

O Allāh, Facilitate the Payment of Our Debt

اللَّهُمَّ اقْضِ عَنَّا الدَّيْنَ

O Allāh, Facilitate the Payment of Our Debt

We have already discussed extensively on the subject of debt in our commentary on the verse ‘*Allāhumma aqdi dayna kullī madīn*’ (O Allāh, facilitate the payment of the debt of every indebted one). It is possible that this verse speaks about the same subject, but is an emphasis and thus reveals the fundamental importance of relieving oneself from debt before departing this mortal world. In fact, if we look at several other supplications, we find that the following two requests have frequently come together: seeking relief from debt and enriching oneself (*wa aghninī min al-faqr* – which is to follow).

Following are some examples:

1. In a supplication that the Holy Prophet (s) is narrated to have taught his beloved daughter Fātimah (a) for sustenance, we find the following:

اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ، مُنْزِلُ التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالزَّبُورِ وَالْفُرْقَانَ... إِقْضِ عَنِّي
الدَّيْنَ وَأَغْنِنِي مِنَ الْفَقْرِ...

“Allāh is our Lord and the Lord of all things; He is the Revealer of Torah, *Injīl*, *Zabūr* and *Furqān*...facilitate the payment of my debt and make me needless...”¹

2. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said to his noble companion Salmān:

يَا سَلْمَانَ: أَكْثَرَ أَنْ تَقُولَ رَبِّي أَقْضِ عَنِّي الدَّيْنَ وَأَغْنِنِي مِنَ الْفَقْرِ.

“O Salmān frequently say: ‘O Lord, pay for me my debt and make me needless.’”²

3. In the well-known supplication of *‘Alqamah* we recite:

... وَتَقْضِي عَنِّي دَيْنِي وَتُجِيرَنِي مِنَ الْفَقْرِ وَ...

“...and pay for me my debt and save me from my poverty...”³

4. In a lengthy supplication recommended for the first day of the Holy month of Ramadān we say:

أَنْتَ الْأَوَّلُ فَلَيْسَ قَبْلَكَ شَيْءٌ، وَأَنْتَ الْآخِرُ فَلَيْسَ بَعْدَكَ شَيْءٌ، وَأَنْتَ الظَّاهِرُ فَلَيْسَ
دُونَكَ شَيْءٌ، فَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَأَقْضِ عَنِّي الدَّيْنَ وَأَغْنِنِي مِنَ الْفَقْرِ.

“You are the First⁴, and thus there is none before You, and You are the Last, and therefore there is none after You; and You are the Apparent, and therefore there is none other than You; so send Your Blessings on Muhammad and his progeny (as) and facilitate the payment of my debt and make me needless.”⁵

The supplicant therefore, is humbly asking Almighty Allāh to make his situation such that after having paid his debts, he would never need to take another debt again. For he realizes how difficult it is to be suspended by debt, and thus would like to be free from its chains so that if death were to overtake him he would have nothing on his shoulders.

Another Aspect: Paying A Common Debt

Another probable meaning of this verse is that it speaks of a common debt that every human being shares. The phrase *‘iqd’ ann al-dayn’*... اقض عنا الدين... (lit. pay for us the debt) can imply that all the human beings are in debt. This is when the article ‘al’ in al-Dayn is for ‘determination’ and thus refers to a particular debt. What kind of debt actually is this? There is well-known dictum (which some scholars narrate as a tradition⁶) that says:

اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ غَرِيمٌ، لَا يُقْضَى دَيْنُهُ.

“Allah is a Creditor whose debt cannot be paid.”

A rephrasal of this dictum is mentioned in the first sermon of Imām ‘Alī (as) in *Nahju’l Balaghah* as follows:

...وَلَا يُؤَدِّي حَقَّهُ الْمُجْتَهِدُونَ....

