

Manifestations Of The All-Merciful

Reflections on the Daily Supplication of the
Holy month of Ramaḍān- Part I

Abū Muḥammad Zayn 'Ābidīn

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Of The All- Merciful**

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Holy month of Ramadan- Part I

Abu Muhammad Zaynu 'I 'Abidin

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

***In the Name of Allah,
the All-Merciful, the All-Beneficent***

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ اٰلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allah, Bless Muhammad & his Progeny

Humble Presentation

I humbly present this short commentary of the daily supplication of the Holy Month of Ramadan to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) and his infallible progeny (upon whom be peace), who represent the perfect Manifestations of the AII-Merciful, and sincerely pray to the AII-Merciful Lord to accept the same.

This humble attempt should be taken as a point of ascent to the meanings of other supplications narrated from the Holy Prophet (s) and his infallible progeny ('a). When reciting any supplication, one should never limit himself/herself with the periphel"y but should struggle for the center and the spirit. Our initial journey would be 'the journey of thought and concept', but this should transport us to overhaul ourselves and 'comprehend the kernal of prayer'. May Almighty Allah assist all of us before we lose the priceless opportunity of this transient life.

Walhamdu lillahi Rabbi 'I 'Alamin

And All praises belong solely to Allah, the Lord of the Universe

Utterly destitute to the All-Affluent

Abu Muammad Zaynu 'I 'Abidin

Qum al-Muqaddasa

Sha'ban al-M'azzam 1423

From the heavenly atmosphere of the neighborhood of Hadrat Fatima Masuma ('a), may the Almighty imbue our hearts with intense love for her, and may He Grace us with her intercession- Amin

Contents

Introduction

Understanding the Merit of the Supplication- **8**

Section 1

O Allah, Instil happiness in the spirits
of the Inhabitants of the grave- **11**

Section 2

O Allah, Enrich every Indigent (poor)- **16**

Section 3

O Allah, Satisfy every Hungry Person- **28**

Section 4

O Allah, Clothe every Unclothed One- **37**

Section 5

O Allah, Facilitate the Payment
of Every Indebted One- **44**

Section 6

O Allah, Relieve every Deeply Anguished One- **54**

Section 7

O Allah, Return Every Stranger- **62**

Section 8

O Allah, Free Every Captive- **80**

Index of Qur'anic Verses- 98

Bibliography- 110



اَللّٰهُمَّ اَدْخِلْ عَلٰى اَهْلِ الْقُبُوْرِ السُّرُوْرَ

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَغْنِ كُلَّ فَقِيْرٍ

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَشْبِعْ كُلَّ جَائِعٍ

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَحْسُ كُلَّ عُرْيَانٍ

اَللّٰهُمَّ اقْضِ دَيْنَ كُلِّ مَدِيْنٍ

اَللّٰهُمَّ فَرِّجْ عَنْ كُلِّ مَكْرُوْبٍ

اَللّٰهُمَّ رُدِّ كُلَّ غَرِيْبٍ

اَللّٰهُمَّ فُكِّ كُلَّ اَسِيْرٍ

Introduction

Understanding The Merit of The Du'a'

Introduction

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

مَنْ دَعَا بِهَذَا الدُّعَاءِ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ بَعْدَ الْمَكْتُوبَةِ اسْتَغْفِرَتْ ذُنُوبُهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

Whosoever supplicates with this prayer in the Holy month of Ramadan after the prescribed prayer, his sins (*dhunub*) would be forgiven till the Day of Judgment.¹

Du'a is not a mere verbal utterance, but "a state of real want," which mostly is manifested by the verbal supplication. So long as there is no harmony between "the inner state of want" and "the verbal utterance," the supplication would lack its spirit.

Realizing this, we say that "the state of yearning for the betterment of every human species" is an 'innate want' of every human being who enjoys an untainted soul. This is because every human being has been fashioned with the Attributes of Almighty Allah. And one such attribute is "mercy" which is all-embracing. Therefore the human being innately wants the betterment of every other human being. The reason why many of us do not experience this quality is our separation from the neighborhood of our All-Loving Creator. Therefore we need to undergo self-purification to realize this quality that has been veiled due to the accumulation of sins and attachment to the world of matter. And when we experience the state of "yearning for the betterment of others" and translate the same in the form of words, our supplication would carry meaning, and we would benefit from its great merit.

Those however who have not attained this station of proximity should never despair but recite this prayer regularly with reflection. . If such supplications of light were intended for perfect human beings only, the Holy Prophet (s) would not teach it to all and sundry. Therefore, we should always try to recite the supplication with reflection and change. If one were to inculcate the sublime thoughts contained in this prayer, he/she can really wake up from his/her deep slumber and change his/her life.

In this Graceful Month when the over-flowing Grace of the All-Gracious is continuous, let us humbly ask Almighty Allah to enable

¹ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.95, p.120, ch.6

us to be among those who utter this wonderful supplication as a translation of our inner spirits.

Section 1

اللَّهُمَّ ادْخِلْ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ السُّرُورَ

**O Allah, Instil happiness in the spirits
of the Inhabitants of the grave**

اللَّهُمَّ ادْخِلْ عَلَى أَهْلِ الْقُبُورِ السُّرُورَ

O Allah, Instil happiness in the spirits
of the Inhabitants of the grave

Supplication and the Law of Cause & Effect

Du'a' is an excellent means of achieving one's legitimate ends.

The universal law of 'cause and effect' itself encourages us to seek help from the Principal Cause- who is Almighty Allah. Thus even in circumstances when things can be acquired through natural means, one should not think that he/she is needless of supplication.

Some, on the other hand, may think that supplication is sufficient and there is no need of achieving our goals through the means that are at our disposal. Clearly, this path also is that of ignorance, for Almighty Allah has established the system of cause and effect and encouraged the human being to employ the same for his exalted ends. The following word of wisdom from Imam al-Sadiq ('a) endorses this:

أَبَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يُجْرِيَ الْأَشْيَاءَ إِلَّا بِأَسْبَابِهَا، فَجَعَلَ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا

Allah does not permit things to take place except by their causes; thus He made a cause for every thing.²

Seeking the Cause of Instilling Happiness

Having known the aforesaid, every understanding supplicant, would seek *the causes* that "instil happiness in spirits of the inhabitants of the grave" apart from praying for the same. Our holy traditions (which indeed are extensions of 111ight") have informed us how to make the deceased happy. Following are traditions worthy of contemplation:

1. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) was asked: 'Is it possible to recite prayers for the dead?' He said, 'Yes, and added:

2 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.2, p.90

إِنَّ الْمَيِّتَ لَيَفْرَحُ بِالتَّرْحُمِ عَلَيْهِ وَ الْإِسْتِغْفَارِ كَمَا يَفْرَحُ الْحَيُّ بِالْهَدْيَةِ

Surely a dead person rejoices when he is pitied upon and forgiveness is sought for him, as is the case of a living being upon receiving a gift.³

2. The Holy Prophet (s) once passed by the grave of a person, who was buried a day before, and saw his family weeping. Observing this, he said:

لَرُكْعَتَانِ خَفِيفَتَانِ مِمَّا تَحْتَفِرُونَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ صَاحِبِ هَذَا الْقَبْرِ مِنْ دُنْيَاكُمْ كُلِّهَا

'Two small units of prayer which you consider insignificant is more lovable to the inhabitant of this grave than your world in its entirety.'⁴

3. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ الْهَدَايَا لِلْأَمْوَاتِ الدُّعَاءُ وَ الْإِسْتِغْفَارُ

'Certainly the gifts [of the living] for the dead are *du'a* ' (supplication) and *istighfar* (seeking forgiveness of the sins of the dead).'⁵

4. Imam 'Ali al-Rida ('a) is reported to have said:

مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ زَارَ قَبْرَ مُؤْمِنٍ فَقَرَأَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ إِلَّا غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ
وَ لِصَاحِبِ الْقَبْرِ

Whosoever of God's servants visits the grave of a believer, and recites seven times "*Inna anzalnahu fi laylati qadr [...]*" Allah would forgive him and the inhabitant of the grave.⁶⁷

5. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

مَنْ مَرَّ عَلَى الْمَقَابِرِ فَقَرَأَ قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ مَرَّةً وَ وَهَبَ أَجْرَهُ لِلْأَمْوَاتِ
أُعْطِيَ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ يَعْدِلُ الْأَمْوَاتِ

3 Mawla Fayg Kashani, *al- Mahajjat al-Bayda*, v.8. p.292

4 *Tanbihu 'I Khawatir*, p.453

5 Mawla Fayg Kashani, *al-Mahajjatu 'I Bayda* " v.8, p.291)

6 Sayyid Yusuf Ibrahimiyani Amuli, *Armaghane Asman*, p.541

7 Shaykh Saduq, *Man La Yahduruhu ' Faqih*, v.I, p.181

Whosoever passes by the graves and recites *Qul Huwallahu Ahad* 11 times and gifts its reward to the dead, he is rewarded equal to the number of the dead⁸.

6. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported⁹ to have said:

تَدْخُلُ عَلَى الْمَيِّتِ فِي قَبْرِهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالصَّوْمُ وَالْحَجُّ وَالصَّدَقَةُ وَالْبِرُّ وَالِدُّعَاءُ وَ
يُكْتَبُ أَجْرُهُ لِلَّذِي فَعَلَهُ وَلِلْمَيِّتِ

Prayers, Fasting, Hajj, Sadaqa, good deeds and Du'a reach the dead in his grave, and their reward is written for [both] the doer and the deceased.

7. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported¹⁰ to have said:

مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ عَنْ مَيِّتٍ عَمَلٍ [عَمَلًا] خَيْرٍ أضعَفَ اللهُ لَهُ أَجْرَهُ وَ نَفَعَ اللهُ بِهِ
الْمَيِّتَ

Whosoever among the Muslims does a good act for a dead person, Allah rewards him manifold and Allah makes the dead benefit from the same.

Therefore, as we pray for the deceased to attain happiness in the intermediate realm (*barzakh*), we should also struggle to employ the means of their happiness set before us and humbly pray to Almighty Allah to accept our deeds.

The late Ayatullah Shahab al-Din Mar'ashi in his last Will¹¹ gave thought provoking advices to His son. One of them was:

"I advise him (my son) to read the Holy Qur'an and send its blessings to the souls of those Shi'ites of the Household of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be peace) who did not leave any offspring."

Therefore, in this Holy month of grace, let us not forget the inhabitants of the grave, including those whom we are not familiar with. In addition, let us also pray for the well-being of those *kuffar*

⁸ al-Hajj Mirza I: Iilsayn al-Nilr al-Tabrasi, *Mustadrak al-Wasli'il*, v.2, p. 483

⁹ al-Shaykh Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'a ila Tahsili Masa'il al-Shari'a*, v.8, p.279

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Ayatullah al-'Uzma Mar'ashi al-Najafi, *Wasiyyatnameye Ayatullah al-'Uzma Mar'ashi*

(disbelievers), who although were apparently known to be disbelievers, but had professed the unity of Allah and became Muslims prior to the departure of their souls from this world. In his *Chehl Hadith* (Forty Traditions), the late Imam al-Khumayni (may Allah elevate his soul) relates something thought provoking from his teacher in *'Irfan* (Divine gnosis) -Ayatullah Shah Abadi. He says:

"Our Shaykh, an accomplished 'arif that he was (i.e. Ayatullah Shah Abadi)- may my soul be his ransom- used to say: "Never call down curses (*Ia'n*) on anybody, though he be a *kafir* concerning whom you do not know how he made the transit from this world to the next, and unless an infallible wali (saint) informs you concerning his condition after death. For it is possible that he may have attained faith before the time of death. Hence let your curse be of a general character.""¹²

And in another place¹³ he says:

"Our great master, the accomplished 'arif, Shahabadi- *ruhi fidah*- used to say, ' Do not look down on even a *kafir* (non-believer} in your heart. It is possible that the divine light of his inner nature may lead him to faith and your rebuke and disdain may lead you towards a wretched life in the Hereafter. Of course to practice *al amr bi 'I-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'ani 'I munkar* (enjoining right' conduct and forbidding bad behavior) is something different from the inner feeling of contempt.' He would even say, 'Never curse the unbelievers regarding whom it is not known that they will leave the world in the state of unbelief. If they leave the world as rightly- guided servants of God, their spiritual rectitude may prove to be an obstruction in the way of your own spiritual advancement.'"

Therefore, as we utter this verse of supplication, let us commit ourselves in performing deeds of virtue for the deceased Muslims, for a practical expression of real want of the happiness of the deceased.

¹² Imam al-Khumayni, *Chehl Hadith*, 28th tradition

¹³ Imam al-Khumayni, *Chehl Hadith*, 3rd tradition

Section 2

اللَّهُمَّ اغْنِ كُلَّ فَقِيرٍ

O Allah, Enrich every Indigent (poor)

The Supplicant's All-Embracing Spirit

[*Allahumma aghni kulla...*]: One preposition employed in nearly every verse of this supplication is "kull" which means "every". The supplicant always tries to seek the betterment of every human being. He assumes a Divine spirit throughout the invocation. Egoism no more exists. He frees himself from the shackles of yearning only for the betterment and repose of the self. The Holy Prophet (s) and his infallible progeny were of such character. They yearned for the betterment and emancipation of all. In order to understand this exalted spirit better, study the following quotations of the Holy Qur'an and traditions:

I. Almighty Allah says in the Qur'an [Chapter al-A'raf- 7: 156]:

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

And My Mercy encompasses all things [i.e. every dependent being].

2. And in [Chapter al-Anbiya'- 21:107] addressing His Noble Messenger, He says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

And we have not sent you but as a mercy for the worlds

3. And in [Chapter al-Kahf- 18:6] addressing His Beloved He says:

فَلَعَلَّكَ بِنِخَعِ نَفْسِكَ عَلَىٰ ءَاثَرِهِمْ إِن لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَٰذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

Then it is near that you will kill yourself in grief, for their outcomes, if they do not believe in this announcement. [MK. Trans.]

4. The following is a radiant verse of the daily du'a' of the holy month of Rajab:

يَا مَنْ يُعْطِي مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلْهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْرِفْهُ تَحَنُّنًا مِنْهُ وَرَحْمَةً

O one who always gives to one from whom He is not asked and who knows Him not. He does this out of his Kindness and Mercy.

5. Almighty Allah says in [Chapter Taha-20:2]:

مَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ

We did not send the Qur'an so that you distress yourself [in the path of propagation by struggling to force the people towards it]

6. And in [Chapter al-Fatir- 35:8] He says:

...فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَةً...

...And therefore do not consume yourself for them due to grief [of their unbelief]...

7. And in [Chapter al-Mumtahana- 60:8] He says:

لَا يَنْهَىٰكُمْ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ
وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

Allah does not forbid you from doing good and acting fairly with those who have not made war against you on account of religion nor driven you out of your homes; surely Allah loves those who act equitably.

8. In a will¹⁴ addressed to his late son -Haj Sayyid Ahmad Khumayni- the late Imam al-Khumayni says:

'...These are the miracles of the Noble Messenger (S). ..who, standing at the apex of the peak of human perfection, sees the realities clearly and without any

¹⁴ Imam Khumayni, *Jelwehaye Rahman*, Translated by Al-Tawhid Journal, v. XI, Nos. 3&4 p.68

intervening *hijab* (curtain). At the same time he is present in all the dimensions of humanity and stages of being, and being the highest manifestation of:



He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden [57:3]

wants all human beings to achieve such a perfection. It was painful for him to see that they failed to achieve such a station, and perhaps the verse:



Ta ha: We have not sent down the Qur'an to you that you distress yourself [20: 1-2]

makes an oblique reference to this fact, and perhaps this hadith also refers to it:



No Prophet was made to suffer torment like me¹⁵

9. Marhum Amin al-Islam Tabrasi in his *Majma' al-Bayan* narrates the following:

و لبث في قومه ألف سنة إلا خمسين عاما ... و كان يدعوهم ليلا و نهارا فلا يزيدهم دعاؤه إلا
فرارا و كان يضربه قومه حتى يغشى عليه فإذا أفلق قال اللهم اهد قومي فإنهم لا يعلمون

Prophet Nuh ('a) lived among his people for 950 years. ...And he would invite them day and night, but it would add nothing in them save repulsion. Sometimes his people would beat him so much that he would fall unconscious, and on regaining consciousness, he would say: "O Allah guide my people for they do not know"¹⁶.

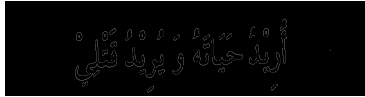
10. Following is the first verse of a beautiful poem attributed to Imam' Ali ('a)¹⁷:

When he saw Ibn Muljim he recited the following near Amr bin Ma'dikarb:

¹⁵ 'Ali al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanzu'l 'Ummal*, v.11, tradition no. 32161

¹⁶ Amin al-Islam Tabrasi, *Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan*, v.4, p.866

¹⁷ Minasha 'r al-Mansub ila 'l Imam al-Wasiyy 'Ali bin Abi Talib, p.64



I want his life and he wants me to be killed...

11. It is narrated that Prophet 'Isa ('a) once said¹⁸:



Be like the sun, shining upon the virtuous and sinful

12. Sayyid Radi al-Din Ibn Tawus is one of the great Shi'a scholars whose works enjoy a certain veneration in the scholarly circles. In His well-known prayer manual- *Iqbal al-A'mal*, which indeed is a masterpiece of devotional supplications, he narrates the following:

كنت في ليلة جلييلة من شهر رمضان بعد تصنيف هذا الكتاب يزمان و أنا أدعو في السحر لمن
يجب أو يحسن تقديم الدعاء له و لي و... فورد على خاطري أن الجاحدين لله جل جلاله و لنعمه
و المستخفين بحرمته و المبدلين لحكمه في عباده و خليقته ينبغي أن يبدأ بالدعاء لهم بالهداية من
ضلاتهم فإن جنائتهم على الربوبية و الحكمة الإلهية و الجلالة النبوية أشد من جنابة العارفين
بالله و بالرسول (ص)

'Some time after having written this book, during one of the great nights of the holy month of Ramadan, when I was praying at *sahar time* for those of whom it is compulsory or good to precede in prayer and also for myself and....then the following thought crossed my mind: it behooves one to first pray for the guidance of those who deny Allah and reject His blessings and those who belittle His Sanctity and change His rule [over His servants and creation], for their crime with relation to the lordship of God, Divine wisdom, and prophetic majesty is more grave than the crime of those who know Allah (swt) and His Messenger (may Allah's blessings be on him and his progeny).....'

