Textual, Inter-textual, and Meta-textual Analysis of the Narrations about Entering the World into an Egg

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Abstract

The responses of impeccable Imams to the question of entering the world into an egg, without changing the volume of both sides, are among the problematic narratives in the field of monotheism, the interpretation of which may be considered as knowing the impossible rational matter by using the analogy of entering the image of objects into the eye, which is not consistent with the content of the original question; the issue does not end there and receiving conflicting dual answers from the Imams to the same question and considering this matter as impossible, are among the other challenges in dealing with this category of hadiths. The present study has used a descriptive-analytical method to explain these hadiths and has found that scholars only accept the apparent indication of the narratives, considering this matter as impossible, and interpret or deny the narratives that have addressed the problem through a metaphorical representation of the world entering the eye. On the other hand, one can interpret some narratives that indicate the possibility of this matter by making changes to both sides and remaining

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silent, and present a new interpretation based on the theories of "Holography" and "Removal of Empty Space of Atoms" in contemporary sciences, in a way that it can be considered as a solution to resolve the contradiction. In fact, the Imams have sometimes given a precise and real answer to the narrators' current state and needs, and sometimes a metaphorical and tacit answer, so that neither the scholars remain ignorant of the truth nor a pretext for denying the power of Almighty God is created for the ignorant and the opponents. Therefore, merely benefiting from a strange appearance of a narrative or initially understanding it in conflict with reason, knowledge, epistemological geometry, etc., is not a sufficient reason for rejection and denial, and a precise understanding of the hadiths requires multidimensional studies that taking into account the knowledge of contemporary humanity can be one of the requirements that can change the world of hadith understanding.

Keywords: World, Egg, Holography, Removal of Empty Space of Atoms, Ikhtilāf al-Hadith, Mushkil al-Hadith.

Introduction

One of the problem narratives in the field of monotheism is the well-known narrative that recounts the question of the possibility of fitting the world into an egg without changing the volume of both sides. One of the narrations of this hadith is the account of the question posed by a heretic named Dīṣānī from Hishām ibn Ḥakam, asking 'Whether Almighty God is able to place the world in an egg in such a way that neither the egg becomes large nor the world becomes small?' Hishām, who was perplexed by the question, sought Imam Ṣādiq's (AS) help and, by using the analogy of taking everything in sight and placing it in the pupil of the eye, which is smaller than a lentil, Imam Ṣādiq gave a confirming answer to Dīṣānī, deeming this matter possible (Kulaynī, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 1, 79; Ṣadūq, (n.d.:) 122-124).

This question was not only raised by Dīṣānī during the time of

Imam Ṣādiq (AS) but also reported by other individuals and from other Imams (Ṣadūq, ibid: 130). In another set of narrations, the ability of God to perform such an act, with different literary styles, has been confirmed and expressed by Imam Ṣādiq, quoting from Imam Ali and Prophet Jesus, stating that God is not described as incapable and who is mightier than God, who makes the earth delicate and the egg immense (ibid: 127 and 130).

Interestingly, in other reports, a dual response from the Imams (AS) to this question has been given, and in contrast to the narratives that have considered the realization of such a hypothesis possible, there are narratives in which the impeccable Imam precisely denies the possibility of such an event in response to this very question and deems it impossible (ibid: 130).

Therefore, in these two categories of narratives, we face two fundamental problems. The first problem relates to the first group, which attributes the performance of a logically impossible act to God by mentioning an example that is not conceptually related to the essence of the question. It is not correct to attribute incapability to the Almighty, who is absolute and real, and it is not permissible to even entertain the thought that He is incapable (Hosseini Ameli, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 76). However, the question arises 'Whether it is possible to merely assume the virtual containment of a small body within a larger body, similar to the actual containment of one body within another?' In other words, the question is real, but the answer is metaphoric. Furthermore, the act of forming an image and reflecting the light of objects in the eye's pupil is not the same as placing an actual body within another body. The second

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question is 'Whether it is possible to delicately place the earth inside an egg, with the only outcome being the egg becoming heavy?' These are among the issues that have posed a challenge to this category of narratives and require clarification and explanation (Sayyid Murtaḍā, 1984 AD/1405 AH: 1, 411).

The second problem relates to the contradiction and duality in the response to a single question. Ultimately, 'Is it possible for the world to fit into an egg without changing, or is it impossible?' Among these narratives, there is a narration that poses a challenge by suggesting the impossible for the Almighty, and otherwise, the narratives that deny this act are not problem on their own, but they need to be addressed in the context of contradiction. Therefore, the analysis of these narratives has employed two branches of knowledge: The knowledge of Mushkil al-Hadith and the knowledge of Ikhtilāf al-Hadith.

1. Background and Method

Until now, independent hadith research with the approach of addressing the mentioned questions has not been carried out, and Islamic scholars, including hadith scholars, theologians, and others, have mostly focused on explaining the meaning of the hadith in their writings. Scholars such as Sayyid Murtaḍā (1984 AD/1405 AH: 1, 411), Muḥaqqiq Dāmād (1992 AD/1413 AH: 182-183), Mullā Ṣadrā (1987 AD/1366 SH: 3, 29), Fayḍ Kāshānī (1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 323 and 2004 AD/1383 SH: 138), Qāḍī Saʿīd Qumī (n.d.: 2, 384-385), Allamah Majlisī (1982 AD/1403 AH: 4, 142 and 58, 253), and others have written extensively on the explanation of hadiths, but the book

"Sharḥ Ḥadīth Bayḍah" by Raḍī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn Khānsārī can be considered the only independent work on the explanation of this hadith. The author has attempted to explain the meaning of the hadith from his own perspective, but the text does not address the issues raised in response to this narration and its answers. Therefore, the present study is the first work to independently collect, analyze, and compare the materials, and to address and analyze the discussions about this hadith and answer the questions surrounding it using a descriptive-analytical method.

