

DU'Ā
ESSENCE OF 'IBĀDAT
and
WISDOM OF NAMING
AND THE NAMES OF
AHL AL-BAYT

'Allamah
Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai

DU'Ā - ESSENCE OF 'IBĀDAT
and
WISDOM OF NAMING AND THE NAMES
OF AHL AL-BAYT

(Du'ā - Maghz-i 'Ibādat

Awr

Ḥikmat-i Tasmiyah awr Asmā'-i Ahl al-Bayt)

Revised Edition

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(Sitarah-yi Imtiyaz)

Institute for Spiritual Wisdom

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**Institute for
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Knowledge for a united humanity

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**Institute for
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Knowledge for a united humanity

Dedication

This revised edition of *Du'ā Essence of 'Ibādat* is published with *Wisdom of Naming (Tasmiyah)* and the *Names of Ahl al-Bayt*, thus completing this book on the esoteric meanings of our daily prayer.

The importance of this publication can be gauged by reflecting upon the following *mubarak farmān* of Nūr Mawlānā Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, Ḥaḍīr Imām (*ṣalawātu'llāhi 'alyahi*) made at Poona, India on 22 February, 1969:

“My beloved spiritual children, I came in and I heard several *sūras* of the Qur'ān being recited, and I remind you of the *farmān* which I made to you in the past. I would like each and every spiritual child not only to know the *Du'ā* by heart, but to understand the meaning of the *Du'ā*. It is fundamental for you and for your children and for the future of our Jamat that each and every one of you, particularly the younger members of the Jamat, should understand the meaning of the *Du'ā*.”

The sponsorship of this publication by the family of Nooruddin Kasim Ali Momin can be duly appreciated only in the context of the fundamental importance of reciting the *Du'ā* with its meanings as mentioned in the *farmān* above.

The family of Kasim Ali Wazir Momin and Ladchi Bai Kasim Ali Momin has a long and devoted service to the Imam of the time and the Jamat. They have served in the capacity of Mukhi Kamadia of various *majalis*. All their children have followed in their exemplary footsteps in their love and devotion to the Imam. Among their sons, Ghulam Mustafa Momin, Zahir Ali

Momin and Nooruddin Momin have made outstanding contributions to the dissemination of *ḥaqīqī ʿilm*. Nooruddin, born on 5 June 1962 in this dedicated and devoted religious family, serves the Imam of the time and his Jamat in numerous ways. He has been a volunteer in the Jamat for 10 years.

His wife, Almas (Nahid), born on 12 December 1967 has been a volunteer for 5 years. They are blessed with a son, Zainu'l-[°]Ābidīn, born on 7 April 1991, who participates actively as a LA.

The publication of this significant translation is one more service rendered by this fortunate family to spread esoteric and *ḥaqīqī* knowledge in the Jamat. May their lasting *ʿilmī* services bring *barakāt* manifold to all the members of their family,

Āmīn!

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The Discovery of the Realities of *Ta'awwudh*:

It must be clear to seekers of knowledge and wisdom that *ta'awwudh*, namely to pronounce the sentence (*kalimah*): *a'ūdhu bi'llāhi mina'sh-shayṭāni'r-rajīm* (I seek refuge in Allāh from the stoning/stoned Satan) is among the rules of recitation and other practices of the holy Qur'ān. Some other forms of *ta'awwudh* are also reported in addition to the above, such as:

- *asta'idhu bi'llāhi's-samī'i'l-'alīmī mina'sh-shayṭāni'r-rajīm*;
- *a'ūdhu bi'llāhi'samī'i'l-'alīmī mina'sh-shayṭāni'r-rajīm*;
- *a'ūdhu bi'llāhi mina'sh-shayṭāni'r-rajīm, inna'llāha huwa's-samī'u'l-'alīm*;
- *asta'idhu bi'llāhi mina'sh-shayṭāni'r-rajīm*.

Nonetheless, the ultimate purpose and purport of all these *kalimāt* (sing. *kalimah*) is the same. That is, their reciters seek refuge in God from the evil of the stoning/stoned Satan (*shayṭān-i rajīm*). In doing so, they attempt to put into practice a commandment of God, in which He, may He be glorified, addresses His Prophet: “And when you recite the Qur'ān, seek refuge (*fa'sta'idh*) in Allāh from Satan, the outcast” (16:98). This translation is according to the view, which is held by most of the commentators that *ta'awwudh* should be recited prior to reciting and reading the Qur'ān. However, there are some others who hold that it should be recited after reciting the Qur'ān. One of them is Ibn-i Kathīr, who inclines to this view on the basis of a report related to a *Sunnat* of the Prophet. In this connection, God willing, we will put forward some facts before you, so that you will be able to understand the purpose of this verse and why a difference has arisen in acting upon it.

It should be understood that there are three purposes in the commandments of God to His servants. It is said: Do something! Or, say something! Or, know something! For, a servant's choice in the internal and external aspects of his own existence is confined only to act, speech and knowledge, in which the act is related to body, speech to rational soul and knowledge to intellect.

Let us now investigate the main purpose of the above-mentioned verse. The main purpose of the command *fa'sta'idh* (seek refuge) is to perform a specific deed, and that again in the light of knowledge and wisdom. For, if we suppose that the command of *fa'sta'idh* can be fulfilled by mere recitation of *a'ūdhu bi'llāh* (I seek refuge in Allāh), it would stand only as a prayer to seek refuge. In such a case, we have to also understand that in a prayer, which demands that the servant perform an action, it is alluded that both knowledge and action are required [for God] to accept that prayer. For instance, when we say: "You alone we worship; You alone we ask for help" in our regular prayer, then obviously the condition for the acceptance of the prayer precedes its expression. That is, we must know how help can be sought exclusively from God, and to know that the key to seek help is alluded in *'ibādat* (worship). That is, it is alluded that the condition for seeking Divine help is *'ibādat*. This *'ibādat* again is not that of an ordinary and ignorant person, but is in its most correct form [by mentioning *īyyāka* (You alone)], that is, the *'arīfānah 'ibādat* (i.e. worship in the light of *ma'rīfat*, God's recognition) Thus, it is evident that there is a practical condition for the acceptance of every prayer. This means that the main purpose of the command *fa'sta'idh* (seek refuge) is not that we should be content with the utterance of the words alone and disregard knowledge and action, which are implied in its meaning.

After this explanation, let us turn to the correct translation of the above-mentioned verse (16:98), which is: “When you have recited the Qur’ān, seek refuge in Allāh from the stoning Satan”. Two questions can be asked about this translation. First, what is the meaning of having recited the Qur’ān and then coming into contact with Satan and seeking refuge in Allāh from him? Second, what is the primary meaning of calling the outcast Satan “stoning (*rajīm*)”? The answer to the first question is that the measure and tense of the verb applicable to the verse: “*fa-idhā faraghta fa’nṣab* (When you are relieved, appoint!)” are also applied to the verse: “*fa-idhā qara’ta’l-Qur’āna fa’sṭa’idh*”. Thus its correct translation is: “When you have recited the Qur’ān, seek refuge in Allāh from the stoning Satan.” The first proof is that guidance for the ultimate salvation of human beings is hidden in the meaning of the command in which God specially addresses the Prophet. Thus, this commandment contains the guidance of attaining the eternal protection of Allāh by decisively escaping from the evils of Satan, and the universal condition to succeed in this supreme goal is to read the Qur’ān first. That is, to understand its essential meaning properly.

The second proof is that the word 'Qur’ān' means 'reading', as God says: “Lo! Upon Us (rests) the putting together of it (in your heart) and the reading of it, and when We read it, follow you the reading” (75:17-18). Thus if we translate the verse of *ta’awwudh* (16:98) in the following way: “When you have read the reading (Qur’ān), seek refuge in Allāh from the stoning Satan”, it is tantamount to saying that a *mu’min* is protected temporarily from the dangers and disturbing thoughts of Satan, of humankind and *jinn*, when he has recited the usual prayers of daily *‘ibādat* or the special words or names, etc. because the Qur’ān means reading. Today, if the speech of God revealed to the holy Prophet is given the name Qur’ān, it is because of the fact that before the appearance of the signs of Prophethood, the

Prophet used to recite the Supreme Name (*ism-i a'zam*). This resulted in the form of Divine speech (*kalām-i ilāhī*). The sacred Divine speech was given the blessed name 'Qur'ān', namely 'reading' for this reason, so that an ever-lasting reminder of the successful *'arīfānah 'ibādat* of the holy Prophet, which he used to practise in the cave of Hirā' and other places may remain forever.

Some time after the remembrance of the *ism-i a'zam*, miraculous and wisdom-filled spiritual events began to occur to the holy Prophet. These events continued. However the Prophet had no time to reflect on them satisfactorily, as there was in front of him a whole world of spiritual unveiling (*mukāshafah*) and observation (*mushāhadah*). Then Jibrā'īl started to bring regular revelation from God. Some time later, when the Prophet became worried about losing these wisdom-filled experiences of the initial stages of his spirituality, God assured him by telling him: "Indeed, it rests upon Us to put together this entire Speech (which is the result of your spirituality) in your heart, i.e. the light, and to read it" (75:17-18). This explanation shows that true *mu'mins* can escape and be protected in the eternal refuge of God from the constant attacks of Satan only if they have attained the reality and wisdom of the wise Qur'ān and the recognition of the light of Muḥammad, peace be upon him and his progeny.

The detailed answer to the second question regarding the word *rajīm* is that its primary meaning is 'stoning' or 'the one who stones'. That is, in order to deflect people from the straight path, Satan poses questions with utmost vigour, from which only the shield of Qur'ānic knowledge and wisdom can save a *mu'min*, and the key to Qur'ānic knowledge and wisdom is hidden in true obedience to the Prophet of God. It must be known that the name of the greatest Satan is Iblīs, who has innumerable offspring. Some of them are hidden in the form of *jinn*s

(invisible creatures) and some of them in the guise of animals and human beings.

Let us suppose that a devilish person continues to divert a true Muslim from the straight path and in order to do so, he tries to impress him with his fabricated knowledge, which contains nothing but falsehood, deception and cunning. Now, however soft, sweet and pleasing the words of this representative of Iblis may be, the way the soul of faith (*rūḥu'l-imān*) of this *mu'min* becomes wounded by his words, is called *rajīm* or stoning. Obviously on such occasions, only true knowledge, *dhikr* and *'ibādat* can help him. For, not only does true knowledge shine from *'ibādat*, but a miraculous kind of spiritual knowledge is also received from it.

The main and ultimate purpose of the Divine command: “When you have read the Qur’ān, seek refuge in God from the stoning Satan”, has now been established. We came to know through the Light and the Book of God (5:15), who Iblis, Satan, etc., are and where and how they attack; with what kind of arms we can encounter them, or what is the way of escaping from their attacks and coming to the refuge of God. These tactics of fighting Satan or escaping from him and coming into God's protection are necessary as, according to the Qur’ān, he is our open enemy and has an innumerable army.

In the Name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The Discovery of the Realities of *Tasmiyah*:

Seeking special success from the Lord of the worlds, it is stated that *tasmiyah* is the name of the *kalimah* “*Bismi'llāh*”, which is found in the beginning of every *sūrah* (except *sūrah* of *Tawbah*) of the holy Qur'ān. This *kalimah*, the complete form of which is “*Bismi'llāhi'r-raḥmāni'r-raḥīm*” is among those blessed *kalimātī* (consisting of more than one word) names of God, which are elaborate and full of spiritual bounties and blessings, as the Qur'ān says: “Full of *barkat* (ped. *barakat*, blessing) is the name of your Lord, Mighty and Glorious” (55:78). Here the special meaning of *barkat* or blessing is the infinity of knowledge and wisdom. That is, the chain of the wonders of knowledge, which commences as a result of the constant remembrance of the special names of the Lord, never ceases. And under this supreme blessing of knowledge and wisdom, other spiritual and material blessings can also be attained. The word *barkat* literally means growth and increase.

Many blessings and virtues of *tasmiyah* or *Bismi'llāh* are mentioned in the books of Exegeses and Traditions and in other related literature. For instance, in *Kawkab-i Durri* (p. 297), it is narrated from Ibn Fakhri that one day the Prince of the faithful, 'Alī said: “If I wish I can load seventy camels with (the exegesis of) the *bā'* of *Bismi'llāh*”. That is, the weight of those books would be equal to the load of seventy camels.

This shows that the *tasmiyah* has many meanings. The gist of all these meanings is the praise of God's blessed name and the guidance to remember him. As God says: “And eat not that whereupon Allāh's name has not been mentioned (during slaughtering)” (6:122). Two facts emerge from this verse: one is that just as there are *lafẓī* names (consisting of one word) of God, there are also His *kalimātī* names. For, God considers the whole of the *kalimah* “*Bismi'llāhi wa'llāhu akbar* (with the name of Allāh and Allāh is great)”, which is recited during the

slaughtering of lawful (*halāl*) animals as His name, in which there is His *lafẓī* name as well as the guidance to remember His names. Further, in the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'ān, Jibrā'il said to the Prophet: "Take the name of your Lord and recite it" (96:1). This command was carried out in the form of reciting *Bismi'llāhi'r-raḥmāni'r-raḥīm*. Thus it is evident that the entire verse of *Bismi'llāh* is one of the *kalimāti* names of God. For, the name of the Lord, which [the Prophet] had to recite before the recitation of the first *sūrah* (96) of the holy Qur'ān was this *Bismi'llāh*.

The other fact is that human beings are given limited freewill (*ikhtiyār*). This means that a person, in his original and natural state, stands balanced between good and bad, just as an honest goldsmith carefully adjusts the beam of his scales prior to weighing, so that in any transactions related to gold, neither the seller nor the buyer suffers any loss or injustice. This example shows that when human beings are in their original natural state, they can incline easily either to good or bad by the slightest movement of their will. Since they make this voluntary movement by their own choice, it is called freewill.

If someone asks: Since the human will is like a balance, whose scales are equipoised perfectly, how did the difference or contradiction occur in such a balanced and equipoised will that, sometimes it inclines towards good and sometimes towards bad? The answer is: The human will is under the influence of two equally opposing powers - the intellect (*‘aql*, i.e. the power which persuades to do good) and the carnal soul (*nafs*, i.e. the power to do bad). Therefore, the human will is sometimes controlled by the *‘aql* and sometimes by the *nafs*.

Thus the hidden battle of the human *‘aql* and *nafs* always continues. This battle or tug of war is not confined to external speech and action only, but also continues internally in thoughts, ideas and pure will. In such a case, the all-embracing mercy of God necessitates that the *‘aql* be helped to compel the

nafs to follow it in every instance, and to make it detest those pleasures for which it opposes the *‘aql*, and to persuade it towards the higher pleasures and delights of the spiritual kind.

Thus God, the Omnipotent, has placed His names in front of human beings, in which there is luminous help for the *‘aql* and spiritual happiness for the *nafs*, so that by remembering them they may attain satisfaction of the heart. As God says: “Verily, in the remembrance of God (which is done through His real names) do hearts find satisfaction” (13:28). Heart is another name for the *nafs*. The *nafs* receives spiritual happiness from the remembrance of God and in the hope of more delight and happiness it starts to obey the *‘aql*.

To such a *nafs*, which following the *‘aql* has attained final satisfaction and spiritual peace by doing *‘ibādat* and true *dhikr*, comes this call from God: “O the satisfied soul! Return unto your Lord, in a state in which you are happy with Him and He is happy with you. Enter among My (specially favoured) servants and enter My Paradise” (89:26-30).

In the famous story in the Qur’ān about Ḥaḍrat Ādam, he was taught the knowledge of names (*‘ilmul-asmā’*). However, except for the people of wisdom, nobody knows how this knowledge was given to him. Was this knowledge acquired (*iktisābi*, external) or was it given (*‘atā’i*, miraculous)? Did God teach Ādam the names of things or His own beautiful names (*al-asmā’u’l-ḥusnā*) (i.e. His Supreme Names)? Is it not true that the names of all the things of the universe and existents and all the sciences related to them, are hidden in the names of God? Is it not true that it is God's names that are like the luminous keys to enter the treasures of the knowledge of the heavens and the earth? As God says about them: “His are the keys of the heavens and the earth” (39:63).

If it is true that God's names are the keys to the treasures of the heavens and the earth, then as a principle, it is also true that

there has to be a separate treasure of all their keys, of which the most important is neither a *waqf* (endowment) available to every individual so that he may steal the treasures, nor can it be kept in another treasure. Had it been so, it too would need a key and so on *ad infinitum*; nor can it be kept in an open place. Rather, this key has to be with a person who, despite being alive and present is, in the words of Mawlā-yi Rūmī, hidden within seven hundred veils. Such a person is the Perfect Man, namely, the Imam of the time.

Thus, one should rest assured that all the names of God, which are the keys to the treasures of the knowledge of the heavens and earth, are under the Supreme Name (*ism-i a'zam*). Further, one should rest assured that the knowledge of names was given to Ḥaḍrat Ādam in a miraculous way, as a result of the remembrance of the Supreme Name, and the same way of teaching was prescribed for Prophet Muḥammad and the other Prophets and friends (of God) and remains so. Thus it is evident that it is the real name of God alone, which is the key to knowledge and recognition (*ma'rifat*). It was because of this that Jibrā'il, when bringing the revelation for the first time to the Prophet, said to him: "Read by the means of/through the name of your Lord".


In Ḥaḍrat Nūḥ's time, when the deluge started, the prayer which he uttered before letting the obedient *mu'mins* embark on the Ark, was in the form of *Bismi'llāh*, as the Qur'ān says: "And He said: Embark therein! Its course and its mooring is by the name of God" (11:41). Here, it is important to note that certain meanings and realities are hidden in a *du'ā* (prayer) or *kalimah* (word) or *ism* (name) prescribed to recite as *dhikr-i ilāhi* (Divine remembrance), which in comparison to other realities, are as necessary to understand as it is to recite *dhikr-i ilāhi* in comparison to other [forms of] *ibādat*.

