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Part 19

The real gift is irretrievable

This material world is based on extinction. The gifts given by the Highest of the high Almighty God should conform to His Greatness. His gifts are permanent. He does not take back what He grants. This world of matter is not spacious enough for this purpose. Here, what is given is also taken back. These eyes, hands and feet given to you are indeed great bounties during the safe period of youth or young age. But if you live on and reach the age of fifty or sixty, things begin to be taken back from you one after another. You lose your teeth one by one.

Likewise, there is a gradual decrease in the your faculties of seeing and hearing. The strength of your hands and legs become less and less and it makes you weaker and weaker. Even if you die before reaching old age, they put you in the grave where earthly worms eat away the whole of your body beginning with your eyes and then come downwards. Permanent and everlasting grant of bounties is not possible in this world of matter. Whoever is given new clothes also gets deprived of it. They are given children, which also have to be taken back. Every kind of happiness available here is but temporary. Such temporary gifts are not becoming to Divine grants. God's everlasting gifts are available in Paradise.

Three bounties higher than every bounty

It is narrated that there are three bounties in Paradise that the people of Paradise will taste. Their taste is better than Paradise itself. O People of Paradise! The first tiding is that you are in high places. These high ranks will never be taken back from you. Once you enter Paradise there is no getting out of it. Another bounty is that you get connected with the original fountainhead of favors, that is, with Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad. Which delight is sweeter than the company, neighborhood and relation with Muhammad and the Progeny of Muhammad?

The third topmost bounty is that the people of Paradise are told that God has become pleased with them.

﴿رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ﴾

“Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Allah; this is the mighty achievement.”¹

The taste and happiness that is higher than all other favors. In Dua Abu Hamzah you recite “Muwahib Haniyyah.” “Muwahib” is the plural of “Mawhibat” which means grant or gift and “Hani” means tasty and pleasing, which makes a heart happy. The happiness of this world is temporary. It is possible that it makes you feel happy for a while but then separation therefrom becomes a headache. Thus it is practically of no value. For example, you are given a park, a garden, bungalow, motor etc. that you like very much. Though you feel happy with it, it is temporary.

﴿لِكِي لَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ﴾

“So that you may not grieve for what has escaped you, nor be exultant at what He has given you...”²

After some years they carry you out of these parks and bungalows, put you in a coffin. How hard would that feeling will be? You will go on saying: Alas! I should not have been given these passing things. These are the pleasures, which result in sorrows.

That world is better which a wise man considers hard because the worldly sweet turns sour at the time of death. (Persian couplet)

The worldly bounties and gifts are bound to decrease and finally become extinct.

Remembrance of death removes futile pleasures

A farsighted man is lucky.

If you keep in mind the end, you will never feel vain pleasure. Your imagination that all these people are happy is due to carelessness. They care the least for the Hereafter. You see one buying the most costly carpets and enjoying thereon. But what is to happen at last? He must lie on bare earth in the grave. If one keeps this fact in mind, his intoxication caused by worldly material possessions will go away.

Tell me why one should build high-rise residence for himself when his final bed will be a handful of dust in grave? (Persian couplet)

But, as I have said earlier, man does not get out of negligence or carelessness so that he may pay attention to hard facts.

﴿اَقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ﴾

“Their reckoning has drawn near to men, and in heedlessness are they turning aside.”³

O God! You make us realize the truth. Kindly drive the love for this material world from our hearts. Let me tell you in simple words and common style about the evidence of Life after death that everyone can understand. All the bounties that one can get in this material world do not befit the high position of God. Gifts from God are everlasting and to be tasted in the everlasting Hereafter, not in this passing world. This material world is too narrow and incapable of it. God’s great grants cannot be experienced here. God is everlasting so His grants too must be everlasting for which this world is too narrow and insufficient. Therefore, surely there is another world of Hereafter wherein Divine everlasting gifts can be tasted and experienced for eternity.