2. Hadith Validating

The validating of hadith is accomplished through attention to its issuance and ensuring the authenticity of its text. The analysis and evaluation of the "Source," "Chain of Transmission," and "Authenticity of the Text" are particularly important in achieving the issuance of the hadith. "Authenticity Validating of Issuance" is responsible for investigating the accuracy or inaccuracy of attributing the statement to the impeccable Imam (AS). In the "Textual Authenticity Validation" of the hadith, the types of narration and differences in reports are examined, and efforts are made to reach a common denominator in the narrations for a proper evaluation of the transmitted text.

2.1. Issuance Authenticity Validating

Validating of the hadith attribution to the impeccable Imam (issuance authenticity or issuance validating) and verifying its issuance are

among the initial stages in understanding narrations. Failure to verify the attribution of a narration to the impeccable Imam leads to the invalidity of that hadith. Therefore, any reading of the texts without proper validation has no value in religious and hadith studies. It is clear that once the lack of attribution of narrations to the impeccable Imam is proven; all the issues and problems mentioned earlier will be resolved on their own. This is because conflicts in reports and teachings only arise when both sides of the conflict are not weak in terms of attribution to the sources of knowledge (Quran and Sunnah).

2.2. Etymology and Analyzing Hadith Sources

Part of the credibility of transmitted data is dependent on the credibility of the sources from which the narrations have been reported. The more the sources are powerful, numerous, reliable, and credible, the stronger the attribution of the evaluated hadith to the impeccable Imam (AS) becomes.

Both categories of narrations referring to the introduction of the world into the egg have been reported by Shaykh Kulaynī (d. 329 AH) in al-Kāfī (1984 AD/1363 SH: 1, 79) with one sanad and Shaykh Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH) in al-Tawḥīd (n.d.: 122, 124, 127, and 130) with five sanads. However, Shaykh Ṭūsī in al-Iḥtijāj has also mentioned this hadith but has cut it and only addressed the ending part of the hadith. Since the problem with this hadith is in its beginning, Ṭūsī's narration is not considered as a source of transmission for the "Mushkil." (Ṭabarsī, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 2, 72)

Therefore, the written origin of this hadith goes back to the 4th

century. However, since this question and answer is reported from Imam Ali, Imam Ṣādiq, and Imam Riḍā (AS), it shows that the concept of the unity of power was still a subject of discussion from the early days of Islam until the time of Imam Riḍā (AS) and did not require any further explanation from the impeccable Imams. It is still one of the topics of Islamic theology.

3. Textual and Inter.textual Analysis and Isnād of Hadith

As mentioned above, there are two categories of narrations regarding the attribution of power to Allah over impossible matters. The first category includes narrations that sometimes provide a positive answer to the question of the narrators, with a metaphorical example mentioned, from Imam Ṣādiq and Imam Riḍā (AS), and sometimes, they introduce this matter as possible, according to Imam Ali and prophet Jesus, and Allah as capable of making the world smaller than an eye or even smaller, and making the earth heavier. Narrations in this category include three types of long, medium, and short reports. The long narration starts with the question of Dīṣānī to Hishām and after Hishām raises the issue to Imam Ṣādiq (AS), he answers that the same God who can put everything you see in the world, inside your eye, which is as small as a lentil or even smaller, can undoubtedly put the world in an egg. Dīṣānī also goes personally to Imam Ali (AS) after hearing the answer from Hishām and asks him to guide him to his God. Imam Ali (AS) guides him with a graceful answer and this narration ends with the explanation of how Dīṣānī became a believer (Kulaynī, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 1, 79; Ṣadūq, (n.d.): 122-124).

The medium narration is Imam Riḍā's (AS) answer to a man who asks about Allah's ability to put the heavens, earth, and everything in them inside an egg. Imam Ali (AS) points to his eye, which is smaller than an egg, and says that the heavens and the earth can fit in it, and when Allah wills, He can take away his ability to see (Ṣadūq, (n.d.): 130).

Finally, the short narration is Imam Ṣādiq's (AS) report, quoting Imam Ali (AS) and Prophet Jesus, who, in response to a similar question, warn that Allah cannot be described as powerless and ask who is more capable than Allah to make the earth soft and the egg huge (ibid: 127). In other words, it is possible for the earth to become soft and fit inside an egg, and in that case, the only thing that happens is the heaviness [enormity] of the egg.

On the other hand, the second category includes narrations that apparently conflict with the first category, and they deny the attribution of power to Allah over impossible matters. These narrations, attributed to Imam Ali (AS), provide a negative answer to the question of the narrators.

Imam Ṣādiq (AS) reports that Imam Ali (AS), in response to a question from a questioner, reminds that Allah is not described as powerless and says: "What you have asked of me is impossible." (Ṣadūq: 130) These narrations, with a total of 6 sanads (1 in Kāfī and 5 in Tawḥīd), have been narrated through the Asanid network and the compilation of their reports (Figure 1 and Appendix 1), indicating that the content of these narrations, with at least 3 narrators in each level, is from the "Mustafīḍāt" of Shia.

