

# Horizons Of Thoughts

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## Preface

### *In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

And may Allah's Peace and Benedictions be on Muhammad, the most perfect personification of Almighty Allah's sublime Attributes and on his infallible progeny, the Ahl al-Bayt, who are rightfully known as the ships of salvation, whosoever boards in their ship, earns salvation, and whosoever lags behind and is indifferent would drown and perish.

Al-Qanduzi, the Hanafite narrator of traditions in his radiant collection Yanabi' al-Mawaddah (lit. Fountains of Stable Love) narrates that Abu Dharr is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (s) as having said:

إِنَّ مَثَلَ أَهْلِ بَيْتِي فِيكُمْ مَثَلُ سَفِينَةِ نُوحٍ، مَنْ رَكِبَهَا نَجَا وَمَنْ تَخَلَّفَ عَنْهَا هَلَكَ

The similitude of my progeny among you is that of the ship of Noah ('a); whosoever boards on it is saved, and whosoever does not would perish<sup>[1]</sup> The ship of al-Hussein ('a), however, according to another tradition is swifter. Observe the following narrative:

Once Imam al-Sadiq ('a) was asked about the prophetic tradition "Surely Hussein is the lamp of guidance and the ship of salvation" saying: "aren't you [the Ahl al-Bayt ('a)] the ships of salvation [too]? The Imam ('a) replied: "All of us are the ships of salvation, however the ship of al-Hussein ('a) is more spacious and faster."<sup>[2]</sup> This tradition is also endorsed by great mystic scholars who can appreciate the sublime secrets of religion. The late Mystic scholar `yatullah Mirza Tabrizi in his monumental prayer manual al-Muraqibat says:

It should be known that the door of al-Hussein ('a) is the door of comprehensive mercy, rapid response and approval. And he would say during his life time: 'the similitude of doing good is rain water which covers both the virtuous and sinful.'<sup>[3]</sup>

Sayyid haddad al-Musawi a great Shi'ite saint and a contemporary of 'Allamah Tabatana'i, is reported to have quoted their mentor in practical gnosis, `yatullah Qazi Tabataba'i as having said:

قَالَ لِي أَسْتَاذِي الْمَرْحُومُ الْقَاضِي قَدَسَ سِرُّهُ: أَنَّهُ حَالٌ أَنْ يَصِلَ إِنْسَانٌ إِلَى مَقَامِ التَّوْحِيدِ  
بِدُونِ طَرِيقِ سَيِّدِ الشَّهَادَةِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

My teacher, Marhum Qazi (may his spirit be sanctified) said to me that it is impossible for a human being to attain the station of tawhid [proximity to God] without the path of Sayyid al-Shuhada.<sup>[4]</sup>

And 'Allamah Tabataba'i is reported to have said:

That hazrat [i.e. Imam al-Hussein ('a)] has great attention towards the wayfarers of the path of God in removing the veil and impediments of the 'path of God'.<sup>[5]</sup>

One of the excellent ways of establishing contact with Imam al-Hussein ('a) is through offering salutations to his exalted personality (ziyarah). This can be achieved either in front of his radiant tomb in Karbala, or in one's home observing some etiquette.

The secret however is that the za'ir who recites the ziyarah must yearn to the attain the apex of the meaning of what he recites and unite with the spirit

of the mazur (the visited one). The grand `yatullah Jawadi Amuli in his masterpiece 'Adabe Finaye Muqarriban' says:

Ziyarah is the mystical presence of the fervent lover ('ashiq) in the dwelling of the Beloved; it is the visitor's passionate encounter of the abode of the visited One; it is the lover's expression of intense love and consideration for the Beloved; it is when the enamored one sincerely gives his heart in the alley of the possessor of the heart...<sup>[6]</sup>

The present commentary tries to examine and reflect on one of the well-known ziyarats that many of the Muslims recite with great zeal and devotion. Most of the Shi'ite Muslims express their veneration and sorrow when they recite this sublime ziyarah on the day of `shura'. However the Infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have taught us to recite it very often. Besides the ample merits that it contains, it is a program of revolution of the sleeping masses. The crux of the ziyarah is tawalla and tabarra', which can correctly be referred to as 'fleeing from imperfection' and 'seeking perfection' or in beautiful words of every Muslim La ilaha illa Allah -Besides Allah- the Only Beloved, there is no other ilah (beloved).

The Name Allah exemplifies all the perfect attributes of Allah, which the human being has been molded to appreciate and naturally seek. Therefore the ziyarah in reality is a call to the innate nature (fitrah) of the human being.

In expressing veneration and seeking the higher levels of peace for Imam al-Hussein ('a) we are trying to unite with the ideas, thoughts and towering volition of Imam('a), and in cursing his opponents, who overtly declared to be Muslims and believers, but were extensions of hypocrites, we are trying to flee from all their ideas, thoughts and actions. Hence this recital trains the reciter to overhaul himself and unite with the spirit of the sacred Imam ('a).

Understanding the aforementioned subtlety obliges every high-spirited seeker of truth to aim for the achievement of the crux of the ziyarah rather than being selfishly motivated to gain personal benefits. The rewards of the ziyarah which are both sacred and sublime should not be the only factor to lead us to recite it.

It is the natural love for the Imam ('a) who exemplifies the Divine Attributes in himself that should transport us to recite this humble presentation. In fact some traditions, as we shall soon consider, clearly state that whosoever visits Imam al-Hussein ('a) in Karbala is as if he has visited Allah in His Throne.

Another very important point to bear in mind is that because the reciter of this ziyarah has been guaranteed by the Imams ('a) to be availed with any need that he has, he/she must be very careful in understanding 'that which is a need' from that 'which is not really a need'. The great saint `yatullah haddad al-Musawi, a contemporary of 'Allamah Tabataba'i would see people clinging at the radiant enclosure where Imam al-Hussein ('a) is buried, and instead of seeking their real needs would ask for those things that would add to the burden that they already have accumulated. He is reported to have said:

إنَّ أكثر النَّاس حينما يذهبون إلى زيارة العتبات المقدسة يقفون ماسكي الضريح فيتوسلون بالإمام (ع) لحوائجهم المادية فيحملون ثقلًا على ثقلهم ولم يسئلوا الإمام (ع) بأن يأخذ منهم ثقلهم و هو التعلق بالدنيا، بل يسئلونه بأن يعطيهم بيتاً أو ولداً أو زوجاً أو سيّارة، وما سمعنا عن أحدٍ دخل بخدمته وقال له خذ مِنِّي كذا وكذا.