“...One Whose rights the diligent cannot fulfill...”⁷

In simpler words: He is One Whose rights cannot be fulfilled even by those who struggle hard and are diligent. In his *Minhaj al-Bar’ah* – a commentary on the *Nahju’l Balaghah* – ‘Allamah Habībullah al-Khu’ī expounds the above statement of Imām ‘Alī (as) as follows:

وَالْمُرَادُ بِالْحَقِّ اللَّازِمُ هُوَ الْقِيَامُ عَلَى شُكْرِ النَّعْمَاءِ، وَحَمْدِ الْآلَاءِ، فَأَشَارَ عَلَيْهِ
السَّلَامُ إِلَى أَنَّهُ لَا يُمْكِنُ الْقِيَامُ بِوُضَائِفِ حَمْدِهِ، لِأَنَّ الْحَمْدَ مِنْ جُمْلَةِ نِعَمِهِ،
فَيَسْتَحِقُّ عَلَيْهِ حَمْدًا وَشُكْرًا، فَلَا يَنْقُضِي مَا يَسْتَحِقُّهُ مِنَ الْمَحَامِدِ، لِعَدَمِ تَنَاهِي
نِعَمِهِ، فَالْأَوْلَى حِينَئِذٍ الْإِعْتِرَافُ بِالْعَجْزِ وَالْقُصُورِ.

“The meaning of compulsory rights [as depicted in the dictum of Imām ‘Alī (as) – ‘One whose rights...’] is to thank God for His blessings and praise Him for His bestowals; therefore the Imām (as) alluded to the fact that it is impossible for one to bear the responsibility of praising Him, because ‘to praise him’ is in itself among His blessings, which then necessitates another praise and thanks; consequently, the praises that He deserves would never end, due to His endless blessings. Hence it is better to confess one’s inability and shortcoming [in praising and thanking Him]...”⁸

Almighty Allah says in the Qur’an:

﴿ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا ﴾

“...If you enumerate Allah’s blessings, you will not be able to count them...”⁹

In his supplication when confessing his shortcomings in giving thanks, Imām al-Sajjīd (as) says:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ أَحَدًا لَا يَبْلُغُ مِنْ شُكْرِكَ غَايَةَ إِلَّا حَصَلَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ إِحْسَانِكَ مَا يُلْزِمُهُ

شُكْرًا. وَلَا يَبْلُغُ مَبْلَغًا مِنْ طَاعَتِكَ وَإِنْ اجْتَهَدَ إِلَّا كَانَ مُقَصِّرًا دُونَ اسْتِحْقَاقِكَ
بِفَضْلِكَ. فَأَشْكُرُ عِبَادِكَ عَاجِزٌ عَنِ شُكْرِكَ، وَأَعْبُدُهُمْ مُقَصِّرٌ عَنِ طَاعَتِكَ.

O Allāh,

no one reaches a limit in thanking You
without acquiring that of Your beneficence
which enjoys upon him thanksgiving,
Nor does anyone reach a degree in obeying You,
even if he strives,
without falling short of what You deserve
because of Your bounty.
The most thankful of Your servants
has not the capacity to thank You,
and the most worshipful of them
falls short of obeying You. 10

Imām ‘Alī (as) in sermon 52 of Nahj’al Balāghah says:

وَاللَّهِ لَوْ انْمَأَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ انْمِيَاءً - وَسَالَتْ عُيُونُكُمْ مِنْ رَغْبَةٍ إِلَيْهِ أَوْ رَهْبَةٍ مِنْهُ دَمًا -
ثُمَّ عَمِرْتُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا - مَا الدُّنْيَا بَاقِيَةٌ مَا جَزَتْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَلَوْ لَمْ تُبْقُوا شَيْئًا مِنْ
جُهْدِكُمْ - أَنْعَمَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ الْعِظَامَ - وَهَدَاهُ إِيَّاكُمْ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ.

“By Allāh, if your hearts melt down thoroughly and your eyes shed tears of blood either in hope for Him or for fear from Him and you are also allowed to live in this world for all the time that it exists, even then your actions cannot pay for His great bounties over you and His having guided you towards faith.”¹¹

Thanking Allāh As He Deserves

But despite all this, Almighty Allāh has shown us a method of thanking Him. Imām al-Sādiq (as) is reported to have said:

أَوْحَى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَى مُوسَى (ع): يَا مُوسَى اشْكُرْنِي حَقَّ شُكْرِي. فَقَالَ: يَا رَبَّ
كَيْفَ أَشْكُرُكَ حَقَّ شُكْرِكَ وَلَيْسَ مِنْ شُكْرٍ أَشْكُرُكَ بِهِ إِلَّا وَأَنْتَ أَنْعَمْتَ بِهِ عَلَيَّ.
فَقَالَ: يَا مُوسَى شَكَرْتَنِي حَقَّ شُكْرِي حِينَ عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنِّي.

