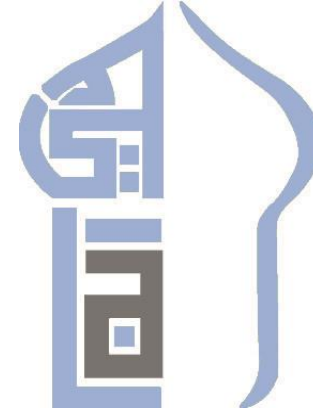


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



ALI 368: Brief Explanation of Du'ā No. 1 from *Sahīfa Sajjādiyya*

SESSION 1:

وَكَانَ مِنْ دُعَائِهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ إِذَا ابْتَدَأَ بِالدُّعَاءِ بَدَأَ بِالتَّنْمِيدِ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَالتَّأْدِيبِ
عَلَيْهِ، فَفَالَ

When he (upon him be peace) began to supplicate, he would begin with praise and laudation of God (Mighty and Majestic is He)

Interesting articles on the *Sahīfa*

Read the following articles during the course. You will find them interesting & highly beneficial; they talk about the circumstances that led to the compilation of the work.

1. A H Sheriff, “Saheefa Al-Kamilah: The Perfect Epistle” from *The Light* magazine, available at:

www.academyofislam.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ALI-201-Intro-Sheriff.pdf

2. “Introduction to Al-Sahifa by the martyred Imam Āyatullāh Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr, available at:

www.academyofislam.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Sahifa-Intro-Sadr.pdf

3. Seyyid Saeed Akhatar Rizvi, “The Illustrious Imamat-period of Imam Zaynal ‘Abidin,” found online at:

www.al-islam.org/al-serat/Illustrious.htm

Important points from A H Sheriff

1. A researcher accepted Islam due to *Sahīfa*. Her observation: *no other book would surpass this as it contained the supreme possible human approach towards the Creator Allah.*
2. Quotation from Shaykh al-Islam Tantawi of Egypt. His remarks: *I was deeply impressed by the value and magnificence of these invocations. I wonder how the Muslims have all along been ignorant of such a valuable treasure. They have been in deep slumber for these centuries. They could not even feel that Allah has supplied them with such a precious store of knowledge.*
3. Gift from the 12th Imam (af): *In a dream once, the Allāmah requested the 12th Imam for a gift of a book from which he could constantly benefit. The Imam recommended Sahīfa telling him that it was a gift from him and he should go and collect the book from a person named at a particular place. Allāmah confirms that in accordance with the advice of the Imam, he collected the Sahīfa from which he benefited a great deal in his exercises of self-purification. The book was cherished as an invaluable gift from the Imam and circulated round among the believers of the place.*

Titles of 10 Du'ās from *Sahīfa*

The *Sahīfa* contains many supplications that focus on spiritual, ethical and ideological aspects of Islam. It also has numerous Du'ās that address worldly needs. Let us have a brief look at the titles of these Du'ās.

Du'ā No. 7: when faced with a worrisome task

Du'ā No. 13: in seeking needs from Allah

Du'ā No. 15: in sickness or distress

Du'ā No. 18: when perils were repelled

Du'ā No. 21: when afflicted with sorrow

Du'ā No. 22: in hardship, effort and difficult affairs

Du'ā No. 23: when asking for well-being

Du'ā No. 29: when the provision is stinted

Du'ā No. 30: for help in repaying debts

Du'ā No. 54: for removal of worries.

Definition of Hamd (حمد)

Al-hamd is to praise someone for a good acquired by his own intention, therefore if you want to praise a pearl for its luster, you may use *al-madh*, but not *al-hamd* because the pearl has not acquired that luster by its own will and power (*Al-Mīzān*, v. 1, p. 27). Thanks (*shukr*) is given for what one has already received, praise is given for the qualities the One Who is praised possesses prior to having bestowed anything and is thus more universal (*The Study Quran*, p. 6) Hamd means extolling the Praiseworthy (*mahmūd*) and giving thanks to Him for all of the favors He has bestowed in this world and for the reward that will be given in the next world.

