Al-Islam.org
Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project
Published on *Al-Islam.org* (https://www.al-islam.org)

Lecture 4: Discussion on Ayat al-Nusrat

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

یٰۤاَیُّہَا الَّذِیۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡۤا اِنۡ تَنۡصُرُوا اللّٰہَ یَنۡصُرۡکُمۡ وَ یُثَبِّتۡ اَقۡدَامَکُمۡ

"Oh you who believe, if you help Allah, He will surely help you, and will firmly plant your feet." (***47:7***)

This place is very fortunate for it serves as a platform for holding congregations in remembrance of those exalted beings whose references were often held in the heavens and the lofty skies and on this Earth these assemblies were even held under the Kisa (cloak) and convened in the plains of Mubahila. Besides, these references continue to adorn the verses of the Holy Quran. How remarkable those selected few must be whose praise and admiration is undertaken in the unspoken narratives of the Creator and their glory and adulation is highlighted by the Almighty from time to time.

God desired and thus ensured that every Holy text that was to reach this world would come as a volume of praise for these notable beings. Torat (Torah) came applauding their honour. Injeel (Bible) sang praises for Aal e Mohammad and Zabur (Testament) carried citations for the Ahlul Bayt. As for the Quran, it is a solemn fact that the commemoration of these prestigious beings serves to configure and uplift the Quranic text.

The title verse read out today points in the direction of those fortunate people who are mentioned in this verse and whose reference is enshrined in this verse. In another verse of the Quran, God informs us,

اِنَّ اللّٰہَ یُحِبُّ الَّذِیۡنَ یُقَاتِلُوۡنَ فِیۡ سَبِیۡلِہٖ صَفًّا کَاَنَّہُمۡ بُنۡیَانٌ مَّرۡصُوۡصٌ

"Verily Allah loves those who fight in His cause in ranks as though they were an unbreakable

concrete wall". (***61:4***)

He loves people who are steadfast and strong when fighting for the cause of Allah. Their disciplined ranks and resolve is likened to an indestructible wall. This verse does not name anyone, but there is no doubt that it highlights those specific characteristics by virtue of which we recognize and identify those whom God loves.

First of all let me make it clear that love is always cherished no matter what the origin of this love is. Is there any person in this world who does not wish to be loved by others? No heart is bereft of this desire. Those who are worthy of being loved harbour this desire and those who are not worthy of it, even they wish to be loved. In short, love is a very pleasant and enchanting feeling and we all yearn for it.

Yet, if the truth be asked, what are we but mere human beings and what is the worth of our love? Essentially, true love is love which is eternal. It is love of One who is willing to gift us everything for the sake of this love. If a needy person loves another one in need, tell me what does he gain from this love? Yes, but if he begins to love someone who has control of everything in His hands, and if in return he is loved by this empowered One, then this needy person requires no other source of love or sustenance.

If God loves some people and holds them dear to Him, then these people are not dependent on others for love. Where is the need for them to seek the love of anyone else? Now, if anyone wishes to love the fortunate ones whom God loves, he should not presume that they need his love. In fact, he should realize and know that it is he himself who needs their love. God's love is sufficient for these blessed ones. When His love is secured than presence or absence of others love does not matter.

For those privileged ones who are the recipients of God's salutations and blessings, it does not matter if others greet them with salaam or bless them with darood. They are not dependent on anyone's greetings or their blessings. However, some people, for their own personal benefit and future salvation may choose to be narrators of darood and wish to present salaam to them.

Now, think about this. God decides to undertake the praise of someone and in this connection He makes arrangement that every divine book should come forth with praise for them. He also desires that their praise precedes their entry into the world and that their glory is announced even before they arrive in this world.

When God loves someone, He keenly follows and reports every moment of their existence. He describes for us their rukuh and sujood (bowing and prostration) and reports their qiam and quood (standing and sitting postures), their wakefulness and their slumber. He relates their movements and their rest, their activity and their leisure and He considers all this worthy of being recorded. He documents their mornings and their evenings and also their nights. So, if some people are lucky to have an ardent chronicler like God, do they require anyone else to speak for them? Do they require others to honour and commemorate them?

