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Some Other Deeds of the Holy Month of Ramadhan

After heart's cleansing and purification with a true repentance which are the most desirable and essential deeds of this month; purification and cleansing of eatables, clothing, housing, automobile ...etc. and payment of khums[1] is most desirable and compulsory, because, it has been mentioned in the traditions that Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), has established (khums) for the purification of man's wealth. Therefore, from these consideration it is up to the watchful wayfarer to pay his Khums dues at the beginning of the month so that his food, clothing and other acts become lawful (halal).

In traditions, the point which has been emphasized a lot is that the Holy month of Ramadhan is the beginning of the new year, and if it was passed well and good, the entire year will pass well and good. From this consideration, those prudent wayfarers who believe that a human being's deeds and actions influence his characteristics and affairs; and further, this influence is more effective especially during the Holy Month of Ramadhan because it is the beginning of the year, and all the future happenings of good and evil during the coming year are predestined in this Holy Month. Therefore, one should make himself readied for performance of special deeds of this month, especially for the deeds of its first day and should not neglect the recital of most famous and exalted prayer consisting of most sublime themes in the tradition quoted from Imam al-Sadiq [a] in the book of Iqbal.

1. Comments About the Etiquette of Prayer

Of course, in reciting this prayer and other such relevant prayers the important thing for a prudent wayfarer is that after having the conditions of the prayer and paying due regards to its special etiquette and codes, it should be recited in a manner the way it deserves to be.

By my own soul, the one who appreciates the worth and merit of this prayer would not be least negligent in their proper recital, and would appreciate that those who have taught us this prayer, what a great favour they have done. And what a great favour Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), has done in assigning

these saintly persons as our leaders, that if they were not there and would not have taught us the manners and etiquette of prayer recital, then how and where could we have learned the etiquette of speaking to Him, the code of prayers, and the manner of thanking him?

And, if they were not there, then how we could have learned about our negligence and shortcomings as regards to the codes of servanthood, and our helplessness in offering appreciation and thanks? If they were not there and would have not taught us all this, then wouldn't we have been living in state of degradation, ignorance, negligence, deviation, and brutality?

The most important condition is that the supplicant reciting such noble supplications during such blessed occasion must understand what is he saying; neither his inner-self should be in contradiction with his outward appearance, nor his self should contradict his tongue, whatever he utters with his tongue should also be confirmed by his heart, should not be a claimant and liar, and his affairs and characteristics should not perceive his sayings as lies.

By bringing upon tongue and chewing up the phrases and sentences, which are not confirmed by his heart, rather are perceived as lies, should not treat Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), as a plaything or mockery because, speaking to Him in this manner in accordance with the decree of reason and wisdom is close to blasphemy, rather if one thinks well, it is nothing but blasphemy.

In front of Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), whose vast infinite knowledge comprehends everything, and who is more aware, than our own selves about all of our exoteric and esoteric affairs – do we stand, stretch our hands in prayer, and open our tongue for offering excuse by saying the following:

"O' Allah! Thou commanded me not to sin and transgress, instead I most boldly trampled Your command and stood up in rebellion against You, but in spite of all that You preserved my honour by not exposing my shameful deeds and insulting me before others."

But in spite of saying the above, if our hearts do not believe, our action and deeds do not confirm and certify whatever is uttered by our tongues; crying and shedding tears, earthiness, and humility, which are the prerequisite for uttering the above are not shown by us, or worst than that, we consider our self as righteous and faithful servants, or feel sad regarding what Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), has done with us...etc. Then with such state of affairs would it be appropriate and decent to utter such words by tongue? Do any wisdom and thinking regard such a behaviour reasonable? And the one who behaves in this manner and speaks so, what does he deserve?

Let us take a pause in order to better discover our being ungrateful, unthankful, and disobedient. Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), who is our Lord and Master, has invited us for a feast of His benevolence and generosity allowing us to sit near His favourite saints, i.e., He has required us to stand before Him for benediction and supplication in order to be benefited from the table of His blessings and benevolence. Before hand, He has dispatched prophets and imams, so that they could teach us the codes and etiquette of attaining His feast, sitting upon the table of His blessing, uttering words with Him,

and standing before Him for supplication and praise.

Now if, in spite of all this, we stood before Him in benediction and supplication and opened our tongues to utter words with Him, but if our heart was occupied in some other things, our mind and self kept thinking about other affairs, and more often about things which Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), regards as His enemy, remaining amused in those thoughts to the extent, that even forgetting the words uttered to Him, becoming completely naive as to with whom are we talking to and what is being sought? What is going to be the result of such ignorance and negligence?

In this stage, wouldn't He proclaim: O' you poor deviated ones! Didn't you feel ashamed in treating my invitation so lightly with mockery? Didn't you feel ashamed by the way you talk to Me, that if your own servants, subordinates, and even your enemies would have treated you in this manner, you would have never excused them. Didn't you feel sorry for treating Me so lightly, even lighter than your own servants? Because, you will feel ashamed and would avoid to treat them in this manner, but don't feel ashamed with Me. If such reprimand is issued for us from Him would we have any reply?

