

The Means of Perfection and God's Nearness

In order to attain self-perfection and God's Nearness one may resort to various means. Here we will point out some of the important means as follows:

- 1- God's Remembrance.
- 2- Nourishment of Moral Virtues.
- 3- Righteous Deeds.
- 4- Martyrdom and Struggle.
- 5- Benevolence and Service to Mankind.
- 6- Supplication and Prayer.
- 7- Fasting.

All of the above means shall be described in details as separate chapters in this book.

First Means –God's Remembrance (Dikhr)

God's-remembrance or invocation (*dhikr*) could be regarded as a starting 'point for the esoteric movement or spiritual migration, of a wayfarer towards the Nearness of the Lord of Universe. A wayfarer through invocation gradually lift himself above the horizons of material world stepping inside the Celestial World of beauty and illumination, becomes complete and perfect eventually attaining the highest exalted position of God's Nearness.

God's invocation is the soul behind all the worships as well is the greatest aim behind their explanation, because the merit of each worship depends upon the degree of attention paid by the worshiper towards

that particular act. The Qur’anic-verses and traditions have made plenty of recommendations about the importance of invocation. For example the Holy Qur’an said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا

“Oh ye who believe! Remember God–Almighty with much. Remembrance. (33: 41)

And said:

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا
سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

“(such as) Those who remember God–Almighty, standing, sitting; reclining, and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say): Our Lord! Thou createdst not this in vain. Glory be to thee! Preserve us from the doom of fire. (3: 191)

And said:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّىٰ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّىٰ

“He is successful who groweth, and remembereth the Name of his Lord, so prayeth. (87: 14–15)

And said:

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

“Remember the Name of the Lord at morning and evening. (76:25)

And said:

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ

“Remember thy Lord much. and praise (Him) in the early hours of night and morning. (3: 41)

And said:

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ

“When ye have performed the act of worship. remember God–Almighty standing, sitting. and reclining. (4: 103)

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن ابي عبدالله (ع) قال: من اكثر ذكر الله عز وجل اظله الله في جنته

“Whoever offers a lot of invocation. God–Almighty will reward him Paradise where he would live forever happily under the shadow of His grace.”¹

Also, he said to his companions:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام في رسالته الى اصحابه قال: واكثرُوا ذكر الله ما استطعتم في كل ساعة من ساعات الليل والنهار، فان الله عَمَر بكثرة الذكر، والله ذاكر من المؤمنين. واعلموا ان الله لم يذكره احد من عباده المؤمنين الا ذكره بخير

“As much as it is possible do remember God–Almighty at every hour during day and night because He has ordered His servants to offer a lot of invocation. Whoever remembers God–Almighty is reciprocated by him. Know that there is not a single believer who does not remember God–Almighty but that God–Almighty too remembers him with goodness.”²

Imam al–Sadiq further said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام: قال الله لموسى: أكثر ذكرى بالليل والنهار وكن عند ذكرى خاشعا وعند بلائى صابرا واطمئن عند ذكرى واعبدني ولا تشرك بي شيئا إلى المصير. يا موسى! اجعلني ذكرك وضع عندي كنزك من الباقيات الصالحات

“God–Almighty said to Moses (a.s.): ‘to remember Him a lot throughout the day and night. During invocation be humble, during calamity be patient, and during My Remembrance be calm and relaxed. Worship Me alone and do not associate any partner with Me. Every body shall have to return towards Me. Oh Moses! Regard me as your provision of the Hereafter and deposit the treasurers of your righteous deeds near Me.”³

At another place he said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: ما من شئ الا وله حد ينتهي إليه فرض الله عزوجل الفرائض فمن أداها فهو حد هن ; و شهر رمضان فمن صامه فهو حده والحج فمن حج فهو حده إلا الذكرفان الله عزوجل لم يرض منه بالقليل ولم يجعل له حدا ينتهي إليه ثم تلا: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا – فقال: لم يجعل

الله له حد اينتهي إليه، قال: وكان أبي كثير الذكر لقد كنت أمشي معه وإنه ليذكر الله وآكل معه الطعام وإنه ليذكر الله ولقد كان يحدث القوم وما يشغله ذلك عن ذكر الله وكنت أرى لسانه لازقا بحنكه يقول: لا إله إلا الله، وكان يجمعنا فيأمرنا بالذكر حتى تطلع الشمس. (الى ان قال) وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: ألا أخبركم بخير أعمالكم وأرفعها في درجاتكم وأزكاها عند مليكم وخير لكم من الدينار والدرهم وخير لكم من أن تلقوا عدوكم فتقتلوهم ويقتلوكم؟ فقالوا: بلى، فقال ذكر الله كثيرا. ثم قال: جاء رجل إلى فقال: من خير أهل المسجد؟ فقال: أكثرهم لله ذكرا. وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: من اعطى لسانا ذاكرا فقد اعطى خير الدنيا والآخرة.

“For every thing there is a limit except God's Remembrance which is infinite and beyond limits. There are religious mandatory obligations which are performed in accordance to prescribed limits. e.g.: The fasting during the month of Ramadhan is limited to thirty days, and similarly the Hajj Pilgrimage is limited to performance of certain prescribed Hajj rituals , but contrary to all of them God's-Remembrance does not has any limits and He has not limited himself to a prescribed or minimum amount of invocation. Then he recited the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

“Oh ye who believe! Remember God-Almighty with much remembrance and glorify him early, and late. (33: 41-42)

“In the above verse God-Almighty has not fixed a limit for His Remembrance. Then he said: 'My father (Imam al-Baqir a.s.) used to offer a lots of invocation, while walking with him I found him remembering God, when we used to sit together for eating he was still busy with invocation, and even while talking to the people he was not negligent from invocation.

I could see his tongue almost attached to his throat while chanting: there is no god except God-Almighty (la illahi illallahu). After the morning prayer he used to assemble all of us together and ordered to offer invocation until sun rise.

“Then he quoted from the Holy Prophet (S) who said: shouldn't I inform you about your best deeds which would bring for you more distinctions as compared to any other deed ? Which is purest and most desirable before God-Almighty. Is much better for you as compared to silver, and gold even is superior than the Holy struggle for the sake of God-Almighty.’

The people asked: “Oh Prophet of God! Please tell us.”

“Do a lots of God's Remembrance.” Replied the Holy Prophet (S).

“Then the Imam said: A man asked the Holy Prophet (S): “Who is the best among the believers ?” “The one who offers a lot of invocation.” Replied the Holy Prophet (S). He further said:

“Who possesses a invoking tongue has indeed been blessed with the goodness of this world and the

Hereafter.”4

The Holy Prophet (S) said to Abu Dharr:

فى وصية ابي ذر قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: عليه بتلاوة القرآن وذكر الله كثيرا فانه ذكر لك فى السما
ونور لك فى الارض.

*“Recite the Holy Qur’an and do a lots of invocation, which will became a means for your remembrance in
the Heavens and will produce illumination for you upon the earth.”*5

Imam al-Hasan 6 (a.s.) quotes from the Holy Prophet (S)

عن الحسن بن على عليه السلام قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: بادروا الى رياض الجنة، فقالوا: ما
رياض الجنة؟ قال: حلق الذكر.

*“Take lead towards the Gardens of Paradise. ‘Which are the Gardens of the Paradise? Asked the
companions ? ‘The rings of invocation Replied the Holy Prophet (S).”*7

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن الصادق عليه السلام قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: ذاكر الله فى الغافلين كالمقاتل فى الفازين له
الجنة.

*“The one who is a reciter of God’s invocation among negligent is like a struggler waging war in the
battlefield alone, while the others are fleeing away. Paradise for such a combatant is compulsory.”*8

The Holy Prophet (S) said to his companions:

ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله خرج على اصحابه فقال: ارتعوا فى رياض الجنة. يا رسول الله وما رياض
الجنة؟ قال: مجالس الذكر، اغدوا وروحوا اذكروا. ومن كان بحب ان يعلم منزلة عند الله فلينظر كيف منزلة الله
تعالى عنده، ينزل العبد حيث انزل العبد الله من نفسه واعلموا ان خير اعمالكم

عند مليكم وازكها وارفعها فى درجاتكم وخير ما طلعت عليه الشمس ذكر الله فانه تعالى اخبر عن نفسه فقال: انا
جليس من ذكرنى.

*“Do utilize the gardens of the Paradise.” Which are these gardens of the Paradise ? Asked the
companions.*

'The assemblies of invocation; remember God–Almighty at morning and evening. 'Whosoever wants to know about his rank and position before God–Almighty, must see how is the position of God in his own life. Because, 'He elevates a servant exactly to the same position –which was assigned to God–Almighty by the servant in his own life.

Know that your best and the most purest deeds which will elevate your rank and position before the Lord and is better than any thing else of this universe is – God's–Remembrance, because God–Almighty had said: "Whoever remembers me –I become his companion."⁹

The above Qur'anic verses and traditions presented here as examples of invocation show its importance clearly. Now let us investigate what is the aim behind the invocation.

A) The Aim of Invocation (Dikhr)

Earlier, it was clearly demonstrated that God's Remembrance is a great worship and is one of the best method of self–building, self–perfection and spiritual migration towards God–Almighty. Now let us examine what is really meant with invocation whose importance has been so much emphasized in traditions and Qur'anic verses.

Does it means simply recital of sentences like: Glory to God, All praises belong to God and there is no god but God (subhan allahi, walhamdu lillahi, wala ilaha illal– lahu) or is there any other aim behind this?

Do these sentences without paying any inner attention towards their esoteric meanings could still provide such important effect? The phrase invocation in the dictionary has been defined in the sense of simply recital as well as in the sense of recital with heart's presence. Similarly, is the case in traditions where this phrase has been used with both meanings i.e. recital with tongue as well recital with heart's presence.

In traditions it has been narrated that Prophet Moses (a.s.) while reciting hymns, asked God–Almighty:

فيما ناجى به موسى عليه السلام ربه: الهى ما جزا من نذكرك بلسانه وقلبه؟ قال: يا موسى اظله يوم القيامة بظل عرشى وأجعله في كنفى.

"Oh God! What is the reward for some one who remembers you by tongue and heart? 'I will place him under the shadow of My Thrown and My Own Protection on the Day of Resurrection."¹⁰

Therefore, as could be seen in the tradition the phrase invocation has been used in both senses i.e. invocation by means of tongue as well as invocation by means of heart. Also, there are plenty of traditions in which invocation has been used in both meanings, but mostly it has been used in the sense of heart's presence with esoteric attention –which is indeed true and perfect invocation.

God's Remembrance may be defined as a state of spirituality and discerning the truth with esoteric attention towards the Lord of Universe, and knowing that He is the Overseer and Supervisor of all our actions at all times. Someone who remembers God–Almighty in such a manner, acts according to His commands, performs compulsory obligations and sustains himself from forbidden acts. Therefore, from the point of view of these considerations we may conclude that invocation is not an easy thing. The Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam 'Ali (a.s.):

فيما اوصى به رسول الله (ص) علياً: يا علي! ثلاث لاتطبقها هذه الامة: المواساة للاخ في ماله. وانصاف الناس من نفسه. وذكر الله على كل حال. وليس هو سبحان الله والحمد لله ولا اله الا الله والله اكبر, ولكن اذا ورد على ما يحرم عليه خاف الله عنده وتركه.

“There are three things of special strength for my Ummah:

First: Fellowship and equality with brother believer in wealth.

Second: Treading others justly against the self

Third: God's Remembrance in all situations.

“What is meant with invocation is not simply recital sentences life: Glory to God; All praises belong to God; and there is no god but God (Subhan allahi, Wal hamdu lillahi wala ilahi illallahu), rather invocation is defined as the state of being so much in remembrance of God–Almighty that whenever one is encountered with a forbidden act, he should fear God–Almighty and should refrain himself from its commitments.”¹¹

The Commander of the Faithful Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said: ¹²

قال على عليه السلام: لا تذكر الله سبحانه ساهياً ولا تنسه لاهياً واذكره ذكراً كاملاً يوافق فيه قلبك لسانك و يطابق اضمارك اعلانك ولن تذكره حقيقة الذكر حتى تنسى نفسك في ذكرك وتفقدتها في امرك.

“Do not engage your self in invocation in the state of negligence and never forget God–Almighty. Remember Him with perfection so that your tongue and hearts become synchronized and your esoteric and exoteric affairs are in conformity with each other. One cannot engaged himself in real invocation but to forget his self completely and while performing deeds he should think of only God–Almighty and 'should not notice his own existence.”

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said: ¹³

قال الصادق عليه السلام: من كان ذاكراً لله تعالى على الحقيقة فهو مطيع ومن كان غافلاً عنه فهو عاص والطاعة علامة الهداية والمعصية علامة الضلالة واصلها الذكر والغفلة فاجعل قلبك قبله لسانك لا تحركه بإشارة القلب

وموافقة العقل ورضى الايمان فإن تعالى عالم بسرك وجهرك وكن كالنازع روحه كالواقف في العرض الأكبر غير شاغل نفسك عما عناك بما كلفك به ربك في أمره ونهيه ووعدته ووعيده ولا تشغلها بدون ما كلف به ربك واغسل قلبك بماء الحزن والخوف واجعل ذكر الله تعالى من اجل ذكره إياك فإنه ذكرك وهو غني عنك فذكره لك أجل وأشهى وأثنى وأتم من ذكرك وأسبق. ومعرفتك بذكره لك تورثك الخضوع والاستحياء والانكسار ويتولد من ذلك رؤية كرمه وفضله السابق وتصغر. عند ذلك طاعتك وان كثرت في جنب منته. وتخلص بوجهه

ورؤيتك ذكرك له تورثك الرياء والعجب والسفه والغلظة في خلقه وهو استكثار الطاعة ونسيان فضله وكرمه ولا تزداد بذلك بعدا ولا تستجلب به على معنى الأيام إلا وحشة. والذكر ذكران: ذكر خالص بموافقة القلب وذكر صادم لك بنفي غيره كما قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: انى لا احصى ثناء عليك, أنت كما أثنيت على نفسك فرسول الله لم يجعل لذكر الله تعالى مقادارا عند علمه بحقيقة سابقة الله عز وجل من قبل ذكره له ومن دونه أولى. فمن أراد يذكر الله تعالى فليعلم انه ما لم يذكر الله العبد بالتوفيق لذكره لا يقدر العبد على ذكره

“Whoever remembers God–Almighty truly will become obedient; whoever is negligent of Him will certainly indulge into sins, His obedience means guidance and sinning indicates deviation. The invocation and negligence are the roots of obedience and transgression respectively.

Therefore, consider your heart as the worshipping point (Qibla), and keep your tongue still without motion except by permission of heart, by approval of wisdom, and with the consent of belief because, God–Almighty is aware of your apparent and hidden affairs.”

“Be like some one whose soul is being confiscated from his body or like some one who is standing before the Lord to be questioned about his deeds. Don't let the self–engaged into any other thing except discharging Divine obligations which are important for you. With the tears of shame, and grief cleanse and purify the contamination of your heart.”

“Know that God–Almighty has remembered you therefore, you should too engage yourself in invocation, because, He remembered you while being absolutely needless of you. Therefore, yours remembrance by God–Almighty will make you more perfect, exalted, acquainted, and delightful as compared to God's Remembrance by you.

Acquaintance with God's Remembrance will increase your humility, courtesy, and decency in front of Him, resulting in your being able to witness His past benevolence and blessings bestowed upon you. At this stage your obedience might appear to you as more but in front of God's favors to you, it will be something very small.”

“Therefore, do perform your deeds strictly for the sake of God–Almighty only. If you perceived your invocation as big it will result in hypocrisy, egotism, ignorance, harshness, and negligence in appreciation of Divine blessings and favors. Such invocation will not bear any fruits except innovator's becoming farther away from God–Almighty and with the passage of time will not produce any positive effect except fear and sorrow.”

“As the Holy Prophet (S) said: ‘I am helpless to hymn your praise (the way you truly deserves). Your essence is such –the manner you praised yourself. Therefore, the Prophet (S) did not attach any worth to his invocations because, he was aware of the fact that remembrance of His servants by God–Almighty is far superior than the God’s Remembrance by His servants.

Therefore, those whose rank is much lower than the Holy Prophet (S) better consider their invocation as insignificant. Because of these considerations some one who really wants to recite God’s Invocation must understand that unless and until God–Almighty remembers him and bestow upon him His special grace –he would not be in a position to offer God’s Invocation.”

As could be seen from these narrations that hearts attention and esoteric presence have been defined as the real meanings of invocation. Further simply heart’s attention and esoteric presence but ineffective is not enough, rather what is required is effective esoteric presence whose indications have been identified as obedience of mandatory obligations and avoidance of forbidden things. But it does not mean that only oral recital of sentences like:

“There is no god but God”; “Glory to God”. And “all praises to God,” (la ilahi illallahu, subhan allahi, and al hamdu lillahi) is not the evidence of true invocation, because these sentences in themselves reflect degrees of God’s invocation.

Apart from that even this invocation by tongue flows from the heart’s fountainhead. Someone, who recites these invocation by tongue certainly is having some attention by heart towards God–Almighty however small it may be, and because of this he is reciting these sentences by his tongue.

From the point of view of Islam, simply recital of these sentences and other invocations is desirable and carries spiritual reward subjected to it being performed with the intention of God’s Nearness. Incidentally we may mention that in case of daily prayers we are strictly obliged to recite similar sentences by tongue and to perform other related rituals outwardly while we know that the heart’s presence and esoteric attention is the real spirit behind the daily prayers.

B) The Degrees of Invocation (Dhikr)

Invocation consists of various degrees or ranks the first and lowest of them begins with the recital of invocation by tongue, and continues till the degree of absolute perfection, which terminates into attaining the stage of feeling being ceased to exist, witnessing the supreme reality and becoming annihilated into His Essence (*Shahood* and *fana*).

At the very first stage, since the invocator pays heart’s attention towards God–Almighty, starts reciting special invocation by tongue with the intention of God’s Nearness, without paying any attention to their meanings.

At the second stage, although he, recites invocation by tongue with the intention of God’s Nearness, but

at the same time also convey their meanings to his mind. At the third stage, the tongue follows the heart, since the heart pays attention towards God–Almighty and in his esoteric essence believes in the meanings and contents of invocations, therefore orders the tongue for their recital.

At the fourth stage, the wayfarer attains esoteric presence, and perfect heart's presence with respect to God–Almighty, considers Him as an overseer of his actions and witnesses his own existence under God's exalted presence. At this stage the experiences of wayfarers differs widely in accordance to the degree of perfection achieved by them.

As much as they become detached from other than God, in the same proportion they become attached to God–Almighty ultimately achieving the highest and most exalted positions of being ceased to exist (*inqata*), countenance (*laqa*), and annihilation (*fana*).

The wayfarer at this stage –which is the most exalted position has teared off all the veils of ignorance and falseness and has attached himself to the Supreme Source of all Blessings and Perfection.

He has removed himself from every thing including his self and has returned towards God–Almighty by cutting all his ties with other than God and reserving his pure love and affection for God–Almighty. He does not see any perfection except God–Almighty so that he could become attached to him, and does not find any companion to become intimate with him.

These purest servants of God have made their access into the supreme Infinite Source of Grandeur, Majesty, Perfection, Blessings and Illumination and are able to witness the Beauty and Illumination of God's Essence with their esoteric eyes. They are not ready to attach their heart and pay attention towards the metaphorical phenomenon of this world even for an instant.

Because they have reached to the Fountain Head of Absolute Beauty and Perfection and, therefore, metaphorical and fictitious perfection do not have any worth in their eyes. They burnt in the love, affection and countenance of their beloved and are not ready to exchange this pleasure even if they are offered both the worlds, and if they encounter world's phenomenon, regards them as reflections of Divine Illumination and signs of God's Perfect Existence.

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) was asked: [14](#)

سئل أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: هل رأيت ربك حين عبدته؟ فقال: ويلك ما كنت أعبد ربا لم أره. قبل: وكيف رأيت؟ قال: ويلك لا تدركه العيون في مشاهدة الابصار ولكن رآته القلوب بحقائق الإيمان.

“Have you seen the God to whom you worship” ?

‘Woe, be upon you! I do not worship a God who could not be seen’. Replied the Imam. ‘How did you see Him’ ? He was asked. ‘Woe be upon you! God–Almighty could not be seen with physical eyes rather

hearts witness His existence through the reality of their faith.” Replied the Imam.”

Imam al-Husayn (a.s.) [15](#)said:

قال حسين بن علي عليه السلام: كيف يستدل عليك بما هو في وجوده مفتقر إليك؟ أ يكون لغيرك من الظهور ما ليس لك حتي يكون هو المظهر لك؟ متي غبت حتي تحتاج إلي دليل يدل عليك؟ و متي بعدت حتي تكون الثار هي التي توصل إليك؟ عميت عين لا تراك عليها رقيباً وخسرت صفقة عبد لم. تجعل له من حبلك نصيباً

“In order to prove Your Existence how can a thing could be referred as an argument which in itself is dependent upon You? Is there exist any manifestation for other than You which You lack, so that he would make You revealed? When were You absent so that an argument will be required? When were You away so that the indications and circumstances of Your reappearance would be needed? Blind is the eye which does not see You as an Overseer upon his deeds. And how unfortunate looser is your servant, who have been deprived of Your Love.”[16](#)

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) in his hymns for the Holy Month of Shaban said:

الهي هب لي كمال الانقطاع اليك وانر ابصار قلوبنا بضيا نظرها اليك حتى تخرق ابصار القلوب حجت النور
فتصل الي معدن العظمة وتصير ارواحنا معلقة تعز قدسك

“Oh God! Bestow upon me absolute separation from every thing except You, enlighten the esoteric eyes of our hearts with Your Beauty and Grandeur ,so that they could tear off the veils of light and become attached to the Supreme Source of Absolute-Perfection. May our souls become united with Your Holy-Essence.”[17](#)

Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.) describes God's righteous servants as follows:

قال علي بن الحسين عليه السلام: بسم الله الرمان الرحيم. إلهي قصرت الألسن عن بلوغ ثنائك كما يليق بجلالك ، وعجزت العقول عن إدراك كنه جمالك ، وانحسرت الأبصار دون النظر إلى سبحات وجهك ولم تجعل للخلق طريقاً إلى معرفتك إلا بالعجز عن معرفتك . إلهي فاجعلنا من الذين ترسخت أشجار الشوق إليك في حدائق صدورهم ، وأخذت لوعة محبتك بمجامع قلوبهم ، فهم إلى أوكار الأفكار يتوون ، وفي رياض القرب والمكاشفة يرتعون ، ومن حياض المحبة بكأس الملاطفة يكرعون، وشرايع المصافات يردون

قد كشف الغطاء عن أبصارهم وانجلت ظلمة الريب عن عقائدهم وضمائرهم وانتفت مخالجة الشك عن قلوبهم وسرائرهم وأنشروحت بتحقيق المعرفة صدورهم وعلت لسبق السعادة في الزهادة همهم وعذب في معين المعاملة شربهم وطاب في مجلس الأنس سرهم وأمن في موطن المخافة سربهم واطمأنت بالرجوع إلى رب الأرباب أنفسهم وتيقنت بالفوز والفلاح أرواحهم وقرت بالنظر إلى محبوبهم أعينهم وأستقر بإدراك السؤال ونيل المأمول قرارهم وربحت في بيع الدنيا بالآخرة تجارتهم. إلهي ما ألد خواطر الإلهام بذكرك على القلوب وما أحلى المسير إليك

بالأوهام في مسالك الغيوب وما أطيب طعم حبك وما أعذب شرب قربك فأعدنا من طردك وإبعادك واجعلنا من
أخص عارفيك وأصلح عبادك وأصدق طائعيك وأخلص عبادك يا عظيم يا جليل يا كريم يا منيل! برحمتك ومنك يا
أرحم الراحمين.

“Oh Lord! The tongues are helpless to offer Your Praise and Adoration, worthy of Your Majesty and Splendor,” the faculties of wisdom cannot comprehend Your Beauty and Glory; the eyes are powerless to be able to witness the manifestation of Your Beauty. For your servants, in their search to attain the exalted position of Your Enlightenment, You have closed all the avenues except to admit their impotence and helplessness.”

“Oh Lord of the Majesty and Splendor! Please consider us among Your those servants in whose hearts the sapling of Your Countenance has been planted and whose hearts are saturated with the grief and sorrow of Your Love.

Thus, they are moving towards the nest of most tender and sublime thoughts with the hope of living in pleasure forever in the most magnanimous and splendid garden of manifestation and nearness of their God. They drink the cups of Your Grace from the Fountain Head of Your Love and entering the wide freeways of fraternity and pleasure.”

“The curtains have been rolled up from their esoteric eyes, the darkness of doubt has been removed from their beliefs and the palpitations of contradiction have been calmed down in their hearts. Certainly of Your Knowledge have made them as large hearted,” strive to surpass others in the race of piety, in their trade with God–Almighty, have been rewarded with the most delicious and pleasurable drinks,”

In their union with their beloved possess a clean and pure inner self while encountering fearful situation are assured with the Divine guidance towards safety” In their return to God–Almighty have attained the most tranquil state; In their journeying towards eternal prosperity and salvation have attained the stage of certainty; In witnessing the glory of their beloved their eyes shine with joy, because of accomplishing the cherished goal, they now possess a peaceful inner self and have profited themselves in their bartering this world with the Hereafter.”

“Oh God! How pleasing are the memories of inspiration relevant to Your Invocation for the hearts! How sweet is the journeying towards you by means of pondering about the unseen! How much delicious is the taste of Your Love! And how much pleasurable and gratifying is the drinking of drinks of Your Nearness !”

“Therefore, oh God! we seek Your shelter again banishment or getting lost. And accept us among the most distinguished gnostics, most righteous servants, most veracious obedient, and most sincere worshippers. Oh Lord of Majesty and Splendor, and Oh God of Mercy and Compassion we swore you of your Blessing, oh Thou Who are the Best of Blessers.”[18](#)

In summary, the fourth position is a position which is most distinguished and exalted and in itself consists of various degrees and ranks which are infinite and continue till the very Holy Essence, Self-Existent (*Wajib al- Wajood*), the Source of Absolute Perfection and Infinite Beauty. In the language of Godly people these stages are called namely:

The position of invocation (*dhikr*) the position of love, (*uns*), the position of being, ceased to exist (*inqata*) the position of intense desire (*shouq*), the position of pleasure (*raza*) the position of fear (*khouf*), the position of witnessing, (*shahood*) the position of absolute certainty (*ain al-yaqin*) the position of assurance (*haq al-yaqin*) and the eventual position of becoming annihilated in God-Almighty (*fana wa baqa billah*). These interpretations most probably have been inferred from traditions and Qur'anic verses and each one of them requires a commentary e.g.:

When the worshipper pays attention towards the Glory, Splendor, Majesty and Infinite Perfection of the Holy Essence of Self Existent (*Wajib al- Wajood*), considers His Love, Favors, and Blessings and realizes his own helplessness and negligence, and looks at the distance between himself and that Holy Exalted Essence; it causes a feeling of love, eagerness, and sorrow within his existence which is known as the position of strong desire (*shouq*).

When the wayfarer thinks in retrospective about his gnostic spiritual journey and discovers the spiritual stations and perfection attained by him –this revelation makes him happy and pleased, which is known as the position of affection or love (*uns*).

When the wayfarer pays attention towards the Splendor, Majesty, Glory, and Absolute Perfection of God's Essence and opposite to that realizes his own helplessness and shortness for attaining the Nearness of that Supreme-Reality –his hearts trembles with fear. The agony and grief overtakes his entire existence, whereby he cries bitterly and sheds tears. This stage is known as the position of fear (*khouf*), and similar is the case with other positions.

It would be better if this God's servant –the prisoner of self's passions, captive of darkness of materialism, deprived of attaining higher spiritual stations –does not put his feet inside this profound and infinite ocean, and let the explanation of these sublime spiritual stations be left for those who have reached there. Because, so far one has not tasted the deliciousness of God's Love, Affection, and Countenance, he is helpless and powerless to explain them.

أحب الصالحين ولست منهم، اللهم ارزقنا حلاوة ذكرك واجعلنا من أهله.

“Oh God! I do like the righteous ones, although, I myself is not one of them, Oh God! Bless me with the sweetness of your invocation and please do include me among them! “

Let us hear the words of those who are qualified to speak in this field. The great philosopher and divine gnostic Sadrudin Shirazi writes:

“If a ray of Divine illumination falls upon a servant, makes him awakened from the sleep of ignorance and nature, thus, his becoming aware of the fact that apart from this perceptible world there also exists another world, and higher than the animalistic pleasures there also exist other satisfactions.

With this realization he refrains himself from indulging into false and worthless amusements and returns towards God–Almighty by offering repentance for his past omissions. Thus, he starts pondering about Qur’anic verses, listening Divine admonitions, deliberating upon the Prophet’s (S) traditions and performing deeds in accordance with Divine commands.”

“In order to attain the eternal perfection he restrains himself from following the worldly allurements such as wealth, power, and positions. If he is lucky to receive further Divine Guidance and Blessings – decides seriously to disassociate himself from other than God, starts journeying towards Him and leaving the habitat of self, his whimsical attractions ascends towards God–Almighty.

At this stage, a ray of Divine illumination enlightens his horizons; a door from the unseen world opens for him and gradually the pages from the Holy Kingdom become apparent for him enabling him to witness the affairs of unseen.”

“When he tastes these special pleasures of the unseen affairs, starts liking seclusion and engages himself into invocation continuously. His hearts becomes detached from material involvement and pays absolute attention towards God–Almighty with his entire existence.

At this juncture mystical knowledge is gradually bestowed upon him and spiritual illuminations become occasionally manifested for him, until he attains absolute certainty in his search discovering the Supreme Reality whereby, all contradictions, doubts are vanished and a special tranquility engulfs his entire existence.”

“At this stage he enters into the Celestial Kingdom and after witnessing the existence of “Ten-wisdoms.” [19](#)(Uqool–Mufarqeh) becomes united with their Celestial Lights and, thus, become enlightened.

Eventually, the Glorious Illumination of the Lord of Majesty and Splendor becomes manifested upon him, thus, making his existence and egotism shattered and he surrenders in front of the Glory and Exaltedness of the Lord of the Heavenly Kingdom. This stage is known as the position of Monotheism (Tawhid) in which any thing other than God–Almighty becomes amortized in the wayfarer’s eyes and he listen to the sound of:

لمن الملك اليوم، الله الواحد

“Whose is the sovereignty this Day? It is God’s the One, the Al-mighty. (40: 16) [20](#)

The most famous and eminent gnostic late Faiz al–Kashani writes: “The way for acquiring God’s Love

and its further strengthening to be worthy of witnessing His Manifestation and Countenance is –to attain enlightenment, (marefah) and its further strengthening.

The way of acquiring enlightenment consists of purifying hearts from worldly occupations and being attached to its allurements through paying absolute attention towards God–Almighty by means of invocations and pondering, and cleansing of heart's dwellings from all sort of attachment towards other than God.

Because, the heart is like a pot, which if filled with water completely would not have any space left to be filled with vinegar. In order to fill this pot with vinegar first it must be emptied with water. God–Almighty has not created anyone with dual heart.”

