The Sacred Effusion
THE SACRED EFFUSION

Reflections on Ziyārat ʿĀshūrā of Sayyid al-Shuhadā al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī

Volume 1

Written by Shaykh Muhammad M Khalfan

Foreword by Dr. Hasnain Walji
Introduction by Shaykh Abbas M H Ismail
# Table of Contents

Foreword by Dr. Hasnain Walji ................................................................. i  
Preface by Shaykh Muhammad M Khalfan ......................................... v  
Introduction by Shaykh Abbas M H Ismail ....................................... xxvii

The Source of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ and Its Authenticity ............................. xlv

CHAPTER 1 ........................................................................................... 1  
Peace be on you, O entirely obedient servant of Allah

CHAPTER 2 ........................................................................................... 43  
Peace be on you, O son of the Messenger of Allah

CHAPTER 3 ........................................................................................... 61  
Peace be on you, O son of the Commander of the Faithful and  
the son of the leader of the successors

CHAPTER 4 ........................................................................................... 97  
Peace be on you, O son of Fāṭima – the leader of the women of  
the worlds

CHAPTER 5 ........................................................................................... 137  
Peace be unto you, O blood of Allâh and the son of the blood  
of Allâh

CHAPTER 6 ........................................................................................... 151  
The exceptionally unique

CHAPTER 7 ........................................................................................... 165  
Peace be unto you and unto the spirits who descended in your  
courtyard

CHAPTER 8 ........................................................................................... 207  
Upon you all I invoke the peace of Allâh forever, as long as I  
live and the night and day subsist
CHAPTER 9

O Aba 'Abdillâh, I swear by Allâh, the loss is great; and the calamity on us and all the enthusiasts of Islâm because of what befell you is great and severe. And the calamity that befell you is reckoned by the inhabitants of the Heavens as great and severe.
TRANSLITERATION TABLE

The method of transliteration of Islamic terminology from the Arabic language has been carried out according to the standard transliteration table mentioned below.

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- Free from imperfections and Exalted is He
- Prayers be upon him and his family
- Peace be upon him
- Peace be upon her
HUMBLE PRESENTATION

This nondescript humbly presents this work to Majma‘ al-Nurayn (Confluence of the Lights of Nubuwwa and Wilâya), Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima al-Zahrâ ﷺ

Muhammad M. Khalfan
Rajab al-Asamm 1430 AH [lunar]
Holy Proximity of Ḥaḍrat Ma‘ṣūma ﷺ
Qum al-Muqaddasa
Islamic Republic of Iran
Foreword

By Dr. Hasnain Walji

بِسْلَامَةِ الْحَمْنِ الرَّحِيم
In the Name of Allāh, the
Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Ziyārat al-‘Āshūrā: A potent antidote to reawaken our hearts.

This is an age where the very purpose of our existence has been obscured by the glut of materialism. We seem to be engulfed in a quagmire that deflects our energy away from his divinely intended purpose. Our true fulfillment can only come through inner light, when the heart is awakened to seek it’s divinely intended purpose.

This seminal work on Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā, aptly named The Sacred Effusion, by Shaykh Muhammad Khalfan, is a beacon for the seeker to seek the Sacred and the Divine. With his characteristic insight, the venerable Shaykh guides us to understand how Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā can be a potent antidote to reawaken our hearts to the real purpose of our existence and not remain a mere habitual or ritual recitation.

As one reads the words so passionately penned by the author, one
cannot help but visualize and ponder upon the origin of the very word *Ziyārat*, which originates from the word *zawr*, which means to deflect or turn away. The context becomes all the more evident when we read that the Arabic word *zūr* refers to a lie - because it deflects from the path of truth. This sets the scene for the reader to contextualize the very essence of the spiritual and moral aspects of the *Ziyārat* - that when visiting the shrines of the Ma'ṣūmin, or reciting the *Ziyārat* we momentarily ‘turn away’ from our worldly existence and gravitate towards an inner state of seeking none other than Allāh. The essence of the *Ziyārat*, as elucidated by the author is that the *za'ir* who recites the *Ziyārat* must imbibe the spirit and attain the cognizance of the sublimity of *Ziyārat* ‘Āshūrā to enable him to align himself with the spirit of the visited one.

The author eloquently elucidates that the crux of the *Ziyārat* ‘ Āshūrā are the concepts of al-Tawallī and al-Tabarrī. He writes:

> Besides its ample merits, it is a program of revolution for the sleeping masses. The crux of the *Ziyārat* is al-tabarrī’ and al-tawallî, which can correctly be translated as ‘fleeing from imperfection’ and ‘seeking perfection’, or in beautiful words of every Muslim: Lā ilāha illallāh - Besides Allāh - the Only Beloved, there is no other ilāh (beloved). The name Allāh exemplifies all the perfect attributes of the Divine Essence, which the human being has been molded to appreciate and naturally seek. The Holy Qur’ān says: ‘...the innate nature of Allāh, upon which the human beings were molded.’ (30:30). Therefore the *Ziyārat* in reality is a call to the unsullied innate disposition (fiṭra) of the human being.

The oft-repeated salutation of *Assālamu ʿAlayka Yā Abā ʿAbdillāh*, assumes an everlasting impression upon our minds when we read how we must manifest our intentions to unite with his lofty ideals, and in
cursing his opponents how we must demonstrate our revulsion at the worldly desires of his enemies. If we truly make that salutation with that understanding, it helps us align ourselves with the spirit of Imām al-Ḥusayn (a) and we have fulfilled and are true to the words we recite in the Ziyārat:

So I ask Allāh, who ennobled me by knowing you and knowing your friends, and enabled me to seek remoteness from your enemies, to place me in your company in this world and the Hereafter.

This allows us to seek nearness to Allāh through the Ziyārat rather than to be only motivated to gain personal benefits. Unquestionably, many traditions of the Aʿīma (a) promise us that by the recitation of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā our needs would be fulfilled. For example Imām Jaʿfar as-Ṣādiq (a) guided Safwān thus:

When you are confronted with some adversity, then seek redress of your grievances from Imām al-Ḥusayn (a) with this Ziyārat and Allāh never reneges on His word.

However, the real question that we are encouraged to ponder upon is “What is our real need that we should ask for?” It helps us create an awareness of our own selves so that we can assess the true value of our neediness. Cited is an inspiring example of asking for one’s real need is of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karim Ḥāiri, the founder of the Ḥawza of Qum. It is said that during the Ziyārat at the Ḥaram of Imām al-Ḥusayn (a) he was seen weeping and telling the Imām (a): “O dear master, I have become a mujtahid but I want to become a human being.”

Thus the Ziyārat, must go beyond the seeking of mundane material benefits and rise to the lofty sublimities of cognition and self awareness to awaken us from the sluggishness caused by the excesses of hubbe-duniya. To do so is to realize the ultimate purpose of Ziyārat. After all who can be a better symbol than Imām al-Ḥusayn (a) whose supreme
sacrifice on the day of ‘Āshūrā, symbolized the highest manifestation of Tawheed - that Besides Allāh- the Only Beloved, there is no other ilāh (beloved).

Hasnain Walji
Plano Texas, March 2009
Preface

By Shaykh Muhammad M Khalfan

All praises belong exclusively to Allāh, and may His peace and benedictions be on Muḥammad, the most perfect epitome of Divine Attributes and his infallible progeny, the Ahl al-Bayt, who are rightfully known as the ships of salvation, whosoever boards their ship, earns eternal felicity, and whosoever lags behind and is indifferent drowns and attains eternal damnation.

Al-Qandūzī, the Hanafite narrator of traditions, in his radiant collection Yanābī’ al-Mawadda (lit. Fountains of Constant Love) narrates a tradition from Abū Dharr al-Ghīfārī who narrates from the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

إنّ مَثِلَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي فِي هَذِهِ مَثِلُ سَفِينَةٍ نُوحٍ، مَنْ رَكَّبَهَا نَجَا وَمَنْ تَخْلَفَ عَنْهَا هَلَكَ

The similitude of my progeny among you is that of the ship of Noah ﷺ; whosoever boards it is saved, and whosoever lags behind would perish¹

The ship of al-Husayn ﷺ, however, according to another tradition is more rapid: Once a companion of Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ asked him about the prophetic tradition “Surely al-Ḥusayn is the lamp of guidance and the ship of salvation” saying: “Aren’t you [the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ] ships of salvation [too]?” The Imām ﷺ replied:

¹ Al-Qandūzī, Yanābī’ al-Mawadda, v.2, p.90
All of us are ships of salvation, save that the ship of al-Ḥusayn  is more spacious and faster.

This tradition is also endorsed by great mystic scholars who can appreciate the sublime secrets of religion. The late mystic-scholar Āyatullah Mīrzā Tabrizī in his monumental prayer manual al-Murāqabat says:

It should be known that the door of al-Ḥusayn  is the door of comprehensive mercy, rapid response and approval. And he [the Imām] would say during his life time: ‘The similitude of doing good is rain water which covers both the virtuous as well as the sinful.’

Sayyid Ḥaddād al-Mūsawī a great Shi‘ite saint and a contemporary of ‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, is reported to have quoted their mentor in practical gnosis, Āyatullāh Qādī al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī as having said:

My teacher, Marḥūm Qādī (may his spirit be sanctified) said to me that it is impossible for a human being to attain the station of tawḥīd [proximity to God] without the path of Sayyid al-Shuhadā’.

And ‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī is reported to have said:

That Ḥaḍrat [i.e. Imām al-Ḥusayn ] has great

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2 Sayyid ‘Ādil al-‘Alawi, Risālāt Islāmiyya, v.6 p. 183
3 Āyatullāh al-Ṭabrizi, al-Murāqibat, p.286
attention towards the wayfarers of the path of God in removing the veil and impediments of the ‘path of God’.\(^5\)

One of the excellent ways of establishing contact with Imām al-Ḥusayn \(\#\) is through offering salutations to his exalted personality (Ziyārat). This can be achieved either in front of his radiant tomb in Karbalā, or in the environs of one’s house observing some specific etiquettes. The secret however is that the za’ir, one who performs the Ziyārat, must yearn to the attain the apex of the meaning of what he recites and unite with the spirit of the mazūr (the visited one). The grand Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī in his masterpiece ‘Adabe Fināye Muqarrabān’ says:

\[\text{Ziyārat is the mystical presence of the fervent lover (ʻāshiq) in the dwelling of the Beloved; it is the visitor’s passionate encounter of the abode of the visited one; it is the lover’s expression of intense love and consideration for the beloved; it is when the enamored one sincerely gives his heart in the alley of the possessor of the heart...}\(\(6\)

The present commentary tries to examine and reflect on one of the well-known ziyārāt that many of the Muslims recite with great zeal and devotion. Most of the Shi‘a Muslims express their veneration and sorrow when they recite this sublime Ziyārat on the day of ‘Āshura’. However, the Infallible Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt \(\#\) have taught us to recite it very often. Besides its ample merits, it is a program of revolution for the sleeping masses. The crux of the Ziyārat is al-tabarri’ and al-tawallī, which can correctly be translated as ‘fleeing from imperfection’ and ‘seeking perfection’, or in the beautiful words of every Muslim Lā ilāha illa Allāh -Besides Allāh- the Only Beloved, there

\[^5\] Hādi Hāshimiyān, Daryāye ‘Irān, p.97
\[^6\] Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, Adab-e-Fināye Muqarribān, v.1, p. 17
is no other ilâh (beloved). The Name Allâh exemplifies all the perfect attributes of the Divine Essence, which the human being has been molded to appreciate and naturally seek. The Holy Qur’ân says:’...the innate nature of Allâh, upon which the human beings were molded...’(30:30). Therefore the Ziyârat in reality is a call to the unsullied innate disposition (fitra) of the human being.

In expressing veneration and seeking the higher levels of peace for Imâm al-Ḥusayn ﷺ we are trying to unite with his ideas, thoughts and towering volition, and in cursing his opponents, who overtly declared themselves to be Muslims and believers, but were extensions of the hypocrites, we are trying to flee from all their ideas, thoughts and actions. Hence this recital trains the reciter to overhaul himself and unite with the spirit of the sacred Imâm ﷺ. In fact, as we shall come to observe in this Ziyârat later, one of the beautiful supplications taught to us when expressing our greetings to the Imâm is to seek spiritual harmony with the Imâm ﷺ in both this world as well as the Hereafter. We say later in this Ziyârat

فآسَالُ اللهِ الَّذِي أكَرُمتُني بِمَعْرَفَتَكُمْ وَمَعْرَفَةِ أُولِيَائِكُمْ وَرَزُقَتِي الْبَرَاءَةَ مِنْ أَعْدَائِكُمْ أَنَّ يَجُعلَني مَعَكُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ 

So I ask Allâh, who ennobled me by knowing you and knowing your friends, and enabled me to seek remoteness from your enemies, to place me in your company in this world and the Hereafter.

Understanding the aforementioned obliges every high-spirited seeker of truth to aim for the achievement of the crux of the Ziyârat rather than be selfishly motivated to gain personal benefits. The rewards of the Ziyârat which are both sacred and sublime should not be the only factor to lead us to recite it. It is the natural love for the Imâm ﷺ who exemplifies the Divine Attributes in himself that should transport us to
recite this humble presentation. In fact some traditions, as we shall soon consider, clearly state that whosoever visits Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ in Karbālā is as if he has visited Allāh at His Throne.⁷

Another very important point to bear in mind is that because the reciter of this Ziyārat has been guaranteed by the Imāms ﷺ that his needs would be fulfilled, he must be very careful in distinguishing ‘that which is really a need’ from ‘that which is not really a need’. The great saint Āyatullāh Ḥaddād al-Mūsawī, a contemporary of ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, would see people clinging onto the radiant enclosure where Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is buried, and instead of seeking their real needs, asking for those things that would increase the burden that they had already accumulated. He is reported to have said:

إِنْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ حِينَمَا يَذْهَبُونَ إِلَى زِيَارَةِ العُطَابِ المَقْدُسَةِ يَقْفُونَ مَأْسَحِيِّي الضِّرْيِحُ فِي تَوْسِلَةٍ بالَّيْسَيْنِ لَحَوَائِجِهِمُ الْمَادِيَةِ فَيَحْمُلُونَ ثُقَالًا عَلَى ثُقَالِهِمْ وَلَمْ يَسِلُوا الْبَيْتَانِ ﻷَنْ يَأْخُذُونَ مِنْهُمْ ثُقَالَهُمْ وَهَوْا التَّعَلُّقُ بِالْدُّنْيَا، بِلْ يَسِلُونَهُ بِأَنْ يُعْطِهِمْ بِبَيْتَانِ وَلَدًا أَوْ زُوْجًا أَوْ سَيَارًا، وَمَا سَمَعَنَا عَنْ أَحَدٍ دَخَلَ بِخَدْمَتِهِ وَقَالَ لَهُ خَذْ مَنِّي سَكَدًا وَسَكَدًا

When most of the people visit the holy shrines, they stand holding fast onto the enclosures of the graves and ask the Imām ﷺ to mediate on their behalf, so that their material needs are fulfilled. Consequently, they add a burden over their burden. They do not ask the Imām ﷺ to remove their burden which is ‘attachment to the world’; rather they ask for a

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⁷ Ibn Qūlawayh, Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, p. 147
house, an off spring, a wife or a car; and never have we heard from anyone who entered in his service, and asked him: ‘Relieve me from such and such a thing.’

In one of his lessons on practical ethics (akhlāq), Ayatullah Mujtahidi (may Allāh elevate his status) narrates the following incident:

 حاج شیخ عبدالکریم حائری (ره) را در حرم امام ضیاء دیدند که
گرفته می‌کند و به امام می‌گوید: آقا جان من مجتهد‌شده‌ام، ولی
می‌خواهم آدم بشوم.

Hāj Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm Ḥā’irī [the founder of the Islamic Seminary of Qum] was seen in the ہارام of Imām al-Ḥusayn weeping and telling the Imām: O dear master, I have become a juristconsult (mujtahid), but I want to become a [perfect] human being.

Some traditions clearly teach us about the ultimate purpose of Ziyārat. Observe the following:

1. Ṣafwān bin Mihrān is reported to have said:

عن أبي عبَّد الله عليه السلام قال: من زار قبر الحسين
وَهُوَ يَرِيدُ الله عَزَّ وَجَلَّ شَیْعَه جَبْرُتْیَلْ
وَمَیْنِتْکُمْ وَأَسْرِافِیلْ حَتَّى يَرَدَ یَلِیَ مَنْ زَلَّهِ.

Imām al-Ṣādiq said: ‘Whosoever visits the grave of al-Ḥusayn while he seeks Allāh, the Invincible

9 See the following website:
http://www.tebyan.net/Religion_Thoughts/TheLearned/Contemporary/2008/1/29/59850.html
and Exalted, Jibrā’il, Mīkā’il, and Iṣrā’il accompany him until he returns back to his house.”

2. Mu’ammar is reported to have said: I heard Zayd bin ‘Alī saying:

من زار قبر الحسين بن عليّ عليه الصلاة والسلام لا يريد به إلا الله  
تغفر له جميع ذنوبه ولو كانت مثل زبد البحر، فاستكثروا من زيارته يغفر الله لكم ذنوبكم.

Whosoever visits the grave of al-Ḥusayn bin ‘Alī while he does not seek thereby save Allāh, Allāh would forgive all his sins even if they be like the foam of the ocean; therefore, visit him often, and Allāh would forgive your sins.”

Seeking ‘Allāh’ as mentioned in the abovementioned narrations refers to yearning for Allāh’s proximity, which in reality is perfecting oneself to attain the attributes of Almighty Allāh. If this is the purpose behind Ziyārat, the visitor would naturally struggle for a complete unity with religion and divine values.

Before we begin the commentary of this radiant Ziyārat, which is also reckoned to be among the sacred traditions (ahādith qudsiyya), and understand both its particular as well as its universal import, it is imperative to generally know the significance of Ziyārat, and its exalted purpose.

**Meaning of Ziyārat**

The word ‘Ziyārat’ is derived from the word “zawr” which means to

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10 Ibn Qūlawayh, Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, p. 274
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., p.333
deflect or draw away from something. A lie is called zūr because it deflects from the path of truth. The zā‘ir is known to be so, because he deflects from other than “the one he intends to visit”. That is why some lexicographers translate “Ziyārat” to mean intention (qaṣd), for the one who deflects from other than a certain entity intends the entity. Al-Fayūmī, a well-known lexicographer in his authoritative lexicon al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr says:

و(الزيارة) في العرف قصد المزور اكرام الله واستثناؤا

The conventional meaning of al-Ziyārat is to intend the one to be visited, for his veneration and intimacy.¹³

And it is said that the reason why Ziyārat is referred to as visiting the saintly human beings, is because it is to deflect from the material routine and draw away from the corporeal world and incline towards the world of spirit, while one is present in the corporeal environment and maintains one’s bodily form.¹⁴

Sometimes Ziyārat is translated as ‘ittiḥād al-zā‘ir bi-al mazūr’ (the unity of the visitor with the visited one). In simpler words: ‘to color oneself with the attributes of the visited one’. This definition does not contradict the former definitions, for ‘seeking and uniting with the attributes of the mazūr (visited one)’ is nothing but ‘deflecting and drawing away from attributes contrary to the mazūr’. In a subtler expression, we can say ‘Ziyārat is to flee from imperfection while struggling for perfection’.¹⁵

Allusions of this reality can also be gotten from the Qur’ānic verse:

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¹³ Ahmad al-Fayūmī, al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr, p. 136

¹⁴ Ayatullah Jawādī Amuli, Adab e Fināye Muqarribān, v.1, p. 23

¹⁵ It is important to note that fleeing from imperfection is the same as fleeing towards perfection.
‘And flee towards Allâh’ (51:50). Imâm al-Ṣâdiq ﷺ is reported16 to have commented on this verse saying “ay ḥujjû” (It means ‘perform ḥajj’). And the literal meaning of ḥajj is qaṣd (intention). In a conversation he had with his son Zayd bin ‘Alî, Imâm Zayn al-‘Abidîn ﷺ says:

وَمَعَنِّي قَوْلَهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ: فَقَسَّمُوًا إِلَى الَّهِ يَعْنِي
حُجُوًا إِلَى بَيْتِ اللَّهِ، يَا بَنِي إِنِّ السِّكَعْبَةَ بَيْتُ اللَّهِ
فَمَنْ حَجَّ بَيْتَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ قَسَّدَ إِلَى اللَّهِ...

And the meaning of Allâh’s speech “And flee to Allâh...” is Ḥujjû ilâ bāytillâh (Intend the house of Allâh); O my dear young son, surely the Ka’ba is the house of Allâh; therefore, whosoever intends the house of Allâh, has surely intended Allâh...17

Therefore ḥajj, as it is correctly conveyed, is not only ‘ḥajju bāyt Allâh al-Ḥarâm’ (intending the sacred House of Allâh), but ḥajj Allâh (intending Allâh) as the verse explicitly conveys: fâ firrû ila Allâh (so escape towards Allâh). And escaping towards Allâh is seeking His noble attributes and fleeing from the contrary. And ḥajj if perfomed with its proper etiquettes, as the experts of the kernel of Islamic law mention, enables one to attain such noble attributes.

Some narrations explicitly say that doing Zīyârat of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the infallible Imâms ﷺ is like doing the Zīyârat of Allâh. Consider the following traditions:

١٦ ‘Allâma al-Ṭabarsi, Tafsîr Majma’ al-Bayân, v.9, p. 268
Zayd al-Shaḥhām is reported to have said: I asked Abū ‘Abdilāh (al-Ṣādiq ﺃﻟ-Ṣﺎديق): What is the reward for one who visits the Messenger of Allāh? The Imām ﺃﻟ-Ṣāديق said: ‘It is like one who has visited Allāh at His throne (‘arsh).’

Zayd al-Shaḥhām is reported to have said: Abū ‘Abdillāh (al-Ṣādiq ﺃﻟ-Ṣﺎديق) said: Whosoever visits the grave of al-Ḥusayn ﺃﻟ- حسين with the knowledge of his status is like one who visits Allāh at His Throne.

Jābir al-Ju‘fī is reported to have said: I came to Ja‘far bin Muḥammad (al-Ṣādiq ﺃﻟ-Ṣﺎديق) on the day of ‘Āshūrā’, and he said to me: ‘These people are the visitors of Allāh (zuwwār Allāh), and it is the right of the mazūr to honor the za‘īr.’

The above traditions confer the implication that because the Imāms ﺃﻟ-Ṣﺎديق...

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18 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.4, p. 585. It should be noted here that ‘throne’ does not refer to the material throne for Almighty Allāh is greater than such limitations.

19 Ibn Qulayhā, Kāmil al-Ziyārat, p. 324

20 Ibid.
are manifestations of Allāh’s sublime names,\(^{21}\) visiting them and seeking their proximity is the same as seeking the proximity of Almighty Allāh. Proximity here, we should understand, does not refer to any kind of physical closeness. Rather, it refers to spiritual proximity. In other words, as the ṣā‘īr (one who deflects from other than the attributes of the mazūr) draws spiritually closer to the Imām Ṣaddiq he in reality embellishes himself with the attributes of Almighty Allāh which the Imām Ṣaddiq exemplifies according to his limitations. The Imāms Ṣaddiq, however, are sheer manifestations (mazāḥīr) of Allāh’s names and thus no attribute independently belongs to other than Allāh. The Holy Qur’ān says:

"الله لا إله إلا هو لا الأسماء الحسنی значения"

Allāh, other than Him there is no God; and to Him alone belong the Beautiful Names...(20:8)

Notice here that instead of Allāh saying ‘The Beautiful Names belong to Allāh’ He says ‘To Him alone belong the Beautiful Names’. In grammatical terminology, the predicate is brought before the subject. And whenever this happens, it signifies restriction. In other words ‘To Him alone [and no one else] belong the Beautiful Names’.

Those who are able to appreciate the secrets of prayer tangibly comprehend this reality in the state of rukū‘ when they vision that no one other than Almighty Allāh has any perfection whatsoever. Imām Khumaynī in his Etiquettes of Prayer says:

أعلمن أن عمدة أحمال الصلاة ثلاثة وسائر الأعمال والأفعال مقدمنا ومهيمنا لها، الأولى: القيام، والثانية: الركوع، الثالثة: السجود، وأهل

\(^{21}\) A reference to the tradition of Imām al-Ṣaddiq Ṣaddiq: Naḥnu al-Âsmâ’ al-Ḥusnâ’ ‘We are the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh.’
المحفظة يروون هذه الثلاثة إشارة إلى التوحيدات الثلاثة. وفي الركوع ترك لرؤية النفس حسب مقام الصفات والأسماء ورؤية لمقام أسماء الحق وصفاته.

Beware that the main states of prayer are three, and the rest of the acts serve as introductory and preparatory phases: (1) qiyām, (2) rukū', and (3) sujūd. And the men of gnosis reckon these three acts as the three kinds of unity...and in the state of rukū’ one cannot behold himself in terms of attributes and names, and beholds God’s exclusive station of Names and Attributes. [In other words, he sees that every kind of attribute or name belongs only to God].

Ziyārat of Believers

Islam highly encourages one to visit one’s Muslim brother or sister. However, it does not emphasize on any kind of Ziyārat whatsoever. It encourages meaningful Ziyārat - Ziyārat with a purpose and aim. Observe the following traditions:

Imām al-Ṣādiq is reported to have said:

قال تزاوروا فإن في زيارة تحكم إحياء لقلوبكم وذكرنا لأحاديثكم وأحاديثنا تعلف بعضكم على بعض فنان أخذتم بهاررة وشذتم وتجوتم وإن تركتموها ضللتكم وهلكتم فخذوا بهما وآنا

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22 Imām Khumaynī, al-ʿAdāb al-Maʿnawīyya li al-Ṣalāt, p. 523
Visit one another, for verily in your visitation is the revival of your hearts, and a remembrance of our speeches; our speeches make you harbor affection for one another; and if you act according to them, you would be guided and saved, and if you shun them, you would go astray and perish; therefore follow them while I guarantee your salvation.\textsuperscript{23}

And Imām al-Bāqir \textsuperscript{2} is reported to have said:

\begin{align*}
\text{تَزَاوَرُوا فِي بِيَوْتَكُمْ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَّا أَمْرُنَا رَحْمَ}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
	ext{اللَّهُ عَبْدًا أَحْيَا أَمَرْنَا}
\end{align*}

Visit one another in your homes for surely in that is the revival of our affair; may Allāh’s Mercy be upon one who revives our affair.\textsuperscript{24}

It should be noted that the revival of the affair discussed in the above traditions is nothing but the revival of Islamic values, for the Ahl al-Bayt \textsuperscript{2} are protectors of Islamic values and to remember them and their teachings is to elevate the human spirit in reality. One should not conjecture that there is any personal gain that these infallible leaders of truth derive from such gatherings. Rather it is their followers who benefit.

Another important point to bear in mind is that ‘the revival of their affair’ cannot be merely achieved by thoughts and words. We must sow the seeds of resolution in our visitations in order to reap the fruits of applying the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt \textsuperscript{2}.

So far \textit{Ziyārat} has been reduced to visitation in the earthly abode. The

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Allāma al-Majlisi}, \textit{Bihār al-Anwār}, v. 17, p. 258

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., v. 17, p. 352
Islamic worldview, however, due its sharp and accurate cognition of reality, as taught by the Holy Qur’ān, the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his infallible successors, does not limit Ziyārat to the corporeal world. It rather believes that human beings can communicate with those who have transcended this limited world of matter and can listen to them as well. In our daily prayer, we address the Holy Prophet ﷺ as follows:

أَلْسَلَّمُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Peace be unto you O Prophet and may Allāh’s mercy and blessings be on you.25

This statement presumes the presence of the mukhāṭab (the addressee). And therefore we believe that the Prophet ﷺ is present and can behold our presence too.

One of the important etiquettes of entering the shrine of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the infallible Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt is to read the well-known idhn al-dukhul (recital of permission to enter). The zā’ir (visitor) adopts a very humble attitude, and appreciating the presence of the Holy Prophet ﷺ seeks his permission to enter his sanctuary. In this well-known recital, we say:

وَأَعْلَمُ أنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَخَلَفَاتُهُ ﷺ أَحْيَاءٌ عَنْدَكَ

بُرِئُونَ، يَرَونَ مَقَامَيْهِ وَيَسْمَعُونَ سَلَامِيّ،

وَيَرُدُّونَ سَلَامِيّ...

...and I know that Your Apostle and vicegerents (upon whom be peace) are alive, receiving sustenance in Your proximity, they see where I stand presently, and hear my speech and respond to my

25 Ayatullāh al-Sīstānī, Minhāj al-Šāliḥīn, v.1, p. 226
salutation...²⁶

Unlike those who consider the human being as an entity which perishes after the worldly death, Islām teaches mankind that death is a purgatory and bridge to the realm beyond. In fact, to be more accurate, death is “tearing of some veils” from the higher reality of every thing. Great people like Imām ʿAlī ۱, due to their intense purity, could boldly claim that they can behold the ultimate form of the reality of this world while they still exist in this earthly abode. In one of his famous dictums, Imām ʿAlī ۱ is reported to have said:


If the curtains were unveiled nothing would be added to my conviction.²⁷

The tearing of veils, however, should not be considered as being limited to the Prophets ۱ and infallible Imāms ۱. Those human beings who are entirely submissive to the laws of Almighty Allāh and have purified their hearts can also relatively enjoy such exalted positions. In fact, Almighty Allāh calls the human beings to appreciate the kernel of this world in the following verse:


And do they not look into the kernel of the heavens and the earth? (7:185)

Hence there is an invitation to tear the veils that we have created for ourselves by sinning. In another interesting dictum of the Holy Prophet ۷ we are told:

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²⁶ Shaykh ʿAbbās Qummi, Mafāṭīḥ al-Jinān, new ed., p. 380
لَوْلاَ أنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ يَحْوُمُونَ عَلَى قُلُوبِ بَنِي آدَمَ
لَنَظَرُوا إِلَى مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ

Was it not for the Satans circling around the hearts of the off-spring of Adam, they surely would have beheld the kernel of the heavens.28

Therefore, the more purity we enjoy, the better we can communicate with those exalted spirits who have left this material world, are alive in the real sense of the word, and due to their exalted station of existential mediation (about which we shall soon discuss in detail) can influence the world of contingent existence and even benefit us in different ways. There have been ample narratives indicating how people visited the shrines of the Ahl al-Bayt Ṣadūq and solved very great problems in their lives.

Our aim of Ziyārat, however, must transcend seeking personal benefits. It is therefore important to first decipher the purpose of Ziyārat, and the reason why our holy Imāms Ṣadūq would teach us particular recitals for visiting the tomb of their grandfather Imām al-Husayn Ṣadūq. Of course this does not mean that one should not seek personal benefits from the great personalities, but one must at least have realized the ultimate purpose of Ziyārat. It is through such realization, dear readers, that rain falls from the hearts and embraces every human being, rather every creature beyond time and place. Such realizations tear the veils of the past and future, and release the human being into the world of perpetual bliss and ecstasy. Soon the reader shall understand the words of this nondescript, for the world of Ahl al-Bayt Ṣadūq is a world yet unknown. Their followers have no share save appreciating the tip of the iceberg:

Imām ‘Alī Ṣadūq is reported to have said to Abū Dharr:

28 ‘Allāma al-Majlisi, Bihār al-Anwār, v. 6, p. 332
And in another tradition he is reported to have said:

لا يُقَاسُ بَالِ مُحْمَّدٍ ۝ مِّن هذِهِ الأَمْهَةِ أَحَدٌ

...None from this *umma* can be compared with the progeny of Muḥammad (upon whom be peace)...30

**The Purpose of Ziyārat**

One of the fundamental requisites of understanding the purpose of *Ziyārat* is to have a correct worldview. If we realize the purpose of human creation, and submit our volition to our intellectual decision, our deeds would be directed towards our eternal salvation. The purpose of human creation according to Qur‘ān and Sunna is to worship Almighty Allāh:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْأَسْوَارِ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ

And I have not created the jinn and the men save that they worship me alone. (51:56)

And worship without knowledge carries no meaning. This is because

29 Ibid., v. 62, p. 7
30 Ibid., v. 32, p.11 7
worship is not a mere exercise without any sense of devotion. 'Ibādah in the literal sense is defined as:

\[
\text{العبادة هي نصب العبد نفسه في مقام المولكية لربه}
\]

'Ibāda is when the servant places himself in the position of being a bondsman of his Lord.\(^{31}\)

And this cannot transpire without the knowledge of the Creator. It is by appreciating His real ownership\(^{32}\) of the entire world of creation, His knowledge over all things, His omnipotence and omnipresence that the human being is overtaken and humbles himself down before Allāh. He also realizes that the true Lord and Master is none but his Creator, and thus he places himself in the station of being an obedient slave of Almighty Allāh. Imām al-Ḥusayn \(^{33}\), underlining the clear link between knowledge and worship is reported to have said:

\[
\text{إن الله جل ذكره ما خلق العبادة إلا ليعرف به فإذا}
\text{عرفوه يبدونه فإذا عبدوه استغنوه بعبادته عنعباداته}
\text{ماإسواه...}
\]

Surely Allāh \(^{34}\) did not Create His servants except for knowing Him, and when they know him, they would worship Him, and when they worship Him, it would suffice them from worshipping other than Him...

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32 Readers must differentiate between real ownership in which the existence and subsistence of an entity is entirely dependent on the owner, and legal ownership in which the existence and subsistence of a property is independent of the owner.
34 'Allāma al-Majlīsī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, v.23, p.83
The worship that results from prior knowledge reaps knowledge itself. Knowledge before worship, however, is mostly intellectual (‘aqli) and conceptual (taṣawwurī). It is the result of rationally establishing the existence of God and His attributes as well as the utter poverty and dependence of the entire creation on His infinite existence. Having realized this the impartial servant worships with veneration and awe. If such worship was out of sincerity, then he is availed with a higher form of knowledge, which is beyond the realm of intellect. It is known in the language of traditions as ‘yaqīn (conviction)’ and ‘the vision of the heart’ which is knowledge by presence (al-‘ilm al-ḥudūrī). Perhaps the following verse of the Qur’ān alludes to the close link between worship and conviction:

واعبَدُ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيكَ الْيَقِينُ

And worship your Lord so that conviction comes to you.\(^{35}\)

In some of the ziyyārāt taught to us by the infallible Imāms ﷺ we are taught to address the Imāms declaring that they had attained the exalted station of yaqīn through sincere worship. Consider the following examples:

1. In one of the ziyyārāt of the Holy Prophet ﷺ we are taught by Imām ‘Alī  to address his noble being as follows:

وَاشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ فَدْ نَصْحَتْ لَامْتَكَ، وَجَاهَدَتْ يَتُّ

سَبِيلُ رَبِّكَ، وَعَبْدَتْهُ حَتَّى أَتَاكَ الْيَقِينُ...\(^{35}\)

...And I bear witness that you gave counsel to your nation and struggled in the way of your Lord, and worshipped Him until conviction (al-yaqīn) came to

\(^{35}\) Holy Qur’ān, 15:99
2. In another Ziyārat we address Imām al-Ḥusayn $a.s.$ as follows:

...Ya ʿAbd-Allāh, you . . .

...O Abā ‘Abdillāh, I bear witness that surely you conveyed what you were ordered by Allāh (the Invincible and Majestic) and other than Him you never feared anyone, and you struggled in His way, and worshipped Him truthfully until conviction (al-yaqīn) came to you...37

3. In one of the ziyārāt of Imām al-Riḍā $a.s.$ we are taught to address him as follows:

...Ashfād anā nak queda aqūma al-sallat wa atīta al-zikāh . . .

...I bear witness that you kept prayer upright and gave the poor tax and invited to what was good and forbade the evil and worshipped Allāh sincerely until conviction (al-yaqīn) came to you; peace be

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36 al-Ḥimyarī al-Qummi, Qurb al-Isnād, p. 382
37 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, v.4, p. 573
upon you O Abā al-Ḥasan...38

There are stages of yaqīn. The yaqīn spoken about in the above traditions is beyond the comprehension of the likes of me and you. Obviously it is a level of knowledge by presence, but beyond our description.

Having realized the fundamental role of sincere worship, our ziyārat, which also rank among acts of worship, should serve as catalysts to earn the exalted station of appreciating the truth by the vision of the heart. Such a state is only possible for a person who is utterly submissive to Allāh. The Ziyārat therefore should teach the zā‘ir the lesson of utter submissio to Allāh. In other words, the Ziyārat should be a means of uniting the zā‘ir with Abū ‘Abdillāh (an appellation depicting Imām al-Ḥusayn ʿa’s utter submission to Allāh). And this can easily be attained after we understand the meaning of the Ziyārat and exemplify its teachings in ourselves. If we read the Ziyārat for our lower ambitions in life, there would be no difference between us and the laity who have busied themselves with the world of matter. Therefore we should bear an exalted aspiration and aim for a great transformation in order to unite with the spirit of al-Ḥusayn ʿa.

Readers do appreciate that the reason why the allies of contemporary formalists hamper us from expressing our sorrow near the graves of the infallible leaders, is because they have realized the revolution it can create in the hearts.

Imām al-Ḥusayn ʿa is a symbol of uprising against falsehood even at the cost of the sacrifice of every possession. Our Ziyārat which is an endeavor of unity and harmony with his noble spirit, therefore, should be a declaration of readiness rather than a mere transaction or habitual recitation.

38 Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, ‘Uyūn Akhbaʿar al-Riḍā ʿa, v.1, p. 302
Introduction

By Shaykh Abbas M H Ismail

Ziyārat: External Proof

The Holy Qur’an is clear in its explication of the reason for which the jinns and humans were created: to worship Allah ﷻ which can only be done with any real quality after we come to know Him. Our fundamental aim is thus inextricably linked to gaining gnosis of Him. This task is by no means a simple one as the Qur’an clearly states that He is incomparable to any thing we may already know, and therefore unknowable in His entirety.

But far from being an oppressive ruler over His subjects and setting them a task doomed to failure, Allah ﷻ desires that humans fulfil their potential and attain salvation by achieving closeness to Him. He has therefore, through His undiminishing mercy, granted His servants access to numerous avenues to be able to reach at least some level of gnosis:

‘يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوُسِيَّةَ’

‘وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لِعَلَيْكُمْ تُقَلِّحُونَ’

O you who believe! Be mindful (of your duty) to

1 Holy Qur’an, 51:56
2 Al-Ṣadūq, ‘Ila‘ al-Shara‘i
3 Holy Qur’an, 42:11
Allāh and seek means of nearness to Him, and struggle in His way, so that you may be successful.⁴

Of these avenues and means, the most effective is to seek the intercession and guidance of the Fourteen Infallibles and to obey them.⁵ The Qur’ān mentions that by obeying the Messenger, one would have thereby followed Allāh ﷻ.⁶ The same applies when considering the family of the Prophet, the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ, whose obedience may also be included in the category of being a valid act of servitude to Allāh ﷻ.⁷ By this argument, the seemingly difficult duty upon the shoulders of humans at first consideration, i.e. the worship of Allāh ﷻ through His gnosis, is made somewhat manageable by the adherence of humans to the obedience and love of the Prophet ﷺ and his holy family, the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ; by loving and obeying the Prophet and his family, humans are fulfilling both a Qur’ānic injunction of seeking a means to the nearness of Allāh ﷻ, as well as correctly identifying this means as being none other than the Fourteen Infallibles.

Ziyārat: An Internal Inclination

Allāh ﷻ has created the human with an innately ordained disposition towards goodness,⁸ known as fitrah in Arabic.⁹ This fitrah, even whilst confined to the realm of the corporeal world, continuously yearns and seeks goodness and is instinctively attracted and naturally inclined to honouring and respecting those instances of goodness it perceives, whether the acts are current and live, or have happened in the past and belong to legends of history, such as members of the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ.¹⁰ Therefore, through both external instruction via the Qur’ān and the

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⁴ Ibid. 5:35
⁵ M. Ţahhiri, Simaye Mukhbitin, Mishkat, Tehran, 2000, pp.13-14
⁶ Holy Qur’ān, 4:80
⁷ Ibid. 42:23, 33:33
⁸ J. Amoli, Adab e Finaye Muqarraban, Isra, Qum, 2002, p.55
⁹ Holy Qur’ān, 30:30
¹⁰ J. Amoli, Adab e Finaye Muqarraban, Isra, Qum, 2002, p.18
lives of the Infallibles, and through the internal proof, the *fitrah*, the connection with the Ahl al-Bayt is a fundamental part of human existence and assists to fulfil an inherent metaphysical need within us of seeking closeness to Allah through noble characteristics perceived in extra-ordinary personalities.

**Ziyārat and a Link to Hajj**

When describing the Islamic forms of worship two terms are often used: *ʿIbādah* and *Dhiyāfah*. The term *ʿIbādah* generally relates to the outer, jurisprudential nature of our acts of worship whilst *Dhiyāfah* can often refer to the inner, spiritual dimensions.11 As an example, our Ramaḍān supplications, (our *ʿIbādah*) seek for Allāh to grant us the chance to perform the Ḥajj pilgrimage, “... In this year and every year ...” 12 The Ḥajj, which is the resulting *Dhiyāfah* at Allāh’s house in Makkah, actually takes place three months later in the month of Dhu al-Ḥijjah.

A close consideration of this will demonstrate that Allāh’s initial pleasure was for us to ask of Him in Ramaḍān to grant us Ḥajj. In prescribing to us what our supplications should be in Ramaḍān through set prayers, Allāh enables His to become aware of what his Master has to offer. The Wise Lord, in commanding His subjects to ask of Him, is able to show us the magnanimity of His banquet and the lofty aspirations we may have of Him. Thus, every subsequent supplication of the servant will improve as he is now aware of what the Host of hosts can grant to him and these two elements become inseparable – i.e. each instance of seeking is accompanied by a higher level of giving, and thus the circle continues between Master and slave. This may be the true meaning behind this excerpt of Duʿā al-Iftitā:

\[
\text{وَلَا يَزِيدُهُ كَثْرَةُ العَطَاءِ إِلَّا جُودًا وَكَرَمًا}
\]

And His excessive giving does not increase in Him,

12 A. Qummi, *Mafāṭīḥ al-Finān*
except (from the point of view of) generosity and kindness.\textsuperscript{13}

When considering the *Ziyārat* of the Infallibles, a similar conclusion seems to hold true. The Infallibles, through their positions as intermediaries and avenues between Allah ﷻ and His subjects, are able to encourage the elevation of people’s wants and desires beyond mere material wishes. Just as Allah ﷻ has a banquet He wishes to share, so too the Infallibles; their banquet is to assist humans to reach levels of divine proximity.

