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Part 2: Commentary on Du'a' al-Iftitah

First Discourse: Ramadan

اَللّـهُمَّ اِنّي اَفْتَتِحُ الثَّناءَ بِحَمْدِكَ، وَاَنْتَ مُسَدِّدٌ لِلصَّوابِ بِمَنِّكَ، وَاَيْقَنْتُ اَنَّكَ اَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ الرّاحِمينَ في مَوْضِعِ الْعَفْوِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ، وَاَشَدُّ الْمُعاقِبينَ في مَوْضِعِ النَّكالِ وَالنَّقِمَةِ، وَاَعْظَمُ الْمُتَجَبِّرينَ في مَوْضِعِ الْكِبْرِياءِ وَالْعَظَمَةِ، اَللّـهُمَّ اَذِنْتَ لي في دُعائِكَ وَمَسْأَلَتِكَ فَاسْمَعْ يا سَميعُ مِدْحَتي، وَاَجِبْ يا رَحيمُ دَعْوَتي، وَاَقِلْ يا غَفُورُ عَثْرَتي.

"O Allah! I begin the 'song of glorification' with Your praise: You, give truth and salvation freely from Your bounties. I know for certain that You are the Most Merciful in disposing forgiveness and mercy, (but) very severe in punishing and chastising the wrongdoers, the Omnipotent in the domain of absolute power and might. O Allah! You have given me permission to invoke You and beseech You, so listen, O Hearer of my words of praise, and favorably reply to my supplication, and minimize my falling into misery, O Oft-forgiving."

Ramadan as a golden opportunity

Life is passing by swiftly and man is heedless of what capital he accumulates. When he sometimes succeeds in reminiscing his past, he realises that he has spent a lot of energy and strove hard, but acquired nothing substantial.

Throughout the year, we are always looking for an opportunity to think about life, its beginning and end and choose the way that leads to everlasting life. Yet, we rarely find that opportunity. Perhaps the best opportunity to be spent for such a purpose is the blessed month of Ramadhan. Once the month of Ramadhan arrives, we always pledge to engage more in worship than usual, to abandon the world and its glitters to some extent, to turn to God, and to think who we are, where we have come from, where we are heading for, and what we must do in this transient abode.

Finally, our waiting comes to an end and the month of Ramadhan arrives, but Satan strives hard that

man should not make use of this blessed period and acquire divine blessings. Satan's open and hidden hands are at work everywhere so as to corrupt man's intention with worldly and carnal desires, associate his supplications, litanies and worship with illness and sluggishness, and deprive him of his desirable spiritual state. In this conflict or struggle between the divine and satanic forces, man has to ask for success [*tawfiq*] from God, take advantage of every opportunity, and not set aside supplications and other forms of worship for other times. He must strive hard to take a positive step towards his perfection and be closer to God. One of the acts which have highly been recommended for the blessed month of Ramadhan is supplication and litany. Ramadhan and supplication are inextricably interwoven with each other.

How to make the most of Ramadan

To make the most of this month, initially we must implore God to grant us the opportunity to engage in supplication. Of course, we must also try our best to acquire the conditions necessary to engage in supplication, by lessening our normal daily activities and give more time to supplication and worship. We must be heedful of our sleeping and eating activities. Our sleeping and eating should not make us sluggish in our worship. We must organize our eating activity in such a manner that we can fast and perform our duties and devotion properly. Consuming the necessary amount of food is different from overeating. We must also organize our sleeping time in such a way that we feel enthusiastic at the time of worship, and not continue the daily activities as before and expect to have the energy and enthusiasm to perform night vigils and devotional acts.

Attention to supplication

Before reciting the supplication, it is but proper to think for a while who we are, whom we want to face, what supplication is, etc. It is indeed a sublime station for man to be able to intimately talk with His Creator! It is necessary for us to have a general idea of what we are reciting and not merely read Arabic sentences without understanding them. The supplications transmitted from the *Ahl al-Bayt* (*'a*) contain lofty and sublime subjects, such that studying them is valuable. Therefore, before reciting the supplications, especially those mentioned for the month of Ramadhan, those who do not know Arabic are supposed to read their translation, know their contents and thus benefit from it.

Different people benefit from supplications in diverse ways which are beyond our comprehension. Supplicating by a mere utterance of words with utmost observance of proper Arabic pronunciation is so different from supplicating with a presence of heart, and it is beyond explanation. In many cases, two persons are supplicating by observing the outward etiquettes of supplication such as supplicating in a state of ablution, sitting while facing the *qiblah* with great humility, but the benefits they acquire from supplicating might be entirely different. To benefit from supplication depends on man's spiritual state and the attention of his heart towards God, the Exalted and His Attributes, especially those mentioned in the supplication.

Ramadan and iftitah

Many supplications for the month of Ramadhan have been recorded. In *Mafatih al-Jinan*[1] alone which is a compendium of supplications transmitted from the Infallibles (*'a*), there are so many supplications that perhaps we would not be able to read all of them even once in our lives, let alone other supplications recorded in treatises on supplication like *Al-Iqbal* of Sayyid Ibn Tawus and other books of supplication. For example, there are transmitted long supplications to be read in the optional prayers [*nawafil*] between the noon [*Tuhr*] and afternoon [*'asr*] prayers in the month of Ramadhan. We can hardly perform the optional prayers, let alone reading the supplications associated with them. Sometimes, even if we have the opportunity to recite these supplications, the spirit of supplication, i.e. the presence of the heart which we are supposed to have at the time of supplication is absent.

One of the most appropriate and substantial transmitted supplications supposed to be read during the nights of Ramadhan is the *Du'a' al-Iftitah*.[2] This supplication teaches the supplicant how to behave and what to be attentive to at the time of supplication.

Praising God as the beginning of supplication

This noble supplication begins with the praise of God:

اَللّـهُمَّ اِنّي اَفْتَتِحُ الثَّناءَ بِحَمْدِكَ.

"O Allah! I begin the 'song of glorification' with Your praise."

In this turbulent world, many impediments prevent man from paying attention to God. The way to man's happiness lies in servitude and worship of God, yet it is lamentable that most people are unaware of this reality. They pay attention to everything, except God and whatever guarantees their true perfection and felicity.

With the arrival of Ramadhan, some impediments are removed and the necessary ground for supplication and worship are provided. In this spring of supplication and worship, those who are eager to remember their Beloved, sing His praise, implore and beseech Him. How should we begin our supplication? The best statement with which one can begin his supplication is by praising God: "O God, to whom all things belong! Whatever a person has is given by You. Whatever stage of perfection a person attains is granted by You. An opportunity [*tawfiq*] to supplicate must also be bestowed by You. O God! Give us the opportunity to supplicate. So many of Your servants throughout the world are negligent of Your remembrance! O Lord! Had You not held our hands, we would have been amongst the negligent. Whatever exists emanates from Your blessings."

﴿ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾

"All good is in Your hand. Indeed You have power over all things."[3]

So, supplication must begin by praising and extolling God who has granted us the opportunity to pay attention to Him.

Choosing the correct path and divine approval

وَأَنْتَ مُسَدِّدٌ لِلصَّوابِ بِمَنِّكَ.

"You, give truth and salvation freely from Your Bounties."

If ever a person succeeds in treading the path of truth and salvation, it is actually a blessing bestowed by God, who has helped him along this way. This part of the supplication points to the fact that although man has been created free to choose the path of goodness or evil, God will help him if he chooses the right path. It is narrated in a *hadith qudsi*, thus:

مَنْ تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ شِبْراً تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ ذِرَاعاً.

"Whoever gets closer to Me by a span [*wajab*], I will get closer to him by a cubit [*dhara'*]."

It is an additional grace from God to help whoever chooses His path.

God's mercy and wrath a blessing in disguise

If God is the source of all good and perfection and nothing comes from Him but good and beauty, why are some calamities, difficulties and even eternal punishments inflicted upon some of His servants?

The truth of the matter is that we assess the Acts of God according to our limited standards or criteria, expecting God to behave towards us according to our thinking, whereas our intellect and knowledge are limited and deficient:

﴿ وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلا قَلِيلا ﴾

"And you have not been given of the knowledge except a few [*of you*]*."*[4]

All Acts of God are anchored in wisdom and the best order of being, and we are unaware of their nature and mechanism. In places where God must be kind and compassionate to His servants, He is so kind and compassionate that its extent is beyond our comprehension. Yet, there are also times when there is no room for kindness and compassion. Instead, His Might, Power and Greatness are manifested. In such cases, chastisements and wrath are witnessed and the expression of His Might toward those who

deserve His punishment is perfected. So, the supplication continues thus:

> وَاَيْقَنْتُ اَنَّكَ اَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ الرّاحِمينَ في مَوْضِعِ الْعَفْوِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ، وَاَشَدُّ الْمُعاقِبينَ في مَوْضِعِ النَّكالِ وَالنَّقِمَةِ، وَاَعْظَمُ الْمُتَجَبِّرِينَ في مَوْضِعِ الْكِبْرِياءِ وَالْعَظَمَةِ، اَللّـهُمَّ اَذِنْتَ لي في دُعائِكَ وَمَسْأَلَتِكَ فَاسْمَعْ يا سَميعُ مِدْحَتي، وَاَجِبْ يا رَحيمُ دَعْوَتي، وَاَقِلْ يا غَفُورُ عَثْرَتي.

