

BOOK FOUR IN THE STORY SERIES

The Story of Angels

From the Beginning of Creation to the Scenes of the Hereafter

In the Light of the Holy Quran and the Narrations
of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them)

“Praise belongs to Allah, Originator of the heavens and the earth, who makes the angels messengers with wings, two, three, and four. He adds to creation whatever He wills. Allah has power over all things.”

Fatir 35:1 - English rendering of the meaning



By the researcher and writer

Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha Al Saraf Al Husayni

27 March 2021 - 14 Sha'ban 1442 AH

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In the Name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Ever-Merciful

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Dedication

To those for whom faith opens the door to questioning: who ask in order to understand more deeply, read in order to draw nearer to the truth, and recognise that knowledge carries a trust before it offers any splendour. To you I dedicate the story of a realm to which our senses provide no common access, yet of which revelation has given us accounts that guide the heart and awaken responsibility. I hope you will find here a connection between sincerity of faith and truthfulness of speech, and between love for the angels and following the obedience and trustworthiness with which Allah describes them.

To my father and mother: as these pages return to the meaning of protection and care, my heart first remembers the care I have known from you throughout my life. Before reflecting on the angels' prayers for the forgiveness of believers, I knew the value of the prayers with which parents sustain their children, of concern that asks for no reward, and of giving that rejoices in its fruit without claiming it. I dedicate this endeavour to you, with its hope of being useful, and ask Allah to grant you a share in its good and to reward you for every door you opened for me towards learning and kindness.

To my wife, who has shared the years of these books with all their presence and preoccupation: my gratitude to you extends both to the pages that have appeared and to the time that preceded them. A book is never written apart from its author's life. Beneath every chapter lie hours that we might have spent together in another way. I remember your patience and help with love, and hope this work repays something of them. May what we learn always bring greater mercy into the home from which we go out to meet others.

To my two sons and my daughter: I do not wish your knowledge of the angels to become a list of names memorised and then emptied of meaning. I hope it teaches you that a word is a trust, that goodness is never lost because no one sees it, that strength gives no licence for injustice, and that saying "I do not know" may be the beginning of honesty. When you read of angels bringing glad tidings, asking forgiveness, or greeting the people of Paradise with peace, remember that the mercy you love to hear about can find expression in the way you treat others.

To my teachers, whose influence returns whenever I open the Quran or turn to a book; and to the memory of Shaykh Ahmad al-Wa'ili, may Allah have mercy on him, whose voice and eloquence retain their place in my memory. I cannot repay the gift of teaching with a book. I can, however, remember its people with gratitude and strive never to use what I have learned to mislead a reader or exalt myself above one.

To my students, and to the young people I meet in Australian schools and at the mosque and husayniyya named for Imam al-Kazim, peace be upon him, in Shepparton: I dedicate these pages in the hope that they will make room for your questions about faith, the unseen, revelation, and our final destiny. Do not be ashamed of a question whose answer remains unclear, and do not be satisfied with an attractive answer until you know its basis. Understanding that can endure and develop grows between the courage to learn and humility before the evidence.

And to those who fulfil a trust without expecting anyone to witness it, who ease a sick person's suffering, protect a frightened heart, conceal another's vulnerability, and restore a right: I dedicate this story. I do not equate human beings with angels in their nature. Rather,

I hope the accounts of Allah's honoured servants will bring a love of obedience and good action closer to our hearts. I ask Allah to make this dedication a sincere prayer, what follows it beneficial knowledge, and to protect us from speaking of Him without knowledge.

Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha Al Saraf Al Husayni

Acknowledgements

Praise belongs to Allah, who has made the pursuit of knowledge a path to gratitude and placed in His Book accounts of His creation that help human beings understand their responsibility and destiny. I praise Him for the opportunity to read, for the ability to return to a text after imagining that we have grasped its meaning, and for those who remind us that knowledge does not grow alongside arrogance. May blessings and peace be upon the Prophet Muhammad and his pure Household. I hope that the material I gather from their legacy will encourage faithful following and clear expression.

My thanks to people begin with my father and mother, for my writing cannot be separated from the life in which I learned the earliest meanings of generosity. To my wife I owe gratitude for her patience and support; for my two sons and my daughter I have a love that makes me more attentive to readers just beginning their journey of questioning. An idea may seem clear to someone long occupied with it, until a question from someone dear reveals that its expression still needs work. A family therefore influences a book in ways that go beyond making time available: it reminds the writer of the people for whom he writes.

I especially remember Umm Du'a, my first teacher of the Holy Quran and my teacher of Islamic education at primary school. Returning in this book to the verses about angels brings back the beginnings in which I learned to listen to Allah's Book and read its words. The contribution of the first teacher remains present, even when the books in the pupil's hands have changed and the distance from the classroom has grown.

I remember Shaykh 'Abd al-Rasul al-Sudani al-Nasiri, with whom I studied during my very brief time at the seminary in Najaf, grateful for what I received without treating that short experience as a claim to qualifications I have not attained. I also remember Mr Kamil, my biology teacher at al-Hamza Secondary School, and my teachers throughout my education, including the lecturers in the Department of Community Health at the Medical Technical Institute in al-Diwaniyya Governorate. Religious and scientific education, each within its own field, helped cultivate respect for questions and care in distinguishing what we know from what we merely suppose.

To the memory of the esteemed Shaykh Ahmad al-Wa'ili, may Allah have mercy on him, I offer prayer and remembrance. I recall the influence of his gatherings in connecting religious culture with people's lives and making eloquence a doorway to understanding. My purpose in mentioning him is to acknowledge an influence on my formation, not to attribute to him a review of this book or agreement with its conclusions. Neither occurred, and neither may truthfully be claimed.

I thank the scholars, researchers, indexers, and those who preserve manuscripts and publish books, and everyone who has brought an old source within reach of a distant reader. Behind the consultation of a short narration may lie generations of copying, collation, commentary, and arrangement. Acknowledging that contribution also requires us not to make a source say

what it did not say, not to attribute an editor's comment to the author of the original text, and not to erase differences in transmission for the sake of a smooth narrative.

I owe particular gratitude to my students and to the young people with whom I converse. Their questions about angels do not always stop at names and functions. They may ask about the meaning of the unseen, the difference between belief and imagination, and the effect of faith upon a life marked by fear and loss. Such questions remind me that a book's value lies in what it helps a reader understand, and that a large number of pages cannot by itself discharge that responsibility.

I conclude by thanking every reader who draws my attention to wording that needs correction, a source I have overlooked, or a meaning I have pressed beyond what it can bear. The errors in this book belong to none of those I have mentioned; responsibility for them is mine. The credit for pointing them out belongs to those who do so. I ask Allah to grant me a receptive spirit towards correction and to make gratitude present in my work as well as in its opening pages.

Author's Foreword

When I began tracing the presence of angels in the Quran, I found that their accounts were not gathered in one place that could be closed after a brief chapter. They appear in the scene of creation and the teaching of Adam, in homes visited by glad tidings, along the path of revelation, and at moments of divine support. They appear again in the preservation of human deeds, at the moment of departure from this world, and in the scenes of resurrection, judgement, and peace. From this distribution arose the idea of a story: to connect these passages so that readers could perceive an unfolding meaning without turning their variety into an imagined tale.

I am Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha Al Saraf Al Husayni. I offer this work as a researcher, compiler, and reader who wishes to make the material he encounters more accessible. I am not a cleric, and I do not present this book as an exercise in independent legal reasoning or as an independent critical study of transmitters. What I can undertake is the responsibility of gathering, arranging, comparing, and expressing material clearly; of referring specialist matters to those qualified in them; and of attributing a judgement to the person who made it. This explanation tells the reader what kind of effort lies before them and helps them use it appropriately.

Reading has taught me that the distance between hearing a report and knowing its source may be greater than we imagine. We hear a name from childhood, then discover that it occurs in a supplication rather than in the Quran. We read a description in a verse, then find that circulating lists have turned it into a personal name. We encounter a story in a compilation, then learn that its compiler quoted it from another source or presented it with an objection or qualification. These apparently small distinctions separate a book that assists understanding from one that makes information more confused.

I therefore wanted this work to include both familiar and unfamiliar names, without reducing the angels to Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, and the Angel of Death alone. Yet I wanted that breadth to be documented: a source location for every name, a text for every function, and an explanation of each disagreement as far as necessary. Material found in a report whose authenticity has not been established is not erased from the record of the tradition, but

neither is it presented on the same footing as a name explicitly stated in the Quran. The right to knowledge includes knowing the limits of the evidence.

The subject of angels presents a particular challenge to a writer. The universe, plants, and animals offer scenes open to observation; access to the realm treated here comes through religious testimony. We cannot complete a scene whose details are missing by drawing on everyday experience or a photograph, nor grant imagination the confidence we grant a text. I have therefore chosen to find the vitality of the story in arranging what has been transmitted, understanding its implications, and exploring its relationship to human life, rather than inventing scenes and conversations that make reading more exciting and less faithful.

Despite this concern for documentation, I do not want the book to become a succession of reservations that interrupts every meaning. Once readers understand a report's source and status, there remains ample room for reflection. Why do glad tidings come to the homes of prophets? What do we learn from the angels' acknowledgement of the limits of their knowledge? How does belief in the recording of deeds change our view of privacy, power, and rights? Why does peace conclude accounts marked by fear and waiting? Such questions make gathering texts the beginning of understanding rather than its end.

Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, remain central to the book's method and material. I read what is transmitted from them concerning creation, worship, revelation, and the intermediate realm; draw upon the language of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya and Nahj al-Balagha and the chapters of hadith collections; and preserve the distinction between a transmitted text and the explanation offered by a scholar who read it. Love is no permission to attribute to them something whose source I have not checked. Accuracy of attribution is part of fidelity to them, just as sound understanding of what is established from their words serves the reader.

I am not writing only for those drawn to details of the unseen. I address anyone who asks how faith can become trustworthiness in life: a father raising children, a young person learning, a worker fulfilling a duty, or someone who has lost a loved one and seeks a meaning that cold language does not dismiss. I hope each will find something helpful in these pages, without my claiming that the book answers every question or that a single narration removes all the heart's pain.

Research and collection for the Story series as a whole began in 2017, as I have explained in earlier volumes, and reading and revision have continued across its subjects. I do not transfer to this book completion dates belonging to another: each work has its own stages and subject. What unites them is the desire to serve those seeking scientific and religious truth, while recognising that the field of evidence differs from one book to another.

I place before the reader an endeavour open to correction, not a reputation I wish to protect from criticism. Recovering an overlooked source, correcting a word in a verse, or removing an inaccurate attribution is a success for revision, even when it requires changing what I have written. I ask Allah to make me the first to benefit from that understanding, to grant me the humility that keeps inquiry on its course, the honesty that protects the reader's rights, and the mercy that makes knowledge useful in life.

Researcher and writer

Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha Al Saraf Al Husayni

This Book's Place in the Story Series

The Story of Angels is the fourth volume in the reading order of the Story series, following The Story of the Universe, The Story of Plants, and The Story of Animals. Readers begin with the broad framework of creation and the world, approach two forms of life they observe on earth, and then turn here to a realm whose religious understanding is founded upon revelation. This is a thematic reading order, not a chronology asserting that angels were created after plants or animals. The order of the books does not establish the order of created beings.

The series comprises eleven books united by the pursuit of knowledge in the light of the Holy Quran and the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. Its unity rests on its sources, fidelity in transmission, and respect for the reader, rather than on repeating the same introductions or using a single literary image for every subject. Each story has its particular question, its way of approaching human life, and the range of evidence within which it can proceed.

The Story of the Universe opens reflection on the heavens and the earth, order, transformation, and destiny. This volume draws from that framework what concerns the creation of angels, their glorification of Allah, their administration by His permission, and their presence at the end of the world. It does not repeat discussions of astronomy or place angels within a scientific model of the universe. A report about them does not become an experimental measurement simply because it stands beside a description of the heavens.

The stories of plants and animals meet this book in questions of sustenance, glorification, care, and the diversity of creation. Similarities of wording, however, do not establish identical realities. Wings in descriptions of angels do not authorise us to construct their anatomy from that of birds. Mention of the keepers of rain does not replace knowledge of the water and soil required for agriculture. The glorification of created beings does not mean that we know how every such act occurs. The series preserves the connections between its subjects while also preserving their boundaries.

The connection with the subject of jinn appears in the story of Iblis and in questions about beings our eyes do not ordinarily witness. Here The Story of Angels must clarify the distinction and leave a fuller treatment of the jinn to its own volume. A connection with creation before Adam also emerges when we inquire into the beginning of the angels' existence. We do not use that connection to establish durations or numbers unsupported by the evidence.

The link with The Story of the Human Being accompanies most chapters: from the announcement of vicegerency, to the womb, protection, and the recording of deeds, and then to death, the intermediate realm, and judgement. Human beings read these accounts and ask what they mean for their lives. Yet angels cannot be reduced to service of humanity, for the texts describe their worship and glorification before humanity enters the story. This book retains its own subject at the centre, returning to human beings insofar as the angels' actions concern them.

The work meets The Story of Guidance in the course of the prophets, revelation, and Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. We do not recount the complete biography of every prophet here. We follow the scene in which angels appear: Abraham's guests, the messengers sent to

Lot, the glad tidings given to Zechariah and Mary, Gabriel at the revelation of the Quran, and the assistance, glad tidings, and visits mentioned in narrations of Ahl al-Bayt. Readers seeking the broader historical course of the divine messages may return to the volume on guidance.

Towards the end, the connections with the spirit, Paradise, and the hereafter become stronger. Yet this book does not encompass every question concerning the spirit or every description of Paradise; it focuses on what has been transmitted about angels in those settings. This focus allows the series to be read as a connected journey while allowing each volume to fulfil its purpose without swelling through the repetition of other books within it.

The Story of Angels can be read independently, since it provides its own definitions, method, sources, and indexes. It can also be read as one stage in a wider journey. In either case, I hope readers will find a unity of purpose alongside freshness of expression, and emerge from each volume with clearer questions and more precise knowledge, rather than merely encountering again what they read in its predecessor.

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General Introduction

In the first Quranic scene announcing humanity's appointment as a vicegerent on earth, we find the angels being addressed. With the early steps of revelation in the prophets' lives, glad tidings and messengership recur. As a person approaches life's end, the angels appear again in the taking of souls, in reassurance, or in the disclosure of the consequences of wrongdoing. The story then reaches the day when creation stands for judgement, the ranks of angels and the keepers of the two final abodes appear, and the scene concludes with praise and peace. Between these settings the questions of our book take shape, and gathering them becomes a journey with a beginning, a course, and a conclusion.

The Quran does not begin its account of angels by presenting them as ornaments of the world or as an object of fruitless curiosity. Belief in them belongs to the faith with which it describes the Messenger and the believers:

"The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. Each believes in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers: 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' They say, 'We hear and we obey. Grant us Your forgiveness, our Lord; to You is the final return.'"

Al-Baqara 2:285

This passage brings together belief in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers, then connects that knowledge with hearing, obedience, and seeking forgiveness. From the outset, it makes no sense to know the angels' names while separating them from the message they bear, or to make admiration for them a substitute for responding to Allah. They belong to the realm of guidance as Allah has made it known to us, and knowing them helps us understand the trust of revelation, the justice of judgement, and the breadth of mercy.

The same meaning appears when the Quran describes righteousness, bringing belief together with social action, patience, and fidelity:

"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces towards the east or the west. Rather, righteous are those who believe in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets; who give wealth, despite their love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, travellers in need, those who ask, and for freeing those in bondage; who establish prayer and give the prescribed charity; who fulfil their pledges when they make them; and who are patient in hardship, suffering, and the time of battle. Those are the ones who are true, and those are the God-conscious."

Al-Baqara 2:177

Here angels are mentioned alongside giving wealth, establishing prayer, keeping promises, and patience. That association illuminates the direction of our reading: we do not seek the unseen to become absent from people's lives, but to understand humanity's place and responsibility within them. Faith mentioned together with feeding the needy and caring for orphans should not become preoccupation with names while rights are neglected.

Who are the angels? The Quran tells us that they are honoured servants, that some are messengers, and that they do not precede Allah in speech but act at His command. It describes them as having wings, portrays some messengers appearing in human form, and mentions groups engaged in glorification, protection, recording, and bearing the Throne. It

does not present an anatomical account of their nature or enumerate every individual name. Our knowledge therefore comes from texts with differing degrees of explicitness and detail. Sound compilation preserves those degrees rather than flattening them.

The question of names seems simple until we open the sources. Gabriel, Michael, Malik, Harut, and Marut are names found in the Quran, although each passage must be read in context. The Angel of Death is a Quranic designation of a function, whereas 'Azra'il is a name whose occurrence must be sought in narration and supplication. Raqib, 'Atid, sa'iq, and shahid function as descriptions in their contexts and should not automatically be added to a count of personal names. A name may occur in a transmitted account without every detail of that account being established, and one name may have several spellings. Hence the need for a documented dictionary, rather than a list that grows every time the same word recurs.

The narrations of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, open further aspects of this realm and connect them with worship of Allah and human life. Nahj al-Balagha describes classes of angels and their constant obedience. Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya contains a supplication bringing together names, groups, and functions. Al-Kafi and other works contain chapters on the spirit, protection, questioning in the grave, homes, and mercy. Books of virtues and visitation contain accounts with their own settings and chains of transmission, including names of angels unfamiliar to many readers.

This material does not all possess the same degree of established authority. The Quran is the foundation; a narration is attributed to its source and its transmission examined; an author's explanation remains an explanation; and an editor's words do not become part of a hadith. When a report occurs in an encyclopaedia such as Bihar al-Anwar, we must determine whether its compiler transmitted it from a particular earlier work, included it in an explanatory discussion, or mentioned it with an objection. The breadth of such a compilation is a blessing to researchers, but it does not remove the need to identify the kind of material being drawn from it.

This distinction is not intended to distance readers from the story's beauty. The Quranic scenes themselves are rich enough: Abraham hastens to honour his guests, then is surprised when they do not eat; Sarah marvels at the glad tidings; Mary seeks refuge in Allah when she sees a man in her seclusion; believers ask for help and receive the promise of steadfastness; the people of Paradise hear greetings of peace from every gate. The power of these scenes lies in faithful transmission and the coherence of their meaning. They need no additional dialogue placed on the lips of their participants.

Narrations that appear to conflict require further patience. The Quran may describe angels as obedient, while a report speaks of an angel being punished or deprived of its wings. We do not resolve that apparent conflict by setting aside the verse, nor by first declaring the report authentic and then searching for any interpretation that might accommodate it. We examine its transmission, wording, and the views of specialists, and explain where the inquiry has led. The result may be to establish where a name occurs without asserting that every detail of its story is authentic.

In this book, the unseen does not become material for claims of personal contact or for revealing individuals' destinies. A person's illness does not tell us which angels they see. We cannot identify the name of the guardian accompanying a particular person, nor turn a dream or a phenomenon of light into a statement about Allah. The source that opens a door

to knowledge also prevents us from exceeding its measure. On that basis we preserve the value of the report and protect the reader from mistaking imagination for religion.

The journey is arranged in seven parts. The first addresses creation, attributes, knowledge, obedience, and the distinction between angels and jinn. The second considers their work in the heavens and what has been transmitted concerning administration. The third accompanies the prophets from Adam to the scenes of Zechariah, Mary, and Jesus. The fourth concerns the Prophet Muhammad and his Household, peace be upon them: from revelation and the heavenly ascent to accounts of their virtues, Karbala, and the Night of Decree. The fifth brings the scene into everyday human life; the sixth crosses into death and the intermediate realm; and the seventh concludes with the blowing of the Trumpet, resurrection, judgement, Hell, Paradise, and peace.

The appendices serve readers seeking particular details: a dictionary of names, a guide to titles and groups, an index of verses, source locations, a summary of methodological findings, and terminology. Topics are referred to by chapter number so that references remain useful when type size or pagination changes. An index is part of a book's trustworthiness: it is not enough to place information in a distant passage and leave readers searching without guidance.

For the Quranic material, I sought occurrences of explicit names and collective terms, then added passages whose subject is known from description or context, such as the bearers of the Throne, the recorders, the scribes, and the keepers. For narrations, I traced chapters related to these subjects and the names appearing in them, returning to earlier sources wherever possible. This endeavour remains open to supplementation. No author can claim to have encompassed every narration in every manuscript and book. What this work undertakes is not to omit something encountered merely because it is unfamiliar, and not to assert something whose source has not been verified merely because it suits the narrative.

I hope the reading will produce an effect deeper than passing wonder: that we feel ashamed of falsehood when reading of the trust of revelation; protect people's rights when reading of the preservation of deeds; practise more mercy when reading of prayers for forgiveness and glad tidings; and keep hope in Allah joined to sincere effort. Then the story of angels will have reached the reader's life, and contemplation of the unseen world will help us improve the world in which we live.

Method and Reader's Guide

The Holy Quran is the primary reference for the subjects of this book. Quranic quotations in this English edition render the meanings of the complete verses cited in the Arabic original, together with the surah and verse number. Occurrences of angels and their explicit names were gathered, followed by descriptions and contexts associated with them. A word search alone is not a complete thematic investigation: expressions such as the keepers of Paradise or those who bear the Throne may identify the subject without the word "angels" appearing in the verse itself.

Narrations are read in their Imami sources according to subject, and the existence of a text is distinguished from a judgement that it was authentically transmitted. Saying "it occurs in al-Kafi" identifies a book; it does not automatically authenticate the chain. Saying "al-Majlisi transmitted it" does not mean that he adopted or authenticated it. When a judgement is

quoted from Mir'at al-'Uqul or another work, its author and location are given, and it is not presented as a consensus. A chain identified as mursal or marfu', or a quotation that does not present a complete chain, is described as it appears in its source.

The nearest available source is preferred whenever it can be consulted. If a report is accessed through Bihar al-Anwar or another compilation, that intermediary is identified. The appearance of one report in several books is not treated as several independent routes of transmission. Differences in the numbering of some volumes of Bihar al-Anwar are also considered: references therefore include a chapter and page number or the subject of the passage, and differences in arrangement are mentioned when necessary.

The presentation distinguishes four kinds of discourse: a Quranic verse; a hadith translated from its quoted wording; a summary explicitly identified as a paraphrase or expressed in language indicating reported meaning; and the author's explanation or inference. A summary is not placed in quotation marks as though it were the exact words of an infallible authority, and no dialogue is added to connect two scenes. Where the source supplies no date, name, or number, the gap is not filled by conjecture.

The dictionary of names includes names whose occurrence has been located in the sources covered by the book, indicating Quranic names, names from narrations, possible titles, and alternative forms. Guardians, the zabaniya, scribes, bearers of the Throne, and similar groups are gathered in the guide to groups and descriptions. The number of entries is not the number of angels, and the absence of a name from this dictionary does not prove that it occurs nowhere beyond its scope.

An account of the unseen is not turned into a medical prescription, an experimental test, or a judgement about an individual's destiny. Nor does this book independently issue legal rulings on images, homes, or other matters. It presents the text relevant to its subject and identifies what requires specialists to bring together the evidence and examine it. Maintaining that boundary prevents a narration from being made responsible for a conclusion it did not state.

References to narrations begin afresh in each chapter, and general sources are collected at the end of the book. The indexes use chapter numbers rather than pages that may change in the working edition. The book may be read continuously, or approached through a name or topic and then its context. In either case, readers are asked to read a report's summary together with its reference and the qualification attached to it, so that a detached piece of information does not lose its status and limits.

Part One

The Beginning of the Story: The Creation of Angels and the Nature of Their Realm

Chapter 1: Before Adam and the Beginning of the Angels' Creation

Our encounter with angels in the Quran begins with a scene preceding Adam's life on earth. They were addressed when Allah announced that He would place a vicegerent on earth. This beginning establishes their presence in that scene, but gives us neither a calculable date for their creation nor the number of years separating them from Adam.

“When your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am placing a vicegerent on earth,’ they said, ‘Will You place there one who causes corruption and sheds blood, while we glorify You with praise and declare Your holiness?’ He said, ‘I know what you do not know.’”

Al-Baqara 2:30

The verse reveals beings who glorify, sanctify, and ask, alongside divine knowledge they do not encompass. Their question therefore should not be read as rebellion resembling the arrogance of Iblis. The scene proceeds to their acknowledgement of the limits of their knowledge and then to obedience. This will be discussed in the chapters on Adam.

The first sermon of Nahj al-Balagha describes classes of angels engaged in worship, messengership, and protection, opening before readers a realm of many functions.[1] It does not, however, supply a calendar of the beginnings of all creatures. Reports arranging the creation of lights, spirits, or angels require individual examination of their chains and implications. Different numbers drawn from them cannot simply be combined and presented as a single timeline.

Our expression “before Adam” is limited to this much. We know that the angels existed before the scene in which they were addressed concerning Adam, and refrain from filling the temporal distance with what has not been established. This restraint gives the story a faithful beginning. Not knowing the detailed chronology does not prevent us from understanding what the text reveals about servanthood and learning.

In this scene, the earth is not the centre of all existence, although it is the setting of the vicegerency under discussion. The existence of those addressed before Adam shows that humanity’s story entered a world already obedient to Allah, and that worship did not begin when human beings began to worship. This priority does not diminish humanity, which was singled out for teaching and responsibility. It places humanity among creatures whose number and circumstances it cannot encompass.

The first sermon sets several pictures side by side: angels continuing in prostration, bowing, and glorification; trusted messengers carrying commands to the prophets; guardians of servants; and custodians of the gardens. The creation preceding Adam thus appears as an active realm, not an audience awaiting humanity’s arrival in order to find a function. When Adam enters the story, a new relationship arises between the two realms, involving teaching, commanded prostration, and then protection, messengership, and the recording of deeds.

I therefore do not begin with an imagined night or a conversation about a time the source does not recount. The beginning we possess is more eloquent: a divine address, a question revealing the limits of knowledge, and an answer preparing the disclosure of wisdom unknown to the questioners. From here the journey begins. Our first lesson about angels is that they are servants who hear the command and receive knowledge.

[1] Al-Sharif al-Radi, Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 1, the passage on the classes of angels. The sermon’s text is used here; its printed commentary is not treated as a narration.

Chapter 2: From What Were the Angels Created?

Human beings ask about the substance of everything they know and try to measure the unfamiliar against the familiar. Yet knowing some attributes of angels does not mean comprehending their nature. The Quran describes their functions, servanthood, and appearances, but the verses cited here do not offer a physical definition of the substance from which they were created.

“Praise belongs to Allah, Originator of the heavens and the earth, who makes the angels messengers with wings, two, three, and four. He adds to creation whatever He wills. Allah has power over all things.”

Fatir 35:1

The verse connects creation with messengership, mentions wings and their variation, and leaves open Allah’s addition to creation. Nothing in it permits us to determine the angels’ composition or turn the word “light” in narrations into photons or radiation with a calculable wavelength. Moving a word from a religious context into scientific terminology requires evidence that verbal resemblance does not provide.

Reports about creation from light address a question this verse does not elaborate: from what were the angels created? We turn to a particular report in its source, preserving the distinction between describing a creature and describing its Creator. Angels are created by Allah; they are neither portions of His essence nor powers independent of Him.

One identifiable passage concerning their creation is al-Majlisi’s quotation from al-Ikhtisas, from al-Mu’alla ibn Muhammad, who attributes it to Imam al-Sadiq with intermediaries omitted, peace be upon him: “Allah, Mighty and Majestic, created the angels from light.”[1] The source’s expression *rafa’ahu* (“he attributed it”) here means that the displayed chain does not name every intermediary. We therefore establish the report’s occurrence and meaning without describing this route, merely because it is presented, as an authentic continuous chain. The attribution of the circulating work al-Ikhtisas to Shaykh al-Mufid does not itself remove the need to examine its contents.

The word “created” is essential. The light mentioned is created, not a portion taken from Allah’s essence. Nor does describing angels through light make every light an angel or every luminous phenomenon evidence of an angelic appearance. The distance between the narration’s expression and specifying how the creation occurred remains real and is respected by the text.

Reading the verse alongside the report yields two different kinds of knowledge: the Quran describes messengership and wings, while the report addresses the origin of their creation. These need not compete, since each answers a different question. What we cannot do is turn either into an anatomical account or an experimental law that neither states.

Quranic reference in this chapter: Fatir 35:1.

[1] Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 56 in the *Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi* edition, chapter 23, p. 191, hadith 48, quoting al-Ikhtisas, p. 109. The same volume is numbered 59 in some arrangements of the encyclopaedia. The displayed chain is *marfu’*, with omitted intermediaries.

Chapter 3: The Angels' Forms, Wings, and Appearances

Readers may associate the word “angel” with a single artistic image. Yet a familiar image does not determine what the text says. The Quran mentions wings, then portrays the Spirit appearing to Mary in human form. It thus invites us to distinguish a creature’s reality from the form in which it appeared on a particular occasion.

“She placed a screen between herself and them. Then We sent Our Spirit to her, and he appeared before her as a well-formed human being.”

Maryam 19:17

Mary did not receive the scene as a distant picture. She confronted a presence in her place of seclusion and therefore sought refuge in Allah. The Quranic expression indicates an appearance; it does not warrant our declaring that this was a biological transformation or that Mary saw every aspect of the being’s reality. Identifying the Spirit here belongs to interpretation, while the text itself remains bounded by its wording.

Abraham’s guests offer another example of the difference between the outward appearance and the reality of those sent. He brought them food, then became afraid when their hands did not reach for it. This does not require us to attribute human nutritional needs to them. Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya describes groups whom Allah has made independent of food and drink through sanctifying Him.[1]

Wings and appearance are expressions accepted within their meaning, without forced comparison or emptying them of content. We neither make an angel a large bird nor treat its human appearance as a denial of its real existence. Distinguishing the text from our mental picture allows readers to acknowledge that some aspects of how this occurs have not been explained to them.

The Quran explains why an angel’s presence cannot always be measured against people’s expectations. Those who proposed that the messenger should be an angel faced the question of human capacity to receive the message and the nature of the encounter:

“Had We made him an angel, We would have made him a man, and would have left them in the confusion they themselves create.”

Al-An’am 6:9

Sending the messenger in a man’s form preserves a human appearance with which people can communicate, but does not remove the obstinate person’s opportunity to object. Knowledge of truth therefore does not depend on the appearance of a form that breaks every familiar expectation. An appearance in human form may occur while the test of believing the message remains.

Nor does the mention of wings assign a fixed number to every angel. The verse in Fatir mentions variation and additions to creation. Diversity belongs to the description of the angelic realm, and one scene does not permit us to draw a uniform form for all. Reports describing large numbers of wings must be read individually. They are not attached to Gabriel, Israfil, or others merely because an image has become familiar in an illustrated book.

