

Sahīfa Du‘ā 25 Explanatory Notes

Passage 1:

اللَّهُمَّ وَمَنْ عَلَيَّ بَقَاءٌ وَوَلَدِي وَبِإِصْلَاحِهِمْ لِي وَبِإِمْتَاعِي بِهِمْ

1. O Allah, be kind to me through the survival of my children, setting them right for me, and allowing me to enjoy them!

Munna ‘alayya = also means: conferring favor upon me. Allah says in Q 3:164:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ

Indeed Allah conferred a benefit (*Shakir*)/ shown grace (*Pickthall*)/ confer a great favor (*Yusufali*) on the believers when He sent to them a messenger from among themselves

Muhani translates (بِقَاءٌ وَوَلَدِي) as: ‘by sparing my issue from death’. Up to recent past, children mortality rate was very high. One of the good books to read about an ‘ālim who lost his sons one after the other, such that wrote a book *Comforter of the Heart* to comprehend the loss. Within a short sentence, the imam has used the first person pronoun 3 x. It shows the love and concern a father has for his children

Passage 2:

إِلَهِي اامدُدْ لِي فِي أَعْمَارِهِمْ، وَزِدْ لِي فِي آجَالِهِمْ، وَرَبِّ لِي صَغِيرَهُمْ، وَقَوِّ لِي ضَعِيفَهُمْ، وَأَصِحِّحْ لِي أَبْدَانَهُمْ وَأَدْيَانَهُمْ وَأَخْلَاقَهُمْ، وَعَافِهِمْ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَفِي جَوَارِحِهِمْ وَفِي كُلِّ مَا عُنِيتُ بِهِ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ، وَأَدْرِزْ لِي وَعَلَى يَدِي أَرْزَاقَهُمْ

2. My God, make long their lives for me, increase their terms, bring up the smallest for me, strengthen the weakest for me, rectify for me: their bodies, their religious dedication, and their moral traits; make them well in: their souls, their limbs, and everything that concerns me of their affair; and pour out for me and upon my hand their provisions!

- The Imam has again employed first person pronoun frequently – 6 x.
- Grant them long lives could be an explanation of ‘survival or sparing’ of children in p.1
- ‘Increase their terms’ continues to expound on ‘survival of children.’
- *Rabbili* refers to upbringing of children, as in Q 17:24 – (كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا)
- Weak and feeble children are not be desired; rather they should be strong & robust.
- Imam uses *asibha* (rectify and heal) when praying for children’s bodies, religion & morals. The way we are concerned about the good health of their bodies, we should equally if not more, be working to enhance their spirituality and characteristics.
- Imam al-Husayn (a) testified to great *akhlāq* of his Ali Akbar on ‘Āsūrā Day.
- Again the Imam uses the word *‘āfihim* (make them well and safe) when praying for their soul, body, and all those things that is of concern to a father.
- Earning for children is one of the challenges, so Imam prays for the flow of sustenance.

Hadīths:

قَالَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ عَ مُجَالَسَةِ الصَّالِحِينَ دَاعِيَةً إِلَى الصَّلَاحِ.

The company of the righteous people is an invitation to goodness (al-Kāfī 1:20)

When Imam al-Sajjad was asked? How did you begin your day? He said that he *begins his day with 8 types of demands: (i) Allah, the Exalted, demands from me the performance of obligatory acts; (ii) the Prophet (s) [demands] following on the Sunnah and the family [demands]; (iii) the family [demands] daily provision. . .* (Jami'ul Akbbār, p. 90)

قِيلَ لِعَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ كَيْفَ أَصْبَحْتَ يَا ابْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ أَصْبَحْتُ مَطْلُوباً بِأَمَانٍ [بِثَمَانٍ] اللَّهُ تَعَالَى
يَطْلُبُنِي بِالْفَرَائِضِ وَالنَّبِيِّ صِ بِالسُّنَّةِ وَالْعِيَالِ بِالْقُوتِ وَالنَّفْسِ بِالشَّهْوَةِ وَالشَّيْطَانَ بِالْمَعْصِيَةِ وَالْحَافِظَانَ
بِصِدْقِ الْعَمَلِ وَمَلَكَ الْمَوْتِ بِالرُّوحِ وَالْقَبْرَ بِالْجَسَدِ فَأَنَا بَيْنَ هَذِهِ الْخِصَالِ مَطْلُوبٌ
(جامع الأخبار (للشعيري)، ص: 90)

. الإمام عليّ (عليه السلام): مَنْ لَمْ يُجْهِدْ نَفْسَهُ فِي صِغَرِهِ لَمْ يَنْبُلْ فِي كِبَرِهِ.