3.1. Meta.textual Analysis and Scholars' Attention to Problem Solving

In dealing with these apparently conflicting narrations, the main point is that the narrations indicating the impossibility of power over the impossible are in the position of expressing the truth, and their practical application is acceptable and unproblematic. However, the narrations that, on the contrary, whether in the form of a metaphorical example or assuming the softening of the earth indicate the possibility of having power over the impossible, have an apparently unacceptable appearance. Therefore, most scholars focus on analyzing the second type of narrations.

The question here is: 'Can an analysis of the appearance of the second category of narrations be presented that is acceptable without interpretation?!' Scholars have given different answers to this question by taking the three approaches of "Acceptance-Explanatory," "Acceptance-Interpretive," and "Denial."

3.1.1. Acceptance Approach

In the acceptance approach, there are two assumed forms for these texts, one possible and the other impossible. The possible form is to make the earth soft and change its volume, and to make the egg heavy while maintaining its size. The impossible form is to place the earth inside the egg while maintaining its current volume and size, assuming that the egg remains the same size and weight.

Scholars who have spoken about the validity of the apparent and speculative appearance of these narrations generally agree on the possible form, not the impossible form.

3.1.1.1. Porosity and Removing of Empty Space in Atoms

This hypothesis is now mostly proposed by contemporary scientists in non-religious fields such as chemistry and physics, and some have speculated that Muslim chemists and physicists were the first to conceive of the apparent acceptance of these narrations (Sadeghi, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 117).

Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050 AH) in explaining the meaning of the term "Talṭīf al-Arḍ" indirectly referred to the possibility of a massive body entering a smaller one through porosity (deleting its emptiness), (ibid, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 3, 30) but not by comparing it to the scientific theories of chemistry and physics that emerged in the 21st century.

In line with his view, Allamah Majlisī (d. 1110 AH) also considered one of the ways of accepting it to be the transportation of the apparent meaning of the narrations, meaning that anything that can be imagined from the meaning of a large body entering a small one is possible, but it requires a transformation of one or both sides. This hypothesis is possible in the Almighty God's power, as nothing is impossible for Him, as long as it has meaning and potentiality (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 260). According to this view, Allamah Majlisī considered this hypothesis as possible without referring to any particular change or transformation of both sides. In fact, Mullā Ṣadrā and Allamah Majlisī have considered the placement of these two in each other as conditional on change.

The possible state that these two scientists have hypothesized, but could not express due to human scientific deficiencies in their time, has been expressed by contemporary empirical scientists as a definite

theory, through which a scientific and different interpretation of the narrations on the power of softening the earth is presented, and their apparent acceptance will be without any problems.

According to the latest theories, each atom has a nucleus and a cloud of electrons that revolve around the nucleus. Protons and neutrons are the constituent particles of the atomic nucleus, which are also known as nucleons; the mass of a proton is 1837 times that of an electron, and the mass of a neutron is 1840 times that of an electron. Therefore, electrons have negligible mass compared to the particles in the nucleus, and practically, the mass of an atom is regarding the mass of its nucleus.

Most of the space within an atom is empty, as evidenced by the comparison of the volume of an atom and its nucleus. The volume of an atom can be calculated based on its radius; the typical atomic radius is equal to one angstrom (10^{-10} meters) (Mortimer, R. G. (2008), p. 8). The diameter of an atomic nucleus ranges from 1.7 to 11.7 fathometers (1.7×10^{-15} to 11.7×10^{-15}), with the small number corresponding to the diameter of a hydrogen atom and the large number to uranium (Angeli, I.; Marinova, K.P. 2013: 69-95).

For example, if we consider a sphere with a radius of 1 centimeter as the atomic nucleus, its electrons would be moving at a distance of 1 kilometer from our hypothetical sphere. The space between the nucleus and the electrons is completely empty. Considering the geometric rules that calculate the volume of a spherical shape with

radius R:"$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi R^3$" assuming the spherical nature of the atom and its nucleus, we have the following proportional relationship between their volumes:

$$\frac{V \text{ (atom volume)}}{V \text{ (nuclei volume)}} = \frac{\frac{4}{3}\pi \times (10^{-10})^3}{\frac{4}{3}\pi \times (10^{-15})^3} = \frac{10^{-30}}{10^{-45}} = 10^{15}$$

This proportion implies that within an atom, 10^{15} atomic nuclei can fit, indicating the significant emptiness within an atom.

Now, if we were to remove the empty spaces inside atoms from the human body, the entire human body would fit into the tip of a needle. Therefore, if we were to eliminate the empty spaces within atoms, we would be able to place a human in a speck of dust, as 99.99% of the human body is composed of empty space[1], or compress all the existing humans on Earth into a sugar cube. This also holds true for the Earth,[2] as if we were to remove the empty space between the Earth's atoms (the distance between the atomic nucleus and the electrons), the entire volume of the Earth, with all its grandeur, would shrink to the size of an orange, while its weight, equal to the current weight of the Earth, 5972 billion billion tons, would remain unchanged.[3]

Therefore, the scientific answer to the question of whether God can fit a

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1. www.businessinsider.com. Available time: 1397/09/15.

2. Jame Jam Newspaper, no. 4785; date: 1395/12/24, p.20.

3. Cf. NASA information around the earth: www.nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov. Available time: 1397/11/28.

universe inside an egg without making the universe small or the egg large is affirmative. Perhaps we can relate the Imam response to this particular situation, meaning that the concept of softening the earth involves removing the gaps and distances between its components as much as possible, and then placing it inside an egg without increasing the size of the egg, although it would become heavy and weighty.

