

Salaat'

Humility, Modesty and Concentration in Salaat

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Abstract: *in the present article, as its name denotes, we discuss the importance of concentration, humility, and modesty in Salaat. The necessity of the mentioned factors is even clearer when you see Salaat as the best way to reach salvation. The following saying from Imam Sadeq can make this point more clear, “One who prays two units (rak’ats) of prayers knowing fully what he is saying in it, he does not turn away from it (after completion), but there remains no sin between him and Allah, that He does not forgive.”*

1- Also known as Namaz or the ‘daily prayers

2- scholar and Researcher/ Jalil Dorrani- Researcher

After reading the *Takbeeratul Ehraam* and *Doa-e-Tawajjoh* and turning your attention towards Allah, if you so desire, continue the *salaat* by reciting the *Isteaazah* (seek refuge in Allah from the accursed *Shaitan*) that you may seek protection from the whisperings of the devil in Allah and dominate him through His grace. Thereafter, you can proceed with the recitation of Surah Hamd, the second surah, bowing, prostration, *qunoot*, *tasbeehaat*, *tashahod* and *salaam*, in the order prescribed. While performing the aforementioned actions, strive to synchronize your limbs with your heart so that just as the latter has become humble and modest, each part of the body feels lowly, meek and submissive in the presence of the Almighty Creator.

Therefore, it is necessary that you gather all your attention, do not pay attention to what is going around you, and distance yourself from anything that diverts your attention. To achieve success in this, endeavour to find a lonely, simple, and unattractive place. Fix such a time for your *salaat* when your thoughts are soothed and relaxed, and there remains no room for laziness, physically as well as psychologically. It is also necessary that you obey the instructions of the infallible Imams (peace be upon them) concerning the methods of *qiyaam*, bowing, prostration, *tashahod* and *salaam*. For, these instructions are indeed very effective for concentration and humility. Moreover, recite the wordings slowly and try to pay utmost attention to their meanings and concepts unfailingly.

Allah the Almighty says,

❦ ***“Surely the believers are successful; those who are humble in their prayers.”*** (The holy Quran, 23:1,2) ❦

❦ ***“O ye who believe! Do not go near prayers while you are in an intoxicated condition till you know what you are saying.”*** (The holy Quran, 4:43) ❦

Imam Baqer (a.s.) explains,

“Do not stand for prayers lazily, yawning or feeling heavy (i.e. considering it to be a burden). For all these are from the traits of

hypocrisy. Allah has prohibited the believers from standing for prayers while they are intoxicated i.e. (intoxicated) from sleep.”¹

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) elaborates,

“When you are in your prayers, then it is obligatory for you to be humble and welcome your prayers. For Allah the Almighty (while describing the believers) says, ‘those who are humble in their prayers.’”²

The same Imam (a.s.) says,

“Certainly, I love the believer among you who while standing for the obligatory prayers, turns his full attention towards Allah and cleanses his heart from all worldly inclinations. He turns his face with his entire heart towards Allah, Who in turn, turns towards him and makes his heart overflow with His love and affection and Himself loves him tremendously.”³

Again, Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says,

“One who prays two units (rak’ats) of prayers knowing fully what he is saying in it, he does not turn away from it (after completion), but there remains no sin between him and Allah, that He does not forgive.”⁴

Imam Baqer (a.s.) says,

“Indeed, from the prayers of the believers, 1/2 or 1/3rd or 1/4th or 1/5th only is accepted. Thus, only that part of the prayers is admitted which is performed with complete attention. And we have ordered the recommended prayers (naafilah) only to cover the deficiencies of the obligatory (prayers).”⁵

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) exhorts,

1- Tafseer-e-Ayyashi, Vol.1, P.242

2- Al-Kafi, Vol.3, P.300

3- Sawaabul A’maal, 163

4- Sawaabul A’maal, P.67

5- Al-Kafi, Vol.3, P.363

“When you perform your obligatory prayers, pray in its time as if it is your last prayers and is never going to return to you ever again. Then look at the place of your prostration. If you knew who is on your right and left, you would have performed your prayers well. And know that you are in front of the One Who sees you although you cannot see Him.”¹

