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Chapter 7: Peace be unto you and unto the spirits who descended in your courtyard

أَلْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى الْأَرْوَاحِ الَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ

Peace be unto you and unto the spirits who descended in your courtyard

Commentary

أَلْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى الْأَرْوَاحِ

Peace be unto you and unto the spirits...

In this verse not only do we declare that Imam al-Husayn (AS) is in the state of *salam*, but also bear witness that his noble companions who sacrificed their lives for Allah and attained the great station of martyrdom, also enjoy the state of peace and protection from calamities. And if we take the verse to be invocative, then we also pray for higher states of *salam* for them.

وَعَلَى الْأَرْوَاحِ

And unto the spirits (*arwah*)

The word *arwah* in the above phrase is the plural of *ruh*. And the word *ruh* (spirit) comes from the word

rih (wind)1. *Ruh* has the quality of *rih*, which moves (*mutaharrik*) and makes things move (*muharrik*). The *ruh* likewise moves and makes the body move. In a tradition narrated in *al-Kafi*, Imam al-Sadiq (AS) tells Muhammad bin Muslim:

إِنَّ الرُّوحَ مُتَحَرِّكٌ كَالرِّيحِ وَإِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ رُوحًا لِأَنَّهُ اشْتَقَّ إِسْمُهُ مِنَ الرِّيحِ...

Indeed *ruh* (spirit) is in motion like *rih* (lit. wind), and **it was named ruh because its name was gotten from al-rih...2**

In fact the entire universe, constantly moves and travels towards Allah, for the Holy Qur`an explicitly tells us that every entity does *tasbih*, which, according to authoritative lexicographers like Raghīb al-Isfahani, fundamentally means:

أَلْمَرُّ السَّرِيعُ فِي عِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ

“...to travel swiftly in the path of Divine worship.”3

Almighty Allah says:

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ
وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا

The seven heavens glorify Him, and the earth [too], and whoever is in them. There is not a thing but that it glorifies Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification. Indeed He is all-forgiving, all-forgiving. (17:44)

Spirit- A Higher Level of The Body

Some of us conjecture that the human being is “composed”– in the physical sense– of a body and a spirit, and that the spirit comes down to, and settles in the body as a separate thing. This stereotype is incorrect, for the human being is a unit of different levels of reality, the spirit being one of them. The spirit is a higher reality of the very body, and the body serves as a lower manifestation of the spirit. Observe the following verse of the Qur`an which talks about how the human spirit is blown:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ. ثُمَّ
خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ
لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ

And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, Then We made him a small seed in a firm resting-place, Then We made the seed a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We made it another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators. (23: 12–14)

Here Almighty Allah explicitly tells us that it is the very body that He creates in another form: *thumma ansha'nahu khalqan akhara* (then we made *it* another creation). In this verse the third person pronoun “*hu*” refers to the material body. In other words, Allah perfects the very body and brings it to a higher state.

The great philosopher and mystic, Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, in his poetical masterpiece *al-Manzhumah* says:

النَّفْسُ فِي الْحُدُوثِ جِسْمَانِيَّةٌ

وَفِي الْبَقَا تَكُونُ رُوحَانِيَّةً

*The soul in its origination is material,
but in its survival is spiritual.*⁴

Perhaps the first person to expound this body–spirit relation in a logical manner was Sadr al–Muta'allihin. Al–Kharrazi⁵ writes:

Mulla Sadra believes that soul is created corporeally. That is, there exists at first corporeal soulless matter. Then, under certain conditions, soul comes into being gradually through matter and its substantial motion. When the fetus settles in its place it starts its evolution on the strength of trans–substantial motion. The fetus first takes a natural mineral shape.

Then, because of further evolution, it takes a vegetative form. At this stage, the corporeal matter is mature enough to take on perception; but as long as it is devoid of sense under the influence of environment, there exists no room for soul therein. After having found vegetative form within the womb, and been influenced both by external factors, and their stimulants, the corporeal matter passively takes

on sense, and then the earliest form of perception takes place. Thus, the first manifestation of soul occurs. Here it could be said that soul is created out of corporeal matter...6

There is a tradition from Imam 'Ali (AS) worthy of contemplation:

مَا أَضْمَرَ أَحَدٌ شَيْئًا إِلَّا ظَهَرَ فِي فَلَاتِ لِسَانِهِ وَصَفَحَاتِ وَجْهِهِ

No one hides anything save that it appears in the lapses of his tongue and the cheeks of his face.7

This shows a unity between the outer side of the human being which is his physical structure and his inner side which is the spirit. The physical can only reveal what is hidden of the spiritual if it is united with the latter.

وَعَلَى الْأَرْوَاحِ

And unto the spirits (*al-arwah*)

Some commentators of this sacred *Ziyarat* have given the possibility that the *arwah* mentioned in this verse refers to the angels who live around the radiant *rawdha* of Imam al-Husayn (AS). Explaining the reality of angels, Shaykh al-Tabrasi in his *Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan* says:

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ رُوحَانِيُونَ خُلِقُوا مِنَ الرِّيحِ فِي قَوْلِ بَعْضِهِمْ، وَمِنَ النُّورِ فِي قَوْلِ
الْحَسَنِ، لَا يَتَنَاسَلُونَ وَلَا يَطْعَمُونَ وَلَا يَشْرَبُونَ.

And angels are spiritual entities (*ruhaniyyun*). They were created from *al-rih* (*the wind*) according to some, and from light (*al-nur*) according to al-Hasan, they neither mate, not eat, nor drink.8

We should note however that words like *al-rih* and *al-nur* must not quickly transport us to their material extensions. Words, as has been established in its own place, have been coined for the spirits of their meanings. Therefore these terms have a subtler meaning, the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this work. One should however at least understand that they do not necessarily refer to the wind that we can feel, or the physical light that we can vision.

According to authoritative scholars like Mir Damad and Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, *al-ruhaniyyun* (the spiritual entities) are the highest of the classes of the angels. In his *Sharh al-Asma'* Sabzawari says:

...فَالأَعْلَى طَبَقَةَ الَّذِينَ طَعَامُهُمُ التَّسْبِيحُ وَشَرَابُهُمُ التَّقْدِيسُ الرُّوحَانِيُّونَ....