When most of the people visit the holy shrines, they stand holding fast onto the enclosures of the graves and mediate with the Imam ('a) for the fulfillment of their material needs, thus adding a burden over their burdens, and they do not ask Imam to remove their burden which is 'attachment to the world'; rather they ask him to give them a house or an off spring or a wife or a car; and we never heard from anyone who entered at his service, and asked him: 'Take away so and so from me.'<sup>[7]</sup>

Before we begin this radiant ziyarah, which is reckoned to be among the sacred traditions <sup>[8]</sup> (ahadith qudsiyyah) as well, and understand both its particular as well as its universal import, it is imperative to generally know the significance of ziyarah, and its exalted purpose.

## Meaning Of Ziyarah

The word 'ziyarah' is derived from the word "zawr" which means to deflect or draw away from something. A lie is called zur because it deflects from the path of truth. The za'ir is known to be so, because he deflects from other than "the one he intends to visit". That is why some lexicographers translate "ziyarah" to mean intention (qasd), for the one who deflects from other than a certain entity intends the entity. Al-Fayumi, a well-known lexicist in his authoritative lexicon al-Misbah al-Munir says:

وَالزِّيَارَةُ فِي الْعُرْفِ قَصْدُ الْمُزُورِ إِكْرَامًا لَهُ وَاسْتِغْنَاءًا بِهِ.

'The conventional meaning of al-ziyarah is to intend the one to be visited, for his veneration or intimacy.'<sup>[9]</sup>

And it is said that the reason why ziyarah is referred to as visiting the saintly human beings, is because it is to deflect from the material routine and draw away from the corporeal world and incline towards the world of spirit, while one is present in the corporeal environment and maintains his/her bodily form<sup>[10]</sup>.

Sometimes ziyarah is translated as 'ittihad al-za'ir ma'al mazur' (i.e. the unity of the visitor with the visited one). In simpler words: 'to paint oneself with the attributes of the visited one'. This definition does not contradict the former definitions, for 'seeking and uniting with the attributes of the mazur (visited one)' is nothing but 'deflecting and drawing away from attributes contrary to the mazur'. In a subtler expression, we can say 'ziyarah is to flee from imperfection as we struggle for attaining perfection'<sup>[11]</sup>.

Allusions of this reality can also be gotten from the Qur'anic verse: 'And flee towards Allah'<sup>[12]</sup>. Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported<sup>[13]</sup> to have commented on this verse saying "ay hujju" (the verse means 'perform hajj'). And the literal import of hajj is qasd (intention). Therefore hajj, as it is correctly conveyed is not only 'hajju bayt Allah al-haram' (intending the sacred House of Allah), but hajj Allah (intending Allah) as the verse explicitly conveys: fa firru ila Allah (so escape towards Allah).

And escaping towards Allah is seeking His Noble Attributes and fleeing from the contrary. And hajj if performed with its proper etiquette, as the experts of the kernel of Islamic law mention, enables one to attain such noble attributes.

Some narratives explicitly say that doing ziyarah of the Holy Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams('a)<sup>[14]</sup> is like doing the ziyarah of Allah. Consider the following traditions:

عَنْ زَيْدِ الشَّحَّامِ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع): مَا لِمَنْ زَارَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (ص)؟ قَالَ: كَمَنْ زَارَ اللَّهَ عَزَّوَجَلَّ فَوْقَ عَرْشِهِ. ...

Zayd al-Shahham is reported to have said: I asked Abu 'Abdilah (al-Sadiq ('a)): What is the reward for one who visits the Messenger of Allah? The Imam ('a) said: 'It is like one who has visited Allah on His throne ('arsh)<sup>[15]</sup>.

عَنْ زَيْدِ الشَّحَّامِ، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ: مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ (ع) عَارِفًا بِحَقِّهِ  
كَانَ كَمَنْ زَارَ اللَّهَ فِي عَرْشِهِ. ...

Zayd al-Shahham is reported to have said: Abu 'Abdilah (al-Sadiq ('a)) said: Whosoever visits the grave of al-Hussein ('a) with the knowledge of his rights is like one who visits Allah in His Throne.<sup>[16]</sup>

عَنْ جَابِرِ الْجُعْفِيِّ، قَالَ: دَخَلْتُ عَلَى جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ (ع) فِي يَوْمِ عَاشُورَاءَ، فَقَالَ لِي:  
هَؤُلَاءِ زُورُ اللَّهِ وَحَقُّ عَلَى الْمَزُورِ أَنْ يُكْرِمَ الزَّائِرَ. ...

Jabir al-Ju'fi is reported to have said: I came to Ja'far bin Muhammad (al-Sadiq ('a)) on the day of 'shura', and he said to me: 'These people are the visitors of Allah (zuwwar Allah), and it is the right of the mazur to honor the za'ir...<sup>[17]</sup>

The above traditions imply that because the Imams ('a) are manifestations<sup>[18]</sup> of Allah's Sublime Names<sup>[19]</sup>, visiting them and seeking closeness to them is the same as seeking closeness to Almighty Allah. Seeking closeness here, we should understand, does not refer to spatial limitations, but spiritual proximity.

In other words, as the za'ir (one who defers from other than the attributes of the mazur) comes spiritually closer to the Imam ('a) he is in reality painting himself with the Attributes of Almighty Allah which the Imam enjoys but with limitations..rather, the Imams ('a) are sheer Manifestations (ma<sup>3</sup>ahir) of Allah's Names and thus in reality no Attribute belongs to other than Allah:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى

Allah, other than Him there is no God; and to Him Alone belongs the Beautiful Names...<sup>[20]</sup> Those who are well versed with the secrets of prayer (Asrar al-Salat) do appreciate this reality in the state of ruku' when they vision that no one other than Almighty Allah has any perfection whatsoever. Imam Khumayni in his Etiquette of Prayer says:



## Ziyarah Of Believers

Islam highly encourages one to visit his/her Muslim brother/sister. However, it does not emphasize on any kind of ziyarah whatsoever. It encourages meaningful ziyarah- ziyarah with a purpose and aim. Observe the following traditions: Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

قَالَ تَزَارَوْا فَإِنَّ فِي زِيَارَتِكُمْ إِحْيَاءَ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَذِكْرًا لِأَحَادِيثِنَا وَأَحَادِيثِنَا تُعْطِفُ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فَإِنْ أَخَذْتُمْ مِنْهَا رَشْدَكُمْ وَجَوَّضْتُمْ وَإِنْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا ضَلَلْتُمْ وَهَلَكْتُمْ فَخُذُوا مِنْهَا وَأَنَا بِنَجَاتِكُمْ رَعِيمٌ.

