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Chapter 1: Peace be on you, O entirely obedient servant of Allah

Peace be on You, O entirely obedient servant of Allah

Commentary

Peace be unto You

Salam is an infinitive noun commonly translated as "peace". Its literal import, however, is:

"to be free from calamities, whether apparent or hidden."1

Therefore by saying "Al-salamu 'alayka" in its invocative sense, we are seeking the state of freedom from every kind of calamity, whether apparent or hidden, for Imam al-Husayn (AS).

It is clear that the Imam (AS) already enjoys the state of *salam* and is in fact one of the manifestations of Allah's attribute *al–Salam*. In one of the *ziyarat* when addressing him we say:

You were at peace the day you were born, and will be at peace the day you die, and the day you will be raised alive. Surely I bear witness that you are a living martyr receiving sustenance near Your Lord...2

Here the phrase 'Al-salamu 'alayka' is taken as a declarative statement, and thus the difference of translation. Therefore we bear witness that Imam al-Husayn (AS) was and will always remain in the state of salam.

In a tradition about the nocturnal ascent (*al-mi'raj*) of the Holy Prophet (S) it is reported that when the Holy Prophet (S) encountered a group of Angels, Divine Apostles and Prophets, it was said to him:

O Muhammad, convey your salutations to them.

So he (S) said:

May the peace of Allah, His mercy and His blessings be upon you

Thereupon Allah revealed unto him:

"Peace, benedictions, mercy and blessings, are you and your progeny.3

Here the Holy Prophet (S) and his progeny (*dhurriyya*) are introduced as "*al-salam*". Hence, seeking *salam* for Imam al-Husayn (AS), would mean seeking higher degrees of the state of *salam* for him, since the levels of *salam* in the plane of contingent existence have no end. The level of *salam* in which there is no kind of imperfection whatsoever is that of *al-Salam al-Mutlaq* (*the Absolute Peace*), which solely belongs to Almighty Allah. The Holy Qur`an says:

He is Allah, other than Whom there is no God, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the Peace [Free from every kind of imperfection], the Securer, the Guardian...(59:23)

Commenting on the Divine Name al-Salam, 'Allama al-Tabataba'i in his Tafsir al-Mizan says:

And *al-Salam* is among His Names, for His Exalted Essence is sheer goodness wherein there is no evil...4

And in a tradition, Hadhrat Fatima al-Zahra' (AS) referring to this kind of salam says:

Surely only Allah is *the Absolute Peace* and from Him alone comes peace and unto Him alone returns peace5

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have once informed Hadhrat Khadija (AS) that Gabriel was nearby and he sent his *salams* to her. Thereupon she said:

Allah is the Absolute Peace, and to Him alone belongs peace and upon Gabriel be peace.6

And since the Absolute Peace loves us, He always invites us to His abode of peace:

And Allah invites to the abode of peace...(10:24)

The indefinite verb yad'u in the above verse confers the sense of continuity, which means that Allah

constantly invites us towards His abode of peace, which is Paradise. Some commentators however confer a subtler interpretation, and say that Allah is *al–Salam*, which means that He is free from every kind of imperfection whatsoever. And when He invites us to *Dar al–Salam*, He calls us to the state of freedom from every kind of imperfection whatsoever. His call will remain constant, for the stages of *salam* have no end. In his commentary on the above verse, *al–Bahrani* narrates the following tradition:

Al-'Ala` bin 'Abd al-Karim reports: I heard Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (AS) saying about the verse 'And Allah calls towards the abode of peace': Indeed *al-Salam* is Allah, the Invincible and Magnificent, and His abode that He created for His near ones is Paradise.7

Al-janna in the above tradition is prefixed with the definite article 'al' which also confers the connotation of a specific kind of paradise. And since Allah (SwT) principally always calls towards the best, for his grace pours out infinitely, the loftiest paradise one can ever achieve is jannat al-liqa' (the paradise of meeting Allah). Here the aspirant of paradise yearns for nothing but the proximity and vision of the All-Beloved. And scholars of insight have said that the journey to perfection never ends. Therefore it is very apt to constantly call every one to the abode of the Absolute Peace.

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The definite article 'al' in the abovementioned phrase conveys different meanings. It can be taken to allude to something known both to the adressor as well as his addressee.8 And because it is clear to all that no kind of perfection comes from anyone save Allah, for He alone is the Principal Cause of the universe, we are only permitted to seek perfection from Him in the independent sense. Therefore if we employ the phrase al–salamu 'alayka in the invocative sense, we can translate it as 'the peace from Allah be upon you'. This is when we take the article al to refer to the specific peace that comes from Allah, which is a Divine bestowal and creation.

However if we translate *al-salam* in the phrase *al-salamu 'alayka* as "the specific peace that Allah possesses", then we are seeking Absolute Peace for Imam al-Husayn (AS). In other words, we are seeking the ultimate state for the Imam (AS). Seeking such kind of peace is not unprecedented. In the

well-known supplication of *al-Sahar* of the Holy month of Ramadhan we seek the Divine Names in their perfect form. In fact the innate nature of every human being has been faishioned to aspire for the Infinite.

You are at peace from my side

If the za'ir however were to consider 'al' to refer to himself, the above phrase can be taken as declarative. In other words, he is trying to say: سَالَوْمِيْ عَلَيْكَ Salami 'alayka (You are at peace from my side)9. Consequently, the za'ir is trying to assure the mazur (the visited one) that he is at peace with him and he would not do anything that would cause harm or disturb him. Instead, he would manifest in himself things that would be geared to seek the mazur's protective physical as well as spiritual life. This is one of the very important stations of the za'ir, since he is in fact reasserting his covenant with Almighty Allah, by informing his beloved Imam (AS) that besides avoiding anything that would cause harm to him (AS), he would do those things that would manifest the spirit of peace as well.

One of the things that does not concur with the spirit of *salam* is to sin. If one utters the above statement and then engages in sin, he will not have maintained the spirit of the *salam* that he uttered. This is because the fourteen infallibles (AS) have the ability to witness the actions of their followers. And when they find them sinning, they get disturbed.

