

CHAPTER V

SENSE OF DEVOTION

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed that God has affirmed as follow :

“My creatures ! Each one of you is misguided, save the one whom I guide. So seek guidance only from Me so that I may instruct you. My people ! Each one of you is famished, save the one whom I feed. So apply to Me only for subsistence, so that I may grant you livelihood. My slaves ! Each one of you is naked, save the one whom I dress with an apparel, so besceh clothing from Me so that I may dress you with garments. My bondmen ! You commit sins day and night and I can forgive all sins. So seek forgiveness from Me so that I may forgive you your sins.

(Sahih Muslim)

Etiquettes of Repentance

1. Never lose hope of acceptance by God of your repentance and petition for forgiveness. Whatever the magnitude of your sins, purify your soul by offering repentance and be hopeful of God's mercy. Despair is the characteristic of unbelievers. It is the distinctive trait of the believers that they repent the most and under no circumstances do they lose hope of God's clemency. It is disastrous to succumb to dismay and lose hope of Allah's Mercy and clemency considering the magnitude of sins. The most outstanding quality of the favourites of Allah is that they do not stick to the wrong and guilt but admit their fault clearly and unconditionally. They are never supposed to be above faults and omissions, but when they commit any fault and realise the wrong done, they do all within their means to beg forgiveness from Allah and to purify themselves of that fault and misdeed.

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ

فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ وَ لَمْ

يَصِرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَ هُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ . «آل عمران ١٣٥»

Walladhina idhā fa'alū fāhishatan au zalamū anfusahum dhakarullāha fastaghfarū lidhunū bihim wa man yaghfirudhdhunūba illallāhu wa lam yusirru 'alā mā fa'alū wahum y'alamūn. (3 : 135)

“And those who when they do an evil thing or wrong themselves remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins—who forgiveth sins save Allah only?—and will not knowingly repeat (the wrong) they did.”

And God affirms in another verse :

ان الذين اتقوا اذا مسهم طائف من الشيطان تذكروا

فاذا هم مبصرون . الاعراف ٢٠١

Innalladhina-t-taqau idhā massahum tāifum minashsh-aitāni tazakkarū fa-idha-hum mubsirūn. (7 : 201)

“Lo ! those who ward off (evil) when a glamour from the evil troubleth them they do but remember (Allah’s guidance) and behold them seers”.

And the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“All human beings without exception are sinful, but the best sinners are those who repent the most”.
(Tirmidhi)

In the Holy Qur’an, God has mentioned it as a distinct virtue of the believers that they offer penances before God at dawn and repent and seek His Forgiveness and God has urged the believers that they should rest assured that God shall cover their sins with His Forgiveness and Clemency, for He is All-Forgiving and the Most Affectionate towards His creatures.

واستغفروا ربكم ثم توبوا اليه ان ربي رحيم ودود

*Wastaghfirā rabbakum thumma tūbū ilaihi inna rabbi
rahimun wadud.* (11 : 90).

“Ask pardon of your Lord and then turn unto Him (repentant). Lo ! my Lord is Merciful, Loving.

2. Always be hopeful of God's Blessings and rest assured that however great your sins may be, God's Munificence is wider and all-encompassing. When a person who has committed a greater volume of sins than the surf of the sea feels ashamed and offers sincere penance before God, He listens to his entreaties and grants him refuge under His Mercy.

يَعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ اسْرِفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ

اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

وَآتِيْبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَاسْلُمُوا لَهُ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ

الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ . «الزمر ٥٣ - ٥٤»

*Ya ibadi-yalladhīna asrafū ‘ala anfusihim la taqnatū
min rahmatillah. Innallaḥa yaghfirudhdhunūba jamīya.
Innahu huwal ghafūrrahim. Wa anibū ila rabbikum wa
aslimū lahu min qabli an ya'tiyakum-ul 'adhabu thumma
lātunsariin.* (39 : 53, 54).

O My slaves who have been prodigal to their own heart! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah who forgiveth all sins. Lo ! He is the Forgiving the Merciful. Turn unto Him repentant ; and surrender unto Him before there come unto you the doom, when ye cannot be helped”.

3. Whenever you feel shame and remorse and at

whatever stage of your life, consider this feeling and realisation a special favour of God and be sure that the doors are always open for repentance. God accepts repentance of His slaves as long as they are alive. However, when they are at the threshold of death and are about to pass over to the next world, the time for offering repentance expires. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“God accepts the repentance of His slave, but only before the slave has breathed his last”. (Tirmidhi)

The brothers of Hadrat Yusuf (peace be upon him) pushed him into a dark well and felt sure that he was dead. In other words, they stood guilty of the murder of a Prophet. They soaked Yusuf's shirt in blood and presented it as a positive evidence of Yusuf's death to their father Hadrat Ya'qub (peace be upon him). They assured him that a wolf had devoured Hadrat Yusuf (peace be upon him)—Many years after the commission of this grave offence when the sense of guilt prevailed upon them, they went to their father remorsefully and requested him : “Dear father, pray to God on our behalf and intercede with Him to grant us forgiveness”. The Messenger of God Hadrat Ya'qub (peace be upon him) did not disappoint his sons by confronting them with the question : “Your offence is grave. Many years have elapsed since you committed this heinous crime, why ask for forgiveness now”? Instead he undertook to offer a prayer to God that He should grant them salvation and assured them that God would certainly forgive them, for God is the Most-Forbearing and Most Compassionate.

قَالُوا يَا أَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا خَاطِئِينَ - (يوسف ٩٧)

Qālū yā abānastaghfir lanā dhunūbanā innā kunnā
khāti'in. (12 : 97).

“They said. O our father ! Ask forgiveness of our sins for us, for Lo ! we are sinful.”

قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ .

«يوسف ٩٨»

Qāla saufa astaghfiru lakum rabbi innahu hu-walghafūr-urrahīm.

(12 : 98)

“He said : I shall ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. Lo ! He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told a strange tale to his Companions (God be pleased with them) with a view to save them from falling a prey to dismay. The tale contains the moral that whenever at any stage of his life a believer feels ashamed of his misdeeds and he sincerely entreats God to forgive him. God shall bestow upon him salvation and He shall never refuse him His favour.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : “There was a man in ancient days who had committed ninety-nine murders. He enquired from people : “Who is the greatest scholar of the time ?” The people gave him the name of a God-fearing monk. The man approached the monk and said. “Respected Sir, I am guilty of ninety-nine murders. Can my repentance and petition for forgiveness be accepted ?” The monk replied : “No, you stand no chances for forgiveness.” In utter dismay the man killed the monk too. Now he had completed a century of murders. He again went round asking the people as to who was the greatest religious scholar on the earth. The people gave him the name of another monk. The man approached the monk

to offer repentance. He related his problem in detail and enquired from him: Sir, I have committed a hundred murders. Tell me, can my repentance be accepted? Is there any scope for my salvation?" The monk replied: "Why not? Nothing stands in the way of acceptance of your repentance. Go to such and such country. You will find a few venerable slaves of God engaged in prayers and devotions to Him. Join them and devote yourself to the worship of God and never return to your homeland, as this place is no more virtually suitable for you (In other words, it is impossible for you to remain firm upon your vow of repentance and to strive to reform yourself while living in this place.)" The man set out according to the directions of the monk. He had hardly covered half the distance when death overtook him. Now the angels of grace and the angels of torment fell into a dispute. The angels of grace argued, "This man repented of his sins and went a long way to offer submission to God." The angels of torment countered: "No, he has not yet performed a single act of virtue——thus the argumentation between the angels went on. In the meantime an angel appeared in the shape of a human being. The angels requested him to settle their dispute. He gave his verdict: "Measure the distance on both sides and determine which side is nearer; the place from where he set out or the place where was he going". When the angels measured the distance on both the sides, it came out that the destination was nearer as compared to the distance he had so far covered. Thus Allah had in fact forgiven him. *(Bukhari, Muslim)*

Confess your sins only before God; beseech Him only for forgiveness; express your sense of humility, helplessness and guilt only before Him. Humility and prostration is a tribute which man should pay only to God. The unfortunate one, who pays this tribute of humility and

prostration to other human beings who are as helpless and humble before God as he himself, becomes insolvent and is left with nothing to pay as tribute to God. Such a man is condemned to disgrace and ignominy. He goes to everybody in search of honour and respect but he gets none.

God affirms :

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُورُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا

لَعَجَلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ بَلْ لَهُمْ مَوْعِدٌ لَنْ يَجِدُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ

مَثَلًا . «الكهف ٥٨»

Wa rabbukal ghafūru dhurrahmah lau yuākhidhu-hum bimā kasabu la'ajjala lahumul adhāba bal-lahum mau'idun lan yajidu min dunihi mau'ilā. (18 : 58)

“Thy Lord is the Forgiver, Full of Mercy. If He took them to task now for what they earn, He would hasten on the doom for them ; but there is an appointed term from which they will find no escape.”

The Qurān' affirms :

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ

وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ . «الشورى ٢٥»

Wa-huwalladhi yaqbaluttabata 'an ibadihi waya'fū anissayyi-āti wa ya'alamu ma taf'alūn. (42 : 25)

“And He it is Who accepts the repentance from His bondmen, and pardoneth the evil deeds and knoweth what ye do.”

In fact, one must himself be convinced that there is only one way to salvation and whoever is denied that approach, is condemned to ignominy and destitution for ever. The befitting attitude of mind in a believer is that whatever the degree of his offence he should only offer penitence to God and shed tears of shame only before Him. There is none except Allah Who only has the authority to grant pardon. So much so that even if someone tries to propitiate the Prophet excluding Allah, he will be deprived of favour before Allah, and will be discarded outright. The Prophet of Allah is also a slave of God soliciting His favour and mercy. The Prophet has been appointed to the exalted office by virtue of his surpassing humility among the creatures of God and he makes greater penances to God in comparison with others.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“O people ! Seek forgiveness of God for your sins and return to Him. Look at me. I offer prayers to God for salvation hundreds of times in a day.” (Muslim)

Concerning the hypocrites. God affirms :

يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنْ تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ

لَا يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ . «توبه ٩٦»

Yahlifūna lakum litardau ‘anhum fa-in tardau ‘anhum fainnallaha lā yarḍā ‘anil qaumil fāsiqin. (9 : 96)

“They swear unto you, that ye may accept them, Though ye accept them. Allah verily accepteth not wrongdoing folk.”

The terrible episode of Hadrat Ka'ab b. Malik (God be pleased with him) as related in the Holy Qur'an gives us a lesson that man should suffer hardships and endure all trials, but he should never think of abandoning submission to God. The trials that come in the way of Islam and the maximum pain and suffering he has to bear in the way of Allah are means to purify and illumine the life of man and to elevate his rank. This humiliation is the sure means of securing eternal prestige and he who abandons submission to Allah and seeks dignity elsewhere shall find it nowhere. Such a man will meet with disgrace everywhere and no eye on earth or in the sky shall regard him with respect.

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ

بِمَا رَحِبَتْ وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَن لَّا مَلْجَأَ

مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ

الرَّحِيمُ . «التوبة - ١١٨»

Wa 'alaththalāthatil-ladhīna khullifū hatta idhā dāqat 'alaihimul ardu bimā rahubat wa dāqat 'alaihim anfusuhum wa zannu an la malja' minallahi illa ilaih. Thumma tāba'alaihim liyatūbu Innallaha huwattawwab-urrahīm.

(9 : 118)

“And to the three also (did he turn in mercy) who were left behind, when the earth, vast as it is was straitened for them and their own souls were straitened for them till they bethought them that there is no refuge from Allah save towards Him. Then turned He unto them in mercy that they (too) might turn (repentant unto Him). Lo ! Allah ! He is the Relenting, the Merciful”.

The three referred to above are Hadrat Ka'ab b. Malik, Hadrat Murarah ibn Rabi' and Hadrat Hilal b. Umayya (God be pleased with them). The example of their penitence serves as a beacon light for the believers as long as the world exists. Hadrat Ka'ab b. Malik (God be pleased with him) who had lost his eyesight in old age and used to walk with the help of his son, had himself related the instructive episode of his exemplary penitence to his son which has been preserved in the Books of Tradition.

When the preparations were being made for the battle of Tabuk and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to call upon the people to join the war I regularly attended all his meetings. Whenever I heard him speak, I made a resolve that I would join the war. However, on returning home I relapsed into laziness. I thought there was plenty of time yet and I had all the provisions of the journey. Moreover, I was in good health and could afford the best mount. There was nothing that could delay me in joining the battle. In this mood, I continued to postpone my departure until all holy warriors had reached the field of battle and I lingered on in Medinah entrapped in indecision and lethargy.

Soon the reports began to pour in that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was returning and one day I heard that he had arrived in Medinah and was staying as usual in the mosque. So I went to the mosque. On arrival I found that the hypocrites were trying to convince the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) of the genuineness of their excuses on oaths. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) heard their insincere speeches and indicated his acceptance of their lame excuses by observing 'May God forgive you'.

When my turn came, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired: 'Say, what

prevented you from coming?' I saw that his smile had a trace of annoyance, so I spoke the truth. "O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! As it happened I had no excuse. I was healthy and prosperous and possessed the mount. It was my lethargy and negligence which deprived me of this privilege".

On hearing me speak the truth, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Well, then, go and wait the verdict from Allah". I got up and went among the people of my tribe. The people of my tribe railed at me and said: "Why did you not offer some plausible excuse. You have always been in the forefront in the service of Islam". However, when I found that two other friends of mine had also told the truth, I felt at ease and determined to hold firmly to the truth.

Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) issued a general proclamation that no one should speak to us. As soon as this proclamation was issued forth, the attitudes in Medinah suddenly changed for me. I became a helpless stranger among my own kith and kin. No one in the society exchanged greetings or entered into a conversation with me. One day, I felt extremely depressed and went to a childhood friend and cousin Abu Qatada (God be pleased with him). I offered him salam, but he did not reciprocate. I, then, said: "Abu Qatada! I ask you in the name of God, tell me, am I wanting in love for God and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)" Qatada (God be pleased with him) remained silent. I repeated my question, but he made no answer. When I asked him in the name of God for the third time, he said: "God and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) know better". My heart overflowed with a surge of emotion and I burst into tears and returned-home with the burden of my grief enhanced. It was

during those days that a Syrian trader in the bazar delivered to me a letter from the monarch of Ghassan'. The Christian monarch had written : "It has come to our knowledge that your chief is subjecting you to extreme repression. You are not a lowly person. We know the worth of a man like you. Come to us. We shall treat you as befits your status and rank". As soon as I read the letter, my tongue uttered : "Here, is another calamity that has befallen me". And I threw the letter into the hearth.

Forty days had passed in this state when a courier of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) delivered his command that I should separate from my wife also. I enquired : "Shall I divorce her"? The answer came : "No, just live separately from her". I despatched my wife to the home of her parents and told her : "Now, wait for the verdict from God".

On the fiftieth day after dawn prayers, I was sitting on the roof of my house highly dejected, stricken with extreme grief and considering life as no longer bearable, when suddenly someone shouted to me: 'Ka'ab ! Congratulations'. On hearing this, I understood that the hour of my deliverance had come and fell in prostration to my God. Later people rushed towards me. They came in crowds and congratulated me. I rose and went straight to the presence of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). I saw his august face glowing with happiness. When I moved forward and greeted him, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : 'K'a'ab ! Congratulations ! This is the happiest day of your life'. I submitted : "Prophet of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you), is this clemency a favour from you or from God ?" The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : "This is a favour from God" and then recited the verses of Surah Taubah (9).

5. Do not delay in offering repentance. Nobody knows when his life will end, and the next moment will bring death to him or his life shall continue. Always remember your fast approaching end and continue to cleanse the impurity of sins from your heart and soul and mind and speech.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“God extends His mercy during the night so that the person who committed a sin during the day should return to Him in the night. God extends His mercy during the day so that the person who has committed a sin during the night may return to his Lord in the day time and seek His forgiveness until the sun rises from the east”. (Muslim)

The expression ‘God extends His mercy, means that God beckons His sinful slaves towards Himself and desires to cover their sins with His blessings. If the person has committed a sin under the pressure of a temporary impulse, he should immediately turn towards his Kind and All-Forgiving God and should lose no time, for sin begets sin. The Satan constantly lies in ambush for the human being and never misses an opportunity to lead man astray.

6. Offer repentance with such true and deep sincerity of heart that the entire course of your life is altered and after repentance you may appear an entirely different man.

God decrees :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ

أَن يُكَفِّرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيُدْخِلَكُم جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِن

تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ

«التَّحْرِيمِ ۸»

*Yā ayyuhalladhīna āmanū tūbū ilallahi taubatan
nasūhā asā rabbukum an yukaffira ‘ankum sayyiātikum
wayudkhillakum jannātin tajrī min tahtihā anhāru
yauma lā yukhzillāhun nabiyya walladhīn āmanū ma’
ahū.* (66 : 8)

“O ye who believe! Turn unto Allah in sincere repentance! It may be that your Lord will remit from you your evil deeds and bring you into Gardens underneath which rivers flow on the day when Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him.