'Visit one another, for verily in your visitation is the revival of your hearts, and a remembrance of our speeches; our speeches make you harbor affection for one another; and if you act according to them, you would be guided and saved, and if you shun them, you would go astray and perish; therefore follow them while I guarantee your salvation.'<sup>[21]</sup>

And Imam al-Baqir ('a) is reported to have said:

تَزَارَوْا فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَأَمْرِنَا رَحِمَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا أَحْيَا أَمْرَنَا.

'Visit one another in your homes for surely in that is the life of our affair; may Allah's Mercy be upon one who revives our affair.'<sup>[22]</sup> It should be noted that the revival of the affair discussed in the above traditions is nothing but the revival of Islamic values, for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) are protectors of Islamic values and to remember them and their teachings is to elevate the human spirit in reality. One should not conjecture that there is any personal again that these infallible leaders of truth derive from such gatherings. Rather it is their followers who benefit.

Another important point to bear in mind is that 'the revival of their affair' cannot be merely achieved by thoughts and words. We must sow the seeds of resolution in our visitations to reap the fruits of applying the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

So far ziyarah has been reduced to visitation in the earthly abode. The Islamic worldview, however, due its sharp and accurate cognition of reality as taught by the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet (s) and his infallible successors, does not limit ziyarah to the corporeal reality. It rather believes that human beings can communicate with those who have transcended this limited world of matter and can listen to them as well. In our daily prayer, we address the Holy Prophet (s) as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ.

Peace be unto you O Prophet and may Allah's Mercy and Blessings be on you.<sup>[23]</sup>

This statement presumes the presence of the mukhatab (the addressee). And therefore we believe that the Prophet (s) is present and can behold our presence too.

One of the important etiquette of entering the shrine of the Holy Prophet (s) and the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is to read the well-known idhn al-dukhul (recital of permission to enter). The za'ir (visitor) adopts a

very humble attitude, and appreciating the presence of the Holy Prophet (s) seeks his permission to enter his hospice. In this well-known recital, we say:

...وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ رَسُولَكَ وَخُلَفَاءَكَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَكَ يُرْزَقُونَ، يَرَوْنَ مَقَامِي وَيَسْمَعُونَ

كَلَامِي، وَيَرْدُّونَ سَلَامِي. ...

...and I know that Your Apostle and vicegerents (upon whom be peace) are alive, receiving sustenance in Your neighborhood, they see where I stand presently, and hear my speech and respond to my salutation...<sup>[24]</sup>

Unlike those who consider the human being as an entity which perishes after this worldly death, Islam teaches mankind that death is a purgatory and bridge to the realm beyond. In fact, to be more accurate, death is "tearing of some veils" from the final result of the reality of every thing. Great people like Imam 'Ali ('a), due to their intense purity, could boldly claim that they can behold the ultimate form of the reality of this world while they still exist in this earthly abode. In one of his famous dictums, Imam 'Ali ('a) is reported to have said:

لَوْ كُشِفَ الْغَطَاءُ مَا أَزْدَدْتُ يَقِينًا.

If the curtains were unveiled nothing would be added to my conviction.<sup>[25]</sup>

The tearing of veils, however, should not be considered as being limited to the Prophets (upon whom be peace) and infallible Imams ('a). Those human beings who are entirely submissive to the laws of Almighty Allah and have purified their hearts can also enjoy such exalted positions. In fact, Almighty Allah calls the human beings to appreciate the kernel of this word in the following verse:

أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ.

And do they not look into the kernel of the heavens and the earth?<sup>[26]</sup>

Hence there is an invitation to tear the veils that we have created for ourselves by sinning. In other interesting dictum of the Holy Prophet (s) we are told:

لَوْلَا أَنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ يَحُومُونَ عَلَى قُلُوبِ بَنِي آدَمَ لَنَظَرُوا إِلَى مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ.

Was is not for the Satans circling around the hearts of the off-springs of Adam, they would have beheld the kernel of the heavens and the earth.<sup>[27]</sup>

Therefore, the more purity we enjoy, the better can we communicate with those exalted spirits who have left this material world, are alive in the real sense of the word, and due to their exalted station of existential mediation (about which we shall soon discuss in detail) can influence the world of contingent existence and even benefit us in different ways. There have been ample narratives indicating how people visited the shrines of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and solved very great problems in life.

Our aim of ziyarah, however, must transcend seeking personal benefits. It is therefore important to first define the purpose of ziyarah, and the reason why our holy Imams ('a) would teach us particular recitals for visiting the tomb of their grandfather Imam al-Hussein ('a). Of course this does mean that one should not seek personal benefits from the great personalities, but he/she must at least have realized the ultimate purpose of ziyarah.

It is through such realization, my brothers and sisters, that rain falls from the hearts and embraces every human being, rather every creature beyond time and place. Such realizations tear the veils of the past and future, and release the human being in the world of perpetual bliss and ecstasy. Soon the reader shall understand the words of this nondescript, for the world of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) is a world yet unknown. Their followers have no share save appreciating the tip of the iceberg:

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

اعْلَمْ يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ أَنَّا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَخَلِيفَتُهُ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ لَا تَجْعَلُونَا أَرْبَابًا وَقُولُوا فِي فَضْلِنَا مَا شِئْتُمْ فَإِنَّكُمْ لَا تَبْلُغُونَ كُنْهَ مَا فِيْنَا وَلَا نُهَآئَتَهُ.

Know O Aba Dharr that I am [only] a slave of Allah and His vicegerent over His servants; do not consider us as Lords and you may say whatever you want about our merits, for you cannot appreciate the essence of our perfection, nor its zenith...<sup>[28]</sup>

And in another tradition he ('a) is reported to have said:

لَا يُقَاسُ بِآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ (ص) مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ أَحَدٌ.

...None from this Ummah can be compared with the progeny of Muhammad (upon whom be peace)...<sup>[29]</sup>

## The Purpose Of Ziyarah

One of the fundamental requisites of understanding the purpose of ziyarah is to have a correct worldview. If we realize the purpose of human creation, and submit our volition to our intellectual decision, our deeds would be directed towards our eternal salvation. The purpose of human creation according to Qur'an and Sunnah is to worship Almighty Allah:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ.

And I have not Created the Jinn and the Men save that they Worship Me Alone.<sup>[30]</sup>

And worship without knowledge carries no meaning. This is because worship is not a mere exercise without any sense of devotion. 'Ibadah in the literal sense is defined as:

الْعِبَادَةُ هِيَ نَصَبُ الْعَبْدِ نَفْسَهُ فِي مَقَامِ الْمَمْلُوكِيَّةِ لِرَبِّهِ.