"I know for certain that You are the Most Merciful in disposing forgiveness and mercy, (but) very severe in punishing and chastising the wrongdoers; the Omnipotent in the domain of absolute power and might."

The need for fear and hope

The realization that he is a helpless servant who has nothing of his own before God and His Might, brings about the happiness of man. All good belongs to Allah. Every difficulty and misery he is in is a product of his own making. He must understand that he has chosen the wrong himself, and it is actually a declaration of war against God who will subject him to hardship. Man must always stand between fear [*khawf*] and hope [*raja'*] and think that in spite of engaging much in the worship of God, it is possible that because of a wrongdoing, he will succumb to the severest wrath of God and leave this world in ignominy, or notwithstanding many sins he has committed, God will save him and grant him a pleasant fate.

To feel safe from the divine wrath is itself one of the cardinal sins. Even if a person spends his entire life in worship, he must not be contented with it, become arrogant and be certain of the fruit of his labor. To be arrogant and self-conceited is a major sin in the sight of God, the Exalted. Instead, one must always have fear, for if God leaves him alone for just a moment, he will fall into the lowest ebb.

As such, those who are nearer to God [*muqarrabin*] like the apostles and *awliya'* are more fearful of Allah. They comprehend His Might more, and notwithstanding the station He has granted them, they are afraid lest they should become arrogant for even a moment.

Meanwhile, God has considered hopelessness of His mercy as one of the gravest sins. No matter how sinful a person becomes, he must not be hopeless of divine mercy. Divine mercy is so all-encompassing that if a person really repents and turns to God, he will be forgiven. When His servant expresses his utmost humility before Him and his state of fear [*khawf*] and hope [*raja'*] is at its peak, he has actually taken a step towards perfection:

> إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ عَبْدٍ مُؤْمِنٍ إلا [و] فِي قَلْبِهِ نُورَانِ: نُورُ خِيفَةٍ وُنُورُ رَجَاءٍ، لَوْ وُزِنَ هَذَا لَمْ يَزَدْ عَلَى هَذَا وَلَوْ وُزِنَ هَذَا لَمْ يَزَدْ عَلَى هَذَا.

“There is no believer who does not have two lights in his heart: the light of fear and the light of hope. Were one of these to be measured it would not exceed the other, and were the other one to be measured, it would not exceed this one.”5

The ability to worship as a favor of God

After mentioning the Divine Attributes and praising God for the opportunities He has granted man, the supplication continues, thus:

اَللّـهُمَّ اَذِنْتَ لي في دُعائِكَ وَمَسْأَلَتِكَ.

“O Allah! You have given me permission to invoke You and beseech You.”

The point highlighted in this part of the supplication is so elegant, yet we are usually negligent of it. We imagine that by our supplications and litanies, we have done a great thing for which God is indebted to us. In this part of the supplication, however, the Imam (*‘a*) said: “O God! What a great blessing You bestowed on me by permitting me to knock at Your Door to supplicate and express my needs.” Perhaps, we are unaware of God’s enormous grace of allowing us to talk to Him, considering the innumerable sins we have committed throughout our life. As such, Imam al-Sajjad (*‘a*) said to God:

وَمِنْ أَعْظَمِ النِّعَمِ عَلَيْنا جَرَيانُ ذِكْرِكَ عَلى أَلْسِنَتِنا، وَإِذْنُكَ لَنا بِدُعآئِكَ، وَتَنْزِيهِكَ وَتَسْبِيحِكَ.

“Among Your greatest favors to us is the recurrence of Your remembrance across our tongues, and Your permission to supplicate to You, declare You exalted, and call You holy!”6

To clarify this subtle point—although it must be acknowledged that the truth of the matter cannot be perfectly conveyed in this manner—let us take for example a person who has not failed in the least in loving and helping a friend. Now, his friend not only refuses to respond with gratitude, but opposes and becomes hostile to him. If his friend behaves in such a manner, it is possible that he will be tolerated many times, but finally human patience will end and he will abandon his friend. Yet, notwithstanding all the blessings God endowed us with, if the same servant goes against the will of God, not only will He not abandon him but will also give him the opportunity to worship and supplicate to Him.

His servant’s sin and the perpetuity of God’s grace

After mentioning God’s grace of permission to be in His Presence, the penitent servant of God asks for forgiveness and enumerates the Divine Attributes and states his requests:

فَاسْمَعْ يا سَميعُ مِدْحَتي، وَاَجِبْ يا رَحيمُ دَعْوَتي، وَاَقِلْ يا غَفُورُ عَثْرَتي.

“So listen, O Hearer of my words of praise, and favorably reply to my supplication, and minimize my falling into misery, O Oft-forgiving.”

All his bodily limbs—his eyes, ears and other limbs, plus his heart—commit offences against God. In spite of all the blessings God has endowed, he wages war against Him, commits sins in His presence. Now, this servant wants to reconcile with God and expresses his requests, hoping that they will be granted! Such expectation of man from God is inconsistent with his attitude and sins. God is supposed to abandon such a servant and forget him. But not only does God not abandon him but also declines to reject him. Instead, God calls on him to get closer. It is recorded in a *hadith qudsi*, thus:

لَوْ عَلِمَ الْمُدْبِرُوْنَ عَنِّي كَيْفَ إِشْتِيَاقِي بِهِمْ لَمَاتُوا شَوقاً.

“Had the wretched known how fond I am of them, they would die out of fondness (of Me).”

Yes, if man reflects seriously, he will realize that it is the greatest grace of God to permit His sinful servant to supplicate to Him and grant his requests.

Second Discourse: The Essence of Supplication

فَكَمْ يا اِلهي مِنْ كُرْبَة قَدْ فَرَّجْتَها وَهُمُوم قَدْ كَشَفْتَها، وَعَثْرَة قَدْ اَقَلْتَها، وَرَحْمَة قَدْ نَشَرْتَها، وَحَلْقَةِ بَلاء قَدْ فَكَكْتَها.

“O my Allah many a trouble You have removed, many a sorrow You have dispelled, many a misery You have mitigated, and at all times Your Mercy was encompassing and You cut the tightening cords of the misfortunes.”

Recounting the blessings of God

After mentioning the innumerable blessings given by God and the permission to talk to Him, *Du‘a’ al-Iftitah* enumerates the various blessings of God which man is usually negligent of.

One of the blessings man is usually negligent of is the blessing of repelling and dispelling calamities and misfortunes—whether man was afflicted with them and then God relieved him of them, or dispelled them beforehand.

Unless man is beset with problems and difficulties, he will not realize the importance of the blessings God has bestowed on him. All of us, more or less, have experienced troubles and predicaments in our life and been relieved of them sooner or later. Yet, we easily forget them without pondering or reflecting on them. Reflecting on the circumstances surrounding those events awakens man and strengthens his relationship with his Creator.

Let us assume that a person or one of the members of his family is suffering from a serious illness and cannot afford to consult a doctor and follow his prescription but if he does not immediately undergo medical treatment, his life will be in danger. In such a situation, he resorts to any means available to relieve him and always fails. In such a time when he has no access to anything or any way out and is about to lose hope, he is suddenly provided with means that totally solve his problem.

Everyone more or less experiences such events in his life. However, we usually consider them 'accidental' and 'coincidental', and not God's scheme. When our problems are solved, we do not realize that Divine grace has included us. Even if we attribute them to God, it is only lip service because we do not actually believe that it was His grace that encompassed us and solved our problems.

In the system of creation, whatever happens—positive or negative—essentially happens by the will of God. Nothing will ever happen except by His leave. If a person receives a blessing, it is His will and permission. Also, if a calamity is removed from him, it is by God's command. He has provided the natural and supernatural means and conditions for an act, some of which we know while of others we do not. But if our problems are solved in an unexpected way, we call it 'chance'.

It is God who constantly nourishes man either through natural means such as trade, business and the like, or supernatural means such as the heavenly table [*al-ma'idah*][7] and the like. In any case, sustenance comes from Him and He is the Sustainer. Repelling and dispelling of difficulties also lie in His hand. Illness comes from Him; so does the cure, through medical treatment and intake of medicine, or other ways. The Glorious Qur'an quotes Hadhrat Ibrahim (Abraham) (*'a*) saying:

﴿ الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ * وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ * وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ * وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ ﴾

"(It is God) who created me, and it is He who guides me, and provides me with food and drink, and when I get sick, it is He who cures me; who will make me die, then He will bring me to life."[8]

It is necessary to ponder on events that have not happened to us but happened to others. If we go out in the morning and return home safely at night, it is God's will to remove hundreds of calamities and difficulties along our way. Just as He has endowed us with eyes, He has also repelled hundreds of threats to our eyes to maintain our sight. Just as He has given us physical bodies, He has also deterred hundreds of dangers to keep us healthy.

