

Spiritual Gems from Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765)

The Sufi recension of the Qurʾān commentary
ascribed to the Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq
as contained in
Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī's (d. 412/1021)
Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tafsīr

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Translated and Annotated
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FONS VITAE



SPIRITUAL GEMS
FROM
JAʿFAR AL-ŞĀDIQ

Bismi'llāhi'l-Raḥmāni'l-Raḥīm

In the Name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful

It is related from Ja'far b. Muḥammad that he said: The Book of God has four things: literal expression (*'ibārah*), allusion (*ishārah*), subtleties (*laṭā'if*) and the deepest realities (*ḥaqā'iq*).¹ The literal expression is for the commonalty (*'awāmm*), the allusion is for the elite (*khawāṣṣ*), the subtleties are for the friends [of God] (*awliyā'*)² and the deepest realities are for the prophets (*anbiyā'*).

﴿ 5 ﴾

سُورَةُ الْمَائِدَةِ

al-Mā'idah (The Table-Spread)

5:1

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

Yā ayyuhā'lladhīna āmanū

O ye who believe.

Concerning His [above] words, Ja'far b. Muḥammad said: Therein are four characteristics: a vocative; a metonymy; an allusion, and an attestation. The [word] *yā* is the vocative, and *ayyu* is the particularisation of the vocative; the *hā* is the metonymy; the [word] *alladhīna* is the allusion; and [the word] *āmanū* is the attestation.

5:1

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ

inna'llāha yaḥkumu mā yurīd

verily God ordains what He intends.

Ja'far said: (God) ordains what He intends (to ordain) and then brings to pass His intention (*irādah*) and His will (*mashī'ah*).⁶³ Then he who is content with His ordinance is at ease and has been guided to the way of his good conduct; while he who resents His ordinance nevertheless must undergo it, but has in it resentment and disgrace.

5:3

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ

(a)l-yawma akmaltu lakum dīnakum

this day I have perfected for you your faith.

Ja'far b. Muḥammad said: *This day* is a reference to the day that Muḥammad the Messenger of God ﷺ was sent, and the day of his prophetic message/mission.

5:18

يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ

yaghfiru liman yashā'u wa yu'adhdhibu man yashā'u

He forgives whom He wills (to forgive) and He chastises whom He wills (to chastise).

Ja'far said: *He forgives whom He wills (to forgive)*, as a grace to them; *and He chastises whom He wills (to chastise)*, justly.⁶⁴

5:35

وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ

wa'btaghū ilayhi'l-wasīlah

and seek unto Him a means of approach.

Ja'far said: Seek from Him closeness (to Him).