

Home > Supplication In the Eyes of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) > Sources of Supplications in the Heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) > Later Source Books of Supplication

Sources of Supplications in the Heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a)

We have incredible riches of supplications in the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and subtle concepts in the whispered prayers (*munajat*) transmitted to us from them.

The Importance given by the Companions of the A’immah to the Recording of the Ahadith

The companions of the A’immah (‘a) used to display extreme keenness in recording what the A’immah would impart to them in the form of prayers.

Sayyid Radiyy ad-Din Ibn Tawus says in his book *Muhaj ad-da’awat* while mentioning the prayer of *jawshan as-Saghir* attributed to Imam Musa al-Kazim (‘a), Abu al-Waddah Muhammad bin ‘Abdillah bin Zayd an-nahshali relates from his father ‘Abdullah bin Zayd, who was among the companions of Imam al-Kazim (‘a), “‘Abdullah bin Zayd reports that there was group from among the special companions of Abu al-Hasan al-Kazim (‘a), from his family members and followers, who used to attend his sittings while they had within their cloaks straight and bent tablets made of hard black wood.

If he uttered a word or gave a verdict on legal issues, they would record what they heard from him. Of the other things ‘Abdullah {bin Zayd} has reported is what they heard from {the Imam} saying in his prayer... and then he mentioned the famous supplication of *jawshan as-Saghir* narrated from Musa bin Ja’far (‘a).”

The Four Hundred Treatises of Hadith

The companions of Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) had compiled four hundred treatises from his speech which came to be famously known as the Four Hundred Treatises (*al-usul al-arba’ mi’ah*).

Shaykh Amin al-Islam at-Tabrasi (d.548 H) says in his book *A'lam al-Wara*, “Four thousand of the well-known scholars have narrated {reports} from Imam as-Sadiq (‘a) and they have compiled four hundred writings known as *al-usul* out of his answers to different questions. The practice of the compilers of the *usul* (may Allah have mercy on them) was to give importance to the recording and writing of what they heard from the A’immah of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).”

In his book *ash-Shamsayn*, Shaykh al-Baha’i says: “It has reached us from our masters (*mashayikh*) – may Allah have mercy upon them– that it was the practice of the compilers of the *usul* that whenever they heard a *hadith* from one of the A’immah (‘a), they would immediately record it in their *usul* so that they might not forget part or all of it in the long run.”

It was due to this fact that these treatises (*al-usul*) were relied upon by the scholars, such that if they related a tradition from them they would consider it as correct and reliable.

After mentioning the Four Hundred Treatises in chapter twenty nine of his book *ar-rawashih*, Muhaqqiq ad-damad asserts, “Let it be known that narrating {a tradition} from the authentic and reliable {Four Hundred} *usul* is one of the fundamental criteria (*arkan*) for the authentication of a tradition (*riwayah*).”

In fact, a great number of the companions of the A’immah (‘a) had undertaken the responsibility of writing the *usul* such that it is not possible to give a detailed account neither of their names nor their treatises. Shaykh at-Tusi (may Allah have mercy on them) says in this regard in the beginning of *al-Fihrist*, “And I do not guarantee to give a complete anthology; for the writings of our associates (*ashab*) and their treatises (*usul*) are almost unrecordable due to their being scattered in different cities.”

However, their number is certainly not less than four hundred, as it has been stated by Muhaqqiq Agha Buzurg at-Tahrani in his work *adh-dhari’ah*.¹

In his previously mentioned work, Muhaqqiq ad-Damad says: “It is common that the Four Hundred Treatises have been written down by four hundred writers from the disciples of Abu ‘Abdillah as-Sadiq (‘a). Moreover, there were around four thousand people attending his sittings and relating from him. Their books and writings are many, but those which have come to be considered as authentic, and are relied upon, and which have been named as *al-usul*, are these Four Hundred Treatises.”

