

## Concept of the Secure Fortress

### “There Is No Deity but Allah” as Fortress of God

#### What Does Secure Fortress Mean, and How Can One Enter It?

The term “Secure Fortress” (*Hisn-e Amn*) may sound familiar to many of us—a safe refuge that provides salvation. In our material and daily lives, we are well aware of this concept, often using such expressions to describe certain people, memories, or places that offer us comfort and security. But is our heart or truth of existence left vulnerable and unprotected in this world?

There is a well-known *hadith* called *Silsilat al-Dhahab*, in which God has introduced the phrase “There is no deity but Allah” as His secure fortress —His *Hisn-e Amn*: “There is no deity but Allah” is my fortress. whoever enters my fortress shall be safe from my punishment” <sup>1</sup>. In previous lessons, we have explored the phrase “There is no deity but Allah” and its connection to different types of beloveds. We learned that this phrase is the key to structuring the hierarchy of love in every human being. A person’s level of humanity is determined by the extent of their connection to this innate truth and the practical application of it in their personal and social life.

According to the words of God and the infallible Imams (Peace be upon them), attaining the status of “There is no deity but Allah” comes with certain conditions— one of which is the acceptance of guardianship (*wilayah*), as Imam al-Ridha (Peace

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<sup>1</sup>. Shaykh al-Saduq, *Al-Tawhid*, trans. Seyed Ali Reza Rizvi, Book 2, Chapter 1, Hadith 23.

be upon him) explicitly mentions this condition in the *hadith of Silsilat al-Dhahab*<sup>2</sup>. Given the deep connection between knowing Allah and knowing the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them), in this discussion, we seek to understand how accepting the guardianship of the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) leads us to a deeper understanding of God and the status of “There is no deity but Allah,” ultimately placing us within the Secure Fortress. Recognizing the attributes and effects of the guardianship of the infallible Imams is the key that allows us to find a safe refuge. Through this understanding, we can navigate the path laid before us safely and reach the ultimate purpose of our creation.

### **Why Attaining the Status of “There Is No Deity but Allah” Is Essential?**

In dictionaries, the word *hisn* has various meanings, including “fortress,” “shelter,” “rampart,” “refuge,” and “a stronghold that cannot be penetrated.” Thus, *Hisn-e Amn* means “a secure fortress.”

To understand the connection between this concept and human beloveds, we must first address a fundamental question: Why is it necessary to attain the status of “There is no deity but Allah”? In previous discussions, we have mentioned that the essence of religion is nothing but the rejection of all beloveds except Allah and the realization of the phrase “There is no deity but Allah.” As humans, we are inherently infinity-seeking beings, yet we are separated from our origin and trapped in the

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<sup>2</sup>. Ibid.

veils and limitations of this world. According to God's divine plan, all of us must return to our true essence, where Allah becomes the sole beloved of our hearts.

We are lovers of perfection by *fitrah*, and everything we seek, whether objects or people, is desired because of the qualities they possess. No human being on this earth can remain content with a limited, worldly perspective. Even the excessive greed of the most ambitious figures in history stems from their desire to attain unlimited perfection. The absolute truth, pleasure and higher levels of life, freedom from limitations, and immortality are the driving forces behind all human pursuits. The problem, however, is that most of us go astray in our search for the manifestation of this infinity. Instead of seeking the infinite and unlimited Beloved, we settle for mortal, worldly beloveds. The assertion that "There is no deity but Allah" is an innate truth, not an exaggeration, as every action, effort, decision, relationship, behavior, and thought unconsciously aims to transcend the limitations of our existence and draw us closer to "There is no deity but Allah." Yet, when we choose the wrong path or follow misguided role models, we stray further from this ultimate truth.

If we truly internalize the essence of religion, meaning "There is no deity but Allah," and genuinely believe in it, we will make fewer mistakes in four essential areas: decisions, relationships, behavior, and thoughts. However, if we fail to understand this fundamental principle, we will pursue goals and make plans that are not in line with the purpose of our creation. Ultimately, what matters in our decisions, relationships, behaviors, and mindset—whether sacred or mundane—is if they bring us closer to the purpose for which we were created.

