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Etiquettes and Requisites of Supplication

Some of our associates (*ashabuna*) have narrated from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq ('a) saying, "I said to him, 'There are two verses in the Book of Allah whose interpretation I do not know.'

He said, 'Which verses are they?'

I said, 'The verse which says: "**Call Me, I will answer you**"; I pray but I do not see the response.'

So he said to me, 'Do you think that Allah did not keep His word?'

'No', I replied.

He said, 'Why is it so then?'

I replied, 'I do not know.'

Then he said, 'Which is the other verse?'

I said, 'The verse "...And He will repay whatever you may spend"¹, I spend but I do not see any repay.'

He said, 'Do you think that Allah did not fulfill His promise?'

I replied, 'No.'

He asked me, 'Why is it so then?'

I answered, 'I do not know.'

Then he said, 'I will inform you, by the will of Allah. Had you been obedient to Him in that which He has commanded you, and then you were to pray to Him, He would have indeed answered you. But you violate His commands and disobey Him, so He does not answer you.'

As for your saying that you spend but do not see any repay, had you acquired wealth through lawful means and spent it in the right way, then no one would spend a penny except that Allah would repay it to him.

And had you called on Him in the appropriate manner, He would answer you, even if you are disobedient.'

I said, 'What is the appropriate manner of supplicating {Him}?''

He said, ‘After you have performed your {daily} obligatory prayers, praise Allah and extol Him, lauding Him as far as you can. {Then} send blessings on the Prophet (S) and exert yourself in sending blessings on him, and testify that he accomplished his mission. Send blessings on him as much as you can.

{Then} recall His bounties with you and those with which He has blessed you, and what He did {of good} to you, praising and thanking Him for that.

{Then} confess all your sins and admit them, or those which you remember and summarize those which have remained unnoticed by you.

{Then} repent to Allah for all your sins, with the intention of not repeating them again. Seek Allah’s forgiveness from them by regretting, with true intention, and with fear and hope.

{Then} say, ‘O Allah, I apologize to you for my wrong deeds. I ask for your forgiveness and repent to you. So assist me in obeying You, and grant me success in fulfilling what You have made incumbent upon me of all that which pleases You. Indeed I have seen no one who has been able to attain {even} part of Your obedience except that it was through your blessing on him before his obedience. So endow me with a blessing through which I may attain your pleasure and Heaven.’

Thereafter, pray for your need, I hope that He will not disappoint you, by His will.”²

With regard to the etiquettes (*adab*) of supplication, Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says:

“Observe the etiquettes of prayer (*du’a*’), and see who you are calling and how you are calling, and why you are calling. Realize the greatness of Allah and His magnificence, and know from the bottom of your heart that He is aware of what is in your conscience, knows your innermost secret, and what transpires in it of the right and wrong.

Know the ways of your salvation and destruction, so that you may not pray to Allah for something in which there is your perdition, thinking that your salvation lies in it. Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: ***‘Man prays for ill as {avidly as} he prays for good, and man is overhasty.***³ Ponder on what you are asking for, and why are you asking for it.

Prayer (*du’a*’) is the responding of your whole to Allah (*al-haqq*), and the annihilation of the self in gazing at the Lord, and leaving the choice (*ikhtiyar*) altogether {to Him}, and the submission of all affairs to Allah, the manifest of it and the occult.

If you do not fulfill the requisites of prayer, then do not wait for the response, for indeed He knows the secret and what is still more hidden; and you may pray for something the contrary of which He has come to know from your innermost secret.”⁴

These two narrations point to the requisites (*shurut*) of the acceptance of a prayer and its etiquettes (*adab*).

I was intending to initially talk about the requisites of prayer and thereafter about its etiquettes. But I encountered some difficulties in the demarcation between the requisites (*shurut*) and the etiquettes (*adab*), hence, I chose to merge the two together.

Here, I will quickly point to a set of requisites and etiquettes related to prayer in the light of the Islamic narrations.

1. Recognition of Allah

One of the most significant requisites for the acceptance of a prayer is the knowledge of Allah, and belief in His absolute power and strength in actualizing what His servant asks from Him.

The author of *ad-durr al-Manthur* reports from Ma'adh bin Jabal that the Holy Prophet (S) said, "Had you recognized Allah with the recognition due to Him, your prayers would have dislodged the mountains."⁵

Regarding the verse 'So let them respond to Me, and let them have faith in Me...'⁶, al-'Ayyashi narrates a tradition in his *Tafsir* from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "They should know that I am capable of granting them what they ask from Me."⁷

At-Tabrasi relates a narration from Imam as-Sadiq ('a) in *Majma' al-Bayan* under the above verse to the effect that, "...and let them have faith in Me'⁸ {means} that they should be convinced that I am capable to give them what they have asked for, 'so that they may fare rightly.'⁹"

It is reported that once Imam as-Sadiq ('a) recited the verse, "Is not He the one who answers the call of the distressed {person} when he invokes Him..."¹⁰

So he was asked, "Why is it that we invoke but are not answered?"

Imam ('a) replied, "Because you invoke one whom you do not recognize, and you pray for what you do not know."¹¹

This tradition emphasizes on the importance of the role of the supplicant's awareness of 'the object of prayer' and of 'the one asked from' in the acceptance of a prayer.

In another tradition, Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "The Holy Prophet (S) has said, 'Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: ***Whoever asks Me, knowing that I am the {only} One who harms and benefits, then I will surely answer him.***'"¹²

In one of his supplications, Imam 'Ali bin al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) says: "You have lauded Yourself for having no need for Your creatures, and it suits You to have no need for them, and You have attributed to them poverty, and it suits them to be poor toward You. So he who strives to remedy his lack through what is with You and wishes to turn poverty away from himself through You, has sought his need in the most likely place and come to his request from the right quarter."¹³

Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says in a whispered prayer (*munajat*), “Immaculate is He on whom relies every believer, and of whom every denier (*jahid*) is in need; and no one can become needless except by the grace of what is with Him.”¹⁴

Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin (‘a) says in a supplication, “We rise in the morning in Your grasp. Your kingdom and authority contain us and Your will embraces us. We move about by Your command and turn this way and that through Your governing. We own nothing of the affair except what You have decreed and nothing of the good except what You have given.”¹⁵

We read in the *Sahifat al-‘Alawiyyah*, “Who can do harm to You, or fight against You, or be beyond Your reach, or be safe from Your decree.”

Part of recognition (*ma’rifah*) is that a supplicant should know that Allah is near to him, nearer than any other thing, and that He is aware of what his soul tempts him to, and that He is nearer to him than his jugular vein, and that He intervenes between him and his self.