The importance and weight of this is adequately portrayed in some of the legal opinions expressed by eminent Muslim jurists of previous generations. Both ‘Allāmah Ḥillī and Sheikh Ṭūṣī have been cited as having declared it to be compulsory for Ḥajj pilgrims to perform the *Ziyārat* of the Holy Prophet in Medina, and have even permitted the Islamic ruler to force people to do so if they do not perform the *Ziyārat* of their own volition.\textsuperscript{14} The Holy Prophet has declared:

من أتى مكية حاجاً ولم يزرني إلى المدينة جفاني

Whosever comes to Makkah as a Ḥajj pilgrim and does not visit me in Medina has shunned me.\textsuperscript{15}

Such is the importance placed upon *Ziyārat* that even after performing the rites of Ḥajj and after seeking proximity to Allah ﷻ in Makkah, ‘Arafah, Muzdalifa and Mina, the pilgrim is still expected to pay respects to the Holy Prophet. This is a view common in both Shi‘a and Sunni sources.\textsuperscript{16}

**Walāyah and Ziyārat**

Al-Kulaynī reports in al-Kāfī from Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ:

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{14} J. Amoli, *Adab e Finaye Muqarraban*, Isra, Qum, 2002, p.32
\textsuperscript{15} M. Najafi, *Jawahir al-Kalam*, volume 20
\textsuperscript{16} See A. Amini, *al-Ghadir*, volume 5
The Sacred Effusion

Islam has been founded upon five: Prayers, Almsgiving, Fasting, Pilgrimage and Walāyah. And nothing has been emphasised the way emphasis has been placed on Walāyah.¹⁷

The cited hadith suggests that of all the acts of worship, it is the Walāyah of Allāh ﷻ, and the Ahl al-Bayt ﷻ, that is the most important. Hence one of the most important etiquettes of the act of Ziyārat is to establish a firm connection with the visited one. It is at this juncture that our acts may transform from mere ‘Ībādah to something similar to Dhiyāfah.

Whilst recognising the host and his kindness it would be foolish not to be cautious of other false hosts and adversaries of the Infallibles. By distancing ourselves from these people, we engage in Tabarrī, a prerequisite to Tawallī – seeking closeness to the Infallibles. Tabarrī is a key theme among the reliable ziyarāt supplications. Ziyārat al-ʿĀshūrā’ is emphatic upon this point, and urges the reader to seek distance from not only the direct adversaries of the Infallibles that confronted the Infallibles in their lifetimes, but even all previous usurpers and oppressors, spanning generations, and their supporters and partisans.¹⁸

This demonstrates that for our visitation to truely carry the colour of Walāyah, the Walāyah we profess must be comprehensive and absolute.

The folly of not adhering to this is eloquently portrayed by the Master of eloquence, Amīr al-Muʾminīn, ‘Ali. Al-Majlisī quotes in Biḥār al-Anwār:

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¹⁷ M. al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī
¹⁸ J. Amoli, Adab e Finaye Muqarraban, Isra, Qum, 2002, p.62
Indeed a man approached Amīr al-Mu’minin and said: “Verily I have love for you and I also love so and so” – and he named one of his (the Imām’s) adversaries – he (Imām) replied: “At this moment you are as though you possess one eye (and your vision is incomplete). So either you should choose blindness or complete vision.”

In the Imām’s words, such a person is incomplete and must address his course of action lest he were to become completely attached to falsehood, thereby becoming utterly lost.

**Sincerity and Zīyārat**

Islāmic ethical discourse stresses the importance of one’s intention and sincerity as a defining factor in the classification of the quality of any action. The purer the intention of the actor in performing the act, the more reward and benefit will be gained from that action. In this regard, people are of different grades and qualities. Whilst the outer action may actually seem identical and uniform, the inner realities and benefits may be tremendously different due to the difference in the purity and sincerity of the intention. It is only in the non-corporeal realm where such realities exist in their truest form. The ḥadith reports that comment upon this reality are manifold. We cite one such report to grant light to our discussion:

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عن البنطي قال: قرأت كتاب أبي الحسن الرضا ﷺ: أبلغ شيعتي أن زيارتي تعالد عنِّيّ الله عزّ وجلّ آلّه حجّة. قال: فقلت لأبي جعفر ﷺ: ألف حجّة؟ قال ﷺ: أي والّه ألف حجّة لمن زاره عارفاً بحقه

Al-Bazanṭi narrates, “I read in the letter of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā ﷺ: Tell my Shi’as that verily the rewards of my Ziyārat, according to Allāh the Mighty and Glorious, is equal to one thousand Ḥajj pilgrimages. So I said to Abū Ja’far (Imām al-Jawād) ﷺ: A thousand Ḥajj pilgrimages? He (as) said to me: Yes, by Allāh! A thousand thousand (a million) Ḥajj pilgrimages for he who performs his Ziyārat whilst understanding his rights.”

An Intellectual Spark

The truly balanced servant must however realise the potential granted him by Allāh ﷺ in being able to utilise all the divine bounties and be wary of satanic traps. It may be all too easy for one to assume that sincerity is sufficient; however, if one is simply unaware of the inner realities of wayfaring and its etiquette, then it is possible the intellect is under-utilised and mere sincerity, whilst praiseworthy, will lead to a lesser outcome. The Qur’ān, when describing the Messenger’s mission, speaks of both Tazkiya (purification) as well as Ta’lim (education).\(^{21}\) Such accuracy in one’s intake of education will result in the realisation that each one of the noble acts, Ṣalāt, Ṣawm, Zakāt, Ḥajj, Walāyah, has no outer, worldly existence, but rather these entities exist in their truest and most radiant form in the non-corporeal realm. If each of these were

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\(^{20}\) M. Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, volume 99
\(^{21}\) J. Amoli, Sahbāye Ṣafā, Mashar, 2001, p.29
to be understood, considered and treated as living entities (albeit in the non-material realm), capable of speech, form and interaction, one’s approach to them would surely be of a particularly focused, respectful and determined nature.  

Together with these realities, the true realities of the visited ones, i.e. the Infallibles that are the intermediaries for initial receipt and subsequent channeling of divine grace, can not err nor do they suffer any imperfection; and although they exist in their most majestic form as light-ordained celestial beings in another sphere, they are able to influence matters in the physical world through their specially ordained mastership granted by Allâh and dependent upon His permission. 

Following these principles, a wayfarer can coach and train himself to be mindful and intensely aware of such truths and when he is able to do so he will witness an active manifestation of the Qur’anic injunction:

وَلله الْمُشْرِقُ وَالمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُولِّىَ فَتَحْتُم وَجَهُ اللَّهِ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسْعَ عَلِيٌّ

To Allâh belongs the east and the west, so whithersoever way you turn there will be the face of Allâh…

Such an outlook will be truly appreciative of the divine at all times and places.

There is a possibility for the opposite to also become true. The Qur’ân offers a stark warning:

بَلِي مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةٌ وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ حَطِيَّتَهُ

فَأَوْلَدْكَ أَصْحَابُ الْنَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا حَالُدُونَ

22 Ibid. p.30
23 Holy Qur’ân, 2:115
Indeed whoever does evil and his sins surround him on every side, such shall be the inmates of the fire, and they shall remain therein forever.  

Such a person will no longer be able to perceive the divine and the ‘face of Allāh’, rather his outlook will be satanic and evil: whithersoever this person may turn he would perceive the face of Shayṭān; evil would envelop him and he would descend into a spiral of negativity, blocked senses, narrow mindedness and a skewed sense of reality. It may be that he is accepting of all things he perceives as utmost truth, or even worse, he may deny all true things as utter falsehood.

Thus, the individual wayfarer, in seeking a companion, a means, and an avenue to the Absolute Truth, must be conscious of the choice of whom he visits and must approach the visitation with a true gnosis and recognition of the visited one, as well as a heart of sincerity, and thereby be completely balanced and guided.

Marḥūm Tustari declares:

وتفاوت التأثيرات بتفاوت المعرفة بحق الإمام الحسين عليه السلام فقد ورد في الروايات التقييد بكونه عارفا بحق الإمام الحسين صلوات الله تعالى عليه

And the difference in the benefits (of the Ziyārat) is due to the difference in the levels of recognition (in the people reciting the Ziyārat) of the rights of Imām al-Ḥusayn عليه السلام, as the narration mentions the condition (for benefiting from the Ziyārat) is to be aware of the rights of Imām al-Ḥusayn, blessings of Allāh, the High, upon him.

24 Ibid. 2:81
25 J. Amoli, Sahbaye Safā, Mashar, 2001, p.31
26 J. Tustari, al-Khāsais al-Husayniyyah, p.164
A Mystical Firebrand

Having now realized the intrinsic beneficial nature and the importance of ziyarah it befits the wayfarer and the slave of the visited one to reflect upon the inner meanings of the act of Ziyārat. The etymology of the word stems from زور, originally meaning ‘to move away’ from a thing. Ahmad Ibn Fāris comments that the term is used to refer to the act of Ziyārat because when a person visits another, he has effectively moved his attention away from everyone and everything else to concentrate upon the visited one. Fayumi adds that Ziyārat involves honouring the visited one and making a bond with them.27 Āyatullāh Jawādī Amolī suggests that the turning away may also be from the material world of bodies and quiddity towards the celestial realm of souls and spirits.28

The Ziyārat should therefore transport us into a higher level of consciousness and spiritual being. Freedom from the world of matter is essential if we are to reach the heights of our potential. An interesting narration quoted by Marḥūm Tustari encapsulates this:

إنّ من زاره كان حكمن زار الله تعالى يشنع

Surely one who visits him (Imām al-Ḥusayn) is like one who visits Allāh at His throne.29

Tustari’s own reflection on this hadith is to conclude that ‘visiting Allāh’ is an allusion to the intense proximity with Allāh ﷻ, in this instance achieved through the Ziyārat. Whereas proximity to Allāh ﷻ can only come about through a polished level of faith and cleanliness of the heart. Hence, the Ziyārat of the Martyr of Kerbalā assists and facilitates to complete one’s level of faith, and cleanse the heart, resulting ultimately in the intense closeness with Allāh ﷻ.

بيروى رسول حق، دوستی حق آورد

27 J. Amoli, Adab e Finaye Muqarraban, Isra, Qum, 2002, p.23
28 Ibid.
29 J. Tustari, al-Khasais al-Husayniyyah, p.165
Following the Prophet of Truth, brings about the friendship of Truth;
So follow the Prophet, thereby seek the friendship of Truth.
The Shari’ah, is the ship of salvation, the Family of the Prophet, is its captain;
Abide aboard the ship and seek to hold tight to the captain.30

Through our closeness with the Ahl al-Bayt Axes, we are also able to benefit from some of the grace which they are granted. In Sūra al-Ahzāb, in one of the most well-known and oft-recited verses of the Qur’ān, Allāh  declares:

\[
\text{إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائَكَتَهُ يُصِلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ}
\]
\[
آمَنُوا صَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّموْ أَتْسَلِيمًا}
\]

Indeed Allāh and Angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! Invoke blessings upon him and and invoke salutations upon him with a worthy salutation.31

Perhaps we miss too easily our own potential in reaching such a stage, where Allāh  and His angels can bless us:

\[
\text{يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا}
\]

30 M. F. Kashani, Diwan e Fazy Kashani, p.32. The word ‘dāman’ in Farsi has not been translated literally but rather its contextual meaning (au)
31 Holy Qur’ān, 33:56
O you who believe! Remember Allāh with frequent remembrance, and glorify Him morning and evening. It is He who sends His blessings to you and so do His angels, that He may bring you out of the darkness into light, and He is Most Merciful to the believers. The day they encounter Him their greeting will be ‘Peace’, and He holds in store for them a noble reward.\(^{32}\)

Thus Allāh ﷻ and His angels also bless certain fallible beings – those that have inculcated within themselves a plentiful remembrance. The result of this blessing is that Allāh ﷻ is able to empower them to come forth from darkness into light. As we have seen, the very same effect is true when visiting the Infallibles, who assist in our spiritual migration towards Allāh ﷻ and away from the material world. Because their source is ultimate purity, the Absolute Truth, in calling upon them to provide us with our spiritual guidance we are confident of the veracity and accuracy of the offerings we can obtain from them. Again this points towards *Tabarri and Tawalli*: ensuring that our hosts are true hosts and truly able to offer us munificence:

\(\text{فَلْيَنْظُرَ الْإنسانُ إلَى طَعَامَهُ}^{33}\)

So let man consider his food.\(^{33}\)

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\(^{32}\) Ibid. 33:41-44  
\(^{33}\) Ibid. 80:24
Regarding the verse above, Imām al-Ṣadiq has declared that the allegorical meaning of the word food is ‘knowledge’. He states:

علمه الذي يأخذه عمَّ يأخذُه

It is his knowledge that he acquires – from whom does he acquire it?\(^{34}\)

By ensuring our source of information and spiritual nourishment is pure, we will be able to avoid spiritual stagnation and prove to be a true instance of leaving the darkness and entering the light.

\textit{Ziyārat: The Return Journey from Truth (al-Ḥaq) to Creation (al-Khalq)}

According to the commandments from the Holy Threshold (الناحية المقدسة) of the Ahl al-Bayt, once this enlightenment is achieved, the journey of the new possessors of light continues onwards towards their fellow human beings. As a recipient and now a guardian of this light, the true servant of the Holy Threshold discharges the duties placed upon him by helping others to emerge from darkness. He becomes the true manifestation as described in Sūra al-An‘ām:

أو من كان ميتا فاحياه وجعلنا له نورا يمشى

بى فى الناس كم من مثله فى الظلمات ليس بخارج منها

Is he who was lifeless, then we granted him life, and granted him a light by which he walks among people, like one whose likeness is that of one who dwells in manifold darkness which he cannot escape?\(^{35}\)

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\(^{35}\) Holy Qur’ān, 6:122
Hence the truly enlightened one seeks to offer the light and bounties he receives to others, to help them in their quest for enlightenment, and in this way may become worthy of the epithet of being a servant at the courtyard of the Holy Threshold.

**Ziyārat: At the Master’s Service**

Thus far we have indulged ourselves in seeking from the Infallibles of the Holy Family. There is however a level of servitude and obligation expected of us, which demonstrates the comprehensiveness of Islām – a religion of faith, belief, spirituality and action. The Master of the believers describes this relationship in sermon 34 of the Nahj al-Balāgha. He begins by outlining the rights that we enjoy over him which include:

1. He should advise us with sincerity
2. He should collect the monies for the public treasury and spend them according to our needs
3. He should ensure our education so we do not remain ignorant
4. He should nurture us into truly scholarly people

The Imām then mentions the rights he enjoys over us:

1. Loyalty to his allegiance
2. To do Naṣīḥah to him in both his presence and absence
3. To answer his call when he calls us
4. To be obedient to his command

The second item in this list is worthy of some deeper contemplation. The word Naṣīḥah in this context should not be confused with the common usage of the word which translates to ‘advice’. In this instance we are considering the choicest Imām and the truest leader, an Infallible, and the epitome of perfection; so how could advice be given from us to he who is guided by Allāh ﷻ, himself being the Straight Path of salvation?

A closer consideration of the term al-Naṣīḥah will reveal that its true meaning is the opposite meaning of غَيْشُ, a term used to denote any type
of dilutedness or taintedness. For example milk that has been mixed with water is referred to as *Maghush* (مغشوشُ), from the same root as غشَّ. According to this analysis, this would render the meaning of *Naṣīḥah* in this context to its root: freedom from any type of dilutedness or taintedness. This meaning has also been used in the Qur’an where Allâh ﷺ commands the believers to repent with sincerity. The word used, *Nuṣūhan*, stems from the same root as *Naṣīḥah*:

وَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تُوبُوا إِلَى الْلَّهِ تُوبَتَا نَصُوحاً

O you who believe! Repent to Allâh with sincere repentance.\textsuperscript{36}

The scholars of ethics have also elaborated the meaning of *Naṣīḥah* to be the opposite of jealousy (*Ḥasad*). This would add a further dimension to the meaning of *Naṣīḥah* to be that someone who truly possesses the trait of *Naṣīḥah* will wish a bounty for his brother believer that will be in his brother’s benefit and something that he would wish for himself; and naturally such an act would also need to be free from any form of taintedness.\textsuperscript{37} Therefore, offering sincere advice that is open, honest and in the benefit of the one being advised, is only one manifestation of the trait of *Naṣīḥah* and not the entire meaning of the term.

Thus the Imãm in this context, by using the word *Naṣīḥah*, regards one of his rights over us as complete sincerity without any form of taintedness. This will apply both in his presence, and equally in his absence. Our conduct in thought, belief and action, should be such that the master whom we are visiting attains confidence that we are truly his, sincerely for him, and utterly devoted to his cause. The following narration may clarify this further:

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. 66:8
\textsuperscript{37} J. Amoli, *Adab e Finaye Muqarraban*, Isra, Qum, 2002, p.52
The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, “He who can guarantee me five things, I will guarantee for him Paradise … Naṣīḥah for Allāh The Mighty and The Glorious, and Naṣīḥah for His Prophet, and Naṣīḥah for the book of Allāh, and Naṣīḥah for the religion of Allāh, and Naṣīḥah to the Muslim nation.”

In the words of the Prophet, Paradise may be earned by someone who is pure, sincere and untainted in his conduct towards Allāh ﷺ, His Prophet, His Book, His Religion and to the Muslim Ummah.

Ziyārat: A Structured Approach to the Meeting Place at the Two Seas

Marhūm Tustari⁴⁰ has elaborated on a series of special timings at which the benefits and rewards of the Ziyārat of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is particularly enhanced:

1. Every Friday
2. Every Month⁴¹
3. Twice per year in person for those able to afford
4. Thrice per year, to guarantee freedom from poverty
5. On the happy occasions of Nowruz, Mab’ath, Ghadir and others

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³⁸ M. Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, volume 2
³⁹ An allusion to Holy Qur’ān, 18:60
⁴⁰ J. Tustari, al-Khasais al-Husayniyyah, pp.166-168
⁴¹ Tustari quotes Imām al-Sadiq ﷺ, “Whosoever performs his Ziyarah (at least) one time per month, will earn the reward of one hundred thousand martyrs like those slain in Badr.”
6. In Rajab:
   a. On the night preceding the first day of Rajab
   b. On the first day of Rajab
   c. On the night preceding the fifteenth day of Rajab
   d. On the fifteenth day of Rajab

7. In Sha‘bān:
   a. On the third day of Sha‘bān
   b. On the night preceding the fifteenth day of Sha‘bān
   c. On the fifteenth day of Sha‘bān

8. In Ramaḍān:
   a. At any time
   b. On the night preceding the first day of Ramaḍān
   c. On the night preceding the fifteenth day of Ramaḍān
   d. On the last night of Ramaḍān
   e. On each of the nights of Qadr and the subsequent days

9. In Dhu al-Ḥijjah:
   a. On the night preceding the day of ‘Arafā
   b. On the day of ‘Arafā
   c. On the night preceding ‘Eid al-Adhā
   d. On the day of ‘Eid al-Adhā
   e. On the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth days of Dhu al-Ḥijjah
   f. On the day of ‘Eid al-Ghadīr

10. In Muḥarram:
    a. On the night preceding ‘Āshūrā and on the day of ‘Āshūrā
    b. On the thirteenth day of Muharram

11. In Safar:
    a. On the twentieth day of Safar

These are some of the meritorious times mentioned for the Ziyārat of
Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. However, such an action is praiseworthy and would yield benefits to an attentive and sincere heart at any time. We beseech the master of martyrs to allow us his visitation and remembrance as long as Allāh ﷻ grants us life and as long as time subsists.

Abbas Mohamed Husein Ismail
London
3 December 2008
4 Dhu al-Hijjah 1429
The Source of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ and Its Authenticity

Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ is a sacred tradition (ḥadith qudsi) which is authentic and veracious. Its main references are two fundamental works of authority:

1. Miḥbāh al-Mutahjīd by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī
2. Kāmil al-Ziyārāt by Ibn Qūlawayh

All the traditions that narrate this ziyārā are proven by scholars of ḥadith to be sound and veracious. In order to establish their authenticity, they have discussed all the chains of narration at length and proven the reliability of every narrator. Those interested in understanding the intricacies of the traditions may refer to works written in this regard.42

The contemporary venerated jurisconsult, Āyatullāh Sayyid al-Shubayrī al-Zanjānī (may Allah protect his noble spirit) was asked about the authenticity of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ and he responded saying:

 بغرض النظر عن التأييدات الغيبية الواردة بطرق
معتبرة حول زيارتون عاشوراء والتي برأسها دليل على
اعتبار هذه الزيارة الشريفة، فإنَّ السند المذكور
مصدح المتهجذ ۚ ذيل هذه الزيارة صند صحيح.

Disregarding what has been narrated from reliable

42 The contemporary scholar Āyatullāh Ja’far Subḥānī has written a separate treatise on establishing the veracity of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ [http://www.Imāmsadeq.org/book/sub3/raasel-va-maghalat-j3/]
sources about its endorsement from the unseen realm (al-ta’yīdāt al-ghaybiyya), which in itself suffices as a proof of the authenticity of this sacred Ziyārat, the chain of narration mentioned in Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid after this Ziyārat is veracious.\(^43\)

**Other Ways of Establishing Authenticity**

Apart from the aforesaid, the authenticity of this radiant Ziyārat can be established through other methods considered in the science of ḥadīth. For example, there are many other ziyārāt where expressions similar to those contained in Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ appear. This indirectly endorses the veracity of the Ziyārat. Furthermore, much of the information contained in the Ziyārat has come in so many of our traditions, some of which are copiously narrated and even rank among the traditions that are successively narrated (mutawātīr) in terms of meaning at least.

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad, one of the contemporary Shi‘a scholars, when asked about the veracity of the different supplications and ziyārāt, including Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’, says:

ان مضامين الزيارات والأدعية المدرجة في السؤال لا يقتصر ورود مضمونها على تلك الزيارات والأدعية فهناك العديد من الزيارات الأخرى والأدعية الأخرى بأسانيد أخرى قريبة المضمون معنىً ولفظاً لقطعات من الأولى، كما أن هذه الزيارات والأدعية قد ورد كثير من مضامينها في الروايات الوديدة في المعارف، وهي كثير من طوائفها مستفيدة بل بعضها متواتر معنوي أو إجمالي، وعلى هذا

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Indeed the contents of the ziyārāt and supplications under question do not only appear in their respective places, but there are a number of other ziyārāt and supplications with other chains of narration, that have similar contents both in word and meaning. Furthermore most of their contents have been narrated in other traditions on Divine Teachings, many of which have been copiously narrated. Rather some of them are also successively narrated (mutawātir) in their meaning and gist. Therefore being worried about the chains of narration of this Ziyārat or that or this supplication or that, is because of disregarding this intellectual reality that pertains to the science of traditions and narrations.44

Those, therefore, who persist in doubting the authenticity of the Ziyārat overlook the other factors that strongly endorse the Ziyārat. The great Shī‘a scholars have always lived with this Ziyārat and many of them incessantly recite it with great zeal and humility. Some ignorant people, due to the expression of imprecation contained in the Ziyārat try to doubt its authenticity. Such people feel that Islam is a religion of peace and hence such words must not be uttered. In response to them, we say that curse is not any kind of abusive expression. Its reality, as we shall come to learn in the commentary of the Ziyārat is to seek the remoteness of the accursed. Such prayer for remoteness, considering its Qur‘ānic origin, is nothing but harmony with Allāh’s Volition. We shall also learn that cursing those who established the foundation of

44 http://www.rafed.net/research/05/06.html
oppression and evil is also a kind of expression of one’s stance against evil. If one tries to reflect carefully, one would understand that the spirit of cursing evil and its epitomes it to flee from imperfection. It is important for us therefore to tear off the veils of the periphery of the Ziyārat and touch the center and appreciate the universal message that it confers.

La‘n and invoking curse is not merely an emotional state of anger that is evanescent. It is a translation of the reality. Therefore whether we invoke curse on them, or not they will always be distanced from the mercy of Allāh ﷻ, due to the seeds of mischief that they had sown in this world.

Seeking the kernel of the curses, we would come to realize that we have parables of Yazīd and Mu‘āwiya in our time and age too. If we cursed the Yazīd of a thousand years ago, it was not because of himself per se, but his ideology and actions. The Yazīd of today must be repelled the same way. This is the message of curse.

May the Almighty enable us understand the spirit of the Ziyārat, so that we avoid discussing trivial issues that distance us from a sacred effusion that rains down perpetually and requires receptive containers.

The Holy Qur’ān says:

«أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أُودِيَةٌ بِقِدَرٍ هَٰلِكٍ»

He sends down water from the sky whereat the valleys are flooded to [the extent of] their capacity…(13:17)

All Praises Belong to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds
CHAPTER 1

آلسلاَمَ عَلَيْكَ يا أبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهُ

Peace be on you, O entirely obedient servant of Allāh
Peace be on You, O entirely obedient servant of Allāh

COMMENTARY

Salām is an infinitive noun commonly translated as “peace”. Its literal import, however, is:

التَّعْرَى مِنَ الْآفَاتِ ٌ ظَاهِرَةٌ وَبَاطِنَةٌ

“to be free from calamities, whether apparent or hidden.”

Therefore by saying “Al-salāmu ‘alayka” in its invocative sense, we are seeking the state of freedom from every kind of calamity, whether apparent or hidden, for Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ.

It is clear that the Imām ﷺ already enjoys the state of salām and is in fact one of the manifestations of Allāh’s attribute al-Salām. In one of the ziyārāt when addressing him we say:

الْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَوْمَ وُلْدَتَ وَيَوْمَ تَمَوتَ وَيَوْمَ تَبِعُتُ

حياً، أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ حَيٌّ شَهْيدٌ تَرْزُقُ عَندَ رَبِّكَ . . .

1 Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, al-Mufradāt, p. 421.
You were at peace the day you were born, and will be at peace the day you die, and the day you will be raised alive. Surely I bear witness that you are a living martyr receiving sustenance near Your Lord...³

Here the phrase ‘Al-salāmu ‘alaykā’ is taken as a declarative statement, and thus the difference of translation. Therefore we bear witness that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ was and will always remain in the state of salām.

In a tradition about the nocturnal ascent (al-mi’rāḥ) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ it is reported that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ encountered a group of Angels, Divine Apostles and Prophets, it was said to him:

йа мухаммэт саллам ʿалайхим

O Muḥammad, convey your salutations to them.

So he ﷺ said:

آلسَلَامُ عَلیْهِمْ وَرَحْماً اللَّهِ وَبَرَکَاتُهُ

May the peace of Allāh, His mercy and His blessings be upon you

Thereupon Allāh revealed unto him:

آلسَلَامُ وَالْتَحِیَّةُ وَالرَّحْماَ وَالْبَرَکَاتُ أَنَّا وَذَرِیَتِکَا

“Peace, benedictions, mercy and blessings, are you and your progeny.”⁴

Here the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his progeny (dhurriyya) are introduced as “al-salām”. Hence, seeking salām for Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, would mean seeking higher degrees of the state of salām for him, since the

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³ Ibn Qūlawayh, Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, p. 391
⁴ Shaykh al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, v.3, p. 486
levels of *salām* in the plane of contingent existence have no end. The level of *salām* in which there is no kind of imperfection whatsoever is that of *al-Salām al-Muṭlaq* (*the Absolute Peace*), which solely belongs to Almighty Allāh. The Holy Qur’ān says:

»هوَ الْلَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقَدْوِسُ السَّلَامُ

المَوْعِدُ الْمُهْيِمِنُ...«

He is Allāh, other than Whom there is no God, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the Peace [Free from every kind of imperfection], the Securer, the Guardian... *(59:23)*

Commenting on the Divine Name *al-Salām*, ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī in his *Tafsīr al-Mizān* says:

وَالسَّلَامُ مِنْ أَسْمَائِهَ تَعَالَى لَأَنَّ ذَاتَهُ المَتَعَالِيَةَ نَفْسُ

الْخَيْرِ الَّذِي لَا شَرِّ فِيهِ...«

And *al-Salām* is among His Names, for His Exalted Essence is sheer goodness wherein there is no evil... *5*

And in a tradition, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima al-Zahrāʾ referring to this kind of *salām* says:

إنَّ اللَّهُ هُوَ السَّلَامُ، وَمَنِهُ السَّلَامُ، وَإِلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

Surely only Allāh is *the Absolute Peace* and from Him alone comes peace and unto Him alone returns peace *6*

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have once informed Ḥaḍrat

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6 Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *al-Amālī*, p. 175
Khadija ﷺ that Gabriel was nearby and he sent his salāms to her. Thereupon she said:

أَلْلَهُ الْسَلَّامُ وَرَبِّ الْسَلَّامِ وَعَلَى جَبَرِيلِ الْسَلَّامُ.

Allāh is the Absolute Peace, and to Him alone belongs peace and upon Gabriel be peace.

And since the Absolute Peace loves us, He always invites us to His abode of peace:

وَاللَّهُ يُدْعَوُ إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَّامِ

And Allāh invites to the abode of peace...(10:24)

The indefinite verb yadū in the above verse confers the sense of continuity, which means that Allāh constantly invites us towards His abode of peace, which is Paradise. Some commentators however confer a subtler interpretation, and say that Allāh is al-Salām, which means that He is free from every kind of imperfection whatsoever. And when He invites us to Dār al-Salām, He calls us to the state of freedom from every kind of imperfection whatsoever. His call will remain constant, for the stages of salām have no end. In his commentary on the above verse, al-Baḥrānī narrates the following tradition:

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ ﷺ، قَالَ: سَمَّعْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرَ ﷺ يُقُولُ فِي قُوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزِّ وَجَلُّ، عَزِّ وَجَلُّ وَلَنْ يُدْعُوا إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَّامِ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ السَّلَّامَ، هُوَ اللَّهُ عَزِّ وَجَلُّ وَلَا تُخْلِقُ وَلَا تُحْلِقُهُ أَوْلِيَاهُ أَنْجُهَا.

Al-‘Alā’ bin ‘Abd al-Karim reports: I heard Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir ﷺ saying about the verse ‘And Allāh

7 Al-Maghribi, Sharḥ al-Akhlāṣ, v.3, p.21
calls towards the abode of peace': Indeed \textit{al-Salām} is Allāh, the Invincible and Magnificent, and His abode that He created for His near ones is Paradise.\footnote{Al-Bāhrānī, \textit{Al-Burḥān fi Tafsīr al-Qur`ān}, v.3, p. 24}

\textit{Al-janna} in the above tradition is prefixed with the definite article ‘\textit{al}’ which also confers the connotation of a specific kind of paradise. And since Allāh principally always calls towards the best, for his grace pours out infinitely, the loftiest paradise one can ever achieve is \textit{jannat al-liqā‘} (the paradise of meeting Allāh). Here the aspirant of paradise yearns for nothing but the proximity and vision of the All-Beloved. And scholars of insight have said that the journey to perfection never ends. Therefore it is very apt to constantly call every one to the abode of the Absolute Peace.

\begin{center}
\textit{السلام عليكم}
\end{center}

Peace be unto You

The definite article ‘\textit{al}’ in the abovementioned phrase conveys different meanings. It can be taken to allude to something known both to the addressee as well as his addressee.\footnote{In Arabic grammar terminology this kind of \textit{al} is known as \textit{al li al-`ahd al-dhihni}} And because it is clear to all that no kind of perfection comes from anyone save Allāh, for He alone is the Principal Cause of the universe, we are only permitted to seek perfection from Him in the independent sense. Therefore if we employ the phrase \textit{al-salāmu ‘alayka} in the invocative sense, we can translate it as ‘the peace from Allāh be upon you’. This is when we take the article \textit{al} to refer to the specific peace that comes from Allāh, which is a Divine bestowal and creation. However if we translate \textit{al-salām} in the phrase \textit{al-salāmu ‘alayka} as “the specific peace that Allāh possesses”, then we are
seeking Absolute Peace for Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. In other words, we are seeking the ultimate state for the Imām ﷺ. Seeking such kind of peace is not unprecedented. In the well-known supplication of al-Saḥar of the Holy month of Ramaḍān we seek the Divine Names in their perfect form. In fact the innate nature of every human being has been fashioned to aspire for the Infinite.

أَسْلَامُ عَلَيْكَ
You are at peace from my side

If the za‘īr however were to consider ‘al’ to refer to himself, the above phrase can be taken as declarative. In other words, he is trying to say: سلامي عليك Salāmī ‘alayka (You are at peace from my side). Consequently, the za‘īr is trying to assure the mazūr (the visted one) that he is at peace with him and he would not do anything that would cause harm or disturb him. Instead, he would manifest in himself things that would be geared to seek the mazūr’s protective physical as well as spiritual life. This is one of the very important stations of the za‘īr, since he is in fact reasserting his covenant with Almighty Allāh, by informing his beloved Imām ﷺ that besides avoiding any thing that would cause harm to him ﷺ, he would do those things that would manifest the spirit of peace as well.

One of the things that does not concur with the spirit of salām is to sin. If one utters the above statement and then engages in sin, he will not have maintained the spirit of the salām that he uttered. This is because the fourteen infallibles ﷺ have the ability to witness the actions of

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10 In order to understand this particular kind of usage better, consider verse 19:47 where Prophet Ibrāhīm ﷺ assures Āzar that he would not harm him. He employs the phrase ‘Salāmun ‘alaikum...’ Exegetes of Qur’an well-grounded in the Arabic language, like Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī in his Anwār al-Tanzil wa Āsrār al-Ta’wil take this view into consideration.
their followers. And when they find them sinning, they get disturbed. Following are narrations that establish the infallible Imām’s ability to vision the deeds of his followers:

1. We humbly express in the well-known Ziyārat al-Jāmi’ a al-Kābirā.

...You are the upright path and the witnesses of the abode of extinction [i.e. the world...]

2. Imām al-Ṣādiq is reported to have said:

Believers referred to in the verse “And say, go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the believers [as well]” (9:105) are the Immaculate Imāms.

Hence the Imāms can behold our mistakes and wrong deeds, and when they do so, they get upset:

1. Thiqat al-Islām al-Kulaynī narrates the following tradition in his al-Kāfi:

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11 Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummī, Mafāṭīḥ al-Jinān, p. 622
12 Allāma al-Majlīsī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.23, p. 339. It should be noted that Imām al-Ṣādiq mentions the most perfect extensions (atamm al-maṣādiq) of the believers as the Imāms. Otherwise the verse clearly tells us that one who has really achieved the expected state of belief can enjoy a station which would enable him to see the actions of others.
Sumā’a reports: I heard him (i.e. Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ) say: What is the matter with you? Why do you displease the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ? Thereupon a man asked him: And how do we displease him? The Imām ﷺ said: Don’t you know that your actions are presented before him; and when he finds a sin in them, he is displeased; therefore do not displease the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ but (rather) make him happy.\(^\text{13}\)

2. Al-Kulaynī also narrates the following tradition:

‘Abdullāh bin Abān al-Zayyāt, a distinguished personality near Imām al-Riḍā ﷺ, reports: I said to

\(^{13}\) Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.1, p. 219
al-Riḍā ﷺ: Pray to Allāh for me and my family, and he said: Don’t I do that? I swear by Allāh surely your actions are presented to me every day and night. “I was extremely amazed at that,” says al-Zayyāt. Then the Imām ﷺ said: Do you not read the Book of Allāh, the Invincible and Exalted, who says: (And say, Go on working: Allāh will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the faithful [as well])?[9:105] I swear by Allāh ‘the faithful’ mentioned in this verse is ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib.’

Hence engaging in sin, and being inconsistent with the spirit of salām, makes us violate our covenant with the Imām ﷺ. Those, therefore who recite their ziyārat without considering this vital point, are either hypocrites or weaklings who like to utter lies infront of the Imām ﷺ. There is a group of sinful reciters, however, whom the self that excessively invites one to evil (al-nafṣ al-ammāra) has weakened, but are nevertheless hopeful for change. Whenever such people recite the Ziyārat, they should experience utter humiliation, and always seek change. They must realize that in order for one to prosper and change, one should perpetually seek Divine Succor and make a firm resolve to leave all those things that are forbidden, however minute they may seem to appear.

May peace from Allāh be upon you

Sometimes the article ‘al’ is employed as a substitute for the second particle (muḍāfūn ilayhī) of a genitive construction. For example, when

14 Ibid.
referring to a book whose owner is known to be a certain Zayd, we can say *al-kitābu* (the book) instead of saying *kitābu Zaydin* (Book of Zayd). Here the article ‘al’ is a substitute for Zayd. Likewise ‘al’ in ‘al-salāmu’ can be a substitute for a particular person. And bearing in mind that there is no perfection whatsoever but that it originates from Allāh, and that the preposition ʿalā indicates that the origin of salām is from a higher plane of existence and we know that there is no Absolutely High save Allāh, ‘al’ can be said to refer to Allāh. In this case the statement *al-salāmu ‘alayka* either means peace from Allāh be upon you, or ‘peace of Allāh’ be upon you.

I surrender all my affairs to you

Another meaning of salām documented by lexicographers is ‘al-taslīm’ (to surrender). Therefore the statement ‘Al-salāmu ‘alaykā’ would mean ‘I surrender myself to you’. In other words, we are trying to tell Imām al-Ḥusayn ותק to “I am your slave. Whatever you say, I shall obey. Your desire is mine. If you want me to reform myself and others, I shall do so.” If we look at the matter from an ontological (*takwīn*) point of view, we come to realize that whether we declare our slavehood or not, the Imām’s light, which according to different traditions, is an intermediary of grace (*wāsiṭat al-fayḍ*), dominates us. Nevertheless the Divine law has facilitated volitional action, and thus nothing is forced on anyone. When surrendering ourselves to the Imām ותק let us secretly ask the Imām ותק to assist us and make us serious and keep us steadfast in our commitment.
Peace be unto You

Sometimes, the article ‘al’ in al-salām conveys either of the following meanings: (1) All kinds of peace, (2) The most perfect kind of peace, or (3) The absolute peace. This is when the definite article ‘al’ denotes ‘genus’ (al-jins) or ‘species’. Grammatically, whenever the definite article ‘al’ is taken to denote genus, one of the following three implications can be gotten:

- All the extensions (maṣādīq) of the genus (jins) are taken into consideration. For example, in chapter al-‘Aṣr we say: Inna al-insāna lafī khusr, we mean ‘every human being is in loss’ (103:2) because al in ‘al-insān’ denotes genus and all the extensions of genus are taken into consideration. In our case, when we say al-salāmu ‘alayka’ in the invocative sense, we mean ‘all kinds of peace be upon you’.

- All the extensions of the perfect attributes of the genus are taken into consideration. For example, when we say hādha huwa al-rajul, we mean, ‘this is a perfect man’ because ‘al-rajul’ denotes ‘the man who has all the perfections of a man’. In our case, when we say al-salāmu ‘alayka in the invocative sense, we mean ‘perfect peace be upon you’.

- The genus (jins) in its absolute sense. In other words no limitation is attributed to the genus. It denotes an absolute form. Therefore when we say: al-salāmu ‘alayka, we can mean Absolute Peace without any limitations, be upon you. In this case, therefore, we are seeking the highest level of peace for Imām al-Ḥusayn ʿa.s.
Agrammatical intricacy worthy of consideration is that the preposition ‘alá in Al-salâmu ‘alayka denotes the sense of envelopment١٥. In other words we are asking Almighty Allâh to envelop and cover Imâm al-Ḥusayn with the state of peace and freedom from every apparent and hidden calamity that is according to his noble essence. Therefore al-salâmu ‘alayka would mean: “May Allâh envelop you with the state of peace.”

Another important point to bear in mind is that the second person masculine pronoun ّ ‘ka’ in ‘alayka presupposes the presence of the zâ’îr’s addressee, and this obliges him to attain receptivity to comprehend and appreciate the same. We do not use the third person pronoun ّ hû to indicate that our invocation of salâm is for an absent mazûr (the visted one). Some of the great saints, due to their spiritual struggle, would attain levels of receptivity that would enable them to see the Imâm ّ or listen to the response that our Imâm ّ would give. It is narrated that the late Rajab ‘Ali al-Khayyâţ, who was a tailor by occupation, due to his strict observation of Islamic laws and harmony with the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt ّ, was endowed with a

penetrating vision and could appreciate what others cannot. Shaykh Muḥammadī Rayshāhī in his collection of the memoirs of this late saint narrates the following interesting account about him:

One of Shaykh Rajab ‘Alī Khayyāt’s devotees said that the Shaykh had once held a session in the house of one of his friends. Before starting his talk, he felt somehow weak due to hunger and asked for some bread. Half a loaf of bread was brought for him to eat, and thereafter he began the meeting. The following night he said: “Last night I made salutations to the holy Imāms ﷺ but I did not see them. I pleaded to find the reason. I was told intuitively: ‘You had half of that food and the hunger alleviated. Why then did you eat the other half?! Having some food that is enough for the body’s need is all right, but extra to that would cause veil and darkness.’”

