

THE SACRED EFFUSION

Reflections on Ziyārat 'Āshūrā' of
Sayyid al-Shuhadā' al-Ḥusayn Ibn 'Alī
(PEACE BE UPON HIM)

Volume 2



Written by Shaykh Muhammad M Khalfan

Foreword by Shaykh Khalil Jaffer

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SAYYID AL-SHUHADĀ’ AL-ḤUSAYN IBN ‘ALĪ □

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THE
**WORLD
FEDERATION**
OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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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.

ء	ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص	ض	ط	ظ	ع	غ	ف	ق	ك	ل	م	ن	و	ي	ه	د	
	ا	ب	ت	ث	ج	ح	خ	د	ذ	ر	ز	س	ش	ص																
	a	b	t	th	j	ḥ	kh	d	dh	r	z	s	sh	ṣ																

Long Vowels		Short Vowels	
ا	ā	َ	a
و	ū	ُ	u
ي	ī	ِ	i

(ṣ) - Peace be upon him and his progeny

('a) - Peace be on him

HUMBLE PRESENTATION

This nondescript humbly presents this work to Majma‘ al-Nurayn
(Confluence of Lights of Nubuwwa and Wilāya), Ḥaḍrat
Fāṭimah al-Zahrā عليها السلام

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

FOREWORD

By Shaykh Khalil Jaffer



The book before you is the much anticipated second volume of **The Sacred Effusion** by Shaykh Muhammad Khalfan – an exposition (*sharḥ*) on the Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’. The first volume covered the opening lines of this poignant salutation to the grandson of Prophet Muḥammad (s), Imam al-Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī, the Master of all martyrs (*sayyid ash-shuhadā*), peace be on him. It highlighted his lineage and emphasised his unique status as one of God’s proofs (*ḥujjah*) over His creation. This second volume continues with the salutation (*ziyārah*), now covering the verses that invoke God’s wrath on the oppressors of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a).

The issues surrounding the ‘cursing’ of God’s enemies does not escape any Muslim and yet it is one of the most misunderstood concepts in Islam, even by Muslims themselves. The author has boldly approached the subject head-on and expertly removed any misunderstands that often result in the mistreatment of the subject. Rather than avoiding it, Shaykh Khalfan has embraced the subject matter, much to the benefit of the reader.

‘Why curse at all?’ one often hears even amongst the lovers and followers of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). ‘Why focus on the negative? Why not just send blessings (*salawāt*) on the Messenger (s) and his Household (‘a) instead? What is to be gotten out of being hateful?’ and so on. The root of all such remarks is ignorance of what *la‘n* represents in Islam.

Perhaps because of the loose translation of *la‘n* into English as ‘cursing’, most people simply equate it to being abusive, or a form to express hate at best; when, in fact, the latter is not *la‘n* but rather *sabb*. The Qur’an condemns *sabb* as for example in the verse, ‘Do not abuse (*la tasabbu*) those whom they invoke besides Allāh, lest they should abuse (*yasabbu*) Allāh out of hostility, without any knowledge ...’ (6:108).

La‘n on the other hand is a form of prayer in the negative, asking God to remove His mercy from the undeserving. In reality it is for those who have already distanced themselves from God’s mercy. The prayer is only to show one’s loyalty and confirm one’s stance, thereby reaffirming one’s faith.

The importance of this disassociation goes beyond confirming that one has no inclination towards the values and ideals of the cursed. It also removes all traces of doubt and hypocrisy from the faithful (*mu‘min*)’s heart. For often a person may believe in what is good but may not disassociate from evil, which in turn leads him or her to be confused and to sit on the proverbial ‘fence’ when the two opposites clash.

Before the Battle of Jamal, a man named Ḥārith Ibn Ḥawṭ came to the Commander of the Faithful ‘Alī Ibn Abi Ṭālib (‘a) and said, ‘Do you believe I can ever imagine that the people of Jamal are in the wrong?’ He was perturbed and confused about where his loyalty should lie; after all, this was to be the first civil war in the Islamic community. Never before had Muslims fought their fellow Muslims. He loved Imam ‘Alī (‘a) but could not reconcile the killing of other fellow Muslims. Imam ‘Alī, peace be on him, replied, ‘O Ḥārith! You have glanced below yourself but not above yourself, and so you have become confused. Certainly you have not known the right (*al-ḥaqq*)’

and the wrong (*al-bāṭil*), so that you can recognise the righteous and the unrighteous!’ To which Ḥārith replied, ‘In that case, I shall withdraw along with Sa‘d Ibn Malik and ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Umar.’ Imam ‘Alī (‘a) again remarked, ‘Indeed, Sa‘d and ‘Umar have neither sided with right nor forsaken wrong!’¹

If asking God to curse transgressors is wrong then how would we explain the numerous verses in which God Himself invokes His *la‘n* on those who are such? (See for example, Qur’an: 2:89, 2:161, 3:61, 3:87, 7:44, 11:18, 24:7).

It is easy to stand with those in the right – even a tyrant claims to do so. *La‘n*, however, also clarifies whom we stand against. This requires courage as it is easier to ignore such matters and to remain silent. It is perhaps for this reason that when Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq (‘a) was asked about love (*al-ḥubb*) and hate (*al-ḡhḡḡ*), and whether they were a part of faith (*īmān*) and had any role to play in it, he replied with the rhetorical question, ‘Is faith (*īmān*) anything but love and hate? ...’² Of course, by ‘love and hate’ he meant association with the righteous and disavowal from the unrighteous for the sake of God, and not personal love and hate for selfish reasons.

To put it differently, when all is said and done, it is not our speech, actions or even thoughts that matter, but where our hearts truly lie. This may remain eluded even from ourselves until we are asked to state our disavowal of the wrongdoers and invoke God’s wrath on them. Without revealing this other side of our faith we can never be sure of where we stand.

A root cause of why many Muslims today are so opposed to condemning the oppressive monarchies of the Umayyads and Abbasids, that committed innumerable acts of tyranny against the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) (‘a) of the Prophet (ṣ) and other innocent Muslims, is the generation-spanning indoctrination by these very oppressors and their agents to ‘only focus on the positives’ and ignore injustices committed by the ‘pious predecessors’, justifying it as ‘history that only God can judge and resolve’. The result of this today is that some so-called Muslims still regard the drunk debauchee and murderer of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), Yazīd Ibn Mu‘āwiya (may Allāh’s curse be on him), to be worthy of the title ‘commander of the faithful’ (*amīr al-mu‘minīn*).

It worked well for the Umayyads to teach people to ignore wrong and only focus on right and create an atmosphere of infallibility for all who ruled as ‘caliphs of God’:

عَنْ سُفْيَانَ بْنِ عُيَيْنَةَ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ إِنَّ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ أَطْلَقُوا لِلنَّاسِ تَعْلِيمَ الْإِيمَانِ وَلَمْ يُطْلِقُوا تَعْلِيمَ الشِّرْكِ
لِكَيْ إِذَا حَمَلُوهُمْ عَلَيْهِ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوهُ

Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyaynah reports from Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (‘a) who said, ‘The Umayyads allowed people to teach (matters of) faith (*al-īmān*) but did not permit teaching about polytheism (*ash-shirk*) so that when they (the Umayyads) would impose it on them (the people) would not recognise it.’³

This trend continues to this day. Nations claiming to be the custodians of Islam will speak at length on the unity of God (*tawḥīd*) but ignore and even refuse to speak of the enemies of *tawḥīd* from whom they take help and support. Our position could be comparable to this if we on one hand claim to love the Household (Ahl al-Bayt) (‘a) of the Prophet (ṣ), but on the other hand take exception to cursing their enemies.

Let us consider the opposite: to acknowledge whom we disassociate from and to declare this with firm faith can save us from eternal damnation even at the very last moments of our lives. Ḥurr Ibn

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, aphorism 272

2 *Al-Kāfi*, v.2, p. 125, h. 5

3 *Al-Kāfi*, v.2, p. 416, h. 1. Note: Polytheism (*ash-shirk*) is the greatest form of injustice (Qur’ān, 31:13)

Yazīd al-Riyāḥī and Zuhayr Ibn al-Qayn are radiating examples of this in Karbala, when they joined Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and attained the ranks of the loftiest, despite their previous opposition to him.

Besides all of this, if the philosophy of *la‘n* is understood, it can also be soul-purifying and can nurture spiritual growth. I cannot put this better than the esteemed author (in his preface to this volume):

When we invoke curses, for example, is our aim a reflection of our narrow-minded personal rancour or a reflection of the innate human concern of dispelling harm from a nation whose purpose is to progress and soar towards the heights of perfection? When we detach ourselves from the fundamental oppressors of our sacred religion, are we detaching ourselves from innocent extensions of our species, or keeping away from the roots of imperfection and human destruction?

In other words, it is only by professing words such as those in the Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ that one can gain a level of certainty that if one was in place of those he curses, he or she would have acted otherwise.

In conclusion, I would like to stress once again: how we express *la‘n* must reflect all the aspects mentioned above. It must be done as a stand for truth rather than an emotional expression aimed at antagonising others. The latter is not what the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) would want nor will it drive people to their door and arouse in them a curiosity to know more about the Prophet (ṣ)’s sacred Household.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Neither the venerable Shaykh Muhammad Maḥmūd Khalfan nor his writings need an introduction. But I would like to stress that I cannot think of a better scholar who could have undertaken the task of writing this exposition. Not only because of the dear Shaykh’s inimitable style of writing but also because of his unique ability to dissect words and bring out new and fresh perspectives from their etymology.

Such works - with expert analysis and insights composed originally in English - are much needed in the Shia Muslim world today, as they usually tend to exist only in Arabic and other Eastern Islamic languages such as Farsi, which, when translated into English, often hold no appeal to a western audience due to their characteristic verbosity, or because they use examples and analogies that Western readers find it difficult to relate to. The value and worth of this work is such that it would not surprise me if this title will, in the near future insha Allāh, be rendered into Arabic and other Islamic languages from which translations normally originate.

Supplications and salutations are often simply seen as pious expressions to be used within Islamic rituals; but one who takes the time to patiently reflect on them and analyse them (as the author has done in this work) will be pleasantly surprised at the wealth of Islamic theological, social and even philosophical and metaphysical concepts to be found within them. These concepts are often more lucid and more reliable than traditional reports in other sources whose chains of transmission may not be easy to authenticate.

I beseech the Almighty One besides Whom there is none, to always cause us to abide in all the good that He has caused Muḥammad (ṣ) and the progeny (Al) of Muḥammad (‘a) to abide in and to keep us away from all ill that He has kept Muḥammad (ṣ) and the progeny (Al) of Muḥammad (‘a) away from; and that this work may become a spiritual treasure trove, a source of mercy and a shade for the author on the Day when there is no shade except that of Allāh, the Almighty and Exalted Lord, Amen.

Shaykh Khalil Jaffer

Toronto, Canada

15th Muḥarram 1433 AH / 11th December 2011

PREFACE

By Shaykh Muḥammad M Khalfan

Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ is a sacred effusion and Divine banquet (*ma’dubah ilāhiyyah*) for every human being who naturally yearns to reunite¹ with the All-Beloved, and achieve everlasting prosperity and bliss. It is a direction to overhaul the fallen soul and elevate it to the heights of magnanimity and greatness (*karāmah*). It is a programme for the revival of society and the destruction of evil forces. Those who may often recite it but have not yet realised its kernel, have deprived themselves of its spirit and reality.

In a tradition narrated in *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid* of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Imam Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Bāqir (‘a) advises ‘Alqamah Ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī, one of his companions, to recite this *ziyārah* daily; this advice of the Imam reveals the *ziyārah*’s fundamental importance. He (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَزُورَهُ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ بِهَذِهِ الزِّيَارَةِ مِنْ دَارِكَ فَافْعَلْ ...

If you can visit him (Imam al-Ḥusayn) every day² through this salutational recital from your home, then do so...³

In submission to the Imam’s direction, our great Shia scholars would adhere to it daily with deep enthusiasm and persistence. Some noteworthy examples are as follows:

1) The grandson of the late Ayatullah Murtaḍā Anṣārī (a very well-known and highly esteemed scholar of Jurisprudence and Principles of Jurisprudence) once said:

One of Ayatullah Shaykh Murtaḍā Anṣārī’s habits was reciting Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’. He would recite it twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. He would be extremely observant in that. After his demise, someone saw him in a dream, and asked him about his state, and he responded: ‘Āshūrā!’ ‘Āshūrā!’ ‘Āshūrā!’⁴

2) The late Ayatullah Bahjat, a well-known gnostic of the present century, is reported to have said the following about his teacher, Ayatullah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Iṣfahānī:

Ayatullah al-‘Uzmā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Iṣfahānī (well-known as Kompānī), the author of several works, and one of our esteemed teachers, had prayed to Allāh to enable him to recite Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ during the last moment of his life, and thereafter his soul be taken. His prayer was accepted, and after having recited Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ he left this world.⁵

1 Reuniting with the All-Beloved only makes sense when one’s origin (*mabda’*) was originally the All-Beloved. The insightful scholars establish that every human being’s origin is Allāh and His proximity. The return of the human being therefore is Allāh. Although the journey from Allāh to the world of matter may be viewed by some as coercive, the journey back to the All-Beloved is undoubtedly volitional

2 Some scholars draw our attention to the phrase “*kulla yawm*” and say that this direction is specifically for the day time. For a detailed discussion on the time of recitation during the day, see *Sharḥu Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’* by al-‘Allāmah al-Kālbāsī, p. 150

3 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*, p. 773

4 *Zindagānī wa Shakhṣiyyate Shaykh Anṣārī*, p. 377

5 <http://www.salehin.com>

3) The Martyr Ayatullah Dastaghayb Shīrāzi⁶ in his *Dāstānhāye Shegift* narrates:

Marhum Shaykh Jawād ‘Arab, who was once the *marja*‘ (jurist-consult) of a group of Shias in Iraq, saw the angel of death [‘Izrā’īl (‘a)] in his dream on the twenty-sixth night of Šafar 1336 AH. After greeting him, he asked: Where are you coming from? He said: I am coming from Shīrāz, and have [just] taken the spirit of Mīrzā Ibrāhīm Maḥallātī. Shaykh Jawād asked: In what state is his spirit in the realm of *barzakh*? The angel replied: It is in the best of states, and in the best of the gardens of *barzakh*, and God has entrusted a thousand angels subservient to him to carry out his (Mīrzā Maḥallātī’s) commands. Shaykh Jawād asked: Due to what action has he attained such a station? ‘Izrā’īl (‘a) said: Due to having recited Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’.⁷

4) One of the associates of the late Ayatullah al-‘Uzmā Arākī⁸ reports:

Ayatullah al-‘Uzmā Arākī’s programme on a daily basis was that he would go to the rooftop of his house and recite Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ while standing, and he ensured he recited the curses (*la‘n*) and salutation (*salām*) portions a hundred times as depicted in the *ziyārah*. This programme of his continued even during occasions of snowfall in winter for as long as he had strength in him.⁹

5) Shaykh Ghayūrī narrates:

Imam Khumaynī’s recitation of Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ was regular and never discontinued. Recently, whilst having a conversation with him, I came to realise that he regularly recited this *ziyārah* with the invocation of a hundred curses and a hundred salutations.¹⁰

6) Dr. Amīnī, the son of ‘Allāmah ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī (the author of the Al-Ghadīr Encyclopaedia) writes about his father:

‘Allāmah Amīnī, despite multiple occupations, writing, reading, arranging and attending to the library building of Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a) in al-Najaf al-Ashraf, would perfectly observe the [constant] recitation of Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ and advise [others] about the same.¹¹

A MICROCOSMIC VISION

One of the dimensions of Ziyārāt ‘Ashura’ worthy of reflection and consideration is its microcosmic¹² dimension. All the external actions and effects performed by human beings in the outer and macrocosmic¹³ universe have their roots in the internal and microcosmic universes of their souls. In order to decipher the fundamental roots and origins of the entire movement of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), it is important for us to study the microcosmic participants of the movement.

6 A great scholar and mystic. He was martyred by hypocrites on the fourteenth of Šafar 1402 AH [lunar] en-route to lead the Friday prayer in Shīrāz (Iran).

7 Ayatullah Dastaghayb Shīrāzi, *Dāstānhāye Shegift*, pp. 273-274, Incident no. 114

8 One of the late religious authorities (*marāji*‘) who was well known as *dā’im al-dhikr* (one who is constantly in the state of remembering Allāh) (<http://www.hawzah.net>).

9 <http://www.ashoora.ir>

10 *Sarguzashthāye wīzhe az Zindagiye Hazrat Imam Khumaynī*, v.6, p. 101;

11 Manšūr Ḥusayn Zādeh Kirmānī, *Ināyāt-e-Ḥusaynī*, p. 52; <http://www.hawzah.net>

12 The word microcosm is a composition of the Greek words *micro* (lit. small) and *kosmos* (world), and means “the small world”.

13 The word macrocosm is a composition of the Greek words *macro* (lit. large) and *kosmos* (world), and means “the large world”.

In other words, the outer phenomena that Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ speaks about, is a reflection of the inner experiences of the different souls that participated in the tragedy of Karbala. Hence, if we would like to decode the tragedy, we must first decode the souls of the individuals who played such an influential role in the realisation of the event.

The forces that established the foundation of wrongdoing and transgression against the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), the forces who provided the different kinds of assistance and help to those who rose against Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), and the forces who were ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of preserving the religion of Islam, all have roots and origins. If one carefully contemplates, one would realise that everything of human action and desire traces back to the human soul (*al-nafs*). In other words, everything a human does and even thinks, begins with the human soul.

The Holy Qur’ān in chapter al-Shams after seven oaths speaks about the felicity and wretchedness of the human soul:

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا. وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَّهَا. وَالتَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّهَا. وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا. وَالسَّمَاءِ وَمَا بَنَاهَا. وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا طَحَاهَا.
وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا. فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا. وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا.

By the sun and her forenoon splendour, by the moon when he follows her, by the day when it reveals her, by the night when it covers her, by the sky and He who built it, by the earth and He who spread it, by the soul and He who fashioned it and inspired it with [discernment between] its virtues and vices: one who purifies it [the soul] is felicitous, and one who betrays it [the soul] fails. (91:1-10)

The story does not end here. The Holy Qur’ān says:

قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ فَرَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ أَهْدَى سَبِيلًا.

Say, “Everyone acts according to his character. Your Lord knows best who is better guided with regard to the way.” (17:84)

Hence the individual is either a grace to the community or a threat depending on the state of the soul. The worst circumstance is when an individual who has corrupted his soul takes control of a whole nation. Instead of carrying out his responsibility to facilitate an atmosphere that would enable the members of the society to progress and attain proximity to Allāh, he would establish the foundation of corruption and chaos.

The fundamental problem that unfolded the tragedy of Karbala was wrapped up in a group of human souls. Those who had corrupted their souls had already created a tragedy of Karbala within themselves. They had already slaughtered the Ḥusayn of their intellect [*‘aql*] and his forces,¹⁴ and kept the Yazid of ignorance [*jahl*] and his forces as their king. This is a universal picture for every contemplative person who would like to understand the gist and kernel of the event of Karbala and this Divine document of Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’.

It is in the light of the aforesaid that we should try to reflect on the different verses of this sacred effusion. When we invoke curses, for example, is our aim a reflection of our narrow-minded personal rancour or a reflection of the innate human concern of dispelling harm from a nation whose purpose is to progress and soar towards the heights of perfection? When we detach ourselves from the fundamental oppressors of our sacred religion, are we detaching ourselves from innocent extensions of our species, or keeping away from the roots of imperfection and human destruction?

14 An allusion to the tradition of Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) where he enumerates the army of intellect [*‘aql*] and [*jahl*] within the human soul. The late Imam Khumaynī has written a beautiful commentary on this tradition.

When we supplicate for being united with al-Ḥusayn (‘a) do we mean the common superficial kind of unity and friendship, or a harmony between our souls and the contented spirit (*al-naḥs al-muṭma’innah*)?¹⁵

We must try to think microcosmically and relate the whole event of Karbala with our souls (*nufūs*), and decipher the origins of our declarations in this sacred ziyārah. If we are able to unfold the crux of our statements then we will understand the microcosmic exegesis of Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’.

The fundamental aim of this ziyārah, as discussed in the previous volume of this commentary, must be Allāh and His proximity. In order to achieve this sublime and lofty aspiration, we must study and contemplate over both the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic manifestations of Allāh, so that we are led to realise that He alone is All-Prior and Everlasting (*al-Ḥaqq*) and All-Prevalent.

The Holy Qur’an, alluding to both the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic signs of Allāh, says:

سُرِّيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ.

Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things? (41:53)

Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ transports us to the external movement and tragedy of Karbala and its macrocosmic dimension. Although it consists of manifestations of Allāh, like the spirits of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his loyal companions, our observation is always external. We have no vision of the inner realities of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his loyal companions, save that which has been narrated to us through traditions and history. Hence our outlook is conceptual and not presential. When we reflect on the lofty aims, wise decisions, towering resolutions, unflinching steadfastness, immaculate demeanour, stern confrontations, total submission, etc. of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his army, we realise that Allāh alone was prevalent in Karbala. All this concerns the macrocosmic signs of Allāh. This is because our observation is external and outside our souls.

In order to have a loftier share of benefit through the recitation of Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ and appreciate the microcosmic and internal signs of Allāh as well, we must align ourselves with the thoughts, beliefs, words, and deeds of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and harmonise our souls with his, so that we are able to presentially comprehend the reality that we have no share of existence save a sheer link or nexus (*‘ayn al-rabṭ*). The real life, knowledge, power, mercy, etc. belong to Allāh. Whatever perfection we have is entirely His, and we only serve as His manifestations. This kind of gnosis and cognition is termed by Amīr al-mu’minīn, ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a), as the most beneficial of all kinds of recognition and knowledge. The Imam (‘a) is reported to have said:

مَعْرِفَةُ النَّفْسِ أَنْفَعُ الْمَعَارِفِ

The comprehensive recognition of the soul is the most beneficial of all kinds of comprehensive recognition.¹⁶

Hence what is imperative for us is to align our spirits with that of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and behold the proximity of the ineffable beauty of the All-Beloved. Obviously, such alignment does not mean attaining the essence of al-Ḥusayn (‘a), which is incomparable to that of other creatures.

15 An allusion to the tradition of Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) where he encourages the believers to recite Sūrat al-Fajr which he calls Sūrat al-Ḥusayn due to the concluding verses of the chapter which speak about the tranquil and contented soul (*al-naḥs al-muṭma’innah*).

16 Al-Rayshahrī, *Mizān al-Hikmah*, v.3, p. 1876

In his well-known journey of *ziyārah* to Karbala, Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh al- Anṣārī, addressing Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), is reported to have said:

وَالَّذِي بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا بِالْحَقِّ لَقَدْ شَارَكْنَاكُمْ فِي مَا دَخَلْتُمْ فِيهِ

I swear by the One who sent Muḥammad as a prophet with truth, surely we have participated with you (laqad shāraknākum) in what you experienced.

‘Aṭīyah al-‘Awfī, who had accompanied Jābir, became surprised, and said to him:

وَكَيْفَ وَلَمْ نَهْبِطْ وَادِيًا وَلَمْ نَعْلُ جَبَلًا وَلَمْ نَضْرِبْ بِسَيْفٍ وَالْقَوْمُ قَدْ فُرِّقَ بَيْنَ رُءُوسِهِمْ وَأَبْدَانِهِمْ وَأُوتِمَّتْ أَوْلَادُهُمْ
وَأُرْمِلَتِ الْأَزْوَاجُ؟

But how can that be possible, while we did not descend on any valley, nor did we climb any mountainous area, nor did we fight with the sword, whereas people separated the heads [of the group of al-Ḥusayn (‘a)] from their bodies, and their children were made orphans and their women were made widows?

In response, Jābir said:

يَا عَظِيمَةً سَمِعْتُ حَبِيبِي رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) يَقُولُ مَنْ أَحَبَّ قَوْمًا حُشِرَ مَعَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ عَمَلَ قَوْمٍ أُشْرِكَ
فِي عَمَلِهِمْ وَالَّذِي بَعَثَ مُحَمَّدًا بِالْحَقِّ نَبِيًّا إِنَّ نِيَّتِي وَنِيَّةَ أَصْحَابِي عَلَى مَا مَضَى عَلَيْهِ الْحُسَيْنُ وَأَصْحَابُهُ.

O ‘Aṭīyah, I heard my beloved, the Apostle of Allāh (ṣ), say: Whosoever loves a nation will be resurrected with them, and whosoever loves the deed of a nation will be considered as having participated in that deed. I swear by the One who sent Muḥammad as a prophet with truth, indeed my intention and the intention of my companions is in accordance with the intention of al-Ḥusayn and his companions.¹⁷

Perhaps the reason we are advised to recite this *ziyārah* regularly is to gradually come to a level of intense harmony with Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and truthfully declare:

يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَكَ فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

O how I wish I had been with you, so that I too would have gained a great success!

A natural consequence of this intense harmony would be the great reward that such a recitation would bring, as Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) informs Ibn Shabīb in a well-known tradition:

يَابْنَ شَيْبِ، إِنَّ سَرَّكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَكَ مِنَ الثَّوَابِ مِثْلَ مَا لِمَنْ اسْتَشْهَدَ مَعَ الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) فَقُلْ مَتَى مَا ذَكَرْتَهُ:
يَا لَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُوزَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا.

O son of Shabīb, if it pleases you to have a reward similar to what those martyred with al-Ḥusayn (‘a) possess, then say whenever you remember him: O how I wish I had been with them, so that I too may have achieved great success!¹⁸

Such declarations can only be correct when one has defeated the inner enemy, which is the closest to oneself and the most dangerous of all. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

17 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.65, p. 13.

18 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, p. 193.

أَعْدَى عَدُوِّكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ.

Your worst enemy is your self which is between your two sides.¹⁹

Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) is reported to have said:

نَفْسُكَ أَقْرَبُ أَعْدَائِكَ إِلَيْكَ.

Your soul is the closest of your enemies to you.²⁰

In another tradition he (s) is reported to have said:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا مِنْ عَدُوٍّ أَعْدَى عَلَيَّ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنَ الْعَصَبِ وَالشَّهْوَةِ، فَاقْمَعُوهُمَا وَاغْلِبُوهُمَا وَاكْظُمُوهُمَا.

I swear by the One in whose hand is my soul, no enemy has greater enmity against the human being than his anger (*ghaḍab*) and desire (*shahwah*). Therefore repress them, overcome them, and suppress them.²¹

Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) is reported to have said:

أَعْدَى عَدُوٍّ لِلْمَرْءِ غَضَبُهُ وَشَهْوَتُهُ، فَمَنْ مَلَكَهُمَا عَلَتْ دَرَجَتُهُ وَبَلَغَ غَايَتَهُ

The worst enemy of a person is his anger and desire. Therefore whosoever prevails over these two, rises in station and attains his goal.²²

In another tradition he ('a) says:

الْهَوَى أَعْظَمُ الْعَدُوِّينَ

Vain passion is the greatest of the two enemies.²³

The esteemed contemporary scholar, Ayatullah Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad, in volume two of his *al-Sha'ā'ir al-Ḥusayniyyah* says:

سيد الشهداء أراد فرسانا في ميدان النفس، و كآني بالحسين يمتحن عاشقيه و محبيه في كل محرم يمر بهم يمتحنهم و يخاطبهم : أنتم صادقون في مودتي وولائي؟ والصدق في مودة الإمام الحسين (عليه السلام) وولائه يتمثل في جهاد النفس قبل أي ساحة أخرى؛ لأن الإنسان لا يمكن أن يصدق في محاربة معسكرات أخرى قبل الصدق في حربه و جهاده ضد نفسه.

The doyen of martyrs sought cavaliers in the battlefield of the soul. It is as if I can behold al-Ḥusayn ('a) examining his ardent lovers and friends every Muharram. He tests and addresses them as follows: Are you truthful in your love and affection for me? Truthfulness in the love and affection for Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) is embodied in the war of the self, before any other arena. This is because the human being cannot be genuine in fighting against other army camps before being genuine in his war and fight against his self.²⁴

Hence, in order to align ourselves with Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a), we must begin with our inner war,

19 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.67, p. 36

20 Al-Rayshahrī, *Mizān al-Hikmah*, v.3, p. 1848

21 ibid.

22 Al-Rayshahrī, *Mizān al-Hikmah*, v.3, p. 1847

23 The two enemies apparently refer to the outer and the inner. Ref: Al-Rayshahrī, *Mizān al-Hikmah*, v.3, p. 1847

24 Ayatullah Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sanad, *al-Sha'ā'ir al-Ḥusayniyyah*, v.2, p. 308

which according to a tradition of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is the “major war (*al-jihād al-akbar*)”. If we are able to vanquish and defeat the enemy within, we can truthfully declare our unity with Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a).

Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ if recited constantly can awaken and motivate us to begin our inner war and struggle, thus paving the way for an ultimate victory over our greatest enemy. When this is realised, our outer declarations would exactly reflect our inner states.

The fruits of the inner revolution are worthy of contemplation. Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), who serves as one of the intermediaries of Divine grace (*wasā’iṭ al-fayḍ al-ilāhiyyah*), can quickly transport the human soul to the level of tawḥid for which it was created. The human being has the ability to ascend to a level where he dissolves in the All-Beloved, and subsists with Him.²⁵ The great mystical scholars do not seek such levels to savour the exalted spiritual states. Their aim and desire is only Allāh. In the beautiful expression of Imam al-Sajjād (‘a):

يَا نَعِيمِي وَجَنَّتِي، وَيَا دُنْيَايَ وَأَخِرَّتِي

O my great blessing and my Garden of Heaven, O my world and my Hereafter...²⁶

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) in his supplication on the day of ‘Arafah prays:

مَاذَا وَجَدَ مَنْ فَقَدَكَ، وَمَا الَّذِي فَقَدَ مَنْ وَجَدَكَ، لَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ رَضِيَ دُونَكَ بَدَلًا

What has He who loses You gained, and what has he who gains You lost? Indeed one who is pleased with other than You in exchange is at loss.²⁷

The sincere mystics seek the exalted station because Allāh wants them to do so. Ibn Sīnā in his *Remarks and Admonitions* makes a very noteworthy statement. He says:

مَنْ آتَرَ الْعِرْفَانَ لِلْعِرْفَانِ فَقَدْ قَالَ بِالثَّانِي

Whosoever prefers gnosis (‘*irfān*’) for the sake of gnosis (‘*irfān*’), has surely acknowledged two deities.²⁸

One’s aim and ambition, therefore, must be Allāh and His neighbourhood. He must correct his vision and align it with utter sincerity. He must be a lover in the true sense of the word.

The path towards attaining the great stations of tawḥid is open to all those who have retained their *fiṭrah* (innate disposition). Hence we should elevate our aspirations and seek the exalted station instead of being overcome with Satanic insinuations of despair.

The late effulgent saint, Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Alī Qāḍī al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, according to a narration from his son Sayyid Ḥasan Qāḍī, would struggle through different acts of worship to attain the exalted vision of tawḥid, but was not successful, until one day when he went to perform the *ziyārah* of Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās (‘a).

The late Ayatullah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭehrānī narrates in volume two of his work *Maṭl‘e Anwār*:

25 In the language of the mystics these levels are termed as ‘*al-fanā’ fi Allāhi wal baqā’ bi Allāhi*’. Neither does ‘dissolution in Allāh’ mean a kind of material dissolution, nor does ‘subsistence in Allāh’ signify a kind of physical companionship and duality. These are spiritual states of the reality that exist even now but cannot be beheld by the human being until he tears off the curtains of ignorance. One who achieves the state of *tawḥid* realises that only one Being exists in the truest sense of the word; the rest are His actions and manifestations.

26 Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a), *Al-Ṣaḥīfat al-Sajjādiyyah* (Abtahi ed.), p. 413

27 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.95, p. 226

28 Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, v.3

مرحوم قاضي پس از سير مدارج و معارج، و التزام به سلوك، و مجاهدهٔ نفس و واردات قلبيه و كشف بعضي از حجابهاي نوراني، چندين سال گذشته بود و هنوز وحدت حضرت حق تعالي تجلّي نموده بود، و يگانگي و توحيد وي در همهٔ عوالم، در پس پردهٔ خفا باقي بود، و مرحوم قاضي به هر عملي كه متوشل مي شد، اين حجاب گشوده نمي شد. تا هنگامي كه ايشان از نجف به كربلا براي زيارت تشرف پيدا كرده؛ و پس از عبور از خيابان عباسيه (خيابان شمالي صحن مطهر) و عبور از در صحن، در آن دالاتي كه ميان در صحن و خود صحن است و نسبتاً قدرتي طويل است، شخص ديوانه‌اي به ايشان مي گويد: (ابوالفضل كهبة اوليا است). مرحوم قاضي همين كه وارد رواق مطهر مي شود، در وقت دخول در حرم، حال توحيد به ايشان دست مي دهد و تا ده دقيقه باقي مي ماند؛ و سپس كه به حرم حضرت سيدالشهداء عليه السلام مشرف مي گردد در حالي كه دستهاي خود را به ضريح مقدس گذاشته بود، آن حال قدرتي قويتر دست مي دهد و مدت يك ساعت باقي مي ماند؛ ديگر از آن به بعد مرتبا و متناوبا و سپس متواليا حالت توحيد براي ايشان بوده است.

Marḥūm Qāḍī, having traversed the stages and stations of ascension and adhered to spiritual wayfaring and self-struggle, and despite having attained inspirations of the heart and having pierced some of the veils of light, many years had passed but he had not yet experienced the theophany (*tajallī*) of the comprehensive unity of God, the Exalted, and His Oneness in all the realms remained hidden. Every action that Marḥūm Qāḍī would perform to attain that state (of *tawḥīd*), yet the curtain hiding this would not be unveiled. This was until he travelled from Najaf to Karbala for *ziyārah*. Having passed through the ‘Abbāsiyyah Road (north of the sacred courtyard) as well as the door of the courtyard, in the corridor between the door of the courtyard and the courtyard itself, a mad²⁹ person told him: Abū al-Faḍl is the *ka‘bah* of the saints (*Abū al-Faḍl kā‘beye awliyā ast*). Upon entering the pure porch and while entering the sacred Haram, Marḥūm Qāḍī was overtaken by the state of *tawḥīd*, which continued for ten minutes. Thereafter he visited the Ḥaram of Sayyid al-Shuhadā’ (‘a), and having placed his hands on the sacred shrine (*darīḥ*), he experienced a stronger level of the earlier state (of Divine unity), which remained for one hour. Thenceforth he would always experience the state of *tawḥīd* regularly and periodically and thereafter uninterruptedly.³⁰

This incident beautifully reveals the great influence visiting Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his loyal companions can have in expediting the journey to Allāh. Hence, as we adhere to reciting this great *ziyārah* in our daily lives, we must always be focused on attaining the fundamental goal behind its recitation-

29 Mad here probably signifies the state of being overcome by Divine ecstasy.

30 Ayatullah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭehrānī, *Maṭl‘e Anwār*, v.2, p. 63.

CHAPTER 10

... فَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً أَسَّسَتْ أَسَاسَ لُظْلُمٍ وَالْجُورِ عَلَيْكُمْ
أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً دَفَعَتْكُمْ عَنْ مَقَامِكُمْ
وَأَزَالَتْكُمْ عَنْ مَرَاتِبِكُمُ الَّتِي رَتَّبَكُمْ اللَّهُ فِيهَا وَلَعَنَ
اللَّهُ أُمَّةً قَتَلَتْكُمْ وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْمُمَهِّدِينَ لَهُمْ بِالتَّمْكِينِ
مِنْ قِتَالِكُمْ

...therefore, may Allāh distance from His mercy the community that laid the foundation of wrongdoing and injustice against you, O Household of the Prophet; and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community who removed you from your position and separated you from your stations where Allāh had established you; and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community who slew you; and may Allāh distance from His mercy those who facilitated for them the possibility to combat with you.

... فَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً أَسَّسَتْ أَسَاسَ لُظْلَمٍ وَالْجُورِ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ

...therefore, may Allāh distance from His mercy the community that laid the foundation of wrongdoing and injustice against you, O Household of the Prophet.

COMMENTARY

The conjunctive particle *fa*¹ in the phrase “*fa la‘ana Allāhu...*” signifies that what follows is because of the preceding account.² In other words: The calamity and loss on all the Muslims and the entire universe due to what happened to Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is intense and severe, *fa* (therefore) *la‘ana Allāhu...* (may Allāh distance from His mercy...)

The trilateral verb *la‘ana* comes from the infinitive *la‘n*, which literally means “to distance or banish one”.³ Therefore, when Allāh ‘curses’, He expels and distances one from His mercy and proximity. Although grammatically in the past tense, the verb is employed here in the invocative sense. Therefore, when we say “*fa la‘ana Allāhu...*” we do not mean “*therefore Allāh distanced from His mercy...*” but rather “*therefore may Allāh distance from His mercy...*”.

The word *ummah*, which we have rendered above as “community” is translated by leading lexicographers as “every group that is united in one thing, be it religion, time or place, whether forcefully or willingly”.⁴ In simple words: If a group is united in religion, time, or place, etc., whether willingly or not, it is known as an *ummah*.

أَسَّسَتْ أَسَاسَ لُظْلَمٍ وَالْجُورِ

...that laid the foundation of wrongdoing and transgression...

The past tense verb *assasa*⁵ literally means “*He laid the foundation*”. Al-Khurāsānī in his *al-Mu‘jam* discussing its etymology says that its triconsonantal origin (a.s.s.) signifies ‘the root and origin of a thing’ (*aṣl al-shay‘ wa awwaluhu*).⁶ And the root and origin of a thing in reality is its foundation. The root and origin of a building, for example, is its foundation. The Holy Qur’ān employs the verb *assasa* when it tries to compare two kinds of foundations, that which is established on God-wariness (*taqwā*) and Divine pleasure, and that which is established on the basis of wrongdoing (*ẓulm*). Almighty Allāh says:

أَفَمَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَى تَقْوَىٰ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شِقَا جُرْفٍ هَارٍ فَانْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارٍ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

Is he who founds his building on God-wariness and [the pursuit of Allāh’s] pleasure better-off or he who founds his building on the brink of a collapsing bank which collapses with him into the fire of Hell? And Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing lot.

(9:109)

1 *Fa* is a prefixed conjunctive particle implying a close connection between the sentences before and after it. This connection may be either a definite cause and effect or a natural sequence of events signifying: and, then, for, therefore, so that, so, in order that, in that case, in consequence, afterwards, at least, lest, because, for fear of, truly, after, by, but, thus, consequently, in order to.

2 The calamity depicted in the previous verse.

3 Al-Ṭurayhī, *Majma‘ al-Baḥrayn*, v.6, p. 309.

4 Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, p. 86.

5 Note that the verb used in the verse is *assasa(t)* which alludes to the *ummah* (community) which is of feminine gender. Hence it is essential to affix the *tā* in the verb *assasa(t)* to allude to the third person feminine singular pronoun, which refers to *ummah*.

6 Al-Khurāsānī, *al-Mu‘jam fī Fiqhī lughat al-Qur‘ān wa sirri Balāghatihi*, v.2, p. 319

Here the concluding phrase “*Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing lot*” (*wa Allāhu lā yahdī al-qawma al-zālimīn*) implies that the second kind of foundation which is “the brink of a collapsing bank” in reality is the foundation of *ẓulm* and wrongdoing. It also informs us that such an edifice will be continuously deprived of Allāh’s guidance (...*lā yahdī al-qawma al-zālimī*).

The word *asās* in the phrase “...*assasa asās al-ẓulm*...” having the same origin as the verb *assasa* discussed earlier, offers a similar connotation. It means “the foundation or origin [of a thing]”. Al-Jawharī in his *al-Ṣiḥah*, says:

الْأُسُّ أَصْلُ الْبَيْتِ وَكَذَلِكَ الْأَسَاسُ

Al-uss is the foundation of a building, and likewise is *al-asās*.⁷

The word *ẓulm* is “to place a thing where it does not belong” or “to place something in the wrong place”. *Al-ẓulm ‘alā Ahl al-Bayt* therefore would mean to “to position the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in the wrong place”. In other words, to deprive them of their position as the true guardians of religion, to treat them as ordinary fallible human beings, to separate them from the Muslims, and to carry out different kinds of oppression against them.

The word *jawr* is defined as follows:

Ibn Fāris in his *Mu‘jam* says:

الجِيمُ وَالْوَاوُ وَالرَّاءُ أَصْلٌ وَاحِدٌ وَهُوَ الْمَيْلُ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ

The single root of *jīm*, *wāw*, and *rā’* [that spell *jawr*] means an inclination to move away from the path.⁸

Al-Jawharī in his *al-Ṣiḥah* says:

الْجَوْرُ الْمَيْلُ عَنِ الْقَصْدِ

Al-Jawr is to decline from one’s equilibrium.⁹

Ibn Ṣīda explaining the meaning of *jawr* says:

وَكُلُّ مَنْ مَالَ فَقَدْ جَارَ وَمِنْهُ جَوْرُ الْحَاكِمِ إِنَّمَا هُوَ مَيْلُهُ فِي حَكْمِهِ

And whosoever inclines, *faqad jāra* (he has done *jawr*). An example of such usage is *jawr al-ḥākim*, which means his (the ruler’s) sole personal inclination in his command.¹⁰

Al-Muṣṭafawī says in his *al-Taḥqīq*:

أَنَّ الْأَصْلَ الْوَاحِدَ فِي هَذِهِ الْمَادَّةِ هُوَ الْمَيْلُ إِلَى شَيْءٍ... وَإِذَا اسْتَعْمِلَتْ بِجَرَفٍ عَنْ أَوْ عَلَى: فَتَكُونُ بِمَعْنَى الْإِعْرَاضِ وَالتَّعَدِّيِّ وَالظُّلْمِ...

The single root meaning of the word *jawr* is “to incline to something (*al-mayl ilā shay’in*)”...and when it is employed with the preposition ‘*an* or ‘*alā* it confers the meaning of turning away, transgression and oppression...¹¹

7 Al-Jawharī, *Al-Ṣiḥah*, v.3, p. 903

8 Ibn Fāris, *Mu‘jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, v.1, p. 493

9 Al-Jawharī, *Al-Ṣiḥah*, v.2, p. 617

10 Al-Khurāsānī, *Al-Mu‘jam*, v.10, p. 418

11 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq*, v.2, p. 141

In light of the aforesaid, therefore, the literal meaning of the phrase under discussion would be, “...therefore may Allāh distance from His mercy the community that established the foundation of wrongdoing and transgression against you, O Ahl al-Bayt”.

عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ

against you, O Household of the Prophet

There has been a controversy among Muslims about the identity of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Whereas a group is blindly adamant that the term does not refer to anyone save the wives of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), another group establishes with evidence that it cannot refer to anyone save the infallible progeny of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

There are more than a hundred and fifty Sunni references¹² that state the term “Ahl al-Bayt” refers to the five companions of the mantle (*Aṣḥāb al-Kisā*). Examples of these authentic references are as follows:

- a) *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, the chapter on the merits of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) (*Faḍā’ilu Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)*). The narrator is ‘Ā’ishah.
- b) *Tafsīr al-Durr al-Manthūr* of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī. The narrators of the tradition in this source are: Aḥmad, Ibn Shaybah, Ibn Jurayr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim.
- c) *Al-Mustadrak of al-Ḥakim* (v.3, p. 147). He narrates it from a different chain of narration from ‘Ā’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). He has also endorsed the tradition through two well-known sources accepted by Sunnis: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari and Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim
- d) *Manāqib Ahl al-Bayt* of al-Tirmidhī. The narration in this work is from ‘Umar Ibn Abī Salamah.
- e) *Musnad* of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (v.6, p. 304). The narrator of the tradition is Umm Salamah, the wife of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ).

Following are some noteworthy narrations that explicitly reveal that Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) cannot refer to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ):

Al-Tirmidhī in his *Manāqib Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)* narrates:

عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ : نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) : إِتْمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيراً فِي بَيْتِ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ، فَدَعَى النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) فَاطِمَةَ وَحَسَنًا وَحُسَيْنًا وَعَلِيًّا (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) خَلَفَ ظَهْرَهُ، فَجَلَّلَهُمْ بِكِسَاءٍ، ثُمَّ قَالَ : (اللَّهُمَّ هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْلُ بَيْتِي فَأَذْهِبْ عَنْهُمْ الرِّجْسَ وَطَهِّرْهُمْ تَطْهِيراً). قَالَتْ أُمُّ سَلَمَةَ : وَأَنَا مَعَهُمْ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ : أَنْتِ عَلَى مَكَانِكَ، وَأَنْتِ إِلَى حَيْبٍ.

‘Umar Ibn Abī Salamah narrates: The verse “Indeed Allāh desires to repel all impurity from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and purify you with a thorough purification” [33:33] was revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the house of Umm Salamah. Thereupon the Prophet (ﷺ) called Fāṭimah (‘a), Ḥasan (‘a), and Ḥusayn (‘a), while ‘Alī (‘a) stood behind the Prophet (ﷺ). So he (ﷺ) covered them with a mantle, and thereafter said: O Allāh, these are my Ahl al-Bayt; therefore, remove from them impurities and purify them with a thorough purification. Thereupon Umm Salamah [who stood nearby] said: Am I also

12 The contemporary esteemed Shia scholar Dr. ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī in his work *Ahl al-Bayt: Dirāsah Mu’jamiyyah Dīnīyah li al-Muṣṭalah* mentions 156 of all of these references. (Al-Shaykh al-Faḍlī, *Dirāsah Mu’jamiyyah Dīnīyah li al-Muṣṭalah*, pp. 24-31)

among them (the Ahl al-Bayt), O Prophet of Allāh? The Prophet (ﷺ) said: You retain your station, and are heading towards the good.¹³

Observe here that Umm Salamah, one of the noble and loyal wives of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), is told that despite her virtue and pleasant future, she is not from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) mentioned in his prayer.

Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī narrates the following tradition in his *Al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafṣīr al-Ma‘thūr*:

وَأَخْرَجَ ابْنُ مَرْدَوَيْهِ عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ قَالَتْ: نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ فِي بَيْتِي: إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيراً وَفِي الْبَيْتِ سَبْعَةٌ جِبْرِيلُ وَمِيكَائِيلُ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ وَعَلِيٌّ وَفَاطِمَةُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَأَنَا عَلَى بَابِ الْبَيْتِ. قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَلَسْتُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ قَالَ: إِنَّكَ إِلَى خَيْرٍ إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Ibn Mardawayh narrated from Umm Salamah, who said: The verse “*Indeed Allāh desires to repel all impurity from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and purify you with a thorough purification*” [33:33] was revealed in my house whilst seven were present: Jibrīl, Mikā‘il (peace be unto them both) and ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (may Allāh be pleased with them). And I was at the door of the house. I said: O Apostle of Allāh, am I not among the Ahl al-Bayt? He said: You are towards goodness, and you are from the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ).¹⁴

Al-Haythamī in his *al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah* says with regard to the term “Ahl al-Bayt” mentioned in chapter 33, verse 33, as follows:

وأكثر المفسرين على أنها نزلت في علي وفاطمة والحسن والحسين لتذكير ضمير (عنكم) وما بعده.

Most exegetes of the Qur’ān hold that it [verse 33:33] was revealed about ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, due to the masculine plural pronoun ‘*ankum*’ [from you] and what follows it [i.e. *yūṭahhirakum*...].¹⁵

In other words, if the verse was revealed solely for the wives of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) it would not have been mentioned with a masculine plural pronoun “kum” in both the phrases ‘*ankum al-rijsa*...and *yūṭahhirakum*. The mention of “kum” indicates that “Ahl al-Bayt” also includes males, who are Imam ‘Alī (‘a), Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a) and Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a).

The Shia narrators of tradition likewise have dealt with the meaning of “Ahl al-Bayt” in detail. While they do not negate that the *Aṣḥāb al-Kisā’* are the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), they add that the term is also employed for the grandsons of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) through the lineage of Imam al-Ḥusayn until the present Holy Imam al-Ḥujjah (may Allāh hasten his reappearance and enable us to actively serve him, avenge the blood of his grandfather al-Ḥusayn (‘a), and attain martyrdom in his ranks).

In this regard there is a tradition narrated from Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) from his father Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a), who said:

دَخَلْتُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فِي بَيْتِ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ وَقَدْ نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ (إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيراً) فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: يَا عَلِيُّ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ نَزَلَتْ فِيكَ وَفِي سِبْطِي وَالْأَيْمَةَ مِنْ وُلْدِكَ...

13 Al-Shaykh al-Faḍlī, *Dirāsah Mu‘jamiyyah Dīnīyyah li al-Muṣṭalaḥ*, p. 33

14 Al-Suyūfī, *Al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafṣīr al-Ma‘thūr*, v.5, p. 198

15 Al-Haythamī, *Al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah*, p. 141; Al-Shaykh al-Faḍlī, *Dirāsah Mu‘jamiyyah Dīnīyyah li al-Muṣṭalaḥ*, pp. 22-23

I came into the presence of the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ) in the house of Umm Salamah and the verse “*Indeed Allāh desires to repel all impurity from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and purify you with a thorough purification*” [33:33] had just been revealed to him. The Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ) said: O ‘Alī! This verse has been revealed *about you, and my two grandsons and the Imams from your sons...*¹⁶

During his captivity together with the noble family of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) met an old man in Sham (Syria and surrounding areas) who thanked Allāh for having made Yazīd victorious. Realising his innocence and ignorance, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) conversed with him. At one point the following conversation transpires, where Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) says:

أَمَا قَرَأْتَ فِي الْأَحْزَابِ : إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا؟

Have you not read in chapter al-Aḥzāb the verse that says “*Indeed Allāh desires to repel all impurity from you, O Ahl al-Bayt, and purify you with a thorough purification*”?¹⁷

The old man said:

وَلَا أَنْتُمْ هُمْ؟

Are you really those people?

The Imam (‘a) replied:

نَعَمْ

Yes.

Having realised his ignorance and the truth of what had actually transpired, the old man started to repent.

عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ

against you, O Household of the Prophet

It is imperative for us to understand that when we speak of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), we do not speak of any kind of nepotistic relationship.¹⁸ The Ahl al-Bayt (lit. those intimate with the house (of the Prophet)), as the well-known successively narrated tradition of *al-thaqalayn* distinctly resonates, are religion (dīn) themselves. Their thoughts, speeches, and actions, are the commentary of the Holy Qur’ān. Therefore, oppression and injustice done to them is oppression and injustice to the Holy Qur’ān and Islam. Those who established the foundation (*asās*) of wrongdoing against them, in reality established the foundation of wrongdoing against the Qur’ān and Islam. Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) revealing the unity between religion and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) states:

هُمُ أَسَاسُ الدِّينِ وَ عِمَادُ الْيَقِينِ

They (the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)) are the foundation of religion and pillars of conviction.¹⁹

هُمْ دَعَائِمُ الْإِسْلَامِ وَ وَلَا يُخِ الْأَعْيَصَامِ

16 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.36, pp. 336-337

17 Ibn Jurayr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān*, v.22, p. 12

18 Nepotism is favouritism granted to relatives or friends regardless of merit.

19 Al-Ṭabarī, *Dalā’il al-Imāmah*, p. 21

They are the pillars of Islam and shelters of protection.²⁰

هُم أَرْزَمَةُ الْحَقِّ، وَأَعْلَامُ الدِّينِ، وَالسِّنَّةُ الصِّدْقِ، فَأَنْزَلُوهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَنَازِلِ الْقُرْآنِ

They are the reigns of the truth, the guideposts of the religion, and tongues of the truth. Therefore place them in the most beautiful stations of the Qur'ān.²¹

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

لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَسَاسٌ وَأَسَاسُ الْإِسْلَامِ حُبُّنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ

There is a foundation (*asās*) for everything, and the foundation of Islam is love for us, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).²²

In the well-known *Ziyārāt al-Jāmi‘ah al-Kabīrah*, we are taught by Imam ‘Alī al-Naqī (‘a) to address the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as follows:

أَنْتُمْ الصِّرَاطُ الْأَقْوَمُ

You are the most upright path.²³

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

وَاللَّهِ نَحْنُ الصِّرَاطُ الْمُسْتَقِيمُ

By Allāh, we (the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)) are the straight path.²⁴

Who are the Founders of Wrongdoing against the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)?

Those who have read authentic records of Islamic history do not need to thoroughly search for the founders of wrongdoing and transgression against the Ahl al-Bayt (Household of the Holy Prophet (‘a)). Both the Shia as well as the Sunni sources clearly mention the key founders of wrongdoing and transgression. In order to maintain the boundaries of this work, we prefer not to mention their names here. Research scholars are invited to decipher their identities themselves for their own satisfaction.

Al-Kulaynī in *al-Kāfī* narrates a tradition from Imam Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir (‘a) in which the Imam (‘a), referring to the first two fundamental oppressors of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), says:

وَاللَّهِ مَا أَسِسَتْ مِنْ بَلِيَّةٍ وَلَا قَضِيَّةٍ تَجْرِي عَلَيْنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا هُمَا أَسَسَا أَوْلَاهَا فَعَلَيْهِمَا لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

I swear by Allāh, no calamity has ever been established, nor does any incident happen to us, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), save that those two established its origin; so upon them be the *la‘n* of Allāh and of the angels and of all of the people.²⁵

20 Imam ‘Alī (‘a), *Nahj al-Balāghah*, v.2, p. 232

21 Al-Burūjardī, *Jāmi‘u Ahādīth al-Shī‘ah*, v.1, p. 7

22 Aḥmad al-Barqī, *Al-Maḥāsīn*, v.1, p. 15; Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.2, p. 46; Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, p. 341; Ibn Shu‘bah Al-Harrānī, *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl*, p. 52; Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Amālī*, p.84; Al-Shaykh al-Ṭabrisī, *Makārim al-Akhḫlāq*, p. 439

23 Al-Mashhadī, *Al-Mazār*, p. 528

24 Al-Shaykh al-Huwayzī, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, v.1, p. 21

25 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.8, p. 245

History gives us the hint that the basis of oppression transpired on a Monday (*yawm al-ithnayn*) when the right of the succession of Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) was usurped fundamentally by two people, well-known as the two idols of Quraysh²⁶ (*Ṣanamay Quraysh*) in the confines of Saqīfat Banī Sā'idah²⁷ immediately after the demise of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). Despite their vociferous claim of proximity to the Holy Prophet (ṣ), instead of attending his burial ceremony, they deserted him and sped to Saqīfah to decide for what it seems they had long been craving. This marked the genesis of an entire historical turmoil and division. Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī (d. 548 AH lunar) in his *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* says:

واعظم خلاف بين الأمة خلاف الإمامة، ما سئل سيف في الإسلام على قاعدة دينية مثل ما سئل على الإمامة في كل زمان
The greatest controversy in the Islamic community is the controversy over Imāmah [Divine leadership]; and in every era, the sword was not unsheathed over any of the other principles of religion, as it was over the issue of Imāmah.²⁸

It was this incident that rent asunder the heart of the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). In response to Umm Salamah, who once asked her how she encountered the beginning of the day, she said:

أَصْبَحْتُ بَيْنَ كَمَدٍ وَكَرْبٍ فَقَدِ النَّبِيَّ وَظَلِمَ الْوَصِيَّ هَتَكَ وَاللَّهِ حِجَابُهُ...

I have encountered the morning in a state between grief and extreme sorrow, of losing the Prophet (ṣ) and [the] oppression to his [rightful] successor. I swear by Allāh, the curtain of succession has been violated...²⁹

According to this nondescript, Hadrat Fāṭimah ('a)'s sorrow transcended transitory emotion. It was meaningfully motivated and resonated so much of what would transpire in the future. She had well-calculated a whole future of oppression on the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), who were declared by the Holy Prophet (ṣ) himself as the fundamental guardians of Islam and the Noah's Ark of perpetuity. Perhaps to this sorrow was her reference when she lamentingly cried:

صَبَّتْ عَلَيَّ مَصَائِبُ لَوْ أَنَّهَا صَبَّتْ عَلَى الْآيَّامِ صِرْنَ لَيَالِيَا

I am afflicted with affliction with which if Days were afflicted, they would turn into nights.³⁰

Fāṭimah ('a)'s sorrow was in actual fact the sorrow of religion and its values. Notice that even when responding to Umm Salamah, she accurately and meaningfully employs words that depict her fundamental concern. She does not say "I encountered the morning in a state between grief and extreme sorrow of losing my father (*faqdi abī*) and oppression on my husband (*zulmi zawjī*)". The matter did not concern "losing a father or the oppression of a husband" but rather "losing one who had direct contact with Divine Revelation" and "witnessing oppression on one who was Divinely chosen as the rightful successor (*waṣī*) and who was the most suitable candidate for safeguarding the ultimate Divine Message and leading the Muslim nation towards salvation". Fāṭimah ('a) was worried for the future of Islam and not why her husband was deprived of the seat of sovereignty

26 One of the thought-provoking supplications that Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī ('a) is reported to have recited in his *qunūt* prayer is *Du'ā' Ṣanamay Quraysh*, where the true character of the two fundamental oppressors is vividly exposed. This can be found in *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.82, p. 260

27 Saqīfah was a roofed building (hence the name *saqīfah* from the word *saqf* (roof)) used by the tribe (*banū*) of Sā'idah of the Khazraj faction.

28 Al-Shahristānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, v.1, p. 16

29 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.43, p. 156

30 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.79, p. 106

over Muslims.³¹ She very well knew what tragedy would ensue now that the sovereignty had been transferred to the wrong hands. She had foreseen how the fundamental branches of religion, which are means for human perfection, would be distorted and changed. She could foresee how the laxity of unsuitable candidates as rulers would facilitate the creation of a group of people who would challenge the very infallible leaders of Islam.

Here below we mention five fundamental consequences of laying the foundation of wrongdoing and transgression against the Ahl al-Bayt ('a):

1. Facilitating Deviation in Islamic Beliefs ('*aqā'id*) Among the Muslim Ummah.

Belief is a fundamental pillar that elevates the human being and validates his actions. Without sound belief the actions of the human being carry less or no value. The fundamental transgression against the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) resulted in a situation that deprived the Muslims from the fountain-spring of the teachings of the true guardians of Islam, and unreliable and unworthy substitutes were replaced to guide or rather misguide the people.

The very concept of leadership by Divine appointment (*Imāmah*) was completely abandoned and distorted. *Imāmah* is not merely a socio-political control. It is the grand responsibility of continuing the important duties of the Messenger of Allāh (ṣ), which involves guidance in the different dimensions of human life, including the spiritual. Hence it is absurd to leave the matter of selecting a ruler on the people to elect someone appropriate through voting. Nor is it correct to allow a layperson, who does not enjoy perfect knowledge of the most suitable candidate for this office, to select anyone he deems appropriate. Appointing a committee likewise, whose majority consists of people of one's own inclination, is nothing more than playing with the weighty matter of Divine leadership.

The practical distortion of the concept of *Imāmah* was one of the great deviations that transpired after the establishment of the foundation of wrongdoing and oppression against the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

In order to understand how serious the belief in *Imāmah* is, let us consider the following traditions:

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

وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَوْ أَنَّ عَبْدًا جَاءَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِعَمَلِ سَبْعِينَ نَبِيًّا مَا قَبِلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُ حَتَّى يَلْقَاهُ بَوْلًا بَيْتِيَّ وَوَلَايَةَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِيَّ.

I swear by the One in whose hand is the soul of Muḥammad, if a slave of Allāh comes forth on the Day of Resurrection having performed the actions of seventy prophets, Allāh would not accept that from him until he meets Him with [the belief in] my guardianship (*wilāyah*) and the guardianship of my Ahl al-Bayt ('a).³²

Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn ('a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ أَفْضَلَ الْبِقَاعِ مَا بَيْنَ الرُّكْنِ وَالْمَقَامِ ، وَلَوْ أَنَّ رَجُلًا عَمَرَ مَا عَمَرَ نُوْحٌ فِي قَوْمِهِ . أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ عَامًا . يَصُومُ النَّهَارَ وَيَقُومُ اللَّيْلَ فِي ذَلِكَ الْمَكَانِ وَلَقِيَ اللَّهَ بِغَيْرِ وَلَايَتِنَا لَمْ يَنْفَعَهُ شَيْئًا

31 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās is reported to have said: I came into the presence of Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a) in Dhīqār, while he was mending his sandle. He asked me: What is the value of this sandle? I said: It has no value. He said: I swear by Allāh indeed it is more lovable to me than my command over you people, unless [by taking command over you] I am able to establish the truth and dispel falsehood. (*wallāhi lahiya aḥabbu ilayya min imratikum illā an uqīma ḥaqqan aw adfa'a bāṭilan*), ref: *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.32, p. 76

32 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Amālī*, p. 140

Indeed the most meritorious spot is between the *rukn*³³ and the *maqām*.³⁴ If a man were to live as long a life as Noah (‘a) lived among his people, which is nine hundred and fifty years, fasting during the day and standing in prayer during the night in that spot, and (thereafter) meet Allāh without our *wilāyah* (guardianship), nothing of that would benefit him.³⁵

Imam Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have said:

... فَوَاللَّهِ لَوْ أَنَّ رَجُلًا عَبَدَ اللَّهَ عُمُرَهُ مَا بَيْنَ الرُّكْنِ وَالْمَقَامِ ثُمَّ مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَجِئْ بِوِلَايَتِنَا لَأَكْبَهُ اللَّهُ فِي النَّارِ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ.
 ...for I swear by Allāh if a man were to worship Allāh throughout his life between *al-rukn* and *al-maqām*,³⁶ and thereafter die, but not come with our *wilāyah* (guardianship), Allāh would throw him down on his face into the Fire.³⁷

Imam Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ لَتَشْتَاقُ وَيَشْتَدُّ ضَوْؤُهَا لِمَجِيءِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) وَشِيعَتِهِمْ، وَلَوْ أَنَّ عَبْدًا عَبَدَ اللَّهَ بَيْنَ الرُّكْنِ وَالْمَقَامِ حَتَّى تَتَقَطَّعَ أَوْصَالُهُ وَهُوَ لَا يَدِينُ اللَّهَ بِحُبِّنَا وَوِلَايَتِنَا أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ، مَا قَبِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ

Indeed the Garden of Heaven craves for the arrival of the progeny of Muḥammad (peace be upon them) and their followers and its light intensifies on their arrival. And if a slave of Allāh were to worship Allāh without our love and our guardianship between *al-rukn* and *al-maqām* until such an extent that his joints are severed, Allāh would not accept that from him.³⁸

Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ الْإِمَامَةَ أَسُّ الْأِسْلَامِ النَّامِي، وَقَرَعُهُ السَّامِي، بِالْإِمَامِ تَمَامُ الصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَالصِّيَامِ وَالْحَجِّ وَالْجِهَادِ...