“Perfection in love demands that one must love God–Almighty with the entire existence of his heart, because so far as the heart continues to pay attention towards other things at least a part of it shall remain occupied with other than God–Almighty.

Therefore, as much as one is attached to other than God –his love towards Him will be decreased in the same proportion, except where, this attention towards other than God is related to a situation, whereby “ an act of God and His created being “ are reflections of one of the manifestations of God's sacred names and Characteristics.”

God–Almighty in the following verse of Holy Qur'an, has pointed out about the same meanings:

قُلِ اللَّهُ ۙ تَمَّ ذُرَّهُمْ

“Say God: Then leave them (6:9)

A stage which is achieved as a result of strong desire where a human being strives that whatever have been revealed for him should become further clearly manifested. While he should remain anxious towards what have not yet been accomplished, because, the strong desire is related to a thing which partly have been perceived from some aspects. but from other dimensions it has not yet been comprehended, and in between these two, there exists the reality, which is beyond the limits and infinite.

“Because, the degree and ranks of comprehension of what have been achieved –is infinite. Similarly, whatever magnification has been left from God' s Splendor and Beauty is also infinite and having attained the real union with the sweetheart, one still desires strongly that pleasurable event which is free from all sort of pains. Therefore, desire never rests at any stage especially when he witnesses so many ranks and positions beyond the imagination of human intellect.”

نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَى بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَيَأْمُرُهُمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَنْتُمْ لَنَا نُورَنَا

“There light will run before them and on their right hands: They will say: our Lord! Perfect our light for us. (66:8)²¹

- [1.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 4. p-1182.
- [2.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 4. p-1183.
- [3.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a vol. 4, p-1182.
- [4.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 4, p-181.
- [5.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-154.
- [6.](#) Imam al-Hasan ibn 'Ali: The eldest son of Imam 'Ali and Hadhrat Fatimah was born on Tuesday, 15 Ramadhan 3 AH in Madina. When the Holy Prophet received the happy news of the birth of his grandson, he came to the house of his beloved daughter, took the newly born child in his arms, recited adhan and iqamah in his right and left ears respectively, and in compliance with Divine command named him al-Hasan.

The martyrdom of his father Imam 'Ali (a.s.) on the 21st Ramadhan marked the inception of Imam Hasan's imamate. The majority of Muslims pledged their allegiance to him and finalized the formality of oath of allegiance (bayah). No sooner had he taken the reins of leadership into his hands then he had to meet the challenge of Mu'awiyah the Governor of Syria who declared war against him.

In compliance of Divine will and in order not to refrain from bloodshed of Muslims he entered into a piece treaty with Mu'awiyah whose terms were not respected and carried out by Mu'awiyah.

Mu'awiyah's malice against Imam Hasan led him to conspire with Imams wife Ja'dah the daughter of Ash'ath. She was made give the Imam some poison which affected his liver. Imam Hasan, thus, succumbed to Mu'awiyah's total mischief and attained his martyrdom on 28th (Safar) 50 A.H. His funeral was attended by Imam al-Husayn and the members of Hashimite family.

His bier while being taken for burial to the Holy Prophet's tomb was shot at with arrows by his enemies, (under the direct supervision and consent of A'ishah), and it had to be diverted for burial to Jannatu'l-Baqi' at Madina.

- [7.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-156.
- [8.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-163.
- [9.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-163.
- [10.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-156.
- [11.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-151.
- [12.](#) Ghirar al-Hukm, p-817.
- [13.](#) Bihar al-Anwar vol. 93, p-158.
- [14.](#) Haqayaqe Faiz, p-179.
- [15.](#) Imam al-Husayn: The younger son of 'Ali by Fatimah was born in Medina on Thursday 3rd Sha'ban 4 A.H; like his brother he lived most of his life quietly in Medina under the watchful eyes of the caliph's officials and spies. When Mu'awiyah's son Yazid became caliph, he demanded allegiance from al-Husayn, who refused to give it.

Finally al-Husayn felt it necessary to go into battle against Yazid to protest against the injustices which were being carried out in the name of Islam. He and a small group of followers including most of his immediate family were cruelly massacred at Karbala. The day of his martyrdom 10th Muharram ' A.H.(Ashura) has become the most solemn day of the Islamic calendar, marked by processions and universal mourning. He is buried in Karbala in Iraq [Tr].

- [16.](#) Iqbal al-Amal, Prayer for the Day of Arafah.
- [17.](#) Iqbal al-Amal, Monajat al-Shabaniyyah.
- [18.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 93, p-163.
- [19.](#) Ten-Wisdoms (Uqool Mufarqeh): Sardar al-Mutalihin and other Islamic philosophers, regarding the creation of universe, have confirmed the existence of Ten-Wisdoms (Uqool-Mufarqeh) before the creation of natural world. And the

Divine blessings upon the material world are bestowed through their means [Author].

[20.](#) Mafateeh al-Ghaib, p-54.

[21.](#) Haqaiq, p-181.

The Effects and Indications of Invocation (Dhikr)

As it was explained earlier that invocation (*dhikr*), witnessing (*shahood*), and countenance (*laqa*), are esoteric positions; and are genuine spiritual perfections, whereby a wayfarer really attains an exalted rank of existence which was not accomplished by him earlier.

If it is said: the position of witnessing is real and similarly, if it is said: the position of love, the position of compliance, the position of desire, the position of union, and the positions of countenance are not metaphorical, rather are real positions; it means that the relevant position represents a rank and degree of a real existence, which naturally should be accompanied with new effects and indications, so that the existence of that perfection could be identified through them. Here, we would describe the details of the following effects:

1. Commitment for God's Obedience

When some one attains a position whereby in his esoteric essence witnesses God's Beauty and sees himself in His presence, without any doubt will obey His commands absolutely. Whatever, he has been commanded to do will be performed by him and will refrain himself from things made forbidden for him.

If, a human being wants to know whether he has attained that position or not, he must evaluate his commitments towards Divine positive and negative commands and in accordance to his performance may determine his relative rank. It is not possible that a human being would have attained the exalted position of love and witnessing and would not have a total commitment towards Divine commands. Imam al-Sadiq has defined the invocation (*dhikr*) as follows:

قال أبو عبدالله عليه السلام: (في حديث إلى أن قال) ولكن إذ أورد عليك شيء أمر الله به وأذا ورد عليك شيء نهى عنه تركته.

“Invocation is meant that when some one encounters an act which has been made mandatory by God-Almighty he performs it and if it is forbidden, he refrains from it.”¹

Imam al Husayn (a.s.) in his prayer of Arafah said:

يا من اذاق احبائه حلاوة المؤانسة فقاموا بين يديه متملقين و يا من البس اوليائه ملابس هيبته فقاموا بين يديه مستغفرين.

“Oh God–Almighty! Thou are the One Who has poured the sweetness of Your love inside your friend's mouths so that they should stand in prayer in front of You and must adore You with humility. Oh Thou are the One Who has dressed your saints with the robe of fear so that they should stand and repent in front of you.”²

God–Almighty said in Holy Qur’an

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ

“Say: If you do love God follow me: God will love you. (3:31)

Imam al Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: من كان ذاكر الله على الحقيقة فهو مطيع ومن كان غافلا عنه فهو عاص.

“Whoever becomes a sincere invocator of God–Almighty, will also become truly obedient to Him, and whoever is negligent, will be a sinner.”³

2. Humility

Whoever witnesses the Power and Majesty of God–Almighty would naturally humiliate himself in front of him, and will continuously lower his head in regret while realizing his omissions and negligence.

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) had narrated in a tradition:

قال الصادق عليه السلام (في حديث الى قال) ومعرفتك بذكره لك يورتك الخضوع والاستحيا والانتكسار

“Your enlightenment because of your being paid attention by God–Almighty will result in your becoming humble, modest and prudent.”⁴

3. Excitement for Worshipping

One of the indication of attaining the position of witnessing is the strong liking for worshipping and feeling intense pleasure during its performance, because, some one who has witnessed the Majesty and Splendor of the Lord of the Worlds and considers himself in the presence of God–Almighty –the

Fountainhead of All Magnanimity and Perfection –would prefer the pleasure of hymns and humming communications with Him over any other enjoyment.

Those who are deprived of spiritual pleasures keep themselves amused with transient worldly amusements which in reality are no more than a pain killer, but those who have tasted the real pleasure of worshipping and hymns of the Lord of the Worlds would never exchange their pleasant state and beauty with any other enjoyment.

These are the purest God's servant who worship him only for the sake of his worthiness to be worshipped and not for the sake of any reward and punishment. In this regard, you must have heard about the melting and burning worshipping and intimate humming communications of the Holy Prophet (S) Imam 'Ali (a.s.) Imam al-Sajjad and other Imams of Prophets (Ahlul Bayt) with their Lord.

4. Tranquility and Assurance

The world is a place of pains, sorrows, and sufferings, which can be classified into the following three categories:

- **First type:** Tragedies like sickness of self or relatives death of self or next of kills, oppression, prejudices, injustice, discard, and interference etc.
- **Second type:** Regret and annoyance for lack of worldly things which are beyond one's reach.
- **Third type:** Fear of loosing whatever have been accumulated, fear of theft or loss of wealth, fear of loosing children because of accidents, and fear of getting sick and possibility of death.

All of the above most probably takes away ease and comfort from a human being, whose roots could be traced to strong attachments to world and avoidance of God's remembrance. God–Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا

“But he who turneth away from remembrance of me, his will be a narrow life. (20: 124)

But God's sincere servants who have reached the Source of all Blessings and Perfection, have witnessed the Absolute Beauty and Splendor, are contented because of God's Remembrance and Affection. They are free from all sort of worries and sorrows, because of their having God–Almighty, they possess every thing.

They do not become annoyed or it worried for lack of worldly things because they do not have any inclinations towards them, instead, they have attached themselves to the Fountainhead of all Blessings

and Perfection, which lacks nothing. Imam al-Hussain (a.s.) in his prayer of Arafah had said:

أنت الذي أزلت الأغيار عن قلوب أحبائك، حتى لم يحبوا سواك، ولم يلجئوا إلى غيرك أنت المونس لهم حيث أوحشتهم العوالم، وأنت الذي هديتهم حيث استبانتم لهم المعالم ماذا وجد من فقدك؟

وما الذي فقد من وجدك؟ لقد خاب من رضي دونك بدلا ولقد خسر من بغى عنك متحولا كيف يرجى سواك وانت ما قطعت الاحسان وكيف يطلب من غيرك وانت ما بدلت عادة الامتنان

“Oh Lord! Thou are the one who has removed the love of others from the hearts of your favorite saints, so that they are not attached to any body except You, and do not seek any other shelter except You. While encountering terrible calamities they seek refuge in You. If Your Enlightenment and Nearness have been achieved by them –it was only because of Your-Guidance.”

“Whosoever does not find You what else there remains to be found? And whoever has found You what else would he be lacking? How much looser is the one who chooses other than You and how unfortunate is the one who deviates from You. How can a human being expect thing from others while Your Favours never get cut off from him? How could one pray for his need before others, while knowing that Your Generosity and Benevolence surround him.”⁵

Any how, the most important effect of one's attaining the position of invocation, witnessing, and love is the attainment of heart's peace and tranquility, because, in principle, nothing can rescue the heart's boat inside the stormy oceans of the life except God's Remembrance. God-Almighty said in Holy Qur'an:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Who have believed and whose hearts have rest in the remembrance of God. Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest! (13:28)

The stronger will be the belief of a person the greater will be his heart's degree of assurance and tranquility.

5. God's Attention towards the Servant

When a God's servant remembers God-Almighty, reciprocally He too bestows special favor and blessing upon His servant. This matter has been mentioned in the following verses and traditions, God-Almighty said in Holy Qur'an:

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ

“Therefore, remember me, I will remember you. (2: 152)

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام: قال الله عزوجل: يا بن آدم! اذكرني في نفسك اذكرك في نفسي، يا بن آدم! اذكرني في خلا اذكرك في خلا، يا بن آدم! اذكرني في ملا اذكرك في ملا خير من ملاك. وقال: ما من عبد ذكر الله في ملا من الناس الا ذكره الله في ملا من الملائكة.

“God–Almighty had said: ‘Oh son of Adam! Remember me in your self so that I would remember you in My Self; Oh son of Adam! Remember me in solitude so that I may remember you in solitude; Oh son of Adam! Remember me in congregation so that I remember you in a congregation much better than yours,” and said: ‘Every servant who remembers God–Almighty among the human beings, God–Almighty remember him among the angels.’”⁶

God's attention and special blessings towards a servant is not a metaphorical thing, rather is a reality whose reasons may be explained as follows:

First Reason

When a servant remembers God–Almighty and with this means makes himself readied for acceptance of His special favors, God–Almighty increases the level of his perfection and elevates him into higher spiritual positions.

Second Reason

When a servant recites God’s invocations and spiritually migrates towards Him, he is blessed with God's attention and special favors, whereby He bestows upon him exalted spiritual positions and takes over the control of his heart, The Holy Prophet (S) said:

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله قال: قال الله تعالى: إذا علمت أنّ الغالب على عبدي الاشتغال بي نقلت شهوته في مسألتي ومناجاتي ، فإذا كان عبدي كذلك فأراد أن يسهو حلتُ بينه وبين أن يسهو - وهذا معنى العصمة - أولئك أوليائي حقاً ، أولئك الأبطال حقاً، أولئك الذين اذا اردت ان اهلك اهل الارض عقوبة زويتها عنهم من اجل اولئك الابطال.

“God Almighty said: ‘When I find a servant sincerely engaged in my invocation –makes him further interested into hymns and worshipping, and if occasionally negligence dominates over him, I prevent such occurrence, These are my real saints and heroes, If I want to annihilate all the earthly creations, it is because of their distinguished existence that My punishment does not descend towards earth.’”⁷

6. God's Love towards the Servant

One of the effect of invocation is the God's love towards the servant. It has been inferred from various Qur'anic verses and traditions that when a person engages himself in God's remembrance and obeys His commandments, He too reciprocates and starts loving that person, The Holy Qur'an said:

قل ان كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

“If you love God, follow me, God will love you. (3:31)

Imam al-Sadiq had narrated from the Holy Prophet (S):

عن ابي عبد الله عليه السلام: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: من اكثر ذكر الله احبه الله ومن ذكر الله كثيرا كتبت له برائتان برائة من النار و برائة من النفاق.

“Whoever offers lots of God's invocation will achieve God's affection towards him, whoever continuously remembers God–Almighty will have two letters written for him letter of immunity from Hells' fire, and letter of immunity from discard.”⁸

God's affection towards a servant is neither a ceremonial act nor it could be compared to the meanings of love as related to human beings. In case of human beings love is meant as heart's attachments and inclinations towards a desirable object, but for God such interpretation of love is not correct.

Love of God must be interpreted as His special favors and graces which further enhance a servants sincerity, attention, and worshipping, towards Him, and through these means attracts him towards the higher stages of perfection and nearness. Because, He loves the servant and likes hearing his humming hymns –bestows upon him the special favor of motivating further towards prayer, invocation, worshipping, and supplications.

Since, He likes servant's nearness, accordingly provides the required means for his perfection, and in nutshell because of His affection towards the servant –takes over his heart's control, thus, providing him the opportunities for better and speedy ascent towards His nearness.

7. The Most Important Effects

At this stage the wayfarer is blessed with most special benefits and privileges whose explanation is not possible through the pen and tongue of strangers, and except the recipient of these positions no one knows any thing about these affairs.

Because, of the effects of self-purification, esoteric cleansing, worshipping, asceticism, thinking, and

continuous recital of invocation, the wayfarer attains on exalted spiritual rank where, by means of his esoteric eyes and ears is able to see and hear the most sublime realities which can not be seen and heard by the apparent eyes and ears. Sometimes he hears the praise and hymns of other creatures including angels and joins them.

While he lives in this world and socialize with its people but in his esoteric essence looks towards upper horizons living in an another world as though he does not belong to this world. In that World he witnesses the Hell and Paradise and keeps in touch with angels and spirits of God's righteous saints. He is familiar with other World, and utilizes its blessings but does not want to speak about it, because such persons prefers seclusion and strictly sustain themselves from fame and popularity.

The higher Divine learning are descended upon the gnostics heart, and mystical–sciences which are not customary with conventional learning are witnessed by him. The wayfarer ultimately achieves an exalted spiritual position whereby he forgets everything including his self and does not pays attention towards anything except the Holy Names and Characteristics of God–Almighty. He sees the Lord of the Universe as Over seer of every thing and every where, Who had said:

هو الاول والاخر والظاهر والباطن.

“I am the first, the last, the hidden and the apparent.”

He sees the world as a manifestation of God's characteristics and considers every perfection and beauty from God–Almighty. The depravity of essence of all creatures, the absolute richness of the Self Existent (*Wajib al-Wajood*) becomes apparent for him and in witnessing the Supreme Source of Absolute Beauty and Perfection feels fascinated and absorbed.

Here it should be pointed out that the position of annihilation (*fana*) in itself consists of various degrees and ranks, and it would be appropriate if this deprived servant should better refrain himself from entering into these privileged positions.

[1.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93. p–155.

[2.](#) Iqbal al–Amal–Prayer of Arafah.

[3.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93, p–158.

[4.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93, p–158.

[5.](#) Iqbal al–Amal, Prayer of Arafah.

[6.](#) Wasail al–Shi’a, vol 4, p–1185.

[7.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol, 93, p–162.

[8.](#) Wasail al–Shi’a, vol. 4, p–181.

The Means of Attainment

In order to achieve faith's perfection and attaining higher spiritual positions of God's Remembrances (*Dhikr*), Witnessing, (*Shahood*), and Countenance (*Laqa*), the following means should be utilized:

1. Meditation and Reasoning

The reasons and arguments presented for the proof of God's Existence might be of some help in this regard, because, the reasons presented in the Holy Qur'an and other books of wisdom and gnosticism confirm that all the worldly phenomenon are needy and deprived rather in their essence are absolute indigence and deprivation.

In order to exist, and for continuation of their actions and movements they all are related to a – “Free from Want Existence”, rather in essence are related and dependent upon Him. All are needy and limited.

In the entire circle of existence there does not exist more than one –”Free from Want”, Self Sufficient and Infinite Existence and that is the Essence of Self Existent (*Wajib al-Wajood*), Whose Existence is absolutely free from defects, limitations, and needs.

He is the Source of all Perfection Whose Power, Knowledge, Life, and Other Characteristics are Absolute and Infinite; is present everywhere and is the overseer of all things, nothing is hidden from Him, is closer to all the creatures, even is nearer to man than his jugular vein. The Qur'anic verses and traditions have explain this in detail. Following are some examples:

فَأَيْنَمَا تُولُوْا فَتَمَّ وَجْهُ اللّٰهِ وَلِلّٰهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ

“To God belong the east and the west: Whithersoever ye turn, there is the presence of God. (2: 115)

And said:

وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيْرٌ

“And He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And God sees well as that ye do. (57: 4)

And said:

أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ وَنَحْنُ

“We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein. (50: 16)

And said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

“For God is witness of all things. (22: 17)

Therefore, pondering and reasoning over the Divine proofs helps man's exit from the intense darkness of unbelief, makes him enter inside the boundaries of faith, opens the path of perfection, and invites him towards action which is the pre-requisite of belief.

2. Deliberations over the Qur'anic Verses

The Holy Qur'an regards all worldly phenomenon as sign and indications of the existence of the World's Creator. The Qur'anic verses emphasize repeatedly to deliberate and think about God's signs, and the beauties, wonders, rhythm, and coordination which is controlling them in order to discover the existence of a Learned, Wise and Omnipotent God.

The human beings have been asked to deliberate deeply about their own creation, mysteries, and wonders incorporated within the structures of their spirit and body, the differences of colors and languages, and the creation of their spouses. Similarly, they are asked to ponder about the creation of sun, moon, stars, and their wonderful movement.

Further they are encouraged to look and think about the creation of earth, mountains, hills, trees, plants, and animals living inside, the water and over land. Also, the Holy Qur'an has described a lot of examples from these creations.

The world indeed is beautiful and fascinating, and a little bit pondering would reveal hundreds of hidden wonders and mysteries within its creatures. Starting from sun, moon, stars, milky ways, and clouds till the fascinating and mysterious world of atom; from the great forests till different types of plants and smaller and larger trees; from the great animals like elephant and camel till the tiny ants, mosquitoes, bacteria, and viruses all of them reveal a special beauty and elegance.

By witnessing the wonders of these worldly phenomenon and the most accurate precise coordination prevailing upon them, a human being may discover the Infinite Grandeur, Majesty, Wisdom, and Knowledge of the Creator and, thus, becomes astonished and fascinated crying from the inner depths of this heart:

هَذَا بَاطِلًا رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ

“Our Lord! Thou createdst not this in vain. (3:191)

Look at the brightening sky full of stars and deliberate deeply over their creation; sit near the edge of a forest and see the Majesty and splendor of God–Almighty. Alas! The world is so beautiful !!

3. Worshipping

After being blessed with faith (*iman*) and enlightenment (*marefah*) a human being must strive and endeavor to perform righteous deed and must discharge his religious obligations. Because, it is through the performance of righteous deeds that the belief and enlightenment achieve perfection, ultimately ascending towards God's Nearness.

It is True that belief, enlightenment and the words of purity (Monotheism) ascend towards Him, but in this movement they are assisted by the righteous deeds. God–Almighty said in Holy Qur’an:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ

“Whoso desireth power (should knew that) all power belongeth to God. Unto Him good words ascend, and the pious deed doth He exalt. (35:10)

The righteous deeds may be compared to the fuel in an airplane. So for it contains fuel it may continue to ascend, but the moment its fuel is finished it crashes immediately. Likewise, belief, ,and enlightenment so for are accompanied by righteous deeds they help ascend the human being towards Upper Heavens, but without the assistance of righteous deeds a human being crashes like an airplane without fuel. God–Almighty said in the Holy Qur’an:

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

“And serve thy Lord till the inevitable cometh into thee. (15:99)

The only way for achieving self–perfection and attaining the state of certainty (*yaqeen*) is to strive seriously to discharge obligations, worshipping, and servitude of God–Almighty. If some one imagines that he may attain exalted spiritual position through means other than worship –is in gross error. [1](#)If God willing (*inshaAllah*) the discussions regarding righteous deeds will be continued later on.

4. Invocations and Supplications

Islam, especially has emphasized the importance of continuous recital of invocations and in this regard special invocations and supplications have been prescribed by the Holy Prophet (S) and Infallible Imams (a.s.) whose recital earns a special reward. Invocation in Islam is considered as a type of worship which

helps one to achieve self-perfection and God's Nearness. For example The Holy Prophet (S) had said:

عن ابي سلام قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله يقول: خمس ما اتقلن في الميزان سبحان الله, والحمد لله, ولا إله الا الله, والله اكبر والولد الصالح يتوفى لمسلم فيصبر ويحتسب.

“There are five things which makes a human being's deeds heavier: Glory to God (Subhan Allahi), All praises belong to God (AlhamduLillahi), there is no God but god (La ilahi-illallahu), God is Great (Allahu Akbar) and to remain patient at the demise of a righteous offspring.”²

And said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: لما اسرى بي الى السما دخلت الجنة فرايت علاقة بينون لبنة من ذهب ولبنت من فضة وربما امسكوا فقلت لهم: ما لكم ربما بنيتم وربما امسكتم؟ فقالوا حتى نجئنا النفقة فقلت لهم: وما نفقتكم؟ فقالوا: قول المؤمن في الدنيا: سبحان الله, والحمد لله, ولا إله الا الله, والله اكبر. فاذا -- قال بنينا واذا امسك امسكنا.

“When on the Night of-Ascent (Mairaj) I was taken into the paradise I saw the angels busy in building the palaces of silver and gold but occasionally they suspended the work. I asked them: 'Why do you work intermittently?' 'When we do have construction material, we continue work but when the material is consumed we are forced to terminate the work.' Replied the angels.”

“What sort of material you require ? I asked. “Glory to God,” “All praises belong to God”, “There is no god but God” and “God is Great”; when a believer is busy in invocation –we receive the material and start to build, but when he forgets to offer invocation, we too are forced to terminate the work.” Replied the angels.”³

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: من قال سبحان الله غرس الله له بها شجرة في الجنة ومن قال الحمد لله غرس الله له بها شجرة في الجنة ومن قال: لا إله إلا الله غرس الله له بها شجرة في الجنة ومن قال: الله أكبر غرس الله له بها شجرة في الجنة: فقال رجل من قريش: يا رسول الله! ان شجرنا في الجنة لكثير. قال: نعم. ولكن إياكم أن ترسلوا عليها نيرانا فتحرقوها. وذلك أن الله عز وجل يقول: يا أيها الذين آمنوا أطيعوا الله وأطيعوا الرسول ولا تبطلوا أعمالكم.

“Whoever recites: “Glory to God”, a tree is planted for him in the Paradise, similarly God-Almighty orders plantation of a tree for a believer inside the Paradise for each recital of” All praises belong to God” or “There is no god but God or “God is Great”. “Then a Qureshite man asked: 'Oh Prophet of God! Then we will have plenty of trees in the paradise.

'Yes it is so! But be careful not to send the fire which will burn all the trees, because God–Almighty had said in the Holy Qur'an: O Ye who believe! Obey God and obey the Messenger and render not your actions vain. ' Replied the Holy Prophet (S).'⁴

Each phrase which induces God's Remembrance in a human being and whose meanings are related to praise, supplication, and adoration of God–Almighty –is called invocation (*dhikr*). But traditions have prescribed special invocations whose recital brings special rewards. Some of the important invocations are as follows:

لا اله الا الله.

(La ilahi illallahu)

"There is no god but God."

سبحان الله.

(Subhan allahi)

"Glory to God"

الحمد لله.

(Al hamdu lillahi)

"All praises belong to God."

لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله.

(La hol wala quwwateh illa billah)

"There is no power except God–Almighty."

حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل.

(Hasbanallahi wa nemal wakil)

"God is sufficient and He the best defence."

لا اله الا الله سبحانك انى كنت من الظالمين

(La illahi illallahu subhanak inni kuntu min al zalimin)

“There is no God save Thee. Be thou Glorified. Lo! I have been a wrong Doer.”

يا حى يا قيوم يا من لا اله الا انت

(Ya hayyu ya qayoom ya min la ilahi illa unt)

“Oh Self-Existent, Eternal these is no God except Thee.”

افوض امرى الى الله ان الله بصير بالعباد

(Afwaz amri illallahu innalahi basir bil ibad)

“Leave the affairs to God, He is aware and knowledgeable about His servants.”

لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلى العظيم

(La howlwala quwwateh illa billah il ‘Ali ul azim)

“There is no power except God the Exalted.”

يا الله

(Ya Allah)

“Oh! God.”

يا رب

(Ya Rab)

“Oh! Lord!”

يا رحمان

(Ya Rahman)

“Oh! Merciful!”

يا ارحم الراحمين

(Ya arhamar rahimin)

“Oh! The Merciful and Compassionate.”

يا ذا الجلال والكرام

(Ya zul jalale wal Ikram)

“Oh! The Majestic and Magnanimous.”

(Ya ghani ya mughni)

يا غنى يا مغنى

“Oh! Thou Who is free from needs, and oh! Thou Who is the Granter of our needs.”

Similarly there are other Holy attributes of God–Almighty which have; been mentioned in the traditions and supplications. All of them are invocations, motivates a man towards God's Remembrance, and. are means of His–Nearness.

A wayfarer may select any one of the above mentioned invocations and should recite them continuously. But some enlightened gnostics preferred certain special invocations. some of them recommended: “there is no god but God” (La ilahi illallahu), while others selected: “glory to God” all praises belong to God; there is no god but God; and God is Great; (Subhan allahi, wal hamadu lillahi wala ilahi illallahu walahu akbar).

But according to some traditions it may be concluded that the invocation: “there is no god but God “ “ (La ilahi illallahu) “ possesses distinction over other invocations. The Holy Prophet (S) had said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: خير العبادة قول لا اله الا الله

“The best worships are the recital of invocation ‘there is no god but God.’”⁵

And said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: سيد القول لا اله الا الله

“The phrase –”there is no god but God “ –is the chief and most distinguished among all other phrases of invocations.”⁶

The Holy Prophet (S) had narrated from Arch Angel Gabriel that God–Almighty said:

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله عن جبرئيل قال الله عز وجل: كلمة لا اله الا الله حصني فمن دخل حصني امن من عذابي.

“The phrase –There is no god but God –is the most stable shelter of Mine. Whoever entered in it shall be immune from My Punishment”⁷

Since the aim of invocation is attention towards God–Almighty, therefore, it may be concluded –that every phrase which improves and increases a person's motivation to remember God–Almighty is indeed the most suitable invocation for that person.

Generally speaking individuals, conditions and their spiritual ranks differ. It is quite possible that the phrase “Oh! God” (Ya Allah!) under certain conditions might be interesting and suitable for some one, while the phrase– “Oh Thou the Granter of the prayers of the depressed.” (Ya Muji bud dawatul Muztarin) may suit some other individual.

For some individuals the phrase –”there is no god but God. “ (La illahi illallahu) may suit, while for some others the phrase– “Oh Merciful”, Concealer of faults” (Ya Ghafar! Ya Sattar!) might be more suitable, and similar is the case with other invocations.

It is because of these considerations that if a wayfarer has access to perfect teacher, it would be better for him to seek his guidance in this regard. But if one does not has access to such learned teachers he may resort to supplication books, traditions and guidelines left by the Holy Prophet traditions and guidelines left by the Holy Prophet (S) and Infallible Imams (a.s.) of Prophets (Ahlul Bayt).

All invocations and worships are good and if performed correctly may help a wayfarer to attain higher gnostic stations. A wayfarer might utilize some or all of them but the learned teachers of gnostics recommend that in order to attain the positions of invocation (*dhikr*) and witnessing (*shahud*), a wayfarer must select a special invocation and then must undertake its recital for a certain fixed numbers in a special manner in order to accomplish the desired goal.

Here it is important to point out that invocations and supplication prescribed in the religious law, although

are worships and could be a means of achieving God's Nearness but, their main aim is attaining the stage of absolute cut off from other than God, and absolute attention and heart's presence towards God–Almighty.

Therefore, simply recital of phrases without paying attention towards their meanings and remaining negligent towards the real aims behind them would not produce any result. Because, recital of invocations and even their continuous repetition is not so difficult but this action alone may not help a wayfarer attaining his cherished goal.

What is useful is concentration and heart's presence towards God–Almighty, and negation and complete cut off from every thing other than Him, which is extremely difficult. So far as one does not achieve negation of others than God, he does not attain the worthiness and decency of receiving God's blessings and illuminations.

Only a heart absolutely and thoroughly cleansed from all existence other than God –has the honor of becoming a sacred place for the illumination of Divine light. Attaining concentration of thoughts and negation of things other than God require !' serious decision, perseverance, supervision, and constancy. It is not so that one will achieve it during the first attempt without practice and undertaking exercises. We must treat the self cautiously and should make him habitual of this act gradually.