Following are narrations that establish the infallible Imam's ability to vision the deeds of his followers:

1. We humbly express in the well–known *Ziyarat al–Jami'a al–Kabira*:

...You are the upright path and the witnesses of the abode of extinction [i.e. the world...]10

2. Imam al-Sadiq (AS) is reported to have said:

Believers referred to in the verse "And say, go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His *Apostle* and the believers [as well]" (9:105) are the Immaculate Imams (AS).11

Hence the Imams (AS) can behold our mistakes and wrong deeds, and when they do so, they get upset:

1. Thigat al-Islam al-Kulayni narrates the following tradition in his al-Kafi:

Suma'a reports: I heard him (i.e. Imam al-Sadiq (AS)) say: What is the matter with you? Why do you displease the Messenger of Allah (S)? Thereupon a man asked him: And how do we displease him? The Imam (AS) said: Don't you know that your actions are presented before him; and when he finds a sin in them, he is displeased; therefore do not displease the Messenger of Allah (S) but (rather) make him happy. 12

2. Al-Kulayni also narrates the following tradition:

'Abdullah bin Aban al–Zayyat, a distinguished personality near Imam al–Ridha (AS), reports: I said to al–Ridha (AS): Pray to Allah for me and my family, and he said: Don't I do that? I swear by Allah surely your actions are presented to me every day and night. "I was extremely amazed at that," says al–Zayyat. Then the Imam (AS) said: Do you not read the Book of Allah, the Invincible and Exalted, who says: (And say, Go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the faithful [as well])? (9:105) I swear by Allah 'the faithful' mentioned in this verse is 'Ali bin Abi Talib. 13

Hence engaging in sin, and being inconsistent with the spirit of *salam*, makes us violate our covenant with the Imam (AS). Those, therefore who recite their *ziyarat* without considering this vital point, are either hypocrites or weaklings who like to utter lies in front of the Imam (AS).

There is a group of sinful reciters, however, whom the self that excessively invites one to evil (*al-nafs al-ammara*) has weakened, but are nevertheless hopeful for change. Whenever such people recite the *Ziyarat*, they should experience utter humiliation, and always seek change. They must realize that in order for one to prosper and change, one should perpetually seek Divine Succor and make a firm

resolve to leave all those things that are forbidden, however minute they may seem to appear.

May peace from Allah be upon you

Sometimes the article 'al' is employed as a substitute for the second particle (*mudhafun ilayhi*) of a genetive construction. For example, when referring to a book whose owner is known to be a certain Zayd, we can say *al-kitabu* (the book) instead of saying كَتَابُ زَيْدِ *kitabu Zaydin* (Book of Zayd). Here the article 'al' is a substitute for Zayd. Likewise 'al' in 'al-salamu' can be a substitute for a particular person. And bearing in mind that there is no perfection whatsoever but that it originates from Allah, and that the preposition على 'ala' indicates that the origin of salam is from a higher plane of existence and we know that there is no Absolutely High save Allah, 'al' can be said to refer to Allah. In this case the statement al-salamu 'alayka either means peace from Allah be upon you, or 'peace of Allah' be upon you.

I surrender all my affairs to you

Another meaning of *salam* documented by lexicographers is '*al-taslim*' (to surrender). Therefore the statement '*Al-salamu* '*alayka*' would mean 'I surrender myself to you'. In other words, we are trying to tell Imam al-Husayn (AS) that "I am your slave. Whatever you say, I shall obey. Your desire is mine. If you want me to reform myself and others, I shall do so." If we look at the matter from an ontological (*takwini*) point of view, we come to realize that whether we declare our slavehood or not, the Imam's light, which according to different traditions, is an intermediary of grace (*wasitat al-faydh*), dominates us. Nevertheless the Divine law has facilitated volitional action, and thus nothing is forced on anyone. When surrending ourself to the Imam (AS) let us secretly ask the Imam (AS) to assist us and make us serious and keep us steadfast in our commitment.

Peace be unto You

Sometimes, the article 'al' in al-salam conveys either of the following meanings: (1) All kinds of peace, (2) The most perfect kind of peace, or (3) The absolute peace. This is when the definite article 'al'

denotes 'genus' (*al-jins*) or 'species'. Grammatically, whenever the definite article 'al' is taken to denote genus, one of the following three implications can be gotten:

- All the extensions (*masadiq*) of the genus (*jins*) are taken into consideration. For example, in chapter *al-'Asr* we say: *Inna al-insana lafi khusr*, we mean '**every human being** is in loss' (103:2) because *al* in '*al-insan*' denotes genus and all the extensions of genus are taken into consideration. In our case, when we say '*al-salamu* '*alayka*' in the invocative sense, we mean "*all kinds of peace be upon you*"
- All the extensions of the perfect attributes of the genus are taken into consideration. For example, when we say *hadha huwa al-rajul*, we mean, *'this is a perfect man'* because *'al-rajul'* denotes *'the man who has all the perfections of a man'*. In our case, when we say *al-salamu 'alayka* in the invocative sense, we mean *'perfect peace be upon you'*.
- The genus (*jins*) in its absolute sense. In other words no limitation is attributed to the genus. It denotes an *absolute form*. Therefore when we say: *al-salamu 'alayka*, we can mean *Absolute Peace without any limitations, be upon you*. In this case, therefore, we are seeking the highest level of peace for Imam al–Husayn (AS).

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May peace from Allah envelop You

A grammatical intricacy worthy of consideration is that the preposition عَلَى 'ala in اَلسَلامُ عَلَيْكَ 'ala in اَلسَلامُ عَلَيْكَ 'ala in اَلسَلامُ عَلَيْكَ 'ala in عَلَى 'alayka denotes the sense of envelopment 14. In other words we are asking Almighty Allah to envelop and cover Imam al–Husayn (AS) with the state of peace and freedom from every apparent and hidden calamity that is according to his noble essence. Therefore al–salamu 'alayka would mean: "May Allah envelop you with the state of peace."

Peace from Allah envelop you

Another important point to bear in mind is that the second person masculine pronoun ﴿ 'ka' in 'alayka' presupposes the presence of the za'ir's addressee, and this obliges him to attain receptivity to comprehend and appreciate the same. We do not use the third person pronoun 'hu' to indicate that our invocation of salam is for an absent mazur (the visited one).

Some of the great saints, due to their spiritual struggle, would attain levels of receptivity that would

enable them to see the Imam (AS) or listen to the response that our Imam (AS) would give. It is narrated that the late Rajab 'Ali al–Khayyat, who was a tailor by occupation, due to his strict observation of Islamic laws and harmony with the teachings of the Ahl al–Bayt (AS), was endowed with a penetrating vision and could appreciate what others cannot. Shaykh Muhammadi Rayshahri in his collection of the memoirs of this late saint narrates the following interesting account about him:

One of Shaykh Rajab 'Ali Khayyat's devotees said that the Shaykh had once held a session in the house of one of his friends. Before starting his talk, he felt somehow weak due to hunger and asked for some bread. Half a loaf of bread was brought for him to eat, and thereafter he began the meeting. The following night he said: "Last night I made salutations to the holy Imams (AS) but I did not see them. I pleaded to find the reason. I was told intuitively: 'You had half of that food and the hunger alleviated. Why then did you eat the other half?! Having some food that is enough for the body's need is all right, but extra to that would cause veil and darkness.'"15

Another interesting account is narrated by Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Bahjat, a well-known contemporary saint, who is quoted by one of his disciples to have said:

One day Shaykh Bahjat (may Allah elevate his status) said to us: In the past people would travel to the city of Mashhad on camels and mules. Once some farmers of Jasib, a region of Qum, travelled to Mashhad for the *Ziyarat* of Imam al–Ridha (AS). On their return they saw a man from their village carrying a lot of fodder. So they reproved him saying: 'O Shaykh, leave struggle for the world, for that would not benefit you and go to Mashhad at least once, and they started reproving and reprehending him. The old man said to them: 'Surely you went to the *ziyara* of the Imam (AS), but did the Imam (AS) respond to your salutation (*salam*)? They said: What is this that you are saying?