Glory to Allah (*Subhan Allah*)! Indeed He possesses wonderful patience and great forbearance, that were it not for his patience, forbearance, greatness, benevolence, and kindness, what would He have done with us for such impudence? Except that he would have shown outburst of his wrath against us, and would have thrown us out from His blessed threshold forever, by confining us into the most horrible and darkest chambers of Hell, in most wretched and humiliating disgrace being inflicted with Hell's most severe punishments?

Yes! Majority of the people in their supplications behave in such manner, their heart being closed by the lock of negligence, they stand in prayer speaking to Him with the tip of their tongue, while having their heart and soul occupied somewhere else; even worst than this are those, who apparently open their tongue for asking pardon admitting their shortcomings, sins, transgressions, and disobedience, but inside their heart they regard themselves as pious, righteous, and faithful servants, and whatever Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), has done with them about their destinies – they are not pleased with it. A step further than these are those who with their engaging in false supplications, which they do not believe in their heart, make mockery of prayer and benediction. Of course, I don't imagine that such type of persons could be found among Muslims.

Unfortunately, that is the way it is, we stand in prayer in the state of ignorance and negligence, uttering words with the tip of our tongue, while continuously thinking about our worldly affairs from the bottom of our hearts. But as regards to what is He going to do with us and our disobedience with this false supplication and negligence, is described in the following narration in which the Imam [a] points out in the first day prayer of the Month as follows:

"He does not question us for being disobedient, does not expose us, covers up our faults, makes our good deeds apparent, does not deprive us from His blessings and favours, does not hand us over to

others, closes his eyes from our faults, does not close the gate of repentance upon us, encourages us to offer repentance for the second time and many more times, promises us acceptance and rewards, treats us the same way as he treats his pious righteous servants, prevents others from insulting and exposing us, and becomes angry upon them if they admonish us, does not turn off His affectionate and kind eyes from us, and does not like to see us in the state of degradation."

Pause and ponder when you recite this prayer of the first day of the Holy month, uttering the following sentence by your tongue:

"I am so hungry for Your love that I would never become satisfied; I am so thirsty for Your friendship that I would never become quenched."

Do you keep a little bit of it within your heart, whatever is being uttered? Do you have any trace of this friendship in your heart, which is being claimed by your tongue? Do you indeed desire meeting Him in the bottom of your heart? If you are really His sincere friend then inevitably you must be infatuated for meeting Him; also, the separation from Him must be painful and you must remain in the state of restlessness and anxiety until your eyes become illuminated your with your beloved's sight. Here it is that Imam [a] after recital of the above, in a sentence saturated with ardent desire, anxiousness, and awaiting says:

"How much infatuated I am for meeting the one Who sees me, but I can't see him."

Yes! It is easy to talk, and uttering very good phrases or sentences with the tongue does not require least trouble (or in other words it does not cost any tax), but whatever is being uttered by the tongue, believing it by heart and having no contradiction between our inner and outer selves is something indeed extremely difficult. And whatever is being uttered by the tongue, having committed to it and paying due respect to all the relevant conditions, codes, and etiquette is indeed difficult. Simply compiling beautiful sentences with the tip of tongue and claiming Lord's friendship is something, and with sincerity being infatuated by soul, being His friend is something entirely a different matter.

Are not the friends, seekers, lovers, and infatuated ones of Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), such as have been described by the Imam[a] in this very prayer of the first day:

"Those who are not pleased only with fasting during day and engaging in night-vigil, rather desire to sacrifice their most precious and dearest thing for Him; want to give up their all possessions; are ready to tolerate the most severe hardships, to walk through the piercing spears, and to embrace the swords and hatchets with open arms; dyeing their hairs and face with their own blood, and falling upon the dirt with their bodies torn to pieces."

And look whether do you possess a little bit of such passions and ardent desires within you? If you are such, congratulations and thousand of congratulations be upon you, but if you are among those who even regard day-fasting and night-vigilance as uncomfortable, then what to say about having zeal and

anxiousness for such things in their hearts.

Therefore, lest you act impudently and shamefully and stand before Allah, (the Glorious, the Exalted), who controls all of your affairs and who sees things much more clearly than yourself in prayer, while lying and uttering things from the tip of your tongue, which you do not believe by heart as well as are not committed to them.

Another thing which a prudent wayfarer should not forget during the first night of this holy month is resorting (*tawassul*) to the impeccable ones (*Ma'sumin*)2 in that night. It is up to him to stretch his hand sincerely towards the threshold of those exalted saintly personalities, should present their blessed, glorious, and beautiful faces as intercessors for our unblessed and polluted (with sins), faces, thus, looking towards the Lord through their splendour and magnanimity because, it is not appropriate and desirable to look towards Him directly with a face blackened with sins, and cheeks rusted with transgressions. Instead, he should plead with them, should open his tongue full of grief and anxiety, should request them to act as intercessors for pleading his case.