...The angels of the highest level, whose food is glorification (*al-tasbih*) and whose drink is sanctification (*al-taqdis*), are the *ruhaniyyun*...9

There are ample traditions that explicitly mention the existence of so many angels in the proximity and neighborhood of the grave of Imam al-Husayn (AS). The following is an example:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مَرْوَانَ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ: زُورُوا الْحُسَيْنَ وَلَوْ كُلُّ سَنَةٍ، فَإِنَّ كُلَّ مَنْ أَتَاهُ عَارِفًا بِحَقِّهِ غَيْرَ جَا حِدٍ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ عَوْضٌ غَيْرُ الْجَنَّةِ، وَرُزِقَ رِزْقًا وَاسِعًا، وَأَتَاهُ اللَّهُ بِفَرْجٍ عَاجِلٍ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَكَلَّ بِقَبْرِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ أَرْبَعَةَ آلَافٍ مَلَكٌ كُلُّهُمْ يَبْكُونَهُ وَيَشِيعُونَ مَنْ زَارَهُ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، فَإِنْ مَرَضَ عَادُوهُ، وَإِنْ مَاتَ شَهِدُوا جَنَازَتَهُ بِالِاسْتِغْفَارِ لَهُ وَالتَّرْحِمِ عَلَيْهِ

Muhammad bin Marwan is reported to have said: I heard him [Imam al-Sadiq (AS)] say: Visit al-Husayn (AS), even if it is once a year, for whosoever comes to him, with knowledge of his station, and not a non-believer, would not be given other than Paradise, and he would be bestowed with extensive sustenance, and Allah would quickly relieve him (from his problems). **Indeed Allah entrusted four thousand angels on the grave of al-Husayn**, all of who weep for him. They accompany the visitor until he returns to his family, and if the visitor gets sick they visit him, and if he dies, they witness his bier and seek for his forgiveness and mercy. 10

Therefore *salam* can also be expressed for these spirits who accompany the grave of al-Husayn (AS). In another *ziyara* of bidding farewell to Imam al-Husayn (AS) we explicitly send our salams to the angels. Al-Mashhadi in his *al-Mazar* narrates the following *Ziyarat*:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا مَلَائِكَةَ رَبِّي الْمُقِيمِينَ فِي هَذَا الْحَرَمِ

Peace be on you o angels of my Lord, **who inhabit this sanctuary**. 11

According to this nondescript, the most probable meaning of *al-arwah* refers to the companions, but there is no harm if we intend the angels too.

...الَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ

...who descended in your courtyard

The past tense verb حَلَّتْ 'hallat' means نَزَلَتْ 'nazalat' (they came down, or descended). And the word 'fina' in the phrase "bi fina'ik" means 'open space in front or at either side of the house' or 'the courtyard'. The above phrase indicates that the spirits of the companions of al-Husayn (AS) enjoy his company and neighborhood after their martyrdom. The implication that the word 'hallat' gives, as some commentators have stated, is that the station of the companions is lower than that of the Imam (AS), a reality which by now is quite clear to the readers, for the Imam (AS) is in an apex which none can comprehend and fathom.

Outstanding Qualities of the Companions of Imam Al-Husayn (AS)

It would not be without benefit to mention some of the outstanding qualities of the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS), for that would make us understand better their sanctity and elevated spirits:

1. The Best Companions (Khayru Ashab)

The Holy Qur'an says:

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

The companions of Hell Fire and the companions of the Paradise are not alike; the companions of the Paradise are the achievers. (59:20)

Imam al-Husayn (AS) is reported to have said about his noble companions:

إِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ أَصْحَابًا أَوْفَى، وَلَا خَيْرًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِي

'Surely I do not know companions more faithful and better than my companions'.¹²

In one of the radiant *ziyarat*, we address the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا خَيْرَ أَنْصَارٍ...

Peace be unto you O best helpers.

It is important for us to know the literal meaning of *ashab*, so that we can understand the traditions narrated about the *ashab* of lofty personalities like Imam al-Husayn (AS). There has been a tendency among many people to conjecture that *ashab* merely refers to those who physically accompany someone.

For example, those who physically accompanied the Holy Prophet (S) are known as *ashabu Rasulillah* (S). Although such usage of the word is common, it is not always meant. Before we establish our contention, let us consider the meaning of *ashab*: Raghib al-Isfahani in his lexicon of Qur'an under the discussion of the root word *صحب* "s h b" says:

الصاحب الملازم إنسانا كان أو حيوانا أو مكانا أو زمانا ولا فرق بين أن تكون مصاحبته بالبدن وهو الاصل والاكثر أو بالعناية والهمة وعلى هذا قال:

لئن غبت عن عيني لما غبت عن قلبي

Al-sahib [pl. *ashab*] is one who accompanies whether a human being, an animal, a place or an age. And it makes no difference whether his company is with his body, which is primarily and mostly the case, or through concern and ambition. And based on this it is said:

If you hide from my eyes

You cannot hide from my heart. 13

In verse 59:20 quoted in the beginning, we observed that the noun *ashab* is annexed to Paradise and Hell Fire. The literal import of the verse, which also is an established reality, reveals that despite their physical existence in this corporeal world, the *ashab*, depending on their state, either spiritually accompany Paradise or Hell Fire. Therefore the criteria of sharing the company of someone or something is not always physical and material.

A well-known tradition narrated by some Muslims to establish the purity of all those who physically accompanied the Holy Prophet (S) is as follows:

أصحابي كالنجوم بأيهم اقتديتم اهتديتم

My companions are like stars, whosoever among them were you to follow, you will be guided. 14

The Holy Qur`an, traditions of the Holy Prophet (S), the intellect as well as history falsifies this tradition if we were to interpret the word *ashab* to merely mean ‘whosoever met the Holy Prophet (S) or physically accompanied him’. For the sake of brevity, we would not like to explain this matter here. Interested readers may refer to a host of scholarly books written on this subject, especially sparkling works like the outstanding masterpiece ‘*Abaqat al-Anwar*’ of the esteemed Indian scholar Sayyid Mir Hamid al-Husayni al-Hindi.

Weren’t the enemies who fought against Imam Amir al-Mu`minin ‘Ali (AS) in the battle of Jamal and Siffin not among those who physically accompanied the Holy Prophet (S)? And what about the battle of Siffin? Can Mu`awiya, who did meet and share the company of the Holy Prophet (S) but fought against the Divinely appointed leader of the time, be considered as a *najm* (a star) through which one can achieve guidance? It is absurd to attribute something like this to the Holy Prophet (S) or misinterpret what he (S) said.

