never left the earth from the creation of Adam (AS) onwards without an Imam through whom He guides people towards Him and he serves as His Argument for His servants and the earth is never left without an Imam [serving as] divine Argument to His servants." Mullā Ṣadrā says that in Imam al-Bāqir's (AS) saying, 'the leader' is intended by 'the Imam', be him the Messenger or his successor, since the earth is not devoid of the actual existence of the Messenger or the Imam, even though their existence may be temporally mutually exclusive. What is intended by the Imam or the Messenger serving as the divine Argument for the servants is that their absence would result in people's ignorance of their Creator, origin, and final return [to God], and such ignorance would lead to being deprived of the means of attaining proximity to the Creator, obtaining divinely granted rewards, and the means of avoiding divine punishment which would necessitate their lack of obligation to worship God, since obligation lies in recognizing the one who made the obligation and the object of obligation. Deprivation from obligation will lead to leaving the bounds of humanity and entering those of bestiality. They would not be thus subject to divine rewards and punishment, similar to animals who have not been provided with divine Arguments and they are not subject to divine rewards and punishment. Being deprived of the Imam would be on a par with not having been granted the blessing of divine Argument. It is narrated from the infallible that one who dies without having recognized the Imam of their time has died as if he lived in the time of ignorance.²¹

The Imam's significance in otherworldly life is also manifested by the fact that acting upon religious obligations in light of guidance provided by divine Arguments will lead to happiness and perfection in this world and the world to come.²² What is intended by the Prophet or the Imam serving as divine Argument for people is that obedience to him will be rewarded by being granted divine mercy and the heaven, but disobedience to him will lead to excruciating punishment. Absence of the Messenger or the Imam as divine Arguments for the servants of God implies that being deprived of such divine blessing would deprive the servants of divine rewards and punishment.²³

The Imam's significance, therefore, is intertwined with the *raison d'être* of being returned to God (*ma'ād*), and the Imam's serving as the intermediary of divine emanation and

providence in the otherworldly life will thus be proved, “The Prophets, the Imams, and the trustees who follow the footsteps of the Prophets, all serve as the means and intermediaries of divine guidance, leading people unto heaven and delivering them from the bounds of bestiality to those of ‘possession’, in that they distributes the shares of heaven and hell.”²⁵

3. Continuity of Divine *Sunnah*

Inspired by the Qur’an and the *riwāyahs* and based on philosophical principles, Mullā Ṣadrā concludes that the earth may never be devoid of the Imam and the divine Argument. His Qur’anic argument is the blessed verses 57:26-27, “And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture; and among them is he who is guided, but many of them are defiantly disobedient. Then in the footsteps of these [prophets], We sent Our messengers, and [after them] We sent Jesus, son of Mary, and granted him the Gospel, and instilled compassion and mercy into the hearts of his followers. As for monasticism, they made it up—We never ordained it for them—only seeking to please Allah, yet they did not [even] observe it strictly. So, We rewarded those of them who were faithful. But most of them are rebellious.”

His thus comments on the verses, “The verses serve as the argument that there is always someone to rise and serve as the divine Argument for His creatures. This divine *sunnah* has been in place from the time of Adam, Noah, Abraham and his descendants to the time of our Prophet, and the divine *sunnah* is never subject to alteration owing to ending prophethood, but the guidance lying at the core of prophethood lasts until the Day of Resurrection. Accordingly, following the time of prophetic mission there should be a trustee or guardian to worship God through intuitive knowledge and without recourse to acquiring it from people, a trustee who serves as the source of knowledge of all scholars and original authorities in Islamic law (*mujtahids*), one in whom is vested the authority to administer worldly and otherworldly affairs of people, one who calls people, as designated by God, to turn towards their inherent nature, irrespective of being followed or denied by people and notwithstanding his being present among people or being, similar to many Pure Imams, concealed from the eyes of people.¹⁹