Of course, this answer may face three challenges. Firstly, by eliminating the empty space between the electron and the nucleus, it will fundamentally change the physical rules and equations governing atoms, particles, the universe, and also fundamental physical concepts. Secondly, if the atom were to change in such a way that the empty space between the electron and the nucleus no longer existed, the egg would also follow this principle and become much smaller, unable to contain the world within itself.

In response to these two challenges, it can be said that the questioner's inquiry about the "Possibility or Impossibility" has such power, not to change the essence and nature of these two, and the response of Imam also indicates the same "Possibility."

3.1.1.2. Holography

In the world of experimental sciences, another aspect of the concept of softening the earth has been presented, meaning that the purpose of softening the earth is the reflection of its image in the eye's lens, which is in fact the same, but its softened state is perceived in the eye without any change occurring on either side. This phenomenon, well-known in the modern scientific world as "Holographic," closely

resembles the response presented by Imam in the form of an example (fitting the world into the pupil of an eye), and Islamic scholars have embraced it as a metaphor.

Perhaps we can present a beautiful explanation of Imam Ali's metaphor from the language of physicists, quantum scientists, and physiologists. The holographic phenomenon is very extensive, but what can be utilized from it in the elucidation of Imam Ali's words are the discussions raised in the area of "Creating three-dimensional images in holography." The three-dimensional state of a hologram is sometimes so real and convincing that you can walk around it and look at it from different angles. However, if you try to touch it, your fingers will pass through it. Unlike regular photographs, each part of a holographic film contains all the information of the entire film. Therefore, if we were to cut a holographic page into pieces, each piece would contain the entire image.

Vision is also a holographic matter; the nature of a hologram is based on the theory of the "Whole is in every part."

In this phenomenon, it is well seen that a small part of an image can depict a complete picture of the desired object. The brain creates and projects images by employing a kind of internal hologram, so a small piece of a hologram can also reproduce everything that the eye sees (For more information on holography, cf. Michael, (n.d.), Chapter 1: "A Fresh and Exceptional Look at Reality," pp. 50-100).

Therefore, in response to the above question of whether God can place the universe in an egg, it can be said that God has created the

universe in this same manner and has hidden a world in every particle of existence, demonstrating His power. Just as each part of a hologram contains the entire image, each part of the universe also encompasses the whole; thus, an image of a part of the universe in the eye will indeed be a three-dimensional image of the entire universe. Therefore, the metaphor of Imam regarding the similarity of the reflection of the world in the eye to placing the world in an egg is not merely figurative, but a report of a reality; a reality with which the universe is constantly engaged.

3.1.2. Interpretative Approach

Most Islamic scholars have interpreted the narrations that imply the "Impossibility" or "Possibility of placing the image of the world in the eye" with a seven-fold semantic approach. In fact, these scholars do not accept the conceptual meaning that is inferred from the words and combinations, but by assuming the true intention of the impeccable Imam regarding interpretative meanings, they consider it acceptable.

3.1.2.1. Referring to the Created Deficiency, not a Creator

Many scholars (Mīrdāmād, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 182-183; Ṣadr al-Mutaʾallihīn, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 3, 29; ḤUsaynī ʿĀmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 76-78; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 323; ibid: 2004 AD/1383 SH: 138; Qumī, (n.d.): 2, 384-385; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 4, 142 and 58, 253; Māzandarānī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 3, 38; Jazāʾirī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 320; Hāshimī Khuʾī, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 5, 11; Malikī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 330) believe that the Almighty God is not described as incapable or powerless, but rather

the impossibility of placing the world in an egg without any change in either of them is a matter of inherent impossibilities, not a deficiency in the power of the Almighty God. Therefore, the impossibility and inherent negation of this proposition return to the deficiency of the creation (egg and world), not the deficiency of the creator (Almighty God). In other words, among the influential conditions of creation in the performance of an action, the capability to accept the effect of the agent lies with the matter. When this receptivity is not possible, the deficiency will be from the matter, not from the agent; just as the existence of a partner for the Almighty God or the coexistence of contradictions that do not exist externally or in the mind, and reason only conceives the concept through synthesis.

This view, which Fayḍ Kāshānī considers a rational response to the questioner (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 323; ibid: 2004 AD/1383 SH: 138), has been expressed differently by Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn. He argues that inherent impossibilities do not have a nature or essence to be within the realm of possibility for the Almighty God. Therefore, the universal power and divine grace encompass everything, but inherent impossibilities do not have the capacity for this power to be related to them. Instead, the mind invents a false concept through synthesis and labels it as a concept that is invalid and impossible to create, both in reality and mentally (Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 3, 29).

3.1.2.2. Convincing Answer Appropriate with Questioner Understanding

84 Sayyid Murtaḍā, who believes in the fabricating of this narration,

states with the assumption of the weak possibility of the narration issuance authenticity, perhaps Imam Ṣādiq (AS), regarding the fact that the questioner was from the hypocrites and disbelievers of the prophets and was not aware of the difference between the possible and the impossible, responded in a way that would not lead to the negation of the power and incapability of the Almighty God. Therefore, the Imam's response is based on the assumption that if this action was possible, then God was capable of doing it, otherwise Imam himself was aware that such a response was not justified. In Sayyid Murtaḍā's view, this is the closest interpretation that can be presented from this malicious report (Sayyid Murtaḍā, 1984 AD/1405 AH: 1, 411). This weak possibility, according to Allamah Majlisī, is considered the most accurate interpretation, with the apparent difference that he does not consider the hadith as fabricated and does not consider this interpretation as weak, but rather considers it the most apparent interpretation. In his view, the deficiency in understanding the questioner's logic and the Imam's explicit response leading to the negation of the power of the Almighty God by the opposing questioner, has caused the Imam to respond in a similar way, as he was aware that the questioner did not understand the difference between the actual existence and the impression. Therefore, the Imam's response is to convince him and make him accept it, so that he does not return and engage in argumentation (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 4, 142 and 58, 253); before Allamah Majlisī, Mullā Ṣadrā and Mullā Ṣālih also considered this view to be correct. From Mullā Ṣadrā's point of view, the convincing response of the Imam may