The Burning of the Heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) at the Hands of Tughril Beg

These treatises together with other texts from the heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), including the works on supplications, were destroyed when the book library which was endowed (*waqf*) by the minister Abu Nasr Sabur bin Ardeshir (the Shiite minister appointed by Baha’ ad-dawlah al-Buwayhi) was set on fire. This library was the most known in those days, the most flourishing and the greatest of its kind.

The actual existence of this library has been mentioned by al-Yaqt al-Hamawi in *Muʿjam al-Buldan* (2:342) under the entry *ʿbayn as-Surayn*. He says: “Bayn as-Surayn which is an area in the Karakh district of Baghdad is among the most beautiful areas and the most populated of it.” He further says: “Therein was the book library which was endowed by the minister Abu Nasr Sabur bin Ardeshir, the minister of Baha’ ad-dawlah bin ‘Adud ad-dawlah al-Buwayhi.

There were no books in the world better than what it contained, as all of them were handwritten by authentic scholars and they were their notable treatises (*usul*). It was burnt along with other parts of Karakh when Tughril Beg, the first king of the Saljuq dynasty, entered Baghdad in 447 H. Among these books which were set on fire by Tughril Beg were the books of supplications transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a).”

After quoting these words of al-Hamawi, Muhaqqiq at-Tahrani (may Allah have mercy on him) says: “I say that it is suspected that part of the books of this library –which was endowed for the Shi’ah and established for them in their location, in the Karakh of Baghdad– were the treatises on supplication (*al-usul ad-du’aiyyah*) which the earlier companions of the A’mmah (‘a) had narrated from them. In the biographies of each of them², the masters of *rijal* have accredited to each of them a book which they referred to as *kitab al-ad’iyah*³, stating their chain of narration to that book from its author.”⁴

Immunity of Part of the Heritage of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) from being Destroyed

A group of these *usul* were collected by Shaykh at-Ta’ifah Abu Ja’far at-Tusi (may Allah have mercy on him) when he compiled *al-Istibsar* and *at-Tahdhib* in Baghdad. Two libraries that contained the fundamental *usul* were at the disposal of Shaykh at-Ta’ifah during this period.

One of them was the library of Sabur, which was established for the Shiite scholars in Karakh, in Baghdad, while the other was the library of his tutor, Sharif al-Murtada, which was estimated to have contained eighty thousand books. Some of these books remained up until the time of Ibn Idris al-Hilli (may Allah have mercy on him) from which he compiled *Mustatrafat as-Sara’ir*.

Immunity of Part of the Source Books on Supplication from being Lost

Agha Buzurg at-Tahrani says in *adh-Dhari’ah*, “In general, these treatises (*usul*) on supplication which were in the Shapur library, with either a general or specific title, were all destroyed by the fire as explained by Yaqt. However, we did not lose anything from them except for their objective existence.

Otherwise, with regard to their content, of the supplications, the formulas of remembrance (*adhkar*) and the visitations (*Ziyarat*), they have reached us exactly in the same way as they were recorded in those

treatises (*usul*). This is because many years before the date of the burning {of the library} some of the great scholars had already written books on supplication, *a'mal* and *Ziyarat*, drawing all that which they brought in their books from the treatises on supplication (*al-usul ad-du'aiyyah*).

These books which were composed out of those treatises before the burning {of the library} continue to exist up to this day, like *Kitab ad-du'a'* of Shaykh al-Kulayni (d.329 H), *Kamil al-Ziyarat* of Ibn Qulawayh (d.360 H), *Kitab ad-du'a' wa al-Mazar* of Shaykh as-Saduq (d.381 H), *Kitab al-Mazar* of Shaykh al-Mufid (d.413 H), and *Rawdat al-'Abidin* of al-Karajaki (d.449 H).”