“Allah, the Exalted, Revealed unto Mūsā (as): ‘O Mūsā, thank Me the way I deserve to be thanked. Mūsā (as) said: O Lord, how can I thank you the way You deserve to be thanked, while there is no gratitude that I express save that it in itself is a blessing that You have bestowed on me; Allah said: O Mūsā, It is now that you have thanked me the way I deserve to be thanked, knowing that that was from me.’”¹²

Therefore understanding the fact that ‘every thanksgiving’ is in itself a blessing of Almighty Allah on His servant is highly important. Rather those who have realized through Divine Revelation (Qur’ān), intellectual reasoning (*burhān*) or inner vision (*‘irfān*) that every element of their beings depend on the Almighty, whether in the level of their essence, attributes or actions, are in a better position of achieving this kind of thankfulness. The following verse of the Holy Qur’ān clearly says the every being together with its action stands by the permission of Almighty Allah:

﴿ وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

“And Allah has created you and whatever you do.”¹³

Therefore whatever good we do, whether in form of thanks, praise, worship, etc. all belong to Almighty Allah and are by His permission, succor (*tawfīq*), and assistance. Neither is our essence our property nor our actions of virtue. Therefore ‘paying the common debt of Allah’ can never be conceived. Consequently, asking Allah to pay our common debt is like asking Him to accept our deeds of worship, praise and thanks.

Thanking the Means of Grace – a Condition of Thanking Allah

Although every advantage that we receive is principally from and by Allah, there are secondary causes that Almighty Allah Creates to allow things to happen. For example, He helps His poor servants through His benevolent rich ones. He feeds the human beings through the plants and animals and requires them to work and facilitate the conditions of preparing food so that they can consume it and maintain their health to worship and get closer to Him. Therefore it would be incorrect to discard the ‘intermediary’ of an advantage by saying that my monotheistic outlook dictates that *al-shukr lillāh* (thanks belong solely to Allah). It is correct to say that thanks belong solely to Allah, but the Almighty has taught the human being to show gratitude to one who does anything good to someone despite his limitation and utter dependence. Observe the following narrations:

1. Imām al-Sādiq (as) is reported to have said:

مِنْ حَقِّ الشُّكْرِ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَشْكُرَ مَنْ أَجْرَى تِلْكَ النِّعْمَةَ عَلَى يَدِهِ.

“An example of thanking Allāh the way He deserves to be thanked is when you thank one in whose hands He enabled the blessing to take place.”¹⁴

2. Imām al-Ridā (as) is reported to have said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ الْمُنْعِمَ مِنَ الْمَخْلُوقِينَ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

“Whosoever does not thank the giver of the blessing from among the creatures, would not thank Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic.”¹⁵

Allāh is the both the Shākir (one who thanks) and the Mashkur (one who is thanked)

Having understood the monotheistic outlook that every action of ours entirely comes into being and subsists by Allāh, it is clear that both the *shākir* and the *mashkur* is Allāh. Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī in his *Sharh al-Asmā'* under the verse ‘...yā khayra Shākirin wa Mashkur, yā khayra Hamidin wa Mahmūd...’ says:

(يَا خَيْرَ ذَاكِرٍ وَمَذْكُورٍ، يَا خَيْرَ شَاكِرٍ وَمَشْكُورٍ، يَا خَيْرَ حَامِدٍ وَمَحْمُودٍ): قَدْ
ذَكَرْنَا سَابِقًا أَنَّهُ إِذَا قِيلَ: (لَهُ الْحَمْدُ) لَا يُقْصَدُ أَنَّ الْمَحْمُودِيَّةَ فَقَطْ أَيْنَمَا وَقَعَتْ
طُرًّا وَكُلًّا لَهُ تَعَالَى، بَلِ الْمَقْصُودُ أَنَّ الْحَامِدِيَّةَ أَيْضًا لَهُ وَبِهِ تَعَالَى، فَالذَّاكِرِيَّةُ
وَالشَّاكِرِيَّةُ وَالْحَامِدِيَّةُ وَنظَائِرُهَا لَهُ وَبِهِ تَعَالَى. وَالْعِبَارَةُ الْأُولَى فِي بَعْضِ الْمَرَاتِبِ
أَنَّ يُقَالَ: إِنَّهُ بِحَوْلِهِ وَقُوَّتِهِ تَعَالَى.

