

Why does **GOD**  
command  
me?

Ali Reza Panahian

Some of the questions that will be answered in this book:

Many good people never abandon the Midnight Prayer even though it is a recommended action and not obligatory.


- So why did God make the Midnight Prayer obligatory for the Prophet (s)?! Was He worried the Prophet (s) would not do it?!
- If the third day of seclusion in the Mosque (I' tikāf) was recommended and not obligatory, we would have stayed anyway. So why did God make it obligatory?!
- If all divine given duties were recommended actions, wouldn't we feel better?
- How does God's promise of "punishment" and "reward" eliminate egotism?
- Is the desire to "not be obliged to do things" an unnatural feeling?
- What is the difference between a selfish enjoyment and an enjoyment through which one seeks God?
- How can we find release from egotistical recommended worship acts?
- Why does a person like to not adhere to commands and to not be obliged to do things?
- Why does a person sometimes like to be obliged to do things and adhere to commands?

بیان معنی







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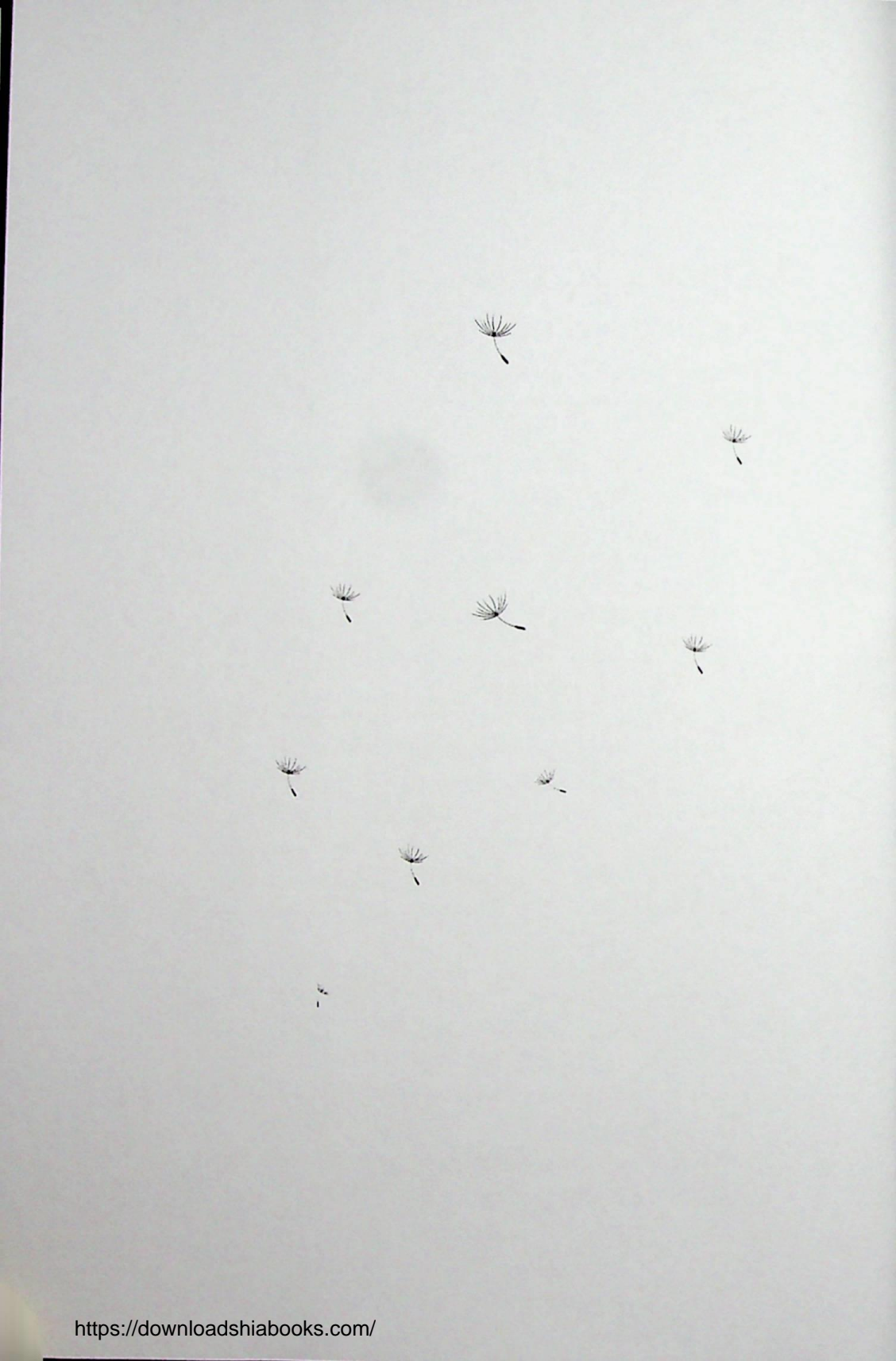
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**NOTES 65**





## **An Important Note**

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The main topic of this book is concerned with answering one of the questions young people most frequently ask about religion. Why does God command us? Why has God placed a large number of commands, prohibitions, and matters that are lawful and unlawful in His religion? Why has He threatened those who disobey His commands with Hell? Wouldn't it be better for God, like doctors, to give His prescription and plan for our health and perfection as a «suggestion» rather than as an order with threats of Hell? Then, whoever wanted to, could carry out this suggestion, and whoever didn't want to, it would be to his own loss. What is the need for giving orders and threatening with Hell? What is the need for and benefit of this number of commands about matters that are lawful and unlawful accompanied by the threat of Hell, which make some young people shun religion? This book answers such questions.

An explanation that should be given here for you, dear reader, is that one of the examples mentioned in this book is a worship act called «I`tikāf» or “spiritual retreat,” which is a kind of religious seclusion in the Mosque. Spiritual retreats are one of the common worship acts in all divine religions; and in Iran, most people are familiar with I`tikāf. But many Muslims living in other countries may not be as familiar



with the details of I'tikāf and so may not fully comprehend some of the examples given in this book. Therefore, we will give a very brief explanation of this special worship act here so that when you read the book, you may fully understand what the author means when referring to this worship act.

The word «I'tikaf» in Arabic means staying in one place. I'tikāf in religious terminology means staying in the Mosque for at least three days. During this stay, one should not leave the Mosque unless necessary and he/she must fast during the days. I'tikāf is not a worship act by force. Rather, it is a voluntary worship act with the aim of getting closer to God, and it has been mentioned in some verses of the Qur'an [2:18]. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran where the author lives, I'tikāf has gradually become especially popular among university students and professors. This movement started in the most prominent universities, such as the University of Tehran and Sharif University of Technology.

The joy, energy and deep peace that the youth gain during these three days has made the youth more and more desirous of participating in this worship act. Many seemingly non-religious youth and girls who for example do not wear the full Islamic covering have participated in this worship act.

After several years, the number of people applying to stay for I'tikāf in Mosques increased to such an extent that even large Mosques were not able to respond to all the requests of those who wished to participate. Therefore, people who were interested were forced to register much

in advance. And due to the high demand, some Mosques were forced to use a lottery system in order to choose those who would be able to participate.

Although I`tikāf is an optional act of worship, if someone performs I`tikāf for two days, I`tikāf becomes obligatory on the third day. Thus, he/she must stay in the Mosque on the third day and fast. This feature of I`tikāf has a subtle point, which is spoken about in this book. We hope you enjoy reading this book and receive the answers to these questions and others. God willing, you will also become more acquainted with the beauty and glory of God's commands.

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## **Publisher's Note**

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This book has two main sections:

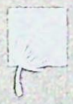
1. "Residing in God's House (the Mosque)" - This is a note for people who go into seclusion in the Mosque (I'tikāf). It includes some points for people to be able to benefit better from the spiritual opportunities of this seclusion or spiritual retreat. This book has studied I'tikāf from different angles and presented various explanations about it. These explanations about I'tikāf can be a start to a person's thinking about this special, outstanding worship act.
2. "The Glory of God's Commands" - This section answers the question "Why does God command me?" from a viewpoint that is based on training and ethics. In addition, it also attempts to explain some of Islam's deep educational concepts in a simple way. The valuable effect of this section of the book is the enjoyable, glorious, pleasant image that stays in the reader's mind about the concept "God's commands," and it will automatically impact his/her spiritual growth.


Bayan Manavi [The Official Office for the Compilation and Publication of Ali Reza Panahian's Works]



Chapter 4  
**Residing in God's  
House (the Mosque)**

• A note for people in I'tikaf





## **A NOTE FOR PEOPLE IN I`TIKĀF**

We should first look at what exactly happens when a person participates in a spiritual retreat and stays in seclusion in the Mosque (I`tikāf). The Mosque is a place for worshiping and not for residing. However, during the period of seclusion you reside in the Mosque, although it is only for three days. You confine yourself for two days so that on the third day, God confines you<sup>1</sup> and takes your hand to help you. You restrict yourself to breathe in the Mosque's environment during all the hours of these days and nights. You do not go out of the place of prayer and do not leave from being under the dome of God's house (for three days). Why?

It is as if you want to see some things about the Mosque

that the people who come, pray, and go do not see. It is abominable to stay in the Mosque overnight unless it is for I'tikāf. You use this opportunity to experience sleeping in the Mosque. This brings about an awakening. It is as if Mosques have some hidden parts, which you are able to discover when you stay in them for a period. You stay so that when others go, you may sit waiting for the Mosque to show its internal reality to you.

You want to see what the difference is between God's House and other places. Is God, Who is present everywhere, more present in His house? Will the Mosque's environment gradually start talking to you? The unseen world is always unseen. However, perhaps if you reside in the place that is the most connected place to the unseen world, it will show some of its unseen realities to you. By the way, with which senses does a human being understand and feel the unseen? It is not with the eyes or the ears. It is not possible with the senses of touch or smell either. It is not even something the mind can do. We have been told that one can see and understand the unseen with his or her heart. Is the heart a tool for perception? Yes, the heart is the only tool for perceiving the unseen world, and we will see God with our hearts on the Day of Judgment.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, you stay in the Mosque so that your heart will start working and for your heart's eyes to open up. You even stop eating and drinking so that this may help "your heart to work." You can understand the rituals for I'tikāf from what has been said. Perhaps you should talk less there and communicate with others by just smiling or



with a kind, quick look. You must try to do whatever you can to stop your heart from being hard. At the same time that you are with the crowd, try to not lose your solitude either. We are unable to understand that the world is in God's presence, and we are unable to feel His presence. Therefore, it is good if we go to the Mosque and try to feel God's presence since His presence is more tangible in the Mosque. At least one time feel His presence here a little deeper than all other times and places. After leaving the Mosque, we will still feel we are in His presence for a while.

I'tikāf means that time is needed for a person to understand some things. Three days is a short, compact time. In the same way, daily, continuous programs mean doing something constantly. Each of these somehow has an effect. It is necessary for a person to do his deeds continuously, and it is also necessary for a person to sometimes spend a short, compact time to heal his mood so that his deeds will be effective. They do the same thing for curing some physical illnesses too. Sometimes a continuous program of medicines is required, and sometimes when it becomes worse, a compact schedule of medicines is needed.

One day we will stand in front of God and meet Him. We will understand at that time that whatever we always wanted was God Himself. We will understand that we should have lived our whole life remembering this moment that was to come and increasing our capacity for this moment. Because each person will be allowed to savour and delight in meeting Him there according

to his/her capacity. However, it will be too late for us to regret there. It was necessary for us to have practiced for meeting God in each prayer from before, and we should have paid attention to this meeting.

We should remember that I`tikāf means insisting to meet God, which is not a childish act. This insisting to meet God must be suited to who we are. Asking for martyrdom was suited to those soldiers who were struggling on the path of God. A person in I`tikāf should have written his will. The Mosque is the place for praying, and prayer is where we meet God. It is also the place for practicing and pleading to meet Him. A person in I`tikāf is playing with his or her life. A person who has experienced I`tikāf and pleads to reside in the land of his/her Beloved is not afraid of dying. Of course, a person who is like this will remember meeting God very much.<sup>3</sup> In addition, his deeds will become good<sup>4</sup> and his life will become long.<sup>5</sup> In general, I`tikāf means becoming ready to reside in God's presence forever.

I`tikāf means residing in the place of prayer.<sup>6</sup> If the peak of prayer is prostration, I`tikāf means residing in the place for prostration. What greatness does this luminous spot have in a human being's life that his or her whole life should be used to understand this? I`tikāf is an attempt to understand prostration. In order to understand something, one should go to its place, so that he/she can see it from close up. The Mosque is the place of prostration.