In other words, offer such sincere and true repentance that not a trace of any temptation to return to the sin remains in your heart or mind. Such a repentance has three or four ingredients. If the sin relates to a transgression of God’s right, repentance should have three elements :

- (1) Man should be sincerely ashamed of his sins.
- (2) Man should firmly resolve to avoid sin in future.
- (3) And man should put his heart and soul in the task of reforming and embellishing his life.

If a man has committed a sin which involves the violation of a human right, repentance should consist of a fourth element also :

- (4) Man should restore the right of another human being or seek forgiveness of the person whose right he has violated.

This is the repentance which really cleanses the man of all his sins. His soul is cleared of sins and adorned with pious deeds, is presented before Allah and is awarded a dwelling place in His Paradise.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“When man commits a sin, his heart is stained with a dark spot. Now if he—

- * renounces the sin ;
- * is ashamed of his sin and seeks salvation ;
- * and turns to God with a firm determination to avoid sin in future ;

God illumines his heart. But if he again commits sin, the dark spot is enlarged until it covers the whole of his heart. This is the rust about which God affirms in His Book :

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ. (مُطَفِّفِينَ - ٢١)

Kalla bal rāna ‘alā qulūbihim mā kānū yaksibūn.

“Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts.” (83 : 14)

7. Take a firm resolve to remain true to your repentance and be vigilant day and night that the commitments you have made before God are duly fulfilled. Test the firmness of your resolve by constant efforts to purify and reform yourself. If, despite all your efforts to guard against evil, you slip and commit an offence, do not lose hope even then. On the contrary seek refuge in the Mercy of God and offer fervent prayers to him : ‘O Creator ! I am weak and infirm. Do not banish me in disgrace from Your threshold. For, I can seek asylum nowhere except in Your Mercy’.

Repentance of a wrong-doer invites the pleasure of God. Taubah (Repentance) literally means ‘return, to turn to’. When thoughts and emotions go astray and one gets entrapped in the quicksand of sin, his connexion with

God is severed and he is so far removed from God as if he is lost to God. And when such a man returns and turns to God in utter shame for his sins, it is as if a lost slave has come back to his master. This situation has been graphically described by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the following eloquent allegory :

“If one of you loses his camel in a waterless desert with all his provisions of food and water laden on the lost camel——and having vainly searched for the camel in all directions of the desert he despairs of his life and lies down under a tree awaiting death and in this state he suddenly beholds his camel laden with all the provisions standing by his side, imagine then his happiness !——the happiness of your Lord and Creator far surpasses the happiness of this man when His lost slave returns and having gone astray resumes allegiance to Him”. (Tirmidhi)

On another occasion, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) elucidated the same fact by means of another impressive allegory :

Some prisoners of war were brought before the Holy Prophet. The group included a woman who had lost her infant. The maternal instinct so overpowered the woman that she found no peace or rest unless she picked up and breastfed any baby she found near her. On seeing the woman in such state the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) enquired from the Companions (God be pleased with them) : Can you imagine that ~~this woman~~ will fling her baby into fire with her own hands? The Companions submitted : “O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! Leaving apart the matter of throwing the child herself, she would stake her life to save the child if it were falling by itself”. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon observed :

“God is by far even more Compassionate and Kind to His slaves than this woman is considerate towards her child”.

8. Offer repentance to and seek forgiveness of the Lord continuously. There are countless offences which a man commits from morning till evening ; sometimes man is not even conscious of these transgressions. Do not imagine that repentance is called for only when a capital sin has been committed ; man needs to repent and pray for his salvation at all times, because he is liable to make a slip at every step. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself used to repent and pray for his salvation seventy or even hundred times in a day. *(Bukhāri, Muslim)*
9. Do not look down upon a sinner who repents and reforms his life. Hadrat ‘Imran b. al-Haseen (God be pleased with him) has reported an incident of the time of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : “A woman of the tribe of Juhainah presented herself before the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She had become pregnant as a result of an unlawful relation. She submitted : “O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! I deserve punishment for adultery. Enforce the Shariah in my case and punish me”. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) sent for the guardian of this woman and observed to him : “Treat this woman well and when she has delivered the child, bring her to me”. When the woman returned after the delivery of her child, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded that her garments should be tied fast around her body (so that the garments may not slip off during stoning and her physical veil may not be torn off) and when this had been done, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ordered that she should be

stoned to death. The order was carried out. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) later offered funeral prayers for her. Hadrat 'Umar (God be pleased with him) submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): "O Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! This woman committed the offence of adultery and you are saying funeral prayers for her". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) thereupon observed: "She repented and offered repentance of such magnitude that if it were portioned among seventy men of Medinah, it would secure their salvation. Did you see any one better than the one who presented the gift of life to God" ?

10. Say the 'finest prayer' to God. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to Hadrat Shaddad ibn Aus (God be pleased with him) 'This is the

سيد الاستغفار *Sayyed-ul-Istaghfar* ('the finest prayer').

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ
وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ عَهْدِكَ وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ
شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ . أَبوءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ وَ أَبوءُ بِذَنْبِي
فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ .

«بخاری ، ترمذی»

Allāhumma anta rabbi lā ilāha illā anta khalaqtani wa anā 'abduka wa anā alā 'ahdika wa wa'adika mastata'tu aūdhu bika min sharri mā sana'tu abū'u laka bini 'matika 'alayya wa abū'u bidhanbi faghfirlī fainnahū la yaghfirudh-dhunūba illā anta. (Bukhāri, Tirmidhi).

“God ! Thou art my Creator ! There is no deity except Thee. Thou created me and I am Thy slave. I shall remain faithful to the pledge of devotion which I have given to Thee to the best of my capability. I seek asylum with Thee against the fearful consequences of my sins. I acknowledge all the blessings Thou hast conferred on me and I confess that I am a sinner——Hence, O My Creator. Forgive my sins. Who else except Thee will forgive my sins ?”

Etiquettes of Prayer

1. Pray to God only. Do not call upon any one else except God to fulfil your needs. Prayer is the essence of worship and worship should be rendered to God alone.

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ

لَهُمْ شَيْءٌ إِلَّا كِبَاسُطٌ كَفَيْهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا

هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ . وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ .

«الرعد ١٤»

*Lahu da'awatul haqqi walladhina yad'una min dunihi
la yastajibuna lahum bishai-in illa kabā'aiti kaffaihi
ilalmāi liyablughā fa'hu wamāhuwa bibālighihī wa mā
du' āul kāfirina illa fī dalāl.* (13 : 14)

“Unto Him is the real prayer. Those unto whom they pray beside Allah respond to them not at all, save as (is the response to) one who stretches forth his hand, towards water (asking) that it may come to his mouth and it will never reach it. The prayer of disbeliever goeth (far) astray”.

In other words all powers to fulfil prayers and to dispose of things lie in the hands of God. All powers vest

in Him and no power lies with any one else. All are dependent upon Him. There is none except Him Who hears the petitions of human beings and fulfils their prayers.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ .
«الفاطر ١٥»

*Yā ayyuhannās antumulfuqarāu ilallāhi wallāhu huwal
ghaniyyul hamīd.* (35 : 15)

“O mankind ! Ye are the poor in your relation to Allah. And Allah ! He is the Absolute, the Owner of Praise”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“God affirms, ‘My creatures ! I have declared tyranny unlawful for Me. So you should also consider acts of oppression and excess on each other as forbidden. My slaves ! Each of you is misguided, except the one whom I guide on the right path. So seek guidance from Me alone, so that I may guide you aright. My people ! Each of you is hungry, except the one whom I feed. Hence call upon Me for sustenance, so that I may provide for your livelihood. My servants ! Each of you is naked, except the one whom I have blessed with garments. So entreat Me to confer dress on you and I shall provide you clothing. My worshippers ! You commit sins in the night as well as in the day and I shall forgive all sins’ ! (Sahih Muslim)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also observed : “Man should call upon God alone to provide for all his needs, so much so that even if a shoe-lace is broken, man should pray to God to provide a shoe-lace, and if he needs salt, he should beseech God to send it to him”.

(Tirmidhi)

The implication is that man ought to turn to God for the fulfilment of his most insignificant and ordinary needs. None except God can hear the prayers and none except Him can fulfil wants.

2. Ask God for only that which is lawful and good. To beseech God's help for the execution of unlawful purposes and sinful acts is the height of impertinence, immodesty and irreverence. To pray to God for the fulfilment of unlawful and forbidden desires and to make vows for such desires is to perpetrate the basest joke on religion. Similarly, do not offer prayers to God to change those realities which He has determined once for all and which are now unalterable. For example, a short man should not pray to God to make him tall, nor should a tall man pray to God to make him short: nor indeed should a man pray to God for eternal youth so that he may never experience old age etc. etc.

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

وَاقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الدِّينَ . «اعراف ٢٩»

Wa aqimu wujuhakum 'inda kulli masjidin wad'ūhu mukhlisīna lahuddīn. (7 : 29)

“And set your faces upright (towards Him) at every place of worship, and call upon Him, making religion pure for Him (only)”.

He, who would present his needs before God, should not take to the path of infidelity and pray for the fulfilment of unlawful desires, but should display good character and virtuous passions and beseech God for the fulfilment of lawful wants.

3. Say prayer with profound sincerity and a righteous disposition and with the conviction that God Whom

you beseech is perfectly aware of your condition and is Most Considerate towards you ; it is He alone Who hears the petitions of His servants and fulfils their prayers. Always offer a pure prayer unmixed with all taint of exhibition, display, deception or polytheism.

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ . «المؤمن - ١٢»

Fad'ullāha mukhlisīna lahuddīn. (40 : 14)

“Call ye, then Allah devoting your obedience wholly to Him”.

And Surah Baqarah bears the command :

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ

إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ .

«البقره ١٨٦»

Wa idhā saa'laka 'ibādī 'annī fainnī qaribun ujību da'-awataddā'i idhā da'āni falyastajībūli walyo'minūbi la'allahum yarshudūn. (2 : 186).

“And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he crieth unto Me. So let them hear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright”.

1. Offer prayer with perfect concentration and devotion of mind and heart and with a positive conviction of God's favour. Instead of gazing at the enormity of your sins, look towards the unlimited mercy, kindness and the countless bounties and blessings of God. The prayer of an inattentive man whose thoughts are not concentrated on God and who

is only mumbling a few words half-heartedly at a whim without anticipating the favour of God is vain.

The Tradition relates :

“Offer prayer with the firm conviction of God’s favour. God does not accept a prayer sent forth by an inattentive heart”.
(*Tirmidhi*)

5. Say prayer in utmost humility with awe and fear of God. Your heart should be astir with the awesome majesty, grandeur and power of God and fear of God should be obvious from your physical posture. Your head should be bent and eyes downcast. Your voice should be muffled, limbs limp, eyes damp with tears and the whole demeanour should present a picture of helpless misery before God. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on beholding a man stroking his beard during worship, observed : “Had he the fear of God in his heart, his body too would have been overcome by it”.

In point of fact while praying a man should tremble with the realisation of his destitution and helpless misery and with the fear that if he were repulsed from the threshold of God, he would not find refuge anywhere. He should have deep awareness of the fact that he possesses nothing of his own ; everything he has is a bounty from God ; if God withholds, no other power in the world can bestow anything on him. God is the Master of everything ; He alone holds the treasure of everything ; man is only a miserable beggar.

The Holy Qur’an commands :

ادعوا ربكم تضرعاً .

Ud’ū rabbakum tadarru’an.

“Call your Lord with humility”.

The dignity of worship consists in the servant calling upon his Creator in desperate humility and in a lowly

manner so that his heart and intellect, emotions and feelings and all parts of his body should be bent in homage to Him and the servant's soul and body should bear evidence to his destitution and plea for help.

6. Say prayer in a muted, faint voice. Do present your petition before God in a desperate manner, but never display your desperation and misery openly. Man should display his humility, lowliness and the plea of misery only before God.

There is no doubt that sometimes you may say prayers in a loud voice, but only in privacy, or amid a congregation so that the others may say 'Amin'. Generally, however, you should say prayer quietly in muffled tones and take full care that your expression of misery and destitution and your supplication is not just a show intended for other people.

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ

الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مَعَ الْغَافِلِينَ

(الاعراف : ٢٠٥)

Wadhkur rabbaka fī nafsika tadarru'an wakhīfatan wa dūnal jahri minal qauli bilghuduwwi walāsāli wa la takun ma'al ghafilīn. (7 : 205)

“And do thou (O Muhammad) remember thy Lord within thyself humbly and with awe below thy breath at morn. and evening. And be thou not of the neglectful”.

The Holy Qur'an praises the beauty of the worship offered by Hadrat Zakaria (peace be upon him) in these words :

اَذْنَادِي رَبِّهِ نِدَاءً خَفِيًّا (مريم ٢)

Idh nāda rabbahu nidaam khāfiyya. (19 : 3)

“When he cried unto his Lord a cry in secret”.

7. You should execute some pious deed before saying a prayer. For instance, make some sacrifice, give alms, feed the hungry one or offer supererogatory worship or observe a fast. In case, God forbid, you land in some trouble, offer prayer to God reminding Him of all these pious deeds which you have performed with true sincerity of heart for His sake only.

The Holy Qur'an says :

إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ

(الفاطر : ١٠)

Ilaihi yas'adul kalimuttayyibu wal 'amalussālihu yarfa'u'hu (35 : 10)

“Pure utterances ascend towards Him only and pious deeds propel them to higher altitudes”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) once related the incident of three men who were entrapped in a cave during a very dark night. They prayed to God reminding Him of their truly sincere deeds and God rescued them from the calamity.

It so happened that during a dark night a group of three men took refuge in a cave. As God Willed, a rock slid down the hill and falling over the mouth of the cave closed the passage completely. It was a massive rock and was too heavy for them to push aside and clear the passage. On consultation among themselves, they resolved to pray to God reminding Him of their truly sincere deeds in anticipation of His Favour to rescue them from this

calamity. In accordance with this resolution, one of them related his pious deed as follows :

I used to take goats for grazing in the forest and earned my living by means of this occupation. On returning from the forest I used to offer milk first to my old parents and, then to my children. One day, I arrived late. My old parents had gone to sleep. The children were awake and hungry. But I could not bear to feed the children before my parents had taken the milk, nor did I wish to put them to inconvenience by waking them up. So I stood all night at the head of their beds holding the cup of milk in my hand. The children clung to my feet and cried for milk all the night, but I remained unmoved and stood there until night gave way to morning.

“O God ! I performed this deed for Your sake only. Remove this rock from the mouth of the cave in recompense for my deed”. And God caused the rock to move aside just so much as to let in a view of the sky.

The second man spoke thus : I put some labourers to work and paid wages to all of them except one man who went away without receiving payment for his labour. A short while later when the man returned to claim his wage I said to him : “All these cows, goats and servants are yours. Take them where you will”. He said : “For God’s sake, don’t cut joke with me”. I answered : “This is not a joke. All this is yours. I invested the money which you had left behind in business. By the Grace of God, the business thrived. All this which you see is the profit derived from that business. Take it with an easy mind. All this belongs to you. And that man went away taking everything with him. Oh God ! I acted in this way to earn Your Goodwill alone. Oh God ! Remove this rock in recompense of my deed”. *By the gracious will of God the rock moved further away from the mouth of the cave.*

The third one narrated the following account of his pious deed : I had a cousin sister for whom I conceived an extraordinary liking. She asked for some money which I supplied. But when I sat close to her to satisfy my need, she said : "Fear God and refrain from this act". I rose at once and I pronounced that sum as a gift to her. Oh God ! You know perfectly well that I did this to win your favour only. Oh God ! Open the mouth of the cave as a reward for this pious deed". God removed the rock from the passage of the cave and liberated the three men from this calamity.

8. Alongwith offering prayers for the fulfilment of pious purposes, try to reform and adorn your life in conformity with the Ordinances of God. Avoid all sins and forbidden things. Respect and observe the Commands of God in all matters and lead a pious life. It is the height of folly and insolence to eat and drink forbidden things, clothe yourself out of unlawful gains and fatten your body on illicit earnings and then anticipate acceptance of your prayer. If you wish your prayer may be accepted, your words and action both should conform to the tenets of religion.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

"God is Pure and He accepts only pure goods. God has enjoined upon the pious the same deeds as He had upon the Messengers. God affirms :

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُّوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا

Ya ayyuharrusulu kulū minattayyibati wa'malū sālihā.

"O Messengers ! Partake of lawful provisions and perform good acts".

Addressing the pious, God enjoins :

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ

Yā ayyuhalladhīna āmanū kulū min tayyibāti ma razaqnākum.