The reason lying behind the Imam serving as divine Argument and guide is the privilege which he, similar to the first divine vicegerent, Adam (AS) and other Prophets (AS), possesses, i.e., direct access to the knowledge deriving from the treasure of divine knowledge. Mullā Ṣadrā says, “There should be a warning guide at any time to learn from God and his heart be enlightened by divine light... Knowledge is the insight in the heart, the prerequisite to guide people to the middle path of moderation. Therefore, similar to the sense of sight required for treading the middle path of moderation... people need a guide endowed with insight, a true Imam, in treading the path of obedience to God, someone who derives his knowledge directly from God, otherwise such Imam would be in need of another Imam.”²⁸

4. Disproving the Necessity of Ineffectuality (*Laghwiyyah*) of the Creator’s Acts

The Imam as the Beacon of Obedience to God

The divine goal of designating the Prophets and designating obligations for people lies in the actualization of worshipping Him perfectly, as it is reflected in the blessed verse 51:56, “I did not create the Jinn and the human beings except for the purpose that they should worship Me.” Accordingly, the absence of an Imam or a divine Argument would render divine acts in designating the Prophets and setting obligations futile and ineffective. Mullā Ṣadrā says, “Since it is proved that worshipping God appropriately may not be accepted except through knowledge which derives from God directly or indirectly through one who has obtained it from God, e.g., the Prophet or the true Imam, anyone willing to believe in the religion of God through worshipping Him and striving in the best possible way without having been endowed with direct light of divine guidance or with that of the truly guided Imam, may never attain to his goal and he will not find his way to the path of truth and he will incur divine wrath since true worship lies in knowing the object of worship and the will to attain to proximity to God. This will not be a possibility for an individual who has gone astray owing to his false belief in worshipping something inexistent.”³⁰

Imam al-Ṣādiq (AS) is narrated as saying, “You will not be true believers unless you gain knowledge, and you will not gain knowledge unless you are sincere and you will not be sincere unless you are obedient at four gates...” In his commentary on this hadith, Mullā Ṣadrā says, “It expresses people’s need for the true Imam, in that their obedience to God will not be perfect and appropriate unless they attain to certitude in their belief and the obedience which is but possible through gaining knowledge from the trustees in whom is vested the administration of affairs, the gates to knowledge and guidance, the Prophets and trustees.”³²

OCCULTATION OF THE IMAM OF THE TIME IN KEEPING WITH HIS ROLE AND POSITION

Proving the necessity of imamate by people’s need for a guardian of societal life, a guide, and a divine Argument and also through the continuity of the divine *sunnah* and disproving the necessity of ineffectuality of the Creator’s acts lie in the existence and presence of the Imam in the society. The Imam is manifested after the last Prophet in the Twelve Imams (AS), the last of whom is the divine Argument in occultation. As a consequence, a question is put forward according to which guidance, knowledge, obedience, social order, and maintaining the society and political life, as the most significant obligation of the Imam, lie in contradiction to the Imam’s occultation. The question has been put forward in relation to theologians’ similar arguments to which a variety of responses have been provided among which the response produced by Mullā Ṣadrā is profound and to the point.

The first response is that the society is not totally deprived of the Imam’s guidance at the time of occultation, but similar to the sun letting rays pass through the clouds, he affects the people who are prepared to receive guidance. He also provides his followers with expositions of laws, even though the public do not have direct access to the guidance and leadership.

