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Chapter Two: Untimed Acts Of Worship

Prelude

The untimed acts of worship are not dedicated to a certain time but can be practiced at any time according to one's special circumstances and personal choice, or whenever the qualifications of their obligation or recommendation are met. For instance, although *jihad* is an obligatory act of worship, it is not dedicated to a certain time; rather, it is associated with its necessity and the fulfillment of its conditions.

This chapter will be dedicated to discussing five untimed acts of worship only: prayer, fasting, supplication, remembrance (*dhikr*), and *jihad*.

As for the other devotional acts, some of them have been previously discussed. For instance, almsgiving and paying the *zakat* (poor–rate) and *khums* (one–fifth) taxes have been discussed in the section on the economic system of the virtuous community. Kind treatment and manners have been discussed in the section regarding the general system of social relations.

As for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, which are among the most important obligations and duties in Islam, their laws can be found within the laws and Islamic view of *jihad* since they are part of the devotional acts that contribute to maintaining worship and religious laws. They are therefore related to the issues of the supreme religious authority (*wilayah*), as has been previously confirmed.

In the first chapter of this volume devotional acts in their capacity as particular to certain times have been discussed. In this chapter, we will discuss untimed devotional acts.

Prayer

In the Holy Qur'an, prayer (*salat*) is considered the most important devotional act in Islam. It is described as the pillar of religion and if it is accepted, everything else will be accepted correspondingly; however, if it is rejected, everything else will be rejected. Prayer also restrains one from indecency and evil. According to some traditions, those who neglect performing the ritual prayers on purpose are ascribed to disbelief (*kufr*).

Hundreds of traditions have been reported concerning the merits of performing prayers, the necessity of establishing them regularly, their outcome, the logic for legislating the prayers, and the method of performing them, as well as many other issues generally related to prayers. Therefore, to discuss all these issues would require an independent, voluminous book.

In our previous discussion of the daily ritual prayers, we cited some traditions. Now, let us cite some more traditions on this topic:

About the merit of prayer, Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab is validly reported to have asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a) about the best deed through which the servants of Allah can seek nearness to Him and which represents the best ever deed in His sight.

The Imam ('a) answered:

مَا أَعْلَمُ شَيْئاً بَعْدَ الْمَعْرِفَةِ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الصَّلاَةَ. أَلاَ تَرَى أَنَّ الْعَبْدَ الصَّالِحَ عِيسَى بْنَ مَرْيَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ قَالَ: ((وَأَوْصَانِي بالصَّلاَة وَالزَّكَاة مَا دُمْتُ حَيّاً).

After recognition of Almighty Allah, I do not know of any thing better than prayer. Have you not noticed that the righteous servant, Jesus the son of Mary, ('a) says, "He has enjoined on me prayer and the poor-rate as long as I live. (19:31)"2

Making recommendations to his companions, Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have said the following about prayer:

تَعَاهَدُوا أَمْرَ الصَّلاَةِ، وَحَافِظُوا عَلَيْهَا، وَاسْتَكْثِرُوا مِنْهَا، وَتَقَرَّبُوا بِهَا، فَإِنَّهَا " كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُوْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْقُوتًا" أَلاَ تَسْمَعُونَ إِلَى جَوَابِ أَهْلِ النَّارِ حِينَ سُئِلُوا: " مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرَ . قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ " وَإِنَّهَا لَتَحُتُ الذُّنُوبَ حَتَّ الْوَرَقِ، وَتُطْلِقُهَا إِطْلاَقَ الرِّبَق، وَشَبَّهَهَا رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بِالْحَمَّةِ تَكُونُ عَلَى بَابِ الرَّجُل، فَهُو كَتَّ الْوُرَقِ، وَتُطْلِقُهَا إِطْلاَقَ الرِّبَق، وَشَبَّهَهَا رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الدَّرَنِ؟ وَقَدْ عَرَفَ حَقَّهَا رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الدَّرَنِ؟ وَقَدْ عَرَفَ حَقَّهَا رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْلَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاللَّيْلَةِ خَمْسَ مَرَّات، فَمَا عَسَى أَنْ يَبْقَى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الدَّرَنِ؟ وَقَدْ عَرَفَ حَقَّهَا رِجَالٌ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْنَهُ عَنْهَا زِينَةُ مَتَاع، وَلاَ قُرَّةُ عَيْن مِنْ وَلَد وَلاَ مَال، يَقُولُ اللهُ سُبْحَانَهُ: "رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلِا بَلْهُ عَلَيْهِمْ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ بَالصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ التَّبْشِيرِ لَهُ ذَيْلُ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ نَصِباً بِالصَّلَاةِ وَلِعَلْ اللهُ عَلَيْهُ وَآلِهِ يَطْلُولُ اللهِ سُبْحَانَهُ: "وَأَمُنُ بَهَا أَهْلُهُ وَيَصْبُرُ عَلَيْهَا "، فَكَانَ يَأْمُلُ بِهَا أَهْلَهُ وَيَصْبُرُ عَلَيْهَا نَفْسَهُ . وَاصْطُهِرْ عَلَيْهَا "، فَكَانَ يَأْمُلُ بِهَا أَهْلَهُ وَيَصْبُرُ عَلَيْهَا نَفْسَهُ

Pledge yourself to prayer and remain steady in its performance. Offer prayer as much as possible and seek nearness of Allah through it, because it is, "imposed upon the believers as a timed ordinance!" Have you not heard the reply of the people of Hell when they were asked, "What has brought you into hell?' They shall say, 'We were not of those who offered the regular prayers!'" Certainly, prayer sheds sins like the dropping of leaves from trees and removes them as ropes removed from the necks of cattle. The Messenger of Allah—May peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants—has said, "Prayer is like a hot spring situated at the door of a person's home. If he takes a bath in it five times a day, will any dirt then remain on him?"

Those believers recognize its value that neither the adornment of property nor the coolness of the eyes produced by children, can turn away from. Allah, the Glorified, says, "(Those) men (are believers) whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah, and constancy in prayer, and paying the poor–rate..." Even after receiving assurance of Paradise, the Messenger of Allah—peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his descendants—used to exert himself in prayer. After he was given the glad tidings of being allowed into Paradise by Allah's command, "And enjoin prayer on your followers and adhere steadily to it," the Holy Prophet (S) used to enjoin his followers to prayer and exert himself to offer it.3

There are certain conditions and etiquettes with regard to the performer of prayers, his or her dress, the place of performing the prayer, and the place of prostration. However, the most important of these conditions are the following:

The body, dress, and place of prostration of a performer of prayer must be ceremonially pure (i.e. *tahir*).

A prayer must be preceded by ceremonial purity that is attained through ritual ablution (i.e. *wudhu'*) or ritual bathing (i.e. *ghusl*).

The place of performing the prayer must be legal (i.e. it must not be usurped or confiscated).

The dress of a performer of prayer must not be made of silk, gold, or the skin of an animal whose flesh is forbidden to eat or the skin of a corpse.

In addition, there are many rulings appertaining to prayer and mentioned in detail in the books on the practical laws of Islam written by jurisprudents and known as *Risalah*.

The Untimed Recommended Prayers

Let us first refer to the obligatory prayers in the following list:

1. Daily obligatory prayers: the dawn (*fajr* or *subh*) prayer, the midday (*zuhr*) prayer, the afternoon (*'asr*) prayer, the sunset (*maghrib*) prayer, and the early night (*'isha'*) prayer.

- 2. The congregational Friday Prayer substitutes the obligatory afternoon prayer on Fridays.
- 3. The '«d Prayers, which are performed on the two feast days of Islam (namely, '«d al-Fitr and '«d al-Adhha).
- 4. The Prayer of Signs (salat al-ayat) is performed when a natural phenomenon is feared.4
- 5. The prayers obligatory due to a vow, an oath, or on behalf of others.
- 6. The Circumambulation Prayer, which has been discussed in the previous chapter of this book.

The optional, recommended prayers are too many, some offered at certain times and on certain occasions. The most important of these untimed optional prayers are:

- 1. Voluntary prayers (Salat al-Tatawwu')
- 2. The prayers of the Holy Infallibles ('a)
- 3. Ja'far al-Tayyar's Prayer
- 4. Prayer for Needs (*Salat al-Hajah*)
- 5. Prayer for Seeking the Best (*Salat al–Istikharah*)
- 6. Prayer of Dedication (*Salat al–Hadiyyah*)

Voluntary Prayers

A voluntary prayer is the prayer offered to seek nearness to Almighty Allah. Of course, such prayers are not restricted to certain formulas, places, or times; rather, they are offered pursuant to the Holy Prophet's saying:

Prayer is the best subject. Therefore, whosoever wills, let him offer a few, and whosoever wills, let him offer many.5

Likewise, it is reported that someone visited the Holy Prophet (S) and asked him to pray to Almighty Allah to allow him into Paradise.

The Holy Prophet (S) answered:

I will, if you help me by prostrating yourself before Him frequently.6

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is validly reported to have said:

Prayer is the offering of every pious person.7

One of such voluntary prayers is the prayer that is offered upon entering a mosque as a form of greeting the place. Of course, greeting a mosque includes offering a voluntary, obligatory, or any other prayer therein. Such voluntary, recommended, or even supererogatory prayers usually consist of two units ended with the statements of *tashahhud*⁸ and *taslim* unless the formula of the prayer has been otherwise defined in a valid religious text.

It is advisable to offer supererogatory prayers and any number of other voluntary prayers whenever there is a desire to do so. In this respect, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

Hearts usually encounter different states ranging between enthusiasm and apathy. If your hearts are enthusiastic, then offer the supererogatory prayers; otherwise, you may perform only the obligatory ones.9

Nonetheless, man is required to keep his heart and self sound and open under all conditions such that he is always ready to jump at the opportunity of offering prayers because the supererogatory and voluntary prayers complete the shortcomings of the obligatory ones and make up the inadvertence, inattentiveness, and absentmindedness to which a performer of an obligatory prayer may be exposed. In fact, what is accepted of one's prayer is only the amount for which a performer has presence of mind. Supporting this fact, many traditions have been validly reported in this regard, such as one reported from Muhammad ibn Muslim from Imam al–Baqir ('a) who says:

Only half, one third, one quarter, or even one fifth of a servant's prayer might be accepted. What is accepted is only the amount of the prayer in which a servant has presence of mind. Therefore, we have been ordered to offer the supererogatory prayers to make up for the shortcomings of the obligatory ones. 10

Prayers of the Holy Infallibles ('a)

In many traditions that are narrated from the Holy Infallibles ('a), certain formulas of recommended prayers are reported to have been offered by these holy persons. These prayers must therefore be of great significance since they were offered by such holy persons. In his book of *Tafsil Wasa'il al-Shi'ah*, al-Hurr al-'Amili has cited three formulas of prayers that are ascribed to the Holy Prophet, Imam 'Ali, and Lady Fatimah al-Zahra', peace be upon them all.

The Holy Prophet's Prayer (S)

Shaykh al–Tusi, in *Misbah al–Mutahajjid*, has mentioned that the Holy Prophet's (recommended) prayer consists of two units, in each unit *Surah al–Fatihah* (No. 1) is recited once and *Surah al–Qadr* (No. 97) repeated fifteen times. The same *Surah* is repeated fifteen times in the ritual genuflection, fifteen times when one raises the body after the genuflection, fifteen times when one performs the ritual prostration, fifteen times when one raises the head after the first prostration, fifteen times when one performs the second prostration, and fifteen times when one raises the head from the second prostration. Upon accomplishment, one may say any post–prayer litany one wishes. Then, one will have all one's sins forgiven by Almighty Allah.11

This prayer has also been reported by Sayyid Ibn Tawus through a valid chain of authority from Imam al–Ridha ('a), mentioning a special formula of supplication to be said upon accomplishment. 12

Imam 'Ali's Prayer

Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, and Shaykh al-Tusi, in *Tahdhib al-Ahkam*, have reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

Whoever offers four units of prayer and repeats Surah al-Tawhid fifteen times in each unit, 13 will be as free of sins like a newborn immediately when he accomplishes the prayer. 14

Shaykh al-Tusi, in *Misbah al-Mutahajjid*, has cited a special formula of litany to be said immediately after this prayer. 15

Lady Fatimah al-Zahra's Prayer

In *Wasa'il al–Shi'ah*, two formulas of prayer are ascribed to Lady Fatimah al–Zahra' ('a) one of which is identical to the previously mentioned prayer of Imam 'Ali ('a), while the other is mentioned by Shaykh al–Tusi in *Misbah al–Mutahajjid*. It consists of two units, in the first unit of which *Surah al–Fatihah* is recited once and *Surah al–Qadr* repeated one hundred times, while in the second unit, *Surah al–Fatihah* is recited once and *Surah al–Tawhid* repeated one hundred times. 16

However, Shaykh al–Qummi has mentioned other formulas with a supplication to be said upon completion. 17

In addition to these prayers, al-Hurr al-'Amili, quoting Sayyid Ibn Tawus in his book *Jamal al-Usbu*', has mentioned other special formulas of prayers that are ascribed to the eleven Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). However, he has omitted to mention the traditions which relate these prayers to any one of the Holy Infallibles ('a). 18

As for Shaykh al–Qummi, he has mentioned these prayers with special formulas of supplication to be said after each prayer. Seemingly, Shaykh al–Qummi has imitated Sayyid Ibn Tawus in this respect. 19 These prayers are not reported to be ascribed to any of the Holy Imams ('a), therefore, we will not cite them.

Ja'far al-Tayyar's Prayer

Ascribed to Ja'far the son of Abu–Talib ('a), the Holy Prophet's cousin, this prayer is the most famous and most favorable of all voluntary prayers. It may be offered anytime, especially on Fridays, the eve of mid–Sha'ban, and on other holy occasions. Before the genuflection of the second and fourth unit of this prayer, it is highly recommended to supplicate to Almighty Allah in the form of *Qunut* (the ritual supplication of prayers). It can also be regarded as one of the daily supererogatory prayers.

Although many traditions have detailed the merits and method of offering this prayer, we will mention a few traditions that are sufficient to convey to the dear reader its significance:

Through a valid chain of authority, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (S) once said to Ja'far:20

May I grant you something? May I give you something? May I endue you with something?

Ja'far answered, "Of course you may Allah's Messenger!"

The attendants thought that Ja'far would be given gold or silver; therefore, they advanced to see what this gift would be. Yet, the Holy Prophet (S) said to Ja'far:

I am going to give you something that if you do everyday, it will be better for you than the whole world and whatever is therein. If you do it once every two days, Almighty Allah will forgive you all your sins that you may have done during those two days, and if you do it once a week, once a month, or once a year, all your sins that you may have done in this period will be forgiven:

For this prayer, you offer four units of prayer beginning them with recitation (of chapters of the Holy Qur'an). When you finish reciting (these chapters), you may repeat the following litany fifteen times:

.سُبْحَانَ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلاَ إِلٰهَ إِلاَّ ٱللَّهُ وَٱللَّهُ ٱكْبَرُ

All glory be to Allah, all praise be to Allah, there is no god save Allah, and Allah is the Greatest.

When you genuflect, you repeat the same litary ten times. When you raise your head after the genuflection, repeat it ten times. When you prostrate, repeat it ten times. When you raise your head from the first prostration, repeat it ten times. When you perform the second prostration, repeat it ten times. When you sit after the second prostration, you repeat it ten times. This means that you will have repeated this litary seventy–five times a unit and three hundred times in the four units. Thus, you will have glorified, praised, and professed Allah's Godhead and Greatness one thousand and two hundred times. If you like, you may offer this prayer in daylight and, if you like, you may offer it at night.21

Although more than one validly reported tradition states that *Surah al–Tawhid* and *Surah al–Kafirun* may be recited in Ja'far al–Tayyar's prayer, another validly reported tradition has deemed recommended reciting, after *Surah al–Fatihah*, *Surah al–Zalzalah* (No. 99) in the first unit of this prayer, *Surah al–'Adiyat* (No. 100) in the second, *Surah al–Nasr* (No. 110) in the third, and *Surah al–Tawhid* in the fourth. According to another tradition, the following *Surah*s may be recited in the following sequence: *al–Zalzalah*, *al–Nasr*, *al–Qadr*, and *al–Tawhid*.

About the reward of offering this prayer, a tradition holds that Almighty Allah will forgive all the sins of both the suppliant and those for whom he supplicates even if they are as many as the sands of 'Alij (a sandy area in the desert).22

Shaykh al-Kulayni has narrated that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) said to Abu-Sa'id al-Mada'ini, "May I teach you something that you should recite in Ja'far al-Tayyar's Prayer?" As the man answered in the affirmative, the Imam ('a) said:

After you say the Tasbihat in the second prostration of the fourth unit, say the following litany:

سُبْحَانَ مَنْ لَبِسَ ٱلْعِزَّ وَٱلْوَقَارَ سُبْحَانَ مَنْ تَعَطَّفَ بِٱلْمَجْدِ وَتَكَرَّمَ بِهِ سُبْحَانَ مَنْ لاَ يَنْبَغِي ٱلتَّسْبِيحُ إِلاَّ لَهُ سُبْحَانَ مَنْ عَرْشِكَ الْحُصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمُهُ سُبْحَانَ ذِي ٱلْقُدْرَةِ وَٱلْكَرَمِ اَللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي اَسْئَلُكَ بِمَعَاقِدِ ٱلْعِزِّ مِنْ عَرْشِكَ الْحُصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمُهُ سُبْحَانَ ذِي ٱلْقُدْرَةِ وَٱلْكَرَمِ اَللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي اَسْئَلُكَ بِمَعَاقِدِ ٱلْعِزِّ مِنْ عَرْشِكَ ...وَمُنْتَهَىٰ ٱلرَّحْمَةِ مِنْ كِتَابِكَ وَٱسْمِكَ ٱلاَعْظَمَ وَكَلِمَاتِكَ ٱلتَّامَّةِ ٱلَّتِي تَمَّتْ صِدْقاً وَعَدْلاً صَلَّ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَاَهْل بَيْتِهِ

Glory be to Him Who has dressed Himself in majesty and dignity! Glory be to He Who bestows favors abundantly, therefore surpasses in glory. Glory be to Him save Whom none is worthy of being glorified! Glory be to He Whose wisdom surrounds everything! Glory be to the Lord of bounty and boon! Glory be to the Lord of omnipotence and nobility! O Allah, I beseech You in the name of that which is the cause of the majesty in Your Throne, in the name of the utmost of mercy in Your Book, and in the name of Your Greatest Name and Your Accomplished Words, which have been accomplished truly and justly, (please) send blessings upon Muhammad and

his Household...

Then, you may mention your needs in the form of a supplication 23

Prayers for Granting of Needs

Many traditions have presented various formulas for obtaining one's needs from Almighty Allah. Prayers form the greatest part of these formulas. Other formulas have come in the form of a prayer followed by a supplication which completes it.

However, the most important and famous formula in this regard may be the prayer for rain (known as *Salat al–Istisqa'*) which is, just like the '«d prayer, offered congregationally in cases of drought and lack of rain. The method of offering this prayer is that the Imam ('a), or religious authority, leads the people to a clean area and, with tranquility, gravity, and submission, they all praise, glorify, and thank Almighty Allah, and then supplicate before Him earnestly, and repeat statements of glorification (i.e. *tasbih*, *tahlil*, and *takbir*). The religious authority then leads the people in a two–unit prayer along with earnest entreaties. Upon completion, he turns over his garment by putting the right side of it on the left side and vice versa as did the Holy Prophet (S).24 Other traditions have mentioned further details.

Due to the significance of this prayer, jurisprudents have dedicated independent chapters to explaining it, just like the '«d prayers.

Another formula of a prayer for granting of needs has been validly reported from Imam al–Sadiq ('a) and Imam al–Kazim ('a) by Shaykh al–Kulayni, Shaykh al–Saduq, and Shaykh al–Tusi. The method of this prayer is to give as alms one *sa'* (approximately three kilograms) of dates, wheat, or barley to sixty poor persons each. On the last third of the night, after performing a ceremonial bath and putting on the least valued garment one's dependents may have such that this garment includes an apron, one should offer a two–unit prayer. In the first prostration of the second unit of this prayer, one should profess Almighty Allah as the One and Only God, exalt Him, sanctify Him, glorify Him, and then recollect one's sins and confess those one can remember before Him. One should then raise the head from the first prostration. In the second prostration, one should repeat the following supplication of seeking sanctuary in Almighty Allah:

O Allah, I do seek sanctuary in You.

After that, one may pray for anything one may desire, following it with the following supplication:

O He, Who existed before all things! O, Author of all things! O He, Who shall exist after all things!

One may then ask Almighty Allah to grant his or her need.

In every prostration, one may try to make the knees touch the ground and raise the apron to the backside by putting it between the buttocks and the inner side of the legs.

In addition, there are other formulas of prayers for granting needs mentioned by al–Hurr al–'Amili, in *Wasa'il al–Shi'ah*, and Shaykh al–Qummi, in *Mafatih al–Jinan*.25

Other Prayers for Granting Specific Needs

Special formulas of prayers have been reported for having special needs granted, such as prayers for forgiveness of sins, prayers for relief from certain troubles, prayers for granting victory over tyrants, prayers for strengthening of the rational faculties, prayers for activating the memory, prayers for reprieve from feared matters, prayers for gaining sustenance, prayers for settling debts, prayers for repelling evil at times of travel, prayers of mothers for the healing of their sick, prayers for anticipated misfortunes, prayers of thanks for bounties, prayers for release from imprisonment, prayers to repel the evil of enemies, prayers for victory, and prayers for pregnancy.26

Moreover, there are three formulas which have relevance with this subject though they are not prayers for granting of needs. These are fasting and praying for warding off the consequences of a misfortune, a two-unit prayer for thanking Almighty Allah, and the prayer at the consummation of marriage. However, these three validly reported prayers express Islamic etiquettes.27

Istikharah and Its Prayer

A sort of devotional act, *Istikharah* (praying that Almighty Allah lead one to the best of many choices) may be explained as follows:

When man intends to do something, such as begin a business, or go on a journey or pilgrimage, but has more than one option and is too perplexed to choose from among them, he is advised to pray to Almighty Allah to lead him to the best choice that benefits him more with regard to his spiritual or worldly affairs.

In this respect, Imam al-Sadiq ('a), through a validly reported tradition, has said:

You may offer a two-unit prayer and then pray to Almighty Allah to guide you to the best choice. By Him I take this oath: whenever a Muslim individual leaves the choice to Almighty Allah, He shall most certainly guide him to the best of choices. 28

Another tradition reads:

Whoever prays to Almighty Allah to choose for him with full contentment, Almighty Allah shall most certainly quide him towards the best 29

In this connection, many traditions have been reported some of which carry the following method of *Istikharah*:

You may come to the mosque at a time other than the prayer time and offer two units of prayer.