We human beings start our lives in childhood. We never forget this period, and its pure moments will

never leave our hearts. How calm we were in the shelter of our mothers' embraces, and how free we were in our fathers' houses. What security and sincerity we had there! Wherever a person goes and to whatever point he reaches, it will never be like his/her childhood. No matter how much this person searches, he/she will never find that golden era.

We have not been created to regret our past. Therefore, a more basic question arises. We were happy in our fathers' houses and were content in our mothers' warm embraces. Where are we supposed to be going that will be better than that place? Where should we reach to that all of our past happiness will be an introduction to it? If we had a kind mother in the beginning and were safe with our father, our situation is not supposed to be worse when we grow up. We are supposed to reach to a God Who is kinder than a mother and brings more safety than a father.

So what about the Mosque? All the enjoyments that were present in our fathers' houses can be felt here too. All the lost feelings of being in our mothers' embraces can be felt here too. Actually, you feel that this is your own house. This house is a shelter for your soul, which is restless and seeking the infinite. After a person experiences I'tikāf, one usually understands how much he/she needed this spiritual retreat and how good a place the Mosque is.

If I had not come to I'tikāf and had not confined myself in God's good house, how could I have understood the true definition of the Mosque? You should stay in this house for a while to understand why Masjid al-Ḥarām,

which is the most important Mosque in the world, has been said to be a house for the people.<sup>7</sup>

I'tikāf is a plan, which has been designed to make us acquainted and more familiar with God's house. After I'tikāf you understand that you need the house of the Creator of the universe as much as you need your own family house, and even more. It was necessary for us to become familiar with this house of our Creator one day.

When we compare God's house with our own house, we see that if our house is a place for our material body, the Mosque is a place of refuge for our infinite soul. Some people realize the greatness of their own soul in the Mosque too. Our soul is very great, and not everyone is able to understand this. Sometimes one can only realize the greatness of his/her soul in the Mosque, which in itself is a place that is spiritually very great.

If a person distances himself from this world based on his own choice - of course not completely on his own, but with God's permission and under His command - his worldly affairs will become much easier.<sup>8</sup> Passing through the hardships of this world will become easier for him too.<sup>9</sup> This is similar to fasting where you do not eat or drink based on your own choice, and as a result, your digestive system becomes healthier and your overall health is more assured. I'tikāf is three days of fasting or abstaining from the world; fasting from the city, streets and bazars; fasting from one's house and work; and fasting from the family. Afterwards when you return, all affairs will become easier.

I'tikāf is a group practice of individual worshiping. It

is a way of finding one's lost self in the crowd. So you should be careful not to lose yourself in the Mosque and in the group of believers. You must not just become busy with others. Actually, you should find yourself and not lose yourself again. Be careful to be considerate of others, because you are not alone. Only seeing ourselves when we are with others is selfishness, and being considerate of the group while protecting our own private time is a practice in seeking God. I'tikāf is the surprising practice of both being considerate of a group and protecting our own private time.

During the period of I'tikāf, and while we are among the group of believers, we should practice worshiping non-pretentiously, not being hypocritical when praying the Midnight Prayer in a crowd, ignoring other people's looks, being uninterested in the encouragement of others, being reluctant for other people's affection, and distancing ourselves from others. While we are distancing ourselves from others, at the same time we should not only respect them but we should also be affectionate toward them too and answer their affection with humbleness.

One should practice sincerity and being alone while being among the crowd. We should be careful not to compare ourselves with others in a bad way causing ourselves to become disappointed. If someone is better than we are - everyone is better than we are - we should tell ourselves, "Maybe God doesn't expect more than this from a weak person like me." If we see someone who is worse than us - that cannot be found - we should say, "Maybe God doesn't expect more than this from him."

I'tikāf is an intense course in practicing the etiquettes involved in relationships with the believers. We should have a pure heart in our friendships and be the first one to say hello. Let's not become bothered or bother others. Let's not praise people in front of themselves<sup>10</sup> and not gossip about others when they are absent. Let's be tolerant and not impose ourselves on others. Let's remember the unpleasant smell of the breath of a person who fasts, which can be a reminder for not talking to the person next to us. We should take a shower before entering the Mosque, and after that, we must try to be neat and clean.

Let's not become repelled by other people's cries and not get tired due to other people's laughing or being careless. Let's be alone with our God while being among the crowd, and let's communicate with others like a child who looks at others while he is in his father's embrace. In such a situation, as soon as the child gets tired, he turns his face away and rests his head on his father. Let's go into prostration when we become tired.

Now, let's think about, "Why have we come for I'tikāf?" and "Why has God granted us this blessing and let us enter His house?" In order to enter any house, one must obtain permission. Many of the people who have become secluded in the Mosque have this permission either visibly or covertly. The fact that they have come is the reason showing they have permission. This is true except for the few people who have not come with a good intention and bad intentions have dragged them to this environment, which is not usually the case among those who have sought religious seclusion in the Mosque. Such

people do not usually benefit from this spiritual retreat very much either.

Perhaps we have been given this opportunity because the kind God wants to bring us closer to Himself. He wants to count our small amount of worshiping, even though He Himself has given us this blessing that we were able to do it, in order to grant us a reward. With our slight worshiping, He wants to grant us great rewards if we do not destroy it with our own hands.

Perhaps we were given this opportunity because God saw that we were going astray, and if He hadn't brought us to His house and bestowed His blessings and mercy upon us, there wouldn't have been any hope for us and we would have totally ruined ourselves. Since we had become so bad, He felt sorry for us and had mercy on us.

Perhaps we were given this opportunity because we were delusional in our thoughts about the little amount of goodness that exists in us and had become proud of ourselves! He wanted to show us some people who are better than ourselves in I'tikāf so that we may realize our slightness. Seeing these pure people around us may cause us to become humbler. Then, we will forget our delusional thoughts about being exalted people.

Perhaps we have come to become released from enemies who show themselves to be our friends. Becoming freed from bad friends is much more important than shaking hands with good friends. Perhaps this three-day absence can eliminate these mismatched friends. The Prophet of God (s) stated, "Prophet Moses (as) could no longer tolerate talking with people after talking with God for

three days. He was repelled when he saw the people."<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps God wants to show an example of a pure believer to other believers, so that this person may teach others sincerity and piety; although, this is very unlikely. For me this is impossible, but if this applies to you good readers, do not become proud. Because, the Almighty God uses the smallest good trait in His servant to be a lesson for good people and an example for those who are interested. This is due to His goodness. We should be busy remembering our lacks. May God give us the grace to be useful for others.

Perhaps it is so that He may take us out from complete hopelessness and eliminate the effects of Satan's continuous, evil whisperings in our ears. Because Satan tells us, "You will never become a good person and God will never care about you." Then it will become clear to us that we still have a kind God Who watches over us. And we can be a private guest in His house.

Perhaps the Merciful God wants to save us from the world of ingratitude and ungratefulness that starts in us when we are faced with tribulations and problems. Sometimes, instead of removing the problems of one of His servants, which help His servant to grow, He gives him/her an opportunity to rest. By drowning people in worship acts, He grants them energy to persevere.

Perhaps this is our last chance to move forward toward God. The Gracious God wants to test us in the final stage. Will we return to Him? Will we make a change in the path of our lives? Will we take this last chance to wake up or not? Perhaps this will truly be our last chance for life, not



just our last chance to move forward.

Perhaps we should not look at the reason for this opportunity but leave ourselves in between hope and fear, put ourselves in His hands and ask Him the reason for this blessing in the next world for Him to manifest the answer to us. What I wanted to stress is that come let us repel pride and arrogance from the beginning since these are often born with good deeds. Let us not destroy our worship acts, because there are many possible reasons for this blessing of being able to be present in the Mosque.






Chapter 2

# The Glory of God's Commands

- Spirituality Without Obligatory Deeds
- Pleading for His Commands
- The Secret Behind God's Commands Being Obligatory
- Other Things That Oppose Our Own Will
- A Religiosity Like Pharaoh
- A Life Filled With God's Commands and Prohibitions
- The Culture of I'tikāf
- Egotistical Recommended Worship Acts
- The Position of the Guardian in the System of Divine Commands
- Why didn't some of the people of Kufa like the Commander of the Faithful, `Alī (as)?
- Why did some people love the Commander of the Faithful, `Alī (as), so much?





## **■ SPIRITUALITY WITHOUT OBLIGATORY DEEDS**

In religion, we are faced with the subject “God’s commands and prohibitions” or “the divine laws about obligatory and forbidden deeds.” One of the reasons why some people escape from religion is God’s commands and prohibitions. Since there is a kind of force involved in these commands, people do not feel comfortable and free to a certain extent in the religious environment. This is especially true since the philosophy behind God’s commands in the religious regulations cannot be understood that easily in many cases. They are not moral values, the goodness or evil of which are more obvious.

This matter may be seen more in worship acts. An

example is the command about prayers. The necessity for carrying out this command of God's cannot be understood that easily. In addition, the need to keep repeating it makes it seem harder than any other deed. We should look for the reason behind people not praying, or not paying enough attention to prayer, in this factor. Many people like spirituality to be a kind of being in love with God and a free relationship between a servant and his Master.

Although, it is true that having a relationship with God based on affection is very valuable, and basically it is a goal and a criterion for spiritual growth. But spirituality, when interpreted to be a loving relationship, is not something that contradicts God's commands and prohibitions. This is an uninformed way of looking at religious commands to say that they are contrary to loving God, and are a duty that are carried out by force and are contrary to a human being's freedom to move toward God.

Some have theorized this commonly held belief, and they present a special kind of popular spirituality. They try to satisfy a human being's spiritual needs with this kind of spirituality, which is usually promoted without religious laws but while retaining many moral virtues. This common belief about spirituality, which seems to be desirable in the beginning, deceives many naive people who do not like to be irreligious but on the other hand cannot tolerate worshipping and adhering to divine commands.

In fact, some cunning people justify how some common<sup>12</sup> people flee from "religiosity and adhering

to divine given duties." They create different kinds of mysticism and spirituality that are without religious laws. Apparently this is a widespread feeling that human beings do not like to feel obligated to do things. They like to do whatever they want freely and based on their own desires. However, the truth is that this is a superficial and artificial feeling, which comes about in a person due to certain mental quandaries. Because, a person's innate nature actually likes servitude and accepting his duties. If he takes action to resolve his problems and shortcomings, or if he thinks and ponders some about himself during his leisure time, he will be able to feel that his innate nature's tendency is toward God's commands and prohibitions. I'tikāf is a good opportunity for a person to become more familiar with his inner being.

## **PLEADING FOR HIS COMMANDS**

Let's search within our own souls and find our interest for His commands so that adhering to God's commands becomes easier for us. Then we will even enjoy obeying the Lord and will find a solution for a person's will wanting to flee from his/her duties. Let's start from here that we should see if all divine commands were only recommended actions, and human beings were not forced to perform any of the divine commands, would they feel better? Let's refer to our own experience even if it is slight. I ask you who are in I'tikāf in the Mosque. If I'tikāf did not include any commands or prohibitions from the Lord, was it still enjoyable? Why has God made some

worship acts and good deeds obligatory for His servants? If a person's mind is satisfied in this regard, his soul will cooperate better in performing the divine commands.

At first glance, participating in a spiritual retreat, or I'tikāf, is a recommended deed.<sup>13</sup> This means it is not compulsory for you to go for I'tikāf and to be in religious seclusion. However, if we look more deeply, it becomes clear that although seclusion is not obligatory, I'tikāf ends with an obligatory action. After you have been secluded in the Mosque for two days, it becomes obligatory for you to stay on the third day and to fast on that day.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, I'tikāf is a recommended pleading in order to reach to an obligatory action. By way of a relatively hard worship act, we struggle for two days in order to reach to the divine obligatory command on the third day.

From this point of view, I'tikāf is something like Ihrām (putting on the pilgrim's garb and making the intention to go for Hajj), when making a voluntary pilgrimage to the Ka`ba (`Umrah al-Mufradah). A person who goes into religious seclusion in the Mosque is acting like a pilgrim going to the Ka`ba (Muḥrim). If a person has not planned to make a pilgrimage to the Ka`ba and has not travelled to Mecca, the actions that are prohibited for a person who is making such a pilgrimage are not prohibited for him. The prohibitions, which are prohibited for a Muḥrim, are all prohibited after the pilgrim to the Ka`ba takes action and pleads for this. It is as if a person who makes the voluntary pilgrimage to Mecca prepares and struggles to bring a shower of the Lord's commands and prohibitions on himself.