be based on the famous premise that the majority of scholars agree with, and that is that the visibility of the external world in the eye does not conflict with the actual visible, and this response is only to make the opponent accept and submit (Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 3, 29). Therefore, the Imam simply gave the answer without paying attention to the introduction of the "Essence" or "Form" of the great body into the small one, just as the questioner, without attention, only wants his assumption to be proven in any way. In fact, this introduction of the existence of a shadowy (spectral) entity in the senses will be an example of the answer to the questioner without assuming actuality or metaphoric (Māzandarānī, 2000 AD/1421 SH: 3, 38). Therefore, the Imam's response is based on the conditions and circumstances of the questioner, as a response that explicitly denies the power of the Almighty God, adds to the confusion of the questioner who is a rancorous; so, Imam answered and convinced him (Jazā'irī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 320; Ṭurayḥī, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 3, 450).

3.1.2.3. Allowed, not the Truth (Mental Existence, not Objective)

Some commentators believe that if the assumption and mental imagery are involved (meaning it is a virtual assumption, not a real one), then in that case, in terms of the existence of sensory and mental impressions, God is capable of performing this insertion, just as the entire world can be seen in a smaller eye. Therefore, the intention of the narration is not the actual existence, but rather a conceptual and mental existence (Ḥusaynī ʿĀmilī, 2004 AD/1425 AH: 76 and 78).

Allamah Majlisī presents the same concept with a slight difference and explains the Dīṣānī malicious intent of the question. From his perspective, one possible interpretation of the narration is that the malicious Dīṣānī's intention could have been the principle of permissibility or non-permissibility of the possibility of a large body being encompassed by a small body, in any way possible (whether real or metaphoric, etc.). Imam Ali referred to the possibility of the existence of a spectral entity (a ghostly presence) of a large body in the senses and material of a small body, as a form of metaphoric indication (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 4, 142).

Jazā'irī also considers Imam's response to be different from the response presented in the question and answer session of Imam Ali (AS) and Prophet Jesus, and considers it a convincing and real response, as it seems that Satan or whoever asked this question to Imam Ali was more knowledgeable than Dīṣānī and would not be satisfied with a convincing response (Jazā'irī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 1, 320).

3.1.2.4. Elimination of the Substantial Dimensions and the Illusion of Incapacity in the Almighty God

According to Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, the narration is in the position of removing the assumption of incapability by providing an example and proving its equivalent (Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 182-183). Ḥusaynī 'Āmilī also accepts this view (2004 AD/1425 AH: 76-78). Allamah Majlisī's explanation of this perspective is that Imam Ali's (AS) reason for referring to the ability to see the world with the eye could be solely to remove the illusion of attributing incapability to

the Almighty God, so as not to imply the negation of power from performing an impossible action onto the incapability of the Almighty God, and nothing more than this (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 4, 142).

3.1.2.5. Metaphor from Believer Heart Surrounding on the World

Qāḍī Saʾīd Qumī believes that the concept of the world fitting into an egg can be a metaphorical interpretation of the world fitting into the soul and heart of a mystic. Just as in the Hadith Qudsī "Lā Yasaʿanī Arḍī wa lā Samāʾī wa Yasaʿanī Qalbu ʿAbdī Muʾmin," the "Qalb (heart)" refers to the divine subtlety that in ancient wisdom was called the "Badhr Bārī" and also the "Ṭāʾir ʿArshī." It is a metaphor for the possibility that flight originates from the egg, which can also be referred to as "al-Bayḍah." (Qumī, (n.d.): 2, 384-385)

3.1.2.6. The Best Argumentation

According to Fayḍ Kāshānī, the Imam's response falls under the category of "The Best Response in Argumentation." (Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 1, 323) However, this view has some problems and has been criticized. The concept of argumentation does not apply in this context; the meaning of argumentation is to present a matter to the opponent, even if it is famous or acknowledged by them, even if it is not true in our belief. However, in this case, the matter that could be the basis for argumentation is that all the objects of the world, with the amount of greatness they have, are considered in the context of external existence in the pupil of the eye. The validity of this context is not only unknown to Dīṣānī, but no Muslim or atheist would advocate for it. This kind of argument would be fallacious for

silencing the opponent, and it is not worthy of the status of Imam Ali, especially in such a great matter that forms the basis of religion and faith and should be understood with certainty and evidence (cf. Baḥrānī, (n.d.): 1, 149).

3.1.2.7. A Brief Violation of the Speaking Soul Immaterial

Mullā Khalīl Qazvīnī believes that similar to the belief of philosophers (such as Aristotle), Dīṣānī's intention in asking the question is to argue for the speaking soul immaterial, contrary to the belief of the people of Islam, who do not believe in the immaterial existence other than the Almighty God. If the soul is not immaterial and is corporeal, it would have a specific size and would not be able to perceive a larger body than itself, as it would be necessary for the large to enter the small without any change in the sides, which is impossible inherently. Furthermore, nobody can perceive another body without contact with all its parts. Therefore, Imam's response is a general refutation of this belief of Dīṣānī. If this argument is correct, the eye should be corporeal to not perceive a body larger than itself. Therefore, the perception of the speaking soul, based on corporeality, would also be the same. As a result, what the questioner considered inherently impossible is not impossible; and if we do not consider the perception of the eye as entering into the eye, then the second premise of Dīṣānī, that the perception of a body without contact with its parts is possible, will be invalid (Qazvīnī, 2008 AD/1429 AH: 2, 200).

