

**Textual Authentication of Hadiths Concerning the “Doctrine of *Ahl al-Jabr*” in the Manuscript *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Ṭuruq al-Rashād*: A Perspective Based on Evidences and Corroborations from Both Sects**

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**Abstract**

Determinism (*jabr*) and free will (*ikhtiyār*) represent some of the most significant and sensitive issues in Islamic philosophy and theology among both sects (*farīqayn*). These debates gave rise to three major perspectives within the Muslim community: two prevalent among Sunnis—namely, the proponents of determinism and the proponents of absolute free will—and the Shi‘i perspective, articulated as the doctrine of *amr bayn al-amrayn* (a position between the two extremes). The manuscript *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Ṭuruq al-Rashād*, authored by Ahmad ibn Sharīf in the eighth century AH, argues for the validity of the Shi‘i view by appealing to narrations and traditions acknowledged in Sunni *ḥadīth* collections. In this article, through textual authentication and by considering corroborative evidences from both sects, the narrations of this section are analyzed using a descriptive–analytical method. The findings indicate that, although establishing complete *tawātur* (mass-transmission) in terms of chains of transmission and wording is not possible, the narrations nonetheless achieve semantic *tawātur*, reliability of issuance, and conformity with the Qur’an and sound reason.

**Keywords:** Manuscript *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Ṭuruq al-Rashād*; Doctrine of *Ahl al-Jabr*; Textual Analysis; Evidences and Corroborations from Both Sects.

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## Introduction

The manuscript *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Ṭuruq al-Rashād*, authored by Aḥmad b. Sharīf in the eighth century AH, was composed during the Mongol domination and the decline of the Abbasid caliphate. In such a context, the Shi‘a minority—often subjected to persecution—found greater opportunity to articulate their beliefs through polemical and argumentative writings aimed at establishing the legitimacy of their creed.

Consultation of various biographical and bibliographical sources, including *Ṭabaqāt A‘lām al-Shī‘a*, *al-Dharī‘a*, *al-Ziriklī’s al-A‘lām*, and *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, yields no information about the author, who thus remains largely unknown. The only available reference is found in *Mawsū‘at Mu‘allifī al-Imāmiyya* (Majma‘ al-Fikr al-Islāmī, 1428 AH, vol. 2, pp. 457–458), which mentions his name, the century in which he lived, the title of the book, and the fact that only a single manuscript exists. In the manuscript itself, the author identifies himself as “Aḥmad ibn Sharīf,” and concludes with the statement *wa-mā anā illā muslimun mutashayyi‘un* (I am nothing but a Muslim adhering to Shi‘ism). It is plausible that the obscurity of the author is due to the survival of only this single work, preserved in one manuscript among Shi‘i collections, which led to his omission from biographical and bibliographical records. Accordingly, the distinctive features of this work serve to introduce the author himself.

As noted, only one copy of the manuscript has been located in the library of the Goharshad Mosque within the sacred shrine of Imam Riḍā, and attempts to discover additional copies have proven unsuccessful. No critical edition or scholarly study has yet been undertaken, and the work remains unpublished.

The manuscript comprises 75 folios (150 pages), including an opening sermon and introduction, and is divided into two principal sections:

1. The first section establishes the legitimacy of the *firqah nājiyah* (the saved sect), affirms the authority of the Commander of the Faithful (‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib) and the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), and highlights their virtues, including prophecies of the advent of the savior and the misguidance of their opponents.

2. The second section addresses a variety of theological and historical topics, such as the doctrines of the determinists (*Ahl al-Jabr*) and their refutation, the beliefs of the four Sunni schools, the governance of the first and second caliphs, and the prohibition of temporary marriage (*mut‘a*) during their rule. Given the significance of the theological issue of determinism and free will, and the impracticality of analyzing all the narrations cited by the author, this study focuses on four of the thirteen



narrations included in the manuscript under the heading *fi bayān mu'taqad Ahl al-Jabr* (On the Doctrine of the Determinists). The methodology adopted here involves textual analysis of four selected narrations, while the remaining are cited as supporting evidence. A distinctive feature of this manuscript is its reliance on narrations considered authentic and trustworthy by Sunni authorities, transmitted in their recognized ḥadīth collections. In line with the maxim *al-faḍlu mā shahidat bihi al-a'dā'* (the highest merit is that acknowledged by one's adversaries), the inadvertent testimony of eminent Sunni scholars and transmitters to the validity of the Twelver Shi'i doctrine, preserved throughout their authoritative works, constitutes compelling proof for any fair-minded scholar and leaves no room for polemical evasion. The title of the book itself reflects this purpose. In addition to *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Ṭuruq al-Rashād*, the author also refers to his work as *Kāshif al-Ghayāhib fi Ibṭāl al-Madhāhib* (Unveiling the Obscurities in Refuting Doctrines), a designation that further underscores its polemical and doctrinal intent.