To provide an acceptable response, Mullā Ṣadrā opens the discussion with a hadith and expounds the Imam’s substantial creation in light of a philosophical principle. Imam al-Ṣādiq

(AS) is narrated as saying, “The Argument is [temporally] before the creation, with the creation, and after the creation.” The hadith removes the illusion of some common people who hold that the perfect essence, higher beings, and elevated lights are but for people’s guidance such that the ultimate goal of creating higher beings is to benefit lower beings, whereas the ultimate goal is at all times nobler than the object of the goal, i.e., the one for whom something comes into being, and the latter is lower in rank than the former.³⁴

In other words, beings in the lower rank, in the system of creation, serve the ones in the higher ranks, e.g., plants serve animals that in turn serve humans, and the end goal of creating plants is to serve animals, but the latter are higher in rank than the former. Accordingly, the ultimate goal of the creation of the Imam who is a higher being is not to serve as the guide and guardian of human beings and they may excel the Imam in rank, but the ultimate goal of the creation of the Imam is that he attains to proximity to God and guiding and leading believers is in line with that ultimate goal.

Each and every being, in more technical terms, has two modes of existence: existence in itself for itself; existence in itself for another. The Imam is for guiding, imamate, and leading people. Forcing the Imam to stay at home, circumscribing the noble Prophet (SAW) in the Valley (*Shi’b*) of Abū Ṭālib, turning away of the *ummah* from the Imam, and finally preparing the ground for the Imam’s occultation and depriving some individuals in a society do not stand in contradiction to the creation and *raison d’être* of imamate.

Mullā Ṣadrā thus investigates the existential profundity of the Imam, saying that his rank lay at the beginning of creation, “The Argument predates people, in that he is the intermediary in the creation, and postdates people, in that he is the ultimate goal towards whom all corporeal beings (*jismāniyyāt*) proceed and he is with people to serve as the Argument and light to guide them towards the path to the hereafter and the sacred path.³⁶

Mullā Ṣadrā elaborately refutes the necessity of providing guidance by the Imam, saying that Noah was one of the Resolute (*Ulu al-‘Azm*) Prophets,³⁸ but nobody accepted his imamate and prophethood, as it happened to some other Prophets. He then proceeds to treat the principle of ‘grace’ (*luṭf*) and supports Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s argument by quoting a hadith narrated from Imam ‘Alī (AS) according to which the Imam’s existence lies in creating and showing grace, but his guidance is the second grace, and the deprivation of the society from the latter is owing to the individuals’ failure; as a result, the grace of the Imam is intact even at the time of his occultation.

The divine sunnah from Adam (AS) to the Seal of the Prophets (SAW) is that the earth has never been without a prophet or an Imam. In other words, the prophethood came to an end, but imamate which lies in the nature of prophethood will last to the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, the existence of the trustee who worships God through intuitive knowledge, the one in possession of the knowledge of the Book, the one who serves as the source of the scholars’ knowledge is a necessity, irrespective of his being obeyed or disobeyed by the *ummah*, similar to the Prophet who was the Messenger of God when people had not believed in his prophetic mission... and similar to a physician who is still a physician even though he is not visited by anyone.³⁹

5. The Imam as the Ultimate Goal of Existence

Mullā Ṣadrā maintains that the world and existence have been created for the Imam, rather than the Imam having been created for people, in that the Imam has been created for attaining to proximity to God. In other words, had there been no Imam in the world of existence, the world would have been deprived of an ultimate goal whose destruction would have been a certainty, since an act without an ultimate goal, in this case, creation without the Imam, is doomed to failure.

The existence of Imam al-Mahdī (AS) is the ultimate goal of the world and its perfection. A world devoid of him would come to destruction, since it is proved that the existence of the ‘perfect man’ is the ultimate goal of this world and such discussions may be understood but through investigating the verses and the hadiths, rather than through probing theological discussions and arguments.²⁷