He, the Exalted, says:

“When My servants ask you about Me, {tell them that} I am indeed nearest.”¹⁶

“We are nearer to him than his jugular vein.”¹⁷

“Know that Allah intervenes between between a man and his heart.”¹⁸

Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says in a supplication, “I seek Your proximity through Your embracing mercy which has embraced all things. My Lord, indeed You see my position and are aware of what is in my conscience, You know my innermost secret, and nothing of my affairs is hidden from You, You are closer to me than my jugular vein.”¹⁹

In his supplication for the day of Friday, he (‘a) says: “There is no god but Allah, who answers (*al-mujib*) the one who invokes Him {even} with the lowest of his voice, who hears (*as-Sami’*) the one who whispers to Him {even} from the innermost of his heart, who is most kind (*ar-ra’uf*) toward him who entertains hope in Him to remove his distress, who is near (*al-qarib*) to him who calls on Him to relieve him of his hardship and grief.”²⁰

In one of his sermons, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says: “He has taken precedence in highness such that nothing is higher than Him, and He is so near that nothing is nearer than Him. Neither has His highness distanced Him from any of His creatures, nor has His nearness put them on the same level with Him.”²¹

2. Entertaining a Good Opinion of Allah

To entertain a good opinion (*husn al-zann*) of Allah is part of the recognition of Allah. Allah, the Exalted, gives to His servants in accordance with their good opinion about Him and their confidence in the

vastness of His mercy and generosity.

According to a Divine Narration, “I am as My servant thinks of Me, so let him not think but good of Me.”²²

The Holy Prophet (S) says: “Invoke Allah while you are confident of the response {from Him}.”

Once Allah revealed to Prophet Musa (‘a), “Whenever you call Me and ask from Me, I am there to listen to you.”²³

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) is narrated to have said, “When you pray {to Allah}, turn {to Him} with your heart, and think as if your need (*hajat*) were at the door.”²⁴

He (‘a) has also been reported to have said, “When you pray {to Allah}, turn {to Him} with your heart, and then be confident of the response (*ijabah*).”²⁵

Contrary to this, there is the state of despair (*qunut*) of Allah’s mercy and the acceptance of prayer. This is one of the things which distance man from Allah’s mercy. One may pray to Allah for something and He, the Exalted, may delay the response because of his own benefit.

But since the supplicant is not aware of that while Allah is, he starts entertaining a bad opinion (*su’ al-zann*) of Allah and despairs of His mercy. Hence, this state of despair would veil him from the mercy of Allah.

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: “A servant continues to be in {the state of} blessing, hope, and mercy of Allah –the All-mighty, the Majestic, so long as he does not make haste and does not despair and does not discard prayer.” He was asked, “How does one make haste?” He (‘a) replied, “By saying, ‘I have been praying to Allah since such and such time, but I do not see the response.’”²⁶

Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Abi Nasr says: “I said to Abu al-Hasan (‘a), ‘May I be your ransom! I have been praying to Allah for a need since such and such a year, but now something {of disappointment} has penetrated my heart because of the delay {in His response}.’

He (‘a) said, ‘O Ahmad! Be careful that Shaitan should not have a way to you and make you disappointed. Tell me, if I were to tell you something, would you trust my word?’

I said, ‘May I be your ransom! If I do not trust your word, then whose word would I trust, as you are the proof (*hujjah*) of Allah on His creatures.’

He (‘a) said, ‘Then be more confident in Allah; for you are on a promise with Him, the All-mighty, the Majestic. Does not Allah say, ‘When My servants ask you about Me, {tell them that} I am indeed nearmost. I answer the supplicant’s call when he calls Me’, and He has said, ‘Do not despair of the mercy of Allah’, and He has said, ‘But Allah promises you His forgiveness and grace.’ Then be confident in Allah more than you are in others, and do not put in your hearts (*qulub*) but what is good, for He is

very forgiving to you.”²⁷

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said, “When one hastily {prays to Allah} and then goes away, Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: ‘Does not My servant know that I am the only one who fulfills the needs?’”²⁸

Hisham bin Salim reports from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), “There was a gap of forty years between Allah’s word, **‘Your supplication has already been granted’**²⁹ and the seizure of Fir’awn.”³⁰

Ishaq bin ‘Ammar says: “I asked as-Sadiq (‘a), ‘Is it possible that a person is granted his prayer but then it is delayed?’ ‘Yes, {even as long as} twenty years’, he replied.”³¹

3. Being in Need of Allah Desperately

One must take shelter with Allah during prayer like a distressed person who finds none other than Allah to rely upon and place his hope in. If a supplicant’s hope is divided between Allah and other than Him or His creatures, then he has not attained a due absorption in Allah (*inqita’*) and has not experienced in himself the state of being desperately in need of Allah (*idtīrar*), which is a fundamental requisite for the acceptance of a prayer.

In his will to his son Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says: “Deliverance (*khalas*) is attained only through sincerity (*ikhlas*). When the {state of} fear intensifies, then to Allah is the retreat.”³²

This is so because at the time of distress, one loses hope in all other than Allah and takes due resort to Allah, such that he entertains no hope in other than Him, the All-mighty, the Majestic.

It is narrated that Allah once revealed to Prophet ‘Isa (‘a), “Call Me the calling of one who is engrossed in grief and cannot find any helper. O ‘Isa! Ask Me and do not ask other than Me, so that the prayer from you would be favourable and so would be the response from Me.”³³

In his Whispered Prayer, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says: “O Allah! My request does not resemble the request of the beggars, for if a beggar is deprived, he would cease begging, while I cannot do without that which I have asked from You, in all times. O Allah! Be pleased with me; and if you are not pleased with me, then forgive me; for a master may forgive his servant while he is displeased with him. O Allah! How dare I call You while I am what I am?! And how dare I despair of You while You are what You are?!”³⁴

This is the state of being in desperate need of Allah in which a servant has no choice but to take refuge with Allah, the Exalted, and obtain his need from Him.

As mentioned earlier, the state of being in dire need of Allah necessitates the state of total absorption in Him. For in such a condition, a servant knows that his need lies only with Allah and not with other than Him. Hence, he would turn to Him alone, averting his face from all other than Him.

Imam ‘Ali bin al–Husayn (‘a) says in a supplication, “Make me among those who supplicate You with sincerity in ease with the supplication of those who are in distress.”³⁵

He says in another place, “O Allah, I showed sincerity by cutting myself off from everything but You. I approached You with my whole self. I averted my face from everyone who needs Your support. I ceased to ask from any one who cannot do without Your bounty. I saw that the needy who seeks from the needy is foolish in his opinion, and misguided in his intellect.”³⁶

Nevertheless, this in no way means that one should not employ the material means which Allah Himself has ordained to be the means for the fulfillment of the needs of His creatures, and has also commanded them to do that. Rather, it means that these natural causes are in extension to the will (*mashi’ah*) of Allah and His command.

Imam as–Sadiq (‘a) has said, “If anyone of you wishes that he should not ask his Lord (*rabb*) for anything except that he should grant him, then let him despair of all the people and not place his hope but in Allah, the All–mighty, the Majestic. If Allah comes to know of this from his heart, then he will not ask from Him for anything except that He will grant him.”³⁷

4. Entering from the Doors Ordained by Allah

Prayer is turning (*iqbal*) toward Allah. Thus, it must take place through the ways in which Allah, the Exalted, has ordered.

It has been narrated that a man from the Banu Isra’il worshipped Allah for forty nights and thereafter prayed to Allah but his prayer was not answered. So he complained about this to Prophet ‘Isa (‘a) who, in turn, inquired from Allah, the Exalted, about this. Allah replied, “O ‘Isa! He called Me while he had a doubt about you in his heart.”³⁸

5. Turning of the Heart to Allah

This is among the other most important requisites for the acceptance of a prayer. This is because the reality of prayer lies in the turning of the heart to Allah. So if the heart becomes occupied with other than Allah, of the wordly distractions, then the supplicant has not been able to actualize the reality of prayer.