Afterwards, you may pray to Almighty Allah to guide you to the best choice, repeating it one hundred times. Then, you may do whatever your heart leads you to do.

According to other traditions, you may repeat the prayer for guidance to the best choice a hundred and one times.30

Mentioning the post-prayer supplication of *Istikharah*, another tradition states:

You may then praise and thank Almighty Allah, invoke His blessings upon the Prophet and his Household, and say the following:

O Allah, if it is something other than that, then (please) repel it from me.

After reciting Surah al-Fatihah, one may recite any other Surah, preferably al-Tawhid and al-Kafirun 31

According to another validly reported tradition, another more detailed and more painstaking formula of *Istikharah* is presented.

Zurarah has reported that he asked Imam al-Baqir ('a), "What should I say when I intend to seek the guidance of Almighty Allah with regard to opting for a choice I should make?"

The Imam ('a) instructed:

When you intend to do so, you may observe fasting on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. On Friday, you may offer two units of prayer in a clean place. Upon accomplishment, you may raise your sight towards the sky and repeat the following supplication one hundred times:

O Allah, I beseech You as the Knower of the unseen and the seen, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful, if

this affair is good for me according to what Your knowledge has encompassed, then (please) make it easy for me to do, make it blessed for me, and make it attainable for me. However, if it is evil for me according to what Your knowledge has encompassed, then (please) ward it off from me by a means that You know, for You best know while I do not, You have the power to destine while I do not, and You can preordain while I cannot. You are the knower of the unseen 32

Other traditions 33 hold other formulas of *Istikharah*, which entail that this act can be classified as prayer, supplication, and imploration for seeking guidance from Almighty Allah. Of course, the more appropriate the acts of supplication and attainment of response such as almsgiving, fasting, choosing the best times to implore, the closer the response of Almighty Allah.

Supporting this fact, Imam al–Sadiq ('a) is reported to have instructed those who intend to purchase a riding animal or something lesser in consideration to seek the guidance of Almighty Allah seven times, and those who intend to undertake greater matters should seek guidance one hundred times.34

Other formulas have entailed offering a prayer and preparing a certain number of sheets of paper in some of which the word 'if'al (do it)' is written while in the others the word 'la taf'al (do not do it)' is written. Then, a process of pulling these sheets is done. If the sheets on which the word 'if'al' come more than the others, then one may do the thing he has intended to do; otherwise, one may not.35

Inferred from many such traditions, it seems advisable for everyone to pray to Almighty Allah for guidance in every act he intends to do, especially at the time of the daily obligatory prayers and immediately before engagement in a particular act.

Dedicated Prayers

Dedicated prayers are prayers whose rewards are dedicated to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) or one's parents, brothers-in-faith, sons, and relatives.

Moreover, the rewards of any righteous deed or devotional act that is done in this worldly life may be dedicated to dead dedicatees who, consequently, will receive rewards by the permission of Almighty Allah. Such dedicated acts include prayers, fasting, performing *Hajj*, almsgiving, reciting the Holy Qur'an, litanies, and any other devotional acts. In this regard, many traditions have been reported some of which hold that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) have made such dedications.

Shaykh al-Qummi has recorded an authentic tradition entailing that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) used to offer two-unit prayers everyday and dedicate their reward to his parents. In the first unit of these prayers, he used to recite *Surah al-Fatihah* and *Surah al-Qadr* and in the second *Surah al-Fatihah* and *Surah al-Kawthar* (No. 108).

It is also reported that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) would offer a two-unit prayer every night and dedicate its reward to his son. Isma'il.

Just as the alive delight at receiving a gift, the dead delight at receiving the rewards of supplications and implorations for forgiveness that are said for them. Generally, in their graves, the dead receive the rewards of the prayers, fasting, *Hajj*, alms, righteous deeds, and supplications that are dedicated to them. Moreover, these rewards are recorded for both the dedicators and the dedicatees.36

In the previous chapter on weekly devotional acts, we referred to a formula of a prayer dedicated to the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).37

The Burial Night Prayer

One type of dedicated prayer, the prayer done on a person's burial night, is familiarly known and practiced by the individuals of the virtuous community. This prayer, which is offered on the first night a dead person spends in the grave, is composed of two units and its reward is dedicated to the deceased by his brothers-in-faith and relatives. Two formulas of the burial night prayer have been mentioned:

The first formula is to offer two units of prayer in the first unit of which *Surah al–Fatihah* and *Ayat al–Kursi* are recited while in the second *Surah al–Fatihah* is recited once and *Surah al–Qadr* repeated ten times. Upon completion, the reward of this prayer is dedicated to the dead in the following formula of supplication:

O Allah, (please) send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and send the reward of this prayer to the grave of so-and-so.38

The second formula is to offer a two-unit prayer in the first unit of which *Surah al-Fatihah* is recited once and *Surah al-Tawhid* repeated twice while in the second unit *Surah al-Fatihah* is recited once and *Surah al-Takathur* (No. 102) repeated ten times. Then, the aforementioned supplication dedicating the reward of the prayer to the dead is recited.39

In his book entitled *Jamal al–Usbu*', Sayyid Ibn Tawus has mentioned a great reward for those who dedicate the rewards of their prayers to the Holy Prophet (S) and the other Holy Infallibles ('a). However, these prayers are offered with a special formula including certain litanies to be said while genuflecting and prostrating.40

Prayers for the Parents

Regarded as another sort of prayers of dedication, the prayer for parents is to be offered by persons who dedicate the reward to their parents. According to Shaykh al–Qummi, this prayer consists of two units, in the first unit of which *Surah al–Fatihah* is recited once and the following holy verse is repeated ten times:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

O our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning shall come to pass. (14:41)

In the second unit, Surah al-Fatihah is recited once and the following holy verse is repeated ten times:

O My Lord, forgive me and my parents and him who enters my house believing, and the believing men and the believing women; and do not increase the unjust in aught but destruction. (71:28)

Upon accomplishment, the following holy verse is repeated ten times:

O my Lord, have compassion on them, as they brought me up when I was little. (17:24)41

- 1. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 3:20, S.8, H. 6, 10, and 13.
- 2. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 3:25, S.8, H. 1.
- 3. Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 197.
- 4. A two-unit prayer with a special method that is performed at the times of natural phenomena, such as lunar and solar eclipses, earthquakes, and violent winds, Salat al-ayat is obligatory in the presence of one of the Infallible Imams ('a); otherwise, it is recommended.

Likewise, during the Age of Occultation, according to one of the familiar opinions adopted by the jurisprudents of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) jurisprudential school, it is optional to perform the Friday congregational Prayer.

- 5. `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 79:308, H. 9.
- 6. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 3:75, H. 1.
- 7. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 3:30, H. 1.
- 8. Tashahhud is a statement said after accomplishing two units of a prayer, no matter how many units a prayer may consist of. The Arabic word 'tashahhud' means to utter the two creeds of Islam (i.e. I bear witness that there is no god save Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.) This statement is followed by an invocation of Almighty Allah's blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household. These three statements thus form the obligatory formula of the ritual tashahhud. However, some statements may be added optionally. [Translator]
- 9. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 3:50, H. 8.
- 10. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 3:52, H. 3.
- 11. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:223, H. 1.
- 12. Shaykh `Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 38.
- 13. Of course, after reciting Surah al-Fatihah.
- 14. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:245, S. 13, H. 1.
- 15. Shaykh `Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 39.
- 16. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:244, S. 10, H. 6.
- 17. Shaykh `Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 40-42.
- 18. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:397, S. Offering the Prayers of the Imams Voluntarily.

- 19. Shaykh `Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 42-45.
- 20. According to some reports that are similar to the one mentioned, the Holy Prophet (S) addressed these words to Ja`far al-Tayyar upon his return from years of refuge in Abyssinia, which concurred with the conquest of Khaybar at the hands of Imam `Ali ('a). Once his eyes fell on Ja`far, the Holy Prophet (S) walked twelve steps forward to receive him. He then embraced him, kissed him between the eyes, wept, and said, "Indeed, I do not know for which matter I am happier, for your return, Ja`far, or for the conquest of Khaybar that Almighty Allah has given at the hands of your brother?" Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) wept for joy when he saw Ja`far.

It is however ironic to find this very prayer mentioned in reference books of Sunni scholars under the title of Salat al-Tasabih, claiming that it was the Holy Prophet's gift to his uncle al-`Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib.

As to me, I do not believe in this claim, because there is nothing to make the Holy Prophet (S) endue his uncle al-`Abbas with such a precious thing. In addition, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) (who knew more than any other regarding what their grandfather had said, done, and endowed) have not confirmed such a claim, so it seems to be one of the fabrications against the Holy Prophet (S) by the fans of the `Abbasid rulers.

- 21. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:194, H. 1.
- 22. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5: 197-198, H. 1, 2 & 3.
- 23. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:198, H. 1.
- 24. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:162, H. 1. This tradition has been reported through a valid chain of authority.
- 25. See Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 5:255-261 and Mafatih al-Jinan 226, 233, 234, 238, 239, and 241 as well as other parts in the appendix entitled al-Baqiyat al-Salihat.
- <u>26.</u> In the fifth volume of Wasa'il al–Shi`ah, the author has mentioned the formulas of these prayers respectively on the following pages: 244, 245, 246, 248, 250, 252, 253, 254, 255, 262, 263, 265, 266, and 268.
- 27. In the fifth volume of Wasa'il al–Shi`ah, the author has mentioned the formulas of these prayers respectively on the following pages: 261, 266, and 267.
- 28. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:204, H. 1.
- 29. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:204, H. 2.
- 30. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:205, H. 5.
- 31. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:206, H. 7.
- 32. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:207, H. 11.
- 33. Such traditions can be referred to in the sections of Istikharah in al-Hurr al-`Amili's Wasa'il al-Shi`ah.
- 34. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:213, H. 1.
- 35. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:208, H. 1.
- 36. Shaykh al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan; Appendix: al-Baqiyat al-Salihat, pp. 214-215.
- 37. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:284.
- 38. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:285, H. 2.
- 39. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:285, H. 3.
- 40. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 5:285, H. 4.
- 41. Shaykh `Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 216.

Fasting

One of the most significant devotional acts, fasting (*sawm*) has been ordained in the Holy Qur'an. On one occasion, it reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ

O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you. (2:183)

This holy verse entails that fasting, as a devotional act, has a historical root that began with the Divine missions.

Another holy verse states:

Seek assistance through patience and prayer. (2:45)

Exegetes of the Holy Qur'an have interpreted patience to be fasting. However, fasting can be obligatory, recommended, and sometimes forbidden. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have paid exceptional attention to this devotional act whose details are reported from them through hundreds of traditions.

Obligatory Fasting

Obligatory fasting is observed during the month of Ramadhan, and it is also the most favorable sort of fasting.

Fasting for two consecutive months is obligatory as a *kaffarah* (reparation; expiation from a violation of a religious duty) upon those who commit a murder while a three–day fasting is obligatory as a *kaffarah* for those who break their oaths.

As for the performers of the ritual *Hajj* pilgrimage who cannot find any animal to offer as a sacrifice, it is obligatory upon them to fast for ten days: three during *Hajj* and seven when they return home.

Other forms of **obligatory fasting** are the fasting of those who **vow or pledge to observe fasting** and those who fast on behalf of dead people.

Some jurisprudents deem it obligatory upon those who sleep until the next morning without performing the obligatory early night prayer to observe fasting the following day.

It is obligatory upon a *mu'takif* (one who practices *i'tikaf*; confinement to a holy place for practicing devotional acts) who has spent two days of *i'tikaf* to observe fasting on the third day because he is required to complete the duration of *i'tikaf*, which is three days.

The details of the laws of obligatory fasting are cited in books on practical laws of Islam; it is therefore necessary to refer to these books to acquaint oneself with these details.

Forbidden Fasting

Fasting is forbidden on the two '«d days (i.e. 'ld al-Fitr, the first of Shawwal, and 'ld al-Adhha, the tenth of Dhu'l-Hijjah), on the *Tashriq* Days (the 11th, 12th, and 13th of Dhu'l-Hijjah), and on 'Ashura' (the tenth of Muharram) as a day of blessings and delight. It is also forbidden to fast for two continuous days (without breaking the fast at the end of the first day and with one intention of fasting for both the days).

Recommended Fasting

There are special occasions on which fasting is highly recommended because it is connected to certain characteristics that necessitate it. These occasions can be summed up in the following points:

- 1. Traditions hold that fasting during the summertime is more preferable and more rewardable. Some of these traditions have expressed that fasting in the hot weather is a sort of *jihad* or even the best sort of *jihad*. 1
- 2. Youths who cannot afford the requirements of marriage are recommended to fast because it would then hinder and restrain their sexual desires. In this connection, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

Whoever can afford marriage expenses should marry, but whoever cannot, should observe fasting because fasting is a restraint for him.

He (S) is also reported to have said to 'Uthman ibn Maz'un who suggested castration:

Do not do it. The castration of my people is fasting.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

Luqman, the wise, said to his son: Observe fasting such that it cuts off your sexual desire, but do not observe fasting such that it prevents you from offering prayers, for prayers are preferred by Almighty Allah to fasting. 2

- 3. Some validly reported traditions have laid emphasis on fasting on Wednesdays for the reason that Hellfire, or divine chastisement, falls on such a day; therefore, to fast on Wednesdays protects against Hellfire. However, it is not improbable that Wednesdays that fall in the middle of the months are the only ones intended, as is indicated by some of these traditions.3
- 4. Some other traditions hold the recommendation of fasting on Fridays, provided that fasting on the Wednesdays and/or Thursdays that precede these Fridays is also observed. It is also probable that these traditions only intend to declare the legality of fasting on such days and deny that fasting on Fridays is forbidden because they are feast days. 4 This could also mean to declare that such discommendation, if found, is cancelled out when fasting on Fridays becomes a continuation of a two or three day fast (beginning with Wednesday or Thursday).
- 5. Other traditions recommend fasting during misfortunes, tribulations, catastrophes, hardships, adversities, and natural disasters like earthquakes. On such occasions, it is highly advised to fast on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. On the last day, it is likewise advisable to pray to Almighty Allah for rescue from such catastrophes. In addition, it is clear that when almsgiving is attached to fasting, the result will be removal of tribulations.5
- 6. Fasting during confinement in mosques (*i'tikaf*) is highly recommended. *I'tikaf* is a devotional practice that is attached to fasting under a vow of spending three days and two nights (that come in-between these days) at least in a mosque. During this period of confinement, abstaining from some legal pleasures is practiced, such as sexual pleasures and using perfumes, as well as other matters the details of which are mentioned in the books on practical laws of Islam.

The best time for practicing *i'tikaf* is the month of Ramadhan and specifically the last ten days of the month. It is also preferable to practice it in famous mosques, such as the Sacred Mosque of Makkah, the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, the Great Mosque of Kufah, the Great Mosque of Basrah, or the great mosques of one's hometown. Further details can be found in books on jurisprudence.

Finally, let us conclude this part by mentioning a number of points with regard to recommended fasting:

First: It is better to conceal fasting and avoid showing it. Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through a famous chain of authority that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said:

About one who conceals his fasting, Almighty Allah will order His angels, saying, "My servant has sought My protection against My chastisement; therefore, grant him protection." He, the Almighty and Majestic, will also commission His angels to pray to Him for the one fasting. Unquestionably, these prayers will be responded to by Him.6

Second: When a faithful believer who is fasting is invited to a meal by one of his brothers–in–faith to whom he is paying a visit, it is highly recommended that he share that meal with his host, winning the highest reward of fasting. According to other traditions, it is advisable for one who is fasting not to tell his brother–in–faith that he is fasting; lest, the latter might feel that he has done him a favor by serving him with food to break his fast.7

Third: According to a set of traditions, the voluntary fasting of wives is not admissible unless they obtain the permission of their husbands. According to other traditions, even the voluntary fasting of sons and guests is not advisable without the permission of their fathers or hosts. 8 Such laws embrace certain social, moral, and organizational significance.

- 1. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 9:381, H. 16, 17 et al.
- 2. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 9:386-387, H. 6, 4, & 7.
- 3. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 9:413, H. 3.
- 4. This implication can be understood from the tradition mentioned by Shaykh al–Tusi in Tahdhib al–Ahkam and quoted by Sayyid al–Borujerdi in Jami` Ahadiih al–Shi`ah 9:414, H. 2.
- 5. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 9:482, S. 21.
- 6. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 9:483, H. 1.
- 7. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 9:488, S. 24.
- 8. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 9:488, S. 23.

Supplication

In its capacity as one of the most preferred devotional acts, supplication (*du'a'*) has been emphatically encouraged by the Holy Qur'an on more than one occasion, such as in the following verses:

When My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls upon Me. So, they should answer My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way. (2:186)

Supplicate your Lord humbly and secretly. Surely, He does not love those who exceed the limits. (7:55)

قُلْ مَا يَعْبَأُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا

Say: My Lord would not care for you were it not for your supplication, but you have indeed rejected the truth; so, that which shall cleave shall come. (25:77)

Your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you. Surely, those who are too proud for My service shall soon enter hell abased. (40:60)

Moreover, the Holy Qur'an has quoted supplications from a number of prophets and righteous people who had to encounter critical situations. Due to their supplications, Almighty Allah saved them.

Supplication in its origin is a religious duty and true believers are required to pray to Almighty Allah and supplicate to Him generally, as is indicated and confirmed by the abovementioned Qur'anic verses and many traditions.

In his book of *al–Kafi*, Shaykh al–Kulayni has reported through a valid chain of authority that Sadir asked Imam al–Baqir ('a), "Which devotional act is the best?"

The Imam ('a) answered:

In the sight of Almighty Allah, nothing is better than asking Him and imploring Him for what He has in possession. No one is more hateful in the sight of Him than one who is too arrogant to serve Him and to implore Him for what He has in possession. 1

According to another validly reported tradition that is quoted by Shaykh al-Kulayni on the authority of Hammad ibn 'Isa, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has said:

Always pray to (Almighty Allah) and do not consider the matter to have ended, because supplication is surely worship. Almighty Allah says, "Surely, those who are too proud for My service shall soon enter hell abased. (40:60)"2

According to another validly reported tradition, Maysir ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz has reported that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said to him:

Always pray to (Almighty Allah) and do not consider the matter to have come to an end. There is a rank with Almighty Allah that cannot be attained except by imploring to Him. If a servant shuts his mouth and does not pray for anything, he will not be given anything. Therefore, always pray so that you will be given. Verily, a door that is always knocked will sooner or later be opened for the knocker.3

Other traditions have defined supplication as:

- The key to all mercies,
- The attainment of all requests,
- The armor of faithful believers.
- The essence of worship,
- The less the supplication, the more the tribulations,4
- The weapon of faithful believers,
- The pillar of religion,
- The defender against evil of enemies and tribulations before, when, and even after they befall,5
- The remedy of all maladies.6

Motives for Responding to Supplications

The following etiquettes that must be followed when supplicating can be grounds for having the prayers responded to:

- A suppliant, upon supplicating, should raise the hands, turn them over, move them in a way indicating submission, deference, and humility, 7 and pass them, upon completion, over the face, the head, and the chest.
- A suppliant should be attentive and sincerely beseeching.
- A suppliant should have full trust and hope in Almighty Allah.8

- A suppliant should pave the way to be seech for his/her personal requests by words of praise, thanks, and glorification of Almighty Allah.
- A suppliant should invoke blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household to supplicate for personal requests. In fact, a supplication is enshrouded until the suppliant invokes Almighty Allah's blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household.9
- Just like beginning any supplication by invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household, it is highly advisable to conclude the supplication with the same invocation. In this respect, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

Whoever wishes a request to be granted by Almighty Allah, should begin his supplication by invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household and conclude it with the same invocation, because Almighty Allah is too generous to respond to the two ends of a supplication and reject the center. He never rejects any invocations of His blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household. 10

- A suppliant should weep or try to weep and shed some tears, be they as small as a fly's head. 11
- A suppliant should acknowledge and confess his/her sins and implore forgiveness. 12
- A suppliant should beseech Almighty Allah in the name of the Holy Prophet and his Household (S), by making them the intercessors for having his/her supplication responded. 13
- A suppliant should call upon Almighty Allah by repeating such expressions like the following words ten times at least before submitting the request:

O Allah! O my Sustainer! O my Lord! O All-beneficent! O All-merciful! O Most Merciful of all those who show mercy!

It is reported that whenever a faithful believer utters such expressions before mentioning his/her request, Almighty Allah will answer him/her, saying, "I am here to respond to you, My servant, pose your request." 14

A suppliant should mention his/her requests by name and in detail.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, does know what His servant wants from Him; yet, He likes requests to be submitted verbally before Him. Therefore, when you supplicate Him, mention your requests by name. 15

- A suppliant should be insistent in supplication and repeat it frequently. A tradition holds that Almighty Allah likes the insistence of those who entreat Him persistently. 16
- A suppliant should pray to Almighty Allah confidentially when beseeching Him for private affairs. A tradition states that a confidential supplication is equal to seventy public ones. 17
- While supplicating, a suppliant should surrender to Almighty Allah's will by saying:

Only that which Allah wills shall come to pass. There is neither might nor power save with Allah.

It is reported that when one adds these two phrases to one's supplication, Almighty Allah will say, "This servant of Mine has yielded and surrendered to My decree. Therefore, (O angels) grant him his request." 18

• A suppliant should declare repentance, show piety, and abstain from violating the prohibitions of Almighty Allah. In this connection, it is reported that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has said:

Whoever wishes to have his supplication responded to should seek legal earnings only, for a single illegally-earned morsel that is raised to his mouth prevents response to his supplication for forty days. 19

• For supplicating to Almighty Allah, it is advisable that four or forty persons gather and supplicate congregationally. When such a group gathers to supplicate collectively for an affair, response will be more attainable.20

Whenever a matter distressed him, Imam al-Baqir ('a) used to bring together all his women and children. As he supplicated, they would say 'Amen (so be it)'.21

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

The suppliant and the reciters of 'Amen' are partners (in the supplication and reward). 22

• A suppliant is required to include as many persons as possible in his/her supplication and avoid supplicating for himself/herself exclusively. This is based on the following tradition that is reported from the Holy Prophet (S):

Whenever one of you supplicates, let him make his supplication general, because this makes the response more attainable. 23

Other traditions have urged the supplicants to add the following prayer to their supplications, because this brings about a great reward:

O Allah, (please) forgive the believing men and women and the Muslim men and women.24

• A suppliant should not exceed the limits in supplication and should not supplicate for things that are improper, unwarranted or aberrant.

In this respect, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

A wronged servant (of Allah) may keep on imprecating evil on the wronging party so excessively that he himself turns into a wrongdoer. 25

• Before supplicating, a supplicant is required to give back all things that he has seized illegally from others and to please all those whom he has wronged. In this regard, a tradition holds that Almighty Allah says:

By My Almightiness and Majesty I take this oath: I will never respond to the supplication of a wronged person with regard to the issue in which he has been wronged as long as he has wronged others in the same way. 26

• A suppliant should be ceremonially pure and should have performed the ritual ablution (wudhu') before

supplicating.