Indeed *Imāmah* (Divine leadership) is the base of this flourishing religion of Islam, and is its lofty branch. *Through the Imam is achieved the completeness of Prayer, Zakāt, Fasting, Hajj, Jihad...*³⁹

It is because of disregarding the very fundamental belief of *Imāmah* that the rest of the roots of religion like *tawḥīd* (belief in the unity of God), *‘adl* (belief in the justice of God), *ma‘ād* (belief in the Hereafter and Judgement Day), etc. were misunderstood. Misleading ideas such as determinism (*al-jabr*), anthropomorphism (*al-tajsīm*), literalism, etc. crept into the Muslim nation. The Shia of Imam ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) however, remaining steadfast to the rope of *Imāmah*, never deviated from the path of salvation and always maintained the correct principles (*uṣūl*) and branches (*furū‘*) of faith. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) had guaranteed them the following reality:

33 *Al-rukn* (lit. the corner) refers to al-Rukn al-Yamānī (the Yemenite Corner, which is the south-western corner of the Ka‘bah). This is opposite the black stone behind the House. The sacred lady Fāṭimah bintu Asad, after delivering Amīr al-mu‘minīn (‘a) inside the Ka‘bah is reported to have exited from this corner of the House of God. The Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said: “Whenever I arrive at al-Rukn al-Yamānī, I find Jibril is already there before me.” (Ref: Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.4, p. 408). Imam al-Sādiq (‘a) is reported to have said: “Rukn al-Yamānī is our gate to Paradise.” (Ref: Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.4, p. 408)

34 *Al-maqām* (lit. standing place) refers to Maqāmu Ibrāhīm (the standing place of Prophet Ibrāhīm (‘a)). It is obligatory for the pilgrim to pray two units of *ṭawāf* prayer behind this place after his *ṭawāf* (circumambulation).

35 Al-Barqī, *Al-Maḥāsīn*, v.1, p.91

36 Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have said: “Indeed (the area) between *al-rukn* and *al-maqām* is filled with the graves of prophets of Allāh.” (*inna mā bayna al-ruknī wa al-maqāmi lamashḥunun min qubūr al-anbiyā*), ref: Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.11, p. 260

37 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.24, p. 149

38 Al-Maghribi, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, v.1, p. 74

39 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.1, pp. 198-200

مَا إِنْ تَمَسَّكْتُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضَلُّوا بَعْدِي

As long as you hold fast onto them both [i.e. the Qur’ān and my infallible household], you shall never go astray.⁴⁰

2. Interpolation of the Sharī’ah, which is a path to the proximity of Allāh.

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

الشَّرِيعَةُ أَقْوَابِي وَالطَّرِيقَةُ أَفْعَالِي وَالْحَقِيقَةُ أَحْوَالِي

The *Sharī’ah* is my utterances, the spiritual path (*al-Ṭariqah*) is my actions, and the ultimate truth (*al-Ḥaqīqah*) is my states.⁴¹

The *Sharī’ah* (Islamic law), the *Ṭariqah* (the spiritual path), and the *Ḥaqīqah* (the reality) are all united. It is through observing the *Sharī’ah* accurately and maintaining its overt and covert etiquette through the *Ṭariqah*, that one can attain the proximity of the *Ḥaqīqah* (vision of Allāh by the heart).

In his Glosses on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and Ibn Fannāri’s *Miṣbāh al-Uns*, Imam Khumaynī says:

إنَّ الطَّرِيقَةَ وَالْحَقِيقَةَ لَا يَحْصِلَانِ إِلَّا مِنْ طَرِيقِ الشَّرِيعَةِ فَإِنَّ الظَّاهِرَ طَرِيقَ الْبَاطِنِ بَلْ يَفْهَمُ مِنْهُ أَنَّ الظَّاهِرَ غَيْرَ مَنْفَكٍ عَنِ الْبَاطِنِ فَمَنْ رَأَى أَنَّ الْبَاطِنَ لَمْ يَحْصَلْ لَهُ مَعَ الْأَعْمَالِ الظَّاهِرَةِ وَاتِّبَاعِ التَّكْلِيفِ الْإِلَهِيَّةِ فليَعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَقُمْ عَلَى الظَّاهِرِ عَلَى مَا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَصِلَ إِلَى الْبَاطِنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ طَرِيقِ الظَّاهِرِ كَبَعْضِ عَوَالِمِ الصُّوفِيَّةِ فَهُوَ عَلَى غَيْرِ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ.

Indeed the path (*al-ṭariqah*) and the reality (*al-ḥaqīqah*) cannot be attained save through the apparent Islamic laws (*al-sharī’ah*); for indeed the apparent (*zāhir*) is the path to the hidden (*bāṭin*). Rather, by verse (5:66)⁴² we understand that the apparent is not separate from the hidden. Therefore whosoever observes that he has not attained the secrets of the hidden world through the performance of apparent actions and by fulfilling Divine obligations, must know that he has not performed the apparent the way it actually must be performed, and whosoever wishes to reach the hidden without the means of the apparent like some of the laity among the Sufis, is ignorant of His Lord’s guidance.⁴³

This informs us how the distortion of the apparent laws of the religion, which is the *Sharī’ah*, can adversely determine the nature of one’s journey towards human perfection.

In a lengthy sermon where he enumerates some of the interpolations the preceding caliphs made, Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a) says:

لَقَدْ عَمِلَ الْوُلَاةُ قَبْلِي بِأُمُورٍ عَظِيمَةٍ خَالَفُوا فِيهَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) مُتَعَدِّينَ لِذَلِكَ. وَلَوْ حَمَلْتُ النَّاسَ عَلَى تَرْكِهَا وَحَوْلْتُهَا إِلَى مَوَاضِعِهَا الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهَا عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) لَتَفَرَّقَ عَنِّي جُنْدِي حَتَّى أَبْغَى وَحْدِي إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْ شِيعَتِي الَّذِينَ عَرَفُوا فَضْلِي وَإِمَامَتِي مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ).....

Indeed the rulers (*wulāt*) before me have committed grave actions by which they purposefully contradicted the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ). And had I compelled the people

40 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.23, p. 106

41 Al-Aḥsā’ī, *‘Awālī al-La’ālī*, v.4, pp. 124-125

42 Almighty Allāh says: “Had they observed the Torah and the Evangel, and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would surely have drawn nourishment from above them and from beneath their feet. There is an upright group among them, but evil is what many of them do.” (5:66)

43 Imam Khumaynī, *Ta’līqāt ‘alā Sharḥi Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam wa Miṣbāh al-Uns*, *al-Faṣṣ al-Ayyūbi*, p. 202

to abandon their actions and place them in their correct positions as per the teachings during the lifetime of the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ), my army would have dispersed from me, until I would be left alone with very few of my followers, who know my merit and my designated leadership from the Book of Allāh and the tradition of the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ)...⁴⁴

In this limited commentary we cannot go into the details of how the laws of Allāh were changed according to the whims of those who ruled. However, we can suffice with some examples:

- a) Although the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) did not permit supererogatory (*nāfilah*) prayers to be conducted in congregation, one of the misguided caliphs, due to his personal whim, changed that and allowed it and even encouraged it, such that it became a custom among the Muslims. When Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib ('a) retained his right, he felt legally bound to correct their deviation, and hence told his son Imam al-Ḥasan ('a) to publicly announce that *nāfilah* prayers must not be performed in congregation. Some ignorant people started challenging Imam al-Ḥasan ('a), and Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a) observing the detrimental repercussions told al-Ḥasan ('a) to leave them to do what they wanted. In one of his sermons, expressing his sorrow on this issue, Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a) says:

وَاللّٰهُ لَقَدْ أَمَرْتُ النَّاسَ أَنْ لَا يَجْتَمِعُوا فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ إِلَّا فِي فَرِيضَةٍ وَأَعْلَمْتُهُمْ أَنَّ اجْتِمَاعَهُمْ فِي التَّوَافِلِ بِدْعَةٌ فَتَنَادَى
بَعْضُ أَهْلِ عَسْكَرِي مِمَّنْ يُقَاتِلُ مَعِيَ يَا أَهْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ غَيَّرْتُ سُنَّةَ عُمَرَ يَنْهَانَا عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ تَطَوُّعًا وَلَقَدْ
خِفْتُ أَنْ يَثُورُوا فِي نَاحِيَةِ جَانِبِ عَسْكَرِي

I swear by Allāh, I ordered the people not to gather in the Holy Month of Ramaḍān in congregation save during the obligatory prayers, and I informed them that their congregation in supererogatory prayer is an innovation (*bid'ah*), whereupon a soldier from among my army who fought besides me, called: O Muslims, 'Umar's tradition has been changed. He ('Alī) is prohibiting us from supererogatory prayer in the month of Ramaḍān! Indeed I feared that they would revolt within my army.⁴⁵

- b) In a comprehensive but succinct tradition, Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) is reported to have said:

حَلَالٌ مُحَمَّدٍ حَلَالٌ أَبَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَحَرَامُهُ حَرَامٌ أَبَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

The things made lawful by Muḥammad will remain lawful until the Day of Resurrection, and the things made unlawful by Muḥammad will remain unlawful until the Day of Resurrection.⁴⁶

In light of the above, let us look at the following well-known tradition of 'Umar narrated by Sunni collectors of tradition:

مُتَعَتَانِ كَانَتَا عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنْهَى عَنْهُمَا وَأَعَاقِبُ عَلَيْهِمَا مُتَعَةَ النِّسَاءِ وَمُتَعَةَ الْحَجِّ

There existed two forms of mut'ah during the lifetime of the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ), but I prohibit them and I will punish anyone who practices them: the mut'ah (temporary marriage) of women and the mut'ah (minor pilgrimage) of Hajj.⁴⁷

Imam 'Alī ('a) is reported to have said:

44 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.34, p. 168

45 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.8, pp. 58-63

46 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.1, p. 58

47 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafāṭīḥ al-Ghayb*, v.5, p. 308; v.10, p. 42; v.10, p. 44

لَوْلَا أَنَّ عُمَرَ نَهَى عَنِ الْمُتَعَةِ مَا زَنَى إِلَّا شَقِيًّا

If ‘Umar had not prohibited mut‘ah (temporary marriage) none save the wretched would have committed fornication.⁴⁸

c) In a letter to Abu Musa al-Ash‘ari, ‘Umar writes:

لَقَدْ هَمَمْتُ أَنْ أَجْعَلَ إِذَا طَلَّقَ الرَّجُلُ امْرَأَتَهُ ثَلَاثًا فِي مَجْلِسٍ أَنْ أَجْعَلَهَا وَاحِدَةً، وَلَكِنَّ أَقْوَامًا جَعَلُوا عَلَيَّ أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَلْزِمُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَا لَزِمَ نَفْسُهُ، مَنْ قَالَ لِامْرَأَتِهِ أَنْتِ عَلَيَّ حَرَامٌ فَهِيَ حَرَامٌ، وَمَنْ قَالَ لِامْرَأَتِهِ: أَنْتِ بَائِنَةٌ، فَهِيَ بَائِنَةٌ، وَمَنْ طَلَّقَ ثَلَاثًا فَهِيَ ثَلَاثٌ.

I decided to stipulate that when a man divorces his wife thrice in one sitting then I reckon it as a single divorce, but groups of people enforced that on themselves. Hence I am obliging every soul what it has adhered to: Whosoever says to his wife: You are unlawful to me, she becomes unlawful to him; and whosoever tells his wife “You are divorced [with an irrevocable divorce]” then she is as such; and whosoever divorces thrice, then it is counted as three times.⁴⁹

Ibn ‘Abbas is reported to have said:

لَمَّا كَانَ زَمَنُ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسِ قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي الطَّلَاقِ أَنَاءٌ، وَإِنَّهُ مَنْ تَعَجَّلَ أَنَاءَةَ اللَّهِ فِي الطَّلَاقِ أَلْزَمْنَاهُ إِيَّاهُ.

During the caliphate of ‘Umar, he said: O people, indeed you had a deliberation in divorce; and indeed whosoever hastens the deliberation bestowed by Allāh in divorce, we will force it on him.

Commenting on the above traditions, al-‘Allāmah al-Amīnī in his *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr* says:

إن من العجب أن يكون استعجال الناس مسوغاً لأن يتخذ الإنسان كتاب الله ورائه ظهرياً ويلزمهم بما رأوا، هذا الذكر الحكيم يقول بكل صراحة: الطلاق مرتان فيمساك بمعروف أو تسريح بإحسان. إلى قوله تعالى: فإن طلقها فلا تحل له من بعد حتى تنكح زوجاً غيره. فقد أوجب سبحانه تحقيق المرتين والتحريم بعد الثالث، وذلك لا يجامع جمع التطلقات بكلمة - ثلاثاً - ولا بتكرار صيغة الطلاق ثلاثاً متعاقبة بلا تحلل عقدة النكاح بينها.

It is indeed strange that the haste of people can make it permissible for a person to place the Book of Allāh behind his back and make it obligatory on the people to act according to their personal opinions. This wise reminder [Qur’ān] very clearly says: *[Revocable] divorce may be only twice; then [let there be] either an honourable retention, or a kindly release... And if he divorces her, she will not be lawful for him until she marries a husband other than him...* [2:229-230]. Indeed Allāh has made it obligatory that the divorce must transpire twice, and the couple become forbidden to each other after the third instance, and that does not tally with performing three divorces by uttering the word “thrice”, nor by repeating the formula of divorce three times in succession without there being any marital contract in between.⁵⁰

We wish to suffice with the aforesaid examples of how laws were freely interpolated by people. Those who would like to explore other lapses of the caliphs preceding Amīr al-mu‘minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib (‘a) may refer to the magnum opus *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr* of al-‘Allāmah al-Amīnī. The

48 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Maḥāṣin al-Ghayb*, v.10, p. 41

49 Al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, v.9, p. 676, tr. 27944

50 Al-‘Allāmah al-Amīnī, *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr*, v.6, p. 253

beauty of this masterpiece is that it heavily refers to Sunni sources to convince our Sunni brethren about the traditions quoted.

3. Facilitating the ground for a group of ignorant Muslims like the renegades (*khawārij*) to have the audacity to openly question and challenge the Divinely chosen leader.

Although some historians mention that the *khawārij* appeared after Imam ‘Alī (‘a) persisted in his covenant with Mu‘āwiyah to stop the battle of Šiffīn, the reality is that the “holier than thou” attitude of the *khawārij* must have taken roots much earlier during the time of the earlier caliphs. Many of the Muslims realised that those who have taken the responsibility of leadership themselves cannot interpret the verses of the Qur‘ān properly and have to refer to others. They also closely observed how some of the rulers were ignorant of the very basic Islamic laws and sometimes would make grave mistakes in cases of penal laws. This perhaps implanted the concept in their minds that religion can be judged and interpreted by any Muslim, even though he is not directly endorsed by Almighty Allāh or His Apostle. To them, the necessity of infallibility of the chosen leader was completely farfetched.

The following are some instances that naturally give way to doubts about the authority of Islamic leadership and create an atmosphere of independence in judging and interpreting Islamic matters:

- a) In his *Šaḥīḥ al-Muslim* the Sunni compiler of tradition Muslim narrates with four chains of narrations from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Abzī, as follows:

أَنَّ رَجُلًا أَتَى عُمَرَ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي أَجْتَنَبْتُ فَلَمْ أَجِدْ مَاءً. فَقَالَ: لَا تُصَلِّ. فَقَالَ عَمَّارٌ: أَمَا تَذْكُرُ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ أَنَا وَأَنْتَ فِي سَرِيَّةٍ، فَأَجْنَبْنَا فَلَمْ نَجِدْ مَاءً. فَأَمَّا أَنْتَ فَلَمْ تُصَلِّ، وَأَمَّا أَنَا فَتَمَعَكْتُ فِي التُّرَابِ وَصَلَّيْتُ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّمَا كَانَ يَكْفِيكَ أَنْ تَضْرِبَ بِيَدَيْكَ الْأَرْضَ ثُمَّ تَنْفُخَ ثُمَّ تَمْسُحَ بِهِمَا وَجْهَكَ وَكَفْيِكَ...

A man came to ‘Umar and said: Indeed I have become ritually unclean (*ajnaḥ*), and have not found water. He [‘Umar] said: [Then] do not pray. ‘Ammār [who was nearby] said: Do you not remember O Amīr al-mu‘minīn when I and you were in a military detachment and we became ritually unclean and did not find water, and you did not pray, but I rolled on the soil and then prayed. Then the Prophet (ṣ) said: Indeed it was sufficient for you to strike with your two hands on the earth and blow [the sand on your hands] and then wipe with them your face and two palms...⁵¹

- b) In his Qur‘ānic Exegesis *Al-Jāmi‘ li Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān*, al-Qurṭubī narrates the following tradition:

وَخَطَبَ عُمَرُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فَقَالَ: أَلَا لَا تُغَالُوا فِي صَدَقَاتِ النِّسَاءِ فَإِنَّهَا لَوْ كَانَتْ مَكْرُمَةً فِي الدُّنْيَا أَوْ تَقْوَى عِنْدَ اللَّهِ لَكَانَ أَوْلَاكُمْ بِهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، مَا أَصْدَقَ قَطُّ امْرَأَةً مِنْ نِسَائِهِ وَلَا بَنَاتِهِ فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ أَوْقِيَّةً. فَقَامَتْ إِلَيْهِ امْرَأَةٌ فَقَالَتْ: يَا عُمَرُ، يُعْطِينَا اللَّهُ وَتُحَرِّمُنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى يَقُولُ: (وَآتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ فَنظَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْئًا)؟ فَقَالَ عُمَرُ: أَصَابَتْ امْرَأَةً وَأَخْطَأَ عُمَرُ. وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ فَاطْرَقَ عُمَرُ ثُمَّ قَالَ: كُلُّ النَّاسِ أَفْقَهُ مِنْكَ يَا عُمَرُ!

‘Umar addressed the people and said: Indeed do not exceed in the dowers of women, for if that would have been a noble deed in this world or a deed of piety to Allāh, then the Apostle of Allāh (ṣ) would have been worthier to do it than you. No woman from his women or daughters ever fixed a dower beyond twelve *awqiyahs*.⁵² On hearing this, a woman stood up towards him and said: O ‘Umar, whilst Allāh is giving us, you deprive us? Does Allāh not say “...and you have given one of them a quintal [of gold], do not

51 Muslim, *Šaḥīḥ Muslim*, the Book of Ḥayḍ, v.1, p. 355, tr. 112

52 A unit of currency. One *awqiyah* is equal to forty silver dirhams

take anything away from it...” (4:20)? Hearing this, ‘Umar said: A woman got it correct but ‘Umar made a mistake. In another tradition, the following expression has come: “Thereupon ‘Umar lowers his head and says: All the people are more understanding than you O ‘Umar (*kullu al-nās afqahu minka yā ‘Umar!*)!”⁵³

The phrase “All the people are more understanding than you O ‘Umar” (*kullu al-nās afqahu minka yā ‘Umar!*) has been repeated by ‘Umar on a number of occasions when he made mistakes. If such is the situation of a leader who is addressed by some as Amīr al-mu’minīn, how vulnerable can the laws of Islam be to wrong interpretation?!

Other similar statements narrated from ‘Umar are as follows:

كُلُّ أَحَدٍ أَعْلَمُ مِنْ عُمَرَ

Everyone is more leaned than ‘Umar.⁵⁴

كُلُّ النَّاسِ أَفْقَهُ مِنْكَ يَا عُمَرُ

All the people are more understanding than you, O ‘Umar.⁵⁵

كُلُّ النَّاسِ أَفْقَهُ مِنْ عُمَرَ حَتَّى الْمُحَدَّرَاتِ فِي الْبُيُوتِ

All the people are more understanding than ‘Umar including spinsters in the houses.⁵⁶

كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ أَفْقَهُ مِنْكَ حَتَّى الْعَجَائِزِ يَا عُمَرُ

Everyone is more understanding than you, including the old women, O ‘Umar.⁵⁷

كُلُّ أَحَدٍ أَفْقَهُ مِنِّي

Everyone is more understanding than me.⁵⁸

c) In his *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr* ‘Allāmah ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī narrates the following tradition from Sunni sources:

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ: إِنَّ عُمَرَ قَرَأَ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ: فَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا وَعِنَبًا وَقَضْبًا وَرَيْثُونًا وَنَخْلًا وَحَدَائِقَ غَلْبًا وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا قَالَ: كَلُّ هَذَا عَرَفْنَاهُ فَمَا الْأَبُّ؟ ثُمَّ رَفَضَ عَصَا كَانَتْ فِي يَدِهِ فَقَالَ: هَذَا لَعَمْرُ اللَّهِ هُوَ التَّكْلُفُ، فَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَنْ لَا تَدْرِي مَا الْأَبُّ؟ اتَّبِعُوا مَا بَيَّنَّ لَكُمْ هُدَاهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ فَاغْمَلُوا بِهِ وَمَا لَمْ تَعْرِفُوهُ فَكَلِّمُوهُ إِلَى رَبِّهِ.

Anas Ibn Mālik reports: Indeed ‘Umar read the following verse on the pulpit: “... and made the grain grow in it, and vines and vegetables, olives and date palms, and densely-planted gardens, fruits and pastures (*fākihātan wa abban*)” (80:27-31), and then said: We have understood all this, but what is the meaning of *al-abb*? Then he left the stick that he had in his hand and said: I swear by the ever-lasting existence of God, this is self-burdening (*al-takalluf*), and what will happen to you if you do not know what the word *al-abb* is? Follow the guidance of the Book that has been made clear for you, and that which you do not know, leave it to its Lord.⁵⁹

53 Al-Qurtubī, *Al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur‘ān*, v.5, p. 99

54 Al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf*, v.1, p. 514

55 Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah al-Andalusī, v.2, p. 29

56 Al-‘Allāmah al-Amīnī, *Al-Ghadīr*, v.6, p. 328

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Al-‘Allāmah al-Amīnī, *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr*, v.6, p. 142

- d) In his *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr* ‘Allāmah ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī narrates the following tradition from Sunni sources:

أَخْرَجَ الْحَافِظَانِ الْعُقَيْلِيُّ وَابْنُ السَّمَّانِ عَنْ أَبِي حَرْبِ بْنِ أَبِي الْأَسْوَدِ: أَنَّ عُمَرَ أَرَادَ رَجَمَ الْمَرْأَةَ الَّتِي وَلَدَتْ لِسِتَّةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَقَالَ لَهُ عَلِيٌّ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ: وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا. وَقَالَ تَعَالَى: وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ. فَالْحَمْلُ سِتَّةُ أَشْهُرٍ وَالْفِصَالُ فِي عَامَيْنِ. فَتَرَكَ عُمَرُ رَجْمَهَا وَقَالَ: لَوْلَا عَلِيٌّ لَهَلَكَ عُمَرُ.

Al-‘Uqayli and Ibn Sammān narrated from Abī Ḥarb Ibn Abī al-Aswad: ‘Umar wanted to punish a woman who had conceived after six months by stoning her to death [because of suspected adultery]. Thereupon ‘Alī (‘a) said to him: Indeed Allāh, the Exalted, says: “... and his gestation and weaning take thirty months” (46:15) and He, the Exalted says: “...and his weaning takes two years” (31:14). Therefore pregnancy can be six months and weaning two years. Having heard this, ‘Umar abandoned his decision to stone her, and said: “If it was not for ‘Alī, ‘Umar would have perished!”⁶⁰

In another similar case, Ibn ‘Abbās reminds ‘Umar that his decision of stoning a certain woman who delivered after six months is incorrect, and after explaining to him the reason, he submits to Ibn ‘Abbās’ view.⁶¹

- e) In his *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr* ‘Allāmah ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī narrates another similar occasion which is very sad indeed:

أَخْرَجَ الْحَافِظُ عَنْ بَعْجَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْجُهَنِيِّ قَالَ: تَزَوَّجَ رَجُلٌ مِنْهَا امْرَأَةً مِنْ جُهَيْنَةَ فَوَلَدَتْ لَهُ تَمَامًا لِسِتَّةِ أَشْهُرٍ، فَأَنْطَلَقَ زَوْجُهَا إِلَى عُثْمَانَ فَأَمَرَ بِهَا أَنْ تُرْجَمَ فَبَلَغَ ذَلِكَ عَلِيًّا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فَأَتَاهُ فَقَالَ: مَا تَصْنَعُ؟ لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ عَلَيْهَا قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا وَقَالَ: وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ. فَالرَّضَاعَةُ أَرْبَعَةٌ وَعِشْرُونَ شَهْرًا وَالْحَمْلُ سِتَّةُ أَشْهُرٍ. فَقَالَ عُثْمَانُ: وَاللَّهِ مَا فَطَنْتُ لِهَذَا، فَأَمَرَ بِهَا عُثْمَانُ أَنْ تُرَدَّ فَوُجِدَتْ قَدْ رُجِمَتْ.....

Ba‘jah Ibn ‘Abdullāh al-Jahannī is reported to have said: A man married a woman from the tribe of Jaḥinah, and she bore a sound child after six months. So her husband went to ‘Uthmān [and informed him about the case] and ‘Uthmān ordered that she should be stoned to death. ‘Alī (‘a) came to know about this matter, and he came to ‘Uthmān and said: What are you doing? She does not deserve to be stoned. Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted says: “...and his gestation and weaning take thirty months” (46:15), and He says: “Mothers shall suckle their children two complete years...” Hence, suckling is twenty four months and gestation six months. [Hearing this,] ‘Uthmān said: I swear by Allāh, I did not know this. So ‘Uthmān ordered that she should be acquitted and not punished, but she was found already stoned to death...⁶²

4. Facilitating a perpetual ground for torture and oppression against the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Some noteworthy examples of the brutal consequences of usurping the caliphate were:

- Forcefully snatching away Fadak, the property gifted by the Prophet (ṣ) to Bibi Fāṭimah (‘a) during his lifetime.
- Martyrdom of Ḥaḍrat Muḥsin (‘a) in the pure womb of Bibi Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ (‘a)
- Martyrdom of Bibi Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ (‘a), a short period after the Holy Prophet (ṣ)’s demise.
- The domination of Banū Umayyah and their atrocities on the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their sincere followers.
- Facilitating the ground for the appearance of the slayers of Amīr al-mu‘minīn who were known

60 Al-‘Allāmah al-Amīnī, *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr*, v.6, p. 134

61 Al-‘Allāmah al-Amīnī, *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr*, v.6, p. 136

62 Al-‘Allāmah al-Amīnī, *Mawsū‘at al-Ghadīr*, v.6, p. 135

as the *Qāsiṭūn* (the unjust, such as Mu‘āwiyah and his followers), the *Nākithūn* (the breakers of allegiance such as Ṭalḥah and Zubayr), and the *Māriqūn* (the renegades who were the Khawārij).

- f) Murder of Amīr al-mu‘minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a).
- g) Murder of Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a).
- h) The horrendous massacre and tragedy of Karbala and the murder of Sayyid al-Shuhadā (Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a))
- i) Captivity of Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) and the rest of the family of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)
- j) The despicable tragedy of al-Ḥarrah in Madīnah.
- k) Murder of Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) and Imam al-Bāqir (‘a)
- l) The victory of Banū ‘Abbās and their atrocities against the Ahl al- Bayt (‘a) and their sincere followers
- m) Murder of the sixth to eleventh Imams (peace be upon them) at the hands of Banū ‘Abbās
- n) The *ghaybah* of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), whose separation has injured the hearts of his sincere followers.

5. Facilitating the ground for disunity and hence weakening the power of the Muslims and Islam.

The Pharaonic divide and rule policy⁶³ has always been helpful to the oppressors, and has always been destructive to the oppressed. When the disbelievers observed how devastating this policy can be, they tried to employ it wherever and whenever they could. On observing the Shia- Sunni divide, the enemies of Islam would always induce hatred and animosity among the Muslims so that they are able to subjugate and dominate them.

We can tangibly observe the same even today: the disbelievers allow terroristic activities in different places of the Muslim world to rationalise their forceful presence. In some Muslim lands lots of wealth is spent to motivate a group of so-called Muslims to carry out terrorist activities against another group of Muslims who have a different ideology.

The Wahhabi faction, whose very creation and momentum has been facilitated by non-Muslims opposed to Islam, have been misled to believe that slaying the Shias for example, will guarantee their place in Paradise. Whereas the aim of the Satanic enemies of Islam is to create unrest, disunity, hatred, animosity, etc. among the Muslims, so that they can control them however they want, the ignorant or rather mischievous Wahhabis, who have not revised the basis of their beliefs, nor authenticated the same, are happily motivated to dip themselves in the innocent blood of scores of Muslims, and as a result establish two things:

- a) Terrorism: The provokers of their activities themselves then publicise their terror throughout the world to tarnish the name of Muslims and Islam in general (which is always extremely cautious when it comes to shedding even a drop of blood). The paradox is that despite the world having so many non-Muslims according to the definition of the Wahhabi ideology, only the Shia Muslims are targeted in this manner!
- b) Disunity: The perpetrators of such massacres undoubtedly instil hatred between the Muslims, and lead ignorant groups among the victims to retaliate, which in turn results in greater bloodshed.

The slumbering Muslims therefore should wake up and realise that unless they change their immature attitude and come to their senses, they will continue to be victims of bloodshed, discord, and disunity, and will never gain control over themselves.

⁶³ The Holy Qur’ān reveals how the Pharaoh would gain control over the people. He would also employ the divide and rule policy: “Indeed Pharaoh tyrannised over the land, reducing its people to factions, abasing one group of them, slaughtering their sons and sparing their women. Indeed he was one of the agents of corruption.” (28:4)

If we observe carefully, ever since Ayatullah al-‘Uẓmā al-Şayyid ‘Alī al-Sīstanī (may Allāh protect him) came into the political scene, he has repeatedly called the people of Iraq towards unity and brotherhood. In extremely infuriating circumstances when the Shias commemorating the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) have been attacked by the Wahhabis, his message has been “unity and no emotional retaliation”. Obviously that does not mean that the perpetrators of the massacres should not be condemned, apprehended or punished. Rather, it means a vigilant Muslim must not be provoked to attack a Sunni Muslim just because one of his fellow Sunni brothers committed an act of terror.

Why Curse The Founders of Wrongdoing?

There is an ongoing debate among our esteemed brethren about the permissibility of expressing *la‘n* on the fundamental elements of oppression against the Household of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) throughout history. In order to understand the truth of this matter, it is imperative for us to first map out a course of discussion, and thereafter tackle each point carefully.

God-willing, we shall adopt the following course, and thereafter try to arrive at a conducive conclusion:

- a) The definition of *la‘n* & curse
- b) The difference between *sabb* & *la‘n*
- c) The law of *la‘n* according to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah
- d) Expressing *la‘n* for a particular person
- e) Understanding the crux of *la‘n*

The Definition of La‘n

A majority of the authoritative lexicographers define the word *la‘n* as “to distance” or “to expel” (*al-ib‘ād* or *al-tārd*). Al-Zamakhsharī, in his lexicon *Asās al-Balāghah* says:

لَعَنَهُ أَهْلُهُ: طَرَدُوهُ وَ أَبْعَدُوهُ، وَهُوَ لَعِينٌ طَرِيدٌ، لَقَدْ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ إِبْلِيسَ: طَرَدَهُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَ أَبْعَدَهُ مِنْ جِوَارِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَ لَعَنَتْ
الْكَلْبَ وَ الدِّئْبَ: طَرَدْتُهُمَا.

La‘anahu ahluhu means “His family expelled and banished him” and thus he is the expelled and banished one (*wa huwa la‘inun tarīdun*). Indeed Allāh did *la‘n* on Iblis [Satan], meaning “He expelled him from Paradise and banished him from the neighbourhood of the angels”. And [when I say] *la‘antu al-kalba wa al-dhi’ba*, I mean I expelled both [the dog and the wolf].⁶⁴

When we are advised to do *la‘n*, it means we are advised to pray to Allāh to distance from His mercy those who deserve to be distanced.

Having known the definition of *la‘n*, which we normally translate in the English language as curse, let us now consider the exact definition of curse, and then compare and reflect whether we can employ it as an equivalent for the word *la‘n* or not.

The Definition of Curse

According to the authoritative encyclopaedic twenty-volume Oxford English Dictionary (OED), curse is translated as:

⁶⁴ Jar Allāh al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-Balāghah*, v.2, p. 674 (Acc. to al-Mostafa.com Repository).

An utterance consigning, or supposed or intended to consign, (a person or thing) to spiritual and temporal evil, the vengeance of the deity, the blasting of malignant fate, etc. It may be uttered by the deity, or by persons supposed to speak in his name, or to be listened to by him.⁶⁵

If the word “consign” is employed in its original sense, which is “setting a seal or mark”, the meaning of curse would be “to mark a person or thing with spiritual or temporal evil”. However, if what is meant by consigning is “to entrust”⁶⁶, curse would signify “to entrust a thing to spiritual and temporal evil”.

As concerns its etymology, the Oxford English Dictionary says:

[Late OE. *curs*, of unknown origin; no word of similar form and sense is known in Teutonic, Romanic, or Celtic....]⁶⁷

Irrespective of the aforesaid information, what is important in our present discussion is how we define “curse” *today* in our age. Skimming through different lexicons, we get the impression that it signifies “*invocation of evil on someone*”. Consider the following examples:

Dictionary of the World Book Encyclopedia:

a) CURSE: vt. (1) to ask God to bring evil or harm on. (2) to bring evil or harm on. (3) to swear at. (4) to excommunicate. (5) to speak profanely against.⁶⁸

The Merriam Webster’s Dictionary:

Definition of *CURSE*

transitive verb

1: to use profanely insolent language against : blaspheme <*curse* God and die — Job 2:9(REB)>

2 a: to call upon divine or supernatural power to send injury upon <was *cursed* and fears he will die>

b : to execrate in fervent and often profane terms <*cursed* by future generations unless we act now>

3: to bring great evil upon : afflict <a land *cursed* with famine>⁶⁹

Having known the definition of curse in its present usage, which is what is important for us at the moment, we come to realise that the word curse cannot accurately replace the word *la‘n*, which means “to distance, banish, expel, etc” or “to pray for the banishment of someone from Divine mercy”.

If however we take the meaning of its corollary (*lāzim*), which is spiritual harm on the one who is expelled from Divine mercy (*mal‘ūn*), perhaps the meaning “to ask God to bring evil or harm on” as defined by the Dictionary of World Book Encyclopedia, may be suitable. Consequently, we can employ the word curse as a substitute for *la‘n*. In this book, whenever we employ the word curse henceforth we refer to the accurate meaning of *la‘n* as expounded by authoritative Arab lexicographers.

65 OED CD Rom, ver.4.0

66 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consign>

67 OED CD Rom, ver.4.0

68 The World Book Dictionary, v.1 (A-K), p. 510

69 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/curse?show=1&t=1294845169>

The Difference Between *Sabb* & *La'n*

A group of misinformed Muslims (for whose guidance we eagerly pray), claim that the Shias fling defamatory remarks on the companions of the Holy Prophet (*ṣaḥāba*). The word they employ in this accusation is “*sabb*”.

In the Arabic language, however, the word *sabb* is quite different from the word *la'n*: Ibn al-Athīr in his *al-Nihāyah* says: “*al-sabb* means *al-shatm* (to speak ill of)”. Its etymological meaning is “to cut” (*al-qaṭ'*).⁷⁰ Some experts of lexicography, however, opine that *al-sabb* is more stern than *al-shatm*, for whereas the latter is to speak ill of someone, the former is to persist and prolong the same. Small wonder, al-Iṣfahānī in his Qur'ānic lexicon, defining *al-sabb* says that it is “*al-shatm al-wajī*” (painful vilification).⁷¹

Hence it is incorrect to say that by invoking Allāh to expel those who deserve to be expelled from His mercy, we are directly speaking ill and employing abusive language about them.

In his epistle *Ziyārāt 'Āshūrā' fawqa al-Shubahāt* (*Ziyārāt 'Āshūrā Beyond Ambiguities*), the late esteemed jurisprudential authority, Ayatullah al-Shaykh Mīrzā Jawād al-Tabrīzī writes:⁷²

It may be said that what has been narrated from Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a) that “Indeed I dislike that you be frequent vilifiers” (*Innī akrahu lakum an takūnū sabbābin*) is a proof for the prohibition of [both] *la'n* and *sabb* (vilification). Imam 'Alī ('a) is reported to have said:

إِنِّي أَكْرَهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونُوا سَبَّابِينَ، وَلَكِنَّكُمْ لَوْ وَصَفْتُمْ أَعْمَالَهُمْ، وَذَكَرْتُمْ حَالَهُمْ كَانَ أَصَوَّبَ فِي الْقَوْلِ وَأَبْلَغَ فِي الْعُذْرِ...

Indeed I dislike you to be frequent vilifiers; but were you to describe their actions and mention their state it would be more correct in speech and more convincing in excuse.⁷³

In response we say: This statement originates from lack of contemplation, due to the following various reasons:

1. The phrase “*Innī akrahu*” (Indeed I dislike) does not establish and prove legal prohibition, save in the case where there is an indication (*qarīnah*) towards that.
2. Indeed the ruling is directed to the addressees about whom the Imam ('a) said “*lakum*” (for you) in the above mentioned tradition. And this does not clarify that it includes all the Muslims, due to the possibility of the existence of a specific characteristic in those warriors who accompanied the Imam ('a) in war, for the situation of war against the enemy requires aloofness from verbal confrontation, and attention to what is of greater importance and more appropriate in that state.
3. Indeed what is disliked is “one who frequently vilifies (*sabbāb*)”, and there is a difference between one who [merely] vilifies (*sabb*) and one who frequently vilifies (*sabbāb*), for the former is a word that signifies abundance, and means “abundance of vilification”. And it is clear that disliking frequent vilification is not the same as disliking mere vilification.
4. The prohibition in the verse is not a legislative prohibition (*nahy mawlawī*) but an advisory prohibition (*nahy irshādī*), due to the hint in the sentence that comes after it, which says “for were you to describe their actions, and speak about their deeds, it would be more correct in

⁷⁰ Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd al-Qādir, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāh*, p. 152

⁷¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 391

⁷² Ayatullah al-Shaykh Mīrzā Jawād al-Tabrīzī, *Ziyārāt 'Āshūrā' fawqa al-Shubahāt*, pp. 26-27

⁷³ Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, w. 206, p. 323

speech and convincing in excuse.” This means that the content of the tradition was geared to guide and show the importance of describing the state of the enemy instead of vilification in influencing the souls of the other side; it did not mean the prohibition of vilification or the exposition of its lesser importance.

5. Indeed there is a clear linguistic and commonly understood difference between *sabb* (vilification) and *la'n*, for *sabb* signifies the lowering of dignity and honour in a person, whereas *la'n* is an invocation to seek expulsion from Divine Mercy. Prohibition of the first, therefore, does not necessitate the prohibition of the second [as they are two different things].

The Law of La'n According to the Qur'an and the Sunnah

The Holy Qur'an is the fundamental source of Islam. Those who have carefully read it have no doubt that Islam permits a believer to express *la'n* to a category of people who deserve to be distant from Divine mercy.

Consider the following verses:

1. The Holy Qur'an says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ
اللَّاغِيُونَ

Indeed those who conceal what We have sent down of manifest proofs and guidance, after We have clarified it in the Book for mankind, they shall be cursed by Allāh and cursed by the cursers. (2:159)

Following is an exposition worthy of consideration:

We very well know that according to the Holy Qur'an the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) does not speak out of his own desire. The source of what he says is Divine Revelation: “*Nor does he speak out of [his own] desire, it is just a revelation that is revealed [to him].*” (53:3). There are traditions that clearly say that Allāh, the Exalted, ordered His Messenger (ﷺ) to openly announce to the people the succession of Imam ‘Alī in Ghadir Khumm, and if he were not to do so, then he would have failed in communicating the Divine Message in totality.

Almighty Allāh revealed the following verse to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) during his farewell pilgrimage (*ḥijjat al-widā'*):

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

O Apostle! Communicate that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you will not have communicated His message at all; and Allāh shall protect you from the people. Indeed Allāh does not guide the faithless. (5:67)

According to the successively narrated (*mutawātir*) tradition of Ghadīr, the phrase “*mā unzila ilayk*” (that which has been revealed to you) of the abovementioned verse refers to appointing Imam ‘Alī (‘a) as the successor of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Thereupon the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) explicitly communicated to a multitude of pilgrims present that Imam ‘Alī (‘a) is his successor and the guardian of every faithful male and female. Interestingly, the very two people who later laid

the foundation stone of oppression against religion, are reported to have preceded everyone in congratulating Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) on this occasion. One of the two, according to different chains of narration from the Shia as well as the Sunni, addressing Imam 'Alī ('a), is reported to have said:

بِجِّ بَيْحَ لَكَ يَا عَلِيُّ أَصْبَحْتَ مَوْلَايَ وَمَوْلَى كُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ

Congratulations, O 'Alī, you have become my guardian and the guardian of every believing male and female.⁷⁴

The two were the same people who later in a place in Madīnah called Ṣaqīfah practically concealed what Allāh revealed of the manifest proofs (2:159). Consequently, according to the Holy Qur'ān, they are perpetually cursed by Allāh Himself. The aorist verb *yal'anu-hum* in the verse above signifies continuity. Therefore Allāh, the All-Majestic, continuously distances them from His Mercy.

Al-'Ayyāshī in his *Tafsīr al-'Ayyāshī*, narrates the following from Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a):

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ فِي عَالِيهِ السَّلَامِ

[The Imam read verse] “Indeed those who conceal what We have sent down of manifest proofs and guidance” and said it (i.e. manifest proofs and guidance) is about 'Alī ('a).⁷⁵

Following is a rational and systematic exposition of the aforesaid discussion:

- a) Allāh ordered His Messenger to declare 'Alī ('a) as his successor in Ghadīr Khumm (5:67)
- b) Concealers of Divine Revelation are constantly cursed by Allāh (2:159)
- c) Some people after the Prophet's demise practically concealed the truth of 'Alī's succession by declaring a successor of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) based on their own whims and selfish desires
- d) They never repented, and for as long as they were alive they never gave the caliphate to its rightful owner. They are also reported to have never written a will where they would surrender the caliphate to its rightful owner.
- e) Therefore they are always cursed by Allāh.

2. The Holy Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

Indeed those disbelieved and died in their state of disbelief, it is they on whom shall be the curse of Allāh, the angels and all mankind. (2:161)

In a tradition narrated from *al-Kāfi*, we come to learn that three specific companions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) whose names have not been mentioned explicitly, due to their denial of the guardianship of Imam 'Alī ('a) left this world with no faith. Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) commenting on the following verse of the Qur'ān,

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أَرَادُوا كُفْرًا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيُغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا

⁷⁴ Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād*, v.8, p. 284; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rikh Madīnat Damishq*, v.42, p. 233

⁷⁵ Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, v.1, p. 365

As for those who believe and then disbelieve, then believe again and then disbelieve and then increase in disbelief, Allāh shall never forgive them, nor shall He guide them to any way. (4:137)

says:

نَزَلَتْ فِي فُلَانٍ وَفُلَانٍ وَفُلَانٍ، آمَنُوا بِالنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فِي أَوَّلِ الْأَمْرِ وَكَفَرُوا حَيْثُ عُرِضَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْوِلَايَةُ، حِينَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ، ثُمَّ آمَنُوا بِالْبَيْعَةِ لِأَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا حَيْثُ مَضَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ، فَلَمْ يُقَرِّرُوا بِالْبَيْعَةِ، ثُمَّ إِذَا دَاوُوا كُفْرًا بِأَخْذِهِمْ مَنْ بَايَعَهُ بِالْبَيْعَةِ لَهُمْ فَهَؤُلَاءِ لَمْ يَبْقَ فِيهِمْ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ شَيْءٌ

This verse was revealed about *so and so*, *so and so*, and *so and so*. They believed in the Prophet (ﷺ) at the onset and disbelieved in him when the matter of the guardianship [of Imam ‘Alī] was presented to them, when the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whosoever’s master I am, this ‘Alī is his master”. Thereafter, they [once again] believed by [apparently] paying their oath of allegiance to Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a), and then disbelieved when the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) passed away and did not confess their oath of allegiance [to Amīr al-mu’minīn]. Thereafter they increased in disbelief by taking the oath of allegiance from those who had established their oath of allegiance with Imam ‘Alī (‘a). These therefore are those in whom no speck of belief remained.⁷⁶

Hence, since these companions had no faith, curse of Allāh, His angels and all the people, is on them.

Following is a rational exposition of the aforesaid discussion:

- a) The curse of Allāh, His angels and all the people are on those who died while they were disbelievers (2:161)
- b) Three anonymous companions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), as the aforementioned tradition of *al-Kāfi* establishes, died as disbelievers.
- c) As a result, these three are cursed by Allāh, the angels and all the people.

3. The Holy Qur’ān says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا

Indeed those who torment Allāh and His Apostle are cursed by Allāh in the world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them. (33:57)

Both the Shia as well as the Sunni sources unanimously narrate the following tradition of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) about Bibi Fāṭimah Zahrā’ (‘a) with slight variations in expression:

مَنْ آذَى فَاطِمَةَ فَقَدْ آذَانِي وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ

Whosoever torments Fāṭimah has tormented me, and whosoever has torments me, has tormented Allāh.⁷⁷

History mentions two particular companions whom Hadrat Fāṭimah Zahrā’ (‘a) herself reminds about the above tradition:

⁷⁶ Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.1, p. 420

⁷⁷ Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.29, p. 158

Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) narrates from his noble grandfathers:

بَيْنَمَا أَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ عِنْدَ فَاطِمَةَ عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ يَعُودَانَهَا، فَقَالَتْ لَهُمَا: أَسْأَلُكُمَا بِاللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ، هَلْ سَمِعْتُمَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يَقُولُ: مَنْ آذَى فَاطِمَةَ فَقَدْ آذَانِي وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ؟ فَقَالَا: اللَّهُمَّ نَعَمْ. قَالَتْ: فَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكُمَا آذَيْتُمَانِي.

While Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were at Fāṭimah (‘a)’s place visiting her when she was sick, she said to them: I ask you two by Allāh, besides whom there is no god, did you hear the Apostle of Allāh (ṣ) say: Whosoever torments Fāṭimah (‘a) has tormented me, and whosoever torments me, has tormented Allāh? They both said: Yes. She thereupon said: Therefore I bear witness that both of you have tormented me!⁷⁸

The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is also reported to have said the following about Imam ‘Alī (‘a):

مَنْ آذَى عَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَانِي

Whosoever torments ‘Alī has tormented me.⁷⁹

‘Amr al-Aslami, one of the companions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) present in Ḥudaybiyyah, had gone to Yemen with Imam ‘Alī (‘a), and apparently was a cause of disturbance to him. After returning to Madīnah, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said to him:

لَقَدْ آذَيْتَنِي

Indeed you have tormented me!

‘Amr, afraid of his situation, says:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ (مِنْ أَنْ) أُؤْذِيكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ)!

I seek refuge from tormenting you, O Apostle of Allāh, (peace be on him and his progeny)!

The Holy Prophet (ṣ) explains the reason:

بَلَى مَنْ آذَى عَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَانِي

Indeed, whosoever torments ‘Alī has tormented me.⁸⁰

He (ṣ) is also reported to have said:

أَلَا مَنْ آذَانِي فِي قَرَابَتِي فَقَدْ آذَانِي، وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ

Indeed whosoever torments me in relation to my near ones, has tormented me, and

78 Ibid.

79 Al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, v.11, p. 601, tr. 32901

80 Al-Shīrawānī, *Manāqib Ahl al-Bayt*, p. 164. This tradition has been narrated in different Sunni sources such as al-Bukhārī in his *Ta’rīkh al-Kabīr* (v.6, p. 306), Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal in his *al-Musnad* and *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, Ibn Ḥajar in the chapter of al-Manāqib of his work *al-Maṭālib al-‘Āliyah*, and *al-Iṣāba* (v.4, p. 533), Ibn Kathīr in his *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* (v.7, p. 393 & v.11, pp. 64-65) and *Al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya* (v.4, p. 202), Al-Ṭabarī in his *Al-Dhakhā’ir al-Uqbā* (p. 65), Al-Manāwī in his *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* (v.6, p. 24), Al-Mutaqqī al-Hindī in his *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* (v.11, p. 601, v.13, p. 122) and *Mawārid al-Damān* (v.13, p. 142), Ibn Sa’d in his *al-Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn ‘Asākir in his *Ta’rīkh al-Damishq* (pp. 201-204), among others (<http://www.estabsarna.com/ImamAli/31Azaa/Main78.htm>)

whosoever torments me has tormented Allāh.⁸¹

It is also important to know that there are traditions that mention other categories of people, whose disturbance would be tantamount to tormenting Almighty Allāh and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). Examples of such traditions are as follows:

a) The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

مَنْ آذَى وَالِدَيْهِ فَقَدْ آذَانِي، وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ، وَمَنْ آذَى اللَّهَ فَهُوَ مَلْعُونٌ

Whosoever torments his parents, has tormented me; and whosoever torments me, has tormented Allāh; and whosoever torments Allāh is cursed [and distant from Allāh's Mercy].⁸²

b) The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

مَنْ آذَى مُؤْمِمًا فَقَدْ آذَانِي، وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ، وَمَنْ آذَى اللَّهَ فَهُوَ مَلْعُونٌ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالزَّبُورِ وَالْفُرْقَانِ

Whosoever torments a faithful believer has tormented me, and whosoever torments me has tormented Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic, and whosoever torments Allāh, is cursed in the Torah, in the Gospel, in the Psalms and in the Furqān [Qur'ān].⁸³

c) The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

مَنْ آذَى الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَقَدْ آذَانِي، وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ آذَى اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ

Whosoever torments the Muslims has tormented me, and whosoever torments me, has tormented Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic.⁸⁴

d) The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

مَنْ آذَى جَارَهُ فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

Whosoever torments his neighbour, then upon him be the curse of Allāh and the angels and all human beings.⁸⁵

e) The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

... وَمَنْ آذَى غَازِيًا فَقَدْ آذَانِي، وَمَنْ آذَانِي فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ ...

...And whosoever torments a warrior [in the way of Allāh] has tormented me, and whosoever torments me, Allāh will prohibit him from Paradise and his abode will be Hell Fire...⁸⁶

In light of the aforesaid, the following is a rational exposition to establish the validity of 'curse':

a) Allāh curses those who torment Allāh and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) in both this world as well as the Hereafter (33:57).

81 Al-Zarandī al-Hanafī, *Naẓmu Durar al-Simṭayn*, p. 233

82 Al-Mirzā al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, v.15, p. 193

83 Al-Nīshābūrī, *Rawḍat al-Wā'iẓīn*, p. 293

84 Al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, v.7, p. 748, tr. 32901

85 Al-Shaykh al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, v.8, p. 425

86 Al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, v.4, p. 313

- b) Tormenting Fāṭimah (‘a), ‘Alī (‘a), the relatives of the Prophet (ṣ), a believer, etc. is tantamount to tormenting Allāh and the Holy Prophet (ṣ).
- c) Consequently, the tormenting ones (some of whom were companions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), and who visited Fāṭimah (‘a) in her house), are therefore cursed by Allāh in this world and the Hereafter.

4. The Holy Qur’ān says:

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ.
أُولَئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

How shall Allāh guide a people who have disbelieved after their faith and after bearing witness that the Apostle is true, and after manifest proofs had come to them? Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing lot. *Their requital is that there shall be upon them the curse of Allāh, the angels, and all mankind.* (3:86-87)

5. The Holy Qur’ān also says:

قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِمَّنْ ذُكِرَ مُتَوَبِّعًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتَ ۗ أُولَئِكَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ.

Say, “*Shall I inform you concerning something worse than that as a requital from Allāh? Those whom Allāh has cursed and with whom He is wrathful, and turned some of whom into apes and swine, and worshippers of Evil! Such are in a worse situation, and more astray from the right way.*” (5:60)

Therefore not only is it allowed in Islam to seek the Divine expulsion of those who deserve such expulsion, it is also an expression of harmony with the All-Wise and All-Merciful Creator Himself, who curses those who deserve it.

There are so many instances in the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as well as the distinguished companions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) where *la‘n* is perfectly expressed. The following are some noteworthy examples:

SHI‘A SOURCES

1) The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

إِذَا ظَهَرَتِ الْبِدْعُ فِي أُمَّتِي فَلْيُظْهِرِ الْعَالِمُ عِلْمَهُ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ

When innovations appear in my nation, the knowledgeable one must manifest his knowledge, and whosoever does not do so then upon him be the curse of Allāh.⁸⁷

2) The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

حَلْقُ اللَّحْيَةِ مِنَ الْمُثَلَّةِ وَمَنْ مَثَلَ فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ

Shaving the beard is an example of mutilation, and whosoever mutilates, then upon him is the curse of Allāh.⁸⁸

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

⁸⁷ Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.1, p. 54

⁸⁸ Al-Shaykh al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, v.1, p. 406

مَنْ قَالَ يَا نَبِيَّاءُ فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ شَكَّ فِي ذَلِكَ فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ

Whosoever says that we are Divine prophets, may the curse of Allāh be upon him; and whosoever [even] doubts about that, may the curse of Allāh be upon him.⁸⁹

4) ‘Alī Ibn Mahzyār is reported to have said: I heard Abā Ja‘far (‘a) saying the following when the name of Abū al-Khaṭṭab was mentioned near him:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ أَبَا الْخَطَّابِ وَلَعَنَ أَصْحَابَهُ وَلَعَنَ الشَّاكِّينَ فِي لَعْنِهِ وَلَعَنَ مَنْ وَقَفَ فِي ذَلِكَ وَشَكَّ فِيهِ...

May Allāh’s curse be on Abā al-Khaṭṭab,⁹⁰ and may He curse his companions, and may He curse those who doubt in invoking curses on him, and may He curse those who stop cursing him and doubt about the same.⁹¹

5) Imam ‘Alī (‘a) is reported to have said: The Messenger of Allāh (ṣ) said to me:

أَنَا وَأَنْتَ يَا عَلِيُّ أَبَوَا هَذَا الْخَلْقِ، فَمَنْ عَقَبْنَا فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ ...

I and You, O ‘Alī, are the two fathers of creation; whosoever disobeys us then upon him be the curse of Allāh...⁹²

6) Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

مَلْعُونٌ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ عَبَدَ الدِّيْنَارَ وَالدِّرْهَمَ ... مَلْعُونٌ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ نَكَحَ بَهِيمَةً

Cursed, cursed is one who worships the *dīnār* and *dirham*⁹³... Cursed, cursed is one who copulates with an animal.⁹⁴

7) Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said:

مَلْعُونٌ مَلْعُونٌ مَالٌ لَا يُزَكَّى

Cursed, cursed, is that wealth that is not purified.⁹⁵

8) Imam Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā Ibn Ja‘far (‘a) is reported to have said:

الْمُؤْمِنُ أَخُو الْمُؤْمِنِ لِأَبِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ مَلْعُونٌ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ اتَّهَمَ أَخَاهُ مَلْعُونٌ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ عَشَّ أَخَاهُ مَلْعُونٌ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ لَمْ يَنْصَحْ أَخَاهُ مَلْعُونٌ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ احْتَجَبَ عَنِ أَخِيهِ مَلْعُونٌ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ اغْتَابَ أَخَاهُ

A believer is the brother of a believer from the same father and mother; cursed, cursed, is he who wrongly blames his brother; cursed, cursed, is he who cheats his brother; cursed, cursed, is he who does not advise his brother; cursed, cursed, is he who hides himself from his brother; cursed, cursed, is he who backbites his brother.⁹⁶

89 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.25, p. 296

90 He is Muḥammad Ibn Miqlāṣ, al-Asadī al-Kūfī. In the beginning he was a direct companion of Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a). Thereafter he claimed things which were incorrect such as Imams are Divine prophets and said things that necessitated his curse and expulsion from Divine mercy.

91 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.25, p. 318

92 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.34, p. 333

93 This is indicative of all money.

94 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.2, p. 270

95 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.3, p. 504

96 Al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī’ah*, v.12, p. 231

SUNNI SOURCES

1. After the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) returned from his farewell pilgrimage, he ordered a twenty year old brave youth called Usāmah Ibn Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah to take an army and go for an expedition against the Romans who were about to attack Madinah. He also commanded some very prominent companions to join the ranks. Historical accounts tell us⁹⁷ that from among those whom he commanded to join this army were Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, Abd al-Rahman Ibn ‘Awwf, Abū ‘Ubaydah Ibn al-Jarrāh, Sa‘d Ibn Abī Waqqās, Talḥah, Zubayr, and Khālīd Ibn al-Walīd. Unfortunately, many did not heed to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)’s words and the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) declared:

جَهِّزُوا جَيْشَ أُسَامَةَ لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ تَخَلَّفَ مِنْهُ

Prepare and equip the army of Usāmah. May Allāh’s curse be on one who lags behind it.⁹⁸

Here there is a clear mention of the Prophet’s curse on some of his prominent companions.

2. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ سَبَّ أَبَاهُ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ سَبَّ أُمَّهُ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ ذَبَحَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ... مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ وَقَعَ عَلَى بَيْمَةِ مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِعَمَلِ قَوْمِ لُوطٍ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ)...

Cursed is one who vilifies his father, cursed is one who vilifies his mother, cursed is one who slaughters [a sacrifice] for other than Allāh...cursed is one who copulates with an animal, cursed is one who does the act of the people of Prophet Lūṭ (‘a).⁹⁹

3. Abu Bakr reports from the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

مَلْعُونٌ مَنْ ضَارَّ مُؤْمِنًا أَوْ مَكَرَ بِهِ

Cursed is one who harms a believer or deceives him.¹⁰⁰

4. Abu Hurayrah narrates from the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

خَيْرُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ مِنْ بَعْدِي عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ وَفَاطِمَةُ وَالْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ فَمَنْ قَالَ غَيْرَ هَذَا فَعَلَيْهِ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ

The best of this nation after me are ‘Alī Ibn Abī Tālib, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn. And whosoever says other than that, may the curse of Allāh be on him.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ After the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) returned from the Farewell Hajj, he fell ill at the beginning of Ṣafar 11 A.H. News was received that the Romans in the north west of Arabia were preparing to attack Madinah. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) ordered the mobilisation of a huge Muslim army under the command of a youth of twenty years called Usāmah Ibn Zayd Ibn Ḥārithah. He ordered all those who had emigrated from Makkah with him to participate in the battle, except Imam ‘Alī (‘a). To arouse the morale of the Muslims the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) tied the banner for Usāmah with his own hands and then instructed him: “Fight in the name of Allāh and in His path. Fight the enemy early in the morning, and cover the distance to that place so quickly that you reach them before they are aware of your march.” Usāmah fixed his camp at Jurf, three miles outside Madīnah, so that the Muslim soldiers could gather there ready for the expedition. Some of the Madinites protested in joining Usāmah because they did not want to serve under such a young commander. On hearing their reluctance, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) warned them and invoked Allāh’s curse on anyone who remained behind. Despite this, some of the companions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) did not proceed, using his illness as a pretext to remain in Madinah. As time passed, the condition of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) grew worse and ultimately the expedition of Usāmah never materialised.

⁹⁸ Al-Shahristānī, *Al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, v.1, p. 23

⁹⁹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad*, v.1, p. 217; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaghīr*, v.2, p. 539; al-Hindī, *Kanz*

¹⁰⁰ Al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, v.3, p. 223

¹⁰¹ Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.37, p. 98

5. Abu Hurayrah narrates from the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

إِذَا دَعَا الرَّجُلُ امْرَأَتَهُ إِلَى فِرَاشِهِ فَأَبَتْ إِلَى فِرَاشِهِ فَأَبَتْ وَهُوَ غَضَبَانُ لَعَنَتَهَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ حَتَّى تَصْبِحَ

If a man calls his wife to his bed, and she refuses, and he spends the night while he is angry [with her], the angels curse her until morning.¹⁰²

6. ‘Abdullah Ibn Zubayr is reported to have said:

أَشْهَدُ لَسَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَلْعَنُ الْحَكَمَ وَمَا وَلَدَ

I bear witness that indeed I heard the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ) cursing Ḥakam and his offspring.¹⁰³

The aforesaid are only a few of the ample examples from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. Hence, trying to challenge them under the pretext that Islam is a religion of peace and mercy is trying to question the validity of the Qur’ān and the dictums of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and the Ahl al- Bayt (‘a). Such an argument does not hold weight and questions the most fundamental Islamic sources.

Invoking La‘n on a Specific Person

Some Muslims opine that we are only allowed to do *la‘n* in a general way, and that we cannot curse a particular person, whom we determine and decipher to be among those who according to the teachings of Islam deserve to be cursed.

The reality, however, is quite contrary, for not only do we have proofs that establish the permissibility of *la‘n* on specific people, there are traditions where some of the signposts of guidance clearly expressed their *la‘n* on specific people by name.

We do not negate that expressing *la‘n* in small instances, due to personal grudges or interests, is abhorred, forbidden, and dangerous as well. Nor do we encourage one to invoke *la‘n* on those whose identities and states one does not know properly. However, that does not mean that we restrict *la‘n* to a general invocation of curse.