Supplications handed down to Us Intact through Misbah al-Mutahajjid

Among the source books on supplication which have drawn from the earlier treatises (*usul*) is *Misbah al-Mutahajjid* of Shaykh at-Ta'ifah Abu Ja'far at-Tusi (d.460 H). After his arrival in Iraq in the year 408 H, at-Tusi extracted –from the earlier treatises which were at his disposal in Sabur Library and the library of his teacher Sharif al-Murtada– traditions of jurisprudence (*ahadith al-ahkam*) and thus compiled *Tahdhib al-Ahkam* and *al-Istibsar*, and also compiled *Misbah al-Mutahajjid* consisting of supplications and *a'mal*, which he extracted from the earlier treatises (*usul*) as far as those who spend the night in vigil (*mutahajjidin*) could endure.

Sources of Supplication that reached Ibn Tawus

Some of the sources of supplication which remained intact in the event of the burning of Sabur Library continued to exist until the seventh century H and reached Sayyid Raddiy ad-din bin Tawus (d.664 H), may Allah have mercy on him.

In chapter forty two of his book *Kashf al-Mahajjah*, which he had composed for his son, Sayyid Ibn Tawus says: “Indeed Allah, the Majestic, has facilitated for you many books at my hand... and Allah, the Majestic, has {also} facilitated for me a number of volumes of prayer books (*da'awat*) which are more than sixty volumes.”

When Sayyid Ibn Tawus wrote *Muhaj ad-da'awat*, he had with him some seventy volumes of works on supplication. Toward the end of *Muhaj ad-da'awat*, he says: “This is the last of what I could recall... if we were to record more than this and all that which is in our knowledge, we would exceed what we had intended to record, for there are more than seventy volumes of books on supplication in our library at this moment.”

Sayyid Ibn Tawus also mentions in his book *al-Yaqin* –which is among the last of his works– that the number of books on supplication with him had reached seventy.”⁵

One Thousand Five Hundred Sources of Hadith and Du'a' with Ibn Tawus

When Sayyid Ibn Tawus authored his great work on supplication known as *al-Iqbal*, he had with him one thousand five hundred books, according to what ash-Shahid has said in his collection (*majmu'atihu*) which al-Jaba'i narrated from a copy with his handwriting. This was in the year 650 H in which Sayyid Ibn Tawus completed his book *al-Iqbal*. Shahid says: "He {i.e. Ibn Tawus} had at his disposal one thousand five hundred books in the year 650 H."⁶

Fifteen Books of Sayyid Ibn Tawus on Supplication and Adhkar

In his book *Falah as-Sa'il*, Sayyid Ibn Tawus says that when he went through the book *al-Misbah al-Kabir* on supplication which belonged to his maternal grandfather, Shaykh Abu Ja'far at-Tusi, he found it to be very beneficial.

However, Ibn Tawus found many other additions which Shaykh at-Tusi had not brought in his book. Hence, he decided to compose a book titled *Tatimmat Misbah al-Mutahajjid wa Muhimmat fi Salah al-Muta'abbid* in fifteen volumes, which would supplement *al-Misbah al-Kabir*.

In the preface of his book *Falah as-Sa'il*, Sayyid Ibn Tawus writes, "With the help of Allah, the Majestic, I am going to arrange that in a couple of volumes, anticipating to achieve what I have intended to compile of the important and supplementary {prayers}.

I have named the first volume: *Falah as-Sa'il*, which consists of the {recommended} acts during the day and night. This is in two volumes.

The third volume: *Zahrat ar-rabi' fi ad'iyat al-asabi'*.

The fourth volume: *Jamal al-usbu' bi kamal al-'amal al-mashru'*.

The fifth volume: *Ad-duru' al-waqiyat min al-akhtar*.

The sixth volume: *Al-midmar li as-Sibaq wa al-lihaq*.

The seventh volume: *As-Salik al-muhtaj ila ma'rifat manasik al-hujjaj*.

The eighth and ninth volumes: *Al-iqbal bil a'mal al-hasanat fima nadhkuruhu mimma yu'mal miqatan wahidan kulla sanat*.

The tenth volume: I have named it *As-Sa'adat bil 'ibadat allati laysa laha waqtun mahtum wa ma'lum fi ar-riwayat bal waqtuha bi hasab al-hadithat al-muqtadiyah wal-adawat al-muta'alliqat biha*.

