

# MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF GOD,  
THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN  
A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES



**The Ahlul Bayt (A) World Assembly**

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# MESSAGE OF THAQALAYN (UK ED.)

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The *Message of Thaqaalayn* feels responsible to present the teachings of Islam in general and the School of the Ahlul Bayt (a) in particular with complete honesty and accuracy and at the same time to emphasise the common ground that binds all Muslims together. Strengthening ties of brotherhood amongst all Muslims, whatever school of Islam they may adhere to, and establishing genuine, enduring and intimate friendship between all those who believe in God are two of the main aims and tasks of the *Message of Thaqaalayn* and indeed, any responsible media.

**Editor-in-Chief**

# THE BEGINNING OF SERVITUDE: CONTEMPLATION ON THE SPIRITUAL AND EPISTEMIC ASPECTS OF FASTING

MOHAMMAD ALI SHOMALI

TRANSLATED BY MOHAMMAD JAVAD SHOMALI

**ABSTRACT:** Fasting is a practice that has always been recommended by health experts throughout history, and is practiced in religions other than Islam, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism. This article delves into the spiritual and epistemic features and benefits of fasting; it purges the root of lust, strengthens a person's will power, and improves a person's ability to contemplate. A person's fast comes with restraining himself from immoral thoughts and actions, and has a lasting effect. Additionally, several narrations are offered to reveal its significance as well as its effects on people in this world and in the next.

In this paper, we will study some narrations to demonstrate the importance of fasting and its effects on people in this world and the hereafter. Then, we will have a brief analysis on how fasting functions in one's spiritual progress as well as in gaining wisdom and better understanding.

### *Narrations on the importance of fasting*

In the famous Hadith of Mi'raj,<sup>1</sup> God told His Prophet: "Worshipping is [consists of] ten parts, out of which nine parts is gaining *halal* (permissible) provision." The Prophet then asked God, "What is the first act of worship?" or more precisely, the Prophet asked what the first step of servitude was. God answered, "The first is silence and fasting." Then the Prophet asked, "Oh my Lord, what is the outcome of fasting?" God replied, "Fasting brings wisdom; wisdom brings knowledge; and knowledge brings certainty. When a servant achieves certainty it no longer matters to him whether he lives in difficulty or in ease."<sup>2</sup>

An explanation regarding this narration and the effect of fasting on one's ability to understand will be offered afterwards in this article.

In a sermon, the Prophet said, "Whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan by listening [to what is useful for his success] and prevents his ears, eyes, tongue and his other organs from immoral acts – such as lying and backbiting – with the intention of getting closer to God, God will make him close to Himself in a way that he will be close in level to Prophet Abraham."<sup>3</sup>

In another narration the Prophet said, "God says 'All righteous acts of man will be rewarded ten to seventy times more than they deserve - except for patience, which is mine and I will reward it.'" Then the

<sup>1</sup> Prophet Muhammad's ascension to heaven.

<sup>2</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 74, p. 27. The hadith reads as follows:

" يا احمد! ان العباده عشر اجزاء: تسعه منها طلب الحلال ... " قال: " يا رب! و ما اول العباده؟ " قال: " اول العباده: الصمت و الصوم. " " قال: " يا رب! و ما ميراث الصوم؟ " قال: " الصوم يورث الحكمة، والحكمة تورث المعرفة، والمعرفة تورث اليقين، فاذا استيقن العبد لا يبالي كيف اصبح بعسر ام ببسر. "

<sup>3</sup> *Wasa'il al-Shia*, vol. 10, p. 164. The original Arabic text is as follows:

عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ فِي خُطْبَةٍ لَهُ: مَنْ صَامَ شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ فِي إِتْقَانٍ وَ سَكْوَةٍ وَ كَفٍّ سَمْعَهُ وَ بَصَرَهُ وَ لِسَانَهُ وَ فَرْجَهُ وَ جَوَارِحَهُ مِنَ الْكُذْبِ وَ الْحَرَامِ وَ الْغَيْبَةِ تَقَرَّبًا (قَرَّبَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ) حَتَّى تَمَسَّ رُكْبَتَاهُ رُكْبَتِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلِ الرَّحْمَنِ ع



Prophet said: "Thus, the reward of patience is stored in the divine knowledge and patience [here] means fasting."<sup>1</sup> It has also been stated in the Qur'an that only those who fast will receive unlimited reward:

انما يوفى الصابرون اجرهم بغير حساب

*Indeed the patient will be paid in full their reward  
without any reckoning. (Qur'an 39:10)*

Imam Sadiq said, "Fasting from food and drinks is not accomplished only by not eating and drinking; when you fast, your ears, eyes, tongue and your body should fast. Remain silent except for when you want to say a good thing. And be considerate to your servants."<sup>2</sup>

These narrations show how fasting is amongst the most important factors that bring about God's pleasure and hence needs special attention. The question that rises at this point is: What is the philosophy behind the emphasis of fasting?

Fasting is examined from different aspects as seen in the following:

### **A) Fasting is a form of non-action**

One may wonder how all these rewards are given to a person who fasts, especially considering that he does not do any particular act. Performing a prayer, reciting the Qur'an, or going on a pilgrimage are actions we perform; however, we do not do anything when we fast. Indeed, similar to silence, fasting is a form of non-action (*tark*). Interestingly, according to the above narration, the best of worship or

<sup>1</sup> *Wasa'il al-Shia*, vol. 7, p. 295. The original Arabic text is as follows:

قال رسول الله (ص) قال الله عزوجل: كل اعمال ابن آدم بعشرة اضعافها الى سبعة ضعف الا الصبر؛ فانه لى وانا اجزى به " فثواب الصبر مخزون فى علم الله و الصبر الصوم.

<sup>2</sup> *Wasa'il al-Shia*, vol. 7, p. 118. The original Arabic text is as follows:

ليس الصيام من الطعام و الشراب ان لا يأكل الانسان و لا يشرب فقط و لكن اذا صمت فليصم سمعك و بصرک و لسانك و بطنك و فرجک و احفظ يدك و فرجک و اكثر السكوت الا من خير و ارفق بخادمك

the beginning of servitude, i.e. silence and fasting, are accomplished by restraining oneself from performing certain actions. For the former, one must not talk, backbite, and lie. For the latter, one must not eat or drink. This shows that if man does not ruin his capital, he will attain closeness to God. It is important that man does not commit any harmful acts.

In a conversation between the Prophet and Abu Dharr, the Prophet said, “Oh Abu Dharr, prayer with goodness is needed as much as salt is needed for the food.”<sup>1</sup> According to this narration, if a pious person prays a little, his prayer will be granted. As even a little amount of salt can flavour food, a little of good action while not committing sins or wrongdoing can help. Of course, it is better to try; however, one’s main endeavour should be to seek piety. Some people pay much attention to quantity; they perform many good actions, such as reciting or invoking or frequently performing pilgrimages. Though these are unquestionably very good acts on the divine path, these are deeds that benefit those who strive to first prevent themselves from committing sins. The one who has many preferable deeds while simultaneously committing sins is like a person who has a backpack with a hole at the bottom of it; all day long he frequently and quickly fills the bag though at the end, he is left with nothing. If one mends his bag, even a small object will be saved for him no matter how much gold and jewellery he accumulates. In the famous hadith of *Qurbe Nawafil*, God says:

None of my servants has approached me by a thing that is dearer to me than wajibat (the obligatory deeds). [Then] By doing the nawafil (preferable deeds) my servant approaches me to an extent that I will love him. And whenever I love a servant I will be his ear by which he hears, his eyes by which he sees, and his hand by which

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<sup>1</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol 77, page 85. The Arabic text is as follows:

يا اباذر: يكفى من الدعاء مع البر ما يكفى الطعام من الملح.

he uses. And if he calls Me I will reply and if he asks for something I will grant it.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, a person must first perform the wajibat and restrain from muharramat (prohibited acts). It is when this step has been taken that the nawafil and mustahabat (preferable deeds) will become useful and will take man to the peak of perfection which is proximity to God.

Thus, perhaps one of the reasons why fasting and silence have been highly emphasized is to help man avoid any obstacles to take him to towards God. Of course, recommended deeds will speed this up and take him to higher levels; however, as mentioned, the first step is to refrain from actions that are wrong and prevent development. This is the most challenging part. If we were asked to recite five sections (*juz'*) of the Qur'an it would be easier for us than to be asked to remain silent for the same amount of time. Thus, one of the features of fasting is that when fasting, man restrains from certain actions, thereby developing greater control over his behaviour and deeds.

### ***B) There is little room for insincere intentions in fasting***

One aspect of fasting is that there is less likelihood that one holds insincere intentions, or shows off (*riya'*), because it is not visible to others. Others notice when one is praying or reciting the Qur'an; however, fasting goes unnoticed as long as the person does not want others to know or unless one claims he is doing so. This is perhaps why God said "Fasting is mine" – because there is less possibility of showing off. Similarly, since nothing is to be done during fasting, there is no deed to be magnified in one's eyes; thus, it is less likely for man to gain false pride. Man can nonetheless feel arrogant as he finds the

<sup>1</sup> *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, pp. 352-353. The Arabic text is as follows:

ما يتقرب الى عبد من عبادى بشيء احب الى مما افترضت عليه و انه ليتقرب الى بالنافلة حتى احبه فاذا احببته كنت اذا سمعه الذى يسمع به و بصره الذى يبصر به و يده التى يبطش بها . ان دعائى اجبته و ان سألنى اعطيته .

few hours of not eating and drinking a great deed worthy of a valuable reward. Thus, there is no guarantee and it needs care and attention.

***C) Fasting dries the root of lust***

Man can balance his instincts and put his animalistic desires under the control of his mind through fasting. Fasting disarms the ego. Sometimes a person who fasts has no desire of doing many things, especially in the state of hunger and thirst for an extended period of time. While it is possible to fast without getting excessively thirsty or hungry in some countries, fasts performed on long and hot summer days can make one very hungry and thirsty. In this state, man's animalistic tendencies become suppressed to an extent that one is unlikely to desire or have the power of thinking about worthless matters. As said in some narrations, the Prophet used to encourage youths to getting married, and to fast if marriage was not possible for them.

***D) Fasting can be performed in conjunction with other actions and has a lasting effect***

The effect of fasting lasts throughout the day while performing other good actions. The direct effect of other deeds – such as reciting the Qur'an – is usually limited to the time it is being performed. Without a doubt, all deeds have a continual spiritual effect on man. However, this effect is not like the effect that exists at the time of performing that action. In other words, the direct and enormous effect of every deed is at the moment that it is being performed. For most of the acts of worship it is usually necessary to stop other activities to gain such an effect. This means most of the acts of worship and recommended acts are in the same rank as each other and therefore when one gets involved in another action he will no longer be able to continue performing the other previous act and reaping its benefit. For example, prayer is considered prayer and its effect is experienced as long as one does not

do any conflicting deed besides it. When you begin doing another act, you are no longer performing prayer.

On the contrary, fasting does not have to be performed in exclusion of other acts of worship. In other words, fasting is not in the same rank as that of other acts; rather, it acts like a tool to help them. It does not prevent other actions from being performed and thus its effect is not confined to a specific time. Its effect continues even while walking, talking at work, studying, and so forth. It is certainly possible to perform recommended prayers while walking, but there are many actions which cannot be done simultaneously. Indeed, fasting is considered to be a high level of remembrance of God which can be done even while playing with the children, communicating, or performing other daily actions.

The Qur'an describes a group of people as:

الذين يذكرون الله قياما و قعودا و على جنوبهم

*“...those who remember God standing, sitting, and lying on their sides.”* (Qur'an, 3:119)

Additionally, fasting stimulates a person's remembrance of God and is feasible for everyone. However, to achieve this level of remembrance through actions other than fasting where one is able to remember God while performing other actions can only be achieved after much preparation and perhaps at the final levels of perfection. Therefore, firstly, fasting has effects like weakening the animal side of man, and secondly, this effect persists even while performing other deeds. Thus, fasting guarantees a day free of evil for man and acts like a tool to strengthen one's faith throughout the day.

Furthermore, because the duration of this act of worship is long, it leaves a more lasting effect. One who takes heed of God's commands

and restrains himself from forbidden actions all day long is affected greatly and gains more than one who performed a recommended action for, say, half an hour. Moreover, one keeps reaffirming the intention to obey the order of God through a period of one month, and this has a very powerful effect. Thus, fasting in the month of Ramadan is great in comparison to other acts of worship.

#### ***E) Fasting helps one speak less***

Fasting has a direct effect on talking. A fasting person does not always have energy to talk in excess, especially for useless things. Bear in mind, many of our problems are caused by saying things at the wrong time or place. The Prophet once said to a person who asked for advice, "Hold your tongue." When the man repeated his question, again the Prophet said, "Hold your tongue. Does anything except the harvest of one's tongue put him into the Fire by one's face?" In another narration, Ma'adh ibn Jabal asked the Prophet, "Will we be questioned about our speech?" to which the Prophet replied, "Does anything except the harvest of one's tongue put him face first into the Fire?"<sup>1</sup>

Thus, with less talking, a more appropriate fast transpires, resulting in strengthening a person's faith and elevating him spiritually to strengthen his faith to eventually take him closer to God.

#### ***F) Fasting strengthens man's willpower***

Another effect of fasting is that it enables man's will to become stronger. The first necessary requirements in approaching God and becoming proximate to Him are a strong will and good intentions. We recite in some of our supplications:

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<sup>1</sup> Warram Collection, volume 1, page 105

Indeed – oh my Lord – I know that the best provisions for a journey in your way are a firm determination, pure intention, and a truthful heart.<sup>1</sup>

In the supplication for the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab we also recite:

I know the best provision for the person who steps in your path, indeed, is a strong will with which he chooses You [over any other thing].<sup>2</sup>

In another supplication, we read:

A firm determination and a true and sincere word of your servant – ‘Oh my Lord’ – is enough for you. And You are where your servant considers You to be.<sup>3</sup>

It is impossible to achieve anything without a strong will. Sometimes a person wants to avoid sins but lacks the willpower to restrain himself when faced with certain situations. Believers are fond of good and dislike evil, as said in the Qur’an:

حب اليكم الايمان و زينة في قلوبكم و كره اليكم الكفر و الفسوق و العصيان

*God has endeared faith to you and made it appealing in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you faithlessness, transgression and disobedience. (Qur’an 49:7)*

<sup>1</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, Vol. 86, p. 318. The Arabic text is as follows:

اللهم و قد علمت ان افضل زاد الراحل اليك عزم اراده و اخلاص نية و صادق طوية

<sup>2</sup> *Mafatih al-Jinan*, Supplication of the 27<sup>th</sup> of Rajab. Arabic text is as follows:

و قد علمت ان افضل زاد الراحل اليك عزم اراده يختارك بها

<sup>3</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 15, p. 275. Arabic text is as follows:

يكفيك عزم اراده و ان يقول العبد بنية صادقة و لسان صادق يا رب! فتكون عند ظن عبدك بك

It is due to our weak willpower that we face numerous problems. Ask any Muslim regarding sin, and they will show disdain for it; in spite of this, sins are committed, and this is caused by a lack of strong will.

Regarding Ayatullah Hujjat, Ayatullah Mutahhari shares an anecdote:

He used to spend most of his time smoking cigarettes. When he got sick as a result, and went to Tehran for treatment, he was told by doctors to stop smoking, especially because it could cause pulmonary disease. At first he joked and said, 'I use my lungs for smoking; why else would I need lungs?' When the doctors told him it was truly harmful for his health, he was determined not to smoke anymore. With one firm decision, it was over [he never smoked again]."<sup>1</sup>

Fasting is one way to make your self-control stronger. For one month, a fasting person avoids pleasures such as eating and drinking primarily for the sake of Allah; as a result, his will is strengthened. God has also ordained hard *kaffarah* (an act of worship to be done to compensate for an unfulfilled obligation – in this case fasting) to strengthen a person's will. Had it not been for this strictness, many would instantly break their fast. One who cannot avoid drinking tea or smoking for merely an hour and avoids it for the entire day for God's sake will definitely strengthen his will. This is a great capital that can motivate a person to achieve anything he wants.

In essence, persistence is the key to success:

وان لو استقاموا على الطريقة لاسقيناهم ماء غدقا

*If they are steadfast on the path [of Allah], We shall provide them with abundant water... (Qur'an 72:16)*

<sup>1</sup> *Spiritual Lectures*, Sadra publications, 1991, p. 255.



Some scholars consider this water to represent knowledge and wisdom; and that this verse indicates that man can gain anything through persistence. It is said about Mulla Husaynquli Hamedani – a great mystic and the teacher of Ayatullah Qadi – that after a hard effort in journeying towards God through mysticism, he was not able to achieve anything. One day he saw a bird at the corner of his room attempting to eat a piece of dry bread. After trying perhaps close to a thousand tries, the bird finally managed to break a small piece of bread and eat it. Being moved by what he had seen, he suddenly realized that similar to the bird, he needed persistence, that he should not be disappointed too quickly, even after few years of effort. He continued his spiritual journey and reached a high level of mysticism. He then became an inspiration to many others.

Imam Ali said, “High courage and feasting do not go together.”<sup>1</sup> Being used to partying does not come together with having a strong will. One can either be a man of war or a man of partying.

### **G) *Fasting improves man's power of contemplation***

Another outcome of fasting is that it improves man's power of contemplation in helping him better comprehend. In the above-mentioned *Hadith al-Mi'raj*, hungeriness results in wisdom, wisdom brings forth knowledge, and knowledge leads to certainty. The hadith continues: “When one gains certainty, he does not mind whether he is an easy life or a difficult one.”<sup>2</sup> This implies that fasting – along with – silence – is so significant that without it a person cannot step in the path of serving God. Moreover, fasting has such great impact on one's understanding and spirituality that it brings forth virtues such as wisdom, knowledge, certainty, and even satisfaction. Indeed, the latter

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<sup>1</sup> " لاتجتمع عزيمة و وليمة " (*Nahj al-Balaghah*, Fayd al-Islam edition, page 692, sermon 211)

<sup>2</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 74, p. 27.

part of the narration is derived from the verse: “*Worship your Lord until certainty comes to you (15:99).*” This is because fasting is the first part of worshipping and through a specific process, it results in certainty.

What is meant by the wisdom that fasting brings is not just knowledge; rather, it is a state in which the wise person considers all logical factors involved in cognition and does not yield to his emotions. Minimizing the effect of emotions on one hand and avoiding both intentional and unintentional fallacies on the other enables a person to increase his or her cognition and knowledge. In other words, what is meant by a wise person is not necessarily a person who has much knowledge; rather, it is the one who walks in the path of knowledge armed with patience and persistence and is not satisfied with anything less than proof or reasoning, does not heed to improper emotions, and puts all epistemological and psychological factors in their place. Thus, wisdom is the power of methodical gaining of knowledge; for this reason, it is introduced as a means of gaining knowledge as mentioned in the hadith.

With regard to how fasting brings wisdom, fasting increases the level of one’s perception and helps sharpen the mind since it reduces distractions. It also weakens one’s lust and harmful imagination which prevents the affect of emotions and other elements that logically should not bear on the process of understanding. In addition, God has special favour and support for true seekers of knowledge and this may work in ways we are aware of in ways we aren’t.

As for the relation between knowledge and faith, knowledge and certainty are usually known to be identical although not in this case. According to *Hadith al-Mi’raj*, certainty is different from knowledge; it is only achieved after knowledge. Certainty here is not a firm verification of any matter that everyone – including the unfaithful – can achieve. This ‘certainty’ has four qualities:

1. It is prior to knowledge and cognition.
2. It is achievable for a person who has stepped in the path of servitude of God.
3. It brings about a kind of calmness and assurance; and because one does not worry or feel anxious when facing difficulties, he reaches such a level of spiritual capacity that difficulty and comfort do not make a difference to him.
4. The object of this certainty must be something specific because according to a well-known intellectual rule in the principles of jurisprudence, there must always be a relation or proportion between the subject and the predicate; as a result, here there must be a relation between being certain and not being affected by difficulties of one's life.

Considering that these four qualities are interconnected, certainty means the tranquillity and confidence which comes after knowledge under the light of belief and tendency towards religious truths. This confidence overcasts all aspects of man in such way that even his emotions are directed. Such a person does not turn wild by pleasures or flustered by difficulties. Therefore, the last phrase of the narration, which implies that certainty requires inattention to difficulties and pleasures, is in line with the verse that advises people not to get upset because of losing or encountering problems<sup>1</sup> and not to become overjoyed with achievements.<sup>2</sup>

In another phrase of *Hadith al-Mi'raj*, God says, "Oh Ahmad, it is desirable if you could taste the sweetness of hunger, solitude, silence and their effects." The Prophet asked, "Oh my Lord, what is the result

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<sup>1</sup> "So that you may not grieve for what escapes you nor for what befell you." (The Qur'an 3:153)

<sup>2</sup> "So that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor exult for what comes your way." (The Qur'an 57 :23)

of hunger?" God answered, "Wisdom, saving your heart (from temptations), proximity to me, being at ease among the people, honesty, and disregard for difficulty and joy."<sup>1</sup> Every purposeful hunger is meant here, not merely that which is caused by fasting. However, since fasting usually comes with hunger, it has these effects as well as benefits from other aspects of fasting as an obligation. It also seems that an ideal fast is a kind in which one feels hunger and thirst; otherwise, if a person does not feel the need to eat during the day due to, say, overeating, his achievements would be less.

Thus, the results of hunger while fasting as explained above are: a) wisdom, b) saving the heart from temptations, and having spiritual stability and steadiness, and c) gaining proximity to God by doing what He desires and gaining knowledge. In short, fasting strengthens a person's ability to avoid difficulties and any kind of unnecessary customs, to not being afraid of telling the truth, and to not care about difficulties and joy.

In one narration, God told Prophet David:

Oh David, I put five things in five things but people look for them in other places and do not find them. I put knowledge in hunger and effort though people search for it in ease and being full, and thus they do not find it. I put honour in my obedience though they search it in serving the kings, and they do not find it. I put richness in contentment but they seek it in wealth, so they do not find it. I placed my pleasure in not being pleased of oneself but people seek it in their pleasure and do not find it. I put ease

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<sup>1</sup> *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 77, p. 22. The Arabic text is as follows:

يا احمد ، لو ذقت حلاوة الجوع و الصمت و الخلوة و ما ورثوا منها . قال : يارب !  
 ما ميراث الجوع ؟ قال : الحكمة و حفظ القلب و التقرب الي و الحزن الدائم و خفة  
 المؤونة بين الناس و قول الحق و لا يبالي عاش بيسر ام بعسر .

in Paradise but then again they search for it in this world and they do not find it.<sup>1</sup>

Imam Ali said, “Gluttony is in contradiction with intelligence and intellect.”<sup>2</sup> Just as feasting and war are opposed, gluttony and knowledge, cognition, and lack of faith, are similarly incompatible.

We humbly ask the merciful God to helps us achieve His pleasure and enable us to get the maximum effect from fasting.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. vol. 78, p. 453. The Arabic text is as follows:

أوحى الله تعالى الى داوود(ع): يا داوود! انى وضعت خمسة فى خمسة والناس يطلبونها فى خمسة غيرها فلا يجدونها و وضعت العلم فى الجوع و الجهد و هم يطلبونه فى الشبع و الراحة فلا يجدونه و وضعت العز فى طاعتي و هم يطلبون فى خدمة السلطان فلا يجدونه و وضعت الغنى فى القناعة و هم يطلبونه فى كثرة المال فلا يجدونه و وضعت رضى فى سحق النفس و هم يطلبونه فى رضا النفس فلا يجدونه و وضعت الراحة فى الجنة و هم يطلبونها فى الدنيا فلا يجدونها.