The problem of determinism and free will has long been a contentious issue, giving rise to three major theological positions: determinism (*jabr*), absolute delegation (*tafwīḍ*), and the intermediate doctrine of *amr bayn al-amrayn* (a position between the two extremes). Human beings are inherently endowed with free will, which they intuitively perceive. Were humans not free, they would never deliberate before acting or refraining from action. The existence of commands, prohibitions, reward, and punishment in society testifies to human freedom, and moral education itself presupposes the acceptance of free will (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, n.d., vol. 3, pp. 139–140). Will (*irāda*) is defined as the relation between the willing agent and his direct actions. This relation, established between the human soul and its acts, is a genuine one (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1395 AH, vol. 1, p. 77). Islamic philosophers have defined free will as follows: *kawn al-fā'il bi-ḥayth in yashā' yaf'al wa-in lam yashā' lam yaf'al*—that is, free will means that if the agent wills to perform an act, he can do so, and if he does not will, he refrains (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1382 SH, vol. 6, p. 308). Determinism, by contrast, entails those human beings lack will and choice in their actions. The third view, upheld by the Imāmiyyah, is *amr bayn al-amrayn*, which affirms divine involvement in human acts alongside human free choice.

As noted, Sunnis are generally divided between determinism and absolute free will: the Ash'arīs advocate determinism, while the Mu'tazilīs uphold free will. The Imāmiyya, however, adhere to the doctrine of *amr bayn al-amrayn*. In this study, following the approach of the manuscript's author, the focus will be restricted to critiquing the determinist position.



## Problem Statement

This study seeks to address the fundamental question of to what extent the narrations cited and the traditions employed by the author of the manuscript in refuting the determinist (*Ahl al-Jabr*) position can be considered textually reliable, corroborated by evidences, and consistent<sup>1</sup> with the ḥadīth sources of both sects (*farīqayn*). To arrive at an answer, it is necessary to establish the reliability of issuance (*wathīqat al-ṣudūr*)<sup>2</sup> of these narrations through contextual indicators and corroborative evidences. In this discussion, the chain of transmission (*isnād*) and the formal authenticity of the narrations are set aside—since their validation requires a separate and detailed investigation—and, following the scholarly practice, textual authentication of four narrations included in the section *fī bayān mu'taqad Ahl al-Jabr* of the manuscript is undertaken, based on the aforementioned evidences and indicators. The remaining narrations in this section are cited as supporting witnesses (*shawāhid*) and corroborations (*mutāba'āt*) that reinforce the narrations under study, thereby establishing a general *tawātur*<sup>3</sup> (mass-transmission) sufficient to yield certainty regarding their issuance. The data collection method employed in this research is library-based, while the content analysis follows a descriptive—

1 *Ḥadīth-e Shāhid*: This is one of the technical terms used in ḥadīth studies. It refers to a single report whose meaning is transmitted through another chain. It is also applied to a ḥadīth in which another transmitter, reporting from a different Companion, agrees with the narrator in both the wording (Hashemi Sharoudi, *Bohuth fi elm al osul* 318/70) Ḥadīth al-Mutābi': Another type of report exists whose definition overlaps with some definitions of ḥadīth al-shāhid, and that is the ḥadīth mutābi'. It is defined as follows: a mutābi' report is one in which another narrator agrees with the original narrator in transmitting from the same shaykh, or from someone above that shaykh. For example, 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm narrates from his father Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim from . . . , and another narrator besides 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm transmits the same text from Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim from. . . For this reason, sometimes the term shāhid is applied to mutāba'ah and vice versa in the words of scholars. (Asqalani *Sharh al nokhbah al fekr fi mostalahat ahl al athar* 92) (Mamqani, *Mostadrek al hedayeh*, 199-197/50)

2 *Wathāqat Ṣudūrī*: This refers to certainty regarding the issuance of a report or narration from the Ma'sūmīn ('a). In ḥadīth terminology, *wathāqat ṣudūrī* is referred to as *wuthūq khabarī*. (جزایری، Hoda al taleb fi sharh al makaseb 363/40)

3. *Tawātur Ijmālī*: This is a category of *tawātur* and stands opposite *tawātur lafzī* and *tawātur ma'nawī*. In *tawātur ijmālī*, there is no shared wording or common explicit content among the reports, yet a shared conclusion is derived from all of them collectively. For example: the reliability of a solitary report transmitted by a trustworthy Imāmī narrator whose content is not explicitly stated in the other reports; however, the sum of the narrations implies it. (Maleki Esfahani, *Farhang estelahat osul* 309/100). If several reports on one subject exist, even if their chains are defective, a collective certainty about the issuance of at least one of them is achieved. (Khoyi, *Mesbah al osul* 192/20) (Naini, *Ajvad al taghdirat* 113/20، 1377ش)



analytical approach. It should be noted that no book or scholarly study directly and comprehensively related to this manuscript has been identified, which highlights the innovative character of this research. However, with respect to the broader thematic content of the manuscript, reference will be made to articles<sup>1</sup> and dissertations<sup>2</sup> that have addressed related issues, serving as a review of the existing literature.