In his famous treatise of rights, Imam Zainul Abedeen (a.s.) discusses the rights of the prayers thus:

“As for the rights of the prayers, you should know that it is a means of reaching towards Allah. And you are standing before Allah when you are praying. When you are aware of this, then it is desirous that you stand during prayers like the one who is disgraced, desirous (of rewards), fearful, scared, hopeful, pauper, crying, respectful of the One Who is before Him. Maintain a dignified calm, head down, limbs humble, tender heart, praying with the best of invocations within yourself, seeking the freedom of your neck from Him, an imprisonment caused on account of your sins and a destruction caused by your misdeeds. There is no strength except Allah’s.”²

Therefore, it is necessary that one who prays, considering the position and status of *salaat*, should pay full attention towards it with his heart and soul, which is worthy of the praying ones. He should derive benefits of both this world as well as the hereafter, from it and the greatest reward of them all, which is, meeting with Allah, comes his way. It does not befit him to become heedless of Allah, his creator, during his prayers, and instead become engaged in him. Although apparently this may seem difficult, rather impossible – which is why it is accompanied with such great rewards and compensation - but one should never despair of it. Perhaps, with Allah’s grace, and our efforts, belief and piety, the difficulties will become easy and problems will be solved. For, if you take one step towards Allah, He will pull you a hundred paces towards Himself. Then, turn towards Him with your entire heart and soul. Don’t

1- Sawaabul A’maal, P.57

2- Tohful Oqool, P.258

allow laziness and indolence to dominate you and keep Shaitan away from you.

Abstain from ignorance and heedlessness that the path is paved and the goal is near.

Invocations in prayer

Previously, we have quoted on the authority of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) that *salaat* is the occasion of fulfilling the desires and achieving one's aims. The *qunoot* in *salaat* has been ordained to enable the worshipper to place his desires and needs in front of his Lord. Also, for prostration, specific supplications have been recommended. Moreover, after the prayers, great emphasis has been laid to invoke and express our needs in front of the Almighty.

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) exhorts,

“It is obligatory for you to supplicate after salaah, for such supplications are answered.”¹

Therefore, invocation is the expression of the need and paucity of our own selves as well as of others along with the confession of the self-sufficiency, generosity, honour, grace, affection and benevolence of the Almighty. Anyone who desires something from others turns and pays attention towards him. As he finds himself in need and impoverished, he strives to present his wants through pleas and persistence, thereby attempting to attract the attention of the invoked one. Traditions have stated that Allah loves importunity and persistence in invocations.

Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s.) assures,

“By Allah, no believer persists with Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) in his needs but that He fulfils it.”¹

1- Khesaal, P.488

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) informs,

“Surely Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) detests that people should be importune and persistent while asking each other for some need but loves the same for Himself. Certainly Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) likes that He is asked and sought for what is with Him.”²

On the other hand, anyone who refuses to invoke Allah or express his needs before Him, subjects himself to His wrath. For, he has considered himself to be needless, great and haughty. Allah the Almighty warns,

❦“Surely those who are arrogant regarding My worship (invoking Me), will soon enter hell in a degraded state.”(The holy Quran, 23:60) ❦

Imam Baqer (a.s.) interprets the word ‘worship’ in this verse as ‘supplication’ and then proceeds to say,

“And supplication is the most superior form of worship.”³

Hannan Bin Sudair relates from his father, who asked Imam Baqer (a.s.), ‘What is the best form of worship?’ Imam (a.s.) replied,

“There is nothing better near Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) than that He is asked and sought for what is with Him. And the most hateful and detestable person for Allah is he who is arrogant in His worship and does not ask Him for what is with Him.”⁴

Hence, we should not claim that Allah the Almighty knows our needs and wants and thus there is no need for us to ask Him further, if as He deems it proper, He will grant it. For, invocation and supplication is this very attention towards Allah and reaching out to His wealth, generosity, and grant. At the same time, it is an expression of our being in

1- Al- Kafi, Vol.2, P.475

2- Al-kafi, Vol.2, P.475

3- Al-Kafi, Vol.2, P.466

4- Al-Kafi, Vol.2, P.466

His slavery and bondage and confessing to His Lordship and Master ship.
And this will be the best form of

Allah's worship. Therefore, we must implore and beseech Allah. Since apparent pleas without heartily attention is fruitless, we must make efforts to ask Him from the depth of our hearts, even if we don't utter our demands orally.