Another interesting account is narrated by Āyatullāh Mūḥammad Taqī Bahjat, a well-known contemporary saint, who is quoted by one of his disciples to have said:

One day Shaykh Bahjat (may Allāh elevate his status) said to us: In the past people would travel to the city of Mashhad on camels and mules. Once some farmers of Jāsīb, a region of Qum, travelled to Mashhad for the Ziyārat of Imām al-Riḍā ﷺ. On their return they saw a man from their village carrying a lot of fodder. So they reproved him saying: ‘O Shaykh, leave struggle for the world, for that would not benefit you and go to Mashhad at

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16 Muḥammad al-Rayshāhī, Kīmīyāye Maḥabbat (Elixir of Love), p. 94
least once, and they started reproving and reprehending him. The old man said to them: ‘Surely you went to the ziyara of the Imām ِ, but did the Imām ِ respond to your salutation (salām)? They said: What is this that you are saying? Is it possible for an Imām who has died to respond to a salutation? The old man said: what do you mean by saying alive or dead? Indeed the Imām ِ sees us and listens to our speech, and what is the benefit of Ziyārat if it is one sided? They said: Is it possible for you to enable this to happen? He said: Yes; then he stood facing Mashhad and said: “Al-salāmu ‘alayka ayyuha al-Imām al-Thāmin” (Peace be unto you, O the Eight Leader of Guidance), and he heard a call that said: ‘Wa ‘alaika al-Salām.’ (And upon you [too] be peace...’). Hearing this the farmers regretted about what they had said to the old man and felt ashamed of themselves.17

Dear readers, these were occasions encountered by men who are not reported to have apparently immersed themselves in intellectual occupations throughout the day as is the case with Islamic scholars. But yet we see that they were able to attain receptivity that would qualify them to see or listen to the call of the Imām ِ. Our endeavor therefore should be to eradicate the darkness that we have accumulated in our hearts and lift the veils, so that when we convey our humble salutations, we are privileged to listen to the sacred response of our Imām ِ.

17 Maḥmūd al-Badrī, Uswat al-‘Ārifīn, p. 215
May Allāh always envelop you with peace

Another important allusion worthy of consideration is hidden in the kind of sentence we employ when seeking peace for the Imām or declaring the same. Observe that the above sentence is a nominal sentence (jumla ismiyya). It starts with a noun and not a verb. Therefore it signifies continuity and permanence. Hence we can either translate it as “May Allāh always envelop you with peace” or “You will always be enveloped with peace from my side.”

I am at peace with you

Some authoritative lexicographers define salām as extreme coherence (al-muwāfaqa al-shadidā). Considering this definition, if we take the phrase ‘Al-salāmu ʿalayka as declarative then we are expressing our extreme harmony and unity with Imām al-Ḥusayn. It is the fear of such state of salām expressed by the revolutionary zāʾir that led tyrants like the the Abbasid al-Manṣūr al-Dawāniqī, Hārūn al-Rashīd and al-Mutawakkil among other oppressors to hamper and even kill anyone who visited the shrine of Imām al-Ḥusayn.

In his Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyīn, Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahānī says:

Al-Mutawakkil was very hostile towards the descendants of Abū Ṭālib, cruel towards their group

18 Jār Allāh al-Zamakhshārī, Tafsīr al-Kashfā, v. 4, p. 401
19 Al-Muṣṭafawī, al-Tahqiq, v. 5, p. 188.
and suspicious of their activities...It occurred to him that ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khāqān, his vizir, also used to think badly of them and the denunciation of their activity seemed good to him. He carried out actions against them that none of the ‘Abbasids before him had carried out. Among these, he ploughed up the grave of al-Husayn and removed all trace of it. He put armed garrisons on the rest of the roads. Anyone they found making a pilgrimage to it, they brought to him. He killed or punished them severely.20

Despite all these threats, the aspirants of al-Ḥusayn flocked like love birds yearning to express their love before their beloved whose love had soaked their hearts and gave them no respite. Abū al-Faraj narrates:

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ashnānī reported to me: My promise to perform the pilgrimage seemed impossible in those days because of the terror. Then I decided to risk my life to do it. A perfume merchant helped me to do that. We set out to perform the pilgrimage, hiding by day and travelling by night until we came to the area of al-Ghādirīyyah. From there we departed in the middle of the night and went into between two garrisons so that we came to the grave of al-Ḥusayn. It was hidden from us. We began to sniff for signs of it and search for some aspect of it until we came upon it. The structure, which had been around it, had been torn down and burnt. Water had been made to flow over it and the place where bricks had been sunk down so

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that it had become like a ditch. We performed the rituals of the pilgrimage to him. We threw ourselves down on the ground and smelled a fragrance from it which I have never smelled anything like. It was like some kind of perfume. I asked the perfume merchant, who was with me, ‘What fragrance is this?’ ‘By God, I have never smelled any kind of perfume like it,’ he replied. We made our farewells and put marks around the grave in a number of places. When al-Mutawakkl was killed, we gathered with a group of the descendants of Abū Ṭālib and the Shī‘ah to go to the grave. We removed the marks and restored it to the state which it had been before.  

In their astute and accurate directions, the Imāms would also encourage their followers to go to visit the shrine of Imām al-Ḥusayn even at the cost of death and martyrdom. They would inform them that the more the fear of being attacked the more the reward for visiting al-Ḥusayn. ‘Allāmah Majlisī quotes Muḥammad bin Muslim saying:

فَقَالَ لِي أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ مُحَمَّدُ بْنٍ عَلِيٍّ ﻟَاتِيًّا: هَلْ تَأْتِيُ قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ ﻟَيْلَةٍ؟ فَقَالَ: نَعْمَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ وَرِجْلٍ.
فَقَالَ لَهُ: مَا كَانَ مِنْ هَذَا أَشْدَدْ قَالَ: أَّبَابُ قَبْرِيَّ عَلَى قُدْرَ الخَوْفِ وَمِنْ خَافٍ فِي إِثْيَانِهِ آمَنَ اللَّهُ رَوَعَهُ بِيَوْمِ يَقْوُمُ النَّاسُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنِ وَانْصَرَفَ بِالْمَغْفُرَةِ وَسَلَّمَتْ عَلَيْهِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ، وَزَارَهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ وَدَعَا لَهُ...  

Imām Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad bin ‘Alī (al-Bāqir) said to me: Do you come to the grave of al-Ḥusayn? I said: Yes, but in dread and fear. The Imām said: ‘If the situation is severe, its reward would be in proportion to the fear; and whatsoever visits him in fear, Allāh would protect his heart on the Day when the people would stand for the Lord of the Universe; and he would leave in the state of being forgiven, and the angels would send their salutations to him, and the Holy Prophet would visit him and pray for him...\(^2\)

The Imāms likewise expressed their extreme attachment to Imām al-Ḥusayn. Rather they would encourage others to pray for them near the radiant dome of Imām al-Ḥusayn. Consider the following traditions:

1. ‘Allāma Majlisī in vol. 101 of his Biḥār al-Anwār quotes Ibn Abī Ya‘fur to have said:

\[\text{قَلْتُ لَآبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ الصَّرَاطُمُ: دَعَانَاِيُ الشَّوَاقُ إِلَيْكَ أَنْ تَجَسَّمَتْ إِلَيْكَ عَلَى مَشْقَقٍ فَقَالَ لِي: لَا تَشْكُرُ رَبِّكَ فَهَلَّا أَتَتْ مِنْ كَانَ آمَنَ أَعْظَمُ حَقًا "عَلَيْكَ مَنِيّ؟ فَكَانَ مِنْ قُوْلِهِ: فَهَلَّا أَتَتْ مِنْ كَانَ آمَنَ أَعْظَمُ حَقًا عَلَيْكَ مَنِيّ أَشْدَدْ عَلَيْ مِنْ قُوْلِهِ "لَا تَشْكُرُ رَبِّكَ. قَلْتُ: وَمِنْ آمَنَ أَعْظَمُ عَلَيْ حَقًا مَنِيّ؟ فَقَالَ: الْحُسَيْنِ بِنِيَ عَلَيْ أَلاَ أَتَتْ الْحُسَيْنِ "فَدَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ عَنْدِهِ وَشَهَّكَتْ إِلَيْهِ حَوَائِجَكَ? \]

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I said to Abū ‘Abdillāh [al-Ṣādiq ﷺ]: My fervent desire to meet you called me to bear the difficulties to come to you. The Imām ﷺ said: ‘Do not complain to your Lord; and why didn’t you come to one who has a greater right over you than me?’ Ibn Abī Ya‘fūr says: His statement ‘Why didn’t you go to one who has a greater right over you than me?’ made me feel more uneasy than his statement “Do not complain to your Lord”. So I said: ‘And who has a greater right over me than yourself?’ The Imām ﷺ said: “Al-Ḥusayn bin ‘Alī ﷺ; why didn’t you come to al-Husayn ﷺ and pray to Allāh near him, and raise your complaint to Him about your needs?”

2. Ibn Qūlawayh reports in his Kāmil al-Ziyārāt that Abū Hāshim al-Ja‘farī, one of the companions of Imām al-Hādī ﷺ is reported to have said:

داخِلتُ عَلَى أَبِي الْحُسَنَ عَلَيْيَ بِن مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ وَهُوَ ﻣُهَمْوَمُ عَلِيْلٗ، فَقَالَ لَيْ: يَا أَبا هَاشَمُ ابْعِثُ رَجُلًا مِن مَوَانِيْنَ الْحَائِرِ يَدْعُو الْلَّهِ لَيْ، فَخَرَجَتْ مِنْ عَنْدِهِ، فَأَسْتَقْبَلَنِي عَلَيْيَ بِن بَلَال فَأَعْلَمْتُهُ مَا قَالَ لِيْ، وَسَأَلَهُ أَن يَكُونُ الْرَّجُلُ الْدَّيْ يَخْرُجُ فَقَالَ: ألسُمُّ وَالطَّاعَةُ، وَلَحْكَمْنِي أَفْوَلُ؛ اَنْهُ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ الْحَائِرِ إِذْ كَانَ بِمَنْزِلَةٍ مِنْ فِي الْحَائِرِ، وَدُعَاؤُهُ لَنْفَسِهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ دَعَائِي لَهُ الْحَائِرِ، فَأَعْلَمْتُهُ ﷺ.

I came to Abū al-Ḥasan (Imām ‘Alī al-Naqī ﷺ) while he had fever and was unwell. He said to me: ‘O Abā Hishâm, send one of our followers to the Ḥā’ir (the dome of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ) to pray to Allāh for me. So I left him and met ‘Alī bin Bilāl. I told him what the Imām ﷺ had said and requested him to carry out the duty, and he was at his service. ‘However,’ said he, ‘indeed the Imām ﷺ is greater than the Ḥā’ir, for he equals the station of the one who is buried in the Ḥā’ir, and his supplication for himself is better than my supplication for him in the Ḥā’ir.’ Abū Hishâm says: I informed the Imām ﷺ about what ‘Alī bin Bilāl said, whereupon he said: Tell him that the Apostle of Allāh was better than the Bayt al-Ḥarām and the Ḥajar al-Aswad, whereas he would circumambulate round the Ka’bah and touch the Ḥajar; and indeed Allāh has places where He loves to be called, so that he may respond to the call of the caller, and the Ḥā’ir is one among them.²⁴

²⁴ Ja’far bin Muḥammad bin Qūlawayh, Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, p. 460
Al-Salām, as we came to learn earlier, is one of the attributes of Almighty Allāh, which some of his noble servants, like the infallible Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt ശ, due to their utter submission exemplify. The path for others too is left open. Every human being is invited to the abode of peace, and therefore he must strive to attain the same. But a true believer has an all-embracing heart, and thus yearns for the betterment of others too. Perhaps that is why we are encouraged to greet others with al-salām. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

السَّلَامُ أَسْمَى مِنْ أَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَأَفْضِلُوهُ بِنَجْمٍ

Al-Salām is a name from among the names of Almighty Allāh. Therefore, spread the same between yourselves...

25

In fact the word muslim has originally been derived from Allāh’s Name al-Salām. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

تَسَمَّى اللَّهُ بِاسْمِيَ سَمِيَ بِهِمَا أَمْتِى هُوَ السَّلَامُ

وَسَمِيَ أَمْتِيَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَهُوَ الْمُؤْمِنَ وَسَمِيَ أَمْتِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Allāh named Himself with two names with which he [also] named my nation: He is al-Salām and He named my nation muslims, and He is al-Mu’min

25 Shaykh al-Ṭabbrī, Mishkāt al-Anwār, p.349
and He named my nation *mu’mins*.

Perhaps due to this reason, scholars like Sayyid al-Shubbar in his *al-Anwār al-Lāmi’a* and ‘Allāma Majlisī in his *Biḥār al-Anwār* believe that one of the meanings of *al-salāmū ‘alayka* is:

َاسمُ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ

May Allāh always envelop you with His Name *al-Salām*.

Therefore, Almighty Allāh not only requires each of us to be at peace, but teaches us to ask for our Muslim brothers and sisters to be availed of the same. It should be understood however that the levels of peace are infinite. Therefore invoking peace for others while we greet them should never cease.

أَسْلَامُ عَلَيْكَ

I declare that Absolute Peace envelops you

Scholars of insight mention one of the meanings of the phrase *al-salamu ‘alayka* as “the Divine Name *al-Salām* envelops you, and you are his manifestation”. In this case the phrase is taken as declarative and *al-Salām* is taken to mean the Divine Name *al-Salām*. In his *Sharḥ al-Asmā‘*, Mullā Hādi Sabzawārī when discussing about the Divine Name *al-Salām* says:

أَحَدُ مَعَانَيْ قُوْلُنَا: سَلَامُ عَلِيْكَ، أَنَّ السَّلَامَ

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27 This meaning has been narrated by both the Shi‘a as well as the Sunni scholars in their commentaries of Qur‘ān and lexicons as well.
The Sacred Effusion

...one of the meanings of our statement ‘salamun ‘alayk’ is that the Peace, the Securer, the Guardian envelops you and you are His manifestation.

Peace be unto you

It is important to understand the remote distance between the sincerity of one who merely declares or verbally seeks peace for the mazūr (‘the visited one’) and one who personifies peace in every dimension of his being and actively struggles to ensure the same for the mazūr. In fact some of our traditions clearly emphasize the vital role of the practical application of al-salām. Look at the following traditions:

1. ‘Allāma Majlisi narrates the following in his Biḥār al-Anwār:

 جاءت جارية للحسن بطلق ريحان فقال لها: آنت حرب لوجه الله فقيل له في ذلك فقال أديبنا الله تعالى فقال: إذا حييتكم البينة وكونا أحسنسا منها اعتقها.

One of the slave women of Imām al-Ḥasan came to him with a bouquet of aromatic plants, whereupon the Imām said to her: You are free for the sake of Allāh. So the Imām was asked as to why did he free her, and he said: ‘Almighty Allāh trained us and said: ‘And When you are greeted with a greeting,

28 Mulla Ḥadī al-Sabzawārī, Sharḥ al-Asmā‘, p. 324
greet with a better one than it, or return it... ‘(4:86).
And to let her free is better return than her gift.²⁹

Therefore the tahiyya (lit. seeking another’s life & well-being (talab al-
ḥayāt)) referred to in the above verse conventionally translated as
‘greeting’ is not limited to a verbal expression of peace, but embraces
other examples of its etymological definition too such as ‘doing virtue
to another’.

2. Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ is reported to have said:

أَلْمَرَدُ بِالْتَحْيَةِ فِي قُوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: «وَإِذَا حَبِّيْتُمْ بِتَحْيَةٍ
السَّلَامُ وَعِيْرُهُ مِنَ الْبَرَّ وَالْحَسَنِ.

Al-tahiyyah (greeting) in the verse ‘And when you are
greeted with a greeting...’ is to greet and perform
other acts of virtue and good.³⁰

These are traditions that show how practical salām can be. Many of us
do not realize this and conjecture that we have earned ample blessings
and reward for our salāms as the holy Qur’ān and the sacred traditions
of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his infallible progeny clearly exemplify.
The Holy Qur’ān says:

فَإِذَا دَخَلَتِمْ بِيُوتًا فَسُلَّمُوا عَلَى أَنفَسِكُم مَنْ
عَنْدَ اللَّهِ مِبَارَكَةٌ طِبِيعَةٌ كَذَلِكَ يَبْيِئُنَّ اللَّهُ لِحَكَمِ
الآيَاتِ لَعَلِّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

So when you enter houses, greet yourselves with a
salutation from God, blessed and pleasant. Thus
does God clarify His signs for you so that you may

²⁹ Allāmah al-Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.81, p. 273
³⁰ Shaykh al-Huwayzī, Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqa‘ālayn, v.1, p. 524
apply reason. (24:61)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

إِذَا دَخَلَ أَحَدُكُم بِيَتٍ فَلِيَسْلَمُ، فَإِنَّهُ يُنَزِّلُهُ
الْبَرَّةُ، وَتَؤْنِسُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ

When one enters his house, he must say salām, for that makes blessings descend on the house and the angels become fond of it.31

Should we restrict these luminant words of guidance to the realm of speech or do they portray the loftier aspects of the reality of al-salām? In fact if there is no coherence between what the tongue utters and what the heart and mind feel and what the actions portray, then how can we claim the honesty of the musallīm (greeter)?

يا يَا بَعْدَيْاللَّهِ
O Abā ‘Abdillāh

The word ‘yā’ is a vocative particle (harfū nīdā) employed to call the munāda (vocative). In simple terms it is a word used to call someone. However, grammarians hold that ‘yā’ is specifically employed for that vocative who is at a far distance32. For example, if we would like to call ‘Alī who is at a far distance, we say ‘بَعْدَيْ ‘Yā ‘Alī!’. The distance considered here was physical and spatial. Rhetoricians however employ the same when they would like to praise an exalted personality even if

31 Muḥammat al-Rayshahri, al-Khayr wa al-Baraka fi al-Kitāb wa al-Sunna, p. 206
32 Al-Ṣabbān in his glosses over Shamʿūnī’s commentary over the Alfiyya of Ibn Mālik, says: ‘Indeed a far object is only called with particles that contain letters of protraction (harf al-madd), because when a far object is called it requires one to prolong his voice, so that the vocative can hear. (Al-Ṣabbān, Ḥāšiyat al-Ṣabbān, v.3, p. 1145.)
he was very near. We address Almighty Allāh, for example, who is closer to us than our jugular veins as ۚۛۚ Yā Allāh, because the Essence of Allāh is Exalted. In the well-known verse of the Throne (Āyat al-Kursī) we declare this reality of Allāh’s Exalted Essence as:

وَهُوَ الْعُلَمِيُّ العَظِيمُ

And He Alone is always the Extremely High & Great (2:255)

In our present situation our vocative and addressee is Imām al-Ḥusayn ۚۛۚ who due to his freedom from the limitations of the material world and comprehensive being is intensely close to us and can see and listen to us too. Hence the reason we employ the vocative particle ‘yā and say ‘Yā Abā ‘Abdillāh’ is to express his exaltedness and confess our lowliness. The people of heart, however, can well appreciate the implication manifested when the ‘the lover calls the beloved’. The implication is to get near to the Beloved. Hence when we call Abā ‘Abdillāh (whose import, as we shall soon expound means ‘the utterly submissive slave of Allāh’) we are seeking his closeness, or in other words ‘the attributes that personifies his exalted being’.

أباعبدالله
O Father of ‘Abdollāh

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33 This is one phrase where the comprehensive beauty of the Qur’an can well be appreciated for all those who can appreciate the subtle issues of Arabic grammar and syntax. This small verse describes so many things at the same time: (1) It is a nominal sentence (al-jumla al-ismiyya) and thus it signifies permanence (2) the pronoun huwā denotes ‘specificity’ and thus these two attributes that follow it are originally reserved for Allāh. (3) The form ‘āl similar to فعل ‘fa’l’ is known as ‘al-ṣifâ al-mushbiḥa’ in the Arabic, which denotes intensity and permanence.
The words *Abū ‘Abdillāh* literally mean ‘the father of the obedient slave of Allāh’. Arabs honorify their fellow brothers by calling them with a teknonym (*kunya*) a name that mostly mentions the first or one of the offsprings of the ‘named one’.) Hence if a person had a son named ‘Abdullāh, he is called *Abū ‘Abdillāh*, which means ‘father of ‘Abdullāh’. One of the reasons behind the Imām *Abū ‘Abdillāh* being called Abū ‘Abdillāh is that he had an offspring called ‘Abdullāh, famously known as al-*radi*’ (one who is still breastfeeding). He was mercilessly martyred by the enemies after Imām al-Ḥusayn read *adhan* in his ear following his birth. In the well-known *Ziyārat al-Nāhiya al-Muqaddasa* Imām al-Zamān *addresses this new born as:*

السلام على عبد الله بن الحسين الطفيلي الرضيع...

Perpetual peace be unto ‘Abdillāh, the one who was still breastfeeding...\(^{34}\)

*Abā ‘Abdillāh*  
Obedient Slave of Allāh

Sometimes however, someone is attributed with a teknonym (*kunya*) not because he is the father of so and so, but because he enjoys a certain quality. For example, one who is well known for his open-handedness and generosity is called Abū Jawād. In our case, a number of commentators of this exalted *Ziyārat*, opine that one of the reasons the holy Imām *addresses this new born as:*

\(^{34}\)al-Shāhīd al-Awwal, *al-Mazār*, p. 149
after his birth which subtly alludes to the submissive state of Imām ޑނެޓިވެރުކެޒުރިބިތ ever since his childhood. In a tradition narrated in Biḥār al-Anwār, Asmā’ is quoted to have said:

‘On the seventh day after his birth, the Prophet ރުކްނަމަނ came to me and said: ‘Bring me my son.’ So I brought Husayn to him...Then he kept him on his bosom and said: ‘O Abā ‘Abdillāh, it is indeed difficult for me...then he burst into tears...’

This tradition indicates that the Imām ޑނެޓިވެރުކެޒުރިބިތ got the tekronym since his very early childhood and thus enjoyed an exalted status since then.

O Utterly Submissive Servant of Allāh

It may be argued that if the za’ir himself, due to his submissiveness to Almighty Allāh is also an ‘abd of Allāh, why should he still call the Imām with the vocative particle ‘yā? The answer to this is very simple: ‘ubūdiyya and submissiveness are of different levels. The distance between the stage of ‘ubūdiyya that the infallible Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt ޑނެޓިވެރުކެޒުރިބިތ occupy and the stage their true followers enjoy is extremely vast. Consider the following narrations:

1. ‘Ibād bin Ṣuhayb is reported to have said:

I asked al-Ṣadiq, Ja‘far bin Muḥammad (upon whom be peace): Inform me whether Abu Dharr is better than you the Ahl al-Bayt? The Imām said: ‘O son of Ṣuhayb, how many months are there in one year?’ I said: ‘twelve months.’ Thereupon he said: ‘And how many among them are sacred (ḥurum)?’ I said ‘Four months.’ He said: ‘And is the month of Ramadān among them?’ I said: ‘No.’ He said: ‘Then is the month of Ramadān greater or the four sacred months?’ I said: ‘Rather the Holy month of Ramadān is greater.’ The Imām then said: ‘So is the case with us, the Ahl al-Bayt; none can be compared to us.’

2. Jābir al-Ju‘fī, a companion of Imām al-Bāqir is reported to have narrated that Imām al-Bāqir once said to him:

Surely we have an exalted status near Allâh! Were we not there, Allâh would not have created any heaven nor earth, nor any Paradise nor Hell Fire, nor any sun or moon, or any Jinnî or human being. O Jâbir! We are the Ahl al-Bayt; none can be compared to us; whosoever compares any human being with us, has disbelieved (or covered (the truth)). O Jâbir! Through us Allâh emancipated you, and through us He guided you; and, I swear by Allâh we have guided you to your Lord...\(^{37}\)

3. Imâm ‘Alî is reported to have said to Abu Dharr:

\[
\text{اَعْلَمُ مَا اَبَذَّرْتُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَخَلِيفَةُ عَلَى عِبَادَهُ لَا تَجُلِّنَا أَرْبَأَبَا وَقَوْلُوا فِي فَضْلِهِ مَا شَتَّمَ فَانَحْكَمُ لَا تَبْلَغُونَ صَنُّهُ مَا فِيْنَا وَلَا نَهْيَتِهِ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ قَدْ أَطَعَانَا أَكْبَرَ وَأَعْظَمَ مَا يَصْفَهُ وَأَصْفَحُكَمُ أُوْيَخْطَرْ عَلَى قَلَبِ أَحْدِهِمْ فَإِذا١٣٧\]

\(^{37}\) Muḥammad bin Jurayr al-Ṭabarî al-Shi‘ī, Nawâdir al-Mu’jizât, p. 124
عَرَفَتُمُونَا هَكَذَا فَأَنْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ.

Know, O Abū Dharr, that I am an utterly submissive servant of Allāh on the earth and His vicegerent over His other servants; do not consider us (the Ahl al-Bayt) to be Lords, and then say about our merits whatever you want, for certainly you would not comprehend the essence of our station, nor its zenith, for verily Allāh bestowed on us better and greater than what describers among you describe or what has penetrated in the imagination of anyone; so when you know us in this way, you surely are the believers.\(^{38}\)

أَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ

Peace be unto you O Abā ‘Abdillāh

One of the areas where it is recommended for one to call his fellow Muslim brother with a teknonym is when he is present before him. In our case, therefore, because we know that Imām al-Ḥusayn is present before us, and we address him using the second person pronoun “kāf”, it is apt to begin our address with his teknonym. Imām al-Riḍā is reported to have said:

إِذَا ذَكَرْتَ الرُّجُلَ وَهُوَ حَاضِرٌ فَقَبْنِهِ وَإِذَا كَانَ غَابِبًا فَقَسَمْهُ

If you mention a man in his presence, then do so using his teknonym (kunya), and if he were to be

\(^{38}\) ‘Allāma al-Majlīsī, \textit{Bihār al-Anwār}, v.26, p.2
absent, then call him by his name.\textsuperscript{39}


\begin{quote}
O father of ‘Abdullāh
\end{quote}

It is important to look at the root meaning of the word ‘ab’ in Abā ‘Abdillāh which we normally translate as ‘father’. In the Arabic language the word ِب ‘ab’ literally means:


Whosoever is a cause in the existence of a thing or its reform or its manifestation is known as ‘ab’.\textsuperscript{40}

And since Imām al-Ḥusayn  يستغفر الله is converges with the Muḥammadan Light (al-Nūr al-Muḥammadi) which is the intermediary of Divine Grace, he is a sabāb (cause) in the existence, reform and manifestation of the caravan of human beings. Therefore he is Abū ‘Abdillāh. Whatever grace any servant of Allāh receives is through the Muḥammadan Light.


In a well-known tradition, we read:

\textsuperscript{39} ‘Allāma al-Majlīṣī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.75, p. 335
\textsuperscript{40} Sharḥ Kalimāt Amīr al-Mu’minīn ہے، p.15
And because Imām al-Ḥusayn  was from among the infallible Imāms  responsible to guide humanity and teach them the path of salvation, he is known as Abū ‘Abdillāh meaning ‘father or tutor of a true servant of Allāh’. In this case every human being enjoys from al-Ḥusayn’s banquet of practical submission. The previous Prophets of Allāh are no exception. Imām al-Ḥusayn  also serves as a father to the Prophets of Allāh before the Seal of the Prophets , since they drew inspiration from him even before his birth. Consider the following narratives from ‘Allāma Majlisi’s Biḥār al-Anwār and Baḥrānī’s al-ʿAwālim:

41 ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, Sharḥ Kalimāt Amīr al-Muʾminīn, p. 15
It is reported from Abī 'Abdillāh (al-Šādiq ﷺ) who said: ‘Indeed the Ismā’īl that Almighty Allāh talks about in the verse ‘And mention in the Book Ismā’īl. Indeed he was true to his promise, and an apostle and a prophet.’ (19:54) was not Ismā’īl the son of Ibrāhīm ﷺ, but was a prophet among prophets whom Allāh, the Invincible and Sublime, sent to his people; and they killed him, and skinned his scalp and face; so an angel came to him, and said: ‘Surely Allāh sent me to you; so order me to do what you want.’ He said: ‘I have model of emulation of what will happen to al-Ḥusayn (upon whom be peace)...’

It is narrated that when Nūḥ ﷺ boarded the Ark, it

42 Shaykh `Abdullāh al-Bahrānī, al-ʿAwālim al-Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, p. 108
transported him throughout the world; and when he passed by Karbalā, the earth forced the ark towards itself, and Nūḥ ﷴ feared of drowning; so he prayed to his Lord: O my God, I went round the entire world, and nowhere was I afraid as I have been in this place; Thereupon Gabriel ﷴ descends, and tells Nūḥ ﷴ: “O Nūḥ this is the place where Ḥusayn ﷴ, the grandson of the Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets and the son of the Seal of the Divine Trustees would be killed. Nūḥ asked him: And who would kill him, O Gabriel? Gabiriel said: His killer is one whom the inhabitants of seven heavens and the seven earths curse; so Nūḥ ﷴ curses him four times...⁴³

وَرَوَى أَنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﷴ مَرَّ فِي أَرْضٍ كَرِبَلَا وَهُوَ رَآى كَبُّ فَرَسَا فَعَطَرَ بِهِ وَسَقَطَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ وَشَجَ رَأْسَهُ وَسَالَ دَمَهُ فَأَخَذَ فِي الْاسْتَغْفَارِ وَقَالَ: إِلَيْهِ أَيُّ شَيْءٌ حَدِيثٌ مَنِيَ؟ فَنَزَلَ إِلَيْهِ جَبَرْنُّ ﷴ وَقَالَ: يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ مَا حَدِيثٌ مَنِكَ ذَنْبٌ وَلَكَنَّ يُقْتَلُ هَنَا سِبْطُ خَاتَمَ الْأَبْيَاءِ وَابْنَ خَاتَمَ الْأُوْصِيَاءِ فَسَالَ دَمَّكَ مُؤَذِّقَةً لَّدَمَهُ وَقَالَ: يَا جَبَرْنُّ ﷴ وَمَنْ يَكُونُ قَاتِلُهُ؟ لَعَنُّ أُهْلَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِينَ... فَرَقَعَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﷴ يَدِيَهُ وَلَعَنَ يَزِيدُ لَعْنًا كَثِيرًا... 

It is narrated that [Prophet] Ibrāhīm ﷴ passed by the land of Karbalā while he was riding his horse.

⁴³ Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Bahrānī, al-‘Awālim al-Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷴ, p. 102
The horse made him stumble and Ibrāhīm ﷺ fell off and his head got wounded and blood started flowing out of him. Thereupon, he began seeking Allāh’s forgiveness, and said: ‘O my God, what [wrong] have I done?’ Thereupon Gabriel descends on him and says: ‘O Ibrāhīm, you have not committed any sin; but this is the place where the grandson of the Seal of Prophets ﷺ and the son of the Seal of the Divine Trustees would be killed; thus your blood flowed in accordance with his blood. He asked Gabriel: ‘And who would be his killer?’ Gabriel said: ‘The one cursed by the inhabitants of the heavens and the earths...Ibrāhīm raised his hands and excessively sends curses on Yazīd...’

These narratives as well others which we have ommitted for the sake of brevity, clearly indicate that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ was an example for his predecessors too. In simpler words, ‘he serves as a timeless model’. The curses from the Prophets in all their particularity depict the universal stance against oppression. Hence, Imām al-Ḥusayn educated, educates and will always educate the human beings with the lesson of utter submission, even at the cost of sacrificing everything. Consequently, we rightfully address him as Abū ‘Abdillāh (the father or tutor of a truly submissive servant of Allāh.)

Servant of Allāh

The name ‘Abdullāh is of very great significance since it also implies

that ‘the named’ is a manifestation of all the attributes of Almighty Allāh. This is because the name Allāh which is sometimes referred to as \textit{al-ism} \textit{al-a’žam} (the greatest name of God) is also a name that comprehends in itself all the sublime attributes of the Divine Essence. Hence one who is a servant of such a Being, necessarily is submissive to His orders, all of which manifest His sublime attributes. Thus whatever a submissive servant of Allāh does, he would do it according to what Allāh wants, and what Allāh wants clearly depicts His sublime attributes. In simple terms: If the king of a certain town possesses excellent traits, his totally obedient servants would carry the same traits, because whatever they do accord with what the king wants.

All the prophets of Allāh as well as the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt \textit{ṣ}a\‘dī are \textit{‘Ibād Allāh} (totally submissive servants of Allāh) and consequently manifestations of His Most Beautiful Attributes as well. It is for this reason perhaps that Imām ‘Alī \textit{ṣ}a\‘dī is reported to have said:

\[
	ext{نَحْنُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى}
\]

\text{We are the Most Beautiful Names of Allāh\textsuperscript{45}}

\[
\text{الْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا بَاعْبَارِيُّ اللَّهِ}
\]

\text{Peace be unto you, O obedient servant of Allāh}

In the Arabic rhetoric there is a rule that says:

\[
	ext{تَعْلِيقُ الْحُكْمَ بِالْوَصْفِ مُشْعَرٌ بِالْعَلَّةِ}
\]

\text{When a statement is qualified with a certain attribute the quality denotes the reason behind the statement.}

\textsuperscript{45} Al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Bahrānī, \textit{Madinat al-Ma‘ājiz}, v.1, p. 556
Bearing this in mind, if we consider the above verse to be a declarative statement, it would be clear for us that the reason why we declare that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ enjoys the state of salām (freedom from calamities) is that he is an ‘utterly submissive servant of Allāh’. In other words the reason for “Assalāmu ‘alaykā” is “Yā Abā ‘Abdillāh”. In simpler words, ‘I declare that you are in the state of Salām, O utterly submissive servant of Allāh’ [and the reason for you to be in that state is your characteristic of being utterly submissive to Allāh].

**Anecdotes of Reflection**

1. Ḥāj Sayyid Ahmad Bahā al-Dīnī, an employee of the Office of the late Imām Khumaynī is reported to have said:

   Imām Khumaynī would pay his respects to Sayyid al-Shuhadā (Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ) before and after every canonical prayer: he would for example pay his respects before the morning prayer, and then after the morning prayer, before the maghrib prayer, before the ‘ishā’ prayer, and then after the ‘ishā’ prayer, before the zuhr prayer, before the ‘asr prayer and then after the ‘asr prayer. In this way he would altogether pay his respects eight times a day to Sayyid al-Shuhadā”

2. A friend of the late saint, Shaykh Rajab ‘Alī al-Khayyāṭ, narrates:

   ‘Together with the Shaykh we went to Kāshān. The Shaykh had the habit that wherever he traveled, he would visit the cemetery of that place. As we entered the cemetery in Kāshān, he said: “Al-Salāmu ‘alayka yā Abā ‘Abd Allāh ﷺ” (“Salutations be on you O

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46 It is Imām al-Ḥusayn who established prayer and ensured its perpetuity. In the well-known ziyārat al-wārith we address the martyred Imām ﷺ as follows: اشهد انك قد اقتمت...I bear witness that you established prayer. (Author)
Imām Husayn ﷺ”) We walked a few steps further on, and then he said: “Do you not smell anything?” ‘No, what smell?’ We asked. Then he asked: “Don’t you feel the smell (scent) of red apples?” Our answer was ‘no’ again. We went further on and met the man in charge of the cemetery. The Shaykh asked him: “Has anyone been buried here today?” The man answered: ‘Just before you arrived someone was buried’, and then he took us to a newly covered tomb. There it was! We all smelled the scent of red apples. We asked the Shaykh about the scent, to which he answered: “When this person was buried here, the sacred person of Sayyid al-Shuhadā’ [Imām Ḥusayn ﷺ] came here and for the sake of this person (and by the blessed visit of Sayyid al-Shuhadā’ ﷺ) the punishment was removed from those buried in this cemetery.”\(^{47}\)

\(^{47}\) Muḥammad al-Rayshahri, \textit{Kīmyāye Maḥbbat}, p. 115
CHAPTER 2

َآَلسَّلَامَ عَلَيْكَ بَيَانٌ سَوْئِ اللهِ

Peace be on you, O son of the Messenger of Allāh
Peace be on You, O son of the Messenger of Allah

COMMENTARY

Ibnu Rasūlillāh is a patronym. Imām al-Husayn in this verse is introduced as the son of the Holy Prophet. There has been a controversy in the past about this bond and relationship. The enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt throughout history would try to denounce it and declare that the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt are not from the progeny of the Holy Prophet but rather only from the progeny of Amīr al-Mu’mīnīn ‘Alī. The Ahl al-Bayt, however, would cogently prove to them the veracity of their relationship with the Holy Prophet. In fact the most cogent of all proofs is the well-known verse of mubāhala (imprecation), where Almighty Allāh says to His Apostle:

Should anyone argue with you concerning him, after

1 A patronymic, or patronym, is a component of a personal name based on the name of one’s father.
the knowledge that has come to you, say, “Come! Let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, our souls and your souls, then let us pray earnestly and call down Allāh’s curse upon the liars.”

(3:61)

This verse speaks of the Holy Prophet’s confrontation with the Christians of Najrān in the well-known incident of *mubahala* (imprecation), when just beholding the brilliant faces of the *Ahl al-Kisā* overwhelmend the Christians and made their bishop say:

إِنِّي لَأَرَى وَجُوهَهَا لَوْ سَأَلَوْا اللَّهَ أَنْ يُزَيَّلَ جِبَالًا مِنْهُ مَكَانَهُ لَا زَالُهُ بَعْدَهُ فَلا تَبَأَلُوْا فَتَهْلَكُوا وَلَا يَقِيمُوا عَلَى وَجُهِ الْأَرْضِ نَصْرَانِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.

Indeed I am seeing faces, who if ask Allāh to uproot a mountain from its place, He would surely do so. Therefore do not imprecate, for if you do so you will perish, and there would remain no Christian on the face of the earth until the Judgment Day.

In the aforementioned verse we clearly find the phrase “*Let us call our sons (abnā’ana) and your sons (abnā’akum)...*” Muslim historians have unanimously narrated that the Holy Prophet had brought Imām al-Ḥasan and Imām al-Ḥusayn as his sons for this event. Ḥadrat Fāṭima al-Zahrā’ narrates from the Holy Prophet that:

سَكَلْ بِنِي أَمْ يَنْتَمُوْنَ إِلَى عَصِبَتِهِمْ إِلَّا وَلِدَ فَاطِمَة فَإِنَّي أَنَا أَبُو هَمْ وَعَصِبَتُهُمْ

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The son of every mother is [solely] attributed to his paternal relations, save the sons of Fāṭima, for surely I am their father and paternal relation.4

This tradition, which is found with slight variations in so many works of traditions, is vocal enough to specify the exceptional relationship between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the sons of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima ﷺ. Throughout the dark pages of history, however, the illegitimate rulers of the Muslim world, due to their jealousy and hatred, always debated this relationship but did not succeed. Following are some examples worthy of consideration:

1. Al-Arbili in his Kashf al-Ghumma narrates:


4 'Allāma Majlīsī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v. 43, p. 228
Dhakwān, a slave of Muʿāwiya, reports: Muʿāwiya [once] said [to me]: Surely I do not know anyone call these two boys (Imām al-Ḥasan and Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ) the two sons of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ. Therefore say: “They are the sons of ‘Ali ﷺ”. Later, Muʿāwiya ordered me to write down the names of his sons in sequence of nobility. I wrote the names of his sons and the names of the sons of his sons, but did not write the names of the sons of his daughters. Then I came to him with the written script. He looked at it, and retorted: Woe be unto you! You have forgotten the elders from among my children! I said: Who are they? He said: Aren’t the sons of that daughter [of mine] my sons? Aren’t the sons of such and such daughter of mine my sons? Dhakwān said: I remarked [in amazement]: God!! Are the sons of your daughters your sons, whereas the sons of Fāṭima ﷺ not the sons of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ? He said: What is the matter with you? May Allāh kill you! No one should hear this from you!⁵

2. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in his Ṭafsīr Maftāḥ al-Ghayb narrates the following from Shu′bī:

⁵ Arbili, Kashf al-Ghumma, v.2, p. 176
I was with Ḥajjāj [bin Yusuf al-Thaqafi] and Yāḥyā bin Ya’mar, the jurisprudent of Khurāsān, was brought from Balkh shackled with iron. Ḥajjāj said to him: You think that Ḥasan and Husayn are from the progeny of the Holy Prophet ﷺ? He said: Of course yes. Thereupon Ḥajjāj said: You must bring me a clear exposition for that from the Book of Allāh or I surely will cut your body into parts. He said: I will bring for you a clear exposition from the Book of Allāh, O Ḥajjāj. Shu’bī says: I was surprised at his audacity in responding with the [concluding] words, “O Ḥajjāj!” Thereupon Ḥajjāj said to him:
But do not bring for me the verse “let us call our sons...” (3:61) He said: I will bring you a clear exposition from the Book of Allāh, and that is Allāh’s speech “...And Noah We had guided before, and from his offspring, David and Solomon up to the phrase [in the next verse] “…and Zechariah, John, Jesus...” (84-85) Who then was the father of Jesus, while he is attached to the progeny of Noah? Shu’bi says: Thereupon Hajjaj lowered his head for some time, and then raised it and said: It is as if I have not read this verse from the Book of Allāh. Release him!