1. According to a tradition narrated by Imam 'Ali bin al–Husayn (a.s.), since God was aware that the later period of history, would produce curious people, and therefore: He revealed the verses of Surah Iron till verse “knower of all that is in the breasts, “ in order to define the boundaries for investigating His essence and characteristics. Therefore whosoever has allowed himself to ponder over beyond these prescribed limits is bound to be doomed.

As if the Surah al Ikhlas, “Say God is One” says to the prayer offerer: God is unique Supreme Power, the Most High, Exalted, the Needless, His essence beyond description, neither Begets nor Begotten, and there is no one similar to Him or His equivalent. Learned, Seer, Wise etc., and other characteristics of God's essence whose knowledge and awareness is obligatory for Muslims, and are regarded influential and effective in shaping their lives, and ascension of their spirits, have been repeated in other surahs of the Holy Qur'an.

Do not think beyond the limits as already defined in this surah about God's essence and know–how about His characteristics. Rather, concentration should be exerted for performing deeds, which would eventually enlighten the believer in knowing God better . Do not think that by engaging in lengthy mental debates about His essence you will achieve more enlightenment.

It is not so! Instead, try to. achieve this desired enlightenment by bringing purification and spirituality to your inner self, and by practicing the principles of Monotheism in your deeds and action; and that is the way the prophets, saints, righteous servants of God, pure Monotheists, and gnostics were. –Profundities of Prayer, Ayatullah Sayyed 'Ali Khamenei, pp–45, 46 [Tr].

2. Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93, p–169.

3. Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93, p–169.

4. Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93, p–168.

5. Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93, p–195.

6. Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93, p–204.

7. Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 93 p–192.

Instructions

Some of the enlightened gnostics have recommended the following instructions for a wayfarer before starting his spiritual journey:

First: Before every thing else a devotee must purify his self from sins and moral abjectnesses by means of repentance. In the beginning with the intention of repentance (*towbah*) take a bath (*ghusl*) and during bathing, think about your past sins and esoteric contamination and then with a feeling of shame, present your self before the Most Merciful and Most Compassionate Lord saying: Oh Lord! I have repented and have returned to you. I have taken a firm decision never to sin again. As I cleaned my body with water, I have also cleaned my heart from sins and moral abjectnesses.

Second: Consider yourself all the time under the presence of God–Almighty. Try your best to remember God in all circumstances and if once in a while negligence overtakes you try to return to the previous state immediately.

Third: Must be strict in guarding his self against contamination with sins. During a period of twenty four hours he must fix a time for self scrutiny and with extreme accuracy should review his daily deeds and should seriously remonstrate his self.

Fourth: Should remain silent and should speak whenever it is absolutely necessary to speak.

Fifth: Should eat moderately to meet his physical needs and should strictly avoid over–eating and becoming a slave of belly.

Sixth: Should maintain his ablution all the times i.e. whenever he terminates ablution he should perform it again. The Holy Prophet (S) narrated a tradition:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: قول الله تعالى: من أحدث ولم يتوضأ فقد جفاني، ومن أحدث وتوضأ ولم يصل ركعتين فقد جفاني ومن أحدث وتوضأ، وصلى ركعتين، ودعاني ولم أجبه فيما سألني من أمر دينه ودنياه، فقد جفوته.. ولست برب جاف

“God–Almighty said: ‘Whoever after termination of ablution does not perform it again has been unfaithful to me,’ whoever after performance of ablution does not offer two units of prayer has done oppression, and whoever after performance of ablution offers prayer and requests for his worldly and spiritual needs –if I don’t grant them, I have oppressed him. But I am not the oppressor God.”¹

Seventh: Should fix a time during 24 hours preferably during night before dawn for practicing concentration and presence of heart, by sitting alone in an isolated place, lowering his head upon knees, concentrating all the senses towards face and strictly avoiding entry of all external thoughts and

memories. One should remain in this state for a while. May be this action would result in some spiritual contemplation for the wayfarer.

Eight: Invocation: “Oh Self-Existent, Eternal, there is no god save Thee,” (Ya Hayyu ya Qayum ya man la ilahi illa unt), should be recited continuously by tongue together with heart's presence i.e. whatever is being chanted by tongue is also comprehended by the heart.

Ninth: During a period of 24 hours one must perform a prolonged prostration with concentration and presence of heart in proportion to one's strength and should repeat the invocation: “There is no god save Thee. Be Thou Glorified. Lo! I have been a wrong Doer.” (La ilahi illallahu Subhanak inni kuntu min az zalimin).

The prolongation of prostration has been proved as very effective and produces good spiritual revelations. Some of the devoted wayfarer are reported to have repeated this invocation as much as four thousand times during a single prolonged prostration.

Tenth: Fix a certain time during 24 hours and with presence of heart should repeat the invocation, “Oh! Thou Who is free from needs, and Oh Thou Who is the Granter of Our needs.” (Ya Ghani Ya Mughni!)

Eleventh: Recite the Holy Qur'an with presence of mind daily, preferably in the standing position and should ponder over the meanings of its verses.

Twelfth: Awake a little before the call of Adhan for the morning prayer, after performing required ablutions should offer Night Prayer (*Namaz al-shab* or *Salatul-lail*), and after finishing it should recite the following verses of Surah Heights (*al-Araf*) with heart's presence, which is useful for attaining certainty and negation of external thoughts.

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا
وَخُفْيَةً ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يَحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا ۗ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ
مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“Inna Rabbokumul lahu lazi khalaqas samawate wal arzfi sittate ayyame summastavi ala arsh yaghshil lailin nahar yatlebo hasisan washamso wal qomro wal najoom muskharat be amrehi. elahul khalqo wal amr tabarkallahu rabbul alamin adava rabbokum tazraun wa kafitan nahu la yohubbul moatadin wala tafsodu fil arz bada islahi wa ada wa ho khofan wa tamum un rahmatullahi qarib minal mohsenin.”

“Lo Your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then mounted He the thrown. He covereth the night with the day, which in haste to follow it, and hath made the sun, the moon and the stars subservient by His command. His verily is all creation and commandment Blessed be God, the Lord of the worlds.”

“(Oh mankind!) call upon your Lord humbly and in secret. Lo! He loveth not aggressors. Work not confusion in the earth after the fair ordering (thereof, and call on Him in fear and hope. Lo! the mercy of God is nigh unto the good.” (7: 54–56) [2](#)

In order to achieve the desired result the above mentioned instructions should be practiced for a period of 40 days. It is possible that the wayfarer may succeed in receiving God's attention and might be blessed with spiritual contemplation. But, if after passing forty days one is not fortunate enough to receive such blessings, instead of becoming disappointed, the program should be repeated again and again till the desired results are accomplished.

Without giving up seriousness, action, and struggle the wayfarer should remain seriously committed towards his spiritual migration and seek favor from the Most Merciful Lord. When ever, he develops the required decency and competency to receive God's special blessing –it will be bestowed upon him.

In case a wayfarer in the beginning does not have the strength to perform all of the above mentioned guidelines, he may begin with few gradually adding others. But most important among these deeds are pondering, self-control, heart's presence, and attention towards God–Almighty.

It is crucial that a wayfarer should thoroughly negate all sort of external thoughts and should pay absolute attention towards God– Almighty, which is a difficult task indeed. The negation of other than God could be achieved gradually in three steps:

1. First: During first stage while reciting invocation try your best to concentrate all your thoughts towards the invocation while strictly preventing the entries of all external thoughts.

2. Second: During this stage one should recite invocation exactly like the first stage with the exception that, while reciting complete attention should be paid towards its meanings and contents, in a manner that mind should become clearly aware of this occurrence.

At the same time efforts should be made to strictly prevent the attack of all sorts of external thoughts and memories. is program should be exercised until one is able to prevent the attacks of all external thoughts during the entire period of invocation, while being remained attentive to their meanings and contents.

3. Third: During third stage, try your best first to memorize the meanings of invocation inside the heart, and since it has accepted their meanings and believes in them, orders the tongue to recite them. In this case the tongue actually follows the heart.

4. Fourth: At this stage try your best to negate all the meanings, contents, interpretations, and even the imaginations of invocations from the heart, thus, making it readied for receiving Divine blessings and illuminations. Try to pay absolute attention towards God–Almighty with your entire existence cleansing your hearts thoroughly from all sorts of external existence, opening its gate for the entrance of God's– Celestial Light.

At this stage it is quite possible that one might succeed in receiving God's special attention, may utilize His grace and illuminations, and submerged with His attraction may ascent further higher and higher upon the ladder of perfection in his spiritual migration towards God–Almighty.

At this station of his gnostic journey the wayfarer might become so much absorbed that he would be seeing nothing except God–Almighty even forgetting his own self and actions. It is better for me to leave the description of these most sublime realities for the God's favorite saints who had seen the end of journey and have tasted the most delicious taste of the stages of Desire (*Shouq*), Affection (*uns*), and Countenance (*Laqa*).

1. Instructions of the Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.)

Nouf had narrated:

“I saw the commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) while passing by with speed, I asked him. 'Oh my master! Where are you heading for?' 'Nouf, leave me alone, my desire is forcing me towards my Beloved.' Replied the Imam. 'Oh my Master! What is your desire.' I asked him. 'the one who is supposed to know about it –already knows, and there is no need to describe it to some body else. The decency demands that a servant of God should not include others (as partner) as for as the blessings and wants are concerned.’” Replied the Imam.

“Oh commander of the Faithful! I am afraid of being dominated by selfish whims and greed in my worldly affairs. ' I said. 'Why are you negligent towards the Saver of afraid ones and Protector of pious ones ?' Said the Imam.

“Introduce Him to me.” I requested. 'He is God–Almighty the Magnanimous through whose special benevolence your wishes are granted. Pay attention towards Him with your .full strength and do not allow Satanic whispers to enter inside your heart, and if you find it difficult then consider me as your guarantor. Return to God and pay absolute attention towards Him. The glorious God has said:

“I swear to My Majesty and Splendor that: Whoever puts his hope in some one other than Me, I will cut off his hope, will dress him in the robe of disgrace and wretchedness, will deprive him from My Nearness, will cut off communication with him and will hide his memory.

Woe be upon him, who takes shelter in other than Me during difficulties, while the solution of difficulties rests with Me. Does he hope in others while I remain Living and Eternal ? Does he go to the homes of human beings for solution of his problems while the gates of their houses are closed? Does he leave the door of My house while its gate remains always open ?

“Was there anyone who trusted Me and was betrayed? The hopes of My servants are tied to Me, and I take care of their hopes. ' I have filled the sky with those who never get tired of My praise, and have ordered the angels never to close the door between Me and My servants.

Does not, the one who face the problem, know that no one can solve it except with My permission ?
Why does not the servant approach Me for his needs, while I had already blessed him with favors without his being asked for them ?”

“Why does not he ask me instead of asking others ? Does he imagine that in the beginning I bestow My favors upon the servant and will now deprive him after his request? Am I miser that My servants regard me as miserly ? Do not the world and Hereafter belong to me ? Do not the merry and benevolence are my characteristics ? Do not the blessings and favors rest in My hand ? Do not all the desires end with Me ? Who has the power to terminate them ?”

“I swear with My majesty and splendor that if all the needs of all of the world's habitants are summed up, and if I bestow upon them in accordance to their wants, not equivalent even to the weight of a tiny particle will be decreased from My kingdom. Whatever is bestowed by Me, how could be it susceptible to loss or reduction ?

How destitute and wretched is the one who is hopeless of My Blessings ? How helpless is the one who disobeys me, indulges into forbidden deeds, disregards My limits and transgresses?” The Commander of the Faithful after narrating this narration said: 'Oh Nouf ! recite the following prayer:

إلهي إن حمدتك فبمواهبك، وإن مجدتك فبمراذك، وإن قدّستك فبقوّتك، وإن هلّلتك فبقدرتك، وإن نظرت فألى رحمتك، وإن عضضت فعلى نعمتك، إلهي إنّه من لم يشغله الولوع بذكرك، ولم يزدده السفر بقربك، كانت حياته عليه ميته وميته عليه حسرة، إلهي تاهت أبصار الناظرين إليك بسرائر القلوب، وطالعت أصغى السامعين لك نجيات الصدور، فلم يلق أبصارهم رُدّ دون ما يريدون، هتكت بينك وبينهم حجب الغفلة، فسكنوا في نورك وتنفسوا بروحك، فصارت قلوبهم مغارساً لهيبتك، وأبصارهم ماكفاً لقدرتك، وقربت أرواحهم من قدسك، فجالسوا اسمك بوقار المجالسة وخضوع المخاطبة، فأقبلت إليهم إقبال الشفيق، وأنصت لهم إنصات الرفيق، وأجبتهم إجابات الأحباء، وناجيتهم مناجاة الأخلاء، فبلغ بي المحلّ الذي إليه وصلوا، وانقلني من ذكرى إلى ذكرك، ولا تترك بيني وبين ملكوت عزّك باباً إلاّ فتحتّه، ولا حجاباً من حجب الغفلة إلاّ هتكته، حتّى تقيم روعي بين ضياء عرشك، وتجعل لنا مقاماً نصب نورك إنك على كلّ شيء قدير.

إلهي ما أوحش طريقاً لا يكون رفيقي فيه أملي فيك، وأبعد سفرأ لا يكون رجائي منه دليلي منك، خاب من اعتصم بحبل غيرك، وضعف ركن من استند إلى غير ركنك، فيا معلّم مؤمليه الأمل فيذهب عنهم كآبة الوجل، لا تحرمني صالح العمل، واكلائي كلاءة من فارقته الحيل، فكيف يلحق مؤمليك ذلّ الفقر وأنت الغنيّ عن مضارّ المذنبين، إلهي وإنّ كلّ حلاوة منقطعة، وحلاوة الايمان تزداد حلاوتها اتّصالا بك، إلهي وإنّ قلبي قد بسط أمله فيك، فأذقتّه من حلاوة بسطك إيّاه البلوغ لما أمل، إنك على كلّ شيء قدير.

إلهي أسألك مسألة المسكين الذي قد تحير في رجاه فلا يجد ملجأً ولا مسنداً يصل به إليك، ولا يستدلّ به عليك إلاّ بك وبأركانك ومقاماتك التي لا تعطيل لها منك، فأسألك باسمك الذي ظهرت له لخاصة أولياتك فوحّدوك وعرفوك فعبدوك بحقيقتك أن تعرّفني نفسك لأقرّ لك ببروبيتك على حقيقة الايمان بك، ولا تجعلني يا إلهي ممن يعبد الاسم

دون المعنى، والحظني بلحظة من لحظاتك تنور بها قلبي بمعرفتك خاصة ومعرفة أوليائك إنك على كل شيء قدير.

“Oh God! If I adore you –it is because of Your Mercy and Compassion,. if Glorify you –it is because of Your commandments, if I sanctify and attribute inviolability to you –it is because of your energy, if I chant the world of Monotheism with my tongue –it is because of Your Power. If I raise my eyes –see Your Blessings all over, if I practice thriftiness, it is because to save Your Bounties,. oh Lord! Whoever, You do not engage in Your invocation, and bestow upon him the grace of journeying towards Your countenance –life becomes for him like death, and death becomes for him a regret and disaster.

“Oh Lord! Those who are able to see –look towards You with their esoteric eyes, mysteries of their hearts became manifested and their wants are granted,. the veils of ignorance have been removed between You and them,. your Divine illumination has enlightened their hearts, they breath the breeze of Your Blessings,.

Your Majesty and Splendor has overwhelmed their hearts,. they witness the signs of Your Absolute Power every where,. there souls have reached near Your Sacred Thrown and with dignity, tranquility, and humility engage themselves in Your invocations. Like a friend You pay attention towards them, listen to their words, grant their, wants, and communicate with them.

“Please bestow upon me similar positions as attained by them, let the veils of ignorance be uplifted so that my soul could see the Divine illumination of Your Celestial Kingdom, and may receive an exalted position therein. Indeed You have the absolute power over all things. ‘Oh God! how fearsome and terrible is journeying on the road which does not terminate in you. Whoever, chooses a shelter of other than you –would certainly be disappointed. Whoever puts his trust in other than you is like sitting upon an unstable base.”

“Oh God! who had induced hope within the hearts of all the hopeless ones and have removed their pains and sufferings, please do not deprive me from the grace of performing righteous deeds and preserve me –the shelter less and destitute– in your shelter. How come those, who put their trust in Your Mercy could be inflicted with deprivation ? While you remain absolutely free from the need of inflicting loss upon sinners.”

“Oh God! All sweetness and pleasures eventually get terminated except the pleasure of faith which increases every day. Oh god! my heart is looking towards You with plenty of desires, please let my heart taste the sweetness of seeing those desires granted. Indeed You have absolute power over all things.”

“Oh God! As some one who has reached near the enlightenment of Your Essence, I beg You, to bestow upon me all the blessings which are worthy of a believer. And protect me from all sort of evils and calamities the way You protect all Your favorite servants. In deed You have absolute power over all things.”

“Oh God! My request to you is like the request of a confused beggar who does not have any shelter or support and except from you does not seek the help of any other helper. I request by the name, which became manifested for Your favorite saints, thus, enabling them to become enlightened about Your Holy Essence, comprehended You as One, and worshipped You with sincerity indeed; please bestow upon me too the learning to comprehend Your Holy Essence, so that I may admit the reality of Your Divinity and Godhood, and do not include me among them who worship Your Name only without paying attention to its meanings.”

“And allocate at least a certain moments (among various moments) to pay attention towards me thus, enlightening my heart about Your Sacred Essence as well as the essence of your favorite saints. Indeed you have absolute power over all things.”³

2. Instructions of Imam al-Sadiq

Unwan Basari, an old man of ninety-four years has narrated as follows:

“For the sake of acquiring knowledge I used to visit Malik bin Anas. When Jafar bin Muhammad (a.s.) came to our city I went to visit him, because I wanted to acquire knowledge from his distinguished and eminent personality.

One day he said to me: 'I am a person who had received God's special favor and attention and have incantation and invocations for every hour during day and night, therefore, you should not prevent me from their recital and like before continue to visit Malik bin Anas for learning knowledge.”

“Hearing these words I become sad and disappointed and left his company. I said to myself. 'If Imam had discovered some goodness within me, certainly he would not have deprived me from his company. Then I left for the Prophet's mosque and offered salutation to him. Next day, I went to the Holy Prophet's tomb and after offering two units of prayer raised my hands up and said:

يا الله يا الله ان تعطف على قلب جفقر وترزقني من علمه ما اهتدى به الى صراطك المستقيم

“Oh God! Oh God! Make Jafar's heart soft for me so that I could utilize his knowledge, and guide me towards straight path.” After that with a heavy broken heart returned home as well as visited Malik bin Anas, because love and affection for Jafar bin Muhammad had penetrated far deeper inside my heart.

For a long time I confined myself within the four walls of my home and did not come out except for offering mandatory daily prayers till my patience was exhausted one day I went to Imam's house and after knocking the door asked permission to enter inside. A servant came out and asked me.”

“What do you want?’ I would like to see the Imam and offer a salutation. ' I replied. 'My master is offering his prayer, replied the servant and returned inside the home, while I kept awaiting outside the door. After

a little while the servant returned and said: 'You may come in.'

"I entered inside the house and offered salutation to Imam. He replied my salutation and said: 'Please be seated, may God–Almighty bestow upon you forgiveness.' Then he lowered his head and after a prolonged silence raised his head and said: 'What is your name ? ' Abu Abdullah,' I replied. 'May God–Almighty bless you with His Special Grace and bestow upon you firmness. What do you want?'

"In this meeting i/there is no any other advantage for me except this prayer –even this much is going to be extremely precious for me. ' I said to myself Then I said: 'I asked God–Almighty to soften your heart for me so that I may utilize your knowledge. I hope my prayer would have been granted by him.

"Oh Abu Abdullah! Knowledge cannot be acquired by learning rather real knowledge is the light which illuminates a person's heart who is blessed with His guidance. Therefore, i/you are seeker of the knowledge, first make your heart comprehend the reality of (God's) servanthood, then request knowledge by means of deeds, and ask God–Almighty for comprehension so that he could make you understand. ' said the Imam.

"I said. 'Oh! Honorable one!' 'Abu Abdullah !" " Please continue.' said the Imam. 'Oh Imam! What is the reality of servanthood?' I asked.

The Imam replied. "The reality of servanthood consists in three things as follows:

1. First: A servant should not consider himself the owner of things which have been bestowed upon him by God–Almighty, because servants never become owner of things rather consider all the wealth as God's property and spent it exactly in the same manner as prescribed by him.
2. Second: Should regard him as absolutely helpless in managing his own affairs.
3. Third: Should engage himself continuously in performance of deeds recommended by God–Almighty and avoidance of His forbidden deeds.

"Therefore, if a servant does not consider himself as the owner of the wealth, spending it for the sake of God's way would become easier for him. If he trusted God–Almighty as a competent manager for managing his affairs then tolerance of worldly hardships would become easier for him. If he kept himself engaged in performing Divine commands and sustained himself: from committing forbidden deeds his precious time would not be wasted in nonsense amusements.

"And if God–Almighty honored a servant with these three characteristics then dealing with world, people, and Satan would become easier for him. In that case, he would not endeavor for increase of wealth for self–glorification, and would not wish for things whose possession is considered as means of prestige and superiority among the people and would not waste his precious hours in false pleasures. This is the first rank of piety which have been described by God–Almighty as follows:

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

“As for that abode of the Hereafter, we assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption, the sequel is for those who ward off evil. (28:83)

“Oh! Abu Abdullah! Please bestow upon me practical instructions. ' I said. The Imam said: 'I recommend you to follow the, following nine items. These are my recommendations and instructions for all those wayfarers who are journeying towards God–Almighty, and I pray that may God–Almighty bestow upon you his special grace.

The following are the guidelines: 'There are three guidelines for practicing self–asceticism (riyazat al–nafs), three guidelines for forbearance (hilm wa burdbari), and the last three guidelines are for education {ilm). Preserve them and, be careful not act negligently in their practice'. Unwan Basari said: 'I was listening to Imam's instruction with my entire existence, then the Imam continued ': 'The three instructions recommended by me for self–asceticism consist of:

1. Be careful, do not eat any thing until and unless you feel an appetite for it, because otherwise, it would be a matter of foolishness and ignorance.
2. Do not eat any thing until and unless you feel absolutely hungry.
3. When you eat always recite phrase in the Name of God (Bismillah) and eat only lawful (halal) foods.

The three instructions recommended by me for forbearance consist of:

1. *Whoever tells you: 'For each sentence you speak to me, I will speak ten sentences in response. ' You should say in reply: 'If you speak ten sentences to me, in reply you will not hear even one sentence from me.*
2. *Whoever threatens you with abusive language, you should promise him good wishes and advice.*
3. *Whoever accuses you, you must say in reply: 'If you said it right may God forgive me and if you lied then may God forgive you.*

The three guidelines recommended by me for education consist of:

1. Whatever is unknown to you ask from the learned ones, but be careful not to question them with the intention of examining their knowledge or giving them hard time.
2. Strictly avoid following your whims and as much as possible act prudently.
3. Strictly avoid issuance of religious decrees (fatwas) without religious documents. As much as you would like to run away while encountering a wild beast, similarly be careful not to offer your neck as a

bridge for people's crossing. ,

“Then he said: 'Oh Abu Abdullah! You may leave now. I have given you sufficient advice. Do not disrupt me from continuation of my incantations and invocations, because, I believe in the dignity of my own self: Salutations be upon those who are obedient to guidance.”⁴

3. Instructions of 'Allamah Majlisi

One of the most eminent wayfarer of gnostic journey –the great learned Divine Scholar Mulla Muhammad Taqi Majlisi writes:

“Whatever this servants has discovered during his period of self–building and gnosticism is related to the period when I was busy in studying commentary of the Holy Qur’an, one night, while I was in a state of partly slept and partly awakened I saw the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S) in a dream.

I said to my self that it is a good opportunity to take a profound look about the perfection and moral ethics of the Holy Prophet (S) The more I paid attention towards him I found his splendor and illumination spreading till it brightened the entire space around me.”

“At this moment it was revealed to me that the Holy Qur’an is the perfect manifestation of the Holy Prophet's moral ethics. Therefore, to know more about Holy Prophet's moral ethics I must ponder deeply about the Holy Qur’an. The more I paid attention upon the verses of Holy Qur’an the more I discovered the sublime realities till at one instant I felt that a lot of realities and learning have been descended upon my heart.”

“After that whenever I pondered about a Qur’anic verse, I felt that a special talent for its comprehension has been bestowed upon me. Of course, appreciation of this incident by some one who has not been blessed with such a grace is naturally difficult rather impossible, but my aim was to advice and guide the fellow brothers for the sake of God–Almighty. The guidelines for asceticism and self–building consist of:

–Useless talks, rather any thing other than God's Remembrance should be strictly avoided.

–Living in luxurious, beautiful and comfortable housing as well as consumption of expensive foods, drinks and fancy clothing should be renounced. (one should limit himself to the extent of .fulfilling his genuine needs).

–Social mixing with other than God's most favorite saints should be strictly avoided.

–Excessive sleep should be avoided and God's invocation with complete dedication should be recited continuously.

“God's favorite saints by continuous recital of invocations namely: “Oh! Self–existent Oh! Eternal “ (ya Hayyio ya Qayyum!) and “There is no god but God” (Ya man la ilaha illa ant), were able to obtain good

results. I too have practiced the same invocation but perhaps my favorite invocation is “Oh! God”! (Ya Allah), with thorough cleansing of heart from all existence other than God, together with absolute concentration towards Him. Of course, what is important is that God's Remembrance should be accompanied with absolute concentration and heart's presence. Also, all other deeds do not come close to the importance assigned to invocation.”

“If this is done for a period of forty day and night continuously then certainly the doors of wisdom, learning, and love will be opened for the wayfarer enabling him to ascent towards the most exalted gnostic positions of annihilation in God (fanafi Allah wa baqa billah), or achieving permanence with God–Almighty.”⁵

4. Letter of Akhund–Mulla Husayn Quli Hamdani

The most eminent learned Divine scholar and gnostic (late) Akhund Mulla Husayn–Quli Hamadani (r.a.) in his letter to one of the scholar in Tabriz writes:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ. الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِیْنَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰی مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِیْنَ وَلَعْنَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلٰی
أَعْدَائِهِمْ اَجْمَعِیْنَ

(Bismillah ar Rahman ar Rahim, Alhamdulillah rabal alimin was salat was salam ala Muhammad wa aleh al tahirin wa lantatullahi ala adaihim ajmaeen).

“In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful”

“Praise be upon God of the worlds, salutations be upon the Muhammad and his Holy progeny and may be the curse of God be upon their enemies.”

“It should not remain hidden for religious brothers that there is no way to achieve the nearness of the Lord of Splendor and Majesty except strictly following the sacred religious law of Islam (Sharia) in all movements, pauses, conversations, and instances etc. Superstitious methods practiced by some pseudo mystics and ignorant ones in accordance to their intellectual taste do not produce any desired result except their taking farther distance from God–Almighty.”

“Even a person who forbids upon himself meat and leaves the hairs of his mustache untrimmed is blessed with the blessing of faith, (i. e. belief about the immunity from sin for the infallible Imams of the Prophet's progeny) must understand, that unless and until he strictly practices their instructions and traditions for invocations, he would become farther away from God–Almighty.”

“It is therefore, necessary that he must regard the sacred Divine Law (Sharia) with special reverence and should attach utmost importance for its execution. Whatever have been emphasized in the sacred religious law as well as whatever have been comprehended by this poor servant by using intellect and

deliberating traditions may be concluded: “The fulfillment of the heartiest desire of all creatures –God' s Nearness depends upon their making serious efforts and endeavors to quit sinning.”

“So for this is not done recital of invocations and pondering over Qur’anic verses would not produce any useful result for heart, because the services rendered by some one who is in direct rebellion against the King would be useless. I don't know, what sort of King ? The exaltedness belong to that king of Splendor and Majesty, and which enmity could be more worst then enmity with such a King ?”

فافهم مما ذكرت ان طلبك المحبة الالهية مع كونك مرتكبا للمعصية امر فاسد جدا و كيف يخفي عليك كون المعصية سببا للنفرة و كون النفرة مانعة الجمع مع المحبة و اذا تحقق عندك ان ترك المعصية اول الدين و آخره و ظاهره و باطنه فبادر الي المجاهدة و اشتغل بتمام الجد في المراقبة من اول قيامك من نومك في جميع آتاتك الي نومك و الزم الادب في مقدس حضرته و اعلم انك جميع اجزا وجودك ذرة ذرة اسير قدرته و راع حرمة شريف حضوره و اعبده كأنك تراه فان لم تكن تراه فانه يراك و التفت دائما الي عظمته و حقارتك و رفعته و دنائتك و عزته و ذلتك و غناه و حاجتك و لا تغفل عن شناعة غفلتك عنه جل جلاله مع التفاتة اليك دائما و قم بين يديه مقام العبد الذليل الضعيف و تبصص تحت قدميه بصبصة الكلب النحيف.اولا يكفيك شرفا و فخرا انه اذن لك في ذكر اسمه العظيم.بلسانك الكثيف الذي نجسته فاذورات المعاصي.

“You must better understand that your efforts endeavor for achieving God's Nearness –while still sinning and being contaminated is a serious mistake. How come this matter has remained hidden from your eyes that it is the sin of a sinner that causes the King to feel hatred towards him, and this hatred can never be summed up with His love.”

“Since you know it with certainty that avoidance of sins is the beginning, end, apparent, and hidden of faith, therefore the sooner you engage yourself in self–struggle the better it would be. With absolute dedication from the moment you awake, all along the day till the time of sleep you must monitor your self strictly.

Be careful to remain respectful because you are continuously in the presence of the Lord of Majesty al1d splendor and know that all your body parts and members, including the finest particles of your existence are the prisoners of His Power, therefore, do not forget to observe the rules of etiquette. Worship him in a manner as though you are actually seeing Him, and if you do not see Him, any way He sees you.”

“Be conscious about His Majesty and your humility, His Eminence and your lowness, His Magnanimity and your abjectness and His Freedom from needs and your neediness. Be aware that if you act negligently in remembering the Lord of Glory and Magnanimity but He does remember you, and in his presence stood like a helpless, wretched servant.

Like a bony dog put your chin upon din before His feet. Is this distinction and honor is not sufficient for you that He has permitted you to utter His Holy Exalted Name by your filthy tongue ? The tongue that had become unclean due to pollution of sinning.”

“Oh dear! Since the Most Compassionate and Most Merciful Lord has made the tongue as the reservoir of the mountain of light, to be commissioned only for His Holy invocation it is indeed shamelessness that the King's reservoir be polluted by refuse and filth of lying, backbiting, cursing, teasing, and sinning.

It should be a place full of perfume and rose water instead of being filled with filth and refuse. Beyond any doubt since you acted negligently in supervising your self strictly, you don't know what son of horrible sins and transgression have been committed by your body parts namely: ears, tongue, eyes, hands feet, belly, and sexual organs.”

“What sorts of devastating fires have you ignited ? How much corruption have you induced in your religion? How much prohibited wounds have you inflicted upon your heart through the tongue's swords and arrows ? It will be surprising if it has not already been killed. If I want to comment about the details of these deviations even this entire book would not be enough, what can I do with one page?