There is another tradition narrated by Shi`i sources however, that is somewhat similar to the abovementioned traditon, but sound and more meaningful: Imam al-Baqir (AS) narrates from the Holy Prophet (S):

مَا وَجَدْتُمْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَالْعَمَلُ بِهِ لَازِمٌ لَا عُذْرَ لَكُمْ فِي تَرْكِهِ، وَمَا لَمْ
يَكُنْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانَتْ فِيهِ سُنَّةٌ مِنِّي لَا عُذْرَ لَكُمْ فِي تَرْكِ سُنَّتِي، وَمَا لَمْ يَكُنْ
فِيهِ سُنَّةٌ مِنِّي فَمَا قَالَ أَصْحَابِي فَخُذُوهُ، فَإِنَّمَا مَثَلُ أَصْحَابِي فِيكُمْ كَمَثَلِ النُّجُومِ،
بِأَيِّهَا أُخِذَ اهْتَدَى فَبِأَيِّ أَقَاوِيلِ أَصْحَابِي أَخَذْتُمْ اهْتَدَيْتُمْ، وَإِخْتِلَافُ أَصْحَابِي لَكُمْ
رَحْمَةٌ، قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَصْحَابُكَ؟ قَالَ: أَهْلُ بَيْتِي

It is essential to act according to what you find in the Book of Allah; and you have no excuse to abandon it. Likewise you have no excuse to abandon whatever is not in the Book but there is a tradition about it from me. And when there is no tradition about something from me, then take whatever my *ashab* say.

For surely the example of my *ashab* among you is like the example of stars (*kamathal al-nujum*), from whosoever among them advice is taken, guidance is achieved; therefore whichever statements of my *ashab* you take, you would get guided; and frequenting my *ashab* is a mercy for you. The Holy Prophet (S) was asked: ‘**O Apostle of Allah, who are your *ashab*? He (S) said: ‘My progeny’.** 15

Here the meaning of *ashab* is used very aptly because the essence of the human being is in his spirit and not his body. The Ahl al-Bayt (AS) being in the heights of perfection and united in the Muhammadan Spirit, truly accompany the Holy Prophet (S) even if the confines of time and place were

to separate them. Hence they really are stars perpetually radiating light.

The aforesaid discussion was to illustrate the meaning of *ashab* when Imam al-Husayn (AS) said:

إِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ أَصْحَابًا أَوْفَى وَلَا خَيْرًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِي

‘Surely I do not know companions more faithful and better than my companions’¹⁶

Here the Imam (AS) is not merely referring to their physical presence, but also alludes to their spiritual sanctity. In fact their apparent presence in the ranks of Imam al-Husayn (AS) in the plains of Karbala and their physical company depicted nothing but their spiritual company as well. This is because it required exalted spirits to remain steadfast in the ranks of the Imam (AS) despite the knowledge about their ephemeral end.

2. The Most Loyal Companions (al-awfa)

As earlier mentioned, the Imam clearly said:

إِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ أَصْحَابًا أَوْفَى وَلَا خَيْرًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِي

‘Surely I do not know **companions more loyal** and better than my companions’¹⁷

Here the word *awfa* is employed thus showing that they were the most loyal of all companions.

Whenever loyalty is talked about, there is always a pledge behind it. Perhaps the best expression of their state is conferred by the following verse of the Qur`an:

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَن يَنْتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا

Among the faithful are men who fulfill what they have pledged to Allah. Of them are some who have fulfilled their pledge, and of them are some who still wait, and they have not changed in the least. (33:23)

One of the places where the loyalty of the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) was radiantly manifested was on the night of ‘Ashura’ when Imam al-Husayn (AS) said to them that the enemies were after him and that they were free to leave. All of the loyal companions in unison expressed their loyalty

and said that they would never leave the Imam (AS) and were ready to be martyred with him.

3. Intense Lovers of Allah ('Ushhaq)

The Holy Qur'an says:

...وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ...

...and those who believe are more intense in their love for Allah... (2: 165)

It is narrated from Imam al-Baqir (AS):

خَرَجَ عَلَيَّ يَسِيرُ بِالنَّاسِ حَتَّى إِذَا كَانَ بِكَرْبَلَاءَ عَلَى مَيْلَيْنِ أَوْ مِيلٍ تَقَدَّمَ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
حَتَّى طَافَ بِمَكَانٍ يُقَالُ لَهَا الْمَقْدَفَانِ فَقَالَ قُتِلَ فِيهَا مَائَتَا نَبِيٍّ وَمَائَتَا سَبْطٍ كُلُّهُمْ
شُهَدَاءٌ وَمَنَاخُ رُكَّابٍ وَمَصَارِعُ عُشَّاقٍ شُهَدَاءٌ لَا يَسْبِقُهُمْ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا يَلْحَقُهُمْ
مَنْ بَعْدَهُمْ

[Imam] 'Ali (AS) went out with some people until he reached a place one or two miles near Karbala', whereupon he went forward and circumambulated around a place known as *al-miqdhafan*, and said: 'This is the place where two hundred Prophets and their grandsons were killed, all of who were martyrs; and it is the halting place of horsemen and the battle ground of intense lovers (*'ushshaq*) and martyrs, whom neither those who came before them or will come after them can prevail [in status]. 18

The word عُشَّاقٍ *'ushshaq* that is employed in the above tradition is worthy of consideration. It is the plural of the word *'ashiq* (passionate lover), which is known to be derived from عَشَقَةٌ *'ashaqa* a plant that coils around a tree from its roots to its branches, and thus envelops it the way passionate love embraces one's entire heart¹⁹. Ibn 'Arabi translates *'ishq* as follows:

ثم العشق وهو التفافه بالقلب مأخوذ من العشقة اللبالية المشوكة التي تلتف
على شجرة العنبة وأمثالها فهو يلتف بقلب المحب حتى يعميه عن النظر إلى
غير محبوبه

Then comes *'ishq* which is when love coils the heart; it is gotten from *al-'ashaqa*, which is the thorned convolvulus (or bindweed), that, twisting in a spiral, wraps around the grapevine and other similar plants.

In this way, blinding love (*ishq*) wraps around the heart of the lover, blinding him so that he can see no one other than his beloved.²⁰

In the well-known *Ziyarat al-Shuhada'* we address the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاءَهُ

Peace be unto you, O friends and **beloveds of Allah**²¹

This verse has so much to reveal. The word *ahiba'* is the plural of the word *habib*, which is commonly translated to mean *mahbub* (beloved). However, its linguistic form *fa'il* (فَعِيل) can confer both the meanings of an active participle (فاعل) and a passive participle (مفعول), which means we can employ the word *habib* either to mean 'the lover'²² or 'the beloved' or both. If we only take the common meaning, however, and translate the word *habib* as *mahbub*, the result is the same. This is because whosoever is the beloved of Allah, is necessarily His lover.