We can critique this view in several respects. First, the terms "Speaking Soul," and its being immaterial or corporeal, are not

mentioned in any of the phrases of the narration, whether in the questioner's query or in Imam Ali's response. This matter is not something that requires precaution or concealment, and it is not something that should not be expressed. Therefore, attributing this meaning to the words is an unfounded attribution. Second, if Dīṣānī's intention is as such, the clarification and explanation of Imam Ali about the power of God to bring the large into the small would be in vain; because the question is not about power or lack of power, but rather the explanation of Imam Ali should be in the context of expressing the possibility and impossibility of this meaning so that Hishām can argue for immaterial based on the judgment of impossibility; otherwise, it would contradict Dīṣānī's intention. Third, Aristotle did not make such an argument for being the speaking soul immaterial, and what Qazvīnī has mentioned is based on the Persian translation of Aristotle's treatise by Bābā Afḍal Kāshī, which has led to such an interpretation. Fourth, the assumption that the belief of muslims in the non-existence of any immaterial other than Allah is also not correct. Scholars such as Khaja Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī in "Tajrīd al-ʿAqāʾid" have a section on the essence and immaterial essence and have doubted the existence of the immaterial intellect and stated that there is no evidence for its impossibility, and the evidence for its existence is present. He also considered the speaking soul as an immaterial essence and has presented several arguments for it, and so on (For more information on criticisms of this view, cf. Baḥrānī, (n.d.): 1, 150-153).

3.1.3. Denial Approach

It should be noted that Sayyid Murtaḍā is the only one who preferred to rejection of hadith rather than acceptance it. The identical and accurate measurement of the observation of the behavior of the universe from the perspective of the unaware of peace be upon him, as well as the absence of conflict between the question arising from the penetration of the world into the egg and the response of the transformation of the image of the world in human vision, indicates: He argues that the Shia and Sunni books are not free from errors and false discussions, such as similitude, predestination, vision, and the ancientness of attributes. Therefore, criticism of hadith and its presentation to reason is necessary. If reason approves it, its presentation with valid evidence such as the Quran will be necessary. If it appears to be valid, the truthfulness and reliability of the narrator will be confirmed. Otherwise, the single hadith narrator's truthfulness will not be sufficient for the validity of the narration. In fact, there are two situations when facing such narrations that seem contrary to truth and validity. The first is to interpret it with a meaning close to the apparent and without affectation and arbitrariness (without clear indication), in which case it is permissible to consider it true. The second is when there is no way to interpret it without affectation, in which case we will be certain of its falsehood. This narration (the entry of the world into an egg) is one of the narrations that seem to prescribe an impossible matter, so it will necessarily be corrupt, even if great scholars like Kulaynī and others have mentioned them in their

books. Most likely, the preference is to fabricate and invent these narrations that have apparent impossibilities and falsehoods. Of course, it is possible to interpret this apparently malicious narration in a way that is far from the apparent indication (with affectation and arbitrariness) (Sayyid Murtaḍā, 1984 AD/1405 AH: 1, 411). Sayyid Murtaḍā's interpretive view, which is presented in a very weak hypothetical form and accompanied by affectation, is the same interpretation that was previously mentioned under the title "A convincing response consistent with the understanding of the questioner." In his view, the interpretation of this narration falls under the category of interpretation with affectation and arbitrariness. Therefore, it does not appear valid, and its denial is preferable. This point of confrontation in his approach as a prominent rational scholar, with Allamah Majlisī as a prominent transmitted scholar, shows that he considers Sayyid Murtaḍā's interpretive view as the most valid semantic interpretation of the narration (cf. Discussion of "A convincing response consistent with the understanding of the questioner" in this research).

Conclusion

The discussion about the relationship of God's power to impossible matters, including theological discussions, has been ongoing from the time of the presence of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) during a long period in the era of the Imamate of Imam Ali (AS) to the time of the later

Imams (Imam Riḍā), and the question of such matters has continued.

On the other hand, the circumstances of the narrators of these hadiths are also noteworthy, as the reporters are mainly among the theologians and the companions of the first rank, such as individuals like Bazanṭī, Hishām ibn Ḥakam, Ibn Abī 'Umayr, Abān ibn 'Uthmān, and 'Umar ibn Udhaynah, who are mostly from the companions of consensus. In contrast, the questioners of this discussion from the Imams (AS) are either ordinary individuals mentioned as a "Man" or knowledgeable but defiant individuals such as Iblīs and Dīṣānī, which indicates that this question arises either from the ignorance and illiteracy of the questioners or from knowledge accompanied by hostility and enmity. Now, considering these points, the beauty of the Imams' answers is understood, as they have given responses that are sometimes precise and real and sometimes metaphorical and tacit, to meet the different circumstances and needs of the narrators, so that scholars do not remain uninformed of the truth, and no pretext for denying the power of the Almighty God is created for the ignorant and defiant. Considering the scholarly character and the power of argument of Hishām ibn Ḥakam, it is highly probable that he understood the inherent impossibility of Dīṣānī's question, but the reason for not answering is that he knows that by pointing out the impossibility of the question, Dīṣānī, who has posed such a question out of defiance, will not be convinced. In fact, the message of Dīṣānī's question is to limit the power of the Almighty God. Therefore, he considered caution as a condition of reason and sought help from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) to provide an answer that covers the concern of not denying the