You, who have yet not cleaned your body parts from the filth, how do you expect someone to write for you about the heart's condition ? Therefore, make haste, hurry up to perform a true repentance and seriously guard your self.”

“In summary, after making his best endeavors for strictly guarding the self a wayfarer striving for God's Nearness should not be negligent about night vigil awakening before dawn and offering the night prayer (Namaz al-Shab) with concentration and heart's presence.

If time permits he should engage himself in hymns and invocations but at least a part of night should be spent in invocation with heart's presence. In all these situations the wayfarer should not be without grief and sorrow and if he is –he should acquire its causes.”

“In the end recite the following:

The tasbeeh of Hazrat Fatimah al-Zahra (s.a.) [6](#)

Surah al-Ikhlâs (surah no. 112)– 12 times,

“There is no god but God. There is no partner, there is no kingdom except yours.” (La illahi illahi wahdahu la sharika lah, lahu al-Mulk) – 10 times,

“There is no god but God” (la ilahi illallahu) – 100 times,

I Beseech God's forgiveness and offer repentance” (Astaghfarullahi rabi wa atuboh ilahe) – 70 times,

A portion of Holy Qur'an and the famous prayer named Dua al-Sabah [7](#) of the Commander of the Faithful Imam 'Ali (a.s.).

“One should remain in the state of ablution continuously and it is preferred to offer two units of prayer after performing each ablution. Be careful not to inflict the least damage or hurt the feeling of fellow

human beings and must strive sincerely in meeting the needs of fellow Muslims especially the scholars and pious ones.

He should not attend any meeting where there is a possibility of sinning, even socialization with the negligent ones is harmful. Also, excessive involvement in world affairs –although permitted religiously, too much humor, nonsense talking, and listening to false rumors are injurious for the hearts condition ultimately making it a dead heart.”

“Without, practicing, strict self–control simply engaging in invocation and deliberations would be fruitless and would not produce the results even though if one succeeds in achieving ecstasy, because it won't be durable and one should not be fooled with ecstasy achieved without self–surveillance. I do not have lot of strength and I beseech you to pray a lot for me and do not forget this humble wretched sinner full of guilt. Do recite Surah Power (Qadr), one hundred times on Thursday night and Friday afternoon.”⁸

5. Instructions of Mirza Javad Agha Maliki Tabrizi

The most celebrated perfect gnostic Mirza Javad Agha Maliki Tabrizi⁹ writes:

“The Holy prophet (S) through his repeated recommendations have emphasized the importance of prolonged prostration, which indeed is an extremely important matter. Prolonged prostration is the most nearest aspect of servanthood, and it is because of this consideration that two prostration have been incorporated in each unit of prayer. About the prolonged prostration of Infallible Imams (a.s.) of the prophets progeny and their Shiite's, a lot of traditions have been narrated.”

In the one of his prolonged prostration Imam al–Sajjad has repeated the following invocation one thousand times:

لا اله الا الله حقا حقا. لا اله الا الله تعبدا ورقا لا اله الا الله ايماننا وتصدقا.

(La illahi illahi haqan haqqa, la illahi illahi taubdan wa riqqa, la illahi illahi Imanan wa sadqa)

*“There is no god but God–truly and Justly.” “There is no god but God I bow in humility in front of him.”
“There is no god but God is the truth indeed and is my faith.”*

About Imam al–Kadhim (a.s.) it has been reported that some times he prolonged his prostration from morning till noon, and similar incidents have been narrated about his companions namely: Ibne abi Amir, Jamil, and Kharbouz.

“During my stay in Najaf al–Ashraf, I had a learned pious scholar who was a Marjai–Taqlid for religious students. I once ask him: 'What special act have you tried in your own life which is effective for a wayfarer in his spiritual gnostic journey ? ' He replied: 'To prolong the prostration during a period of

twenty four hours and reciting of invocation:

لا اله الا انت. سبحانك انى كنت من الظالمين

(La illahi illa ant Subahnak Inni Kunt min as Zalimin). *“There is no God save Thee. Be Thou Glorified. Lo! I have been a wrong doer.”* While reciting this invocation lie must pay attention to the fact that God–Almighty is for inviolable to oppress me rather I am the one who have oppressed my own self and have blamed Him for that.”

“My teacher recommended this prostration to those who were interested in gnostic journey, and those who performed it obtained good results especially, those who prolonged it more. Some of them repeated this invocation in prostration one thousand times, some of them a little more or less and about some of them I heard that they repeated it three thousands times in their prostration.”¹⁰

6. Instructions of Sheikh Najmuddin

Sheikh Najmuddin Razi writes:

“Know that engaging in invocations without paying due regards to recital manners and relevant etiquettes will not produce useful results. First of all a devoted wayfarer should prepare himself thoroughly to meet all the requirements of moral etiquette. When a true devotee is inflicted with the pain of desire for undertaking the spiritual journey, its symptoms are that he develops intense affection with invocations and feels frightened with the people until reaching to a point whereby he turns his face away from the people and takes shelter in invocation, as the Holy Qur’an says:

قُلِ اللَّهُ ۙ ثُمَّ نَزَّهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ

“Say God! Then leave them in the play of caviling. (6:91)

“As he continues to guard his invocations he should not be negligent towards its basis which is true repentance (towbatun nasuh) and should not commit sins. While, engaging in invocations it is preferable to take a bath (ghusl) and in case it is not possible one must make ablutions, because invocation is tantamount of waging wars against enemies in the battlefield which cannot be done without armaments, and this is why the ablution has been called as the armaments of believers:

The clothing of devotee should be clean and should meet the following four requirements:

- 1. First:** Cleanliness from impurities such as blood, urine and excrement etc.
- 2. Second:** Cleanliness from oppression i.e. the clothing should not have been obtained through

oppression.

3. Third: Cleanliness from sanctity i.e. it should not consist of forbidden (haram) Material such as silk (for men).

4. Fourth: Cleanliness from vanity i.e. its length should be short in accordance with Islamic traditions and should not be dress of vanity.

The place of invocation should be dark, clean, and isolated and it is preferred to make it perfumed by burning some incenses. He should sit in the direction of Mecca, sitting in a squared position¹¹ –a position which is forbidden all times except for recital of invocation because Khuwaja (a.s.) after offering morning prayer used to sit in squared position until sun-rise.

He should place his hands upon his thighs, making his heart and eyes readied with all due respect should, start reciting the invocation (la ilahi illallahu). “There is no god but God” –with his entire existence in a rhythmic cycle in a whistling manner without raising his voice.

“He should recite the invocation firmly and continuously pondering about its meanings within his heart as well as negating all the external thoughts. Like the meanings of “there is no god” (La illahi) he should negate whatever thoughts enter inside his heart, meaning that he would no longer desire any thing else and would not like to have any other beloved except God–Almighty. In totality he should negate other gods and should affirm God–Almighty as the beloved and ultimate desired object.”

“While chanting each phrase of invocation the heart should accompany the tongue from the beginning till end negating and affirming, and in this process whenever he looks inside his heart and if discovers his heart attached to something else –should discard it, returning the heart to God–Almighty. By negating –”There is no god.” –must nullify heart's attachment towards other than God, thus, destroying the roots of his attachment to other objects and replacing it with God's love.”

“In this manner the devotee should chant, invocation continuously, so that gradually heart becomes cleaned and purified from all sorts of usual desirable objects achieving an state of heart's absolute domination with invocation. When it occurs the devotee becomes totally annihilated by the invocation's illumination turning him as singular –purifying his essence with all sort of attractions and obstacles, and enabling him to pass through the material and spiritual worlds swiftly.”

“As it is said: that the heart of a believer is the place especially reserved for the union with God–Almighty. But so far as the heart's domain is occupied by the alien elements, God's Majesty and Exaltedness does not consider it befitting for His entry. However, once the herald of “there is no god” announces the cleanliness of heart's domain from alien elements, one may then expect the entry of the Lord of the Majesty and Splendor. As the Holy Qur'an says: [12](#)

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ

“So when thou art relieved still toil and strive to please thy Lord. (94:7-8)

Therefore, in the light of above discussion it becomes clear that eminent gnostics while regarding invocation as one of the best means for undertaking gnostic journey, for its implementation have experienced and recommended various methods. The reason is that all invocation described therein assure the real aim behind them which is to cut off all connections from other than God and paying absolute attention towards God–Almighty.

But their influence varies in proportion to the rank and degree of a devotee. What is the rank and position of a wayfarer, where does he stand upon the path, and what particular invocation will be suitable for him –are matters where the role of a competent teacher comes into picture.

In the books of traditions and supplications a lot of invocation and supplication have been narrated and for each one of them special rewards have been described accordingly. Over all invocations and supplications may be divided into two categories, namely: Independent and Conditional.

For some of the invocations particular timings, special conditions and a certain number have been prescribed and in these cases the wayfarer is supposed to perform them exactly in the same manner as prescribed by the Infallible Imams (a.s.) so that he earn the prescribed reward.

But some of the invocations are independent and in those cases the devotee is free to select the suitable number for its recital and its timings in accordance to his circumstances, and conditions. Or, may consult his teacher and guide. Also, one may resort to the books of supplication and traditions.

Here it is important to emphasize the importance of the following matters:

1. First: A wayfarer must be aware of the fact that the real aim behind the invocation is to attain absolute concentration and heart's presence towards God–Almighty. Therefore, in selecting the timings, quantity and quality of invocation he should keep in mind the real aim and should continue recital, but whenever he feels tired, exhausted and disaffected he should discontinue and must start again at some appropriate time because the Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said:

قال على عليه السلام: ان للقلوب سهوة واقبالا وادبارا فاتوها من قبل شهوتها واقبالها فان القلب اذا اكره عمى

“Sometimes the heart is healthy and full of enthusiasm while at other times it is sick and disaffected, therefore, deeds must be performed when the heart is willing, otherwise, performance of a deed with a reluctant heart would result in heart's blindness.”¹³

2. Second: It must be understood clearly that the real aim behind continuation of invocation and practicing asceticism is to attain self–perfection and God's Nearness which is not possible except through discharging due obligations. If a person is responsible for performance of some social and

religious obligations, he must discharge them properly and while doing so should not remain negligent from God's Remembrance as well as recital of invocations to the extent he may do so.

Also, he may again continue it in his free time, but if by taking the excuse of asceticism and continuation of invocation if he hides into seclusion and did not discharge his due obligations, then such deeds will not result in God is Nearness for him.

- [1.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 1, p-268,
- [2.](#) al-Kafi, vol. 1, p-344.
- [3.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 94, p-94.
- [4.](#) Kashkul, Shaykh Bahai, vol. 2, p-184, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 1, p-224.
- [5.](#) Rozatehal-Mutaqin, vol. 13, p-128.
- [6.](#) Allahu Akbar 34 times, Subhan Allah 33 times, an Alhamdu lillah 33 times [Tr].
- [7.](#) For Dua-i Sabah refer to Mafateh al-Jinan of Haj Sheikh Abbas Qummi p-97 [[Tr].
- [8.](#) Tazkirateh al-Muttaqin, p-207.
- [9.](#) Mirza Javad Agha Malaki Tabrizi: The most distinguished jurisprudent and perfect mystic late Mirza Javad Agha Malaki Tabrizi was born in Tabriz. After finishing his early education at his home town, he left for Najaf al-Ashraf which at that time was supposed to be the most reputable religious learning center.

At Najaf he attended the lectures of great learned jurisprudents such as Akhund Khorasani (writer of Kifayateh al-Usool) Haj Agha Ridha Hamadani (writer of Misbah al-Faqiyeh) and Muhaddith Nouri (writer of Mustadrak al-Wasail).

Also, during this period he came in contact with most celebrated mystic personality of that time –Akhund Mulla Husain Quli Hamdani, who was unique in knowledge, ethics, and mystics. Mr. Malaki spent 14 years with him and during this period acquired profound knowledge of moral ethics and Mysticism from his learned professor.

Mr. Malaki attained such higher spiritual positions in gnosticism that a great jurisprudent and scholar like sheik Muhammad Hussain Isfahani famous as Kampani, himself an outstanding authority of learning and deeds, in a letter to Mr. Malaki, seeks his instructions regarding ethics and mysticism.

Mr. Malaki returned to his native home town Tabriz in the year 1320 or 21 A.H. and settled down there, but after few years due to constitutional revolution the conditions in Tabriz deteriorated facing him to migrate to Qum. Where he started teaching jurisprudence from Faiz Kashani's Book: Mafateeh as well as taught ethics (Akhlaque). Also, he kept himself busy in writing and had left many precious works.

Ultimately, after living a fruitful life full of learning, teaching, writing, refinement, and purification of self he left this transient world to join his beloved in the moving of 11th Dhil Hijjah 1343 A.H. His Holy remains were buried in the t Shaykhan-Qum Graveyard near the tomb of Mirzai Qummi. The following verse, written in Arabic reflects about his precious existence and the year of his demise.

العلم وذهب العلم.

“The world lost its soul, the Nation lost its shelter.”

His virtues and mystical perfection are far greater to be confined in words. In order to satisfy the curiosity of our readers to know more about profundities of Islamic mysticism, the following reports narrated by authentic sources will through some light about the spiritual perfection of this great man.

1. One of his close friend and pupil had reported:

“One night in the city of Shahroud in a dream I found myself in a plain where Imam al-Mahdi (2) (a.s.) the Lord and Master

of the Age, together with a group of his companions, was leading the congregational prayer. With the intention of kissing his hand and salutations, when I approached him, I saw a sheik whose face was the manifestations of virtues and perfection sitting near the Imam. After awakening from this dream kept thinking deeply about the dignified sheik who is so close to the Imam. I was so much interested to identify and meet him.”

“Searching for him, I went to Mash had hoping to locate him over these but could not; came to Tehran but still there was no news from him, ultimately, when I came to Qum, I found him in a small room at Faizyeh –school busy in teaching. Having inquired about him, they said: 'He is Mirza Javad Malaki Tabrizi. '

When I visited him he welcomed me with I heartedly and with kindness, treated me in a manner as though he knows me, and was aware of that dream. After that I remained in his company and found him exactly the way I had first perceived him in that dream.”

2. Another one of his intimate friend has reported. The following story: “One day after finishing the lecture late Malaki went to the room of a religious student in Dar al-Shafa School; he thanked and appreciated the inmate and after sitting over there for a while came out of the room. Since I was accompanying him, I asked the reason of visiting this student Mr. Malaki answered:

'Last night near the dawn I was bestowed with special Divine grace which I understood was not due my own deeds. When, I thought deeply, I discovered that this student is busy in night vigil and in his night prayer has prayed for me and those blessing were the result of his prayer. Therefore, I visited him for offering my appreciation and thanks .

3. “Late Malaki has a son who is the source of warmth and pleasure for his household. On the Day of Eid al-Ghadir, when traditionally people visit the elderly personalities to offer greetings, his house is full of visitors. Suddenly, a female servant discovers the dead body of his son floating inside the yard's water pool.

She starts crying; the others women folk of Mr. Malaki's household joins her in loud crying; having heard the loud screams Mr. Malaki comes to the back yard and sees the lifeless body of his dear one; he controls himself and asks the women folk to stop crying, the women stop lamentation and become silenced, the dead body is placed in a corner and they return inside the house in order to treat the visiting guests. Some of the guests remained for the lunch at his house. After lunch, when the guests asked permission to leave, Mr. Malaki says to some of his close friends:

'Please don't leave, I have some thing to tell you. ' When all the guests left the house, he informed them about the tragedy of his son's demise and seeks their help in making the necessary arrangements for the funeral.”

4. Late Hujjatul Islam Sayed Mahmood Yazdi, one of very close and intimate friend has narrated the following: “When the time of night prayer arrived he used to perform all the etiquettes recommended for awakening of heart namely prostration and special supplications, used to cry in his bed, then he will come outside in the yard and looking at the sky will recite the verse:

Lo! in the creation of earth and sky there are signs... (2: 164)

and while placing his head against the wall, shedded tears. During ablutions sitting one the water pool continued crying and while standing upon the prayer rug used to become agitated and used to cry a lot during prayer and especially in Qunoots.”

5. Late Haj Agha Husain Fatimi, a pious ascetic and an intimate friend of Mr. Malaki has narrated: “When I returned from the Jamkaran Mosque, I was informed that Mr. Malaki has inquired about me. Since, I knew that he is sick I rushed to see him. I presume it was Friday after noon, I found him laying upon a bad neat and cleaned, bathed, perfumed and hair dyed readied for Dhohr and Asr Prayer.

He recited Adhan and Aqameh upon his bed, recited supplications and as soon as raised his hands for Takbirteh al-Ahram and said Allahu Akbar (God is great) his sacred spirit ascended towards the celestial Kingdom thus, the meanings of narration: The Prayer is believers heavenly journey –become truly manifested for him. Also, the meanings of “Get readied

for the Prayer” in accordance to traditions have been described as the time of meeting the Beloved, too become materialized for him because he rushed to meet his Beloved with prayer.

This was the brief life history of a perfect mystic. For the detailed biography the readers may refer to the following books:

Rehanateh al-Adab vol. 5 p-397, Naqba al-Beshar vol. 1 p-330, Ganjinai Danishmandan vol. 1 p-232, preface to Resala Laqa Allah and Simai Farzangan pp. 60-70 [Tr].

(2) Imam al-Mahdi (a.s.): The son of Imam Hasan Askari was born in Samarra on Friday, 15th Sha'ban 255 A.H. The twelfth Imam lives in hiding under the protection and tutorship of his father until the latter's martyrdom, when by God's command he went into occultation, during a period known as “lesser occultation” (al-Ghaybat as-Sughra).

During this period, four special deputies in succession would answer the questions of the Shi'ite and resolve their problems. After that in the year 329 A.H. the Imam went into the Greater occultation (al-Ghaybat al-Kubra), until a day when by God's command he will reappear to fill the world with justice as it is now filled with oppression.

(3) Eid al-Ghadir: In the tenth year of the Hijra, the Most Noble Messenger (S) set out for Mecca to perform his final, farewell Hajj. After carrying out the rituals of the pilgrimage and imparting necessary teachings to the people, he set out for Medina. When he was returning on 18th Dhu'l-Hijja (10 March, 632), on the road at a locale known as Ghadir al-Khumm (Ghadir Pond), he ordered the caravan to halt. In the midst of one hundred twenty thousand pilgrims from all over the Arabian Peninsula, he took 'Ali's (a.s.) hand, raised it aloft and declared:

“He of whom I am the mawla (the patron, master, leader), of him 'Ali is also the mawla (man kuntu mawlahu fa 'Ali-un-mawlahu).

Oh God! Be friend of him who is his friend, and be the enemy of him who is his enemy {Allahuma wali man walahu wa adi man adhau}”

With this act, the question of the successor, who was to govern the affairs: of the Muslims, guard the sunnah (the body of customary behavior based on the Prophet precedent), and uphold religious customs and laws, was settled for the Islamic society. The intent of the noble verse,

' Messenger! Promulgate what has been revealed to you by your Lord. for if you do not. you will not have conveyed His message' (5: 67),

was carried out. The Most Noble Messenger (S) died shortly after returning to Medina. The above traditions of al-Ghadir are so abundantly reported and so commonly attested by hundreds of different transmitters belonging to all school of thoughts that it be futile to doubt their authenticity.

Ibn Kathir, a most staunch supporter of Sunni viewpoint has devoted seven pages to this subject and has collected a great number of different isnads from which the tradition is narrated. Also, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal has recorded this event in his Musnad [Tr].

[10.](#) al-Moraqebat, p-122.

[11.](#) While offering prayers in sitting positions the legs are bent in a vertical, plane. Like sitting for Tashahud and Salutation. Squared position means a relaxed position in which the legs are bent in a horizontal plane [Tr].

[12.](#) Marsad al-ebad, p-150.

[13.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-61.

Obstacles of the Path

Starting a spiritual journey upon the road of perfection and attaining higher spiritual positions is not an easy and simple task rather is extremely difficult and complicated. A devotee has to encounter plenty of obstacles in his path and must struggle to remove them, otherwise, he would never be able to reach his Desired destination.

1. First Obstacle: Incompetence

The greatest obstacle for undertaking gnostic journey and attaining God's Nearness by a wayfarer is the incompetency of his self. A heart contaminated and darkened by sinning cannot become a center for the illumination of Divine light. When a human heart as a result of sinning turns into a Satan's commands center then how come God's favorite angels may descend into it?

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) narrated a tradition from his father:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال كان ابي يقول: ما من شيء افسد للقلب من خطيئته ان القلب ليواقع الخطيئة فلا تزال به حتى تغلب عليه فيصير اعلا اسفله.

“For a human being there is nothing worst than sin because it wages war against heart until taking over its control. This condition of heart is called inverted or upside down heart.”¹

The heart of a sinner is an inverted heart, which forces him to move in the wrong direction. Then how could he move in the direction of God's Nearness and could accept God's blessings and favors? Therefore, it is necessary for a wayfarer that before starting his journey to achieve self-purification and self-perfection, firstly he must try his best not to commit sins and only then he should engage himself into invocation and worship, otherwise his efforts and endeavor in invocation and worship will not result in his becoming near to God-Almighty.

2. Second Obstacle: Worldly Attachments

One of the greatest barrier is the attachments to worldly allurements such as desire of wealth and property, love of wife and children, attachment to house and other means of living, ambitions towards power and positions, attachments towards family, and even liking towards education and knowledge etc. are the types of attachments which prevent a human being from movement and migration towards God-Almighty.

A heart so much in love with perceptible things and is infatuated in them, how can detach itself so easily

and may ascent towards the Upper-Heaven? A heart which is the command center for of worldly affairs, how could it become the illumination of Divine light. Apart from that in accordance to traditions the love of this world is the roots of all sins and transgressions, and a sinner can never ascent towards God's Nearness. Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: حب الدنيا رأس كل خطيئة.

“The love of world is the root of all evils.”²

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: اول ما عصى الله تبارك وتعالى بست خصال: حب الدنيا وحب الرياسة وحب الطعام وحب الراحة.

“The first thing through which transgression against God-Almighty was done consisted of six characteristics: Love of world, love of position, love of women, love of eating, love of sleeping, and love of comforts.”³

Jabir narrated that once he visited Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) who said:

عن جابر قال: دخلت على ابن جعفر عليه السلام فقال: يا جابر! والله اني لمح زؤن واني لمشغول القلب: قلت: جعلت فداك, وما شغلك وما حزن قلبك؟ فقال يا جابر! إنه من دخل قلبه صافي خالص دين الله شغل قلبه عما سواه, يا جابر!! ما الدنيا وما عسى أن تكون الدنيا؟ هل هي إلا طعام أكلته أو ثوب لبسته أو امرأة أصبتها؟ يا جابر! إن المؤمنين لم يطمئنوا إلى الدنيا ببقائهم فيها ولم يأمنوا قدومهم الآخرة يا جابر! الآخرة دار قرار والدنيا دار فناء وزوال, ولكن أهل الدنيا أهل غفلة, وكأن المؤمنين هم الفقهاء, أهل فكرة وعبرة لم يصمّمهم عن ذكر الله جل اسمه ما سمعوا بأذانهم ولم يعمهم عن ذكر الله ما رأوا من الزينة بأعينهم ففازوا بثواب الآخرة, كما فازوا بذلك العلم..

“Oh Jabir my heart is sad and lull of grief 'May my soul be sacrificed upon you, what is the reason of your grief ? I said. The Imam said: 'In whoever's heart the God's true and pure religion will enter, his heart would become detached to all external attachments (other than God's).”

“Oh Jabir! what is world and its worth? Is it any thing else other than the mouthful you eat, the piece of dress you use to cover your body and the women you take for marriage ?”

“Oh Jabir! The believers do not trust the world and its life and do not regards themselves as safe from their transfer into the Hereafter.”

“Oh Jabir! The Hereafter is the permanent abode of eternity while the world is a place of temporary

abode and place of dying but the worldly ones are negligent of this reality except the true believers who are the people who think, deliberate, and take lessons from the world.

Whatever, enters into their ears does not prevent them from God's Remembrance, and similarly possession of gold and wealth does not make them negligent from God's worshipping, thus, they are the ones who earn the rewards of Hereafter because of their being aware about the religion.”⁴

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: لا يجد المؤمن حلاوة الايمان فى قلبه حتى لا يبالى من اكل الدنيا

“A person never tastes the sweetness of faith until and unless he becomes indifferent to whatever has been eaten by him.”⁵

Therefore, it is necessary for a wayfarer to completely detach his heart from such attractions so that movement and migration towards the higher exalted positions become possible for him. He should thoroughly cleanse his heart from thoughts and anxieties of worldly affairs so that they could be replaced by God's Remembrance.

However, it must be reminded that whatever has been condemned is –infatuation and intense attachment to worldly affairs –and not worldly affairs in themselves. A wayfarer, like any other human being for continuation of life needs housing, clothing, food, and life partner and in order to fulfill these requirements he has no choice except to work.

For the continuation of human race and to leave his offspring one must marry and for the sake of social life he has no choice except to accept social responsibilities. It is because of these considerations that none of them have been condemned in the Islamic canon law (*sharia*)⁶.

Instead if performed with the intention of God's Nearness (*qurb*), all of them are considered as worships bringing a person closer to God–Almighty. Because these things in themselves do not act as obstacles for movement, undertaking a gnostic journey, and engaging in God's Remembrance.

What acts as an obstacle for movement and invocation is infatuation and intense attachments to these affairs. If these affairs become the life's main aim and objective, thus, occupying his attention and thoughts completely in themselves then such a situation would result in his becoming negligent from God's Remembrance.

Therefore in Islam money worshipping, women worshipping, and power and education worshipping are condemned because they prevent a man from migration and movement towards God–Almighty but the money, women, education, and position in themselves are not condemned.

Did not the Holy Prophet (S) Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (a.s.), Imam al-Sajjad, and other

Infallible Imams of Prophets (*Ahlul Bayt*) work, endeavor, and utilize the Divine bounties? This is one of the great advantage of Islam that for the World and Hereafter and their relevant affairs does not recognize any boundary and limitations.

3. Third Obstacle: Obedience of Passions

The Third obstacle is surrender to selfish whims, passions and carnal desires. Like the dark and thick smoke, self's whims and passions attack the heart's domain turning into a darkened heart, thus, lacking the decency for illumination of Divine light.

Whims and passion continuously pull the heart from one direction to another one, thus, never allowing him the opportunity to have a union with God–Almighty and developing some affection for Him. Day and night they try and endeavor to present their own passionate demands. Naturally, in this situation who has the courage to think about migration and ascension towards the Celestial Kingdom of God–Almighty.

God–Almighty has said in Holy Qur'an:

وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

“And follow not desire that it beguile thee from the way of God. (37:26)

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said:

قال أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: أشجع الناس من غلب هواه.

“The most brave person is the one who could dominate over the passions of his self.”⁷

4. Fourth Obstacle: Overeating

One of the main obstacles of the way for God's Remembrance and invocation is over-eating and being a slave of the belly. A person who strives day and night to arrange good and delicious food and fills his belly with different sorts of tasty foods, how could such a person will have union with God–Almighty, develop affection, and establish secret communications with Him?

With a stomach full of food how could one may have a mood for worshipping and supplication? Some one who considers pleasure simply in eating and drinking, when would taste the sweetness of supplication with God–Almighty? It is because of these considerations that overeating has been condemned in Islam. Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said to Abu–Basir:

ابو بصير عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: قال لى: يا ابا محمد! ان البطن ليطغى من اكله, واقرب ما يكون العبد من الله اذا خف بطنه وابغض ما يكون العبد إلى الله اذا امتلا بطنه.

“Stomach transgresses under the influence of over-eating. The most nearest situation between God–Almighty and his servant is –when the stomach is empty and the worst situation is –when his stomach is full.”⁸

Imam al–Sadiq also said:

.عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: ان الله يبغض كثرة الاكل

“God–Almighty considers over eating as something indecent.”⁹

The Holy Prophet (S) had said:

.قال رسول الله (ص): لا تشبعوا فيطفى نور المعرفة من قلوبكم

“Don’t indulge in over-eating because it would quench the light of faith within your hearts.”¹⁰

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) had said in a narration:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: ليس شيء اضر لقلب المؤمن من كثرة الاكل وهى مورثة شيئين: قسوة القلب وهيجان الشهوة, والجوع ادام للمؤمنين وغدا للروح وطعام للقلب وصحة للبدن

“For the heart of a believer there is nothing worst than over-eating, because it will cause hard–heartedness and seduction, while hunger happens to be the most delicious disk for a believer’s soul and heart, and health for his body.”¹¹

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) has said:

.قال امير المؤمنين عليه السلام: اذا اراد الله صلاح عبده الهمة قلة الكلام وقلة الطعام وقلة المنام

“When God–Almighty intends to reform the believer’s affair, He bestows upon him three blessings: less sleep, less appetite, and less speech.”¹²

He also said:

قال على عليه السلام: نعم العون على اسر النفس وكسر عاداتها التجوع

“Hunger is the best help for controlling self and breaking up chronic habits.”¹³

There is a tradition narrated by Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) that on the night of Ascent (*Mairaj*), God–Almighty said to the Holy Prophet (S):

قال على عليه السلام: قال الله تبارك وتعالى ليلة المعراج: يا احمد! لو نقت حلاوة الجوع الصمت والخلوة وما ورثوا منها. قال يا رب! ما ميراث الجوع؟ قال: الحكمة وحفظ القلب والتقرب الى والحزن الدائم وخفة بين الناس وقول الحق، ولا يبالي عاش بيسرا وبعسر.

“Oh Ahmad! How sweet and beautiful are the hunger, silence, and seclusion? ‘Oh God! What is the advantage of hunger?’ Asked the Holy Prophet (S). ‘Wisdom, heart’s tranquility, nearness to Me, continuous grief, righteous talks, thriftiness, and in difference at the time of ease and hardships, are the characteristics acquired by My servant as a result of hunger, silence, and seclusion.’ Replied God–Almighty.”¹⁴

Of course, a wayfarer like other people for remaining alive and to have the required energy for worship requires food, but he should be careful to eat food just to fulfill his bodily requirements and should avoid over-eating strictly. Because, over-eating causes indigestion, lethargy and depression towards worship, hard heartedness, and negligence from God's Remembrance.

On the contrary moderation in eating and hunger result in one's feeling active and zealous for worship and attention towards God– Almighty. While, being hungry a human being is possessed with soul's purification, illumination and enjoyment which is not the case with a full stomach.

Therefore, it is extremely important that a wayfarer should eat only to the extent it is required for fulfillment of his bodily needs and especially should be hungry during invocation, worshipping, and supplication.

5. Fifth Obstacle: Unnecessary Talks

One of the obstacle which prevents a wayfarer from movement towards his ultimate desired goal, and intervene in achieving concentration and heart's presence, is useless and idle talks. God–Almighty has bestowed upon him the power of speech in order to fulfill his genuine needs. If he used it to the extent it was needed then he has utilized this great blessing correctly.