The Sermon of Forms in Nahj al-Balagha adds a description of the angels’ varied forms and differing measures, immediately linking these with their trustworthiness in revelation.[2]

Differences in creation are not presented as degrees of independence from Allah, for the sermon denies that they claim to create alongside Him. The breadth of the description thus joins clear servanthood, becoming a way to know the Maker and the task with which He entrusted them.

That movement within the sermon deserves reflection: it begins with forms and wings, then speaks of trust, serenity, and divine unity. An angel is not fully understood merely by imagining its appearance. Its work and its response to Allah's command illuminate the meaning of that appearance. When reading descriptions of angels accompanying the stories of prophets, we should keep this order: first read what the text describes, then follow the message the emissary came to deliver.

[2] Nahj al-Balagha, the Sermon of Forms (Khutbat al-Ashbah), no. 91 in the numbering used here, the section "On the description of the angels," beginning with their differing forms and measures. It is numbered 90 in some editions; where numbering differs, consult the sermon's name and the opening of the passage.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, blessings upon the bearers of the Throne and every angel brought near, the passage on the tribes of angels.

Chapter 4: Honoured Servants and the Obedience of Angels

The Quran defines angels through their relationship with Allah before discussing their forms and activities. They are servants. Their honour does not elevate them to divinity, and their nearness does not allow them to precede His command.

"They say, 'The All-Merciful has taken a child.' Glory be to Him! Rather, they are honoured servants. (26) They do not precede Him in speech, and they act at His command. (27) He knows what lies before them and behind them. They intercede only for those with whom He is pleased, and they tremble in awe of Him. (28)"

Al-Anbiya' 21:26-28

This statement occurs in the rejection of attributing offspring to Allah. Servanthood is the doctrinal foundation explaining what follows: no independent speech, no action outside the command, and no intercession except within permission and approval. It is a mistake to take an account of an angel's strength or nearness and separate that strength and nearness from this foundation.

Describing the angels of punishment, the Quran likewise affirms their obedience to Allah's commands. Executing just punishment does not make them arbitrarily cruel, just as carrying glad tidings does not make them an independent source of mercy. Their actions are defined by the tasks Allah assigns to them.

Discussion of angelic infallibility begins here. If a narration appears to describe an angel's delay or loss of rank, we should neither ignore the Quranic foundation of obedience nor choose a convenient explanation without evidence. We first study the report's chain, then its language, then whether it can be understood without contradicting decisive scripture. The account of Fitrus will provide an example. Respect for narration and respect for the Quran thus become one task: preserving the ranks of evidence.

Obedience extends to continuous worship, as the Quran contrasts human arrogance with the worship of those in Allah's presence:

“To Him belong all who are in the heavens and the earth. Those in His presence are not too proud to worship Him, nor do they grow weary. (19) They glorify Him night and day, without ceasing. (20)”

Al-Anbiya' 21:19-20

Their worship does not imply that Allah needs it; He is independent of His creation. It describes the angels' condition: they are not arrogant, exhausted, or flagging. Together these expressions remove the picture of worship that begins eagerly and then turns into weariness or contention.

An angel's honour therefore does not mean possessing a right to act independently. Gabriel is entrusted with what he carries; the Angel of Death is assigned a task; the keepers of Paradise welcome its people by their Lord's permission. Their functions are not competing territories of sovereignty, but activities united by one principle. This preserves divine unity as names multiply throughout the book: different names do not multiply gods, and different tasks do not divide Allah's authority.

The angels' testimony appears in the declaration of divine unity and justice:

“Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him, as do the angels and those endowed with knowledge, while He upholds justice. There is no god but Him, the Almighty, the All-Wise.”

Al 'Imran 3:18

They testify to Allah's oneness and cannot rightly become objects of worship that contradicts their testimony. The Quran therefore denies that a true prophet's command could call people to deify angels or prophets:

“Nor would he command you to take the angels and the prophets as lords. Would he command you to disbelieve after you have submitted?”

Al 'Imran 3:80

Their disavowal of the idolaters' worship of them appears in the questioning on the Day of Gathering:

“On the day He gathers them all together, He will say to the angels, ‘Was it you these people used to worship?’ (40) They will say, ‘Glory be to You! You are our Protector, not they. Rather, they used to worship the jinn; most of them believed in them.’ (41)”

Saba' 34:40-41

Their answer acknowledges neither independent authority nor approval of what the worshippers did. It declares Allah's transcendence, allegiance to Him, and rejection of the claim. These passages complement the descriptions of their prostration and awe:

“To Allah prostrates every moving creature in the heavens and on earth, and the angels, who are not arrogant. (49) They fear their Lord above them and do what they are commanded. (50)”

Al-Nahl 16:49-50

It is also wrong to attribute femininity to them on the basis of human imagination. The Quran confronts that claim by asking for evidence and whether its proponents witnessed creation:

“Has your Lord favoured you with sons while taking females from among the angels for Himself? You are indeed uttering a monstrous statement.”

Al-Isra' 17:40

“Ask them: does your Lord have daughters while they have sons? (149) Or did We create the angels female while they were witnesses? (150) Truly, it is out of their falsehood that they say, (151) ‘Allah has begotten,’ and they are indeed liars. (152) Has He chosen daughters over sons? (153)”

Al-Saffat 37:149-153

“They have made the angels, who are servants of the All-Merciful, female. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony will be recorded, and they will be questioned.”

Al-Zukhruf 43:19

“Those who do not believe in the hereafter name the angels with female names. (27) They have no knowledge of this. They follow nothing but conjecture, and conjecture is of no avail against the truth. (28)”

Al-Najm 53:27-28

The context rejects a naming unsupported by knowledge. It does not permit us to replace it with another sexual image invented for the angels. Our concern is to preserve what revelation reports, not to describe reproduction or bodies that the text does not describe. Their obedience thus connects with divine unity and with honesty in speaking about them. Error does not arise only in worshipping them; it may begin with testimony offered without knowledge.

In the Sermon of Forms, obedience extends to the purity of relationships among angels: no envy divides them, no contention tears apart their purpose, and no self-admiration makes them magnify their deeds.[1] This is worship undrained by rivalry for rank. The longer they serve, the more deeply they revere their Lord. Abundant worship does not turn into a sense of independence from Him.

The sermon joins love, awe, and hope in its description of them. These meanings do not contradict one another. Knowledge bringing them near to Allah increases their awareness of His greatness, and nearness does not erase humility. We thus understand unceasing glorification as an expression of knowledge, love, and servanthood, not a movement emptied of meaning. Human beings can draw from this description a way to improve their own worship: protect it from self-congratulation and pride, and let knowledge become a reason for humility.

The account of worship is completed by the closing verse of al-A'raf and the declaration in Fussilat:

“Those in your Lord's presence are not too proud to worship Him. They glorify Him, and to Him they prostrate.”

Al-A'raf 7:206

“If they are arrogant, those in your Lord's presence glorify Him night and day, and they never grow weary.”

Fussilat 41:38

Prostration and glorification are joined with the absence of arrogance and weariness. Their station becomes no excuse for dispensing with worship. Al-Anbiya' states the judgement on a claim to divinity, were it to be made:

"If any of them were to say, 'I am a god besides Him,' We would repay him with Hell. Thus do We repay the wrongdoers."

Al-Anbiya' 21:29

This conditional statement affirms Allah's authority and justice. It does not report that a particular angel claimed divinity. A complete reading must not turn a conditional sentence into a story of disobedience the text never recounts.

[1] Nahj al-Balagha, the Sermon of Forms, no. 91, the description of angels: passages on knowledge, love, awe, and the absence of self-admiration and envy. Presented in paraphrase.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Anbiya' 21:26-28; 21:19-20; Al 'Imran 3:18; 3:80; Saba' 34:40-41; al-Nahl 16:49-50; al-Isra' 17:40; al-Saffat 37:149-153; al-Zukhruf 43:19; al-Najm 53:27-28.

Chapter 5: What Do the Angels Know?

In the scene of Adam's instruction, we see the distinction between knowledge Allah, glorified be He, grants His creatures and His own encompassing knowledge. The angels did not conceal their limits or invent an answer to preserve an appearance of knowing.

"They said, 'Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You alone are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.'"

Al-Baqara 2:32

This acknowledgement is no moral defect; it is an honest response. They knew what Allah had taught them and did not turn their nearness to Him into a claim to know everything He knows. We therefore cannot transfer absolute divine knowledge to Gabriel or any other angel, however exalted its station.

The verses of al-Anbiya' describe Allah's knowledge of what lies before them and behind them. An angel may transmit knowledge of the unseen that has been disclosed to it without possessing the unseen intrinsically. A transmitted report requires a source, and granted knowledge remains a gift, not independence.

This distinction affects how narrations are read. An angel may announce a future event, ask a question, or await a command. There is no contradiction between these situations when knowledge is connected with what Allah teaches. Contradiction arises when we first assume an all-encompassing knowledge that the text does not establish and then judge other accounts against it.

Human beings can learn an etiquette close to daily life from this response: say what you know, identify its source, and stop where you do not know. Intellectual humility does not obstruct faith; it expresses the trustworthiness we encounter in the angels' words.

Accounts of the future require us to distinguish three things: Allah's knowledge, which is preceded by no ignorance; His teaching a messenger or angel a particular matter; and that report's reaching us through transmission. If an angel authentically brought glad tidings of

Isaac, for example, it communicated what it had been sent to announce. It did not thereby become knowledgeable about every child who would enter the world.

In the angels' address to Abraham, their knowledge of the purpose of their mission removes his fear and explains their presence. The Quran does not portray them displaying every secret of the world. Knowledge in that event performs a specific task: conveying glad tidings and identifying their destination. Our reading thus follows what the text says rather than an unseen system we imagine behind every name.

Intellectual honesty has another aspect here: human beings need not know everything an angel knows. An angel may be commanded to do something whose preliminaries we do not comprehend, and only the measure necessary for guidance may be conveyed to us. Leaving unspoken details alone does not diminish the known report. It prevents granted knowledge from becoming mixed with our own inventions.

Near the end of the description of angels in the Sermon of Forms, knowledge is linked to long obedience: "As their obedience continues, they increase in knowledge of their Lord, and the majesty of their Lord grows greater in their hearts." [1] This describes an increase. Their knowledge therefore cannot equal Allah's knowledge, which is neither preceded by ignorance nor followed by acquisition. Angels are creatures who receive and know, witnessing in worship more of their Creator's greatness.

The connection between this increase and their acknowledgement in Adam's story is clear. Recognising the limits of knowledge does not suspend understanding; it places it correctly. When a creature acknowledges that Allah taught it, it opens the way to receiving without claiming total comprehension. Presenting both passages together preserves the difference between our ignorance of the details of angelic knowledge and the principle that their knowledge is granted by Allah and concerns what He wills to teach them.

[1] Nahj al-Balagha, the Sermon of Forms, no. 91, the conclusion of the description of angels, before the account of the earth and its spreading.

Quranic reference in this chapter: al-Baqara 2:32.

Chapter 6: The Angels' Ranks and Stations

The Quran does not portray the angelic realm as a group without tasks or stations. Messengership, protection, recording, bearing, and glorification are distinct descriptions. Their activities may be diverse without requiring us to construct a complete chart of ranks.

"There is none among us who does not have a known station. (164) We are indeed those who stand in ranks. (165) We are indeed those who glorify. (166)"

Al-Saffat 37:164-166

When interpreted as referring to angels, these verses indicate that each has a station and that they stand in ranks and glorify Allah. A known station is not a numerical hierarchy that we can reconstruct merely by collecting titles. A description may concern a task, nearness, or a particular scene. Connecting descriptions requires a text.

The first sermon of Nahj al-Balagha presents classes engaged in worship, trustees of revelation, guardians of servants, and custodians of the gardens.[1] This diversity explains

the breadth of service and obedience. It does not mean that every collective name in another book necessarily constitutes a higher or lower rank.

Numbers require the same care. If a verse specifies a number in reinforcements for a battle or among the keepers of Hell, this does not become the total number of angels. In the context of Hell's keepers, the Quran states that only Allah knows His hosts; the full verse will appear in its place. Sound compilation preserves the subject of each number and the limits of each description.

The mention of ranks conveys order in worship: each stands in a place and obeys a command, without disorder or rivalry for authority. It does not imply that angels have a social assembly resembling human gatherings. It brings the meaning of order closer to us within the limits of the wording.

Several descriptions may apply to one angel. Gabriel is a messenger, trustworthy, and brought near; each description need not name a new angel. Guardians may likewise be described by their work, while another text mentions recording or receiving. We do not declare all these groups identical, but neither do we turn differences of expression alone into an increased number of groups.

This principle assists the reading of the dictionary at the book's end. Names introduce beings; titles help explain work; numbers remain tied to their particular scenes. Degrees of nearness to Allah cannot be extracted from the order of names in a list or from the length of an account mentioning one name rather than another.

Al-Zukhruf affirms Allah's power to create beings different from those familiar to people:

"If We willed, We could make angels in your place on earth, succeeding one another."

Al-Zukhruf 43:60

This statement belongs to an argument about divine power. It does not say that a particular human became an angel or provide a law by which humans transform into angels. It returns all creation to divine will and prevents us from treating our familiar existence as the only limit of what Allah can do.

The Sermon of Forms describes the heavens populated by angels, mentions those glorifying Allah in the precincts of holiness and the veils, and presents differing forms, measures, and scenes of worship.[2] Diversity here is not fragmentation. Their orientation is one, and their trust is one in its fundamental relation to Allah's command, although each angel's place and assignment differ. This explains how varied functions coexist with orderly obedience in their realm.

The sermon closes the scene with the one prostrating and the one hastening in service. Worship in this description includes both abiding in reverence and hastening to carry out a command; it is not confined to one form. Readers therefore approach angelic ranks through their work: carrying revelation, glorifying, protecting, conveying, and fulfilling commands. Turning this variety into a detailed hierarchy with fixed names and numbers for every level requires a text establishing that particular arrangement.

[2] Nahj al-Balagha, the Sermon of Forms, no. 91, the opening and conclusion of the description of angels; compare its relationship with Sermon 1.

[1] Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 1, the classes of angels. Quranic reference: al-Saffat 37:164-166.

Chapter 7: The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the Trustworthy Spirit

“Spirit” is among the words whose context most needs to be preserved. It may occur in discussions of humanity, revelation, support, and descent. We cannot choose one meaning and impose it upon every occurrence.

“They ask you about the Spirit. Say, ‘The Spirit belongs to my Lord’s command, and you have been given only a little knowledge.’”

Al-Isra’ 17:85

The verse’s conclusion calls for humility about the measure of knowledge available. Simply citing this verse does not resolve every question about the spirit, nor does frequent use of the word establish an identical referent in every setting. In al-Shu’ara’, the Trustworthy Spirit appears in the revelation of the Quran; in al-Qadr, the Spirit is mentioned alongside the angels.

Al-Kulayni narrates from Abu Basir, from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, in interpreting the Spirit mentioned in al-Shura, that it is a creation greater than Gabriel and Michael, which was with the Messenger of Allah, informing and guiding him, and remains with the Imams after him.[1] This is a paraphrase of the report. The hadith edition consulted reproduced al-Majlisi’s judgement in Mir’at al-‘Uqul that it is authentic. Attributing that judgement to him is more precise than declaring every report in the chapter authentic, since other reports there receive different assessments.

We must therefore neither make every occurrence of the Spirit another name for Gabriel nor deny its interpretation as Gabriel in the expression “the Trustworthy Spirit” where evidence supports that reading. Meaning is determined by context and the particular narration. For this reason, entries concerning the Spirit are included among terms and titles, rather than automatically added to the number of personal angelic names.

Another verse demonstrates the variety of the word’s use:

“Thus We revealed to you a spirit from Our command. You did not know what the Book was, nor faith, but We made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. You indeed guide to a straight path.”

Al-Shura 42:52

Here the Spirit is connected with command, revelation, light, and guidance in one context. Imami narration gives this passage a particular interpretation, while the Quranic context explains the role of what was revealed to the Prophet in bringing guidance to life. Neither layer of reading should be erased by ignoring the other, nor should a narrated interpretation be presented as a replacement for the verse’s words.

This book distinguishes the Spirit discussed in chapters on the guidance granted to the Prophet and the Imams, the human spirit whose conditions extend beyond worldly life, and titles connected with the descent of revelation. This is not a judgement that every usage is unrelated to the others; it safeguards against a conclusion preceding inquiry. We therefore

do not count “the Spirit” as a personal name unless a source identifies a being and explains what it means.

The word also extends beyond a personal name in descriptions of Jesus and of the support given to believers:

“People of the Book, do not exceed the bounds in your religion, and say nothing about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only Allah’s messenger, His word which He cast to Mary, and a spirit from Him. Believe, then, in Allah and His messengers, and do not say ‘Three.’ Desist; that is better for you. Allah is only One God. Glory be to Him, far above having a child. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Allah suffices as Guardian.”

Al-Nisa’ 4:171

“You will not find people who believe in Allah and the Last Day showing affection towards those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they are their fathers, sons, brothers, or kin. He has inscribed faith in their hearts and strengthened them with a spirit from Him. He will admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow, to remain there forever. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. Those are Allah’s party. Truly, Allah’s party are the successful.”

Al-Mujadila 58:22

In the verse, Jesus is Allah’s messenger, His word, and a spirit from Him; he is not an angel, and the attribution does not mean he is a part of Allah. In al-Mujadila, support is connected with faith and steadfastness. Not every occurrence of “spirit” therefore enters an inventory of angels. Each usage retains its context before its interpretation is examined.

[1] Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, Book of the Divine Proof, chapter “The Spirit by which Allah guides the Imams,” hadith 1; al-Majlisi, Mir’at al-‘Uqul, vol. 3, p. 169, according to the reference accompanying the digital text.

Chapter 8: Angels, Jinn, and Iblis

The presence of Iblis in the scene of prostration has led to portrayals of him as an angel who became a devil. Yet the Quran names his kind in a verse that cannot be bypassed when constructing the account.

“When We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ they prostrated, except Iblis. He was one of the jinn and departed from his Lord’s command. Will you then take him and his offspring as protectors instead of Me, though they are your enemies? What an evil exchange for the wrongdoers!”

Al-Kahf 18:50

The verse explicitly states that he belonged to the jinn and connects his departure with disobedience to his Lord’s command. His presence among those addressed, or in a station of worship, does not change that statement. Nor may all jinn be charged with Iblis’s act, since the Quran describes their differing conditions and the faith of some among them.

Iblis is a figure in the test of obedience, not a name in the dictionary of angels. He appears in the index of persons and events because his relationship to their story is established, while relationship and membership remain distinct. His refusal does not establish that angels

obeyed after some of their own kind rebelled, unless independent evidence demonstrates that claim.

Reports of his earlier worship, its duration, and his station require individual investigation. The Quranic lesson is sufficiently clear: knowing the command did not prevent his arrogance. Details of time and rank remain proportionate to their evidence. By distinguishing these realms, we move to the angels' activities without carrying errors of classification from the outset.

A passage concerning the substance of creation also bears upon the distinction between angels and jinn:

“He created the human being from sounding clay like pottery. (14) And He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire. (15)”

Al-Rahman 55:14-15

These verses concern humanity and the jinn; they do not mention the substance of the angels' creation. We cannot fill that silence by placing every invisible being in one kind. Concealment from our eyes is a shared feature from our perspective, not a definition of the reality of everything unseen.

The scene of Iblis adds an ethical distinction in this particular event: the angels obeyed, while he refused and grew arrogant. Yet its meaning is not reducible to a comparison between substances, for his boast of fire is itself what is rejected. Nearness to Allah is not earned by the kind of element from which one is made, but through what Allah requires of His servant. This point returns in Adam's story, where divine instruction stands against Iblis's arrogant comparison.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Kahf 18:50; al-Rahman 55:14-15.

Part Two

Angels in the Heavens and the Administration of Creation

Chapter 9: The Bearers of the Throne and Those Around It

The Quranic account of the bearers of the Throne reaches believers' lives through their prayers for them. A scene people might imagine remote from themselves carries prayers for forgiveness, mercy, and hope of deliverance.

“Those who bear the Throne and those around it glorify their Lord with praise, believe in Him, and ask forgiveness for those who believe: ‘Our Lord, You encompass all things in mercy and knowledge. Forgive those who repent and follow Your path, and protect them from the punishment of the blazing Fire. (7) Our Lord, admit them into the Gardens of Eden which You have promised them, together with the righteous among their parents, spouses, and offspring. You are indeed the Almighty, the All-Wise. (8) Protect them from evil consequences. Whoever You protect from evil consequences on that day, You have indeed shown mercy; that is the great triumph.’ (9)”

Ghafir 40:7-9

These verses connect glorifying Allah and believing in Him with seeking forgiveness for believers. The prayer includes righteous parents, spouses, and descendants. Its concern is not curiosity about size and appearance, but the breadth of Allah's mercy and protection from evil and punishment. Descriptions of the higher realm should therefore be read in the light of their religious purpose, without neglecting what their wording establishes.

Bearing the Throne does not imply that Allah is carried or needs a bearer. Angels are His creation, and the Throne is His creation. His freedom from need is a fundamental principle that no mental image overturns. The meanings of the Throne and its bearing are subjects of theological and exegetical inquiry; they are not settled by imagining a human throne with a king seated upon it.

Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa begins with blessings upon the bearers of the Throne and describes their constant worship.[1] It honours them through servanthood, not deification. Readers may take from this chapter a meaning close to life: a believer's prayer for another is no small act in significance, and concern for the righteousness of others is among the qualities of Allah's honoured servants.

The bearers' prayer moves from forgiveness to protection from punishment, admission to the Gardens of Eden, preservation of bonds with righteous family members, and protection from evil consequences. They ask not merely for individual escape, but for complete mercy, a good outcome, and reunion with righteous relatives. Every request is directed to Allah alone.

Among the names occurring in reports about the Throne's greatness is Hizqa'il. In Rawdat al-Wa'izin, al-Fattal al-Naysaburi presents an account attributed to Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad, from his father, from his grandfather, peace be upon them. It describes an angel of this name with many wings, attempting a flight that does not reach the Throne's limit.[2] The passage provides no complete chain from the author to the Imam. The name is therefore recorded as occurring in this report, while its numbers are not made into a certain cosmic measurement.

Hizqa'il is not confused with Darda'il, who appears in an account of al-Husayn's birth, even though some wording concerning flight and great wings is shared. A common theme of greatness is insufficient to erase differences of name or source. This demonstrates the dictionary's purpose: preserving each report's identity before considering whether accounts can be reconciled.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, opening passage.

[2] Al-Fattal al-Naysaburi, Rawdat al-Wa'izin wa-Basirat al-Mutta'izin, vol. 1, the gathering on wonders indicating Allah's greatness, report 7, pp. 129-130 in the edition consulted.

Chapter 10: The Inhabitants of the Heavens and the Inhabited House

The Inhabited House appears in a brief Quranic oath, while narrations describe its connection with heavenly worship. These two levels must remain clear: the Quranic designation is established, and further details require their own sources.

“By the Inhabited House.”

Al-Tur 52:4

This verse alone specifies neither the House's location nor the number who enter it, so those details are not attributed to it. Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa mentions angels circling the Inhabited House, alongside inhabitants of the heavens and those entrusted with messages.[1] It establishes this description's place in the devotional text, without authorising us to construct an astronomical map of the location.

Heavenly worship reveals the breadth of glorification. Humanity is not alone in worship, nor does Allah's greatness depend on human awareness of it. When readers encounter ranks, prostration, and circling in these accounts, they should attend first to ordered obedience and reverence, leaving the manner of their occurrence within what the text explains.

The heavens in these reports cannot automatically be equated with planets, galaxies, or atmospheric layers. These terms belong to different fields; equating them is a separate claim requiring proof. The book follows the text as it stands, neither turning the unseen into an artificial scientific map nor reducing a religious account to an image emptied of meaning.

In this context, the Inhabited House is a place of worship, not another angelic name. This simple point prevents a common error in lists that mix personal names, places, and descriptions without distinction. Those who circle it are angels; the House is the place associated with their activity.

Readers may perceive a connection between earthly worshippers circling the Sacred House and accounts of heavenly worship: both express servanthood directed by Allah's command. That connection does not require the two places to have identical material or dimensions, nor make the heaven named in a report something identifiable through a telescope.

In Supplication 3, the scene expands from the people of the Inhabited House to inhabitants of the heavens and trustees of messages. Worship becomes more than one kind of movement: glorification, circling, and fulfilment of a trust. We do not know every individual name among them, but namelessness does not lessen their importance to this book. The Quran itself teaches much through groups identified by their work.

Among accounts of the heavens is what the Quran relates in the words of the jinn:

"We reached towards heaven and found it filled with mighty guards and shooting flames.
(8) We used to sit there in places for listening, but whoever listens now finds a shooting flame lying in wait for him. (9)"

Al-Jinn 72:8-9

The text mentions guards and shooting flames and describes a change in the condition being recounted. These two verses do not name individual guards. Identifying them and their functions belongs to interpretation; personal names cannot be extracted from the word "guards." What matters here is that listening to the unseen is not open to everyone who seeks it, and heaven is not an unrestricted field for claiming knowledge without permission.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the passages on inhabitants of the heavens and those circling the Inhabited House.

Chapter 11: Angels of the Veils, Those Brought Near, and the Spiritual Ones

Supplications describe groups of angels without giving an individual name to each. Among these descriptions are the spiritual ones, those of nearness, and those carrying the unseen to the messengers. These groups and qualities should be recorded without turning every expression into a personal name.

Supplication 3 mentions the Spirit who presides over the angels of the veils, then the Spirit who belongs to Allah's command.[1] Different wording alone does not establish a specific number of beings, just as the shared word "Spirit" does not prove one referent in every passage. We preserve the wording, explain the question, and refrain from claiming a conclusion unsupported by inquiry.

"The Messiah will never disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor will the angels brought near. Whoever disdains His worship and grows arrogant, He will gather them all to Himself."

Al-Nisa' 4:172

The verse mentions angels brought near while denying disdain for worship. Nearness does not remove servanthood; it manifests itself through it. We therefore do not understand the veils as a necessity protecting Allah's essence from His creation, or imagine that place encompasses Him. Any interpretation must preserve His transcendence.

This chapter helps organise knowledge. "The spiritual ones" belongs in the guide to groups; "those brought near" among descriptions and stations; individual names in their own section. We thus neither inflate the number of named angels merely because their attributes vary nor neglect groups whose members are unnamed.

One narrated term is "the cherubim" (al-karubiyyun). In his chapters on angels, al-Majlisi quotes a report from Basa'ir al-Darajat linking them with the earliest creation and the manifestation to the mountain in Moses' story.[2] Its displayed chain includes al-Sayyari and an attribution to the Imam with intermediaries omitted (marfu'). Its picture cannot therefore be made into an agreed doctrinal fact. The term nevertheless deserves inclusion among groups, so that it is not mistaken for an overlooked individual name.

These texts also help distinguish devotional and philosophical usage. Some authors discuss angels in the language of intellects, souls, and ranks; others explain a supplication's words; others transmit a report with its chain. These are not pages of one undifferentiated text. Al-Majlisi collected different views, and not every statement he included becomes a hadith from Ahl al-Bayt.

"Angels of the veils" is thus a description preserved in a supplication, while a detailed account of the veils' meaning is a separate inquiry. Faithful reading allows readers to appreciate the tradition's richness without losing the boundaries between narration and explanation, or between theological reasoning and Quranic statement.

The Quran mentions the Highest Assembly in two different contexts:

"They cannot listen to the Highest Assembly, and they are pelted from every side."

Al-Saffat 37:8

"I had no knowledge of the Highest Assembly when they disputed."

Sad 38:69

The first concerns the prevention of eavesdropping; the second concerns the Prophet being taught what he did not know before revelation. The issue returns to fidelity to the source: what the Messenger knows about this assembly comes through what Allah reveals, not a claim to an earlier independent observation. “The Highest Assembly” is therefore a description of a group and station according to context and interpretation, not the name of an angel.

The Sermon of Forms joins mention of the veils with the resounding of glorification, filling the scene with worship, and then addresses the limits of sight’s apprehension beyond it.[3] Read beside the blessings upon the angels of the veils and the spiritual ones in al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, the two texts share reverence for a realm beyond the human senses while keeping all its inhabitants in servanthood.

The language of veils, nearness, and majesty belongs here to discourse affirming divine unity. Within the story it means that nearness has honour, creatures have limits, and knowing some group names does not disclose every aspect of their existence. Attention therefore moves beyond appearance alone to what the text conveys: unbroken worship, a preserved trust, and humility deepened by knowledge.

[3] Nahj al-Balagha, the Sermon of Forms, no. 91, the opening description of angels in the precincts of holiness, the coverings of the veils, and the pavilions of majesty. Paraphrased.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, passages on the Spirit, angels of the veils, and the spiritual ones.

[2] Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, chapter 23, p. 184, hadith 26, quoting Basa’ir al-Darajat and al-Sara’ir. The cited chain is marfu’, with omitted intermediaries.

Chapter 12: Michael, Peace Be upon Him: Name and Station

The name Mikal appears in the Quran alongside Gabriel in rejecting hostility to revelation and its bearers. This association indicates his station without detailing his tasks.

“Whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, His messengers, Gabriel, and Michael: Allah is indeed an enemy to the disbelievers.”

Al-Baqara 2:98

The Quranic form in this reading is Mikal; Mika’il is familiar in hadith and supplication. Both forms, rendered in English as Michael, are retained under one dictionary entry with their sources, not counted as two beings. His introduction should begin with what the verse states rather than a list of functions whose individual bases are unknown.

In al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Michael is described as possessing honour and an exalted station through obedience to Allah.[1] The supplication connects status with obedience, preserving the principle already discussed: rightly honouring angels honours servants, rather than creating intermediaries independent of their Lord.

The traditional association of sustenance, rain, and vegetation with him comes from material other than the verse in al-Baqara and the brief statement in al-Sahifa. Reading this assignment alongside accounts of angelic groups entrusted with natural phenomena helps distinguish Michael’s station from the details of functions attributed to him.

Al-Baqara does not introduce Michael apart from the foundation of faith in the message. It brings together hostility to Allah, His angels, His messengers, Gabriel, and Michael in rejecting an attitude that accepts some aspects of revelation and refuses others. Love for one angel's name cannot become an excuse to reject another who carries out the same Lord's command.