Most important of all are the spiritual blessings of God. He has given us the blessing of faith and intellect. Many people leave their homes in the morning having faith but return back in the evening with weak or no faith at all. They fast during Ramadhan this year but cannot do so next year. Many people had been on the straight path at the beginning but gone astray after sometime and succumbed to deviant and eclectic schools and currents. Don't we all know of people who have lost their way?

Perpetuity of blessings lies in the hand of God

The blessings of guidance, knowledge of God, His Apostle (S) and the infallible Imams (*'a*) also come from God. Preserving them also lies in His hand. Our prayer, *"Guide us on the straight path."*[9] is a request for the perpetuity and continuity of the blessing of guidance. By the will of Allah, we have identified the straight path and follow it, but without the help of God there is no guarantee that we will continue treading this path. So, we must always ask God to guide us and keep us on the straight path.

Many people are on the straight path but given to sins. Initially, they commit only one sin, then two or three and gradually get accustomed to sinful acts and finally deviate from the path. It is only God who keeps man (on the straight path) and keeps him away from sins. Sometimes, a person decides to commit a sin, strives to commit it and even makes the necessary preparation for it, but God out of His mercy prevents His servants from committing it. All these cases are among the blessings and grace of God. If man is grateful for these blessings, God will maintain them for him and not leave him alone. Therefore, if the ground for the commission of sins is open, yet we do not commit them, we must not consider God to be indebted to us but we must instead be grateful and indebted to Him for keeping us away from them.

Thus, during supplication it is necessary for us to be mindful of Whom we are facing—He who engulfs us with His spiritual and material blessings every moment. We have been given thousands of opportunities to make use of the blessings in the right way and if we did not, at least we did not commit any sin. Man, however, is ungrateful and overlooks all these blessings.

If at the time of difficulty a friend helps us, we never forget him and are always thankful to him, although his extended help in solving our problem is actually part of God's scheme, and he only serves as God's instrument. Yet, we tend to forget the innumerable blessings of God and we do not thank Him even verbally.

The need to reflect on the blessings of God

Given the innumerable blessings of God, the Exalted, is it not appropriate to think about these blessings for a few minutes everyday? We have nothing to offer Him in exchange for these blessings. At least we can appreciate and acknowledge their being bestowed by God. So, in this part of the supplication the supplicant embarks on mentioning some of these blessings:

فَكَمْ يا اِلهي مِنْ كُرْبَة قَدْ فَرَّجْتَها.

"O Allah, many a trouble You have removed."

وَهُمُوم قَدْ كَشَفْتَها.

“Many a sorrow You have dispelled.”

وَعَثْرَة قَدْ اَقَلْتَها، وَرَحْمَة قَدْ نَشَرْتَها، وَحَلْقَةِ بَلاء قَدْ فَكَكْتَها.

“Many a misery You have mitigated, and at all times Your Mercy encompassed us, and You cut the tightening cords of misfortunes.”

If a person reflects on the supplication up to this point and on the troubles and difficulties he experienced and how God relieved him, he will readily supplicate and recite these parts of the supplication.

Once a person acknowledges all blessings as coming from God, his heart will incline to God and he will become eager to have intimacy with Him. But if a person does not recognize God as the origin of these blessings, and treats God as a being who hinders his indulgence in licentiousness and merrymaking by threatening him with hellfire, how can he talk to such a God? Given the fact that he does not appreciate the blessings God has given him that could nurture the love of God in his heart, how can he become intimate with God?

1. Fear of punishment as a divine blessing

Fear of God is also one of the divine blessings, but our ignorance hinders us from understanding this blessing. When God threatens us and shows us some dangers, He actually shows us the ill effects of wicked acts—effects which will impinge on us before anybody else. These requitals and undesirable events which are the result of wicked acts serve as a warning so that we avoid engaging in evil works. It is similar to the case of a father who scares his small child not to play with fire. His warning is not meant to annoy his child but to prevent an undesirable event from happening. Therefore, to warn in this context is a kind of grace.

2. Religious duties as divine blessings

The institution of obligations and prohibitions is nothing but a means to repel harm from man. Thus, divine duties are all part of His grace. For example, by enduring hunger and thirst by fasting, which may seem difficult to us, is one of the greatest graces of God. It has many benefits which contribute to our eternal felicity. Had God only mentioned its benefits and utilities, it would not ensure our desire to earn those benefits. As such, He has obliged us to fast so that we definitely earn its benefits and merits and be recipients of Divine mercy and spiritual virtues and become felicitous. So are other obligations and prohibitions all blessings.

فَاِنْ اَبْطأَ عَنّي عَتَبْتُ بِجَهْلي عَلَيْكَ، وَلَعَلَّ الَّذي اَبْطأَ عَنّي هُوَ خَيْرٌ لي لِعِلْمِكَ بِعاقِبَةِ الْاُمُورِ، فَلَمْ اَرَ مَوْلاً كَريماً اَصْبَرَ عَلى عَبْد لَئيم مِنْكَ عَلَيَّ.

“A temporary setback, and I, out of ignorance, begin to despair, although perhaps slowing down may be a blessing in disguise, because You alone know [all] the consequences. I know no generous master who is more accommodating of unsatisfied servants, than You are to me.”

Wisdom behind the delay in the acceptance of supplications

The existence of deficiencies in life should not make a servant of God nurse an ill feeling toward Him for He knows best what is good for His servant. In many instances, the delay in the grant of his requests is good for a person. In some cases, it is even good for him that his supplications in this world are not granted but are reserved for him in the next world. So, there is no ground for us to nurse ill feeling toward God.

Unfortunately, we do not pay attention to the wisdom of God and in reality we do not have strong faith in His Attributes. We do not believe that He is the All-compassionate [*al-ra'uf*], the All-merciful [*al-rahim*]. We imagine that it is out of His stinginess—God forbid—that He does not grant our requests. Yet, as mentioned earlier, whoever knocks at His Door and implores Him, God, out of His grace, takes his real welfare under consideration and pays attention to his petitions according to His infinite wisdom.

Third Discourse: Sincerity

يا رَبِّ، اِنَّكَ تَدْعُوني فَأُوَلِّي عَنْكَ، وَتَتَحَبَّبُ اِلَيَّ فَاَتَبَغَّضُ اِلَيْكَ، وَتَتَوَدَّدُ اِلَيَّ فَلا اَقْبَلُ مِنْكَ، كَأَنَّ لِيَ التَّطَوُّلَ عَلَيْكَ، فَلَمْ يَمْنَعْكَ ذلِكَ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ لي، وَالاِحْسانِ اِلَيَّ، وَالتَّفَضُّلِ عَلَيَّ بِجُودِكَ وَكَرَمِكَ، فَارْحَمْ عَبْدَكَ الْجاهِلَ وَجُدْ عَلَيْهِ بِفَضْلِ اِحْسانِكَ اِنَّكَ جَوادٌ كَريمٌ.

“O Lord! You invite me but I turn away; You offer affection while I respond with disinterest in You; You love me but I do not respond, thinking You are overreaching me, yet You do not abstain from bestowing favors and blessings on me from Your mercy and generosity; so, have mercy on Your ignorant servant and keep him in good favor. Verily, You are Generous and Kind.”

Man’s arrogance and indifference to God

In this part of the supplication, the supplicant deals with the status of man vis-à-vis God so that he can know his position in relation to God. On one hand, he must consider God’s grace on him, and on the other, he must realize his meanness and ingratitude to God. So, he says:

يا رَبِّ، اِنَّكَ تَدْعُوني فَأُوَلِّي عَنْكَ.

“O Lord! You invite me but I turn away.”

That God has permitted us to talk to Him and supplicate to Him shows His greatest grace and magnanimity to us. Without His permission, we have no merit to talk to Him. He has not only permitted us to supplicate to Him but also calls us, notwithstanding all our failings, and asks us to turn to Him. Yet, in exchange for this magnificent grace of God, what do we do? Instead of accepting this cordial invitation, we turn our backs to Him.

وَتَتَحَبَّبُ اِلَيَّ فَاَتَبَغَّضُ اِلَيْكَ.

“You offer affection but I respond with disinterest in You.”

We are in need of Him and we must be humble in His presence to win His pleasure, but on the contrary it is He who shows love and compassion to us while we express hostility to Him!

وَتَتَوَدَّدُ اِلَيَّ فَلا اَقْبَلُ مِنْكَ.

“You love me but I do not respond to it.”

Has it ever happened that when we express interest and love to a person, yet he does not pay attention to us? Will we not regret expressing interest and love because of his inattention and indifference? Perhaps one’s expression of interest to another involves worldly or sensual motives, but are there such motives in God’s love toward His servants? We erroneously interpret God’s expression of love.

كَأَنَّ لِيَ التَّطَوُّلَ عَلَيْكَ.

“As if You are overreaching me.”

Instead of expressing our need to earn His pleasure, we do not care for Him and think that we have a right over Him or that He should be indebted to us for supplicating to Him.

What an unworthy pride and arrogance we have in return for His infinite mercy! What do we have which we are proud of? Whenever He calls us, we entertain ourselves with something else. In spite of our bad conduct, the perpetuity of God’s mercy and goodness remains.