Imam as–Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said, “Indeed Allah does not accept the prayer which rises from the back of a heedless (*sahin*) heart.”³⁹

He (‘a) has also said, “When you invoke {Allah}, turn {to Him} with your heart, and then be confident of the response.”⁴⁰

He (‘a) again says: “Amir al–Mu’minin (‘a) has said, ‘Allah, the All–mighty, the Majestic, does not accept the prayer from the back of a negligent (*lahin*) heart.’⁴¹”

A Divine Narration says: “O Musa! Call Me with a pure heart and a truthful tongue.”⁴²

In his will to ‘Ali (‘a), the Holy Prophet (S) says: “Allah does not accept the prayer of a heedless heart.”⁴³

Sulaiman bin ‘Amru says: “I heard Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) saying, ‘Allah does not answer the prayer from the posterior of a heedless heart. Thus, when you pray, turn (*aqbil*) with your heart {toward Him} and then be confident of the response.”⁴⁴

It is also narrated from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) that he said, “Allah does not answer the prayer from the back of a hardened (*qasin*) heart.”⁴⁵

Therefore, the heart of a supplicant must turn toward Allah and be attentive to Him during prayer.

Negligence (*lahw*), heedlessness (*sahw*) and hardness (*qaswah*) of the heart are all among the hurdles which stop the heart from attaining the state of turning toward Allah.

While reciting the transmitted supplications⁴⁶ in particular, a reciter must create the state and ambiance of prayer within himself. He must also be cautious of his heart falling behind his tongue, as a result of which his tongue becomes busy with the recitation of the supplication while his heart is engaged with the worldly distractions.

In his valuable and instructional book, *al-Muraqabat*⁴⁷, the mystic jurist, Shaykh Jawad Maliki Tabrizi (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“Know that you cannot attain the good of prayer (*du’a*) and the response (*ijabah*) to it unless your innermost secret, your spirit and your heart are qualified (*ittisaf*) by the properties (*sifat*) of prayer. Qualification by its properties means that the originator of the prayer should be your innermost secret, spirit and heart.

For instance, when you say {addressing Allah}, ‘I place my hope (*raja*) in You for every good’, your innermost secret, spirit and heart should entertain hope in Allah. Thereafter, its effects should become manifest in your actions. He in whose innermost secret and essence the ‘hope’ is actualized, then it is just as if his whole becomes {an embodiment of} hope. And if this is actualized in his spirit, then it is as if he lives with hope. And he who is hopeful with his heart, then the actions he performs of his own volition shall always be accompanied by hope.

So beware that none of your affairs should be devoid of hope, and consider that to be {part of} your actions. Then see, do you find in your activities the effect of hope, which is the act of seeking (*talab*), or not?

Have you not heard the speech of the Ma’sum (‘a), “Whoever is hopeful of something seeks it?” And this is how it is; because you find the people of this world who are hopeful of the worldly affairs, if they hope for good from someone or something, they would seek it from that person or thing to the extent of their hope. Do not you see that a trader never leaves his trade, or a craftsman his industry? All this is

because they are anticipating good in the trade and industry.

Similarly, every group seeks what it anticipates from that in which they find their object of hope, and do not leave it until after they have acquired it, except {surprisingly} for him who is hopeful of the Heaven (*jannah*) and the Hereafter, and except for him who is hopeful of the grace and kindness of Allah, as is the case most of the time. But such a thing is impossible!

The fact that the effects (*athar*) follow their properties⁴⁸ is among the things ordained by Allah, the Wise; and you will find no change in the norm (*sunnah*) of Allah. Rather, the violation⁴⁹ (*takhalluf*) is due to the mistaking of the illusion (*da'wa*) for the reality (*haqiqah*), otherwise, there is not a little hope except that there is with it the like of it of the act of asking (*talab*), and so on.

The same applies to other elements of prayer, apart from hope, such as *tasbih*⁵⁰, *tahlil*⁵¹, *tahmid*⁵², *tadarru'*⁵³, *istikanah*⁵⁴, *khawf*⁵⁵, *istighfar*⁵⁶ and *tawbah*⁵⁷. Each of these has a reality and an illusion, and the effect belongs to the reality, without any violation.”

6. Humiliation and Softening the Heart

If a supplicant wishes his prayer to be accepted then he must seek tender-heartedness (*riqqat al-qalb*) and try to soften his heart; for when the heart becomes tender it opens up, and the veils between the supplicant and Allah are lifted and he is nearer to Allah.

The mode of prayer and request has an effect on the softening of the heart. The narrations that put emphasis on self-abasement (*tadhallul*) during prayer are, in fact, for the purpose of actualizing this end.

In his book *'Uddat ud-Da'i*, Ahmad bin Fahd al-Hilli narrates that the Holy Prophet (S) would look like a beggar asking for food when he invoked Allah and prayed to Him.

It is reported that among the things Allah, the Exalted, revealed to Prophet Musa ('a) was, “O Musa! Stretch your hands before Me in humility like a humble servant calling his master for help. If you did that, you will be showered with mercy, as I am the Most Kind of those who are kind and powerful.”⁵⁸

Muhammad bin Muslim says: “I inquired from Abu Ja'far al-Baqir ('a) about the verse ‘...Yet they neither humbled themselves to their Lord, nor did they entreat Him {for mercy}.’⁵⁹ He ('a) replied, ‘Humbling oneself (*istikanah*) means humility (*khudu'*), while entreaty (*tadarru'*) means raising up the two hands in imploration.”⁶⁰

Since the purpose behind this particular mode of prayer had not been clear for the people, the sceptics were putting people in doubt as to the mode of supplication. They would say: why do we raise our hands toward the skies? Is Allah in the skies that we should raise our hands toward it?

For this reason, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) used to explain to them that Allah, the Exalted, is present

everywhere, but we take up this particular mode of prayer as a mark of our humility and neediness toward Allah; for raising the two hands is a sign of humility and indigence. This mark has an inspiring effect in the softening of the heart, removing hardness from it, clearing it up and drawing its attention to Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted.

At-Tabrasi narrates in *al-Ihtijaj* that once Abu Qurrah asked Imam ar-Rida (‘a), “Why is it that when you supplicate you raise your hands toward the sky? Abu al-Hasan (‘a) replied, ‘Allah has sought servanthood (*‘ubudiyyah*) from His creatures through different forms of worship... and He has sought servanthood from His creatures during prayer (*du‘a’*), request and imploration, by {asking them} to stretch their hands and raise them toward the sky, displaying their humility as a sign of servanthood and abasement before Him.”⁶¹

In fact, the moment of the softening of the heart is the very moment of the descent of Allah’s mercy. So one should avail such moments by turning his attention to Allah for supplication; for the mercy of Allah is without any reckoning during such moments. However, this should not imply that there is a specified time for the coming down of Allah’s mercy. Rather, the receiving of this mercy has a specified time and a particular state, the state of tenderness (*riqqah*).

The Holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said, “Avail yourself of the opportunity of prayer (*du‘a’*) at the softening {of the heart}; for it⁶² is a mercy.”⁶³

Abu Basir narrates from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), “If {the heart of} anyone of you becomes softened, then let him pray; for the heart does not soften until it has become pure.”⁶⁴

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) has also said, “When your skin quivers and your eyes shed tears, then you have drawn closer! Your need has been considered.”⁶⁵

This narration is precise; for according to it the acceptance of a prayer has direct connection with the state (*halat*) of the supplicant. The more humble and softer the heart becomes, the closer the supplicant will be to the response. On the contrary, the harsher and harder it becomes, the further he will be from the response.

The Islamic narrations highlight the importance of availing the moments of the softening of the heart and when one is broken-hearted –as a result of the hardships and distress in this world– for turning toward Allah, the Exalted, through prayer and request.

These moments prepare one to turn toward Allah and receive His mercy. The secret behind all this lies in the fact that the heart cannot acquire the state of turning to Allah (*iqbal*) and that of receiving his mercy (*istiqbal*) except when it softens. Thus, the acquisition of the state of softening of the heart (*riqqah*) is necessary for one who desires the face of Allah (*wajh allah*) and wishes to attain the state of turning toward Him during prayer.

Ishaq bin ‘Ammar narrates, “I said to Abu ‘Abdillah as–Sadiq (‘a), ‘{It so happens that} I supplicate and desire to weep, but I cannot. At times, I remember some of my family members who have passed away, so my heart softens and I weep. Is this allowed?’ He replied, ‘Yes, do remember {them}; and when your heart becomes tender, do weep and invoke your Lord, the Blessed, the Exalted.”⁶⁶

If the state of weeping did not give the supplicant a helping hand to soften his heart, then he should simulate weeping (*tabaki*); for it results in weeping, and weeping, in turn, results in the softening of the heart, which subsequently opens up the heart onto Allah.

Sa’d bin Yasar reports, “I said to Imam as–Sadiq (‘a), ‘I {only} simulate weeping when I supplicate, I cannot weep.’ He said, ‘Yes {there is no objection in it.}”⁶⁷

Abu Hamzah ath–Thumali narrates that Imam as–Sadiq (‘a) once said to Abu Basir, “If you feared the occurrence of something or you had a wish, then begin by glorifying Allah and praise Him as is worthy of Him. Thereafter, send blessings on the Holy Prophet (S) and pray for your need; and try to weep...my father used to say, ‘A servant is in the nearest position to {his} Lord, the All–mighty, the Majestic, when he is prostrating (*sajid*) and weeping.”⁶⁸

Among the formulas of remembrance (*dhikr*) of Imam as–Sadiq (‘a) in prostration was, “My lowly face has prostrated before Your Mighty face; my perishing face has prostrated before Your Eternal and Everlasting face; my needy face has prostrated before Your Self–sufficient face. My face, hearing, sight, flesh, blood, skin, bones, and what the earth has borne of me, have {all} prostrated before Allah, Lord of the worlds.”⁶⁹

7. Continuity in Praying in Adversity and Ease

Continuation in invoking Allah during adversity (*shiddah*) and ease (*rakha*), and the precedence of supplication in ease over supplication during hardships, is a matter about which there has been emphasis in the Islamic sources.

The Holy Prophet (S) is narrated to have said, “Make yourself known to Allah during ease, He will know you in adversity.”⁷⁰

Imam as–Sadiq (‘a) says: “Whoever takes precedence in invoking {Allah}, he will be answered when a calamity befalls {him} and it will be said, ‘{This is} a voice known {to us}’, and he will not be obscured from the skies. {But} he who takes no precedence in supplicating will not be answered during affliction, and the angels shall say, ‘We do not recognize this voice.’”⁷¹

Imam as–Sadiq (‘a) is also reported to have said, “Supplication during ease extract the needs during adversity.”⁷²

He (‘a) is also narrated to have said, “Whoever likes to be answered during adversity, should increase

supplicating during ease.”⁷³

He (‘a) has also said, “My grandfather used to say, “Take precedence in making supplication; for if a servant consistently invokes {Allah} and then an affliction befalls him and he prays {to Allah}, it would be said, ‘{This is} a voice known {to us}. But if he is not consistent in supplicating and a calamity befalls him, it would be said, ‘Where were you before this day?’”⁷⁴

The above narrations point to a subtle and profound meaning; for supplication is ‘turning toward Allah’ (*iqbal*), and the most effective and closer of it to acceptance is the one in which the *iqbal* is at its climax. So when the state of ‘turning’ is actualized and the heart becomes pure and the supplicant turns to Allah wholly, then there would be no obstacle between the prayer and the response. On the contrary, if the state of turning to Allah is poor, the similar would be the response.

The state of turning toward Allah and drawing the attention of the heart to Him can only be acquired through frequent supplication. This is exactly like any other act in human life. Thus, the more frequent one’s invocation, the more easily he would be able to attain the state of *iqbal* and his heart would yield to him more in being attentive to Allah.

Consequently, when a calamity befalls him and he turns to Allah at that time, his heart would easily and swiftly obey him in turning toward Allah, as his prayer would be nearer to acceptance, and there would be no hindrance between his supplication and the response from Allah.

Fadl bin ‘Abbas says that the Prophet of Allah (S) said to me, “Be mindful of Allah, He will be mindful of you. Be mindful of Allah and you will {always} find Him before you. Make yourself known to Him in ease, He will know you in adversity.”⁷⁵

Imam ‘Ali bin al-Husayn (‘a) used to say, “I have not seen the like of taking precedence in making supplication; for the response (*ijabah*) is not within the reach of a person at all times.”⁷⁶

Abu Dharr al-Ghaffari reports that the Holy Prophet (S) said, “O Aba Dharr! Make yourself known to Allah at times of ease, He will know you during adversity. If you ask, ask from Allah, and if you seek help, seek the help of Allah.”⁷⁷

It is narrated that Abu Ja’far al-Baqir (‘a) used to say, “The prayer of a believer in ease (*rakha*) ought to be like his prayer at times of adversity (*shiddah*). He should not slack off if he is granted {his request}; so do not get weary of making supplication, for indeed supplication has a great position with Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic.”⁷⁸

8. Fulfilling the Covenant of Allah

It is related in *Tafsir al-Qumi* that Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) was asked, “Allah, the Exalted, says: ‘Call Me, I will answer you’, we do call Him but are not answered.” He said, “Because you do not keep the

covenant of Allah; Allah says: ‘...And fulfill My covenant, I will fulfill your covenant.’⁷⁹ By Allah, had you fulfilled to Allah His, He would have fulfilled to you yours.”⁸⁰

9. Simultaneity of Prayer with Efforts

One of the conditions for the acceptance of a supplication is to follow it up with endeavour (*‘amal*). Prayer without putting efforts to attain one’s need is of no avail, as endeavour does not dispense with prayer. These are two different points.

The first point is that supplication cannot be a substitute for endeavour.