So, invocation is loved and desirable in all states and at all times but that invocation is more acceptable which is accompanied with its etiquette and conditions of time and place. As said earlier, one of the best times for supplications, is during prayers and after it, because it is that time when a believer rises to converse with his Lord, attains the elevated position of divine recognition and proximity, and his focus and concentration towards his Master is increased. We hope that Allah the Almighty makes our prayers as a channel towards His nearness a means for the acceptance of our supplications and needs.

Reality of Salaat

It is evident that the holy Quran has been revealed in eloquent Arabic. The Holy Prophet (a.s.) and the infallible Imams (a.s.) conveyed their views and opinions to the people in the customary language prevalent in those times. And there is no evidence or document in support of change in the meanings of terms used by these holy personalities. Therefore, it is obligatory that every term that has come in the Quran or used by the Holy Prophet (a.s.) and the infallible Imams (a.s.), must be used in that very literal meaning as was prevalent in their times. This premise is applicable to all the terms and phrases used by them including the words that mean worship. But for the limitations and conditions set by them on the literal applications, especially of the words used to imply worship, we must apply the apparent meanings to achieve our aim.

The word 'salaat' is among the Arabic words which is used in abundance in Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet (a.s.) and the infallible Imams (a.s.). Thus, to know its actual meaning, first and

foremost, we must search for its literal meaning and then strive to look for its conditions and definitions in the words of the infallibles (a.s.).

In *Lesaanul Arab*, vol. 14, p. 464, Ibn Manzoor writes: *As-salaat* means *al-dua*(invocation) and *al-isteghfaar* (seeking forgiveness).... And Zujjaaj has said:

The root in the word *al-salaat* is necessity. It is said, ‘when a thing becomes obligatory (i.e. when it does not become separate or separates a thing). And among the meanings of a *musalli* is the horse that comes second in the race, i.e. it trails behind the first horse. Yet another meaning of *sal’ya* is roasted meat and other roasted items. Also, *salaat* means to warm one’s hands...*salaat* also means to whirl or spin a staff to soften it or to make it straight.

Ibn Atheer, in *al-Nihaayah*, vol. 2, p. 50, writes: *Salaat* means a special form of worship. Its literal root implies invocation....Also it is said that its literal meaning indicates respect.

The meaning that has been accepted by all Arab litterateurs is ‘invocation’.

This translation is also universally accepted among the jurists. But considering the fact that the word invocation is always used in the transitive form, while *salaat* is non-transitive, it becomes clear that these are not synonyms or equivalents of each other. The reality of invocation is not only calling out or supplicating, rather it is only one of its facets. Invocation, in reality, suggests the calling out the invoked one by the one who invokes to attract the attention of the former. And when it is coupled with calling out, it is termed as ‘*doa*’ (supplication). But as the word ‘*salaat*’ is non-transitive, i.e. it is not in need of an object, it connotes sheer attention of one to another, without him expecting that person to pay attention to him. Therefore, the literal meanings of this expression indicate that *salaat* is an attention that is accompanied with softness, respect and following.

The word ‘*salaat*’ has been used in this very meaning in the Holy Quran and tradition. Like in the verse,

❁“Surely Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet.”(The holy Quran, 33:56)❁

where the blessings of Allah upon the Prophet (a.s.) have been supplemented with the blessings of the angels.