Imam Ali (a): *He who does not exert himself in his childhood will not be high-minded when he grows up.*
[Ghurar al-Hikam, no. 8272]

الإمام عليّ (عليه السلام): مَنْ سَأَلَ فِي صِغَرِهِ أَجَابَ فِي كِبَرِهِ

Imam Ali (a): *He who asks questions as a child is able to answer them himself as an adult.*
[Ibid. no. 8273]

الإمام عليّ (عليه السلام): مَنْ لَمْ يَتَعَلَّمْ فِي الصِّغَرِ لَمْ يَتَقَدَّمْ فِي الْكِبَرِ

Imam Ali (a): *He who does not learn as a child does not progress as an adult.*
[Ibid. no. 8937]

Passage 3

وَأَجْعَلُهُمْ أَبْرَاراً أَتْقِيَاءَ بُصْرَاءَ سَامِعِينَ مُطِيعِينَ لَكَ، وَلِأَوْلِيَاءِكَ مُحِبِّينَ مُنَاصِحِينَ، وَلِجَمِيعِ
أَعْدَائِكَ مُعَانِدِينَ وَبَغِضِينَ، آمِينَ

3. Make them: pious, fearing, insightful, hearing, and obedient toward You; loving and well-disposed toward Your friends; and stubbornly resistant and full of hate toward all Your enemies! Amen!

Qualities that parents should work to instill in their children:

1. Pious and virtuous (birr, pl. abrār).

Allah refers to the righteous (abrār) a number of times in the Quran.

Prayer of Ulul Albāb 3: 191 – 194. Part of this prayer is: *and cause us to die with the righteous*

The Righteous will be drinking from a cup whose mixture would be kāfūr (Q 76:5)

In verse 82:13 & 83:22 Allah assures the Righteous thus: - *Surely the righteous will be in bliss*
In 83:18 it says: Indeed the record of the Righteous is in ‘Ilīyyīn.

There are numerous Hadiths on Abrār, but we will only include one here:

2. God-fearing and Godwary (*muttaqīn* or *atqiyā*). The holy Quran is replete with verses on the significance and necessity of having the quality of taqwā. See for e.g. verses 2:103, 194, 196, 223 & 231.

Amīrul Mu’minīn (a): *Fear Allah in secret, and He will withhold what might harm you.* He has also said: *Whoever fears Allah . . . is feared by everything.*

3. Insightful. See Q 12:108 where Allah asks the Holy Prophet to: *Say, “this is my way, I invite to Allah with insight (basīrah), I and those who follow me.”*
4. Listening (to the admonitions and good words). Refer to Q 39:18 – *Those who listen to the speech and follow the best of it. Those are the ones Allah has guided, and those are people of understanding.* Ann Landers was asked by *Psychology Today*, what was the secret of your success. She said, she was a good listener.
5. Obedient to Allah. Amīrul Mu’minīn (a): *Surely Allah, may He be glorified, has appointed rewards for being obedient to Him.*
6. Loving and well-disposed to the friends of Allah. Instill the love of the Holy Prophet (s), his Ahlul Bayt (a) and their friends in the heart of your children. One way is to read to them select stories from the lives of these people. Refer to, amongst other, *Anecdotes for Reflection*, Parts 1 to 4. Also refer to Moral Stories at <http://www.ezsoftech.com/stories/default.asp>. You may need to check the veracity of some stories with scholars and ensure to narrate only those stories which are appropriate to the comprehension levels of your children.
7. Disliking and dissociating with all the enemies of Allah. Gather info on the atrocities and wrong committed by the enemies of Islam and the Ahlul Bayt (a). Do you find people in our times who adore these enemies or who have the same belief and characteristics? Our children should not associate with such people.