To truly know ourselves, our role in this world, and the extent of our progress toward bliss, we must examine how deeply we have connected with “There is no deity but Allah” and how effectively we have rejected false deities. As the Quran expresses, “Allah ‘alone’ is the truth, and what they invoke besides Him is falsehood” <sup>3</sup>. The extent to which the motto of “There is no deity but Allah” is realized within us is the scale of our humanity.

### **The Connection Between the Status of “There Is No Deity but Allah” and the Secure Fortress**

At the beginning of this discussion, we mentioned that the status of “There is no deity but Allah” is a secure fortress. To prove and truly believe in this truth, we must first have a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of the status of “There is no deity but Allah.”

When we speak of a secure fortress or refuge, we imagine a place or situation where we are safe from harm. Given that the status of “There is no deity but Allah” is described as the secure fortress, and considering the multi-dimensional nature of human existence, the question arises: Does attaining this status ensure the safety of all the dimensions of human existence, or does it only protect a specific part? To answer this question, let us first explore some characteristics of the status of “There is no deity but Allah.”

The truth of “There is no deity but Allah” means the subordination of all beloveds except Allah. However, it is important to note that accepting this truth does not

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<sup>3</sup>. Quran, 22:62

mean denying the beloveds of the lower dimensions of our being. These perfections and beloveds serve as tools and aids to help the spiritual dimension reach its ultimate goal.

If we have truly internalized the truth of “There is no deity but Allah” in our hearts and fully accepted it, then Allah will become the primary beloved in our hearts, and no other beloved can distract us. This very fact protects us from the harms of choosing limited and low perfections.

For instance, let us briefly revisit the years of adolescence. Adolescence marks the beginning of emotional and sexual maturity, a time of intense emotional surges. If you have experienced the taste of love for the opposite gender during this stage of life, you will likely recall a pure and passionate relationship that no limitation or problem could diminish; in fact, challenges often intensified the longing and desire between the two. During this time, both individuals are solely focused on finding a private space to be together, so consumed by their connection that they forget basic needs like sleep and food. Hunger and lack of sleep, which would typically cause discomfort, cannot hinder the intimacy of their shared experience.

This example of love and the deep longing it awakens in the heart serves as a powerful analogy for understanding the Secure Fortress of “There is no deity but Allah.” Here, we do not deny the existence of lower needs and qualities; rather, we emphasize that, under the overwhelming influence of love, these needs cannot impose limitations or cause harm to the existing loving relationship. Similarly, testifying to “There is no deity but Allah” in practice means that none of the beloveds of our lower dimensions hold dominion over our hearts. Our hearts have only one beloved and sovereign, which is Allah.

For someone whose heart is ruled by Allah, nothing other than this Beloved occupies his thoughts. He seeks nothing but Him, and all his relationships, decisions, thoughts, and actions are directed toward connecting with this Beloved. Natural instincts and lower perfections are no longer the criteria for his evaluation. When Allah becomes the central focus of our attention, the hardships and challenges of the lower dimensions of our existence no longer incapacitate us. This is the realization and attainment of the true meaning of “There is no deity but Allah”—the Secure Fortress for the human dimension of our existence. It is a status where none of the beloveds of the lower dimension of our being can disrupt our love for and connection with Allah.

### **The Connection Between Accepting Guardianship (*Wilayah*) and Attaining the Status of “There Is No Deity but Allah”**

To reach any status or rank, we must first know it, understand the conditions required to attain it, and discover the best and most reliable paths leading to it. The status of “There is no deity but Allah” has two fundamental prerequisites: monotheism (*Tawhid*) and guardianship (*Wilayah*).

The connection between these two is that guardianship serves as the means through which one can attain monotheism. Their relationship is so deeply intertwined that knowing the infallible Imam of one’s time is considered equivalent to knowing monotheism and attaining *ma’rifa*<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, to know God and reach the status of “There is no deity but Allah,” we must enter through the gateway of

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<sup>4</sup>. “People of each era know that Imam to whom obedience is obligatory for them.” (*Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol.5, p. 312)

guardianship and knowing the Infallible Imams. This means that achieving the ultimate purpose of our creation requires establishing an existential relationship with guardianship.