In his commentary on the hadith “Had the earth lasted without an Imam, it would have ended in destruction,” Mullā Ṣadrā says, “The reason lying behind it is that God, the Most Exalted, created creatures in a hierarchy from the highest to the lowest such that the latter had their lowest in rank and the center lay in elemental materials, particularly the earthly ones as the source and origin of baseness, darkness, and remoteness from nobleness and exaltedness. Then, God willed to cause the lower ranks to attain to the noblest and highest ranks and ultimate goals. He thus created the earth for plants, plants for animals, and animals for man as the highest creature in rank whose highest rank lies in attaining to the rank of imamate, i.e., the perfect man, the ruler of the world, where he is the vicegerent of God. Accordingly, the earth and its inhabitants have been created for the Imam and had the Imam, for whom everything else has been created, ceased to exist, other things would have ceased to exist too. The hadith narrated from the Imam according to which the earth without the Argument will end in destruction implies that the earth without the Imam will end in destruction and will become non-existent.”⁴²

6. The Imam’s Existence in the Hierarchy of Creation

The Two-Sided Existence and the Cause of the Order in the World

The necessity of the Imam’s existence along with his guidance, leadership, and other roles have been treated from the perspective of the transcendental philosophy. As mentioned above, the Imam’s functions may not be affected by his occultation or people’s turning away from him. The ultimate goal of the creation of the Imam far exceeds his guidance.

The existential rank and significance of the Imam in the hierarchy of creation is elaborately demonstrated by Mullā Ṣadrā, “First, We have the Creator, the Maker who is Omnipotent and whose Omnipotence is not restricted by the intermediaries;⁴⁴ second, the Creator and Shaper is free from corporeality and materiality,⁴⁵ (elements and corporeal things may not directly derive from God); third, God Almighty, the All-Wise, is All-Aware of what is best in the order of the world and the best interests of the people (as a result, He creates man and what is best for him);⁴⁶ fourth, God has intermediaries and means of making, affecting, creating, and supervising the affairs, since God is more exalted than directly dealing with

corporeal beings (hence the existence of the order as well as the causes and effects);⁴⁷ fifth, people are in need of an individual to supervise their worldly and otherworldly affairs and teach them the manner of living in this earth and attaining to deliverance from punishment in the hereafter (hence the need for the creation of the Imam);⁴⁸ sixth, the supervising Imam has two aspects, one towards holiness and the divine, and another towards corporeality and humanness, in that he is the divine human or the divinely taught man, obedience to him second to God would be lawful, and he is the vicegerent of God in the earthly world; the Prophet and the Imam are nobler and higher in rank than other species of elements and heavenly spheres and thus is known the priority and posteriority in existence between the higher and the lower existents in the hierarchy of existence (i.e., the particular rank of the Imam in terms of existence and creation).

Therefore, in his commentary on the hadith, “Will the earth last without the Imam?” he says, “The earth may not last without the Prophet or the Imam, irrespective of people incurring or not incurring divine wrath. In other words, the Imam’s existence is the cause of the existence of the earth and its inhabitants and the existence of the Imam is the cause of their existence, and the existence of the effect is dependent on the existence of the cause, and that is the principle of causality. The earth and its inhabitants are unquestionably maintained by virtue of the existence of the Imam, since the Imam’s corporeal existence is the ultimate goal of their existence; accordingly, the earth and its inhabitants may not survive for one single moment without the existence of the perfect man.”⁵⁶

The exalted rank of the Imam’s existence is best depicted in Mullā Ṣadrā’s commentary on the hadith, “Had the earth been deprived of the Imam for a moment, it would have engulfed the inhabitants, similar to the sea that immerses its inhabitants.” The hadith, similar to what was mentioned above, is saying that the Prophet’s and the Imam’s existence is not only for meeting the needs of people in improving their worldly and otherworldly affairs, but it is also for their survival, in that the Imam’s corporeal existence is the ultimate goal of their existence; as a result, the earth and its inhabitants may not survive without the existence of the perfect man.”⁵⁸

In his conclusion to the *Kitāb al-Ḥujjah* (The Book of the Argument), Mullā Ṣadrā says, “This is the *Book of the Argument* in which it was proved that people are in need of the Argument; the earth is never deprived of the Argument; the Imams (AS) are the vicegerents of God in His earth; His gates are the source of divine blessings, the lights of God, the trustees of the affairs, the pillars of the earth, the People of the Reminder (*Ahl al-Dhikr*),³⁹ and those firmly rooted in knowledge (*al-rāsikhūn fī al-‘ilm*).^{40, 41} Mullā Ṣadrā thus maintains that the Imam’s existence is effective in creation and legislation, and the Imam is the reality of divine guardianship which is the continuity of the Prophets’ obligation.