Similarly, in another verse,

❁“Their (polytheists) prayers in the Ka’ba was nothing but whistling and clapping of hands.”(The holy Quran, 8:35)❁

In still another verse, the Holy Quran declares,

❁“He is the One who turns towards you and so do His angels that He may bring you out from the darkness to light.”(The Holy Quran, 33:43)❁

Yet another verse commands the Holy Prophet (a.s.),

❁“And turn your attention towards them. Certainly your attention provides them comfort.”(The holy Quran, 9:103)❁

The *salawaat* sent by the Muslims on the Prophet (a.s.) and his progeny (a.s.), which incidentally is the most oft-uttered *dhikr* in Islam, is another evidence to support our view. Therefore, it is clear that the *salaat* of Allah, His angels and the Muslims on the Holy Prophet (a.s.) and his pure progeny(a.s.), and similarly the *salaat* of the polytheists in the Ka’ba and the *salaat* of Allah’s Messenger on the Muslims while taking charity from them, none comprised of prostration, bowing or other essential elements of the daily ritual prayers in them.

Another proof is this famous slogan that was used in the early period of Islam to call the society towards Allah’s religion, which is the Arabic equivalent of ‘your attention please,’ when you want to draw the attention of others to a very important matter.

Yet another proof is that traditions have talked about the *salaat* of Iblis, Hazrat Adam (a.s.), Hazrat Nuh (a.s.), Hazrat Sulaiman (a.s.), Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) and Hazrat Eesa (a.s.). Therefore, it is evident that the literal aspect, root and reality of *salaat*, was present in all the Prophets (a.s.).

Moreover, there were many Arabs who practiced Christianity and Judaism yet used this term for their form of worship. And if the word *salaat* bore any other meaning than attention in their vocabulary, it would have been used in that very sense. In that case, the unanimity of the litterateurs on the meaning of this word would not hold water.

This itself is a proof for the fact that the word *salaat* has been used in Islamic ideology in its literal sense and nobody used it in its new sense in the initial era of Islam. And only after applying the requisite definitions and conditions to it, they have accepted and limited its literal meaning and concept.

More important than all these is the basic and fundamental difference in the types of *salaat* - obligatory (*waajib*), recommended (*mustahab*), types of obligatory and types of recommended. Also, the differences in *salaat* prescribed for different individuals - traveller, sick, drowning and dumb.

Obviously, no other meaning can take in its fold all the above applications, except the literal meaning on which everybody agrees the only difference being in the definitions and conditions attached to them. E.g. the daily prayers are the same as the Friday prayers but each of them possesses certain conditions peculiar only to itself. In the tradition of ascension (*me'raj*) it has been narrated from the Holy Prophet (a.s.):

“Hazrat Moosa (a.s.), in one of his munaajaat (whispering supplications) to Allah prayed, ‘O Allah! Grant me Your recognition.’

Allah retorted, ‘Testify that there is no god but Allah.’ Hazrat Moosa (a.s.) asked, ‘O Allah! How is salaat?’ Allah the Almighty replied, ‘Say, ‘There is no god but Allah’ and till the day of judgment, My servants will utter this statement.’¹

A little attention on this tradition reveals the fact that the literal aspect of the word *salaat* covers all types of remembrance and attention towards the Almighty. The only difference being among them is that

1- Behaarul Anwar, Vol.93, P. 202

while one is perfect, the other is more perfect, one is obligatory and the other, recommended. To imply that the application of the word *salaat* is true only for the obligatory while for others it is just metaphorical is definitely wrong and incorrect. For, the most complete *salaat* is that which includes the recitation of the Holy Quran, its invocations and other conditions that are available in the traditions of the Holy Prophet (a.s.) and his infallible progeny (a.s.). As the Quran itself descended in stages and the traditions of the infallible were narrated sequentially, proves that *salaat* of the Prophets (a.s.) prior to the Holy Prophet (a.s.) and that of the Muslims in early Islam, was only in its metaphorical sense (and not as used today).