Apart from that because of excessive talking a persons thoughts became scattered and disturbed and therefore, cannot pay attention towards God–Almighty with heart's presence It is because of these considerations that too much talking and nonsense conversations have been severely condemned in traditions. For example: The Holy Prophet (S) had said: ¹⁵

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: لا تكثرُوا الكلامَ بغير ذكر الله فان كثرة الكلام بغير ذكر الله طقسوا لقلب. ان ابعء الناس من الله القلب القاسى

“Avoid speaking too much except while reciting invocations for God–Almighty, because, utterance of too many words other than God’s Remembrance causes hard–heartedness and the most distant apart people from God–Almighty are the people with darkened heart.”

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said:

قال على عليه السلام: اخزن لسانك وعد كلامك يقل كلامك الا بخير

“Control your tongue and do count the words uttered by you in order to reduce your talk while engaging in an un–pious act.”¹⁶

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: الكلام ثلاثة: فربح وسالم وشاحب. فاما الربح فالذى يذكر الله, واما السالم فالذى يقول ما احب الله, واما الشاحب فالذى يخوض فى الناس

“There are three kind of talks, namely: useful, good and nonsense. The useful talks consist of God’s invocation, healthy talks are the ones which are loved by God, and nonsense talks are spreading, rumors, and talking about the people behind their back.”¹⁷

Also he said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: امسك لسانك فانها صدقة تصدق بها على نفسك, ثم قال: ولا يعرف حقيقته الايمان حتى يحزن من لسانه

“Control your tongue because it is the best gift which you may present to the self; then he further elaborated: a person never tastes the reality of belief but to strictly control his tongue.”¹⁸

Imam al–Ridha ¹⁹ said:

قال ابو الحسن الرضا عليه السلام: من علامات الفقه الحلم والعلم والصمت. ان الصمت باب من أبواب الحكمة. ان الصمت يكسب المحبة انه دليل على كل خير

“There are three things which indicate symptoms of intelligence and religious knowledge of jurisprudence: Patience, learning, and silence. And among them silence is the gate of wisdom, causes

love, and is responsible for each blessing.”[20](#)

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) has said:

قال على عليه السلام: اذا تم العقل نقص الكلام

“The more one achieves perfection of reason the less he talks.”[21](#)

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: ما عبد الله بشيء افضل من الصمت والمشى الى بيته

“There is no worship superior than silence and going on foot towards the House of God for Hajj pilgrimage.”[22](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) said to Abu Dharr:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: عليك بطول الصمت فانه مطردة للشيطان وعون لك على امر دينك

“I recommend you to practice silence, because it would keep Satan away from you. It helps a lot for the protection of your religion.”[23](#)

Anyway, it is necessary for a wayfarer to control his tongue strictly, should be serious in his talks and should avoid over-talking. In worldly affairs he should limit himself to the extent it is absolutely necessary, and instead should engage his tongue in recital of invocations, incantations, and in discussions of useful and important academic and social matters. The most celebrated mystic of our time, great professor ‘Allamah Tabatabai (RA)[24](#) said:

“I have witnessed the most precious effects of silence. Practice silence for forty days and nights speaking only when it is absolutely required, remaining engaged in meditations and invocations until attaining purity and enlightenment.”

6. Sixth Obstacle –Love for Self (Hubbe-Zat)

Once a wayfarer succeeds in removing all the obstacles from his path and somehow manages to pass through all stages, then he has to be confronted with the greatest barrier which is –love for self. Suddenly, he discovers that all actions, and deeds even worships were done for the sake of love for self.

All his worshipping, asceticism, invocation, supplication, fasting, and prayer were performed for the sake of self and rewards of the Hereafter, resulting a net gain for his self. Such worships although will earn a

person Paradise and eternal rewards but would not result in his ascent towards the most distinguished sublime spiritual positions of Invocations, Witnessing, and Countenance.

Without migrating from the positions of love for essence or love for self, a person would never be able to witness the unique and unparalleled beauty of the Lord of Glory and Majesty, and so for he does not tear off all the veils including the veil of self, he would not be able to develop the required capability of witnessing God's illumination.

Therefore, it is necessary for a wayfarer that through asceticism and struggle he must arrange his exit from the limited boundaries of love of essence by converting it into love of God and, thus, performing all deeds for His pleasure only. If he eats food, it is because of the fact that his eternal beloved has desires so. for the sake of his remaining alive, and if he worships, it is because of the reason. that he had considered God–Almighty as worth of being worshipped.

Such a person seeks neither this world nor the next one instead he is the seeker of God–Almighty. He does not want even to have miracles or special discoveries and except the real Creator does not have any other desire and objective.

If he succeeds and passes through this crucial stage and even is able to give up his identity and personality than he may take up a giant step towards the threshold of Monotheism (*Tawhid*), thus, ascending towards the most sublime spiritual positions of Witnessing, Countenance, and entering inside the Celestial Kingdom as described by the Holy Qur'an:

“Firmly established in the favor of a Mighty King.” (54:55)

7. Seventh Obstacle: Indecisiveness

One of the great obstacle of the path and perhaps the most important one is the indecisiveness and lack of determination which prevents a person from starting his deeds. Satan and imperious–self in the beginning try their best to reflect matters relevant to gnostic journey and asceticism as insignificant and unnecessary. They endeavor to convince a person simply to engage in rituals without paying least attention towards heart's presence.

They would say: You don't have any other obligation except worshipping in a ritual manner. Why do you care about having heart's presence, attention, and invocation? If occasionally he thought about these things, they will prevent him from his determination by utilizing hundred of tricks and treacheries, and sometimes they will reflect these matters before him as something so much difficult and complicated that he will become disappointed and hopeless.

But, a true devotee should resist the whispers of Satan and his imperious–self. By referring to Qur'anic–verses, traditions, and books of moral ethics and learning, he should make himself aware about the importance and need of spiritual migration, heart's presence, invocation, and witnessing the Supreme

Reality.

Once he discovers its real worth and see his own eternal salvation in it –he should move seriously, ignoring all whispers of hopelessness and disappointments telling his self: although, it is difficult but since my future salvation depends upon it I should better take action quickly, as God–Almighty has promised in the Holy Qur’an:

“As for those who strive in us, We surely guide them to our paths.” (29:69)

Since, discussions regarding the explanation of first Method of attaining perfection and God's–Nearness became too lengthy, I apologize to my readers.

[1.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 73, p–312.

[2.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 73, p–90

[3.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 73, p.94.

[4.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 73, p–36.

[5.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 73, p–49.

[6.](#) Shariah, Divine law, a science which embraces every dimension of human conduct, including the political [Tr].

[7.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 70, p–76.

[8.](#) Wasail al–Shi’a, vol. 16, p–405.

[9.](#) Wasail al–Shi’a, vol. 16, p–407.

[10.](#) al–Mustadrak, vol. 3, p–81.

[11.](#) al–Mustadarak, vol. 3, p–80.

[12.](#) al–Mustadarak, vol. 3 p–81.

[13.](#) al–Mustadarak, vol. 3 p–81.

[14.](#) al–Mustadrak, vol. 3 p–82.

[15.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 71, p–281.

[16.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 71, p–281.

[17.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 71, p–289.

[18.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 71, p–298.

[19.](#) Imam ‘Ali ibn Musa al–Ridha (a.s.): was born in Medina on Thursday, 11th Dhu'l qadah 148 A.H. He lived in a period when the Abbasids were faced with increasing difficulties because of Shiite revolts. After al–Mam'un the seventh Abbasid Caliph and a contemporary of Imam al–Ridha (a.s.) murdered his brother Amin and assumed office, he thought he would solve the problems by naming Imam as his own successor hoping thus, to insure him in worldly affairs and turn the devotion of his followers away from him.

After encouragement, urging, and finally threats, Imam accepted on condition that he be excused from dismissals, appointments, and other involvement in matters of state. Making the most of this circumstance, the Imam extended guidance to the people, imparting priceless elucidation of Islamic culture and spiritual truths, which have survived in numbers roughly equal to those reaching us from the Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.), and in greater number than those of any other Imam.

Finally after al–Ma' mum realized his mistake, for Shi'ism began to spread even more rapidly he is said to have poisoned him; he died at the age of 55 in Mashhad, Khorasan on Tuesday, 17th Safar 203 A.H.. He is buried in Mashhad Iran.

[20.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 71, p–290.

[21.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 71, p–290.

[22.](#) Bihar of al–Anwar, vol. 71, p–278.

[23.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p-279.

[24.](#) 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabatabai: Was born into a family of scholars in Tabriz in 1271 A.H. Solar/1892 A.D. He lost his mother when he was 5 years old and his father at the age of nine. He studied his primary education over there for six years. In the year 1297/1918 he entered the field of religious and Arabic studies and was occupied with readings of texts until 1304/1925.

In the year 1304/1425 he went to Najaf al-Ashraf for higher religious studies where he studied Jurisprudence, mathematics, and Philosophy under the most eminent personalities of that period such as Ayatullah Abul Hasan Esfahani, Ayatullah Hojjat Kuhkamani, and Sayyed Hosayn Badkubi, and after finishing his curriculum returned to his native Tabriz in the year 1345/1935.

In the year 1325/1946 he settled in Qum where he continued his religious studies, teaching, and research activities until his demise in the year 1360/1981. Allahmeh Tabatabai in his Autobiography writes:

"I forgot all that is fair and foul in the world and thought the sweet and bitter events equal. I withdrew from social contact with any except scholars; I cut back food and sleep and life's other necessities to the bare minimum and devoted the rest of my time and resources to scholarship and research.

I would often spend the night in study until sunrise (especially in spring and summer), and I would always research the next day's lesson in advance, making whatever exertions were called for to solve any problem that arose so that by class time I would already have a clear understanding of the Professor's topic." 'Allamah S.M. H. Tabatabai, Islamic Teachings, p-14.

'Allamah Tabatabai has written hundreds of the religious works, the famous among them is Commentary of the Holy Qur'an, (Tafsir al-Mizan) published in 20 volumes. In this work the Noble Qur'an is expounded in an unprecedented manner verse by verse. [Tr].

Second Means, Nourishment of Moral Virtues

One of the ways for gradual nourishment and perfection of self, spiritual migration, and attaining God's Nearness is to excel in moral virtues deeply rooted within human primordial nature. Good moral ethics are values which are incorporated within human Celestial Spirit and with their gradual nourishment the humanness of a human being attains perfection until finally ascending towards the exalted sublime position of God's Nearness.

The Holy Essence of the Lord of the World is the fountainhead of all perfection; since, a human being also belongs to the Upper Heavens, through his pure, upright, and uncontaminated nature recognizes the human perfection which are in proportion to Heavenly Kingdom, naturally feels attracted towards them.

It is because of these considerations that all human beings at all times, regarding appreciation of good moral virtues namely: justice, sacrifice, righteousness, trust, benevolence, bravery, patience and perseverance, knowledge, defense of deprived, thanks, generosity, loyalty, reliance (upon God), hospitality, pardon and forgiveness, politeness, and social service etc. –are in agreement. God–

Almighty in Holy Qur'an said:

وَتَنفَسِ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

“And a soul and Him who perfected it, and inspired it (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and (what is) right for it. He is indeed successful who causes it to grow. And he is indeed a failure who stunteth it. (91: 7-10)

Moral virtues when repeated plant themselves firmly within human self and like a habit become a part of human existence. It influences the self-building, what to become, and how to become of a human being. It is because of these considerations that special attention has been paid towards moral ethics in Islam, and they constitute a great portion of Islamic commands.

There are hundreds and thousands of traditions which deal with ethics. Majority of Qur'anic verses consist of ethical commands; majority of the Qur'anic stories pursue moral objectives so much so that it could rightly be called as a book of moral ethics.

In principle, one of the great aims of Divine prophets had been self-purification and nourishment of moral excellence. The Prophet of Islam too had clearly announced the objective behind his prophetic mission as perfection and nourishment of moral ethics and said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: انما بعثت لاتيتم مكارم الاخلاق

“I have been appointed as prophet of God for the completion and perfection of moral ethics.”¹

Also, said:

قال رسول الله (ص): عليكم بمكارم الاخلاق فان الله بعثني بها

“I recommend to you the importance of good moral conduct because, I have been appointed by God-Almighty to accomplish this very aim.”²

¹. al-Mustadrak, vol. 2 p-282.

². Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, p-375.

Third Means, the Righteous Deeds

It may be derived from the Holy Qur'an that after the belief (*Iman*) the righteous deeds play the most important role in attaining self-perfection, God's Nearness, higher human ranks, and pure delightful life of the Next World. God-Almighty has said in the Holy Qur'an:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“Whosoever doth right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily We shall quicken with good life and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do. (16: 97)

And said:

وَمَنْ يَأْتِهِ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ الصَّالِحَاتِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجَاتُ الْعُلَىٰ

“But whoso cometh unto Him a believer, having done good works, for such are the high stations. (20:75)

And said:

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا

“And whoever hopeth for the meeting with his lord, let him to righteous deeds and make none share of the worship due unto his lord. (18: 110)

And said:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيعًا ۖ إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ

“Whoso desireth power should know that) all power belongeth to God. Unto Him good words ascend, and the pious deed doth He exalt. (35: 10)

The Glorious God in this verse explains that all power, prestige, and wealth belong to Him and the sacred word that is the clean and pure soul of a Monotheist (*Muahid*) and righteous belief in Monotheism (*Tawhid*) will ascend towards God-Almighty, and this will be made possible through the righteous deeds.

The righteous deeds performed with pure intention and sincerity affect the doer's self thus, nourishing him for attaining perfection. The Holy Qur'an clearly explains that the pure and charming life of the Hereafter and attainment of the most sublime spiritual position of God's Nearness and Countenance is possible only through the combination of belief and righteous deeds.

The Holy Qur'an has emphasized the importance of righteous deeds a lot and regards it as the only means for achieving eternal salvation and prosperity. The value and worth of righteous deeds depends upon their being compatible with religious law and revelations.

Because the Creator of the men as well as of the world who is familiar with the special creation of human beings knows his path of perfection and salvation and therefore, accordingly has revealed it to the Holy Prophet (S) through the revelations so that he may present it to the people for their utilization. God-Almighty said in Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ

“O you who believe, obey God and the messenger while he calleth you to that which quickeneth you. (8:24)

The righteous deeds are the deeds that have been defined by religious law (*shariah*) as mandatory (*wajib*) or recommended (*mustahab*) deeds, and a wayfarer through their performance may undertake his spiritual migration leading him towards God's Nearness. This is the only way and all other ways are deviated and misleading and will never take a wayfarer to his final destination.

A wayfarer must be absolutely obedient to religious law and for his mystical journey should not follow any other path except the religious path and should avoid strictly engaging into invocations and incantations that do not have any authenticity in religious law.

Because, not only they do not take a wayfarer towards his destination instead, carry him farther apart from his destination since deviation from religious law is innovation and sin. To start with, a wayfarer should try his best to perform all religious obligatory obligations correctly in accordance with regulations, because, their renunciation will not result in attainment of higher spiritual positions, however seriously he may endeavor in performing recommended deeds and engaging into invocations and incantations.

During the second stage the recommended deeds and invocations might be included in the program. The wayfarer at this stage in accordance to his spiritual strength and personal capabilities may perform recommended deeds and the more he endeavors the greater will be the possibilities of his attaining higher spiritual positions.

From the point of view of superiority, it should be pointed out that all recommended deeds are not equal rather some of them excel over others and with the result some of them could be more better and

favorite, as have been mentioned in the books of supplication and traditions.

A wayfarer might select some supplications, prayers, invocations, and incantations from these books and then may engage himself on a regular basis. The more and precisely he performs them, the greater will be the purity and illumination of his soul, enabling him to ascend higher and higher up toward the exalted gnostic stations.

Here, we will point out to some of the righteous deeds and for the remaining ones the readers are advised to refer to other books but it should be reminded that mandatory deeds, recommended deeds, invocations, and supplications would be considered as righteous and favorite deeds only if they are performed with sincerity.

The authenticity of a deed and its becoming favorite depends in proportion to the sincerity of the performer. From this consideration; firstly we must discuss sincerity (*ikhlas*), and I will describe some of the righteous deeds later on.

The Sincerity

The position of sincerity has been described as one of the highest stages of a wayfarer's gnostic journey and attainment of self-perfection. It is because of sincerity that the heart becomes center of illumination for Divine light, whereby wisdom and knowledge flowing through heart manifest themselves through appearing upon the tongue. The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: ما اخلص عبد اربعين صباحا الا جرت ينابيع الحكمة من قلبه على لسانه

“Whoever devotes himself sincerely for a period of forty days for God–Almighty, streams of wisdom flowing from his heart will appear upon his tongue.”¹

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said:

قال على عليه السلام: اين الذين اخلصوا اعمالهم لله وطهروا قلوبهم لمواضع نظر الله

“Where are those who performed their deeds with sincerity for God–Almighty, and purified their hearts so that they could absorb God’s special attention towards them.”²

Hadhrate Fatimah al-Zahra³ (s.a.) the daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قالت سيدة النساء صلوات الله عليها: من اصعد الى الله خالص عبادته اهبط الله افضل مصلحته

“Whoever sends pure and sincere worship for God–Almighty, He too reciprocates by bestowing upon Him His best favors.”⁴

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) has said:

قال على عليه السلام: قلوب العباد الطاهرة مواضع نظر الله سبحانه فمن طهر قلبه نظر الله اليه

“Pure hearts of believers are reserved for Glorious God’s special attention, therefore, whoever purifies his heart will certainly be blessed with God’s special attention.”⁵

The Holy Prophet (S) had narrated a tradition from Arch–Angel Gabriel who heard it from God–Almighty who said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: مخبرا عن جبرئيل عن الله عز وجل انه قال: الاخلاص سر من اسرارى استودعته قلب من احببت من عابدى

“That sincerity is a mystery from my mysteries and whoever is loved by me, I will deposit it in his heart.”⁶

Sincerity consists of various grades and degrees, the most lowest grade of sincerity is that a believer should perform all his worships strictly for the sake of God–Almighty free from all traces of polytheism, hypocrisy, and ostentation.

This much amount of sincerity is must for the correctness of worships, and without it the doer will not be able to receive God’s Nearness. The worth of a deed depends upon pure intentions and sincerity, free from all traces of Polytheism and dissimulation. The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: ان الله لا ينظر الى صوركم واعمالكم وانما ينظر الى قلوبكم

“God–Almighty does not look at your faces and deeds rather looks inside your hearts.”⁷

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: يقول الله: انا خير شريك, من اشرك معى غيرى فى عمله لم اقبله الا ما كان خالصا

“God–Almighty said: ‘I am the best partner for You, and whosoever associates with me some one else in his deeds, then I will handover the entire deed to that associate, because I do not accept but pure and sincere deeds.”⁸

Also, he said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: ان الله يحشر الناس على نياتهم يوم القيامة

“On the Day of Judgment, God–Almighty will associate people in accordance with their intentions.”

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) has said:

قال على عليه السلام: طوبى لمن اخلص لله العبادة الدعا ولم يشغل قلبه بما ترى عيناه ولم ينس ذكر الله بما
تسمع اذناه ولم يحزن صدره بما اعطى غيره

“How lucky is the one who worships and prays only for the sake of God–Almighty; does not engage his heart in whatsoever is seen by his eyes; does not forget God's Remembrance because of whatsoever enters into his ears,. and does not become envious in seeing things bestowed upon others.”⁹

He also said:

قال على عليه السلام: امارات السعادة اخلاص العمل

“Sincerity in deeds is an indication of doer's salvation and prosperity.”¹⁰

A worship that is accepted by God–Almighty and earns perfection and His Nearness for the worshipper – is the worship free from all traces of self–conceit, dissimulation, Egotism, and ostentation offered for the sake of Him alone. The only criteria for acceptance of deeds is –sincerity and devotion. The more is the degree of sincerity the greater would be the perfection and merit of the deed.

The worshippers may be grouped in to the following three categories:

1. The First Group: Consists of those who worship God–Almighty because of fear of Divine punishment and Hell's fire.
2. The Second Group: Consists of those who obey Divine commands for the sake of bounties of Paradise and rewards in the Hereafter.

Although, worshipping with the above aims does not harm their correctness in any way and the doer will earn the eternal rewards and favors, because, the Holy Qur'an and traditions have very often utilized both of the above methods for the people's guidance.

Apart from that the Holy Prophet (S) himself, infallible Imams (a.s.) of his Holy Progeny, and God's Favorite Saints too were afraid of Divine retributions, continuously cried for help and were eager and hopeful for Paradise and its bounties.

3. The Third Group: Consists of those who worship God–Almighty because they consider Him worthy of

it and want to thank him for His Divine bounties and blessings. Such aim does not have any contradiction with sincerity –a criteria for the acceptance of deeds.

Therefore, in traditions, in order to encourage people for God's obedience, His bounties and favors have been reminded, so that to show their appreciation, the human beings should obey His commandments. Even the Holy Prophet (S) himself and Infallible Imam (a.s.) of his holy progeny sometimes in order to emphasize the importance and seriousness of worship said:

أفلا اكون عبدا شكورا

“Shouldn't I be a thankful servant?”

Although, the deeds of all groups do get accepted, but among them it is the third group whose deeds carry special distinction because they are accompanied with a higher degree of sincerity. The Commander of the Faithful Imam 'Ali (a.s.) has said:

قال امير المؤمنين عليه السلام: ان قوما عبدوا الله رغبة فتلك عبادة التجار وان قوما عبدوا الله رهبة فتلك عبادة العبيد وان قوما عبدوا الله شكرا فتلك عبادة الاحرار

“The worshiper of God–Almighty may be divided into following three groups:

1 First Group: Consists of those who worship God–Almighty for the sake of eternal rewards, which is like –worshipping of merchants, (for the sake of profit).

2. Second Group: Consists of those who worship God–Almighty because of the fear of God and retributions, which is like –the worshipping of slaves (for the sake of fear).

3. Third Group: Consists of those who worship God–Almighty because to express their appreciation and thanks for His bounties and favors which is like the –worshipping of freeman.”¹¹

4. The Fourth Group: Consists of those who worships God–Almighty for the sake of attaining self–perfection and nourishment of their selves. Of course, perusal of this objective does not inflict any damage to the degree of sincerity and devotion that is the criteria for acceptance of deeds.

5. The Fifth Group: Consists of those who are the most favorite and distinguished servants of God–Almighty. Since they have recognized Him very well and consider Him as the Fountainhead of all Blessings and Perfection –Worship Him.

Because, of their being aware of the Absolute and Infinite Power of the Lord of Splendor and Majesty, and since they have not discovered any other effective source of power except Him – consider Him alone worthy of worshipping, love Him and humiliate and humble themselves in front of His Exalted

Glory, And this is called the highest degree of sincerity and devotion. Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: ان الناس يعبدون الله على ثلاثة أوجه: فطبقة يعبدونه رغبة في ثوابه فتلك عبادة الحرصاء وهو الطمع، وآخرون يعبدونه فرقا من النار فتلك عبادة العبيد وهي الرهبة، ولكني أعبده حبا له عز وجل فتلك عبادة الكرام، وهو الامن لقوله عز وجل "وهم من فزع يومئذ آمنون" ويقوله "قل إن كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني يحببكم الله ويغفر لكم ذنوبكم" فمن أحب الله أحبه الله، ومن أحبه الله عز وجل كان من الآمين.

“There are three categories of worshipers:

The first category consists of those who worship for the sake of eternal rewards –which is the worshipping of greedy, because they are motivated due to greed.

The second category consists of those who worship because of fear of Hell's fire which is the worshipping of slaves, since their motivation is due to fear. But since I love God–Almighty –I worship Him, which is the worship of elders, and nobles whose motivation is tranquility and assurance. God–Almighty has said:

وَهُمْ مِّنْ فَرَعٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ آمِنُونَ

“And such are safe from fear that Day. (27:89)

And further said:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحِبُّكُمْ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

“Say (O Muhammad, to mankind): If you love God, follow me, God will love you and forgive your sins. (3:31)

Therefore, whosoever loves God–Almighty, He too loves him and (on the Day of Resurrection) he will be among those who have been blessed with peace and security”[12](#)

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) has said:

قال علي عليه السلام: ما عبدتك خوفا من نارك ولا طمعا في جنتك ولكن وجدتك اهلا للعبادة فعبدتك

“Oh God! I worship you neither because of fear from the Hell's fire nor for the greed of Paradise's bounties, but, since I believe You are worthy of adoration and praise –I do worship you.”[13](#)

All of the above mentioned groups are sincere and their deeds are accepted but still all of them do not

hold a single rank, rather from the point of view of perfection they differ with each other –the fifth group possessing the most distinguished position.

It should be reminded here that the holder of distinguished ranks are not disqualified as for as the requirements of lower ranks are concerned, rather in addition to their being qualified for lower ranks they also possess higher distinguished credentials.

The righteous and sincere slaves of God–Almighty, too are afraid of Him, are hopeful of His Mercy and Compassion, are thankful for His Bounties, and are anxious for attaining spiritual nearness with Him, but their motivation behind worship is not limited to only above things, instead, since they have discovered a better understanding of God–Almighty, they praise and worship Him.

Those distinguished and God's chosen human beings in spite of their attaining exalted spiritual positions have not given up the lower positions, because, a wayfarer traveling upon the road of perfection when reaches relatively higher spiritual stations, also possesses the qualifications of lower stations which have been attained by him earlier in his spiritual journey.

Whatever was discussed so far was related to sincerity and devotion in worship, but sincerity is something which is not limited to worship only, rather a wayfarer gradually reaches to a point whereby he purifies himself as well his heart, for God–Almighty, cleansing the heart's dwelling from all sort of alien existence.

So much so that all actions, deeds and thoughts, are assigned exclusively to God–Almighty, and the wayfarer does not perform any thing but for His pleasure. He is not afraid of other than God and does not trust other than Him, to the extent that even his friendship and enmity are done exclusively for the God's pleasure, and this is known as the highest degree of sincerity. The Commander of the Faithful Imam 'Ali (a.s.) has said:

قال علي عليه السلام: طوبى لمن اخلص لله عمله وعلمه وحبه وتغضه واخذه وتركه وكلامه وصمته.

“How fortunate is the one whose deeds, knowledge, love, grudge, possession, renunciation speaking, and silence –all are reserved exclusively for God–Almighty.”¹⁴

Imam al-Sadiq has said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: من احب لله وابغض لله واعطى لله ومنع لله فهو ممن يكمل ايمانه.

“Whosoever loves, grudges, donates, and refrains exclusively for the sake of God–Almighty –is some one whose faith is perfect.”¹⁵

Also, said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: ما انعم الله على عبد اجل من ان لا يكون في قلبه مع الله غيره.

“God–Almighty has not bestowed upon a servant any thing superior than –that there should not be anything in his heart except God–Almighty.”¹⁶

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) says:

قال على عليه السلام: اين القلوب التي وهبت لله وعوقدت على طاعة الله.

“Where are the hearts who have been donated to God–Almighty, and are committed exclusively for his obedience.”¹⁷

When a wayfarer attains that privileged position, God–Almighty purifies him for Himself and through Divine Illumination, intuition, and revelations makes him immune against sins and transgressions. Such a human being is called God's devoted friend (*Mukhlis*) and they are the most distinguished servants of God–Almighty. The Holy Qur’an says:

إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ

“Lo! We purified them with a pure thought, remembrance of the Home (of the Hereafter) (38:46)

The Holy Qur’an says about Prophet Moses (a.s.):

وَإِذْ ذُكِّرُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ مَوْسَىٰ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مٌخْلَصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا

“And make mention in the scripture of Moses. Lo! He was chosen, and he was a messenger of (God), a Prophet. (19:51)

God's chosen devoted servants ultimately reach to a position whereby even Satan becomes disappointed in his efforts to make them deviated. The Holy Qur’an quotes Satan when he speaks to God–Almighty:

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ

“He said: Then by Thy might, I surely will beguile them every one, save Thy single minded slaves

among them. (38: 82–83)

In the end it must be reminded that attaining such exalted position is not an easy and simple thing rather it requires self-purification, endeavors, and struggle in worshipping. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (a.s.) says:

قال على عليه السلام: الخلاص ثمرة العبادة.

“Sincerity and devotion are the fruits of worship.”¹⁸

As has been described in traditions that engagements in worshipping and invocations continuously for a period of forty days and nights might be effective and useful for attaining inner purity enlightenment of soul, and the position of sincerity. But, this could not be accomplished in one single attempt rather should be attempted gradually after passing through various stages of sincerity.

¹. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70. p-242 .

². Ghirar al-Hukm, p-172.

³. Fatimah al-Zahra (s.a.): The beloved daughter of the Prophet from Khadijah, Fatimah was born in Mecca on Friday, 20th Jumadath-thaniyah in the fifth year after the declaration of the prophethood (615 A.D.) She was so loved by the Prophet that he called her “a part of me.” In 2 A.H. / 624 A.D. she married 'Ali ibn Abu Talib from whom she bore three sons, Hasan, Husayn and Muhsin (who died stillborn), and two daughters, Zaynab and Umme Kulthum.

She was at the Prophet's bedside at the moment of his death and struggled for her husband's succession to the caliphate. She died at the age of 18 in Medina on 14th Jummaadi al awwl 11 A.H. (633 A.D.); and is buried in the graveyard of Jannatu'l Baqi in Medina. It is said that when she was born the whole sky became illuminated; therefore she is called al-Zahra', the “Radiant.” She is the mother of the Shi'ite Imams and is considered the most holy of Muslim women.

⁴. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-249.

⁵. the Ghirar al-Hukm, p-538.

⁶. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70. p-249.

⁷. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-209.

⁸. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-243.

⁹. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70-229.

¹⁰. Ghirar al-Hukm, p-43.

¹¹. Bihar al-Anwar, vol 70, p-196.

¹². Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-197.

¹³. Bihar al-Anwar, p-197.

¹⁴. Ghirar al-Hukm p-462.

¹⁵. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p-248.

¹⁶. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70 p-249.

¹⁷. Ghirar al-Hukm, p-172.

¹⁸. Ghirar al-Hukm, p-17.

Some Righteous Deeds

As was mentioned in earlier chapters of this books that the only path that could lead a wayfarer towards perfection and may help him in his ascend towards God's Nearness is obedience to revelations and following the path shown by Divine Prophets. The path which they followed themselves has been defined as performance of mandatory (*wajibat*) and recommended (*Nawafil wa Mustahabbat*) religious deeds which are called righteous deeds.

All mandatory and recommended righteous deeds incorporated into Islamic Cannon Law (*sharia*) and registered in the Holy Qur'an as well as in other books of traditions are called as righteous deeds. You may better identity them and might utilize them in following the righteous path. Here we will discuss some of righteous deeds as follows:

First: Obligatory Prayers

The Prayer is one of the best means for undertaking spiritual migration towards God–Almighty and attaining the exalted position of His–nearness. Imam al–Ridha (a.s.) has said:

قال الرضا عليه السلام: الصلوة قربان كل تقى.

“The prayer is a means of attaining God’s nearness for every righteous human being.”¹

Mu' awiyah bin Wahab asked Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.)