Mullā Ṣadrā, having provided a philosophical foundation for imamate, proceeds from the stage of general imamate to proving the particular imamate. In the first step, based on the *riwāyahs*, he sheds light on the inalterable path of inspiration (*ilhām*) and guardianship (*wilāyah*) after the Prophet (SAW).⁴² In the second step, he substantiates the necessity of divine designation of such Imam by producing narrative and rational arguments.⁴³ In the third step, he refutes the substitution of the divine Argument with the Qur’an, *sunnah*, and the Companions of the Messenger of God (SAW).⁴⁴ In the fourth step, he proves the imamate of Imam ‘Alī (AS) and the eleven descendants of his based on successive (*mutawātir*) *riwāyahs* narrated by Sunni and Shia narrators, e.g., the hadith of ‘Twelve Vicegerents’⁴⁵ and “One

who dies without having recognized the Imam of their time has died as if he lived in the time of ignorance.”^{46,47} Mullā Ṣadrā’s perspective regarding the necessity of the designation of the Imam by the Prophet (SAW) and the former’s successorship to the latter is similar to the view held by Ibn Sīnā. Mullā Ṣadrā maintains that since the Prophet’s (SAW) corporeal existence is not always with the *umma*, he has an obligation to name his successor and thus leave no room for doubts.⁴⁸

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NOTES

1. See below on one of Mullā Ṣadrā’s arguments on proving the necessity of the existence of the Imam by divine designation (*naṣṣ*).
2. Raḥīmīyān (2002), p. 14.
3. The divinely designated Argument after the Prophet Muhammad is but the infallible Imam (AS), a question frequently emphasized and substantiated through producing arguments by Mullā Ṣadrā; see Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), pp. 400, 486.
4. The existence of the Prophet or the Imam is not only because of the people’s need for them in order to improve their religious and worldly affairs, even though such affairs necessarily fall within his powers to the extent that the earth and its inhabitants are based on his existence since his existence is the ultimate cause of the earth and its inhabitants, see Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), vol. 2, p. 502.
 ان وجود النبي... او الامام ليس بمجرد ان الخلق محتاجون اليه في اصلاح دينهم و دنياهم وان كان ذلك امراً مترتباً على وجوده ضرورة، بل انما قامت بوجوده الارض و من فيها لكون وجوده الكوني علة غائية لوجودها... (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), vol. 2, p. 502)
5. Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (2002), Treatise 4, p. 613.
6. Idem (1984).
7. Idem (1997), pp. 61-62; idem (1984), *Kitāb al-Ḥujjah (The Book of Argument)*, p. 484.
8. Arabic text:
 لما ثبت ان نظام الدين والدنيا لا يتمشى الا بوجود امام يقتدى به الناس ويأتمون به ويتعمون منه سبيل هدايم وتقواهم، والحاجة اليه في كل زمان اعظم وأهم من الحاجة الى غذاهم وكساهم و ما يجرى مجراها من المنافع و الضروريات، فوجب في العناية الربانية ان لا يترك الارض ولا يدع الخلق بغير امام و الا لزم احد الامور الثلاثة: اما الجهل و عدم العلم بتلك الحاجة او النقص و عدم القدرة على خلقه او البخل والضمنة بوجوده و الكل محال، والله اجل واعظم ما يستلزم احد هذه الامور. (Loc.cit)
9. Arabic text:

والحاجة الى هذا الانسان في ان يبقى نوع البشر و يتحصل وجوده، اشد من كثير من المنافع التي لاضرورة فيها للبقاء ... كانبات الشعر على الحاجبين و تعبير الاخصم للقدمين ... فلا يجوز ان يكون العناية الاول يقتضى تلك المنافع و لاهذه التي هي اصلها و عمدتها و لا ان يكون المبدء الصانع تعالى والملائكة بعده يعلم تلك ولا يعلم هذه و لا ان الذى يعلمه في نظام الخير الممكن وجوده، الضرورى حصوله لتمهيد نظام الخير لا يوجد ... (Ibid, pp. 391-393)

10. Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), *Kitāb al-Hujjah (Book of Argument)*, p. 380.

11. al-Hillī (1407/1986), pp. 346-354.

12. “And We would never punish [a people] until We have sent a messenger [to warn them] (17:15).”

13. Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), *Kitāb al-Hujjah (Book of Argument)*, pp. 484-485.

كانه + DDGE > B>D: انك بلطفك وجودك على عبادك لا تخلى ارضك من حجة لك عليهم ليهدوا به سبيل قربك و رحمتك وينجوا به عن عقابك وغضبك.

14. Arabic text:

والله ماترك الله ارضاً منذ قبض آدم + <DQ> وفيها امام يهتدى به الى الله و هو هجته على عباده ولا تبقى الارض بغير امام حجة الله على عباده. (Ibid, pp. 485-486)

15. Arabic text:

اراد للسلام بالامام مقتدى الخلائق اعم من ان يكون رسولاً او خليفة رسول، فان الارض لا تخلو من احدهما لا بعينه و ان جاز خلوها من احدهما بسبب حصول الآخر، ومعنى كون الامام و النبي حجة لله على العباد انه اذا لم يكن احدهما في الارض لم يعرف العباد خالقهم و مبدئهم و معادهم، و اذا جهلوا باحوال مبدئهم و معادهم جهلوا بكيفية اكتساب ما يقرهم اليه و الى ثوابه والاجتناب عما يعدهم عنه و يوجب عقابهم، فلم يكونوا مكلفين بالعبودية والطاعة اذ التكليف فرع معرفة المكلف و المكلف به، و اذا خرجوا عن حدود التكليف خرجوا عن حدود الانسانية الى حدود الهيمنية فلم يستحقوا ثواباً ولا عقاباً كسائر البهائم و كما ليس لله حجة على البهائم و الحشرات فكذلك حكم من لا امام له، و لهذا ورد عنه... EF E>* H DE يعرف امام زمانه فقد مات ميتة الجاهلية.

16. (Ibid, p. 486)

17. Arabic text:

معنى كون النبي و الامام حجة الله على العباد: ان طاعته يوجب استحقاق الرحمة والجنة و النعيم وان عصيانه يوجب استحقاق الغضب و العذاب الاليم، و معنى كون رفعهما جميعاً حجة للعباد، انهم لا يستحقون عند ذلك ثواباً ولا عقاباً. (Ibid, p. 506)

18. Arabic text:

انّ الانبياء والرسل عليهم السلام و من يخذو حذوهم من الائمة و الاولياء عليهم السلام، اسباب و وسائل لهداية الناس، وجعلهم من اهل الجنة و صيرورتهم من حدود الحيوانية الى حدود الملكية ... و هذا معنى كونهم قسم الجنة و النار ... (Ibid, p. 544)

19. Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1415/1994), vol. 6, p. 298.