Indeed, these people are not dependent for praise on any of us since God highlights their virtues. They are not reliant on others for projection as God undertakes that responsibility. When we decide to pay tribute to them, it is not for their adornment but for our own benefit. Not to raise their status but to raise our standards. We remember them not for their sake but for own sake. They are loved and loved by the Creator of this Universe who informs us:

اِنَّ اللّٰہَ یُحِبُّ الَّذِیۡنَ یُقَاتِلُوۡنَ فِیۡ سَبِیۡلِہٖ صَفًّا کَاَنَّہُمۡ بُنۡیَانٌ مَّرۡصُوۡصٌ

"Verily Allah loves those who fight in His cause in ranks as though they were an unbreakable concrete wall". (***61:4***)

I wish to make a point here. Not a personal observation but an inference that I have drawn from the environment of the Quran. I want all of you to follow this. God says,

یٰۤاَیُّہَا الَّذِیۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡۤا اِنۡ تَنۡصُرُوا اللّٰہَ یَنۡصُرۡکُمۡ وَ یُثَبِّتۡ اَقۡدَامَکُمۡ

"O you who believe, if you help Allah, He will surely help you, and will firmly plant your feet."(***47:7***)

God is communicating to the believers that if they step into the battlefield with the intention of helping Allah, then He too will help them. If they come forth with the aim of helping God, He will be their helper. He will come to their assistance and the first sign of His help is a promise to plant their feet firmly in the battlefield. God will provide support and help in a manner that their foothold will not be uprooted from the battlefield. He will ensure firmness and provide resolve to their determination.

My audience will agree that a respectable person will always honour his pledge so what to talk of a pledge made by an imam, or a prophet and specifically that of God Himself. Nothing can prevent God from fulfilling His pledge. No difficulty can stop Him from keeping His word or be used as an excuse for not keeping the promise. For surely one who is helpless cannot be God.

Even, humans with their severe limitations, try to keep their promises before leaving this world, so how is it possible for the pledge of God, who is totally Empowered, to waver and not be honoured? Definitely, it was and will continue to be honoured. What He has promised is bound by righteousness. Thus, if you go to the battlefield with the intention of helping Allah, He will help you and He will firmly plant your feet.

I want to highlight a point here that you may have missed. If God forbid mine or any person's feet fail to stay firm and are uprooted from the battlefield, resulting in days of absence from the battle scene, then he can either claim that he went with good intention but God did not keep His promise. Since, He did not

keep His promise why should he be blamed for the retreat. In that case God does not remain God. If He is not truthful He cannot be God.

So either admit that God forgot His promise and forgot His task of being God, or if that contention is not true, which any believer will admit is not true, then it has to be said that the one uprooted did not go with the intention of helping Allah. Had he gone with that purpose God would have helped him. He would have provided the weight of lead to his feet such that they would not move away from the field. But the unsteady gait reveals the secrets of the heart. It is an indication that the person had not gone with the intention of helping Allah and hence there was no stability in his footwork. But if you see someone with a firm foothold, then be assured that he has come as a helper of God.

It is worth understanding what I now share with you. A mistake committed by us is assigned a certain level but forgiveness or pardon of this mistake occupies a totally different level. It is with His grace that the Most Compassionate God overlooks our greatest shortcomings. His Mercy bails out the wrongdoer, but the credit for this forgiveness does not belong to the one making the mistake. The credit for this goes to Allah, who is in no hurry to punish us and refers to Himself as the Most Merciful and Forbearing God.

Now what level shall we assign to the person who did not enter the battlefield with the intention of helping Allah? The desire to help God was not present. So the motivation which he did not take with him cannot be switched on or generated in retrospect. It cannot be exchanged at a later time. That record will remain in place. There is no promise of love for those who are not firm in their resolve to help Allah. At best, if they repent they can seek His forgiveness.

God informs us that he loves those who fight with resolve as though they were a fortified wall,

اِنَّ اللّٰہَ یُحِبُّ الَّذِیۡنَ یُقَاتِلُوۡنَ فِیۡ سَبِیۡلِہٖ صَفًّا کَاَنَّہُمۡ بُنۡیَانٌ مَّرۡصُوۡصٌ

"Verily Allah loves those who fight in His cause in ranks as though they were an unbreakable concrete wall". (***61:4***)

My learned audience can estimate whether there is an element of negation in this admission or not. Apparently, the words used in this Quranic verse are positive. We are told that God loves those who are steadfast in the battlefield. Those who fight as though they were an unbreakable wall. He loves such people. But is there a negation inherent in this positive or not? If this verse identifies the people whom God loves, it also suggests those whom God does not like.

God loves the people who do not leave the battlefield, who are steadfast and who fight with resolve as though they were a fortified wall. So, if these are the ones whom God loves then can one say that God also loves those who are not like them? In that case, what is the use of love? Where is the need for love? If God loves certain people then there is a converse for love, too. There is also an opposite of

love. If there is an inverse for steadfastness and if a contrary term exists then the opposite of love will be applicable to it. In other words, God does not love people who leave the battlefield.

I wish to inform my audience that God mentions His love in the context of guidance. I wish to raise your level here. Any information in the Quran is not merely a piece of news. Quran is not a newspaper. In fact, the purpose of its revelation is mentioned in the text. This is a Book of Guidance for the righteous people. Hence, if this is a source of guidance then each and every component is for guidance. Every chapter, every verse is for guidance. Every story, every example, every injunction and every piece of information is for the purpose of guidance.