To put it simply, I'tikāf means a person choosing to bring troubles upon oneself. Although this is the case if we consider becoming obliged to do an obligatory command to be bringing troubles upon ourselves. This is like making a voluntary pilgrimage to the Ka'ba. It is not like the obligatory pilgrimage where a person who is capable of making this trip is obliged to go. Rather, it is like the voluntary pilgrimage ('Umrah al-Mufradah)<sup>15</sup> where you yourself decide to go to the house of God. In the voluntary pilgrimage, as soon as you want to enter God's sanctum you must become Muḥrim. When you become Muḥrim, you impose some obligatory actions upon yourself. I use the word "impose" on purpose, so that the bitterness of God's commands being obligatory - at least in some people's opinion - may be easily felt.

Of course, recommended actions are not without commands either, although the commands are not as strong as they are for obligatory actions. Because, there is a certain amount of the God of the universe's signals and permission within them. We do these actions because they are God's recommended "commands." Otherwise, why do you not seclude yourself in the Mosque at other times, or why do you not go into seclusion in other places? If God's commands are dear for a person, he does recommended actions too. Otherwise, he will consider the recommended deeds to be actions from which he can escape and not actions he needs to do. In any case, a person cannot taste the same thing in recommended actions that he does in carrying out the obligatory commands.

In I'tikāf, when you stay in the Mosque for the first two

days, which is recommended, you make God's command obligatory on yourself on the third day. You could have tried to get close to God by doing other recommended deeds, but they would not have had the same result. Why did you look for a recommended deed that ended up in an obligatory deed? Why did you search for an obligatory deed to do? It is as if you say, "God, make a deed obligatory for me. I like to execute Your orders. I like to be prohibited from a deed and for some deeds to become obligatory or forbidden for me by You." Why should one do this?

Look at the beautiful feeling the one who goes for I'tikāf has on the third day. He looks at all the people in the world and is proud of himself that, "I am subjected to God's command for staying in the Mosque. Today, my Master has kept me. Today I have received a mission from my Owner and Commander." This beautiful feeling is a reality, and anyone who looks deeply a little bit can see this in those who have secluded themselves in the Mosque. On the sunset of the third day, when God's command to remain ends, a person who has secluded himself feels his heart is heavy and he leaves the Mosque with a mysterious sorrow. Although he is happy for having participated in the I'tikāf, he feels heavyhearted since it is finishing. He feels like crying and would like to conduct his farewell ceremony with the Mosque with sincere sighs and lamentations.

If I'tikāf on the third day were recommended and not obligatory, all of you would still definitely stay in the Mosque. So why did God prefer to make staying in the

Mosque on the third day obligatory for you who have come yourself? When we make a voluntary pilgrimage to the Ka`ba, why are a series of God's obligatory commands showered upon us? If going on this pilgrimage did not have this series of commands and these acts were just recommended deeds - for example, if it was recommended to not look in the mirror, etc. - all of us would definitely do these recommended deeds. So why did God make all these deeds obligatory? Was He worried that we would not adhere to them? Otherwise, why did He make them obligatory?

We can ask such a question in another situation too. Why did the Almighty God make the Midnight Prayer obligatory for the Holy Prophet (s)?<sup>16</sup> It was definitely not so that he would not abandon the Midnight Prayer. It was definitely not due to a concern about the Prophet's (s) power of understanding to be able to understand the necessity and the value of the Midnight Prayer. So why was it obligatory for him? Even many of the followers of his teachings would never abandon the Midnight Prayer although it is recommended and not obligatory. We see God treats the Prophet (s) with only honor and respect. Perhaps a deed being obligatory and an obligatory command being issued by the Lord is a way of honoring the servant.

The truth is that with the above explanation we have no choice but to accept this analysis. This custom can easily be seen with respect to many of God's commands. When we are His guests in the holy month of Ramadan and He wants to honor us, He makes fasting obligatory

for us. Aside from its hardships, the fact that fasting is obligatory is very interesting. With all the threats that have been mentioned for abandoning fasting,<sup>17</sup> what kind of banquet<sup>18</sup> is this?

Therefore, we can see that the Almighty God honors His servants with His obligatory commands. What kind of relationship exists between this way of honoring and obligatory commands? What important benefit comes from this obligation?

One of the important benefits that we can see from an obligatory command is that when God makes a deed obligatory, the servant's interference in being able to choose in this command is much less, and the believer's egotism is eliminated. In other words, the servant does not have the right to choose. It is the Master Who has determined the deed and how it should be done, and He has commanded His servant to do it. We had not chosen to do this deed to feel that God owes us something after doing it and that we have done Him a favor by doing a good deed. In recommended deeds, our egotism is present more.

Perhaps this is why obligatory deeds are preferred to recommended ones, and the value of carrying out obligatory actions and avoiding prohibited deeds is more than doing recommended actions.

The second point is that when a deed is obligatory, it shows the necessity of that deed. A divine decree concerning doing or avoiding a deed shows the importance of its effects. At the same time, it is a sign of God's grace to His servant. It is also a sign of the Lord's

attention and kindness. Therefore, He has bestowed His grace on His servants in two ways. One grace is that the kind God does not want you to be doomed or to be deprived from an important blessing. The other point is that He wants to minimize the interference of your egotism in deciding to do or to abandon a deed. In this way, your deed will become more luminous and have more effect in your spiritual growth.

Obligatory deeds are commands that make a person luminous more than recommended deeds do. The light from obligatory deeds is more than the light from recommended ones. Although, recommended deeds are an introduction to and supplement of obligatory deeds. After doing obligatory actions, a person can grow faster than after doing recommended actions.

Now try to understand the spirit of the divine commands and implement them in your life. Then see how if the main essence of the beauty of I'tikāf is understood and it penetrates our souls and our society, what a change will come about.

## **THE SECRET BEHIND GOD'S COMMANDS BEING OBLIGATORY**

Why should a person like obligatory deeds more than recommended deeds? Why should a person want a deed to become obligatory for him first then do it? For every moment that you do a deed in order to get closer to God, if that action is obligatory, it has more value than the moments when you do that same deed when it is

recommended. Why is it like this?

It is due to the fact that when we do a recommended deed, our egotism is present more. However, when a deed is obligatory, you cannot really say, "That was me! I did it." Since it was obligatory, you had to do it and could not say, "God, I could have avoided doing this deed." In that case, the angels would have told you, "Excuse me! This was an obligatory deed. You would have been very wrong if you did not do it." This is where a person's egotism crumbles. Of course, we are talking about a faithful person for whom God's commands automatically take him toward action. Otherwise, the unbelievers who are not concerned with divine commands are outside of our discussion.

It is as if the true meaning of the beautiful phrases "being bounded" and "being compelled to servitude" concerning human beings are manifested here. The word "servitude" is very beautiful, and the moment when God "binds" His servant is very beautiful. It is as if when you stretch out your hand toward God and you want to shake hands with Him, He binds you and pushes you to serve Himself.

Which way do you think is more beautiful, if you go with your own will, or if you are bound and taken? If you ask people, many who are far from the subject of spiritual matters - or to say it in a better way, are negligent of their innate nature - will say, "It's obvious. If you go with your own will, it is much better than them taking you." However, the mystics who are in I'tikāf or are Muḥrim know that if we are bound and taken, it is much

more beautiful. Of course, this does not require much knowledge of mysticism to be understood. Our innate nature, since we have been created as servants, asks for this. We have been created for servitude. The Qur'an says, "*And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me.*"<sup>19</sup> People who have not covered or harmed their innate nature will enjoy being God's servant. The moment when God decrees a command is the moment to understand the relationship between a servant and his/her Master. This is what we have lost.

In a situation where there is God's command and I do something because I am forced to carry it out, this is more luminous because there is no "I" involved. The presence of "I" darkens the soul. "I," its presence, and its effect on any action tarnishes that action. Although in the beginning of your movement and in choosing the way to God, the role of "I" is a blessing. It is possible that you have started moving toward God for your own benefit. However, if you have accepted God to be your God and have accepted your servitude toward Him, the more you move toward Him, the more this role of "I" should become weaker.

Thus, the bad "I" that says, "I want to infringe on other's rights" needs to become weaker. We should investigate and see how this pharaonic "I" has come to reach such a state of rebellion. What is the root of this evilness? When have these vices grown inside one? How has an evil, rebellious person who has no mercy for anyone come to this state? He/she has nurtured this "I" and allowed it to be free to such an extent that it cannot be controlled

anymore. When a person does not diminish his egotism by worshiping and obeying divine commands, and his "I" becomes strengthened, he cannot stop its rebellion anymore. Then he says, "I like to sin." After having given your "I" so much freedom, see if you can control it. You have given it freedom where you should not have. Now stop it if you can.

When is it that we should stop this "I"? It is when we start to say, "I want to object to this 'I,'" but then we see that "I" is still present! How can egotism be eliminated when "I" is still present? A knife won't cut its own handle. That is why no matter how much some people fight with their own will, they do not become good people and they don't become luminous. Eventually, they will rise up against their spirituality and morality one day. This is because they have kept their "I."

Therefore, God Himself comes to our help and He crushes our "I" with His commands. He says, "It's obligatory for you to pray." In this way, God has crushed our "I" with His command due to His beneficence.

One misplaced question that is very common is, "What need does God have for our prayer?" Since prayer is obligatory, this person feels that it is as if God has a need for our prayer. Some people may even imagine that God has humiliated Himself a little by making it obligatory. That is because they say that we should not ask people for something if we think they may not accept it. Perhaps these people would suggest that it would have been better if God did not make prayer obligatory so that His magnanimity would have been maintained. They are



neglecting the fact that since He is magnanimous He has made prayer obligatory for us so that He may eliminate the roots of selfishness in us.

## **OTHER THINGS THAT OPPOSE OUR OWN WILL**

The Almighty God has done another favor to His servants too and that is preparing a painful Hell in case people abandon His commands.<sup>20</sup> The effect of this Hell can be studied from this angle that divine torment plays a unique role in eliminating our egotism. When you think about divine punishment, nothing of "I" remains to make a commotion to encourage one to not obey God's commands. Even after obeying God's commands, this looming punishment prevents you from becoming proud.

In the same way, divine rewards have the important effect of building our souls and separating us from our egotism. For any good deed that you do, God will reward you. Actually, when there is a reward for each good deed, you become small in front of the Almighty God in a way. He has told you from the beginning, "For every good deed that you do, I will give you your wages<sup>21</sup> so that you can understand you are a worker and feel that you have an employer. You will see that everything has worked together to train you to be a servant and to teach you servitude, because the way to obtaining all the blessings that God has placed for human beings is through this servitude.

God's way of dealing with people does not change

with even His best servants. He even rewards Ḥusayn (as).<sup>22</sup> It is as if God tells His Ḥusayn (as), "My Ḥusayn, you are dying for Me in the ditch. But no one should think that this is a loving relationship with a beloved who is equal to His servants. I (God) will reward you in return."

If Imam Ḥusayn (as) were to say, "God, no I don't want any reward. My action was only because of You. I don't want to be rewarded at all, etc." an inappropriate kind of self-sufficiency could be felt from this way of talking. Thus, we can see that God will even reward Imam Ḥusayn (as).

That is why the meaning of what God is saying in the Qur'an is this, "Martyrs trade with God, and I won't give them less than their due wage."<sup>23</sup> I am God and not a beloved who needs others to sacrifice themselves for Me. I am the beloved God." The difference between the beloved God and some other beloved person is that when God is the beloved, you like to obey His commands so that you will be rewarded. Of course, this is different from a situation where you like a reward.

In his last will to Imam Ḥasan (as) and Imam Ḥusayn (as), Imam `Alī (as) said, "Work for the wages that God will give."<sup>24</sup> It is not the reward that we like. We like to be rewarded by God. This shows our smallness in front of the One Whom we are worshipping. This relationship between a servant and his Master is not destroyed even in the most loving relationship.

I ask that when you want to define prayer to pay attention to this aspect of prayer that it is "obligatory." When you want to talk about prayer, pay special

attention to this point that prayer is obligatory. Prayer is not talking to God whenever we want. That is not what we call prayer! If in the beginning of a prayer you say, "God, I am praying because I want to talk to You. '*Allāhu Akbar* (God is Greater)," this prayer is not accepted. If you behave in this way, you have not prayed yet. Rather, you should have this intention, "God, I am praying the two cycle Morning Prayer that You have commanded me to pray. '*Allāhu Akbar*.'" Of course, you can talk about your needs and wants while you are doing this obligatory deed too. And it is very good to do so. It is good to do so because He Himself has given permission to you to talk about your needs when you are praying. Actually, He has advised us to do so.