<sup>2</sup> *Mustadrak ul-Wasail*, vol. 16, p. 221. Arabic text is as follows:

لايتجمع الفطنة و البطنة.



# FORGIVENESS IN THE MUNAJAT SHA'BANIYYAH

ARIFA HUDDA

**ABSTRACT:** Communicating with the divine can take various forms; among these, the most powerful heart-to-heart conversation is found in the spiritually-potent whispered prayer known as *Munaajaat Sha'baaniyyah*. What follows in this piece is a glimpse of the concept of forgiveness in the whispered prayer, and a description of its various forms, that is, the various types of seeking forgiveness and accepting an apology, as well the reasons for why people accept apologies from one another. Lastly, how to address Allah when seeking repentance will be addressed. Our asking for forgiveness from Him should be such that we plead with Him until He accepts our apology. If a person wants Allah's forgiveness and mercy we are to manifest this trait of Allah – the Oft-Forgiver – within ourselves; and in order for Allah to forgive us, then we need to forgive others as well.

The beautiful “Whispered Prayer” known as *Munaajaat Sha'baniyyah* - also referred to as the Munaajaat of Imam Ali – was recited by him and the Imams, and ranks amongst the most sublime of their prayers.

Islam consists of various methods of communication and communion with Allah – namely, the recitation of the Noble Qur'an, the supplication (*du'a*), and the whispered prayer (*munaajaat*).

Unlike the whispered prayer, *du'a* is a general and encompassing term literally meaning ‘to call upon [someone]’. It can be recited in a

number of ways: from far away or close by, loudly or quietly, from a person known to the listener or a stranger – these calls are referred to as *du'a*. In the Islamic tradition, such an appeal forms an inner connection between the finite and the Infinite – the servant and Allah, the Most High.

However, the *munaajaat* – or whispered – prayer – and its source word in Arabic, *najwa*, is a whisper or secret talk – a specific communication with someone such that no one else can hear this communication – in essence, is a form of spiritual intimacy between two individuals.

Therefore, in a *Munaajaat*, sometimes Allah communicates to a person (through inspiration) or people communicate to Allah, and this is what is known as a dialogue or reciprocal form of communication.

In this regard, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq beautifully states:

وَإِنَّ الْعَبْدَ إِذَا تَخَلَّى بِسَيِّدِهِ فِي جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ [ الْمُظْلِمِ ] وَ نَاجَاهُ أَتَيْتَ اللَّهُ النُّورَ فِي قَلْبِهِ، فَإِذَا قَالَ: يَا رَبِّ يَا رَبِّ، نَادَاهُ الْجَلِيلُ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ: لَبَّيْكَ عَبْدِي سَأَلَنِي أُعْطَيْتَ وَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَيَّ أَكْفَيْتَ. ثُمَّ يَقُولُ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ لِمَلَائِكَتِهِ: يَا مَلَائِكَتِي، انظُرُوا إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي فَقَدْ تَخَلَّى بِي فِي جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ الْمُظْلِمِ وَ الْبَطْلُونَ لَا هُونَ وَ الْغَافِلُونَ نِيَامُ اشْهَدُوا أَنِّي غَفَرْتُ لَهُ

And surely when the servant, in the darkness of night, secludes himself with his Master (Allah) and engages in the whispered prayer to Him, Allah confirms the Divine light (*noor*) in his [the servant's] heart. Then, when the person calls out, 'O Lord! O Lord!' The Sublime One (*al-Jaleel*), may He be Glorified and Exalted, calls out to His servant, 'Here I am My servant. Ask Me and I will grant you; have complete reliance upon Me and I will be sufficient for you. Then He, may He be Glorified and Exalted, proclaims to His angels, 'O My angels! Look towards My servant; indeed, he has secluded himself in the



darkness of the night with Me, while the spiritually idle people are engaged in futile acts and the heedless ones are asleep. Bear witness that indeed I have forgiven him.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the *Munaajaat* is such that one speaks knowing that Allah has heard him, responded to him, and has even asked His angels to help this servant.

There are many well-known whispered prayers conveyed to us through the endless teachings of the Ahlul Bayt, peace be upon them; some examples of these are the fifteen whispered prayers (*Munaajaat*) of Imam Zaynul Abideen, which can be found at the end of *as-Sahifah as-Sajjadiyah*;<sup>2</sup> the *Munaajaat* of Imam Ali, in which he used to recite and is famously known as the “*Munaajaat of Imam Ali in Masjid al-Kufa*”; and the *Munaajaat Sha'baniyyah* which was a personal favourite of the late Ayatullah Khomeini, the late founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who recommended its recitation when he wrote his final will and testament. He said that it is not known to him if there is any other intimate whispered prayer or supplication that has been recited by all of the 12 Imams other than *Munaajaat Sha'baniyyah*.

Thus, *Munaajaat* is an expression of our love to Allah; it is the language of love - not the language of logic. It contains various etiquettes of invocation to Allah – how to ask Him for forgiveness and reach out for His mercy.

### ***Diverse ways of seeking pardon***

In the following, the part of *Munaajaat Sha'baniyyah* that deals with a servant pleading for forgiveness from Allah for his wrongdoings and

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<sup>1</sup> *Mustadrak al-Wasaail*, Volume 5, Pg. 207

<sup>2</sup> For an in-depth and inspiring explanation of each of these Whispered Prayers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Imam, please refer to the lectures of Shaykh Mohammad Ali Shomali found at [www.quranstudy.com](http://www.quranstudy.com).

evil deeds will be used as a springboard to describe the different types of seeking pardon.

For example, let's say a person says something unpleasant to his friend during an argument with him, regrets it shortly afterwards, and resolves to ask him for forgiveness. One must not convince himself that he did not do anything wrong; rather, one must acknowledge that something wrong was done, and then seek forgiveness by humbling himself until his friend accept his words of repentance. In this situation, one will be forgiven by their friend, God-willing.

In another kind of seeking forgiveness, a person understands that in order to reach perfection they are to ask for forgiveness for their evil actions with humility and the proper etiquette. However, it does not matter for this person if the other side accepts one's repentance or not; they merely want to be content that they have "fulfilled their obligation". And this is all that is important for them; nothing else matters. They feel that they are not really in need of having their forgiveness accepted; they simply say sorry out of a sense of duty.

A third instance is when a person has killed another individual and a sentence has been made against him that unless the family of the deceased one forgives the perpetrator, he must be put to death. For him it is very crucial that his forgiveness is accepted by the other party, and therefore he will plead and plead with the family and beg them to pardon him because he realizes that he is in a life and death situation.

When one is seeking forgiveness from Allah for the many sins committed, it should resemble the third type of forgiveness in pleading to Him; it is very crucial that our apology be accepted by Him and we make ourselves worthy of attaining His forgiveness.

In the following part of *Munaajaat Sha'baniyyah*, we recite:

إِلَهِي اعْتِذَارِي إِلَيْكَ اعْتِذَارُ مَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَغْنِ عَنْ قَبُولِ عُذْرِهِ فَاقْبَلْ عُذْرِي يَا  
أَكْرَمَ مَنْ اعْتَذَرَ إِلَيْهِ الْمُسِيئُونَ

My God! My offering excuses to you is the offering of excuses of one who cannot do without the acceptance of this excuse – so accept my excuse – O the Most Generous of those to whom the evil doers offer excuses.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore as we mentioned, our asking for forgiveness from Allah should be such that we plead with Him until He accepts our apology because there is no other choice that we have in the matter. If He does not forgive us, we are doomed in this world and the next.

A similar phrase in *Du'a Kumayl* reads:

اللَّهُمَّ فَاقْبَلْ عُذْرِي

*O Allah! So then please accept my excuse!*<sup>2</sup>

### ***Acceptance of an apology***

There are several dimensions in the acceptance of an apology:

1. The other party may simply say “I accept your apology”;
2. Some may console you by saying, “I know that you did not do this [wrong act] intentionally;”
3. Others may remind the other person how to ask for forgiveness, a more admirable method;

<sup>1</sup> Mafātīḥ al-Jinān, al-Qummī, ‘Abbās, Munājāt Sha‘bāniyyah

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Du‘a Kumayl

4. Another one may respond by apologizing and consoling them for the wrong action that was committed by the wrongdoer.

Therefore, an ordinary person will plainly accept the apology, a spiritually higher person would indirectly teach them how to ask forgiveness, and the highest spiritual level includes the one who forgives beforehand and even consoles the wrongdoer for his or her evil action.

### ***Reasons for why people accept apologies from one another***

The reasons for accepting apologies from others include the following:

1. One may accept the apology of another person with the intention or hope that if one day they are need of something or require help, they can remind that person, and almost in a way, make them feel obliged to help them out *only* because they had accepted their apology previously;
2. Some people may forgive another person because they too in turn want to be forgiven by them;
3. Often times, friends may forgive each other because they want their friendship to take on a new or greater form and in turn they want to personally benefit from that;
4. One wants to be forgiven by Allah, and we know that if one wants the forgiveness and mercy of Allah to be showered upon us, then we need to manifest this trait of Allah – the Oft-Forgiver within ourselves; and in order for Allah to forgive us, we need to forgive others as well.

In the above scenarios, a person is looking at the rewards involved – be it from other people or from Allah. There is some aim in mind for which a person is willing to forgive the other party for their

shortcomings. However, when Allah accepts our apologies – provided that we plead to Him and beg Him in the right way – then it is not for any reward or benefit that He receives or is looking for; rather, He forgives us out of His greatness and exaltedness. In fact, not only does He accept our apology and forgive our lapses, but He even teaches and guides us on *how* to do so.

All praise belongs to him – the Most Merciful, the Most Forgiving – and we pray that we can forgive others just as we would like Allah to forgive us and overlook all of our many slips and faults.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO *THE COLLECTION OF WARRAM*

MORTEZA KARIMI

**ABSTRACT:** *Tanbih al-Khawatir wa Nuzhat al-Nawazir*, better known as *Majmu'a (Collection)* of Warram, is a celebrated work on moral and ethical doctrines of the Shi'a school of thought. Written by a renowned and reliable scholar, this book enjoys a prominent position among the books on ethics and etiquette of pious people. In addition to the biography of the author and various names of the book, this paper presents a general outlook of its authenticity and content, and offers citations of its narrations in other hadith collections.

Warram ibn Abi Firas's *Tanbih al-Khawatir wa Nuzhat al-Nawazir*, better known as *Majmu'at Waram (The Collection of Warram)* is a precious collection of narrations on the moral practices and etiquettes of God-wary and pious believers.

## ***Biography of the author***

Warram ibn Abi Firas is counted among the scholars of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H. He was born in Hilla, the centre of Shi'a teachings, particularly in jurisprudence. No information currently exists regarding the date of his birth. Most researchers believe that he belonged to an Arab tribe among the descendants of Malik al-Ashtar, the great

companion of Imam Ali.<sup>1</sup> According to this view, his lineage is as follows: Abu al-Husayn Warram ibn Abi Firas ibn Hamdan ibn 'Isa ibn Abi al-Najm ibn Warram ibn Hamdan ibn Khuldan ibn Ibrahim ibn Malik ibn Harith al-Ashtar al-Nakha'i. Some researchers such Mustafa Jawad, however, hold that his ancestors were among the Kurdish *mawali* (non-Arab Muslims) of Bani Ashtar who took part in the uprising of Mukhtar al-Thaqafi in 66 AH.<sup>2</sup> He is the maternal ancestor of Sayyid Radi al-Din ibn Tawus<sup>3</sup>, the famous Shi'i scholar and the author of *Al-Luhuf*. Some authors mistakenly assumed that Warram is the paternal ancestor of Sayyid ibn Tawus<sup>4</sup>. This assumption, however, is incorrect since the paternal ancestors of Sayyid ibn Tawus have been numerated in various books and there is no mention of Warram amongst them. Moreover, his father was among the great jurists of his time, and his brother, Mujir al-Din Ja'far ibn Abi Firas, was a well-known scholar.<sup>5</sup>

Warram's spouse is a descendant of Shaykh Tusi<sup>6</sup>. It is for this reason that Sayyid ibn Tawus occasionally wrote "my grandfather Warram ibn Abi Firas" and sometimes "my grandfather Shaykh Tusi" in his books – although in reality, it was his great ancestor. His scholarly and spiritual status is apparent in his valuable works; furthermore, Sayyid ibn Tawus's testimony is the best evidence - he says in his *Falah al-Sa'il*, "My grandfather is among those on whose deeds one can rely." Shaykh Muntajab al-Din also has called him a pious scholar and a great jurist. He said, "I saw him in Hilla and found him just as [good as] I had heard of." Also, Sayyid ibn Tawus explicitly declares that his grandfather had a great influence in his scholarly life. Furthermore, he speaks about his

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<sup>1</sup>See. Muntajab al-Din Razi, *Al-Fihrist*, pp. 128-9; Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili, *'Amal al-'Amil*, sec. 2, p. 338; Muhsin 'Amin, *'A'yan al-Shi'a*, vol. 4 p. 621.

<sup>2</sup>Mustafa Jawad, *Jawan al-Qabilat Al-Kurdiyya al-Mansiyya*, in *Majaala al-'Ilmiyya al-'Iraqiyya*, vol. 4 num. 1 pp.84-121

<sup>3</sup> 589-664 AH

<sup>4</sup> As said in the words of Qadi Nur Allah Shushtari

<sup>5</sup> Died in 626 AH in Baghdad and buried in the holy shrine of Imam Ali (a).

<sup>6</sup> 385-460 AH



considerable love for the progeny of the Holy Prophet.<sup>1</sup> In praising him, an anonymous Arab poet wrote:

ورام بحر لا يجاء بمثله      في كل بحر منه سبعة اجر  
حلف الزمان بان يجيء بمثله      حنث يميناك يا زمان! فكفر

*Warram is an ocean which has no parallel. There are seven seas in each ocean of him.<sup>2</sup> Time had sworn to bring a like of him. O time! You did not fulfill your pledge. Thus pay the atonement (of the breach of promise).*

It has been proven that several generations of the family of Abi Firas were among the military high officials and generals. Warram is said to have been among the commanders for some time. However, he abandoned all his worldly engagements and chose the path of spiritual wayfaring as his way of life and became an example of piety and spirituality.<sup>3</sup> Little is known about his teachers and students. Among his teachers, however, one may refer to Sayyid Abu al-Hasan al-'Arifi al-'Alawi and Sadid al-Din Mahmud al-Himmasi.<sup>4</sup> Muhammad ibn Ja'far, known as Ibn Mashhadi, has been cited as one of his students.

Beside *Tanbih al-Khawatir wa Nuzhat al-Nawazir*, which is among the sources of *Bihar al-Anwar*, he has authored another book namely *Mas'alatun fi al-Muwasa'a wa al-Mudayaqa*.<sup>5</sup> Regarding this book, Shaykh Aqa Buzurg Tihrani states: "According to Shahid in his *Ghayat al-Murad fi Sharh Nukat al-Irshad*, this is a very useful and informative book..."<sup>6</sup> His fame, however, is mostly due to his *Majmu'a Warram*.

<sup>1</sup>See. Sayyid ibn Tawus. *Al-'Aman min Akhtar al-Asfar wa al-Azman*.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. his book

<sup>3</sup> Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Lisan ak-Mizan*, vol. 6 p. 218; Hasan Amin, *Mustadrakat 'Ayan al-Shi'a*, vol. 1 p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> Muntajab al-Din Razi, *ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>5</sup> Aqa Buzurg -i- Tihrani, *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 20 p. 395.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Shaykh Warram ibn Abi Firas passed away in Muharram in 605 AH in Hilla and was buried there.<sup>1</sup> In his *Al-Kamil*, Ibn Athir, the famous historian, describing the events of the year 605 AH, writes: "On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Muharram of this year, Abu al-Husayn Warram ibn Abi Firas, the pious scholar, passed away in Sayfiyya located in the city of Hilla. He was a righteous person."

### ***Various names of the book***

The original name of the book is *Tanbih al-Khawatir wa Nuzhat al-Nawazir*. It is, however, commonly known as *Majmu'a Warram*. Different scholars, however, when referring to this book, have used other names as well such as:

*Tanbih al-Khatir wa Nuzhat al-Nazir* by 'Allam Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 1 pp. 10, 22, 106;

*Nuzhat al-Nazir wa Tanbih al-Khatir* by Agha Bozorge Tehrani in his *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 12 p. 66;

*Tanbih al-Khawatir* by Muhaddith Nuri in *Mustadark al-Wasa'il*, vol. 1 p. 109 and Muhsin Amin in his *'A'yan al-Shi'a*, vol. 3 p. 448;

*Tanbih al-Khatir*, by 'Allam Majlisi in his *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 1 p. 29; vol. 85 p. 4 ;

*Nuzhat al-Nazir* by Agha Bozorge Tehrani in his *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 20 p. 109;

*Tanbih al-Khawatir wa Nuzhat al-Nazir* by Hasan Amin in his *Mustadrakat 'Ayan al-Shi'a*, vol. 1 p. 250.

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<sup>1</sup> Hasan 'Amin, *ibid*.

Also in some sources, the title is followed by *في الترغيب و الترهيب و المواعظ و* "الزواجر" (*On Encouragement, Discouragement, and Wisdom*) indicating that the main theme of the book is ethical.

### ***The definition of 'majmu'a' (collection) as a scholarly term***

According to Shaykh Agha Bozorge Tehrani in his *Al-Dhari'a*, '*majmu'a*' is a general title for a kind of writing containing information the author has gathered during his lifetime. Some other names for such writings are *kashkul* (anthology), *jung* (miscellany), and *khirqa*.<sup>1</sup> Such books are not exclusively on religious or ethical matters; rather, different collections have been authored on different fields such as experimental sciences, social sciences, mathematics, humanities, and philosophy. Furthermore, sometimes collections were done exclusively containing narrations with the titles of '*Amali* (literally meaning dictations) or *Arba'iniyyat* (a general titles for collections of forty hadiths).

In his *Al-Dhari'a*, Agha Bozorg cites 313 works under the title of *Majmu'a* and their authors. *Majmu'a Warram* is one of these books, on which he writes:

*Majmu'a Warram*, the original name of which is *Nuzhat al-Nazir* is written by Shaykh Sa'id Abu al-Husayn Warram ibn Abi Firas ibn Warram ibn Hamdan, a descendant of Malik al-Ashtar al-Nakha'i, who passed away in 605 AH. This book was published in 1300 AH in Tehran for the first time and has been republished 3 times thereafter.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See. *Al-Dhari'a*, vol. 20 p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Regarding this book, Allama Majlisi says, "*Tanbih al-Khatir wa Nuzhat al-Nazir* (another title used for the book) has been written by Shaykh Warram...The chain of transmission of this book has been mentioned in *Ijazat*."<sup>1</sup>

### ***A general outlook of the book***

*Majmu'a Warram* has two sections published in one volume. The first section is divided into several chapters with about 70 titles. The content of the first section is divided into six categories:

- 1- Wisdoms and admonitions;
- 2- Etiquette of social relations;
- 3- Excellent ethics and virtues and ways to obtain them;
- 4- Ill manners and the ways to treat them;
- 5- Discussions on love and hatred for God and inward accounting (*mahasabat al-nafs*);
- 6- Far-fetched hopes and discussions on death, the Purgatory (*Barzakh*) and Resurrection.

The second section contains various subjects such as:

- 1- The wisdoms and admonitions of the Holy Prophet of Islam and his progeny as well as the previous Prophets;
- 2- The sermons of the Holy Prophet of Islam and his progeny and their supplications;
- 3- Aphorisms;

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<sup>1</sup> *Bihar al-'Anwar*, vol. 10 p. 10.

- 4- The qualities of a pious believer;
- 5- Debates of great companions of Imams with their opponenets like the one between Hujr ibn 'Udayy and Mu'awiya;
- 6- Some thoughtful sayings of great companions of the Imams such as Abu Dharr, Miqdad, and Salman, and those of great scholars such as Shaykh Mufid and Fudayl ibn 'Ayyad.

The book serves more as an anthology containing instructive narrations, stories, poems, and aphorisms rather than containing a particular arrangement in categorizing the subjects. Despite the existence of definite titles, especially in the first section, the material in each chapter can go off topic. According to some researchers, the first section of the book was considerably influenced by Ghazali's *'Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* so much so that one may claim that *Majmu'a Warram* is a part of Ghazali's book. Warram in many cases quoted the writings of Ghazali either precisely or with slight changes, although he has not referred to the name of Ghazali.

Mirza 'Abd Allah 'Afandi Isfahani believes that *Tanbih al-Khawatir* contains a detailed and abridged version.<sup>1</sup> What may confirm this claim is that Sayyid ibn Tawus in his *Falah al-Sa'il* and *Al-Yaqin* has quoted some sayings from this book. These quotations, however, are not found in the printed version of the work.

What distinguishes this book is that both moral and immoral qualities have been mentioned jointly; in other words, how to obtain both a good quality and purge an immoral one. For example, after describing haughtiness, the author suggests ways to remove it and afterwards explains humbleness and its intrinsic worth.

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<sup>1</sup>*Riyad al-'Ulama'*, vol. 5 p. 286.

### ***The authenticity of the book***

Scholars' views differ on the authenticity of *The Collection of Warram*. An objection repeatedly mentioned in the books on the biographies of the narrators (*tarajim*) and has been repeated by prominent scholars such as the author of *Amal al-Amil* is that Warram has mixed both sound and weak traditions in this collection. Therefore, his book is not a trustworthy one.

Others have rejected the above-mentioned criticism in several ways:

- Most of the narrations of this book as well as the chains of transmitters of the narrators have been mentioned in other collections of *hadith*;
- Warram has omitted the chain of transmitters or has mentioned one or two of the narrators only for brevity; for this reason there are several *mursal*<sup>1</sup> and *maqtu*<sup>2</sup> traditions in this work.
- There are many sayings from well-known scholars other than the Infallibles. These sayings function only as a confirmation.
- The author used authentic collections of *hadith* from both Shi'i and Sunni sources such as *Al-Kafi*, *Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih*, *Al-Mahasin*, *Zuhd al-Nabi*, *Gharib al-Hadith*, and *'Alam al-Nubuwwa*.
- According to Shaykh Agha Bozorge Tehrani, some Sunni narrations and great scholars have been added to the book mainly for Sunnis to acknowledge it.