In his advice to Abu Dharr, the Holy Prophet (S) says: “O Aba Dharr! The example of one who supplicates without acting⁸¹ is like he who shoots {an arrow} without a bow.”⁸²

‘Umar bin Yazid reports, “I said to Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), ‘A person says: ‘I will sit in my house, I will pray and fast and worship Allah. As for my sustenance, it will come to me.’ He said, ‘This is one of the three people who would not be answered.’”⁸³

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) has said, “One who invokes without acting is like he who shoots without a bow.”⁸⁴

He (‘a) is also narrated to have said, “The supplication of three people are rejected; he who sits in his house and says: ‘O my Lord! Give me provision’; for it is said to him, ‘Did I not ordain for you a way to obtain your provision? ...’”⁸⁵

Hence, if a father was just to pray to Allah for the spiritual well being and guidance of his child without giving importance to his correct up-bringing, then his prayer shall not be answered.

Similarly, if a sick person were to pray for his recovery but without consulting a physician and taking medicine and maintaining the proper diet necessary for his recovery, then the acceptance of such a prayer would be hindered.

The second point is that putting efforts alone does not suffice.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said, ‘{On the Day of Judgement} two people will enter the Heaven, both of whom used to perform the same deeds {in the world}. Upon seeing one above himself, the other will say, ‘O My Lord! Why did You give him {all this} when our deeds were the same?’ Allah, the Exalted, will reply, ‘He asked Me {for it}, but you did not ask Me.’ The Prophet then said, ‘Ask Allah for His grace and pray for His bounties in abundance, for nothing equals this in importance.’”⁸⁶

The Holy Prophet (S) has also said, “Indeed Allah has servants who do {righteous} deeds, so He gives them {of His mercy}; and there are others who sincerely ask Him, so He grants them. Thereafter, He will gather all of them in the Heaven. So those who performed {good} deeds shall say, ‘Our Lord, You gave us because we acted {righteously}, but why did You give to these {people}?’ He will say, ‘These are my

servants. I gave you your reward without wasting anything of your deeds. These people besought Me, hence I gave them and enriched them; this is My grace, I give it to whomsoever I desire.”⁸⁷

10. Supplication within the Framework of the Divine Norms

Supplication is not breaking the ontological laws of Allah operating in the universe, nature, history, and society. The norms of Allah do not alter or change.

The supplicant ought not to pray for something which contradicts the norms of Allah or contrasts His legislative (*tashri'iyah*) laws.

Imam 'Ali ('a) was once asked, “Which prayer is the most erroneous one?” He replied, “Praying for that which is not possible.”⁸⁸

He ('a) is also reported to have said, “O supplicant! Do not ask for what is not going to happen and is illegal.”

Praying for ‘that which is not going to happen’ (*ma la yakunu*) is to pray for change in the norms of Allah regarding the society, nature or universe.

And asking for ‘that which is illegal’ (*ma la yahillu*) is opposing the legislative system of Allah in human life.

It is to this regard that Allah, the Exalted, says: “...even if you plead forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah shall never forgive them...”⁸⁹

11. Abstinance from Sins

Among the other conditions for the acceptance of a prayer is abstinence from sins and repenting of them. How can a person attain the state of turning toward Allah (*iqbal*), which is the essence of supplication, when he is indulged in disobeying Allah, turns away from His commands and does not repent to Him?

Muhammad bin Muslim narrates from Imam al-Baqir ('a), “It so happens that a person asks Allah for a need and He decides to fulfill it sooner or later, but the person commits a sin during this time, so Allah, the Exalted, says to the angel, ‘Do not grant his need and deprive him of it; for he has exposed himself to My wrath and {thus} deserves to be deprived by Me.”⁹⁰

It is reported that the Holy Prophet (S) said, “{One day} Prophet Musa ('a) passed by a man who was in a state of prostration. After {Prophet Musa} finished his work, he found him still prostrating. So he ('a) said, ‘If your need was in my hand, I would have surely granted it to you.’ At this, Allah revealed to him, ‘O Musa! Even if he were to prostrate to the extent that his head is separated {from his body}, I will not

accept {his prayer}, unless he turns away from what I dislike to what I like.”⁹¹

12. Congregation for Supplication and Asking the Believers to say Amin

Among the things insisted upon in the Islamic narrations is prayer in the congregation of the believers (*mu'minin*), for the congregation of believers before Allah is always among the stations of Allah's mercy. No group of believers comes together, provided Allah is pleased with their gathering, except that their congregation shall be closer to Allah's mercy and it will be among the stations of his grace.

Ibn Khalid reports Imam as-Sadiq ('a) saying, “No group of forty believers come together and pray to Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, for something, except that they shall be answered. If their number does not reach forty, then {if} four {of them} pray to Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, ten times, Allah will respond to them. And if their number does not reach four, then if one {of them} were to pray to Allah forty times, Allah, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, will answer him.”⁹²

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) has also said, “Whenever my father would become grief-stricken because of something, he would call the women and children, and then he would pray {to Allah} and they would say *amin*.”⁹³

13. Consistency in Praying to Allah

Among the things that a supplicant should be careful about in prayer is that he should not lose the state of consistency (*tarassul*) in asking Allah, the Exalted, and demanding from Him. For the essence and spirit of supplication is constituted by turning toward Allah, beseeching and entreating Him earnestly, and the recitation of the supplications handed down to us from the A'imma ('a).

The supplicant ought not to lose this state, for it is in the state of consistently praying without constraint (*takalluf*) that one may experience within himself a turning toward Allah, a sense of humility and a softening of the heart, which he may not experience even while reciting the transmitted supplications.

Hence, it is important for a supplicant to preserve the state of prayer (*halat ad-du'a'*), because of what it entails of the consistence and ease in being attentive to Allah and imploring Him.

The A'imma ('a) sometimes used to prefer for a supplicant to supplicate consistently with whatever came into his mind, rather than supplicating with the transmitted prayers, so that the supplication may not become devoid of the consistency and continuity.

Zurarah is reported to have said, “I said to Abu 'Abdillah ('a), ‘Teach me a supplication (*du'a'*). He said, ‘The best of supplications is indeed that which flows on your tongue.’”⁹⁴

14. Preparing the Self for Prayer

Prayer is ‘turning toward Allah’. The soul must be prepared for this ‘turning’.

Among the ways of preparing the soul is to begin with praising and extolling Allah, thanking Him for His blessings and grace, seeking forgiveness from sins, and sending salutations and blessings on the Prophet of Allah (S) and his Progeny (‘a). This preamble prepares the supplicant to turn to Allah, and to ask and beseech Him.

Praising Allah, thanking Him, seeking forgiveness, and sending blessings on the Prophet (S) and his Progeny have appeared in the beginning of most of the supplications, as they pervade many of them.

‘Ays bin Qasim reports Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) to have said, “If anyone among you sought a need, then let him praise Allah and extol Him... and when you are about to ask for a need, then glorify Allah, the All-mighty, the All-compeller; praise and extol Him saying, ‘O Most Generous of those who give, O Best of those who have been asked from, O Most Merciful of those who were asked for mercy, O One, O All-embracing, O He who neither begat nor was begotten, nor has He any equal, O He who has neither taken any spouse nor son, O He who does whatever He wishes, and consolidates whatever He decrees, and decides whatever He likes, O He who intervenes between a man and his heart, O He who is in the highest position, O He who there is nothing like Him, O All-hearing, All-seeing.’”