Deniers of prophethood have a bad opinion about God

Among various kinds of bad opinions one, which indeed is unjust and oppressive, is about God Almighty. A man who has such prohibited bad opinion is one who is proud and ignorant and denies the messenger and the Divine Book. Such people say: What is a messenger, an Imam and Qur’an? For the prosperity of man, the intelligence given by God is sufficient. Of course this word is originally from ancient philosophers. It became an excuse for others who say that, for finding out the road to prosperity human intellect is sufficient. No messenger is needed.

Various replies are given to refute this faulty assertion. But the best refutation is that which is found in one of the verses of the Holy Qur’an.

﴿وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ بَشَرٍ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ﴾

“And they do not assign to Allah the attributes due to Him when they say: Allah has not revealed anything to a mortal.”⁴

You, who have denied the Messenger, have made an allegation of injustice and oppression on God Almighty. According to your ignorance and faulty view God has left man in the darkness of confusion. Had there been no Messenger, Imam and the Book, man would have remained in a state of confusion and uneasiness both in this world and in the Hereafter.

Human intelligence is unable to comprehend Good and Evil

You say that man has enough wisdom and intelligence to actually understand what is beneficial and what is harmful. First, everyone's intelligence is not the same or equal. Things, which appear good to a low level brain, may look bad to a high level intellect. Even the higher intellect is unable to distinguish and propose an overall good for the life in this world. Even if all the intelligent people of the world come together, they become even less powerful. How can they find the truth behind whatever happens? That is why, after making laws and rules for social conduct, they have to amend them from time to time. If they correct one aspect, another aspect turns defective. Lawmaking is the right of Only One God Who oversees everything in the universe and knows what is beneficial and what is harmful to man in every age. Man is too weak to distinguish the harmful from the beneficial both for himself and for others; both in the current age and in all ages. Human intellect is too weak to do this job.

No circumspection in law-making

Perhaps they may say that there will be no harm if they resort to circumspection while formulating laws. The reply is that distinguishing of such circumspection and understanding of various contingencies is indeed a very hard and impossible task. Even in insignificant personal matters some intelligent people have gone wrong. As such circumspection creates more trouble. It is mentioned in the book of Islamic Practical Laws that even those who have good religious knowledge need to rely on Taqleed (follow a Mujtahid/qualified jurisprudent). He needs to rely on that Mujtahid for making any circumspection. Even the Mujtahids sometimes say that precaution in such and such matter is like this or that. So circumspection in formulating laws for human life is wrong.

As for the Hereafter and life after death, human intelligence has not the slightest ability to know what is in store there; that where he will go after death, where he would be given a place, which deeds will give happiness and joy and which would bring loss. No one can know this except Only One God Who is the Creator and Owner of both this world and that world. He makes man know about this through revelation to His Messengers. The Messengers convey this knowledge to the people. Otherwise even if all the intelligent people in the world join together they will never be able to know what happens after death, what is useful and what is harmful because they are on the earth and in the world of matter. Just as a child which is still in the womb cannot know what the outer world is, O the one who is still in the womb of this material world! Until you come out of it you will not understand. Until you are not separated from flesh you will not know.

Dreams cannot be accepted as proofs

Even dream or visions cannot be taken as true for sure. Sometimes it is a mountain and sometimes a molehill. For instance, one sees in his dream that his father has worn a nice new dress. He becomes happy and says: Praise be to Allah, he is very happy there. This is no measure as it is possible that your

imagination dressed your father in new apparel. Suppose it was a true vision, it is possible that when you saw him he may be in pleasure and happiness. After that it can be otherwise. After death, man's condition changes as his condition was changing in the world. It is not same all the time. In the world, at one time, he was in the Mosque and in another hour where? May I call it the house of Satan? Yes, in a cinema house. Is it not the devil's house? At one time he recites Qur'an and in another utters shameful indecencies. It is not the same at all times.

I tell you in general that after one dies, no one can know perfectly as to in what condition the departed soul is. You will know only when you go there. So far as you are here you have no means to know what is going on there in the other permanent world. Most of the visions and summoning of souls etc are incorrect. A molehill can appear as a mountain and vice versa. Perfect knowledge is impossible. Everything depends on Divine revelation. God and His Messenger and the Imam say that this deed is good and this bad for life after death and that such and such thing is harmful for you after you die.