### ***The narrations of this book in other hadith collections***

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<sup>1</sup> A tradition which does not include the names of the transmitters of a given narration from an Infallible

<sup>2</sup> A tradition with an interrupted chain of narrators

Many hadith collections composed after the time of Warram include some of the narrations of *Tanbih al-Khawatir* in their works, such as:

- Shaykh Hurr al-'Amili<sup>1</sup> in his *Wasa'il al-Shi'a* has narrated 20 traditions from it in various volumes.<sup>2</sup>
- 'Allama Majlisi<sup>3</sup> in his *Bihar al-'Anwar* has made mention of Warram and his book in several cases.<sup>4</sup>
- Muhaddith Nuri<sup>5</sup> in his *Mustadrak al-Wasa'il* has quoted about 25 traditions from it.<sup>6</sup>
- Other books that cite Warram along with or without the name of his book are: *Irshad al-Qulub* and *'Alam al-Din* by Hasan abn Abi al-Hasan al-Daylami,<sup>7</sup> *Al-'Aman*, *Faraj al-Mahmum*, *Falah al-Sa'il*, *Al-Mujtana*, *Al-Yaqin* and *Sa'd al-Su'ud* all by Sayyid ibn Tawus, and *Al-Fihrist* by Shaykh Muntajab al-Din.<sup>8</sup>

Interestingly, several exegeses of the Holy Qur'an also cite the narrations of *Majmu'a Warram*. Among these works are:

- *Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* by Sayyid Hashim Bahrani cites more than 10 narrations from Warram's collections in various volumes.<sup>9</sup>
- *Tafsir al-Muhit al-'A'zam wa al-Bahr al-Khedam* by Sayyid Haydar 'Amuli cites 3 traditions from the collections, all in its 4<sup>th</sup> volume.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1033-1104 AH

<sup>2</sup> e.g. vol. 2 p. 445; vol. 3 p. 200; vol. 5 pp. 35, 214, 297; vol. 6 p. 184; vol. 7 pp. 153, 178, 509, etc.

<sup>3</sup> 1037-1110 AH

<sup>4</sup> e.g. vol. 40 p. 23; vol. 106 pp. 22, 104 etc.

<sup>5</sup> 1254-1320 AH

<sup>6</sup> Vol. 1 p. 109; vol. 2 pp. 96, 109, 477; vol. 3 pp. 244, 257, 382, 467; vol. 5 pp. 222, 263; vol. 6 pp. 335, 459, 506, etc.

<sup>7</sup> d. 841 AH

<sup>8</sup> 504-after 600 AH

<sup>9</sup> Vol. 1 pp. 10, 72, 691; vol. 5 pp. 113, 261, 456, 750. etc.

- *Tafsir Sitt Suwar* by Habib Allah Sharif Kashani cites four narrations from *Majmu'a Warram*.<sup>2</sup>
- *Al-Tafsir al-Mu'in li al-Wa'izin wa al-Mutta'izin* by Muhammad Huwaydi Baghdadi cites more than 70 narrations from *Tanbih al-Khawatir*, the high number indicating the authenticity of the book according to Baghdadi.
- Among the narrations mentioned in *Al-Tafsir al-Mansub 'ila al-Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari*, 30 narrations are in *Tanbih al-Khawatir*.
- Other books referring to Warram and his book are Mulla Habib Allah Sharif Kashani's *Bawariq al-Qahr fi Tafsir Sura al-Dahr* by, Ayat-Allah Makarim Shirazi's *Tafsire Nemuneh*, Jawad ibn Sa'id Kazimi's *Masalik al-Afham 'ila 'Ayat al-Qur'an* and 'Allama Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i's *Tafsir al-Mizan*.

### ***Selected topics***

The second volume of the book includes a section on “*Forbidden Acts according to the Holy Prophet (s)*.” Some of these acts are just disliked and not prohibited. In other words, the list includes both haram and makruh acts. Some of these acts include:

- Eating by the left hand and while leaning;
- Burning the limbs of the animals by fire;
- Talking a lot while being in matrimonial relations;
- Keeping the rubbish in the house at night;
- Women's make-up for men other than their husbands;
- Referring to fortune-tellers;
- Drinking wine;

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<sup>1</sup> pp. 267, 291 and 296

<sup>2</sup> pp. 11, 54, 84 and 262



- Hiring a wage-earner without determining his wage;
- Building a construction just for snobbery;
- Looking at the interior side of the neighbours' house;
- Concealment of a testimony;
- Deceptiveness in transactions which causes a Muslim to be mustered with the Jews;
- Slapping on the face of a Muslim;
- Denying a Muslim of a loan which he is in need of.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

For those interested in Islamic ethics, *Majmu'a* of Warram is a valuable work to be studied time and time again given its reliable author and authenticated content. As the general outlook of this precious work shows, various aspects of moral principles as viewed by Shi'a narrations have been meticulously dealt with. In a nutshell, *Majmu'a of Warram* describes both good and negative characteristics and offers instruction on how to obtain praiseworthy qualities and abstain from the immoral ones. Indeed, *Majmu'a of Warram* is a source for wayfarers in spiritual path who seek to progress in this journey through pure Islamic doctrines.

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*Idem.*, *Kashf al-Mahajja li Thamara al-Muhja*, Najaf 1370/1951;

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# A GLIMPSE AT THE MAJOR SHI'A SEMINARIES, PART II

RASOUL IMANI KHOSHKHU  
TRANSLATED BY FATEMEH SOLTANMOHAMMADI

**ABSTRACT:** Part I of this series focused on the Islamic seminaries of Basra, known for its role in the science of Hadith; Baghdad, the center of advancements in jurisprudence, theology, and deductive reasoning; and Najaf, one of the most important institutions of academics and *ijtihad* in the history of Shi'a academia. This part presents information on the revival of *ijtihad* in the Seminary of Hillah and introduces its prominent scholars, such as Najib al-Din Muhammad Ja'far, Muhaqqiq al-Hilli, Sayyid bin Tawus, and Allamah Hilli. It also introduces the Seminary of Kazemayn – where the renowned Shaykh Mufid studied; the Seminary of Samarra, where Shi'a theology was taught, along with alerting the Shi'a of their political responsibilities and providing them with a culture of supplication (*dua*) and pilgrimage (*ziyara*); and the Seminary of Karbala, where the highly proficient scholar Abdullah bin Ja'far Humayri – the teacher of renowned scholars Ali bin Babiwayh and Muhammad bin Ya'qub Kulayni – studied.

## *The Islamic Seminary of Hillah*

The establishment of the Islamic seminary of Hillah is simultaneous with the establishment of the city of Hillah itself towards the end of the fifth century Hijri. Factors such as its large Shi'a population, its educated founders, the formation of a Shi'a government at its inception, and unstable political conditions in adjacent areas are reasons for its

growth, and its Islamic seminaries were the leading Shi'a seminaries for three centuries.<sup>1</sup>

After the downfall of the Khwarezmid Empire by the hands of the Mongols, Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan attacked Iraq in 551 AH to expand the empire and took over Baghdad. This event led to the decline of the Islamic seminaries of Baghdad and Najaf. The seminary of Hillah, which remained unharmed by the Mongols' attacks due to wise policies adopted by the scholars of the town, was revived and was able to introduce and provide the Shi'a world with renowned scholars.

This flourishing period thrived from the time Baghdad was attacked in the sixth century to the ninth century Hijri; afterwards, with the revival of the Najaf seminary, the seminary of Hillah faced a downturn. Although it was still considered to be one of the active seminaries of Iraq, it was not able to gain back the strength it had in the first period.

### ***The revival of ijthihad in the Islamic Seminary of Hillah***

One of the characteristics of the Hillah seminary was its dynamism and vitality and steadfastness against decline and emulation. This is unlike the seminary of Najaf in the period after Sheikh Tusi which was so heavily influenced by the great scholarship and spiritual characteristics of Sheikh Tusi that for several centuries, his views were adopted by successive scholars. It was only due to innate talent and matchless courage of Muhammad ibn Idris<sup>2</sup> the author of *al-Sara'ir* that ideas of Sheikh Tusi were seriously challenged and criticised. After ibn Idris, his method of ijthihad was continued in the later centuries by other religious scholars of the seminary of Hillah and finally reached its peak towards the end of the eighth century through the hands of Allamah Hilli.

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<sup>1</sup> Jawadi, Qasim and Hasani, Sayyid Ali, "A Historical Analysis of the Islamic Seminary of Hillah" in the journal of Shi'a Studies, Number 21

<sup>2</sup> Born 589 AH

### *The great scholars of the Hillah Seminary*

The following are some of the seminary's great scholars:

1. Najib al-Din Muhammad Ja'far, known as Ibn Nima,<sup>1</sup> Muhaqqiq al-Hilli, Shaykh Sadid al-Din,<sup>2</sup> and Sayyid Ahmad bin Tawus and his brother, Radhi al-Din.
2. Ja'far bin Muhammad bin Ja'far bin Abu al-Baqa' Hibatullah, of Allamah Hilli's teachers.
3. Najm al-Din Ja'far bin Hasan bin Yahya, known as Muhaqqiq al-Hilli<sup>3</sup> was one of the renowned jurists of Hillah and Allamah Hilli's teacher where through writing books,<sup>4</sup> he helped with growth of science of *usul* and accelerated the movement of *ijtihad* in the Hillah seminary. He also took a great step in expanding jurisprudential texts with his *Shara'i al-Islam fi Masa'il al-Halal wa al-Haram* where he examines recounted sayings, their implications, and their effects. For this reason, this book has been used in the seminaries up until the present years, and to this day, many commentaries and interpretations have been written on it, including *Jawahir al-Kalam*, an encyclopedia in Shi'a jurisprudence. Some of his other works include *al-Mu'tabar fi Sharh al-Mukhtasar*, which after Shaykh Tusi's *al-Mabsut*, is counted as the second comparative and demonstrative work on Shi'a jurisprudence.
4. Radi al-Din Ali bin Sa'd al-Din Musa, known as Sayyid bin Tawus<sup>5</sup> was of the learned and pious jurists of Hillah where asceticism (*zuhd*) and worship (*ibadah*) were his recognizable characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> Died 645 AH

<sup>2</sup> Father of Allamah Hilli

<sup>3</sup> 602-676 AH

<sup>4</sup> Such as *al-Ma'arij al-Usul* and *Najh al-Wusul ila Ma'rifa Ilm Usul*

<sup>5</sup> 589-664 AH

Reaching a high level in mysticism as well as meeting the Twelfth Imam, were some of his greatest achievements which were verified by many contemporary scholars and scholars who came after him. Nonetheless, in addition to his level of spirituality, he had a great deal knowledge, even though his particular viewpoint in regards to sciences such as jurisprudence and theology<sup>1</sup> set him apart from others, and although he had reached the level of *ijtihad*, he would not issue juristic rulings (*fatwas*). On the other hand, he was proficient in the science of narration and the study of the stars (*ilm al-nujum*; astronomy). He authored a book onn the lives of the astronomers called, “*Faraj al-Mahmum fi Tarikh Ulama’ al-Nujum.*”

5. Sayyid Jamal al-Din Ahmad bin Musa bin Tawus.<sup>2</sup> His popularity is mostly due to his efforts made in the field of prophetic narrations and biographical evaluation (*rijal*). His most important works in the field of biographical evaluation is the book *Hal al-Ishkal fi Ma’rifi al-Rijal* which contains the most important information about Shi’a rijal. He was the one who proposed classification of hadiths into four categories: authentic (*sahih*), approved (*hasan*), reliable (*muwaththaq*), and weak (*da’if*). This classification was welcomed by other scholars and is still used.
6. Hasan bin Yusuf bin Mutahhar Hilli, known as Allamah Hilli<sup>3</sup> was a renowned Shi’a jurist and scholar; it was through him that Shi’a jurisprudence flourished.

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<sup>1</sup> Even though the Sayyid was certainly as *mujtahid* who considered jurisprudence to be the pathway for understanding Islamic legal laws (*ahkam*) and reviving the traditions of the Prophet (pbuh), but he did consider engagement in jurisprudence as much as needed sufficient. He also showed interest in contemplating theological issues and believed theology made the path more difficult for people. However, he wasn’t absolutely against theology and at times allowed it. Jawadi, Qasim Jawadi and Sayyid Ali Hasani, *ibid*.

<sup>2</sup> Died 673 AH

<sup>3</sup> Died 826 AH

Allamah Hilli was a prolific author in the fields of jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, philosophy, logics, biographical evaluation, Qur'anic exegesis, narration, the science of Arabic syntax (*ilm al-nahw*), supplications and other various books in which some believe its total to be over five hundred volumes.<sup>1</sup> His most important works are in the fields of jurisprudence,<sup>2</sup> principles of jurisprudence;<sup>3</sup> theology,<sup>4</sup> biographical evaluation,<sup>5</sup> Qur'anic exegesis,<sup>6</sup> and philosophy and logic.<sup>7</sup>

One of Allamah's important initiatives was his positive response to the request of the Mongolian ruler, Uljeitu (Khodabandeh), and his migration to Iran and taking advantage of the political atmosphere to spread and present Shi'a Islam. After converting to Shi'ism, Uljeitu (Khodabandeh) summoned a large group of scholars from Hillah and Iraq, including Allamah Hilli and his son Fakhr al-Muhaqqiqin, to Iran and provided a school in Soltaniyyeh for Allamah to teach Islamic studies. He also provided a traveling school (*madrasah sayyarah*), with the management and supervision of Allamah, in order that it could travel with the ruler to various areas for other areas to make use of his presence and valuable knowledge. The books *Nahj al-Haq wa Kashf al-Sidq*, *Minhaj al-Kirama*, and *Kashf al-Yaqin fi Fadha'il Amir al-Mu'mineen* were written upon Uljeitu's request.

Coexistence and heartfelt interactions with scholars of different Islamic sects, while standing firm in his principles and Shi'a beliefs was another important characteristic of the Allamah. This very act is what

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<sup>1</sup> Sadr, Sayyid Hasan, *Ta'sis al-Shi'a al-ulum al-Islam*, pg. 27.

<sup>2</sup> *al-Mukhtalif al-Shi'ah fi Ahkam al-Shari'ah*, *Tadhkirah al-Fuqaha'*, *Tabsira al-Muta'alimin fi Ahkam al-Din*, and *Qawa'id al-Ahkam fi Ma'rifa al-Halal wa al-Haram*

<sup>3</sup> *Tahdhib al-Wusul ila Ilm al-Usul* and *Nihaya' al-Wusul ila Ilm al-Usul*

<sup>4</sup> *Manahij al-Yaqin*, *Kashf al-Murad fi Sharh Tajrid al-'Itiqad*, *Anwar al-Malakut fi Sharh al-Yaqut*, *Minhaj al-Kirama fi al-Imamah*, and *Nahj al-Haq wa Kashf al-Sidq*

<sup>5</sup> *Khulasa al-Aqwal fi Ma'rifa al-Rijal* and *Kashf al-Maqal fi Ma'rifa al-Rijal*

<sup>6</sup> *Nahj al-Iman fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* and *al-Qawl al-Wajiz fi Tafsir al-Kitab al-'Aziz*

<sup>7</sup> *al-Qawa'id wa al-Maqasid*, *al-Jawhar al-Nadhid*, *Idhah al-Maqasid*, *Nahj al-Irfan*, *Kashf al-Khafa min Kitab al-Shifa*, and *al-Isharat ila Ma'ani al-Isharat*

led scholars and students from other sects to gather in his traveling school<sup>1</sup> which was instituted by Uljeitu (Sultan Muhammad Khodabandeh)<sup>2</sup> to study and teach. Some scholars from the Sunni school of thought such as ibn Hajar Asqalani in *Lisan al-Mizan*<sup>3</sup> and Safdi Shafa'i in 'Ayan al-Asr and 'Awan al-Nasr have praised him. Safdi considers Allamah Hilli a sign (*ayah*) of God that no writer is capable of describing all his good attributes.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Islamic Seminary of Kazemayn*

The city of Kazemayn is situated northwest and eight kilometres of Baghdad. After the completion of the city of Baghdad by Mansur Abbasi in the year 149 AH, he commanded a graveyard be built north of the city for him and his family. This graveyard was later known as the "Quraysh" graveyard or "the graveyard of Bani Hashim." After the martyrdom of Imam Kazem (a) and Imam Jawad (a), their holy bodies were buried in this very graveyard; and it was this event that led the

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<sup>1</sup>"Madrasah Sayyarah" was established by Sultan Khodabandeh after Allamah Hilli's suggestion. Since the is was custom that the Mongol rulers would reside in Maragheh and Soltaniyyeh during the warm seasons and in Baghdad in the cold seasons, and because Sultan Khabandeh would take scholars with him on his travels and since he really like Allamah Hilli, he suggested that he join him. Rejecting this offer was not a good idea because it was possible the enemy and jealous crowd would falsely read into the matter and use it against the Allamah. On the other hand, the Allamah didn't want to be completely under the ruler's authority and fall behind form his own academic activities. For this reason he suggested the traveling school which was approved by the ruler and through this means Allamah was able to provide publications in Shia beliefs and understandings and train numerous students. Rabbani Golpaygani, Ali, *Imamiah*, Kayhan Andishah, number 54, 1373.

<sup>2</sup> Uljaitu (659-695 Shamsi) was the eight ruler of the Ilkahnid Dynasty where after the death of Ghazan it was passed down to the Mongol Uljeitu in Iran. Uljeitu who was baptized as a Christian, with the name Nicholas, later on in his life converted to Buddhism and later accepted Islam, becoming a follower of Abu Hanifa's school of thought and chose the Islamic name, Muhammad Khodabandeh, for himself. Afterwards he converted to Shia Islam and after debating with Allamah Hilli and Nidham al-Din Muraghe'ee, he stayed firm in his belief. John Andrew Boyle, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, translation Hasan Anousheh, pg. 376.

<sup>3</sup> Asqalani, ibn Hajar, *Lisan al-Mizan*, vol. 2, pg. 317.

<sup>4</sup> "العالمه الحلبي رحمة الله آية من آيات الله العلمية و شخصية فذة، يعجز الكاتب عن احصاء فضائله... كان ريبض الاخلاق، حليماً، قائماً

بالعلوم حكيماً، طار ذكره في الاقطار، و اقتحم الناس اليه و تخرج به اقدام كثيرة"

Quoted from: Fadhli, Abd al-Hadi, *Tarikh al-Tahsri' al-Islami*, pg. 363.



Shi'as to travel to this city to visit these two Imams. Through building their homes, the first towards making the city of Kazemayn were taken.

After Baghdad was defeated by Mu'izz al-Dawla<sup>1</sup> in 334 AH, the city of Kazemayn was rebuilt and reconstructed by him. He constructed a big courtyard around the holy shrines and built small chambers around the courtyard for Shi'a scholars and seminarians to reside in. On the eastern side, he constructed a partition (*maqsurah*)<sup>2</sup> for publicly-held classes and named it "*madras*."<sup>3</sup> One of his other initiatives was expanding Buratha Mosque and constructing an Islamic center beside it. Buratha is the name of a mosque with an ancient history<sup>4</sup> situated between Kazemayn and Baghdad. The training of great scholars like Shaykh Mufid took place there.

Another personality which played a role in the expansion and development of the academic environment in Kazemayn was al-Nasir Li Dinillah,<sup>5</sup> an Abbasid Caliph. Due to his services to the Shi'a faith and his kindness towards the Shi'a, in several historical records, some have claimed he was Shi'a.<sup>6</sup> In 608 AH he commanded - just like the

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<sup>1</sup>Mu'izz al-Dawla (died 356 AH) was of the most popular Buyid rulers who ministered the Abbasid Caliphate and was the commandership of the city of Baghdad. Abul Husayn, Ahmad.

<sup>2</sup>"maqsurah" is the name of an area in the mosque where initially during the time of the caliphs it was structured as a small room with a small opening to the outside and was situated towards the front of the mosque. The leader in prayer or the person delivering the sermon (khatib) would stand their due to security measures. Later on this area joined the indoor area of the mosque, overlooking the mosque's verandah.

<sup>3</sup>Faydh Qummi, Abbas, History of Kadhimayn, pg. 76.

<sup>4</sup>It has come in numerous narrations that the Prophet prayed in this holy site and it has been narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) that: We found out that Prophet Esa (Jesus) prayed at this place and in a narration from Amir al-Mu'mineen it says: Should I tell you what other person prayed here? He said: Yes. The Imam said: Prophet Ibrahim Khalilullah (Abraham). Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 99, pg. 26, bab 3.

<sup>5</sup>575-622 AH

<sup>6</sup>Murkhani, similar to Suyuti, Zehbi, and ibn Imad Hanbanli have emphasizes on him being Shia and other Sunni sources, if they haven't talked about his faith conversely haven't mentioned him in a good light. Even some of them go as far as to explicitly and implicitly talk bad about him while they say the opposite about other Abbasid caliphs which were Sunni. Ya'qubi, Muhammad Tahir, Shia Caliph al-Nasir Lidinullah, *Majaleyyeh Tarikh dar Aeeneyeh Pajuhesh*, number 28-29.

system in Baghdad – that academic discussions take place in the chambers in the holy shrine of Imam Musa al-Kazem (a) and it was during the same time that he ordered *Masnad Ahmad bin Hanbal* be taught by a Shi'a scholar named Safi al-Din Ma'bad bin Muhamamd Musawi. The first topic taught by him in this book and in this location was *Masnad Abu Bakr* and the event of Fadak.<sup>1</sup> Likewise his Shi'a vizier, Mu'yid al-Din Qummi, made efforts in developing the infrastructure of Kazemayn, some of whom were building a school and 'House of the Qur'an' (*Dar al-Qur'an*) for Shi'a orphans and Alawites beside the tomb of Imam Musa bin Ja'far (as) to learn how to write and read the Qur'an.<sup>2</sup>

Because of its close proximity to the Baghdad seminary, the Islamic seminary of Kazemayn was influenced by the scholars and great intellects of that city and greatly affected by the city of Baghdad's academic expansion and decline; nevertheless, in the recent centuries, many great scholars have resided in this city. Through teaching and training seminarians in their offices and homes across the city, they have made brighter the academic status of Kazemayn in comparison with other Shi'a seminaries. Some of the aforementioned cases are:

- 1- Residence of Sayyid Muhammad Ali Hibat al-Din Shahrastani; Bayt Sayyid Muhsin 'Araji<sup>3</sup>;
- 2- Residence of Shaykh Ahmad Balaghi Kadhimini<sup>4</sup> who Shaykh Muhammad Jawad Balaghi from Najaf is of this family;
- 3- Aal Mudhaffar who Shaykh Muhammad Hasa Mudhaffar, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Mudhaffar, and Shaykh Muhammad Ridha are of this family;

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<sup>1</sup> Sibti ibn Jawzi, Yusuf bin Qazghali, *Mara al-Zaman fi Tarikh al-'Ayan*, pg. 556.

<sup>2</sup> Ya'qubi, Muhammad Tahir, *ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> Died 1227 AH

<sup>4</sup> Died 1271

- 4- Residence of Sayyid Haydar<sup>1</sup> who Sayyid Mahdi Haydari, who is of the great academics and jurists of Iraq of the earlier centuries who called people to fight (*jihad*) against England, in the first world, is of this family;
- 5- Residence of Shaykh Abd al-Aziz Khalisi<sup>2</sup> who is related to Ali bin Madhahir the brother of Habib bin Madhahir and Ayatullah Shaykh Mahdi Khalisi, was considered and jurists during his time, is of this family;
- 6- Residence of Shibr who is a decedent of Sayyid Abdullah Shibr<sup>3</sup>, a Shi'a scholar and owns many written works;
- 7- Residence of Sayyid Ismaeel Sadr;<sup>4</sup>
- 8- Residence Shaykh Muhammad Hasan Aal Yasin<sup>5</sup> who is one of the residence in Najaf and Kadhimayn.<sup>6</sup>

### ***The Islamic Seminary of Samarra***

The beginning of the growth and development of academia in the city of Samarra and its significance as one of the main academic centers in the Shi'a world is simultaneous with the arrival of Imam Hasan al-Askari to this city. Imam Hadi's twenty-year presence<sup>7</sup> in Samarra

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<sup>1</sup> Died 1265

<sup>2</sup> Died 1286

<sup>3</sup> Died 1242

<sup>4</sup> Died 1338

<sup>5</sup> Died 1308

<sup>6</sup> Shi'a Seminaries across the World, pg.230.