If Allah grants me success to complete these books based on what I anticipate of His grace, then I hope that each of these books be the first of its kind which no one has preceded me with the like of it, and I hope them to be among the essentials for he who intends to do *'ibadah* and prepare himself for the return (*ma'ad*) before death.

I have named the first part: *Falah as-Sa'il wa najah as-Sa'il fi 'amal yawm wa laylat*.

The second part: *Zahrat ar-rabi' fi ad'iyat al-asabi'*.

The third part: *Ar-ruju' fi Ziyarat wa ziyadat salawat wa da'awat al-usbu' fi al-layl wa an-nahar*.

The fourth part: *Al-iqbal bi al-'amal al-hasanat fima yu'mal marratan wahidah kulla sanat*.

The fifth part: *Asrar as-Salawat wa anwar ad-da'awat*.

If Allah, the Majestic, allows me to author this final volume, then I would withhold it the rest of my life, unless he who has the permission allows me to give it to someone before my death.”⁷

Later Source Books of Supplication

Agha Buzurg at-Tahrani (may Allah have mercy on him) writes, “Thereafter, a group of scholars have added to what Sayyid Ibn Tawus had recorded in his works numerous supplications and *a'mal* also attributed to the A'imma (‘a) and which were collected in the earlier works of supplication and which were not at the disposal of Sayyid Ibn Tawus. They were guarded against burning, drowning and moths-worms, and thus reached them. Hence, they brought those prayers in their works on supplication.

Among these scholars are:

1. Shaykh Muhammad bin Makki who was martyred in 786 H.
2. Shaykh *jamal as-Salikin* (the beauty of the wayfarers), the author of the present *al-Mazar*, Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad bin Fahd al-Hilli (d.841 H), {also} the author of *'Uddat ud-Da'i* and *at-Tahsin fi Sifat al-'Arifin*.
3. Shaykh Taqi ad-Din Ibrahim al-Kaf'ami (d.905 H), the author of *Junnat al-Aman al-Waqiyah*, *al-Balad al-Amin* and *Muhasabat an-Nafs*, all of which contain prayers and *adhkar* transmitted from the A'imma (‘a). He clearly asserts in the beginning of his book *al-Junnah* that he had collected them from reliable works, which he was {academically} bound to adhere to their content. He mentioned as sources of *al-Junnah* and *al-Balad* over two hundred books and gave reference to them in the text of both his works. Most of these books are among the earlier works on supplication, like *Rawdat al-'Abidin* of al-Karajaki (d.449 H).
4. Shaykh al-Baha'i (d.1031 H), the author of *Miftah al-Falah*.
5. Muhaddith Fayd al-Kashani (d.1091 H), the author of *Khulasat al-Adhkar*.
6. Al-Majlisi (d.1111 H). He is the one who collected and preserved {the *ahadith*}, and thereafter compiled them in the volumes of *al-Bihar* in Arabic, and in *Zad al-Ma'ad*, *Tuhfat al-Za'ir*, *Miqbah al-Masabih*, *Rabi' al-Asabi'* and *Miftah al-Ghayb*, which are all in Persian.”⁸

1. Ad-Dhari'at ila Tasanif ash-Shi'ah, vol.2, pg. 129.

2. i.e. each of the earlier companions of the A'imma (‘a) {trns.}

3. The book of supplications {trns.}
4. Adh-Dhari'ah, vol.8, pg. 174.
5. Adh-Dhari'ah, vol.2, pg.265.
6. Adh-Dhari'ah, vol.2, pg. 264 265.
7. Falah as- Sa'il, pg.7 9.
8. Adh- Dhari'at ila Tasanif ash-Shi'ah, vol.8, pg. 179 180.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/supplication-in-the-eyes-of-ahlalbayt-muhammad-mahdi-al-asifi/sources-supplications-heritage-ahl-al>