The preceding discussion reveals the necessity and importance of understanding the meaning and reality of *Bismi'llāh*. Thus,

Bismi'llāhi'r-raḥmāni'r-raḥim means 'In the name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful'. This however, is its superficial meaning. Therefore in order to ascertain its real teaching and ultimate meaning, we have to look with insight into the important verses related to *Bismi'llāh*. It is well-known to many people that when Jibrā'il first brought the message from Allāh, the *kalimah* of *Bismi'llāh* was not in its beginning as a part of it. Had it been so, it would not have been said: "Take the name of your Lord and read", rather it would have simply been said: "Read it". Further, if *Bismi'llāh* had been a part of the *sūrah*, then it was not necessary to mention it separately. Thus, it is evident that the *kalimah* of *Bismi'llāh* was not in the beginning of any *sūrah*, but is only a verse of the text of the Qur'ān (27:30), similar to the verse of *istī'ādhah* (16:98). However, it is recited as a token of respect and is written in the beginning of every *sūrah* of the Qur'ān (with the exception of *Tawbah*). The first reason for this is that the Prophet was told to take the name of the Lord and recite the Qur'ān, and the second reason is its esoteric importance.

Now let us discuss what was said to the Prophet regarding the recitation of the first revelation taking the name of the Lord. God says: "*Iqra' bismi rabbika'lladhi khalaqa* (O Prophet!) Read the Qur'ān (which has started to reveal to you) taking the name of your Lord, Who created" (96:1). That is, understand the reality of the revelation in the light of the "Supreme Name" of the Lord, through Whose nurturing your spiritual creation has become completed. "He created man from a clot" (96:2), that is, He created the Perfect Man from a chain of *dhikr*, whose words were linked with each other as the drops of blood congeal with each other and become a clot from which human beings are created. "Read (this Qur'ān) and your Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who taught by means of the pen" (96:3-4). That is, read again the reality of the revelation in the light of the same *dhikr*, for your Lord is the Most Bounteous Who, by means of the pen, namely the Pearl of Intellect (*gawhar-i 'aql*),

taught you some signs, which require deep reflection. “He taught man that which he knew not” (96:5), that is, He taught the Perfect Man all those things that he did not know, through these special ways of spirituality.

Now let us see the realities and the secrets of *Bismi'llāhi'r-raḥmāni'r-raḥīm* in the light of what has been discussed above. The letter *bā'* is used in the sense of seeking help (*istī'ānat*), translated into English as 'with', 'through', 'by means of'. The original name of *bā'* was “*bayt* (house)”. For, the symbol of this letter was a house, at the door of which was shown a standing man, as shown in the diagram:  .

Then gradually, the name '*bayt*' was transformed into *bā'*; the shape of the house changed into a horizontal line and the man into the dot, as shown in *bā'* (ب), the second letter of the Arabic alphabet.

Thus the indication of the letter *bā'* in the beginning of the Qur'ān, in the beginning of every *sūrah* and in the beginning of a supreme *kalimāti* name of God, like *Bismi'llāh*, is that the wisdom of the holy Book of God, which abounds in the realities of the universe and the secrets of the existents, can be obtained from a special house and further, permission to enter this blessed house can be obtained from a special person. The blessed house is the holy Prophet Muḥammad and the special person, who is like the gate and the gatekeeper of this house, is Mawlānā Murtaḍā 'Alī. It is in this sense that the Prophet said: “I am the house of wisdom and 'Alī is its door”. He also said: “I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī is its gate. Whoever wants knowledge let him come through the gate”. Mawlānā 'Alī also said in this sense: “I am the dot under the *bā'* of *Bismi'llāh*”.

In *Bismi'llāh*, the letter *bā'* is followed by '*ism*', which means the Supreme Name. The word *ism* is followed by *Allāh*, which means the True Worshipped (*ma'būd*). Then follows *ar-raḥmān*, which is an attributive name of God, in which He

provides physical mercies for all humankind and then follows *ar-raḥīm*, which is also an attributive name of God, in which He grants spiritual mercies to *mu'mins* only. These two kinds of mercies start with tenderness of the heart. For *raḥmat*, which in Persian is called *mihr*, means tenderness and kindness of heart. Thus the Prophet used to recite *Bismi'llāh* in the following sense: "I read and understand the Qur'ān through the Supreme Name of God, the True Worshipped, Who is *ar-raḥmān* and provides for physical needs and is *ar-raḥīm* and fulfils spiritual needs".

The gist of the discussion is that the spiritual reality of *Bismi'llāh* depends on the knowledge of every individual. If this is the case, then we should reflect on the verse in which the Prophet is taught to recite *Bismi'llāh*. That is, we should understand the object and meaning of verse (96:1) "Read taking the name of your Lord!" The Prophet is told: 'Read the Qur'ān by means of that name of your Lord by the blessing of whose *dhikr*, your spiritual nurture and creation have become complete'. This indeed is an allusion to the Supreme Name and the Prophet continued the *dhikr* of the Supreme Name even during the revelation of the Qur'ān, just as he did before its revelation. He made the *kalimah* of *Bismi'llāh*, which contains the practical praise of the Supreme Name, the subject heading of the Qur'ān and also of every *sūrah*, so that the Supreme Name is mentioned before anything else in the Qur'ān's arrangement.

It has already been mentioned that *Bismi'llāh* is a verse from the text of the Qur'ān (27:30), in connection with the story of Ḥaḍrat Sulaymān. The Queen of Sheba said (when she received the letter from Ḥaḍrat Sulaymān): "O chieftains! Lo! There has been thrown unto me a noble book. Lo! It is from Sulaymān, and it is: *Bismi'llāhi'r-raḥmāni'r-raḥīm*". In this story, God, the Absolute Wise, has called the world of unveiling of the Queen of Sheba "a noble book", and [her] miraculous conception

(*taṣawwur*) and imagination (*khayāl*) “*Bismi'llāhi'r-raḥmāni'r-raḥīm*”, which was a subsidiary miracle of the hidden *dhikr* of the Supreme Name given [to her] by Ḥaḍrat Sulaymān.

Thus, by *Bismi'llāh* (by means of Allāh's name), the holy Prophet at whatever time he may have said it, meant the greatest miraculous name, the Supreme Name, which is ever-living and is the fountainhead of the light of guidance in the external world and the internal world. For, every wise person can be clear by reflection that, although the word “Allāh” is a name (*ism*) here, like many other examples it has been used as the *musammā* (named one). For instance, in “Read by means of the name of your Lord (*rabb*)” the word 'Lord' is used as *musammā*. Therefore, in order to accomplish this command, *Yā rabb*, (O Lord) *Yā rabb* (O Lord) will not be recited, rather as mentioned earlier, some other name will be recited. Similarly, in *Bismi'llāh*, by *ism* (name) is meant *ism-i-ā'zam* (Supreme Name) and Allāh is used as *musammā*. That is, there is no description of the word 'Allāh' that represents the pure essence of God in this wisdom that is *Bismi'llāh*, rather there is the description of the Supreme Name of God. Also in *ar-raḥmān* and *ar-raḥīm* (the Compassionate, the Merciful), it is the description and praise of the same Supreme Name. It is necessary that this explanation should be studied and reflected upon without being trapped in any kind of *taqlid* (blind conformity), otherwise it is very difficult to understand it. However, it is not difficult for those who have been favoured by God with the gift of understanding the truth.

Wa's-salām! (Peace!)

Du'ā Part One

The Symbols and Secrets of *Ummu'l-Kitāb*

One of the names of the *sūrah* of *Fātiḥah* is *Ummu'l-Kitāb*, which means the origin of the Book. This means that all the wisdoms of the wise Qur'ān and the book of the universe are condensed in it. Or, in other words, the entire Qur'ān is the Divine exegesis of the *sūrah* of *Fātiḥah*. Both these statements are correct, as God says: “*Wa-innahu fī ummi'l-kitābi ladaynā la-‘aliyyun ḥakīm* (And it ‘the holy Qur'ān’ is in the *Ummu'l Kitāb* (*sūrah* of *Fātiḥah*) and that the *Ummu'l-Kitāb* (in luminous existence) is with Us, which is the wise ‘Alī” (43:4). Thus it is an accepted fact for the wise people that, if the Qur'ān on the one hand is condensed in the *sūrah* of *Fātiḥah*, on the other it is with the light of Mawlānā ‘Alī. For, according to a Prophetic Tradition, the *Fātiḥah* is the external *Ummu'l-Kitāb*, whereas the light of Mawlānā ‘Alī is the internal *Ummu'l-Kitāb*. For further elaboration of this point, see the last part of discourse 19 of *Wajh-i Din*.

The *Fātiḥah* being the origin of the Book means that it is the gist of the entire Qur'ān. That is, what is elaborated in the Qur'ān is condensed in it. In other words, the *Fātiḥah* is the condensed Book, whereas the Qur'ān is the elaborated Book. Thus, the *Fātiḥah* is a comprehensive and all-embracing example of Divine guidance and the entire Qur'ān is a compendium of the subsidiary examples of this guidance. Further, in a wisdom-filled way, the *Fātiḥah* is a list of necessary realities by carefully examining which every fortunate wise person can understand what God wills to teach His servants in His cherished Book. This means that one of the beauties of the *Fātiḥah* is that it is a complete list of Qur'ānic

subjects, as shown in the following:

1. *Maʿrifat* (Divine recognition)
2. *Al-Ḥamd* (praise and extollation of God)
3. *Ulūhiyyat* (Divinity)
4. *Rubūbiyyat* (Divine providence)
5. *ʿĀlamīn* (worlds)
6. Physical mercy
7. Spiritual mercy
8. Kingdom of God
9. Time
10. Religion and Resurrection
11. *Ikhlāṣ* (sincerity)
12. *ʿIbādat* (worship)
13. *Istīʿānat* (seeking help)
14. What should we pray for first?
15. *Hidāyat* (guidance)
16. *Ṣirāṭ-i mustaqīm* (straight path)
17. Different paths
18. God's greatest favour
19. The people whom God has favoured
20. What is Divine *ghadab* (anger)?
21. Deviation.

In addition to these, there are other subjects, which are alluded to in the *Fātiḥah*. For instance, why does the dot come before *alif*, i.e. why did the Qurʾān begin with the dot of *Bismi'llāh*, whereas *al-ḥamd* begins with *alif*? Why is the first word of the wise Qurʾān “*bism*”? What is the wisdom hidden in the composition of the Qurʾānic letters *bā'* and *sīn* making “*bis*”? What do the nineteen letters of “*Bismi'llāh*” allude to? What do the seven verses of the *Fātiḥah* signify? What is the allusion of the quinqueliteral (five lettered) word *al-ḥamd* = *alif* (ا), *lām* (ل), *hā'* (ح), *mīm* (م), and *dāl* (د) in the beginning of *Fātiḥah*? However, as these realities are hidden in the depths of wisdom, there is no immediate necessity for ordinary people to search for or enquire about them, nor can this short book contain more elaboration than what has been said. Therefore, God willing,

we will confine ourselves to explaining the above-mentioned subjects to a certain extent only.

(1) Explanation of *Ma'rifat* (Divine Recognition):

Alif-lām (ا ل) in the Arabic language is the definite article. Every common noun (*nakirah*) that is prefixed by it is called definite (*ma'rifah*). *Ma'rifah* means 'definite or known', whereas *nakirah* means 'indefinite or unknown' (which in English are called proper and common nouns respectively). For instance, in Arabic, *al-rajul* (pronounced *ar-rajul*) means the man or a person who is known by sight or by writing or verbally, and contrary to this *rajulun* means a man or a person who is not known by any of these means. Now if somebody looks from a realistic and Islamic point of view and reflects in the light of reason and justice, he cannot deny that for Muslims, the glorification and extollation of God is not left in the unknown form of "*ḥamd*", rather it has been made known in the form of *al-ḥamd* prefixing it with *alif-lām*. This *ḥamd* or the glorification and extollation of God was definitely made known by the Prophet Muḥammad and after him in every age, by his *waṣī* (legatee), 'Alī [and the Imams after him].

In this case if the *ḥamd* of God in its meaning, became known in the form of *al-ḥamd* by prefixing *alif-lām* to its unknown form *ḥamd* through the Prophet and his *waṣī*, it means that they are the ones who have brought the *alif-lām* of *al-ḥamd*. For, if they had not made the *ḥamd* or the praise of God known to the people through their *tanzil* and *ta'wil*, then despite their apparently uttering *al-ḥamdu li'llāh*, in reality it would have remained unknown to them. That is, its real form would have remained indefinite or unknown to them and consequently the *alif-lām* of their pronunciation would not have existed at all. However, it is not so. In the religion of Islam, the *ḥamd* or praise of God has become known now, as the Prophet and his *waṣī* have made it known, [that is, they have made *ḥamd*, *al-ḥamd*]. Thus, the *ḥamd* has now become known both literally and in meaning, as they became the real meaning of *alif-lām*. For, just

as the literal *alif-lām* has made the indefinite *ḥamd* definite, in the same way they, as the real or spiritual *alif-lām*, have made the indefinite meaning of the *ḥamd* definite. Thus, the real meaning of the *alif-lām* of *al-ḥamd* is the holy Prophet and Mawlānā ʿAlī. In the *Fātiḥah*, which is like a list of the subjects of the Qurʾān, the subject of the recognition of God in the form of *alif-lām* has come first, which shows the importance of the recognition of God and the necessity of the means (*wasilah*) through which it can be attained.

(2) *Al-Ḥamd* (Praise and Extollation of God):

Al-Ḥamd's meaning implies all the attributes and beauties of God. It is in this respect that it is translated as "all praises". Each one of these attributes and beauties, when specified, is prefixed with *alif-lām*, such as *al-khāliq* (the Creator), *al-rāziq* (the Sustainer), *al-ʿālim* (the Knowing), *al-samīʿ* (the Hearing), *al-jamāl* (the Beauty), *al-kamāl* (the Perfection), *al-thanāʾ* (the Praise), *al-baqāʾ* (the Survival), etc. The means and causes of the real meaning of *alif-lām*, which is prefixed to all these known attributes and beauties, are the holy Prophet Muḥammad and Mawlānā ʿAlī, as explained above.

Now the question arises: Is this the ultimate recognition (*maʿrifat*) of God, as mentioned above? The answer is "No", rather this is the common and elementary kind of recognition, which belongs to the religion of Islam in comparison to other religions. This recognition is followed by communal recognition, and finally the individual recognition. Nonetheless, as mentioned above, in all these stages of recognition, it is the Prophet and his *waṣī* who are the means of recognition and at every advanced or higher stage the meaning of *al-ḥamd* and the recognition of *alif-lām* become more and more special. For recognition has many stages. God has sent the holy Prophet Muḥammad, as His last and final Prophet in the chain of these stages to make the people pass through them. The Prophet, according to Divine command, appointed Mawlānā ʿAlī as his *waṣī*, so that His everlasting light as the

Imam of the time may continue as the fountainhead of guidance and the means of recognition till the Day of Resurrection.

(3) *Ulūhiyyat* (Divinity):

The third part of the *Fātiḥah* is about *ulūhiyyat* or Divinity and this meaning is hidden in the word “Allāh”. The word “Allāh” originally was *al-ilāh* the definite form of *ilāh*, but because of frequent usage has become “Allāh”. It is therefore not a plastic (*jāmid*) noun, but is derived from *ilāh*. However, there is no doubt that the word “Allāh” is mostly used in the sense of God. Sometimes it also means 'Worshipped One' (*maʿbūd*) and in fact this is its original meaning, as it is said in the Qur'ān: “*Wa-huwa'llāhu fi's-samāwāti wa-fi'l-arḍ* (And He alone is Worshipped in the heavens and in the earth)” (6:3). Thus the word “Allāh” is the subject of *ulūhiyyat*. That is, the subject of Godhead and servitude [of the servants]. However here again the question arises: What is the means of the recognition of the True Worshipped (*maʿbūd*)? And what is the true way of God's worship through which His pleasure can be attained? The detailed answer to this important question is related to all those Qur'ānic verses in which divinity, recognition and servitude are dealt with, and the key to every detail can be obtained from those holy personalities to whom *alif* and *lām* allude, as mentioned earlier.

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(4) *Rubūbiyyat* (Divine Providence):

Rubūbiyyat, which is the attribute of *Rabb*, means Divine Providence. For *rabb* means Nourisher and Lord and thus *rubūbiyyat* means His nourishing or providence and lordship. *Rabb* is an attributive name, which in Arabic is used both in a special sense as well as in an ordinary sense, i.e. it is used for God as well as for human beings. However, in the *Fātiḥah*, it is used in the special sense, because here it is mentioned as that attribute of God according to which He nourishes the existents and the creatures. The nourishment of creatures by God is in three stages: Firstly, nourishment of the intellect by which the needs of rational beings are fulfilled; secondly, spiritual

nourishment by which the needs of animate or living beings are fulfilled; and thirdly, physical nourishment by which the bodies of minerals, vegetables and animals are created and completed. In these three stages of nourishment, there are numerous sub-stages, in which all the different kinds of existents and creatures are nourished.

(5) ‘*Ālamīn* (Worlds):

The first verse of the *Fātiḥah* ends with *al-‘ālamīn* (the worlds) and the whole verse *al-ḥamdu li’llāhi rabbi’l-‘ālamīn* means that all praise is due to Allāh, for He alone nourishes all the worlds. Those who make people aware of this praise of God, are the holy Prophet Muḥammad and his progeny, who are the real meaning of the *alif-lām* of *al-ḥamd* and the path that leads to the realities of praise and recognition is the ‘*ibādat*, which is performed according to their guidance. For, in the order of the words, Allāh is the fourth word, the One Who necessitates ‘*ibādat*, for it means the True Worshipped. The fruit of ‘*ibādat* should be received in the form of knowledge and recognition, for the fifth word of the verse is “*rabb*”, whose special meaning is 'the one who nourishes the intellect and the soul'. Further, the Prophet has indicated that knowledge and recognition mean the search in which one sees how the *rabb* or Lord nourishes the human intellect and soul. The famous *Ḥadīth* in which the Prophet has mentioned this is: “*Man ‘arafa nafsahu fa-qad ‘arafa rabbahu*, i.e. the one who has seen the reality of his/her essence, namely, the intellect and soul and their nourishment, has seen his/her *rabb* or Nourisher at the end of the chain of this search”.