## **2- Presentation and Introduction of the Section “On the Doctrine of the Determinists (*Ahl al-Jabr*)” in the Manuscript *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Ṭuruq al-Rashād***

In the manuscript *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Ṭuruq al-Rashād*, the author presents thirteen narrations, whose cumulative transmission (*tawātur ijmālī*) indicates their collective reliability in refuting the doctrine of the determinists (*Jabriyyūn*). Before examining selected examples of these narrations, it is appropriate to reflect on the reasons and circumstances that led to the emergence of the debate on determinism and free will. Determinism (*jabr*) and free will (*ikhtiyār*) constitute some of the most fundamental, ancient, and sensitive issues in Islamic philosophy and theology. Their significance lies in their close connection with questions of divine will, power, and knowledge of human actions—particularly the creation of acts, divine decree (*qaḍā’ wa-qadar*), and divine justice. Lexically, *jabr* denotes performing an act against one’s will (al-Farāhīdī, 1409 AH, vol. 6, p. 115; Ibn Manẓūr, 1414 AH, vol. 4, p. 116), or under compulsion and force (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH, p. 183). In theological and philosophical usage, it refers to the compulsion of the servant in his actions due to divine overpowering (al-Mufīd, 1413 AH, pp. 46–47). By contrast, *ikhtiyār* derives from the root *khayr* (good), meaning to choose the best option (Ibn Manẓūr, 1414 AH, vol. 4, p. 267), and denotes any act performed without coercion (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH, p. 302), such that the act or its omission depends upon the agent’s will (Khawājā Naṣīr, 1405 AH, p. 477). In theological terminology, the opposite of determinism is *tafwīḍ* (delegation), meaning the complete assignment of

1 See: 1. A Response to the Critique of the Ḥadīth of the Division of the Ummah from the Perspective of Both Schools, Āl-Mujaddad Shīrāzī, Seyyed Hassan, *Ṣerāt Journal*, Winter 2019, Issue 20, pp. 9–26.

2. An Examination and Critique of the Ḥadīth of the Saved Sect, Beqāei Yamin, Mohammad, *Journal of Islamic Schools of Thought Studies*, Summer 2015, Issue 40, pp. 57–66.

2 See: 1. Critical edition and verification of the manuscript "*al shahab al thagheb le navaseb al aemeh al ataeb*", Emādi Esterābādī, Reyhāneh Sādāt, Supervisor: Ḥasanī Ranjbar, Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch, M.A. Thesis, Winter 2014.

2. *Critique and Examination of the Verses of Wilāyah in al-Ṭabarī’s Tafsīr*, Ḥabībī-Pour, Manẓūr, Supervisor: Ḥujjat al-Islām Seyyed Moḥammad Ḥossein Mīrī, Advisor: Ḥujjat al-Islām Alirezā ‘Azīmī-Fard, M.A. Thesis, 2014.



human acts to the servants themselves (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1418 AH, vol. 1, pp. 276–277). God, being All-Wise, does nothing without purpose or benefit, nor does He commit injustice or burden anyone beyond their capacity. Divine obligations are legislated for the benefit of human beings themselves, not for God’s own advantage (‘Allāma Majlisī, 1392 SH, p. 192). Thus, humans remain free in performing or refraining from their duties, and in the realm of voluntary acts neither absolute determinism nor absolute delegation applies. The correct belief is an intermediate position between the two. To claim that humans are compelled in their actions implies attributing injustice to God, which is impossible and tantamount to disbelief. Conversely, to claim that God has no involvement whatsoever in human acts—denying any divine relation to them—is also disbelief, known as *tafwīd* (ibid., p. 193). Rather, God intervenes in human acts through special guidance and granting success (*tawfīq*), or by withholding such guidance, without thereby compelling the servant. Analogies in jurisprudence and social relations illustrate this: when a master commands his servant to perform a task, threatens punishment for neglect, and emphasizes the obligation through encouragement and reminders, the servant remains responsible for compliance. The master’s involvement does not negate the servant’s freedom. In the same way, divine involvement in human acts constitutes the intermediate doctrine between determinism and delegation, as affirmed by numerous narrations (Majlisī, 1392 SH, pp. 194–195). ‘Allāma Majlisī, in Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn, states: “Know that many narrations affirm that neither determinism applies—whereby humans are compelled in their acts—nor delegation applies—whereby they are abandoned to themselves. Rather, it is a matter between two extremes. Most scholars interpret this to mean that God does not compel the servant, while the servant acts by his own will; yet all means and faculties enabling the act, such as bodily organs, spiritual capacities, and instruments, are provided by God. This is the doctrine of *amr bayn al-amrayn* (a position between two extremes) mentioned in the narrations” (Majlisī, 1384 SH, vol. 2, chap. 3). Accordingly, the Imāmī Shi’a affirm that human acts are simultaneously attributable to human choice and divine will. Human volition operates in harmony with divine will, not in opposition to it. Determinists claim that God is the sole agent of human acts, while proponents of delegation deny any divine involvement. In the section *fi bayān mu’taqad Ahl al-Jabr* of the manuscript, the author employs rational arguments and Qur’anic verses to present narrations that refute and invalidate the determinist doctrine, portraying their beliefs as contrary to authentic Islam and inconsistent with the reasoning of the wise and discerning. A comprehensive view of the narrations included in the section



*fī bayān mu'taqad Ahl al-Jabr* of the manuscript *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Turuq al-Rashād* allows these traditions to be classified under four main categories:

1. Refutation of determinism based on divine mercy
2. Rational arguments against determinism
3. The existence of divine punishment and reward as evidence of human free will
4. The adoption of determinism as a means of evading religious responsibility

In light of the Qur'anic verse *وَمَا أَضَلَّنَا إِلَّا الْمُجْرِمُونَ* (None led us astray except the criminals, Qur'an 26:99), together with the preceding and subsequent verses that recount the reproachful and admonishing dialogues with the inhabitants of Hell, it must be acknowledged that the act of leading astray is attributed to agents other than God. This attribution is incompatible with the determinist claim that all acts are exclusively ascribed to God. Accordingly, the original narrations preserved in the manuscript will now be examined in detail.