The Divine scholar, Mullā Muḥammad al-Narāqī writes in his ethical masterpiece *Jāmi‘ al-Sa‘ādāt*:

والحق جواز اللعن على شخص معين غَلِمَ إِتِّصَافُهُ بِصِفَةِ الْكُفْرِ أَوْ الظلم أَوْ الفسق. وما قيل من عدم جواز ذلك إلا على من يثبت لعنه من الشرع كفرعون وأبي جهل. لأن كل شخص معين كان على إحدى الصفات الثلاثة ربما رجع عنها، فيموت مسلماً أو تائباً، فيكون مقرباً عند الله لا مبعداً عنه كلاماً ينبغي أن يطوى ولا يروى، إذ المستفاد من كلام الله تعالى وكلام رسوله (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) وكلام أئمتنا الراشدين: جواز نسبته إلى الشخص المعين، بل المستفاد منها أن اللعن على بعض أهل الجحود والعناد من أحب العبادات وأقرب القربات، قال الله سبحانه: ﴿أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ﴾. وقال: ﴿أُولَئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ﴾. وقال النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم): ﴿لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْكَاذِبَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مَارِجًا﴾. وقال (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) في جواب أبي سفيان حين هجاه بألف بيت: ﴿... اللَّهُمَّ الْعَنَّهُ بِكُلِّ حَرْفٍ أَلْفَ لَعْنَةٍ﴾ وقد لعن أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام) جماعة. وروى أنه كان يقنت في الصلاة المفروضة بلعن معاوية وعمرو بن العاص وأبي موسى الأشعري وأبي الأعور الأسلمي، مع إنه أحلم الناس وأشدهم صفحاً عمن يسوء به، فلولا أنه كان يرى لعنهم من الطاعات لما يتخير محله في الصلوات المفروضة.

102 Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad*, v.2, p. 439

103 Al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, v.11, p. 358; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh Madīnat Damishq*, v.58, p. 272

وروى الشيخ الطوسي: ﴿أن الصادق (عليه السلام) كان ينصرف من الصلاة بلعن أربعة رجال﴾. ومن نظر إلى ما وقع للحسن (عليه السلام) مع معاوية وأصحابه وكيف لعنهم، وتتبع ما ورد من الأئمة في الكافي وغيره من كتب الأخبار والأدعية في لعنهم من يستحق اللعن من رؤساء الضلال والتصريح بأسمائهم يعلم أن ذلك من شعائر الدين، بحيث لا يعتريه شك ومريّة. وما ورد من قوله (عليه السلام) ﴿لا تكونوا لعانين﴾، ومثله. نهى عن اللعن على غير المستحقين، وما روي: أن أمير المؤمنين (عليه السلام) نهى عن لعن أهل الشام، فإن صح، فلعله كان يرجو إسلامهم ورجوعهم إليه، كما هو شأن الرئيس المشفق على الرعية. وبالجملة: اللعن على رؤساء الظلم والضلال والمجاهرين بالكفر والفسق جائز، بل مستحب، وعلى غيرهم من المسلمين غير جائز، إلا أن يتيقن باتصافه بإحدى الصفات الموجبة له. وينبغي ألا يحكم باتصافه بشيء منها بمجرد الظن والتخمين، إذ لا يجوز أن يرم مسلم بكفر وفسق من غير تحقيق

The truth is that cursing a specific person who is known to have the attribute of wilful disbelief (*kufir*), wrongdoing (*zulm*), or volitional disobedience (*fisq*), is permissible. And what has been said about its impermissibility to the exception of one about whom there is religious evidence such as the Pharaoh and Abū Jahl, due to the possibility that whosoever possesses these attributes may [eventually] abandon them and die the death of a believer or in the state of penitence, and hence be close to Allāh and not distant from Him, is a statement which should be ignored and not narrated, for what we comprehend from the speech of Allāh the Almighty and his Messenger (ﷺ) and the statements of our Divinely guided Imams (‘a), is the permissibility of attributing the same to a specific person. Rather, what we understand from them is that cursing some deniers of faith and opponents is from among the most beloved forms of worship and elements that enable one to attain the proximity of Allāh better. Allāh, the Glorified, says: “*Those are they upon whom be the curse of Allāh, the angels and all the people.*” (2:161). And He says: “*These are those whom Allāh [always] curses and the cursing ones [likewise always] curse.*” (2:159). The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: “*May Allāh curse the liar even if he be joking*”; and in response to Abū Sufyān’s thousand verses of poetry in ridicule of him, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) said: “*...O Allāh curse him on every letter that he utters with a thousand curses.*” Indeed Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a) cursed a group of people. It is narrated that during the state of *qunūt* of his obligatory prayers, he would invoke curses on Mu‘āwiyah, ‘Amr Ibn ‘Āṣ, Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī, and Abū A‘war al-Aslamī, despite being the most forbearing of the people and most forgiving to whosoever does evil to him. If he would not consider his invocation of curses as being among the acts of Divine obedience, he would not have chosen its place to be the obligatory prayers. Al-Shaykh al-Ṭusī narrates that Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) would finish his prayer with cursing four men; and whosoever observes what transpired with Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a) and Mu‘āwiyah and his companions, and how the Imam (‘a) cursed them, and skims through what has been narrated from the Imams in *al-Kāfī* and other texts of traditions and supplications about cursing those who deserve to be cursed from among the leaders of deviation, and [observes] the distinct mention of their names as well, realises that that is from among the teachings of religion, having no speck of doubt about it whatsoever. And what has been narrated from Amir al-mu’minin (‘a) such as “*Do not be frequent cursers*” and the like is the prohibition of cursing those who do not deserve to be cursed, and the narration of prohibiting to curse the people of Sham, assuming its authenticity, is perhaps because he (‘a) was hopeful of their submission and return to him, and such is the demeanour of a leader who is kind to his subjects. In conclusion: Cursing the leaders of oppression, deviation, and those who display their volitional disbelief and sinful state, is permissible. Rather it is recommended as well. However cursing other Muslims is impermissible unless one attains conviction that he has one of the characteristics that makes him deserve the same. It is imperative for one not to make a conclusion that someone has one of the characteristics [that makes

him fit to be cursed] through mere speculation and conjecture. This is because it is impermissible to attribute disbelief (*kufṛ*) and volitional disobedience (*fiṣq*) to someone without proper investigation.¹⁰⁴

Understanding the Crux of La‘n

The human being has been moulded in a way that he has two fundamental reactions vis-à-vis the things around him:

- a) Attraction of that which is beneficial (*jalb al-manfa‘ah*)
- b) Repulsion of that which is harmful (*daf‘ al-ḍarar*)

He is naturally attracted to those things that would benefit him and repelled from those things that would harm him. This is an undeniable innate and natural element in every sound human being irrespective of race or religion.

Seeking the long life and prosperity of those who promote one’s real prosperity and praying for the damnation of those who struggle for the destruction of the same, likewise is very natural.

La‘n when expressed from the depths of the heart enables one to retain this innate disposition. Whereas through salutations (*salām*) one cultivates and strengthens the love for real prosperity of the human beings, the secret of which lies in following the tenets of the Divine religion in the different levels and attaining individual and social equilibrium among people, *la‘n* enables one to fortify his heart to be completely against those who promote disbelief, lawlessness, slavery (overt as well as covert), oppression (internal as well as external), and theft (in all the modern manifestations of the vice), characteristics which are naturally abhorred by every human being of sound nature who has understood the truth and loves to progress and attain eternal felicity. It is through the destruction of such elements from the society that one attains true life. The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

There is life for you in retribution, O you who possess intellects! Maybe you will be God wary! (2:179)

Hence, *la‘n* should not be mistaken with an emotional grudge or rash reaction of ill-natured people. *La‘n* is a strong opposition against falsehood and its supporters. It is the declaration of a stance against the enemies of Allāh and all those who promote the destruction of human beings. If one contemplates on this reality painstakingly, one would realise that *la‘n* is nothing but sheer love for Allāh and a demeanour of intense mercy for other people.

Du‘ā’ - Prayer or Curse?

In the Arabic language when we want to make a prayer in relation to someone, we employ the word *al-du‘ā’*.¹⁰⁵ However, the Arabic preposition that follows it would determine whether the prayer is for or against him. If it is linked with the preposition *lām* it would signify benefit, but if it is linked with preposition *‘alā*, it would signify harm and curse. Following are two examples of each case:

Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

104 Mullā Muḥammad al-Narāqī, *Jāmi‘ al-Sa‘ādāt*, v.1, pp. 353-355

105 In his *Mu‘jam*, Ibn Fāris mentions the triconsonantal root meaning of *du‘ā’* as: “to make something incline to you by means of sound or speech from you” (*an tumīla al-shay‘a ilayka bi ṣawtin wa kalāmin yakūnu minka*) - see *Mu‘jam Maqāyis al-Lughah*, v.2, p. 279

مَنْ أَكْرَمَ مُؤْمِنًا فَكَأَنَّ مَا يُكْرِمُ اللَّهُ، وَمَنْ دَعَا لِأَخِيهِ الْمُؤْمِنِ دَفَعَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ الْبَلَاءَ وَدَرَّ عَلَيْهِ الرِّزْقَ

Whosoever honours a believer honours Allāh, and whosoever *prays* for his *mu'min* brother Allāh would dispel calamities from him and pour down (His) provision on him.¹⁰⁶

Imam Musā al-Kāzīm ('a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ دَعَا لِأَخِيهِ بِظَهْرِ الْعَيْبِ نُودِيَ مِنَ الْعَرْشِ: وَلَكَ مِائَةٌ أَلْفٍ ضِعْفٍ

Whosoever prays for his brother [in faith] in his absence is called from the Divine Throne and told: And for you is 100,000 times more.¹⁰⁷

Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) is reported to have said:

أَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ دَعَا عَلَى وُلْدِهِ أَوْرَثَهُ الْفَقْرَ

Whoever curses his children, Allāh would make him inherit poverty.¹⁰⁸

Ibn Abī Jamhūr al-Aḥsā'ī in his '*Awālī al-La'ālī al-'Azīziyyah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Dīniyyah* narrates:

وَرُوي أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَتَتْ فِي الصُّبْحِ وَدَعَا عَلَى جَمَاعَةٍ وَسَمَّاهُمْ

It is narrated that the Prophet (ṣ) performed *qunūt* in the morning prayer and cursed a group of people and named them.¹⁰⁹

If we plunge ourselves a little deeper we will come to realise that when we love someone because he upholds human values, and we pray for his advantage and perfection, we do so due to the fact that our innate disposition naturally seeks and is attracted to benefit and good. Similarly, when we despise someone because he is the epitome of evil and spiritual destruction, we are actually revealing our innate disposition which naturally abhors and flees from evil. In other words the root of prayer “for” or “against” someone is *jalb al-manfa'ah* (attracting benefit) and *daf' al-ḍarar* (repelling harm).

Notice, both prayer and curse are called *du'ā'*, and both stem from the innate disposition of the human being. However, we should note that in the same way as there are limits and conditions for prayer, there are limits and conditions for curse as well. Consider the following traditions:

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

مَنْ دَعَا لِظَالِمٍ بِالْبَقَاءِ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُعْصَى اللَّهُ فِي أَرْضِهِ

Whosoever prays for the subsistence of an oppressor, loves that Allāh is disobeyed on His earth.¹¹⁰

Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) is reported to have said:

أَيُّمَا رَجُلٍ دَعَا عَلَى وُلْدِهِ أَوْرَثَهُ اللَّهُ الْفَقْرَ

106 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭabrisī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, p. 329

107 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, p. 540

108 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.101, p. 99

109 Al-Aḥsa'ī, '*Awālī al-La'ālī al-'Azīziyyah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Dīniyyah*, v.2, p. 43

110 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.72, p. 334

Whosoever curses his children Allāh would make him inherit poverty.¹¹¹

Stripping off the Spatial Limitations

It is important to realise that *la 'n* knows no time, place and people. Yesterday it was Yazīd and his likes, and today, it is our duty to decipher and condemn those who assimilate his footsteps in the modern world.

Imam Khumaynī in his final will says:

آنچه لعن و نفرین بر ستمگران آل بیت است، تمام فریاد قهرمانانۀ ملتها است، بر سردمداران ستمپیشه در طول تاریخ الی الابد. و می دانید که لعن و نفرین و فریاد از بیداد بنی امیه لعنه الله علیهم با آنکه آنان منقرض و به جهنم رهسپار شده اند، فریاد بر سر "ستمگران جهان" و زنده نگهداشتن این فریاد ستم شکن است.

The curse and execration on the oppressors of the progeny of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) are all brave protests of nations over the tyrannical rulers throughout history, in perpetuity. And you know that curse, execration, and protest against the injustice of Banu Umayyah (May Allāh curse them) despite their extinction and transfer to Hell Fire, is a protest against the world oppressors; and the revival of such protest crushes oppression.¹¹²

Hence, the *la 'n* that we express for the past transgressors must not make us oblivious of the present and the future. It should be a stepping stone towards comprehending its universal signification. The Holy Qur'ān, which vocally expresses *la 'n* on the oppressors for example, is for every time and place. Hence we should also invoke the destruction and abandonment of all the contemporary transgressors, promoters of lawlessness, etc. This is because it is with the existence of such people that the human race is facing different kinds of problems.

Asserting the importance of being aware of the present extensions of evil, Martyr Murtaḍā Mūṭahharī in one of his powerful statements said:

یزید زمان حسین (علیه السلام) مُرد، یزید زمان خود را بشناسید!

“The Yazīd of Imam Ḥusayn (‘a)’s age is dead. You must now decipher the Yazīd of your own time!”¹¹³

Does Curse Contradict One’s Merciful Demeanour?

The late Gnostic, Ayatullah al-Sayyid al-Ḥaddād al-Mūsawī (may Allāh sanctify his purified spirit) was once asked about the philosophy of invoking curses in the supplication of ‘Alqamah that follows Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’.

The questioner asked: Are these severe curses in different forms in harmony with the spirit of Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) who is the school of mercy and love?

In response, the Sayyid said:

This supplication is entirely for seeking goodness (*khayr*) and mercy, although it appears in the form of execration and curse. Generally, all the curses of Allāh or those that have come through the tongue of the Prophet and his Infallible progeny (may Allāh’s abundant mercy and peace be on them all) are goodness, sheer goodness.

111 Ibn Fahd al-Hillī, *‘Uddat al-Dā’ir wa Najāh al-Sā’ir*, p. 89

112 Imam Khumaynī, *Ṣaḥīfeye Imām*, v.21, p. 400

113 <http://www.pana.ir/NSite/FullStory/News/?Id=8425>

Principally, nothing save goodness flows from God and His close servants. These curses are for the person of the transgressor, and not for a God-wary believer who is busy in his work. However much life, health and power is given to the transgressor and the tyrant, he would employ them in harming his soul and transgressing the bounds of the oppressed. Hence restraining his health, strength and life is repelling harm, and the repulsion of harm in reality is attaining benefit.

With our limited material and sensory vision we conjecture that goodness is always in being healthy, having power and life, regardless of the reality of life, one's good or evil intention, pleasant or unpleasant decision, good or evil belief [etc]. However, such is not the case. This is because one must consider the spirit as well. Life is good for the human being when he is the source of good for himself and others. However, if he becomes a source of evil, and the increment of life, protection, health and strength, brings about self-transgression and trespassing the vicinity of the human beings, it is not goodness. We cannot term this kind of facilitation as "goodness". In this situation, its opposite is goodness. In other words, for such a person, death, illness, destitution, is good, although others may be unaware of it.

A knife employed by a surgeon who severs a contaminated part of one's body is good, although it necessitates sickness, unconsciousness, shedding of the blood of the sick person, and consumption of bitter medicine. And although the contaminated part of the body deems itself to be good, the reality is that it is not as such. Mercy is not in continuously becoming fat and eating oily and sweet food. Sometimes it is in being thin, bearing hunger and sufficing oneself with simple food.

A child always wants sweets from his father, but the merciful father does not respond positively to his request. Sometimes he does give him sweets but to a limited proportion. This is good and mercy for the child. Sometimes, however, he gives him a bitter laxative and injection, places him in the hospital for an operation, and forbids him from playing. Never is the child pleased with this behaviour. He would always like to run around, eat sweets, and play; and [hence,] he opposes his father in this prohibition and limitation. Sometimes he conjectures that his father is selfish and [even] his enemy. However, the reality of the matter is other than this. All these actions of the father is goodness and mercy for the child, for it would facilitate his life, although the child neither knows [that] or wants it. Hence the father is extremely disturbed by these events and predicaments. He does not rest, is at the bed-side of his child, and does not sleep until morning. And this is sheer mercy.

Mercy sometimes appears in the form of bestowals and giving sweets and sometimes in the form of prohibition and injection. Both are examples of mercy, but in two different complexions and forms.

The Prophets and Imams ('a) came for the real life and eternal prosperity of humankind, and their message revolves around this [very] pivot. Hence, whenever the real life collides with the material life, the true health with the superficial health, and the true strength with the attributive strength, the latter is overlooked for the protection of the former. Hence they give the command for war, kill the polytheists and the disbelievers, discipline the hypocrites and punish the sinful. All this is *khayr* (goodness).

In order to make a transgressor attain the highest station of humanness, corporal discipline, paralysis, poverty, illness, and weakness are *khayr* (goodness), for these things [wake him up] and make him come back to himself and lessen the swelling of

the self that frequently invited towards evil, and confer him with nobility. Hence it is goodness and mercy.¹¹⁴

Cursing: Harmonising Oneself with the Divine Spirit

A very important point to remember is that we are aware that Allāh curses a group of people in the Qur'ān due to some characteristics, and the reality of His curse is to deprive them from His mercy. Those who possess a Divine spirit assimilate Allāh's demeanour, and seek the same for these people. In simple words, it is as if they declare their harmony and pleasure with what Allāh is pleased with.

The Holy Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ
اللَّاعِنُونَ

Indeed those who conceal what We have sent down of manifest proofs and guidance, after We have clarified it in the Book for mankind, *they shall be cursed by Allāh and cursed by the cursers.* (2:159)

Observe here that not only Allāh curses those who hide manifest proofs, but even those who are in harmony with the Divine spirit. They are known as *al-lā'inūn* (the cursing ones) in this verse.

It must be remembered that the principal curser as indicated in the verse is Allāh. Hence He expels a group of people from His mercy because they have wrought themselves in such a way that they deserve to be expelled. Consequently, they encounter nothing but the recompense of their deeds. We, on the other hand, who are encouraged to curse them, actually harmonise ourselves with the Divine spirit, and in fact strengthen our innate and natural aversion for the proponents of disbelief, deviation, oppression, and mischief.

Cursing the Dead Ones

It must be understood that curse or expulsion from Divine mercy does not stop in this world. There are verses that inform us that a group of people are cursed in this world as well as the Hereafter. They have planted the seeds of continual expulsion and harm for themselves. Hence, while Almighty Allāh curses them, if His virtuous servants who are dissolved in Him adopt His demeanour, they are displaying complete submission to Him.

Cursing those who continually oppressed the guardians of Islam, such that they left this world in the state of disbelief, is therefore sheer manifestation of Divine volition.

The Holy Qur'ān says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

Indeed those who turn faithless and die while they are faithless, it is they on whom shall be the curse of Allāh, the angels and all mankind. (2:161)

وَالَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ
وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

But as for those who break Allāh's covenant after having pledged it solemnly, and sever

114 Ayatullah Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭehrānī, *Rūḥ-e-Mujarrad*, Section 3, pp. 110-115

what Allāh has commanded to be joined, and cause corruption in the earth, it is they on whom is the curse, and for them will be the ills of the [ultimate] abode. (13:25)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْعَافِيَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لَعُنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Indeed those who accuse honourable and unwary faithful women shall be cursed in this world and the Hereafter, and there shall be a great punishment for them. (24:23)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا

Indeed those who torment Allāh and His Apostle are cursed by Allāh in the world and the Hereafter, and He has prepared a humiliating punishment for them. (33:57)

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعَذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

The day when the excuses of the wrongdoers will not benefit them, and the curse will lie on them, and for them will be the ills of the [ultimate] abode. (40:52)

These verses clearly indicate that the process of *la‘n* does not stop in this world, but continues in the Hereafter as well.

When one invokes curses, he actually does the following:

1. Expresses dislike for the cursed one, who in reality is a composition of his beliefs, thoughts, words, deeds and aims.
2. Expresses his stance vis-à-vis falsehood, corruption, oppression, mischief and all that is evil.
3. Trains his spirit to dislike and detach himself from the characteristics of the cursed one. The expression of curse enables one to think of the root of the matter. One realises that it is the evil habits of the cursed one that makes one curse him. Hence he struggles to eliminate even the small shades of the habits in himself.
4. Expresses his concern to repel harm from himself and others. One of the effects of curse is death and divine punishment. If curse would bring about the death, destruction, illness, etc. in one who is harmful for the human beings, it is nothing but extreme mercy.
5. Assimilates the Divine spirit. Indeed the human being was created to represent Allāh on earth. By following Allāh’s demeanour, he manifests the Divine spirit.

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً دَفَعَتْكُمْ عَنْ مَقَامِكُمْ وَأَزَالَتْكُمْ عَنْ مَرَاتِبِكُمْ الَّتِي رَتَبَكُمْ اللَّهُ فِيهَا

...and may Allāh expel from His mercy the community who removed you from your position and separated you from your stations where Allāh had established you...

This verse can be taken as an emphasis or description of the previous verse: Those who laid the foundation of wrongdoing and transgression against the Household of the Prophet (ﷺ) did so by depriving them their right of leadership through Divine appointment and separating them from the stations where Allāh had firmly established them.

The past tense *daf‘a* employed in the above verse signifies repulsion. Its triconsonantal meaning is “to move something away”¹¹⁵ (*tanḥiyat al-shay’*).¹¹⁶ Therefore, the phrase “*dafa‘at-kum*” literally means “they removed you”.

115 Al-Muṣṭafawī in his Qur’ān Lexicon *al-Taḥqīq* defines the single triconsonantal root meaning of the word *daf‘* as “*al-man‘u baqā’an aw istidāmatan*” (to hamper in terms of subsistence or continuity) - Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, v.3, p. 226. Hence if we consider this meaning, the phrase ‘...*ummatan dafa‘at-kum*’ would be rendered as “...the community that intercepted you from your position”.

116 Ibn Fāris, *Mu‘jam Maqāyis al-Lūgha*, v.2, p. 288

In one of his sermons after the death of ‘Uthmān, Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) reminds the people about how the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) were removed from their right, which alludes to the very station (*maqām*) we are discussing here. The Imam (‘a) said:

فَلَمَّا مَضَى صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ لِسَبِيلِهِ دَفَعَنَا عَنْ حَقِّنَا مَنْ دَفَعَنَا...

When he [the Holy Prophet (ṣ)] passed away onto his path [of the Hereafter], *removed us from our right those who removed us...*¹¹⁷

The word *maqām* literally means ‘a standing place’ (*maḥall li al-qiyām*). *Maqāmu Ibrāhīm* mentioned in the Qur’ān, for example, means ‘the standing place of Ibrāhīm (‘a)’. Although employed in its physical sense, it is also used to signify a spiritual standing place or a spiritual station.

Apparently the position (*maqām*) and stations (*marātib*) spoken about in this verse do not refer to their spiritual stations, from which they can be neither removed nor separated. Despite being deprived of their right to govern the Islamic nation they enjoyed stations that no other human being can describe.

The word *maqām* (the place of standing) therefore refers to the station of the political & social role of *Imāmah* (leadership by Divine appointment). Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) refers to the same in a tradition narrated by a contemporary of his called Abū al-Faḍl. The latter reports that the Imam (‘a) said:

مَنْ ادَّعَى مَقَامَنَا يَعْنِي الْإِمَامَةَ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ أَوْ قَالَ مُشْرِكٌ

Whosoever claims our station (*maqām*), which is Divine Leadership, then he is an unbeliever, or he may have said: he is a polytheist.¹¹⁸

Notice the Imam (‘a) employs the word *maqām* here for leadership by Divine appointment.

Another word worthy of consideration is *azālat* in the phrase *azālatikum ‘an marātibikum...* which we have rendered as “separated”. The triconsonantal root meaning of the word is “the moving away of something from a spot through separation” (*tanaḥḥī shay’ ‘an nuqṭatīn bi iftirāqin ‘anhā*).¹¹⁹

The word *marātib* is the plural of *martabah* (station). Its triconsonantal root (*r.t.b*) signifies “to be firm, constant, etc.” Al-Ṭurayḥī in his lexicon *Majma’ al-Baḥrayn*, under the root (r.t.b) says:

رَتَبَ الشَّيْءُ رُتُوبًا مِنْ بَابِ قَعَدَ أَيِ اسْتَقَرَّ وَدَامَ ... وَالرُّتْبَةُ الْمَنْزِلَةُ وَكَذَلِكَ الْمَرْتَبَةُ

Rataba al-shay’u rutūban is pronounced like qa’ada (*qa’ada qu’ūdan*) and means “it settled and continued”... and *al-rutbah* means a waystation (*al-manzilah*), and likewise is *al-martaba*.¹²⁰

Hence when we speak of *marātib*, we speak of stations.

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً دَفَعَتْكُمْ عَنْ مَقَامِكُمْ وَأَزَالَتْكُمْ عَنْ مَرَاتِبِكُمْ الَّتِي رَتَّبَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِيهَا

...and may Allāh expel from His mercy the community who removed you from your position and separated you from your stations where Allāh had established you...

117 Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *al-Jamal*, p. 144

118 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.25, p. 114

119 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *al-Taḥqīq*, v.4, p. 373

120 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭurayḥī, *Majma’ al-Baḥrayn*, v.2, p. 140

Although we said that the *maqām* and *marātib* spoken about in this verse only refers to the apparent political and social position bestowed to them through Divine appointment, there is a probability that it also refers to their spiritual stations. Obviously this does not mean that the fundamental oppressors removed or separated them from their spiritual stations. It rather means that the oppressors hid and covered their spiritual stations by depriving them of their role and sidelining them, such that the people did not realise their great spiritual stations. A similar usage is found in a tradition of Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a); during his time there was a group of notorious people who claimed Divinity for Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a), whereupon the Imam cursed them. In one of his statements he employs the same phrase “*azālanā*” to signify a kind of cover. The Imam (‘a) is reported to have said:

لَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ قَالَ فِيْنَا مَا لَا نَقُولُهُ فِي أَنْفُسِنَا وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ مَنْ أَرَاَلَنَا عَنِ الْعُبُودِيَّةِ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ مَابُنَا وَمَعَادُنَا...

May Allāh’s curse be on one who says about us what we do not claim for ourselves, and curse be on one *who separates us from being slaves of Allāh*, for the purpose of which He created us, and towards Him is our return...¹²¹

Notice that Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) here employs the phrase ‘*azālanā ‘an al-‘ubūdiyyah li Allāh*’ (he separated us from being slaves of Allāh), which does not in any way mean that they were actually separated from really being the utter slaves of Allāh. Rather it means that the extremists (*ghulāt*) depicted them to possess the station of Divinity. Hence the phrase *azālanā* alludes to a kind of covering of their real station, which was their utter submission to God (‘*ubūdiyyah*).

... وَأَرَاَلْتَكُمْ عَنْ مَرَاتِبِكُمُ الَّتِي رَتَّبَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِيهَا

... and separated you from your stations *where Allāh had established you*

The phrase *rattabakum Allāhu fihā* in the verse explicitly informs us that the stations bestowed on the Ahl al-Bayt, irrespective of their kind and nature, are all Divine bestowals.

There is an implicit confession here that the station of Imāmah is not that which can be bestowed by fallible human beings. Neither election, nor selection, nor a committee, can select one who would have the deserving qualities and abilities to bear the great responsibilities of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) in the different dimensions of life.

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً دَفَعَتْكُمْ عَنْ مَقَامِكُمْ وَأَرَاَلْتَكُمْ عَنْ مَرَاتِبِكُمُ الَّتِي رَتَّبَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِيهَا

...and may Allāh expel from His mercy the community who removed you from your position and separated you from your stations where Allāh had established you...

The second person masculine plural object pronoun ‘*kum*’ iterated in this verse refers to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). In fact, whatever transpired on Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) esoterically also transpired on the rest of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) describing the calamity employs the first person plural pronoun “*nā*” revealing the sorrow of the entire Ahl al-Bayt (‘a):

إِنَّ الْمَحْرَمَ شَهْرٌ كَانَ أَهْلُ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يُحْرَمُونَ فِيهِ الْقِتَالُ فَاسْتُجِلَّتْ فِيهِ دِمَاؤُنَا وَهَيْكَلَتْ فِيهِ حُرْمَتُنَا وَسُيَ فِيهِ ذَرَارِيُنَا
وَنَسَاؤُنَا وَأُضْرِمَتِ النَّيْرَانُ فِي مَصَارِبِنَا وَأَنْتَهَبَ مَا فِيهَا مِنْ ثَقَلِنَا وَلَمْ تُرْعَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ حُرْمَةٌ فِي أَمْرِنَا إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْحُسَيْنِ
أَفْرَحَ جُفُونُنَا وَأَسْبَلَ دُمُوعُنَا وَأَدَّلَ عَزِيْرُنَا بِأَرْضِ كَرْبٍ وَبَلَاءٍ... فَعَلَى مِثْلِ الْحُسَيْنِ فَلَيْبِكَ الْبَاكُونَ فَإِنَّ الْبُكَاءَ عَلَيْهِ يَحْطُ
الدُّنُوبَ الْعِظَامَ.

Indeed Muḥarram is a month in which the people of the age of ignorance would

121 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.25, p. 297

prohibit war, but thereafter *our* blood was allowed to be spilled therein, *our* sanctity was violated, *our* children and women were taken as captives, the place where *our* tents lay was set on fire, *our* property was looted, and no esteem was observed for the Apostle of Allāh in *our* matter. Indeed the day of al-Ḥusayn wounded *our* eyelids, shed *our* tears, humiliated *our* revered in the land of *karb* (deep anguish) and *balā'* (trial)... Therefore for the likes of al-Ḥusayn ('a) the weepers must weep, for weeping over him drops the grave sins.¹²²

In the well-known Tradition of the Mantle, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) expressing his unity with his Ahl al-Bayt ('a) says:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْلُ بَيْتِي وَخَاصَّتِي وَحَامَّتِي، لَحْمُهُمْ لَحْمِي، وَدَمُهُمْ دَمِي، يُؤْلَمُنِي مَا يُؤْلَمُهُمْ، وَيَحْزُنُنِي مَا يَحْزُنُهُمْ، أَنَا حَرْبٌ لِمَنْ حَارَبَهُمْ، وَسِلْمٌ لِمَنْ سَالَمَهُمْ، وَعَدُوٌّ لِمَنْ عَادَاهُمْ، وَمُحِبٌّ لِمَنْ أَحَبَّهُمْ، إِنَّهُمْ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْهُمْ ...

O Allāh, indeed these are my Household, special to me, and intimate with me, their flesh is my flesh and their blood is my blood; whosoever hurts them hurts me, and whosoever makes them sad, makes me sad; I am at war with he who fights against them, and at peace with he who is at peace with them; I am an enemy of he who shows enmity to them, and a lover of he who loves them. Indeed they are from me and I from them.¹²³

Rather, whatever transpired on the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) transpired on their true followers (Shia) as well. Hence they express their sorrow or happiness according to the sorrow and happiness of their masters: In a tradition about the true followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى اطَّلَعَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ فَاخْتَارَنَا وَاخْتَارَ لَنَا شِيعَةً يَنْصُرُونَنَا وَيَفْرَحُونَ لِفَرْحَتِنَا وَيَحْزَنُونَ لِحُزْنِنَا وَيَبْذُلُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَنْفُسَهُمْ فِيْنَا أَوْلِيَاكَ مِنَّا وَإِلَيْنَا

Indeed Allāh, the abundantly gracious and exalted, inspected the earth and selected us, and he chose for us followers who help us; they get happy due to our happiness and sad due to our sadness; they spend their wealth and sacrifice themselves in our way. These are those who are from us, and get close to us.¹²⁴

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً ...

...and may Allāh expel from His mercy the community¹²⁵ (*ummah*)

Having realised earlier the broad connotation of the word *ummah*, which means “a group of people united due to a common thing in them”, invoking curse is not limited to the two fundamental oppressors. Rather all those who succeeded them in usurping the right of political leadership of the Islamic government or hid their spiritual stations are also worthy of being cursed.

The Abbasids, for example, whose entire history is brim with oppression and injustice against the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) cannot be excluded. All of them without exception oppressed the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and usurped their rights. When Ma'mūn with his ruse tried to coerce Imam al-Riḍā ('a) to accept the caliphate, the Imam ('a), presenting a beautiful reasoning, rejected the same. Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq in his *Amālī* narrates the conversation between Imam al-Riḍā ('a) and Ma'mūn as follows:

122 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.44, p. 283

123 *Mawsū'at al-Kalimāt al-Ḥusayn*, p. 76

124 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.44, p. 287

125 We have rendered *ummah* in this work as community, due to the sense of “common identity and characteristics” it conveys. Otherwise the limitations of time and place can be absent.

... فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَأْمُونُ: إِنِّي قَدْ رَأَيْتُ أَنْ أُعْزَلَ نَفْسِي عَنِ الْخِلَافَةِ وَأَجْعَلَهَا لَكَ وَأُبَايَعَكَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ الرِّضَا (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): إِنَّ كَانَتْ الْخِلَافَةُ لَكَ وَجَعَلَهَا اللَّهُ لَكَ، فَلَا يَجُوزُ أَنْ تَخْلَعَ لِإِسَاءَةِ اللَّهِ وَتَجْعَلَهُ لِعَيْرِكَ، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ الْخِلَافَةُ لِيَسْتِ لَكَ، فَلَا يَجُوزُ لَكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَأْمُونُ: يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ لَا بُدَّ لَكَ مِنْ قَبُولِ هَذَا الْأَمْرِ، فَقَالَ: لَسْتُ أَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ طَائِعًا أَبَدًا...

...So Ma'mūn said to the Imam ('a): Surely, I thought that I should remove myself from the caliphate and give it to you and pay my oath of allegiance to you. Thereupon al-Riḍā ('a) said: If the caliphate belongs to you and Allāh made it for you, then it is not permissible that you remove the apparel that Allāh has made you to wear, and render it for other than yourself. And if the caliphate does not belong to you, then you are not allowed to give me what is not your property. Ma'mūn [irritated by the Imam's sharp-witted response] said: O Son of the Messenger of Allāh, you must agree to this matter. The Imam ('a) said: I will never do that obediently...¹²⁶

Another example worthy of reflection is that of Imam Mūsā Ibn Ja'far ('a). Hārūn al-Rashīd informed the Imam ('a) that he is ready to return the land of Fadak to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). Thereupon Imam al-Kāzīm ('a) told him that he would not accept it save with all its boundaries. The following conversation transpired:

يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ خُذْ فَدَاكَ حَتَّى أَرُدُّهَا عَلَيْكَ، فَيَأْتِي، حَتَّى أَلْحَ عَلَيْهِ، فَقَالَ: لَا أَخُذُهَا إِلَّا بِحُدُودِهَا، قَالَ: وَمَا حُدُودُهَا؟ قَالَ: ... إِنَّ حَدِّدْتُهَا لَمْ تَرُدَّهَا، قَالَ: بِحَقِّ جَدِّكَ إِلَّا فَعَلْتُ، قَالَ: أَمَّا الْحَدُّ الْأَوَّلُ فَعِدَنُ، فَتَغَيَّرَ وَجْهُ الرَّشِيدِ، وَقَالَ: هَيْهَ، قَالَ: وَالْحَدُّ الثَّانِي سَرَ قَنْدُ، فَارْبَدَ وَجْهُهُ، قَالَ: وَالْحَدُّ الثَّلَاثُ أَفْرِيقِيَا، فَاسْوَدَّ وَجْهُهُ، وَقَالَ: هَيْهَ، قَالَ: وَالرَّابِعُ سَيْفُ الْبَحْرِ مِمَّا بَيْنَ الْخَزْرُ وَأَرْمِينِيَّةِ، قَالَ الرَّشِيدُ: فَلَمْ يَبْقَ لَنَا شَيْءٌ، قَالَ مُوسَى (ع): قَدْ أَعْلَمْتُكَ أَنِّي إِنْ حَدِّدْتُهَا لَمْ تَرُدَّهَا. فَعِنَدَ ذَلِكَ عَزَمَ عَلَى قَتْلِهِ.

O Abā al-Ḥasan, take Fadak so that I may return it to you. The Imam ('a) refused to accept until Hārūn persisted. Thereupon the Imam ('a) said: I will not take it except with its boundaries. Hārūn asked: And what are its boundaries? The Imam said: If I identify the boundaries you will not return it back. Hārūn said: I swear by the station of your grandfather, that I will return it. The Imam ('a) said: The first boundary is Eden. The colour of al-Rashīd's face changed. He said: Continue! The Imam ('a) said: The second boundary is Samarqand. Hārūn's face took on a glowering expression. The Imam ('a) continued and said: The third boundary is Africa. Hārūn's face turned black and gloomy. He said: Continue! The Imam ('a) said: The fourth boundary is the ocean, and whatever is beyond the Caspian Sea and Armenia. Thereupon Hārūn al-Rashīd said: Therefore nothing remains for us?! Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm ('a) said: Indeed I did inform you that if I identify the boundaries of Fadak, you will not be able to return the same! And at this instance Hārūn decided to kill the Imam.¹²⁷

'Abd al-Mun'im Ḥasan, having quoted the above narration in his book *Bi Nūri Fāṭimah Ihtadaytu* (I was guided through the light of Fāṭimah) concludes:

فدك إذا هي التعبير الثاني عن الخلافة الإسلامية والزهراء (سلام الله عليها) جعلت فدك مقدمة للوصول إلى الخلافة. فadak, therefore, is another expression for the Islamic caliphate, and al-Zahrā' ('a) made Fadak a foundation to attain the caliphate [and place it in its proper place].¹²⁸

126 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, p. 126

127 Jār Allāh al-Zamaksharī, *Rabī' al-Abrār*. Also see the following references: Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqibu Āli Abī Ṭālib* ('a), v.3, p. 435; Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.23, p. 200;

128 'Abd al-Mun'im Ḥasan, *Bi Nūri Fāṭimah Ihtadaytu*, p. 94

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً قَتَلَتْكُمْ

...and may Allāh expel from His mercy the community who slew you...

Although apparent history records one wretched person who mercilessly martyred Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), the reality is that a whole group is introduced as responsible for this act. Obviously according to Islamic law, not only is the immediate killer (*al-mubāshir*) responsible for a crime, but also the one who commanded (*al-āmir*) him to carry out the same. Rather, the latter’s crime is more despicable. Notice that the word *ummaḥ* has also been mentioned in the above phrase. The entire army of Yazīd who came to fight against Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), having a single aim, are known as the *qatalah* (killers) of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). Rather, all those who supported them even by word are among them.

In a ziyarah addressed to Ḥaḍrat Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās, we say:

قَتَلَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً قَتَلَتْكُمْ بِالْأَيْدِي وَاللُّسُنِ

May Allāh slay that community who slew you with actions and words.

Therefore, expressing support for Yazīd and his people, is actually to have participated in their crimes. Small wonder it is then that in some traditions we are told that our 12th Holy Imam (‘a) would even kill some of the descendents of the killers of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) because they enjoy the same spirit and aspire to do the same thing that their ancestors did.

In a tradition narrated in *Al-Burhān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān*, a person asks Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) about the interpretation of the Qur’ānic verse 17:33, and the Imam (‘a) says that it referred to the Qa’imu Ali Muḥammad (‘a) who will avenge for the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). Then at one point he (‘a) says:

يَقْتُلُ وَاللَّهِ ذُرَارِيَّ قَتَلَةَ الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) بِفِعَالِ آبَائِهَا

He [Qā’imu Āli Muḥammad (ṣ)] will kill, I swear by Allāh, the descendents of the slayers of al-Ḥusayn (‘a), due to what their forefathers did.¹²⁹

This tradition of Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) was known even during the time of Imam al-Riḍā (‘a). Unclear about its meaning, ‘Abd al-Salām al-Harawī asks Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) of his opinion about Imam al-Ṣādiq’s (‘a) statement, and the Imam (‘a) says: It is as he (‘a) had said. So al-Harawī argues and asks the meaning of the verse “*No bearer shall bear another’s burden*” (17:15). Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) in response says:

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فِي جَمِيعِ أَقْوَالِهِ، لَكِنَّ ذُرَارِيَّ قَتَلَةَ الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) يَرْضَوْنَ بِفِعَالِ آبَائِهِمْ وَيَفْتَخِرُونَ بِهَا وَمَنْ رَضِيَ شَيْئًا كَانَ كَمَنْ أَتَاهُ وَلَوْ أَنَّ رَجُلًا قُتِلَ فِي لَمَشْرِقِ فَرَضِي بِقَتْلِهِ رَجُلٌ فِي لَمَغْرِبِ لَكَانَ الرَّاضِي عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ شَرِيكَ الْقَاتِلِ وَإِنَّمَا يَقْتُلُهُمُ الْقَائِمُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) إِذَا خَرَجَ لِرِضَاهُمْ بِفِعَالِ آبَائِهِمْ

Allāh is right in all His words. However, the progeny of the slayers of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) would approve [and be pleased with] the deeds of their forefathers and they would boast of the same. And indeed whosoever sanctions an act is like one who has done the act. And if a person were to be killed in the East, and a man from the West were to approve his deed, the one who approves would be a participant in his murder. And indeed al-Qā’im (‘a) would kill them when he appears, because they approve and are happy with what their forefathers did.¹³⁰

129 Al-Shaykh al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān*, v.3, p. 528

130 Ibid

Cursing the Killers of al-Ḥusayn ('a) is Compulsory

Cursing the killers of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) does not require any intricate proof. The most lucid proof is the following verse of the Holy Qur'ān:

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَعَذَّبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعْنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا

Should anyone slay a believer intentionally, his requital shall be Hell, to remain in it [forever]; Allāh shall be wrathful at him and curse him and He shall prepare for him a great punishment. (4:93)

Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) was not only a believer but the very epitome of belief and Islam. Therefore his killers are more worthy of being cursed and abandoned from Divine mercy.

Those who deprive themselves from the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) opine that one should not invoke curses against Yazīd, for perhaps he repented before death. The infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), whom the Holy Prophet (ṣ) declared as authorities of religion in the well-known tradition of al-Thaqalayn, have themselves in various instances enlightened the Muslims about the identity of Yazīd. They have also explicitly cursed him, and therefore there is no room to doubt whether it is correct to curse Yazīd or not. In fact, they have said that the matter is so serious that the curse of Allāh is essential for the killers of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a). In a lengthy tradition, Maytham al-Tammār reports from Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī ('a) about what would transpire to Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) on the tenth of Muharram. At one point he says:

وَجَبَتْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى قَتَلَةِ الْحُسَيْنِ كَمَا وَجَبَتْ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ الَّذِينَ يَجْعَلُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ...

The curse of Allāh is obligatory on the slayers of al-Ḥusayn ('a) the way it is obligatory on the polytheists who associate another god with Allāh...¹³¹

Addressing his companion al-Rayyān Ibn Shabīb, Imam al-Riḍā ('a) says:

يَا بَنَ شَبِيبٍ إِنْ سَرَّكَ أَنْ تَسْكُنَ الْعُرْفَ الْمَبْنِيَّةَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ (ص) فَالْعَنْ قَتَلَةَ الْحُسَيْنِ

O son of Shabīb, if it pleases you to inhabit the rooms built in Paradise with the Prophet (ṣ), then curse the killers of al-Ḥusayn ('a).¹³²

The Holy Qur'ān says:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ. ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَلْؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ تَتَطَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِالْإِيمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِنْ يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسَارَى تُفَادُوهُمْ وَهُمْ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ ۚ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

And when We took a pledge from you: “You shall not shed your [own people’s] blood, and you shall not expel your folks from your homes,” you pledged, and you testify [to this pledge of your ancestors]. Then there you were, killing your folks and expelling a part of your folks from their homes, backing one another against them in sin and aggression! And if they came to you as captives, you would ransom them, though their expulsion itself was forbidden you. What! Do you believe in part of the Book and defy another part? So what is the requital of those of you who do that except disgrace in

131 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.45, p. 202

132 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.44, p. 285

the life of this world? And on the Day of Resurrection, they shall be consigned to the severest punishment. And Allāh is not oblivious of what you do. (2:84-85)

In a tradition narrated in *Tafsir Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askarī* (‘a) under the above verses, the Imam (‘a) is reported to have said:

... فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) لَمَّا نَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الْآيَةُ فِي الْيَهُودِ: هَؤُلَاءِ الْيَهُودُ [الَّذِينَ] نَقَضُوا عَهْدَ اللَّهِ، وَكَذَّبُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَقَتَلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ: أَفَلَا أَنْبَيْتُكُمْ بِمَنْ يُضَاهِيهِمْ مِنْ يَهُودِ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ قَالُوا: بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ. قَالَ: قَوْمٌ مِنْ أُمَّتِي يَنْتَحِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ مِلَّتِي، يَقْتُلُونَ أَفْضَلَ ذُرِّيَّتِي وَأَطْيَبَ أَرْوَمِي، وَيَبْدِلُونَ شَرِيْعِي وَسُنَّتِي، وَيَقْتُلُونَ وَلَدِي الْحَسَنَ وَالْحُسَيْنَ كَمَا قَتَلَ أَسْلَافُ هَؤُلَاءِ الْيَهُودِ زَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى. أَلَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَلْعَنُهُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَهُمْ، وَيَبْعَثُ عَلَى بَقَايَا ذُرَارِيهِمْ قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ هَادِيًا مَهْدِيًا مِنْ وُلْدِ الْحُسَيْنِ الْمَظْلُومِ، يَجْرِفُهُمْ [بِسُيُوفِ أَوْلِيَائِهِ] إِلَى نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ، أَلَا وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ قَتَلَةَ الْحُسَيْنِ وَمُحِبِّيهِمْ وَنَاصِرِيهِمْ، وَالسَّائِكِينَ عَنْ لَعْنِهِمْ مِنْ غَيْرِ تَقِيَّةٍ تُسَكِّتُهُمْ. أَلَا وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى الْبَاكِينَ عَلَى الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ (ع) رَحْمَةً وَشَفَقَةً، وَاللَّاعِنِينَ لِأَعْدَائِهِمْ وَالْمُتَلَيِّنِينَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْظًا وَحَتْفًا، أَلَا وَإِنَّ الرَّاضِينَ بِقَتْلِ الْحُسَيْنِ (ع) شُرَكَاءُ قَتَلِيهِ.

...So the Messenger of Allāh (ṣ) said when this verse was revealed about the Jews: These are the Jews who broke their covenant with Allāh, rejected the Apostles of Allāh, and slew the close servants of Allāh. Should I not inform you of those who resemble them from the Jews of this nation? They [companions who were with him] said: Of course O Apostle of Allāh! The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said: They are a people from my nation who would claim to be followers of my religion, and will slay the best of my progeny and the most pleasant of my lineage; they would change my religion and tradition, and will slay my two sons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (‘a) in the manner that the predecessors of these Jews slew Zakariyyah and Yahyā. Indeed Allāh curses them the way He cursed them [i.e. the Jews], and will send a Guide from the progeny of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) before the Day of Resurrection to the remnants of their progeny, who would turn them by the swords of his close companions to the Hell Fire. Indeed, curse be on the slayers of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and their lovers, helpers, and those who are silent in cursing, without any dissimulation (taqiyya) silencing them. Indeed, and may Allāh’s abundant mercy pour down on those who weep over al-Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī in mercy and pity, who curse their enemies, and are filled with anger and rage against them. Indeed, those who are happy with the slaying of al-Ḥusayn are partners in crime with his slayers.¹³³

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْمُمَهِّدِينَ لَهُمْ بِالتَّمْكِينِ مِنْ قِتَالِكُمْ

...and may Allāh expel from His mercy those who facilitated for them the possibility to combat with you.

“*Al-mumahhidīn*” in this verse literally means ‘those who prepared or facilitated’. It is the plural of the word “*mumahhid*” (one who prepares, facilitates, paves the way, etc.). Its origin is from the root m.h.d, which signifies ‘to make a place ready for residing and rest’.¹³⁴

And al-tamkīn signifies “to make possible”. It is derived from the word ‘*kawn*’ (to be).

In this phrase therefore, we invoke Divine curse on those who facilitated and paved the way (*al-mumahhidīn*) for the slayers of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) whether directly or indirectly, by making it possible (*bi al-tamkin*) to combat with the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in the plains of Karbala.

In order to understand how the usurpation of successorship of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), which was a

133 *Tafsir Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askarī* (‘a), pp. 368-369

134 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, v.11, p. 189

Divinely ordained right, facilitated the Karbala tragedy, we would like to draw your attention to the following brief chronology of events:

A CHRONOLOGY LINKING KARBALA TO SAQIFAH

10 AH: On the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) is explicitly declared as the successor of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) in Ghadīr Khumm. This is followed by words of congratulations from Abū Bakr and 'Umar.

11 AH: On the 26th of Safar the Holy Prophet (ṣ) orders Abū Bakr, 'Umar, Uthmān, and other companions from the Muhājirūn to accompany Usāmah Ibn Zayd in an expedition against the Romans, but they do not respond positively. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) curses them.

On the 28th of Safar the Holy Prophet (ṣ) leaves this world at the age of 63 years.

On the 28th Safar while Imam 'Alī ('a) and some companions were busy with the burial arrangement of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), a group of people fled to Saqīfah and chose Abū Bakr as the caliph after the Holy Prophet (ṣ).

- During Abū Bakr's reign, Yazīd Ibn Abū Sufyān is made the governor in Damascus.
- During Abū Bakr's reign, Hadrat Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' ('a) seeks a written title deed of a land called Fadak that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) had gifted her during his life time, but is ultimately deprived of the same.
- As promised by the Holy Prophet (ṣ), Hadrat Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' ('a) left this world very soon after him. Prior to her demise she assertively said that two particular companions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) were not allowed to attend her funeral ceremony.
- Just before his death, Abū Bakr sought a paper and a pen to write his last will. His state at that moment, as historical accounts explicitly indicate, was not balanced. As he wrote about his successor, he fell unconscious, and the remaining contents of his will was written by 'Uthmān. 'Uthmān wrote 'Umar's name as the second caliph, and when Abū Bakr gained consciousness, he agreed to what had been written. We should try to compare this scenario with the scenario of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) who sought a paper and a pen, but was deprived of the same and told by one of the companions "*innahu la yahjur*" (indeed he is speaking nonsense).

13 AH: On the 22nd of Jamādi al-Thānī Abū Bakr dies at the age of 68 years, and 'Umar succeeds him through the former's written appointment.

21 AH: After the sickness of Yazīd Ibn Abū Sufyān 'Umar appoints the former's brother, Mu'āwiyah Ibn Abū Sufyān as the governor in Damascus.

23 AH: 'Umar is murdered on the 9th of Rabī' al-Awwal¹³⁵ and 'Uthmān Ibn al-'Āffān comes to office by the appointment of a committee engineered by 'Umar during his life time.

Mu'āwiyah continued to subsist as governor of Syria as he strengthened his kingdom and sovereignty.

35 AH: On the 18th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah which is also the anniversary of 'Īd al-Ghadīr, 'Uthmān Ibn al-'Āffān was murdered in his house. His age at that time is recorded to be 90.

Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) gains his usurped right after 23 years.

¹³⁵ According to another account 'Umar was murdered on the 26th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah.

36 AH: On the 10th of Jamādi al-Ūlā ‘Ā’ishah & her supporters like Ṭalḥah and Zubayr challenge Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) in the battle of Jamal, and they are completely defeated.

38 AH: On the 1st of Safar Mu‘āwiyah challenges Imam ‘Alī (‘a) in Ṣiffīn. Thereafter Imam is near to gaining victory when ‘Amr Ibn ‘Āṣ deceives a group of ignorant people by ordering Qur’āns to be raised on lances and announcing that Qur’ān should be kept as a judge to decipher who is with the truth. This leads to a forced ceasefire.

39 AH: The harebrained Kharijites challenge Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a) in the battle of Nahrawān. On the 9th of Safar Imam (‘a) defeats them completely.

40 AH: Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a) is martyred on the 21st of Ramaḍān by Ibn Muljim al-Murādī, a Kharijite who swore near the Ka‘bah to slay Imam during prayer.

Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a) succeeds the Imāmah and is reckoned officially as the caliph.¹³⁶

At the onset of his caliphate, Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a) heads to fight with the Umayyads, but is betrayed by his own army in several places. Among those who betrayed the Imam were the remnants of the Kharijites.

41 AH: Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a) agrees to sign an accord of understanding with Mu‘āwiyah. Among the conditions of the agreement was that Mu‘āwiyah should not appoint any successor after him. Mu‘āwiyah does not keep the conditions, and later seeks support for his son Yazīd’s future caliphate in different parts of the Muslim world.

Mu‘āwiyah rules as the caliph after having been a governor for twenty years (21 AH - 41 AH).

50 AH: Mu‘āwiyah plots to poison Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a) and Imam (‘a) is poisoned through one of his wives, Ja‘dah daughter of Ash‘ath Ibn Qays al-Kindī, and on the 7th of Safar attains martyrdom at the age of 47.

56 AH: Mu‘āwiyah, being unfaithful to his agreement with Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a), seeks the people’s oath of allegiance for his lawless and corrupt product Yazīd as his successor.¹³⁷

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) disagrees to pay the oath of allegiance to Yazīd.

60 AH: On the 12th of Rajab Mu‘āwiyah dies at the age of 78 years as a Christian¹³⁸ (after having been in Damascus for 39 years (21-60 AH)), and on the 15th of Rajab his product Yazīd forcefully becomes the caliph.

Yazīd orders for those who have not paid the oath of allegiance to do so. He says that if Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) refuses to pay allegiance (bay‘ah) he should be beheaded.

On the 28th of Rajab Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), realising the chaos created in the Islamic world and the necessity of Islam’s revival, leaves Madīnah for Makkah and begins his uprising. Then, on 8th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, he heads towards Kūfah, and finally before reaching Kūfah diverges towards Karbala.

61 AH: On the 10th of Muḥarram Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is martyred in the plains of Karbala.

136 Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, v.2, p. 9

137 The Glowing Spirit al-Allāmah Amīnī in his unparalleled masterpiece *al-Ghadīr* narrates this date from Ibn Kathīr in his historical work *Ta’rīkh Ibn Kathīr* (v.8, p. 79)

138 There are historical evidences that indicate Mu‘āwiyah dies as a Christian and not a Muslim.

Hence the distance from Saqīfah to Karbala is 41 years. Saqīfah was a manifestation of a practical rejection of the word of God. It was the foundation of so many subsequent turmoils within the Muslim world:

In his *Riyād al-Madh wa al-Rathā'*, Sayyid Bāqir al-Hindī says:

كُلُّ عَدْرِ وَقَوْلٍ وَأَفْكِ وَزُورٍ هُوَ فَرْعُ جَحْدِ نَصِّ الْعَدِيرِ

*Every betrayal, malicious gossip, lie, and falsehood
Was an offshoot of the denial of the explicit tradition of al-Ghadīr.*

Here al-Hindī would like to reveal that due to the denial of the explicit narration of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)'s selection of Amīr al-mu'mīnīn 'Alī ('a) as his immediate successor in Ghadīr Khumm, incidents of betrayal, malicious gossip, lie and falsehood came to transpire.

Mullā Ṣadrā, the great gnostic and philosopher, in his brilliant work "*Seh Aṣl*" alluding to the pivotal role of Saqīfah in the creation of Karbala says:

قُتِلَ الْحُسَيْنُ يَوْمَ السَّقِيفَةِ

Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) was slain on the day of Saqīfah¹³⁹

'Allamah Majlisī mentions something similar in his *Bihār al-Anwār* when he says:

وَلَيْعَمَ مَا قِيلَ: مَا قُتِلَ الْحُسَيْنُ إِلَّا فِي يَوْمِ السَّقِيفَةِ

How excellent is what is said that al-Ḥusayn ('a) was not slain save on the Day of al-Saqīfah.¹⁴⁰

In reality, he wants to tell us that the basis and foundation for Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a)'s martyrdom was laid in Saqīfah. This is because it is the usurpation of the caliphate that paved the way for the likes of Mu'āwiyah and Yazīd into the Islamic government, as a consequence of which the tragedy of Karbala came to transpire.

Perhaps his source of inspiration was the following couplets of Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn Qar'ah:

لولا اعتداء رعية ألقى سياستها الخليفة
وسيوف أعداء بها هاماتنا أبدا نقيفة
لنشرت من أسرار آل محمد جملا لطيفة
يغنيكمو عما رواه مالك وأبو حنيفة
وأريتكم أن الحسين أصيب في يوم السقيفة
ولأبي حال ألدت بالليل فاطمة الشريفة

*Was it not for the transgression of subjects
A policy adopted by the caliph
And the swords of the enemies
By which our heads would always be slashed
Indeed I would have disseminated some secrets
Of the Progeny of Muḥammad which are subtle*

139 Mullā Ṣadrā, *Seh Aṣl*, p. 113

140 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, v.45, p. 328

*They would suffice you from what Mālik and Abū Ḥanīfah have narrated
And I would have shown you that al-Ḥusayn
Was slain on the Day of Saqīfah
And the reason why the Exalted Fāṭimah was buried at night¹⁴¹*

Ayatullah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Kāshif al-Ghiṭā, in one of his poetry writes:

تَا اللهُ مَا كَرَبَلَاءَ لَوْلَا سَقِيْفَتُهُمْ وَمِثْلُ هَذَا الْفَرْعِ ذَاكَ الْأَصْلُ أَنْتَجَهُ

By Allāh, Karbala would not have transpired was it not for their Saqīfah And a branch like this was the product of that root¹⁴²

In some narrations Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is called *al-maqtūl yawm al-ithnayn*¹⁴³ (the one slain on Monday), which is a clear allusion to the Saqīfah calamity.

Perhaps the following tradition of Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) alludes to the same tragedy:

مَا أُصِيبَ آلُ مُحَمَّدٍ إِلَّا فِي يَوْمِ الْإِثْنَيْنِ

The progeny of Muḥammad was not afflicted with a calamity save on a Monday.¹⁴⁴

Al-Isfahānī in his *al-Anwār al-Qudsiyyah* alluding to how the arrow that severed the neck of ‘Alī Aṣghar, the six month old son of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), was facilitated in the event of Saqīfah says:

وَمَا رَمَاهُ إِذْ رَمَاهُ حَرْمَلَةٌ
وَإِنَّمَا رَمَاهُ مِنْ مَهْدَ لَهُ
سَهْمٌ أَتَى مِنْ جَانِبِ السَّقِيْفَةِ
وَقَوْسُهُ عَلَى يَدِ الْخَلِيْفَةِ

*Ḥarmalah did not throw [the arrow] when he threw [it]
Only he threw [the arrow] who facilitated for him to throw
An arrow that came from the side of Saqīfah While the bow
was in the hands of the Khalīfah.¹⁴⁵*

141 *Kashf al-Ghumma*, v.1, p. 505

142 *Adab al-Ṭaff*, v.10, p. 57 (<http://www.rafed.net/books/shear/adab-altaff-10/04.html>)

143 Al-Shaykh Shūshtarī, *Fawā'id al-Mashāhid*, p. 458

144 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, v.4, p. 146

145 Al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Isfahānī, *Al-Anwār al-Qudsiyyah*, p. 151

CHAPTER 11

بَرَّئْتُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَإِلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُمْ، وَمِنْ أَشْيَاعِهِمْ وَاتِّبَاعِهِمْ
وَأَوْلِيَائِهِمْ، يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِنِّي سَلِّمٌ لِمَنْ سَلَّمَكُمْ،
وَحَرْبٌ لِمَنْ حَارَبَكُمْ، إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

In my recourse to Allāh and to you, I dissociate myself from them, their partisans, their followers, and their friends; O Abā ‘Abdillāh, surely I am at peace with he who is at peace with you, and at war with he who is at war with you, until the Day of Resurrection.

بَرَّئْتُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَإِلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُمْ

In my recourse to Allāh and to you, I dissociate myself from them...

COMMENTARY

In this verse we are expressing our detachment from all those whom we cursed in the previous verses. Although in the past tense, the verb *bari'tu* is employed to express renunciation and detachment in the present.

The triconsonantal root (*jadr thulāthī*) of the verb *bari'a* is said to signify *al-tabā'ud min al-naqṣi wa al-'ayb* (to distance oneself from imperfection and defect).¹ Hence the Abrahamic call “*Innī barī'un mim mā tushrikūn*”, for example, would be rendered as “Indeed I am detached from what you associate with Allāh”. (6:78)

The authoritative Shia linguist Ibn Ma'sūm, while explaining the verse “*wa anā abra'u ilayka min an astakbira*” of supplication 12 of *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah*, defines the word *abra'u* as follows:

أَبْرَأُ إِلَيْكَ أَيُّ أَتْبَاعَهُ ... وَعَدَاهُ بِيَالِي لِتَضْمِينِهِ مَعْنَى الْإِلْتِجَاءِ: أَيُّ أَبْرَأُ مُلْتَجِئًا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْإِسْتِكْبَارِ

Abra'u ilayka means I distance myself...; and he ('a) made it transitive with the preposition *ilā* to include the meaning of *al-iltijā'* (seeking refuge). In other words, it means “I distance myself while having recourse to You, from the seeking pride”.²

In supplication 52 of *al-Ṣaḥīfah al-Sajjādiyyah*, explaining the phrase “*wa bari'tu mimman 'abada siwāk*” Ibn Ma'sūm says:

وَبَرَّئْتُ مِنْهُ ... إِنْ فَصَلَ عَنْهُ وَقَطَعَ عُلُقَتَهُ بِهِ، أَيُّ بَرَّئْتُ مِمَّنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَيْهَا غَيْرَكَ كَعَبْدَةِ الْأَوْثَانِ وَالشَّمْسِ وَالنَّجْمِ وَغَيْرِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ

Wa bari'a minhu...means he separated from it and cut ties with it. Hence it (the phrase under discussion) would mean “I separate myself from he who takes a god other than You, such as the worshippers of idols, the sun, the star, etc.” And Allāh is All-Knowing.³

Therefore when we say “*bari'tu ilā Allāhi wa ilaykum minhum*” we mean “While having recourse to Allāh and to you (the Household of the Prophet (ṣ)), I dissociate myself from the aforementioned wrongdoers and oppressors”.