Only the eye of the Prophet and the Imam can see

Once a woman living in Basra developed a severe stomachache. Doctors told her to drink old wine. She did not drink and went to Medina to ask the knower of truths, Imam Ja'far Sadiq. She told the Imam, "Doctors have advised me to drink old wine to cure my stomachache. I understand that you are the Hujjat (the Divine proof and argument) between God and me. If you allow me I will drink and tell God tomorrow on the Day of Judgment that Ja'far permitted me so I drank. If you disallow me I will not drink."

The summary of this narration is that the Imam said, "Never! If I allow you to do so, I fear for you the time when you are breathing your last. It means that if you drink wine it will produce a bad effect at the time of your death, even if you drink it as a remedy.⁵ After all it is a very big gloom. Either Satan comes out from man himself or, as per another narration, the person feels extreme thirst. The Imam, who sees, says that he knows and that others do not know about the other world. None except the Messenger and the Imam know the hidden world after death, the grave life and the conditions on Judgment Day.

Does God obstruct the path of His servants? Curse of God on those who disbelieved in the Holy Qur'an. If there is no messenger and no Qur'an what will a confused man do in total darkness? One who has denied the Prophet and the Holy Book, Qur'an has, in fact, denied the wisdom and justice of God. If God has left man in darkness and confusion, He has been unjust, which is unbelievable. He must show the true path to His servants, which He has.

There also is another kind of bad opinion about God's creation. It is seen and heard during a fight between truth and falsehood that always or mostly, truth appears to have been defeated and falsehood victorious. Look at the history of Islam from its early days till today, there has been so much oppression and also that no vengeance has been taken from the oppressor. The oppressed are being tortured and killed and the oppressor suffers no harm. This may cause some to entertain a bad opinion about the creation, as it did happen. Anyone who reads the story of Muawiyah and Imam Ali says: O God! How did

all this happen?

God took away Ali, while Muawiyah and Amr Aas remained alive

Abdur Rahman Ibn Muljim, Hajjaj bin Abdullah and Amr bin Bakr Tamimi were courageous as well as clever. They wanted to take a bloody revenge from Ali, Muawiyah and Amr bin Aas respectively. They swore together that they will kill their respective enemies simultaneously. They said if Ali is killed, Muawiyah will also be killed and so also the latter's teacher, the Satan, Amr Aas. Then there will remain no trouble. So they took an oath together that at the end of the 19th night of the holy month of Ramadhan, at the time of the Azan (call for prayer) of the dawn prayer, Ali should be killed in the Mosque of Kufa, Muawiyah in the Mosque of Syria and Amr bin Aas in the mosque of Egypt (as he was the governor of Egypt).

They bade goodbye to one another. Ibn Muljim left for Kufa and, as you all know, he also saw Qutama and took his concurrence, got his sword poisoned for a thousand dirhams and did his job.

But Hajjaj alias Barak went to Syria, readied himself at the time of morning Azan at the same time and on the same day, poisoned his sword also like Ibn Muljim for Muawiyah as was done by Ibn Muljim at the time of the prayer. Suddenly he killed the Imam who led the congregational prayers. Muawiyah was behind that Imam. When Muawiyah bowed to go into prostration, Hajjaj raised his sword to cut off the head of Muawiyah but it (the sword) hit Muawiyah's buttocks slicing a portion of his flesh. People took him to a surgeon who said there are two kinds of remedies: One is branding and another a special concoction. Muawiyah said, "I cannot bear branding." The doctor said, "If you are not branded you will become sterile." Muawiyah replied, "Yazid and Khalid are sufficient for me." At last he survived.

It is said that Barak was also brought to Muawiyah. When the latter wanted to kill Barak, the latter said, "Good tidings for you." Muawiyah asked, "What?" The reply of Barak was, "We wanted tonight to kill both you and Ali. You have survived but I give you good tidings that Ali will also be killed this night. So keep me safe tonight. If Ali is killed you will be happy to hear that your enemy is killed and then, if you please, you may pardon me. If Ali is not killed I give you a promise to go and to kill him myself." Here we find two versions. According to one, he was spared till the news of Ali's martyrdom came. Thereafter he was not killed but let off after cutting off his hands and feet. Some say he was killed.

