

Prelude

At the outset, it seems appropriate to allude to a number of essential points that are both relevant to the system of devotional acts and to other discussions.

First: Clearly, the circle of recommended rites in general and recommended devotional acts in particular is considerably large, even though some of these have no documented evidence of having been issued by one of the Holy Infallibles (‘a); as such, they cannot be recommended or authorized by the sources of religious laws. As a result, one should perform these acts under the probability that they are a requirement of religious law. This sort of intention is in the terminology of Shi’ite jurisprudence called *raja’ al-matlubiyah* (Probability of Requirement).

In this respect, several authentically reported traditions hold that when a believer practices an act which is transmitted to him by someone from the Holy Prophet (S), with the intention of gaining its reward, then Almighty Allah will record for him that reward even if it has been untrue.

In Shi’ite jurisprudence, the tenor of such traditions lies under the rule of Concession in the Proof of Recommended Acts. [1](#)

All the same, we will mention the recommended rites and devotional acts mentioned in validly reported traditions that confirm their recommendation and validity, and we will try to choose the examples of rites and acts that generally conform with the invariable line of the chains of authority that are reported from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Consequently, these acts will be considered recommended, in their capacity as examples of the general line adopted by the Holy Imams (‘a), even if we lack specific evidence of their recommendation.

Second: In sessions of devotional acts, we notice that there is a variety and a combination of various devotional acts, such as ceremonial purity (represented by the ritual ablution and bathing), prayers, supplications, litanies, almsgivings, fasting, and the like. This reveals that these devotional sessions have a common method and goal, which entails that human perfection can be attained through no other means than the mixture of these devotional acts, since the spiritual and psychological needs of man are

various and miscellaneous. In view of this fact, it is necessary to take much interest in such variety of devotional acts in all sessions in order to achieve this perfection and it is necessary, not to restrict oneself to a definite sort of devotional act.

Third: The intensified course of devotional acts in daily worship, or at other times, may create the misconception that Islam calls man to turn away from performing his social duties, both individual and collective, and devote all his time to devotional acts, such as prayers, fasting, supplications, etc. Suspension of social activities will naturally turn human life into monasticism which is forbidden by Islam.

Islam lays great emphasis on the social aspect of human life, which we have discussed in the previous books of this series and has preferred it to various sorts of recommended devotional acts. The Economic System emphasizes that earning a lawful living is the best sort of worship, seeking of knowledge for a single hour is preferred to seventy-years of worship, settlement of disagreements among individuals and groups is better than all prayers and fasting, and meeting brothers-in-faith and fulfilling one's duties towards them is also preferred to all recommended prayers and fasting. All these examples demonstrate the fact that carrying out social duties is preferred to the practice of recommended devotional acts

Through this intensified course of devotional acts, Islam only intends to give man the opportunity to make the totality of his life acts of worship, although it already offers him priority and variety in the practice of acts of obedience to enable him to attain self-perfection without having to violate the social equilibrium.

General Methodology

The acts of worship system is characterized by all-inclusiveness and variety, as it represents the chief goal of man's existence and creation, as maintained by Almighty Allah:

(وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ 56)

I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me. (51:56)

Thus, the methodology of the system of acts of worship, as set up by Islam and elucidated by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), is comprehensive and all-inclusive, for all time to come.

This methodology of the system of acts of worship falls within two main areas:

The First group of acts involves **timed devotional acts** dedicated to certain hours, days, or anniversaries, including the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly acts of worship.

The Second group of acts includes **untimed devotional acts**.

1. - The Rule of Concession in the Proofs of Recommended Acts (al-tasamuh fi addillat al-sunan) is a jurisprudential

principle entailing inclusion of a certain state within a common ruling even if this state has not been adequately proven as belonging to it.

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