It is evident here that His attributive name “*rabb*” is referred to in order to attain God's recognition. This means that the recognition and knowledge of the human self or soul are attained in the form of intellectual and spiritual nourishment. In this state, the ‘*arif* sees the examples of all these attributes of God one by one with his inner eye. These examples are extremely luminous, attractive, lovely, wondrous and

unforgettable, and therefore, the *‘ārīf* never forgets the examples of this knowledge and recognition after recognizing his self and his *rabb* (Nourisher). Divine nourishment is applied first and foremost to human beings, for it is the human being who is the most deserving and needy of intellectual, spiritual and physical nourishment. Moreover, the reason for the praise of God that is mentioned here is the nourishment of the universe and existents. That is, it is the nourishment of the worlds, which is His greatest attribute, in which are included His other attributes also. For, in all the names of God are found the meanings of the unstinting benevolence of Divine mercy and the needs of humankind.

***Rabbi'l-‘ālamīn* (Nourisher of the worlds):**

Rabbi'l-‘ālamīn means that God has innumerable worlds. According to some sages of religion, these worlds are of three kinds: The subtle worlds (pure spiritual worlds), the dense worlds (pure physical worlds) and the combined worlds (the worlds which are a combination of body and soul), i.e. the worlds of human personalities.

The worlds that are purely spiritual are beyond space and time and are ever-living angels. For, according to the above-mentioned statement, if human beings can be combined worlds of body and soul, then necessarily angels can also be purely spiritual worlds. As for the purely physical worlds, there cannot be any doubt at all that they are the planets and the stars and the elements, vegetables and animals, in which corporeality is predominant and hence they can be called purely physical worlds.

Thus it is evident that in the meaning of *rabbi'l-‘ālamīn* the nourishment of human worlds is specifically mentioned. For, in the above-mentioned three kinds of worlds, the angels do not need as much nourishment as human beings whereas the pure physical worlds, due to their being devoid of intellect and awareness, are not capable of [receiving] Divine nourishment as are human beings.

Further, it is a clear fact that the word *‘ālamīn* in the holy Qur’ān is used mainly in the sense of human beings, as God says: “*Wamā arsalnāka illā raḥmata ‘l-li-‘ālamīn* (And We sent you not save as a mercy for the peoples)” (21:107). Thus it is evident that the Divine nourishment, which is mentioned in *rabbi‘l-‘ālamīn* is the nourishment of the human worlds in a special sense and that of the other worlds in a general sense. For, if we accept that God nourishes this universe, it has to have fruit; and if there is one, it is humankind. In this case too, the fruit of Divine nourishment is the human being and it is specifically provided for him, just as in reality the nourishment of a tree is for the sake of its fruit.

The wisdom-filled words of the *Fātiḥah* or the *Ummu‘l-kitāb*, which are like the titles of the details of the Qur’ān, have endless meanings, which cannot be described extensively in the present booklet. Therefore, we will explain briefly only those words in whose meanings there is no controversy.

(6) Physical Mercy; (7) Spiritual Mercy; (8) Kingdom of God:

There is no need for further explanation of the physical and spiritual mercy of God, implied by *ar-raḥmān* and *ar-raḥīm* respectively as they have already been explained in the section on *Tasmiyah*. Also the Kingdom of God does not require a detailed explanation, as no religious person doubts it.

(9) Time; (10) Religion and Resurrection:

On the meaning of *Mālikī yawmi‘d-dīn* = the Lord of the Day of Resurrection, one may ask what the secret is in linking the kingdom or lordship of God with the Day of Resurrection, when it is clear that He is the real Lord and unique King of the entire universe and existents? The answer is that there is no doubt that God is the real Lord and unique King of every thing in the universe and existents, nonetheless, He grants partial choice or freewill to the inhabitants of every newly populated planet for a specified time and when this time comes to an end,

He imposes upon them spiritual forces and takes this partial choice back into His Hand.

This means that the inhabitants of newly populated planets pass through two phases of time: In the first phase or cycle they are given a limited choice, whereas in the second phase or cycle this limited choice is taken back from them. For, the ultimate meaning of *mālik* is owner or the one who has power or choice. *Yawm* is used for a specific time or the spiritual cycle. Among the various meanings of *din*, here the most appropriate is religion, retribution and account. Thus, in the spiritual cycle, which is the day of religion, retribution and account, all the powers of the people that were given to them as a trust will be returned to the control of God, the True Owner, and this will result in the disappearance of ideological differences which now exist between people, for as God says: "Whose is the sovereignty this day? It is Allāh's, the One, the Overwhelming" (40:16). By Allāh's kingdom is meant true Islamic rule. The One (*al-wāḥid*) alludes to universal unity and national integrity and the Overwhelming (*al-qahhār*) alludes to the discovery of spiritual forces.

(11) *Ikhlāṣ* (Purity, Sincerity):

In the fourth verse of the *Fātiḥah*, first is mentioned *ikhhlāṣ* or sincerity, that is, to purify one's belief regarding the unity of God from all things other than Him. *Ikhlāṣ* literally means to purify something from adulteration and mixture. Therefore, everything which can possibly be adulterated and alloyed, but is found pure in a true sense is called *khālīṣ* (pure), such as gold, silver etc. Nonetheless, in religious terms *ikhhlāṣ* means that state of the heart in which its attention is towards God alone and in this state, there is not the slightest mixture of other imaginations and thoughts. Regarding this state of the heart, an example from the wise Qur'ān is presented here, which is: "And when they mount upon the ships they pray to Allāh, making their faith pure for Him only, but when He brings them safe to land, behold they ascribe partners (unto Him)" (29:65).

The purport or meaning of this verse depends purely on wisdom. That is, most of the believers in God do not apparently start to pray to Him purifying their faith for Him when they embark on a ship, nor do they unusually ascribe partners to Him instantly upon coming ashore. However, it is true that due to the fear in their hearts when embarking on a ship they become attentive to God, in such a way that no worldly thing can divert their attention from Him, but after landing, this state of the heart, which according to God is called *ikhhlās* or 'pure faith', vanishes and worldly imaginations and thoughts start to enter their hearts. This state of the heart, according to God, is called *shirk* or 'ascribing partners to God'. Thus, *ikhhlās* is the name of that state of heart in which attention is directed towards God alone, just as the people of a ship in a dangerous sea are attentive to God alone.

(12) *‘Ibādat* (Worship):

The first condition of *‘ibādat* (worship), *du‘ā* (prayer) and *dhikr* (remembrance) is *ikhhlās* (purity), which has been discussed above. Thus “*‘Iyyāka na‘budu* = You alone we worship” means: We worship You with purity, free from the dirt of idolatry of thoughts. In short, the way of doing *‘arīfānah ‘ibādat* is taught in this verse, so that every *mu‘min* may gradually reach the highest stage of *‘ibādat* and *ma‘rifat*. However, the question now arises: What is the means through which *ikhhlās* or purity of a *mu‘min* may progress to such an extent that, during *‘ibādat*, there remains in his heart nothing but attention towards God and everything else is forgotten? The answer is that God has created two means to make a human being's headstrong carnal soul follow and obey his intellect: one is fear and the other is hope, as mentioned in the definition of faith (*īmān*): “*al-īmānu bayna'l-khawfi wa'r-rajā'* (faith lies between fear and hope)”. Just as horror and hatred are hidden in the meaning of fear, affection and love are hidden in the meaning of hope. Thus, in a Qur'ānic example of fear, it is explained that the headstrong human *nafs* becomes frightened and starts to work according to

the suggestions of the *‘aql* and how, as a result, the practical *ikhhlās* (sincerity) of a human being rejects the worldly desires of the *nafs*, and his heart's attention and chain of prayers become strong and unbreakable as long as the fear lasts.

The same is the result of hope, that is, true and ardent love. In fact, *mu'mins' ikhlās*, which is based on true and ardent love is stronger and more fruitful than the one based on fear. However, a question still remains: What is the means through which true love can be created for God? A satisfactory answer to this most essential and important question is given in the noble Qur'ān itself where God says: "Say: (O Muḥammad to humankind): If you love Allāh, follow me; Allāh will love you and forgive your sins. Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful" (3:31).

This shows that God does not love those who are trying to love God on their own without following and loving the Prophet. However, when they start to follow and love the Prophet, God also starts to love them and as a result forgives all their sins in this life, so that they may be purified to such an extent that pure love for God may manifest from them. Thus, it is evident that the means of true love for God is to follow and to love the holy Prophet Muḥammad.

Now, if someone asks: "What is the means of truly following the holy Prophet, according to the Qur'ān?" The answer is that the only means of following him is love and friendship of his relatives, as God says, "Say (O Muḥammad unto humankind): I ask of you no reward for it (for conveying the message of God), save friendship for [my] relatives" (42:23).

According to this verse, although the friendship of the Prophet's relatives is an obligation upon every religious person, we have to reflect in the light of intellect and wisdom that it is not something that has been forcefully enjoined upon a group or an individual as a fee for conveying the message, or that one should accept it without knowing about its reality and benefit

and expect that this friendship is what God and His Prophet like. Rather, this friendship is such that the reality of their spiritual closeness to the Prophet and their luminous relationship to him must be understood from the very beginning of his mission. For the relationship of ʿAlī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and their pure progeny, the true Imams, to the Prophet is not only physical, but more so and on a higher level it is luminous and spiritual.

Thus the love and friendship of the luminous relatives of the Prophet mean that they must be obeyed and followed after God and the Prophet. For, to love the higher ranks of religion means to obey them. Those higher ranks love and befriend *mu'mins* in the sense of guiding them and having mercy on them. Thus one of the meanings of verse (3:31) is: "Say (O Muḥammad unto humankind): If you (think that you) love God then (the correct form of loving God is that you should) follow me. (As the result of that) God will love you, (and His love and friendship means) that He will forgive you all your sins."

It is evident that *mu'mins* can love and befriend God, the Prophet and his relatives in the form of [their] obedience. Thus, the means of loving the Prophet is to love his relatives and the means of loving God is to love His Prophet. The love for God has the miraculous effect that it helps *mu'mins* to do His *ʿibādat* in a true sense. It is this true love for God, which is the source of hope and sincerity. It is this love due to which the attention of their hearts remains focused on God, as there is spiritual happiness and luminous peace of a higher kind in this kind of *ʿibādat*.

(13) *Istifānat* (Seeking Help):

Istifānat, i.e. to seek help from God in every good deed is mentioned after *ʿarīfānah ʿibādat* in the *Fātiḥah*, for Divine help comes on a large scale and prominently only after *ʿibādat*. Thus it is said: "*Wa-īyyāka nastaʿin* = And from You alone, we seek help." That is: O God! We purify Your unity from

association of multiplicity and single out Your *ma'rifat*, and seek from You alone miraculous help of the spiritual kind, which is always granted to Your chosen servants.

(14) The First Prayer (*du'ā*):

After seeking spiritual help practically, the first thing that the true *mu'min* does according to Divine teaching is that he prays for guidance. For, in “*al-ḥamdu li'llāhi rabbi'l-ālamīn*” he praises and extolls God, in “*ar-rahmāni'r-rahīm*” he affirms His physical and spiritual mercy, in “*māliki yawmi'd-dīn*” he expresses his hope about the coming of *qiyāmat*, i.e. the spiritual cycle and the exaltation of *mu'mins* in it, and in “*īyyāka na'budu wa-īyyāka nasta'in*” he performs ‘*arīfānah*’ *ibādat* and seeks spiritual help practically. Now the way he prays for guidance shows that special guidance is beyond the *mu'min*'s choice, it is only in God's power. Also it is evident that the first prayer of the holy Qur'ān is to seek guidance. The proof that special guidance depends on Divine will is that a *mu'min* is given some option in the matters mentioned from *al-ḥamdu* till *nasta'in* (i.e. in almost half of the *sūrah*), upon which he acts according to his capacity and also seeks to improve with practical help from God. However, in the matters mentioned from *ihdīnā* till *aḍ-ḍallīn*, the *mu'min* is not given any option, therefore he prays to benefit from some of them and to be saved from others.

Knowledge for a united humanity

(15) *Hidāyat* (Guidance):

It should be noted that Arabic is the most comprehensive language in the world. The wise Qur'ān is revealed in the selected words of this language and the *sūrah* of *Fātiḥah* is in the selected words of the Qur'ān. The purpose of the selection of words is the comprehensiveness and extensiveness of their meanings. Further, it is also a special way of wisdom that when it is intended to expand the meanings of a word, its literal meaning is presented in a most appropriate example. Since many of the realities of the universe and existents resemble each other, therefore this one example can allude to many realities equally.

The word *hidāyat* is one such example, which literally means to guide a person from one place to another in a worldly sense. The nature of guidance in religion also resembles worldly guidance, and is esoteric and exoteric teaching about religion and this world, through which human beings are led from one stage to another to meet God in the final stage. Thus true religion is compared with a straight path and the teacher with the guide, and teaching with showing the path.

(16) *Ṣirāṭ-i Mustaqīm* (Straight Path):

The first example and the first prayer (*duʿā*) of the wise Qurʾān, in which all Muslims seek knowledge and success from God to enable them to recognise the true religion and to progress in it begins with the words: “*Idhinaʾs-ṣirāṭaʾl-mustaqīm* = Guide us on the straight path”. That is: O Allāh! make us benefit from the external and internal means of knowledge and success of True Islam, so that we may advance on the straight path solving all those new problems which crop up due to the states and events of the time, or due to intellectual progress. Here, the knowledge, success and high ambition, which are sought in order to be able to see and walk on the straight path signifies that the true religion really resembles a straight path, whose length and distance with respect to spiritual progress is from *azal* to *abad*; with respect to physical progress, from the cycle of Ādam till the Resurrection; with respect to every *ummat* (community), from one lord of *sharīʿat* to another with respect to [Islam from the advent of] the holy Prophet till the Resurrection; with respect to the personal life of an individual, from his birth to death and with respect to *taṣawwuf* and *ḥaqīqat* from birth to the self-recognition (*khwud-shināsi*) of every individual.

Thus, it is evident that true religion resembles a straight path, which is as difficult to see and walk on, as it is easy. It is easy in the sense that God, Whose favours have been praised from *al-ḥamdu* to *nastaʿin*, has created all the means to see and walk on the straight path through His providence and mercy, and

nothing at all is lacking in this connection. It is difficult in the sense that an extremely cunning and artful enemy, namely Satan, who sometimes appears in the guise of humankind and sometimes disguises himself in the attire of *jinn*, waits on this path with his countless army of horsemen and infantry, to attack suddenly and to cause every individual and group that turns its face to this path and those who walk on it, to flee. For further details on this subject, see the holy Qur'ān: 7:11-25; 17:61-70.

If it is accepted that Satan always exists in this world and that he will continue to divert people from the straight path until the Resurrection, then the law of Divine justice also necessitates the presence of a means to guide people on the straight path until the Resurrection. This means of guidance is the holy Prophet Muḥammad and his progeny, i.e. the Imam of the time, who is the light of the Prophet and Imam 'Alī, about whom God says: "(O Muḥammad!) You are a warner only and for every people there is a guide" (13:7). It is obvious that warning (which is possible by the appearance of miracles and occurrence of calamities or by purely conveying the message) is the work of Prophets, whereas the hidden guidance related to the exoteric and esoteric [aspects of religion] is the Imams' work. Thus, it is evident that, as long as people exist in this world, a guide also exists and is present in it, for according to this verse, the guide and the people, i.e. the people of the time, are attached to each other. This is because of the fact that God said to the Prophet that, through the Qur'ān and his own *Sunnat* he was only a warner to his community until the Resurrection, whereas its guidance would be carried out by the guide, namely, 'Alī and the exalted Imams from his progeny.

(17) Different Paths:

Diverging paths other than the straight path are crooked, harmful and do not lead to the desired destination. Nonetheless, it is possible for those who follow these paths to leave them and come back to the straight path, as the wise Qur'ān says: "And to

Allāh leads the straight path, but there are paths that turn aside. And had He willed He would have led you all aright” (16:9).

(18) God's Greatest Favour:

The greatest bounty (*niʿmat*) or the greatest favour (*inʿām*) of God, which is specifically mentioned in the *Fātiḥah*, is *hidāyat* (guidance) on the straight path. For the meaning of *hidāyat* is hidden knowledge, recognition, wisdom and pleasure of God; it is the name of the light of intellect and soul and it is the name of finding the way to the light of God, for as God says: “God guides unto His light whom He wills” (24:35). That is, God grants the recognition of the Imam of the time to whom He wills, for it is the Imam of the time who is the light of God, and it is through him alone that people receive the exoteric and esoteric guidance of God.

(19) The People whom God has favoured:

This straight path and the guidance on it, belongs to those whom God has favoured, and they comprise five groups: *Nabiyyīn* (Prophets), *ṣiddiqīn* (truthful ones), *shuhadāʾ* (witnesses), *ṣāliḥīn* (righteous ones) and *tābiʿīn* (followers) (see 4:69). That is the *nātiqs*, *asāses*, *imāms*, *ḥujjats* and *dāʿis*, whom God has favoured and they are the people who can guide others on the straight path. For, only those who themselves are guided can guide others. In this verse, the gist of which is given here, first are mentioned the *nabiyyīn* i.e. *nātiqs*, then the *ṣiddiqīn* i.e. *asāses*, because for the affirmation of the *tanzil* of every *nātiq* there is always a *ṣiddiq* or *asās*, who through his *taʿwīl* affirms the *tanzil* of the *nātiq*. Then are mentioned the *shuhadāʾ*, i.e. the *imāms*. The *imāms* are called *shuhadāʾ* or witnesses, because of the fact that each Imam is the witness over the people of his time and there has not been a time in which the Imam of the time was not present and a witness. Then are mentioned the *ṣāliḥīn* i.e. the *ḥujjats*. *Ṣāliḥīn* are the twelve *ḥujjats* on the surface of the earth, who, according to the guidance of the Imam of the time, improve (the conditions of the people of) the world. Then are mentioned the *tābiʿīn* i.e. the *dāʿis*, who follow these four physical *ḥudūd* and also invite the

people to obey the Imam of the time and take *bay'at* from them on his behalf.