In his commentary on Supplication 3, al-Majlisi states that Michael is the chief of the angels entrusted with the sustenance of creation, mentioning angels of clouds, thunder, lightning, winds, and rain.[2] This refers to al-Majlisi's explanatory passage and his phrase "it is narrated"; it is not a complete hadith with a chain in that location. The assignment may therefore be described as familiar in traditional presentations and recorded in the commentary, while its standing remains below that of an explicit Quranic text.

Sustenance is not confined to food brought by rain or growing after it. Trust in Allah and provision remain connected with human work and responsibility; they do not permit neglect of crops or abandonment of dependants' rights. Mentioning commissioned angels adds divine administration to the understanding of causes; it does not erase causes from life.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the passage on Michael.

[2] Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, chapter 23, commentary on Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, p. 221 onwards, the passage on Michael. The text was also consulted in the arrangement numbered vol. 59.

Chapter 13: Angels of Rain, Clouds, Winds, and Mountains

Imam al-Sajjad's supplication, peace be upon him, connects angels with phenomena people see around them: rain, clouds, winds, mountains, and waters. It names groups entrusted with these affairs, linking the visible world with obedience to the divine command.[1]

This connection does not authorise us to discard descriptions of natural phenomena. Understanding the causes of condensation or wind movement within empirical inquiry does not decide whether unseen administration is possible. Equally, an angelic activity mentioned in a supplication does not establish a detailed explanation of a particular physical mechanism. Each inquiry has its own question and evidence.

"Thunder glorifies Him with praise, and the angels out of fear of Him. He sends thunderbolts and strikes with them whom He wills, while they dispute about Allah; He is mighty in power."

Al-Ra'd 13:13

The verse brings together the glorification of thunder and angels and fear of Allah; it does not offer a scientific equation for thunder. Readers can reflect on the scene's significance without imposing a question the text was not given to answer. Knowledge of angels becomes a reason to contemplate Allah's authority, not a substitute for studying nature or taking safety precautions.

The guide to groups preserves expressions such as keepers of rain, drivers of clouds, and those entrusted with mountains as they occur, without inventing individual names. A functional description is important material, but does not by itself establish that one angel handles every instance of a phenomenon throughout the world.

What unites these activities in the supplication is fulfilment of assigned tasks, without a claim to independent ownership of rain or wind. Reciting these passages, the reader asks Allah to bless His servants who carry out His command. The direction of prayer remains clear, and the whole universe remains dependent upon its Creator.

Al-Sahifa's wording distinguishes tasks: keepers of rain, drivers of clouds, and escorts of snow and hail. This variety places the water reaching earth within a meaning of care and measured ordering. The supplication does not name everyone performing these tasks, so we do not insert personal names from other lists into a silence the text maintains.

When believers read of thunder as glorifying Allah, the response is not to abandon questions about nature, but to see the universe as creation whose meaning exceeds humanity's immediate benefit. The rain awaited by a farmer and the wind feared by a traveller are alike within Allah's authority. Through this connection the supplication is understood, while practical work and safety remain appropriate.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, passages on rain, clouds, winds, mountains, and waters. Paraphrased.

Chapter 14: Messengers of the Divine Command

The Quran presents angels as messengers whose selection belongs to Allah. Their mission may be revelation, glad tidings, or a command concerning a particular event. Its function is determined by what the text indicates.

“Allah chooses messengers from among the angels and from among human beings. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.”

Al-Hajj 22:75

An angelic messenger cannot act independently of the One who sends it, nor does its mediation diminish Allah's power. The power to act directly does not preclude creating causes and tasks carried out by obedient servants. The error lies in setting those causes in competition with their Creator.

“We descend only by your Lord's command. To Him belongs what is before us, what is behind us, and what lies between. Your Lord is never forgetful.”

Maryam 19:64

This address connects descent with command. Waiting for a command may itself belong to the trust of messengership; it should not be interpreted as inability or forgetfulness on Allah's part. This helps us read the coming prophetic scenes: the messengers do not visit Abraham and Lot or bring revelation to the Prophet on their own initiative.

Supplication does not contradict this order. The servant calls upon Allah, takes the available means, and leaves the manner of the response to His wisdom. Angelic functions do not yield formulas for summoning angels or compelling them to work. The relationship taught by the text is servanthood and reliance upon Allah, providing a clear foundation for the account of human messengership.

Three elements complete the picture of the angelic messenger: the One who sent it, the trust it carries, and the one to whom it is sent. Remove divine permission, and it becomes an independent power. Remove the trust, and the significance of the message disappears.

Remove the destination of the address, and the report becomes mere wonder without purpose.

Angels therefore descend in varied Quranic contexts: glad tidings, support, revelation, taking souls, and welcoming on the Day of Resurrection. Their common feature is not repetition of one scene but action proceeding from Allah's command. One group may bring good news to Abraham's home and then proceed to Lot's people with a different outcome, without the two missions contradicting each other.

Waiting for the command is part of obedience. The angels' declaration in Maryam establishes that they do not choose to appear according to people's desires or proposals. The message is not summoned by a challenger's insistence, and an angel cannot alter its time. We thus approach Gabriel having recognised why his trustworthiness is fundamental to understanding his name.

The Quran explicitly describes the sending of angels with the Spirit from His command to warn concerning divine unity:

"He sends down the angels with the Spirit from His command upon whom He wills of His servants: 'Warn that there is no god but Me, so be mindful of Me.'"

Al-Nahl 16:2

Against this divine choice stand the deniers' repeated demands that an angel descend according to their proposal:

"They say, 'Why has an angel not been sent down to him?' Had We sent down an angel, the matter would have been decided, and they would have been granted no further respite."

Al-An'am 6:8

"Perhaps you would leave aside some of what is revealed to you, your breast distressed by their saying, 'Why has a treasure not been sent down to him, or an angel come with him?' You are only a warner, and Allah is Guardian over all things."

Hud 11:12

"Why do you not bring us the angels, if you are truthful? (7) We send down the angels only with the truth, and then they would be granted no respite. (8)"

Al-Hijr 15:7-8

"They say, 'What is it with this messenger, eating food and walking in the markets? Why has an angel not been sent down to him to be a warner alongside him?'"

Al-Furqan 25:7

These demands make belief conditional upon a form selected by the objector. The response explains that the Messenger fulfils his assignment and that angelic descent has its own wisdom, time, and consequence. The Quran also challenges the assumption that a perceptible sign necessarily removes obstinacy:

"Even if We sent the angels down to them, the dead spoke to them, and We gathered everything before them face to face, they would not believe unless Allah willed. But most of them are ignorant."

Al-An'am 6:111

It then answers another objection concerning the Messenger's humanity:

"Say, 'If there were angels on earth walking about at ease, We would have sent down to them from heaven an angel as messenger.'"

Al-Isra' 17:95

A message to human beings is not invalidated because its human bearer shares their life and speaks their language. The Prophet need not claim to be an angel to be truthful:

"Say, 'I do not tell you that I possess Allah's treasures, nor that I know the unseen; nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I follow only what is revealed to me.' Say, 'Are the blind and the seeing equal? Will you not reflect?'"

Al-An'am 6:50

These verses preserve each participant's place along the path of guidance: Allah chooses, the angel fulfils its mission, the prophet conveys it, and the human being is responsible for reflection and response. The objector cannot rearrange that path according to personal preference.

Among passages connected with administration are the openings of al-Saffat, al-Dhariyat, al-Mursalat, and al-Nazi'at. Al-Majlisi gathers exegetical views on them, including interpretations of several descriptions as angels, while presenting other views concerning some expressions.[1] They are therefore included in the thematic map as passages requiring interpretation, without making every expression the name of a separate angelic company.

"By those arrayed in ranks, (1) and those who drive away forcefully, (2) and those who recite the Reminder: (3) your God is indeed One, (4) Lord of the heavens and the earth and all between them, and Lord of the points of sunrise. (5)"

Al-Saffat 37:1-5

Ranks, driving away, and recitation present order, action, and worship, concluding in affirmation of Allah's oneness. When these descriptions are interpreted as angels, the oath's purpose remains connected with divine unity. The descriptions do not independently create a new list of names.

"By those that scatter far and wide, (1) and those that bear a burden, (2) and those that glide with ease, (3) and those that apportion the command. (4)"

Al-Dhariyat 51:1-4

"Those that apportion the command" is among expressions interpreted as angels, while views concerning the earlier expressions vary, including winds and clouds. Preserving this variety clarifies the connection between cosmic scenes and divine command without imposing one obligatory interpretation on every expression in the passage.

"By those sent forth in succession, (1) and those that blow violently, (2) and those that spread abroad, (3) and those that distinguish decisively, (4) and those that deliver a reminder, (5) to leave no excuse or to give warning. (6)"

Al-Mursalat 77:1-6

These descriptions conclude with delivering the Reminder to remove excuses and warn, revealing the aspect of messengership and guidance. The relationship between those sent forth, blowing violently, spreading, and distinguishing requires exegetical reading. The feminine plural form in Arabic is no evidence for the femininity of angels that the Quran rejects.

“By those that pull out with force, (1) and those that draw out gently, (2) and those that move swiftly, (3) and those that race ahead, (4) and those that administer the command. (5)”

Al-Nazi‘at 79:1-5

Interpretations of these expressions mention taking souls, hastening to fulfil commands, and authorised administration, alongside other interpretations of some of them. These verses therefore connect with the chapters on taking souls as well as this chapter. The distinction remains between the verse’s wording and the identification of its referent offered by an interpreter.

Revelation is connected with guarding its path. Al-Jinn concludes with a statement about the messenger whom Allah approves:

“Knower of the unseen, He discloses His unseen to no one, (26) except a messenger whom He approves. He then places guards before him and behind him, (27) so that He may know that they have conveyed their Lord’s messages. He encompasses all that is with them and has counted everything precisely. (28)”

Al-Jinn 72:26-28

Several commentaries interpret the guards here as angels. The meaning concerns safeguarding transmission and Allah’s encompassing knowledge. Knowledge of the unseen begins with what Allah discloses to His messenger, not an angel’s or prophet’s independent possession of its keys. This function completes messengership: carrying the command and guarding its arrival.

[1] Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 56, chapter 23, opening discussion of verses and their interpretation, pp. 146-170; particularly the views on al-Nazi‘at, pp. 168-170, quoting *Majma‘ al-Bayan*. This volume is numbered 59 in another arrangement. The material is an exegetical presentation of multiple views.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Hajj 22:75; Maryam 19:64; al-Nahl 16:2; al-An‘am 6:8; Hud 11:12; al-Hijr 15:7-8; al-Furqan 25:7; al-An‘am 6:111; al-Isra‘ 17:95; al-An‘am 6:50; al-Saffat 37:1-5; al-Dhariyat 51:1-4; al-Mursalat 77:1-6; al-Nazi‘at 79:1-5.

Part Three

Angels in the Journey of the Prophets and Nations

Chapter 15: Gabriel, Peace Be upon Him, and the Trust of Revelation

Gabriel stands foremost among the angels associated with revelation in Muslim awareness. Familiarity with his name, however, does not replace returning to the Quranic passage that introduces him and explains his work.

“Say, ‘Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel: he brought it down upon your heart by Allah’s permission, confirming what preceded it, and as guidance and glad tidings for the believers.’”

Al-Baqara 2:97

The verse states that the Quran descended upon the Prophet’s heart by Allah’s permission and answers hostility towards Gabriel. This hostility is not a personal disagreement with an angel, but concerns the message he bears. Divine permission again identifies the source and authority of revelation.

“It is indeed a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. (192) The Trustworthy Spirit brought it down (193) upon your heart, so that you might be among the warners, (194) in clear Arabic speech. (195)”

Al-Shu‘ara’ 26:192-195

In this context, the Trustworthy Spirit is read alongside the explicit naming of Gabriel in al-Baqara. Trustworthiness is central: the messenger does not alter what he is charged to convey or make revelation his own opinion. Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa describes Gabriel’s trustworthiness in conveying revelation, nearness, and station.[1]

Jibra’il, Jibril, and Jabra’il occur in usage and books, and each form is preserved according to the source when quoted. Different spelling does not imply different beings. Accounts of his appearance, wings, and encounters require the sources of each event; those details are not attached to the verse without distinction.

Reading Gabriel as trustworthy turns attention back to what he bears: guidance for humanity, rather than merely a story of extraordinary power. From here we move to the scenes preceding Adam’s earthly life, and then to glad tidings and occasions of messengership.

In the context of revelation, the Quran describes the noble messenger’s strength, station, and trustworthiness:

“It is indeed the word of a noble messenger, (19) possessing strength, firmly established with the Lord of the Throne, (20) obeyed there and trustworthy. (21) Your companion is not mad. (22) He certainly saw him on the clear horizon. (23)”

Al-Takwir 81:19-23

In the interpretation identifying Gabriel as the bearer of revelation, the angelic messenger remains distinct from the Prophet who received it. Strength affirms the ability to fulfil the

trust; station does not separate its bearer from the Lord of the Throne; obedience to him in the Highest Assembly does not make him the independent source of the Quran.

Attributing the word to a noble messenger here therefore concerns carrying and conveying, not composing revelation. Al-Baqara states that he brought it to the Prophet's heart by Allah's permission. Together the passages preserve the path of the message: from Allah, through a trustworthy intermediary, to the heart of the human Messenger who conveys it to people.

Different written forms of the name do not change this station. We retain Jibril when identifying the Quranic form and Jibra'il or Jabra'il according to the narration, referring all forms to a single entry. Preserving the wording is part of preserving the text itself.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the passage on Gabriel, trustee of revelation.

Chapter 16: The Angels and the Announcement of Adam's Vicegerency

The announcement of vicegerency has already been mentioned. Here we follow the scene's sequence. Adam was not introduced to the angels through a description of his height or appearance. The event unfolded through the knowledge Allah taught him, revealing an aspect of wisdom they had not encompassed.

"He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels and said, 'Tell Me the names of these, if you are truthful.' (31) They said, 'Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You alone are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.' (32) He said, 'Adam, tell them their names.' When he told them their names, He said, 'Did I not tell you that I know the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and know what you reveal and what you have concealed?' (33)"

Al-Baqara 2:31-33

This passage does not explain every detail of the names in a way allowing certainty about a list it does not give. Commentaries offer several understandings; we do not substitute one for the verse and present it as the verse's wording. What the scene establishes is Allah's teaching of Adam, the question, the angels' acknowledgement, and the disclosure of what Allah had taught him.

Their question about corruption and bloodshed must be understood in a way that preserves their obedience. Asking about wisdom is not identical with arrogant objection, especially when their subsequent answer declares Allah's transcendence and the limits of their knowledge. Claiming they knew this through a particular earlier creation or specified history depends upon reports establishing that identification.

Humanity thus appears within a sphere of responsibility not cancelled by its capacity for corruption. Honouring Adam does not necessarily mean preferring every human act to every angel; the scene has its own implications, and generalisation requires evidence. The lesson we may safely carry is that a creature's value is not exhausted by its substance and that divine wisdom exceeds what an observer first perceives.

The sequence is significant: Adam is taught; the names are presented to the angels and they are questioned; they acknowledge their limits; Adam then informs them. Vicegerency is not

simply one body overpowering another or one element outranking another. It reveals a dimension of knowledge Allah placed in the human being.

These verses nevertheless do not enumerate the names taught to Adam or reproduce the lesson's contents and details. Interpretations therefore differ in identifying the intended meaning, while their shared foundation remains clear: Allah showed the angels knowledge He had granted Adam, and their acknowledgement did not become envy or objection.

The significance of the first question is thus disclosed. They asked about wisdom in what they perceived as the possibility of corruption and bloodshed, then received clarification through the act of teaching. Allah's answer did not deny that evil would occur in human history; it revealed that this possibility was not the whole truth. The capacity for learning, guidance, and repentance expresses a wisdom in vicegerency that cannot be reduced to corruption alone.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Baqara 2:31-33.

Chapter 17: Prostration before Adam and the Beginning of Iblis's Test

The scene moves from teaching to command, revealing the difference between a question that ends in submission and arrogance that rejects obligation. The angels prostrated, while Iblis refused.

“When We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ they prostrated, except Iblis. He refused, grew arrogant, and was among the disbelievers.”

Al-Baqara 2:34

Prostration before Adam here fulfils Allah's command and honours Adam; it does not acknowledge Adam's divinity. It cannot be understood apart from the fact that Allah commands and the angels are His servants. Turning this prostration into worship of a creature contradicts the event's framework of divine unity.

“He said, ‘Iblis, what prevented you from prostrating before what I created with My two hands? Have you grown arrogant, or were you among the exalted?’ (75) He said, ‘I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay.’ (76)”

Sad 38:75-76

Iblis made the original substance a criterion for rejecting the command and proclaimed his own superiority. The verses do not praise fire above clay; they report the argument underlying his refusal. The lesson emerges here: the problem is not the absence of all knowledge, but a corrupt response to truth when it conflicts with self-exaltation.

No invented conversation between the angels and Iblis is needed to complete the scene. Their obedience and his refusal are clear. Further details before or after cannot be accepted merely because they make the narrative entertaining. A faithful story preserves silence where the source is silent and explains what it says rather than crowding it with what it never said.

Sad offers another portrayal of complete obedience:

“The angels prostrated, all of them together, (73) except Iblis; he grew arrogant and was among the disbelievers. (74)”

Sad 38:73-74

The verse affirms the prostration of all the angels and singles out Iblis for arrogance. His refusal is therefore no defect in the response of the angelic company described by the Quran, but the departure of one who arrogantly rejected the command. He did not dispute Allah's existence; he disputed what obedience required when the command contradicted his imagined superiority.

Prostration here is obedience to Allah concerning Adam. It does not make Adam divine, nor does every commanded prostration become worship of someone other than Allah merely because of the movement's form. Command and intention determine its meaning. It is a mistake to isolate the movement from its context and judge the whole account on that basis.

The event also reveals that abundant worship provides no immunity from arrogance if its practitioner sets the self above the command. The angels, by contrast, accepted the wisdom disclosed and obeyed the One who taught them. Two paths diverge at one threshold: servanthood willing to learn, and a self wishing to judge the command by its claim to superiority.

The Quran repeats this scene in several surahs. Its foundation remains one, while its lessons expand. In al-A'raf it follows creation and formation:

“We created you, then formed you, then said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam.’ They prostrated, except Iblis; he was not among those who prostrated.”

Al-A'raf 7:11

Al-Hijr mentions the substance of human creation and the breathing of the spirit, followed by the angels' obedience:

“When your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am creating a human being from sounding clay, from moulded dark mud. (28) When I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down before him in prostration.’ (29) The angels prostrated, all of them together. (30)”

Al-Hijr 15:28-30

Al-Isra' presents Iblis's explanation of his refusal through clay, while Ta Ha expresses his stance in the word “refused”:

“When We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ they prostrated, except Iblis. He said, ‘Shall I prostrate before one You created from clay?’”

Al-Isra' 17:61

“When We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ they prostrated, except Iblis; he refused.”

Ta Ha 20:116

The opening address appears again in Sad:

“When your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am creating a human being from clay. (71) When I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down before him in prostration.’ (72)”

Sad 38:71-72

These are Quranic passages about the same scene, not accounts of a prostration repeated as many times as the surahs. Comparing them brings together what they state without erasing the particular context of each appearance.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Baqara 2:34; Sad 38:75-76; 38:73-74; al-A'raf 7:11; al-Hijr 15:28-30; al-Isra' 17:61; Ta Ha 20:116; Sad 38:71-72.

Chapter 18: Angels with Adam and His Family

Adam's story extends to repentance, descent, and the responsibility of guidance. In these stages, not every address or act of instruction should be attributed to an angel unless the text identifies one. The Quran may attribute teaching to Allah without mentioning an intermediary.

“Then Adam received words from his Lord, and He turned towards him in forgiveness. He is indeed the Acceptor of repentance, the Ever-Merciful. (37) We said, ‘Descend from it, all of you. When guidance comes to you from Me, those who follow My guidance shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. (38) But those who disbelieve and deny Our signs are the inhabitants of the Fire; there they will remain.’ (39)”

Al-Baqara 2:37-39

The passage establishes the receiving of words, acceptance of repentance, and promise of guidance. It does not name an angel who taught Adam the words or describe ceremonies of the first life on earth. Its meaning is therefore presented as given, while details of intermediaries are left to narrations requiring separate source investigation.

Circulating accounts of Adam include details of instruction in worship and agriculture, his death, washing and burial, and the angels' relations with his family. I do not present these as established history here. Their inclusion in a collected chapter of stories does not resolve differences in their chains. No new individual angelic name is established in the texts underlying this chapter; the dictionary must not be filled with an unattributed circulating name.

Mentioning Eve and the first family does not depart from the book's subject. Women are included wherever they have a place in an event, while what the Quran says is distinguished from names supplied by interpreters or narrators. This stage's conclusion remains that guidance continued after the descent, and that discussion of angels forms part of that guidance, not an opening to recount the entire history of the first family without evidence.

As Adam's story moves to earth, the encounter with guidance takes a different form. The scene is no longer simply the teaching of names among those addressed in the Highest Assembly. Humanity faces livelihood, responsibility, enmity, and repentance, followed by the promise associated with following guidance. We cannot fill every stage of Adam's life with the name of an angel absent from the text before us.

The first scene's influence remains: the human being who was taught can err, yet can also receive words of repentance and return. The angels who acknowledged their limits do not appear in the Quran as adversaries rejoicing at his fall. Such a picture lacks textual support and conflicts with the story's opening of mercy after error.

From this transition begins the history of the human family. Eve is mentioned with Adam in the account of dwelling and trial, and the story then extends to his descendants. Reports about a shroud descending, instruction in washing the dead, or angels attending his death belong to narrated material whose details cannot be established from the repentance verses alone. Where a reliable report has not been identified, explaining that boundary is more faithful than constructing a farewell scene the source does not recount.

Angels are also mentioned in Satan's whispering to the first parents:

"Satan whispered to them to expose what had been concealed from them of their nakedness. He said, 'Your Lord forbade you this tree only lest you become two angels or become immortal.'"

Al-A'raf 7:20

Here the Quran reports Satan's words; it does not endorse the truth of his enticement. Becoming angels belongs to a false promise within temptation, not a Quranic assertion that eating from the tree transforms humans into angels. This is another example of why the speaker in a story must be identified before a belief is extracted from the words.

Among accounts connecting angels with Adam and the covenant is the Black Stone report in al-Kafi's Book of Pilgrimage. Bukayr ibn A'yan narrates a lengthy account from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, describing the Stone's origin as a great angel entrusted with the covenant and placed with Adam to remind him of it. It then describes its transformation into a jewel and its being carried to the House's location.[1] The report gives this angel no personal name, so its subject is recorded among descriptions without inventing a dictionary name.

The account emphasises trust, renewal of the covenant, and testimony to fidelity, meanings distinct from examining the Stone's material composition. Its details must also be distinguished from the chapter's first hadith, which mentions taking in the covenants without presenting the entire transformation story. A judgement on the chain of the shorter report is not transferred to every detail of the longer one merely because both appear in the same chapter.

[1] Al-Kafi, vol. 4, Book of Pilgrimage, chapter on the origin of the Stone and the reason for touching it, hadith 3, pp. 184-187; compared with the chapter's first hadith. These details are presented as the content of this transmission, without independently authenticating it here.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Baqara 2:37-39; al-A'raf 7:20.

Chapter 19: Angels with the Early Prophets

Accounts of the early prophets involve revelation, deliverance, elevation, and punishment. These themes alone do not suffice to name the angel who carried out each event. The wish to complete a story may turn a possibility into a definite character; hence the need to stop at the limits of what is stated.

“Mention Idris in the Book. He was a man of truth, a prophet. (56) We raised him to a high station. (57)”

Maryam 19:56-57

The Quran mentions Idris and his elevation, but these two verses name no angel who carried him or took his soul. Stories connecting Idris with the Angel of Death therefore need their own sources and cannot be presented as a definitive explanation of his elevation. Likewise, Seth appears in narrated tradition, but his name does not occur in the Quran. Angelic details should not be attributed to his story without documentation.

“Build the Ark under Our eyes and through Our revelation. Do not plead with Me concerning those who have wronged; they will be drowned.”

Hud 11:37

This passage from Noah’s story affirms revelation and care without naming an angel in the building of the Ark. General belief in revelation must be distinguished from identifying intermediaries in every part of an event. In the accounts of Hud and Salih, the Quran establishes deliverance and punishment, but assigning every sound, wind, or cry to a particular angel requires further evidence.

This chapter’s purpose is not to collect conjectural names, but to establish a principle for reading ancient accounts: we do not fill the spaces between texts with scenes of our own making. The material may expand as particular narrations are established, but these verses provide no new individual name for the dictionary.

Idris reaches the reader associated with truthfulness, prophethood, and an elevated station. These three elements form the centre of his account in the two verses. Connecting that elevation with a particular angel or a meeting with the Angel of Death needs an independent narrated source. A prophet’s name does not open the way to establish an angelic name the verse does not give.

Noah’s story manifests care in building the Ark through revelation and then in carrying and delivering the believers. Yet the language of care does not require every command Noah received in that setting to have been transmitted through a named angel. This distinction preserves the prophets’ connection with guidance without forcing every form of revelation into one pattern.

When this book mentions Seth in the setting of the first family or the continuation of the entrusted succession, it does not make his name Quranic or fill his account with angelic names from reports of unknown transmission. We can recognise a path from Adam’s instruction to human messengership: Allah guides, teaches, and sends; angels are among His messengers. Yet the transmitted details of their presence in each prophet’s life are not equally extensive.

Sometimes brevity is therefore part of a scene’s truthfulness. Not every Quranic prophet is accompanied by a detailed angelic story, and equal faith in the prophets does not require equal chapter lengths.

Objections to a messenger’s humanity were not confined to the time of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household. In Noah’s story, the Quran records the chiefs’ words:

“The disbelieving chiefs of his people said, ‘This is only a human being like yourselves, seeking superiority over you. Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels. We never heard of this among our forefathers.’”

Al-Mu’minun 23:24

The objection returns in an account of peoples visited by messengers:

“When messengers came to them from before them and behind them, saying, ‘Worship none but Allah,’ they said, ‘Had our Lord willed, He would have sent down angels. We disbelieve in what you have been sent with.’”

Fussilat 41:14

“Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels” is the deniers’ argument reported by the Quran in these passages, not a Quranic rule defining how messages must arrive. Angels thus appear in prophetic stories through the peoples’ arguments as well, even when the text does not describe angels descending in the event itself.

Quranic references in this chapter: Maryam 19:56-57; Hud 11:37; al-Mu’minun 23:24; Fussilat 41:14.

Chapter 20: Abraham’s Guests and the Glad Tidings to Sarah

Hospitality opens one of the clearest scenes of angelic presence in Quranic narrative. Messengers came to Abraham carrying news. He welcomed them with his customary generosity, then noticed something unfamiliar in human hospitality.

“Our messengers came to Abraham with glad tidings. They said, ‘Peace.’ He answered, ‘Peace,’ and soon brought a roasted calf. (69) When he saw their hands not reaching for it, he found them strange and felt afraid of them. They said, ‘Do not fear. We have been sent to the people of Lot.’ (70) His wife was standing there and laughed; We gave her glad tidings of Isaac, and after Isaac, Jacob. (71) She said, ‘Alas! Shall I give birth when I am an old woman and this husband of mine is an old man? This is indeed astonishing.’ (72) They said, ‘Do you marvel at Allah’s command? Allah’s mercy and blessings be upon you, people of the household. He is Praiseworthy, Glorious.’ (73)”

Hud 11:69-73

The story moves from peace to food, from fear to reassurance, and then to glad tidings. It does not recount a lengthy conversation about angelic nature, disclosing only what the event requires. The woman is Abraham’s wife; Sarah is her familiar name in tradition, but these verses do not name her personally.

The promise concerns Isaac and, after Isaac, Jacob. The woman receives it with astonishment rooted in her age, and the reply directs her to Allah’s command and mercy. This joy must remain central to the story. She should not be relegated to the margins of a male scene when she is the one addressed by its glad tidings and mercy.

The event also appears in al-Hijr and al-Dharyat, which develop the dialogue and affirm the messengers’ mission. Their number and names cannot be determined from this passage alone. Nor is their refusal of food an insult to hospitality. The Quran explains the fear through the disclosure of their different condition, then removes it by identifying their mission.

News of a birth and news of the end of Lot's people stand beside one another in this journey. The angelic messenger bears what it is commanded in both settings, revealing the unity of divine command and its different effects upon people of faith and people of injustice.

Al-Dhariyat recounts the encounter from another perspective, adding details of the actions surrounding the glad tidings:

"Has the account of Abraham's honoured guests reached you? (24) When they entered his presence and said, 'Peace,' he answered, 'Peace: unfamiliar people.' (25) He slipped away to his family and brought a fat calf. (26) He placed it near them and said, 'Will you not eat?' (27) He felt afraid of them. They said, 'Do not fear,' and gave him glad tidings of a knowledgeable son. (28) His wife came forward with a cry, struck her face, and said, 'An old, barren woman!' (29) They said, 'Thus has your Lord said. He is indeed the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.' (30)"

Al-Dhariyat 51:24-30

The guests enter with peace, Abraham returns peace, then hastens to his family and brings a fat calf. Their identity is not announced before his hospitality, making their abstention from food a cause of surprise and fear. Reassurance and the promise of a son follow, and his wife responds with astonishment at birth amid old age and barrenness.

The Quran itself provides this narrative movement; descriptions of their clothes, voices, or number of footsteps are unnecessary inventions. Comparison with Hud reveals the scene's consistency: peace, hospitality, fear removed by the announcement of the mission, and astonishment answered through Allah's power and wisdom.

These verses do not name the individual guests. We therefore speak of the messengers who visited Abraham or his angelic guests, without asserting that every famous great angel was among them unless attributing that claim to a particular narration. This restraint does not weaken the story: its centre is the good news and Allah's promise.