وَ (مِنْ) أَشْيَاعِهِمْ وَأَتْبَاعِهِمْ وَأَوْلِيَاءِهِمْ

...and (from) their supporters, their followers, and their friends

Among those from whom we separate ourselves as we take recourse to Allāh and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), are the partisans, followers and close and intimate associates of the oppressors.

This informs us of a vital truth: Supporting, following, or befriending the fundamental oppressors, makes one to be classified among them.

1 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq*, v.1, p. 240

2 Sayyid 'Alī Khān (Ibn Ma'sūm), *Riyāḍ al-Sālikīn*, v.2, pp. 513-514

3 Sayyid 'Alī Khān, *Riyāḍ al-Sālikīn*, v.7, p. 381

The word أَشْيَاءُ *ashyā'* is the plural of شَيْعٌ *shiya'*, which is the plural of شَيْعَةٌ *shī'ah*. Hence *ashyā'* in Arabic terminology is *jam' al-jam'* (plural of a plural).⁴ The Holy Qur'ān employs this word as follows:

وَحِيلَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُونَ كَمَا فُعِلَ بِأَشْيَاعِهِمْ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي شَكٍّ مُّرِيبٍ

And between them and their desires, is placed a barrier, as was done in the past with *their partisans*⁵ (*ashyā'ihim*); for they were indeed in suspicious doubt. (34:54)

Ibn Fāris in his *Mu'jam* says:

الشيخ والياء والعين اصلان يدل أحدهما على معاضدة ومساعدة والآخر على بث وإشادة

Shīn, yā', and *'ayn* have two root meanings: (a) *Mu'āḍadah & musā'afah* (to support), and (b) *Bathth wa ishādah* (to spread)⁶

The word *shī'ah* would therefore either signify “one who supports” or “one who spreads and disseminates”. Consequently *ashyā'* in the phrase “*min ashyā'ihim*” are the abundant supporters or disseminators. In this verse we are saying that we distance ourselves from such supporters and disseminators of the culture of oppression.

The word *atbā'* is the plural of *tābi'* the same way as *aṣḥāb* is the plural of *ṣāhib* and *aṭhār* the plural of *tāhir*. *Tābi'* literally means “follower of one's track”. Its triconsonantal root meaning is “to follow and move, whether through action or thought, behind something, be it material or spiritual”.⁷ Hence *atbā'* are those who follow the footsteps of another. In this verse the *atbā'* are all those who followed, follow, or will follow the footsteps of the founders of oppression against the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

Appreciating the Crux of Barā'ah

If we study the crux of *barā'ah* mentioned in the verse under discussion we realise that it delineates a journey for all the human beings. Basically, we take recourse to Allāh and His manifestations (the Ahl al-Bayt), as we desert and detach ourselves from the manifestations of Satan, who laid the foundation of wrongdoing and injustice against the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). In simple words, we seek refuge in Allāh and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) while separating ourselves from the oppressors and their deeds. If we consider this reality in a more universal way, we come to realise that it demarcates a journey to which every human being innately aspires. The disposition of every human being is naturally drawn away from imperfection and inclined towards perfection. In order for one to be successful in this journey one must have a point of recourse and refuge. Intellectually speaking, since Almighty Allāh is the only independently invincible power, we are naturally drawn to take recourse in Him. And since He has laid a system of cause and effect and has kept intermediaries of power to be the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt ('a), we are also allowed to seek shelter in them. The beauty here is that both “the refuge” as well as “the destination” is one and the same. This is because when we flee from imperfection we are actually heading towards absolute perfection, whose reality is Allāh. And as we journey towards absolute perfection Satan will not leave us alone. He would come in different ways to intercept us from continuing our journey. The Holy Qur'ān, quoting Satan, says:

4 Al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, v.14, p. 318

5 A partisan is one who takes part or sides with another; an adherent or supporter of a party, person, or cause; especially a devoted or zealous supporter; often in an unfavourable sense: One who supports his party ‘through thick and thin’; a blind, prejudiced, unreasoning, or fanatical adherent (OED)

6 Ibn Fāris, *Mu'jam Maqāyis al-Lughah*, v.3, p. 235

7 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq*, v.1, p. 377

قَالَ فِيمَا أَعُوذُ بِكَ لَأَفْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ. ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

“As You have consigned me to perversity,” he said, “I will surely lie in wait for them on Your straight path. Then I will come at them from their front and from their rear, and from their right and their left, and You will not find most of them to be grateful.” (7:16-17)

Hence we need a shelter and refuge which is invincible; and there is no refuge and shelter more powerful than Almighty Allāh.

In conclusion, although our declaration here is against the oppressors and their allies, we must realise that these oppressors are not different from their thoughts, intentions, resolutions, words, and actions. According to scholars of insight, the human being is made up of his thoughts, words and deeds. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī in his *Mathnawī* says:

ای برادر تو همان اندیشه ای مابقی خود استخوان و ریشه ای

*O brother you are the very thought that you have
The remaining of you are bones and skin*

Mullā Ṣadrā and other great Shia philosophers like the contemporary effulgent star of mystical sciences ‘Allāmah Ḥasan Zadeh Amulī, have explained and proven the concept of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible (*ittiḥād al-‘āqil bi al-ma‘qūl*) in great detail in their philosophical works.⁸ This concept establishes that knowledge becomes one with the knower. Due to the limitations of this work, we do not want to go into the details about this sublime concept.

Concerning the “unity of the doer and the deed” (*ittiḥād al-‘āmil bi al-amal*), which is one of the derivative discussions of the concept of the unity of the intelligent and the intelligible (*ittiḥād al-‘āqil bi al-ma‘qūl*), ‘Allāmah Ḥasan Zadeh Amulī writes in his masterpiece on spiritual anthropology *Sarḥ al-‘Uyūn fī Sharḥ al-‘Uyūn*:

اعلم أنّ الإنسان ليس إلا علمه وعمله وهما يتحدان بالنفس اتحاداً وجودياً، بل الأمر أرفع من التعبير بالاتحاد، فإنّ وزانهما مع النفس وزان الجدار مثلاً مع أحجاره ولبنه وطينه، والجدار ليس إلا هي، والنفس تتسع بهما اتساعاً وجودياً، والعلم مشخّص الروح الإنساني، والعمل مشخّص بدنه الأخرى

Know that the human being is nothing but his knowledge and action, and they both are united existentially with the soul. Rather, the matter is higher than expressing it in terms of unity, for their example in relation to the soul is the example of the wall in relation to the stones, bricks and clay that form it; the wall, as can be understood, is nothing but these objects. Furthermore, the soul existentially expands through both of them [knowledge and action], and whereas knowledge determines the human spirit, action determines his afterlife body.⁹

Therefore, if we remove the particularities of this verse (*bari‘tu ilā Allāh...*), and act accordingly, it would enable us to journey to the path of perfection. The late gnostic Ayatullah Anṣārī Ḥamadāni is reported to have said:

همان مقدار که دوستی اهل بیت (ع) می تواند موصل الی المحبوب باشد، همان مقدار هم می تواند برائت از دشمنانشان انسان را به خدا برساند و انسان

⁸ ‘Allāmah Ḥasan Zadeh Amulī has written a separate treatise on the *Unity of the Intelligent and the Intelligible* in the Persian language.

⁹ ‘Allāmah Ḥasan Zadeh Amulī, *Sarḥ al-‘Uyūn fī Sharḥ al-‘Uyūn*, p. 923

In the same proportion that love of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) can make one reach the All-Beloved, expressing hatred against their enemies can also make one reach God. The human being must have both together.¹⁰

Martyr Murtaḍā Muṭahharī in his commentary of the Qur'ān says:

... ولی اسلام دین توی و تبری است، دین نفی و اثبات با یکدیگر است، دینی است که حتی نفیش تقدم دارد بر اثباتش، به قول علای اخلاق «تخلیه» تقدم دارد بر «تخلیه»؛ یعنی اول بریدن از غیر او، بعد به او پیوند کردن

Islam however, is a religion of *tawallī* and *tabarrī*, a religion of negation and affirmation together, a religion whose very negation precedes its affirmation, and in the expression of the scholars of ethics, *takhliyah* (emptying spiritual impurities from oneself) precedes *taḥliyah* (self-beautification with excellent characteristics).

In his *Akhlāq dar Qur'ān*, Ayatullah Makārim al-Shīrāzī, one of the contemporary referral authorities of Islamic law (*marāji*'), says:

این توی و تبری یا «حبّ فی الله و بغض فی الله» یکی از گامهای بسیار مهم و مؤثر در تهذیب نفس و سیر و سلوک الی الله است.

This *tawallī* and *tabarrī*, or [in other words] “love in the way of Allāh and hatred in the way of Allāh” is one of the most important and influential steps in the purification of the soul and spiritual wayfaring to Allāh.¹¹

In a beautiful tradition Imam al-Bāqir ('a) clearly reveals the effect of *al-tawallī* and *al-tabarrī* on those who wish to remove the veils that separate them from Allāh. He is reported to have said:

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ لَا يَكُونَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ حِجَابٌ حَتَّى يَنْظُرَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَنْظُرَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ فَلْيَتَوَلَّ آلَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَيَتَبَرَّأْ مِنْ عَدُوِّهِمْ، وَيَأْتَمَّ بِالْإِمَامِ مِنْهُمْ، فَإِنَّهُ إِذَا كَانَ كَذَلِكَ نَظَرَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَنَظَرَ إِلَى اللَّهِ.

Whosoever likes to have no veil between him and Allāh, such that he looks at Allāh and Allāh looks at him, must express his love for the progeny of Muḥammad (ṣ) and express his detachment from their enemies, and follow an Imam from among them, for indeed if this happens, Allāh will look at him, and he will look at Allāh.¹²

This tradition has numerous allusions worthy of contemplation. Here we shall suffice with the following two:

- a) The phrase *ḥattā yanẓura Allāhu ilayhi* (such that Allāh looks at him), should not make us conjecture that Allāh cannot see us before we practise *al-tawallī* and *al-tabarrī*. Almighty Allāh has absolute knowledge of every element of every being. He is *al-Muḥīṭ* (the All-Encompasser) in the most perfect connotation of the word. In light of the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) we come to realise that this expression is to signify special attention and favour. In another tradition, explaining this phrase, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have stated:

... وَمَنْ نَظَرَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ لَمْ يُعَذِّبْهُ أَبَدًا

...And Allāh will never punish one whom He looks at.¹³

10 <http://www.rasekhoon.net/article/show-9532.aspx>

11 Ayatullah Nāṣir Makārim al-Shīrāzī, *Akhlāq dar Qur'ān*, v.1, p. 375

12 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.27, pp. 51-52

13 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Khiṣāl*, p. 318

‘Allāmah Majlisī in his *Biḥār al-Anwār*, after quoting the abovementioned tradition, explains it as follows:

بيان: نظره إلى الله كناية عن غاية المعرفة بحسب طاقته وقابليته، ونظر الله إليه كناية عن نهاية اللطف والرحمة.

Exposition: The servant looking at Allāh alludes to the state of ultimate gnosis (*ghāyat al-ma‘rifah*) according to his ability and aptitude, and Allāh looking at him alludes to utmost kindness and mercy.¹⁴

- b) The insightful scholars indeed appreciate how profound and important the phrase “*an lā yakūna baynahu wa bayna Allāh ḥijābun*” (...that no veil exists between him and Allāh) is. In other traditions that speak of the same subject the expression that has been employed is “*an yanzura ilā Allāhi bi ghayri ḥijābin*...” (...to look at Allāh without a veil).¹⁵

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ...

O Abā ‘Abdillāh...

Here once again we address Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) directly, which pre-requires us to feel his presence and see him. Earlier in volume one of this commentary (pp. 7-8) we mentioned how important it is for us to attain receptivity if we would like to address the Imam (‘a) directly and hear his response. We also mentioned some noteworthy examples of the insightful who had attained the maturity of receptiveness. Here we would like to mention another interesting incident, which reveals the fact that the door is open for all. What is required, however, is struggle and effort on our part.

In his *Biḥār al-Anwār* Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī narrates:

رُوي عَنْ أَبِي بَصِيرٍ قَالَ دَخَلْتُ الْمَسْجِدَ مَعَ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): وَالنَّاسُ يَدْخُلُونَ وَيَخْرُجُونَ فَقَالَ لِي سَلِ النَّاسَ هَلْ يَرَوْنِي فَكُلُّ مَنْ لَقِيْتُهُ قُلْتُ لَهُ أَرَأَيْتَ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ يَقُولُ لَا وَهُوَ وَاقِفٌ حَتَّى دَخَلَ أَبُو هَارُونَ الْمَكْفُوفُ قَالَ سَلْ هَذَا فَقُلْتُ هَلْ رَأَيْتَ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ فَقَالَ أَلَيْسَ هُوَ بِقَائِمٍ قُلْ وَمَا عَلِمْتُكَ قَالَ وَكَيْفَ لَا أَعْلَمُ وَهُوَ نُورٌ سَاطِعٌ

Abū Baṣīr is reported to have said: I entered the mosque with Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir] (‘a) while the people were entering and exiting from the mosque. So the Imam (‘a) said to me: Ask the people, whether they can see me. Therefore, I asked whosoever I met, whether he had seen Abū Ja‘far (‘a), and he would reply in the negative, despite Abū Ja‘far (‘a) standing [nearby], until Abū Hārūn, a blind man, entered the mosque. So the Imam (‘a) said to me: Ask him [the same question]. And I said to him: Have you seen Abū Ja‘far? He said: Isn’t he the one standing? I asked: And how do you know? Abū Hārūn replied: And how can I not know, *while he (the Imam) is a radiating*¹⁶ *light*...¹⁷

In his *Mustadrakāt ‘Ilmi Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, Al-Shāhrūdī says:

14 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.27, p. 52

15 Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Khālid al-Barqī, *Al-Maḥāsīn*, v.1, p. 6

16 In one of the *Ziyārāt* of Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) we address him as follows: “...Peace be unto you, O radiating light” (*Assalāmu ‘alayka ayyuha al-nūr al-sāṭi*): (*Al-Marhūn, A‘māl al-Ḥaramayn*, p. 176). We employ the same expression in the *ziyārah* of Imam al-Kāzīm (‘a) (Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.99, p. 16) and the *ziyārah* of Imam al-Jawād (‘a) (Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.99, p. 20). Describing an infallible Imam, Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) is reported to have said: The Imam is the illuminating full moon, the lit lamp, *the radiating light*, the guiding star in the darkness of darkness... (Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.1, p. 198)

17 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.46, p. 243; Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī, *Al-Kharā‘ij wa al-Jarā‘ih*, v.2, pp. 595-596; Al-‘Āmilī, *Al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaḥīm*, v.2, p. 183

وهذا يدل على جلالته وكمال معرفته. . .

This shows his majesty and perfect gnosis...¹⁸

This incident serves as a universal anecdote for people of reflection. Abū Hārūn was not a prophet or infallible leader. He was an obedient companion of Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) and with struggle and effort he attained a high level of perfection, such that he was able to decipher the presence of the Imam (‘a) through the eye of his heart (*baṣīrah*).

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِنِّي سَلِمٌ لِمَنْ سَلِمَ مِنْكُمْ
وَحَرْبٌ لِمَنْ حَارَبَكُمْ، إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

O Abā ‘Abdillāh, surely I am at peace with he who is at peace with you, and at war with he who is at war with you, until the Day of Resurrection.

This declaration is reminiscent of so many traditions¹⁹ where the Holy Prophet (ṣ) addressing Ahl al-Kisā’ would say:

أَنَا سَلِمٌ لِمَنْ سَلِمَ مِنْكُمْ وَحَرْبٌ لِمَنْ حَارَبَكُمْ

I am at peace with he who is at peace with you, and at war with he who is at war with you.

The word *silm* literally means peace. The esteemed Shia lexicographer Ibn al-Sikkīt in his authoritative lexicon *Iṣlāḥ al-Manṭiq* defining both *al-salm* and *al-silm* says that they both signify *al-ṣulḥ* (peace).²⁰

The word *ḥarb* signifies *naqīd al-silm* (the contradictory of *silm* (peace)).²¹ Ibn al-Sikkīt in his *Iṣlāḥ*, however, defines it as follows:

والحرب: مصدر حَرَبَ يَحْرِبُ حَرْبًا إِذَا اشْتَدَّ غَضَبُهُ

Harb is the infinitive of the verbs *ḥariba*, *yaḥrabu*, *ḥarban*. [We say *ḥariba*] when “his anger intensifies”.²²

Hence, we are expressing our peace and harmony with those who are at peace with Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and disharmony with those who are at war with them.

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِنِّي سَلِمٌ لِمَنْ سَلِمَ مِنْكُمْ

O Abā ‘Abdillāh, surely I am at peace with he who is at peace with you

One of the meanings of *silm* is *al-islām* and *al-istislām* (submission).²³ In this case we are expressing our submission to those who are submissive to Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

The Holy Qur’ān says:

18 Al-Shāhrūdī, *‘Ilmi Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, v.8, p. 470

19 ‘Allamah Mīrzā Abū al-Faḍl Tehrānī, *Shifā’ al-Ṣuḍur*, p. 215, Ayatullah Ḥabībullah Kāshānī, *Sharḥu Ziyārāt ‘Ashūrā’*, p. 65

20 Ibn al-Sikkīt al-Ahwāzī, *Tarṭību Iṣlāḥ al-Manṭiq*, p. 202; Al-Jawharī, *Al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, v.5, p. 1951

21 Al-Khalīl al-Farāhīdī, *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, v.3, p. 213

22 Ibn al-Sikkīt al-Ahwāzī, *Tarṭību Iṣlāḥ al-Manṭiq*, p. 124

23 Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzil wa Asrār al-Ta’wīl*, v.1, p. 133; Ibn ‘Ajībāh, *Al-Baḥr al-Madīd fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān al-Majīd*, v.1, p. 235

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

O you who have faith! Enter into submission, all together, and do not follow in Satan's steps; he is indeed your manifest enemy. (2:208)

Abū Basir is reported to have said that Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) after reciting “*O you who have faith! Enter into submission, all together, and do not follow in Satan's steps...*” asked him whether he knew the meaning of *al-silm* indicated in the verse, and he replied that the Imam knew better. Thereupon Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) said:

وَلَايَةٌ عَلَيَّ وَالْأَيُّمَةُ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ - قَالَ: وَخُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ - وَاللَّهِ - وَلَايَةٌ فُلَانٌ وَفُلَانٌ

It [i.e. *silm*] means the guardianship of ‘Alī and his successors after him, and the phrase *khuṭuwāt al-shayṭān*, I swear by Allāh, is the guardianship of so-and-so (fulan) and so-and-so (fulan).²⁴

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِيَّي سَلِمْتُ لِمَنْ سَلِمَ مِنْكُمْ
وَحَرْبٌ لِمَنْ حَارَبَكُمْ، إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

O Abā ‘Abdillāh, surely I am at peace with he who is at peace with you, and at war with he who is at war with you, until the Day of Resurrection.

Calling Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) here with the teknonym Abū ‘Abdillāh, and then declaring one's loyalty and unity with him has a specific message worthy of contemplation. The term *Abū ‘Abdillāh*, as we realised in our past discussions, signifies the state of total submission (*‘ubūdiyyah*) of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) to Allāh. Hence calling him with this teknonym and pledging loyalty reveals a connection, which is: “*I am at peace with he who is at peace with you, and at war with he who is at war with you, because you are submissive to Allāh*”. Therefore, in reality the *zā’ir* would like to pledge his or her loyalty to Allāh Himself.

This verse teaches us that peace (*al-silm*) and war (*al-ḥarb*) should be understood and interpreted in light of submission to Allāh, which is Islam (lit. submission to the will of Allāh). Hence peace in the sense of total unity and cooperation with the forces of *kufr* is meaningless.

Ceasefire agreements the like of *Ṣulḥ al-Ḥudaybiyyah* and *Ṣulḥ al-Ḥasan* (‘a), however, do not depict any kind of union and harmony between Islam and the forces opposing it. They are nothing but tactful strategies in favour of the epitomes of truth.

Revealing the great advantage of the Truce of al-Ḥudaybiyyah, for example, Zuhri says:

لم يكن فتح أعظم من صلح الحديبية، وذلك أن المشركين اختلطوا بالمسلمين فسمعوا كلامهم فتمكن الإسلام في قلوبهم، أسلم في ثلاث سنين خلق كثير...

There was no victory greater than the truce of al-Ḥudaybiyyah, for the polytheists mixed with the Muslims and heard their speeches, as a result of which Islam settled in their hearts, and within a period of three years many people accepted Islam.

The truce of Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a) likewise did not mean any kind of harmony and submission to Mu‘āwiyah. The conditions of the truce are vocal enough to endorse this truth.

Never has Islam made any kind of peace with any kind of evil force whatsoever. Peace with

²⁴ Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān*, v.1, p. 446. The phrase “so-and-so and so-and- so” refers to two specific people.

falsehood means harmony with falsehood, and harmony with falsehood means war with Islam.

Whenever anyone observes any Islamic faction making peace with the forces opposed to Islam, we must be convinced that the faction is a pseudo-Islamic faction and not truly Islamic. Unless, however, there is a kind of ceasefire, which does not depict any kind of complete harmony whatsoever.

إِنِّي سَلِمٌ لِمَنْ سَلِمَ كُمْ
وَحَرْبٌ لِمَنْ حَارَبَكُمْ

...surely I am at peace with he who is at peace with you and at war with he who is at war with you...

Although we have rendered the phrase “*Innī silmun liman sālமாகুম wa ḥarbun liman hārabakum*” as “I am at peace (*musālimun*) with he who is at peace with you and at war (*muḥaribun*) with he who is at war with you”, the phrase literally signifies “I am peace itself (*silmun*) with he who is at peace with you and war itself (*ḥarbun*) with he who is at war with you”. This is because the infinitives *silm* and *ḥarb* are employed instead of the active participles *musālim* and *muḥārib*, and hence they reveal intensity (*li al-mubālaghah*) in expression. In other words we are trying to express our intense peace and unity with he who is at peace with Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his loyal companions, and intense war against he who is at war with Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his loyal companions.²⁵ Mullā ‘Abdullāh in his *Hāshiyah* giving a similar example says:

إذا قلنا (زَيْدٌ عَدْلٌ) فهذا مبالغة في اتصافه بالعدالة حتى كأنه أصبح عين العدل ... لأنه فقط متصف بالعدالة

If we say *Zaydun ‘Adlun* [instead of *Zaydun ‘Ādilun*] then this is to intensely qualify him with justice, to the extent that it is as if he has turned into justice itself, and not merely that he is qualified with justice.²⁶

‘Allāmah Mīrzā Tehrānī in his commentary on *Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā*’, endorsing the aforementioned explanation, says:

According to this slave [of Allāh] what is more apparent is that the meaning of these [i.e. *silm* and *ḥarb*] is what their infinitive connotations reveal. In order to manifest perfect submission and indulgence in obedience and assimilation, we must say: In our current station we have reached such level that we have turned into the reality of peace itself with those who are at peace with you, and into the true extension of war itself with those who are at war with you.²⁷

وَحَرْبٌ لِمَنْ حَارَبَكُمْ

...and at war with he who is at war with you...

Ḥarb (war) does not always take place by means of guns, tanks and ammunitions. Attacking the human soul and mind²⁸ through the dissemination of a culture based upon forgetting the Wise

25 Al-Shaykh al-Mu’ayyad, *Aḍwā’ ‘Alā Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā*’, p. 167

26 Ibid.

27 ‘Allāmah Mīrzā Abū al-Faḍl Tehrānī, *Shifā’u al-Ṣuḍur*, pp. 213-214

28 Psychological warfare or the basic aspects of modern psychological operations (PSYOP), have been known by many other names or terms, including Psy Ops, Political Warfare, “Hearts and Minds,” and Propaganda. Various techniques are used, by any set of groups, and aimed to influence a target audience’s value systems, belief systems, emotions, motives, reasoning, or behaviour. It is used to induce confessions or reinforce attitude and behaviours favourable to the originator’s objectives, and are sometimes combined with black operations or false flag tactics. Target audiences can be governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_warfare)

Creator, attachment to the material world, disrespect for human values, etc. can be so powerful and destructive that no ammunition can be compared to it. The television, the internet, the environment, etc. are all facilitators of this war against humanness (*al-insāniyyah*). If the enemies are victorious in such fronts the rest is not a big problem. This is because people who have been intoxicated with the pleasures of the world and indulge heavily in the same cannot be ready to give their souls in the way of Allāh.

The fundamental reason why the esteemed Iranian soldiers would diligently face an army supported by the world superpowers of the time was the spirit of intense love for martyrdom. Only one who has given up the pleasures of the material world can be ready to fight against any kind of power with all manner of ammunitions.

The controversial Protocols of the Elders of Zion reveals how the elders of Zion envisioned to destroy the non-Jewish forces of the world through the weapon of deception and materialism. Observe the following quotations taken from the translation of a journalist by the name of Victor E. Marsden:²⁹

PROTOCOL 1:

7. In our day the power which has replaced that of the rulers who were liberal is the power of Gold. Time was when Faith ruled. The idea of freedom is impossible of realization because no one knows how to use it with moderation.

22. Behold the alcoholic animals, bemused with drink, the right to an immoderate use of which comes along with freedom. It is not for us and ours to walk that road. The peoples of the GOYIM (non-jews) are bemused with alcoholic liquors; their youth has grown stupid on classicism and from early immorality, into which it has been inducted by our special agents - by tutors, lackeys, governesses in the houses of the wealthy, by clerks and others, by our women in the places of dissipation frequented by the GOYIM. In the number of these last I count also the so-called "*society ladies*," voluntary followers of the others in corruption and luxury.

27. Our triumph has been rendered easier by the fact that in our relations with the men, whom we wanted, we have always worked upon the most sensitive chords of the human mind, upon the cash account, upon the cupidity, upon the insatiability for material needs of man; and each one of these human weaknesses, taken alone, is sufficient to paralyze initiative, for it hands over the will of men to the disposition of him who has bought their activities.

PROTOCOL 2:

5. In the hands of the States of to-day there is a great force that creates the movement of thought in the people, and that is the Press. The part played by the Press is to keep pointing our requirements supposed to be indispensable, to give voice to the complaints of the people, to express and to create discontent. It is in the Press that the triumph of freedom of speech finds its incarnation. But the GOYIM States have not known how to make use of this force; and it has fallen into our hands. Through the Press we have gained the power to influence while remaining ourselves in the shade; thanks to the Press we have got the GOLD in our hands, notwithstanding that we have had to gather it out of the oceans of blood and tears. But it has paid us, though we have sacrificed many of our people. Each victim on our side is worth in the sight of God a thousand GOYIM.

PROTOCOL 5:

7. ... Nowadays it is more important to disarm the peoples than to lead them into war: more

²⁹ <http://www.jewwatch.com/index.htm>, <http://radioislam.org/islam/english/toread/pr-zion.htm>

important to use for our advantage the passions which have burst into flames than to quench their fire... The principle object of our directorate consists in this: to debilitate the public mind by criticism; to lead it away from serious reflections calculated to arouse resistance...

PROTOCOL 9:

10. We have fooled, bemused and corrupted the youth of the GOYIM by rearing them in principles and theories which are known to us to be false although it is that they have been inculcated.

We must therefore be astute enough to distinguish the different war fronts and defend and fight valiantly in the way of Allāh.

Friendship & Enmity in the Words of Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a)

In order to further understand the truth of friendship and enmity, let us consider the following tradition of Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a) quoted in *Nahj al-Balāghah*:

أَصْدِقَاؤُكَ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَأَعْدَاؤُكَ ثَلَاثَةٌ فَأَصْدِقَاؤُكَ صَدِيقُكَ وَصَدِيقُكَ صَدِيقُكَ وَعَدُوُّكَ وَعَدُوُّكَ وَعَدُوُّكَ وَعَدُوُّكَ
وَصَدِيقُكَ وَعَدُوُّكَ

Your friends are three and your enemies are three. As for your friends they are: (a) your friend, (b) your friend's friend, and (c) your enemy's enemy; and as for your enemies, they are: (a) your enemy, (b) the enemy of your friend, and (c) the friend of your enemy.

This 'Alawite equation is veracious when we consider the criteria of friendship to be "love or hate for Allāh and His servants".

Analysing the matter of friendship, we find that our friend is naturally our friend. However the reason why his friend is also our friend is because the basis of friendship in both cases is love for God: our friend's friend befriends our friend due to love for Allāh and His servants. Hence he likewise is our friend. With regards to the enemy of our enemy, because our enemy dislikes God and His servants (even in the practical sense), his enemy would have the opposite character: love for God and His servants. Therefore he likewise is our friend.

With regard to our enemy, we know that our enemy is obviously our enemy. However, one who befriends our enemy has the same qualities that our enemy has: love for Satan and his servants. Hence we naturally hate him, and thus he too is our enemy. Then, the enemy of our friend likewise is our enemy because our friend is one who loves Allāh and His servants. One who hates such a person and is his enemy, loves the opposite: love for Satan and his servants. Therefore, such a person cannot be our friend, because we naturally love Allāh and His servants.

If the basis of friendship and enmity are different, this equation cannot come to be true. Hence we should find a unified basis for friendship and enmity and then try to understand the equation provided by Imam 'Alī ('a). In our case what is important and the fundamental criterion is truth, love for Allāh, religiousness, etc. This is because we have taken the human dimension into consideration.

Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) is reported to have said:

الصَّدِيقُ مَنْ كَانَ نَاهِيًا عَنِ الظُّلْمِ وَالْعُدُوَانِ مُعِينًا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالْإِحْسَانِ

A friend is one who prohibits wrongdoing and transgression, and assists one in doing

actions of virtue and good.³⁰

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) is reported to have said:

لَا يُحِبُّنَا كَافِرٌ وَلَا يُبْغِضُنَا مُؤْمِنٌ

A *kāfir* does not love us and a *mu’min* does not hate us.³¹

Those who claim to love both Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and Yazīd are either oblivious of the reality or they are joking. History has informed us of some such examples. Observe the following tradition:

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ (لَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): إِنِّي أُحِبُّكَ وَأُحِبُّ مُعَاوِيَةَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: أَمَّا الْآنَ فَأَنْتَ أَعْوَرٌ، فِيمَا أَنْ تَبْرَأَ أَوْ تَعْمَى!؟

A man said to Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a): Surely I love you and I love Mu‘āwiyah [as well]. Thereupon the Imam (‘a) said: For the moment, one of your eyes cannot see. Now either you get well (*tabra*’) or blind (*ta’mā*).³²

Here Imam (‘a) propounds another beautiful equation worthy of contemplation. He informs him that both these kinds of love cannot unite. If this person is not careful and continues his love for Mu‘āwiyah, he will truly hate Imam ‘Alī (‘a), which is true blindness. However, if he understands the reality of the love of Mu‘āwiyah and abandons him, he would get well and will be able to see with both eyes.

Notice that this statement of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) reveals how powerful his speech was. Another way of translating the last sentence is, “Now either you express your *barā’ah* (detachment from Mu‘āwiyah) or get blind (*ta’mā*). This is because Mu‘āwiyah’s love has no religious basis at all.

Interestingly, some time prior to this conversation, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

صَدِيقُ عَدُوِّ عَلِيٍّ عَدُوٌّ عَلِيٍّ

The friend of the enemy of ‘Alī is the enemy of ‘Alī.³³

There are a number of traditions that emphasise that *al-tawalli* without *al-tabarrī* is incomplete:

Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) was once told that so-and-so loves you, but is weak in expressing his dissociation from your enemy. The Imam (‘a) said:

هِيَئَاتِ، كَذَبَ مَنْ ادَّعَى مَحَبَّتَنَا وَلَمْ يَتَبَرَّأْ مِنْ عَدُوِّنَا

This is farfetched! He who claims our love but does not express his detachment from our enemy is a liar.³⁴

Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) is reported to have said:

كَمَالُ الدِّينِ وَلَا يَتُّنَا وَالْبِرَاءَةُ مِنْ عَدُوِّنَا

30 Al-Āmadī, *Ghurur al-Hikam*, p. 415

31 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.23, p. 313

32 Ibn al-Damishqī, *Jawāhir al-Maṭālib fī Manāqib al-Imam ‘Alī (‘a)*, v.2, p. 158

33 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.77, p. 174

34 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.27, p. 58

The perfection of faith is in our friendship and detachment from our enemies.³⁵

Taking a Mu'min as an Enemy Hampers one From Paradise

A *mu'min* therefore is not an enemy, even if he were to disturb another *mu'min* or due to his weakness do something that is contrary to the religion. As long as he has retained his innate disposition (*fiṭrah*) and faith in the true teachings of Islam, one should not entertain any kind of rancour or hatred in one's heart for him. Yes, that does not mean that he is not accountable for his deeds and that whatever he does is correct. Almighty Allāh will deal with such people according to their intentions, words and deeds. Hence a *mu'min's* duty is to advise such a sinful *mu'min* and pray for his change and transformation. In case he has to be put to trial for usurping someone's property, then he must be tried in the court of justice, and there is nothing wrong with that. However, this does not validate developing rancour in the heart for him.

Those believers who are oblivious of this reality and entertain rancour in their hearts for other believers would have to face a difficult time before being able to enter Paradise. One of the supplications of the true believers mentioned in the Qur'ān is to seek the eradication of "the specks of ill- feeling and rancour" for other believers. They pray as follows:

... رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

... "Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who were our forerunners in the faith, and do not put any rancour in our hearts toward the faithful. Our Lord, You are indeed most kind and merciful." (59:10)

In fact, those who are not intentional disbelievers (*kuffār*),³⁶ should likewise not be abandoned or hated. Perhaps they have not accepted Islam due to some impediments hampering them. Therefore harbouring hatred against them is not the correct thing to do. Instead one should pray for their salvation. During the time of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), if the Prophet (ﷺ) gave the probability of someone's transformation and change he would not curse him. A good example is in the plains of Uḥud when the Prophet (ﷺ) was bleeding on his forehead and teeth and the companions being overtaken with sadness, asked him to invoke Allāh's curse on them, whereupon he said: "Surely I was not sent as one who frequently curses; I was sent as a mercy and caller to Allāh." And then praying for them, he said "O Allāh guide them, for they do not know." (*Allāhummahdi qawmī fa innahum lā ya lamūn*).³⁷

Yes, those who through repeated actions of atrocities and oppression have lost their innate disposition and love to do mischief, and there is no hope for their change, are worthy of being cursed and abandoned. These are they who must be taken as real enemies. And it is such people whom we curse in our supplications and salutational recitals.

... إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

...until the Day of Resurrection.

Expressing the Target Reveals One's Steadfastness

The declaration "Indeed I am at peace with he who is at peace with you...until the Day of

35 Ibid.

36 It is imperative for us to understand the reality that a *kāfir* (lit. one who covers (*sātir*)) is one who despite knowing the truth, covers it. Despite knowing that Islam is the true religion he covers it through his verbal and practical rejection. Therefore, there are many whose disbelief does not stem from their intentional rejection, but from their inability to find out the truth or ignorance of the same. We cannot term these as *kuffār*

37 Al-'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Sunan al-Nabī (ﷺ)*, p. 413

Resurrection” reveals the powerful resolution of the speaker. It resembles one who promises the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to be steadfast in their love and support through upholding their message which is the true and untainted version of Islam, throughout one’s life.

In fact it is another expression of unity with the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) forever. Such a statement, although simple in its constitution, requires a towering resolution and exalted spirit. It is also a promise to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) to be always submissive and supportive of the teachings of Islam in all the difficult circumstances. Abū Baṣīr reports that he heard Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) say:

وَاللّٰهِ لَتَمَيِّزَنَّ وَاللّٰهِ لَتَمَحِّصَنَّ وَاللّٰهِ لَتُعْرَبَنَّ كَمَا يُعْرَبُ الزُّوَانُ مِنَ الصَّمْحِ

I swear by Allāh, you most surely will be singled out, I swear by Allāh you most surely will be cleansed, I swear by Allāh you most surely will be garbled³⁸ in the way darnel is garbled from wheat.³⁹

The phrase *latugharballunna* above signifies the process of sieving. The verb *gharbala* comes from *ghirbāl* which is “a sieve”.

Reading such statements now and again is extremely important for the human being. It reminds him of his duty and purpose in life. It wakes him up from his slumber of sin. It deters him from those things that are abhorred by the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and Islam.

Although we have conditioned our unity with the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) with the target “*yawm al-qiyāmah*” (the Day of Resurrection), it does not imply that our promise ends with the Day of Resurrection. It reveals perpetuity. This is because one who is loyal to the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) throughout the period of this world in the true sense of the word, will never separate from them. In the beautiful words of Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a):

مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا كَانَ مَعَنَا أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ هَكَذَا (ثُمَّ جَمَعَ بَيْنَ السَّبَابَتَيْنِ...)

Whosoever loves us will be with us or will come with us on the Day of Resurrection like this (then he (‘a) joined the forefingers of his two hands)...⁴⁰

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّنَا وَعَمِلَ بِأَمْرِنَا كَانَ مَعَنَا فِي السَّنَامِ الْأَعْلَى، وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَنَا وَرَدَّنَا أَوْ رَدَّ وَاحِدًا مِنَّا فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ بِاللّٰهِ وَبِآيَاتِهِ.

Whosoever loves us and acts according to our command would be with us at the highest zenith, and whosoever hates us and rejects us or rejects even one of us is a disbeliever in Allāh and His signs.⁴¹

A Short Word on Friendship & Enmity in the Way of Allāh

Every human being in the beginning possesses an unsullied and sound innate disposition, which in Qur’ānic terms is called *al-fiṭrah*. The Holy Qur’ān says:

38 This is one of the loan words that English has gotten from the Arabic language (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Arabic_loanwords_in_English). Initially it signified the original meaning, but later it found a different meaning (<http://dictionary.reference.com>). In this book, however, we have retained its original meaning which is “to sift”. The well-known OED defines it as: “To remove the garble or refuse from (spice, etc.); to sift; to cleanse (const. of); also to sift out. Obs.” [CD ROM Oxford English Dictionary, v.4]. See also: (Joseph Twadell Shiple, *The Origins of English Words: A Discursive Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*, p. 126)

39 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.52, p. 114

40 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.8, pp. 106-107

41 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.36, p. 38

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا ۚ فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the origination of Allāh according to which He originated mankind. There is no altering Allāh's creation; that is the upright religion, but most people do not know. (30:30)

One of the characteristics of the innate disposition is that it naturally seeks benefit and good and keeps away from harm and evil. We do not require a proof to establish this reality, for we naturally experience it in ourselves. Due to limitations however, we are not able to decipher all the things that are beneficial (*nāfi'*) and harmful (*dārr*) to us. This is where the advantage of sending prophets of Allāh for guidance is realised. The prophets (peace be upon them) were sent to enlighten the human beings about many of the things that are beneficial and harmful to them. They communicated Divine laws to them so that they may attain absolute perfection, something for which every innate disposition eagerly craves. They warned them away from sins which they taught are responsible for the destruction of the human soul and its eternal misery.

Whereas a group of people who blindly speculated that the intellect is sufficient to know everything, got deprived of the knowledge that would enable them to seek their natural perfection, a group intelligent and astute enough to realise the magnanimity of the matter, having reflected on what the prophets had to say, submitted to the truth, and were availed with knowledge of what was dangerous and beneficial for them. They realised that submission to God would gradually facilitate their ultimate perfection, whereas sin would destroy the human soul and fling it to the lowest pit of ignominy and imperfection. Hence they struggled to be steadfast in the obedience of Allāh, and struggled to refrain from sin, and in this way they did not increase their imperfection and deficiencies.

Not all the believers however were able to observe steadfastness on the path of absolute perfection. The life of the material world and the evil-inviting self blindfolded some, and hence there was a need of wakening the soul and placing it on the right track.

Perhaps this is a fundamental reason why Islam legislated and made obligatory the two principles of al-tawallī (*expressing friendship with the lovers of Allāh*) and al-tabarrī (*expressing hatred and detachment from Allāh's enemies*). When these two principles are constantly practiced the human being wakes up and changes himself. Announcing one's love for the lovers of truth and eternal human felicity and denouncing the lovers of evil and eternal damnation, strengthens the heart of the human being, and brings him back to the track of his innate human disposition.

Cultivating this very natural feeling, according to some of the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is known as the "most firm handles of faith":

1. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) addressing Imam 'Alī ('a) said:

يَا عَلِيُّ أَوْثَقُ عُرَى الْإِيمَانِ الْحُبُّ فِي اللَّهِ وَالْبُغْضُ فِي اللَّهِ

O 'Alī, the most firm handles of faith is love in the way of Allāh and hatred in the way of Allāh.⁴²

2. Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ أَوْثَقَ عُرَى الْإِيمَانِ أَنْ تُحِبَّ فِي اللَّهِ وَتُبْغِضَ فِي اللَّهِ، وَتُعْطَى فِي اللَّهِ، وَتَمْنَعَ فِي اللَّهِ

⁴² Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*, v.4, p. 362

Among the firmest handles of faith is that you love in the way of Allāh, hate in the way of Allāh, give in the way of Allāh and refuse in the way of Allāh.⁴³

3. Fūḍayl is reported to have asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) whether love and hatred was from faith, and the Imam (‘a) responded saying:

وَهَلِ الْإِيْمَانُ إِلَّا الْحُبُّ وَالْبُغْضُ؟ ثُمَّ تَلَا هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ «حَبَبَ إِلَيْكُمْ الْإِيْمَانَ وَرَزَيْتَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَهُ إِلَيْكُمْ الْكُفْرَ
وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ»

And is faith anything other than love and hatred? Thereafter the Imam (‘a) recited the following verse of the Qur’ān: And he made you love faith and beautified it in your hearts and made you abhor disbelief and open disobedience and sin. These are the guided ones.⁴⁴

Therefore, in expressing love or hatred there is no kind of personal or selfish relation involved. The criteria is truth (*ḥaqq*) and falsehood (*bāṭil*) respectively. In fact, to be more accurate, the criteria is, “that which leads to perfection” and that which “separates one from perfection”.

Open Condemnation Against Injustice is Natural

Openly expressing one’s hatred, detachment, and separation from traitors and their allies is extremely effective and can definitely lead to victory. Sacrifice and steadfastness, however are also important on this path.

Past history has revealed how *barā’ah* was able to topple governments supported by most powerful existing forces. The reason why we find that even peaceful demonstrations frighten governments is that they are extremely effective in destroying the prevailing forces.

The recent⁴⁵ Islamic wakefulness (*al-ṣaḥwa al-islāmiyyah*) observed in some parts of the Middle East is very praiseworthy. If continued with steadfastness and proper direction it would reap nothing but victory. In fact their demonstrations are practical manifestations of what we recite when we condemn and detach ourselves from those who established the foundation of wrongdoing and transgression against the epitomes of true religion. A regime established on the basis of oppression is illegal and hence must be abandoned and destroyed.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his companions rose to practically reject the prevailing government of Yazīd. This was a manifestation of *barā’ah* from his side. If the subjects of a government that aims at destroying Islam, humiliating Muslims, depriving them of their rights and undermining them, rise to condemn this power, they would have practically expressed their *barā’ah*. This is the spirit of *barā’ah*, which is not limited to Muslims, but all those who innately seek freedom from oppression and wrongdoing.

Transcending the Horizons to Appreciate the Self

Detaching oneself from evil and its forces and seeking proximity of good and perfection fundamentally begins with the human soul (*nafs*). Only one who has seasoned his soul will be able to express his hatred and dislike against the forces of evil and struggle to achieve the proximity of the forces of perfection.

All the kinds of chaos observed in the outer world (*al-‘ālam al-āfāqī*) have its roots in the *nafs* of

43 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.2, p. 125

44 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.2, p. 125

45 The wave of wakefulness is reported to have begun in December 2010.

the human beings and the inner world. Hence it is important for us to understand the map of our souls and identify the dominant forces that are in control. If the faculties of anger (*ghaḍab*) and appetite (*shahwah*) have the upper hand and control over the intellect (*‘aql*), the consequences both in the inner as well as the outer world would be nothing but chaos and tragedy. If however, the control is solely with the intellect, inner peace and equilibrium would be achieved, which in turn would facilitate outer peace and justice. One who has struggled to season his soul would naturally be attracted to perfection and repelled from imperfection. Consequently, such a soul would naturally express his *barā’ah* against those who established the foundation of oppression and transgression against the very epitomes of religion.

Vocalisation of *barā’ah* therefore should serve as a catalyst to transform our inner conditions so that we naturally express our rancour and hatred against the evil forces of the human soul, and love and friendship for the forces of excellence and perfection.

Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (‘a), reminding us of how the human being actually contains a battlefield within himself, enumerates the good and evil traits within every human being in a lengthy tradition as *junūd al-‘aql* (the soldiers of intellect) and *junūd al-jahl* (the soldiers of ignorance).

In a tradition from Amīr al-mu‘minīn (‘a), the forces within the human soul is termed as *jaysh* (army):

الْعَقْلُ صَاحِبُ جَيْشِ الرَّحْمَانِ وَالْهَوَى قَائِدُ جَيْشِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَالنَّفْسُ مُتَجَاذِبَةٌ بَيْنَهُمَا فَأَيُّهُمَا غَلَبَ كَانَتْ فِي حَيْرِهِ

The intellect is the commander of the army of the All-Merciful and mundane desire is the leader of the army of Satan, and the soul is undergoing an attraction of both, and enters in the domain of whichever among them triumphs.⁴⁶

One of the most explicit traditions that vocally speaks of the human soul as a battalion is the well-known tradition of *jihād al-akbar*. After gaining victory in one of the battles, when the Muslims returned, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) addressing them said:

مَرْحَبًا بِقَوْمٍ فَضَّوْا الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَبَقِيَ عَلَيْهِمَ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ

Welcome to the people who have completed the lesser *jihād* (struggle) and what remains for them is the greater *jihād*.

The Holy Prophet (ṣ) was asked:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ؟

O Apostle of Allāh, and what is the greater *jihād*?

He (ṣ) said:

جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ

Jihād al-naḥs (the struggle against the self).⁴⁷

Prophet Sulaymān (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ الْعَالِبَ لَهُوَاهُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الَّذِي يَفْتَحُ الْمَدِينَةَ وَحَدَهُ

46 Al-Wāsitī, ‘*Uyūn al-Hikam wa al-Mawā‘iz*, p. 64

47 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.5, p. 12

One who is victorious over his mundane desire is more tough than one who conquers a whole city singlehandedly.

Therefore it is imperative for us to subdue the evil-inviting self (*al-nafs al-ammāratu bi al-sū'ī*) in us, and attain the victorious state of the peaceful self (*al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*), so that we are always victorious in the battles of the phenomenal world.

The reason perhaps why Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) was so steadfast in his repulsion from evil and love for perfection, is that he enjoyed the station of *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*. According to a lengthy tradition narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a),⁴⁸ Sūrat al-Fajr (chapter 89) was also named Surat al-Ḥusayn ('a) because of its concluding verses, which reflect the personality of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a), as he is the soul that enjoys serenity and peace – a soul that is freed from all kinds of shackles of evil, a soul that is immersed in the love of Allāh, a soul that enjoys the seat of victory.

In the same tradition that explains the reason why Surat al-Fajr was called Surat al-Ḥusayn ('a), Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) informs his companion Abū Usāmah that whosoever recites it constantly during the obligatory and supererogatory prayers would be in the company of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) in Heaven. Appreciating the fact that recitation is not mere vocalisation but also epitomisation and self-transformation, if we recite the chapter, inculcate its teachings in ourselves, resolve to change and fight the inner forces of sin until victory, we likewise would enjoy the station of *al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*. Can anyone perceive a station more intoxicating than that of being with al-Ḥusayn in Paradise? If the mere mention of al-Ḥusayn melts the *mu'min* down, what would his companionship do? In the encouraging words of Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a):

كَانَ مَعَ الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) فِي دَرَجَتِهِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

He would be with al-Ḥusayn (peace be on him) in his station in al-Jannah. Indeed Allāh is the Invincible, the All-Wise.⁴⁹

Starting with the Self

Imam Khumaynī, one of the most successful revolutionaries of his time, having understood the kernel of the matter, in different speeches alluded to the reality that the beginning of reform is the human self. The following are some of his noteworthy directions, which in reality find their basis in the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a):

ما تا اصلاح نکنیم خودمان را، نمی توانیم کشور خودمان را اصلاح کنیم

Until we do not reform ourselves we will not be able to reform our country.⁵⁰

اگر بخواهید کشور شما یک کشور مستقلی باشد که دیگران نتوانند در آن دخالت بکنند، از خودتان باید شروع کنید

If you would like your country to be independent such that others cannot interfere in its affairs, you must start with your own selves.⁵¹

تا در بند خویشتن خویش و هواهای نفسانی خود باشید، نمی توانید «جهاد فی سبیل الله» و دفاع از «حریم الله» نمایید

As long as you are in the shackles of yourself and your mundane desires, you cannot undertake jihād [Divine struggle] in the way of Allāh and defend the sanctuary of Allāh.⁵²

48 Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān*, v.5, p. 658

49 Ibid.

50 <http://www.imam-khomeini-isf.com>

51 Ibid.

52 Imam Khumaynī, *Kalimāt-e-Qiṣār*, p. 75

The Secretary General of Hizbollah, Sayyid Ḥasan NasrAllāh, in some of his past speeches during the holy months of Muḥarram, has alluded to the fundamental condition of beginning with *jihād al-naḥs* before any kind of jihād. Observe the following statements:

In a speech he delivered on the 7th night of Muḥarram 1419 AH (1998) about Jihād he says:

... «لَا فَضِيلَةَ كَلِّ لُجْهَادٍ وَلَا جِهَادٍ كُمَجَاهِدَةِ الْهَوَى». هذا التفيل طبيعي جدًا لأنه في الحقيقة، من يتجح في جهاد نفسه يقدر أن ينجح في جهاد العدو لأنه كي يذهب لجهاد عدوه عليه أن يعغلب على شهواته.

...*There is no merit like jihad (struggle in the way of Allāh) and there is no jihad like the jihad of the self (Imam al- Baqir (“A)). This superiority is very natural because in reality one who is victorious in the jihad of the self, can be successful in the jihad against the [outer] enemy. This is because in order for one to be able to go and fight his [outer] enemy he must overcome his mundane desires.*⁵³

In another speech he delivered on the 10th night of Muharram 1419 AH (1998) about God-wariness, he says:

فلنعلم إن أعدى عدو لنا هو نفسنا التي بين جنبينا، نفسنا الأمانة بالسوء، نفسنا الطامعة في الدنيا، نفسنا المنكبة على المعاصي والذنوب والآتام فلنقف مع الحسين لنقاتلها ونتغلب عليها ونتصر ونبليغ الفتح، وهذا هو الفتح الفتوح هذا هو الفتح المبين. و كما نقلت لكم عن رسول الله (ص): «لَيْسَ الشَّدِيدُ مَنْ غَلَبَ النَّاسَ. إِنَّ الشَّدِيدَ مَنْ غَلَبَ نَفْسَهُ». الذين كانوا مع الحسين كانوا الأشداء لأنهم غلبوا أنفسهم وانتصروا عليها وخرجوا ليقاتلوا ونالوا شرف الشهادة وختم لهم بخير. والحشود المؤلفة المجهزة بالسلاح والسيوف والرماح كانت مهزومة ضعيفة هزيلة برغم كثرة عن دها لأنها كانت منهارة أمام النفس الأمانة بالسوء وأمام أسفل السافلين الشيطان المطرود من الرحمة الإلهية.

Thus we must know that the most hostile of our enemies is our *naḥs* that is between our two sides, our *naḥs* that invites abundantly towards evil, our *naḥs* that is greedy of the world, our *naḥs* that is immersed in disobedience, sins, and misdeeds. Therefore we must stand besides al-Ḥusayn (‘a) so that we can fight against it [i.e. our *naḥs*] and overcome it, win and attain victory. And this is the victory of the victories (*al-faḥ al-fuḥ*), and this is the manifest victory. And as I narrated to you that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) said, “*One who overcomes the people is not tough. Indeed the tough one is one who overcomes his naḥs*”. Those who were together with al-Ḥusayn (‘a) were tough people because they subdued their souls and gained victory over them and [thereafter] left to fight and attained the elevation of martyrdom and their outcomes were sealed with goodness. But the united masses armed with ammunitions and swords and spears were defeated, weak and feeble despite the abundance of their number, because they collapsed before the evil-inviting self *al-naḥs al-ammāratu bi al-sū’i*) and the lowest of the low, Satan, the one expelled from Divine mercy.⁵⁴

The radiant contemporary sun of the East, Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Alī al-Ḥusayni al-Khāmene’ī, in some of his speeches presents the same logic, which is worthy of contemplation. In a speech that he delivered to the Revolutionary Guards on the occasion of the birthday of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), he said:

ماجرای امام حسین علیه السلام، تلفیق این دو بخش است. یعنی آنجایی که هم جهاد با دشمن و هم جهاد با نفس، در اعلی مرتبه آن تجلی پیدا کرد.

53 NasrAllāh, *Khiṭāb ‘Āshurā’*, p. 163

54 NasrAllāh, *Khiṭāb ‘Āshurā’*, pp. 186-187

ماجرای عاشورا بود... ماجرای عاشورا عبارت است از يك حرکت عظیم مجاهدت‌آمیز در هر دو جبهه. هم در جبهه مبارزه بادشمن خارجی و برونی؛ که همان دستگاه خلافت فاسد... و هم در جبهه درونی، که آن روز جامعه به‌طور عموم به سمت همان فساد درونی حرکت کرده بود.

The episode of Imam Ḥusayn ('a) is a combination of these two dimensions. In other words, the area where both a holy war against the apparent enemy as well as a holy war against the inner self were manifested in their highest degree was the episode of 'Ashura'... The event of 'Ashura' is a great movement of struggle in both the war fronts, the front of fighting against the outer and external enemy, which was the very corrupt apparatus of the caliphate of the time... and the front of the inner self, which had moved towards inner corruption in the society of that time in general...⁵⁵

In another speech describing the warriors of Karbala, he said:

يك صحنه جنگ است؛ آن هم جنگی بسیار دشوارتر. آن جایی که مردان و زنان مؤمن و فداکار پشت سر حسین بن علی علیه‌السلام راه می افتند؛ دنیا و مافیها، لذتها و زیباییهای دنیا، در مقابل احساس وظیفه از چشم آنها می افتد؛ انسانهایی که معنویت مجسم و متبلور در باطنشان، بر جنود شیطانی - همان جنود عقل و جنود جهلی که در روایات ما هست - غلبه پیدا کرد و به عنوان يك عده انسان نمونه، والا و بزرگ، در تاریخ ماندگار شدند...

It is a scenario of war, a war that is extremely difficult; it is where sacrificing faithful men and women go after Ḥusayn Ibn 'Alī ('a). The world and what it contains, its pleasures and its beauties against the sense of responsibility, fall down before their eyes. They are human beings in whose hearts, the embodied and crystallised spirituality has overcome the soldiers of Satan – the very soldiers of intellect and ignorance that are mentioned in our traditions – and being acknowledged as a group of exemplary, great, and lofty human beings, they have become immortal in history.⁵⁶

A Historical Incident Worthy of Contemplation

Almighty Allāh revealed the chapter *al-Bara'ah* and ordered His Apostle to openly declare his repulsion and hatred against the *mushrikūn* (polytheists) during the pilgrimage as follows:

بَرَاءَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ. فَسِيحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ^{٥٥} وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْزِي الْكَافِرِينَ. وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ^{٥٦} وَرَسُولُهُ^{٥٧} فَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ^{٥٨} وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ.

[This is a] declaration of [repudiation by Allāh and His Apostle [addressed] to the polytheists with whom you had made a treaty: Travel [unmolested] in the land for four months, but know that you cannot thwart Allāh, and that Allāh shall disgrace the faithless. [This is] an announcement from Allāh and His Apostle to all the people on the day of the greater Hajj: that Allāh and His Apostle repudiate the polytheists: If you repent that is better for you; but if you turn your backs [on Allāh], know that you cannot thwart Allāh, and inform the faithless of a painful punishment. (9:1-3)

Some traditions indicate that after this chapter was revealed, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) dispatched one of the companions with it to openly declare the stance of the Muslims against the polytheists. No sooner had the companion left when Almighty Allāh revealed to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) to order the companion to return back and replace him with 'Alī ('a). Eventually 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a), who was the very epitome of monotheism in its purest form, delivered the message.

This incident has much to reveal for every contemplative: the exterior and macrocosmic *barā'ah* can only be done by one who has a heart that naturally repels evil and its forces. If one is not successful in removing the subtle forms of shirk within oneself, how is it possible for one to be the

55 <http://www.leader.ir>; Aḥmad Mukhbīrī, *Khūrshīd-e-Shahādat*, pp. 70-71

56 Aḥmad Mukhbīrī, *Khūrshīd-e-Shahādat*, p. 71

messenger of this Divine announcement which declares hatred against all kinds of shirk? In the beautiful dictum of Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a):

مَنْ لَمْ يُصْلِحْ نَفْسَهُ لَمْ يُصْلِحْ غَيْرَهُ

Whosoever does not reform himself cannot reform other than himself.

Therefore a spirit like that of 'Alī ('a) who enjoys a heart that is extremely attached to absolute perfection and detached from the forces of evil, sin and deficiency, would be perfect in conveying the message of *barā'ah*.

In the beautiful words of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

أَبَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يُبَلِّغَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ مِنْهُ

Allāh did not allow that anyone save a man from Muḥammad to convey [the Divine message] on his behalf.⁵⁷

This beautiful statement is actually a law and universal truth worthy of reflection. Allāh does not permit His message to be conveyed save by the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) or a Prophet-like heart which is clean and pure. Since 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib ('a) was the best manifestation of the prophetic heart, and his soul had defeated the inner forces of evil, he was the best representative for declaring *barā'ah* against the polytheists. Not a speck of the smallest kind of shirk ever lurked in the elevated heart of 'Alī ('a), and never did he bow down to any idol, which is why he is honoured in some circles as *karrama Allāhu wajhahu* (Allāh ennobled his essence).⁵⁸

It may be asked that if that was the case why did the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) give it to the wrong person at first? God forbid, was he ignorant in his move? The insightful scholars understand the reason as an intentional move to reveal that (a) the companion sent in the beginning cannot represent the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) even in conveying one chapter of the Holy Qur'ān, let alone shoulder a higher responsibility, and (b) the heart of the conveyer should be in total harmony with what is conveyed. Since this condition was not met by the companion who was told to return back, he was unfit to convey the message.

57 Al-Kāshānī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Ṣāfi*, v.2, p. 32

58 In one of my journeys to Makkah (December 2007), I had seen something very fascinating in the Masjid al-Ḥarām. On the pillar opposite the door of the Ka'bah, adjacent to the women's entrance to the place where the water of the spring well of *Zamzam* is drawn, I found the inscription “‘Alī al-Murtaḍā *karrama Allāhu wajhahu*”. The entire inscription revealed a world of meaning for me. Unlike the names of the other *ṣahābah* (companions of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)) depicted on other poles of the environs of the Sacred Haram, wherever the name 'Ali came it was honoured with *al-Murtaḍā* and *karrama Allāhu wajhahu*. Ibn 'Abbas is reported to have said that Imam 'Ali ('a) was known as *al-Murtaḍā* because he would follow what Allāh and His Apostle are pleased with in all his matters (Ref: Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.35, p. 60). In other words, Allāh's pleasure would be his pleasure. And one who has attained such a lofty station, Allāh is already pleased (*Rāḍī*) with him. What is unique about that is that whereas in the case of the other *ṣahābah* the prayer “*raḍīya Allāhu 'anhu*” (may Allāh be pleased with him) is always mentioned, *al-Murtaḍā* reveals that the prayer has already been accepted and that Imam 'Ali is already one with whom Allāh is pleased. And the phrase *karrama Allāhu wajhahu* testifies that Imam 'Ali (lit. exalted) never bowed down before any idol. It should be noted however, that unlike “*raḍīya Allāhu 'anhu*”, “*karrama Allāhu wajhahu*” is not a supplication but a narration. It means “Allāh ennobled his essence (from bowing down to any idol ('an an *yaṣjudā liṣanam*))”, Ref: al-Shablanjī, *Nūr al-Abṣār*, p. 69) and not “May Allāh enoble his complexion”. However, if we are speaking of higher levels of *karāmah* (greatness and nobility) then perhaps there is no problem. This is because only Almighty Allāh is *al-Karīm al-Mutlaq* (the Absolute Noble One), and the path to His Nobility is endless. What is so symbolic about this scenery is that it is adjacent to the *Masqā* (place where one's thirst is quenched) of *Zamzam*: In the way we witness the water place of *Zamzam* adjacent to the pole that manifests the name of 'Ali ('a), we shall Insha Allāh witness Imam 'Ali ('a) beside the water place of *kawthar* on the Judgement Day.

CHAPTER 12

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ آلَ زِيَادٍ وَآلَ مَرْوَانَ، وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ قَاطِبَةً،
وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ ابْنَ مَرْجَانَةَ، وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ عُمَرَ بْنَ سَعْدٍ، وَلَعَنَ
اللَّهُ شِمْرًا، وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً أَسْرَجَتْ وَأَلْجَمَتْ وَتَنَقَّبَتْ
لِقِتَالِكَ

And may Allāh distance from His mercy the clan of Ziyād and the clan of Marwān; and may Allāh distance from His mercy the progeny of Umayyah altogether; and may Allāh distance from His mercy the product of Marjānah; and may Allāh distance from His mercy ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d; and may Allāh distance from His mercy Shimr; and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community that laid the saddles of their horses, their reigns and took off to combat with you.

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ آلَ زِيَادٍ وَآلَ مَرْوَانَ

And may Allāh distance the clan of Ziyād and the clan of Marwān from His mercy...