- A suppliant should face the kiblah direction while supplicating.
- A suppliant should give alms before supplicating.
- A suppliant should have already supplicated Almighty Allah before the befalling of an ordeal.
- A faithful believer should ask his brothers–in–faith to supplicate for him, since the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

Nothing is swifter in response than the supplication of an absent person to another absent one. 27

It is also reported that Almighty Allah never rejects the supplication of a faithful believer for his brother-in-faith who does not know about it; rather, He, the Almighty, responds and decrees the same thing for the supplicant.28

Before mentioning one's personal needs, a suppliant should supplicate for forty faithful believers. This is another sort of generalization in supplication, yet in a special method.29

More Motives

In addition to the aforementioned factors, there are more reasons that contribute to response of supplications related to the time, place, and condition of the suppliant.

The Best Times for Supplicating

As for the best time of supplicating, 30 these times are as follows:

- Thursday Nights and Fridays, especially the last hour of Fridays
- The last third of the night
- The month of Ramadhan
- The three Nights of Qadr, especially the eve of the twenty-third of Ramadhan
- The night and day of 'Arafat. Here, supplication is preferred to fasting. In fact, it is recommended to fast on this day only when such fasting will not detract from supplicating.
- The night and day of the Divine Mission (i.e. 27th of Rajab)

- The nights and days of the two '«ds The first night of Rajab • The fifteenth night and day of Rajab • The first night of Sha'ban • The Holy Prophet's birthday Midday • The time between dawn and sunrise Sunset • The blowing of the wind The vanishing of shadows Rainfall • The first shedding of the blood of a slain faithful believer in war **Best Situations for Supplicating** Recitation of the Holy Qur'an • Recitation of the call to prayer (i.e. adhan) • The meeting of two hosts for the purpose of winning martyrdom31 • Prayer of the wronged, because, in the expression of a tradition, "nothing can screen it from advancing directly towards the Divine Throne"32 • Shuddering (having a convulsive tremor of the body) • Inclination toward shedding tears (caused by a sad or moving feeling)
- When the sun is at its zenith, or starting to decline
- At this very time, the doors to the heavens are opened, the help of the angels is expected, and the response of the Almighty Lord is awaited.33
- Upon completion of prayers

- The time between two obligatory prayers
- The time of breaking a fast34

Places of Supplicating

As for the best places of supplicating, the following can be mentioned:

- The Sacred Mosque of Makkah
- The holy places where the rituals of *Hajj* are performed.
- The Fount of Mercy (*mizab al-rahmah*) above Hijr Isma'il (a fence near the Holy Ka'bah).
- The Station of Prophet Abraham ('a) (maqam Ibrahim)
- The Black Stone (al-hajar al-aswad)
- The area between the Station of Abraham ('a) and the gate of the Holy Ka'bah
- Inside the Holy Ka'bah
- The Zamzam Spring
- On al-Safa
- On al-Marwah
- The Holy Monument (*al-mash'ar al-haram*)
- The three statues known as *al-jamarat*
- The first glance of the Holy Ka'bah35
- The Holy Prophet's tomb
- The Holy Prophet's Mosque, especially the area between his tomb and minbar
- The holy shrine of Imam Husayn ('a)
- The holy mosques, like the Kufah Mosque

Conditions of Supplicating

Supplications are responded under the following conditions:

- The supplications of the observers of fasting
- The supplications of the ailing and the performers of *Hajj* and *'Umrah*
- The supplications of three persons meeting at the home of one of their brothers-in-faith who is not expected to betray them
- The imprecations of the wronged persons upon those who have wronged them and those who have had a hand in such wrongdoings

In this connection, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

My father used to say: Avoid the imprecation of the wronged, because it directly ascends to the heavens. 36

- The prayers of a poor believer for his brother-in-faith who helps him, and his imprecations (of evil) upon his brother-in-faith who rejects to help him although he can easily do it, are responded to
- The prayers of a sick person for those who visit him
- The prayers of the beggars for those who give them
- The prayers of travelers
- The prayers of fathers for their pious sons and their imprecations upon their disobedient sons
- The prayers of just leaders
- The prayers for neighbors37

When Supplications are Rejected

According to the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), supplications that are in violation of the rules and principles, as well as the natural and legal means that Almighty Allah has put at the disposal of man to help him manage all his affairs, are always rejected. In plainer words, when man has sufficient capability of managing an affair that Almighty Allah wants him to do, but he, instead, stands still and depends upon supplicating to Him for managing such affairs, then Almighty Allah will never respond to him.

Traditions have mentioned some samples of such persons whose supplications are never responded:

(1) Those who are capable of seeking earnings—a duty commanded by Almighty Allah—but they instead

sit in their houses and supplicate to Him to give them sustenance.

- (2) Those who can divorce wives who are committing iniquity but instead keep them and imprecate them.
- (3) The creditors who are too lenient towards documenting the loans they give to others by means of having witnesses or any other means, but when the debtors deny such loans, they imprecate them.
- (4) Those who imprecate (evil or curse) neighbors that annoy them while they can move to other places.
- (5) Those who profligately waste the fortunes that Almighty Allah has given to them and then supplicate to Him to give them sustenance.
- (6) Those who commit acts of disobedience to Almighty Allah by usurping the rights of others while they are capable of avoiding such illegal acts, and who later do not repent and submit to Almighty Allah.

The supplications and imprecations of such classes of people are never responded.38

From the above we can understand that whenever the individuals of a community desire to change their conditions, they must first of all change what is in their inner selves. To this general rule, the Holy Qur'an has referred, saying:

Surely, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition. (13:11)

Of course, such changes cannot come by means of supplication; rather, practical steps bring about the change. Only then can the supplication be effective in removing the obstacles and preparing for the out-of-reach causes.

Special Directions

In addition to the previous instructions, the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) taught the individuals of the virtuous community special manners of supplicating. They, therefore, taught them how to supplicate and what to say in their supplications. Although the traditions that demonstrate such manners are too many, we will restrict the discussion of this topic to the following points:

Imprecation of Punishment on the Enemies

Just like the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), the individuals of the virtuous community used to suffer from great numbers of enemies and ill-wishers. In their capacity as the true faithful believers, their one

and only weapon was seeking Almighty Allah's help against these enemies. Some traditions have reported some occasions on which the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and their followers used to resort to supplication in order to save themselves from their opponents. Let us now refer to a few samples of such events.

Quoted from the book known as *Rijal al–Kashshi*, Al–Masma'i has reported that when Dawud ibn 'Ali, one of the tyrants of the 'Abbasid dynasty, arrested al–Mu'alla ibn Khunays, one of the intimate companions of Imam al–Sadiq ('a), and intended to kill him, al–Mu'alla asked him to allow him to meet the people, claiming that he had many debts and much money to declare openly before the people. Hence, when al–Mu'alla was allowed to meet the people in the marketplace, he declared, "O people, I am al–Mu'alla ibn Khunays! Some of you may know me. I want you to witness that whatever estate, money, debt, slave, or house, be it little or much, is now gifted to Ja'far ibn Muhammad."

Upon hearing this declaration, the police chief officer became angry and killed al-Mu'alla. Once he was informed about this event, Imam al-Sadiq ('a), followed by his son Isma'il, angry and hastening, left his house and came to Dawud, "You have killed my follower and seized my money!" said the Imam ('a).

"No," answered Dawud, "I have neither killed your follower nor seized your money."

"By Allah I swear it," said the Imam ('a), "I will imprecate Almighty Allah's punishment upon the one who killed my follower and seized my money."

"I did not kill him," said Dawud, "it was my police chief officer who did it."

"Was it under your permission or not?" asked the Imam ('a).

"No," answered Dawud, "it was not under my permission."

The Imam ('a) turned his face towards his son, Isma'il, and ordered him to deal with that police chief officer.

Immediately, Isma'il, unsheathing his sword, headed for the office of that chief officer and killed him there...

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) spent that whole night in worship, standing up and prostrating. At the last hour of that night, he said this imprecation in his prostration:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِقُوَّتِكَ الْقَوِيَّةِ وَبِمَحَالِكَ الشَّدِيدِ وَبِعِزَّتِكَ الَّتِي خَلْقُكَ لَهَا ذَيْلٌ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَنْ لَلَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِقُوَّتِكَ الْقَوِيَّةِ وَبِمِحَالِكَ الشَّديدِ وَبِعِزَّتِكَ الَّتِي خَلْقُكَ لَهَا ذَيْلٌ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَنْ لَسَّاعَةَ .

O Allah, I do beseech You in the name of Your powerful power, Your mighty prowess, and Your Almightiness to which all Your creatures are docile, (please) send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and grasp him (i.e. Dawud) at this very hour.

No sooner did the Imam ('a) finish his prayer than Dawud died.39

Sahl ibn Ziyad is reported to have quoted Ishaq ibn 'Ammar as narrating:

I complained to Imam al-Sadiq ('a) about one of my neighbors who used to annoy me. The Imam ('a) asked me to imprecate him. As I did, nothing changed. I then returned to the Imam ('a) and complained that my imprecation had done nothing to that man. "How did you imprecate upon him?" asked the Imam ('a). "Whenever I met him, I would do so," I answered. "No," the Imam ('a) taught, "You must imprecate him when he leaves and when he turns his back." Soon after that, Almighty Allah spared him the trouble.40

Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, has reported Yunus ibn 'Ammar as saying:

I, once, complained to Imam al-Sadiq ('a) about a neighbor from the tribe of Quraysh and the clan of Muhriz who used to defame me by name. Whenever I passed by him, he would cry out, "This Rafidhi is carrying funds to Ja'far ibn Muhammad."

The Imam ('a) taught me to imprecate him, saying, "In the last prostration of the first two units of the Night Prayer, imprecate Almighty Allah's punishment on this man. You may begin your imprecation with statements of praising and glorifying Almighty Allah after which you may say the following: O Allah, so–and–so (mention his name and his father's) is defaming, offending, enraging, and exposing me to repulsive things. O Allah, (please) hit him with a swift dart, causing him to be distracted from me. O Allah, (please) hasten his death time, cut off his existence, and make this to happen immediately at this very hour, O Lord."

When we returned to Kufah, I asked my family members about the man, and I was told that he was suffering an ailment. Forthwith, we heard lamentations coming from his house declaring his death.41

Invoking Allah's Curse upon a Lying Party (Mubahalah)

In situations of argument, disputation, and failure of methods of logic and excellent preaching to guide to the right path, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) taught their partisans to resort to the reciprocal invocation of Allah's curse upon the wrong party—a method inspired from the teaching of the Holy Qur'an with regard to the disputation between the Holy Prophet (S) and the Christians of Najran.

In *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported that Abu-Masruq said to Imam al-Sadiq ('a), "Whenever we debate with people (regarding the question of which sect represents the genuine line of Islam), we provide as evidence texts of the Holy Qur'an, but they distort their meanings. When we provide this holy verse, '*O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you.* (4:59),' they claim that this verse was revealed to express obedience to the commanders of detachments. When we provide as evidence this holy verse, '*Only Allah is your Leader and His Messenger and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they*

bow. (5:55),' they claim that this verse was revealed to express the leadership of the believers. When we provide this holy verse, 'Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives. (42:23),' they claim that it was revealed to express love for the relatives of Muslims, etc."

The Imam ('a), upon hearing this, said, "If it is so, then invite them to mubahalah."

"How is that?" Abu-Masruq asked.

The Imam ('a) taught, "You may reform yourself for three days (i.e. prepare yourself for this challenge and avoid committing any acts of disobedience to Almighty Allah), observe fasting, and bathe yourself ritually. The other party and you may then meet in the desert. When you are there, interlace the fingers of your right hands with his fingers, and treat him fairly by beginning with yourself in this invocation of curse upon the lying party. You may say the following formula of invocation: 'O Allah, O Lord of the seven skies and the seven (layers of) the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen, All–beneficent, and All–merciful! If Abu–Masruq denied a truth or claimed falsely, then pour down upon him a thunderbolt from heaven or a painful chastisement. But if *so–and–so* (i.e. the other party) denied a truth or claimed falsely, then pour down upon him a thunderbolt from heaven or a painful chastisement.' If you do all that, you will soon see the outcome of this invocation on the other party."

Abu-Masruq commented, "When I invited them to this challenge, I could not find any single person accepting to do it."42

According to another validly reported tradition, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said to Abu-Ja'far Muhammad ibn al-Nu'man:

Debate with them, show them the true guidance you are following, and challenge them to an invocation of curse with regard to the priority of 'Ali ('a). 43

In the previous books of the security system of the virtuous community and the social relations system, we have confirmed that the invitation to following the true party is a duty commissioned by Almighty Allah, but the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) suspended carrying out this duty on account of the special political circumstances to which the individuals of the virtuous community were subjected.

This method of invoking a curse upon the lying party (i.e. *mubahalah*) is another demonstration of this fact.

Showing the Points of Error in Supplications

In the course of building a virtuous community, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) corrected the points of error their

followers might commit upon supplicating, addressing, and speaking to Almighty Allah. Corrections can be deduced from traditions, some of which are:

Safwan ibn Yahya has reported al-Kahili as saying that he wrote a letter to Imam al-Ridha ('a), asking his opinion about the supplication that beings with, "All praise be to Allah to the utmost of His knowledge." He received an answer from the Imam ('a) teaching him to change the phrase of "to the utmost of His knowledge" into "to the utmost of His pleasure."44

Imam al–Sadiq ('a) is reported to have narrated that when Imam 'Ali ('a) heard someone saying, "*O Allah, I do seek Your protection against temptation*," he said to him, "You are seeking the protection of Almighty Allah against your property and children! Instead, you should say, '*O Allah, I do seek Your protection against the misleading temptations*.' Almighty Allah says, '*Your property and your children are a temptation*. (8:28)'"45

In *al–Kafi*, Shaykh al–Kulayni has reported on the authority of Aban ibn 'Abd al–Malik on the authority of Bakr al–Arqat (on the authority of Shu'ayb) that someone visited Imam al–Sadiq ('a) and said, "May Allah lead you to more success! I am totally loyal to you, but when I was stricken by harsh poverty, I sought the help of my family members and relatives. However, this has increased nothing but more aloofness from them."

The Imam ('a) answered, "What Almighty Allah has given you is definitely better than what He has taken from you."

The man said, "May Allah accept me as ransom for you! Pray to Allah for me that He may make me dispense with all His creatures."

The Imam ('a) answered:

Verily, Allah has put the sustenance of him whom He willed in the hands of others whom He willed. Yet, you should pray to Him to help you dispense with needs that compel you to resort to the lowly of His creatures. 46

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have said:

In the presence of my father, a man, supplicating to Allah, said, "O Allah, (please) make us dispense with all of Your creatures."

"Do not say it in this way," my father taught, "Rather, you should say, 'O Allah, make us dispense with the wicked ones of Your creatures.' Verily, a faithful believer cannot dispense with his brothers-in-faith."47

In al-Kafi, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported Imam al-Ridha ('a) as saying:

In the presence of Imam al-Baqir ('a), a man, supplicating to Almighty Allah, said, "O Allah, I do beseech You to give part of Your legally-gotten sustenance."

"You have just be sought the sustenance of the prophets," the Imam ('a) commented. "Rather, you should say, 'O Allah, I be seech You for sustenance that is legally-attained, abundant and pleasant." 48

Spontaneous Supplications are the Best Supplications

A supplication may be of two forms:

The first form entails the spontaneous supplications that one may compose of his own accord to express glorification and praise of Almighty Allah or to express his own emotions, feelings, and requests from Him.

The second form entails the special formulas of supplications that are reported from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams ('a) or mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

Just as the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) taught their followers methods and formulas of supplication, they also urged them to supplicate of their own accord in order to educate and train them to invent and excel in praying to Almighty Allah, which is a sort of righteous deed. They also intended such spontaneous supplications to express the sentimental and spiritual states that interact with their feelings and prerequisites so that the practice of supplicating would be easy, within reach, and correspond to current needs, without memorization or following written texts.

Nonetheless, the reported formulas of supplications maintain their supreme ranks and vital roles in education, purification, and expression of feelings.

In this regard, Sayyid Ibn Tawus, quoting Sa'd ibn 'Abdullah in his book of *Du'a'*, has reported that when Zurarah asked Imam al–Sadiq ('a) to teach him a supplication, the Imam ('a) answered:

The best of supplications are those which you compose of your own accord. 49

In his book of *al-Khisal*, Shaykh al-Saduq has reported Muhammad ibn Isma'il as quoting Imam al-Baqir ('a) as saying:

There is no specific supplication to be said in the following seven situations: (1) Prayers at funerals, (2) supplications during the ritual prayers (i.e. Qunut), (3) supplicating at al-Mustajar (the opposite of the gate of the Ka'bah), (4) supplicating at al-Safa, (5) supplicating at al-Marwah, (6) supplicating during the

ritual halt on Mount 'Arafat, and (7) supplicating during the two-unit Circumambulation Prayer. 50

Some traditions have interpreted this teaching as an inducement of ease in supplication.

Shaykh al-Kulayni in *al-Kafi* and Shaykh al-Tusi in *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* have reported that Bakr ibn Habib asked the Imam ('a) as to what supplication he should say in the *Qunut* and *Tashahhud*.

The Imam ('a) answered:

You should say the best thing you know. If there were certain formulas to be said, then all people would be destroyed.51

According to another tradition, the Imam ('a) has said:

Had it been obligatory upon people to say a certain formula of supplication, they all would be destroyed. However, the people used to say the easiest of what they knew.52

Objectives of Supplicating

We can construe a general concept of the most significant features in the following points:

- **1.** Supplication is a method of education, purification, and sanctification. It also identifies the most proper manner of addressing the Lord with words of glorification, praise, and thanks, in addition to resorting to Him, calling down His mercy, and beseeching Him for granting needs. Obviously, these manners are taught by the special formulas and styles of supplication and the means, of guaranteeing the response of the supplicated Lord, that are instructed by the Ahl al–Bayt ('a).
- 2. The supplicatory prayers are expressions of a practical attitude of man towards His Sustainer and Creator. They therefore express man's belief in Almighty Allah, commitment to serving Him, and belief in the unseen and its role in and connection with the material life of human beings. For these reasons, supplication enlists one to perform religious duties.
- **3.** The Almighty Creator has created this universe according to a firmly compact, flawless, and comprehensive system. This system involves two aspects one of which is compulsory, in the sense that it is related to creation which man has no power to change, while the other is optional, in the sense that it is contingent upon the will of man to bring about the causes, outcomes, and consequences related to his will.

As an influential factor in this comprehensive system, supplication enters this system through the relationship between man's will, deed, and behavior and the divine will that is totally overpowering and dominating whatever is in existence, including man and his will. By means of supplication, this divine will becomes responsive to man's will and call according to certain conditions, criteria, and regulations.

These conditions and regulations can be presented in the following points:

- **a)** The response of the Divine Will to supplications is contingent upon the level of relationship between man and his Lord, identified through man's deeds, behavior, and perfection in his correspondence with the religious laws and provisions decided by Almighty Allah. In other words, the more man responds to divine laws and provisions, the more the Lord responds to man's supplications, will and desires.
- **b**) Response to supplicatory prayers is also conditional upon the amount of the supplicant's devotion to Almighty Allah in times of urgency, feeling of absolute need for Him, resorting to Him, having hope in Him, and recognizing Him.
- **c**) A suppliant must exert all possible and legal efforts and energies to attain his need when all other doors are blocked. A supplication can thus be defined as request for operating the power of Almighty Allah in a field that is unattainable for man. Accordingly, supplication is not a compensation for the human will by the Divine Will; otherwise, the divine logic for creating man as a willful being would be lost.
- **d**) Response to supplications is contingent upon the absence of a person's voluntary and optional obstacles that result from his behavior and deeds and necessitate rejection of his supplication for help and assistance.
- **e**) Response of supplications is also contingent upon the absence of other interests related to the supplicant himself or to other righteous people that require delay in or nullity of response.

About this condition, a part of a supplication reads:

...but when Your response is delayed, out of ignorance I blame You although perhaps slowing down may be a blessing in disguise because You alone know the consequences of all matters.

Referring to this fact too, the Holy Qur'an states:

It may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you. (2:216)

Through a valid chain of authority, Shaykh al-Kulayni, in his book of *al-Kafi*, has reported Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abi-Nasr as saying:

One day, I visited (Imam) Abu'l-Hasan Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim ('a) and said to him, "May Allah accept me as ransom for you! I have been beseeching Almighty Allah for granting me a request for more than a year, but the response has been delayed, so I felt something must be improper about it."

The Imam ('a) answered:

يَا أَحْمَدُ، إِيَّاكَ وَالشَّيْطَانَ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ عَلَيْكَ سَبِيلٌ حَتَّى يُقَنِّطَكَ. إِنَّ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ صَلَوَاتُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ كَانَ يَقُولُ: إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنِ يَسْأَلُ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حَاجَةً فَيُوَّخَّرُ عَنْهُ تَعْجِيلُ إِجَابَتِهِ حُبًا لِصَوْتِهِ وَاسْتِمَاعٍ نَحِيهِ. وَاللهِ مَا أَخَّرَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَا يَطْلِبُونَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا خَيْرٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَجَلَ لَهُمْ فِيهَا، وَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ الدُّنْيَا؟ إِنَّ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ كَانَ يَقُولُ: يَنْبَغِي لِلْمُؤْمِنِ أَنْ يَكُونَ دُعَاقُهُ فِي الرَّخَاءِ نَحْوا مِنْ دُعَائِهِ فِي الشِّدَّةِ، لَيْسَ إِذَا أَعْطِيَ فَتَرَ، فَلاَ تَمَلَّ الدُّعَاءَ فَإِنَّهُ مِنَ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِمَكَانِش. وَعَلَيْكَ بِالصَّبْرِ وَطَلَبِ الْحَلالِ وَصِلَةِ الرَّحِمِ، وَإِيَّاكَ وَمُكَاشَفَةَ النَّاسِ فَإِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ نَصِلُ مِنَ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِمَكَانِش. وَعَلَيْكَ بِالصَّبْرِ وَطَلَبِ الْحَلالِ وَصِلَةِ الرَّحِمِ، وَإِيَّاكَ وَمُكَاشَفَةَ النَّاسِ فَإِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ نَصِلُ مَنْ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِمَكَانِش. وَعَلَيْكَ بِالصَّبْرِ وَطَلَبِ الْحَلالِ وَصِلَةِ الرَّحِمِ، وَإِيَّاكَ وَمُكَاشَفَةَ النَّاسِ فَإِنَّا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ نَصِلُ مَنْ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِمَكَانِش. وَعَلَيْكَ بِالصَّبْرِ وَطَلَب فِي ذَلِكَ الْعَاقِبَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ. إِنَّ صَاحِبَ النِعْمَة فِي المُنْالِ وَمِل وَمَا يَعْمَلُ فِي عَيْنِهِ فَلاَ يَشْبُعُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ، وَإِذَا كَثُرَتِ النِّعَمَ كَانَ الْمُسْلِمُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَاكَ خَطْرِي طَلَبَ عُيْر الْذِي عَنْكَ مَلُ الْقِتْنَةِ فِيهَا. أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْكَ، لَوْ أَنِي قُلْتُ لَكَ قَوْلاً أَكُنُت تَثِقُ بِهِ مِنِي؟

O Ahmad, beware of letting Satan have a way against you that he may make you lose hope! Abu–Ja'far (al–Baqir), Allah's blessings be upon him, used to say, "It happens that a faithful believer beseeches Almighty Allah for something, but Allah delays the response out of His love to hear the voice of that believer and to listen to his crying out to Him." By Allah I swear, He has never delayed responding to the faithful believers who ask for some worldly things when these things would be better for them than what He has already given them." What is the value of this world? Abu–Ja'far used to say, "A faithful believer is required to supplicate to Almighty Allah in situations of prosperity in the same way as he supplicates in situations of misery. He thus must not slow down supplicating when he is prosperous." Therefore, never be weary of supplicating because it enjoys a considerable value in the sight of Almighty Allah.