Al-Hijr elaborates the glad tidings and hope before the messengers proceed to their next task:

"Tell them about Abraham's guests. (51) When they entered his presence and said, 'Peace,' he said, 'We are afraid of you.' (52) They said, 'Do not be afraid. We bring you glad tidings of a knowledgeable son.' (53) He said, 'Do you bring me good news when old age has overtaken me? What, then, is the news you bring?' (54) They said, 'We bring you good news in truth, so do not be among those who despair.' (55) He said, 'Who despairs of his Lord's mercy except those astray?' (56) He said, 'What, then, is your mission, messengers?' (57) They said, 'We have been sent to a guilty people, (58) except the family of Lot; we shall save them all, (59) except his wife. We have decreed that she shall be among those left behind.' (60)"

Al-Hijr 15:51-60

The fear beginning the encounter turns into dialogue about good news and Allah's mercy, after which Abraham asks the purpose of their coming. The answer shows that deliverance and punishment do not occur without distinction: Lot's family is excepted from destruction, and his wife from deliverance. In Hud, the dialogue extends to pleading concerning Lot's people:

“When fear had left Abraham and the glad tidings had reached him, he began pleading with Us concerning Lot’s people. (74) Abraham was indeed forbearing, tender-hearted, and ever turning to Allah. (75) ‘Abraham, turn away from this. Your Lord’s command has come, and a punishment that cannot be turned back is coming upon them.’ (76)”

Hud 11:74-76

One report naming the guests occurs in *Rawdat al-Kafi*, from Abu Yazid al-Hammar, from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him. It names four emissaries: Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, and Karubil.[1] This establishes the location of the name Karubil in narration, although the hospitality verses do not name him. It is not automatically merged with al-karubiyyun, a group mentioned in another report: verbal similarity does not prove identity. Al-Majlisi’s assessment of this report’s chain as unknown has been transmitted. The name’s occurrence is therefore documented without treating every detail of the narration as certain.

[1] *Al-Kafi*, vol. 8, *al-Rawda*, hadith 505, beginning “Allah Most High sent four angels to destroy the people of Lot”; also quoted by al-Majlisi in *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 56, chapter 24, pp. 256-257, hadith 20. The assessment “unknown” is reproduced with the text in the hadith edition consulted; use the hadith number and opening where commentary numbering differs.

Quranic references in this chapter: Hud 11:69-73; al-Dhariyat 51:24-30.

Chapter 21: Angels with Lot

The messengers’ arrival appeared to Lot as a severe trial. He welcomed them knowing his people’s corruption and what might threaten a guest. Their true situation had not yet been disclosed to remove his anxiety.

“When Our messengers came to Lot, he was distressed on their account, felt powerless to protect them, and said, ‘This is a difficult day.’ (77) His people came rushing towards him; previously they had been committing evil deeds. He said, ‘My people, here are my daughters; they are purer for you. Be mindful of Allah and do not disgrace me concerning my guests. Is there not one right-minded man among you?’ (78) They said, ‘You know that we have no claim upon your daughters, and you certainly know what we want.’ (79) He said, ‘If only I had strength against you or could take refuge in a mighty support!’ (80) They said, ‘Lot, we are your Lord’s messengers. They will never reach you. Depart with your family during a portion of the night, and let none of you look back, except your wife: what strikes them will strike her. Their appointed time is morning. Is morning not near?’ (81) When Our command came, We turned the town upside down and rained upon it stones of layered baked clay, (82) marked with your Lord. They are not far from the wrongdoers. (83)”

Hud 11:77-83

The text presents Lot’s distress, his confrontation with his people, and then the messengers’ address revealing the situation’s reality. Knowing that they are his Lord’s messengers changes the meaning of the danger. His people cannot reach them as he feared, and the task becomes departure at the commanded time.

Daughters and wife appear in the story, each in her place. Mentioning the daughters does not require inventing names for them. Nor should Lot’s appeal be interpreted in a manner contradicting his prophetic station without considering the wording and sound

interpretation. His wife, however, is not saved merely by the marriage bond: the context identifies her fate with that of the people.

Elsewhere the Quran mentions blinding those who sought access to his guests. Such details are brought together according to their textual locations, not a narrator's wish to increase excitement. Identifying the angel responsible for each action remains separate from establishing the event itself.

The scene reveals the ethics of hospitality and the burden of protecting the vulnerable, as well as the fact that kinship does not erase responsibility. It does not invite people to impose unseen punishments upon others. It reports a particular event in which messengers carried out Allah's command, not an authorisation for anyone to appoint themselves to execute something similar.

The preceding scene's consequences now reach Lot. The same guests carry a mission unknown to his people. He is distressed for their safety because he knows his people's aggression, while they are reassured by knowing their assignment. The difference between what the Prophet knows on receiving them and what they subsequently disclose belongs to the story's structure; it does not diminish his station.

The Quran explicitly records the blinding:

"They sought to lure him into surrendering his guests, so We blotted out their eyes:
"Taste My punishment and My warnings."

Al-Qamar 54:37

Punishment here is connected with attempted assault upon guests and persistence in corruption. The story should not be reduced to a punitive desire on the angels' part. They convey a command, explain the way out to Lot, and identify morning as his people's appointed time.

The wife's proximity to a prophetic household does not guarantee deliverance while she opposes its guidance, nor is the believing family abandoned to punishment. The outcome follows the faith and stance described in the text. Physical kinship is distinguished from responding to guidance, and the messengers' role in rescuing believers appears alongside their execution of judgement upon aggressors.

Al-'Ankabut joins Abraham's glad tidings and Lot's rescue in one continuous account:

"When Our messengers came to Abraham with glad tidings, they said, 'We are going to destroy the inhabitants of this town; its people have been wrongdoers.' (31) He said, 'But Lot is there.' They said, 'We know best who is there. We shall save him and his family, except his wife; she is among those left behind.' (32) When Our messengers came to Lot, he was distressed on their account and felt powerless to protect them. They said, 'Do not fear or grieve. We shall save you and your family, except your wife; she is among those left behind. (33) We are bringing down upon the inhabitants of this town a punishment from heaven for their persistent transgression.' (34) We have left of it a clear sign for people who understand. (35)"

Al-'Ankabut 29:31-35

Abraham's question about Lot receives an answer affirming the messengers' knowledge of the town's inhabitants and the deliverance of Lot and his family except his wife. Lot is then

told not to fear or grieve. Protecting believers is integral to the mission; punishment is not its whole content.

“He said, ‘What, then, is your mission, messengers?’ (31) They said, ‘We have been sent to a guilty people, (32) to send upon them stones of clay, (33) marked with your Lord for those who exceed all bounds.’ (34) We brought out the believers who were there, (35) but found there only one household of those who submitted. (36) We left there a sign for those who fear the painful punishment. (37)”

Al-Dhariyat 51:31-37

This passage identifies the guilty people as the mission’s target and describes believers being brought out before judgement descends. Al-Hijr details the instructions for departure and portrays the confrontation and its outcome:

“When the messengers came to Lot’s household, (61) he said, ‘You are unfamiliar people.’ (62) They said, ‘Rather, we have brought you what they kept doubting. (63) We have come to you with the truth, and we are certainly truthful. (64) Depart with your family during a portion of the night, follow behind them, let none of you look back, and proceed where you are commanded.’ (65) We conveyed to him that decree: the last of these people would be cut off by morning. (66) The townspeople came rejoicing. (67) He said, ‘These are my guests, so do not disgrace me. (68) Be mindful of Allah and do not shame me.’ (69) They said, ‘Did we not forbid you to protect anyone?’ (70) He said, ‘Here are my daughters, if you must act.’ (71) By your life, they wandered blindly in their intoxication. (72) The cry seized them at sunrise. (73) We turned the town upside down and rained upon them stones of baked clay. (74) In this are signs for those who discern. (75) It lies beside an enduring road. (76) In this is indeed a sign for believers. (77)”

Al-Hijr 15:61-77

Comparing the surahs yields a fuller picture: the messengers’ identification, reassurance of the Prophet, the timing of departure, and then the consequence and lesson. Several surahs do not mean several independent events, and names drawn from a narration must not be inserted into the Quranic text as though they belong to it.

Quranic references in this chapter: Hud 11:77-83; al-Qamar 54:37.

Chapter 22: Angels with Abraham’s Family

Abraham’s family history branches into Mecca and the Levant, with many stories forming around it. Fidelity in discussing angels requires distinguishing Quranic accounts of prayer, trial, and deliverance from the intermediaries identified by narrations.

“Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in a valley without cultivation near Your Sacred House, our Lord, so that they may establish prayer. Make people’s hearts incline towards them, and provide them with fruits, so that they may give thanks.”

Ibrahim 14:37

The prayer mentions settling some descendants near the House. This verse names neither Hagar nor Ishmael and does not recount the water or the angel. Those details are known from other sources; preserving the difference does not harm the story. Likewise, the ransom

in the sacrifice story does not by itself establish who carried it or how it arrived. Identifying the intended sacrificial son is also a question with its own evidence.

In Joseph's story, the women use the word "angel" when they see him. This must not be taken as an actual angel's presence at the gathering: their words describe Joseph in astonishment.

"When she heard of their scheming, she invited them, prepared a reclining place for them, gave each a knife, and said, 'Come out before them.' When they saw him, they marvelled at him and cut their hands, saying, 'Allah forbid! This is no human being; this is only a noble angel.'"

Yusuf 12:31

This example teaches that collecting every word connected with angels does not by itself explain its role in a story. We must know who speaks and whether the words state a fact, make a comparison, or report the speaker's belief. Likewise, the proof Joseph saw cannot be identified as a particular angel without evidence.

Circulating accounts of Jacob's encounters with the Angel of Death require documentation, and their details are not established here. The family is thus included in the inquiry without burdening its stories with unsupported names or dialogues.

The household's glad tidings extend into the story of Isaac, Jacob, and Abraham's descendants. They promise more than passing joy; they form a link in prophetic history. Yet belonging to this household does not cancel descendants' responsibility or require a named angelic scene for every individual.

The women's description of Joseph as a "noble angel" reveals an image of angels in human consciousness as exemplars of beauty and honour. It remains their comparison, not a Quranic statement that Joseph is an angel. Distinguishing characters' speech from divine statements about beings' realities is essential in a book concerned with names and attributes.

Nor do we confuse Rahil, named as an angel in some accounts of Fatima's marriage, peace be upon her, with the woman called Rachel in historical accounts of Jacob's family. Similar wording does not make the figures identical; source and context determine the referent. The same principle applies to Isma'il, a prophet's name and also an angelic name in a narration of the heavenly ascent.

Quranic references in this chapter: Ibrahim 14:37; Yusuf 12:31.

Chapter 23: Angels with Moses, Aaron, and the Children of Israel

The history of the Children of Israel includes revelation, support, and successive trials, but an angel is not named in every scene. Among the clearest passages is the angels' carrying of the Ark as confirmation of Talut's kingship.

"Their prophet said to them, 'The sign of his kingship is that the Ark will come to you, containing tranquillity from your Lord and a remnant of what the families of Moses and Aaron left behind, carried by the angels. In that is a sign for you, if you are believers.'"

Al-Baqara 2:248

The verse links the Ark with tranquillity and a remnant left by the families of Moses and Aaron, explicitly stating that angels carry it. It gives neither the carriers' number nor their names, and understanding its meaning does not depend on knowing what it leaves unnamed. This is a sign for a particular people, not an unrestricted story into which every familiar detail may be inserted.

In Moses' life, the Quran mentions revelation, calling, and direct speech. We cannot make Gabriel the intermediary in every address to Moses merely because he is the trustee of revelation. Allah describes speaking to Moses, and each passage has its own meaning. Likewise, revelation to Moses' mother does not in itself establish a visible angel sent to her or necessarily make her a prophet.

Accounts of Moses' and Aaron's deaths and meetings with the Angel of Death require scrutiny preserving prophetic dignity, rather than acceptance of everything circulating in story collections. We will not add an insufficiently evidenced incident merely to make the chapter resemble a complete biography. Aaron remains a human prophet here, not an angelic name merely because Harun resembles Harut.

The sign of the Ark appears amid the Children of Israel's objection to Talut's kingship. They requested a leader, then some objected to his selection because he lacked wealth. The answer was that Allah had chosen him and increased him in knowledge and bodily strength. The Ark carried by angels was then identified as a sign. It is thus inseparable from the test of accepting divine choice.

The Ark contains tranquillity and a remnant of what the families of Moses and Aaron left, as the text states. Its shape, precise contents, and the manner in which angels carry it are not explained so fully as to include everything later stories depict. We can describe what it says: a sign confirming the report, reassurance connected with the prophetic inheritance, and carrying performed by angels.

Aaron the prophet must be distinguished from Harut the angel. Similar letters have no bearing on identity. Aaron is Moses' brother and partner in the mission; Harut appears with Marut in an entirely different setting. Linguistic precision prevents seemingly small errors from passing into indexes and memory.

Pharaoh also uses an angelic proposal in his argument against Moses:

“Why, then, have bracelets of gold not been bestowed upon him, or angels come with him in company?”

Al-Zukhruf 43:53

The objection combines a sign of ornament and authority in Pharaoh's eyes with angelic accompaniment. He measures the message by appearances familiar from his court and demands that the prophet conform to that measure. The verse does not say that Allah failed to support Moses; it exposes the opponent's effort to turn attention from evidence to appearance.

The expression “the messenger's trace” in al-Samiri's story also requires distinguishing Quranic wording from an identification supplied by interpretation:

“He said, ‘What was your purpose, al-Samiri?’ (95) He said, ‘I perceived what they did not perceive. I took a handful from the messenger's trace and cast it away; thus my soul

prompted me.’ (96) He said, ‘Go, then. In this life you shall say, “No contact!” You have an appointment that you will not escape. Look at your god, to which you remained devoted: we shall burn it and scatter it completely into the sea.’ (97)”

Ta Ha 20:95-97

These verses do not explicitly name Gabriel. Identifying the messenger as Gabriel, together with the added account of an animal’s trace, remains an interpretation with its evidence and debates; the name is not made part of the Quranic text. The verses present al-Samiri’s admission, what his soul prompted, and the judgement upon him. His act is therefore no approved model for engaging with traces or the unseen.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Baqara 2:248; al-Zukhruf 43:53.

Chapter 24: Angels with Other Prophets and Nations

Reading prophetic narratives repeatedly raises the identity of figures who enter a prophet’s presence or address him. Some commentaries identify figures as angels where the Quran does not explicitly do so. The two disputants in David’s story are a familiar example.

“Has the account of the disputants reached you, when they climbed over the wall of the sanctuary? (21) When they entered David’s presence, he was alarmed. They said, ‘Do not fear. We are two disputants, one of whom has wronged the other. Judge between us with truth, do not be unjust, and guide us to the sound path. (22) This brother of mine has ninety-nine ewes, while I have one ewe. He said, “Entrust her to me,” and overpowered me in argument.’ (23) David said, ‘He has wronged you by asking to add your ewe to his. Many associates wrong one another, except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and how few they are.’ David realised that We had tested him, so he sought his Lord’s forgiveness, fell down bowing, and turned to Him. (24) We forgave him that, and he has nearness to Us and an excellent return. (25)”

Sad 38:21-25

The text recounts their climbing into the sanctuary, David’s alarm, the dispute, and his seeking forgiveness and returning to Allah. It does not say here that the disputants were Gabriel and Michael or give them two names. Identifying them as angels therefore remains an exegetical view requiring evidence, not Quranic wording inserted into the narrative.

In the Imami framework, the story is read while preserving the prophets’ infallibility. Tales accusing David of crimes established by neither the Quran nor a reliable report are not accepted. Rejecting those tales, however, does not justify choosing any detailed alternative: the alternative also needs evidence.

Accounts of Solomon, Job, Jonah, Shu’ayb, Elijah, Elisha, and Dhu al-Kifl offer extensive fields for narrated inquiry. Listing these names does not imply that this chapter establishes an angelic story for each. Additional details about a Quranic prophet may be transmitted with differing authority. A compiler must identify the source of every detail before adopting it.

The indexes therefore distinguish a figure mentioned in the discussion from a figure connected with an established specific angelic event. This is more precise than increasing the number of stories through undocumented connections, and better preserves prophetic dignity and the reader’s right to know the extent of the evidence.

David's story highlights the significance of judgement before the hearing is complete. The disputants enter in a way that alarms him, request a truthful judgement, and present one party's claim. After David's response come his request for forgiveness, falling down, and return to his Lord. The explicit lesson concerns justice and awareness of trial, whether one adopts an interpretation identifying the disputants as angels or remains with the verses' express statements.

Solomon cannot be burdened with every circulating tale of magic: the verse of Harut and Marut explicitly denies his disbelief. The subjection of jinn to him is not the subjection of angels; the Quran names jinn and devils in their places. An extraordinary activity does not erase distinctions between kinds of beings.

In the accounts of Job, Jonah, and others, prayer, deliverance, and patience remain central to the Quranic presentation. Narrations may add an angel's presence or the communication of a command, but a book about angels does not gain breadth by inserting an angel into every story. Its breadth lies in clarifying when the text expressly mentions their presence, when identification comes from a separate report, and when no name is given.

Noah's address to his people also distinguishes prophethood from being an angel:

"I do not tell you that I possess Allah's treasures, nor that I know the unseen, nor do I say that I am an angel. Nor do I say of those your eyes despise that Allah will never grant them good. Allah knows best what is in their souls. If I did so, I would indeed be among the wrongdoers."

Hud 11:31

The address denies claims to possess Allah's treasures, intrinsic knowledge of the unseen, or angelic nature, then refuses to judge that people scorned by his listeners will receive no good from Allah. Humility in claims of knowledge is connected with fairness towards people. Such fairness does not weaken the prophet's station; it belongs to the truthfulness of what he conveys from his Lord.

Quranic references in this chapter: Sad 38:21-25; Hud 11:31.

Chapter 25: Harut and Marut: Knowledge and Trial

These two names occur in a long verse that must not be fragmented so as to remove the angels' warning or confuse the devils' actions with their mission. The verse begins by clearing Solomon of disbelief, then addresses teaching, trial, and the misuse of knowledge.

"They followed what the devils recited concerning Solomon's kingdom. Solomon did not disbelieve, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and what was sent down to the two angels at Babylon, Harut and Marut. The two taught no one without first saying, 'We are only a trial, so do not disbelieve.' Yet people learned from them what could separate a man from his wife. They could harm no one through it except by Allah's permission. They learned what harmed them and did not benefit them. They certainly knew that whoever purchased it would have no share in the hereafter. Miserable indeed was that for which they sold themselves, if only they knew."

Al-Baqara 2:102

In the familiar reading of al-malakayn, “the two angels,” the names appear in the Babylon setting. The text declares that they taught no one without warning of the trial and forbidding disbelief. The story therefore cannot be reduced to their teaching evil without warning, nor supplemented with a moral fall merely because some tales recount one.

The verse mentions no woman named al-Zuhara, drinking of wine, adultery, or idol worship. Attributing these to the verse is wrong. Accepting them as narration requires independent examination that does not disregard the decisive description of angelic obedience. Nor do we invent translations of the two names or assert their linguistic origins on the basis of similar sounds.

The event reveals the learner’s responsibility. Knowledge does not exempt its possessor from considering purpose and consequences; someone may learn what harms others. The verse supplies no practical recipe for magic and gives these acts no independent power outside Allah’s authority. Studying it is a way into divine unity and trustworthiness, not instruction in harm or the summoning of supposed powers.

Understanding the verse requires following its actions: following what devils recite; denying Solomon’s disbelief; teaching, testing, and warning; then learners misusing what they know to separate spouses. In its express wording, the two angels do not entice people to harm; they warn before teaching.

Trial here means a test, not a prior judgement of corruption against those through whom it occurs. A person may learn something capable of harmful use and then be forbidden that use. Knowing something is not identical with choosing or advocating it. Distinguishing instruction from causing harm is therefore central to reading the passage.

In his chapter on angelic infallibility, al-Majlisi collects differing reports and approaches. These include a passage from the commentary attributed to Imam al-‘Askari rejecting the adultery, wine, and killing story attached to Harut and Marut, and appealing to the principle of angelic obedience.[1] The commentary’s attribution and transmission are themselves debated. This quotation alone cannot deliver a final judgement on every narration, but it shows that Imami tradition did not present the popular story as an agreed account.

Quranic reference in this chapter: al-Baqara 2:102.

[1] Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, chapter 25, “The infallibility of angels and the story of Harut and Marut,” pp. 319-323, quoting the commentary attributed to Imam al-Hasan al-‘Askari, peace be upon him. This identifies the location of an interpretive approach; it does not independently authenticate the book’s transmission.

Chapter 26: Angels with Zechariah, Mary, and Jesus

The glad tidings come to Zechariah while he stands in prayer. The message gives the child’s name and qualities, placing joy within worship and guidance.

“The angels called to him while he stood praying in the sanctuary: ‘Allah gives you glad tidings of John, confirming a word from Allah, noble, chaste, and a prophet among the righteous.’”

Al ‘Imran 3:39

The angels' call is explicit, but the verse does not name an individual caller. We do not replace the plural with a personal name without identifying the source for doing so. The account then turns to Mary, addressed through election, purification, and worship.

"When the angels said, 'Mary, Allah has chosen you, purified you, and chosen you above the women of the worlds. (42) Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord, prostrate, and bow with those who bow.' (43) That is among the accounts of the unseen which We reveal to you. You were not with them when they cast their pens to decide who would care for Mary, nor were you with them when they disputed. (44) When the angels said, 'Mary, Allah gives you glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, honoured in this world and the hereafter, and among those brought near.' (45)"

Al 'Imran 3:42-45

These verses do not reduce Mary to motherhood alone. She receives an address of election and is herself a worshipper; then comes the announcement of Jesus. The narrative must preserve this order so that the woman is not hidden behind the event that follows her.

In Maryam, the scene expands through appearance, seeking refuge, and dialogue:

"She said, 'I seek refuge in the All-Merciful from you, if you are mindful of Him.' (18) He said, 'I am only your Lord's messenger, to grant you a pure son.' (19) She said, 'How can I have a son when no man has touched me and I have not been unchaste?' (20) He said, 'Thus it shall be. Your Lord says, "It is easy for Me, and We shall make him a sign for people and a mercy from Us." It is a matter already decreed.' (21)"

Maryam 19:18-21

Mary's chastity and seeking refuge in Allah are evident, and the messenger identifies himself through his mission. This does not make angels an independent cause of Jesus' creation; the command belongs to Allah. Jesus' strengthening through the Holy Spirit appears elsewhere in the Quran and must be read with attention to the Spirit's meaning in context, rather than assuming one interpretation for every use.

The journey through the prophets in this part ends with a scene joining revelation, glad tidings, creation, and responsibility. As we turn to the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household, the same trust remains: state what the text says, preserve the identities of men and women, and attribute no addition to the Quran that it does not contain.

A beautiful connection unites these scenes: they occur where human possibilities appear narrow. Zechariah is old, his wife barren, and Mary has been touched by no man. The angelic message does not deny these circumstances; it conveys a promise of Allah's power, unconstrained by the limitations of causes as human beings perceive them.

Each scene retains its own address. Zechariah's glad tidings name and describe John. Mary's address begins with election and purification, then announces Jesus. The Spirit's appearance is followed by an answer reassuring her of his purpose. We do not merge these messages into one conversation or attribute to a speaker words occurring only in another scene.

The Quran describes Jesus' strengthening through the Holy Spirit:

"We gave Moses the Book and sent messengers after him in succession. We gave Jesus son of Mary clear proofs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. Is it that whenever a

messenger brings what your souls do not desire, you grow arrogant, denying some and killing others?”

Al-Baqara 2:87

This strengthening concerns fulfilment of the mission and clear proofs. It does not place Jesus among angels, just as his birth without a father does not remove his mother from humanity. These scenes preserve the distinction between the creating Lord, the conveying messenger, the human recipient of glad tidings, and the miracle Allah brings about.

The Holy Spirit’s strengthening of Jesus is not confined to al-Baqara 2:87. It recurs when the messengers’ differing stations are described, and again when Jesus is reminded of Allah’s blessings:

“Those messengers: We favoured some above others. Among them were those to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some in degrees. We gave Jesus son of Mary clear proofs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. Had Allah willed, those after them would not have fought one another after clear proofs came to them. But they differed: some believed and some disbelieved. Had Allah willed, they would not have fought one another, but Allah does whatever He wills.”

Al-Baqara 2:253

“When Allah said, ‘Jesus son of Mary, remember My favour upon you and your mother: when I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit, so that you spoke to people in the cradle and in maturity; when I taught you the Book, wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel; when, by My permission, you fashioned from clay the shape of a bird, breathed into it, and it became a bird by My permission; when you healed the blind from birth and the leper by My permission, and brought forth the dead by My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from you when you came to them with clear proofs, and the disbelievers among them said, “This is only manifest magic.”’”

Al-Ma’ida 5:110

Al-Ma’ida connects strengthening with teaching, speech, and signs Allah brings about through Jesus, repeatedly qualifying them by divine permission. This preserves divine unity in miracles as in angelic mediation. Two further verses mention Mary’s chastity and the breathing of the spirit:

“And she who guarded her chastity: We breathed into her of Our spirit and made her and her son a sign for the worlds.”

Al-Anbiya’ 21:91

“And Mary daughter of ‘Imran, who guarded her chastity: We breathed into it of Our spirit. She affirmed her Lord’s words and His books, and was among the devoutly obedient.”

Al-Tahrim 66:12

These passages are read with the Spirit’s appearance and mission of glad tidings in Maryam, without turning attribution to Allah into a division of His essence, or replacing “of Our spirit” with an angelic name not stated in the two verses.

Quranic references in this chapter: Al 'Imran 3:39; 3:42-45; Maryam 19:18-21; al-Baqara 2:87.

Part Four

Angels with the Prophet Muhammad and His Household, Peace Be upon Them

Chapter 27: Angels in Accounts of the Prophet's Birth and Upbringing

Biographical works and books of virtues contain extensive accounts of the Prophet's birth and upbringing. Their abundance demands greater precision in identifying sources. Different reports should not be combined into a single picture presented as established history for every stage of his childhood.

An important text here is the Sermon of Humbling in Nahj al-Balagha. It describes a great angel accompanying the Prophet from the time he was weaned, guiding him along the path of noble qualities and excellent character.[1] It presents continuous formative care without naming the angel. We therefore do not assert that it was Gabriel or Israfil, or count "the greatest angel" as a new personal name.

Imam 'Ali, peace be upon him, gives an account in the same context of accompanying the Prophet and following his character. Formation and emulation thus become the narrative's focus, rather than a display of extraordinary powers detached from life. Khadija has her place in accounts of the first household of faith, without our attributing particular angelic meetings to her merely because of her exalted station.

Details about angels descending at the moment of birth, their numbers, and their names remain tied to the reports transmitting them. Restricting this discussion to an identified text does not diminish the Prophet. It protects his honour from dependence upon an unestablished tale. This leads to his mission, where the trustee of revelation's role is defined by Quranic text.

The Sermon of Humbling connects the angel's companionship from weaning with the path of noble qualities and the finest character. Its formative meaning is clear: divine care in this account is not a public exhibition of power, but guidance in building the character the community would know in its Messenger.

"The greatest angel among His angels" does not explicitly name Gabriel here. Commentators may attempt an identification or connect it with reports of the Spirit, but this book preserves the difference between the sermon and a commentator's reasoning. The description is therefore included among titles, with a reference to its source.

Numerous birth accounts mention the opening of heaven's gates or the presence of angelic groups. Their details cannot all be combined into one night without comparing their transmissions. What we can present here with a clearly identified source is the passage from the Sermon of Humbling and its meaning of care. The story then proceeds to the Quran's revelation, where explicit texts on revelation and its intermediary become numerous.

[1] Nahj al-Balagha, the Sermon of Humbling (al-Qasi'a), no. 192 in the common numbering, the passage on care for the Prophet from weaning. Paraphrased.

Chapter 28: The Revelation of the Quran and Gabriel's Companionship with the Prophet

The central meaning of the Quran's descent is that the human Messenger receives from Allah, and Gabriel faithfully carries what he is entrusted with. Revelation is neither the Prophet's psychological invention nor the angel's opinion. The earlier verse from al-Baqara names Gabriel and specifies his bringing it to the Prophet's heart by Allah's permission.

"Say, 'The Holy Spirit has brought it down from your Lord in truth, to make the believers steadfast, and as guidance and glad tidings for those who submit.'"

Al-Nahl 16:102

The Holy Spirit is described here in the setting of strengthening believers, guidance, and glad tidings. His role is understood through its purpose: conveying truth, not displaying angelic form. The Quran also affirms that divine communication does not take only one form.

"It is not for a human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation, from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger who reveals by His permission whatever He wills. He is Most High, All-Wise."

Al-Shura 42:51

The verse distinguishes revelation, speech from behind a veil, and sending a messenger. An intermediary named in one passage must not be imposed on every other passage. Nor should every account of meeting Gabriel be turned into a Quranic verse or legislation independent of prophetic explanation.

Accounts of the beginning of revelation require scrutiny that preserves the Prophet's certainty and infallibility. Not every familiar biographical story binds the Imami method, and rejecting an unestablished report does not justify inventing a replacement. We present what the evidence supports and leave other matters open to investigation.

Trustworthiness appears on two levels here: faithful conveyance, with which the text describes the angelic messenger, and faithful transmission, required of anyone writing his account. Praise alone does not complete the writing; the report must be protected from additions of unknown origin.

When the Quran connects revelation with the Prophet's heart, the heart is the place of receiving and preserving the message, not a battlefield between divine communication and an indistinct delusion. Gabriel's trustworthiness affirms that revelation arrived as commanded, without alteration by the intermediary or independent authority to legislate.

Al-Nahl states that the Holy Spirit brought it from the Lord in truth to strengthen believers and bring guidance and good news to those who submit. The descent's purpose extends beyond transferring words to forming faith within a community that learns, receives, and acts. Gabriel's presence thus belongs to the history of guidance Muslims lived through the Quran.

Gabriel's companionship at moments of revelation does not imply the same kind of presence at every instant. The Quran itself names different forms of divine speech: revelation, from

behind a veil, or through a messenger. We neither reduce them to a single mechanism nor claim to know how every event occurred unless its source recounts it. They share the foundation that guidance comes from Allah and the Messenger faithfully conveys it.

The angels' testimony to revelation appears explicitly:

"But Allah bears witness to what He has sent down to you: He sent it down with His knowledge, and the angels bear witness. Allah suffices as Witness."

Al-Nisa' 4:166

The Quran also makes belief in them fundamental to its address to believers:

"You who believe, believe in Allah, His Messenger, the Book He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Book He sent down before. Whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has strayed far indeed."

Al-Nisa' 4:136

Belief in Gabriel cannot be separated from affirming the revelation he brought, nor affirmation of revelation from its divine source. Angelic testimony confirms the message's trustworthiness; it is no means of going beyond what Allah revealed to an unsupported new claim.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Nahl 16:102; al-Shura 42:51; al-Nisa' 4:166; 4:136.

Chapter 29: Angels in the Night Journey and Heavenly Ascent

The Quran establishes the Night Journey and makes the showing of signs an evident purpose. Detailed scenes of the heavenly ascent occur in several reports, examined according to their sources without confusing the event's foundation with every narration's particulars.

"Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him some of Our signs. He is indeed the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing."