“O ye who believe ! Partake of those lawful and pure things which We have bestowed on you”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then referred to the case of a man who travels a long distance and arrives at a sacred spot to pay homage ; he is covered all over with dust ; he raises both hands towards the sky and says : ‘My Lord’, ‘O My Lord’, yet because he partakes of unlawful food and drinks and dresses out of forbidden gains and fattens his body on illicit earnings, how can the prayer of such a contumacious and disobedient person be accepted ? *(Sahih Muslim)*

9. Offer prayers regularly. The expression of one’s humility, destitution and sense of loyalty to God is in itself a worship. God Himself has commanded His servants to offer prayer to Him. God has said : “Whenever the servant calls Me I listen to him”. Do not get tired of offering prayer. Do not be tied down by the doubt whether prayer would change your destiny or not. The obstinacy or flexibility of fate or the acceptance or rejection of prayer depends on the Will of God Who is All-Knowing and All-Wise. All the same, it is the duty of the slave to offer prayer to Him like a beggar and destitute person and not to consider himself independent of Him for a single moment.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“The humblest person is the one who is humble in prayer”. *(Tabrani)*

In addition to that the Holy Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed : “God considers nothing as nobler and as more honourable than prayer”.

(*Tirmidhi*)

The most luminous trait of the believer is that in distress or ease, pain or pleasure, poverty or prosperity, adversity or luxury——under all sorts of condition he turns to God only and presents his needs to Him alone and prays to Him regularly for grace.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“The person who does not pray to God invokes wrath of God”.

(*Tirmidhi*)

10. Put complete faith in God as to the acceptance of your prayer. Never commit the blunder of renouncing prayer in desperation if quick results of the acceptance of your prayer are not forthcoming. Concentrate on offering prayer instead of feeling anxious about the acceptance of your prayer.

Hadrat ‘Umer (God be pleased with him) observed :

“I am not concerned about the acceptance of my prayer. I am only anxious to pray. When the favour of offering a prayer has been granted to me, the acceptance will also be granted”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“When a Muslim turns towards God to ask for some favour, God inevitably supplies his want. Either his wish is granted or God adds the thing desired to the balance of reward which the Muslim will receive in the eternal world. On the Day of Judgement, God shall summon a pious man to His Presence and enquire from him face to face : “O My slave ! I commanded you to pray and promised that I shall grant your prayer. Did you then offer prayer ?” The man will submit : “Yes,

I offered prayer". God will then observe : "I granted whatever prayer you offered. Did you not pray to Me on that day for the alleviation of sorrow and pain which had seized you and I had succoured you". The slave will submit : "True, O Creator". God then will observe : "I granted that prayer and fulfilled that desire of yours in the mortal world. But on that other day you were struck by another calamity and you prayed to Me for succour, but you found none and, therefore, continued to labour under pain and sorrow". The slave will submit : "Yes, it is true beyond doubt, My Creator". Thereupon God will observe : "In Paradise many bounties have I reserved for you in reward for that prayer,"—and in the same manner God shall ascertain other needs and make a similar observation in regard to all of them".

Afterwards, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

"There shall not be a single prayer offered by a pious person concerning which God will not state. "I granted this prayer of yours in the world and I added that desire of yours to the balance of your reward in eternity". The pious person will ponder then : "Would that none of my prayers had been granted in the mortal world ! Hence the servant should continue to pray under all conditions".

(*Hakim*)

11. Observe all external etiquettes, purity and cleanliness at the time of prayer. Keep your heart clear of all evil passions, illicit designs and absurd beliefs.

The Holy Qur'an affirms :

ان الله يحب التوابين ويحب المتطهرين

Innallāha yuhibbutawwābina wa yuhibbul mutatahhirin.

“Truly, they are the favourites of God who repent most and those others who keep themselves pure and clean”.

In Surah Muddaththir, God enjoins :

وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ

Wa rabbaka fakabbir wa thiyābaka fatahkir.

“Thy Lord magnify and thy raiment purify”.

12. Offer prayer for others also, but begin with yourself. Seek favour for yourself first and then for others too. The Holy Qur'an reproduces two prayers offered by Hadrat Ibrahim and Hadrat Noah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them) which bear the above moral :

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَلْ دُعَاءَنَا

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

(ابراهيم : ٤٠ ، ٤١)

Rabb-ij'alni muqim-as-salāti wa min dhu-r-riyyati rabbana wa taqabbal du'a Rabbanaghfir li-wali wālidayya wa lilmo'minina yauma yaqūm-ul-hisāb (14 : 40-41)

“My Lord ! Make me to establish proper worship and some of my posterily (also) our Lord! and accept the prayer. Our Lord ! Forgive me and my parents and believers on the day when the account is cast”.

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَنْ دَخَلَ بَيْتِي مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(نوح : ٢٨)

وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

*Rabbighfir li wali-walidayya wa liman dakhala
baitiya mo'minan wa lilmo'minina wal-mo'minat.*

(71 : 28)

“My Lord ! Forgive me and my parents and him who entereth my house believing, and believing men and believing women and increase not the wrong doers in aught save ruin”.

Hadrat Ubayi b. Ka'b (God be pleased with him) reports : “Whenever the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) happened to mention some person, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to offer a prayer for that person and commenced the prayer by asking God's favour for himself first”.

(Tirmidhi)

3. If you are acting as leader in the prayer, you should always offer prayer on behalf of the whole congregation using plural parts of speech. The prayers which have been reproduced in the Holy Qur'an generally contain plural parts of speech. The leader in fact is the spokesman for the whole congregation. When he utters a prayer using plurals, the congregation should utter 'Amin' at the end of each prayer offered by them.
1. Avoid prejudice and selfishness in prayer. Do not fall into the error of considering the vast and common blessing of God as limited and thus praying for the grant of His Grace and Bounty to you especially.

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) relates : “A beduin entered the mosque of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and said his prayers and then said : “O God : Grant your favour to me and to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and to none else besides us.” On hearing this, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

لَقَدْ تَحَجَّرَتْ وَأَسَمًا

Laqad tahajjarta wāsi'an

“You have narrowed the vast limits of God's blessings.” (Bukhari)

15. Avoid formal and conscious rhyming in prayer. Utter your prayer in a simple manner with profound sincerity. Abstain from singing or rhyming. However, it does not matter if by chance your tongue does utter a rhymed speech or an alliteration. A few such prayers as have an informal rhyme and perfect balance in stress are reported to have been uttered by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). For instance, Hadrat Zaid b. Arqam has reported a very comprehensive prayer offered by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ وَنَفْسٍ لَا تَتَّبِعُ وَعِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ، وَدَعْوَةٍ لَا يُسْتَجَابُ لَهَا - (الترمذی)

Allahumma inni a'udhū bika min qalbin la-yakhsa'u wa nafsin lātashba'u wa 'ilmin lā-yanfa'u wa da'watin lā-yustajabu lahā. (Tirmidhi)

“God I seek thy refuge from the heart which is devoid of thy fear, from the being that lacks contentment, from the knowledge that is unprofitable and from the prayer which is unacceptable.”

16. Offer praise and thanksgiving to the Lord before putting your needs and requirements before Him. Afterwards, say two Rakahs of supplementary prayer and say ‘peace and blessings be on the Holy Prophet’ at the beginning and end of your prayer.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“At times when a person seeks the favour of God or the assistance of man in connection with some need or requirement, the needy person should perform ablution, say two Rakahs of prayer, offer praise and thanksgiving to the Lord and say ‘peace and blessings of Allah be on the Holy Prophet’. (Afterwards, he should put his need before God)”.
(*Tirmidhi*)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed the fact that the prayer of a man which is accompanied by praise and thanksgiving to the Lord and by the invocation of God's peace and blessings on the person of the Holy Prophet is granted the honour of fulfilment. Hadrat Fadāla (God be pleased with him) narrates : “The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was seated in the mosque when a man entered, performed the worship and at the end uttered. اللهم اغفر لي *Allāhummaghfirli* (God grant me pardon). On hearing this, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to the man : “You were rather quick in offering the prayer. When the worship is over, you should first of all render praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, invoke peace and blessings upon the Prophet and finally say your prayer. As the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was speaking to the person, another man came in, offered worship and at the end, rendered praise to God and invoked His peace and blessings upon the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet, thereupon, observed to him : “Now say your prayer”, it shall be granted.”

(*Tirmidhi*)

17. Offer prayer to God at all times and at every step, for He is never tired of hearing the prayers of His slaves. However, traditions reveal to us that there are certain special times and circumstances in which prayers are accepted very soon

Hence, do not miss the opportunity of offering prayer at these hours and circumstances :

(1) In the stillness of the latter part of night when most people are enjoying sweet slumber, the man who gets up and engages in communion with God and places his needs before the Lord in sincere humility shall be blessed with special favour of God.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“God holds court on the sky of the world every night. When the latter part of the night remains God observes, “Who calls Me ? I will accept his prayer. Who begs ? I will fulfil his need. Who asks for salvation ? I will grant him salvation.” (Tirmidhi)

(2) Offer the maximum number of prayers in the night of Shab Qadr, for in auspiciousness this night is better than a thousand months. Say the following prayer especially :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُورٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

Allahumma innaka 'afuwoun tukhibb-ul-'afwa fa'fu 'anni.

“God : Thou art All-Forgiving. Thou likest showing Mercy the best. Hence Forgive me”.

(3) In the field of 'Arafat when the 'guests of God' assemble there on the 6th Dhil-Hajj. (Tirmidhi)

(4) At a particular moment on Friday which falls between the commencement of the sermon and end of the worship or from the time when the 'Asr prayer is over till the hour of the Maghrib worship.

- (5) At the hour of the announcement of the Prayer-Call and at the time when the Holy warriors are being lined up for battle in the field.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“Two things are never repulsed from the Court of God. One, the prayer offered at the hour of the announcement of Prayer-Call. Second, the prayer uttered at the time of lining up for battle in the field”.
(*Abu Dāwūd*)

- (6) In the interval between the announcement of the Prayer-Call and the Takbir.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

“The prayer offered in the interval between the Adhan (Prayer-Call) and the Aqāmah is never rejected”. The illustrious companions (God be pleased with them) submitted : O, Prophet of Allah, what should we pray during this period. The Holy Prophet observed : Say this prayer.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

Allahumma inni as'alukal'afwa wal-'afiyata fid dunya wal-akhirah.

“God ! I implore of Thee forgiveness, kindness and protection in this world and in eternity”.

- (7) During the auspicious days of Ramadan and specially at the time of breaking fast. (*Bazaz*)

(8) After the performance of obligatory prayers whether you offer prayer individually or in a congregation.

- (9) In the state of prostration.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has observed :

“In the state of prostration, the slave gains the nearest proximity to his Lord. Hence offer the optimum prayer while you are lying in prostration before God”.

(10) When you are seized by a serious calamity or the deepest sorrow and pain. *(Hakam)*

(11) When a religious assemblage takes place for the purpose of remembrance and worship of God. *(Bukhāri, Muslim)*

(12) When a reading of the Holy Qur'an is completed. *(Tabrani)*

18. Offer prayers at the following places, especially. On the eve of his departure from Mecca to Basra, Hadrat Hasan Basri (God be merciful to him) wrote a letter to the residents of Mecca stating the importance of putting up in Mecca and the favours thereof and also clearly mentioned that prayers offered at the following fifteen places in Mecca are especially accepted by God :

(1) Near the Multazam

(2) Below the Mizāb

(3) Inside the Ka'bah

(4) Near the fount of Zam
Zam

(5) At Safa and Marwa

(6) Near Safa and Marwa
at the place where 'Sa'i'
is performed

(7) At the rear of the 'Place
of Ibrahim'

(8) In 'Arafat

(9) In Muzdalifa

(10) In Mina

(11) Near the three Jamarat

(Hisne Hassin)

19. Make constant efforts to memorize the same words of prayer to God as are contained in the Holy Qur'an and the

Traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is clear that no better words of prayer and no better manner of offering prayer can be found than that which God taught to His Prophets (peace and blessings of Allah be upon them) and to His pious slaves (may God be pleased with them). Besides there is no speech which can possibly surpass the word taught by God and adopted by His Messengers in effect, sweetness, comprehensiveness, grace and acceptability! The repetition of the prayers taught by the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions and a thoughtful consideration of their meanings trains and educates one's mind as to what wishes and prayers should a pious person entertain. What deeds are worthy of his striving and what goals should he set for himself". There is no doubt that prayer transcends all barriers of language, style or diction. Man is free to beg anything from God in any language or style. It is, however, a supplementary Blessing of God that He has revealed to us what to ask for and in what manner? By prescribing words of prayer. Moreover, God taught the pious what attitude to adopt for achieving grace in religion and in secular matters and what wishes and aspirations should a pious man entertain in his heart. There is no religious or secular need as well as there is no aspect of grace, for which a prayer has not been prescribed. It is more propitious, therefore, that you should pray to God in those words which are contained in the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions and you should repeat only those prayers which are incorporated in the Qur'an or those which were uttered at various times by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself.

However, until such time as you commit to memory the words of the prayers contained in the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions, you ought at least to reproduce their sense in your prayers.

We reproduce in the following pages some comprehensive prayers from the Holy Qur'an as well as from the Traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). You should learn these prayers by heart gradually and then repeat only these prayers afterwards.

Comprehensive Quranic Prayers

Prayer for Mercy and Forgiveness :

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْخَاسِرِينَ -

(الاعراف : ٢٣)

الْخَاسِرِينَ -

Rabbanaḥ zalamnā anfusānā wa in lam taghfir lanā wa tarhamnā lanakūnanna min-al-khāsirīn. (7 : 23)

Our Lord ! We have wronged ourselves. If Thou forgive us not and have not mercy on us, surely we are of the lost.

No doubt unless God absolves man of his sins and showers endless Mercy on him, man will go to ruin.

Prayer for Grace in both the Worlds

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ
النَّارِ -

(البقره : ٢٠١)

النَّارِ -

Rabbana ātinā fid-dunyā hasanatan wa fil-ākhirati hasanatan wa qina ‘adhāb-an-nār. (2 : 201)

“Our Lord ! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good and guard us from the doom of the Fire”.

Prayer for Forbearance and Fortitude :

رَبَّنَا اَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ اَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ

الْكَافِرِينَ - (البقره : ٢٥٠)

Rabbana afrigh 'alaina sabran wa thabbit aqdamanā wansurnā 'alalqaumil-kāfirin. (2 : 250)

Our Lord ! Bestow on us endurance, make our foothold sure, and give us help against the disbelieving folk.

Prayer for Protection against the Mischief of the Devil :

رَبِّ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ ۝ وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ رَبِّ اَنْ

يَحْضُرُوْنَ ۝ (المؤمنون : ٩٧ ، ٩٨)

Rabbi a'ūdhu bika min hamazāt-ish-shayātini wa aūdhubika rabbi an yahdurūn. (23 : 97, 98)

My Lord ! I seek refuge in Thee from suggestions of the evil ones and I seek refuge in Thee, my Lord ! lest they be present with me.

Prayer for Protection against the torment of Hell :

رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ اِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا

اِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا - (الفرقان : ٦٥ ، ٦٦)

Rabbanasrif 'annā 'adhāba jahannama inna 'adhābahā

kāna gharamā Innahā sā'at mustaqarran wa muqāmā:
(25 : 65-66).

Our Lord ! Avert from us the doom of hell : Lo ! the doom thereof is anguish. Lo ! it is wretched as abode and station.

Prayer for the Correction of Heart :

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ
رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ . (آل عمران : ٨)

*Rabbanā lā tuzigh qulūbana ba'da idh hadaitanā wa
hablanā min ladunka rahmah innaka antal-Wahhāb.*
(3 : 8)

Our Lord ! Cause not our hearts to stray after Thou hast guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Thy Presence. Lo ! Thou, only Thou art the Bestower.

Prayer for the Purification of Heart :

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ
فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ○
(الحشر : ١٠)

*Rabbanaghfir lanā wa li-ikhwaninal-ladhīna sabaqūnā
bil-īmāni wa lā taj'al fī qulūbina ghillal-lil-ladhīna
āmanu rabbanā innaka ra'ūf-ur-Rahīm.* (59 : 10)

Our Lord ! Forgive us and our brethren who were before us in the faith, and place not in our hearts any rancour towards those who believe. Our Lord ! Thou art full of pity, Merciful,

Prayer for Favourable Turn of Events :

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهِيَ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا

رَشَدًا . (الكهف : ١٠)

*Rabbanā āatina min ladunka rahmatan wa hayyi' lanā
min amrina rashada. (18 : 10)*

“Our Lord ! Give mercy from Thy presence and shape for us right conduct in our plight.”

Prayer for Salvation :

رَبَّنَا آمِنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

(المؤمنون : ١٠٩)

*Rabbanā āamannā faghfir lanā warhamnā wa anta
khair-ur-rāhimin. (23 : 109)*

Our Lord ! We believe therefore forgive us and have mercy on us for Thou art best of all who show mercy.

Prayer for the grant of satisfaction and peace in the family :

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا

لِلْمُتَّقِينَ أِمَامًا . (الفرقان : ٧٤)

*Rabbanā hab lanā min azwajinā wa dhur-riyyatinā
qurrata a'ayunin waj'alnā lil-muttaqina imāmā. (25 : 74)*

Our Lord ! Vouchsafe us comfort of our wives and of our offspring, and make us patterns for (all) those who ward off (evil).

In other words, grant us such a pure and noble life that the pious should take us as a model and emulate our example.