Al-hamdu lillāh in the Quran

It occurs 23 times. Following verses of the Quran contain *al-hamdu lillāh*: 1: 2; 6:1, 45; 7:43; 10:10; 14:39; 16:75; 17:111; 18:1; 23:28; 27:15, 59, 93; 29:63, 31:25; 34:1; 35:1, 34; 37:182; 39:29, 74, 75; and 40:65. It would be a good exercise to refer to these verses and see in what context has the phrase been used.

Praise (*al-hamd*) is rendered in the definite rather than the indefinite to indicate that all forms of praise and all gratitude belong to God.

Why All praise belongs to Allah?

That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything (Q 40:62). Allah also says: Who made good everything that He has created (Q 32:7). Everything is good because it has been created by Allah and is attributed to Him. In other words, a thing becomes good because it is created by Allah; and everything created by Him is good. The Quran also says: Allah is He besides Whom there is no god; His are the very best names (20:8); and Allah's are the best names; therefore call on Him thereby (7:180). Thus it is clear that Allah is good in His names and good in His actions; and that every good and beauty emanates from Him (Al-Mizan, v. 1. p. 27)

Passage 1 from Du'ā 1

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الْأَوَّلِ بِلاَ أَوَّلٍ كَانَ قَبْلَهُ، وَالْآخِرِ بِلاَ آخِرٍ يَكُونُ بَعْدَهُ

Chittick: *Praise belongs to God, the First, without a first before Him, the Last, without a last behind Him.*

Muhani: *All praise is due to God, the First, before Whom there was no 'first' and the Last, after Whom there shall be no 'last'.*

To this day, the *Sahīfa Sajjādiyya* has been translated into English only twice. Once in 1930s by Ahmad Muhani from Lucknow and in 1984 by William C. Chittick. We will provide both translations for you to understand the passages well.

Notes on passage No. 1

It is said that the words *awwal* –the first, and *ākhir* – the last, in the passage have been taken from Q 57:3 (هُوَ الْأَوَّلُ) (وَ الْآخِرُ) – *He is the First and the Last*. Imam al-Sadiq (a) was asked the meaning of He is the First and the Last, he answered: He is the First, not a first prior to Himself and not from a precedent before Him. He is the Last, not from any end, as assumed in the case of creatures. He is the First, the Last, without any reference to any beginning or end. The Prophet (s) used to say to God:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الْأَوَّلُ فَلَيْسَ قَبْلَكَ شَيْءٌ وَأَنْتَ الْآخِرُ فَلَيْسَ بَعْدَكَ شَيْءٌ

O God, you are the First prior to whom there was nothing; and You the Last after whom nothing exists.

Passage 2 from Du'a 1

الَّذِي قَصُرَتْ عَنْ رُؤْيَيْهِ أَبْصَارُ النَّاطِرِينَ، وَعَجَزَتْ عَنْ
نَعْتِهِ أَوْهَامُ الْوَاصِفِينَ

Chittick: *Beholders' eyes fall short of seeing Him, describers' imaginations are not able to depict Him.*

Muhani: *The eyes of those who see fall short of seeing Him; the imagination of those who praise Him fall short of describing Him.*

Notes on passage No. 2

Our sites is so limited that we may not see many material beings. Our own spirits, jinn, angles, air, pain, neutron, electron, some microbes and viruses are all not visible to our eyes. The Sacred Being of Allah, which is not similar to anything in this world, is beyond our power to see or observe Him.

Imam al-Sādiq (a) has said: *Allah is Great and High. Allah's servants are incapable to describe Him and may not observe Him. He is Delicate and Knowing. You may not describe Him through quality, place and time. How could I quantitatively describe Him since He made the quantity what it is? I recognized quality through His quality to what possesses quality. How could I describe Him with place when He created the concept of place; and I recognized place because He gave me the concept. He is both in and out of things. Eyes may never see Him, but He sees our eyes. There is no god except Him; He is the Mighty, the Wise, the Knowing.*

Passage No. 3 from Du'ā 1

اِبْتَدَعَ بِقُدْرَتِهِ الْخُلُقَ اِبْتِدَاعًا، وَاخْتَرَعَهُمْ عَلَى مَشِيَّتِهِ اخْتِرَاعًا

Chittick: *He originated the creatures through His power with an origination, He devised them in accordance with His will with a devising.*

