

**In the Name of God**

**the Beneficent  
the Merciful**







**Seeking  
Forgiveness  
and  
Repentance**



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## Preface

‘Abdul Salam al-Harawī quoted from Imam Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) saying, “May God have mercy upon the one who revives our affairs.” Al-Harawī asked, “How should one revive your affairs?” The Imam (P.B.U.H.) said, “He should learn our knowledge and teach it to people. If people get informed of the virtues of our words, they would follow us.”<sup>1</sup>

*‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (P.B.U.H.), vol. 1, p. 307*

One of the great blessings of God the Almighty to us is that He put the Infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.) among us to learn how to live a God-centered life through observing their lifestyle and to achieve eternal bliss through practicing their useful guidelines.

Mashhad is a piece of paradise where [the shrine of] the son of the Messenger of God (P.B.U.H.), the eighth star in the sky of Imamate, is located and every year

١ - عَنْ عَبْدِ السَّلَامِ الْهَرَوِيِّ، عَنِ الرِّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ، قَالَ: «رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا أَحَبَّأَ أَمَرَنَا»، قُلْتُ: كَيْفَ يُحْيِي أَمْرَكُمْ؟ قَالَ: «يَتَعَلَّمُ عُلُومَنَا وَبُعَلِّمُهَا النَّاسَ، فَإِنَّ النَّاسَ لَوْ عَلِمُوا مَحَاسِنَ كَلَامِنَا لَاتَّبَعُونَا».



from various parts of Iran and the world, millions of fascinated pilgrims visit this heavenly shrine to quench their thirsty souls from the limpid spring of the infallible Imam's (P.B.U.H.) knowledge.

The servants of this shrine, Āstān Quds Raḍawī, are all by some means in the service of the pilgrims of Imam Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) so that they can make a pilgrimage with peace of mind and get many benefits from this heavenly shrine.

“The Management of Foreign Pilgrims of Āstān Quds Raḍawī” also has been trying in various forms to introduce culture, manners, and lifestyle of the Infallibles (P.B.U.T.) specially Imam Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) to the lovers and enthusiasts of this school.

The affairs of this management are in line with the Supreme Leader of Iran's statements and running the commands of the custodian of Āstān Quds Raḍawī as well as Āstān Quds Raḍawī 20-year vision plan for disseminating Islamic culture and civilization in accordance with needs of non-Iranian pilgrims in order to create insight and spiritual growth in them.

Some good examples of these affairs done in line with serving non-Iranian pilgrims of Imam Riḍā (P.B.U.H.) in the international arena are as follows; organizing special cultural programs, insight circles, professional meetings, scientific conferences, educational classes and workshops, cultural competitions, poetry nights, conversion ceremonies, expert panels and advisory board as well as responding to letters, sending books and cultu-



ral products around the world; answering religious and theological questions; and also Raḍawī Talk chat rooms, production and translation of pure Islamic teachings into various languages.

It is the time that the call of Islam is going not only to return the people, who have fallen from their origin in every corner of the world, to the truth but also to return Islam-seeking and truth-seeking hearts to [Islamic] sublime and magnanimous teachings which are spreading in the world. It is hoped that in such days, reading this book would be found useful for the truth seekers and it would be regarded as a forward step for giving insight to the pilgrims and lovers of the Infallibles (P.B.U.T.) as well as gaining the satisfaction of God.

“O’ God bless Muḥammad and Muḥammad’s household, give me to enjoy a sound guidance which I seek not to replace, a path of truth from which I swerve not, and an intention of right conduct in which I have no doubts! Let me live as long as my life is a free gift in obeying Thee.”<sup>1,2</sup>

### The Management of Foreign Pilgrims of the A.Q.R.



١- «اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَ مَتَّعْنِي بِهُدَىٰ صَالِحٍ لَا أَسْتَبْدِلُ بِهِ، وَ طَرِيقَةَ حَقِّ لَا أَرْبِعُ عَنْهَا، وَ نَبِيَّةٍ رُشِدٍ لَا أَشُكُّ فِيهَا، وَ عَمَّرْنِي مَا كَانَ عُمُرِي يُدْلِلُهُ فِي طَاعَتِكَ.»

2- *Al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, Supplication 20.



### Translator's word

If the style of this book is found unattractive, it will show that I have done my work ill and not represented the author truly; but, if it is found odd, I beg that I may not bear all the blame. I have simply tried to reproduce the author's own mixture of colloquialisms and formalisms, and his preference for the precise expression of his thought rather than the word conventionally expected.

One special feature of the style, however, gives the reason why this preface should exist. It is characteristic of the Supreme Leader of Iran-Ayatollah Khamenei's lectures and speeches that the thread of thought is carried on largely by the repetition of the same word in a modified form or sense. That connection of ideas which has guided popular instinct in the formation of words is made to suggest the line of thought which the author



wishes to follow. If this echoing of words is missed, the bearing of statements on each other is in a measure lost; and, where the ideas are very new, one cannot afford to throw away any help in following their connection. Therefore, where a useful echo could not be reproduced in English, I have generally called attention to it in a note. My notes are distinguished from the author's by being enclosed in brackets.

I have set my face as a flint against the temptation to add footnotes that were not part of the translation. There is no telling how much I might have enlarged the book if I had put a footnote at every sentence which deserved to have its truth brought out by fuller elucidation—or even at every one which I thought needed modification. It might have been within my province, if I had been able, to explain all the comments to references and sources, but I doubt whether anyone could do that properly without having access to the books of four or five well-chosen prominent Shī'a scholars and authors. The comments are clear enough, without names and sources, to give a vivid picture of certain aspects of repentance and seeking for forgiveness in daily life then. Where Persian books are referred to, the pages cited are those of the Persian editions even when (usually because of some comments in the text) the titles of the books are translated.



**Shahireh Nozari**  
**September, 2017**



### **Part One:**

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Seeking Forgiveness, a Prerequisite for Repentance

The first sermon of the Friday Prayer on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1988  
C.E. / 26<sup>th</sup> Ramadan, 1408 A.H.

The following is the first sermon of the Friday Prayer delivered by Ayatollah Khamenei—presently the Supreme Leader of Iran, on the occasion of Quds Day of 1988 during his presidency. His excellency discusses seeking forgiveness as an appropriate topic for the holy month of Ramadan based on the verses of the Qur’an and narrations even though the material he discusses is neither dedicated nor limited to this month. As this speech is delivered as a Friday Prayer sermon, the addressees are from all walks of life, having different ages and levels of knowledge.

A feature that distinguishes this speech from others delivered on this topic is the Supreme Leader’s social outlook on seemingly individual and ethical issues, such as seeking forgiveness, which can be clearly seen in the subtopics such as “The Social Impact of Seeking Forgiveness” and “The Social Impact of Committing Sins”.

### In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds, Whom we praise, from Whom we seek help, in Whom we believe, to Whom we repent, and on Whom we rely<sup>1,2</sup> and peace and blessings be upon His beloved and noble one, the master of His servants, the protector of His secret, the promoter of His message, the harbinger of His mercy, the warner of His chastisement, our Master and Prophet, Abū al-Qāsim al-Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, and upon his (Infallible), pure and chosen household, and upon those who guide the guided, specially the one remaining with God on earth. And greetings be upon the Imams of the Muslims, those who guide the oppressed and those who guide



١- «الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَهْدِيهِ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ»

2- *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 88, p. 101.

the faithful. Indeed, God the Almighty says in His book, “Say [that God declares,] ‘O’ My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of God. Indeed, God will forgive all sins.”<sup>1,2</sup>

I advise all the praying brothers and sisters toward the remembrance of God, observing piety, paying attention to God, pleading for forgiveness, repenting, praying, regretting evil, and dedicating themselves to goodness and righteousness deeds.

### The holy month of Ramadan, an opportunity to seek forgiveness

On this last Friday of Ramadan, which is one of the most promising opportunities for the faithful and observant worshippers, I would like to present a brief discussion suitable for the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan and that is for the reflection of my own self and you dear ones, and that is the topic of seeking forgiveness.

One of the opportunities for seeking forgiveness is Ramadan, and the month of Ramadan is about to finish. If these last few days pass and we have not been able to obtain Divine forgiveness and mercy for our sins and our mistakes, we will certainly be at a loss and have harmed ourselves. And undoubtedly, the one who is deprived of God’s mercy in this month is wretched. One of the ways

١- «قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا».

2- *The Holy Qur’an*, 39:53



of attracting Divine mercy is to seek forgiveness.

Seeking forgiveness means asking God the Almighty for forgiveness and His pardon. This is emphasized in many verses of the Holy Qur'an. We are asked to repent for our sins. Certainly, there is no one who has not committed sins. Of course, our sins as ordinary people are quite different from the sins of those close to God. The Commander of the Faithful (P.B.U.H.) also asks for forgiveness, but his pleading for forgiveness is not for the kind of things we do; he asks for forgiveness for something else. We, who have wrongdoings in our personal and social life, commit sins and exhort ourselves to trespass God's commandments, must plead for forgiveness. For a few minutes, I will address this issue in this sermon as a brief reminder.

### Seeking forgiveness in the verses and narrations

Firstly, an important part of the supplications that we received from the infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.) is seeking forgiveness, which demonstrates its importance. When you look at the lofty supplication of Kumayl that you recite on Thursday nights—it is one of the best supplications we've received from the Imams (P.B.U.T.), you see it is from the beginning to the end seeking for forgiveness and pardon in different words. At the opening of the supplication, you swear to God in that very meaningful tone that is specific to the Imams (P.B.U.T.) by ten things: His mercy, His power, His grandeur, His dignity,



His light, etc. Once you urge God earnestly by these ten attributes, you beseech Him to forgive you for five types of sins. “O’ God! Forgive me those sins which tear apart safeguards.”<sup>1,2</sup> Those sins that alter blessings. There are some sins that change the blessings that God has granted. Those sins that call down tribulation, and those sins that hold back one’s supplication.

Look at how many mistakes and transgressions we may have committed that have such dangerous and harmful consequences for us. We should beseech God the Almighty to pardon us for committing them. The same can be seen in the supplication of *Abū Ḥamza Thumālī* and many other supplications. When you look at them, you see a large part of these supplications is about seeking forgiveness from the Lord. In an overview of the Holy Qur’an, I found that there was a statement that was in the words of many prophets addressed to their people, “Plead with your Lord for forgiveness”<sup>3</sup> so that this seeking for forgiveness and pardon opens the path to your happiness. The first step is to seek forgiveness. Seeking forgiveness makes it possible for human beings to repent, because repentance is not just seeking pardon, rather it is to return from the path of misguidance. The first step in this return is that one beseeches God for pardon.

١- «اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تَهْتِكُ الْعِصَمَ».

2- Ṭūsī, M., *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid wa Silāḥ al-Muta‘abbid*, vol. 2, p. 844.

٣- «وَ أَنْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ».



## The social impact of seeking forgiveness

According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an as well as some of the narrations that I have read, seeking forgiveness makes it possible to resolve issues in individual life and societies. If a community pays attention to their sins, isn't heedless of them, and seeks to compensate for its sins and beseeches the Almighty God to forgive them, Divine blessings will flow to this community. This is mentioned in many verses of the Holy Qur'an such as: Sūra Hūd in two or three verses, Sūra Nūh, and in many other verses. "Plead with your Lord for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently. He will provide you with a good provision."<sup>1,2</sup> Or, in another verse: "O my people! Plead with your Lord for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently: He will send copious rains for you from the sky, and add power to your [present] power."<sup>3,4</sup> In another verse, "telling [them], 'Plead to your Lord for forgiveness.'<sup>5,6</sup> 'Indeed, He is All-forgiver. He will send for you abundant rains from the sky,'<sup>7,8</sup> 'and aid you with wealth and sons, and provide you with gardens and pro-

1- «وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 11:3.

3- «وَيَا قَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا وَيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً إِلَىٰ قُوَّتِكُمْ».

4- *The Holy Qur'an*, 11:52.

5- «فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا».

6- *The Holy Qur'an*, 71:10.

7- «يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا».

8- *The Holy Qur'an*, 71:11.





vide you with streams’’<sup>1,2</sup> These are from the speeches of Nūḥ (P.B.U.H.) to his people.

## The social impacts of committing sins

On the other hand, sins cause the social life of communities to be ruined. Many communities enjoyed prosperity, power, and dignity; sins brought them to a lowly state and diminished and deprived them of the conveniences God had provided them with. Once more, in many verses of the Qur’an<sup>3</sup>, it is stated that, “so God seized them for their sins”<sup>4,5</sup>. God seized, tormented, and punished a community for its sins. This is something definitely known from Islamic teachings. We are in a poor situation if we do not pay attention to this point. We must acknowledge that once human beings fall into sins, mistakes and faults due to ignorance, lust and misunderstandings, they inescapably shall be punished for their sins and mistakes. The only solution is to pay attention, find their mistakes, turn toward God after turning away from Him through sin, repent, and seek His pardon; and certainly, this seeking pardon leads to awareness.

1- «وَمُجِدِّدِكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَ يَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا».

2- *The Holy Qur’an*, 71:12.

3- Ref. *the Holy Qur’an*, 2:11 & 8:52 & 40:21.

4- «فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ».

5- *The Holy Qur’an*, 8:52.



What does it mean when we are advised that we should always be reciting a *dhikr*<sup>1</sup> of beseeching God for forgiveness? This means that we are constantly in danger of falling and sinning. If there is no sin, why should one seek forgiveness? When we are told to daily ask for God's pardon a certain number of times, it means that we are exposed to that number of sins or more every day. That is the truth, we are in danger of committing sins.

What is painful for a nation is for its sins to cause it to lose God's grace and mercy. Here, the issue is not the matter of an individual. Of course, an individual may disgrace themselves with sins and will be at a loss; this is a matter of an individual. This is obviously not insignificant. It is still very important. All of human endeavor is to end well; meaning, to enjoy prosperity. If that goal is lost, nothing could be more devastating.

But sometimes, the matter is even more important than that. Every so often, the members of a community through their negligence, sin, arrogance, and ignorance cause it to fall from God's mercy and grace. This has happened in the past. In the Holy Qur'an, there are examples of those who had disgraced and overwhelmed a community by their sins. There are also examples from among the narrations, which if we were to include and give examples of, this would become a long discussion, not be suitable for a Friday Prayer sermon. Specially today as you have marched and are exhausted. Neverthe-



1- i.e. the name of devotional acts in Islam in which short phrases or prayers are repeatedly recited silently within the mind or aloud.

less, this truly needs to be elaborated on for the people. Religious speakers, scholars and clerics during the holy month of Ramadan and other opportunities should enlighten people on what a severe loss is made by overlooking the sins we are committing and how it may alter the destiny of a nation.

