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The Special Banquet

This kind of invitation takes place on specific occasions. It manifests Allāh's (SwT) special Mercy which despite given to all, is accepted and benefited from, only by the believers. This kind of Mercy is also known as *al-rahmah al-rahīmiyyah*, which comes in the first verse of Sūrat al-Hamd: Bismillāh al-Rahmān *al-Rahīm*. Following are some noteworthy extensions (*masādiq*) of the special Divine banquet:

1. Special invitation in the Holy month of Ramadān

The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

...وَهُوَ شَهْرٌ دُعِيتُمْ فِيهِ إِلى ضِيَافَةِ اللّٰهِ...

"...It is a month in which you have been called to the Banquet of Allāh..."1

Imām Muhammad al-Bāqir ('a) is reported to have said:

...شَهْرُ رَمَضَانِ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانِ وَالصَّائِمُوْنَ فِيهِ أَضْيَافُ اللّٰهِ...

"...The month of Ramadān is the month of Ramadān, and those who are fasting therein are the guests of Allāh...2"

2. Special invitation during Hajj and ‘Umrah

Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ ضَيْفَ اللّٰهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَجُلٌ حَجَّ وَاعْتَمَرَ، فَهُوَ ضَيْفُ اللّٰهِ حَتّى يَرْجِعَ إِلى مَنْزِلِهِ...

“Surely the guest of Allāh is the one who performs hajj and ‘umrah until he returns back to his house...3”

3. Special Invitation during Prayer (salāh)

The above tradition of Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a) mentions the second kind of guest as:

...وَرَجُلٌ كَانَ فِي صَلاَتِهِ، فَهُوَ فِي كَنْفِ اللّٰهِ حَتَّى يَنْصَرِفَ...

“...and one who is in his prayers, and thus under Divine protection, until he leaves his prayer...4”

Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is also reported to have said:

مَنْ صَلَّى صَلاَةً فَرِيضَةً وَعَقَّبَ إِلى أُخْرَى فَهُوَ ضَيْفُ اللّٰهِ، وَحَقٌّ عَلَى اللّٰهِ أَنْ يُكْرِمَ ضَيْفَهُ...

“Whosoever prays an obligatory prayer and follows it with another, then he is a guest of Allāh, and it is upon Allāh to venerate His guest...5”

Imām Hasan al-Mujtabā (‘a) was known to say the following whenever he would reach the door of the mosque:

إِلٰهِي ضَيْفُكَ بِبَابِكَ، يَا مُحْسِنُ قَدْ أَتَاكَ الْمُسِيءُ، فَتَجَاوَزْ عَنْ قَبِيحِ مَا عِنْدِي

بِجَمِيلِ مَا عِنْدَك يَا كَرِيـمُ.

“O God, Your guest is at Your door; O Virtuous One, certainly the bad doer has come to you; so overlook the ugliness that I possess with the beauty that is with You, O Noble One.6”

This perhaps reveals that whenever one is in the mosque, one is in reality the special guest of All?h.

4. Special Invitation for those Obedient to All?h

Ibn Fahd al-Hill? in his *‘Uddat al-D?’?* narrates a sacred tradition (*al-had?th al-quds?*) in which Almighty All?h tells Prophet D?w?d (‘a) the following:

أَهْلُ طَاعَـتِي فِي ضِيَافَـتِي.

“The obedient people are My guests…7”

5. Special Invitation to the Rememberers of All?h

The Holy Prophet (s) in a sacred tradition is reported to have said:

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سُبْحَانَهُ يَقُولُ أَهْلُ ذِكْرِي فِي ضِيَافَتِي...

“And surely All?h, free is He from imperfections, Says: Those who remember Me are My guests….8”

6. Special Invitation to those who Study the Holy Qur’?n in the Mosque

The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

...مَا جَلَسَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْت مِنْ بُيُوت اللّٰهِ، يَدْرُسُونَ كِتَابَ اللّٰهِ، وَيَتَعَاطَوْنَهُ بَيْـنَهُمْ إِلاَّ كَانُوا أَضْـيَافَ اللّٰهِ تَعَالـى، وَأَظَلَّتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ بِأَجْنِحَتِهَا مَا دَامُوا فِيهِ، حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ...

"No people sit in a house from among the houses of Allah studying the Book of Allah and exchanging information between themselves, save that the Angels place a shade over them by their wings until they engage in talking about something else...9"

7. Special Invitation for one who Visits His Mu'min brother in the way of Allah

It is reported in a tradition that the Holy Prophet (s) said:

مَنْ زَارَ أَخَاهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ قَالَ اللّٰهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَهُ: أَنْتَ ضَيْفِي وَزَائِرِي، عَلَيَّ قِرَاكَ، وَقَدْ أَوْجَبْتُ لَكَ الْجَنَّةَ بِحُبِّكَ إِيَّاهُ...

"Whosoever visits his brother at his home, (in the way of Allah), Allah, the Invincible and Majestic, Says: 'You are My guest and My visitor, and I am bound to entertain you; and surely I have made Paradise obligatory on you through your love for him...10"

8. Special Invitation for the zi'ir (visitor) of Imam al-Husayn ('a)

In one of the *ziyarat* of Imam al-Husayn ('a), we are taught to address him saying:

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللّٰهِ: أَنَا ضَيْفُ اللّٰهِ وَضَيْفُكَ، وَجَارُ اللّٰهِ وَجَارُكَ، وَلِكُلّ ضَيْف وَجَارٍ قِرًى، وَقِرَايَ فِي هٰذَا الْوَقْت أَنْ تَسْأَلَ اللّٰهَ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالـى أَنْ يَرْزُقَنِي فَكَاكَ رَقَبَتِي مِنَ النَّارِ، إِنَّهُ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ...

"O Abu 'Abdillah, I am the guest of Allah and your guest as well, and Allah is my refuge; and you too are

my refuge; and for every guest and seeker of refuge there is a banquet; please therefore make my banquet be at this moment that you ask All□h to provide me with freedom from Hell Fire; surely He is All-Hearing of Prayer…11”

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1. al-Iqb□l, vol. 1, pg. 26.
2. Fad□’il al-Ashhur al-Thal□thah, pg. 123.
3. al-KhiS□l, vol. 1, pg. 127.
4. al-KhiS□l, vol. 1, pg. 127.
5. al-K□f□, vol. 2, pg. 241.
6. al-Anw□r al-Bahiyyah, pg. 87.
7. ‘Uddat al-D□‘□, pg. 252.
8. Irsh□d al-Qul□b, pg. 58.
9. Mustadrak al-Was□’il, vol. 3, pg. 313.
10. al-K□f□, vol. 2, pg. 176.
11. Maf□t□h al-Jin□n, pg. 292.

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