Then, after a few lines he says¹⁹:

فدعوت لكل ضال عن الله بالهداية إليه و لكل ضال عن الرسول بالرجوع إليه و لكل ضال
عن الحق بالاعتراف به و الاعتماد عليه.

¹⁸ Mawla Sayyid Radi al-Din bin Tawus, *Iqbal al-A 'mol*, v.I, p. 385

¹⁹ Mawla Sayyid Radi al-Din bin Tawus, *Iqbal al-A 'mol*, v.I, p. 384



So I prayed for all those who have deviated from Allah to get guided towards -Him, and all those who have deviated from His Messenger to return to Him, and all those I;: who have strayed from the truth to admit it and rely on the same.

Then I prayed for the people of Divine succor (*ahl al-tawfiq*) to be established on their path and for the men of realization (*ahl al-tah*) to attain greater realization, and [then] I prayed for myself and those. ..

Therefore, when reciting the verses of this supplication of the holy month, the supplicant should in unison with the Prophet (s) and his infallible progeny, open his heart for all.

Objection:

Does the aforesaid mean that we should also pray for the material repose of every hypocrite and disbeliever. when we know that they are sources of destruction and mischief in the society? Don't we know about their evil state in various places of the Qur'an? How can we yearn for the material prosperity of one who would cause mischief in the world?

Response

Almighty Allah wants both the spiritual as well as the physical betterment of every human being. The purpose of human creation according to the Holy Qur'an, as shall be soon discussed, is not only, meant for the believers, but for the entire caravan of humanity .The verses cited above clearly indicate how the Prophet (s) suffered I agony due to the adamant stance of the disbelievers. 'The agony' was due to the all-embracing spirit that he possessed. He wanted the salvation of every human being.

The supplicant who submissive to Almighty Allah too would like the same to be realized for *every human being*. However, it would be wrong for him to seek their material prosperity *for the sake of material prosperity*. When seeking the material prosperity of every human being, one must ask Almighty Allah for that material prosperity *that would serve as a means for the human goal*. One should desire, for example, that every human being receives food

and shelter, so that he/she can worship Almighty Allah and attain His proximity.

There are different reasons why some human beings are deprived from basic necessities of life. The fundamental cause of many of the

deprivations is the 'deficiency of the receptacle of Grace'. ; Otherwise the Creator's Grace is abundantly poured down to all. The Holy Qur'an so beautifully expounds this truth In chapter ar- Ra'd (13), verse 17:



He sent down water from the sky, and the channels flowed, each according to its measure.....

Those who consume foods that would ruin their digestive system, for example, create the gateway of deprivation from food themselves. Those who engage in sin, hamper their sustenance themselves. Both material as well as spiritual prosperity depend on the receptacle. Otherwise the All-Merciful can never be thought to be stingy or subjective. He is always al-Jawad and Open-Handed.

Therefore, clean and limpid water descends from the sky , but dirty receptacles always receive dirty water, narrow receptacles always receive less water, perforated receptacles always lose water, etc. This is a universal law that the Qur'an so beautifully expounds.

It is noteworthy that the word " *Rahim* " that we always utter when starting Chapter *al-Fatiha* does not literally indicate that His ever- rewarding Mercy and Guidance is only reserved for the believers; rather such Mercy is poured down upon all, but only those receptacles who believed in the truth and have the capacity to accept can absorb the same. For a better understanding of this vital truth those who are interested may look at adab *al-Salat* of the late Imam Khumayni.²⁰

The Gracious Benefits of Prayers in Absence

Another very important trend in the supplication is praying for others in their absence. There are several holy verses and traditions

²⁰ Imam Khumayni, *Tafsir Surat al-Hamad*, p.23

that lay great emphasis on this and enumerate good reward for the same, Following are examples worthy of consideration:

I. [The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said²¹]:



Nothing is accepted as quickly as one's supplication for another when both are absent from each other.

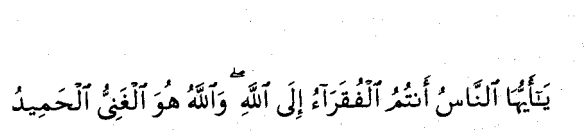
2 [It is reported from Imam al-Sadiq ('a) that he said²²]:



The *du'a* of a believer for another believer dispels calamities from him and showers him with abundant sustenance.

Absolute Need of the Human Being

In the culture of the holy Qur'an every human being, whatever status he may have in this world, is needy. The Holy Qur'an [35: 15] says:



O human beings, you are needy to Allah, and it is Allah Who is Affluent, the praised one:

This verse is in complete harmony with intellectual proof, which considers every dependent being to depend on a source, which is Independent and Whose existence is Necessary and essential, Therefore all the human beings together with their possessions as well as all the other dependent entities, entirely stand and subsist by the cause of Divine Grace, We read on Thursday nights²³:



21 Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v.2, p. 887, tr. 5730

22 Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v.2, p. 887, tr. 5730]

23 Kaf'ami, *Misbah al-Kaf'ami*, section 46, p.647

O One Who Bestows Grace continuously on the creation.

Almighty Allah is *Rabbu 'I 'Alamin*. The meaning of 'Rabb' should not be equated to the word "Lord" as it is normally translated. *Rabb*- as mentioned by *Tafsir al-Mizan*- means *al-Malik al-Mudabbir*" (The Owner and Manager of affairs), which indicates that Allah owns every dependent entity in its entirety and manages it by making it subsist and controlling its affairs each and every moment. Thus we should try to remove the irrational thinking of some people who separate God from creation and say that he is resting. Exalted is He, from such limitations.

Therefore if, the soul owner "in the real sense of the word" is Allah, every human being is poor and indigent.

A Step Towards Eradication of Poverty

On reciting the verse under discussion, the supplicant always imagines, that he/she is praying for all those who are apparently needy and have no source of stable livelihood in this world. This also is a correct translation of the verse. However, in view of the introduction presented above, we must understand that the dimensions of poverty are not limited to what we normally imagine.

When we pray to Allah to enrich the poor, we should also have practically taken a step to enrich others to the extent permitted by our limitations. This, as explained previously, is what is required of us.

If we carefully ponder over the verse under discussion, we would realize that the supplication does not merely seek 'the temporal satisfaction' of the needy. Many of us temporarily satisfy the needy in the holy month of Ramadan by purchasing some household necessities of consumption and are pleased for having done something that Almighty Allah desires. Obviously such an act is highly recommended and reaps lots of benefits, but is different from what we are trying to seek from our All-loving Creator in this particular verse: we are not merely after the temporal satisfaction of the poor; we are praying to Allah to assist the needy with a permanent source of income. "O Allah, *aghni (enrich) kulla faqir* (every poor person).

Having realized this subtle point, the supplicant should think of how to play an active role in making the poor affluent. Several

examples of such a requirement can come to mind. However each depends on the supplicant's limitation: one who happens to be extremely rich would think of supporting the poor to start small businesses of their own and enrich them thereby; one who owns a small-scale business and is in need of employees, would employ the poor and thereby enrich them up to a certain extent. One may also not be an employee of someone himself, but due to his acquaintance with other wealthy men, would try to intercede on the poor's behalf and get them jobs. The readers do realize the variety of the extensions of this noble venture. The significant point here is that every one should take "a step".

Historical Examples

The life history of our Holy Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams ('a) are a practical translation of this verse of the du'a'. Many examples can be cited, but due to the brevity of this article, we would suffice with only a few:

1. Historians have narrated how Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (peace be upon him) in all his greatness and elevation would help the needy with great amounts of money at one go. It is also narrated of him that thrice during his life-time the Imam ('a) spent half of his wealth for the needy. [Ta'rikh al-Khulafa- Suyuti]

2. Farazdaq is a well-known character to the lovers of the Ahlul-Bayt ('a). When the Umayyad governor of the time- Hisham bin Abdul Malik tries to belittle Imam Zaynu'l 'Abidin ('a) by asking about his identity, Farazdaq recites a beautiful couplet about the exalted character of the Imam ('a). This makes Hisham very angry and he terminates the continuous help that he would give to Farazdaq and imprisons him as well. Imam ('a) sends a good amount of money to him in prison, but Farazdaq does not accept at first. Then the Imam ('a) insists and he finally accepts. Later with the prayer of the Imam ('a) when he is released, he informs the Imam ('a) of how he was regularly paid by Hisham and that his name was afterwards deleted from Hisham's payroll. Imam ('a) thereupon gifts Farazdaq with an huge amount of money that would suffice him for 40 years. Farazdaq's life too extended for another 40 years. [Vide Manaqib]

3. In his Manaqib, Ibn Shahr Ashiib narrates that Imam Zaynu'l 'Abidin ('a) took the responsibility to cater for 100 needy families. [Vide al-Manaqib]

Therefore, we should try, through our Sadaqat, to 'eradicate' poverty. One of the best methods of doing so is to gather even very small amounts of support from those who would like to eradicate poverty and use the same for this sublime purpose.

Enriching the Motive of Our Action

There is another significant issue, which must be inculcated in this holy month of grace. When we ask Almighty Allah to 'enrich all the poor', we should do so because "we ourselves desire it". That is our untainted disposition yearns for it. At times someone does something and gets happy thereby due to the reward that awaits him. However, sometimes the act in itself is enjoyable for the person. *Salat*, for example, to those who are not humble before God is burdensome and difficult. The Holy Qur'an [2:45] says:



And take recourse in patience and prayer, and that is indeed hard except for the humble

But one who has cleaned his heart and loves to whisper to the only beloved says:



Stand O Bilal, and make us happy with prayer²⁴

And says:

قُرَّةُ عَيْنِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ

'The apple of my eye (*qurratu 'ayni*) is in prayer.'²⁵

There is a vast difference between those who tire themselves in anticipation of Divine reward and those who tire themselves because they highly enjoy praying to the only Beloved.

Therefore let us struggle to become extinct in the spirit of Allah, and practically try to enrich the poor because we naturally enjoy the same; and because it is "our need" and "our concern". Let us remove the specks of "anticipation" of reward.

²⁴ Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, new ed., v.1, p. 62.

²⁵ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.82, p.193

Readers however should not be led to believe that those who expect reward are sinners. No; rather they enjoy a lower stage, but are good doers and must be encouraged as well. All of us start from this lower step and by Divine succor ascend slowly and gradually. We may easily claim to have ascended the higher level, but between 'contention' and 'reality' there can be utter remoteness.

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Section 3



O Allah, Satisfy every Hungry Person

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O Allah, Satisfy every Hungry Person

Experiencing Hunger

One of the philosophies behind fasting in the holy month of Ramadan is to experience hunger and thereby understand the situation of those who are hungry and cannot afford to satisfy themselves properly. The following tradition quoted by Mawla Fayd Kashani from *Man La Yahduruhu'I Faqih*, speaks of the same: Imam al-Sadiq ('a) in an authentic narration whilst explaining the philosophy of fasting says:

أَرَادَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ يُسَوِّيَ بَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ وَأَنْ يُذِيقَ الْغَنِيِّ نَبْلَ الْجُوعِ وَالْأَلَمَ لِيَرِقَّ عَلَى الضَّعِيفِ وَيَرْحَمَ الْجَائِعَ

Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, desired to maintain equality between His creatures and make the rich experience hunger and pain so that he may have pity on the weak and mercy on the hungry one.²⁶

Causes of Hunger

Hunger is a widespread problem in today's world and has several causes, which may be classified into two kinds: self-related and external. The source of the self-related causes is the sufferer himself, whereas external causes stem from the society and other natural phenomena. To discuss both these kinds of causes is beyond the scope of this limited commentary . It is important however to study the limitations of these causes so that we may be able to struggle to avoid or eradicate them easily. The subject under discussion, as can be observed clearly, is also closely related to poverty . We had earlier mentioned the fact that every dependent thing stands by Allah's permission. Hence, if Allah (swt) does not want

²⁶ Mawla Fayd Kishani, al-Mahajjat al-Bayda', v.2, p. 124.

one to encounter disasters or be affected by them nothing would happen to him. This universal law, as pointed earlier is not only presented by revelation, but also established by reason.

Ensuring Sustenance

Having realized this important truth, let us now look at the following verses of the holy Qur'an:

1. [Chapter al-A'raf-7: 96]:



And if the people of the towns were to believe and observe piety, surely we would have opened to them the blessings of the heaven and the earth...

2. [Chapter al-Talaq-65: 2-3]:



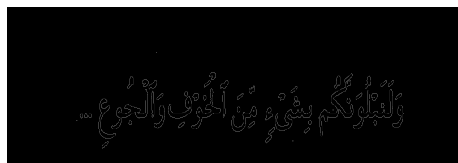
And whosoever is God-wary (observes piety) He would make for him an outlet [from difficulties] and Bestow on him sustenance from whence he thinks not. ..

3. [Chapter Nuh ('a)- 71: 10-12]:



Then I said: seek forgiveness from your Lord, [for] surely He is the Most- forgiving; He would send down abundance of rain upon you; and help you with wealth and sons; and make for you gardens and make for you rivers

These verses inform the human being the best path of ensuring sustenance and necessarily avoiding the calamity of hunger. If the culture of *taqwa* and *istighfar* (in its various manifestations and dimensions] were to prevail, hunger would no more be a predicament save in cases like that of Divine trial.



And We would certainly try You with somewhat of fear and hunger ...²⁷

We also have ample traditions that inform the hungry and the destitute as well those who would like to disseminate the culture of independence, about the ways of achieving sustenance. Following are some examples:

Increasing Sustenance

- I. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said²⁸:

إِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَزِيدُ فِي الرِّزْقِ

Surely virtuousness increases sustenance

2. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said²⁹:

حَسَنُ الْخُلُقِ يَزِيدُ فِي الرِّزْقِ

Good behaviour (*akhlaq*) increases sustenance

3. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said.³⁰:

دُمُّ عَلَى الطَّهَارَةِ يُرْسِمُ عَلَيْكَ فِي الرِّزْقِ

Always be in the state of *tahara* (purity) and your sustenance would be increased

Therefore the duty of those who sincerely utter this verse of the supplication besides actively supporting others, should be to educate them to realize the direct causes of hunger.

The esteemed author of *Mir'atu 'I Kamal*, the late Ayatullah al- Shaykh Mamaqani has filled 6 pages full of reasons that cause poverty and hamper one's sustenance. References have also come in the gloss of a later edition of this 3- volume opus of devotions.

²⁷ Holy Qur'an, 2:155

²⁸ Muhammadi Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v.2

²⁹ *Ibid*,

³⁰ *Ibid*.

Those interested can look at pages 569-583. Here however we would like to suffice ourselves with mentioning only a few of them:

Causes that Hamper Sustenance

Expression of greed, sleeping between maghrib and 'isha, sleeping between *fajr* and sunrise, severing relationship with near ones, sleeping naked for long durations, cursing one's children, eating in the state of lying down, leaving to pray for one's parents, backbiting, *israf* (over eating, extravagance, etc.), seeking the faults of people, eating while walking, urination and sexual intercourse while facing *qibla*, urinating on water, laughing excessively especially near graves and gatherings of the learned, not lending money to one who is in need, expression of poverty to one who possesses wealth, and excessive of sleep.

Ayatullah Mamqani mentions about 175 reasons in his manual. Therefore, it is essential for us to propagate the culture of *taqwa* in those poor societies, which can absorb the teachings of Allah (swt). *Taqwa* in every dimension of the human life enables one to earn happiness in this world as well as the Hereafter.

An Indepth Consideration: Another Extention of Food

Food in Qur'anic terminology does not always refer to material food. Rather, there are clear allusions made by the Imams of the Ahlu'I-Bayt ('a) who represent the most authoritative commentators of the Qur'an, that *ta' am* (food) in the language of the Qur'an sometimes refers to knowledge. It refers to food of the soul, and not only that of the body. The following verse is an example:

In chapter 'Abasa [80:24], Almighty Allah says:

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ

Then let man look at his food

Under this holy verse the Shi'ite commentator Sayyid Hashim Bahrani in his *Tafsir al-Burhani* quotes a tradition narrated by al-Kafi [v.I, p.39, tr.8] from Imam'al-Sadiq ('a) as follows:

Zayd al-Shal.II.Iam asks Imam ('a) what "man's31 food" stands for in the verse above. The Imam ('a) responds saying:

عِلْمُهُ الَّذِي يَلْخُذُهُ عَنْهُ يَلْخُذُهُ

The knowledge that he acquires; from whom does he acquires it?³²

Therefore if hunger means lack of knowledge many of us are indeed hungry. A scholar who has spent years in acquiring knowledge too would pray to Allah to bestow on him more and more, for there is no limit to the acquisition of knowledge. The Holy Prophet (s) himself would seek more knowledge by the following supplication that Almighty Allah teaches him in the holy Qur'an [20:114]:

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

And say: O my Lord increase me in knowledge

And saying:

مَا عَرَفْنَاكَ حَتَّى نَعْرِفُكَ

We have not known your reality completely

The solution to this hunger too is *taqwa*. The following two verses clearly prove this contention:

1. [Chapter al-Baqara: 2:282]:

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ

And be God-wary , and Allah will teach you

2. [Chapter al-Anfal: 8:29]

³¹ This interpretation is very apt and accurate, for the reality of the human being is his spirit. Necessarily then, his food would be uniform with his spirit. And this food can be nothing but knowledge.

³² AI-Sayyid Hashim Bahrani, *al-Burhan Fi Tafsiri'l Qur'an*, p.214

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا...