Likewise, abide by patience, seeking legal earnings, and building good relations with your relatives. On the other hand, beware of behaving impudently towards people, because we, the Ahl al-Bayt, always build good relations with those who rupture their relations with us and we behave kindly towards those who mistreat us. By doing so, we expect only good outcomes. I swear it by Allah. When the wealthy people in this world are granted their needs whenever they ask, they ask for things that they do not need. Consequently, they disregard the wealth they have to the degree that nothing will satiate them. When graces are given in abundance to a Muslim, his duties with regard to these graces increase, and he will not care if he fails in this test. If I say something to you, will you accept it from me in full trust?

Abu-Nasr answered, "Of course I will. May Allah accept me as ransom for you! If I do not put my trust in you while you are the proof of Allah for His creatures, in whom else can I trust?"

The Imam ('a) said:

فَكُنْ بِاللهِ أَوْثَقَ فَإِنَّكَ عَلَى مَوْعِد مِنَ اللهِ. أَلَيْسَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ:" وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَانِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ اللَّهِ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ (53)" وَقَالَ: "اللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا(268)" فَكُنْ بِاللهِ اللهَا الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ (186)" وَقَالَ: "لَا لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ (53)" وَقَالَ: "اللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا (268)" فَكُنْ بِاللهِ اللهَ عَلْمُ اللهَ عَنْ وَهَا تَجْعَلُوا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلاَّ خَيْراً فَإِنَّهُ مَغْفُورٌ لَكُمْ

Thus, you should trust Almighty Allah more than anyone else, for He promises (to respond to your supplications). Is it not that He, the Almighty and Majestic, says, "When My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me. (2:186)" He also says, "Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. (39:53)" He also says, "Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance. (2:268)" Thus, trust Almighty Allah more than anyone else. Do not feel in yourselves towards Him anything other than good, for you will be forgiven.53

Reported Formulas of Supplications

Many and various formulas of supplication that vary in length, contents, and style have been reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), including marvelous and superb supplications, addressing, praising, thanking, glorifying, begging, confessing, and resorting to Almighty Allah.

This great moral, literary, eloquent, and spiritual fortune is considered one of the distinctive features of the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) School and obviously indicates their superior standing and rank and their Imamate and supremacy over all other people.

In the previous chapters and sections of this book, we have referred to a large number of such formulas of supplications, demonstrating that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) gifted us special supplicatory formulas for each occasion, condition, and time, especially on the blessed anniversaries, holy places, and devotional rites. There are many lengthy books comprising these supplications.

Amongst the Holy Imams ('a), Imam 'Ali and Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) are particularly known for reporting such distinctive supplicatory formulas like *Du'a' al-Sabah* (Supplication of the Morning), *Du'a' Kumayl* (Supplication of Kumayl), the Fifteen Whispered Supplicatory Prayers, and many others. The book of supplication known as *al-Sahifah al-'Alawiyyah* (The Book of 'Ali ('a)) is the best example in this regard.

The book entitled *al–Sahifah al–Sajjadiyyah* (which comprises the supplications of Imam Zayn al–'Abidin ('a)) is too famous to require introduction. If we add the famous supplication known as *Du'a' Abi–Hamzah al–Thumali* and the collection of the other supplications of Imam Zayn al–'Abidin ('a), the total will be six books.

There are some other supplications by the other holy Imams ('a) such as, Imam Husayn's supplication on the Day of 'Arafat, Imam al–Baqir's *Du'a' al–Baha'* (Supplication of Splendor), Imam al–Mahdi's *Du'a' al–Iftitah* (Supplication of Commencement), and Imam al–Hadi's *al–Ziyarah al–Jami'ah* (the Comprehensive Formula of *Ziyarah*).

To include all such formulas of supplication reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) requires lengthy books. We can therefore notice that the scholars of the virtuous community, especially in the first ages, compiled lengthy books about this topic apart from their famous books on traditions. Further acquaintance with these supplications can be obtained by referring to these books.

However, we will hereinafter list some famous supplicatory formulas, which can be found in the famous and widely circulated book of *Mafatih al–Jinan* in addition to Shaykh al–Tusi's *Misbah al–Mutahajjid*, Shaykh al–Kaf'ami's *al–Misbah*, Sayyid Ibn Tawus's *Iqba al–A'mal*, and many other reference books:

- Du'a' Kumayl
- *Du'a' al–Simat* (Supplication of Attributes)
- *Du'a' al-'Asharat* (Supplication of the Tens)
- *Du'a' al–Sabah* (Supplication of the Morning)
- *Du'a' al–Jawshan al–Kabir* (The Major Supplication of the Coat of Armor)
- *Du'a' al–Jawshan al–Saghir* (The Minor Supplication of the Coat of Armor)
- *Du'a' al-Mashlul* (Supplication of the Lame)
- *Du'a' al-Mujir* (Supplication of the Succoring)
- *Du'a' Yastashir* (Supplication of the Counseling)
- The Fifteen Whispered Prayers
- *Du'a' al-Iftitah* (Supplication of Commencement)
- *Du'a' al–Baha'* (Supplication of Splendor)
- Du'a' Abi-Hamzah al-Thumali
- *Du'a' al-Sahar* (Supplication at Early Dawn)
- *Al-Munajat al-Sha'baniyyah* (The Whispered Prayer of Sha'ban)
- *Du'a' Makarim al–Akhlaq* (Supplication of Nobility of Character)

There are also some famous supplications that are not reported as ascribed to the Holy Imams ('a), such as the famous supplication known as *Du'a' al–Nudbah* (Lamentation).

These formulas of supplicatory prayers represent a practical school and methodology that man may benefit from once he applies them to the details of his life activities. These advantages can be summed up thus:

- 1. Details of these supplicatory formulas teach the most proper way of speaking to the Almighty.
- 2. They introduce the attributes, manners, graces, and gifts of the Almighty.
- 3. They encourage piety, repentance for one's sins, repeated turning to the Lord in penitence, and abstention from violating His prohibitions.
- 4. They urge commitment to nobility of character, treat compliance with one's personal lusts and desires, and help provide power over desires and deviations.
- 5. They diagnose points of defect in one's behavior.
- 6. They familiarize people with and lead them to perform righteous deeds and high-ranking conduct according to religious law.
- 7. They disclose the means Satan usually uses to tempt man and the tiny cracks through which he may take hold of him.
- 8. They present generally everything that is needed by man in this world as well as the world to come.
 - 1. `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 90:294, H. 23.
 - 2. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:187, H. 1 & 4.
 - 3. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:188, H. 5.
 - 4. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:184, S. 1.
 - 5. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:201, S. 3.
 - 6. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:213, S. 4.
 - 7. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:214, S. 5.
 - 8. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:220, H. 1, 6, 7, and 9.
 - 9. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:236, S. 10.
 - 10. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:243, H. 26, as quoted from Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:494, H. 16.
 - 11. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:224, S. 7.
 - 12. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:227, S. 8.
 - 13. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:244, S. 11.
 - 14. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:257, S. 12.
 - 15. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:197, H. 1, as quoted from Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:467, H. 2.
 - 16. Savvid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:263, S. 14.
 - 17. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:273, S. 16.
 - 18. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:274, S. 17.
 - 19. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:294, S. 24, as quoted from `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar

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90:357, H. 16.
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- 20. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:298, S. 25.
- 21. Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:487.
- 22. Ibn Fahad al-Hilli, `Uddat al-Da`i, pp. 146.
- 23. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:301, S. 26.
- 24. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'ah 15:314, S. 29.
- 25. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:325, S. 34.
- 26. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:345, S. 45.
- 27. Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:510.
- 28. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:304, S. 9.
- 29. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'ah 15:317, S. 30.
- 30. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:277, H. 1.
- 31. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:277, H. 2.
- 32. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:277, H. 3.
- 33. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:277, H. 8.
- 34. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:279, H. 12.
- 35. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:280.
- 36. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'ah 15:302, H. 1.
- 37. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:302, S. 27.
- 38. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'ah 15:321, S. 33.
- 39. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'ah 15:327, S. 35, H. 2.
- 40. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:327, S. 35, H. 7.
- 41. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:327, S. 35, H. 11.
- 42. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:327, S. 36, H. 1.
- 43. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:327, S. 36, H. 4.
- 44. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:335, S. 37, H. 1.
- 45. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:335, S. 38, H. 1.
- 46. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:336, S. 40, H. 1.
- 47. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:336, S. 40, H. 3.
- 48. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:319, H. 4.
- 49. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:337, H. 1.
- 50. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 3:321, H. 5.
- <u>51.</u> Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 5:334, H. 21. A similar tradition is mentioned in the same reference book, carrying number 22.
- 52. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 5:335, H. 26.
- 53. Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:448, H. 1.

Dhikr

By *dhikr* we mean the words and phrases by which Almighty Allah is mentioned, 1 praised, thanked, glorified, or besought for help. The most famous words of *dhikr* in Islam are the following:

• Alhamdu-lillah; all praise be to Allah.

- Bismillah; in the Name of Allah (I begin).
- Ma sha'allah; only that which Allah wills (shall come to pass).
- Allahu-akbar; Allah is the Most Great.
- La ilaha illallah; there is no god save Allah.
- Subhanallah; all glory be to Allah.

The word *dhikr* also means seeking forgiveness, declaring repentance, and turning to Almighty Allah in penitence by giving up one's sins and disobedience to Him.

It can also refer to invoking Almighty Allah's blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household.2

Dhikr, in its inclusive meaning, is one of the Islamic obligatory devotional practices mentioned and urged in the Holy Qur'an on many occasions, such as in the following verses:

Glorify the name of your Lord, morning and evening, and during part of the night adore Him, and give glory to Him a long part of the night. (76:25–26)

Most surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand: those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying): Our Lord! You have not created this in vain! Glory be to You! Save us then from the chastisement of the fire. (3: 190–191)

Those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults—and who forgives faults but Allah—and who do not knowingly persist in what they have done. (3:135)

Had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger had also asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-returning to mercy, Merciful. (4:64)

Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will provide you with a goodly provision to an appointed term and bestow His grace on every one endowed with grace. (11:3)

Surely, Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, call for Divine blessings on him and salute him with a becoming salutation. (33:56)

O you who believe, remember Allah, remember Him frequently, and glorify Him morning and evening. He it is Who sends His blessings on you, and so do His angels, that He may bring you forth out of utter darkness into the light. He is Merciful to the believers. (33:41–43)

According to a validly reported tradition, Imam al-Baqir ('a) is reported to have said:

مَكْتُوبٌ فِي التَّوْرَاةِ الَّتِي لَمْ تُغَيَّرْ أَنَّ مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمُ سَأَلَ رَبَّهُ فَقَالَ: يَا رَبِّ، أَقَرِيبٌ أَنْتَ مِنِّي فَأُناجِيكَ، أَمْ بَعِيدٌ فَأَنادِيكَ؟ فَأَوْحَى اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَيْهِ: يَا مُوسَى، أَنَا جَلِيسُ مَنْ ذَكَرَنِي. فَقَالَ مُوسَى: فَمَنْ فِي سِتْرِكَ يَوْمَ لاَ سِتْرَ إِلاَّ فَأَنادِيكَ؟ فَقَالَ: الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُصِيبَ أَهْلَ الأَرْضِ بِسُوءٍ سَتْرُكَ؟ فَقَالَ: الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَنِي فَأَذْكُرَهُمْ وَيَتَحَابُونَ فِيَّ فَأُحَبَّهُمْ، فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُصِيبَ أَهْلَ الأَرْضِ بِسُوءٍ سَتْرُكَ؟ فَقَالَ: الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَنِي فَأَذْكُرَهُمْ وَيَتَحَابُونَ فِيَّ فَأُحَبَّهُمْ، فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أُصِيبَ أَهْلَ الأَرْضِ بِسُوءٍ مَنْ فَعَالَ: النَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَنِي فَأَذْكُرَهُمْ فَذَفَعْتُ عَنْهُمْ بِهِمْ

In the unaltered Torah, it is written that (Prophet) Moses asked his Lord, saying, "O Lord, are You nigh to me that I can speak to You confidentially, or remote from me that I should cry out to You?" The Almighty and Majestic Lord revealed to him, saying, "O Moses, I am the adjacent companion of him who remembers Me." Prophet Moses asked, "Who will be under Your covering on the day when there shall be no cover save Yours?" The Lord answering said, "They are those who remember Me; therefore, I remember them, and those who love each other for My sake; therefore, I love them. When I am to decide evil for the inhabitants of the earth, I may ward off this evil only when I remember those (who

remember Me). "3

Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

Whoever mentions Almighty Allah frequently will be loved by Him. Whoever mentions Almighty Allah frequently will be granted two immunities: one from Hellfire and the other from hypocrisy.4

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (S) once, came to his companions and said, "Enjoy yourselves in the gardens of heaven."

"What are these gardens of heavens?" they asked.

He (S) answered:

مَجَالِسُ الذّكْرِ، أُغْدُوا وَرُوحُوا وَاذْكُرُوا. وَمَنْ كَانَ يُحِبُّ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ مَنْزِلَتَهُ عِنْدَ اللهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ مَنْزِلَةُ اللهِ عِنْدَهُ، فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَنْدَهُ، فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَنْدَهُ وَخَيْرَ اللهَ تَعَالَى يُنْزِلُ الْعَبْدَ حَيْثُ أَنْزَلَ الْعَبْدُ اللهَ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ. وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ خَيْرَ أَعْمَالِكُمْ وَأَزْكَاهَا وَأَرْفَعَهَا فِي دَرَجَاتِكُمْ وَخَيْرَ مَا طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ ذِكْرُ اللهِ سُبْحَانَهُ، فَإِنَّهُ أَخْبَرَ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَقَالَ: أَنَا جَلِيسُ مَنْ ذَكَرَنِي. وَقَالَ سُبْحَانَهُ: فَاذْكُرُونِي مَا طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ النَّعْمَ وَالإِحْسَانِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ وَالرِّضُوانِ . أَنْكُرْكُمْ بِنِعْمَتِي وَاذْكُرُونِي بِالطَّاعَةِ وَالْعِبَادَةِ أَذْكُرْكُمْ بِالنِّعَم وَالإِحْسَانِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ وَالرِّضُوانِ

These are the meetings of mentioning Almighty Allah. Come, go, and mention Him. Whoever wishes to know his standing with Almighty Allah should check the standing he has given Almighty Allah within himself, because Almighty Allah gives a servant (of Him) the same rank that the servant gives to Him. Be it known to you the most favorable, the most growing, the most raising of ranks, and the best of whatever is under sunlight is the remembrance of Almighty Allah Who has informed with regard to Himself saying, "I am the adjacent companion of him who remembers Me." He, the Glorified, has said, "Remember Me, and I will remember you with My grace. Remember me with obedience to Me and servitude, and I will remember you with favors, kindness, mercy, and pleasure."5

Categories Of Dhikr

It seems proper to classify our discussion of *dhikr* into three categories:

- Dhikr in its private meaning
- Imploration for forgiveness (istighfar)
- Invocation of blessings (*salawat*) upon the Holy Prophet, his Household, the other prophets, and the faithful believers

Dhikr in its private meaning

Dhikr in its private meaning includes all varieties of verbal references to Almighty Allah, such as mentioning Him by names and attributes, thanking, praising, glorifying, and exalting Him.

However, traditions give special significance to certain formulas of *dhikr*, entailing phrases of praising, glorifying, etc.

The most significant of these formulas can be cited in the following list:

- Basmalah (Commencing with the Name of Allah)
- Isti'adhah (Seeking Almighty Allah's protection)
- Tahlil (Professing Almighty Allah as the one and only God)
- Tahmid (Praising Almighty Allah)
- *Tasbih* (Glorifying Almighty Allah)
- *Takbir* (Professing Almighty Allah as the greatest of all)
- Hawqalah (Professing that there in neither power nor might save with Almighty Allah)
- Mashi'ah (Professing that only what Almighty Allah wills will comes to pass)
- *Istirja*' (Professing that all things are Allah's and everything returns to Him)

1. Basmalah

Basmalah is a verse of the Holy Qur'an. Except for Surah Bara'ah (al-Tawbah, No. 9), Basmalah is found in all chapters of the Holy Qur'an. Some traditions hold that it is the best of all verses. In this regard, Shaykh al-Tusi, in Tahdhib al-Ahkam, has reported through a valid chain of authority that Muhammad ibn Muslim asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a) whether al-sab' al-mathani (seven of the oft-repeated verses) wa'l-qur'an al-'azim6 stands for Surah al-Fatihah.

The Imam ('a) answered in the affirmative.

"Is bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim part of the al-sab' al-mathani?" asked Muhammad.

The Imam ('a) answered, "Yes, it is. It is the best of these seven verses."7

According to another tradition, Imam al-Baqir ('a) is reported to have said:

Bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim is closer to the Greatest Name than the pupil of the eye to its surrounding blackness.8

A third tradition states:

Verily, bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim was the foremost book revealed from the heavens. When you recite bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim, it will protect you from whatever is between the heavens and the earth.9

Basmalah: the Motto of the Virtuous Community

Due to the unmatched regard of the *Basmalah* in the view of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), it has turned into a sign and motto of the individuals of the virtuous community to distinguish them from the other Muslims. This fact can be concluded from the following points:

- **1.** The followers of the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) School, unlike all other Muslim sects, abide by reciting the *Basmalah* in all prayers as an inseparable part of *Surah al–Fatihah* as well as all other *Surahs*.
- **2.** In the five obligatory prayers, the followers of the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) recite the *Basmalah* audibly, including the prayers in which the *Surah*s should be recited inaudibly. Details of this point have been previously cited within our discussion of the daily obligatory prayers.

In this regard, al-Hakam ibn 'Umayr is reported to have said, "I followed the Prophet (S) in congregational prayers and he recited the *Basmalah* audibly in the early night, dawn, and Friday (obligatory) prayers." 10

- **3.** The followers of the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) firmly believe that the *Basmalah* is part of all the chapters of the Holy Qur'an except *Surah al–Tawbah*. Many traditions reported from the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) and the Holy Prophet (S) maintain this. Many historical demonstrations such as all the calligraphies of the Holy Qur'an, which are circulated among all Muslims, the *Basmalah* is written in the same calligraphy in which all the other verses are written.
- **4.** The followers of the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) commit themselves to begin all their activities and affairs with the *Basmalah*, especially in writing. Moreover, following the instructions of the Holy Imams ('a), they believe that before carrying out any matter, the *Basmalah* should be said.

In this regard, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

Any important affair that is not preceded by bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim is imperfect.

Any letter that is not begun with bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim is incomplete. 11

The partisans of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are known for this special conduct regarding the *Basmalah* such that it has been presented as one of the five distinctive features of true believers. 12

2. Isti'adhah

Isti'adhah is to seek Almighty Allah's protection from Satan the accursed no matter what the formula might be. However, the most famous statements of *Isti'adhah* are the following:

- 1. A'udhu billahi min ashshaytani arrajim (I seek the protection of Allah against Satan, the accursed).
- 2. A'udhu billahi assami'l al'alim (I seek the protection of Allah, the All-hearing, the All-knowing, against Satan, the accursed).

Referring to *Isti'adhah*, the Holy Qur'an has instructed that one who recites it should begin with this statement.

It thus reads:

So, when you recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Satan. (16:98)

Traditions demonstrating the methods of some prayers of the Holy Imams ('a) hold that they used to say the *Isti'adhah* in the prayers before the *Basmalah* and before reciting the Holy Qur'an.

In *Qurb al-Isnad*, al-Himyari al-Qummi has reported Hannan ibn Sadir as saying:

One day, I followed Imam al-Sadiq ('a) in a congregational prayer. In an audible voice, he said 'a'udhu billahi assami'i al'alimi min ashshaytani arrajimi wa a'udhu billahi an yahdhuruni (I seek the protection of the All-hearing and All-knowing Allah against Satan, the accursed, and I seek Allah's protection lest devils be present with me)'. Audibly again, he ('a) said the Basmalah."

According to Shaykh al-Tusi's *Tahdhib al-Ahkam*, Hannan ibn Sadir said:

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said the Isti'adhah audibly and then raised his voice with the Basmalah. 13

In the famous *tafsir* (exegesis of the Holy Qur'an) book entitled *Majma' al-Bayan*, Shaykh al-Tabrisi states that to say the *Isti'adhah* before reciting any thing of the Holy Qur'an is recommended, but not obligatory, be it in prayers or at any other situation. 14

In *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through a chain of authority that Furat ibn Ahnaf said that he heard Imam al-Bagir ('a) saying:

The first book revealed from the heavens was bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim. Therefore, when you utter it, do not care if you have not said Isti'adhah before it. 15

3. Tahlil

Tahlil is to profess that Almighty Allah is the one and only God. Its statements are the following:

- La ilaha illallah (There is no god save Allah).
- La ilaha illa huwa (There is no god save Him).

On several occasions in the Holy Qur'an, *Tahlil* has come in these two formulas, such as in the following verse:

Allah bears witness that there is no god but He. So do the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice. There is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise. (3:18)

To bear witness that there is no god save Allah is one of the two creeds (i.e. *shahadah*) of Islam. These two creeds are repeated in the ritual *adhan* and *iqamah*, which are recommended parts of the ritual prayers, and at the *tashahhud*, which is an obligatory part.

While demonstrating the merits of repeating this article of faith, many traditions hold that there is nothing greater, better, superior, and more precious than bearing witness that there is no god save Allah.