معاوية بن وحب قال: سالت ابا عبدالله عليه السلام عن افضل ما يتقرب به العباد الى ربهم واحب ذلك الى الله عز وجل ما هو؟ فقال ما أعلم شيئاً بعد المعرفة أفضل من هذه الصلاة، ألا ترى أن العبد الصالح عيسى ابن مريم عليه السلام « وأوصاني بالصلاة والزكوة ما دمت حياً. : قال

“What is the best deed which brings human beings close to God–Almighty, and is also liked by Him ? The Imam replied: After enlightenment of God’s Essence, I do not know any thing better than the ‘prayer”. Did not you hear that God’s righteous servant Prophet Jesus (a.s.) has said: “God has recommended for me prayer and charity until I remain alive.”²

Also, he said:

زيد الشحام عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال سمعته يقول: أحب الاعمال إلى الله عز و جل الصلاة وهي آخر وصايا الانبياء (عل)، فما أحسن الرجل يغتسل أو يتوضأ فيسبغ الوضوء ثم يتنحى حيث لا يراه أنيس فيشرف عليه

وهو راكع أو ساجد. إن العبد إذا سجد فأطال السجود نادى إبليس: ياويلاه أطلع وعصيت وسجد وأبيت

“The most esteemed and favorite deed before God–Almighty is – “Prayer” The Prayer is the last dying will of all prophets. How good it is that a human being takes a bath or performs ablution, then retires into a secluded corner where he is not seen by anyone and have the honor of performing genuflexion and prostration. When a servant bows himself down into prostration and prolonged it than Satan says:

“Oh! Woe upon me! this servant has obeyed God–almighty, while I transgressed and he has offered prostration which I refused.”³

Imam al Ridha (a.s.) has said:

قال الرضا عليه السلام: اقرب ما يكون العبد من الله وهو ساجد وذلك قوله تعالى "واسجد واقترّب

“The most nearest position between the servant and God–Almighty is– the state of prostration ⁴because God–Almighty has said:

واسجُدْ واقْتَرِبْ

“But prostrate thyself; and draw near (to God–Almighty).” (96: 19)⁵

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: اذا اقام المصلى الى الصلاة نزلت عليه الرحمة من اعنان السما الى اعنان الارض وحفت به الملائكة وناداه ملك: لو يعلم هذا المصلى ما فى الصلاة ما انفتل

“When a human being stands for prayers,. God’s Blessings descend upon him from the sky; the angels circle him around and one of them says., If this prayer–offerer would have known the worth of his prayer, he would never have broken his concentration (towards God) throughout the prayer.”⁶

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: إذا قام العبد المؤمن في صلاته نظر الله إليه أو قال: أقبل الله عليه – حتى ينصرف، وأظلمت الرحمة من فوق رأسه إلى افق السماء، والملائكة تحفه من حوله إلى افق السماء، ووكل الله به ملكا قائما على رأسه يقول له: أيها المصلي لو تعلم من ينظر إليك ومن تناجي ما التفت ولا زلت من موضعك أبدا

“When a believer stands for prayer, God–Almighty looks at him until he finishes it, His blessing covers him from the sky; the angels circle him around and God–Almighty assigns an angel who says: ‘Oh prayer

offerer! If you would have known –who is looking at you and with whom are you communicating ? You would never have paid your attention towards any other thing, and you would never have been deviated from this position.”⁷

1. Heart's Presence in Prayer

The Prayer is a celestial formula and Divine electuary, every part of which contains a hidden mystery. It is a means of love, communication, and remembrance of the Lord of the Universe. It is the best means of attaining perfection, spiritual ascension, and God's Nearness. According to Islamic traditions the prayer has been called –a believers heavenly journey (*Mairaj*) which protects him from moral indecencies.

It is such a pure sparkling stream of spirituality that whosoever enters into it five times a day will purify his soul from all sort of pollution and contamination. It is the greatest trust of God–Almighty and is the criteria of acceptance of all other deeds. The prayer is such a mysterious heavenly formula, but subjected to its being alive and possessing spirit, which means heart's presence during prayer, paying attention towards God–Almighty, and being humble in front of Him.

The invocations, recitals of Qur’anic verses, genuflection, prostration, the witnessing, and salutations constitute the face and body of the prayer while the heart's presence and attention towards the Creator form its spirit. Since a body without a soul becomes a dead body lacking any characteristic, likewise a prayer offered without heart's presence, although satisfies as far as the performance of compulsory religious obligation is concerned, nevertheless, such a prayer does not help in ascending the prayer offerer towards higher spiritual positions.

In principle, the greatest objective behind the establishment of prayer may be described as –invocation recitals and engaging in God's Remembrance. God–Almighty said to the Holy Prophet (S):

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

“And establish worship for My Remembrance. (20: 14)

The Friday–Prayer has been described as an invocation in the Holy Qur’an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

“Oh ye who believe! When the call is heard for the prayer of the Day of Congregation, haste unto remembrance of God. (62: 9)

The criteria for the acceptance of prayer is –the heart's presence, and whatever amount of heart's

presence it may contain, the prayer will be accepted accordingly. It is because of this consideration that traditions have emphasized a lot about the importance of heart's presence in prayers.

For example:

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: ان من الصلاة لما يقبل نصفها وثلثها وربعها وخمسها إلى العشر، وان منها لما تلفّ كما يلفّ الثوب الخلق فيضرب بها وجه صاحبها، وانما لك من صلاتك ما اقبلت عليه بقلبك.

“Sometimes only half of the prayer gets accepted while at other times may be one-third, one fourth, one-fifth, and one-tenth of it will be accepted. Some of the prayers like an old wrapped cloth are pounded upon the offerer's head. As a matter of fact, only that portion of the prayer will be accepted from you, in which you have paid heartily attention towards God-Almighty.”⁸

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام يقول: ذا قام العبد إلى الصلاة أقبل الله عز وجل عليه بوجهه فلا يزال مقبلاً عليه حتى يلتفت ثلاث مرات فإذا التفت ثلاث مرات أعرض عنه.

“When a servant stands of prayer, God-Almighty pays attention towards him and did not break it until the servant deviates from His- remembrance for the third time. When this happens, God-Almighty too turns his face away from the prayer offerer.”⁹

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) says:

قال امير المؤمنين عليه السلام: لا يقوم احدكم الى الصلاة متكاسلاً ولا ناعساً ولا يفكر في نفسه فإنه بين يدي ربه عز وجل ، وانما للعبد من صلاته ما اقبل عليه منها بقلبه.

“Do not offer prayer in the state of drowsiness or napping; while offering prayer do not think about yourself; because, you are standing in the presence of God-Almighty. Indeed, only that portion of the prayer will be accepted from the servant in which he has paid heartiest attention towards God-Almighty.”¹⁰

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال صلى الله عليه وآله: أيما عبد التفت في صلاته قال الله: يا عبدي إلى من تقصد ومن تطلب؟ أرباً غيري تريد أو رقيباً سواي تطلب؟ أو جواد خلالي تبغي؟ و أنا أكرم الأكرمين وأجود الأجودين وأفضل المعطين، أثيبك ثواباً لا يُحصي قدره. أقبل عليّ فأني عليك مقبل وملائكتي عليك مقبلون. وأن أقبل زال عنه أثم ما كان منه. فإن ألتفت ثانية

أعاد الله مقالته فإذا أقبل في صلاته غفر الله له وتجاوز عنه ما كان منه. فإن ألتفت ثالثة أعاد الله مقالته، فإن أقبل في صلاته غفر الله له ما تقدم من ذنبه. فإن ألتفت رابعة أعرض الله عنه وأعرضت الملائمة عنه ويقول: وليتك يا عبدي الى ما توليت.

“Each servant (of God), while standing in prayer pays attention towards other than Him, God–Almighty says: ‘Oh my servant! Which way are you turning your face ? Who is the one you are looking for ? Do you seek a God and protector other than me ? Are you looking for a benevolent other than me?

While, I remain to be the Most Merciful among merciful, Most Compassionate among benevolent and happens to be the Greatest Bestower. I will bestow upon you such a reward that could not be counted. Pay attention towards Me, because I and my angels are paying attention towards you.”

“Thus, if the prayer offerer paid attention towards God–Almighty, his past sins are deleted. But again if he pays attention towards others (than God), he is reminded by God–Almighty like before. If he turns his attention towards prayer, his sins and negligence from prayer are pardoned and their effects are nullified.”

“If for the third time he deviates his attention from the prayer, God–Almighty once more repeats his earlier warning, in case he paid attention towards the prayer, again his sins are pardoned. But if he deviated his attention away from the prayer for the fourth time, then God–Almighty and his angels turn their faces away from the prayer offerer and God–Almighty says to him: ‘ Now I have assigned you to the guardianship of someone who is liked by you.”¹¹

The value of prayer depends directly upon heart's presence and attention paid towards God–Almighty; to the extent heart's presence is achieved during prayer, it will be effective in attaining inner purification and God's–Nearness. It was not without reason that all Divine Prophets (a.s.) Infallible Imams (a.s.), and God's favorite saints paid so much attention towards prayer. About the Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) it has been written:

“At the time of prayer his body used to tremble and the color of his face changed. They asked him the reason behind his agitation and fear. In reply he said: ‘ The time has arrived for returning of trust –which was offered to earth and heavens but they declined to assume this responsibility. But human being accepted this great trust. I am afraid that whether I would be able to discharge this heavy responsibility of returning this trust or not.”¹²

About the Imam al–Baqir (a.s.) and al–Sadiq (a.s.) it has been narrated: “At the time of prayer their faces used to turn pale and red with fear of God–Almighty; in their prayer they conversed with God–Almighty as though they are actually seeing him.”¹³

About Imam al–Sajjad (a.s.) it has been narrated: “When he stood for prayer the color of his face became pale with fear, and like a humble slave standing in front of his Master, his body parts trembled.

His prayer was always used to be his parting prayer as though there will never going to be any other prayer offered by him after this one.”[14](#)

About the life of Fatimah al-Zahra (s.a.) the daughter of the holy Prophet (S) it has been narrated: “Because, of the intensity of fear, during prayer even the number of her breaths could have been counted.”[15](#)

Regarding the life of Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) it has been narrated: “His body trembled during prayer. When he remembered Paradise and Hell, become so restless and agitated as though have been bitten by a snake. He requested Paradise from God-Almighty and sought His shelter from Hell.”[16](#)

“Ayesheh narrates about the Holy Prophet (S): while I was busy in talking with him, when the time of prayer arrived, suddenly he become so indifferent as though neither he recognizes us nor we do recognize him.”[17](#)

About Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.) it has been narrated:

“While he was in the middle of prayer his cloak rolled down from his shoulder but he remained unconscious about it. When he finished his prayer one of his companion asked: *'Oh son of the Holy Prophet (S) ! While you were offering prayer your clock rolled down but you did not pay attention to it.'*

“The Imam replied: *'Woe upon you! Do you know in front of whom I was standing ? Such awareness prevented me from paying attention towards my clock. Don't you understand that a servant's prayer is accepted only to the extent he pays attention towards God-Almighty during his prayer?'*

'Oh son of the Holy Prophet (S), Therefore, on this basis we all are going to be doomed?' Asked the companion. *'No! If you offer recommended prayers (Nawafil) God-Almighty through them will treat your compulsory prayers as completed.'*[18](#)

“Regarding the Holy Prophet (S) it has been narrated that during prayer the color of his face changed completely, and a bubbling sound similar to the noises coming out from a boiling pot was heard coming out from his chest. When he stood for his prayer he was motionless like a piece of cloth fallen upon the ground.”[19](#)

2. Degrees of Heart's Presence

Heart's presence consists of various ranks and degrees which differ from each other from the point of view of perfection. A wayfarer has to go through these various grades gradually so that he may ascent towards the higher spiritual positions of God's Nearness and Witnessing.

It is a lengthy way containing various positions, whose introduction and explanation for some one deprived like me, who is looking from a distance and burning in regret –is not befitting. But some of these stages will be explained here in brief, which might be useful for wayfarers.

First Stage

This may be defined as a state in which the prayer offerer either through out the prayer or some part of it pays brief attention to the fact that he is standing before God–Almighty, speaks and converses with Him. However, at this stage he does not pay attention towards the meanings of words and does not understand the details of his conversation.

Second Stage

The second degree of heart's presence may be defined as a state in which the prayer offer apart from his being aware of the fact that he is standing before God–Almighty and is communicating with Him, also, pays attention towards the meanings of words and invocation and knows exactly what is he saying to God–Almighty. While announcing the worlds, simultaneously, he is also making his heart to understand its meaning like a mother who teaches her child how to pronounce a sentence as well as explains him its meanings.

Third Stage

The Third degree of heart's presence may be defined as a state in which the prayer offerer in addition of his being aware of the earlier stages, also comprehend very well the realities of Glorification, Adoration, Praise, Sanctification, Monotheism, and meanings of other invocations.

Further, his understanding of the above is based upon logical arguments, pays attention towards them during prayer, understand very well as to what is he saying, what does he want, and with whom is he speaking?

Fourth Stage

The fourth stage of heart's presence may be defined as a state in which the prayer offerer, in addition of his being aware of the early stages, must also have influenced upon his inner essence the learning and meanings of invocations, and must have achieved the state of certainty (*yaqin*) and faith (*iman*). In that case the tongue follows the heart and since the heart believes in those realities pursues the tongue to undertake the recital of invocations.

Fifth Stage

The fifth stage of heart's presence may be defined as a state in which the prayer offerer in addition of his being aware of early stages has achieved the most sublime spiritual positions of revelation, intuition, and countenance. Through his esoteric eyes witnesses the Sacred Names and Characteristics of God–Almighty and does not see any thing except Him, even does not pay attention to himself his actions, deeds, and invocations.

He speaks with God–Almighty but is unconscious of the speaker and speech. He has given up his own

existence and have become fascinated after witnessing the beauty of Lord's Holy Essence. Even at this stage there are ranks and degree varying in distinction relative to the status of the wayfarers. This stage is like an ocean of infinite depth and for some one deprived like me, it is better not to enter in it and leave it's description for those who deserve it:

اللهم ارزقنا حلاوة ذكرك ومشاهدة جمالك.

“Oh God! Please bestow upon us the sweetness of your invocations and the witnessing of your beauty.”

3. Important Factors for Attaining Heart's Presence

In as much as heart's presence is important and worthwhile, in the same proportion its attainment is extremely difficult. No sooner a person starts his prayer Satan suddenly whispers in his heart pulling him from one side to another, and continuously engaging him into all sort of thoughts and memories.

The heart [20](#) engages himself into accounting, planning, reviewing past and future problems, solving academic problems; very often recollecting during prayers, topic which were forgotten by him completely and when he returns to himself discovers that the prayer is over. Even if in between he pays attention towards prayer he deviates immediately.

It is indeed sad and one must feel sorry about it! What should we do to dominate over this rebellious and playful self? How should we keep these scattered thoughts away from us during the prayer and keep our attention exclusively to remember God–Almighty.

Those who have traveled this path and were able to receive Divine special favors can better guide us, and it would be better if the pen would have been in their hands. But, this helpless and veiled servant too would like to describe some points which may be useful in achieving heart's presence during prayer as follows:

Secluded Place

If one has to offer individual compulsory prayer or recommended prayer it is better to select an isolated free from noises and interference. The prayer's place should be free from pictures or any other object which might attract prayer offer's attention; should not be a public place, rather a secluded corner inside the home should be selected and prayer should always be offered over there.

While, offering prayer, one should look at the place of prostration or may close his eyes, and among these two whichever he thinks is mere useful for heart's presence should be practiced. It is advisable to offer prayer in a smaller room a near the wall so that the prayer offerer's view is restricted. While, offering congregational prayers one should look at the place of prostration and listen attentively to the recital of Qur'anic verses, if the congregational leader (*Imam*) is reciting them loudly.

Removal of Obstacles

Before the prayer all obstacles in attaining heart's presence must be removed and only then one should engage himself into prayer. e.g. If the prayer offerer needs to go to toilet, he must relieve himself first, and after performing required ablutions should engage himself into prayer. If he is not comfortable because of severe hunger and thirst, first he must satisfy his hunger and thirst by eating and drinking and then should offer his prayers.

Also, if because of over-eating he lacks the mood, he should wait a while till he feels ready for prayer. Similarly, if because of being extremely tired and exhausted or feeling sleeplessness, if he does not have the mood to offer prayer, he should first rest and sleep, and then should offer his prayer. If he is busy investigating something or is disturbed and agitated because of a tragic occurrence, he should try within the bounds of possibilities to eliminate the causes of concern before prayer.

One of the greatest obstacles is intense attachment to worldly allurements namely: Wealth and property, power and position, and woman and children. Severe attraction of these things causes prayer offerer's attention turns towards these things deviating from God–Almighty, during prayer. Therefore, the prayer offerer must seriously endeavor to cut off these attractions, so that heart's presence and attention towards God–Almighty become easier for him.

Strengthening of Faith

Man's attention towards God–Almighty depends in proportion to his knowledge and enlightenment relative to Him. If the faith has reached to the degree of certainty, has completely comprehended God's Majesty, Power, Presence, Dominion, and Knowledge, naturally will show humility and humbleness in front of him, and there would be no room left for negligence and forgetfulness.

Some one who sees God's existence everywhere as his overseer, regards himself continuously before His presence, while standing in prayer –a place of talking with Him, will never be negligent from His remembrance.

Suppose, if one has to speak before a powerful king, he will naturally control all his senses, would know exactly what is he supposed to do, and what is he going to speak? So, if one recognizes God–Almighty with Splendor and Majesty, he would never be negligent of Him during prayer.

Therefore, a human being should endeavor for strengthening his faith and attaining perfect enlightenment so that he may achieve maximum heart's presence during his prayer. The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: اعبد الله كانت تراه فان كنت لاتراه فانه يراك.

“Worship God–Almighty as though you are actually seeing Him, and even if you do not see Him, He sees you.”²¹

Aban bin Toghlab said that I said to Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.):

ابان بن تغلب قال قلت لابي عبدالله عليه السلام: اني رايت على بن الحسين عليه السلام اذا قام فى الصلاة غشى لونه لون آخر. فقال لي: والله ان على بن الحسين كان يعرف الذى يقوم بين يديه.

“I saw ‘Ali Bin al–Husayn (a.s.) offering prayer in such a manner that the color of his face changed. Please explain the reason. ‘Yes! Because he recognized completely God–Almighty in front of whom he was standing in prayer.’ Replied the Imam.”²²

Remembrance of Death

One thing which might be useful in achieving heart's presence is –remembrance of death. If a person thinks about death, and pays attention to the fact that neither timings nor the circumstances of death's arrival are known, it may occur at any time, under any situation, even it is quite possible that this prayer might be the last one. In that case he would not offer prayer with negligence.

It is recommended that a prayer offerer should think about death before the prayer; should imagine that the moment of death has arrived; the death angel Israel for receiving the soul has already arrived, and it is only a limited time, say, an hour or few minutes have been left for him, after which his deeds' register will be closed forever, and he will be transferred to Eternal World.

Over there, his deeds will be scrutinized and the result would be either eternal prosperity and happy living near God's favorites or adversity, cruelty, punishment, and torture inside the Hell. By imagining and picturing dying one may better concentrate, may witness himself standing in front of God–Almighty, and thus may offer prayer with more humility and humbleness as his farewell prayer. Before beginning prayer create such conditions for yourself and then prolong it during entire length of prayer. Imam Al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: إذا صليت صلاة فريضة فصلها لوقتها صلاة مودع يخاف أن لا يعود إليها ابدا. ثم اصرف ببصرك إلى موضع سجودك، فلو تعلم من عن يمينك وشمالك لأحسننت صلاتك، واعلم أنك بين يدي من يراك ولا تراه.

“Offer compulsory prayer during its time, like someone who is offering his farewell prayer, and is afraid that after this he will never have the opportunity to offer the prayer again. While offering the prayer, look at the place of prostration. If one realizes some one nearby is watching his prayer –he becomes more careful in offering his prayer. Know ! that you are standing in front of some one who sees you but is not seen by you.”²³

Readiness

After removing all obstacles around him, the prayer offerer should make himself ready for prayer by retiring into a suitable isolated place. Before standing he must remind himself about the Majesty and Infinite power of God–Almighty and his own weakness and incompetence. He must realize that he is standing in front of the Lords of worlds and is speaking to him. He is standing in front of such a Magnificent Power which surrounds everything even is aware of most secret affairs.

Imagine and manifest dying, accounting of deeds, Paradise, and Hell in your mind's eye; assign a higher probability that death might occur very soon, and even this very prayer could be the last prayer of his life. Prolonged these reflections until self became completely tamed and is in a mood to pay attention. Then with attention and hearts' presence recite the call for prayer– (adhan) and (aqameh) respectively, recite the following supplication and during its recital pay attention to its meaning.

اللهم اليك توجهت ومرضاتك طلبت وثوابك ابتغيت بك آمنت وعليك توكلت اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد وافتح
مصامع قلبي لذكرك وثبتني على دينك ولا تزغ قلبي بعد اذ هديتني وهب لي من لدنك رحمة انك انت الواهب

(Allahumma elaika tawwajahato wa marzateka talabato wa thawabaka ibtaqhazzito wa beka amanto wa elaika tawwakalto allahuma salle ala Muhammadin wa aley Muhammad waftoh masamea qalbi lezekreka wa sabbatni ala deneka wa deney Nabiyeha wala tuzqe qalbi bada is hadeytani wa habli min ladunka rahamate inneka antal wahab.)

“Oh God! I seek Your refuge; desire whatever pleases Thou. Aspire to receive Your reward have faith in Thee and trust and rely upon You. Oh God! send salutations upon Muhammad (S) and his Holy progeny (a.s.), open my heart's esoteric ears to Your invocation,. make me steadfast upon Your religion, and the religion of Your Prophet (S). Don't make my heart deviate after being blessed with Your guidance, and bestow upon me Your favors and blessings, verily! You are the most benevolent.”

Then recite the following prayer:

يا محسن قد اتاك المسيء، يا محسن أحسن الي

(ya Mohsin qadatak al masiyee ya Mohsin ehsan al ati.)

“Oh Beneficent, verily bless me –the sinner;

Oh Beneficent! bestow your favors upon me.”

If after that one feels like having proper attention and humility he may say Takbirateh al–Ahram by proclaiming, “God is Great” (*Allahu Akbar*) and may begin his prayer. But, if he feels that he is not yet

ready, does not feel any change in his mood, should seek refuge²⁴ in God–Almighty from Satanic whispers and should repeat the earlier program till he gets ready.

At this moment with due attention and heart's presence should say Takbirateh al–Ahram while paying attention towards its meanings and may begin his prayer. But, he must pay attention as to whom is he talking and what is he saying?

Be careful that tongue and heart coordinate each other and do not lie. Does he know the meanings of “God is Great” (Allahu Akbar) i.e. God is Greater than –that He could be described. He must pay attention correctly what is he saying? Does he really believe in it? Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: اذا استقبلت القبلة فانس الدنيا وما فيها والخلق وما هم فيه واستفرغ قلبك عن كل شاغلٍ يشغلك عن الله وعين بسرك عظمة الله واذكر وقوفك بين يديه يوم تبلو كل نفس ما أسلفت وردوا إلى الله مولاهم الحق. وقف على قدم الخوف والرجاء فإذا كبرت فاستصغر ما بين السموات العلى والثرى دون كبريائه: فإن الله تعالى إذا اطلع على قلب العبد وهو يكبر وفي قلبه عارضٌ عن حقيقة

تكبيره ، قال : يا كاذب أتخدعني ؟ وعزّتي وجلالي لأحرمنك حلاوة ذكري ، ولأحجبنك عن قربي و المسارة بمناجاتي .

“When you stand facing Holy Mecca (Qiblah)²⁵ with prayer intention –forget the world and whatever it contains, people, and their affairs absolutely, make your heart free from every thing which prevents you from God's Remembrance and with esoteric eyes witness God's Majesty and Splendor. Recollect your stoppage in front of Him on the Day of Resurrection when each human being will make his earlier deposited deeds manifested, thus, returning towards God–Almighty.

'During prayer be in a state of fear and hope, after making your proper intention and saying (Takbirateh al–Ahram, i.e. Allahu Akbar), whatever, the earth and sky may contain, consider it as small and insignificant, because when prayer offerer says it, God–Almighty looks in his heart, thus, if he had not paid attention towards the reality of Takbirateh al–Ahram He says to him:

'Oh liar! Do you want to deceit me ?' swear to my splendor and majesty that will deprive you .from My invocations pleasure and enjoyment of having private communications with Me.”²⁶

Of course preparation and getting readied before the prayer, during making intention and saying Takbirateh al–Ahram are extremely effective in achieving heart's presence, but still more important than that, is the continuation of this state through out the prayer. If a slight negligence is shown, self immediately starts his action of flying from one side to another one, thus, breaking heart's presence and concentration.

Therefore, prayer offerer must watch his self carefully all along the prayer. He must tightly closed his

hearts entrance towards all other than God and must prevent entries of scattered thoughts and memories should consider himself always standing in God's presence, should offer prayer as though he is actually talking with God–Almighty, bows down and prostrates in front of him; while reciting Qur’anic verses and invocations must pay attention towards their meanings; must realize what is he saying; with what Majestic Power is he speaking and should maintain this condition until the prayer is over. It is a difficult task but with efforts, endeavors, and seriousness it becomes easier. God–Almighty has promised in the Holy Qur’an:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

“And those who strive in Our (cause) –We will certainly guide them to Our paths. (29:69)

If one does not succeed in the very first attempt instead of getting disappointed, he should become more determined and serious in trying again, until attaining domination over self gradually. The heart should be cleansed thoroughly from scattered thoughts and should be motivated to pay attention towards God–Almighty. If such thing is not possible within one day, few weeks and few months, he should not be disappoint because after all such a thing is possible.

There were and still are many distinguished personalities who were able to achieve absolute heart's presence from the beginning till the end of prayer, and during prayer did not pay any attention towards other than God.

We would not be disappointed either from attaining such distinguished position and if achieving absolute perfection is not possible, we must try to attain at least whatever is attainable within the bounds of possibilities and should consider even this much as a great bounty.[27](#)

Second: Supererogatory Prayers (Nawafil)

Earlier it was mentioned that the Prayer happens to be the best means of spiritual migration, invocation, and God's Nearness. God–Almighty, who is absolutely more knowledgeable, as compared to any other person, about the special human creation, and their path of perfection, has defined prayer, and by means of prophets have handed it over to human beings –so that they may utilize it for their salvation and attaining perfection.

The path of utilization from this means is always open. The prayer has not been limited to a certain fixed time, rather one may utilize from it at any time, any where and under all circumstances. Generally, the prayer may be classified into following two categories:

1. Mandatory or Compulsory Prayers (*Wajib*).
2. Supererogatory or Recommended Prayers (*Nawafil*).

There are six types of Mandatory or Compulsory Prayers:

1. Daily Prayer (*salat wajib*).
2. Sign Prayer (*salat ayat*), to be recited at the solar or lunar eclipse
3. Death Prayer (*Mayyit*).
4. Circumambulation Prayer during Hajj pilgrim (*Towwaf*).
5. Prayer which become mandatory upon one's taking an oath or making a solemn promise to God (*Nazr*).
6. Make up Prayer (*Qadha*). Daily prayers not offered by father become compulsory upon his eldest son, after his demise.

Daily prayers are compulsory upon all adult Muslims after attaining puberty, but other compulsory prayers become compulsory during certain periods under special circumstances. A person who desires to achieve salvation and perfection, as a very first step must perform all compulsory obligations strictly in their prescribed manner, and if performs them with heart's presence and devotion, become best means of achieving God's favor.

Quitting compulsory obligations and instead indulging into performance of recommended deeds will never result in achieving God's favor. If someone thinks, that by quitting compulsory obligation and by means of some recommended deeds, invocations, and incantations, he may complete his journey towards perfection and attaining higher spiritual positions—certainly he is making a mistake.

But after performance of compulsory obligations, he may seek God's nearness by means of supererogatory prayers and other recommended deeds for attaining sublime spiritual positions. There are plenty of supererogatory prayers (*nawafil*), and overall may be divided into two categories: Daily supererogatory prayers (*nawafil*) and other recommended prayers.

Daily Supererogatory Prayers consists of thirty four units (Rakats):

1. Supererogatory Prayer Noon (*Dhohr*) –8 units, (before compulsory (*Dhohr*) prayer, 4 times –2 units).
2. Supererogatory Prayer After–Noon (*Asr*) –8 units (before compulsory (*Asr*) Prayer, 4 times –2 units).
3. Supererogatory Prayer Evening (*Maghrib*) –4 units (after compulsory (*Maghrib*) Prayer, 2 times –2 units).
4. Supererogatory Prayer Night (*Isha*) –2 units (in sitting position, after compulsory (*Isha*) Prayer, and is regarded equivalent to one unit of standing prayer).

5. Supererogatory Prayer Morning (*Fajr*) –2 units (before compulsory (*Fajr*) Prayer).

6. Night Prayer (*Namaz al-Shab* or *Salat al Lail*) –11 units.

Tradition books describe the importance of recital of daily supererogatory prayers; their effects and rewards have also been specified, and have been introduced as complimentary to compulsory prayers. But other than daily supererogatory prayers other recommended prayers during certain special periods, places, and circumstances as well as their relevant rewards have also been described.

The readers may study the details of different kinds of supererogatory prayers and recommended prayers and their advantages and rewards in the books of traditions and supplications [28](#) and may utilize them in your spiritual journey and attainment of self-perfection.

Apart from that prayer is desired and recommended at any time, every place and under all circumstances and a wayfarer may take its advantage. The path of taking advantage from this means remains always open. A human being at any time, any place, and under all conditions may be benefited from this great blessing and may establish a quick communication with God–Almighty. The Commander of the Faithful Imam .’Ali (a.s.) has said:

عن أبي الحسن عليه السلام قال: صلاة النوافل قربان كل مؤمن.

“Supererogatory Prayer (Nafilah) results in a believer’s becoming near to God–Almighty.” [29](#)

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: إن العبد ليرفع له من صلاته نصفها أو ثلثها أو ربعها أو خمسها فما يرفع له إلا ما أقبل عليه بقلبه وإنما أمرنا بالنافلة لئتم لهم بها ما نقصوا من الفريضة.

“Truly sometimes one half; or one third, or one fourth, or one fifth of prayer ascends upward (i.e. is accepted by God); only those portions of prayer ascend upwards which are accompanied by heart’s presence; and because of this reason. We are assigned to recite supererogatory prayers so that through their means the shortcomings of daily prayers could be compensated.” [30](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: قال رسول الله صلى عليه وآله: قال الله تعالى: ما تحبب إلي عبدي بشئ أحب إلي مما افترضته عليه، وإنه ليتحبب إلي بالنافلة حتى أحبه، فإذا أحببته كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به، وبصره الذي يبصر به، ولسانه الذي ينطق به، ويده التي يبطش بها، ورجله التي يمشي بها، إذا دعاني أحببته، وإذا سألتني أعطيته، وما ترددت في شئ أنا فاعله كترددتي في موت المؤمن: يكره الموت وأنا أكره مساءته.

“In order to become my beloved, my servant does not have any thing better than performing compulsory obligations– Through performance of recommended obligations (Nawafil) he becomes so much intimate with me that I become like his ears through which he hears; become as his eyes through which he sees; become as his tongue through which he talks,– become as his hands through which he finds things,– and become as his feet through which he moves.