“We mentioned earlier that if it is said ‘to Him belongs all praises’ it does not only mean that every praise wherever it may occur belongs to Allāh, but also means that ‘the agency of praise’ [wherever it may be] too belongs to Allāh and takes place by Him; hence thankfulness (*shākirīyyah*), remembrance (*dhākirīyyah*), praise (*hāmidīyyah*) and the like [all] belong to him and take place by Him, the Exalted. And a better expression about the same in a certain level is to say: that it [i.e. praise, thankfulness, etc.] transpires by His power and strength, the Exalted.”¹⁶

Imām Husayn (as) in his famous supplication of *‘Arafah* alludes to the subtly that even before we try to remember Him, He remembers us. He attracts us; He pulls us; He encourages us to thank and praise and remember Him. If we were to free ourselves from the spatial limitations, we can understand a subtler meaning to such precedence: Not only does He Remember us before we remember Him, but causally it

is essential for Him to Remember us so that we Remember Him. Rather, our remembrance is entirely by Him. Imām Husayn (as) says:

...أَنْتَ الذَّاكِرُ قَبْلَ الذَّاكِرِينَ...

“...You are the Rememberer before the rememberers...”¹⁷

Allāh is Thanked according to the Limitation of the Thankful One

It should be noted that although the tradition on *shukr* that we mentioned earlier clearly states how one can thank Almighty Allāh appropriately, it makes a hint to the fact that thanking Him the way He deserves is beyond the limitation of the human being. None can ever claim that he has thanked Almighty Allāh for every blessing. Firstly, because every ‘thanks’ necessitates another thanks, since thanking him is a blessing in itself. And secondly, we cannot enumerate and count the blessings of Almighty Allāh. Imām al-Sajjīd (as) in his prayer *Munājāt al-Shakirīn* mentions these two reasons as follows:

...فَالأَوْكَ جَمَّةٌ ضَعْفَ لِسَانِي عَنْ إِحْصَائِهَا، وَنَعْمَاؤُكَ كَثِيرَةٌ قَصَرَ فَهْمِي عَنْ
إِدْرَاكِهَا فَضلاً عَنْ اسْتِقْصَائِهَا، فَكَيْفَ لِي بِتَحْمِيلِ الشُّكْرِ وَشُكْرِي إِيَّاكَ يَفْتَقِرُ
إِلَى شُكْرِي؟ فَكُلَّمَا قُلْتُ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ وَجَبَ عَلَيَّ لِذَلِكَ أَنْ أَقُولَ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ.

“Your boons are abundant –
my tongue is too weak to count them!
Your favours are many –
my understanding falls short of grasping them,
not to speak of exhausting them!
So how can I achieve thanksgiving?
For my thanking You requires thanksgiving.
Whenever I say, ‘To You belongs praise!’,
it becomes thereby incumbent upon me to say,
‘To You belongs praise!’”¹⁸

Therefore, no one should ever think that he or she has the ability to thank Him the way He deserves. Yes, out of His overflowing Mercy, He accepts the thankfulness and praise of one who has realized that his thankfulness itself is from Allāh and that it deserves another thanking. But that should not be taken as the ‘perfect’ thanks of the ‘abd (servant of Allāh). Rather it should be taken as ‘the imperfect and incomplete thanks ‘accepted by the All-Merciful. Furthermore the degrees of comprehending that every

thanksgiving is a blessing and from Allāh are various. Whereas some have accepted this truth by following the Revelation, others have established its verity through intellectual reasoning. Another group however, due to the purification of their hearts, can literally behold this truth through presential knowledge (*al-’ilm al-hudūrī*).

In another supplication Imām al-Sajjīd (as) confesses that the *dhikr* (remembrance of Allāh, whether that be in the form of thanks (*shukr*), praise (*hamd*), etc.) of the supplicant is according to his imperfect state and not according to what Almighty Allāh deserves. In his *Munājāt al-Dhikrīn*, Imām al-Sajjīd (as) whispers:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. إِلَهِي لَوْلَا الْوَاجِبُ مِنْ قَبُولِ أَمْرِكَ لَنَزَّهْتُكَ مِنْ [عَنْ]
ذِكْرِي إِيَّاكَ، عَلَى أَنَّ ذِكْرِي لَكَ بِقَدْرِي لَا بِقَدْرِكَ...