All of Quran is for guidance. What is not for guidance is not the Quran. The entire Quran is for guidance and each and every part is for guidance. Now if this is true then the verse under discussion is also part of the Quran,

اِنَّ اللّٰہَ یُحِبُّ الَّذِیۡنَ یُقَاتِلُوۡنَ فِیۡ سَبِیۡلِہٖ صَفًّا کَاَنَّہُمۡ بُنۡیَانٌ مَّرۡصُوۡصٌ

"Verily Allah loves those who fight in His cause in ranks as though they were an unbreakable concrete wall". (***61:4***)

Even though the above verse is an informative sentence yet every information is for the sake of guidance, or else it is not a part of Quran. So what guidance do we get from this verse of the Quran? We are informed that God's love is directed towards those who do not leave the battlefield, so that we may also direct our love towards them. This is to ensure that God's love and our love do not point in different directions. If perchance we select an opposing direction, then we will be guilty of showing utter disregard for His wish.

By giving us this information Quran invites us to reflect deeply. God lets us know that He loves people who do not desert the battlefield. Now He wants us to check our hearts and our feelings to ascertain whom we are inclined to love. We are to determine whether we love the same people God loves or do we love those whom He does not love.

I wish to explain something here. There is as much difference between the love of human beings and the love of God as there is between man and God. Let me elaborate this a little. We humans tend to fall in love with the physical form of a human being. After we claim to love this person, we also begin to love every trait and quality of the selected person. You need to look at this logically and notice the difference in the outlook.

We love a person for his identity and because we claim to love this person then we begin to love the qualities associated with this person. Love of this person comes first and subsequently this person's attributes are also endeared to us. Now if this loved one is indifferent to us we love this indifference. If

the one we adore is not true to us, we overlook this betrayal. If we notice breach of promise we ignore this infringement. All these attributes are readily acceptable to us for the sake of love for this person. Now since we have fallen in love, these qualities, regardless of their merit are worthy of love. We are simply not concerned with their good or bad!

I think you have understood the point I am trying to make. The shortcomings of the person we claim to love appear as accomplishments to us. We ourselves project the negative qualities of our beloved as virtues. This love is different. This love is blind. There is a saying regarding this kind of love that it makes the person deaf and blind. The shortcomings are clearly noticeable but are not sighted by the one who claims to love. Echoes of the failings and faults are audible but this person's hearing is insensitive to this sound. This is the drawback of love that starts with the love of a person and then leads to love of all attributes related to this person.

The glory of God does not permit Him to love a personality. He does not invest in love of a person and neither does He select an identity to love. His glory is reserved to highlight the qualities of a person and to cherish the attributes of an individual. The criteria of His love is not the person but the qualitative traits inherent in the person. When the basis of love is qualitative, then this naturally leads to love of the person in possession of those qualities. This variation in position needs to be understood.

We humans tend to love a person first and then grow to love the characteristics of that person. On the other hand God first approves of the values and virtues and then loves the person in possession of those qualities. When traits are the basis of love, the colour of the skin or the age of the person or the place he is associated with, do not matter. Now if an Abyssinian slave owns those traits God will love this John of Abyssinia. If a person belonging to the tribe of Qureish is devoid of these traits then He will not love this person and in fact He will reveal a verse showing scant respect for Abu Lahab.

Notice clearly that God does not select a person to love. He selects qualities to love. These qualities may be exhibited by an individual of any colour, race or status. This person may reside in any continent, locality or household. These details are not important. God is only concerned with these qualities. Wherever, He finds these positive attributes He appreciates them and those in possession of those qualities are endeared to him.

He loves the owners of these qualities and He loves the place where they dwell and the homes in which they reside. The path that they tread, that path is loved. The place where they sleep that place is loved. In short, wherever they may be that place is dear to God.I remember the Quranic verse,

لَا أُقْسِمُ بِهَٰذَا الْبَلَدِ

"Nay, I swear by this city (***Al Balad***)***"*** (***90:1***)

وَ اَنۡتَ حِلٌّۢ بِهٰذَا الۡبَلَدِ

While you (***O Mohammad***) ***are resident in this city"*** (***90:2***)

This verse was revealed in Mecca. Al Balad is the name of Mecca. In this verse God swears by the city when the Prophet of God is stationed there. Now tell me is Mecca being sworn by or is it actually the Prophet? Appreciate the elegance of the reference being used to swear. God does not wish to directly swear by His Prophet so He selects the city where His Prophet resides. Thus, Mecca is being sworn by only when the Prophet is in that city. Mecca is worthy of being sworn by only when the Prophet resides there.