20. Arabic text:

فلا بد في كل زمان من هادى منذر يتعلم من الله و يتنور قلبه بنوره ... ان العلم و هو البصيرة القلبية شرط الاهتداء الى سواء سبيل فكما ان البصر الحسى شرط للمشى على طريق مقتصد ... فعامة الناس يحتاجون في طريق العبودية والطاعة لله الى قائد ذى بصيرة و امام حق اخذ علمه من الله بلا واسطة و الا لأحتاج هو ايضاً الى امام اخر ... (Ibid, p. 586)

21. Arabic text:

لما ثبت ان العبادة لا تصلح الا بالعلم و العلم لا يحصل الا من عند الله بلا واسطة او بواسطة من حصل له من عند الله كالنبي و الامام بالحق، فكل من اراد ان يدين الله بعبادته و بذل فيها غاية سعيه و جهده و هو ليس ممن يهتدى بهدى الله و نوره بلا واسطة ولا له امام هادى و مهدي من الله فسعيه باطل غير مقبول، و هو مع ذلك ضال عن طريق الحق متحيراً والله مبغض لا عماله؛ اما كون سعيه باطلاً غير مقبول فظاهر، لان شرط صحة العبادة معرفة المعبود و القصد الى تقربه و هي غير حاصله له، و اما كونه ضالاً عن الطريق فلظنه الفاسد انه على شئ يعتد به من الطاعة و هو ليس على شئ منها اصلاً ... (Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), p. 533)

22. Arabic text:

الغرض من هذا الحديث بيان حاجة الناس الى الامام الحق من جهة ان طاعتهم لله لا تتم و لا تصلح الا بالمعرفة و التصديق على وجه اليقين و ذلك لا يمكن الا بالاخذ عن ولاة الامر و ابواب العلم و الهدى و اهل بيت النبوة والولاية. (Ibid, p. 523)

23. Arabic text:

فائدة هذا الحديث دفع توهم ما يظنه النفوس العامية ان الذوات الكاملة و النفوس العالية والانوار الشامخة انما خلقت لاجل اهتداء الخلق حتى يكون الغاية في وجود العالى انتفاع السافل وليس الامر كما زعموه، فان الغاية دائماً اشرف من ذى الغاية، و الذى لأجله يكون الشئ فذلك الشئ أدون منزلة منه. (Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), *Kitāb al-Hujjah*, p. 467)

24. Arabic text:

فهي قبل الخلق من حيث كونها واسطة في اليجاد الخلق، و بعد الخلق من حيث كونها من الغايات التي ينتهي اليها الجسائيات و مع الخلق لتكون حجة لهم و نوراً يهتدون به في ظلمات احوالهم الى طريق الاخرة و سبيل القدس. (Ibid, pp. 467-468)

25. I.e., those with divinely revealed *sharias*, see Ṭabāṭabā'ī's commentary on 42:13 [Transl].

26. Arabic text:

لكن النبوة ختمت و بقيت الامامة التي هي باطن النبوة الى يوم القيامة؛ فلا بد في كل زمان و بعد زمن الرسالة من الوجود ولي يعبد الله على الشهود الكشفي و يكون عنده علم الكتاب الالهي و مأخذ علوم علماء ... سواء الرعية اطاعوه او عصوه و الناس اجابوه او انكروه كما كان الرسول رسولاً و ان لم يؤمن برسالته احد من الرعية ... و ليس اذا لم يستعجل و لم يستشف المرضى من الطبيب لم يكن طبيباً ... (Ibid, pp. 474-476, 507-508)

27. Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1415/1994), vol. 6, p. 221.

28. Arabic text:

و السبب اللى الحكى في ذلك ان الله تعالى لما خلق الموجودات المترتبة في الشرف والحسة وعلى سنة الابداع حتى بلغت نهايتها في الدنائة وصلت مركزها في السفالة وهى المواد العنصرية سيما الارضية التي هي منبع الحسة والكثافة و البعد عن اللطافة، اراد ان يرتقى بها الى غايتها في الشرف والعلو ... فخلق الارض للنبات و النبات للحيوان و الحيوان للانسان و اخر درجة الانسان الذى هو غاية هذه الاكوان هو ما في مرتبة الامامة اعنى الانسان الكامل الذى هو سلطان العالم الارضى و خليفة الله فيه، فالارض و ما فيها انما خلقت لاجله، و كل ما خلق لاجل شئ فتمى لم يكن، لم يكن ذلك الشئ، فعنى قوله: لوبقت بغير امام لساخت، اى لو فرض انها خلقت من امام لهلكت و سقطت عن درجة الوجود. (Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), pp. 487-488)