Is it possible for an Imam who has died to respond to a salutation? The old man said: what do you mean by saying alive or dead? Indeed the Imam (AS) sees us and listens to our speech, and what is the benefit of *Ziyarat* if it is one sided? They said: Is it possible for you to enable this to happen? He said: Yes; then he stood facing Mashhad and said: "Al–salamu 'alayka ayyuha al–Imam al–Thamin" (Peace be unto you, O the Eight Leader of Guidance), and he heard a call that said: 'Wa 'alaika al–Salam..' (And upon you [too] be peace...'). Hearing this the farmers regretted about what they had said to the old man and felt ashamed of themselves.16

Dear readers, these were occasions encountered by men who are not reported to have apparently immersed themselves in intellectual occupations throughout the day as is the case with Islamic scholars. But yet we see that they were able to attain receptivity that would qualify them to see or listen to the call of the Imam (AS). Our endeavor therefore should be to eradicate the darkness that we have accumulated in our hearts and lift the veils, so that when we convey our humble salutations, we are privileged to listen to the sacred response of our Imam (AS).

أُلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ

May Allah always envelop you with peace

Another important allusion worthy of consideration is hidden in the kind of sentence we employ when seeking peace for the Imam (AS) or declaring the same. Observe that the above sentence is a nominal sentence (*jumla ismiyya*). It starts with a noun and not a verb. Therefore it signifies continuity and permanence. Hence we can either translate it as "May Allah always envelop you with peace" or "You will always be enveloped with peace from my side" 17.

أَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ

I am at peace with you

Some authoritative lexicographers define salam as extreme coherence (al-muwafaqa al-shadida). 18 Considering this definition, if we take the phrase 'Al-salamu 'alayka as declarative then we are expressing our extreme harmony and unity with Imam al-Husayn (AS). It is the fear of such state of salam expressed by the revolutionary za'ir that led tyrants like the the Abbasid al-Mansur al-Dawaniqi, Harun al-Rashid and al-Mutawakkil among other oppressors to hamper and even kill anyone who visited the shrine of Imam al-Husayn (AS).

In his *Maqatil al–Talibiyyin*, Abu al–Faraj al–Isfahani says:

Al-Mutawakkil was very hostile towards the descendants of Abu Talib, cruel towards their group and suspicious of their activities...It occurred to him that 'Ubayd Allah ibn Yahya ibn Khaqan, his vizier, also used to think badly of them and the denunciation of their activity seemed good to him. He carried out actions against them that none of the 'Abbasids before him had carried out. Among these, he ploughed up the grave of al-Husayn (AS) and removed all trace of it. He put armed garrisons on the rest of the roads. Anyone they found making a pilgrimage to it, they brought to him. He killed or punished them severely. 19

Despite all these threats, the aspirants of al-Husayn (AS) flocked like love birds yearning to express their love before their beloved whose love had soaked their hearts and gave them no respite. Abu al-Faraj narrates:

Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Ashnani reported to me: My promise to perform the pilgrimage seemed impossible in those days because of the terror. Then I decided to risk my life to do it. A perfume merchant helped me to do that. We set out to perform the pilgrimage, hiding by day and travelling by night until we came to the area of al-Ghadhiriyyah. From there we departed in the middle of the night

and went into between two garrisons so that we came to the grave of al-Husayn (AS). It was hidden from us. We began to sniff for signs of it and search for some aspect of it until we came upon it.

The structure, which had been around it, had been torn down and burnt. Water had been made to flow over it and the place where bricks had been sunk down so that it had become like a ditch. We performed the rituals of the pilgrimage to him. We threw ourselves down on the ground and smelled a fragrance from it which I have never smelled anything like. It was like some kind of perfume. I asked the perfume merchant, who was with me, 'What fragrance is this?' 'By God, I have never smelled any kind of perfume like it,' he replied. We made our farewells and put marks around the grave in a number of places. When al-Mutawakkil was killed, we gathered with a group of the descendants of Abu Talib and the Shi'ah to go to the grave. We removed the marks and restored it to the state which it had been before 20

In their astute and accurate directions, the Imams (AS) would also encourage their followers to go to visit the shrine of Imam al–Husayn (AS) even at the cost of death and martyrdom. They would inform them that the more the fear of being attacked the more the reward for visiting al–Husayn (AS). 'Allama Majlisi quotes Muhammad bin Muslim saying:

Imam Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin 'Ali (al-Baqir) (AS) said to me: Do you come to the grave of al-Husayn (AS)? I said: Yes, but in dread and fear. The Imam (AS) said: 'If the situation is severe, its reward would be in proportion to the fear; and whosoever visits him in fear, Allah would protect his heart on the Day when the people would stand for the Lord of the Universe; and he would leave in the state of being forgiven, and the angels would send their salutations to him, and the Holy Prophet (S) would visit him and pray for him...21

The Imams (AS) likewise expressed their extreme attachment to Imam al–Husayn (AS). Rather they would encourage others to pray for them near the radiant dome of Imam al–Husayn (AS). Consider the following traditions:

1. 'Allama Majlisi in vol. 101 of his Bihar al-Anwar quotes Ibn Abi Ya'fur to have said:

اَتَيْتَ مَنْ كَانَ اَعْظَمُ حَقًّا عَلَيْكَ مِنِّيْ اَشَدُّ عَلَيَّ مِنْ قَوْلِهِ " لاَ تَشْكُ رَبَّكَ ". قُلْتُ: وَمَنْ اَعْظَمُ عَلَيَّ حَقًّا مِنْكَ ؟ قَالَ:اَلْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيّ اَلاَ اَتَيْتَ الْحُسَيْنَ فَدَعَوْتَ اللهَ عَلَيَّ الْاَ اَتَيْتَ الْحُسَيْنَ فَدَعَوْتَ اللهَ عَلَيَّ الْاَ اَتَيْتَ الْحُسَيْنَ فَدَعَوْتَ اللهَ عَلَيَّ الْاَ اَتَيْتَ الْحُسَيْنَ فَدَعَوْتَ اللهَ عَلَيْ اللهَ اللهَ عَلَيَّ حَوَايجَكَ؟