COMMENTARY

Here we are taught to curse specific groups of people who played a fundamental role in oppressing the guardians of religion and carrying out massacres that words fail to describe. Cursing them or more accurately “seeking their distance from Divine mercy” is nothing but declaring one’s harmony with Allāh Himself, who curses such people in the Holy Qur’ān. We have already established the veracity of this truth in the beginning of this work, and hence we do not wish to repeat the same over here.

The word *āl* which appears twice in this verse is rendered in different ways. Some have translated it in the same way as *ahl* (family, near ones, those with whom one is intimate, etc.). They opine that the word *āl* was originally *ahl*,¹ and then it turned into *āl*. Therefore it bears the same meaning.

Al-Jawharī, defining the word *āl* says:

وآل الرجل: أهله وعياله وآله أيضا: أتباعه

Āl of a man is his family and household. And his *āl* also signifies his followers.²

Perhaps the most comprehensive opinion on this word has been presented by the late lexicographer Al-Muṣṭafawī in his *al-Taḥqīq*. Defining the root word of *āl*, he says:

أن هذه الكلمة مشتقة من (الأول) بمعنى التقدّم وترتب الغير عليه. وبلحاظ هذا المعنى تطلق على عدّة يرجع نسبهم أو عنوانهم أو طريقتهم أو دينهم الى شخص، فتضاف اليه، فيقال: آل يعقوب، آل النبي، آل فرعون، آل موسى.

The word *Āl* is derived from *awl* which means precedence (*al-taqaddum*) from which another follows. Considering this meaning it refers to a number of people whose lineage or title or path or religion returns to one person, and hence it is annexed to him. Thus it is said, *Āl Yā‘qūb*, *Āl al-Nabī*, *Āl Fir‘awn*, and *Āl Mūsā*.³

Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his *Tafsīr al-Tibyān* says:

وقال صاحب العين: الآل كل شيء يؤول إلى شيء

The author of *al-‘ayn* said: *Āl* is everything that returns to a thing.⁴

Perhaps a suitable equivalent for *al* in the English language is “clan”, which is defined as:

CLAN: [a. Gaelic *clann*...]

1. A number of persons claiming descent, from common ancestor, and associated together; a tribe.

1 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 98

2 Al-Jawharī, *Al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, v.4, p. 1627

3 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq*, v.1, p. 177. We can understand this meaning in the following tradition of the Holy Prophet (ṣ): *Kullu taqīyyin wa naqīyyin ālī* (every God-wary and pure person is my *āl*)

4 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, v.1, p. 219

2. A collection of people having common attributes; a fraternity, party, set, lot.⁵

Hence *Āla Ziyād* and *Āla Marwān* is rendered as “the clan of Ziyād” and “the clan of Marwan” respectively. In annexing *āl* to Ziyād and Marwān, Mullā Ḥabībullah Kāshānī says there is an allusion that the two are the origin of their (the *āl*’s) transgression and wrongdoing and their trainers in that.⁶

In order to know *Āla Ziyād* and *Āla Marwān*, let us first try to understand Ziyād and Marwān:

Introducing Ziyād Ibn Abīhi

Historical records tell us that Ziyād was an illegal product of Sumayyah, a slave girl who worked as a prostitute during the age of ignorance. In order to prove his kinship with Ziyād, Mu‘āwiyah had to bring a witness by the name of Abū Maryam al-Salūlī⁷ who explained the details of how Abū Sufyān sought from him a prostitute and how he introduced Sumayyah and how Abū Sufyān committed fornication with her, and thereafter Ziyād was born.

Al-‘Aṣqalānī in his *al-Iṣābah* writes:

زيد بن أبيه وهو ابن سمية الذي صار يقال له ابن أبي سفیان، ولد في فراش عبيد مولى ثقيف، فكان يقال له زيد بن عبيد، ثم استلحقه معاوية، ثم لما انقضت الدولة الأموية صار يقال له: زيد بن أبيه، وزيد بن سمية وكنيته أبو المغيرة. Ziyād Ibn Abīhi [lit. Ziyād son of his father] is the son of Sumayyah, who came to be known as Ibn Abī Sufyān (the son of Abū Sufyān). He was born in the house of ‘Ubayd, the slave of Thaqīf, and thus he was called Ziyād Ibn ‘Ubayd, and thereafter Mu‘āwiyah attached him to himself [as a brother]. Later when the Umayyad empire fell, he came to be known as Ziyād Ibn Abīh [Ziyād, the son of his father] and Ziyād Ibn Sumayyah, and his teknonym was Abū al-Mughayrah.⁸

This action of Mu‘āwiyah (i.e. attaching Ziyād to himself) was clearly contrary to the Islamic law, for the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had said:

الْوَلَدُ لِلْفِرَاشِ وَلِلْعَاهِرِ الْحَجَرُ

The born child belongs to the bed where it was conceived, and the adulterer must be deprived.⁹

Hence, since Sumayyah conceived Ziyād while she was the wife of ‘Ubayd, the slave of Thaqīf, it was legally incorrect of Mu‘āwiyah to attach Ziyād to Abū Sufyān, and consider him as his brother. According to the Islamic law, Ziyād should be taken as the child of ‘Ubayd, and Abū Sufyān has no relationship to him whatsoever.

Imam al-Ḥasan (‘a), addressing Ziyād in the presence of Mu‘āwiyah, ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ, and Marwān Ibn al-Ḥakam, is reported to have said:

وَمَا أَنْتَ يَا زِيَادُ وَفُرَيْشًا؟ لَا أَعْرِفُ لَكَ فِيهَا أَدِيمًا صَحِيحًا وَلَا فَرَعًا نَابِتًا، وَلَا قَدِيمًا نَابِتًا، وَلَا مَنَبِتًا كَرِيمًا، بَلْ كَأَنْتَ أُمُّكَ بَغِيًّا تُدَاوِلُهَا رِجَالُ قُرَيْشٍ، وَفُجَارُ الْعَرَبِ، فَلَمَّا وُلِدْتَ لَمْ تَعْرِفْ لَكَ الْعَرَبُ وَالِدًا فَادْعَاكَ هَذَا - يَعْنِي مُعَاوِيَةَ - بَعْدَ

5 Oxford English Dictionary (OED), CD ROM, ver. 4

6 Ayatullah Ḥabībullah Kāshānī, *Sharḥu Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā*, p. 66

7 Al-Shīrāzī, *Dhakhīrat al-Dārayn*, pp. 121-122

8 Ibid, p. 119

9 Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Nādirah*, v.25, pp. 13-14

مَمَاتِ أَبِيهِ، مَالِكَ إِفْتِحَارًا، تَكْفِيكَ سُمِّيَةَ وَ يَكْفِينَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَ أَبِي عَائِشَةَ ابْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ سَيِّدِ
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ...

O Ziyād, what relation do you have with Quraysh? I do not know that you have with them a legal origin, a growing branch, a firm step, or a noble source. Rather, your mother was a prostitute whom Qurayshite men and the dissolute Arabs alternated. When you were born, the Arabs did not reckon a father for you. Thereafter this one (Mu‘āwiyah) claimed you [as his brother] after the death of his father. You have no pride! Sufficient for you is Sumayyah, and sufficient for us is Allāh’s Apostle (ﷺ) and my father ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a), the doyen of the believers...¹⁰

Ziyād was known to be one of the tyrants who committed so many atrocities against the lovers of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) during his lifetime. In the beginning Imam ‘Alī (‘a) during his caliphate chose him as his governor in Fārs. He was warned by the Imam (‘a) to beware of the deception of Mu‘āwiyah, but it seems he took things lightly. Afterwards he was subdued by the guile of Mu‘āwiyah, and overturned in his loyalty to Imam ‘Alī (‘a). Mu‘āwiyah placed him as his governor in Kūfah and Baṣrah, where he began slaying and torturing the companions of Amīr al-mu‘minīn ‘Alī (‘a). History records that he killed 100,000 Shias of Imam ‘Alī (‘a). In a letter to Mu‘āwiyah, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) enumerates some of his atrocities as follows:

... ثُمَّ سَلَطْتُهُ عَلَى الْعِرَاقَيْنِ فَفَقَعَ أَيْدِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَ سَمَلَ أَعْيُنَهُمْ، وَ صَلَبَهُمْ عَلَى جُدُوعِ النَّخْلِ،! كَأَنَّكَ لَسْتَ مِنْ هَذِهِ
 الْأُمَّةِ وَ كَأَنَّهَا لَيْسَتْ مِنْكَ ... أَوْ لَسْتَ صَاحِبُ الْخَضْرَمِيِّينَ الَّذِينَ كَتَبَ إِلَيْكَ ابْنُ سُمَيَّةٍ أَنَّهُمْ عَلَى دِينِ عَلِيٍّ، فَكَتَبْتَ
 إِلَيْهِ أَنْ أَقْتُلَ مَنْ كَانَ عَلَى دِينِ عَلِيٍّ وَرَأْيِهِ، فَفَقَعْتَهُمْ، وَ مَثَّلَ بِهِمْ بِأَمْرِكَ، وَ دِينَ عَلِيٍّ هُوَ دِينُ مُحَمَّدٍ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) ...
 ... Thereafter you made him [i.e. Ziyād] dominate al-‘Irāqayn [Kūfah and Baṣrah], and he severed the hands of the faithful, gouged their eyes, and crucified them on the trunks of date palms. It is as if you are not from this [Islamic] nation, and the nation is alien to you... Were you not the one responsible for the Ḥadramīs [originally from Yemen] about whom the son of Sumayyah wrote to you. He said that they are in the religion of ‘Alī, and you wrote to him and told him to kill whosoever is in the religion and opinion of ‘Alī (‘a), whereupon he killed them and mutilated their bodies by your order. [But] the religion of ‘Alī is the same as the religion of Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his progeny)!...¹¹

Ziyād is also the first one to openly announce and begin the vilification (*sabb*) of Imam ‘Alī in the cities of Baṣrah and Kūfah.

Understanding Āl Ziyād in a More Profound Way

We came to understand earlier that *āl* refers to “a number of people whose lineage or title or path or religion returns to one person, and hence it is annexed to him”. Therefore all those who were or are united with the path of Ziyād and bear the same spirit of hatred against the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are from his *āl* and hence worthy of being cursed. Time or place cannot limit the *āl* of Ziyād. If, therefore, one observes that a particular ruler in the contemporary world adopts a path similar to Ziyād, he must not doubt that he is from the *āl* of Ziyād.

The equation is quite simple: the human being, as we understood in the previous chapter, is tantamount to his thoughts, beliefs, words and deeds. If anyone claims to be an Islamic leader of a certain part of the Muslim world, but carries out atrocities against the lovers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

10 Al-Amīnī, *Al-Ghadīr*, v.10, pp. 225-226

11 Ahmad Ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, v.5, p. 129; Al-Bahrānī, *Min Akhlāq al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (‘a)*, p. 147

in the same way as the likes of Ziyād did, he is a manifestation of Ziyād and therefore from among the *Āl Ziyād*.

Saladin Ayyūbi Revives the Tradition of Ziyād

Saladin Ayyūbi, as history reveals, was an example of the character of Ziyād. During his time he is reported to have killed so many Shias. Among the things that he did¹² against the Shias are:

- He usurped the wealth, property, and houses of the Fatimids (Shias of Egypt and North Africa), and gave their wealth to his people and tribe.
- He removed Shia judges and replaced them with Shafi‘ī judges.¹³
- He removed “*ḥayya ‘alā khayri al-‘amal*” from the call to prayer (*adhān*).¹⁴
- He prohibited the Shia school of thought and made the Mālikī and Shafi‘ī schools of thought to prevail.¹⁵
- He would force the people to believe in the Sunni and Ash‘arī schools of thought, and would spill the blood of those who would refuse to accept these schools of thought. Ibn Zuhrah al-Ḥalabi in his *Ghunyat al-Nuzū‘* writes:

دخل صلاح الدين الأيوبي إلى حلب عام ٥٧٩ وحمل الناس على التسنن و عقيدة الأشعري ولا يقدم للخطابة ولا للتدريس إلا من كان مقلدا لأحد المذاهب الأربعة، ووضع السيف على الشيعة فقتلهم وأبادهم مثل عمله في مصر، إلى حد يقول الخفاجي في كتابه: فقد غال الأيوبيون في القضاء على كل أثر للشيعة.

Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī [Saladin] entered Aleppo in the year 579 AH and forced the people to accept Sunnism and the belief of al-Ash‘arī, and no one was allowed to deliver sermons or teach save he who was a follower of one of the four Sunni schools of thought. And he placed his sword on the Shia and killed and exterminated them in the way he did in Egypt to the extent that al-Khafājī in his book writes: “Indeed the Ayyubites went to their extreme in exterminating every mark of the Shia.”¹⁶

- He imprisoned the children of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) in Egypt and separated between their men and women, so that the Imam’s progeny becomes extinct. Shaykh Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyah in his *Al-Shī‘ah wa al-Ḥakimūn* writes:

و حبس بقايا العلويين في مصر، وفرّق بين الرجال والنساء، حتى لا يتناسلوا...

And he (Saladin) imprisoned the remaining Alawiyūn [descendants of Imam ‘Alī (‘a)] in Egypt and separated their men from their women so that they do not procreate.¹⁷

- He revived the tradition of celebrating on the Day of ‘Āshūrā’, something that the Banū Umayyah and Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf had begun, but was then stopped. Saladin announced the Day of ‘Āshūrā’ as the day of ‘Īd. Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn in his *A‘yān al-Shī‘ah* says:

12 ‘Aṭā‘ī Iṣfahānī, *I‘tirāfāt* 2, p. 926

13 Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyah, *Al-Shī‘ah wa al-Ḥakimūn*, p. 293

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibn Zuhrah al-Ḥalabi, *Ghunyat al-Nuzū‘*, p. 10

17 Muḥammad Jawād Mughniyah, *Al-Shī‘ah wa al-Ḥakimūn*, pp. 293-294

وأعيد اتّخاذ يوم قتل الحسين (عليه السلام) عيداً الذي كان قد سنه بنو أمية والحجاج بالشام وغيرها واحداث جعله عيداً بمصر ولم يكن معروفاً فيها بنص المقرئزي

...And observing the day when Imam al-Ḥusayn (peace be on him) was killed as 'Īd (day of happiness), a tradition instituted by the Banū Umayyah and Ḥajjāj in Damascus and other cities, was restored. He [Saladin] began the tradition of observing the occasion as 'Īd in Egypt, where, according to al-Maqrīzī, it was unknown.¹⁸

- He executed a mass killing of the Shias in Aleppo.

Hatred against the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and their followers, we must understand, according to some of our traditions, transforms one into a condition that is more dirty than a dog. Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى لَمْ يَخْلُقْ خَلْقًا أَفْجَسَ مِنَ الْكَلْبِ، وَإِنَّ التَّاصِبَ لَنَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ أَفْجَسَ مِنْهُ

Indeed Allāh, the Blessed and Exalted, did not create any creation more impure than the dog; and surely one who hates us, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), is more impure than it.¹⁹

And in another tradition he ('a) is reported to have said:

والتَّاصِبُ شَرٌّ مِنْ وَدِّ الزِّنَا

And the *nāṣib* [one who hates the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)] is worse than an offspring of adultery (*walad al-zinā*).²⁰

Once a person came to Imam al-Bāqir ('a) and informed him about how his neighbour does not practise any of the obligatory deeds, including the prayer (Ṣalāt). The Imam ('a) became surprised, and then said:

أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مِنْهُ؟

Should I not inform you of one who is more evil than him?

The companion said: Yes indeed (*balā*). Thereupon the Imam ('a) said:

التَّاصِبُ لَنَا شَرٌّ مِنْهُ

One who hates us is more evil than him.²¹

Imam 'Alī ('a) is reported to have said:

وَأَمَّا التَّاصِبُ لَنَا وَالْمُعَادِي لَنَا فَمُشْرِكٌ كَافِرٌ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ

...And one who hates us and shows enmity to us, is a polytheist, disbeliever and an enemy of Allāh.²²

Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) is reported to have said:

18 Al-Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, v.1, p. 30

19 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.77, p. 37

20 Al-Barqī, *Al-Maḥāsīn*, v.1, p. 185

21 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.8, p. 101

22 Al-Anṣārī, *Kitāb Sulaym Ibn Qays*, p. 449

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ لَيَشْفَعُ لِحَبِيْبِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُوْنَ نَاصِبًا، وَلَوْ أَنَّ نَاصِبًا شَفَعَ لَهُ كُلُّ نَبِيٍّ مُرْسَلٍ وَمَلَكَ مُقَرَّبٍ مَا شَفَعُوا

Indeed a believer can intercede for his close friend except if the friend hates the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), and if every prophet and angel brought close to Allāh were to intercede for a nasib [one who hates the Ahl al-Bayt], their intercession would not be accepted.²³

Introducing Marwān Ibn al-Ḥakam

Marwān Ibn al-Ḥakam Ibn Abī al-‘Āṣ Ibn Umayyah is well-known for his extreme hatred against Allāh, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), and Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a). The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) during his lifetime is reported to have cursed both him and his father Ḥakam. In one of her testimonials, ‘Ā’ishah is reported to have openly said the following to Marwān:

أَشْهَدُ لَقَدْ لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَبَاكَ وَلَعَنَكَ وَأَنْتَ الطَّرِيدُ ابْنُ الطَّرِيدِ

I bear witness that the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ) cursed your father and you, and you are the expelled (*al-ṭarīd*), the son of the expelled (*al-ṭarīd*).²⁴

‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Abī ‘Abdillāh is reported to have said:

سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) يَقُولُ: خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) مِنْ حُجْرَتِهِ وَمَرَّ وَأَبُوهُ يَسْتَمِعَانِ إِلَى حَدِيثِهِ فَقَالَ لَهُ: الْوَرَعُ ابْنُ الْوَرَعِ....

I heard Abū ‘Abdillāh (‘a) [al-Ṣādiq] saying: The Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ) came out of his room and found Marwān and his father [spying and] listening carefully to his speech. So he said to Marwān: You are a lizard,²⁵ son of a lizard.²⁶

The tradition of lizard according to authoritative scholars is considered as *mashhūr* (well-known).²⁷ It reveals that the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) saw the inner forms of Marwān and his father as lizards. In the beautiful expression of Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a), who spoke about a group of people, who appear to be humans but are animals in reality,

فَالصُّورَةُ صُورَةُ إِنْسَانٍ، وَالْقَلْبُ قَلْبُ حَيَوَانٍ

...Therefore, the apparent form is the form of human beings, but the heart is the heart of an animal.²⁸

In another sermon Imam ‘Alī (‘a) is reported to have said:

فَقُبْحًا لَكُمْ يَا أَشْبَاهَ الرِّجَالِ وَلَا رِجَالٍ

23 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.27, p. 236

24 Al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, v.4, pp. 335-336

25 There are traditions about the nature of a lizard worthy of mention: (1) The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said: “Whilst the frogs were extinguishing the fire from Ibrāhīm (‘a), the lizards were blowing into it [to increase the fire], and hence it was prohibited to kill the former, and ordered to kill the latter.” (Al-Ṣan‘ānī, *Al-Muṣannif*, v.4, p. 446); (2) Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) is reported to have said: “...and indeed lizards were a tribe from the tribes of Banī Isrā’īl (sons of Prophet Ya‘qūb (‘a)), who would vilify the children of prophets and hate them and so Allāh transformed them into lizards.” (Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *‘Ilal al-Sharāyi’*, v.2, p. 487); (3) ‘Abdullāh Ibn Ṭalḥah narrates: I asked Abā ‘Abdillāh (al-Ṣadiq) (‘a) about the lizard, and he said: “It is unclean (*rijs*) and a total metamorphosis (*maskh*).” (Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.58, p. 53)

26 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.8, p. 238

27 Al-Shahristānī, *Wuḍū‘ al-Nabī (ﷺ)*, v.1, p. 186

28 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.2, p. 57

...So shame on you, O semblances of men and not men!²⁹

Due to their ill behaviour and spying for the polytheists, the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have expelled both Ḥakam and Marwān from Madīnah to the town of Ṭā'if.

Ibn Kathīr in his *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* writes:

وقد كان أبوه الحكم من أكبر أعداء النبي، وإنما أسلم يوم الفتح، وقدم الحكم المدينة ثم طرده النبي إلى الطائف ومات بها.

Indeed Marwān's father al-Ḥakam was from the arch enemies of the Prophet (ﷺ). Surely he [only] accepted Islam during the victory of Makkah, and came to settle in Madīnah. Then the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) banished him to Ṭā'if where he finally died.³⁰

Perhaps the most stern narration about Ḥakam is the following report narrated from the Holy Prophet (ﷺ):

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْحَكَمَ بْنِ أَبِي الْعَاصِ، وَلَوْ تَحْتَ أَسْتَارِ الْكُعْبَةِ، فَاقْتُلُوهُ.

If you see al-Ḥakam Ibn al-'Ās even behind the curtains of the Ka'bah, kill him!³¹

Marwān is reported to have lived in Ṭā'if until his close relative 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān came to power. The father of Marwān, al-Ḥakam was the uncle of 'Uthmān. When 'Uthmān came to power, he summoned Marwān to Madīnah, brought him closer to him, and spent money lavishly for him. Trusting Marwān, he appointed him a minister, married him to his daughter and entrusted to him all the political affairs, though the latter was devoid of any correct political vision.

Ibn Kathīr in his *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* says:

وقد كان عثمان بن عفان يكرمه ويعظمه، وكان كاتب الحكم بين يديه، ومن تحت رأسه جرت قضية الدار، وبسببه حصر عثمان بن عفان فيها. وألحَّ عليه أولئك أن يُسَلِّمَ مروان إليهم فامتنع عثمان أشد الامتناع.

Indeed 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān would respect and venerate him [i.e. Marwān], and he was the scribe of 'Uthmān's orders, and the incident of *dār*³² transpired before his eyes, and it is due to him that 'Uthmān Ibn al-'Affān was surrounded and besieged. And those who besieged the house persistently asked 'Uthmān to surrender Marwān to them, but 'Uthmān sternly refused to do so.³³

عن طارق بن شهاب قال: أول من قدَّم الخطبة على الصلاة يوم العيد مروان فقال له رجل: خالفت السنة؟ فقال له مروان: إنه قد تُرك ما هنالك

Ṭāriq Ibn Shihāb is reported to have said: The first person to make the sermon of 'Īd precede its prayer is Marwān; a man even said to him: You have acted contrary to the Prophet's way (Sunnah). Marwān said: Indeed that has been abandoned.³⁴

عن أبي هريرة: أن رسول رأى في المنام أن بني الحكم يرقون على منبره وينزلون، فأصبح كالمغيظ، وقال: رَأَيْتُ بَنِي

29 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭabrisī, *Al-Ihtijāj*, v.1, p. 255

30 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.8, p. 284

31 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.33, p. 196

32 This is an apparent reference to the Holy Prophet's invitation to his close relatives to accept Islam.

33 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.8, p. 284

34 Ibid, p. 283

الْحَكَمَ يَنْزُونَ عَلَى مِنْبَرِي نَزْوِ الْقَرَدَةِ.

Abū Hurayrah is reported to have said: The Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ) saw in his dream that the progeny of al-Ḥakam are ascending on his pulpit and descending. Thereupon he angrily said: "I saw Banī al-Ḥakam jumping over my pulpit like monkeys."³⁵

ولمّا كان متولياً على المدينة لمعاوية كان يسبّ عليّاً كل جمعة على المنبر، وقال له الحسن بن علي: لقد لعن الله أباك الحكّم وأنت في صلبيه على لسان نبيّه، فقال: لعن الله الحكّم وما ولد.

When Marwān was Mu‘āwiyah’s governor over Madīnah, he would vilify ‘Alī (‘a) every Friday on the pulpit. Al-Ḥasan Ibn ‘Alī (‘a) said to him: "Indeed Allāh cursed your father through the tongue of His Prophet (ﷺ) while you were [still] in his loins. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: 'May Allāh curse al-Ḥakam and whom he bears.'"³⁶

Marwān was also known as *Ibn al-Zarqā’* due to his grandmother al-Zarqā’ bintu Wahab, who was a well known prostitute of her time. In one of his stern encounters with Marwān, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) draws his attention to his degenerate descent as follows:

يَأْتِنَ الرَّزْقَاءَ الدَّاعِيَةَ إِلَى نَفْسِهَا بِسُوقِ عُكَّازٍ

O product of al-Zarqā’, who would call others towards herself in the market of ‘Ukkāz.³⁷

When Yazīd came to power, he sent a letter to Walīd Ibn ‘Utbah, his governor of Madīnah, to seek oath of allegiance from Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). He also said that if Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) were to refuse, then Walīd should behead him. Walīd consulted Marwān for advice on this and the latter said:

إِنَّهُ لَا يُبَايِعُ، وَلَوْ كُنْتُ مَكَانَكَ لَضَرَبْتُ عُقُقَهُ.

Indeed he will not give the oath of allegiance; and if I were in your place, I would behead him.

Thereafter Walīd, who was in the company of Marwān, summoned the Imam (‘a) to convey to him Yazīd’s message and seek from him the oath of allegiance. The Imam (‘a) came to Walīd with thirty of his men. Walīd informed the Imam of Mu‘āwiyah’s death and then sought his oath of allegiance, whereupon the Imam (‘a) said:

إِنَّ الْبَيْعَةَ لَا تَكُونُ سِرًّا، فَإِذَا دَعَوْتَ النَّاسَ غَدًا فَادْعُنَا مَعَهُمْ.

Indeed the oath of allegiance does not transpire in private. Therefore when you call the people tomorrow, invite us with them.

Marwān, in his devilish nature, said:

لَا تَقْبَلُ أَيْهَا الْأَمِيرُ عُذْرَهُ، فَإِنْ بَايَعَ الْآنَ وَالْآنَ فَاصْرِبْ عُقُقَهُ

O Amīr, do not accept his excuse. If he pays his oath of allegiance now, well and good, otherwise sever his neck.

Hearing this, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) reprimanded Marwān as follows:

35 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, v.8, p. 284

36 Ibid, pp. 284-285

37 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.49, pp. 252-253

وَيْلٌ لَكَ يَا بَنَ الرَّزْقَاءِ أَنْتَ تَأْمُرُ بِضَرْبِ عُنُقِي كَذَبْتَ وَاللَّهِ وَلَوْ مِتَّ

Woe be unto you, O son of al-Zarqā'. You command to sever my head?! By Allāh, you cannot do that, and you are degenerate!

Then addressing Walīd, he ('a) said:

أَيُّهَا الْأَمِيرُ إِنَّا أَهْلُ بَيْتِ الثُّبُورِ وَمَعْدِنُ الرِّسَالَةِ وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِنَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ وَبِنَا حَتَمَ اللَّهُ وَبِنَا رَجُلٌ فَاسِقٌ، شَارِبٌ
الْخُمُرِ، قَاتِلُ النَّفْسِ الْمُحَرَّمَةِ، مُعَلِنٌ بِالْفِسْقِ، وَمِثْلِي لَا يُبَايِعُ مِثْلَهُ، وَلَيْكِنَ نَصَبُحُ وَنَصَبُحُونَ وَنَنْظُرُ وَنَنْظُرُونَ أَيُّنَا أَحَقُّ
بِالْخِلَافَةِ وَالْبَيْعَةِ.

O Amīr, we are the Household of the Prophet, the minefield of apostleship, the place where angels frequent, through us Allāh begins and through us He ends. Yazīd, on the contrary, is an open sinner, wine drinker, slayer of innocent souls, and displayer of sin. One who is like me cannot pay an oath of allegiance to one who is like him. However, we shall continue and [wait and] see which of us has more right over caliphate and allegiance.³⁸

In one of his encounters with Marwān, Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) draws a true picture of who Marwān really is. He says:

وَيْلَكَ يَا مَرْوَانَ! إِلَيْكَ عَنِّي فَإِنَّكَ رِجْسٌ وَإِنَّا أَهْلُ بَيْتِ الطَّهَارَةِ الَّذِينَ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَى نَبِيِّهِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَأَلِيهِ وَسَلَّمَ، فَقَالَ: (إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا)

Woe be unto you O Marwān! Get away from me, for indeed you are dirt (*rijs*) and we are the Family of the House of purity, those about whom Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic, revealed to his Prophet Muḥammad (s), and said: “*Indeed Allāh desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification*”.(33:33)³⁹

Noteworthy Exceptions

Sa'd Ibn 'Abd al-Malik, the grandson of Marwān Ibn al-Ḥakam, was a companion of Imam al-Bāqir ('a). Due to his virtue, Imam al-Bāqir ('a) would call him Sa'd *al-khayr*. Although he was an Umayyad from the family tree of Marwān, he was considered by the Imam ('a) as a true follower of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), who was intimate with the House of prophethood (*Ahlu Bayt al-Nubuwwah*). Once when he learned that the accursed tree mentioned in the Qur'ān (*al-shajarat al-mal'ūnah fi al-Qur'ān*: 17:60) referred to the Banū Umayyah, he turned extremely sorrowful and began weeping loudly. Imam al-Bāqir ('a) on seeing his situation consoled him and said that although he was physically from the Banū Umayyah, he was not from the cursed tree. The following are the details of the tradition:

عَنْ أَبِي حَمْزَةَ، قَالَ: دَخَلَ سَعْدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمَلِكِ وَكَانَ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يُسَمِّيهِ سَعْدَ الْخَيْرِ وَهُوَ مِنْ وُلْدِ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ
بَنِ مَرْوَانَ عَلَى أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَبَيْنَمَا يَنْشَجُ كَمَا تَنْشَجُ النِّسَاءُ قَالَ: فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبُو جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: مَا يُبْكِيكَ
يَا سَعْدُ؟ قَالَ وَكَيْفَ لَا أَبْكِي وَأَنَا مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ الْمَلْعُونَةِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ: لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ أَنْتَ أَمْوِيٌّ مِنَّا أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ أَمَا
سَمِعْتَ قَوْلَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَحْيَىٰ عَنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ: فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي.

Abū Ḥamzah is reported to have said: Sa'd Ibn 'Abd al-Malik [Ibn Marwān], whom Imam al-Bāqir ('a) would call Sa'd al-Khayr [Sa'd, the good one] and who was among

38 Al-Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Tāwūs, *Al-Luḥūf fi Qatla al-Ṭufūf*, p. 17

39 Al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*, v.5, p. 17

the children of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ibn Marwān, entered in the presence of Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir (‘a)], and while he cried in the way the women cry, Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) asked him, What makes you cry O Sa‘d? Sa‘d replied: How can I not cry while I am from the accursed tree (*al-shajarah al-mal‘ūnah*) in the Qur’ān [17:60]? The Imam (‘a) said to him: You are not from them. You are an Umayyad, but from us, the Ahl al-Bayt. Have you not heard the word of Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic, regarding Ibrāhīm, “*and whosoever follows me is from me* [14:36]?”⁴⁰

Hence it is important for us to realise that when we say *Āl Marwān*, we do not mean the entire lineage of Marwān, regardless of their character and personality. *Āl Marwān* are those among the progeny of Marwān who resembled him in their character and personality.

وَلَعَنَّ اللَّهُ بَنِي أُمَيَّةَ قَاتِبَةً

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the progeny of Umayyah altogether.

Banū Umayyah literally means “sons of Umayyah”. The word *Banū*⁴¹ is the plural of the word *ibn*. In the Arabic when we say *Banū* we do not only mean the immediate male offspring, but rather the entire progeny. Hence *Banū Umayyah* would signify the progeny of Umayyah.

The word *Umayyah* is the diminutive (*muṣaghghar*) of the word *amah* (slave girl). The esteemed ‘Allāmah ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīnī in his magnum opus of light *al-Ghadīr* narrates the following interesting report:

دخل شريك بن الأعور (وكان دميما) على معاوية، فقال له معاوية: إنك لدميم، والجميل خير من الدميم، وإنك لشريك، وما لله من شريك، وإن أباك أعور، والصحيح خير من الأعور، فكيف سُدت قومك؟ فقال له: إنك معاوية، وما معاوية إلا كلبة عوت فاستعوت الكلاب؛ وإنك لابن صخر والسهل خير من الصخر، وإنك لابن حرب والسلم خير من الحرب، وإنك لابن أمية، وما أمية إلا أمة صغرت. فكيف صرت أمير المؤمنين؟

Sharīk Ibn al-A‘war (who was an ugly man) entered in the presence of Mu‘āwiyah, whereupon the latter said to him: Indeed you are ugly [*damīm*], and one who is handsome is better than one who is ugly; and indeed you are Sharīk [lit. partner] whereas Allāh does not have a *sharīk*; and indeed your father is A‘war [lit. one eyed], and one who is sound is better than a ‘war [one eyed]. How then did you become the leader of your community? Thereupon Sharīk said to him: Indeed you are Mu‘āwiyah and *mu‘āwiyah* is not save a female dog that barks and makes other dogs follow suit; indeed you are the son of Ṣakhr [lit. rock] and a soft ground [*al-sahl*] is better than *ṣakhr* [hard stone]; and indeed you are the son of Ḥarb [lit. war], and peace is better than war; and indeed you are the son of Umayyah, and *umayyah* is none save a slave girl who has been degraded. How then did you become the commander of the faithful?⁴²

Defining the root of the word *qāṭibatan*, Ibn Fāris in his *Mu‘jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah* says:

القاف والطاء والباء أصل صحيح يدل على الجمع. يقال: جاءت العرب قاطبة، إذا جاءت بأجمعها.

Qāf, ṭā’ and *yā’* is a sound root that signifies “to gather” (*al-jam*). It is said that “*the Arabs came qāṭibatan*”, when they came all together.⁴³

40 Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Al-Ikhtisās*, p. 85

41 Note that this word is pronounced as *Banū* when in the nominative case (*marfū’*), whereas it is read as *banī* in both the accusative (*manṣūb*) and the genitive (*majrūr*) cases. In the present text it is in the accusative case because it is the object of curse.

42 Al-Shaykh al-Amīnī, *Al-Ghadīr*, v.10, p. 171

43 Ibn Fāris, *Mu‘jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, v.5, p. 105

Hence the word *qāṭibatan* in the phrase “...*Banī Umayyata qāṭibatan*” is a circumstantial qualifier (*hāl*) that describes the state of Banū Umayyah. It means “all together”. Hence the meaning of the phrase under discussion would be “*And may Allāh distance from His mercy the progeny of Umayyah all together*”.

The Origins of Umayyah & His Progeny

History tells us that Umayyah was a Roman slave bought by ‘Abd al-Shams, the son of ‘Abd Manāf.⁴⁴ Thereafter due to his intelligence and astuteness, ‘Abd al-Shams adopted him as his own son.⁴⁵ As per the expression of one report: “...*thumma tabannāhu*” (...thereafter he (‘Abd al-Shams) adopted him as his son).⁴⁶ Later he was attributed to ‘Abd al-Shams as his own son although he was not his biological son. Hence, although some of the members of the progeny of Umayyah later claimed to hail from Quraysh, their origin is reckoned as alien to Quraysh.

Imam ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) in one of his letters to Mu‘āwiyah, who had claimed to be from the progeny of ‘Abd Manāf, says:

وَأَمَّا قَوْلُكَ إِنَّا بَنُو عَبْدِ مَنَافٍ فَكَذَلِكَ نَحْنُ. وَلَكِنَّ لَيْسَ أُمِيَّةُ كَهَاشِمٍ. وَلَا حَرْبٌ كَعَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ. وَلَا أَبُو سُفْيَانَ كَأَبِي طَالِبٍ، وَلَا الْمُهَاجِرُ كَالطَّلِيقِ وَلَا الصَّرِيحُ كَاللَّصِيقِ...

As for your claim that “We are the sons of ‘Abd Manāf”, [know that] we likewise are the same. However, Umayyah is not like Hāshim, nor is Ḥarb like ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, nor is Abū Sufyān like Abū Ṭālib, nor is an emigrant (*al-muhājir*) like one who was taken as captive and then released on compensation (*al-talīq*), nor is a proper blood relationship (*al-ṣaḥīḥ*) like one who was attached to a relationship (*al-laṣīq*)...⁴⁷

In order to properly understand what Imam ‘Alī (‘a) meant in this letter, let us look at the definitions of some of the words employed. Muḥammad ‘Abduh in his commentary of the *Nahj al-Balāghah*, explaining the word *al-talīq* and *al-laṣīq* says:

الطليق الذي أسر فأطلق بالمن عليه أو الفدية، و ابو سفيان ومعاوية كانوا من الطلقاء يوم الفتح. والمهاجر من آمن في المخافة وهاجر تخلصا منها. والصريح صحيح النسب في ذوي الحسب. واللصيق من ينتمي إليهم وهو أجنبي عنهم
Al-talīq is one who was taken as captive and then released through great favour or compensation. Abū Sufyān and Mu‘āwiyah were from the *tulaqā* [captive released on great favour or compensation] on the day of the victory of Makkah. And a *muhājir* [emigrant] is one who embraced belief whilst in fear and migrated to be emancipated from fear. And *al-ṣaḥīḥ* is one with proper lineage (*ṣaḥīḥ al-nasab*), whereas *al-laṣīq* is one who is associated to them although he is alien to them.⁴⁸

With regard to the origin of Umayyah, ‘Allāmah al-Majlisī in his *Biḥār al-Anwār* writes:

قال صاحب الكامل البهائي: إن أمية كان غلاما روميا لعبد الشمس، فلما ألقاه كيسا فظنا أعتقه وتبناه، فقيل أمية بن عبد الشمس.

44 ‘Abd Manāf is the great grandfather of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and Imam ‘Alī (‘a).

45 According to ‘Allāmah Mīrzā Abū al-Faḍl Tehrānī, however, the well-known view is that he was really the son of ‘Abd al-Shams (*Umayyah banābar mashhūr pisare ‘Abd al-Shams Ibn ‘Abde Manāf ast*), ‘Allamah Mirza Abū al-Faḍl Tehrānī, *Shifā’ al-Ṣudūr*, p. 231

46 Al-Shakiri, Hashim wa ‘Abd al-Shams, p. 120

47 Imam ‘Alī (‘a), *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter 17, v.3, p. 17

48 Ibid, p. 19

The author of *al-Kāmil al-Bahā'ī* says: Indeed Umayyah was a Roman slave of 'Abd al-Shams.⁴⁹ And when he found him to be astute and clever, he freed him and adopted him as a son. Hence it was said, Umayyah Ibn 'Abd al-Shams.⁵⁰

Al-Ṭurayhī in his *Majma' al-Baḥrayn* says:

وفي نقل آخر ان بني أمية ليسوا من قريش، بل كان لعبد شمس بن مناف عبد رومي يقال له: أمية فنسب إلى عبد شمس، ففيل: أمية بن عبد شمس فنسبوا بني أمية إلى قريش لذلك، وأصلهم من الروم، وكان ذلك عند العرب جائزا أن يلحق بالنسب مثل ذلك.

According to another narration, indeed Banī Umayyah are not from Quraysh. Rather 'Abd al-Shams Ibn 'Abd Manāf had a Roman slave called Umayyah, and therefore he was attributed to him. Hence it was said Umayyah Ibn 'Abd al-Shams, and that is why they attributed Banū Umayyah to Quraysh. However their origin was Rome. And to attach a person like that to one's lineage was permitted among the Arabs.⁵¹

Understanding Umayyah's Personality

Banū Umayyah, as history clearly reveals, always had ill feelings for Banū Hāshim. Historical records inform us that Umayyah himself hated his uncle Hāshim, because the latter was privileged with the responsibility of feeding (*al-rifādah*) and serving water (*al-siqāyah*) to pilgrims, a tradition instituted by his grandfather Quṣay Ibn Kilāb Ibn Murrah. This privilege was not given to 'Abd al-Shams, who would always travel and hardly stay in Makkah. He was also a poor man who had many children. So the Quraysh unanimously decided to bestow Hāshim the responsibility of feeding the pilgrims. Hāshim was a rich man who would annually donate a lot of wealth during the Hajj season and feed the pilgrims and quench their thirst. Umayyah, it is said, also had wealth, and hence tried to do what Hāshim was doing, but was unable to cope with the task. A group of people among the Quraysh, observing his inability, began rejoicing at his misfortune and reproving him. This made him annoyed and he sought to compete and rival with Hāshim. The loser of the rivalry (*al-munāfarah*) was to pay the price of fifty black eyed camels and be expelled from Makkah for ten years. Al- Khuzā'ī, who was the adjudicator of the competition, declared Hāshim to be the winner.⁵² His declaration is reported to have been as follows:

وَالْقَمَرِ الْبَاهِرِ، وَالْكَوْكَبِ الرَّاهِرِ، وَالْعَمَامِ الْمَاطِرِ، وَمَا بِالْحِجْوِ مِنْ طَائِرٍ، وَمَا أَهْتَدَى بِعَلَمٍ مُسَافِرٍ، مِنْ مُنْجِدٍ وَعَاثِرٍ، لَقَدْ سَبَقَ هَاشِمٌ أُمَيَّةَ إِلَى الْمَآثِرِ، أَوَّلَ مِنْهُ وَآخِرُ، وَأَبُو هَمَّامَةَ بِذَلِكَ خَابِرٌ.

By the glorious moon, by the shining star, by the rain-pouring cloud, by the bird(s) in the air, by the beacon that guides the traveller, one going to Najd and another to Ghawr. Indeed Hāshim has outstripped Umayyah to glorious deeds. There is a first in this and a last. Abū Hamhamah knows this.⁵³

Hāshim, who was given fifty camels due to his victory, slaughtered them in Makkah and fed the people, while Umayyah had to spend ten years in Syria. During his expulsion, Umayyah committed acts that the pen is ashamed to write.

49 In some reports it has also been mentioned that his mother was a Roman slave girl, who was a prostitute.

50 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.31, p. 543

51 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭurayhī, *Majma' al-Baḥrayn*, v.1, p. 116

52 The Sunni scholar Taqī al-Din Aḥmad Ibn 'Alī al-Maqrīzī (845-766 AH lunar) in his well-known work *Al-Nizā'u wa al-Takhāshumu fīmā bayna Banī Umayyah wa Banī Hāshim* (Book Of Contention And Strife Concerning The Relations Between The Banū Umayyah And The Banū Hāshim) presents a long account on the origins of the problem and the role Banū Umayyah in trying to destroy Banū Hāshim.

53 W. Heinrichs, B. Gruendler & M. Cooperson, *Classical Arabic humanities in their own terms: festschrift for Wolfhart*, p.225

Ibn Qutaybah in his *al-Ma'arif* writes:

وقال ابن الكلبي كان أمية بن عبد شمس خرج إلى الشام فأقام بها عشر سنين فوقع على أمة للخم يهودية من أهل صفورية يقال لها ترناء، وكان لها زوج من أهل صفورية يهودي فولدت له ذكوان فادعاه أمية واستلحقه وكناه أبا عمرو ثم قدم به مكة، فلذلك قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لعقبة يوم أمر بقتله إنما أنت يهودي من أهل صفورية.

Ibn al-Kalbī said that Umayyah Ibn 'Abd al-Shams set out to Shām⁵⁴ and stayed there for ten years, and had illicit intercourse with a Jewess called Turnā of Banū Lakhm from the people of Sepphoris (*Ṣaffūriyyah*),⁵⁵ who already was married to a Jew from the people of Sepphoris. The product of their union was the birth of Dhakwān, whom Umayyah claimed as his son and attached him to himself, and gave him the teknonym Abū 'Amr. Later he came with him to Makkah. That is why the Prophet (ﷺ) said to 'Uqbah⁵⁶ on the day he ordered that he must be killed, "Indeed you are a Jew from the people of Sepphoris."⁵⁷

Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd reports in his *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*:

قال أبو عثمان: وصنع أمية في الجاهلية شيئاً لم يصنعه أحد من العرب، زوج ابنه أبا عمرو امرأته في حياته منه، فأولدها أبا معيط بن أبي عمرو بن أمية...

Abū 'Uthmān said: Umayyah did something in the age of ignorance that none among that Arabs had ever done. He made his son Abū 'Amr [i.e. Dhakwān] marry his wife [after divorce] during his lifetime, and then made her give birth to Abū Mu'ayṭ Ibn Abī 'Amr Ibn Umayyah...⁵⁸

This is the story of the root of Banū Umayyah, a story that clearly depicts their degenerate origin.

Banū Umayyah in the Qur'ān

Enumerating⁵⁹ all the atrocities of Banu Umayyah one by one is beyond the scope of this exegesis. God-willing, however, when a specific member among them is mentioned in the course of this ziyārah we shall delve upon the details of the atrocities he had done. For the moment, however, let us consider some verses of the Qur'ān and traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) describing the Banū Umayyah, so that we understand the reason why we are taught to curse Banū Umayyah and seek their expulsion from Divine mercy.

a) The Holy Qur'ān says:

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ وَنُحَوِّفُهُمْ

54 Shām at that time covered Palestine as well.

55 Tzipori (Hebrew: ציפורי), also known as Sepphoris, Dioceserea and Saffuriya is located in the central Galilee region, 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) north-northwest of Nazareth, in modern-day Israel. The site holds a rich and diverse historical and architectural legacy that includes Assyrian, Hellenistic, Judean, Babylonian, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Crusader, Arabic and Ottoman influences: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzipori>

56 'Uqbah Ibn Abī Mu'ayṭ descended from Dhakwān. He is reported to have made an attempt on the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)'s life near the Ka'bah, and was executed on the orders of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) after having been captured during the Battle of Badr. When he claimed that he was a tribesman of Quraysh, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "You are but a Jew of the Sepphoris people".

57 Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Ma'arif*, p. 319

58 Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v.15, p. 207

59 Those interested in going through the details on the enmity between Banū Umayyah and Banū Hāshim may refer to the well-known work of al-Maqrīzī called *Al-Nizā'u wa al-Takhāsumu fīmā bayna Banī Umayyah wa Banī Hāshim* (Book Of Contention And Strife Concerning The Relations Between The Banū Umayyah And The Banū Hāshim) translated into English by Clifford Edmund Bosworth.

فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا.

When We said to you, “Indeed your Lord comprehends all mankind,” We did not appoint the vision that We showed you except as a test for the people and the tree cursed in the Qur’ān. We deter them, but it only increases them in great rebellion. (17:60)

Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have said:

... «وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ» يَعْنِي بَنِي أُمَيَّة

“... ‘And the cursed tree in Qur’ān’ means Bani Umayyah.”⁶⁰

Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) addressing ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said:

يَا أَبَا حَفْصٍ، أَلَا أَخْبِرُكَ بِمَا نَزَلَ فِي بَنِي أُمَيَّة؟

O father of Ḥafṣ, should I not inform you what has been revealed about Banū Umayyah?

‘Umar said: Of course, tell me. Thereupon Imam ‘Alī (‘a) said:

فَإِنَّهُ نَزَلَ فِيهِمْ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ

Indeed “the cursed tree in Qur’ān” was revealed about them.

Thereupon Umar became annoyed and said:

كَذَبْتَ، بَنُو أُمَيَّة خَيْرٌ مِنْكَ، وَأَوْصِلْ لِلرَّحِمِ.

You have lied! Banū Umayyah are better than you and better in ties with their near ones.⁶¹

Al-Ṭabarī in his *Ta’rīkh al-Ṭabarī* writes:

... فَمِمَّا لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عَلَى لِسَانِ نَبِيِّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَنْزَلَ بِهِ كِتَابًا قَوْلَهُ «وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ» وَنُحُوْفُهُمْ فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا» وَلَا اخْتِلَافَ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ أَنَّهُ أَرَادَ بِهَا بَنِي أُمَيَّة...
...And from among that with which Allāh cursed them through the tongue of his Prophet (ṣ) and revealed it in written form is His word: “...and the tree cursed in the Qur’ān. We deter them, but it only increases them in great rebellion”, and there is no difference of opinion among anyone that He meant Banī Umayyah...⁶²

b) The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ

And the parable of a bad word [impure being] is that of a bad tree: uprooted from the ground, it has no stability. (14:26)

In a narration from Imam al-Bāqir (‘a), commenting on the above verse, the Imam (‘a) says:

ثُمَّ صَرَبَ اللَّهُ لِأَعْدَاءِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَقَالَ: وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا

60 Al-Shaykh al-Huwayzī, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, v.3, p. 179

61 Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, v.3, p. 542

62 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-Ṭabarī*, v.8, p. 185

...Then Allāh struck a similitude for the enemies of Āl Muḥammad (peace be on them and their progeny), and said: “*And the parable of a bad word [impure being] is that of a bad tree: uprooted from the ground, it has no stability*”.⁶³

In another tradition where there is utter clarity, Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have said after mentioning the abovementioned verse:

كَذَلِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ لَا تَصْعَدُ أَعْمَالُهُمْ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَبَنُو أُمِّيَّةٍ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ فِي مَسْجِدٍ وَلَا فِي مَجْلِسٍ، وَلَا تَصْعَدُ أَعْمَالُهُمْ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنْهُمْ.

Likewise are the disbelievers, their actions do not ascend to the heaven, and Banū Umayyah do not remember Allāh in the mosque nor in any gathering, nor do their actions ascend to the heaven save a small number of them.⁶⁴

The exception that Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) mentions here is worthy of reflection. Although lineage does affect the human being, but if one adheres to the right path and does the right things, Almighty Allāh will revive his spirit. An example is what we mentioned earlier with regard to Sa‘d al-Khayr, whom Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) praised as “*minnā Ahl al- Bayt*” (He is from us, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)) although he was a descendent of Marwān al-Ṭarīd.

Traditions About Banū Umayyah

In order to know better the reality of the personalities of Banu Umayyah, it is important that we consider some traditions from the Holy Prophet (ṣ):

a) The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said three times the following:

وَيْلٌ لِبَنِي أُمِّيَّة!

Woe be unto Banū Umayyah!⁶⁵

b) The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

شَرُّ قَبَائِلِ الْعَرَبِ ثَلَاثٌ: بَنُو حَنِيفَةَ، وَبَنُو أُمِّيَّةَ، وَبَنُو تَقَيْفٍ

The most evil tribes of the Arabs are three: Banū Ḥanīfah, Banū Umayyah, and Banū Thaḳīf.⁶⁶

c) The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَنْ يُبَدِّلُ سُنَّتِي رَجُلٌ مِنْ بَنِي أُمِّيَّةَ

Indeed the first one who will change my tradition is a man from Banū Umayyah.⁶⁷

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ بَنِي أُمِّيَّةَ قَاطِبَةً

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the progeny of Umayyah altogether.

63 Al-Shaykh al-Huwayzī, *Tafsīr Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, v.2, p. 538

64 Ibid.

65 Al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, v.11, p. 165

66 Ibn Karāmah, *Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn 'an Faḍā'il al-Tālibīn*, p. 114

67 Al-Shaykh al-Amīnī, *Al-Ghadīr*, v.3, p. 257

The esteemed scholar, Mīrẓā Muḥammad Taqī al-Iṣfahānī in the second volume of his masterpiece *Mikyāl al-Makārim fī Fawā'id al-Du'ā' li al-Qā'im* ('a) discusses the importance of abundantly cursing the Banū Umayyah during the absence of the twelfth Imam ('a). At one point of his discussion, al-Iṣfahānī under the title 'nota bene' (*tanbīh*), says:

مقتضى ما عرفت مما ذكرناه، وما لم نذكر، كقوله (عليه السلام) ولعن الله بني أمية قاطبة، عموم اللعن على جميع بني أمية، مع أن علماءنا ذكروا في أولياء أمير المؤمنين والأئمة وخواصهم جماعة ينتهي نسبهم إليهم، ولا ريب في حرمة اللعن على المؤمنين، الموالين للأئمة الطاهرين وقد قال الله عز وجل (وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى) وقال تبارك وتعالى (كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِيْنٌ)... والأظهر عندي في هذا المقام أن يقال إن المراد من بني أمية من يسلك مسلكهم ويجذو حذوهم في معاداة أمير المؤمنين والأئمة الطاهرين، وأوليائهم، سواء كان من هذا الحي، أم سائر الأحياء. فإن من سلك مسلكهم يعد منهم، وطنيته من طينتهم، وإن لم يكن في النسب الظاهري معدودا منهم، ومن كان مواليا لأمير المؤمنين والأئمة الطاهرين فهو منهم، من أي حي كان والدليل على ما ذكرناه قوله عز وجل (وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ إِنَّ ابْنِي مِنْ أَهْلِي وَإِنَّ وَعْدَكَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْتَ أَحْكَمُ الْحَاكِمِينَ قَالَ يَا نُوحُ إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ). والنبوي (صلى الله عليه وآله) سلمان منا أهل البيت. وقولهم (عليهم السلام) شيعتنا منا، وإلينا. وفي البرهان وغيره عن عمر بن يزيد الثقفي قال: قال أبو عبد الله (عليه السلام): يا بن يزيد أنت والله منا أهل البيت قلت جعلت فداك من آل محمد؟ قال (عليه السلام) أي والله، قلت: من أنفسهم جعلت فداك، قال: أي والله من أنفسهم يا عمر أما تقرأ كتاب الله عز وجل (إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ) أو ما تقرأ قول الله عز اسمه (فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ كَافِرٌ بِي). وفي هذا المعنى روايات كثيرة وما ذكرناه كاف لأهل البصيرة.

According to what you have known about that which we have [just] mentioned and that which we have not yet mentioned such as the Imam's statement "and may Allāh curse the Banū Umayyah altogether" (*wa la'ana Allāhu Banī Umayyata qāṭibatan*), curse should be invoked for all the Banū Umayyah, whereas our scholars have cited among the close companions of Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a) and the [rest of the] Imams ('a) as well as their special associates, a group whose lineage returns to them [i.e. Banū Umayyah]; and there is no doubt that cursing the faithful followers of the immaculate Imams ('a) is religiously forbidden. Allāh (the Invincible and Majestic) has said: "No bearer shall bear another's burden" [35:18] and He, the Almighty said: "Every man is a hostage to what he has earned" [52:21]...and what is more apparent to me here is that it be said that by Banū Umayyah we mean "whoever adopts their path and follows their example in showing enmity against Amīr al-mu'minīn ('a) and the immaculate Imams ('a) and their close followers", whether he belongs to this tribe or the rest of the tribes. The proof of what we have just mentioned is the speech of Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic: "Noah called out to his Lord, and said, 'My Lord! My son is indeed from my family. Your promise is indeed true, and You are the fairest of all judges.' Said He, 'O Noah! Indeed He is not of your family.'" [11:45-46] and the Prophet (ṣ)'s saying "Salmān is from us, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)"⁶⁸ and the statement of the Imams ('a): "Our Shias are from us."⁶⁹ Likewise, in *Tafsīr al-Burhān*⁷⁰ and other works, 'Umar Ibn Yazīd al-Thaqafī [is reported to have] said that Imam al-Ṣādiq ('a) said: "O son of Yazīd, I swear by Allāh, that you are from us the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)." 'Umar said: "May I be made your ransom, from the Āl Muḥammad?" The Imam ('a) said: "Yes, I swear by Allāh." 'Umar [once again] asks, "From their own selves, may I be made your ransom?" The Imam ('a) said: "Yes, I swear by Allāh, from themselves; O 'Umar, do you not read the Book of Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic: "Indeed the nearest of all people to Abraham are those who follow him, and this Prophet and those who have faith, and

68 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* ('a), v.1, p. 7

69 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.1, p. 483

70 Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, v.1, p. 641

Allāh is the guardian of the faithful.” [3:68]? Do you not read the word of Allāh, Invincible is His Name: “*So whoever follows me indeed belongs to me, and as for someone who disobeys me, well, You are indeed All-forgiving, All-merciful.*” [14:36]. Likewise, there are several other traditions explaining this meaning. What we have [just] mentioned suffices for the insightful.⁷¹

In conclusion, the principle is straightforward: If one understands, follows and adheres to truth, and hence loves the epitomes of Islam and abhors the epitomes of disbelief, even if he were to be descendent of the likes of Marwān Ibn al-Ḥakam or Yazīd, he would be reckoned from the people of the truth.

Hence invoking curses of Allāh on all the Ban Umayyah is to invoke curses on all those who have adopted the character and spirit of those Umayyads who behaved hypocritically and committed different kinds of atrocities against the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).

The late Imam Khumaynī in one of his speeches said something worthy of contemplation:

آنچه لعن و نفرین بر ستمگران آل بیت است، تمام فریاد قهرمانانۀ ملتهاست، بر سردمداران ستم پیشه در طول تاریخ الی الابد. و می دانید که لعن و نفرین و فریاد از بیداد بنی امیه - لعنة الله عليهم - با آنکه آنان منقرض و به جهنم رهسپار شده اند، فریاد بر سر "ستمگران جهان" و زنده نگهداشتن این فریاد ستم شکن است

All the curses and execration on the oppressors of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) are the brave demonstrations of different nations against the oppressive rulers all along history and forever. And you know that cursing and execration and demonstrating against the oppression of Banū Umayyah (may Allāh’s curse be on them), despite their extinction and transfer to the Hell Fire, is a demonstration against the oppressors of the world and preserving this demonstration, breaks oppression.⁷²

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ ابْنَ مَرْجَانَةَ

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the product of Marjānah

Ibn Marjānah literally means “the son of Marjānah”. Marjānah, the daughter of Nawf, was a slave girl of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Ḥisān Ibn Ṭhābit. A number of men would have illegal relations with her, one of whom was Ziyād Ibn Sumayyah. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān sold her when she was illegally pregnant, and soon thereafter she gave birth to two boys, ‘Ibād and ‘Ubaydullāh, whose fathers were not known. Thereafter Ziyād called both of them to himself and kept them as his own sons. During Mu‘āwiyah’s time ‘Ibād was given the governorship of Sejistān while ‘Ubaydullāh (known later as Ibn Ziyād) was made the governor of Baṣrah.

In one of his confrontations with ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) referring to Ibn Ziyād’s indecent origin says:

...تَزْعَمُ أَنْ يُؤَلِّيَكَ الدَّعِيُّ بِنُ الدَّعِيِّ بِلَادَ الرَّيِّ وَ جُرْجَانَ، وَاللَّهِ لَا تَتَّهِنًا بِذَلِكَ أَبَدًا

You think that the *illegal product, son of the illegal product* will make you the governor of Ray and Jurjān? I swear by Allāh, you will never enjoy that!⁷³

In a very stern confrontation with Ibn Ziyād, a lover of Amīr al-mu‘minīn (‘a) called ‘Afif al-Kindi who had lost his eyesight, said to him:

71 Mirzā Muḥammad Taqī al-Iṣfahānī, *Mikyāl al-Makārim fī Fawā'id al-Du'ā' li al-Qā'im ('a)*, v.2, pp. 407-408

72 Imam Khumaynī, *Ṣaḥīfeye Imām*, v.21, p. 400

73 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.45, p. 10

يَا بَنَ مَرْجَانَةَ، تَقْتُلُ أَوْلَادَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَتَقُومُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ مَقَامَ الصَّادِقِينَ؟

*O son of Marjānah, you slay the children of Prophets and then stand on the pulpit, the station of the truthful ones?*⁷⁴

History tells us that when Yazīd came to power, he was not in favour of Ibn Ziyād retaining the governorship of Baṣrah. He had decided to remove the latter, when he suddenly changed his mind. Seeking advice from his Christian secretary Sarjūn Ibn Manṣūr al-Rūmī,⁷⁵ not only made him change his mind, but also give Ibn Ziyād the governorship of Kūfah. Experts in history believe that one of the fundamental killers of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is Sarjūn, who advised Yazīd to keep Ibn Ziyād, so that he goes against Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a).

Al-Ṭabarī⁷⁶ writes:

“He (Yazīd) summoned a *mawlā* (associate) of his called Sarjūn, who used to advise him, and gave him the news. Sarjūn⁷⁷ asked whether he would accept the advice of Mu‘āwiyah if he were alive. When he agreed, Sarjūn said, ‘Then accept it from me. The only man from al-Kūfah is ‘Ubaydallāh Ibn Ziyād. Give him authority over the city.’ Yazīd had been very angry with ‘Ubaydullāh Ibn Ziyād; he had been intending to dismiss him from al-Baṣrah. Yet now he wrote to him expressing satisfaction with him; he gave him authority over al-Kūfah together with al-Baṣrah. He also wrote to him to hunt for Muslim Ibn ‘Aqīl and to kill him if he found him.”

John Haldon in his work *Money, power and politics in early Islamic Syria* writes:

Sarjūn’s importance continued under Mu‘āwiyah’s son, Yazīd (680-84) and when the caliph was faced with the most difficult political crisis of his reign, the expedition of al-Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī from Madīnah to ‘Irāq, it was to Sarjūn that he turned for advice. (al-Ṭabarī, II, 227, 239.)⁷⁸

It seems Sergios had realised that only an evil personality the like of Ibn Marjānah could mastermind and pioneer this battle against the immaculate progeny of the Holy Prophet (ṣ).

Some of the most fundamental atrocities Ibn Marjānah committed were:

a) Merciless execution of Muslim Ibn ‘Aqīl

Having been chosen as the governor of Kūfah, Ibn Ziyād entered Kūfah tactfully such that the Kūfans thought that Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) had come. His face was hidden and the people gave him a very warm welcome. Later they realised that it was actually Ibn Ziyād.

The first thing that Ibn Ziyād did was to break the revolution of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) that had just begun in Kūfah. He employed the strategy of threat and enticement. Soon he was able to separate the supporters of Muslim Ibn ‘Aqīl and capture Muslim Ibn ‘Aqīl. Finally, Muslim Ibn ‘Aqīl and Hāni Ibn al-‘Urwah (one of his avid supporters) were mercilessly executed.

Al-Ṭabarī in his *Ta’rīkh al-Ṭabarī* writes:

⁷⁴ Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, v.2, p. 117

⁷⁵ Also called Sergios.

⁷⁶ Al-Ṭabarī (Tr. IKA Howard), *The Caliphate of Yazīd Ibn Mu‘āwiyah*, p. 18

⁷⁷ Sarjūn was Mu‘āwiyah’s secretary and advisor.

⁷⁸ John Haldon, *Money, power and politics in early Islamic Syria: a review of current debates*, pp. 193-194.