So these are the people who are guided on the straight path and they are appointed by God to guide the people. Thus, people are taught to receive guidance from them and follow their path in this prayer, as the Qur'ān says: “*Ṣirāṭa'lladhina an'amta 'alayhim* = (Guide us on) the path of those whom You have favoured”.

(20) What is Divine *Ghaḍab* (Anger)?

One of the important subject headings of the *Fātiḥah* is Divine anger or *ghaḍab*. This means that one of the important subjects of the Qur'ān is about the anger of God. It is necessary therefore to explain it to some extent here. Divine anger is not related to God's pure essence, rather it is included in His law. His law is the name of the collective nature of the universe and existents, whose quintessence is the human being. Thus human nature is like a model or a book of Divine law. In other words, Divine law is within human beings, and it is a kind of automatic law. This means that the effects and consequences, whether good or bad of what a human being intends, speaks or does by his own choice affect him first and last. We may ask: If a human being has equal power over good and bad and Divine law requites him according to whatever he does in accordance with his own desire, to which creature do the actions of God's ninety-nine or hundred attributes apply? The answer is that there is no doubt that a human being can do as much bad as he can do good by the power which God has given him. In this case it appears to be appropriate that he must be requited accordingly. But, in reality, it is not so, rather his bad deeds are requited in like measure, but his good deeds are rewarded ten times over. It is obvious that the nine fold reward is due to God's attributes, and the one is due to his own choice, as the Qur'ān testifies: “Whoso brings a good deed will receive tenfold the like thereof, while whoso brings an ill deed will be awarded but the like thereof; and they will not be wronged” (6:161).

The purpose of this explanation is to show that there is no permanent name for wrath and anger in the attributive names of God. Names like *qāhir* or *qahhār*, which common people use in the sense of anger or wrath, or the use of *qahr* in the sense of *ghaḍab* is a mistake due to their wrong habit. These names actually mean mighty, overwhelming, conquering.

Now it is established that Divine anger as an unchangeable law is hidden in the nature of a human being in the form of his ignorance and negligence. This means that when individuals or a community do not obey the command of God and turn their face away from His *‘ibādat*, their intellects do not receive the knowledge that was hidden in obeying His command and their souls do not receive the spiritual food, which was hidden in His *‘ibādat*. Thus, their ignorance and negligence will continue to increase to the extent that their intellects and souls will be deformed. That is, their capacity to acquire true knowledge, wisdom and pleasure from *dhikr* and *‘ibādat* will disappear even though they will remain in a human shape and form, as God says: “And had We willed, We verily could have transformed them in their place, making them powerless to go forward or turn back” (36:67). That is, if We had willed We could have transformed them into the habits and characteristics of an animal in a human body, due to which they would neither have progressed in humanity, nor could they have returned to the natural capacities of their childhood. They will remain in a state in which they have lost their natural capacities.

(21) Deviation:

According to the *sūrah* of *Fātiḥah*, the people of every age are divided into four groups with respect to religion and law. The first group is guided by the special favours of God. They follow the straight path and can guide others on it. The second group is capable of following the straight path and constantly prays to be able to do so. The third group is that which has become subject to the wrath and anger of God. The path that they have chosen is not one that can join the straight path. The fourth

group consists of those who have deviated from the straight path and the path which they now follow does not lead to the desired destination, for as God says: “*Ghayri'l-maghḏūbi ʿalayhim wa-la'ḏ-ḏāllin* = Not (the path) of those who earn Your anger nor of those who go astray”.

Section on the words of *Ṣalāt*:

“*Sajada wajhi ilayka* = O Allāh! my intention, attention and face are prostrated before You with submissiveness and humility.” *Sajdah* means to bow down with submissiveness and humility. *Wajh* here is used in the sense of intention, attention and face. And the appropriate translation of *ilayka* here, is 'before You'. “*Wa-tawakkaltu ʿalayka* = And I trusted in You”. That is, I entrust those matters to You which are beyond my power, and rely on You. “*Minka quwwati* = From You is provided my strength”. That is, if I can do anything within my power, spiritually and physically, this is through the means granted by You. “*Wa-anta ʿiṣmati yā rabb'al-ʿālamīn* = And it is You Who is my protection and refuge, O Lord of the worlds”. That is, it is You Who protects me from sins and affliction through Your spiritual and physical guidance and miraculous power. For it is You Who sustains the worlds. And it is the nature (habit) of the Sustainer to sustain and protect more the one who is more needy and cries more.

“*Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Muḥammadini'l-muṣṭafā* = O Allāh! send mercy through the chosen Muḥammad”, whom You have sent as an all-embracing mercy for the people of the worlds (21:107), “*Wa-ʿalā ʿAliyyini'l-murtaḏā* = And through the selected ʿAlī, whom You have given the title of *al-Kawthar* (the one who has abundant children) and considered him as the son of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad; “*Wa-ʿalā'l-aʿimmati'l-aṭḥār* = And through the pure and true Imams”, who are the luminous and spiritual children of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad, peace be upon him and his progeny and *al-Kawthar* (i.e. ʿAlī). For God, in the *sūrah* of *al-Kawthar*, considers them the children of the Prophet and his true heirs, successors and bearers of his light of

guidance, and refutes the taunt of the infidel who said that Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, had no male issue. This infidel, according to some reports was ʿĀṣ bin Wā'il, and according to others, ʿAqabah bin Abū Muʿayyit and according to Ibn Abbās, it was Kaʿab bin Ashraf and a group of the Quraysh who taunted the Prophet thus.

“Wa-ʿalā ḥujjati'l-amri ṣāhibi'z-zamāni wa'l-ʿaṣri imāmina'l-ḥādiri'l-mawjūdi mawlānā Shāh Karimi'l-Ḥusaynī = And send mercy through our present and living Imam Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, who is the proof of Your command and the master of external time (zamān) and internal time (ʿaṣr)”. The proof of the command means that God has never left this world without a guide. For, had He done so, on the Day of Judgement people would have said: O our Lord, there was no present and living guide from You in our time and therefore we could not understand the ultimate purpose of Your Book. In such a case, in view of the law of justice, they would have been right in their argument against God, and He would have been accountable for not having provided guidance. But the fact is that the argument stands against the people, for in every age He has sent a messenger for their guidance, and then He has appointed a true successor to him so that the people would not have an argument against Him about the lack of guidance, for as He says: “So that humankind might have no argument against God, after the messengers” (4:164). Thus, after the holy Prophet until the Resurrection, the Imam of every age in his time is the proof of the command and guidance of God over humankind, therefore people have no argument against God on the Day of Resurrection.

“Inner time (ʿaṣr-i bāṭin)” is the name of spiritual time, which is linked to external time (zamānah-i zāhir), just like the soul is linked to the body. In other words, ʿaṣr is the name of the spiritual cycle, which is hidden in the physical cycle and when this cycle will come to an end, that cycle will appear, just as the day appears when the night ends. Let us give an example to

make the reality of *‘aṣr* or spiritual time understandable: Sometimes, as a result of a good deed or good *‘ibādat*, you may have seen a luminous dream and you might have realised that time in the world of dreams is utterly different from that of the external world. It is possible that in such a luminous dream you may have seen spring, although physically it is not the season of spring. Such a time is called *‘aṣr*. Another example from the state of wakefulness: Take an example of a pure *darwish* or a *faqīr*, who is in constant *dhikr*, or a *ṣūfī* of *ḥaqīqat* or a true *mu'min*, who in addition to good deeds has attained perfection in *‘ibādat* and *ma‘rifat*, to such an extent that when he wants to see the luminous world with his inner eyes, he closes his external eyes and the luminous world is before him. Now time in this luminous world is different from the time in the external world through which his body passes. Time in the luminous world is called the inner or spiritual time (*‘aṣr-i bāṭin*), whose majesty and grandeur is such that God swears by it: “By the *‘aṣr* (spiritual time)! Verily man (due to his negligence about the *‘aṣr*) is in great loss” (103:1-2).

“Allāhumma laka sujūdī wa-ṭā‘atī = O Allāh! my prostration and obedience is for You”.

Section on the Meaning of *Ṣalāt*:

There are different views regarding the interpretation of *ṣalāt*. Before expressing our views here, we want to quote a note of Farmān *‘Alī*, from his translation of the Qur’ān. He says: “I have added “*āl* (progeny)” in the translation of the verse (33:56): “Verily, Allāh and His angels send blessings (*durūd*) on the Prophet and (his progeny)”, for several reasons:

- (1) Imām Rāzī has accepted that the *ahl al-bāyt* of the Prophet are equal to him in five things, one of them is the invocation of *ṣalāt* on them in *tashahhud*.
- (2) According to one tradition, several years before the fertility of the tree of Islam, the angels sent *ṣalāt* on Ḥaḍrat *‘Alī*.
- (3) In *Manāqib-i Murtaḍawī*, it is narrated from Anas bin

Mālik that the holy Prophet said: “The angels sent *ṣalāt* on me and ‘Alī seven times”.

- (4) In *Sunan-i Abī Dāwūd*, it is narrated from Ibn Abī Shaybah, endorsed by Tirmidhī, Ḥākim, Abu'l-Qāsim, Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Mas‘ūd-i Badarī that people told the Prophet, that they knew how to send peace (*salām*) on him, but they did not know how to send *ṣalāt* upon him. The Prophet said: “Say: *Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa-‘ālī Muḥammadin kamā ṣallayta ‘alā Ibrāhīma wa-‘alā ‘ālī Ibrāhīm* (O Allāh! send blessings upon Muḥammad and his progeny as You have sent upon Ibrāhīm and his progeny)”.
- (5) In *Mawāhib-i Laduniyyah* it is also mentioned that the Prophet used to recite in the *ṣalāt* (ritual prayer): “*Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa-‘ālī Muḥammadin kamā ṣallayta ‘alā Ibrāhīma wa-‘alā ‘ālī Ibrāhīm* (O Allāh! send blessings upon Muḥammad and his progeny as You have sent upon Ibrāhīm and his progeny)”.
- (6) It is narrated in *Ṣawā’iqun Muḥriqah* that the Prophet said: *Lā tuṣallū ‘alayya ṣalātan batrā’* (Do not send upon me an incomplete *ṣalāt*)”. The people asked him: What is an incomplete *ṣalāt*? The Prophet said: It is to say *Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammad* only. He said: Say: *Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa-‘ālī Muḥammad*.
- (7) Irrespective of the above, there is “*Salāmun ‘alā ‘ālī Yā-Sin* (Peace be on the progeny of *Yā-Sin*)” in the Qur’ān itself (37:130). It is obvious that *Yā-Sin* is the title of the holy Prophet, and thus by *‘ālī Yā-Sin* is meant *‘ālī Muḥammad*.
- (8) According to ‘Allāmah Zamakhsharī's interpretation of verse (33:43), if it is possible to send *ṣalāt* on ordinary *mu'mins*, then indeed, the holy *ahl al-bayt* are more deserving of it.

(9) Imām Shāfi‘ī has said:

*Yā ahla bayti rasūli'llāhi ḥubbukum;
Farḍum-mina'llāhi fi'l-qur'āni anزالahu.
Kafākum min 'aẓimi'l-qadri annakum;
Man lam yuṣalli 'alaykum lā ṣalāta lahu.*

“O the *ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet! God has made love for you obligatory in the Qur'ān. For your eminence, it is enough to say that whoever does not send *ṣalāt* upon you, his *ṣalāt* is not valid.” See *Tafsir-i Durr-i Manthūr* (Misr, n.d.) V, 216.

According to the above-mentioned evidences, the excellence and sublime status of the progeny of the Prophet is proven and it is also established that recitation of *ṣalāt* upon them together with the Prophet is obligatory. However, it still remains to understand in what sense we should recite this *ṣalāt* on the Prophet and his progeny? Does the recitation of the *ṣalāt* mean that by doing so, we seek for them from God a mercy which is granted to them only after our asking Him? If this is true, what does this all-embracing and far-reaching command of God mean when He says: “And We did not send you (O Muḥammad) except as a mercy for the people of the world” (21:107)? The fact is that when as a mark of respect we recite *ṣalāt* on the name of the Prophet and his pure progeny, we seek mercy for ourselves through them, for as God says: “Indeed, Allāh and His angels send mercy through the Prophet Muḥammad (and his progeny). O you who believe, you should seek blessings through them (and in order to receive blessings through them) you should duly submit to them” (33:56).

In order to ascertain the above-mentioned meaning of the verse, let us first look into the meaning of the infinitive of *yuṣallūna* and *ṣallū*, which is *ṣalāt*. *Ṣalāt* means 'ritual prayer (*namāz*), (*du‘ā*) and mercy'. According to these meanings, *yuṣallūna* means: 'they perform ritual prayer', 'they pray, i.e.

they ask', 'they seek mercy', 'they send mercy'. However, it is unanimously agreed that God neither performs ritual prayer, nor prays to someone, nor seeks mercy from anyone. Thus the correct meaning of it is: "He sends blessings to *mu'mins* with angels through Muḥammad and his progeny". Thus, this is the meaning hidden in *yusallūna*. Contrary to this, if we understand that Allāh sends mercy and His angels also send mercy like Him, then the question arises: Where does the mercy of the angels come from? Further, with whom do they send this mercy, when God sends His mercy with them?

When the correct meaning of *yusallūna*, which befits God's act, is established, then *ṣallū* also means that which befits the belief of *mu'mins*. That is, the command of *ṣallu* here means 'seek mercy!' not 'send mercy!'. For, in the beginning of this verse it is mentioned that God and His angels send sufficient mercy to the Prophet and his progeny without the request or intercession of anyone, so that the *mu'mins* may duly obey them and seek and attain this mercy from them.

Now let us look into the meaning of the word *‘alā*, which has different meanings in different idioms. That is, it does not always mean "upon" and its meaning does not end with the noun that it precedes, but goes beyond that. As in verse (88:26): "*Thumma inna ‘alaynā ḥisābahum* (Then upon Us shall rest their reckoning)", though the word *‘alā* has preceded the pronoun *nā* (us), yet it carries the meaning of *ḥisāb* (reckoning) beyond *nā* to the pronoun *hum* (their). That is, this verse does not mean "We are answerable for their account". The above explanation of *ṣalāt* is sufficient here.

In the Name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Part Two

Symbols of the Verse of Obedience

“Yā ayyuha'l-ladhina āmanū = O you who believe! i.e. the entire community of Muḥammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, the ordinary and the chosen ones, living from the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān till the Resurrection”.
“Aṭī'u'llāha wa-aṭī'u'r-rasūla wa-uli'l-amri minkum = Obey Allāh, obey the Prophet and obey the ulu'l-amr (who are) from among you”. The explanation of the symbols of this verse is that according to it, obedience is of three kinds: obedience to God, obedience to the Prophet and obedience to the *ulu'l-amr*. Obedience to God consists of the unchangeable laws of the universe, principles of order in nature and the general code of conduct of humankind. In this sense, the people of every nation and every religion in this world obey God. In other words, all people accept this ethical obedience. This means that to act upon those good things, which also existed before Islam, is called obedience to God in the terminology of the Qur'ān. This obedience can be called ethical obedience.

Obedience to the Prophet consists of those special religious matters, which God enjoined on the people of the world only through the Prophet under the name of Islam. To act upon these matters is such obedience to God that it can be accomplished only through the Prophet, therefore another name for obedience to the Prophet is religious obedience. Obedience to the *ulu'l-amr* is related to luminous and permanent guidance, which is found in the Imam of every age and about which, God in these wisdom-filled words, says: “(O Muḥammad) Indeed you are a warner and for every people there is a guide” (13:7). That is, your task is only to warn openly in your own time and

there is a guide for every people and accordingly, among your people also, there will be a guide forever. Thus, obedience to the guide or the *ulu'l-amr* can be called spiritual obedience.

From this wisdom-filled verse we can deduce that religious matters are divided into two kinds: One kind is related to warning and the other to guidance. The warner (*mundhir*), i.e. the Prophet, warns on behalf of God and he uses the external and internal means of warning to do so, particularly the manifestation of miracles and the befalling of calamities. And all this can happen openly. But the guide, i.e. the Imam, who is appointed by God for spiritual guidance, neither warns people nor performs any external miracle in his own name, nor preaches on a large scale. Just as the warner first threatens the people with fear of Hell, in the same way the guide, later on, inspires people to hope for Paradise.

In the sequence of obedience, it is evident that first is ethical obedience, which is the general obedience to God, then comes religious obedience, which is performed through the Prophet, and which in comparison to the general, is special obedience to God, and finally comes spiritual obedience to God, which is performed through the mediation of the guide or *ulu'l-amr*. This is the most special obedience to God. It is because of this fact that God has said: "O you who believe! obey God, obey the Prophet and obey the *ulu'l-amr* who is from among you". That is, first act upon the simple and easy teachings of the Qur'an, which are clear and are accepted by and obligatory on every nation and every group and they have no doubt about their usefulness, so that humankind may progress ethically and the foundation of Islam may become strong through people's natural capacities and ethical qualities. Further, they may be able to understand the wisdom of the religious laws through the help of ethical laws. After this kind of ethical reformation they should act upon those Qur'anic teachings which are specific to

the religion of Islam and the holy Prophet, and which were explained by him through his pure *Sunnat* and special *Aḥādith*. Then human beings should act upon those teachings which are specifically related to the spirit of Islam and the guide, i.e. the Imam, and the *ta'wil* of which is found in the physical and spiritual guidance of the Imam of the time. However, this is only possible through the recognition of and true obedience to the Imam of the time. Thus ethical obedience begins with the affirmation of the existence of God, religious obedience with the affirmation of the messengership of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad and spiritual obedience with the recognition of the Imam of the time and affirmation of his guidance.