power of the Almighty God, and the occurrence of such caution from a believer is very scholarly and beautiful.
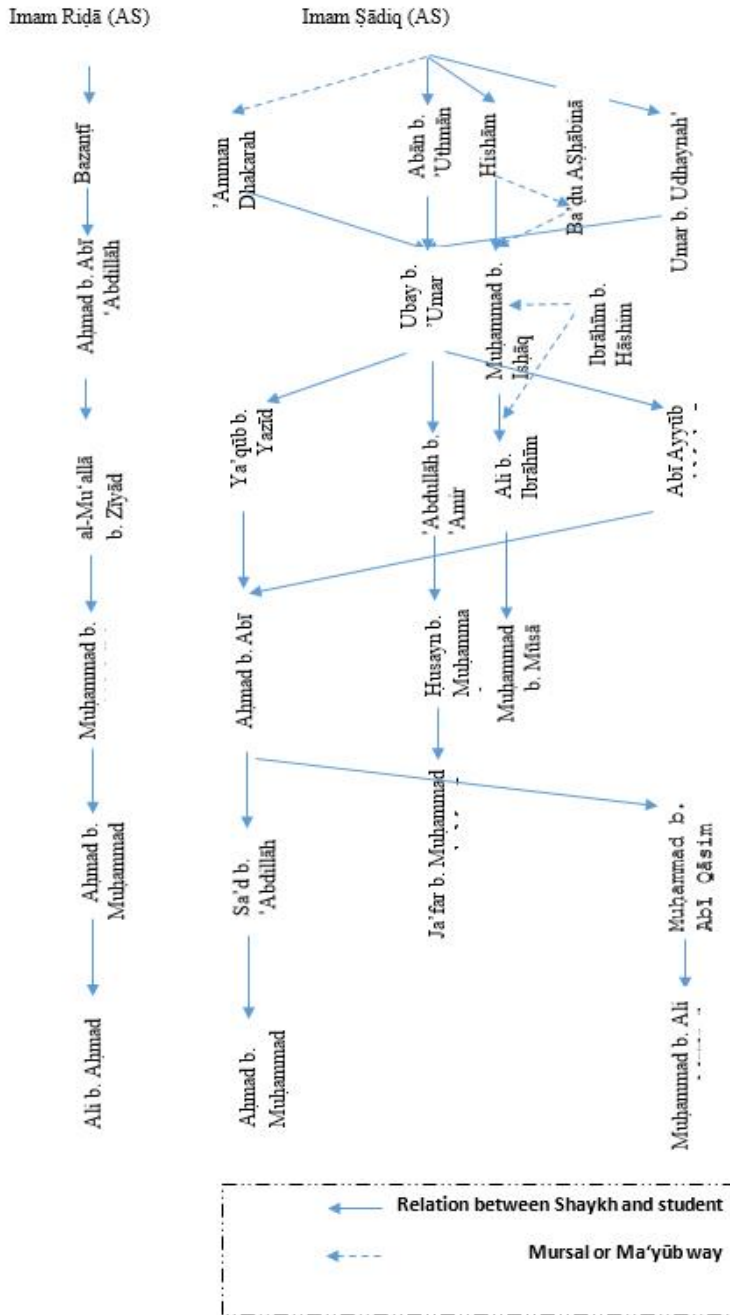
Except for Sayyid Murtaḍā, the majority of Shia scholars, both rationalists and traditionalists, have either accepted or interpreted this narration, and their acceptance not only does not result in affectation and arbitrariness, but also necessitates precision in multi-dimensional approach to understanding the hadith and negating purely rational and one-dimensional analysis. Interestingly, the guesses and opinions of these two groups are very close to each other in a way that a kind of similarity and intellectual inclination in this area is evident between them. Seeing the names of Mīr Dāmād, Mullā Ṣadrā, Badr al-Din al-ʿĀmilī, Fayḍ Kāshānī, Qāḍī Saʾīd Qumī, ʿAllamah Majlisī, Māzandarānī, Jazāʾirī, Hāshimī Khuʾī, etc., alongside each other, who belong to two different groups of rationalists and traditionalists, shows that the criterion of rationalism and traditionalism has no effect on adopting a different approach to this narration, and their difference lies only in the style of analysis and expression of the semantic aspects that they present in line with their scientific findings.

Another important point is that attention to modern sciences and knowledge can provide a new interpretation of a narration and sometimes lead to the discovery of a different concept and the defense or rejection of a narration. Therefore, merely benefiting from the outward appearance of a narration, or its initial understanding conflicting with reason, knowledge, epistemological geometry, etc., is not a precise reason for its rejection and denial. A precise understanding of the hadith requires comprehensive examinations.

