

Dua Makarim al-Akhlaq- The Supplication on Noble Character and Acts Pleasing to God

Dars 1 Summary: Vinay Khetia

What are Islamic Ethics?

Science of *'ilm al-akhlaq*- seeks to know which state of mind/being must be nurtured and which actions should be performed and which to be avoided, all of which results in arriving at living a dignified life and attaining salvation in the hereafter.

- This is a practical (*amali*) study and investigation with the purpose of implementing what is learned.
- As the Prophet has said: “Dua without action is like bow without an arrow.”
- This is a Dua of the highest order designed to take us to the peak of spiritual and existential perfection

The Legacy of Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin:

Since we are able to date this supplication in the Sahifa with a isnad going back to Ali b. al-Husayn (which we are), then certainly the ethics of spiritual poverty, and complete surrender of one’s personality to God can be traced back to the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt (as)- and the Sufis along with al-Hassan al-Basri were students (directly or indirectly) of the fourth Imam.

Importance of Dua/Prayer/Turning to God in general:

- We are not able to rise on our own—we asking God to ask our hand to the shores or felicity

قُلْ مَا يَعْجُبُكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْ لَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا-Furqan:77

Say O Muhammad: “**What weight do you have before my Lord—if it was not for your dua’..**

Or “What would my Lord do with you if it were not for your supplication”- (prayer of all types-wajib and non-wajib...)

Why is the supplication interspersed with the invocation of blessing upon Muhammad and his progeny (as)?

- Why begin with Salat on Muhammad and Al Muhammad?
- Via Imam al-Sadiq (also reported from the Prophet)

¹ Root word- ‘aba’, only occurs once in Qur’an. –meanings: to care about, to concern oneself with,

- ُ صَفْوَانَ الْجَمَّالِ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ: كُلُّ دُعَاءٍ يُدْعَى اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ بِهِ مَحْجُوبٌ عَنِ السَّمَاءِ حَتَّى يُصَلَّى عَلَي مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ.²

“Every supplication/invocation invoked before God is veiled from (reaching) the heavens (ie. rising to be accepted by God) until salutations are sent upon Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad”

There is an intimate connection between—entering a conversation with God by first recognizing the position of his Prophet and his Proofs on over creation.

Opening of the Dua:

- Take/Make my faith to the perfection **بَلِّغْ بِإِيمَانِي أَكْمَلَ الْإِيمَانِ**

-A condition of this faith is having unflinching love for God and His Messenger and his Ahl al-Bayt

Al-Shahid al-Awwal uses the following verse and Prophetic hadith in the opening pages of his work addressed to those who have lost loved ones:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا

“And Amongst mankind are those who take equals/partners other than God-setting them up as equals before God...

(how so?)

يَحُبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَ لَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

They love them with the love due to God, And those who believe (those with Iman) are intense in their love for God 2:165

و اجْعَلْ يَقِينِي أَفْضَلَ الْيَقِينِ: Continuation of the Dua'

And make my certainty the best/most virtuous of Yaqin (a state of conviction not mixed with doubt and uncertainty)

How do we arrive at Yaqin? It is a combination of these three processes:

² Al-Kafi, 2:493, For similar wording also see Sunni sources: al-Suyuti, Jami al-Saghir 1:606 H4266, al-Mutaqi al-Hindi, Kamz al-'Ummal, 2:78 H3215

a. Investigation—*nazarīyah* (intense study of especially the pillars of faith, seeking an understanding with a combination of evidences: namely, authentic traditions and impenetrable deductive logic—*adillah al-naqliyyah wa al-'aqliyyah*)

b. Words—it has to be expressed—*qawliyyah* (expressed through prayer, supplications and heartfelt testimony before God)

c. Actions ‘*amaliyyah* (carrying out, acting upon what I know to be true and right-shaping my actions and world view on the basis of a and b.

(This process is based upon direct and indirect expressions/principles derived from the Qur’an and reliable narrations)

False Yaqin:

Useless/Delusionary Yaqin (*al-yaqin al-batil*):

وَ جَحَدُوا بِهَا وَ اسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَ عُلُوًّا فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

They rejected/fought it [our signs-brought to them via Prophet Musa] (—they had an oppressive and arrogant certainty ... (27:14)

Their (the Pharaoh and his supporters) arrogant and oppressive behavior led them to a state despite seeing the signs/miracles brought by Nabi Musa they continued in their violent ways—this is false certainty—sick self- delusion

- This sort of self-delusionary certainty can be attributed to the likes of Mua’wiya, Yazid Ibn Ziyad and their folk ((لعنهم الله))

-This is akin to “ the false/delusionary certainty” a tyrant has in their murderous and barbaric behavior

Ie: They rejected our signs (the miracles performed by Prophet Musa-as) while they recognized in their hearts that it was the truth. Thus they knew Musa (as) was a Prophet but this did not materialize in faith because of their arrogance (*istikbar*).

Thus Ibn Ziyad and his like knew Imam al-Husayn was the grandson of the Prophet, - they knew the Prophet protected him and loved him during his life- but this recognition never materialized into them desisting from their actions and joining the cause of Imam al-Husayn (as).