O believers, if you be God-wary (observe piety) Allah shall enable you to distinguish the truth from the falsehood

Hunger from A Mystical Dimension:

The late mystic-scholar as well as teacher of Imam Khumayni, Ayatullah Maliki Tabrizi in his well-known manual of devotions "*al-Muraqibat*" explains ample benefits of hunger for the spiritual traveler by mentioning some of the following traditions:

I. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

أَفْضَلُكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَنْزِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَطْوَلُكُمْ جُوعًا وَتَفَكُّمًا فِي اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَهُ

The best of you in terms of rank near Allah on the day of Judgment is that among you who experiences hunger and engages in contemplation about Allah, the exalted, for the longest period.³³

2. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have told Usama:

إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ وَ بَطْنُكَ جَائِعٌ وَ كَبِدُكَ ظَمْآنٌ فَأَقْبِلْ، فَإِنَّكَ تُدْرِكُ
بِذَلِكَ أَشْرَفَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَ تَدْخُلُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَ تَفْرَحُ بِمُلُوكِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَ يُصَلُّ
عَلَيْكَ الْجَبَرُوتُ

'If it is possible for you to encounter the angel of death while you are hungry and thirsty , then do so, for by that you would experience the noblest of stations and reside in the company of the Prophets, and the angels would rejoice in the arrival of your spirit, and God would send His Blessings on you.³⁴

3. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

أَجِيعُوا أَكْبَدَكُمْ وَأَعْرُوا أَجْسَدَكُمْ، لَعَلَّ قُلُوبَكُمْ تَرَى اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ

³³ Ayatullah Maliki Tabrizi, *al-Muraqibat*, p. 154- New ed.

³⁴ Ayatullah Maliki Tabrizi, *al-Muraqibat*, p. 154- new ed.

Keep your stomachs hungry and afflict your bodies; perhaps [by doing so] your hearts would see Allah, the exalted and glorious.³⁵

4. The Holy Prophet(s) is reported to have said:



Whosoever keeps his stomach hungry, would attain sublimity of thought.³⁶

5. The Holy Prophet (s) during his *mi'raj* (his ascent to the proximity of God) asks Almighty Allah:



O Lord what does hunger inherit?

Almighty Allah says:



'It inherits wisdom and the protection of the heart. ..³⁷

Therefore "hunger" has a fundamental role to play in uplifting the human being spiritually. However that should not be taken to mean that 'hunger' is recommended for all and sundry, including those who cannot resist the same and may fall sick or die. If we look at the book of Islamic laws³⁸ at our disposal, we would find that one of the etiquette of food consumption is to take two meals a day: one meal in the earlier part of the day and the other in the earlier part of the night. The gap between these two meals should not be filled with any other kind of food. Many of us do have the potential to resist such a diet, but the forces of desire never allow us to practice the same. There are people however who need more intake of food, and thus such a diet is out of question .for them. Obviously that should not indicate that they are not religious or pious. It is by the

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.156

³⁷ Ayatullah Sa'adat Parwar, *Sirru'l Isra'*, v. I, p.13

³⁸ Ayatullah al-'Uzma Sayyid ' Ali Sistani, *Tawdihu'I Masa 'il*, p.495

intake of food that they can practice their devotions and perform deeds of virtue and struggle in their lives according to the dictates of Divine law.

There comes a time in the life of one who has purified his soul and attained the proximity of Allah when he has the ability to withstand hunger not only for short periods but also for unusual intervals. This contention undoubtedly sounds absurd in the language of science and experiment, but the experts of Islamic esotericism believe that when the spirit of man strengthens, such phenomena are feasible.

Avicenna (Ibn Sina), the great Shi'ite philosopher, who is also known as Sayyid al-'Uqala' (the doyen of intellectuals) in his monumental *"Ishlirat wa al-Tanbihat"* says:



If you come to know that a Gnostic (*'arif*) has refrained for an unusual interval from receiving the little food he has, graciously assent and consider this among the well-known principles of nature.³⁹

Therefore hunger for those who are not deprived of sustenance and are able to withstand the same is highly recommended due to the reasons mentioned above.

³⁹ Shaykh al-Ra'is Ibn Sina, *al-Isharat wa 'I-Tanbihat*, v.4, p.111

Section 4



O Allah, Clothe every Unclothed One

O Allah, Clothe every Unclothed One

اللَّهُمَّ اكْسُ كُلَّ عُرْيَانٍ

Aim of Human Creation

One of the great calamities of human life is the lack of insight about the purpose of human creation. So long as man has not come to know 'the goal of life' he would always have to face difficulties. This universal law applies to the affluent too. Ask every wealthy person whether his money always keeps him happy, and his answer would be in the negative. The Holy Qur'an as well the Ahlu'l Bayt ('a) have informed us that the aim behind human creation is to attain Allah's proximity and nearness. And the path that leads one to realize this aspiration is none other than '*ibada*'. The following verse explains it:

In chapter 51, verse 56, Almighty Allah says:



"And I have not created the jinn and men except that they should worship Me."

Here the aim is indicated as Allah's Worship. But is it the 'final aim of creation?' To answer this we should look at chapter 15, verse 99 of the Qur'an, which says:



"And worship your Lord until Conviction comes to you."

Therefore it is *ma'rifatullah* that is the end. And the closer one gets to his Lord the better his knowledge of his Creator.

Beautiful allusions are made in the following verses too about the ultimate end of the human being:

1. Imam' Ali ('a) in his famous supplication of Kumayl cries:



O the Ultimate Hope of the Gnostics

2. And in the prayer of' Arafa, Sayyid al-Shuhada ('a) cries:



O Allah Seek me by Your Mercy until I reach You

It is Allah's worship that raises the human being so high that he may witness God- of course in his own limitations as explained by some traditions of the Ahlu'l Bayt ('a).

Having known this, we should realize that since the human being resides in the world of matter and possesses a structure that is submissive to the laws of matter, he is need of different necessities that may enable him to subsist and achieve his goal in life. Examples of such basic necessities, which we may also term as 'the means of life' , are food, drink, clothing, place of shelter, etc.

The Means and the Goal

Many who have not realized the purpose of human life busy themselves with the means and forget the end. When they look at the luster of the various kinds of material products of the so-called developed countries, they brand that as 'human progress' and even try to doubt the authenticity of Islam. Advancement in science and technology is not something abhorred by Islam at all. Rather it is encouraged. However it still comes under the umbrella of 'the means of the end' and thus one should not mistake it as 'the yardstick of human progress' .One should rather question himself/herself whether 'the material product' really serves to be 'means' on the path towards Allah or not. Both the VCR and the Internet, for example, are helpful means of communication, but if they hamper the human being from traversing to the path of eternal happiness what use do they have in serving as' a means' for the goal? The proponents of advancement always present two kinds of products:

1. Those of variable nature
2. Those of invariable nature

Commodities of the first category allow the human being to reason and work on the path towards perfection both before and after purchase. For example, when buying a television set, one may or may not decide to employ it in watching only those programs that would enrich his mind and spirit. In the case of the second category, however, 'this choice' is out of question 'after purchase.' For example, if a person were to purchase an indecent film due to his base inclinations. Later if he were to decide to employ the same for a good purpose, he would not be able to do so. He cannot change the film to enrich his mind. All he can do is to erase the film and dub something that would enrich his spirit. Similar is the case with material items that directly concern human development and subsistence such as food, drink and clothing. Many kinds of food and clothing are forbidden in Islam and can thus not be branded as 'the means' for the human goal.

Therefore it is highly significant to know the difference between 'the goal' and the 'means'. Many of us unfortunately have molded our lives to struggle only for the abundance of the means and have forgotten the goal. We would understand this reality when entering our graves. The Qur'an (102: 1-2] says:

أَلْهَيْكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ. حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ.

Competing for Abundance has engaged you until you come to the graves

The Purpose Behind Clothing

'Clothing' is one of the very basic necessities of human life and indeed a blessing of Allah (swt) to the human being. Understanding the purpose behind clothing would open several doors of understanding and enable us to do the needful while requesting the All-merciful Lord to clothe all the naked. Following are verses of Qur'an and supplications worthy of contemplation:

I. (Chapter Al-A'raf-7: 26]:

يٰٓبَنِي آدَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُورِي سَوْءَ تِكُمْ وَرِدِشًا

O children of Adam, surely we have sent down for you clothing *that covers your shame* and an attire that *causes beauty*; and the attire of piety; that is better. ..

2. Imam Musa bin Ja 'far al-Karim ('a) is reported⁴⁰ to have said that whenever a person would like to put on a new dress he should wipe his hand over it and say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي كَسَانِي مَا أُوَارِي بِهِ عَوْرَتِي وَأَتَجَمَّلُ بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ...

Praise belongs to Allah who clothed me with what I cover my shame and beautify myself among the people...

Studying the abovementioned quotations we come to realize that two important reasons behind clothing are:

1. To conceal one's private parts
2. To beautify oneself

The Inner Attire

Having spoken about this great blessing, Almighty Allah transports the reader to a very important truth, which if neglected would cause continual regret. He reminds the human being that he/she is not summed up in the material body to need 'the material attire' only. Rather 'the inner attire' is of fundamental significance. In the words of Qur'an: *dhalika khayr* (that is the better!). ' Allama Tabataba'i in his monumental *al-Mizan* has a beautiful explanation about this. In order to indicate the gravity of the situation of 'the pain' that the human being experiences when his shameful deeds are displayed, he says:

...إِلَّا أَنَّ ظُهُورَ سَوَاءَاتِ الْبَاطِنِيَّةِ أَشَدُّ...

....except that the pain experienced with the appearance of the inner blemishes is more intense

⁴⁰ 'Allama Majlisi, *Hilyatu 'I Muttaqin*, ch.9.

Other verses of the holy Qur'an clearly explain the calamity of this situation. Look at the verses below:

1. [Chapter al-Tariq: -86: 9]:



The day when the secrets shall be made manifest

2. [Chapter Ali 'Imran -3: 30]:

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا
وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا...

On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that evil was a long distance. ..

3. [Chapter Ali 'Imran -3:192]:



O Lord, surely whomsoever you place in the Fire, you have indeed disgraced him.....

Therefore when uttering this verse of the supplication we should try to think whether we are among those who are spiritually unclothed or not. If we are, then we should seek Divine help to establish ourselves with *taqwa* so that we do not face that ignominy which is so intense to bear.

The other fundamental use of clothing was to look presentable and beautiful. The inclination to be beautiful is inherent in every human being and there are ample indications in our holy traditions that encourage one to look beautiful and presentable in the limits of the Shari'a. In order to observe the brevity of this commentary we would avoid mentioning them.

However, we must understand that in the manner "*taqwa*" and piety is a source of protection from sin and ignominy, it also is a source of embellishment. This is because it embellishes the inner form of the human being with excellent character and makes him

the Beloved of Allah. How remote is the 'beloved of the apparently beautiful' from the Beloved of spiritually beautiful: *razaqanallahu jami'an* [May Allah enable all of us to achieve the same]

A Word of Prayer

O Allah, as we humbly ask you to clothe both the physically as well as spiritually naked ones, and seek your support to help those who have no proper clothes in their physical lives, enable us to struggle to clothe ourselves with the attire of *taqwa*, so that we may acquire the worth to clothe others as well.

Section 5



O Allah, Facilitate the Payment
of Every Indebted One

اللَّهُمَّ اقْضِ دَيْنَ كُلِّ مَدِينٍ

O Allah, Facilitate the Payment
of Every Indebted One

The Comprehensive Meaning of 'dayn'

Many would conjecture that 'dayn' (debt) is the same as 'qard' (loan). In the terminology of Islamic jurisprudence, however, the word *dayn* has a broader connotation than the word *qard*. *Dayn* also covers *qard* in its conceptual umbrella. Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi in his *Tafsir-e Namune* alludes to this subtlety and says that *qard* is only applied when one gets obliged to return the equivalent of the thing taken; for example, if he takes money as a loan, he would have to return the same amount of money; and if he takes a certain kind of food, he would be obliged to return the same. However, 'dayn' has a broader framework, for it includes any kind of transaction such as 'settlement of claim' (*sulh*) leasing (*ijara*), buying and selling, and the like⁴¹.

Debt Sometimes Hampers One From Spiritual Progress

Debt at times becomes a very great impediment on the path towards ~ God. The reason for this is that it preoccupies one's mind and heart, and that is a decisive factor that hampers progress. Look at the following traditions:

I. Imam Zaynu'l' Abidin ('a) in his beautiful supplication⁴² for relief from debt informs his followers the difficult situation that a debtor normally experiences. Look at the following:

O God,
bless Muhammad and his Household
and release me from a debt

⁴¹ Astane Qudse Radawi, *Sharho Tafsire Lughate Qur'an Bar Asase Tafsire Namune*, p.70

⁴² Sahifat al-Sajjadiyya, Supp. no.30]:

which makes me lose face,
confuses my mind,
disrupts my thinking,
and prolongs my occupation with attending to it!

I seek refuge in Thee, my Lord,

from worry and thought about debt,
from the distraction and sleeplessness of debt;
so bless Muhammad and his Household
and give me refuge from it!

I seek sanctuary in Thee, my Lord, from
debt's abasement in life
and its ill effects after death. ..

2. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said⁴³:

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالدَّيْنَ فَإِنَّهُ هُمُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَكَذَلِكَ بِالنَّهَارِ

Beware of debt for surely it causes grief during the night and humiliation during the day

Another obvious case that can hamper the indebted one from spiritual development is when he is indifferent in paying his debt: following are traditions worthy of contemplation:

1. Imam la 'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported⁴⁴ to have said:

إِيْمَانُ رَجُلٍ لَا يُقْرِضُ بَيْنَهُ وَلَا وَفِي نَفْسِهِ أَنْ لَا يُؤَدِّيَهُ ذَلِكَ الْأَمْرَ السُّلُوبُ

Whosoever comes to a person and takes some money as a loan from him while he has the intention of not paying him back is a usual thief.

2. Imam la 'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported⁴⁵ to have said:

مَنْ اسْتَعَانَ بِنَا فَلَمْ يَنْتِزِعْ نَفْسَهُ كَانَ بِمِثْلِهِ السُّلُوبُ

Whosoever takes a loan and makes no intention to pay back the same, is equivalent to a thief

⁴³ Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v.2, p.958

⁴⁴ al-Shaykh Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Hurr al-' Amili, *Wasa 'I al-Shi 'a ila Tahsili Masa al-Shari'a*, v.18, p. 329

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, v.18, p. 328

In the above traditions such people are termed as thieves. Essentially then, the very notion of 'spiritual progress' is far-fetched to them.

Those who are regularly habituated in taking loans from here and there should also realize the dangerous consequences that await them. Traditions of the Ahlul-Bayt ('a) have alluded to some such dangers as follows:

I. Imam' Ali ('a) is reported to have said⁴⁶:



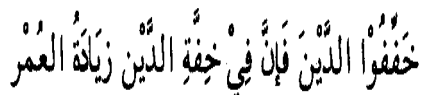
Excess of debt turns the truthful to be a liar and one who accomplishes [his promises] to be unfaithful.

2. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) is reported⁴⁷ to have said:



Martyrdom in Allah's way expiates every sin, save debt, for it has no compensation save its payment, or payment by the inheritor (*sahibuhu*) or forgiveness from the creditor...

3. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said⁴⁸:



Lessen your debts, for surely in the reduction of your debts is the increment of life

When Should One Take a Loan?

These above traditions should not be mistaken to mean that one has no right to take any loan whatsoever. Rather, in times of

⁴⁶ Marhum Amadi, *Ghuraru' Hikam Wa Duraru 'I Kalim*, p. 368

⁴⁷ al-Shaykh Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Wasa 'I al-Shi 'a ila Tahsili Masa 'il al-Shari 'a*, v. 18, p. 324

⁴⁸ Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v.2, p.958

difficulties believers are allowed to take loans within the framework of Islamic laws. The Infallible progeny of the Holy Prophet (s) also took loans during their lifetime. But that which is very important is to understand properly *the correct circumstance of taking a loan*. A substantial number of people take loans to live a life of leisure or extravagance. So long as the believer has not learnt to observe an Islamic discipline, he would always have to live a life of hardship. Imam Zaynu'l ' Abidin ('a) teaches his followers in supplication no. 30 of the Saheefa al-Sajjadiyya to adopt some sublime traits in order to avoid debt and be freed from the same. Look at the following:

O God,

 bless Muhammad and his Household
 prevent me from extravagance and excess,
 put me on the course of generous spending and moderation,
 teach me excellent distribution,
 hold me back through Thy gentleness from squandering,
 allow me to attain my provisions through lawful means,
 direct my spending toward the gateways of devotion,
 and take away from me any possession
 which will bring forth pride in me,
 lead to insolence,
 or drag me in its heels to rebellion!

O God,

 make me love the companionship of the poor
 and help me be their companion with excellent patience!
 Whenever you take away from me
 the goods of this perishing world,
 store them for me in Thy abiding treasures!

Make this world's broken pieces

 which Thou hast conferred upon me and its goods
 which Thou hast quickly granted to me
 a way to reach Thy neighbourhood,
 a link to Thy nearness,
 and a means to Thy Garden!

Verily Thou art Possessor of bounty abounding,
 and Thou art the Munificent, the Generous.

So beautifully has the Imam informed his followers about the causes of their wretched state of debt. Every point in the above supplication is a gateway of understanding. [Readers are requested to reflect on each of the verses above to decipher the causes].

The wealthy believers, on the other hand, are highly encouraged to give loans to their needy brothers/sisters and assist them in times of problems. In fact some holy traditions clearly tell us that the reward one gets by giving *qard* exceeds the reward a person gets by giving} *sadaqa*, although in the case of the latter no return is anticipated, whereas in the case of the former the lender does expect return. Following are traditions worthy of reflection.

1. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:



The following has been written on the door of Paradise: Surely Sadaqa equals 10 times [reward], and one loan equals to 18 times [reward]...

2. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said ⁵⁰

مَنْ أَقْرَضَ مُؤْمِنًا قَرْضًا يَنْظُرُ بِهِ مَيْسُورُهُ كَانَ مَالُهُ فِي زَكَاةٍ وَكَانَ هُوَ فِي صَلَاةٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ حَتَّى يُؤَدِّيَهُ

Whosoever gives loan to a mu'min, expecting his ease thereby, his wealth would be on the increment and the angels would invoke blessings on him until he is paid.