I said to Abu 'Abdillah [al-Sadiq (AS)]: My fervent desire to meet you called me to bear the difficulties to come to you. The Imam (AS) said: 'Do not complain to your Lord; and why didn't you come to one who has a greater right over you than me?' Ibn Abi Ya'fur says: His statement 'Why didn't you go to one who has a greater right over you than me?' made me feel more uneasy than his statement "Do not complain to your Lord". So I said: 'And who has a greater right over me than yourself?" The Imam (AS) said: "Al–Husayn bin 'Ali (AS); why didn't you come to al–Husayn (AS) and pray to Allah near him, and raise your complaint to Him about your needs?22

2. Ibn Qulawayh reports in his *Kamil al–Ziyarat* that Abu Hashim al–Ja'fari, one of the companions of Imam al–Hadi (AS) is reported to have said:

دَخَلْتُ عَلَى اَبِي الْحَسَنِ عَلِيّ بْنِ مُحَمَّد وَهُوَ مَحْمُوْمٌ عَلِيْلٌ، فَقَالَ لِيْ: يَا اَبَا هِاشَمِ اِبْعَتْ رَجُلاً مِنْ مَوَالِيْنَا اللَّي الْحَائِرِ يَدْعُو اللهَ لِيْ، فَخَرَجْتُ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ، فَاسْتَقْبَلَنِيْ عِلْيٌ بْنِ بِلاَل فَاعْلَمْتُهُ مَا قَالَ لِيْ، وَسَاَلْتُهُ اَنْ يَكُوْنَ الرَّجُلُ الَّذِيْ يَخْرُجُ فَقَالَ: عَلِيّ بْنِ بِلاَل فَاعْلَمْتُهُ مَا قَالَ لِيْ، وَسَاَلْتُهُ اَنْ يَكُوْنَ الرَّجُلُ الَّذِيْ يَخْرُجُ فَقَالَ: السَّمْعُ وَالطَاعَةُ، وَلَكِنَّنِيْ اَقُوْلُ: إِنَّهُ اَفْضَلَ مِنَ الْحَائِرِ إِذْ كَانَ بِمَنْزِلَةِ مَنْ فِي الْحَائِرِ، وَدُعَاوُهُ لِنَفْسِهِ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ دُعَائِيْ لَهُ بِالْحَائِرِ، فَكَانَ يَطُوْفُ بِالْبَيْتِ وَيَسْتَلِمُ الْكَائِرِ، وَكَانَ يَطُوْفُ بِالْبَيْتِ وَيَسْتَلِمُ الْكَائِرِ، وَكَانَ يَطُوْفُ بِالْبَيْتِ وَيَسْتَلِمُ الْحَجَرِ، وَكَانَ يَطُوْفُ بِالْبَيْتِ وَيَسْتَلِمُ الْحَجَرِ، وَكَانَ يَطُوْفُ بِالْبَيْتِ وَيَسْتَلِمُ الْحَجَرِ، وَكَانَ يَطُوْفُ بِالْبَيْتِ وَيَسْتَلِمُ الْحَجَرَ، وَإِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى بِقَاعًا يُحِبُّ اَنْ يُدْعَى فِيْهَا فَيَسْتَجِيْبُ لِمَنْ دَعَاهُ، وَالْحَائِرُ مِنْ الْمَائِلُ أَلْمُ نَعْلَمُ لَهُ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَيَسْتَلِمُ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَيَسْتَلِمُ فَيَسْتَجِيْبُ لِمَنْ دَعَاهُ، وَالْحَائِرُ مِنْ الْمَائِلُ لَهُ عَلَمْ اللّهَ تَعَالَى بِقَاعًا يُحِبُ أَنْ يُدْعَى فِيْهَا فَيَسْتَجِيْبُ لِمَنْ دَعَاهُ، وَالْحَائِرُ مِنْ الْهَالَمُ لَعُلَى اللّهَ تَعَالَى بِقَاعًا يُحِبُ أَنْ يُدْعَى فِيْهَا فَيَسْتَجِيْبُ لِمَنْ دَعَاهُ، وَالْحَائِرُ مِنْ الْنَالِهُ لَعُلَى اللّهُ لَعْمَالَى بِقَاعًا يُحِبُ أَنْ يُلْكَامِنُ مَلْمَا فَيَسْتَجِيْبُ لِمَنْ دَعَاهُ وَلَا اللّهُ مَا فَلَلْمُ لَالَهُ يَعْلَى اللّهُ لَعْلِي اللّهَ لَنَالِهُ مَا لَكُونُ مَا لَكُونُ لَاللّهُ لَعْلَى اللّهُ لَوْلُ اللّهُ لَكُونُ اللّهُ لَعْلَالِ اللّهُ لَلْمُ لَاللّهُ لَلْهُ الْمُنْ لَعْلَمُ الْمُ لَالَهُ لَلْهُ لَوْلُ لِلْهُ لَالِهُ لَعْلَى اللّهُ لَلْمُ لَالِهُ لَوْلُ لَالِهُ لَلْهُ لَلْهُ لَلْهُ لَكُونُ لَاللّهُ لَوْلُولُ اللّهُ لَعْلَالِهُ لَاللّهُ لَكُونُ لَا لَلْهُ لَعْلَى لَالِهُ لَالِهُ لَالِهُ لَعْلَالِهُ لَالِهُ لَتَعْلِي لَمْ لَالْعَلْمُ لِلْهُ ل

I came to Abu al–Hasan (Imam 'Ali al–Naqi (AS)) while he had fever and was unwell. He said to me: 'O Aba Hisham, send one of our followers to the Ha'ir (the dome of Imam al–Husayn (AS)) to pray to Allah for me. So I left him and met 'Ali bin Bilal. I told him what the Imam (AS) had said and requested him to carry out the duty, and he was at his service. 'However,' said he, 'indeed the Imam (AS) is greater than the Ha'ir, for he equals the station of the one who is buried in the Ha'ir, and his supplication for himself is better than my supplication for him in the Ha'ir.' Abu Hisham says: I informed the Imam (AS) about what 'Ali bin Bilal said, whereupon he said: Tell him that the Apostle of Allah was better than the *Bayt al–Haram* and the *Hajar al–Aswad*, whereas he would circumambulate round the Ka'bah and touch the Hajar; and indeed Allah has places where He loves to be called, so that he may respond to the call of the caller, and the Ha'ir is one among them.23

أُلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ

Peace be unto You

Al-Salam, as we came to learn earlier, is one of the attributes of Almighty Allah, which some of his noble servants, like the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), due to their utter submission exemplify. The path for others too is left open. Every human being is invited to the abode of peace, and therefore he must strive to attain the same. But a true beliver has an all-embracing heart, and thus yearns for the betterment of others too. Perhaps that is why we are encouraged to greet others with al-salam. The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

Al-Salam is a name from among the names of Almighty Allah. Therefore, spread the same between yourselves...24

In fact the word *muslim* has originally been derived from Allah's Name *al-Salam*. The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

Allah named Himself with two names with which he [also] named my nation: He is *al-Salam* and He named my nation *muslims*, and He is *al-Mu'min* and He named my nation *mu'mins*.25

Perhaps due to this reason, scholars like Sayyid al-Shubbar in his *al-Anwar al-Lami'a* and 'Allama Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar* believe that one of the meanings of *al-salamu 'alayka* is26:

May Allah always envelop you with His Name al-Salam.