Do not miss the point that Mecca is the permanent station of the House of God and this House is not likely to move or shift to any other location. However, God does not make His House the focus in this verse. The focus is on Ahl al Bait, those worthy of His House. Mecca is worthy of being sworn by only when the Prophet is present there. This suggests that wherever the Prophet may be, that place is worthy of being sworn by. The Lord be praised! Such is the eminence of these people. They do not attain ascension, they lend ascent to others!

This is the reason Angel Gabriel looked down from the elevated position he occupied in the Heavens towards the congregation under the cloak. Mind you he was in that ethereal environment when God was pronouncing to the angels and other creation residing in the heavens:

'I swear by My glory and magnificence, that I did not create the expanse of the Heavens and the spread of this Earth and the glowing moon and the shining sun, neither the orbiting space nor the flowing rivers nor the sailing ships but for the love of these five people under the cloak'. (*Hadith al- Kisa*) (*Tradition of the Cloak*)

God transformed the darkness of eternity with the dawn of light and all creation came into being for the love of the five. They were five in number but at that moment of Divine confession, they were all together under the cloak.

I do not believe that Gabriel was not informed of the identity of the five under the cloak, but asking questions of this nature helps to reveal a lot to the world. He asked,

'My Lord, who are the five gathered under the cloak'? (*Hadith al- Kisa*)

Now listen to this carefully. God identifies the five under the cloak,

'They are the Ahlul Bayt of Nabuwat, they are the Treasure of Risalat. They are Fatima, her father, her husband and her sons'. (*Hadith al- Kisa*)

It was not said that they are the Ahlul Bayt of Nabi (Messenger) and they are the Treasure of Rasool (Prophet). The words used are, 'Ahlul Bayt of Nabuwat' and the 'Treasure of Risalat'. They are the ones who are directly linked to and associated with Nabuwat and Risalat.

The first drawback of using the term Ahlul Bayt Nabi would be to exclude the Prophet from this gathering. Now minus the Prophet the sanctity of the gathering would lose its essence. If the term Ahlul Bayt Nabi was used, the name Fatima could still be used but it would not be possible to include her father. Fatima's father is the Nabi, and he cannot be referred to as Ahlul Bayt Nabi.

I am sure you have understood that the Prophet is not Ahlul Bayt Nabi. He is Nabi himself. Hence, the term Ahlul Bayt Nabi would not accommodate the inclusion of the Prophet. After saying Fatima the term her father could not be used.

Minus the Prophet, the reference to the Ahlul Bayt would still be valid but even their real significance and importance would be diminished. This point is worth consideration. The true status of the Ahlul Bayt would not be manifest by a simple relation to the Prophet for even an inept person can claim a relation to the Prophet. The one making mistakes can also establish a link to the Prophet.

Allow me to say something here. It is an established fact that claiming a relationship to a prophet or owning a connection to the prophet is no guarantee for a safe passage to Heaven. Many relatives of the prophets have failed to earn a place in Heaven. Is that a fact or not?

Take the example of the son of Prophet Nuh. It was that awkward moment when Nuh was warned not to repeat his plea for his son's safety, for in that case his name would be removed from the list of Messengers of God. Prophet Nuh complied, for losing the prestigious task of Nabuwat was not a choice. The loss of a son was acceptable but the mantle of Prophethood had to be retained. The sacred mission of conveying God's Messages could not be forsaken. Certainly, this son was not heading towards Heaven.

Azar was the relative of a Prophet. Some even refer to him as the Prophet's father, but we do not subscribe to that. We have no objection to referring to him as a relative. He had looked after and he had brought up this Prophet. He was a senior relation or perhaps even an uncle. He was related to the Prophet but did that relationship promise him a place in Heaven? God stopped Prophet Ibrahim from seeking forgiveness for Azar and asked him not to repeat this request. There Prophet Nuh was stopped and here Prophet Ibrahim is being checked. Be warned and do not repeat your request.

It is clear that inaptness of a relative raises problems for a Prophet, for if he pleads their case he risks losing his Prophethood. Hence, there is this scene in front of you where a Prophet's pleading may risk him his Prophethood and you will also witness a scene of intense suitability where a Prophet's not saying something may threaten his role as a Prophet. In this later case God wishes that our Prophet should announce His message both orally and physically. Say it with his tongue and raise him with his hands. Words and action both are required. He is to say it and do it.