### The double impact of committing sins in an Islamic community

Here, I would like to remind you—dear brothers and sisters, and the whole nation of Iran, and specially those among this great nation who hold social responsibilities, small or big—that we should be aware that God’s grace, blessings and mercy over this nation, which was truly a great, historical miracle, will continue to shower on us only if we beseech God the Almighty’s pardon for our faults and sins and stop committing them. “O’ God! Forgive me those sins which alter blessings!”<sup>1,2</sup> If it was the blessing of the grandeur, dignity and triumph of the Muslims being altered by my sins and those like mine, it would have been unquestionably a severe loss.

Some sins, in particular situations, have greater harmful impacts than usual. Backbiting is always bad; but, when a community needs compassion, beneficence, empathy, unity and harmony, backbiting is a fatal sin, because it distances the hearts. Slandering is a great sin. But on

١- «اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُغَيِّرُ النِّعَمَ».

2- Tūsī, M., *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid wa Silāḥ al-Muta‘abbid*, vol. 2, p.844.



the day a community encourages and needs values to be preserved and embodied in the faces of the members of the community, and strives to ensure that committing sin is eradicated in the community, slandering—which mirrors negative values and attributes and is rejected in Islam—is an even greater sin, a double sin. Lying is always a great sin, but on the day a community needs to appreciate the essence of truth and the people’s awareness is decisive and constructive for their destiny, lying, which changes the truth and perhaps is one of the greatest sins, is a double and bigger sin. Laziness and unruliness in a community is always bad; nonetheless, when the people need community services, business services, labor services, clerical services, military services, academic services of professors or students, villagers’ services—everyone needs the services of each other, and the community must all together work and strive to get out of this difficult situation, on that day, idleness, laziness and shirking one’s responsibility are bigger sins, double sins. Doing an injustice to individuals, ignoring their financial rights, their honor, their social rights and taking them away are always considered sins. However, once an Islamic community raises the banner of Qur’anic justice and seeks to become an exemplar of that which is well-defined in the Holy Qur’an and Islam for the whole world, if oppression takes place in that community, whether in the area of justice and judiciary or administration, or even in the common relations of the people of the community with each other such as two neighbors, two colleagues, or two



comrades oppress each other, say bad words about each other or ignore the rights of each other—even though that is always bad, but once we want to show our community is a sample of ‘Alī’s (P.B.U.H.) justice, they are bigger sins, double injustices. It is not permissible for a community to be filled with such sins.

Here and now, who can say that we are free from these sins? Who can say that we are not infected with lies, backbiting, slanders, laziness, bullies, oppression, and violation of others’ rights? Of course, as I am an official in the country and shoulder an important responsibility in accordance with the constitution, if I myself commit these things that I mentioned; my burden, harm, and sin would be more than a normal persons’. If I commit such violations, I am more disgraceful than you. But this is the same for all the people, their deeds and sins today have more perilous impacts compared to the situation where there is no Islamic community, there is no need for unity, and we do not feel the necessity to be a model of Islam.

### **Seeking forgiveness: means of deliverance from Divine punishment**

Be sensitive with regards to sins. Brothers, sisters, we should not ignore sins. We should not cover up our own sins and we should be heedful of others’ sins as well. This is our greatest task and lesson today. We need this heedfulness and sensitivity on the battlefield as well. If it’s not there, we will be defeated in the battlefield as



well. If it's not there, we will not have the courage to deal with the seemingly powerful enemies of Islam. If this spirit doesn't exist, the maintenance of Islamic life will be impossible. This spirit means being sensitive to those sins which we are committing and being aware of the fact that what we did or what we said is a wrongdoing, an oppression, an offense to a Muslim, or transgressing Divine limits.

The core of this attention and sensitivity is known as piety in Islamic terminology. Being heedful and sensitive as well as avoiding and evading sins due to this sensitivity is the same thing as piety. Every week, an Islamic community, through the Friday Prayer leaders, must be commanded to piety. This spirit is so important due to the impacts. Having or not having piety has a decisive influence on the community. If there is no piety in a community and people gradually stifle and diminish their piety, the continuation of Islamic life is not possible; that is how important this is. And if we enliven the spirit of seeking forgiveness within ourselves, it will compensate for a great deal.

I will read a narration to finish my sermon with. It is narrated in *Nahj al-Balāgha*, that the Commander of the Faithful (P.B.U.H.) said, "There are two sources of deliverance from God's punishment, one of which has been raised up, while the other is before you. You should therefore adhere to it. The source of deliverance which has been raised up is the Messenger of God (May God bless him and his descendants), while the source of de-



liverance that remains is the seeking of forgiveness.”<sup>1,2</sup> Then the Commander of the Faithful (P.B.U.H.) recites this verse, “God, the Glorified, has said, ‘But God will not punish them while you are in their midst, nor will God punish them while they plead for forgiveness.’”<sup>3,4</sup>

Islamic communities during eras did not seek forgiveness and suffered great torments. We were not heedful of our sins. We—the people of Islam in Iran or in many other Islamic lands—have suffered loss, weakness, foreign occupation, the plundering of our properties and falling behind from human progress; it is all due to the sins we did not pay attention to and did not beg forgiveness for.

Today, we should preserve this means of safety for ourselves. It is not enough to just say, “I ask God for His forgiveness”<sup>5</sup> by the tongue. Here, “astaghfirullāh”<sup>6</sup> means I seek forgiveness from God and “wa atūbu ilayh”<sup>7</sup> means I return to Him; we all must return to Him. The most crucial condition is what I mentioned earlier: to be heedful of the sins we are committing. Our main issues is this, we overlook the sins we have committed. Every so often, someone commits a sin imagining he

١- «كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمَانَانِ مِنَ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَ قَدْ رُفِعَ أَحَدُهُمَا فَدَوَّنَكُمُ الْآخَرَ فَتَمَسَّكُوا بِهِ أَمَّا الْأَمَانُ الَّذِي رُفِعَ فَهُوَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَ أَمَّا الْأَمَانُ الْبَاقِي فَالِاسْتِغْفَارُ».

2- *Nahj al-Balāgha*, Wisdom 88.

٣- «قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: وَ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَ أَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَ هُمْ يَسْتَعْفِرُونَ».

4- *The Holy Qur'an*, 8:33.

٥- «استغفر الله».

6- *ibid*.

٧- «و اتوب اليه».



is doing good. His revolutionary spirit motivates him to start a movement which is in actuality anti-Islamic and counter-revolutionary. Under the pretext of adhering to Islam and the Qur'an, he does or says something which is against Islam and the Holy Qur'an. We should be heedful. We should be aware of our deeds. And do not say we can't differentiate or understand. No, the conscience of a person understands very well which words, which movement is contrary and wrong and which is in accordance with "what God has sent down"<sup>1, 2</sup>. I beseech God the Almighty to cause us to succeed in seeking for forgiveness.

Dear God! By the right of Muḥammad and his household (P.B.U.T.), grant us success in repenting and pleading for forgiveness in the last few days of Ramadan.

Dear God! Make us heedful of our own sins.

Dear God! By Muḥammad and his household (P. B.U.T.), do not punish us for our sins.

Dear God! Make what was said and advised impactful on the speaker and listener.







## Part Two:

25

Dimensions of Seeking Forgiveness and Repentance

A meeting with the government officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2005 C.E. / 27<sup>th</sup> Ramadan, 1426 A.H.

Every year, on one night during the holy month of Ramadan, the representatives, senior officials and executives of the country are the guests of the Supreme Leader of Iran for *iftār*. Before *iftār*, his excellency delivers lectures generally addressing epistemic and ethical issues. The following is one of those lectures delivered in 2005, in which individual and social sins, as well as seeking forgiveness for each of them are spoken about. The topic that has been dealt with more is about the sins which directly touch people and society. Although at first glance, the addressees of these statements are only government officials, the social outlook that has been given to committing sins and seeking forgiveness in this speech is beneficial for any person associated with a community or a group.

### In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings be upon our master and Prophet, Abū al-Qāsim al-Muṣṭafā Muḥammad and upon his (Infallible), pure and chosen household, specially the one remaining with God on earth.<sup>1</sup> All-wise God says, “Plead with your Lord for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently. He will provide you with a good provision for a specified term and grant His grace to every meritorious person.”<sup>2,3</sup>



١- «الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَي سَيِّدِنَا وَنَبِيِّنَا أَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ  
الْأَطْيَبِينَ الْأَطْهَرِينَ الْمُتَنَجِّبِينَ الْهُدَاةَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ سَيِّمًا بَقِيَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِينَ».  
٢- قَالَ اللَّهُ الْحَكِيمُ: «وَ أَنْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ مَتَّعَكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى  
وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ».

3- *The Holy Qur'an*, 11: 3.

This is an important gathering and these days are also important days. The month of Ramadan, with all its Divine blessings, is in its last few days. We, the officials of this great country, who have always been hoping to benefit from Divine assistance in performing our duties in the best possible manner, are passing through this valuable month. All of this, while we do not know how much we have been able to gain from Divine mercy and grace during this month and during the Nights of *Qadr*. We cannot afford to let this great blessing and grace pass us by. Our responsibility is heavy. There is a long way to go and we have a heavy responsibility to fulfill. Such heavy responsibilities cannot be accomplished except through Divine assistance. For this reason, it is necessary to make the best of these opportunities. This is the main topic of my statements today.

### Everyone should seek forgiveness

In the Holy Qur'an, including the verse I referred to, God the Almighty has repeatedly ordered human beings to seek forgiveness and repent to Him. Repentance means returning. This returning can be manifested in word and in action. In certain cases, we have been negligent. We need to reform ourselves, and this is the priority. Sūra Hūd starts in this way: "In the Name of God, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. Alif, Lām, Rā. [This is] a Book, whose signs have been made definitive and the elaborated from One [who is] All-wise, all-aware, dec-



laring: ‘Worship no one but God. I am indeed a warner from Him to you and a bearer of good news. Plead with your Lord for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently. He will provide you with a good provision for a specified term...’<sup>1,2</sup> In other words, the Qur’anic mission is primarily the issue of monotheism. Returning to God and pleading for His forgiveness are discussed immediately afterwards. This applies to people from all levels, ranging from prophets (P.B.U.T.) to people at lower levels, but the sin for which we repent is different in our case from the case of pious people. “Do not compare the affairs of the righteous with your own.”<sup>3,4</sup> However, even those people need to plead God for forgiveness; they too might make mistakes. “Disgraceful acts never separate from creatures in both worlds, only God knows.”<sup>5,6</sup> They too need to plead for forgiveness and compensate for their failure and relative hesitation. In our case, mistakes and sins are not few; we commit different kinds of mistakes. This is the essence of what I want to say.

۱- «بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. الرِّكَابُ أَحْكَمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ \* أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ \* وَ أَنْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مَتَاعًا وَسَيِّئًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِي فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهُ».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 11:1-3.

۳- کار پاکان را قیاس از خود مگیر.

4- Rumi, J., *The Spiritual Couplets (Masnavi Manavi)*. vol. 1, s. 11.

۵- سیه رویی ز ممکن در دو عالم جدا هرگز نشد، و الله اعلم.

6- Shabestari, M., *The Secret Rose Garden (Gulshan-i Rāz)*. s. 7.



Let me quote a narration here, “Close the door to calamity by pleading for forgiveness.”<sup>1,2</sup> In the Sūra I recited before, God says, “He will provide you with a good provision.”<sup>3,4</sup> In other words, making good use of one’s life will be possible through pleading for forgiveness and repenting to God the Almighty.

There is another narration, which says, “The best praying is pleading for forgiveness.”<sup>5,6</sup> This is from the supplication of Sha‘bānīyya, “O’ God! I have no doubt that you will not reject me with respect to my need I have spent my life asking you for.”<sup>7</sup> What is this need? This need—on which a lifetime has been spent—is pleading for Divine forgiveness.

### Everything we do is a prelude to reforming ourselves

Divine forgiveness results in correcting our mistakes and compensating for the harm that we have done to ourselves and to others. If human beings seriously go after rectifying their mistakes and sins, the Divine path will be everlasting and human beings will have a good destiny. The main problem with us human beings is that we neglect our mistakes, that we fail to recognize the

١- «إِدْفَعُوا أَبْوَابَ الْبَلَايَا بِالِاسْتِغْفَارِ».

2- Nūrī, H., *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol. 5, p. 318.

٣- «مُتَّعَكُمْ مَتَاعًا حَسَنًا».

4- *The Holy Qur’an*, 11:3.

٥- «خَيْرُ الدُّعَاءِ الْاسْتِغْفَارُ».

٦- «إِلَهِي مَا أَطْنُكَ تَرُدُّنِي فِي حَاجَةٍ قَدْ أَفْتِنْتُ عُمْرِي فِي طَلِبِهَا مِنْكَ».

7- Ibn Ṭāwūs, A., *Iqbāl al-A‘māl*, vol. 2, p. 686.



need for correction, that we fail to reform ourselves and rectify our actions. If such cases of negligence are eliminated and this determination develops, all mistakes will be corrected. At the first stage—which is the preliminary stage and among our greatest responsibilities, we correct ourselves. That is to say, everything we do is a prelude to reforming ourselves, a prelude to achieving Divine satisfaction. “Take care of your own souls. He who strays cannot hurt you if you are guided.”<sup>1,2</sup> The purpose of all efforts and struggles is to make God satisfied with us and to achieve the kind of perfection that has been ordained for us since the beginning of creation.

### The communal forgiveness and social reform

The other stage is communal forgiveness and social reform. We should reform the collective path and goal and collective performance to the best of our capabilities. This is the clearest example of the effect of seeking God’s forgiveness and the genuine meaning, content and essence of seeking forgiveness. This should not be considered as difficult. If we have determination, it is easy, and we can do it. These nights, you have recited in the supplication of *Abū Ḥamza Thumālī*, “And truly traveling to You is short in duration.”<sup>3</sup> The main thing is determination, taking action, and making efforts. “O’

١- «عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 5:105.

٣- «وَأَنَّ الرَّاحِلَ إِلَيْكَ قَرِيبٌ الْمَسَافَةِ».



God! You will not disclose Your creature's secrets except when they have already disclosed them in public."<sup>1</sup> We create a rift between ourselves and God with our own hands, with our mistakes. There is no distance between us and God the Almighty. We are very close. If we achieve any success, this is a sign of God's mercy. If you manage to plead for forgiveness from the bottom of your heart and then develop the determination to take action, be sure that Divine grace and attention will be bestowed on you, that you are being attracted and pulled toward God. In several places in the Holy Qur'an, God has attributed repentance to Himself, "then He turned clemently toward them so that they might be penitent."<sup>2,3</sup> God repented so that human beings would repent. What is the meaning of repentance? Repentance means attention and return. God turned His attention to you and this caused your hearts to become inclined toward God the Almighty.