### 2-1. Refutation of Determinism Based on Divine Mercy

All rational people, despite differences in nations, beliefs, and religions, agree that God is *Arham al-Rāhimīn* (the Most Merciful of the merciful). The prophets also testify to God's supreme mercy. Among the examples is the statement of Moses (peace be upon him) in the Qur'an:

(al-A'raf, verse 151) *﴿قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِأَخِي وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ﴾*

“Moses said: My Lord, forgive me and my brother, and admit us into Your mercy, for You are the Most Merciful of the merciful. Another example is the statement of Joseph (peace be upon him):

(Yūsuf, verse 92) *﴿قَالَ لَا تَثْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ﴾*

He said: There is no blame upon you today. May God forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful. How then can this group affirm that their Prophet describes God with such a supreme attribute of mercy, yet at the same time claim that God creates people only to cast them into Hell without granting them any choice of their own? Ahmad ibn Sharīf, in the manuscript, cites the following narration from the perspective of the majority of Muslims, transmitted from the Messenger of God (peace be upon him): “Among these is what al-Ḥumaydī narrated in his book *al-Jam' bayn al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, in the Musnad of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, from Ibn 'Umar, from 'Umar, who said: Captives were brought before the Prophet (peace be upon him). A woman among the captives was searching anxiously until she found a child among them. She took the child, pressed him to her chest, and



nursed him. The Prophet (pbuh) then said: ‘Do you think this woman would throw her child into the fire?’ We replied: ‘No, by God.’ He said: ‘God is more merciful to His servants than this woman is to her child.’ This narration is supported by corroborative evidences (*shawāhid wa-mutāba‘āt*) as outlined below.

### 2-1-1. Corroborative Evidences (*Shawāhid wa-Mutāba‘āt*)

The aforementioned narration is supported by corroborative evidences both in the manuscript and in the sources of both sects (*farīqayn*).

#### 2-1-1-1. Corroborative Evidences in the Manuscript

Aḥmad ibn Sharīf, in the manuscript, cites several narrations that serve as semantic corroborations of the preceding narration. These are transmitted from the Messenger of God (pbuh) as follows:

1. Narration of Abū Hurayra: Al-Ḥumaydī also reports in *al-Jam‘* from the Musnad of Abū Hurayra, through ‘Aṭā’ ibn Umm [Abī] Rabāḥ, who said: Abū Hurayra narrated that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) said: “Indeed, God Almighty has one hundred mercies. He sent down one mercy among the jinn, humankind, animals, and creatures, through which they show affection and compassion, and through which even wild beasts show kindness to their offspring. God has reserved ninety-nine mercies with which He will show mercy to His servants on the Day of Resurrection.”

2. Another narration of Abū Hurayra: Al-Ḥumaydī also reports in *al-Jam‘* from the Musnad of Abū Hurayra, who said that the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) declared: “God, Mighty and Majestic, will say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was ill and you did not visit Me. He will reply: O Lord, how could I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds? God will say: Did you not know that My servant so-and-so was ill and you did not visit him? Did you not know that had you visited him, you would have found Me with him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you did not feed Me. He will reply: O Lord, how could I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds? God will say: Did you not know that My servant so-and-so asked you for food and you did not feed him? Had you fed him, you would have found that with Me. O son of Adam, I asked you for drink and you did not give Me water. He will reply: O Lord, how could I give You drink when You are the Lord of the worlds? God will say: My servant so-and-so asked you for water and you did not give him drink. Had you given him water, you would have found that with Me.”

3. Narration of ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd: Al-Ḥumaydī also reports in *al-Jam‘* from the Musnad of ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, who said: “I heard the Messenger of God (pbuh) say: God rejoices at the repentance of His believing servant more than a man who, after traveling in a desolate land



with his camel carrying his food and drink, lays down to sleep. When he awakens, his camel has gone. He searches for it until hunger and thirst overwhelm him, or as God wills. He then says: I will return to the place where I was and sleep until I die. He lays his head upon his arm to die, then awakens to find his camel beside him with his provisions and water. God is more joyful at the repentance of His believing servant than this man is at finding his camel and provisions.” Thus, the corroborative evidences of the aforementioned narration in the manuscript are also attested in the sources of both sects (*maṣādir al-farīqayn*), as will be outlined below.

### **2–1–1–2. Corroborative Evidences in the Sources of Both Sects (*Maṣādir al-Farīqayn*)**

The major and authoritative sources of both sects, with agreement in wording, are as follows:

#### **Shi‘i Sources**

1. al-Ḥillī, *Nahj al-Haqq wa-Kashf al-Ṣidq*, p. 374
2. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Ṭarā’if fi Ma’rifat al-Madhāhib al-Ṭawā’if*, vol. 2, p. 308

#### **Sunni Sources**

1. al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 8, p. 8
2. al-Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā’ wa-l-Ṣifāt*, vol. 2, p. 457.
3. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Kashf al-Mushkil min Ḥadīth al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, vol. 1, p. 94
4. Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi‘ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 4, p. 52.
5. al-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, p. 160
6. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-Nihāya*, vol. 20, p. 53
7. Abū Nu‘aym, *Ma’rifat al-Ṣaḥāba*, vol. 8, p. 256
8. Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’ wa-Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā’*, vol. 3, p. 228, and others.