It might be that their hearts would become soft with love for him, with their greatness they might accept him by acting as his intercessors as well as might request Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), that may He accept him and bestow upon him the grace and favour so that he would become the way his Lord desires him to be. Because, Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), being the most Compassionate and most Merciful, undoubtedly would accept the plea and intercession of those compassionate and exalted personalities, especially, those Sinless noble ones, to whom He himself has taught generosity and compassion as well as has allowed them to act as intercessors.

Yes! By resorting sincerely, truly and honestly to these noble exalted personalities one may attain such gains, prosperity, and salvation which can't even be attained through engaging in worship for one complete year. Therefore, it is up to us to make our best endeavours, by treating the time as our best available opportunity; we should extend our hands towards their threshold; by offering salutations and thanks should open our tongues for needs, and saying the following sincerely and honestly:

O' my masters! Tonight you are the support and shelter of everyone, you are the most exalted and generous among all exalted and generous ones, you like inviting guests and want to be generous towards them; Also Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), has commanded you to provide refuge and shelter for the wretched and unsheltered people; now here is one of the Allah's unsheltered servants who has came to attend your as well as Allah's feast; has attached his heart upon your support and well as Allah's support and hospitality; be hospitable and allow him to sit upon the table of your generosity and treat him in the following manner:

Consider him as your friend and supporter and do not deprive him from your best support and endeavours; do not deprive him from your prayer, backing, and intercession; ask Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), not to deprive him from His Forgiveness and Benevolence; shouldn't deprive him from His

mercy and compassion; then look at him with love and pleasure; becoming so happy and pleased with him that after that He should never become unhappy and angry with him, should regard him as His sincere friend and worthy servant....

O' my masters! Please beseech Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), to bestow upon me these things; He will accept your prayer and intercession, because your splendour and majesty, and your worth and prestige before Him is far greater than what could be perceived by the human mind and understanding.

I swear to you by your splendour and majesty, which Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), has bestowed upon you, to look towards me with kindness and do not deprive me from whatever I have desired; reward me more than whatever I have asked in accordance with your generosity; don't look upon my worthlessness, disobedience, and deviations, because the generosity of the generous ones and the hospitality shown by the exalted ones are in accordance with their generosity and exaltedness and not in proportion with the worth and merit of their recipients.

O' my masters! You are the ones who have taught greatness to the exalted ones, generosity to the generous ones, and benevolence to the benevolent ones; if there is a discussion about the benevolence you are the first and the last as well as the roots and the branches; if there is a discussion about the magnanimity and greatness you are their fountainhead; you are the ones who never returned any one hopeless and empty-handed, as you yourself have proclaimed:

"Your generosity and reward like rain water pour upon the righteous ones as well as upon the bad ones, likewise;" saturate me with the rain of your generosity, do not deprive me from the rain of your generosity, do not deprive me from the pouring of your love because I am thirsty for your generosity and hungry for your love and affection; you don't like that your guests who have taken shelter in your threshold and have tied their hopes upon your benevolence should remain thirsty and hungry.

O' my masters! If you will deprive me from your hospitality I will die with hunger under your shelter sitting upon the side of your tablecloth. No! No! You wouldn't treat me in this manner; you are not the ones who would deprive the guests from your hospitality so that he would return heart-broken, hopeless and hungry. Never! Never!

Yes! It is up to the prudent wayfarer to mobilize all his talents, expertise, strength, and endeavours for resorting towards them; crying and shedding tears, pleading, and requesting for intercession and support with these exalted saintly personalities; so that through resorting for one hour he may earn the prosperity for one year, and through such insignificant efforts might achieve huge gains. Also, he should not forget to repeat this resorting and crying every morning and evening, and by sending salutations (upon them) everyday and resorting to them every night should strengthen his commitment towards them.

The prudent wayfarer who wants to perform recommended deeds (*mustahabbat*) and supererogatory prayers (*nafilah*), it would be much better for him first to review his situation, affairs, and work-load in order to find out whether he is in low, moderate, and high mood. After reviewing his situation then he

should select the proper program which is suitable for him.

One of the recommended acts which has been emphasised a lot in traditions is to perform supererogatory prayers, especially one thousand ra'kats supererogatory prayer which must be offered during this month.[3] If the wayfarer's spiritual condition and mood allow him to perform this special prayer what other grace better than this can he ask for? He should perform it and should not forget its relevant supplications, because those supplication contain very delicate and sublime themes, which are not found in other supplications.

Of course, he must do his best to recite these prayers sincerely and honestly with the heart's presence and concentration, in a state of being fully awakened, so that his prayers shouldn't be a thing uttered only from tip of his tongue and chewing of words, rather it should indeed be a confidential and humming communication with his Creator. And truly how much blessing and happiness it contains – the supplicant whose condition testifies his saying; whatever he utters by tongue is also believed by his heart, whatever he brings upon his lips comes out from the depth of his soul, and whatever he says also possesses it.