... ف جاء به إلى عبيدالله فأمر به فأصعد إلى أعلى القصر فضربت عنقه وألقى جثته إلى الناس

...And he ('Abd al-Rahmān) brought him (Muslim Ibn 'Aqīl) to 'Ubaydullāh, who ordered his execution, whereupon he was taken to the roof of the castle and beheaded and his body was thrown from the top toward the people.⁷⁹

- b) Instigation of 'Umar Ibn Sa'd to lead an army to Karbala and carry out the horrendous massacre on 'Āshūrā'.

Having heard that 'Umar Ibn Sa'd was somewhat indecisive and not determined to kill Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a), he sent Shimr with an army to ensure that his orders were carried out.

- c) When Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a)'s blessed head was brought before him in his court in Kūfah, he began mocking at it and tapping the Imam's lips with his cane. Shaykh al-Mufīd in his *Kitāb al-Irshād* writes:

وأمر بإحضار الرأس فوضع بين يديه، فجعل ينظر إليه ويتبسم وفي يده قضيب يضرب به ثناياه، وكان إلى جانبه زيد بن أرقم صاحب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وهو شيخ كبير فلما رآه يضرب بالقضيب ثناياه قال له: ارفع قضيبك عن هاتين الشفتين، فوالله الذي لا إله غيره لقد رأيت شفتي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله عليهما ما لا أحصيه كثرة تقبلهما، ثم انتحب باكياً. فقال له ابن زياد: أبكى الله عينيك، أتبكي لفتح الله؟ والله لولا أنك شيخ قد خرفت وذهب عقلك لضربت عنقك.

He ordered that the head of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) be brought, and it was placed before him. Then he began looking at it and smiling and in his hand was a cane with which he struck the middle teeth of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a). And beside him was Zayd Ibn al-Arqam, a companion of the Apostle of Allāh (ṣ) who was very old. When he saw Ibn Ziyād hitting Imam's lips with the cane, he said to him: Remove your cane from these two lips, for surely by Allāh besides Whom there is no god, indeed I saw the two lips of the Apostle of Allāh (ṣ) kissing them so many times that I cannot count. Then he started weeping. Ibn Ziyād said to him: May Allāh make your eyes weep! Do you weep upon the victory of Allāh? I swear by Allāh if you were not an old man who was out of his senses, I would have beheaded you.⁸⁰

Ibn Marjānah did not live long after the massacre of Karbala. Mukhtār al-Thaqafī ensured that he defeated and beheaded him for what he had done against the grandson of the Holy Prophet (ṣ).

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ عُمَرَ بْنَ سَعْدٍ

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy 'Umar Ibn Sa'd

'Umar Ibn Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ was the commander of the forces of Yazīd's army and the principal slayer of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) on the plains of Karbala. He was an example of one in whose heart there was an inner struggle between the forces of belief and disbelief; ultimately the forces of disbelief outstripped the forces of belief and made him accept a task which facilitated his eternal damnation.

His father Sa'd was one of the companions of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) who held a distinguished place in society. He was among the six councillors that 'Umar chose before his death to select the next caliph. He would not be negligent in professing the merits of Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī ('a). In a

79 Al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh al-Ṭabarī*, v.4, p. 260

80 Al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Al-Irshād*, v.2, p. 114-115

journey to pilgrimage, he is reported to have narrated five fundamental traditions on the merits of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) to two of his Iraqi associates. Some Sunni scholars reckon him as one of the ten who have been promised Paradise (‘*asharah mubashsharah*). He accepted Islam at the age of seventeen and was poisoned by Mu‘āwiyah at the age of 50 or 55. What is astonishing, however, is that despite accepting the merits of Imam ‘Alī (‘a), he did not give his oath of allegiance to the Imam (‘a). The reason, insightful scholars realise, is that he himself sought leadership.

In a well-known incident when Imam ‘Alī (‘a) told his companions to ask him anything they wished to know before they lose him, Sa‘d Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ in his naivety asked Imam ‘Alī (‘a) the number of hair that he had on his head and beard.

Ibn Qūlawayh in his *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* narrates:

كَانَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) يَخْطُبُ النَّاسَ وَهُوَ يَقُولُ: سَلُونِي قَبْلَ أَنْ تَفْقِدُونِي فَوَاللَّهِ مَا تَسْأَلُونِي عَنْ شَيْءٍ مَضَى وَلَا شَيْءٍ يَكُونُ إِلَّا نَبَّأْتُكُمْ بِهِ، قَالَ: فَقَامَ إِلَيْهِ سَعْدُ بْنُ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ وَقَالَ: يَا أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَخْبِرْنِي كَمْ فِي رَأْسِي وَخَيْبَتِي مِنْ شَعْرَةٍ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: وَاللَّهِ لَقَدْ سَأَلْتَنِي عَنْ مَسْأَلَةٍ حَدَّثَنِي خَلِيلِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) أَنَّكَ سَتَسْأَلُنِي عَنْهَا، وَمَا فِي رَأْسِكَ وَخَيْبَتِكَ مِنْ شَعْرَةٍ إِلَّا وَفِي أَصْلِهَا شَيْطَانٌ جَالِسٌ، وَإِنْ فِي بَيْتِكَ لَسَخْلًا يَقْتُلُ الْحُسَيْنَ ابْنِي ...

Amīr al-mu‘minīn (‘a) was delivering a sermon to the people and saying: Ask me before you lose me, for by Allāh I shall inform you about whatever you ask of the past or future. Thereupon Sa‘d Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ stood up to him and said: O Amīr al-mu‘minīn, inform me how many hair do I have in my head and beard? The Imam (‘a) said to him: I swear by Allāh, you have asked me a question about which my beloved the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ) informed me that you shall ask. There is no hair in your head and beard save that in its root there is a Satan seated. Indeed in your house is a kid who will kill al-Ḥusayn (‘a) my son...⁸¹

History tells us that when Ibn Ziyād ordered ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d to take charge of the army against Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) he was extremely hesitant. But when he was told that if he were to reject this, then the governorship of Rayy (Tehran) would be taken away from him, the forces of evil gave him no respite, and he sought for some time to think over and consult some people. History tells us that no one encouraged him to carry out this despicable deed.

Al-Baḥrānī writes in his *Madīnat al-Ma‘ājiz*:

روي انه لما جمع ابن زياد قومه - لعنهم الله جميعا - لحرب الحسين - عليه السلام -، فقال ابن زياد: أيها الناس من منكم يتولى قتل الحسين - عليه السلام - وله [ولاية] أي بلد شاء، فلم يجبه أحد منهم، فاستدعى بعمر بن سعد - لعنه الله -، وقال (له): يا عمر أريد أن تتولى حرب الحسين - عليه السلام - بنفسك، فقال له: اعفني عن ذلك. فقال ابن زياد: قد أعفيتك يا عمر فاردد علينا عهدنا الذي كتبناه لك بولاية الري. فقال عمر بن سعد: أمهلني الليلة، فقال له: قد أمهلتك، فانصرف عمر بن سعد إلى منزله، وجعل يستشير قومه وإخوانه، ومن يثق به من أصحابه، فلم يشر عليه أحد بذلك...

It is narrated that when Ibn Ziyād gathered his people (may Allāh’s curse be on them all) to fight against al-Ḥusayn (‘a), he said: O people, who among you will take the charge of slaying al-Ḥusayn (‘a) so that he is given the governorship of any city he wishes? None among them responded. Thereupon he called ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d (may Allāh’s curse be on him) and said to him: O ‘Umar, I want you to take charge of the battle against al-Ḥusayn (‘a) yourself. ‘Umar said to him: Pardon me from that.

81 Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, pp. 155-156

Thereupon Ibn Ziyād said: I will absolve you from that O ‘Umar, but give us back the document in which we promised to give you the governorship of Rayy. Hearing this, ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d said: Avail me respite this night. Ibn Ziyād said: I have given you this night [to think over]. ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d thereafter left for his house and began consulting his people, brothers, and those whom he trusted among his companions. None of them advised him to accept the order...⁸²

Finally due to heavy intoxication of the love of the world (*ḥubb al- duniyah*), he was ready to go and fight against the purest soul of his time.

On the night of ‘Āshūrā’ Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) in his overflowing mercy and love for the salvation of his enemies, called ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d and advised him to abandon the forces of evil and join his forces to attain eternal salvation. But Ibn Sa‘d continuously concocted pretexts, until the Imam (‘a), knowing that there was no room for transformation and change in Ibn Sa‘d, cursed him.

A part of the conversation is as follows:

فَقَالَ لَهُ الْحُسَيْنُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: وَيْلَكَ يَا ابْنَ سَعْدٍ أَمَا تَتَّقِي اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ مَعَادُكَ أَتُقَاتِلُنِي وَأَنَا ابْنُ مَنْ عَلِمْتَ؟ دَرُّهُوْلَاءِ
الْقَوْمِ وَكُنْ مَعِي، فَإِنَّهُ أَقْرَبُ لَكَ إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى،
فَقَالَ عُمَرُ بْنُ سَعْدٍ: أَخَافُ أَنْ يُهْدَمَ دَارِي،
فَقَالَ الْحُسَيْنُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: أَنَا أَبْنِيهَا لَكَ،
فَقَالَ: أَخَافُ أَنْ تُؤْخَذَ ضِعْيَتِي،
فَقَالَ الْحُسَيْنُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: أَنَا أَخْلُفُ عَلَيْكَ خَيْرًا مِنْهَا مِنْ مَالِي بِالْحِجَازِ
فَقَالَ: لِي عِيَالٌ وَأَخَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ،
ثُمَّ سَكَتَ وَلَمْ يُجِبْهُ إِلَى شَيْءٍ فَانْصَرَفَ عَنْهُ الْحُسَيْنُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، وَهُوَ يَقُولُ: مَالِكَ دَبْحَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَى فِرَاشِكَ عَاجِلًا...

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) [to Ibn Sa‘d]: Woe be unto you, O Ibn Sa‘d, do you not fear Allāh to Whom is your return? Do you fight against me whilst you know whose son I am? Leave these people and stay with me, for that is closer for you to Allāh, the Exalted.

‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d: I am afraid that my house will be destroyed.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): I will build it for you.

‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d: I am afraid that my land may be taken.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): I will leave for you better than that from my wealth in Hijāz.

‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d: I have a family and I am afraid something might happen to them.

Thereafter Ibn Sa‘d was silent and did not respond to the Imam (‘a), whereupon Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) left him while he said: What is wrong with you?! May Allāh slaughter you in your home soon...⁸³

This scenario transports us to the following verses of the Holy Qur’ān:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ. خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ

82 Al-Bahrānī, *Madīnat al-Ma‘ājiz*, v.4, p. 63

83 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.44, pp. 388-389

غَشَاوَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ.

As for the faithless, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith. Allāh has set a seal on their hearts and their hearing, and there is a blindfold on their sight, and there is a great punishment for them. (2:6-7)

وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ. إِنَّمَا تُنذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبَ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَأَجْرٍ كَرِيمٍ

It is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith. You can only warn someone who follows the Reminder and fears the All-beneficent in secret; so give him the good news of forgiveness and a noble reward. (36:10-11)

When Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) had incurred several wounds and lay on the plains of Naynawā unconscious, it was ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d who began encouraging his men to behead the Imam (‘a). Perhaps that is why some historians reckon him as “*bāshara qatla al-Ḥusayn*” (one who directly killed Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)).⁸⁴

One of the most heart-rendering moments that reveals ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d’s metamorphosised character is the aftermath of the Imam’s martyrdom. Ibn al-Athīr in *Usd al-Ghābah* writes:

ولمّا قتل الحسين أمر عمر بن سعد نفرا فركبوا خيولهم وأوطؤها الحسين

And after al-Ḥusayn (‘a) was martyred, ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d gave orders to a group of people, who mounted their horses and trampled the body of al-Ḥusayn (‘a).⁸⁵

This was a brief story of a person who was defeated in the inner battle (*jihād al-naḥs*), and as a result lost the outer battle as well. Due to his love and passion for position he had the audacity of killing the grandson of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) who was the official Divine guide of the age. It is difficult for one to understand how a human being can have the audacity of carrying out such a horrendous massacre. History, however, always repeats itself, for the laws of history do not change. The atrocious nature of killing innocent civilians will not stop as long as there exist a people who represent Cain in this world.

The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبِلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Relate to them truly the account of Adam’s two sons. When the two of them offered an offering, it was accepted from one of them and not accepted from the other. [One of them] said, “Surely I will kill you.” [The other one] said, “Allāh accepts only from the God wary.” (5:27)

The plains of Karbala manifested the battle between Able and Cain. Those who had come to save the religion of Islam represented Able, whereas those who came to attain the worldly reward represented Cain.

According to a tradition⁸⁶ from Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) the ransom for Ismā‘īl which is described with

84 Abū Riya, *Aḍwā’ ‘alā al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyyah*, p. 350

85 Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-Ghābah*, v.2, p. 21

86 Shaykh al-Ṣadūq narrates the following tradition in his *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (‘a)*: Mufaḍḍal Ibn Shādhān ⇒

greatness in the verse “*Wa fadaynāhū bi dhibhin ‘aẓīm*” (and We ransomed him with a great sacrifice (37:107)) refers to the sacrifice of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a),⁸⁷ the acceptance of which Hadrat Zaynab (‘a) humbly prays after beholding the beheaded body of her brother. Al-Bayātī narrates:

...ثم بسطت يديها تحت بدنه المقدس ورفعتة نحو السماء وقالت: الهي تقبل منا هذا القربان.

...Thereafter she spread her hands below his sacred body and raised them towards the sky and said: O God, accept from us this offering.⁸⁸

The slogan “*kullu yawmin ‘Āshūrā’ wa kullu arḍin Karbalā’* (Every day is Ashura and every land is Karbala)” is actually a principle not only in the external and macrocosmic universe, but even in the internal and microcosmic universe. Hence it is also correct to say, “*kullu nafsin ‘Āshūrā’ wa kullu nafsin Karbalā’* (every soul is Ashura and every Soul is Karbala)”. It is imperative therefore for us to understand that our “*Husayn*” or “*Umar Ibn Sa’d*” starts from the realm of the inner self. If we are victorious over *al-nafs al-ammārah bi-sū*⁸⁹ (‘Umar Ibn Sa’d), then only can we achieve the *al-nafs al-muṭma’innah*⁹⁰ (Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)). In one of his sermons compiled in the book *Majālis-e-Shushtarī*, Ayatullah Shaykh Ja‘far al-Shushtarī says:

...the Lord of the universe has placed within our souls both examples of prophets and their opposites, who are rebels and disbelievers. Within you there is an example of Adam, who had two sons, one felicitous and the other wretched. The first was Able (peace be on him) and the other was Cain (may Allāh’s curse be on him), who killed Able.

⇐ narrates: I heard al-Riḍā (peace be upon him) saying: When Allāh (Blessed and Exalted is He) ordered Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) to slaughter the ram that He sent down, instead of his son Ismā‘īl (peace be upon him), Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) wished that he would have slaughtered his own son Ismā‘īl (peace be upon him) with his hand and was not ordered to slaughter the ram instead, so that he experiences in his heart that which a father who sacrifices the dearest of his sons with his hand experiences, and as a result, deserves the highest of the stations of the people of reward due to calamities. So Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic, revealed unto him: O Ibrāhīm, who is the most beloved of my creation to you? Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) replied: O Lord, you did not create a creation which is more beloved to me than your beloved Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his progeny). Thereupon Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic, revealed unto him: O Ibrāhīm, is he then more beloved to you, or yourself? Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) replied: Rather, he is more lovable to me than myself. Allāh (the Invincible and Majestic) said: Is then his son more lovable to you, or your son? He said: Rather his son is more lovable. Allāh said: Does the slaughter of his son in oppression by his enemies agitate your heart more, or slaughtering your son with your hand in my obedience? He said: Rather, the slaughter of his son in the hands of his enemies agitates my heart more. Allāh said: O Ibrāhīm, indeed a people who conjecture that they are from the ummah of Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) would soon kill al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him), his son, after him, in oppression and enmity, in the way a ram is slaughtered, and as a result, they would earn My wrath. This agitated and hurt the heart of Ibrāhīm (peace be upon him) and he started weeping. Thereupon Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic, revealed unto him: O Ibrāhīm, I have ransomed “your agitation for your son Ismā‘īl (peace be upon him) if you were to slaughter him”, with “your agitation for al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and his martyrdom”, and have made incumbent for you the highest of the stations of the rewarded ones due to calamities. And that is the word of Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic: “*And we ransomed him with a great sacrifice*”. (37:107). And there is no power nor strength except through Allāh, the Exalted, and Great. [Ref: Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* (‘a), v.2, pp. 187-188]

87 Different well-known Shia scholars have alluded to this interpretation. Ayatullah Sayyid Muḥammad Ṣādiq Rūḥānī, for example, in his recent work *‘Āshūrā wa Qiyaṃe Imām Husayn (‘a) az Niḡāhe Ḥaḍrat Āyatullāh al-‘Uẓmā Rūḥānī* says: Verse (37:107) has two meanings, the apparent (*ẓāhir*), and the hidden (*bāḥin*). The apparent meaning of the great sacrifice is the sheep that Gabriel brought from Allāh on the earth, so that it is sacrificed instead of Ismā‘īl. And since it was from God, it has been remembered with the term “great” (*‘aẓīm*). However, the hidden meaning of it is that the sacrifice and *dhibhin ‘aẓīm* is Sayyid al-Shuhadā’ Imam Ḥusayn (‘a)...[pp. 63-64]. In his unique masterpiece *al-Khaṣā’is al-Ḥusayniyyah*, Marhum al-Shaykh Ja‘far al-Tustarī says: Indeed it has been narrated that the great sacrifice is al-Ḥusayn (‘a)...[p. 377]

88 Al-Bayātī, *Al-Akhlāq al-Ḥusayniyyah*, pp. 292-293

89 Lit. The self that frequently invites to evil. The Holy Qur’ān says: “Yet I do not absolve my [own carnal] soul, for the [carnal] soul indeed prompts [men] to evil, except inasmuch as my Lord has mercy. Indeed my Lord is All-forgiving, All-merciful.” (12:53)

90 Lit. The soul at complete rest. The Holy Qur’ān in this regard says: “O soul at peace! Return to your Lord, pleased, pleasing! Then enter among My servants, And enter My paradise!” (89:27-30)

Within you there is a specimen of [both] Able and Cain. Likewise within you and your existence there is an Abraham and a Nimrod. Similarly in you there is a Moses and a Pharaoh. Likewise in you there is a Jesus and the [arrogant] Jews who crucified Jesus, and thought that they had martyred him. *They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but the matter was made to seem so for them.* (4:157) Likewise within your existence there is a Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdullāh and Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab. The Prophet (s) killed Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab. Be careful that your Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab do not kill the Muḥammad that is within yourself!

Likewise in your existence there is ‘Alī and so and so. The first is faith in totality, whereas the second is total disbelief. Be careful that so and so which is the second and total disbelief does not annihilate your ‘Alī!⁹¹

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ شِمْرًا،

and may Allāh distance from His mercy Shimr

Shimr Ibn Dhī al-Jawshan al-Ḍabābī is reported to have severed the blessed head of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) on the plains of Karbala in order to attain a reward from Yazīd. History tells us that in the beginning he fought in the army of Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a) in the battle of Ṣiffin, but later got deviated and united with the renegades (*khawārij*). Since then he always had hatred against the progeny of Imam ‘Alī (‘a).

His father was said to be ‘Aws Ibn A‘war,⁹² who received his armour (*jawshan*) from the Khosrau⁹³ of Persia and after wearing it acquired the name Dhī al-Jawshan (the possessor of the armour)⁹⁴. He was among the Arab polytheists of Ḥijāz, who did not accept the message of the Holy Prophet (s), until the victory of Makkah.

The birth of Shimr was as a result of an illegal relation between the wife of ‘Aws Ibn A‘war and a goat tender. It is reported that once, when she was on her way to the cemetery of Kindah, she became thirsty and sought water from a goat tender. The goat tender refused to serve her water unless she committed adultery with him. She finally accepted his condition and thereafter became pregnant with Shimr.⁹⁵

On the day of ‘Āshūrā’ Shimr was heavily intoxicated with the love of the world. When ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d asked his soldiers to behead Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), it is narrated that none was able to do it save Shimr.

Historical records tell us:

فَنَادَى ابْنُ سَعْدٍ: مَنْ يَأْتِينِي بِرَأْسِهِ، وَلَهُ مَا يُتَهَتَّى بِهِ؟

فَقَالَ الشِّمْرُ: أَنَا، أَنُهَا الْأَمِيرُ!

فَقَالَ: أَسْرِعْ، وَلَكَ الْجَائِزَةُ الْعَظْمَى!

فَأَقْبَلَ إِلَى الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ)، وَقَدْ كَانَ غَضِيْبِي عَلَيْهِ، فَدَنَا إِلَيْهِ وَبَرَكَ عَلَى صَدْرِهِ، فَحَسَّ بِهِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). وَقَالَ: يَا

وَيْلَكَ! مَنْ أَنْتَ، فَقَدْ ارْتَقَيْتَ مُرْتَقَى عَظِيمًا؟!

91 Shaykh Ja‘far Shushtarī, *Majālis-e-Shushtarī*, pp. 182-183

92 He is also famously known as Shurahbīl (Al-Shīrāzī, *Dhakhīrat al-Dārayn*, p. 129)

93 Another name for Kisrā (the king of Iran).

94 Al-Shīrāzī, *Dhakhīrat al-Dārayn*, p. 129

95 Al-Shāhrūdī, *Mustadrak Safīnat al-Bihār*, v.6, p. 44

فَقَالَ: هُوَ الشِّمْرُ.

فَقَالَ لَهُ: وَيْلَكَ، مَنْ أَنَا؟!

فَقَالَ: أَنْتَ الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، وَأَبْنُ فَاطِمَةَ الزَّهْرَاءِ، وَجَدُّكَ مُحَمَّدٌ الْمُصْطَفَى (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ).

فَقَالَ الْحُسَيْنُ: وَيْلَكَ، إِذَا عَرَفْتَ هَذَا حَسْبِي وَنَسْبِي فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُنِي؟!

فَقَالَ الشِّمْرُ: إِنْ لَمْ أَقْتُلْكَ فَمَنْ يَأْخُذُ الْجَائِزَةَ مِنْ يَزِيدٍ؟

فَقَالَ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): أَيُّمَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكَ، الْجَائِزَةُ مِنْ يَزِيدٍ، أَوْ شَفَاعَةَ جَدِّي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ)؟

فَقَالَ اللَّعِينُ: دَانِيٌّ مِنَ الْجَائِزَةِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْكَ، وَمِنْ جَدِّكَ.

فَقَالَ الْحُسَيْنُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): إِذَا كَانَ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ قَتْلِي فَاسْقِنِي شُرْبَةً مِنَ الْمَاءِ.

فَقَالَ لَهُ: هَيْهَاتُ، وَاللَّهِ! لَا دُفَّتْ قَطْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةً مِنَ الْمَاءِ حَتَّى تَذُوقَ الْمَوْتَ غُصَّةً بَعْدَ غُصَّةٍ.

فَقَالَ لَهُ: وَيْلَكَ، اكْشِفْ لِي عَنْ وَجْهِكَ وَبَطْنِكَ! فَكَشَفَ لَهُ، فَإِذَا هُوَ أَنْبَعُ أَبْرَصٍ، لَهُ صُورَةٌ تَشْبَهُ الْكِلَابَ وَالْحَنْتَازِيرَ.

فَقَالَ الْحُسَيْنُ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): صَدَقَ جَدِّي فِيمَا قَالَ.

فَقَالَ: وَمَا قَالَ جَدُّكَ؟

قَالَ: يَقُولُ لِأَبْنِي: يَا عَلِيُّ! يَقْتُلْ وَلَدَكَ هَذَا رَجُلٌ أَنْبَعُ أَبْرَصٍ، أَشْبَهُ الْخَلْقَ بِالْكِلَابِ وَالْحَنْتَازِيرِ.

فَعَضِبَ الشِّمْرُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ، وَقَالَ: تُشْبِهُنِي بِالْكِلَابِ وَالْحَنْتَازِيرِ، فَوَاللَّهِ! لَأَذْبَحَنَّكَ مِنْ فَعَاكَ! نَمَّ قَلْبُهُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ، وَجَعَلَ يَقْطَعُ

أَوْدَاجَهُ رُوحِي لَهُ الْفِدَاءِ، وَهُوَ يُنَادِينِي: وَآ جَدَّهُ! وَآ مُحَمَّدَاهُ! وَآ أَبَا قَاسِمَاهُ! وَآ أَبْتَاهُ وَآ عَلِيَّاهُ! أَأَقْتُلُ عَظْمَانًا وَجَدِّي مُحَمَّدًا

الْمُصْطَفَى؟ أَأَقْتُلُ عَظْمَانًا وَأَبْنِي عَلِيَّ الْمُرْتَضَى، وَأُمِّي فَاطِمَةَ الزَّهْرَاءِ؟

Then ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d shouted: Who will bring for me his head, and he would have what he would relish?

Shimr: I, O Amīr!

‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d: Hurry up, and you will have the greatest reward.

Thereupon Shimr approached Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), who was in the state of unconsciousness. He drew near to him and sat on his chest. Feeling the weight on him, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) [looked up at him and] said: Woe be unto you, who are you, for indeed you have ascended an exalted peak!

Shimr: It is Shimr.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): Woe be unto you, who am I?

Shimr: You are Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī, the son of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ (‘a), and your grandfather is Muḥammad, the chosen one.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): If you know that this is my lineage and root, why then are you killing me?

Shimr: If I do not kill you, who then will take the reward from Yazīd?

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): Which one is more lovable to you, reward from Yazīd or the intercession of my grandfather the Apostle of Allāh (s)?

Shimr: A *dāniq*⁹⁶ of the reward is more lovable to me than you and your grandfather.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): If you insist on killing me, then at least give me a sip of water.

Shimr: Never! By Allāh, you will not taste a drop of water until you taste death in the state of continual agony.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): Woe be unto you! Unveil for me your face and stomach.

Shimr unveils his face and stomach, and he appears spotted and leprous, resembling dogs and pigs.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): My grandfather was right in what he said.

Shimr: And what did your grandfather say?

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a): Addressing my father he said: O ‘Alī, a leprous and spotted person who most resembles dogs and pigs will kill this son of yours.

This made Shimr furious, and he said: You liken me with dogs and pigs? By Allāh, I will slaughter you from the back of your neck! Then he turned the Imam’s face, and began severing the jugular vein (may my spirit be ransomed for him) as he [the Imam] called out: O my grandfather! O Muḥammad! O Abal Qāsim, O dear father! O ‘Alī! Should I be killed thirsty while my grandfather is Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā? Should I be killed thirsty while my father is ‘Alī al-Murtaḍā, and my mother Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’?⁹⁷

Indeed we belong to Allāh and to Him alone we shall return. (2:156)

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً أَسْرَجَتْ وَأَلْجَمَتْ وَتَنَقَّبَتْ لِقِتَالِكَ

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community who saddled their mounts, placed their bridles and patrolled to combat with you.

This verse informs us how every element that participated in fighting against Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is distant from Divine mercy and worthy of being cursed.

The past tense verb *asraja* means “*he saddled*” or “*he fastened the saddle*”. It comes from the word *al-sarj* which simply means “a saddle” or “that which is placed on the back of the horse to make it easy for one to sit over its back”.⁹⁸

In a tradition, Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a) requests his slave Kambar to tie the saddle of his horse as follows:

يَا قَنْمَرُ أَسْرِجْ لِي فَرَسِي

O Kambar, tie for me the saddle of my horse.⁹⁹

96 *Dāniq* can refer to 1/6 of a dirham or a small coin.

97 *Mawsū‘at Kalimāt al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (‘a)*, pp.617- 618

98 Ibn Fāris has an indepth definition. He says that the root meaning of the letters *sīn*, *rā’* and *jīm* is splendor (*al-ḥusn*), embellishment (*al-zīnah*) and beauty (*al-jamāl*). The word *al-sirāj* (lamp) comes from the same root. It was known to be so due to its light (*al-ḍiyā*) and beauty (*al-ḥusn*). Likewise, the word *al-sarj* (saddle) is from the same root, and it is the embellishment (*al-zīnah*) of the mount over which it is placed (Ibn Fāris, *Mu‘jam Maqāyis al-Lughah*, v.3, p. 156)

99 Al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Thāqib fī al-Manāqib*, p. 269

The verb *asrajat* employed in the above verse is with a *tā' al-ta'nīth* (*tā'* signifying the feminine gender) affixed to it, which refers to the community (*ummah*). Hence the verse is literally rendered as “May Allāh distance from His mercy they (the *ummah*) who saddle [their mounts]...”

This apparently refers to the time of embarking to go to Karbala. Hence those who intended to fight against the grandson of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) and thus tied their saddles to get ready and travel to Karbala are cursed.

Note that in this verse we realise that the mere intention (*niyyah*) to go and commit this despicable deed itself brings about remoteness from Allāh’s proximity. One may argue that mere intention to commit the deed without success in doing so is not a sin and hence should not expel one from Divine mercy. In response we say that “intending to fight against the grandson of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)” cannot ever be conceived save from one whose heart is overturned and who has nurtured an evil nature in himself. There is a great difference between intending to commit minor sins and intending to fight against the very epitome of religion and Islam.

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً ... أَلْجَمَتْ

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community... who placed their (i.e. their mounts’) bridles...

The verb *aljama* literally means “He placed the bridle [of his mount in its mouth]”. The origin of the verb is *al-lijām* which is a rope or rod that is placed in the mouth of the mount and attached around the back of its head. When we say, for example, *aljamtu al-farasa*, we mean *ja’altu al-lijāma fī famihā* (I placed the bridle in the mouth of the horse).¹⁰⁰

The past tense verb *aljamat* employed in the above verse is with a *tā' al-ta'nīth* (*tā'* signifying the feminine gender) affixed to it, which again refers to the community (*ummah*). Hence the above verse is literally rendered as “May Allāh distance from His mercy they (the *ummah*) who...placed their (mounts’) bridles...”

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً ... وَتَنَقَّبَتْ

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community... who covered their faces with a veil.

The verb *tanaqqaba* literally means “he placed a veil over his face”. It comes from the word *al-niqāb* which is a veil.

Commenting on the verse under discussion, ‘Allāmah al-Majlisī explains “*tanaqqabat*” as follows:

لعله كان النقاب بينهم متعارفا عند الذهاب إلى الحرب، بل إلى مطلق الأسفار حذرا من أعدائهم لئلا يعرفوهم...

Perhaps this is because the veil was a normal trend between them when going to war, or rather in all their journeys, to remain safe from their enemies recognising them...¹⁰¹

Sayyid Ḥasan Sārawī in his *Risāleye Tadhkirat al-Dhākirīn* says that some scholars speculate that the Kūfans covered themselves with veils when going to fight against Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Ḥusayn (‘a) because of their shame in breaking their oaths of allegiance to Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). Earlier they had written letters to the Imam (‘a) inviting him and showing their support for him, but later they broke their loyalty. Hence they were ashamed in encountering the Imam (‘a) and thus covered their heads and faces.¹⁰²

100 Al-Ṭurayhī, *Majma’ al-Baḥrayn*, v.4, p. 111

101 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.98, p. 301

102 Sayyid Ḥasan Sārawī, *Nigāhī be Ziyārāt-e-‘Āshūrā’* (*Risāleye Tadhkirat al-Dhākirīn*), p. 166

The past tense verb *tanaqqabat* employed in the above verse is with a *tā' al-ta'nīth* (*tā'* signifying the feminine gender) affixed to it, which refers to the community (*ummah*). Hence the above verse is literally rendered as “May Allāh distance from His mercy they (the *ummah*) who...placed veils over their faces...”

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً ... تَنَقَّبَتْ (تَنَكَّبَتْ)

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community... who placed their bows and quivers [to combat with you].

Some scholars opine that actually the verb *tanaqqabat* تنقبت with a *qāf* after *nūn* is an interpolation of the verb *tanakkabat* تنكبت with a *kāf* after *nūn*. This verb refers to the placing of bows on shoulders. For example, when it is said, “*tanakkaba qawsahu*”, it means “*alqāhā 'alā mankibihi*” (he placed his bow on his shoulders).¹⁰³ Therefore the past tense verb *tanakkabat* would mean “*they (the ummah) placed their bows and quivers (for arrows) on their shoulders*”. This variable meaning, some believe, is in complete harmony with the previous verbs *asrajat* and *aljamat*, for all three verbs refer to preparation for a war.

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً ... تَنَقَّبَتْ (تَهَيَّأَتْ)

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community... who got ready [to combat with you].

Another noteworthy opinion is that it is possible there has been a small interpolation in the original text of the *ziyārah* and instead of *tanaqqabat*, the original contained the verb *tahayya'at* (they got ready/they prepared themselves). Sayyid Muḥammad Jawād al-Shubayrī, a contemporary scholar, has tried to establish this view in one of his research papers.¹⁰⁴

وَلَعَنَ اللَّهُ أُمَّةً ... تَنَقَّبَتْ (تَنَكَّبَتْ)

...and may Allāh distance from His mercy the community... who patrolled [to combat with you].

The verb *tanaqqaba* can also mean “he traversed”, when it is derived from the word *al-naqb* which means path.¹⁰⁵ Al-Jawharī in his *al-Ṣiḥah* says, “*al-naqb* signifies a path in the mountains” (*al-naqbu al-tarīqu fī al-jabal*).¹⁰⁶ Ibn Fāris in his *Mu'jam* takes us deeper, defining the single root meaning *nūn*, *qāf*, and *bā'* as “an opening in something” (*fathun fī shay'in*)¹⁰⁷ which due to its comprehensive connotation does not contradict Jawharī's definition, for a path is actually “an opening”. Ibn Manzūr and al-Zubaydī likewise provide a similar definition in their works. Both define the infinitive *al-naqb* as *al-thaqbu fī ayyi shay'in kān* (perforation in anything whatsoever).¹⁰⁸

Al-Muṣṭafawī, however, dives much deeper in his Qur'ān lexicon *al-Taḥqīq* and defines the root *nūn*, *qāf*, and *bā'* as *baḥṭhun wa takhlīlun wa tadqīqun sawā'an kāna fī māddiyin aw ma'nawiyin* (to search, pierce, and scrutinise, whether in a material or spiritual entity).¹⁰⁹

Hence the past tense verb *tanaqqabat* which is with *atā' al-ta'nīth* that refers to the *ummah*, would signify “they traversed” or “they patrolled”. As a result, the verse can be literally rendered as: “May

103 Al-Shāmī, *Subul al-Hudā wa al-Rashād*, v.3, p. 229

104 'Ulūm al-Hadīth Journal, n.21, pp. 30-51

105 Al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, v.9, p. 225

106 Al-Jawharī, *Al-Ṣiḥah*, v.1, p. 227

107 Ibn Fāris, *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, v.5, p. 465

108 Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, v.1, p. 765; Al-Zubaydī, *Tāj al-'Arūs*, v.2, p. 443

109 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq*, v.12, p. 214

Allāh distance from His mercy they (the *ummah*) who...patrolled [to combat with you].”

... لِقِتَالِكَ

... to combat with you.

The phrase *li qiṭālika* in the above phrase is fundamental for it informs us the main reason why a community saddled and placed the bridles of their mounts and covered their faces. The reason is “to combat with Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)’”.

If one only reflects on the second person masculine pronoun “*kāf*” of the phrase “*li qiṭālika*” which refers to Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), one would realise the gravity of the matter.

Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)’s resplendent and immaculate character is more evident than the Sun. Hence we need not to prove this reality. What is important is to realise that not everyone can see the Sun or its rays. The Holy Qur’ān says:

فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبَ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

...Indeed it is not the eyes that turn blind, but the hearts turn blind that are in the breasts! (22:46)

However much you may explain to a blind person the nature of the Sun, he will still fail to understand fully. The fault is not with the Sun, but with the one trying to understand it.

Whereas history informs us of the likes of Ibn Sa‘d, who had turned blind at heart, it also informs us of those who always enjoyed the beauty of the Divine sun. One such example was a man called Kāmil.

History tells us that when ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d was given the opportunity of one night to decide whether he was ready to lead an army against Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), he sought advice from Kāmil, who was a person that epitomised the reality of *al-kamāl al-insānī* (human perfection). On hearing Ibn Sa‘d’s words, on whether he should proceed to battle against Imam al-Ḥusayn, Kāmil retorted in a very negative and stern manner. The following is the anecdote as depicted in *Madīnat al-Ma‘ājiz* of Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī:

وكان عند عمر بن سعد رجل من أهل الخير يقال له كامل، وكان صديقاً لأبيه من قبله، فقال له: يا عمر مالي أراك بهيئة وحركة، فما الذي أنت عازم عليه؟ (وكان كامل كاسمه ذا رأي وعقل ودين كامل).

فقال له ابن سعد (لعنه الله): إني قد ولّيت أمر هذا الجيش في حرب الحسين (عليه السلام)، وإنا قتلته عندي وأهل بيته كأكلة آكل أو كشرية ماء، وإذا قتلته خرجت إلى ملك الري.

فقال له كامل: أف لك يا عمر بن سعد، تريد أن تقتل الحسين ابن بنت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله)؟ أف لك ولدينك! يا عمر أسفهمت الحق وضللت الهدى؟ أما تعلم إلى حرب من تخرج؟ ولمن تقاتل؟ إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون. والله لو أعطيت الدنيا وما فيها على قتل رجل واحد من أمة محمد (صلى الله عليه وآله) لما فعلت، فكيف تريد تقتل الحسين (عليه السلام) ابن بنت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله)؟ وما الذي تقول غداً لرسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) إذا وردت عليه وقد قتلت ولده، وقرّة عينه، وثمره فؤاده، وابن بنته سيّدة نساء العالمين، وابن سيّد الوصيّين، وهو سيّد شباب أهل الجنّة من الخلق أجمعين؟ وإنّه في زماننا هذا بمنزلة جدّه (صلى الله عليه وآله) في زمانه، وطاعته فرض

علينا كطاعته، وإِنَّه باب الجنة والنار، فاختر لنفسك ما أنت مختار، وإني أشهد بالله إن حاربتَه أو قتلته أو أعنت عليه أو على قتله لا تلبث في الدنيا بعده إلا قليلاً.

فقال له عمر بن سعد: أقبالوت تخوفني؟ وإني إذا فرغت من قتله، أكون أميراً على سبعين ألف فارس وأتولى ملك الري. 'Umar Ibn Sa'd had with him a person from the men of virtue called Kāmil, who was [also] a friend of his father before him. He asked: 'Umar [Ibn Sa'd]: O 'Umar why do I find you in a particular state and movement? What have you resolved to do? (Kāmil as his name signifies was a person of perfect opinion, intellect and religion.)

'Umar Ibn Sa'd replied: I have been commissioned to lead the army to fight against al-Ḥusayn ('a), and killing him and his family to me is like a morsel of food to one who eats or a sip of water. After I kill him I will head to govern Rayy.

Kāmil said to him: Woe be unto you, O 'Umar Ibn Sa'd! Do you want to kill al-Ḥusayn, the son of the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ)?! Woe be unto you and your religion! O 'Umar, have you depreciated the truth and deviated from the guidance? Do you not realise against whom you have set out to war? And with whom will you fight? *Indeed we belong to Allāh and to Him do we return.* I swear by Allāh, if I were to be given the world and what it contains, to kill a single man from the *umma* of Muḥammad (ﷺ), I would not do so. How then do you want to kill al-Ḥusayn ('a), the son of the daughter of the Apostle of Allāh? And what will you say tomorrow to the Apostle of Allāh (ﷺ) when you will be brought in his presence in the state of having killed his son, the apple of his eye, the fruit of his heart, the son of the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) the Leader of all the women of the worlds, the son of the Doyen of the successors, while he is the Doyen of the youth of Paradise? Indeed in our present age he is what his grandfather was during his time, and obeying him is obligatory on us like obeying the Prophet (ﷺ), and indeed he is the door of Paradise and Hell Fire.¹¹⁰ Therefore select for yourself what you choose, and I take Allāh as my witness that if you fight with him or slay him or support [others] against him in his martyrdom, you will not live in this world after that save for a short while.

Thereupon 'Umar Ibn Sa'd said: Are you frightening me with death? Indeed after I finish killing him, I would be a commander over seventy thousand horsemen and govern the kingdom of Rayy.

فقال له كامل: إني أحدثك بحديث صحيح، أرجو لك فيه النجاة إن وفقت لقبوله. اعلم أي سافرت مع أبيك سعد (بن أبي وقاص) إلى الشام، فانقطعت بي مطيبي عن أصحابي، وتهت وعطشت، فلاح لي دير راهب فملت إليه، ونزلت عن فرسي، وأتيت إلى باب الدي لأشرب ماء، فأشرف علي راهب من ذلك الدير وقال: ما تريد؟ فقلت له: إني عطشان، فقال لي: أنت من أمة هذا النبي الذين يقتل بعضهم بعضاً على حب الدنيا مكالبة، ويتنافسون فيها على حطامها؟ فقلت له: أنا من الأمة المرحومة أمة محمد (صلى الله عليه وآله). فقال: إنكم أشتر أمة، فالويل لكم يوم القيامة، وقد سدتم إلى عترة نبيكم، (فقتلتموهم وشردتموهم وإني أجد في كتبنا إنكم تقتلون ابن بنت نبيكم) وتسبون نسائه وتنهبون أمواله، فقلت له: يا راهب نحن نفعل ذلك؟ قال: نعم، وإني إذا فعلتم ذلك ضجت السماوات والأرضون، والبحار، والجبال، والبراري، والقفار، والوحوش، والأطيار باللعنة على قاتله، ثم لا يلبث قاتله في الدنيا إلا قليلاً، ثم يظهر رجل يطلب بثاره، فلا يدع أحداً شرك في أمره بسوء إلا قتله، وعجل الله بروحه إلى النار.

110 Obedience or disobedience to Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) determines one's ultimate position: if one obeys him, one's abode is Paradise, and if one disobeys him, his abode is Hell Fire.

Thereupon Kāmil said: Indeed I am narrating to you an authentic tradition, and I hope that you are emancipated thereby, if you are bestowed with the succour to accept it. Know that I travelled with your father Sa‘d Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ to Shām, and [on the way] my mount got separated from my other companions, and I got lost and thirsty. There appeared before me a monastery of a monk and I headed towards it. I got down from my horse, and I came to the door of the monastery so that I may drink some water. A monk of that monastery came towards me, and said: What do you want? I said: Indeed I am thirsty. Thereupon he said to me: Are you from the nation of this Prophet, who kill each other for the love of the world out of greed, and compete with each other for its vanities? I said: [Rather,] I am from the mercified nation, the nation of Muḥammad (ṣ). He said: You are the worst nation! So woe be unto you on the Day of Judgement! Indeed you have hampered the family of your Prophet (ṣ) and killed and expelled them, and surely I find in our books that you shall kill the son of the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and take his women as captives, and loot their wealth. I said to the monk: Will we do that? He said: Yes. And when you have done that, the heavens, earths, oceans, mountains, steppes, deserts, wild animals, and birds would curse his slayers. Then his slayer would not remain in the earth save for a short while. Thereafter will appear a man who will avenge for his blood, and will not spare anyone who participated in his matter, save that he would kill him, and Allāh will hasten the soul of the participant soul into Hell Fire.

ثم قال الراهب: إني لأرى لك قرابة من قاتل هذا الابن الطيب، والله إني لو أدركت أيامه لوقيته بنفسي من حر السيوف، فقلت: يا راهب إني أعيذ نفسي أن أكون ممن يقاتل ابن بنت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله)، فقال: إن لم تكن أنت فرجل قريب منك (بسبب أو نسب)، وإن قاتله عليه نصف عذاب أهل النار، وإن عذابه أشد من عذاب فرعون وهامان، ثم ردم الباب في وجهي، ودخل يعبد الله تعالى، وأبى أن يسقيني الماء. قال كامل: فركبت فرسي ولحقت أصحابي، فقال لي أبوك سعد: ما بطأك عنا يا كامل؟ فحدثته بما سمعته من الراهب، فقال لي: صدقت.

ثم إن سعداً أخبرني أنه نزل بدير هذا الراهب مرة من قبلي، فأخبره أنه هو الرجل الذي يقتل ابن بنت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله)، فخاف أبوك سعد من ذلك، وخشي أن تكون أنت قاتله، فأبعدك عنه وأقصاك، فاحذر يا عمر أن تخرج عليه فإن خرجت عليه يكون عليك نصف عذاب أهل النار،

Then the monk said: Indeed I see that you are close to the killer of this pure offspring; I swear by Allāh, if I were to be alive during his days I would protect him myself from the heat of the swords. Thereupon I said: O monk, I seek protection of my soul from being the one who would fight against the son of the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ṣ). He said: If you are not the one, then it is a man close to you (either through lineage or a cause), and indeed his killer will have half the entire punishment of the people of Hell Fire. Indeed his punishment is more severe than that of Pharaoh and Hamān. Then the monk closed the door at me, and entered to worship, and refused to give me water. So I climbed my horse and got to my companions. Your father Sa‘d asked me: What delayed you from us? I spoke to him about what I had heard from the monk. He said: You are right.

Then he [Sa‘d] informed me that once he had alighted at the monastery of this monk, and he [the monk] informed him [Sa‘d] that he [Sa‘d] would be the man who will kill the son of the daughter of the Holy Prophet (ṣ); and he [Sa‘d] became frightened, and was afraid that you [who were nearby him] may be the one who would kill the grandson of the Prophet (ṣ). So he separated you from him and put you afar. Therefore beware O ‘Umar, that you rise against him [Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)], for if you do so, you will have half of the punishment of the people of Hell Fire.

قال : فبلغ الخبر إلى ابن زياد (لعنه الله)، فاستدعى بكامل، وقطع لسانه، فعاش يوماً أو بعض يوم، ومات (رحمه الله تعالى).

The news of this conversation reached Ibn Ziyād and he summoned Kāmil and cut off his tongue. Kāmil lived [only for] a day or a part thereof, and thereafter died (may Allāh, the Exalted have mercy on him).

... لِقِتَالِكَ ...

... to combat with you.

Fighting against Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) who innately encapsulates the humanness (*al-insāniyyah*) of the human being is like fighting with the entire human caravan. This is a Qur’ānic principle worthy of contemplation. The Holy Qur’ān says:

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ

That is why We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul, without [its being guilty of] manslaughter or corruption on the earth, is as though he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves a life is as though he had saved all mankind. Our apostles certainly brought them manifest signs, yet even after that many of them commit excesses on the earth. (5:32)

Killing Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is like killing the entire human caravan. Every human being is identical with the rest of the human beings in his human structure. Killing one extension therefore is like killing all.

Furthermore, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) in himself represented an entire nation. He was an *ummah* in himself. The Holy Qur’ān speaks of Prophet Ibrāhīm, the idol breaker, as an *ummah*, as he represents a whole community in the worship and obedience of Allāh:

إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِلَّهِ حَنِيفًا وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Indeed Abraham was a nation obedient to Allāh, a hanif, and he was not one of the polytheists. (16:120)

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) alluding to the comprehensive existence of the human being is reported to have said:

الْمُؤْمِنُ وَحْدَهُ جَمَاعَةٌ

A believer alone is a congregation.

The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) explaining the comprehensive existence of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ جَدِّي عَبْدَ الْمُطَّلِبِ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فِي هَيْئَةِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَزِيَّ الْمُلُوكِ

Indeed Allāh will raise my grandfather ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib as one community in the form of prophets and attire of kings.

CHAPTER 13

بِأَبِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي، لَقَدْ عَظُمَ مُصَابِي بِكَ، فَاسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي
أَكْرَمَ مَقَامَكَ، وَأَكْرَمَنِي بِكَ، أَنْ يَرْزُقَنِي طَلَبَ ثَارِكَ مَعَ
إِمَامٍ مَنْصُورٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ.

May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. Indeed my affliction due to what happened to you is immense. Therefore, I ask Allāh who venerated your station and honoured me through you, to provide me the succour to avenge for your blood with a supported leader from the family of Muḥammad, may Allāh pour down His mercy on him and his progeny.

بِأَبِي أَنْتَ وَأُمِّي

May my father and mother be sacrificed for you..

COMMENTARY

In Arabic terminology, such a phrase is known as *al-tafdiyyah* (expression of sacrifice). It is normally employed to show one's deep veneration and love¹ for one's addressee. Its original construction is said to be: *Fadaytuka bi abī anta wa ummī* (may my father and mother be sacrificed for you). Hence the phrase *fadaytuka* is elliptical and hidden.²

Some scholars³ explaining this phrase believe that its literal meaning should not be taken into consideration. It is rather an expression of revealing one's love and kindness to the addressee. That is why it can also be employed by one whose parents are not alive:

Al-Māzandarānī in his *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī* explaining the phrase “*Bi abī anta wa ummī*” says:

وجاز التفدية عندنا وعند أكثر العامة وكرهها بعضهم وقال: لا يفدي بمسلم والصحيح عدم الكراهة لورودها في الأحاديث الصحيحة من طرقنا وطرقهم مع عدم الإنكار سيما له (صلى الله عليه وآله) على أنه ليس المراد الحقيقة وإنما هي على معنى الحنان والبر، ولذلك يقول ذلك أيضاً من ليس له أب وأم موجودان.

Expressing sacrifice is permitted according to us (the Shia) as well as most of the Sunnis (*‘Ammah*). Some however considered it as abhorred (*makruh*) and said: A Muslim cannot be ransomed. The correct view however is that it is not abhorred because it appears in our authentic traditions, from our sources as well as their sources, without any prohibition, especially for him (ṣ) [the Holy Prophet]. Besides, what is meant is not the literal. Rather, it signifies kindness and righteousness. And for this very reason, one who does not have a father or mother may also say it.⁴

The *zā'ir* here declares that he gives preference to Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) even over his parents. And preferring the Imam (‘a) over his parents is in reality preferring the peak of truth because the Imam (‘a) is always a manifestation of the truth (*ḥaqq*). He never thinks or does or commands anyone to do anything that is contrary to the truth. We address the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in *Ziyārāt al-Jāmi‘ah* in the following way:

الْحَقُّ مَعَكُمْ وَفِيكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ وَإِلَيْكُمْ

Truth is united with you, within yourselves, comes from you and returns to You.

Hence the meaning of expressing one's sacrifice of one's parents, is prioritisation. We are trying to declare that Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is a priority over our parents. Whatever he says or does is taken as a preference. His words precede the words even of our beloved parents. Hence if at all there is any kind of contradiction between him and our parents, he takes priority. If we ponder over this carefully, we would come to realise that whether we express the words of sacrifice or not, the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) always have a priority over every believer, for they are the epitomes of religion and whatever they say or do is in complete harmony with the pleasure of Allāh. In the

1 Ḥabibullāh al-Khū‘ī, *Minhāj al-Barā‘ah fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, v.15, p. 71

2 Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*, v.1, p. 20

3 Al-Māzandarānī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, v.5, p. 330

4 Ibid.

beautiful words of Sayyid al-Shuhada' ('a), "The pleasure of Allāh is our pleasure".⁵

لَقَدْ عَظُمَ مُصَابِي بِكَ

Indeed my affliction due to what happened to you is immense

The particle 'lām' in 'la-qad' shows that the *zā'ir* swears and believes that the calamity that has befallen him is indeed immense and severe. The word *muṣāb* in the phrase *laqad 'aẓuma muṣābī bika* is translated as *muṣībah* (affliction).⁶ Hence it is as if we are saying *laqad 'aẓuma muṣībatī bika* (Indeed my affliction due to what happened to you is immense).

Here we are declaring the immensity of our affliction due to what happened to Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a). A natural consequence of such a situation is deep anguish and sorrow. Expressing our state of intense affliction and sorrow, however, should be natural and tangible. In order to realise this, we have to pass through two important stages:

- a) Proper Knowledge: Accurate knowledge about the personality of the Imam ('a) and the details of the tragedy of Karbala.
- b) True Love: Intense love and attachment for Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a), such that one feels united with the Imam ('a) and considers the Imam's loss as his own loss, or rather even greater.⁷

Proper Knowledge

Unfortunately sometimes the fundamental aim of conveying the message of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) is forgotten. Instead of introducing his sublime character and narrating a reliable account of his tribulations, so that a natural flow of tears ensue, some try to concoct or relate inauthentic records to ensure that the listeners are able to weep well.

Martyr Muṭahharī in his *Ḥamāseye Ḥusaynī* says:

Another weak point present in the mourning gatherings - which is mostly from the people's side and has fortunately become lesser - is that profuse and loud weeping is regarded as the criterion of their success. After all, the speaker on the *minbar* must relate the sorrowful accounts of the tragic events. While these accounts are related, the people are expected not merely to shed tears: the mere shedding of tears is not acceptable; the *majlis* must be rocked with cries of mourning. I do not say that the *majlis* should not be rocked with mourning; what I say is that this must not be the objective. If tears are shed as a result of listening to facts and the *majlis* is rocked with mourning by descriptions of real history without false and fabricated narratives, without distortion, without conjuring companions for Imam Ḥusayn that did not exist in history and who are unknown to Imam Ḥusayn himself (as they were nonexistent), without attributing such children to Imam Ḥusayn as did not exist, without carving out enemies for Imam Ḥusayn that basically had not existed - that is very good indeed. But when reality and truth are absent, should we go on making war against Imam Ḥusayn by fabricating falsehoods and lies?⁸

5 Al-Shaykh 'Abdullāh al-Bahrānī, *al-Imām al-Ḥusayn ('a)*, p. 217

6 Al-Kāshānī, *Sharḥ Ziyārāt 'Ashūrā'*, p. 72

7 If one ponders carefully one will realise that these two stages are interlinked: knowledge is what reaps love. One must therefore try to acquire deep knowledge of the reality of al-Ḥusayn ('a) and his sublime movement, so that one can develop a natural attraction to his sublime character. It is important to realise however that knowledge is not always sufficient. One must enjoy the purity of heart to be drawn towards virtue and goodness.

8 <http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/ashura/>

If we express our great sorrow through inauthentic records, the foundation of our sorrow is questionable. In such a case it is the calamity on “*the Ḥusayn of our fictitious thoughts*” for which we express our grief and sorrow. We should therefore read and convey events narrated from scholars whom we can genuinely trust, so that tears are shed due to the truth that is narrated.

Some noble scholars, in order to avoid deviation and misquotation, try to read a reliable *maqṭal* so that the listeners get accurate information and weep on the basis of truth. During my stay in the Islamic Republic of Iran, I have noticed this specifically from the Leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Alī Khāmanē’ī, who is said to have read in a number of his Friday sermons from this reliable book of narration. On the Day of ‘Āshūrā 1416 AH (lunar), Ayatullah Khāmanē’ī, in his Friday sermon, said:

ما به همه می‌گوییم که از روی متن، روضه بخوانید؛ حالا بنده می‌خواهم متن کتاب (لهوف) ابن طاووس را برایتان بخوانم، تا ببینیم روضه متنی چگونه است. بعضی می‌گویند آدم نمی‌شود همان را که در کتاب نوشته است، بخواند؛ باید پیروانیم - بسازیم - خوب؛ گاهی آن هم اشکالی ندارد؛ اما ما حالا از روی کتاب، چند کلمه‌ای می‌خوانیم... کتاب معروف «لهوف» از سید علی بن موسی بن جعفر بن طاووس است. در تعبیّرات منبریه‌ای ما این عبارات این کتاب - مثل روایت - خوانده می‌شود؛ از بس متقن و مهم است.

We say to everyone to read the words of lamentation from the text [of the book] itself. At this moment I would like to read to you from the text of the book [*Luhūf*] of Ibn Ṭāwūs, so that we may observe a lamentation that is read from the text. Some say that one cannot read exactly whatever has been written in the book. We should nurture and create the material [and then present it]. Fine. Sometimes that has no problem. However, at this moment we would like read a few words from the book... The well-known work *Luhūf* is from Sayyid ‘Alī Ibn Mūsā Ibn Ja‘far Ibn Ṭāwūs. In the expression of our sermonisers, the very text of this book is read like a tradition. This is how firm and important this work is.⁹

On the 11th Muharram 1419 AH Ayatullah Khāmanē’ī said:

من امروز می‌خواهم از روی مقتل ابن طاووس که کتاب «لهوف» است چند جمله ذکر مصیبت کم و چند صحنه از این صحنه‌های عظیم را برای شما عزیزان بخوانم، البته این مقتل بسیار معتبری است. ابن طاووس - که علی بن طاووس باشد - فقیه، عارف، بزرگ، صدوق، موثق، مورد احترام همه و استاد فقهای بسیار بزرگی است. خودش ادیب و شاعر و شخصیت خیلی برجسته‌ای است. ایشان اولین مقتل بسیار معتبر و موجز را نوشتند. البته قبل از ایشان مقاتل زیادی است. استادشان «ابن نما» مقتل دارد، شیخ طوسی مقتل دارد، دیگران هم دارند، مقتلهای زیادی قبل از ایشان نوشته اند؛ اما وقتی «لهوف» آمد، تقریباً همه مقاتل، تحت الشعاع قرار گرفت. این مقتل بسیار خوبی است؛ چون عبارات، بسیار خوب و دقیق و خلاصه انتخاب شده است.

Today I would like to read some words of lamentation from the *maqṭal*¹⁰ of Ibn Ṭāwūs, which is the book *al-Luhūf*, and narrate some of the remarkable scenarios for you dear listeners. Indeed this *maqṭal* is very reliable. Ibn Ṭāwūs, whose name is ‘Alī Ibn Ṭāwūs, was a jurisprudent, great gnostic, very truthful, trustworthy, and venerated by all. He was the mentor of great jurisprudents as well. He himself is a literaturist, poet, and a great personality. He has written the first reliable and very concise *maqṭal*. Obviously prior to him there have been many *maqātil* [pl. of *maqṭal*]. His teacher Ibn Numā has a *maqṭal*, Shaykh Ṭusī has a *maqṭal*, and other scholars likewise have their own *maqātil*. Many *maqātil* have been written prior to him. However, when *Luhūf* came, it overshadowed nearly all the rest. This is a very good *maqṭal*, since its expressions are

9 <http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/?p=bayanat&id=1137>

10 The word *Maqṭal* is in the linguistic form of *maf‘al*, which in the Arabic reveals a noun of place, a noun of time, or an infinitive of mim (*maṣdar mīmī*). In our case it has been originally employed to reveal an infinitive of mīm, and it means “to kill”. Hence *maqṭal* has been employed for the meaning of *qatl*. Thereafter the book that would narrate the *qatl* was also known as *maqṭal*. Hence when we say *Maqṭal al-Ḥusayn*, we mean “the slaying of al-Ḥusayn” or “the book that narrates how Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) was killed”.

very good and accurate and is a summarised selection.¹¹

Martyr Ayatullah Qāḍī Tabrīzī, a great scholar of his time, is reported to have said:

کتاب لهُوف سید ابن طاوس - رحمة الله عليه - نقلیاتش بسیار مورد اعتماد است و در میان کتب مقاتل، کتاب مقتل به اندازه اعتبار و اعتماد، به آن نمی رسد...

The reports contained in the book *Luhūf* of Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs (may Allāh have mercy on him) are very reliable, and among the *maqātil* [books that narrate the tragedy of Karbala], no *maqṭal* is at par with it in terms of authenticity and reliability...¹²

Tangible sorrow can be realised well when one understands the truth of how a vicegerent of Allāh on the earth, who enjoyed the highest level of perfection, is mercilessly treated and killed. Then is when one can really feel the expression “Indeed my affliction is immense...” (*laqad ‘aẓuma muṣābī bika*) and vocalise the same.

It is narrated that when Ayatullah Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm Hāeri, the founder of the Ḥawzah of Qum, would sit in a gathering of lamentation for Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), he would not wait for the narration of the affliction that befell on the Imam (‘a). Simply hearing the name “Ḥusayn” would bring about a flow of tears, such that he would sometimes be overcome by loss of strength.¹³

The late Ayatullah Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Alī Arākī is reported to have said the following about his mentor, Ayatullah Shaykh ‘Abd al-Karīm Hāeri:

I was at his service during the days of ‘Āshūrā’. I saw that that great personality would now and again recite the following ode and weep:¹⁴

تَبْكِيكَ عَيْنِي لِأَجْلِ مَثُوبَةٍ لَكِنَّمَا عَيْنِي لِأَجْلِكَ بَاكِيَةً
My eye is weeping not in order to attain reward
Rather my eye weeps for you.

When one has understood who the Imam (‘a) is, and has realised how closely one is linked to him, and learns about the real tragedy of Karbala, one is naturally overcome with perpetual sorrow and anguish. Such sorrow, however, is so praiseworthy, that it is equalled to tasbih (glorification). Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

نَفْسُ الْمَهْمُومِ لَنَا الْمَعْتَمُّ لِظُلْمِنَا تَسْبِيحٌ وَهَمُّهُ لِأَمْرِنَا عِبَادَةٌ

The breath of one who is grief-stricken¹⁵ for us and is sorrowful due to oppression on

11 <http://saharnews.ir/view-9293.html>; <http://hamrahemontazer.com/index.php?start=40>

12 <http://www.tarikhislam.com>

13 *Dīdār bā Abrār*, v.46, p. 102

14 Ḥamzah Karīm Khānī, *Mu‘jizaye Ashk*, pp. 86-87

15 It is important for us to understand the subtle difference between *hamm* and *ghamm*, both of which are sometimes rendered as “grief”. The difference is that *hamm* is a state of sorrow and grief that comes about when one has already carried out the preliminaries of his intention, but is not able to do what he intended (Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur‘ān al-Karīm*, v.11, p. 286). Hence it is a state of sorrow for not being able to do something. One who yearns to assist the Imam (‘a), for example, but is unable to achieve his desire, is *mahmūm* (grief-stricken). *Ghamm*, the trilateral root of which signifies, *al-taghtiyah* (to cover), literally means “that which covers happiness in the heart”. In a tradition, Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said: “Indeed Noah (‘a) complained to Allāh of grief (*ghamm*), whereupon Allāh revealed unto him: Eat grapes, for indeed it removes grief (*ghamm*).” (Al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, v.25, p. 151). In his *al-Furūq al-Lughawīyah*, Abū Hilāl al-Askarī mentions different opinions on the difference between *al-hamm* and *al-ghamm*. One of these is that *al-hamm* is a state (of grief) that transpires before an incident, whereas *al-ghamm* is a state (of grief) that transpires after an incident. [Abū Hilāl al-Askarī, *al-Furūq al-Lughawīyah*, p. 560]

us, is *taṣbīh*, and his anguish for our situation is worship.¹⁶

The root meaning of *taṣbīh* depicts a journey towards Allāh. According to al-Iṣfahānī in his Qur'ān lexicon *al-Mufradāt*, its root meaning is:

المَرَّ السَّرِيعِ فِي عِبَادَةِ اللَّهِ

Passing swiftly in the worship of Allāh.¹⁷

In his lexicon *Al-Taḥqīq*, al-Muṣṭafawī defines the trilateral root of *taṣbīh* as:

الحركة في مسير الحق من دون انحراف

Movement in the path of truth without deviation.¹⁸

Hence these definitions convey the meaning of a spiritual journey. And the only path of truth that we are certain of is The Straight Path [*al-ṣīrāt al-mustaqīm*], which takes one to Allāh and His proximity.