"Unless there is attraction from the beloved, Efforts by the helpless lover are futile."<sup>4,5</sup>

In the supplication of *Abū Ḥamza Thumālī*, we recite, "O' my Lord! You have brought me up in Your gifts, and bounties since I was youthful, and elevated my designation as I grew older, so, O' the One who brought me

۱- «وَأَنْتَ لَا تَحْتَجِبُ عَنْ خَلْقِكَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَحْبِبَهُمُ الْأَعْمَالُ دُونَكَ».

۲- «ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا».

3- *The Holy Qur'an*, 9:118.

۴- تا که از جانب معشوق نباشد کششی کوشش عاشق بیچاره به جایی نرسد.

5- Anonymous poet.



up in this life with His benevolence, bountifulness and blessings, and indicated to me His forgiveness and generosity in the hereafter. My knowledge, O' my Master, is that which guides me to You and my love is my intercessor to You, and I am trusting in my evidence with Your guidance and comfortable in my intercessor with Your intercession."<sup>1</sup> The fact that You guided me toward Yourself, the fact that You presented a proof to me, is a sign that You are guiding me, that You are attracting me. If you see that in the month of Ramadan our youth go to the mosque, raise their hands toward the sky and shed tears for forgiveness to the extent that their voice fills the general atmosphere of our society, be sure that this is an indication of God's attention to our nation, an indication of Divine attraction, the kind of attraction that God the Almighty has caused because He wants to bestow His mercy. "O' God! I ask for the causes of Your mercy."<sup>2</sup> This will prepare the ground for God's mercy. God the Almighty wants to bestow His mercy and blessings upon this nation.



١- «مَعْرِفَتِي يَا مَوْلَايَ دَلِيلِي عَلَيْكَ وَ حُبِّي لَكَ شَفِيعِي إِلَيْكَ وَ أَنَا وَاثِقٌ مِّنْ دَلِيلِي بِدَلَالَتِكَ وَ سَاكِنٌ مِّنْ شَفِيعِي إِلَى شَفَاعَتِكَ».

٢- «اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مَوْجِبَاتِ رَحْمَتِكَ».



## Repenting for three types of sins: individual, taking others' rights, communal

There are three kinds of sins for which one should repent. Knowing these three kinds of sins is useful for people like us. We need them in our managerial work. Forgetting about these sins has caused immense damage. There are three types of sins. One kind is the sins that only involve injustice to one's self. Oppressing one's self has been mentioned many times in the Holy Qur'an and in narrations. This kind of sins is committed by the individual and its direct impacts only affect him, such as common personal sins.

Another type is a sin that a person commits, but its direct consequences affect other people as well. This is a heavier sin. It is an injustice to one's self as well, but, because it affects others too, it creates more problems and is more difficult to counteract—such as oppression, usurpation, violating others' rights, trampling upon the rights of other human beings. This kind of sins is mostly committed by governments. It is mostly committed by managers. It is mostly committed by politicians. It is mostly committed by international personalities. It is mostly committed by the people who can change the conditions of families and sometimes even an entire nation with a single word, with a single signature, with a single dismissal, with a single appointment. Usually ordinary people do not commit such sins, and, even if they do commit such sins, their scope is far more limited—like



a person who steps on the foot of another person deliberately. This is the scope of their sins. But if people like us commit such a sin, its scope will be vast. As I said, one single signature, one single decree, one single word, one single judgment, and one single decision by people like us can affect a large number of people.

Repentance for this kind of sin is different from other kinds of repentance. In the case of a sin of the first type, the individual needs only to plead God the Almighty for forgiveness in a sincere manner, but in the case of a sin of the second type, the issue cannot be solved with simple repentance; rather, one must compensate for the damage that has been done. This is the point where we come across the issue of rectifying errors and compensating for the damage that has been done.

The third type is the communal sin, which is committed by nations. It is no longer the case of a single individual committing a sin whose consequences would affect only a limited number of people. Sometimes an entire nation or a significant portion of it is involved in a sin. It is necessary to repent for this kind of sins in a different way. A nation might keep silent in the face of a sinful act or in the face of tyranny and fail to show any reaction to it. This too is a sin, perhaps a sin that is even graver. This is an instance of the verse, “Indeed God does not change a people’s lot, unless they change what is in their souls.”<sup>1,2</sup> This is the kind of sin which obliterates great



١- «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 13:11.

blessings. This is the kind of sin which causes great calamities for communities and nations.

The people who stood by and watched a great religious scholar like Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri<sup>1</sup> being hanged, the people who knew he was among the founders and leaders of the Constitutional Movement, yet he was accused of being against the Constitutional Movement simply because he refused to collaborate with the English—and West—oriented trend of the Constitutional Movement (baseless and irrational lies which are still being believed and repeated by a number of speakers and writers) received their punishment fifteen years later when, in the city of Tehran, a constituent assembly was formed, which ratified transfer of power to Reza Shah<sup>2</sup>. They were a group of ordinary people and their sin was one that would affect the entire nation. “And beware of a punishment which shall not visit the wrongdoers among you exclusively.”<sup>3,4</sup> Sometimes punishment is not limited to those who have committed a sin; rather, everybody is punished. This is because the sinful act is committed by the people even though not all people may be directly involved in it. However, the same Iranian nation took to the streets and faced the military tanks of Mo-

1- A prominent Shi'a Muslim cleric in Qajar Iran during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Trans.).

2- Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878-1944)- the founder of Pahlavi dynasty (Trans.).

۳- «وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً».

4- *The Holy Qur'an*, 8:25.



hammad Reza Pahlavi<sup>1</sup> without fearing death. In other words, they compensated for fifty years of sinful silence and they were rewarded by God the Almighty. The oppressive government collapsed and a popular government replaced it. Disgraceful political dependence was destroyed and the movement toward independence started. And, God willing, this movement will continue and our nation will reach its goals while relying on God's mercy and its own efforts. This was because our nation took action. Therefore, there is a different way of pleading for forgiveness in the case of a sin of the third type.

“Repentance” has been repeatedly mentioned in the Holy Qur'an alongside “reform” and “good deeds” such as, “...except such as repent, make amends...”<sup>2,3</sup> and “excepting those who repent, attain faith, and act righteously.”<sup>4,5</sup> In one occasion, even an instance of this reform has been mentioned, “except such as repent, make amends, and clarify...”<sup>6,7</sup> These people have been contrasted with “Indeed those who conceal what We have sent down of manifest proofs...”<sup>8,9</sup> or “except for those who repent and reform, and hold fast to God and dedicate their religion

1- Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (1919-1980)- the last monarch of Iran.

۲- «إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا».

3- *The Holy Qur'an*, 2:160.

۴- «إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا».

5- *The Holy Qur'an*, 25:70.

۶- «إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُّوا».

7- *The Holy Qur'an*, 2:160.

۸- «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ».

9- *The Holy Qur'an*, 2:159.



[exclusively] to God.”<sup>1,2</sup> This verse is about those who acted hypocritically and wavered. It says that repentance and reform of these people depends on their decision to free themselves from doubt and impurities. Therefore, reform is a requirement for repentance.

### Five types of sins affecting the community

We need to plead for Divine forgiveness. The forgiveness we seek is far beyond ourselves. I should seek forgiveness for myself and you too should seek forgiveness for yourselves. In fact, it cannot be said that we are simply sinful; rather, we are immersed in sins. There are so many failures, so many infringements and so many flaws in our actions that we must plead God the Almighty for forgiveness. Pleading for Divine forgiveness enlightens the heart, the mind, and the soul. This is personal repentance: it is only between us and God. However, there is communal forgiveness as well. Because the people who have attended this meeting are government officials of the country, heads of the three branches of government and senior managers of the country, I have written down five topics to discuss in this meeting, but, due to lack of time, I will not go into detail and will only mention them in passing.

One is the issue of disputes. We should repent and seek Divine forgiveness for our disputes. Discord and dispute harm us. Sometimes dispute is caused by pro-

١ - «إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 4:146.



voking ethnic, religious, local, and political sentiments. Other times, a dispute is caused when differences of opinion develop into conflicts. Differences of opinion may exist, and nothing is wrong with it, but it should not develop into a conflict.

This is why we criticize those who write provocative articles against people's beliefs, against the truths that exist in society and against historical facts that have not been distorted. Otherwise, we do not have any problem with freedom of expression. I believe in freedom of expression in its real and broad sense. But some comments should not be made while in public addresses. Rather, they should be discussed in meetings of experts. Yes, a number of Islamic jurists may sit down together with a number of jurists, philosophers or sociologists to discuss the most fundamental issues. They may even exchange views about the principle of monotheism: They may reject or support the principle of monotheism and present their reasons. Then, the results can be presented to the people, but first the issue should be debated in meetings of specialists. The same is true of the obvious facts about the Revolution and of basic issues relating to the Islamic Republic; such issues should be discussed in meetings of specialists. This is the purpose of the movement for freedom of thought, which has been discussed earlier. Of course, universities and Islamic seminaries made a good move in the beginning, but I see no noticeable changes in practice. They should organize scholarly meetings and arrange debates. However, if it is decided that people



may make public announcements about matters which should be discussed and debated within a specialized domain, then this is not freedom of expression.

Of course, these are ideological differences which are possible to not have led to dispute. These are political differences, differences and gaps between different pillars of the government that they tried for years to foment discord among. Obviously, when there is dispute and discord among senior officials of the country and they cannot come to an agreement and they constantly think of harming each other, it will not be possible to move things forward... In my opinion, this is one of the issues which were neglected in the past and now we should ask for Divine forgiveness and prevent this negligence from perpetuating.

The second issue is the issue of selfishness in the broad sense of the word. We should seek forgiveness from God for selfishness. Being self-centered is the opposite of being God-centered. The heart of a self-centered person is devoid of worship of God to the same extent that it is filled with selfishness and self-worship. This selfishness is broad in meaning. That is to say, it includes unreasonable, biased and fervent support for one's self, one's party, one's faction, one's relatives and associates and one's close friends. This is wrong. Many of the disputes which existed in the political atmosphere of our country, were the result of this attitude. A long time ago—perhaps twenty years ago—I said that differences that have emerged in the form of leftist or rightist ideas in our country are similar



to the tribal disputes of the past. We should not allow such a thing to continue. We should not let such self-centeredness seep into us and change us.

The third point is about neglecting the people and neglecting to serve them. If we have had negligence in this regard, we should seek forgiveness from God and we should repent. We should not let our hearts neglect the people...

The next topic is related to neglecting national power and the prerequisites which serve as the main pillars of this national power. It is necessary for a nation to be strong and powerful, so that it can achieve spiritual happiness and freedom and conquer the peaks of knowledge, even though these things are among the prerequisites for national power. A nation that is weak, a nation that has suffered humiliation, a nation that is dependent and imitates other nations, a nation that relies on others cannot reach the peaks it aspires to. It is necessary to achieve national power. How can national power be achieved? Through knowledge and ethics. We have discussed the issue of knowledge on many occasions. In this meeting, we will speak about ethics. We should not receive a low score in ethics. Our Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) was a promoter of ethics. The flag of spiritual purification and moral perfection was raised by the holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) as his prophetic mission. We must not suffer from backwardness in the area of ethics. Social behaviors, discipline, sense of responsibility, abiding the law and the spirit of religiousness—some unjust





people have attacked the spirit of religiousness within our youth and they have undermined this spirit through their hollow and irrational comments in the name of freedom—maintaining the spirit of religiosity and legalism are the foundations of authority.

We should not neglect existing capabilities and capacities. One of the pillars of national power is that our government officials and people should have faith in their capability to follow this path and accomplish these goals. They should not feel that they are incapable and helpless. They should not feel that they have reached a dead end. We should instill this spirit into the people. This is among our responsibilities. This is among the things that the government should do. The prerequisites for achieving national power are among the responsibilities of the government and governmental organizations. Of course, we should not develop delusions of being powerful. We should not resort to delusions and fantasies whenever we are not capable of doing something. We should not neglect our real and true power.

The last topic which I would like to discuss is related to failing to watch the enemy. We should plead for Divine forgiveness and we should repent for what we have neglected regarding the enemy and his plots. This repentance means warning oneself, becoming vigilant and opening up one's eyes. For some time, they created uproar, saying that we are always speaking about the enemy, that we have developed delusions of conspiracy. They said that we are always concerned that a plot is being hatched aga-



inst us. Turning one's attention away from a plot will not make that plot go away. Today, everything has become clear. The day they were making such comments, certain things were not announced openly, but today they are openly announcing that there are plots against the Islamic Republic, against our constitution, against our nation and against our interests. By ignoring these plots, one cannot make them go away. We should vigilantly assess and identify the enemy and his plots and defend ourselves and our national interests in a vigilant and wise manner.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad and his household (P.B.U.T.), we plead You to make us successful in seeking Your forgiveness and in repenting to You. Enlighten our hearts with the light of repentance.

Relieve the Islamic *Umma* and all Muslim nations from the malevolence of the enemies.

Dear God, make the dear people of Iran more powerful on a daily basis.

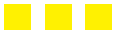
...Dear God, associate our dear martyrs with the holy Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.).

Increase solidarity among our government officials on a daily basis.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad and his household (P.B.U.T.), we beseech You to make the officials in the three branches of government successful in accomplishing their responsibilities.

Greetings and God's mercy be upon you.





### **Part Three:**

43

The Effects of Committing Sins, the Barriers to Seeking Forgiveness

The first sermon of the Friday Prayer on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1997 C.E. / 8<sup>th</sup> Ramadan, 1417 A.H.

The following is the full text of the speech delivered as the first sermon of the Friday Prayer on January 17, 1997 by Ayatollah Khomeini, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, at the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan. In this sermon, the worldly and transcendental effects of committing sins are elucidated on, and with regard to their effects, the importance of forgiveness, as a blessing and a means to destroy the effects of sins, is elaborated on. Moreover, the “barriers to seeking forgiveness”, which are “negligence” and “pride”, are expanded upon in this part. In addition, the two issues of pleading for “a real and thoughtful forgiveness” as well as seeking for “a general forgiveness” are spoken of at the end of this sermon.