Prayer for Parents :

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ

(ابراهيم : ٤١)

Rabbanaghfir li wa li-wālidayya wa lil-mo'minina yauma yaqūm-ul-hisāb. (14 : 41)

Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the day when the account is cast.

Prayer for Protection from trials and tribulations :

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ

عَلَيْنَا أَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا

تَحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا، وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا،

وَارْحَمْنَا، أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ

الْكَافِرِينَ . (البقرة : ٢٨٦)

Rabbanā lā tu'ākhidhnā innasīnā au akhta'nā rabbanā wa lā tahmil 'alainā isran kamā hamaltahu 'alalladhīna min qablina rabbana wa lā tuhammilnā mā lā tāqata lanā bihi wa'fu 'annā waghfir lanā war hamna anta maulāna fansurnā 'al-al-qaum-il-kāfirīn. (2 : 286)

Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or err : Our Lord! Lay not on us such a burden as Thou didst lay on

those before us : Our Lord ! Impose not on us that which we have not the strength to bear : Pardon us, absolve us and have mercy on us. Thou, art our Protector and give us victory over the disbelieving folk.

Prayer for getting rid of the disbelievers' domination.

عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝
وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ . (يونس : ٨٥-٨٤)

*'Alallāhi tawakkalnā rabbanā lā taj'alnā fitnatān-
lil-qawm-iz-zālimīn. Wa najjinā birahmatika min-al-
qawmil kāfirīn. (10 : 85)*

In Allah we put trust. Our Lord ! Oh, make us not a lure for the wrongdoing folk. And of Thy mercy, save us from the folk that disbelieve.

Prayer for a propitious end.

فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنْتَ وَليٌّ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ
تَوَفَّنِي مُسْلِمًا وَالحَقْنِي بِالصَّالِحِينَ . (يوسف : ١٠١)

*Fatir-as-samāwāti wal-ardi anta waliyyi fid-dunyā
wal-aakhirati tawaffani musliman wa allhiqni bissalihīn.
(10 : 101)*

Creator of the heavens and the earth Thou art my protecting Friend in the world and the Hereafter. Make me to die submissive (unto Thee), and join me to the righteous.

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا

بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاٰمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا
 وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْاَبْرَارِ ۝ رَبَّنَا وَاٰتِنَا مَا وَهَدْتَنَا عَلٰى
 رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ اِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيْعَادَ

(آل عمران : ١٩٣، ١٩٤)

*Rabbanā innanā sami'nā munādiyan yunādī lil-īmāni
 an āminu birabbikum fa' āmanna rabbana faghfir
 lanā-dhunūbanā wa kaffir 'annā sayyi' ātinā wa
 tawaffanā ma'al abrār. Rabbanā wa-ātinā ma wa
 ađtanā 'alā rusulika walā tukhzinā yaum-al-qiyāmati
 innaka lā tukhlif-ul-mī'ād.* (2 : 193, 94)

Our Lord ! Lo ! We have heard a crier calling unto
 Faith : Believe ye in your Lord ! So we believed Our
 Lord ! Therefore forgive us our sins, and remit from us
 our evil deeds and make us die the death of the righteous.
 Our Lord ! And give us that which Thou hast promised
 to us by Thy messengers. Confound us not upon the
 Day of Resurrection. Lo ! Thou breakest not the trust.

Some Prayers of the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.)

The Muhaddithin (Reporters of Traditions) have worked hard and devoted whole of their lives in collecting and compiling the books of Traditions, the prayers which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to offer during journeys and in camp. Alongwith the prayers incorporated in the Holy Qur'an, you should also utter these prayers of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). These prayers are not only comprehensive, impressive and propitious, but also teach the correct thinking to the believer as well as the desires and ambitions he should cherish. In fact, a man's real nature is reflected in his desires, especially moments when he is satisfied that no other human being is present and that his murmur can only be heard by his Creator. Each word of the prayers offered by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the darkness of the night, in privacy, in the midst and outside the company of the people, is characterised by profound sincerity, devotion and eagerness and one feels that the utterer of such prayers is the most exalted person who is perfectly aware of his status as the servant of God and he constantly begs from his Lord as a needy person. Moreover, his eagerness and devotion is constantly increasing in depth and intensity as he continues to offer prayers to God. The essence of all his prayers is as follows: "God! Draw me closer! Spare me from Thy wrath! Bestow upon me Thy favour! Give me success and grace in Eternity.

Prayers to be offered in the Morning and Evening :

Hadrat 'Uthman b. 'Affan (God be pleased with him) narrates : "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed : No harm can come to a man from anything who utters the following prayer morning and evening" :

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا
فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ .
(مسند احمد)

*Bismilla-hil-ladhi lā yadurru ma'asmihi shai'un fil-
ardi wa lā fis-samāi wa huwas-samī'ul 'alīm.*

(Musnad Ahmad).

In the name of God by virtue of Whose name naught in the heaven nor earth doth hurt and He is the Hearer the Knower.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Umar (God be pleased with him) reports : "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to offer the following prayer in the morning and evening regularly without respite" :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ . اللَّهُمَّ
إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَفْوَ وَالْعَافِيَةَ فِي دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ وَأَهْلِي
وَمَالِي اللَّهُمَّ اسْتُرْ عَوْرَاتِي وَآمِنْ رَوْعَاتِي اللَّهُمَّ احْفَظْنِي
مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِي وَعَنْ يَمِينِي وَعَنْ شِمَالِي
وَمِنْ فَوْقِي، وَأَعُوذُ بِعَظَمَتِكَ أَنْ أُغْتَالَ مِنْ تَحْتِي
(ترمذی)

Allahumma inni as'alukal-'āfiyata fid-dunyā wal-ākhir.

irata, Allahumma inni as'alukal-'afwa wal-'afiyata fi dini wa dunyāyi wa ahli wa māli. Allahummastur 'aurāti wa āmin rau'āti. Allahummaḥfazni min baini yadayya wa min khalfi wa 'an yamini wa 'an shimāli wa min fauqi wa 'aūdhu bi 'azmatika an ughtāla min tahti.
(Tirmidhi)

O God ! Behold, I beg of Thee peace in this world and the hereafter. O God ! Behold, I beg of Thee forgiveness and safety in my faith, in my world, in mine household and in my wealth. O God ! cover my defects, and give me peace from mine apprehension. O God ! protect me from my front and from my rear, from my right and from my left also from above me; and I seek refuge in Thee lest I be surprised from beneath me !

Prayer against Lethargy and Cowardice :

Hadrat Anas b. Malik (God be pleased with him) states :
"I used to remain in attendance on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and I used to hear him offer this prayer very often":

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحُزْنِ وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ،
وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَضَلَعِ الدِّينِ وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ
(بخاری، مسلم)

Allahumma inni 'aūdhu bika min-al-hammi wa-l-huzni wal-'ajzi wal-kasali wal-bukhli wal-jubni wa dala'id-daini wa ghalabatir-rijali.
(Bukhāri, Muslim)

O God ! Behold, I seek refuge in Thee from anxiety and grief, from inability and sloth, from faint heartedness, and niggardliness, from the burden of indebtedness and the domination of men.

Prayer for the Attainment of Piety and Purity :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْهُدَى وَالتُّقَى وَالْعَفَافَ وَالْغِنَى

Allahumma innī as'alukal-hudā wat-tuqa wal-'afāfa wal-ghinā.

O God ! Behold I beg of Thee, guidance, piety, purity and contentment.

This is the most comprehensive prayer. In these four words the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has asked for everything that a believer needs.

Prayer for Protection against degradation in this world and the Hereafter :

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْسِنْ عَاقِبَتَنَا فِي الْأُمُورِ كُلِّهَا وَأَجِرْنَا مِنْ خِزْيِ

الدُّنْيَا وَعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ . (طبرانی)

Allahumma ahsn 'aqibatana fil-umuri kulliha wa ajirna min khizyid-dunyā wa 'adhāb-il-aakhirah. (Tabrani)

“God! End all our activities in grace and protect us from the torment of degradation in this world and in the Hereafter”.

Prayer to be offered after Worship :

Hadrat Mu'adh (God be pleased with him) states that one day the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took my hand and observed : “O Mu'adh! I love thee”, and then proceeded to affirm: “O Mu'adh! I advise you that you should never miss uttering the following words after each prayer :

اللَّهُمَّ اعْنِي عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ

Allahumma a'inni 'ala dhikrika wa shukrika wa husni ibadatika.

O Lord! help me in remembering Thee, in expressing gratitude to Thee and in worshipping Thee in the best manner.

Will of the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) :

Hadrat Shaddad b. Aus (God be pleased with him) states :
 "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) advised me : Shaddad ! when you see the worldly people busy in amassing gold and silver, you should gather the blissful treasure by uttering the following words off and on" :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الثَّبَاتَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَالْعَزِيمَةَ عَلَى

الرُّشْدِ ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ شُكْرَ نِعْمَتِكَ وَحُسْنَ عِبَادَتِكَ

وَأَسْأَلُكَ قَلْبًا سَلِيمًا وَ لِسَانًا صَادِقًا وَأَسْأَلُكَ

مِنْ خَيْرِ مَا تَعْلَمُ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا تَعْلَمُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُكَ

لِمَا تَعْلَمُ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَامُ الْغُيُوبِ . (مسند احمد)

Allahumma inni as'aluk-ath-thabāta fil-amri wal-'azimati 'alar-rushdī wa as'aluka shukra ni'matika wa husna 'ibādatika wa as'aluka qalban salīman wa lisānan sādiqan wa as'aluka min khairi mā ta'lamu wa a'ūdhu bika min sharri mā ta'lamū wa astaghfiruka limā ta'lamu innaka anta 'allāmul ghuyūb. (Musnad Ahmad)

O God ! Behold, I beg of Thee steadfastness in keeping (Thy) command and firmness of resolution in (pursuing) the right course. I beg of Thee (the feeling of) thankfulness for Thy grace and (ability for) adoring Thee best. I beg

of Thee a sound heart and a truthful tongue. I beg of Thee the good of that which Thee Knowest, and I seek refuge in Thee from the evil which Thee Knowest I seek Thy forgiveness for all of my wrongs thou knowest. No doubt Thou knowest all that is unknown to us.

Prayer for Forgiveness and the Favour of Allah

Hadrat Abu Huraira (God be pleased with him) states that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) while bequeathing a will to Hadrat Salman Farsi (God be pleased with him), had observed: "I wish to bequeath a few words to you. Beseech the Most Kind in these words. Rush towards the Most Kind and offer prayer to Him in these words day and night :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ صِحَّةً فِي إِيمَانٍ وَإِيمَانًا فِي حُسْنِ
خُلُقٍ وَنَجَاحًا يَتَّبِعُهُ فَلَاحٌ وَرَحْمَةً مِنْكَ وَعَافِيَةً وَمَغْفِرَةً
مِنْكَ وَرِضْوَانًا

(طبرانی ، حاکم)

*Allahumma inni as'aluka sihkatan fi imanin wa imanan
fi husni khulqin wa najahan yatba,uhū falāhun wa rah-
matan minka wa 'afiyatan wa maghfiratan minka wa
ridwānā.* (Tabrani, Hakam).

O God! Behold! I beg of Thee vigour and health in my faith. and effect of faith in my dealings and behaviour and success leading to peace and mercy from Thee; and also security, forgiveness and Thy pleasure.

Prayer for Purification from Sins :

Hadrat Umm Salama (God be pleased with her) narrates: "The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to offer the following prayer :

اللَّهُمَّ نَقِّ قَلْبِي مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا نَقَّيْتَ الثَّوْبَ

الْأَبْيَضَ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ اللَّهُمَّ بَعِدْ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ خَطِيئَتِي كَمَا

بَعَدْتَ بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ . (معجم كبير)

Allahumma naqqi qalbi mina-l-khatāyā kama naqqaita-ththaubal-abyada min-ad danas. Allahumma ba'id baini wa baina khati'ati kamā ba'adta bain-al-mashriqi wal-maghrib. (Moajam Kabir).

O God! clean my heart from sins, just as you clean white cloth of dirt. O God! cause as great a distance between me and my faults, as there is between East and West.

Prayer for the Attainment of Respect among the People :

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي صَبُورًا وَاجْعَلْنِي شَكُورًا وَاجْعَلْنِي فِي

عَيْنِي صَغِيرًا وَفِي أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ كَبِيرًا .

Allahummaj'alni sabūran waj'alni shakūran waj'alni fi 'aini saghīran wa fi a'yunninnāsi kabīrā.

O Allah! make me patient and thankful to Thee, and make me small in my own eyes, but great in other peoples eyes.

A comprehensive Prayer :

Hadrat 'Āisha (God be pleased with her) states: "It so happened once that when the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came to see me I was engaged in offering worship. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) needed me immediately but I was delayed, whereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him) observed: 'Āisha, you should utter brief and comprehensive prayers. When I came to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) I submitted: "O Messenger of Allah! (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! Teach me a brief and comprehensive prayer". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "You should utter the following prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهِ عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا
 عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ أَعْلَمْ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهِ
 عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ أَعْلَمْ وَأَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ
 وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ
 وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِمَّا سَأَلْتَ بِهِ
 مُحَمَّدًا وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِمَّا تَعُوذُ مِنْهُ مُحَمَّدٌ وَمَا قَضَيْتَ لِي
 مِنْ قَضَاءٍ فَاجْعَلْ عَاقِبَتَهُ رُشْدًا . (حَاكِم)

Allahumma inni as'aluka min-al-khairi kullihī 'ājilihī wa ājilihī ma'alimtu minhu wa ma lam a'alamu wa a'udhu bika min-ash-sharri kullihī 'ājilihī wa ājilihī ma'alimtu minhu wa mā lam a'alamu wa asaluka-l-jannata wa mā qarraba ilaiha min qawlin au 'amalin wa 'a'ūdu bika min-an-nari wa ma qarraba ilaiha min qawlin au 'amalin wa as'aluka mimmā sa'alaka bihī Muhammadun wa a'udhu bika min mā ta'awwadha minhu Muhammadun wa mā qadaita li min qadā'in faj'al-āqibatahu rushdā. (Hakam).

O Allah! I ask of Thee all the good which is in the present or in the future, and I ask of Thee paradise, and the works and deeds, which would take me nearer to the same, and I seek refuge in Thee from Fire and the works and deeds which would take me nearer to the same. And I ask of Thee that which was sought by Muhammad, and I seek refuge in Thee from that regarding which Muhammad sought Thy Protection, and that the end of all Thy decrees above me should be good.

Prayer for Holding Firm to Islam :

اللَّهُمَّ احْفَظْنِي بِالْإِسْلَامِ قَائِمًا وَاحْفَظْنِي بِالْإِسْلَامِ قَاعِدًا
وَاحْفَظْنِي بِالْإِسْلَامِ رَاقِدًا وَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِي عَدُوًّا
حَاسِدًا.

Allahummaḥfaznī bil-islāmī qā'iman waḥfaznī bil-islāmī qā'idan waḥfaznī bil-islāmī rāqidan wa lā tushmit bi'aduwwan ḥāsīdā.

O Allah! maintain my faith in Islam, while I am standing or while I am sitting or while I am lying and let not the enemy, the envious pass sarcastic remarks about me.

Prayer of a New Convert to Islam :

Ḥadīrat Abu Malik Ashja'i (God be pleased with him) reports: "My father narrated that whenever a person embraced the religion of Islam, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to teach him Salāt and also the following prayer" ;

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي، وَارْحَمْنِي وَاهْدِنِي، وَعَافِنِي
وَارْزُقْنِي.

Allahummaghfir li warhamni, wahdini, wa 'āfini warzuqni.

O Allah! forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, grant me peace and give me sustenance.

Prayer for the Avoidance of Dissension and Immorality :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ مُنْكَرَاتِ الْأَخْلَاقِ وَالْأَعْمَالِ
وَالْأَهْوَاءِ اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّقَاقِ وَالنِّفَاقِ وَسُوءِ
الْأَخْلَاقِ.

Allahumma inni a'ūdhu bika min munkarāt-il-akhlāqi wal-a'amali wal-ahwā'i. Allahumma inni a'ūdhu bika min-ash-shiqāqi wan-nifāqi wan sū-il-akhlāq.

O Allah! I seek refuge in Thee from evil morals, deeds and desires. O Allah! Behold, I seek refuge in Thee from schism, hypocrisy and evil morals.

Darūd and Salām

Invocation of Peace and Blessings on the Holy Prophet (p. b. u. h.)

Invoke peace and blessings of Allah upon your venerable benefactor Hadrat Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Truly, we can make no recompense for his countless favours and limitless love and affection. What we can do, however, is to invoke the peace and blessings of Allah on him with the deepest sense of reverence, love, devotion and loyalty to his person. We should pray to God, "Creator! Your Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had to suffer terrible torments in his task of communicating your message to us. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took great pains to guide us on the path of righteousness. Creator! We can make no return for this favour. We implore You, O Creator! to shower Your boundless benefactions upon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), to exalt him in Your favour; to protect his religion from the onslaught of falsehood; to extend his religion and to bestow upon him a higher rank than all other favourite companions of Yours in the eternal world." The Holy Qur'an enjoins upon the Muslims :

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّوْنَ عَلٰى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا

(الاحزاب : ٥٦)

صَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيْمًا

Innallaha wamalāikatahu yussalluna alannabiyyi yā ayyu

halladhina āmanū sallū ‘alaihi wa sallimū taslīma.