3. Thiqat al-Islām Muḥammad bin Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī narrates in his Al-Kāfī:

6 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, V.2, p. 412
It is narrated from Abū al-Jārūd: Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir ﷺ] said to me: O Aba al-Jārūd, what do they say about al-Ḥasan ﷺ and al-Ḥusayn ﷺ? I said: They are against our belief that they are the two sons of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ said: Then with what [proof] did you argue with them? I said: With the word of Allāh about ‘Isā bin Maryam “...And from
his [Noah’s] offspring, David and Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron thus do We reward the virtuous; and Zechariah, John, ‘Isā...” (6:84-85)

Therefore He placed ‘Isā in the progeny of Noah 🏛️. Imām 🏛️ said: So what did they say to you? I said: They said: It is possible for a son of a female to be a son, but he would not be from the loin. He 🏛️ said: So with what [other proof] did you argue against them? I said: We argued against them with the word of Allāh,”...Come! Let us call our sons and your sons...” (3:61) He 🏛️ said: And what did they say to you? I said: They said that sometimes in Arabic rhetoric a person may call the sons of another man as “our sons”. Thereupon Abū Ja’far 🏛️ said: O Aba al-Jārūd indeed I will give you a verse from the Book of Allāh, the Sublime and Exalted [proving] that they (Imām al-Ḥasan and Imām al-Ḥusayn 🏛️) are from the loin of the Holy Prophet 🏛️, and none save the disbeliever would negate it. I said: And where is it, may I be made your ransion? He 🏛️ said: From where Allāh, the Exalted, says “Forbidden to you are your mothers, your daughters and your sisters, your paternal aunts and your maternal aunts, your brother’s daughters and your sister’s daughters, your/ foster- who have suckled you and your sisters through fostering, your wives” mothers, and your stepdaughters who are under your care] born [of the wives whom you have gone into but if you have not gone into them there is no sin upon you and the wives of your sons who are from your own loins.” (4:23) Ask them, O Aba al-Jārūd, was it permitted for the Messenger of Allāh 🏛️ to marry with the wives of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn 🏛️? If they say ‘yes’, then surely they have
lied and violated the bounds. And if they say “no”, then they [surely] are his two sons from his loin.7

We wish to suffice with the aforesaid incidents. Otherwise there are so many other traditions where this relationship is clearly and explicitly mentioned.

O product of the Messenger of Allāh

The word ḫba‘ ʿibn’ etymologically means ‘the edifice of’ or the ‘product of’. Al-İsfahānī in his al-Mufradāt says:

Surely ʿibn was known to be so because it is a building (binā) of the father, for it is the father who built him and Allāh made him to be the builder in his existence; and ʿibn is known to be anything that is attained because of another thing or training or guardianship or a lot of service or doing something on one’s behalf...8

7 Al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.8, p. 217
8 Al-İsfahānī, al-Mufradāt, p. 147
Therefore it is right to say that Imâm al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is the product or fruit of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in terms of spiritual upbringing. It is in the environment of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that Imâm al-Ḥusayn ﷺ grew and learnt so many important things. In some traditions the Holy Prophet ﷺ also addresses Imâm al-Ḥusayn ﷺ as thamarata fuʿādi (the fruit of my heart). For example, once ‘Ā’isha seeing the cordial encounter of the Prophet ﷺ with al-Husayn ﷺ who was then a small baby on the laps of the Prophet ﷺ, asked him:

يَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ مَا أَشْدَ أَعْجَابَكَ بِهِذَا الصَّبِّيَّ

O Apostle of Allâh, how attached are you to this child!

And the Prophet ﷺ said:

وَلَكَ وَكَيْفَ لَا أَحْبَبْ وَلَا أَعْجَبُ بِهِ، وَهُوَ نَمْرَةٌ

فَوَادُي وَقُرِّةً عَيْنِيَّ... 

Woe be to you, and how should I not love him and not get attracted to him, while he is the fruit of my heart and the apple of my eyes? 9

يا بَنٍّ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

O product of the Messenger of Allâh

The genitive construction ‘Raṣûlullâh’ alludes to a particular identity of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which is his apostleship (al-risâla). Therefore Ibnu Raṣûlillâh would mean the product of the Messenger of Allâh. Specifying this patronym alludes to the reality that Imâm al-Ḥusayn

9 Ibnu Qûlawayh, Kâmil al-Ziyârât, p. 144
was built to exemplify the attributes that a Divine Messenger must have. Obviously this does not mean that he was a Divinely proclaimed Messenger, for the Holy Prophet was the Seal of all the Apostles (khātam al-rusul), but alludes to the fact that he manifested the qualities of a Divine Messenger. In fact the word ‘rasūl’ when employed in the general sense refers to any kind of Allāh’s messenger, such as the Angels. When Angel Jibra’il appears before Ḥaḍrat Maryam in the form of a handsome young man, and the latter seeks refuge in Allāh and advises him to observe piety, Jibra’il responds saying:

```arabic
إِنِّي آنَا رَسُولُ رَبِّكَ لَأَهْبَ لَكَ عَلَمًا زِكَّيًا
```

Surely I am only a messenger of your Lord, so that I may gift you a pure male offspring. (19:19)

And Imām ‘Alī is reported to have said:

```arabic
الْمَلَائِكَةُ هُمُ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ كَسَارِيَ أَبْيَاءِ اللَّهِ إِلَى
الْخَلْقِ

...The angels are the messengers of Allāh to the creatures like the rest of the prophets of Allāh...
```  

Sometimes the word ‘rasūl’ is also used for a destitute who is extremely poor. If he seeks help, then he is in reality spreading the message of being openhanded. Those therefore who shun such people are in reality shunning a messenger of Allāh. Imām ‘Alī is reported to have said:

```arabic
الْمُسْكِينِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﻟِيَكُمْ ﻣَنْ ﻣَنَّهُ ﻓَقْدُ ﻣَنَّهُ
اللَّهُ، ﻭَمَنْ أَعْطَاهُ ﻓَقْدُ أَعْطَى اللَّهُ
```

The extremely poor is a messenger of Allāh unto

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10 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭabrāsī, al-Iḥtiyāj, v.2, p. 266
you; so whosoever refuses to help him, surely he has refused Allâh, and whosoever gives him, then surely he has given to Allâh.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{align*}
\text{O product of the Messenger of Allâh}
\end{align*}

The word ‘Allâh’ here specifies the kind of message that the Holy Prophet ﷺ bears. As explained earlier, the name Allâh exemplifies all the perfect attributes of God, and therefore the Holy Prophet is the bearer of the message of all the perfect attributes. The Holy Qur’ân in fact is a written document that calls the human beings to emblesh themselves with the attributes of Almighty Allâh. And Imâm al-Ḥusayn \textsuperscript{5} being the fruit and edifice of a messenger of Allâh, qualifies as a caller to all the perfect Divine Attributes. In fact one of the characteristics of the Infallible Imâms of the Ahl al-Bayt \textsuperscript{\ref{1.1.3}} is that they are \textit{‘al-du‘ât ilâ Allâh} (callers to Allâh). This call is not only in the realm of words. Their deeds and actions portray the Divine Attributes. In the well-known 

\begin{align*}
\text{Al-sâlâm \`a l-dîn \`a l-lâh}
\end{align*}

Peace be on you callers unto Allâh.\textsuperscript{12}

In another Ziyârat of Imâm al-Ḥusayn \textsuperscript{5} declaring our total commitment and harmony with his noble spirit, we repeat the following seven times:

\begin{itemize}
\item [\textsuperscript{11}] Imâm ‘Ali (‘a), \textit{Nahj al-Balâghah}, v.4, p. 74
\item [\textsuperscript{12}] Al-Mashhadî, \textit{Al-Mazâr}, p. 525
\end{itemize}
Here I am, O caller to Allāh; if my body did not respond to your call [due to its absence during the tragedy of Karbalā], then surely my heart, hair, skin, opinion, and desire have responded in submission to the call of the successor of the Divinely sent Prophet ﷺ and his chosen gradson.¹³

Here there is another allusion worthy of contemplation: notice the words “khalaf al-nabi al-mursal” which brilliantly manifest the kind of relationship we are trying to declare. In the Arabic, a khalaf is “a successor”. And when the adjective al-mursal follows al-nabi, there is a particular implication we are trying to convey. In short, we are delcaring that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ succeeds the role of shouldering the mission of the Apostle of Almighty Allāh.

There are other clear indications also that show that the Infallible Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt  possess attributes that qualified them to be bearers of Allāh’s message and inviter of the same. In Ziyārat al-Jāmi’a we read:

فَبَلَغَ اللَّهُ بِحُكْمِ أَفْضِلِ شَرَفِ مَجَلْلٍ
المُكَرَّمِينَ، وَأَعْلَى مَنْازِلِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ، وَأَرْفَعَ
دِرَجَاتِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ، حَيْثُ لَا يَلْقَحُهُ لَأَحَقُّ، وَلَا
يَفْقَحُهُ فَائِقُ

And Allāh made you attain the best sanctimonious

¹³ 'Allāma Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.98, p. 168
station of the ennobled ones, and the highest stations of the near ones, and the most exalted stations of the mursalin (apostles), where none can join or transcend...\(^\text{14}\)

This clearly tells us that the Imāms ﷺ had qualities to carry out the duty of passing on the message of Allāh to the people. And by the phrase “arfa’a darajāt al-mursalin” we should appreciate the fact that they even transcended messengers of Allāh preceding the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This is because they bore the message of Khātam al-Rusul (the Seal of the Messengers).

In another Ziyārat of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ we address him as:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَأَرْبَتُ مُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

Peace be on you, O Inheritor of Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh.\(^\text{15}\)

Those who can appreciate the subtle implications of the above statement, understand how vocal it is in revealing the distinction of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. We confess that he inherited the Holy Prophet ﷺ’s duty of conveying the message of Allāh. All the components of the above expression such as “al-salāmu”, “alayka”, “yā”, “wāritha Muḥammad”, “wāritha Muḥammadin Rāsūlāth”, “Rāsūl”, “Rāsūlillāh”, “Allāh”, etc. are worthy of reflection. Therefore, read and ascend!

**The Relation between ‘Abd and Rasūl**

An important point to bear in mind is that in order for Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ to really be a rasūl and a conveyer of Allāh’s message to the people, it is incumbent on him to be an ‘abd (an utterly submissive servant of Allāh). Hence it was apt to address him with the teknonym

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\(^\text{15}\) Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn bin Ṭawūs, *Iqābāl al-A‘māl*, v.3, p.70
Abū ‘Abdillāh in the first verse and thereafter with the patronym ibnu Rasūlillāh. We find a similar case when we recite our tashahhud in the cananonical prayer. We say:

اَشْهَدْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَحَدٌ وَلَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَاشْهَدْ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

I bear witness that other than Allāh there is no god, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His utterly obedient servant and Apostle.

Notice that the phrase “ʿabduh” precedes “wa rasūluh”, which alludes to the sequence we are talking about.

However, this station is even higher than being the servant of “Allāh”. Here the third person pronoun “hu” affixed to ʿabd and rasūl refer to the Divine Essence. Discussing this intricacy here is beyond the scope of this commentary.
CHAPTER 3

َآَلِسْلَاءُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنُ اَمَيْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَابْنُ سَيْدِ الْوَصْيِيْنِ

Peace be on you, O son of the Commander of the Faithful and the son of the leader of the successors
Peace be on You, O son of the Commander of the Faithful and the son of the Leader of the Successors

The apparent import of this verse signifies that Imām al-Ḥusayn is the son and offspring of Amīr al-Mu’minin. This is a historical fact and we would not like to go into details about the same. However to reveal how brilliant is the origin of Imām al-Ḥusayn verses 19-20 of Sūrat al-Rahmān come to mind:

«مَرْجَ الْبَحْرِينَ يَلْتَقَانِ. بَيْنَهُمَا بِرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيْانِ»

He merged the two seas, meeting each other. There is a barrier between them which they do not overstep. (55:19-20)

Yaḥyā bin Saʿīd narrates:
I heard Abā ‘Abdillāh [al-Ṣādiq] saying the following about the verse of Allāh “He merged the two seas, meeting each other. There is a barrier between them which they do not overstep.”: ‘Alī and Faṭima are two deep seas of knowledge, none of who oversteps the other. From them emerge the pearl and the coral, who are al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.

The appellation Amīr al-Mu’mīnin was conferred to Imām ‘Alī by Allāh Himself in the higher levels of existence prior to this material world. Consider the following traditions:

1. Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates in his Al-Khīṣāː

   عن النبي ﷺ قال: في اللوحة المخفوطة تحت العرش على بن أبي طالب أمير المؤمنين

   The Holy Prophet is reported to have said: In the Guarded Tablet under the Divine Throne is [written] ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālīb is Amīr al-mu’mīnin (Commander of the faithful).

2. Al-Kulaynī in his Al-Kāfī narrates with his chain of narrators:

   عن جابر عن أبي جعفر ﷺ فَالَّذِي لَهُ لَا مَسَّهُ أمير المؤمنين ﷺ فَالَّذِي لَهُ سَمَّاهُ وَهَكَذَا أَنْزَلَ فِي صُبْحَهُ وَإِذَا أَحَدَ رُكَّبَ مِن بَيْنِي آَمِمْ مِنْ ظُهُورهُمْ

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, Al-Khīṣā, v.1, p. 65
2 Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn bin Ṭawūs, Al-Yaṣīn, p. 152
Jābir reports³: I said to Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir 废]: Why was Imām ‘Ali ⁴ named Amīr al-Mu‘minin? He ⁴ said: Allāh is the One who named him, and this is how He revealed it in His Book: “When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them bear witness over themselves, [He said to them,] Am I not your Lord (7:172) and isn’t Muḥammad My Messenger and ‘Alī Amīr al-mu‘minin (the commander of the faithful)?”⁴

3. Fūrāt bin İbrāhīm in his Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī narrates the following tradition:

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Imām al-Bāqir ⁴ is reported to have said: If the ignorant of this nation would know when Imām ‘Ali ⁴ was named Amīr al-mu‘minin, they would

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³ Al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.1, p. 412
⁴ It should be noted that Imām al-Bāqir ⁴ wanted to inform Jābir about what is not apparently indicated in the verse, but is a reality that exists in the higher realm. Therefore one should not misconstrue and conjecture that the exposition of the Imām ⁴ is a physical part of the Qur‘ān.
not reject his guardianship and obedience. The reporter said: I asked him Ḥasan: And when was Imām ‘Alī  mentioned Amīr al-mu’minīn? He replied: It was when Allāh took the covenant with the progeny of Adam.

Some traditions clearly tell us that the Holy Prophet ﷺ called Imām ‘Alī  Amīr al-mu’minīn on different occasions during his life time. Consider the following:

1. When Ḥadrat Fāṭima bint al-Asad, the noble mother of Imām ‘Alī , comes out of the Ka’ba with her exalted offspring ‘Alī , the following is reported to have transpired:

قال على علي السلام عليك يا أبى ورحمة الله وبركاته نعم تحنح وقال يسعي الله الرحمن الرحمن قد أفلح المؤمنون فقال رسول الله قد أفلحوا بكم أنت والله أميرهم تميرهم من علمكم فيمصارون وأنت والله دليلهم و بك والله يهتدون

Imām ‘Alī  said: Peace be unto you, O father and may Allāh’s mercy and blessings be upon you. Thereafter he coughed a little and recited [the following verses of Sūrat al-Mu’minūn]: In the name of Allāh, the All-Benevolent, the All-Merciful. Indeed the believers have become victorious (23:1)...

Thereupon the Messenger of Allāh said: Surely they have gained victory by you; You are, by Allāh, their Amīr (commander), you provide them from your

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5 Furāt bin Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī, Tafsīr Furāt al-Kūfī, p. 147
knowledge, and hence they gain knowledge; and I swear by Allāh you are their Guide, and I swear by Allāh they attain guidance through you.⁶

This tradition has so many allusions worthy of contemplation. Not only does the Holy Prophet ﷺ call Imām ‘Alī ﷺ as the commander of the faithful, but also informs us the close relationship between one’s commandership of the faithful and one’s vast knowledge. In clearer words, since Imām ‘Alī ﷺ is the commander of the faithful he practically serves as the source and treasure trove of their knowledge. And that is why he provides them with the knowledge they require. Another allusion worthy of consideration is that Imām ﷺ upon birth already manifested an ocean of knowledge. Perhaps it alludes to the Muḥammadan Light (al-Nūr al-Muḥammadī) where he unites with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. For, any kind of grace, whether knowledge or otherwise, is conferred to the creation through this very reality. This truth is elicited from a tradition narrated from Jābir bin Abdillāh al-Anṣārī:

قلت لرسول الله ﷺ: أَوْلُ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مَا هُوَ؟ فَقَالَ ﷺ: نُورُ نَبِيِّكِ يَا جَابِرُ، خَلَقَهُ اللَّهُ، فَمَثَّلَ مَنْهُ نُورًا حَيْرً.

I asked the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: What is the first thing that Allāh created? He ﷺ said: The light of your prophet O Jābir. Allāh created it, thereafter He created from it every good.⁷

2. ‘Amr bin Ḥuṣayb, the brother of Burayda bin Ḥuṣayb is reported to have said:

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⁷ ‘Allāma Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.25, p.21

3. Imām al-Riḍā ✈️ is reported to have narrated from his fathers from

⁸ Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Al-Amālī, p. 289
Imám al-Ḥusayn bin ‘Alí ﷺ:

قال لي بُرِّيدة: أمْرَنَا رَسُولُ اللّه ﷺ أن نُسَلِّمَ عَلَى
أبيك بِإِمْرِهِ المُؤْمِنِينَ.

Burāyḍā said to me: The Messenger of Allāh commanded us to greet your father with the name Amīr al-mu’mīnīn.\(^9\)

وَلَآ أَتُجَابُوهُ بِالْإِيمَانِ المُؤْمِنِينَ
O son of the Commander of the Faithful

The appellation Amīr al-mu’mīnīn, according to different traditions, has different meanings, all of which aptly befit the exalted personality of Imám ‘Alí ﷺ. Therefore in reality there is no contradiction. The most well-known meaning of this appellation is ‘commander of the faithful’. The word amīr comes from the word amr (order, command). Imám ‘Alí ﷺ manifesting faith in its utmost purity in all the dimensions of his being qualified to be the amir of the faithful. One of the milestones of history that brilliantly manifested this reality is the battle of Khaḍāq, when after having permitted Imám ‘Alí ﷺ to fight against ‘Amr bīn ‘Abd Wudd, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

بُرِّرَ الإِيمَانُ كُلُّهُ إِلَى الشَّرْكِ كُلِّهُ

Faith in its totality has come out to fight with polytheism in its totality...\(^{10}\)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ in calling Imám ‘Alí ﷺ al-īmān kulluh (faith in

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\(^9\) Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, ‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Ridā ﷺ, v.1, p. 73

\(^{10}\) Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn bin Ṭawūs, Al-Ṭarā’īf fī Ma’rifatī Madhāhib al-Ṭawā’īf, p. 60
its totality) resonated a wealth of information, which only the comprehending ears (al-udhun al-wā‘iyah) were able to appreciate. It is such epitomization of faith that makes the entity of ‘Ali emanate nothing but instructions of faith and makes him worthy of being the commander of the faithful. Unfortunately those who later branded themselves with this title were oblivious of the simple reality that ‘fāqid al-shay’ lā yu‘īlh” (one who lacks something cannot confer the same). One who clearly disobeys Allâh and usurps the right of others becomes a laughing stock when he names himself Amīr al-mu‘minin. This is because only one who totally submits to Allâh و and personifies faith can confer injunctions and directions of faith. In an interesting tradition narrated from ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb we are told:

سَمَعَتْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ إِنَّ السَّمَاءَاتِ السَّبْعَ
والأَرْضِينَ السَّبْعَ لَوْ وُضِعَتْ فِي صَفَّةٍ وُضِعَ إِيمَانٌ
عليٌّ ﻋﻠَى ﺍِلْشَّهَابِ ﻓِي ﺍِلْشَّهَابِ لِحَرْجٍ إِيمَانٌ ﻋﻠَى ﺍِلْشَّهَابِ

I heard the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ say: Surely if the seven heavens and the seven earths were placed in one of the palms of the scale, and the faith of ‘Ali bin Abî Ṭâlib placed on the other, the faith of ‘Ali would be heavier.11

In another tradition the Holy Prophet ﷺ vocally informs us that the yardstick of the belief of the believers is the radiant being of ‘Ali. In one of his conversations with Imām ‘Ali ﷺ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ says:

لَوْ لَا أَنْتَ لَمْ يُعْرَفَ المُؤْمِنُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِيٌّ ...

If you were not there, the believers would not be

11 Ḥājī al-Nūrī, Mustadrak al-Wasā’il, V.15, p. 337
known after me...12

Therefore Imâm ʿAlî  السماع serves as the scale of faith (mīzân al-imān).

وَعَبَائِهِ الْمُكْرَمِينَ لَا يَسِيِّبُونَهُ بَالقُولِ وَهُمْ
بَأَمِرِهِ يَعُمَّلُونَ...

And His ennobled servants who do not advance

12 ʿAllāma Majlīṣī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.37, p. 272
13 In his well-known Treatise of Rights, Imâm Zayn al-ʿĀbidin  السماع specifying the rights of the father alludes to his fundamental mediation of the existence of his offspring. He says: And as for the right(s) of your father, you should know that he is your source (fa'lam annahu ašluk), and that was it not for him you would not have existed; so whatever you find in yourself that pleases you, then know that your father is the source of the blessing (fa'lam anā abāka ašl al-ni'ima), then praise and thank Allāh. (Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, al-Amāli, pp. 453-454)
Him in speech, and act according to His Command...\(^{14}\)

And in another place of the same Ziyārat we say:

فَأْتِي لِحَكْمِ مُطَيِّعٍ،َ {مَنْ أَطَاعَكُمْ فَقَدْ أَطَعَ اللَّهُ}َ،َ وَمَنْ عَصَاكُمْ فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهُ...\(...

So indeed I am obedient to you; whosoever obeys you has obeyed Allāh, and whosoever disobeys you has indeed disobeyed Allāh...\(^{15}\)

There are other traditions too that clearly depict that the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt איהו are the ulū al-amr (those worthy to command) mentioned in the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْدِّينِ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأَلْيِهِ الْأَمَرَ مِنْ هُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرَدُوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كَانَتْ تَوَابُعُ الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلاً

O you who have faith! Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle and those among you who hold command. And if you dispute concerning anything, refer it to Allāh and the Apostle, if you have faith in Allāh and the Last Day. That is better and more favourable in outcome. (4:59)

Jābir al-Juʿfī narrates: I heard Jābir bin ʻAbdillāh al-Anṣārī say:

\(^{14}\) Shaykh al-Kaf’ami, Miṣbāḥ, p. 505

\(^{15}\) ʻAllāma Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.99, p. 133
When Allāh revealed unto His Prophet Muhammad ﷺ the verse “O you who have faith! Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle and those among you who hold command” (4:59). I asked [the Prophet ﷺ]: O Messenger of Allāh, we know about Allāh and His Messenger. But who are the Ulū al-Amr (those who hold command) whose obedience Allāh placed in
line with your obedience? He ﷺ said: *They are my successors*, O Jābir, and the leaders of the Muslims after me. The first among them is ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib ﷺ, then comes al-Ḥasan ﷺ, and then al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, then ‘Alī the son of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, then Muḥammad the son of ‘Alī who is well-known in the Torah as al-Bāqir (the cleaver). Soon you will meet him, O Jābir! And when you meet him convey to him my salāms (greetings). Then comes al-Ṣādiq Ja'far bin Muḥammad ﷺ, then Mūsā bin Ja'far ﷺ, then ‘Alī bin Mūsā, then Muḥammad bin ‘Alī, then ‘Alī bin Muḥammad, then al-Ḥasan bin ‘Alī ﷺ, then one whose name and tekynonym (*kunya*) would be like mine, the proof of Allāh on the earth and His remnant among His servants, the son of al-Ḥasan bin ‘Alī ﷺ. He is the one by whom Allāh will conquer the easts and wests of the earth...”

Therefore all the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ qualify in the universal sense to be *Amir al-mu’minin* (commander of the faithful).

[O edifice of the Commander of all the Faithful]

A grammatical allusion worthy of consideration, can be understood by looking at the article ‘ʿal’ prefixed in the plural “al-mu’minin” (the faithful) above. One the well-known grammatical laws is that when the article ‘ʿal’ precedes a plural, it signifies that all the extensions of the

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16 Al-Baḥrānī, *Tafsīr al-Burhān*, v.2, p. 103
plural are taken into consideration. In our case, when we say *al-mu’minūn*, we mean “all the faithful”. Therefore, the appellation Amīr al-mu’minīn signifies that Imām ‘Alī ﷺ is the commander of *all the faithful*. In a tradition the Holy Prophet ﷺ after informing Imām ‘Alī ﷺ how Allāh Himself named him Amīr al-mu’minīn, says:

\[... فَأَنتَ يَا عَلَيٌّ أميرٌ مَّن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَأميرٌ مَّن فِي الْأرْضَ وَأميرٌ مَّن مَّضَى وَأميرٌ مَّن بَقَى فَلاَ إِمَّامُ قَبْلَكِ وَلَا إِمَّامُ بَعْدَكِ لَانَّهُ لَا يُجَوِّزَ أَن يُسَمَّى بِهِذَا الْإِسْمُ مِنْ لَمْ يُسَمِّهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِهٍ...\]

...Therefore, you, *O ‘Alī, are the commander (amīr) of those in the heavens and the commander (amīr) of those in the earth, and the commander (amīr) of those who have past, and the commander (amīr) of those who remain. Hence there is no amīr prior to you, nor is there any amīr after you*. For it is impermissible to name someone with this name whom Allāh has not named.\(^{17}\)

Consequently his edifice, Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, who is *ibnu Amīr al-mu’minīn* is also the *amīr* of all the believers.

**Amīr al-Mu’minīn – An Exclusive Appellation**

It should be known that the appellation *‘Amīr al-mu’minīn* although widely employed by different people in history, is exclusively for Imām ‘Alī ﷺ. The other Imāms ﷺ would not allow their followers to use it for them. Observe the following narrations:

1. Imām ‘Alī ﷺ is reported to have said:

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\(^{17}\) Muḥammad bin Ahmad al-Qummī, *Mi’at Manqaba*, pp. 52-53
Chapter III

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: When I was made to ascend to the Heavens, I was at a distance from my Lord that was like the length of two bows or nearer. So my Lord Revealed unto me what He Revealed. Then He said: O Muḥammad send your greetings to ‘Alî bin Abî Ṭâlib, Amîr al-mu’minîn ﷺ. Indeed I have not named anyone with this appellation before him, and will never name anyone with it after him.18

2. ‘Allâmâ Majlîsî in his Biḥâr al-Anwâr narrates:

A man called Imâm al-Ṣâdiq ﷺ, ‘O Commander of the faithful! whereupon the Imâm ﷺ said: Stop! For surely no one approves being named so, save that he is tried with the trial of Abû Jahl.19

3. Shaykh al-Kulaynî in his al-Kâfî narrates the following tradition:

18 Shaykh al-Ṭūsî, Al-Amâlî, p. 295
19 ‘Allâmâ Majlîsî, Biḥâr al-Anwâr, v. 37, p. 334
A person asked Imâm al-Šâdiq about [Imâm] Al-Qâ’îm, whether it is proper to greet him with [the appellation] Amîr al-Mu’mînîn, and he said: No. That is a name that Allâh named Amîr al-Mu’mînin with it, none before him was named with it, and none will name himself with it after him save a disbeliever. The person said: may I be made your ransom, how should one greet him? He said: They should say: Peace be unto you, O remnant of Allâh (Baqiyyat Allâh). Thereafter he read the verse of Qur’an, “What remains of Allâh’s provision is better for you...”(11:86)²⁰

\[\text{Yâ'în Amîr al-mu’mînîn,}\]

O the Edifice of the Provider of the Faithful

Another meaning of ‘Amîr al-mu’mînîn’ is the ‘one who provides knowledge to the believers’. This is when the word Amîr stems from the infinitive ‘mîr’ which means جلب الطعام ‘jalb al-tâ’âm’ (to draw food).

²⁰ Al-Kulaynî, Al-Kâfî, v.1, p. 411
Al-Ṭurayḥi in his *Gharib al-Qur'ān* says:

"يقال: فلان يمیر اهله اذا حمل إليهم أقواثهم من غبر بلدتهم من المیرة بكسر اليمين وسکون الیاء طعام يمتازه الإنسان أي يجلبه من بلد الى بلد.

It is said: *Fulān yamīru ahlahu* (So and so provides his family) when he carries to them their provisions from another town. It comes from *al-mīra* which is food that a person obtains or takes from one town to another."

And food in this case does not only refer to ‘physical food’ that satisfies one’s stomach, but fundamentally to spiritual food that elevates the human being. Under the verse of the holy Qur’ān that says ‘*Then let man look at his food*’ (80:24), Imām al-Ṣādiq  explains to Zayd al-Shahḥām, one of his companions that food here refers to knowledge, and that the human being is told to reflect on his knowledge and its origin. Likewise, as we shall soon see, the ‘*mīr*’ referred to in this case is interpreted by the infallible Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt  to mean knowledge. Consider the following narrations:

1. ‘Allāma Majlisī in his *Biḥār al-Anwār* reports :

   عـْن جاـبـر عـن أبـي جعـفر قـال قـلْت جـعلت
   فذاك: لم سـمـي أمـيـر المؤـمـنـين أمـيـر المؤـمـنـين؟
   قال: لأنـه يمـيـرُهـم الـعـلـم: أـمـا سـمـعْت كـتـاب اللـله
   عـزِوْجَلِ (وْنـمـيـر أَهْلَنا)؟

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21 Al-Ṭurayḥī, *Gharib al-Qur’ān*, p. 279. Also check his *Maj’ma’ al-Bahrayn* v.4, p. 253

Jābir is reported to have said: I asked Abī Jaʿfar (al-Bāqir): “May I be made your ranson; why was Amīr al-Muʿminīn (Imām ‘Alī) known as Amīr al-muʿminīn?” The Imām said: ‘It is because he provides them (yamīruhum) with knowledge; haven’t you heard the Book of Allāh ‘wa namīru ahlānā’ (...we will get provisions for our family... (12:65))?23

2. ‘Allāma Majlisi in his Biḥār al-Anwār reports:

آبان بن الصلوت عن الصادق: سمي أمير المؤمنين إنما هو من ميره العلم، وذلك أن العلماء من علمه امتازوا و من ميرته استعملوا

Abān bin al-Ṣalt is reported to have said that Imām al-Ṣādiq said: Indeed naming Amīr al-muʿminīn is from ‘the provision of knowledge’; and that is because the knowledgeable ones took knowledge from him, and took advantage of his provision.24

Some esteemed muḥaddithūn like the late ‘Allāma Majlisi give the probability that the word Amīr instead of being a common noun meaning ‘commander’ is an indefinite verb (al-fīʾ al-muḍārī) meaning ‘I provide’ (اِمیَر) that later turned into a proper noun (‘alam). In other words, Imām ‘Alī said “Amīru (I provide) al-muʿminīna (the believers)’ and thereafter the whole statement turned into a noun referring to Imām ‘Alī. They liken this with name تَأْبَطُ شَرَّ (lit. he put evil beneath his armpit). The well-known poet Thābit bin Jābir was called that because it is said that the sword never left him.25 According

24 Allāma Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, v. 37, p. 334
25 E.W.Lane, E.W.Lane Arabic-English Lexicon, see under the root word ‘abaṭā’
to a narration indicated in the *Biḥār al-Anwār*, he was known to be so because:

ثَابِطٌ سَيْفًا وَخَرَجُ فَقُلْ لأَمِّهِ: أَيْنَ هُوَ؟ فَقَالَتْ: ثَابِطٌ شِرَّاً وَخَرَجَ.

...he put a sword beneath his armpit (*ta’abbaṭa sayfān*) and went out; and when his mother was asked, ‘Where is he?’ she said: He put evil under his armpit (*ta’abbaṭa sharran*) and left.\(^{26}\)

In short, therefore, *Amīr al-mu’minīn (I provide the faithful)* could be a sentence which later turned into a proper noun.

يَابَنَ أَمِيرٍ الْمُؤَمِّنِينَ

O son of the **Commander of the Bestowers of Protection**

If we carefully consider the meaning of *al-mu’minūn* (plural of *al-mu’min*) in the genitive construction Amīr al-mu’minīn we may be able to unravel and draw some of the secrets of this radiant verse. Following are some narratives that define the word *mu’min*:

1. Imām al-Ṣādiq \(^{26}\) was asked why a believer was known as *mu’min* and he said:

لَأَنَّهُ اشْتَقَّ لِلنَّاسِ مَنْ أَسْمَىْهُ تَعَالَى فَسَمَّاهُ مُؤَمِّنًا، وَأَنَّهُ سَمِيَ الْمُؤَمِّنُ لِثُلُّهُ يُؤْمِنُ مِنْ عَذَابِ اللهِ تَعَالَى، وَيُؤْمِنُ عَلَى اللَّهِ يُؤْمِنُ الْقِيَامَةَ فِي جِيْزَانْ لَهُ

\(^{26}\) *Ibid.*, v. 35, p. 133
It is because He (Allāh) derived for the believer a name from His Names, and named him *muʿmin*. And he was named *muʿmin* because he is protected from the punishment of Allāh, the Exalted, and gives warrant to Allāh [for others] on the Judgment Day, and Allāh would approve that for him.

2. Imām al-Sadiq  when defining the meaning of the Divine Name *al-Muʿmin* is reported to have said:

َسُمِيَ الْبَارِئ عُرَ وَجَلْ مُؤَمِّنًا لَأَنَّهُ يُؤْمِنُ مِنْ عَدَأٍ بِهِ

من أطاعه

The Maker, Invincible and Exalted, was named *Muʿmin* because He protects (*yuʿminu*) whosoever obeys Him from His punishment...²⁷

Notice carefully that the aforementioned traditions allude to the following important realities:

(a) The believer is a manifestation of the Divine Name *al-Muʿmin*.
(b) He enjoys protection (*amān*), and
(c) He confers protection (*yuʿminu*) by seeking the same for others from Allāh.

3. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

َأَلَآ أَنْبِيَتُكُمْ لَمْ سُمِّيَ الْمُؤْمِنُ مُؤَمِّنًا؟ لِإِيْمَانِهِ النَّاسَ

على أنفسهم وأموالهم

Should I not inform you why a believer was named

²⁷ Shaykh Saduq, *Al-Tawhid*, p. 205
mu’min? It is because he grants security to people in themselves and their wealth.

4. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

وَاللَّهُ مَا سَمَّى الْمُؤْمِنْ مَوْمَعًا إِلَّا كَرَامَةً لِأُمِّيِّر
المُؤْمِنِين

“I swear by Allāh, the believer was not named mu’min save in honor of Amīr al-Mu’minīn”

If we study the various derivatives of the word mu’min as expounded in the above traditions, we would realize that all of them converge at one single attribute: protection (amān). The reason why a believer is called mu’min is because he ‘enjoys protection’ and ‘confers the same’. The fourth tradition however requires deliberation to comprehend. Perhaps it would like to tell us that in order to bestow the honorable appellation Amīr al-mu’minīn to Imām ‘Alī ﷺ, Allāh named the believer as mu’min. For the appellation Amīr al-mu’minīn would have no meaning in the absence of people called ‘mu’minun’. Obviously this should not be considered a kind of superficial honorification. The Imām ﷺ most brilliantly manifesting the Divine Attribute al-Mu’min, qualified to command the believers who manifest this attribute according to their limitations. Therefore Allāh bestowing honor to Him called the believer a mu’min and named Him Amīr al-mu’minīn.

In conclusion, the genitive construction Amīr al-Mu’minīn means ‘The commander of those who confer protection’. Therefore Imām ‘Alī ﷺ is the commander of one who enjoys and confers protection. Consequently, he is the professor and teacher of the lesson of protection (amān). He is not merely a theoretical professor, but ‘a commander’ and thus ‘a practical mentor’. And the believers always benefit from his banquet. If we ponder over the abovementioned traditions we would realize that the protection that is spoken about is not always physical protection. A believer fundamentally seeks the
spiritual protection of others.

The entire life of Amir al-mu’minin ﷺ serves as a lesson for those who would like to learn how to protect themselves and others. The yardstick of such a life, as mentioned in the aforementioned tradition of Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ, is obedience to Allāh. The Imām’s thoughts, words, and deeds, all reflect utter submission to Allāh’s will.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ describing some of the phenomena of the Day of Judgment to Imām ‘Alī ﷺ says:

وَسَِّبْعُوهُ الْأَمِينُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةَ

...Thereafter a caller on behalf of Allāh would call: Look! Surely ‘Alī and his followers are the protected ones (al-āminūn) on the Judgment Day.²⁸

And in another tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ says:

يا عَلِيُّ، أَنْتَ وَشَيْعُتَكَ عَلَى الْحَوْضِ تَسْقُونَ مَنْ أَحْبَبْتُمْ، وَتَمْمِعُونَ مِنْ كَثِرَةِ هَمَّتِهِ، وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَمِينُونَ يَوْمَ الْفَزْعِ الأَكْبَرَ... 

O ‘Alī, you and your followers would quench the thirst of whom you love at the Fountain, and hamper those whom you abhor. You are the protected ones (al-āminun) on the Day of the great terror (See 21:103).²⁹

Some of the verses of the Holy Qur’ān also inform us that by maintaining pure faith and observing taqwā, ‘protection’ (amān) is a

²⁸ ‘Allāma Majlīsī, Bihār al-Anwār, v. 37, p. 75
²⁹ 'Allāma Majlīsī, Bihār al-Anwār, v. 65, p. 45
guarantee:

الذين آمنوا ولا يلبسوا إيمانهم بظلم أو لئلك لهم
الأمن وهم مهتدون

Those who have faith and do not taint their faith with wrongdoing for such there shall be safety, and they are the [rightly] guided.” (6:82)

إن المؤمنين هم مقيم أمين

Indeed the God wary are in a secure station (44:51)

Imām al-Husayn ImageButton who is ibnu Amir al-mu’minin is in this sense “the product of the commander of those who confer protection”. Necessarily, then, he likewise enjoys the characteristics of his father. His entire life serves as a lesson of amān and protection from Hell Fire.

In one of the supplications of the Holy month of Sha’ban we express the following about the Ahl al-Bayt ImageButton:

أَلَّهُمْ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآل مُحَمَّد أَفْلُكَ الْجَارِيَةُ فِي
اللَّجِّ العَامِرَةُ يَآمَنُ مِن رَكِبَتِهَا وَيَغْرَقُ مِن تَرَكُّهَا

O Allah bless Muhammad and his progeny, the moving ark in the covering depths [of the sea], whosoever boards in it is protected and whosoever leaves it drowns.30

Recitation & Realization

Reciting this verse after having known its comprehensive meaning undoubtedly fills the heart of the loving zā’ir with awe and veneration for the mazūr. However, as we had mentioned in the very beginning of

30 'Allāma Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, v. 87, p. 19
this commentary, the most important and fundamental purpose of our recitation must be unity and coherence with the mazūr. If we address Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ with ibnu Amīr al-mu’minīn, and believe that he is fit to command the believers, then we must resolve to practically follow his commands. Believing someone to be amīr is practically realized when one follows him. And when we understand Amīr al-mu’minīn ﷺ as the commander of those who confer amān and safety, then we must practically seek and follow the lesson of conferring safety from Imām ﷺ and apply the same in our lifetimes. And if we comprehend the appellation Amīr al-mu’minīn as the provider of knowledge to the believers, then we must practically draw our fundamental knowledge from authorities like Imām ‘Alī ﷺ and the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ. And if we understand the meaning of Amīr al-mu’minīn ﷺ as the Commander of those who have faith, then we should resolve in following his footsteps and drawing closer to him so that we are entitled to be the bearers of īmān and faith.

يا بن أمير المؤمنين
O Son Of The Commander Of Those Who Confer Tranquility

The word mu’min is conventionally translated as ‘faithful’ or ‘believer’. Its literal import however is worthy of consideration. It comes from the word ‘amn’ which according to leading lexicographers like al-Isfahani, means ‘tumāninat al-nafs’ (tranquility and contentment of the heart). And the word īman which we translate as faith actually means ‘to place in oneself or another [the state of] amn (tranquility). And when we say ‘āmna billāh’ which we conventionally translate as ‘he believed in Allāh’ we literally mean ‘he attained contentment and tranquility by Allāh’. Principally when we speak of īmān billāh we mean to agree and have tranquility that God exists, He is the overwhelming One, and to Him belong the Attributes of Beauty and Majesty. However, such
tranquility which is limited to the belief in the existence of God is substantially different from the tranquility and serenity attained in Allâh. Perhaps the most apt example of tranquility one can cite in the life of the commander of the tranquil ones (Amir al-mu’minin) is what transpired on the well-known *laylat al-mabit* when Imâm ‘Ali ﷺ rests with utter peace and tranquility on the blessed bed of the Holy Prophet ﷺ while the Prophet ﷺ sets for his well-known migration to Madina. Indeed I feel it is only the Holy Qur’an that can properly narrate the nature of this historic incident. Almighty Allâh says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ

وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفًا بَعْدِ الْعِبَادِ

And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allâh, and Allâh is most kind to [His] servants. (2:207)

Imâm Zayn al-’Abidin ﷺ is reported to have said:

نَزَّلَتْ فِي عَلِيٍّ ﷺ حِينَ بَاتَ عَلَى فِرَارِشِ رَسُوْلِ اللَّهِ ﷺ

This verse was revealed about ‘Ali ﷺ when he slept on the bed of the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ. ³¹

In another tradition which shows the extent of *iṭmi’nân* and tranquility of ‘Alî ﷺ, we are told:

فَبَاتَ عَلَى مُوَطِّنَتِهِ نَفْسُهُ عَلَى القُتُلِ

So Imâm ‘Ali ﷺ slept while he stationed his soul to

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be killed...³²

The phrase ‘muwatținan nafsahu ‘alá al-qatl’ reveals so much. It shows the Imám’s readiness to be martyred in the way of Allâh. The word ‘muwatținan’ literally connotes that Imám ‘Alî had stationed his spirit in the waṭan (hometown) of martyrdom.