Failure to deliver ,

وَ اِن لَّم تَفعَل فَمَا بَلَّغتَ رِسَالَتَهٗ

"And if you do not do it then (***it will be as if***) ***you have not delivered His Prophethood*** (***at all***)***"*** (***5:67***)

may serve to undo the Prophet's entire effort. So, on the one hand a Prophet risks losing his Prophethood if he pleads the case of the unworthy and on the other hand you will see a situation where if the Prophet does not proclaim the worth of his relative, he risks undoing the entire effort of his Prophethood. The previous one depicts a case of extreme ineligibility and the latter an utmost level of eligibility!

I do not wish to say that having a relation with the prophet is of no value. It is valuable but only if it is not coupled with denial of the prophets mission. It has to be said here that if there is claim of a relationship to the prophet and a state of denial exists then this person deserves more punishment then a non–believer.

Now tell me honestly, how many battles has Abu Sufyan waged against the Prophet? He was personally responsible for many battles like Badar, Uhad and others. It was under his direct command that the assaults were carried out, but do you find his mention anywhere in the Quran? How much pain and misery was inflicted by Abu Jahal? I can picture that period in time quite vividly. Is it possible to find a more vicious enemy than Abu Jahal in the context of history? His name is viewed with great scorn even by the children and he is remembered not for his virtues but for his evil ways.

Who is not familiar with the name of Abu Jahal or ignorant of the hardships he caused the Prophet? But is he mentioned in the Quran? There is no reference to Abu Jahal or Abu Sufyan but if there is a name, it is of Abu Lahab. In my opinion God is so impartial in this matter that if a link to the Prophet is established He will make no allowance. He exercises the right to name or not name wrongdoers but if the offender is a relative of the Prophet, his name will be mentioned openly and no concession will be granted.

It is also confirmed in Surah Ahzab that if anyone owns a relation to the Prophet,

يُّضٰعَف لَهَا العَذَابُ ضِعفَينِ

"their punishment will be doubled" (***33:30***)

The degree of penalty increases if a relationship to the Prophet is confirmed, for the Prophet was known

to them. He was not a stranger for them. He was close to them and not at a remote distance. There was opportunity for familiarity, hence they cannot be treated like other people. Their punishment will be doubled.

So, it is established that God doubles the punishment as a result of acquaintance to the Prophet. On the other hand He proclaims love of some of these near ones as a compensation for the task of Prophethood, and since this Ajr e Risalat is also made mandatory then it has to be understood that the basis of seeking this love for the near ones, was not their nearness to the Prophet. It was on grounds of their exalted status and their qualitative superiority that they were thus rewarded.

The Sadaat (descendents of the Prophet and his Aal) can to this day claim a link to the Prophet. They are Aal e Rasool, children of the Prophet and no link or relationship is superior to that of children. They are the closest link in terms of inheritance. If even a single child exists then too the brothers of a deceased person cannot claim inheritance, nor can sisters or paternal or maternal uncles and aunts. Children and their offspring are in direct line of inheritance till the Day of Judgement no matter how far this lineage extends. They inherit and no one can deny them this right. This is valid if the dying person has a child.

It is often said that a grandson is denied inheritance. This is only true if the son or daughter of the dying man are alive. In that case they inherit. But if the dying man's children are not alive then the grandson is the sole inheritor. He is the nearest and closest relation. He will be deprived if there is someone to contest his claim. A grandson can only be denied if a person with lineage superior to his exists. So, till the Day of Judgement children will always be first in line of lineage and no relationship closer than that can ever exist.

Now I wish to ask the Sadaat, myself for example. I can claim a relation to the Prophet but can I also claim a relation to his mission of Prophethood? I think this is not a complicated issue. We are related to the Prophet but are we also related to his mission? We have a link to the one who is close to God, but do we have a relation to this closeness? We may claim a relation to a learned person but are we related to his learning, too? No way. It is one thing to be related to a person but altogether another thing to be related to his qualities and attributes.

A scholar may have many relatives but can anyone claim that they are related to his scholarship, too? A doctor may be related to many but are they related to medical science as well? If there is a link to a law expert then does it mean they possess knowledge of law as well?

To be related to the Prophet is different from being related to his Prophethood just as a relation to a scholar is different from having a relation to his scholarship. Claiming a relation to the infallible is not the same as a relation to his purity and perfection. This was reserved for the Ahlul Bayt only. They alone deserve to be Ahlul Bayt of Prophethood.

Thus, we see that the relatives of the Prophet had existed and will continue to exist till the day of

Judgement, but merely boasting of a link to the Prophet is not a sign of eminence or excellence. This relation will only be worthy of pride if it is linked to his Prophethood as well. The ones blessed with this association are the ones who without being declared messengers and without being declared prophets are assisting in his task of Prophethood.

When Prophethood was confronted with an issue then relatives of this Prophethood were taken alongside for assistance.