29. Arabic text: احدها، ان لنا خالقاً صانعاً قادراً على كل شئ.

30. Arabic text: ثانيها، ان الصانع الخالق جل اسمه متعال عن التجسيم والتعلق بالمواد

31. Arabic text: ثالثها، انه تعالى حكيم عالم بوجوه الخير و المنفعة في النظام و سبيل مصلحة للخلائق...

32. Arabic text: رابعها، ان له تعالى وسائل في الابداع و التأثير و الخلق و التدبير لامتناع مباشرة الافعال بمزاولة المواد...

33. Arabic text: خامسها، ان الناس محتاجون في معاشهم و معادهم الى من يدبر امورهم ويعلمهم طريق المعيشة في الدنيا و النجاة من العذاب بالعقبى (Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), p. 391).

34. Arabic text:

سادسها، فيكون (الامام المدبر) ذا وجهين وجه الى التقديس و الالهية و وجه الى التجسيم و البشرية فيكون انساناً ربانياً او رباً إنسانياً تكاد تحل عبادته بعد طاعته و هو خليفة الله في العالم الارضى ... (Ibid, p. 394)

35. Arabic text:

فروع النبي... و الامام + FH9 >D شريف اشرف من سائر الانواع الفلكية و العنصرية ... و قد علمت الحال في باب التقدم و التأخر في الوجود بين النوع الشريف و النوع الخسيس ... (Ibid, p. 504)

36. Arabic text:

ان الارض لا تبقى بغير رسول او امام سواء كان الله ساخطا على اهلها ام لا. و ذلك لما مر ذكره من وجوده سبب لوجودها و بقائه سبب لبقائها ولا يقوم المسبب بدون سببه كما هو قاعدة العلة و المعلول ... (Ibid, p. 488)

37. Arabic text:

(Ibid, p. 502) ... انما قامت بوجوده الارض و من فيها لكون وجوده الكوني علة غائية لوجودها، فلا تقوم الارض و من فيها لحظة الا بوجود الانسان الكامل ...

38. Arabic text:

لو ان الامام رفع من الارض ساعة لماجت باهلها كما يوج البحر باهله؛ دل هذا الحديث على حقيقة ما مر ذكره منا من ان وجود النبي ﷺ او الامام ﷺ ليس بمجرد ان الخلق محتاجون اليه في اصلاح دينهم و دنياهم و ان كان ذلك امراً متتبئاً على وجوده ضرورة، بل انما قامت بوجوده الارض و من فيها لكون وجوده الكوني علة غائية لوجودها، فلا تقوم الارض و من فيها لحظة الا بوجود الانسان الكامل ... (Loc. Cit)

39. The Qur'an, 16:43; 17:7 [Transl].

40. The Qur'an 3:7; 4:162 [Transl].

41. Arabic text:

فهذا كتاب الحجّة و المقصود فيه اثبات ان الناس مضطرون الى الحجّة وان الارض لا تخلوا من حجة و ان الائمة عليهم السلام خلفاء الله في ارضه و ابوابه التي يؤتى منه، وهم انوار الله و ولاة الامر و اركان الارض و اهل الذكر و الراسخون في العلم ... (Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), pp. 389-390)

42. Ibid, pp. 424, 441, 444, 464, 519.

43. Ibid, pp. 400, 404, 405, 469.

44. Ibid, pp. 400, 409, 425, 431, 480-489.

45. Majlisī, Biḥār, vol. 23, p. 290 [Transl].

46. See above, n. 15 [Transl].

47. Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1984), pp. 461, 480-489.

48. Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1415/1994), vol. 4, p. 220.