### **2–1–2. Textual Analysis**

When the word *rahmat* (mercy) becomes an attribute of God, it signifies benevolence and kindness in essence (al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH, p. 191; Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1390 AH, vol. 1, p. 23). From the perspective of Shi‘i theology, divine mercy means the effusion of goodness to the needy and the downtrodden, and the act of supporting them. God’s mercy is characterized by comprehensiveness, universality, and perfection. Comprehensiveness means that God intends to remove need and weakness from all who are needy. Universality means that the scope of divine mercy encompasses both the virtuous and the wicked, both believers and disbelievers, and applies in this world as well as in the Hereafter. Perfection means that, unlike human beings who may suffer fatigue or hardship in acts of kindness, God never experiences weariness or pain in His mercy (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1418 AH, vol. 1, p. 159). Human actions produce specific consequences and reflections. Good deeds result in greater insight, guidance toward God, and the performance of better acts. As the Qur’an states:



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو

الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ﴾ (al-Anfāl, verse 29)

“O you who believe, if you fear God, He will grant you a criterion to distinguish truth from falsehood, remove your sins, and forgive you. And God is the Possessor of great bounty.” Conversely, if a person pursues evil, the darkness of the heart increases, leading to greater sin and sometimes even to outright denial. Thus, the choice of the good or the evil path lies within human volition, a truth acknowledged by the conscience of every human being. How then could it be possible, in light of this divine attribute, that God would deprive humans of choice altogether or delegate it entirely without involvement? The sending of messengers itself is an expression of God’s mercy, ensuring that humanity is not left alone or without guidance throughout the course of life. Moreover, God has promised punishment to sinners in many Qur’anic verses. For example:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلَالَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ مَدَدًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَإِمَّا السَّاعَةَ

فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا﴾ (Maryam, verse 75)

“Say: Whoever is in error, let the Most Merciful extend for him an appointed term until, when they see what they are promised—whether punishment or the Hour—they will know who is worse in position and weaker in forces.” Similarly, in Sūrat al-Zumar, verses 54–55 and elsewhere, God warns sinners of punishment. If, as the determinists claim, sinners have no choice or will of their own in committing sins, and the act of sin is attributed directly to God, this contradicts divine mercy. It would mean that God punishes a servant for an act He Himself performed, which is clearly incompatible with attributing mercy to God—let alone describing Him as Arḥam al-Rāḥimīn (the Most Merciful of the merciful).

## 2–2. Rational Arguments Against Determinism

Numerous rational arguments have been advanced to refute the doctrine of the determinists (*Jabriyyūn*). In the aforementioned manuscript, Aḥmad b. Sharīf cites a narration from Abū Ḥanīfa, transmitted from Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him): “It is narrated that Abū Ḥanīfa, the founder of his school, once passed by Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (peace be upon him) and sought to test him. He asked: ‘Whose responsibility is sin?’ Mūsā b. Ja‘far replied: ‘Sit down and I will inform you.’ Abū Ḥanīfa sat before him, and Mūsā ibn Ja‘far said: ‘Sin must be attributed either to the servant, or to the Lord Almighty, or to both together. If it is from God, then He is too just and fair to wrong His weak servant and hold him accountable for what he did not do. If it is from both, then God would be a partner in sin, and the stronger is more obliged to show fairness to His weak servant. If it is from



the servant alone, then the command is directed to him, the prohibition is addressed to him, and he is entitled to reward and punishment, with Paradise or Hell becoming his due.”

### **2–2–1. Corroborative Evidences (Shawāhid wa-Mutāba‘āt)**

This narration is supported by corroborative evidences both in the manuscript and in the sources of both sects.

#### **2–2–1–1. Corroborative Evidences in the Manuscript**

Aḥmad ibn Sharīf cites narrations that serve as semantic corroborations of the above narration:

1. Narration from Ja‘far ibn Moḥammad (peace be upon him): It is reported that he once said to some determinists: “Is there anyone who accepts a valid excuse more readily than God Almighty?” They replied: “No.” He asked: “What do you say about one who claims ‘I am unable’ and is truly unable? Is he excused?” They said: “Yes, he is excused.” He continued: “If God knows that His servants are unable to obey Him, or if they say on the Day of Resurrection: ‘O Lord, we were unable to obey You because You prevented us,’ would their statement and excuse not be valid according to the determinists?” They replied: “Yes, by God.” He said: “Then, according to your view, God must accept this valid excuse and never hold anyone accountable. This contradicts the consensus of all religions.” At that moment, the determinist repented from his belief in determinism.

2. Report concerning al-Ḥajjāj and early scholars: It is narrated that al-Ḥajjāj wrote to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd, Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā’, and ‘Āmir al-Sha‘bī, asking them to state what they had received regarding *qaḍā’ wa-qadar* (divine decree and predestination). Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī replied: “Among the best of what has reached us is what I heard from the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him), who said: ‘Do you think that the one who forbade you is the one who caused you harm? Rather, it is yourself that brings you harm, while God is free from such matters.’” ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd wrote: “The best statement I heard regarding *qaḍā’ wa-qadar* is from the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī (peace be upon him): ‘If sin were decreed as inevitable, then the sinner punished in retribution would be wronged.’” Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā’ wrote: “The best statement I heard is from ‘Alī (peace be upon him): ‘Would God guide you to the right path and then compel you to hardship?’” al-Sha‘bī wrote: “The best statement I heard is from ‘Alī (peace be upon him): ‘Whatever you seek forgiveness from God for is from yourself, and whatever you praise God for is from Him.’” When al-Ḥajjāj read their letters, he reflected and said: “Indeed, they have taken this from a pure source.” This was his admission despite his well-known enmity toward the Ahl al-Bayt (as).