As a result of spiritual obedience to the Imam of the time, true *mu'mins* attain recognition of the light of the Prophet, which he has compared with the city of knowledge and the house of wisdom, and ʿAlī's light with the gate of the city of knowledge and the door of the house of wisdom. Thus true *mu'mins*, in spiritual obedience to the Imam of the time, in reality obey the Prophet. As a result of this, they attain knowledge, wisdom and recognition of God, for it is the Imam of the time, who is the light of ʿAlī and the gate of knowledge and wisdom of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad. Thus, it is evident that God and the Prophet can be truly obeyed only through the guidance of the Imam. It is because of this that first the general and external obedience to God, i.e. ethical obedience, then the religious obedience to the Prophet and finally, the spiritual obedience to the true Imams are enjoined in the verse of "obedience". These three kinds of obedience are of an exoteric and general kind. The esoteric and special kind of obedience starts with spiritual obedience, which is in the form of spiritual and luminous guidance. It is in the light of this guidance that obedience to the Prophet and God is performed, which are related to knowledge and wisdom and to the knowledge of the oneness of God and His recognition respectively.

“*Wa-kulla shay'in aḥṣaynāhu fi imāmin-mubīn* = And We have encompassed everything in the essence (light) of the manifest Imam”. That is, everything exists in the form of knowledge and soul in the light of the true Imam. Further, in this light, which is the light of God and His Prophet, are contained the heavens and the earth, as God says: “His Pedestal (*kursī*) has encompassed the heavens and the earth” (2:255). By Pedestal or *kursī* is meant the light of guidance about which God says: “Allāh is the light of the heavens and the earth” (24:35). If there is the light of God in the exterior and interior of everything, the same light is in the world of humanity as well, which is the manifest Imam, for God says: “And We have encompassed everything in a Book” (78:29). This Book too, means the same manifest Imam in whose light is everything, as it is said: “O Lord! Your mercy and knowledge have encompassed everything” (40:7). By this mercy and knowledge are meant the soul and intellect of the manifest Imam, which are known as the Universal Soul and the Universal Intellect. Now according to the principles of reason and logic, let us consider whether one great and comprehensive thing should contain everything or should every thing contain all things? It is a fact that every thing cannot contain all things rather a thing, which is the greatest and the most comprehensive, can contain everything.

Let us think logically whether a universal thing should comprise all particular things, or should every particular thing comprise all things. Since it is a fact that among physical existents, it is impossible for any particular thing to comprise all things, and it is only the universal things that can do so, then it should also be true of spiritual existents. That is, among the spiritual existents too, there is a universal reality comprising all other realities. Thus, whatever example or reality it is intended to express in appropriate words or phrases, it is this universal reality or Monoreality that is implied, so that the wise may understand all other necessary realities under it, while the rest may remain content with the examples only.

Some people translate “*Imāmim-mubīn*” as the Guarded Tablet (*lawḥ-i mahfūz*) but this translation is not correct. For, if by Imam they mean the Tablet and by *mubīn*, guarded, then this translation does not correspond to any lexical rules. The obvious reason for the invalidity of this translation is the verbal contradiction between *mubīn* and *mahfūz*. That is, *mahfūz* means guarded or preserved as it is said in Arabic: *ḥafīẓa's-sirra* (he guarded the secret). Contrary to this, *mubīn* means manifest and speaking. Thus Guarded Tablet is not the correct translation of *Imāmim-mubīn*, rather its correct translation is the manifest and speaking Imam. This will be further elaborated in its appropriate place.

The word Imam had been used as a special religious technical term before the revelation of the Qur'ān, in the time of Ḥaḍrat Ādam and prominently in the time of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm and then in the community of the children of Ismā'īl and the children of Israel. The word Imam has always been used literally for a worldly leader and technically for a religious leader, whose rank apparently is next to a great Prophet. In the lifetime of every great Prophet he has remained as his miraculous *wazīr* (minister) and after him, his heir, legatee (*waṣī*) and successor. In order to make this most exalted meaning of Imam understandable, a wisdom-filled Qur'ānic verse is presented, which is:

“When his Lord tried Ibrāhīm with [perfect] Words, and he fulfilled them (as the luminous *dhikr*). (Then) He said: I make you an Imam for humankind. He pleaded: And (make Imams) from my offspring also! He answered: (Do not worry) My covenant (which has the characteristic of justice) is not within the reach of wrongdoers”(2:124). That is, the rank of *Imāmat* will continue in your progeny, until the Resurrection and will not be given to others.

It should be known that by the above-mentioned perfect Words, are meant the Supreme Name and its subsidiary names, in which there is the light of Prophethood and *Imāmat*, the purpose of which is to guide people. It is universally accepted that Ḥaḍrat Ādam was taught the Names before the angels prostrated to him and then when he came back to earth from paradise, he was taught the perfect Words. These two things are in fact the same thing. From these Words of Ḥaḍrat Ādam, the light of Prophethood and *Imāmat* started to rise. Thus, these Words, Names and their results (Prophethood and *Imāmat*) are mentioned in the greatest trial of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm.

One of the results of this wisdom-filled verse is that the great rank of *Imāmat* starts after initial revelation (*waḥy*), inspiration (*ilhām*) and general spiritual conversation and it is very close to the rank of the *nāṭiq*. Thus, it is evident that in this verse, God is speaking directly or indirectly to Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm, and he is listening to this holy speech and then he implores God. All this is in connection with the preparation for *Imāmat*. That is, Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm was to be appointed Imam after these spiritual events. From this it is established that spiritual conversation starts long before the rank of *Imāmat* and the Imam, in his special position, becomes the owner of the treasures of (Divine) favour and guidance. There are satisfactory answers to questions related to *Imāmat* in this explanation, provided a fortunate person reads it with intellect and wisdom and has attained (Divine) favour and guidance.

Regarding the word *mubin* let us reflect on the following Prophetic Tradition: “*‘Aliyyun bābu ‘ilmī wa-mubīnun li-ummatī mā ursiltu bihi min ba‘dī* (‘Alī is the gate of my knowledge and after me, he is the interpreter (*mubīn*) for my community, of that with which I have been sent)”. That is, ‘Alī is the master of true knowledge and the *ta’wīl* of the Qur’ān. This Tradition not only shows that *mubin* means manifest and

interpreter, but is also the interpretation of verse (36:12): “*Wa-kulla shay'in aḥṣaynāhu fi imāmim-mubīn*”. For, it is clear that the knowledge and wisdom of the holy Prophet, which is in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, is also in the blessed personality of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī. Thus the gate of the knowledge of the Prophet means that all the sciences and wisdoms of the Prophet are in Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, just as a prosperous and organized city is surrounded by its strong wall and gate. Thus, it is evident that the light of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, the spirit of the Qur'ān and the reality of the *Ḥadīth* are included in the light of ‘Alī, namely, the manifest and speaking Imam. What then is left out of the light of the Prophet, the spirit of the Qur'ān and the reality of the *Ḥadīth*? In fact, the ultimate great secrets of God's Godhead are also included in these realities. It is from here that these secrets reveal to an ‘*ārif*. This much explanation of *Imāmim-mubīn* is sufficient in this book.

“*Allāhumma yā mawlānā anta's-salām* = O Allāh! O our Master! You are eternal life and everlasting peace by Your essence and attributes”; “*Wa-minka's-salām* = And that everlasting peace is from You, (not from anybody else)”; “*Wa-ilayka yarjī'u's-salām* = And that everlasting peace returns to You”, “*Hayyinā rabbanā bi's-salām* = O our Sustainer! Grant us the life of true peace”; “*Wa-adkhilnā dāra's-salām* = And usher us into the abode of central Paradise (embodied light)”; “*Tabārakta rabbanā wa-tā'ālayta yā dha'l-jalāli wa'l-ikrām* = O Glorious and Bounteous One! You are blessed and sublime”.

Salām literally means soundness of body and soul, and technically it means *ta'yīd*. *Ta'yīd* is that spiritual and luminous help which is given to Prophets, Imams and *mu'mins* of the highest rank, in the form of a miraculous knowledge and wisdom, in which spiritual beings speak to them and knowledge, wisdom and necessary guidance is given to them through visual and auditory allusions and signs. All these

realities and attributes are comprised by “*as-salām*”, which is one of the beautiful names of God. Here it is worth mentioning that one name of God can be distinguished from His other names only when it has a different meaning and characteristic. Thus one of the names of God is “*aẓ-ẓāhir*”, which means manifest. This means that this name has the characteristic of manifestation of light, manifestation of power, manifestation of knowledge, manifestation of miracles and manifestation of speech. Otherwise, God would not have adopted such a name. Thus it is evident, that every name of God is distinguished from His other names because of its specific meaning and characteristic. Thus in this *du‘ā*, the characteristics of the name “*as-salām*” and its importance and necessity in *dhikr* and *du‘ā* are mentioned. In short, this name is related to the luminous (astral) body of the Imam of the time. The proof of this is that the names of God have *muwakkals* (spiritual beings entrusted with some duty), manifestations (*maẓāhir*) and treasurers. In this connection, this much explanation is enough for true *mu'mins*.

“*Allāhumma yā mawlānā minka madadī* = O Allāh! O our Master! From You is my (spiritual) help”; “*Wa-‘alayka mu‘tamadī* = You are my trust and support”; “*Iyyāka na‘budu wa-iyyāka nasta‘in* = You alone we worship and from You alone we seek help”; “*Yā ‘Aliyyu bi-luṭfika adrikni* = O ‘Alī (who is from God and whose act is specifically related to God) with your favour and kindness come to my help”; “*La ilāha illa’l-lāhu* = There is no God except Allāh”; “*Muḥammadu’l-rasūlu’llāh* = Muhammed is the messenger of Allāh”; “*‘Aliyyun amīru’l-mu‘minīna ‘Aliyyu’llāh* = And the Prince of the faithful, ‘Alī is appointed by God”; “*Mawlānā Shāh Karīmu’l-Ḥusaynī al-imāmu’l-ḥādiru’l-mawjūd* = our lord Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī is the present and living Imam”; “*Allāhumma laka sujūdi wa-ṭā‘ati* = O Allāh! my prostration and obedience is for You”.

Part Three

The Ultimate Purpose of the Message of the Qur'ān

“Yā ayyuha'r-rasūlu balligh mā unzila ilayka mir-rabbika, wa-il-lam taf'al fa-mā ballaghta risālatahu, wa'llāhu ya'simuka mina'n-nās = O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord. If you did not, then you did not convey His message. And (do not be afraid!) Allāh will protect you from humankind” (5:67).

This verse was brought by the Trustworthy Jibrā'il, at the place of Hajfah, which is situated at a distance of three miles from Ghadīr-i Khumm, when the Prophet after completing the farewell pilgrimage was returning to Madīnah. This Shī'ah narration is also found in the books of some truth-loving Sunnī savants. Here we quote a marginal note from the translation of the Qur'ān, p.188 by Farman 'Alī, a Shī'ah commentator. He says: “Ibn Abī Hātim has narrated from Abū Sa'id Khudari that this verse was revealed about Ḥaḍrat 'Alī at Ghadīr-i Khumm. Based on this, Ibn Mardawayh has narrated from Ibn Mas'ud that this verse used to be recited during the life time of the Prophet as follows: *“Yā ayyuha'r-rasūlu balligh mā unzila ilayka mir-rabbika anna 'Aliyyan mawla'l-mu'minina, wa-il-lam taf'al...”* = O Messenger! Convey the command that has been revealed to you about 'Alī, that he is the Mawlā (master) of the *mu'mins*. If you did...” (*Tafsīr-i Durr-i Manthūr*, by Jalālu'd-Dīn Suyūṭī, a Sunnī commentator (Miṣr, n.d.) III, 398).

In fact, the Prophet wanted to appoint 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib as his *khalīfah* or successor for a long time, but he did not take steps to do so because of the fear of opposition from some of his companions. But finally, when this emphatic command of God revealed to him on the way to Madīnah after the farewell pilgrimage, he was compelled to declare him as his successor at

Ghadr-i Khumm, in front of approximately a hundred thousand people. On his appointment as the *khalifah* and *waṣī*, the people congratulated Ḥaḍrat °Alī on his *khilāfat* and *walāyat* and poets composed eulogies in his praise, such as the famous verse of Ḥassān:

*Fa-qāla lahu qum yā °Aliyyu fa-innani
Raḍituka min ba°dī imāman wa hādiyā*

He (the Prophet) said to him (Ḥaḍrat °Alī):

“O °Alī stand up, indeed I am pleased
to appoint you as the Imām and guide
after me”.

“*Lā ilāha illa'llāhu'l-ḥayyu'l-qayyūm* = There is no God except Allāh, Who is Everliving and Everlasting by Himself”. “*Lā ilāha illa'llāhu'l-maliku'l-ḥaqqu'l-mubīn* = There is no God except Allāh, Who is the real King of the manifest”. “*Lā ilāha illa'llāhu'l-maliku'l-ḥaqqu'l-yaqīn* = There is no God except Allāh, Who is the real King of certainty”; “*Lā ilāha illa'llāhu māliku yawmi'd-dīn* = There is no God except Allāh, Who is the Master of the Day of Judgement”; “*Lā fatā illā °Aliyyun, lā sayfa illā Dhu'l-faḡār* = There is no ideal man except °Alī (and) there is no ideal sword except *Dhu'l-faḡār*.” “*Tawassalū °inda'l-maṣā'ibi bi-mawlākumu'l-ḥaḍiri'l-mawjūdi Shāh Karīmī'l-Ḥusaynī* = Seek the mediation and closeness of your lord Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī during calamities.” “*Allāhumma laka sujūdi wa-tā°ati* = O Allāh! my prostration and obedience is for You.”

The *kalimah* “*Lā ilāha illa'llāh*” is among the perfect Words of the wise Qur'ān. Perfect words mean those words or concise phrases which contain numerous meanings of the universe and the existents. For instance, “*kun*” is one such Word, which only means “Be”, yet endless realities are hidden in it. Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīm Pīr Nāṣir-i Khusraw has explained the *ta'wīl* of “*lā ilāha illa'llāh*” in discourse 11 of *Wajh-i Din*.

Part Four

For true *Bay'at*, the presence of the Prophet or the Imam of the Time is necessary

"Inna'lladhina yubāyi'unaka innamā yubāyi'una'llāha yadu'llāhi fawqa aydihim, fa-man nakatha fa-innamā yankuthu 'alā nafsihi, wa-man awfā bi-mā 'āhada 'alayhu'llāha fa-sayutihi ajran 'azīmā = Verily those who give *bay'at* (oath of allegiance) to you (O Prophet), they verily give *bay'at* to Allāh. Allāh's Hand is on their hands. So whoever breaks his *bay'at*, does so to his own soul's loss, and whoever fulfils his covenant with Allāh, He will soon grant him immense reward" (48:10).

The word *bay'at* is derived from *bay'*, which literally means 'buying and selling'. Technically, it means *mu'mins* making a covenant with God through the Prophet or his successor that, in order to attain the pleasure of God and salvation, they are pleased and ready to offer any kind of sacrifice of life and wealth. Further, in order to truly obey God, the Prophet and the *ulu'l-amr*, they [are pleased and ready to] abandon unlawful desires. This is the meaning of *bay'at* in the verses mentioned in the Qur'ān: (48:10,18; 60:12).

Here it is essential to mention the fact that, with respect to the Prophet's expediency and choice, there are two kinds of commands in the holy Qur'ān. One kind of command is that which God issued out of His own will or out of the desire of the Prophet and then they were acted upon. The other kind of command is that which was alluded to by God or that the Prophet acted upon out of his choice according to the expediency of time, then God endorsed those acts through revelation. *Bay'at-i riḍwān* (*bay'at* of happiness) is one such act, in which, on the occasion of the treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah in 6

A.H., the Prophet took *bay'at* from fourteen hundred companions and which was endorsed by God later on in the two verses of the *sūrah* of *Fath* (48:10, 18).

Thus, to act upon the true *bay'at* and its conditions is a final test of Islam (surrender) and *Īmān* (true faith) and for which the presence of the Prophet of God or the Imam of the time is necessary. For, in order to take *bay'at* from *mu'mins* there must be someone present in the world whose *bay'at* amounts to God's *bay'at*, and his blessed hand represents God's Hand with respect to his personality, so that *mu'mins* will always remember their covenant. That is, they remember that they have given *bay'at* to God and in His presence they have made the covenant of true obedience.

“*Allāhumma'ghfir lanā dhunūbanā* = O our Lord! Forgive our sins”; *Wa'rzuqnā wa'rḥamnā* = Grant us spiritual and physical sustenance and have mercy on us”; “*Bi-ḥaqqi rusulika'l-muqarrabina wa-a'immatika'l-muṭahharina* = for the sake of Your close Prophets and pure Imams”; “*Wa-bi-ḥaqqi mawlānā wa-imāminā Shāh Karīmī'l-Ḥusaynī* = and for the sake of our lord and our Imam Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī”; “*Allāhumma laka sujūdi wa-ṭā'ati* = O Allāh! my prostration and obedience is for You”.

Luminous Science
Knowledge for a united humanity

In the Name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Part Five

The Qur'ān and Imāmat are the Trusts of God and the Prophet

“*Yā ayyuha'lladhina āmanū lā takhūnu'llāha wa'r-rasūla wa-takhūnū amānātikum wa-antum ta^llamūn* = O you who believe, betray not the trust of Allāh and the Messenger, nor knowingly betray your trusts” (8:27).