Then it will not be incorrect if we say: The literal meaning of *salaat* is applicable everywhere, except that for each occasion some conditions and restrictions have been imposed. In the conversation between Imam Sadeq (a.s.) and Mansoor, the Abbaside Caliph, the same meaning can be derived:

“On a Friday, Mansoor emerged from his palace while leaning on the shoulders of Imam Sadeq (a.s.). On seeing this, a person called ‘Rezaam’ remarked, ‘Who is this man who enjoys such a status that the chief of the believers (Mansoor) is leaning on him?’ He was told that he is Abu Abdillah, Jafar Ibn Muhammad al-Sadeq (a.s.). He cried (with the intention of insulting the Imam), ‘How I wish that the face of Abu Abdillah would become the shoe of Mansoor!’ Thereafter, he came in front of Mansoor and said, ‘O Chief of the believers! Permit me to pose a query. Mansoor answered, ‘Ask him (Imam (a.s.)).’ He insisted, ‘I want to ask you.’ Mansoor was obstinate, ‘Ask him’. On this, Rezaam stood before Imam Sadeq (a.s.) and demanded, ‘Define for me salaat and its conditions and restrictions.

Imam (a.s.) replied,

‘Salaat has four thousand definitions and you do not deserve to be informed of all of them.’ He said, ‘Inform me only of those conditions that cannot be forsaken and without which salaat will not remain a salaat.’ Imam (a.s.) explained, ‘Salaat will not be complete till a person

performs the ablutions (wuzu) completely and prays without any shortcomings.

Unawareness, hypocrisy, and deviation should be totally discarded. He should recognize Allah and stand before Him with total cognition. A feeling of humility and modesty should encompass him. He should find himself between complete hope and absolute despair, patient as well as anxious. That is, he should stand as if Allah's promises will be fulfilled for him and that His threats will be actualized against him. He should put aside his own honor and dignity. His aim and goal should be right in front of his eyes. He must submit his heart to the Almighty and tread on His path. He should not be distanced with his prayers to such an extent that his relationship with his Lord is totally severed. Remember, he is standing before Him who is his aim and brought for Him his own gift, and at the same time, hoping for His Help, Assistance and Grace.

The salaah that is ordered and revealed (in Quran) is this very salaah. And it is this salaah which keeps a person away from evils and indecencies.'

When Imam Sadeq (a.s.) completed his reply, Mansour turned to him (a.s.) and said,

*'O Abu Abdillah! We always quench our thirst from the ocean of your knowledge and come nearer to you. You have extricated us from deviation and have dispelled our darkness with your light. We will always float in the brilliance of your holiness and the oceans of your greatness.'*¹

Therefore, the reality of the term 'salaah', its subject and application, is the very attention towards Allah the Almighty but this meaning has been subjected to some definitions, restrictions, and conditions in the Quranic verses and traditions of the infallible (a.s.). For instance, the condition of timings, facing the Qiblah, saying 'Allah-o-Akbar', recitation of Quran, glorification, praise, saying 'there is no god

1- Behaarul Anwaar, Vol.84, P.250

but Allah', witnessing monotheism and prophet hood, praying for the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), bowing in respect, prostration, etc. Hence, the various actions and utterances in the obligatory and recommended prayers and the numerous types of prayers are not the reality of the term 'salaat'.

Rather, these have been connected to it through the medium of other proofs.

Innate recognition of Allah and its role in Salaat

According to the verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Ahle Bait (a.s.), any person who steps into this world, bears the recognition of Allah. This introduction was in a world prior to this and was firmly ingrained in his heart.

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says,

“Recognition (of Allah) was established and they forgot the occasion. Soon, they will remember it on a day. If this (recognition) was not there, none would have followed who is his Creator and who is his sustainer.”¹

Allah the Almighty orders,

﴿ “Then turn your face towards the religion, being upright. The nature of Allah on which He has created man. There is no change in Allah’s creation. This is the strong religion but most people know not.” (The holy Quran, 30:30) ﴾

Explaining the above verse, Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says,

“He created them on monotheism at the covenant (meethaaq) on His recognition that He is their Lord...”²

1- Elalush Sharaaye', P.118

2- Tauheed, P.330

Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s.), elucidates the term uprightness (*haneefeeyah*) in the verse,

﴿...being upright for Allah, and not among those who associate with Him.﴾ (The holy Quran, 22:31) ﴿

“It is the nature (fitrat) on which Allah has created mankind. There is no change in Allah’s creation.”