3. Narration from Imām Ja‘far al-Şādiq (peace be upon him): It is reported that a man asked him about qaḍā’ wa-qadar. He replied: “Whatever you can reproach the servant for is from the servant, and whatever you cannot reproach him for is from God. God says to the servant: ‘Why did you disobey? Why did you commit immorality? Why did you drink wine? Why did you commit fornication?’ But He does not say: ‘Why did you fall ill? Why did you become short? Why did you become white or black?’ For these are acts of the servant, while those are acts of God in creation.”

### 2–1–2. Corroborative Evidences in the Sources of Both Sects (*Shawāhid wa-Mutāba‘ūt fī al-Farīqayn*)

The major classical sources of both sects that mention the narration in agreement of wording include the following:

#### Shi‘i Sources

1. al-Mufīd, *al-Fuṣūl al-Mukhtāra min al-‘Uyūn wa-l-Maḥāsīn*, p. 73
2. al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī al-Murtaḍā*, vol. 1, p. 152
3. al-Fattāl al-Nīshābūrī, *Rawḍat al-Wā‘izīn wa-Baṣīrat al-Muta‘izīn*, vol. 1, p. 39
4. al-Ṭabrisī, *A‘lām al-Warā‘ bi-A‘lām al-Hudā*, vol. 2, p. 29
5. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib al-Qur‘ān wa-Mukhtalifa*, vol. 1, p. 120.
6. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, vol. 4, p. 314.
7. bn Ṭāwūs, *al-Ṭarā‘if fī Ma‘rifat al-Madhāhib al-Ṭawā‘if*, vol. 2, p. 328

#### Sunni Sources

1. al-Dhahabī, *al-Muntaqā min Minhāj al-I‘tidāl fī Naqḍ Kalām Ahl al-Rafd wa-l-I‘tizāl*, p. 136
2. Ibn Taymiyya, *Minhāj al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya fī Naqḍ Kalām al-Shi‘a al-Qadariyya*, vol. 3, p. 138
3. al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī al-Murtaḍā (Ghurar al-Fawā‘id wa-Durar al-Qalā‘id)*, vol. 1, p. 152

### 2–2–2. Textual Analysis

In the domain of rational arguments against determinism, several proofs have been advanced, of which the most significant are as follows:

1. Innate Disposition and Conscience (*Fiṭra wa-Wijdān*): All human beings intuitively perceive that they are free in their actions. This sense of freedom is self-evident and undeniable (Mullā Şadrā, 1382 SH, vol. 6, p. 370).

2. Responsibility and Obligation (*Taklīf wa-Mas‘ūliyya*): Human responsibility and obligation without free will is invalid and reprehensible, and the All-Wise God does not commit reprehensible acts (al-Ṭūsī, 1407 AH, p. 330).



3. Praise and Blame (*Madh wa-Dhamm*): Praise and blame, reward and punishment, are meaningless without free will. These are universally acknowledged realities in human life (al-Mufīd, 1413 AH, p. 55).

4. Immediate Knowledge (*‘Ilm Ḥuḍūrī*): Human beings possess direct experiential knowledge of their own volition in actions, and this immediate awareness cannot be denied (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1395 AH, vol. 2, p. 102).

5. Causality (*‘Ilīyya*): Every act requires a cause, and the cause of voluntary acts is human will and choice (Ibn Sīnā, 1381 AH, al-Ishārāt wa-l-Tanbīhāt, Third Namat, Chapter 12).

In the school of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), the doctrine of *amr bayn al-amrayn* (“a position between determinism and delegation”) is presented as the middle path, preserving both divine power and human free will (al-Ṣadūq, 1398 SH, Bāb 59, ḥadīth 1; al-Kulaynī, 1407 AH, vol. 1, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, Bāb al-Jabr wa-l-Qadar). From all these arguments, it becomes evident that assigning obligation to human beings without free will and volition is meaningless, impossible, and void. Human reason alone suffices to recognize that man is free and responsible for his actions. Thus, in all societies—even the most primitive—wrongdoers are deemed worthy of blame and condemnation, while the virtuous are considered deserving of praise and commendation. If human beings did not perceive themselves as free and possessing volition, they would not acknowledge responsibility for themselves or others, nor would they distinguish between permissible and impermissible acts. Yet reality demonstrates otherwise.

### **3–2. The Existence of Divine Punishment and Reward as Evidence of Human Free Will**

The issue of reward and punishment constitutes one of the most important arguments against determinism, for reward and punishment without free will would be unjust and reprehensible. In light of this, the author of the manuscript substantiates this principle by citing a narration from the Messenger of God (pbuh). Aḥmad ibn Sharīf, in the manuscript, transmits the response of ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (peace be upon him) to a question posed by Faḍl ibn Sahl. Faḍl asked the Imam: “O Abū al-Ḥasan, are human beings compelled?” He replied: “God is too just to compel His creation and then punish them.” Faḍl then asked: “Are they abandoned?” He replied: “God is too just to neglect His creation and leave them to themselves.”