Of course, it is not only with God's commands that our egotism is crushed. Tragedies and tribulations can crush our egotism too. It is obvious that it is much better if we become humble with God's commands. Some people at the time of death gain the humbleness that they should have had when they were standing on their praying mat. And the arrogance and egotism that should have been crushed during worshipping is crushed when they are dying.<sup>25</sup>

Another time that our egotism is eliminated is when we are belittled by some domineering power, or when arrogant, aggressive people humble us. If you do not become God's servant and become humble in front of Him, such people know how to humble you before themselves. They do all that they can so that you will not become God's servant. Then you will easily become

their servant. There is a mysterious relationship between God's guardianship and the guardianship of the Ṭāghūt (domineering powers).

We must choose with which way we want to lose our egotism. Do we want to choose the way where no trace will remain of us, we become despised through tragedies and death, and we do not gain any dignity? Or, shall we choose the way by which our egotism is eliminated in front of the Almighty God and through servitude, we become drowned in His Greatness, we gain dignity from Him and we become eternal? If we wish to experience being humble only in being His servant, which is the same as being dignified, we must understand God's kindness that He has commanded us so that we may grow and advance. We should see God's kindness in His commands.

This way of looking at God's commands as being kind and uplifting is different from popular culture. For now, popular culture is under the influence of humanism and it looks at spirituality only as a tool for gaining calmness and relieving a person. It only accepts a god that serves human beings. That which the arrogant, aggressive groups in the world have made popular in today's culture, and which the unbelievers like, is that everything is at the service of a person's egotism. Religion and spirituality have been weakened with this same outlook. Obedience, worshiping, duties and religious laws have faded. It is clear why they invite people to be irreligious and to escape from being God's servant.

## ■ A RELIGIOSITY LIKE PHARAOH

Some people like to follow religion in a certain way. For example, they say, "Sir, talk about prayer in such a way that I will like it and be satisfied to pray." One should answer them, "What value does that prayer have?" Of course, it is good for people to sometimes pay attention to the beauties and wisdom of God's commands. Perhaps what many people mean by such a question is that they want to hear something about the reasons for prayer so that their hearts will become illuminated and they will become motivated to pray. However, one needs to be careful of his or her own desires. We should not wait until we see prayer to be in harmony with our own desires to worship God.

It is true that a person may not have yet reached this maturity to understand that doing deeds according to one's own personal desires and likings is disgraceful. For such people, one should speak about the tangible benefits of prayer as much as possible for now until they become interested in praying and worshipping, or at least they avoid sinning. Then gradually one can talk to them about truths. In general, worship acts are a path for us to separate ourselves from our own ego and own will.

God's good servants strictly avoid allowing their own "will" and "self" to influence their being, behavior, thinking, and wishes. They say, "May this idol of 'I' die rather than me worship God because of this idol." Because God would become second in such a case, and the idol "I" would be first. If you say, "I like to read the Qur'an now,"

how valuable will this recitation be?! Let's see! What has happened that you want to recite the Qur'an? Has the first idol allowed you to worship God?

This is why believers are worried and are not sure about themselves when they do a good deed.<sup>26</sup> One of the reasons they are worried is because they think, "Perhaps I did this worship act since it was in accordance with my will." Each of us has a Pharaoh within ourselves that is capable of saying, "*I am your Lord, the most high.*"<sup>27</sup> We should be careful that our worship acts do not become like Pharaoh's deeds. Say, "O God! What is Your command? Command me! Even put Your Heaven and Hell that is the result of our deeds in response to Your commands and prohibitions in front of me so that I will understand that I have no choice other than to carry out Your command."

Some people imagine they have done God a favor by worshipping Him and sometimes thinking about Him. It is as if they are being kind to God. They are making God small. It is as if He is something likeable but subordinate to them, or He is like a form of transportation to take them wherever they want to go. God forbid, they want God to be like a car at their disposal.

They are so egotistic that they only worship God when they want. But no, let us worship God due to His commands! See how this way of looking at things burns the roots of sinning. Not only does it burn the roots of sinning, it also waters the pure seedling that is stretching its head up to the heavens and the purified soul inside a person to strengthen its roots. The elimination of "I" deepens the roots of the seedling of purifying the soul,

which is within a person's being.

God willing, try to read the Qur'an very much during these three days. Look at the verses of the lovable Qur'an and see how God deals with His servants. He does not bring down His divine status even an epsilon. God's high status is not lowered at all. By repeatedly reviewing the verses of the Holy Qur'an, we can believe that God is our Lord, the Most High and that we are extremely minute before Him. By reviewing the Qur'an, we will understand that a bigger existence is over us, and that we are submissive to Him.

Pharaoh had rebelled, and it was necessary for a prophet to be sent to him to stop him from his disobedience. We too have rebelled, and God has sent His Noble Prophet (s) for us. God, the Almighty, told Moses (as), "*Go to Pharaoh. He has indeed rebelled.*"<sup>28</sup> God told our Prophet on the night of the beginning of his prophetic mission, "*Indeed man becomes rebellious when he considers himself to be without need.*"<sup>29</sup> We participate in I'tikāf in a Mosque to destroy our feelings of being like Pharaoh and having no need for God.

## **A LIFE FILLED WITH GOD'S COMMANDS AND PROHIBITIONS**

Some people run away from God's commands and try to avoid the religious orders. However, there are other people, like the people with religious understanding who are in I'tikāf, who try to increase their understanding about God's commands. If God has given a clear

command, they accept it with their heart and soul. If they have spare time, they search to see if there are any of God's commands that they should have been doing but they were unaware and negligent of them. Because, some of God's commands are hidden in certain circumstances. These kinds of commands are not general commands and only apply to people who are in a specific situation. If a person lives carelessly and is negligent, he/she will not become aware of God's commands. One example of this is where we have been told to take care of and help those who are in need around us. However, since we do not pay attention to those who are around us, we neglect those commands too.

Thus, the believers are always diligent in pursuing any possible commands that they should have been carrying out but which they were unaware of. Therefore, their lives are always overflowing with duties that they are careful not to neglect due to their attentiveness. This is a special custom and way, which only those who have tasted the truth of worshipping enjoy.

Imam Ṣādiq (as) addressed 'Unwān Baṣrī in a tradition, which is known as the 'Unwān Baṣrī Tradition, and said, "Go and find the truth of worship." 'Unwān Baṣrī asked, "What is the truth of worship?" In answering this question, the Imam (as) mentioned several factors and the third one is this, "This person's entire thinking and concentration is centered on God's commands." This means that all of his concentration is used for understanding what things God has commanded him/her to do, so that he/she can carry out these commands, and understanding what things



God has forbidden, so that he/she can avoid doing those.<sup>30</sup> If you look at servitude and life from this perspective, the *Treatise on Practical Laws* [of the Religious Authority that you follow] will become your book of instruction for religion. It will show your path for your spiritual wayfaring. It will become a tool for manifesting your love.

## ■ THE CULTURE OF I`TIKĀF

I`tikāf means searching and probing for God's commands. You stay two days in the Almighty God's house so that on the third day God will order you to be confined to His house. I`tikāf means volunteering to receive God's commands. I`tikāf means a blossoming of our internal nature, understanding the beauty of commands and a servant becoming freed from his uncertainty. I`tikāf means coming at His beckon, listening to His command, and leaving when He gives permission.

I ask you to take the customs of I`tikāf with you when you leave. When I say the customs of I`tikāf, I mean the spirit and outlook that can be created in a person by I`tikāf and which begins when gathering with other people in I`tikāf. A custom of I`tikāf is to say, "This is worthless for me to do a good deed since 'I' feel like it. What is more valuable is for fundamentally 'I' and 'my will' not to exist, and only God and His commands compel me to do good deeds." This is what is meant by servitude. A person must try to get close to the true meaning of servitude by performing the deeds that are compulsory so that he/she can enjoy worshipping.

Yes, enjoy. But, this pleasure is different from sensual enjoyments. These are spiritual, higher pleasures of the soul. This pleasure is the reward of the Great Lord for His humble servant who has gained dignity. I`tikāf is of this kind of pleasure and is not a selfish enjoyment. It is a pleasure in pursuing God, which is active in the souls of pure, vigilant people and those who are in love.

The pleasure one has in I`tikāf is due to abandoning sensual desires. It has been well said that, "If you taste the enjoyment of abandoning enjoyments, you won't say that sensual desires are enjoyable." The pleasure from I`tikāf is due to patience and faith, faith in His promises and patience in worship acts and avoiding sins. After a short time, patience gradually becomes sweet to the servant's palate.

The custom of I`tikāf removes inappropriate questions and does not consider worshiping God to be something injudicious. The culture of I`tikāf causes a person to be continuously in pursuit of God's commandments. Instead of bargaining over the limits of God's commandments, think about becoming drowned in the depths of worshiping and servitude. I`tikāf causes us to be in pursuit of understanding God's commands more, and we should realize that it was to our own loss that we ignored these commands. It is only God Who can make up for the benefits that we have missed.

Young people! You should ask God to give you the success of being able to go into religious seclusion next to the House of God (Ka`ba). Then, after you have put on the Ihrām (pilgrim's garb), which in itself is

somehow a way for receiving a large number of God's commandments, you can become a person who has entered religious seclusion and be one who has inhabited His house. Then you can say, "O God! It is not difficult for me that You give me many commandments. See, I have even entered religious seclusion in Your Mosque so that Your commands may apply to me." Then there will be obligatory commandments one on top of another. How sweet it will be.

Do you know when you will taste the enjoyment of religious seclusion? It is on the third day. When you want to leave the Mosque, you will see that you are somewhat sad. It is as if God is kicking you out. Perhaps some people who look at this from the outside will say, "Be happy. You are free now. You were in I'tikāf for a while. Now you can go. Why are you crying?" You answer, "It is as if during these three days when I was breathing in the atmosphere of God's commandments, I was embraced by God's mercy. Now those commandments have been removed, and I feel alone without a place of refuge, and..."

The end of Hajj has the same feeling. At sunset on the last day of the month of Ramadan is also the same way when people say, "God's command for fasting during the month of Ramadan has come to an end." People's hearts are sad. Now it is God Who wants to make His servants happy. He says, "Come tomorrow; it's Eid al-Fitr. Come and be happy. Come, so that I may give you a gift on this Eid." Now God wants to do something so that the sad hearts of the believers may be happy.

## **EGOTISTICAL RECOMMENDED WORSHIP ACTS**

Now, if after doing obligatory deeds and along with them, you want to grow and become uplifted by doing recommended deeds, what should your intention be? You should say, "God, I don't do this recommended deed because I could have not done it, because I became excited about my freedom, or because I chose to do it with pride and so I did it. Rather, I did it because I love that You glanced at me and beckoned to me. You allowed me, and You granted me Your permission. I do recommended deeds because there is a little of Your commands in them." If the encouragement for a servant to do a recommended deed is a lack of coercion and the fact that it is not obligatory, this will be like worshipping ourselves and self-seeking, not worshipping God.

If we do recommended deeds with this intention that there is a little of God's commandments in them, they will be protected from harmful, evil effects such as: taking the place of obligatory actions, causing arrogance, a feeling that God is obliged to us, our deeds becoming useless, or our deeds not strengthening and completing our obligatory deeds.

An important example of self-seeking worshipping with evil effects is abandoning God's more important commands - such as ignoring the situation of the people who are around you, who have rights on you or who are dependent on you - and doing worship acts instead. In such a situation, your worshipping may even appear to be

very beautiful. It is as if Satan does not tempt a person to abandon this misplaced worship act.

## **THE POSITION OF THE GUARDIAN IN THE SYSTEM OF DIVINE COMMANDS**

At this point, let us discuss this time in history a little, which is the most valuable topic that we should pay attention to in these moments. This is the anniversary of the birth of the Commander of the Faithful, `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (as). (Or if you are doing the recommended I`tikāf at the end of the month of Ramadan, it is the anniversary of Imam `Alī's (as) martyrdom.) It is impossible not to remember him when discussing such a topic and during such a time. Worshiping without believing in his Guardianship is not accepted,<sup>31</sup> and religious understanding without paying attention to his high status is irrational.

In the explanation that has been given about God's commands and prohibitions so far, the Almighty God has determined some deputies on earth in representation of Himself, who are the Guardians He has sent over people. They are both the messengers of God and also the first ones to execute His commands. The prophets and their successors, the Imams (as), have the responsibility of ruling on earth as God's deputies, and naturally, they have the responsibility to make sure that God's commands and prohibitions are obeyed. They should protect the boundaries of the divine commands in society, confront the enemies of God and help God's servants in adhering to God's commands.

Now, let's see what the position of God's Greatest Guardian (the Imam of the Time (a.j.)) is, what our circumstances are before him, and what relationship we have with him. Then let's see what happened to `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (as) who was the Imam of the Imams and had the weighty mission of imparting the divine commands. When the Almighty God's commands cause the unbelievers to escape from and oppose religion, won't His deputy on earth who is responsible for imparting the divine commands be the target of animosity? When God is accused by unwise, shallow people who ask, "Does God need our prayer?" why wouldn't `Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (as) who was trying to establish a government at God's command be accused of power-seeking and a greed for ruling? It is that simple.