Imam (a.s.) reiterates,

“Allah has created them on recognition.”¹

Thus, Allah the Almighty has placed His recognition in the soil (*teenat*) of every creature, mixed it with his essence and ruled out the possibility of change in this form. This is the covenant that Allah has taken from all His creatures before their arrival in this world and is attached with them in this world as well to complete His argument upon them. Allah the Almighty informs,

﴿And (remember) when your Lord removed from the backs of the progeny of Adam (a.s.), their off-springs and made them witness against themselves, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They all said, ‘Yes. We testify.’ (This was) so that you may not say on the day of Judgment, ‘Surely we were unaware of this.’ Or that you say, ‘Our forefathers were polytheists from before and we are only their off-springs. Will you destroy us for what the wrong-doers did?’﴾ (The holy Quran, 7:172,173) ﴿

So, all the humans have been created on the nature of Allah’s recognition (*marefatullah*) and hence the question of doubt and ambiguity concerning the Almighty. Prophets of Allah (peace be upon them) who came to invite the people towards Him, used to say,

﴿Are you in doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth?﴾ (The holy Quran, 14:10) ﴿

Imam Baqer (a.s.) says that the Holy Prophet (a.s.) said,

1- Tauheed, P. 330

“Every child is born on fitrat (God-knowing nature). That is, on the recognition that surely Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He) is his Creator. And this is His saying, ‘And if you ask them who has created the heavens and the earth, they would certainly say, Allah.’”¹

Therefore, all the human beings, at the time of their birth, possess the recognition of Allah, His Unity, (Tauheed) His being their Creator and Sustainer in their nature. But this recognition is simple (*baseet*). That is, it is present in their nature but they are not aware of its existence. Had they continued to live in this very way, and there did not come any reminder in their entire lives, they would be neither believers nor unbelievers or polytheists.

Someone asked Imam Sadeq (a.s.) concerning the verse,

“People were one nation. Then Allah raised the Prophets as givers of glad tidings and as warners.”(The holy Quran, 2:213)

He (a.s.) replied,

❖*“They were not on guidance. They were on Allah’s nature on which He created them. There is no change in Allah’s creation. And they could not be guided till Allah guided them. Have you not heard Ibrahim saying, ‘Had my Lord not guided me, I would definitely have been among the deviated ones.’ (The holy Quran, 6:77) ❖, i.e. I would have been among those who forgot the covenant.”²*

When Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.), among the greatest monotheists and those who have recognized Allah, confesses in this manner, then how is it possible that others can acquire the cognition of Allah through their intellects and understanding?! How can they recognize a thing that is beyond their intellects and remote from their understanding?

Allah the Almighty says to the holy Prophet (a.s.),

1- Tauheed, P.331

2- Tafseer-e-Ayyashi, Vol.1, P.104

“Their guidance is not on you but Allah guides whosoever He pleases.” (The holy Quran, 2:272)

“Allah does not place responsibility on a soul but within its capacity.” (The holy Quran, 2:286)

“Allah does not place responsibility on a soul but what has been given to it.” (The holy Quran, 65:7)

Abdul A’laa says I asked Imam Sadeq (a.s.):

‘Has Allah provided man any faculty by which he can acquire the recognition of Allah?’

He (a.s.) replied in the negative. He questioned again,

‘Has he imposed on them a responsibility to acquire His recognition?’

Once again Imam (a.s.) answered,

‘No. Explanation is only from Allah’s side.’ Thereafter, he (a.s.) recited the last two verses quoted above.’

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) says,

“Allah has not imposed any responsibility on His creatures that they recognize Him. It is upon Allah alone to introduce Himself to His creatures. And it is the duty of the creatures that when Allah introduces Himself, they should accept His recognition.”¹

In yet another tradition, he (a.s.) said,

“Allah has not placed any responsibility on His creatures vis-à-vis recognition. Nor has he provided them any path for it.”²

Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that Allah, on account of His grace and nobility, has instilled His recognition in the creatures, but for

1- Al-Kafi, Vol.1, P.164

2- Behaarul Anwaar, Vol.5, P.222

His munificence, none would be able to realize and find Him in the concealed depths of their essence.