In the famous tradition known as *al–Salsalah al–Dhahabiyyah* (the golden chain of authority), which was addressed to the people by Imam al–Ridha ('a) at Nayshabur during his journey to Khurasan, he quoted on the authority of his fathers, on the authority of Archangel Gabriel ('a), on the authority of Almighty

Allah, Who says:

To bear witness that there is no god save Allah is My fortress. Whoever pronounces it wholeheartedly will enter into My fortress, and whoever enters My fortress will be safe from My chastisement. 16

This creed is unquestionably the best of all words and the master of all statements. He who pronounces it with faith will gain Paradise, but he who pronounces it hypocritically will have his property saved from confiscation and his blood from being shed although his final return is to Hellfire. 17

Based on this fact, the *Tahlil* statement has come to be the motto of all Muslims in this world and on the Discriminating Bridge on the Resurrection Day, as is maintained by traditions. 18

Likewise, to declare this statement audibly brings about great rewards.

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

No Muslim raises his voice with la ilaha illallah but that his sins, the moment that he finishes, will be scattered under his feet in the same way as leaves of a tree are scattered under it. 19

It goes without saying that to add up the second creed (i.e. bearing witness that Muhammad (S) is the Messenger of Allah) to this one will multiply the reward.

Some traditions state that pronouncing the two creeds of Islam brings about one million rewards, redeems one from Hellfire, and permits one to enter Paradise.20

4. Tahmid

In statements like 'Alhamdu lillah (All praise be to Allah)' or 'Alhamdu lillahi rabbi'l-'alamin (All praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds)', the first statement in the ritual prayers, after the Basmalah, is the expression that all praise is due to Allah; i.e. Tahmid. It is also the concluding part of the true believers' prayers. Thus does the Holy Qur'an teach us, saying:

The conclusion of their prayer will be: Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. (10:10)

In the Holy Qur'an too, this statement has been frequently repeated on the tongues of prophets and saints.

It also expresses the dearest deed to Almighty Allah.

In *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported Muhammad ibn Marwan as saying: I asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a) about the dearest deed to Almighty Allah. He answered, "It is to praise Him."21

The Holy Prophet (S) used to praise Almighty Allah very often in the morning and evening 22

5. Tasbih

The most familiar statement of *Tasbih* is *Subhanallah* (All glory be to Allah).

It has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an on many occasions. It was also the object of pride of the angels when they desired to be the vicegerents of Almighty Allah on the earth:

When your Lord said to the angels, "Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth." They said, "Will You place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we glorify Your praise and sanctify You?" He said, "Surely, I know that which you know not." (2:30)

Glorifying Almighty Allah is a universal phenomenon that includes all the beings—a fact confirmed by the Holy Qur'an that says:

The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein glorify Him. There is not a thing but glorifies His praise, but you understand not their praise. Lo! He is ever Clement, Forgiving. (17:44)

The Holy Qur'an has also urged the Holy Prophet (S) and the believers to hymn the glory of Almighty Allah:

Hymn the glory of your Lord, and be of those who make prostration to Him. (15:98)

A good number of traditions reveal the merits of *Tasbih*, 23 such as the following one that is reported in Ibn Idris al–Hilli's book of *al–Sara'ir* from Imam al–Sadig ('a):

There in no word lighter on tongues and more eloquent than subhanallah (All glory is due to Allah). 24

In his book entitled *Thawab al-A'mal*, Shaykh al-Sadug has quoted Imam al-Sadig ('a) as saying:

Whoever says, 'subhanallahi wabihamdihi subhanallahi al'azimi wabihamdihi (All glory is due to Allah and in praise of Him. All glory be to Allah, the All-great, and in praise of Him),' Almighty Allah will record for him three thousand rewards, raise him three thousand ranks, and create from these words a bird in Paradise that hymns the glory of Almighty Allah while the rewards of its hymns will be recorded for him. 25

6. Takbir

The statement of *Takbir* is *Allahu–akbar* (Allah is the Most Great).

Takbir has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an on many occasions, such as in the following verses:

O you enveloped in your cloak, arise and warn, and your Lord magnify. (74:1-3)

He desires that you should complete the period and that you should magnify Allah for having guided you, that perhaps you may be thankful. (2:185)

Say: Praise be to Allah Who has not taken to Himself a son and Who has no partner in the sovereignty nor has He any protecting friend through dependence. Magnify Him with all

magnificence. (17:111)

Takbir is another motto of Muslims, because it is repeated by them in the *adhan* and *iqamah* several times. It is also the commencing statement of the ritual prayers. Actually, a prayer starts when the *Takbir* statement is pronounced. Likewise, this statement is the point of moving from one ritual part of a prayer to another.

About the merits of this statement, some traditions attach it to the merits of *Tahlil*. They thus hold that nothing is more favorable to Almighty Allah than *Tahlil* and *Takbir*. Others hold that Paradise is the price of stating this statement, which also erases sins.26

It is also one of the four statements of glorification (*al-Tasbihat al-Arba'ah*) familiarly known for their great merits and rewards. 27 This statement of glorification can substitute *Surah al-Fatihah* in the last two units of the four-unit obligatory prayer.

7. Hawqalah

The *Hawqalah* statement is *La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah* (There is neither might nor power save with Allah).

A reference to this statement has been made in the Holy Qur'an, more specifically in the following verse:

If only, when you entered your garden, you had said, "That which Allah wills will come to pass! There is no strength save in Allah!" (18:39)

Many traditions confirm that repeating this statement, which is a sort of verbal *dhikr*, brings about great rewards and wards off distress, grief, obsession, and poverty. According to other traditions, it is one of the paradisiacal treasures. To pronounce this statement, according to other traditions, overthrows sins and makes one as free of sins as the day on which his mother gave birth to him.28

8. Mashi'ah

The most familiar statement of *Mashi'ah* is *Ma sha'allah* (Only that which Allah wills shall come to pass). This statement has been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, *Surah* al–Kahf (No. 18) Verse No. 39.

In the famous discussion of supplications, we have cited the great reward of this statement, which expresses surrender to the Divine Will. It has been also cited in some timed litanies, especially within the devotional rites of the month of Rajab.

9. Istirja'

The statement of *Istirja*' is to say *Inna lillahi wa-inna ilayhi raji'un* (We are Allah's and to Him shall we return). This sort of *dhikr* is said in situations of misfortune, according to the instruction of the Holy Qur'an that states:

When a misfortune befalls them, they say, "We are Allah's and to Him shall we return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord and those are the followers of the right course. (2:156-157)

This statement has been explained by Imam 'Ali ('a) in the following tradition:

As a consolation on the death of 'Abd al-Rahman, al-Ash'ath's brother, Imam 'Ali ('a) said to him:

If you show impatience, then you are carrying out your duty towards 'Abd al-Rahman. However, if you show patience, then you are carrying out your duty towards God. In any case, if you show patience, you will suffer the matter while you are praised, and if you show impatience, you will suffer the same matter without being praised.

Al-Ash'ath said, "We are Allah's and to Him shall we return." Imam 'Ali ('a) asked:

Do you know the interpretation of your saying?

Al-Ash'ath replied, "You are surely the utmost and best of knowledge."

The Imam ('a) explained:

Your saying, 'We are Allah's,' is a confession of Allah's possession of all things, while your saying, 'To Him we will return,' is a confession of your eventual death. 29

About the significance and reward of repeating this statement, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have described it as a feature that keeps man in the circle of divine superior illumination.30

From some traditions, we can conclude that the *Istirja*' statement is one of the divine gifts given to the Muslim nation exclusively. In the famous book of *tafsir* ascribed to 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, it is reported that when Imam a–Sadiq ('a) was asked about the scope of Prophet Jacob's grief for the loss of his son,

Prophet Joseph ('a), the Imam ('a) answered:

He grieved for his son the grief of seventy mothers for losing their sons. Jacob did not know the Istirja'; therefore, he said, "O my sorrow for Joseph!"31

Revealed by the aforesaid holy verse as well as many traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), the *Istirja'* statement has many advantages, some of which are listed hereinafter:

- Blessings, mercy, and guidance to the truth by Almighty Allah
- Forgiveness of sins
- Rewards when repeated in misfortunes and while remembering them32

Istighfar

Istighfar (imploration for forgiveness) has been repeated in the Holy Qur'an for various purposes:

1. On some occasions, the Holy Qur'an, encouraging people to implore Almighty Allah for forgiveness, demonstrates the material and moral outcomes and advantages:

Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will provide you with a goodly provision for an appointed term and bestow His grace on every one endowed with grace. (11:3)

O my people, ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will send on you clouds pouring down abundance of rain and add strength to your strength. (11:52)

2. On other occasions, the Holy Qur'an shows the imploration for forgiveness in the form of supplicatory prayers said by the righteous people:

Our Lord, forgive us, and those of our brethren who preceded us in faith, and do not allow any spite to remain in our hearts towards those who believe, our Lord! Surely, You are Kind, Merciful. (59:10)

3. On other occasions, it confirms that there are always opportunities to repent and implore forgiveness under all circumstances:

O my servants who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Surely, Allah forgives the faults altogether. Surely, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (39:53)

4. On other occasions, it expresses the reasons for forgiveness and the methods of gaining it.

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

O you who believe, if you are careful of your duty to Allah, He will grant you a distinction, do away with your evils, and forgive you. Allah is the Lord of mighty grace. (8:29)

5. On other occasions, it shows how the respite of forgiveness ends and how the doors to it are locked:

Surely, those who disbelieve and turn away from Allah's way, then they die while they are unbelievers, Allah will by no means forgive them. (47:34)

Surely, as for those who believe then disbelieve, again believe and again disbelieve, then increase in disbelief, Allah will not forgive them nor guide them on the right path. (4:137)

6. On other occasions, it shows the way for forgiveness:

O you who believe, be careful of your duty to Allah and believe in His Messenger: He will give you two portions of His mercy, make for you a light with which you will walk, and forgive you. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (57:28)

Those who, when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults—and who forgives the faults but Allah, and who do not knowingly persist in what they have done. (3:135)

Concerning the merits and outcomes of implorations for forgiveness, many traditions have been reported.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

Imploration for forgiveness is the best of supplications. 33

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

Hearts rust just like the rusting of copper. You should therefore polish them by means of imploring for forgiveness. 34

Imam al-Sadig ('a) is reported to have said:

When a servant (of Allah) implores Him for forgiveness repeatedly, his record of deeds will be elevated, shining. 35

Imploring for Allah's forgiveness is obligatory, since it expresses repentance and turning to Him from the committed sins.36

Repentance before Almighty Allah, which is another variety of *istighfar*, is a divinely commissioned duty. In view of that, to neglect repenting before Him is considered an act of disobedience to Him or a graver sin that may turn all the other insignificant sins into grave ones.

A tradition reads:

An insignificant fault that is committed persistently no longer remains insignificant, and a grave sin for which forgiveness is implored does not remain grave.37

Explaining the meaning of this tradition, other traditions have interpreted persistence on insignificant sins into negligence of repentance and imploration for forgiveness.38

Imam al-Sadiq, on the authority of Imam al-Baqir, has quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

He who possesses the following four qualities will enjoy the brightest illumination by Allah: (1) belief that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger, (2) in misfortune saying, 'We are Allah's and to Him shall we return', (3) in situations of welfare saying, 'All praise be to Allah the Lord of the Worlds', and (4) after committing sins saying, 'I implore Allah for forgiveness and to Him do I repent'.39

According to another validly reported tradition, Mu'awiyah ibn Wahab is reported to have heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying:

If one repents truly, Almighty Allah will then love him. As a result, He will cover up his sins in the world and the Hereafter.

"How does Almighty Allah cover up sins?" he was asked.

The Imam ('a) answered:

He will make his two guardian angels forget whatever they have recorded regarding his sins. He will order his limbs to screen whatever sins he has done with them, and He will conceal the places on the earth where the sins where committed. Thus, when he goes to meet his Lord in the Hereafter, there will be no evidence remaining of his sins. 40

True repentance has been defined in traditions as the interior becoming the same or even better than the exterior.41

About the significance of imploring for forgiveness, Imam al-Sadig ('a) said:

Almighty Allah will certainly forgive any believer who commits forty grave sins every day and night but then truly regrets what he did and prays to Him for forgiveness through the following imploration:

I pray for the forgiveness of Allah save Whom there is no god; the Ever-living, the Self-Subsisting, the wonderful Originator of the heavens and the earth, and the Lord of Majesty and Honor; and I beseech Him to send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad and to accept my repentance.42

According to other traditions, imploring for forgiveness is one of the pillars of faith.43

The Limit of Asking for Forgiveness

In their traditions, the Ahl al–Bayt ('a) have diagnosed the limit of asking for forgiveness (*istighfar*), demonstrating that such entreaties must be sincere, originating from the heart and the sentiment, and associated with remorse for having committed the sin involved and determination not to do it ever again.

In this respect, the following dialogue between Kumayl ibn Ziyad and al-Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported in the book of *Tuhaf al-'Uqul*:

Kumayl asked, "It happens that a servant (of God) commits a sin then implores the Lord for forgiveness. What is the limit of such entreaties?"

Imam 'Ali ('a) answered, "It is repentance, son of Ziyad."

"Only this?" wondered Kumayl.

"No," answered Imam 'Ali ('a).

"How is it then?" asked Kumayl.

The Imam ('a) answered, "When a servant commits a sin, he should implore forgiveness through action."

"What is that action?" asked Kumayl.

The Imam answered, "It is the movement of the two lips and the tongue, and he should attach truth to that movement."

"What is that truth?" asked Kumayl.

"It is certification of the heart and determination not to commit the sin for which he repented ever again," answered the Imam ('a).

"If I do so, will I be regarded as a repentant?" asked Kumayl.

"No," answered the Imam.

"How is that?" wondered Kumayl.

"This is because you have not attained the origin yet," explained the Imam ('a).

"What is the origin of imploration for God's forgiveness, then?" asked Kumayl.

The Imam ('a) replied, "The origin of imploring forgiveness is to turn to repentance for the sin from which you have implored Allah's forgiveness. This is the first grade of the true worshippers. The abandonment of sins and the imploration for forgiveness have six indications:

First: to feel sorry for the past deed

Second: to determine not to commit that sin ever again

Third: to fulfill the duties obligatory upon you towards other creatures

Fourth: to fulfill your duty towards Almighty Allah in every obligatory matter

Fifth: to dissolve the flesh, which was composed due to forbidden and illegally gotten things until the skin touches the bones. Only then may you start to build new flesh.

Sixth: to make your body suffer the pains of obedience to Almighty Allah just as you have made it taste the pleasures of acts of disobedience to Him. 44

Hastening to Implore for Forgiveness

To implore for forgiveness, it is necessary to do it as immediately as possible without any delay. Referring to this matter, the Holy Qur'an says:

When they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls, they remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults. (3:135)

This matter has been also emphasized in many traditions:

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

Whoever commits a sin will be granted a delay of seven hours before his sin is recorded. If he says the following (formula of) imploration for forgiveness three times, the sin will not be recorded against him:

I implore forgiveness of Allah; there is no god save Him, the Ever-living and Self-Subsisting; and to Him do I turn in repentance. 45

According to another validly reported tradition, Zurarah reports that he heard Imam al-Sadiq ('a) saying:

When a servant (of Allah) commits a sin, he is granted a delay from morning to evening. If he implores forgiveness of Almighty Allah, the sin will not be recorded against him. 46

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is also reported to have said:

When this verse was revealed, "When they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls, they remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults, (3: 135)" Satan (Iblis) went up a mountain in Makkah called Thawr and cried out in a loud voice at his diabolic fellows. When they thronged together, he said to them, "This verse has been revealed. Which one of you will take the mission of facing it?" A devil stood up and said, "I will. I can do so-and-so." "No," said Satan, "you cannot." Another devil stood up and made the same suggestion, but Satan again rejected the suggestion. Then, the sneaking whisperer stood up and said, "I can perform this mission." "What are your means?" asked Satan. The devil said, "I will give them promises and excite vain desires in them until they commit wrongdoings. When they do, I will make them forget to ask for forgiveness." "You are given this mission," said Satan. Since then, Satan entrusted this mission with this devil up to the Day of Resurrection.47

Sufyan ibn al-Simt is reported to have quoted Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

When Almighty Allah intends good for one of His servants who has committed a sin, He inflicts him with a chastisement and then reminds him to implore for forgiveness. However, if He intends evil to someone who has committed a sin, He grants him a grace after the sin and makes him forget to ask for forgiveness and persist in committing sins. This is the meaning of Almighty Allah's saying, "We will lead them on by degrees from whence they know not. (7:182)" Thus, Almighty Allah will lead them on to graces whereby they continue to commit acts of disobedience to Him. 48

The most favorable entreaty for forgiveness is that which is attached to confession of having committed the sin and mentioning it either by name or generally.

Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported Imam al-Baqir ('a) as saying:

By Allah I swear that none shall be redeemed from the consequences of a committed sin except he who confesses it.

Remorse is sufficient repentance. 49

By Allah I swear that He does not want from people more than the following two features: they should acknowledge His favors upon them so that He might increase these favors for them, and they should confess having committed sins so that He might forgive them. 50

Sinning is considered rebellion against Almighty Allah and violation of obedience and servitude to Him; therefore, a sin that is committed openly results in immediate and harsher punishment while a sin that is committed covertly out of shame before Almighty Allah is a sort of weakness to defy one's desires and instincts. At the same time, it expresses a hidden feeling in the inner self indicating fear of Almighty Allah and inclination towards turning to Him and begging Him for forgiveness.

In this connection, Imam al-Ridha ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

He who conceals a good deed that he has done will be given seventy rewards. He who commits a sin openly will be disappointed. He who conceals a sin that he has committed will be forgiven.51

The abovementioned discussion demonstrates obviously the significance of appeals for forgiveness which, in addition to the removal of punishments for sins or preventing their documentation, represent one of the pillars of faith and perfection in human progression.

As previously shown, to repeat statements of imploration for forgiveness must be accompanied by a cordial and sentimental feeling because such statements must reflect true repentance.

According to a validly reported tradition, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has said:

The Messenger of Allah (S) used to repeat the statement imploring Almighty Allah for forgiveness seventy times a day and the statement of declaring repentance to Him seventy times a day, also.

When he was asked about the very statements the Holy Prophet (S) used to repeat, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) answered:

He used to say 'astaghfirullah' seventy times a day and 'atubu-ilallah' seventy times, too 52

Invocations Of Blessings

The divine command of invoking Almighty Allah's blessings upon the Holy Prophet (S) has been declared in the Holy Qur'an:

Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe, invoke blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation. (33:56)

To invoke blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household is one of the religious duties acknowledged by all Muslims. They consensually believe that the daily obligatory prayers are not accepted unless an invocation of blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household is mentioned therein. This invocation is, thus, one of the obligatory parts of the ritual *tashahhud* of prayers.

Let us now refer to some traditions that demonstrate the merits, effects, gains, and method of invoking Allah's blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household along with the laws appertaining to mentioning the Holy Prophet (S) and agreed upon by almost all Muslims. However, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) take special interest in this matter and follow it so persistently that it has become one of

the features that distinguish them from the others.

About the merits of invocations of blessings, many traditions have been reported. Through a valid chain of authority, Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, has reported Imam al-Baqir or Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

Nothing in the scale of one's deeds is heavier than the invocations of blessings upon the Prophet and his Household. When the deeds of someone are put in the Balance, the scale of bad deeds may outweigh the scale of good deeds. However, when the invocations of blessings (said by this person) are added to the scale of good deeds, only then will this scale outweigh the other scale of bad deeds. 53

This fact has been reported in other traditions with various styles and explanations. For instance, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

I will be standing at the Balance on the Day of Resurrection. When I notice that the scale of bad deeds of someone outweighs the other scale, I will then add his invocations of blessings upon me to the scale of his good deeds so that it will outweigh the other scale.

He that invokes blessings upon me will not be sent to Hellfire, but he that forgets to invoke blessings upon me will lose the way to heaven.

In the sight of Almighty Allah, invocation of blessings is equal to the statements of Tasbih, Tahlil, and Takbir. 54

Gains of Invocations of Blessings upon the Prophet and his Household

The following points demonstrate the gains that are obtained from invoking Allah's blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household.

• Invocations of blessings efface wrongdoings and demolish sins:

In Thawab al-A'mal, Shaykh al-Saduq has quoted Imam 'Ali ('a) as saying:

Invoking blessings upon the Prophet extinguishes wrongdoings in a way more effective than when water is used to extinguish fire.55

In 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha and al-Amali, Shaykh al-Saduq has quoted Imam al-Ridha ('a) as saying:

Surely, invoking blessings upon the Prophet totally demolishes sins. 56

Invocations of blessings eradicate hypocrisy:

Shaykh al-Kulayni, through a valid chain of authority, and Shaykh al-Saduq reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

Raise your voices with invocations of blessings upon me, for this removes hypocrisy. 57

According to another validly reported tradition, Shaykh al-Kulayni reports the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

Invocations of blessings upon me and my Household remove hypocrisy 58

• Invocations of blessings upon the Holy Prophet (S) lead to his intercession:

In his instructive will to Imam 'Ali ('a), the Holy Prophet (S) said:

O 'Ali, my intercession will be bindingly attainable for him who invokes blessings upon me every day or every night, even if he has committed grave sins. 59

• Invocations of blessings cause Divine Mercy to descend upon the invoker:

Many traditions have confirmed this fact. Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

إِذَا ذُكِرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَأَكْثِرُوا الصَّلاَةَ عَلَيْهِ; فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ صَلَّى عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَأَكْثِرُوا الصَّلاَةَ وَاحِدَةً صَلَّى عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى عَلَى الْعَبْدِ لِصَلاَةِ اللهِ مَلَّكَته مَنَّا اللهُ عَلَيْهُ وَالْعَبْدِ لِصَلاَةِ اللهِ عَلَيْهُ وَصَلاَةً مَلاَئكَته .

Whenever the Prophet (S) is mentioned, invoke Allah's blessings upon him as many times as possible. Verily, whoever invokes blessings upon him only once, Almighty Allah will send one thousand blessings upon him (i.e. the invoker) with one thousand rows of angels. As Almighty Allah and His angels send blessings upon him, every being that is created by Him will invoke His blessings upon that invoker. 60

• Invocations of blessings make supplications accessible, please the Lord, and increase physical powers:

In al-Ja'fariyyat, Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

Your invocations of blessings upon me make your prayers successful, give pleasure to your Lord, and improve your bodies. 61

• Method of Invoking Blessings upon the Prophet and his Household:

It has been confirmed in many traditions that invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet (S) should be done according to the same method of invoking blessings upon the Prophet Abraham ('a) and his household. Although these traditions have come in various forms, all of them eventually reveal the same idea. Hereinafter, we will mention two of these traditions only.