The Commander of the Faithful (as) was accused of two things. One was that when he gave commands and took action, he was accused of seeking power. The second was that when he did not give commands and waited for the society to mature in order to be able to take action, he was accused of seeking ease. People openly accused the Commander of the Faithful (as) of these two things during his time.<sup>32</sup> We should deeply understand the relation between our servitude to God and accepting the guardianship of God's Guardian. Many people worship sincerely, but since they do not put themselves completely under God's command, God will not accept even a bit of their worshiping. It is not as if they sometimes sin and God does not forgive them. God is kind and benevolent and He forgives sins, but these kinds of people are not

willing to accept some of God's commands. Wasn't Satan the same way and therefore subjected to God's wrath?

This is a divine tradition that whenever God wants to test the honesty of His servant, He tests him with obeying his Guardian. No one can hide his irreligiousness behind adhering to some of God's commands. Hiding in this way is the way of the unbelievers and hypocrites. When they cannot object to divine commands for some reason, they bring excuses and say there are obstacles in the way of their obeying God's Guardian.

Therefore, if a society obeys God's commands, its people will be kind with God's Guardian. And if a society escapes from the divine commands, it will fight with God's Guardian. Since people are not in a position to be able to fight with God, they retaliate by fighting with His deputy and their hidden disbelief is revealed in this way.

That is why I want to come to a clear result, even though some may consider it to be just a slogan. This conclusion is that the people who follow the Guardian are the ones who are truly doing *I'tikāf*. *I'tikāf* means staying in God's House waiting to receive the Master's commands. *I'tikāf* means being present in the camp of the soldiers of the Imam of the Time (a.j.) and announcing one's readiness to obey the Master eagerly.

That is why those who oppose our religion oppose this Guardianship too. And those who are opposed to us following the Guardian are opposed to our religiosity too. Our enemies have clearly understood the relationship between wanton behavior and shunning the Guardian. That is why that CIA analyst says, "If you

want to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran, you must propagate wanton behavior.” And, he directly mentions illicit relationships between men and women.

It is not without reason that when the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic wants to speak about the stability of our system, he talks about the I`tikāf of young people and university students.<sup>33</sup>

## **WHY DIDN'T SOME OF THE PEOPLE OF KUFA LIKE THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL, `ALĪ (AS)?**

Let's finish our discussion by remembering how the Commander of the Faithful (as) was oppressed. Because remembering his oppression is praising him, and his referral to this may be seen in the book *Nahj al-Balāghah*.<sup>34</sup> Did the Imam have a bad behaviour, or was he not generous or kind enough, that some people showed animosity to him? Did the people of that time have no sense at all, or were their hearts made of stone, that they became enemies with the Imam? How could one not like a person who had the outstanding attributes that he had? Don't think that only thieves and looters of the public treasury showed animosity toward `Alī (as). Or don't think it was only the ones who loved to rule and saw the Imam to be an obstacle to them taking power that showed animosity toward him. How many people like this were there? Look at `Alī's (as) extensive loneliness in history.

Wasn't the Imam humble to such an extent that he was called, "Abu Turāb (the father of dirt)"? So why



didn't everyone love him in his/her heart? Didn't he help the deprived people? Why did some of these deprived people become his enemies and the enemies of his children? Didn't he have a sea of knowledge and wisdom within himself? He spoke jewels of wisdom. Why didn't everyone become infatuated with him? Didn't they see his tears arising from his deep mysticism and his amorous supplications to God? At least they could have respected him as a true mystic.

The truth is that if `Alī (as) had not given any commands, everyone would have liked him and no one would have had any problems with him. Be careful that you are not such that the Imam's commands and prohibitions make you displeased with him. You are awaiting a master who is exceptional in his commanding and prohibiting. Since his hand is open in this, he will command and prohibit even more than Imam `Alī (as) did. Be careful that before he returns you are ready to accept commandments so that you will not turn away from him.

What I am saying is not just my personal opinion. Haven't you heard that Imam Ṣādiq (as) warned the Shi'a that the opportunity for correcting oneself will end at the time of the Reappearance,<sup>35</sup> and he warned of the terrifying tests at the end of time?<sup>36</sup> In fact, he called the attention of the Shi'a to the necessity of preparing themselves before the Reappearance.<sup>37</sup> What Imam Ṣādiq said means, "O our Shi'a, prepare yourselves before the Reappearance. Purify yourselves and prepare yourselves as much as is needed. Because, when the Reappearance takes place, terrifying tests will suddenly come up. At that time, you

will not have the opportunity to correct yourselves. You need to have corrected yourselves before that time."

It is possible that you like Imam Mahdī (a.j.) while you are far from him. However, if you are not used to accepting his commands, it is possible that when you get closer to him you will gradually start hating him. A person who is not eager for commands cannot love the Commander of the Faithful (as) for very long.

Wasn't there a person who said, "O `Alī, I love you"? Perhaps he himself thought that he was telling the truth. However, the Imam (as) looked at him and said, "You don't love me. You're lying." The man objected and said, "O `Alī, I am telling you about my soul. Are you aware of what is in my heart that you are rejecting this?" The Imam replied, "I know all of my friends by their names and their characteristics, but you're not one of them."<sup>38</sup>

History may show that this person became corrupted later on. Perhaps he was a corrupted person from the beginning, but this poor man was not even aware of it himself. The time had not yet come for him to be tested and see that he would not listen to commands.

Do you know when the first moment of meeting the Commander of the Faithful, `Alī (as), will be? According to the traditions, we will meet the Imam during the difficult moments when we are dying. He himself said, "Whenever someone dies, he will see me."<sup>39</sup> When a person is under pressure, he curses everything. He is angry, talks freely and reveals his selfishness. When you are dying, you will suddenly see the Imam in front of yourself. At that time, the more you like to live, the more

you will hate the Imam. Be very careful so that you will not hate the Imam at that time. If you like your life too much, you may look at the Imam with anger.

In Imam Khomeini's (r) letter to his son, Haj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeini, which was filled with mysticism and morals, he wrote, "Behold! There is a danger in the moments when one is separating from this world and migrating to the eternal world. If a person loves himself, and in addition to that, he loves this world with all its various aspects, it is possible that at the time of death and migrating to the next world some affairs will be revealed to him and he will see that God's agent is separating him from his beloved (this world). In such a condition, he may migrate with feelings of enmity toward the Almighty God and while hating and being angry at Him. This is the outcome and result of loving oneself and this world, which has been mentioned in the traditions. A trustworthy, religious person narrated, 'I went to visit a person who was dying. That person said, "God is oppressing me in a way that no one has done before this. God wants to separate me from my children, whom I have raised with great effort." I got up and left, and he died.'"<sup>40</sup>

That religious person had probably gone to the person who was dying to remind him to say, "*Lā Ilāha Illallāh* (There is no god except Allāh)" as has been recommended in our religion.<sup>41</sup> However, it was as if the man was answering, "Shall I say it now? My whole life I was wrong to say it. Who is taking my life? Is this the right time for me to die? I have just finished raising my children. I should stay and enjoy my life. I have to die

now?!" So he was unable to say this sentence "*Lā Ilāha Illallāh*" and he died. Imam Ṣādiq (as) said, "If a person sees something that he does not like at the time of death, nothing will be more hateful for him than meeting God."<sup>42</sup>

It has been related in the traditions that Satan swore to God's dignity that he would not stop misleading human beings as long as he is alive.<sup>43</sup> It is natural that he uses the most force at the time when one is dying to remove a person's belief.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps one of Satan's deceptions is that at that moment he tells a person, "See, it's God who is taking your life." In this way, he causes a person to become angry at God. Because it has been said in the traditions that the smallest hardship when dying is like 100 blows of a sword, which hit a person and cause his suffering.<sup>45</sup> Of course, in other traditions good news has been given about death being easy for the believers. But if a person has not prepared himself, it is not clear if he will leave this world as a faithful person.

## **WHY DID SOME PEOPLE LOVE THE COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL, `ALĪ (AS), SO MUCH?**

You should be obedient your whole life and create a love for obeying commands within yourself in order to be able to love the Commander of the Faithful (as). A person who accepts commands will love the Commander of the Faithful (as), and a person who is a servant will be devoted to his master.

When some people see the Imam in those hard

moments (at the time of death), they forget all the sorrows of the world and all their pains stop. As they look at the innocent eyes of `Alī (as), love and passion will create a fervor in their hearts. They will stand in front of the Imam with complete enthusiasm, praise God and obtain all their wishes. Death for such people is a meeting place and not a sorrowful incident.

You have certainly heard the story of a slave who stole something and how `Alī (as) punished him by cutting off his fingers. It is related that they brought a black slave, whose hands were tied up, to the Commander of the Faithful (as) and said that he had stolen something. The Imam asked him three times, "Did you steal?" He replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, I stole. Purify me by punishing me."<sup>46</sup> The Imam gave the command, the punishment was carried out and they cut off his fingers.

On his way returning home, he met Ibn al-Kawa', who held grudges against the Commander of the Faithful (as) in his heart. Later, this man became one of the Khawārij. Ibn al-Kawa' asked the slave, "Who has cut your fingers?" The slave replied, "He is the lion of Hijaz and the champion of Iraq. He is the one who smashes the bold (wrongdoers) and takes revenge on the ignorant (foolish). He has a noble, honourable nature. He is the one who has come out from two sacred places, the inheritor of the people of Mash`ar, and the father of the two grandsons (of the Prophet). He is the foremost of all the foremost and the last successor of Āl Yāsīn. He is confirmed by the angel Gabriel and helped by the angel Michael. He is the "firm handhold" (Ḥabl al-Matīn) and protected by all the

soldiers in the sky. I swear he is the Commander of the Faithful, contrary to the desire of his opponents."<sup>47</sup>

Ibn al-Kawa', whose mouth was probably hanging open in surprise, said, "He has cut your hand and you are praising him?!" The black man said, "If he cuts me into pieces, it will have no effect on me except to increase my affection for him."<sup>48</sup>

Ibn al-Kawa' who was surprised at what the slave had said, went to the Commander of the Faithful (as) and told him the story of what he had seen. Ibn al-Kawa' said, "When I asked him the second time, 'The Commander of the Faithful has cut your fingers and you're praising him?!' he replied, 'How can I not praise him while affection for him has mixed with my entire being. I swear to God that he hasn't cut my fingers except because he wanted to adhere to the divine commandments.'"

The Commander of the Faithful (as) said, "Ibn al-Kawa' don't you know that the people who love us, even if we cut them into pieces, their affection only increases toward us. And among our enemies, there are some people who, even if we put oil and honey in their mouths (and are kind to them), it has no effect other than to increase their hatred toward us."<sup>49</sup>

At another time, the Imam (as) said, "If I strike a believer on his nose with a sword for him to become my enemy, he won't become my enemy."<sup>50</sup> Why? Because a believer is not selfish before `Alī (as). That is because `Alī has caused him to become infatuated with himself. If `Alī struck him, he would not even notice that `Alī had struck him let alone hate `Alī's command. The Imam

(as) continued, "If I were to turn the whole world into honey and put it in a hypocrite's mouth for him to like me, he would not like me. The Prophet of God (s) told me, 'O `Alī, no believer will become your enemy and no hypocrite will become your friend.'"<sup>51</sup>

We ask God to help us and to cause our hearts to have a pure affection for the Imam due to our accepting God's commands. Pure affection is unique. It is enjoyable in such a way that cannot be found in anything else in the world. A unique affection is an affection without a reason. You suddenly say, "I miss Ali." I ask, "Why?" You say, "I don't know, but I'm overwhelmed. I want my master and commander." I say, "My dear, you love the Imam, fine. But why are you impatient? Calm down." You say, "No, I'm restless." I see that there is no other solution other than for someone to come and talk about the master for you to feel relieved. You say, "I need to keep repeating his name until I can find a little peace. 'O my master! With your remembrance, my heart is alive. Only through my private conversations with you is my heart saved from its fear.'"<sup>52</sup>





Such a person finds happiness and sweetness in remembering `Alī (as). If he gets married, he talks about `Alī's (as) attributes in his wedding. Friends, decide to talk about `Alī's (as) attributes in your wedding. Enjoy the highest enjoyment. Nothing in this world will light a fire inside a person the way that `Alī's (as) affection does. Ask for this affection from him himself. I swear to God that `Alī (as) is kind. If you ask him for this world, he will give it to you. However, if you ask him for himself, he will

wait a little for you to move toward him. Nevertheless, this effort is sweet. Ask him directly.