فَلَمْ يَمْنَعْكَ ذلِكَ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ لي، وَالاِحْسانِ اِلَيَّ، وَالتَّفَضُّلِ عَلَيَّ بِجُودِكَ وَكَرَمِكَ.

“Yet, You do not abstain from bestowing favors and blessings on me out of Your mercy and generosity.”

فَارْحَمْ عَبْدَكَ الْجاهِلَ وَجُدْ عَلَيْهِ بِفَضْلِ اِحْسانِكَ اِنَّكَ جَوادٌ كَريمٌ.

“So have mercy on Your ignorant servant and keep him in good favor. Verily, You are Generous and Kind.”

The value of getting closer and fervently praying to God

Fervently praying to God and having intimacy with Him has such an effect on the human soul that if a person really establishes connection with God, at the time of supplication, he cannot give attention to mundane and worldly matters and request them from God. It is true that the grace of God dictates that whenever man calls Him for whatever reason He answers him, but the expanse of God’s kindness is one thing while man’s high aspiration is another. It does not mean that man should not knock at God’s Door for the fulfillment of his worldly needs. Rather, the point is that those who have experienced the sweetness of fervently praying to Him will never exchange it for material motives. In addition, the servant who sees himself lacking all these things must ask for each of his needs from Him although the material means for them are available. It is even appropriate that as soon as he feels the need for them, he asks God for them and considers all things as means only. But the most important thing is to talk to and beseechingly supplicate to God. This is far more valuable than asking Him for mundane things.

One of the *‘ulama’* said: “It is undesirable for a servant to ask his master to provide his material needs—wholesome food, descent clothing and pleasant abode. The wise servant is he who is always preoccupied with acting upon the order of his master. His master knows the set of rules of mastership as well as the needs of his servant. There is no need for the servant to remind his master of his needs.” Asking for such things is below lofty purpose. The servant must be heedful of his master’s order and execute it, and not think for himself. We must ask God for the opportunity to serve Him. We must ask God for an opportunity to become what is pleasing to Him.

The ever-open doors of God’s mercy

What is most important for the servant is to acquire merit to talk to his Master. To privately talk to the Worshipped Being [*ma‘bud*] is more valuable than anything else. If the servant is important in the sight of his Master, He will allow him to beseech and fervently pray to Him. The Master will also listen to him. Among people, such opportunities and chances rarely occur especially if the master is always busy. He hardly finds time to talk and listen to his servants. Even if the servant is extremely fond of his master and eager to talk to him, he will not find any opportunity.

But God is such a Master that notwithstanding His immense and indescribable Might, He still accepts His servants no matter how wicked and ungrateful they are and listens to their supplications. Whenever His servant calls Him, He answers and welcomes him. In *hadith qudsi*, God said to one of the Israelite prophets: *“I am very fond of My servants and wait for them to turn to Me. They have turned their backs and kept aloof from Me. In spite of that, I am waiting for their return.”*

اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ الَّذي لا يُهْتَكُ حِجابُهُ، وَلا يُغْلَقُ بابُهُ، وَلا يُرَدُّ سائِلُهُ.

“Praise be to Allah! None can disclose anything hidden by Him; none can shut the doors kept open by Him; no one who makes a request is sent away disappointed by Him.”

It is only in certain periods that the kindness of a philanthropic person benefits others. Even the rulers known for their justice and magnanimity opened their courts to the public only on certain days of the year. They did not entertain everybody, everyday, every moment and everywhere. Yet, the doors of Divine mercy are always open to those who ask for His grace. He answers whenever you call Him.

In one of his litanies, Imam al-Sajjad (*‘a*) said:

نَامَتِ الْعُيُوْنُ وَعَلَتِ النُّجُوْمُ وَأَنْتَ الْمَلِكُ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْم غَلَّقَتِ الْمُلُوْكُ أَبْوَابُهَا وَأَقَامَتْ عَلَيْهَا حُرَّاسُهَا وَبَابُكَ مَفْتُوْحٌ لِلسَّائِلِيْنَ جئتُكَ لِتَنْظُرَ إِلَيَّ بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ.

“Eyes sleep and stars fall, yet You are the Ever-living and Self-existent King. Kings keep their castles’ gates closed and assign guards on them, yet Your door is open to all those who knock. I come to You that You may look at me with Your mercy, O Most Merciful of the merciful!”[10]

In some supplications, we read: “O Lord! Now is the time when every lover is alone with his partner, talking intimately. And those who are not lovers, as well as the animals, are sleeping. All doors are closed, yet the doors of Your forgiveness and munificence are wide open. No guard hinders anyone from entering Your court of bounty. Whoever wants to call You calls You and You answer him. Moreover, You Yourself call Your servants and Your invitation is always open: *‘Is there anyone who regrets committing wicked acts and intends to return to Me so that I may admit him?’* What mercy and compassion towards sinners who pay no attention to You and commit evil acts with impunity! Instead of the servant entreatingly and earnestly asking for Your acceptance, it is You who invite Your servant: *“Come, come that I may accept you.”*

We must see who our Master is. We must know Him. We must acquire more knowledge about Him. He admits everybody without any discrimination. Imam al-Sajjad (*‘a*) said:

لاَ يَشْغَلُهُ شَأْنٌ عَنْ شَأْنٍ.

“No action hinders Him from engaging in another (work).”[11]

While the prophets, nearest angels and *awliya’* are busy supplicating Him, He is not negligent of others. If a common person in a certain part of the world calls Him, He will answer him. Is there such an outstanding Master who remembers His servant even after months or years of no contact? Is it then proper to pay attention to everything except Him at the time of prayer and supplication? Is it not impolite to worship Him sluggishly, heedlessly and despondently, or even think that He is indebted to us because of our worship?

Presence of heart needed in worship

If we reflect, we will realize that our prayers and supplications are nothing but commissions of sin. Let us assume that after a long time of separation, we meet a friend and we are supposed to have an hour of tête-à-tête. But during our meeting we turn our back and are busy with other work. Such a behavior is obviously offensive! If we are supposed to meet a prominent figure and do the same, it is more offensive and unpleasant. Our lack of attention to God or presence of heart during prayer is most offensive and shameful. If, after God has given us the opportunity to be in His presence and talk to Him, we do not pay attention to Him, we deserve severe punishment which is worthy even if it kills us. In spite of all these, God does not reject us. In fact, He always invites us to partake in His banquet.

God's forgiveness and compassion should not make us arrogant. Commensurate to our knowledge we are bound to discharge our duty in the best possible manner. Prayers and supplications which are mere recitation of some words without the spirit of worship are devoid of grace. We must struggle to make our prayers, supplications and other devotional acts acquire the spirit of worship, understand their meanings and have presence of heart.

To delay the performance of acts of worship especially the obligatory ritual prayers is equally wrong. We should not imagine that if the saying of prayer is somehow delayed, we will become more enthusiastic in performing it. In many cases, the delay itself is a satanic insinuation [*waswasah*] under the guise of tiredness, work and the like. Prayer which is performed after its prescribed time is deficient and spiritless.

No matter how low the level of our acts of worship be they should not be abandoned. Instead, we must strive to perform them better, and be more polite and humble in the presence of God. To abandon them is a sin and sign of ingratitude. The solution is not to abandon a devotional act but to improve it.

Some narrow-minded people think that prayer or supplication devoid of understanding is useless. This is not true. Besides the outer expressions of worship, we must beseech God to give us presence of heart and the opportunity to increase our understanding and love of Him.

Love and affection as a product of gnosis [ma'rifah]

Many subjects mentioned in supplications and prayers are about the knowledge of God. If the love of God is deeply rooted in the heart of man, he will himself be concerned with the performance of worship. As such, whenever the loving servants of Allah have the opportunity, be it a short period of time, they think of prayer, supplication and remembrance of God. However, it is inappropriate to imagine that since we always worship God in the form of prayer and supplication, we are His meritorious servants. We are fooling ourselves with such assumptions. If a person really loves another, he does not want to separate from her even for a moment. Hadrat Imam al-Husayn (*'a*) said:

إِلٰهِي أَمَرْتَ بِالرُّجُوْعِ إِلىٰ الآثَارِ.

“O Allah! [In order to know You,] You commanded us to refer to the effects [of Your Power].”12

It is true that God has commanded it, but His loving servants’ desire is to be always close to Him. They want to be always in His presence even if they are obliged to pay attention to material means, and outwardly, their hearts seem to be detached from His remembrance.

Does the one who does not want to spend an hour in litany and supplication have any love for God? Can it be said that all our love and hate, struggle [*jihad*] and other feelings are for the sake of God, without really loving Him? If our actions are indeed for His sake, it is never possible not to love Him and consider something more desirable than prayer. The *awliya’* of Allah were always waiting for the slightest opportunity to supplicate in a corner. After performing their social responsibilities they would seclude themselves in order to hear the Divine invitation in their supplications and litanies which would give them more energy and enthusiasm.