'Ibadah is when the servant places himself in the position of being a bondsman of his Lord.<sup>[31]</sup>

And this cannot transpire without the knowledge of the Creator. It is by appreciating His real ownership<sup>[32]</sup> of the entire world of creation, His Knowledge over all things, His Omnipotence and Omnipresence that the human being is overtaken and humbles himself down before the Allah. He also realizes that the true Lord and Master is none but His Creator, and thus he places himself in the station of being an obedient slave of Almighty Allah. Imam al-Hussein ('a), underlining the clear link between knowledge and worship is reported to have said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَلَّ ذِكْرُهُ مَا خَلَقَ الْعِبَادَ إِلَّا لِيَعْرِفُوهُ فَإِذَا عَرَفُوهُ عَبْدُوهُ فَإِذَا عَبْدُوهُ اسْتَغْنَوْا بِعِبَادَتِهِ

عَنْ عِبَادَةِ مَا سِوَاهُ. ...

Surely Allah ('a) did not Create His servants except for knowing Him, and when they know him, they would worship Him, and when they worship Him, it would suffice them from worshipping other than Him....<sup>[33]</sup>

The worship that results from prior knowledge reaps knowledge itself. Knowledge before worship, however, is mostly intellectual ('aqli) and conceptual (tasawwuri). It is a the result of rationally establishing the existence of God and His Attributes as well as the utter poverty and dependence of the entire creation on His Infinite Existence.

Having realized this, the impartial servant worships with veneration and awe. If such worship was out of sincerity, he is availed with a higher form of knowledge, which is beyond the realm of intellect. It is known in the language of traditions as 'yaqin (conviction)' and 'the vision of the heart' which is knowledge by presence (al-'ilm al-huzuri). The following verse of the Qur'an alludes to the close link between worship and conviction:

وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ.

And worship your Lord so that conviction comes to you<sup>[34]</sup>.

In some of the ziyarat taught to us by the infallible Imams ('a) we are taught to address the Imams declaring that they had attained the exalted station of yaqin through sincere worship. Consider the following examples:

1. In one of the ziyarah of the Holy Prophet (s) we are taught by Imam 'Ali ('a) to address his noble being as follows:

...وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ قَدْ نَصَحْتَ لَأُمَّتِكَ، وَجَاهَدْتَ فِي سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ، وَعَبَدْتَهُ حَتَّى أَتَاكَ الْيَقِينُ...  
...

...And I bear witness that you gave counsel to your nation and struggled in the way of your Lord, and worshipped Him until conviction came to you...<sup>[35]</sup> 2. In another ziyarah we address Imam al-Hussein ('a) as follows:

...يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ عَنِ اللَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ مَا أُمِرْتَ بِهِ وَلَمْ تَخْشَ أَحَدًا غَيْرَهُ وَجَاهَدْتَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ وَعَبَدْتَهُ صَادِقًا حَتَّى أَتَاكَ الْيَقِينُ...  
...

...O Aba 'Abdillah, I bear witness that surely you conveyed what you were ordered by Allah (the Invincible and Majestic) and other than Him you never feared anyone, and you struggled in His way, and worshipped Him truthfully until conviction came to you...<sup>[36]</sup> 3. In one of the ziyarah of Imam al-Riza ('a) we are taught to address him as follows:

...أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ قَدْ أَقَمْتَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَمَرْتَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَيْتَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَعَبَدْتَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا حَتَّى أَتَاكَ الْيَقِينُ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ...  
...

...I bear witness that you kept prayer upright and gave the poor tax and invited to what was good and forbade the evil and worshipped Allah sincerely until conviction came to you; peace be upon you O Aba al-hasan...<sup>[37]</sup>

Having realized this, our ziyarah should serve as a catalyst to earn the exalted station of appreciating the truth by the vision of the heart. And the path towards this endeavor is to be a true slave of Almighty Allah. In other words, the ziyarah should be a means of uniting with Abu 'Abdillah (an appellation depicting the true slave-hood of Imam al-Hussein ('a)).

And this can easily be attained after we understand the meaning of the ziyarah and exemplify its teachings in ourselves. If we limit the ziyarah for our lower ambitions in life, there would be no difference between us and the laity who have busied themselves with the world of matter. Therefore, the za'ir should bear an exalted aspiration and aim for a great transformation, in order to unite with the spirit of al-Hussein ('a).

Readers do appreciate that the reason why the allies of the contemporary formalists hamper us from expressing our sorrow near the graves of the infallible leaders, is because they have realized the revolution it can create in the hearts.

Imam al-Hussein ('a) is a symbol of uprising against falsehood even at the cost of the sacrifice of every possession. Our ziyarah which is an endeavor of unity in the real sense therefore should be a declaration of readiness and not merely a habitual recitation.

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ.

Assalamu 'alayka

The word al-Salam is commonly translated as "the Peace". Its literal import, however, means:

التَّعَرِّي مِنَ الْآفَاتِ الظَّاهِرَةِ وَالْبَاطِنَةِ.

...to be free from calamities, whether apparent or hidden <sup>[38]</sup>.

Therefore we are seeking the state of freedom from every kind of calamity for Imam al-Hussein ('a), whether that be apparent or hidden. It should however be understood that the Imam already enjoys the state of salam and is in fact one of the manifestations of Allah's Attribute al-Salam. The Holy Prophet (s) in his nocturnal ascent (al-Mi'raj) came across a group of Angels, Divine Apostles and Prophets, and it was said to him:

يَا مُحَمَّدُ سَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَقَالَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّ السَّلَامَ وَالتَّحِيَّةَ وَالرَّحْمَةَ وَالْبَرَكَاتِ أَنْتَ وَذُرِّيَّتُكَ.

O Muhammad, send benedictions on them, and he (s) said: al-Salamu 'alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh (May the peace, Mercy and Blessings be upon you). Thereupon Allah Revealed unto him: "the Peace and Benedictions, and Mercy and Blessings, are you and your progeny." <sup>[39]</sup> Hence seeking Salam for him would mean seeking higher degrees of the state of Salam because the levels of Salam have no end. Only Almighty Allah enjoys the Absolute State of Salam:

... هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ

...He is Allah, other than Whom there is no god, He alone is the Sovereign, the Most Holy, the Peace <sup>[40]</sup>

1. In a tradition lady Fatima Zahra ('a) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّلَامُ، وَمِنْهُ السَّلَامُ، وَإِلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

Surely only Allah is the Absolute Peace and from Him alone comes peace and unto Him alone returns Peace <sup>[41]</sup> 2. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have told Lady Khadijah ('a) once that 'This is Gabriel, who sends his Salams unto you', whereupon she replied:

اللَّهُ السَّلَامُ وَلِلَّهِ السَّلَامُ وَعَلَى جِبْرَائِيلَ السَّلَامُ.