Now, as for Amr Aas, that devil of the day and the fox of his time, Amr bin Bakr was appointed to kill him. He also had poisoned his sword since the night of 9th Ramadhan for the purpose of killing Amr bin Aas. Next morning, he was awaiting the arrival of Amr Aas in the Jama Masjid of Egypt. But the latter, that night suffered from colic and could not attend the mosque and said that, in his place, the unlucky judge Qazi Kharijah bin Habeebah would lead the morning prayers. The poor fellow was not aware of the plan. As soon as he raised his head from prostration, Amr bin Bark killed him mistaking him for Amr bin Aas. The Qazi died on that day or the day after. Amr bin Aas killed Amr bin Bakr. The story thus ended.

Now man thinks over all this. He sees that these two oppressors survived but the sword of Ibn Muljim did its job. Our master, who is the master of justice, went away from this world! This is according to divine will. It was different in the case of the other two. Now listen to the reply. You imagine that the one who oppressed people in this world should be punished soon in this world. But the fact is that this world is too small a place wherein Divine revenge can be taken.

Divine retaliation is to take place in the other world. The world of retribution and recompense is another world. This world is the place for scattering seeds. Harvest is after death. If you like to sow a sweet watermelon, do so. If you want to sow the bitter colocynth, you may sow it also. This world is a sowing ground for the Hereafter. The fruits of deeds, good or bad, will have to be tasted after death. You think that the one who has acted with justice in this world should live longer, become stronger. No, it is not so. The proceedings in this world are subject to a chain of cause and effect related with this world only. This is not the place where the deeds of people are recompensed.

Here it is better if I recite for you a verse from the Qur'an.

If He retaliates none will remain alive

If God Almighty catches hold of people for their deeds in this world, no one will be left walking or moving on this earth anymore.

﴿وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ﴾

“And if Allah had destroyed men for their iniquity, He would not leave on the earth a single creature...”⁶

If God decides to take revenge from sinners and oppressors in this very world then no one will remain alive here. Who is there who has not done any injustice or oppression? Is there any day in which we have not done anything wrong? Do you imagine that only he is oppressor who has cut off someone's neck? How many unjust things are being done by the one who sits behind a desk? Does one's tongue not injure many people in an oppressive manner? Wrong and injustice is being done everywhere from behind the weigh-balance, by a worker, by a mason. Wherever you look there is injustice and unfair dealing.

One does wrong in any way. Let aside all other things. Is there anyone who has not done injustice to his wife during his married life? It is oppression indeed. Not only beating but also harassing and troubling her are also wrong and unjust things. Likewise, a woman also acts unjustly with her husband by not observing his genuine rights. Both the husband and the wife have their rights, which must be observed by both. Similar is the case between father and his children etc. I mean common injustice. It is not possible to take revenge from the oppressors and the unjust in this world. Almighty

Allah says: If We catch the oppressors in this world then no one will be left alive. But God gives respite and allows people to repent and mend their ways. The place to take revenge or to punish the guilty is in the other world after death. You want and you expect that God's Will should return the strike of Ibn Muljim to his own head instead of Ali's and that the hit on Muawiyah should kill him. But it is not so. This world is not a place for recompense. This is not the place for Ali's justice.

It is life to be killed on the Path of Truth

Being killed is of two kinds – being killed in the path of desire and lust, which is destruction (loss in both worlds). Unlucky is one who gets killed in the path of lust and passion, as it is real destruction, but being killed in the path of God, truth and righteousness is life, not destruction.

How true is what the author of *Hadaaiq* has said: Those who say that if Ali bin Abi Talib knew that he was to be killed within hours in the night of 19th of the holy month of Ramadhan why he came out of his house? Because Qur'an says:

﴿وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ﴾

*“...and cast not yourselves to perdition with your own hands...”*⁷

Do not proceed towards destruction by yourselves. Here destruction is not death. Here destruction means sinning. Real destruction is that man does a thing, which angers God and attracts chastisement from Him, but if death occurs in the path of God it is the biggest salvation and greatest fortune. That is why, for his entire life, Ali had a very strong desire to be killed in the path of God.