### **In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful**

All praise is due to God, Whom we praise, from Whom we seek help, from Whom we draw the power, and Whom we rely on, and peace and greetings be upon His beloved and noble one, the best among His servants, the protector of His secret, the promoter of His message, our master and Prophet, Abā al-Qāsim al-Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, upon his (Infallible), pure and chosen household, and upon those who guide the guided, specially the one remaining with God on earth. And greetings be upon the Imams of the Muslims, those who support the oppressed and those who guide the faithful. All-wise God says in His book: “In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Whoever commits evil or wrongs himself and then pleads to God for forgiveness, will find



God All-forgiving, All-merciful”<sup>1,2</sup>

May the holy month of Ramadan—which is the month of God, repentance, invocation, seeking for forgiveness and help—be blessed for all of you and all Muslims of the world. And at the beginning of this sermon, in which I will mention some points about the importance of this month, I advise all the dear worshippers to observe piety. Because this is the month of piety, and fasting is a means of piety, and piety is surely the believer’s investment for this world and the Hereafter, both for the believer and the devout community. And we hope that in this month, God grants this valuable investment to us and to the great Islamic society of Iran and makes us enjoy it. In the supplication which has been recommended for this month, we recite, “This is the month of turning to You (in penitence), this is the month of repentance, this is the month of forgiveness and mercy, this is the month of release from Hellfire”<sup>3</sup>. This month is the month of repentance, forgiveness, and returning to God. Today, on this occasion, I will address some points about seeking forgiveness in the first sermon.

١- «الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. أَحْمَدُهُ وَاسْتَعِينُهُ وَاسْتَمَدُّ مِنْهُ وَاتَّوَكَّلَ عَلَيْهِ وَاصْلِي وَاسْلَمْ عَلَيَّ حَبِيبِي وَنَجِيبِي وَخَيْرِيكَ فِي خَلْقِهِ وَحَافِظِ سِرِّهِ وَمُبْلِغِ رِسَالَاتِهِ، سَيِّدِنَا وَنَبِيَّنَا أَبِي الْقَاسِمِ الْمُصْطَفِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِينَ وَصَلَّى عَلَيَّ أُمَّةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَحُمَاةَ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ وَهُدَاةَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. قَالَ اللَّهُ الْحَكِيمُ فِي كِتَابِهِ: «بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ. وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 4:110.

٣- «وَهَذَا شَهْرُ الْإِنَابَةِ وَهَذَا شَهْرُ التَّوْبَةِ وَهَذَا شَهْرُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ وَهَذَا شَهْرُ الْحَقِّ مِنَ النَّارِ».



## Seeking forgiveness: the opening of the door of Divine blessings

“Seeking forgiveness” means seeking mercy and Divine pardon for sins. Such a forgiveness, if properly done, would open the door of Divine blessings toward mankind. All of what an individual human being and a human society require of Divine benefactions—such as Divine bounties, Divine mercy, Divine lightness, Divine guidance, Divine grace, Divine aid in doing things and gaining achievements in various fields—are blocked from our reach by the sins we commit. Sin becomes a veil between us and Divine mercy or Divine bounties. Pleading for forgiveness takes away this veil and opens a route to Divine mercy and its bounties. This is the benefit of seeking for forgiveness. Hence, in Qur’anic verses, you see in several places worldly benefits and sometimes the benefits of the hereafter are stated for beseeching forgiveness. For example, “Plead with your Lord for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently: He will send copious rains for you from the sky.”<sup>1,2</sup> Similar examples are in many verses of the Qur’an. It is perfectly understandable and justifiable that the path to all these Divine benefactions, because of seeking forgiveness, is opened to the heart of man, human body, and human society. Therefore, seeking forgiveness is important.



١- «اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 11:52.

Seeking forgiveness, itself, is in fact a part of repentance; and repentance means to return to God. In other words, one of the pillars of repentance is seeking forgiveness which means beseeching pardon from the Exalted God. This is one of the great Divine blessings. That is, God the Almighty has opened the door of repentance to His servants so that they can move forward to perfection and their sins do not overpower them, as sins pull man down from the height of human exaltation.

### **The spiritual effects of committing sins in human beings**

Each sin damages the human soul. Surely, sins damage human dignity, spirituality, spiritual progress, luminosity of the human soul, and blind the spirit. They tarnish that aspect of spirituality that exists in man, which is the source of human's differentiation from the rest of the beings of this material universe, and bring him close to the station of animals, and to that of inanimate objects. Sin is like this.

### **The worldly and social impacts of committing sin**

Sins in human life, in addition to the spiritual aspect, bring in failure and losses. There are many opportunities for human progress in which human beings fail due to the sins they have committed. Of course, these all have scientific and philosophical justifications; and these are



not mere words or phrases. All of these have a scientific and a psychological justification. How does sin paralyze a human and make him immobile? Consider in the battle of Uḥud, due to the fault of a group of Muslims, the original victory turned into a defeat. First, they won in the battle of Uḥud but after the archers, who should have stayed positioned on the mountain side and kept the flank invulnerable, left their trenches in favor of spoils of war and ran downhill to the battlefield. The enemy exploited this move, conducted a raid on the Muslims and overran their flank and rear; this is what caused the defeat.

In the Sūra of Āl-i ‘Imrān, there are several verses, one after another, regarding this issue. Perhaps, ten, twelve or more verses of the Sūra of Āl-i ‘Imrān is about the same case of defeat because the Muslims were extremely upset and uneasy; this defeat was very heavy for them. The Qur’anic verses likewise calmed them down, guided them and made them understand why they suffered this defeat and explained to them how this incident occurred. It comes to this verse, stating, “Those of you who fled on the day when the two hosts met, only Satan had made them stumble because of some of their deeds.”<sup>1,2</sup> That is, if you see some of you in the battle of Uḥud turned their back on the enemy and were defeated, it was because the ground for this was prepared for in advance; they had internal flaws. “Only Satan had made



١- «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا».  
2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 3:155.



them stumble because of some of their deeds”<sup>1,2</sup>. That is, the ill-effects of old sins showed up on the battlefield.

On the military front, on the political front, in opposing the enemy, in advancing construction and education, in where straightforwardness is desirable, in where precise understanding is required, on the minute one should be as sharp as a sword’s blade cutting through the obstacles and nothing should stop him, the sins show up. Of course, this is about the sins for which one had not sought a sincere repentance and a real forgiveness for. In this Sūra, there is another verse expressing the same meaning in another way. That is, when the Qur’an wants to say: well, it is not surprising that you did not win the battle; you had a problem on the battlefield; such things happen and they are not new. It states, “How many a prophet there has been with whom a multitude of godly men fought. They did not falter for what befell them in the way of God, neither did they weaken, nor did they abase themselves”<sup>3,4</sup>. That is, what is going on? The defeat of Uḥud has shocked you, got you so upset, made you feel weak. Some of you feel desperate because a dozen have been killed. Truly, the previous prophets also faced problems on the battlefields; but, they did not feel weak nor were they despirited because of what had hap-

١ - «إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا».

2- ibid.

٣ - «وَكَأَيِّن مِّن نَّبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ مَا ضَعُفُوا وَ مَا اسْتَكَانُوا».

4- *The Holy Qur’an*, 3:146.



pened. Then, it adds, “All that they said was, ‘Our Lord, forgive us our sins, and our excesses in our affairs...’”<sup>1,2</sup>. This means, in the past, once the Prophet’s (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) companions and disciples suffered a disaster in the battles and in various events, they prayed to the Lord, saying, “Our Lord, forgive us our sins, and our excesses in our affairs”<sup>3,4</sup>. This, in fact, indicates that an incident or a disaster happens mainly due to the effects of the sins you have committed. This is a matter of sins.

So, you see! The sins that human beings commit, these various misconducts, which are caused by sensuality, covetousness, attachment to material possessions, adherence to worldly positions, feeling miserliness toward one’s possessions—sins may also stem from other things, such as jealousy, close-fistedness, greediness, lust and wrath, these various sins have two certain impacts on human existence: One is the spiritual impact which makes the soul lose its spirituality and removes its luminosity. In other terms, it weakens spirituality in humans and blocks the path to God’s mercy; this is the first effect. Secondly, in the context of social struggles, through the ups and downs of life, where it requires perseverance and resistance to manifest the authority of the will of mankind, these sins detain them; and if there is no other factor to compensate for this weakness, these sins sub-

١- «وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 3:147.

٣- «رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا».

4- *ibid*.



due them. Of course, sometimes there are other factors, for instance, a good trait or a good deed in humans may compensate it. The discussion isn't on those cases; sins, on their own, have these effects.

### Seeking forgiveness, a Divine blessing to destroy the effects of sins

In this regard, God the Almighty has given a great blessing to man, and that blessing is the blessing of pardon. He says if you do a wrongdoing, its effect will definitely take place; as if you entered a microbe in your body, contracting a disease is inevitable. You wounded your body, this is inevitable. If you want to eliminate the effect of this injury, this disease, to heal, God the Exalted has opened a door and that is the door of repentance. It is the door of seeking forgiveness. It is the door of penitence. It is the return to Him. God the Almighty will compensate it. This is the great blessing that God the Exalted has bestowed upon us.

In the supplication of Bidding Farewell to the holy Month of Ramadan, which is the forty-fifth supplication of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, there is a statement in which Imam Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) addresses the Holiest Essence<sup>1</sup>, “It is You who have opened for Your servants a door to Your pardon, which You have named ‘repentance’. You have placed upon that door a pointer from Your revela-

1- i.e. Al-dhāt al-aqdasīya referred to God the Exalted.



tion, lest they stray from it”<sup>1</sup>. You have placed a guide, from the Qur’an, from the revelation, so that Your servants do not go astray from it; this denotes the verses of the Qur’an. After some words, the Imam (P.B.U.H.) adds, “What is the excuse of him who remains heedless of entering that house after the opening of the door and the setting up of the pointer?”<sup>2</sup> What is man’s excuse for not using the opening of this door and not enjoying Divine pardon? To have Divine pardon, you need to plead for forgiveness; that is, beseech pardon. You must plead for pardon from God the Almighty.

I will read a tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H. & H.H.). I have written it down here that according to this tradition, the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) has said, “God the Exalted forgives the sinners except the one who does not want to be forgiven.”<sup>3,4</sup> According to this narration, one day, the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) told his companions that the Almighty God forgives the sinners except those who do not wish to be forgiven. Then, the companions asked, “They said, ‘O’ the Messenger of God! Who is the one who does not like to be forgiven?”<sup>5,6</sup> “He said, ‘The one who does not

١- «أنت الذي فتحت لِعِبَادِكَ بَاباً إِلَى عَفْوِكَ وَسَمَّيْتَهُ التَّوْبَةَ وَجَعَلْتِ عَلَى ذَلِكَ الْبَابِ دَلِيلًا مِنْ وَجْهِكَ لِنَهْلِ يَضِلُّوا عَنْهُ».

٢- «فَمَا عُدَّ مَنْ أَعْقَلَ دُخُولَ ذَلِكَ الْمَنْزِلِ بَعْدَ فَتْحِ الْبَابِ وَإِقَامَةِ الدَّلِيلِ».

٣- «إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَغْفِرُ لِلْمُذْنِبِينَ إِلَّا مَنْ لَا يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَغْفَرَ لَهُ».

4- Nūrī, H., *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 12, p. 122..

٥- «قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ الَّذِي يُرِيدُ أَنْ لَا يُغْفَرَ لَهُ».

6- *ibid.*



ask for forgiveness.”<sup>1,2</sup> Therefore, the key to repentance is seeking forgiveness, and it is also the key to pardon. One can gain Divine pardon through seeking forgiveness. Seeking forgiveness is important. *Istighfār*, that is to say, beseeching God for pardon.

Now, I will mention two or three short points in this regard—God willing, this may be the means by which we will take advantage of this month of Ramadan to take a few steps toward the Almighty God and use this Divine mercy that is very necessary and useful for the world and the hereafter of our nation, our community and the advancement in these diverse fields that are before us.

## Barriers to obtaining forgiveness

### 1. Negligence

One point is that if we are to seek forgiveness and obtain this Divine blessing, we need to remove two traits from ourselves: One is negligence and the other is pride. Negligence, that is, man does not understand the whole picture; he is not aware that he is committing sins; like some people. I do not say ‘many’; for this point, it doesn’t matter if there are few or many. In some communities, many people may be like this. There may be fewer people in other communities. Anyhow, there is this kind of person in the world, among human beings, who is negligent. He commits sins; yet, he is not aware it is a

١- «قَالَ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَغْفِر».

2- ibid.



wrongdoing he is committing. He tells lies, conspires, backbites, makes mischief, does harm, destroys things, commits murder, incriminates various innocent people on a false charge, on the more distant horizons and on the broader scale, he has dreadful dreams for the nation and misleads people; he is not aware at all that he is committing these wrongdoings. If someone tells him that he is committing sins, he may carefreely chortle and ridicule, “Sin?! What sin? What are you saying?”

Now, these people are negligent. Some do not even believe in reward and punishment. Some of them have some idea of reward and punishment, but are drowned in a state of carelessness, not realizing what they are doing. If we look closely at our everyday life, we will see that some of our states of affairs are similar to that of these negligent people. Negligence is a very strange thing; it is a very big danger. Perhaps, for man, there is no greater danger than negligence; there is no enemy greater than negligence. Some are like this. Well, the negligent man will never think of seeking forgiveness. He does not think that he is committing sins. He is drowned in sins; he is drunken; he is asleep; he is truly like a person who walks in his sleep. Therefore, the people of moral ethics, in expressing the mystics’ phases concerning ethicism and refinement of the soul, names this phase—in which man seeks to abandon negligence—as the phase of “attentiveness”<sup>1</sup> or vigilance. In the Qur’anic terminology, piety is the opposite of negligence. Piety means to be



vigilant and constantly be watchful of yourself. If a negligent person commits tens of sins and is not aware of them, the pious person is the complete opposite of him. If he commits a few sins, he instantly feels that he has committed them and thinks of compensating for them. “When those who are Godwary are touched by a visitation of Satan”<sup>1,2</sup>. As soon as Satan passes by him, just as Satan’s shadow falls upon him or a breath of Satan’s wind begins to blow on him, he instantly discerns that he has been infiltrated by Satan, made mistakes, and fallen into negligence. “They remember [God] and, behold, they perceive.”<sup>3,4</sup>. Such a person’s eyes are wide open.

This negligence is an obstacle to pleading for forgiveness; it is a great hindrance to seeking for forgiveness. Look, My dear brothers and sisters! Whoever you are; this address is not to a certain group of people—for instance, those who are inexperienced, less-educated, young or fledgling, etc.—no; everyone, even elders, scholars, scientists, prominent figures, personages, grandees, commoners, the rich, the poor, every person must be aware that negligence may sometime or at times come upon them; they may become negligent and reckless. They commit sin; yet, they do not feel it. This is a very important thing.