(33 : 56)

Lo ! Allah and his angels, shower blessings on the Prophet O ye who believe ! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation."

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed to Hardat Ubayī b. Ka'b (God be pleased with him) :

"Obayī ! If you devote all your time to invoking peace and blessings of Allah upon the Prophet, God shall take it upon Himself to provide for your sustenance in this world and in eternity." (Musnad Ahmad)

Hadrat Anas b. Malik (God be pleased with him) narrates that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed :

"A person who invokes peace and blessings of Allah on me is recompensed by Allah in the following manner :

"Allah showers blessings on him ten times. Allah adds ten virtues and erases ten vices from his record of deeds. And Allah elevates his rank by ten grades." (Nasa'i)

In addition to this, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) affirmed :

"The angels continue to invoke the blessings of God upon a man as long as he devotes himself to invoking peace and blessing of Allah upon me."

(Ahmad and Ibn Majah)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed ;

"The man who hears my name mentioned yet fails to invoke the peace and blessings of Allah on me is a miser."

(Tirmidhi)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declared the person most deserving of the honour of his companionship and attendance in the life hereafter who invokes the peace and blessings of Allah on him the most,

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

“The person who invokes peace and blessings of Allah on me the most, will be the best deserving my companionship and attendance on the Day of Judgement”. (Tirmidhi)

There is a slight variation in the wordings of the texts of the invocation of peace and blessings of Allah which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught to the illustrious companions (God be pleased with them) on various occasions. You may use any of these texts. The text which is generally recited in worship and which has been declared as the most propitious one by Ḥaḍrat ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbas (God be pleased with him) is as follows :

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ. اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ
 عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ.

(صحيح سنن أحمد)

Allahumma salli 'alā Muḥammadin wa'alā aali Muḥammadin kamā sallaita 'alā Ibrahīma wa 'alā aali Ibrahīma innaka Ḥamidun Majīd. Allahumma barik 'ala Muḥammadin wa'alā aali Muḥammadin kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrahīma wa 'alā āli Ibrahīma innaka Ḥamidun Majīd. (Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta, Musnad Ahmad).

O Allah! Shower Thy mercy upon Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, as thou didst shower Thy mercy upon Abraham and the followers of Abraham! Behold Thou art Praiseworthy, Glorious! O Allah! shower Thy blessing upon Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, as Thou didst shower Thy blessings upon Abraham & the followers of Abraham Behold, Thou art Praiseworthy, Glorious.

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd (God be pleased with him) observed to the people: "You should invoke peace and blessings of Allah on the Holy Prophet in a proper manner. Who knows this invocation may be presented before the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)?" The people requested him to teach the proper invocation to them. Thereupon he observed: "You should recite the invocation thus.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ صَلَواتِكَ وَرَحْمَتِكَ وَبَرَكَاتِكَ عَلَيَّ

سَيِّدِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ وَآمَامِ الْمُتَّقِينَ وَخَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ مُحَمَّدٍ

عَبْدِكَ وَرَسُولِكَ آمَامِ الْخَيْرِ وَقَائِدِ الْخَيْرِ وَرَسُولِ

الرَّحْمَةِ، اللَّهُمَّ ابْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا يَغْبِطُهُ بِهِ الْأَوْلُونَ ○ اللَّهُمَّ

صَلِّ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَيَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ ○ اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَيَّ

مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَيَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى

آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ

(ابن ماجه)

Allahumma j'al salātaka wa rahmataka wa barakātika 'alā sayyid-il-mursalīna wa imam-il-mut-taqīna wa khātim-in-nabiyyīna Muḥammadin 'abdika wa rasūlika, imam-il-khairi wa qā'id-il-khairi warasūl-ir-rahmati, Allahumma b'athhu maqaman yaghbituhū bihil-awwalūn. Allahumma salli 'ala Muḥammadin wa 'alā aali Muḥammadin kamā sallaita 'ala Ibrahīma wa 'alā aali Ibrahīma innaka Ḥamidun Majīd. Allahumma bārik 'alā Muḥammadin wa 'alā aali Muḥammadin kamā barakta 'alā Ibrahīma wa 'alā aali Ibrahīma innaka Ḥamidun Majīd. (Ibn-e-Majah).

God! Shower Your favour, blessing and benefactions upon the lord of Prophets, leader of the pious and the seal of Prophets, Muhammad who is Your servant, Your Messenger, a model of Good, a guide to peace and a Messenger, of Blessings. God! elevate him to an exalted position which may be the envy of his predecessors. God! Show Your blessings to Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad as You blessed Abraham and the progeny of Abraham. Truly, You possess the purest attributes and are Great. God! Show Your favour to Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad as You showered favour on Abraham and the progeny of Abraham. Truly, you possess the purest attributes and are Great". (Ibn Majah)

Hadrat Abu Mas'ūd Ansāri (God be pleased with him) narrates: "Once Bashir b. Sa'd (God be pleased with him) submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): In what manner should we invoke peace and blessings of Allah on you? The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) remained silent for a while and then observed: Say these words:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ

عَلَىٰ آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَبَارِكْ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَىٰ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
 كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ

مَجِيدٌ

(مسلم)

*Allāhuma salli 'alā Muḥammadin wa 'ala āli Muḥammadin
 kamā sallaita 'alā aali Ibrahīma wa barik 'alā Muḥammadin
 wa 'alā aali Muḥammadin kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrahīma
 fil-'ālamīna innaka Ḥamidun Majid. (Muslim).*

O Allah! shower Thy mercy upon Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad as Thou didst shower Thy mercy upon the followers of Abraham! Behold! Thou art Praiseworthy, Glorious. O Allah! shower Thy blessings upon Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, as Thou didst shower Thy blessings upon Abraham in the worlds. Behold Thou art Praiseworthy, Glorious.

The Supplication of Sacrifice

Lay down the animal parallel with the direction of the Qibla and utter the following prayer first:

اِنِّى وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِي لِلَّذِى فَطَرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ
حَنِيفًا وَمَا اَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ، اِنَّ صَلٰوَتِىْ وَنُسُكِىْ
وَمَحْيَاىَ وَمَمَاتِىْ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ
وَبِذٰلِكَ اُمِرْتُ وَاَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ وَمِنْكَ .

Inni wajjahtu wajhiya lil-ladhi fatar-as-samawati wal-arda hanifan wa ma ana min-al-mushrikin. Inna salāti wa nusuki wa mahyāya wa mamāti lillahi rabb-il-'alamin. La sharika lahu wa bidhalika omirtu wa ana min-al-muslimin. Allahumma laka wa minka.

Behold I have turned my face earnestly towards Him Who originated the heavens and the earth and I am not of polytheists. Behold, my salat, mine offering, my living and mine dying are all for God, Lord of the worlds. No partners hath He, concerning this I have been bidden and I am of the Muslims O God! (I offer this) to you and You gave it to me.

After reciting this prayer, Say بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ

'Bismillahi Allahu akbar'. (In the Name of Allah Who is Great) and cut the throat of the animal with a sharp-edged knife. Having performed the slaughter, read this prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ تَقَبَّلْهُ مِنِّي كَمَا تَقَبَّلْتَ مِنْ خَلِيلِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَحَبِيبِكَ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِمَا الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ .

*Allahumma taqabbalhu minni kamā taqabbalta min khali-
lika Ibrahīma wa habībika Muhammadin 'alaihimas-
salātu was-salām.*

“God ! Accept this sacrifice offered by me as Thou accepted the sacrifice offered by Thy friend Abraham and that offered by Thy loved one Muhammad. May peace and blessings descend upon both”.

Although it is permissible to let someone else perform the slaughter of your sacrificial animal, yet it is better if you perform this act with your own hands. While you perform the slaughter, try to think and feel in the same way as you express through the words you utter at the time of sacrificing the animal i. e. all that we have got belongs to Allah and it is all to be spent in His way only. The act of sacrificing the animal in His name is in submission to His will and if ever required we shall readily sacrifice even our own life in the way of Allah and shall be grateful to Him that He conferred upon us the honour of martyrdom by affording us an opportunity to shed our blood in His name.

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1. If the animal is jointly shared by several partners, say **مِنْ** instead of **مِنِّي** and then announce the names of all partners.

Aqiqa Prayer

'Aqiqa' refers to the goat or ram which is sacrificed on behalf of a new-born child on the seventh day after his birth.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

"On the seventh day a name should be prescribed for the child. Its hair and all filth should be removed and sacrifice should be performed on his behalf".

Before sacrificing the animal, first make it lie down parallel with the direction of the Qibla and recite the prayer which is uttered at the slaughter of a sacrificial animal i.e. from ' to ' لک و منک ' Afterwards say ' بسم الله الله اکبر ' and cut the throat of the animal with a sharp-edged knife and then recite the following prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ هَذِهِ عَقِيْقَةٌ تَقْبَلُهُ كَمَا تَقْبَلُ
مِنْ حَبِيْبِكَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَخَلِيْلِكَ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ عَلَيْهِمَا الصَّلَاةُ
وَالسَّلَامُ دَمُهَا بِدَمِهِ لَحْمُهَا بِلَحْمِهِ شَعْرُهَا بِشَعْرِهِ
عَظْمُهَا بِعَظْمِهِ .

Allahumma hadhihi aqiqatu..... taqabbalhu kama taqabbalta min habibika Muhammadin wa khallika Ibrahimma 'alaihimas-salatu wassalamu damuha bidamihi lahmuhā bilahmihi sha'ruha bi-sha'rihi azmuhā bi-azmihi.

“O Allah! This is the Aqiqah of¹.....Accept it as Thou accepted the ‘Aqiqah offered by Thy loved one Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and by Thy friend Abraham (peace be upon him). The blood of this sacrifice is ransom for the blood of the child, its flesh is the ransom for the flesh of the child, its hair are a ransom for the child’s hair and its bones are the ransom for the child’s bones. God! Accept it”.

The people who possess means must offer sacrifice on behalf of their children. ‘Aqiqah is a desirable sacrifice. Two lambs or goats on behalf of the male child and a single goat or lamb on behalf of the female. It is permissible also to sacrifice a single goat on behalf of a boy. However, for those who lack means, it is certainly improper to perform the sacrifice by begging loans.

Noncooked ‘Aqiqah meat may be distributed. It is preferable, however, to send cooked meat to the beggars, the poor and your neighbours. On the eve of the ‘Aqiqah of Hadrat Hasan (God be pleased with him), the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instructed: “Send one chopped leg of the animal to the midwife and eat the rest yourself and feed others”. (Abū Dāwūd)

1. Insert the name of the child whose ‘Aqiqah is being performed after the words.

The Taravih Prayer

The word 'Taravih' is the plural form of 'Tarviha'. 'Tarviha' denotes the period of rest and relaxation at the end of every four Rakahs of prayer. It is in this context that this supplementary prayer of the month of Ramadan is called 'Taravih'. Tarviha, i. e. to pause and relax at the end of every four Rakahs of prayer, is a Sunnah.

The following prayer should be recited during 'Tarviha' :

سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْمَلِكِ وَالْمَلَكُوتِ . سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْعِزَّةِ
 وَالْعِظْمَةِ وَالْهَيْبَةِ وَالْقُدْرَةِ وَالْكَبْرِيَاءِ وَالْجَبْرُوتِ .
 سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَنَامُ وَلَا يَمُوتُ .
 سُبْحَانَ قُدُّوسٍ ، رَبَّنَا وَرَبِّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ .
 اللَّهُمَّ اجْرِنَا مِنَ النَّارِ يَا مُجِيرُ يَا مُجِيرُ يَا مُجِيرُ .

Subhana dhil-mulki wal-malakūt. Subhana dhil-izzati wal-'azmati wal-haibati wal-qudrati wal-kibriyā'i wal-jabarūt. Subhan-al-malik-il-hayyil-ladhi lā yanāmu wa lā yamūtu, subbūhun quddūsun rabbuna wa rabb-ul-malā'ikati war-rūh. Allahumma ajirna min-an-nāri yā mujīru yā mujīru yā mujīr

“Pure is the Ruler and the Sovereign. Pure is the Exalted and the Supreme, the Awesome and the Powerful and the

Great Wielder of Authority. Pure is the Immortal Sovereign Who neither sleeps, nor will ever die. Purest and free from all blemishes is our Sustainer Who is the Provider of angels and of Gabriel. God! Grant us asylum from the Fire of Hell. O Protector, O Protector, O Protector'.

Offer the 'Taravih' prayer in congregation and if possible listen to the recitation of the full text of the Holy Qur'an during 'Namaz'. Offer 'Taravih' behind a 'Hafiz' (the one who has memorised the full text of the Holy Quran) who recites the Qur'an with full reverence, devotion and eagerness in moderate pace and with proper pauses and correct accents so that the listeners do not get tired and the Qur'an may be recited so clearly as to make every word of it audible and distinct. It is a great injustice with the Holy Qur'an to read it rapidly without understanding as if you are trying to get rid of a burden. The Book of Allah deserves to be read with a will, devotion and concentration pondering over its meaning and implications and trying to grasp its real sense and spirit.

Similarly the 'Taravih' prayer must be offered with ease and concentration showing no haste and hurry. To perform Rukū and Prostration in rapid succession without knowing what is being uttered amounts to sheer disregard of the objectives of prayer and missing the relish of real taste and enjoyment of worship.

Qunūt-i-Nāzila

Whenever, God forbid, the Muslims are faced with a critical situation and the menace and terror of the enemy has overcome them, they should recite Qunūt-i-Nāzila during prayers, especially in the course of the dawn prayer. After the second Rakah of the morning prayers, recite the following prayers in the standing posture before performing the prostration. Traditions reveal that this prayer was recited during worship by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his illustrious companions (God be pleased with them) at critical times, they offered this prayer especially during morning worship:

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنَا فِيمَنْ هَدَيْتَ وَعَافِنَا فِيمَنْ عَافَيْتَ وَتَوَلَّنَا
 فِيمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيمَا أَعْطَيْتَ وَقِنَا شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ
 فَإِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَىٰ عَلَيْكَ . إِنَّهُ لَا يَدُلُّ مِنْ
 وَالْبَيْتِ وَلَا يَعْزُ مِنْ عَادَيْتَ تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ
 نَسْتَغْفِرُكَ وَنَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ ۝ اللَّهُمَّ عَذِّبِ الْكُفْرَةَ الَّذِينَ
 يَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ وَيُكَذِّبُونَ رُسُلَكَ وَيُقَاتِلُونَ
 أَوْلِيَاءَكَ . اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ

وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَأَصْلَحَ ذَاتَ بَيْنِهِمْ وَأَلْفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ
 وَاجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَثَبِّتْهُمْ عَلَى
 مِلَّةِ رَسُولِكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَأَوْزِعْهُمْ أَنْ يُوَفُّوا
 بِعَهْدِكَ الَّذِي عَاهَدْتَهُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْصُرْهُمْ عَلَى عَدُوِّكَ
 وَعَدُوِّهِمْ إِلَهَ الْحَقِّ وَاجْعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ

*Allāhummahdinā fīman hadaita wa 'āfina fī-man 'āfaita
 wa tawallanā fī-man tawallaita wa barik lanā fī-ma
 a'ātaita wa qina sharra mā qadaita fa-innaka taqdī wa la
 yuqdā 'alaika innahu lā yadhillu man wālaita wa lā
 ya'izzu man 'ādaita tābarakta rabbanā wa ta'ālaita
 nastaghfiruka wa natūbu ilaika, Allahumma 'adhhdhib-il-
 kafaratal-ladhīna yasuddūna 'an sabīlīka wa yukadhdhi-
 būna rusulaka wa yuqātilūna auliā'aka, Allahummaghfir
 lil-mo'minīna wal-mo'mināt, wal-muslimīna wal-musli-
 māt, wa aslih dhāta bainihim wa allif baina qulūbihim,
 waj'al fī qulūbihim-ul-īmāna wal-hikmata wa thabbi-
 thum 'ala millati rasūlīka sallal-lāhu 'alahi wa sallam
 wa auzi'hum an yūfū bi'ahdik-al-ladhī 'āhadtahum
 'alaihi, wansurhum 'ala 'aduwwīka wa'aduwwihim ilāh-
 al-haqqi waj'alnā minhum.*

O Allah! guide us amongst those whom Thou hast guided aright, and preserve us among those whom thou hast preserved. Include us amongst those whom Thou hast taken under Thy protection. Bless us in that which Thou hast bestowed upon us and protect us from the evil of that which Thou hast ordained, for it is Thou Who ordainest and none can ordain against Thee indeed! Never is he

abased whom Thou takest as friend and none is respected
 Whom Thou takest as a foe. Blessed art Thou Our Lord
 and exalted. We ask repentance from Thee and turn to
 Thee ; O Allah! send torment upon the unbelievers, who
 prevent us from following Thy way and refute Thy
 messengers, and fight against Thy friends. Allah! grant
 forgiveness to us and to the Faithful males and females
 & Muslim men and women and bring reconciliation
 among them and foster affection (for one another) in their
 hearts and bless them with conviction and insight and
 make them firm and unwavering followers of the Holy
 Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and
 enable them to fulfil the pledge You have taken from them;
 help them against Thy enemies and against their enemies
 O Real Deity ! hear our prayers and deal us with these
 people !"