In his book entitled 'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha, Shaykh al-Saduq, through a valid chain of authority, has reported al-Rayyan ibn al-Salt as saying:

Imam al-Ridha ('a) attended a session held by al-Ma'mun, the 'Abbasid ruler, in Marw in which some of the scholars of Iraq and Khurasan were present. Then, al-Ma'mun said, "Tell me about the meaning of the following verse…" Imam al-Ridha ('a) said:

In the seventh verse, God the Exalted says, 'Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O you that believe! send blessings on him and salute him with all respect.' When this verse was revealed, some people asked, "O Prophet of Allah! We know how to greet you but how should we send blessings

upon you?" The Prophet (S) answered, "Say: O Allah! Bless Muhammad and Muhammad's Household in the same way that You blessed Abraham and Abraham's Household. You are surely Praiseworthy and Glorious." Can anyone of you disagree with this?

The scholars answered, "No." Al-Ma'mun said, "This is something that no one can disagree about and the whole nation agrees upon unanimously...62

Shaykh Sharaf al-Din al-Najafi, in his book entitled *Kanz al-Fawa'id*, has reported Ibn Abi-Layla, the famous scholar of jurisprudence, as saying:

One day, I met Ka'b ibn 'Ajzah who said to me, "May I gift you a precious thing? One day, the Messenger of Allah (S) came out to us and we asked him, 'You have taught us how to greet you, but how should we invoke blessings upon you?'

He (S) answered: "You should say: O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad in the same way that You sent blessings upon Abraham and the household of Abraham, and send benedictions upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad in the same way that You sent benedictions upon Abraham and the household of Abraham. Verily, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious."63

To add phrases like *ali–Muhammad* (Muhammad's Household) and *ahli–baytihi* (his family) to the formulas of invoking blessings upon the Holy Prophet has been emphasized in traditions, which confirm that cutting off this part (from the formula of invocation) is regarded as an injustice towards the family of the Holy Prophet (S). The Holy Prophet (S) described such invocations as being mutilated.

In this regard, Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, reports Abu'l-Qidah to have quoted Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

Upon hearing him who attached himself to the Holy House saying, "O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad," my father said to him:

O servant of Allah! Do not mutilate it (i.e. the invocation). Do not usurp our right! Say, 'O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household.'64

Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

Do not utter mutilated invocations of blessings upon me; rather, you should include my Household and not separate them. Verily, all lineages and relationships shall be cut off on the Day of Resurrection, except mine.65

Circumstances of Invocations of Blessings

According to traditions, invocations of blessings upon the Holy Prophet (S) and his Household are highly recommended in certain situations because of their positive effects. The following list includes the most significant of these situations:

When supplicating to Almighty Allah for a need, it is highly recommended to begin and end the supplication with the invocation of blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household, since this invocation helps achieve a response to the supplication.

Invocations of blessings are highly recommended after the daily obligatory prayers as a formula of post-prayer invocation. As has been previously cited, this invocation is obligatory in the *tashahhud* statement of the obligatory prayers.

Invocations of blessings are highly recommended and greatly rewardable on Thursday nights, on Fridays, in Ramadhan and Sha'ban, and on other occasions.

Invocations of blessings are recommended while uttering any formula of dhikr.

In this respect, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdullah al-Dahqan as narrating the following:

In one of my visits to Imam al-Ridha ('a), I asked him about the interpretation of Almighty Allah's saying, "And remembered the name of his Lord, so prayed. (87:15)"

"Does this mean that whenever one remembers the name of his Lord, he should stand up and offer a prayer?" I asked.

The Imam ('a) commented, "He who does so has in fact ascribed an enormity to Almighty Allah!"

I thus asked, "May Allah accept me as ransom for you! What does the verse mean then?"

The Imam ('a) explained:

It means that whenever one mentions the name of his Lord, he should invoke His blessings upon Muhammad and his Household.66

Invocation of blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household is highly recommended while referring to the prophets.

'«sa ibn 'Ubayd has reported Mu'awiyah ibn 'Ammar as saying: In the presence of Imam al-Sadiq ('a), I mentioned one of the prophets and invoked Almighty Allah's blessings upon him. Instructing me, the Imam ('a) said:

Whenever you mention any of the prophets, you should begin with invoking blessings upon Prophet Muhammad before you invoke them upon the prophet involved. May Allah send blessings upon Muhammad, his Household, and all the prophets.67

It is highly recommended to conclude any discourse with the invocation of blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household.

In this respect, Muhammad ibn 'Umar ibn Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn al-Bara' al-Ju'abi has reported that Abu-Muhammad al-Hasan ibn 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn al-'Abbas al-Razi al-Tamimi said that his master 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha ('a) told him that his father Musa ibn Ja'far said that his father Ja'far ibn Muhammad said that his father Muhammad ibn 'Ali said that his father 'Ali ibn Husayn said that his father Husayn ibn 'Ali said that his father 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib said that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

He that concludes his discourse with an invocation of Allah's blessings upon me and upon 'Ali will be allowed to enter Paradise.68

When something is forgotten, it is highly recommended to invoke blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household because such invocation causes one's heart and memory to become activated and illumined.

Abu-Hashim Dawud ibn Qasim al-Ja'fari has reported on the authority of Imam al-Baqir ('a) that Imam Hasan ('a) once replied to someone, thus:

Regarding what you have asked about remembering and forgetting, there is an area in man's heart over which there is a plate. When a person invokes Almighty Allah's blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad in a perfect manner, this plate reveals that area. Then, the heart becomes illuminated and the person remembers what he has forgotten. However, if he omits the invocation or expresses it imperfectly, this plate will totally conceal that area. Then, the heart will be in darkness...69

Conclusion

Times and Situations of Dhikr

The verses of the Holy Qur'an show that there is no specified time for remembering and mentioning

Almighty Allah even though the times of morning and evening, expressed by the Holy Qur'an as **bukratan wa-asilan** (33:42) or **bi'lghadati wal'ashiyyi** (18:28), are the best times to mention Him.

Yet, the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)70 encourage remembering and mentioning Almighty Allah and demonstrate that such remembrance is not restricted to certain times.

Such absoluteness can be deduced from this holy verse:

O you who believe, remember Allah with much remembrance. (33:41)

As far as traditions are concerned, the following tradition supports this fact:

Shaykh al-Kulayni reports Abu'l-Qidah to have quoted Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ وَلَهُ حَدِّ يَنْتَهِي إِلَيْهِ، إِلاَّ الذّكْرَ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ حَدُّ يَنْتَهِي إِلَيْهِ. فَرَضَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ الْفَرَائِضَ فَمَنْ مَنْهُ عَهُوَ حَدُّهُ، وَالْحَجُّ فَمَنْ حَجَّ فَهُوَ حَدُّهُ، إِلاَّ الذّكْرَ فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ يَرْضَ مِنْهُ بِالْقَلِيلِ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ حَدًّا يَنْتَهِي إِلَيْهِ: " يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذَكْرًا كَثِيرًا (41) وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكُرَةً وَأَصِيلًا (42)" لَمْ يَجْعَلْ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَهُ حَدَّا يَنْتَهِي إِلَيْهِ. وَكَانَ أَبِي عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَثِيرَ الذَكْرِ. لَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَمْشِي مَعَهُ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَذْكُرُ اللهَ وَكَانَ أَبِي عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ كَثِيرَ الذَكْرِ. لَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَمْشِي مَعَهُ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَذْكُرُ اللهَ وَكَانَ يُحَدِّثُ الْقَوْمَ وَمَا يَشْغُلُهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللهِ، وَكُنْتُ أَرَى لِسَانَهُ لاَرْقَا وَآكُلُ مَعَهُ الطَّعَامَ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَذْكُرُ اللهَ، وَلَقَدْ كَانَ يُحَدِّثُ الْقَوْمَ وَمَا يَشْغُلُهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللهِ، وَكُنْتُ أَرَى لِسَانَهُ لاَرْقَا بِحَنَكِهِ يَقُولُ: لاَ إِلهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ، وَكَانَ يَجْمَعُنَا فَيَأْمُرُنَا بِالذّكْرِ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ، وَيَأْمُرُ بِالْقِرَاءَةِ مَنْ كَانَ يَقْرَأُ فِيهِ الْقَرْآنُ وَيُذَكِّرُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيهِ تَكُثُّرُ بَرَكَتُهُ وَتَحْضُرُهُ الْمُلاَئِكَةُ وَتَحْضُرُهُ الْمُلاَئِكَةُ وَتَحْضُرُهُ الشَيَاطِينُ وَيُضَى وَيُضَى أَلِهُ الْمُرَّيُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيهِ تَقِلُّ بَرَكَتُهُ وَتَهْجُرُهُ الْمَلائِكَةُ وَتَحْضُرُهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيهِ تَقِلُّ بَرَكَتُهُ وَتَهْجُرُهُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَتَحْضُرُهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيهِ تَقِلُّ بَرِكُوهُ الْمَالِائِكُمُ وَتَحْضُرُهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيهِ تَقِلُّ بَرَكَتُهُ وَتَهُجُرُهُ الْمَلائِكَةُ وَتَحْضُرُهُ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيهِ تَقِلُ بَرَكُوهُ وَتُهُولُ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا لَلهُ عَنْ وَكُولُ اللهُ عَرَّ وَكُلُ اللهُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ فَاللهُ عَنَّ وَتَعْمُرُهُ الْمُلَائِكُةُ وَلَا لَلهُ عَلَا لَلهُ عَلَى اللهُ عَلَقُولُو اللهُ عَنَّ وَلَاللهُ عَنَّ وَلَا لَاللهُ عَنَّ وَكُولُولُ اللهُ عَلَا لَاللهُ عَنَّ وَاللهُ عَلَا لَاللهُ عَلَى اللهُ عَلَى اللهُ ع

All things entirely have limits at which they eventually arrive, except remembering Allah (i.e. dhikr), which is the one and only thing that has no limit. As for the divine precepts that Almighty Allah has imposed, their limit is to carry them out properly. Similarly, he who fasts during the month of Ramadhan has in fact arrived at the limit of the precept of fasting and he who performs the Hajj Pilgrimage arrives at its limit. Exclusive is the remembrance of Allah, Who does not accept stopping at a small amount and has not settled any limit at which one may stop. (He thus says) "O you who believe, remember Allah with much remembrance and glorify Him early and late. (33:41-42)"

Thus, Allah, the Glorified and Majestic, has not decided any limit for remembering Him. My father used to remember Allah most frequently. Whenever I accompanied him on a walk, he remembered Allah. Whenever I ate with him, he remembered Allah. Although he was talking to others, this would never distract him from remembering Allah. I used to see his tongue sticking to his jaw and repeating 'la ilaha illallahu'. He used to gather us and instruct us to remember Allah until sunrise. As for those who learnt

reading, he would order them to recite. As for those who could not read, he would order them to utter statements remembering Allah.

Verily, a house in which the Qur'an is recited and Almighty Allah is mentioned frequently will be granted many blessings, attended by the angels, deserted by the devils, and lit up for the inhabitants of the heavens in the same way as a shining star lights up for the inhabitants of the earth. On the other hand, a house in which neither the Qur'an is recited nor Almighty Allah is mentioned will diminish in blessing and be deserted by the angels and attended by the devils.71

However, some other traditions have specified certain times and situations when remembering Almighty Allah appears to be more favorable and more binding because these times, places, and situations enjoy some particularities. For instance, traditions have laid much emphasis on remembering Almighty Allah in the morning and evening.

Thus, non-assignment of certain times and situations for remembering Almighty Allah in some traditions and assigning certain times and situations for it in others, demonstrates both aspects of *dhikr* in Islam.

Recommended situations for dhikr

Let us now cite a number of situations when remembering Almighty Allah is highly recommended:

When graces of Almighty Allah are showered upon a servant, he is required to remember Him with words of praise and thanks. Conversely, when the servant is exposed to harsh poverty, he is required to remember Almighty Allah by expressing that all might and all power are His alone; i.e. to repeat the statement of *Hawqalah*.

In this regard, Muhammad ibn Yusuf has reported that Muhammad ibn Ja'far ('a) reported on the authority of his father, Imam al-Sadiq ('a), on the authority of his fathers on the authority of the Messenger of Allah (S) who said:

Whoever is showered with graces should say alhamdu lillahi rabbi'l-'alamin (all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds). But whoever is stricken by harsh poverty should repeatedly say la hawla wala quwwata illa billahi al'aliyyi al'azim (there is neither might nor power save with Allah, the All-high and All-great). This statement is one of the heavenly treasures. It cures seventy-two maladies the slightest of which is distress.72

It is necessary to remember Almighty Allah in states of inattentiveness, absentmindedness, and lack of feeling. In such conditions, hearts become stagnant like a worn-out tatter or a rotten bone.

In this connection, Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, has reported the following from Abu-Usamah.

One day while I was accompanying Imam al-Sadiq ('a), he asked me to recite something from the Holy Qur'an. No sooner did I recite the first verse of a chapter than Imam al-Sadiq ('a) was moved and he started weeping. He then said to me:

O Abu-Usamah, take care of your heart (against negligence and oblivion) and beware lest corruption attack it. A heart may be attacked at certain intervals of time by doubt, especially in the mornings, which may empty it of both faith and unfaith, causing it to be like a worn-out tatter or a rotten bone. O Abu-Usamah, have you ever come upon a time during which you searched for some good or bad item in your heart but you could find nothing, thus not knowing where your heart was?

"Yes, I have. Something like this has happened to me and I think it happens to all people," answered Abu-Usamah.

The Imam ('a) commented:

Yes, it does. No one is spared from this feeling. If this happens to you, you should remember Almighty Allah and beware lest corruptive things attack you. If He intends good to one of His servants, He will then cast items of faith in his heart, but if He intends something else, He will cast something else therein.

Abu-Usamah asked, "What do you-may Allah accept me as ransom for you-mean by something else?"

The Imam ('a) answered:

He may cast unfaith if He intends it. 73

When evil misgivings about a Divine attribute or a creation of Almighty Allah attack the heart, it becomes highly recommended to remember Him by uttering any statement of *dhikr*, such as *Hawqalah*, *Tahlil*, or

any similar statement.74

As maintained by a tradition, remembering Almighty Allah when the others are preoccupied in their worldly personal affairs, such as business and merchandise, brings about one thousand rewards and an unprecedented forgiveness of the Lord.75

It is highly recommended to mention Almighty Allah upon leaving a meeting and concluding a lecture or a discourse with one of the following statements:

Glory be to you Lord, the Lord of Honor, above what they describe. Peace be on the messengers. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

All glory be to You, O Allah, and in praise of You. There is no god save You. I implore Your forgiveness and turn to You repentant.

Remembering Almighty Allah among people who are distracted from remembering Him is considered to be like fighting with warriors (for the sake of Almighty Allah) or fighting when the others abscond.76

Upon looking in the mirror, it is highly recommended to remember Almighty Allah and thank Him for granting you perfection in your creation and good looks. The Holy Prophet (S) said the following statement whenever he looked in the mirror:

All praise is due to Allah Who has granted perfection in my creation, made goodly my form, given me perfect things that others have imperfect, guided me to Islam, and endued me with Prophethood.77

Remembering Almighty Allah should be practiced in company, in private, overtly and covertly.

Imam al-Sadig ('a) is reported to have said:

Our true partisans (i.e. Shi'ah) are those who mention Allah frequently in private. 78

The following saying of Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is recorded in the book of *al-Mahasin*:

Allah, the Exalted, says, "O son of Adam, if you remember Me in private, I will remember you in private. O son of Adam, if you remember Me confidentially, I will remember you confidentially. O son of Adam, if you remember Me in the presence of a company, I will remember you in the presence of a company better than yours."

No servant remembers Allah in the company of others but that Allah will remember him in a company of angels.79

It is worth mentioning that traditions hold that any act of obedience to Almighty Allah is remembrance of Him, while any act of disobedience to Him is a sort of failing to remember Him. 80 In view of that, *dhikr* has a more profound meaning than mere movement of tongues. In other words, *dhikr* is a process of keeping Almighty Allah in mind and turning to Him, convinced that He is always present, He knows all our deeds, and He will call us to account according to every deed we do in this earthly life. We will therefore be rewarded for our good deeds and punished for the evil ones.

Besides, other traditions hold that remembering the Holy Prophet (S) and Imams ('a) is another sort of *dhikr* (remembering Almighty Allah), because Almighty Allah has linked His Prophet (S) to Himself.81

Objectives Of Dhikr

The previous presentation of the circumstances and effects of *dhikr* and the various aspects and features of the Islamic approach of *dhikr* must have made it clear that *dhikr* is a factor that inseparably and incessantly accompanies man under all conditions and at all times. It also plays a vital role in the process of achieving and working towards self–perfection in this world and the world to come with regard to the following aspects:

- One's relationship with Almighty Allah
- Spiritual, mental, and confidential aspects of life
- Willpower to withstand personal desires and pressures
- Conduct and behavior

The following titles show some of its effects:

Spiritual Effects

Dhikr consolidates and strengthens man's relationship with the Lord, thus achieving the highest ranks and the best rewards.

- It cures many psychological disorders, and purifies hearts from pollution and tarnish.
- It trains man in patience, steadfastness, submission to the Divine Will, satisfaction, and contentment during ordeals and suffering.
- It deters a person from committing acts of disobedience to Almighty Allah, commands obedience to Him, ensures piety and abstention for whatever is deemed forbidden, helps a person abide by true conduct and performance, and aids a person to speak nothing but the truth and do nothing but what is right. Of course, individuals can abide by all these points only when they feel that Almighty Allah is constantly present with them, watching all their movements for which they will either be rewarded when they are compatible with what Allah has commanded or punished when they are in violation of His commands.

Material Effects

In addition to the spiritual effects of *dhikr*, we cite some of its material effects:

Some traditions confirm that those who remember Almighty Allah frequently are saved from the dangers of thunderbolts.82

When one is preoccupied in remembering Almighty Allah and misses doing another thing that he had intended to do, Almighty Allah will give him a better thing than what he wished to gain from that deed.83

Whoever remembers Almighty Allah or His Prophet (S) in a meeting will gain ten rewards. On the other hand, a session in which Almighty Allah or the Holy Prophet (S) are not mentioned can bring about evil results for its people who will also suffer intense regret on the Day of Resurrection.84

Presence in sessions where Almighty Allah is remembered achieves benefits and blessings in this world as well as the world to come. Such sessions have been described as rich gardens of Paradise.

Advising his son, Lugman the wise said:

يَا بُنَيَّ، إِخْتَرِ الْمَجَالِسَ عَلَى عَيْنِكَ، فَإِنْ رَأَيْتَ قَوْماً يَذْكُرُونَ اللهَ جَلَّ وَعَزَّ فَاجْلِسْ مَعَهُمْ؛ فَإِنْ تَكُنْ عَالِماً يَزِيدُونَكَ عِلْماً، وَإِنْ تَكُنْ جَاهِلاً عَلَّمُوكَ، وَلَعَلَّ اللهَ أَنْ يُظِلَّهُمْ بِرَحْمَتِهِ فَيَعُمَّكَ مَعَهُمْ. وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ قَوْماً لاَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عِلْماً، وَإِنْ تَكُنْ جَاهِلاً عَلَّمُوكَ، وَلَعَلَّ اللهَ أَنْ يُظِلَّهُمْ بِعُقُوبَةٍ فَيَعُمَّكَ فَلاَ تَجْلِسْ مَعَهُمْ؛ فَإِنْ تَكُنْ عَالِماً لَمْ يَنْفَعُكَ عِلْمُكَ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ جَاهِلاً يَزِيدُوكَ جَهْلاً، وَلَعَلَّ اللهَ أَنْ يُظِلَّهُمْ بِعُقُوبَةٍ فَيَعُمَّكَ مَعَهُمْ. هَا إِنْ تَكُنْ عَالِماً لَمْ يَنْفَعُكَ عِلْمُكَ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ جَاهِلاً يَزِيدُوكَ جَهْلاً، وَلَعَلَّ اللهَ أَنْ يُظِلَّهُمْ بِعُقُوبَةٍ فَيَعُمَّكَ مَعَهُمْ

O son, investigate the meetings that you want to join. If you find some people remembering Almighty Allah, then sit with them because they will increase the knowledge you have, they will teach you if you are ignorant, and perhaps Almighty Allah will cast a shadow of mercy upon them and this will include you, also. If you find some people distracted from remembering Almighty Allah, then do not sit with them because, if you have some knowledge, you will not benefit from your knowledge by being with them, if you are ignorant, they will increase your ignorance, and perhaps Almighty Allah will cast a punishment upon them and this will include you, also.85

- 1. Lexically, the word dhikr means to remember or to remind.
- 2. Although imploration for forgiveness (istighfar) and invocation of blessings (salawat) are sorts of supplications, they are added to dhikr, because their verbal structures are similar to the structures and statements of dhikr. Another reason is that it is deemed recommended to repeat these statements many times in certain formulas of dhikr. Moreover, some traditions demonstrate that the invocation of blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household may substitute for phrases of remembrance and glorification of Almighty Allah. For these reasons, these two supplicatory prayers will be discussed within the words and phrases of dhikr.
- 3. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:350, H. 1.
- 4. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:350, H. 19.
- 5. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:350, H. 6.
- 6. This is an indication to the following holy verse:

Certainly, We have given you seven of the oft-repeated verses and the grand Qur'an. (15:87)

- 7. Al-Huwayzi, Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn 1:8. Topic: bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim.
- 8. Al-Huwayzi, Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn 1:8, H. 21.
- 9. Al-Huwayzi, Tafsir Nur al-Thagalayn 1:8, H. 14.
- 10. Al-Suyuti, al-Durr al-Manthur 1:8.
- 11. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 5:378, H. 4 and 5.
- 12. This is an indication of the previously mentioned tradition that reads:

The signs of true faithful believers are five: Offering the fifty, visitation on the Day of Arba`in, wearing a ring on the right hand, pressing the forehead, and raising the voice with bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim.

- 13. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 5:220-221.
- 14. -Shaykh al-Tabrisi, Majma` al-Bayan 3:385.
- 15. Al-Huwayzi, Nur al-Thagalayn 3:84, H. 217.
- 16. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:413, H. 22.
- 17. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:407, S. 19.
- 18. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:419, H. 44.
- 19. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:422, S. 21.
- 20. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:423, S. 22.
- 21. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:380, H. 1.
- 22. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:380, H. 6 & 7.
- 23. Refer to Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:393, S. 16.
- 24. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:397, H. 11.
- 25. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:396, H. 9.
- 26. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:431, S. 24.
- 27. Sayvid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:399, S. 24.

In this reference book, the following validly reported tradition is cited:

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

One day, the poor came to the Holy Prophet (S) and complained, "O Allah's Messenger, the rich have the (financial) ability to manumit slaves, while we do not; have the ability to go on Hajj, while we do not; have the ability to give alms, while we

do not; and, have the ability to participate in jihad, while we do not."