And remember Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, much by His names, for the names of Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, are many. And send blessings on Muhammad (S) and his Progeny, and say, ‘O Allah, enlarge {my share} from Your lawful (*halal*) provision so that through which I may hold back my face {from the wrongdoing}, give back the trust with me, maintain good relations with my relatives, and that it should be an aid for me in {performing} *hajj* and ‘*umrah*.’

Then he said, ‘A man entered the mosque and performed two units of prayers, and then he {immediately} invoked Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic. So the Messenger of Allah (S) said, ‘The servant hastened {in calling} his Lord’. Another person came {in}, he offered two units of prayers, then he praised Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, and sent salutations on the Prophet (S). So the Prophet of Allah (S) said, ‘Ask and you will be granted.’”⁹⁵

Abu Kahmas narrates from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), “{One day} a man entered the mosque and began {praying for his need} before praising Allah and sending salutations on the Prophet (S) . So the Prophet (S) said, ‘The servant hastened {in calling} his Lord.’ Then came in another {person}, he offered prayers (*salat*), praised Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, and sent blessings on the Messenger of Allah (S) . So the Prophet of Allah (S) said, ‘Ask and you shall be granted.’”⁹⁶

Safwan al-Jammal narrates from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), “Any supplication by which Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, is called upon is obscured (*mahjub*) from the heavens until {the supplicant} sends

blessings on Muhammad (S) and his Progeny.”⁹⁷

It is also reported from as-Sadiq (‘a), “A prayer remains veiled from the heavens until {the supplicant} sends blessings on Muhammad (S) and his Progeny.”⁹⁸

15. Calling Allah by His Beautiful Names

Allah loves His servants to call upon Him with His Beautiful Names (*asma’ al-husna*). “Say, ‘Invoke ‘Allah’ or invoke ‘the All-beneficent’. Whichever {of His names} you may invoke, to Him belong the Best Names...”⁹⁹

Each of these Beautiful Names of Allah is a key among the keys of His mercy and grace. There has been great emphasis in the Islamic sources regarding supplicating with the Beautiful Names of Allah. There are numerous traditions that if a believer supplicates Allah with His Beautiful Names ten times, He, the Exalted, would respond to him.

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: “Whoever says ‘O Allah’ ten times, it is said to him, ‘Here I am, what is your need?’”¹⁰⁰

Abu Basir reports Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) to have said, “If a person says in the state of prostration ‘O Allah, O my Lord, O my Master’ three times, Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, will answer him saying, ‘Here I am My servant! Ask for your need.’”¹⁰¹

‘Abdullah bin Ja’far narrates in *Qurb al-Isnad* from Mas’adah bin Sadaqah who said, “Ja’far {bin Muhammad} told me, ‘{Once} some of the children of my father complained {to him of an affliction}. So when he passed by them, he said, ‘Say ten times ‘O Allah, O Allah’, for none of the believers says this except that the Lord, the Blessed, the Exalted, says: ‘Here I am My servant! Ask for your need.’”¹⁰²

Imam ‘Ali bin al-Husayn (‘a) is reported to have said, “The Holy Prophet (S) heard a man saying, ‘O Most Merciful of the merciful.’ So he laid his hand on the shoulder of the man and said, ‘The Most Merciful has turned to you with His face, ask your need.’”¹⁰³

16. Presenting the Needs before Allah

Allah, the Exalted, knows what we want, what we need and what we are asking for. Although His knowledge suffices Him from our request, He, the Exalted, loves that we should present our needs to Him, to the extent that sometimes He even puts us in need so that we may take our needs to Him.

Nonetheless, if Allah hates a person, He would suffice him and make him needless so that he may not invoke Him and raise his hands toward Him.

When man presents his needs before Allah, he gets closer to Him, develops intimacy with Him, and

realizes his poverty and neediness toward Him. And all this is loved by Allah, the Exalted. So when we call on Him for any of our needs, He loves us to prolong our supplication, and not to shorten it the way people do when talking to the rulers.

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says in this regard, "Indeed Allah, the Exalted, knows what His servant wants when he calls on Him, but He loves him to reveal his needs to Him. So when you supplicate, mention your needs."¹⁰⁴

17. Persistence in Praying

Persistence (*ilhah*) in supplicating Allah shows the profundity of one's confidence and hope in Allah, and the depth of one's attachment to Him. The greater one's confidence in Allah, the greater would be his persistence in supplicating Him. On the contrary, if the trust of a person in Allah is weak, then he would naturally desist from supplication and despair if he does not see response to his prayer.

The way persistence in praying to Allah reveals the depth of one's confidence in Allah, similarly it deepens one's trust in Allah and consolidates it. Moreover, the proximity of a person to Allah is in accordance with the degree of his confidence in Allah and his attachment to Him.

There has appeared great emphasis in the Islamic traditions about persistence in praying and that one should not despair in any situation.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said, "Indeed Allah loves those who persist (*mulihhin*) in making supplication."¹⁰⁵

He (S) is also reported to have said, "Verily, Allah loves a persistent (*lahuh*) petitioner."¹⁰⁶

Imam 'Ali ('a) says: "Prayer is the shield of a believer. And a door which is frequently knocked at shall be opened for you."¹⁰⁷

It is narrated from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Supplication averts the Divine destiny (*qada'*) after it has been confirmed. So supplicate frequently; for it is the key of every mercy and the fulfillment of every need. And that which lies with Allah can only be attained through supplication. And there is no door which is frequently knocked at except that it will soon be opened for the one who knocks it."¹⁰⁸

Imam al-Baqir ('a) says: "Allah dislikes the insistence of people in asking from one another, but He likes to be asked from insistently."¹⁰⁹

Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have said, "Persist in asking from Him and the doors of mercy shall be opened for you."¹¹⁰

Walid bin 'Uqbah al-Hijri narrates that he heard Imam al-Baqir ('a) saying, "By Allah, no believer persists in asking for his need from Allah except that He would grant it to him."¹¹¹

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) narrates from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said, “May Allah have mercy on a person who calls on Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, for a need, and then persists in calling on Him, whether he is answered or not.” Then he recited this verse, “I will supplicate my Lord. Hopefully, I will not be disappointed in supplicating my Lord.”¹¹²

Imam al-Baqir (‘a) says: “Nay, by Allah, no one persists in asking from Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, except that He would answer him.”¹¹³

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) is also narrated to have said, “Ask your need and persist in asking; for indeed Allah loves the persistence of the persistent among His believing servants.”¹¹⁴

18. Prayer for Others and from Others

We shall discuss in chapter six of this book about what we should pray to Allah and what we should not. But at the moment we will talk on this topic to the extent that it is related to the etiquettes and requisites of supplication.

If a person opens up before Allah to his brothers in faith, and removes from his heart the grudge and hatred which may be existing between them and him, then Allah, the Exalted, will open for him the doors of His mercy.

This is because the opening up of believers to one another, and their consolidating the state of mutual love and sympathy between themselves, is among the keys to Allah’s mercy for the supplicant as well as for the one for whom the supplicant prays for (*al-mad’uww lahu*).