Prayer for the Fulfilment of a need

Whenever any need, big or small, arises, you should stand before God and offer two Rakahs of supererogatory prayer, (Sālat al-Hājat). Afterwards, offer thanksgiving and praise to God and invoke peace and blessings upon the Holy Prophet. Then utter the following prayer. There is every hope that God will not reject your prayer. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

“When someone seeks fulfilment of a need from God or man, he should first carefully perform ablution, say two Rakahs of supererogatory prayer and then offer thanksgiving and praise to the Lord; afterwards, he should invoke peace and blessings of God on the Holy Prophet; and finally utter this prayer to God:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ
الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ أَسْأَلُكَ
مُوجِبَاتِ رَحْمَتِكَ وَعَزَائِمِ مَغْفِرَتِكَ وَالْغَنِيمَةَ مِنْ
كُلِّ بَرٍّ وَسَلَامَةٍ مِنْ كُلِّ آثِمٍ لَا تَدْعُ لِي ذَنْبًا إِلَّا غَفَرْتَهُ
وَلَا هَمًّا إِلَّا فَرَجْتَهُ وَلَا حَاجَةَ مِنِّي لَكَ رِضًا إِلَّا قَضَيْتَهَا
يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ .

(ترمذى ، ابن ماجه)

*La ilāha illallahul-halimul-karīm. Subhanallahi rabbil-
 'arshil-'azīm. Wal-hamdu lillahi rabbil-'ālamīn.
 As'aluka mūjibāti rahmatika wa 'azā'imi maghfiratika
 wal-ghanimata min kulli birrin was-salamata min
 kulli ithmin lā tada' lī dhanban illa ghaflatahu wa lā
 hamman illa farrajtahū wa lā hājatan hiya laka ridan
 illā qadaitaha ya arhamar-rāhimīn. (Firmidhi).*

There is no deity save God the Clement the Bountiful. Glory be to God, Lord of the Magnificent Throne! Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds! I beg of Thee the means of (obtaining) Thy mercy and securing Thy pardon; participation in every righteousness and protection from every sin. Leave no sin of mine unforgiven no anxiety unrelieved and let no need of mine unfulfilled where-with Thou art pleased O Thou the Most Merciful of Those who show mercy!

Prayer for Memorizing Qur'an

To learn the Holy Qur'an by heart and to memorize its text for ever you should offer the prayer which was taught to Hadrat 'Ali (God be pleased with him) by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas (God be pleased with him) reports: "Once we were sitting in the company of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when 'Ali (God be pleased with him) arrived and complained about his memory: O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! My mind does not retain the verses of the Qu'ran. I cannot remember what I have learnt previously". The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

„O Abul Hassan ! Let me teach you a prayer which will be of benefit to you and to those whom you will teach this prayer and having learnt this prayer whatever you commit to memory shall be retained and you shall always remember it". Hadrat 'Ali (God be pleased with him) submitted: "O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you) ! Do teach me this prayer". Whereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed concerning this prayer: "Say this prayer on Friday night and offer it on three, five or seven Thursday nights in succession. By the Will of God, this prayer will prove efficacious. I swear by His Name Who has entrusted me with the Religion of Truth, this prayer by the believers never goes unanswered".

Continuing his narration, Hadrat 'Abdullah b. 'Abbas

(God be pleased with him) says: "Five or seven Thursday nights had passed when Hadrat 'Ali (God be pleased with him) came to the company of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and submitted: "O Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon you)! Before this whenever I memorised four verses, my memory failed me when I tried to reproduce them. Now, however, the position is that I memorise forty verses and when I wish to reproduce them, it appears as if the Book of God is lying open before me. Similarly, I used to hear a tradition and later failed to reproduce it but now I hear several traditions and retain them so well that I hardly miss a single word while reproducing those traditions".

On hearing this, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "I swear by the Lord of Ka'bah that Abul Hassan is a true believer".

Giving detailed instructions about this prayer, the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Say this prayer on Friday night. When the sons of my brother Ya'qub requested him to pray for their redemption, Ya'qub replied: "Yes, I shall offer a prayer for your redemption shortly". Ya'qub meant that he would pray for their redemption on the next Friday night. So 'Ali! Rise at the hour of 'Tahajjud' on Friday night, for this is the most propitious time for the fulfilment of prayer; one's soul is eager at this time and the heart is fully devoted to God. If perchance you are unable to rise in the later part of the night, get up at midnight. If you can't wake up at midnight, then offer four Rakahs of supererogatory prayer in the first watch of the night in the following order: In the First Rakah, recite Surah Fatihah and after this Surah Yaseen;¹ in the second Rakah, recite Surah Fatihah and Surah Ad-Dukhan,² in the third Rakah, read Surah Fatihah with Surah Alif Lam Mim Sajdah;³ and in the fourth Rakah, recite Surah Mulk⁴ after Surah

1, Sura-36. 2, Surah-44. 3, Surah-32. 4, Surah-67

Fatiha. Afterwards, having recited 'Attahiyyāt' and offered Salam on both sides, offer thanks to God and praise Him. Invoke God's peace and blessings upon the Holy Prophet and all other Messengers in a proper manner. Implore Him to grant redemption to all the believing men and believing women and offer prayer for the salvation of those brethren who preceded you in faith. And finally say this prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْنِي بِتَرْكِ الْمَعَاصِي أَبَدًا أَمَا ابْقَيْتَنِي

وَارْحَمْنِي أَنْ أَتَكَلَّفَ مَا لَا يَعْينِي وَارْزُقْنِي حُسْنَ النَّظَرِ

فِيمَا يَرْضِيكَ عَنِّي . اللَّهُمَّ بَدِيعَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْأَكْرَامِ وَالْعِزَّةِ الَّتِي لَا تُرَامُ أَسْأَلُكَ

يَا اللَّهُ يَا رَحْمَنُ بِجَلَالِكَ وَنُورِ وَجْهِكَ أَنْ تُلْزِمَ

قَلْبِي حِفْظَ كِتَابِكَ كَمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي وَارْزُقْنِي أَنْ أَتْلُوهُ

عَلَى النَّحْوِ الَّذِي يَرْضِيكَ عَنِّي . اللَّهُمَّ بَدِيعَ السَّمَوَاتِ

وَالْأَرْضِ ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْأَكْرَامِ وَالْعِزَّةِ الَّتِي لَا تُرَامُ

أَسْأَلُكَ يَا اللَّهُ يَا رَحْمَنُ بِجَلَالِكَ وَنُورِ وَجْهِكَ أَنْ

تَنُورَ بِكِتَابِكَ بَصِيرِي وَأَنْ تُطَلِّقَ بِهِ لِسَانِي وَأَنْ تُفْرِجَ
 بِهِ عَن قَلْبِي وَأَنْ تُشْرِحَ بِهِ صَدْرِي وَأَنْ تُغْسِلَ بِهِ
 بَدَنِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَعِينُنِي عَلَى الْحَقِّ غَيْرُكَ وَلَا يُؤْتِيهِ إِلَّا
 أَنْتَ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ . (الترمذی)

*Allāhummarhamnī bitarkil-ma'āsi abadan ma abqaitanī
 warhamnī an atakallafa mā lā ya'ninī warzuqnī husnan-
 nazri fī-ma yurdika 'anni. Allahumma badī'assamawati
 wal-ardi dhaljalāli wal-ikrāmi wal-'izzatil-lati lā tur-
 āmu as'aluka yā Allahu yā Rahmānu bijalālika wa nūri
 wajhika an tulzima qalbi hiḥza kitābika kamā 'allamtanī
 warzuqnī an atluwahū 'alan-nahwil-ladhi yurdika 'anni.
 Allāhumma badī'as-samāwāti wal-ardi dhaljalāli wal-
 ikrāmi wal-'izzatil-lati lā turāmu. As'aluka yā Allahu
 yā Rahmānu bijalālika wa nūri wajhika an tunawwira
 bikitābika basari wa an tutliqa bihi lisāni wa an tufar-
 rija bihi 'an qalbi wa an tashraha bihi sadri wa antagh-
 sila bihi badanī fa-innahu lā yu'inunī 'alal-haqqi ghairu-
 ruka wa lā yu'tihi illa anta wa lā haula walā quwata
 illa bi-llahil 'Aliyil-'azīm. (Tirmizi).*

O God! Be Thou gracious unto me by enabling me to eschew sins altogether as long as Thou sufferest me to live; and have mercy upon me lest I concern myself with ought which is of no consequence to me. And vouchsafe me the aesthetic sight which will cause Thee to be well pleased with me.

O God! Originator of the heavens and the earth Lord of Majesty and glory and of Might is comprehensible! I beseech Thee O god, O beneficent Lord in the name of Thy

Majesty and of the Light of Thy countenance to cause mine heart to retain Thy explaint as Thou hast taught to me. And grant that I may recite it in such manner as will cause Thee to be well pleased with me. O God, Originator of the heavens and the earth, Lord of Majesty and Bounty and of Might Who is unchallengable. I beseech Thee O God, O Beneficent Lord! in the name of Thy Majesty and of the Light of Thy countenance, to illuminate my sight with Thy scripture, make my tongue fluent with its words to comfort mine heart therewith, to make me fully receptive to it and to wash my body clean with its blessings. For indeed, None aideth me in (attaining) the truth besides Thee and now giveth it unto me besides Thee. There is no strength nor power save in God, the Exalted, the Magnificent.

Prayer of gaining understanding of the Qur'an

The favourite worship of the pious is to recite the Holy Qur'an and to meditate and reflect upon its meaning. Love of Qur'an is proof of attachment to God as it is also a means to establish communion with God. The believer obtains spiritual bliss by contemplating and meditating on the meanings of the Qur'an and it is through this process only that he secures access to the founts of wisdom contained in the Qur'an.

The Holy Qur'an is undoubtedly an easily comprehensible Book. As regards obtaining guidance from it and carrying out its injunctions, the teachings of the Holy Qur'an are very simple, clear and free of all ambiguity or complexity of meaning. However, to grasp its inner meanings and significance and to derive wisdom from it, it is imperative that you should study the Qur'an after having fulfilled all the conditions and obligations for gaining comprehension of it; reflect upon its contents with sincere application and never adopt a careless and listless attitude towards the Book, but study it constantly for the rest of your life.

It is quite natural that at certain points during study, you will come across a text upon which you will deliberate long and hard without arriving at any one interpretation which your mind will accept. You will then feel at a loss. But if you are a devoted student of the Qur'an, don't ever feel dejected or lose heart, nor should you entertain any impudent notion of leveling criticism upon the Holy Book. And feeling hopeless, don't abandon the practice of deliberating and meditating upon the

meanings of the Qur'an. On the contrary, you should turn towards God with full concentration and reposing complete trust in Him you should seek His aid in the unravelling of this problem. Do not make an impudent bid to make a whimsical exposition of the Qur'an or to give it an interpretation which conforms to your ideas. Like a true seeker of Truth, stick to the meaning which the text of the Qur'an makes plain and pray to God in extreme humility and with a sense of helplessness: 'O God! Eliminate my confusion; make the true meaning manifest to me and let my heart be content with that interpretation and meaning which is really true.' For this purpose, recite the Holy Qur'an rather loudly but distinctly with pauses in the course of supererogatory prayers at night. Offer the prayer reproduced below. It is hoped from God that the prayer will prove efficacious.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: "Any person who offers this prayer while in a state of sorrow and distress, God shall alleviate his suffering and bestow upon him felicity and rejoicings."

اللَّهُمَّ أَنِي عَبْدُكَ، ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ ابْنُ أَمَّتِكَ نَاصِبِي
 يَدِكَ، مَاضٍ فِي حُكْمِكَ، عَدْلٌ فِي قَضَائِكَ أَسْأَلُكَ
 بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ هُوَ لَكَ، سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ
 فِي كِتَابِكَ أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ خَلْقِكَ أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ
 بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ، أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رَيْعَ
 قَلْبِي وَنُورَ صَدْرِي وَجِلَاءَ حُزْنِي وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي وَغَمِّي .
 (مسند احمد، ابن حبان)

*Allahumma inni 'abduka, ibnu 'abdika, ibnu amatika
nāsīyatī biyadika, mādin fiyya hukmuka, 'adlun fiyya
qadā'uka, as'aluka bikulli ismin huwa laka, sammaitu
bihī nafsaka an anzaltahu fī kitābika au 'allamtahu
ahadan min khalqika awista'tharta bihī fī 'ilmil-ghaibi
'indaka an taj'alal-Qur'āna rabī'a qalbi wa nūra sadri
wajalā'a huzni wadha hāba hammī wa ghammī.*

(Musnad Ahmed, Ibn-Hiban)

“God! I am Thy slave. I am the son of Thy bondman and the son of Thy bondmaid. My brow is in Thy grip. I am under Thy command. Thy judgement in regard to me is just and fair. In the Name of all Attributes applicable to Thee and all Attributes which Thou hast reserved for Thyself, or those which Thou hast revealed in Thy Book, or have transmitted to one of Thy creatures or have kept them hidden in the treasury of the unseen with Thee in the Name of all these Attributes I implore Thee to make the Holy Qur'an the joy of my heart, the light of my bosom, a panacea for my distress and a cure of my sorrows and perplexity”.

The narrator of this Tradition Hadrat 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (God be pleased with him) states that the people submitted to the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : “Shall we learn this prayer”? Whereupon the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed: “Any one who hears this prayer, must learn it and memorise it”.

The Friday Sermon

The Friday sermon is an extremely effective and disciplined means of arousing Islamic sentiments, keeping the Faith alive and carrying out the duty of remembering God constantly and in an orderly manner. It is a unique religious institution designed to remind the Muslims of their obligations each week in a perfectly natural way and to inculcate in them a sense of the requirements of religion and an impassioned spirit to serve Islam. But you can make an effective use of this institution only when you address the congregation in their vernacular.

As regards the second sermon, it must be delivered in Arabic; however, the first sermon ought to be delivered in a speech which the audience can understand. It is proper for you to prepare a brief but comprehensive address on the requirements of religion in the context of current affairs and try to develop the mind of the people and rouse them to action each week regularly and in a disciplined manner. If for some reason it is not possible for you to prepare an address yourself, you should at least read the Arabic text and deliver its meaningful translation in the vernacular of your audience. Among the Arabic texts, your best choice is a sermon delivered by the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the illustrious companions (God be pleased with them). Below are reproduced quotations from the authentic speech of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). One of these is the historic sermon which he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) delivered on the first Friday after his migration to Medina. The second address contains an eloquent call to the Muslims to acquire a deep sense of the Holy

Qur'an and to deliberate and ponder over its meanings constantly for it is impossible to hold on to religion without a firm attachment to the Holy Qur'an.

The First Sermon of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in Medina.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ أَحْمَدُهُ وَأَسْتَعِينُهُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُهُ وَأَسْتَهْدِيهِ
 وَأُؤْمِنُ بِهِ وَلَا أَكْفُرُهُ وَأَعَادِي مِنْ يَكْفُرُهُ . وَأَشْهَدُ
 أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ
 مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ . أَرْسَلَهُ بِالْهُدَى وَالنُّورِ
 وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ عَلَى فِتْرَةٍ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَقَلَّةٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِ وَضَلَالَةٍ
 مِنَ النَّاسِ وَأَنْقِطَاعٍ مِنَ الزَّمَانِ وَذُنُوبٍ مِنَ السَّاعَةِ
 وَقُرْبٍ مِنَ الْآجِلِ . وَمَنْ يَطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ، فَقَدْ
 رَشِدَ وَمَنْ يَعْصِيهِمَا فَقَدْ غَوَى وَفَرَطَ وَضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا
 أَوْصِيَكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا أَوْصَى بِهِ الْمُسْلِمُ
 الْمُسْلِمُ أَنْ يَحْضَرَ عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَإِنْ يَأْمُرُهُ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ
 فَاحْذَرُوا مَا حَذَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ وَلَا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ

ذَلِكَ نَصِيحَةً وَلَا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ ذَكَرُوا إِنْ تَقْوَى

اللَّهُ لِمَنْ عَمِلَ بِهِ عَلَى وَجَلٍ وَمَخَافَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ عَوْنٌ

صَدَقَ عَلَى مَا تَبَغُّونَ مِنْ أَمْرِ الْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يَصْلِحِ الَّذِي

بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ فِي السِّرِّ وَالْعَلَانِيَةِ لَا يَنْوِي

بِذَلِكَ إِلَّا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ يَكُنْ لَهُ ذِكْرًا فِي عَاجِلِ أَمْرِهِ وَذُخْرًا

فِيمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ حِينَ يَفْتَقِرُ الْمَرْءُ إِلَى مَا قَدَّمَ وَمَا كَانَ

مِنْ سِوَى ذَلِكَ يَبُودُ لَوْ أَنْ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا

وَيَحْذِرُكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ رَؤُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ وَالَّذِي

صَدَقَ قَوْلَهُ، وَأَنْجَزَ وَعَدَهُ لَا خُلْفَ لَذَلِكَ فَإِنَّهُ

يَقُولُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: مَا يَبْدُلُ الْقَوْلَ لَدَى وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَامٍ

لِلْعَبِيدِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي عَاجِلِ أَمْرِكُمْ وَأَجَلِهِ فِي السِّرِّ

وَالْعَلَانِيَةِ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَكْفُرْ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيَعْظُمَ لَهُ

أَجْرًا. وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا. وَإِنْ

تَقْوَى اللَّهِ يَوْفَى عَقُوبَتَهُ وَيَوْفَى سَخَطَهُ وَإِنْ تَقْوَى اللَّهِ يَبِيضُ

الوجوه . ويرضى الرب ويرفع الدرجة .