Allah is the Absolute Peace and to Him alone belongs Peace and upon Gabriel be Peace <sup>[42]</sup> 3. We are taught in a supplication <sup>[43]</sup> to say:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ السَّلَامُ وَ مِنْكَ السَّلَامُ وَإِلَيْكَ يَرْجِعُ السَّلَامُ.

O Allah, You alone are the Peace, and from You Alone is Peace and unto You alone return peace 'Allama Tabataba'i in his monumental al-Mizan, says:

وَالْأَصْلُ فِي مَعْنَى السَّلَامِ عَلَى مَا ذَكَرَهُ الرَّاعِبُ فِي الْمَفْرَدَاتِ هُوَ التَّعَرِّي عَنِ الْآفَاتِ الظَّاهِرَةِ وَالْبَاطِنَةِ، وَإِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُ مَعْنَاهُ فِي جَمِيعِ مُشْتَقَّاتِهِ... وَالسَّلَامُ مِنْ أَسْمَائِهِ تَعَالَى لِأَنَّ ذَاتَهُ الْمُبْتَغَاةَ نَفْسُ الْخَيْرِ الَّذِي لَا شَرَّ فِيهِ....

And the original meaning of the word al-Salam according to what al-Raghib indicated in al-Mufradat is to be free from adversities, both apparent as well as hidden, and unto this meaning return the import of al-Salam in all its derivatives... And al-Salam is from the Divine Attributes, for His Exalted Essence is good in itself, which does not have any speck of evil. <sup>[44]</sup>

But since 'the Absolute Peace' <sup>[45]</sup> loves us, He laid a path open in front of us a path towards His Absolute Perfection, and thus always calls us towards the same:

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوا إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ

And Allah invites to the abode of Peace... <sup>[46]</sup>

The definite article 'al' which connotes "al-ta'rif" (determination) can be taken to allude to a specific salam- the Salam that comes from Allah. This is because the sentence "al-Salamu 'alayka" is taken here as an invocative statement (al-du'a'). And because no kind of perfection comes from anyone save Allah, for He Alone is the Principal Cause, we are only permitted to seek perfection from Him in the independent sense. This does not however hamper us to employ the means that He has set for us to attain the perfections. Therefore when we say: Al-Salamu 'alayka <sup>[47]</sup> we mean: May Allah Bestow you with the state of Peace.

'Alayka Alludes to Enveloping Peace

Another linguistic intricacy worthy of consideration is that the preposition علي 'ala in Al-Salamu 'alayka denotes the sense of envelopment <sup>[48]</sup>. In other words we are asking Almighty Allah to Envelop Imam al-Hussein ('a) with the state of Peace and freedom from every apparent and hidden calamity that is according to his noble essence. Therefore Al-Salamu 'alayka would mean:

May Allah Envelop you with the state of Peace Al-Salamu 'Alayka as a Declarative Statement Sometimes however the article al is taken to allude to the visitor (za'ir), in which situation the statement is no more invocative, but declarative <sup>[49]</sup>. In other words, when the za'ir says al-Salamu 'alayka, he means:

سَلَامِي عَلَيْكَ.

Salami 'alayka

I am <sup>[50]</sup> at peace with you.

In other words he is trying to assure the person who is visited that his intentions, words, and deeds would be coherent with the spirit of peace and he would not do anything that would cause harm or disturb him. Instead he would manifest in himself things that would be geared to seek his protective physical as well as spiritual life.

This is one of the highly important stations for the za'ir, since he is in fact reasserting his covenant with Almighty Allah, by informing his beloved Imam ('a) that besides avoiding any thing that would cause harm to him ('a), he would do those things that would manifest the spirit of peace as well.

One of the things that does not concur with the spirit of al-Salam is to sin. If one engages in sin, and utters the above statement, then he has not maintained the spirit of the Salam that he has uttered, the reason being that the fourteen infallibles ('a) have the ability to witness the sins of their followers too. Look at the following narrations:

1. We humbly express in the well-known ziyarat al-Jami'a al-Kabira:

...أَنْتُمْ الصِّرَاطُ الْأَقْوَمُ وَشُهَدَاءُ دَارِ الْفَنَاءِ...



...You are the upright path and the Witnesses of the Abode of Extinction [i.e. the world...]<sup>[51]</sup> 2.Imam al-Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said:

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) فِي قَوْلِهِ (وَقُلْ اْعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ) الْمُؤْمِنُونَ هَاهُنَا الْإِئِمَّةُ الطَّاهِرَةُ (ع)

Believers referred to in the verse "And say, Go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the believers [as well]" are the Immaculate Imams ('a)<sup>[52]</sup>

Hence the Imams ('a) can behold our mistakes and wrong deeds, and when they do so, they get upset:

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

مَا لَكُمْ تَسْوَعُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (ص) فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ: كَيْفَ نَسْوُهُ فَقَالَ أَمَا تَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ أَعْمَالَكُمْ تُعْرَضُ عَلَيْهِ فَإِذَا رَأَى فِيهَا مَعْصِيَةً سَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَلَا تَسْوَعُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولَهُ.

What is the matter with you? Why do you displease the Messenger of Allah. Thereupon a man asked him: 'And how do we displease him? The Imam ('a) said: 'Don't you know that your actions are presented before him; and when he finds a sin in them, he is displeased; therefore do not displease the Messenger of Allah (upon whom be peace) and make him happy.'<sup>[53]</sup>

2. Ibn Aban al-Zayyat reports:

قُلْتُ لِلرِّضَا (ع): ادْعُ اللَّهَ لِي وَلِأَهْلِ بَيْتِي فَقَالَ: أَوْ لَسْتُ أَفْعَلُ؟ وَاللَّهِ إِنَّ أَعْمَالَكُمْ لَتُعْرَضُ عَلَيَّ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ، قَالَ: فَاسْتَغْظَمْتُ ذَلِكَ فَقَالَ لِي أَمَا تَقْرَأُ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: (وَقُلْ اْعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ) قَالَ: هُوَ وَاللَّهُ عَلَيَّ بِنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ (ع).

