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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 سألتني 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 down 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
وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا
وَخُفْيَةً ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يَحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ وَلَا تَفْسِدُوا 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 tabarkallahho 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 throne. 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 فبمرادك، وإن قدّستك فبقوّتك، وإن هلّلتك فبقدرتك، وإن نظرت فيّ إلى رحمته، 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 نجيّات الصدور، فلم يلق أبصارهم ردّ دون ما يريدون، هتكت بينك وبينهم حجب الغفلة، فسكنوا في نورك وتنفسوا بروحك، فصارت قلوبهم مغارساً لهيبتك، وأبصارهم ماكفاً لقدرك، وقرّبت 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 ذكرى، ولا تترك بني وبين ملكوت عزّك باباً إلا فتحتّه، ولا حجاباً من حجب الغفلة إلا هتكتّه، حتّى تقيم روحي بين ضياء عرشك، وتجعل لنا مقاماً نصب نورك إنك على كلّ شيء قدير.

إلهي ما أوحش طريقاً لا يكون رفيقي فيه أملي فيك، وأبعد سفرّاً لا يكون رجائي منه دليلي منك، خاب من اعتصم بحبل غيرك، وضعف ركن من استند إلى غير ركنك، فيا معلّم مؤمّليه الأمل فيذهب عنهم كآبة الوجل، لا تحرمني

صالح العمل, واكلائي كلاءة من فارقتة الحيل, فكيف يلحق مؤمليك ذلّ الفقر وأنت الغنيّ عن مضارّ المذنبين, إلهي وإنّ كلّ حلاوة منقطعة, وحلاوة الايمان تزداد حلاوتها اتّصالاً بك, إلهي وإنّ قلبي قد بسط أمله فيك, فأذقته من حلاوة بسطك إياه البلوغ لما أملّ, إنك على كلّ شيء قدير.

إلهي أسألك مسألة المسكين الذي قد تحير في رجاء فلا يجد ملجأ ولا مسنداً يصل به إليك, ولا يستدلّ به عليك إلّا بك وبأركانك ومقاماتك التي لا تعطيل لها منك, فأسألك باسمك الذي ظهرت له لخاصة أوليائك فوحّدوك وعرفوك فعبّدوك بحقيقتك أن تعرّفني نفسك لأقرّ لك بربوبيّتك 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 كلّ 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:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على محمد وآله الطاهرين ولعنة الله على أعدائهم اجمعين

(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 آناتك الي نومك و الزم الادب في مقدس حضرته و اعلم انك جميع اجزا وجودك ذرة ذرة اسير قدرته و راع حرمة شريف حضوره و اعبد كانه تراه فان لم تكن تراه فانه يراك و التفت دائما الي عظمته و حقارتك و رفعتك و دنائتك و عزته و ذلتك و غناه و حاجتك و لا تغفل عن شناعة غفلتك عنه جل جلاله مع التفاته 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 pans 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 pans 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 J he should engage himself in hymns and invocations but at least a pan 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 tasbih 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 Tabrizi[9](#) 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 ايمانا وتصديقا

(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 ذَرْهُمْ 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 consists 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 علي 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 ونهب 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 worm 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 bed 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.

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