Such supplicant undoubtedly is righteous, acceptable, and dear in Allah's sight. For example: the supplicant who opens his tongue feeling sorry and ashamed, speaks about his state of helplessness and wretchedness, disobedience and ungratefulness, deviation and wickedness, sins and transgressions, boldness and lowliness, and considers himself among the condemned ones, as has been expressed in some of such supplications:

"That he himself admits that his heart is so much full of filth and his sins are so severe that if the earth would have known about them it would have swallowed him; if the mountains would have learned they would have fallen upon his head; and if the rivers would have become knowledgeable about it, they would have caught him in their whirlpool ....."

It could be derived that if a supplicant says such things, and if these feelings come from the depths of his inner soul and his heart believes in it, even if one happens to be Satan, would become righteous, what to say about a believer and Muslim. Especially, as has been mentioned in parts of these very prayers, that his fear, anxiety, and danger should be because of divine wrath and not because of Hell's punishment.

Yes! If the supplicant in this state as well as in other blessed situations, which have been described in these supplications, whatever he brings upon his tongue also believes in it by his heart, undoubtedly would become righteous, would attain Allah's pleasure, thus, ascending towards the most exalted spiritual stations. But the wayfarer who does not find within himself the required zeal and motivation for performance of such recommended deeds, feels tired and lazy, should take a penetrating look within his heart, and must thoroughly scrutinize his state of affairs.

If he thinks that performance of worship and recommended deeds even if done without interest and willingness would result in his attaining the state of being zealous and happy, certainly he must do it and

should engage himself in worship and recommended deeds, lest Satan succeed in taking over his control, thus making him completely deprived from taking advantage of worship and recommended deeds.

Because if some one quits the worship and recommended deeds simply taking the excuse of being tired, and not having the required mood, gradually his affairs reach to the limits, whereby, he completely turns his face away from these deeds and worships, thus, becoming deprived from their advantages forever. While on the contrary, it has occurred quite often, that someone became engaged in performance of worships and recommended deeds in the beginning with unwillingness and not much inclination and motivation, but during their performance has attained the state of happiness and willingness far beyond than his expectations.

But if he realizes, that at present he is tired and exhausted, and if by quitting the performance of worship and recommended deeds at the moment will result in his attaining a better mood and willingness, later on, he should quit it and should not allow himself to become habituated in engaging in worship and recommended deeds in a state of being tired and unmotivated. Of course, he must watch himself so that his lazy and easygoing self does not trick him to quit the worship performed in the lazy mood with the hope of performing it later with willingness and motivation.

The most important deeds of this month are recital of the Holy Qur'an and supplications, and it is up to the prudent wayfarer to make his best efforts for their recital. Of course, instead of renouncing one of them completely, he should pay more attention towards the one which is more suitable with his mood and situation and brings more illumination and joy within his heart. He should not forget the supplications mentioned in the traditions as follows:

At the beginning of the first night of the Holy Month, should recite the prayer: “Ya 'Aliyyu ya Adheem”, which should then be recited after each prayer. Also one should recite the prayer of “Iftetah”, the famous morning (*sahar*) prayer: Allahuma inni asaaluka min Bahaika”, and especially, should not forget the prayer of “Abu Hamza al-Thimali”, in accordance with his mood and situation every night or at alternate nights, during the days should recite relevant prayers, and should not forget the recital of Friday supplications and attending the Friday Congregational Prayer.

In his prayers should beseech Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted) a lot for bestowing upon him the grace for appreciation of the Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr) and Night of Fitr, and during days and nights should pray a lot for the Imam of the Age - Imam Mahdi [a], by reciting the following:

“O' Allah! Please grant his wishes for himself, his progeny, followers, subjects, and the people who are under his guardianship or have some relationship with him. Please fulfill his wishes and let us see this fulfillment, and create a situation whereby the enemies feel scared. O' Allah, please let us join his most intimate followers and old friends, and send salutations and greetings upon him and his impeccable progeny. O' Thou, who are the most generous among the generous ones.”

Also, he should pray for parents, teachers, fellow brother believers, next of kin, neighbours, whoever has a right upon him, all the believers, and should include them in prayers which he makes for himself.

Another important deed of this month is to take bath (*ghusl*) during the first night, all the odd nights, and first day. It has been narrated in tradition that:

"Whoever undertakes a bath in a running water during the first night of the Holy Month, and pours at least thirty handfuls of water upon his head, would remain in the state of cleanliness (*taharat*) till the next Ramadhan."

And in another tradition taking bath in the above manner has been described as medicine for the whole year.

2. Comments About the Effects of Deeds

Perhaps acceptance of such narrations which contain matters requiring pause and thinking might be harder for some people and they might interpret them as being incorrect. Such behavior is nothing except not understanding properly about the actions and effects, especially, if they happen to be smaller and insignificant. Otherwise from the point of view of origin and basis what is the difference between the effect of fire which every one believes and does not feel surprised than the effects of deeds and actions? Or what is the difference between the effects of movement of heavenly bodies than the effects of action and movement of human beings?

Except that, since human beings have heard a lot about the effects of movement of heavenly bodies, and have become used to it, they do not feel astonished and surprised, but since they have heard and known very little about the effects of human actions and movements, and are not familiar with it, feel surprised, astonished, and are at war.