In his *Ṣabr-e-Jamīl Sayr o Sulūk ba 'Āshūrā*, Sayyid Mahdī Mīr Baqīrī writes:

آیا از این بالاتر سلوک سراغ دارید؟ راهی برای سلوک و مراحل روشنتر از این مراحل که در زیارت عاشورا آمده سراغ دارید؟ لذا زیارت عاشورا معراجنامه شیعه است. دیگرصد میدان و هزار منزل و دویست منزل نمی خواهد. به میزانی که انسان به سید الشهداء نزدیک و همراه مصیبت آن حضرت شود و به میزانی که روح انسان تحت تأثیر مصیبت آن حضرت قرار گیرد، محبت و عشق به دنیا و مقام از بین می رود، این مصیبت همه را می سوزاند، لذا نَفْسُ الْمَهْمُومِ لَنَا الْمُعْتَمِّ لِظُلْمِنَا تَسْبِيحٌ تَسْبِيحٌ كَارِشٍ تَطْهِيرٍ وَمَقْدَمَةٌ مَغْفَرَةٍ اسْت...

Do you know of a loftier system of spiritual wayfaring? Do you know of a path for wayfaring and spiritual stations more evident than those that appear in Ziyārāt 'Āshūrā? That is why Ziyārāt 'Āshūrā is a Shia's prescription of spiritual ascension (*mi'rāj nāmah*). There is no need then for a hundred grounds, a thousand way-stations, and two hundred spiritual dwellings. Inasmuch as a human being gets close and united with the calamity of Sayyid al-Shuhadā', and inasmuch as the spirit of the human being is affected by the calamity, love and extreme attachment for the world and position will subside. This affliction burns away everything. That is why "The breath of one who is grief stricken for us and is sorrowful due to our oppression, is *taṣbīh*". The work of *taṣbīh* is purification (*tahīr*) and it is the beginning phase of [acquiring] Divine forgiveness.¹⁹

It is important for us to reflect on the abovementioned quotation in which Sayyid Mīr Baqīrī alludes to a very important point: Sorrow over Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) burns off the taints of the love of the world in the heart. If the effect of our sorrow and lamentation, therefore, is contrary to that, we should try to reassess the same. Our duty in that case would be to struggle and strive to realise the state of true sorrow for Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) and his loyal companions. It is such kind of sorrow and lamentation that our esteemed scholars have always encouraged.

Imam al-Riḍā ('a) alluding to the powerful spiritual effect of sorrow and happiness for the sorrow and happiness of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) says to Ibn Shabīb:

16 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.2, p. 226

17 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 392

18 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, v.5, p. 21

19 Ustad Sayyid Mahdī Mīr Baqīrī, *Ṣabr-e-Jamīl* (this is an unpublished manuscript of the author. It is a transcript of 20 speeches delivered in *Madraseye 'Ilmiyyeye Mu'miniyye* and *Madreseye Imam Ḥasan Mujtabā ('a)* in the holy city of Qum), p. 132

يَا بْنَ شَيْبٍ إِنْ سَرَكَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مَعَنَا فِي الدَّرَجَاتِ الْعُلَى مِنَ الْجَنَانِ فَاحْزَنْ لِحُزْنِنَا وَأَفْرَحْ لِفَرْحِنَا وَعَلَيْكَ يَوْلَايَتِنَا

O son of Shabīb, if it pleases you to be with us in the lofty stations of the Heavens, then be sorrowful for our sorrow and joyful for our joy, and maintain our guardianship.²⁰

In conclusion, the state of sorrow and grief for the oppression that afflicted Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is a means to spiritually uplift the grief-stricken. In fact there are many traditions that allude to the uplifting effect of weeping for Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). Some examples are as follows:

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

وَكُلُّ مَنْ بَكَى مِنْهُمْ عَلَى مُصَابِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَخَذْنَا بِيَدِهِ وَأَدْخَلْنَاهُ الْجَنَّةَ

And for everyone who weeps among them [the believers] on the affliction of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) we would take his hand and place him in al-Jannah (the Heavens).²¹

2. Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have uttered the following supplication:

شِيعَتُنَا مِنَّا وَقَدْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ فَاضِلِ طِينَتِنَا وَعُجِنُوا بِنُورِ وَلَايَتِنَا رَضُوا بِنَا أَيْمَةً وَرَضِينَا بِهِ شِيعَةً يُصِيبُهُمْ مُصَابِنَا وَتُبْكِيهِمْ مُصَابِينَا وَيُحْزِنُهُمْ حُزْنِنَا وَيُسِرُّهُمْ سُرُورُنَا وَنَحْنُ أَيْضًا نَتَأَلَّمُ بِتَأَلُّمِهِمْ وَنَطَّلِعُ عَلَى أَحْوَالِهِمْ ... فَمَنْ ذَكَرَ مُصَابِنَا وَبَكَى لِأَجَلِنَا اسْتَحْيَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُ بِالنَّارِ.

Our Shias are from us and indeed they have been created from the remainder of our clay and mixed with the light of our guardianship. They are pleased with us as Divine leaders, and we are pleased with them as our Shias. Whatever afflicts us afflicts them and our afflictions make them weep. Our grief grieves them and our happiness makes them happy. We likewise are hurt when they are hurt, and we come to know of their states... Whosoever remembers our affliction and weeps for us, Allāh is ashamed to punish him with the Fire [of Hell].²²

3. Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ثَوَابٌ إِلَّا الدَّمْعَةَ فِينَا

For every thing there is a reward save a tear for us.²³

4. Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) addressing the poet Di‘bil al-Khuzā‘ī says:

يَا دَعِيلُ مَنْ بَكَى عَلَى مُصَابِ جَدِّي الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ذُنُوبَهُ أَلْبَتَّةَ

O Di‘bil, whosoever weeps on the affliction of my grandfather al-Ḥusayn (‘a), Allāh will forgive his sins.²⁴

5. Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have said:

كَانَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ: أَيُّمَا مُؤْمِنٍ دَمَعَتْ عَيْنَاهُ لِقَتْلِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ دَمْعَةً حَتَّى تَسِيلَ عَلَى خَدِّهِ بَوَّأَهُ اللَّهُ بِهَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ عُرْقًا يَسْكُنُهَا أَحْقَابًا.

‘Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn (‘a) would say: Any believer whose eyes shed a single tear for the

20 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* (‘a), v.2, p. 269

21 Al-Bahrānī, *Al-‘Awālim al-Imām al-Ḥusayn* (‘a), p. 534

22 Al-Abṭahī, *Al-Shī‘ah fī Aḥādīth al-Farīqayn*, p. 513

23 Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, p. 211

24 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.45, p. 257

martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī (‘a), to the extent that it rolls down his cheek, Allāh would thereby settle him down in rooms in Heaven, where he would abide for ages.²⁵

6. Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

وَمَنْ ذَكَرَ الْحُسَيْنَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عِنْدَهُ، فَخَرَجَ مِنْ عَيْنَيْهِ مِنَ الدَّمُوعِ مِقْدَارَ جُنَاحِ ذُبَابٍ كَانَ ثَوَابُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ، وَلَمْ يَرِضْ لَهُ بِدُونِ الْجَنَّةِ.

And in whosoever’s presence al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is mentioned and tears roll down from his eyes the size of the wing of a gnat, His reward will be with Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic, and He would not be pleased to give him less than Heaven.²⁶

In his work *Hamāseye Ḥusaynī*, Martyr Muṭahharī, explaining the link between weeping for Imam al-Ḥusayn and attaining lofty stations, says: If a tear that we shed for him (Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)) should signify a harmony between our souls and his spirit, it represents a brief flight that our spirit makes along with Ḥusayn’s spirit. Should it create within us a little glow of his valour, a particle of his free nature, a particle of his faith, a particle of his piety, and a small spark of his *tawḥīd*, such a tear has an infinite value. They have said that it has the worth an entire world even if it is as small as the ‘wing of a gnat’. Believe it! But that is not a tear shed for a pointless death, but a tear for the greatness of Ḥusayn and his great spirit, a tear that signifies harmony with Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī and of movement in his steps. Yes, such a tear has an incalculable worth even if it is as small as a gnat’s wing.²⁷

Understanding the Abundant Reward for a Single Tear

In his book *‘Abqarriyyu al-Ḥisān*, Shaykh ‘Alī Akbar Nahāwandī narrates:

In anticipation of meeting the twelfth Holy Imam (‘a), Sayyid Baḥr al-‘Ulūm (may Allāh’s mercy be on him) set out for Sāmarrā’. On his way he was reflecting on the matter of how weeping over Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) could bring about the forgiveness of sins. That very moment his attention was driven to an Arab mounted on a horse who had come to him. He greeted him.

The Arab said: O Sayyid, what are you reflecting and thinking about? If it is a scholarly issue, then tell me, perhaps I am from those who deserve to know. Sayyid Baḥr al-‘Ulūm Said: I am wondering how God, the Sublime, bestows so much reward to the visitors and those who weep for Sayyid al-Shuhadā’ (‘a). For example, for every step that the zā’ir takes on the way to visit the Imam (‘a) the reward of one Hajj and one ‘Umrah is written in the books of his deeds, and due to [merely] one tear, all his minor and major sins are forgiven.

The Arab on the horseback said: Do not be surprised. I will present to you a similitude so that the difficulty is solved:

Once upon a time a king together with his courtiers went for hunting, and in the hunting ground he became separated and far from his courtiers, and he encountered great difficulty in the wilderness. He was extremely hungry and thirsty. He saw a tent from afar, in which there was an old woman and her son. They only had one goat from which they would draw milk and manage their lives. The king entered the tent and became their guest. They served him and they did so through this very goat that they had. That is, they slaughtered the goat and served him. This is while they did not know the king,

25 Al-Baḥrānī, *Al-‘Awālim al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (‘a)*, p. 532

26 Ibid, p. 533

27 Martyr Muṭahharī, *Al-Malḥama al-Ḥusayniyyah*, v.1, p. 63; <http://www.al-islam.org/al-tawhid/ashura/>

and they did what they did just in honour of the guest, and also roasted the goat, because they did not have anything else with which to serve him. That night the king slept in that very place and the next day he left them, and made himself reach his courtiers, and narrated what transpired to his courtiers. After narrating the incident, he asked them: If I would like to reward the old woman and her son for their hospitality, what should I do? One of those present said that he should give them a sheep. Another, who was from among his ministers said: Give them a hundred goats and a hundred coins. Another said: Give them such and such farm. The king said: Whatever I give is less! This is because if I were to give them my kingdom, I would have given them equal to what they gave me, because that old woman gave me whatever she had. I likewise must give whatever I have, so that it is equal. Thereafter the Arab on the mount, said to Sayyid Baḥr al-‘Ulūm: Now, O Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, Hadrat Sayyid al-Shuhadā’ gave whatever he had of wealth, family, wife, son, brother, etc. in the way of Allāh. Therefore you must not be surprised when God gives all this recompense and reward to the zā’irīn and those who weep for the Imam (‘a). That Arab after having had this conversation vanished from sight.²⁸

In short, if one would really like to declare that he is afflicted severely due to what happened to Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), one must acquire both the knowledge of the personality of the Imam (‘a) and the accurate and reliable details of what transpired in the movement of al-Ḥusayn (‘a). A substantially laudable level of knowledge about Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is when one experiences the knowledge contained in the depths of his heart. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ لِلْحُسَيْنِ فِي بَوَاطِنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَعْرِفَةً مَكْتُومَةً

Indeed in the depths of the believers there is hidden knowledge of al-Ḥusayn (‘a).²⁹

True Love

One should develop a deep love for Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and perpetually pray to Allāh for the same. The stronger our love, the more tangible our expression. Those who have understood the reality of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and struggle throughout their lifetimes to unite with him, would naturally be overcome with grief and feeling when they hear the calamity of al-Ḥusayn (‘a).

One of the great achievements of a believer in this world is to come to a level in which he has, to a certain extent, united with the Imam (‘a). If a believer struggles to remove the taints of the sins that he has accumulated and clears off the dust gathered over his innate disposition (*al-fiṭrah*), he would naturally feel an intense attraction towards Imam al-Ḥusayn. His warmth for al-Ḥusayn (‘a) would be unique and perpetual. The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ لِقَتْلِ الْحُسَيْنِ حَرَارَةً فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَا تُبْرَدُ أَبَدًا

Indeed due to al-Ḥusayn’s martyrdom, there is a heat in the hearts of the believers that will never cool.³⁰

Ayatullah Mīrzā Malikī Tabrīzī, one of the well-known gnostics of his time, reports the following in his prayer manual *al-Murāqibāt*:

وقد رأيت بعض أولادي الصغار ترك في العشر الأول في مأكله الإدام وكان يأكل الخبز بلا إدام، ولم يكن فيما أعلم

28 Al-Nahāwandī, ‘*Abqarriyyu al-Hisān*, v.1, p. 119; http://ketaab.iec-md.org/QAAEM/abqari-el-hesaan_nahaavandi_fehrest.html

29 Al-Rāwandī, *Al-Kharā’ij wa al-Jarāyih*, v.2, p. 842

30 Al-Mīrzā al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, v.10, p. 318

أن يقول له ذلك أحد حبه الباطني بعثه على ذلك

And indeed I have seen some of my small children, during the first ten days [of Muḥarram], avoiding broth in their meals; and they would eat bread without broth; and as far as I know, no one had told them to do that; it was their internal love (*ḥubbuhu al-bāṭinī*) that caused them to do that.³¹

When the aforementioned two elements settle in our hearts, our expressions of sorrow will be tangible and hence natural and truthful.

لَقَدْ عَظُمَ مُصَابِي بِكَ

Indeed my affliction due to what happened to you is immense

Employing the second person masculine pronoun “ka” in the singular form and not in the plural form “kum” in the abovementioned phrase is perhaps to reveal the immensity and intensity of the calamity that afflicted Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) specifically. In other words, the calamity that befell Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) was incomparable and matchless. Perhaps it refers to the difficult situation of observing a group of people going against the truth and thus earning eternal damnation. The Imam (‘a) has an all-embracing spirit, and thus yearns for perfection for all. The apparent calamities that befell him is not the only aspect of his tragedy; rather, ‘the deviation of the people’ really makes it a great calamity for him. Small wonder it is that he (‘a) even advises ‘Umar Ibn Sa‘d and tells him to leave the ranks of the enemy and join his ranks, but the latter, intoxicated by the love of power and indifferent of the Hereafter, would not accept.

فَأَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَكْرَمَ مَقَامَكَ

Thus I ask Allāh who ennobled your station...

The conjunctive particle fa in the phrase “fa as ‘alullāha...” signifies that what follows is sought because of the foregoing sorrowful state of immense affliction of the *zā’ir*. In simple words, the *zā’ir* is trying to say “Due to my state of immense affliction (which deserves reward), I ask Allāh who ennobled your station...to provide me...”

With regard to every affliction deserving Divine reward, the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said:

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ يُؤْذِي الْمُؤْمِنَ فَهُوَ لَهُ مُصِيبَةٌ وَ لَهُ أَجْرُ الْمُصِيبَةِ

Everything that disturbs a believer is an affliction for him, and he would be given the recompense of the affliction.³²

Imam al-Ḥasan al-Mujtabā (‘a) is reported to have said:

الْمُصَائِبُ مَفَاتِيحُ الْأَجْرِ

Afflictions are keys to recompense.³³

The phrase “*alladhī³⁴ akrama maqāmaka*” refers to Allāh’s favour on Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). The past tense verb *akrama* means “he bestowed greatness” or “he bestowed honour”. And the word *maqām* is a noun of place (*ismu makān*) which literally means *maḥall al-qiyām* (“the place of

31 Al-Mīrzā Jawād al-Malikī al-Tabrīzī, *Al-Murāqibāt*, v.2, pp. 22-23

32 Al-Nisābūrī, *Rawḍat al-Wī‘izīn*, p. 423

33 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.75, p. 115

34 *Alladhī* is a relative pronoun that refers here to Allāh.

standing” or simply “a station”). Such standing is not restricted to physical standing. It also includes spiritual standing. Hence the phrase *alladhī akrama maqāmaka*, can be rendered as “... *Who made your station great...*”

One of the variable probabilities of the *maqām* (station) spoken about in this phrase is the station of *shahādah* (martyrdom), which in our traditions is described as a station of *karāmah* (greatness).

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

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ فَيَتَمَنَّى أَنْ يُخْرَجَ مِنْهَا إِلَّا الشَّهِيدَ، فَإِنَّهُ يَتَمَنَّى أَنْ يَرْجَعَ فَيُقْتَلَ عَشْرَ مَرَّاتٍ، مِمَّا يَرَى مِنْ كَرَامَةِ
اللَّهِ

No one enters the Garden [of Heaven] and thereafter wishes to come out, except the martyr; for indeed he wishes to return so that he is killed ten times, *due to what he sees of honour (karāmah) of Allāh*.³⁵

In the court of Ibn Ziyād when Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) was threatened to be killed, the Imam (‘a) said:

أَبِالْقَتْلِ تُهَدِّدُنِي يَا ابْنَ زِيَادٍ؟ أَمَا عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ الْقَتْلَ لَنَا عَادَةٌ، وَكَرَامَتُنَا الشَّهَادَةُ؟

Are you threatening me with murder, O Ibn Ziyād? Do you not know that being killed is a custom for us, and *our greatness and honour (karāmah) is in martyrdom*?³⁶

In one of the salutational recitals of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), when praying to Allāh we clearly mention that Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) was honoured with martyrdom. We pray as follows:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْقَبْرَ قَبْرُ حَبِيبِكَ وَصَفْوَتِكَ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ، الْفَائِزِ بِكَرَامَتِكَ، أَكْرَمْتَهُ بِالشَّهَادَةِ، وَأَعْطَيْتَهُ مَوَارِيثَ
الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

O Allāh, indeed I bear witness that this grave is the grave of your beloved and chosen servant, who achieved Your honour, *You honoured him with martyrdom*, and bestowed on him the heritage of the Prophets.³⁷

In a sacred tradition, Almighty Allāh is reported to have said:

أَكْرَمْتُ حُسَيْنًا بِالشَّهَادَةِ وَخَتَمْتُ لَهُ بِالسَّعَادَةِ فَهُوَ أَفْضَلُ مَنْ اسْتُشْهِدَ فِيَّ وَأَرْفَعُ الشُّهَدَاءَ عِنْدِي دَرَجَةً.

I honoured Husayn with martyrdom and sealed him with felicity. Therefore he is the best of one who has been martyred in My way, and the most elevated of the martyrs near Me in terms of station.³⁸

Hence when we say *alladhī akrama maqāmaka* we mean “Who ennobled your station through martyrdom”.

أَكْرَمَ مَقَامَكَ

[Who] ennobled your station

Perhaps the station (*maqām*) mentioned in the above phrase refers to Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)’s unique

35 Al-Burūjardī, *Jāmi‘u Ahādīth al-Shī‘ah*, v.13, p. 17

36 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.45, p. 118

37 Al-Mashhadī, *Al-Mazār*, p. 376

38 Shādhān b. Jabra‘īl al-Qummī, *Al-Faḍā‘il*, pp. 113-114

station, which Allāh gifted him due to his sublime movement and supreme sacrifice.

On resolving to leave Madīnah, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) spent a great deal of time near the grave of his grandfather the Holy Prophet (ṣ). One night during his prayer in the state of *sajdah* (prostration), he dreamt the Holy Prophet (ṣ) addressing him, saying:

وَإِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ دَرَجَاتٌ لَا تَنَالُهَا إِلَّا بِالشَّهَادَةِ

Indeed for you in the Garden [of Heaven] are stations that you shall not attain save through martyrdom.³⁹

After this dream the Imam (‘a) woke up in a state of weeping, and informed his family of his dream and decision to leave Madīnah.

وَأَكْرَمَنِي بِكَ

...and honoured me through you

This alludes to the path towards *al-karāmah al-insāniyyah* (human greatness). It is by learning and applying the life of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) that a human being attains *karāmah* and greatness. Almighty Allāh informs us that the criterion of greatness is self-protection from disobedience:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْتَقَاكُمْ

Surely the most honourable of you to Allāh is the most God-wary... (49:13)

Many traditions allude to the fact that the path of human greatness and honour is *taqwa* (God-wariness). Consider the following examples:

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

لَا كَرَمَ إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى

There is no greatness save through God-wariness (*al-taqwā*).⁴⁰

Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is reported to have said:

لَا كَرَمَ أَعَزُّ مِنَ التَّقْوَى

There is no greatness more honourable than God-wariness (*al-taqwā*).⁴¹

مِفْتَاحُ الْكَرَمِ التَّقْوَى

They key of greatness is God-wariness (*al-taqwā*).⁴²

إِنَّمَا الْكَرَمُ النَّزْهُ عَنِ الْمَعَاصِي

Indeed greatness (*al-karam*) is in being free from sin.⁴³

مَنْ إِنَّقَى رَبَّهُ كَانَ كَرِيمًا

39 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, p. 217

40 Al-Maghribī, *Da‘ā’im al-Islām*, v.1, p. 105

41 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.8, p. 19

42 Al-Rayshahrī, *Mizān al-Hikmah*, v.4, p. 363

43 Ibid, v.3, p. 2684

Whosoever is wary of his Lord, is great.⁴⁴

Bearing the aforesaid in mind, we conclude that the reason why it is through al-Ḥusayn (‘a) that we attain greatness, is because he represents the most perfect manifestation of *taqwā*. Allusions to the Imam’s piety and God-wariness can be found in the following sources

Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) is reported to have said:

لِلْإِمَامِ عَلَامَاتٌ يَكُونُ أَعْلَمَ النَّاسِ، وَأَحْكَمَ النَّاسِ، وَأَتْقَى النَّاسِ، وَأَحْلَمَ النَّاسِ، وَأَشْجَعَ النَّاسِ، وَأَسْحَى النَّاسِ،
وَأَعْبَدَ النَّاسِ...

An Infallible leader has [specific] signs: He is the most learned, the most appropriate for jurisdiction, the most God-wary, the most forbearing, the most generous, and the most worshipful of the people...⁴⁵

In the well-known ziyārah *al-Jāmi‘ah al-Kabīrah* we refer to the Infallible Imams with the following characteristics:

السَّلَامُ عَلَى أئِمَّةِ الْهُدَى، وَمَصَابِيحِ الدُّجَى، وَأَعْلَامِ التَّقَى...

Peace be on the leaders of guidance, the lamps of darkness, the *signposts of God-wariness*...⁴⁶

After the family of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) were brought as captives into the court of Yazīd (upon whom be Allāh’s curses), Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) at one point introduced himself as follows:

أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ابْتَلَانَا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ بِبَلَاءٍ حَسَنِ، حَيْثُ جَعَلَ رَايَةَ الْهُدَى وَالْعَدْلِ وَالْتَقَى فِيْنَا

O people, indeed Allāh, the Exalted (and to Him alone belongs praise) tried us the Household of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) with a goodly trial when he *placed the banner of guidance, justice, and God-wariness (al-tuqā) in us*.⁴⁷

In a *ziyārah* that Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have taught his beloved companion Mufaḍḍal Ibn ‘Umar, we address the Imam (‘a) as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا الْوَصِيُّ الْبَارُ التَّقِيُّ

Peace be unto you, O Trustee, the Virtuous, *the God-wary*.⁴⁸

In another *ziyārah* of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) we address him as follows:

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكُمْ كَلِمَةُ التَّقْوَى وَبَابُ الْهُدَى وَالْعُرْوَةُ الْوُثْقَى

And I bear witness that you are *the word of God-wariness (kalimat al-taqwā)*, the door of guidance, the firm handle...⁴⁹

Therefore when we say *wa akramanī bika* we mean “and Allāh honoured me and made me great by following your footsteps which were all in line with *taqwā*”.

44 Ibid, p. 2687

45 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Khiṣāl*, pp. 527-528

46 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*, v.2, p. 610

47 Ibn Shahr Āshūb, *Manāqibu Ālī Ābī Tālib (‘a)*, v.3, p. 305

48 Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, p. 376

49 Ibid, p. 369

Hence, it is only after we personify ourselves with the *taqwā* that Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) taught can we humbly say ‘*akramanī bika*’.

وَأَكْرَمَنِي بِكَ

...and honoured me through you

Perhaps the *karāmah* spoken about in the phrase *akramanī bika* is the *wilāyah* (guardianship) and *maḥabbah* (love) of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), who is one of the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Indeed without their guardianship the true and intact version of Islam cannot be acquired. They were given the responsibility to safeguard and communicate the true message of Islam, and they did so with utmost care and responsibility.

In a tradition, Imam al-Bāqir (‘a), after mentioning the verse *Tabārakasmu Rabbika Dhī al-Jalāli wa al-Ikrām* (Blessed is the name of your Lord, who is the Majestic and Munificent), is reported to have said:

فَنَحْنُ جَلَالُ اللَّهِ وَكَرَامَتُهُ الَّتِي أَكْرَمَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى الْعِبَادَ بِطَاعَتِنَا

We are the majesty of Allāh and His greatness, with which *Allāh honoured His servants through obeying us...*⁵⁰

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

مَا يَضُرُّ مَنْ أَكْرَمَهُ اللَّهُ بِأَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ شِيعَتِنَا مَا أَصَابَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَقْدِرُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْحَشِيشَ.

Whosoever *Allāh honours to be among our Shias* is not harmed by what afflicts him in the world, even if he is not able to procure something to eat except grass.⁵¹

In the well known *ziyārah al-Jāmi‘ah al-Kabīrah* we address the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ بَيْتِ الثُّبُورَةِ وَمَوْضِعِ الرِّسَالَةِ وَمُخْتَلَفِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ... وَأَصُولِ الْكَرَمِ وَقَادَةَ الْأُمَمِ ...

Peace be upon you O: Household of Prophethood, station of Apostleship, the place where angels descend and ascend... the roots of greatness (*uṣūl al-karam*), and the leaders of nations...⁵²

Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, describing the phrase *uṣūl al-karam* says:

وأصول الكرم: الكرم الجواد المعطي أو الجامع لأنواع الخير والشرف والفضائل، والمعنيان وكماهما فيهم ظاهران، أو المراد أنهم أسباب كرم الله تعالى على العباد في الدنيا والآخرة.

Uṣūl al-karam: *al-karam* means the generous, the open-handed, and the giver, or one who comprehends in himself all kinds of good, loftiness and virtue. Both the meanings and their perfect levels are apparent in them. Another probability is that what is meant by *uṣūl al-karam* is that they are the means of conferring Allāh’s honour on the servants in this world and the Hereafter.⁵³

50 Al-Ṣaffār, *Baṣā‘ir al-Darajāt*, p. 332

51 Al-Maghribī, *Sharḥ al-Akḥbār*, v.3, p. 462

52 Al-Mashhadī, *Al-Mazār*, p. 524

53 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.99, p. 135

وَأَكْرَمَنِي بِكَ

...and honoured me through you

When we say “*and He honoured me through you*” it is correct to understand it in the ontological sense. In simple words, whatever benefit we receive, whether material or spiritual, is through the Muḥammadan light (*al-Nūr al-Muḥammadī*), where the lights of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) unite. Hence if we have any kind of greatness (*karāmah*), it is “*bika*” (through you, O Ḥusayn). The preposition *bā* here therefore is taken to be causative (*li al-sababiyah*).

In a beautiful tradition, Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have said:

فَخُنُّ أَوَّلُ خَلْقٍ ابْتَدَأَ اللَّهُ، وَأَوَّلُ خَلْقٍ عَبَدَ اللَّهُ، وَسَبَّحَهُ، وَنَحْنُ سَبَبُ خَلْقِ الْخَلْقِ، وَسَبَبُ تَسْبِيحِهِمْ وَعِبَادَتِهِمْ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْأَدَمِيِّينَ، فَبِنَا عَرَفَ اللَّهُ، وَبِنَا وَجَدَ اللَّهُ، وَبِنَا عَرَفَ اللَّهُ مَنْ أَكْرَمَ اللَّهُ مِنْ جَمِيعِ خَلْقِهِ، وَبِنَا أَتَابَ اللَّهُ مَنْ أَتَابَ، وَعَاقَبَ مَنْ عَاقَبَ...

Therefore we are the first creation that Allāh began with, and the first creation that worshipped Allāh and glorified Him, and we are the cause of the creation of all creation, and the cause of their, i.e. the angels and human beings, glorification and worship. Thus, through us Allāh is known, and through us Allāh’s unity is professed, *and through us Allāh is worshipped, and through us Allāh honours whom He honours from among his entire creation*, and through us Allāh rewards whosoever he rewards and punishes whosoever He punishes.⁵⁴

Khaythamah al-Ju‘fī reports that he heard Imam al-Baqir (‘a) say the following:

... وَنَحْنُ الَّذِينَ بِنَا يُنَزَّلُ اللَّهُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ الرَّحْمَةَ، وَبِنَا يُسْقَوْنَ الْغَيْثَ، وَنَحْنُ الَّذِينَ بِنَا يُصْرَفُ عَنْكُمْ الْعَذَابُ، فَمَنْ عَرَفَنَا وَأَبْصَرَنَا وَعَرَفَ حَقَّنَا وَأَخَذَ بِأَمْرِنَا فَهُوَ مِنَّا وَإِلَيْنَا.

... and we are those by means of which Allāh brings down mercy, and by us they [the creation] are quenched with rain, and we are those by means of which Divine punishment is averted from you. Hence whosoever comes to know us, has insight about us, and recognises our right and carries out our command, is from us, and moves towards us.⁵⁵

This tradition explicitly reveals the fundamental role of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) in being the intermediaries of Divine Grace. Hence, in case of *ikrām* (to bestow honour or greatness) likewise, is done through them. In this sense it is correct to say *wa akramanī bika* (and He honoured me through You).

وَأَكْرَمَنِي بِكَ

...and honoured me through you

Since Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) saved Islam through his supreme sacrifice, whosoever follows Islam is indebted to him. And it is by following Islam in its purest form that ‘*karāmah*’ and ‘human greatness’ can be achieved. Imam ‘Alī (‘a) in *Nahj al-Balāghah* introduces Islam as:

وَدَلِّكَ لِأَنَّهُ اسْمُ سَلَامَةٍ وَجَمَاعٍ كَرَامَةٍ

54 Al-Bahrānī, *Hilyat al-Abrār*, v.1, p. 16; Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.25, p. 20; Al-Bahrānī, *Ghāyat al-Marām*, v.1, p. 42

55 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni‘mah*, p. 206

And that is because it (Islam) is the name of peace and the collector of ‘greatness’ (*karāmah*).

Therefore in reality any greatness (*karāmah*) attained by anyone of us is through Al-Ḥusayn (‘a).

Here this nondescript wishes to share an experience he was privileged to relish during the holy month of Ramaḍān [September 2011] in the neighbourhood of the Rawḍah (shrine) of Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) in al-Najaf al-Ashraf:

Among the most touching and spiritual moments I encountered in the holy neighbourhood of Imam ‘Alī (‘a) was during the predawn moments when a caller⁵⁶ in the shrine of Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a), would recite, through a loudspeaker, supplications and words of wisdom before the call of the *Fajr* prayer. As the time of dawn would approach, he would recite a beautiful poetry in which he would remind the Muslims intending to fast, to drink water before the fast begins. The recital is so beautiful and moving, that only the heart can understand its pleasant feeling. But the heart is after all a heart. Such poetry at one instance transports the listener from drinking water to the one who was deprived of water in the plains of Karbala. This is when although the soft hearted believer drinks water, he also sheds tears as his heart bleeds for the martyr of Karbala, who was beheaded in intense thirst. The hypocrites did not allow him to drink even a sip of water before beheading him.

Following are the lines of poetry recited⁵⁷:

اشْرَبِ الْمَاءَ وَعَجِّلْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ الصَّبَاحُ
اشْرَبِ الْمَاءَ هَنِيئًا إِنَّهُ مَاءٌ مُبَاحٌ

*Drink water and be quick, before the morning arrives
Drink water in delight, indeed it is permissible water*

اشْرَبِ الْمَاءَ هَنِيئًا بِسُرُورٍ وَارْتِيَاخٍ
وَاطْلُبِ الْعَفْوَ مِنَ الْبَارِي الْعَفُورِ

*Drink water in delight, happiness and serenity
And seek pardon from the All-Forgiving Originator*

أَيُّهَا الصَّائِمُ فِي يَوْمِ النُّشُورِ
لَكَ فِي الْفِرْدَوْسِ حُورٌ وَقُصُورٌ

*O Fasting one, on the Day of Resurrection
You have damsels and mansions in Paradise*

أَيُّهَا الصَّائِمُ مِنْ خَوْفِ الْإِلَهِ
إِنَّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَأَعْلَمُ لَكَ جَاهٌ

*O Fasting one in fear of God
Indeed near Allāh know, that You have a station*

اشْرَبِ الْمَاءَ هَنِيئًا وَامْسِكْ بَعْدَهُ
حَيْثُ لَأَحَ الصُّبْحُ كُنْ فِيهِ انْتِبَاهٌ

56 The reciter, according to one narration, is known as Mullā Bashīr al-Najafī.

57 Those interested in procuring the sound file of this moving recital can refer to the website of the shrine of Amīr al-mu’minīn (‘a) which is: <http://www.imamali-a.com/?part=255&id=68>

*Drink water in delight and thereafter restrain yourself from it
When the morning comes to pass, be alert about that*

اشْرَبِ الْمَاءَ هَنِيئًا يَا مُحِبَّ
وَاجْرِئِ دَمْعَ الْعَيْنِ حُزْنًا وَانْتَحِبْ

*Drink water in delight O lover
And release the flow of the tear of the eye, in sorrow, and weep,*

لِلْحُسَيْنِ السَّبِطِ فِي جَنْبِ الْفُرَاتِ
مَاتَ عَطْشَانًا شَهِيدًا مُحْتَسِبِ

*For Husayn, the Grandson of the Prophet, beside the Euphrates
He died in the state of thirst and martyrdom, and entrusting his affairs on God*

اشْرَبِ الْمَاءَ هَنِيئًا وَادْكُرِ السَّبِطَ الْحُسَيْنِ
رَأْسُهُ الظَّاهِرُ يَتْلُو سُورَ الْحَقِّ الْمُبِينِ

*Drink water delightfully and remember Husayn, the grandson of the Prophet
His pure head reciting the chapters of the manifest truth*

وَأُيِّحَتْ حُرْمَاتُ الْمُصْطَفَى الْهَادِي الْأَمِينِ
بِمُصَابِ الْحُسَيْنِ قَدْ بَكَاهُ الْخَافِقِينَ

*The sanctities of the Household of Mustafa, the Guide and the Trustworthy, have been violated
With the calamity of Husayn, both the east as well as west wept for Him*

اشْرَبُوا الْمَاءَ هَنِيئًا وَادْكُرُوا سَبِطَ الرَّسُولِ
وَادْرِفُوا دَمْعًا وَعَزُّوا أُمَّهُ الطُّهْرَ الْبَتُولِ

*Drink water in delight, and remember the grandson of the Messenger of Allāh
And release your tears and condole his mother, the pure and unique,*

أَخْبِرُوهَا بِعِزَاءِ كَيْفَ دَاسَتْهُ الْخَيُْولُ
رَأْسُهُ الظَّاهِرُ فَوْقَ الرُّمْحِ فِي الشَّامِ يَجُولُ

*Inform her of the sorrow of how the horses were made to run over his body
[This is while] his pure head on a spear was paraded in Shām*

أَخْبِرُوهَا بِحُسَيْنٍ جَثَّةً فَوْقَ الرِّمَالِ
وَعَلَى رُمْحٍ طَوِيلٍ رَأْسُهُ الدَّامِي يَحَالُ

*Inform her of Husayn, whose body was on the sands
And his bleeding head on a long spear was paraded*

أَخْبِرُوهَا بِأَنِينِ سُبَيْتِ أَسْمَى عِيَالِ
إِنَّ فِي الطَّفِّ مُصَابًا صَدَعَتْ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ

*Inform her while crying, the loftiest family were taken as captives
Indeed in Taff there was an affliction by which mountains are split*

إشْرَبُوا الْمَاءَ هَنِيئًا وَاذْكُرُوا الْوَيْلَ الشَّهِيدِ
كَيْفَ عَبَدَ اللَّهُ يَشْكُو ظَمًا الْحَرِّ الشَّدِيدِ

*Drink water in delight and remember the martyred child
How does 'Abdullāh express his thirst of intense heat*

يَطْلُبُ الْمَاءَ فَيُسْقَى الْوَيْلَ مِنَ حَزْرِ الْوَرِيدِ
فَاسْقُوا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ دَمْعًا سَاكِبًا فَوْقَ الْخُدُودِ

*He seeks water, but the child is quenched with rupture of the jugular vein
Therefore quench the thirst of 'Abdullāh with tears that pour over the cheeks*

إشْرَبُوا الْمَاءَ وَعَزُّوا رَمْلَةَ أُمِّ الشَّبَابِ
ذُبِحَ الْقَاسِمُ عَدْرًا ظَامِيًا فَوْقَ التُّرَابِ

*Drink water and condole Ramlah, the mother of youth
Qasim was slaughtered treacherously while he was thirsty on the sand*

سَاعِدُوهَا بِعَزَاءٍ خَفَّفُوا عَنْهَا الْمَصَابِ
إِنَّهُ خَطْبٌ عَظِيمٌ بَدْرَهَا السَّاطِعُ غَابَ

*Help her with consolation, and lessen her affliction
Indeed it is a great incident, its shining full moon is hidden*

إشْرَبُوا الْمَاءَ وَعَزُّوا زَيْنَبًا ثُمَّ الرَّبَابِ
إِنَّ لِكَبْرِ حُزْنًا وَأَيْنًا وَأَيْتِحَابًا

*Drink water and console Zaynab, and then Rabāb
Indeed for the sake of Akbar there is intense sorrow, moaning, and weeping*

أَشْبَهُ النَّاسِ لِيَطَّ جِسْمُهُ أَمْسَى خِصَابِ
إِنَّ فِي الطَّيِّفِ صَحَايَا قُطِعَتْ أَسْمَى رِقَابِ

*He resembles most to Tahā, his body turned coloured with blood
Indeed in al-Ṭaff there are sacrifices, the loftiest head was severed*

إشْرَبُوا الْمَاءَ هَنِيئًا وَاذْكُرُوا الْحُزْنَ الْكَبِيرَ
كَيْفَ فِي الطَّيِّفِ سَبَايَا وَإِلَى الشَّامِ تَسِيرُ

*Drink water in delight and remember the great sorrow
How in al-Ṭaff there were captives who travelled to Shām*

لَا رِجَالَ لَا حُمَاهُ لَا كَفِيلٌ لَا نَصِيرُ
لَا مُعِينٌ لَا أَمِينٌ لَا رَحِيمٌ لَا مُجِيرُ

*Neither were there any men, nor supporters, nor guardians, nor helpers
Nor was there any assistant, nor a confidant, nor a merciful person, nor a shelter giver*

وَاذْكُرُوا الْبَدْرَ صَرِيعًا وَعَلَى نَهْرِ الطُّفُوفِ
أَطْفَأُوا الْعَيْنَ بِسَهْمٍ قَطَعُوا مِنْهُ الْكُفُوفَ

*Remember the full moon fallen dead and on the river of al-Ṭufūf
They extinguished the eye with an arrow and severed his hands*

جَسَدُ الشَّهْمِ خِصَابٌ بِرِمَاحٍ وَسُيُوفٍ
وَعَلَى النَّهْرِ صَرِيحًا بَيْنَ أَنْيَابِ الْخُتُوفِ

*The body of the gallant is coloured through arrows and swords
And it lay on the river fallen between the teeth of death*

وَأَذْكُرُوا زَيْنَبَ تَبْكِي فَوْقَ تَلِّ الزَّيْنَبِيَّةِ
وَتُنَادِي يَا بَنَ أُتِي يَا غَرِيبَ الْغَاظِرِيَّةِ

*Remember Zaynab weeping over the hill of Zaynabiyyah
Calling O brother, O stranger of Ghāḍiriyyah*

يَا شَهِيدًا يَا قَتِيلًا يَا أَبَا النَّفْسِ الرَّكِيَّةِ
لَا خِيَامَ لِأَحْمَاءَ جَنَّ لَيْلِ الْفَاطِمِيَّةِ

*O martyr, O slain, O father of the pure soul
Neither is there any tent nor any helper, and the night of the Fāṭimis is covered.*

The careful listener thus begins his fast after having remembered the very spirit of fasting without whose supreme sacrifice and martyrdom the practice of fasting would not exist.

It is because of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) that we pray, fast, go for pilgrimage, pay the poor rate, etc. Hence remembering him, his thirst and his sacrifice before fasting is recognising his right. How fortunate are they who begin their fast with remembering this lover intoxicated in the Divine love!

فَأَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَكْرَمَ مَقَامَكَ وَأَكْرَمَنِي بِكَ أَنْ يَرُدُّنِي طَلَبَ نَارِكَ

Thus I ask Allāh who honoured your station and honoured me through you to enable me to avenge for your blood...

If we carefully consider the entire phrase above, we come to realise that it is highly probable that the *karāmah* spoken about with regard to both Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) as well as the *zā’ir* is closely linked and related to the provision (rizq) that the *zā’ir* eagerly seeks from Allāh. Apparently the *karāmah* spoken about is related to the supreme sacrifice of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). Hence whereas the phrase *akrama maqāmaka* (honoured your station) can be taken to mean the supreme sacrifice (which also is the same as martyrdom or the unique martyrdom spoken about earlier) the phrase *akramanī bika* (honoured me through you) refers to love, obedience, and loyalty to the Imam (‘a). Therefore the *zā’ir* asks, “I ask Allāh who honoured your station (by enabling you to offer the supreme sacrifice) and honoured me through you (by my love and obedience to you), to enable me to avenge your blood.”

It is imperative for us to realise that *Ziyārāt ‘Ashūrā’* is a Divine document that teaches the *zā’ir* the manner and etiquette of how to address Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). It also is a programme for a human being who wishes to express his loyalty and harmony with the Imam (‘a). In this verse we observe that Almighty Allāh teaches the *zā’ir* to cultivate and nurture his spirit to get ready to combat the forces of *kufṛ* (disbelief) and *nifāq* (hypocrisy). In seeking to avenge the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) on a daily basis, one reveals one’s preparedness to unite with the Imam of the time (‘a), who, as we shall soon understand, will rise to avenge the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a).

The *zā'ir* therefore should realise that reciting this *ziyārah* daily is actually accepting a responsibility and revealing one's readiness to sacrifice one's soul for the sake of avenging the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a). Hence, constant vocalisation of such powerful supplicatory expressions must transport one to practicalisation and preparation. It should actually turn one into a true *muntaẓir* (awaiter) of Imam al-Ḥujjah ('a).

أَنْ يَرْزُقَنِي طَلَبَ تَارِكَ مَعَ إِمَامٍ مَنْصُورٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ

...to enable me to avenge for your blood with the supported Imam from the Progeny of Muḥammad (ṣ).

Yarzuqu in the phrase “*an yarzuqanī ṭalaba thārika...*” is an aorist verb which literally means ‘he provided’. Although it is commonly employed to mean material provision and sustenance (*al-rizq al-maddī*), it is also widely used to signify spiritual sustenance (*al-rizq al-ma'nawī*). Here we clearly see that it has been employed for the “provision of avenging for the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a)”.

The phrase *ma'a Imāmin manṣūrin min ahli bayti Muḥammadin* (with the supported Imam from the Household of Muḥammad (ṣ)) refers to Imam al-Mahdī ('a). In chapter five of this commentary, we mentioned a tradition that explicitly reveals this truth. Here below we reproduce the same:

The Holy Qur'ān says:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيَّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا

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-Burhān*, while commenting on the above verse, narrates the following tradition:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سِنَانَ، عَنْ رَجُلٍ، قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) عَنْ قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيَّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ ۗ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مَنْصُورًا. قَالَ: ذَلِكَ قَائِمُ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ)، يَخْرُجُ فَيَقْتُلُ بِدَمِ الْحُسَيْنِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ)...

Muḥammad Ibn Sinān narrates from a person who said: I asked Abū 'Abdillāh [al-Ṣādiq ('a)] 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 ('a). He will come out and rise to avenge the blood of al-Ḥusayn ('a)...⁵⁸

It is possible that the adjective *manṣūr* in the phrase *ma'a Imāmin manṣūr* is the same as depicted in verse 17:33 where Allāh says “...for he enjoys the support [of law]” (...innahu kāna manṣūran).

What the *zā'ir* is referring to in this particular verse is his eagerness in being one of the soldiers of Imam al-Mahdī ('a). In different traditions there is a clear mention that Imam al-Mahdī ('a) together with his most sincere and loyal soldiers would rise in Makkah, and their slogan would be *yā lithārāt al-Ḥusayn*⁵⁹ (O avengers of the blood of al-Ḥusayn ('a), [come to our aid!]).

⁵⁸ Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, v.3, p. 528

⁵⁹ The phrase *yā lithārāt al-Ḥusayn* originally is known to be *yā āla thārāt al-Ḥusayn*: O the people of avenging the blood of al-Ḥusayn ('a), [come to my aid!]. Thereafter for the sake of easy pronunciation the *alif* was ⇒

In one of the *ziyārāt* where we address all the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), while referring to Imam al-Mahdī (‘a) we say:

السَّلَامُ عَلَى الْإِمَامِ الْعَالِمِ، الْغَائِبِ عَنِ الْأَبْصَارِ، وَالْحَاضِرِ فِي الْأَمْصَارِ، وَالْغَائِبِ عَنِ الْعُيُونِ، الْحَاضِرِ فِي الْأَفْكَارِ، بَقِيَّةِ الْأَخْيَارِ، الْوَارِثِ ذَا الْفِقَارِ، الَّذِي يَظْهَرُ فِي بَيْتِ اللَّهِ ذِي الْأَسْتَارِ، وَيُنَادِي بِشِعَارِ يَا لِنَارَاتِ الْحُسَيْنِ...

Peace be unto the knowledgeable Imam, hidden from the eyes, present in the cities, absent from the spies, present in the thoughts, the remainder of the virtuous, the inheritor of Dhū al-Fiqār, who will appear in the House of Allāh which has curtains, and will call with the slogan “*O avengers of the blood of al-Ḥusayn (‘a), [come to our aid!]*...”⁶⁰

Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a), describing the companions of Imam al-Mahdī (‘a), is reported to have said:

...رُهْبَانًا بِاللَّيْلِ لِيُوثَّ بِالتَّهَارِ، هُمْ أَطْوَعُ لَهُ مِنَ الْأُمَّةِ لِسَيِّدِهَا، كَالْمَصَابِيحِ كَأَنَّ قُلُوبَهُمُ الْقَنَادِيلُ، وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشِيَةِ اللَّهِ مُشْفِقُونَ يَدْعُونَ بِالشَّهَادَةِ، وَيَتَمَنَّوْنَ أَنْ يُقْتَلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ شِعَارُهُمْ: يَا لِنَارَاتِ الْحُسَيْنِ...

...ascetics at night and lions during the day; they are more obedient to their Imam than a nation is to its leader, they are like lamps, as if their hearts are candelabrams. They are apprehensive in the fear of Allāh, they call towards martyrdom, and yearn to be killed in the way of Allāh. Their slogan is *yā lithārāt al-Ḥusayn* (O avengers of the blood of al-Ḥusayn (‘a), [come to our aid!])...⁶¹

This reveals the kind of companions required to avenge the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). It indirectly informs us that if we vocalise our readiness to avenge the blood of al-Ḥusayn (‘a), we must begin preparing ourselves so that we may enjoy the abovementioned excellent characteristics.

Furthermore, if we look at the traditions on waiting (*intizār*) for the Imam’s uprising, we realise that the matter is not as easy as is conjectured. *Intizār* signifies perpetual dynamism:

a) Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is reported to have said:

...وَالْمُنْتَظَرُ لِأَمْرِنَا كَالْمُنْتَسِخِطِ بِدَمِهِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

...And one who awaits our command is like one who rolls in his blood in the way of Allāh.⁶²

b) Imam Mūsā Ibn Ja‘far al-Kāzīm (‘a) is reported to have said:

...وَأَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ بَعْدَ الْمَعْرِفَةِ انْتِظَارُ الْفَرَجِ ...

The best of worship after ma’rifā (knowledge of God/the Imam) is to wait for the relief [caused by the reappearance of the Twelfth Imam].⁶³

Fayḍ Ibn al-Mukhtar is reported to have said:

⇐ dropped. In volume three of *Iqbāl al-A‘māl* Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Ṭāwūs narrates the tradition of Ibn Shabīb, where Imam al-Riḍā (‘a) mentions a group of angels residing in the proximity of the grave of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), who would assist Imam al-Mahdī (‘a) upon his uprising, and their slogan would be *yā āla thārāt al-Ḥusayn*. Notice instead of *lithārāt*, *āla thārāt* is employed. (Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-A‘māl*, v.3, p. 29)

60 Al-Mashhadī, *Al-Mazār*, p. 107

61 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.52, p. 308

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid, v.75, p. 326

سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) يَقُولُ: مَنْ مَاتَ مِنْكُمْ وَهُوَ مُنْتَظِرٌ لِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ كَمَنْ هُوَ مَعَ الْقَائِمِ فِي فَسْطَاطِهِ قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَكَتَ هُنَيْئَةً ثُمَّ قَالَ: لَا بَلْ كَمَنْ قَارَعَ مَعَهُ بِسَيْفِهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: لَا وَاللَّهِ إِلَّا كَمَنْ اسْتَشْهَدَ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ).

I heard Abū ‘Abdillāh saying: “Whosoever dies among you *while he is waiting* for this matter is like one who is with al-Qā’im in his ranks.” Fayḍ continues: Then the Imam (‘a) waited for some moments, and then said: “No, rather he is like one who fought with his sword alongside him.” Then he (‘a) said: “No, rather he is like one who is martyred with the Messenger of Allāh (ṣ).”⁶⁴

Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is reported to have said:

انْتَظِرُوا الْفَرَجَ وَلَا تَيَأَسُوا مِنْ رَوْحِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّ أَحَبَّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ انْتِظَارُ الْفَرَجِ

Wait for the deliverance and do not despair from Allāh’s Mercy, *for indeed the most beloved of actions to Allāh, the Invincible and Exalted, is to wait for the relief [caused by the reappearance of the Twelfth Imam].*⁶⁵

In a letter to ‘Alī Ibn al-Ḥusayn Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askarī says:

...وَعَلَيْكَ بِالصَّبْرِ وَانْتَظَارِ الْفَرَجِ فَإِنَّ النَّبِيَّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) قَالَ: أَفْضَلُ أَعْمَالِ أُمَّتِي انْتِظَارُ الْفَرَجِ، وَلَا تَزَالُ شَيْعَتُنَا فِي حُزْنٍ حَتَّى يَظْهَرَ وَلَدِي الَّذِي بَشَّرَ بِهِ النَّبِيُّ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) يَمْلَأُ الْأَرْضَ قِسْطًا وَعَدْلًا كَمَا مَلَأَتْ جَوْرًا وَظُلْمًا ...

I implore upon you patience and waiting for the relief. And *our Shias would constantly be in the state of sorrow* until my son, whose glad tidings have been given by the Prophet (ṣ) appears, and fills the earth with justice, the way it was filled with deviation and oppression.⁶⁶

Imam al-Jawād (‘a) was asked why Imam al-Mahdī (‘a) was named *al-Munṭazar*, and he replied:

...لِأَنَّ لَهُ عَيْبَةً تَكْثُرُ أَيَّامُهَا وَيَطُولُ أَمْدُهَا، فَيَنْتَظِرُ خُرُوجَهُ الْمُخْلِصُونَ وَيُنْكِرُهُ الْمُرتَابُونَ وَيَسْتَهْزِئُ بِذِكْرِهِ الْجَاحِدُونَ...

...This is because he would have a concealment, the days of which would be many and its time would be long; *so the mukhliṣūn (sincere ones) would wait for his coming*, and the doubtful ones would reject him and the disbelievers would scorn by his mention...⁶⁷

Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) is reported to have said to a companion called Abū Khālid:

...يَا أَبَا خَالِدٍ إِنَّ أَهْلَ زَمَانٍ عَيْبَتِهِ، الْقَائِلُونَ بِإِمَامَتِهِ، الْمُنْتَظِرُونَ لِظُهُورِهِ أَفْضَلُ أَهْلِ كُلِّ زَمَانٍ، لِأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى ذَكَرَهُ أَعْظَاهُمْ مِنَ الْعُقُولِ وَالْأَفْهَامِ وَالْمَعْرِفَةِ مَا صَارَتْ بِهِ الْعَيْبَةُ عِنْدَهُمْ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْمَشَاهِدَةِ، وَجَعَلَهُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) بِالسَّيْفِ أُولَئِكَ الْمُخْلِصُونَ حَقًّا، وَشَيْعَتُنَا صِدْقًا وَالِدُعَاةُ إِلَى دِينِ اللَّهِ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا...

...O Abū Khālid, indeed the people of the time of his occultation, who profess his

64 Ibid, v.52, p. 162

65 Ibid, p. 123

66 Ibid, v.50, p. 317

67 Ibid, v.51, p. 30

leadership and wait for his reappearance, are better than the people of all times, because Allāh, exalted is His remembrance, bestowed them with intellects and understanding faculties and knowledge by which occultation for them is like witnessing the Imam (‘a), and he made them during that time like the battalions fighting alongside the Messenger of Allāh (ṣ) with the sword. Those indeed are the purified ones, and our followers (Shias) in truth, and the callers to the religion of Allāh in secret and open...⁶⁸

All these narrations indicate that *intizār* is not a passive phenomenon but a dynamic preparation. Those, therefore, who sincerely mean what they express when they declare their eagerness to avenge the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) alongside the Imam of the time (‘a), must transform themselves so that their speech accurately reflects the states of their hearts.

The Meaning of Avenging Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)’s Blood

One of the questions that may occur in some minds is that history tells us that Mukhtār al-Thaqafī and his supporters tried to avenge the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his sincere companions. They ensured the slaying of all those who played a part in the oppression in Karbala. Their slogan likewise was similar to what is anticipated from Imam al-Ḥujjah (‘a) and his loyal companions in the near future. When they would fight they would cry out “*yā lithārāt al-Ḥusayn*” (O avengers of the blood of al-Ḥusayn (‘a), [come to our aid!]). In light of this, what is the meaning of avenging the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) with the Imam of our time (‘a)?

Explaining the meaning of this, the contemporary philosopher and esteemed exegete of the Qur’ān, Ayatullah Jawādī Āmulī, in his brilliant work *Shekūfā’iye ‘Aql dar Partowe Nehzate Ḥusaynī*⁶⁹ says:

It should be noted that Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) has two personalities:

1. Natural (*ḥaqīqī*)
2. Legal (*ḥuqūqī*)

Those who martyred the Imam (‘a) martyred both his personalities, and men like Mukhtār avenged the blood of both his personalities. However, the slayers of his legal personality (i.e. imamate, caliphate, wilayah, leadership, etc.) are always there. There are always those who mislead the people when it comes to *wilāyah* and *Imāmah*. It is such people whom we must confront.

Therefore, avenging the blood of al-Ḥusayn (‘a) makes sense even during the time of the Twelfth holy Imam (‘a) who would have to face those who are against the leadership that Almighty Allāh wants on earth.

When we pray humbly to Almighty Allāh to make us from the avengers of the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), we should try to seek those attributes that the true companions (ashab) of Imam (‘a) possess.

A noteworthy point that Ayatullah Jawādī Āmulī alludes to in his discussion about avenging the blood of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) is one qualification to avenge the Imam’s blood. He says:

رهبران الهی تلاش می کنند که جامعه انسانی را وارث حسین بن علی (علیه السلام) کنند. اگر جامعه ای وارث حسین بن علی (علیه السلام) بود، میراث همه انبیا را به سهم خود خواهد برد؛ چون یکی از شعارهای رسمی در هنگام عرض ادب و برخورد با یک دیگر در مراسم سوگ سالار شهیدان این است: «عظم

⁶⁸ Ibid, v.52, p. 122

⁶⁹ Ayatullah Jawādī Āmulī, *Shekūfā’iye ‘Aql dar Partowe Nehzate Ḥusaynī*, p. 107

الله» یا «أعظم الله أجورنا و أجوركم بمصابنا بالحسين (عليه السلام) و جعلنا و إياكم من الطالبين بثاره»... ما وقتی می توانم خونهای حسین بن علی (علیه السلام) را بگیریم که وارث او باشیم؛ چون اگر وارث او نباشیم، خونها خواهی به ما ارتباطی ندارد. اگر کسی نسبت به مقتولی یا شهیدی بیگانه باشد، حق ندارد برای خونخواهی او انتقام بگیرد. پس، طبق این شعار و دعا ما جزو وارثان حسین بن علی (علیه السلام) هستیم. از این رو، از خدا توفیق طلب خونهای حسین بن علی (علیه السلام) را داریم.

Divine leaders aim to make the human society to be an inheritor of Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī (‘a). If a society becomes an inheritor of Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī (‘a), it would inherit the legacy of all the prophets. One of the common slogans when respectfully meeting one another in ceremonies of lamentation for the doyen of martyrs is ‘*aẓẓama Allāhu* (may Allāh magnify) or a ‘*ẓam Allāhu ujūranā wa ujūrakum bi muṣābinā bi al-Ḥusayn (‘a) wa ja ‘alanā wa iyyākum min al-tālibina bithā’rihi* (may Allāh magnify our recompense and your recompense for our affliction due to what happened to al-Ḥusayn (peace be upon him) and may He make us and you among the avengers of his blood)... We can only avenge the blood of Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī (‘a) if we are his inheritors. For if we do not inherit him, then avenging blood is not related to us. If someone is alien to a person who is murdered or martyred, he has no right to take revenge for his blood. Therefore according to this slogan and supplication, we are among the inheritors of Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī (‘a). Hence, we seek from Allāh the succour of avenging the blood of Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Alī (‘a).⁷⁰

A Secret of Reciting Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ Daily

One of the main advantages of reciting Ziyārāt ‘Āshūrā’ daily is that it awakens the human soul to get ready for the Twelfth Imam’s reappearance. It enables one to constantly pledge loyalty to the Imam of the time and facilitates murabatah (adhering to the Imam (‘a)) during his absence.

In Islamic law, the word *murābaṭah* is employed for those warriors who adhere to the frontiers of a Muslim country to safeguard them. Almighty Allāh has reserved great reward for such people. According to a tradition narrated from Salmān al-Muḥammadi, the well-known close companion of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), to safeguard the frontiers of an Islamic country for a night is better than a whole month’s fasting and standing in prayer.⁷¹ The least duration for *murābaṭah* is known to be three days and the most is forty days.⁷² Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

الرِّبَاطُ ثَلَاثَةُ أَيَّامٍ، وَأَكْثَرُهُ أَرْبَعُونَ يَوْمًا فَإِذَا جَاوَزَ ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ جِهَادٌ

Guarding the frontiers (*al-ribāṭ*) is for three days and the longest duration is forty days. However, if it exceeds that then it is considered as jihad [war in the way of Allāh].⁷³

There is another kind of *murābaṭah*, however, to which the Holy Qur’ān invites the believers:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

O you who have faith! Be patient, stand firm, and be adherent (*rābiṭū*), and be wary of Allāh so that you may be felicitous. (3:200)

Burayd Ibn Mu‘āwiyah al-‘Ajli is reported to have said:

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَلِيِّ الْبَاقِرِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) فِي قَوْلِهِ: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا. قَالَ: اصْبِرُوا عَلَى

70 Ayatullah Jawādī Āmulī, *Shekūfā’iye ‘Aql dar Partowe Nehzate Husaynī*, p. 106-107

71 Al-‘Allāmah al-Hillī, *Tadhkirat al-Fuqahā’*, v.9, p. 451

72 Ibid.

73 Al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī’ah*, v. 15, p. 290

أَدَاءِ الْفَرَائِضِ، وَصَابِرُوا عَدُوَّكُمْ، وَرَابِطُوا إِمَامَكُمْ الْمُنْتَظَرِ.

Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad Ibn ‘Alī al-Bāqir (‘a) said about Allāh’s words: “*O you who have brought faith, be patient, stand firm, and be adherent*” [3:200] that it means: “Be patient in performing the obligatory acts, stand firm against your enemy, and adhere to your awaited Imam.”⁷⁴

Adhering to the awaited Imam (‘a) alludes to the awaitee’s state of preparation, harmony and steadfastness. One who has not yet prepared to rise with the Imam (‘a) has not yet reached the frontiers to safeguard the same. *Ribāṭ* (adhering to the frontiers of a Muslim country for their protection) only makes sense when one has deciphered the frontiers of a Muslim country, resolved to station oneself there, and has practically stationed oneself there. However, the *ribāṭ* spoken about in the aforementioned verse (3:200) is not simple and entails great struggle. It is a *ribāṭ* that transpires within the soul of the human being, and forms the very foundation of the *ribāṭ* in the world of phenomena.

Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) once asks Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Ju‘fī:

كَمْ الرِّبَاطُ عِنْدَكُمْ؟

How long is *ribāṭ* (safeguarding the frontiers) near you?