Since we are not aware that we are committing sins,

١- «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا».

2- *The Holy Qur’an*, 7:201.

٣- «تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ».

4- *ibid*.



we do not repent and seek forgiveness for the sin which you and I commit and do not feel. Then, on the Day of Resurrection, once our eyes are opened, we see what things are recorded in the book of our deeds! We will be pretty astounded. “When did I do these deeds?” We will not be able to remember at all. This is the sin of negligence; this is the worry of negligence. Therefore, one obstacle to obtaining forgiveness is negligence.

## 2. Pride

The second is pride or self-conceit. One does a little thing and becomes proud. In the interpretations of supplications and narrations, it is referred to as, “getting conceited with God”<sup>1</sup>. In this supplication of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*—the forty-sixth supplication—which is recited on Fridays, there is a very shocking phrase. I have written it down here, the Imam<sup>2</sup> (P.B.U.H.) states, “and the most wretched wretchedness to him who is deluded about You! How much he will move about in Your chastisement! How long he will frequent Your punishment! How far his utmost end from relief! How he will despair of an easy exit!”<sup>3,4</sup> According to this narration, whoever gets pride in his deeds will be in a state of “getting

١- «الْإِغْتِرَارُ بِاللَّهِ».

2- i.e. Imam Sajjād (P.B.U.H.).

٣- «وَالشَّقَاءُ الْأَشْقَى لِمَنْ اغْتَرَّ بِكَ مَا أَكْثَرَ تَصَرُّفَهُ فِي عَذَابِكَ، وَمَا أَطْوَلَ تَرَدُّدَهُ فِي عِقَابِكَ، وَمَا أَبْعَدَ غَايَتَهُ مِنَ الْفَرَجِ، وَمَا أَقْنَطَهُ مِنْ سَهْوَلَةِ الْمَخْرَجِ».

4- *Al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, Supplication 46. In this book translation of the parts of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya* book is taken from the English version of the Psalms of Islam translated by William Chittick.





conceited with God”<sup>1</sup>. This is so. He would be exiled from contentment; he would enjoy a very short source of relief and well-being. Why? For the reason that the very small thing he does, for example, if he says two units of prayer, offers a service to the people, gives alms or does something in the cause of God, he immediately becomes proud that, “I have brought myself to account before God the Almighty and my account of deeds is settled. I do not need anything.” He may not utter this, but in his heart, he believes it.

To disparage sins; be careful, that the Almighty God has opened the door of repentance and says He pardons sins does not mean that sins are slight and pardonable, or they are minor, no. Sometimes sins lay waste to and destroy all the true existence of human beings. A human being, at the highest level of human life, is transformed into an unflattering, filthy animal. Sins are so. Do not imagine that sins are unimportant; this lying, backbiting, disregarding the dignity of human beings, oppressing—even if you oppress a person just with words—are not slight and pardonable, nor they are allowable.

It is not necessary for a person to feel guilty that he should have been drowning in sins for many years. No, a sin is a sin; you should not belittle sins. In the narrations, there is a category for “the underestimation of sins”<sup>2</sup> in which belittling sins is reproached.

١- «الْإِغْتِرَارُ بِاللَّهِ».

٢- «إِسْتِحْقَارُ الذُّنُوبِ».



The reason that God the Exalted says, “He may forgive” is that the return to God is very important; it does not mean that sin is minor or slight. Sin is a very dangerous thing. Yet, returning to God, paying attention to Him and remembering Him are so important that if anyone does it honestly and truly, the terminal illness will be definingly cured.

So, being enticed by or being proud of our good deeds—which we, here and now, imagine or perceive them to be upright, the “good” deeds may not be so good or very important in reality—should be avoided. Such an enticement would cause you to not seek forgiveness. In another part of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, the Imam (P.B.U.H.) says, “But You, my God, are worthy that the righteous not be deluded concerning You”<sup>1,2</sup>. This is what Imam Sajjād (P. B.U.H.) states. See what wording and knowledge he has! This is the path. “The righteous”<sup>3</sup>, who have reached the highest level of human beings’ servitude, should not be proud of the fact that they have stayed on God’s path and think that they do not need to take any action. No; “that the righteous not be deluded concerning You”<sup>4</sup>. This is also a hindrance to pleading for forgiveness. Well, if there is no negligence, there will be no “getting conceited with God”<sup>5</sup>, neither self-conceit nor self-centeredness. At that point, man may plead for forgiveness.

١- «فَأَمَّا أَنْتَ يَا إِلَهِي فَأَهْلٌ أَنْ لَا يَغْتَرَّ بِكَ الصَّادِقُونَ».

2- *Al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, Supplication 39.

٣- صَادِقِينَ.

٤- «أَنْ لَا يَغْتَرَّ بِكَ الصَّادِقُونَ».

٥- «الْإِغْتِرَارُ بِاللَّهِ».



## The conditions for true and determined seeking of forgiveness

The next point is that the seeking of forgiveness that is useful is that which is true and determined. Assume you have a great deal of trouble and ask God to remove them. For example, suppose—God forbid—that a dear one of your loved ones has a problem. You have gone through normal ways of solving it; yet, you could not do it. Now, you resort, pray, and beseech to the Lord of the World. See! See how you beseech God at the moment when your child or a dear one of your loved ones is sick and you turn to God and bring yourself into a mood of prayer. Beseech God’s pardon in the same way. Indeed, seek forgiveness for your sin earnestly, and decide not to commit it again.

Of course, someone may have a decision not to commit sins; yet, he relapses and commits them. That is alright; he can repent again. If he violates his repentance one hundred times, the door of repentance is still open to him. However, those of you who repent and beseech forgiveness should not intend from the beginning that “very well, now we are seeking for forgiveness, then let’s do it again, do the same wrong thing, do the same wrong doing”; this is not right!

I read a narration that is apparently quoted from Imam Riḍā (P.B.U.H.), saying, “The one who repents through his tongue but he is not ashamed in his heart,



has made a joke of himself.”<sup>1,2</sup> In this narration or according to it, the Imam (P.B.U.H.) deems the person, who asks for forgiveness with his tongue but does not regret for his sins and is quite happy with committing them while he utters: “I ask God for His forgiveness,”<sup>3</sup> as the one who is making a fool of himself. What kind of seeking forgiveness is this?! Surely, this is not seeking forgiveness. Seeking forgiveness, that is to say, one returns to God the Exalted and asks Him sincerely to pardon his wrongdoings. How does a person dare to beseech forgiveness from the Almighty God while he wishes to do the same wrongdoing over and over again?! What type of pleading for forgiveness is this?!

“Repentance on the lips, rosary in the hand, but [our] heart is full of passion for sins,

surely grave sins are amused at our [way of] pleading for forgiveness.”<sup>4,5</sup>

Such a pleading for forgiveness is not adequate. Seeking forgiveness should be true and determined.

۱- «مَنْ اسْتَغْفَرَ لِسَانِهِ وَ لَمْ يَنْدَمْ بِقَلْبِهِ فَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَأَ بِنَفْسِهِ».

2- Majlisī, M., *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 75, p. 356.

۳- «أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ».

۴- «توبه بر لب، سبحه در کف، دل پُر از شوق گناه

معصیت را خنده می‌آید ز استغفار ما»

5- Qodsi Mashhadi, Haji Mohammedjan (1996). *Divan Haji Mohammad Jahan Qodsi Mashhadi*. Ed. Mohammad Ghahreman. Mashhad: Ferdowsi University Press.



## Seeking forgiveness is for everyone

Seeking forgiveness is not specific to certain people that have sinned very much. No, all humans, even those at the Prophet's (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) level, need to seek forgiveness. "that God may forgive you what is past of your sin and what is to come"<sup>1,2</sup> The Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) also needs to seek God's forgiveness.

Seeking forgiveness is either for the sins we have committed or for moral sins. If we assume that we have not committed any sin—of course, such people are a few, there are no lies, no backbites, no oppression, no offense, no harassment, no insult to anyone, no destroying people's property, nor any sin in their book of deeds; yet, so many of such people, who do not have such tangible sins, suffer from spiritual sins, i.e. moral sins. The same person, who does not commit any sin, once he is among people, he says, "Indeed, these poor people are all engaged in sins while we—praise be to God<sup>3</sup>—refrain from sins and do not commit them" and considers himself above them. This is a sin, and he needs to seek forgiveness.

It is an abasement or a fall. The humiliation of humans, knowing oneself above others, giving so much importance to your work more than others' or some of the other ugly moral traits that humans seem to have, such as jealousy, greed, megalomania, and so on; there

١- «لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَ مَا تَأَخَّرَ».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 48:2 .

٣- «الحمد لله».



is a need to seek forgiveness of them.

If we suppose there is a person who does not even commit these, then the issue of the knowledge of monotheism and cognition of the Lord is not a limited door, a narrow path, and a dead end; it is infinite. The prophets (P. B.U.T.) and those close to God, everyone is making progress on this path. They are engaged in the evolution of the soul; they are engaged in obtaining greater knowledge of the Sacred Essence of the Lord and His perfect attributes. Any moment that they have not advanced in this way is a failure, a lapse, a spiritual disability; there is a need to seek forgiveness.

Seeking forgiveness is for everyone. Therefore, you see that the infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.) in these supplications are so ardent. Some people imagine that Imam Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) has used such an ardor to teach others. Well, yes, it is true that he is teaching others—both the form and the content of the supplication—but this is not the point. The principle of the matter is that this is the pleading of this righteous servant and great and honorable man. This is his own fervent ardor. This display of invocation to the Lord is for himself. This fear of the retribution of God, this desire to approach Him, and this longing for obtaining His gratification belong to himself. These pleading for forgiveness and seeking pardon from God are for himself.

Pertaining to permissible acts, there are permissible acts in life such as acceptable pleasures or permitted deeds that it is quite possible for a person, who is at the



highest level, to consider these acts as a kind of fall and decadence. He wishes that he had not been placed within the framework of material and physical necessities, and he could disregard the permissible acts and the material matters. Then, he could proceed more and more on the path of acknowledgement, and in that infinite valley toward Divine gratification and the paradise of His cognition. Since it is not possible, he pleads for forgiveness. Therefore, pleading for forgiveness is for everyone.

These are several statements about seeking forgiveness, which I have stated on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. My dear ones! Seize the opportunity of the month of Ramadan to plead for your forgiveness and beseech God the Almighty to pardon you. Our nation, with the spirit of sacrifice, with the endurance that it has shown, with the great work that this nation has done, with the bright and good youth that our nation has in this world—this kind of young people, in such numbers, are definitely not found anywhere in the world or in any community other than ours—with these women, men, and mothers, and various sacrifices that have come from these people, this nation has a great potential for advancement in material, spiritual, worldly, and afterlife spheres. This nation should attract Divine mercy to itself with pleading for forgiveness.

Everybody needs to seek forgiveness, everybody! Those who worship, those who are moderate in worship, those who are even lazy in worship, those who only do the least; those who even sometimes—God forbid—aban-



don their obligatory worships; all and all pay attention that this seeking forgiveness improves your relationship with God. Plead for forgiveness from God the Almighty, beseech acceptance from Him, seek pardon from Him, ask Him to remove this barrier of sin, to take the cloud away from the sun of His grace, benevolence and blessings so that His benevolence shines on these hearts and souls. Then, see what exaltation and change occurs.

At the end of the first sermon, at noon Friday, I recite this prayer, “I ask You God and call You by Your greatest, most magnificent, most dignified and most respected Name and by the sanctity of Your Names and Your patrons, O’ Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Dear God! Make us Your righteous servants.

Dear God! Grant to all of us, in the true sense of the word, success in repentance, turning in penitence, and returning to you as well as pleading for forgiveness.

Dear God! Let Your grace and benevolence, which in all respects have always been shined on this nation, shine more and more.

Dear God! Forgive and pardon our shortcomings, failures and lavishness.

Dear God! Extend Your pardon, mercy and forgiveness on our mistakes, ignorance, deficiencies and flaws.

Dear God! By the pure and righteous people, by the pure-hearted who are among our community, our people

١- «نستلك اللهم و ندعوك، باسمك العظيم الاعظم، الاعز الاجل الاكرم و بحرمة اسمائك و بحرمة اوليائك ياالله».





and the crowd gathered here today, O' Lord! Cleanse the dust of ignorance and remove the curtain of darkness from our hearts.

Dear God! Endow us with Your cognition.

Dear God! Reward all of us with progress on the path to You and on the way to human perfection.

Dear God! Absolve our sins.

Dear God! Bestow your goodness and grace on this nation.

Dear God! Keep these enemies—the enemies of this nation, the enemies of this country, the enemies of this revolution, those who are unfamiliar with You, those who are angry with you, those who are distant from you and are hostile with this nation due to the association of it with you—away from this nation! Make their evil harm themselves. Make our nation successful in all fields.

Dear God! Provide us with closeness to Qur'an and Qur'anic teachings in this month.

Bestow Your mercy and forgiveness on our deceased ones—specially our great Imam<sup>1</sup> and the souls of our honorable martyrs.

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1- i.e. Sayyid Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini (1902-1989)—an Iranian Shī'a Muslim religious leader, philosopher, revolutionary, and politician as well as the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. (Trans.).







**Part Four:**

67

The Night of Ordainment: An Opportunity to Seek Forgiveness

The first sermon of the Friday Prayer on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1998 C.E. / 17<sup>th</sup> Ramadan, 1418 A.H.

The speech of this part was made as a Friday Prayer sermon on one day before the first Night of Ordainment<sup>1</sup> during the month of Ramadan in 1997. At the beginning of the sermon, his excellency points out that during the last month of Ramadan, he has opened the discussion of seeking forgiveness and repentance—which refers to the third part of this book—and says that he does not repeat the topics in this sermon; and from here on, he intends to express the importance of the night and the need to take advantage of seeking forgiveness in it. Another discussion, which is touched on in this sermon, is about “the Patrons of God’s<sup>2</sup> pleading forgiveness”, in which a dimension of forgiveness is spoken.