#### **3–2–1. Corroborative Evidences (*Shawāhid wa-Mutāba‘āt*)**

This narration is supported by corroborative evidences both in the manuscript and in the sources of both sects.

#### **3–2–1–1. Corroborative Evidences in the Manuscript**

1. Narration from Abū Ḥanīfa and Mūsā ibn Ja‘far (peace be upon him):



It is narrated that Abū Ḥanīfa once passed by Mūsā b. Ja‘far (peace be upon him) intending to test him. He asked: “Whose responsibility is sin?” Mūsā b. Ja‘far replied: “Sit down until I inform you.” Abū Ḥanīfa sat before him, and the Imam said: “Sin must be attributed either to the servant, or to the Lord Almighty, or to both together. If it is from God, then He is too just and fair to wrong His weak servant and hold him accountable for what he did not do. If it is from both, then God would be a partner in sin, and the stronger is more obliged to show fairness to His weak servant. If it is from the servant alone, then the command is directed to him, the prohibition is addressed to him, and he is entitled to reward and punishment, with Paradise or Hell becoming his due.”

2. Narration from *al-Khwārazmī in al-Fā‘iq* (a Sunni scholar of reliability): He reports from al-Aṣḡagh b. Nubāta that an elderly man approached ‘Alī (peace be upon him) after the battle of Ṣiffīn and asked: “Tell us, O Commander of the Faithful, was our march to Syria by divine decree and predestination?” ‘Alī replied: “By Him who split the seed and created life, we did not tread a step, descend into a valley, or ascend a hill except by divine decree and predestination.” The man said: “Then I see no reward for myself with God.” ‘Alī responded: “Patience, O elder. Rather, your reward is immense in your journey and in your return. In none of your states were you compelled or coerced.” The man asked: “Then what of the decree and predestination that brought us here?” ‘Alī replied: “Woe to you! Did you think decree and predestination are binding and absolute? If that were so, reward and punishment, promise and threat would be nullified. No one would deserve praise or blame, the righteous would not merit commendation, nor the sinner condemnation. That is the doctrine of idol-worshippers and the soldiers of Satan; they are the Qadariyya and the Magians of this community. God commands by way of choice and forbids by way of warning. He is not disobeyed out of weakness, nor obeyed under compulsion. He did not send messengers in vain, nor create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in futility. That is the assumption of those who disbelieve, and woe to them from the Fire.” The man then asked: “What then are the decree and predestination by which we marched?” ‘Alī replied: “It is the command of God Almighty and His judgment.” He then recited:

(وَقَضَىٰ آلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ) (al-Isrā’, verse 23) “And your Lord has decreed that

you worship none but Him.” The elder departed rejoicing.

### 2-1-3-2. Corroborative Evidences in the Sources of Both Sects (*Shawāhid wa-Mutāba‘āt fī al-Farīqayn*)

The major classical sources of both sects that transmit the aforementioned narration with agreement in wording include:

### Shi'i Sources

1. al-Hillī, *al-'Uddad al-Qawiyya li-Daf' al-Makhāwif al-Yawmiyya*, p. 299
2. Ibn Ṭāwūs, *al-Ṭarā'if fī Ma'rifat al-Madhāhib*, vol. 2, p. 330

### Sunni Sources

1. al-Rāzī, *Nathr al-Durr fī al-Muḥāḍarāt*, vol. 1, p. 250
2. al-Hindī al-Makkī, *al-Suyūf al-Mushriqa wa-Mukhtaṣar al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥarriqa*, p. 400

#### 2–3–2. Textual Analysis

As is evident from authoritative sources and rational arguments, the issue of reward and punishment is among the strongest proofs against determinism. Belief in determinism contradicts divine justice and wisdom, for reward and punishment without free will are unacceptable. If human beings were compelled, the purpose of sending messengers and revealing scriptures would be meaningless. According to theological sources, obligation without free will is not only meaningless but reprehensible (al-Ṭūsī, 1407 AH, p. 332). Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī states: “Self-evident perception testifies that our actions are attributable to ourselves” (al-Ṭūsī, 1413 AH, p. 308). Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā affirms: “Punishment without choice is injustice, and God is exalted above injustice” (1411 AH, p. 285).

The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes human free will:

(إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا) (al-Insān, verse 3)

“We have shown him the way: he may be grateful or he may be ungrateful.” In light of Qur'anic verses and rational as well as transmitted proofs, the doctrine of determinism is incompatible with divine reward and punishment. Belief in determinism entails attributing injustice to God and rendering the sending of messengers futile. Therefore, the doctrine of *amr bayn al-amrayn* stands as the only logical explanation of human volition, preserving both divine power and human free will.

#### 4–2. Belief in Determinism as a Means of Escaping Religious Responsibility

Belief in determinism can function as a defensive mechanism to evade religious and moral responsibilities. In this regard, Aḥmad b. Sharīf substantiates the point by citing a narration from the Messenger of God (pbuh). It is narrated in al-Fā'iq from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh, a companion of the Prophet (pbuh) who said: “There will come in the latter days a people who commit sins and claim that God Almighty decreed them upon them. Whoever refutes them is like one who unsheathes his sword in the path of God.”