Because the less people know about a thing, and the less they are familiar with it, the more antagonised and disgusted they are. And the more knowledgeable and familiar about a matter they are, the less antagonised and disgusted they feel. How come no one feels antagonised about the impact of great and wonderful words or orders relevant to world affairs?

Didn't sometimes a word, for example, a word uttered by a tyrant emperor produce thousands of effects like devastation, murders, bloodshed, and plundering ...etc., that their remnant effects remained for quite some time or forever? Why no one rejects the effects of these things? Is it not because they understand these effects and can discover the secret and mysteries of these things through their faculty of reason and mind, therefore, accept them without any antagonism?

The prophets and the saints who possess a better sense of recognition than our own senses and whose sight is much sharper than our own, see, identify, and report to us the effect and impact of things like taking bath (*ghusl*) which cannot be seen and identified by us.

Therefore, whoever believes in Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), divine prophets, and considers them as His righteous and exalted servants, should not show any slight doubt about the traditions which have been reported by them, even though they cannot comprehend them through their sense of limited appreciation. Because contradictions and doubts shown about their sayings is a branch of blasphemy which is not compatible with their righteous belief.

Also, it must be understood that to accept and obey these traditions and relevant commands which are far deeper than to be comprehended by our limited sense of perception and level of understanding deserve more worth and merit as compared to acceptance and obedience of those traditions and commands which could be easily understood by our knowledge and thinking. Likewise the sincerity relevant to such deeds which are beyond comprehension through human mind is far superior than the sincerity related to other usual deeds. Therefore, from these considerations we should not act negligently in their performance or may wish to quit them, instead, we should make our best endeavours in their commitments much more than the performance of other deeds.

Yes! the Holy Qur'an and traditions have confirmed the authenticity of the effects of ablutions (*wadhu*) and bath (*ghusl*) upon the behavior and affairs of human beings, and it was from this consideration that in proportion to their effects, some of them were made compulsory while others were proposed as recommended deeds.

From some of the traditions it can be derived that some of these rituals of cleaning (*taharat*) contain celestial illumination which would be beneficial to their owners especially on the Judgement Day. In accordance with some of the traditions, they possess celestial physical existence like the physical existence of human beings and things, who would become manifested to their own masters, would approach them and would release them from Hell's punishments as well as from other hardships on the Judgement Day. It has been mentioned about a perfect gnostics that his celestial illumination of ablutions (*noor al-wadhu*) became manifested for him in this world, and he had seen it in the form of a wonderful illumination.

Yes! There are plenty of traditions confirming the actions and deeds of a human being acquiring features, body, life, conscience, and awareness in the hidden world; they visit their masters, speak to them, become affectionate with them, interceded for them, and encourage them reducing their fear...etc. And the one who believes in Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), the Holy Prophet [s], the Judgement Day, and believes whatever has been told about the Psychic-world (*Barzakh*), must also believe about such effects of human's actions and deeds which have been reported in traditions.

3. Fast-breaking (Iftar)

Earlier it was described that in accordance with their intentions and wishes the fast observers could be classified into few categories, here it should be added that also their fast-breaking differs and could be classified into following categories based upon their intentions and wants.

1. The one who considers fasting only as a mandatory obligation – a burden upon his shoulders – and in order to be freed from Hell's punishment or attaining Paradise, somehow tolerates it till fast–breaking, as well as during fasting limits himself to the extent of renunciation of eating, drinking, and other jurisprudential limitations whose violation would result in the fast's cancellation, inevitably his fast–breaking too would be feeling relieved from the burden of obligation assigned upon his shoulders, escaping from the pain of hunger and thirst, getting rid from the limitations of fasting, and being able to be benefited from the pleasures of eating and drinking.

2. The one who observes fast for the sake of Allah's pleasure and attaining higher, exalted spiritual stations, and not simply renouncing eating and drinking and observing other jurisprudential limitations responsible for the fast's cancellation would abstain from every forbidden and undesirable deed, after fast–breaking, would allow upon himself only a portion of things renounced during fasting like eating and drinking, but would continue to abstain from a portion of other acts and deeds. His aim from eating and drinking in addition of pleasure would be – that Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), has permitted their consumption, and because of the fact that eating and drinking increases man's strength, thus, making him better readied for worship and enlightenment, which further provides a background for obedience of divine commands.

3. The one whose fasting has been described superior than the abstinence already mentioned – is the abstinence from whatsoever prevents him from Allah's remembrance even thoughts and ideas which are perfectly legitimate and allowable. Inevitably the fast–breaking of such a person will be for the sake of Allah, in the path of Allah and with the remembrance of Allah; neither he would eat anything with the intention of enjoying its taste, nor he would eat more than his requirement, also this would not prevent him from Allah's remembrance.