The gist of this verse is that the reality of the Qur'ān and the status of the progeny of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (i.e. *Imāmat*) are the trusts of God and the Prophet, which *mu'mins* must not betray. That is, they should not claim these sacred trusts and must understand that they are the possessions of God and the Prophet. They should believe that God, the Prophet and the one whom God and His Prophet have appointed know the real meaning of the Qur'ān. And regarding the rank of *Imāmat*, they should believe that it belongs to the Prophet and after him to his progeny and the *ummat* has no right to interfere in it. The example of such a belief and concept amounts to executing the trusts of God and the Prophet faithfully and benefitting from them according to the will of God and the Prophet.

As for “Nor knowingly betray your trusts”, by this part of the verse God means that if you betray the trusts of God and the Prophet, then you betray your own trusts knowingly, in the sense that if someone claims to have knowledge and wisdom of the Qur'ān without acquiring it from the progeny of the Prophet, i.e. the Imam of the time, he betrays the trusts of God and the Prophet and as a result of that, he betrays his own trust, which is with the Imam of the time. And he himself will be accountable for the betrayal of his trust. For, he was aware that due to deviation from the straight path he will not be able to see the treasurer of the Divine knowledge and thus he will not be

able to enter the city of knowledge and wisdom. As Mawlānā °Alī has said: “I am the interpreter of the revelation of God”. He has also said: “I am the treasurer of the knowledge of God”. The holy Prophet has said: “I am the city of knowledge and °Alī is its gate, whoever wants knowledge should come through the gate”. Further, in this connection, God has said: “Then We gave the Book as inheritance unto those (i.e. the Imams) whom (on the basis of their natural capability) We selected of Our servants. For, of the (common) servants there are some who (due to disobedience) wrong themselves and of them are some who follow a middle course (between good and bad) and of them are some who excel (others) in good deeds, by Allāh's permission. That is the great favour” (35:32).

“Rabbana'ghfir lanā dhunūbanā wa-sahhil umūranā wa'rzūqnā wa'rḥamnā innaka °alā kulli shay'in qadīr = O our Lord! Forgive our sins! Make our tasks easy! Grant us spiritual and physical sustenance and have mercy upon us! Indeed, You are powerful over everything”. Yā °Aliyyu yā Muḥammadu ... Yā Muḥammadu yā °Aliyyu ...

“Yā imāma'z-zamāni yā mawlānā anta quwwatī wa-anta sanadī wa-°alayka't-tikālī yā ḥaḍīru yā mawjūdu yā Shāh Karīmu'l-Ḥusaynī anta'l-imāmu'l-ḥaqqu'l-mubīn = O Imam of the time! O our lord! You are my strength and you are my support and in you is my trust. O the present one! O the existing one! O Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī! You are the true and manifest Imam”. “Allāhumma laka sujūdī wa-tā°atī = O Allāh! my prostration and obedience is for You”.

Part Six

Sciences (*ma'ārif*) of the *Sūrah* of *Ikhlāṣ* (Purity, Sincerity)

“*Qul huwa'llāhu aḥad* = Say (O Muḥammad)! Allāh is One (Monoreal);” *Allāhu's-ṣamad* = Allāh (Monoreal) in His physical and spiritual manifestations of His attributes is everything; “*Lam yalid* = He has not begotten”. For the Monoreal Himself is an eternal and ever-pervading reality, therefore, He does not need children. Children are the need of an existent, which is mortal and not ever-reaching. That is, Monoreal does not give birth to another monoreal.

“*Wa-lam yūlad* = And He has not been begotten”. For the Monoreal Himself is eternal. That is, He has always been there and will last forever. Therefore, it is impossible to think that this Monoreal has been created by anybody else. “*Wa-lam yaku'l-lahu kufiwan aḥad* = And there is none equal to Him”. For this Monoreal in His essential attributes, diverse manifestations and colourful splendours, is extremely consummate and perfect.

In order to elucidate this, let us present a mathematical example. If we accept that all numbers are the manifestation of the number “one”, then it is true to say that in the world of numbers, number “one” is everything, for there is no number, which does not depend on number one for its existence. Thus it is evident that in counting and reckoning, the number “one” in reality does not depend on any other number. Nor has there been in reality any other number created from number “one”. Nor has the number “one” been created from any other number. Nor is there any other number equal to number “one”. For all numbers, in reality, are the different forms of number “one”.

Thus the different examples of this number or Monoreal are described in the entire Qur'ān, such as: "Wherever you turn there is Allāh's essence (*wajh*)" (2:115). This all-embracing reality applies not only to directions, but also to the essence of things, as there is a manifestation of this reality in the essence of everything. For this wisdom-filled verse alludes to the infinity of the Monoreal and the word "wherever (*ayn*)" indicates infinite time, spacious universe and the essence of innumerable existents. Further, the "one who turns his face (*mutawajjih*)" is also related to time, space and the one who resides in the space. This means that there is a special manifestation of unity in the essence of everything. In other words the name of the essence of essences is Monoreal (*waḥdatu 'l-wujūd*) or Allāh.

This reality can be further elucidated by what the Qur'ān says: "Everything is perishable except His essence" (28:88). Here what we have to reflect on is the use of the particle "except (*illā*)", which is used in a sentence when someone wants to exempt one thing from the things of the same genus. That is, the thing because of its homogeneity is counted among other things, but because of its specific characteristic is exempt from the rest. This is the example of the essence of God or Monoreal that it is not separated from the inner subsistence of things, but their external annihilation cannot be applicable to it, therefore it is exempt from them. Nor do things perish at the same time and even the things that do perish, their luminous form and eternal figure abides in the Monoreality. Therefore, nothing decreases in this Monoreality at all. However, contrary to this, if we believe that in *azal* there was the essence of God, but there were no creatures, this would mean that there was a Creator, but without any creation and after billions of years, He created the creatures. In this case God would be contingent. That is, He changed from one state to another. That is, first He created nothing, then He created so many creatures. But this is impossible and untrue. That is, God is everything in His essence and attributes. This is the explanation of "*huwa'l-kull*"

and “*hamah ūst*” (He is everything) instead of which, here we have used “Monoreality (*waḥdat-i wujūd*)”. Thus “*Qul huwa'llāhu aḥad*” alludes to Monoreality, not to the individuality of a separate essence (from other existents). For in reality, the creation of multiplicity from the pure oneness (*waḥdat-i maḥd*) is impossible. As Ḥaḍrat Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw (may God sanctify his secret) says:

*Makun dar šun°-i mašnū°āt rah gum
Zi jaw jaw rūyad-u gandum za gandum*

In the search of the reality of creatures
do not lose the path; (and remember the
principle) that from barley grows barley
and from wheat grows wheat.

This means that, in reality, multiplicity is not created from oneness or unity, but it is accepted only in a metaphorical sense. Nor does the question of the creation of anything else arise after accepting Monoreality as an eternal reality, except to accept the fact that it is the Monoreality, which is a multiplicity-like unity, just as water is the name of the unity of ocean, clouds, rain, stream, spring and every kind of wetness. Whether this wetness is in the air, or in vegetables, or in animals, yet in name, attribute, property, colour and taste of water, all are the same. If there is a difference in their acts it is because of their quantitative decrease and increase. Thus if the ocean through its clouds can pour down rain on the entire earth, whereas a drop cannot do this, it is because of the immense quantity of the ocean in which numerous drops work together. This is an example of the monoreality of water which is in the form of a circle and which is multiplicity-like unity.

“Allāhumma bi-ḥaqqi Muḥammadini'l-Muṣṭafā wa-
°Aliyyini'l-Murtaḍā wa-Fāṭimata'z-Zahrā'i wa'l-Ḥasani wa'l-
Ḥusayn; Allāhumma bi-ḥaqqi mawlānā °Aliyy, mawlāna'l-
Ḥusayn, mawlānā Zayni'l-°Ābidīn, mawlānā Muḥammadini'l-

Bāqir, mawlānā Jaʿfarini's-Şādiq, mawlānā Ismāʿīl, mawlānā Muḥammadi'bni Ismāʿīl, mawlānā Wafīyy Aḥmad, mawlānā Taqīyy Muḥammad, mawlānā Raḍīyyi'd-Dīni ʿAbdi'llāh, mawlānā Muḥammadini'l-Mahdiyy, mawlānā'l-Qā'im, mawlānā'l-Manşūr, mawlānā'l-Muʿizz, mawlānā'l-ʿAzīz, mawlānā'l-Ḥākimi bi-amri'llāh, mawlānā'z-Zāhir, mawlānā'l-Mustanşiri bi'llāh, mawlānā Nizār, mawlānā'l-Hādī, mawlānā'l-Muhtadī, mawlānā'l-Qāhir, mawlānā ʿAlā dhikrihi's-salām, mawlānā Aʿlā Muḥammad, mawlānā Jalālī'd-Dīni Ḥasan, mawlānā ʿAlā'i'd-Dīni Muḥammad, mawlānā Rukni'd-Dīni Khayr Shāh, mawlānā Shamsi'd-Dīni Muḥammad, mawlānā Qāsim Shāh, mawlānā Islām Shāh, mawlānā Muḥammadi'bni Islām Shāh, mawlānā'l-Mustanşiri bi'llāh, mawlānā ʿAbdi's-Salām, mawlānā Gharīb Mirzā, mawlānā Abī Dharr ʿAliyy, mawlānā Murād Mirzā, mawlānā Dhi'l-faqār ʿAliyy, mawlānā Nūrī'd-Dīn ʿAliyy, mawlānā Khalīli'llāhi ʿAliyy, mawlānā Nizār, mawlānā's-Sayyid ʿAliyy, mawlānā Ḥasan ʿAliyy, mawlānā Qāsim ʿAliyy, mawlānā Abi'l-Ḥasan ʿAliyy, mawlānā Khalīli'llāhi ʿAliyy, mawlānā Shāh Ḥasan ʿAliyy, mawlānā Shāh ʿAliyy Shāh, mawlānā Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh

Wa-biḥaqqi mawlānā wa-imāmina'l-hāḍiri'l-mawjūdi Shāh Karīmi'l-Ḥusaynī irḥamnā wa'ghfir lanā innaka ʿalā kulli shay'in qadīr. Wa'l-ḥamdu li'llāhi rabbi'l-ʿālamīn = O Allāh! for the sake of the chosen Muḥammad, the selected ʿAlī, the radiant Fāṭimah, (Imam) Ḥasan and (Imam) Ḥusayn; O Allāh! for the sake of our lord ʿAlī (the names of Imams up to the present Imam) and for the sake of our lord and Imam, Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī, have mercy on us and forgive us. Indeed, You are powerful over everything. And praise be to Allāh, the Sustainer of the worlds". *"Allāhumma laka sujūdī wa-ṭāʿati* = O Allāh! my prostration and obedience is for You".

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For True *Bayʿat* at the Presence of the Prophet or the Imam of the Time is Necessary

- 1 Regarding religious matters, this *bayʿat* was taken towards the end of the Prophet's mission therefore it is the most special act. For, to accept Islam is a common act, but to act upon its ultimate teachings is the most special act (48, 49)

Part Five:

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- 1 No purport of the Qur'ān is without wisdom, therefore, it is necessary to think about what trusts of God and the Prophet have been entrusted to *mu'mins*, which they could betray (50)
- 2 God says: "We have bestowed upon the progeny of Ibrāhīm the Book and the wisdom and We have bestowed upon them a great kingdom" (4:54). The progeny of Ibrāhīm are Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad and his progeny, the true Imams. Thus they are the heirs of the Book, wisdom and the great kingdom, i.e. *Imāmat* (50, 51)
- 3 The Prophet has said: "ʿAlī is from me and I am from him". Therefore, their light is one (51)

Part Six:

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- 5 Ḥakīm Nāṣir-i Khusraw has answered all questions regarding God with *hamah ūst* (54)

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Wisdom of Naming (*Tasmiyah*) and the Names of *Ahl al-Bayt*

In the Name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

In this article, this most humble servant, the slave of the slaves of the Imam of the time and dust under the feet of friends, is trying to comply with a written request of some of my esteemed, knowledge-nurturing and learned friends, in which for the sake of disseminating knowledge they have asked me to explain the meaning of the blessed names of the holy *Ahl al-bayt* and the wisdom of naming. In this connection, first of all it is necessary to explain certain fundamental points concerning the wisdom of naming, which are as follows:

1. Sometimes according to tradition or custom or religious belief, people give their children the names of a religious or ancestral dignitary or a well-known personality. The aim and object of doing so is that, God willing, their children will possess the attributes implicit in their names.
2. They fondly give the name of a great personality in view of his virtues, even if literally his name has an insignificant meaning, such as the blessed name of Ḥaḍrat Mūsā, which in the Coptic language has apparently a very insignificant meaning: *Mū* means water and *sā* means tree, thus Mūsā means the one who was taken from water under the tree. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that his name is given [to children] with the intention of acquiring blessing. For, the characteristics and virtues of the personality dominate the literal meaning of the name in this example.
3. In this connection, it is also a custom to coin a new name or to select an old one for the new-born child in which a good characteristic is attributed to the child, such as *Shayr-dil* (lit. lion-hearted=brave), *Āfiāb-bāno* (lit. sun-lady=beautiful).

4. Sometimes the name is given with respect to time, place and other events, such as *Nawrūz 'Ali*, *Gulshan*, *Hajj Bibi*, etc. Nonetheless, the best tradition is that *mu'mins* should give their children the blessed names of the *Ahl al-bayt*. However, in the case of girls' names it is permitted to select a name from among the beautiful and attractive things, such as stars, jewels, flowers, etc.

Although apparently this principle has also been used in the venerable names of the Prophets and Imams, their names contain great secrets of knowledge and recognition (*ma'rifat*), as they are the closest friends of God. So it is not a wonder if God has kept a special heavenly *ta'wil* in the name of Ḥaḍrat Mūsā, for the science of *ta'wil* (*'ilm-i ta'wil*) in its subtlety and power of adjustment is like water and the words are like vessels of varying sizes. Thus, the water of *ta'wil* in the vessel of every word adjusts in accordance with its shape and form. After this introduction, let us return to the main subject.

Institute for

Muḥammad (peace be upon him and his progeny):

Root: *ḥā, mīm, dāl*. Muḥammad means highly praised, extolled and commended. In the holy Qur'ān, it is mentioned four times and Aḥmad once. Although the entire Qur'ān is full of the praise of the Prophet, as it is said: "*Qur'ān tamām waṣf-i kamāl-i Muḥammad ast*", namely, the entire Qur'ān is the praise of the perfection of Muḥammad, but here we are mainly concerned with the meaning of the name "Muḥammad". In this respect, it is appropriate to say that this word is directly linked to *maqām-i maḥmūd* (i.e. praised place), as God says: "Maybe your Lord will raise you to a praised place (*maqāman maḥmūdā*)", (17:79). That is, your resurrection (*inbī'āth*) will be at "*maqām-i maḥmūd* or the Praised Place", which is the Divine Word (*kalimah-i bārī*) and the fountainhead of Intellect, and is praised, extolled and commended.

According to *hisāb-i jumal* (use of the letters of the alphabet according to their numerical value) the numerical *ta'wil* of Muḥammad is ʿAlī, as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Muḥammad} &= \text{mim} (40) + \text{ḥā}' (8) + \text{mim} (40) + \text{dāl} (4) \\ &= 92 = 2+9 = 11 = 1+1 = 2 \\ \text{ʿAlī} &= \text{ʿayn} (70) + \text{lām} (30) + \text{yā}' (10) \\ &= 110 = 0+1+1 = 2\end{aligned}$$

You can see that the minor *jumal* of Muḥammad is two, by which is meant ʿAlī for ʿAlī's minor *jumal* is also two. This means that Muḥammad and ʿAlī, peace be upon them both and their progeny, are one light, for light is always one; the same one light is ever-reaching, ever-pervading and self-sufficient and the concept of two lights negates the perfection of light.

Muṣṭafā:

Root: *ṣād, fā', wāw*. It means selected, chosen, admired and esteemed. This is the blessed appellation of the holy Prophet.

ʿAlī (peace be upon him):

Root: *ʿayn, lām, wāw*. It means lofty, noble, high, exalted. This blessed name of ʿAlī is among the attributive names of God. The reason for this is that God creates His chosen servants, the Prophets and Imams in His own image (*ṣūrat-i Raḥmān*). He gives them one of His names and considers them His living Supreme Name (*ism-i aʿẓam*), He breathes His Holy Spirit into them and confers upon them His vicegerency (*khilāfat*). Thus, it is a fact that the holy names of Muḥammad and ʿAlī are given by God. For this was His unchangeable decision that the light of knowledge and guidance will remain forever linked with the progeny of Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him (4:54).

Murtaḍā:

Root: *rā', dād, yā'*. It means admired, esteemed, selected, chosen. This is the appellation of Mawlā ʿAlī, which is according to the intention of God and His Prophet.

Fāṭimah (peace be upon her):

Root: *fā', tā', mīm*. Fāṭimah literally means a woman who has weaned a child at the fixed time. The holy name of Fāṭimah, however, is given after the esteemed name of Fāṭimah bint Asad, the wife of Ḥaḍrat Abū Ṭālib, whose personal characteristics and virtues are taken into consideration, instead of its literal meaning. She was the daughter of Asad, granddaughter of Ḥaḍrat Hāshim and paternal aunt of the Prophet. What her virtues were, and with what love and compassion she took care of the Prophet can be assessed from the respective history.