<sup>7</sup> In historical references, there is a difference of opinion in regards to the number of years Imam Hadi (a) was exiled to Samarra. A group of them (*ibn al-Sabbagh, al-Fusul al-Muhimmah*, pg. 283) is referenced to that the time of exile was in the year 243 AH. According to this the timeframe in which the Imam (a) resided in Samarra till the time of his martyrdom will be around eleven years. But there are more sources (*Tadhkirah al-Khawas*, pg. 322; *Tarikh Baghdad*, vol. 12, pg. 56; *Manqib*, vol. 4, pg. 401; and *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 50, pg. 206-207) have written the timeframe of the Imams stay to twenty or over twenty years. Bearing in mind that the time of martyrdom of the Imam, according to historians, was in the year 254 AH,

made it the center of attention amongst the Shi'ia from all regions of the Islamic society. Meanwhile, Imam Hadi, through adopting specific methods, personally meeting with specific confidants, and writing to his representatives and agents (*wakil*) who from four major regions in which Shi'as were gathered - Baghdad, Mada'in, and Kufa; Basrah and Ahwaz; Qum and Hamedan; and Hijaz and Yemen, he would respond to religious questions and issue Divine knowledge.

Other than containing guidelines to the Shi'as' political responsibilities and alerting them of the political situation of the society and rulers of the time, these correspondence contained ideological and theological questions and answers; as the Shi'a center held intellectual guidance and responding the Shi'a people's ideological needs with importance. For example, there was correspondence between Muhammad bin Ali Kashani and Imam Hadi in regards to the doctrine of Oneness [of God] (*tawhid*)<sup>1</sup> and the Imam's response to a question regarding the topic of determinism (*jabr*) and full power (*tafwidh*).<sup>2</sup>

The school of Imam Hadi (*maktab*) held the following curriculum: 1) the study of the Qur'an 2) Shi'a theology 3) the culture of supplication (*dua*) and pilgrimage (*ziyarah*), and 4) holding a definitive stance against political and religious enemies.<sup>3</sup>

Given the incident of some type of Sufis during the time of Imam Ali al-Naqi, who drew people away from political participation and true worship, with issuing the culture of supplication and pilgrimage and with the genuine Shi'a gnosticism, the Imam fought oppression and

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the year he was exiled will be 234 AH. Cited from the site, Imam Hadi at: [http://www.imamhadi.net/htm/far/imamhadi/aftabe\\_heayat\\_imamhadi\\_per.htm](http://www.imamhadi.net/htm/far/imamhadi/aftabe_heayat_imamhadi_per.htm).

<sup>1</sup> Shaykh Saduq, *al-Tawhid*, pg. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Harrani, Hasan bin Ali Shu'bah, *Tuhf al-'Aqul*, translation by Ahmad Jannati, Tehran, *Intisharat Ilmiyyah Islamiyyah*, 1363, pg. 468.

<sup>3</sup> Shi'a Seminaries across the World, pg. 236.

identified the enemies, and reminded the people of the importance of loving the family of the Prophet (*Ahl-ul Bayt*).<sup>1</sup>

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali al-Naqi in 254 AH, Imam Hasan al-Askari took on the imamate and leadership of the people (*ummah*). However, because of the extreme restrictions in the political atmosphere, the strengthening of the *Mahdaviat*, and monitoring the Imam's interactions and correspondence, his presence in Samarra was as influential as the time of his father in expanding Shi'a knowledge and divine understanding.

During the time of Imam al-Mahdi and the period of the minor occultation, since this city had made the Abbasid ruler sensitive towards it, the Imam's special deputies resided in the city of Baghdad; this very act made Baghdad the center of attention, making Samarra less central.

The revitalization and recentralization of the Islamic Seminary of Samarra is due to the very capable and distinguished jurist and soldier of his time, Mirza Muhammad Hasan Shirazi's<sup>2</sup> migration to Samarra.

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<sup>1</sup> A man named Muhammad bin Husayn says I was with Imam Ali al-Naqi (as) in the Prophet's Mosque (*Masjid al-Nabi*) when suddenly a group of Sufis entered the mosque and created a circle engaging in *dhikr*. The Imam said: don't pay attention to these frauds for they are the successors of Satan and destroyer of the religion's belief system. Their ascetics are for the comfort of their body and their night prayers (*tahjjud*) and vigilance through the night is to fish the common people...at that moment, one of the Imam's companions said: "*Wa in kana mu'tarifan bi-huquqikum?*" (and what if that person admits to your rights?). The Imam gave him a harsh stare and said: Abandon this sort of speech. Don't you know whoever knows our rights would not object to our orders. Hur 'Amili, *al-Untha 'Ashriyah*, p. 2. It has to be noted that Sufism has been used in different senses throughout the history. At that time, it was used sometimes for the people who did not have a balanced and comprehensive of understanding and practicing Islam.

<sup>2</sup> Issuer of the Tobacco Boycott. Some of the important achievements in Shi'a history where the seminary of Samarra and Mirza Shirazi himself played a role in the termination of the agreement that would place all tobacco products at the disposal of British companies. This crucial measure taken was due to Mirza Shirazi's historical issue, otherwise known as the tobacco boycott, which resulted in preventing the colonizers from getting their hand on Iran's national wealth and showed the power and influence of Shi'a jurists to the world.

Ayatullah al-Uzma Haj Mirza Muhammad Hasan Shirazi,<sup>1</sup> who after the passing of Shaykh Ansari in 1281 AH, he took on the authority and leadership of the Shi‘as. In 1287 AH, he was honored to go to Mecca for pilgrimage where he initially intended to live next to the Holy Prophet, but after visiting the city of Najaf he decided to move to Samarra which during that time the population was predominantly Sunni. In Sha‘ban of 1290 AH, he migrated to Samarra. With Mirza Shirazi’s migration to Samarra, after many years the Islamic seminary of this city once again returned to its academic status and became a center for teaching and training those seeking Islamic sciences and knowledge taught by the Ahlul-Bayt.<sup>2</sup>

Allamah Muhaqqiq Shaykh Aghabozorg Tehrani, in his *al-Dhari’ah*, reports the number of Mirza Shirazi’s students - who also did research in his seminary - to be over five hundred.<sup>3</sup>

The method and format of Mirza Shirazi’s teaching in Samarra, inspired by Shaykh Ansari’s the method of *ijtihad*, made the spirit of research and academic criticism strengthen in his students and seminarians; and his calm composure in listening to the students’ views and giving them courage to present their opinions and participate in debates and discussions, he presented a new method in educating and teaching seminaries, and this became a well-known method in the Seminary of Samarra.<sup>4</sup>

One of the important achievements in Shi‘a history where the seminary of Samarra and Mirza Shirazi himself played a role was in the termination of the agreement that would place all tobacco products at the disposal of British companies. This crucial measure taken was due

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<sup>1</sup> Born 1230 AH in Shiraz and died 1312 AH in Samarra

<sup>2</sup> Aqiqi Bakhshayeshi, Abd al-Rahim, Famous Shi‘a Jurists, pg. 356-357.

<sup>3</sup> Tehrani, Aghabozorg, *al-Dhari’ah ila Tasanif al-Shi’a*, vol. 4, pg. 367.

<sup>4</sup> Jannati, Muhammad Ibrahim, *Adawar Ijtihad*, pg. 394-389.

to Mirza Shirazi's historical issue - otherwise known as the tobacco boycott<sup>1</sup> - which resulted in preventing the colonizers from getting their hands on Iran's national wealth and revealing the power and influence of the Shi'ā jurists to the world.

Mirza Shirazi passed away in 1312 AH at the age of 82, and after being moved to the city of Najaf, he was buried in the holy shrine of Ali bin Abi Talib (as). The Islamic seminary of Samarra continued its academic progress; and with the guidance and management of some of Mirza's top students including Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi<sup>2</sup> and Sayyid Hasan Sadr,<sup>3</sup> they continued to educate seminarians and publish the knowledge taught by the Ahlul-Bayt (s).<sup>4</sup> However, the seminary of Samarra's expansion, after the passing of Mirza Shirazi was short-lived, and after the migration of great scholars like Muhammad Taqi Shirazi and Sayyid Hasan Sadr to Karbala and Kadhimiyya, the Samarra seminary's period of decline arrived.

In the recent years, to revive the Islamic seminary of Samarra, the largest Islamic and academic center was constructed adjacent to the shrine of the two Imams (Askarayn) and in the remaining area of Mirza Shirazi's seminary under the supervision of the administration of religious leaders.

### ***The Islamic seminary of Karbala***

In 61 AH, the land of Karbala witnessed the innocent martyrdom of Imam Husayn - the grandson of Prophet Muhammad – along with his children and his loyal companions, as well as the burial of their holy

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<sup>1</sup> The text of Mirza Shirazi's fatwa in regards to tobacco is the following: "In the name of Allah the Most Gracious the Most Merciful, From today and on, consumption of tobacco in any way would be considered as declaring war against the master and Imam of Time (as)." *Danesh-Nameh Jahan-e Islam*, under Ghulam Ali Haddad Adil's supervision.

<sup>2</sup> 1270-1338 AH

<sup>3</sup> 1272-1354 AH

<sup>4</sup> *Shi'ā Seminaries Across the World*, pg. 254.

bodies in this land filled with agonies (*karb*) and afflictions (*bala'*). With the grace of the Shi'as residing beside the holy shrine of the Imam, it became a place for narrating and publishing hadiths and cultivating and teaching their knowledge; thus, became one of the central seminaries in the Shi'a world.

One of the expert Shi'a narrators who resided in this city during the minor occultation and spent considerable time narrating traditions of the Ahlul Bayt is Abdullah bin Ja'far Humayri.<sup>1</sup> A highly proficient narrator and scholar of Qum, he was the teacher of prominent intellectuals such as Ali bin Babiwayh, Muhammad bin Ya'qub Kulayni, and Muhammad bin Quluyyah. He traveled to Iraq to visit the holy shrines of Amir al-Mu'mineen and Aba Abdullah al-Husayn, and after staying in the city of Karbala for a time period, he returned back to Qum.<sup>2</sup> He was also a prolific author; one of his works was Humayri's *Qarb al-Isnad*,<sup>3</sup> a collection of 1,378 traditions from Imam Sadiq, Imam Kadhim, and Imam Rida.

During the major occultation, the Islamic seminary of Karbala witnessed great scholars who traveled to Karbala from neighboring cities such as Hillah and Najaf to teach. They include Ahmad Ali bin Ahmad bin Abbas Najashi (372-450 AH), author of a famous biographical evaluation book; Imad al-Din ibn Hamza Tusi;<sup>4</sup> Sayyid

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<sup>1</sup> 234-300 AH

<sup>2</sup> Dawani, Ali, *Islamic Figures*, vol. 2, pg. 134.

<sup>3</sup> *Qarb al-Isnad* is a collection of narrations which are comprised of narrations that have been narrated from the Imams with fewer transmitters. For this reason, the narrators of this book had to travel great distances to acquire this narrations, so that the narrations are given through a closer transmitter to the Imams.

<sup>4</sup> He was of the Shi'a theological jurists, famous as "Sahib Wasilah," and of the great scholars of Tus. Because he came after Shaykh Tusi, who shares the same name, teknonym, origin, they would refer to him as Abu Ja'far Thani and Abu Ja'far Muta'akhar. He was contemporary to Shaykh Muntakhab al-Din and was one of ibn Shahr Ashub's teachers. Ibn Hamza passed away in Karbala and was buried outside Najaf's city gates. His most important jurisprudential work is *al-Wasila ila Nayl al-Fadhila*.



Fakhar Muadd Haeri;<sup>1</sup> Sayyid Abd al-Karim bin Tawus Fakhar Musawi;<sup>2</sup> Shams al-Din Muhammad bin Makki, known as the First Shahid; and ibn Fahd Hilli.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most important events in the history of Karbala Seminary was the debate between the *Usulism* and *Akhbarism*. The appearance of the Akhbarism movement and the dispute arisen between those for and against it was of the crucial events that took place in the history of Islamic Shi'ā seminaries that greatly affected the Karbala seminary. The rise of the Safavid Dynasty in Iran; entrusting important Islamic positions to narrators and Akhbari scholars; the domination of the Asharites and the People of Hadith (*Ahl al-Hadith*) on the Islamic seminaries of Mecca and Medina (*haramayn*) in Hejaz; the rebellion of the Kharijites in Bahrain; and the migration of Bahraini scholars to Iran and Iraq are the factors that caused the Akhbari movement to halt and trigger the Usuli movement to become the focus in the eleventh and twelfth century Hijri, the seminary of Karbala.<sup>4</sup>

Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani<sup>5</sup> was among the Ahkbari scholars who went to Iran after the Kharijites' revolt in Bahrain in 1126 AH. He afterwards moved to Iraq, and finally resided in Karbala. He was the author of the valuable *al-Nadhira fi Ahkam al-Itrah al-Tahira*. Through building the grand mosque situated to the western courtyard of Aba Abdullah al-Husayn, and leading and teaching in it, he established his school of thought in Karbala – the Akhbari school – in which he was a representative of.

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<sup>1</sup> Died 630 AH

<sup>2</sup> Was of the jurists in Hillah who wrote a popular book called *al-Hujjah Ali al-Dhahib ila Takfir Abi Talib*, on the topic of proving Abi Talib's faith.

<sup>3</sup> Shi'ā Seminaries across the World, pg. 258-262.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pg. 262.

<sup>5</sup> 1107-1186 AH

Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani's classes began in the Karbala seminary which had attracted many seminarians and had successfully taken hold of its intellectual atmosphere and the Usuli scholars' attention, where the moment they felt danger with regards to the obstruction of the principle of *ijtihad*, because of the growth of Ahkbari beliefs, they debated and ultimately publicly declared their disagreement with Shaykh Yusuf's Akhbari movement led by Wahid Behbahani.

Muhammad Baqir Isfahani, known as Wahid Behbahani,<sup>1</sup> was a progeny of Shaykh Mufid and the grandson the first Allamah Majlisi. After moving to Najaf and studying the rational and transmitted sciences (*ulum ma'qul wa manqul*) under the scholars of that seminary, he returned to Behbahan and wrote books<sup>2</sup> rejecting Akhbarism. In the year 1159 AH, he left Behbahan for Najaf, but afterwards thought the seminary lacked academic vigorousness necessary to be a well-rounded teacher. He later resided in Karbala and took on the headship of that seminary.<sup>3</sup> He owned over seventy books and mentored students such as Allamah Bahr al-Ulum, Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Shahrastani, Shaykh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita', Mirza Qumi, and Mulla Mahdi Naraqi, in which after him, they took Usulism to its zenith and achieving the qualifications of *ijtihad*, they took on the juristic leadership of the region.

Shaykh Yusuf Bahrani's arrival to Karbala and his teaching of Ahkbari principles in the seminary where usuli jurist Wahid Behbahani led began a deep academic discussion that led to the public disagreement of the two instructors of the seminary. Even though at times these differences became very obvious,<sup>4</sup> Yusuf Bahrani's calm reaction in

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<sup>1</sup> 1117-1205 AH

<sup>2</sup> Some of his book rejecting Akhbarism are: *Risalah Hujjiyyah Ijma'*, *Risalah Qiyas*, *Risalah al-Ijtihad wa al-Akhbar*.

<sup>3</sup> Dawani, Ali, *Wahid Behbahani*, pg. 123.

<sup>4</sup> After the debates and academic discussions Wahid Behbahani had with Yusuf Bahrani, which lasted for days, in conclusion Wahid Behbahani boycotted his school and along with

face of Wahid Behbahani and his students' complaints and objections<sup>1</sup> led to a peaceful academic and friendly coexistence between the two views. This was to the point that after Shaykh Yusuf Behbahani's demise in Karbala, there was a magnificent funeral and all the Islamic seminaries of Karbala and Najaf were closed and Wahid Behbahani himself did the prayer for his body.

The thirteenth century Hijri coincided with an important political and social initiative from the Karbala seminary, and that was the issue of a fatwa against the colonialist Britain by the second Mirza Shirazi. Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi,<sup>2</sup> who was one of Mirza Muhammad Hasan Shirazi's<sup>3</sup> exceptional students in the city of Samarra, after his death in the year 1312 AH, for twenty-four years taught and mentored seminarians in Samarra. He then moved to Kadhimiya and then afterwards resided in Karbala. Muhammad Taqi Shirazi's last years in Karbala, which coincided with World War I, were the golden years of his fruitful life and a time where he played an influential role in major political and social changes.

In 1332 AH, England declared its hostility towards the Uthmani government and intended to seize Basra. Hearing the plea for help from the people of Basra, the scholars of Iraq rose to their defense, whom amongst them was Mirza Shirazi from the seminary of Karbala, and issued a fatwa declaring resistance against foreign aggression. This initiated a movement and revolution known as "The 1920 Iraqi Revolt," and concluded with Britain leaving Iraq. After Iraq's independence, the

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prohibiting students from participating in his classes, he declared praying behind was null. *Shia Seminaries across the World*, pg. 265

<sup>1</sup>It has been narrated that when Yusuf Bahrani was informed about Wahid Behbahani's disagreements with him and his boycott on his classes, in response to protesters who demanded his classes be cancelled, he said, "He follows his religious obligation and I follow my religious obligation." Considering, he would encourage his students to participate in Wahid Behbahani's classes.

<sup>2</sup> 1258-1338 AH

<sup>3</sup> The great Mirza

second Mirza Shirazi, along with people such as Ayatullah Shaykh Mahdi Khalisi, Ayatullah Sayyid Mustafa Kashani, Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Ali Shahrastani, Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Tabatabai Yazdi, and Mirza's own son Muhammad Ridha decided to take the Iraqi revolution towards an independent government ruled by a Muslim individual. For this reason, in response to Britain's intent to impose one of its own agents for the presidency of Iraq, he issued his famous fatwa with the following text: "No Muslim has the right to choose a non-Muslim to govern and rule over the Muslim people."<sup>1</sup>

Britain's resistance against accepting the popular demands of the Iraqi people and preventing them from deciding for their own future, which was at times accompanied with exiling the leaders of the movement,<sup>2</sup> prompted Mirza Shirazi to issue a fatwa, allowing armed defense against British government forces:

Demanding your rights is obligatory on the Iraqi people and it obligatory upon them to observe peace and calmness in response to the people's request. In the event that Britain refuses to accept the people request, it is permissible for them to resort to defensive forces.<sup>3</sup>

Though the demise of the second Mirza Shirazi in 1338 AH, the intensification of British interference, and the start of trend in exiling revolutionary leaders, dampened the revolution's passion and vigor, yet the Iraqi scholars' mighty resistance and specifically Mirza Shirazi's resistance against foreign influence, once again it showed the power and influences of Shi'a religious establishment (*marja'iyah*) in mobilizing people forces against the colonial domination of Islamic

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<sup>1</sup> Famous Shia Jurists, pg. 285

<sup>2</sup> Of the exiled scholars is Shaykh Muhammad Ridha, son of Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, who was exiled to the Hengam Island, in the Persian Gulf.

<sup>3</sup> Sadiqi Tehrani, Muhammad, *A Look at the Iraqi Islamic Revolution of 1920 and the Role of Islamic Mujahid Scholars*, pg. 56.

countries to the heads of colonialism and specifically the British government.

In the fourteenth century Hijri, the Islamic seminary of Karbala saw many outstanding personalities. One of the great scholars of this century, from Karbala, who was considered the patriarch of the Shirazis in this city, was the pious and learned scholar, Ayatullah Sayyid Mahdi Shirazi.<sup>1</sup> He, who was one of Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi and Sayyid Muhammad Kadhim Tabatabai Yazdi's students, after travelling to and living in the cities Samarra, Kadhimiyya, and Najaf, he returned to Karbala and in 1366 AH after the passing of Ayatullah al-Udhma Haj Agha Husayn Qummi, the religious establishment of the Shi'a was passed on to him.<sup>2</sup>

Part III of this series will focus on the Seminaries of Jabal Amel, Isfahan, and Mashhad.

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<sup>1</sup> 1308-1380 AH

<sup>2</sup> Simultaneous with the marja'iyah of Sayyid Mahdi Shirazi in Iraq, Ayatullah al-Udhma Sayyid Husayn Burujerdi (ra) held the overall marja'iyah of Shi'as.



# A PROBE INTO THE MEANING OF LIGHT IN THE QUR'AN AND HADITH<sup>1</sup>

AZIZULLAH AFSHAR KERMANI<sup>2</sup>  
TRANSLATED BY JABIR CHANDOO

**ABSTRACT:** The word light (nur) has been applied in the religious texts to a variety of instances. These instances involve a wide spectrum of beings whose one extreme is the visible light, whilst the other extreme is the divine Essence. Entities situated between these two extremes such as intellect, knowledge, faith, divine messengers and their successors, guidance, and the like, have also been referred to as light. Nonetheless, the possession of light by all other beings is by virtue of the perpetual Essence of God.

## *Preamble*

“The Light” is one of the names of God. One of the chapters in the Holy Qur’an has been named after light. The word ‘light’ has a wide range of applications in the Qur’an and Hadith, and has been used in relation to a variety of things. Although the entities referred to as light vary in essence from one another, they have been referred to as such due to the presence of some distinctive features in every one of them.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has been translated from Farsi into English for the *Message of Thaqaalayn*. The Farsi paper was published in *Pajuhesh-e Dini*, No. 8, Winter 2004, pp. 86-99.

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This paper aims to examine the most distinguished instances of light in the view of the Holy Qur'an and the narrations, and subsequently to uncover the connection between them.

### *Definition of 'light'*

Light has been defined in several ways. Some of these definitions represent only the visible light, such as the definition, 'Light are rays that scatter and help the eye to sight'.<sup>1</sup> Others define light as the very thing that exposes other entities, and reveals their reality to the sight.<sup>2</sup> However, it would not be possible, in light of the above definitions, to explain all the instances of light that have appeared in the Islamic texts. The above definitions restrict the reality of light to the visible light only. Thus, there is a need to define light in such a way that it would include all its different instances.

According to another famous definition of light, it is a reality that is self-manifesting and manifests things other than itself.<sup>3</sup> Although this definition takes in the visible light, it is not limited to it, as it includes all that which is manifest in itself and manifests other things. Hence, this definition is capable of explaining the diverse instances of light.

### *The different applications of the word 'light'*

The first and the simplest experience that we have of light is that of visible light. This is the very perception of light that most people have in common.

The word light has appeared in this connotation in several verses of the Qur'an:

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<sup>1</sup> Raghīb Isfahānī, p.827.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Manzur, 14/321.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 14/321.