Now let us take a pause and think that if our fast–breaking, eating, and drinking are done for the sake of pleasure, especially, if they are accompanied with over–eating, then this will be tantamount to an animal act, of course, if it was arranged through lawful means and lawful income, and if it consists of forbidden means and forbidden money, then in that case it will be even lower and degrading. But this same fast–breaking, eating, and drinking, if is done with the intention of obedience of divine command, for having the required physical strength in order to be able to engage in worship, thus, attaining Allah's nearness, then in that case it will tantamount to the deeds of prophets, imams, and angels.

Therefore, we must be careful and must strive that our eating and drinking should be like those of the prophets and imams and not like those of the animals and beasts, because, the prophets and imams even though enjoy eating and drinking as per the dictates of their human nature, nevertheless, pursue far deeper intentions and objectives.

As their worldly lives, utilization from worldly bounties, and looking at world all indicate something very different, i.e., even though these exalted personalities live in this same world, and in accordance with their human nature, inevitably take advantage from world's bounties, but their worldly lives and utilization

of worldly bounties and pleasures never make them negligent towards Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), His remembrance, seeing Him and thanking Him.

Because they do not look upon worldly bounties and material pleasures from the point of view of their being just bounties and pleasures, rather they see in them the manifestation of Allah's Glory, Affection, Providence and Mercy and indeed, see Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), Himself and recite the following verse:

"I see Your manifestation in everything."

And the following:

"When I look at the ocean, I see You in the ocean,

When I look at the desert, I see You in the desert.

Wherever I look at the plain and mountain, I see the manifestations of your elegant stature in them."

– Baba Tahir

That is the way they see the manifestation of Allah's glory in the universe, and it is because of their seeing Him, in the world and its bounties that never makes their eyes tired, instead gives them pleasure and joy. Yes! Their pleasure and joy from worldly manifestations, and their point of view regarding material phenomenon is nothing except the above-mentioned interpretation. If they are happy with the world it is because of the fact that they see this world's happiness from Him, and if they look at the world with affection – it is because of seeing their beloved's glory in the mirror of this world, as the famous mystic poet Sa'di has said:

"I am happy with the world because I see this world's happiness from Him,

I am the lover of this whole world because this whole world is from Him."

And if they sit to enjoy the beauty of the world's garden, it is because of their plucking the flowers of His glory, as has been described by the most celebrated mystic poet Hafiz al-Shirazi (R.A.):

"What is my desire from looking at the world's garden?

It is to pluck the flowers of Your glory through the eyes."

Hafiz al-Shirazi[4]

4. Eating Before the Dawn (Suhur)

Eating before the dawn is a recommended deed of fasting, and it has been narrated in a tradition:

“Eat before dawn even if it be only a drink of water, because Allah sends salutations upon those who eat before dawn for fasting.”

During awakening for eating before dawn, in addition to the recitals of invocations (*dhikr*) and special prayers, recital of Surah al-Qadr (Power) carries plenty of reward, and it has been narrated:

“Every believer who observes fast, and at dawn (*sahar*), and fast-breaking (*iftar*) recites Surah al-Qadr (Power), during the period dawn and fast-breaking is like the martyr who is wallowing in his own blood.”

Of course, we should keep in mind that our aim for eating at dawn is to perform a recommended religious act, as well as it provides us required strength in order to enable us to observe the fast.

5. Prayer for Understanding the Nights of Qadr and Fitr

One of the most important prayers and requests which a fast observer should not forget, and from the very beginning of the Holy Month every night, day, and at every available opportunity should beseech Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), is to bestow upon him the divine grace for worshipping, servitude, and night-vigil during the nights of Qadr and Fitr.

And if a fast observer beseeches Him honestly and sincerely undoubtedly He will respond to his request and would not deny him his desire for having the divine grace - the grace which is so great that deserves merit - and the one who has trust in Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), and the Holy Qur'an, in order to be sure for its attainment would be ready to spend that entire year in worshipping, night-vigil and asceticism. Did not the Holy Qur'an consider that night better than thousand months which are longer than eighty years? Would not by efforts and endeavours of one year, he accomplish the bonus and reward of eighty years?

Which is indeed a great profit, what to say to accomplish that same profit of eighty years during a period of less than a month. From this consideration, if someone does not have even so much courage to pray and request for the divine grace of comprehension of the Night of Power (*Lailatul-Qadr*) during the span of approximately twenty days (from the beginning of the Holy Month until the Night of Power), then he should realize that his heart is sick and his faith is unstable, and therefore it is up to him to seek the treatment for his heart's sickness and faith's instability. Whatever has been said about the Night of Power (Lailatul Qadr) is also valid for the day and night of Eid-ul-Fitr because Imam al-Sajjad has narrated that:

“This night (Night of Fitr) is not less valuable than the Night of Power (*Lailatul-Qadr*).”

Yes! Allah's devoted servants whose desire and courage is that through their prayer, worship, and preparation reach to the point whereby their esoteric eyes become opened during these nights so that they could witness the descent of angels, (Archangel Gabriel), and destinies descend from the Celestial Kingdom towards the earth during this night. And as compared to those great ones are we who do not

possess even the courage to pray and request for the divine grace of worshipping during these nights.

6. Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr) and Appreciation of its Merits

It is true that we do not know exactly, as to which night is the Night of Power (*Lailatul-Qadr*), but this should not prevent us from praying and requesting for its comprehension, of course to identify as to which night is the Night of Power, it has been narrated that from the beginning of the Holy Month till the night of twenty third, Surah-44, al-Dukhan should be recited one hundred times or Surah-97, al-Qadr should be recited one thousand times every night.

Also, for better comprehension of the Night of Power (*Lailatul Qadr*), there is a narration in the book of Iqbal, whose authenticity although is questionable, nevertheless, because of the profound importance of the Night of Power (*Lailatul-Qadr*), to act in accordance with the tradition, assuming its authenticity as correct would be reasonable. The summary of the tradition is as follows:

Ibn Abbas has quoted from the Holy Prophet [s]:

"I teach you a prayer (*salat*) that if you performed it, you will see the Night of Power (*Lailatul Qadr*) every night, twenty times or even more in the following manner:

Four rak'at prayer with one salutation (*Salam*), in every rak'at one time Surah al-Fatihah (the Opening), three times Surah al-Kafirun (the Disbelievers) and three times Surah al-Ikhlas (the Sincerity). After finishing salutation, recite the *tasbeeh* (praise) of Fatimah al-Zahra [a] thirteen times, and recite the invocation *Astaghfirullah* (Oh Allah, Forgive me) thirteen times.

The aim of the narration is not explicitly clear for us, and perhaps what is meant by seeing twenty times or even more Night of Power could be, that for someone like this, there is a reward, which is equivalent to the pleasure of seeing the twenty Nights of Power or even more. For example, it has been narrated that the reward of recital of one praise (*tasbeeh*) is greater than the Prophet Solomon's [a] Kingdom. But the interpretation of those who think that the reward of this prayer (*salat*) is equivalent to the reward of worship and night-vigil of twenty or even more Nights of Power (*Lailatul-Qadr*) is not correct.

7. Witnessing of the Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr)

If it is asked what is meant from seeing the Night of Power (*Lailatul-Qadr*) and its pleasure? The reply is - that seeing the Night of Power means witnessing, whatever is being revealed during that night, seeing the descent of angels and destination of affairs, exactly as they are seen by the Imam of the Age (*Wali al-Asr* [*a*]) during this night.

Here it should be briefly explained that Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), has created between the 'Worlds of Spirits' (*Arwah*) and the 'World of Bodies' (*Ajsam*) another world known as the 'Psychic World' (*Barzakh or Mithal*) which neither possesses the darkness and narrowness of the World of Bodies nor

has the brightness and vastness of the World of Spirits. It is neither like the World of Spirits which is completely separate and abstract from the darkness of matter, confinement of physical bodies, and limits of quantity, nor it is like the 'Material World' which is completely confined into the darkness of matter, confinement of physical bodies and quantitative limits, rather it is free from the darkness of matter, but still is confined to the limits of shape and quantity, it is a world free from matter but with shape and quantity and in itself contains many worlds.

Every existence which exists in the 'Material World', in addition to the physical and material existence of his own world, also possesses different kinds of existences in the 'Psychic Worlds'. And every existence before his being created in this 'Material World' possessed relevant existence in the 'Psychic World' and before that in the World of Spirits in its appropriate form. In other words every existence, first exists in the hidden divine treasures as has been described in the following verse:

"And there is not a thing but with us are stores thereof.

And We send it not down save in appointed measure."

– Holy Qur'an (15:21)

From there this existence descends into the 'Psychic World' and from there, through divine angels further descends into the 'Material World', i.e. whatever exists in this 'Material World' was descended from the 'Psychic World' and whatever exists in the 'Psychic World' was descended from the hidden divine treasures.

Therefore, every human being whatever destiny or gains he possesses, are from these three worlds; although, majority of the people are negligent about their own 'Psychic' and 'Hidden Worlds', and are not even aware of their negligence, i.e., they neither know about the existence of these hidden Worlds nor are they aware that they themselves the possess existence in these worlds, except those upon whom Allah (Glorious, the Exalted), has bestowed His special grace to recognize them and their selves, and through the path of self-recognition could also recognize their psychic and spiritual hidden existences.

Because the reality of human self is rooted in the Spiritual-World, therefore, from this consideration, the one who has received the divine grace, is able to remove the material curtain from his spirit and self, thus, seeing the self's reality, without matter, in the psychic from, and may go even further deeper than this stage, whereby being able to see the spiritual reality of his self without any shape. Such recognition of the self is the meaning of the following narration quoted from the Commander of [a] the Faithful Imam 'Ali:

"Whoever has identified his self in reality has recognised his Creator."

Therefore, only those who have discovered the reality of their selves in this manner may truly appreciate the link and interface between the self's identification (*khud shanasi*) and Allah's identification (*khuda*

shanasi).