“My God,
were it not incumbent to accept Your command,
I would declare You far too exalted for me to remember You,
for I remember You in my measure,
not in Your measure...”¹⁹

Worship – A Form of Thanking Almighty Allāh

Those who have realized the utter dependence of the human being and the absolute affluence of Almighty Allāh would never deem whatever they do as perfect. Consequently, they would not worship Almighty Allāh in transaction for Paradise. They would worship Him because He deserves to be worshipped. Their worship would be a worship of thankfulness or love. Imām ‘Alī (as) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَغْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ التُّجَّارِ، وَإِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَهْبَةً فَتِلْكَ
عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيدِ، وَإِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ شُكْرًا فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَحْرَارِ.

“Surely a people worshipped Allāh in anticipation [of reward]; this is the worship of traders; and a people worshipped Allāh out of fear [of Hell]; this is the worship of bondsman; and another group of people worshipped Allāh out of thankfulness, this is the worship of the liberated and free ones (*ahrār*).”²⁰

Readers can appreciate the fundamental reason why some worship Allāh as a transaction. It is due to their ignorance of the relation between the human being and Allāh. They feel they can offer something

independent from themselves. They do not realize that every perfect action entirely stands by Allāh:

﴿وَمَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نُّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ﴾

Whatever blessing you have is from God...21

It should however not be misunderstood and thought that every evil deed also stems from Almighty Allāh. Indeed it is through the support of Almighty that every deed regardless of its nature is done. The human beings however have a volition and can choose what to do. The human conscience is a proof to this contention. When they resolve to do bad, Almighty Allāh out of His Wisdom does not intercept their way. Rather every movement they make is entirely by His support. Trial and tribulation, and obedience and disobedience would carry no meaning if every one was forced to do what Almighty Allāh wants. Therefore good and bad is by His support but not forced by Him on man.

It should also be realized that ‘to do bad’ stems from imperfection on the part of the human being. And imperfection is the non-existence of a perfection, which does not require any cause. Therefore attributing the non-existence of a perfection to Almighty Allāh is evidently absurd. For example, the stingy behavior of a certain person reveals deficiency on his part. The person lacks the ‘broadness of heart’ and the trait of ‘open-handedness (*jud*).’ We cannot say that Almighty Allāh creates his stinginess. This is because stinginess (*bukhl*) is not a trait to be created. It is the absence of a trait. But when the person is openhanded and benevolent, the trait of benevolence which is an existential trait (*sifah wujūdiyyah*) needs a cause. And it is only by Almighty Allāh that this trait can exist and subsist. Therefore we can say that benevolence is from and by Allāh, but we cannot say that stinginess is from and by Allāh. Yes, the actions that stem from a stingy heart, need the support and strength of Allāh. However, since Almighty Allāh has given every one a free will, he himself chooses the action and Allāh (swt) enables him to carry out the same. But that should not lead us to imagine that Allāh has forced him to do the action.

The Holy Prophet’s (s) Worship

Several traditions narrate that the Holy Prophet (s) would worship Almighty Allāh so much that his feet would get swollen. He was once asked by one of his wives: ‘Why do you distress yourself when Almighty Allāh has forgiven all your past and future sins?’ and he replied: ‘should I not be a thankful servant of Allāh?’²²

Despite all this, he (s) is reported to have said:

مَا عَبَدْنَاكَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِكَ...

“We have not worshiped you the way You deserve to be worshipped...”

The angels of Allāh (swt) likewise, despite their utter purity and perpetual worship, declare their shortcoming in worshipping Almighty Allāh the way He deserves to be worshipped. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said to Abū Dharr:

يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ! إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَلَائِكَةً قِيَامًا مِنْ خِيفَةِ اللَّهِ، مَا رَفَعُوا رُؤُوسَهُمْ حَتَّى يَنْفَخُ فِي
الصُّورِ النَّفْخَةَ الْآخِرَةَ، فَيَقُولُونَ جَمِيعًا: سُبْحَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَبِحَمْدِكَ، مَا عَبَدْنَاكَ كَمَا
يَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَنْ تُعْبَدَ.

“O Abū Dharr, surely Allāh has angels who stand in fear of Him; they would not raise their heads until the final blow of the trumpet; thereupon all of them would say: Free from imperfection are You, Our Lord, and we praise You; we did not worship You the way You should be worshipped.”²³

And Imām al-Sajjīd (as) alluding to this in one of his supplications quotes the angels of Allāh saying:

سُبْحَانَكَ مَا عَبَدْنَاكَ حَقَّ عِبَادَتِكَ.