Al-Isra' 17:1

The ascent report in the commentary attributed to 'Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi mentions an angel called Isma'il at the lowest heaven, encounters with angelic groups, and Malik, keeper of Hell.[1] Isma'il is recorded as a name occurring in this narration and distinguished from the prophet Ishmael and from transmitters bearing the same name.

The printed commentary's entire contents cannot receive one judgement merely from the book's title; the attribution and transmission of its material are themselves matters of study. Nor does the Quranic establishment of the Night Journey make every number or form in the report certain. Different levels of evidence within one subject should remain visible to readers.

Scenes of worship, mercy, and punishment are read as part of the narrated showing of signs. Unstated details are not added to make the scene cinematic. We do not place heavenly levels on a map of the contemporary universe or measure stages of the journey with quantities absent from the source.

The ascent account in Tafsir al-Qummi begins with Gabriel ascending alongside the Prophet and mentions an angel called Isma'il in the lowest heaven. It then describes encounters with

Malik, keeper of Hell, and the Angel of Death, and presents angels in worship.[1] These details belong to narrated material, whereas the verse in al-Isra' establishes the Night Journey from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque.

One passage depicts an angel combining snow and fire, whose glorification and prayer concern bringing believers' hearts together. The unusual image is not detached from meaning: the text connects divine power with union and reconciliation. Nevertheless, the image does not become a physical law we claim to test.

The three names or designations encountered here do not acquire new identities merely by appearing in the ascent. Malik is the name associated with Hell's keepers; the Angel of Death is the familiar functional title; and the angel Isma'il is distinguished from the prophet Ishmael in the dictionary. Unnamed groups retain their descriptions; we do not complete their names through conjecture.

The opening of al-Najm is fundamental to discussion of seeing signs of the higher realm:

"One mighty in power taught him, (5) possessing strength, who stood poised (6) upon the highest horizon. (7) Then he drew near and came closer, (8) until he was two bow-lengths away, or nearer. (9) Then He revealed to His servant what He revealed. (10) The heart did not deny what it saw. (11) Will you dispute with him about what he sees? (12) He certainly saw him on another descent, (13) by the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary, (14) near which is the Garden of Refuge, (15) when the Lote Tree was covered by what covered it. (16) The sight neither swerved nor exceeded its bounds. (17) He certainly saw some of his Lord's greatest signs. (18)"

Al-Najm 53:5-18

The passage presents teaching, strength, the horizon, approach, and then seeing at the Lote Tree and the showing of great signs. Commentaries discuss the pronouns' referents and the object of vision; identifying the mighty one as Gabriel is among the best-known readings. This book preserves the difference between the passage's words and that interpretation. Nearness is not made into a spatial distance encompassing Allah, nor are the verses treated as an explicit declaration of seeing Allah's essence with bodily eyes. The names of angels encountered in the ascent's details come from its reports, not from mention of the Lote Tree alone.

[1] Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 2, commentary on al-Isra' 17:1, the ascent report, especially p. 4 onwards in the common printed pagination. Judgement on its particulars depends upon examination of its transmission.

Chapter 30: Angels at Moments of Divine Support

At Badr, reinforcement was connected with believers' appeal for help and their steadfastness in danger. The Quran attributes victory to Allah while describing angels as a cause of glad tidings and reassurance.

"When you sought your Lord's help, He answered you: 'I will reinforce you with a thousand angels following one another.' (9) Allah made this only glad tidings and a means of reassuring your hearts. Victory comes only from Allah; Allah is Almighty, All-Wise. (10) When He covered you with drowsiness as security from Him, and sent down water from heaven to purify you, remove Satan's defilement from you, strengthen your hearts, and

make your feet firm. (11) When your Lord revealed to the angels, 'I am with you, so strengthen those who believe. I shall cast terror into the disbelievers' hearts. Strike above their necks and strike every fingertip of theirs.' (12)"

Al-Anfal 8:9-12

These verses do not erase the believers' work or reduce the battle to angelic action. Reassurance relates to human readiness and resolve, while victory belongs to Allah. Commands within a particular wartime event do not give individuals unrestricted authority to use violence in every age.

Al 'Imran mentions other numbers of reinforcements, with conditions of patience and mindfulness of Allah. Bringing reports and numbers together requires preserving each context, rather than adding them arithmetically to produce a total the text never states.

"You who believe, remember Allah's favour upon you when armies came against you and We sent upon them a wind and hosts you did not see. Allah sees all that you do."

Al-Ahzab 33:9

The Confederates scene mentions wind and unseen hosts. Al-Tawba also describes support through unseen hosts in other settings. Not every passage explicitly names an angel or specifies a number, so Quranic wording is established before its interpretation is presented.

If Gabriel or Michael is named in a battle narration, that naming needs its own reference. Angelic presence at Badr itself is explicit and does not depend on identifying each individual's form, turban colour, or horse's name. The message concerns steadfastness and reliance on Allah, while human beings remain morally responsible for their actions.

Al 'Imran clarifies the connection of reinforcement with steadfastness and gratitude:

"Allah gave you victory at Badr when you were weak. Be mindful of Allah, so that you may give thanks. (123) When you said to the believers, 'Will it not suffice you that your Lord reinforces you with three thousand angels sent down?' (124) Yes: if you remain patient and mindful, and they come against you in this sudden rush, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand marked angels. (125) Allah made this only glad tidings for you and reassurance for your hearts. Victory comes only from Allah, the Almighty, the All-Wise. (126)"

Al 'Imran 3:123-126

Badr is recalled with weakness, the promise of support, and the attribution of victory to Allah. Memorising angelic numbers is insufficient if we miss their connection with patience and mindfulness, and the purpose of glad tidings and reassurance. The numbers remain tied to their contexts and conditions; they are not added to become the total descending at every event.

The Confederates scene has a different form: wind and hosts unseen. Not seeing is part of the report, so visual descriptions absent from the verse cannot be constructed. Nor may a narrated detail from Badr be transferred to the Confederates merely because both concern support.

Belief in reinforcement did not remove the duties of steadfastness, sound planning, or endurance of hardship. This chapter is not a promise that every battle someone undertakes

will end in victory. It presents particular texts from the Messenger's history, with the wisdom and conditions the Quran states.

Gabriel is named alongside angels in the context of the Prophet's household and support for him:

"If you two repent to Allah, your hearts have indeed inclined away; but if you support one another against him, Allah is his Protector, and Gabriel and the righteous among the believers; and the angels, moreover, are his supporters."

Al-Tahrim 66:4

Angelic presence here concerns support within the verses' particular context; it is not detached to become an account of another battle. The Quran also records the obstinate demand to bring the angels face to face:

"Or make the sky fall upon us in pieces as you claim, or bring Allah and the angels before us face to face."

Al-Isra' 17:92

Comparison shows the difference between support Allah permits and a mission an angel carries, and a demand devised by a denier to make belief dependent upon a self-imposed condition.

Al-Tawba also mentions unseen hosts, first in the setting of Hunayn and then in the Messenger's expulsion and the cave:

"Then Allah sent down His tranquillity upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and sent down hosts you did not see. He punished those who disbelieved; that is the recompense of the disbelievers."

Al-Tawba 9:26

"If you do not support him, Allah already supported him when the disbelievers drove him out, one of two, when they were in the cave and he said to his companion, 'Do not grieve; Allah is with us.' Allah sent down His tranquillity upon him, strengthened him with hosts you did not see, and made the disbelievers' word the lowest, while Allah's word is the highest. Allah is Almighty, All-Wise."

Al-Tawba 9:40

These passages complete the comparison with Badr and the Confederates. The Quran establishes divine reinforcement, while the hosts' appearance, names, and detailed actions depend upon established interpretation and narration. Badr's numbers are not transferred to these settings without a text.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Anfal 8:9-12; al-Ahzab 33:9; Al 'Imran 3:123-126; al-Tahrim 66:4; al-Isra' 17:92.

Chapter 31: Angels in the House of Prophethood

Imami accounts of angels extend to Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, while clearly distinguishing concluded prophethood from angelic address and guidance. Not every angelic communication announces prophethood or new legislation, as Mary's address already demonstrated.

Al-Kulayni narrates from Abu 'Ubayda, from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, an account of Gabriel coming to Fatima after the Prophet's death, consoling her and informing her about her father and what would occur among her descendants, while 'Ali wrote what was conveyed.[1] The account presents the contents of Fatima's Mushaf in this setting; it does not justify calling it an alternative Quran. In its original usage, mushaf does not restrict every book bearing that term to the Quranic text.

The hadith edition consulted reproduces al-Majlisi's authentication of this report in Mir'at al-'Uqul. That is a judgement attributed to its author concerning a particular report, not a blanket authentication of the chapter. The period mentioned after the Prophet's death remains part of the narration and does not alone settle every historical disagreement.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is Allah's Messenger and the Seal of the Prophets. Allah has knowledge of all things."

Al-Ahzab 33:40

The finality of prophethood sets a boundary that interpretation does not cross in the Imami method. Angelic address, where established, creates no messenger after Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household, and gives no one the right to abrogate his law. Accounts concerning 'Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, and their descendants are read within inherited guidance, with each report documented and disputed material not silently merged with the sound.

Among less familiar names is Zawqabil, quoted by al-Majlisi in Bihar al-Anwar among material on Fatima's virtues, peace be upon her, in an account of turning the handmill; another account mentions Gabriel.[2] We identify where this name occurs without deciding, before examining the original transmissions, that both accounts describe one event or that the name difference is a scribal error. Inclusion in a compilation is not independent proof of the story's authenticity.

Rahil is another name in this subject, appearing in accounts of the marriage of the Commander of the Faithful and Fatima, peace be upon them. Al-Majlisi transmits a report describing this angel addressing an angelic gathering, connected with glad tidings concerning their descendants and their station.[3] This usage has no connection with Rachel in accounts of Jacob's family merely because the Arabic wording coincides.

The marriage reports collected by al-Majlisi vary: some elaborate decoration and the address, while others are brief. Their wording is not blended to reconstruct one speech and claim it as the transmitted text. We record the name, setting, and particular transmission, leaving other reports available for comparison.

Al-Kafi's report of Gabriel visiting Fatima after her father's death shows another aspect of angelic presence: consolation and information, with the Commander of the Faithful writing what the report describes. It is not a new Quran and does not alter the finality of prophethood. Distinguishing prophethood from address and guidance is fundamental to the Imami understanding of this subject. An angel's communication does not automatically claim a new legislative mission.

Al-Kafi devotes a chapter to angels entering the Imams' homes and bringing news. A report from Misma' Kardin al-Basri, from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, describes their handshakes upon the furnishings and their gentleness towards children.[4] This adds a

domestic dimension to accounts of address and guidance. Its narrations are read individually with their chains; they establish no prophethood after the Seal of the Prophets. Nor may readers use them to validate personal claims of meeting angels: an account about a transmitted instance supplies no general proof for every claimant.

[4] Al-Kafi, vol. 1, Book of the Divine Proof, chapter “The angels enter the homes of the Imams, peace be upon them, tread their furnishings, and bring them news,” hadith 1; see also hadith 3 on angelic down. These are source locations, without assigning one judgement to all the chapter’s chains.

[1] Al-Kafi, Book of the Divine Proof, chapter mentioning the Sahifa, Jafr, Jami’a, and Fatima’s Mushaf, hadith 5; Mir’at al-’Uqul, vol. 3, p. 59, according to the reference accompanying the digital text consulted.

[2] Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 46, quotations from al-Manaqib concerning the virtues of Fatima, peace be upon her. The group of quotations begins as item 44 on p. 44. The passage is used to record the name, without authenticating the report’s chain.

[3] Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, chapter on the marriage of Fatima, peace be upon her, pp. 102-104, hadith 12 and associated routes in hadith 13; also p. 110, quoting Ibn Shahrashub’s Manaqib. Rahil is explicitly named; no comprehensive authentication of these routes is issued here.

Chapter 32: Fitrus and Angelic Names in Accounts of Ahl al-Bayt

Fitrus’s story is well known among accounts of Imam al-Husayn’s birth, peace be upon him. Its familiarity makes consultation of its source essential, since versions circulating in gatherings may combine details from different transmissions.

In al-Amali, al-Saduq narrates from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, an account of Gabriel descending to offer congratulations on al-Husayn’s birth, passing an angel named Fitrus whose wing had been injured, and what then happened near the newborn.[1] The name thus has an identifiable place in a hadith work and is not merely a modern designation. Establishing that location, however, differs from authenticating every event in the account.

In Kamal al-Din, al-Saduq narrates from Ibn ‘Abbas an account of an angel named Darda’il, involving loss of station and wings and a prayer for him through the newborn’s blessing.[2] Darda’il cannot be merged with Fitrus simply because the stories share features, nor does similarity alone prove separate events. Each name is recorded with its report, and identification is withheld where evidence is lacking.

Both reports raise a question about punishment and the principle of angelic obedience. Calling the matter “leaving the better course” does not by itself resolve it, since that is an interpretation requiring evidence. Inquiry begins with the chain and textual history, then the wording and its possible reconciliation with decisive scripture. This chapter therefore makes no final judgement authenticating either story and builds no doctrinal foundation upon them.

Al-Majlisi mentions another name, Salsā’il, in an excerpt from a lengthy report of al-Mufaddal attributed to Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, referring readers to its chain in the Occultation section of his encyclopaedia.[3] The excerpt also concerns al-Husayn’s birth and prayer for the angel. This common setting proves neither that all three names designate one

angel nor that they represent three independent events. That comparative question goes beyond recording names.

The accounts of Fitrus, Darda'il, and Salsā'il retain separate places, with each name's source and setting identified. A name's presence in the tradition is a documentary finding. Establishing every detail of its report and interpreting apparent conflict with infallibility is another inquiry, not settled by similarities among stories.

Al-Saduq's Fitrus account unfolds through Gabriel's descent with congratulations, his encounter with Fitrus, the carrying of Fitrus's request, and the reported restoration of his wing through al-Husayn's blessing. Presenting these elements from the source is more precise than retaining only the image of "the broken angel," detached in memory from its occasion and setting.

Darda'il appears in another report through Ibn 'Abbas, where his questioning concerns his station and is followed by loss of wings and their restoration through prayer. Similarity to Fitrus's conclusion does not authenticate this transmission, and its wing numbers are not transferred to the other name. For Salsā'il, al-Majlisi supplies an excerpt from al-Mufaddal's report; knowing the underlying transmission is necessary before treating the excerpt as independently supported.

This book's conclusion is limited: these names occur in the narrated corpus at locations identified here, but their details do not possess the standing of Quranic names. They are preserved because an inquiry into names includes disputed reports, and their status is explained because collection does not mean authentication. Belief in al-Husayn's honour does not depend upon every detail of these reports, and criticism of a chain does not diminish his station.

[1] Al-Saduq, al-Amali, session 28, hadith 9, no. 215 in the Mu'assasat al-Bi'tha edition, p. 200 onwards.

[2] Al-Saduq, Kamal al-Din wa-Tamam al-Ni'ma, vol. 1, chapter on the Prophet's designation of the Qa'im and the Imams, hadith 36, pp. 282-284 in the edition consulted.

[3] Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, pp. 258-259, hadith 47. This is an excerpt referring to al-Mufaddal's longer report, not a complete independent chain in that location.

Chapter 33: Angels and Karbala

Many Imami reports connect angels with Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him, from announcements of his martyrdom to visits to his grave and prayers for his visitors. This field cannot be reduced to one report or all its chains authenticated merely because they share a subject.

In Kamil al-Ziyarat, Ibn Qulawayh devotes a chapter to angels accompanying al-Husayn's visitor, welcoming the visitor, and visiting during illness. It includes reports of four thousand angels entrusted with his grave.[1] The several routes offer material to be examined narration by narration; multiplicity does not erase differences among transmitters or texts.

The ninth hadith in that chapter, through Aban ibn Taghlib, names the leader of those angels as al-Mansur and connects the account with awaiting the Qa'im's rising.[2] The designation is included in the dictionary because its source location exists, without deciding whether it is a personal name rather than a title or claiming to authenticate the whole report.

These narrations concern fidelity to the oppressed and the enduring influence of martyrdom. Their lesson does not justify attributing a number or saying to an infallible authority without documentation. Nor do accounts of reward exempt people from duties or others' rights: the religious meaning of visitation remains joined to integrity and justice.

Ibn Qulawayh's chapter extends care beyond the grave itself to the visitor's arrival, return, and illness. In these accounts, angels witness visitation and pray; the visitor's relationship to the one buried there enters a setting of mercy and fidelity. The chapter is not one narration, so particular wording and numbers must be referred to their respective hadiths.

Recording al-Mansur serves two purposes: preserving a name or title less familiar than the great angelic names, and showing that some accounts of angels at Karbala connect with hope for the establishment of justice. That connection does not authorise dating the reappearance or identifying events in a particular age as necessary fulfilments of the report.

Karbala's human meaning remains clear without imagined additions: martyrdom, oppression, and fidelity to truth. Reports of angels' presence, grief, or visitation are related in proportion to their evidence. The narrative thus retains its emotional force without granting emotion the right to create an event absent from the source.

[1] Ibn Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, chapter 77, hadiths 1-8, according to the edition consulted.

[2] Ibid., chapter 77, hadith 9. Al-Mansur occurs in this report's text; its authentication is not settled here.

Chapter 34: The Imams, the Night of Decree, and Accounts of the Reappearance

Al-Qadr offers a brief but deeply significant account of the Quran's descent, the night's merit, and the descent of angels and the Spirit. Understanding it requires reading the whole surah.

"We sent it down on the Night of Decree. (1) What will make you know what the Night of Decree is? (2) The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. (3) The angels and the Spirit descend in it by their Lord's permission, with every command. (4) Peace it is until the rising of dawn. (5)"

Al-Qadr 97:1-5

The text establishes descent by Allah's permission, but does not name human recipients of angelic descent after the Prophet. The Imami reading connecting the night's continuation with the Divine Proof rests on narrations. It should be presented on that basis, rather than as an explicit personal name in the surah.

Al-Kafi's report of the Spirit guiding the Imams, documented in Chapter 7, helps explain this framework.[1] Kamal al-Din also contains narrations connecting the Night of Decree with 'Ali and his descendants, but their status cannot be equated without examining each route. Quranic meaning and hadith inquiry complement one another here; neither dispenses with the other.

Accounts of the reappearance mention angelic reinforcement, including the earlier report in Kamil al-Ziyarat about angels awaiting the Qa'im's rising.[2] They do not authorise fixing its

date, identifying every contemporary sound or event with an angel, or validating a person's claim to contact with the unseen.

Awaiting in this method does not cancel action or the responsibility to verify. Protecting the Imam's station includes refusing to attach unestablished events to him. Honouring angels includes refusing to use their names to promote unsupported claims.

Al-Qadr precisely joins the night's great excellence with the condition extending to dawn: peace. It is not a time for seeking control over the unseen, but for worship, hope, and descent by Allah's command. Mentioning the Spirit alongside angels calls for preserving the term's particularity, as discussed in its chapter.

In the Imami perspective, reports about the Divine Proof describe continuing care after the Prophet without continuing prophethood. This framework explains the Spirit's guidance of the Imams and connects the Night of Decree with ongoing guidance. Yet a particular Imam's name and the arrangement of what is conveyed come from the narration stating them, not from adding names to the surah's wording.

Reports of support for the Qa'im express hope for complete justice; they do not give the author knowledge of future dates. Just as angels descend only at their Lord's command, readers cannot appoint a time for them. Trustworthiness here continues the story's foundation: servanthood that knows the measure it has been taught and awaits what it has been commanded to await.

[1] Al-Kafi, Book of the Divine Proof, chapter on the Spirit by which Allah guides the Imams, hadith 1.

[2] Kamil al-Ziyarat, chapter 77, hadith 9. For the Night of Decree report: Kamal al-Din, vol. 1, chapter 24, hadith 30; its transmission must be examined before building details upon it.

Part Five

Angels in the Human Journey and Everyday Life

Chapter 35: Angels and the Beginning of Human Life

Human life begins in a hidden state that no one witnesses for themselves. The Quran addresses this origin in language inviting humility and reflection. Reports of angels in the womb add an unseen dimension that must not be treated as a ready-made anatomical description.

“He is the One who forms you in the wombs however He wills. There is no god but Him, the Almighty, the All-Wise.”

Al 'Imran 3:6

In the chapter on the beginning of human creation and development in the mother's womb, al-Kulayni narrates from Zurara, from Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him, a report of two angels carrying out commands concerning formation and recording. At its end it mentions an angel called Zajir.[1] This designation is recorded as occurring in the report, with its possible connection to the term's functional meaning. The two unnamed angels are not counted as two new personal names.

A longer report in the same chapter gives further details. Their mere occurrence does not make them medical instructions or justify a moral judgement upon a foetus because of its position in the womb. Expressions concerning pregnancy's stages, the covenant, and recording require independent study of meaning as well as transmission. Hadith scrutiny does not replace understanding what the narration actually says.

Nor does recording misery and happiness, where a report is established and interpreted, entail denying human responsibility or compelling disobedience. Knowing what will occur differs from forcing it. This chapter preserves two principles: all creation belongs to Allah, and moral obligation is not rendered meaningless by abolishing choice. We do not invent a visible scene to explain the unseen manner of these acts.

Womb reports connect recording and care with the beginning of a life whose conscious experience has not yet begun. Al-Kafi's chapter describes the sending of angels and recording of decrees, including Zajir in the context of birth.[1] These narrations should be read within their language of creation and determination, not as a medical report describing what diagnostic equipment reveals.

Recording what Allah knows does not mean people are compelled in every future choice. The difference between knowing an act and compelling it is essential to responsibility. The same Book that mentions determination calls for action and holds people accountable. One aspect of religious language cannot be used to invalidate another.

This reading preserves the dignity of mother and child. A foetus's position or a difficult birth cannot be treated as proof of an angel's anger or the child's righteousness or corruption. The report makes no such identification about a particular case, and the reader possesses no authority to make it. Practical care remains a matter of support, gentleness, and appropriate means; unseen knowledge remains within the text's meaning.

[1] Al-Kafi, vol. 6, Book of 'Aqiqa, chapter on the beginning of human creation and development in the mother's womb, hadith 7; for the longer account, hadith 4 in the digital chapter order consulted. The report locates the designation; it is not used to issue a medical judgement.

Chapter 36: Guardians and Successive Attendants

The Quran places humanity within responsibility and care, mentioning successive attendants and guardians in contexts that should not be merged indiscriminately. Preserving deeds differs from protecting a person from an accident, although both share a basic sense of keeping.

“For each are successive attendants before and behind, guarding him by Allah's command. Allah does not change a people's condition until they change what is within themselves. When Allah wills adversity for a people, it cannot be turned back, and they have no protector besides Him.”

Al-Ra'd 13:11

The verse joins successive attendants and protection with people's responsibility to change what is within themselves. This prevents divine care from becoming an excuse for passivity or negligence. One cannot claim angelic protection and then neglect a duty or expose oneself and others to known danger.

Exegetical tradition interprets the successive attendants as guardian angels, but details of number, succession, and manner of protection depend upon narrations. The verse names no individuals and does not say that everyone who escapes danger has seen an angel or identified one. Escape alone does not disclose how unseen administration occurred.

In al-Infitar, the guardians are described as noble recorders, indicating oversight of deeds. Recording therefore receives the next chapter. Distinguishing contexts prevents the construction of one angel necessarily combining every function associated with protection.

Care does not erase trial. Illness or calamity is no proof that Allah has abandoned someone or that their faith is deficient. Believers remain called to mercy and action, not judgements on people's standing based upon events in their lives.

The Quran describes protection beyond what people can see. Before and behind them are things unnoticed; life is not preserved by human caution alone. Yet protection does not exclude affliction or turn a believer into someone immune to disease or accidents.

Al-Majlisi quotes from al-Tawhid a report attributed to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, describing angels protecting a person from falling or a collapsing wall, then leaving the person to what comes at the appointed term.[1] This paraphrase illustrates protection bounded by Allah's command; it does not identify an unseen cause behind every accident that we can read from outside.

Distinguishing protection from recording helps bring verses together. Angels may keep a person safe in one context and preserve what the person does in another. Shared wording does not erase different meanings, nor do different functions reveal the total number assigned to each individual. The immediate fruit is awareness of blessing alongside responsibility, not claims to know the guardians accompanying a particular person.

Al-Tariq expresses keeping in a concise, comprehensive statement:

“There is no soul without a guardian over it.”

Al-Tariq 86:4

The verse declares that no soul is neglected. The guardian's meaning and identity belong to interpretation. It is read alongside the successive attendants and noble recorders without treating different expressions as disclosure of a fixed angelic number around every person.

Quranic reference in this chapter: al-Ra'd 13:11.

[1] Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, chapter 23, p. 184, hadith 25, quoting al-Saduq's al-Tawhid. Consult its displayed chain when judging the transmission.

Chapter 37: The Noble Recorders

Action acquires its full significance when we understand that it is not lost. The Quran describes the noble recorders in language connecting oversight with knowledge of deeds, not a wish to expose people to disgrace.

“Over you are indeed guardians, (10) noble recorders, (11) who know what you do. (12)”

Al-Infitar 82:10-12

These verses establish the guardians' existence, nobility, recording, and knowledge of our deeds. They name neither writing instruments nor the material preserving the records. We therefore do not turn this knowledge into a technical description of an unseen register whose workings the text does not explain.

Belief in recording does not invite despair over mistakes. The Quran opens repentance and affirms the possibility of return. A specific delay before a wrong deed is recorded or erased must not be given without documenting its narration. Timing is a detail of a particular report, not part of these verses' explicit wording.

"The record will be set down, and you will see the guilty fearful of what it contains. They will say, 'Woe to us! What is this record that leaves nothing small or great without counting it?' They will find what they did present before them, and your Lord wrongs no one."

Al-Kahf 18:49

The record appears in a scene of justice: human deeds are present, and injustice is denied of Allah. The purpose is not to make the servant feel arbitrarily watched, but to understand that goodness is not lost and harm done to others does not disappear because people forget it.

Practical consequences follow: honesty in private, preserving the rights of those unable to defend themselves, and restoring wrongfully taken rights. Belief in the recorder is of little benefit if it becomes fear of an angelic image while one continues damaging others' lives.

The noble recorders' description combines the dignity of those performing the task with its precision. Nobility does not mean overlooking injustice, and recording does not mean pursuing people in search of condemnation. It preserves their deeds within justice. On the day the record is displayed, nothing small or great is lost, as al-Kahf states.

Privacy therefore does not cancel responsibility, and an act unseen by people does not become consequence-free. Yet recording remains joined to Allah's mercy and acceptance of repentance. We cannot read verses of enumeration while ignoring the Quran's call to return and reform. The One who preserves deeds also knows the sincerity of repentance.

The description does not say that the recorders need instruments resembling our paper and pens. Recording is established, but its manner is not explained in these verses. Readers can rest with the consequence that concerns them: justice is not lost through weak human memory or a wrongdoer's ability to conceal a crime, and a small kindness forgotten by people remains preserved with Allah.

Recording includes human schemes and secret conversations:

"When We let people taste mercy after hardship has touched them, they begin plotting against Our signs. Say, 'Allah is swifter in countering plans.' Our messengers record what you scheme."

Yunus 10:21

"Or do they think We do not hear their secrets and private conversations? Indeed We do, and Our messengers are beside them, recording."

Al-Zukhruf 43:80

Preserving deeds is not confined to public speech. Secrets, private discussions, and schemes lie within Allah's knowledge, while His messengers carry out their commanded recording. The recorders' mediation does not imply that Allah needs informants; it belongs to the order of testimony and recompense He has disclosed. Honesty in private thus extends honesty in public.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Infitar 82:10-12; al-Kahf 18:49.

Chapter 38: Raqib and 'Atid: Description or Name?

Raqib and 'Atid are often treated as personal names of two angels. A precise dictionary, however, must begin with the verse's structure and context before elevating common usage into explicit naming.

"When the two receivers receive, seated on the right and on the left. (17) No word does a person utter without a vigilant observer ready beside him. (18)"

Qaf 50:17-18

The passage mentions two receivers, on the right and left, then describes the presence of a watchful, ready observer at each utterance. Watchfulness and readiness have clear linguistic meanings. Their appearance in this form does not establish that one word names one individual and the other names the second, or assign the two supposed names to the two sides.

The expression is therefore recorded among descriptions, with its popular use as names acknowledged. The two are not counted as explicit Quranic personal names on the same footing as Gabriel and Michael. Any report naming them would require documentation and interpretation; the verse cannot substitute for that report.

This watchfulness complements responsibility for speech. A word may build or destroy trust, testify truthfully, or slander. Believers do not need the recorder's personal name to understand the significance of honesty, backbiting, and false accusation. Remaining with the description does not diminish the verse's meaning; it prevents an unresolved claim from displacing it.

The sentence's structure makes this clearer. Raqib conveys watching and keeping; 'atid conveys presence and readiness. Arabic allows one being to be described as raqib 'atid, so juxtaposing the words does not create a list of two independent names. The preceding verse concerns two receivers on the right and left; their relationship must be read through the whole context.

The words may nevertheless become common in everyday speech as if they were names. This book's dictionary distinguishes conventional usage from what the verse itself establishes. Including them among descriptions keeps the information usable without increasing the number of named angels on an unverified basis.

This precision matters when translating names or teaching children. Instead of stating categorically that one angel is called Raqib and the other 'Atid, we can say that the Quran mentions two receivers and describes the angelic presence at speech as vigilant and ready. Teaching can thus remain both simple and accurate.

Quranic references in this chapter: Qaf 50:17-18.

Chapter 39: Angels, Prayer, the Quran, and Remembrance

Angels are connected with worship on several levels: they themselves glorify Allah, while other texts describe them praying for believers or attending gatherings of remembrance. Worship thus emerges as no movement isolated from the realm of meaning.

“Allah and His angels send blessings upon the Prophet. You who believe, send blessings upon him and greet him with wholehearted peace.”

Al-Ahzab 33:56

The verse joins Allah’s and the angels’ blessings upon the Prophet with the believers’ command to bless and greet him. The meaning and manner of salat need not be identical for every subject to whom the act is attributed. The expression is read according to its source. The Messenger’s station is central to this honour, without any divine attribute passing to a creature.

Al-Kafi contains a report from Imam al-Sadiq, from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them, connecting Quranic recitation and remembrance of Allah in a home with increased blessing and angelic presence.[1] It is presented as a report in its source, not a specific material promise guaranteeing freedom from illness or hardship.