Man cannot get any honor which is greater than being martyred for the cause of the Lord of the Worlds. It was the longing of Ali to be killed for the sake of the religion of God. As I have said earlier, whenever Ali returned from battlefield safely, he used to weep. When the Messenger of God asked, “O Ali! You have returned victorious. Why are you weeping?” Ali replied, “O Messenger of God! Every time I go to battlefield I return safely whereas it is my strong desire to get killed in God's path.” The Messenger of God also gave him good tidings saying, “O Ali! At last your bread will become red by the blood of your head in the path of God Almighty.”⁸

Ali longed for martyrdom

Ali was aware of this prophecy and the Messenger had told him in his dream, “O Ali! For the last ten days of the month of Ramadhan, you are our guest.” It was a night in the middle of the said last days of Ramadhan, in the house of Umme Kulthum and in one in the house of Zainab. What was it with which Ali broke his fast? According to one narration, he took only three morsels.⁹ Umme Kulthum asked, “My

Sir! You were on fast for the whole day and hence hungry. What is there in these three morsels?"

Ali replied, "My departure is near. I am to leave this world in the last ten days of this holy month. I wish that while going, my stomach should be empty." He wished to become thus fortunate. Last night, I told you that Ali was given an option either to remain alive or to be killed. He himself preferred martyrdom. It was no use to forestall Ibn Muljim. He could have been downed by merely a signal. But Ali is willing to submit to the Will of God Almighty.

Ali was, after all, to die one day anyhow. He could and was to go away from this world because of one reason or the other. But what means is better than the poisoned sword, in the path of God, that too during prayer and in the mosque. Who gets such fortune? That too in the best of circumstances, with total attention to God, with hearty acceptance of God's will. All the good people of the world always have such a lofty desire that when they die they should die remembering God. At the time of death man is generally unmindful.

He has futile thoughts. Who is there who gives away his life having full remembrance of God? It is the lofty fortune of Ali. That is why he said, "By the Lord of Ka'ba, I have succeeded." I got what I wanted. So, do not say: Why Muawiyah did not die while Ali got killed. This being killed is the very desire of Ali himself. You imagine that death is a monstrosity, which ends all delights. Yes, it was a monstrosity for Muawiyah. For him it was distancing from pleasures, but for Ali it was quite the opposite. For Ali, it was joining God and being freed.

Happiness and hardship are relative

It is mentioned in a narration that once Imam Hasan Mujtaba went to a public bath, wore nice clothes, rode a horse. He also had a slave with him. This son of the Amirul Momineen was moving in an admirable manner. On his way, he met a Jew who was very poor and extremely unhappy. As his eye fell on Hasan he stopped and said, "I have to say something to you." Imam Hasan also stopped and asked, "What have you to say?" That man said, "Has your grandfather not said, 'This world is a prison for a believer.'¹⁰

When a believer dies, the gate of the prison opens and the believer comes out of that jail. For a disbeliever, it is opposite. This world is a Paradise for a denier. When he dies, he is driven out of Paradise?" That man said, "If this tradition is true, what I am observing is its opposite. Look at your life and my life. Am I in a jail or you?" The summary of what Imam Hasan said is that: What my grandfather said is about the life after death (What wisdom, what a truth, what a solid reply!).

In whatever happiness a believer may be here, its relation is with the pleasures after death. Still this world is a prison for him. Even if he wears the costliest dress it is nothing compared to what he will get after death as promised to him by God Almighty. The most delicious food a believer may get in this world cannot be compared to the delightful food he is promised in Paradise and the most delicious drink of this

world is nothing compared to the water of the pool of Kauthar. All the sweet things in this world are sour if compared with the bounties of that world after death. The nicest bungalow or place of this world is like a prison if compared with the palace he will get in Paradise.