“Free from imperfection are You! We have not worshipped You the way You deserve to be worshipped.”²⁴

Hence one should never rely on any of his deeds of virtue. Obviously this does not mean that he should despair and think that his deeds have no value. One should instead totally rely on the Grace of the All-Merciful and continue in his struggle of perfection.

A Noteworthy Incident

The night before he left for the hospital where he was to pass the last moments of his life, the late ʿayyātullāh Khumaynī was in the company of Mrs. Fātimah Tabātabāʾī, his daughter-in-law among other relatives. The latter narrates the following conversation, which took place after ʿayyātullāh Khumaynī had eaten very little of his dinner:

ʿayyātullāh Khumaynī: Now I have one or two advices for you: I shall not return. However, I don't want you to express grief and anxiety on my demise. I am asking God to give you patience. Be careful not to weep and lament. This is what I had to say.”

Fātimah Tabātabāʾī: I and Khānum (the wife of ʿayyātullāh Khumaynī) were present; I do not recollect

exactly; I think Zahr[ؓ] Kh[ؓ]num Ishr[ؓ]q[ؓ] was (also) present. I don't know whether someone else was present or not. It was difficult for us to listen to this issue; all of us had turned sad.

Kh[ؓ]num said: No, [ؓ]gh[ؓ], God Willing, you will recover...

[ؓ]yatull[ؓ]h Khumayn[ؓ]: No, I will not return. However, let me tell you this: to go [to the next world] is very difficult; to go [to the next world] is very difficult.'

F[ؓ]tima Tab[ؓ]tab[ؓ]'[ؓ] said: [ؓ]gh[ؓ], If you say all this, then we shall greatly lose our hopes. This is because, as far as I know, although I am young, those who have been with you narrate that not only have you performed all the obligatory deeds, and abstained from the forbidden ones, you have also observed the recommended acts and even abstained from most of the unpleasant deeds (*makr[ؓ]h[ؓ]t*). If it is really difficult for you also, then what should we say? We get greatly despondent.

[ؓ]yatull[ؓ]h Khumayn[ؓ]: 'No, you must not despair from God's Mercy²⁵; this itself is the greatest sin...²⁶ However, bear this in mind that to go [to the next world] is very difficult; I do not have any [good] deed, so that I should want to be happy thereby.'

F[ؓ]timah Tab[ؓ]tab[ؓ]'[ؓ]: But [ؓ]gh[ؓ], these words that you utter are very difficult for us to bear, for if it is as such, we are extremely frightened, worried and upset.'

[ؓ]yatull[ؓ]h Khumayn[ؓ]: 'It is really as such. If Hadrat Sajj[ؓ]d (as) wept and said: "O Lord it is likely that my good deeds are bad"²⁷, do I possess a deed to get happy and confident thereby? I only have hope of God's Grace²⁸ and have no [action] at my credit to be hopeful...; and to go [to the next world] is very difficult; to go [to the next world] is very difficult.

The doctors then came, and Im[ؓ]m [Khumayn[ؓ]] said: 'It is time to leave.'²⁹

A Supplication to the Only Beloved

O All[ؓ]h, all of us have debts to pay. Some pertain to the material world and others concern the immaterial realm. You Have taught us how important it is to ensure that our debts are paid before we enter Your sanctuary of love. Therefore enable us to pay our debts. You very well know that the common debt that all of us have to pay can never be paid unless You forgive us and accept our few deeds of virtue, if any. O All[ؓ]h, we have no hope in our actions however much we have struggled; our hope is on Your Enveloping Mercy. Therefore deprive us not from the same. Our hope (*raj[ؓ]'*), which again is entirely by Your Grace, is our capital asset (*ra'sum[ؓ]*). Enable us to maintain it so that it can facilitate the Divine spark to glow in our spirits and always inspire us to come closer to You.

It is indeed interesting to note the extent of hope in our infallible Im[ؓ]ms (as), who enjoyed very exalted stations: Im[ؓ]m 'Al[ؓ] (as) whispers in his Sha'b[ؓ]n whisperings (*Mun[ؓ]aj[ؓ]t al-Sha'ab[ؓ]niyyah*):

إِنْ أَدْخَلْتَنِي النَّارَ أَعْلَمْتُ أَهْلَهَا أَنِّي أُحِبُّكَ.