He does not reject or disappoint anyone. If you do not believe me, I can prove it to you. Let's talk about what happened in Medina. When those two people came to visit Fāṭimah Zahrā (as) and she did not let them in, they knew what to do. They easily went to `Alī (as) and asked him to mediate for them. Fāṭimah (as) said, "O `Alī, I don't want to see these people in your house." The Commander of the Faithful (as) replied, "My Fāṭimah, I don't like anyone to ask me for something and I refuse him."<sup>53</sup>







Notes



## C h a p t e r 1

1. When a person goes into religious seclusion in the Mosque for three days and participates in this spiritual retreat, the first two days that one stays are a recommended action done with the intention of coming closer to God. However, after a person has stayed in the Mosque for this religious seclusion for two days, it becomes obligatory to remain in the Mosque the third day. [Trans.]

2. The Commander of the Faithful, `Alī (as), said, "Eyes have not seen Him by looking at Him, however hearts see Him by seeing the truths of faith."

«لَمْ تَرَهُ الْعُيُونُ بِمُشَاهَدَةِ الْأَبْصَارِ وَ لَكِنْ رَأَتْهُ الْقُلُوبُ بِحَقَائِقِ الْإِيمَانِ»

[*Amālī*, Ṣadūq, p. 342]

3. The Commander of the Faithful, `Alī (as) said, "Whoever loves something is anxious to remember and talk about it."

«مَنْ أَحَبَّ شَيْئًا لَجَّ بِذِكْرِهِ»

[*Ghurar al-Hikam*, tradition no. 895]

4. The Holy Prophet of God (s) said, "The best virtue in this world is remembering death. The best worship act is remembering death. The best thinking is remembering death. And whoever is filled with remembering death will find his grave to be one of the gardens of Paradise."

«أَفْضَلُ الرَّهْدِ فِي الدُّنْيَا ذِكْرُ الْمَوْتِ وَ أَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ ذِكْرُ الْمَوْتِ وَ أَفْضَلُ التَّفَكُّرِ ذِكْرُ الْمَوْتِ.  
فَمَنْ أَثْقَلَهُ ذِكْرُ الْمَوْتِ وَجَدَ قَبْرَهُ رَوْحَةً مِنْ رِيَاحِ الْجَنَّةِ»

[*Jāmi` al-Akhhbār*, p. 165]

The Commander of the Faithful (as) said, "Whoever loves to meet his Lord avoids (and does not become attached to) this world."

«مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ سَبَحَانَهُ، سَلَا عَنِ الدُّنْيَا.»

[*Ghurar al-Hikam*, tradition no. 8,425]

5. The Messenger of God (s) said, "Nothing prolongs life except righteousness."

«لَا يَزِيدُ فِي الْعُمُرِ إِلَّا الْبِرُّ.»

[*Makārim al-Akhḷāq*, Ṭabarsī, p. 389]

Imam Ṣādiq (as) said, "Whoever has good intentions, his life will be prolonged."

«من خَسَنَتْ نِيَّتُهُ زِيدَ فِي عُمُرِهِ.»

[*Da`awāt al-Rāwandī*, p. 127]

6. Imam Riḍā (as) said, "The closest position of a person to God is when he is in prostration. These are God's words in the Qur'an where He has said, '*Prostrate and come nearer (to Allāh)*.' [Qur'an, 96:19]"

«أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الْعَبْدُ مِنَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَهُوَ سَاجِدٌ، وَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ.»

[*Man lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, vol. 1, p. 209]

7. "The first House ever to be built for people was that at Bakkah (Mecca), blessed and a guidance for the worlds."

«إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ»

[Qur'an, 3:96]

8. The Holy Prophet of God (s) said, "God revealed to the world, 'Whoever serves you, make him suffer. And whoever throws you away, serve him/her.'"

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَوْحَى إِلَى الدُّنْيَا أَنْ اتَّعِبِي مَنْ خَدَمَكَ وَاحْدُمِي مَنْ رَفَضَكَ.»

[*Amālī*, Ṣadūq, p. 279]

The Commander of the Faithful, `Alī (as), said, "If you turn toward the world, the world will turn its back on you. If you turn away from the world, the world will turn toward you."

«إِنَّكَ إِنْ أَقْبَلْتَ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا أَدْبَرَتْ إِيَّاكَ إِنْ أَدْبَرْتَ عَنِ الدُّنْيَا أَقْبَلَتْ.»

[*Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, tradition no. 3,798 and 3,799]

9. The Commander of the Faithful, `Alī (as), said, "If one becomes detached from this world, tragedies will become easy for him/her."

«مَنْ زَهَدَ فِي الدُّنْيَا هَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ المُصِيبَاتُ.»

[*Uṣūl Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 50]

10. The Holy Prophet of God (s) said, "If a person attacks another person with a sharp knife, it is better for him than being praised in front of himself."

﴿لَوْ مَشَى رَجُلٌ إِلَى رَجُلٍ بِسِكِّينٍ مُرْهَبٍ كَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ مِنْ أَنْ يُثْنِيَ عَلَيْهِ فِي وَجْهِهِ.﴾

[*Mīzān al-Hikmah*, tradition no. 18,679]

In another tradition, the Prophet (s) said, "Whenever you praise your brother (in faith) in front of him, it is as if you have cut his throat with a blade."

﴿إِذَا مَدَّحْتَ أَخَاكَ فِي وَجْهِهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا أَمْرَتَ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ الْمُوسَى.﴾

[*Ibid*, tradition no. 18,680]

11. The Messenger of God (s) said, "The Glorious God spoke 124,000 words in private with Mūsā bin `Imrān (Moses) (as) over a period of three days and nights. During this period Mūsā bin `Imrān did not eat or drink anything. When he returned to the Israelites and heard them speaking, he was repelled by them. The reason for this was the effect that listening to the Glorious God's sweet words had on his ears."

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ نَاجَى مُوسَى بْنِ عِمْرَانَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ بِمِائَةِ أَلْفِ كَلِمَةٍ وَأَرْبَعِينَ وَعِشْرِينَ أَلْفَ كَلِمَةٍ فِي ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ وَلَيْالِيهِنَّ مَا طَعِمَ فِيهَا مُوسَى وَلَا شَرِبَ فِيهَا فَلَمَّا انْصَرَفَ إِلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَسَمِعَ كَلَامَ الْأَدَمِيِّينَ مَقْتَهُمْ لِمَا كَانَ وَقَعَ فِي مَسَامِعِهِ مِنْ حَلَاوَةِ كَلَامِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.﴾

[*Khiṣāl*, Ṣadūq, vol. 2, p. 642]

Imam `Alī (as) said, "The result of becoming close and attached to God is avoiding (becoming attached to) people."

﴿ثَمَرَةُ الْأُنْسِ بِاللَّهِ الْإِسْتِيْحَاشُ مِنَ النَّاسِ.﴾

[*Ghurar al-Hikam*, tradition no. 3,949]

## C h a p t e r    2

12. Common people are those who do not have any opinion or analysis from themselves, and they act according to their environment and other people's opinions. Therefore, an educated person who does not usually think about religiosity and only follows what other people say, is a common person. [For more information, refer to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei's, statements in defining who are "common people" and who are the "elites." For example,

refer to his statements in speaking with the group of Commanders of "Division 72 of Muḥammad Rasūllullāh (s)" on June 9, 1996.]

13. Rule no. 1: "I'tikāf is recommended, but it becomes obligatory if a vow is made or in other similar situations. [*Islamic Laws and Regulations from Imam Khomeini (Annotated)*. vol. 2, p. 933, Rules for I'tikāf]
14. Rule no. 6: It is permitted for a person to stay for I'tikāf for more than three days. But whenever a person stays for two days, he should add the third day to it (according to obligatory caution). Rule no. 8: One can abandon a recommended I'tikāf on either of the first two days. However, it is not allowed to abandon it on the third day. [*Islamic Laws and Regulations from Imam Khomeini (Annotated)*. vol. 2, p. 933, Rules for I'tikāf]
15. Making the obligatory pilgrimage to the Ka`ba (Hajj Tamattu') is obligatory one time for a person who has the necessary circumstances. Going again in other years is recommended and not obligatory. This pilgrimage, whether it is obligatory or recommended, should be done during its special month (Dhū al-Ḥijjah). Making a recommended pilgrimage to the Ka`ba ('Umrah al-Mufradah) is done during the other months of the year and has less deeds that are required to be done.
16. Refer to the commentary on verses 1 and 2 of the chapter "Muzammil" in the book "*Tafsīr al-Mizān*."

About the verse "*And during part of the night adore Him, and give glory to Him a long (part of the) night [Qur'an, 76:26]*," Imam Ṣādiq (as) said, "God commanded the Prophet (s) to pray during some hours of the night."

«أَمْرُهُ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ فِي سَاعَاتِهِ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ.»

[*Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, tradition no. 6,922]

Muḥammad bin Muslim has related that he asked about the meaning of the verses "*O you who have wrapped up in your garments! Rise to pray in the night except a little [Qur'an, 73:1-2]*," from Imam Bāqir (as). The Imam (as) answered, "God commanded he (the Prophet) pray every night."

«أَمَرَ اللهُ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ.»

[*Tahdhīb*, vol. 2, p. 335]

17. If a person abandons even a day of fasting during the month of Ramadan, he should make up for it and also give the expiation. The expiation for missing a day of fasting during the month of Ramadan is freeing a slave, or feeding 60 poor people or fasting for two months - 31 days of which should be done consecutively. This atonement is for abandoning just one day of fasting during the month of Ramadan. [For more information, refer to *Islamic Laws and Regulations from Imam Khomeini*, rules no. 1,658 – 1,662.]
18. In a sermon before the start of the month of Ramadan, the Prophet of God (s) said about this month, "... a month in which you are invited to God's banquet." [*Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, Ṣadūq, vol. 1, p. 295] [Trans.]

19. This verse from the Holy Qur'an is as follows:

«وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ»

[*Qur'an*, 51:56.]

20. An example is, "*For he who transgresses after this, he shall have a painful punishment.*"

«فَمَنْ اغْتَدَىٰ بِغَدِّ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ»

[*Qur'an*, 5:94]

21. The Qur'an says, "*And as to those who believe and do good deeds, He will pay them fully their wages; and Allāh does not love the unjust.*"

«وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ»

[*Qur'an*, 3:57]

It is also written in the Qur'an, "*If you believe and guard (against evil), He will give you your wages.*"

«إِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ أُجُورَكُمْ»

[*Qur'an*, 47:36]

22. Imam Ṣādiq (as) and Imam Bāqir (as) both said, "Indeed the Almighty

God rewarded Ḥusayn (as) because of his being murdered, by putting Imamate in his descendants, healing in his dust, and prayers being accepted next to his grave. In addition, the days when his pilgrims come to visit him are not counted as the days of their lives." Muḥammad bin Muslim said, "So I asked Imam Ṣādiq (as), 'All this greatness and honor is gained by honoring Ḥusayn (as). What does he himself gain?' The Imam replied, 'Indeed God will join him to the Prophet (s) and he will forever be with him and at his level.' Then the Imam recited this verse, 'And (as for) those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work; every man is responsible for what he shall have wrought.' [Qur'an, 52:21]"

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى عَوَّضَ الْحُسَيْنِ عَمِن قَتْلِهِ أَنْ جَعَلَ الْإِمَامَةَ فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ وَالشِّفَاءَ فِي تُرَابِهِ وَ إِجَابَةَ الدُّعَاءِ عِنْدَ قَبْرِهِ وَلَا تُعَدُّ أَيَّامُ زَائِرِيهِ حَائِبًا وَ زَاجِعًا مِنْ عُمْرِهِ قَالَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُسْلِمٍ فَقُلْتُ لِأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع هَذِهِ الْجَلَالُ تُنَالُ بِالْحُسَيْنِ ع فَمَا لَهُ فِي نَفْسِهِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى أَخَفَّهُ بِالنَّبِيِّ فَكَانَ مَعَهُ فِي دَرَجَتِهِ وَ مِثْلِيهِ ثُمَّ نَلَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع وَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ اتَّعْتَفْتُمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ بِإِيمَانِ الْخَفَاءِ بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ.»

[*Amālī*, Shaykh Ṭūsī, p. 317]

23. The exact verse from the Holy Qur'an is as follows, "*Allāh* has purchased from the believers their selves and possessions, and for them is Paradise. They fight in the Way of *Allāh*, slay, and are slain. That is a binding promise upon Him in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an; and who is there that more truthfully fulfills his covenant than *Allāh*? Therefore, rejoice in the bargain you have bargained with Him. That is the mighty winning."