Shaykh Baha'i and the Du'a of Relief From Debt

In his well-known masterpiece of commentary of 40 traditions (*al- Arba 'una Hadithan*), Shaykh Baha '1 relates an interesting incident that he had experienced after quoting the following tradition:

The esteemed Shaykh al-Sadaq Muhammad bin Babaway al-Qummi has narrated with his chain of narrators from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) who narrates the same from his fathers (upon whom be peace), who narrated from Amiru'l mu'minin ('a) who said:

I complained to the Prophet (s) about a loan that I had on my shoulders, and he (s) said

⁴⁹ Ayatullah Mazaqani, *Mir 'atu'l Kamal*, p. 146

⁵⁰ al-Shaykh Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Hurr al-' Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi 'a ila Tahsili Masa'il al-Shari 'a*, v.18, p. 330

O ' Ali say:



O Allah make me needless of that which you have made unlawful through that which you have made lawful, and [make me needless] of other than you by Your Favor

Thereafter Shaykh Baha'i narrates:

During some years of my life I was so much in debt, that the amount I had to pay exceeded 1500 mithqals of Gold and the lenders were highly persistent in getting their money back. So difficult had the situation become that it diverted me from many of my occupations, and I had no solution in repaying them. So I adhered in reciting the above supplication, and would repeat it after every morning prayer, and at times would also recite the same after other prayers. Consequently, Allah, the exalted made it easy for me to pay the loans and quickly enabled me to pay the same in a very short time through unknown sources⁵¹.

Obligations

Relieving others from debt therefore is highly significant for their perfection. Consequently, this verse creates different obligations for different people:

- .. Those who have the ability to relieve others from any of the kinds of debt should struggle to do so. A generous moneylender having realized the faithfulness and inability of the debtor, may forgive him (partly or entirely) and thereby practically and faithfully translate this verse of the supplication.
- .. Those who have the capacity of relieving themselves from debt in any of the manifestations they have been entrapped, should struggle to do so, otherwise it would be an unfaithful cry on their part. How greedy would it be for one who has ample money to give but waits for help and prays for external support!
- .. Muslim societies who have a united system can solve this grave problem of debt in its different manifestations very quickly by the collection of even very minute contributions from individuals.

⁵¹ Shaykh Baha'i, *al-Arba 'una Hadithan*, p. 243]

An In-depth Consideration

The supplications that the Infallible Imams have taught us are very rich in content, but they require 'a broad vision' to be appreciated. In many places we have stressed, albeit indirectly, the importance of the inner content of every verse. Here too we think it is important to mention the same:

One of the significant laws that prevail the world of language is that words are coined for the spirit of their meanings. This is contrary to what some conjecture when saying that words are coined for their 'material extensions (*masadiq*)' and not 'the spirit of their meanings'. They mean to say for example, the word 'balance' only refers to the conventional balance that we are aware of. Clearly, this is not correct, for the examples of balance are not be limited to those instruments of balance that measure material entities. The Holy Qur'an is also known as *mizan* (balance). The personality of Imam' Ali ('a) is another extension of *balance*, for the believers are judged and weighed according to his spirit. Most of the learned scholars believe that words are coined for the spirit of their meanings and not necessarily their material extensions. For further research on this subtle subject, one may refer to the introduction of *al-Mizan* of Allama Tabataba'i and the first chapter of the treatise of 'Encounter with God' by Ayatullah Maliki Tabrizi- the well-known Shi'ite saint. Ayatullah Maliki Tabrizi says:

"...Besides, according to what has been researched, words have been coined for the spirit of their meanings and the particulars of the meanings have nothing to do with the ['spirit or the] meaning; for example the word *mizan* (balance) has been coined for a thing by means of which other things are measured, but the particularity of having two sides of the scale or the rest of the particularities of a conventional scale has nothing to do with the meaning [for which the word was actually coined]" Thus using the word 'balance' to denote the different types and kinds of balances that have been invented, would mean 'correct usage' and employing a word to denote the meaning for which it was coined. Therefore, the meaning for which the word *mizan* was coined is 'a measuring instrument' regardless of any specifics, neither of the 'Instrument' nor 'the object measured'. Nowadays the Instruments that measure the heat and temperature of the body and air as well as those that measure the blood temperature, the speed of vehicles, and a variety of Other measuring instruments which number perhaps in hundreds or even thousands, all are the meanings of the word '*mizan*', and employing the word *mizaan* for them would be

correct usage. Likewise is the case with other general words such as path (*sirat*), light (*nur*), reward (*thawab*), punishment (*'iqab*), etc."⁵²

Realizing this, we should try to look 'at the 'spirit' of the meaning of '*dayn*' so that we can decipher the variety of its examples and struggle to emancipate ourselves from them accordingly.

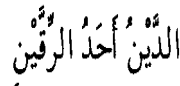
According to *Mu'jam Maqa 'is al-Lugha*, a comprehensive dictionary of Arabic words, the root word of *dayn* (d-y-n) means 'submission' (*inqiyad*) and 'surrender'. All the derivatives of the word (*dal-ye-nun*) reveal a kind of 'submission' and 'slavery'. Debt in one way enslaves the debtor and binds him/her until he/she relieves himself/herself from the same. The following sayings of Imam' Ali ('a) are worthy of reflection:

I. Imam' Ali ('a) is reported to have said⁵³:



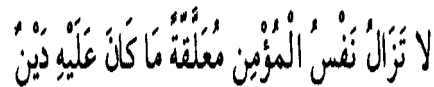
Debt is slavery and payment is freedom

2. Imam' Ali ('a) is reported to have said⁵⁴:



Debt is one of the two kinds of slavery

3. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said⁵⁵:



The spirit of a believer remains suspended as long as he has a debt on him

When we take a loan we are in fact enslaved until we free ourselves by paying the same. Likewise is the case with regard to all the extensions of debt.

⁵² Ayatullah Mirza Jawad Maliki Tabrizi, *Risaleye Liqa'ullah*

⁵³ Marhum Amadi, *Ghuraru 'Hikam wa Duraru'l Kalim*, p. 368

⁵⁴ *Ibid*,

⁵⁵ al-Shaykh Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili, *Wasa 'I al-Shi 'a ila Tahsili Masa'ilal-Shari'a*, v,18, p. 317

Those acts that Almighty Allah expects from every human being are likewise examples of 'dayn, .The human being therefore should struggle to perform them so that they have nothing on their shoulders. In the following radiant tradition, Salat is considered to be an extension of *dayn*:

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) narrates⁵⁶ Hadrat Luqman as saying:

إِذَا جَاءَ وَقْتُ الصَّلَاةِ فَلَا تُؤَخِّرْهَا لَشَيْءٍ، صَلُّهَا وَاسْتَرْحْ، فَإِنَّهَا دَيْنٌ

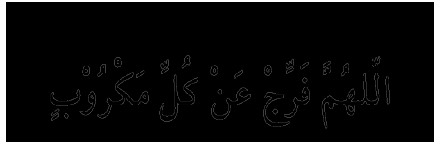
When the time of prayer comes do not delay prayer for something else; pray and take repose, for verily it is a debt (*dayn*).

⁵⁶ al-Shaykh Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Hurr al-' Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'a ila Tahsili Masa'il al-Shari'a*

Section 6

اللَّهُمَّ فَرِّجْ عَنْ كُلِّ مَكْرُوبٍ

O Allah, Relieve every Deeply Anguished One



O Allah, Relieve every Deeply Anguished One

Meaning of 'Makrub'

'Makrub' is an object noun whose origin is the verbal noun '*karb*' meaning 'deep anguish'. 'Allama Tabataba'i in his *al-Mizan* quotes Raghīb Isfahani, the famous lexicographer of Qur'anic words, as saying⁵⁷:

الْكَرْبُ الْغَمُّ الشَّدِيدُ

Karb means deep anguish

The word *Karbala*, for example, is a composition of 'intense grief (*karb*) and 'trial' (*bala*'). Therefore, in short, '*makrub*' is one who suffers deep sorrow and anguish.

The Source of Anguish

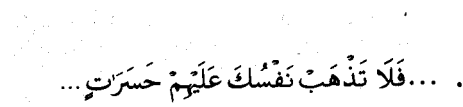
In this verse we are humbly asking Allah (swt) to lift the state of deep anguish from all 'the deeply anguished and sorrowful'. And whosoever seeks the relief of the anguished also seeks the elimination of the causes that create anguish too. We should, however, realize that the sources of anguish vary according to different people and different circumstances. Those who enjoy the proximity of Allah, despite having no grief for loss of the world and its pleasures:



Surely the Friends of Allah neither fear nor grieve [Holy Qur'an, 10:62]

experience deep anguish for the disbelievers due to the outcomes they would have to face in future:

⁵⁷ 'Allama Tabataba'i, *AI-Mizan fi Tafsiri'l Qur'an*, v. 7, p. 134



...And therefore do not consume yourself for them due to grief [of their unbelief]...[Holy Qur'an, 35:8]

Imam Khumayni in his well-known Forty Traditions (*Chehl Hadith*) says:

'...whoever perceives the greatness and glory of the Lord to a greater extent and knows the sacred station of God Almighty more than others, he suffers more and is tormented to a greater extent by the sins of the creatures and their offences against the Lord's sanctity. Also, one who has a greater love and compassion for the creatures of God is tormented to a greater extent by their crooked and wretched condition and ways. And, of course, the Seal of the Prophets (S) was more perfect in all these stations and higher than all of the prophets and the *awliya*' (those near to God) in respect of his degree of excellence and perfection. Hence his torment ""& and suffering was greater than that of any one of them....'

Sometimes the source of grief is different. For example, with regard to Prophet Ayyub ('a) we say the following⁵⁸ in one of the supplications of the Holy month of Ramadan:

يَا مُلَيِّنَ الْحَدِيدِ لِذَاوُودَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَا كَاشِفَ الْكُرْبِ الْعِظَامِ عَنْ أَيُّوبَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

O Softener of Iron for Dawud, upon whom be peace.

O Reliever of great sorrows from Ayyub, upon whom be peace.

This indicates that Prophet Ayyub had suffered heavy calamities during his lifetime. Perhaps the following tradition explains this better:

'Ali ibn Ibrahim in a long tradition narrates on the authority of Abu Basir that al-'Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said:

"...Then his [Prophet Ayyub ('a)'s] whole body, excepting his, intellect eyes, was subjected to the disease. Then Iblis blew upon it and it because wound extending from his head to feet. He (Job) remained for ape condition, praising and thanking God, until it became infested w Whenever a worm fell off from his body, he would put it back, saying to it, "Return

⁵⁸ Mawla Sayyid Radi al-Din bin Tawus, *IqbaI al-A 'mal*, v.1, p. 364

to your place, from where God created you." And it began to stench until his townsfolk expelled him from his town and his food came from the garbage thrown outside the town."⁵⁹

With regard to Prophet Nuh ('a) also 'intense grief has been mentioned. Look at the following verse:

وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ

And Nuh, when he cried afore time, so We answered him, and delivered him and his followers from *the great anguish*. [Holy Qur'an, 21 :76]

Exegetes of Qur'an have different interpretations for the source of this grief. Some like Tabarsi in his *Majma' al-Bayan* surmise that it refers to the disturbance of his people, whereas Mawla Kashani says that it may refer to both that and to the great flood.

Some sources of grief, however, spring from -the weakness of faith and deep attachment to the world: because one does not have the luxuries of life that others seem to enjoy, you may find him suffering grief. Those who commit suicide due to intense grief and sorrow do so due to lack of patience or even 'aim' in life. Hence, every *makrub* is not the same.

The supplicant therefore should bear in mind the different causes of sorrow and anguish and sincerely pray to Allah to eliminate them accordingly. For example, with regard to one who is greatly disturbed due to lack of the additional pleasures of the world, one must pray that he is emancipated from the love of the world. For the person who experiences a state of utter poverty, one should pray that his needs are covered so that he may engage in his daily affairs and devotion with peace of mind; for one who suffers a cancerous ailment, one should yearn for his relief from the same, so that he may live in peace and derive utmost benefit of doing good in life and thereby build his Hereafter.

Remembering the Anguished of Today

To keep abreast with the contemporary history of the world may seem to be insignificant for some: what can I do, for example, if

⁵⁹ Narrated by Imam Khumayni in his 40 traditions

others are dying of starvation in Afghanistan't? have no means to attend them and thus it makes no difference whether I come to know their awful state or not.

Clearly, such thinking stems from a narrow outlook. The human being enjoys a disposition that yearns for the salvation of every other human being. Therefore indifference is an alien concept to his nature. 'Not being able to help the oppressed' does not necessitate indifference on our part.

Firstly, our natural conscience would like to know the situation of those of our brothers/sisters who are suffering throughout the world.

Secondly, if we are materially unable, Almighty Allah has opened the door of prayer for us. Through prayers for the destitute, things can really change.

Thirdly, there are so many things that we can do together to crush the power of the world arrogance, but we do not realize the same. Our businessmen who import goods from countries like Israel and buy them at relatively low costs, can stop such transactions, so that they may not indirectly take part in killing the innocent Palestinians. Many of us indirectly promote the commodities that the world arrogance produces. If we were to boycott such products, they would never be as materially prosperous as they are. Today if the Arab leaders were to wake up and stop bowing in front of the world arrogance, a great transformation can take place.

Individual Responsibility

But what is my duty as an individual when I recite this verse of the radiant supplication? Most of us enjoy a certain limit of power and can play an effective role accordingly. Therefore let us measure the power that we have at our disposal, and practically take steps to relieve those anguished and distressed people that we can support. For we are not obliged to do what is beyond our capacity. The Holy Qur'an [al-Baqara- 2:286] says:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا...

Allah does not oblige a soul save to the extent of its capacity. ..

Thus if I can support a particular family and remove it from the state of sorrow, I should do so. If I am the president of a certain society, and can remove the sorrow of those who are disturbed by the 'disorganization of the social setup' I should do so by organization. The list goes on. The extensions are deciphered according to the power every supplicant has. Otherwise, uttering this radiant verse of the supplication would mean nothing but the mere movement one's tongue, or the expression of one's hypocrisy; may Allah save us from such ignominy!

Instilling Happiness in the Hearts of Believers

Removing anguish from the heart of a believer and instilling happiness in him is one of the significant subjects that our books of tradition have extensively covered. Following are traditions worthy of reflection:

- I. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported⁶⁰ to have said:

مَنْ سَرَّ مُؤْمِنًا فَقَدْ سَرَّنِي، وَمَنْ سَرَّنِي فَقَدْ سَرَّ اللَّهَ

Whoever makes a believer happy, has indeed made me happy; and whosoever has made me happy, has indeed made Allah happy.

2. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported⁶¹ to have said:

إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ دَارًا يُقَالُ لَهَا دَارُ الْفَرَحِ لَا يَدْخُلُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ فَرَّحَ يَتَامَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Surely there is a place in Paradise called 'the House of Joy'; none would enter therein save one who made the believers among the orphans happy

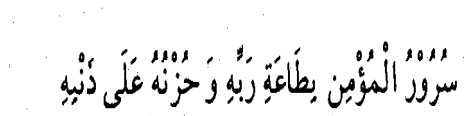
Recommended Extensions of Anguish

Some extensions of anguish are highly recommended. They can be gateways toward prosperity and peace. True repentance and regret is one such extension:

60 Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v. 2., p.1291, 8465

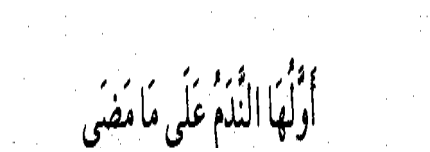
61 Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v. 2., p.1291, tr. 8460

Imam' Ali ('a) is reported⁶² to have said:



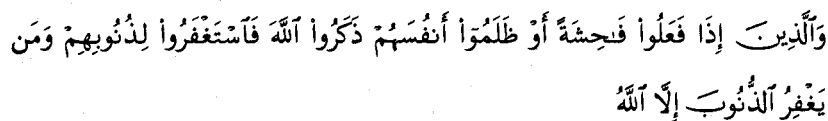
The happiness of a believer is in his obedience and his grief is due to his sin

In fact repentance is a fundamental condition from among the six conditions of *istighflir* enumerated by Imam' Ali ('a) in *Nahju'l Baliigha*. Imam ('a) says:



The first [condition of *istighfar*] is regret of the past [misdeeds]

The Holy Qur'an [3:135] says:



And those when they commit an indecency or oppress themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness of their sins; and who can forgive a sin save Allah?

In his *Tafsir al-Safi*, Mawla Fayd Kashani under this verse narrates⁶³ the following incident:

[Observing brevity here we would not mention all the details of the incident, but try to mention the important points.]

Once during the time of the Holy Prophet (s) a youth called Bahlul while intensely weeping came in the presence of the Holy Prophet (s). The Holy Prophet (s) asked him why he was weeping, and he said that he had committed very great sins, such that if Allah (swt) were to punish him for only some of them, he would enter the Hell Fire. Then the Holy Prophet (s) asks him some questions and the youth answers the Prophet (s). At one point the conversation reaches a climax and the Holy Prophet (s) asks the youth: 'Is there anyone save The Very Great who would forgive the very great sin? The youth says: 'No, I swear by Allah/. Then the Holy Prophet (s) asks him to inform him one of his sins. The youth then narrates his story as follows:

⁶² Muhammadi al-Ravy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v. 2, p. 1291 , tr. 8455

⁶³ Mawla Fayd Kashani, *Tafsir al-safi*, v .I, pp. 382-384

I used to dig graves for seven years; I would remove the dead, and disrobe them. Once it so happened that a lady from the Ansar died. After she was carried to her grave and buried, her family left the place; then the night came to pass. I neared her grave, dug it, and removed her out; thereafter I unshrouded her and left her naked near the grave; and started taking off. Suddenly Satan came in my mind and began attracting me towards her. By this, I returned back and lacking self-control committed the vile deed with her. Then I took off leaving her in that state. Suddenly I heard a voice from behind which said: O youth, woe be upon you from the Judge of the Day of Judgment, the day when He shall make me and you stand in the naked state that you left me among the dead, and took me out from my grave and removed my shroud from me and left me to stand in the state of impurity....So woe be upon you. Narrating this, the youth said: Therefore I do not think that I shall ever smell the scent of Paradise. Hearing all this the Prophet (s) said: Be away from me O sinner; I am afraid I would burn by your Fire; how near are you from the Fire! The youth then left the noble presence of the Holy Prophet (s) and went to Medina where he took some provisions and left for one of its mountains; there he tied his hands onto his neck and started supplicating and seeking forgiveness and weeping and repenting. He did this for forty days and nights. It is said that the animals around him also wept for him. When forty days and nights were over, he raised his hands towards the sky and cried: 'O

Allah, what have you done about my wish? If you have accepted my supplication and forgiven my fault then inform the Holy Prophet (s) through revelation about the same; and if not, then quickly send down a fire that would burn me, or a punishment in this world that would vanquish me, and emancipate me from humiliation of the Day of Resurrection. Upon this, Almighty Allah sends the abovementioned verse [3: 135].