The Holy Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ
أَذَلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ
لَأَيْمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

O you who believe! whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allah's way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; this is Allah's grace, He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allah is Ample-giving, Knowing. [5: 54]

Furthermore the linguistic pattern *fa'il* (فَعِيل) is both a hyperbolic form (*sigha mubaligha*), which gives the connotation of abundance and, an assimilate epithet²³ (*sifa mushbiha*), which confers the sense of continuity. Therefore, the companions of the Imam (AS) were abundantly and perpetually in love of Allah.

If we try to study the origin of the word *habib*, we may be able to unravel other noteworthy secrets.

Expounding on the etymology of the word '*hubb*' Sayyid al-Jaza'iri in his ethical masterpiece *al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyya* says:

سَمِّيَ الحب حبا لوصوله إلى حَبَّة القلب التي هي منبع الحياة، وإذا اتصل بها سرى مع الحياة في جميع أجزاء البدن واثبت في كل جزء صورة المحبوب

The infinitive noun 'hubb' (lit. love) was called *hubb* because it reaches the *habbat al-qalb* (the seed of the heart), which is the source of life. And when it reaches the seed of the heart it penetrates with life to all the parts of the body and leaves the picture of the beloved in every part.²⁴

And the only Master who plants, splits, and makes germinate the seed of love is the *Faliq al-habbi wa al-nawa* (**the Splitter of the grain and the pit- 6:95**), and it is He alone who rears this love and leads it to its perfection, for it is He alone who is *Rabb al-falaq* (**the Lord of splitting- 113: 1**).

Another interesting expression we employ when we address the companions is the following:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَصْفِيَاءَ اللَّهِ وَأُودَاءَهُ

Peace be unto you, O chosen ones of Allah and His **lovers**²⁵

The word *awidda'* is the plural of *wadid*²⁶ in the linguistic pattern of *fa'il* (فَعِيل) which, as discussed above, gives the connotations of permanence and abundance. In addition, it also confers the meaning of both the active participle (*fa'il*) and the passive participle (*maf'ul*), which means that there is constant mutual love between the lovers and the Beloved. Also, the origin of the word *wadid* and other words of the same family, is *watad* (nail), which confers the meaning of stable and constant love.

Ha'iri in his *Muqtaniyat al-Durar* says:

وأصل الودّ من الودّ وهو أثبت من المحبّة

...and the origin of *al-wudd* is *al-watad* (nail) and it is more firm than *al-mahabba* (germinal love)...²⁷

And in his *Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan* Haqqi says:

الود أثبت في أرض القلب من المحبة لاشتقاقه من الودّ

Al-wudd is more firm in the earth of the heart than *al-mahabba*, because it is derived from *al-watad* (nail)...²⁸

Having known that the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) were among the intense lovers of Allah, let us briefly look at the origin of their intense love. What actually makes one a lover for another?

Every sound conscience will agree that knowledge for perfection would reap love and attachment for the same. So long as one is ignorant of another, one cannot develop love for him. It is after acquiring knowledge about the perfect qualities of a certain person that one develops love and attachment for the beloved.

Furthermore, love requires the lover to be naturally inclined to the qualities of the beloved, otherwise the knowledge of the attributes of the beloved would not reap love. If a person, for example, has no inclination towards physical beauty, despite his knowledge of the physically beautiful, he would not develop love for the physically beautiful. It is when the heart naturally loves and appreciates beauty that when the beautiful is beheld, the spark of love is ignited and a raging fire follows.

The noble companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS), having retained their innate nature, were natural lovers of Absolute Perfection (*al-kamal al-mutlaq*) and also enjoyed the *ma'rifa of Almighty Allah*, and that is what made them crave to meet their Only Beloved.

Knowledge of Allah is sometimes classified into two:

- Conceptual & Acquired Knowledge (*al-'ilm al-husuli*)
- Presential & Divinely Endowed Knowledge (*al-'ilm al-hudhuri*)

Conceptual knowledge is very limited and a kind of narration of what is behind the curtain. Presential knowledge, on the contrary, is to lift the curtain from the face of the Beloved²⁹. In clearer terms, it is to beautify oneself with the attributes of the Beloved. Between the conceptual appreciation of the Beloved and lifting the veil of the Beloved there is utter remoteness. It is the presential knowledge of Allah that makes one perpetually an amorous lover. Such a lover manifests the love of the Only Beloved in every move he makes. Expressions like the following reveal how intense was the love that glowed in the hearts of the Imam (AS)'s companions:

وَقَامَ إِلَيْهِ رَجُلٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ زُهَيْرُ بْنُ الْقَيْنِ الْبَجَلِيِّ، فَقَالَ : يَا بْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ، وَدَدْتُ
أَنْي قُتِلْتُ ثُمَّ نُشِرْتُ، ثُمَّ قُتِلْتُ ثُمَّ نُشِرْتُ، ثُمَّ قُتِلْتُ ثُمَّ نُشِرْتُ فِيكَ وَفِي الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ
مِائَةَ قَتْلَةٍ

A man called Zuhayr bin al-Qayn al-Bajli came to the Imam (AS) and said: 'O son of the Apostle of Allah, I wish I would be martyred and then resurrected and again be killed and resurrected, and again be killed and resurrected in your way and in the way of those who are with you, a hundred times.³⁰

All this fervor shows nothing but passionate love for Almighty Allah, for sacrificing oneself for al-Husayn (AS) who is a manifestation of Allah's Attributes is nothing but to sacrifice oneself for Allah, the Only Beloved.

The following verse of the Holy Qur'an also depicts the reality of which we have so far spoken:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Say: If you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your faults, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (3:31)

We should remember that it is only after embellishing ourselves with the Attributes of Allah, that our actions would be according to what Allah and His messenger wants.

4. Sharp Inner Vision (Kushifa lahum al-Ghita')

The Holy Qur'an says:

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp. (50:22)

Ibn 'Amara reports from his father who reports:

قُلْتُ لَهُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْحُسَيْنِ وَإِقْدَامِهِمْ عَلَى الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُمْ كُشِفَ لَهُمُ الْغِطَاءُ حَتَّى رَأَوْا مَنَازِلَهُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ...