Therefore, Almighty Allah not only requires each of us to be at peace, but teaches us to ask for our Muslim brothers and sisters to be availed of the same. It should be understood however that the levels

of peace are infinite. Therefore invoking peace for others while we greet them should never cease.

I declare that Absolute Peace envelops you

Scholars of insight mention one of the meanings of the phrase *al-salamu 'alayka* as "the Divine Name *al-Salam* envelops you, and you are his manifestation". In this case the phrase is taken as declarative and *al-Salam* is taken to mean the Divine Name *al-Salam*. In his *Sharh al-Asma'*, Mulla Hadi Sabzaw³ari when discussing about the Divine Name *al-Salam* says:

...one of the meanings of our statement 'salamun 'alayk" is that the Peace, the Securer, the Guardian envelops you and you are His manifestation.27

Peace be unto you

It is important to understand the remote distance between the sincerity of one who merely declares or verbally seeks peace for the *mazur* ('the visited one') and one who personifies peace in every dimension of his being and actively struggles to ensure the same for the *mazur*. In fact some of our traditions clearly emphasize the vital role of the practical application of *al-salam*. Look at the following traditions:

1. 'Allama Majlisi narrates the following in his Bihar al-Anwar:

One of the slave women of Imam al-Hasan (AS) came to him with a bouquet of aromatic plants, whereupon the Imam (AS) said to her: You are free for the sake of Allah. So the Imam (AS) was asked

as to why did he free her, and he said: 'Almighty Allah trained us and said: 'And When you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better one than it, or return it... '(4:86). And to let her free is better return than her gift.28

Therefore the *tahiyya* (lit. seeking another's life & well-being (*talab al-hayat*)) referred to in the above verse conventionally translated as 'greeting' is not limited to a verbal expression of peace, but embraces other examples of its etymological definition too such as 'doing virtue to another'.

2. Imam al-Sadiq (AS) is reported to have said:

Al-tahiyyah (greeting) in the verse 'And when you are greeted with a greeting...' is to greet and perform other acts of virtue and good.29

These are traditions that show how practical salam can be. Many of us do not realize this and conjecture that we have earned ample blessings and reward for our salams as the holy Qur`an and the sacred traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) and his infallible progeny clearly exemplify.

The Holy Qur`an says:

So when you enter houses, greet yourselves with a salutation from God, blessed and pleasant. Thus does God clarify His signs for you so that you may apply reason. (24:61)

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

When one enters his house, he must say *salam*, for that makes blessings descend on the house and the angels become fond of it.30

Should we restrict these luminant words of guidance to the realm of speech or do they portray the loftier

aspects of the reality of *al-salam*? In fact if there is no coherence between what the tongue utters and what the heart and mind feel and what the actions portray, then how can we claim the honesty of the *musallim* (greeter)?

O Aba 'Abdillah

The word 'ya' is a vocative particle (harfu nida') employed to call the munada (vocative). In simple terms it is a word used to call someone. However, grammarians hold that 'ya' is specifically employed for that vocative who is at a far distance31. For example, if we would like to call 'Ali who is at a far distance, we say 'يَا عَلِي' Ya 'Ali!'. The distance considered here was physical and spatial. Rhetoricians however employ the same when they would like to praise an exalted personality even if he was very near.

We address Almighty Allah, for example, who is closer to us than our jugular veins as يَالُك Ya Allah, because the Essence of Allah is Exalted. In the well–known verse of the Throne (Ayat al–Kursi) we declare this reality of Allah's Exalted Essence as:

And He Alone is always the Extremely High & Great (2:255)32

In our present situation our vocative and addressee is Imam al–Husayn (AS) who due to his freedom from the limitations of the material world and comprehensive being is intensely close to us and can see and listen to us too. Hence the reason we employ the vocative particle 'ya and say 'Ya Aba 'Abdillah' is to express his exaltedness and confess our lowliness.

The people of heart, however, can well appreciate the implication manifested when the 'the lover calls the beloved'. The implication is to get near to the Beloved. Hence when we call Aba 'Abdillah (whose import, as we shall soon expound means 'the utterly submissive slave of Allah') we are seeking his closeness, or in other words 'the attributes that personifies his exalted being'.

The words *Aba 'Abdillah* literally mean 'the father of the obedient slave of Allah'. Arabs honorify their fellow brothers by calling them with a teknonym (*kunya*) a name that mostly mentions the first or one of the offsprings of the 'named one'. Hence if a person had a son named 'Abdullah, he is called *Abu 'Abdillah*, which means 'father of 'Abdullah'. One of the reasons behind the Imam (AS) being called Abu 'Abdillah is that he had an offspring called 'Abdullah, famously known as الرَّضَيْعُ *al-radhi*' (one who is still breastfeeding).

He was mercilessly martyred by the enemies after Imam al–Husayn (AS) read *adhan* in his ear following his birth. In the well–known *Ziyarat al–Nahiya al–Muqaddasa* Imam al–Zaman (AS) addresses this new born as:

Perpetual peace be unto 'Abdillah, the one who was still breastfeeding...33

Obedient Slave of Allah

Sometimes however, someone is attributed with a teknonym (*kunya*) not because he is the father of so and so, but because he enjoys a certain quality. For example, one who is well known for his open-handedness and generosity is called Abu Jawad. In our case, a number of commentators of this exalted *Ziyarat*, opine that one of the reasons the holy Imam (AS) was given the *kunya* Abu 'Abdillah was his extreme submissiveness to Allah. In other words, he was the true slave of Allah.