### In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds, Whom we praise, from Whom we seek help, in Whom we believe, to Whom we repent, and Whom we rely on, and peace and greetings be upon His beloved and noble one, the master of His servants, the protector of His secret, the promoter of His message, the harbinger of His mercy, the warner of His chastisement, our master and Prophet, Abu al-Qāsim al-Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, and upon his (Infallible), pure and chosen household, and upon those who guide the guided, specially the one remaining with God on earth. And greetings be upon the Imams of the Muslims, those who support the oppressed

1- *Laylat al-Qadr*- i.e. one of the nights of the last ten days of Ramadan on which Muslims believe that the blessings and mercy of God are abundant, sins are forgiven, supplications are accepted, and the annual ordainment is revealed to the angels who also descend to earth. (Trans.)



and those who guide the faithful.<sup>1</sup>

All the dear worshipping brothers and sisters, I advise you—in these hours and auspicious days and nights—to take advantage of these blessings that are given in abundance to the believers during this month and its nights by the Lord of the Universe. I advise all and myself to observe Divine piety, be aware of God, watch out for your own behavior and words before God, and be careful of dangerous roads, the slippery grounds, and the places where the human soul does not have the power to pass easily with endurance or confidence. In a person's life, in the social life, the Almighty God has put in place some means to overcome these slippery grounds, and that is the means by which human beings can preserve themselves, bring themselves closer to the purpose and take benefit from the facilities that the Almighty God has given to the believers in order to reach the intended destination.

### The importance of seeking forgiveness during the holy month of Ramadan

Watching out for these things is piety. And as you have heard many times, one of the important goals of the month of Ramadan is to be pious; “so that you may

١ - الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَنُصَلِّي وَنُسَلِّمُ عَلَى حَبِيبِهِ وَنَجِيبِهِ وَخَيْرَتِهِ فِي خَلْقِهِ، حَافِظِ سِرِّهِ وَ مُبْلِغِ رِسَالَاتِهِ، بِشِيرِ رَحْمَتِهِ وَ تَذِيرِ نِقْمَتِهِ سَيِّدَنَا وَ نَبِيَّنَا وَ حَبِيبِ قُلُوبِنَا أَبِي الْقَاسِمِ الْمُصْطَفِيِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ عَلِيِّ آلِهِ الْأَطْيَبِينَ الْأَطْهَرِينَ الْمُنْتَجِبِينَ الْمُعْصُومِينَ، سَيِّمًا بِقِيَّةِ اللَّهِ فِي الْأَرْضِينَ وَ صَلَّى عَلَيَّ أَهْمَةَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَ حُمَاةِ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ وَ هُدَاةِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.



be Godway”<sup>1,2</sup>. And when I consider the actions that are prescribed<sup>3</sup>, the fasting during the month of Ramadan, reciting the Holy Qur’an, reading the relevant supplications and making the appeals which are the blessings of God the Exalted as well as pleading for forgiveness or pardon—among these four very important elements, considering that fasting in Ramadan is obligatory as well, I feel what is very important to us is pleading for forgiveness; beseeching pardon and seeking absolution from the Lord of the Universe for what we have committed due to idleness, ignorance and—God forbid—negligence.

Last year during the same auspicious month of Ramadan, I gave some statements in detail on seeking repentance and forgiveness in this blessed month. Today, I do not intend to speak again about seeking forgiveness, either as an intellectual debate or a Qur’anic and *ḥadīth* discussion; rather, I would like to revisit the issue of seeking forgiveness on the occasion of the nearness of the auspicious Nights of Ordainment as these precious nights are very important.



2- *The Holy Qur’an*, 2:183.

3- Islamic laws.

## The Patrons of God's seeking of forgiveness

My dear brothers and sisters! The first step is to beseech God the Almighty for pardon and to return to God. Repentance, that is to say, return to God. Wherever you are, at all levels of perfection, even at the level of the Commander of the Faithful (P.B.U.H.), you need to plead for forgiveness. The Almighty God says to the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), “And plead for [God’s] forgiveness for your sin,”<sup>1,2</sup> and “then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and plead to Him for forgiveness.”<sup>3,4</sup> Many times in the Holy Qur’an, God says to the Prophet (P. B.U.H. & H.H.), “plead for forgiveness”. Even though the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) is infallible; he does not commit sin; he does not violate God’s command; still, He asks the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) to “plead for forgiveness”.

Now, what the patrons of God and the great personalities are seeking forgiveness for is something that can be discussed. They are not seeking forgiveness for sins of the type we commit; for the reason that they do not commit such sins. Their position is high. Their proximity to God and Divine position is at the highest level. In such position of proximity, sometimes the things that are admissible to us—possible, even the things that are commendable for us—are impediments to that great per-

١- «وَاسْتَغْفِرِ لِدُنْيِكَ».

2- *The Holy Qur’an*, 40:55 & 47:19.

٣- «فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ».

4- *The Holy Qur’an*, 110:3.



sonality and deterrents to the dignity of such proximity. Therefore, he seeks forgiveness—a real forgiveness, not a fictitious one.

Look at the supplication of Kumayl. At the very beginning, the Commander of the Faithful (P.B.U.H.), in the supplication of Kumayl—which according to the traditions has been issued and composed by this great Imam (P.B.U.H.) and starts with pleading for forgiveness—swears to God by His name, His power, His grandeur and the attributes of His exaltedness and beauty. After all the earnest adjurations, the Imam (P.B.U.H.) begins to plead for forgiveness, “O’ God! Forgive me those sins which tear apart safeguards!”<sup>1</sup> to the end. Look as well at the supplication of *Abū Ḥamza Thumālī* and other countless supplications of these great people.

Me and you need to plead for forgiveness. Take heed lest you—believers, dear ones, the clean and pure-hearted—become complacent and say in your heart, “we have not sinned”! Truly, we are drowned in idleness and negligence. “What value remains for our deeds if compared to Your favors!”<sup>2</sup> What is the correlation and the relation of what we imagine we do good with the Lord’s blessings as well as what is His due with regards to our gratitude; and how much worth is it to mention our deeds in relation to them?! Certainly, we cannot give God His due of thanks; we are not able to. “Neither he who has



١- «اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تَهْتِكُ الْعِصَمَ».

٢- «وَمَا قَدَّرُ أَعْمَالِنَا فِي جَنْبِ نِعْمِكَ».



done righteous deeds can dispense with Your aid...<sup>21</sup> Is it probable for a person to be dispensable from Divine favor and grace at any time? Of course, we always need them, and the Lord's grace continuously shines upon us. "Your good descend upon us"<sup>22</sup> and we cannot give Him His due thanks. In any case—whether this is because of laziness or negligence—we need to seek forgiveness.

### The Night of Ordainment, an opportunity to seek forgiveness

The Night of Ordainment, or *Laylat al-Qadr*, is an opportunity to seek pardon or to express regret. Act contrite in front of the Almighty God. Now that God the Almighty has given me and you an opportunity to return to Him, we should plead for forgiveness and express regret to Him. And do so; otherwise, there will be a day when the Almighty God will address the perpetrators, "nor will they be permitted to offer excuses."<sup>3,4</sup> We will not be permitted to make an apology, God forbid. The perpetrators will not be allowed to say sorry; there is no apology there. At this time, where the opportunity exists, where it is permissible, where expressing regret increases your level, washes your sins away, cleanses you and illuminates you, offer excuses to God the Exalted! At this point, where the

١- «لَا الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ اسْتَغْنِي عَنْ عَوْنِكَ».

٢- «خَيْرُكَ إِلَيْنَا نَازِلٌ».

٣- «لَا يُؤَدِّنُ لَهُمْ قَبَعَتِدْرُونَ».

4- *The Holy Qur'an*, 77:36.



opportunity exists, draw the attention of God to yourself, wrap yourself in His grace and receive His love for yourself. “Remember Me, and I will remember you”<sup>1,2</sup>. That is, at the very moment when you put the Almighty God in your heart, evoke Him in your heart and recall Him, at that very moment, God the Exalted has established grace, kindness and compassion upon you and assuredly His grace, munificence and forgiveness are extended to you. Call on God to remember you. Otherwise, the day will come when God will address the sinners as, “We [too] have forgotten you.”<sup>3,4</sup> Meaning: Go! We fail to recall and have overlooked you. This is the realm of Resurrection.

Today, God the Almighty has allowed you to wail, appeal, shed tears, strengthen your devotion to Him, express your love to Him, flow the tears of joy, and love from your warm heart to your eyes. Seize this opportunity, otherwise, there will be a day when God the Almighty will address the offenders and say, “Do not make entreaties today!”<sup>5,6</sup> Go, do not shed tears, do not appeal, it does not make a difference. “Indeed, you will not receive any help from Us”<sup>7,8</sup>.

This opportunity is an opportunity for life, an oppor-

١- «فَادْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 2:152.

٣- «إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ».

4- *The Holy Qur'an*, 32:14.

٥- «لَاتَجَارُوا الْيَوْمَ».

6- *The Holy Qur'an*, 23:65.

٧- «إِنَّكُمْ مِنَّا لَا تُنصَرُونَ».

8- *ibid*.



tunity for a lifetime that is available to you and me to return to God. And the best opportunities are a few days of the year, among which the auspicious month of Ramadan is the best period, in which the Night of Ordainment is the best.

The Night of Ordainment occurs on one of these three recommended nights of Ramadan. According to the narration<sup>1</sup> of the late *Muḥaddith* Qomi<sup>2</sup>, once someone asked one of the Infallibles (P.B.U.T.) which of these three nights—or the two nights of 21<sup>st</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>—is regarded as the Night of Ordainment. He answered, “How easy it is for a man to observe the Night of Ordainment for two or three nights.” Why should one be hesitant between these three nights? How long do these three nights last? There were some who considered the whole month of Ramadan, from the beginning to the end, as the Night of Ordainment and performed the rituals of the night.

### The social effects of seeking forgiveness

Certainly, if a nation realigns its heart with God, steps toward Him, truly beseeches Him and wholeheartedly takes shelter with Him, it will never be miserable; it will not be put to shame; it will not be corrupted; it will not be humiliated; it will not be captivated by the enemy,

1- Kulaynī, M., *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 4, p. 156.

2- i.e. also known as Sheikh Abbas Qomi, he was a Shī‘a scholar, historian, and *ḥadīth* narrator who wrote many books and *Mafātīḥ al-Janān* is his renowned masterpiece. (Ed.)



and it will not be subject to internal conflicts. If the weight of all these miseries fall upon a nation, it is mainly due to the shortcomings, negligence, sins, corruptions and misfortunes that we lay upon ourselves: “is because of what your hands have earned”<sup>1,2</sup>. Indeed, whosoever steps toward God the Almighty takes himself one step closer to infallibility and protection from sins.

We should seek refuge in God. We should appeal to Him. We should work for Him. We should act for Him. We should give our hearts to Him. We should infuse the purity of our hearts with God’s remembrance. Once our hearts are brightened with the lights of piety and are neither attached to the world nor a captive of worldly and material things, the community becomes a place with truly bright, purified and pious people. Such persons strive well, work hard and build their own world well. Not being attached to the personal world does not mean that one should not strive for this world; rather, it means that the improvement of one’s worldly life is an act for God and a share of otherworldly deeds. In other words, whatsoever causes the improvement of material life is what God has asked us to do, and surely it is considered as one of the otherworldly deeds. That is why this improvement of worldly life is better, smoother, sweeter and more complete once it is accompanied with remembering God.



## One night better than a thousand months

Cherish these days. Truly hold the Nights of Ordainment dear. The Holy Qur'an explicitly states, "[The Night of Ordainment] is better than a thousand months."<sup>1,2</sup> One night is better than a thousand months! It is very valuable. It is the night in which the angels descend. It is the night in which the Spirit<sup>3</sup> descends. It is the night that the Almighty God has described as "peaceful"<sup>4</sup>, tranquil. "Peaceful"<sup>5</sup> not only means Divine peace and greetings upon humans, but also refers to wellbeing, peace, tranquility, serenity between people, for hearts, souls, bodies, communities, and all. Such a spiritual night this is! Cherish the auspicious Nights of Ordainment and pray for the issues of the country, yourself, Muslims, and the Islamic countries.

See how many problems the Islamic countries have! Beseech God to solve these problems. Pray for all human beings. Pray for the guidance of the people, yourself, your life, your authorities, your country, your dece-

١- «خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ».

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, 97:3.

3- i.e. Some of the narrations that clearly state that the Spirit is a being other than the angels. According to a narration, "A man come to Imam (P.B.U.H.) 'Alī (P.B.U.H.) and asked, 'Isn't the Spirit Gabriel?' The Imam replied, 'Gabriel is an angel and the Spirit is not Gabriel.'" In another narration, Imam Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.) says, "It is a being greater than Gabriel and Michael, it would stay with the Messenger of God (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and now it stays with the Infallibles (P.B.U.T.); it is a being from the Kingdom of God." (Trans.)

٤- «سَلَامٌ».

5- *ibid.*



ased ones, and for what you seek that the Almighty God bestow upon you. Hold its hours and minutes dear.

I humbly also ask all of you, dear brothers and sisters, to pray for me on these auspicious Nights of Ordainment.

Here, we invoke some prayers as, God willing, communal prayers are accepted in these hours, approximately, close to the noon:

“I ask You God and call You by Your greatest, most magnificent, most dignified and most respected Name.”<sup>1</sup>

Dear God! Make us succeed in understanding the Night of Ordainment.

Make the Night of Ordainment better than a thousand months for us.

Answer our prayers on that night.

Now and on that night, express our greetings and salutations to Our master and the Imam of Time, the one who remains with God, may our souls be his ransom.

On that auspicious night, invoke his pure benedictions and favor on all of us.

Dear God! Make the Iranian nation glorious and proud.

Settle and establish Islamic laws in the whole world.

Suppress and defeat the enemies of Islam, the enemies of Iran, the enemies of this nation, and the enemies of the Islamic Republic.

Guide all human beings in all parts of the world to the path of righteousness.



١- «نَسْتَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَ نَدْعُوكَ، بِاسْمِكَ الْعَظِيمِ الْعَظَمِ، الْأَعَزَّ الْأَجَلَّ الْأَكْرَمِ يَا اللَّهُ».

Dear God! Strengthen the bonds of brotherhood, peace and serenity among this nation.

Dear God! Associate the pure souls of our dear martyrs with Your saints in “the rank of the highest ranking”<sup>1</sup>.

Associate the (Infallible) soul of our great Imam<sup>2</sup> with Your saints.

Dear God! Bestow Your mercy and forgiveness on our predecessors, on our parents, and to those whom we give our respect<sup>3</sup>.

Dear God! Resolve by your benefaction the plights of the people as well as our personal, public, social, and other problems.

Enlighten the face of this nation with joy, spirituality and serenity.

Dear God! Make this great nation achieve a victory over its enemies.

Suppress and defeat the enemies of this nation by its own hands.

Dear God! Strengthen our relationship with Qur’an and Islam and preserve it on a daily basis.

Make us cherish the teachings of Islam, the Revolution<sup>4</sup> and the blessed Qur’anic verses.