خذوا بحظكم ولا تفرطوا في جنب الله وقد علمكم الله

كتابه . ونهج لكم سبيله ليعلم الذين صدقوا ويعلم

الكاذبين . فاحسنوا كما أحسن الله اليكم وعادوا .

أعداءه . وجاهدوا في الله حق جهاده . هو اجتنبكم

وسمكم المسلمين ليهلك من هلك عن بينة ويحيى من

حي عن بينة ولا قوة إلا بالله .

فأكثروا ذكر الله وأعملوا لما بعد اليوم فإنه من

يصلح ما بينه وبين الله يكفه الله ما بينه وبين

الناس .

ذلك بأن الله يقضى على الناس ولا يقضون عليه ويملك

من الناس ولا يملكون منه الله أكبر ولا قوة إلا بالله

العظيم ○ (الطبرى جلد ١٢ ص ٢٥٥)

*Al-hamdu lillahi Ahmaduhū wa astu'inuhū wa astagh-
firuhū wa astahdihī wa ū'minu bihī wa lā akfuruhu wa
ū'ādi man yakfurūhu wa ashhaduan lā-ilāha illallāhu*

wahdahū lā sharika lahū wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan
 'abduhū wa rasūluh. Arsalahu bilhudā wannūri
 walmau-i-zatī 'alā fatratin minar-rusuli wa qillatin
 minal ilmi wa dalalatin minannāsi wanqitai'n mina-
 zamāni wazunuwwin minassa'ati wa qurbin minal ajali
 wa man yuti-'illaha wa rasūlahu faqad rashada wa man-
 ya 'sihima faqad ghawā wa farrata wa dalla dalalan ba'ida.
 Ustikum bitaqwallāhi fa-innahū khairu mā ausa bi-hil-
 muslimu. Almuslima an yahuddahū 'alal ākhirati wa an
 ya'murahū bitaqwallāhi fahdharū. Ma hadhdharakum-
 ullahu min-nafsihi wala afzala min dhālika nashatan
 wala afzala min dhalika dhikran wa inna taqwallahi
 liman amila bihi alā wajalin wa makhafatin min rab-
 bihi auna sidqin alā mā tabghūna min amril ākhirati wa
 man yuslihilladhi bainahū wa bainallahi min amrihi
 fission wal'alāniyati lā yanwi bidhālika illā wajhallāhi
 yakun lahu dhikran fi 'ājili amrihi wa dhukhuran fi-mā
 b'adal mauti hina yafiqirulmar'i' illā mā qaddama wa
 mā kāna min siwā dhalika yawaddu lau anna bainahā
 wa bainahū amadan ba'idan wa yuhaddhiru kumullahu
 nafsahū wallāhu raūfun bil'ibādi walladhi sadaqa
 qaulahū wa anjaza wa'adahū lā khulifa lidhalika fa-
 innahū yaqūlu 'azza wajalla mā yubaddalul qaulu
 ladayya wa mā ana bizalla min lilabidi fattaqullaha fi-
 ājili amrikum wa ājiliki fission wal-'alāniyati fa-
 innahū man yattaqillaha yukaffir'anhu sayyi-ātihī wa
 yu'azzim lahū ajra. Wa man yattugillaha faqad faza
 fauzan azlma wa inna taqwallahi yuwaqqi 'uqubatahu
 wayuwagqi sukhutahu wa inna taqwallahi yubayyidul
 wujūha wa yurdirrabba wa yarfa'udarajah. Khudhu
 bihazzikum walā tufarritu fi janbillahi wa qad allamakum
 ullahu kitābahū wa nahaja lakumsabillahu liya'alamallad-
 hīnu sadaqū wa ya'lamal kādhibīn. Fa-ahsanū kamā
 ahsanallāhu ilaikum wa 'ādu a'adāhu wa jāhidū fillahi
 haqqa jihādihī huwajtabakum wa sammākumul muslimīna

liyah-lika man halaka 'an bayyinatin wa yahya man hayya bayyinatin wa la quwwata illā billāhi.

Fa aktharū dhikrallāhi wa'malu limā bā'adal yaumi fa innahū man yuslihu ma bainahū wa bainallāhi yakfi-hillāhū ma baina hū wa bain-an-nāsi.

Dhālika bi annallaha yaqdi alan nāsi wa la yaqdūna alaihi wa yamliku minan nāsi wa la yamlikūna minhullāho akbarū wa la quwwata illā billāhil azim.

“Thanksgiving and Praise be to Allah. I pay Him gratitude. I invoke His aid. I beseech His Forgiveness and seek Guidance from Him; and I put my faith in Him; and I disbelieve Him nor and I consider him as my enemy who disbelieve Him. And I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah; He is Alone and has no partner; and I bear testimony that Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Apostle, Allah sent him with guidance, light and exhortation and instituted him as His Messenger at a time when the office of Prophethood had long remained dormant; the light of true knowledge had faded; evil was dominant; society was in a state of upheaval; doom was hanging overhead; and death was hovering over the head of each man. Hence he who believed in the Messenger and obeyed Allah and His Messenger was righteous. And he who defied the both went astray, transgressed limits and fell into shortsightedness and having lost the path of righteousness advanced far into wrong.

I instruct you to fear God. The best counsel that a Muslim can offer to another Muslim is that a Muslim should persuade the other to make provision for the life hereafter and urge him to fear God. Fear God as hath He ordained you to fear Him. Hence no exhortation is better than this, nor can there be a better reminder. The fact is that awe and fear of God is the real aid to secure a propitious destiny in the eternal world for the man who passes his life in constant fear

Mighty and the Exalted affirms: "My word suffers no change and I never do the least injustice to any of My people". Hence fear God in all the public and private affairs relating to this world or the life Hereafter. Verily Allah redeems the sins of a person who fears His wrath and He enhances the reward of such a person to the maximum degree. And he who constantly fears Him achieves the highest success; and behold, the fear of God saves man from His punishment, protects him from His wrath and behold the fear of God makes your faces radiant and lively; it pleases the Lord and elevates the man before God Almighty.

So, gather virtues of your share and never fail, or lack in submission to His Commands, especially when He has taught you what is right and what is wrong through His Book and has guided you to the right path. This is to differentiate the truthful from those who are liars. Behave well with the people, as Allah has treated you with kindness. Consider His enemies as your own, and strive hard in the way of Allah. He has chosen you and has designated you 'Muslim', so that one who is to perish should meet his doom with manifest reason and logic and one who is to live, should live with manifest reason and all power and authority rests in Allah and Allah alone.

So, ever remember and mention Allah and mind your deeds and actions keeping in view the day to come; for the man who sets the matters between him and the Almighty, Allah suffices him in all the matters between Him and the mankind because Allah decides the fate of the mankind and the mankind wields no authority over Him. God is the Master of everything that men possess; men exercise no power on anything divine; He is Paramount and there rests no power but with Allah".

Advice to Develop Interest in the Qur'an

ان الحمد لله وحده واستعينه ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسنا

وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَهْدِيهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يَضِلَّهُ

فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ

أَنْ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زِينَهُ

اللَّهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ وَأَدْخَلَهُ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ بَعْدَ الْكُفْرِ، وَاخْتَارَهُ

عَلَى مَا سِوَاهُ مِنْ أَحَادِيثِ النَّاسِ. أَنَّهُ أَصْدَقُ الْحَدِيثِ

وَابْلَغُهُ. أَحِبُّوا مَنْ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ وَأَحِبُّوا اللَّهَ مِنْ كُلِّ

قَلُوبِكُمْ وَلَا تَمَلُّوا كَلَامَ اللَّهِ وَذَكَرَهُ، وَلَا تَقْسُوا عَلَيْهِ

قُلُوبِكُمْ.

اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ

وَصَدِّقُوا صَالِحَ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ وَتَحَابُّوا

بِرُوحِ اللَّهِ بَيْنَكُمْ. وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

(اعجاز القرآن)

*Innalhamda lillāhi ahmaduhū wa asta'inuhū wa
n'aūzubillāhi min shurūri anfusina wa min sayye'āti
a'amālinā man yahdi hillahu falā mudilla lahū wa man*

yudlihu fala hādiya lah. Wa ash-hadu an la ilaha illallahu la sharika lahū. [Inna ahsanal hadithi kitābul-lahi qad aflaha man zayyanahullāhu fi qalbihi wa adkhalahū fil islāmi ba'adal-kufri wakhtārahū 'alā ma siwāhu min ahādith innāsi. Innahū asdaqul hadithi wa ablaghuhū ahibbū man ahabballāha wa ahibbullāha min kulli qulūbikum wa lātaqsu 'alaihi qulūbahum. 'U'obūdullāha walā tushri kū bihi shai-an. Ittaqullaha haqqa tuqātihi wa saddiqu sāliha mā ta'amalūna bi-afwāhikum wa tuhābbū birauhillāhi bainakum wassalāmu 'alaikum wa rahmatullahi. (Ijaz ul Quran : 475)

“Verily, thanksgiving and praise are due to Allah alone. I offer Him gratitude and praise and beg His aid; and we seek asylum with Him against our misdeeds and wrongs committed by us. Whomsoever He guideth (and He guideth only those who really look for His guidance) no one can lead him astray. Whomsoever He deflects from the right path (and He deflects only those who yearn not the guidance) no one can guide him aright.

I bear witness that there is no deity save Allah. He is Alone. He has no partner.

Verily, the best word is the Book of God. Indeed, successful is he who adorns his heart with the word of Allah and whom Allah has favoured with Islam and turned him away from pagamsin and who preferred the word of Allah over all the human thinking and theories. Verily the word of Allah is the truth, most impressive and most effective. Love him who loves the word of Allah Develop real love and attachment with Allah with your heart and soul. Let not the recitation of the word of Allah and remembering Him bore you and let not your hearts be indifferent and adamant to the word of Allah. Worship Allah alone; and attribute none as His partner or associate, fear Him ever to the extent He should be feared. Confirm your pious deeds by your words also i. e. say what is proper

and becoming of you ; and love each other for the cause of Allah and in total submission to Him. May Peace and Mercy of Allah be upon you !

The Second Sermon

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ
 أَرْسَلَهُ اللَّهُ شَاهِدًا وَنَذِيرًا وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِأَذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا
 مُنِيرًا وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا كَثِيرًا
 كَثِيرًا .

أَمَّا بَعْدُ : فَيَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ! أَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ
 تَقْوَى اللَّهِ مَلَكَ الْحَسَنَاتِ . وَعَلَيْكُمْ بِالطَّاعَةِ فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ
 يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا . وَقَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى
 فِي كِتَابِهِ الْمَجِيدِ . إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا .

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ
 الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ . اللَّهُمَّ امْطِرْ شَائِبَ
 رِضْوَانِكَ عَلَى السَّابِقِينَ الْأُولِينَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ

خُصُّوصًا عَلَى أَفْضَلِ الْبَشَرِ بَعْدَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ بِالتَّحْقِيقِ

أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَيِّدِنَا أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

عَنْهُ وَعَلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَيِّدِنَا عُمَرَ بْنِ الْفَارُوقِ رَضِيَ

اللَّهُ عَنْهُ وَعَلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَيِّدِنَا عُثْمَانَ بْنِ عَفَّانَ رَضِيَ

اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ وَعَلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَيِّدِنَا عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي

طَالِبٍ كَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَجْهَهُ وَعَلَى وَلَدَيْهِ السَّعِيدِينَ سَيِّدَا شَبَابِ

أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ الْحَسَنِ وَالْحُسَيْنِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُمَا

وَعَلَى أُمَّهُمَا سَيِّدَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَاطِمَةَ الزَّهْرَاءِ رَضِيَ

اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهَا وَعَلَى سَائِرِ الصَّحَابَةِ وَالتَّابِعِينَ رِضْوَانُ

اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ .

اللَّهُمَّ انصُرْ مَنْ نَصَرَ دِينَ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

وَاجْعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ . وَاخْتِذْ مِنْ خِدَالِ دِينِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ

عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ رَحِمَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ
 الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ
 إِذْ كُرُوا بِاللَّهِ يَذْكُرْكُمْ وَادْعُوهُ يُسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ وَلَذِكْرُ
 اللَّهِ تَعَالَىٰ أَعْلَىٰ وَأَوْلَىٰ وَاعِزُّ وَاجِلٌ وَأَهْمٌ وَأَعْظَمُ
 وَأكْبَرُ .

*Alhamdu lillāhi hamdan kasīran wassalātu wassalāmu
 'alā rasūlihi arsalahullāhu shahīdan wa nadhīra.. Wa
 dāīyan ilallāhi bi-idhnihi wa sirājan munīran wa
 'alā alihi wa ashābihi wa sallama taslīman kasīran
 kasīra.*

*Amma ba'adu-ḥayā-ayyuhannāsu Usikum bitaqwallāhi
 fa-inna taqwallāhi milākul hasanāt. Wa-'alaikum bittā'
 āti fa-innahū man yuti'illāha wa rasūlahu faqad faza
 faūzan azīma.*

*Wa qālallahu ta'āla fī kitābi-hil-majīd. Innallaha wama
 lāi'katuhu yusallūna 'alannabiyyī. Yā ayyuhalladhīna
 āmanu sallū 'alaihi wa sallimū taslīma.*

*Allahumma salli 'ala sayyidina wa maulana Muham-
 madin wa 'alā alihi wa ashabi hilladhīnat-tabaūhu fī
 sā'atil 'usrati. Allahumma antir shaābība ridwanika
 'alas sābiqīnal awwalīna minal muhājirīna wal ansāri
 khusūsan alā afzalil bashari ba 'dalambiyāi bittahqiq
 amiril mo'minīna sayyidina Abi Bakrinissiddiq
 radiallāhu ta'ālā anhu wa 'alal amiril mo'minīna
 sayyadinā ūmara nilfārūqī radiallāhu ta'ālā 'anhu.
 Wa 'alā amiril mo'minīna sayyidina 'Usmanab-
 ni Affān radiallāhu ta'ālā anhu wa 'alā amiril*

mo'minina sayyidina 'Ali-ibni Abi Tālib karramallāhu wajhahu wa 'alā waladaihis-sa'idaini sayyida shabābi ahlil jannate al-Hasanu wal-Hussainu radi allāhu ta'ālā 'anhuma wa 'alā ummihima sayyidatinnisāi ahlil jannati Fātimatazzahrāi radi allāhu ta'āla 'anhā wa ala sāiris sahābatī wattābi'ina ridwanullāhi ta'ālā 'alaihm ajmain' Allāhumman sur man nasara dīna Muḥammadin sallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam waj'alnā minhum wakhdhul man khadhala dīna Muḥammadin sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam wala taj'alna minhum 'ibādullāhi rahimakumullāhu. Innallāha ya'muru bil' adli wal ihsāni wa itāi dhilqurbā wa yanhā anil jahshāi wal munkari wal baghyi ya'izukum la'allakum tudhakkarūn udhkurullāha yadhkurkum wad'ūhu yastajib lakum waladhikrullāhi ta'ālā a'ulā wa aula wa a'azzu wa ajallo wa ahammu wa a'azamu wa akbar.

The praise is due to Allah, the abundant praise, and benediction and peace be upon His Messenger whom Allah has sent as a witness, a warner and an inviter towards Allah with His mandate and as a radiant light and may peace and abundant peace be on his progeny, followers and Companions.

Thereafter, O mankind, I exhort you to fear God, for verily fear of Allah is supermost virtue and incumbent upon you is the obedience. And verily he, who obeys Allah and His Messenger, achieves great success, Allah, the exalted, has declared in His Dignified Book (the Quran) : Verily, Allah and His angels invoke benediction on the Apostle. so, O ye who believe, invoke blessings on him and seek abundant peace for him.