Traditions indicate that Imam al–Husayn (AS) was given the teknonym after his birth which subtly alludes to the submissive state of Imam (AS) ever since his childhood. In a tradition narrated in *Bihar al–Anwar*, Asma' is quoted to have said:

'On the seventh day after his birth, the Prophet (S) came to me and said: 'Bring me my son.' So I brought Husayn to him...Then he kept him on his bossom and said: 'O Aba 'Abdillah, it is indeed difficult for me...then he burst into tears...'34

This tradition indicates that the Imam (AS) got the teknonym since his very early childhood and thus enjoyed an exalted status since then.

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ

O Utterly Submissive Servant of Allah

It may be argued that if the *za'ir* himself, due to his submissiveness to Almighty Allah is also an *'abd* of Allah, why should he still call the Imam with the vocative particle *'ya'*? The answer to this is very simple: *'ubudiyya* and submissiveness are of different levels. The distance between the stage of *'ubudiyya* that the infallible Imams of the Ahl al–Bayt (AS) occupy and the stage their true followers enjoy is extremely vast. Consider the following narrations:

1. 'Ibad bin Suhayb is reported to have said:

قُلْتُ لِلصَّادِقِ جَعْفَر بْنِ مُحَمَّد: اَخْبِرْنِيْ عَنْ اَبِيْ ذَرّ، اَهُوَ اَفْضَلُ اَمْ اَنْتُمْ اَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ؟ فَقَالَ: يَا ابْنَ صُهُيْب كَمْ شُهُورُ السَّنَة فَقُلْتُ: اِثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا، فَقَالَ: وَكَمِ الْبَيْتِ؟ فَقَالَ: قَلْتُ: اِثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا، فَقَالَ: وَكَمِ الْحُرُم مِنْهَا؟ قُلْتُ: لاَ، قَالَ: فَشَهْرُ رَمَضَان مِنْهَا؟ قُلْتُ: لاَ، قَالَ: فَشَهْرُ رَمَضَان مِنْهَا؟ قُلْتُ: نَكْ نَحْنُ رَمَضَان اَفْضَلُ اَمِ الاَشْهُرِ الحُرُم؟ فَقُلْتُ: بَلْ شَهْرُ رَمَضَان، قَالَ: فَكَذَلِكَ نَحْنُ رَمَضَان اَفْضَلُ اَمِ الاَشْهُرِ الحُرُم؟ فَقُلْتُ: بَلْ شَهْرُ رَمَضَان، قَالَ: فَكَذَلِكَ نَحْنُ الْبَيْتِ لاَ يُقَاسُ بِنَا اَحَدٌ.

I asked al-Sadiq (AS), Ja'far bin Muhammad (upon whom be peace): Inform me whether Abu Dharr is better than you the Ahl al-Bayt (AS)? The Imam (AS) said: 'O son of Suhayb, how many months are there in one year'? I said: 'twelve months.' Thereupon he (AS) said: 'And how many among them are sacred (*hurum*)?' I said 'Four months.' He (AS) said: 'And is the month of Ramadhan among them?' I said: 'No.' He (AS) said: 'Then is the month of Ramadan greater or the four sacred months?' I said: 'Rather the Holy month of Ramadhan is greater.' The Imam (AS) then said: 'So is the case with us, the Ahl al-Bayt; none can be compared to us.'35

2. Jabir al-Ju'fi, a companion of Imam al-Baqir is reported to have narrated that Imam al-Baqir (AS) once said to him:

إِنَّا مِنَ اللهِ بِمَكَانٍ وَمَنْزِلَةٍ رَفِيْعَةٍ! فَلَوْلاَ نَحْنُ مَا خَلَقَ اللهُ تعَالَى سَمَاءًا وَلاَ اَرْضًا، وَلاَجَنَّةً وَلاَنَارًا، وَلاَ شَمْسًا وَلاَقَمرًا، وَلاَجِنِّيًّا وَلاَ إِنْسِيًّا. يَا جَابِر، إِنَّا اَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ لاَ

Surely we have an exalted status near Allah! Were we not there, Allah would not have created any heaven nor earth, nor any Paradise nor Hell Fire, nor any sun or moon, or any Jinni or human being. O Jabir! We are the Ahl al-Bayt; none can be compared to us; whosoever compares any human being with us, has disbelieved (or covered (the truth)). O Jabir! Through us Allah emancipated you, and through us He guided you; and, I swear by Allah we have guided you to your Lord...36

3. Imam 'Ali (AS) is reported to have said to Abu Dharr:

Know, O Abu Dharr, that I am an utterly submissive servant of Allah on the earth and His vicegerent over His other servants; do not consider us (the Ahl al-Bayt (AS)) to be Lords, and then say about our merits whatever you want, *for certainly you would not comprehend the essence of our station, nor its zenith*, for verily Allah bestowed on us better and greater than what describers among you describe or what has penetrated in the imagination of anyone; so when you know us in this way, you surely are the believers.37

Peace be unto you O Aba 'Abdillah

One of the areas where it is recommended for one to call his fellow Muslim brother with a teknonym is when he is present before him. In our case, therefore, because we know that Imam al–Husayn (AS) is present before us, and we address him using the second person pronoun "kaf", it is apt to begin our address with his teknonym. Imam al–Ridha (AS) is reported to have said:

If you mention a man in his presence, then do so using his teknonym (*kunya*), and if he were to be absent, then call him by his name.38

O father of 'Abdullah

It is important to look at the root meaning of the word 'ab' in Aba 'Abdillah which we normally translate as 'father'. In the Arabic language the word أب 'ab' literally means:

Whosoever is a cause in the existence of a thing or its reform or its manifestation is known as 'ab'.39

And since Imam al-Husayn (AS) converges with the Muhammadan Light (al-Nur al-Muhammadi) which is the intermediary of Divine Grace, he is a *sabab* (cause) in the existence, reform and manifestation of the caravan of human beings. Therefore he is Abu 'Abdillah. Whatever grace any servant of Allah receives is through the Muhammadan Light.