I asked Imam al-Sadiq (AS): Tell me about the companions of al-Husayn (AS) and how they would advance to their death, and he said: **Indeed the curtain was unveiled for them**, until they saw their dwellings in Paradise...31

In one of the *ziyarat*, we address the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) in the following manner:

...أَشْهَدُ لَقَدْ كَشَفَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْغِطَاءَ...

...I bear witness that most surely Allah unveiled for you the curtain...32

Sharp inner vision is attainable by every human being who purifies his spirit. The reason why many of us do not enjoy this kind of vision, is the murkiness of our hearts. Following is a tradition narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) worthy of reflection:

لَوْلَا تَكْثِيرُ فِي كَلَامِكُمْ وَتَمْرِيجُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ لَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَرَى وَلَسَمِعْتُمْ مَا أَسْمَعُ

Was it not for your loquaciousness and confusion in your hearts, you would have surely seen what I see, and you would have surely heard what I hear.33

In fact the faithful human being is required to behold the kernel of the universe. Almighty Allah says:

أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Have they not contemplated the dominions of the heavens and the earth, and whatever things Allah has created, and that maybe their time has already drawn near? So what discourse will they believe after this?! (7: 185)

6. Immersed in God (Rabbaniyyun)

The Holy Qur`an says:

وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّانِيِّينَ

But be godly people...(3:79)

And in one of the salutational recitals we address the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) in the following way:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَيُّهَا الرِّبَّانِيُّونَ

Peace be unto you, **O Rabbaniyyun...**34

This verse talks about the great spiritual status of the noble companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS). *Rabbaniyyun* is the plural of *Rabbani*, which according to some lexicographers like al-Turayhi denotes 'one who is perfect in both knowledge and action'³⁵ Others translate '*Rabbani*' more accurately and say:

الرَّبَّانِي هُوَ الْمُنْسُوبُ إِلَى الرَّبِّ وَزِيَادَةُ الْاَلِفِ وَالنُّونِ فِيهِ تَدُلُّ عَلَى الْمُبَالَغَةِ فِي
النَّسْبَةِ فَتَكُونُ الْمَعْنَى: مَنْ كَانَ شَدِيدَ الْاِخْتِصَاصِ بِالرَّبِّ وَكَثِيرَ الْاِشْتِغَالِ
بِعِبَادَتِهِ وَعِبَادَتِهِ، وَيَجُوزُ اَيْضًا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَنْسُوبًا إِلَى الرَّبِّ بِمَعْنَاهِ الْمَصْدَرِ
فَيَدُلُّ عَلَى الْمُبَالَغَةِ فِي تَرْبِيَةِ النَّاسِ وَتَدْبِيرِهِمْ...

Rabbani رَبَّانِي is one who is attributed to 'الرب' the Lord' and the additional 'alif' and 'nun' in the word is to denote intensification in attribution, and hence the meaning of the word would be: One who is intensely attributed to the Lord and absorbed in His submission and worship; and the word can also be related to 'الرب' the Lord in its infinitive (*masdar*) sense, so that it would mean intensity in training the people and controlling their affairs...³⁶

And both the meanings can be true together.

7. Spiritual Sovereignty

The Holy Qur'an says:

قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

We said: O fire! be a comfort and peace to Ibrahim! (21:59)

Jabir narrates from Imam al-Baqir (AS):

قَالَ الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ لِأَصْحَابِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُقْتَلَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ: يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّكَ
سُتَسَاقُ إِلَى الْعِرَاقِ، وَهِيَ أَرْضٌ قَدْ اتَّقَىٰ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ، وَأَوْصِيَاءُ النَّبِيِّينَ، وَهِيَ
أَرْضٌ تُدْعَى "عَمُورًا" وَإِنَّكَ تُسْتَشْهَدُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَشْهَدُ مَعَكَ جَمَاعَةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِكَ لَا
يَجِدُونَ أَلَمَ مَسِّ الْحَدِيدِ، وَتَلَا: قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ تَكُونُ
الْحَرْبُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَيْهِمْ بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا

Before his martyrdom, Imam al-Husayn bin 'Ali said to his companions: Indeed the Apostle of Allah (S) said [to me]: O my dear young son, surely you will be led to 'Iraq; it is a land where Prophets of Allah and Successors of the Prophets have met; It is a land called 'Amura. And indeed you shall be martyred there together **with a group among your companions who would not sense the pain of the touch of iron**. Then Imam al-Husayn (AS) read the verse: **'O Fire, be cool and peaceful for Ibrahim' (21:59)**. The war will be cool and peaceful on you and them.³⁷

Explaining this situation of the Imam, the grand Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli says:

ووفقا لرواية الامام الباقر فإن جنود الحسين يوم عاشوراء لم يكونوا يستشعروا آلام الضرب والطعن و الجراح إلا بما تولده القرصة من ألم... لماذا؟ لأن الروح هي مصدر الألم والفرح. يصوم احدهم فيشعر بوطأة الظمأ و الجوع...و يصوم الآخر فلا نرى فيه إلا النشاط والابتهاج...اليسست الظروف الفيزيائية متساوية للاثنين...فلماذا يتعذب الاول و ينطلق الآخر؟! لأن الروح لدي الثاني مشدودة الى نقطة بعيدة عن الظروف المادية. و لقد كان ابطال كربلاء من تلك الروح العظيمة المبهورة بالغيب...

According to a tradition from Imam al-Baqir (AS) the army of al-Husayn (AS) did not feel the pain of the blows and wounds on the 'Ashura' day save a pinch...why is that? This is because the spirit is the origin of pain and happiness. One of you may fast and feel the pangs of hunger and thirst...whereas another would fast but we would find in him nothing but happiness and high-spiritedness...aren't the physical conditions similar for both? So why is the first in torment while the second does not feel anything? This is because the spirit of the second is attached to a realm distant from the material conditions. Indeed the gallant warriors of Karbala' were among those great spirits overcome by the unseen plane of existence.³⁸

8. Worshippers through Awareness (al-'Ubbad)

The Holy Qur'an says:

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيُغَيِّظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and those with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allah and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Tawrat and their description in the Injeel; like as seed-produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the unbelievers on account of them; Allah has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward. (48:29)

Sayyid Radhi al-Din bin Tawus al-Hasani (may Allah elevate his noble spirit) in his well-known *maqalat*, *al-Luhuf 'ala Qatla al-Tufuf* narrates:

وَبَاتَ الْحُسَيْنُ وَأَصْحَابُهُ تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةَ وَ لَهُمْ دَوِيٌّ كَدَوِيٍّ النَّحْلِ مَا بَيْنَ رَاكِعٍ وَ
سَاجِدٍ وَ قَائِمٍ وَ قَاعِدٍ...