If he beseech me I accept; if he desires some thing I bestow it upon him, I have never contradicted anything like contradiction in taking a believer's soul,– he is disgusted with death and I become disgusted seeing him unhappy.”³¹

Third: Night Prayer (Salatul-Layl)

Among various recommended deeds (Nawafil) the Night Prayer carries special distinction, and the Holy Qur'an and traditions have made lots of emphasis and recommendations for its performance. God– Almighty says to Holy Prophet (S):

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

“And some part of the night awake for it, a largess for thee. It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a praised estate. (17:79)

And in praise of God's Special Servants says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا

“And who spend the night before their Lord prostrate and standing. (25:64)

And in defining believers characteristics says:

تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةٍ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“Who forsake their beds to cry unto their Lord in fear and hope, and spend of what we have bestowed up on them. No soul knoweth what is kept hidden for them of joy, as a reward for what they used to do. (32: 16–17)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: ان الله جل جلاله اوحى الى الدنيا: أن أتعبني من خدمك و اخدمني من رفضك.

وإن العبد إذا تخلى بسيدته في جوف الليل المظلم وتجاه أثبت الله النور في قلبه فإذا قال: يا رب يا رب! ناداه الجليل جل جلاله: لبيك عبدي، سلني أعطك و توكل عليّ أكفك ، ثم يقول جل جلاله لملائكته: يا ملائكتي انظروا إلى عبدي فقد تخلى بي في جوف الليل المظلم والباطلون لأهون والغافلون ينامون. اشهدوا أنني قد غفرت له

“God–Almighty send revelation to world asking it to be indifferent towards its admirers and to be in service to its forsakers. When a God’s servant in the darkness of night engages himself in humming communications with his Creator, God–Almighty enlightens his heart.”

“When he says: Oh God! Oh God! (Yarab! Yarab!) God–Almighty responds by replying –‘yes my servant! Whatever you desire I will bestow it upon you, rely upon Me so that I make you self–sufficient’. Then God–Almighty says to His angels –‘Look at my servant! How in the darkness of night is he busy in humming private communications with Me, while lovers of nonsense amusements are busy in pursuing their carnal desires and the ignorant ones are busy in sleep. Be you witness that I have forgiven my servant.”[32](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله (ص): اشرف امتي حملة القرآن واصحاب الليل

“The nobles of my nation (Ummah) are –the carriers of Holy Qur’an and night vigilants.”[33](#)

And said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: ما زال جبرئيل يوصيني بقيام الليل حتى ظننت ان خيار امتي لا يناموا

“Angel Gabriel has made so much recommendation about night prayer to me, that I assume the righteous one of my nation (Ummah) will not sleep during night.”[34](#)

And said:

انس بن مالك قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله يقول: ركعتان في جوف الليل احب الى من الدنيا وما فيها.

“Two units of prayer in the middle of night is more beloved to me than the world and whatsoever it may contain.”[35](#)

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: صلاة الليل تحس الوجه وتحس الخلق وتطيب الريح وتدر الرزق وتقضى الدين وتذهب بالهم وتجلوا البصر.

“Night Prayer makes face beautiful, conduct righteous, and (prayer offerer’s) body performed; increases sustenance; pays debts; removes grief and increases shining of eyes.”³⁶

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: صلاة الليل مرضاة الرب وحب الملائكة وسنة الأنبياء ونور المعرفة وأصل الإيمان، وراحة الأبدان وكراهية الشيطان وسلاح على الأعداء وإجابة للدعاء وقبول الأعمال وبركة في الرزق وشفيع بين صاحبها وبين ملك الموت وسراج في قبره وفراش تحت جنبه وجواب منكر ونكير ومؤنس وزائر في قبره إلى يوم القيامة، فإذا كان يوم القيامة كانت الصلاة ظلا فوقه وتأجا على رأسه ولباسا على بدنه ونورا يسعى بين يديه وسترا بينه وبين النار وحجة للؤمنين بين يدى الله تعالى وثقلا فى الميزان وجوازا على الصراط ومفتاحا للجنة. لأن الصلاة تكبير وتحميد وتسييح وتمجيد وتقديس وتعظيم وقراءة ودعاء وان أفضل الاعمال كلها الصلاة لوقتها.

“Night Prayer is a means of pleasing God–Almighty and achieving friendship of His angels. It is a tradition and way of prophets; a light of seeing God and root of the faith (because it strengthens faith). Makes body relaxed and Satan agitated, it is arsenal against enemies; is a means for acceptance of prayer and deeds; increases Divine–Bounties for a human being; acts as an intercessor between prayer offerer and death’s angel; it is the light and floor covering inside the grave as well as the defender to the questioning of two angels (Munkir and Nakir).

“Inside the grave it will become a companion and pilgrim of the prayer offerer till the Day of Resurrection. On the Judgment Day, it will provide a shadow for head; will become a crown upon head; a dress for body, a front light; and a barrier between prayer offerer and Hell’s .fire. It will be a solid argument before God–Almighty for the believer, a means for making deeds heavier; a pass for crossing over the Sirat and a key of Paradise.

Because, prayer consists of proclamation of God’s Greatness (Takbir), Praise, Adoration, Worship, to show humility and humbleness in front of Him, respect, recital of the Holy Qur’an, and supplication. Indeed the prayer offered at its right time –is the most superior deed.”³⁷

There are many traditions and Qur’anic verses which describe the special importance assigned to Night Prayer. Its recital has been the traditions of prophets and God’s favorite saints. The Holy Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (a.s.) of his Holy Progeny have shown special interests and paid attention towards Night Prayer. God’s favorite saints and mystics through their continuous engagements into Night Prayer, invocations, and supplications at dawn were able to attain exalted spiritual positions.

How beautiful and pleasing it is that a God’s servant wakes up from sleep; leaves his soft and comfortable bed; makes ablutions, and in the darkness of night, while the others are busy in deep sleep,

stands up before the Lord of the worlds; engages into humming communications with Him; and through this spiritual journey ascends towards Upper Heavens, thus, joining the angels of Celestial Kingdom in praising, worshipping, and adoring God–Almighty.

At this moment, his heart becomes center of illumination of Divine light and with a heart fully saturated with God's desire ascends towards the most sublime spiritual position of God's Nearness.

1. Details of Night Prayer

The Night–Prayer consists of all together eleven units (Rakats) of prayer. The first eight units are offered as two units prayer (exactly like 2 units of Morning Prayer), repeated four times with the intention of Night–Prayer. After finishing these eight units, make intention for the (Prayer of Shafa) [38](#) and offer two units of prayer.

In the end make intention of (Prayer of Witr)[39](#) and offer are unit of prayer with special instructions. There are special etiquettes and supplications for the Night Prayer that may be found in the books of traditions and supplications.[40](#)

2. Etiquette of Night Prayer

The time of Night Prayer begins after midnight and the more nearer it gets to dawn the better it is. Whenever you are awakened for night prayer first of all relieve yourself from the call of nature, clean your teeth, make ablutions (*wadhu*), and make yourself perfumed.

The night prayer consists of 11 units (Rakats) as follows:

8 Rakat (4 times 2 rakat) Night Prayer

2 Rakat Prayer of Shafa

1 Rakat Prayer of Witr

The first eight rakats should be offered like 2 rakats of Morning prayer repeating four times with a salutation offered after every two Rakats. In the first Rakat recite Surah Opening:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِیْنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ مَا لِكِ یَوْمِ الدِّیْنِ اِیَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِیَّاكَ نَسْتَعِیْنُ اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِیْمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِیْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَیْهِمْ غَیْرِ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَیْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّیْنَ

(Bismillah ar Rahman nir Rahim; alhamadu lillahi Rab al alimin; ar Rahman nir Rahim,' Malike yom iddin,' iyyaka nabudu wa iyyaka nastayeen, ahede nassratal mustaqeem saratal lazina,' anamta aleyhim,' gharyil maqdhubeh alehim waladh dhuallin).

“In the Name of God the Beneficent and the Merciful”, “Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds,’ the Beneficent, the Merciful,” Owner of the day of Judgment,’ Thee (alone) we worship, Thee alone we ask for help,’ show us the straight path,’ The path of those whom Thou hast favored,’ Not (the path) of those who earn thine anger nor of those who go astray. (1:1-7),

After reciting Surah Opening the prayer offerer may recite any other surah whatever he likes or may recite Surah “Sincerity” in all 8 Rakats:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ اللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ یَلِدْ وَلَمْ یُولَدْ وَلَمْ یَكُنْ لَّهٗ کُفُوًا اَحَدٌ

(Bismillah ar Rahman nir Rahim,. qul ho wallahu ahad Allahus samad,. lam yalid walam yulad,' walam ya kun lahu kufu one ahad),

In the Name of God, the Beneficent and the Merciful

“Say: He is God, the One! God, the eternally besought of all! He begeteth not nor was begotten, And there is non comparable unto Him. (112: 1-4)

In the second rakat of prayer like all others prayers, Qunoot is optional and recital of the following, three times is sufficient.

سبحان الله

Subhan Allahi

“Glory to God”

Prayer of Shafa

After finishing eight Rakat of Night Prayer as described above, make intention of two rakats of prayer of Shafa as follows:

In the first Rakat after recital of Surah Opening recite Surah Nas (Mankind) as follows:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ اِلٰهِ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ الَّذِي يُّوسِّسُ فِيْ صُدُوْرِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

(Bismillah ar Rahman nir Rahim;

Qul auzu bi Rab bil nas,. Malik in nas ilahin nas,. Min sharril waswasil Khannas, Allazi yo vis viso fi

sudoorin nase,” Min al jinnate onenas.)

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful”

“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind; The King of mankind,” The God of mankind,” from the evil of the sneaking whisperer; who whispereth in the hearts of mankind; of the jinn and of mankind. (114: 1-6)

In the second Rakat after recital of Surah Opening recite Surah Day Break as follows:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ اِذَا وَقَبَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّٰثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ
وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّٰثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

(Bismillah ar Rahman nir Rahim,” Qui a uzu bi Rab bil falaq; min, sharrin ma khalaq, wa min sharre ghasiqin eza waqab, wa min sharrin naffasate fil uqad)

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of Daybreak, from the evil of that which He created; from the evil of the darkness when it is intense; and from the evil of malignant witchcraft and from the evil of envier when he envieth. (113: 1-5)

Prayer of Witr

After finishing two rakat of Prayer of Shaf'a, make intention of one Rakat of Witr Prayer as follows:

After recital of Surah Opening recite Surah Sincerity one time. Or, one may recite Surah Sincerity three times, Surah Day-Break one time and Surah Mankind one time, after Surah Opening. Having finished recital of the above raise your hands upward for Qunoot, and recite whatever you prefer or you may recite the following:

رَبَّنَا اٰتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

(Rabana atena fid dunia hasaneh wa fil akhre hasanah wa qena aza bin nar).

“Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of Fire. (2:201)

or, recite the following:

اللهم كن لوليك الحجة بن الحسن صلواتك عليه وعلى آبائه في هذه الساعة وفي كل ساعة وليا وحافظا وقائدا

وناصرا ودليلا وعينا حتى تسكنه ارضك طوعا وتمتعه فيها طويلا

(Allahumma Kulle Waliyak al Hujjat ibnal Hasan Salawataka aleyhim wa ala abahe fi hazes saat wafi kulle saat walian wa hafiza wa qaiden wa nasera wa dalilan wa ayena hatta tuzkenahu arzaka toa wa tamatteahufiha tavila, be rahameteka ya ar hamar rahimin.)

“Oh God! Protect Your Vicegerent (Vali al-Asr), and send salutations upon him, and his Holy ancestors at this time as well as at all the times, (as our) Imam, guardian, supporter, and guide until such time; when you bestow upon him the honor of heading the (Divine) Government. And let the people be delighted in his reign, by bestowing success, and by extending his reign (as maximum as possible).”

Or recite the following:

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أقدامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

(Rabana afrigh aleyna sabran wa sabbit iqdamana wa unurna alal qomal kafiriin)

“Our Lord! Bestow on us endurance, make our foothold sure; and give us help against the disbelieving folk. (2:250)

It is recommended that in the state of Qunoot one should try to cry and shed tears because, of remembering his past sins and transgressions, God-Almighty Day of Judgment and the Hell's fire. According to Islamic traditions, if one prays for forty believers God-Almighty grants his supplications.

Therefore, in Qunoot it is recommended to ask God's forgiveness for at least forty believers, (including your parents, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, scholars, martyrs etc.) in the following manner:

اللهم اغفر

(Allahummaghfir)

Oh God! forgive (Mention the name of person, and repeat it for forty people) it has been narrated that the Holy Prophet (S) used to seek God is forgiveness seventy times. Therefore, while still maintaining your left hand in the state of Qunoot, and holding a rosary in your right hand recite the following seventy times:

استغفر الله ربي واتوب اليه

(Astagh.frullahi rabi wa atubo elahe)

“Oh God! Forgive me and accept my repentance.” The Holy Prophet (S) used to recite the following sentence seven times:

هذا مقام العائذ بك من النار.

(Haza maqamal aize beka minan nar)

“Here is some one who has sought your shelter from the Hell's fire.”

It has been narrated that Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.) used to seek God's forgiveness three hundred times by reciting the following sentence:

العفو.

(Al afoo)

“(Oh God!) Please Forgive!”

Therefore, while still holding left hand in the state of Qunoot, crying, shedding tears of regret and shame for past sins with the rosary in right hand, recite the above sentence three hundred times. After finishing it recite the following supplication only one time:

ربنا اغفر لي وارحمني واتوب اليه انك انت التواب الغفور الرحيم.

(Rubbe naqhfirli warhamni watoubli innaka antal tawwabul ghafoor urrahim.)

“Oh God! Please forgive me, be kind to me and accept my repentance. Indeed you are the one who accepts repentance, forgiver, and the most Merciful.”

This completes the Qunoot of Witr prayer. After finishing Qunoot bow down into genuflection and prostration and finish the prayer in the usual manner like all other prayers with the recital of witnessing (*Tashahud*) and salutation (*salam*). Those readers who are not familiar with these Prayer rituals may refer to the Book: Profundities of Prayer written by: Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei; Translated by S.H. Alamdar and Published by Ansariyan Publications, Qum.

[1.](#) al-Ka.fi, vol. 3, p-265.

[2.](#) al-Kafi, vol. 3, p-264.

[3.](#) al-Kafi, vol. 3, p-264.

[4.](#) Prostration: Regarding prostration it is narrated that during one's entire life if one succeeds during a single prostration to achieve a real union with the Creator, it will compensate for all the past omissions. He would receive Divine blessings and would become immune from the satanic temptations forever.

On the contrary if during prostration, which is the state of renunciation if his heart is preoccupied with any thing other than Him, he will be listed among the group of hypocrites and the misled.

[5.](#) al-Kafi Vol. 3, p-265.

[6.](#) al-Kafi, vol. 3, p-265.

[7.](#) al-Kafi, vol. 3, p-265.

[8.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-260.

[9.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-241.

[10.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-239.

[11.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-244.

[12.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-248.

[13.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-248.

[14.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-250.

[15.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-258.

[16.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-258.

[17.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p.258.

[18.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-265.

[19.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-248.

[20.](#) In his book "Sirr-us-Salat" (the Mysteries of Prayers), Imam Khomeini, describes the presence of heart, as follows:

"During prayers one must try to completely cut off the heart's preoccupation with worldly affairs. If a person is submerged in love and desires of this world, naturally his heart is busy continuously from one involvement to another. The heart behaves like a bird jumping from one branch to another. So for we have this tree of worldly ambitions or desires ("Hubb-e Duniya") in our heart, it will behave restless.

If by struggle, practice, efforts, and thinking about the severe consequences and losses, if one could succeed in cutting this tree of worldly ambitions or desires, then the heart will become reposed and peaceful. It will achieve spiritual perfection. At least the more one tries to free himself from worldly charms and temptations the more he succeeds in cutting the various branches of that tree in his heart, with the result, the presence of heart will be achieved in the same proportion."

Imam Khomeini further explains the term 'love of this world' (Hubb al-Duniya). "There are people who do not possess anything at all of this moral world, but still they could be the persons totally submerged in the love of this world.

While on the contrary, one maybe be like Prophet Sulaiman bin Dawood, (Solomon son of David) king of kings and possessing all the treasurers of this universe, but at the same time may not be a man of this world, completely detached from the lure of the world." [Tr].

[21.](#) Nahjal-Fasahath, p-65.

[22.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-236.

[23.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-233.

[24.](#) One should recite Istiadha:

اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

"I seek refuge in God-Almighty from .Satan -the damned one."

[25.](#) Direction to which Muslims turn their face for Prayer. [Tr.]

[26.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-230.

[27.](#) In order to attain heart's presence during prayer we may utilize books which have been written about Mysteries of Prayer, like the book "Sirr-us-Salat" (Mysteries of Prayer) written by Divine Scholar and Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (r.a.) [Author].

[28.](#) Refer to Kulliyat Mafatteh al-Jinan of (late) Haj Sheik Abbas Qummi [Tr].

- [29.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-36.
[30.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-28.
[31.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-31
[32.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-137.
[33.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-138.
[34.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-139.
[35.](#) the Bahar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-148.
[36.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-153.
[37.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-161.
[38.](#) وَالشَّفَعِ وَالْوَتْرِ

“By the Even and Odd (contrasted).” (89:3) [Tr].

[39.](#) Ibid.

[40.](#) For the convenience of our readers the [Tr] has prepared “Etiquettes of Night-Prayer” abstracted from supplication books.

Fourth Means, Struggle (Jihad) and Martyrdom (Shahadat)

Struggle waged for the way of God-Almighty, extension of Islamic rule, proclamation of Monotheism (Tawhid), defense of Islamic lands and governance of Qur’anic commands, combating against oppression and arrogance, and for the defense of deprived and oppressed –is considered as one of the great worship, which results in a struggler’s achieving self-perfection and spiritual ascension towards God-Almighty. There are plenty of traditions and Qur’anic Verses which describe the special importance attached to struggle. e.g. : God-Almighty says in Holy Qur’an:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

“Those who believe and have left their homes and striven with their wealth and their lives in God’s way are of much greater worth in God’s sight. These are they who are triumphant. (9:20)

And said:

“But he has bestowed on those who strive a great reward above the sedentary. (4:95)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: للجنة باب يقال له باب المجاهدين يمضون إليه فإذا هو مفتوح وهم متقلدون

بسيوفهم والجمع في الموقف والملائكة ترحب بهم.

“There is a gate in the Paradise called as the “Gate of Strugglers.” When the strugglers walk towards the Paradise, the gate opens and the strugglers with their swords hanging enter into Paradise passing through a grand welcome by angels, while the other people remain being held up for accounting of their deeds.”¹

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: فوق كل ذى بربر حتى يقتل في سبيل الله، فاذا قتل في سبيل الله فليس فوقه بر.

“For every virtue, there is an another higher virtue except when a human being sacrifices his life for the sake of God–Almighty. And in that case there exists nothing superior than that.”²

The Holy Prophet (S) said: “That God–Almighty bestows upon a martyr the following seven blessings;

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: للشهيد سبع خصال من الله: أول قطرة من دمه مغفور له كل ذنب. والثانية يقع رأسه في حجر زوجته من الحور العين وتمسحان الغبار عن وجهه، وتقولان مرحباً بك، ويقول هو مثل ذلك لهما. والثالثة يكسى من كسوة الجنة. والرابعة تبتدره خزنة الجنة بكل ريح طيبة أيهم يأخذه معه. والخامسة أن يرى منزله. والسادسة أن يقال لروحه اسرح في الجنة حيث شئت. والسابعة أن ينظر في وجه الله وإنها لراحة لكل نبي وشهيد.

1. *“When the first drop of blood comes out his body all his sins are pardoned.*
2. *After martyrdom his head is placed upon the laps of two heavenly maids, who clean off dirt from his face and say –greeting to you, and he too reciprocates their greetings.*
3. *They dress him in Heavenly clothes.*
4. *The store keeper of Paradise present him different kinds of perfumes and good smells, so that he may select whatever desires.*
5. *At the time of martyrdom his place in Paradise is shown to him.*
6. *After the martyrdom his soul is addressed –you are free to move in the Paradise wherever you desire.*
7. *A martyr is allowed to witness God's Beauty, which brings a special sort of comfort for every prophet and martyr.”³*

God–Almighty says in Holy Qur'an:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ۖ يُفَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ وَعَدَا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۖ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

“Lo! God hath bought .from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs: They shall fight in the way of God and shall slay and be slain. It is a promise which is binding on Him in Torah, the Gospel and the Holy Qur’an. Who fulfilleth his covenant better than God’s? Rejoice in your bargain that you have made, for that is the supreme triumph. (9: 111)

The above mentioned verse is one of the most beautiful and tender verses of the Holy Qur’an in which the people have been encouraged to participate in struggle, with special delicacy and tenderness. In the beginning the verse says:

“God has purchased of the believers their persons and their goods, and in return gives them Paradise.”

What a beautiful deal? The buyer is God–Almighty –the Lord of the Universe and Absolute Owner of all the riches. The believers are the sellers who believe in God–Almighty and Hereafter. And the thing being traded is –the eternal Paradise.

Then says:

God Almighty in Torah, Bible and Holy Qur’an –the three great Heavenly scriptures, has registered such promise.

Then says:

Do you know anyone else ?

Who is more faithful to his covenant than God ?

In the end God–Almighty gives glad tidings to believers about such a worthy deal and says:

That is the most supreme achievement.

The Holy Qur’an for a human being martyred in God’s path confirms the highest position and says:

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا ۖ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

“Think not of those who are slain in God’s way as dead. Nay they live finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord. (3: 169)

The sentence in the presence of their Lord describes the supreme position assigned to a martyr. Human

soul's remaining alive after death is not reserved for martyrs only, rather is applicable to all human beings.

But the distinction of martyrs is the sentence: in the presence of their Lord. i.e. they will continue life –at the most superior positions, and will receive their sustenance at these positions, and naturally the sustenance received by them, will not be similar to the sustenance received by others.

Struggle in God's path and martyrdom are the most greatest and worthiest worships and a martyr through this distinguished means may attain the most subtle spiritual positions. What distinguishes this worship from other worships is its two dimensions, which may be described as follows:

A. First Dimension: The supreme Goal of the struggler

The aim of a combatant is not to safeguard his own interest as well as the interest of his relatives. He is not a selfish or shortsighted person rather he is dedicated to achieve the objectives and goals desired by God–Almighty.

B. Second Dimension: The magnitude of sacrifice

A combatant in order to undertake his spiritual journey, and for the sake of achieving his cherished goal i.e. God–Almighty, invest his most valuable and dearest assets. If a human being offers some donation for a charity it does not mean more than that he has overlooked a certain portion of his wealth; similarly in case he worships, it does not mean more than that he has spent a certain amount of his time and energy.

But a struggler overlooks every thing belonging to him; above every thing else he over looks his own life and surrender his entire existence to God–Almighty with absolute sincerity; he closes his eyes from wealth, power, position, wife, children, and relatives, thus, suddenly surrendering his soul to God–Almighty.

The work done by gnostics and devoted individuals during their entire span of lives, may be accomplished by a struggler either all of it or even may be more than that in a very short time. The matter and materialistic world is too much confined for the exalted and enlightened spirit of a struggler, because of the same reason, like a formidable lion breaks his material cage, as a light winged pigeon flies over the vast illuminated Upper Heavens and from the most superior exalted positions ascends towards their beloved God–Almighty.

If other God's saints, gradually, during entire span of lives were able to attained the most distinguished spiritual positions namely – position of desire, love, witnessing a combatant martyr travels this one hundreds years distance in one single night and, thus, attains the most distinguished spiritual position of God's–countenance (*laqa*).

If other God's servants by means of invocations, incarnations, sitting and standing seek God's Nearness, a struggler of God's way through tolerance of wounds, pains, hardships, bullets, fragments of mortar shell, and ultimately by sacrificing his own soul attains God's Nearness; although, there is vast difference between these two.

The battle field possesses a special sort of purity, spirituality, and illumination; it is field of love, sacrifice, action, and enthusiasm; it is a field of competition for getting sacrificed in the beloved's path, and becoming alive for eternal life. The humming warm communications of the dwellers of trenchement with their beloved possess a special fervor of purity, illumination, and attraction whose examples cannot be seen even inside the mosques and temples.

[1.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p-5.

[2.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 11,p-10.

[3.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol., 11,p-9.

Fifth Means, Benevolence and Service to Humanity

According to Islamic doctrine, God's worship and nearness neither can be summarized simply performance of prayer, fasting, Hajj, pilgrimages, invocations, and supplications, nor is limited to presence in mosques, temples, and tombs; instead, discharging social responsibilities, compassion, goodness, and serving God's servants, if done with the intention of God's nearness, are considered as most superior worships and could become a means for self-building, self-purification, and God's Nearness.

In Islam, devotion and undertaking spiritual journey towards God-Almighty do not necessarily require living in seclusion, rather could be done together with acceptance of social responsibilities as well as living a perfectly normal social life.

Cooperation in righteous deeds and benevolence; goodness, endeavors in fulfilling the needs of believers and making them happier; defense of oppressed and deprived; taking care of the affairs of Muslims; solving their problems and extending a helping hand towards God's servants, from the Islamic point of view are considered a great worship whose reward is ten times higher than performance of a Hajj pilgrimage.

Their exist hundreds of traditions narrated by the Holy Prophet (S) and Infallible Imams (a.s.) which emphasize the importance of this matter. e.g.: the following has been narrated from Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) that God-Almighty said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: قال الله عزوجل: الخلق عيالى فاحبهم الى الطفهم بهم واسعاهم فى حوائجهم

“My servants are my children, therefore, the most beloved persons before me are those who are kindest towards them and do their best in taking care of their needs.”1

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: الخلق عيال الله فاحب الخلق الى الله من نفع عيال الله وادخل على أهل بيت سرورا.

“The people are God's children, therefore, the most beloved persons before God–Almighty are those whose benevolence reach to God's children, thus, making their families happier full of joy.”2

Imam al–Baqir (a.s.) said:

عن ابي جعفر عليه السلام قال: تبسم الرجل فى وجه اخيه حسنة وصرف القذى عنه حسنة وما عبد الله بشيء احب إلى الله من ادخال السرور على المؤمن.

“Smiling of a believer while encountering a fellow brother believer as well as solving his problems are accounted as righteous deeds. There is no worship more beloved before God–Almighty than making a believer joyful.”3

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: من سر مؤمنا فقد سرنى ومن سرنى فقد سر رسول الله ومن سر رسول الله فقد سر الله ومن سر الله ادخله جنته.

“Whoever makes a believer happy has made me happy; whoever makes me happy has made the Holy Prophet (S) happy,. whoever has made the Holy Prophet (S) happy has made God–Almighty happy; and whoever has made God–Almighty happy will enter into Paradise.”4

And said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: لقضا حاجة امرى مؤمن احب الى الله من عشرين حجة كل حجة ينفق فيها صاحبها مائة الف.

“Fulfillment of a believer's need before God–Almighty is more beloved than performance of Hajj pilgrimage for ten times each time spending ten thousands.”5

And said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: مشى المسلم فى حاجة المسلم خير من سبعين توافا بالبيت الحرام

“To strive for fulfillment of Muslim’s need is better than circumambulating around the Holy Kaba seventy times.”⁶

And said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: ان لله عبادا من خلقه يفرع العباد عليهم فى حوائجهم اولئك هم الامنون

“God–Almighty has created some of His special servants, that at the time of their needs, people take shelter in them. These are the ones who will be immune from God’s Punishment on the Judgment Day.”⁷

Therefore, as described above, according to Islamic point of view –benevolence, goodness, helping God’s servants and to solve their problems are considered as great worships. And if they are done with the intention of God’s pleasure will become means for nourishment and perfection of self, spiritual migration and ascension towards God’s Nearness.

Unfortunately, a majority of people lack the proper understanding of true Islam, and therefore, have been deprived from benefits of such a large and important part of Islamic worship. In their opinion worshipping and undertaking spiritual journey towards God–Almighty is not possible, except, through prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, supplication, invocation, and incantations.

¹. al-Kafi, vol. 2, p-199.

². al-Kafi, vol. 2p-164.

³. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, p-188.

⁴. Bihar al-Anwar vol. 74, p-413.

⁵. al-Kafi, vol. 2, p-193.

⁶. Bihar al-Anwar vol. 74, p-311.

⁷. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, p-318.

Sixth Means, Supplications (Dua)

The supplication (*dua*) is one of the best worship through which one may attain self–perfection and God’s Nearness. Because, of this reason God–Almighty has invited his servants to offer supplications. God–Almighty says in Holy Qur’an:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ﴿٤٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

“And your Lord hath said: Pray unto Me and I will hear your prayer. Lo! Than who scorn My service, they will enter Hell disgraced. (40:60)

And said:

ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً ﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

(“Oh mankind!) Call upon your Lord humbly and in secret. Lo! He loveth not aggressors. (7:55)

And said:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

“And when My Servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he crieth unto Me. (2: 186)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: الدعاء مخ العبادة.

“The supplication (Dua) is the soul of the worship.”¹

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: الدعاء حق العبادة قال الله: "ان الذين يستكبرون عن عبادتي" الايه, ادع الله ولا تقل ان
الا مرقد فرغ منه.

“Supplication is worship, because God–Almighty says: ' You must continue to seek God–Almighty and should never say: It is all done.”²

And said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: عليكم بالدعاء فانكم لا تقربون بمثله ولا تتركوا صغيرة لصغرها ان تدعوا بها, ان
صاحب الصغار هو صاحب الكبار

“You should never quit supplication in all circumstances, because you will never find any other substitute

like supplication in attaining God's–Nearness. Even, for insignificant [3](#)and minor affairs one must supplicate, and because of their being insignificant supplication should not be abandoned, because, after all the Master of petty affairs happens to be the same Master of large affairs.”[4](#)

God's Servant must supplicate because his entire existence needs God–Almighty. Because, a human being in essence is absolutely poor, needy, and dependent; and in case he becomes deprived of God's blessings even for an instant, he will be destroyed as though he was never existed.

Whatever, reaches to a servant is bestowed from God–Almighty, therefore, a servant should admit this primordial dependency by his tongue and should confirm his poverty, servitude, and needs, through his practical actions, which is the real meaning of worship.

At the time of supplication a human being remembers God–Almighty, establish humming communications with him, and like a humble servant with tearful eyes presents his needs before God–Almighty the Owner of Absolute Riches. By abandoning his hopes from the world of poverty and wants, he establishes his link with the Most Supreme Source of all Blessings and Perfection.

Flying upward from the world of poverty, he succeeds in witnessing the Beauty of God's Essence, through his esoteric eyes. The state of supplication and humming private communications with God–Almighty is one of the most pleasurable and beautiful condition of a servant which will never be exchanged for any price by God's saints.

Refer to al–Sahifah al–Sajjadiyyah[5](#) and other supplication books and study the details of humming communications of Infallible Imams (a.s.) of the Prophet's Holy Progeny. Establishing communications with God–Almighty and hoping that He will accept the supplications, brings tranquility, and assurance for the suppliant's heart.