Ayatullâh al-Rayshahrî quoting al-Ţabaqât al-Kubrâ among other historical texts writes in his Mawsû‘at al-Imâm ‘Ali bin Abî Ṭâlib :

...فاقتّرح على علي أن يَبْتَ في فَرَاهْ عَلَى الْلَّيْلَةِ، فسَأَلَهُ: أَتَسْلَمْ  أَنْ رَسُولُ الْلَّهِ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. فَرَحَ الْإِمَامُ هَذَا الْاقْتِرَاحَ مُوْطِنًا فَسَجَدَ إِلَى الْمَوْجِهَةَ المُشْرِكَيْنِ صِبَاحًا، وَلَحَفَ بِالأَبْرَدَ الْيَمِنِيَّ الأَخْضَرُ الَّذِي كَانَ يَلْحَفُهُ النِّبِيُّ ﺗَنْوَيْهُ، وَنَامَ مُطَمَّنًا فِي فَرَاهِهِ

...So the Prophet suggested to ‘Alî that he sleeps that night in his bed, and ‘Alî asked him: Would you be protected thereby O Messenger of Allâh? He said: Yes. So the Imâm welcomed this suggestion while stationing himself to be martyred when he confronts the polytheists in the morning, and he prostrated in thanks to Allâh for this great gift, and wrapped himself with the green Yemenite cloak that the Messenger of Allâh would cover himself with when he slept, and he slept in the

³² Ibid., v.1, pp. 442-443
state of tranquility...³³

The phrase ‘wa nāma muṭma’innan fī fīrāshihi’ (and he slept in the state of tranquility in the Prophet’s bed) is worthy of reflection. It shows how Amīr al-mu’minin having sold his soul to the only beloved is overwhelmed and overtaken with utmost composure and tranquility.

Bearing the aforesaid understanding of the appellation Amīr al-mu’minin in mind, the meaning of ibn Amīr al-mu’minin confers the implication that Imām al-Husayn ⁴ who is the edifice of the commander of the tranquil spirits also exemplifies the same attribute of tranquility.

Both his words as well as his deeds reveal this reality. In his well-known supplication of ‘Arafa, Imām al-Ḥusayn ⁴ is narrated to have said:

ما دَأْوَجَدَ مِنْ فَقْدَكَ وَمَا الْذِّي فَقَدَ مِنْ وَجْدَكَ؟

What has he who has lost You found? And what has he who has found You lost?³⁴

And Imām al-Ṣādiq ⁴ is reported to have said:

افْرَّؤُوا سُورَةَ المُجَرْ في فَرَأْتُوْهمُ وَنَوْافِلْكِمْ،
فَإِنَّهَا سُورَةُ الْحَسِينِ وَأَرْضَبَا فِيهَا رَحْمَكُمْ اللَّهُ
فَقَالَ لَهُ أُبُو أُسَمَّة وَكَانَ حَاضِرًّا في الْمَجْلِسِ: صِبْيَنَّ
صَارَتْ هِذِهِ السُّوْرَةُ لِلْحَسِينِ خَاصَّةً؟ فَقَالَ:
أَلَّا تَسَعُّم إِلَى قُوَّلَهُ تَعَالَى: «يَا أَيِّهَا الْنَّفْسُ
المُطَمَّتَةُ أَرْجِعُ إِلَى رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضَى فَادْخِلْيْكَ.»

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³³ Al-Rayshahri, Mawsū‘at Imām ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālīb, v.1, pp. 158-159
³⁴Al-Rayshahri, Mizān al-Ḥikma, v.1, p. 502
Read Sūrat al-Fajr in your obligatory and supererogatory prayers, for indeed it is the chapter of al-Husayn ﷺ, and have a liking to it, may Allāh have mercy on you. Thereupon Abū Usāma, who was present in the gathering asked him ﷺ: How did this sūra become specifically for al-Husayn ﷺ?

The Imām ﷺ said: Do you not listen to Allāh’s word “O contented spirit (yā ayyatuha al-nafs al-mūtma‘inna), return to your Lord, while you are pleased with Him, and He is pleased with you, and enter the company of My servants, and enter My paradise”. It refers to Imām al-Husayn bin ‘Ali ﷺ, for he is the contented spirit who is pleased with his Lord and his Lord is pleased with him...35

Al-Bahrānī narrates a beautiful tradition from Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidin ﷺ which describes the situation of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and his brilliant companions before their departure from this world when the situation intensified as follows:

...وَكَانَ الْحُسْنَيْنِ ﺃَلْيَاءٌ وَبَعْضُ مِنْ مَعَهُ مِنْ خَصَائِصِهِ تَشْرَقُ أَلْوَانُهُمْ، وَتَهْدَا جُوُارِهِمْ،
وَتَسْتَبْكِنُ نَفْوُسُهُمْ...  

...while the situation of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and some of those with him, would be such that their colors

would shine, the parts of their bodies would be composed, and their spirits would be in the state of serenity...⁴⁶

Having known the subtle meaning of *ibnu Amīr al-mu’minin* as the edifice of the possessor and bestower of tranquility, our aspiration should be to uplift ourselves and realize the characteristics of a tranquil soul.

‘Allāma Majlisī in his *Bihār al-Anwār* narrates:

> عَنْ أَنَس بْنِ مَالِك قَالَ: فَفَضِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: {الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطَمِّمُنَّ قُلُوبَهُمْ بِذَكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَّا بِذَكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطَمِّمُنَّ القُلُوبَ}: أَتَدْرَى مِنْ هَمْ يَا أَبِيُّ أَمَّ سَلِيمُ؟ قَالَ: مِنْ هَمْ يَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ؟ فَقَالَ: نَحْنُ أُهَلُ الْبَيْتِ وَشَيعَتُنا.

Anas bin Mālik is reported to have said: The Messenger of Allāh recited “And those who have faith and their hearts are tranquil by the remembrance of Allāh...” (13:28) and said: Do you know who they are, O son of Umm Sulaym? I said: Who are they, O Messenger of Allāh? He ﷺ said: They are we and our Shi‘a.⁴⁷

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...and the son of the Leader of the Successors

Here, as in the previous cases, ‘ibn’ bears two different messages: Imām al-Ḥusayn is the son of sayyid al-waṣiyyīn, as well as his spiritual product. And because he is the spiritual product of the master of all the past successors of the prophets of Allāh, he likewise excels them and is embellished with the attributes of his father. The word ‘sayyid’ literally means ‘leader’. Its correlative is the verb sādā-yasūdu (he led, he is leading). That which makes Imām ‘Alī to be sayyid al-waṣiyyīn is his capability to succeed the Leader of the Apostles (sayyid al-rusuh), who bore the most comprehensive message of Allāh, the Qur’ān, which is introduced as al-Muhaymin. Consider the following verse of the Holy Qur’ān:

"وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدَّقًا لَمَّا بَيْنَ يَدِيٍّ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهْيَمٍٰ عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكِمْ بِهِمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَذَبحُوا أَهْوَاءهُمْ عَمَّا جَآءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ..."

We have sent down to you the Book with the truth, confirming what was before it of the Book and as a guardian (muhayminan) over it. So judge between them by what God has sent down, and do not follow their desires against the truth that has come to you. (5:48)

No Divine Messenger (rasūl) or Successor (waṣī) can bear the message of the Holy Prophet  save Imām ‘Alī and his successors, for every
Prophet ☪ enjoys the station of the Book that was revealed unto him. Therefore because the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt ☪ are the bearers of the Qur’ān (ḥamalat kitābilLāh) they excel the other prophets and their successors and are rightly known as sādat al-awṣiyā’. Consider the following narrations:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: أَنَا سَيِّدُ النَّبِيّينَ وَوَصِيُّ سَيِّدُ

النَّبِيّينَ وَأُوْلَيْ الْأُمْرَاءِ سَادَةُ الأَوْصَيْاءِ

The Apostle of Allāh, upon whom and whose immaculate progeny be peace, said: ‘I am the leader of the Prophets and my successor is the leader of all the successors, and his successors are the leaders of all the successors.’

وَعَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: أَنَا سَيِّدُ

النَّبِيّينَ وَأُوْلَيْ الْأُمْرَاءِ وَأَفْضَلُ مِنْ الْمُلْكِ عِندَ

النَّبِيّينَ وَأُوْلَيْ الْأُمْرَاءِ سَادَةُ أَوْلَيْ الْأُمْرَاءِ النَّبِيّينَ

وَأُوْلَيْ الْأُمْرَاءِ لَكُلِّ دُرُوشِهِ أَفْضَلُ دُرُوسٍ ذَرِيّاتِ النَّبِيّينَ

Ibn ‘Abbās is reported to have said: The Holy Prophet ☪ said: ‘I am the leader of the Prophets and Apostles, and better than the angels nearmost to Allāh, and my successors are the the leaders of the successors of the other prophets and apostles, and my lineage is the best of the lineages of the Prophets and Apostles of Allāh.’

38 Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Man lā Yahduruhu al-Faqīh, v.4, p. 174
And in the proximity of the radiant dome of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ tells his companion Ṣafwān that all the Divine prophets and their successors visit Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, including the Imām himself. He says

وَمَحْمُودٌ أَفْضَلُ الْأَنَبِيَّاءِ وَنَحْنُ أَفْضَلُ النُّصُابُ

...[including] Muhammad the best of the Prophets and we, the best successors...40

In the first volume of his well-known thematic exegesis of Qur’ān, the grand Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī (may the Almighty protect his noble self) says:

‘Inasmuch as the Noble Qur’ān is muhaymin (supervisor and protector), the Seal of the Apostles is also muhaymin over the prophets, for every Apostle invites his community to the station of his book, and the station of every prophet is the same as the station of his book, and the station of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ is the same as the station of the Message that he brought.41

And when trying to establish how Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is the Leader of martyrs, Āyatullah Jawādī Āmulī in his Shekūfaieye ‘Aql says:

Husayn ﷺ is the leader and superior to all the martyrs of the universe. And this station is due to his company with the reality of the Holy Qur’ān which is a guardian over all other heavenly scriptures. In other words:

40 Ibid., v.101, p. 60
41 Āyatullah Jawādī Āmulī, Qur’ān dar Qur’ān, p. 292
Chapter III

1- The reality of the Prophet ﷺ’s progeny is at par with the Holy Qur’an.

2- The reality of Qur’an, apart from verifying the previous books has a supervisory role over them.

3- Every prophet is at par with the heavenly book given to him.

4- When the Progeny of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is equal to the noble Qur’an, they [obviously] are guardians over the great divine men of the past.

This same evidence can be employed to prove that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is among the leaders of all the successors of the previous prophets of Allāh (sayyid al-waṣiyīn).

...and the son of the Leader of the Successors

The word waṣiyīn is the plural of waṣī and it literally means [the] ‘trustee’ to whom one entrusts his will (waṣiyya). In the present context, however, it refers to the Divine Trustee who is entrusted with a Divine Will, which is to govern the Islamic state and rule according to the Divine Laws. And Imām ‘Alī ﷺ was entrusted with this Divine Will before the demise of the Holy Prophet ﷺ on several occasions, the fundamental of which was in Ghadīr Khumm, where he ﷺ announced Imām ‘Alī ﷺ as his successor and sought confirmation from others too. Therefore, when we say that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is the edifice, product, and inheritor of the Leader of the Divine successors and trustees, we are also implying that he has inherited the qualities of such successorship. And in rising against an illegal government that would
ruin and demolish the material and spiritual felicity of the believers, he practically manifested his trustworthiness and successfully undertook his mission of Divine leadership.
CHAPTER 4

أَلَسْلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا بْنَ نَافَاتِمَ

سَيِّدَةُ نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ

Peace be on you, O son of Fāṭima – the leader of the women of the worlds
Peace be on You, O son of Faṭīma—
the Leader of the Women of the Worlds

**COMMENTARY**

Peace be unto you, O son of Faṭīma

This verse is one of the most radiant verses of *Ziyārat ʿAṣhūrā*, for it reveals the pleasant origin of Imām al-Ḥusayn and his utter purity. Not only is the Imām a physical offspring of the sublimest example of purity and goodness, he is her spiritual artifact (*binā*) as well. One of the appellations of Ḥaḍrat Faṭīma is al-Ṭayyiba (the pleasant one). In a well-known *Ziyārat* of the Holy Prophet we supplicate as follows:

...اللهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى فَاطِمَةُ الطَّيِّبَةَ
الطَّاهِرةُ المُطَهَّرةُ، الْتِّيَ أَنْتَجَبْتُهَا
وُطَهَّرَتْهَا وَقَضَّلَتْهَا عَلَى نَسْبَاء
الْعَالَمِينَ...

...O Allāh, bless Faṭīma, *the pleasant one* (*al-Ṭayyiba*), the pure, the purified, whom You chose, purified and preferred over all the women of the
worlds...¹

Imām al-Ḥusayn  meaning the offspring of a pure mother the like of al-Ṭayyiba, also inherits utter purity. Small wonder it is that one of his appellations is al-Ṭayyib: Abū Shibli narrates:

قلت لأبي عبد الله أزور قبر الحسن فذكر
نعم زور الطيب وأثم الصلاة فيه...

I said to Imām al-Ṣādiq ː I visit the grave of al-Ḥusayn  He said: Yes, visit al-Ṭayyib  (the pleasant one), and pray the complete prayer (and not qasr) near him...³

In another tradition, Abū Saʿīd al-Madāʾinī says: I entered in the presence of Abū ʿAbdillāh [al-Ṣādiq ː], and I said: May I be made your ransom. Should I visit the grave of al-Ḥusayn  He (‘a) said:

نعم يا أبا سعيد أنت قبر الحسن فإن رسول
الله أطيب الأطيةين وأحترم الطاهرين وأتبر
الأبرار فإنك إذا زرته كتب الله لك به حماساً و
عشرين حجة.

Yes O Abā Saʿīd, visit the grave of al-Ḥusayn  the offspring of the Messenger of Allāh  the most

¹ Allāma Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.98, pp.262-263
² The root meaning of al-ṭayyib is ‘that which is desirable, in which there is no kind of apparent or hidden dirt...’ [See Muṣṭafawī’s al-Taḥqīq, v.7, p. 151]. Al-İsfahānī confers a similar definition in his Al-Mufradāt. He says: ‘wa aṣl al-ṭayyib mā tastaṣalidhhu al-ḥawās wa mā tastaṣalidhhu al-nafs’ (and the root meaning of al-ṭayyib is that by which the senses take pleasure, and that which the soul takes pleasure [See Al-Mufradāt of Al-İsfahānī, p. 527.]
³ Shaykh al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, v.4, p. 587
pleasant of the most pleasant ones and the most pure of the pure ones, and the most righteous of the righteous ones; for surely if you visit him, Allâh will write for you the reward of twenty five pilgrimages (hajjis).\(^4\)

In the well-known Ziyarat al-Jâmî’a al-Kabîra there is a statement that alludes to the process of the transfer of purity. We are taught to address the Ahl al-Bayt \(^5\) in the following way:

\[
\text{طابت وطهرت بعضها من بعض ...}
\]

...and that your spirits, your light, and your nature are one; they became pleasant and purified some from others...\(^5\)

In another tradition where the basis of transfer is clearly depicted, the Holy Prophet \(^6\) presents a Divine law:

\[
\text{فأبى أن يخرج من الطيب إلا الطيب ...}
\]

...And He [Allâh] did not allow to produce from a pleasant entity save a pleasant entity.

In a beautiful conversation with Kumayl bin Ziyâd al-Nakha’î Amîr al-mu’minîn ‘Alî \(^7\) narrates the Prophet \(^8\) as saying:

\[
\text{علي مني وابنائي مني وطبيبون مني وأنا منهم وهم الطبيبون بعد أمهم وهم صفينة من ركبها نجا ومنه}
\]

\(^4\) ‘Allâma Majlisi, Bihâr al-Anwâr, v.98, pp. 41
\(^5\) Shaykh al-‘Tûsî, Man Lâ Yahdûruhu al-Faqîh, v.2, p. 613
\(^6\) ‘Allâma Majlisi, Bihâr al-Anwâr, v.65, p. 24
‘Ali is from me, and my two sons are from him, and the tayyibūn [a reference to the A’imma ُ] are from me, and I am from them, and they are the tayyibūn (pleasant ones) after their mother, and they are the Ark upon which whoever boards is emancipated, and whosoever lags behind, falls...

Readers are requested to reflect on the phrase “wa hum al-ṭayyibūn ba’da ummihim” (and they are the pleasant ones after their mother) which subtly alludes to the root and transfer of their purity.

In order to understand better the transfer of purity, let us consider the following verses and narrations:

1- The Holy Qur’an presents a parable of universal significance:

Don’t you see how Allāh sets forth a parable? A pleasant word⁸ (kalima tayyiba) is like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens, It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave of its Lord. So Allāh sets forth parables

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7 ‘Allāma Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.74, p. 278
8 Unlike the word of man which is expressed by the tongue, kalima with regard to Almighty Allah refers to His creation. His creation is His speech. Therefore kalima tayyiba refers to a being of purity. Prophet ‘Īsā ُ in the Holy Qur’an is referred to as “…wa kalimatuhu alqāha ilā Maryam...” (and His Word that He cast toward Mary) (4:171)
for men, in order that they may receive admonition.

(14:24)

This verse must be understood in light of the fact that Allâh’s word is different from the word of the human being. According to a radiant expression of Amîr al-mu’minîn ‘Alî رضي الله عنه in Nahj al-Balâgha, Allâh’s words are His very creations. He ﷺ says: ‘And surely His speech is the action that He originates...’ Therefore when we speak of kalima ţayyiba we refer to a pleasant and good being. And among the fundamental requisites of such an entity, as depicted in the above verse, is a firm and powerful origin. One who is born to parents of firm knowledge and action, would always inhabit the skies of spiritual elevation, and benefit others every moment by the permission of their Lord. In a tradition Imâm al-Bâqîr ﷺ says the following about the aforementioned verse:

...نَحْنُ الشَّجَرَةُ الَّتِي قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ﴿أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتَ﴾ وفَرَّعَهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ، نَحْنُ نُعْطِي شِيۡعَتَنَا مَا نَشَاءُ
من عِلَّمًا

We are the tree about which Almighty Allâh said “...whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens” (14:24). We are the ones who give our Shi’as what we want from our knowledge... ۱۰

2. Imâm Amîr al-mu’minîn ‘Alî رضي الله عنه alluding to the reality that the fruit depends on the water of the plant says:

...وَاَعۡلَمْ أَنَّ كُلَّ عَمَلٍ نَبَاتٍ، وَكُلُّ نَبَاتٍ لَا غَنِىٓ
بِهِ عَنِ الْمَاءِ، وَالْمِياءَ مُخَالِفَةٌ، فَمَا طَابٌ سَقِيَّةٌ

۹ Imâm ‘Alî رضي الله عنه, Nahj al-Balâgha, sermon 228
۱۰ Quţb al-Dîn al-Rawandî, Al-Kharâ’îj wa al-Farîjîh, v.2, p. 596
...and know that every action is a plant, and every plant is not needless of water, and waters are of different kinds. And if the water of a plant is pure and pleasant, its growth would be pleasant and its fruit sweet. And if the water of a plant is dirty and unpleasant, its growth would be unpleasant and its fruit bitter.¹¹

3. Alluding to the fundamental importance of the land where the plant grows, the Holy Qur’an says:

وَالْبَلْدُ الطَّيِّبُ يُخْرِجُ نَبَاتَهُ وَالْذِّي حَبِّثَ لاَ يُخْرِجُ إِلَّا نَكْدَدًا

The good land its vegetation comes out by the permission of its Lord, and as for that which is bad, it does not come out except sparsely. (7:58)

4. In a well-known Zīyārat when addressing the Imāms of the Baqī’ cemetery in Madīna we say:

طَبِّبْنَ وَطَابَ مِنْ تَحْكِمٍ...  

You are pleasant and the place of your growth too is pleasant and pure...¹²

5. Alluding to the pleasant growth of Ḥaḍrat Maryam ﷺ Almighty Allāh says:

¹¹ ‘Allāma Majlīṣī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.29, p. 600
¹² Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.4, p. 559
Thereupon her Lord accepted her with a beautiful acceptance, and caused her to grow as a lovely plant... (3:37)

6. Imām al-Husayn  السلام عليما says in his well-known supplication of ‘Arafat:

خلقتني من التراب، ثم أسكنتني الأصلاب أمناً
لرب التمون وإختلاف الدهر، فلمس أزل طاعناً
من صلب إلى حرم في تقادم الأيام الماضية
والقرون الخالية

...You created me from clay, then established me in loins safe from the unpredictable turn of destiny and the difference of times; then I have been shifting from the loin to the womb along the course of the bygone days and the past centuries.”

Here Imām al-Husayn  السلام عليما is trying to teach us of a profound reality: the question of transfer of purity or impurity is not necessarily from the immediate parents. Generations are responsible.

7. In the well-known Ziyārat al-Wārith we address Imām al-Ḥusayn  السلام عليما in the following way:

أشهد أنك نور في الأصلاب الشامخة والأرحام
المطهرة لم تنجس الاجهال بإنجازها...

Surely I bear witness that you were a light in the great loins and the pure wombs, the [age of]

13 Sayyid Raḍi al-Dīn bin Ṭawūs al-Ḥasanī, Iqbal al-A‘māl, v.2, p.74
ignorance did not taint you with its dirt...¹⁴

Here again notice the words al-aṣlāb (loins) and al-arḥām (wombs) are in the plural form, which means that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is the edifice of a whole generation, and not mere one sulb (loin) and raḥim (womb).

8. In his address to the disobedient Kūfān on the plains of Karbalā he alluded to his pure origin saying:

آَلَا إِنَّ الدُّعِيَ بِنِ الدُّعِيَ قَدْ رَكَّزَ بَيْنَ أَنْصَارِينَ بَيْنَ القَلْتِ وَالدُّلَّةَ، وَهَيْهَاتُ ماَ أَخْذُ الدُّنْيَا، أَبِي الَّلَهِ ذَلِكَ وَرَسُولُهُ، وَجَدُودُ طَابَتْ وَحُجُورُ طَهْرَتْ، وَأَنْوَفْ حَمِيمَةُ وَنَفَوَسُ أَبِيَّةَ... 

Beware the illegal offspring, product of the illegal offspring, has made me to choose between the two: fighting with my few men and accepting the degradation [of paying oath of allegiance to Yazid]; This [i.e.accepting the latter] is farfetched; I will never accept degradation; Allāh and His Messenger and pleasant grandparents and pure blossoms and leaders of valor and protective souls do not allow that...¹⁵

The aforementioned quotations teach us that in order for one to be bestowed with an offspring the like of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, one is required to travel through a similar spiritual chain. Obviously a completely identical chain is impossible to attain, but one can establish the foundation of a chain that nurtures the values of the lineage of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. There is always time for rectification and change. The Holy Qur’ān says:

¹⁴ Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn bin Ṭawūs al-Ḥasanī, al-Luhūf fī Qatlā al-Ṭufūf, p.6
He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead from the living, and gives life to the earth after its death, and thus shall you be brought forth. (30:19)

Imām al-Ṣādiq ʿAllah’s Messenger to him  explaining the phrase ‘He brings forth the living from the dead and brings forth the dead’ in a tradition says:

فَالَحَيٌّ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْذِّيْ تَخْرَجُ طَيْنَتَهُ مِنْ طَيْنَةِ الْكَافِرِ. وَالْمِيتُ الْذِّيْ تَخْرَجُ مِنْ الْحَيٍّ هُوَ الْكَافِرُ الْذِّيْ تَخْرَجُ مِنْ طَيْنَةِ الْمُؤْمِنِ.

The living is the believer whose clay comes out from the clay of a disbeliever, and the dead that comes out from the living is a disbeliever, who comes out from the clay of a believer.16

Therefore if we firmly resolve to purify our beliefs and actions and unite with the spirit of tawḥīd, we can serve as the foundation of a powerful generation to come.17 This is where determining issues such as ‘the formation of the worldview of the youth’, ‘spouse selection and its correct criteria’, ‘etiquette of spousal interaction’, ‘prenatal care in both the physical as well as spiritual dimensions’, ‘child upbringing’, ‘the importance of the temperament of the wetnurse during breastfeeding’ etc. come into focus. Modern science has partially contributed in

16 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.2, p. 5
17 One of the interpretations given for kalima ṭayyība is kalimat Lā ʾilāha ʾilla Allah. If the parents purify themselves and make their foundations of belief and action firm, they would serve as origins of those human beings who truly personify Lā ʾilāha ʾilla Allah.
showing how some of these factors determine the felicity and happiness of the child.

The Canadian Psychiatrist, Dr. Thomas Verny, well-known as the world’s leading expert on the effects of the prenatal and the early post-natal environment on personality development in his ‘The Secret Life of the Unborn Child’ has interesting information to reveal. He says:

... a woman is her baby’s conduit to the world. Everything that affects her, affects him. And nothing affects her as deeply or hits with such lacerating impact as worries about her husband (or partner). Because of that, few things are more dangerous to a child, emotionally and physically, than a father who abuses or neglects his pregnant wife...

An equally vital factor in the child’s emotional well-being is his father’s commitment to the marriage. Any number of things can influence a man’s ability to relate to his partner, from the way he feels about his wife or his own father to his job pressures or his own insecurities. (Ideally, of course, the time to work out these problems is before conceiving, not during a pregnancy.)

(The mother’s) thoughts and feelings are the material out of which the unborn child fashions himself. When they are positive and nurturing, the child can... withstand shocks from almost any quarter. But the fetus cannot be misled either. If he is good at sensing what is on his mother’s mind generally, he is even better at sensing her attitude towards him...

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18 Dr. Thomas Verny, *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child*, p.25
19 Ibid., p. 43
Certainly exemplifying the method of how to prepare the foundation of a powerful generation would require a separate work in itself. One of the very important secrets for the success of the future child is the perfection of the preparatory causes. If both the spouses enjoy a sound temperament and spiritual purity, and both consume the right foods before and after copulation, and both maintain an environment of serenity and Divine love, they would always serve as foundations of powerful generations to come. The Holy Qur’ān cites a beautiful parable showing that Divine Grace is abundantly showered to all. The limitations of the receptacles, however, determine the nature of their bodies and spirits. The more deficient the receptacle, the more deficient the result. This also pertains to physical beauty. Hence you may find some children with excellent physical features, but poor moral traits, and vice versa. The Holy Qur’ān says:

"أنزل من السماء ماء فسالت أوقية بقدرها..."

He sends down water from the skies, and the channels flow, each according to its measure...(13:17)

Philosophically explaining the differences in quality of the off-springs born, the late Imām al-Khumaynī in his book ‘al-Ţalab wa al-Īrāda says:
Then be it known to you that because the Essentially Necessary Being is necessary in every dimension, it is impossible to withhold grace from the receptacle of grace. This is because withholding it while the latter enjoys complete receptivity or does not have any deficiency, necessitates the imperfection of the Provider of grace or His contingent nature, exalted is He from such attributions. And such kind of necessity [when we say that it is impossible to withhold Divine Grace] is similar to the essential impossibility of evil and oppression issuing from God, which is something volitional and does not contradict His possession of free will and power. Hence when there exists complete receptivity in the receptacles, grace is bestowed from higher causes. And as for bestowing existential grace in proportion to the receptivity of potency of the receptacle (al-mādda), it is because there is a specific coherence between the potency of a receptacle (al-mādda) and the actuality of its form (al-ṣūra), due to a united


      
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


           

           



       
 
      
   
    
      

         
         




    
  
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 







          
              
 







'Fāṭima' has various derivatives. Some of them are as follows:

1. Her weaning ( bénéficie) was concurrent with Divine inspiration and she was detached from impurity ( fūtimat ‘an al-tamth)

Imām Abū Ja’far [al-Bāqir ] is reported to have said:

When Fatima was born, Allāh sent down a revelation to an angel, who thereupon made the tongue of Muḥammad speak whereupon he named her Fatima . Then Allāh said: Indeed I detached you [from ignorance] through knowledge ( faṭamauki bi al-‘ilm) and detached you from menstruation ( faṭamauki min al-tamth). Thereafter Abu Ja’far said: I swear by Allāh, indeed Allāh detached her [from ignorance] through knowledge and detached her from menstruation during the Divine covenant ( fi al-mithāq).

Commenting on this, ‘Allāma Majlīsī in his Biḥār al-Anwār says:

بِرَأْنَ: فَطَمِّتَكَ بِالْعَلَّمِ أَيَّ أَرْضَعْتُكَ بِالْعَلَّمِ حَتَّى استغْنِيَتْ وَفَطَمَتْ، أَوْ قَطَعْتُكَ عَنَّ الْجَهْلِ بِسَبْبِ العلمِ أَوْ جَعَلْتُ فَطَامَكَ مِنَ الْلِّبَنِ مَقْرُونًا بِالْعَلَّم

21 Al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.1, p. 460
Exposition: *Faţamtuki bi al-‘ilm* (I detached you through knowledge) means *arḍa’tuki bi al-‘ilm* (I fed you with knowledge) until you were satisfied and weaned. Or it means “I detached you from ignorance by means of knowledge”, or “I made your weaning from milk accompany knowledge”, which alludes that from the very beginning of her inner makeup she was endowed with the Divine knowledge (‘ulūm Rabbāniyya). In the aforesaid possibilities, the active participle (*fā’īl*) is in the meaning of the passive participle (*maf‘ūl*) such as *al-dāfīq* in the meaning of *al-madhīq* (86:6)\(^\text{22}\)

Considering Imām al-Husayn  as *ibnu Fāṭima*, we conclude that he is an offspring of one who was free from physical impurities and endowed with Divine knowledge even before her descent to this worldly life. Consequently he (Imām  also possesses similar qualities: his birth did not accompany any kind of impurity and he was endowed with Divine knowledge from the very onset. Following are traditions worthy of contemplation:

• In a tradition narrated in al-Kāfi, Imām al-Bāqir  enumerating some of the characteristics of an infallible Imām says:

\[
\text{... يُولَدُ مُطَهَّرًا مَّخْتَυُنًا وإذا وَقَعَ عَلَى الأَرْضِ وَقَعَ}
\]

\(^{22}\) ‘Allāma Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v. 43, p. 13. Allāma is trying to simply say that the word Fāṭima which is in the pattern of an active participle signifies the meaning of a passive participle. This is because she is “cut off from ignorance” and “cut off from impurity”. So in this case she is the passive participle.
...He [the infallible Imām ً] is born pure and circumcised, and when he descends on the ground he falls on his arms, while he loudly declares the shahādatayn...²³

- In another tradition narrated from Ḥaḍrat Šafiyya Bint ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, where the specific details of the pure birth of Imām al-Ḥusayn ً is mentioned we read:

لاَمُ أَسْقَطَ الْحُسْنِيَّ بنَ فَاطِمَةِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَمَّاهُ بِيْنَ يَدِيهَا
فَقَالَ لِيَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم هُلْمُي إِلَيَّ بَابَيْنِ فَقَطَتْ يَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِنَّنَا لَمَّا نُنْظَفُهُ بَعْدَ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَنتُ نَظَفُينِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَدْنَظَفَهُ وَطَهَرَهُ

When al-Ḥusayn ً, the son of Fāṭima ً descended to the ground, I was near Fāṭima ً. Thereupon the Prophet ً said to me: Bring to me my son. I said: O Messenger of Allāh, we have not yet cleaned him. So the Prophet ً said: Do you think you would clean him? Indeed Allāh has cleaned and purified him...²⁴

- With regard to Imām al-Ḥusayn ً’s knowledge even prior to his descent in this material world, we have ample traditions that reveal that the Ahl al-Bayt ً possessed knowledge even prior to their birth. One of these that speak of this reality is as follows:

قالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَنَّا وَعَلَيْنِ وَفَاطِمَةُ وَالْحُسَنِ

²³ Al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.1, p. 388
²⁴ ʿAllāma Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, v. 43, p. 256
The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: I, ‘Ali, Faṭīma, Ḥasan and ʿUsayn, were in the pavilion of the Divine Throne glorifying Allah, and the angels would glorify through our glorification. This was two thousand years before Allāh created Adam...

This tradition speaks of their light which was prior to their earthly descent. The fact that they resided in the pavilion of Divine Throne reveals their vast knowledge already. This is because in other traditions the ‘Arsh is translated as Divine Knowledge:

Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ is reported to have said:

وَالْعَرْشُ هُوَ الْعِلْمُ الَّذِي لاَ يَقْدِرُ أَحَدُ قَدْرَهُ

...And the throne is knowledge which none can measure...

2. She and her followers are detached from the Hell Fire

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said to Ḥāḍrat Faṭīma ﷺ in the presence of Imām ‘Alī ﷺ:

يَا فَاطِمَةَ أَتَدْرِينَ لَمْ سَمِّيْتَ فَاطِمَةً؟ فَقَالَ أَنْهَا فَطِمْتُ هِيَ وَشِيْعَتُها مِنَ النَّارِ

O Faṭīma, do you know why you were named

25 ‘Allāma Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v. 4, p. 89
Fāṭima? Imām ‘Alī ᵃˡ-Ṣaddiq said: O Messenger of Allāh, why was she named Fāṭima ᴸᵃⁿᵉ? He ᴮᵃⁿᵉ said: Because she and her Shi‘as are detached from the Hell Fire.²⁶

Imām al-Ḥusayn ᴮᵃⁿᵉ, who is the offspring and fruit of Fāṭima ᴮᵃⁿᵉ likewise enjoys the same characteristic: in sacrificing whatever he had for the emancipation of the entire humanity, he serves as a radiant signpost of detaching those who follow his noble footsteps from Hellfire. In fact, in visiting his grave and expressing our salutation to his noble self there is emancipation from Hellfire. Ibn Qūlawayh narrates in his masterpiece collection Kāmil al-Ziyārāt:

قَالَ أَبُو عِبَدِ اللَّهِ أَسْأَلُ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ مَنْ أَتَى قَبْرَ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ۖ فَقَدْ وَصَلَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَوَصَلْنَا وَحَرَّمَتْ غَيْبَتُهُ وَحَرَّمَ لَحْمَهُ عَلَى النَّارِ ...

Imām al-Ṣadiq ᵃˡ-Ṣaddiq said: Whosoever comes to the grave of Abū ‘Abdillāh [al-Husayn ᵃˡ-Ṣaddiq], has indeed established contact with the Messenger of Allāh ᷺ as well as us, and backbiting him is forbidden and his flesh is forbidden on the Hell-Fire.²⁷

On the day of ‘Āshurā’ while addressing Imām al-Ḥusayn ᴮᵃⁿᵉ as our host, we request him to ask Allāh to emancipate us from Hell Fire:

بَلَى أَبَا عِبَدِ اللَّهِ أَنَا ضَيِّفُ اللَّهِ وَضَيِّفُكَ وَجَارُ اللَّهِ وَجَارُكَ وَلَكِ ضَيِّفُ وَجَارُ قَرِئَ وَقَرِئَ فِي هَذَا الْوَقُتَ أَنْ تَسْأَلِ اللَّهَ سُبُحَاهُ وَتَعَالَى أَنْ يُزْرَقِنِي

²⁶ Ibid., v. 43, p. 14
²⁷ Ibnu Qūlawayh, Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, p. 127
We must try to understand this tradition carefully. What we seek from Imām al-Ḥusayn  is not prayer for future safety but current emancipation. And emancipation presumes that we are already burning in Hell Fire. Scholars of gnosis tell us that due to our inner blindness, we cannot perceive our inner pathetic state. Otherwise, if the curtains of darkness were unveiled from our hearts we would comprehend the fire that is in us.

3. She was severed and detached from evil

Yūnus bin Ţabyān is reported to have said: Abū ‘Abdillāh [al-Ṣādiq] said:

أنتَ ذِي أَيِّ شَيْءٍ تَقْصِيرُ فَاطِمَةُ؟ قَلْتُ: أَخْبَرْنِي يَا سَيْدِي، قَالَ: فَطِمْتُ مِنَ الشَّرِّ.

Do you know what is the meaning of the name Fāṭima? I said: Inform me, O master. He  said: [It means that] she was detached from evil (shari)...

And sharr (lit. evil) is interpreted by some scholars as sin. The Holy

28 ‘Allāma Majlisi, Bihār al-Anwār, v. 4, p. 89
29 Shaykh Ṣadūq, Al-Khīṣal, p. 414
Qur'ān sometimes also employs it for the same meaning:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلُ مُتَمَّلَلًّا ذَرَةً خَيرًا يَأْتِهِ وَ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ مُتَمَّلَلًّا ذَرَةً شَرًا يَأْتِهِ

So whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it. (99:78)

Observe that the word “shari’” here is employed to denote an evil action, which is “sin” itself.

Hence Fāṭima was ma’sūma (infallible). Her offspring and the fruit of her noble being, who is Imām al-Husayn likewise was free from sin. This is because he is among the Ahl al-Bayt whom Allāh Himself purified from sin and indecency. The Holy Qur’ān says in Sūrat al-Ahzāb:

إِنَّمَا يَرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَذْهَبَ عَنْهُمُ الرِّجَسُ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

...Indeed Allāh desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification. (33:33)

4. Her lovers are detached from Hellfire

The Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

إِنِّي سَمِيتُ ابْنِتِي فَاطِمَةً لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَطَمَهَا وَقَطَمَ مَنْ أَحْبَاهُ مِنَ النَّارِ

Indeed I named by daughter as Fāṭima because Allāh, the Invincible and Exalted, detached her and
those who love her from the Hell-Fire.\(^{30}\)

According to a universal principle conveyed by the Holy Qur’an, a true lover is a sincere follower:

\[ \text{‘Fā‘il, ینحنتم تحبون لله فاتباعوني يحببكم الله.} \]

\[ \text{ويعفو لكما ذنوب لكم وallah غفور رحيم.} \]

Say, “If you love Allâh, then follow me; Allâh will love you and forgive you your sins, and Allâh is all-forgiving, all-merciful.” (3:31)

Therefore those who sincerely follow the footsteps of Ḥaḍrat Zahra’ and hence enjoy true love for her, would obviously be detached from Hell Fire. In a very beautiful tradition Imâm al-Bâqir says:

\[ \text{وَهَلْ الْدِّينُ إِلَّا الْحُبُّ} \]

And is religion other than love?\(^{31}\)

Imâm al-Husayn in this sense being *ibnu Fāṭima* likewise is one whose love emancipates one from Hell Fire. In fact there is a narration that pertains to the true love of all the Ahl al-Bayt. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

\[ \text{مَنْ أَحِبَّنَا أُهِلَ الْبَيْتِ حَشْرَهُ اللهُ آمَنَاَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةَ} \]

Whosoever loves us the Ahl al-Bayt, Allâh would raise him in the state of protection on the Day of Judgment.\(^{32}\)

5. She is an intermediary of Divine Grace


\(^{31}\) Shaykh al-Kulaynî, *Al-Kâfî*, v.8, p. 79

\(^{32}\) ‘Allâma Majlisi, *Bihâr al-Anwâr*, v. 27, p. 79
In different traditions we are told that Allāh derived the name Fāṭima from His Name Fāṭir al-samāwātī wa al-ard (6:79) (The Cleaver of the heavens and the earth). The name al-Fāṭiru comes from the word faṭr which means to “cleave”. Here it means one who cleaves and breaks non-existence and brings about existence. In conclusion, as some scholars have written in their works, it means ‘The Originator’. Observe the following traditions:

- In a lengthy tradition, where the Ahl al-Kisā’ were present, the Holy Prophet at one point addresses Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima saying:

> ...وَشَقّ لَكَ ِّبَا فَاطِمَةَ اسْمُمَا مِنْ اسْمَمَهُ فَهُوَ

*الفَاطِرُ وَأَنتَ فَاطِمَةَ

...And He derived for you O Fāṭima a name from His Names, for He is al-Fāṭiru (the Originator), and you are Fāṭima.33

- Almighty Allāh in a conversation with prophet Adam introduces the light of Fāṭima as follows:

> ...وَهَذِهِ فَاطِمَةَ وَأَنتُ فَاطِرُ السَّمَاءَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ

> فَاطِمَةُ أَعْدَائِي عَنْ رَحمَتِي يَوْمَ فَصُلَّ فِصَائِي

> وَفَاطِمَ أَوْلِيَائِي عَمَّا عُطِّرَتِهِمْ وُشَيْنِهِمْ فَشَقَقَتْ لَهَا

> اسْمُمَا مِنْ اسْمِي

...and this is Fāṭima while I am the Fāṭir al-samāwātī wa al-ard (Originator of the heavens and the earth), Fāṭimu a’dā’i min Raḥmati yawma fāṣli qadā’i (the Severer of My enemies from My mercy on the day of My judgment), and Fāṭimu awliyā’i ‘ammā

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33 Ibid., v. 37, p. 47
ya’tarīhim wa yashīnuhum (the Relinquisher of affliction and disgrace from those near to me). So I derived for her a name from My Name.

- In a supplication taught by Angel Jibrā’il to Prophet Adam we read as follows:

\[
yā hamīd bāḥq muḥammad yā ‘alai bāḥq ‘alī yā fāṭar
\]

O praised one, I swear by the station of Muḥammad,
O Exalted One, I swear by the station of ‘Alī, O Originator, I swear by the station of Fāṭima ...\(^{34}\)

Readers must understand that this tradition does not speak simply of the method of derivation that we commonly know. Fāṭima plays a fundamental role in the creation and origination of the heavens and the earth. She unites with the Muḥammadan Light which is the first Divine Creation, from which proceeds every good.

Imām al-Ḥusayn, being ibnu Fāṭima, also manifests the attribute of al-Fāṭiru. This is also because he is united with the Muḥammadan Reality (al-Nūr al-Muḥammadi), which is the intermediary of Divine grace.

Other traditions also indicate that they - the Ahl al-Bayt - are the intermediaries (wasā’iṭ) between Allāh and the creation. For example, in one of his brilliant messages, our 12\(^{th}\) Holy Imām is reported to have said:

\[
naḥnu sīnā‘ūt rabbana wa al-ḥalq bi‘adu sīnā‘ūnā
\]

We are the actions of our Lord, and the creation

\(^{34}\)Ibid., v.44, p.245
thereafter are our actions.\textsuperscript{35}

And in a lengthy tradition, the Holy Prophet \textsuperscript{๘} tells Imâm ‘Ali ﷺ:

... يَا عَلَيْ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ وَلَا حَوَاءَ وَلَا

الجَنَّةَ وَلَا النَّارَ وَلَا السَّمَاءَ وَلَا الأَرْضَ ...