'Al-Husayn and his companions were awake the whole night [of 'Ashura'] and **their environment resembled an area permeated with the sound of the humming of bees.** [In other words all of them were busy in the remembrance of Allah and the sound of their whisperings permeated the entire environment.] Some were in the state of *ruku'*, others in the state of *sujud*, some standing and others sitting... 39

And al-Qazwini narrates from the History of *al-A'tham al-Kufi*:

إنه ما نام في تلك الليلة الحسين ولا احد من اصحابه واعوانه إلى الصبح.

Surely that night neither al-Husayn nor anyone of his companions and supporters slept until morning.⁴⁰

Worship is undoubtedly a merit when it is not reduced to mere actions and recitals. The companions of al-Husayn (AS) were men who worshipped Almighty Allah out of awareness and knowledge. Their appellations such as *ahibba'Allah* (*Divine lovers*), *'ushshaq* (*intense lovers*) and *kushifa lahum al-ghita* (*the curtains were unveiled for them*), all demonstrate their knowledge and deep insight. This is because such qualities are essential corollaries of knowledge, without which they carry no meaning. It is such kind of worship that is natural and praiseworthy.

Expression of utter humility near the Absolute Perfect Being can only come about naturally after one realizes whom he is in front of. Such realization is in stages. Sometimes one has conceptual knowledge about the Creator and thus he maintains a degree of humility in prayer, but that cannot be compared to one who has presential knowledge of Allah. It is such knowledge about which Imam ‘Ali (AS) talks in a conversation with a *rabbi*:

عَنْ أَبِي الْحَسَنِ الْمُوصَلِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: جَاءَ حَبْرٌ إِلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، فَقَالَ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ رَبَّكَ حِينَ عَبَدْتَهُ؟ قَالَ: فَقَالَ: وَيْلَكَ لَمْ أَكُنْ لِأَعْبُدَ رَبًّا لَمْ أَرَهُ، قَالَ: وَكَيْفَ رَأَيْتَهُ؟ قَالَ: وَيْلَكَ لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْعُيُونُ فِي مُشَاهَدَةِ الْأَبْصَارِ وَلَكِنْ رَأَتْهُ الْقُلُوبُ بِحَقَائِقِ الْإِيمَانِ.

Abu al-Hasan al-Mawsali narrates from Abi ‘Abdillah [al-Sadiq (AS)] who said: A rabbi came to Amir al-Mu’minin (AS), and said: ‘Ya Amir al-Mu’minin, did you see your Lord when you worshipped Him? Imam (AS) said: ‘Woe unto you! Eyes do not comprehend Him in their ocular vision, but hearts see Him through the realities of conviction.⁴¹

Worship without knowledge and awareness, on the contrary is insignificant and sometimes dangerous too. Consider the following traditions:

a. Imam ‘Ali (AS) says:

أَلَا لَا خَيْرَ فِي عِبَادَةٍ لَا فِقْهَ فِيهَا

Indeed there is no good in that worship that is without understanding.⁴²

b. Imam Zayn al-’Abidin (AS) says:

لَا عِبَادَةَ إِلَّا بِالتَّفَقُّهِ

There is no worship save with understanding⁴³

c. Imam ‘Ali (AS) says:

سَكُنُوا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ مَعْرِفَةَ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ، حَتَّى يَنْفَعَكُمْ مَا تُحَرِّكُونَ مِنَ الْجَوَارِحِ

بِعِبَادَةِ مَنْ تَعْرِفُونَ.

Settle in your hearts the knowledge of Whom you worship so that the members that you move in worship of Whom you know can benefit you.⁴⁴

d. Imam 'Ali (AS) says:

لَا خَيْرَ فِي عِبَادَةِ لَا عِلْمَ فِيهَا

There is no good in that worship which accompanies no knowledge.⁴⁵

It is interesting to note that the expression 'They had the humming as the humming of bees' لَهُمْ دَوِيٌّ كَدَوِيٍّ النَّحْلِ that has come for the noble companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) has also come with regard to the Khawarij, who were adamant in their ignorant stance and ready to fight against Imam 'Ali (AS) in the battle of Nahrawan. Jundub bin Zuhayr al-Azdi narrates:

When the Kharijites separated from Imam 'Ali (AS), he set out to fight against them and we set out with him. I reached their camps, and found that their environment was covered with the sound of the recitation of Qur'an. [The words used in the tradition is *lahum dawiyyun kadawiy al-nahl* (they had the sound of the humming of bee)]. Among them were those who wore burnoose and had calluses on their foreheads. When I saw that, doubt crept my heart; so I separated myself from them, descended from my horseback, fixed my lance on the ground, and kept my shield, and placed my armor over it.

And I stood in prayer while I cried: "O Allah if fighting against them is according to Your desire, then show me something by which I know that it is the truth; and if it is not according to Your desire, then divert me from the battle. Suddenly Imam 'Ali came and descended from the horse of the Apostle of Allah, and stood in prayer, and then suddenly a man came and said: 'They [the Kharijites] have crossed the river. Then another one came and firmly tied his mount, and said: They crossed it and left. Thereafter Amir al-Mu'minin (AS) said: 'They have not crossed the river, nor will they cross it, and they surely will be killed near it; this has been informed to me by Allah and His Apostle.'

The Imam (AS) [then] said: 'O Jundub, do you see that hill?' I said, 'Yes.' He said: 'Surely the Apostle of Allah (upon whom be peace) narrated to me that they would fight near there.' As for us, we would first send a messenger unto them, who would invite them to the Book of Allah and the Sunna of His Prophet, and they would shoot at his face with arrows, and he would be killed. Jundub says: We went towards them and saw them still in their army not yet departed or left. So the Imam (AS) called his men and gathered them, then he came near their ranks saying: 'Who will take this Qur'an and walk towards these people and call them to the Book of Allah and the Sunna of the Prophet (S)? One who does so, would

be killed and attain Paradise. None save a youth from Banu ‘Amir bin Sa’sa’a responded to this call.