After the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet(s) goes to the place where the youth was weeping in forgiveness. [The sad scenario makes one really weep. We have omitted it here to observe brevity]. The Holy Prophet (s) nears the youth and tells him: "I give you glad tidings [from Allah] you are a freed slave of Allah from the fire.

Section 7

اللَّهُمَّ رُدِّ كُلَّ غَرِيبٍ

O Allah, Return Every Stranger

اللَّهُمَّ رُدَّ كُلَّ غَرِيبٍ

O Allah, Return Every Stranger

Meaning of 'Gharib,

Due to an acquaintance with different cultures and languages some of us conjecture that the word '*gharib*' means 'poor'. In the Urdu language, however, this word when used in the absolute sense denotes the poverty of a person. But when it is particularized like, '*gharibu'l watan*' the meaning changes.

In the Arabic, which appears also to be the source language of the word, '*gharib*' means 'a remote entity'. Its origin is the word '*ghurba*' which means 'remoteness'. Any thing therefore which is *gharib* is far.

In his Commentary of Sahifat al-Sajjadiyya⁶⁴, Sayyid ' Ali Khan al- Husayni, says:

الْغُرْبَةُ بِالضَّمِّ الْبُعْدُ وَالنُّوْيُ

Ghurba (with the vowel *dhamma* over *ghayn*) stands for remoteness and distance

Hence *gharib* is anything that is far [in relation to something else].

In the Arabic language, unknown words are also known as *gharib*.

The pain of being a stranger can be well appreciated by only those who have experienced, or are experiencing the state of being far from their hometowns. Whosoever travels abroad, has hope of returning back to his hometown safe and sound. Obviously he would not like to separate himself from his near ones or abandon his material assets of life. Those who have left their hometowns and encountered calamities on their way or were stranded in a foreign country can understand how agonizing it is to be far from home.

⁶⁴ Sayyid ' Ali Khan, *Riyadi al-Salikin*, v.I, p.473

The recent decades of contemporary history is brim with examples that break the heart of every concerned listener: the Zionists, as has been their trend in the ancient past, continue harassing different parts of the weak nations of the world through terrorism and banishment, and thereby drive out scores of innocent men, women and children from their hometowns so that they should bear the, painful torture of surviving in refugee camps.

Such innocent victims are really in need of our support. As mentioned earlier, we must try to study the areas where we can play an effective role to support them in any way. If donations are collected from *reliable aid organizations*, we should try to contribute as much as we can. If we can help a refugee who lives in poverty in our countries, we should struggle to support him, so that he may adopt the new situation he has been forced into. If we are unable to do all this we should never forget to pray for them and seek their repose from the All-Powerful Creator.

Therefore, when we pray to Allah to return all those who are far away from their hometowns and cannot return due to some difficulties, we should not forget the manifestations of such people in contemporary history; we are duty bound to remember all those who suffer the predicament of banishment such as the Palestinians, the Afghanis, etc.

Extensions of Ghurba

It is possible for one to be a foreigner somewhere, but enjoy a very luxurious life. Consequently one may/may not experience the agony of separation. Those whom Allah has bestowed affluence do not necessarily experience the agony of separation. The means of communication are easily at their disposal and they have no sense of grief, for whenever they choose to return back they do not face any problems. The following holy tradition alludes to this reality:

Imam' Ali ('a) is reported⁶⁵ to have said:



The Affluent is a resident in a foreign place

⁶⁵ Marhum Amadi, *Tasnifu Ghurari'l Hikam*, p.369

Poverty , on the contrary , transforms one into a stranger:

Imam' Ali ('a) is reported⁶⁶ to have said:

الْفَقْرُ فِي الْوَطَنِ غُرْبَةٌ

Poverty in one's town is remoteness

Imam' Ali ('a) is reported⁶⁷ to have said:

الْمُقِيلُ غَرِيبٌ فِي بَلَدِهِ

The unpropertied is a stranger in his hometown

Perhaps this is one reason why in the Urdu language the word *gharib* is used to denote poverty .

Other extensions of *ghurba* are as follows:

1. Imam' Ali ('a) is reported to have said:

الْغَرِيبُ مَنْ لَيْسَ لَهُ حَيِّبٌ

A stranger is one who does not have a friend

2. Imam' Ali ('a) is reported to have said:

الْأَحْمَقُ غَرِيبٌ فِي بَلَدِهِ، مُهَانٌ بَيْنَ أَعْرَضِهِ

A silly person is a stranger in his hometown, and degenerate among his friends

The Relative Aspect of the word 'Gharib'

The abovementioned tradition indicates that whosoever is silly is *gharib* (a stranger). However, this should not be taken in the absolute sense. The word *gharib* is relative. One who is silly despite being *gharib* (far) in the company of the learned, is at home in the company of his likes. Similar is the case with the learned, for they

⁶⁶ Marhum Amadi, *Mu 'jamu Alfazi Ghurari'l Hikam*, p.810

⁶⁷ Marhum Amadi, *Mu'jamu Alfazi Ghurari'l Hikam*, p.810

are strangers in the company of the silly, but residents in the company of the learned: Another such instance is when a majority of the population are ignorant. Here again the learned are strangers:

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

الْعُلَمَاءُ غُرَبَاءُ لِكثْرَةِ الْجُهْلِ

The learned are strangers due to the great number of the ignorant

Sometimes, however, the learned can be strangers in the company of the learned themselves. One who is specialized in Chemistry, for example, and has no acquaintance with Eastern philosophy is an alien in the company of the Muslim metaphysicians and vice versa.

Furthermore, it is also possible for one to be a stranger and a resident at the same time. For example, a scholar may be far from his hometown, and thus a stranger, but close to the learned class, and hence a resident. Sometimes, a scholar, despite being in his hometown, which is inhabited by the learned class of his own field, is still called a stranger in terms of being far from the proximity of Allah (swt).

Ahlu'Ibayt ('a): Positive Extensions of Gharib

Most of the Muslims were oblivious of the future consequences of the decision made about caliphate after the Prophet (s)'s demise. The question of caliphate was not a matter of enjoyment of power

I for some decades, but the question of safeguarding the true version I of Islam and the guardianship of the bearers of the final religion and

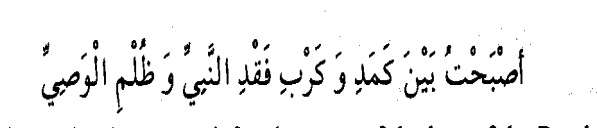
their future generations. The extreme grief (*karb*) of Hadrat Fatima ('a) indeed portrays, how far apart were the masses from her broad vision. She thought of the future, whereas others were after the destruction of Islam and the usurpation of material power. Her spirit was for the entire humanity, whereas others only thought of their own schemes. She together with her radiant family and very few trustworthy followers, was *gharib*, since she was far from those who were disobedient to God and could NOT foresee the calamities that would befall the Muslim nation. Whenever one tries to reflect this extension of *ghurba*, the heart experiences constriction and the

tongue stops and tears roll down the cheeks. The following statement⁶⁸ of Fa!ima ('a) sums it all up:

Ummu Salama asks Hadrat Fatima ('a):

O daughter of the Messenger of Allah (s), how did you approach your morning?

And Fatima ('a) replies:



I encountered morning in great grief and sorrow of the loss of the Prophet (s) and the oppression of his successor. ..

After this foundational blow on the Muslim Umma, the Ahlul-Bayt ('a) and their true followers always remained *gharib* among a great number of the Muslim Umma.

The Ghurba of Every Human Being of Tainted Disposition

O Allah [the Name of the Essence that possesses all the Perfect Divine Attributes], return all the *ghuraba* ' (distanced) [who are spiritually far, which means that they do not enjoy the Divine Attributes].

Hafiz the great mystic-poet says⁶⁹ :

Man az dayare habibam na az bilade gharib
Muhaymina be rafiqane khud rasan bazam

I belong to the beloved's town, not to the land of strangers;
O Lord, join me again to your friends!

Masters on the path towards human perfection believe that the human being is traveler in this world. He has path to cover, which is 'the religion' or in Qur'anic terms 'sirat al-mustaqim' and a

⁶⁸ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v. 43, p.156, tr.5

⁶⁹ Hafiz Shirazi, *Diwane Khwajah Hafiz Shirazi*, ed. Pezhman, p. 150, ghazal 334.

'destination', which is Almighty Allah Himself. Alluding to this Allah (swt) says:

I. [The Human Being is a Traveler: Holy Qur'an, 84:6]

يَتَأْتِيهَا الْإِنْسَنُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدًّا فَلَمْلَقِيهِ

O human being you are always striving unto Your Lord laboriously & you shall meet him

2. [The Path: Holy Qur'an, Al-Fatiha-1:6]

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us on the Straight Path

3. [The Destination, Holy Qur'an, al-Fatir 35:18]

وَالِإِلَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

To Allah is the homecoming (destination).

Religion, if practiced properly, can uplift the human being so high that he can also transcend the angels in perfection. Interested men/women may ask what *dhikr* or act to perform if one would like to begin the spiritual journey to Allah. The stereotype that 'the *tariqa*' (the spiritual path) is other than the 'Shari'a' (the apparent Islamic law) is a great impediment inculcated by the Satan. It is by reading and understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah correctly and following the *Tawdihu'I Masa 'il* (the Book of Islamic Laws) that one can attain heights of perfection. Many of us tend to conjecture that an 'arif (a mystic) is one who must isolate himself all the time and practice some specific *dhikr* and wait for spiritual revelations (*mukashafat*). Our Shi'a scholars do not agree to this misconception. They believe that both the *Shari'a* and the *Tariqa* enjoy a unity. And it is by practicing the apparent Islamic law and observing both its inner as well as its outer etiquette that a human being can attain Allah's nearness and transcend the angels.

The human being's ascent to God should not be mistaken with the physical journey. His journey is beyond the confines of time and space. He is in fact coloring himself with Divine Attributes and thus nearing The Gracious Presence. Our holy Imams ('a) who had reached the peaks of perfection were manifestations of Divine Attributes. Look at the following tradition:

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported⁷⁰ to have said:

نَحْنُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى

We are the Most Beautiful Names [of Allah]

Hence, in order to return back to our hometown, which is Allah's proximity, we must try to adopt the correct path set by Almighty Allah: The Holy Qur'an [35:18] says:

وَمَنْ تَزَكَّى فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّى لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

And whosoever purifies himself, purifies himself only for his own soul's good. To Allah is the homecoming (destination).

Thus the path is 'self-purification', which is not different from following the Islamic Laws.

However, we must realize that the journey is not as easy as it may seem to be. For one to cover the different stations of the journey, a qualified master of gnosis is essential, since the path is full of obstacles and the accursed Satan is always on the watch. He always struggles to hamper the way of one who has made a firm resolution to adopt the spiritual path.

This, however, should not dishearten those who are far from places where such masters exist, for there are instances, which indicate that one can attain such exalted destinations without a direct relationship with such masters. [The fundamental role of the Ahlu'l Bayt ('a) however always remains. We shall explain this in our later discussions- Insha Allah.] The late Ayatullah Muhammad Husayn

⁷⁰ Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.25, p.4, tr. 7

Tehrani reports a thought-provoking incident in his *Anwar-e- Malakut*⁷¹ as follows:

Respect for Mother Turns one into A Friend of Allah

[Ayatullah Tehrani narrates that once in Tehran he had gone to the Islamiyya bookshop situated on Buzajumhari Street to purchase books. He was a friend of one of the partners of the organization, Haj Sayyid Muhammad Kitabchi, who was responsible for the store of the Bookshop. He went to the bookshop to meet him and purchase some books as well. It was in the morning and approximately four hours remained for midday. A man had also come to the store to purchase books. Having purchased the books that he required, he started taking off, when suddenly he began saying: My beloved Allah, my physician Allah, my helper, my helper, my soul, my soul. The Ayatullah narrates:] On looking at him, I saw that his face had turned red and he was sweating; he was plunged in happiness and ecstasy beyond limit. Addressing him, I said: 'Dear Mr! Dear Dervish, do not eat all alone; this is not the custom of etiquette'; He took a turn around himself and began chanting some poems of Baba Tahir 'Uryan [a well-known mystic buried in Hamadan]. Thereafter he kept silent and wept a lot. Then he turned happy and laughed. I said: Ahsant! [Thereafter a conversation followed. During the conversation, Ayatullah Muhammad Husayn Tehrani asks the saint to inform him how he could attain such an exalted station, and the saint narrates his anecdote as follows:]

I had an old mother who was sick and disabled. She was bed ridden for so many years. I alone was at her service, and would attend to her needs: I would cook food for her, bring water to her for ablution, and was at her service for her different needs. However she was very ill-mannered and would sometimes abuse me, but I would bear that and respond to her with a smile. Due to this very attitude of hers I did not get married, although my age exceeded forty years. This was because maintaining the family with the kind of character that my mother had was impossible for me. I knew that if I would marry, either she would cause our separation, or I would be forced to leave her. Abandoning my mother, however, was not agreeable to my conscience. Hence I observed patience in remaining a (bachelor, and adopted myself with the situation. Sometimes, due to great patience in front other ill encounter, I would experience a spark of light in my heart, a state of happiness and joy. However this would only be temporary. This situation continued until one cold winter night. I had placed my bed near hers so that she is not alone and would not need to raise her voice to call me for her necessities. On that night I had filled a jug with water, and placed it near my bedside all the time, so that if my mother required some water I would immediately give the same to her. In the middle of that night she asked for water. I stood up immediately and filled a small vessel with water and gave it to her saying: 'Take, dear mother.' She, being in the state of sleepiness did not realize that I attended to her request immediately; she thought that I had brought her the water late. Upon this, she

⁷¹ *AyatullahTehrani,Anware Malakut, v. I pp.141-145]*

abused me with strange abusive language and hit me on my head with the vessel of water. I immediately filled the vessel with water once again and addressing her said: 'Dear mother, take, and forgive me; I am sorry! Saying this, I was overcome, and didn't know what happened next. In short, I attained my aspiration: those sparks had tuned into a world of light resembling the radiant sun; and my beloved, my friend, my helper, and my doctor, spoke to me. Thereafter this state never stopped. And it is years now that this state has remained...

Dear readers, there is vast difference between the servant whispering to His Beloved and the Beloved whispering to His servant. Never conjecture that such an incident is farfetched for it was just another practical translation of Imam' Ali ('a)'s statement in *Nahju'l Balagha*⁷² as follows:

وَمَا بَرِحْتُ لِلَّهِ عَزَّتْ أَلَاءُهُ فِي الْبُرْهَةِ بَعْدَ الْبُرْهَةِ وَفِي أَرْمَانِ الْفَتَرَاتِ عِبَادًا نَاجَاهُمْ فِي
فِكْرِهِمْ وَكَلَمَتِهِمْ فِي ذَاتِ عُقُولِهِمْ

In all the periods and times when there were no prophets, there have been persons with whom Allah, precious are His bounties, whispered in their hearts and spoke in the essence of their intellects.