Gatherings of knowledge and remembrance are more than sounds. Honesty in learning, kindness towards participants, and respect for truth are among their fruits. Angelic attendance does not require human displays claiming special vision. What is established through an accepted report is believed within its limits; personal experience claimed by others does not become proof binding everyone.

Numbers of angels at prayer, pilgrimage, or recitation, and precise times of attendance, require their hadith sources. A number is not inserted simply because the purpose is encouragement. Truthful encouragement needs no unsupported exaggeration.

The Quran describes the pages borne by the scribes:

“In honoured pages, (13) exalted and purified, (14) in the hands of scribes, (15) noble and righteous. (16)”

‘Abasa 80:13-16

Honour, elevation, and purification meet here, followed by the scribes’ nobility and righteousness. Revelation is no text of uncertain origin passed around however anyone wishes. Its station is understood through reminder, guidance, and trust.

For homes where the Quran is recited, al-Kafi’s report mentions increased goodness, angelic presence, and the departure of devils.[1] This does not mean that sound alone exempts residents from acting upon the Quran. Recitation remains a doorway to reflection, honesty, mercy, and fulfilment of rights; otherwise the tongue becomes detached from the Book’s repeated purpose.

Blessing the Prophet and his Household joins believers in an act of honour the Quran attributes to Allah and His angels towards the Prophet. Human blessings are not thereby identical in every respect with Allah’s or the angels’; each attribution has its appropriate meaning. Yet believers’ action enters a significance of reverence, love, and obedience extending beyond the visible world.

Dawn prayer is among the occasions of angelic witnessing. The Quran says:

“Establish prayer from the sun’s decline until the darkness of night, and the dawn recitation. The dawn recitation is indeed witnessed.”

Al-Isra’ 17:78

Al-Kafi narrates from Ishaq ibn ‘Ammar, from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, that the witnessing is by the angels of night and day. The report also mentions prayer at the beginning of dawn being recorded twice.[2] The verse is the foundation, while this detailed identification comes from narration. The meeting of the two groups expresses care for worship as night gives way to day.

Angels’ connection with knowledge also appears in Imam al-Sadiq’s narration from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his Household: “The angels lower their wings for the seeker of knowledge, pleased with him.”[3] The passage belongs to a hadith connecting learning with the path to Paradise, creation’s prayers for forgiveness, and inheritance from the prophets. Knowledge’s value is not merely collecting words; the context places it on a path of guidance where people learn and teach. In assessing the hadith’s two routes, al-Majlisi distinguished the first from the second. His assessment cannot be reduced to one judgement upon every chain.

Al-Saduq narrates from Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him, an account of angels assigned to fasting people, seeking forgiveness for them in Ramadan and bringing good news at the breaking of the fast. It closes by drawing attention to their subsequent deeds.[4] Hope is connected with continuing after the season; promised forgiveness is no permission to return to injustice. The displayed chain includes an unnamed intermediary, “from one who heard,” so the report is related with that qualification and is not described here as authentic with a continuous chain.

[2] Al-Kafi, vol. 3, Book of Prayer, chapter on the time of dawn prayer, hadith 2, pp. 286-287, the report of Ishaq ibn ‘Ammar.

[3] Al-Kafi, vol. 1, Book of the Excellence of Knowledge, chapter on the reward of the scholar and learner, hadith 1, p. 34; Mir’at al-‘Uqul, vol. 1, p. 113: al-Majlisi describes the first route as unknown and the second as good or reliable, not falling short of authentic.

[4] Al-Saduq, al-Amali, session 13, hadith 1, from Muhammad ibn Muslim, from Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him; the displayed chain contains “from one who heard Muhammad ibn Muslim.”

[1] Al-Kafi, vol. 2, Book of the Excellence of the Quran, chapter on homes where the Quran is recited, hadith 3, p. 610 in the common printed pagination.

Chapter 40: Angels, Supplication, and Repentance

We have already read of the bearers of the Throne seeking forgiveness for believers. Here we approach what that means for someone who errs and then returns. The book does not present angels as beings concerned only with pursuing faults; the Quran also mentions their prayers and requests for forgiveness.

“He is the One who sends blessings upon you, and His angels do so, to bring you out of darkness into light. He is ever merciful to the believers.”

Al-Ahzab 33:43

The verse connects this kindness with emergence from darkness into light. Readers can recognise an invitation to hope and action, not a guarantee exempting them from repentance or restoring rights. Mercy opens the path without making injustice towards others insignificant.

Narrations describe angels praying for those who pray for others or do good. Every particular number, time, or reward requires documentation. The foundation of praying and seeking forgiveness for believers already has explicit Quranic witnesses; no invented detail is needed to strengthen its effect upon the heart.

Complete repentance cannot remain merely a private inward image when wrongdoing concerns another person's right. Angelic requests for forgiveness do not exempt us from apology and repair where required. Speaking of mercy must also attend to the wronged, so that hope does not become an excuse for abandoning their rights.

This meaning brings the devotional discussion naturally towards mercy between people. A heart hoping for angelic prayer should itself be able to pray for others and comfort those in need.

One title in this field is al-Da'i, "the Caller." In Iqbal al-A'mal, Ibn Tawus presents, in the section on the angel calling during Rajab's nights, a report quoted from devotional books and attributed to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household. It describes an angel in the seventh heaven encouraging remembrance, obedience, and seeking forgiveness.[1] No complete connected chain is given there. We therefore present it as a narration and record al-Da'i as a descriptive designation connected with its function.

The report does not confine supplication to one month. Encouraging devotion at a particular time does not cancel the general availability of nearness and prayer, nor does hope of forgiveness permit delaying the restoration of rights. Repentance hoped to bear fruit in the hereafter also shows its sincerity through repairing what can be repaired in this life.

Praying for others is among mercy's broadest doors. The description of the Throne's bearers began with their requests for believers' forgiveness. That meaning returns here to make concern for people part of the goodness believers learn: asking for them what they hope for themselves, loving their deliverance, and not turning imagined nearness to Allah into contempt for them.

Another passage broadens the description of seeking forgiveness to those on earth:

"The heavens almost break apart above them, while the angels glorify their Lord with praise and seek forgiveness for those on earth. Truly, Allah is the All-Forgiving, the Ever-Merciful."

Al-Shura 42:5

This verse shares with the prayer of the Throne's bearers the themes of mercy and seeking forgiveness. Yet the Quran also mentions a curse in the context of disbelief and persistence, so mercy is not read by setting justice aside:

"Those who disbelieve and die as disbelievers: upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels, and all people."

Al-Baqara 2:161

“Their recompense is that upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels, and all people, (87) remaining under it; their punishment will not be lightened, nor will they be granted respite, (88) except those who afterwards repent and make amends. Allah is All-Forgiving, Ever-Merciful. (89)”

Al ‘Imran 3:87-89

The second passage carefully opens repentance and reform after mentioning recompense. The curse must not be detached to close what the verses open, nor hope used to deny the responsibility of those persisting in injustice and disbelief.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Ahzab 33:43; al-Shura 42:5; al-Baqara 2:161; Al ‘Imran 3:87-89.

[1] Ibn Tawus, Iqbal al-A‘mal, vol. 3, p. 174, section 5 of the devotions of Rajab, the report of the angel calling to Allah each night of Rajab. The quotation begins, “We have transmitted it from books of worship.”

Chapter 41: Angels and Works of Mercy

Accounts of visiting the sick bring human care together with angelic prayer. A person visits someone burdened by illness, offers comfort, and eases loneliness. Narrations describe this act in ways that raise it beyond a passing social courtesy.

In the chapter on the reward of visiting the sick, al-Kulayni narrates from Fudayl ibn Yasar, from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, an account of angels accompanying the visitor and seeking forgiveness for them. The underlying meaning recurs elsewhere in the chapter.[1] Some narrations mention seventy thousand angels. The number is preserved as part of a particular report, not as a fact strengthened merely by repetition in preaching.

The chapter’s routes vary, including chains passing through debated transmitters and differing forms of wording. Fidelity requires avoiding one judgement upon all the narrations without study. The general meaning of mercy can be presented while preserving that distinction.

Visiting itself must consider the patient’s needs, privacy, and rest. Calling an action a visit does not make it good if it burdens the patient or exposes private matters. This is an ethical inference from the purpose of comfort, not wording attributed to the cited narration.

These reports move interest in angels from distant images to an action readers can perform. The report does not ask them to search for an angel’s form, but to visit and comfort another person. Angelic prayer appears within that mercy to deepen appreciation of its worth.

The visitor’s presence should therefore benefit the patient rather than burden them. Companionship and assistance do not suit an exhausting stay, frightening speech, or curiosity about private affairs. These courtesies are understood through mercy’s purpose; not every detail is attributed to a particular hadith’s wording.

Good works also include charity, reconciliation, and feeding those in need, but this chapter does not assign angelic numbers to each without a text. The shared meaning is that an action appearing small to people may have great standing with Allah. A practical question follows: who needs a visit or help today that I can provide?

The connection is not confined to illness. In the chapter on visiting fellow believers, al-Kafi narrates from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, that seventy thousand angels are assigned to someone who visits a fellow believer for Allah and seeks what is with Him, bringing glad tidings of Paradise.[2] Intention stands at the heart of the act: a visit for Allah, not hidden advantage or display. Al-Majlisi's assessment of this route as reliable, like an authentic report, is quoted. It concerns this particular hadith, not everything collected under visitation.

This illuminates the earlier discussion of visiting the sick: presence that eases loneliness and preserves fellowship has religious worth. A visit may occur in a modest home, unseen by an audience, yet be greater in intention and mercy than appearances suggest. Accounts of angels thus return people to an accessible action rather than imprisoning them in a search for extraordinary scenes.

[2] Al-Kafi, vol. 2, Book of Faith and Disbelief, chapter on visiting fellow believers, hadith 1; Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. 9, p. 52, with the assessment "reliable, like authentic" (muwatthaq ka-l-sahih).

[1] Al-Kafi, vol. 3, Book of Funerals, chapter on the reward of visiting the sick, hadith 2; see also hadith 8. Numbers and formulations occur within the chapter's narrations; no blanket authentication is issued here.

Chapter 42: Angels, Homes, and the Hidden Life of Human Beings

Reports describe angels attending or leaving homes, and some are used to frighten people about everyday details. Faithful reading begins with the narration's text, reliability, and meaning, rather than the psychological effect of its circulation.

Chapter 39 presented the report about a home in which the Quran is recited, connecting the place with remembrance and blessing.[1] A report of one angelic group leaving does not mean that deeds cease to be recorded or that the Angel of Death cannot enter. Extending "angels" to every kind in every report requires evidence; otherwise misunderstanding itself creates the contradiction.

Dreams and passing thoughts must not become binding angelic messages. A dream may deeply affect someone, but sincere emotion does not establish the identity of the figure seen or make its words legislation. An accusation against a person or a claim to religious leadership cannot be built upon a dream lacking generally binding evidence.

"Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Hearing, sight, and the heart: each of these will be questioned."

Al-Isra' 17:36

The verse clearly locates responsibility for knowledge. Its applications include refusing to assert that light in a photograph or an unidentified sound is an angel, and refusing to use fear of the unseen to control others. The faith explored in these chapters bears honesty and mercy and preserves people's right to evidence.

Al-Kafi's chapter on decorating homes includes reports concerning angelic entry: one mentions, in Gabriel's words, a house containing a human image or a dog; another mentions a representation not trodden underfoot.[2] These locations allow the wording to be read within its chapters rather than relying on an unattributed popular phrase.

Differences in wording and qualifications matter. Quickly combining them does not justify one ruling upon every image, use, and circumstance. Nor does a report of non-entry here justify claiming that recording angels or the Angel of Death are unable to enter a home: their functions have their own general texts. Detailed legal conclusions belong to the collection of evidence and the principles of legal reasoning.

These reports should not become a means of shaming people or neglecting cleanliness and kindness towards those sharing a home. A household seeking obedience must also preserve rights: no harm, injustice, or betrayal of trust. Quranic recitation belongs within that life, not as a screen concealing conduct contrary to its guidance.

[1] Al-Kafi, Book of the Excellence of the Quran, chapter on homes where the Quran is recited, hadith 3.

[2] Al-Kafi, vol. 6, Book of Dress, Adornment, and Good Conduct, chapter on decorating homes, hadiths 12 and 13, p. 528 in the pagination consulted. Al-Majlisi judges hadith 12 weak in *Mir'at al-'Uqul*, vol. 22, p. 440. This concerns that particular route and does not replace collecting the chapter's texts for legal inquiry.

Part Six

At Life's End: Angels, Death, and the Intermediate Realm

Chapter 43: The Angel of Death and His Helpers

Human beings approach death without the power to determine their lifetime's end for themselves. The Quran identifies the angel assigned to take souls by a functional title, while making the return to Allah the scene's conclusion.

“Say, ‘The Angel of Death, who has been entrusted with you, will take your souls. Then you will be returned to your Lord.’”

Al-Sajda 32:11

‘Azra’il is named neither in this verse nor anywhere in the Quran. It does occur in devotional material quoted by al-Majlisi for the middle of Rajab, paired with the Angel of Death and the task of taking souls.[2] We therefore do not deny its occurrence in Imami tradition, but distinguish that devotional location from the Quranic title, while examination of the supplication's transmission remains a separate matter.

“He is the Subduer over His servants, and He sends guardians over you. When death comes to one of you, Our messengers take his soul, and they do not neglect their duty.”

Al-An'am 6:61

This verse mentions messengers taking the person's soul; al-Sajda mentions the Angel of Death; and the Quran also attributes taking souls to Allah. Different attributions need not contradict one another. An action may be attributed to the commander, the one assigned overall responsibility, and those executing it according to context. Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa mentions the Angel of Death and his helpers, assisting in bringing these functions together.[1]

The chapter returns the meaning to its foundation: death is a transition by Allah's command, and the angel is an assigned servant. Fear producing reform is commendable; unsupported terrifying descriptions serve neither knowledge nor mercy.

Reading the passages on taking souls together removes an apparent conflict. Death is attributed to Allah, to the Angel of Death, and to angelic messengers. These need not be contradictory alternatives: the act occurs by Allah's command, the Angel of Death is entrusted with it, and reports describe helpers.

Al-Majlisi quotes from *Man La Yahduru al-Faqih* an explanation attributed to Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, comparing the helpers' work to assistants of a chief of police: he sends them on tasks, so the action is attributed to them, to him, and ultimately to the one who commanded it.[3] The analogy explains command and execution, not every detail of unseen reality through human institutions.

'Azra'il's place in the book is thus defined. "The Angel of Death" is a Quranic functional title, whereas 'Azra'il occurs in the devotional text whose location has been identified. Mentioning one does not require deleting the other, but equating their sources' authority is wrong. Preserving this difference allows accounts of dying to be read without making the most familiar name into Quranic wording.

The Quran explicitly attributes taking souls to Allah in a passage joining death and sleep:

"Allah takes souls at their death, and those that have not died during their sleep. He retains those for whom He has decreed death and sends the others back until an appointed term. In that are signs for people who reflect."

Al-Zumar 39:42

This attribution is read alongside the commissioning of the Angel of Death and the sending of guardians; angelic execution does not compete with divine action. Comparing sleep with death in retaining and releasing the soul does not authorise inventing a sleeper's journey populated by angels the text does not name.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the passage on the Angel of Death and his helpers.

[2] Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 98, chapter 107, devotions for the night and day of mid-Rajab, p. 400, in the supplication including blessings upon angels. This establishes the name's location in the consulted text, not the authenticity of every transmission of the devotion and supplication.

[3] Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 56, chapter 23, p. 233, commentary on the Angel of Death and his helpers in Supplication 3, quoting al-Saduq's *Man La Yahduru al-Faqih*.

Chapter 44: Angels at the Time of Dying

The Quran portrays different experiences of the taking of souls: peace and glad tidings in one passage, severity in another. The difference concerns a person's condition as Allah knows it, not what we can infer from bodily appearance alone.

"Those whose souls the angels take while they are good and pure, saying, 'Peace be upon you. Enter Paradise because of what you used to do.'"

Al-Nahl 16:32

Peace is addressed to those taken in goodness, and recompense is connected with deeds. The verse does not describe medical stages of bodily death or permit us to identify a particular vision for everyone whose death we attend. It reports a reality not fully accessible to external observation.

“If only you could see when the angels take the souls of the disbelievers, striking their faces and backs: ‘Taste the punishment of burning. (50) That is for what your hands have sent ahead, and Allah is never unjust to His servants.’ (51)”

Al-Anfal 8:50-51

This contrasting scene describes severity connected with disbelief and earlier deeds, concluding by denying injustice of Allah. Yet a painful movement at death cannot be made proof of unseen punishment, nor outward calm a final testimony to destiny. Bodily conditions have their causes; inner realities belong to Allah.

Mercy requires discussion of death to assist preparation and action, not accuse grieving families. Those accompanying the sick should not interpret every word or movement as a report from the hereafter, but fulfil their duties of care, protection of privacy, and prayer.

These verses place us at the boundary between what is witnessed and what revelation reports. We neither deny glad tidings because a camera cannot capture them nor claim to photograph them when a lens records an unexplained effect. Honesty here is a trust towards both living and dead.

The Quran offers another scene connecting reassurance with steadfastness:

“Those who say, ‘Our Lord is Allah,’ and then remain steadfast: the angels descend upon them, saying, ‘Do not fear or grieve. Rejoice in the Paradise you were promised. (30) We are your protectors in worldly life and in the hereafter. There you will have whatever your souls desire and whatever you request, (31) as hospitality from the All-Forgiving, the Ever-Merciful.’ (32)”

Fussilat 41:30-32

Freedom from fear and grief accompanies the promise of Paradise and protection in this life and the next. Commentators differ over the temporal extent of this descent, so the verses are not made into a medical report about a single dying moment. They establish the angels’ good news for the steadfast and the mercy it carries.

This unseen reality cannot be measured by the severity of illness or bodily calm. Pain may afflict the righteous and others alike. Breathing and movement do not reveal what the dying person sees or hears. Respecting the text means not claiming authority to issue judgements about the hereafter from a passing bodily scene.

The living have a clear, immediate duty: gentleness towards the dying, preservation of dignity, comfort for the family, and avoidance of frightening, unverified accounts. Angelic narrative opens hope and responsibility; it grants no authority over the inner state of those being farewelled.

The angels’ questioning of those who wronged themselves occurs in the setting of oppression and migration, followed by an exception for people genuinely unable to find means or a way:

“Those whose souls the angels take while they are wronging themselves will be asked, ‘What condition were you in?’ They will say, ‘We were oppressed in the land.’ The angels

will say, 'Was Allah's earth not spacious enough for you to migrate within it?' Their refuge is Hell, an evil destination, (97) except the helpless among men, women, and children who can find neither a means nor a way. (98) These Allah may pardon; Allah is ever Pardoning, All-Forgiving. (99)"

Al-Nisa' 4:97-99

Not everyone outwardly powerless receives one judgement, and the excuses explicitly recognised by the verses must not be discarded. At death, denial of wrongdoing is also confronted by Allah's knowledge:

"Those whose souls the angels take while they are wronging themselves will offer submission, saying, 'We did no evil.' Indeed you did: Allah knows what you used to do. (28) Enter the gates of Hell, remaining there. Evil indeed is the abode of the arrogant. (29)"

Al-Nahl 16:28-29

Another passage describes falsehood exposed in the throes of death:

"Who is more unjust than one who invents a lie against Allah, or says, 'Revelation has come to me,' when nothing has been revealed to him, or says, 'I shall send down the like of what Allah has sent down'? If only you could see the wrongdoers in death's agonies, while the angels stretch out their hands: 'Give up your souls! Today you are repaid with humiliating punishment for saying what is untrue about Allah and arrogantly rejecting His signs.'"

Al-An'am 6:93

Striking faces and backs is also mentioned in Muhammad:

"How will it be when the angels take their souls, striking their faces and backs? (27) That is because they followed what angered Allah and disliked His pleasure, so He rendered their deeds fruitless. (28)"

Muhammad 47:27-28

These Quranic scenes concern final consequences. They do not authorise applying them to a particular deceased person from appearance or illness. Allah knows and judges inward realities; the living possess only what evidence establishes within the sphere of their responsibility.

The messengers' address when taking souls includes asking about those invoked besides Allah:

"Who is more unjust than one who invents a lie against Allah or denies His signs? Their allotted portion of the decree will reach them until, when Our messengers come to take their souls, they ask, 'Where are those you used to invoke besides Allah?' They will say, 'They have deserted us,' and testify against themselves that they were disbelievers."

Al-A'raf 7:37

The powerlessness of those invoked is disclosed when the time for action ends. The Quran also portrays the onlookers' inability to return the soul when it reaches the throat:

“Why, then, when it reaches the throat, (83) while you are looking on, (84) and We are nearer to him than you, though you do not see, (85) why, if you are not subject to judgement, (86) do you not return it, if you are truthful? (87)”

Al-Waqi’a 56:83-87

This passage names no angel, and its meaning of nearness is examined in commentary. It alone is no detailed description of the Angel of Death’s form. Its evident meaning reveals human limits at a moment when those surrounding the dying cannot restore life simply because they wish the person to remain.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Nahl 16:32; al-Anfal 8:50-51; Fussilat 41:30-32; al-Nisa’ 4:97-99; al-Nahl 16:28-29; al-An’am 6:93; Muhammad 47:27-28.

Chapter 45: Munkar, Nakir, and Questioning in the Grave

Narrated accounts move from the taking of souls to questioning and name Munkar and Nakir. Both occur in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa and in al-Kafi’s reports on questioning in the grave.[1]

One report, from Bashir al-Dahhan, from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, describes the two angels arriving and asking about one’s Lord, religion, and messenger.[2] This identifies the names’ and function’s source location. It does not replace examination of the chain or detailed descriptions, which are not automatically combined with details from other reports into a single scene.

“Allah makes the believers steadfast through the firm word in worldly life and in the hereafter. Allah lets the wrongdoers go astray, and Allah does whatever He wills.”

Ibrahim 14:27

The verse may be read alongside hadiths about steadfastness during questioning, but it does not name the two angels. We neither present their names as Quranic nor deny their narrated function merely because the Quran leaves them unnamed.

Nor should all people be treated identically in every narrated detail. Al-Kafi’s chapter itself discusses who is questioned and who is not. Children, the genuinely powerless, and others require their own inquiry; this chapter issues no individual judgements upon them.

Preparing for questioning is not memorising answers detached from life. Knowing truth, being faithful to it, and restoring rights give the discussion its ethical effect. Frightening details should not terrorise a child or a distressed person, or be attributed to an infallible authority without verification. The purpose is to awaken the heart to action, not confine it within imagination ignorant of the text’s limits.

Alongside Munkar and Nakir appear Mubashshir and Bashir. Quoting Shaykh al-Mufid’s theological positions, al-Majlisi mentions them in questioning those who receive blessing, contrasting them with “Naakir and Nakir” for the state of punishment.[3] In his commentary on al-Sahifa, he considers whether these are names for the same two angels according to the deceased’s condition or for two different kinds. He favours identity on the apparent sense of most reports while acknowledging the other possibility.[4]

We therefore do not count Munkar, Naakir, Mubashshir, and Bashir as separate individuals simply by counting expressions. The forms are recorded with their relation to questioning,

good news, and disapproval. A numerical inventory here requires more than names extracted from different texts.

Questioning in the grave is not a verbal examination in which memorised answers help someone persistently living their opposite. The reports concern belief, action, and firmness, and the verse they invoke concerns Allah's strengthening of believers. Hidden particulars remain within the report describing them, without constructing one scene from every divergent description.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the passage on Munkar and Nakir.

[2] Al-Kafi, vol. 3, Book of Funerals, chapter on questioning in the grave and who is or is not questioned, hadith 7, p. 240 in the common printed pagination; also hadith 12, p. 243.

[3] Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, chapter 23, pp. 211-212, quoting Shaykh al-Mufid's Awa'il al-Maqalat, the discussion of the two angels descending to those in graves.

[4] Ibid., p. 234, commentary on Munkar and Nakir in Supplication 3. The discussion is al-Majlisi's, not part of the supplication itself.

Chapter 46: Ruman and Designations of the Angels of the Grave

Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya names Ruman with the description "tester of the graves." [1] This clearly locates the name for the dictionary, but supplies neither an extended biography nor a detailed sequence for his visit relative to other angels.

Trial in this context concerns testing and examination; the title does not mean inviting people into error. Yet specific questions, instruments, or actions attributed to Ruman cannot be derived from this brief expression alone. Every narration expanding the story requires its own source and assessment.

Not every title in grave reports is counted as an independent angel. A description may indicate a function; names may differ according to circumstances in some accounts; transmission may contain a scribal error. Similarity or difference of wording alone cannot decide these matters; texts and their routes must be compared.

Munkar, Nakir, and Ruman therefore receive distinct entries because their names have identifiable locations in the consulted sources, with shared reference to questioning in the grave. Other circulating names do not receive equal standing before a clear basis is located. Missing details are not invented to lengthen a short chapter: faithful knowledge may be shorter and more accurate than a popular tale.

Explaining Ruman, al-Majlisi states that he found no mention in reports he considered reliable apart from this supplication, then relates a story through another route. [2] This is a specific statement about the extent of his findings there, not an absolute denial of every text a later researcher might locate.

He then quotes Shadhan ibn Jibra'il's al-Fada'il, in an account of Salman speaking with a deceased person, an angel naming himself Munabbih and commanding the deceased to write down his deeds. [3] This location should also enter the dictionary. Its detailed story does not derive from al-Sahifa's brief mention of Ruman; its transmission is independent.

Is Munabbih Ruman? Similarity of reminding and recording functions does not establish identity. Are they necessarily two individuals? Different expressions alone do not settle that

either; one may be a title. The book therefore records two entries with the possibility explained, without manufacturing certainty absent from the evidence. Documentation matters more than a total: lists may multiply through two names for one function, or lose a rare designation when its source is overlooked.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, "Ruman, tester of the graves." This citation does not independently authenticate every popular account about him.

[2] Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, chapter 23, p. 234, commentary on "and Ruman, tester of the graves."

[3] Ibid., p. 235, quoting al-Fada'il by Shadhan ibn Jibra'il, al-Asbagh ibn Nubata's report from Salman and the deceased person's account.

Chapter 47: Angels in the Intermediate Realm

Religious discourse about humanity does not end with bodily dissolution. The Quran mentions an intermediate barrier until resurrection, but establishing this stage does not make every detail available to us.

"When death comes to one of them, he says, 'My Lord, send me back, (99) so that I may do good in what I left behind.' No! It is only a word he utters. Beyond them is a barrier until the day they are raised. (100)"

Al-Mu'minun 23:99-100

The scene presents regret for missed action, not a request for new names. Its effect should therefore remain practical: use life for reform before return becomes an unfulfilled request. The intermediate realm is not simply earthly life continuing under familiar sensory laws.

"The Fire: they are exposed to it morning and evening. On the day the Hour is established: 'Admit Pharaoh's people to the severest punishment.'"

Ghafir 40:46

This verse distinguishes Pharaoh's people being exposed to the Fire from their entry into the severest punishment when the Hour comes. It thus supports a condition preceding the great resurrection. Yet it neither names an angel responsible for that exposure nor allows every deceased person's fate to be determined by analogy with this example.

Narrations about angels of the grave, blessing, and punishment elaborate aspects of this subject. The preceding two chapters considered specific examples. Other reports of spirits visiting or communicating with the living are not presented as settled facts before examination. Nor do reported near-death experiences automatically establish details of the intermediate realm: every claim has its field and evidence.

The distinction in the verse about Pharaoh's people allows an understanding of recompense before the general scene of resurrection, without making time in the intermediate realm identical with the earthly hours familiar to us.

Likewise, "grave" in narrations should not confine intermediate existence to the visible pit alone. Someone not buried in the usual manner does not thereby escape Allah's knowledge or power. The relationship with the body and the conditions of perception cannot be resolved by looking at soil, since the subject extends beyond the burial place.

Angels appear in accounts of this stage at death, questioning, glad tidings, or punishment. These activities relate to the person's prior life, not the living's ability to picture the unseen. Mentioning the intermediate realm therefore recalls the value of action now. Readers possess the opportunity to repent, reform, and restore rights; what they meet after death belongs to Allah's judgement, justice, and mercy.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Mu'minun 23:99-100; Ghafir 40:46.

Chapter 48: The End of the World and the Fate of the Angels

The Quran moves from individual deaths to the overwhelming blast affecting the heavens and earth, with an exception whose members the verse does not name.

"The Trumpet will be blown, and those in the heavens and on earth will fall stricken, except whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown again, and suddenly they will stand, looking on."

Al-Zumar 39:68

The exception must remain as given. We do not insert angels brought near or bearers of the Throne without further evidence. Nor can some stories' sequence of the deaths of Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, and the Angel of Death be derived from an order of names the verse never mentions.

Angels are created beings and possess no intrinsic permanence belonging to Allah alone. Yet specifying what happens to each group at the world's end, and how they die or fall stricken, requires particular reports. A general expression does not replace investigation, and differing narrations are not transformed into a certain sequence chosen by preference.

This subject connects with interpretation of the Trumpet and the meanings of being stricken and resurrection. Words may occur in different contexts; all usages should not be compressed into one definition without examination. The verse cited here explicitly moves from one blowing to another and then to creation standing again.

The scene confronts humanity's pride in permanence. Familiar patterns of life are not independent of their Creator, and death cannot prevent Him from restoring creation. This ending opens the story's final part, where the unseen we are told about becomes scenes of judgement and recompense.

The verse does not place Allah, glorified be He, within the passing away affecting creation. The Creator remains, and what occurs in the heavens and earth occurs at His command. The Quran states this concisely:

"Everyone upon it will pass away, (26) while the Face of your Lord, Possessor of Majesty and Honour, remains. (27)"

Al-Rahman 55:26-27

This places every discussion of angels correctly: their constant work and great creation do not give them existence independent of Allah. Identifying those excepted from the blast in al-Zumar and arranging angels' deaths one after another go beyond that foundation. Reports concerning them differ in transmission and wording.

We do not arrange the blasts of terror, collapse, and rising into an inevitable timetable merely because commentaries use those headings. The book establishes what the cited text states and takes the blower's name from its narrated source. Worldly life thus ends in our account without our claiming a precise vision the evidence does not describe.

Verses about waiting warn that obstinacy may continue until a time when response no longer resembles willing response during its proper opportunity:

"Are they waiting only for the angels to come to them, or your Lord to come, or some of your Lord's signs to come? On the day some of your Lord's signs come, a soul's faith will not benefit it if it had not believed before or earned good through its faith. Say, 'Wait; we too are waiting.'"