O father of 'Abdullah

In a well-known tradition, we read:

Indeed there are only **three fathers**: the father who was the reason for your birth, the father who taught you, and the father who married you (to his daughter).40

And because Imam al–Husayn (AS) was from among the infallible Imams (AS) responsible to guide humanity and teach them the path of salvation, he is known as Abu 'Abdillah meaning 'father or tutor of a true servant of Allah'. In this case every human being enjoys from al–Husayn's banquet of practical submission. The previous Prophets of Allah are no exception. Imam al–Husayn (AS) also serves as a

father to the Prophets of Allah before the Seal of the Prophets (AS), since they drew inspiration from him even before his birth. Consider the following narratives from 'Allama Majlisi's *Bihar al–Anwar* and Bahrani's *al–'Awalim*:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللهِ، قَالَ: إِنَّ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ الَّذِيْ قَالَ اللهُ تَعَالَى: وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ اِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًا لَمْ يَكُنْ إِسْمَاعِيْلُ بْنِ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ بَلْ كَانَ نَبِيًّا مِنَ الْانْبِيَاءِ، بَعَثَهُ اللهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَأَخَذُوْهُ فَسَلَخُواْ فَرْوَةَ رَأْسِهِ كَانَ نَبِيًّا مِنَ الْاَنْبِيَاءِ، بَعَثَهُ اللهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ فَأَخَذُوْهُ فَسَلَخُواْ فَرْوَةَ رَأْسِهِ وَوَجْهِهِ، فَاتَاهُ مَلَكُ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ جَلَّ جَلاَلُهُ بَعَثَنِيْ إِلَيْكَ فَمُرْنِي بِمَا شِئْتَ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ جَلَّ جَلاَلُهُ بَعَثَنِيْ إِلَيْكَ فَمُرْنِي بِمَا شِئْتَ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ اللهَ جَلَّ جَلاَلُهُ بَعَثَنِيْ إِلَيْكَ فَمُرْنِي بِمَا شِئْتَ، فَقَالَ:

It is reported from Abi 'Abdillah (al-Sadiq (AS)) who said: 'Indeed the Isma'il that Almighty Allah talks about in the verse '*And mention in the Book Isma'il. Indeed he was true to his promise, and an apostle and a prophet.'* (19:54) was not Isma'il (AS) the son of Ibrahim (AS), but was a prophet among prophets whom Allah, the Invincible and Sublime, sent to his people; and they killed him, and skinned his scalp and face; so an angel came to him, and said: 'Surely Allah sent me to you; so order me to do what you want.' He said: 'I have model of emulation of what will happen to al-Husayn (upon whom be peace)...41

وَرُويَ أَنَّ نُوْحًا لَمَّا رَكِبَ فِي السَّفِيْنَةِ طَافَتْ بِهِ جَمِيْعَ الدُّنْيَا، فَلَمَّا مَرَّتْ بِكَرْبَلاَ اَخَذَتْهُ الأَرْضُ وَخَافَ نُوْح اَلْغَرْقَ، فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ، وَقَالَ: إِلَهِيْ طَفْتُ جَمِيْعَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا اَصَابَنِيْ فَيْ هَذِهِ الأَرْضِ، فَنَزَلَ جِبْرَئِيْلُ، وَقَالَ يَا نُوْحُ فِي هَذَا الْمُوْضِعِ يُقْتَلُ الْحُسَيْنُ سِبْطَ مُحَمَّد خَاتَمِ الأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَابْنِ خَاتَمِ الأَوْصِيَاءِ، فَقَالَ: الْمَوْضِعِ يُقْتَلُ الْحُسَيْنُ سِبْطَ مُحَمَّد خَاتَمِ الأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَابْنِ خَاتَمِ الأَوْصِيَاءِ، فَقَالَ: وَمَنِ الْقَاتِلُ لَهُ يَا جَبْرَئِيْلُ؟ قَالَ: قَاتِلُهُ لَعِيْنُ اَهْلِ سَبْعِ سَمَاوَات وَسَبْعِ ارَضِيْنَ، فَلَعَنْهُ نُوْح اَرْبَعَ مَرَّاتِ...

It is narrated that when Nuh (AS) boarded the Ark, it transported him throughout the world; and when he passed by Karbala, the earth forced the ark towards itself, and Nuh (AS) feared of drowning; so he prayed to his Lord: O my God, I went round the entire world, and nowhere was I afraid as I have been in this place; Thereupon Gabriel (AS) descends, and tells Nuh (AS): "O Nuh this is the place where Husayn (AS), the grandson of the Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets and the son of the Seal of the Divine Trustees would be killed. Nuh asked him: And who would kill him, O Gabriel? Gabriel said: His killer is one whom the inhabitants of seven heavens and the seven earths curse; so Nuh (AS) curses him four times...42

It is narrated that [Prophet] Ibrahim (AS) passed by the land of Karbala while he was riding his horse. The horse made him stumble and Ibrahim (AS) fell off and his head got wounded and blood started flowing out of him. Thereupon, he began seeking Allah's forgiveness, and said: 'O my God, what [wrong] have I done?'

Thereupon Gabriel descends on him and says: 'O Ibrahim, you have not committed any sin; but this is the place where the grandson of the Seal of Prophets (AS) and the son of the Seal of the Divine Trustees would be killed; thus your blood flowed in accordance with his blood. He asked Gabriel: 'And who would be his killer?' Gabriel said: 'The one cursed by the inhabitants of the heavens and the earths...Ibrahim raised his hands and excessively sends curses on Yazid...43

These narratives as well others which we have ommitted for the sake of brevity, clearly indicate that Imam al-Husayn (AS) was an example for his predecessors too. In simpler words, 'he serves as a timeless model'. The curses from the Prophets in all their particularity depict the universal stance against oppression. Hence, Imam al-Husayn (AS) educated, educates and will always educate the human beings with the lesson of utter submission, even at the cost of sacrificing everything. Consequently, we rightfully address him as Abu 'Abdillah (the father or tutor of a truly submissive servant of Allah.)

عَبْد اللَّهِ

Servant of Allah

The name 'Abdullah is of very great significance since it also implies that 'the named' is a manifestation of all the attributes of Almighty Allah. This is because the name Allah which is sometimes referred to as *al-ism al-a'zham* (the greatest name of God) is also a name that comprehends in itself all the sublime attributes of the Divine Essence. Hence one who is a servant of such a Being, necessarily is submissive to His orders, all of which manifest His sublime attributes.

Thus whatever a submissive servant of Allah does, he would do it according to what Allah wants, and

what Allah wants clearly depicts His sublime attributes. In simple terms: If the king of a certain town possesses excellent traits, his totally obedient servants would carry the same traits, because whatever they do accord with what the king wants.

All the prophets of Allah as well as the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) are 'Ibad Allah (totally submissive servants of Allah) and consequently manifestations of His Most Beautiful Attributes as well. It is for this reason perhaps that Imam 'Ali (AS) is reported to have said:

We are the Most Beautiful Names of Allah44

Peace be unto you, O obedient servant of Allah

In the Arabic rhetoric there is a rule that says:

When a statement is qualified with a certain attribute the quality denotes the reason behind the statement.

Bearing this in mind, if we consider the above verse to be a declarative statement, it would be clear for us that the reason why we declare that Imam al–Husayn (AS) enjoys the state of salam (freedom from calamities) is that he is an 'utterly submissive servant of Allah'. In other words the reason for "Assalamu 'alayka" is "Ya Aba 'Abdillah". In simpler words, 'I declare that you are in the state of Salam, O utterly submissive servant of Allah' [and the reason for you to be in that state is your characteristic of being utterly submissive to Allah].