As long as the opportunity remains, our 'ardent aspiration' should be to attain this particular gracious abode before we leave the world and cannot do anything. There is a very thought-provoking incident narrated in *Rawdat al-Kafi* by Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a'):⁷³

The Prayer of A Broad Minded Old-Woman

عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (ص) كَانَ نَزَلَ عَلَى رَجُلٍ بِالطَّائِفِ قَبْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ فَاتَّكَمَهُ
فَلَمَّا أَنْ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدًا (ص) إِلَى النَّاسِ قِيلَ لِلرَّجُلِ أَتَدْرِي مَنْ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَهُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
إِلَى النَّاسِ قَالَ لَا قَالُوا لَهُ هُوَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ يَتِيمٌ أَبِي طَالِبٍ وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَانَ نَزَلَ بِكَ
بِالطَّائِفِ يَوْمَ كَذَا وَكَذَا فَاتَّكَمْتَهُ قَالَ فَقَدِمَ الرَّجُلُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ (ص) فَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ وَأَسْلَمَ ثُمَّ
قَالَ لَهُ أَتَعْرِفُنِي يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَالَ وَمَنْ أَنْتَ قَالَ أَنَا رَبُّ الْمَنْزِلِ الَّذِي نَزَلَتْ بِهِ بِالطَّائِفِ فِي
الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَوْمَ كَذَا وَكَذَا فَاتَّكَمْتُكَ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) مَرْحَبًا بِكَ سَلْ حَاجَتَكَ فَقَالَ

⁷² Imam' Ali ('a), *Nahju'l Balagha*, Sermon 222 (220-variation)

⁷³ Thiqatu'l Islam al-Kulayni, *Rawdat al-Kafi*, v.8, pp, 110-111

أَسْأَلُكَ مَا تَنِي شَلَّةٌ يَرْعَاهَا فَأَمَرَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) يَمَّا سَأَلَ ثُمَّ قَالَ لِأَصْحَابِهِ مَا كَانَ عَلَى هَذَا الرَّجُلِ أَنْ يَسْأَلَنِي سُؤَالَ عَجُوزِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لِمُوسَى (ع) فَقَالُوا وَ مَا سَأَلَتْ عَجُوزُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لِمُوسَى فَقَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ ذِكْرُهُ أَوْحَى إِلَيَّ مُوسَى أَنَّ أَحْمِلَ عِظَامَ يُوسُفَ مِنْ مِصْرَ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَخْرُجَ مِنْهَا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ بِالشَّامِ فَسَأَلَ مُوسَى عَنْ قَبْرِ يُوسُفَ (ع) فَجَاءَهُ شَيْخٌ فَقَالَ إِنْ كَانَ أَحَدٌ يَعْرِفُ قَبْرَهُ فَقُلَانَهُ فَأَرْسَلَ مُوسَى (ع) إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُ قَالَ تَعْلَمِينَ مَوْضِعَ قَبْرِ يُوسُفَ (ع) قَالَتْ نَعَمْ قَالَ فَذَلِّينِي عَلَيْهِ وَ لَكَ مَا سَأَلْتَ قَالَ لَا أَذُوكَ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا يَحْكُمِي قَالَ فَلَكَ الْجَنَّةُ قَالَتْ لَا إِلَّا يَحْكُمِي عَلَيْكَ فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِلَى مُوسَى لَا يَكْبُرُ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لَهَا حُكْمَهَا فَقَالَ لَهَا مُوسَى فَلَكَ حُكْمُكَ قَالَتْ فَإِنَّ حُكْمِي أَنْ أَكُونَ مَعَكَ فِي دَرَجَتِكَ الَّتِي تَكُونُ فِيهَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) مَا كَانَ عَلَى هَذَا لَوْ سَأَلَنِي مَا سَأَلْتَ عَجُوزُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

Before the advent of Islam, once when the Holy Prophet (s) happen to visit Ta'if, someone generously hosted him, Later when the Prophet (s) was appointed as a Messenger of Allah, the said person was asked: 'Do you know whom did Allah appoint as his Messenger to the people?' 'No.' he replied. They said: 'It is Muhammad bin' Abdillah, the orphan of Abi Talib, who, on such and such a day had been your guest in Ta'if and you graciously hosted him, Hearing this the person comes ill the presence of the Prophet (s), greets him, embraces Islam, and then says: 'O Messenger of Allah, do you recognize me?' The Prophet (s) says: And who are you?' The man then says: 'I am the owner of the house in which you had put up in Ta'if during the age of ignorance (before the advent of Islam) on such and such a day and I hosted you. The Holy Prophet (s) said: 'You are welcome; ask what you what.' The man said: 'I want 200 sheep together with their shepherds, The Holy Prophet (s) ordered that he be given what he wanted. Then addressing his companions he wished that the man would seek that which the old lady of Bani Isra'il asked from Prophet Musa ('a). The companions asked: ' And what did the old lady of Bani Isra'il seek from Musa?' The Prophet (s) said: 'Surely Allah revealed to Prophet Musa ('a) to carry the bones of Prophet Yusuf ('a) before he left Egypt for the holy land in Sham. Thereupon Prophet Musa ('a) asked about the whereabouts of the grave of Prophet Yusuf ('a), and an old man approached him and said: If at all anyone happens to know the whereabouts of the grave, it is such and such old woman. Prophet Musa ('a) asked her to be brought to him and when she came in his presence, he asked: 'Do you know the place of the grave of Prophet Yusuf ('a)?' She said: 'Yes.' The Prophet said: 'Therefore guide me towards the grave and I you will get whatever you ask,' She said: 'I shall not guide you towards it except you agree to what I want in return,' The Prophet ('a) said: 'You shall get Paradise.' She said: 'No, except what I want,' Thereupon Almighty Allah revealed to Prophet Musa ('a) that agreeing to her request should seem insurmountable to him. Therefore Prophet Musa ('a) said: ' Alright, you would have what you want.'

Thereupon she said: 'I would like to be with you in the same station that you would I have in Paradise on the Day of Judgment.' Narrating this the Holy Prophet (s) said: 'why didn't this man seek that which the old woman of Bani Isra'il sought?'

This anecdote serves as a very important lesson for us. Ponder over the aspiration of the old woman. The lady is given Paradise but ~ she rejects it. She aspires beyond that. She yearns for the same station that Prophet Musa ('a) would enjoy in the Hereafter, which is none other than Allah's proximity or *Jannat al-liqa* ' (The Paradise of meeting Allah). Following are verses of Qur'an that allude to this exalted station:

I. [Holy Qur'an: Chapter al-Fajr- 89: 27-30]

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ . أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً . فَأَدْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي .
وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

O soul at peace, Return to your Lord,
While you are pleased with Him,
and He is pleased with you
then enter the company of my obedient servants
And ENTER MY PARADISE,

2. [Holy Qur'an 54: 54-55]

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ . فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِندَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

Surely the God-wary (pious) are in gardens and rivers In the seat of truth with the Most Powerful King

Clearly the aspiration of the old lady of Bani Isra'il draws all of us to 'understand our real innate need' and pray accordingly. Let us not waste the opportunity of the nights of *qadr* at our disposal. Our aspiration should be the forgiveness of sins and Allah's proximity. Yes, seeking 'long life', 'a lot of sustenance' etc. as 'the means to I enable us attain Allah's proximity is also highly recommended. Our supplications are full of expressions of such needs. But the material needs must always be sought as a means for the 'Great Return' to God. Otherwise the same worldly benefits can widen the gap. Let us take a lesson from Bibi Asiya, Fir'awn's wife, who despite enjoying

all the worldly pleasures, did not surrender to Fir'awn and faced painful torture from him. Almighty Allah mentions her supplication as follows:

رَبِّ أَتَنِي لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ

O my Lord, build for me NEAR YOU a house in paradise.

Ayatullah al-'Uzma and the Apple of our eyes, Shaykh Jawadi Amuli (may Almighty Allah prolong his exalted shadow), the contemporary commentator of Qur'an and indeed a true successor of his teacher' Allama Tabataba'i in the field of Tafsir says⁷⁴:

This woman asks for Paradise near God, whereas others only seek Paradise. .. However, this lady asks for God first, and then asks for a house near God. She does not say: *Rabbibni li baytan fi'l Janna* ('O Lord, build for me a house in Paradise', nor does she say: *Rabbibni li baitan 'indakaji 'l Janna* ('O Lord, build for me A HOUSE near You in Paradise.' Rather she says: *Rabbibni li 'indaka baytanji'l Janna* ('O Lord, build for me NEAR YOU a house in Paradise). First she mentions 'the proximity of Allah' and then she speaks about Paradise. That is, if it is a matter of *al-Jar Thummaddar* (First the neighbor, then the house), this lady says: *Allah, thumma al-Janna* (First Allah, and then Paradise). Certainly the Paradise that is *'indallah* (near Allah) is greatly different from the Paradise 'underneath which rivers flow. ..,

'Allama Tabataba'i⁷⁵ says:

الْجَمْعُ بَيْنَ كَوْنِ الْبَيْتِ الْمُنِيِّ لَهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَفِي الْجَنَّةِ لِكَوْنِ الْجَنَّةِ دَارَ الْقُرْبِ مِنَ اللَّهِ...

Seeking a house to be built near Allah and in Paradise at the same time is due to the fact that Paradise is the abode of Nearness to God.

True Believers are Gharib!

There are various narrations that clearly state that a believer is a stranger.' For example:

1.Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) is reported⁷⁶ to have said:

⁷⁴ Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, *Zan dar aineye Jamalo Jalal*, pp. 156-157

⁷⁵ 'Allama Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan*, v .19, p. 344

⁷⁶ *Mustadrak Safinat al-Bihar*, v.7, p. 550]

الْمُؤْمِنُ غَرِيبٌ وَطُوبَى لِلْغُرَبَاءِ

A believer is a stranger; and blessed be the strangers!

2. Kamil at- Tamma⁷⁷ says:

سَمِعْتُ أَبَا جَعْفَرٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَقُولُ: «النَّاسُ كُلُّهُمْ بَهَائِمٌ (ثلاثاً) إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُ غَرِيبٌ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ

'I heard Abu Ja'far [Imam Muhammad al-Baqir], upon whom be peace, saying thrice: The people are all beasts' save a few of the fteleivers; and thrice, "a believer is a stanger (*gharib*.)"

'Allama Majlisi in his magnum opus 'The Oceans of Lights' comments on this tradition as follows:

بيان كلهم بهائم أي شبيه بها في عدم العقل و إدراك الحق و غلبة الشهوات النفسانية على
القوى العقلانية كما قل تعالى إِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ كذا ...المؤمن
غريب لأنه قلما يجد مثله فيسكن إليه فهو بين الناس كالغريب الذي بعد عن أهله و وطنه ...

Exposition: "All are beasts" means that they resemble them in not using their intellect and not comprehending the truth and in their selfish desires dominating their intellectual faculties, as the Most High says: 'They are like animals; rather, they are more astray' ...A believer is a stranger because he rarely finds his parallel so that he may seek repose in him; hence he is among the people like a stranger, who is far from his family and hometown. ...⁷⁸

Thus, following can be reasons why a believer is "*gharib*":

I. A believer naturally aspires the company of his All-Loving Creator and struggles to reach this exalted destination. As long as he has not reached the destination he always finds himself a stranger. Imam' Ali ('a) is reported to have said:

الدُّنْيَا دَارُ الْغُرَبَاءِ وَ مَوْطِنُ الْأَسْفِيَاءِ

⁷⁷ Thiqat al-Islam al-Kulayni, *Al-Kafi*, v.2, p. 242

⁷⁸ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.64, p. 160

And the following is reported⁷⁹ in another tradition:

حُبُّ الْوَطَنِ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ

Love for one's hometown is a sign of faith.

2. In the company of the non-believers, believers are strangers. This is because while they live in a world of belief, love of God and concern for the salvation of humanity, the non-believers do not perceive the realities and attach themselves to the world of matter and its benefits.

Why was Imam 'Ali al-Rida ('a) known as Imam al-Gharib

Sometimes when addressing our 8th Holy Imam ('a) we say:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا غَرِيبَ الْغُرَبَاءِ

Peace be on you, O Stranger of the Strangers

The teacher of Ayatullah Muhammad Husayn Tehrani in the discipline of gnosis- Sayyid Hashim Haddad, was once asked the reason why Imam al-Rida ('a) was known as *Imam al-Gharib*. He responded in some details. Two reasons⁸⁰ one can mention about this are:

- 1- The Imam enjoyed the station of wilaya, which was so exalted, and close to Divine proximity, but far from other human beings. Necessarily, majority of the people were not acquainted with the attributes of wilaya and the characteristics of a wali [who is a manifestation of Divine Attributes]. Thus Imam was *gharib* in their company.
- 2- Ma'mun al-Rashid forced the Imam ('a) to Mary and the Imam ('a) had to leave his hometown, his family and the neighborhood of the Holy Prophet (s)'s tomb. Thus he was *gharib*. In addition calling him to Mary was a kind of captivity, exile and imprisonment, for despite granting him power and princely station, he deprived him from all his functions: neither was he allowed to give legal rulings nor to offer Friday and 'Id prayer.

⁷⁹ Shaykh ' Abbas Qummi, *Safinat al-Bihar*, v.8, p.525

⁸⁰ Ayatullah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tehrani, *Al-Tawhid Quarterly Journal*, v. XIII, no.4, pp.72-85

In another *ziyara*⁸¹ we also call Imam al-Husayn ('a) as *Gharib al- ghuraba* '. And in a tradition narrated in al-Mashhadi's *al-Mazar al- Kabir*, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have asked the following about a group of people:

فَمَا يَمْنَعُهُمْ مِنْ زِيَارَةِ قَبْرِ الْغَرِيبِ...

And what hampers them from visiting the grave of al-Gharib? [he means Imam al- Husayn ('a)]⁸²

The Hometown of the Gharib

Sayyid ' Ali Khan Husayni, in his *Riyad al-Salikin*, quotes the following:

سئل أبو جعفر الشّاشي: من الغريب؟ فقال: الذي يطلبه رضوان في الجنة فلا يجده و يطلبه مالك في النار فلا يجده و يطلبه جبرئيل في السماوات فلا يجده و يطلبه إبليس في الأرض فلا يجده، فقال له أهل المجلس و قد تفتّرت قلوبهم: يا أبا جعفر فأين يكون هذا الغريب؟ فقال: في مقعد صلق عند مليك مقتدر

Abu Ja'far al-Shashi was asked: who is a stranger (gharib)? He said: 'He is one whom the Rdwan seeks in Paradise, but does not find, one whom the Malik seeks in Hell Fire, but does not find, one whom Gabriel seeks in the heavens but does not find, one whom Iblis seeks in the earth, but does not find. So the people of the gathering asked him with broken hearts: A Aba Ja'far, where then is this stranger? He said: **'In the seat of truth with the Most Powerful King (54:55)'**

The Great Sign Complains of *ghurba* in the Supplication of Kumayl

The infallibility of Imam' All ('a) is an established fact and hence we would not like to engage in explaining the details of the same. We also know his famous dictum⁸³ that says:

⁸¹ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.98, ch.18, p.230

⁸² al-Shaykh Abu ' Abdillah Muhammad bin Ja'far al-Mashhadi, *al-Mazar al-Kabir*, p.333, 1st ed, Qum, Iran

⁸³ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihari'l Anwar*, v.40, p.153. tr. 5

لَوْ كُشِفَ الْغِطَاءُ مَا أَزْدَدْتُ يَقِينًا

If the curtain was unveiled nothing would be added to my certitude

Why then should he show his fear of separation from the Beloved? What kind of separation is this? What kind of unbearable *ghurba* is this? Imam Khumayni, in his forty traditions when enumerating the levels of patience of the gnostics says:

Another level is that of *sabr 'an Allah* (sabr from God) which pertains to the stations of lovers of God and piners for Him, of those blessed with epiphany (*ahl al-shuhud wa al- 'ayan*) at the time of returning to their own world, the world of plurality and sobriety (after intoxication with God). This is the hardest and the most difficult of the stations, and to it has referred the Master of the Wayfarers, the Commander of the Faithful, and the Leader of the Perfect (i.e. 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ('a) in the noble Du'a' Kumayl:

فَهَبْنِي يَا إِلَهِي وَسَيِّدِي وَمَوْلَايَ وَرَبِّي صَبْرْتُ عَلَى عَذَابِكَ، فَكَيْفَ أَصْبِرُ عَلَى فِرَاقِكَ

O my God, my Master and my Lord! Even if I were able to endure Thy chastisement, how shall I bear Thy separation?!

Perhaps the following dictum of Imam' Ali ('a) also explains the reality of the matter:

نَارُ الْفُرْقَةِ أَحْرُ مِنْ نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ

The fire of separation is hotter than Hell Fire⁸⁴

اَللّٰهُمَّ رُدِّ كُلَّ غَرِيبٍ

Hence when we seek the return of all the strangers we must pray to Allah to:

1. Return all those who have been driven out of their homes and suffer the pain of separation
2. Return all the sinful folk back to the proximity of Allah, which in reality is: (1) Perfecting the human being in terms of Divine Attributes like knowledge, patience, etc" and (2) Lessening the gap

⁸⁴ *Mirath-e-Hadithe Shi 'e*, v.8, p.217

of the high-ranking strangers like the Aïmma ('a) and the low-ranking ones like the sinful, and thus removing the *ghurba* of the Imams from the rest too. [This point is worthy of reflection]. Otherwise, in another sense, the Imams ('a) being close to Almighty Allah, were never *gharib* (strangers). This is because they were never far from their spiritual hometown. There is a beautiful report narrated by al-Zamakhshari in his *Rabi' al-Abrar* worthy of reflection. He reports:

لَمَّا أُخْرِجَ يُوسُفُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مِنَ الْجُبِّ وَاشْتُرِيَ قَالَ لَهُمْ قَائِلٌ: اسْتَوْصُوا بِهَذَا الْغَرِيبِ خَيْرًا.
فَقَالَ لَهُمْ يُوسُفُ: مَنْ كَانَ مَعَ اللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِ غَرَبَةٌ

"When Yusuf ('a) was taken out of the well, and bought, a person said to them:
'Take care of this stranger (*gharib*). [Hearing this,] Yusuf ('a) said to them:
whosoever is with Almighty Allah, is not a stranger."⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Abu'l Qasim Mahmud bin 'Umar al-Zamakhshari, *Rabi' al-Abrar wa Nusus al-Akhbar*, v.3, p.5

Section 8

اللَّهُمَّ فَكِّ كُلَّ أَسِيرٍ

O Allah, Free Every Captive

اللَّهُمَّ فَكِّ كُلَّ أَسِيرٍ

O Allah, Free Every Captive

Meaning of Asir

The word *Asir* originates from *al-asr*, which means:

الشَّدُّ بِالْقَيْدِ

Fastening with a bond

Raghib, the famous lexicographer, in his Qur'anic dictionary *al- Mufradat*⁸⁶ says:

"One who was tied by fetters was known to be *asir*; thereafter the word was intended for every entity that is seized and bound, even if it was not fettered by anything. ..for example:

أَنَا أَسِيرُ نِعْمَتِكَ

I am bound to your favor

From the abovementioned definition, the comprehensiveness of the concept of the word '*asir*' becomes clear. The traditions of the Holy Prophet (s) and his immaculate progeny also reveal this truth. Following are some examples for your perusal:

- a. Imam Abu'l I:lasan al- Thalith⁸⁷ (' Ali al-Naqi ('a)) is reported to have said:

وَالْجَاهِلُ أَسِيرُ لِسَانِهِ

The ignorant one is a captive of his tongue

- b. In a supplication⁸⁸ from Yusha' bin Nun ('a) we find the following expression:

⁸⁶ Raghib Isfahani, *al-Mufradat*, p. 76, new ed.