فَقُل تَعَالَوا نَدعُ اَبنَآءَنَا وَ اَبنَآءَكُم وَ نِسَآءَنَا وَ نِسَآءَكُم وَ اَنفُسَنَا وَ اَنفُسَكُم ثُمَّ نَبتَهِل فَنَجعَل لَّعنَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَى الكٰذِبِينَ

"Say, come let us summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and our souls and your souls and then let us humbly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on the liars". (***3:61***)

This was the task of Prophethood, hence the relatives of the Prophethood were sought out and those who had a link to the Prophet but not his Prophethood were left out. They were not taken for they had no link to his mission of Prophethood. Only one female was selected from amongst all the women in the world even though requirement came in plural form. From amongst all the male relatives only one was selected as the soul of the Prophet. This is so for the sole criteria for selection is a relationship to the Prophethood and only those who possessed it were selected.

Mind you, the Prophet did not make the selection. God did. The Prophet simply obeyed His command. To this day no one has dared to say that the Prophet made a personal choice, for this command is preserved in the Quran. Nor can anyone ever claim that the Ahlul Bayt made this decision or that the Prophet wished to take them. A verse was revealed that asked him to take them along. Thus, his Prophethood banked on taking them along. It was mandatory on the Prophet to obey this command.

Now think about this, that those whom the Prophet of God was taking along with him on the instructions of God, what were they required to go and say. Just one sentence:

لَّعنَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَى الكٰذِبِينَ

"God's curse be on the liars" (***3:61***)

Now this is a short sentence. I can say it and you can say it. Call them truthful or call them liars, what does it take to say a few words? However, what had to be said there was with the permission of God and He wanted that the person saying it should never have lied, either verbally or with his actions. Such a person would be in a position to invoke the curse of Allah on the liars. To the extent of saying only,

anyone can invoke the curse, but if that person has indulged in lying, then he risks the possibility of this curse to be somewhat directed towards himself, too.

This is a very delicate situation. God wishes to introduce the five under the cloak. He introduces them as 'Ahlul Bayt Nabuwat' and the 'Treasure of Risalat' and when angel Gabriel sought their names, He said,

'They are Fatima, her father, her husband and her sons'. (*Hadith al-Kisa*) (*Tradition of the Cloak*)

Of the five, God named only one. What a remarkable situation that He did not choose a senior man or a young one for introduction. The only name used is of Khatoon e Jannat, Lady of Heaven! All others are introduced on the basis of their relation to her.

'They are Fatima's father, Fatima's husband and Fatima's sons'. (*Hadith al- Kisa*)

In short, whoever was there was related to Fatima. They had a link to Fatima. It is thus clear that since the cloak belonged to Fatima, her name was used as the reference for all the introductions. All those who gathered under the cloak were there because they had a relation to the owner of the cloak. Had that belonged to someone else, those under the cloak would have been introduced with that reference. And if they had come by virtue of another relation then they would be introduced accordingly.

However, the cloak belonged to Fatima and whoever came under it was there by virtue of their relation to her. Her father, her husband and her sons came because of their link to her. This is the respect of the cloak and respect of the owner of the cloak. Thus, God selected Lady of Heaven as the focal point of virtue and purity. He let it be known that just as it was a matter of honour for her to have a father of this stature, it was also an honour for the Prophet to be blessed with a daughter like her!

God holds His Prophet in great regard and the vital sign of this respect is that He never addresses the Prophet by name directly. You have all read the Quran and are in the habit of reading it often, so you can verify that God addresses Adam as "O Adam". He calls out to Nuh, "O Nuh" and you will also see Prophet Ibrahim being addressed by name, and addresses of "O Musa" and "O Isa" in the Quran. All the Prophets were called out by name, but even though our Prophet was the recipient of this Book and is addressed many a times in the Quran but he is never called out as 'O Mohammad' or 'O Ahmad'.

The criteria for address selected by God is based on high esteem for the Prophet. Sometimes He calls out, ***"O Nabi"*** (***33:45***) or ***"O Prophet"*** (***5:41***). Sometimes as "***O Mozammil"*** (***73:1***) or ***"O Mudassar"*** (***74:1***) and at other times as ***"TaHa"*** (***20:1***) or ***"YaSin"*** (***36:1***). God always addressed the Prophet by his qualities, his titles or his designations but never by name.

Now if a Prophet, who is so highly revered by God, stood up as a mark of respect for his daughter, then let me say this respect was not for his daughter but for her status, for her honour and for the prestigious qualities of his daughter.

Somebody has very genuinely suggested that if this respect was solely in the capacity of a daughter

then this practice would have become an established 'sunnat' (tradition) for eternity. This would be a practice designated as 'Tradition of the Prophet'. However, this tradition has not been followed. We do not respect our daughters like that for they are not like the daughter of the Prophet. The Prophet respected Fatima's honour, her amazing grace and dignity and her remarkable excellence. Other fathers were not blessed with daughters of this nature hence this practice was not established.