Appendix 1

Hadith Text	Imam	Hadith Isnād	source	
A Laka Rabb? Faqāla: Balī, Qāla A Qādiru Huwa? Qāla: Na'am Qādirun Qāhirun Qāla: Yaqdiru an Yadkhula al-Dunyā Kulluhā al-Baydatu lā Takburu al- Baydatu wa lā Taṣgharu al-Dunyā? Qāla Hishām: al-Naẓirah… Yā Hishām Fanẓur Amāmaka wa Fawqaka wa Akhbaranī bimā Tarā Faqāla: Arā Samā'an wa Arḍan wa Dawran wa Quṣūran wa Birārī wa Jibālan wa Anhāran Faqāla lahū Abū 'Abdallāhi (AS): Innalladhī Qadara an Yadkhula Alladhī Tarāhu al-'Adasah wa Aqalla Minhā Qādirun an Yadkhula al-Dunyā Kulluhā al-Baydah lā Taṣghiru al-Dunyā wa lā Takbiru al-Baydah…	Al.Ṣādiq (AS)	Ali b. Ibrahim, 'an Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Khafāf aw 'an Abīhi 'an Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Qāla: In 'Abdallāh al-Dīṣānī Sa'ala Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.	(329 AD)Kafī Kolaynī	1.
		Ḥaddathanā Muḥammad b. al-Mutawakkil Qāla: Ḥaddathanā Ali b. Ibrahim b. Hāshim 'an Muḥammad b. Abī Isḥāq al-Khafāf, Qāla: Ḥaddathanī 'Iddatun min Aṣḥābinā an 'Abdallāhi al-Dīṣānī Annī Hishām b. al-Ḥakam.		
Jā'a Rajulun Ilā al-Riḍā' Qāla: Hal Yaqdiru Rabbika an Yaj'al al-Samāwātu wal Arḍu wa mā Baynahumā fī Baydah? Qāla: Na'am wa fī Aṣghari min al-Baydah qad Ja'alahā fī 'Aynaka wa Hīya Aqalla min al-Baydah, li Annaka Idhā Fataḥtahā 'Āyanat al-Samā' wal Arḍa wa mā Baynahumā walaw Shā'a li A'mālika 'anhā	Al.Riḍā (AS)	Ḥaddathanā Ali b. Aḥmad 'an 'Abdallāhi al-Barqī Qāla: Ḥaddathanā Abī 'an Jaddihī Aḥmad b. Abī 'Abdallāhi 'an Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr Qāla:	(381 AD) Al-Tawḥīd ṣadūq	
Jā'a Rajulun Ilā Amīr al-Mu'minīn Qāla: A Yaqdiru an Yadkhula al-Arḍa fī Baydati wa lā Yaṣghiru al-Arḍa wa lā Yakburu al-Baydata? Faqāla: Waylaka Inna Allāha lā Yūṣifa bil 'Ajza wa man Aqdara mimman Yalṭafu al-Arḍa wa Ya'ẓumu al-Baydata.	Al.Ṣādiq (AS)	Ḥaddathanā Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Masrūr Qāl: Ḥaddathanā al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. 'Āmir 'Abdallāhi b. 'Āmir 'an ibn Abī 'Umayr 'an Abān b. 'Uthmān.		
Qīla li Amīr al-Mu'minīn Hal Yaqdiru Rabbuka an Yadkhula al-Dunyā aw Yakbura al-Baydah? Qāla: Inna Allāha Tabāraka wa Ta'ālā lā Yunsab Ilal 'Ajz wa Alladhī Sa'altanī lā Yakūn		Ḥaddathanā Muḥammad b. Ali Mājīlūyah 'an 'Ammihī Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim 'an Aḥmad b. Abī 'Abdillāh 'an Abī Ayyūb al-Madanī 'an Muḥammad b. Abī 'Umayr 'an 'Umar b. Anīnah		
		Ḥaddathanā Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Masrūr Qāla Ḥaddathanā al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. 'Āmir 'an 'Ammihī 'Abdallāhi b. 'Āmir 'an b. Abī 'Umayr 'an Abān b. 'Uthmān[1]		
Inna Iblīs Qāla: li 'Īsā b. Maryam: A Yaqdiru Rabbaka 'Alā an Yadkhula al-Arḍa Baydatun lā Yaṣghuru al-Arḍa wa lā Yakburu al-Baydata? Faqāla 'Īsā Waylaka 'alā anna Allāha lā Yūṣifa bi 'Ajzin wa man Aqdara mimman Yalṭafu al-Arḍa wa Yu'ẓumu al-Baydah.		Ḥaddathanā Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-'Aṭṭār Qāla: Ḥaddathanī Sa'd b. 'Abdullāh 'an Aḥmad b. Abī 'Abdillāh 'an Ya'qūb b. Yazīd 'an Muḥammad b. Abī 'Umayr 'amman Dhikruh.		2.

1. The narration of Abān b. 'Uthmān is different from the 'Umar b. Udhaynah that has not effect on the content:'An Abī 'Abdallāh Qāla: Jā'a Rajulun Ilā Amīr al-Mu'minīn Faqāla: A Yaqdiru an Yadkhula al-Arḍa fī Baydati wa lā Yaṣghura al-Arḍa wa lā Yakbur al-Baydah? Faqāla Waylaka Innallāha lā Yūṣafu bil 'Ajzi wa man Aqdara mimman Yalṭaful Arḍa wa Ya'ẓumul Baydah.

Imam Riḍā (AS) Imam Ṣādiq (AS)

Bazanṭī

'Ammān Dhakarah Abān b. 'Uthmān Hishām Baʿḍu AShābinā Umar b. Udhaynah'

Aḥmad b. Abī 'Abdillāh

Ubay b. 'Umar Muḥammad b. Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim

al-Muʿallā b. Ziyād

Yaʿqūb b. Yazīd 'Abdullāh b. 'Amir Ali b. Ibrāhīm Abī Ayyūb

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad

Aḥmad b. Abī Ḥusayn b. Muḥamma Muḥammad b. Mūsā

Ali b. Aḥmad

Saʿd b. 'Abdillāh Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad Muḥammad b. Abī Qāsim

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad

Muḥammad b. Ali

⟵ Relation between Shaykh and student

⟵ - - - Mursal or Maʿyūb way

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