⁸⁷ Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.78, p. 368, tr. 3

إِلَهِي أَنْتَ مَلِكُ الْعَطَايَا وَأَنَا أَسِيرُ الْخَطَايَا

O God, You are the sovereign of bestowals while I am a captive of my faults

c. In one Ziyara of Arba'in⁸⁹ (40th of Imam al-Husayn ('a)) said to be taught by Imam al-Sadiq ('a), we address Imam al-Husayn ('a) as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَسِيرِ الْكَرْبَاتِ

Peace be upon the captive of deep sorrows

d. In his well known epistle⁹⁰ to Malik al-Ashtar Imam' Ali ('a) says:

...فَإِنَّ هَذَا الدِّينَ قَدْ كَانَ أَسِيرًا فِي أَيْدِي الْأَشْرَارِ يُعْمَلُ فِيهِ بِالْهَوَى وَتُطَلَّبُ بِهِ الدُّنْيَا...

...for surely this Religion was a captive in the hands of the evil folk, for under its pretext they would follow their base inclinations and achieve worldly gains. ..

e. In Nahju'l Balagha⁹¹, while explaining the characteristics of the angels, Imam' Ali is reported to have said:

...فَهُمْ أَسْرَاءُ إِيْمَانٍ...

...for they are captives of faith. ..

The word 'asir' likewise has a relative connotation: whereas a group of people may be captives of their vain inclinations but suffer no physical imprisonment, a group may enjoy utter spiritual freedom, but be in the state of physical captivity.

⁸⁸ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.94, p. 93, tr. 8

⁸⁹ 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.101, p. 331, tr. 2

⁹⁰ 'Imam' Ali ('a), *Nahj al-Balagha*, Letter 53

⁹¹ 'Imam' Ali ('a), *Nahj al-Balagha*, Sermon 91

The Apparent Extension of Asir

Certainly, this verse is one of the most painful verses of the supplication. Many innocent human beings throughout the world today suffer imprisonment. While a group among them are victims of oppression and breach of man-made law, ..there is a class whose very innocence has brought them behind bars. Being behind bars is only one part of the story. The oppression and torture that these innocent captives have to bear is terrible and inexpressible. Such kind of treatment stems from the kind of outlook possessed by the wardens of the different prisons, who receive the power of discretion from their masters, who in turn possess authority through their respective governments. The following statement from Amnesty international¹⁹² speaks of this reality:

"Torture does not happen in a vacuum. The social and political context, and the supply of tools and techniques for inflicting pain rely on a failure of political will. If the governments of the world had the political will to stop torture they could do so."

In order to appreciate the gravity of the matter, one can refer to the relevant texts available on prison torture in the Internet from human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch [hrw.org] and the like. Due to the brevity of this commentary, however, we would only mention a few examples of the situation prevailing the prisons of the world:

Prisoners Suffering Torture

I. MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN: "... but torture continues and is not confined to military dictatorships or authoritarian regimes; torture is inflicted in democratic states too. It is also clear that victims of torture are criminal suspects as well as political prisoners, the disadvantaged as well as the dissident, people targeted because of their identity as well as their beliefs. They are women as well as men, children as well as adults."⁹³

⁹² <http://www.stoptorture.org>, A branch of Amnesty International

⁹³ *Ibid*

2. WOMEN: "Amnesty International (AI) has documented countless cases of women being tortured in custody. In its coverage of armed conflicts, it has reported the systematic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war."⁹⁴

3: CHILDREN: "The fact that children could suffer torture at all should come as a terrible shock. Their dependency and vulnerability should render them immune from the atrocities adults inflict on one another. Their very innocence should put them beyond reach. Yet violence against children is endemic: children are tortured by the police or security forces. .."⁹⁵

Methods Of Torture

"The survey showed that beating is by far the most common method of torture and ill-treatment by state agents today, reported in over 150 countries. People are beaten with fists, sticks, gun-butts, makeshift whips, iron pipes, baseball bats, electric flex. Victims suffer bruises, internal bleeding, broken bones, lost teeth, ruptured organs and some die.

Rape and sexual abuse of prisoners is also widespread. Other common methods of torture and ill-treatment include electric shocks (reported in more than 40 countries), suspension of the body (more than 40 countries), beating on the soles of the feet (more than 30 countries), suffocation (more than 30 countries), mock execution or death threat (more than 50 countries) and prolonged solitary confinement (more than 50 countries).

Other methods include submersion in water, stubbing of cigarettes on the body, being tied to the back of a car and being dragged behind it, sleep deprivation and sensory deprivation. ..

The most common forms of judicial corporal punishment include amputation and flogging. Some forms such as amputation and branding are deliberately designed to permanently mutilate the human body. However, all of these punishments can cause a range of long-term or permanent injuries."⁹⁶

The attitude of Islamic law, however, whose source is the Creator of human being himself, is greatly different. Browsing through the history of Islamic leadership from the time of the Holy Prophet (s) until now we come to understand the verity of this contention. Following are examples for your perusal:

- I. The first war that the Muslims valiantly fought was Badr. Overwhelming the disbelievers, the Muslims apprehended many

⁹⁴ [A branch of Amnesty International
<http://www.stoptorture.org/report/index.htm>]

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

nonbelievers and took them as captives. However, the Prophet (s) considered the 'captives' as human beings and believed that they too had certain rights. No one was allowed to maltreat them. Instead ways of letting them free were suggested to them. Accordingly many were set free with a ransom fee. History tells us that⁹⁷ :

وَكَانَ يُفْلِيهِمْ عَلَيْهِمْ عَلَى قَدْرِ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

And the Prophet (s) took a ransom fee from them according to their financial state

And some of the captives had no wealth but knew the art of writing. The Prophet (s) would tell each of them to teach ten men from Medina as a ransom.

2. It is reported⁹⁸ that after Ibn Muljam struck the fatal blow on Imam' Ali ('a), the Imam addressing his two sons ('a), said:

إِحْسِنُوا هَذَا الْأَسِيرَ وَأَطْعِمُوهُ وَاسْقُوهُ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِسَارَهُ

Imprison this captive, and give him food and drink, and deal with him in a good way in his captivity

And in another tradition⁹⁹ he says the following about Ibn Muljam:

إِنَّهُ أَسِيرٌ، فَاحْسِنُوا نَزْلَهُ وَ أَكْرَمُوا مَثْوَاهُ، فَإِنْ بَقِيتُ قَتَلْتُ أَوْ عَفَوْتُ، وَإِنْ مِتُّ فَاقْتُلُوهُ قَتْلَتِي، وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

Indeed he is a captive; therefore give him good food and a nice place; then if I were to remain alive I would either kill him or forgive him; and if I die, then kill him the way he struck me [with one blow] and do not transgress the limits, for verily Allah does not love those who transgress the limits. [2: 190]

This practical encounter of Imam' Ali in those sensitive moments exemplifies the outlook of the embodiment of Islam. Grudge and revenge does not remain in the heart of 'a), for every element of his body is the instrument of Allah (swt).

⁹⁷ *Hayat al-Nabi wa Siratuhu*, v.2, p. 60, Uswa Publications

⁹⁸ Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mawsu'at al-Imam .Ali bin Abi Talib*, v. 7, p. 250, tr.2949

⁹⁹ *Mawsu'at al-Imam ' Ali bin Abi Talib*, v.7. p. 250. tr. 2950

3. If one were to study carefully the rights of prisoners according to Islam, he would realize how far apart is man made law from Divine law. Shaykh Najm al-Din Tabasi in his *Mawarid al-Sijn* [Occasions of Prison] enumerates some of the rights of prisoners as follows¹⁰⁰:

...believing prisoners can attend Friday & id Prayers under surveillance, and then return immediately to their cells, prisoners may meet with their near ones and are free to receive food and clothing from them too, prisoners should be imprisoned in a healthy environment and allowed to go out under surveillance during a particular time, one who is ill should not be imprisoned, the support that the prisoner gives to his family, must be drawn from the public treasury (*baytu 'I mal*) of the Muslims, etc...

The above however should not confuse one to believe that prisoners should be left without interrogation or motivation to repent. The prisoner is dealt according to the crime that he/she has ~ committed. Political prisoners also are dealt in a different way. However, the prisoner is not dealt with like an animal or tortured or raped or even psychologically threatened or played around with. These are against the dictates of the Islamic Sharl'a. They rather are dealt as human beings and no one is allowed to transgress the limits laid by Almighty Allah. *Hence, should we hear or observe inhuman behavior from the prison wardens of a so-called Islamic state, we must not be led to think that that is what Islam believes. There is a vast difference between the criteria being 'Islam' and the criteria being 'the deed of a non-practicing Muslim ruler.*

Look at the following traditions carefully:

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ عَلِيًّا (ع) كَانَ يُطْعِمُ مَنْ خُلِدَ فِي السُّجْنِ مِنْ بَيْتِ مَلِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Surely' Ali ('a) would feed the captive who served life imprisonment' from the treasury of the Muslims

Imam' Ali ('a)¹⁰¹ is reported to have said:

¹⁰⁰ Shaykh Najm al-Din Tabasi, *Mawarid al-Sijn*, pp. 493 onwards

¹⁰¹ Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v.1 , p.76

إِطْعَامُ الْأَسِيرِ وَالْإِحْسَانُ إِلَيْهِ حَقٌّ وَاجِبٌ وَإِنْ قَتَلْتَهُ مِنْ الْغَدِ

Feeding the captive and doing good to him, is a compulsory right, even if you were to kill him [in accordance with the penal laws of Islam] the following day.

Hawa al-Nafs: One of the Most Destructive Kinds of Captivity

1. The Holy Qur'an [Surat al-Qasas 28: 50] says:

...وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بَغْيِرَ هُدًى مِّنَ اللَّهِ...

'...and who is more stray than he who follows his low desires without any guidance from Allah?'

2. Imam' Ali ('a) is reported' to have said:

كَمْ مِنْ عَقْلٍ أَسِيرٍ عِنْدَ هَوًى أَمِيرٍ

How great a number are there intellects under the captivity of dominant inclinations!

3. Imam' Ali ('a) is reported¹⁰³ to have said:

إِنَّ أَخَوْفَ مَا أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ اثْنَتَانِ: اتِّبَاعُ الْهَوَى وَطُولُ الْأَمَلِ

Surely there are two things that I fear most from you: following your vain inclinations and having long hopes.

One of the most destructive extensions of captivity is the captivity of the soul by base inclinations. In the language of the Qur'an, it is called "*al-hawa*". It is a great hurdle on our way to God. *Nearly every world problem today stems from this very element of destruction.* Rather, the entire history of creation is replete with examples that show how destructive has this kind of captivity been: due to this very captivity, Satan did not prostrate before Adam although he was commanded to do so, Cain was led to kill Abel

¹⁰² Marhum Amadi, *Mu'Jamu Ghurari Hikam*, p.34]

¹⁰³ Imam 'Ali ('a), *Nahjul Balagha*, sermon no.28]

1 despite the latter being his own brother, Noah ('a)'s son left his father although the latter was a prophet of Allah (swt), and the list goes on. Study the causes of the different wars and conflicts of the past and present and you would realize that *the root cause is this very kind of captivity*. When a president suffers such captivity, he kills so many innocent civilians; when a minister of finance is shackled by such captivity, he embezzles millions of dollars; when an irreligious and aimless human being suffers such captivity, he engages in different kinds of evils. In short, whosoever enjoys more power affects mischief accordingly. Freedom from such captivity, however, is in our hands. Almighty Allah has given us the keys to the door of the prison and advised us to leave, but the attraction of amenities of the prison, it seems, has kept us from moving.

Hawa al-Nafs Depreciates One to the Example of a Dog!

The Holy Qur'an [chapter 7, verse no. 175-176] says:

وَأَنذَرُ عَلَيْهِم نَبَأَ الَّذِي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ
الْغَاوِينَ . وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ
الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحَمَلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثَ أَوْ تَتْرَكهُ يَلْهَثَ

Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our Signs, but he passed them by: so Satan followed him up, and he went astray. If it had been Our Will, We should have elevated him with Our Signs; but he inclined to the earth, and followed his own vain desires. His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue.

This verse, according to a tradition quoted by 'Allama Taba'aba'l in his Al-Mizan and narrated by Tafsir al-Burhan, talks about Bal' am bin Ba 'lira. He was a man who lived during the time of Prophet Musa ('a) and enjoyed a high spiritual state for according to a tradition reported from Imam al-Riqa ('a) he knew the *ism al-a 'zam* (the Great Name of Allah). Later, due to his base

inclinations, he became a supporter of Fir'awn and became spiritually ignoble. Imam al-Rida ('a) is reported to have said¹⁰⁴:

Surely Hal'am bin Ba'ura was given the Great Name of God and whenever he would pray with the same, his supplication would be accepted. Then he inclined towards Fir'awn. Once when Fir'awn was after Prophet Musa ('a) and his followers, he met Hal'am and said: 'Pray to Allah to throw Musa ('a) and his followers into our trap.' Subsequently he climbed his donkey to set out for searching Musa ('a) and his companions. The donkey, however, did not move. So he began hitting it. Thereafter Allah (the invincible and exalted) enabled it to speak and [addressing Hal 'am] it said: Woe unto you! For what are you hitting me? Do you want me to accompany you so that you pray against Prophet Musa ('a), the Prophet of Allah and the believing nation? Hal'am [paid no attention] and continued hitting the donkey until he killed the animal. Thereupon Hal'am forgot the great Name of God.

This verse is a lesson for all those learned folk who have attained a degree of piety .If one is not steadfast in his war against his base soul, there is a risk of him falling into a state of degradation and spiritual destruction, We seek refuge in the All-Merciful Lord from every kind of ignominy that separates us from His Neighborhood.

Verse no, 176 considers the example of Bal' am as the example of a dog:

فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرَكْهُ يَلْهَثْ ذَٰلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ
الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأَقْصُصْ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

So his parable is as the parable of a dog; if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue; and if you leave him alone he lolls out his tongue; this is a parable of those who , reject our signs; therefore relate the narrative so that they may reflect.

Preference of External Imprisonment Over Internal Imprisonment

The Qur'an [12:33] quotes Yusuf ('a) praying:

¹⁰⁴ Sayyid Hashim, Bahrani, *Al-Burhan Fi Tafsiri'l Qur'an*, v.3, pp. 246-247

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ...

'O My Lord, prison is dearer to me than that unto which they invite me. ...'

The story of Prophet Yusuf ('a) in the Holy Qur'an is a lesson of thought for every human being who aspires to live a life of freedom and prosperity. After Zulaykha provoked Yusuf ('a) but was met with failure, she tried to accuse him of seducing her. Her accusation was proven to be false by a witness. The news of this event spread in the town and Zulaykha was accused of trying to provoke 'the embodiment of chastity'. In order to extinguish the fire of the situation, she invited those women who accused her and giving each a citrus fruit and a knife, told them to cut the fruit when Yusuf passed by. Instead of cutting the fruit they wounded their hands. They were captivated by the physical beauty of Yusuf ('a).

The Holy Qur'an says:

1- [The news spread and the women began talking]

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتْنَهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ۖ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ۚ إِنَّا
لَنَرُهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

Certain women that were in the city said, 'The Governor's wife seeks to seduce her slave from his (pure) self; surely he has affected her deeply with love; verily we see her in manifest error.' [Surat Yusuf- 12:30]

Whereas at the onset the women reckon Zulaykha to be in manifest error, they themselves invite Yusuf ('a) to have a relationship with him later.

2- [Zulaykha invites the women]

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكًا ۖ وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ
سِكِّينًا ۖ وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ ۖ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا
بَشَرًا ۖ إِن هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

When she heard of their scheming talk, she sent for them, and prepared for them a repast and gave each of them a knife and said [to Yusuf]: 'Come out unto them'. And when they saw him they extolled him; and [in their amazement] cut their 1 hands saying: Hasha lilLah! (Far from Allah is every imperfection!) This is no mortal; this is none but a noble angel.' [Surat Yusuf- 12:31]

3- [Zulaykha admits that they were right, and threatens Yusuf of Imprisonment]

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَاودْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ وَلَئِنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ
مَا أَمَرُهُ لَيَسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُونَا مِنَ الصَّغِيرِينَ

She said: This is he about whom you blamed me; and indeed I sought to seduce him from his [pure] self, but he did firmly abstain himself guiltless; and now if he does not do what I command him, he shall certainly be imprisoned, and he shall ; certainly be of those brought low! [Surat Yusuf- 12:32]

Despite accusing Yusuf ('a) at the onset of trying to seduce her, she clearly admits that she was the one who tried to provoke him. Furthermore, she says that he would either have to surrender to her i desire or fall in prison [and thus also be branded as the one in fault]

4- [The women would like to have relationship with Yusuf ('a)]

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْهِنَّ
وَأَكُنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

'He said, 'O My Lord, prison is dearer to me than that unto which they invite me (*yad 'anani ilayhi*); and if you do not avert from me their conspiracy I may yearn unto them and become of the ignorant ones' [Surat Yusuf- 12:33]

In a lengthy tradition narrated¹⁰⁵ by Abu Hamza al-Thumali, Imam Zayn al-' Abidin ('a) is reported to have said that after leaving the gathering that Zulaykha had organized, each one of the women sent a message to Yusuf secretly [in the absence of Zulaykha] and asked

¹⁰⁵, Allama Tabataba'i, *Tafsir al-Mizan*, v. 11, pp. 164-165]

him that they would like to meet him. But Prophet Yusuf ('a) refused, and prayed to Allah:

وَالَا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْنَّ وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

'If You do not ward off their scheme, I would be inclined to them and be of the ignorant ones.'

According to commentators of the Qur'an, the word *yad'unani ilayhi* (is dearer to me than "they call me to") which is in the imperfect tense (*mudari* ') indicates that they were persistently inviting Yusuf ('a) towards themselves. However, Prophet Yusuf ('a) cried:

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ ۖ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَيْنَّ
وَأَكُن مِّنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

'O My Lord, prison is dearer to me than that unto which they invite me; and if you do not avert from me their conspiracy I may yearn unto them and become of the ignorant ones' [Surat Yusuf- 12:33]

This verse clearly shows that Prophet Yusuf ('a) had the sexual desire, and was aware of the danger he was entrapped in. He therefore beseeched Almighty Allah to protect him from what they conspired. He preferred to be imprisoned and accepted humiliation [of being attributed falsely to be at fault] but dared to disobey his Lord. And the All-merciful Lord responded:

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

And his Lord accepted his prayer and ward off their conspiracy; surely he is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.