When our Prophet, who is so dearly respected by God, saw his daughter enter the door, not only did he stand up as a mark of respect for her prestige but he would also move forward to receive Fatima. Such was the status of Lady of Heaven, the highly dignified Fatima!

Now the lady, who is treated with utmost regard by the Prophet of God, is not concerned whether the rest of the world respects her or not. She has achieved a position of high standing. Ask the Prophet about that, or ask Ali or her sons who were to be Imams later. And ask her daughter Zainab how much she revered her mother Fatima.

I will now narrate an incidence that I remember and will wind up this session with that. It dates back to the times when the Prophet was stationed in Medina. He had just concluded a prayer session in Masjid e Nabvi (Prophet's Mosque). A man stepped forward from the prayer rows and addressed the faithful, "I am a traveller and I came from far to embrace Islam. I am a Muslim now and have stayed here many months but now I miss my children and wish to return home. However, I have no clothes or money or any means of transport and am even hungry". The Arab thus placed forth his demands to those present in the mosque.

Those were economically challenging times but still the Prophet asked the people, "Is there anyone who can address the requirements of this needy person? I will be responsible for your reward". No one was able to make a commitment. Then Salman Farsi (the honourable companion of the Prophet) stood up and said, "I myself do not own anything but I shall take you to a door from where no one ever returns unrewarded. Come with me".

Salman took the traveller with him and walked towards the destined door. I am sure you have understood which door is being referred to here. Hazrat Salman informed the traveller that whenever the Prophet came to this door he said aloud, "Assalam Alaikum Ahlul Bayt Nabuwat and Maadin Risalat". He further added, "This is how the Prophet greets the inmates of this house. You too should do likewise". Hence, this Arab offered his salaam in the same manner at the door of mercy and generosity.

Khatoon e Jannat heard the salaam and came to the door. The traveller put forth his request. Hazrat Salman Farsi explained that he had brought this man to her door for he was a traveller in need and he was hungry and without any means or sustenance. Bibi quietly said that even though her children were without food for three days running, she would not return empty handed any person seeking help at her door.

Having said that, she removed the neck band she was wearing and solemnly handed it over to Salman,

who then gave it to the traveller in need. Apparently, the neck band was not a precious item and the needs of this man were far too many. He wondered, 'What did I come here for and what did I get'! Looking at him Hazrat Salman said, "You don't know who gifted this to you. Your needs are met. Your difficulties are over. God alone knows what all you have got. Come along".

They returned to the mosque. The Prophet was waiting to see what the traveller got from his daughter's door. He called the traveller and asked him what he was given. He showed the neckband and said, 'This is what I got from your worthy daughter". Tears flooded the Prophet's eyes and out of sheer love for his daughter he asked the Arab to pray for her. The traveller prayed, "Lord endow Fatima all that which no eye has ever seen and no ear has ever heard".

The neckband was in the traveller's hand. The mosque was packed with Muslims and this gathering included those whom the traveller had asked for help earlier but they had not responded. However, seeing Fatima's neckband in his hands seemed to jolt their sense of honour. The Arab had not snatched it or stolen it or taken it by any unfair way. Lady Syeda had given it by choice but still the Muslims felt indignant. After conferring with each other they addressed the traveller, "We will give you one thousand crowns if you sell this neckband to us. Also we will give you a camel to travel and ample food and clothing". When the Arab heard this he said, "God be praised. I have become rich"!

In no time the traveller sold the neckband and received the bounties. The Muslims went home, perfumed the neckband and wrapped it in a Yemeni cloth and one of them asked his slave to take the wrapped neckband to the Prophet and gift it to him on behalf of the two of them. And then he said to the slave, "Go, I have gifted you to the Prophet as well".

The slave took the wrapped neckband to the mosque. He conveyed his master's message and presented the gift to the Prophet. As it was a gift the Prophet accepted it and also the services of the slave. Then he asked him to take the enclosed neckband as a gift from him to his daughter. He also gifted the slave to her.

The slave now came to Lady Syeda's door with this trust. He conveyed her father's message and also informed her that he was now dedicated to her service. In response she said, "I set you free in the name of God". The slave smiled on hearing this sentence.

When someone asked him what had prompted the smile, he replied that the reason for this amused smile was a cursory reflection on the progression of the neckband. It stepped out of the house to fulfill a need. It helped a traveller reach his destination. It clothed a person in need of clothes. It fed a hungry man and relieved him of his hunger. It enriched a poor man in need. It freed an enslaved person. It solved all the problems faced by one in distress and having done that it came back home!