I said to al-Rida ('a): Pray to Allah for me and my family, and he said: Don't I do that? I swear by Allah surely your actions are presented to me every day and night. "I was extremely amazed at that," says al-Zayyat. Then the Imam ('a) said: Do you not read the Book of Allah, the Invincible and Majestic, Who says: (And say, Go on working: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the faithful [as well])? I swear by Allah 'Ali bin Abi Talib is among the 'the faithful' mentioned in this verse.'<sup>[54]</sup>

Hence engaging in sin, being inconsistent with the spirit of Salam, makes us violate our covenant with the Imam ('a). Those, therefore who recite their ziyarah without considering this vital point, are either hypocrites or weaklings who like to utter lies in front of the Imam ('a). There is a group of sinful reciters, however, whom the self that invites one to evil (al-nafs al-ammara) has weakened, but are nevertheless hopeful for change.

Whenever such people recite the ziyarah, they should experience utter humiliation, and always seek change. They must realize that in order for one to prosper and change, he/she should perpetually seek Divine Succor and make a firm resolve to leave all those things that are forbidden, however minute they may seem to appear.



## Another Important Meaning Of AL-Salam

Some authoritative lexicographers like al-Mustafawi in his al-Tahqiq fi Kalimat al-Qur'an al-Karim define al-Salam as 'a state that depicts the apparent dimension of an entity to be intensely coherent with its hidden dimension, such that no kind of difference remains in between.'<sup>[55]</sup> This meaning, we must understand, does not contradict the aforementioned definition, for to be in the state of equilibrium such that the apparent and the hidden of a thing are intensely coherent to each other, is nothing but to be free from spiritual calamities and imperfections.

Considering this definition, if we take the phrase 'As Salamu 'Alayka as invocative (li al-du'a)<sup>[56]</sup>, then we are seeking the exalted state of salam for the Imam ('a) in its higher degrees, and thus indirectly declaring our harmony with the spirit of salam too. This is because one does not seek anything good for someone save that his heart truly confirms to it.

This therefore calls for a great responsibility in the za'ir: to struggle and seek the state of salam which in the case of the human being is the equilibrium of the soul (salah al-nafs). If one begins his journey towards this exalted state by self-purification as expounded by the masters of ethics, his/her salam would truly shine with the spirit of sincerity.

It is the fear of such state of salam acquired by the revolutionary za'ir that led tyrants<sup>[57]</sup> like the the Abbaside ruler Mutawakkil bi' Allah to hamper and even kill anyone who aspired to visit the shrine of Imam al-Hussein ('a).

## Other Variables of al-Salam

Sometimes, the article 'al' in al-Salam conveys either of the following:

- 1- All kinds of peace
- 2- The most perfect peace

This is when the definite article 'al' denotes 'genus' or 'species'. Those who are acquainted with lexical discussions may consider the footnote below.<sup>[58]</sup>

Therefore when we seek the state of al-Salam for our Imam ('a) we either seek all kinds of peace that behoove his exalted being, or the most perfect peace. Seeking the second form of peace is in reality seeking higher levels of peace for the Imam ('a) who already enjoys peace. In fact the verse below implies that the degrees of peace are endless:

وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى دَارِ السَّلَامِ.

And Allah invites to the abode of Peace...<sup>[59]</sup>

Note that the indefinite verb yad'u denotes 'continuity' and permanence. Therefore even with regard to the the Holy Prophet(s) who enjoys the highest level of perfection, the invitation is open. Rather it is open both in this world as well as the Hereafter.

## Seeking The Absolute State Of-Salam

Sometimes when the article 'al' denotes genus, it can be taken to mean 'the absolute sense'. This is because no particular kind of peace is mentioned. Therefore it is taken to mean peace without any kind of particularity of limitation. And this is the highest form of peace, which no one save Almighty Allah enjoys. The Holy Qur'an says:

...هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيْمِنُ

...He is Allah, other than Whom there is no god, He alone is the Sovereign, the Most Holy, the Absolute Peace <sup>[60]</sup>

Nevertheless the human beings are taught to seek such peace for the obedient servants of Almighty Allah. Look at the following verses:

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَى

Say, All praise belongs to Allah, and Peace [in the absolute sense] be to His servants whom He has chosen <sup>[61]</sup>

It should be noted however that the human being whatever level of peace he would attain would never reach the absolute sense, which is only coherent with the Absolute Perfect Being Who is Essentially Existent. Seeking the same for others, would in reality be seeking higher stages of Salam for them. And this journey of Salam, according to masters of the field, would neither end in this world nor in the Hereafter. In short, the path from the finite to the infinite by the Infinite is Infinite.

### SEEKING AN ATTRIBUTE OF ALLAH FOR OTHERS

Al-Salam, as we came to learn, earlier is one of the Attributes of Almighty Allah, which some of his noble servants, like the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), due to their utter submission enjoyed. The path for others too is left open. Every human being is invited to the abode of peace, and therefore he/she must strive to attain the same. But a true believer has an all-embracing heart, and thus yearns for the betterment of others too. Perhaps that is why we are encouraged to greet others with al-Salam. The Holy Prophet (s) is reported to have said:

السَّلَامُ اسْمٌ مِنْ أَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى فَأَفْشُوهُ بَيْنَكُمْ.

Al-Salam is a Name from among the Names of Almighty Allah; therefore, spread the same between you... <sup>[62]</sup> In fact the word Muslim has originally been derived from Allah's name al-Salam. Look at the following tradition:

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

تَسَمَّى اللَّهُ بِاسْمَيْنِ سَمِيَ بِهِمَا أُمَّتِي هُوَ السَّلَامُ وَسَمِيَ أُمَّتِي الْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَهُوَ الْمُؤْمِنُ وَسَمِيَ أُمَّتِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

Allah Named Himself with two names with which he [also] named my Nation: He is al-Salam and He named my nation as muslims, and He is al-Mu'min and He Named my mu'mins. <sup>[63]</sup>

Perhaps due to this reason, exponents of ziyarah like al-Shubbar in his al-Anwar al-Lami'ah and 'Allama Majlisi in his Bihar al-Anwar believe that one of the meanings of al-Salamu 'alayka is <sup>[64]</sup>:

إِسْمُ السَّلَامِ عَلَيْكَ.

*May Allah always Envelop you with His Name al-Salam*

Therefore, Almighty Allah not only requires each of us to be at peace, but teaches us to ask for our Muslim brothers and sisters to be availed of the same. It should be understood however that the levels of peace are infinite.

Therefore invoking peace for others while we greet them should never cease.