The Imam (AS) however, on observing his young age, said: ‘Return to where you stood.’ Then he made the same announcement again, and none save the same youth responded positively to his call. So the Imam (AS) said: ‘Take it [the Qur`an], but mind you that you would be killed.’ So he walked with it unto them until he came to a place where they could hear him. He called them, and they shot at him with arrows, and he returned to us, while his face resembled a porcupine (for he was surrounded with arrows). So ‘Ali (AS) said: Attack them! So we attacked them. Jundub says: The doubt [that had crept my heart earlier) came out, and I [fought] and slew...’⁴⁶

Therefore the yardstick to judge the truly worshipful nature of a person is not by the quantity of his worship, but the quality of his worship. The Holy Qur`an says:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ

...Who created death and life that He may try you-- which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving. (67:2)

Ample traditions explicitly say that the value of one’s worship is according to one’s understanding and intellect. Observe the following:

a. The Holy Prophet (S) addressing a people who praised a man [for his worship] said:

كَيْفَ عَقْلُ الرَّجُلِ؟ قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ نُخْبِرُكَ عَنْ اجْتِهَادِهِ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ وَأَصْنَافِ الْخَيْرِ، وَتَسْأَلُنَا عَنْ عَقْلِهِ؟! فَقَالَ: إِنَّ الْأَحْمَقَ يُصِيبُ بِحُمَقِهِ أَعْظَمَ مِنْ فُجُورِ الْفَاجِرِ، وَإِنَّمَا يُرْتَفَعُ الْعِبَادُ غَدًا فِي الدَّرَجَاتِ وَيَنَالُونَ الزُّلْفَى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ عَلَى قَدْرِ عُقُولِهِمْ.

How is the man’s intellect? They said: O Apostle of Allah, we inform you about his struggle in worship and good actions, and you ask us about his intellect? Thereupon the Prophet (S) said: Indeed an idiot (*ahmaq*) due to his silliness can perform something graver than the crimes of criminals; **and surely the servants [of Allah] would only be elevated tomorrow in stations and reach the proximity of their Lord according to their intellects.**⁴⁷

b. Muhammad bin Sulayman al-Daylami reports from his father who said:

قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ فَلَانَ مِنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَدِينِهِ وَفَضْلِهِ فَقَالَ كَيْفَ عَقْلُهُ قُلْتُ لَا أُدْرِي
فَقَالَ إِنَّ الثَّوَابَ عَلَى قَدْرِ الْعَقْلِ...

I informed Imam al-Sadiq (AS) about the *ibada* and religiousness and merits of a certain person.

Thereupon he asked me: how is his intellect/understanding? I said: I do not know. So he said:
'Surely reward is according to one's intellect/understanding.'⁴⁸

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

الْعِلْمُ إِمَامُ الْعَمَلِ، وَالْعَمَلُ تَابِعُهُ

Knowledge is the leader of action and the action is its follower.⁴⁹

Although the Khawarij were well known for their excessive worship and recitation of Qur`an, their ignorance never allowed them to benefit from their worship or recitation. Perhaps the following verse of the Holy Qur`an aptly describes their example:

الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا أُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَزَنًا

Those whose endeavour goes awry in the life of the world, while they suppose they are doing good.' They are the ones who deny the signs of their Lord and the encounter with Him So their works have failed. On the Day of Resurrection We will not set for them any weight. (18: 104-105)

They struggled to station themselves in the surface of religion, but were deprived of that too. They had not understood the Holy Qur`an and thus were ready to fight against the very epitome of the Qur`an. When Imam 'Ali (AS) tried to explain to them the deception that had entangled them, they thought they understood religion more than one who was literally chosen by the Holy Prophet (S) as his *wasī* (vicegerent).

So wild had their attitude become that they had the audacity to slaughter a sincere companion of the Holy Prophet (S) who was loyal to his teachings, and slit the womb of his expectant wife. The latter's crime was merely loyalty to Imam 'Ali (AS).

Although this is past history for us, the Khariji trend has remained up to this day. The Wahhabis, due to their identical attitude, can aptly be known as the 'neo-Kharijites'.

What is interesting is that even Westerners have likened the Wahhabis with the Khawarij. For example, Jon Kyl, a Republican Senator from Arizona writes in the *Front Page Magazine*:

Islamic extremism as an ideology is hardly new with the first movement that resembles today's phenomenon, known as the Kharijites, appearing shortly after the birth of Islam in the 7th century.

Later it was expounded on by various Islamic scholars, such as Ibn Taymiya in the 13th century, but it did not become institutionalized until the mid-18th century when the theories promulgated by the radical cleric Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab were accepted and imposed as the state religion of his realm by the founder of the House of Saud. 50

Esposito, in his *Islam and Politics* writes:

“Religious zeal and military might merged in a religiopolitical movement that waged holy war with a zeal reminiscent of the early Kharijites, viewing all Muslims who resisted as unbelievers. The tribes of Arabia were subdued and united in the name of Islamic egalitarianism.”⁵¹

The apparently worshipful attitude of the Kharijites, both present and past, should not lead one to surmise that worship in great quantity is not praiseworthy. Those who have attained realization would naturally be pulled towards constant worship. They would, in terms of a tradition, be ‘amorous lovers’ of worship. Consider the following tradition:

عن أبي عبد الله قال: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ: أَفْضَلُ النَّاسِ مَنْ عَشِقَ الْعِبَادَةَ فَعَانَقَهَا
وَأَحَبَّهَا بِقَلْبِهِ، وَيَأْشُرَهَا بِجَسَدِهِ وَتَفَرَّغَ لَهَا، فَهُوَ لِأَيُّبَالِي عَلَى مَا أَصْبَحَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا
عَلَى عُسْرٍ أَمْ عَلَى يُسْرٍ؟

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) says: The Apostle of Allah (S) said: The best of people is one who intensely loves worship (*'ashiqah al-'ibada*), embraces it, loves it through his heart, and performs it with his body and occupies himself with it; Thereafter he does not care about the situation he faces in the world, whether it be difficult or easy.⁵²

If we reflect on some historical accounts of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Infallible Progeny (AS) we would come to realize how abundantly they engaged in worship. It was their exalted state that made them constantly absorbed in prayer. It is reported about Hadhrat Zahra' (AS) that she would stand in prayer so much that her feet would get swollen⁵³. And concerning Imam 'Ali (AS) Imam al-Sadiq (AS) narrates:

وَلَقَدْ دَخَلَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَلَى أَبِيهِ فَإِذَا هُوَ قَدْ بَلَغَ مِنَ الْعِبَادَةِ مَا لَمْ يَبْلُغْهُ أَحَدٌ، وَقَدْ