Allah! Bestow on our Master and our Lord Muhammad and on his progeny, followers and his companions who obeyed him in adversity. Allah! Shower Thy perfect pleasure on those who excelled (to affirm faith) amongst the emigrants

and the helpers, particularly on the unanimously admitted the most excellent of mankind, next to the Prophets, the Amir of the believers, our master, Abu Bakr the most truthful (may Allah be pleased with him) and on the Amir of the believers, our master Umar Al-Farooq (may Allah be pleased with him) and on the Amir of the believers, our master, Usman b. Affān (may Allah be pleased with him) and on the Amir of the believers, our master, Ali (may Allah glorify his face) and on his two noble sons, the masters of the youth of the inmates of Paradise Hasan and Husain (may Allah be pleased with both of them) and on their mother, the leader of the ladies of the paradise, Fatimataz-Zahra (may Allah be pleased with her) and on all the companions of the Holy Prophet and their successors (may Allah be pleased with all of them).

Allah! Grant success to those who uphold the way of life taught by the Deen of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and make us amongst them; and humiliate those who humiliate the teachings of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and make us not amongst them. O servants of Allah! May Allah show mercy on you. Verily Allah, enjoins justice and kindness, and giving to kinsfolk, and forbids indecency, abomination and transgression. He exhorts you so that you always remember. Remember Allah, He will remember you (in adversity) Pray unto Him, He will respond to you. Indeed, the remembrance of Allah is the most high, most excellent, most dignified most superior, most grand and the greatest.

The Nuptial Sermon

It is propitious to read a sermon at a wedding ceremony in order to explain the significance of 'Nikah' (marriage contract) in divine law, and to bring home to the parties the requirements and heavy responsibilities imposed by this contract. With a view to derive the maximum benefit from the sermon, it is advisable for the preacher to translate the sermon and offer a brief exegesis of the text in the vernacular so that the assembly may fully appreciate the sermon. To this end, we reproduce below the text of the Nuptial Sermon along with its translation.

ان الحمد لله نستعينه ونستغفره ونعوذ بالله من شرور
 انفسنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادي
 له . واشهد ان لا اله الا الله واشهد ان محمدا عبده
 ورسوله .

يا ايها الذين امنوا اتقوا الله حق تقاته ولا تموتن الا وانتم
 مسلمون ○

يا ايها الناس اتقوا ربكم الذي خلقكم من نفس واحدة

وَنَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ط وَاتَّقُوا

اللَّهِ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ

رَقِيبًا ○

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا يُصَلِّحْ

لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ

وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا . (مشكوة)

وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي

لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَقُّكُمْ لَهُ وَلَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأَفِطِرُ وَأُحِلِّي

وَأَرْقُدُ وَأَتَزُوجُ النِّسَاءَ فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنِّي فَلَيْسَ

(بخاری)

مِنِّي .

Innalhamda lillāhi nastatnuhū wa nastaghfiruhū wa na'ūdhu billāhi min shurūri anfusinā man yahdihillāhu falā mudilla lahu waman yudlilhu falā hādīa lahu wa ash-hadu an lā-ilāha illallāhu wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasūluhu. Yā-ayyuhalladhina āmanut-taqullāha haqqa tuqātihī wala tamūtunna illā wa antum muslimūn.

Ya-ayyuhannās uttaqū rabbakumulladhī khalaqakum min nafsīn wāhidatin wa khalaqa minhā zaujahā wa bassa min huma rijalan kathīran wa nisā'. Wattaqullā-halladhī tasāa'lūna bīhi wal ūrhām. Innallaḥa kāna 'alaikum raqība,

Ya-ayyuhalladhīna āmanuttuqullāhu wa qūlu qaulan sadīdan yuslih lakum a'amālakum wa yaghfir lakum dhunubakum wa man yuti 'illāhu wa rasulahu faqad faza fauzan uzīma. (Mishkāt).

Wa qāla rasūlullāhi sallallāhu 'alaihi wasallam. Wallāhi innī la akhshākum lillāhi na atqākum lahū wa lakinnī asūmu wa uftiru wa usalli wa arqudu wa atazawwajun nisāa' faman raghibu 'an sunnatī falaisa minnī. (Bukhari)

"Thanksgiving and praise are due to Allah alone, we seek aid from Him alone; and we beseech forgiveness of our sins from Him only; and we consign ourselves to the protection of Allah against the evils of our souls and against all offences. Truly, whomsoever Allah guides on the straight path (and He puts him only on the straight path who sincerely desires to walk along that way), no one can lead him astray. And whomsoever God deflects (and He deflects only him who yearns to be deflected), no one can put him on the straight path. And I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and I testify that Muhammad is the bondman of Allah and His Messenger.

O Believers! Fear Allah, as He should be duly feared; and die not save you be Muslims.

O mankind! Fear the wrath of your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created his spouse; and from them twain hath spread (all over the world) a multitude of men and women. Fear Allah, in Whom you claim your rights from one another and (be careful in observing your duty to) the wombs (that bore you). / So! Allah is Watchful over you.

O Believers ! Fear God constantly ; and utter what is fair and sound God, then, will rectify your deeds and cover up your sins with forgiveness ; and whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, he indeed shall secure a glorious success”.

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) says. “By God! I fear Allah more than all of you; I save myself from the wrath of Allah more than do all of you; but I observe fast and sometimes I do not keep fast. I say prayers at night and I sleep also; and I also take women in marriage. Hence whosoever turns away from my way, he bears no relation with me”.

Istikhara

Do have 'Istikhara' on the eve of such important events of life as journey, Nikah (marriage contract), employment and in commercial matters. 'Istikhara' means 'to beseech goodness and welfare'. When your mind is in doubt as to which aspect of an important and lawful problem is propitious for you, you must perform an 'Istikhara' and, then, adopt the course suggested by your heart, taking it as the will of God. Whenever you are confronted with an issue of extraordinary importance, and find it difficult to reach the correct decision and adopt the right course, perform two Rak'ahs of supererogatory prayer at any hour outside the unpropitious and forbidden timings. Afterwards, offer the 'Istikhara' prayer. Hadrat Sa'd b. Abi Waqas (God be pleased with him) reports that the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) observed:

"It is propitious for the progeny of Adam to beseech goodness and welfare from God; and it is also propitious for the progeny of Adam to submit to the Will of God; and it is most unfortunate for the progeny of Adam if they do not beseech goodness and welfare from God and are not happy in the Will of God". (*Musnad Ahmed*)

The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also observed:

"One who observes 'Istikhara' is never disappointed; and the one who takes counsel is never put to shame; and the one who observes economy does not have to depend on others". (*Tabarani*)

Hadrat Jabir (God be pleased with him) states: "As the

Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) taught us the Qur'an, so also he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instructed us to observe 'Istikhara' in every matter. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to observe: When anyone among you is perplexed over an important matter, he should perform two Rak'ahs of super-erogatory prayer and then offer this prayer: (Bukhari)

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ وَأَسْأَلُكَ
 مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيمِ فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ
 وَأَنْتَ عَلَامُ الْغُيُوبِ ،

اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ خَيْرٌ لِي فِي دِينِي
 وَمَعِيشَتِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي فَأَقْدِرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي
 فِيهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعِيشَتِي
 وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي وَاصْرِفْنِي عَنْهُ وَاقْدِرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ
 حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ ارْضِنِي بِهِ .

*Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi'ilmika wa astaqdiruka
 biqudratika wa as'aluka min fadlikal-'azimi fa-innaka
 taqdiru wa la aqdiru wa ta'lamu la a'lamu wa anta
 'allamul-Ghuyyub.*

*Allahumma in kunta ta'lamu anna hadhal-amra khayrun
 li fi dini wa ma'ishaiti wa 'aqibati amri faqdirhu li wa
 yassirhu li thumma barik li fih wa in kunta ta'lamu*

*anna hadhal-amra sharrun li fi dini wa ma'ishati wa
āqibati amri fasrifhu 'anni wasrifni anhu waqdurli-
yal-khaira haithu kāna thumma ardint bihi.*

O Allah! I ask of Thee the good through Thy knowledge, and ability through Thy power and beg (Thy favours), out Thine infinite bounty. For, behold, Thou hast power; I have none. Thou knowest, I know not; and Thou art the great knower of things hidden.

O Allah! If in Thy knowledge this¹ matter be good for my faith, for my livelihood, and for the issue of mine affairs, then ordain it for me, and make it easy for me and bless me therewith. But if in Thy knowledge, this matter be bad for my faith, for my livelihood, and for the issue of mine affairs, then turn it away from me, and turn me away therefrom, and ordain for me the good wherever it be, and cause me to be pleased there with.

1. At this point, the supplicant should describe his need in place of the expression or should think of his need while uttering.

The Excellent Attributes of God

The most authentic and safe means of achieving purity of soul and contentment of heart is to devote your tongue to the remembrance of God, to commemorate His Attributes; to ponder over the significance of these Attributes, and to accustom yourself to absorb these Attributes in your mind and heart in perfect faith and awareness. The Holy Qur'an affirms:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذْ كُورُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً

(الاحزاب ٤٢)

وَأَصِيلًا ○

Ya-ayyuhalladhina āmanudhkurullāha dhikran kathiran wa sabbihūhu bukratan wa asila. (33 : 42).

“O Believers! Remember Allah abundantly and commemorate Him morning and evening”.

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

Wa lillahil asmāul husnā fad'ūhu bihā.

And Surah 'Ārāf reveals:

“And for Allah are excellent names. Invoke Him by them.

The detail and vast significance of these names has clearly been revealed in the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has also told us their

number and detail and pointing out the great reward that their retention in mind entails, he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has urged frequent remembrance of these Attributes. The Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has said:

“God has ninety-nine——one short of a hundred——names. Whosoever preserves these names in his memory shall enter Paradise”. (Bukhari).

The preservation of the Divine Attributes in your memory implies that you should understand their significance, absorb them, absorb their spirit and order your lives in conformity to them——the best course to achieve this end is that you should recite the Qur'an with zeal and fervour; develop the habit to study the meanings of the Qur'an; and make it a rule to reflect upon and evaluate the mandate of the Qur'an regularly. Study also with devotion and concentration those Traditions of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which explain the meaning and significance of these Attributes of God. In addition, make it a point to recite such propitious submissions to Allah and prayers having sanction of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with concentration and devotion as incorporate these Attributes of God. The scholars of the Qur'an have collected these ninety-nine excellent names of God from the text of the Qur'an itself.

ALLAH ^{الله}

This is the Personal Name of the Creator of the universe Who is the fount of all exalted virtues, goodness and blessings. No one ever has been called by this name before, nor is it lawful to call any one now by this name. Allah is the true object of all your devotions; to Him alone is due all your worship and sacrifice; and His protection is the only refuge

against all apprehensions. Hence cherish love for Him in your heart, offer true worship to Him only, and put all your trust and reliance upon Him alone.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ . (البقرة)

Walladhina āmanū ashaddo hubban lillahi.

(*Al-Baqarah*)

“And those who believe, cherish deep love for Allah”.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ

الدينَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ . (الزمر ٢)

Inna anzalnā ilaikal kitaba bilhaqqi fa'abudillāha mukhlisan lahuddīna alā lillāhiddīnil khālis. (39 : 2).

“(O Prophet, Verily, We have sent down the Book to thee with truth. So, worship Allah alone, with pure devotion for Him. Know well that obedience and devotion are the dues of Allah only”.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا أُشْرِكَ بِهِ .

Qul innamā umirtu an a'abudallāha wa lā ushrika bihi

“Say, I have been commanded to worship Allah only and not to appoint any one as His Partner”.

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

Wa 'alallāhi falyatawakkalil mutawakkilūn.

“And the trusting repose trust in Allah only”.

2. AL-RAHMAN الرَّحْمَنُ

He Who is very zealous in beneficence and Whose Mercy knows no bounds; the one who out of His Mercy has bestowed great bounties on mankind.

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ

Arrahmānu allamal qurāna khalaqal insāna 'allamahul bayān,

“The Rahman (Benificent) taught the Qur'an, created man and conferred on him the faculty of speech”.

The greatest expression of God's Beneficence is that He bestowed upon mankind such a supreme bounty as the Qur'an and then by conferring on man the faculty of speech, God elevated him to a distinctive position among the living species.

3. AL-RAHIM الرَّحِيمُ

He Whose Blessings are constantly descending, Whose perennial bounty never ceases. As in the world, man obtains sustenance, progresses forward, advances on the path of righteousness, and is enjoying an opportunity to act under the constant shade of God's Blessings, so also in the eternal world the pious shall secure a life of peace and luxury in a comfortable abode like Paradise by the grace of this Attribute of God.

وَأَنْ تَعْدُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصَوْنَهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

Wa in ta'uddū ni'matallahī lā tuhsūha Innallāha laghafūrurrahīm.

“And if you enumerate the bounties of God, you would not encompass them. Verily, He is Forgiving, Merciful.

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ۝ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ
سَلَامٌ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَرِيمًا .

*Howalladhi yusalli 'alaikūm wamalāi'katuhū liyukhri-
jakum minaz zulumāti ilannuri wa kāna bilmo'minīna
rahīma. Tahīyyatuhum yauma yalqaunahu salāmun wa
a' adda lahum ajran karīma.*

“It is He Who bestows blessings upon you and His angels (pray for blessings on you) in order that He may redeem you from darkness and bring you into Light; He is exceedingly Merciful to the believers. Their salutation on the day when they shall meet Him will be: Peace. And He has prepared for them a good recompense.

4. AL-MALIK الْمَلِكُ

Real King of the universe, Whose authority is supreme in both worlds.

فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ .

Fata'ālallāhul-malīkul haqqu.

“So, Supreme is Allah, the real King”.

5. AL-QUDDŪS الْقُدُّوسُ

Completely free from all defects and errors. Hence the Law He has transmitted to us is infallible.

6. AS-SALAM السَّلَامُ

Free from and immune to all foibles or failings.

7. AL-MU'MIN الْمُؤْمِنُ

Saviour and protector from all calamities and torments.

8. AL-MUHAIMIN الْمُحَيْمِنُ

Guardian of the creatures; He Who protects from sins.

9. AL-AZIZ الْعَزِيزُ

The only source of dignity and authority. One Whose sovereignty reigns supreme over all.

إِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا . (يونس)

Innal izzata lillahi jam'i'an (10 : 65)

“Verily, all Dignity is for God”.

10. AL-JABBĀR الْجَبَّارُ

The all powerful overlord, the Mighty; One Who sets right the destiny of His creatures.

11. AL-MUTAKABBIR الْمُتَكَبِّرُ

Fount of grandeur and sovereignty; Who has no partner in sovereignty.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ جَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ

الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ط سَجُنَ اللَّهُ عَمَّا

يُشْرِكُونَ ○ (الحشر ٢٣)

*Huwallāhulladhi la-ilāha illāhū Almalikul quddūsus
salamul-mo'minul-muhaiminul azizul jabbārul Mutakab-
bir. Subhānallāhi 'amma yushrikūn. (59: 23)*

“He is Allah, save whom there is no deity. The Sovereign Lord, the Flawless and the Holy One, Dispenser of Peace and tranquillity ;Guardian, Lord of all ; All powerful and Supreme; the Superb and Glorified over and above all they assign to Him as partners”.

12. AL-KHĀLIQُ الْخَالِقُ

Repository of befitting powers and faculties and bestower of the best form.

13. AL-BĀRIُ الْبَارِيُ

The nonsuch Inventor, who brings into being all from nonentity.

14. AL-MUSSAWIRُ الْمَصَوِّرُ

One who gives various shapes and forms to His creation,

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ (آل عمران)

Huwalladhi yusawwirukum fil arhāmi kaifa yashāu.

“It is He alone Who shapes you in the wombs of your mothers as He wills (Al-‘Imran)

وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوْرَكُمْ

Wa sawwarakum fa-ahsana suwarakum.

“He shaped you and shaped you well”.

هُوَ اللهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِيُّ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى

(الحشر ٢٤)

*Huwallāhul-khāliqul-bāri-ul-mussawwiru Iahul asmāu'l
husnā.* (59 : 24)

“He is Allah ; the Creator of the Universe, the originator, the Artist ; all the good names, indeed, belong to Him;

15. AL-GHAFFAR الْغَفَّارُ

All-Forgiving and All Foregoing.

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

(نوح)

Fa qultustaghfirū rabbakum innahu kāna ghaffāra.

(71 : 10).

“And I said: Seek forgiveness from Your Lord; He is All-Forgiving”.

16. AL-QAHHĀR الْقَهَّارُ

Full Sovereign and Perfect Authority over His creatures.

17. AL-WAHID الْوَاحِدُ

ONE, Who has no partner in His Person, Attributes, Powers and Privileges.

لَمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ .

Limanil mulk-alyauma lillāhil wāhidil Qahhār.

“In Whom doth the sovereignty vest this Day? In Allah, the One, All Dominant.

18. AL-TAWWAB التَّوَّابُ

One who relents to His creatures and accepts the repentance of the wrongdoers.

ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

Thumma tāba alaihim liyatūbū inn-allāha huwat tawwābur rahīm.

“God, then, turned to them So that they may repent In fact Allah is the Most Relenting and Most Merciful”

19. AL-WAHHĀB الْوَهَّابُ

Selfless Benefactor; and Generous.

وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ

Wa hab lanā min la-dunka rahmatan innaka antal wahhāb.