- a. *“It is He who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light ...”*  
(10:5)
- b. *“...and has made therein the moon for a light ...”* (71:16)
- c. *“... and made the darkneses and the light ...”* (6:1)

According to Ghazali, this conception of light is specific to the ordinary mind, and is relative in nature. He maintains that for a person who is blind, the visible light is neither self-manifest, nor does it manifests things other than itself. Hence, beside the light itself, the observer of it also plays an important role in the process of perceiving light. Moreover, close scrutiny of the matter leads us to the fact that light is not the cause of perception of the visible entities, rather it is the place (mahall) where perception takes place. As a result, it is more appropriate to term the faculty of vision as light than the thing which is sighted.<sup>1</sup>

What is observed here is basically a shift from visible light, as something material, to the light of sight. In order to prove his point, Ghazali cites examples regarding the way the phrase ‘light of vision’ is commonly used; thus, for example, it is frequently said in the case of a blind person who has lost the light of vision, or it is said regarding the weak vision of a bat.<sup>2</sup>

However, the light of vision itself is deficient in many respects, such as that it can see the visible but not the invisible; it can perceive the finite but not the infinite; it can sight other things but cannot sight itself; and the like. Nevertheless, there exists within man the spiritual eye which is free from the limitations of the physical eye. It has the ability to sight the visible and the non-visible, that which is far and near, and the material and immaterial. In general, existence in its entirety falls within

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<sup>1</sup> Ghazali, p.41 and 42.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.42.

the realm of this vision. This spiritual eye is the human intellect ('aql). Were we to compare between the sensual perception and that of intellection, it would be more proper to term the intellect as 'light'. The Prophetic narration which says that "God created Adam in His form [or image]" is in fact alluding to the above reality; for the power of intellection in man is a light that far represents the divine light.<sup>1</sup>

Now, close scrutiny on the characteristics of the faculty of intellect leads us to the fact that the intellect, which is the very knower and the reality of man, is self-manifest, and it manifests other things for itself. Put differently, man is knowledge in his essence; and one of the features of knowledge is that it is self-manifest and makes other things manifest. It is due to this reason that the Holy Prophet (s) said, "Knowledge is the light that God casts in the heart of whomever He wishes."<sup>2</sup>

In several verses of the Holy Qur'an, knowledge has been referred to as light and radiance:

1. "... Say, 'Are the blind one and the seer equal? Or are the darkness and the light equal?'" ...<sup>3</sup>
2. "The blind one and the seer are not equal, nor darkness and light."<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, there is a close relationship between the sensual perception, knowledge, thoughts, and the faculty of intellect. Imam 'Ali (a) says in this regard, "Intellects are the directors of the thoughts; and thoughts are the directors of the hearts; and the hearts are the directors

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, p.44.

<sup>2</sup> Majlisi, 1/225.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'an, 13:16.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'an, 35:19-20.

of the [physical] senses; and the senses are the directors of the bodily members.”<sup>1</sup>

Now, if knowledge were to be associated with the pursuit for truth, adherence to it, and struggle in its way; and if the bearer of knowledge were to apply his knowledge in the way of his spiritual development and perfection, then such knowledge would culminate in faith (‘iman). Hence, it is observed in a number of the Qur’anic verses that faith has been termed as light.<sup>2</sup> The following are a few examples:

1. “... and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people ...” (6:122)
2. “... and give you a light to walk by ...” (57:28)
3. “God is the Master of the faithful; He brings them out of darkness into light ...” (2:257)

Ghazali asserts that in the same manner that the physical eye is in need of sunlight to be able to see, likewise the intellect or the spiritual eye is in need of some light to be able to visualize. This spiritual light is the Holy Qur’an.<sup>3</sup>

In a number of verses, the Qur’an has referred to itself as light.<sup>4</sup> Consider the following verses:

1. “So have faith in God and His Apostle and the light which We have sent down ...” (64:8)
2. “... and We have sent down to you a manifest light.” (4:174)

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<sup>1</sup> Majlisi, 1/969.

<sup>2</sup> Muqatil bin Sulayman, under the entry *nur*.

<sup>3</sup> Ghazali, p.48.

<sup>4</sup> Tabataba’i, 7/378.

3. “... and help him and follow the light that has been sent down with him ...” (7:157)

The aim of such expressions is to make clear that the Qur’an is a light that illuminates for mankind the path of success in life; the path that man ought to traverse if he were to attain felicity and perfection.<sup>1</sup>

As the last of all divine messages, Islam revolves around the Holy Qur’an. Islam and the Qur’an are inseparable. In some verses of the Qur’an, the word ‘light’ has been used to denote the religion of Islam.<sup>2</sup>

1. “*They desire to put out the light of God with their mouths ...*” (9:32)
2. “... *God guides to His Light whomever He wishes ...*” (24:35)

The Prophet of Islam (s) has been referred to in the Qur’an as light. This is because he demarcated the truth from the falsehood by his words and actions, and made clear for mankind the real felicity and perfection through the divine message.

1. “*And as a summoner to God by His permission, and as a radiant lamp.*” (33:46)
2. “... *Certainly there has come to you a light from God and a manifest Book.*” (5:15)

The aim of the Holy Prophet, Islam and the Qur’an is to guide mankind towards God and to develop insight in them. Guidance and spiritual insight is considered by the Qur’an as a higher stage of human life that has profound impact in the transformation of the spirit and worldview of man, and in giving him a direction that is divine.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, 413.

<sup>2</sup> Muqatil bin Sulayman, under the entry *nur*.

In the following verses of the Qur'an, divine guidance and spiritual insight have been termed as light:<sup>1</sup>

1. *“Is he who was lifeless, then We gave him life and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, like one who dwells in a manifold darkness which he cannot leave? ...”* (6:122)
2. *“[This is] a Book We have sent down to you that you may bring mankind out from darkness into light ...”* (14:1)

Light in the above verses denote guidance, whilst darkness stands for misguidance. A point worthy of note here is that light has appeared in these verses in the singular form (*nur*), whereas darkness is in the plural form (*zulumat*). The wisdom behind this is that guidance is one of the instances of truth (*haqq*), and the reality of truth is that it is one. There is no disagreement or contradiction between the diverse instances that represent it. On the contrary, misguidance takes on numerous forms that controvert one another, since it originates in following the lowly desires.

The new life attained by the believers as a result of their confidence in the guidance and insight they have acquired shall make them possess light in the hereafter. On the Day of Resurrection, they will pass through the bridge (*sirat*) with the help of this light. The Qur'an has alluded to this reality in a number of its verses:

1. *“The day you will see the faithful, men and women, with their light moving swiftly before them and on their right ...”* (57:12)
2. *“... Their light will move swiftly before them and on their right ...”* (66:8)

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<sup>1</sup> Tabataba'i, 7/514.

In the afterlife, not only the light of the believers shall become manifest, rather the Divine Light shall also illuminate the earth. The following verse attests to this reality:

*And the earth will glow with the light of her Lord ... (39:69)*

Some scholars maintain that the word ‘light’ in the above verse denotes justice.<sup>1</sup>

Among the other applications of the word light in the Islamic texts is that it has been used to refer to people who are vested with the divine successorship (*imamah*) and authority (*wilayah*), especially in the case of ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (a). This is because these personalities have illumined this world by their divine knowledge and authority, and have enlightened the hearts of the believers.<sup>2</sup>

It is reported from Imam al-Rida (a) that he said, “*God guides to His Light whomever He wishes*”<sup>3</sup> means that ‘God guides to our wilayah whomever He likes’. And “*one whom God has not granted any light has no light*”<sup>4</sup> implies that ‘one for whom God has not appointed an *imam* in this world has no light in the hereafter, that is, he shall have no *imam* to guide him, and to follow him to the heaven’.<sup>5</sup>

One of the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (a) says regarding the verse “*So have faith in God and His Apostle and the light which We have sent down*”<sup>6</sup>:

By God, this light (*nur*) refers to the Imams from the Progeny of the Prophet until the Day of Resurrection. They are the light of God in the

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<sup>1</sup> Nishaburi, p.559.

<sup>2</sup> Sharif, p.314.

<sup>3</sup> Qur’an, 24:35.

<sup>4</sup> Qur’an, 24:40.

<sup>5</sup> Astarabadi, p.358.

<sup>6</sup> Qur’an, 64:8.

heavens and the earth. The luminosity of their light in the hearts of the believers is even brighter than the sunlight.<sup>1</sup>

In another narration, Imam ‘Ali applies the verse *God is the Light of the heavens and the earth*<sup>2</sup> to the Holy Prophet and the twelve Shi’a Imams.<sup>3</sup>

The well-known verse that discusses ‘light’ in the Qur’an is verse 35 of Surah al-Nur. The word light has appeared five times in this verse. Numerous and diverse interpretations have been offered concerning this particular verse. God has been referred in it as “*The Light of the heavens and the earth*”. According to some scholars, it signifies that God is Manifest by Himself, whilst all that exists in the heavens and the earth are manifest because of Him.<sup>4</sup>

Considering the fact that it is through its existence that an entity becomes manifest for other things, existence would be the most complete representation of the reality of light. On the other hand, since the existence of contingent beings is dependent on the existence of God, He would be the most perfect of all instances of light. In other words, He is Manifest by Himself and causes all entities other than Him to become manifest. Every being becomes manifest and comes into existence through Him. Therefore, God is the Light through which the heavens and the earth have become manifest. In fact, the verse of light alludes to this reality.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the very basis of manifestation is existence, in the same manner that the basis of concealment is non-existence. God is the only being who exists by Himself, whilst all other than Him have been

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<sup>1</sup> Qummi, 342-343.

<sup>2</sup> Qur’an, 24:35.

<sup>3</sup> Bahrani, 136-137.

<sup>4</sup> Kashani, 3/434.

<sup>5</sup> Tabataba’i, 15/172.

brought to existence by Him.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the relationship between being manifest and existence is inseparable. The degree of manifestation of every being is proportionate to the intensity (*shiddat*) of its existence.

Now, if God is the only being who is self-sufficient in His essence, subsists on His own, and whose existence has no limit, then it follows that His essence is Absolute Light. He is the Light that has no darkness as its opposite. He is the Light of the whole universe, and of the heavens and the earth: “*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth.*” He is more manifest than any other thing that is manifest, as He is closer to us than any other thing that is close to us. All other entities are manifest by virtue of His Essence: “*...and by the light of Your face through which all things are illumined.*”<sup>2</sup> Every being owes its luminosity to that of the Divine Essence. The Divine Light is immutable and does not wane. It has filled every place and has besieged everything; there is no veil that can stop it from shining. There is no opposite to it, nor does it have any equal. There is no end to it since it does not fade away. No darkness can ever contravene the Divine Light.

Man is unable to see God around him due to his cognitive deficiency. The human cognitive faculty functions in a manner that it can only detect and comprehend something by taking into account the opposite of it. Since God has no opposite, man is incapable of noticing His presence. A rather strange reality to consider here is that the reason God is always hidden from sight is because He is always evident to it. If He were partially evident and partially hidden, He would not have remained unnoticed from the sight. The Divine plane is above all forms of change, movement, and extinction. It is due to this very reason that He remains hidden from human perception.

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<sup>1</sup> Baydawi, 4/107.

<sup>2</sup> Imam ‘Ali (a), Supplication of Kumayl.



The words of the philosophers and mystics that ‘The Divine essence is hidden due to the intensity and severity of His presence’ need to be understood in light of the above explanation. ‘O He Who is hidden due to the plenitude of His Light, Who is manifest and hidden in His appearance.’<sup>1</sup> He is hidden in the same respect that He is evident. His being evident is the same as His being hidden. How beautiful has ‘Ali described this reality when he says, “Every evident other than Him is hidden, and every hidden beside Him is not evident.”<sup>2</sup> It is God alone who is both manifest and hidden, with the same unity and simplicity of His essence. His essence is not partially manifest and partially non-manifest; rather He is manifest, all of Him, as He is hidden, all of Him. Put differently, He is manifest in the same respect that He is non-manifest, and His being hidden is exactly the same as His being evident. The primary source of the above reality is the Qur’an itself when it states: “*He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden ...*” (57:3), and “... *so whichever way you turn, there is the face of God ...*” (2:115).<sup>3</sup>

As a result, if the application of the word light in the case of God were to be compared to its application to all other than Him, it would be observed that the word is applied to all beings other than God by virtue of His light, since their very existence is from Him. Therefore, anything other than God cannot be manifest on its own, rather it owes its manifestation to other than itself. Consequently, this contingent manifestation would naturally be subject to intensity and weakness, and would also be prone to change and extinction. Thus, the word light would be applied to God literally, and to other than Him figuratively; since there is only God in the realm of existence, and all other than Him

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<sup>1</sup> Sabzawari, *Sharh al-Manzumah*, 2/35.

<sup>2</sup> Imam Ali, Sermon 65.

<sup>3</sup> Mutahhari, *Bist Guftar*, p.242-243.

are bound to disappear: "... *Everything is to perish except His Face ...*" (28:88).<sup>1</sup>

We started our discussion with the visible light, and thereafter moved on, by detracting the limitations of the physical light, to transcendent instances of light until we ultimately reached the real light embodied in the divine Essence. However, this bottom-to-top course of discussion is traversed in perception and at the cognitive level only, otherwise in reality (*thubut*), it is the other way round; it is the Divine Essence which is evident, luminous and manifest by itself at the first instance, and the visibility of all other than God is by virtue of Him: *He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden ...* (57:3).

If God is the only light, that is, if He is the only reality that is manifest by itself and makes other things manifest, then, in this case, there will be nothing as light in contrast to God. All other forms of light will be darkness in front of Him, for it is God alone who is, by His very essence, manifest and makes other things manifest. All other entities beside Him are dark and non-existent in their essence. If they are manifest and make other things manifest, it is because God has made them to be so.<sup>2</sup>

There are other interpretations too offered regarding the verse "*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth ...*" (24:35). According to some exegetes, this verse implies that God is the Owner of the light in the heavens and the earth; this light in the heavens and earth signifies the truth (haqq). And the reason light in the above verse has been annexed to the heavens and the earth is either to depict the vastness of the Divine radiance such that it is due to Him that the heavens and the earth

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<sup>1</sup> Ghazali, p.55.

<sup>2</sup> Mutahhari, *Āshna'i ba Qur'an*, 4/101.

have become radiant, or it is to illustrate that the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth derive light from Him.<sup>1</sup>

The author of *Majma' al-Bayan* offers three explanations in relation to the meaning of the sentence “*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth*”:

1. God guides the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth towards that in which lies their interests.
2. God has illumined the heavens and the earth through the sun, the moon, and the stars.
3. God has adorned the heavens with the angels, and the earth with the prophets and scholars.<sup>2</sup>

Fakhr al-Razi maintains that the above verse either means that God is the one who guides the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth, and runs their affairs through His infinite wisdom and clear proofs; or He is the one who creates order and harmony in the heavens and the earth; or He is the one who has illumined and beautified the heavens and the earth, the heavens with the sun, the moon and the stars, and the earth with the prophets and scholars.<sup>3</sup>

It has been reported from Imam ‘Ali that he said, “*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” denotes that it is Him who disseminated the truth amidst the heavens and the earth, and subsequently, the entire universe became illumined with it.” This may imply that He it is who irradiated the hearts of the dwellers of the heavens and earth through His Light.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Zamakhshari, 3/66-67.

<sup>2</sup> Tabrisi, 7/249.

<sup>3</sup> Fakhr al-Razi, 23/195.

<sup>4</sup> Tabrisi, *Jawami' al-Jami'*, 4/313.

There is no doubt that the divine light reveals itself through the creation, for everything that comes into being indicates that it has a Creator. All creatures in the universe act as a mirror, each one reflecting the Creator through the level of existence and the ontological qualities peculiar to it. However, God has also manifested Himself to mankind through His legislative guidance embodied in the divine apostleship (*nubuwwah*) and successorship (*wilayah*). The remaining part of the verse of light that follows the phrase “*God is the Light of the heavens and the earth*” points to this fact:

*The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp — the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star — lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it. Light upon light. God guides to His Light whomever He wishes. God draws parables for mankind, and God has knowledge of all things. (24:35)*

There is difference among the exegetes as to the reality of this light that God has attributed to Himself, and the thing to which this light has been compared. The majority of them are of the opinion that light in this verse symbolizes the Holy Prophet. Thus, it is as if the verse read: ‘The parable of Muhammad – who is the messenger of God, is a niche, the lamp is his heart, and the glass is his chest -that has been compared to the glittering star.’ Again the verse talks about the heart of the Prophet and says that this lamp is lit from a blessed tree – that is Abraham, since most prophets were from his lineage. Nonetheless, the blessed tree could also be interpreted as the revelation (*wahy*). Muhammad is neither eastern nor western; that is, he is neither a Christian nor a Jew, since the Christians used to pray towards the east, and the Jews towards the west. “*Whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it*”: the marks of prophethood would almost give evidence to the Prophet’s apostleship even before he declared himself a

prophet, or the veracity of his claim to prophethood is nearly to be established even if no miracle were to be seen from him.<sup>1</sup>

It has been reported from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq that "*The parable of His Light...*" refers to the Ahl al-Bayt; that is, the Holy Prophet and the twelve Imams after him are the signs that exhibit monotheism (tawhid), and guide people towards the religion and what it entails of the obligatory and recommended acts.<sup>2</sup>

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir is narrated to have said, "The *niche wherein is a lamp* is the light of knowledge situated in the chest of the Holy Prophet, whilst the glass is the bosom of 'Ali to whom the Prophet imparted his knowledge, hence it moved to his bosom. "*Whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it*" implies that the learned from the progeny of Muhammad shall soon disclose the truth before he is asked about it. "*Light upon light*" means that after [the departure of] every individual from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (a), another Imam – aided with the light of knowledge and wisdom - takes his place. This [succession] has been there in the issue [of imamah] from the time of Adam [and will continue] until the Hour sets in. They are the vicegerents of God on earth and His proof over His creation. The earth is never empty of any one of them at all times."<sup>3</sup>

Expounding on the meaning of "*Light upon light*", some exegetes maintain that the Qur'an is the *Light* that God has sent to mankind so that they may seek guidance from it, while *upon light* signifies the clear proofs that existed before the Qur'an. According to another view, "*Light upon light*" means that part of the Qur'an clarifies the other part of it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, 313-314.

<sup>2</sup> Huwayzi, 5/156.

<sup>3</sup> Tabrisi, *Jawami' al-Jami'*, 4/315.

<sup>4</sup> Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, 10/171.

Tabrisi offers the following five interpretations regarding the phrase “*The parable of His Light*”:

1. The parable of the divine light through which He guides the believers is the faith (*iman*) that dwells in their hearts.
2. The divine light is the Qur’an which has penetrated into the hearts of human beings.
3. It signifies the Holy Prophet (s). He annexed him to Himself in order to exalt the Prophet’s position.
4. Light stands for proofs of monotheism and divine justice which are as clear and evident as light itself.
5. Light implies obedience; that is, obedience to God in the heart of a believer acts as a light.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

The world light – in the sense of the radiance that eliminates darkness – has been applied to different things. The most evident instance of light is the visible light which represents a level from among the many levels of the corporal world. The transcendent instances of light are such as the light of knowledge, faith, guidance, Imam, prophet, intellect, and the divine Essence. The common feature that is found in all the diverse instances of light is that it puts an end to darkness and perplexity, brings about illumination and clarity, and identifies distinctly the correct path and goal of perfection. Therefore, those who are entangled in different forms of darkness and obscurity in this world ought to enlighten themselves with the corresponding forms of light and

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<sup>1</sup> Tabrisi, *Majma’ al-Bayan*, 7/250.

luminosity so that they may succeed to attain the higher stages of human perfection.

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# THE MEANINGS AND ADDRESSES OF SALAM IN PRAYER

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ABSTRACT: *Salam (Peace)* is a Qur'anic term with a wide range of deep meanings and various practical aspects and manifestations. This divine word is a name of Allah, and many hadiths have been reported from the Holy Prophet and Imams regarding its meanings. In many religious texts, including prayers, ziyarahs, and social interactions, its manifestations are clearly seen. As the best deed and act of worship and the most beautiful display of servitude to Allah, prayer has some elements, including Salam. This article first identifies and summarizes the most important meanings of Salam on the basis of authentic Arabic and Persian dictionaries. Next, on the basis of these meanings, the most significant implications will be investigated, namely, the philosophy of Salam in Prayer.

## ***The Statement of Problem***

As will be mentioned in the literal analysis of the word 'Salam', there are fifteen meanings for this term. On the basis of legal injunctions, Salam is an element of prayer. In this element of prayer, the praying person recites three sentences. The two first sentences are

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recommended, and the last one is obligatory. First, Salam is said to the Holy Prophet, then to 'us', and the righteous servants of Allah. In the last sentence, Salam is said to 'you'. The first question this article addresses is: Among the fifteen mentioned meanings of prayer, which one is congruent with the spirit of prayer and its addressees? The second question to be answered is regarding who the addressees of the second and third sentences are ('us' and 'you').

### *Introduction*

Salam is a key Qur'anic term and has a wide range of meanings in Islamic culture. This blessed word is used as a name of Allah and also as a word of salutation among Muslims. Salam is among the elements of prayer<sup>1</sup> and the ending part of this divine obligation. Like other elements of prayer, it enjoys profound aspects, some of which will be referred to by those who know the truth and mysteries of prayers based on hadiths by Prophet Muhammad and the Imams. No doubt the way to more reflection on this issue is open, and we have a long way to gain perfect knowledge.

As mentioned above, Salam has a wide range of meanings, most of which are materialized in the Salams mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

The main questions about Salam in prayer include a) which of the various meanings and concepts is related to the depth of prayer more, b) which idea about the philosophy of Salam in prayer is more likely to be true and valid, and finally, c) who the addresses of Salam are in each of three sentences and which message is conveyed to them.

Benefiting from the support of Allah and using the hadiths of the Imams and valuable points about the philosophy and secrets of prayer,

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<sup>1</sup> By element, it is not meant the Rukn which is a jurisprudential term used in the treatises of Practical Islamic Rulings. Five things are Rukn: intention, saying Allahu-Akbar to start the prayer, standing before Ruku', Ruku' and two Sajdas.

these questions will be answered as much as possible. In addition, a comparative study will be conducted on books of “Secrets of Prayer” (*Asrar al-Salat*) and other similar books.

### ***The Meanings of Salam***

In order to find out about the main meanings of the word Salam, it is necessary to examine and analyse what is mentioned about this divine word in reliable Persian and Arabic dictionaries. Then the similar redundant meanings should be omitted, and a precise conclusion should be reached about the meanings of Salam. Accordingly, first the following data was gathered and classified: numerous points raised in such well-known dictionaries as *Lisan-ul-Arab*,<sup>1</sup> *Majma’-ul-Bahrain*,<sup>2</sup> *Kitab-ul-‘Ayn*,<sup>3</sup> and *Tahdhib-ul-Lughah*,<sup>4</sup> whatever commentator on and philologists of Arabic like *Tarihi*,<sup>5</sup> *Zubaidi*,<sup>6</sup> *ibn Qutaibah*,<sup>7</sup> *Raghib*,<sup>8</sup> *Jeffry*,<sup>9</sup> *Suyuti*,<sup>10</sup> *Khurramshahi*,<sup>11</sup> *Insafpur*,<sup>12</sup> *Dekhoda*,<sup>13</sup> *Reyshahri*,<sup>14</sup> *Mustafa*<sup>15</sup> and may other philologists referred to about Salam in their books; mentioning all of them is beyond the constraints of this paper. Afterwards, common points were omitted, and fifteen separate meanings were obtained as follows:

1. health, being away from all scourges; healthy, and pure,
2. a name of Allah,

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<sup>1</sup> vol.2, p. 289

<sup>2</sup> vol.6, p.84

<sup>3</sup> vol.7, p.256

<sup>4</sup> p.445

<sup>5</sup> the entry of ‘Silm’

<sup>6</sup> the entry of ‘Silm’

<sup>7</sup> vol. 1, p. 239

<sup>8</sup> the entry of ‘Silm’

<sup>9</sup> p. 258

<sup>10</sup> vol.1, p.121

<sup>11</sup> p.1206

<sup>12</sup> p.585

<sup>13</sup> p.13711

<sup>14</sup> p. 2571

<sup>15</sup> p. 446

3. well-being, peace,
4. security and safety, being safe from each other,
5. reconciliation,
6. salutation,
7. farewell,
8. tranquility,
9. submission and surrender,
10. a word which is not futile, the strong and purposeful word,
11. the name of a tree which is immune from any pest,
12. the name of a hard stone which is secure from any kind of erosion,  
large, broad, and small stones,
13. asking for permission,
14. veneration and reverence,
15. a long stick resembling a tree branch.