Al-An'am 6:158

"Are they waiting only for the angels to come to them or for your Lord's command to come? Those before them acted likewise. Allah did not wrong them; they wronged themselves."

Al-Nahl 16:33

These passages concern the consequence of awaiting signs while denying truth, not an invitation to postpone faith until an angel appears. The requirement was to respond to evidence while action was possible, not demand that the ending first be unveiled.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Zumar 39:68; al-Rahman 55:26-27; al-An'am 6:158; al-Nahl 16:33.

Part Seven

Angels in the Scenes of Resurrection, Judgement, and Recompense

Chapter 49: Israfil and the Blowing of the Trumpet

After the overwhelming blast, the Quran mentions the blowing followed by creation's rising. Resurrection is no ordinary return to another worldly day. A new stage is disclosed: the time allowed for action ends, and what humanity has sent ahead begins to appear.

"The Trumpet will be blown, and suddenly they will hurry from their graves to their Lord. (51) They will say, 'Woe to us! Who has raised us from our resting place?' This is what the All-Merciful promised, and the messengers spoke the truth. (52) It will be only one cry, and suddenly they will all be brought before Us. (53) Today no soul will be wronged in anything, and you will be repaid only for what you used to do. (54)"

Ya Sin 36:51-54

The verses move through emergence from graves, the astonished question, universal gathering, and the rule of recompense: no injustice and no burden for what a person did not do. That ethical foundation must not be lost amid attempts to imagine the Trumpet's form or size.

These verses do not name the blower. Israfil occurs in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, connected with the Trumpet and awaiting the command to blow.[1] This locates the name and distinguishes the Quranic foundation of the blowing from identification of its bearer in narrated tradition. We add neither a detailed number of blasts whose texts have not been studied nor a sequence for everything between them.

In this text, Israfil awaits permission; he does not independently initiate resurrection. This connection with divine command returns to the meaning accompanying us from the book's beginning: a great task does not make its bearer a lord or remove a creature from servanthood.

The blast that terrifies creation also ends the wrongdoer's power over the wronged. Everyone is brought forth, and rights are not lost in humanity's multitude. Despite its terror, resurrection is joined to the promise of justice not completed in worldly life alone.

The Quran brings together the blowing's enormity and its subjection to Allah's power:

"The Trumpet will be blown, and those in the heavens and on earth will fall stricken, except whom Allah wills. Then it will be blown again, and suddenly they will stand, looking on."

Al-Zumar 39:68

The first blowing interrupts the earlier condition; another follows, after which comes standing and looking. Ya Sin describes emergence from graves and hastening towards the Lord. Initial bewilderment becomes part of a scene ending in universal gathering.

Israfil's name in this book comes from Supplication 3 and associated narrations, not the words of verses mentioning the Trumpet. Al-Sahifa describes him as its bearer awaiting permission, showing readiness to obey. This is more precise than saying he chooses the ending's time: waiting for the command is fundamental to his work.

"Trumpet" does not allow us to specify its substance, dimensions, or the transmission of its effect according to human instruments' laws. What is established is a blowing with an immense effect upon creation, occurring at Allah's command. Israfil recalls that the story beginning before Adam extends beyond any individual lifetime to the universal transition into judgement.

The blowing appears in settings of terror, creation's rising, and arrival in groups:

"On the day the Trumpet is blown, those in the heavens and on earth will be terrified, except whom Allah wills, and all will come to Him humbled."

Al-Naml 27:87

"When the Trumpet is blown with a single blast."

Al-Haqqa 69:13

"On the day the Trumpet is blown, you will come in groups."

Al-Naba' 78:18

These verses establish the blowing and its comprehensive transition without naming the blower. Israfil's designation remains in its narrated and devotional source, while the Quran's

references retain their own wording. Counting blasts and reconciling terror, collapse, and resurrection require contextual comparison, not merely noting different descriptions.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the passage on Israfil, bearer of the Trumpet.

Chapter 50: Angels at Resurrection and the Gathering

Familiar creation changes in the scenes of resurrection. Heaven and earth are not a fixed background to a human event, but part of an immense transformation in which the Quran mentions angelic descent and the bearing of the Throne.

“On the day heaven is split open with clouds, and the angels are sent down in a mighty descent.”

Al-Furqan 25:25

“The angels will be upon its edges, and eight will bear your Lord’s Throne above them that day.”

Al-Haqqa 69:17

The second verse establishes a number in that day’s Throne-bearing scene, but does not name the eight. A number alone establishes neither circulating names nor particular bodily forms. Every additional detail belongs to its narration, not to the number itself.

Readers may wish to combine all resurrection verses into a precise spatial map or a timetable in minutes. Yet the texts present complementary aspects of a tremendous day and need not provide a sensory map drawable by worldly measurements. Distinguishing scenes does not deny their connection; it withholds an unestablished arrangement.

The limits of human power become clear. Armies, wealth, and office confer no right to evade judgement. Angels, despite their immense presence, appear not as partners in judgement but as servants fulfilling their assignments.

At the Gathering, transformation of heaven and earth meets the angels’ ranked presence. Among the verses describing it are:

“No indeed! When the earth is crushed, crushed again, (21) and your Lord comes, and the angels rank upon rank. (22)”

Al-Fajr 89:21-22

Divine coming is understood in the light of Allah’s transcendence. Bodily movement or a dependent being’s passage between places cannot be imposed upon Him. The angelic ranks belong to the scene of judgement confronting creation, not human crowds competing for authority.

In al-Haqqa, angels appear at heaven’s edges and the Throne is borne that day. Their presence reflects order amid the world’s terrifying change. Anyone imagining that multitudes could cause an individual to be lost at judgement encounters a scene without chaos or absent justice.

These varied passages do not authorise a complete map of every rank, position, and route. We may recognise what unites them: people standing before their Lord, angels present at His command, and realities unveiled that people did not witness in their former life.

Angels also appear in the scene where waiting ends and the matter is decided:

“Are they waiting only for Allah to come to them in canopies of cloud, and the angels, and for the matter to be decided? To Allah all matters return.”

Al-Baqara 2:210

The Quran reiterates that arrogantly demanding to see angels does not make their appearance good news for the guilty:

“Those who do not expect to meet Us say, ‘Why have angels not been sent down to us, or why do we not see our Lord?’ They have grown arrogant within themselves and transgressed greatly. (21) On the day they see the angels, there will be no glad tidings for the guilty, and they will say, ‘An inviolable barrier!’ (22)”

Al-Furqan 25:21-22

The Spirit and angels standing in ranks are likewise joined with permission to speak:

“On the day the Spirit and the angels stand in ranks, they will not speak except one whom the All-Merciful permits and who speaks rightly.”

Al-Naba’ 78:38

Among passages mentioning ascent is:

“The angels and the Spirit ascend to Him in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years.”

Al-Ma’arij 70:4

This verse does not permit converting the day into an equation for angelic speed. Its context is unseen, and its wording supplies no conditions for a physics problem. It adds the higher realm’s obedience to the command and the breadth of a scene whose details humanity cannot comprehend independently.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Furqan 25:25; al-Haqqa 69:17; al-Fajr 89:21-22; al-Baqara 2:210; al-Furqan 25:21-22; al-Naba’ 78:38; al-Ma’arij 70:4.

Chapter 51: The Driver, the Witness, and Angels at Judgement

Human beings do not arrive at judgement carrying only the image they fashioned of themselves. The Quran describes every soul arriving with a driver and a witness, followed by removal of the covering that concealed that day’s reality.

“Every soul will come with a driver and a witness. (21) ‘You were heedless of this, so We have removed your covering; today your sight is sharp.’ (22) His companion will say, ‘Here is what I have ready.’ (23)”

Qaf 50:21-23

“Driver” and “witness” are descriptions here, not personal names merely because they occur in the singular. Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya mentions them among angels.[1] Quranic reference and narrated illumination thus meet without confusing their wording or sources.

At judgement, renaming actions ceases to deceive. Aggression does not become justice through skilful description, and kindness is not lost because no one praised its doer. Recording deeds in this world connects with testimony whose effect appears in the next.

Intercession does not mean that angels possess authority to suspend divine judgement or can be won over independently of Allah.

“How many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession avails nothing until Allah gives permission for whom He wills and approves.”

Al-Najm 53:26

The verse returns the matter to permission and approval. Intercession cannot become advance permission for injustice or a private guarantee one person grants another without evidence. Believers may join hope in mercy with restoring rights and sincere repentance.

The driver and witness confront humanity with the seriousness of its destiny. That seriousness does not erase mercy’s breadth; it prevents mercy from becoming, in our minds, denial of responsibility or disregard for the suffering of those we wronged.

Qaf constructs the scene around every soul’s arrival, then the driver and witness. It is not limited to a visible group possessing someone to make its case known. Every soul is addressed, and what it neglected stands before it.

This explains the distinction between recording deeds in worldly life and testifying to them in the hereafter. One preserves them as they occur; the other displays them at judgement. Commentary may explain connections among descriptions, but we extract no unstated personal names. Driver and witness remain descriptions in our dictionary, not additional names alongside Gabriel and Michael.

Nor does angelic presence at judgement make intercession unrestricted authority. The Quran states that it benefits only after Allah’s permission for whom He wills and approves. Trust, mercy, and justice meet under that same permission. Hope for permitted intercession provides no excuse to persist in injustice or deny others’ rights.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the final enumeration of angels, the passage on the driver and witness.

Chapter 52: Malik, the Keepers of Hell, and the Zabaniya

Malik is explicitly named in the Quran in a cry from the people of Hell. His name is not an isolated detail: it occurs within a plea for escape from punishment and an answer declaring that they will remain.

“They will call, ‘Malik, let your Lord put an end to us!’ He will say, ‘You are to remain.’”

Al-Zukhruf 43:77

Elsewhere the Quran describes the angels over the Fire as stern and obedient. They act neither from personal vengeance nor beyond their assigned command.

“You who believe, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones. Over it are stern, mighty angels who do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and who do what they are commanded.”

Al-Tahrim 66:6

“Over it are nineteen. (30) We have appointed only angels as keepers of the Fire, and made their number a trial for those who disbelieve, so that those given the Book may become certain and believers increase in faith; so that those given the Book and believers may not doubt; and so that those with sickness in their hearts and the disbelievers may say, ‘What does Allah intend by this example?’ Thus Allah lets whom He wills go astray and guides whom He wills. None knows your Lord’s hosts except Him. This is only a reminder to humanity. (31)”

Al-Muddaththir 74:30-31

The context establishes that the Fire’s keepers are angels, gives the number, and explains its relation to human trial. It does not name the nineteen individually; no invented list is supplied to complete them. Nor does it establish that every angel assigned to every aspect of the Fire is confined to names known to us.

“Let him call his assembly. (17) We shall call the zabaniya. (18)”

Al-‘Alaq 96:17-18

Zabaniya is a collective term in this warning and occurs in Supplication 3 among the angels of the Fire.[1] It names a group, not an individual angel. “Keepers of Hell” likewise describes a function and group, although Malik is personally named in the Quran.

The cry to Malik reveals the inhabitants’ suffering: they ask for death to end their condition and are told they will remain. Malik does not possess a judgement competing with Allah’s or an independent power to ease it. He is a keeper fulfilling his task in the abode they have entered.

The nineteen in al-Muddaththir belong to the setting of the Fire’s keepers. The following verse identifies them as angels and makes the number a test for groups of people. It is no numerical game revealing every secret of the unseen, nor the number of every angel of punishment in every other text.

In al-‘Alaq, the zabaniya stand against one who transgresses and forbids a servant to pray. Divine enforcement confronts the assembly whose power the tyrant imagines will protect him. This description of strength must not become invented names for each group member: the Quran gives no such list.

Punishment should remain connected with justice and deeds, not imagined scenes designed only to frighten. Malik, keepers, and zabaniya share the fulfilment of Allah’s command without injustice towards anyone.

The Quranic accounts of the keepers extend beyond names and numbers to their dialogue with those arriving at Hell:

“The disbelievers will be driven to Hell in groups. When they reach it, its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say, ‘Did messengers from among you not come, reciting your Lord’s signs and warning you of meeting this day?’ They will say, ‘Yes, but the decree of punishment has become due against the disbelievers.’ (71) It will be said, ‘Enter Hell’s gates, remaining there.’ Evil indeed is the abode of the arrogant. (72)”

Al-Zumar 39:71-72

The question recalls established evidence and warning; those entering acknowledge that messengers reached them. A further plea comes from within the punishment:

“Those in the Fire will say to Hell’s keepers, ‘Pray to your Lord to lighten our punishment for one day.’ (49) They will say, ‘Did your messengers not come with clear proofs?’ They will answer, ‘Yes.’ The keepers will say, ‘Then pray.’ But the disbelievers’ prayer is only in vain. (50)”

Ghafir 40:49-50

The keepers do not independently change recompense; they refer back to the messengers’ communication and Allah’s judgement. In al-Mulk, the question is repeated to every group:

“It almost bursts with rage. Whenever a group is cast into it, its keepers ask, ‘Did no warner come to you?’ (8) They will say, ‘Yes, a warner came, but we denied him and said, “Allah has sent down nothing; you are only in great error.”’ (9)”

Al-Mulk 67:8-9

These scenes join the keepers’ strength with the clarity of the evidence they recall. They possess no punitive authority independent of divine justice. Their dialogue completes the meaning of al-Tahrim’s description: they do what they are commanded, and the scene’s severity does not make their work a product of whim.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, passages on Malik, the keepers, and the zabaniya.

Chapter 53: Ridwan and the Angels at Paradise’s Gates

The scene of warning is answered by the welcome of the God-conscious. They arrive at Paradise’s gates and hear a greeting of peace, goodness, and admission to the station promised to them.

“Those mindful of their Lord will be led to Paradise in groups. When they reach it and its gates are opened, its keepers will say, ‘Peace be upon you. You have been good and pure; enter it, to remain forever.’ (73) They will say, ‘Praise belongs to Allah, who fulfilled His promise to us and made us inherit the land, so that we may dwell in Paradise wherever we wish. How excellent is the reward of those who work!’ (74)”

Al-Zumar 39:73-74

The Quran mentions keepers here without naming them. Ridwan is named with the custodians of the gardens in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya.[1] We therefore identify that text as his source, rather than claiming that Quranic occurrences of ridwan name Paradise’s keeper. In their Quranic settings, the word concerns divine pleasure and does not identify an angel.

Another distinction deserves preservation: Paradise’s bliss does not make every creature mentioned there an angel. Houris, youths, and attendants have their own descriptions and texts. They are not added to angels merely because they share an abode. Boundaries of name and kind belong to faithful classification.

The keepers appear in a scene of honour, but honour does not change the blessing’s source. Paradise’s inhabitants praise Allah, who fulfilled His promise and made them inherit the land; they do not stop at the creature permitted to welcome them. Divine unity remains present at the story’s end as at its beginning.

Peace at the gate is no ornamental phrase. It ends a path containing fear, patience, and work. While people remain in this world, reform remains open, and hope should not be reduced to imagining bliss while persisting in harming others.

The difference between arrival at Paradise and Hell appears in their receptions. Paradise's keepers offer peace, goodness, and permission to enter. Its gate ends fear and begins honour, but the keeper is no independent giver of Paradise: he conveys the Lord's judgement and promise.

In al-Sahifa, Ridwan appears with the custodians of the gardens, connecting the name with approval and honour without turning every Quranic occurrence of ridwan into his name. Quranic usage signifies Allah's pleasure in its settings; identifying an angel requires a text naming a being.

These texts do not reveal every keeper's name at every gate, and no invented names are needed to complete the scene's meaning. The Quran sufficiently reveals mercy: people whose truthfulness, patience, and faith brought them to a gracious welcome; angels greeting them; and an abode where they need not prepare for another loss as they did in worldly life.

[1] Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the passage on Ridwan and the custodians of the gardens.

Chapter 54: The Angels' Peace and the Closing Scene

Some Quranic scenes of recompense conclude with angels entering upon Paradise's inhabitants through every gate, their greeting expressing patience and a good final outcome.

"Gardens of Eden, which they will enter together with the righteous among their parents, spouses, and descendants. The angels will enter upon them through every gate, (23) saying, 'Peace be upon you for your patience. How excellent is the final abode!' (24)"

Al-Ra'd 13:23-24

Patience here is not submission to injustice or abandonment of rights, but steadfastness in what pleases Allah throughout responsibility's path. The scene gathers righteous family members, extending hope beyond individual isolation into companionship united by goodness.

"The greatest terror will not grieve them, and the angels will welcome them: 'This is your day, which you were promised.'"

Al-Anbiya' 21:103

Angels greet them with good news in this promise. We do not know every greeter's name and need invent none to understand safety after terror. An unnamed group may direct attention more powerfully to the message it carries.

"You will see the angels surrounding the Throne, glorifying their Lord with praise. Judgement will be passed between them in truth, and it will be said, 'Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.'"

Al-Zumar 39:75

Al-Zumar's final verse joins angelic worship, judgement in truth, and praise of Allah. This is the proper framework for ending the story: angels possess no independence from their Lord, judgement is no arena of arbitrariness, and praise is not spoken apart from justice.

We have travelled from the angels' question at the beginning of Adam's story to their glorification at judgement's conclusion; from humanity's learning of names to the disclosure of its deeds. At every stage, unseen knowledge placed a present duty before people: recognise the limits of knowledge, preserve trust, show mercy to creation, and humble oneself before Allah.

Here the story ceases to add scenes, but its meaning continues. Readers return to daily life: speech recorded by the two recorders, a right awaiting its owner, a sick person needing a visitor, and repentance that should not be delayed. There the fruit of knowledge becomes visible.

Peace acquires deeper meaning at the journey's end. We heard it in Abraham's home, read it in al-Qadr, and now reach Paradise's gates through it. Settings change, but the expression carries safety, mercy, and permission to draw near.

The angels enter through every gate and connect their greeting with patience. Human worldly life returns to the scene: hardship endured in obedience, injustice from which one restrained oneself, and faith upon which the heart remained firm. The ending is inseparable from deeds preserved by recorders and attested by witnesses.

Al-Zumar then closes with those surrounding the Throne, glorification, judgement in truth, and praise of Allah, Lord of the worlds. The story began with a realm glorifying before Adam and ends with one glorifying after judgement. Between those points, humanity learned, received messengers, had its deeds preserved, was called to mercy, and confronted the consequence of choice.

The book's gathered picture of angels now settles: honoured servants, diverse in activity and united in obedience. We know the names the text supplies, preserve groups' descriptions, and leave what we have not been taught. The story's final invitation is to make knowledge a cause of truer action and a more merciful life.

Quranic references in this chapter: al-Ra'd 13:23-24; al-Anbiya' 21:103; al-Zumar 39:75.

General Conclusion: What Have We Learned from the Story of Angels?

This journey was not a search for astonishing beings upon whom we could simply close the book. We found angels connected with revelation, worship, protection, recording deeds, death, and recompense: matters returning people to the meaning of their lives and responsibilities.

Our first lesson was that nearness to Allah does not remove a creature from servanthood. Gabriel is a trustworthy messenger; Michael, Israfil, the Angel of Death, and all other angels possess no authority independent of their Creator. Understanding this prevents knowledge of them becoming exaggeration or seeking independently from them what belongs only to Allah. Scenes of their power invite no worship of them; they testify to their Creator's administration.

We learned that adding more to the unseen does not make it clearer. Some familiar expressions are descriptions rather than names; some reports need investigation; some names are absent from the Quran but identifiable in narrated sources. These distinctions do not diminish faith. They protect it from attachment to the unestablished and preserve readers' right to distinguish degrees of knowledge.

Narration also deserves scholarly respect beyond repetition. Knowing the book in which a report occurs begins inquiry rather than ending it. Its transmission, wording, context, and relationship with the Quran and other reports must be examined. A researcher may suspend judgement on a detail while retaining the foundation supported by a clearer text. Such restraint is fidelity to the tradition and those to whom its words are attributed, not hostility towards them.

Humanity appears here as known in its deeds and never neglected, addressed through responsibility and hope. Angelic protection gives no permission to neglect causes; recording deeds is no reason for despair; intercession grants no licence for injustice. Each meaning has a balancing fruit: caution with protection, repentance with judgement, restoration of rights with hope, and trust in Allah's justice and mercy with fear.

Among the journey's most beautiful conclusions is the angels' association with peace. We read glad tidings, greetings, and strengthening as well as warning and judgement, allowing no single image to erase the other texts. Religion should become neither permanent terror nor reassurance detached from action. Hearts need an honesty joining promise and warning without cruelty towards the afflicted or pride in supposed righteousness.

If names and reports remain to be investigated, the way is known: a source locating them, comparison establishing their wording, and inquiry weighing their evidence. This book leaves correction and addition open. It does not claim that collected names equal the number of angels or that what we did not find occurs in no source anywhere.

I place the journey's conclusion beside the praise that closes judgement in truth. I ask Allah to make what we learned an aid to trustworthiness, what we do not know a reason for humility, and what we got wrong open to correction. The purpose is to emerge from reading about angels more truthful in our lives, more merciful to people, and more careful not to speak of Allah without knowledge.

Documentary Appendices

These appendices assist reading and returning to sources. "Location of occurrence" alone does not authenticate a chain, and the dictionary does not claim to exhaust every name in the entire narrated corpus. It gathers the names and designations treated in this book, distinguishing identified occurrences from matters requiring further inquiry.

Appendix 1: Dictionary of Angelic Names and Designations

'Azra'il: absent from the Quran; occurs in the supplication quoted in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 98, chapter 107, p. 400, paired with the Angel of Death. Locating this occurrence does not replace examining and assessing the supplication's routes. Chapter 43.

Bashir: a designation in Shaykh al-Mufid's discussion of questioning those blessed in the grave, quoted by al-Majlisi in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, pp. 211-212, from Awa'il al-Maqalat. On p. 234

al-Majlisi discusses its relation to Munkar and Nakir. Several designations do not by themselves establish several individuals. Chapter 45.

Darda'il: al-Saduq, Kamal al-Din wa-Tamam al-Ni'ma, vol. 1, chapter 24, hadith 36, in an account connected with the birth of Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him. It is not equated with Fitrus's account simply because of shared features, and its chain is not finally assessed here. Chapter 32.

Al-Da'i (the Caller): name or title of an angel in the seventh heaven calling during Rajab's nights; Ibn Tawus, Iqbal al-A'mal, vol. 3, p. 174, section 5 of Rajab's devotions. The author explicitly quotes devotional books without giving a complete chain there. Chapter 40.

Fitrus: al-Saduq, al-Amali, session 28, hadith 9, sequential no. 215 in the cited edition, in an account of the birth of Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him. Locating the name is separate from assessing the chain and interpreting its details. Chapter 32.

Gabriel (Jibra'il, Jibril, Jabra'il): written forms of one name, not three angels. Jibril occurs in the Quran, including al-Baqara 2:97-98 and al-Tahrim 66:4. Chapters 15 and 28-31. Literal citation preserves the source's form.

Harut: named with Marut in al-Baqara 2:102. Their story is read first from the verse, then through examination of explanatory narrations without assuming popular additions authentic. Chapter 25.

Hizqa'il: named in al-Fattal al-Naysaburi's Rawdat al-Wa'izin wa-Basirat al-Mutta'izin, vol. 1, the gathering on wonders indicating Allah's greatness, report 7, pp. 129-130, concerning the Throne's greatness and many wings. No complete chain from author to Imam is displayed. Identity with Darda'il is not asserted. Chapter 9.

Isma'il: an angel is so named in the ascent report in Tafsir al-Qummi, on al-Isra' 17:1, vol. 2, p. 4 in common pagination. Distinct from the prophet Ishmael, peace be upon him. Its occurrence does not remove the need to examine the report's transmission and the material's attribution. Chapter 29.

Israfil: named in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya as bearer of the Trumpet. Not a Quranic personal name. Discussed in Chapter 49; see also Chapter 48.

Karubil: named with Gabriel, Michael, and Israfil in the report of angels sent to Abraham and Lot's people; al-Kafi, vol. 8, al-Rawda, hadith 505; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, chapter 24, pp. 256-257, hadith 20. Not Quranic; identity with the cherubim is not established. Al-Majlisi's assessment of the route as unknown is quoted. Chapter 20, with a connection to Chapter 21.

Malik: a Quranic name in al-Zukhruf 43:77, in the cry of Hell's inhabitants. Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa also mentions Malik and the keepers. Chapter 52.

Al-Mansur: Ibn Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, chapter 77, hadith 9, describing the leader of angels connected with visitation of Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him. The wording is preserved while its status as personal name or title, and the report's chain, remain matters for inquiry. Chapter 33.

Marut: named with Harut in al-Baqara 2:102. Popular tales concerning them do not acquire authority merely through connection with two Quranic names. Chapter 25.

Michael (Mikal, Mika'il): Mikal is the Quranic form in al-Baqara 2:98; Mika'il is familiar in narrations and supplications, including Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa. Different forms do not mean different angels. Chapter 12.

Mubashshir: named with Bashir in al-Mufid's statement quoted in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, pp. 211-212. On p. 234 al-Majlisi discusses whether these designate the two angels according to the deceased's condition or different beings. Counting words alone does not decide the question. Chapter 45.

Munabbih: a designation in the account of Salman speaking with a deceased person, involving an angel commanding the recording of deeds; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, p. 235, quoting Shadhan ibn Jibra'il's al-Fada'il. Possibly a title; similarity of function does not establish identity with Ruman. Chapter 46.

Munkar: the form Naakir occurs in al-Majlisi's quotation from al-Mufid, vol. 56, p. 212; a different form alone is not counted as an independent angel here. Munkar occurs in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa and al-Kafi's grave-questioning reports, vol. 3. Chapter 45.

Nakir: named with Munkar in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa and narrations of questioning in the grave. Not a Quranic personal name. Chapter 45.

Rahil: an angelic speaker in some reports of the marriage of the Commander of the Faithful and Fatima, peace be upon them; al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, pp. 102-104, hadiths 12 and 13; see also p. 110. Distinct from Rachel in Jacob's family history. Chapter 31.

Ridwan: named with the custodians of the gardens in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya. His personal name is not established by Quranic occurrences of ridwan, meaning divine pleasure. Chapter 53.

Ruman: named as tester of the graves in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya. This phrase alone does not establish all circulating details of his story. Chapter 46.

Salsā'il: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, pp. 258-259, hadith 47, an excerpt from al-Mufaddal's lengthy report attributed to Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him. It concerns Imam al-Husayn's birth; resemblance to Fitrus and Darda'il does not settle identity or plurality. Chapter 32.

Zajir: an angel is so designated in al-Kafi, vol. 6, Book of 'Aqiqa, chapter on the beginning of human creation and development in the mother's womb, hadiths 4 and 7. It may be considered a name or functional title according to the narration's usage; linguistic derivation alone does not settle classification. Chapter 35.

Zawqabil: Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 46, in the account of turning the handmill for Lady Fatima, peace be upon her, within quotations from al-Manaqib. The chain is not assessed here, and identity with Gabriel named in another report is not asserted. Chapter 31.

Dictionary principle: this dictionary contains twenty-five distinct entries for names and designations whose occurrences have been located in the identified sources, preserving their differing levels of transmission. The entries do not necessarily represent twenty-five individuals: some may be titles, and several designations may refer to one being. Variant forms of Gabriel, Michael, and Naakir remain within their entries and do not multiply the count.

Appendix 2: Titles, Descriptions, Groups, and Functions

Angel of Death: a Quranic functional title in al-Sajda 32:11, with no personal name in the verse. Al-An'am 6:61 mentions messengers taking souls, and al-Sahifa mentions the Angel of Death's helpers. Chapter 43.

The Spirit: a term used in several contexts; identity of meaning is not assumed across every verse and narration. Selected occurrences are discussed in Chapter 7, Mary's scene in Chapter 3, and the Night of Decree in Chapter 34.

The Trustworthy Spirit and the Holy Spirit: titles or expressions whose referents require context and interpretation, rather than counting every phrase as an independent person. Chapters 15 and 28.

The greatest angel: a description in Nahj al-Balagha's Sermon of Humbling of the angel accompanying the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household, from childhood. The quoted text does not name him. Chapter 27.

Raqib and 'Atid: descriptions in Qaf 50:18; their occurrence alone does not establish personal names. Chapter 38.

Driver and witness: descriptions in Qaf 50:21, also appearing among angels in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa. Chapter 51.

Bearers of the Throne and those surrounding it: groups mentioned in passages including Ghafir 40:7 and al-Zumar 39:75. Functions and descriptions vary with context. Chapters 9, 50, and 54.

Those brought near, the spiritual ones, and angels of the veils: descriptions and groups in the texts treated in Chapters 6 and 11. Each description is not turned into a rank with numerical boundaries unstated by the text.

Guardians, noble recorders, and the two receivers: expressions concerning protection and recording. Their relationship is examined through verses and narrations, not imagined synonymy. Chapters 36-38.

Successive attendants (al-mu'aqqibat): a Quranic expression in al-Ra'd 13:11, studied through interpretation and function, not counted as a personal name. Chapter 36.

The noble, righteous scribes: a Quranic description in 'Abasa 80:15-16. Al-Sahifa also mentions scribes and guardians. Detailed identification belongs to interpretation; the term does not automatically equal every class of recorders.

Keepers of rain, drivers of clouds, escorts of snow and hail, and those entrusted with mountains: functional groups in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa, treated in Chapter 13 within the text's meaning.

Angels of the womb: a descriptive designation for al-Kafi's reports on the beginning of human creation, not a Quranic group name in that wording. Chapter 35.

Angels of support, gatherings of goodness, and visits to the sick: thematic classifications based on activities in the sources, not closed companies whose functions cannot overlap. Chapters 30 and 39-41.

Keepers of Hell and the zabaniya: collective descriptions, not individual names. Chapter 52.

Keepers of Paradise and custodians of the gardens: descriptions of authorised welcome and service. Ridwan's name in al-Sahifa is distinguished from the Quranic term "keepers." Chapter 53.

Cherubim (al-karubiyyun): a collective term in the report quoted from Basa'ir al-Darajat in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, p. 184, hadith 26, through a chain with omitted intermediaries. It becomes neither a single angel's name nor a certain classification of all angelic ranks. Chapter 11.

The Highest Assembly: a Quranic expression in al-Saffat 37:8 and Sad 38:69 concerning the higher realm, not a personal name. Chapter 11.

Those arrayed in ranks, driving away, reciting, apportioning, sent forth, distinguishing, delivering, pulling out, drawing out, moving swiftly, racing ahead, and administering: Quranic descriptions opening several surahs. A number are interpreted as angels, while interpretations of some expressions differ. They are not personal names, and an interpretive possibility is not equated with explicit naming. Chapter 14.