إِلٰهِي كَمْ تَتَحَبَّبَ إِلَيْنَا بِالنَّعَمِ وَأَنْتَ عَنَّا غَنِيٌّ وَنَتَبَغَضُ إِلَيْكَ بِالْمَعَاصِيَ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْكَ مُحْتَاجُوْنَ!

Fourth Discourse: Hope

اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ الَّذي لا يُهْتَكُ حِجابُهُ، وَلا يُغْلَقُ بابُهُ، وَلا يُرَدُّ سائِلُهُ، وَلا يُخَيَّبُ آمِلُهُ.

“Praise be to Allah! None can disclose anything hidden by Him; none can shut the doors kept open by Him; no one who makes a request is sent away disappointed by Him; and no one who looks long and attentively is deluded in his hopes.”

Hope and reliance on God

Among the points highlighted in *Du‘a’ al-Iftitah* is that God never rejects His servant, closes His door of mercy on him, or allows him to lose hope, provided that he turns, relies and pins his hopes on God.

It is possible that out of personal motives, we do something for a person and remind him of this favor: “I did it for your sake.” But we cannot do this to God for He is aware of our intention and motive. The expression “By the will of God”, is good but we must be sincere in our words and deeds. Usually, out of the hundred times that we make this expression, only once we truly mean it. As stated in the supplication, if a person really pins his hopes on God, “no one who looks long and attentively is deluded in his hopes”.

If we become hopeless, it is because we have not actually pinned our hope on God and done something

with reliance on Him. If we like an activity we do it with great enthusiasm. But if do not like it or it requires a lot of effort and patience, either we do not do it or do it sluggishly. For example, in doing something, if the means to do so is accessible to us, we tend to do it, otherwise we consider it impossible to be done. If we do something with the hope that someone will come to rescue or assist us but he does not come, we tend to be discouraged in continuing it. Even in simple worldly matters, we tend to look for a friend or acquaintance to assist us. This only shows that we do not actually pin our hope to God. God has not guaranteed the realization of such hope.

Imam ‘Ali’s (‘a) saying about pinning one’s hope on God

adhrat ‘Ali (*‘a*) said:

> يَدَّعِي بِزُعْمِهِ أَنَّهُ يَرْجُو اللهَ، كَذَبَ وَالْعَظِيمِ! مَا بَالُهُ لاَ يَتَبَيَّنُ رَجَاؤُهُ فِي عَمَلِهِ؟ فَكُلُّ مَنْ رَجَا عُرِفَ رَجَاؤُهُ فِي عَمَلِهِ...
> يَرْجُو اللهَ فِي الْكَبِيرِ، وَيَرْجُو الْعِبَادَ فِي الصَّغِيرِ، فَيُعْطِي العَبْدَ مَا لاَ يُعْطِي الرَّبَّ!

“He claims, according to his own assumptions, he hopes from Allah. By Allah, the Great, he lies. Do not one’s hopes become visible through one’s action? The hope of every one who hopes is known through his action... He hopes big things from Allah and small things from men but he gives to man (such consideration as) he does not give to Allah. What is the matter with Allah, glorified be His praise? He is accorded less (consideration) than what is given to His creatures.”[13]

Imam ‘Ali (*‘a*) said that if a person is hopeful of something, he strives to achieve it. Hope urges man to toil and sweat. A youngster who hopes that by obtaining a degree he will find a suitable job and good social standing will strive hard for years. Day and night, he will endure being away from home and everything else. Why? It is because he hopes that by obtaining a certain degree he will acquire a suitable job. So, hope produces movement, not laziness and inertia.

Under the pretext of relying on God, some people refuse to discharge any duty. They strive neither to perform the recommended acts [*mustahabbat*] nor to avoid the dubious [*mushtabahat*]. If they are asked, they say: “God’s mercy is infinite and He will treat us mercifully. One must not despair of God’s favor!” Is their hope greater than that of the *awliya’* and prophets? Notwithstanding their total reliance and trust in God, these holy personages would not abandon even the least of duties and responsibilities. Is our hope for God’s favor greater than theirs, such that without action we hope that God will admit us into the highest heaven?!

We usually imagine that we have strong trust in God. But the Commander of the Faithful (*‘a*) exposed the truth by saying: “You have neither fear [*khawf*] nor hope [*raja’*]”. If you are really hopeful of God’s favor, its effect must be manifested through your action. If you pin your hope on a person and expect him to do something for you, how will you behave with him? You are careful in your action lest you annoy or irritate him; you always show respect; etc. Would you ever dare reviling him or displaying a

hostile attitude toward him? But how about your attitude toward your Creator?

Imam ‘Ali (*‘a*) said: “You rely on this person concerning insignificant and trivial matters but you are not as humble and polite to God as you are to him although your reliance on God involves far more serious and sublime matters.”

Concerning which matters do you rely on a person? Trivial matters. He solves your problem or serves as your mediator. At most, he protects your honor in times of need or saves your life in times of danger so that you can live longer. In any case, all of these are limited. How valuable is the degree obtained by a young student who has spent the prime of his youth in studies? Is it 10 million, 1 billion, or 1 trillion? No matter how much, it is limited and finite. What we are expecting from God is an unlimited eternal life. Do our deeds measure up to this expectation or wish? If we are really hoping for it, why is it not manifested in our action? It is better to be truthful to God and not deceive ourselves. God cannot be deceived although unfortunately some people intend to deceive Him:

﴿ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴾

“They seek to deceive Allah and those who have faith, yet they deceive no one but themselves, but they are not aware.”[14]

We must be truthful to God. The wise man is one who purifies his intentions and is truthful in supplicating to Him.

What we do pretentiously for God may possibly deceive people but God cannot be deceived. If we want to change our condition, we must change ourselves. We must rely on God alone or else He will leave us alone and we will reach nowhere. We must bear in mind that only He can be truly relied upon and no one else.

It is reported from Imam al-Sadiq (*‘a*) that God, the Blessed and Exalted, says:

“By My Honor, Glory, Greatness and Exaltedness over the Throne! I shall turn into despair the hope of one who pins his hope on other than Me and cover him with the garment of contempt in the eyes of people. I shall keep him away from Me and not allow him to meet Me. Has he pinned his hope on other than Me to solve his problems while [the solution to] problems lies in My hand? Has he attached himself to other than Me and knocks at another’s door while the keys of all closed doors are with Me, and My door is open to those who call Me? Is there anyone who in time of difficulties pinned his hope on Me but I frustrated him? Is there anyone who relied on Me on an important affair but I deprived him?”[15]

So, one must rely on God alone. Relying on God means to consider all powers to be from Him and to use them while bearing in mind that with His permission nothing can be done. One must consult the doctor and abide by his medical prescription but at the same time he must bear in mind that the healing

power lies with God. Without the will of God, a doctor's correct diagnosis could be useless and thus, he would give the wrong prescription. Or, in spite of correct diagnosis and prescription, the sick would not be cured. This does not mean that there is no need to consult the doctor. While relying on God, we must also abide by the doctor's prescription for it is one of the means and manifestations of God's favor. In any case, cure comes from Him.

Reliance on God means believing that affairs and their elements are in the hand of God. He must believe in the reality that God manages all affairs and provides all means. In cases where no means are in sight, it is not beyond His power to create new means. He can also do something without any means. Therefore, in no way does the faithful one cease his reliance on God, irrespective of the existence or absence of natural means. He will not be frustrated if he fails through a certain means or way—be it money, doctor, medicine, etc. But, we should not expect that God will always definitely solve our problems through supernatural ways. It is self-worship to disregard natural means and ask God to solve our problems by supernatural means because in certain instances, it is the will of God to solve our problems through a natural way. In this regard, God says:

أَبَى اللهُ أَنْ يُجْرِيَ الأَشْيَاءَ إِلاَّ بِالأَسْبَابِ.

"Allah does not want things to be materialized through other than their [natural] means."[16]

Yes, if there are no available natural means, God acts through supernatural means. For example, He sent down a heavenly table-cloth full of food and drink to a group of Israelites,[17] kept Hadhrat Ibrahim (*'a*) alive and safe in the fire,[18] and many other cases.

Fifth Discourse: Waiting for the Advent of Imam al-Mahdi ('atfs)

اَللّـهُمَّ اِنّا نَرْغَبُ اِلَيْكَ في دَوْلَة كَريمَة تُعِزُّ بِهَا الاِسْلامَ وَاَهْلَهُ، وَتُذِلُّ بِهَا النِّفاقَ وَاَهْلَهُ، وَتَجْعَلُنا فيها مِنَ الدُّعاةِ اِلى طاعَتِكَ، وَالْقادَةِ اِلى سَبيلِكَ، وَتَرْزُقُنا بِها كَرامَةَ الدُّنْيا وَالاْخِرَةِ.

"O Allah we ardently desire that in the kind, just and fair government, You give honor to Islam and its followers, and humble and humiliate hypocrisy and the hypocrites, and include us among those who invite people unto Your obedience and lead them to Your approved path, and give us the good of this world and the world to come."