Before I conclude let me remind you that Fatima commanded great respect and honour in the lifetime of her father. Also that Zainab was the pride of her mother. She was an integral part of Fatima. If Fatima was the senior embodiment of purity then Zainab was the junior version of the same piety. She was an

absolute replica of Syeda. When Fatima gifted the neckband to the traveller, the honour of the Muslims was challenged. How could they allow the band that their Prophet's daughter wore, the band that had been in contact with her body, to be given to a stranger!

It is the same Syeda's daughters who were forced to come out bare headed from their camps after Imam Hussain's martyrdom in Karbala. They are Fatima's daughters Zainab and Kulsoom who were forced to appear before Ibne Ziyad in his court, or walked through the market places of Kufa and Damascus without any head coverings. And why were they bare headed? Because their brother Hussein was no longer with them. His martyrdom had emboldened this veil snatching injustice.

Zainab and Kulsoom were sadly without their brothers and without their head coverings. They were herded by the enemies to various places, along whatever routes they selected and were halted at will. The caravan of Fatima's daughters was to pass through the market places of Damascus. They had not entered yet. The shops had already been decorated and the whole city wore a festive look of celebration.

I remember an episode. Sehel ibne Saad was a companion of the holy Prophet and he was remembered by Imam Hussein on the day of Ashura. Imam Hussein addressed his opponents, "If you do not know who I am or acknowledge my status, then ask my grandfather's companions, for some are still alive. Ask them what the Prophet of God said about me. Sehel ibne Saad is still around. Ask him if what I say is correct".

The companion named on the day of Ashura was by chance passing through Damascus on his way to Bait ul Muqaddus (Al Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem). While passing, he noticed that the entire city had been decorated and illuminated and wore a festive look. Since, he was travelling and unaware, he checked. It was not an occasion for Eid so why was the city so adorned. The people realizing he was a traveller informed him that enemies of the Government had been subdued and this celebration was to parade the caravan consisting of the widows, children and destitute of these rebels. The décor and arrangements were to celebrate their defeat and subjugation.

Sehel was still finding out who these people were and from where they had come when he sighted the caravan. He noticed a peculiar aura around them. The caravan was heralded in with a strange grandeur. In the forefront was a long spear on which was mounted a head covered in blood and dust. Sehel tried to recognize the face but was unable to do so. He made a strange observation here. He could not identify the face but he saw an occasional glimmer of nur radiating from the lips. It was similar to the 'nur' he had often seen emanating from the lips of the Holy Prophet.

Sehel describes the scene thus. The spear was in the forefront and the prisoners were following behind it. A captive bound in chains and fetters had his hands tied behind his neck. He led the prisoners and the reins of some of the camels in the caravan were wrapped around his hands. These camels were carrying the crestfallen women and their hands too were tied with the reins.

Sehel approached the sick and helpless prisoner in shackles and asked him kindly, “To which nation do you belong”? On hearing this question the prisoner raised his head and looking at him replied, “Sehel you did not recognize us”. The reply confused Sehel. It embarrassed him that he had not recognized the prisoner even though he had correctly identified him. Imam Zain ul Abideen asked Sehel not to feel embarrassed for where had he ever seen them in chains and fetters before. Where had he ever seen them imprisoned and dragged in shackles to recognize them in this condition. Sehel now implored the Imam, “Please tell me quickly, who are you? Where do you belong? What is your identity? To which family do you belong”?

In reply to these questions the Imam said, “Listen then. Hear with fortitude and hold your heart while I tell you who I am”. Then he said, “I am the heir of Mecca and Mina. I am the son of the owner of Zamzam and Safa. I am the son of Prophet Mohammad Mustafa (pbuh). I am the son of Ali Murtaza. I am the son of Fatima Zehra. I am the son of Hussein , the Martyr of Karbala”!

When Sehel heard this, he beat up his face and cried, “O Syed! I wish I was blind today and had not seen this condition with my eyes. Tell me, how can I be of service to you”? Imam replied, and this sentence is worth your attention, “If you wish to help me then lend me a piece of cloth”. Sehel took of his head cover and gave a piece from it to the Imam. He was reminded by the Imam that his hands were bound and was asked to fold the cloth, lift the shackle and place it under it.

Sehel folded the cloth as the Imam had requested. When he lifted the shackle from the neck he viewed a condition that he was never able to forget. What did he see? The iron shackle had cut deeply into the skin and as a result a sheet of blood was trickling down the Imam’s back. Sehel managed to place the cloth as required but then with a cry of anguish he fainted right there.

God’s wrath be on the transgressors.

Source URL:
https://www.al-islam.org/foremost-faith-maulana-syed-mohammad-jaffer-zaidi-shaheed/lecture-4-discussion-ayat-al-nusrat