Al-Ju‘fī replied:

أَرْبَعُونَ

Forty days

Thereupon the Imam (‘a) said:

لَكِنَّ رِبَاطَنَا رِبَاطَ الدَّهْرِ

But our adherence is for a long time.

Commenting on this tradition, ‘Allāmah al-Majlisī says:

رِبَاطَنَا رِبَاطَ الدَّهْرِ: أي يجب على الشيعة أن يربطوا أنفسهم على طاعة إمام الحق، وانتظار فرجه، وتهيأوا لنصرته.

Our adherence is the adherence of a long time: It is obligatory on the Shias to fasten themselves to the obedience of the true Imam and await his relief, and prepare themselves for his assistance.⁷⁵

This reveals that those waiting for the Imam (‘a) have a challenge ahead of them, and they should not despair and lose hope, but should continue maintaining the spirit of preparedness till the uprising of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a).

In fact, the length of the inner *ribāṭ*, is also an advantage for the *murābiṭ* (the adhering one), because the more he resists the attacks of the alien forces, the stronger he becomes. In ethical terms his state (*ḥāl*) of being protective turns into a trait (*malakah*) of protectiveness.

According to another tradition, one of the distinctions of a Shia is that he is always a *murābiṭ* in

⁷⁴ Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur‘ān*, v.1, p. 730

⁷⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Mikyāl al-Makārim*, v.2, p. 398

the way of Allāh. He always adheres to the Imam of his time regardless of the danger haunting him. In *al-Kāfī*, al-Kulaynī narrates a tradition from Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) who is reported to have said:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى لَمَّا خَلَقَ نَبِيَّهُ وَوَصِيَّهُ وَابْنَتَهُ وَابْنَيْهِ وَجَمِيعَ الْأَئِمَّةِ وَخَلَقَ شِيعَتَهُمْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمِيثَاقَ وَأَنْ يَصْبِرُوا
وَيُصَابِرُوا وَيُرَاطِبُوا وَأَنْ يَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَوَعَدَهُمْ أَنْ يُسَلِّمَ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضَ الْمُبَارَكَةَ وَالْحَرَمَ الْأَمِينَ...

...Indeed when Allāh, the Bountiful and Exalted, created His Prophet, his [the Prophet’s] trustee, his daughter, his two sons, all the [infallible] Imams, and created their Shias, He made a covenant with them, to be patient, stand firm, and adhering (*wa yurābiṭū*), and to be wary of Allāh, and promised to entrust to them the blessed earth and safe sanctuary...⁷⁶

Hence the very spirit of maintaining our identities as the bearers of the true form of Islam, should make us line up with the Imam of our time in the true sense of the word and remain steadfast in his ranks.

76 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.1, p. 451

CHAPTER 14

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي عِنْدَكَ وَجِيهًا بِالْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

O Allāh, make me distinguished near You through al-Husayn ('a) in this world and the Hereafter.

اللَّهُمَّ
O Allāh

COMMENTARY

Originally, the phrase *Allāhumma* was *yā Allāh*, and thereafter the vocative partial *yā* was removed and the letter *mīm* was affixed to “*Allāh*” instead. This view is endorsed by Khalīl al-Farāhīdī, Sībawayh, and all the grammarians of Baṣrah.¹

The reason why the vocative particle *yā* is used despite Almighty Allāh being nearer to the human being than his jugular vein is either for veneration or the expression of one’s remoteness. The *zā’ir* realises that the distance between him and the Absolute Perfect Being is infinite, and thus calls upon Him in veneration.

In some supplications we also address Almighty Allāh as *yā Ba’idū* (O Remote One). For example, in a supplication recited while touching one’s chest with the pillar beside the black stone (*al-ḥajar al-aswad*) of the Ka‘bah, we are taught to say:

يَا وَاحِدُ يَا أَحَدُ يَا مَا جِدُ يَا قَرِيبُ يَا بَعِيدُ يَا عَزِيزُ يَا حَكِيمُ لَا تَدْرِنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً
طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ

O One, O Non-composite, O Glorious, O the Near One, O the Remote One, O Invincible, O Wise, do not leave me alone and you are the Best of Inheritors; gift me from Your proximity pleasant offspring; indeed you are the Listener of supplication.²

In another supplication narrated in *Iqbāl al-A’māl*, we are taught to say:

يَا حَلِيمُ يَا مُعِيدُ يَا مُتَدَانِي يَا بَعِيدُ يَا رَوْفُ يَا رَحِيمُ يَا كَرِيمُ يَا عَفْوُ

O Forbearing One, O Returner, O Near One, O Remote One...³

In the well-known supplication of *al-Iftitāh* we recite:

الَّذِي بَعْدَ فَلَا يَرَى وَقَرَّبَ فَشَهِدَ النَّجْوَى تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى

...Who is Distant and thus cannot be seen, and Close, and thus witnesses the whisperings [of the whisperers], the Plentiful and Exalted.⁴

In another supplication where we mention the Beautiful Names of Allāh, we say:

... يَا بَعِيدًا فِي قُرْبِهِ ...

O Distant in His Proximity...⁵

Therefore it is the general realisation of such remoteness that allows us to call Almighty Allāh, and

1 Al-Qurtubī, *Tafsīr al-Qurtubī*, v.4, p. 53

2 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.4, p. 530

3 Al-Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-A’māl*, v.3, p. 206

4 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, v.3, p. 109

5 *Al-Maqām al-Asnā fī Tafsīr al-Asmā’ al-Ḥusnā*, p. 88

thus venerate Him.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي عِنْدَكَ وَجِيهًا بِالْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

O Allāh, make me distinguished near You through al-Ḥusayn (‘a)

Ij’alnī in the phrase “*Allāhumma ij’alnī...*” is an imperative verb which is employed here for supplication. It means “make me” or “render me”. The transitive verb *ja’ala* is of two kinds:

- a) Singly Transitive Ja’l (*al-ja’l al-basīṭ*)
- b) Doubly Transitive Ja’l (*al-ja’l al-murakkab*)

The singly transitive *ja’l* refers to that transitive verb of *ja’l* which accepts only one object (*maf’ūl bihi*), whereas the doubly transitive *ja’l* requires two objects.

An example of the first category is the following supplication:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ فِي قَلْبِي نُورًا

O Allāh place in my heart a light.⁶

Notice the verb *ij’al* here is followed by only one object, which is “*nūran*” (a light).

Examples of the second category are the following supplications:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَمَلِي خَالِصًا لِرُوحِكَ الْكَرِيمِ

O Allāh, make my action purely for your Great Essence.⁷

Here the verb *ij’al* is followed by two objects, “*‘amalī*” (my action) and “*khāliṣan...*” (purely...).

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي تَابِعًا لِصَالِحِي مَنْ مَضَى مِنْ أَوْلِيَائِكَ

O Allāh, make me a follower of the righteous among your preceding close servants.⁸

Here again the verb *ij’al* is followed by two objects, “*yā*” (me) attached to *ij’al* (which is a first person singular pronoun that refers to the speaker) and “*tābi’an*” (which means one who follows). Hence “*ij’alnī tābi’an...*” means “make me a follower of...”.

In our case, the *ja’l* employed in the phrase “*Allāhumma ij’alnī ‘indaka...*” is of the second category of *ja’l*. Its first object is the first person pronoun *yā’* attached to *ij’al*, and its second object is *wajīhan*, the meaning of which we shall soon discuss.

The word *‘inda* in the phrase *‘indaka* is an adverb of place which signifies proximity and closeness. Hence when the second person masculine pronoun *kāf* which denotes Almighty Allāh is attached to it, it signifies the neighbourhood of Allāh. Therefore when we say *ij’anlī ‘indaka*, we mean “make me near You...” or “make me in Your proximity...”

The word *wajīh* is defined as “one who is in possession of a rank, loftiness, and standing (*dhū al-jāhi wa al-sharāfi wa al-qadr*).”⁹

6 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*, p. 689

7 Al-Aḥsā’ī, *‘Awālī al-La’ālī*, v.1, p. 5

8 Al-Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn Ibn Ṭāwūs, *Iqbāl al-A’māl*, v.1, p. 117

9 Al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Rāzī*, v.8, p. 53

Almighty Allāh says with regard to Prophet Mūsā (‘a):

... وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهًا

...and he was distinguished near Allāh. (33:69)

And about Prophet ‘Īsā (‘a) He says:

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِّنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ.

When the angels said, ‘O Mary, God gives you the good news of a Word from Him whose name is Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, distinguished in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near [to God].’ (3:45)

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī in his monumental exegesis of the Qur’ān, *al-Mizān*, under this verse says:

قوله تعالى: وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ الْجَاهَةُ هِيَ الْمَقْبُولِيَّةُ

Allāh says: ‘distinguished (*wajīhān*) in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near [to God]’. *Al-wajāhah* means *al-maqbūliyyah* (acceptability).¹⁰

The Holy Prophet (ṣ) and his noble progeny too are distinguished near Allāh. In the well-known prayer of *tawassul* we address each of the Infallibles (‘a) as follows:

يَا وَجِيهًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِشْفَعْ لَنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

O distinguished near Allāh, intercede for us near Allāh.¹¹

The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said to Umm Ayman one day:

وَاللَّهِ يَا أُمَّ أَيْمَنَ، زَوَّجْتُهَا كُفُوًا شَرِيفًا وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ.

I swear by Allāh, O Umm Ayman, I have married her [i.e. Hadrat Fāṭimah (‘a)] to an exalted suitor [i.e. ‘Alī], who is distinguished in this world and the Hereafter and is from the close servants of God.¹²

Hence, when we say *Allāhummaj ‘alnī ‘indaka wajīhān* we mean “O Allāh make me distinguished near You” or “make me one who is accepted near You”. And being accepted and distinguished near Allāh is not through attribution and concoction (*al-waḍ’*), but rather actualization and epitomisation (*al-taaqquq*). In one of the very inspiring statements, Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to inform Jābir as follows:

يَا جَابِرُ، بَلِّغْ شِيعَتِي عَنِّي السَّلَامَ، وَأَعْلِمُهُمْ أَنَّهُ لَا قَرَابَةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ)، وَلَا يُتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيْهِ إِلَّا بِالطَّاعَةِ لَهُ.

O Jābir, convey greetings to my followers, and inform them that there is no filial relationship between us and Allāh (the Invincible and Majestic), and proximity to Him is not attained save through His obedience.¹³

In other words, if there is any kind of proximity attained by anyone, it is through obedience to Allāh and through observing God-wariness.

10 ‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *al-Mizān*, v.3, p. 195

11 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.99, p. 247

12 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Amālī*, pp. 354-355; Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.43, p. 105

13 Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *Al-Amālī*, p. 296

In another tradition, Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have told Khaythamah:

أَبْلَغُ شَيْعَتَنَا أَنَّهُ لَا يُنَالُ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا بِالْعَمَلِ

Convey to our followers that what is with Allāh is not attained save through actions.¹⁴

The Holy Qur’ān teaches us that the path towards being accepted by Allāh is God-wariness and piety:

إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

Allāh accepts only from the God wary. (5:27)

Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a)¹⁵ is reported to have said:

الْأَسَاسُ فِي الدُّنْيَا عَامِلَانِ: عَامِلٌ عَمِلَ فِي الدُّنْيَا لِلدُّنْيَا، قَدْ شَغَلَتْهُ دُنْيَاهُ عَنْ آخِرَتِهِ، يَخْشَى عَلَى مَنْ يَخْلُفُهُ الْفَقْرَ، وَيَأْمَنُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ، فَيُفْنِي عُمُرَهُ فِي مَنَفَعَةٍ غَيْرِهِ. وَعَامِلٌ عَمِلَ فِي الدُّنْيَا لِمَا بَعْدَهَا، فَجَاءَهُ الَّذِي لَهُ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا بِغَيْرِ عَمَلٍ، فَأَحْرَزَ الْخَطِيئِينَ مَعًا، وَمَلَكَ الدَّارَيْنِ جَمِيعًا، فَأَصْبَحَ وَجِيهًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، لَا يَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ حَاجَةً فَيَمْنَعَهُ

People in this world are categorised into two kinds of workers: [1] One who works in this world for the sake of this world, and his world occupies him from his Hereafter; he fears poverty for the one who would succeed him, and feels safe about that for himself. Hence he wastes his lifetime for the advantage of other than himself; and [2] One who works in this world for the Hereafter, attains his part of this world without action, and gets both the shares together and achieves both the worlds; and [as a result] becomes distinguished near Allāh (*wajīhān ‘inda Allāh*), such that he never asks Allāh for a need and is deprived.¹⁶

This tradition reveals a broader and detailed exposition of the truth. It tells us that one must realise that attaining a status and rank near Allāh requires one to understand the difference between the means and the goal, and to act accordingly. Those who take the world as a means to attain the sublime goal of Divine proximity are always successful and distinguished.

Seeking status near Allāh through al-Ḥusayn (‘a), who is the epitome of taqwa and virtue, therefore, is equivalent to struggling to harmonise oneself with the thoughts, words and deeds of the Imam (‘a). He is one of the excellent exemplars of those who took this world as a means and not a goal. Hence, he personifies the path towards nobility and sublimity and the path towards dignity near Almighty Allāh.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي عِنْدَكَ وَجِيهًا

O Allāh, make me distinguished near You ...

Mentioning the phrase “*indaka wajīhān*” (near You, distinguished) enables the *zā’ir* to declare that what is important to him is having a status and position near Allāh. Once he has realised this, then the *zā’ir* would not sacrifice that for any worldly position that the people may offer him.

14 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.2, p. 29

15 Imam ‘Alā (‘a) in another tradition is reported to have said: Beware of hypocrisy, for a person who has two faces cannot be distinguished near Allāh (*īyyāka wa al-nifāqu fa inna dhal wajhayni lā yakūnu wajīhān inda Allāhi*): Al-Najafī, *Mawsū‘at Aḥādīth Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)*, v.1, p. 408

16 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.90, p. 360

The preposition *bā’* in phrase *wajīhān bi al-Ḥusayn (‘a)* is for mediation (*al-sababiyah*). Hence one of the variable meanings of the phrase is: “[O Allāh, make us in Your proximity] distinguished through [the power of] al-Ḥusayn (‘a)”. It can also confer the meaning of taking al-Ḥusayn as one’s guardian and master, and following whatever he says. Consequently it would mean, “[O Allāh, make us in Your proximity] distinguished through [obeying] al-Ḥusayn (‘a)”. Terminologically, we can say that the *bā’* in “*bi al-Ḥusayn (‘a)*” either signifies *al-wilāyah al-takwīniyyah* (ontological guardianship) or *al-wilāyah al-tashrī‘iyyah* (legal guardianship) of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a). In other words, both of these kinds of guardianship are intermediaries for acquiring a status near Almighty Allāh.

فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

In this world and the Hereafter

The word *dunyā* is the feminine equivalent for word *adna* (the lowest). It signifies the lowest realm of existence, which is the material world.

In *Biḥār al-Anwār* Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī narrates:

فِيمَا سَأَلَ يَزِيدُ بْنُ سَلَامٍ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ سَأَلَهُ عَنِ الدُّنْيَا لِمَ سُمِّيَتْ الدُّنْيَا؟ قَالَ: لِأَنَّ الدُّنْيَا دَنِيَّةٌ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ دُونَ الآخِرَةِ، وَلَوْ خُلِقَتْ مَعَ الآخِرَةِ لَمْ يَفْنِ أَهْلُهَا كَمَا لَا يَفْنَى أَهْلُ الآخِرَةِ. قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي لِمَ سُمِّيَتْ الآخِرَةُ آخِرَةً؟ قَالَ: لِأَنَّهَا مُتَأَخِّرَةٌ تَحِيٌّ مِنْ بَعْدِ الدُّنْيَا، لَا تُوصَفُ سِنِينَهَا، وَلَا تُحْصَى أَيَامُهَا، وَلَا يَمُوتُ سُكَّانُهَا.

Yazīd Ibn Salām is reported to have asked the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) about why the world was known as *al-dunyā*? The Prophet (ﷺ) said: It is because the world (*al-dunyā*) is low, and was created lower than the Hereafter (*al-ākhirah*); and if it would have been created together with the Hereafter (*al-ākhirah*), its inhabitants would not perish in the same way that the inhabitants of the Hereafter do not perish. Ibn Salām said: Then inform me why the Hereafter is known as *al-ākhirah*? The Prophet (ﷺ) said: This is because it is later and comes after the *dunyā*, its years cannot be described, nor its days enumerated, nor do its inhabitants die.¹⁷

In another narration, a Jew asked Amīr al-mu‘minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) the reason why *al-dunyā* was known as *al-dunyā* and *al-ākhirah* as *al-ākhirah*, and the Imam (‘a) is reported to have said:

وَإِنَّمَا سُمِّيَتْ الدُّنْيَا دُنْيَا: لِأَنَّهَا أَدْنَى مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، وَسُمِّيَتْ الآخِرَةُ آخِرَةً لِأَنَّ فِيهَا الْجَزَاءَ وَالنَّوَابِ.

Indeed *dunyā* was called *dunyā* because it is lower than every thing, and *ākhirah* was known as *ākhirah* because therein is recompense and reward.¹⁸

The Interrelation Between the World & the Hereafter

It is imperative for us to know that although *al-dunyā* is separate from *al-ākhirah*, they are the same reality but of different levels. The Hereafter (which includes the intermediate realm of existence and the realm of *qiyāmah*) reflects the higher reality of this world. Hence those who feel that it is possible for one to attain a rank near Allāh in the Hereafter although he is deprived of the same in this world are mistaken. This is because the virtue of the Hereafter is determined by the virtue of

17 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.54, p. 356

18 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *‘Ilal al-Sharāyi’*, v.1, p. 2

this world. If one strives to totally submit to Allāh’s will in this world, he would realise how great he always was near Almighty Allāh.

في الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

In this world and the Hereafter

Perhaps the reason why we mention “in this world and the Hereafter” is to seek such “acceptability” that would always remain. Whosoever is *wajīh* near Allāh in this world, is also the same in the Hereafter, because the Hereafter is the kernel of this world. The challenge however is to maintain that station near Allāh until one leaves this world.

CHAPTER 15

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، إِنِّي أَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَإِلَى رَسُولِهِ وَإِلَى أَمِيرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِلَى فَاطِمَةَ وَإِلَى الْحَسَنِ وَإِلَيْكَ بِمُؤَالَاتِكَ،
وَبِالْبِرَاءَةِ مِمَّنْ قَاتَلَكَ وَنَصَبَ لَكَ الْحَرْبَ وَ بِالْبِرَاءَةِ مِمَّنْ
أَسَّسَ أَسَاسَ الظُّلْمِ وَالْجَوْرِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَبْرَأُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَإِلَى
رَسُولِهِ مِمَّنْ أَسَّسَ أَسَاسَ ذَلِكَ وَبَنَى عَلَيْهِ بُنْيَانَهُ وَ جَرَى
فِي ظُلْمِهِ وَ جَوْرِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ عَلَى أَشْيَاعِكُمْ،

O Abā ‘Abdillāh, Indeed I seek nearness to Allāh, His Messenger, Amīr al-mu’minīn, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and to you, through my love for you, and by staying away from the one who fought against you and made war against you, and from the one who established the foundation of wrongdoing and injustice against you, and I take recourse in Allāh and His Messenger while detaching myself from those who established that and built on it its edifice and continued their wrongdoing and injustice against you and your followers.

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، إِنِّي أَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَإِلَى رَسُولِهِ وَإِلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِلَى فَاطِمَةَ وَإِلَى الْحَسَنِ وَإِلَيْكَ
O Abā ‘Abdillah, Indeed I seek nearness to Allāh, His Messenger,
Amīr al-mu’minīn, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and to you ...

COMMENTARY

The aorist verb *ataqarrabu* in the phrase “*innī ataqarrabu ila Allāhi...*” is in the linguistic form of *al-tafa’ul*, which signifies quest (*al-ṭalab*). Hence, when we say *ataqarrabu* we mean “I seek nearness” (*aṭlubu al-qurba*). A similar example is that of *ata’allamu* which means “I seek knowledge” (*aṭlubu al-’ilma*).

Seeking the proximity of the exalted members of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is the same as seeking the proximity of Allāh. This is because they represent the most perfect manifestations of Allāh’s names.¹ Here below we shall consider three verses of the Qur’ān that allude to this reality:

1) The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَٰؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

And He taught Adam the Names, all of them; then presented them to the angels and said,
“Tell me the names of these, if you are truthful.” (2:31)

Traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) clearly specify that the names taught to Adam were the names of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). And that does not mean any kind of transfer of the concepts of the vocalised names into the mind of Adam. The process of teaching is the process of shaping the fabric of Adam’s existence to exemplify the Divine Names. In his monumental exegesis of *Al-Mizān*, ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī says:

...ويكون معنى تعليم الأسماء إيداع هذا العلم في الإنسان بحيث يظهر منه آثاره تدريجاً دائماً ولو اهتدى إلى السبيل
أمكنه أن يخرج من القوة إلى الفعل ...

...and the meaning of “teaching the names” is to bequeath this knowledge to the human being, such that its effects appear gradually, and if he is guided to the path, he is able to bring it [the knowledge] out from the state of potentiality (*quwwah*) to the state of actuality (*fi’l*)...²

In a tradition narrated as a commentary on the aforementioned verse (2:31), Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى عَلَّمَ آدَمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَسْمَاءَ حُجَجِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى كُلِّهَا

Indeed Allāh, the Bounteous & Exalted, taught Adam all of the names of the proofs of Allāh (*hujaj Allāh*), the Exalted.³

In *Tafsīr Imām Ḥasan al-‘Askarī*, the Imam (‘a) is reported to have said:

1 Imam ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is reported to have said: “We are the most beautiful names...” (*Naḥnu al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā...*): Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.27, p. 38

2 Al-‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, v.1, p. 116

3 Al-Mashhadī, *Tafsīr Kanz al-Daqā’iq wa Baḥr al-Gharā’ib*, v.1, p. 344

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا أَسْمَاءَ أَنْبِيَاءِ اللَّهِ، وَأَسْمَاءَ مُحَمَّدٍ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ)، وَعَلِيٍّ وَفَاطِمَةَ وَالْحَسَنَ وَالْحُسَيْنَ، وَالطَّيِّبِينَ مِنْ آلِهِمَا...⁴

“And He taught Adam the Names, all of them”: these are the names of the prophets of Allāh, names of Muḥammad (ṣ), ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and the pleasant offspring from both their progenies...⁴

It is important for us to realise that in the language of the Qur’ān names are not mere vocalisations. A name is an essence with a specific attribute of perfection. Hence, when we say *al-Raḥmān*, we mean “a being who possesses the attribute of *raḥmān* (mercy)”.

In the aforementioned traditions when we say “names of prophets” or “names of the proofs of Allāh”, it may refer to their excellent characteristics, which exemplify Divine attributes.

2) The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

To Allāh belong the most beautiful names, so supplicate Him by them... (7:180)

In *Al-Kāfi*, Shaykh al-Kulaynī narrates the following thought-provoking tradition:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الصَّادِقِ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) فِي قَوْلِهِ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا. قَالَ: نَحْنُ وَاللَّهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ الَّتِي لَا يَقْبَلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْعِبَادِ عَمَلًا إِلَّا بِمَعْرِفَتِنَا

Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Sādiq (‘a) is reported to have said about the word of Allāh, the Invincible and Majestic, “To Allāh belong the most beautiful names, so supplicate Him by them...” [7:180]: *We, I swear by Allāh, are the most beautiful names, and Allāh does not accept any action from His servants save with our recognition.*

3. The Holy Qur’ān says:

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the Majestic and the Munificent! (55:78)

In *Al-Burhān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān*, al-Baḥrānī narrates the following tradition of Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) as a commentary on the above verse:

نَحْنُ جَلَالُ اللَّهِ وَكِرَامَتُهُ الَّتِي أَكْرَمَ اللَّهُ الْعِبَادَ بِطَاعَتِنَا

We are the majesty of Allāh and His nobility with which Allāh honours His servants through obeying us...⁵

The reality of seeking the proximity of Allāh is to acquire His perfect Names and attributes according to our limitations. Therefore, while we seek to personify ourselves with the attributes of Allāh, we are also in reality trying to personify ourselves with what the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) exemplify. Obviously the difference is that Allāh possesses absolute and infinite perfection, whereas the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), despite being in a level the kernel of which none of the creation can comprehend, have limited perfections. In fact, the Qur’ānic reality is that, “to Allāh alone belong all the beautiful names...” (*wa lillāhi al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*; 7:180) and whatever others have are in reality

4 Al-Baḥrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān*, v.1, p. 164

5 Ibid, v.5, p. 248

manifestations (*tajalliyāt*) of Allāh's names. No creature whatsoever has anything of his own.

The Unity of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)

A noteworthy reality we can derive from the verse under discussion is that all the infallible members of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are united in terms of being close to Almighty Allāh. Adhering to any of them is like adhering to every member. This is because they are the manifestations of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), who is a manifestation of Allāh. All of them represent the Straight Path of guidance (*al-ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*).

In a lengthy tradition Amīr al-mu'minīn 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) is reported to have said:

كُلُّنَا وَاحِدٌ، أَوْلُنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَآخِرُنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَأَوْسَطُنَا مُحَمَّدٌ وَكُلُّنَا مُحَمَّدٌ. فَلَا تُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَنَا

We all are one, the first of us is Muḥammad, the last of us is Muḥammad, the middle of us is Muḥammad, and all of us are Muḥammad. Therefore do not differentiate between us.⁶

بِمُؤَالَاتِكَ

...through my love for you

This is the first method mentioned for seeking nearness to Allāh. The meaning of *muwālāt* is profound and comprehensive. Its linguistic construction *mufā'alah* means mutual love. It is through our love for Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a) that we can attain proximity to Allāh, His Apostle and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). Love for al-Ḥusayn ('a), however, is not a mere fleeting emotion, but a unity of the lover and the beloved. Hence one should struggle for the unification and true bond between oneself and the Imam ('a).

Ethicians in their works have stated that love is acquired from the knowledge of the beauty (*ḥusn*) of the beloved. It is only after the lover comes to know about the perfections of the beloved that love is planted in his heart. The greater the knowledge of the most perfect entity, the more fierce the fire of love. Conceptual knowledge (knowledge perceived through the human mind) reveals only the tip of the iceberg. It requires one to personify oneself with the qualities of al-Ḥusayn ('a), even if that be according to one's limited ability, that one can comprehend the raging fire of love and the extreme yearning for al-Ḥusayn ('a).

Therefore *muwālāt* of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is in reality the development of spiritual harmony between the lover and the beloved. So long as the lover does not experience the sublime qualities necessary in a true believer (*mu'min*) he would always enjoy very little of the special love for them. Different traditions expressly tell us that the *muwālāt* anticipated from the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is in complete harmony with the way of life of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

In conclusion, the path of seeking nearness to Allāh, His Apostle, and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is to harmonise oneself with the thoughts, speech, and deeds of Imam al-Ḥusayn ('a), and to acquire the sublime qualities of his exalted self. And developing this kind of love is a natural path to the proximity of Allāh. The Holy Qur'ān informs us of this reality in two important verses:

... قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ ...

...Say, "I do not ask you any reward for it except riveting love of [my] relatives." ... (42:23)

6 Al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.26, pp. 6-7

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا

Say, “I do not ask you any reward for it, except that anyone who wishes should take the way to his Lord.” (25:57)

If we understand verse 42:23 in light of verse 25:57 we come to realise that the riveting love (*mawaddah*) for the close relatives of the Holy Prophet (s) anticipated from us is an essential concomitant of obedience to Allāh and spiritual wayfaring to Him (...*ilā Rabbihi sabīlan*). Those who surmise that love can be separated from obedience to Allāh are mistaken. In fact, one of the beautiful verses of the Qur’ān where the relation between obedience and love is mentioned is as follows:

... وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ ...

...but the faithful have a more ardent love for Allāh... (2:165)

This clearly reveals the there is a strong link between true belief in Allāh (which essentially necessitates appropriate action) and love for Him. And since love for Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) actually returns to love for Allāh (*man aḥabbakum faqad aḥabba Allāha*),⁷ one who truly believes in the guardianship of the Imam (‘a) and totally obeys him, would have more love for him.

The fundamental importance and influence of muwalat can be appreciated by considering the following part of the well-known *Ziyārāt al-Jāmi‘ah al-Kabīrah*:

بِمُؤَالَاتِكُمْ عَلَّمَنَا اللَّهُ مَعَالِمَ دِينِنَا وَأَصْلَحَ مَا كَانَ فَسَدَ مِنْ دُنْيَانَا، وَبِمُؤَالَاتِكُمْ تَمَّتِ الْكَلِمَةُ وَعَظُمَتِ الرَّعْمَةُ وَائْتَلَقَتِ
الْفُرْقَةُ وَبِمُؤَالَاتِكُمْ تَقْبَلُ الطَّاعَةُ الْمُفْتَرَضَةُ وَلَكُمْ الْمَوَدَّةُ الْوَاجِبَةُ...

Through our love for you, Allāh taught us the pillars of our religion and rectified those affairs of our world that were out of their state of equilibrium, and through our love for you the word has been accomplished and the blessing has been great, and disunity has tuned into unity, and through our love you, obligatory deeds are accepted, and riveting love for you is compulsory...

وَبِالْبِرَاءَةِ مِمَّنْ قَاتَلَكَ وَنَصَبَ لَكَ الْحَرْبَ وَبِالْبِرَاءَةِ مِمَّنْ أَسَسَ أَسَاسَ الظُّلْمِ وَالْجُورِ عَلَيْكُمْ

...and by detachment from the one who fought against you and made war against you, and from the one who established the foundation of wrongdoing and injustice against you...

This phrase continues to describe the path towards the proximity of Allāh and the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Without *barā’ah*⁸ proximity cannot be attained. In fact the root meaning of *muwālāt* and *barā’ah* return to *qurb* (proximity) and *bu’d* (distance). Consequently, true *muwālāt*⁹ only transpires when it is coupled with true *barā’ah*,¹⁰ and vice versa. The Holy Qur’ān says:

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ
أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ
عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

7 This is a reference from one of the verses of the well-known *Ziyārāt al-Jāmi‘ah al-Kabīrah*, in which we declare, “Whosoever loves you (the Infallible Imams), indeed has loved Allāh”. The reason for this perhaps is that they exemplify the Names of Allāh.

8 Distancing oneself from evil and imperfection.

9 To love, to support, or to follow.

10 To distance oneself from the enemies.

You shall not find a people who believe in Allāh and the latter day befriending those who act in opposition to Allāh and His Messenger, even though they were their (own) fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk; these are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and whom He has strengthened with an inspiration from Him: and He will cause them to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; Allāh is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with Him; these are Allāh’s party: now surely the party of Allāh are the successful ones. (58:22)

Hence expressing one’s love for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) is meaningless when one expresses love for their enemies as well. Those who claim to be impartial and say that we express our love for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) but refrain from expressing our hatred against their enemies, also are ignorant of the fact that loving them is “loving perfection”, which means “hating imperfection”. It is absurd for one to say that “I love perfection” but “do not hate imperfection”. The equation is quite simple. It only needs one to reflect a little to understand the relationship between *muwālāt* and *barā’ah*.

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

كَذِبَ مَنْ ادَّعَى مَحَبَّتَنَا وَلَمْ يَتَبَرَّأْ مِنْ عَدُوِّنَا

One who claims our love but does not express his detachment from our enemies has lied.¹¹

In the verse under discussion, we are taught to express our desertion and detachment from the following people:

- a) Those who fought against the Imam (...*man qātalak*)
- b) Those who established war against the Imam (...*naṣaba laka al-ḥarba*)
- c) Those who established the foundation of wrongdoing and transgression against the Ahl al-Bayt (...*man assasa asās al-zulmī wa al-jawri ‘alaykum*)

If we carefully study the abovementioned groups we would come to realise that their origins are the uncontrolled use of the inner animal faculties of the human being. When one allows one’s faculty of *ghaḍab* (anger) or *shahwah* (lowly desires) to dominate one’s ‘*aql* (intellect), one tends to indulge in terrifying atrocities. The army of Yazīd consisted of people, whose motive of fighting against the Imam (‘a) was either real hatred against the Imam (‘a) and his loyal companions and family, or expectation of worldly promises and its material benefits, or both. In simpler words, the faculties of anger (*ghaḍab*) and appetite (*shahwah*) had dominated them. Hence their inner realities had actually turned into animals.

Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّمَا أَهْلُ الدُّنْيَا كِلَابٌ عَاوِيَّةٌ وَسِبَاعٌ ضَارِيَّةٌ ...

*Indeed those attached to the world are barking dogs and beasts of prey.*¹²

In one of his transit points before reaching Karbala, called ‘Aqabat al- Baṭn, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) addressing his companions narrates one of his dreams, and says:

رَأَيْتُ كِلَابًا تَنْهَشُنِي، أَشَدُّهَا عَلَيَّ كَلْبٌ أَبْقَعُ

I dreamt that dogs are biting me, *the most severe of which was a spotted dog.*¹³

11 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.72, p. 58

12 Al-Āmadī, *Ghurar al-Hikam*, p. 137

13 Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, p. 157

In Karbala likewise, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) visions a similar dream. In his *Bihār al-Anwār*, ‘Allāmah Majlisī narrates:

لَمَّا كَانَ وَقْتُ السَّحْرِ فِي اللَّيْلَةِ الَّتِي حُوصِرَ فِيهَا الْحُسَيْنُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ خَفِقَ بِرَأْسِهِ خَفَقَةً ثُمَّ اسْتَيْقَظَ فَقَالَ: رَأَيْتُ فِي مَنَائِمِ السَّاعَةِ كَأَنَّ كِلَابًا قَدْ شَدَّتْ عَلَيَّ لِتَنْهَشَنِي، وَفِيهَا كَلْبٌ أَبْقَعَ رَأْيْتُهُ أَشَدُّهَا عَلَيَّ، وَأَظُنُّ أَنَّ الَّذِي يَتَوَلَّى قَتْلِي رَجُلٌ أَبْرَصٌ مِنْ بَيْنِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ

During the pre-dawn (*saḥar*) moments of the night in which Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) was besieged, he dropped his head drowsily, and thereafter woke up and said: *I saw in my dream this moment that it is as if dogs have charged on me to tear me off, and among them is a spotted dog, who was much more severe on me; and I think that the one who would take the charge of slaying me is a leper among these people.*¹⁴

Finally, when Shimr was about to sever the sacred head of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a), the Imam (‘a) says: My grandfather was right in what he said. Shimr asks: What did your grandfather say? Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) replies:

يَقُولُ لِأَبِي: يَا عَلِيُّ! يَفْتُلُ وَلَدَكَ هَذَا رَجُلٌ أَبْقَعَ أَبْرَصٌ، أَشْبَهُ الْخَلْقِ بِالْكِلَابِ وَالْحَتَّازِيرِ.

Addressing my father he said: O ‘Alī, a leprous and spotted person who most resembles dogs and pigs will kill this son of yours.¹⁵

In the well-known *Ziyārāt al-Nāḥiyah al-Muqaddasah*, Imam al-Mahdī (‘a) at one point is reported to have expressed his salutations as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَى الْأَجْسَامِ الْعَارِيَةِ فِي الْقَلَوَاتِ، تَنْهَشُهَا الذِّئَابُ الْعَادِيَاتُ، وَتَحْتَلِفُ إِلَيْهَا السِّبَاعُ الصَّارِيَاتُ،

Peace be upon the unclothed corpses in the desert, *bitten by wild wolves and around whom the beasts of prey prowled.*¹⁶

This reveals the inner reality of Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a)’s slayers. They had lost their identities as human beings. They had become beasts of prey (*al-sibā‘ al-dāriyāt*). The Holy Qur’ān says:

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

Indeed the worst of beasts in Allāh’s sight are the deaf and the dumb who do not apply reason. (8:22)

إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

Indeed the worst of beasts in Allāh’s sight are those who are faithless; so they will not have faith.¹⁷ (8:55)

According to the scholars of insight, this phenomenon is known as celestial incarnation (*al-tanāsukh al-malakūtī*) which tangibly appears in the intermediate realm (*barzakh*). Due to one’s belief and actions, one develops traits that turn one into different kinds of animals.

14 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, v.58, p. 183

15 *Mawsū‘at Kalimāt al-Imām al-Ḥusayn (‘a)*, p. 618

16 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār*, v.98, p. 317

17 Commenting on verse 8:55, Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (‘a) is reported to have said: This verse was revealed about Banū Umayyah. So they are the worst creatures of Allāh. They are the ones who disbelieved in the esoteric meaning of the Qur’ān, and thus they shall never believe. (Al-Shaykh al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, v.2, p. 705)

The Holy Qur'ān says:

وَإِذَا الْوُحُوشُ حُشِرَتْ

...when the wild beasts are resurrected (81:5)

Commenting on this verse, the great insightful scholar, Ayatullah Ḥasan Zādeh Āmulī says:

اي الأناسي الذين يحشرون على صور بذور ما تكتسبوا

It means the human beings who will be resurrected according to the forms of the seeds of what they have earned.¹⁸

وَأُتْبِرُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَإِلَى رَسُولِهِ مِمَّنْ أَسَّسَ أَسَاسَ ذَلِكَ وَبَنَى عَلَيْهِ بُنْيَانَهُ وَجَرَى فِي ظُلْمِهِ وَجُورِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَلَى أَشْيَاعِكُمْ
...and I take recourse in Allāh and His Messenger while detaching myself from those who established that and built on it its edifice and continued their wrongdoing and injustice against you and your followers.

Earlier we said that *barā'ah* etymologically is defined as distancing oneself from imperfection (*al-tabā'ud min al-naqs*).¹⁹ Therefore, we can correctly say that it is a natural response to the call of the human disposition (*al-fiṭrah*). This is because the human being is innately driven to seek benefit (*jalb al-manfa'ah*) and repel harm (*daf' al-ḍarar*). And because perfection (*kamāl*) is an extension of benefit, and imperfection (*naqs*) an extension of harm, the human being is innately attracted to the former and repelled from the latter. Despite this innate tendency in man, we still find some getting attracted to evil and repelled from good. Two main reasons for this are as follows:

1) Deviation in Knowledge.

Examples of this are as follows:

(a) Belief in Ethical Relativism

This comes about when one believes that character traits of perfection (*kamāl*) and imperfection (*naqs*) are relative (*nisbī*), and there are no absolute (*muṭlaq*) moral values: lies, injustice, gluttony, stinginess, etc., for example are not absolutely evil, and their moral nature depends on factors such as personality, society, culture, time, place, etc. Likewise, traits such as justice, mercy, truthfulness, chastity, open-handedness, etc. although are relatively good, they can be evil at times. Hence we do not have character traits that are perpetually good and perpetually evil.

If one reflects on this attractive but highly misleading ideology, one will come to realise how dangerous and harmful it is. It vanquishes the very fabric of religion, which has been brought to elevate the human character:

In his *Bihār al-Anwār* 'Allāmah al-Majlisī reports the following tradition:

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الدِّينُ؟ فَقَالَ: حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ. ثُمَّ أَتَاهُ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ فَقَالَ: مَا الدِّينُ؟ فَقَالَ: حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ. ثُمَّ أَتَاهُ مِنْ قِبَلِ شِمَالِهِ فَقَالَ: مَا الدِّينُ؟ فَقَالَ: حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ. ثُمَّ أَتَاهُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ فَقَالَ: مَا الدِّينُ؟ فَالْتَمَتَ إِلَيْهِ وَقَالَ: أَمَا تَفْقَهُ الدِّينَ؟! الدِّينُ هُوَ أَنْ لَا تَعْصِبَ.

A man approached the Holy Prophet (ṣ), appeared before him and said: O Apostle of

18 Ayatullah Ḥasan Zādeh Āmulī, 'Uyūnu Masā'il al-Nafs, p. 802

19 Al-Muṣṭafawī, *Al-Taḥqīq fī Kalimāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, v.1, p. 240

Allāh, what is religion? He (ﷺ) said: It is beautiful character. Then the man approached him from the right hand side and asked: What is religion? The Prophet (ﷺ) [once again] said: It is beautiful character. Thereafter the man came from the left hand side and asked: What is religion? The Prophet (ﷺ) said: It is beautiful character. Then the man approached the Prophet (ﷺ) from behind and asked: What is religion? The Prophet (ﷺ) attending him said: Do you not understand religion? Religion is that you should not be angry.²⁰

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

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

Indeed I was only sent to complete the noble character traits.²¹

These noble character traits are manifestations of Divine Attributes. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

Adopt the character traits of Allāh.²²

In reality, adopting the characteristics of Allāh and strengthening them in oneself enables one to be very close to Almighty Allāh. Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ أَفْرَبَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَوْسَعُكُمْ خُلُقًا

Indeed the closest among you to Allāh is one with the most comprehensive character traits.²³

In the reasoning of ethical relativism, however, it is meaningless to call the believers to traits of nobility (*makārim al-akhlāq*), when there are no such traits in their absolute sense. We cannot, for example, say that because Allāh is the most Truthful of all speakers (*aṣḍaq al-qā’ilīn*), we likewise should develop the same trait. This is because truth may sometimes lead to an innocent man’s murder. Hence truth is not always a trait of virtue.

In response, we must understand that although religion and intellectual judgement would guide us to cover the truth in some circumstances, but it is not because truthfulness per se is bad or evil. If one tries to understand this point properly one would come to realise that truthfulness does not lead to murder, but “the one who reacts negatively to the truth” leads to murder. Therefore in order to avoid “the apparently inevitable negative reaction” we tend to cover the truth. Hence covering truth is not due to its transitory evil nature. Truth was, is, and will always remain pleasant and good.

Scholars of authority have dealt with this subject in detail in their works and covering their intricacies comprehensively is beyond the scope of this commentary. However, those who understand the fallacy of ethical relativism will realise that not only is it contrary to one’s innate comprehension and religious direction, it vividly contradicts the actions of its proponents too.

Louis P. Pojman in his paper *Ethical Relativism and Ethical Objectivism* narrates:

Columbia university professor Sidney Morgenbesser once taught a philosophy class of students who argued vehemently for subjectivism. When a test was taken,

20 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.68, p. 393

21 Ibid, v.16, p. 210

22 Mullā Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, v.4, p. 298

23 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, v.8, p. 69

Morgenbesser returned all the tests marked “F”- even though his comments showed that most of the tests were of a very high quality. When the students expressed outrage at this injustice, Morgenbesser answered that he had accepted the notion of subjectivism for purposes of marking the exams, in which case the principle of justice had no objective validity.²⁴

Ethical absolutism on the other hand considers ethical values to be absolute and eternal. They are not subject to external causes and circumstances, but are constant and naturally decipherable by the human being. One who has retained the soundness of his human disposition (*al-fītrah*) can easily comprehend the good and the bad according to one’s limits. The Holy Qur’ān vocally alludes to this reality in the following verse:

وَنَفْسٍ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا. فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا. وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا

And by the soul and Him who fashioned it, and inspired it with [discernment between] its virtues and vices: one who purifies it is felicitous, and one who betrays it fails. (91:7-10)

Commenting on the phrase “*fa alhamahā fujūrahā wa taqwāhā*” (and inspired it with [discernment between] its virtues and vices), Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

بَيَّنَ لَهَا مَا تَأْتِي وَمَا تَنْتَرِكُ

He clarified for the soul what it should do and from what it should refrain.²⁵

There are a number of traditions that distinctly enumerate traits which are good and traits which are bad. Following are some noteworthy examples:

In his *al-Amālī*, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq narrates from Ḥammād Ibn ‘Uthmān:

جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى الصَّادِقِ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) فَقَالَ لَهُ: يَا بَنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أَخْبِرْنِي بِمَكَارِمِ الْأَخْلَاقِ. فَقَالَ: الْعَفْوُ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ، وَصِلَّةُ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ، وَإِعْطَاءُ مَنْ حَرَمَكَ، وَقَوْلُ الْحَقِّ وَلَوْ عَلَى نَفْسِكَ.

A man came to al-Ṣādiq, Ja‘far Ibn Muḥammad (‘a), and said: O son of the Apostle of Allāh, inform me of the noble traits (*makārim al-akhlāq*). The Imam (‘a) said: They are: forgiveness on one who had done wrong to you, establishing connection with one who had detached himself from you, giving one who had deprived you, and speaking the truth, even if it is against you.²⁶

Amīr al-mu‘minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is reported to have said:

أَحْسَنُ الْمَكَارِمِ الْجُودُ

The most beautiful of noble traits is generosity.²⁷

He (‘a) is also reported to have said:

الْعَفْوُ تَأْجُ الْمَكَارِمِ

Forgiveness is the crown of noble traits.²⁸

24 Bennie R. Crockett, *Addresses of the Mississippi Philosophical Association*, p. 199

25 Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān*, v.4, p. 782

26 Al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Al-Amālī*, p. 355

27 Al-Wāsiṭī, *‘Uyūn al-Ḥikam wa al-Mawā‘iz*, p. 114

28 Ibid, p. 19

Imam al-Bāqir (‘a) was once asked about the noble trait which has the most virtue, and he said:

الصَّبْرُ وَالسَّمَاحَةُ

Patience and open-handedness.²⁹

Imam al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have narrated the following tradition from the Holy Prophet (ṣ):

أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَبْعَدِكُمْ مِنِّي شَبَهًا؟ قَالُوا: بَلَى يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَقَالَ: الْفَاحِشُ الْمُتَفَحِّشُ، الْبِذِيءُ، الْبَخِيلُ، الْمُحْتَالُ، الْخَفُودُ، الْحُسُودُ، الْقَاسِي الْقَلْبُ، الْبَعِيدُ مِنْ كُلِّ خَيْرٍ يُرْجَى، عَزِيزُ الْمَأْمُونِ مِنْ كُلِّ شَرٍّ يُتَّقَى.

Should I not inform you of the most distant from me in resemblance? They said: Indeed tell us, O Apostle of Allāh. He (ṣ) said: the degenerate and shameless foul speaker, the stingy, the proud, the rancorous, the jealous, the stone hearted, one from whom no good originates, and from whose evil no one is safe.³⁰

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

إِيَّاكَ وَخِصْلَتَيْنِ: الصَّجْرُ وَالْكَسْلُ، فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ صَجَرْتَ لَمْ تَصْبِرْ عَلَى حَقٍّ وَإِنْ كَسَلْتَ لَمْ تُؤَدِّ حَقًّا

Beware of two characteristics: Vexation³¹ and laziness, for indeed if you are vexed you will not be patient on the truth, and if you are lazy, you will not observe a right.³²

Amīr al-mu’minīn ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) is reported to have said:

شَرُّ الْأَخْلَاقِ الْكِذْبُ وَالتَّفَاقُ

The most evil of character traits are lies and hypocrisy.³³

We have mentioned only a few of the ample traditions that explicitly reveal that we have absolute good or evil traits, and the theory of ethical relativism is baseless.

Those, however, who are adamant in their blind belief in ethical relativism would either be led to practically oppose their ideology through their behaviour and action, or be a victim of attraction towards the evil and repulsion from the good.

The most pathetic consequence for the proponent of such an idea would be to be deprived from adopting the character traits of Allāh, for which the human being was created. This is because for such a person, there is no absolute good trait. Likewise detaching oneself from “evil” would make no sense, for the same evil can be good sometimes.

(b) Belief in [Ethical] Determinism

Another reason why some are attracted to evil and repelled from good can be their belief in ethical determinism. This belief is a product of deviation from the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). The proponents of such an ideology are called Ash‘arites. They believe that human action is entirely compelled by God. So whatever any believer does, he does it by Allāh’s compulsion and force. In this case both the epitomes of justice as well as injustice are always good, for every action is

29 Al-Rayshahrī, *Mizān al-Hikmah*, v.1, p. 808

30 Al-Shaykh al-Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfi*, v.2, p. 291

31 The literal meaning of the word *al-ḍajr* is *al-qaliqu min al-ghamm* (uneasiness due to grief), Ref: Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, v.4, p. 481

32 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.69, p. 192

33 Al-Wāsiṭī, *‘Uyūn al-Hikam wa al-Mawā‘iz*, p. 293

entirely from Allāh (*min Allāh*) and through Allāh (*bi Allāh*).

The Ash‘arites, in order to prove their contention, would adhere to a set of verses of the Qur’ān, and abandon the rest. The Holy Qur’ān introduces such kind of people as follows:

الَّذِينَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْآنَ عِضِينَ

Those who reduced the Qur’ān into pieces. (15:91)

When the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) was asked what ‘idin meant in the above verse, he is reported to have said:

آمَنُوا بِبَعْضٍ وَكَفَرُوا بِبَعْضٍ

They believed in some parts and disbelieved in others.³⁴

And commenting on this verse, Ibn ‘Abbās is reported to have said:

هم أهل الكتاب جزّئوه أجزاء و آمنوا ببعضه وكفروا ببعضه

They are the People of the Book. They cut the Qur’ān into pieces and believed in some parts and disbelieved in others.³⁵

In order to rationalise their lavish and atrocious rule and mischief in the Islamic lands, the Banū Umayyah always supported the misleading ideology of determinism and coercion. In his *Al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-‘Adl wa al-Tawhīd*, Qaḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār says:

أظهر معاوية ان ما يأتيه بقضاء الله ومن خلقه، ليجعله عذرا في ما يأتيه ويوهم أنه مصيب فيه، وأن الله جعله إماما وولاه الأمر، وفشا ذلك في ملوك بني أمية

Mu‘āwiyah declared that whatever he does is by the decree of Allāh and from His works, to make it a pretext for what he does, and make people conjecture that he is right in his deed, and that Allāh has made him the leader and the guardian over the matter, and this [ideology] spread among the kings of Banū Umayyah.³⁶

It is also reported that Mu‘āwiyah once said:

لَوْ لَمْ يَرِنِي اللَّهُ أَهْلًا لِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ مَا تَرَكْنِي وَإِيَّاهُ، وَلَوْ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى مَا نَحْنُ فِيهِ لَعَيَّرَهُ!

If Allāh would not consider me to be suitable for this matter [of caliphate] He would not have left me with it, and if Allāh, the Exalted, would dislike the position we are in, He would have changed it.³⁷

He would also say the following:

أَنَا عَامِلٌ مِنْ عَمَّالِ اللَّهِ أُعْطِيَ مَنْ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ وَأَمْنَعُ مَنْ مَنَعَهُ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا لَعَيَّرَهُ

I am a worker from the workers of Allāh, I give to whosoever Allāh gives and refuse whosoever Allāh refuses. And if Allāh would have disliked a matter, He would have changed it.³⁸

34 Al-Bahrānī, *Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, p. 9

35 Ijāz al-Bayān, ‘*An Ma ‘ānī al-Qur’ān*, v.1, p. 473

36 Al-Jalālī, *Jihād al-Imām al-Sajjād (‘a)*, p. 90

37 Al-Kūrānī, *Jawāhir al-Ta’rikh*, v.2, pp. 226-227

38 Ibid

The Umayyads also tried to rationalise the Karbala massacre by their belief in determinism. Notice how Ibn Ziyād addresses Ḥaḍrat Zaynab (‘a) in his court:

كَيْفَ رَأَيْتِ صُنْعَ اللَّهِ بِأَخِيكَ وَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِكَ؟

How did you find Allāh’s dealing with your brother and your family?³⁹

This clearly shows that he is trying to say that whatever Yazīd and his men did were all the works of Allāh.

Ḥaḍrat Zaynab (‘a) in her intense perspicacity responded saying:

مَا رَأَيْتُ إِلَّا جَمِيلًا

I saw nothing but beauty.⁴⁰

Perhaps she wanted to inform Ibn Ziyād the following realities:

i) Whatever Allāh does is beautiful. He provided free will to everyone. Hence he would never coerce anyone into doing anything good or evil. He would permit them to do what they chose. In the same way as He provided the supporters of Yazīd with the ability to carry out what they chose, He provided Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his companions the ability to carry out what they chose. Whereas the supporters of Yazīd chose to be slaves of the world till the last moment, Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his companions chose to remain the slaves of Allāh till the last moment. Such ability to remain steadfast and retain their total submission to Allāh in front of the most challenging circumstances, till the last moment reveals, nothing but extreme patience, which, according to the Qur’ān, is *jamīl* (utter beauty). The Holy Qur’ān, quoting Prophet Ya‘qub, says that after realising the machination of the brothers of Yusuf (‘a), Prophet Ya‘qub said: *fa ṣabrūn jamīl* (and patience is beautiful!) (12:18,83). Hence “I saw nothing but beauty”.

ii) Although you saw the atrocious dimension of the event, we could see the celestial reality of the same, which depicted nothing but beauty.⁴¹

Another instance where the irrational belief of determinism is propounded by Ibn Ziyād is when he asks Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) his name, and the Imam (‘a) replies, “‘Alī son of al-Ḥusayn.” Thereupon Ibn Ziyād says:

أَلَيْسَ قَدْ قَتَلَ اللَّهُ عَلِيَّ بْنَ الْحُسَيْنِ؟

Isn’t it that Allāh surely killed ‘Alī son of al-Ḥusayn?

Correcting his foul speech, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) replies:

39 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.45, p. 115

40 Ibid, p. 116

41 Hence, unlike how Ibn Ziyād tried to picture the event, the companions of Karbala were encompassed with Allāh’s mercy and soaked in His love. In one of his beautiful interpretations of the tradition “...and I am from Ḥusayn”, Ayatullah Muḥammad Riḍā Rabbānī says in his work *Sarmastān-e-Ṣahbāye ‘Ishq (Intoxicated by the Wine of Intense Love)* says: The leader of the two realms, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Ḥusayn is the sovereign of intense love. He is the one who sacrificed himself in the way of intense love for God; he is the one who taught the lesson of showing love to every other person, and in reality he is the leader of those who were intoxicated by the wine of intense affection and Divine love. Was it not for his movement and uprising, there would have been no trace of Islam and religion. Hence, in reality he is the cause of the subsistence of Islam and religion. This is why the Doyen of the Apostles and Seal of the Prophets, Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (s) said, “I am from Ḥusayn”. (*Sarmastān-e-Ṣahbāye ‘Ishq*, pp. 25-26)

قَدْ كَانَ لِي أَخٌ يُسَمَّى عَلِيًّا قَتَلَهُ النَّاسُ

Indeed I had a brother called ‘Alī, whom the people killed.

Ibn Ziyād once again says:

بَلَى اللَّهُ قَتَلَهُ

Rather it was Allāh who killed him.

Correcting his speech once again, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) says:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَقَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا

Allāh takes the souls during their death... (39:42)

Upon this brave encounter, Ibn Ziyād orders that the Imam (‘a) be beheaded and Ḥaḍrat Zaynab (‘a) intercepts his evil orders by saying that if he wanted to kill Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (‘a) then she should be killed with him.

As‘ad Waḥīd al-Qāsim in his book *Azmat al-Khilāfah wa al-Imāmah wa Āthāruhā al-Mu‘āṣirah* says:

...وأما الحجاج، فقد قال بعد أن قتل رجلاً لإظهاره حب الإمام علي عليه السلام: اللهم أنت قتلته ولو شئت لمنعني منه. وهكذا فإن بني أمية - كما يذكر المؤرخون - كانوا يركزون على مسألة الجبر لتبرير سلوكهم ومظالمهم ضد المسلمين ليكونوا معذورين، فقتلوا معبد الجهني (على يد الحجاج سنة ٨٠ هجرية)، وغيلان الدمشقي (على يد هشام بن عبد الملك سنة ١٠٨ هجرية) لقولهما بحرية الإرادة.

...As for Ḥajjāj, after killing a man due to the latter’s expression of love for Imam ‘Alī (‘a), he said: O Allāh, you killed him, and if you wanted, you would have hampered me from doing it. And this was the tendency, for indeed Banū Umayyah, as the historians narrate, would focus on the subject of Divine compulsion to rationalise their behaviour and atrocities against the Muslims so that they are excused. They killed Ma‘bad al-Jahannī (at the hands of Ḥajjāj in the year 80 AH) and Ghāylān al-Dimishqī (at the hands of Hishām Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik in the year 106 AH) because of their proclamation of the freedom of will.⁴²

Apart from the fact that the sound human conscience experiences the existence of a free will in the human being, there are several verses of the Qur’ān that reveal this truth. Here below we quote three examples:

(i) The Jews, who claimed to be exceptional people, were asked by Allāh to seek death if they were really truthful. Then Allāh says:

وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

But they will not long for it ever because of what their hands have sent ahead, and Allāh knows best the wrongdoers. (2:95)

The phrase “*bimā qaddamat aydīhim*” (because of what their hands have sent ahead) explicitly proves the existence of free will in the human being.

⁴² As‘ad Waḥīd al-Qāsim, *Azmat al-Khilāfah wa al-Imāmah wa Āthāruhā al-Mu‘āṣirah*, p. 256; <http://www.shiaweb.org/books/khelafa/pa57.html>

(ii) The Holy Qur’ān says:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ

And say, “[This is] the truth from your Lord: let anyone who wishes believe it, and let anyone who wishes disbelieve it.”... (18:29)

This verse likewise needs no elucidation. It is crystal clear and vocally reveals that the human being has a free will and can choose whatever he wants. The phrase “*fa man shā’a*” (and let anyone who wishes) is worthy of reflection.

(iii) The Holy Qur’ān says:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

Indeed We have guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful. (76:3)

Here Allāh informs us that the human being is left to select his path. He is free to choose the path of thankfulness or ungratefulness.

The adherents of the prophetic tradition of *thaqalayn* however, negated the irrational belief of determinism and established that the human being is not forced to do anything by Allāh, but does everything by His support. Whenever he wills to do bad Allāh gives him the power to do it, but does not force him to do the deed. No one, they believe, has any kind of independent power whatsoever to do anything. Every kind of power, however minute it may be, is entirely Allāh’s. This is depicted in the words of remembrance ‘*Lā ḥawlā wa lā quwwata illā billāh*’ (there is no state nor power save that it is by Allāh’s support).

The aforementioned verses throw light upon the reality and show us that love for the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) always comes together with repulsion for their enemies. And since the human being is the sum total of his beliefs and actions, our repulsion is based on the sound human nature that is always repelled from imperfection and evil.

2) Deviation in Action such as Concealment of Human Disposition:

Due to excessive sin and disbelief, there are those who have eclipsed their innate disposition and therefore reckon evil as good, and vice versa. The Holy Qur’ān says the following about such people:

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا السُّوأَى أَن كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

Then the fate of those who committed misdeeds was that they denied the signs of Allāh and they used to deride them. (30:10)

Abū Baṣīr is reported to have said:

سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ: إِذَا أَذْنَبَ الرَّجُلُ خَرَجَ فِي قَلْبِهِ نُكْتَةٌ سَوْدَاءٌ فَإِن تَابَ ائْتَمَحَتْ وَإِن زَادَ زَادَتْ حَتَّى تَغْلِبَ عَلَى قَلْبِهِ فَلَا يَفْلَحُ بَعْدَهَا أَبَدًا.

I heard Abā Abdillāh [al-Ṣādiq (‘a)] saying: When a man sins, a black spot appears in his heart; and if he repents it is erased; but if he increases in sin it increases, until it overcomes the heart, after which he shall never prosper.⁴³

43 Al-‘Allāmah al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, v.7, p. 327

Explaining this phenomenon, Mullā Ṣadrā says:

...من فعل فعلا أو تكلم بقول، يظهر منه أثر في نفسه وحالة قلبية تبقى زمانا. وإذا تكررت الأفاعيل والأقاويل، استحكمت الآثار في النفس، فصارت الأحوال ملكات، إذ الفرق بين الملكة والحال بالشدة والضعف والاشتداد في الكيفية يؤدي إلى حصول صورة جوهرية هي مبدء مثل تلك الكيفية؛ كالحرارة الضعيفة في الفحم إذا اشتدت صارت صورة نارية محرقة، وكذلك الكيفية النفسانية إذا اشتدت صارت ملكة راسخة، أي صورة نفسانية هي مبدء آثار مختصة بها، فيصدر بسببها الفعل المناسب لها بسهولة من غير روية وتعمل.

...Whosoever performs a deed or utters a speech, it leaves an effect in his soul and a state of heart (*ḥāl*) that remains for some duration. And if the deeds and words are repeated, their effects become strengthened in the soul, and the states (*al-aḥwāl*) turn into fixed traits (*malakāt*), for the difference between a fixed trait (*malakah*) and a state (*ḥāl*) is in intensity and weakness; and intensity in quality (*kayfiyyah*) leads to attaining a substance form (*sūrah jawhariyyah*), which would [then] be the [generating] origin of a similar state; this can be illustrated by taking the example of a piece of coal; when its heat increases, it becomes a form of fire that burns. Such is the case with any quality of the soul; if it increases in intensity it becomes a firmly fixed trait, i.e. a form of the soul which would be the origin of its according effects; hence because of that, the action appropriate to it ensues easily without any deliberation and thought.

In brief, we understand that:

- Any act that we do, whether in the form of speech or otherwise leaves an effect on the soul which is known as a *ḥāl* (a state).
- If a particular act whether good or bad is repeated, the *ḥāl* (state) changes into a *malakah* (fixed trait) which unites with the soul.
- The *malakah* then serves as the origin of its respective action.

Observe that when Shimr is asked by Imam al-Ḥusayn (‘a) whether he knows who the Imam (‘a) was, the wretched murderer said that he very well knew but considered the gift that he would receive from Yazīd to be better. This is the state of one whose heart has been eclipsed.



Ziyarat ‘Āshūrā’ if recited constantly can really awaken and motivate us to begin our inner war and struggle and pave the way for an ultimate victory over our greatest enemy. When this is realized, our declarations would exactly reflect our inner states. The fruits of the inner revolution are worthy of contemplation. Imam al-Husayn (‘a) who serves as one of the intermediaries of Divine grace (*wasā’iṭ al-fayḍ al-ilāhiyyah*), can quickly transport the human soul to the level of *tawḥīd* for which it was created. The human being has the ability to ascend to a level where he dissolves in the All-Beloved, and subsists with Him.

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