Zahrā':

Root: *Zā', hā', rā'*. Zahrā' whose masculine form is *azhar*, means bright, brilliant, splendid, radiant. It stems from *zahara*, which means glittering and brightening of a lamp, moon or face. *Zuhrah* is another word from the same root *zahara*, which is used in the sense of beauty. This same *zuhrah* is the name of a star, which was considered to be the goddess of beauty. In short, all those virtues and perfections, which should be in the Chief of the ladies of paradise were present in the pure and holy personality of Fāṭimah-yi Zahrā'. She was pure intellectually, spiritually and physically in the fullest sense of purity, for God in the verse of *Taṭhir* (purification) has given the guarantee of the perfect and complete purity of the *Ahl al-bayt* of the Prophet (33:33). In this world material things are purified in many ways, but the best purification takes place by the sun's rays and then by water. When water in reaching the ocean becomes turbid, the sun elevates it by rarifying and purifying it and causes it to rain in the form of pure water (25:48). This example reveals the reality that the purification of the *Ahl al-bayt* is from the rain of light, which is purification *par excellence*.

Ḥasan (peace be upon him):

Root: *ḥā', sin, nūn*. It means every agreeable and desirable thing, beautiful, handsome. The holy Prophet says: "Ḥasan and

Ḥusayn both are true Imāms, whether they stand or sit down, and their father is better than both of them”. That is, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn whether they carry on the *da‘wat* or not are Imams: *mustawda‘* (entrusted) and *mustaqarr* (permanent), respectively. And their father is better than both of them, because he is the *asās* (foundation).

Where the name of the true Imam is ‘Alī (i.e. lofty, high) it is an indication to the sublimity of the light of God, and when this light is in the form of Ḥasan, then the attention is drawn to its inner beauty. Ḥaḍrat Yūsuf was *Imām-i mustawda‘*, whom God, the Omniscient, the Wise, has presented as the example of the spiritual beauty and majesty of the light of *Imāmat*, so that the true love (for the Imam) may prevail over the people of faith.

Ḥusayn (peace be upon him):

The root and meaning are the same as those of Ḥasan, except that as a mark of love, it is its diminutive form. In this wisdom-filled name there is an indication that some people will despise the progeny of Muḥammad, the children of ‘Alī, and some will love them. For, a diminutive noun has both these aspects.

Zaynu'l-‘Ābidīn (peace be upon him):

Root: *zā‘*, *yā‘*, *nūn* and ‘*ayn*, *bā‘*, *dāl*. His proper name was ‘Alī and Zaynu'l-‘Ābidīn was his appellation. It means the adornment of the worshippers. This blessed appellation of the Imam reveals the importance of worship (‘*ibādat*) of God, the One. It also reveals that the spirit of ‘*ibādat* is the concept of *Imāmat*, for it is the Imam who is the door of *ma‘rifat* (recognition of God) and *ma‘rifat* is the spirit of ‘*ibādat*. In the holy Qur‘ān, the word *zayn* is used for the light of faith (*nūr-i imān*), as God says: “But Allāh has endeared the faith to you and has beautified (illuminated) it in your hearts” (49:7).

Muḥammad al-Bāqir (peace be upon him):

Root: *bā'*, *qāf*, *rā'*. *Baqara* means to split open, cut something open. *Tabaqqara 'l-rajulu fi 'l-ilm aw fi 'l-māl*, that is, the man became abundant in knowledge or in wealth, or he enhanced himself in knowledge or wealth. In accordance with its radical meaning *bāqir* means the opener or revealer of the hidden sciences and inner secrets, and for this reason, the Imam was called *Bāqiru 'l-ʿulūm*. In short, from the example of the name and the work of the Imam it is evident that the light of *Imāmat* always reveals the esoteric and *ʿirfāni* wisdoms.

Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him):

Root: *jīm*, *ʿayn*, *fā'*, *rā'* and *ṣād*, *dāl*, *qāf*. *Jaʿfar* means river, stream and *ṣādiq* means truthful. This blessed name reveals the fact that the pure and holy Imam is the flowing river of true knowledge. Every Imam is *aṣ-ṣādiq* (the truthful) of his own time and all Imams are called *aṣ-ṣādiqūn* (the truthful ones). Thus, the people of all times are addressed as: “O you who believe! Fear God and be with the truthful ones (*aṣ-ṣādiqīn*)” (9:119). That is, adhere to the Imam of the time, so that you will be enriched with the treasures of realities and recognition (*ḥaqāʾiq-u maʿārif*). It should be properly reflected here that, on the one side there are the people of faith who have to be with the *ṣādiqūn* (the truthful ones) by attaining the true faith and practising *taqwā* (fear of God) and on the other, there are the *ṣādiqūn* who are on the highest degree of perfection of faith, *taqwā* and truthfulness.

Ismāʿīl (peace be upon him):

This word in Hebrew is *shimāʿīl*. *Shimāʿ* means to listen and *īl* means God. Thus the literal meaning of this word is “listening by God”. This blessed name of the true Imam is after the worthy and beloved son of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm, namely Ḥaḍrat Ismāʿīl. This wisdom-filled name alludes that the chain of *Imāmat* is the progeny of Ibrāhīm and of Muḥammad. Further, in this name attention is drawn towards external and internal sacrifices.

Muḥammad bin Ismāʿil (peace be upon him):

This blessed name of the holy Imam is after the glorious name of the Prophet of Islam, so that people may know the spiritual and ancestral relation of the Imams from the progeny of Muḥammad. God has given His beloved Prophet *al-Kawthar* (108:1), namely the one who has abundant children. He is undoubtedly Mawlā ʿAlī, so that the system of guidance, the cherished religion (Islam) of the Prophet, may continue forever. Thus all the meanings of *Kawthar* were hidden in the exalted personality of the Commander of the faithful, ʿAlī. Another meaning of *Kawthar* is wisdom, in which there is abundant good (*khayr-i kathir*) (2:269). The third meaning of *Kawthar* is the pond of the same name (*ḥawḍ-i Kawthar*). All these realities are hidden in the light of *Imāmat*. The *taʿwil* of the pond of *Kawthar* is the rank of *qiyāmat*, whose lord is every seventh Imam. Imam Muḥammad bin Ismāʿil was the first lord of *qiyāmat* in the chain of the minor cycles consisting of seven Imams. This is why the light of *Imāmat* was transferred to him extraordinarily.

Wafiyy Aḥmad (peace be upon him):

Root: *wāw, fāʾ, yāʾ* and *hāʾ, mim, dāl*. Wafiyy means complete, perfect, true to one's word, faithful, truthful, trustworthy, the one who gives and takes what is due to the people. Aḥmad means highly praised and extolled. Here Aḥmad is after the name of the Prophet. Thus Wafiyy Aḥmad means the one who gives and takes the right on behalf of the Prophet and fulfils his word. This blessed name reveals the reality that the true Imam is from God and His Prophet. It should be remembered that the attribute of Wafiyy, namely, *wafāʾ* (fulfilment) is an extremely great attribute, for God has praised the external and internal deeds, knowledge and recognition (*ʿilm-u maʿrifat*) of a great Prophet like Ibrāhīm by this one word *wafāʾ*, as He says: “*Wa-Ibrāhīma'lladhi waffā* (And Ibrāhīm who fulfilled” (53:37)).

Taqiyy Muḥammad (peace be upon him):

Root: *wāw, qāf, yā'*. Taqiyy means God-fearing, godly, pious. Here it should be remembered that the light of *Imāmat* is always the same, only its manifestations are different with respect to name and person. Therefore, the meanings that are implied in the name of one Imam are in reality common to all Imams. For instance, Taqiyy Muḥammad (the pious of Muḥammad), although it is the blessed name of one Imam, its meanings are common to all of them. It should also be remembered that *taqwā*, which has great importance in the Qur'ān and Islam, is related to the blessed personality of the Imam.

Raḍiyy 'Abdu'llāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *rā', qād, yā'* and *'ayn, bā', dāl*. Raḍiyy 'Abd Allāh means the servant of God who is satisfied and content. The subject of this pure name of the Imam is *riḍā'* and *riḍwān Allāh*, that is the contentment and pleasure of God, for the contentment and pleasure of God is supreme in the religion of Islam. This means that those who are chosen by God worship and obey Him, not because of the fear of hell nor for greed of paradise, but [purely] for the sake of the contentment and pleasure of God. Further, they are always content and pleased with the contentment and pleasure of God, as the wise Qur'ān says: "And of humankind is he who sells himself, seeking the pleasure of Allāh; and Allāh has compassion on (His) servants" (2:207). This verse has two aspects, special and common. In its special aspect it is about the Commander of the faithful, 'Alī; in its common aspect it contains guidance for all, that it should be understood that one has to offer the greatest sacrifice for the sake of God's pleasure.

Muḥammad al-Mahdī (peace be upon him):

Root: *hā', dāl, yā'*. Mahdī means the guided one, the one whom God guides towards truth (*ḥaqq*). The subject of this blessed name of the Imam is guidance (*hidāyat*). This means that every Imam, is first *mahdī* (guided) and then he is *hādī* (the one who

guides). Although all the pure Imams with respect to the inner light are alike, according to the Divine programme great events take place in the time of some Imams, such as in the time of Ḥaḍrat Imam Muḥammad al-Mahdī.

Qā'im bi-amri'llāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *qāf, wāw, mim* and *alif, mim, rā'*. Qā'im bi-amri'llāh means the one who, by the command of God, has stood for the work of religion, the one invested with the Divine command (*waliyy-i amr*) and possessor of authority (*ṣāhib-i ikhtiyār*), who is the Imam of the time, as God says: "Allāh (Himself) is witness that there is no God save Him, and the angels and the possessors of knowledge (*ulu'l-'ilm*) who execute justice" (3:18). In this holy verse in witnessing *tawḥīd* (unity of God) the possessors of knowledge, who are mentioned after God and the angels, are the Prophets and Imams who possess knowledge and justice in their respective times. Thus Ḥaḍrat Imam Qā'im bi-amri'llāh too, by the command of God, was dispensing spiritual knowledge and justice. And this is the position of every Imam.

The lamp of Divine light is lit forever. It never extinguishes. This means that this lamp of knowledge and guidance continues in a holy chain, which consists of the Prophets in the cycle of Prophethood and the holy Imams in the cycle of *Imāmat*. And it is they who are the possessors of knowledge and who execute justice. Contrary to this if there is a time in which several means of knowledge are available, and in another no means were available, God's knowledge would have failed to pervade all times and His justice would have been defective. This, however, is impossible.

Manṣūr bi'llāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *nūn, ṣād, rā'*. Manṣūr bi'llāh means the one who has received help (*madaḍ*) from God. The true Imam through the allusion of the meaning of this name indicates that the Imam of

every time receives help from God. Here the word help or *madad* needs some explanation, for it is minimum as well as maximum. Thus, it should be known that the help that the Imam receives from God is extremely immense, that is, the Divine light dwells in him, and there is everything in the light.

Mu'izz li-Dini'llāh (peace be upon him):

Root: 'ayn, zā', zā' and dāl, yā', nūn. Mu'izz li-Dini'llāh means the one who gives strength and honour ('izzat) to the religion of God. This glorious name of the Imam has become the subject of 'izzat (might, honour). There cannot be any doubt for a *mu'min* that the entire 'izzat belongs to God, the Prophet and the pure Imams, as God says: "The 'izzat belongs to God and His Messenger and the believers (*mu'minin* = the Imams); but the hypocrites know not" (63:8). Among the principles of Qur'ānic wisdom, when *mu'mins* are mentioned in the Qur'ān in a praiseworthy way, it mainly means the Imams, for it is only the Imams who are at the pinnacle of the perfection of faith. In short, religion has an esoteric aspect (*bāṭin*) and an exoteric aspect (*zāhir*). God has linked the esoteric or hidden aspect with the Imam and He has left the exoteric or open one for the people, so that on the Day of Judgement they will be questioned [about it].

‘Aziz bi'llāh (peace be upon him):

Root: 'ayn, zā', zā'. 'Aziz bi'llāh means the one whom God has given 'izzat (honour, might) and predominance. The Imam with this royal name also had a *darwish*-like name, Nizār, which means weak, slim, powerless. This name at first appears to be related to Mawlānā Imam Qā'im bi-amri'llāh. The wisdom of two such opposing names of the true Imam is that his blessed personality always has two aspects: luminosity (*nūrāniyyat*) and corporeality (*jismāniyyat*). Light is always mighty and all-encompassing whereas the body without light is weak and powerless. Thus, the law of corporeality does not harm those who know the light of *Imāmat* as it ought to be known. But

those who confine themselves to the corporeality and humanity of the Imam are drowned in the deluge of doubts and suspicion.

Such a name of the Imam contains the wisdom that although a *mu'min* always has to remain humble, he needs to be more so on the occasion of success so that there will be no trace of pride in his heart and he will be duly grateful.

Ḥākīm bi-amri'llāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *hā'*, *kāf*, *mīm*. Ḥākīm bi-amri'llāh means the one who judges and decides according to the command of God; the one who rules according to the command of God. Here it is worth pondering that as far as saying is concerned, many people say that they are judging or deciding according to the command of God, but it is only the Imam on this planet earth who really judges and decides according to the command and will of God. As God says: "Lo! We have revealed unto you the Book with the truth, and that you may judge between humankind by that which Allāh has shown you (in spirituality)" (4:105). In "by that which Allāh has shown you" is alluded the spirit and spirituality of the Qur'ān, which is specifically for the Prophet and Imam. Thus according to the command of God, the Teacher of the Qur'ān and the Judge is the Imam only.

Ẓāhir (peace be upon him):

Root: *zā'*, *hā'*, *rā'*. Ẓāhir means apparent, helper, overpowering. This wisdom-filled name of the Imam with all these meanings was for the might, honour and strength of the religion of God. It is known to the people of knowledge that *aẓ-Ẓāhir* is among the attributive names of God. Thus if someone believes that the Imam is that light which is appointed in this world for the sake of guidance, then this means that the Imam is that name of God which is called *an-Nūr* (the Light). If this is true, then it is also true that the Imam is the attributive name *aẓ-Ẓāhir* (the Manifest) of God, for the words 'light' and 'manifest' have the same meaning.

Mustanşir bi'llāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *nūn, šād, rā'*. Mustanşir bi'llāh means the one who seeks help from God by His command. This name of the holy Imam, which is full of all kinds of blessings, is the subject of help (*ta'yid*). There are varying degrees, both common and special, of seeking help from God until a place is reached where *ta'yid* already exists and it works automatically. Such an exalted place is the light and luminosity of the holy Imam.

Nizār (peace be upon him):

Root: *nūn, zā', rā'*. Nizār means powerless, weak, humble. From this blessed and wisdom-filled name of Imam Nizār, we receive the light of guidance that a *mu'min* should choose the way of humility, because all the wisdoms of well-being and success are hidden in it. For instance:

- Where prayer (*du'ā*) is the essence of *'ibādat*, the expression of humility [during it] is an important element of it (prayer).
- Pride is the greatest moral and spiritual disease and it can be prevented only through humility.
- Repentance is spiritual purification, but its spirit is humility.
- *Nafs* or the carnal soul is the greatest enemy and it can be defeated only through humility.
- If a thing can bring a *mu'min* close to luminous annihilation (*fanā'-i nūrāniyyat*), it is only humility.

Hādī (peace be upon him):

Root: *hā', dāl, yā'*. Hādī means guide, leader, the one who shows the path. The blessed name of Imam Hādī is among the extremely important names of the light of *Imāmat*. For *hidāyat*

or guidance, which is the attribute of the true guide, is the most extensive subject of the Qur'ān and Islam. This is because of the fact that guidance is knowledge as well as light; it is speech as well as action; it is in the external world as well as in the internal world; it is at the minimum ranks as well as at the maximum ranks; in this there is the representation of God as well as that of the Prophet.

Muhtadī (peace be upon him):

Root: *hā'*, *dāl*, *yā'*. Muhtadī means the one who finds the right way, rightly guided, one who has attained guidance. The esteemed name of Imam Muhtadī is also related to guidance. It should be remembered that as every act has an ultimate purpose, guidance also has an ultimate goal and that is the ultimate station of the straight path, namely, the desired destination, where the *mu'min* merges with the Universal Command (*amr-i kull*).

Qāhir (peace be upon him):

Root: *qāf*, *hā'*, *rā'*. Qāhir means overpowering, almighty. It is among the attributive names of God, as it is said in the Qur'ān: "Whose is the sovereignty this day? It is Allāh's, the One/Unifier (*wāḥid*), the Subduer (*qahhār*)" (40:16). In this name there is an allusion of unifying all people by force at the final destination. That is to say, His force will unify all the people on the day the spiritual kingdom of God will be established.

The full name of the Imam here is al-Qāhir bi-quwwati'llāh. That is, the one who becomes overpowering by the force of God; the one who is made mighty by God. This means that the true Imam is the living name of God therefore, he is the locus of manifestation (*maẓhar*) and the luminous mirror of all His attributes.

Ḥasan ‘Alā dhikrihi's-salām (peace be upon him):

Ḥasan is the name, and ‘alā dhikrihi's-salām is the appellation. Ḥasan means, as has already been said, extremely handsome intellectually, spiritually and physically. ‘Alā dhikrihi's-salām means peace upon his remembrance, as “*ṣalawātu'llāhi ‘alayhi wa salāmuḥ* (blessing and peace of God be upon him)” is said on mentioning every Imam's name. The *ta'wil* of *salām* is higher help (*ta'yid-i a'lā*), namely, the full support of Divine light.

A'īlā Muḥammad (peace be upon him):

Root: *‘ayn, lām, wāw*. A'īlā means the highest, the most exalted. Thus A'īlā Muḥammad means the one who is [made] by God and Muḥammad, the Messenger of God, the most exalted and distinguished among the people of the world. That is, the holy and pure Imam, who as the bearer of the light is the most exalted and most excellent, as the Imam from the progeny of Muḥammad and the children of ‘Alī has to be.