Guards: a description in the jinn's account of heaven, al-Jinn 72:8-9. Neither verse names individual guards. Chapter 10.

The angel in the Black Stone account: described in al-Kafi, vol. 4, Book of Pilgrimage, the chapter on the Stone's origin, hadith 3. No personal name is given. Chapter 18.

Angels witnessing dawn, angels of the seeker of knowledge, and those assigned to fasting people: descriptions of narrated functions, not personal names. Chapter 39.

Angels assigned to a believer's visitor: described in al-Kafi, Book of Faith and Disbelief, chapter on visiting fellow believers, hadith 1. Chapter 41.

Appendix 3: Guide to Quranic Verses Quoted in Full

This guide arranges verses in Quranic order and gives the chapters in which they appear. "General Introduction" refers to citations preceding Chapter 1. Brief references to verses not quoted in full remain in their chapters' reference lists.

Al-Baqara (2): 30 (Chapter 1); 31 (Chapter 16); 32 (Chapter 5, Chapter 16); 33 (Chapter 16); 34 (Chapter 17); 37-39 (Chapter 18); 87 (Chapter 26); 97 (Chapter 15); 98 (Chapter 12); 102 (Chapter 25); 161 (Chapter 40); 177 (General Introduction); 210 (Chapter 50); 248 (Chapter 23); 253 (Chapter 26); 285 (General Introduction).

Al 'Imran (3): 6 (Chapter 35); 18 (Chapter 4); 39 (Chapter 26); 42-45 (Chapter 26); 80 (Chapter 4); 87-89 (Chapter 40); 123-126 (Chapter 30).

Al-Nisa' (4): 97-99 (Chapter 44); 136 (Chapter 28); 166 (Chapter 28); 171 (Chapter 7); 172 (Chapter 11).

Al-Ma'ida (5): 110 (Chapter 26).

Al-An'am (6): 8 (Chapter 14); 9 (Chapter 3); 50 (Chapter 14); 61 (Chapter 43); 93 (Chapter 44); 111 (Chapter 14); 158 (Chapter 48).

Al-A'raf (7): 11 (Chapter 17); 20 (Chapter 18); 37 (Chapter 44); 206 (Chapter 4).

Al-Anfal (8): 9-12 (Chapter 30); 50-51 (Chapter 44).

Al-Tawba (9): 26 (Chapter 30); 40 (Chapter 30).

Yunus (10): 21 (Chapter 37).

Hud (11): 12 (Chapter 14); 31 (Chapter 24); 37 (Chapter 19); 69-76 (Chapter 20); 77-83 (Chapter 21).

Yusuf (12): 31 (Chapter 22).

Al-Ra'd (13): 11 (Chapter 36); 13 (Chapter 13); 23-24 (Chapter 54).

Ibrahim (14): 27 (Chapter 45); 37 (Chapter 22).

Al-Hijr (15): 7-8 (Chapter 14); 28-30 (Chapter 17); 51-60 (Chapter 20); 61-77 (Chapter 21).

Al-Nahl (16): 2 (Chapter 14); 28-29 (Chapter 44); 32 (Chapter 44); 33 (Chapter 48); 49-50 (Chapter 4); 102 (Chapter 28).

Al-Isra' (17): 1 (Chapter 29); 36 (Chapter 42); 40 (Chapter 4); 61 (Chapter 17); 78 (Chapter 39); 85 (Chapter 7); 92 (Chapter 30); 95 (Chapter 14).

Al-Kahf (18): 49 (Chapter 37); 50 (Chapter 8).

Maryam (19): 17 (Chapter 3); 18-21 (Chapter 26); 56-57 (Chapter 19); 64 (Chapter 14).

Ta Ha (20): 95-97 (Chapter 23); 116 (Chapter 17).

Al-Anbiya' (21): 19-20 (Chapter 4); 26-29 (Chapter 4); 91 (Chapter 26); 103 (Chapter 54).

Al-Hajj (22): 75 (Chapter 14).

Al-Mu'minun (23): 24 (Chapter 19); 99-100 (Chapter 47).

Al-Furqan (25): 7 (Chapter 14); 21-22 (Chapter 50); 25 (Chapter 50).

Al-Shu'ara' (26): 192-195 (Chapter 15).

Al-Naml (27): 87 (Chapter 49).

Al-'Ankabut (29): 31-35 (Chapter 21).

Al-Sajda (32): 11 (Chapter 43).

Al-Ahzab (33): 9 (Chapter 30); 40 (Chapter 31); 43 (Chapter 40); 56 (Chapter 39).

Saba' (34): 40-41 (Chapter 4).

Fatir (35): 1 (Chapter 2).

Ya Sin (36): 51-54 (Chapter 49).

Al-Saffat (37): 1-5 (Chapter 14); 8 (Chapter 11); 149-153 (Chapter 4); 164-166 (Chapter 6).

Sad (38): 21-25 (Chapter 24); 69 (Chapter 11); 71-76 (Chapter 17).

Al-Zumar (39): 42 (Chapter 43); 68 (Chapter 48, Chapter 49); 71-72 (Chapter 52); 73-74 (Chapter 53); 75 (Chapter 54).

Ghafir (40): 7-9 (Chapter 9); 46 (Chapter 47); 49-50 (Chapter 52).

Fussilat (41): 14 (Chapter 19); 30-32 (Chapter 44); 38 (Chapter 4).

Al-Shura (42): 5 (Chapter 40); 51 (Chapter 28); 52 (Chapter 7).

Al-Zukhruf (43): 19 (Chapter 4); 53 (Chapter 23); 60 (Chapter 6); 77 (Chapter 52); 80 (Chapter 37).

Muhammad (47): 27-28 (Chapter 44).

Qaf (50): 17-18 (Chapter 38); 21-23 (Chapter 51).

Al-Dhariyat (51): 1-4 (Chapter 14); 24-30 (Chapter 20); 31-37 (Chapter 21).

Al-Tur (52): 4 (Chapter 10).

Al-Najm (53): 5-18 (Chapter 29); 26 (Chapter 51); 27-28 (Chapter 4).

Al-Qamar (54): 37 (Chapter 21).

Al-Rahman (55): 14-15 (Chapter 8); 26-27 (Chapter 48).

Al-Waqi'a (56): 83-87 (Chapter 44).

Al-Mujadila (58): 22 (Chapter 7).

Al-Tahrim (66): 4 (Chapter 30); 6 (Chapter 52); 12 (Chapter 26).

Al-Mulk (67): 8-9 (Chapter 52).

Al-Haqqa (69): 13 (Chapter 49); 17 (Chapter 50).

Al-Ma'arij (70): 4 (Chapter 50).

Al-Jinn (72): 8-9 (Chapter 10); 26-28 (Chapter 14).

Al-Muddaththir (74): 30-31 (Chapter 52).

Al-Mursalat (77): 1-6 (Chapter 14).

Al-Naba' (78): 18 (Chapter 49); 38 (Chapter 50).

Al-Nazi'at (79): 1-5 (Chapter 14).

'Abasa (80): 13-16 (Chapter 39).

Al-Takwir (81): 19-23 (Chapter 15).

Al-Infitar (82): 10-12 (Chapter 37).

Al-Tariq (86): 4 (Chapter 36).

Al-Fajr (89): 21-22 (Chapter 50).

Al-'Alaq (96): 17-18 (Chapter 52).

Al-Qadr (97): 1-5 (Chapter 34).

Appendix 4: Guide to Narrated Sources and Their Use

Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya: Supplication 3, blessings upon the bearers of the Throne and every angel brought near. Used for angelic qualities and groups; the names Israfil, Ridwan, Ruman, Munkar, and Nakir; and references to the Angel of Death and his helpers, Malik, the keepers, the driver, and the witness. Recording a passage does not alone settle the transmission of every detail.

Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 1 on angelic classes; the Sermon of Forms, no. 91, on differing forms and measures, pure worship, and knowledge, numbered 90 in some editions; and the Sermon of Humbling, no. 192, on the angel accompanying the Prophet, may Allah bless him and his Household. Where numbering differs, consult the sermon's name and text. The Sermon of Forms is used in Chapters 3-6 and 11, and Appendix 7.

Al-Kafi, vol. 1: Book of the Divine Proof, chapter on the Spirit by which Allah guides the Imams, peace be upon them, hadith 1; and the chapter mentioning the Sahifa, Jafr, Jami'a, and the Mushaf of Fatima, peace be upon her, hadith 5. Principal use: Chapters 7, 31, and 34.

Al-Kafi, vol. 2: Book of the Excellence of the Quran, chapter on homes where the Quran is recited, hadith 3. Chapter 39, connected with Chapter 42.

Al-Kafi, vol. 3: Book of Funerals, chapter on the reward of visiting the sick, hadiths 2 and 8; chapter on questioning in the grave and who is or is not questioned, hadiths 7 and 12. Chapters 41 and 45.

Al-Kafi, vol. 6: Book of 'Aqiqa, chapter on the beginning of human creation and development in the mother's womb, hadiths 4 and 7, including the designation Zajir. Chapter 35. Also Book of Dress, Adornment, and Good Conduct, chapter on decorating homes, hadiths 12 and 13, p. 528, used in Chapter 42.

Al-Saduq's al-Amali: session 28, hadith 9, sequential no. 215, p. 200 onwards in the cited Mu'assasat al-Bi'tha edition, the Fitrus account. Chapter 32.

Al-Saduq's Kamal al-Din wa-Tamam al-Ni'ma: vol. 1, chapter 24, hadith 36, pp. 282-284 in the consulted pagination, the Darda'il account; also hadith 30 in the same chapter on the Night of Decree. Chapters 32 and 34.

Ibn Qulawayh's Kamil al-Ziyarat: chapter 77, reports of angels attending visitation of Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him, especially hadith 9 containing al-Mansur. Chapter 33. Chapter and hadith numbers take priority over page numbers where editions differ.

Tafsir al-Qummi: commentary on al-Isra' 17:1, the ascent report, vol. 2, p. 4 in the consulted pagination, including Isma'il. Chapter 29. Attribution and transmission of each portion of the circulating commentary are not settled by its title alone.

Bihar al-Anwar: vol. 56, chapters 23-25 on angelic nature, attributes, those brought near, infallibility, and Harut and Marut. Locations include pp. 184, 191, 211-212, 221 onwards, 233-235, and 319-323. This volume is numbered 59 in some arrangements. Transmitted hadiths are distinguished from commentaries and theological views.

Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43: p. 46 for Zawqabil; pp. 102-104 and 110 for Rahil; pp. 258-259, hadith 47, for Salsā'il. Vol. 98, chapter 107, p. 400, for 'Azra'il. These references locate names without assigning one judgement to all their reports' routes.

Rawdat al-Wa'izin wa-Basirat al-Mutta'izin: vol. 1, the gathering on wonders indicating Allah's greatness, report 7, pp. 129-130, the Hizqa'il account. Chapter 9.

Iqbal al-A'mal: vol. 3, p. 174, section 5 of Rajab's devotions, the angel designated al-Da'i. Chapter 40.

Earlier works accessed through al-Majlisi's quotations: al-Ikhtisas for creation from light; Basa'ir al-Darajat for the cherubim; al-Tawhid for protection; Awa'il al-Maqalat for Bashir and Mubashshir; Shadhan ibn Jibra'il's al-Fada'il for Munabbih; and the commentary attributed to Imam al-'Askari for Harut and Marut. The intermediary is identified in each location; direct consultation is not claimed for an original work not directly examined.

Additional al-Kafi locations: vol. 1, Book of the Excellence of Knowledge, chapter on the reward of scholar and learner, hadith 1; Book of the Divine Proof, chapter on angels entering the Imams' homes, hadith 1. Vol. 2, Book of Faith and Disbelief, chapter on visiting fellow believers, hadith 1. Vol. 3, Book of Prayer, chapter on dawn prayer's time, hadith 2. Vol. 4, Book of Pilgrimage, chapter on the Stone's origin and the reason for touching it, hadith 3. Vol. 8, al-Rawda, hadith 505, the Karubil account. Chapters 18, 20, 31, 39, and 41.

Additional al-Saduq, al-Amali: session 13, hadith 1, angels seeking forgiveness for those fasting. Chapter 39.

Additional Mir'at al-'Uqul: vol. 1, p. 113, on the two routes of the seeker-of-knowledge report; vol. 9, p. 52, on visiting a believer. Judgements remain attributed to al-Majlisi and to the particular routes concerned.

Appendix 5: Findings and Points of Disagreement

1. Identifying Quranic names. Gabriel, Michael, Malik, Harut, and Marut occur by name in the Quran; the Angel of Death occurs by functional title. Ridwan in the sense of Allah's pleasure does not become a Quranic naming of Paradise's keeper. Nor do raqib, 'atid, driver, and witness become personal names merely because they occur in the singular.
2. The substance of creation. The report of creation from light is located in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, p. 191, hadith 48, quoting al-Ikhtisas, with rafa'ahu ("he attributed it") in the chain. The finding establishes the passage and its reported meaning while acknowledging omitted intermediaries. It claims neither an authentic continuous chain nor a physical definition of light.
3. 'Azra'il and devotional names. 'Azra'il is located in a supplication in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 98, p. 400. Israfil, Ridwan, and Ruman occur in Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya. These names are read within their textual genres, not attributed to verses that do not mention them.
4. Fitrus, Darda'il, and Salsā'il. Their locations are identified in al-Saduq's al-Amali, Kamal al-Din, and Bihar al-Anwar, with differing routes and details. Similar scenes establish neither one identity for the three nor an independent basis for overturning Quranic obedience through punitive details. Assessment depends on chain and meaning. Hizqa'il occurs in another source concerning the Throne's greatness and is not automatically merged with them.
5. Harut and Marut. The Quran establishes teaching, trial, and warning against disbelief. The tradition contains differing stories, including a passage in the commentary attributed to Imam al-'Askari rejecting their alleged disobedience, quoted in Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, pp. 319-323. Debate over that source's attribution remains relevant; not every popular story becomes part of the verse.
6. The Spirit and guidance. Al-Kafi's chapter on the Spirit guiding the Imams contains a report of a creation greater than Gabriel and Michael. Al-Majlisi judges its first hadith authentic in Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. 3, p. 169. This is a scholar's judgement upon a particular route, not a declaration that every Quranic occurrence of "Spirit" means one thing.
7. Fatima, peace be upon her. Gabriel's visits after the Prophet's death are located in al-Kafi, Book of the Divine Proof, the chapter mentioning the Sahifa, Jafr, Jami'a, and Fatima's Mushaf, hadith 5. Al-Majlisi judges it authentic in Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. 3, p. 59. The book distinguishes the address and consolation described there from a new Quran or claim to prophethood. Rahil and Zawqabil have separate locations and transmissions.
8. Grave-related designations. Bashir and Mubashshir are added from al-Majlisi's quotation of al-Mufid; Naakir is recorded within Munkar's entry; Munabbih is added from the report quoted from al-Fada'il. Several expressions do not determine the number of individuals. Al-Majlisi's discussion of identity or difference is commentary, not a new hadith from an infallible authority.
9. Homes and angelic entry. Hadiths 12 and 13 of al-Kafi's chapter on decorating homes are located in vol. 6, p. 528, preserving their different wording and qualifications. Al-Majlisi's judgement of hadith 12 as weak is quoted from Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. 22, p. 440. This neither authenticates nor weakens all other texts, and the presentation does not replace legal inquiry when issuing a practical ruling.
10. Scope of collection. The Quranic inventory covers explicit references to angels and their names, supplemented by related descriptions and contexts. Narrated collection extends across Bihar al-Anwar's chapters on angels, those brought near, and infallibility, and identified locations in earlier and other works. The dictionary is bounded by that scope. It claims neither every narration in every

printed book and manuscript nor equivalence between accurate attribution to a book and authentic transmission from an infallible authority.

Appendix 6: Glossary of Terms

Personal name: an expression identifying a particular being, such as Gabriel and Malik in the cited Quranic passages.

Title or description: an expression indicating a quality or task, sometimes used as a title. It is not judged a personal name without contextual evidence.

Appearance (tamaththul): manifestation in a form described by the text, as in Mary's story. It does not by itself provide a material explanation of how it occurs.

The unseen (ghayb): what lies beyond human perception in a given setting. What Allah discloses of it is known through its evidence, not imagination alone.

Source tracing (takhrij): identifying a report's locations, routes, and transmitted forms. It differs from a final judgement of authenticity.

Chain of transmission (sanad): the sequence of transmitters through whom a report is narrated. Its study is one aspect of assessment.

Text (matn): a report's wording and content, examined for meaning, context, and relationship with other evidence.

Authentic (sahih): a hadith judgement with conditions whose application differs among methods. A scholar's judgement is attributed to that scholar, not presented as consensus.

Widely known (mashhur): material in common circulation. Familiarity alone does not replace detailed establishment of its transmission.

Intermediate realm (barzakh): the intervening stage until resurrection, as indicated by al-Mu'minun 23:99-100. Its detailed conditions require their own texts.

The Trumpet (sur): the term in verses concerning the blowing. Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya names Israfil as its bearer. Artistic images do not determine its nature.

Intercession (shafa'a): in the cited texts, an act bound to Allah's permission and approval, not an independent power allowing a creature to override His judgement.

Bada': a theological term appearing in some reports, not meaning prior ignorance attributed to Allah. Its full treatment lies outside this book; it is mentioned to prevent accounts of recorded decrees being made to imply compulsion without inquiry.

Appendix 7: Foundational Texts for Understanding Angels

This appendix presents the complete text of Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, followed by selected passages from the Sermon of Forms in Nahj al-Balagha. Readers can encounter the wording in context and return from it to the chapters' thematic explanations. The following passages translate the source texts; introductory paragraphs and section headings belong to this book's arrangement.

I. Supplication 3 of al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya: Blessings upon the Bearers of the Throne and Every Angel Brought Near

"O Allah, and the bearers of Your Throne, who never cease glorifying You, never tire of declaring Your holiness, and never grow weary in Your worship; who do not prefer neglect to earnestness in Your command, and are never heedless of yearning for You;

“And Israfil, bearer of the Trumpet, intent as he awaits Your permission and the arrival of the command, so that with its blast he may awaken those fallen, held captive in the graves;

“And Michael, possessing honour with You and an exalted station through obedience to You;

“And Gabriel, entrusted with Your revelation, obeyed among the inhabitants of Your heavens, firmly established with You and brought near to You; and the Spirit who presides over the angels of the veils; and the Spirit who belongs to Your command: bless them, and the angels beneath them who inhabit Your heavens and are entrusted with Your messages; those whom perseverance does not weary, whom toil does not exhaust or weaken, whose desires do not distract them from glorifying You, and whose reverence for You is never interrupted by heedless forgetfulness; those with humbled eyes who do not seek to look upon You, with bowed heads, whose longing for what is with You has endured, who are absorbed in remembering Your blessings and humble before Your greatness and the majesty of Your grandeur; those who, when they see Hell roaring against the people of disobedience to You, say, ‘Glory be to You! We have not worshipped You as You deserve to be worshipped.’

“Bless them, the spiritual ones among Your angels, those brought near to You, those carrying the unseen to Your messengers, those entrusted with Your revelation, and the tribes of angels whom You have chosen for Yourself, made independent of food and drink through their declaring Your holiness, and settled within the layers of Your heavens; and those upon their edges when the command descends to fulfil Your promise;

“And the keepers of rain, the drivers of clouds, and the one at whose driving call the rumble of thunder is heard, and when the rustling clouds carry him along, the bolts of lightning flash; the escorts of snow and hail, those descending with the drops of rain as it falls, those standing over the treasuries of winds, those entrusted with the mountains so that they do not shift, and those whom You have taught the weights of waters and the measure held by the torrents and masses of rain;

“And Your angelic messengers to the people of earth with unwelcome affliction and welcome ease; the noble, righteous scribes; the guardians, noble recorders; the Angel of Death and his helpers; Munkar and Nakir; Ruman, tester of the graves; those circling the Inhabited House; Malik and the keepers; Ridwan and the custodians of the gardens; those who do not disobey Allah in what He commands them and do what they are commanded; those who say, ‘Peace be upon you for your patience. How excellent is the final abode!’; and the zabaniya, who, when told, ‘Seize him and fetter him, then make him burn in the blazing Fire,’ rush towards him and grant him no respite; those whose mention we have overlooked, whose station with You and assigned task we do not know; the inhabitants of air, earth, and water, and those among them appointed over creation;

“Bless them on the day every soul comes with a driver and a witness. Bless them with a blessing that adds honour to their honour and purity to their purity. O Allah, when You bless Your angels and messengers and convey to them our blessings upon them, bless us for the gracious speech about them You have opened to us. You are indeed Generous, Noble.”

Source: al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3, the complete supplication. Its paragraphs have been separated for ease of reading, following the consulted text.

II. Passages from the Sermon of Forms: On the Description of Angels

These passages occur within a description of the heavens populated by angels, their differing forms and measures, and their trustworthiness and obedience. They are selections, not the complete sermon or its entire section on angels.

“Allah made them there the trustees of His revelation and entrusted them with carrying the deposits of His commands and prohibitions to the messengers. He protected them from the uncertainty of doubts, so none swerves from the path of His pleasure. He supplied them with sustaining assistance, filled their hearts with the humility of tranquil submission, opened easy doors for them to proclaim His glory, and set clear beacons for them upon the signs of His oneness.”

On their enduring humility despite their nearness:

“Their great nearness has not released the bonds of their humility. Self-admiration has not taken hold of them so that they might count their earlier deeds as abundant, nor has the submissiveness of reverence left them any share in magnifying their good actions.”

At the passage’s conclusion:

“There is no space the size of a hide in the layers of heaven without an angel prostrating upon it or hastening diligently in service. As their obedience continues, they increase in knowledge of their Lord, and the majesty of their Lord grows greater in their hearts.”

Source: Nahj al-Balagha, the Sermon of Forms, no. 91 in the numbering used, the section “On the description of the angels.” It is numbered 90 in some editions. The headings here follow the sequence of meanings and do not represent continuous source text between the three quotations.

Guide to discussion: created attributes, Chapter 3; obedience, love, and awe, Chapter 4; knowledge, Chapter 5; varied functions, Chapter 6; veils and spiritual ones, Chapter 11. The names and functions in Supplication 3 are distributed across the relevant chapters and gathered in the dictionary.

Sources and References

The Holy Quran. Surah and verse are given with each passage; quoted locations are gathered in Appendix 3.

Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-‘Abidin, peace be upon him. Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya, Supplication 3. The supplication’s text is distinguished from its commentaries.

Al-Sharif al-Radi, Muhammad ibn al-Husayn, compiler. Nahj al-Balagha: Sermon 1; the Sermon of Forms, no. 91; and the Sermon of Humbling, no. 192 in the numbering used. The Sermon of Forms is numbered 90 in some editions; its number is accompanied by its name and the passage’s subject.

Al-Kulayni, Muhammad ibn Ya‘qub. Al-Kafi, vols. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8, the books, chapters, and hadiths identified in chapter references and Appendix 4. Chapter names and hadith numbers take priority over page numbers where editions differ.

Al-Saduq, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Babawayh. Al-Amali, edited and published by Mu‘assasat al-Bi‘tha, Qom: session 13, hadith 1; session 28, hadith 9, sequential no. 215.

Al-Saduq, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Babawayh. Kamal al-Din wa-Tamam al-Ni‘ma, vol. 1, chapter 24, especially hadith 36 and hadith 30 at the cited location.

Ibn Qulawayh, Ja‘far ibn Muhammad. Kamil al-Ziyarat, chapter 77, accounts of angels at the grave of Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him, especially hadith 9.

Tafsir al-Qummi, attributed to ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi, vol. 2, commentary on the opening of al-Isra’, the ascent report. The methodological observation concerning the circulating book’s composition and attribution remains applicable.

Al-Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir. Mir‘at al-‘Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul, vol. 1, p. 113; vol. 3, pp. 59 and 169; vol. 9, p. 52; vol. 22, p. 440. Used to attribute judgements on particular routes to al-Majlisi, not to authenticate or weaken every report in al-Kafi.

Al-Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 56, Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabi, Beirut, third corrected edition, 1403 AH/1983, chapters 23-25 on angels; numbered vol. 59 in another arrangement. Also vol. 43, pp. 46, 102-104, 110, and 258-259; vol. 98, chapter 107, p. 400. Quoted source material is distinguished from the commentator’s words.

Al-Fattal al-Naysaburi, Muhammad ibn Ahmad. Rawdat al-Wa‘izin wa-Basirat al-Mutta‘izin, vol. 1, the gathering on wonders indicating Allah’s greatness, report 7, pp. 129-130.

Ibn Tawus, 'Ali ibn Musa. *Iqbal al-A'mal*, vol. 3, section 5 of Rajab's devotions, p. 174.

Al-Mufid, Muhammad ibn Muhammad, *Awa'il al-Maqalat*, the discussion of the two angels descending to those in graves; al-Ikhtisas, attributed to him; al-Saffar, *Basa'ir al-Darajat*; al-Saduq, *al-Tawhid*; Shadhan ibn Jibra'il, *al-Fada'il*; and the commentary attributed to Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari. Identified passages from these works were accessed through al-Majlisi's quotations, as stated in the chapter references.

Reference conventions: when editions differ in pagination, consult the chapter name, hadith number, and opening words. *Bihar al-Anwar* volume numbers follow the arrangement specified in each reference, noting the alternative numbering of the volume containing the angelic chapters.

Closing Indexes

These indexes identify discussions by chapter number; the Contents at the beginning gives their opening pages. Names occurring in disputed reports are included so readers can find their discussion, not to authenticate everything narrated about them.

Index of Angelic Names and Designations

'Azra'il: 43; details in the dictionary.

Bashir: 45; details in the dictionary.

Darda'il: 32; details in the dictionary.

Al-Da'i: 40; details in the dictionary.

Fitrus: 32; details in the dictionary.

Gabriel and variant forms: 12, 15, 28-31, 34; details in the dictionary.

Harut: 25; details in the dictionary.

Hizqa'il: 9; details in the dictionary.

Isma'il the angel: 29; details in the dictionary.

Israfil: 48, 49; details in the dictionary.

Karubil: 20, 21; details in the dictionary.

Malik: 52; details in the dictionary.

Al-Mansur: 33; details in the dictionary.

Marut: 25; details in the dictionary.

Michael (Mikal and Mika'il): 12, 15; details in the dictionary.

Mubashshir: 45; details in the dictionary.

Munabbih: 46; details in the dictionary.

Munkar and Naakir: 45; details in the dictionary.

Nakir: 45; details in the dictionary.

Rahil: 31; details in the dictionary.

Ridwan: 53; details in the dictionary.

Ruman: 46; details in the dictionary.

Salsā'il: 32; details in the dictionary.

Zajir: 35; details in the dictionary.

Zawqabil: 31; details in the dictionary.

Index of Descriptions and Groups

Angel in the Black Stone account: 18.
 Angel of Death and his helpers: 43.
 Angels and natural phenomena: 13-14.
 Angels assigned to a believer's visitor: 41.
 Angels of the womb: 35.
 Angels witnessing dawn, attending seekers of knowledge, and assigned to those fasting: 39.
 Bearers of the Throne: 9, 50.
 Cherubim and the Highest Assembly: 11.
 Driver and witness: 51.
 Greatest angel accompanying the Prophet: 27.
 Guardians and successive attendants: 36.
 Guards of heaven: 10.
 Keepers of Paradise: 53.
 Noble recorders: 37-38.
 Raqib and 'Atid: 38.
 The Spirit: 7, 34.
 Spiritual ones and angels of the veils: 11.
 Trustworthy Spirit and Holy Spirit: 15, 28.
 Zabaniya and keepers of Hell: 52.

Index of Prophets, Ahl al-Bayt, and Other Figures Mentioned

Iblis: 8, 17; included for comparison and to distinguish jinn from angels.
 Adam: 1, 16-18.
 Idris: 19.
 Noah: 19.
 Abraham and Sarah: 20, 22.
 Lot: 21.
 Joseph: 22.
 Moses and Aaron: 23.
 David: 24.
 Zechariah, Mary, and Jesus: 26.
 Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and his Household: 27-31.
 Commander of the Faithful 'Ali, peace be upon him: 27, 31, 34.
 Lady Fatima al-Zahra, peace be upon her: 31.
 Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon him: 32-33.
 The Imams, peace be upon them, and the Night of Decree: 34.

Subject Index

Creation and attributes of angels: 1-6.
 The Spirit and distinguishing kinds of creation: 7-8.
 The Throne and the Inhabited House: 9-10.
 Angelic ranks and administration: 11-15.
 Angels and the prophets: 16-26.
 Revelation, the ascent, and support: 27-30.
 Ahl al-Bayt, Karbala, and the Night of Decree: 31-34.
 Angels and human life: 35-42.
 Death, the grave, and the intermediate realm: 43-48.
 The Trumpet, resurrection, and judgement: 49-51.
 Hell, Paradise, and peace: 52-54.
 Narration assessment and the limits of collection: Method and Reader's Guide; Appendices 4 and 5.

Index of Source Works

Al-Amali: 32, 39.
 Awa'il al-Maqalat: 45.
 Basa'ir al-Darajat: 11.
 Bihar al-Anwar: 2, 11, 12, 14, 20, 25, 31, 32, 36, 43, 45, 46.
 Commentary attributed to Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari: 25.
 Al-Fada'il: 46.
 Holy Quran: see Appendix 3, arranged by surah with chapter numbers.
 Al-Ikhtisas: 2.
 Iqbal al-A'mal: 40.
 Al-Kafi: 7, 18, 20, 31, 34, 35, 39, 41, 42, 45.
 Kamal al-Din: 32, 34.
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 Mir'at al-'Uqul: 7, 31, 39, 41, 42.
 Nahj al-Balagha: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 27.
 Rawdat al-Wa'izin: 9.
 Al-Saduq's al-Tawhid: 36, through Bihar al-Anwar.
 Al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya: 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 43, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53.
 Tafsir al-Qummi: 29.
 The story is complete. Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

BOOK FOUR IN THE STORY SERIES

The Story of Angels

“They do not precede Him in speech,
and they act at His command.”

Al-Anbiya' 21:27

From the angels' glorification and bearing of the Throne to the trust of revelation and their companionship with the prophets; from protecting human beings and recording their deeds to death, resurrection, and judgement, this book explores the world of angels in the light of the Holy Quran and the narrations of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them.

Seven parts are complemented by a dictionary of names and designations, guides to verses and sources, and detailed indexes. Throughout, the book distinguishes transmitted texts, their interpretation, and matters requiring further investigation.



By the researcher and writer

Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha Al Saraf Al Husayni

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