It will be sufficient to conclude this explanation at this point, and would be appropriate to return to the earlier discussion. It should be added that from the traditions it can be derived that commands, and destinations for every year, i.e., sustenance, provisions, age, and one year lives of all worldly and earthly creatures are assigned during the Night of Power and through the divine angel are descended to this 'Material World', and the one who is Allah's Vicegerent (*Khalifatullah*) upon the earth sees and identifies these descent of destinies upon earth, i.e. it becomes clearly manifested upon him, and this very manifestation and seeing and identifying the descent of destinies upon earth though angels is called seeing the Night of Power and the joy and ecstasy felt by the seer, is the result of this manifestation, which could only be described by those who have experienced such phenomenon, and perhaps seeing of the Kingdom of Heaven (*Malakut*) by Prophet Abraham [a] which has been mentioned in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an might resemble such manifestations.

"So also did We show Abraham the power and laws of the heavens and the earth."

Holy Qur'an (6:75)

8. Inviting Others for Fast-breaking (Iftar) and Acceptance of Their Invitations

One of the most esteemed etiquette of this month is to invite a fast-observer for fast breaking (*iftar*), whose profound reward as described by the Holy Prophet [s] in the Sermon of Sha'baniyah, was mentioned earlier. Of course here too like other deeds and worships, what is more important is the sincerity of the deeds, and the one who wishes to perform this act must strive that his aim and intention should be only for Allah's pleasure as well as to follow divine etiquette and manners regarding this month. Has not Allah invited his servants for a feast in this month and Himself taken the responsibility of their reception and hospitality?

Therefore, to be host and to invite others for fast-breaking (*iftar*) and food at dawn (*Suhur*) are divine acts and etiquette). Allah forbid that one should perform these acts with the intention of hypocrisy, egotism, publicity, and even for the sake of the reward in the hereafter, or should perform these things because of the influence of following local customs and prevailing etiquette of the society. And since, how to give *iftar*, type of food, how to treat the guests, who should be invited, etc., all are effective as far as the aim and degree of sincerity or hypocrisy of the host are concerned, therefore, while beseeching Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted), for help he should be careful and pay attention towards all these details and in their selection nothing should interfere except Allah's pleasure.

Similarly whenever one accepts other's fast-breaking invitation, lest in acceptance of his invitation nothing should interfere except sincerity and Allah's pleasure, and in attainment of this sincerity, one should make his best endeavours, because, quite often it might happen, that by sincere acceptance of a

believer's invitation and sincerely sharing the table with a fellow Muslim one may have access to such huge rewards and profits which cannot be achieved by worshipping of several years or deeds.

Because, what is more heavier than everything else in the acceptance of deeds is this very sincerity and cleansing and not the abundance and frequency. Was not it that Satan's thousand years of worship in acceptance of his deed was weightless but one single repentance of Adam [a] with sincerity was responsible in his attaining divine acceptance, and therefore, it is because of this reason that righteous Allah's servants strive their best for attaining sincerity and purity in their deeds, and not for their repetition and abundance.

1. Khums: According to Shi'i school of thought, Khums is to be levied in an equitable manner on all agricultural and commercial profits and all natural resources whether above or below the ground – in short, on all forms of wealth and income. It applies equally to a green grocer with his stall outside the mosques as to the shipping or mining magnate. They must all pay one-fifth of their surplus income, after customary expenses are deducted to the Islamic ruler so that it enters the treasury [Tr].
2. Ma'sumin: In accordance with the Islamic traditions the week days have been assigned to the Ma'sumin – those possessing the quality of 'ismat (divinely bestowed freedom from error and sin) i.e., the Holy Prophet [s], His daughter Sayyida Fatimah al-Zahra [a] and the twelve Imams [a] as follows: 1. Saturday Prophet Muhammad [s] 2. Sunday Imam Ali and Sayyida Fatimah al-Zahra [a] 3. Monday Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn [a] 4. Tuesday Imam al-Sajjad, Imam al-Baqir and Imam al-Sadiq [a] 5. Wednesday Imam al-Kadhim, Imam al-Rida, Imam al-Taqi and Imam al-Naqi [a] 6. Thursday Imam al Askari [a] 7. Friday Imam of the Age al-Mahdi [a] For detailed description of their ziyaraats, refer to Mafatih al-Jinan of Late Hajj Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi (R.A.) The night of the day means the night preceding the day, i.e., Friday night starts with the evening of Thursday and ends at the break of dawn on Friday [Tr].
3. Regarding how to offer one thousand rak'ats prayer and how much should be offered during each night, there are many traditions and one of the most authentic tradition has been mentioned in Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi's book (Mafatih al-Jinan)*,[Author]. * Mafatih al-Jinan: The standard manual of Shi'i devotion, containing the supplicatory prayers of Imams as well as formulae for recitation at particular times or visitation of the tombs of Imams [a] Its compiler Sheikh Abbas al-Qummi, was a scholar of vast learning who died in Najaf in 1359/1940 [Tr].
4. Hafiz al-Shirazi: The supreme master of Persian lyrical poetry, 726/1325 792/1390. His verse is marked by a rich interplay between different levels of meaning – mystical and profane, personal, and political [Tr].

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