If a human being, while facing lives hardships for solution of his problems and difficulties, does not seek refuge in God–Almighty, then how could he show perseverance against them and have assurance for continuation of his life?

Supplication is a believer's arsenal through which he struggles against disappointments and despairs, and seeks help from a hidden super natural power for solution of his difficulties and problems. The Divine–Prophets and Infallible Imams (a.s.) always utilized this arsenal and have recommended it strongly for believers. Imam al–Ridha (a.s.) said to his companions:

عن الرضا عليه السلام انه كان يقول لاصحابه: عليكم بسلاح الانبيا فليل وما صلاح الانبيا؟ قال: الدعاء.

“Use the arsenal of Prophets.” What is the arsenal of prophets? He was asked. “Supplication”. Replied the Imam.”[6](#)

Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) said:

قال ابو جعفر عليه السلام: ان الله يحب من عبادة المؤمنين كل عبد ودعا فعليكم بالدعا ففى السحر الى طلوع الشمس, فانها ساعة تفتح فيها ابواب السما وتقسم فيها الارزاق وتقضى فيها الحوائج العظام.

“God–Almighty, among .the believers loves the one, who supplicates a lot; and I recommend you to supplicate specially at the time of dawn until sun–rise, because, at this time the gates of Heaven are opened; people’s sustenance is distributed and their great wants are granted.”⁷

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: الدعاء سلاح المؤمن وعمود الدين ونور السموات والارض.

“Supplication is believer’s arsenal; is the pillar of religion and light of the earth and sky.”⁸

Supplication is a worship rather is the soul of all worships and brings eternal rewards. It is a believers ascension to Heavenly Kingdom, makes the supplicant’s spirit perfected and nourished and helps suppliant to attain God’s Nearness. The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said:

قال امير المؤمنين عليه السلام: الدعاء مفاتيح النجاح ومقاليد الفلاح وخير الدعاء ما صدر عن نقى وقلب تقى وفى المناجات سبب النجاة وبالاخلاص يكون الخلاص فاذا اشتد الفزع فالى الله المفزع.

“Supplication is the key of prosperity; the best supplication is the supplication which comes out .from pure chests and pious hearts; supplication or hymns with God–Almighty results in salvation; and through means of sincerity one is saved from adversities and wickedness, therefore, when hardships become intense one should seek refuge in God–Almighty.”⁹

Therefore, supplication is a worship that if done properly in accordance with relevant conditions will result in suppliant’s attaining self–perfection and God’s Nearness, and these results certainly depends upon the rank and degree of the supplication. Because, of this reason a Lord’s servant at any place, under any circumstances should never be negligent from this great worship, since a supplication is never going to be ineffective, although it may not produce immediate and apparent results.

It is possible that sometimes the grant of suppliant’s wants might be delayed; or may be they will not be fulfilled in this world; but even this is not without wisdom; because, occasionally a believer’s demand are not in his real interest and a Wise God knows better what is really good for his servant.

Therefore, a servant should always stretch his hands before the Almighty Omnipotent God, and should supplicate for his wants. If it is deemed appropriate his wants will be granted in this world. But,

sometimes God–Almighty thinks it appropriate to delay the grant of his servant so that he does more intensive humming communication. with Him, thus, attaining higher exalted spiritual positions.

Sometimes, divine expediency dictates that his grant should not be granted in this world so that he should remain continuously engaged in God's Remembrance, and receive a much better reward in the next world. The Holy Prophet (S) said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: رحم الله عبدا طلب من الله حاجة فالح الدعاء استجيب له او لم يستجب له تلاهذه الايه وادعوا ربى عسى ان لا اكون بدعاء ربى شقيا

“May God–Almighty bless the servant who seeks his needs from God–Almighty and pleads for their fulfillment through supplications whether his wants are granted or not. Then he recited the following verse: [10](#)

وَأَدْعُو رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا

“It may be that in prayer unto my Lord, I shall not be unblest. (19:48)

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: ان المؤمن ليدعو الله عز وجل في حاجته فيقول الله تعالى: أخروا إجابته شوقا إلى صوته ودعائه فاذا كان يوم القيامة قال الله: عبي! دعوتنى فأخرت إجابتك, وثوابك كذا وكذا ودعوتنى فى كذا وكذا: فأخرت إجابتك وثوابك كذا وكذا. فيتمنى المؤمن أنه لم يستجيب له دعوة فى الدنيا مما يرى من حسن الثواب.

“Sometimes a believer supplicates for a need before God–Almighty; but, He orders His Angels to delay the grant of servant's needs, because, He loves to hear his voice and supplication more. Then on the Day of Judgment says to him:

'Oh My servant! You called me but I delayed your request, now in return I will bestow upon you such and such reward and so and so supplication. 'Hearing it the servant would say: I wish none of my needs would have been granted in the world. 'He says so because he sees the excellent rewards of Hereafter.” [11](#)

And said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: إحفظ أدب الدعاء وانظر من تدعو وكيف تدعو ولماذا وحقق عظمة الله وكبريائه وعاین بقلبك علمه بما فى ضميرك وإطلاعه على سرك وما تكون فيه نجاتك قال الله تعالى: وَيَدْعُو الْإِنْسَانَ بِالْشَّرِّ دُعَاءَهُ

بالخَيْرِ ، وكان الانسانُ عَجُولاً وتفكر ماذا تسأل ولماذا تسأل والدعا إستجابة الكل منك للحق وتذويب المهجة في مشاهدة الرب وترك الاختيار جميعا وتسليم الامور كلها ظاهرا وباطنا إلى الله تعالى فإن لم تأت بشرط الدعاء فلا تنتظر الاجابة فانه يعلم السر وأخفى. فلعلك تدعوه بشيء قد علم من شرك خلاف ذلك

“Be careful about the etiquettes of supplication, and pay attention as to which personality are you talking, how do you beseech Him, and for what purpose is He implored?”

“Think about the Majesty and Splendor of God–Almighty, and look inside your heart and know that He is aware of whatever is contained therein,. He knows about your heart's secrets and the truth and falsehood hidden therein. Be careful, to identify correctly the path of your salvation or misfortune lest you request a thing from God–Almighty which contains your destruction while you imagine your salvation in it. God–Almighty said in Holy Qur’an:

“Man Prayeth for evil as he prayeth for good, for man was ever hasty. (17: 11)

“Therefore, think correctly regarding what do you want from God–Almighty and for what purpose is it required. A supplication will be accepted only if you exert absolute concentration of your entire existence towards God–Almighty; melting your heart while witnessing His presence; abandoning all your disposals, and absolute surrender of all affairs with sincerity to God–Almighty. So, if you did not act in accordance to above mentioned conditions of supplication do not look forward for its acceptance.

“Because, God–Almighty is aware of all your secrets and mysteries. Perhaps you beseech God–Almighty for something, while you know that your intention is opposite to your request.”¹²

¹. Sahih Tirmidhi, vol. 2, p–266.

². al–Kafi, vol. 2. p–407.

³. Even if one need's an insignificant thing like shoe's laces, one must pray and ask God–Almighty [Tr].

⁴. al–Kafi, vol. 2, p–467.

⁵. Al–Sahifah Al–Sajjadiyyah: includes certain supplications quoted from Imam Zain al–Abidin ‘Ali b. Hussain b. ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.). He is one of the Imams belonging to the household of the Prophet whom Allah has kept pure and free of defilement. The Imam was the fourth in line of the Imams of the Prophet's household. Imam ‘Ali ibn al–Husain (a.s.), was born in the year 38 A.H. or, perhaps as is conjectured, a little before that and lived for a period of 57 years.

Imam al–Shafi considered Imam “Ali ibn al–Husain (a.s.) as the most supreme jurist of all the people of Medina” Abd al–Malik bin Marwan said to him, “in the area of religious sciences, in devotion and piety, you have been granted that which no one before you has had other than your ancestors”. Further Umar bin ' Abd al–Aziz said, “The light of this life, ' the beauty of Islam is Zain al–Abidin”

Al–Sahifah Al–Sajjadiyyah represents and stands out as a profound social work of the time and a reflection of a supreme endeavor to meet the exigencies of spiritual ordeals facing the society at the time of the Imam. But beyond this it is a profound collection of supplications in the divine tradition, a unique compilation which will remain throughout the ages as a gift to mankind, a work of moral inspiration for worldly conduct and a torch of guidance.

Human beings will constantly remain in need of this heavenly souvenir; and the need increases whenever Satan comes to increase the allurements of the world for people, and by its fascination to keep them in bondage [Tr].

6. al-Kafi, vol. 2, p-468.
7. al-Kafi vol. 2, p-478.
8. al-Kafi, vol. 2, p-468.
9. al-Kafi, vol. 2, p-468.
10. al-Kafi vol. 2 p-475.
11. al-Kafi, vol. 2, p-490.
12. Haqayaqi-Faiz, p-244.

Seventh Means, Fast (Sawm)

Fasting is one of the greatest worship which exerts tremendous influence in one's efforts for self-perfection, self purification, and self building. There are many traditions which describe the special distinction assigned to fasting. Following are few examples: The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: الصوم جنة من النار.

“The Fasting is a shield for protection against Hell's fire.”¹

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلم قال: ان الله تعالى يقول: الصوم لى وانا اجزى عليه.

“God-Almighty said: ' Fasting is for Me and I bestow its reward upon the fast observer.”²

And said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: ان الصائم منكم ليرتفع فى رياض الجنة وتدعو له لا ملائكة حتى يفطر.

“The fast observer moves an enjoys inside the Garden of Paradise, and angels pray for him until the fast breaking time.”³

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: من صام يوما تطوعا ابتغا ثواب الله وجيب له المغفرة

“Whoever observes one recommended fast for the sake of reward, forgiveness for him becomes

compulsory.”⁴

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: نوم الصائم عبادة وصمته تسبيح وعلمه متقبل ودعائه مستجاب.

“The sleep of a fast observer is regarded as worship; his silence is considered as praise, his deeds are accepted and his supplications are granted.”⁵

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: قال الله عز وجل: كل أعمال ابن آدم بعشرة أضعافها إلى سبعمائة ضعف إلا الصبر، فإنه لي وأنا أجزى به، فتواب الصبر مخزون في علم الله والصبر هو الصوم.

“God-Almighty said: 'For all righteous deeds of servants there is a reward from ten times to seven hundred time, but since, fasting is specially reserved for me –I will bestow its reward. Therefore. only God-Almighty knows the reward of fasting.’”⁶

Fasting. is a special worship which is a combination of two parts i.e. negation and confrontation. The first part consists of self-Restraint and renunciation of drinking, eating, and sexual pleasures, which are legitimate pleasures, as well as not to tell a lie about God-Almighty and Holy Prophet (S) and some other affairs which have been described in details in Jurisprudential books.

The second part consists of devotion, intention, and desire to seek God's Nearness, which in reality are tantamount to soul of this worship. The reality of fasting consists of self-restraint and voluntary .relinquishment of material pleasures namely –Eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, and not to tell a lie about God-Almighty and Holy Prophet (S), with the intention of God’s Nearness.

The definition of a fast as given in the books of Jurisprudence is -- that if some one with the intention of God's Nearness renounced the affairs namely –eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, discharge of semen, telling a lie about God-Almighty and Holy Prophet (S), to take a dive inside water, remaining in the state of impurity as a result of a wet dream –his fast is correct and does not require to take a make up (*qadha*) fast or pay ransom (*kuffara*). This fast is known as the fast of common people.

But, in traditions the scope of self-restraint have not been limited to the above mentioned limits rather it covers much wider dimensions. In traditions it has been mentioned that simply abandonment of eating and drinking is not enough, instead a real fast observer is the one who prevents all his limbs and body parts from sins. i.e. the eyes should be prevented from the sins relevant to the eyes, as well as prevent ears, tongue, hands, and feet from their relevant sins. Such fast belongs to God’s special servants.

Further, superior than this is the fasting of the most special ones (*khawwas*) in which case the observer of the fast apart from abandoning eating, drinking as well as renunciation of all sins also disengages his heart from all sort of scattered thinking which prevent him from God's Remembrance. He should continuously engage himself in God's remembrance and should know that He is seeing all his actions. As God's guest he should make himself readied for His countenance. For example let us refer to the following tradition: Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: ليس الصيام من الطعام والشراب أن لا يأكل الانسان ولا يشرب فقط ولكن إذا صمت فليصم سمعك وبصرك ولسانك وبطنك وفرجك واحفظ يدك وفرجك وأكثر السكوت إلا من خير وارفق بخادمك.

“Fasting is not achieved simply by renunciation of eating and drinking. When you observe fast your eyes, ears, tongue, stomach, and sexual parts should also be fasting with you. While in the state of fasting prevent your hands and sexual parts from sinning, should remain silent continuously except for speaking something good and useful or to the extent it is required to communicate with your house servant.”⁷

Also said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: وليكن عليك وقار الصائم وألزم ما استطعت من الصمت والسكوت إلا عن ذكر الله. ولا تجعل يوم صومك كيوم فطرك.

“The dignity and prestige of fasting should be understood by you wry clearly. As much as possible, maintain silence except for God's Remembrance. It should not be such that the day of your fasting should be similar to the day in which you are not observing fast.”⁸

The Holy Prophet (S) said in a sermon:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله, في خطبة له: ومن صام شهر رمضان في إنصات وسكوت وكف سمعه وبصره ولسانه وفرجه وجوارحه من الكذب والحرام والغيبة تقربا, قربه الله منه حتى تمس ركبتاه ركبتي إبراهيم خليل الرحمن.

“Whosoever observes fasting during Holy month of Ramadhan while maintaining silence and preventing his ears, eyes, tongue, sexual organs, and other body parts from lying, backbiting, and other forbidden acts, with the intention of achieving God's Nearness, God-Almighty will bestow upon him His Nearness, so that he will become a companion of Prophet Abraham (a.s.) –God's chosen friend.”⁹

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: إن الصيام ليس من الطعام والشراب وحده, إنما للصوم شرط يحتاج أن يحفظ

حتى يتم الصوم وهو الصمت الداخلى، أما تسمع قول مريم بنت عمران، اني نذرت للرحمن صوما فلن اكلم اليوم انسيا، يعنى صمتا. فاذا صمتم فاحفظوا ألسنتكم عن الكذب وعضوا أبصاركم ولا تنازعوا ولا تحاسدوا ولا تغتابوا ولا تماروا ولا تكذبوا ولا تباشروا ولا تخالفوا ولا تغاضبوا ولا تسابوا ولا تشاتموا ولا تنازوا ولا تجادلوا ولا تبادوا ولا تظلموا ولا تسافهوا ولا تزاجروا ولا تغفلوا عن ذكر الله وعن الصلاة وألزموا الصمت والسكوت والحلم والصبر والصدق ومجانبة أهل الشر واجتنبوا قول الزور والكذب والفراء والخصومة وظن السوء والغيبة والنميمة وكونوا مشرفين على الآخرة منتظرين لياامكم، منتظرين لما وعدكم الله متزودين للقاء الله وعليكم السكينة والوقار والخشوع والخضوع وذل العبد الخائف من مولاه راجين خائفين راغبين راهبين قد طهرتم القلوب من العيوب وتقديست سرائركم من الخب ونظفت الجسم من القاذورات، وتبرأت إلى الله من عداه وواليت الله في صومك بالصمت من جميع الجهات مما قد نهاك الله عنه في السر والعلانية وخشيت الله حق خشيته في السر والعلانية ووهبت نفسك لله في أيام صومك وفرغت قلبك له

فيما امرك ودعاك اليه، فاذا فعلت ذلك كله فانت صائم لله بحقيقة سومه صانع لما امرك وكلما نقصت منها شيئاً مما: بينت لك فقد نقص من صومك بمقدار ذلك (إلى أن قال) إن الصوم ليس من الطعام والشراب إنما جعل الله ذلك حجاباً مما سواها من الفواحش من الفعل والقول يفطر الصائم ، ما أقل الصوم وأكثر الجوع؟

“Fasting does not mean only renunciation of eating and drinking rather it has conditions which must be followed strictly in order to have a complete and perfect fast which means internal silence. Did not you hear the reply of Mary daughter of Imran who said to the people:

“I have vowed a fast for God–Almighty, therefore, today will speak to none i.e. since, I am fasting therefore must be quiet. ‘ So, when you observe fast protect your tongue from lying; don’t be angry; don’t curse, don’t be rude; don’t argue and dispute; due to ignorance don’t reject or be indecent to each other, don’t be negligent from God’s remembrance; continuously practice silence, intellection, patience and keep distance from the wicked people. Assign importance to the Hereafter; must look forward for the day when God’s Promise will be fulfilled; and collect some provisions for God’s countenance.

“Poise dignity, humbleness, humility, and fear like a servant who is afraid of his master, should be practiced; should remain in the state of hope and fear. If you cleansed and purified your heart from faults; your inner self from conceit and treachery; your body from pollution, renounced every thing other than God; accepted His Guardianship through fasting, and preventing inner and outer self from performance of God ' s forbidden things; respected God’s rights by remaining afraid outwardly and inwardly because of His presence,. during fasting donated your self to God–Almighty, purified and cleansed heart for God–Almighty and assigned him to act in accordance to His commands.

“If you observed fast in a manner described above, then indeed you really are a true fast observer and have discharged your duty well. But in as much as you deviated from the above criteria, your fast be considered as deficient and incomplete in the same proportion.

Because, fasting is not limited only to renunciation of eating and drinking rather God–Almighty has made

fasting a veil for other actions and sayings which make fasting canceled. Therefore, how small is the number of fast observers and how large is the number of hungry ones.”¹⁰

Role of Fasting in Self-Building

Fasting is one of the most important and valuable worship, which if, observed in accordance to its special etiquettes and conditions, and maintaining the same degree of quality as required by sacred Islamic canon law (*sharia*), will exert tremendous impact upon the self-building, self-perfection, and self-purification efforts.

Fasting is extremely influential during the stages of purification of self from sins and other moral indecencies and making it readied for perfection, decoration and utilization of Divine Illuminations. A fast observer through renunciation of sins controls, subdues, and ultimately forces the imperious-self into submission. The duration of fasting is a period of quitting sins and practicing self-asceticism –a period of struggling with self, and practicing self-restraint.

During this period a fast observer not only purify and cleanse his self from sins and other moral abjectnesses, but even abandons his legitimate pleasures such as eating and drinking, and through these means makes his self purified and illuminated. Because, hunger results in attaining internal purification and more attention towards God-Almighty. A human being, while hungry very often possesses a feeling of contentment or Joy¹¹ but lacks such mood when his stomach is full.

In summary, fasting is very effective in acquiring piety, and because, of this consideration the Holy Qur’an has defined acquiring piety as the main objective behind the fasting.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

“O ye believe! Fasting is presented for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil).” (Quran 2: 183)

The one who observes fast during the Holy month of Ramadhan, because, of fasting prevents himself from engaging into sins and other moral abjectnesses through out the month, would succeed in dominating his self and therefore, may continue this habit of renunciation of sins even after the Holy month.”

So for whatever has been described was related to the influence of fasting in purifying self from sins and other moral indecencies. But also from the point of view of positive dimensions it is very influential in achieving self-purification, decoration of inner self and God's Nearness which will be described briefly as follows:

1. Fasting i.e. self-restraint and renunciation of special acts which break the fast –is a worship, which if

observed with sincerity and intention of God's Nearness, results in nourishment and perfection of self and God's Nearness like other worships.

2. By renunciation of legitimate pleasures and quitting sins the fast observer's heart gets cleansed and polished, becomes free from all scattered thoughts and memories of other than God and through this means earns the decency of absorbing the Divine blessings and illuminations.

In this stage God's special blessings and favors are bestowed upon him and, thus, with Divine rapture ascends towards God's countenance. It is because of these reasons that it has been mentioned in the traditions that breathing and sleeping of a fast observer merit the reward of a worship.

3. The days of fasting are the best times for worship, prayer, supplication, Qur'anic-recital, invocation and charitable deeds; because, during this period self is relatively better prepared for heart's presence, devotion and attention towards God-Almighty as compared to any other period. The Holy Month of Ramadhan have been called as the best times, spring of worship (specially recital of the Holy Qur'an) and the most appropriate opportunity for paying attention to wards God-Almighty.

Because, of this reason the special virtues of the Holy Month of Ramadhan and worshipping during it, have been emphasized a lot in the books of Islamic traditions. For example; when the Holy Month of Ramadhan arrived, Imam al- Sadiq (a.s.) emphasized its importance to his children and said:

ان ابا عبدالله عليه السلام يوصى ولده إذا دخل شهر رمضان: فاجهدوا أنفسكم فإن فيه تقسم الأرزاق وتكتب الآجال وفيه يكتب وفد الله الذين يفدون إليه وفيه ليلة العمل فيها خير من العمل في ألف شهر

“Endeavor in worship because in this month people 's sustenance is distributed and their demises are registered, those who will be returned to God-Almighty are decided in this month, In this month there is a special “Night of Power” (Qadr), the worshipping in which excels the worshipping of one thousands months.”¹²

The Commander of the Faithful Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said:

قال أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: عليك في شهر رمضان بكثرة الدعاء والإستغفار فاما الدعاء فيدفع به عنكم البلا واما الإستغفار فتمحى به ذنوبكم

“Oh people! During the Holy Month of Ramadhan read a lot of supplication and seek God's pardon (Esteghfar) because, by means of supplications the calamities are removed from you and by means of asking God's pardon your sins are forgiven.” ¹³

Also he said that one day the Holy Prophet delivered a sermon in which he said:

على عليه السلام قال: ان رسول الله خطبنا ذات يوم فقال: أيها الناس انه قد أقبل إليكم شهر الله بالبركة والرحمة والمغفرة ، شهر هو عند الله أفضل الشهور وأيامه أفضل الأيام ولياليه أفضل الليالي وساعاته أفضل الساعات هو شهر دعيتم فيه إلى ضيافة الله وجعلتم فيه من أهل كرامة الله، أنفاسكم فيه تسبيح، ونومكم فيه عبادة، وعملكم فيه مقبول، ودعاءكم فيه مستجاب. فاسألوا الله ربكم بنيات صادقة وقلوب طاهرة ان يوفقكم لصيامه وتلاوة كتابه، فان الشقي كل الشقي من حرم غفران الله في هذا الشهر العظيم، واذكروا بجوعكم وعطشكم فيه جوع يوم القيامة وعطشه، وتصدقوا على فقرائكم ومساكينكم، ووقروا كباركم وارحموا صغاركم وصلوا أرحامكم واحفظوا ألسنتكم وعضوا عما لا يحل النظر إليه أبصاركم وعما لا يحل الاستماع إليه أسماعكم، وتحننوا على أيتام الناس يتحنن على أيتامكم. وتوبوا إلى الله من ذنوبكم وارفعوا إليه أيديكم بالدعاء، في أوقات صلاتكم فإنها أفضل الساعات ينظر الله فيها إلى عباده بعين الرحمة، يجيبهم إذا ناجوه ويلبيهم إذا نادوه ويعطيهم إذا سألوه ويستجيب لهم إذا دعوه.

أيها الناس إن أنفسكم مرهونة بأعمالكم ففكوها باستغفاركم، وظهوركم ثقيلة من أوزاركم فخففوا عنها بطول سجودكم، واعملوا أن الله أقسم بعزته أن لا يعذب المصلين والساجدين وان لا يروعهم بالنار يوم يقوم الناس لرب العالمين. أيها الناس من فطر منكم صائماً مؤمناً في هذا الشهر كان له بذلك عند الله عتق رقبة ومغفرة لما مضى من ذنوبه.

قيل: يا رسول الله! وليس كلنا يقدر على ذلك فقال صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم اتقوا الله ولو بشرية من ماء، واتقوا النار ولو بشق تمرة أيها الناس من حسن منكم في هذا الشهر خلقه كان له جواز على الصراط يوم تزل فيه الأقدام، ومن خفف فيه عما ملكت يمينه خفف الله عليه حسابه، ومن كف فيه شره كف الله عنه غضبه يوم يلقاه، ومن أكرم فيه يتيماً أكرمه الله يوم يلقاه، ومن وصل فيه رحمه وصله الله برحمته يوم يلقاه، ومن قطع فيه رحمه قطع الله عنه رحمته يوم يلقاه، ومن تطوع بصلاة كتب الله له براءة من النار، ومن أدى فيه فرضاً كان له ثواب من أدى سبعين فريضة في ما سواه من الشهور، ومن أكثر فيه من الصلاة عليّ ثقل الله ميزانه يوم تخف الموازين، ومن تلا..فيه آية من القرآن كان له مثل أجر من ختم القرآن في غيره من الشهور.

أيها الناس: إن أبواب الجنان في هذا الشهر مفتحة فاسألوا ربكم أن لا يغلقها عليكم، وأبواب النيران مغلقة فاسألوا الله أن لا يفتحها عليكم، والشياطين مغلولة، فاسألوا ربكم أن لا يسلطها عليكم. قال أمير المؤمنين علي (عليه السلام) فقلت: يا رسول الله! ما أفضل الأعمال في هذا الشهر؟ فقال: يا أبا الحسن أفضل الأعمال في هذا الشهر الورع عن محارم الله.

“Oh people! The month of God with blessing mercy and pardon has come to you, a month which is the best month among all months before God–Almighty, its days are the best days, its nights are the best nights and its hours are the best hours.

It is month in which you have been invited by God–Almighty for a feast, and have been selected as the recipient of this special favor. Your breathings merit the reward of praise, while your sleeping in this month earns the reward of a worship. In this month your deeds are accepted and prayers are granted.”

“Therefore, with true intention and pure hearts beseech God–Almighty to bestow upon you His special favor to be able to observe fasting and recite the Holy Qur’an. Because, the most unfortunate and wretched one is the one who remains deprived from God’s pardon during this great month.

With your thrust and hunger remind yourself about the thrust and hunger of the Day of Judgment; pay charity to poor and destitute people, pay respect to elders; be kind towards youngsters, and observe the bonds of relationship with your kith and kins.”

“Watch your tongues, cover your eyes from seeing forbidden objects and prevent your ears from hearing forbidden affairs. Be kind to the orphans of the people so that the others are kind towards your orphans.

Repent for your sins and at the time of prayer raise your hands upward, because, these hours are the best hours in which God–Almighty looks towards mankind with mercy and compassion. Their hymns are granted, their cries are heard. Whatever they ask is bestowed upon them and their prayers are fulfilled.”

“Oh people! Your (selves) are mortgaged against your deeds and therefore, by means of repentance make yourself free. Your back has become too much heavy due to sins; by prolongation of your prostration make yourself light burdened. Know that! God–Almighty has taken the oath of his Majesty and Splendor that he will not punish those who offers prayers and bows down in prostration, and on the Day of Judgment will not scare them through the Hell's fire.”

“Oh people! whoever in this month will make arrangements for the fast–breaking (iftar) of a believer will be bestowed upon the reward equal to freeing of a slave and all of his past sins shall be pardoned. He was asked: 'Oh prophet of God! But all of us are not in a position to arrange the fast–breaking of a fast–observer. The Prophet replied: 'Protect yourself from the Hell's fire and offer fast–breaking even if it happens to be a piece of date with a glass of sharbet.”

“Oh people! whoever makes his conduct better in this month, on the Judgment Day will be bestowed upon the permit for crossing over the Sirat. Whoever will open the knots of difficulties of people's affairs in this month, God–Almighty on the Judgment Day will make the accounting of his deeds easier.”

Whoever makes people immune from his mischief, God–Almighty on the Judgment Day will make him immune from his wrath. Whoever treats an orphan with respect, on the Judgment Day, God–Almighty will treat him with honor. Whoever takes care to strengthen family bonds with relatives, God–Almighty will extend His blessing upon him on the Judgment Day, and whoever will cut off his family ties, God–Almighty too will deprive him from His blessing on the Judgment Day.”

“Whoever offers supererogatory prayers in this month, God–Almighty will register for him immunity from the fire. Whoever performs a compulsory deed in this month, will be bestowed the reward of seventy compulsory deeds performed in other months.

Whoever offers a lots of salutation upon me in this month, on the Judgment Day, God–Almighty will make the balance of his righteous deeds heavier. Whoever recites one single verse of the Holy Qur'an during this month will be bestowed the reward of finishing the entire Holy Qur'an in other months.”

“Oh people! The gates of Paradise are opened in this month, beseech God–Almighty that it should not

be closed upon you. The Doors of Hell are closed, and ask God–Almighty that they are not opened upon you. The devils are chained in this month, ask God–Almighty not to allow them to take over your control.”

“Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) said: ‘Oh Prophet of God! which one is the best deed during this month?’ The Holy Prophet (S) replied: ‘Oh Abul Hasan! The most supreme deed in this month is piety and renunciation of Divine forbidden acts.”¹⁴

As is evident from the above narration that the Holy Month of Ramadhan is a month full of blessings and special virtues. It is a month of worship, self–building, supplications, night prayer, and self–perfection. Worshipping in this month is bestowed rewards many times of the reward of worship performed in other months.

Even the sleeping and breathings of a believer are given the reward of a worship. In this month the gates of the Paradise are opened while the Hell's doors are closed.

God's angels continuously invite the people towards God's worship, especially at the dawn and on the night of Power (*Lailatul Qadr*) in which worshipping and night–vigil are superior than the prayer of thousands months. ¹⁵God–Almighty in this month have granted an audience inviting all the believers for a Divine feast; the invitation of which have been brought by the messengers.

The host is the Most Merciful and Most compassionate God–Almighty, the God’s most favorite angels are the servants and the believers are the guests. The table spread of Divine blessings containing all sorts of rewards and favors has been provided.

From all dimensions, the Divine special blessings and favors –which cannot be seen by eyes, ears are helpless to hear about them, and human hearts cannot even imagine them are readied to be awarded upon the guests in accordance to their merits, worthiness, and absorbing capabilities.

If we are negligent, we will feel sorry and regret on the Day of Judgment, whereby feeling sorry and being regretful will not be of any advantage. The special acts and supplications of the Holy Month of Ramadhan are described in the book –*Mafateeh al–Jinan* by late Haj Abbas Qummi as well as in books of supplications; and with sincerity, attention, and heart’s presence utilize them for spiritual migration and attaining God’s Nearness.

In the end, it must be reminded that other worships too, like prayer, fasting, invocations, and supplications might be useful and effective in self–building and nourishment and perfection of the self. But for the sake of brevity it would not be appropriate to provide their detailed explanation and description in. this book.

^{1.} Wasail al–Shi’a, vol. 7, p–289.

^{2.} Wasail al–Shi’a, vol. 7, p–290.

^{3.} Wasail al–Shi’a, vol., 7, p–296.

- [4.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-293.
- [5.](#) -Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-294.
- [6.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-295.
- [7.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-118.
- [8.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-117.
- [9.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-117.
- [10.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-119.
- [11.](#) Those who have observed fasting during Holy Month of Ramdhan or have observed recommended fasts may appreciate these feelings [Tr].
- [12.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-221.
- [13.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-223.
- [14.](#) Wasail al-Shi'a, vol. 7, p-227.
- [15.](#) The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. (97:3) [Tr].

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