1- i.e. ‘Illīyīn which is the name of the seventh heaven. Some say it refers to the place in which the guardian angels reside, those who receive and record the deeds of devout believers. Others claim it refers to the rank of the highest ranking and closest-to-God believers in the Hereafter. (Trans.)

2- Ref. Imam Khomeini (Trans.).

۳- «دَوِي الحَقُوق».

4- Ref. the Iranian Revolution- also known as the Islamic Revolution or the 1979 Revolution. (Trans.)









### **Part Five:**

81

Supplication, a Means for Reminding, Attention and Seeking Forgiveness

A formal lecture delivered at the Presidential Office on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1987 C.E. / 29<sup>th</sup> Ramadan, 1407 A.H.

The following is a lecture delivered on the last day of Ramadan in 1987. In that year, during the auspicious month of Ramadan, in the basement of the Presidential Office, the congregational prayers of noon and evening were led every day by Ayatollah Khamenei. His excellency used to lecture at the beginning and end of the month. In this lecture, the discussion begins with the subject of piety and the need for constant maintenance and care. The next issue is supplication, as a means for reminding and attention. His excellency states that being unfamiliar with the language of supplications is one of the obstacles to the use of them and recommends that good translations be provided for the supplications. Then, as a sample, he translates one third of the supplication of Bidding Farewell to the holy Month of Ramadan from *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*. Speaking about the needs of the Islamic state to dignified people, his holiness ends his words with the mention of the heartbreaking incident of Abū ‘Abdillāh<sup>1</sup>, focusing on the subject of supplication.

This book, which itself is a moral message from the Supreme Leader of Iran, ends with the mention of the heartbreaking incident of Imam Ḥusayn (P.B.U.H.). May God accept and grant us the intercession of the Master of the Martyrs<sup>2</sup>.

## In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings be upon our master and Prophet, Abū al-Qāsim al-Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, and upon

١- ابو عبدالله.

2- i.e. one of the most famous epithets of Imam Ḥusayn (P.B.U.H.) beside Ḥamza bin ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. It is narrated that one of the companions of Imam Ṣādiq (P.B.U.H.), had decided to visit the graves of the martyrs of Medina, once the Imam (P.B.U.H.) asked her, “Why do not you visit the grave of your Master of the Martyrs?” Assuming the Imam (P.B.U.H.) is referring to Imam ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.), she asked, “Who do you mean by the Master of Martyrs?” He replied, “The Master of the Martyrs is Ḥusayn bin ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.).” (Trans.)



his household, and may God curse all their enemies.<sup>1</sup> All-wise God says, “Say, ‘What store my Lord would set by you were it not for your supplication?’”<sup>2,3</sup>

### The need for constant reminding and attention

In Islamic view, man needs constant reminding and attention. Because, according to this view, man is a traveler and a striver who, if he neglects and hesitates in his moves and efforts, will not be able to reach his goal. He is a traveler or a striver who, if he constantly strives and does his best, will reach the goal at the end of time when his life is over. And that goal is the spiritual perfection and excellence that will make its effect known in the life after death. Everything is a prelude to this, and, assuredly, the life after death is the real life in the Islamic perspective. Of course, today, we cannot imagine that life and that period in our minds, but the Islamic worldview teaches us that in this period, which is called the worldly life, we have an incomplete and unfinished life: “but the abode of the Hereafter is indeed Life”<sup>4,5</sup>. Life is there. Once we go there, we will see. And in that life, prosperity, joy and happiness depend on the efforts we make here. So, if we neglect, forget and are reluctant to

١- الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَ الصَّلَاةِ وَ السَّلَامِ عَلَي سَيِّدِنَا وَ نَبِيِّنَا أَبِي الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ الْمُعْصومِينَ وَ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى أَعْدَائِهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ.

2- *The Holy Qur'an*, (25):77.

٣- «قُلْ مَا يَعْجَبُ بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ».

٤- «وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِیَ الْحَيَوَانُ».

5- *The Holy Qur'an*, (29):64.



make such efforts, we suddenly open our eyes and find ourselves in the real life with empty hands.

It is necessary to remind mankind so that he strives on a permanent basis, and carries out his assignment which forms the same strivings. And there are reminders in the religion for the human being, and truly the prophets,(P.B.U.T.) themselves, are reminders, “So remind—for you are only a reminder.”<sup>1,2</sup> And the Holy Qur’an is a means of reminding, that in the Divine Book, this feature and mission of the Qur’an has been repeatedly mentioned. One of the means of reminding is the recitation of daily prayers which five times a day remind us. Another one is the preaching by which the scholars remind us. The other is supplication which reminds us to call upon and speak to God. The next is the recitation of the Divine verses of the Holy Qur’an, which takes us away from negligence and similar things. So, all these methods work so that we do not fall into negligence. Since, if we forget and stumble into negligence, it will prevent us from obtaining our goal. And if we cannot obtain our goal, our situation in that promised life will be a bad one. From the beginning to the end, we have such a fate and destiny.



## Piety, constant awareness and everlasting attention

Piety, which has been emphasized on so much, is that humans should be aware of themselves. They should take care not to slip away. They should not make mistakes and be ignorant of their own situation, destiny, purpose, path and duty. Like driving on a dangerous, slippery, winding road, if you show a reckless lack of care or attention, if you forget under what circumstances you are driving, you may lose your life. In the same way, piety means the constant care and maintenance that the notable people are perfect masters of, to the extent that it becomes an inseparable trait and constantly admonishes them.

In the month of Ramadan, with supplicating, saying prayers and fasting—as hunger is seen as one of the things that gives serenity to humans—in addition to the rest of the features that are in this month, man holds an attitude of reminding and remembrance; and absolves himself from negligence.

It is not that the admonished person never commits sins and makes mistakes. Yes, he may make mistakes and commit sins. It is not like the pious person is not infected with committing sins; yes, he is. But there is a difference between the sin of a pious person and an impious one. The sin of the impious person is pretty much like walking on a slippery slope and sliding down. A sin causes another sin in its wake. He enjoys committing sins; he is fascinated by them and closes his eyes to their ugliness. The impious person is like this. When the pi-



ous person commits a sin, he finds out immediately; he knows that he made a mistake and tries to compensate for it. “When those who are Godwary are touched by a visitation of Satan, they remember [God] and, behold, they perceive Him”<sup>1,2</sup>. The pious person is like that according to the Qur’an; once Satan “visited”<sup>3</sup> him or the minute he is insinuated by Satan’s temptations, he instantly realizes that he is in the wrong. He does not slip down a slippery slope nor relegate himself to the lowest of the low. He holds and controls himself.

The pious and admonished person is like someone who, after getting caught in a strong current and pushed across the stream, swims in the opposite direction to reach the shore of safety. A moment of negligence, desistence, sluggishness, watching here and there would drive him backward. Indeed, that strong current in our lives comes from our instincts, our desires, our lusts and our anti-evolving human tendencies which push us backward. If we are heedful and mindful, the minute we are pushed a little bit back, we immediately realize we are wrong, and we start swimming, floundering and proceeding to our original path. If not, if we are not pious and admonished, we are negligent of the moment we are pushed back. It is a current that pushed us; but, since we do not move and flounder, we feel truly comfortable with it. We stop and confidently place ourselves in the

١- «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ».

2- *The Holy Qur’an*, 7:201.

٣- «مَسَّ».



hands of the current. One day, we find that we are whirling in a vortex or close to the vortex core. Undeniably, we can do nothing to avoid it at that stage.

### Supplication and features of the auspicious month of Ramadan, the means for expressing gratitude

Supplication in Ramadan and all the features that this holy month enjoys are to remind us, shield us from negligence and show us our contaminations. Amidst supplicating, saying prayers and paying attention in this month, there is an opportunity for us to review and distinguish the mistakes we are habituated with and accustomed to. Sometimes, a person has become accustomed to committing a sin, no matter what. The same can be said about our laziness, our weaknesses, and all the other shortcomings we have.

The month of Ramadan is coming to an end today, apparently, there are not many more hours left over. We have to wait for the next Ramadan. This chapter, the one-month chapter, is a very precious and valuable one. In these thirty days or twenty nine days, God has placed the Night of Ordainment, and truly the Night of Ordainment is an exceptional opportunity for man throughout the year. If one could take part in that night, he would achieve a lot of goodness. In the supplication of Bidding Farewell to the holy Month of Ramadan, not the one mentioned in *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, I will now recite a bit of it for you. In the brief supplication



of Bidding Farewell to the holy Month of Ramadan, which is included in *Maḥāṭib al-Jinān*, it is stated, “And that You may include me, out of Your mercy, with those whom You allowed to obtain the benefits of the Night of Ordainment and those for whom You have decided this Night to be better than one thousand months”<sup>1</sup>. That is not the same for everyone. For the one whom the Night of Ordainment, either the night of twenty-third or twenty-first, is not different from any twenty-third night of any other month, there is no remembrance of God, no care, no spiritual state nor tears, not even an appeal. In complete negligence, he either falls asleep and does not even remember that it is the Night of Ordainment, or, God forbid, he gets contaminated with sins and moral vices. For such a person, the Night of Ordainment is not better than one thousand months. It is just a night and that is indeed a forfeiting night. Assuredly, the Night of Ordainment has nothing for him. The Night of Ordainment is better than one thousand months for whosoever appreciate the hours and minutes of that night and make good use of every minute of it. And therefore, we recite in the supplication: Dear God! Include us among those whose Night of Ordainment is neither turned to dust nor faded away.



١- «وَأَنْ تَجْعَلَنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِمَّنْ حُزَّتْ لَهُ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ وَجَعَلْتَهَا لَهُ خَيْرًا مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ».



## Translation of some parts of the supplication of Bidding Farewell to the Holy Month of Ramadan

This supplication in *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, which is the forty-fifth supplication of *al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjādīyya*, is also an example of the supplications instructed to us by the infallible Imams (P.B.U.T.), as well as including a remarkable theme on the importance of Ramadan. I thought I would just translate part of this supplication for you. We need to get familiar with the language of supplication. This is one of our shortcomings. We recite supplications in the same way; we either do not understand their meaning or, if we do, we neither contemplate on nor ponder on them. We are reciting them; yet, our mind is somewhere else even though these supplications are all the precious books of knowledge and copies of love and affection, and there are a lot of things in these supplications that teach us something important if we paid attention.

Some interpret supplications, which is good, but when I interpret a word of a supplication with reference to twenty words, this is not the words of the Imam (P.B.U.H.). If the Imam's (P.B.U.H.) word can be translated to a beautiful, sophisticated and precise word, it will give us the apparent meaning of the words of the Imam (P.B.U.H.). Those detailed interpretations are good for people to learn, but to understand the pleasure of the Imam's (P.B.U.H.) speech, which is very beautiful, not at all, they are not good.

Some people similarly just recite and pass along.



They do not understand that this supplication of Kumayl, which they recite and pass easily, is a relinquishing one, what a beautiful passage it is, whether artistically or literarily, and what themes are in it. Here, to reveal some of the themes of these supplications, I will give a simple translation of this supplication in as much time as we have. I won't prolong it and will not translate all of it. This is how it starts:

“O’ God! O’ He who desires no repayment!”<sup>1</sup>. “O’ He who shows no remorse at bestowal!”<sup>2</sup>. I won’t recite the original Arabic phrases and will only translate them into Farsi. O’ He who rewards not His servant tit for tat or does not treat them like their own. Your kindness is a new beginning; that is, no one has any prior entitlement to it. Your pardon is a gratuitous bounty. Your punishment is justice and Your Ordainment is a choice for the best of Your servants. If You bestow, You stain not Your bestowal with obligation and if You withhold, You withhold not in transgression. You show gratitude to him who thanks You, while You have inspired him to thank You. You reward him who praises You, while though You have taught him Your praise. You cover the sins of him whom, if You willed, You would expose and You are generous toward him from whom, if You willed, You would withhold. The one whom You cover his sins is worthy of Your exposure and the one whom You are generous toward is worthy of Your withholding, but You have founded Your



١- «اللَّهُمَّ يَا مَنْ لَا يَرَعَبُ فِي الْجَزَاءِ».

٢- «وَّ يَا مَنْ لَا يَنْدَمُ عَلَى الْعَطَاءِ».

acts upon a gratuitous bounty, channeled Your power into forbearance, received him who disobeyed You with clemency, and disregarded him who intended wrongdoing against himself. You await their turning back without haste and refrain from rushing them toward repentance, so that the perisher among them may not perish because of You, and the wretched may not be wretched through Your favor, but only after Your prolonged excusing him and successive arguments against him, and surely, it is an act of generosity through Your pardon and an act of kindness through Your tenderness.

It is You who have opened for Your servants a door to Your pardon, which You have named ‘repentance’. You have placed upon that door a pointer from Your revelation, lest we stray from it. You have said in Your Qur’an, “Repent to God with sincere repentance!”<sup>1,2</sup>. It may be that Your Lord will acquit you of your evil deeds, will compensate for—these are the Qur’anic verses—and will admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow upon the day when God will not destroy the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and those who have faith along with him, their light running before them and on their right hands, and they say to You, “Our Lord! Perfect our light for us, and forgive us! Indeed, You have power over all things.” This is the door God has shown us in His Qur’an for repentance. He shows us that we can repent. “What is the excuse of him who remains heedless of entering that

١- «توبوا إلى الله توبَةً نَصُوحًا».

2- *The Holy Qur’an*, 66:8.



house after the opening of the door [and the setting up of the pointer]?”<sup>1</sup>

It is You who have raised the price against Yourself to the advantage of Your servants, desiring their profit in their trade with You, their triumph through reaching You, and their increase on account of You, for You have said in the Qur’an, “Whoever brings virtue shall receive ten times its like”<sup>2,3</sup> and if one brings vice, he shall not be repaid except with its like.

Here, the Imam mentions the verses concerning the rewards of believers. Then, he addresses Divine remembrance, bringing forth various Qur’anic verses. At that point, he adds:

Were any creature himself to direct another creature to the like of that to which You Yourself have directed Your servants, he would be described with beneficence, qualified by kindness, and praised by every tongue.

That is to say, you are lending money to someone, for example, then you say to the person, if you do not want to give me this money back in a certain amount of time, you should do this. If you wish not to pay back all of the money that you borrowed and had never given it back to me, you should do this; give people a second chance to put things right. If you want me to forgive the wrongdoing you have done to me; you need to do this.

١- «فَمَا عُدُّ مَنْ أَعْقَلَ دُخُولَ ذَلِكَ الْمَنْزِلِ بَعْدَ فَتْحِ الْبَابِ».

٢- «مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا».



“So, to You belongs praise as long as there is found a way to praise You”<sup>1</sup> and as long as there remains words by which You may be praised and meanings which may be spent in praise!