With regard to the supplicant, Mu‘awiyah bin ‘Ammar reports from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), “Praying for your brother in his absence drives sustenance (*rizq*) to the supplicant and averts calamities from him, and an angel says: ‘And for you is the like of that.’”¹¹⁵

The Holy Prophet (S) has said, “Whosoever prays for a believer in his absence, an angel would call out, ‘And for you is the like of that.’”¹¹⁶

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: “The prayer of a person for his brother in his absence increases in sustenance and averts afflictions.”¹¹⁷

Ibn Khalid al-Qammat says: “Abu Ja’far al-Baqir (‘a) said, ‘The quickest of the prayer to be answered is the prayer of a brother for his his brother {in faith} in his absence. As he begins to pray for his brother, the angel appointed over him says: ‘*amin!* And for you is twofold of that’”¹¹⁸

With regard to the one prayed for (*al-mad’uww lahu*), it has been narrated that Allah, the Exalted, said to Musa bin ‘Imran, “Call Me with a tongue with which you have not disobeyed Me.” He said, “O my Lord! How is that possible for me?” He replied, “Call Me with the tongue of others.”¹¹⁹

19. Supplication at the Time of the Descent of Mercy

It is through supplication that man attracts Allah's mercy. For this reason, the best time for supplication is the time when the mercy of Allah descends. At such moments man is closer to Allah and is exposed to His mercy.

The hours in which Allah's mercy descends are many, among them is: during the recitation of the Qur'an, at the time of *adhan*¹²⁰, when it rains, and when the ranks of the truth and falsehood meet and people fall as martyrs. The last hour is the best of the times in which the doors of Allah's mercy are opened toward the earth.

As-Sakuni narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "Imam 'Ali ('a) has said, 'Avail yourself of the opportunity of supplication at four {times}; during the recitation of the Qur'an, at the time *adhan*, when it rains, and when the two armies {of truth and falsehood} meet for martyrdom.'"¹²¹

Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have said, "Avail yourself of the opportunity of supplication at five places; when reciting the Qur'an, at the time of *adhan*, when it rains, when the two armies meet for martyrdom, and when the oppressed (*mazlum*) makes supplication, as there is nothing to impede it from {reaching} the throne (*'arsh*)."¹²²

He ('a) has also said, "Whoever recites a hundred verses of the Qur'an, any part of the Qur'an he wished, and then says 'O Allah' for seven times, then even if he were to pray against a solid rock, he would dislodge it, by the will of Allah."¹²³

Imam as-Sadiq ('a) says: "My father used to pray for {his} need at noon (*zawal ash-Shams*). Whenever he intended do so, he would give charity (*sadaqah*) and smell a bit of fragrance, then he would go to the mosque and pray for his need in accordance with the will of Allah."¹²⁴

20. Praying in the Middle of the Night

The solitude (*khalwah*) of the night has a great effect in the turning of the soul toward Allah and in receiving His mercy. What one experiences during the late hours of the night, of the state of turning to Allah and the ability to acquire His mercy, is hardly experienced by him at other times.

Furthermore, Allah has kept in the late hours of the night of His blessings and mercy what He has not kept in other hours of the day and night.

It is apparent from the Islamic traditions that all hours of the day and night are not equal. There are times wherein the doors of Allah's mercy are opened for man more than other times. Some hours attract the mercy of Allah more than other hours do. The best of these hours and the ones which have a greater share of the mercy of Allah are the hours of the second half of the night.

Allah, the Exalted, says:

“O you wrapped up in your mantle! Stand vigil through the night, except a little, a half, or reduce a little from that, or add to it, and recite the Qur’an in a measured tone. Indeed soon We shall cast on you a weighty word. Indeed the watch of the night is firmer in tread and more upright in respect to speech.”¹²⁵

Mufaddal bin ‘Amru narrates from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a), “Some of what Allah whispered (*naja*) to Musa bin ‘Imran (‘a) was, ‘O son of ‘Imran! He who assumes that he loves me but when the night falls he does not think of Me and goes to sleep is a liar. Does not every lover love to be alone with his beloved? Here I am O son of ‘Imran, I am aware of My lovers; when the night covers them their eyes go into their hearts, My punishment is embodied before their eyes, they address Me {as if} they see Me, and they speak to me {as if} they are in My presence. O son of ‘Imran! Give Me humility from your heart, humbleness from your body, and tears from your eyes. Call Me in the darkness {of the night}, for you will indeed find Me Nearmost, Answering.”¹²⁶

There are several places in this text worth pondering on, though we do not intend to discuss them in detail.

1. The night serves as a covering for the friends (*awliya*) of Allah and guards them against the discomfort of life and its distractions. It is as if the night pulls him out from the middle of the distractions that occupies him from turning to Allah and attaining detachment from everything other than Him. This is the opportunity of the seclusion (*khalwah*) at night when the face of Allah (*wajh allah*) becomes exclusive for man, away from all distractions, and he is able to attain in this seclusion the state of total absorption in Allah.
2. The discomfort of the daytime and its numerous distractions diverge our power of sight and hearing. But when the night covers us and we come out of the uneasiness of life, our powers of sight and hearing, which had been diverged during the daytime, once again converge. They shift from exterior to interior, and from the uneasiness of the daytime to inside the heart, the source of light and spiritual insight in man’s life.

It is at their convergence that Allah, the Exalted, opens the doors of light and spiritual insight onto the heart of a person, ‘*when the night covers them their eyes go into their hearts*’. It is at this moment that one sees himself in the presence of Allah and witnesses the wrath and mercy of Allah before him.

Thus, when he addresses Allah he would address Him as if he sees Him and is in His presence, not from a distance, ‘*they address Me {as if} they see Me*’. And when he talks to Allah he would talk to Him as if he is in His presence, and not away from Him, ‘*and they speak to me {as if} they are in My presence*’. And the anger and punishment of Allah would become embodied before him as the phrase goes ‘*My punishment is embodied in their eyes*’.

Subsequently, the intimacy (*uns*) with the presence of the beloved, seclusion with Him, and the fear of His punishment seizes from them the comfort of sleep. How can one sleep when he finds himself in the presence of the beloved at the seclusion of the night, whispering and speaking to Him? How can slumber overcome him when he sees the punishment of Allah embodied in front of him? Such a state is a natural outcome of the transformation of the power of sight from exterior to interior.

In his sermon famously known as *al-muttaqin* (the pious ones), Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says: “At night they rise on their feet {for prayers}, reading parts of the Qur’an in a measured tone, creating through it grief for themselves and taking counsel with it for the cure of their ailments. If they come across a verse which arouses desire {for the Heaven}, they pursue it avidly, and their spirits turn toward it eagerly, and they feel as if it is in front of them.

And when they come across a verse which fills with fear {of the Fire}, they bend the ears of their hearts toward it, and feel as though the sound of Hell and its cries are reaching their ears. They bend themselves from their backs, prostrate on their foreheads, palms, knees and toes, beseeching Allah, the Exalted, to set {them} free {from the Fire}. In the daytime, they are enduring, learned, virtuous and Godwary.”¹²⁷

In another narration, Imam ‘Ali (‘a) said to Nawf al-Bikali about the characteristics of the night, “O Nawf! Prophet Dawud once woke up at such an hour of the night and said: this is indeed the hour in which no one makes supplication but that he will be answered.”¹²⁸

The Holy Prophet (S) says: “In the final hours of the night Allah, the All-mighty, the Majestic, says: ‘Is there any supplicant whom I may answer? Is there any petitioner so that I may grant his request? Is there anyone to plead for forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there any repentant so that I may turn toward him clemently?’”