Waiting for the advent of Imam al-Mahdi ('atfs)

One of the points highlighted in *Du'a' al-Iftitah* is the desire for the Islamic state to be established with the reappearance of Hadrat Wali al-'Asr (*'atfs*).[19] In this supplication, the mission of the Islamic government and our duty in relation to it are also mentioned. Fortunately, we are all encompassed by

God's great favor of the knowledge about Hadrat Wali al-'Asr (*'atfs*) and waiting for his advent.

Belief in the advent of Hadrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*) is common to all Muslim schools of thought [*madhahib*]—Sunni or Shi'ah. Non-Muslims also believe in a sort of waiting for relief with the coming of a savior [*maslih*]. We have a difference of opinion with our Sunni brothers concerning some issues of Imamate, but few differences concerning the belief in the coming of Hadrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*).

Many Sunni scholars have written books about Hadrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*) and acknowledged that their recorded traditions [*ahadith*] about Imam al-Mahdi (*'atfs*) are *mutawatir*.20 However, there are differences of opinion about his personal features. Some Sunnis believe that at the end of time a descendant of the Apostle (S) named Mahdi will come but they differ with us on the identity of his parents and whether he has been born or yet to be born. Some of them believe that the Mahdi (*'atfs*) will be born in future.

Of course, some Sunnis exactly share our beliefs regarding the Last Imam (*'atfs*). That is, they believe that he is an eleventh direct descendant of Imam 'Ali and Hadrat Fatimah (*'a*). Some of them have even explained that the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*) has already been born and is alive and that some people have been privileged to meet the Imam (*'atfs*). In this regard, the names of some of those who were able to meet him have been mentioned.

Therefore, not only the Shi'ah believe in Imam al-Mahdi (*'atfs*). Some do not believe in him as an Imam and successor [*khalifah*] of the Messenger of Allah (S) with cosmic or ontological guardianship [*wilayat-e takwini*]21 and divine knowledge and power. For example, some Sunnis especially the Shafi'is have special devotion to the infallible Imams (*'a*), recognizing them as jurists [*fuqaha*] and descendants of the Messenger of Allah (S), but do not believe in their infallibility [*'ismah*] and guardianship [*wilayah*]. In this regard, their knowledge is deficient.

Yet, notwithstanding all these beliefs, the Ahl al-Sunnah have somehow forgotten his advent, and one cannot include them among those who are waiting [*muntazirin*] for the government of al-Mahdi (*'atfs*). So, only the Shi'ah are waiting every moment for his reappearance. It is we who ponder on these questions:

Firstly, what is our motive in waiting for the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*) and his government of truth? What incites your desire to be present during his advent?

Secondly, what is our duty during this period of waiting [*intizar*] and occultation [*ghaybah*]? What must we do so as to be included among those who are truly waiting for him (*'atfs*)?

The motive behind "waiting"

The carnal state of man is so complex that sometimes he himself is unaware of its intricacies. Sometimes, a person wants something without knowing the reason behind his inclination to it. Similarly,

regarding the issue of waiting for the advent of ḥadhrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*) and the establishment of his government, people have also diverse motives. For instance, it is popular among laymen that during the advent of the Imam (*'atfs*), the daily needs of man will be provided gratuitously or what is called *salawati*. In other words, the needs which require efforts to be met will be met by only invoking blessings upon Muhammad and his progeny (*'a*) [*salawat*]. As such, it is possible that for this or similar reasons some people are eager to wait for the reappearance of the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*), and basically, for this reason, they are waiting for it.

Others are waiting for his coming to set right their affairs and remove the burden of problems from their shoulders. The fact is that it is not easy to perform some religious duties especially social responsibilities such as enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil [*amr bi'l-ma'ruf wa nahyi 'an'il-munkar*] and campaigning against injustice and corruption. Thinking that with the coming of the Mahdi (*'atfs*) these burdens will be removed from their shoulders, some people are waiting for his reappearance.

Perhaps on account of suffering from tyranny and oppression, others are waiting for the establishment of the government that will eliminate the tyrants and everyone will enjoy his right (advocates of justice, equality and fairness).

Meanwhile, there are also those who are waiting for the advent of ḥadhrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*) for the victory of the religion of truth, implementation of the divine laws which are yet to be implemented, revival of the Prophet's (S) *Sunnah*, and annihilation of the traces of disbelief [*kufr*] and polytheism [*shirk*].

We must ask ourselves as to our motive in waiting for the advent of the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*). Are we after the gratuitous [*salawati*] bread, or are we fed up of the tyrants and oppressors? Is it because the burden of religious responsibility is heavy on us, or is it because Islam and the Muslims are in danger, that we are waiting for that day? We must reflect and identify which of them is our real motive in waiting for it.

If our motive is one of the first three mentioned reasons, then we are actually only concerned with ourselves and not others! In reality, we are waiting for our own relief and comfort, and not for the advent of ḥadhrat al-ḥujjah (*'atfs*)!

If a person other than the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*) grants our requests, we will follow and incline to him. Therefore, the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*) and his advent do not concern us. Our main goal is our own comfort and nothing else. What is the value of waiting [*intiẓar*] which is motivated by laziness and the pursuit of comfort?

If we are waiting for the day of the advent of the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*) for him to remove the burden of responsibilities from our shoulders, wage a campaign against disbelief and hypocrisy [*nifaq*], enjoin the good and forbid the evil, set right our affairs, and finally make us the inheritors of the fruits of his labor so that we can enjoy without difficulty the wealth and other amenities to be provided by his government, such an act of waiting has no value and merit.

The true and valuable waiting is for one to wait for the relief [*faraj*] with the advent of ḥadhrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*) for the victory and exaltation of Islam and its spread. This is the true and valuable waiting, and many narrations [*riwayat*] speak of its lofty value. It is true that under the aegis of the global revolution and government of ḥadhrat al-ḥujjah (*'atfs*), there will be peace, security, abundance of blessings, annihilation of oppression and the oppressors, and uprooting of poverty and misery, but they must not be the principal motive of the faithful in waiting for the Mahdi (*'atfs*).

In this part of the supplication, the motive of man in waiting for the *faraj* and the mission of the Imam (*'atfs*) in establishing his government are also mentioned:

اَللّـهُمَّ اِنّا نَرْغَبُ اِلَيْكَ في دَوْلَة كَريمَة تُعِزُّ بِهَا الاِْسْلامَ وَاَهْلَهُ، وَتُذِلُّ بِهَا النِّفاقَ وَاَهْلَهُ.

"O Allah we ardently desire that in (his) kind, just and fair government, You give honor to Islam and its followers, and humble and humiliate hypocrisy and the hypocrites."

وَتَجْعَلُنا فيها مِنَ الدُّعاةِ اِلى طاعَتِكَ، وَالْقادَةِ اِلى سَبيلِكَ.

"And include us among those who invite people unto Your obedience and lead them onto Your approved path."

During the advent of the Imam (*'atfs*), we are not also supposed to abandon our duties. It is not true that after his advent, without propagation [*tabligh*] people will embrace Islam and do righteous deeds. In fact, there will be need for propagation, training and education at that time. At that time, we hope to be the forerunners and pioneers in materializing the goals of the Mahdi (*'atfs*) by inviting the people toward him:

وَتَرْزُقُنا بِها كَرامَةَ الدُّنْيا وَالاْخِرَةِ.

"And give us the good of this world and the world to come."

What are our duties as the true *muntaẓirin*? What must we do, so that during his reappearance we can rightfully play our role?

The most important duty of a true *muntaẓir* is for him to know the truth and act upon it as far as he can so that he can easily solve problems. It is such a person who can lead people during the time of the advent of ḥadhrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*). How can one who procrastinates in knowing the truth and acting upon it lead others? Prior to his advent, therefore, we must prepare ourselves by increasing our knowledge and improving our actions.

Learning from previous communities (the fate of those who are waiting [muntazirin]

Throughout history, the government of truth has always been promised to the believing communities and they have always been waiting for it. Yet, after the coming of the expected government, it became clear that they were not sincere in their claims. For example, the glad tidings of the birth and coming of ḥadhrat Musa (Moses) (*'a*) were given to the Children of Israel during the Pharaoh's reign, as repeatedly mentioned in the Qur'an. The Pharaoh so persecuted the Children of Israel that perhaps no other nation had experienced their ordeal. They were persecuted to such an extent that their religious leaders gathered together and asked their people to pray for the coming of ḥadhrat Musa (*'a*). According to pertinent traditions, it was because of the profuse cry and lamentation of the Israelites that the coming of ḥadhrat Musa (*'a*) was expedited. He was born and grew up. After sometime, he rose up against Pharaoh and finally the Israelites were able to cross the sea and were thus delivered from his yoke. They saw with their own eyes that Pharaoh and his legion pursued them but in spite of their military might Pharaoh and his forces were not able to cross the sea and drowned.