### ***Meanings of Salam in Prayer***

As mentioned above, there are fifteen meanings for Salam in various dictionaries. These definitions will be examined to see which one conforms to the spirit of Salam in prayer. For this purpose, many references and books on philosophy and secrets of prayer are consulted and their important points and discussions are mentioned in this article. In addition to referring to main viewpoints on various aspects and summarizing the points, the conclusions are reported briefly. Hence, at first the main viewpoints on the meanings and addressees of Salam in prayer are addressed. While so doing, points about the philosophy and interpretation of Salam in prayer and its links with the Ascent (*Mi'raaj*) of the Holy Prophet will be presented.

### A. *The Main Viewpoints and Ideas on the Meanings of Salam in Prayer*

1. Mulla Muhsin Fayd Kashani, Imam Khomeini, Shahid Thani (the Second Martyr), Hajj Mirza Jawad Maliki Tabrizi, Ayatollah Jawadi Amuli and others deem Salam in prayer to refer to “security”. This is based on a well-known hadith attributed to Imam Sadiq in *Misbah-u-Shari’ah*. He said:

Salam at the end of prayer means security. That is, whoever obeys the commands of Allah and acts upon His Messenger’s Sunnah humbly will be immune from worldly afflictions and punishment in the hereafter. Salam is a name of Allah which He has endowed His servants with so that they use it in their transactions, keeping things in their trusts, and their relationships, keeping company and socializing with each other. And if you want to act upon the meaning of Salam, you should fear Allah, and your faith and wisdom should be immune from you; that is, you should not taint them with sins. You should not annoy your guardian angels (who record your deeds), and not drive them away with your bad deeds either. Likewise, both your friends and enemies should be immune from you and your actions. Whoever does not adhere to Salam is neither secure nor submissive. He is lying about his Salam even though he pretends to adhere to Salam in front of people.

2. As regards the meaning of security, Hajj Mirza Jawad Maliki Tabrizi wrote, “From these words, deduce the ruling of saying “Salam” to people. Do you say “Salam” to somebody while you do not wish him good health, all blessings, or some of them? Is it something other than hypocrisy? Can one expect the reward that Allah has promised in return for such a Salam? In addition, know the status of your saying Salam to the Prophet and the Imams in

prayer and while visiting (doing *ziyarah*) their holy shrines.” (ibid, 368).

3. Mulla Muhsin Feid Kashani said about the hadith of Imam Sadiq, “If the guardian angels, who record your deeds and are the closest ones to you, closer than your friend and enemy, and are not immune from you, obviously your friends and enemies are not secure from you either. And no one is secure from the one who does not adhere to Salam as referred to in the hadith. He is insincere about his Salam, even though he says “Salam” to everybody.”<sup>1</sup>
4. In the book *Ma’ani al-Akhbar*, Abdullah ibn Fadl Hashemi is quoted as saying, “When I asked Imam Sadiq about the meaning of Salam, he said, ‘Salam means security and finishing the prayer.’ I asked again, ‘May I be sacrificed for you! How come?’ He responded, ‘In the past, it was customary for people to consider somebody’s coming to them and saying ‘Salam’ to them a sign of being secure from their harm. However, if he did not say ‘Salam’ when approaching them, they were not immune from him. Similarly, if they did not say ‘Salam’ in response, he was not immune from their harm either. This was customary among the Arabs. Thus, ‘Salam’ is indicative of his finishing the prayer and being allowed to speak. It guarantees that nothing can enter prayer and ruin it. Salam is a name of Allah which the praying person addresses to the two angels that Allah has assigned to watch his actions.”<sup>2</sup>
5. In *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, a hadith by Imam Ali describes the reason for saying Salam: “Peace be upon you and Allah’s mercy and

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<sup>1</sup> Fayd Kashani, 176

<sup>2</sup> ibid

blessings”<sup>1</sup> in prayer is to seek Allah’s mercy, the Glorified; that is, prayer protects you from the chastisement of the Hereafter.”<sup>2</sup>

6. In this regard, Ayatollah Jawadi Amuli wrote, “Salam can be interpreted as us being covered by mercy of Allah.”<sup>3</sup> In other above-mentioned references, similar explanations can be found.

### **B. *The addresses of Salam***

Salam in the final part of prayer including three sentences, namely

1. السلام عليك ايها النبي و رحمه الله و بركاته (“Peace be upon you, O’ the Prophet, and Allah’s mercy and His blessing”);
2. السلام علينا و على عباد الله الصالحين (“Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah”);
3. السلام عليكم و رحمه الله و بركاته (“Peace be upon you and Allah’s mercy and blessings”).

The Shi’a jurists considered only the last sentence as mandatory, and they regard the two first sentences as recommended. No doubt the analyses of Salam in prayer carried out here are related to the third sentence. What follows is a summary of the sayings:

1. In his book *The New Treatise*, Imam Khomeini considered the addresses of Salam in بركاته و رحمه الله و السلام عليكم to be angels or those with qualities of angels:

As in Islamic teachings, prayer is the ascent of the believer to Heaven and a spiritual journey. We establish a spiritual relationship with our leaders, Islamic Ummah, all righteous

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<sup>1</sup> السلام عليكم و رحمه الله و بركاته

<sup>2</sup> Majlisi, 254/81

<sup>3</sup> ibid, 148

groups, and angels in the last Rak'at after Tashahud, see them in front of us and say Salam to them because 'In the spiritual journey, distance does not matter,'<sup>1</sup>:

1.1 السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته means the Divine peace, mercy and blessings be upon you, o' the Prophet!

1.2 السلام علينا means peace be on us (who have the same belief and form Islamic Ummah and Hizbullah [the party of Allah]).

1.3 على عباد الله الصالحين و means peace be upon the righteous servants of Allah.

Through this Salam, we can keep away from sectarianism and self-importance and send peace and Salam on all those who tread the path of righteousness.

1.4 السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته means Allah's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you (angels or those with qualities of angels).

This Salam takes us out of the earthly world and into the world of souls and angels. Finishing the prayer with Salam to angels shows the result of prayer; that is, if a Muslim performs prayer humbly, he will have the features of angels so much so as to reach the rank of angels and say Salam to them.<sup>2</sup>

2. According to Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, "Salam was originally realized in the Night of Ascent. In that night, when Prophet Muhammad knelt down and recited Tashahud<sup>3</sup> and Salawat in the end of his prayer, he suddenly saw the lines of prophets and angels

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<sup>1</sup> Risalah Nowin, 100

<sup>2</sup> Bi-Azar Shirazi, 100

<sup>3</sup> The part of prayer where Muslims kneel



in front of him. He was told, “O’ Muhammad! Say Salam to them!” So he said, “Allah’s peace, mercy and blessings be upon you”.<sup>1</sup> Then Allah revealed to him, “Surely peace, mercy and blessing are you and your progeny.”<sup>2</sup>

3. In *Ilal-u-Sharayi*, it is narrated that Imam Sadiq was asked about the reason for Salam, he said in response, “Salam is a means of leaving the prayer.” Mufaddal ibn ‘Umar asked, “So why does the person praying say Salam looking at the right side and not the left side?” The Imam replied, “Because the angel recording the good deeds is on your right side, the angel recording the bad deeds is on your left side, and prayer is a good deed. Thus, Salam is recited looking at the right side. Then he also asked, “Why do not we say Salam with a singular grammatical object, addressing one angel on the right side?” The sixth Imam answered, “We say Salam with a plural grammatical object so that it is addressed to both angels, but looking at the right side indicates the superiority of the angel at the right side.” Finally, Mufaddal asked, “Why do we leave the state of prayer with Salam?” The Imam replied, “Because it is Salam and salutation to these two angels.” Then he added, “Performing Prayer according to injunctions and observing its Ruku’, Sajdah and Salam guarantees security from Hellfire. On the Day of Judgment, if somebody’s prayer is accepted, his other good deeds will be accepted as well. Thus, if his prayer is perfect, his other good deeds will also be perfect; if not, they will be rejected, too.”<sup>3</sup>
4. In the book “Pithy Points”, Ayatullah Bahjat is quoted as saying, “When the servant comes back from the presence of Allah, his first souvenir is His Salam. A part of supplication in Kufa Mosque reads as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> السلام عليكم و رحمه الله و بركاته

<sup>2</sup> Kulayni, 3/486

<sup>3</sup> Jawadi Amuli, 148 reporting from *Ilal-u-Sharayi*

“O, Allah! You are Salam (peace), and from You is Salam, and to You returns Salam. O’ Our Lord! Salute us with Your Salam!”<sup>1</sup>

5. An excerpt from the book “The Song of Monotheism” also reads as follows, “[After Tashahhud, the praying person says “Peace be upon you, O’ the Prophet!<sup>2</sup> And Allah’s mercy and His blessing”; “Peace be upon us and upon the righteous servants of Allah”.<sup>3</sup> In every prayer, a Muslim inculcates friendship ties with all righteous servants of Allah in himself. In other words, he repeats his sending of peace on righteous and Muslim servants of Allah every day; peace and Salam on righteous servants of Allah. If here ‘righteous people’ is mentioned, then, “Peace be upon you and Allah’s mercy and blessings”.<sup>4</sup>
6. In *Mi’raj-u-Sa’adah*, Mulla Ahmad Naraqi wrote about some rites and secrets of prayer:

And when you start reciting Salam, you should consider yourself in the presence of the Holy Prophet, the angels close to Allah, other prophets, the Holy Imams, and the guardian angels who record your deeds. You should remember all of them. Then, you should say “Salam” to Prophet Muhammad, who is the chief and the means of guidance and faith, saying, السلام عليك ايها النبي و رحمه الله و بركاته. Finally, you should turn to all of them and say “Salam” to them. Beware of saying Salam negligently without remembering them. Likewise, when you lead a public prayer, address your Salam to all of

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<sup>1</sup> اللهم انت السلام و منك السلام واليك يرجع و يعود السلام حينما ربنا منك بالسلام

<sup>2</sup> السلام عليك ايها النبي و رحمه الله و بركاته

<sup>3</sup> السلام علينا و على عباد الله الصالحين

<sup>4</sup> السلام عليكم و رحمه الله و بركاته

those praying behind you. When you put these points into practice, you can hope that your prayer is accepted. Also, beware of praying negligently. As regards the secrets of prayer, some great scholars said that prayer is an example of the way we will be present on the Day of Judgment in the gathering place of resurrection, so in prayer we should remember that state of being. Adhan<sup>1</sup> indicates the second time that Israfil<sup>2</sup> will blow the Horn in the end of Time when the dead will be resurrected, Iqamah<sup>3</sup> represents the call of Allah when He summons His servants, and standing while facing Qiblah<sup>4</sup> symbolizes our standing in the presence of Allah in order to be interrogated for our deeds. These great scholars first talked about the symbolic relationship between all elements of prayer and the presence of man in the gathering place of resurrection, and finally elaborated on Salam.”<sup>5</sup>

7. In the book Jami’ Abbasi, Shaikh Baha’i wrote regarding Salam in prayer:

There are seventeen acts related to Salam, five of which are mandatory and twelve other ones are recommended acts based on Sunnah. The five obligatory acts include kneeling down for reciting Salam, keeping still while doing so, saying *السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته*, and saying this sentence after finishing with the tashahhud, and saying it in such a way that one can hear himself. The recommended acts based on Sunnah include Turak (kneeling down in a way that one leans on the left side and left thigh and puts the front side of right foot on the back of his left foot) as what is done in Tashahhud; placing the hands on his lap; keeping fingers

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<sup>1</sup> Call to prayer

<sup>2</sup> The angel who will sound the trumpet on Judgment Day

<sup>3</sup> The second call to the prayer, recited just before the prayer begins

<sup>4</sup> The direction Muslims turn at for prayer towards the Ka’aba - the House of God in Mecca

<sup>5</sup> Naraq, 681-682

close to each other; intending to leave the state of prayer; saying Salam to the Prophets, the Imams, angels, believing human beings and Jinns; the prayer leader's intending to address Salam to believers praying behind him; the latter's intending to address Salam to the former; the prayer leader's audible Salam; those praying behind him saying Salam quietly and choice is left to the one who performs prayer individually; both looking at their right side when saying Salam; then those praying behind him looking at the left side to see if there is somebody on their left side – some also say that also if there is wall on their left side; finally, the one who performs prayer individually looking at his right side.”<sup>1</sup>

8. As for the addressees of Salam in prayer, Shahid Thani said:

When you are finished with Tashahhud, consider yourself in the presence of the Holy Prophet and the angels close to Allah, and say, السلام عليك ايها النبي ورحمه الله وبركاته، السلام علينا و على عباد الله الصالحين. Then remember Prophet Muhammad, other prophets, the Imams, and guardian angels who record your deeds and say, السلام عليكم ورحمه الله وبركاته.

You should not address them while you are ignorant of addressees because your deed will be futile and mere pretence. And how can your call be heard when there is no addressee? What would you do if there were not the bounty, sweeping mercy, and perfect compassion of Allah Who accepts the prayer void of its origin and truth due to inattention? Nevertheless, it may not be accepted.

If you lead the public prayer, address your Salam to those who pray behind you, in addition to those who those mentioned above. If you act upon above-mentioned points,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, 53-54

you truly observe the right of Salam in prayer and deserve the increasing generosity of Allah.”<sup>1</sup>

9. Mulla Muhsin Feid Kashani’s opinion resembles the aforesaid words of Shahid Thani.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

1. The main meaning of Salam is safety and security from the Divine rage on the Day of Judgment.
2. In the Salam of prayer, the prophets, Imams, righteous servants of Allah and angels are addressed by the one praying.
3. In addition to safety and security, Salam in prayer can also refer to salutation.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited in Jawadi Amuli, 77

<sup>2</sup> Feid Kashani, *al-Mahajatt-ul-Baida’*, 1/393

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# EATING AND DRINKING CONDUCT OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD<sup>1</sup>

DR MOHAMMAD REZA JABBARI

ABSTRACT: In the present day, a great deal of research is being done on how to eat as well as eating etiquette for people's wellbeing. This article touches upon Prophet Muhammad's eating and drinking habits and etiquette, including the kinds of food he ate, the amount eaten, when he ate, and with whom. Other aspects of eating etiquette, such as beginning a meal with Allah's name, ending it in praising Him, hygiene, and avoiding wastefulness are also considered. Since the Prophet was chosen by Allah to deliver His message to the people through teaching them how to live and eventually reach perfection, he is the perfect model to be followed in every aspect of a person's life.

Eating and drinking are among the basic requirements of a person's material life. If these needs are not met correctly, its effects on the body and spirit are detrimental. Since the body works as a vehicle for the soul, any disorder in the body will undoubtedly disrupt it.

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<sup>1</sup> This is translation of chapter two of *Sire-ye Akhlāqi-e Payāambar-e A'zam: Sulūk-e Fardi* (2011, Nashr-e Ma'ārif, Qum).

The prophets and saints (*awliya' Allah*) were also not needless of food and drink. By following the correct approach to eating, they ensure their body's wellbeing and use it as a means to bring the soul to perfection. For this reason, when studying the lifestyle of the Prophet, the etiquettes related to eating, drinking, and other aspects related to bodily health and physical appearance should be studied before those related to one's spiritual life.

Considering all the narrations (*hadiths*) regarding the etiquette and conduct of the Prophet with regards to eating and drinking, we find answers to questions such as: When, why, and how did the Prophet eat? How much and what types of food did he have? Did he eat alone or with others? The answers are found in the following discussions.

#### ***A) The primary goal for eating***

Why people eat or drink seems obvious at first glance: eating and drinking are natural necessities of human life. However, from the viewpoint of saints, the philosophy behind providing for the physical needs of the body in general is more important than mere survival: The body plays the role of an instrument for man's reality – the soul. In other words, for the soul to move towards perfection, the needs of the body as the vehicle and instrument for the soul should be supplied. For this reason, the instrumental role of eating in the direction of worship and performing obligations has been pointed out in narrations, as the Prophet said:

O' God, grant us abundance (*barakah*) of bread and do not let us be separated from it, for without it we will not be able to perform ritual prayer, fast, and perform our divine obligations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 5, p. 73, no. 13 and vol. 6, p. 287, no. 6

Imam Sadiq also states, “The foundation of the body is based on bread.”<sup>3</sup> In another narration, a person asks Abu Dharr,<sup>4</sup> “What is the best deed after believing in God?” He replied, “Performing ritual prayers and eating bread.” Seeing the person surprised by this answer, Abu Dharr continued, “If there is no bread, God will not be worshipped.”<sup>5</sup> As Sarakhsi said, Abu Dharr implied that eating bread gives a person enough strength to perform ritual prayers.

Considering these hadiths, the Prophet’s aim for eating was noble; rather than eating to become gluttonous, it is to prepare the body for fulfilling ritual obligations.

### ***B) The kinds of food the Prophet ate***

The Prophet chose food that was *halal* (permissible), simple, and beneficial:

#### ***1. Permissibility (halal)***

Since the Prophet’s role was to guide people, he was the most careful when it came to eating permissible foods. He constantly ate along with his family and servant, and they ate only what God permitted.<sup>6</sup> The Prophet also insisted on eating with others, as well as beginning a meal in the name of God and praising Him when the meal was finished. The food must also be permissible (*halal*).<sup>7</sup>

One of the practical examples of the Prophet’s attention towards eating permissible food and avoiding prohibited food is seen when he became the guest of a group of the Ansar. When they put a piece of broiled mutton in front of him, he put a morsel into his mouth, chewed it, but

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, vol. 6, p. 286, no. 3 and 7

<sup>4</sup> One of the Prophet Muhammad’s companions

<sup>5</sup> Al-Sarakhsi, *Al-Mabsut*, no. 30, p. 258

<sup>6</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 26; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 241

<sup>7</sup> Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 398

did not swallow it. He took it out and said that he was informed that the mutton “has been supplied unfairly.” Confirming what the Prophet said, they admitted, “Since we did not manage to find any sheep at the market, we took a sheep from one of the neighbours without permission and expect to pay for it afterwards.”<sup>8</sup>

## 2. *Simplicity*

Narrations state that the Prophet’s food was as ordinary as his contemporaries. Based on Tabarsi’s narration, the Prophet was not demanding with regards to what he ate. He never insisted on having a specific type of food; he ate whatever he was provided within the boundaries of its permissibility.<sup>9</sup> Of course, this does not contradict the narrations that specify the foods and fruits that the Prophet liked; if it was possible, the Prophet would have the beneficial foods or fruits he liked.

In most cases, the Prophet ate barley bread made with whole grain flour. In some narrations, barley bread has been introduced as the food of the prophets, as seen in this saying by Imam Ridha:

There has not been any prophet who has not invited people to eat barely bread and has not asked for its abundance. And it has not gone into any stomach without removing an illness. It is the food of the prophets and the righteous people, and God has refused to place anything other than barley as their main food.<sup>10</sup>

In another narration, Qutadah speaks of the simplicity of the Prophet’s food: “Sometimes we would go to Anas Ibn Malik while his baker was working. One day, Anas turned to us and said, ‘Eat from these pieces of

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<sup>8</sup> Al-Hilli, *Tazkirah Al-Fuqaha*, vol. 2, p. 392; Al-Muqaddasi, *Al-Sharh Al-Kabir*, vol. 5, p. 395

<sup>9</sup> Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 26; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 241

<sup>10</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 305, no. 1

bread, though I have not ever heard about the Prophet's having bread made with sifted flour without bran, and his having broiled mutton.”<sup>11</sup>

The Prophet's stew was also very simple. Imam Sadiq narrates that one day the Prophet went to his wife, Umm Salamah, who brought a slice of bread for the Prophet. When he asked her if she had any stew as well, she replied that she did not, and that she only had vinegar. The Prophet then said, “Vinegar is good stew. The house in which there is vinegar is not poor.”<sup>12</sup>

The Prophet sometimes would only have bread dipped in milk. Based on Kulayni's narration from Imam Sadiq, one morning the Prophet went out of his home for prayer while eating a slice of bread dipped in milk.<sup>13</sup>

### ***3. Beneficial and Harmless***

The Prophet did not consume food or drink that was harmful. Imam Sadiq narrates from Imam Ali that once, when a very hot food was brought for the Prophet, he said, “Let it become cool. God has not fed us fire. And foods that are not too hot are blessed.”<sup>14</sup> Nowadays, the damaging effects of eating hot food are known to everyone.

Because of the Prophet's connection to the source of Divine knowledge and his awareness of the qualities and effects of the various foods, he

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<sup>11</sup> Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Hanbal*, vol. 3, p. 134; Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol. 6, p. 206  
There is also a narration from *Ayisha* about Prophet's eating barely bread. It is worth mentioning that barley bread was financially less valuable than wheat bread, but today, it has proven to be nutritiously more valuable.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 329, no. 1; Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 267, no. 70

<sup>13</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 273, no. 2. It is mentionable in according to view of Shi'ite jurists, eating while walking is undesirable. For this reason they have interpreted that his deed was for necessity or for stating permit for that action. (refer to: Shahid Awal, *Al-Durus*, vol. 3, p. 27; Al Hurr Al-Ameli, *Wasail Al-Shi'a*, vol. 16, p. 421. The source of narration about abomination is one hadith from Abdullah Ibn Sanan quoted from Imam Sadiq based on prevention of this deed except for necessary cases. (refer to: Shaykh Saduq, *Man La Yahzuru Al-Faqih*, vol. 3, p. 354)

<sup>14</sup> Refer to: Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 322, no. 1

chose the most beneficial food available. Furthermore, he also observed medical principles with respect to the amount of food he ate.

In the narration mentioned earlier by Imam Reza, the curative quality of barley bread was pointed out.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, in some other narrations, Imam Sadiq presented milk, vinegar, oil, and *sawiq* (a kind of food made of mashed meat and mashed wheat or barley together with sugar and dates) as the food of the prophets, and meat and milk as their soup.<sup>16</sup>

The Prophet's favourite food was meat given its healthy benefits:

Meat increases the strength of hearing and sight. It is superior to all the foods in this world and the Hereafter. Had wanted God to feed me with meat every day, He would do so.<sup>17</sup>

Sometimes he would have meat cooked in water and at other times he would have it roasted and served with bread.<sup>18</sup> He liked sheep's leg more than its other parts.<sup>19</sup>

Imam Sadiq has said that the Prophet broke his fast with sweets when they were available,<sup>20</sup> and if he did not have access to them, he would break his fast with lukewarm water. Regarding this, he said:

It [warm water] cleans the liver and the stomach, makes the smell of the mouth pleasant, strengthens the teeth

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<sup>15</sup> Refer to: Ibid, p. 305, no. 1

<sup>16</sup> Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 491; Ibid, p. 467; Ibid, p. 482; Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 306

<sup>17</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 30

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Refer to: Shaykh Saduq, *Ilal Al-Sharayi'*, vol. 1, p. 134

<sup>20</sup> It is noteworthy that breaking the fast with sweets is beneficial from two aspects: first, they are absorbed quickly in the body and relieve the hunger of the fasting person, and second, they reduce the appetite for eating, when one breaks his fast with them, and thus prevent gluttony.

and the eyes, sharpens the sight, causes forgiveness of sins, stimulates the blood vessels, removes bitterness, stops phlegm, decreases the heat in the stomach, and removes headaches.<sup>21</sup>

The Prophet also liked honey; he knew that eating it – along with reciting verses of the Qur’an – as well as chewing frankincense would remove phlegm.<sup>22</sup>

The Prophet sometimes expressed the desirability of meals by saying “*tayyib*” (“delicious”). For example, once, when one of his companions offered him some kind of desert like *faludeh*, he took some of it, and asked him, “O’ Aba Abdallah, what is it made of?” The man answered: “We spilt some oil and honey into one stony pot, and then heated it. After that we grind wheat cores and mix it with the honey and oil until it is completely mingled and ready to eat.” The Prophet then said, “This is a delicious dish.”<sup>23</sup>

### C) *The kinds of food served*

The simplicity of the Prophet did not allow for more than one kind of food to be served at each meal. Imam Sadiq narrates that one Thursday night when the Prophet was at Quba Mosque, he asked for a drink to break his fast. Aws Ibn Khuli Al-Ansari brought a big bowl containing a mixture of milk and honey. The Prophet brought it close to his lips (perhaps to smell it), and then suddenly refused to drink it, and said:

This contains two kinds of drinks. Only one is sufficient.  
I will not drink them together. However I do not forbid

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<sup>21</sup> Al-Nayshaburi, *Ruzah Al-Waizin*, p. 341; Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 27, 28; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 242. There are also a number of hadiths from Imam Sadiq about the breaking fast with lukewarm: Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 4, p. 152

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, vol. 6, p. 332. In a similar hadith Imam Sadiq has narrated from Imam Ali a hadith with the similar content.