The Holy Prophet (S) instructed them, "He who repeats the Takbir statement one hundred times will have a better reward than that of manumitting one hundred slaves. He who repeats the Tasbih statement one hundred times will have a reward better than that of sacrificing one hundred camels as offerings (to the Holy Ka`bah). He who repeats the Tahmid statement one hundred times will have a better reward than that of offering one hundred horses, along with their saddles and riddles, for the warriors for the sake of Almighty Allah. He who repeats the Tahlil statement one hundred times will win the best reward of all those who practice devotional acts on that day except those who repeat the same statement more than one hundred times."

When the rich were informed of this instruction, they applied these instructions to themselves. The poor then came to the Holy Prophet (S) and informed him about it. He commented, "This is the favor of Allah which He gives to whom He wishes." There are similar traditions in Section: 18 of the same reference book.

Apparently, these Four Statements of Glorification are the best of all statements of dhikr because they include the most familiar four formulas of dhikr and because they replace the best chapter of the Holy Qur'an (Surah al-Fatihah) in the last two units of the four-unit ritual prayers. Besides, many merits have been reported for these statements.

- 28. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:424, S. 23.
- 29. Ibn Shu`bah al-Harrani, Tuhaf al-`Uqul, pp. 209.
- 30. Al-Huwayzi, Nur al-Thaqalayn 1:144, H. 451.
- 31. Al-Huwayzi, Nur al-Thagalayn 1:144, H. 456.
- 32. Al-Huwayzi, Nur al-Thaqalayn 1:144, H. 453, 454, and 458.
- 33. Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:504, H. 1.
- 34. `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 74: 127, H. 8.
- 35. Al-Tabrisi, Mishkat al-Anwar, pp. 200.
- <u>36.</u> The sins that are committed or felt and then forgiveness of Almighty Allah for them is implored differ in ranks and levels.

Some sins may be grave or may entail ascription of partners to Almighty Allah, false worship, or polytheism, be it covert or open. It is therefore required to turn to Almighty Allah from such grave sins.

Other sins may be insignificant that are expressed by the Holy Qur'an as small faults or unwilled offenses.

Other sins may issue from inadvertence, oblivion, or negligence of the better of two choices. A truly pure and righteous servant may feel that he has committed misconduct or a sin due to such oblivion or negligence.

Other sins may be a failure to do what ought to be done towards Almighty Allah, such as failure to thank Him for a grace, to carry out a duty, to undertake a mission, to help a pauper as it should be, to stand by a brother-in-faith, to show affection to a believer, or to avoid a discommended matter.

Although some of these acts are not regarded as sins in the jurisprudential concept, they require asking forgiveness for them, especially by individuals of high ranks of self-perfection.

- 37. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:268, H. 3.
- 38. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:268, H. 4.
- 39. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:256, H. 18.
- 40. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:257, H. 1.
- 41. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:361, H. 1 & 2.
- 42. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:364, H. 3.
- 43. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:361, H. 9.
- 44. Ibn Shu`bah al-Harrani, Tuhaf al-`Uqul, pp. 133-134.
- 45. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:351, H. 2.
- 46. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:351, H. 4.
- 47. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:351, H. 7.
- 48. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:351, H. 10.
- 49. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:347, H. 1.
- 50. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:347, H. 2.

- 51. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:350, H. 1.
- 52. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:496, H. 19.
- 53. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:462, H. 1.
- 54. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:462, H. 3, 5, and 8 respectively.
- 55. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:463, H. 6.
- 56. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:463, H. 8.
- 57. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:463, H. 13.
- 58. Sayvid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:463, H. 14.
- 59. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:465, H. 18.
- 60. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:468, H. 32.
- 61. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:466, H. 22.
- 62. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:478, H. 67.
- 63. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:476, H. 62. Refer to H. 61, 63-70 in the same reference book.
- 64. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:488, H. 97.
- 65. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:488, H. 98.
- 66. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:491, S. 36, H. 1.
- 67. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:491, S. 33, H. 1.
- 68. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:491, S. 35, H. 1.
- 69. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:490, S. 34, H. 1.
- <u>70.</u> The Holy Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are the two "weighty" things that the Holy Prophet (S), by the command of Almighty Allah, has ordered his people to adhere to. They represent the essence of Islam—a fact undeniably revealed in the final, most famous instruction of the Holy Prophet (S), known as Hadith al-Thaqalayn. [translator]
- 71. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:359, H. 42.
- 72. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:385, H. 1.
- 73. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:373, H. 1.
- 74. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'ah 15:374, S. 9.
- 75. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:372, S. 7.
- 76. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:371, S. 6.
- 77. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:384, S. 14, H. 2.
- 78. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:367, S. 5, H. 2.
- 79. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:368, S. 5, H. 8.
- 80. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:365, S. 3, H. 4.
- 81. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:433, S. 26, H. 1 & 2.
- 82. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:365, S. 4.
- 83. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:364, S. 3.
- 84. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:433, S. 26.
- 85. Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:457, S. 29.

Jihad

Jihad (struggle for the sake of Almighty Allah) is one of the most significant divine precepts and devotional acts discussed in the Holy Qur'an on many occasions including the following:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا (78)

Strive hard in the way of Allah as is due to Him. He has chosen you (to convey the message of Monotheism) and has not laid upon you any hardship in religion. (This is) the faith of your father Abraham ('a). He named you Muslims before and in this (the Qur'an), that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and you be witnesses to the people; therefore, keep up prayer, pay the poorrate, and hold fast by Allah. He is your Guardian. How excellent a Guardian and how excellent a Helper is He! (22:78)

O you, who believe. Shall I lead you to a commerce which can deliver you from a painful chastisement? You should believe in Allah and His Messenger and struggle hard in Allah's way with your property and your lives. That is better for you, did you but know. (61:10-11)

The word 'jihad' has a vast meaning in Islam and in the Holy Qur'an, because it is derived from the Arabic root j-h-d, which means capacity and scope. In view of this, jihad means to exert all possible efforts to defend and struggle for Almighty Allah and to spread and defend Islam.

Consequently, any effort, suffering, endeavor, or sacrifice made for the sake of Almighty Allah, is *jihad*, be it mental or material. It can be in the form of reporting a tradition, authoring a book, seeking religious knowledge, learning any other advantageous field of science, setting aright matters of difference among disputing parties, enjoining the right, or forbidding the wrong in addition to self–sacrifice and fighting for the sake of Almighty Allah.

In Muslim jurisprudential terminology, the word *jihad* usually means fighting for the sake of Almighty Allah with weapons and readiness to embrace injury, death and martyrdom.

Almighty Allah has imposed *jihad* in this sense on every Muslim (male) individual under certain conditions. Therein it becomes obligatory upon such individuals to expose themselves to death in defense of themselves, Islam, and persecuted people.

In this regard, the Holy Qur'an states:

(كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ (216

Fighting is enjoined upon you, and it is an object of dislike to you. It may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you. (2:216)

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ (39) الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكُرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذْكُرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا (40) (وَلَيَنْصَرُنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصَرُدُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَويٌّ عَزِيزٌ (40)

Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed and, most surely, Allah is well able to assist them; those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say, "Our Lord is Allah." Had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered. Surely, Allah will help him who helps His cause. Most surely, Allah is Strong, Mighty. (22:39–40)

وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ (الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِم أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ نَصِيرًا (75)

What reason do you have that you should not fight in the way of Allah and the weak among men, women, and children, for those who say, "Our Lord, cause us to go forth from the town whose people are oppressors. Give us from You a guardian and give us from You a helper." (4:75)

These holy verses entail that the reason for passing the law of fighting was originally for the sake of self–defense, especially after the polytheists, atheists, and enemies of Islam used all means of repression, persecution, oppression, transgression, pursuit, banishment from hometowns, economic and social siege, torture, and assassinations against Muslims in order to force them to give up their faith.

In addition to the last two verses, the following verse sheds light on this fact:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (190) وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (190) وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتُلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ (191) فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (192) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ (191) فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهُ عَنُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (192) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُمْ وَالْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصِ وَيَكُمُ وَاتَقُوا اللَّهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهُ مَعْ الْمُتَّقِينَ (194) (194) وَمَرَامِ وَاللَّهُ مَا عُتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَقُوا اللَّهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهُ مَا عُتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَقُوا اللَّهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهُ مَا الْمُتَقِينَ (194)

Fight in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits. Surely, Allah does not love those who exceed the limits. Kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out. Persecution is severer than slaughter. Do not fight with them in the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay

them. Such is the recompense of the unbelievers. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Fight with them until there is no persecution and religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors. The sacred month for the sacred month and all sacred things are under the law of retaliation. Whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict injury on him according to the injury he has inflicted on you. Be careful of your duty to Allah and know that Allah is with those who guard against evil. (2:190–194)

From these holy verses, we can understand that such fighting is based on self-defense and warding off aggression. Therefore, such fighting is stopped when aggression is warded off.

Significance and Merit of Jihad

Jihad entails great merit for man and striving nations and involves great significance in achieving the sacred goals that Almighty Allah has put before man in his advancement towards perfection—a march that cannot be consummated except by undergoing various sorts of "distress" and "affliction". Exegetes have interpreted distress to be fighting.

In many verses like the following, the Holy Qur'an has revealed this fact:

Do you think that you would enter heaven while yet the state of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you. Distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said, "When will the help of Allah come?" Now, surely, the help of Allah is nigh. (2:214)

He will forgive you your faults and cause you to enter into gardens, beneath which rivers flow, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetuity. That is the mighty achievement. Yet, another blessing that you love: help from Allah and a victory near at hand. Give good news to the believers. (61:12–13)

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ (169) فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (170) يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ

Reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they are alive and are provided sustenance from their Lord—rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His grace. They rejoice for the sake of those who, being left behind them, have not yet joined them that they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve. They rejoice on account of favor from Allah and His grace and Allah does not waste the reward of the believers. (3:169–171)

Allah shall grant to the strivers, above those who hold back, a mighty reward—high degrees from Him and protection and mercy. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (4:95–96)

Their Lord gives them good news of mercy from Himself, His good pleasure, and gardens wherein lasting blessings shall be theirs, abiding therein for ever. The reward with Allah is great indeed. (9:21–22)

It did not beseem the people of Madinah and those among the dwellers of the desert to remain behind the Messenger of Allah, nor should they desire anything for themselves in preference to him. This is because there afflicts them not thirst or fatigue or hunger in Allah's way, nor do they tread a path which enrages the unbelievers, nor do they attain from the enemy what they attain, but a good work is written down to them on account of it. Surely, Allah does not waste the reward of the doers of good. (9:120)

Besides these verses and many others, traditions that are reported from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) demonstrate emphatically the significance and great role of *jihad* in preserving Islam, human dignity and poise, and the strength of the Muslim community in addition to achieving the goals of the individual and collective progression of man towards perfection.

In *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through a valid chain of authority that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

. ٱلْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ فِي السَّيْفِ وَتَحْتَ ظِلِّ السَّيْفِ. وَلاَ يُقِيمُ النَّاسَ إلاَّ السَّيْفُ. وَالسُّيُوفُ مَقَالِيدُ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ

All goodness lies in swords and under their shadows. Nothing amends people except swords. Swords are verily the keys of Paradise and Hellfire. 1

The following sermon of Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported in both Shaykh al-Kulayni's *al-Kafi* and al-Sharif al-Radhi's compilation of *Nahj al-Balaghah*:

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ الْجِهَادَ بَابٌ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ الجَنَّةِ، فَتَحَهُ اللهُ لِخَاصَّةِ أَوْلِيَائِهِ، وَهُوَ لِباسُ التَّقْوَى، وَدِرْعُ اللهِ الحَصِينَةُ، وَجُنَّتُهُ الوَثِيقَةُ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهُ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ أَلبَسَهُ اللهُ ثَوْبَ الذُّلِّ، وَشَمِلَهُ البَلاَءُ، وَدُيِّثَ بِالصَّغَارِ وَالقَمَاءَةِ، وَضُرِبَ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ الوَثِيقَةُ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهُ رَغْبَةً عَنْهُ أَلبَسَهُ اللهُ ثَوْبَ الذُّلِّ، وَشَمِلَهُ البَلاَءُ، وَدُيِّثَ بِالصَّغَارِ وَالقَمَاءَةِ، وَضُرِبَ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ بِالْإِسْهَابِ، وَأُدِيلَ الحَقُّ مِنْهُ بِتَضْيِيعِ الجِهَادِ، وَسِيمَ الخَسْفَ، وَمُنِعَ النَّصَفَ

Now then, surely jihad (i.e. striving for Almighty Allah's sake) is one of the doors of Paradise, which Allah has opened for His special friends. It is the dress of piety and the protective armor of Allah and His trustworthy shield. Whoever abandons it, Allah covers him with the dress of disgrace and the clothes of distress. He is kicked with contempt and scorn, and his heart is veiled with screens (of neglect). Truth is taken away from him because of missing jihad. He has to suffer ignominy and justice is denied to him.2

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

لِلْجَنَّةِ بَابٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ بَابَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ، يَمْضُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَإِذَا هُوَ مَفْتُوحٌ وَهُمْ مُتَقَلِّدُونَ بِسِيُوفِهِمْ، وَالْجَمْعُ فِي الْمَوْقِفِ وَالْجَمْعُ فِي الْمَوْقِفِ وَالْجَمْعُ فِي الْمَوْقِفِ وَالْمَلاَئِكَةُ تُرَحِّبُ بِهِمْ. فَمَنْ تَرَكَ الْجِهَادَ أَلْبَسَهُ اللهُ ذُلاً وَفَقْراً فِي مَعِيشَتِهِ وَمَحْقاً فِي دِينِهِ. إِنَّ اللهَ أَغْنَى أُمَّتِي بِسَنَابِكِ وَالْمَلاَئِكَةُ تُرَحِّبُ بِهِمْ. فَمَنْ تَرَكَ الْجِهَادَ أَلْبَسَهُ اللهُ ذُلاً وَفَقْراً فِي مَعِيشَتِهِ وَمَحْقاً فِي دِينِهِ. إِنَّ اللهَ أَغْنَى أُمَّتِي بِسَنَابِكِ وَالْمَلائِكَةُ تُرَحِّبُ بِهِمْ. فَمَنْ تَرَكَ الْجِهَادَ أَلْبُسَهُ اللهُ ذُلاً وَفَقْراً فِي مَعِيشَتِهِ وَمَحْقاً فِي دينِهِ. إِنَّ اللهَ أَغْنَى أُمَّتِي بِسَنَابِكِ

Paradise has a gate that is called "the Gate of Strivers." The strivers will walk to this gate, which is open wide before them, holding their swords (i.e. weapons) while crowds will be halted in the field of interrogation, and the angels will be welcoming them. So, he who abandons jihad will be dressed by Allah in the garb of humility, poverty in livelihood, and destruction in religion. Almighty Allah has endued my people with dignity through the hooves of their horses and the handles of their spears.3

Shaykh al-Saduq in *al-Khisal* and Shaykh al-Tusi in *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* have reported on the authority of Imam al-Sadiq ('a) on the authority of his fathers that the Holy Prophet (S) said:

فَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي بِرِّ بِرِّ حَتَّى يُقْتَلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، فَإِذَا قُتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ فَلَيْسَ فَوْقَهُ بِرِّ، وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عُقُوقٍ عُقُوقٌ حَتَّى يُقْتُلَ أَحَدَ وَالدَيْه، فَإِذَا قَتَلَ أَحَدَ وَالدَيْه فَلَيْسَ فَوْقَهُ عُقُوقٌ .

Over everyone that is possessed of devoutness there is one even more devout, except over those martyred for the sake of Allah. When one is martyred for the sake of Allah, there will be no devoutness

greater than his. Likewise, over everyone undutiful there is one even more undutiful except for those who kill one of their parents. When one kills one of his parents, there will be no impiety greater than his.4

In his other book entitled 'Iqab al-A'mal, Shaykh al-Saduq, with regard to the rewards of the strivers for the sake of Allah, reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said:

For every step that a striver takes, forsaking his home in the way of Allah, seven hundred thousand rewards will be recorded. Seven hundred thousand of his evildoings will be effaced, seven hundred thousand ranks will he be raised, and he will be, under the assurance of Allah, regarded as martyr no matter what sort of death he dies. If he returns back home, he will be forgiven and his supplication responded to.5

According to another tradition, Mansur ibn Hazim has reported that he asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a) to identify the best of all deeds. The Imam ('a) answered:

(They are) performing the prayers in their times, acting piously towards parents, and striving in the way of Allah.6

In *al-Khisal*, Shaykh al-Saduq has reported through a valid chain of authority that Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) said:

No drops are dearer to Almighty Allah than two drops: a drop of blood that is shed in the way of Allah and a teardrop that is shed in the darkness of night intended for nothing save Almighty Allah.7

Shaykh al-Tusi, in *al-Amali*, has reported Imam 'Ali ('a) as saying:

Death is a greedy pursuer. As for the pursued, neither one who stays at home will be able to weaken it,

nor will one who flees be able to escape it. Therefore, go forward into battle and do not shrink away since there is no escape from death. Even if you are not killed in battle, you will die. By Allah, in Whose hand is the life of 'Ali (I swear), a thousand sword blows on the head are easier than death in bed.8

Shaykh al-Saduq, in *al-Amali*, reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

The most honorable death is to be killed as a martyr.9

In each of the abovementioned traditions, we have attempted to display different merits of *jihad* and *mujahids* (i.e. performers of *jihad*).

Categories of Jihad

Jihad is classified into two categories: struggle against the enemy and struggle against the self (i.e. self–strife or self–purification).

The Holy Prophet (S), in an authentically reported tradition, has expressed self-purification as 'the major *jihad*' and struggle against the enemy as 'the minor *jihad*'.

Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, and Shaykh al-Saduq, in *al-Majalis* and *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, have reported the following:

On seeing the returning armies from the battlefront, the Holy Prophet (S) said, "Blessed are those who have performed the minor jihad, and have yet to perform the major one." When asked what the major jihad was, the Holy Prophet (S) replied, "It is the jihad of the self (struggle against one's self)." 10

The topic of self-strife has already been discussed in a previous book of this series. 11

In the most reliable reference books of hadith, chapters comprising many sections have been dedicated to discussing this topic. 12

The most important point in this regard is that one should not assume that self-strife can substitute for struggle against the enemy or that one who practices self-strife is not responsible for *jihad* against enemies because self-strife, in its capacity as a category of *jihad*, is considered to be more important than struggle against the enemy. To understand the relationship between these two categories of *jihad*, we should say that self-strife is more comprehensive and broader than struggle against the enemy, but the latter is still a branch of the earlier. In view of this, the major *jihad* cannot be attained unless its qualifications are met.

Laws Appertaining to Jihad

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are reported to have classified *jihad*, in terms of its laws, into several classes.

Through a valid chain of authority, Shaykh al–Tusi reported Fudhayl ibn 'Ayyadh and Hafs ibn Ghiyath to have narrated the following:

As he was asked whether *jihad* is obligatory or recommended, Imam al-Sadig ('a) answered:

الْجهَادُ عَلَى أَرْبَعَةِ أَوْجُهٍ، فَجهَادَانِ فَرْضٌ، وَجهَادٌ سُنَّةٌ لاَ تُقَامُ إِلاَّ مَعَ الْفَرْضِ، وَجهَادٌ سُنَّةٌ. فَأَمَّا أَخُدُ الْفَرْضَ وَجُهَادٌ سُنَّةٌ لاَ يُقَامُ إِلاَّ مَعَ اللهِ عَنَّ وَجَلَّ، وَهُوَ مِنْ أَعْظَمِ الْجِهَادِ، وَمُجَاهَدَةُ النَّذِي هُوَ سُنَّةٌ لاَ يُقَامُ إِلاَّ مَعَ فَرْضٍ، فَإِنَّ مُجَاهَدَةَ الْعَدُوقِ فَرْضٌ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأُمَّةِ وَلَوْ تَرَكُوا الْجِهَادَ لأَتَاهُمُ وَأَمَّا الْجِهَادُ الَّذِي هُوَ سُنَّةٌ لاَ يُقَامُ إِلاَّ مَعَ فَرْضٍ، فَإِنَّ مُجَاهَدَةُ الْعَدُوقِ فَرْضٌ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْأُمَّةِ وَلَوْ تَرَكُوا الْجِهَادُ الْآتَاهُمُ الْعَدُوقَ مَعَ الأُمَّةِ فَيُجَاهِدُهُمْ. وَأَمَّا الْجِهَادُ الَّذِي الْعَدَابُ، وَهُوَ سُنَّةٌ عَلَى الإِمَامِ وَحْدَهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ الْعَدُوقَ مَعَ الأُمَّةِ فَيُجَاهِدُهُمْ. وَأَمَّا الْجِهَادُ الَّذِي الْعَدُولُ سُنَّةً أَقَامَهَا الرَّجُلُ وَجَاهَدَ فِي إِقَامَتِهَا وَبُلُوغِهَا وَإِحْيَاءِهَا فَالْعَمَلُ وَالسَّعْيُ فِيهَا مِنْ أَفْضَلِ الأَعْمَالِ; لأَتَّهَا هُو سُنَّةٌ قَكُلُّ سُنَّةٍ أَقَامَهَا الرَّجُلُ وَجَاهَدَ فِي إِقَامَتِهَا وَبُلُوغِهَا وَإِحْيَاءِهَا فَالْعَمَلُ وَالسَّعْيُ فِيهَا مِنْ أَفْضَلِ الأَعْمَالِ; لأَنَّهَا إِحْيَاءُ سُنَّةٍ. وَقَدْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَيً اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ سَنَّ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُا وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا إِلَى يَوْمِ اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ سَنَّ سُنَةً مَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُا وَأَدْ مَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَيًا اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ سَنَّ سُنَّةً مَسَنَةً فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُا وَأَنْ يُنْفُصَ مِنْ أَجُورُهُمْ شَيْءً

Jihad is of four kinds—two are obligatory, one recommended but performed only along with the obligatory, and one that is only recommended. One of the two obligatory jihads is self-strife; that is, struggle against committing acts of disobedience to Allah. It is surely the greatest form of jihad. The other obligatory jihad is fighting disbelievers. The jihad that is recommended but performed only with the obligatory is fighting the enemy. It is obligatory upon all the individuals of the (Muslim) nation. If they abandon fighting against the enemies, chastisement will befall them. In fact, the torments they are now suffering is part of this chastisement.