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الصَّوْرُ الْعَظِيمُ.»

[*Qur'an*, 9:111]

24. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter no. 47.

25. The Holy Qur'an says, "Why, then, when the soul leaps up to the throat of the dying..."

«قُلُوبًا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُومَ»

[*Qur'an*, 56:83]



26. In describing the pious, the Commander of the Faithful (as) said,  
 "When he/she is doing a good deed, he/she is afraid and worried."

﴿يَعْمَلُ الْأَعْمَالُ الصَّالِحَةَ وَهُوَ عَلَى وَجَلٍ﴾

[*Nahj al-Balāghah*, sermon 193. This sermon is known as the sermon of "Hamām."] ]

27. *Qur'an*, 79:24.

28. *Qur'an*, 20:24 and 79:17.

29. *Qur'an*, 96:6 - 7.

30. This tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (as) is as follows:

﴿وَجُمْلَةُ اسْتِغَالِيهِ فِيمَا أَمَرَهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ وَنَهَاهُ عَنْهُ﴾

[*Mishkāṭ al-Anwār Fī Ghurar al-Akḥbār*, p. 325.] ]

31. Imam Bāqir (as) said, "(The angel) Gabriel descended upon the Prophet (s) and told him, 'O Muḥammad, salam and He (the Almighty God) says salam to you and says, "I created seven skies with whatever is in them and seven earths with whatever is in them. I did not create any position higher than Rukn (the eastern side of Ka`ba) and Maqām (the station of Ibrahim next to the Ka`ba). If someone calls Me in this place from the beginning of the creation of the sky and earth but comes to meet Me while denying the Guardianship of `Alī (as), I will throw him in Hell on his face.'"

﴿نَزَلَ جِبْرَائِيلُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ص فَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ السَّلَامُ يُقْرِئُكَ السَّلَامَ وَيَقُولُ: خَلَقْتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعَ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَالْأَرْضِينَ السَّبْعَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهِنَّ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ مَوْضِعاً أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الرُّكْنِ وَالْمَقَامِ وَلَوْ أَنَّ عَبْدًا دَعَانِي هُنَاكَ مُنْذُ خَلَقْتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِينَ ثُمَّ لَقِيَنِي جَاحِداً لَوْلَايَةِ عَلِيِّ لِأَكْبَبْتُهُ فِي سَقَرٍ﴾

[*Amālī*, Ṣadūq, p. 484]

In addition, the Prophet of God (s) told `Alī (as), "O Ali, if a servant worships God for the same period of time that Noah was preaching to his nation (meaning for a very long period), and if he has gold that weighs the same weight as the Uḥud Mountain and gives it in charity in the way of God, and if he lives so long that he goes to Hajj 1,000 times on foot, and then he is killed between Ṣafā and Marwa while he is oppressed, but he does not believe in your Guardianship, he will neither smell Heaven nor will he enter it."

«يَا عَلِيُّ لَوْ أَنَّ عَبْدًا عَبَدَ اللَّهَ مِثْلَ مَا قَامَ نُوحٌ فِي قَوْمِهِ وَكَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أُخِي دَهَبًا فَأَلْفَقَهُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَدَّ فِي عُمُرِهِ حَتَّى حَجَّ أَلْفَ عَامٍ عَلَى قَدَمَيْهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلَ بَيْنَ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةِ مَظْلُومًا ثُمَّ لَمْ يُؤَالِكَ يَا عَلِيُّ لَمْ يَشْتَمْ رَانِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ وَلَمْ يَدْخُلْهَا.»

[*Bishārah al-Muṣṭafā*, p. 94; *Manāqib Ibn Shahr Āshūb*, vol. 3, p. 198; *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 27, p. 194, narrated from *Manāqib Khārazmī*.]

32. The example of the first case was during the Battle of Jamal (camel). Imam `Alī (as) was accused by Ṭalḥa, Zubayr and his opponents in this Battle of seeking power and killing `Uthmān in order to gain power. The second example was when he accepted arbitration (between Imam `Alī and Mu'awiyah) due to the weakness of people's insight, especially the Khawārij (those who had left the religion). Later on, the Khawārij accused the Commander of the Faithful (as) of seeking his own comfort. They said he accepted arbitration to protect his own life because of his fear of Mu'awiyah and because of the Khawārij's swords. About the Khawārij, Imam `Alī (as) said, "They said, 'The right way was that our leader should not have obeyed our opinion, which was wrong, and he should have acted according to his own opinion (fighting with Mu'awiyah, and he should have stood up against those who believed in arbitration). He should not have been concerned about his own life or the fact that some of us opposed him. Now, since he followed and obeyed us in our mistake, he has become an unbeliever.'"

«يَا قَالُوا كَانَ يَتَّبِعِي لِأَمِيرِنَا أَنْ لَا يَتَّبِعَ مَنْ أَخْطَأَ وَأَنْ يَقْضِيَ بِحَقِيقَةِ رَأْيِهِ عَلَى قَتْلِ نَفْسِهِ وَ قَتْلِ مَنْ خَالَفَهُ مِنَّا. فَقَدْ كَفَرَ بِمَتَابِعَتِهِ إِنَانَا وَ طَاعَتِهِ لَنَا فِي الْخَطَا.»

[*Khiṣāl*, Ṣadūq, vol. 2, p. 381]

33. Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Today, the political system of the country is stronger than ever... We have such a situation today. Most of the people of our society are young. And they are young people who are not caught up in the traps and corruption that most of the young people of the world are caught up in... Our young people are in pursuit of the truth. Their hearts are soft and enlightened. Never in the years of the far past when I was young during the month of Ramadan in our country or in the Guharshād Mosque in Mashhad did we see people going into religious seclusion... During the time

for l'tikāf today, our universities, Mosques throughout the country, and the central Mosques are filled with people who have come for religious seclusion... This is how our young people are today. Today, a tendency for religion and revolutionary values exists among most parts of society." [Nov. 12, 2006]

Ayatollah Khamenei also said, "The enemy saw the university students in l'tikāf in the universities' Mosques. They saw the Mosques were filled with these people who were in l'tikāf. Most of them were young people. The enemy shakes from such things. All of these are different aspects of the greatness of this revolution, the greatness of that message, and the greatness of that Imam (Khomeini)." [Apr. 29, 1998]

34. In answering Mu'awiyah's letter, Imam `Alī (as) said, "You said they pulled me toward pledging allegiance like a restrained camel... I swear to God that you wanted to criticize me but you praised me. You wanted to disgrace me, but you disgraced yourself. A Muslim does not fear being oppressed as long as he does not doubt about his religion and does not doubt his certainty."

«وَقُلْتُ إِنِّي كُنْتُ أَفَادُ كَمَا يُفَادُ الْجَمَلُ الْمُخْشَوْشُ حَتَّى أَبَايَعُ. وَ لَعَمْرُ اللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ تَذُمَّ فَمَدَحْتُ وَأَنْ تُفْضَحَ فَأَفْتَضَحْتَ. وَمَا عَلَيَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ عَصَايَةِ فِي أَنْ يَكُونُوا مَظْلُومًا مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ شَاكًا فِي دِينِهِ وَلَا مَرْتَابًا بِتَقْيِينِهِ.»

[*Nahj al-Balāghah*, letter no. 28]

35. About the verse, "On the day when some of the signs of your Lord come, no soul will be benefited by its belief had it not believed before or earned good in its belief. Say, 'Wait, we too are waiting,'" [Qur'an, 6:158], Imam Ṣādiq (as) said, "The signs are the Imams and the awaited sign is the Qā'im. The meaning of their belief not benefiting them is not believing in the Qā'im before his uprising with a sword although they had believed in his fathers who were before him."

«أَنَّهُ قَالَ فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: «يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ»، فَقَالَ: الْآيَاتُ هُمُ الْأَيُّمَةُ وَالْآيَةُ الْمُنْتَظَرُ هُوَ الْقَائِمُ عَ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَيَأْتِيهِمُ بِالسَّيْفِ وَإِنْ آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ آبَائِهِ ع.»

[*Kamāl al-Dīn*, Shaykh Ṣadūq, vol. 1, p. 18]

36. "We were sitting and Imam Ṣādiq (as) could hear us talking. The Imam

asked, 'What are you discussing?' Then he said, 'I swear to God, that which you are awaiting will not come about until you are sifted, you have become pure, and the good and bad are separated.'"

«عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مَلْصُورِ الصِّقْلِيِّ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ: كُنْتُ أَنَا وَالْحَارِثُ بْنُ الْمَعْبِزَةِ وَجَمَاعَةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا جُلُوسًا وَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع يَسْمَعُ كَلَامَنَا. فَقَالَ لَنَا: فِي أَيِّ شَيْءٍ أَنْتُمْ؟ هِيَ هَاتِ هَذِهِاتِ لَا وَاللَّهِ لَا يَكُونُ مَا تُمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْيُنَكُمْ حَتَّى تُغْرَبَلُوا لَا وَاللَّهِ لَا يَكُونُ مَا تُمْدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْيُنَكُمْ حَتَّى تُمَخَّصُوا.»

[*Kāfir*, vol. 1. p. 370]

37. Imam Ṣādiq (as) said, "Indeed there is a government for us that will be established whenever God wants." Then he said, "Whoever likes to be among the companions of the Qā'im should await him, and his deeds should be accompanied with vigilance (*wara*) and good behavior while he is awaiting him. In this case, if he dies and the Qā'im reappears after his death, he will receive the same reward as those who see the Imam. So, struggle hard and await him. Good for those who receive God's mercy."

«إِنَّ لَنَا دَوْلَةً يَجِيءُ اللَّهُ بِهَا إِذَا شَاءَ. مَنْ سَرَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْقَائِمِ فَلْيَنْتَظِرْ وَ لْيَعْمَلْ بِالْوَرَعِ وَ مَخَاسِنِ الْأَخْلَاقِ وَ هُوَ مُنْتَظَرٌ فَإِنْ مَاتَ وَ قَامَ الْقَائِمُ بَعْدَهُ كَانَ لَهُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ مِثْلُ أُخْرٍ مَنْ أَدْرَكَهُ فَجَدَّوْا وَ انْتَظَرُوا هَبِينَا لَكُمْ آتِيهَا الْعَصَابَةُ الْمَرْحُومَةُ.»

[*Ghaybah*, Nu'mānī, p. 200]

38. Imam Ṣādiq (as) said, "A man came to the Commander of the Faithful (as) and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I swear to God that I love you.' The Imam replied, 'You are lying.' The man said, 'Glory be to God. Do you know what is going on inside me?!' The Commander of the Faithful (as) became upset, raised his hands toward the sky and told him, 'Why shouldn't it be like this when our Sublime Lord created the souls two thousand years before the bodies. Then he showed us those who love us and those who do not love us. I swear to God, I did not see your soul among those who love us. Where were you?'"

«جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع فَقَالَ: يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لِأَحِبُّكَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ: كَذَبْتَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ الرَّجُلُ: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ كَأَنَّكَ تُعْرِفُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي! قَالَ: فَعَضِبَ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع وَ رَفَعَ يَدَهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَ قَالَ: كَيْفَ لَا يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ وَ هُوَ رَبُّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى خَلَقَ الْأَرْوَاحَ قَبْلَ الْأَبْدَانِ بِالْفِي عَامٍ ثُمَّ عَرَضَ عَلَيْنَا الْمُحِبِّ مِنَ الْمُنْغِضِ قَوْلَ اللَّهِ مَا رَأَيْتُكَ فِيمَنْ أَحَبَّنَا فَأَيْنَ كُنْتَ؟»

[*Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt*, p. 89]

In another narration, it has been related in this way, "Woe to you! Indeed you are lying. I don't see your face among the faces (of those who love me) nor your name among the names."

«...وَيَحْكَ لَمَّا كَذَّبْتَ. فَمَا أَعْرِفُ وَجْهَكَ فِي الْوُجُوهِ وَلَا اسْمَكَ فِي الْأَسْمَاءِ.»

[*Amālī*, Ṭūsī, p. 409]

39. The full tradition from Imam `Alī (as) is this, "O Ḥārith, I give you good news. I swear to the One Who spilt the seed and created all creatures, my friends and enemies will definitely see me in different junctures: at the time of death, next to the bridge of the Ṣirāṭ, and at the time of dividing."

«أُبَشِّرُكَ يَا حَارِثُ لَيَعْرِفُنِي وَالَّذِي فَلَقَ الْحَبَّةَ وَبَرَأَ النَّسَمَةَ وَلَيَبِيَّ وَغَدَوَى فِي مَوَاطِنَ سُنَى. عِنْدَ الْمَمَاتِ وَعِنْدَ الصَّرَاطِ وَعِنْدَ الْمُقَاسِمَةِ.»