Here, another question crops up and that is: What is the use of prior world's introduction in this life?

The answer is that firstly, it is not necessary that this innate recognition be only for this world. Rather, it is quite possible that it might be simply for the sake of completing the argument.

Secondly, if prior recognition was not available- as the traditions have stated explicitly- none would be able to recognize their Lord, their Creator and their Sustainer.

Therefore, Allah has not only introduced Himself in the previous world by instilling this cognition in the essence of the people, in fact, even in this world, which is a place of examination and tribulations, it is He Who has lifted the veils of negligence and forgetfulness from the hidden recognition in their nature and guided them towards it.

Evidently, the tradition of Allah is that this guidance can be achieved only through the media of causes like sending of the Prophets (a.s.), His signs, placing man in difficulties and problems, etc.

Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) considers guiding the people to the innate recognition and reminding them of their covenant to their Lord, as the important aims of sending the Prophets (peace on them):

“Then He raised among them His messengers, and sent successively to them His Prophets, to make them fulfill the covenant of their nature, and remind them of His forgotten bounties...”¹

And Allah the Almighty addresses His messenger (a.s.) thus:

❦ *“Then remind; for you are only a reminder. You are not dominant over them.”* (The holy Quran, 88:21,22) ❦

Divine emissaries were sent so that they could draw the attention of mankind to the concealed recognition in their nature. They performed this task in various ways and adopting numerous methods. Similarly, their successors (*awsiyaa*) too followed in the footsteps of the Prophets (a.s.) and invited the people towards their Lord.

A man came to Imam Sadeq (a.s.) and requested, “O son of Allah’s messenger!

Guide me to Allah as to who is He. For indeed the disputants have argued with me a lot in this regard and have even confused me.”

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) replied,

“O slave of Allah! Have you ever boarded an ark?”

He replied in the affirmative. Imam (a.s.) questioned him further,

“Has it ever happened that the ark was wrecked and there was no other ship which could rescue you? Nor did you know swimming by which you could reach to the shore?”

When he replied in the affirmative again, Imam (a.s.) questioned,

“At this juncture (when all your hopes have been severed), did you not rely on SOMEONE who could save you from this difficulty?”

He exclaimed, “Of course.”

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) confirmed,

“The One who was your hope in that moment of calamity and from whom you expected salvation when there was no other Saviour, a refuge when there was no other refuge...is Allah”¹

Therefore, it is clear that philosophical discussions and theological arguments did not bring this man nearer to Allah. But, Imam Sadeq (a.s.), in his simple and lucid style, reminded him of his Lord,

1- Tauheed, P.230

introduced in his (fitrat) nature. Of course, this is one of the methods to guide a man towards the recognition of his Lord. This method which is called as that of difficulties and calamities (*basaa wa zarraa*) has been used extensively in Quran.

Allah the Almighty reminds,

﴿ “Your Lord is He Who speeds the ships for you in the sea that you may seek of His grace; surely He is ever Merciful to you. And when distress afflicts you in the sea, away go those whom you call except He; but when He brings you safe to the land, you turn aside; and man is ever ungrateful.” (The holy Quran, 17:66,67) ﴾

Another method which has been extensively relied upon by the Quran and the traditions of the infallible Imams (a.s.), is to remind man of the bounties of Allah. Ranging from man himself, to the smallest dust particle, not only the existence of every creature, but even their survival is bonded with Allah’s Power and Grace.

Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s.) reveals,

“Allah, the High, revealed to Moses (a.s.), ‘Love Me and make My creatures love Me.’ Hazrat Moses (a.s.) said, ‘O Lord! You know that nobody is dearer to me than You. But how can I change the hearts of the servants?’ On this, Allah revealed to him, ‘Remind them of My bounties and endowments. Then certainly they will not remember anything but good about Me.’”¹

The late Ayatullah Mirza Mahdi Isfahaani (may Allah’s mercy be on him) opines in this regard,