## Between Declaring AL-Salam & Its Application

It is important to understand the remote distance between the sincerity of one who merely declares peace and verbally seeks the same for the mazur ('the visited one') and one who personifies peace in every dimension of his being and actively struggles to ensure the same for the mazur. In fact some of our traditions clearly emphasize the vital role of the practical application of al-Salam. Look at the following traditions: 1. Ibn Shahr `shub narrates in his well-known al-Manaqib from Anas that he said:

جَاءَتْ جَارِيَةٌ لِلْحَسَنِ (ع) بِطَاقِ رِجَانٍ فَقَالَ لَهَا أَنْتَ خَيْرُ لَوْجِهِ اللَّهِ فَقِيلَ لَهُ فِي ذَلِكَ فَقَالَ أَدَّبَنَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فَقَالَ إِذَا حُيِّيتُمْ الْآيَةَ وَكَانَ أَحْسَنُ مِنْهَا إِعْتَانَهَا.

One of the slave women of Imam al-hasan ('a) came to him with a bouquet of aromatic plants, whereupon the Imam ('a) said to her: You are free for the sake of Allah. So I asked the Imam ('a) as to why did he free her, and he said: 'Almighty Allah educated us and said: 'And When you are greeted with a greeting, greet with a better one than it, or return it...<sup>[65]</sup> And to let her free is better than her gift.<sup>[66]</sup>

Here is an example of how practical Salam can be. Many of us do not realize this very important point and conjecture that we have earned ample blessings and reward for our Salams as the holy Qur'an and the sacred traditions of the Holy Prophet (s) and his infallible progeny clearly exemplify.

The Holy Qur'an says:

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

When one enters his house, he must say salam, for that sends down blessings and the angels become fond of him.<sup>[67]</sup> Should we restrict these luminant words of guidance to the realm of speech or do they portray the loftier aspects of the reality of al-Salam ?. In fact if there is no coherence between what the tongue utters and what the heart and mind feel and what the actions portray, then how can we claim the honesty of the musallim (greeter)?

يَا أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ.

*Ya Aba 'Abdillah*

The word 'Ya' is an interjection employed to call the vocative (munada). In simple terms it is word used to call someone. However, lexists hold that يا'ya' is employed for a vocative (munada) who is at a far distance. For example, if we would like to call 'Ali who is at a far distance, we say ياعلي 'Ya 'Ali!.

The distance considered here was physical and spatial. Lexists however employ the same when they would like to praise an exalted personality even if he/she was very near. In fact we also address Almighty Allah Who is closer to us than our jugular veins as يَا اللَّهُ Ya Allah, because the Essence of Allah is Infinitely Exalted. In the well-known verse of the Throne ('yat al-Kursi) we declare this reality of Allah's Exalted Essence as:

وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ.

And He Alone is the Extremely Exalted & Great Forever <sup>[68]</sup>

In our present situation our vocative and addressee is Imam al-Hussein ('a) who due to his freedom from the limitations of the material world and comprehensive being is too close to us and can see and hear us too. Hence the reason why we employ the interjection 'ya and say 'Ya Aba 'Abdillah' is to express his exaltedness and confess our lowliness.

The people of heart, however, can well appreciate the implication manifested when the 'the lover calls the beloved'. The implication is to get near to the Beloved. Hence when we call Aba 'Abdillah (whose import, as we shall soon expound means 'the utterly submissive slave of Allah) we are seeking his closeness, or in other words 'the attributes that personifies his exalted being'.

أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ

*Aba 'Abdillah*

The words Aba 'Abdillah literally mean 'the father of the submissive slave of Allah'. Arabs honorify their fellow brothers by calling them with a kunya (a name that mostly mentions the first or one of the offsprings of the 'named one'.) Hence if a person had a son called 'Abdullah, he is called Abu 'Abdillah, which means 'father of 'Abdullah'. In fact one of our traditions indicates that it is better to call someone by his offspring's name in front of him than to use his real name. Imam al-Riza ('a) is reported to have said:

إِذَا ذَكَرْتَ الرَّجُلَ وَهُوَ حَاضِرٌ فَكُنِّهِ وَإِذَا كَانَ غَائِبًا فَسَمِّهِ.

If you mention a man in his presence, then do so using his agnomen (kunya), and if he were to be absent, then call him by his name. <sup>[69]</sup> One of the variable reasons given behind the Imam ('a) being called Abu 'Abdillah is that he had an offspring called 'Abdullah, famously known الرضيع al-radi' (one who is still breastfeeding). He is one of the members of the Imam's noble family who was mercilessly martyred in the plains of Karbala. In the well-known Ziyarat al-Nahiya al-Muqaddasah we say:

السَّلَامُ عَلَى عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ الطِّفْلِ الرَّضِيعِ...

Perpetual peace be unto 'Abdillah, the one who was still breastfeeding <sup>[70]</sup>

أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ

*Aba 'Abdillah*

Sometimes however, someone is attributed with an agnomen (kunya) not because he is the father of so and so, but because he enjoys a certain quality. For example, one who is well known for his open-handedness and generosity is called Abu Jawad. In this context, a number of commentators of this exalted ziyarah, opine that one of the reasons why the holy Imam ('a) was given the agnomen Abu 'Abdillah was his extreme submissiveness to Allah. In other words, he was the true servant of Allah.

Traditions indicate that Imam al-Hussein ('a) was given the agnomen after his birth by Almighty Allah himself through the revelation of the Arch

Angel Gabriel, which subtly alludes to the submissive state of Imam ('a) ever since his birth:

## End Notes

- 1 Al-Qanduzi, Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, v.2, p.90
- 2 Sayyid `dil al-'Alawi, Risalat Islamiyyah, v.6 p. 183
- 3 `yatullah al-Tabrizi, al-Muraqibat, p.286
- 4 `rifun Fi al-Rihab al-Qudsiyya, p.47
- 5 Daryaye 'Irfan, p.97
- 6 Ref Adab-e-Finaye Muqarriban, v.1, p. 17
- 7 `rifun fi al-Rihab al-Qudsiyyah, p. 146
- 8 Ibn Qulawayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, p.333
- 9 Ahmad al-Fayumi, al-Misbah al-Munir, p. 136
- 10 `yatullah Jawadi Amuli, Adabe Finaye Muqarriban, v.1, p. 23
- 11 It is important to note that fleeing from imperfection is the same as fleeing towards perfection.
- 12 Holy Qur'an, 51:50
- 13 'Allama Tabrasi, Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, v.9, p. 268
- 14 This may apply to all the Imams ('a) but definitely there is a reason behind being specific in their speeches.
- 15 Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v.4, p. 585. It should be noted here that 'throne' does not refer to the material throne for Almighty Allah is greater than such limitations.
- 16 Ibn Qulwayh, Kamil al-Ziyarat, p. 324
- 17 Ibid
- 18 hujjat al-Islam Sayyid `dil al-'Alawi a contemporary scholar and a former student of the Grand `yatullah al-Mar'ashi al-Najafi reports a beautiful exposition from those well-versed with kernel of religion. Those interested to know more may refer to volume 6, p. 282 of his Risalat Islamiyya [Islamic Treatises].
- 19 A reference to the tradition of Imam al-Sadiq ('a): Nahnu al-Asma' al-husna' We are the Most Beautiful Names of Allah'.
- 20 Holy Qur'an, 20:8
- 21 'Allamah Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 17, p. 258
- 22 Ibid., v. 17, p. 352
- 23 Ayatullah al-Sistani, Minhaj al-Saihin, v.1, p. 226
- 24 Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, new ed., p. 380
- 25 'Allamah Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 40, p. 153
- 26 Holy Qur'an, 7:185
- 27 'Allamah Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 6, p. 332
- 28 'Allamah Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v. 62, p. 7
- 29 Ibid., v. 32, p.11 7
- 30 Holy Qur'an, 51:56
- 31 'Allamah Tabataba'i, Tafsir Al-Mizan, v.1, p.24
- 32 Readers must differentiate between real ownership in which the existence and subsistence of an entity is entirely dependent on the owner, and positional ownership in which the existence and subsistence of a property is independent of the owner.
- 33 'Allamah Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.23, p.83
- 34 Holy Qur'an, 15:99
- 35 al-himyari al-Qummi, Qurb al-Isnad, p. 382
- 36 al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, v.4, p. 573
- 37 al-Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Uyun AKhbar al-Riza ('a), v.1, p. 302
- 38 Al-Isfahani, al-Mufradat, p. 421
- 39 Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, v.3, p. 486
- 40 It should be noted that the definite attribute al-Salam has two connotations: It either depicts the attribute of Divine Essence which enjoys the state of peace and is free from any sort of calamity, imperfection and deficiency, or the Active Attribute of Allah, which means that He Alone is the Bestower and Giver of Salam and the state of peace and being free from calamities and imperfections.
- 41 Shaykh al-Tusi, al-Amali, p. 175
- 42 Al-Maghribi, Sharh al-Akhbar, v.3, p.21
- 43 Sayyid Razi al-Din bin Tawus, Jamal al-Usbu', p. 34

44 Al-Tabataba'i, al-Mizan, v.10, p.39

45 I.e. Almighty Allah

46 Holy Qur'an, 10:24

47 It should be noted that this statement in turn can have two meanings: May Allah's Salam (the Absolute State of Salam) be upon you, or May the Salam of Allah (I.e. Salam from Allah) be upon you. Note that in the first case a person is seeking the highest form of Salam, which is restricted and reserved for Almighty Allah, whereas, in the second, a person seeks Divine Grace that would elevate the state of Salam that the servant enjoys. In simple terms: in the first instance, the za'ir seeks for the Essential Attribute of Allah for the mazur (the one visited), while in the second instance, he seeks an intense manifestation of Allah's Attribute of Action - al-Salam.

48 Vide Shifa al-Sudur, p. 98; Tadhkirat al-Za'irin [Ref: Persion collection 'Nigahi be Ziyarate Ashura', p. 142 ]

49 Many scholars have alluded to this variable. Those interested may look at Arabic lexicons as well as Qur'an commentaries. Scholars such as Sabzawari in his Sharh al-Asma [Ref Sharh al-Asma, p.] and al-Sarawi in his Tadhkirat al-Za'irin [Ref: Persion collection 'Nigahi be Ziyarate Ashura', p. 142] have also taken this variable into consideration.

50 It should be also noted that because the sentence (al-salamu 'alayka) is a nominal clause (jumla ismiyya) it denotes continuity and permanence. Hence we have translated it as "I am at peace with you forever". For a better understanding of the usage of a nominative clause refer to Jar Allah Zamakhshari's al-Kashshaf, v.4, p. 401

51 Shaykh 'Abbas Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, p. 622

52 Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.23, p. 339

53 Al-Kulayni, Al-Kafi, v.1, p. 219

54 Ibid.

55 Al-Mustafawi, al-Tahqiq, v.5, p. 188

56 I.e. as a du'a (supplication)

57 The illegal occupants of Iraq today are fearful of this very important form of transformation. The Iraqis, therefore, should be alert, get united and vanquish the occupiers, and that would indeed represent a practical step to unite with the spirit of Imam al-Hussein ('a) the neighborhood of whom they are most fortunate to enjoy.

58 According to authoritative lexicographers the definite article 'al' sometimes denotes jinsiyya (lit. 'genus') which can give one of the following three implications:

a) All the extensions (masadiq) of the genus (jins) and 'species' are taken into consideration. For example, in chapter al-'Asr we say: Inna al-Insana lafi khusr, we mean 'every human being is in loss' because 'al-Insan' denotes genus and all the extensions of genus are taken into consideration.

b) All the extensions of the perfect attributes of the genus are taken into consideration. For example when we say hadha huwa al-rajul, we mean, 'this is a perfect man' because 'al-rajul' denotes 'the man who has all the perfections of a man'

c) The genus (jins) in its absolute sense. In other words no limitation is attributed to the genus. It denotes an absolute form. Therefore when we say: al-Salam, we can mean Absolute Peace without any limitations, and such peace belongs to Almighty Allah

59 Holy Qur'an, Chapter (10), Verse (25)

60 Holy Qur'an, 59:23

61 Ibid., 27:59

62 Al-Tabrasi, Mishkat al-Anwar, p.349

63 Al-Suyuti, Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur, v.4, p. 373. 'Allama Tabataba'i also narrates this tradition from Suyuti in his monumental al-Mizan.

64 This meaning has been narrated by both the Shi'ah as well as the Sunni scholars in their commentaries of Qur'an and lexicons as well.

65 Holy Qur'an, 4:86

66 Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, v.1, p. 524

67 al-Rayy al-Shahri, al-Khayr wa al-Baraka fi al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah, p. 206

68 Vide chapter 2, verse 255. This is one verse where the comprehensive beauty of the Qur'an can well be appreciated for all those who can appreciate the subtle issues of Arabic lexical discussions. This small verse describes so many things at the same time: (1) It is a nominal clause (al-jumla al-ismiyyah) and thus it expounds permanence (2) the pronoun



huwa denotes 'specificity' and thus the two attributes that follow it are originally reserved for Allah. (3) The form 'ali similar to فعيل 'fa'il' is known as 'al-sifa al-mushbiha' in the Arabic, which denotes intensity and permanence.

69 'Allamah Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, v.75, p. 335

70 al-Shahid al-Awwal, al-Mazar, p. 149

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