Meanwhile, fighting against the enemies is recommended under orders from the Imam, who is permitted to fight the enemy with his people. The jihad that is only recommended is every excellent practice of man and his efforts in instituting, achieving, and enlivening that practice. Activities and efforts that are exercised for achieving such traditions are the best deeds, because they represent restoration of excellent traditions. The Messenger of Allah (S) said, "He who introduces an excellent traditional practice will gain the reward of doing that practice in addition to the rewards of everyone who practices it up to the Day of Resurrection without any decrease in the reward. 13

The second form of *jihad* that is obligatory represents the defensive *jihad* that is obligatory upon all Muslims, men and women, under all circumstances, with or without the existence of a just ruler. The third form of *jihad* represents the preparatory *jihad* that is obligatory upon men under certain conditions, the most important being the command and power in the hand of a just leader and promulgation for Islam preceding the fight.

In this connection, Shaykh al-Tusi has reported Talhah ibn Zayd as saying:

I asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a) about the ruling concerning a Muslim who lives peacefully with non-Muslim people, but when other non-Muslim people invade them, he wages a war against the invaders.

The Imam ('a) answered:

It is obligatory upon such a Muslim individual to avoid engaging himself in such a war because he is required to fight in line with the laws of Almighty Allah and His Messenger (S). He is therefore disallowed to fight against non–Muslims under the power of unjust rulers. 14

Confirming the validity of this tradition, Shaykh al–Kulayni, in *al–Kafi*, has reported that Abu–'Amr al–Zuhri, once, asked Imam al–Sadiq ('a), "Is inviting to the religion of Allah and fighting in His way permissible to certain individuals in the situation that no one else is permitted to undertake these missions or are they allowable to every one who believes in Almighty Allah as the One and Only God and in Muhammad (S) as His Messenger?"

The Imam ('a) answered:

To undertake these missions is not allowed except for certain people and none should do this job except one from their circle.

"Who are these people?" al-Zuhri asked.

The Imam ('a) answered:

They are those who meet the qualifications that Almighty Allah has specified for fighting and struggling against the enemies. Only those are permitted to invite others to the religion of Allah. Thus, those who cannot meet these qualifications of fighting against the enemies are not permitted to practice jihad and promulgate the religion of Allah until they find themselves capable of meeting the qualifications that Almighty Allah has specified for jihad. 15

About the condition of inviting to Islam before waging war against the enemies, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported, in *al-Kafi*, that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) quoted Imam 'Ali ('a) as saying:

Before the Messenger of Allah (S) sent me to Yemen, he said to me:

Do not fight anyone before inviting him to Islam. By Allah, if He guides a single man (to the true faith) at your hands, this will be better for you than possessing whatever is under the sunlight. The loyalty of that man will be yours, O 'Ali. 16

Many verses of the Holy Qur'an indicate that it is obligatory to invite everybody to the way of Allah by means of wisdom and excellent preaching (16:125), while others instruct emphatically on steadfastness in conveying the divine mission. Likewise, the tradition of the Holy Prophet (S) reveals that Muslims did not fight against any of their enemies before all other peaceful means had been used. Thus, when Muslims maintained all conclusive arguments against their enemies and nothing prevented these enemies from accepting Islam except psychological obstacles, Muslims would start fighting them to break such obstacles that represented infidelity and deliberate rejection of the truth.

We thus can understand the condition of obtaining the just ruler's authorization for waging war against the enemies because identifying the proper conditions as precisely as is required entails thorough experience, cognizance, and acquaintance with social conditions, in addition to a high level of piety and perfect justice.

Many laws pertaining to *jihad* have been enacted in the religious code of Islamic law. These laws discuss aspects such as the following:

- The means of killing, such as by poison or burning
- Killing techniques
- Those for whom *jihad* is obligatory including men who are not feeble and women under certain circumstances.
- Spoils of war, and the ways of distributing them and paying their one-fifth tax
- Ways of dealing with the prisoners of war and the conditions under which these prisoners are taken as slaves, given unconditional freedom, released upon payment of ransom (when they are routed), or killed (before they are routed).
- Circumstances and conditions of granting the enemy immunity
- Differentiation between polytheists, the People of the Book, and invaders.

Fleeing the battlefield

More details are available in books on Muslim jurisprudence and practical laws of Islam.

In addition to these laws, *jihad* has special manners to be followed including etiquettes of attacking the enemy, etiquettes of private fights (between two people), and the methods of dealing with prisoners of war.

In this respect, Malik ibn A'yun has reported the following:

Imam 'Ali ('a), rousing the people to fight in Siffin, said:

إِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ قَدْ دَلَّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيم، وَيَشْفَى بِكُمْ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ الإِيمَانِ بِاللهِ وَالْجِهَادِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، وَجَعَلَ ثَوَابَهُ مَغْفِرَةً لِلذَّنْب، وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيَّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتً عَدْنِ. وَقَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: "إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا كَأَنَّهُمْ بُنْيَانٌ مَرْصُوصٌ (4)" فَسَوُّوا صَنْفُوفَكُمْ كَالْبُنْيَّانِ الْمَرْصُوصِ فَقَدّمُوا الدَّارِعَ، وَأَخِرُوا الْحَاسِرَ، وَعُضُوا عَلَى النَّوَاجِذ، فَإِنَّهُ أَنْبَى لِلسُّيُوف عَلَى الْهَام، وَالْتَوُوا عَلَى أَطْرَاف الرّمَاح، فَإِنَّهُ أَمْوَرُ لِلأَسِنَّةِ، وَغُضُّوا الأَبْصارَ فَإِنَّهُ أَرْبَطُ لِلْجَأْشِ وَأَسْكَنُ لِلْقُلُوبِ، وَأَمِيتُوا الأَصْوَاتَ فَإِنَّهُ أَطْرَدُ لِلْفَشَل وَأَوْلَى بِالْوَقَارِ، وَلاَ تَمِيلُوا برَايَاتِكُمْ وَلاَ تُزَيّلُوهَا وَلاَ تَجْعَلُوهَا إِلاَّ مَعَ شُجْعَانكُمْ; فَإِنَّ الْمَانعَ للذِّمَارِ وَالصَّابِرَ عنْدَ نُزُولِ الْحَقَايق هُمْ أَهْلُ الْحَفَاظ. وَلاَ تُمَثِّلُوا بِقَتيل، وَإِذَا وَصَلْتُمْ إِلَى رِحَالِ الْقَوْمِ فَلاَ تَهْتِكُوا سَتْراً، وَلاَ تَدْخُلُوا دَاراً، وَلاَ تَأْخُذُوا شَيْئاً مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ إِلاَّ مَا وَجَدْتُمْ فِي عَسْكَرهِمْ، وَلاَ تُهَيِّجُوا إِمْرَأَةً بِأَدَىً وَإِنْ شَتَمْنَ أَعْرَاضَكُمْ وَسَبَبْنَ أُمْرَاءَكُمْ وَصُلُحَاءَكُمْ; فَإِنَّهُنَّ نَاقِصَاتُ الْقِوَى وَالأَنْفُس وَالْعُقُول، وَقَدْ كُنَّا نُؤْمَرُ بِالْكَفِّ عَنْهُنَّ وَهُنَّ مُشْرِكَاتٌ، وَإِنْ كَانَ الرَّجُلُ لَيَتَنَاوَلُ الْمَرْأَةَ فَيُعَيَّرُ بِهَا وَعَقَبَهُ مِنْ بَعْده. وَاعْلَمُوا أَنْ أَهْلَ الْحِفَاظِ هُمُ الَّذينَ يَحْتَفُونَ بِرَايَاتِهِمْ وَيَكْتَنِفُونَهَا، وَيَصِيرُونَ حَفَافِيَهَا وَوَرَاءَهَا وَأَمَامَهَا، وَلاَ يُضَيِّعُونَهَا. لاَ يَتَأَخَّرُونَ عَنْهَا فَيُسَلِّمُوهَا، وَلاَ يَتَقَدَّمُونَ عَلَيْهَا فَيُفْرِدُوهَا. رَحِمَ اللهُ إِمْرَأً وَاسَى أَخَاهُ بنَفْسِهِ، وَلَمْ يَكِلْ قَرْنَهُ إِلَى أَخِيهِ فَيَجْتَمِعَ عَلَيْهِ قَرْنُهُ وَقَرْنُ أَخِيهِ فَيَكْتَسِبَ بِذَلِكَ اللاَّئِمَةَ، وَيَأْتِيَ بِدَنَاءَةِ. وَكَيْفَ لاَ يَكُونُ كَذَلِكَ وَهُوَ يُقَاتِلُ الإِثْنَيْنِ، وَهَذا مُمْسِكٌ يَدَهُ قَدْ حَلَّى قَرْنَهُ عَلَى أَخِيهِ هَارِباً مِنْهُ يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ؟ وَهَذَا، فَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ يَمْقُتْهُ اللهُ، فَلاَ تَتَعَرَّضُوا لِمَقْت اللهِ فَإِنَّ مَمَرَّكُمْ إِلَى اللهِ، وَقَدْ قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: " قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمُ الْفِرَارُ إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْت أَو الْقَتْل وَإِذًا لَا تُمَتَّعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا(16)" وَأَيْمُ الله، لَئِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنْ سُيُوفِ الْعَاجِلَةِ لاَ تَسْلَمُونَ مِنْ سَيْفِ الآجِلَةِ، فَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَبْرِ وَالصِبْدْق، فَإِنَّمَا يَنْزِلُ النَّصْرُ بَعْدَ الصَّبْر، فَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ، وَلاَ قُوَّةَ إِلاَّ بِاللهِ

Verily, Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, has shown you a trade by which He will grant you an escape from dreadful punishment and bring you great good. It is faith in Allah and striving on His path. He has made their reward for it forgiveness of sins and blessed dwellings in gardens of Eden. He, the Almighty and Majestic, said, "Surely, Allah loves those who fight on His path in ranks like a tightly-packed building." Arrange your ranks, thus, like a tightly-packed building. Bring forward the man clad in armor and keep back the unarmored. Bite hard on the teeth, for this makes swords stronger on the head. Twist the edges of spears, for this makes the stabs of spearheads more piercing.

Lower your glances, for this increases confidence and raises the spirit. Deaden your voices, for this dismisses feelings of failure and detains despair. As for your standard, do not allow it to incline (towards the ground) and do not desert it. Only put it in the hands of the brave among you. Those who defend

honor and are steadfast in their revelation of truth are the defenders who are right in their opinions. Do not mutilate any killed person. When you advance for the spoils of the (other) party, do not tear any veil, do not break into any house to seize their property, take only things that you find in their camps. Do not incite a woman by any harmful means even if they verbally attack your chastity and revile your commanders and the righteous amongst you because women are of deficient power, souls, and minds.

We were ordered to eschew them while they were polytheists. Whenever a man has harmed a woman, he as well as his descendants have been imputed to dishonor because of it. Be it known to you all, only the sagacious defenders among you will honor and protect your standards. They should thus surround them from behind, front, and all sides. They should never fail to keep them raised. They should not hold them behind them, so that they are easily surrendered, nor leave them behind, lest they remain unprotected.

May Allah have mercy on any man of you who comforts his brother with his own life and does not flee, leaving his opponent with his brother so that his own opponent and his brother's opponent gather against his brother. For, by that, he will acquire blame and inferiority will come upon him. How should he avoid it if he fights the two when he refrains from supporting his brother and gives him up to the opponent, fleeing and looking at him?

Whoever does so will be loathed by Allah. Therefore, do not expose yourselves to the loathing of Allah, for you will eventually pass by Him. Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, has said, "Say: Flight will never benefit you. If you flee from death or being killed, then you will only enjoy it a little." I swear by Allah that if you flee from the swords of this world, you will not be safe from the sword of the next world. Therefore, seek help in steadfastness and honesty, for victory comes only after showing steadfastness. So, strive hard in the way of Allah such a striving as is due to Him. There is no power save with Allah. 17

Circumstances for Jihad

As deduced from the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet's traditions, we can list the situations when fighting with weapons is permissible:

- **1. Defense of Islam**: When the religion is endangered by polytheists or apostates of Islam, it becomes obligatory to defend it by means of *jihad*.
- **2. Self-defense**: In addition to warding off dangers and defending one's property and chastity, self-defense includes defending the Muslim community when exposed to killing or persecution.

In *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through a valid chain of authority that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:



He who is killed defending himself against wrongdoing is a martyr. 18

Another tradition holds that being killed defending oneself against wronging includes being killed in defense of one's family members, property, and the like. 19

3. Resistance of Oppression and Tyranny: When the nation is exposed to unbearable extents of oppression and tyranny at the hands of despotic rulers who violate all human values and confiscate man's freedom, dignity, and basic rights, struggle against such rulers becomes obligatory. In this respect, the Holy Qur'an declares:

Lo! Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made its people castes. He oppressed a tribe among them, killing their sons and sparing their women. Lo! He was of those who work corruption. We desired to show favor to those who were oppressed in the earth, to make them examples, and to make them the inheritors. (28:4–5)

4. Liberating the oppressed and the weak from the tyrants and the oppressors: Referring to this sort of *jihad*, the Holy Qur'an states:

What reason do you have that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men, the women, and the children who say, "Our Lord, cause us to go forth from this town whose people are oppressors. Give us from You a guardian and give us from You a helper." (4:75)

With regard to the same issue, the Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

He is definitely not a Muslim who hears a man calling for the help of Muslims but he refrains from responding to him. 20

5. Fighting a Transgressing Muslim Faction: Jihad is obligatory in situations where a faction of Muslims violate the law and wrongfully rebel against a qualified, just ruler. Three factions broke away and transferred their allegiances from Imam 'Ali ('a), led by 'A'ishah, Talhah, and al–Zubayr, the supporters of Mu'awiyah who challenged Imam 'Ali's authority, and the apostates who abandoned their

faiths (known as Khawarij) all mutinied against the government of Imam 'Ali ('a), forcing him to fight against them in defense of the Muslim community and government in the three famous battles led by him during his reign.

Jihad is also carried out against Muslim parties that make inroads upon other Muslims. In such cases, the community of Muslims is required to first make peace between these two Muslims parties, but if one party refuses and goes on assaulting and transgressing the other party, it will then be necessary for all Muslims to fight against this transgressing party in order to withstand transgression and oppression.

Another example of fighting against the transgressors, which is a sort of *jihad*, is to fight against the Muslim tyrannical rulers who subjugate the Muslim community by means of injustice, discrimination, and despotism.

This category of *jihad* was practiced by Imam Husayn ('a) in his great uprising against the tyrannical rule of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. Explaining his attitude to the tyranny of Yazid, Imam Husayn ('a) is reported to have said:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، قَالَ: مَنْ رَأَى سُلْطَاناً جَائِراً مُسْتَحِلاً لِحَرَامِ اللهِ، نَاكِثاً لِعَهْدِهِ، مُخَالِفاً لِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللهِ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، يَعْمَلُ فِي عِبَادِ اللهِ بِالإِثْمِ وَالْعُدُوانِ، فَلَمْ يُغَيِّرْ عَلَيْهِ بِقَوْلِ وَلاَ فِعْلِ كَانَ مُخَالِفاً لِسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ بِقَوْلِ وَلاَ فِعْلِ كَانَ حَقًا عَلَى اللهِ أَنْ يُدْخِلَهُ مَدْخَلَهُ مَدْخَلَهُ. أَلاَ وَإِنَّ هَوُّلاَءِ قَدْ لَزِمُوا طَاعَةَ الشَّيْطَانِ، وَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْ طَاعَةِ الرَّحْمَنِ، وَأَظُهُرُوا الْفُسَادَ، وَتَوَلَّوْ الْمُرادِ وَحَرَّمُوا حَرَامَ اللهِ وَحَرَّمُوا حَرَامَ اللهِ وَحَرَّمُوا حَرَالَهُ، وَإِنِّى أَحَقُ بِهَذَا الأَمْر

O people, Allah's Messenger (S) said, "If one realizes that an unjust ruler is violating the prohibitions of Allah, breaching his pledge with Him, opposing the traditions of His Messenger (S), and treating His servants with sinful and aggressive means, but does not try to change that by a deed or a word, then Allah will definitely join him with that ruler." Verily, those rulers abided by obedience to Satan, abandoned obedience to the All-beneficent God, made mischief openly, infringed upon the provisions of Allah, seized booty, violated the prohibitions of Allah, and prohibited that which Allah had deemed lawful. Most certainly, I am worthier than anyone else to stand against them. 21

In the same manner, we can understand why the Holy Imams ('a) defended the uprising of Zayd ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, which was based on the same understanding of *jihad*. About this uprising, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

فَإِنَّ زَيْداً كَانَ عَالِماً وَكَانَ صَدُوقاً وَلَمْ يَدْعُكُمْ إِلَى نَفْسِهِ، وَإِنَّمَا دَعَاكُمْ إِلَى الرِّضَا مِنْ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ. وَلَوْ ظَهَرَ لَوَفَى بِمَا دَعَاكُمْ إِلَيْهِ.

Verily, Zayd was knowledgeable and honest. He did not call you to accept him as your leader; rather, he called you to revolt for the sake of attaining the pleasure of Muhammad's Household (S). Had he

succeeded (in his revolution), he would have certainly fulfilled his pledge and the slogan to which he had called you. 22

Similarly, Imam al-Ridha ('a) is reported to have said to al-Ma'mun, the 'Abbasid ruler:

Do not compare my brother Zayd23 to Zayd ibn 'Ali. Zayd ibn 'Ali was one of the scholars of the Household of Muhammad (S). He was angry for the sake of Allah. He therefore strove against His enemies until he was killed following His path. My father Musa ibn Ja'far narrated that he had heard his father Ja'far ibn Muhammad saying, 'May Allah bless my uncle Zayd! He was inviting the people to attain the pleasure of Muhammad's Household (S), not towards himself. He would have fulfilled what he had said if he had become victorious. He consulted with me about his uprising and I told him, 'O uncle! Do it if you are pleased to be killed and your corpse be hung up from the gallows in the al–Kunnasah neighborhood.' Zayd did not make any unrighteous claims. He was much more pious than that. He invited the people to attain the pleasure of Muhammad's Household (S). 24

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have also extolled the revolution of Husayn ibn 'Ali *Sahib Fakhkh*, describing it as the most astounding misfortune after the tragic saga of al-Taff (i.e. Imam Husayn's martyrdom).25

Of course, the first, third, fourth, and fifth situations of *jihad* apply to fighting against non–Islamic powers that govern Muslim countries although apparent power is in the hand of Muslim rulers.

Resistance, fighting, and use of weapons are permissible only when all other means—like inviting to the way of Allah with wisdom and excellent preaching—fail to achieve the goals. Hence, when rulers prevent Muslims by force from conveying the divine mission, impose upon them laws that are incompatible to the laws of Islam, or deprive them of the freedom of expressing their opinions or choosing for themselves, only then will armed resistance and fighting be legal to make the required changes.

However, Muslims must have the power to fight as a means of self-defense or defense of their religion. If not, they must wait for the appropriate opportunity. It is also necessary that such fighting be under the supervision of a decent, well-versed jurisprudent who enjoys all the qualifications of the political leadership as ordained by the code of Islamic law.

Ribat (Taking up Positions on the Borders)

Another category of *jihad* is to take up positions on the frontiers of the Muslim countries in order to safeguard them from probable invasions by the enemy and be ready to defend border territories, especially when these borders are common with the country of an enemy.

Taking up positions on the frontiers is obligatory only when the Muslim country anticipates an attack by a non–Muslim enemy; otherwise, it is not obligatory although it is encouraged by the code of Islamic law.26

In this regard, Muhammad ibn Muslim and Zurarah have reported Imam al-Baqir and Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

Ribat (guarding the borders) is three days at least and forty days as a maximum. If it exceeds this period, it is then jihad.27

Conclusion

The objectives of *jihad* according to Islam can be summarized in the following points:

- 1. *Jihad* is one of the most significant devotional acts through which Islam and the Muslim community are protected; tyranny, corruption, and transgression are dealt with; and the dignity and esteem of Muslims are maintained.
- 2. *Jihad* is one of the means of spreading the Islamic mission under certain circumstances and in an exceptional way. When all other means of invitation to the religion of Islam are exhausted, and nothing prevents the acceptance of Islam except psychological obstacles (that represent infidelity and deliberate rejection of the truth), only then is *jihad* carried out, in order to break these obstacles.
- 3. *Jihad* is based on the right of self-defense in the face of direct aggression against Islam and the Muslim community. *Jihad* is a protective means against such threats. Such *jihad* is called protective *jihad*. Whenever indications of such threats and dangers are experienced, it becomes necessary to be in a state of preparation to confront them.
- 4. *Jihad* is taking up arms against Muslim rulers that swerve away from the path of Islam and is carried out only when such rulers use power to prevent the Muslims from conveying the mission of Islam or impose upon them a non–Islamic system of rule, without giving them the freedom to express their opinions or to choose for themselves. Once again, such *jihad* must be preceded by exhausting all the other peaceful means, such as preaching, advising and the like.

- 5. Fighting is obligatory only when there is sufficient capability to do so or to achieve the purposes sought after, even if this achievement requires a long time. It is necessary to prepare the required power and wait for the most appropriate opportunity although it is impermissible to miss a suitable opportunity or surrender in the face of despotic power.
- 6. Fighting must be under the supervision of a just leader. In the present time, a just leader is represented by the well-versed and experienced jurisprudent who takes on the political and social leadership, who has full acquaintance with the political and social circumstances, and who is courageous and competent enough to identify the situations and take proper decisions according to religious law.
 - 1. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:5, H. 1.

The authenticity of this tradition is corroborated by other traditions that are mentioned in the same chapter of this reference book.

- 2. Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon No. 27.
- 3. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:5, H. 2.
- 4. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:10, H. 21.
- 5. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:12, H. 27.
- 6. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:12, H. 28.
- 7. `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 100:10, H. 16.
- 8. Shaykh al-Mufid, Kitab al-Irshad, pp. 238.
- 9. `Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 74:8, H. 4.
- 10. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:122 & 124, H. 1 & 9.
- 11. Self-strife or self-purification has been discussed in the principles and rules of Islam, (the moral principles).

Moreover, some details of this topic have been discussed in the book of social relations of the virtuous community (control over emotions and excellent example and distinctive behavior).

- 12. See, for instance, al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:122-392.
- 13. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:16, H. 1.
- 14. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:16, H. 3.
- 15. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:23, H. 23.
- 16. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:30, H. 1.
- 17. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:71, H. 3.
- 18. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:92, H. 8.
- 19. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:92, H. 9.
- 20. Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 2:164, H. 5.
- 21. Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Umam wa'l-Muluk (known as Tarikh al-Tabari) 4:304; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh 4:48 (with a slight difference).
- 22. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah, 11:35-36, H. 1.
- 23. Zayd ibn Musa, known as Zayd al-Nar.
- 24. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:39, H. 11.
- 25. Al-Mamuqani, Tanqih al-Maqal 1:337, biography of al-Husayn ibn `Ali (Sahib Fakhkh)
- 26. Sayyid al-Khu'i, Minhaj al-Salihin, pp. 376.
- 27. Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 11:19, H. 1.

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