Anecdotes for Reflection

1. Haj Sayyid Ahmad Baha al-Dini, an employee of the Office of the late Imam Khumayni is reported to have said:

Imam Khumayni would pay his respects to Sayyid al-Shuhada (Imam al-Husayn (AS)) before and after

every canonical prayer: he would for example pay his respects before the morning prayer, and then after the morning prayer, before the *maghrib* prayer, before the 'isha' prayer, and then after the 'isha' prayer, before the *zhuhr* prayer, before the 'asr prayer and then after the 'asr prayer. In this way he would altogether pay his respects eight times a day to Sayyid al–Shuhada'45.

2. A friend of the late saint, Shaykh Rajab 'Ali al-Khayyat, narrates:

'Together with the Shaykh we went to Kashan. The Shaykh had the habit that wherever he traveled, he would visit the cemetery of that place. As we entered the cemetery in Kashan, he said: "Al-Salamu 'alayka ya Aba 'Abd Allah (AS)" ("Salutations be on you O Imam Husayn (AS)") We walked a few steps further on, and then he said: "Do you not smell anything?" 'No, what smell?' We asked. Then he asked: "Don't you feel the smell (scent) of red apples?" Our answer was 'no' again. We went further on and met the man in charge of the cemetery.

The Shaykh asked him: "Has anyone been **buried** here today?" The man answered: "Just before you arrived someone was buried', and then he took us to a newly covered tomb. There it was! We all smelled the scent of red apples. We asked the Shaykh about the scent, to which he answered: "When this person was buried here, the sacred person of Sayyid al– Shuhada' [Imam Husayn (AS)] came here and for the sake of this person (and by the blessed visit of Sayyid al–Shuhada' (AS)) the punishment was removed from those buried in this cemetery."46

- 1. Raghib al-Isfahani, al-Mufradat, p. 421.
- 2. Ibn Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, p. 391
- 3. Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, v.3, p. 486
- 4. 'Allama al-Tabataba'i, al-Mizan, v. 10, p. 39
- 5. Shaykh al-Tusi, al-Amali, p. 175
- 6. Al-Maghribi, Sharh al-Akhbar, v.3, p.21
- 7. Al-Bahrani, Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, v.3, p. 24
- 8. In Arabic grammar terminology this kind of al is known as al li al-'ahd al-dhihni
- 9. In order to understand this particular kind of usage better, consider verse 19:47 where Prophet Ibrahim 🗈 assures Azar that he would not harm him. He employs the phrase 'Salamun 'alaikum....' Exegetes of Qur'an well–grounded in the Arabic language, like Qadhi al–Baydhawi in his Anwar al–Tanzil wa Asrar al–Ta'wil take this view into consideration.
- 10. Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, p. 622
- 11. Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.23, p. 339. It should be noted that Imam al-Sadiq I mentions the most perfect extensions (atamm al-masadiq) of the believers as the Imams I. Otherwise the verse clearly tells us that one who has really achieved the expected state of belief can enjoy a station which would enable him to see the actions of others.
- 12. Shaykh al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v. 1, p. 219
- 13. Ibid.
- 14. Mirza Tehrani, Shifa al-Sudur, p. 98; Tadhkirat al-Za'irin [Ref: Persian collection 'Nigahi be Ziyarat-e 'Ashura', p. 142
- 15. Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Kimyaye Mahabbat (Elixir of Love), p. 94
- 16. Mahmud al-Badri, Uswat al-'Arifin, p. 215
- 17. Jar Allah al-Zamakhshari, Tafsir al-Kashshaf, v.4, p. 401

- 18. Al-Mustafawi, al-Tahqiq, v.5, p. 188.
- 19. Shaykh Shams al-Din, The Revolution of al-Husayn T, http://www.al-islam.org/revolution/2.htm [1]
- 20. Shaykh Shams al-Din, The Revolution of al-Husayn ©, http://www.al-islam.org/revolution/2.htm [1]
- 21. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 101, p.11
- 22. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 101, p. 46; Ibn Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, p. 315
- 23. Ja'far bin Muhammad bin Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, p. 460
- 24. Shaykh al-Tabrasi, Mishkat al-Anwar, p.349
- 25. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur, v.4, p. 373
- 26. This meaning has been narrated by both the Shi'a as well as the Sunni scholars in their commentaries of Qur`an and lexicons as well.
- 27. Mulla Hadi al-Sabzawari, Sharh al-Asma', p. 324
- 28. Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.81, p. 273
- 29. Shaykh al-Huwayzi, Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, v. 1, p. 524
- 30. Muhammadi al-Rayshahri, al-Khayr wa al-Baraka fi al-Kitab wa al-Sunna, p. 206
- 31. Al-Sabban in his glosses over Sham'uni's commentary over the Alfiyya of Ibn Malik, says: 'Indeed a far object is only called with particles that contain letters of protraction (harf al-madd), because when a far object is called it requires one to prolong his voice, so that the vocative can hear. (Al-Sabban, Hashiyat al-Sabban, v.3, p. 1145.)
- 32. This is one phrase where the comprehensive beauty of the Qur`an can well be appreciated for all those who can appreciate the subtle issues of Arabic grammar and syntax. This small verse describes so many things at the same time:
- (1) It is a nominal sentence (al-jumla al-ismiyya) and thus it signifies permanence (2) the pronoun huwa denotes 'specificity' and thus these two attributes that follow it are originally reserved for Allah. (3) The form 'ali similar to فعيل 'fa'il' is known as 'al-sifa al-mushbiha' in the Arabic, which denotes intensity and permanence.
- 33. al-Shahid al-Awwal, al-Mazar, p. 149
- 34. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.44, pp. 250-251
- 35. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.22, p. 406
- 36. Muhammad bin Jurayr al-Tabari al-Shi'i, Nawadir al-Mu'jizat, p. 124
- 37. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.26, p.2
- 38. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.75, p. 335
- 39. Sharh Kalimat Amir al-Mu'minin 1, p. 15
- 40. 'Abd al-Wahhab, Sharh Kalimat Amir al-Mu'minin 1, p. 15
- 41. Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Bahrani, al-'Awalim- al-Imam al-Husayn 🗈, p. 108
- 42. Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Bahrani, al-'Awalim- al-Imam al-Husayn 1, p. 102
- 43. Ibid.
- 44. Al-Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani, Madinat al-Ma'ajiz, v.1, p. 556
- 45. It is Imam al-Husayn who established prayer and ensured its perpetuity. In the well-known ziyarat al-warith we address the martyred Imam 🗈 as follows: أشهد انك قد اقمت الصلاة...I bear witness that you established prayer. (Author)
- 46. Muhammad al-Rayshahri, Kimyaye Mahabbat, p. 115

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