“The aim of rationalization through the signs is to prevent the denial of Allah’s existence (hadd-e-nafy-o-ta’teel). For, the existence of a creature is impossible without a Creator...Moreover, the conclusion of this reasoning in divine science, is perplexity and confusion in the

1- Behaarul Anwar, Vol.70, P.22

recognition of His Being, the Most High, -and it is obligatory that it should be thus- and therefore, He is called as ‘Allah’.”¹

Thus, it is clear that the natural recognition of Allah implies that He on account of His grace and nobility has bestowed His recognition to the entire mankind and ingrained it in their essence and created them on it. But as this recognition is simple (baseet), they are unaware of its existence in their essence and whenever Allah the Almighty so desires, He will remind them about it and draw their attention. Of course, their reminder and attention has different levels and grades. Some reminders are very severe and intense while others are weak and yet others are moderate. We have already stated that it is a divine tradition that He usually makes His slave attentive towards Himself and reminds them about this recognition on different occasions, of which we have mentioned a few. One of these instances is salaah.

In salaah, Allah the Almighty remembers His servants and this remembrance is much more than what the servants remember of their Lord. In salaah, the slaves, feeling their need, paucity, degradation and dependence, raise their hands to beg their Lord, the Self-Sufficient, the Needless. Allah the Almighty fulfils their needs and helps them achieve their desires. It is known that the most important and greatest desire of a cognizant servant is to attain proximity with His Lord, meeting Allah and rising to the highest levels of recognition. Allah the Almighty on His part, according to His promise, helps him reach to the unprecedented degrees. As a result, when he finds himself in the presence of the Almighty, he realizes His greatness and might to such an extent that he is completely oblivious of everything else around him. Previously, we have narrated the statement of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) that he said,

“And the meaning of ‘surely the prayers have been established’ in Eqaamah is that: ‘The time of visitation, conversation, fulfillment of needs, comprehending the desires and reaching to Allah (Mighty and Glorified be He), His nobility, pardon, satisfaction and forgiveness has arrived.’”

1- Abwaabul Huda, P.17

Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s.) says that Allah the Almighty has said,

“The best thing by which My servants can gain proximity to Me are the obligatory acts who performance has been imposed upon them. And certainly, My servant comes so close to Me by performing the recommended acts that I love him. And when I love him, I become his ear by which he listens, his eyes by which he sees, his tongue by which he speaks and his hand by which he takes. When he calls Me, I answer him and if he asks Me for something, I grant him.”¹

The Late Ayatullah Mirza Mahdi Isfahaani (may Allah’s mercy be on him) says:

“True divine recognition cannot be gained except through Him and the reins of this recognition are in His hands. It is upon Him to introduce Himself to His servants. Thus, seeing Him, meeting Him and recognizing Him is entirely dependent on Him. Hence, He has made some houses on the earth for His vision and recognition and named them as ‘mosques’. The timings of salaah are the timings of meeting and recognizing Him. To announce the timings of this ascension, He has ordained the azaan. To attend to His presence, He has imposed some conditions like cleanliness of the body and clothes and the mode of dressing. The basis of this recognition is to stand before Him with respect and attention and this is done through announcing His greatness (Allahu Akbar), praising Him (Alhamdulillah), purifying Him (Subbuhun Quddus), invoking, modesty, humility, a sense of degradation and lowliness, etc. As there is no limit for the recognition of Allah and even the levels of this recognition are infinite, hence salaah has been made obligatory for everybody till their last breath. Anyone who tastes the sweetness of prayers and achieves its aim, will realize that his advent in this world and his imprisonment in this abode, is only for recognition. For, a person’s recognition is incomplete till he enters the house of deprivation and realization and his changing from one condition to another so that he attains the levels of recognition which

1- Al-kafi, Vol.2, P.352

cannot be achieved but in such a house. Therefore, he will know the reason for his arrival in this house of examination and test. Because if man does not witness the conditions of degradation, poverty and helplessness, he will never know might, needlessness and perfection. Consequently, he will never know who is the source of this might and needlessness. And one, who is not aware of the pains of veil and ignorance, will never recognize the value of recognition, knowledge and vision.”¹

1- Abwabul Huda, P.125, 127