[*Amālī*, Mufīd, p. 6)]

A poet has written this tradition in the form of a poem, "O Ḥārith Hamdānī, whenever someone dies he will see me whether he is a believer or a hypocrite."

«يَا حَارِثَ هَمْدَانَ مَنْ يَمُوتُ يَرِنِي / مِنْ مُؤْمِنٍ أَوْ مُنَافِقٍ قُبُلًا.»

In some sources, they have attributed this poem to the Imam. Overall, the main point has been mentioned in the two traditions that have been cited and other reliable traditions.

40. *Ṣaḥīfah Imām*, vol. 16, p. 216

41. Imam Ṣādiq (as) said, "When you are with someone who is dying repeat these words for them to testify, 'There is no god except Allāh, and indeed Muḥammad is God's Messenger.' Repeat this until they die."

«إِذَا خَصَرْتُمْ مَوْتَاكُمْ فَلَقِّنُوهُمْ شَهَادَةَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ حَتَّى يَمُوتَ.»

[*Kāfi*, vol. 3, p. 123]

42. A person said, "I asked Imam Ṣādiq, 'Is this true that whoever likes to meet God, God likes to meet him, and whoever does not like to meet God, God does not like to meet him?' The Imam replied,

‘Yes.’ I said, ‘I swear to God, we do not like to die!’ The Imam said, ‘It is not the way that you are thinking. Rather, it is about liking or not liking to meet God at the time of death. If at that time a person sees something that he likes, nothing will be dearer to him than going ahead. In this case, God loves meeting him and he too loves meeting God. However, if he sees something at that time that he does not like, nothing is more hateful for him than meeting God and the Almighty God hates meeting him too.’”

«قُلْتُ أَصْلَحَكَ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَحَبِّ لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ لِقَاءُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَبْغَضَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ قُلْتُ فَوَاللَّهِ إِنَّا لَنَذْكُرُهُ الْمَوْتَ فَقَالَ لَيْسَ ذَلِكَ حَيْثُ تَذْهَبُ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ الْمُعَايَنَةِ إِذَا رَأَى مَا يُحِبُّ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى يُحِبُّ لِقَاءَهُ وَهُوَ يُحِبُّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ حِينَئِذٍ وَإِذَا رَأَى مَا يَكْرَهُ فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَبْغَضَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ يَبْغِضُ لِقَاءَهُ.»

[*Kāfir*, vol. 3, p. 134]

43. The Prophet of God (s) stated, “Satan said, ‘I swear to Your dignity that as long as Your servants are alive, I will not stop misleading them.’ God said, ‘I swear to My dignity and Glory that as long as they ask for My forgiveness, I will forgive them.’”

«قَالَ إبليس: وِعَزَّتِكَ لَا أَبْرُحُ أَعْوَى عِبَادِكَ مَا دَامَتْ أَرْوَاحُهُمْ فِي أَجْسَادِهِمْ. فَقَالَ: وَعَزَّتِي وَحَلَالِي، لَا أَرَأَى أَنْ أُغْفِرَ لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَغْفَرُونِي.»

[*Mizān al-Hikmah*, tradition no. 15,212, narrated from *Al-Targhib wa al-Tarhib*, vol. 2, p. 467]

44. The Prophet of God (s) said, “Be present next to those who are dying and repeat these words for them to say, ‘There is no god except Allāh.’ More than at any other time, Satan tries to get close to a person at the time of his death.”

«إِحْضَرُوا مَوْتَاكُمْ وَلَقِّنُوهُمْ «لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ»... وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ ابْنِ آدَمَ عِنْدَ ذَلِكَ الْمَصْرَعِ.»

[*Kanz al-Ummāl*, tradition no. 42,158]

45. This tradition is from the Holy Prophet (s):

«أَدْنَى جَبَدَاتِ الْمَوْتِ بِمَنْزِلَةِ مَائَةِ ضَرْبَةٍ بِالشَّيْفِ.»

[*Kanz al-Ummāl*, tradition no. 42,208]

46. The tradition is as follows:

«يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ظَهَرَنِي قَائِلِي سَرَفَتْ.»

## 47. The tradition is as follows:

«لَيْثُ الْحَجَارِ، وَكَنْبُسُ الْعِرَاقِ، وَمُضَادِمُ الْأَبْطَالِ، الْمُنتَقَمُ مِنَ الْجُهَالِ، كَرِيمُ الْأَصْلِ، شَرِيفُ الْفُضْلِ، مُجَلُّ الْعَزَمِينَ، وَارِثُ الْمَشْعَرَيْنِ، أَبُو التَّبِئِطَيْنِ، أَوَّلُ الشَّاقِقِينَ وَآخِرُ الْوَصِيَّيْنِ مِنْ آلِ يَاسِينَ، الْمُؤَيَّدُ بِجُنَائِلِ، الْمَنْصُورُ بِمِيكَائِيلَ، الْخَبْلُ الْقَمِيئِ، الْمَخْفُوظُ بِجُنْدِ الشَّمَاءِ أَجْمَعِينَ، ذَلِكَ وَابْنُهُ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى زَعْمِ الرَّاعِمِينَ.»

## 48. The tradition is as follows:

«لَوْ قَطَعَنِي إِزْبَاءُ مَا أزدَدْتُ لَهُ إِلَّا حُبًّا.»

## 49. The tradition is as follows:

«إِنْ مُجِبْتَنَا لَوْ قَطَعْنَا هُمْ إِزْبَاءُ مَا أزدَادُوا لَنَا إِلَّا حُبًّا وَإِنْ فِي أَعْدَائِنَا مَنْ لَوْ أَعْتَلْنَا هُمْ السَّمْنَ وَالْعَسْلَ، مَا أزدَادُوا مِنَّا إِلَّا بُغْضًا.»

This story has been mentioned in several sources of the traditions with slight differences in its details. It has a beautiful ending. It has been said that this black slave was martyred in the Nahrawān Battle. If you are interested in knowing more, please refer to the given sources.

[*Manāqib*, Ibn Shahr Āshūb, vol. 2, p. 335; *Al-Taḥṣīn*, Sayyid bin Ṭāwūs, p. 610; *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, narrated from *Kharā'ij*, vol. 18, p. 151, tradition no. 22,367; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 24, p. 267 and vol. 41, p. 217, narrated from *Manāqib* and *Kharā'ij*.]

## 50. The tradition is as follows:

«لَوْ مَرَبْتُ خَيْشُومَ الْمُؤْمِنِ بِشَيْفِي هَذَا عَلَى أَنْ يُبَغِّضَنِي مَا أَبْغَضَنِي وَ لَوْ صَبَّيْتُ الدُّنْيَا بِحِمَاتِهَا عَلَى الْمُتَنَافِي عَلَى أَنْ يُحِبَّنِي مَا أَحَبَّنِي وَ ذَلِكَ أَنَّهُ قَضَى فَالْقَضَى عَلَى لِسَانِ النَّبِيِّ الْأَمِيِّ ص أَنَّهُ قَالَ يَا عَلِيُّ لَا يُبَغِّضُكَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَلَا يُحِبُّكَ مُتَنَافِقٌ.»

[*Nahj al-Balāghah*, saying no. 45]

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Mafātih al-Jinān*, Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī Supplication; *Iqbāl al-'Amāl*, Sayyid bin Ṭāwūs, p. 73; *Miṣbāḥ*, Kaf'amī, p. 595.

Although the phrase that has been narrated is addressing God, its content is not such that it is only for the Lord of the universe, because such wording has been used in the traditions in different ways. For example, the Prophet of God (s) said, "Remembering God, the most High, the most Glorious, is a worship act. Remembering me is a worship act. Remembering 'Alī is a worship act. Remembering the Imams from among his children is a worship act."

﴿ذَكَرَ اللهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عِبَادَةَ وَ ذِكْرَ عَلِيٍّ عِبَادَةً وَ ذِكْرَ الْأَيْمَةِ مِنْ وَ لَدِهِ عِبَادَةً﴾

[*Ikhtiṣāṣ*, Shaykh Muḥīd, p. 223]

Or about Imam Mahdī (a.j.), Imam Ṣādiq (as) used the phrase, “My Master (*Sayyidī*).”

﴿سَيِّدِي عَيْنِيكَ نَفْتُ رِقَادِي﴾

[*Al-Ghaybah*, Shaykh Ṭūsī, p. 167]

In the Kumayl Supplication, we address God, “Yā llāhī wa Sayyidī wa Mawlāy” ﴿يَا إِلَهِي وَ سَيِّدِي وَ مَوْلَاي﴾. We should be careful not to address the Imams with the titles, which are special for God like “llāhī” ﴿إِلَهِي﴾ and “Rabbī” ﴿رَبِّي﴾ because they are God’s creatures and servants.

53. The tradition is as follows:

«... وَ قَدْ أَتَيْنَاهَا غَيْرَ هَذِهِ الْمَرَّةِ مِرَارًا نُرِيدُ الْإِذْنَ عَلَيْهَا وَ هِيَ تَأْتِي أَنْ تَأْذِنَ لَنَا حَتَّى نَدْخُلَ عَلَيْهَا فَتُتْرَأْسِي. فَإِنْ رَأَيْتَ أَنْ تَسْتَأْذِنَ لَنَا عَلَيْهَا فَأَفْعَلْ.»

They said, “O Ali, besides this time, we have asked several times for Fatimah’s permission to enter in order to gain her satisfaction, but she doesn’t give us permission. If possible, ask for her permission for us.”

﴿قَالَ عَلِيٌّ ع: نَعَمْ. فَدَخَلَ عَلِيُّ عَلِيٍّ فَاطْمَأَنَّ ع فَقَالَ: يَا بَيْتَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ قَدْ كَانَ مِنْ هَذَيْنِ الرَّجُلَيْنِ مَا قَدْ رَأَيْتَ وَ قَدْ تَرَدَّدَا مِرَارًا كَثِيرَةً وَ رَدَّدَتْهُمَا وَ لَمْ تَأْذِنِي لَهُمَا وَ قَدْ سَأَلَانِي أَنْ أَسْتَأْذِنَ لَهُمَا عَلَيْكَ. فَقَالَتْ: وَ اللَّهُ لَا أَذُنُ لَهُمَا وَ لَا أَكَلِمَةٌ لَهُمَا كَلِمَةٌ مِنْ رَأْسِي حَتَّى أَلْقَى أَبِي فَأَشْكُوهُمَا إِلَيْهِ بِمَا صَنَعَا وَ ارْتَكَبَا مِنِّي. قَالَ عَلِيُّ ع: فَإِنِّي صَمَمْتُ لَهُمَا ذَلِكَ. قَالَتْ: إِنْ كُنْتُ قَدْ صَمَمْتُ لَهُمَا شَيْئًا، فَالْبَيْتُ بَيْتُكَ وَ التِّسَاءُ تُتْبَعُ الرِّجَالُ، لَا أَحَالَفُ عَلَيْكَ بِشَيْءٍ فَأُذِنُ لِمَنْ أَحَبَبْتُ.﴾

[*Ilal al-Sharāyī*, Ṣadūq, vol. 2, p. 187]







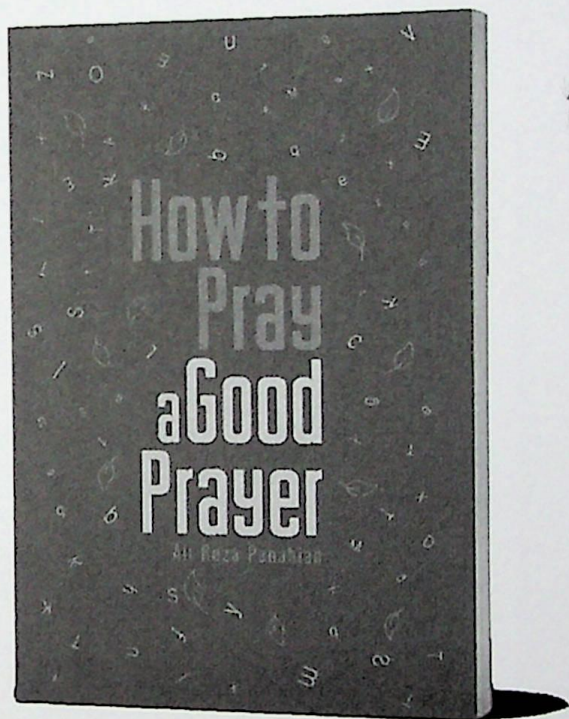
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**How to Pray  
a Good Prayer**

Ali Reza Panahian