Passage 4:

اللَّهُمَّ اشْدُدْ بِهِمْ عَضُدِي، وَأَقِمْ بِهِمْ أَوْدِي، وَكَثِّرْ بِهِمْ عَدَدِي، وَزَيِّنْ بِهِمْ مَحْضَرِي، وَأَخِي
بِهِمْ ذِكْرِي، وَاكْفِنِي بِهِمْ فِي غَيْبَتِي، وَأَعِنِّي بِهِمْ عَلَى حَاجَتِي، وَاجْعَلْهُمْ لِي مُحِبِّينَ،
وَعَلَيَّ حَادِبِينَ مُقْبِلِينَ مُسْتَقِيمِينَ لِي، مُطِيعِينَ، غَيْرَ عَاصِينَ وَلَا عَاقِبِينَ وَلَا مُخَالَفِينَ وَلَا
خَاطِبِينَ

4. O Allah, through them: strengthen my arm, straighten my burdened back, multiply my number, adorn my presence, keep alive my mention, suffice me when I am away, help me in my needs, and make them: loving toward me, affectionate, approaching, upright, obedient; never: disobedient, disrespectful, opposed, or offenders!

Commentary:

- The Imam again employs the first person pronoun about 10 times
- Function of children, especially boys, is that they are helpful in all physical tasks
- All sons & daughters serve as part of family members. Sh. Al-Mufīd in *Kitāb al-Irshād* names sons & daughters amongst the children of Imams
- The presence of children in gatherings should be a cause of *ẓīnat* (adornment and beauty) for their parents. The audience should immediately notice that the children come from a well-raised Muslim and Mu'min family. Children's morals & speech point to their parents – not their family name. For e.g. Imam al-Taqī al-Jawād (a) at the age of 9 responded with confidence & dignity questions by Ma'mūn, such that the later said, "Truly, you are the worthy son of Imam Ali Ridha."
- In your absence, especially after your death, your children's good deeds and morals should enliven your name and remembrance. Observe at the children of some great scholars.
- Often fathers have to go away for business trips and in olden days for wars. The children should fill-in to run family & business affairs on their behalf sufficiently.
- Once the children grow up and begin to earn, they are supposed to fulfill the needs of their parents. Allah says: *They ask you, [O Our Messenger], what they should spend. Say, 'whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents, relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler (Q 2:215).* Imam Ja'far as-Sādiq (a) said that you should: "*Fulfil their requirements . . . even if they in reality are not in need of your assistance.*" (S. S. A. Rizvi, *Family Life in Islam*).
- Good akhlāq includes children loving their parents, being affectionate to them, approachable by them, respectable and obedient to the parents. Parents should never fear their children, whatever their age or position is in the society.
- The children should never be disobedient, disrespectful, opposing or offending to their parents. Is there an exception to this rule? The Holy Quran clarifies this when it says: *But if they endeavor to make you associate [a partner] with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness (31:15).*

Hadiths by Amīrul Mu'minīn Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (a):

- A child that has to be retrained is like an extra finger: if you let it be, then you dislike it; and if you cut it off, then it is painful.
- If you scold a child, then leave him room to turn away from his wrong action, so that you do not leave him with obstinacy as his only way out.
- The first things that children should learn about are the things that they will need to know when they become men.
- Surely the heart of a child is like fallow ground: whatever is planted in it is accepted by it.
- It should be your aim to display more kindness towards your child than the kindness that he displays towards you.

(The Sayings & Wisdom of Imam 'Ali, Sh. F. Haeri (comp), p. 110-11)

ASSIGNMENT. Read from passage 5, 6 & 12 and jot down your reflections on them:

5. *Help me in their upbringing, their education, and my devotion toward them, give me among them from Yourself male children, make that a good for me, and make them a help for me in that which I ask from You!* 6. *Give me and my progeny refuge from the accursed Satan . . .* 12. *O Allah, give me all of that through Your bestowal of success and Your mercy, grant us refuge from the chastisement of the burning, and give to all the Muslims, male and female, and all the faithful, male and female, the like of what I have asked for myself and my children, in the immediate of this world and the deferred of the next.* ALI 317/HK/9-15