...O ‘Ali, and was it not for us (the Ahl al-Bayt \textsuperscript{๘}),
Allâh would not have created Adam, nor Hâwâ’, nor
Paradise, nor Hell Fire, nor the sky, nor the earth...\textsuperscript{36}

Commenting on this tradition, Imâm Khumaynî in his book of gnosis,
\textit{Mişbâḥ al-Hidâya} says:

قِوْلُهُ ﷺ: (لَوْلَا نَحْنُ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ) إِلَى أَخْرَه.
لَأَنَّهُمْ وَسَائِطٌ بَيْنِ الحَقِّ وَالخَلْقِ وَروَايَتُ بَيْن
الحَضْرَةِ الْوَحِيدَةِ الْمَحْضَّةِ وَالحَكْمَةِ التَّفْصِيلِيَةِ;
وَيَقُولُ هَذِهِ الْفَقْرَةُ بِيَانٍ وَسَائِطْهُمْ بِحَسْبِ أَصْل
الْوَجْدَ، وَكَونُهُمْ مَظَهَّرُ الْرَّحْمَةِ الرَّحْمَانِيَةِ الَّتِي
هِي فَيْضٌ أَصْلُ الْوَجْدَ...

The Holy Prophet \textsuperscript{๘} said: ‘\textit{Was it not for us Allâh
would not create Adam...}’ This is because they (the
Ahl al-Bayt \textsuperscript{๘}) are intermediaries (\textit{wasâ’ît}) between
God and the creation, and links between the
Presence of Sheer Unity (\textit{al-ḥadra al-wâhda al-mâhda})
and separative plurality (\textit{al-kâthra al-tâfšiliyya}); and
this part of the tradition explains their intermediary

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., v.53, p. 178
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., v.18, p. 345
role in terms of existence, and that they are manifestations of the All-comprehensive Mercy of Allah, which confers existence itself...37

6. The creation cannot comprehend her reality

In the well-known Qur’anic commentary of Furât al-Kûfî we read the following tradition narrated from Imâm al-Sâdiq  about the chapter al-Qadr:

**عن أبي عبد الله أن قال: إننا أنزلنا في ليلة القدر الليلّة فاطمة والقدر الله فمن عرف فاطمة حق معرفتها فقد أدرك ليلة القدر وليّما سميت فاطمة لأن الخلق فعلموا عن معرفتها**

Imâm Abû ‘Abdillâh al-Sâdiq  is reported to have said that in the verse ‘Indeed we sent it on the laylat al-qadr” the word al-layla refers to Fâtimah  and the word al-qadr refers to Allah. Therefore whosoever knows Fâtimah  the way she must be known, then indeed he has comprehended the laylat al-qadr. And surely she was named Fâtimah because the creation was detached from comprehending her reality (li anna al-khalqa fu’timû ‘an ma’rifâtihâ).

Readers should understand that the Imâm  is referring to the esoteric and inner meaning of this verse.38

Expounding on this tradition39, the saintly scholar, Āyatullâh ‘Alî Sa’âdat Parwar (may Allah elevate his noble spirit) in his brilliant

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37 Imâm Khumaynî, Mîsbâh al-Hidâya, p. 78
38 Al-Kûfî, Tafsîr Furât, p. 581
39 In order to understand the core of this tradition which is beyond the scope of this work, readers are requested to refer to pp. 11-112 of the Persian treatise Jelweye Nûr.
treatise on the spiritual status of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima Jelwēye Nūr says
that this tradition is understandable after we believe that the reality of
the entire Holy Qur’ān was received all at once by the heart of the Holy
Prophet on the night of grandeur. This is because Fāṭima is similar
to her father enjoys a receptacle that can contain the Divine message.
Hence it is proper to call her Laylat al-Qadr.

Bearing the aforesaid in mind, the matronym Ibn Fāṭima implies
that the creation is likewise detached from knowing the exalted status
and sanctity of Imâm al-Ḥusayn.

In a lengthy conversation, Imâm ‘Alî says to Abû Dharr:

فَإِنَّكُمْ لَا تَلْقَوْنَ كَنَّهَا مَفْيَأً وَلَا نِهَائِتَهُ

...for surely you will not attain the zenith or of our
station, nor its ultimate state...

And in a brilliant tradition, Imâm al-Riḍâ, defining the station of
an infallible Imâm says:

الإِمَامُ وَاحِدُ دَهْرِهِ لَا يَدَأْنِيهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَا يَعَادِلُهُ عَالَمٌ
ولَا يُجَدَّ مَنَّهُ بَدِّلَ وَلَا لَهُ مِثْلٌ وَلَا نَظِيرٌ... فَمَنْ ذَا
الذِّي يَلْبِثُ مَعْرِفَةً الإِمَامَ وَيَمْكِنُهُ اِخْتِيَارُهُ هَيَهَاتٌ
هيَهَاتٌ...

The Imâm is unique in his time. None can come
closer to him in rank, and no scholar equals him,
and he has no substitute, nor does he have an
example or peer...Who then can attain the
knowledge of Imâm or is able to venture into
knowing him? It is indeed farfetched! It is indeed

40 ‘Allâma Majlisi, Bihâr al-Anwâr, v. 26, p. 1
farfetched!... 41

O son of Faţimah, the Mistress of the Women of the Universe

If we ponder over the appellation that follows the name Faţima ﷺ we come to understand another very important implication of this verse. Ḩaḍrat Faţima ﷺ is known as Sayyidatu nisā’ al-‘ālamīn (Mistress of the women of the worlds), which reveals her presiding status (siyāda) over all other women, past, present, and future. The word sayyida is the feminine form of the noun sayyid, which confers the connotation of presidency and mastership.

In order to understand the root meaning of mastership (siyāda), some authoritative scholars like Ayatullah Jawādī Amulī refer to the following tradition of Amīr al-mu’minīn ﷺ:

باحمال الموهون يجب السؤدَد

By shouldering responsibilities mastership becomes essential.

In this sense, all the fourteen infallibles are sādāt, for they are the fundamental beings who have shouldered the heaviest responsibility any being can ever shoulder. In the ontological and existential sense they represent the middle link between Allāh and His creation. Therefore every good is sourced through their light. Hence they have mastership over the entire caravan of the creation.

Shaykh Ṣāduq narrates in his masterpiece collection ‘Ilal al-Sharāyi’ from Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ:

41 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.1, p. 201
Fāṭima was known as *Muḥaddatha* (one spoken to by the angels) because the Angels would descend from the heaven and call her the way they would call Maryam, daughter of ‘Imrān. They would say: Indeed Allāh has chosen you and purified you and chosen you over the women of the worlds. O Fatima be obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow down with those who bow down. So she would speak to them and they would speak to her. One night she said to them: isn’t the one who has more merit over all the women of the world Maryam, the daughter of ‘Imrān? They said: Indeed Maryam was the Mistress of her world, and indeed Allāh, the Invincible and Magnificent made you the Mistress of the women of your and her world as well as the
Mistress of the preceding and succeeding women.⁴²

The word *al-‘ālamīn* confers the meaning that her mistressship envelops all the worlds, and she presides every woman whatsoever. This is because when the article ‘*al*’ precedes a plural noun, it refers to *all the extensions* of the noun.

Imām al-Ḥusayn  being *ibnu Fāṭimati Sayyidi nisā’ al-‘ālamīn*, and hence a product and fruit of the mistress of the women of the world, also enjoys qualities of mastership.

Imām Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn  reports from Imām al-Ḥusayn  :

*كُن رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يَقُولُ فِي مَا بَشَرْنِيْ بِهِ: يَا حُسَيْنَ أَنتُ السَّيَدُ أَبْنُ السَّيَدِ أَبُو السَّادَةَ*

Among the glad tidings that the Messenger of Allāh  would give me, is: O Ḥusayn, you are the master (sayyid), son of the master (sayyid), father of masters (sayyids)...⁴³

And in the well-known *Ziyarat al-Arbaʿ in* Imām al-Ṣādiq  teaches us to address Imām al-Ḥusayn  as follows:

*وَجَعَلَتْهُ سَيِّدًا مِنَ السَّادَةِ وَقَائِدًا مِنَ القَادِئَةَ*

...and He (Allāh) made you a *sayyid* from the sayyids, and a leader from the leaders...⁴⁴

**The Path towards Mastership**

When we try to to address Imām al-Ḥusayn  with mastership, we must struggle to embark on a spiritual journey to attain a color of the

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⁴³ Ibid., v. 36, p. 344
⁴⁴ Ibid., v. 98, p. 331
same. The Ahl al-Bayt  whose light presides over the creation have also taught us the path towards *siyāda* (mastership).

One of the fundamental criteria of mastership is generosity and open-handedness (*jād*). Consider the following narrations:

1. Imām al-Ḥusayn  is reported to have said:

\[
\text{مَنْ جَادَ سَأَدَ وَمَنْ بَخلَ رَذَلُ}
\]

Whosoever bestows generously reigns supreme, and one who is stingy becomes ignoble.\(^{45}\)

2. The Holy Prophet  is reported to have said:

\[
\text{سيدُ القُومِ خَادِمُهُمْ}
\]

The sayyid of a nation is their servant.\(^{46}\)

3. Imām  is reported to have said:

\[
\text{بِالجُودِ تَحْكُونُ السيَادَةُ}
\]

Mastership comes about through open-handedness.\(^{47}\)

4. Imām  is reported to have said:

\[
\text{سبَبُ السيَادَةَ السَّحَاءُ}
\]

Generosity is the cause of mastership.\(^{48}\)

5. Imām  is reported to have said:

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46 *Man Lā Yahḍuruhu al-Faqih*, v.4, p. 378
47 Al-Āmadi, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, p.378
48 Al-Wāsīṭi, *ʿUyun al-Ḥikam wa al-Mawāʾis*, p. 281
 Forgive in power and do good in fortune, your mastership will turn perfect.49

Considering the aforesaid narrations which speak of generosity and open-handedness as the criteria of mastership, let us consider the following narration that speaks of the best kind of open-handedness:

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

وَأَجْوَدَ النَّاسِ مِنْ جَادٍ بِنَفْسِهِ وَمَالِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّه

...And the most open-handed of all people, is one who generously bestows his self and his wealth in the way of Allâh.50

And Imâm al-Ḥusayn was that sayyid who sacrificed everything that he had for the sake of Allâh. Therefore he has al-siyâda al-ʻuzmâ (The greatest mastership).

Hîlîl bin Nâfî’ reports:

وَرُوِىٰ هَلَال بن نَافِع قَالَ: إِنِّي لَوَاقِفُ فِي أُصْحَابٍ عَمَّر بن سَعِد إِذْ صَرَّخَ صَارِخً: أَبَشِرُ أُبَيْهَا الامِّيِّر
فهَذَا شَمُر قَدْ قُتِلَ الْحَسِينُ، قَالَ: فَخَرَجَتُ بِبَيْنِ الصُّفْنِ فَوَقَتَ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَجوَدُ بِنَفْسِهِ فَوْلاَهُ مَارَا يَتُ قَتِيلَا مَضْمَعَ بَدْمَهُ أَحْسَنُ مِنْهُ ولاَ أنْوِرَ وَجَهًا، وَلَقِيدَ شُغْلِي نُورُ وَجَهٍ وَجُمَالَ

49 Al-Âsî, ‘Uyûn al-Ḥikam wa al-Mawâ’îṣ, p. 200
50 ‘Allâma Majlîsî, Bihâr al-Anwâr, v. 73, p. 12
Hilāl bin Nāfī reports: I stood with the companions of ‘Umar bin Sa‘d, when a caller shouted: Glad tidings to you, O Amīr, for this is Shimr, who has already killed al-Husayn. Hilāl says: I left between the two ranks and stood besides him (al-Husayn) while surely he was giving away his life, I swear by Allāh I never saw a killed man smeared in his blood more beautiful and more sparkling in face than him. And indeed the light of his face and the beauty of his awe-inspiring appearance occupied me from thinking about his martyrdom...

O son of Faṭimah, the Leader of the Women of the Worlds

Some commentators of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā have defined siyāda as sharāf wa ‘ulluw al-martaba. In other words, when we say Ḥāṣrāt Faṭima is Sayyidatu nisa‘ al-‘ālamīn, we mean she is the most high-ranking of all women, past, present, and future:

Shaykh Ṣadūq in his al-Amāli narrates a lengthy tradition from the Holy Prophet, who at one point says:

51 'Allāma Majlisi, Bihār al-Anwār, v. 45, p. 57
52 Shaykh ‘Ali Ḥaydar Mu’ayyad, Adwa’ al-Ẓiyarat ‘Āshūrā, p. 131
As for my daughter Fāṭima, she is the Mistress of the women of the worlds from the foremost and latter ones, and surely she stands in her place of prayer, whereupon seventy thousand angels close to Allāh, send their salutations to her, and call her with what the angels called Maryam. So they say: “O Fāṭima, indeed Allāh chose you and purified you, and chose you over the women of all the worlds.”

Therefore Imām al-Ḥusayn the son and edifice of Sayyidatu nisāʾi al-ʿālamīn also is among the most elevated of people. We have already mentioned traditions that clearly distinguish Imām al-Ḥusayn as sayyid. However, because we defined the word sayyid here to mean sharīf, let us consider the following verse of the well-known salutational recital of Ziyārat al-Jāmiʿa al-Kabīra.

وَطَأَطَا ْسَكُّلُ شَرَفِي فَلِشَرَفِكُمْ ...

And every sharīf (one who enjoys an elevated status) bows down before your elevated status (li sharafīkum)...
O son of Faṭimah, the Mistress of the Women of the Universe

Another possible meaning of Sayyidat al-Nisā, as understood from a tradition, is that she is mufrūḍat al-ṭāʾa (one who must be obeyed) with regard to all the women. That is, whatever she commands must be obeyed, and her words and deeds are are proof for them. Rather according to a tradition, she has this position with regard to all:

Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir  is reported to have said:

وَلَقَدْ كَانَتْ لَهَا مَفْرُوضَةُ الطَّاعَةِ عَلَى جَمِيعٍ مِنْ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْجَنِّ وَالْإِنسَ وَالْتَيْرِ وَالْوُحْشِ وَالأَلْبَيْاءِ وَالمَلَائِكَةِ

And indeed she was one to be compulsorily obeyed by all the creation: the Jins, the human beings, the birds, the wild animals, the prophets and the angels.55

And mufrūḍat al-ṭāʾa (one who must be obeyed) in this tradition should not be merely taken as one who must be obeyed by all through their volitions. Rather it also speaks of wilāya takwiniyya (ontological presidency), which means that she has Divinely bestowed power and can control or lay effect on their entities of existence. This definition of mistressship is an inspiration from the following tradition:

ʿAllāma Majlisī narrated the following tradition in Biḥār al-Anwār:

55 Al-Shāhrūdī, Mustadrak Saḥīḥat al-Biḥār, v.6, p. 208
The Prophet said: 'Ali is the Sayyid of the Arabs. So 'A’ishah asked: O Messenger of Allâh, aren’t you the Sayyid of Arabs? He said: I am the Sayyid of the children of Adam, and 'Alî is the Sayyid of the Arabs. So 'A’ishah asked: O Messenger of Allâh, and who is a sayyid? He said: One whose obedience is made compulsory, the way my obedience is made compulsory.\(^{56}\)

And the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt are clear that all the Imâms are muftaraḍ al-țâ’a. There are clear expressions about that in some interesting traditions. Observe the following traditions:

Al-'Amîli in his Wasâ’il al-Shi‘a narrates:

\(^{56}\)‘Allâmâ Majlîsî, Bihâr al-Anwâr, v.4, p.198
It is narrated that Imām al-Ṣādiq ۲۶ once got ill, and ordered someone who was near him to go and tell his people to hire someone, so that he may pray for him near the grave of al-Ḥusayn ۲۶. So they found a person, and told him to do what is required. He said: I will go, but al-Ḥusayn ۲۶ is an Imām who must be compulsorily obeyed (muṭtarḍ al-ṭā‘a) and he (i.e. Imām al-Ṣādiq ۲۶) [likewise] is an Imām who must be compulsorily obeyed. [Aren’t they equal in status?] So they went to Imām al-Ṣādiq ۲۶ and informed him what the person had said. The Imām ۲۶ said: What he said is correct. However, is he not aware that Allāh has places, wherein supplications are accepted. And that spot [i.e. near the grave of al-Ḥusayn ۲۶] is among those places.۵۷

‘Allāma Majlisī narrates the following tradition in his Biḥār al-Anwār:

۵۷ Al-ʿĀmilī, Wasāʾil al-Shīʿa, v.14, p. 537
'Abdullāh bin al-Fāḍl is reported to have said: I was with Abū `Abdillāh [al-Ṣādiq ẖ], and a person from the inhabitants of Ṭūs came in his presence. He said to the Imām ﷽: O son of the Messenger of Allāh, what reward is there for one who visits the grave of Abū `Abdillāh al-Ḥusayn bin `Alī ולה? The Imām ﷽ said to him: O Ṭūs, whosoever visits the grave of Abū `Abdillāh al-Ḥusayn bin `Alī ולה while he knows that the Imām ﷽ is one who is compulsorily to be obeyed (mustaraḍ al-ṭā‘a) by the servants of Allāh, Allāh would forgive him his past and future sins, and would accept his intercession for seventy sinners, and he would not ask any need from Allāh near the Imām’s grave save that Allāh would fulfil his need.⁵⁸

‘Allama Majlisi narrates the following tradition in his Biḥār al-Anwār.

‘Abd al-Ḥamīd bin Naṣr reports: Abū `Abdillāh [Imām al-Ṣādiq] ﷽ said: They deny the Imām who

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⁵⁸ ‘Allama Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.4, p.198
must be compulsorily obeyed and reject him. *I swear by Allāh there is no station in the earth greater near Allāh then one who must be compulsorily obeyed*.59

59 Ibid., v.25, p.141
CHAPTER 5

Advertisements

Ya'qūb ibn Abī Jāzar

Peace be unto you, O blood of Allāh and the son of the blood of Allāh
COMMENTARY

Peace be unto You, O possessor of the blood venerated by Allâh

The word thâr љ in the Arabic language has been employed for different meanings: avenging for blood, rancour, blood, the slain, etc.

Many commentators of Ziyârat ʾĂshurâ‘ have rendered the phrase ‘thâr Allâh’ as ‘blood of Allâh’. Allâma al-Ţabâtabâ’î likewise is reported to have said the same thing when asked about its meaning.

In order for this verse to be comprehensible, a muḍâf (first particle of a genitive construction) is taken to be elliptical and hidden before the word thâr. The sentence would originally read “yâ șâhiba thârillâh” (O possessor of the blood of Allâh). Therefore when we say “yâ thâr Allâh”, we actually mean “yâ șâhiba thârillâh”.

Obviously Allâh is free from any kind of anthropomorphic attribute (Qur’ân, 42:11), and thus the meaning of ‘blood of Allâh’ should not be taken as ‘the blood that is a part of Allâh’, far is He from any kind of imperfection whatsoever. The possibility that thâr Allâh means ‘the blood owned by Allâh’ is although correct in the real sense, for Almighty Allâh has absolute ownership over every entity (Qur’ân, 3:189), it is not meant in the present case. This is because the appellation ‘thâr Allâh’ here denotes a distinct characteristic of al-Ţusayn ﷺ.
whereas ‘thār Allāh’ in its general sense refers to every human being. Unless, however, we would like to express the nobility (sharāfā) of the blood of Imām al-Ḥusayn ulla, which was sacrificed in the way of Allāh. We do have similar instances in the Arabic language such as baytullāh (house of Allāh), rūḥullāh (spirit of Allāh), nāqatallāh (camel of Allāh: 91:13), etc. Annexing the name Allāh in such instances is in order to reveal the nobility of the first particle of the genitive construction. In short, when we say ‘yā thār Allāh’ we mean ‘O one whose blood is the blood that Allāh venerated and preferred over the blood of others.’

Peace be unto you, O the spilled blood, whose avenger is Allāh

One of the most clear expositions3 for thār Allāh is that it refers to that blood that has been spilled in falsehood and injustice, and is attributed to the wali al-dam (one who has the right to avenge for the blood). Therefore when we say thār Allāh we mean ‘the spilled blood that belongs to Allāh’, and He alone is the avenger of the same. This meaning can be understood in other salutational recitals as well. For example in one of the ziyārāt of Imām al-Ḥusayn ulla we address him as follows:

...and that you are the blood of Allāh (thār Allāh) in the earth and the blood that none of the inhabitants of the earth can avenge, and none save Allāh alone

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2 Habībullāh Kashānī, Sharḥu Ziyārat ‘Āshūra’; p. 45
3 Sayyid Mahdī Mir Bāqiri, Šabīr-Jamāl Sayr o Sulūk bā ‘Āshūra’; pp. 75-76
can avenge it.\(^4\)

This, however, does not contradict those salutational recitals and supplications that encourage us to ask Almighty Allāh to enable us avenge the blood of Imām al-Ḥusayn with our present Imām, for he is a vicegerent of Allāh on earth and His medium, and can thus serve as Allāh’s representative in avenging the blood of Imām al-Ḥusayn.

The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَلَا تَقْتِلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ {وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقُتِلْ جَعَلْنَا لُوْلِيَّةَ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يُسَرِّفُ فِي الْقُتْلِ إِنَّهُ مَنْصُورٌ}

Do not kill a soul [whose life] Allāh has made inviolable, except with due cause, and whoever is killed wrongfully, We have certainly given his heir an authority. But let him not commit any excess in killing, for he enjoys the support [of law.] (17:33)

Al-Bahrānī in his Tafsīr al-Burḥān, while commenting on the above verse narrates the following tradition:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ سُلْطَانٍ عَنْ رَجُلٍ قَالَ: سَأَلتُ أَبَا عِبَّادَ الْلَّهِ ﺔٓ ﻧَ قُولُهُ تَعَالَ: ﻣَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقُتِلْ جَعَلْنَا لُوْلِيَّةَ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يُسَرِّفُ فِي الْقُتْلِ إِنَّهُ مَنْصُورٌ أَقَالَ ذَٰٔلِكَ فَأَمَّنَ أَلْ مُحَمَّدٍ ﺔٓ ﺔٓ ﻧَ بَخَرَ فَقُتِلَ ﺔٓ ﺔٓ ﺔٓ 

\[^4\] Ibn Qūlawayh, Kāmil al-Ziyārāt, v.1, p. 216
Muḥammad bin Sinān narrates from a person who said: I asked Abā ‘Abdillāh [al-Ṣādiq ﷺ] about the verse “and whoever is killed wrongfully, We have certainly given his heir an authority”, and he said: **That is the Qā‘im of the progeny of Muḥammad ﷺ. He will come out and rise to avenge the blood of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ...**

We also read in the supplication of al-Nudba:

آَيُّ الْطَّالِبُ بِدَمِ المَقْتُولِ بِحَكْرٍ بَلاَءَ

Where is the one who would avenge the blood of the one who was killed in Karbalā’...

Therefore whether we say that Allāh Himself will avenge the blood of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ or the present Imām ﷺ will do the same, there is no difference. This is because the Imām ﷺ is an entirely submissive servant of Almighty Allāh and whatever he does is whatever Allāh wants.

**آَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا نَارَ اللَّهِ**

Peace be unto you, O one whose blood is the blood of Allāh

One of the possible meanings of the phrase *yā thār Allāh* is ‘*yā man thāruhu thār Allāh*’ (O one whose blood is the blood of Allāh). Here the za‘ir declares that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ enjoys the lofty spiritual state of *al-baqā‘ bi Allāh ba‘d al-fanā‘* (survival in Allāh after

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6 Al-Mashhadi, *al-Mazār*, p. 579
7 Habibullāh Kāshānī, *Sharḥu Ziyārat ‘Aṣhūrā‘*, p. 45
dissolution in Him) which the mystic-scholars expound in their works. Due to the comprehensive and profound meaning it entails, we would not like to go into the details of this reality here.

Those who have attained heights of human perfection through supererogatory worship and obedience (nawāfīl) come to a station where they vision and comprehend that every act of theirs is done through Almighty Allāh. In other words, Almighty Allāh becomes their means of action. In a sacred tradition [hadith al-qudsi], Almighty Allāh is reported to have said:

ما يتقرّب إلى عبدي يشبي أحب إلى مَما افترضت عليه. وإنّه ليتقرّب إلى بالنافلة حتي أحبه، فاذّا أحبّته كنّتّ اذا سمعه الذي يسمع به وبره التي يبّطش بها وسنانه الذي ينطق به ويدّه التَّي يبّطش بها، إن دعاني أحبّته.

My servant does not draw near to me with anything more lovable to Me than what I have made obligatory on him. And surely he never ceases to draw near to Me through supererogatory acts until I love him. And when I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees, his tongue through which he speaks, his hand through which he grasps. When he calls on Me I respond to him.

This tradition speaks of two fundamental kinds of proximity: (a) proximity attained through obligatory deeds (qurb al-farā’iḍ), and (b) proximity attained through supererogatory deeds (qurb al-nawāfīl). Thār Allāh refers to the first level. In this level it is the servant who becomes the instrument of Allāh. Almighty Allāh Sees, Hears, and
Speaks through His servant. This should not lead one to conjecture that Allah is in need of His servant, for the latter’s very existence as well as subsistence entirely depend on Allah’s volition. Being an instrument of Allah rather shows the utter obedience of the servant and his unity with Divine volition. Perhaps Imam al-Husayn’s well-known dictum ‘Riḍa Allah Riḍānā Ahl al-Bayt’ (The pleasure of Allah is our pleasure, the Ahl al-Bayt refers to this very state. The servant in this state becomes عين الله يد الله (the eyes of Allah), يد الله (the hand of Allah) or ثار الله” (blood of Allah), which means that He employs these intermediaries of the elevated human being to do what He decides. Ḥāshim bin ‘Umāra narrates: I heard Amīr al-mu’minin ‘Alī say:

أنا عين الله وأنا يد الله وأنا جنب الله وأنا باب الله
I am the eye of Allah, and I am the hand of Allah; and I am the side of Allah and I am the door of Allah.9

And Aswād bin Saʿīd reports: I was with Abū Jaʿfar, and he said:

نحن حجة الله ونحن باب الله ونحن لسان الله
ونحن وجه الله ونحن عين الله في خلقه...
We (the Ahl al-Bayt) are the proof of Allah, we are the door of Allah, and we are the tongue of Allah, and we are the face of Allah, and we are the eye of Allah in His creation...10

Scholars of insight when expounding this exalted state also refer to the following verse of the Holy Qurʾān:

8 Imām Khumaynī, Gloses on the Commentary of Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam, pp. 281-282
9 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.1, p. 145
10 ‘Allama Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.25, p. 384
You did not kill them; rather it was Allāh who killed them; and you did not throw when you threw, rather it was Allāh who threw, that He might test the faithful with a good test from Himself. Indeed Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (8:17)

This verse speaks of the Battle of Badr. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asks Imām ‘Ali ﷺ to give him a handful of pebbles, whereafter he ﷺ throws them at the faces of the polytheists of Quraysh. Almighty Allāh describes this as His own action. In other words, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was Allāh’s agent and medium. He is told: You did not throw when you threw, but Allāh threw. In reality no kind of selfhood remained in the Prophet ﷺ. His entire being manifested the Divine.

Thār Allāh, according to some Divine scholars, refers to this very kind of perfection. Imām al-Husayn ﷺ’s entire movement and sacrifice manifested the attributes of Allāh.

Scholars of insight, considering the reality that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is thār Allāh say that the compensatory price of the blood of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ therefore is Allāh Himself. The late scholar Aytullah Mūhammad Riḍā Rabbānī in his Jalawāt-e-Rabbānī says:

أَنِّيَّتُ مِقَامٍ ثَارَ اللَّهِ رَأْيِ وَأَجَدُ أَسْتَ وَبِهْمَينِ جِهَةٍ

استَ كَّرَأْبَهُي اَوَّ خَوَدَاسِتَ

That Ḥaḍrat occupies the station of thār Allāh and for this very reason his compensatory price is God

Himself.¹²

And in his comments over ‘Allāma al-Ţabāţabā’ī’s translation of thār Allāh as ‘blood of Allāh’ Shaykh Rukhsād, a former student of ‘Allāma says:

منظور این است که خداوند متعل مخود خونهای امام
حسن – علیه السلام – می باشد؛ زیرا در برای شهادت
و فداکاری آن حضرت هیچ نعمتی از نعمتهای دیگری
جز دیدار پروردگار قرار نمی گرفت.

This implies that Almighty God Himself is the compensatory price of the blood of Imām al-Ḥusayn یez. This is because in exchange for the Imām’s martyrdom and sacrifice, there was no blessing of the Hereafter other than the vision of God.¹³

Perhaps the reason why the compensatory price of al-Ḥusayn یez is Allāh Himself is the Imām’s state of utter dissolution in the Beloved and survival by Him (al-fanā‘ fi Allāh wa al-baqā‘ bihi)¹⁴. As we said earlier, Imām al-Ḥusayn یez, due to his very exalted station, was a medium of Allāh’s works. Therefore, like the Prophet ﷺ who is told ‘you did not throw when you threw, rather it was Allāh who threw’(8:17), Imām al-Ḥusayn did not fight gallantly when he fought gallantly in the plains of Karbalā’ but Allāh fought gallantly in the plains of Karbalā’. This is because every element of Imām al-Ḥusayn

¹² Aṣyṭullāh Muḥammad Riḍā Rabbānī, Jalawāt-e-Rabbānī, v.1, p.305
¹³ Muḥammad Ḥusayn Rukhsād, Dar Mahzare ‘Allāmeye Ṭabāţabā’ī, p. 177
¹⁴ One should not misconceive such kind of unity being a kind of compositional unity (ittiḥād) or incarnation (ḥulūl); far is Allāh from every kind of deficiency whatsoever. Those endowed with a sharp vision say that such a state is nothing but ‘the unveiling of the reality.’ The utterly submissive human being understands that he is nothing but an action of Allāh.
was for Allāh. Hence he can rightly be known as ‘aynallāh (eye of Allāh), yadullāh (hand of Allāh), lisānallāh (tongue of Allāh), thārullāh (blood of Allāh), etc.

Mentioning the lofty station of Imām al-Ḥusayn ʿa.s and his companions, al-Narāqī in his Mathnawī-e-Ṭaqdis says:

اين فناء بنده در مولا بود
اين فنا از صد بقا اولى بود
اين عدم باشد رو كوي بقا
فهم آن خواهی برو تا کربلا

This is the dissolution of the servant in his Master

This dissolution is better than a hundred lives

This dissolution is a path towards the alley of survival

If you would like to know its reality go upto Karbala.\(^{15}\)

Although the compensatory price for the horrendous massacre cannot be paid, the meaning of ‘avenging the blood of Imām al-Ḥusayn ʿa.s’ as we shall come to understand later in this Ziyārat, would in reality be a struggle to eradicate all those enemies who are openly against a Divine government being established, where the laws of Allāh are executed and the religion is practised in the best possible manner, so that an environment for human perfection is facilitated for every human being.

\(^{15}\) Mawlā al-Narāqī, Mathnawi-e-Ṭaqdis, p. 273
Thār has also been translated as qatīl (the one who is killed). And when Allāh is annexed to the word thār, it confers the meaning qatīlullāh (the one killed for Allāh or in His way). The expression qatīlu Allāh has come in different ziyārāt related to Imām al-Ḥusayn ʿa.s. For example in a Ziyārat taught by Imām al-Ṣādiq ʿa.s we address the Imām ʿa.s saying:

أَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا قَتِيلُ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنَ قَتِيلِهِ أَلسَلَامُ عَلَيْكُم

يَا ثَارُ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنَ ثَارِهِ

Peace be unto you O martyr, the son of a martyr, peace be unto you, O blood of Allāh, the son of the blood of Allāh...

Observe that the phrase ‘thār Allāh wabna thāriḥ’ has also come in this Ziyārat. Does it mean therefore that thār Allāh has a different meaning from qatīl Allāh? Obviously in this place it is possible. However we can also take thār Allāh as an emphasis of qatīl Allāh. In our case, i.e. in Ziyārat ‘Ashurā’, however, it is possible that this phrase would like to confer the meaning of both the phrases depicted in the above quotation. And Allāh is All-Knowing.

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16 ’Allama Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, v.98, p. 151
And the offspring of the blood of Allāh

This phrase talks about Imām ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn also occupying the exalted station of thār Allāh. Perhaps it would like us to know that Imām al-Ḥusayn being the product (ibn) of a thār Allāh inherited the same appellation from his father.
CHAPTER 6

The exceptionally unique
The original meaning of *al-witr* in the Arabic language is *al-fārd* (single) and *man lā thāniya lah* (one who does not have a second)². And *al-mawtūr* which is an adjective of *al-witr* also means the same, but is brought as an emphasis² in this case. A similar example³ has come in the Qur'ān with regard to *ḥijr* (forbidden) and *maḥjūr* (prohibited), the latter being an emphasis of the former:

> يَوْمَ يُرَوْنَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَا بُشْرَىٰ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُجِرَّمِينَ
> وَيَقُولُونَ حَجْرًا مَّحْجُورًا

On the day when they shall see the angels, there shall be no joy on that day for the guilty, and they shall say: *It is a forbidden thing totally prohibited.* (25:22)

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1 Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Hamadānī, *Sharḥ al-Asmāʿ al-Ḥusnā*, p.143
2 This variable has been discussed by great scholars like al-Narāqī in his *Mushkilāt al-Akhbār* (p. 301) and al-Šubbar in his *Mašābiḥ al-Anwār* (p. 341). ‘Allāma al-Ṭabarabāʾī also translated *al-witr al-mawtūr* as ‘the unique one’ (Rukhsād, *Dar Maḥzar-e-Allāmeye Ṭabātabāʾī*, p. 184)
3 Other examples that have come in Arabic literature are: *bardun bārid*, *shiʿrūn shāʿīr*, etc.
And in the well-known supplication of *al-Ṣabāḥ*, Amīr al-muʾminīn ‘Ali ṣaḥhbūr tries to emphasize *al-layl* (the night) with the adjective *al-alyal* (nightly):

صَلِّ اللَّهُمَّ عَلَى الْدُّلِّيْلِ إِلَيْكَ فِي الْلَّيْلِ الأَلْيَلِ

وَالْمَاسِكِ مِنْ أَسْبَابِكَ بِحَبْلِ الشَّرْفِ الأَطْوَلِ

Bless, oh Allāh, the guide to You in the darkest night, him who, of Thy ropes, clings to the cord of the longest nobility...⁴

Some scholars opine⁵ that *al-witr* refers to Imām al-Husayn’s unique spiritual status which the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Infallible Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt also possess. Hence, in relation to the rest of the creation an infallible leader (*al-imām al-maṣum*) the like of Imām al-Ḥusayn ⁶ occupies a unique station, and hence is *al-witr al-mawtūr*.

Amīr al-muʾminīn ‘Alī ṣaḥhbūr describing an Infallible Imām as:

لا يُوجَدُ لَهُ مِثْلٌ وَلا يَقُومُ لَهُ بَديِل

He is peerless, no substitute can represent him.⁶

And in another tradition, Imām al-Riḍā describing the qualities of an infallible Imām, says:

الإِمَامُ وَاحِدٌ دَحْرِهِ لَا يَدْانِيهِ أُحْدّ

The Imām is unique in his time. None can come closer to him in rank...⁷

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⁵ I heard this opinion from Ayatullāh Ansārī Shīrāzī, from whom I would study the 9th volume of the magnum opus *al-Asfār* of Mullā Ṣadrā.
⁷ Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.1, p. 201
We may also say that Imām al-Ḥusayn is a manifestation of the Divine Name al-Witru. The Holy Prophet , after speaking about the Divine Names, is reported to have said:

إنَّهُ وَتَرْ، يُحْبَبُ الْوَتَرَ

Surely He [Allāh] is Unique, and He Loves the unique

Expounding the meaning of Yā Witru in his commentary on the supplication of al-Jawshan al-Kabīr, Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī says:

(يَا وَتْرُ) أيَّانَهُ الْوَجْهُ الْبِسْطِ الْبَسِيطُ الْذِّي لَا يَخَالَطُهُ شَيْءٌ أَخْرَ مِنْ مَاهِيَةٍ أَوْ مَادَةٍ أَوْ قَوْةٍ أَوْ قِوَّةٍ أَوْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ قَوْمٍ أَوْ قَوْمٍ...

Yā Witru means that He is Sheer Existence, which is Simple [Non-composite], and nothing accompanies it like quiddity (māhiyya), matter (mādā), potentiality (quwwa) or potential (isti’dād)...

The corollary of being ‘sheer existence’ (al-wujūd al-ṣīrf) and ‘non-compositeness’ (al-basāṭa) is uniqueness. This is because it is impossible for a non-composite entity to have a second. Hence, no entity can be likened to His Sacred Essence, nor can any entity be compared to Him. Imām ‘Alī explaining the meaning of the phrase Allāhu Akbar says:

يَعْنِيُ الْوَاحِدُ الأَحَدُ الْالْدِّي لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ لَّا يَقَاسُ بِشَيْءٍ...

It means that He is One, Non-composite, the like of

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8 ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, al-Mīzān, v.8, p. 359
9 Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, Sharḥ al-Asmā` al-Ḥusnā, p. 722
which there is nothing, and nothing can be compared to Him...\(^{10}\)

The Ahl al-Bayt شیعی, being the most perfect manifestations of the Divine Names, enjoy such an exalted station near Allāh, that none can be compared to them. They undoubtedly are manifestations of the Divine Name *al-Witr*, which means مَنْ لَا نَاتِی لَهُ (One who does not have a second). In a tradition narrated from Zurār, Imām al-Bāqir شیخ الباقیر says:

وَإِنَّا لَا نُوسِفُ وَكِيفُ نُوسِفُ قَوْمٌ رَفَعَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْسَ وَهُوَ الشَّكَّ

And surely we cannot be described, and how can a people be described from whom Allāh has removed impurity, which is doubt...\(^{11}\)

Apparently the doubt that is spoken about in this tradition is related to the realities of the Creator and His creation. The Ahl al-Bayt شیعی, due to their lofty spiritual status, transcend the lower levels of conviction and enjoy the level of ḥaqq al-yaqīn or even higher. Therefore the absence of doubt should not be conjectured to be merely in the conceptual level.

\section*{الوْنَّرِ الْمُؤْنُورُ}
The Exceptionally Unique

Some commentators give the possibility that this verse refers to Imām al-Ḥusayn شیخ الاحسن’s uniqueness with regard to everyone, including Prophet Muḥammad شیخ النور and the other members of his infallible progeny شیخ التوابع.

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\(^{10}\) Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *'Ilal al-Sharā‘i*, v.2, p. 320

\(^{11}\) Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, v.2, p. 182
This however is not because his spiritual station is higher than theirs, for all of them unite in the Muḥammadan Light (al-Nūr al-Muḥammadi). In a conversation with Salmān and Jundub, Imām ʿAlī ﷺ says:

أنا أحببُ وأميتُ بآذنِ رَبِّي، أنا أنبِثُكمُ بِمَا
تَعَلَّمُونَ وَمَا تَدْخَرُونَ فِي بَيْوَتِكمُ بِآذنِ رَبِّي،
وَأنا عَالِمُ بِضَمْعَاتِ قُلْبِي وَأَنْثِمَةَ مِنْ أَوْلَادِي
عَلَمُونَ وَيَعْلَمُونَ هَذَا إِذَا أحْبَوْا وَأَرَادُوا لَأَنَا
مُحَمَّدٌ وَكَنِئْنا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَخْرَجْنا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَوْرَسْطَا
مُحَمَّدٌ وَكَنِئْنا مُحَمَّدٌ فَلَأْتُمْ فِى بَيْتِنا...

I revive the dead, and make the living ones die by my Lord’s permission; I can inform you about what you eat and what you store in your homes by my Lord’s permission; and I know what is hidden in your hearts; and the Imāms from my progeny ﷺ can [also] know this and do the aforesaid if they desired and wanted, because all of us are one; the first among us is Muḥammad, the middle one among us is Muḥammad, the last among us is Muḥammad, and all of us are Muḥammad; therefore do not differentiate between us.¹²

The reason, as some great scholars like the late ‘Allāma al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī¹³ and Āyatullāh Saʿādat Parwar (may Allāh elevate their noble spirits) expound¹⁴, why Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ occupies a unique station, is his

---

¹³ Muḥammad Ḥusayn Rukhshād, Dar MAhzare Allameye Ţabāṭabā’ī, p. 184
¹⁴ Āyatullāh Saʿādat Parwar, Furūgh-e-Shahādat, p.40
utilization of the greater opportunity to manifest his perfect qualities by carrying out his great movement and sacrificing everything he had for the sake of the Only Beloved. The Holy Qur’ān says that for everyone are stations according to what they did:

وَلَيْكُلُّ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّمَّا عَمِلُوا وَلَيْوُفِيقُهُمُ أَعْمَالَهُمُ

وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

And for all are degrees according to what they did, and that He may pay them back fully their deeds and they shall not be wronged. (46:19)

If the other Imāms Ἔ faced the same conditions that Imām al-Ḥusayn Ἔ had encountered, they too would have done what he did. The opportunity however was gifted to Imām al-Ḥusayn Ἔ and accordingly he acquired a station that is unparalleled. The following tradition refers to a unique station for Imām al-Ḥusayn Ἔ:

رَوِيَ عَنِ الرَّسُولِ الْأَقْحَاسِيَّ الْأَعْظَمِ، قَالَ لَزُوْجِتِهِ أَمَّ سَلَّمَةُ، أُوْحِيَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِلَىٰ أَمَّهُ أَنَّهُ (أَيْ لِلْحِسَنِينِ)

d’ارجَةُ لَا يَنَالُهَا أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْخَلْقِينِ

The Most Noble Messenger Ἔ said to his wife Umm Salama: Allāh Revealed unto me that verily he (al-Ḥusayn) has a station which none of the creation would attain.²⁵

And Imām al-Ḥusayn Ἔ just before his departure from Madīna sees the Prophet Ἔ in his dream saying to him:

وَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ دَرَجَاتٌ لَا تَنَالُهَا إِلَّا بِالْشَّهَادَةِ

²⁵ Allāma al-Majlisi, Bihār al-Anwār, v. 44, p.225
And indeed you have stations in the Paradise that you shall not attain save with martyrdom.\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{A Peerless Contingent Being}

In his masterpiece \textit{Jalawāt-e-Rabbānī} Āyatullāh Muḥammad Riḍā Rabbānī (may Allāh elevate his spirit) believes and tries to establish that Imām al-Husayn \textsuperscript{8} is a peerless contingent being (\textit{mumkin al-wujūd bilā sharīk}). At one place he says: In our book \textit{Tawḥīd-e-Rabbānī} we have comprehensively explained the meaning of the magnificient name Allāh. One of its meanings is, “aliha al-khalq ‘an darki mā‘iyatih wal iḥāta bikayfiyyatih” (The creation is baffled in comprehending His whatness and apprehending His howness)\textsuperscript{17}, which the cleaver of the knowledge of the disciplines of the foremost and latter ones and the fifth brilliant star of Divine Leadership and Guardianship, Ḥaḍrat Imām al-Bāqir \textsuperscript{8} has mentioned. Imām al-Bāqir \textsuperscript{8} has said that Allāh is that God before Whose Essence and Attributes the intellects of the entire creation are bewildered, confounded and mystified.