By accepting the guardianship of and aligning ourselves with the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them), we can reach the status of “There is no deity but Allah”; this connection reshapes our destiny, reorders our priorities, and harmonizes our lives with the divine hierarchy of love. One who adopts the lifestyle of the *Walīyyullah* (the divinely appointed guardian) will not easily fall into the traps of material world because accepting the divine hierarchy of love and truly believing in the phrase “There is no deity but Allah” diminish the significance of lower, worldly beloveds in his mind. Many of life’s difficulties arise from overvaluing the inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, and intellectual dimensions of our existence—along with the attachments they create. This misplaced focus enslaves us and pulls us away from the Secure Fortress of God.

Choosing a *Wilayah*-based lifestyle and aligning our hierarchy of love with God’s plan shields us from the harms of the material dimensions of our being. It ensures that hardships in the lower dimensions cannot disturb us—just as a billionaire remains unfazed by losing a few small banknotes.

However, if our life is not rooted in guardianship and we fail to align our thoughts and behaviors with the lifestyle of the Infallible experts, we will become like a seed that has not taken root in the ground, lacking stability and firmness<sup>5</sup>. Or we will be

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<sup>5</sup>. “... uprooted from the earth, having no stability.” (Quran, 14:26)

like a fetus that, due to being improperly positioned within the mother's womb, either faces miscarriage or a perilous birth.

### **The Importance and Necessity of Accepting Guardianship in Attaining the Secure Fortress**

To attain true monotheism, we must connect with the most perfect and infinite manifestation of God—the Infallible Imams (Peace be upon them). They hold the highest rank among all beings, while everything else reflects only a limited aspect of God. A finite reflection can never lead us to the Infinite Beloved. Since Allah has created human beings with infinite potential, He has also provided us with the most complete manifestations of Himself as role models, enabling us to fulfill our innate desire for perfection.

In every field we pursue, we require a role model or mentor who is an expert in that discipline. A true master imparts specialized knowledge and skills. Beyond all disciplines—whether inanimate, vegetative, animalistic, or intellective—our ultimate goal as human beings is to reflect divine attributes and attain absolute knowledge, power, beauty, and life. To achieve this, we need a mentor who has already perfected this path. Not just anyone can serve as our guide; only those who have reached the highest level of divine realization can lead us. The Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) are the only perfect examples capable of bringing us closer to our true origin—Allah—helping us enter His Secure Fortress and fulfill the purpose of our creation.

Choosing any beloved other than Allah diminishes and weakens us. The Household of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon them) help us structure our lives in a way

that directs us toward “There is no deity but Allah,” ensuring that by making Allah our ultimate beloved, we remain dignified and valuable.

In essence, accepting the guardianship of the Household of Prophet Muhammad is recognizing our true worth and status. Such awareness prevents us from selling ourselves short or settling for anything less than the value of a perfect human being. A person who knows his true worth is always joyful, calm, and hopeful. He is never humiliated by the world, does not grieve over worldly matters, and remains unshaken by the difficulties of the lower dimensions of existence. The true dimension of his being which is his spiritual or human dimension remains intact, untouched by hardships. Conversely, failing to acknowledge the status of the Infallible Imams—which in reality is the true status of humanity itself—leaves us weak and small, vulnerable to the pressures of life. Without this recognition, worldly struggles can humiliate and sadden us.

Sadness, anxiety, hopelessness, weakness, emptiness, defeat, misery, and darkness are the experiences of those who fail to place Allah at the top of their hierarchy of love and, as a result, remain outside His secure fortress.

The distinction between one who embraces the guardianship of the Infallible Imams and establishes an existential relationship with them, and one who rejects it, is akin to the difference between a person securely aboard a steadfast ship and one cast adrift, helpless, in the vast and perilous ocean. Even if the first person struggles with sins and mistakes, they remain within the ark. They may face consequences for their errors, but ultimately, they will reach the shore of salvation. However, someone who denies the guardianship is not even on the ship to begin the journey. No matter how much they worship, their efforts will not lead to

salvation because they lack the means to reach the divine shore. Thus, guardianship is the secure fortress and the ark of salvation that carries humanity safely to the shores of God's ultimate security.