<sup>23</sup> al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 28

eating them. I choose not to drink them so as to show my humbleness before God, and anyone who shows humility before God, God will dignify him. Anyone who is arrogant, God will degrade him. He who is moderate in livelihood will be given sustenance by God, but he who is extravagant, God will make him deprived. And he who remembers death often will be liked by God.<sup>24</sup>

This tradition portrays the Prophet's contentment with one kind of drink and food at a time, and this contentment is preferable – not mandatory – given that Islam is a simple religion to follow. It also indicates the ascetic lifestyle in which the infallible Imams and righteous people lived; although they had the opportunity to use worldly blessings, they only used what was necessary due to their modesty and humility towards God, as they did not consider themselves deserving the least Godly gifts and confessed their inability to thank God for His smallest favours. On the other hand, the arrogant are completely occupied with worldly affairs and use God's blessings while being unconcerned about His favours; instead, they transgress from the right path and demand more from Him. Thus, the Prophet's main advice in this narration is moderation in life and refraining from prodigality. At the end of the narration, the Prophet advises people to remember death, which is an important way of preserving man from deviations.<sup>25</sup>

#### ***D) The amount the Prophet ate***

The saints and the people of wisdom have always strictly advised others to eat a moderate amount of food and forsake gluttony. Nowadays, researchers of medical sciences also emphasize this issue.

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<sup>24</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol.2, p.122 ,no.3; al-Hurr al-Ameli, *Wasail Al-Shi'a*, vol.11 p.219, no.31; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol.16, p.265, no. 64 and vol.75, p. 126, no. 25 and also look at: Ahwazi, *Kitab Al-Zuhd*, p.55, no.148.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol.5, p.494 ; Al-Ameli, *A'yaan Al- Shiah* vol.10, p.374; Al-Ameli, *Al-Intisaar*, vol.9, p.407.



Kulayni quotes Imam Baqir saying, “In the eyes of God, nothing is more unfavourable and hated than a full stomach”<sup>26</sup> and “When the stomach becomes full, it steps into the path of transgression.”<sup>27</sup> As the wise saying goes: “Do not eat very much, so as to not drink very much, so as to not sleep very much, so as to not regret very much.”<sup>28</sup> Prophetic narrations have also stressed that gluttony causes disease, hardheartedness, sluggishness in worship and prayer, and illness of the body. This causes the heart to die, and as a result, one becomes distanced by God and eventually disliked by Him.<sup>29</sup> Regarding the amount of eating, the Prophet said:

The children of Adam do not fill any pot worse than the stomach. Only a few morsels that give them strength is sufficient for them. But if one has to eat, he should put one-third [of his stomach] for his food, one-third of it for his drink, and the remaining one-third for breathing.<sup>30,31</sup>

The Prophet’s spouses also witnessed the Prophet’s moderate way of eating: as they said, “The Prophet’s stomach never became filled with food.”<sup>32</sup>

### ***E) When the Prophet ate***

The Prophet did not eat except when he felt hungry and when his body required nutrition, as he said, “Eat when you have an appetite for eating, and stop eating while you [still] have an appetite for it.”<sup>33</sup> Another narration states that the Prophet’s preferred to have food when

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<sup>26</sup> Al- Kulayni, *Al- kafi*, vol. 6 , p.270, no. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, no.10

<sup>28</sup> Yahsabi, *Al- Shifaa Beta’riif Huquq Aal-Mustafa* , vol.1, p.85.

<sup>29</sup> Refer to: Nuri Al-Tabarsi, *Mustadrik Al- Wasail wa Mustanbit Al-Masail*, vol.16, p.209-221

<sup>30</sup> Considering the fact that breathing is not the stomach’s function, it can be understood that what is meant by breathing is the gases that are emitted from the food.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, A hadith has been stated from Imam Sadiq with a similar content, look at: al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol.2, p.440; Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol.6, p.269.

<sup>32</sup> Yahsabi, *Al-Shifaa Beta’riif Huquq Aal-Mustafa* , vol. 1, p. 85

<sup>33</sup> Nuri Al-Tabarsi, *Mustadrik Al- Wasail wa Mustanbit Al-Masail*, vol. 16, p. 221, no. 17

it was necessary to do so. He never ate when he was full.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, regarding the Prophet's food, Anas ibn Malik said, "The Prophet would never eat meat or bread during the day or night, except when his body needed them."<sup>35</sup>

The Imams recommended having two meals every day<sup>36</sup> and eating a small portion at night before going to sleep:

Do not abandon eating dinner, even if it is only three morsels (of bread) with salt. And anyone who abandons eating dinner (totally), a vessel dies in his body which will never be revived.<sup>37</sup>

The Prophet has also stated, "Eat dinner even if it is only a handful of low quality dates, because abandoning eating dinner brings about old age."<sup>38</sup>

### ***F) Who did the Prophet eat with?***

The Prophet advised others against eating alone as he never ate alone when he had the opportunity to eat with another person:

Would you like me to inform you who the worst among you is? One who rejects his guest, beats his servant, and eats alone.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 27; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 241. "Za-Fa-Fa" is said to have two meaning, need being and the first and gathering of a group of people to eat the second. If we translate the hadith using the second meaning, it will be related to the next headline which is whether we should eat alone or with others. (Refer to: Al-Juhari, *Al-Sihah, Taj al-luqah* and *Sihah Al-Arabiyyah*, the root "za-fa-fa"; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 254 - 255)

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad*, vol. 3, p. 270; Al-Tirmizi, *Al-Shamail Al-Muhamadiyah*, p. 318.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 288, no. 2

<sup>37</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 195

<sup>38</sup> Al-Tirmizi, (*Al-Jami' Al-Sahih Sunan Al-Tirmizi*, vol. 3, p. 188; Al-Jurjani, *Al-Kamel fi Al-Zoafaa Al-Rijal*, vol. 4 p. 294; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 66, p. 346, no. 22

<sup>39</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 2, p. 290; Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 31

When a food possesses four qualities it becomes perfect: being *halal*, *eating it with other people*, having started with the name of God, and having ended with the praise of God.<sup>40</sup>

He also said:

The best food in the eyes of God is that food which has many hands (i.e. many people) involved in eating it.<sup>41</sup>

Imam Sadiq narrates from Imam Ali that the Prophet with regards to eating also said:

Eating food with people brings about abundance. One person's food portion is enough for two people, and two people's food portion is enough for four.<sup>42</sup>

The Prophet's statement may mean that despite not becoming full, the body's requirements will be provided for, and this might be the consequence of the people's sacrifice (*ithar*) in sharing their portions with others. The emergence of abundance (*barakah*) in food means that by God's blessing, little food can result in sufficient food that is sufficient to supply the body's needs.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, the Prophet reproached those who ate by themselves while choosing not to invite those who pass by to join them. Kulayni narrates that once when the Prophet was performing prayer in a battle, a group of people went to see him. But since they found him worshipping, they went to the Prophet's companions and told them that if they were not in a hurry to leave, they would have waited for the Prophet to finish his

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<sup>40</sup> Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 398.

<sup>41</sup> Nuri Tabarsi, *Mustadrik Al-Wasail wa Mustanbit Al-Masail*, vol. 16, p. 227, no. 11

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Ash'ath Al-Kufi, *Al-Ja'fariyat*, p. 159; Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 398; Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 273 Chapter on *Ijtima' al-Aydi Alaa al-Ta'am*, no. 1

<sup>43</sup> Under a similar hadith from Imam Sadiq, Qaazii Nu'mani gives a similar explanation about the hadith. (Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, *Da'aim Al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 111

worship, but they said that they had to go and asked those companions to send their greetings to the Prophet. After they left, the Prophet told that group of companions unhappily, “A group of people come to you, send their greetings to me, and you do not invite them to eat something? If my friend Ja‘far [ibn Abi Taleb]<sup>44</sup> was here, it would never happen that a group of people meet him without eating food with him.<sup>45</sup>

According to Tabarsi’s narration, the Prophet partook permissible (*halal*) food together with his family and servant, or when he was invited to eat, together with those who had invited him. He sat on the ground or on whatever the hosts used for sitting, and ate the same food they ate, unless a guest came to him, in which case he ate with his guest.<sup>46</sup>

According to another narration from Tabarsi, once a person said to the Prophet that they ate food but never became full, the Prophet said, “Perhaps you eat separately. Gather together at the time of eating, and recite the name of God so that you may have abundance.”<sup>47</sup>

These sayings, in addition to inviting others to share a meal and visit one another, emphasize on making family relations stronger by cooperating with one another. The Divine blessing on a group of believers who assemble out of affection and brotherhood is far greater than the blessing on believers individually.

The Prophet sometimes ate with poor and needy people, and by the blessing of his presence, many of them were fed to their fill. It has been narrated from Imam Baqir that one night the Prophet broke his fast

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<sup>44</sup> Cousin of the Prophet and brother of Imam Ali who migrated with some Muslims to Abyssinia and some years after his return he was martyred in one of the battles.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 275, no. 1; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 263, no. 56

<sup>46</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 26-27; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 241

<sup>47</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 149, and also refer to: Ibn Hibah Allah Al-Shafi’i, *Tarikh Madinat Dimashq*, vol. 62, p. 42

beside the pulpit (*minbar*), together with the deprived people who slept in the mosque. He ate in an earthenware pot, and by the blessing of his presence, thirty people ate from that food and were fed to their fill. Then the pot was returned to the wives of the Prophet, and they all were fully fed as well.<sup>48</sup>

This narration contains two messages: the concern of the Prophet for sharing company with people in eating, and his miracle in feeding a large number of people to their fill with a small amount of food.

### ***G) How did the Prophet eat and drink?***

There are numerous narrations about how the Prophet ate and the mannerisms he followed:

#### ***1. Beginning in the name of Allah and ending with praising Him***

As in other affairs, the Prophet also mentioned the name of God when eating and drinking.<sup>49</sup> We quoted the Prophet earlier saying:

The meal with four qualities is perfect: its permissibility (*halal*), having many people eating it, initiated with the name of God, and ended with praising Him.<sup>50</sup>

When food was brought for the Prophet, he would say:

*Bism-Allah (In the Name of God). O' God, make this gift a gift for which we are grateful so that we gain the gift of paradise through it. Bism-Allah, O' God, grant us abundance in what you have provided for us and make it continue.*<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Al-Humayni, *Qurb Al-Isnad*, p. 148; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 219, no. 9

<sup>49</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 27

<sup>50</sup> Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 398

<sup>51</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 27; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 241-242

Moreover, contrary to the customary practice of praying after the meal, the Prophet prayed *before* eating, which is an indication of giving thanks for a gift before actually starting to use it.

While drinking, the Prophet mentioned the name of God and prayed in the beginning, and praised God in the end. Since he drank water in three breaths, he said “*Bismillah*” and praised God three times.<sup>52</sup> When he wanted to start drinking, he prayed thus:

Praise be to the God who sends down water from the sky, and manages the affairs as He desires. In the name of God, the best of names.<sup>53</sup>

Also, Imam Ali said:

Many times I have been with the Prophet and saw that while drinking water, he would breathe three times, and each time he would mention the name of God in the beginning and praise God in the end.<sup>54</sup>

Also, when drinking water, he would say:

Praise be to the God who, by His grace, quenched our thirst with clean and pleasant water, and did not give us bitter and salty water despite our sins.<sup>55</sup>

According to another narration, when drinking milk, the Prophet would say, “O’ God, grant us abundance in this, and bestow us more from it.”

## ***2. Drinking in three gulps***

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<sup>52</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 31; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 246

<sup>53</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 151; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 475

<sup>54</sup> Al-Tamimi Al-Maqrabi, *Da’aim Al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 130, no. 453

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, no. 456

As pointed out, the manners and lifestyle of the Prophet regarding drinking was such that he divided a drink into three gulps, and mentioned the name of God and praised him in each gulp. In the narrations from the Imams, it is mentioned that the difference between human beings and animals in drinking is that human beings do not drink water in one breath as animals do. Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq said, "Drinking in three breaths is better than in one breath." Both Imams found it unfavourable that a person should dip his head in the water, like a thirsty camel, and continue until his thirst is quenched.<sup>56</sup>

It is narrated by ibn Abbas that the Prophet took two breaths<sup>57</sup> while drinking. Also according to a narration from Tabarsi, the Prophet sometimes drank in one breath.<sup>58</sup> This may have happened in cases in which he drank a small amount of water and drinking in three breaths was not necessary.

### ***3. Drinking from clean utensils***

In one narration, one day the Prophet saw a man who had dipped his mouth in water and drank from the middle of the pot as animals do. The Prophet said to him, "Do you dip your head in water and drink like animals? If you have no dishes, fill your palms with water since it is the cleanest dish."<sup>59</sup>

### ***4. Sipping Water***

Another way in which the Prophet drank water was by sipping it; he said, "Drink water by sipping and do not drink it all at once, because it causes pain in the liver."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, *Da'im Al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 130, no. 454

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 31

<sup>59</sup> Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, *Da'aim Al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 130, no. 452

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, no. 452; Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 31

### ***5. Not Breathing Inside the Container***

When the Prophet drank water, he would remove the container from his mouth if he wanted to breathe;<sup>61</sup> this showed his concern for hygiene.

### ***6. Eating from the food placed in front of him***

When other people were present at the meal, the Prophet confined himself to the food that was in front of him, and would not reach for the food that was in front of others.<sup>62</sup> This characteristic is a kind of social politeness, which is very delicate.

### ***7. Starting to Eat Before Others and Finishing After Them***

When the Prophet ate with other people, whether he was a guest or the host, he started eating before others, and also stopped after everyone had finished eating. This was especially noticeable when he was the host.<sup>63</sup>

This behaviour was not out of greed; rather, it was to make the guests feel comfortable and not shy to eat. This behaviour also has a specific ethical delicacy. At the times that the Prophet was a guest, others did not start to eat before he did out of respect for him. Thus, by starting to eat earlier than others, the Prophet made them feel at ease in starting to eat. At the end of the meal, also, if the Prophet stopped eating sooner than others, it would make them stop – perhaps even before feeling full – of respect or shame.

### ***8. Eating and drinking using his right hand***

The right hand is a symbol of blessing in Islamic culture. In the Holy Qur'an, "The people of the right hand" (*ashab al-miymanah*) and "The

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<sup>61</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 31

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 23 and 28

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 23



people of the left hand” (*ashab al-yamin*) have been presented as the people of salvation and felicity, and on the Day of Judgment their record of deeds will be given in their right hand.<sup>64</sup>

The Prophet also performed various activities with his right hand. While mentioning the noble manners of the Prophet, Tabarsi has said:

And the right hand of the Prophet was for eating, drinking, taking, and giving. He did not take except with the right hand, and did not give except with the right hand. And his left hand was for other activities. He liked “*tayammun*” (acting by the right hand) in everything he did, such as putting on clothes, putting on shoes, moving objects, etc.<sup>65</sup>

According to a narration, Imam Sadiq narrates from his ancestors that the Prophet discouraged eating and drinking with the left hand.<sup>66</sup> There is another narration that indicates the emphasis that the Prophet put on this matter.<sup>67</sup>

### **9. Modesty and politeness**

The Prophet was not voracious during a meal; he sat calmly and politely, bringing the food close to his mouth to bite it rather than lowering his head towards the food.<sup>68</sup> Other narrations state the Prophet’s modesty while eating, and unlike [arrogant] kings, he used to eat without leaning against something:

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<sup>64</sup> Qur’an, Chapter *Waqiah* (56), verse. 8-12; Ibid, verse. 90-91; Qur’an, Chapter *Inshiqaq* (84), verse. 7,8

<sup>65</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p.23.

<sup>66</sup> Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, *Da’aim Al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 130, no. 447

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 119, no. 399, and also refer to: Nuri Tabarsi, *Mustadrik Al-Wasail wa Mustanbit Al-Masail*, vol. 16, p. 228

<sup>68</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 30

After being assigned prophethood until the time of his death, the Prophet never ate leaning against something, and this was because of his humility before God.<sup>69</sup>

In addition to acknowledging that the Prophet never ate leaning against something, Imam Muhammad ibn Muslim from Imam Baqir says that these behaviours indicates the special humility of the Prophet before God.<sup>70</sup> In another narration, Bashir Dahhan asks Imam Sadiq whether the Prophet ate leaning on his left or right side, to which the Imam replied:

The Prophet never ate while leaning on his left or right side; rather, he sat like a servant and this was out of humility before God.<sup>71</sup> Imam Sadiq said also to Mu'alla ibn Khunays:

Since the time he was assigned prophethood, the Prophet never ate while leaning against something and he disliked behaving like [arrogant] kings.<sup>72</sup>

What comes to mind first from the word “leaning” is resting one’s back, or left or right side against something. The reason for avoiding eating in such a condition – as it is understood from the mentioned narrations – is to avoid behaving like arrogant people and to express humility before God. Some scholars have interpreted the word “leaning” in these narrations as a particular form of sitting in which one’s tendency to eat increases, such as sitting cross-legged. But the Prophet sat in such a way as if he was ready to rise at any moment.<sup>73</sup> Also, this etiquette of sitting does not bring about gluttony. The way the Prophet sat humbly is likened to the way servants sat – with

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<sup>69</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 8, p. 164, no. 175; Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 23 and 27; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 242 and vol. 41, p. 130, no. 41

<sup>70</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 8, p. 129, no. 100

<sup>71</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 271, no. 7; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 262, no. 5

<sup>72</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 272, no. 8

<sup>73</sup> Yahsabi, *Al-Shifaa Beta'riif Huquq Aal-Mustafa*, vol. 1, p. 86

modesty and humility. The Prophet himself said, “Indeed I am a servant who eats like servants and sits like them.”<sup>74</sup> Also, Imam Baqir said, “The Prophet ate like servants and sat like them. And he ate and slept on the ground.”<sup>75</sup> He also quoted the Prophet saying:

There are five things which I will not quit until the time of my death: eating on the ground together with servants, riding saddleless mounts, milking goats with my hands, wearing woolen clothes, and greeting (saying *salam*) to children, so that they become customary (*sunnah*) after me.<sup>76</sup>

The intention of the Prophet in making these simple behaviours customary is the message that lies behind them, which is to be humble with people.

It is narrated from ibn Abbas that the Prophet sat and ate on the ground. And he accepted the invitation of servants for eating barley bread.<sup>77</sup> Imam Sadiq also said: “The holy Prophet ate like a servant and sat like a servant, and he knew himself a servant.”<sup>78</sup>

While sitting on the ground like a servant, the Prophet sat on his knees like servant as a sign of humility before God. This interpretation is mentioned in a narration from Tabarsi in the following way:

Most of the time, when the Prophet ate, he ate from the food that was in front of him, and sat on his knees, similar to a person who is performing prayer sits at the time of *tashahhud*, except that he put one knee on the other knee

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 271, no. 6; Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 457, no. 387; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 262, no. 55

<sup>76</sup> Shaykh Saduq, *Al-Amaali*, p. 130; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 215, no. 2

<sup>77</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 16; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 222, no. 19

<sup>78</sup> Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 456, no. 386; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 225, no.

and one foot on the other foot. He said, 'I am a servant who eats like a servant and sits like a servant.'<sup>79</sup>

Besides what was mentioned, the Prophet also discouraged eating while lying on the back or the stomach. In addition to politeness and modesty, this was also because of health-related issues.<sup>80</sup>

### ***10. Avoiding Formalities (takalluf) in providing the items***

The Prophet – especially considering the economic state of that time – did not have any strict commitments to the formalities or the unnecessary items related to serving the food. For example, if in some cases there was no tablecloth – or something that could be used instead – the Prophet would eat on the ground.<sup>81</sup> One day, one of the Ansar brought some dates for the Prophet as a gift. But since they found no dishes at home, the Prophet cleaned a space on the ground with a piece of cloth, and said, "Place them here. By God if the world had the value of a fly's wing in the eyes of God, He would not give any of it to the disbelievers and hypocrites."<sup>82</sup> It should be mentioned here that considering the Prophet's concern for hygiene, putting the dates on the ground does not mean consuming them in that condition, and they would of course be consumed after being cleaned.

The Prophet also ate with his hands. This means that, considering the circumstances of his time, he invited his followers to simplicity of life. Here it is necessary to mention two points:

First, eating by hands is not in disagreement with observing hygiene; because, as it will be mentioned in the discussion about food hygiene, the Prophet washed his hands before and after eating.