21. Wiping the Face and Head after Supplication

Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) says: “No one stretches his hand toward Allah, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, except that Allah –the All-mighty, the Majestic– is ashamed of turning down his request completely, until he puts in his hand what He wishes of His grace and mercy. So whenever anyone of you supplicates, then he should not withdraw his hand until after he has wiped it on his face and head.”¹²⁹

1. Qur’an, 34:39.

2. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.319; Falah as-Sa’il, pg.38 39; and ‘Uddat ud-Da’i, pg. 16.

3. Qur’an, 17:11.

4. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.90, pg.322.

5. Al-Mizan, vol.2, pg.43.

6. Qur’an, 2:186.

7. Ibid.

8. Qur'an, 2:185.
9. Qur'an, 2:185.
10. Qur'an, 27:62.
11. Tafsir as-Safi, pg.57, under verse no.86 of Chapter Two; Iran lithographic edition.
12. Thawab al-A'mal, pg.84.
13. Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.13.
14. Al-Balad al-Amin, pg.96.
15. Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.6.
16. Qur'an, 2:186.
17. Qur'an, 50:16.
18. Qur'an, 8:24.
19. Al-Balad al-Amin, pg.96.
20. Ibid, pg.93.
21. Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon no.49.
22. Al-Mizan, vol.2, pg.37.
23. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1105, hadith no.8703.
24. Usul al-Kafi, pg.519; Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1105, hadith no.8700.
25. Usul al-Kafi, bab al-iqbal-'ala ad-du'a'.
26. Ibid, pg.527; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1107, hadith no.8711.
27. Qurb al-Isnad, pg.171.
28. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1106, hadith no.8709.
29. Qur'an, 10:89.
30. Usul al-Kafi, pg.562.
31. Ibid.
32. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1121, hadith no.8764.
33. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1174, hadith no.8958.
34. Al-Balad al-Amin, pg.316.
35. Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.22.
36. Ibid, supplication no.28.
37. Tafsir as-Safi, pg.58, Iran lithographic edition; Usul al-Kafi, pg.382; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1174, hadith no.8956.
38. Kalimat Allah, hadith no.371.
39. Usul al-Kafi, bab al-iqbal-'ala ad-du'a'.
40. Ibid, hadith no.1.
41. Ibid, hadith no.2.
42. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.34.
43. Man la Yahduru al-faqih, vol.2, pg.339.
44. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1105, hadith no.8705.
45. Ibid, vol.4, pg.1106, hadith no.8707.
46. By transmitted supplications, we mean the supplications which have reached us from the Holy Prophet (S) and the A'imma (a). These supplications are referred to in Arabic as al-ad'iyat al-ma'turah.
47. Pg.60 61.
48. For instance, the 'act of seeking' is the natural consequence of the property of hope, when it is realized in the heart of a person. {Trns.}
49. That is, if we find a property without the effect expected of it.
50. Glorification of Allah: subhan allah.
51. Pronunciation of the phrase la ilaha illa allah.
52. Praising Allah: al-hamd li allah.

53. Pleading with Allah.
54. To become lowly before Allah.
55. Fear of Allah.
56. Seeking Allah's forgiveness.
57. Repenting to Allah.
58. 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.139.
59. Qur'an, 23:76.
60. Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, pg.348.
61. Usul al-Kafi, pg.522; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1101, hadith no.8687.
62. The softening of the heart (al-riqqah).
63. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.313.
64. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1120, hadith no.8761; and Usul al-Kafi, pg.521.
65. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1141, hadith no.8763.
66. Usul al-Kafi, pg.523; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1121, hadith no.8767.
67. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1122, hadith no.8769; and Usul al-Kafi, pg.523.
68. Usul al-Kafi, pg.524; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1122, hadith no.8770.
69. Al-Balad al-Amin, pg.331.
70. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1097, hadith no.8672.
71. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1096, hadith no.8664.
72. Ibid, vol.4, pg.1096, hadith no.8665.
73. Ibid, vol.4, pg.1096, hadith no.8660.
74. Ibid, vol.4, pg.1096, hadith no.8667.
75. Man la Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol.2, pg.358.
76. Al-Irshad of al-Mufid, pg.277.
77. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1098; and 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.127.
78. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1111, hadith no.8729.
79. Qur'an, 2:40.
80. Tafsir as-Safi, pg.57, under the exegesis of verse 186 of Chapter Two, lithographic edition.
81. That is, without putting efforts and employing the means ordained by Allah to attain his need.
82. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, kitab as-Salat, abwab al-du'a', bab no.32, hadith no.3.
83. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1160, hadith no.8913.
84. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1175, hadith no.8965.
85. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1175, hadith no.8965.
86. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1084, hadith no.8608.
87. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1084, hadith no.8609.
88. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.324.
89. Qur'an, 9:80.
90. Usul al-Kafi, pg.440.
91. 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg.125.
92. Usul al-Kafi, pg.525.
93. Ibid; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1144, hadith no.8863.
94. Al-Aman min al-Akhtar of Sayyid Ibn Tawus, pg.3.
95. Usul al-Kafi, pg.524; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1126, hadith 8786.
96. Usul al-Kafi, pg.525; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1127, hadith 8788.
97. Usul al-Kafi, pg.528; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1135, hadith no.8826.
98. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1137, hadith no.8837; and al-Majalis of al-Mufid, pg.60.
99. Qur'an, 17:110.
100. Usul al-Kafi, pg.541; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg.1130, hadith no.8798.

101. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1131, hadith no.8802.
102. Qurb al-Isnad, pg.2; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1132, hadith no.8809.
103. Muhasabat al-Nafs, pg. 148; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1132, hadith no.8815.
104. Usul al-Kafi, pg.520; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1091, hadith no.8642.
105. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.300.
106. Ibid, pg.374.
107. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1085, hadith no.8612.
108. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1086, hadith no.8616.
109. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.374.
110. Ibid, vol.77, pg.205.
111. Usul al-Kafi, pg.520.
112. Qur'an, 19:47.
113. Usul al-Kafi, pg.520.
114. Qurb al-Asnad, pg.520.
115. Al-Amali of at-Tusi, vol.2, pg.290; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.387.
116. Ibid, vol.2, pg.95; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.384.
117. Usul al-Kafi, pg.435; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1145, hadith no.8867.
118. Ibid.
119. Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.342; and 'Uddat ud-Da'i, pg. 128.
120. The call to prayer.
121. Usul al-Kafi, pg.521; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1114, hadith no.8739.
122. Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1115, hadith no.8742.
123. Thawab al-A'mal-of as-Saduq, pg.58.
124. Usul al-Kafi, pg.521.
125. Qur'an, 73:1 6.
126. Al-Majalis of al-Mufid, pg.214; and Wasa'il al-Shi'ah, vol.4, pg. 1125, hadith no.8781.
127. Nahj al-Balaghah, sermon no. 193.
128. Ibid, saying no. 104.
129. Usul al-Kafi, vol.2, pg.342; Man La Yahduruhu al-Faqih, vol. 1, pg. 107; and Bihar al-Anwar, vol.93, pg.307.

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