Jalālu'd-Dīn Ḥasan (peace be upon him):

Root: *jīm, lām, lām*. Jalālu'd-Dīn means the greatness and grandeur of religion. The name of the Imam was Ḥasan and Jalālu'd-Dīn was his appellation. Jalālu'd-Dīn Ḥasan means the one who has all the external and internal virtues of religion, which are the grandeur of religion. In other words, Ḥasan is the grandeur of religion. Everybody accepts that Islam is the religion of nature, but they do not think about its meaning. It means that the holy Prophet was like the seed of the tree of Islam, therefore, from his exalted personality the tree of Islam came into being, grew and expanded. Thus, the virtues of the holy personality of the Prophet expanded into the tree of Islam. Then the Imam was the fruit of this tree, therefore, all the virtues of the religion of Islam gathered in his personality.

‘Alā'u'd-Dīn (peace be upon him):

Root: *‘ayn, lām, wāw*. ‘Alā' means loftiness, sublimity, nobility. ‘Alā'u'd-Dīn means exaltedness and nobility of religion. There

are two kinds of exaltedness: material and spiritual. The exaltedness or the sublimity that is mentioned here is the spiritual sublimity or exaltedness, which is the exaltedness of intellect, knowledge and recognition. The full name of the holy Imam is 'Alā'u'd-Dīn Muḥammad, which means that the exaltedness and nobility of religion is Muḥammad, peace be on him and his progeny. It also means the one who is the exaltedness of religion on behalf of God and Muḥammad, the Messenger of God, namely, the exalted Imam.

Ruknu'd-Dīn Khurshāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *rā'*, *kāf*, *nūn*. Rukn means support, pillar, the fountainhead of strength. Ruknu'd-Dīn means the one on whom religion depends, namely, the fountainhead of strength, pillar of religion; Khur (sun) Shāh means the king who is like the sun, namely the exalted Imam who is the fountainhead of strength and the king like the sun. The sun, which is an example of the light of guidance, works in two ways: on the one hand, it radiates the light directly and on the other, it spreads light through the moon. Thus in the time of Prophethood, the Prophet is the sun and the *asās* is the moon. In the time of the *asās*, he is the sun and the Imam is the moon, and in the time of *Imāmat*, the Imam is the sun and the *bāb* (heir to the *Imāmat*) is the moon. In this sense, the Qur'ān calls the sun *ḍiyā'* (splendour) and *sirāj* (lamp) and the moon, light (*nūr*) (10:5; 71:16). Here *ḍiyā'* and *sirāj* are the original light, and by *nūr* is meant the reflected light.

Shamsu'd-Dīn Muḥammad (peace be upon him):

Root: *shīn*, *mīm*, *sīn*. Shams means sun and Shamsu'd-Dīn means the sun of religion. Shamsu'd-Dīn Muḥammad means Muḥammad is the sun of religion on behalf of God and Muḥammad, the Messenger of God. This blessed name of the exalted Imam, the true guide, accords with those Qur'ānic verses in which the light of guidance is compared with the sun. Such verses are linked not only with the sun, but also with the east, the west, the heaven and the light, etc.

Qāsim Shāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *qāf, sin, mīm*. Qāsim means divider. Qāsim Shāh means the king who divides, namely, the true Imam who divides all the things of the Divine treasures, by God's command, as it is said in the Qur'ān: "Or do they own the treasures of your Lord? Or have they been given charge (thereof)?" (52:37). This means that the Imams are the treasurers of God and in this sense, every Imam is *qāsim*, the divider.

Islām Shāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *sin, lām, mīm*. Islām Shāh means the king of Islam, the king of kings of religion. The example of king for the holy Imam is a brilliant fact. The Qur'ānic term for king is *malik*. Other terms in this connection are *mulk*, *malakūt* (kingdom), etc. In the religion of God, if it is the time of Prophethood, the king is the Prophet and the Imam is his *wazīr*; if it is the time of *Imāmat*, the Imam is the king and his heir is the *wazīr*.

Muḥammad bin Islām Shāh (peace be upon him):

This esteemed name of the Imam is after the blessed name of the Prophet. For the Imam is the light of God and of the Prophet. This holy light has many relations, such as the light of the Qur'ān, the light of Islam, the light of guidance, the light of knowledge, the light of *ma'rīfat*, the light of unity, the light of faith, etc. Why should there be doubt about the many names of the one light, while God and the Prophet too, have many names?

Mustanṣir bi'llāh (peace be upon him):

This blessed name of the Imam has already been explained above. Here we will say only this much, that the help of God can be attained only through the mediation of the Prophet and the Imam and God's aid and help are needed in the work of religion and the next world. Thus God's living and speaking help is the Imam of the time.

‘Abdu's-Salām (peace be upon him):

Root: ‘*ayn*, *bā’*, *dāl*. ‘Abd means servant, slave; Salām means peace, security, a name of God. ‘Abdu's-Salām means slave of God, the slave of the one who possesses peace. If it is the name of someone other than the Imam, then it will be ‘Abdu's-Salām (servant of Salām) in a literal sense only, but contrary to this, the Imam is ‘Abdu's-Salām in the true sense. That is, the Imam is the chosen servant of God, therefore he brings God's peace to the people and leads them to His peace. Further, the exalted Imam in his own personality is the ‘*arīf* in its ultimate sense therefore, his ‘*ibādat* is perfect and full of luminosity.

Gharīb Mirzā (peace be upon him):

Root: *ghayn*, *rā’*, *bā’*. Gharīb means foreign, alien, strange, unusual, extraordinary. Mirzā means prince. Gharīb Mirzā means extraordinary prince, strange prince. Undoubtedly, the Imam is strange to the people of the world and alien to them as well, for they do not recognize him. As it is said in a Tradition about Islam that it began like a stranger and will return as a stranger. Thus Islam and the Imam are wondrous and strange. That is, their inner side (*baṭīn*) is full of the marvels and wonders of the light of knowledge and wisdom. The Imam is alien in this world in the sense that his main abode is the higher world. He is foreign also, because the people do not recognize him as he ought to be recognized. Therefore, it is said: *Salmān gharibam qalb-i tū*

Abū Dharr ‘Alī (peace be upon him):

Root: *alif*, *bā’*, *wāw* and *dhal*, *rā’*, *rā’*. Abū means father; Dharr means *dharrah* (particle), the plural of which is *dharṛāt* (particles). Abū Dharr ‘Alī means ‘Alī who is the father of particles, that is the holy Imam who is the father of particles of the souls and whose personality is the world of particles (‘*ālam-i dharr*) in which all souls are gathered in the form of subtle particles, so that it should be an example of the unity and multiplicity of souls. It should be remembered that there are three basic examples in humankind: intellect, which is the

example of unity which is at the top; body is the example of multiplicity which is at the bottom and soul which contains the examples of both unity and multiplicity, for it is between the two, therefore, it is one as well as many.

Murād Mirzā (peace be upon him):

Root: *rā'*, *wāw*, *dāl*. Murād means intended, desired, sought, object. Murād Mirzā means the prince who is sought after. That is, the holy, noble and generous Imam, who is sought by all. There is no doubt that a *mu'min* is *murīd* (one who desires) and the pure Imam is *murād* (the desired). That is, he is desired by the soul (*maqṣūd-i jān*). Although there are many religious and worldly desires of a *mu'min* and they also have an order [of priority], his desire of desires or the ultimate and supreme desire is the Imam of the time, for it is he alone who is the most comprehensive treasure of Divine secrets.

Dhu'l-Faqār ʿAlī (peace be upon him):

Root: *dhāl*, *wāw* and *fā'*, *qāf*, *rā'*. Dhū means possessor, owner; Faqār means vertebra, backbone. Dhu'l-Faqār means the sword whose back is like the backbone, as is said: *sayfun mufaqqar*, a sword notched on the back. Dhu'l-Faqār ʿAlī, that is, the Dhu'l-Faqār of ʿAlī, this holy name of the Imam is a symbol of the *jihād* (struggle) of *tanzīl* and *ta'wīl*. The *jihād* of *tanzīl* (external) is known to everyone, but to understand the *jihād* of *ta'wīl* with its different aspects is not possible for the common people, since it is external as well as internal, in the form of intellect and in the form of knowledge, in the form of soul as well as in the form of wealth; it is with the help of the heavenly army as well as that of the earthly army.

Nūru'd-Dīn ʿAlī (peace be upon him):

Root: *nūn*, *wāw*, *rā'*. Nūr means light and Nūru'd-Dīn means the light of religion. Nūru'd-Dīn ʿAlī means ʿAlī is the light of religion, the one who is the light of religion on behalf of ʿAlī, namely the Imam from the progeny of Muḥammad and the children of ʿAlī. This wisdom-filled name of the Imam is

extremely important, for “light” in the Qur’ān is the most outstanding subject, in which the one and the same light is mentioned as a whole. Nonetheless, with respect to the different aspects of the reality of light the concept of God is in the verse of *miṣbāḥ* (24:35), the concept of the Prophet is in the verse of *sirāj* (33:46) and the concept of the Imams is in the verse of *maṣābiḥ* (41:12; 67:5).

Khalīlu'llāh ‘Alī (peace be upon him):

Root: *khā’*, *lām*, *lām*. Khalīl means needy, poor, indigent; a sincere and intimate friend. Khalīlu'llāh means needy (*faqīr*) of God, that is someone whom God has made needy for His special favours, the sincere and intimate friend of God, the appellation of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm.

Khalīlu'llāh ‘Alī: ‘Alī who was needy of God and his sincere friend. Every Imam is needy of the luminous gifts of God and His sincere friend, as it is said about Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm: “Allāh chose Ibrāhīm for a needy (or a friend)” (4:125). And it is said about Ḥaḍrat Mūsā: “(And Mūsā prayed:) My Lord! I am needy of whatever good You send down for me” (28:24). Thus the meanings of the needy (*faqīr*) of God are in accordance with this level.

Nizār (peace be upon him):

It has already been explained that this blessed name of the true Imam, Nizār, teaches *mu'mins* humility. For the entire wisdom is in humility. The defeat of *nafs* (carnal soul) and the victory of the intellect lies in that *mu'mins* must choose modesty and humility, as it is said: “And give good tidings (O Muḥammad) to the humble” (22:34).

Sayyid ‘Alī (peace be upon him):

Root: *sīn*, *wāw*, *dāl*. Sayyid means chief, leader, the progeny of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, the progeny of the Prophet. Sayyid ‘Alī: ‘Alī is chief, the one who is chief, namely, the Imam on behalf of Mawlā ‘Alī. These meanings of the word Sayyid, in addition to

religious literature, are also found in authentic dictionaries. Authentic dictionaries are very logical. Thus when it is accepted that terms like *sayyid* or *āl-i Muḥammad* or *āl-i rasūl*, namely the progeny of the Prophet are applicable only to those who are the children of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah-i Zahrā', cannot they be included in the verse *Istifā'* (selection): "Lo! God has selected Ādam and Nūh and progeny of Ibrāhīm and the progeny of 'Imrān ..." (3:33)? Definitely, they can be! For the term "progeny of Muḥammad" or *āl-i Muḥammad* is an elaboration and an explanation of the term "progeny of Ibrāhīm" and "progeny of 'Imrān".

Ḥasan 'Alī (peace be upon him):

Ḥasan means beautiful, handsome. Ḥasan 'Alī means 'Alī is this Ḥasan who is extremely handsome with the virtues of the light of God, and he is on behalf of 'Alī, and with respect to light, is himself 'Alī. The fountainhead of Divine beauty is the light, followed by the soul, whereas the body is just a shadow.

Qāsim 'Alī (peace be upon him):

Qāsim means divider. Qāsim 'Alī means the divider is 'Alī. That is, by the command of God, 'Alī is the divider of the descending steps (*darakāt*) of hell and the ascending grades (*darajāt*) of paradise. Also at present in this world it is 'Alī, who as the Divine Light, divides the sustenance of intellect and knowledge. Thus the blessed name of Imam Qāsim 'Alī revivifies this concept.

Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī (peace be upon him):

'Alī is Abu'l-Ḥasan, the appointment of this Imam Abu'l-Ḥasan is from 'Alī and he is from the descendants of 'Alī. The *kunyat* (agnomen) of Abu'l-Ḥasan is also Mawlā 'Alī's. Since 'Alī is the centre of *Imāmat*, therefore it is necessary that the blessed names of the Imams from the children of 'Alī should return to their origin and centre, and an aspect of light be mentioned in every name.

Khalilu'llāh 'Alī (peace be upon him):

God is mentioned first in this holy name, the purpose of which is the concept of unity, then there is the praise of God, that He made Ibrāhīm His friend (needy) and enriched him with the wealth of light; then in mentioning 'Alī, it is alluded that the chain of light will continue till the resurrection in the progeny of Ibrāhīm, and that is the progeny of Muḥammad and the children of 'Alī. Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm in his own time had prayed in the following way: “My Lord! Vouchsafe me wisdom and unite me to the righteous (*aṣ-ṣāliḥīn*). And make for me a truthful tongue (*lisān ṣidq*) among the people of the future” (26:83-84). The law of reality (*qānūn-i ḥaqīqat*) says that God has united Ibrāhīm with the chain of the light of guidance of his progeny by granting him wisdom and he is alive in this light and God has made the true Imam his tongue. And the purpose of the truthful tongue is to explain knowledge and wisdom.

Ḥasan 'Alī Shāh (peace be upon him):

The favourite and lovely title of Shāh has been used for almost all Imams. For, in reality, the Imam is the king and love for the king of the throne of spirituality is extremely pleasant. The Qur'ānic term for Shāh is *malik*, the plural of which is *mulūk*. True *mu'mins* derive immense happiness from the concept of the Imam being king, for in this concept there is a great secret and that is hidden in the following verse: “And (remember) when Mūsā said unto his people: O my people! Remember Allāh's favour unto you, how He made among you prophets and He made you kings” (5:20). This is in the sense that the true *mu'mins* of the community of Mūsā were kings in the light of their respective Imam of the time. For Imam of the time is the name of the supreme soul of *mu'mins*, which is embodied as the Perfect Man and this great bounty is the same for all times.

The title “Āghā Khān” began to be used from this blessed attire (*jāmah-i mubārak*) of the holy light. Another form of this title is “Āqā Khān”. Āqā means a great lord, nobleman, head; Khān

means chief, prince; both words are Turkish. The technical meaning of “Āqā Khān” is very exalted and unique and it is obvious why the Imam has accepted it as a title.

‘Alī Shāh Dātār (peace be upon him):

The meaning of this holy name is that Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī, the Commander of the faithful, is extremely generous. This exalted Imam whose glorious name is ‘Alī Shāh Dātār is, in reality, Murtaḍā ‘Alī, the king who was very generous. Dātār means very generous, benevolent, granter, munificent. Since the Imam and the Prophet are the hands of God, hence He gives His favours to the people through His hands. Thus whatever the Imam, as the hand of God, grants is the most precious of all things and is everlasting. This is the meaning of a Qur’ānic verse (2:248), which says that the proof of the Imam being the spiritual king is that the Ark of spirituality comes to the people, in which there will be things of the peace of heart from their Lord. Further, the knowledge and wisdom of the progeny of Mūsā and that of Hārūn (Prophethood and *Imāmat*) is in it. The Ark will be carried and brought by angels, that is, it is something spiritual and not material. This is a bright proof of the spiritual kingdom of the true Imam, which accords with verse (4:54) concerning the progeny of Ibrāhīm.

Sultān Muḥammad Shāh (peace be upon him):

Root: *sīn, lām, tā’*. Sultān means proof, argument, force, overpowering, king. In this glorious and blessed name there are the meanings of the Muḥammadan kingdom. And certainly the unprecedented personality of Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Sultān, peace and salutation of God be upon him, possessed the spiritual kingdom. Although every Imam in his time is the spiritual king, but according to the great programme of God, all times are not alike. Thus the time of Ḥaḍrat Imam Sultān Muḥammad Shāh was extremely important and very special, in fact, it was the greatest of all. For, in the language of the *ta’wil* of the Qur’ān, his exalted personality was *shab-i qadr* (the night of *qadr*), in

which the angels, the supreme soul and other souls of the world of command descend [to the physical world]. The purpose of the descent of the angels and souls is two fold: to take the account of the past from the people and to make a great programme for the future. Thus, in the time of this living *shab-i qadr* that promise of God, which is mentioned in (97:1-5), has been fulfilled.

It should be remembered that whether it is 'angel or soul', it is found on several levels. That is, at the place of *ma'rifat* angels and souls are in their real [spiritual] form, which only an *'arif* can see and recognise. But on the lower levels, the angels and souls who come to the people of this world are in a solidified (*munjamid*) form. That is, everything of knowledge, art and science of this world, in its origin and fountainhead, is a solidified angel or soul. Just as the water everywhere in its universal circle is not only water, but is also steam, vapour, cloud, snow, rain, ice, etc. Thus today, scientists have found the solidified soul in the form of electrons by splitting the atom.

Similarly, flying saucers are also a kind of solidified angels. All this is according to that great programme of God, which is mentioned in the Qur'ān time and again, which is related to the *shab-i qadr* and Ḥaḍrat Qā'imū'l-qiyāmat, the most excellent greeting and peace be upon him.

Shāh Karīm (peace be upon him):

Root: *kāf*, *rā'*, *mim*. Karīm means generous, forgiver, honourable, great, esteemed, a name of God, and a related hidden Supreme Name is *al-akram al-akram al-akram* ... Nūr Mawlānā Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī Ḥaḍīr Imam: Nūr means the intellectual, spiritual and moral light; Mawlānā means our lord; Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī means the generous king from the progeny of Ḥusayn; Ḥaḍīr Imam means the Imam whose recognition and obedience is incumbent upon the people of the time and without this the *walāyat* of the previous Imams does

not avail anything. This most noble and the greatest Imam who, in the holy chain of *Imāmat* is the seventh seven, is the Imam of the atomic age. A great resurrection has taken place in the background of his *Imāmat*, which the people of the world saw only in the world of particles. They did not see it in the external world. The reason for this is the wall that is erected between the external and the internal worlds (57:13).

Wa's-salām.

The humble servant,
Naṣīr al-Dīn Naṣīr Hunzai
24th September, 1983.



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