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<sup>79</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 27

<sup>80</sup> Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, *Da'aim Al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 119, no. 399

<sup>81</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 28

<sup>82</sup> Al-Iskafi, *Al-Tamhis*, p. 48, no. 79; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 284, no. 133 and vol. 69, p. 51, no. 72

Second, the message of these kinds of narrations is not that the followers of the Prophet today should also eat by hand. But rather the message is that in case formalities and other related items cannot be provided, one should not go through a lot of difficulties for providing them. The way the Prophet ate with his hand was such as to not look similar in the slightest degree to the way arrogant people ate. The Prophet, depending on the kind of food, ate with three or four fingers, and sometimes used his whole hand if necessary, or even his both hands.<sup>83</sup> Regarding this, Imam Sadiq said:

The Prophet sat like a servant, put his hand on the ground, and ate with three fingers. He did not eat with two fingers like arrogant people.<sup>84</sup>

Tabarsi describes this as follows:

The Prophet ate with three fingers: the thumb and the two adjacent fingers (the index and middle fingers), and sometimes he ate with four fingers, and [sometimes] with his whole hand. He did not eat with two fingers and would say: ‘Eating with two fingers is [like] the way Satan eats.’<sup>85</sup>

## ***11. Avoiding waste***

Regarding consuming the food that remains in the dish, the Prophet said, “The greatest blessing is in the end of the food.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 29; Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, *Da'aim Al-Islam*, vol. 2 , p. 119, no. 402

<sup>84</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 297, no. 6; Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 442; Majlisi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 63, p. 414

<sup>85</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 28

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

Imam Sadiq also stated: “The Prophet wiped the dish of the food and said, ‘Anyone who does this, his action is like he has given charity to the size of the dish of his food.’”<sup>87</sup>

The Prophet wiped the dish of the food and said: “The end of the food has the greatest blessing, and the angels hail those who do this and pray for the abundance of their sustenance. And there is a double reward for them.”<sup>88</sup>

The fact that wiping the dish of the food is known as bringing about blessing might be because of the reason that there is a kind of thankfulness for the Godly gifts, and avoidance of squander and ungratefulness in it. Thus, the person who does this is addressed by the following verse of the Qur’an: “*If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you [in blessing].*” (14:7)

## ***12. Observing Food Hygiene***

One of the important characteristics of the Prophet was the attention he gave to hygiene in various dimensions, especially in eating and drinking. For instance, washing the hands, both before and after eating, was very much emphasized by the Prophet. Especially taking into consideration the fact that the people of that time usually ate with their hands, there are many narrations from the Prophet regarding this issue in which the effects of this act of hygiene are mentioned; effects such as removal of poverty, increasing of sustenance, abundance of good, keeping away insanity, accuracy of sight, and staying away from illness.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 297, no. 4; Al-Barqi, *Al-Mahasin*, vol. 2, p. 443, no. 318; Al-Hurr Al-Ameli, *Wasail Al-Shia*, vol. 16, p. 496, no. 1

<sup>88</sup> Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, *Da'aim Al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 120, no. 405

<sup>89</sup> Nuri Tabarsi, *Mustadrik Al-Wasail wa Mustanbit Al-Masail*, vol. 16, p. 269, no. 11; Ibid, p. 267; Ibn Ash'ath Al-Kufi, *Al-Ja'fariyat*, p. 27; Shaykh Saduq, *Man La Yahzuruhu Al-Faqih*, vol. 3, p. 358; Ibn Salamah Al-Qazai, *Musnad Al-Shahab*, vol.1, p.205; Rawandi, *Al-Da'awat*, p. 142; Rawandi, *Al-Nawadir*, p. 221. It is worthy to mention that, according to the belief of

Another manifestation of food hygiene in the lifestyle of the Prophet is his emphasis on the cleanliness of the container of food or water. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq that the Prophet preferred to drink water in the dishes that were brought to him as gifts, from the city of *Sham* (Damascus), and he said: “These are the cleanest of your dishes.”<sup>90</sup> It might be the case that the structure of these dishes was such that the smoothness of their surface made it less possible for unclean particles to remain in dish, as it can be the case with uneven surfaces and dishes with patterns carved into them. The Prophet drank water in containers made of wood, or skin, or in earthenware, and he also drank water in the palms of his hands and said: “There is no dish cleaner than the palms.”<sup>91</sup>

According to some narrations, the Prophet forbade bending the lid of the waterskin while drinking water from it, and prohibited others from doing so as well.<sup>92</sup> This prohibition might have been due to the fact that the water inside the waterskin, as a result of being bent, would give a foul odour, and that the bent area would gradually become polluted. Since the surface of the waterskin is greasy, when some part of it is often bent, there is a higher possibility of that part becoming polluted.<sup>93</sup>

It was mentioned earlier that when the Prophet wanted to breathe while he was drinking water, he took the container away from his mouth, and brought it near again after breathing.<sup>94</sup> This indicates the Prophet’s consideration of the most delicate issues of hygiene and manners. Breathing in the container, especially if someone else is going to drink

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Shi’ite scholars, the meaning of the word *wudu* (ablution) and words from the same root in these hadiths is “to wash hands”. Sayyid Murtaza, *Al-Amaali*, vol. 2, p. 58; Najafi, *Jawahir Al-Kalam*, vol. 36, p. 448

<sup>90</sup> Al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, vol. 6, p. 386, no. 8; Majlesi, *Bihar Al-Anwar*, vol. 16, p. 268, no. 80

<sup>91</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 31

<sup>92</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 31

<sup>93</sup> Al-Tamimi Al-Maqribi, *Da’aim Al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 129, no. 448

<sup>94</sup> Al-Tabarsi, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, p. 31

from it, is not in accordance with the principles of hygiene<sup>95</sup> and proper manners.

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<sup>95</sup> It is a proven fact, now, that during expiration body gives out carbon dioxide and this why water in a bowl becomes unclean by breathing.



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## IMAMAH AND WILAYAH, PART VII<sup>1</sup>

MOHAMMAD ALI SHOMALI

**ABSTRACT:** In Shi‘i Islam, it is necessary for a society to have a pious, knowledgeable, wise, and infallible guide who will lead the Muslim society after the Prophet’s death to present truth Islam. Having such a leader is a grace of God. While Part V of this series studied a group of verses that refer to the concept of witness in the Qur’an – who was none other than Imam Ali – together with his roles and merits, Part VI offered authentic hadiths that refer to the legitimacy of Imam Ali’s leadership, such as the *Hadith of Manzilah*, the *Hadith of Wilaya*, and the *Hadith of Ghadir*. This last part focuses on the concept of *wilayah*, and specifically verses in the Qur’an that pertain to *wilayah* in legislation and creation.

The term *wilayah* is profound in Arabic. It originally refers to something coming after something else without any interval. The Arabic phrase ‘*waliya hādhā dhāka*’ means ‘this has come immediately after the other.’ But from this original meaning which relates to material things, the term expands to include other aspects.<sup>2</sup> When *wilayah* is expanded from its material meaning, it essentially means ‘to assist,’ ‘to help,’ ‘to lead,’ or ‘to act as someone’s master.’ On the other hand, the term

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<sup>1</sup>This paper is based on lecture 14 of a series of lectures delivered by Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali in summer 2004 in Qum.

<sup>2</sup>In Arabic and in other languages, it is very common that the original meaning of a term might refer to a physical or material meaning, and then it is extended to immaterial or abstract meanings as well.

*walayah* refers to friendship and love. The focus in this paper is on *wilayah*, rather than *walayah*.

Wilayah has two meanings: a) to help, assist, and aid; and b) to lead, rule, and have control of something.

### ***The first meaning of wali***

The first meaning of wali (aid or friend): In his *al-Tafsir al-Kabir*,<sup>3</sup> Fakhruddin Razi<sup>4</sup> says that *wilayah* sometimes refers to both ‘aid’ and ‘friend,’ and sometimes it simply means ‘aid.’ Sometimes it refers to someone who is superior and takes charge. He refers to the following verse:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ  
الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ  
اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

*But the faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another: they bid what is right and forbid what is wrong and maintain the prayer, give the zakāt, and obey Allah and His Apostle. It is they to whom Allah will soon grant His mercy. Indeed Allah is all-mighty, all-wise.*<sup>5</sup>

In this verse, Allah says that the faithful – male or female – are a wali of one another. According to Razi, wali refers to a believer helping another believer and vice-versa: the relationship is reciprocal. They “are comrades of one another”<sup>6</sup> on a mutual basis.

### ***The second meaning of wali***

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<sup>3</sup> Commentary on the Qur’an

<sup>4</sup> Prominent Sunni scholar and prolific author

<sup>5</sup> 9:71

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

The second meaning of wali (to be in charge): Razi mentions a tradition similar to those found in Shi‘a sources. For example, from a jurisprudential point of view, the permission of a wali is required for a girl to get married. Here, wali refers to her father, and if her father is unavailable, it can refer to her guardian.

Moreover, the Prophet was a wali of this Islamic nation. The Qur’an says: *“Your guardian is only God, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down.”*<sup>7</sup>

In his commentary on Chapter Tawbah, Ayatollah Mutahhari says that the verse *“But the faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another”* does not merely refer to being friends of one other. In this usage some aspects of the second meaning is found. The relation of wilayah between believers is not merely to assist each other; rather, it is to supervise one another. This means that a believer is to observe some rights for other believers, and Allah has given believers some authority over one another. It is for this reason we are obliged to enjoin others to good and forbid one another from doing wrong. Without this right upon one another, we could then only mind our own business obliviously, or at least pleasantly ask others to see to their obligations as an alternative. But we are asked to enjoin others to do good; when it is necessary believers command one another to observe their religious duties regardless of whether it is towards a close relative or not.

Thus, wilayah is not merely a matter of friendship; there is some sort of superiority each believer has towards another believer. Allah has given us superiority. Whoever exceeds the other in practicing Islam achieves this superiority. Thus, a better believer is responsible for enjoining good and prohibiting bad.

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<sup>7</sup> 5:55

Scholars divide the second meaning of wilayah into two: a) wilayah in creation and b) wilayah in legislation. Allah possesses both types. In an Islamic state, lawmakers are permitted to generate laws although only within a framework of divine law. None other than God can be a true lawmaker. The only framework in which legislation can be applied in parliament is divine law and a legitimate constitution which by itself must be compatible with the divine law. For example, in Iran parliament exists, but every law passed by the parliament must be approved by the Guardian Council who in turn ensures that the laws are compatible with Qur'anic teachings. There are twelve members in the Guardian Council: six mujtahids<sup>8</sup> and six experts in law. Mujtahids verify the acceptance of the laws according to Islamic rulings. Afterwards, all twelve verify its compatibility with the constitution.

Thus, full legislation belongs to Allah, and then He provides this in some measure to those He is pleased with. The Prophets' authority to legislate is called *al-Wilayah al-Tashri'iyya*, or 'Legislative Guardianship.' On the other hand, *al-Wilayah al-Takwiniyya*, or 'Generative Guardianship,' refers to guardianship in relation to creation. Some verses in the Qur'an point to either type of wilayah, and some refer to both types.

### ***Wilayah in both Creation and Legislation***

There are verses that refer to both types of wilayah. For example, in verse 9 of the Chapter al-Shura, Allah says:

فَأَلَّفَهُ هُوَ الْأَوْلِيَّ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

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<sup>8</sup> In Islamic law: a scholar's independent interpretation or use of reason to derive a rule of divine law from the Qur'an if not precisely described in the Qur'an, hadiths, and scholarly consensus.

*[Say,] 'It is Allah who is the Guardian, and He revives the dead, and He has power over all things.*

This verse refers to both types of guardianship and states that God is the only true and independent master and guardian (*wali*). Any other guardianship or mastership must originate from His guardian and mastership, just as mirrors merely reflect the light of a bulb and do not truly give off light themselves. The Prophet, Imams, mujtahids, and in some cases, parents, all have been delegated some level of the wilayah that belongs to God in the first place. It is for this reason that if someone who has wilayah without being an infallible asks us to commit an action against the command of Allah, we must disobey them. For example, parents are to be obeyed, but if they ask one to commit a sin they must not be obeyed.

### ***Wilayah in Legislation***

Verse 36 of the Chapter *Ahzab* refers to legislative authority:

مَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَىٰ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ  
الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلًّا مُّبِينًا

*A faithful man or woman may not, when Allah and His Apostle have decided on a matter, have any option in their matter, and whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle has certainly strayed into manifest error.*

Allah or the Prophet's decree is the truth; thus, believers do not reserve the right to evaluate as to whether they should accept it or not, as people do not have a choice when the truth is concerned. Evaluating Allah's decrees is similar to having the choice of saying the sun is shining when it is actually shining. Moreover, this is not to be mistaken as a matter of dictatorship. Divine or prophetic decisions are not to be

questioned, because they always comply with the truth and no one should question the truth.

### ***Wilaya in Creation***

In verse 101 of the chapter Yusuf, Prophet Yusuf addresses God:

أَنْتَ وَلِيِّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ

*You are my guardian in this world and the Hereafter!  
Let my death be in submission [to You], and unite me  
with the Righteous.*

This verse refers to wilayah in creation. It does not refer to legislative wilayah because there exists no legislation of Islamic law (*sharia*) in the hereafter. Prophet Yusuf tells God that He is the guardian of this world and the hereafter, and this means that all affairs – his life, existence, happiness, abundance, illness – are in God’s hands in both this world and the next.

Although Allah maintains full authority over all affairs, the Qur’an tells us about the role that people such as the Prophets, Imams, saints, and even jinns<sup>9</sup> play in maintaining this world and running its affairs. So Allah is in charge of everything but there is a hierarchy. Like a king or a leader of a state who is in charge of whatever the government does, but this does not mean that he runs the state single-handedly and does not have agents. There is a hierarchical structure of the agents.

***Prophet Sulayman:*** In the chapter *The Ant*, verses 38 and 39, when Prophet Sulayman asked his men to bring Queen Sheba’s throne:

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<sup>9</sup> *Jinns* are two-dimensional supernatural spirits who, like human beings, have free will and can be good or evil. They occupy the unseen world and possess particular physical abilities humans do not have. However, human beings exceed them in their intellectual and spiritual capacities, which is why jinns are commanded to follow a human prophet.



*He said, 'O [members of the] elite! Which of you will bring me her throne before they come to me in submission?' An afreet from among the jinn said, 'I will bring it to you before you rise from your place. Indeed I have the power for it and am trustworthy.' The one who had knowledge of the Book said, 'I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye.' So when he saw it set near him, he said, 'This is by the grace of my Lord, to test me if I will give thanks or be ungrateful. And whoever gives thanks, gives thanks only for his own sake. And whoever is ungrateful [should know that] my Lord is indeed all-sufficient, all-generous.'* (27:38 - 40)

Though the jinn wanted to bring the throne of the Queen before the Prophet stood up, another person said he could bring the throne in less than a blink. And this person had one quality: some knowledge of the Book. This proves that it is possible for certain people to have extraordinary power more so than people's ordinary abilities. This is not unusual, as there are pious people who have been informed of happenings in another part of the world, or events in the past and future.

The question arises: how is it possible for the second person to bring the throne instantaneously? Because he had some knowledge of the Book ('*ilmun min al kitab*), he was able to bring the throne within a twinkling of an eye. Now we can better imagine what would a person who has all the knowledge of the Book ('*ilmul kitab*) be able to do. The Qur'an tells us:

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ  
عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ

*The Unbelievers say: "No messenger art thou" Say: "Enough for a witness between me and you is God, and such as have knowledge of the Book." (13:43)*

Discussing the Qur'anic concept of witness, we demonstrated in previous parts that Imam Ali was the witness who followed the Prophet and had all knowledge of the Book.

**Prophet Jesus:** There are many verses in the Qur'an about the miracles of Prophet Jesus. Interestingly, those miraculous acts are attributed to Jesus, but at the same time it is stated clearly that they were with Allah's blessing and could not have happened without Allah's permission and authority. The role of the prophets in performing miracles was not just to pray and then Allah swt performed the miracles. Normal people can also pray to Allah to bring miracles. A miracle occurs when a close servant of God brings that miracle with Allah's blessing:

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُم إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

*And [he will be] an apostle to the Children of Israel, [and he will declare,] 'I have certainly brought you a sign from your Lord: I will create for you out of clay the form of a bird, then I will breathe into it, and it will become a bird by God's leave. And I heal the blind and the leper and I revive the dead by God's leave. And I will tell you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses. There is indeed a sign in that for you, should you be faithful. (3:49)*

Jesus did not just pray for the clay to transform into a bird. He *made* it a bird. When Allah wanted to create Adam He made his body from clay and then blew into him from His spirit. In a similar way, but of course with great differences, Jesus was also made able to give life to a bird. Of course, Jesus did this with the help and blessing of Allah. This is wilayah in creation which means that Prophet Jesus had this guardianship in the creation, some role in running this world.

**Prophet Abraham:** The Qur'an tells us about the story of Prophet Ibrahim when he asked Allah to show him how He revives the dead:

*And when Abraham said, 'My Lord! Show me how You revive the dead,' He said, 'Do you not believe?' He said, 'Yes indeed, but in order that my heart may be at rest.' He said, 'Take four of the birds. Then cut them into pieces, and place a part of them on every mountain, then call them; they will come to you hastening. And know that God is all-mighty and all-wise.'* (2:260)

Prophet Abraham did not ask Allah to show him how the dead are revived; he asked Allah to show him *how He revives the dead*. Thus, Allah granted Prophet Abraham the power to give new life. It is noteworthy, however, not to misinterpret this action as polytheistic (*shirk*) in that this action is entirely attributed to the doer. It is an action done within the channel of creation. It is through the person that Allah does something. Prophet Abraham was able to understand how Allah revives the dead because he himself revived those birds.

Thus, the Prophets, jinns, angels, and those whom possess knowledge of the book, can play a role in running certain worldly affairs or occurring in the hierarchy of the agents.

***The successors of the Prophet have wilayah***

We believe that the infallible Imams were given the same generative wilayah in that they were able to play a stronger role than the ordinary people. They have acted as a medium between Allah and the people, a channel through which Allah spread His mercy and blessings. Though people can directly call and pray to Allah, the gift of existence, mercy, and blessings of Allah run through these channels, creating a necessary hierarchy in society. Of course, communication with Allah is possible for everyone, but it is helpful as well, and Allah can by pass any agent which occurs in this hierarchy, though His norm is to do things through its causes (*aballaahu an yujriya al-umura illaa bi asbaabihaa*).

Note: The Imams condemned the beliefs of some zealots who mistakenly believed in the deity of some of the Imams given their knowledge and power. Though they showed kindness to non-Shi‘as, the Imams were stern with respect to these exaggerations. In one hadith that relates to the knowledge of the Imams, a companion of Imam Sadiq narrates:

I was with the Imam, Abu Basir, Yahya al-Bazzaz, and Dawood ibn Kathir. The Imam left angry. When he returned, the Imam said, ‘I am surprised at those who think that we [Imams] know the unseen [*ghayb*]. I swear by Allah, no one knows the unseen except him.’ Then the Imam said, ‘I was looking for the housemaid but couldn’t find her.’<sup>10</sup>

To refute the idea of the zealots, Imam Sadiq stressed on the fact that no one knows the unseen except Allah. Sadir says that later he, Abu Basir, and Muyassar visited Imam in his house and said to Imam, “May we be your ransom! We heard you saying so and so about not knowing where your housemaid was, but we know that you have vast

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<sup>10</sup> *Al-Kafi*, vol. 1, p. 257.

knowledge, though we don't ascribe the knowledge of the unseen to you." Imam then explained to them that Imams have all the knowledge of the Book (13:43) which includes every single drop of water in seas.<sup>11</sup>

In another hadith, Ammar Sabati asks Imam Sadiq as to whether the Imams know the unseen (*ghayb*). Imam Sadiq replied: "No, but when they want to know the unseen Allah (swt) informs them."<sup>12</sup>

Thus, according to the hadiths and in line with the Qur'anic verses about the knowledge of the unseen, it becomes clear that the knowledge of the unseen only belongs to Allah.<sup>13</sup> No one has access to it, except those servants of Allah whom He is pleased with, such as the prophets and Imams. The Qur'an says:

*Say, 'I do not know if what you are promised is near, or if my Lord has set a term for it.' Knower of the Unseen, He does not disclose His Unseen to anyone, except to an apostle He approves of. (72:25-27)*

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Full text of hadith in Arabic is as follows:

عَنْ سَدِيرٍ قَالَ كُنْتُ أَنَا وَ أَبُو بَصِيرٍ وَ بَحْيَى الْبَرَّازِ وَ دَاوُدُ بْنُ كَثِيرٍ فِي مَجْلِسِ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع إِذْ خَرَجَ إِلَيْنَا وَ هُوَ مُغْضَبٌ فَلَمَّا أَخَذَ مَجْلِسَهُ قَالَ يَا عَجَبًا لِأَقْوَامٍ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَا نَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ مَا يَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ لَقَدْ هَمَمْتُ بِضَرْبِ جَارِيَّتِي فَلَأَنَّهُ فَهَرَبَتْ مِنِّي فَمَا عَلِمْتُ فِي أَيِّ بُيُوتِ الدَّارِ هِيَ قَالَ سَدِيرٌ فَلَمَّا أَنْ قَامَ مِنْ مَجْلِسِهِ وَ صَارَ فِي مَنْزِلِهِ دَخَلْتُ أَنَا وَ أَبُو بَصِيرٍ وَ مُبَيْسَرٌ وَ فَلْنَا لَهُ جُعِلْنَا فِدَاكَ سَمِعْنَاكَ وَ أَنْتَ تَقُولُ كَذَا وَ كَذَا فِي أَمْرِ جَارِيَّتِكَ وَ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ عِلْمًا كَثِيرًا وَ لَا نَنْسُبُكَ إِلَى عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ قَالَ فَقَالَ يَا سَدِيرُ أَلَمْ تَقْرَأَ الْقُرْآنَ قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ فَهَلْ وَجَدْتَ فِيهَا قَرَأْتَ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ قَالَ قُلْتُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ قَدْ قَرَأْتُهُ قَالَ فَهَلْ عَرَفْتَ الرَّجُلَ وَ هَلْ عَلِمْتَ مَا كَانَ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ عِلْمِ الْكِتَابِ قَالَ قُلْتُ أَخْبِرْنِي بِهِ قَالَ قَدْرُ قَطْرَةٍ مِنَ الْمَاءِ فِي الْبَحْرِ الْأَخْضَرِ فَمَا يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمِ الْكِتَابِ قَالَ قُلْتُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ مَا أَقَلَّ هَذَا فَقَالَ يَا سَدِيرُ مَا أَكْثَرَ هَذَا أَنْ يَنْسِبَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِلَى الْعِلْمِ الَّذِي أَخْبَرَكَ بِهِ يَا سَدِيرُ فَهَلْ وَجَدْتَ فِيهَا قَرَأْتَ مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ أَيْضًا فَلَنْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَ مَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ قَالَ قُلْتُ قَدْ قَرَأْتُهُ جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ قَالَ أَمْ مَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ كُلَّهُ أَفَهُمْ أَمْ مَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ بَعْضُهُ قُلْتُ لَا بَلْ مَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ كُلُّهُ قَالَ فَأَوْمَأَ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى صَدْرِهِ وَ قَالَ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ وَ اللَّهُ كُلُّهُ عِنْدَنَا عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ وَ اللَّهُ كُلُّهُ عِنْدَنَا

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Full text of hadith in Arabic is as follows:

عَنْ عَمَّارِ السَّابِاطِيِّ قَالَ سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع عَنِ الْإِمَامِ يَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ فَقَالَ لَا وَ لَكِنْ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَعْلَمَ الشَّيْءَ أَعْلَمَهُ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ.

<sup>13</sup> For example, the Qur'an says: "Say, 'No one in the heavens or the earth knows the Unseen except God, and they are not aware when they will be resurrected.'" (27:65)

*These accounts are from the Unseen, which We reveal to you, and you were not with them when they were casting lots [to see] which of them would take charge of Mary's care, nor were you with them when they were contending. (3:44)*

*These are accounts of the Unseen which We reveal to you. Neither you nor your people used to know them before this. So be patient. Indeed the outcome will be in favour of the Godwary. (11:49)*

### **Conclusion**

Referring to both literal and technical meanings of wilayah, this paper focused on wilayah as a kind of guardianship. Wali is the one who is in charge. This can be with respect to legislation or with respect to creation and managing the world. The Qur'an includes verses that refer to both generative and legislative types of wilayah. In the first place, Allah possesses both types. None other than Allah is the true lawmaker, although He provides it in some measure to those He is pleased with. Also the generative power in the first place belongs to Allah, but Allah may give authority in His generative wilayah to those with whom He is pleased like His angels and chosen servants. The Prophet, Imams, mujtahids, and in some cases, parents, have been entrusted with some level of legislative wilayah with God's permission. Thus, the Infallible Imams were given both legislative and generative wilayah to be a channel through which Allah spread His vast mercy.