“If you place me in the Hell Fire I will inform its inhabitants that I love You...”³⁰

And in his well-known *Du‘ā al-Kumayl* he cries:

أَمْ كَيْفَ أَسْكُنُ فِي النَّارِ وَرَجَائِي عَفْوُكَ؟ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ يَا سَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَايَ أَقْسِمُ صَادِقًا،
لَئِنْ تَرَكَتَنِي نَاطِقًا، لِأَضِجَنَّ إِلَيْكَ بَيْنَ أَهْلِهَا ضَجِيجَ الْآمِلِينَ... وَالْأَبْكِينَ عَلَيْكَ بُكَاءَ
الْفَاقِدِينَ...

“How can I stay in the Hell Fire when I am hopeful of Your forgiveness; for by Your Invincibility, O my Leader and my Master– I swear truthfully, if you do allow me to speak; I would surely cry to You among its inhabitants, the cry of the hopeful... and I would most surely lament for You the lamentation of those who are separate from their dear ones...”³¹

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1. *Bihar al-Anwar*, v. 29, pg. 297
 2. *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, pg. 233
 3. *Mafatih al-Jinan*, v. 1, pg. 459
 4. This supplication reveals the Pre-eternity & Necessity of the Non-Composite Creator.
 5. *al-Iqbal al-A‘mal*, v. 1, pg. 130
 6. This dictum is mentioned by ‘Allamah *Tabataba‘i* in the introduction of *al-Mizān* [See *Tafsir al-Mizān*, v. 1, pg. 27]. In his anthology of questions (*Dar Mahdare Ustād*) that he had asked the grand ‘Allamah during his life time, *Hujjat al-Islam Rukhshad* quotes this dictum as a hadith and attributes the same to ‘Allamah. The reference however has not been cited. Nevertheless, the dictum itself bears witness to its veracious content.
 7. *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Sermon 1
 8. *Minhaj al-Bar‘ah fi Sharhi Nahj al-Balaghah*, v. 1, pg. 247
 9. Holy Qur’an, 14:34
 10. *al-Sahafat al-Sajjadiyyah* (The Psalms of Islam, English Translation by William Chittick), Supplication no. 37, pp. 123–124
 11. *Nahj al-Balaghah*, sermon 52, pg. 72
 12. *Bihar al-Anwar*, v. 13, pg. 351
 13. Holy Qur’an, 37:96
 14. *Was‘il al-Sh‘ah*, v. 16, pg. 311
 15. *Ibid.*, v. 16, pg. 313
 16. *Sharh al-Asma‘*, pp. 759–760
 17. *Du‘ā al-‘Arafah*, *Mafatih al-Jinan*, v. 1, pg. 273
 18. *al-Sahafat al-Sajjadiyyah* (The Psalms of Islam, English Translation by William Chittick), Supplication no. 37, pp. 243–244
 19. *Sahafat al-Sajjadiyyah*, pg. 255
 20. *Nahj al-Balaghah*, wisdom no. 237

21. Holy Qurʿān, 16:53
22. Bihār al-Anwār, v. 16, pg. 264
23. Makrīm al-Akhlāq, v. 1, pg. 464
24. al-Sahāfat al-Sajjīdiyyah, sugg. no.3
25. The Holy Qurʿān [39:54] says: Say: O My servants who have been extravagant against yourselves, do not despair of Allāh's Mercy; surely Allāh forgives sins altogether. Surely, He is the All-forgiving, the All-compassionate. The Holy Qurʿān [15:56] also says: He said, 'And who despairs of the Mercy of his Lord, excepting those that are astray?'
26. Imām 'Alī is reported to have once told a person, whom fear had made to despair, due to the amplex of his sins: 'O you! Your despondency of Allāh's Mercy is worse than your sins.' [Jāmi' al-Sa'ādāt, vol. 1, pg. 247]
27. This also refers to what Imam al-Husayn says in his famous supplication of 'Arafah. He says: 'O God, one whose good deeds are bad, how can his bad deeds not be bad?' [Mafatih al-Jinn, Du'ā al-'Arafah by Imām al-Husayn].
28. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said: 'Know that no one of you will be saved by his action, including me; except if Allāh's Mercy and Grace were to cover me.' (Mizān al-Hikmah, new ed., vol. 3, pg. 2131)
29. Fasl-e Sabr - Memoirs of the days of Imām's illness and demise by the team of physicians and those affiliated to 'Ayatullāh Khumaynī, pp. 83-84.
30. Mafatih al-Jinn, v. 1, pg. 158
31. Ibid.,v. 1, pg. 65

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