Sa‘dī, the Persian poet says:

\begin{center}
\textit{Jehan Mutfaqh Bar al-Heetsi}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{Frou Manadeh Dr Kne Heetsi.}
\end{center}

\textit{The entire creation is unanimous in his Godhood}

\textit{Unable to apprehend the Essence of His Being}

Thereafter Rabbanī says that Imām al-Husayn \textsuperscript{8}, who is a manifestation of the Name Allāh, likewise, confounds the intellects and overcomes the human beings with perplexity and amazement.

\begin{center}
\textit{Fik Ya Ajudah Al-Ahkon Gha Alfikr Kulliyya}.
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{16} ‘Allāma al-Majlisī, \textit{Bihār al-Anwār}, v. 58, p.182

\textsuperscript{17} ‘Allāma al-Majlisī, \textit{Bihār al-Anwār}, v.3, p. 222
Chapter VI

حیّرت ذوی اللب وبلبلة العقولا.

O the marvel of existence, the intellect is exhausted in You; You confounded people of insight and confused the intellects

اين حسين كيست كه عالم همه دیوانه اوسط
اين په شمعی است كه جانها همه پروانه اوسط

Who is this Husayn, that the entire world is mad after him; What candle is this, that all the souls are its moth(s)?

Imām Husayn ین په not only puzzled and astounded the human world and realm of humanity, but also made the most exalted angels and the residents of the Divine throne as well as the entire chain of the sacred intellects, astonished at his display of intense love and self-sacrifice in the path of the Eternal and Infinite Beloved.18

الّوّتّر الّمّؤوّتّر

The martyr, whose near ones have been killed, but their blood have not been avenged for

Lexicographers like al-Ṭurayḥi in his Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, have defined the word mawtūr as one whose near one has been unjustly killed but his blood has not been avenged for as yet19. And since he is mawtūr, he necessarily is the thā’ir (avenger of the blood) as well. Muḥammad bin Muslima in the battle of Khaybar employs a similar expression when he

19 Shaykh al-Ṭurayḥi, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, v.4, p. 463
tells the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

آنا المَوْتُورُ الثَّائر

I am one whose kin has been unjustly killed but his blood not yet avenged, and I am the avenger.²⁰

The word *witr* also signifies ‘the blood that has been spilled unjustly’²¹. Therefore when we address Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ as *al-witr al-mawtūr* we mean he is the martyr whose near ones and companions were unjustly killed, but their blood has not been avenged for. Hence he is the avenger of their blood. Some commentators opine that if we consider the Imām ﷺ to be the one who would avenge the blood of his near ones, then that would transpire during his return to this world (*raj’a*). With regard to *raj’a*, Ḥamrān narrates from Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir ﷺ:

إن أول من يرجع لجَار كَم الحسَنِ فَيَمِلك
حتى تقع حاجباه على عينيه من الحكير

Indeed the first one to return is your refuge al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, who will rule [for so many years] until his eyebrows would hang over his eyes, out of old age.²²

١٣٩٠٠

الْوِتْرُ الْمَوْتُورَ
The Alone who was Rendered Solitary

²⁰ Al-Zubaydi, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, v.7, p. 582
²¹ Mīrza Tehrānī, *Shīfā al-Šudūr*, p. 165
Sometimes the word *witr* is translated as ‘alone’, whereas the word *mawtūr* as ‘one whose relation is slain, and so is separated from him and rendered solitary’.²³ Imām al-Ḥusayn was rendered solitary after he lost his near ones and noble companions and stood alone to fight against the forces of evil.

Some analysts of this radiant *Ziyārat* believe that the enemies of Islam right from the time of the Holy Prophet planned how to isolate and make people be indifferent of the household of the Holy Prophet. The word *al-witr* can also allude to this situation that the Imām experienced. Therefore he was the lonely one, whose relation was slain and who was rendered solitary.

We must understand that the Imām, due to his sublime rank was even lonelier than his companions and family members in the plains of Karbalā. The station of Imāmate is unique and has no parallel. In this sense he was not only from the strangers (*ghurabā*) like his companions, but also *gharīb al-ghurabā* (the stranger of the strangers). In a *Ziyārat* narrated from Imām al-Ṣādiq we address Imām al-Ḥusayn as follows:

\[
\text{السَّلَّامُ عَليْكَ يَا غَرِيبَ الْغُرَبَاءَ}
\]

Peace be unto you, o stranger of the strangers.²⁴

In this state of intense *ghurba*, the enemies did not spare the lives of his noble family members and companions, and rendered him solitary and alone. It is in these moments that he cried from the depths of his heart:

\[
\text{هَلْ مِنْ نَاصِرٍ يَنَصُّرُ الْذرِّيَةَ الأَطْهَارِ، هَلْ مِنْ مُجِّبِرٍ لَا بَسْطَ الْبَسْتَوْلِ، هَلْ مِنْ ذَابٍ يَذْدِبُ عَنْ حَرْمِ}
\]

²³ Al-Zubaydi, *Ṭāj al-ʿArūs*, v. 7, p.583
الرسُوْلِ

Is there any helper to help the immaculate progeny? Is there any protector for the children of al-Batūl ﷺ? Is there any defender to guard the sanctuary of the Messenger of Allāh?

Perhaps Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ summed up his message to his lovers in these short, but very meaningful expressions. The call was made to ‘the future’ and every receptive heart can hear it every moment. Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ was the epitome of Islam, and his call was the call for the emancipation of Islam. If we are receptive enough to hear his call, then every step of ours must be geared towards assiting Islam. If we struggle to eradicate sin and try to perfect ourselves as well as others and revive Islam, then we do respond to his call. Otherwise we should not be surprised if we also rank among those who left him alone. May Allāh protect us from being among those who leave him alone.

الوِلَدُ الْمَوْتُورُ
The Alone and Deprived

Sometimes the word *al-mawtūr* is employed to mean ‘one who is deprived’ (*al-manqūs*). The following tradition of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is translated taking this meaning into consideration:

المَوْتُورُ أهْلُهُ وَمَالهُ مَنْ ضَيَّعَ صَلاَةَ العَصرِ

One who is deprived of his family and wealth is one who wastes the prayer of ʿAṣr.

---

25 ʿAllāma al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, v.80, p.28
Therefore if we take the word *witr* to mean ‘alone’, the phrase would mean ‘the alone who was deprived of his hometown, family and wealth’.
CHAPTER 7

أَلْسَلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَى الْأَزْوَاجِ
الَّتِي حَلَّتْ بِفَتَائِكَ

Peace be unto you and unto the spirits who descended in your courtyard
Peace be unto you and unto the spirits who descended in your courtyard.

COMMENTARY

Peace be unto you and unto the spirits...

In this verse not only do we declare that Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ is in the state of salām, but also bear witness that his noble companions who sacrificed their lives for Allāh and attained the great station of martyrdom, also enjoy the state of peace and protection from calamities. And if we take the verse to be invocative, then we also pray for higher states of salām for them.

And unto the spirits (arwāḥ)

The word arwāḥ in the above phrase is the plural of rūḥ. And the word rūḥ (spirit) comes from the word rīḥ (wind)3. Rūḥ has the quality of rīḥ, which moves (mutaḥarrik) and makes things move (muḥarrik). The rūḥ likewise moves and makes the body move. In a tradition narrated in al-Kāfī, Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ tells Muḥammad bin Muslim:

---
3 Al-Muṣṭafawi, Al-Tahqiq fi Kalimāt al-Qur’ān al-Karīm, v.4, p. 254
In fact the entire universe, constantly moves and travels towards Allâh, for the Holy Qur’an explicitly tells us that every entity does tasbîh, which, according to authoritative lexicographers like Râghib al-Îsftâhî, fundamentally means:

"...to travel swiftly in the path of Divine worship.”

Almighty Allâh says

The seven heavens glorify Him, and the earth [too], and whoever is in them. There is not a thing but that it glorifies Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification. Indeed He is all-forbearing, all-forgiving. (17:44)

**Spirit- A Higher Level of the Body**

Some of us conjecture that the human being is “composed”- in the physical sense- of a body and a spirit, and that the spirit comes down to,
and settles in the body as a separate thing. This stereotype is incorrect, for the human being is a unit of different levels of reality, the spirit being one of them. The spirit is a higher reality of the very body, and the body serves as a lower manifestation of the spirit. Observe the following verse of the Qur’ān which talks about how the human spirit is blown:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سَلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُفْطَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكَكِينٍ. ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّفْطَةَ عَلَى نُفْطَةٍ مَّكَكِينَةٍ مُّضَغَّةٍ مَّضَغٌّ عَظَامًا فَحَسَسَنَا الْمَعَازِمَ لَحَمَّامَ ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلَقًا أُخْرَى فَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقَينَ

And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, Then We made him a small seed in a firm resting-place, Then We made the seed a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We made it another creation, so blessed be Allāh, the best of the creators. (23:12-14)

Here Almighty Allāh explicitly tells us that it is the very body that He creates in another form: *thumma ansha’nā hu khalqan ākharā* (then we made it another creation). In this verse the third person pronoun “hu” refers to the material body. In other words, Allāh perfects the very body and brings it to a higher state.

The great philosopher and mystic, Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, in his poetical masterpiece *al-Manzūmah* says:

النَّفْسُ فِي الحَدْوَثِ جَسَمَانِيَةٌ
The soul in its origination is material,
but in its survival is spiritual.⁴

Perhaps the first person to expound this body-spirit relation in a logical
manner was Šadr al-Muta’allihīn. Al-Kharrāzī⁵ writes:

Mullā Šadrā believes that soul is created corporeally.
That is, there exists at first corporeal soulless matter.
Then, under certain conditions, soul comes into
being gradually through matter and its substantial
motion. When the fetus settles in its place it starts its
evolution on the strength of trans–substantial
motion. The fetus first takes a natural mineral shape.
Then, because of further evolution, it takes a
vegetative form. At this stage, the corporeal matter is
mature enough to take on perception; but as long as
it is devoid of sense under the influence of
environment, there exists no room for soul therein.
After having found vegetative form within the
womb, and been influenced both by external factors,
and their stimulants, the corporeal matter passively
takes on sense, and then the earliest form of
perception takes place. Thus, the first manifestation
of soul occurs. Here it could be said that soul is
created out of corporeal matter... (Mullā Šadrā, 
Astfār, vol.9, p. 112)

⁴ Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, Sharḥ al-Manṣūma, v.5, p. 113
⁵ Kamāl Kharrāzī, Mulla Sadra’s Idea of Soul-Body Relation and its Consequences in
There is a tradition from Imām ‘Alī  ﷺ worthy of contemplation:

ما أمضمر أحد شنيعاً إلا ظهر في فلئتات لسانه
وصفحات وجهه

No one hides anything save that it appears in the lapses of his tongue and the cheeks of his face.\(^6\)

This shows a unity between the outer side of the human being which is his physical structure and his inner side which is the spirit. The physical can only reveal what is hidden of the spiritual if it is united with the latter.

\[\text{وَعَلَى الْأَرَوَاحُ}
\]

And unto the spirits (\textit{al-arwāh})

Some commentators of this sacred \textit{Ziyārat} have given the possibility that the \textit{arwāh} mentioned in this verse refers to the angels who live around the radiant \textit{rawda} of Imām al-Ḥusayn . Explaining the reality of angels, Shaykh al-Ṭabāsī in his \textit{Tafsīr Majma’ al-Bayān} says:

\[\text{وَالملائَكَةُ رُوحَانِيُّونَ خَلَفَوا مِنَ الْرِّيحِ فِي قَوْلِ بَعْضِهِمْ وَمِنَ النُّورِ فِي قَوْلِ الْحَسَنِ لَا يَتَناَسِلُونَ وَلَا يَطْعَمُونَ وَلَا يَشْرَبُونَ}

And angels are spiritual entities (\textit{rūhāniyyūn}). They were created from \textit{al-rīḥ} (the wind) according to some, and from light (\textit{al-nūr}) according to al-Ḥasan,

\(^6\) Imām ‘Alī  ﷺ, \textit{Nahj al-Balāghah}, v.4, p. 7
they neither mate, not eat, nor drink.\(^7\)

We should note however that words like \textit{al-rîḥ} and \textit{al-nîr} must not quickly transport us to their material extensions. Words, as has been established in its own place, have been coined for the spirits of their meanings. Therefore these terms have a subtler meaning, the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this work. One should however at least understand that they do not necessarily refer to the wind that we can feel, or the physical light that we can vision.

According to authoritative scholars like Mîr Dâmâd and Mullâ Hâdî Sabzawârî, \textit{al-rûhâniyyûn} (the spiritual entities) are the highest of the classes of the angels. In his \textit{Sharḥ al-Asmâ’} Sabzawârî says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{فَحَلَّ أَنَّ أَعْلَى خَيْبَةَ الْإِنْسَانِ مُحَمَّدُ الْسَّلَامُ \\
وَسَّرَابُمُ الْتَقْدِيسِ الرُّوحِيَّانِ.}
\end{align*}
\]

...The angels of the highest level, whose food is glorification (\textit{al-tasbîḥ}) and whose drink is sanctification (\textit{al-taqdîs}), are the \textit{rûhâniyyûn}...\(^8\)

There are ample traditions that explicitly mention the existence of so many angels in the proximity and neighborhood of the grave of Imâm al-Ḥusayn \(\ṣ.\). The following is an example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مَرْوَانِ، عِنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنْ:}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{سَمَعَتُهُ يَقُولُ: زُوُرُوْا الْحُسَينِ لَكُمْ وَلَوْ كَتَبْتُمْ سَنَةً،}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{فَأَنْ سَكَّ مَنْ أَتَاهُ عَافِرًا بِحَقِّ عَبْرَ جَاحِدٍ لَّمْ يُكْسِنُ}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{لَهُ عُوضٌ عَبْرَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَرُزِقَ رَزُقًا وَاسِعًا، وَأَتَاهَا اللَّهُ}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^7\) Shaykh al-Ṭabrâsî, \textit{Majmā’ al-Bayân fī Tafsîr al-Qur’ān}, v.1, p. 190
\(^8\) Mullâ Hâdî Sabzawârî, \textit{Sharḥ al-Asmâ’ al-Ḥusnâ}, v.2, p. 51
Muhammad bin Marwān is reported to have said: I heard him [Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ] say: Visit al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, even if it is once a year, for whosoever comes to him, with knowledge of his station, and not a non-believer, would not be given other than Paradise, and he would be bestowed with extensive sustenance, and Allāh would quickly relieve him (from his problems). **Indeed Allāh entrusted four thousand angels on the grave of al-Ḥusayn**, all of who weep for him. They accompany the visitor until he returns to his family, and if the visitor gets sick they visit him, and if he dies, they witness his bier and seek for his forgiveness and mercy.⁹

Therefore *salām* can also be expressed for these spirits who accompany the grave of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ. In another *ziyara* of bidding farewell to Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ we explicitly send our salāms to the angels. Al-Mashhadi in his *al-Mazār* narrates the following *Ziyārat*:

أَلْسَلَّمُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا مَلَائِكَةَ رَبِّي المُقِيمِينَ فِي هَذَا

الْحَرَمِ

Peace be on you o angels of my Lord, **who inhabit**

---

⁹ Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārat*, pp. 175-176
Chapter VII

this sanctuary.¹⁰

According to this nondescript, the most probable meaning of al-arwāh refers to the companions, but there is no harm if we intend the angels too.

...who descended in your courtyard

The past tense verb حَلَلَ means وَزَنَ (they came down, or descended). And the word finā’ in the phrase “bi finā’ik” means ‘open space in front or at either side of the house’ or ‘the courtyard’. The above phrase indicates that the spirits of the companions of al-Ḥusayn 享受到 his company and neighborhood after their martyrdom. The implication that the word حَلَلَ gives, as some commentators have stated, is that the station of the companions is lower than that of the Imām 万家，a reality which by now is quite clear to the readers, for the Imām 万家 is in an apex which none can comprehend and fathom.

Outstanding Qualities of the Companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn万家

It would not be without benefit to mention some of the outstanding qualities of the companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn万家，for that would make us understand better their sanctity and elevated spirits:

1. The Best Companions (Khayru Ašāḥ)

The Holy Qur’ān says:

لاَ يَسْتَوِي أصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأصْحَابُ الجَنَّةِ أصْحَابُ

الجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

¹⁰ Al-Mashhādī, Al-Mazār, p. 426
The companions of Hell Fire and the companions of the Paradise are not alike; the companions of the Paradise are the achievers. (59:20)

Imâm al-Ḥusayn is reported to have said about his noble companions:

إنِي لَا أَعْلَمُ أُصْحَابَةَ أَوْقَى، وَلَا حَيْرَةً مِّنْ أُصْحَابِيْ

‘Surely I do not know companions more faithful and better than my companions’.

In one of the radiant ziyârât, we address the companions of Imâm al-Ḥusayn as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا خَيْرَ أَنصَارٍ...

Peace be unto you O best helpers.

It is important for us to know the literal meaning of așhâb, so that we can understand the traditions narrated about the așhâb of lofty personalities like Imâm al-Ḥusayn. There has been a tendency among many people to conjecture that așhâb merely refers to those who physically accompany someone. For example, those who physically accompanied the Holy Prophet are known as așhâbu Rasûlillâh. Although such usage of the word is common, it is not always meant. Before we establish our contention, let us consider the meaning of așhâb. Râghib al-Iṣfahânî in his lexicon of Qur’ân under the discussion of the root word صحِب “s h b” says:

الصاحب الملازم إنسانًا مكان أو حيوانًا أو مكانًا

أو زمانًا ولا فرق بين أن تكون مصاحبيه بالبدن

11 Shaykh al-Mufid, Kitâb al-Irshâd, p. 43
Chapter VII

هو الاصل والاكثر أو بالعناية والهمة وعلى هذا

قال:

لَئِنْ غَيَّتْ عَنْ عَيْنِي، لَمَّا غَيَّتْ عَنْ قَلْبِي

*Al-ṣāḥib* [pl. *aṣḥāb*] is one who accompanies whether a human being, an animal, a place or an age. And it makes no difference whether his company is with his body, which is primarily and mostly the case, or through concern and ambition. And based on this it is said:

*If you hide from my eyes*

*You cannot hide from my heart.*

In verse 59:20 quoted in the beginning, we observed that the noun *aṣḥāb* is annexed to Paradise and Hell Fire. The literal import of the verse, which also is an established reality, reveals that despite their physical existence in this corporeal world, the *aṣḥāb*, depending on their state, either spiritually accompany Paradise or Hell Fire. Therefore the criteria of sharing the company of someone or something is not always physical and material.

A well-known tradition narrated by some Muslims to establish the purity of all those who physically accompanied the Holy Prophet ﷺ is as follows:

أَصْحَابِي سَكَنَّتْ ضُرُوطُهُم بِأَيْمَهُم اهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِهْتَدَيْتُمْ

My companions are like stars, whosoever among them were you to follow, you will be guided.

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13 Al-Tha`labī, *Tafsīr al-Tha`labī*, v.3, p. 334
The Holy Qur’ān, traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the intellect as well as history falsifies this tradition if we were to interpret the word ʾašhāb to merely mean ‘whosoever met the Holy Prophet ﷺ or physically accompanied him’. For the sake of brevity, we would not like to explain this matter here. Interested readers may refer to a host of scholarly books written on this subject, especially sparkling works like the outstanding masterpiece ʿAbaqāt al-Anwār of the esteemed Indian scholar Sayyid Mir Ḥāmid al-Ḥusaynī al-Ḥindi.

Weren’t the enemies who fought against Imām Amīr al-Mu’minin ‘Alī ﷺ in the battle of Jamāl and Ṣifṭīn not among those who physically accompanied the Holy Prophet ﷺ? And what about the battle of Ṣifṭīn? Can Mu’āwiya, who did meet and share the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ but fought against the Divinely appointed leader of the time, be considered as a ʿnajm (a star) through which one can achieve guidance? It is absurd to attribute something like this to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or misinterpret what he ﷺ said.

There is another tradition narrated by Shīʿī sources however, that is somewhat similar to the abovementioned traditon, but sound and more meaningful: Imām al-Bāqir ﷺ narrates from the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

ما وجدتم في كتاب الله عز وجل فحالعمل به لازم لا عذر لحكم في ترككم وما لم يكن في كتاب الله وكانت في سنة مني لا عذر لحكم في ترك سنتي وما لم يكن في سنة مني فما فما قسال أصحابي فخذوه فإنما مثال أصحابي ففيكم كمثل النجوم بأيها أخذ اهتدي في أي أقفو فإن أصحابي أخذتم اهتديتم واختلاف أصحابي لكم رحمة فقيل يا رسول الله من أصحابك
قَالَ: أَهْلُ بَيْتِيُ

It is essential to act according to what you find in the Book of Allāh; and you have no excuse to abandon it. Likewise you have no excuse to abandon whatever is not in the Book but there is a tradition about it from me. And when there is no tradition about something from me, then take whatever my ašāb say. For surely the example of my ašāb among you is like the example of stars (kamathal al-nujūm), from whosoever among them advice is taken, guidance is achieved; therefore whichever statements of my ašāb you take, you would get guided; and frequenting my ašāb is a mercy for you. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked: ‘O Apostle of Allāh, who are your ašāb? He ﷺ said: ‘My progeny’.14

Here the meaning of ašāb is used very aptly because the essence of the human being is in his spirit and not his body. The Ahl al-Bayt ﷲ being in the heights of perfection and united in the Muḥammadan Spirit, truly accompany the Holy Prophet ﷺ even if the confines of time and place were to separate them. Hence they really are stars perpetually radiating light.

The aforesaid discussion was to illustrate the meaning of ašāb when Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷲ said:

إِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ أَصْحَابَا أَوْفِقَى وَلَا خَيْرًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِيُ

‘Surely I do not know companions more faithful and better than my companions’15

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14 Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Maʿānī al-Akhbār, p. 156
15 Shaykh al-Mufīd, Kitāb al-Irshād, p. 43
Here the Imām Ƅ is not merely referring to their physical presence, but also alludes to their spiritual sanctity. In fact their apparent presence in the ranks of Imām al-Ḥusayn Ƅ in the plains of Karbalā and their physical company depicted nothing but their spiritual company as well. This is because it required exalted spirits to remain steadfast in the ranks of the Imām Ƅ despite the knowledge about their ephemeral end.

2. The Most Loyal Companions (*al-*awfā)

As earlier mentioned, the Imām clearly said:

إِنِّي لَا أَعْلَمُ أُصْحَابًا أَوْفِقًا وَلَا خَيْرًا مِنْ أُصْحَابِي

‘Surely I do not know companions more loyal and better than my companions’

Here the word *awfā* is employed thus showing that they were the most loyal of all companions. Whenever loyalty is talked about, there is always a pledge behind it. Perhaps the best expression of their state is conferred by the following verse of the Qur’ān:

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمَنْ مِنْ قَضَى نَحْبِهُ وَمَنْ هُمْ مِنْ يَنْتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَلَوْا بَذَيلًا

Among the faithful are *men who fulfill what they have pledged to Allāh*. Of them are some who have fulfilled their pledge, and of them are some who still wait, and they have not changed in the least. (33:23)

One of the places where the loyalty of the companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn Ƅ was radiantly manifested was on the night of ‘Āshūrā’

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16 Ibid.
when Imām al-Ḥusayn  said to them that the enemies were after him and that they were free to leave. All of the loyal companions in unison expressed their loyalty and said that they would never leave the Imām and were ready to be martyred with him.

3. Intense Lovers of Allāh (‘Ushhāq)
The Holy Qur’ān says:

...وَالَّذِينَ آمَنَوْا أَشْدَدْ حُبَّا لِلَّهِ... (2:165)

It is narrated from Imām al-Bāqir  :

[Imām] ‘Alī  went out with some people until he reached a place one or two miles near Karbalā’, whereupon he went forward and circumambulated around a place known as al-miqdhaṭān, and said: ‘This is the place where two hundred Prophets and their grandsons were killed, all of who were martyrs; and it is the halting place of horsemen and the battle ground of intense lovers (‘ushshāq) and martyrs, whom neither those who came before them or will
come after them can prevail [in status].

The word ʿushshāq that is employed in the above tradition is worthy of consideration. It is the plural of the word ʿāshiq (passionate lover), which is known to be derived from ʿashaqa a plant that coils around a tree from its roots to its branches, and thus envelops it the way passionate love embraces one’s entire heart. Ibn ʿArabī translates ʿishq as follows:

ثم العشق وهو التفاهم بالقلب مأخوذ من العشقة
اللبلابة المشوقة التي تلف على شجرة العنبة
وامثالها فهو يلتف بقلب المحب حتى يعميه عن
النظر إلى غير محبوبه

Then comes ʿishq which is when love coils the heart; it is gotten from al-ʿashaqa, which is the thorned convolvulus (or bindweed), that, twisting in a spiral, wraps around the grapevine and other similar plants. In this way, blinding love (ʿishq) wraps around the heart of the lover, blinding him so that he can see no one other than his beloved.

In the well-known Ẓīyārat al-Shuhada’ we address the companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn  as follows:

أَسْلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أُوْلِيَاءَ اللّهِ وَأَحْبَاءُهُ

Peace be unto you, O friends and beloveds of Allāh

19 Ibn ʿArabī, al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya, v.4, p. 259
20 Al-Mashhādī, al-Mazār, p. 464
This verse has so much to reveal. The word َُِبَح (habīb) is the plural of the word َُبَحِبَبَت (habīb), which is commonly translated to mean َُبَحِبَث (mahbūb) (beloved). However, its linguistic form َُبَحِبَن (fa’īl) can confer both the meanings of an active participle (فعَيْل) and a passive participle (فاعل), which means we can employ the word َُبَحَبَت either to means ‘the lover’\(^\text{21}\) or ‘the beloved’ or both. If we only take the common meaning, however, and translate the word َُبَحَبَت as َُبَحِبَث, the result is the same. This is because whosoever is the beloved of Allāh, is necessarily His lover. The Holy Qur’ān says:

\[\text{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَن يَرْتَدْ مِنْ دِينِهِ فَسَؤُفْ يَأتيُ اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحبَّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُمْ أَدْلاً عَلَى} \]
\[\text{المُؤْمِنِينَ أَعْزَةً عَلَى الْحَكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي} \]
\[\text{سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةٍ لَأَنَّمَ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ} \]
\[\text{يُؤْتِيهِ مِنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عِلْمُهُ.} \]

O you who believe! whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allāh will bring a people, َُبَحِبَت (He shall love them and they shall love Him), lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard in Allāh’s way and shall not fear the censure of any censurer; this is Allāh’s grace, He gives it to whom He pleases, and Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing. [5: 54]

Furthermore the linguistic pattern َُبَحِبَن (fa’īl) is both a hyperbolic form (َِبَحَبَت) and a passive participle (َُبَحِبَت), which gives the connotation of abundance and, an assimilate epithet\(^\text{22}\) (َِبَحَبَت), which confers the sense of

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\(^{21}\) Al-Zubaydi, ُُبَحِبَت al-‘Arūs, v.1, p. 393

continuity. Therefore, the companions of the Imām  were abundantly and perpetually in love of Allāh.

If we try to study the origin of the word ḥabīb, we may be able to unravel other noteworthy secrets. Expounding on the etymology of the word ‘ḥubb’ Sayyid al-Jazā’irī in his ethical masterpiece al-Anwār al-Nuʿmāniyya says:

سمى الحب حبا لوصوله إلى حبة القلب التي هي منبع الحياة، وإذا اتصل بها سرى مع الحياة جمعت جزءاً من جزء فصورة المحبوب

The infinitive noun ‘ḥubb’ (lit. love) was called ḥubb because it reaches the ḥabbat al-qalb (the seed of the heart), which is the source of life. And when it reaches the seed of the heart it penetrates with life to all the parts of the body and leaves the picture of the beloved in every part.23

And the only Master who plants, splits, and makes germinate the seed of love is the Fāliq al-ḥabbī wa al-nawā (the Splitter of the grain and the pit- 6:99), and it is He alone who rears this love and leads it to its perfection, for it is He alone who is Rabb al-fālaq (the Lord of splitting-113:1).

Another interesting expression we employ when we address the companions is the following:

السلام عليكم يا أصفياء الله وأوداءه

Peace be unto you, O chosen ones of Allāh and His

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23 Al-Jazā’irī, Al-Anwār al-Nu ‘māniyya, v.3, p. 161
lovers

The word *awiddāʾ* is the plural of *wadiṭ* (فعل) which, as discussed above, gives the connotations of permanence and abundance. In addition, it also confers the meaning of both the active participle (*fāʾil*) and the passive participle (*māfūḥ*), which means that there is constant mutual love between the lovers and the Beloved. Also, the origin of the word *wadid* and other words of the same family, is *wataḍ* (nail), which confers the meaning of stable and constant love.

Ḥāʾirī in his *Muqtaniyāt al-Durar* says:

وَأَصِلُ الْوَدٌ مِنَ الْوَدَتِ وَهُوَ أَثْبَتُ مِنَ الْمَحْبَةَ

...and the origin of *al-wudd* is *al-wadaḍ* (nail) and it is more firm than *al-maḥabba* (germinal love)...

And in his *Tafsīr Ruḥ al-Bayān* Ḥaqqī says:

الْوَدُّ أَثْبَتُ فِي أَرْضِ الْقَلْبِ مِنَ الْمَحْبَةِ لَا شَتَاقُهُ مِنَ الْوَدَتِ

*Al-wudd* is more firm in the earth of the heart than *al-maḥabba*, because it is derived from *al-wadaḍ* (nail)...

Having known that the companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ were among the intense lovers of Allāh, let us briefly look at the origin of their intense love. What actually makes one a lover for another? Every sound conscience will agree that knowledge for perfection would

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26 Ḥāʾirī, *Muqtaniyāt al-Durar wa Multaqātāt al-Thamar*, v.12, p. 115
27 Ḥaqqī, *Tafsīr Ruḥ al-Bayān*, v.10, p. 393
reap love and attachment for the same. So long as one is ignorant of another, one cannot develop love for him. It is after acquiring knowledge about the perfect qualities of a certain person that one develops love and attachment for the beloved. Furthermore, love requires the lover to be naturally inclined to the qualities of the beloved, otherwise the knowledge of the attributes of the beloved would not reap love. If a person, for example, has no inclination towards physical beauty, despite his knowledge of the physically beautiful, he would not develop love for the physically beautiful. It is when the heart naturally loves and appreciates beauty that when the beautiful is beheld, the spark of love is ignited and a raging fire follows.

The noble companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn Ṣadūq, having retained their innate nature, were natural lovers of Absolute Perfection (al-kamāl al-muṭlaq) and also enjoyed the ma’rifā of Almighty Allāh, and that is what made them crave to meet their Only Beloved.

Knowledge of Allāh is sometimes classified into two:

- Conceptual & Acquired Knowledge (al-ʿilm al-ḥusūlī)
- Presential & Divinely Endowed Knowledge (al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī)

Conceptual knowledge is very limited and a kind of narration of what is behind the curtain. Presential knowledge, on the contrary, is to lift the curtain from the face of the Beloved. In clearer terms, it is to beautify oneself with the attributes of the Beloved. Between the conceptual appreciation of the Beloved and lifting the veil of the Beloved there is utter remoteness. It is the presential knowledge of Allāh that makes one perpetually an amorous lover. Such a lover manifests the love of the Only Beloved in every move he makes. Expressions like the following reveal how intense was the love that glowed in the hearts of the Imām Ṣadūq’s companions:

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28 In more accurate terms, the Beloved has no veil. We are full of veils. We must therefore struggle to eradicate the veils from our side so that we can vision the face of the Only Beloved.
A man called Zuhayr bin al-Qayn al-Bajli came to the Imām  and said: ‘O son of the Apostle of Allāh, I wish I would be martyred and then resurrected and again be killed and resurrected, and again be killed and resurrected in your way and in the way of those who are with you, a hundred times.\(^9\)

All this fervor shows nothing but passionate love for Almighty Allāh, for sacrificing oneself for al-Ḥusayn  who is a manifestation of Allāh’s Attributes is nothing but to sacrifice oneself for Allāh, the Only Beloved.

The following verse of the Holy Qur’ān also depicts the reality of which we have so far spoken:

\[
\text{قَلَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَعْبُونَ اللَّهَ فَأَتَى عُيُونِي يَحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ}
\]

\[
وَيُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ
\]

Say: If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive you your faults, and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful. (3:31)

We should remember that it is only after embellishing ourselves with the Attributes of Allāh, that our actions would be according to what Allāh and His messenger wants.

\(^9\) Allāma al-Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.44, p. 316
4. Sharp Inner Vision (Kushifa lahum al-Ghiṭâ’)

The Holy Qur’ān says:

\[
\text{ٌلَٰقِدْ كُنْتُ فِي غَفَّلَةٍ مَّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ}
\]

\[
\text{غُطَاءَكَ فِي بُصْرَكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ}
\]

Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp. (50:22)

Ibn ‘Amāra reports from his father who reports:

\[
قُلْتُ لِهِ أَخْبَرْنِي عَنْ أُصْحَابِ الْحَسَنِينِ وَإِفْدَامِهِمْ
\]

\[
عَلَى الْمَوْتِ فَقَالُ: إِنَّهُمْ كَشِفْنَا لَهُمْ الغَطَاءَ حَتَّى
\]

\[
رَأَوُا مِنْذِلَهُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ . . .
\]

I asked Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ: Tell me about the companions of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ and how they would advance to their death, and he said: ‘**Indeed the curtain was unveiled for them**, until they saw their dwellings in Paradise...\(^30\)

In one of the ziyārāt, we address the companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ in the following manner:

\[
.. أُشْهِدُ لَقَدْ كَشَفْنَا الْلَّهُ لَحَكْمُ الْغَطَاءَ . . .
\]

\[
.. I bear witness that most surely Allāh unveiled for you the curtain...\(^31\)
\]

Sharp inner vision is attainable by every human being who purifies his

31 ‘Allāma al-Majlisi, Biḥār al-Anwār, v. 45, p.70
spirit. The reason why many of us do not enjoy this kind of vision, is the murkiness of our hearts. Following is a tradition narrated from the Holy Prophet ᵇworthy of reflection:

لَوْلَا تَطَخَّئُوا فِي سَلاَمَتِكُمْ وَتَمْرِيجٍ فِي قُلوبِكُمْ
لَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَرَى وَلَسَمَعْتُمْ مَا أَسْمَعْتُ

Was it not for your loquaciousness and confusion in your hearts, you would have surely seen what I see, and you would have surely heard what I hear. ⁵³²

In fact the faithful human being is required to behold the kernel of the universe. Almighty Allāh says:

أَوَلَمْ يُظْرِفُوا بِمَلَکَتِ السَّمَارَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ
وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَى أَنْ يَكْبُرْ قَدْ
اقْتَرِبَ أَجْلَهُمْ فَبَلَّأَيْ حَدِيثٌ بَعْدُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

*Have they not contemplated the dominions of the heavens and the earth,* and whatever things Allāh has created, and that maybe their time has already drawn near? So what discourse will they believe after this?! (7:185)

5. Immersed in God (*Rabbāniyyūn*)
The Holy Qur’ān says:

ولَحْكَا نَكُونَ نَا رَبِينِينَ

But be godly people...(3:79)

And in one of the salutational recitals we address the companions of

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Imām al-Ḥusayn in the following way:

آَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ إِيَّهَا الْرَّبَانِيُّونَ

Peace be unto you, O Rabbāniyūn...

This verse talks about the great spiritual status of the noble companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn. Rabbāniyūn is the plural of Rabbānī, which according to some lexicographers like al-Ṭurayhi denotes ‘one who is perfect in both knowledge and action’ Others translate ‘Rabbānī’ more accurately and say:

الْرَّبَانِيُّ هو المنسوب الى الرَّب وزيادة الألف وال난ون فيه تدل علي المبالغة في النسبة ف تكون المعنى: مَن كَان شَديد الاختصاص بالرَّب وكتير الاشغال بعبوديته وعبادته، ويجوز ايضًا أن يكون منسوبا الى الرَّب بمعنى المصدر فيدل علي المبالغة في تربية الناس وتدبيرهم...

Rabbānī is one who is attributed to ‘the Lord’ and the additional ‘alif’ and ‘nun’ in the word is to denote intensification in attribution, and hence the meaning of the word would be: One who is intensely attributed to the Lord and absorbed in His submission and worship; and the word can also be related to the Lord in its infinitive (maṣdar) sense, so that it would mean intensity in training the

33 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.4, p. 574
34 Al-Ṭurayhī, Tafsīr Gharīb al-Qur‘ān, p. 100
people and controlling their affairs...  

And both the meanings can be true together.

6. Spiritual Sovereignty
The Holy Qur’an says:

» فَلَنَّا يَا نَارُ سَكُونٍ بَرَدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمٍ ﴿

We said: O fire! be a comfort and peace to Ibrahim!
(21:59)

Jâbir narrates from Imâm al-Bâqrî  [الباقر]:

قال الحسين بن علي ﺔ ﻷ أصحابه قبل أن يقتل: إن رسول الله ﷺ قال: يا بني إني أنك سننفق إلى العراق، وهي أرض قد التقى بها النبيون، وأوصياء النبيون، وهي أرض تدعى عمروا، وإنك تستشهد بها ومستشهد معك جماعة من أصحابك لا يجدون آل مس الحديد، وتلا: فَلَنَّا يَا نَارُ سَكُونٍ بَرَدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمٍ ﴿

الحرب عليكم وعليهم بردًا وسلامًا

Before his martyrdom, Imâm al-Ḥusayn bin ‘Alâ said to his companions: Indeed the Apostle of Allâh ﷺ said [to me]: O my dear young son, surely you will be led to ‘Irâq; it is a land where Prophets of Allâh and Successors of the Prophets have met; It is

35 Âyatullah Sayyid Maḥmûd Ṭâleqânî, Partuwi az Qur’ân, v.5, p. 185
a land called ‘Amūrā. And indeed you shall be martyred there together with a group among your companions who would not sense the pain of the touch of iron. Then Imām al-Ḥusayn Ʌ read the verse: ‘O Fire, be cool and peaceful for Ibrāhīm’ (21:59). The war will be cool and peaceful on you and them.36

Explaining this situation of the Imām, the grand Āyatullāh Jawadī Āmulī says:

ووفقًا لرواية الامام الباق : فإن جنود الحسين ﷺ يوم عاشوراء لم يكونوا يشعروا آلام الضرح والطمع والجراح إلا بما تولده القرصة من ألم ... لماذا؟ لأن الروح هي مصدر الألم والفرح. يصوم أحدهم فيشعر بوخآة الظلماء و الجوع ... ويصوم الآخر فلا نرى فيه إلا النشاط والابتهاج ... اليمست الظروف الفيزيائية متساوية للالثنين ... فلماذا يتعذب الأول و ينطلق الآخر؟ لأن الروح لدى الثاني مشدودة إلى نقطة بعيدة عن الظروف المادية. ولقد كان ابطال كرزابلاء ممن تلك الروح العظيمة المبهورة بالغيب ...

According to a tradition from Imām al-Bāqir Ɇ

36 Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandi, al-Kharā’ij wa al-Jarāyih, v.2, p. 848
the army of al-Ḥusayn did not feel the pain of the blows and wounds on the ‘Āshurā’ day save a pinch...why is that? This is because the spirit is the origin of pain and happiness. One of you may fast and feel the pangs of hunger and thirst...whereas another would fast but we would find in him nothing but happiness and high-spiritedness...aren’t the physical conditions similar for both? So why is the first in torment while the second does not feel anything? This is because the spirit of the second is attached to a realm distant from the material conditions. Indeed the gallant warriors of Karbalā’ were among those great spirits overcome by the unseen plane of existence.37

7. Worshippers through Awareness (al-‘Ubbād)
The Holy Qur’ān says:

\[ \text{فَأَسَّوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الْزَّرَاعِ لِتُفْيِضَ بهُمْ السَّكَبَارَ وَعَدُ اللَّهُ الَّذينَ أَمَنُوا وَعَمَلُوا الصَّالِحاتِ منْهُم مَعْفُورًا وَأَجرًا عَظِيمًا} \]

Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, and those

37 Āyatullah Jawādī Āmulī, Thawrat al-ʻIshq al-Ilāhī, p. 232
with him are firm of heart against the unbelievers, compassionate among themselves; you will see them bowing down, prostrating themselves, seeking grace from Allāh and pleasure; their marks are in their faces because of the effect of prostration; that is their description in the Tawrāt and their description in the Injeel; like as seed-produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the unbelievers on account of them; Allāh has promised those among them who believe and do good, forgiveness and a great reward. (48:29)

Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn bin Ṭāwūs al-Ḥasanī (may Allāh elevate his noble spirit) in his well-known maqta, al-Luḥūf `alā Qatlā al-Ṭufūf narrates:

وَبَاتِ الحُسْنِينَ وَأصْحَابِهُ تَلَکَ اللَّيْلَةَ وَلَهُمْ دُوِّيٌّ
سَأَجِدُ وَقَاعِدُ وَقَائِمُ وَقَائِمُ وَقَاعِدُ...