Muhani: *By His Power He created every creature de novo and He molded them according to His Will.*

Notes on passage No. 3

The Quran uses the phrase (بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ) - *the Originator of the heavens and earth* twice in verses 2:117 and 6: 101. This means that Allah created heavens and the earth without the need of previous samples and examples. Imam al-Bāqir (a) explains:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ابْتَدَعَ الْأَشْيَاءَ كُلَّهَا بِعِلْمِهِ عَلَى غَيْرِ مِثَالٍ كَانَ قَبْلَهُ فَاَبْتَدَعَ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِينَ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ قَبْلَهُنَّ سَمَاوَاتٌ وَلَا أَرْضُونَ

Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, created everything with His knowledge without having [the need of] any previous sample. So He originated the heavens and the earth, when there was no precedence of heavens or earths existing (al-Kāfī, 2: 256). The world is amazing - the skies, plants, animals, human beings, etc. all depend on the determination of Allah (swt). Imam al-Sajjad (a): He devised and molded them according to His Will

Passage No. 4 from Du'ā 1

مَسَّ سَلَكَ بِهِمْ طَرِيقَ إِرَادَتِهِ، وَبَعَثَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ مَحَبَّتِهِ، لَا يَمْلِكُونَ تَأْخِيرًا
عَمَّا قَدَّمَهُمْ إِلَيْهِ، وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَقَدُّمًا إِلَى مَا أَخَّرَهُمْ عَنْهُ

Chittick: *Then He made them walk on the path of His desire, He sent them out on the way of His love. They cannot keep back from that to which He has sent them forward, nor can they go forward to that from which He has kept them back.*

Muhani: *Then He made them walk along the path of His Intention and caused them to tread the way of His Love. They have no power to delay that towards which He hastens them nor are they able to hasten that which He delays for them.*

Notes on passage No. 4

The elements of universe and creatures, including the galaxies, stars, the suns and moons were put in the specific paths. Their exact movements and their actions and reactions over one another, so meticulously predetermined, has produced such an amazing and awesome system of creation. The Quran stipulates this in the response of Musa to Fir'aun:

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ

He said, "Our Lord is He who gave each thing its form and then guided [it]". With the guidance of Allah and with the cooperation of the sun, soil, weather and water, plants are decorated green so that the world will look charming and desirable.

Passage 5 from Du'a 1

وَجَعَلَ لِكُلِّ رُوحٍ مِنْهُمْ قُوتًا مَعْلُومًا مَقْسُومًا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ،
لَا يَنْقُصُ مَنْ زَادَهُ نَاقِصٌ، وَلَا يَزِيدُ مَنْ نَقَصَ مِنْهُمْ زَائِدٌ

Chittick: *He assigned from His provision to each of their spirits nourishment known and apportioned. No decreaser decreases those whom He increases, no increaser increases those of them whom He decreases.*

Muhani: *He has ordained for every soul a definite quantity of subsistence, distributed out of the nourishment provided by Him. There can be no decrease of what He has increased and no increase of what He has decreased.*

Notes on passage No. 5 - 1

The Almighty God has bestowed upon all human beings different rights: the right to eat, the right to have a shelter, the right to wear clothes. It is not fair for few to benefit from all privileges at the expense of the deprivation of the majority of population.

Each servant of God has been assigned the amount of sustenance through God's benevolence and he/she has to earn it in the right ways. If somebody has an opportunity to earn extra income, he should spend it for the needs of the society instead of hoarding it or wasting for personal hobbies.

Notes on passage No. 5- 2

Holy Quran often commands us to spend from what Allah has given us. The Quranic statement about the believers *that they spend out of what We have given them* appears in verses 2:3, 8:3, 22:35, 28:54 and 32:16. See how beautifully the Quran defines the believers:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ
وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا ۚ لَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith; and upon their Lord they rely - (2) The ones who establish prayer, and from what We have provided them, they spend. (3) Those are the believers, truly. For them are degrees [of high position] with their Lord and forgiveness and noble provision. (4)

References

Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Tabatabai, *Al-Mizan*, v. 1

Sh. Husayn Ansariyan, *The Land of Lovers*, V. 1

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S. H. Nasr (ed.), *The Study Quran*