But for the disbeliever: Even if he lives the hardest and the most troublesome life in this world, by God, it is Paradise compared to even the first hardship in the grave. Even if a denier is subjected to the hardest torture in this world's prison, this torturous prison is a Paradise compared to the chastisement, which he is to get in the grave. 11

Think of the relationship between here and there. Whatever trouble and hardship a disbeliever may experience here in this world is nothing in relation to the divine punishments, which will be meted out to him in grave and hell. The Holy Prophet has said, "He is under pressure like a nail in wall." What a fearsome pressure in a dark and narrow grave! The holy Imam was asked, "Will not those who hang taste the squeeze of grave?" (In the past people were kept hanging even for years). The holy Imam said, "The Lord of the ground is also the Lord of the air." Conditions make no difference. If a man has attracted divine pressure and darkness, wherever his body may be he is under squeeze and torturous pressure. Such darkness, that if he brings out his hand, he will not be able to see it.

﴿إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكِدْ يَرَاهَا﴾

*"When he holds out his hand, he is almost unable to see it..."*12

Woe to the prison in Barzakh (life before Judgment Day after death). So if a disbeliever is in a prison in this world, this worldly prison is Paradise compared to his grave.

The Worldly Furnace is a Sanatorium of Hell

It also is reported that the Holy Prophet said, "If a disbeliever is taken out of hellfire and put in the furnace of this world's fire he will feel extreme relief." What a fierce fire is there in hell! In comparison with it the fires in this world are like rest houses. This is quite and totally true because the Holy Qur'an speaks about: "The hottest fire" (Naarun haamiyah).

If compared with hell, fire in this world is cold. Even in this world, fires have different degrees. There is the heat of oxygen, burning of acid, even higher is the lightning. Now what is the fire of 'Saaqiah'?13 I do not know. It can scatter mountains. Have you not seen during your journeys lightning falling from the sky and burning down green trees? I tell you about even greater heat. If it falls in the sea it will fry the fish at its bottom. O God! What a heat, which even an ocean, cannot cool!

A drop of tear cools down oceans of fire

Hell is also a fire that cannot be cooled by seven seas, but I am aware of a drop of water, which can cool it down. It is in our control. Appreciate it. We possess a drop of water, which can extinguish mountains of fire. It is the water of our eyes. If a faithful believer makes himself or herself really faithful, if he really becomes fearful of God's anger and chastisement, if this fear melts his heart and wets his eyes, this drop cools down the fiercest fires of hell.¹⁴ There are many narrations on this topic.

For example: Weeping is the best remedy for every illness. A weeping eye is the spring of Divine Grace. Running water creates greenery everywhere. Rolling tears are indeed God's Mercy everywhere.

Especially these passing nights have the night of power (Lailatul Qadr) in them. The holy Imam is reported to have said¹⁵: Remain awake in the 21st and the 23rd night of the holy month of Ramadhan for improving your Hereafter. Come and remember God continuously. Your heart will become alive. Not only your eyes, but your heart must also remain awake. Refrain from God's disobedience and disrespect. Explaining the verse: "God has created men for being kind", Imam Sadiq says: So that they may make excuse and pray to Him so that He may be Kind to them.¹⁶ The machinery of this creation (universe) is for the purpose that man with this tongue may make excuse and seek forgiveness, with his burning heart and weeping eye. It will cause the Divine ocean of Mercy to overflow if one appreciates this.

O Lord! You make our prayers like that. It is not possible for us to become like that. First recite Dua Abu Hamzah: How can I save myself unless You help me. How can I get the good when the good is only with You. O Lord! It is only You Who can make our prayers like that. Kindly grant that condition to us all. Make us repent sincerely

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1. Surah Maidah 5:119
 2. Surah Hadid 57:23
 3. Surah Anbiya 21:1
 4. Surah Anam 6:91
 5. For further details see the book Greater Sins
 6. Surah Nahl 16:61
 7. Surah Baqarah 2:195
 8. Biharul Anwar, vol. 9
 9. Biharul Anwar, vol. 9, pg. 655
 10. Kashful Ghummah
 11. Biharul Anwar, vol. 3
 12. Surah Nur 24:40
 13. A kind of hellfire
 14. Biharul Anwar, vol. 3
 15. Mafatihul Jinan, Aamal of Qadr Night
 16. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 1

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