‘Al-Ḥusayn and his companions were awake the whole night [of ‘Āshurā’] and their environment resembled an area permeated with the sound of the humming of bees. [In other words all of them were busy in the remembrance of Allāh and the sound of their whisperings permeated the entire environment.] Some were in the state of rukū‘; others in the state of sujūd, some standing and others sitting... ³⁸

And al-Qazwīnī narrates from the History of al-A‘tham al-Kūfī.

³⁸ Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn bin Ṭāwūs, al-Luḥūf `alā Qatlā al-Ṭufūf, p.91
Surely that night neither al-Husayn nor anyone of his companions and supporters slept until morning.\textsuperscript{39}

Worship is undoubtedly a merit when it is not reduced to mere actions and recitals. The companions of al-Husayn were men who worshipped Almighty Allāh out of awareness and knowledge. Their appellations such as aḥibbā‘Allāh (Divine lovers), ʿushshāq (intense lovers) and kushīfā lahīm al-gḥīṭā (the curtains were unveiled for them), all demonstrate their knowledge and deep insight. This is because such qualities are essential corollaries of knowledge, without which they carry no meaning. It is such kind of worship that is natural and praiseworthy. Expression of utter humility near the Absolute Perfect Being can only come about naturally after one realizes whom he is infront of. Such realization is in stages. Sometimes one has conceptual knowledge about the Creator and thus he maintains a degree of humility in prayer, but that cannot be compared to one who has presential knowledge of Allāh. It is such knowledge about which Imām ʿAlī \textsuperscript{†} talks in a conversation with a rabbī:

\begin{quote}
عن أبي الحسن الموصلي عن أبي عبّد الله قُالَ: جاء حَبَّرٌ إلى أمير المؤمنين ﷺ، فقال: يا أمير المؤمنين هل رأيت ربك حين عبّدته؟ قال: فقال: وَلَكَ لَمْ أَكُنْ لأَعْبَدْ رَبَّيْنِ أَرَهُ، قَالَ: وَكَيْفُ رَأْيَتْهُ؟ قَالَ: وَلَكَ لَا تَدْرِّسُكَ الْعِيْوَنَ فِي
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Al-Imām al-Ḥusayn wa Aṣḥābuhi}, v.1, p. 264
Worship without knowledge and awareness, on the contrary is insignificant and sometimes dangerous too. Consider the following traditions:

a. Imām ‘Alī said:

Indeed there is no good in that worship that is without understanding.

b. Imām Zayn al-ʿĀbidin says:

There is no worship save with understanding.

c. Imām ‘Alī said:

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40 Al-ʿĀmilī, al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimma fī Uṣūl al-Aʿīma, v.1, p.180
41 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, al-Kāfī, v.1, p. 36
42 Shaykh al-Rayshahrī, Mizān al-Ḥikmah, v.3, p. 1798
Settle in your hearts the knowledge of Whom you worship so that the members that you move in worship of Whom you know can benefit you.\textsuperscript{43}

d. Imām ‘Alī al-Ḥusayn says:

لا خير في عبادة لا علم فيها

There is no good in that worship which accompanies no knowledge.\textsuperscript{44}

It is interesting to note that the expression ‘They had the humming as the humming of bees’ that has come for the noble companions of Imām al-Husayn has also come with regard to the Khawārij, who were adamant in their ignorant stance and ready to fight against Imām ‘Alī in the battle of Nahrawān. Jundub bin Zuhayr al-Azdī narrates:

When the Khārijites separated from Imām ‘Alī, he set out to fight against them and we set out with him. I reached their camps, and found that their environment was covered with the sound of the recitation of Qur’ān. [The words used in the tradition is \textit{lahum dawiyyun kadawiyy al-naḥl} (they had the sound of the humming of bee)]. Among them were those who wore burnoose and had calluses on their foreheads. When I saw that, doubt

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.} \\
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushright}
crept my heart; so I separated myself from them, descended from my horseback, fixed my lance on the ground, and kept my shield, and placed my armor over it. And I stood in prayer while I cried: “O Allāh if fighting against them is according to Your desire, then show me something by which I know that it is the truth; and if it is not according to Your desire, then divert me from the battle. Suddenly Imām ‘Alī came and descended from the horse of the Apostle of Allāh, and stood in prayer, and then suddenly a man came and said: ‘They [the Khārijites] have crossed the river. Then another one came and firmly tied his mount, and said: They crossed it and left. Thereafter Amīr al-Mu’minin [said: ‘They have not crossed the river, nor will they cross it, and they surely will be killed near it; this has been informed to me by Allāh and His Apostle.’ The Imām [then] said: ‘O Jundub, do you see that hill?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He said: ‘Surely the Apostle of Allāh (upon whom be peace) narrated to me that they would fight near there.’ As for us, we would first send a messenger unto them, who would invite them to the Book of Allāh and the Sunna of His Prophet, and they would shoot at his face with arrows, and he would be killed. Jundub says: We went towards them and saw them still in their army not yet departed or left. So the Imām called his men and gathered them, then he came near their ranks saying: ‘Who will take this Qur’ān and walk towards these people and call them to the Book of Allāh and the Sunna of the Prophet? One who does so, would be killed and attain Paradise. None save a youth from Banū ‘Āmir bin Sa’ṣa’a responded to this call. The Imām however, on observing
his young age, said: ‘Return to where you stood.’
Then he made the same announcement again, and
none save the same youth responded positively to
his call. So the Imâm  said: ‘Take it [the Qur’ân],
but mind you that you would be killed.’ So he
walked with it unto them until he came to a place
where they could hear him. He called them, and they
shot at him with arrows, and he returned to us,
while his face resembled a porcupine (for he was
surrounded with arrows). So ‘Ali  said: Attack
them! So we attacked them. Jundub says: The doubt
[that had crept my heart earlier] came out, and I
[fought] and slew.’

Therefore the yardstick to judge the truly worshipful nature of a person
is not by the quantity of his worship, but the quality of his worship.
The Holy Qur’ân says:

الذي خلق الموت والحياة ليستوكم أيكم
أخسن عملاً وهو العزيز الغفور

...Who created death and life that He may try you--
which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty,
the Forgiving. (67:2)

Ample traditions explicitly say that the value of one’s worship is
according to one’s understanding and intellect. Observe the following:
a. The Holy Prophet  addressing a people who praised a man [for his
worship] said:

سُكْفَ عَقْلُ الرَّجُلِ أَنَّهُ يَوْمَ يُنَبِّئُكَ

How is the man’s intellect? They said: O Apostle of Allah, we inform you about his struggle in worship and good actions, and you ask us about his intellect? Thereupon the Prophet ﷺ said: Indeed an idiot (aḥmaq) due to his silliness can perform something graver than the crimes of criminals; and surely the servants [of Allah] would only be elevated tomorrow in stations and reach the proximity of their Lord according to their intellects.⁴⁶

b. Muhammad bin Sulaymān al-Daylami reports from his father who said:

I informed Imām al-Ṣādiq ﷺ about the ‘ibāda and religiousness and merits of a certain person. Thereupon he asked me: how is his intellect/understanding? I said: I do not know. So he said: ‘Surely reward is according to one’s

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⁴⁶ Ibn Shu’ba al-Bahrānī, Ṭuḥaf al-ʿUqūl, p. 54
intellect/understanding.\textsuperscript{47}

c. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said:

\begin{quote}
العلمٌ إمامٌ العملٍ، وَالعملٌ تابعٌ
\end{quote}

Knowledge is the leader of action and the action is its follower.\textsuperscript{48}

Although the Khawārij were well known for their excessive worship and recitation of Qur’an, their ignorance never allowed them to benefit from their worship or recitation. Perhaps the following verse of the Holy Qur’an aptly describes their example:

\begin{quote}
الذين ضل سعيهم في الحياة الدنيا وهم يحسبون أولئك الذين يحسنون ممن أرسلنا بهم كتاباً ربهم ولقائه فحفظتهم أعمالهم فلا يقيم لهم يوم القيامة وزناً
\end{quote}

Those whose endeavour goes awry in the life of the world, while they suppose they are doing good.’ They are the ones who deny the signs of their Lord and the encounter with Him So their works have failed. On the Day of Resurrection We will not set for them any weight. (18:104-105)

They struggled to station themselves in the surface of religion, but were deprived of that too. They had not understood the Holy Qur’an and thus were ready to fight against the very epitome of the Qur’an. When Imām ʿAli \textsuperscript{49} tried to explain to them the deception that had

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{47} Shaykh al-Kulaynī, \textit{al-Kāfī}, v.1, p. 11
\textsuperscript{48} Shaykh al-Rayshahri, \textit{Mīzān al-Ḥikma}, v.3, p. 2035
\end{flushright}
entangled them, they thought they understood religion more than one
who was literally chosen by the Holy Prophet ﷺ as his waṣī
(vicegerent). So wild had their attitude become that they had the
audacity to slaughter a sincere companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who
was loyal to his teachings, and slit the womb of his expectant wife. The
latter’s crime was merely loyalty to Imām ‘Alī ﷺ.

Although this is past history for us, the Kharijī trend has remained up
to this day. The Wahhābīs, due to their identical attitude, can aptly be
known as the ‘neo-Khārijītes’.

What is interesting is that even Westerners have likened the Wahhābīs
with the Khawārij. For example, Jon Kyl, a Republican Senator from
Arizona writes in the Front Page Magazine:

Islamic extremism as an ideology is hardly new with
the first movement that resembles today’s
phenomenon, known as the Kharijītis, appearing
shortly after the birth of Islam in the 7th century.

Later it was expounded on by various Islamic
scholars, such as Ibn Taymiya in the 13th century, but
it did not become institutionalized until the mid-
18th century when the theories promulgated by the
radical cleric Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb were
accepted and imposed as the state religion of his
realm by the founder of the House of Saud.49

Esposito, in his Islām and Politics writes:

“Religious zeal and military might merged in a
religiopolitical movement that waged holy war with
a zeal reminiscent of the early Kharijītes, viewing all

49 Jon Kyl, Terrorism: Growing Wahhabi Influence in the United States,
Muslims who resisted as unbelievers. The tribes of Arabia were subdued and united in the name of Islamic egalitarianism.”

The apparently worshipful attitude of the Khārijites, both present and past, should not lead one to surmise that worship in great quantity is not praiseworthy. Those who have attained realization would naturally be pulled towards constant worship. They would, in terms of a tradition, be ‘amorous lovers’ of worship. Consider the following tradition:

عن أبي عبد الله قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: أفضل الناس من عشق العبادة فعنىها وأحبها بقلبها، وباشرها بجسد وترعرع لها. فهو لأيالي على ما أصبح من الدنيا على عصر أم على يسير؟

Imām al-Ṣādiq ʌṣ علم says: The Apostle of Allāh ﷺ said: The best of people is one who intensely loves worship (‘ashīqa al-‘ibāda), embraces it, loves it through his heart, and performs it with his body and occupies himself with it; Thereafter he does not care about the situation he faces in the world, whether it be difficult or easy.

If we reflect on some historical accounts of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Infallible Progeny ʌس علم we would come to realize how abundantly they engaged in worship. It was their exalted state that made them constantly absorbed in prayer. It is reported about Ḥaḍrat Zahrā’ ʌس علم that she would stand in prayer so much that her feet would get

50 Esposito, Islam and Politics, page 36.
51 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfi, v.2, p. 83
swollen. And concerning Imām ‘Alī Imām al-Ṣādiq narrates:

ولقد دخل أبو جعفر على أبيه فإذا هو قد بلغ من العبادة ما لم يبلغه أحد، وقد اصفر لونه من السهير، ورمضت عيناه من البكاء، ودبرت جبهته من السجود، وورمته قدمه من القيام في الصلاة. فقال: فقُلّ: أبو جعفر: فلَمَّا أملك حين رأيت تلك الحال من البكاء فبكيت رحمته لجَامِعٌ، وإذا هو يبكي، فالتفت إلي بعده هنية من دَخَولِي، فقال: يا بني أعطني بعض تلك الصحف التي فيها عبادة علي، فأعطيته، فقرأ فيها يسيرًا ثم تركها من يده تضجج وقُال: من يَقُوَّى على عبادة علي بن أبي طالب؟

Surely Abū Ja‘far came to his father, while he had worshipped Allāh so much that none would equal him, and due to night vigil his complexion had turned pale; his eyes had become sore out of weeping, and his forehead had sunk in due to a lot of prostration, and his legs became swollen out of standing in prayer. Imām al-Ṣādiq said: [Seeing this] Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir] said: I could not control myself from weeping when I saw him in that state; so I wept in mercy for him. And suddenly he lay contemplating. Then after a little while, he faced me, and said: ‘O my dear little son, give me some of

52 ‘Allāma al-Majlī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.43, p.84
those manuscripts that speak about the worship of ‘Ali ﷺ; so I gave him, and he read from it a little, and then left it in dissatisfaction and said: ‘Who can worship like ‘Ali bin Abi Ṭalib ﷺ?’

These and many other incidents show how absorbed were the Ahl al-Bayt ﷺ in the worship of Allāh. Their worship, however, was out of insight and knowledge of the worship and the Worshipped One. So absorbed were they, that when an arrow is removed from the feet of Imām ‘Ali while he is in prayer, he does not sense any pain whatsoever.

In conclusion, it should be realized that the companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ were worshippers who worshipped Allāh as a natural outcome of their knowledge and vision. If such worship is done constantly and in abundance, it is highly recommended and praiseworthy. But if it is performed without knowledge, it has very little or no value at all.

8. Strangers (Ghurabā)
The Holy Qur’ān says:

रजाल लातेहीम ट्जागरा लो बियु हैन देक्सार ल्हे
एफाम ईलामा वा इतिया दे अर्कान गाँव गोमा तन्तल फो वे दक्लो वा अब्सारः

Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allāh and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was once asked about ghurabā’ (strangers in the

53 ‘Allāma al-Majlīsī, Biḥār al-ʾAnwār, v.46, p.75
54 Holy Qur’ān, 24:37
real sense of the word), and he ﷺ said:

اَلْذِينَ يُحْيِوْنَ مَا أَمَاتَ النَّاسُ مِنْ سُنَّتِي

They are those who will revive what the people ruined from my Sunna.⁵⁵

Sacrificing themselves for the revival of religion, the companions of Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ steadfastly stood against the enemies. Earlier Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ had permitted them to leave if they wished to, but they never dared to even think of deserting him. Among the rest of the Muslims, they were truly the ghuraba’ whose stations others never appreciated. Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ, however, was even more gharib then them, for he occupied a station that even his companions never comprehended. It is therefore correct to call him Gharib al-ghuraba’ (The stranger among the strangers (his companions)). In one of the salutational recitals we address Imām al-Ḥusayn ﷺ as follows:

أَلَسْلَامُ عَلَى خَامِسِ أَصْحَابِ أَهْلِ الحَكْسَاءِ;
أَلَسْلَامُ عَلَى غَرِيبِ الْغَرِيِّبَاءِ...

Peace be unto you O the fifth member of the people of the cloak, Peace be unto you, O stranger of the strangers...⁵⁶

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⁵⁵ Al-Azhari, Mu’jam Tahdhib al-Lugha, v.3, p. 2646
⁵⁶ Al-Mashhadī, al-Mazār, p. 497
Upon you all I invoke the peace of Allāh forever, as long as I live and the night and day subsist
Upon you all I invoke the peace of Allāh forever, as long as I live and the night and day subsist.

**COMMENTARY**

In this phrase the predicate ‘alaykum... (upon you...) is brought before the subject ‘Salāmullāh’, thus conferring the meaning of restriction (ḥāṣr)’. In simple words, the zā‘ir is trying to say, “Only upon you all I invoke the peace of Allāh...”. This means that it is only for the likes of Imām al-Ḥusayn and his noble companions that the zā‘ir invokes salām. In other words, they represent those who are worthy of such invocation.

The preposition ‘alā (على), as we came to know earlier, confers the meaning of encompassment. Hence we are in reality praying for Allāh’s peace to encompass and envelop Imām al-Ḥusayn and his loyal companions.

This sentence is a nominal sentence (jumla ismiyya) too, which means that our invocation is perpetual and permanent. A nominal sentence confers the connotation of continuity (al-dawām).

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1 One of the grammatical rules of the Arabic language is that if the predicate (khabar) of a sentence is brought before its subject (mubtada’), it confers the meanings that the ‘predicate’ is exclusively for the subject.
Upon you, I invoke...

In the phrase *minni* (from me) the first person pronoun َاءَ يَا’ is attached to the preposition من min implying that the zā’ir is the one who invokes the *salām* of Allāh for the *mazūr* (the visited one).

Upon you all I invoke...

The word *jamī’an* (altogether) is a circumstantial expression (ِهَلُّ for the second person plural pronoun “*kum*” in عَلَيْكُم *‘alaykum (upon you). Hence the meaning is ‘Upon you altogether I invoke...’. Some commentators have also given the probability of another variable. They say that since a believer is a group in himself، the word *jamī’an* is not a circumstantial expression for the second person plural pronoun *kum* (you all) but rather for the first person singular pronoun *yā’* affixed to the preposition min. It is as if the zā’ir says, “Upon you I invoke with all the elements of my being, the peace of Allāh...”

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2 Mawlā ḤabībulLāh al-Kāshānī, *Sharḥu Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā*, p. 52
3 This refers to a well-known tradition that says ‘a believer is a congregation in himself.’
4 Mawlā ḤabībulLāh al-Kāshānī, *Sharḥu Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā*, p. 52
Annexing the name Allāh to salām either means that we are invoking a higher level of peace from Allāh or the Absolute Peace that belongs to Allāh.

Another intricacy worthy of consideration is that the Name Allāh being the all-comprehensive name (al-ism al-jāmi') of God, when annexed to salām implies that we are seeking salām (protection and freedom from imperfection) in all the perfect attributes of Imām al-Ḥusayn and his loyal companions, who are manifestations of the all-comprehensive name Allāh.

Here the zā’ir implicitly tries to say that he would always remain steadfast in his love and devotion for Imām al-Ḥusayn. He says that his invocation of salam for the Imām and his loyal companions is perpetual. It does not matter whether he is alive in this material world or not. Expressing this kind of statement is in reality declaring one’s firm and perpetual stance of loyalty to Imām al-Ḥusayn. This, therefore, presumes the zā’ir’s solidified unwavering resolution.

Shaykh Mufid (may Allāh elevate his status) narrates a tradition in the seventeenth assembly of his work al-Amāli that may enlighten us more about the meaning of having an unwavering resolution of attachment and devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt.
Abū Muḥammad, brother of Yūnus b. Yaʾqūb narrates from his brother Yūnus, who said:

كِتِبَتُ بالمدينة قَامَتْي جَعْفَرُ بن مُحَمَّدُ الزَّهَرَاءِ في بعض أزقتها فَقَالَ اذْهَبِ يَا يُونِسَ فَإِنَّ بالبَابِ رَجُلاً مَنَأ أَهْلُ البَيْتِ فَقَالَ فَجَعَلَتُ إلى البَابِ فِي ذَا عِيسى بْنِ عُبَیدُ اللَّهَ جَالَسُ قَلَّتُ لَهُ مِنْ أَنَّ قَالَ أَنَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ فَقَالَ يَتَنَّئُ بِأَسْرُعِ مِنْ أَنْ أَقِلِ أَبُو عُبَیدُ اللَّهِ عَلِيَّ الْهَمْرَاءِ عَلَى حَمَارٍ فَدَخَلَ عَلَى الْحَمَارِ الدَّارَ ثُمَّ الْفَتْتُ إِلَيْنَا فَقَالَ أَدْخَلْنَا ثُمَّ قَالَ يَا يُونِسُ أَحَسْبُ أَنْكَ أَنْطَكَتْ قَوْلِي لَكِ إِنِّي عِيسى بْنِ عُبَیدُ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَهْلُ البَيْتِ فَقَالَ فَلُذْتُ إِيَّاَيَ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلْتُ فِدَاكِ لَأَنَّ عِيسى بْنَ عُبَیدُ اللَّهِ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ البَيْتِ فَقَالَ يَا يُونِسُ عِيسى بْنُ عُبَیدُ اللَّهِ رَجُلٌ مَنْ أَهْلُ حِيَةٍ وَ هُوَ مَنْ أَمِيَّتَا

I was at Madīna, when Jaʿfar bin Muḥammad met me in one of its lanes. He said: “O Yūnus, go to the door, for a person from us the Ahl al-Bayt is at the door.” He said: “I went towards the door and found ‘Īsā bin ʿAbdillah sitting there. So, I said: “Who are you?” He replied: “I am from Qum.” He said: “No sooner than he had said that, Abū ʿAbdillah appeared on a donkey and he entered the house riding the donkey. Then attending to us, he said: “Come through.” Then he said: “O Yūnus, I believe you were not convinced when I said that ʿĪsā’
bin ‘Abdillāh is from us, Ahl al-Bayt?” I said: “It is so, may I be your ransom. For ‘Isā bin ‘Abdillāh is from people of Qum, how can he be one of you Ahl al-Bayt?” He said: “O Yūnus, ‘Isa bin ‘Abdillāh is from us as long as he lives, and he shall be from us after he has died.”

5 Shaykh Mufid, Al-Amāli, 17th Assembly, p. 140.
O Abū ‘Abdillāh, I swear by Allāh, the loss is great; and the calamity on us and all the enthusiasts of Islām because of what befell you is great and severe. And the calamity that befell you is reckoned by all the inhabitants of the heavens in the heavens as great and severe.
O Abā ʿAbdillah, I swear by Allāh, the loss is great; and the calamity on us and all the enthusiasts of Islam because of what befell you is great and severe. And the calamity that befell you is reckoned by all the inhabitants of the heavens in the heavens as great and severe.

COMMENTARY

O utterly obedient servant of Allāh...

Once again we call Imām al-Ḥusayn, although we realize that he can listen to us and behold our presence wherever we are. And why employ the vocative particle ʿā to call him? We said in the beginning that ʿā is used for a person who is quite far. The reason is that we would like to express our deep veneration for his exalted self. This is because although he may ontologically be very close to us, his exalted spirit is utterly remote from our inferior level. The most important thing, however, is to be able to see his noble self when we address him. If we purify our souls and behold the realm beyond this world we may be able to vision what most of the people are deprived of due to their accumulation of sins. The very fact that we address Imām al-Ḥusayn presumes that
the *mukhāṭab* (addressee) is present before us. Otherwise why don’t we employ the third person pronoun and invoke *salam* on his exalted being? And since the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt  teach the believers to always aspire for the best, whenever we recite this salutation we must crave to attain the station that can facilitate a direct communication with Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Ḥusayn  . When such an encounter is made possible, the heart breaks and the rivers of tears flow and the believer melts down before *al-witr al-mawtūr*.

\[
\text{يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ يَلَدَ عَظْمَتُ الرَّزِيَّةُ}
\]

O utterly obedient servant of Allāh, by Allāh, the loss is great.

Some commentators of this sacred *Ziyārat* say that the vocative particle *yâ* is once again brought in this verse to renew the feelings of sorrow for what befell on Imām al-Ḥusayn  . Al-Kashānī supporting this view says, “*Juddīda nidā’uḥu litajdid al-ḥuzn...*” (calling the Imām was renewed due the renewal of sorrow...).

\[
\text{لَكَذَٰلِكَ عَظْمَتُ الرَّزِيَّةُ}
\]

By Allāh, the loss is great.

The letter ‘*lâm*’ (ا) in *laqad* is employed for taking an oath. And since the particle *‘qad’* here appears before a past tense verb ‘*ażumat* (is great), it denotes emphasis. Hence *laqad ‘ażumat* would mean ‘By Allāh, surely great has been...’. The origin of the word ‘*raziyya*’ (رزی) is the word *razi’a* (رزی) with a *hamza* (ـ) after the letter *yâ*. Some have

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1 Mawlā HabibulLāh Kashānī, *Sharḥu Ziyārat ‘Ashurā’*, p. 53
merely translated it as a calamity. However, it denotes a specific kind of calamity: calamity due to loss. Al-Kashānī in his commentary says that it specifically refers to the calamity of the loss of the dear and beloved ones. However, it is also used for a calamity of loss in the general sense. Before his departure from this mortal world, the Holy Prophet in his state of illness sought a paper and pen to write something very important for the Muslim Umma. An ignorant man nearby said, “Indeed pain has overtaken the Messenger of Allāh, and you have the Qur’ān with you. The Book of Allāh is sufficient for us”. This followed a difference of opinion among people near the Holy Prophet. On seeing this chaotic state of affairs, he told them to disperse from there. ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās in reference to the impediment that hampered the Holy Prophet to write down the important direction, would employ the word raziyya and say:

إنَّ الرَّضُوْىَ بِكُلِّ الرِّضْوَىَ مَا حَالَ بَيْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صِلَّى
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَبَيْنَ اِنْ يَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ هُمْ ذَلِكَ
الْمُكَتَّابِ... 

Surely the calamity, a total calamity hindered the Messenger of Allāh from writing for them that testament.

The verb ṣṣ raza’a or razi’a literally means ‘he lessened’ or ‘he diminished’. Al-Fīrūzābādī in his al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ, giving an example of how this verb is used, says:

ما رَزَّعْتُهُ بِالْحَكْسَرُ مَا نَقَصَتْهُ

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2 Ibid.
3 Al-Ṭabari, Al-Mustashrid, p. 682
4 E.W. Lane, E.W. Lane Arabic-English Lexicon, under the root word raza’a
Mā razi’tuhu means I have not lessened.⁵

Therefore laqad ‘ażumat al-raziyya means ‘By Allāh, indeed the loss is great.’

This phrase talks about the greatness and intensity of the calamity that the believers faced by losing an Infallible Imām of the Ahl al-Bayt who enjoyed a very exalted rank near Allāh and represented Allāh on earth. Only those who comprehend the greatness of such a Divine leader can tangibly feel the loss. Amīr al-mu’mīnīn ‘Alī ⁴ says in a meaningful tradition:

فَكَلَّمَاهُ عَظْمُ قَدْرُ الشَّيْءِ المُنْتَافِسِ فِيهِ عَظُمَتِ
الرَّزِيَّةُ لِفَقْهِهِ

...so, the greater the value of the envied entity the greater the calamity of its loss.

And since the sanctity of Imām al-Ḥusayn ⁴ is such that its essence is incomprehensible, the gravity of losing his personality is likewise incomprehensible. In addition, the difficult circumstances that Imām al-Ḥusayn ⁴ and his noble progeny faced and the manner in which their sanctity was violated leave such wounds in the hearts of his lovers that make them tearful forever. Ibrāhīm bin Abī Maḥmūd narrates from Imām al-Riḍā’ ⁴:

إنَّ يَوْمَ الْحَسَنِينِ أَفْرَحَ جُفُونَتَا وَأَسْبَلَ دُمُوعَتَا وَأَذَلُّ عَزْيَتَا. بَأَرْضٍ كَرْبٍ وَبَلَاءٍ. وَأَوْرَثَنَا الحُكْرَبَ 
وَالْبَلَاءِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْانْفِضَاءِ، فَعَلَى مَثَلِ الْحُسَنِينِ 
فَلْيُبْنِي الْبَاحَكُوْنَ، فَانَّ الْبَكَّاءَ عَلَيْهِ يَحْضُرُ الدُّنْوِ بًَ

⁵ Al-Firūzābādī, Al-Qāmūs al-Muhīṭ, v.1, p. 122
Surely the day of al-Ḥusayn wounded our eyes and made our tears pour down and dishonored our venerated ones in the land of sorrow and tribulation, and thereby it made us inherit sorrow and calamity until the final day, and therefore the mourners must weep for the likes of al-Ḥusayn, for surely weeping over him wipes out major sins ...⁶

Imām al-Mahdī in his well-known Ziyārat al-Nāḥiyya addressing Imām al-Ḥusayn cries:

But as I have been hindered by the course of time and as (Allāh’s) decree has prevented me from helping you, and as I could not fight those who fought you, and was not able to show hostility to those who showed hostility to you, I will, therefore, lament you morning and evening, and will weep blood in place of tears, out of my anguish for you and my sorrow for all that befell you, until I meet death from the pain of the catastrophe and the

⁶ Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn bin al-Ṭāwūs, Iqbal al-Aʾmāl, v.3, p. 28
choking grief.\footnote{Muḥammad bin al-Mashhadi, \textit{Al-Mazār}, p. 500}

By Allāh, the loss is great.

Before one tries to swear and say that the loss is great, one must have knowledge about the same. Although we cannot even imagine the magnitude of the loss that the Ahl al-Bayt encountered in the plains of Karbalā, it is important for us to search for authentic information about the same, so that we may naturally express our sorrow as we recite this particular phrase.

\textit{An Unparalleled Incident}

One of the reasons that make this calamity outstanding and unique is that those who joined al-Husayn knew very well what awaited them. Despite that, they chose with complete volition on their side, to undertake this sacred journey and meet the calamities with open arms. Imām al-Husayn made it very clear to them when he resolved to embark on his journey to ‘Irāq that martyrdom is what awaits him:

\begin{quote}
من هكَّان فَنَّى بَأَذَلَا مُهْجِتَه، مُوطِنًا عَلَى لِقَاءِ اللّهِ
نفسه فَلَبِّرَ حَلَّ مَعْنَا فَايَنَّ رَأَحِلَ مَصْبُحًا إِنْ شَاءُ اللّهُ
تَعَالَيْ....
\end{quote}

Whosoever is ready to sacrifice his soul for us, and has stationed himself for meeting Allāh, he must leave with us, for surely I will leave tomorrow
morning Inshā Allāh...

It is such a move in complete awareness of the horrendous massacre that singles out the tragedy of Karbalā. The late eminent scholar ‘Allāma Muḥammad Taqī Ja'farī in response to a question asked as to why the Karbalā event is the most sorrowful of all events in history, said:

The important factor in the story of al-Ḥusayn which cannot be compared to any other event whatsoever is that it was out of complete awareness and choice. At no moment did they lose their free will. Furthermore, historical analysis shows that even at the very last moment if the Imām would say ‘yes’ [to Yazid], not only would the difficult situation be over, but he would be saved from that place, and perhaps the next era would be his era...

...and the calamity on us and all the enthusiasts of Islām because of what befell on you is great and severe...

The past tense verb ‘jallat’ mentioned in the above phrase is commonly translated in the same way as the verb ‘ażumat (is great). Some lexicographers however state that there is a fine difference between the two verbs: whereas ‘ażumat can apply for both material as well as spiritual intensity, jallat is only correct for spiritual greatness. Therefore this phrase implies that the calamity on us is spiritually great.

8 Al-Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Baḥrānī, al-'Awālīm (al-Imām al-Husayn (a)), p. 216
9 Muḥammad Riḍā Jawādī & ‘Alī Ja'fārī, Dar Maḥzar-e- Ḥakim ‘Allāmeyye Ja’farī, p. 18
All that the Imām al-ʿAbbās and his noble family members as well as sincere companions faced has enormously hurt our spirits and the spirit of every lover of Islām. In revealing the magnitude of the tragedy, Imām al-Ḥasan addressing his brother says:

لا يوم كيومك يا أبا عبد الله

There is no day like your Day O Abā ʿAbdillāh.\(^{11}\)

And Imām Zayn al-ʿĀbidin in one of his sermons says:

وهذئ الرزىَة التي لا مثلها رزىَة.

...and this is a calamity the like of which there is no calamity.\(^{12}\)

And ʿAbdullāh bin al-Faḍl narrates from Imām al-Ṣādiq:

إِنْ يَوْمَ قَتَلَ الْحُسَيْنَ عَلَى أَعْظَمْ مُصْبِينَ مَنْ جَمِيع

سَائِرِ الأَيَامِ...

Indeed the day of the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn is a day of greater calamity then all other days...\(^{13}\)

وَعَلَى جَمِيع أَهْلِ الإِسْلَامِ

and on all the members of the enthusiasts of Islām

The genitive construction *Ahl al-Islām* denotes ‘those who are intimate

\(^{11}\) Al-Baḥrānī, *al-ʿAwālim (al-Imām al-Ḥusayn)*, p. 154


\(^{13}\) *Ibid.*, p. 516
and attached to İslām’. The literal meaning of the word ahl according to some lexicographers is uns (intimacy) coupled with specific relationship and attachment. The word Ah al-Bayt refers to the people of a house, because they are intimate, attached, and have a specific relationship to the house.

Therefore when we say that the loss and calamity is great on all the Ahl al-Islām we mean that all those who really have intimacy, attachment and relationship with Islam suffer with great loss and calamity. This is where we must try to analyze ourselves and see whether we are from the Ahl al-Islām or not.

The main reason why the Ahl al-Islām must express sorrow is that Imām al-Ḥusayn is the epitome of İslām. Naturally therefore, all the lovers of Islam would tangibly feel sorrowful when any kind of calamity befalls him.

In one of his counsels to his contemporary, Imām al-Bāqir describing the Ahl al-Bayt, says:

\[\text{وَنَحْنُ مَواضِعُ الرَّسَالَةِ وَنَحْنُ الدِّينَ...} \]

And we are the places of the Divine Message, and we are the Religion...

And in another tradition, Imām al-Ṣādiq informs his companion Dāwūd:

\[\text{بِيَّ دَاوُدَ نَحْنُ الصَّلَاةُ فِي كِتَابِ اللهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَنَحْنُ الزَّكَاةُ وَنَحْنُ الصَّيْامُ وَنَحْنُ الحَجُّ وَنَحْنُ الشَّهْرُ الحَرَامُ وَنَحْنُ البَلَدُ الحَرَامُ وَنَحْنُ سُكَبَّةُ اللهِ وَنَحْنُ} \]

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15 Al-Daylami, Irshād al-Qulūb, v. 2, p. 418
O Dawud, we are the prayer (al-salāt) in the Book of Allāh, the Invincible and Exalted, and we are the poor rate (zakāt), and we are the fast (al-ṣiyām), and we are the pilgrimage (al-ḥajj) and we are the sacred month (al-shahr al-ḥarām) and we are the sacred city (al-balad al-ḥarām) and we are the Ka‘ba of Allāh and we are the qibla of Allāh...

These traditions inform us that the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt were epitomes of religion. Therefore love for religion in the true sense is love for them, and vice versa.

And the calamity that befell you is reckoned by all the inhabitants of the heavens in the heavens as severe and great.

In this phrase we confess that not only was the calamity great for the earth and its inhabitants, the heavens and their inhabitants likewise were overtaken by sorrow and grief for what transpired on a representative of Allāh on earth.

Imām ‘Alī bin Mūsā al-Riḍā addressing to Ibn Shabīb says:

Сertainly, the seven heavens and earths cried because of his martyrdom (i.e. of al-Ḥusayn).

16 ‘Allama Majlisī, Bihār al-Anwār, v.24, p. 303
And Imām al-Ṣādiq  is reported to have said:

إنَّ أبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحُسَيْنِ ﰾ: لَمَّا قَضَى بَعْتُ عَلَيْهِ السَّمَاءَاتُ الْسَّبْعَ وَالأَرْضُونَ السَّبْعَ وَما فِيهِنَّ وَمَا بَيْتُهُنَّ وَمَن يَتَمَلَّبُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ مِنْ حَلَقٍ رِبَّنَا وَمَا يُرَى وَمَا لَا يُرَى

Indeed when Abā ‘Abdillāh al-Husayn bin ‘Alī  left this world, the seven heavens and the seven earths and whatever is in and between them, and whosoever moves in Paradise and Hell Fire from the creation of our Lord and what can be seen and what cannot be seen wept for him.17

It should be known that it has been established in its own place that every existential entity has a share in comprehension (shu‘ūr), glorification (tasbīḥ), laudation (ḥamād), love (‘ishq), and lamentation (bukā). Those, however, who have not contemplated on the Holy Qur‘ān and the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt  as well, may consider this as far fetched. In order to grasp this reality intellectually, they should refer to works on the Transcendent Philosophy (al-ḥikmat al-muta‘āliya) propounded by leading philosophers such as Mullā  and Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (may Allah elevate their noble spirits).

Following is a verse of the Holy Qur‘ān that clearly informs us about the possibility of the sky weeping:

فَمَا بَعْتُ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانَوا

منْ نَظَرِينَ

So neither the sky wept for them, nor the earth; nor

17 Shaykh al-Kulaynī, Al-Kāfī, v.4, p. 575
were they granted any respite. (44:29)

Commenting on this verse, Imām al-Ṣādiq is reported to have said:

لا تَبُّكِ السّمَاءُ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مَّنْذَ قُتِّلَ يُحِيَّى بِنْ زَكَرْيَا، حَتّى قُتِّلَ الْحُسَيْنُ عَلَيْهِ ﷺ، فَبَحَكَتْ عَلَيْهِ

The sky did not cry over anyone ever since Yaḥyā bin Zakariyya was slain, until al-Ḥusayn was slain, whereupon it cried over him.18

And Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir is reported to have said the following about the abovementioned verse:

ما بَحَكَتِ السّمَاءُ عَلَى أَحَدٍ بَعْدَ يُحِيَّى بِنْ زَكَرْيَا،

لا إِلَى الْحُسَيْنِ بِنْ عَلِيٍّ ﷺ، فَأَقْتِلَهَا بَحَكَتْ عَلَيْهِ

أَرَبعِينَ يَوْمًا

The sky did not cry for anyone after Yaḥyā bin Zakariyya save on al-Ḥusayn bin ʿAlī, for surely it cried over him for forty days.19

The verse as well as the comments of the Ahl al-Bayt clearly reveal to us that the sky manifests sorrow and expresses its lamentation as well.

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19 Ibid.
And the calamity that befell on you is reckoned by all the inhabitants of the heavens in the heavens as severe and great.

The article *al* that precedes *al-sama'at* (السماءات) confers the meaning that all the heavens are taken into consideration.

And heavens and skies should not transport us to their material extensions. Scholars of authority opine that they refer to the higher levels of the universe of contingent existence.

The phrase *ahl al-sama'at* can refer to the angels who inhabit the heavens and all the exalted departed souls who witnessed or came to know about the tragedy of Karbalā.

Consider the following traditions:

Imām al-Riḍā  tells Ibn Shabīb:

> ولقد نزل إلى الأرض من الملائكة أربعة آلاف نصره فوجدوه قد قتل فهم عند قبره شمعت غبر إلا أن يقمن الساائم فيكونون من أنصاره وشعاراتهم يا لثارات الحسين

Four thousand angels descended on earth to aid him, but (when they were allowed to reach there) they found him martyred. *So they remained at his grave, dishevelled and covered with dust, and will remain there until the rising of al-Qā'im* (Imām al-Mahdī ழ), whereupon they will aid him. Their slogan will be, ‘Vengeance for the blood of al-Husayn ！”
Imām al-Ṣādiq  tells a companion called Fuḍayl:

ما لِحَكَمِ لا تَتأوْنُهُ يَعْنِي قُبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ إِنَّ الْأَفْلَامَ وُلِّكَنْ يُبَيِّشُونَ عِنْدَ قُبْرِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

What is the matter with you that you do not visit him [the grave of Imām al-Ḥusayn ]? Surely four thousand angels constantly weep near his grave, [and will do so] until the Judgment Day. 20

As for the departed souls, one of the traditions that break the hearts and make us realize how grave is the matter of al-Ḥusayn  is the following conversation between Imām al-Ṣādiq  and Abū Baṣir, his loyal companion, who had lost his physical eyesight, but was endowed with spiritual effulgence:

يَا أَبَا بَصِيرٍ إِذَا نَظَرَتْ إِلَى وَلَدَ الْحُسَيْنِ أُتْبَيْنُ ما لَأَمْلَعْكُهُ بِمَا أَتَى إِلَى أَبِيهِمْ وَأَتَى إِلَى أَبَا بَصِيرٍ إِنَّ فَاطِمَةَ بْنِيُّ مُلُكُشَةَ تَبْكِيهِ وَتَشْهَقِ. فَلَا تَزَالُ الأَمْرَ عَظِيمٌ قُالَ غَيْرُهُ أَعْظَمُ مَنْ لَمْ تَسْمَعْهُ نَمُّ قُالَ يَا أَبَا بَصِيرٍ أَمْ تَحْبُبُ أَنْ تَحْكُمْ فِي مَنْ يَسْمَعُ فَاطِمَةَ بْنِيُّ مُلُكُشَةَ فِي بِكَيْتُهَا حَينَ قَالَاهَا فَمَا أَقْدَرَتْ عَلَى الْمَنْطَقَةِ وَمَا أَقْدَرَتْ عَلَى كَلَامِي مِنَ الْبِكَاءِ.

Imām al-Ṣādiq  said: O Abā Baṣir, when I look at

20 'Allāma Majlisi, Bihār al-Anwār, v. 45, p. 222
the progeny of al-Ḥusayn, I am overcome due to what happened to their father and his family; O Abā Baṣīr, Indeed Fāṭima constantly weeps for him (al-Ḥusayn) and sighs [out of deep sorrow]....So the angels constantly sympathize and weep due to her weeping and pray to Allāh and express their humility to Him.... Abū Baṣīr said: May I be made your ransom. Indeed the matter is great. Thereupon the Imām said: What you have not heard other than this is even greater. Thereafter the Imām said: O Abā Baṣīr: Don’t you want to be among those who assist Fāṭima? Abū Baṣīr says: When he said this, I started weeping and could not utter a word, nor could I speak due to my weeping...

This tradition clearly hints to us that whatever we have heard and known about Imām al-Ḥusayn cannot be compared to that which we do not know.

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21 Shaykh al-Nūrī, Mustadrak al-Wasā’il, v.10, p. 314
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Notes