These are situations when the true visage of a believer is unraveled. Prophet Yusuf ('a) prefers to be a captive of the external forces then to be entrapped by the licentious forces within, which ruin the human being and his entire future. The prison here is a place of safety and salvation. It is a place of shelter for this spirit, which is burning with the love of Allah (swt). He is ready to suffer

the travails and hardships of imprisonment and humiliation but cannot withstand the torture of disobeying the only Beloved, who reared him to be what he was. And how can it ever be conceivable for one whose heart brims with the love of Allah to even think of blemishing his hands with sin?

A Subtle Allusion,

'Allama Tabataba'i in his *Al-Mizan* says something worthy of reflection: when Zulaykha tightly closed the doors of her room (*ghallaqat al-abwab*), and depending on the apparent power that she had, said: '*hayta lak*' (Come [to me]!), Yusuf ('a) was immersed in the love of Allah and forgot every apparent means of refuge, including himself; hence when seeking refuge in Almighty Allah, he never said "*Inni a 'udhu*" (Surely I seek refuge) but said: '*ma' adhallah!*' [Nb: Although both *a 'udhu billahi* and *ma' adhallah* show that Yusuf seeks Refuge in Allah, but in the case of the latter (i.e. *ma' adhallah*) the supplicant forgets all the apparent means of refuge, including himself].

'Allama Tabataba'i¹⁰⁶ says

...فَلَمْ يَقُلْ: إِنِّي أَعُوذُ مِنْكَ بِاللَّهِ أَوْ مَا يُؤْتِي مَعْنَاهُ، وَإِنَّمَا قَالَ: مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ...

...he [prophet Yusuf ('a)] did not say: 'Indeed I seek refuge with Allah from you. ..' or a statement similar to that; rather he only said: 'ma 'aadhallaah ' (hence not making any mention of "I" or "You" or any other means). ..

Then' Allama continues saying:

...وَكَمْ مِنَ الْفَرْقِ بَيْنَ قَوْلِهِ هَذَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْلِ مَرْيَمَ لِلرُّوحِ لَمَّا تَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا: إِنِّي أَعُوذُ
بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ...

...and what a great a difference between this statement of his and Maryam's statement to the Holy Spirit when he appeared to her in the form of a man: 'Surely I take refuge in the All-merciful from you... [19:18]

¹⁰⁶ , Allama Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan*, v .11, pp.120-123

The Captive of Allah on Earth!

'Allama Majlisi in his magnum opus 'The Oceans of Lights' narrates¹⁰⁷ a tradition in which the Prophet (s) is asked to explain the status of Imam' Ali ('a), whereupon the Prophet (s) speaks about his merits at great length. At one point he says:

أَلَا مَنْ أَحَبَّ عَلِيًّا سُمِّيَ أَسِيرُ اللَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَبَاهَى اللَّهُ بِهِ مَلَائِكَتَهُ وَحَمَلَهُ عَرْشُهُ

Indeed whosoever loves' Ali is called the captive of Allah on the earth and Allah is proud of him near His angels and the Bearers of His throne.

Here two points must be understood:

1. What does 'love for' Ali ('a)' mean in this tradition?
2. What does it mean to be Allah' s captive on earth?

What makes us love' Ali ('a)? Is it his blessed physical appearance? Is it the place where he lived? Is it the people whom he met? Is it the tribe, which he belonged to? Or is it his excellent characteristics, which manifest true Islam or in the words of the gnostics 'manifest the Divine Attributes'? Clearly it is the knowledge of' Ali's manifestation of Divine Attributes that ignites sparks of love in our hearts. We would like to enjoy his company; rather, if we look at the depth of the matter, 'we would like to be another Ali'. Love itself draws one to seek unity with the beloved.

The believers, therefore, who experience love for Imam' Ali ('a), in reality seek 'his Attributes'. And 'the attributes of' Ali ('a)' are the attributes of the Prophet (s); and the attributes of the Prophet (s) are manifestations of the Attributes of Allah (swt). Look at the following traditions painstakingly:

The Holy Prophet (s) is reported¹⁰⁸ to have said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ عَلِيًّا فَقَدْ أَحَبَّنِي، وَمَنْ أَحَبَّنِي فَقَدْ أَحَبَّ اللَّهَ

Whosoever loves Ali, loves me; and whosoever loves me, loves Allah

107 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar-al-Anwar*, v.27, p.115, tr.89

108 'Allama Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, v.5, p.69, tr.1]

What use is that love which has no effect to follow? In a tradition, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ('a) addressing Jabir Ju'fi, says¹⁰⁹:

...يَا جَابِرُ مَنْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَأَحَبَّنَا فَهُوَ وَلِيُّنَا وَمَنْ عَصَى اللَّهَ لَمْ يَنْفَعَهُ حُبُّنَا

...a Jabir! He who obeys Allah and loves us, is our friend; and whosoever disobeys Him, our love would not benefit him.

Imagine that you are fond of a particular attire, which would surely make you look presentable and handsome/beautiful. If there is no hurdle in your way or there is a hurdle, but can be removed easily, wouldn't you try to purchase the dress? Certainly you would. Likewise, if 'one really is fond of acquiring the attributes of Imam, Ali ('a)' and has the means at his disposal and can vanquish the hurdle of 'his selfish desires' wouldn't he struggle for the same?

Nevertheless, there are degrees of love, which remain in the level of the heart and have little effect in the minds and the hearts. Such people, due to maintaining their 'innate disposition' (*fitra*) up to a certain extent, would be cleansed in the Hell Fire before residing in heaven. Some traditions do allude to this reality.

But when we equate a lover of 'Ali ('a) with a captive of Allah (swt) whom Almighty Allah is proud of, it is wrong to think that love here merely stands for emotional attachment. Can the possession of 'emotional attachment' be the same as 'complete obedience to Allah'? Certainly not. Therefore love in the tradition under discussion is of a greater degree. The Holy Qur'an [2: 165] alludes to this as follows:

...وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ ...

And those who believe have more intense love for Allah

A Free Man in Karbala

The timeless event of Karbala reveals a beautiful example of one who freed himself from the shackles of his vain inclinations and consequently represented an embodiment of his name. He was

¹⁰⁹ Muhammadi al-Rayy Shahri, *Mizan al-Hikma*, v.1, p.519, tr. 3211]

called Hurr (the free one). At the onset he was among the commanders of Yazid. However, upon realization of the worth of the truth, he repented and joined the ranks of Imam al-Husayn ('a). Having fought very bravely in the ranks of the Imam ('a) against the Kuffar, he attained the exalted station of martyrdom. In his last moments, as Imam al-Husayn ('a) was wiping blood from his radiant face, he said:

أَنْتَ حُرٌّ كَمَا سَمَّيْتُكَ أُمُّكَ، وَأَنْتَ حُرٌّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

You are Hurr (a free man) as your mother named you; and you are free in this world as well as the Hereafter

The well-known Shi'a historian, Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, in his *Hayat al-Imam al-Husayn ('a)* after quoting the above, remarks:

لَقَدْ كَانَ الْحُرُّ حُرًّا حِينَمَا تَغْلِبُ عَقْلُهُ هَوَاهُ...

Surely Hurr was 'a free man' when his intellect won over his vain inclination (*hawahu*) ¹¹⁰

A Deliberation on the Solution

1. When we pray to Almighty Allah to release all the captives, we do not pray for the release of every kind of captive, whether he/she be a captive of Allah or a captive of Satan. We rather pray for all those captives whose captivity hampers them from physical and spiritual prosperity. However, deliverance from spiritual captivity, as we mentioned above, is in the hands of the captive himself. If he wakes up from his slumber and changes his wrong attitudes, he would free himself. And one who is successful in doing so can struggle to spread the culture of how to free others from the shackles of spiritual imprisonment, and consequently translate this radiant verse of the supplication into action.
2. Both physical and spiritual captivity sometimes are genuine and the fault of the prisoner himself. For example: if one were to intentionally steal or prefer his/her mundane desires to Divine law. Hence, the supplicant should also try to humbly seek the eradication

¹¹⁰ Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, *Hayat al-Imam al-Husayn ('a)*, v.3, p.222]

of the causes that lead to such imprisonment. In reality both kinds of imprisonment in their genuine state stem from *ittibaa' al-hawaa* (following one's base inclinations]. Therefore, we must pray that the culture of *taqwa* penetrates into our societies so that 'genuine' imprisonment no more prevails.

3. Many cases of imprisonment in the contemporary era are manifestations of oppression by ungodly governments. Such acts of oppression can sometimes be aborted by a united uprising by the masses. If the masses continue such protests, it would obviously frighten the government and there would be chances for the release of the innocent captives.

4. A substantial number of so-called Muslim states can hamper the mass killings of the blood thirsty superpowers, for one of the most significant sources of energy are in their hands: oil, or 'black gold'. The case of Palestine also can be solved very easily by them. But it is their base interests that hamper them from using their intellects, and in the process make them earn eternal ignominy.

Index of Qur'anic Verses

Index of Qur'anic Verses

Surat al-Hamd- Chapter 1

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

1:6: p.67

Guide us on the Straight Path

Surat al-Baqarar- Chapter 2

2:45: p.25

وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ

And take recourse in patience and prayer, and that is indeed hard except for the fearful ones

2:155: p.29-30

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ ...

And We would certainly try You with somewhat of fear and hunger.

2: 165: p.94

... وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ ...

And those who believe have more intense love for Allah

2:282: p.32

...وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ ...

And be God-wary, and Allah will teach you

2:286: p.57

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا...

Allah does not oblige a soul save to the extent of its capacity. ..

Surat Ali 'Imran ('a)- Chapter 3

3: 30: p.41

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا
وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا...

On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that evil was a long distance. ..

3:135: p.59

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ
يَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

And those when they commit an indecency or oppress themselves, remember Allah and seek forgiveness of their sins; and who can forgive a sin save Allah?

3:192: p.41

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ...

O Lord, surely whomsoever you place in the Fire, you have indeed disgraced him...

Surat al-A 'raf- Chapter 7

7: 26: pp.39-40

يَسْبِقُ ءَادَمَ قَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ لِبَاسًا يُورِي سُوءَ بَشَرِكُمْ وَرَدِشًا
وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوَى ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ...

O children of Adam, surely we have sent down for you clothing *that covers your shame* and an attire that **causes beauty**; and the attire of piety; that is better. ..

7:96: p.29

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَأَتَّقُوا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ...

And if the people of the towns were to believe and observe piety, surely we would have opened to them the blessings of the heaven and the earth. ..

7:156: p.16

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

And My Mercy encompasses all things [i.e. every dependent being].

7:175-176: p.87,88

وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي ءَاتَيْنَاهُ ءَايَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ
الْغَاوِينَ . وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ
الْكَلْبِ إِن تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَتْرُكْهُ يَلْهَثْ

Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent Our Signs, but he passed them by: so Satan followed him up, and he went astray. If it had been Our Will, We should have elevated him with Our Signs; but he inclined to the earth, and followed his own vain desires. His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, or if you leave him alone, he (still) lolls out his tongue.

Surat al-Anfal- Chapter 8

8:29: p.32-33

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا...

O believers, if you be God-wary (observe piety) Allah shall enable you to distinguish the truth from the falsehood

Surat Yunus ('a) -Chapter 10

10:62: p. 54

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Surely the Friends of Allah neither fear nor grieve

Surat Yusuf ('a)- Chapter 12

12:23: p.92

مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ...

I seek refuge with Allah

12:30: p.89

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ امْرَأَتُ الْعَزِيزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتْنَهَا عَنْ نَفْسِهِ ۖ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ۚ إِنَّا
لَنَرُهَا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

Certain women that were in the city said, 'The Governor's wife seeks to seduce her slave from his (pure) self; surely he has affected her deeply with love; verily we see her in manifest error.'

12:31: pp.89-90

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ أَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِنَّ وَأَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَكًّا ۖ وَآتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ
سِكِّينًا ۖ وَقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ ۖ وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ مَا هَذَا
بَشَرًا ۖ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ

When she heard of their scheming talk, she sent for them, and prepared for them a repast and gave each of them a knife and said [to Yusuf]: 'Come out unto them '. And when they saw him they extolled him; and [in their amazement] cut their

hands saying: Hasha lilLah! (Far from Allah is every imperfection!) This is no mortal; this is none but a noble angel.'

12:32: p.90

قَالَتْ فَذَلِكُنَّ الَّذِي لُمْتُنَّنِي فِيهِ وَلَقَدْ رَوَدْتُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ وَلَئِنْ لَمْ يَفْعَلْ
مَا أَمَرُهُ لَيَسْجُنَّ وَلَيَكُونَا مِنَ الصَّغِيرِينَ

She said: This is he about whom you blamed me; and indeed I sought to seduce him from his [pure] self, but he did firmly abstain himself guiltless; and now if he does not do what I command him, he shall certainly be imprisoned, and he shall certainly be of those brought low!

12:33: pp88-91

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ وَإِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّي كَيْدَهُنَّ أَصْبُ إِلَهُنَّ
وَأَكُنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

'He said, 'O My Lord, prison is dearer to me than that unto which they invite me (*yad'unani ilayhi*); and if you do not avert from me their conspiracy I may yearn unto them and become of the ignorant ones'

12:34: p.91

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُمْ كَيْدَهُنَّ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

And his Lord accepted his prayer and warded off their conspiracy; surely he is the All-hearing, the All-knowing.

Suratal-Ra'd- Chapter 13**13:17: p.21**

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا...

He sent down water from the sky, and the channels flowed, each according to its measure...

Surat al-Hijr- Chapter 15**15:99: p.37**

وَأَعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ

"And worship your Lord until Conviction comes to you."

Surat al-Kahf- Chapter 18**18:6: p.16**

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَخِيعٌ نَفْسِكَ عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

Then it is near that you will kill yourself in grief, for their outcomes, if they do not believe in this announcement.

Surat Maryam ('a) -Chapter 19**19:18: p.92**

إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ مِنْكَ...

'Surely I take refuge in the All-merciful from you.

Surat Taha -Chapter 20**20:1-2: pp. 17 &18**

طه . مَا أُنزِلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ

Ta ha: We have not sent down the Qur'an to you that you distress yourself

20:114: p.32

وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا

And say: O my Lord increase me in knowledge

Surat al-Anbiya' ('a)- Chapter 21

21:76: p. 56

وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ

And Nuh, when he cried aforetime, so We answered him, and delivered him and, his followers from **the great anguish**.

21:107: p.16

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

And we have not sent you but as a mercy for the worlds

Surat al-Qasas-Chapter 28

28: 50: p.86

...وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بَغْيِرَ هُدًى مِّنَ اللَّهِ...

'....and who is more stray than he who follows his low desires without any guidance from Allah?'

Surat Fatir- Chapter 35**35:8: p.17 & 55**

...فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسْرَتٍ...

...And therefore do not consume yourself for them due to grief [of their unbelief]. ..

35:15: p.22

يَتَأْتِيَ النَّاسُ أَشْتَرُ الْفُقَرَاءِ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

O human beings, you are needy to Allah, and it is Allah Who is Affluent, the praised one:

35:18: pp. 67 & 68

وَمَنْ تَزَكَّى فَإِنَّمَا يَتَزَكَّى لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ

And whosoever purifies himself, purifies himself only for his own soul's good. To Allah is the homecoming (destination).

Surat al-Dhariat- Chapter 51**51:56: p.37**

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

..And I have not created the jinn and men except that they should worship Me."

Surat al-Qamar -Chapter 54**54: 54-55: p.72**

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ ۖ فِي مَقْعَدٍ صَدِيقٍ ۖ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

Surely the God-wary (pious) are in gardens and rivers In the seat of truth with the Most Powerful King

Surat al-Hadid- Chapter 57**57:3: p.18**

هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ وَالْآخِرُ وَالظَّاهِرُ وَالْبَاطِنُ

He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden

Surat al-Mumthana- Chapter 60**60:8: p.17**

لَا يَنْهَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُم مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبَرُّوهُمْ
وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

Allah does not forbid you from doing good and acting fairly with those who have f not made war against you on account of religion nor driven you out of your homes; surely Allah loves those who act equitably.

Surat al-Talaq- Chapter 65**65: 2-3: p.29**

...وَمَن يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا. وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِن حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

And whosoever is God-wary (observes piety) he would make for him an outlet [from difficulties] and bestow on him sustenance from whence he thinks not. ...

Surat al-Tahrim- Chapter 66**66:11: p.73**

رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ

O my Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise.

Surat Nuh ('a)- Chapter 71**71: 10-12: p.29**

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا . يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا . وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ
بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا .

Then I said: seek forgiveness from your Lord, [for] surely He is the Most- forgiving; He would send down abundance of rain upon you; and help you with wealth and sons; and make for you gardens and make for you rivers

Surat 'Abasa- Chapter 80**80:24: p.31**

فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ إِلَى طَعَامِهِ

Then let man look at his food

Surat al-Inshiqaq- Chapter 84**84:6: p. 67**

يَتَأَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدًّا فَلَمْلَمِيهِ

O human being you are always striving unto Your Lord laboriously & you shall meet Him

Surat al-Tariq- Chapter 86**86: 9: p.41**

يَوْمَ تُبْلَى السَّرَائِرُ

The day when the secrets shall be made manifest

Surat al-Fajr- Chapter 89**89: 27-30: p.72**

يَنَاقُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ . أَرْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مُّرْضِيَةً . فَأَدْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي .
وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

O soul at peace, return to your Lord, while You are pleased with Him, and He is pleased with you then enter the company of My obedient servants and enter My Paradise.

Surat al-Takathur- Chapter 102**102: 1-2: p.39**

أَلْهَيْكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ . حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ .

Competing for Abundance has engaged you until you come to the graves

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