Those, who one day had asked God to expedite the coming of ḥadhrat Musa (*'a*) to be delivered from the clutches of Pharaoh and worship God freely, committed the most unscrupulous acts after being delivered from Pharaoh till the passing away of ḥadhrat Musa (*'a*)! Instead of gratitude and thankfulness to God, the Exalted, for deliverance, and obediently following the orders of ḥadhrat Musa (*'a*), they engaged in committing devious acts and making awkward demands of him. Along their way to Palestine from Egypt, they passed by a city whose inhabitants were idol-worshippers, and they said to him: "We cannot see the God whom you believe and ask us to worship. We want God who is like the deity of these idol-worshippers":

﴿ اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ ﴾

"Make for us a god like the gods that they have."[22]

They were the same people who had suffered from Pharaoh and beseeched God to hasten the coming of ḥadhrat Musa (*'a*).

After this happening, ḥadhrat Musa (*'a*) went to Mount Ṭur to engage in worship. He was supposed to stay there for thirty days and it was extended to another ten days. While he was engrossed in worship and supplications, the Israelites went to Samiri and told him, "Make a god for us!" So, Samiri made a golden calf and said:

﴿ هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَى فَنَسِيَ ﴾

"This is your god and the god of Moses!"[23]

That is to say, "This is the same god Moses is referring to." And the Israelites prostrated before it. Finally, those who had been eagerly waiting for adhrat Musa (*'a*) did so.

There is also a similar account regarding Prophet Muhammad (S). Many of the People of the Book[24] in the Arabian Peninsula particularly in Medina had been waiting for the coming of the Apostle (S). They resided in Medina and its suburbs so that with the coming of the expected prophet, they could pay their allegiance to him sooner than others. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an states:

﴿ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ ﴾

"[They] recognize him just as they recognize their sons."[25]

However, when the Apostle (S) invited them to embrace the religion of Islam, they considered his objectives repugnant to their desires. So, they declined his invitation and did not submit to him.

These historical events serve as a lesson for us to avoid meeting the same fate—God forbid—in waiting for the advent of adhrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*). This does not suggest that our good fate is ensured. It is recorded in some traditions that after the advent of adhrat al-Mahdi (*'atfs*), some people will write a letter to him, saying, "We do not need you!"

Therefore, we must mould ourselves according to Islam. We must suppress our carnal desires and prepare ourselves to recognize him as well as his uprising and revolution. If we are fond of him and shed tears whenever we hear his name, we must not become arrogant and be negligent of our fate.

As such, waiting is valuable provided that we are really inclined to meet the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*), feel sorry to see some divine injunctions yet to be implemented and yearn for his advent so that he can restore the glory of Islam and the Muslims and implement the divine laws. We must prepare ourselves to be able to recognize his government and follow his orders, and we must ask God, the Exalted, to grant us this opportunity [*tawfiq*].

Sixth Discourse: The Imam of the Age ('atfs)

اَللّـهُمَّ اِنّا نَشْكُو اِلَيْكَ فَقْدَ نَبِيِّنا صَلَواتُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، وَغَيْبَةَ وَلِيِّنا، وَكَثْرَةَ عَدُوِّنا، وَقِلَّةَ عَدَدِنا، وَشِدَّةَ الْفِتَنِ بِنا، وَتَظاهُرَ الزَّمانِ عَلَيْنا.

"O Allah, we feel uneasy and are disturbed over the departure of our Prophet (S), absence of our guardian-friend, too many enemies, our numerical scarcity, widespread disorder, and vicissitudes of time."

The Apostle (S) and the Imams (‘a) with the most valuable blessings

From the points stated earlier, it is clear that man must always pay attention to his needs and seek only the help of God, the Exalted, to provide them. As stated earlier, his needs are not only limited to material and worldly needs. One of our greatest needs is our need for the Holy Prophet (S) and his successor. Even if all worldly blessings are available to man but he is deprived of the guidance of the Holy Prophet (S), all those blessings compared to this guidance are insignificant and immaterial.

We can understand this need only if we grasp the blessing of the presence of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imam of the Time (*‘atfs*) and we really know who they are and which of the blessings of these holy personages are bestowed upon the Muslim *ummah*. It is impossible for us to comprehend the greatness and station of the Imams (*‘a*). We can only say that the entire universe has been created as the blessings of their existence.

لَوْلاَكَ لَمَا خَلَقْتُ الأَفْلاَكَ.

“Had it not been for you, I would not have created the universe.”[26]

The same is true in the case of the Imams (*‘a*). Whether we can grasp or comprehend this tenet or not, depends on the extent of our knowledge about these personages. It is sufficient to say that were it not for the Imams (*‘a*), the foundation could not survive. The deviations that took place immediately after the demise of the Messenger of Allah (S) prove this claim. Were it not for the 250 years of effort and struggle of the infallible Imams (*‘a*), today we would not witness the truths of Islam. Even the truths of Islam that survive among the Ahl al-Sunnah are part of the blessings of the Imams of guidance (*‘a*). The caliphs and rulers who used to hold the Friday congregational prayers on Wednesdays and lead the dawn prayer while drunk could have been the protectors and preservers of Islam. The blood of the Doyen of the Martyrs (*‘a*) and the struggle of other Imams of guidance (*‘a*) were responsible for the survival of Islam.

Of course, the blessings of the Imams of guidance (*‘a*) were and are not limited to their respective lifetimes. In fact, even after their demise they remained a source of blessing. They would solve the problems of not only their followers and lovers but often even those of non-Muslims. If all miracles reported about each of the Infallibles [*ma‘sumin*] (*‘a*) throughout history were compiled, they would constitute a huge book. Nevertheless, the most important and perpetual blessing of the Imams (*‘a*) consists of their sayings and traditions [*sunan*]. These radiant traditions are responsible for the preservation and spread of Islam as well as the felicity of man. That which plays a crucial role in the felicity of man can be found in the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*. Are we not created to attain perfection and eternal felicity? What can significantly assist us in this regard are the recorded traditions of the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Imams (*‘a*). Hence, anyone who pays attention to the main purpose of creation will realize that the blessing of the Imams (*‘a*) is incomparable, and an acknowledgment of this

blessing must commensurate with the blessing itself.

Unfortunately, however, the present state of affairs is such that only a few pay attention to this matter. A majority of the world population is non-Muslim. Most of the Muslims do not believe the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*) has already been born and is alive. Only the minority Shi'ah believe in his being alive, and many of them are only Shi'ah in name and not in practice. As such, they also do not give much attention to the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*), and rarely remember him. Only very few of the Muslims enjoy the opportunity to remember him occasionally and resort to his mediation [*tawassul*] when they are in trouble. We must recall how many times we remember him every year, month and week. What is the effect of his holy presence on our lives? What affliction are we faced with for not paying homage [*ziyarah*] to him?

Heedlessness of the Imam of the Age ('atfs)

Usually, since the Imam of the Time is in occultation [*ghaybah*] and we are deprived of paying homage to him, we do not feel any deficiency. Our sustenance is provided. We consult the *'ulama'* and *mujtahidin* regarding religious issues. In view of this, what is our need for the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*)?! Why do we not feel any deficiency? Why we are not worried about his occultation? The reason is our negligence and weak faith. It is not because we do not really need him (*'atfs*). We do, but we cannot comprehend it. We are not aware what tribulation we are suffering from—tribulation which is a product of our own making. The people's unpleasant attitude and their ingratitude in relation to the existence of the pure Imams (*'a*) has been the reason behind the Imam of the Time's (*'atfs*) occultation. Is the discord among the different parts of the Muslim society not a tribulation?27

The Noble Qur'an states that one of the severest tribulations God will inflict upon a people is the existence of discord and difference among them:

﴿ قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيَعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ ﴾

"Say, 'He is able to send upon you a punishment from above you or from under your feet, or confound you as* [*hostile*] *factions, and make you taste one another's violence.'"28

Nowadays, it is obvious that hearts are separated from one another, heading in different directions. It is evident that these disputes and dissensions are because of the occultation of the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*).

During the blessed month of Ramadhan when we want to supplicate and fervently pray to God, we must read this part of *Du'a' al-Iftitah* and since we are living in the period of his (*'atfs*) occultation and are deprived of paying homage to him (*'atfs*), we must express worry and concern. It is but proper to sincerely read this part of the supplication and reflect on the great blessing of his existence, and how our

deprivation of this blessing is making us suffer from afflictions and predicaments.

The fact, that we do not know how to please God, the Exalted, and the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*), is a serious problem. By revealing the Book (the Qur'an), commissioning the Apostle (S) and the infallible Imams (*'a*), and endowing us with the faculty of reasoning, He has shown us the way. If we observe carefully, we will find out that in all cases of disputes and differences, we can somehow identify the correct path and choose that which is pleasant to God and the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*). However, at this time, we are experiencing internal and external problems. On one hand, we have internal disputes, and on the other hand, the East and the West oppose us. No sect or school of thought is as alienated as Shi'ism. All sects or schools of thought are inclined either to the East or the West. Only the Shi'ah are attached to their leader and master and are hoping for his coming. We must identify what action the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*) wants from us.

One of our beliefs is that the Imam of the Age (*'atfs*) is aware of the deeds of his *ummah* especially his Shi'ah. In our books on traditions, there is a section [*bab*] called "presentation of actions" [*'ardh al-a'mal*]. Many traditions belonging to this section, suggest that the weekly (and in some traditions, daily) actions of the faithful are reported to the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*) and during the Night of Ordainment [*Laylat al-Qadr*] all people's destinies are presented to him. The Imam (*'atfs*) is the medium of favor between God and the people and the divine favors are extended to the people through him. Will he not be offended upon knowing our actions? We must ensure that our deeds please him (*'atfs*), and that he will not say—God forbid—that he does not have such followers.