#### 4–2–1. Corroborative Evidences (Shawāhid wa-Mutāba'āt)

This narration is supported by corroborative evidences in the manuscript and in the sources of both sects.



#### 4-2-1-1. Corroborative Evidences in the Manuscript

1. It is narrated from the Prophet (pbuh), as reported by al-Khwārazmī in *al-Fā'iq* and others: A man came to the Prophet (pbuh), who asked him: "Tell me of the most astonishing thing you have seen." He replied: "I saw a people who married their mothers, daughters, and sisters. When asked why they did so, they said: 'God decreed it upon us.' The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'There will be in my community a people who hold the same belief. They are the Magians of my community.'"

2. It is narrated by a group of Muslim scholars from the Prophet (pbuh): "The *Qadariyyah* were cursed upon the tongue of seventy prophets." They asked: "Who are the *Qadariyyah*, O Messenger of God?" He replied: "They are those who claim that God Almighty decreed sins upon them and then punishes them for them."

#### 2-4-1-2. Corroborative Evidences in the Sources of Both Sects (*Shawāhid wa-Mutāba'āt fī al-Farīqayn*)

The major and well-known classical sources of both sects that transmit the aforementioned narration with agreement in wording include:

##### Shi'i Sources

1. Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Mutashābih al-Qur'ān wa-Mukhtalifah*, vol. 1, p. 202
2. Ibn Tāwūs, *al-Ṭarā'if fī Ma'rifat al-Madhāhib al-Ṭawā'if*, vol. 2, p. 344

##### Sunni Sources

Upon reviewing the major sources and works of Sunnī scholarship prior to the eighth century, the narration was not found. However, it appears in works after the eighth century, including:

1. Sayyid Sābiq, *al-'Aqā'id al-Islāmiyyah*, p. 99
2. Ḥamlāwī, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd al-Musammā bi-l-Takhallī 'an al-Taqālīd wa-l-Taḥallī bi-l-Aṣl al-Mufīd*, p. 205

#### 2-4-2. Textual Analysis

The fundamental inclination toward determinism among Muslims often served to negate moral and religious responsibility, particularly for rulers, and to justify their oppression. By attributing all actions to God, the masses were more inclined to endure injustice without complaint or protest against their rulers. At the same time, this belief opened the door for individuals to commit sins without accountability, making it appealing to many as a justification for evading obligations. Imām al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: "Indeed, there are people who wish that God would forgive them without merit, so they argue by means of determinism." (al-Ṣadūq, 1398 SH, p. 360). Likewise, the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) stated: "When actions are attributed to determinism, reward and punishment are nullified." (al-Āmidī, 1410 AH, ḥadīth 4521). Shaykh al-Mufīd, in his critique of the determinists, wrote: "The determinists



advanced this claim solely to escape responsibility.” (Awā’il al-Maqālāt, p. 58). ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā’ī also argued that belief in determinism leads to false reliance (*tawakkul kādhīb*) and abandonment of effort and action (al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, vol. 1, p. 234). Mullā Ṣadrā, in *al-Ḥikma al-Muta’āliya fī al-Asfār al-‘Aqliyya al-Arba‘a*, warns: “If determinism were true, the revealed laws would be invalidated and the motives for obedience would cease.” (vol. 6, p. 378). Based on authoritative Islamic sources and the analyses of religious scholars, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Belief in determinism often serves as a justification for evading responsibility.

2. This belief contradicts the philosophy of prophetic mission and the objectives of divine legislation.

3. The practical consequence of such belief is the weakening of motivation for obedience and the abandonment of obligations.

### Conclusion

Regardless of the chain of transmission (*isnād*) of the narrations contained in the manuscript *Minhāj Ūlī al-Albāb bi-Nahj al-Sadād wa-Ṭuruq al-Rashād*, and in accordance with the methodology of the classical scholars, after examining the corroborative evidences (*shawāhid wa-mutāba‘āt*) from both sects and conducting textual validation, the following results were obtained:

1. Due to the corroborative evidences cited by Aḥmad ibn Sharīf in his manuscript, together with the narrations transmitted in the sources of both sects, the cumulative (*tawātur ijmālī*) authenticity of the narrations was established.

2. The content of these narrations conforms to the Book of God, accords with the Prophetic Sunnah, and is consistent with rational proofs, thereby possessing reliability in transmission.

3. The scholars of the Shi‘i tradition unanimously accepted such narrations, whereas the scholars of the Sunnī tradition expressed differing views regarding their authenticity. Certainly, the consensus of the Shi‘i scholars carries greater weight than the divergence of opinion among Sunnī scholars, and the narrations cannot be invalidated merely on the basis of some Sunnī objections.

4. By establishing the soundness of the content and the presence of corroborative evidences in the sources of both sects, it is concluded that the doctrine of determinism (*jabr*), which has many adherents among the masses, is invalid and unacceptable according to the Book of God, the Prophetic Sunnah, and rational arguments. Alongside the principal content of the narrations under study, a subsidiary conclusion may also be drawn: neither absolute determinism nor complete delegation (*tafwīd*) is correct.



Rather, human will and choice occupy a position between the two, which is the doctrine of *amr bayn al-amrayn*.

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