إصْفَرَ لَوْنُهُ مِنَ السَّهْرِ، وَرَمَضَتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْبُكَاءِ، وَدَبَّرَتْ جَبْهَتُهُ مِنَ السَّجُودِ،
 وَوَرَمَتْ قَدَمَاهُ مِنَ الْقِيَامِ فِي الصَّلَاةِ. قَالَ: فَقَالَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ: فَلَمَّ أَمَلِكُ حِينَ رَأَيْتَهُ
 بِتِلْكَ الْحَالِ مِنَ الْبُكَاءِ فَبَكَيتُ رَحْمَةً لَهُ، وَإِذَا هُوَ يُفَكِّرُ، فَالْتَفَتَ إِلَيَّ بَعْدَ هَنِيئَةٍ مِنْ
 دُخُولِي، فَقَالَ: يَا بُنَيَّ أَعْطِنِي بَعْضَ تِلْكَ الصُّحُفِ الَّتِي فِيهَا عِبَادَةُ عَلِيٍّ، فَأَعْطَيْتُهُ،
 فَقَرَأَ فِيهَا يَسِيرًا ثُمَّ تَرَكَهَا مِنْ يَدِهِ تَضَجَّرًا وَقَالَ: مَنْ يَقْوَى عَلَى عِبَادَةِ عَلِيٍّ بِنِ ابْنِ أَبِي
 طَالِبٍ!؟

Surely Abu Ja'far came to his father, while he had worshipped Allah so much that none would equal him, and due to night vigil his complexion had turned pale; his eyes had become sore out of weeping, and his forehead had sunk in due to a lot of prostration, and his legs became swollen out of standing in prayer. Imam al-Sadiq (AS) said: [Seeing this] Abu Ja'far [al-Baqir (AS)] said: I could not control myself from weeping when I saw him in that state; so I wept in mercy for him. And suddenly he lay contemplating. Then after a little while, he faced me, and said: 'O my dear little son, give me some of those manuscripts that speak about the worship of 'Ali (AS); so I gave him, and he read from it a little, and then left it in dissatisfaction and said: 'Who can worship like 'Ali bin Abi Talib (AS)'?54

These and many other incidents show how absorbed were the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) in the worship of Allah. Their worship, however, was out of insight and knowledge of the worship and the Worshipped One. So absorbed were they, that when an arrow is removed from the feet of Imam 'Ali while he is in prayer, he does not sense any pain whatsoever.

In conclusion, it should be realized that the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) were worshippers who worshipped Allah as a natural outcome of their knowledge and vision. If such worship is done constantly and in abundance, it is highly recommended and praiseworthy. But if it is performed without knowledge, it has very little or no value at all.

9. Strangers (Ghuraba')

The Holy Qur'an says:

رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ
 يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about. (Holy Qur'an, 24:37)

The Holy Prophet (S) was once asked about *ghuraba'* (strangers in the real sense of the word), and he (S) said:

الَّذِينَ يُحْيُونَ مَا أَمَاتَ النَّاسُ مِنْ سُنَّتِي

They are those who will revive what the people ruined from my Sunna.⁵⁵

Sacrificing themselves for the revival of religion, the companions of Imam al-Husayn (AS) steadfastly stood against the enemies. Earlier Imam al-Husayn (AS) had permitted them to leave if they wished to, but they never dared to even think of deserting him. Among the rest of the Muslims, they were truly the *ghuraba'* whose stations others never appreciated.

Imam al-Husayn (AS), however, was even more *gharib* than them, for he occupied a station that even his companions never comprehended. It is therefore correct to call him *Gharib al-ghuraba'* (The stranger among the strangers (his companions)). In one of the salutational recitals we address Imam al-Husayn (AS) as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَى خَامِسِ أَصْحَابِ أَهْلِ الْكِسَاءِ، السَّلَامُ عَلَى غَرِيبِ الْغُرَبَاءِ...

Peace be unto you O the fifth member of the people of the cloak, Peace be unto you, **O stranger of the strangers...**⁵⁶

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1. Al-Mustafawi, Al-Tahqiq fi Kalimat al-Qur'an al-Karim, v.4, p. 254
 2. Thiqat al-Islam al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v. 1, p. 133
 3. Al-Isfahani, Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an, p. 392
 4. Mulla Hadi Sabzawari, Sharh al-Man'uma, v.5, p. 113
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 6. Mulla Sadra, Asfar, vol.9, p. 112
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 8. Shaykh al-al-Tabrasi, Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, v.1, p. 190
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 10. Ibn Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, pp. 175-176
 11. Al-Mashhadi, Al-Mazar, p. 426
 12. Shaykh al-Mufid, Kitab al-Irshad, p. 43
 13. Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Mufradatu Alfa' al-Qur'an, p. 475
 14. Al-Tha'labi, Tafsir al-Tha'labi, v.3, p. 334
 15. Shaykh al-Saduq, Ma'ani al-Akhbar, p. 156
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17. Ibid.
18. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.41, p. 295
19. Sayyid al-Jaza'iri, al-Anwar al-Nu'maniyya, v.3, p. 166
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21. Al-Mashhadi, al-Mazar, p. 464
22. Al-Zubaydi, Taj al-'Arus, v. 1, p. 393
23. Pierre Cachia (University of Edinburgh), "THE MONITOR, A Dictionary of Arabic Grammatical Terms", p. 107, published in 1973 by Longman Group Ltd.
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25. Al-Shahid al-Awwal, al-Mazar, p. 129
26. Al-Zubaydi, Taj al-'Arus, v.5, p. 306
27. Ha'iri, Muqtaniyat al-Durar wa Multaqatat al-Thamar, v. 12, p. 115
28. Haqqi, Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, v. 10, p. 393
29. In more accurate terms, the Beloved has no veil. We are full of veils. We must therefore struggle to eradicate the veils from our side so that we can vision the face of the Only Beloved.
30. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.44, p. 316
31. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.44, p.297
32. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 45, p.70
33. 'Allama al-Tabataba'i, Tafsir al-Mizan, v.5, p. 270
34. Shaykh al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v.4, p. 574
35. Al-Turayhi, Tafsir Gharib al-Qur'an, p. 100
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37. Qutb al-Din al-Rawandi, al-Khara'ij wa al-Jarayih, v.2, p. 848
38. Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, Thawrat al-'Ishq al-Ilahi, p. 232
39. Sayyid Radhi al-Din bin Tawus, al-Luhuf 'ala Qatla al-Tufuf, p.91
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54. 'Allama al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.46, p.75
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56. Al-Mashhadi, al-Mazar, p. 497

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[1] http://www.mullasadra.org/New_Site/English/Paper%20Bank/Anthropology/kamal%20Kharazi.htm

[2] <http://www.FrontPageMagazine.com>