We know that the Imam (*'atfs*) will be pleased if we obey God's commands, but they are repugnant to our carnal desires so we are heedless of them.

No one doubts that the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams (*'a*) are sent for the preservation of the religion and laws of God. No one doubts that any action that contributes to the preservation of the religion and laws of God is pleasant to the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*) and whatever keeps people away from the religion of God and distorts the religion, Islamic beliefs and divine laws displeases and annoys him. Do we doubt that whatever contributes to the abandonment of the Apostle's (S) *Sunnah* and the Qur'anic injunctions irritates him? Do we doubt that those who undermine the religion and weaken the faith of people are abhorred by him? Don't we know that it is a sin to say that a certain law must be changed as it belongs to the past and is not applicable today, and thereby weakens the faith of people in the inalterability of divine laws?

Our duty during this period of occultation

If we want to sincerely read this part of the supplication and express worry over the absence of the Prophet (S) and the occultation of the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*), we must strive as much as we can in preserving the religion. Our spiritual condition must be such that if the Imam of the Time (*'atfs*) comes, we will unconditionally obey his orders. We must be ready to offer him our life, wealth and family. Do we

have such readiness?

In one of the supplications for the nights of Ramadhan, we read:

وَقَتْلاً فِي سَبِيْلِكَ فَوَفِّقْ لَنَا.

“Make us succeed in being martyred in Your way!”

We must mould ourselves in such a way that we will not be afraid to be slain in the way of Allah but even yearn for it. We must ask God to give us pure intention, and sincerely and truthfully talk to Him. We must really ask Him to mould us in such a way that our life and death are pleasing to Him and the Imam of the Time (*‘atfs*). We must pray to God for us to be included among the companions of the Mahdi (*‘atfs*) and have the opportunity to do whatever pleases him and inform us of whatever we do not know.

We want the Imam of the Time (*‘atfs*) to lead us and teach us everything we are ignorant of. There are among us who wish to meet the Imam of the Time (*‘atfs*) even if only in a dream. Another thing to be done is to desire to meet him so as to acquire as much blessing as possible from his presence, and acquire the merit needed to meet him. Even now, the existence of the Imam of the Age (*‘atfs*) is a blessing which can be enjoyed by anyone who deserves it:

هَلْ إِلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ أَحْمَدَ سَبِيْلٌ فَتُلْقىٰ، هَلْ يَتَّصِلُ يَوْمُنَا منك بِعِدَهٍ فَنَحْظىٰ، مَتىٰ نَرِدُ مَنَاهِلَكَ الرَّوِيَةَ فَنَرْوىٰ، مَتىٰ نَنْتَفِعُ مِنْ عَذْبِ مَائِكَ فَقَدْ طَالَ الصَّدىٰ، مَتىٰ نُغَادِيْكَ وَنُرَاوِحُكَ فَنُقِرَّ عَيْناً، مَتىٰ تَرَانَا وَنَرَاكَ؟

“Do you, O son of Ahmad, have means and ways to arrange our meeting? Can you once cleverly guide the course of time, so that we may obtain our wish? When shall we bridge the gap that separates us so that we may refer to the authority? How long shall we keep waiting for your pleasing and satisfying essence and quality? The period of expectation has already lasted long! When shall we receive our share from you and have our minds set at rest? For we have fixed our eyes upon you and strive with perseverance. When shall we be happy, and see your beautiful countenance and fine aspect?”29

May God give us the opportunity to recognize and accept the Imam of the Age (*‘atfs*), to love him and to really wait for the establishment of his government. May He also acquaint us with our duties at this period of occultation and give us the opportunity to benefit from his presence during his occultation as well as reappearance.

أَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَأَنْجِزْ لِوَلِيِّكَ مَا وَعَدْتَهُ، أَللّٰهُمَّ أَظْهِرِ كَلِمَتَهُ وَأَعِلِ دَعْوَتَهُ وَانْصُرْهُ عَلىٰ عَدُوِّهِ وَعَدُوِّكَ، أَللّٰهُمَّ انْفَعْنَا بِحُبِّهِ وَاحْشُرْنَا فِي زُمْرَتِهِ، آمِيْنَ يَا رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ!

“O Allah! Bless Muhammad and his progeny, and grant what You have promised to Your *wali*. O Allah!

Manifest his word [of truth] and honor his call. Help him against his enemy and Your enemy. O Allah! Convey to him our greetings and salutations and favor us with his pleasure. Grant us his benevolence and mercy. O Allah! Benefit us with his love and include us among his company under his banner. So be it, O Lord of the worlds!"30

1. – Mafatih al-Jinan [Keys to the Gardens of Paradise]: a standard manual of Shi'i devotion containing supplications and prayers of the infallible Imams ('a) as well as formulae for recitation at particular times or during visits to the shrines of the Imams ('a), compiled from Bihar al-Anwar [Oceans of Lights] and other sources by Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, a scholar of vast learning who died in Najaf in 1940. [Trans.]

2. – 'Allamah Majlisi thus writes in Zad al-Ma'ad: "Based on an authentic chain of transmission, it is reported that Hadrat Sahib al-Amr ('atfs) instructed his Shi'ah to recite this supplication (Du'a' al-Iftitah) every night during the month of Ramadan for every supplication recited in the said month is recorded by angels who pray for forgiveness of the sins of the supplicant." The late Haj Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi has also mentioned it in Hadiyyat al-Za'irin.
While stating the chain of transmission of the supplications for the month of Ramadan, Sayyid Ibn Tawus in Al-Iqbal mentioned the famous chain of transmission of this supplication by quoting Nasr al-Sukuni who said: "I asked Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman al-Baghdadi (may Allah have mercy on him) to teach me the supplications of the month of Ramadan which Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), one of the four special deputies [nawwab] of the Imam of the Time ('atfs), used to recite. He then showed me a red-covered notebook from which I copied Du'a' al-Iftitah which was recommended for recitation every night of the month of Ramadan. It was also stated: "Verily, angels listen to this supplication and ask for forgiveness of the sins of its reciter."

3. – Surat Al 'Imran 3:26.

4. – Surat al-Isra' (or Bani Isra'il) 17:85.

5. – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 352, hadith 1.
This tradition is also recorded in Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, ed. 'Ali Akbar al-Ghifari, 4th edition, Dar Mus'ab Dar at-Ta'aruf, Beirut, 1401 AH, vol. 67, hadith 1. [Trans.]

6. – Mafatih al-Jinan, The 15 Whispered Prayers, "The Whispered Prayer of the Rememberers".

7. – See Surat al-Ma'idah 5:112-115. [Trans.]

8. – Surat al-Shu'ara' 26:78-81.

9. – Surat al-Fatihah 1:6.

10. – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 46, section 5, p. 78, hadith 75.

11. – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 90, p. 154, section 9, hadith 111.

12. – Mafatih al-Jinan, "Imam al-Husayn's ('a) Supplication on the Day of 'Arafah."

13. – Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 160.

14. – Surat al-Baqarah 2:9.

15. – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 130, section 63, hadith 7.

16. – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 2, p. 90, section 14, hadith 14.

17. – See Surat al-Ma'idah 5:112-115. [Trans.]

18. – See Surat al-Anbiya' 21:61. [Trans.]

19. – The abbreviation, "atfs" stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, 'ajjalallahu ta'ala farajahu a-sharif [may Allah, the Exalted, expedite his glorious advent], which is invoked after mentioning the name of Imam al-Mahdi (atfs).

20. – A mutawatir hadith is one which has been reported by so many different chains of transmission that such a number of narrators in every generation would normally not be able to agree on fabricating a tradition without the fact of its fabrication becoming known. [Trans.]

21. – For further information about the idea of guardianship [wilayah] and the guardian [wali], see Murtada Mutahhari, Waliha wa Wilayatha (Qum, 1355 AH/1975) which was translated into English by Mustajab Ansari under the title Master and Mastership (Karachi: Islamic Seminary Publication, 1980) available online at https://www.al-islam.org/master-and-mastership-ayatullah-murtadha-mutahhari [1] and by Yahya Cooper as Wilayah: The Station of the Master (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1982) available online at

https://www.al-islam.org/wilayah-station-master-ayatullah-murtadha-mutah... [2] [Trans.]

22. – Surat al-A'raf 7:138.

23. – Surat Ta Ha 20:88.

24. – People of the Book [ahl al-kitab]: the respectful title given to the Jews and Christians in the Qur'an. [Trans.]

25. – Surat al-Baqarah 2:146; Surat al-An'am 6:20.

26. – Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 16, p. 406, hadith 1.

27. – It is worthy of note that this series of speeches was delivered prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

28. – Surat al-An'am 6:65.

29. – Mafatih al-Jinan, part of Du'a' Nudbah.

30. – Ibid., part of Ziyarat Sahib al-Amr ('atfs).

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