Similarly, he refers to the Divine blessings. Then, Imam Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) comes to Ramadan, saying:

O‘ God, You have appointed among the most excellent of those duties and the most special of those obligations the month of Ramadan, which You have singled out from other months, chosen from among all periods and eras, and preferred over all times of the year through the Qur’an and the Light which You sent down within it, the faith by which You multiplied, the fasting which You obligated therein—and which is the means of our salvation, the standing in prayer which You encouraged at its time, and the Night of Ordainment which You magnified therein, the night which is “better than a thousand months”<sup>2,3</sup>. Through Ramadan, You have preferred us over the other communities and through its excellence You have chosen us to the exclusion of the people of other creeds. In short, the month of Ramadan stood among us for a month. And this companionship was a very good one. And we are not sad of it, rather we feel sorrow it is parted from us [at the fulfilment of its number]. So, we bid farewell to it with the farewell of one whose parting pains us and leaving fills us with gloom and loneliness.

١- «فَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ مَا وَجِدَ فِي حَمْدِكَ مَذْهَبٌ».

٢- «خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ».

3- *The Holy Qur’an*, 97: 3.



And we are waiting for this [auspicious] month to come back to us again. And we speak to Your chosen month with these words.

At that time, Imam Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) begins to shower the month of Ramadan with very passionate and zealous words:

“Peace be upon you, o’ greatest month of God!”<sup>1</sup> and o’ festival of His friends! “Peace be upon you, o’ most noble of accompanying times!”<sup>2</sup> and o’ best of months in days and hours! “Peace be upon you, the month in which expectations come near”<sup>3</sup>.

In the same way, Imam Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) bids farewell to this sacred month, with these lines. He talks about the Night of Ordainment, supplication, prayers, the Qur’an and seeking forgiveness in this month earnestly and enthusiastically. He makes a request to God:

O’ God, preserve for us what we have gained in this month and for what we have missed in this month, treat with your clemency our deprivation, our deficiency, as a weakness and recompense for us, what we have missed.

Finally, Imam Sajjād (P.B.U.H.) prays the month of Ramadan will return.

This is an example of the supplications of this auspicious month that we denoted a part of it from the words of



١- «السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا شَهْرَ اللَّهِ الْأَكْبَرَ».

٢- «السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَكْرَمَ مَصْحُوبٍ مِنَ الْأَوْقَاتِ».

٣- «السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ شَهْرٍ قَرُبَتْ فِيهِ الْأَمَالُ».

the Master of the Prostraters<sup>1</sup> or the teacher of supplications and remembrance at the end of this month. I believe that these supplications must be presented with good translations. Those who are capable of translating these supplications—apart from details, elucidations, interpretations, and these things—should translate them in words that are clear, expressive, eloquent and reasonably suitable, somewhat similar to Imam Sajjād’s (P.B.U.H.) statements, and fit in with the needs of the Persian speakers who do not know Arabic. And they should also contemplate on these supplications and see how one can talk to God the Almighty.

### **The abandonment of sin, a necessity for observing piety**

Now, at the end of these issues, I would like to say to you, dear brothers and sisters, is to appreciate and observe this source of piety that you have gained in this month. It will be lost. You have surely provided a source of piety for yourself in this month with your presence in the gatherings of the servants of God, such as mosques, congregational prayers, discussions, and so on, God willing. The atmosphere of our community is the atmosphere of attention and reminding, the atmosphere of the Qur’an, supplications and invocations; truly, the prevailing atmosphere is like this, or by attending these gatherings and breathing in this spiritual realm. Fasting has also been a huge help.

1- Ref. Sayyid al-Sajjādīn.



This fasting is a very valuable and precious thing. It is not necessary for the human being, like their weight, to try and see how much they have gained or lost; rather, they can understand how well the spirituality and serenity has inspired them. Of course, one feels and sees the effects of this worship in one's deeds, behaviors, in one's humbling and admonishing heart. But it does not mean that it is now very tangible; look at the certain amount of spirituality, serenity, and gentleness which has enriched your lives.

Observing it, in the first place, is that you should not commit sins as far as you can. One of our problems is that we are not aware of our own sins. The one who is accustomed to backbiting, for example, does not care about the sin he is committing on a regular basis. The person who is accustomed to lying does not mind committing this sin and justly acclimatizes to it. The one who is accustomed to harassing the people around him with his words, his manners, his behavior, and his own deeds does not care about it; he is accustomed to it. The person who is accustomed to various lusts—various sexual lusts, through the eyes and other ways—does not mind that he has opened himself to such a sin and plight. The one, who is accustomed to embezzling public treasury or the property of the people, does not mind what a great sin he is committing.

That is to say he does not care, not that he is not aware of it but negligence provides human beings with a fondness; one acclimatizes to sins. Primarily, he does not feel that he has sinned and keeps committing it. Once he fin-





ds out, he thinks inwardly his own sin is insignificant. The minute a person acclimatizes to a sin, he considers it inconsequential; this itself is a sin. That is to say, it is a sin—which is undeniably of the greater sins—to consider transgression and disobedience of the Divine commands unimportant and say that this sin is insignificant; this is considered a sin itself.

If we wish not to sin, we should first distinguish our sin. And this is only possible by our own selves. Others are not aware of our sins. We ought to be careful about ourselves; in our day-to-day behavior. Everyone has their own type of sins. I may commit a sin that you have never committed. You may commit a sin that your other brother does not even do. Apart from the common sins that all humans often share due to carnal temptations, whether they may have committed a few or many, there are some specific sins. Sometimes idleness would be considered a sin for one person but not for another person. For instance, assume that someone is working for himself—trading, laboring, working for himself. If this person wastes away his time in idleness, it is a small and limited sin, even though it may be regarded as a grave sin with respect to the state of the needs of the community. Nonetheless, another case is one person who is doing a sensitive job for the community. His idleness makes irreparable damages; this is a grave sin. One is dealing with macro-financial issues; his disregard for financial matters is a grave sin; whereas, the disregard of the one who is not dealing with those issues of such importance and scope in financial matters is not so



noteworthy. In other terms, one's behavior, method, ethics and deeds are a lesson and a pattern for the community. For example, the behavior of us, the clergymen, is deemed as a standard in the eyes of the people; or, for instance, the brothers who wear revered uniforms of revolution<sup>1</sup>.

... So you see, it is important to distinguish our sins. Sometimes we are not aware of our sins. Undeniably, "a believer is a mirror for his brother"<sup>2,3</sup>. One brother can rebuke his brother if he sees, hears, or knows he will commit sin; yet, he should not disrepute and annoy him. He should reprimand him in a friendly way; he should admonish and reprove him in the same manner. It is good if he can reform himself as well. In short, the observance of that source of piety, serenity and spirituality mainly demands the abandonment of sin. Therefore, we must try hard to abandon sins and be cautious not to commit them.

### The need of the community and the Islamic state for pious people

And nowadays, our community and our state require pure, influential and enduring people who are strong in their spirituality, whose hearts are grounded in and quenched of the Divine knowledge, and whom sins have neither penetrated into nor crumbled their spirit; our state requires such people...Our community requires such



1- i.e. men in uniform (Trans.).

3- Ḥarrānī, Ḥ., *Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl*, p. 173.

۲- «المؤمن مرآة المؤمن».

people: devout, vigilant, cognizant, sincere and friendly. And if we can build a generation or our generation—meaning this generation—with Islamic ethics and Islamic education, surely the next generations after us will all move on this line, and others will learn from us.

Well, I finish my statements here. This Ramadan, as the last Ramadan, was an opportunity for us to hold congregational prayers, say prayers, and become reminded here every day at noon in the company of you, faithful, pious, sincere, and serene brothers and sisters. Your pure personality and good characteristics, which certainly exist among us and are to be found in our gathering, caused us to become reminded, exhilarated, spiritualized, and also provided our community environment with a delicate spirituality. It was very valuable; it was very good. Every day, we enjoyed the statements of one of the dear brothers<sup>1</sup>. Among these discussions, there were very good debates which was more useful this year, since subjects were pre-determined and they were prepared for. Also, we hope that these statements can be used for other purposes too.

Besides, many brothers, brothers and sisters, indeed worked so hard here during this period that I feel obligated to acknowledge them: the brothers in charge of the Law Enforcement of Tehran Friday Prayer as well as the rest of the brothers in the Friday Prayers Headquarters, who helped to set up this roof, these tents and so on, besides the maintenance men of the Presidential Office

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1- Ref. lectures (Trans.) .



and the dear brothers and sisters in the Intelligence Protection Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, who took great pains during the month to arrange things. The brothers in the Public Relations Office and all those who somehow helped and worked hard to organize and manage this building and this one-month move. Hereby, we sincerely express gratitude to all, and we hope that we have been able to make efficient use of their efforts and endeavors.

### The supplication, reminding and '*Āshūrā* based attention

Considering supplication, I want to describe one sentence about a tragedy. On our battlefield fronts, if you have ever been to them, you have probably seen an outlandish sight at nights of operations or at nights close to an operation. Based on what we have heard of and seen a bit of, there is an identical thrilling sight. Our youth, these sincere believing brothers, these clean, bright and pure-hearted people, when they feel that they are close to their appointment with God and they may taste the drink of martyrdom or there is the possibility of ascending to the Divine realm, they get strange at those nights before the operation. You would find them in a very precious and distinguished situation: supplicating, saying prayers, saying night prayers<sup>1</sup>, remembering God, and reminding.



1- i.e. Tahajjud (Trans.).

You would find the same scene you read about in some of the wills written by the martyrs. I read one of these wills a few days ago. I saw yes, that person mentioned about the night prayers of his brothers and friends—yet he had not talked about himself. He narrated how those nights were and how much whispers and sobs were heard from those trenches and bulwarks! This is because in the last hour of the last days, one feels that his time is coming to an end. He gets into such a devoted state. Moreover, there is the joy of meeting with Lord for those who are moving toward martyrdom.

The same thing may have been happening in the tents of the companions of Abā ‘Abdillāh (P.B.U.H.), with a much higher dimension and in a double form, on the night of ‘*Āshūrā*<sup>1</sup>. It is quoted from one of those who wrote down and recorded the incidents:

“One night when I was passing near the tents of Ḥusayn bin ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.), I heard the sound of the recitation of the Qur’an, supplication, prayers and admonishment could be heard from the tents; and they were all remembering God and supplicating.”

And indeed, for that hard day, such a state and serenity were necessary.

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1- Ref. the martyrdom of Ḥusayn bin ‘Alī (P.B.U.H.), the grandson of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.), at the Battle of *Karbalā* on 10<sup>th</sup> October in the year 680 C.E. The massacre of Ḥusayn (P.B.U.H.) with a small group of his companions and family members had a great impact on the religious conscience of Muslims, who commemorate his martyrdom every year at a ten-day carnival with sorrow and passion. (Trans.)



But on the eleventh night...

If anyone had crossed through the tents, surely he would have heard no whisper and saw no such mood.

And instead of all the tents,

there was only one half-burned tent, where the children and daughters of Abā ‘Abdillāh (P.B.U.H.) and the young were gathered in.

Perhaps, a faint murmur rose from them.

But most likely, this murmur was to shed tears on the loved ones and the outcries parched with thirst...

“I ask You God and call You by Your greatest, most magnificent, most dignified and most respected Name and by the blood of the oppressed.”<sup>1</sup>

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, bless this auspicious month for all of us and our nation.

Dear God, out of Your grace and benefaction, accept from the good deeds and goodness your servants did in this month.

Dear God, do not release us from this month unforgiven.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, if you have not pardoned us and our sins until this hour, then forgive us our sins in the few hours that are remaining.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, do not let this month of Ra-



١- «نَسْأَلُكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَ نَدْعُوكَ، بِاسْمِكَ الْعَظِيمِ الْعَظِيمِ، الْأَعَزُّ الْأَجَلُّ الْأَكْرَمُ وَ يَاوَلِيائِكَ وَ يَدَمِ الْمَظْلُومِينَ يَا اللَّهُ».

madan be a cause of regret for us.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, bestow the abundant rewards and bounties of this month of Ramadan on our predecessors, on our parents and on our martyrs.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, accept, out of Your grace and bounty, the supplications that proceed in this month from the lips of Your servants; particularly the supplications of the Nights of Ordainment.

Dear God, all of our people undoubtedly prayed during the month, specially during the Nights of Ordainment, for the longevity, healthiness and prosperity of our dear Imam (P.B.U.H.); dear God, we beseech you to grant these prayers.

Dear God, our people unquestionably prayed during this month and specifically during the Nights of Ordainment for the victory of the combatants<sup>1</sup> and their return with honor and safety; dear God, we beseech you to grant these prayers.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, grant patience, comfort and reward to the families of the martyrs.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, solve, out of Your grace and bounty, the problems of the Islamic community and Muslims around the world.

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1- Iran-Iraq war servicemen .



Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, we ask you to familiarize us with our duties, enable us to fulfill our duties, and help us accomplish them.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, we ask you to get us acquainted with our own faults, sins, mistakes and stumbles; and enable us to overcome these mistakes, shortcoming and weaknesses.

Dear God, help and assist us on Your path.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, make the pure heart of the Imam of the Age (may our souls be sacrificed for his sake) satisfied and pleased with us. Bestow us his magnificent favor and regard.

Dear God, hasten the re-appearance and arrival of the Imam.

By the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household and by the Imam's sacredness, put us among his eminent companions, servants, soldiers and martyrs.

Dear God, by the blessedness of Muḥammad (P.B.U.H. & H.H.) and his household, accept, out of Your grace, what we said and what we did.

Dear God, grant us our prayers and forgive our parents.

“May God have mercy on the one who recites Sūra al-Fātiḥa following a *Ṣalawāt*”<sup>1</sup>.





## Arabic Transliteration Guide

ا	alif	a ā (long vowel)	ط	tā	t/T
ب	bā	b	ظ	zā	z
ت	tā	t	ع	‘ayn	‘
ث	thā	th	غ	ghayn	gh
ج	jīm	j	ف	Fā	f
ح	hā	h/H	ق	Qāf	q
خ	khā	kh	ك	Kāf	k
د	dāl	D	ل	Lām	l
ذ	dhāl	dh	م	mīm	m
ر	rā	R	ن	Nūn	n
ز	zā	Z	هـ	Hā	h
س	sīn	S	و	wāw	w (consonantal) ū (long vowel)
ش	shīn	sh	ي	Yā	y (consonantal) ī (long vowel)
ص	ṣād	S/ṣ	ء	hamza	,
ض	ḍād	d/Ḍ			
Short vowels	fatha		َ		= a
	Kasra		ِ		= i
	damma		ُ		= u



